

FUTURE-PROOF HISTORIC CENTRES

FINAL REPORT, JUNE 2013



Connecting cities
Building successes



**Final report of the URBACT LINKS NETWORK.
JOURNAL DE BORD 2010-2013**

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5, Rue Pleyel
93283 Saint-Denis, France
Tel. +33 1 49 17 46 08
Fax +33 1 49 17 45 55
www.urbact.eu

Project Coordination:
Frédérique Calvanus
f.calvanus@bayonne.fr

Final report edited by
Antonio Borghi, Lead expert of the LINKS Network
antonioborghi@gmail.com

Texts:

Sylvie Durruty, Martine Bisauta, Frédérique Calvanus, Antonio Borghi, Brecht Vandekerckhove, Ramon de Torres Lopez, Kleopatra Theologidou, Job Roos, Ioanna Papayianni, Eric Aufare, Jean Marc Gary, Carmen Nechifor, Johannes Bertleff, Dan Oprea, Roland Bartha, Julien Labat, Adri Hartkorn, Ilse Rijnveld, Wim Van Unen, Philip Stein, Malcolm Noonan, Virginie Leclercq, Davy Fiankan, Bart Blancquaert, Roel Hendrickx, Selma Harrington, Adrian Joyce and Ferruccio Favaron.

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URBACT LINKS NETWORK

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Edited by Antonio Borghi



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1. INTRODUCTION

The URBACT II programme aims at improving the efficiency of integrated and sustainable urban development policies in Europe supporting the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Programme's specific objectives are:

- To facilitate the exchange of experience and learning among city policy makers, practitioners in the field of sustainable urban development, local and regional authorities.
- To disseminate widely the experiences and examples of good practice achieved by cities and to ensure the transfer of know-how in the area of sustainable urban development.
- To assist policy-makers and practitioners in the cities, managers of operational programmes and other actors to define ac-

tion plans on sustainable development of urban areas (the so-called Local Action Plans)

The LINKS network partnership is extremely well representative in terms of geographical balance, cultural areas. Different urban development approach and heritage conservation approaches were represented, different economic and social background, different political visions, but the same imperative to preserve and at the same time transform urban heritage for the benefit of future generations. Use historic city centres not as a museum for tourists but as a matter of cultural identity, economic development and social cohesion.

LINKS Partners have exchanged also about many difficulties, obstacles and gaps in everyday management of urban heritage. The LINKS partnership at the beginning was made by 10 cities: the eight represented at the final conference plus Evora and Freiberg. These two cities had to leave the project due to the budget constraints following the Stability Pact with which every EU countries is struggling with.

During 30 months of activities the LINKS Network achieved the fundamental targets identified by the URBACT II Program. It has established a common framework for exchange among very diverse experiences facing the difficulties provided by different background and aspiration of the partner cities. Having achieved a fruitful exchange platform the LINKS partners have decided to go beyond the usual scope of work of an URBACT Network, providing an original contribution to the EU policy making process formulating a set of policy recommendations to the Members of the European Parliament. We hope that the ideas and suggestions of the network partners will provide a useful contribution to the current debate on the next programming period of cohesion policy 2014-2020 and new ERDF regulations, Partnership contracts and Operational programmes to be drafted in each member State during 2013, the implementation phase of the re-cast Energy Performance of Building Directive (2010) and Energy Efficiency Directive (2012), debate around Horizon 2020 and the Joint Programming Initiative JPI etc.

This Journal de Bord aims at documenting the journey of the URBACT LINKS Network, noting the evolution of sharing and peer learning methodologies, the main topics discussed during the thematic workshops and the key findings. The source for this document are the network's baseline study and thematic reports of the workshops, but also the newsletters in which the outputs have been disseminated to a wider audience, press articles produced and blog posts published by the partners. It contains contributions, abstracts or full articles by Sylvie Durruty, Martine Bisauta, Frédérique Calvanus, Antonio Borghi, Brecht Vandekerckhove, Ramon de Torres Lopez, Kleopatra Theologidou, Job Roos, Ioanna Papayianni, Eric Aufare, Jean Marc Gary, Carmen Nechifor, Johannes

Bertleff, Dan Oprea, Roland Bartha, Julien Labat, Adri Hartkorn, Ilse Rijnveld, Wim Van Unen, Philip Stein, Malcolm Noonan, Virginie Leclercq, Davy Fiankan, Bart Blancquaert and Roel Hendrickx.

At the Final Conference besides the LINKS Network's representatives and those of the EU Institutions (Urban Intergroup, DG Regio, DG Energy, URBACT), also some external stakeholders like Energy Cities, Cecodhas and Eurocities were invited to contribute to the debate. The contributions by Selma Harrington, President of the Architects' Council of Europe, by Ferruccio Favaron Chairman Urban and Territorial Policies Department of the Italian Council of Architects (Consiglio Nazionale Architetti Pianificatori, Paesaggisti e Conservatori CNAPPC) and Adrian Joyce Secretary General of EuroACE, The European Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency in Buildings are collected in the Appendix of this report.



2. MAIN TOPICS AND WORK PROGRAMME

During the first 6 months of the Network activities, in the so-called development phase that was supported by Lead Expert Raphaël Souchier, among other tasks a baseline study was produced aiming at:

- Fence the field of work of the network, also by making a desk research, describing the state of the art on the networks topics
- Set out the framework in which the network, with some adjustments, has worked, identifying main topics to be addressed and related sub-themes
- Formulate the overall objectives of the network's activities on which the partners agreed

In principle, the activities and objectives imagined by the lead partner in the application form, in the

baseline study have been translated in an initial work plan for the partnership. A roadmap has been structured around the cornerstones of the URBACT integrated approach, outlining from the beginning some priorities to be dealt in depth.

- A proper understanding of historic city centres and traditional buildings with regard to their functional, technical and physical specific features and behaviour as a pre-requisite for any intervention and modification.
- A clear vision of the future destination and

use of historic city centres and their urban fabric to guide the necessary adaptation, technical and physical upgrading, integration with new technologies or re-activation of traditional buildings techniques.

- Contributing to a common knowledge platform on environmentally friendly building materials and techniques - eco-materials for eco-restoration - which are not only natural, but also local and represent a great potential for development of local economies and employment.
- Explore the interrelations among the main dimension of eco-restoration, the co-benefits of the integrated and eco-friendly approach. Hence the need to address these dimensions with coordinated, long term targeted strategies.

Following the guidelines provided by the baseline study the network identified 4 main areas in which the thematic workshop were to be focused: Urban issues, Social challenges, Technical aspects and Economic opportunities.

These areas reflect the pillars of the URBACT integrated approach to urban issues with some specific nuances and have been further developed and differentiated during the network activities.





3. TRANSNATIONAL THEMATIC WORKSHOPS. SIX STEPS TO CO-PRODUCE THE LOCAL ACTION PLANS

According to the interests and competences of each partner, but also to the needs of the network, a certain division of tasks was undertaken, giving each partner the responsibility for the organisation of one thematic workshop or meeting.

- First Network Partners Meeting (Bayonne, February 2010)
- Network Partners Meeting (Kilkenny September 2010)
- Urban Issues (Freiberg, November 2010)
- Social Challenges (Almeria, February 2011)
- Technical Aspects (Veria, May 2011)
- Economic Opportunities (Bayonne, October 2011)
- Good Governance (Brasov, February 2012)
- Irish National Planning Conference (April 2012)
- International Symposium on the Dutch Approach (Delft, May 2012)
- Key Findings and Preparation of the Final Conference (Budrio, October 2012)
- Final Conference (Brussels/ Anderlecht, January 2013)

It must be noted that this subdivision of the LINKS subject into sub-themes is purely instrumental to carry out the network's activities, meanwhile the target of "Future proofing Historic centres" remains a fully integrated one. In fact in each of the workshop it has been re-affirmed that single aspects cannot of sustainable urban development of historic city centres cannot be dealt in isolation. This was also one of the assumption of the baseline study and all workshops and thematic meetings have confirmed that the social, economic, technical, environmental, cultural issues to be tackled are strongly linked to one another. As a matter of fact the subdivision in sub-themes is purely conventional and pragmatic tool and could be done in different ways, according to specific conditions and needs.

Bearing this in mind it is helpful to resume which have been – in a nutshell – the key outcomes of the thematic workshops, before dedicating a chapter to each of them.

The LINKS partner gathered together for the first time at invitation of the city of **Freiberg** in Germany, for the a three days workshop in November 2010. The thematic focus of the workshop was quite broad addressing the urban challenges. A good start to introduce the integrated approach as a key element of the network investigations. The concrete aim of the workshop was defined as how to capitalise the asset of historic cities to create a comfortable, thrifty and contemporary urban environment, where people prefer to live instead of moving to the new residential areas in the periphery. The important role of long term town planning strategies to achieve high urban quality was well noted in this workshop. The LINKS partners agreed on the importance of a clear political vision and transparent administrative regulations to implement urban policies and projects.

The **Almeria** workshop, February 2011, organised in cooperation with thematic expert Brecht Vandekerckhove (SUM Research, Brussels) focused on the challenges of integrating citizens involvement and active participation in long term urban development strategies. It underlined the fact that citizens participation to the urban development strategies and

projects (e.g. in terms of ownership of places and co-decision making, but also lifestyles and behaviours) cannot be separated from the economic and technical framework. Active citizens involvement is key to the success of any urban development strategy, but the most successful approaches show that they are embedded in the local urban context sharing their physical and economic pre-conditions.

The workshop in **Veria**, May 2011, focused on the manifold technical aspects of improving energy efficiency of historic and traditional buildings highlighting that there is no ready-made or one-fits-all solution. On the other hand it was found that a common approach can be develop to energy retrofitting any kind of building in the European urban context. The so called integral approach according to which it is possible and necessary to design and implement ad hoc solutions for each and every building, starting with an in-depth diagnosis and understanding of the building in his context and carrying the design choices consequently throughout until the choice of compatible materials and techniques from the local supply chain and skills. The enthusiasm for the extraordinary level of the exchange in this workshop (co-organised by the city of Delft) brought as a consequence the wish to follow-up with an ad hoc international symposium which was organised by prof. Job Roos (TU Delft) in May 2012.

The workshop in **Bayonne**, October 2011, highlighted on one side the great potential of eco-restoration to boost the economy as an added value generating, labour intensive activity that mobilise a long supply chain and cannot be de-localised. On the other hand it underlined the difficulties, but also the many opportunities, arising from engineering together various financial instruments (EU, national, regional, local) to support eco-restoration. This workshop was partly dedicated to technical issues as well, in particular to the difficulties faced by natural materials in the certification process and in assessing energy performance of traditional buildings. A joint outcome of the Veria and Bayonne workshop is the urgency of overcoming the contraposition between heritage and energy efficiency, re-defining energy efficiency in a holistic lifecycle perspective and adapting the

legal and financial framework to boost energy retrofitting of the European historic cities.

The workshop in **Brasov**, February 2012, identified a number of ways to promote ideas and recommendations from the previous workshops into the local policy frameworks, with the adequate governance structures. It was also the first workshop where the partnership started close monitoring of the Local Action Plans and exchange about the final conference. In the workshop different aspects of translating ideas and knowledge into urban policies and concrete actions were experimented and evaluated, considering the technical solutions, economic dimension and financial feasibility in an integrated and holistic perspective.

Thanks to a very careful management of the network resources and to the engagement of the partners two more meetings were added to the networks work programme: in occasion of the international Symposium in Delft and a two-day workshop in Budrio.

The agenda of the meeting in **Delft**, May 2012, was articulated in two parts: the International Symposium at the Technical University was a great chance to bring the partnership closer to different academic perspectives and to the world of real estate in the Dutch context. In the second part the municipality of Delft illustrated with presentations and study visits the local urban policy context, some innovative eco-restoration projects such as the White Rose Foundation. Here the meeting joined the partners of the Interreg VI-B project Living green (www.living-green.eu) for a very interesting exchange of views on European territorial cooperation programs. Furthermore part of this meeting was dedicated to the preparation of the final conference and definition of the network outputs. In particular it was agreed to ask the Urban Intergroup of the European Parliament for a joint event in the framework of the LINKS final conference.

In October 2012 The LINKS Network partners met in **Budrio**. The agenda of the meeting was mainly dedicated to the preparation of the final conference at the European Parliament and a discussion took

place to agree on a list of recommendations to put forward as the key message of the LINKS partners to the EU institutions. Hosting the meeting the local administration organised some site visits to important local monuments like the Villa Malvezzi and the Teatro Consorziale, which is also the LINKS pilot project of Budrio.

The Final conference took place in **Brussels** on the 9th, 10th and 11th of January 2013. After three years of activity and one year of preparation the event was organised in cooperation between the network partners, the Urban Intergroup of the European Parliament and the thematic section Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN) of the European Economic and Social Committee. On the 9th and the 11th presentations, site visits and workshop sessions took place in various locations of Anderlecht, the local partner. On the morning of the 10th the LINKS partners were invited to introduce the networks activities and outputs in the European Parliament, introduce and discuss with the MEPs and representatives of the Commission their recommendations. In the afternoon they were invited by the European Economic and Social Committee to introduce the Local Action Plans of each partner city, explaining the expected impact of the network activities at local level.



First step. Workshop in Freiberg: "Setting the scene for an integrated urban approach in the eco-restoration of historic city centres"

The first workshop of the network was held in Freiberg (Germany, Saxony) in late 2010 and set out the framework for the following transnational workshops. The Editorial of the 1st Newsletter outlined the thematic field of exchange of this workshop.

By mustering nine European cities with a protected historic centre, the LINKS network aims to prove that the conflict between environmental stakes and heritage preservation can be solved.

The LINKS network motto is future-proof historic centres, meaning that ancient districts can become sustainable if the expectations of the inhabitants are met, in providing energy-efficient buildings, modern

comfort and quality public spaces that are still few and far between nowadays. One can find all the elements that constitute the environmentally friendly housing developments most town planners aim to create today, in historic centres. Their urban forms are particularly thrifty in terms of use of space, local building materials, closeness to urban services, social and functional mix etc., but in spite of these assets, historic centres find it difficult to remain vibrant with harmonious and balanced neighbourhoods.

- How to face the numerous obstacles and counterbalance heritage protection and public demand for change?

- How to solve problems: traffic, tourists, noise pollution, daily retail activity and adapt housing to new, modern comfort standards?
- How to maintain centres as urban polarities in ever-growing urban districts faced with territorial competition?
- How to convey the importance of improving the conception and assessment of long-term urban strategies and the management of their centres on a daily basis?

Being the first meeting of the partners the Workshop in Freiberg was mainly dedicated to setting out the framework for the network activities rather than on concrete thematic outputs. Addressing the thematic field of urban issues it was intended to establish a common exchange platform among the partners and capture their priorities in a first face to face sharing. One of the articles of the first LINKS Newsletter expressed the main features of this sharing and exchange platform listing the cornerstones of the urban integrated approach.

Town planners in charge of historic centres must permanently keep a sound balance between heritage protection and demands for change. During the post Second World War period, the hunger of modernity lead to an irreversible loss of ancient buildings and to the dislocation of traditional urban structure, in particular to allow the car dependant uses form development. This is the best illustration of how short term decisions often unforeseen can have negative long term impacts.

To avoid the errors of the past, town planners are bound to adapt the urban fabric, both preserving the essence of the inherited pattern and keeping open to new expectations and way of life. This requires to precisely understand which of Today's needs and expectations (in terms of public spaces, equipment, services, customers habits...), keep evolving within the societal changes and how they can be compatible with the absolute necessity of sustainable development.

The old European city is already showing some advantages to plainly participate in a sustainable urban development: compact, limited land use; high architectural quality and economical constructions in

natural resources, accessibility of services and urban diversity, economic, cultural and educational potential. But the historic centres struggle to recover their traditional role of living districts. How many of them remain considered as only picturesque and touristic areas, big open-air museums, or shopping centres?

How is it possible to maintain and reinforce them as urban polarities in an increasing urban scale and territorial concurrency? The obstacles are numerous, and the revitalization of historic centres supposes to manage various problems such as car traffic, the "cost of fame" to be paid by overcrowded touristic destinations, daily retailing activities, noise pollution, housing adaptation to new comfort needs... The only way to manage these challenges is that Urban planning to be part of an integrated approach, involving citizens, disrupting practitioners and elected representatives' habits. How can cities learn to better conceive and assess in the long run their urban strategies?

To address those questions, the partners were asked to monitor their urban strategies according to the seven pillars of wisdom for urban projects:

- The urban project is designed both as a process and as an output. And not only an output – You must consider the process (the ways & means) that lead to its production;
- The urban project is designed in each and all of its dimensions, as an integrated approach and taking into account all the interactions among the dimensions of political, economic, social, cultural, and technical;
- The urban project is designed as a dynamic balance between short term and long term considerations and not as an answer to either practical emergencies or to a utopian vision;
- The urban project is designed in interaction with all the actors of the city (among which are the inhabitants, and not without or against them);
- The urban project is designed as an acceptable, feasible process that can be revised and updated when needed;
- The urban project is designed as an open and

adaptable process; and not as a “closed” and definitive product;

- The urban project is designed as a complex process and not a simple and solely technical process.

Focus on Freiberg

Freiberg is located on the territory of the former GDR – in the metropolitan region “Sachsendreieck” (City triangle Chemnitz/Dresden/Leipzig). In comparison to this big cities Freiberg is a small town with 42,000 inhabitants. Today Freiberg is the capital of the district Mittelsachsen and is a very important city in tourism and history as well as for the Solar industry.

Freiberg is an old mining city founded in 1162. The first discovery of silver in the area in 1168 was the beginning of a mining boom throughout Saxony. In 1765 the Bergakademie Freiberg (today technical University Bergakademie Freiberg) was founded. Today it is the oldest mining academy (montane

University / Bergakademie) in the world. The mining industry shaped both the town of Freiberg and its university. Due to its 800-year history as a mining region Freiberg is still the headquarters of the government mining administration in Saxony and Germany’s top region for mining-related consultancy services. Silver-Seekers have a wealth of prospects throughout Freiberg: Saxony’s oldest and main silver mine, the museum at Freudenstein castle, the city’s Mining festival or the Mettenschicht Christmas ceremony at the mines. A strong tourist attraction is the new created Terramineralia the biggest private owned mineral collection in the world situated in the renovated Freudenstein castle.

Urban challenges in the historic city of Freiberg

1990 was a decisive year for the future of historic centre of Freiberg. The unity of the late medieval buildings was indeed protected from demolition for decades. However, the fabric of the Freiberg downtown area was in a miserable condition. In 1995 the historic centre was declared as a rehabilitation zone, this was a necessary prerequisite for funding from the programs of the urban monument conservation.





Major challenge for urban planning was the preservation of the building before further decay.

Meanwhile, 83% of approx. 800 historic properties in the city centre have been rehabilitated. The living in Freiberg historic centre is for all ages and social strata. 8,5% of the Freiberg population living in the old town have an average of 35 years. It is now the youngest district of the city. The city had great success in refurbishing the historic buildings throughout the past twenty years. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider particularly the remaining, highly worn-out buildings which are to be found in problematic locations of the historic centre. Approximately 30 percent of the buildings located in the historic centre still need to be restored. The demands for climate protection in the buildings are very high and there is an increasing interest for energy efficient construction methods especially for the ancient buildings. Therefore, an approach for the solution of this problem includes the combination of various ways to conserve energy in order to preserve listed buildings and the same time to respect the by-law for energy preservation.

With this gratifying situation, the challenges of the urban development are redefined. Initially the renovations of buildings was the major consideration. Now it is saving the quality of life in the old town. New priorities have revealed: Saving the quality of

roads and urban spaces while respecting the heritage regulating transport and implementing environmental improvements. Compatibility with existing standards of current technical requirements and the preservation of historic buildings, Creating quality of life for all ages and interests by compatibility of various uses.

The transformation of the main place within the citizen involvement. A wide participation process has been launched to regenerate the market square, which is the core of the historic city. The aim of this process is to improve the identification of the inhabitants and other users with the historic city centre and to promote the acceptance of the inhabitants of the proposed measures.

The new design for the Market Square in Freiberg has been presented by the operational team: civil engineer Dr. Mario Klippstein (Aqua Saxonia GmbH) and architect and lighting designer Ruairí O'Brien (Ruairí O'Brien. Architektur Licht Kunst)

The choices for street furniture have been conceived in reference to the mining history and to the very tight links of the city with geology. The identity of the future place, its deep-rootedness in the local history and its belonging to modern style are immediately perceptible and understandable. The image that the city wants to show, promoted by the means of the motto "from silver to silica" is faithfully transcribed through this project.



Second step. Workshop in Almería: "Tackling the social challenges, fostering active citizens' participation"

As a preparation to the 2nd thematic workshop that was held in Almería a questionnaire was circulated to find answers to the question "How to identify current aspiration to live in historic centres?". A further objective of this exercise was to achieve a shared definition of what are the main features of the social dimension of sustainable regeneration of historical city centres, with a specific focus on good governance and active involvement of citizens in the regeneration processes.

The working sessions of the first day were introduced by the greetings of the Mayor of Almería Luis Rogelio Rodríguez-Comendador Pérez, who illustrated the great interest of the municipality of Almería in international cooperation networks and projects. URBACT

project officer Raffaele Barbato reminded the added value of URBACT networking in order to address and motivate human capital within municipalities with the opportunity to exchange experiences at international level. Lead expert Antonio Borghi underlined the historic role of European cities to enhance regional and national competitiveness, suggesting that city networks are today's and tomorrow's marketplaces.

The capacity of cities to generate, share and implement innovation is directly linked to their activity in a wide range of networks (marketplaces), ensuring a strong flow of tangible and intangible goods to activate and enrich the urban layers.

Thematic expert Brecht Vandekerckhove (SUM/Brussels) introduced the Almeria workshop in terms of content and methodology, illustrating the results of the preparation works. Ahead of the workshop sessions every partner introduced the themes on which their contribution to the network were focused supported by the so-called Visual SWOT analysis. The presentations touched on a large variety of topics (247) that have been grouped and ranked to reach an overall synthetic view in terms of offer and demand of expertise by each partner city. Setting a

thematic framework and consulting the network partners of their priorities within this framework to establish the core themes of interactive workshop sessions has become the working methodology of the URBACT LINKS network transnational meetings from Almeria to the Final conference.

Surprisingly enough the issues identified as having the more relevant impact on the social dimension of urban revitalisation of historical city centres resulted: (1) strategies to involve citizens in the decision making process, (2) improvement of quality of the public space and (3) achieving more sustainable mobility patterns.

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to presentations of challenges, potentials and good practises of the host city of Almeria, with illustrations of the local projects for sustainable urban development (some of which EU funded) and field visits.

In three consecutive workshop sessions the main aspects of the social implications to achieve sustainable development of historic city centres selected in the first day were dealt with in terms of (1) why are they so important, (2) which strategies do we propose to face them, (3) which specific actions can be taken given the actual situation.

The third day was introduced by the conclusions of the workshop of day 2 and by the discussion and site visit of the Almerian case study "La Chanca", probably the most challenged and challenging neighbourhood in Almeria, with its mix of Spanish, Gypsies and Muslim north African population where various regeneration projects have been put in place since the late seventies.

During the three intense days of the workshop the indoor sessions - held in the council hall of the municipality building recently renovated with EU support - have been well mixed with excursions and site visits where the participants had the opportunity to experience the complexity of the issues to be faced, the consistency of policies in place and the concrete results achieved.

Almeria has shown to have taken strong advantage by the opportunities provided by EU funding for urban regeneration revitalising the regional economy through new agricultural and industrial activities,



strengthening social cohesion enhancing energies arising from civil society, enriching its cultural identity capitalising the asset of both ancient and recent history.

The great interest towards the URBACT network activities expressed by the elected representatives and by the local press and the active engagement in international cooperation projects (a.o. URBACT Networks LINKS and Roma-net) whiteness that Almeria is more than well prepared to continue its regeneration process with the upcoming URBAN Project. For the URBACT LINKS network it has been a brilliant start in the implementation phase. The partners have participated with great engagement and the thematic framework has done a significant step forward and has gained a momentum to be transferred to the Local Support Groups.

The social aspects of urban regeneration and eco-restoration in historic city centres

by **Brecht Vandekerckhove**,
SUM/Brussels

Abstract

The central question of the Almeria meeting was: "How can we (re)build sustainable historic cities with quality housing and living environments, cities with a renewed appeal as potential living environment?" Starting point was that cities are not only built in stone bricks, but also by social networks. We must try to offer a good quality of housing and living environment, but we must also aim for the best social environment. This we have to create together with the inhabitants and users of our cities in a participative approach.

The first questions we asked ourselves were:

- How do people want to live?
- How can we find this out?
- How can we make this match with the ambitions we have for our cities?

Of course these questions deal with a lot of different aspects and in the debate it was our intention to get much more focus on the real expectations of citizens with regard to the revitalisation of their historical city centres. In the first exercise we had to select the crucial challenges for most partners and what lessons can we learn from each other. Interestingly enough throughout the discussions the central theme of the Almeria workshop shifted towards the involvement of citizens in urban regeneration or eco-restoration.

After the thematic introduction we had a large debate about the result of the SWOT analysis¹ that every city has introduced on the first day. In this exercises numerous strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were listed. This gave the different cities the opportunity to get to know each other, but it was especially interesting to see that we had lot points of common interest.

In the end it was decided to focus on 3 different themes to be deepened in this workshop. The selected topics were:

1. How to involve citizens in participated revitalisation and restoration processes in historic city centres?

2. Citizens and the use of their city: How to manage public spaces as vibrant places in historic city centres?

3. The relationship of citizens towards the use of cars: accessibility, alternative concepts of mobility and parking specific for historical city centres.

¹ A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a subject. The present subject is our historic cities and their capacity of developing as dynamic residential environments. In a SWOT analysis you determine and analyse the present and possible future situation by identifying:
Strengths: characteristics of the city that give it an advantage over other residential environments.
Weaknesses: are characteristics that place the city at a disadvantage relative to other residential environments
Opportunities: external chances, trends to have the possibility of becoming a better residential environment.
Threats: external elements, trends in the environment that could cause trouble for becoming a better residential environment.



Every city participated in all workshops and had the opportunity to deal with all the selected themes. We were able to see how cities have similar problems, and most of the times different approaches and answers. During these debates we tried to examine what we wanted to do differently in the future and as already mentioned the participative approach became the central focus of the workshop.

Introduction

This workshop had the social aspects of urban regeneration and eco-restoration as a central focus. If the central challenge of this workshop is: 'how can we make our historic cities attractive living environments?'. Therefore the first question we have to ask ourselves is: How do people want to live nowadays? What kind of qualities do they need for their everyday wellbeing? According to the scheme of the workshop the following question was: How can we learn and be sure to understand well what people really want?

We started with a thematic introduction on the quality of life that people are looking for. The first thing we agreed on is that the wishes of the inhabitants of our cities and surrounding suburban municipalities change depending on the phase of their life. Cities

and their historical centres have a strong appeal to young people, but the attraction may reduce in the phase of the family formation and expansion.

All households have requirements in terms of typology, size, comfort, a garden or a balcony, the neighbourhood, social relations, facilities and services. Yet one is aware that combining all these aspects into the ideal living situation may not be feasible, or affordable. In other words, if we really want to convince people of living in the city we need to determine especially those aspects that prevail, which housing conditions are 'sine qua non'.

In addition we have to ask ourselves how can our historical city centres be an attractive alternative to suburbia: Proximity of facilities and work? No need for a car? Vibrancy of the city? Identity, ambience and festivities? The social networks?

It is clear that the different dimensions that come into the picture are numerous. We need not only to find out how do people want to live, but also what do they really think about their cities, what are their expectations. The complexity of offer and demand of the social environment in historical city centres and the involvement of citizens into neighbourhood development became the key issues of the workshop in Almeria.

Approach

We tried to tackle this multitude of dimensions by means of a SWOT-analysis. In preparation of the workshop in Almeria each city did a SWOT exercise of its own city. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a subject. The present subject is our historic cities and their capacity of developing as dynamic residential environments. In a SWOT analysis we can determine and analyse the present and possible future situation by identifying:

- Strengths: characteristics of the city that give it an advantage over other residential environments.
- Weaknesses: are characteristics that place the city at a disadvantage relative to other residential environments
- Opportunities: external chances, trends to have the possibility of becoming a better residential environment.
- Threats: external elements, trends in the environment that could cause trouble for becoming a better residential environment.

We were looking only for the most important issues of all four aspects, but in the end we came up with 227 different aspects that had to be divided into 17 different categories.

The aspects mentioned were quite diverse:

- The presence of guidelines for eco-restoration of historical buildings
- The presence of a place dedicated to participation
- The availability of public spaces which is now occupied by cars
- The lack of respect for the cultural value of the built heritage
- The lack of equipment and spaces for teenagers and young people
- The image of a city of knowledge (e.g. the presence of important university)
- The possibility of transforming the historical city centre into a barrier-free quarter (as an reaction to the demographic change)

- The strong roots and sense of ownership of the local inhabitants
- The Concept of a 10 min city: Compact city

We divided the issues mentioned under 17 categories :

1. Housing: quality, comfort and price
2. Social and demographic mix
3. Historical and built environment
4. Neighbourhood aspects
5. Public space
6. Facilities & (conflict) of functions
7. Mobility, parking & proximity of functions
8. Participation/Activation/Belonging/(cultural) identity
9. Events
10. The vibrancy of the cities
11. Aspects of overall decline
12. Security/Safety
13. Education
14. Public Interventions & urban renewal
15. The competition with suburbia
16. Location in a regional context
17. Economic problems on a national scale

The variety of issues that were raised proves that the challenges that we face in our cities are diverse and complex. Of course it is not possible for the LINKS network to deal with all these problems. After going through the different Swot exercises and comparing the different cities in the network we used these exercises to define what we can realistically learn from each other and what we want to learn from each other. In this exercise we ended up with a list of nine different topics:

- How to involve citizens in participation processes
- How to manage economic resources for regeneration processes
- Expertise for guidelines for low-energy construction & eco-construction
- Citizens and the use of their city: how to manage public spaces as vibrant places avoiding to much conflict of uses
- The creation of awareness for and promotion (through events) of the cultural heritage and value of historical city centres

- Cultural marketing and branding
- The relationship of citizens towards the use of cars: Accessibility, alternative concepts of mobility and parking and transition of atmospheres between in & outer city
- Experience in renovation in historic buildings and sustainable issues
- Expertise in planning policy & interaction with built heritage

The workshop in Almeria had the main goal to cover the social topics of urban regeneration through eco-restoration therefore we decided on three central themes, as indicated in bold above to be the discussion subjects in our workshops. The workshops had two basic questions:

Why do we want to work on this theme? How do we want to work on this theme?

1. How to involve citizens in participation processes in historic cities?

a. Why do we want to work on citizens' participation?

The answers that were put forward on this question were quite diverse. The first idea is that it is a basic right, we live in democracies, and so the citizens' voice has to be important for local authorities. It can even be a tool of pressure. So we can use citizens' participation to empower people.

Most of the participating cities were convinced of the practical advantages of a participative approach. Citizen's involvement can improve the quality of the way we work and final result of our projects. Starting from a technical or political vision citizens' participation can help us to integrate & revise it.

An important aspect that was often mentioned throughout the Almeria workshop was the correct identification of the needs of citizens and other city users. It was considered a very difficult challenge to find a way of identifying which needs should be given the highest priority. To find a way for balance of uses that fit the real needs.

If we go a step further a participative approach can

be a way to give citizens a larger involvement in projects and a larger sense of community. So we can even use citizens' participation to improve the feeling of belonging in their neighbourhoods even for the creation of a sense of identification with their city or their neighbourhood and a renewed involvement and activation. This is something we clearly saw in the example of La Chance. For many cities these elements were considered the ultimate goal because a sense of belonging and activation is considered the key elements in community building.

A last opinion was that good participation processes can lead to better understandings in both directions and a larger support for policy an administration, in success but also more understanding in failure.

Here we can roughly recognize again the two different ways of looking at our cities, neighbourhoods, urban projects, etc. In the first approach we see participation mentioned because of its importance to work in a correct way, implement the correct project, plan, design... In the second we see that it is mentioned because we want to work on community and community building.

Of course both aspects are valid, and once again we see that cities are built by bricks but also by social networks.

b. How do we want to work on citizens' participation?

Participation is often mentioned as a very important element our city planning processes, whether this concerns spatial or social planning. But as often as it was mentioned it was pointed out to be a continuous challenge in our everyday work.

In the group discussion we were at the same time considering methods in a very detailed and concrete way. At the same time we were discussing about how participation should be tailor-made and every participation process should have a different approach and an individual "design".

The cities of the LINKS network identified that participation should be tailor-made.

We need a different approach in function of issues,



stakeholder groups and for different phases of the participation process. This requests us to be imaginative and creative in developing different approaches for the citizens' participation.

In the workshop the city of Anderlecht pointed out, that they have a team, located at a participation house, that can give expert support specifically for this. It was mentioned that if participation is such a challenge and if we think it is really that important, such a support can give a great input.

In the thematic introduction we have learned that there are a lot of different methods to find out which are the citizens' opinions: meetings or hearings, surveys, polls, interviews, ... but it is in the processes that we use the greatest creativity. There we might reach the greatest involvement and learn the most about our fellow citizens: workshops, focus groups, street-visits, open house events, Neighbourhood presence (Fairs), visual techniques, ... A very important factor is the accessibility of information, communication and participation. All of this must happen on an easy-access and very understandable level. Several cities mentioned that it is important to come close to citizens

in their own neighbourhood and with individual approaches. In some places they also made use of new media used such as Wikipedia (Kilkenny).

Another important aspect that was mentioned was that participation is not something that should just come at the end. A project has different phases, and it seems that the partners of the LINKS network believe that a participative approach is necessary in every step of the process, even before a project starts. One challenge we have to face is to learn how to deal with short-term high expectations.

We must also be able to deal with different opinions. We can have as many ideas, as we have groups. We must learn to choose and select priorities.

A specific aspect that came several times into the focus on the Almeria workshop was the importance to work with the young people. This is not only an easy way to approach communities, but this also ensures possibilities for future community projects and can therefore be seen as an education for future responsibility towards the community. This was shown very clearly in the example of La Chanca.

c. How can these ideas be translated into local action?

The first step we must take is to identify the stakeholders, not only citizens, but all actors who use the city or have an interest in the revitalization of historical city centres. Depending on content of the participation and identified stakeholders we must design the participation process:

- Who do we want to involve?
- At what moment?
- With which goal?
- And how?

A strong point of attention we found that all participants had in common was the engagement of the political level in these processes. All partners acknowledge the importance to engage policymakers from the beginning to the end of the process. Even though this is not a guaranteed factor of success, which was also shown in the example of La Chanca. So if we know that the city is not only built by stone bricks, but also with social network. We must not only care for the design of the built environment, but also for the design of the participation process!

2. How to manage public spaces as vibrant places in historic cities and avoiding too much conflict of uses in town centres

a. Why do we want to work on our public spaces?

The importance of good quality public space was noticeably an important topic for different cities of the network. Public space is clearly a central aspect of city life, and maybe more so for historic cities where the decor is often very characteristic.

In the debates we had about this topic one of the first aspects was that we should be aware that there are many different kinds of public space. We always refer to central squares or parks, but also streets or a playground in a residential area are a part of the city's public spaces. It was found important to identify these different kinds of public space with their own identity as a place. But often also to give iden-

tity to the surrounding neighbourhood and the city as such. It is in the public space you have the potentiality to find the city to be at its best. That's why many of the partner cities want our public spaces to be vibrant, not only to attract people, but also to attract a mix of activities, a mix of uses and also day & night, of course in balance with other present functions and in balance with the context.

We want public spaces in our cities that give light and air to our cities, green spaces and (blue spaces) water, to break with the grey structures of our cities. It is in the public spaces where people can live the city, where people can spend their time, can have interactions with each other and can relax. An important aspect for successful public space is whether they are user-friendly.

It is important that in public spaces slow mobility gets the space it deserves. This means accessible and save for everyone, youngsters, elderly, mothers with pushcarts, ... we want them to be barrier-free. In this perspective we are very interested in the plan for barrier-free cities in Freiberg.

b. How do we want to work our public spaces?

Seeing the previous chapter it is logic that this happens in a participative approach, with relevant stakeholders in function of the type of public space and with involvement during the programming, realisation and use. Different steps were identified:

- Step 1. Identify the different public spaces in our cities, and acknowledge or determine the different identities/functions/uses for different public space: Squares, Parks, Streets, Public buildings.
- Step 2. Each public space has its own different stakeholder, we must identify them and engage them: residents, users, shops, bars, ...), if we involve these partners than it is best to integrate the political level along with them.
- Step 3. With all relevant targets groups and stakeholders we want to come to a shared diagnoses. This because we believe in involvement during the programming, realisation and use.
 - a. For this shared diagnosis we have to take different steps:

- b. Identification of real needs
- c. Give priorities
- d. Identify the (desired) character
- e. Vision & programming (incl. functions)

■ Step 4. Organise the design process in this way that you have the largest quality in output. This might be via a competition if we think this is relevant depending on the scale of the project. The main issue is to have a greater quality of design. One of the qualities that is thought to be very important that public space has a certain room for flexibility and that the design allows new functions to be fitted in later.



3. The relationship of citizens towards the uses and ownership of cars: accessibility, alternative concepts of mobility and parking and transition of atmospheres between inner & outer city

a. Why do we want to work on mobility for sustainable urban development?

The car and the use of the car have a huge impact on our cities. A large part of citizens, including children, mothers and elderly people are limited due to the high degree of private cars and motorbikes and to the central place a car has in our cities. The presence of the car in our public space damages the public space, both physically and in terms of use. Due to its environmental impact it determines to a great extent how our cities are healthy and safe.

But it was said that it is not only because of safety and health we should work on urban mobility. Pedestrian city centres makes life in the streets more vibrant and thus increase the economical turnover of activities in the city centre.

Urban mobility is resource consuming; it takes time and money, and of course there is a freedom of choice. But in this freedom of choice public transport, slow mobility and private transport by car should be on the same level in cost and in speed.

b. How we move towards socially more sustainable mobility patterns?

In the discussions we had there were two different aspects. On the one hand there was a debate linked with urban planning, the localisation of functions, the organisation of mobility and transport, but simultaneously we were also discussing that we need not only to change the way we design our cities, but we also need to educate the people who use the city, to start using it in a different way. Of course both aspects go together. If we want services and amenities to be accessible we have to keep this into account in our urban planning systems and for example promoting mixed use neighbourhoods. But a better town planning also includes the implementation of better mobility plans. We must give priority to slow mobility and public transport. Specific for our historic cities extensive pedestrian areas in the city centres can have great benefits. By consequence we have to be

more restrictive about the use of cars for inhabitants and for visitors.

The LINKS cities want to work on the place of the car in the city. Diminishing parking places in the city centre and making it more expensive in combination with providing parking places at the edge of the city centre and frequent (and if possible free) public transport to the city centre. At same time they want to redesign the city centres for public transport, cycling and walking, so they can start stimulating people to leave their car at home. Build streets and walkways for pedestrians and bikes, making access difficult for cars. And simultaneously it is important to have different measures to dissuade the use of a car, for example admitting cars only for residents and as guests in the city centres, decreasing allowed car speed at 15-20 km/h, road pricing, free pass on public transport for those who give up driving.

As it is mentioned above, we will not succeed if we only work with spatial and infrastructural aspects. We also have to make people understand that they will have to use their city in a different way. Once again it was mentioned that one of the key actors are kids and youngsters: starting with them will give more chances for the future Conclusion: We had the intention to work on the social aspects of eco-restoration and revitalisation of historical city centres. We have acknowledged that the first challenge we often have to deal with is the identification of our target groups.

Who are we working for? What are their needs? How can we reach them?

The first thing we have to do is look to identify our partners (citizens, users) to activate and involve them in our projects/processes. In the Almeria workshop we were discussing throughout different sessions about this challenge. The question we now have to ask ourselves is what can we do with these exercises. Every partner realises that he can improve the way things are happening in their city. But it's not always in our own hands to make these kinds of changes; nevertheless we can make some contribution and work on some aspects mentioned. So, each one of

the partners has to clarify what he can improve in his own city with these lessons learned.

The LINKS network offers the possibility to reflect about different aspects.

- The LINKS project has the intention to create on online platform where online discussions can take place and ideas be reflected upon
- We know there are a lot of publications and manuals on methodological aspect. The LINKS network will strive for sharing this documentation online.

Now it is time for the cities and their local support groups to look for policies they can implement and feed the debates on the virtual city marketplace of the LINKS network.

Focus on La Chanca

by Ramon de Torres Lopez

The district of La Chanca, which was founded in the 10th century was in a state of abandonment and oblivion, since the close of the 19th century. The neighbourhood endured a situation of "unsustainable misery", as denounced by the writer Juan Goytisolo at the beginning of the sixties in his book "La Chanca".

With a population of 10 000 inhabitants, the district of La Chanca, was having serious urban and social problems : the existence of substandard housing and cave dwellings, deficit in infrastructure, high rates of illiteracy, primary-school dropout, unemployment, a high birth-rate and groups at risk of social exclusion with a 25% gipsy population. By the end of the 70es, resident association La Traña represented the voice of the district, demanding the indispensable social and urban transformation of La Chanca.

The Special Plan for Interior Improvement of La Chanca (PERI) drawn up to meet the demand of social movement in the district of La Chanca and passed in its definitive version in 1990, tries to go beyond a mere intervention and improvement of the physical conditions of the neighbourhood and it establishes a



proposal with a capacity to intervene in problems of the community of people and in external problems that may cause situations of vulnerability.

From the beginning, the Plan was set to include participation, as it was inspired by the resident association "La Traiña", which also cooperated actively in its drafting. Priorities were selected through public debates, organized by the resident association and the team of specialist who drew up the Plan. Solving the problem of access to decent housing for groups of outcast was considered as the main priority, as well as implementing programs to eradicate poverty and to promote ethnic equality, conserving social and cultural diversity. The Plan was conceived as an integrated urban program, which not only operates on the habitat – the physical structure – but also on the inhabitants – the people who live there – from a perspective of sustainable development.

The PERI plan, deals with general action in infrastructure, housing, equipment and free space, while it maintains the resident population within its own community. Coordinated with urban-development intervention, it applies Social Programs which attempts to eradicate poverty from the neighbourhood at risk of being socially excluded. Likewise, initiatives are set forth which pay attention to social and cultural variety and which promote ethnic equality, dedicated to the gypsy community and Maghrebi immigrants. At the same time, intervention programs

are developed for women, health prevention, education and vocational training as social rights are priority objectives of the Plan.

The Management Office (ORUCHA). has been turned into a referent of a new all-round policy and of transfer of the experience, at a social, economic and environmental level to other interventions of local, regional, national and international scope. The inter administrative coordination, has resulted into an integrated management of social, economic, environmental and cultural elements. In La Chanca, the agreement between Local, Regional Autonomous and Central administrations as well as the development of several programs supported by the EU have been decisive, for making financial, technical and human resources available.

Citizen participation has also been a key piece in planning, where objectives, strategies and principles of development have to be shared. In La Chanca, the resident association has been the driving force of changes that have inspired innovative action and have stimulated changes in public policies.



Third step. Workshop in Veria: "Restoration and improvement of energy performance of buildings in historic centres"

Conservation, restoration and reuse of heritage buildings play a key role in the sustainable development of our cities provided that historical buildings meet the challenges of future needs, in particular regarding their energy performance. For this reason it is crucial to deepen and find answers to the following questions:

- What are the non-negotiable characteristic and intrinsic qualities of historic and traditional buildings?
- What are the relevant strategies and tools to enhance these qualities?
- What are the best technical solutions to im-

prove energy efficiency without damaging heritage values?

- Which is the relationship between current building technologies and eco-restoration approach?
- Is it appropriate to introduce renewable energies in heritage buildings or protected areas? If yes, how should their impact be managed?

24-26th of May 2011 LINKS partners gathered together in VERIA (Greece) to deal with the technical aspects of eco-restoration of historical city centres. The workshop was introduced by the explanation of the premises where it was mainly going to take

place – the Mansion House Sarafoglou – giving the guests an idea about the history of the building, the rationales behind its shape and its intrinsic value. The explanation of the building took place in the open courtyard and was much more than a merely architectural, historical or socio-cultural analysis of the building. The story was told by the professionals who worked on it over the last two decades and has been published on the full report. It recalls how it is necessary first to study and understand the buildings and then design its renovation to bring it to a new life. This story immediately gave an additional dimension to the workshop, giving the participants the feeling of being invited to take part to a story that lasted since centuries and to give a contribution to take it further.

Following the welcome speeches of local authorities representatives and introduction to the workshop by the Lead Partner a key note lecture was held by Job Roos from the TU Delft, member of the ULSG, who illustrated the so-called “Integral approach” to eco-restoration of heritage and traditional buildings from the point of view of his long standing experience as a practitioner and University professor in the Nederland. His presentation focused particularly on the experience of the new seat of the Architecture faculty of the TU Delft in the Red Chemistry building, which is also the main case study of the city for the URBACT LINKS Network.



Methodological introduction for the analysis of heritage buildings

by Antonio Borghi

Our cities and our buildings never remain the same. The very fact that their context is changing, changes the buildings and their meaning as well. In a sense, conservation of heritage and sustainable development are two faces of the same coin.

Some of the buildings we have to look after have been built generations before us, others for just some decades but in any case it is our responsibility to hand them on in good condition to future generations. In order to do so, it is not enough to have the necessary budget, the power to determine restoration works and sufficient knowledge about technical means. It is necessary to listen to existing buildings, to understand how they have been built in terms of materials, design and for which purposes.

Having this respectful and thoughtful approach, the outcome of the restoration project can be very different: (1) keeping the building as far as possible, as it is, preserving also its damages; witness of the times (Neues Museum in Berlin, Palais de Tokyo in Paris); (2) bringing it back to its original status “where it was/as it was” (Teatro La Fenice in Venezia, Frauenkirche in Dresda); (3) or transforming the existing building or urban fabric into something radically different (Opera House in Lyon, Kunsthaus Graz)





The examples show that thoughtful design can have quite different outcomes, depending on the local context and expectations, the brief, the budget and the relationship with the citizens on an existing building. Of course these examples are quite radical in their attitude and have a strong symbolic value for the city and the community in which they are embedded. Dealing with “ordinary” buildings, budgets and functions the range of choices will not be that wide, nevertheless, in restoration projects there are always fundamental choices to be made and it is never true that there is only one good way to proceed.

According to a recent study² published by the Irish Government, steps to be taken by the owner/person responsible for the building can be listed as follows:

- Do understand and double-check the reasons for the problems to be solved before undertaking any kind of repairs.
- Do repair the parts of the building that need it - do not replace them unless they can no longer do the job they were designed to do.
- Do make sure the right materials and repair techniques are used and that even the smallest changes you make to the building are done well.
- Do use techniques that can be easily reversed or undone. This allows for any unforeseen problems to be corrected in the future without damage to the special qualities of the building.
- Do record all repair work for the benefit of future owners.

- Do use expert technicians and skilled workers – get independent advice from the right people and double-check the references – you can't go wrong!

Common mistakes to be avoided by the owner/person responsible for the building are:

- a. Do not exaggerate - only do as much work to the building as is necessary and as little as possible
- b. Do not look at isolated problems - consider them in the context of the building as a whole.
- c. Do not use architectural elements or materials from elsewhere unless you are certain that they haven't caused the destruction of other buildings or been the result of theft.

Architects, engineers and technicians involved should:

- 1) Consider the micro-climate and respond as appropriate: take advantage of the sun, create protection from the wind and keep buildings well-maintained and dry.
- 2) Ensure the nature of use is suitable for the building as a whole or for particular rooms within a building. In some cases, it may be appropriate to re-arrange the location of activities within a building.
- 3) Control the impact of the renovation work: make clear what's new and make sure that it fits the existing building or hide it in a clever way.
- 4) Evaluate the energy requirement in the context of embodied energy and life cycle costs.

2 “Energy efficiency in traditional buildings” Advice series, Government of Ireland 2010 ISBN 978-1-4064-2444-7



- 5) Understand why and where heat is lost. Recognise energy-efficient design features in traditional buildings and endeavour to retain and improve these features.

“Planning energy efficiency improvement for existing buildings should be made according to a priority list, where the simplest measures with the fewest consequences should be implemented first.” (Terje Nypan)

Prioritising the order in which building elements are to be upgraded, taking into consideration both the character of the historic fabric and the upgrading work, will provide the greatest energy savings when compared to the investment costs.

In general, for a traditional masonry building, the priority order will be as follows:

- 1. Draught proofing of existing windows and doors
- 2. Repair of shutters and fitting of curtains
- 3. Installation of one more layer of windows inside or outside (instead of replacing the existing windows)
- 4. Insulation between heated space and cold loft
- 5. Insulation between heated space and cold basement.
- 6. Replacement of outdated services with high efficiency units and updated controls
- 7. Wall insulation

The principles of passive design are a useful way of thinking when making any modifications, especially additions of new volumes or technologies. If constructing an extension to an existing building, this new addition is the best opportunity to incorporate elements such as micro-renewables, which can serve both the new and old parts of the building.

Heritage values versus modern need"

by Kleopatra Theologidou

In modern times, with the rapid changes in life style, science and technology, more challenges are appearing and in turn causing more dilemmas. Furthermore, it is more urgent than ever to take climate change



and energy saving into consideration when restoring historic buildings.

Eco-restoration is a relatively new concept to be added to the conservation process and theory. In a way, energy efficiency is a contemporary value not to be ignored.

Restoration and eco-restoration are processes with continuous dilemmas between benefits and losses. They entail compromises necessary to ensure the protection of our architectural property. In this process, the use of proper methodological tools and knowledge about technology are decisive in appropriate decision making. These tools and knowledge were discussed and developed during the meeting in Veria with great devotion and success by all the partners and invited experts.

How realistic is it, when restoring historic buildings, to manage a balance between the preservation of their values and the necessary alterations for their adaptation to modern needs? What are their values and what are modern needs?

The literature in this field is quite rich, especially when referring to values. The debate goes back as far as the late 19th century. Historic values, aesthetic values, building values, age values, memory values, both individual and collective and use values are some of the most important characteristics to be examined in the process of evaluating the importance of historic buildings. Very often the different values are conflictual, even if the restoration work is performed in a very strict context from a preservation point of view. History, aesthetics and unity of form are very well known dilemmas.

Conversation with prof. Ioanna Papayianni

(University of Thessaloniki)

Professor Ioanna Papayianni, chemist and civil engineer, is an expert at an international level in the rehabilitation of cultural heritage and is carrying out, alongside other projects, scientific research on building techniques and materials of monuments from all periods, at the University of Thessaloniki.

At our workshop in Veria she presented some of her research findings and the work programme she has started as a contribution to the network. Her presentation has been one of the most significant contributions to the workshop.

“Veria is one of the most important historic centres in South Eastern Europe. Apart from Byzantine churches, the old buildings (private or public) have been constructed from the pre-industrial revolution period up to the early 20th century. They constitute a great part of its cultural heritage which testifies to the historic and socio-economic background of the area.

The historic buildings in Veria could be categorized (according to their style) as vernacular architecture which has been developed in the recent past in South East Europe and as neoclassical or eclectic architecture.

Most historic buildings have been abandoned and destroyed by overloading and earthquake vibrations, as well as by the ageing effects of moisture and other deterioration factors due to environmental conditions. Some of them have been repaired and retrofitted with concrete, very often without any respect to their characteristics and traditional structures.

The importance of the appropriate repair and maintenance, as well as their revival and incorporation into the modern city, society and local economy has been well defined in the URBACT project.

Therefore, developing a strategy for the repair, maintenance and upgrading of historic buildings, which will be based on the well established principles of restoration is of utmost priority for their incorpora-



tion into the contemporary plan of Veria. Furthermore, an estimation of their energy efficiency is required to make them habitable once again. The old buildings are inherently green because they were adapted to local climate. However, the climate has changed, especially in urban regions and the energy efficiency of old buildings is questionable.”

After the workshop in Veria we had the opportunity to ask Professor Papayianni a few more questions; a special contribution to the LINKS newsletter.

Q: Greece has undergone major changes in the last decade. With the turn of the century; joining the Eurozone and hosting the Olympic Games, Greece has been projected into the future from its world apart. Is the modernization of the country causing damage to the urban and built heritage or has it, on the contrary, been an opportunity?

A: During the last decade, most of the large infrastructure projects were carried out in Athens. The impact of all the relevant activities for the modernization of the city was rather positive, since old buildings were restored and archaeological sites conserved.

Q: What are the main concerns of Greek, historic cities? Can Europe play a positive role in their safeguard and restoration?

A: The lack of funds and strategy for the protection and upgrading of the historic centres, except in the case of damage caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and fires. Because of the inadequate and inconsistent stewardship of cultural assets the buildings are exploited inappropriately, resulting in many problems regarding the preservation of their identity.

Q: What are the cornerstones of a coherent, creative, sustainable and future proof management of historical city centres?

A: A strategic policy to be established by local authorities who will be compelled to implement it.

It will concern:

- a. A record of the building's assets and their classification.
- b. Their conservation and stabilization.
- c. The creation of motives to keep them in use.
- d. Taking into account the harmonization of historical centres if they are to be expanded and avoid the development of large cities.
- e. Make citizens active in protecting their heritage.
- f. Continuous efforts for upgrading historical centres.

Looking for balance. The discovery of an integral approach

by Job Roos (TU Delft)

My story today is about the City of Delft and its transformation within in a timeframe of about 10 years. Three years have passed now. The focus is on the re-use on behalf of the Faculty of Architecture of a huge listed monument, caused by a major disaster: the destruction by fire overnight in 2008, of the previous modern building of The Faculty. The re-use handles about the scale of the monumental building but we will also have to go beyond its borders.

BK-City (the name of the new Faculty Building implemented in the existing building) fulfilled now in the past three years only partly the social needs and the eco-needs, and more over the cultural needs. Eco-needs and partly social needs still have to be implemented. This still is a big challenge to be met and asks for cunning, inspired and innovative/integral engineering. It is a story about sustainability: re-using the existing building and the potential to anchor a whole community to the historical city (again). It concerns of course lots of facts and figures, but above all it concerns the process of looking for balance in the complex design task of re-use that is still going on today.

History of the campus

There was a huge fire on the 13th of May 2008. A solid and huge modernistic building was destroyed within a couple of hours. We never thought that our building was even so vulnerable, that it could vanish into thin air so soon. The impact of this emergency was the beginning of a different scope on the development of the TU-Delft campus.

The University and the Faculty of Architecture were originally located in historical buildings in the City centre of Delft. At the beginning of the twentieth century the faculties of TU Delft already (also spread originally throughout the Historical City of Delft), were replaced in a new campus at the southern borders of the City centre. Around 1950 the campus slowly moved further to the south, actually a total



new modern campus was laid out in the 'polders'. The evacuation of the first and former campus near the City-Centre was concluded around 2005. One of the last buildings to be left was 'Red Chemistry', a large building with an urban pattern of about 30.000 square meters.

The new campus was of course a child of its time (CIAM/satellite-city), very conceptual like individual buildings on an 'empty screen'. There was great ambition at that time and the Faculty of Architecture was one of the last buildings at the far end of the campus. The architect Van de Broek en Bakema designed the building in 1968 for its purpose following the program for the school at that time.

Through the years the population of students grew tremendously, and other needs evolved. New plans were designed to enlarge and refurbish the building. Also new recent plans for the campus were designed to 'compact' and change the identity of monoculture (originally only school-buildings) to multi culture mixed with other urban functions. This should result in a better social sustainability.

The huge fire on 13th of May in the year 2008 ended those dreams radically, as far as the faculty of architecture was involved we thought at that time. The building could not be saved. If there had not been a fire, I can imagine that the building by the City of Delft would have been listed in the coming years as

a piece of valuable heritage of modern times. Just as is happening to other buildings on the campus right now.

Within a few weeks after the fire, the board of the TU-Delft decided that the Faculty of Architecture should have a new temporary housing very soon. The solution was to use the still available building of 'Red Chemistry'. In fact this building should be developed into individual houses, but the crisis that started later in the autumn of 2008 already cast its shadow in advance. The investor was willing to interfere in his development of the building, in fact I think it was the right moment for them. This was the beginning of a development that now after three years still hasn't stopped. Not as far as the building is concerned but also: it doesn't stop at the scale of the building. I will explain to you.

Context of the assignment

The context in which the assignment for the new housing of the Faculty of Architecture was developed, was quite interesting. High speed (original aim about a half year to design and build) was needed to have a building for at least 5 years. And, also a whole new generation of architects had to be trained. So you can understand there was a great ambition for the building being an outstanding example of architecture in the field re-use and inspiring environment for learning and working So the approach had to be professional.

And, from an emergency point of view there had to be a pragmatic approach: the best available building on short notice was 'Red Chemistry', a huge listed monument in the heart of the former campus. And not only listed as a building but also in its context together with other early 20th century University buildings. So a tremendous transformation had to be handled, there was a complex task to fulfil. How to handle?

Already three weeks after the fire the building started, although there was no plan yet. At that moment the client (the board of the University and its representative the dean Wytze Patijn), organized a meeting with the most important stakeholders: this meant about thirty-five people around the table. Not less than 5 architects were involved!

This was the incentive beginning of a thrilling and unique process as we called "The making of BK-City. We can actually distinguish two stages in the project: one of them has been completed and met the needs of culture and to a certain extend also social needs. The second stage is about the rest of social needs and mainly the ecological needs. This process just started.

The history of 'Red Chemistry' and its broad value assessment

The building of 'Red Chemistry' was built in the twenties, at that time the largest University building in the Netherlands (30,000 m²). It was designed in an urban like pattern of nine wings and several court-yards by the state-architect van Drecht. Built originally in the spatial typology of a chemical laboratory and with the rich application of red brick and natural stone, the nickname of 'Red Chemistry' was born. It never fulfilled its purpose. It was used in different ways and ended as an administrative building of the University. In 2005 the building was abandoned and plans were drawn to converse the building into an apartment building.

So these plans were stopped for two reasons: world crisis and the urgent temporary need for housing for the Faculty of Architecture. It needs hardly any explanation that the plans for conversion into individual houses in a former original public building, would have taken a lot of effort and energy to execute. One can put question marks from a sustainable point of view anyhow. But also for the design it was not an easy task. A thorough historical, technical and architectural analysis and broad (in)tangible value assessment on the diverse levels of scale and value aspects, were the basis and inspiration for the main interventions in the building. The knowledge that was gathered here, was a good contribution to very valuable conditions for the discoveries needed to design BK-City.

In fact, without this knowledge of the balance between the existing and to a certain extend firm interventions, could not have been found that soon and successful. The fact that the building has been listed as a monument, has its roots in its firm and sustain-

able appearance in the city and the careful design in an alteration of brick and natural stone with a keen interest in a mix of classical and Amsterdam School stylistic elements. The huge building is to a certain extend an interesting urban like pattern in the early twentieth century lay-out of the former campus.

The development of the plan

Pragmatism, enthusiasm, inspiration, emergency-management, participation of many stakeholders, much knowledge and capability that could be applied, were the underpinning conditions for rather precise planning. The complexity and high speed of the execution, asked for a skilful team.

The choice that was made for five architects was maybe the most peculiar one. Many hands of course make the work lighter, but this was not the main reason. As we experienced, the intense workshops helped us to sharpen our starting points and concepts. As a matter of fact the client organized its own criticism in an intellectual way, one might conclude after all. We went much further than aesthetics and conceptual sketches and theoretical debates and hobbyhorses riding. We were forced to deliver for our own community, we could not fail. So on one hand the experience of the new Faculty as a living organism was at stake, on the other we were aware we should take history very seriously. The integral approach was forced upon us and we liked it.

By May 2009 the new temporary Faculty Building was realized. About 35,000 m² (biggest faculty building with 3000 students and around 1000 staff members) living/vivid University community was realized at the other end of the University Campus, close to the historical City of Delft. In December 2008 the results of a competition for a definite new faculty building between 450 architects, was exhibited and were announced. In fact three plans ended as the most successful: An 'icon' (sustainable and innovative) on the position of the former faculty building, a building as a linear connector 'all over the campus' (urban), and a continuation of BK-City (re-use).



Do battle

Because of the unorthodox process, the thinking about the re-use of the 'Red-Chemistry' building should be very contextual in the broadest sense of the word. Great concepts that were not focused on the integral approach, were doomed to fail. The difference in identity with the former modern faculty building was immense: a building that had been designed as a perfect architectural object on the campus, thirteen stories high, closely related to educational methods at that time and very much 'divided'. 'Red Chemistry' was different, but with about the same numbers in square meters just too small for its new function.

The identity of the building is more related to an urban structure with open courtyards than a building. A vast surface in three stories, guileless in its urban lay-out because of unfortunate landownership in the twenties of the last century.

A very large classical Dutch building, also influenced by Amsterdam School style elements. It was composed of red brick and natural stone building at that time, with low attention for an overall spatial quality in its lay-out: 1 kilometre of corridor for instance and because of the imperfect/ irregular shape of the building somewhat confusing for its visitors to orientate themselves.

In the understanding of the meaning of the lay-out of the building, as an historical 'urban structure', its

historical imperfectness, its ability to facilitate a new community on a horizontal basis now and the notion of the new program, the discovery of the assignment could be done. 'All knowledge in advance' because of the former cultural historical value assessment was of great help. A masterplan emerged which we called 'BK-CITY'. In the terminology 'BK-CITY', the essence is revealed. The introduction of a new public infrastructure consisting of street(s) and glass-covered squares, the potential of the building could be used, enhanced and intertwined in a self evident manner. This public structure had always been the missing link, and now the somewhat dull and uninspired building could reveal its hidden beauty.

The BK-community meets each other on a regular basis in this vital urban and connecting structure. The social-cultural change towards the former modern housing of the Faculty of Architecture is obvious.

Imperfection as resource for inspiration

The 5 architects that worked on the design of 'BK-City', made use of the 'knowledge in advance': they used it as a guideline; they also enhanced the new 'urban structure' of the building, as this was the main 'discovery of the assignment. The effect of several architects designing upon the same building was amazing.

The existing and eclectic Dutch classical building was actually rather boring than thrilling from an experience point of view. The master plan facilitated a different perspective on the building-structure: a world of different places, colours and atmospheres could be developed within the firm structure of the masterplan.

The five different architects (from very conceptual tot contextual) designed a coherent plan. There was a sharp debate and the interventions and refurbishment were all done within the context of the value assessment and the assignment. The original 'DNA' of the building was an important starting point. Facilitated and inspired by the work that was executed by the builders almost at the same time we made



the designs, the important theme of imperfection became a leading motive.

Taking out all artificial ceilings for instance and adjusting the technical structure with spatial new passages, the building emerged on one hand as a strong sustainable structure, on the other one could feel the imperfection seeing the building 'naked'. One could experience the strong structure for instance already in the 'skin', the elevations, designed in a thorough balanced application of brick and the firm use of natural stone. The application of natural stone in the elevations itself can be observed in varieties of articulation of the architecture (window frames, lintels and cornices in Weibener and Etttringer tuff), the decoration (for instance the ceramic mouldings for ventilation) and the plinth of the building in pink granite.

The imperfection now could be sensed in reading the building's interior in its structural outfits without almost any upholstery. Actually at the start of the refurbishment we left the building from a pragmatic point of view 'unfinished', we didn't spend energy on it. Together with all the new visible infrastructure of technical installations, the reinterpretation of the original idea of a Laboratory Building emerged in a strong informal atmosphere. In the end we hardly did upholster the building. Together with the very precise influence of the 5 architects, this resulted in something different than the original building and at the same time we remained very close to its original identity.

In many ways the building can be experienced as an 'education permanent'; students can 'read' the structure, the history and at the same time sense every day the meaning of the intervention that could gain quality from a process that facilitated an inte-

gral and multidisciplinary approach. Is this a Dutch approach? To some extent yes, it is hard for us to answer. We experienced the making of BK-CITY (also driven by the emergency and high speed), as something refreshing and an opening to new ways of thinking of connecting the future to the past.

BK-City Slim

Already before the community of the Faculty of Architecture started to use the building, there was the idea of making the building the permanent housing for the Faculty. Of course much money was spent (almost 60 million euros), but particularly the very special atmosphere in the building was very attractive to its new 'owners', students and staff.

The former iconic competition for a new building was still there but no longer of importance. In fact this building had become the icon, an 'icon of re-use', and from a social point of view very topical; because re-use undergoes a firm stimulus by Dutch Government today.

Peculiar detail that at the same time this Government, who funded originally 25 million Euros for an architectural icon for a new building, withdrew this offer. Since no longer this icon was purchased. The acknowledgement that re-use also is a complex and topical architectural skill, that still has to be gained here, is more or less shocking.

Maybe the fact that in 2011 two serious prizes were awarded to BK-CITY may help: the Europa Nostra prize in the field of conservation and the nomination for Dutch Renovation Award, both in June 2011. As stated before: in the process of the making of BK-CITY not all needs could be fulfilled within the severe constraints in time. Especially ecological needs and partly social needed do still have to be gained.

The first motives were pragmatic:

- Measures for energy reduction (CO₂- neutral)
- Combination of these measures with the necessary maintenance
- To implement a better and sustainable use of the building (Still small extensions needed)

But of course inspired by the success of BK-CITY, there should be more ambition. As a Faculty of Architecture (education and research institute) we should use and enlarge our own knowledge here, make the building an example/landmark and icon for sustainability. Not just the energy-aspects but more-over the broad perception of sustainability, the innovative and inspired engineering should be enhanced and implemented. But there is also some jeopardizing this ambitious project, caused by a financial crisis at Dutch Universities. Budgets for the coming years have been reduced dramatically, and we know that for the real ecological plans economical payback on short is not the most important feature. It did not stop us until now to proceed on the project. The first step was a competition for thorough integral design: a competition was organized.

New competition

A committee was formed to meet the challenge of the ambition of BK-CITY SLIM. There was keen preparation for a competition between spans of architects and climate-experts. Since the building of BK-CITY had been transformed successfully in an unorthodox process, it was decided that the brief for the competition of a sustainable building should not be primar-



ily the work of architects alone. The scope should be again the multi disciplinary approach with the focus on Climate. Actually the engineering we required for BK-CITY SLIM and the safe-guarding the architectural features of BK-CITY, should be complementary. The exact assignment was called E-Innovation: on the long term the building should be independent of fossil energy resources.

Challenges to be met were:

- Ecological aspects (life-cycles of material and water)
- Social aspects
- Economic aspects

The project team of BK-CITY SLIM selected four spans of architects and climate-experts. They were asked to develop a concept/ real vision on E-innovation that could also be executed in several steps in time. The complex task was underpinned by a lot of relevant information. Not the least was a new value assessment of the building after the realization of BK-City. Four spans of designers were selected, that to the opinion of the jury, were fit to fulfil this ambitious assignment. Next step was to formulate the criteria for the selection the best plans:

- Spatial quality
- The architectural features of E-innovation (also from an educational point of view)
- Treating the heritage after the interventions of BK-City
- The (realistic) vision on E-innovation

The products of the design teams were judged by a jury of experts in December 2010. The result was moreover a 'container of very interesting and pragmatic ideas'; a realistic plan could not be chosen and implemented. The complex task could not be fulfilled, partly because the integral approach and expected attitude/relationship between architects and climate experts did not happen to a satisfying extent. In fact the architectural ideas were not in line with the informal atmosphere of BK-CITY and had no relationship with proposals done by the Climate experts.



Outcomes of the competition, possible measures

After balancing the results, the competition resulted in a number of possible several projects /measurements. Integration still has to be engineered. This will be the next challenging step that we are about to begin. I will summarize the most important outcomes of the competition:

- a. Reduction of electricity (lighting) by better control system
- b. Insulation of the brick facades and slate/ wooden roofs
- c. Insulations of the windows
- d. No use of the attic
- e. Glasshouse on the West side of the building
- f. Further research was recommended:
- g. Natural ventilation and the new concept of the Breathing Window
- h. The application of photo voltaic cells.
- i. The resources of energy: low temperature heating towards a comfortable building
- j. Further research for sustainability of University Plant
- k. Integration of all possible measures into a thorough concept

One of the competing architects (except) had a thrilling and abstract concept that from an ecological point of view was quite interesting. Concrete implementation however could not be done. And now there's a big challenge for the project to think and act and reckon differently just like in the emergency

driven BK-CITY project. And to make the challenging link between context and concept.

First of all with all the recent effort that has been undertaken in favour of BK-CITY SLIM, there is a real longing for good technology for making buildings SMART, and that could help us solve the problems of balanced ecological design. However, despite all new innovative development we are still on our way. Perhaps in a decade or two we will have possibilities we only can dream of now. For instance the use of sun power in photovoltaic cells will improve drastically in about five years. So what more is there to come, we are curious about. We really are in a dilemma to find a good balance between cultural, ecological, social and economic needs. BK-CITY SLIM we want to be an outstanding example, so we should use all the possible knowledge and skills we can obtain a good balancing in the building. But we know a part of the solution is still in the future ahead of us. As Faculty of Architecture we really should make our building the subject of constant research. We should enhance the complexity which is connected to the subject and invest in it. Despite all the questions of quick wins we should persist in meaningful research.

Secondly the successful project of BK-CITY is a model for a new way of thinking, a different attitude for architects. It is about the relation between history, present and future, to link them to the design-task. And it is not primarily all about the architectural design as an autonomous skill, it is about arguments that contribute to the story of needed conversion. Not a story of absolute truth, but a story that facilitates to discover the assignment where the architect should be an important team player. It is remarkable that the ambitious BK-community that trains new generations of architects, feels at home in the building.

I would like to stress again the future scope of (broad) technology driven design, as a solid footing the design task. Looking for balance between historical/cultural, ecological, social and economic aspects in an integral and innovative approach should be re-installed.

Third observation is the effect of the re-use of 'Red Chemistry' beyond the scale of the building. After



the discovery of the great potential of permanent re-use, things started to be different now. The epic heart of the Campus shifted toward the north side, the interrelation with the heart of the historical City of Delft was re-established. The success of re-use may result that the Campus of TU-Delft will no longer be the footprint of the modern campus that was designed in the fifties. Other former University buildings may be of interest again. Together with new functions, the urban footprint of both old and new campus will be more social and cultural sustainable. This is beyond expectation.

It is interesting that caused by the emergency, something not planned but rather guileless, these conversions do happen. Like in landscape architecture, not everything foreseen and unplanned, aware of a context that goes beyond design.

Conclusions

I want to conclude with the challenges to be met in the project of BK-CITY SLIM. It is very interesting that in November 2010 Michael Kouli Prodromou finished his master study at the Faculty of Architecture with the subject: "The sustainable refurbishment of BK-City. These were his main conclusions and recommendations:

- The existing building is extremely wasteful, huge possibilities lie in its refurbishment
- Simple measures might result in cost-effective solutions

- Interrelated measures could be much more effective
- A careful design is needed to balance the different interests
- An energy-neutral building is impossible with current available technology
- More data is needed for life-cycles of applied materials
- BK-City provides already wonderful opportunities for sustainable energy applications, such as the empty attic space, the water tower, the flat parts of the roof, ventilation through the decorative nature stone façade elements originally used for that purpose.
- Ways to involve the users, make them aware of energy consumption in the building. The 'education permanence', trying to lower our personal carbon footprint by behaviour.

Last but not least and I fully quote Michael here:

"How the refurbishment project of BK-City can become the cornerstone of a broader Governmental, Municipal or University refurbishment program could be investigated. For example, a refurbishment scheme that involves other TU-Delft Faculties or even the entire City of Delft. This will, moreover, make the claims for subsidies and financial support stronger. That leaves us with a dilemma, or rather an assignment for future. The need to reduce costs in quick steps and the ambition for constant search for better resources, by means of improved and innovative technology. We should as Institute of Knowledge empowered by the needs of society do both. It is our main responsibility."



Fourth step. Workshop in Bayonne: “How to make eco-restoration an asset for local economies?”

by Sylvie Durruty, Deputy Mayor for economy of the Municipality of Bayonne

Extremely concerned about the preservation of its heritage and the image of its historic centre, the City of Bayonne joined the LINKS project, attracted by the promise of interesting, technique exchanges. A first statement announced the guidelines: our historic heritage is threatened by the implementation of new thermal regulations which are inadequate, yet housing in historic centres cannot remain on the side lines of important energy challenges. It is therefore necessary to rediscover and make known the most effective restoration techniques and those most adapted to old and fragile buildings.

Exchanges at local and European levels, bringing about rapid results, these techniques, appropriate

and effective, were quickly identified. To summarize and simplify them, the LINKS partners grouped them under the term “eco-restoration”, referred to as “eco-construction” for new buildings.

The question of technique has become secondary and LINKS has had to put the matter in a different light. The economic dimension of the project has become an essential component of cogitation because even with the best technical and environmental methods, eco-restoration has to face the reality of economic constraints!

How can local markets face such development in techniques? how can they respond to increasing demand? how can craftsmen be updated on new skills? how can the unavoidable, additional costs of these new methods be absorbed?

And finally, to also look at positive aspects, how can these new measures represent a real opportunity to our local economies?

These are the questions that the LINKS partners came to analyse at Bayonne and that the Local Support Group of Bayonne Group has been examining for several months. New perspectives have been presented at a time when they were rather few and far between - now it's up to us to seize the opportunities.

From awareness to training. A challenge to boost local market in Bayonne

by **Frédérique Calvanus,**
LINKS network coordinator

Since the beginning of the Links project, the City of Bayonne has been faced with an obstacle to develop eco-restoration: the local market does not seem to be mature enough to make a real change in professional practices.

On the one hand, there is no strong demand. First of all, most flats in the historic centre are rental housing and energy saving is not a major concern for owners and developers. Moreover, in order to preserve heritage, no energy performance is imposed by regulation for traditional buildings. Then, habits in terms of energy renovation are deeply rooted and old buildings are commonly renovated with modern and conventional materials.

On the other hand, the specificity of old building thermal behaviour remains quite confidential. But thermal renovation with a high level of performance requires to really improve knowledge and skills. It is very difficult to give up old recipes which have been fully satisfying for decades. The reasons why they should change are not obvious at first. Have LINKS partners made a strategic error when they adopted the term "eco-restoration" as if de facto their only concern was the environment though it is first a matter of promoting the only techniques that are adapted to old buildings?



The fact that such techniques limit our impact on the environment and favour local economy is a further advantage that is rather a cardinal virtue, but the truth is that to durably preserve our building heritage and offer real energy performance, a radical change in restoration methods cannot be avoided.

To start this change, the City of Bayonne mobilised the professionals of the building restoration and organised very short awareness modules for craftsmen, thematic coffee breaks, during which craftsmen formed to new techniques described their experience to peers.

Multi-professional meetings called Form'action were also organised by the local LINKS group to evaluate the interest of architects, craftsmen, practitioners, their level of knowledge and their needs in terms of information to actually change practices.

The first Form'action day, organised in January 2012, on the theme "why eco-restoration" with Jean-Marc Gary, a thermal engineer, brought 38 participants together. This moment of knowledge acquisition, but more particularly of exchange between professionals, was very much appreciated and was followed by a second Form'action meeting on the themes air tightness-ventilation-inside air quality.

These Form'action meetings do not claim to replace qualifying training courses. All the contrary. They intend to alert professionals to the need for change and training. organised during the project, these Form'actions make it possible for the local group to better define and adapt qualifying training courses which will be part of the Local Action Plan of Bayonne.

Conversation with Eric Aufaure, ADEME Aquitaine

Q: What are the objectives of ADEME (Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie) as regards to the conservation and re-use of heritage buildings?

A: ADEME does not have any specific policies for the restoration of historic centres. however, they actively support communities that carry out ambitious policies, as is the case with Bayonne. The scarcity and increasing use of natural resources (building materials, fossil fuels) and the negative impact of urban spread have lead naturally to the improvement of the attractiveness of historic centres. In fact, the energy performances of old town centres are usually far superior to those of buildings constructed between 1930 and 1970 (due in particular to the density of traditional urban fabric and the inertia of old buildings).

Q: The French legislative framework has set ambitious targets over the next few years: a reduction of 38% in energy consumption in existing buildings, mainstreaming of low-energy buildings by 2013 and zero-energy buildings by 2020. Are the necessary policies and resources in place?

A: Technically speaking, these objectives are realistic: we already know how to construct positive energy buildings and reduce the average consumption of actual buildings by a third. This has been proved by current projects on council homes and property belonging to the state and local authorities. however, these commitments require, firstly, more effort in the training of building professionals (architects, research consultants and craftsmen) and secondly, more financial incentives, especially in restoration programmes.



Q: Are there any potential conflicts between initiatives taken by cities and the national legal framework?

A: On the contrary, the state and certain local authorities are working together on the BATAN project (BATAN stands for BATiments ANciens - old buildings) with an aim to fully comprehend the energy performance of old buildings. This should allow the adaptation of energy policies to the specificity of heritage buildings and conciliate energy saving and heritage protection even more.

Q: Is the renovation of buildings a growing economic sector? Could it be a new source of employment?

A: The energy saving objectives mentioned above could lead to the creation of an extra 120,000 long-term jobs (source: Grenelle de l'Environnement). As thermal renovation requires a good technical know-how, these objectives will also help to improve the qualifications of the workmen and the attractiveness of jobs in the building sector.

Q: Is the low cost of nuclear electric power a disadvantage in the promotion of renewable energy?

A: First of all, let's make it clear: nuclear power cov-



ers the main annual electricity needs in France, but for a few weeks during the winter months electricity is produced by gas and fuel power plants to meet the extra demand for heating purposes.

Electricity provides the most expensive type of heating. Nevertheless, the low investment costs required for installation and maintenance, the possibility of individualizing use and costs and the lower energy use in urban dwellings, especially in Bayonne, have contributed to the development of electric heating to the detriment of renewable energy.

Today, a significant development of renewable energy in historic centres would imply investment in a communal, heating and hot water system in blocks of flats or grouped buildings. The complete rehabilitation of a housing block should be the opportunity to analyse technical and financial solutions. ADEME are in a position to offer advice and financial support to local authorities for this type of investment.

Conversation with Jean Marc Gary Febus

Ecohabitat, Office for thermal studies

Q: The conservation of heritage buildings and the improvement of their comfort and energy performance are seen as conflicting priorities, especially under budgetary constraints.

According to your experience, what are the main threats to historic buildings?

A: Conventional techniques commonly used to insulate old buildings are a pernicious threat. Industrial insulation, such as mineral wool, is known to accumulate moisture in double walls. Buildings renovated with these types of materials can reveal serious structural damage due to moisture, many years later.

Q: Certain types of insulation can destroy historic buildings. How can we deal with this problem?

A: Some insulation techniques are perfectly suitable for old buildings. Unfortunately they remain unfamiliar and have trouble developing, particularly in France. The most appropriate techniques are those which use hygroscopic materials which facilitate the natural transfer of humidity through walls by evaporation.

Q: Let's take windows for example. Thin window frames and single glazing are often replaced by plump metal or PVC windows with double or triple glazing. Is this an efficient way to save energy?

A: We must be aware that, if they are airtight, windows only represent a small part of energy waste. Changing them remains very expensive but replacing windows is not a priority measure. If old windows cannot be repaired and really need to be changed, there is a real environmental challenge to use local wood instead of tropical tree species, aluminium or PVC.

Q: Humidity is the worst enemy of architecture, even more today than in past times. What is wrong with our modern buildings?

A: Conventional insulation cannot cope with humidity. Old walls, unlike modern ones, have the ability to regulate moisture naturally. It is therefore very difficult to manage humidity excess, unavoidable at certain times of the year and even certain times of the day, simply by ventilation.

Q: Today we have the choice of several heating systems and energy sources. What is the best combination of fossil and renewable energy for a central European climate?



A: It is more important to improve the comfort of inhabitants than to upgrade the performance of heating systems which, unfortunately, remain uncommon in rented accommodation: low-temperature irradiative heating (favourable in the use of renewable energy such as solar panels, heat pumps, and geothermal energy). Wood burning energy provides good supplementary heating during very cold weather conditions even though it is not particularly suitable in urban districts.

Q: Is there enough awareness of energy conservation amongst the professionals of the building sector and developers? How can they resist the lobbying of powerful standardized building material industries?

A: In general, the professionals are not sufficiently aware of the potential of energy conservation conditioned by architectural choices (exposure, materials, openings, internal planning). A good overall outlook can enable a building to obtain the best theoretical performances. In practice, this performance will only be attained if the quality of implementation is correct. The challenge of energy conservation therefore involves the whole of the building industry.

A struggle for life. The French certification process, an obstacle to development of eco-materials

by Julien Labat

To meet the commitments of the French environment "Grenelle", France must increase thermal renovation by 400,000 units per year by 2020. To meet these objectives, local authorities must engage in voluntary action programmes. Considering the magnitude of this project, it is crucial to limit the impact of construction/ renovation and its global environmental balance by using bio-sourced and local materials. However, the certification remains an obstacle to the development of ecological materials.

With more than two years of practical experience acquired within the European network, the City of

Bayonne paints a clear picture of the crucial need for local bio-sourced material outlets.

A statement without ambiguity

The scientific observation is simple: the sustainability of old structures and the improvement of their thermal performance justifies the systematic use of ecological materials.

The environmental issue is as follows: in view of the decrease of energy consumption in the housing stock, the embodied energy of construction/renovation materials appears to be more important in the environmental balance. Future energy issues call for the use of local firms for the manufacturing of ecological materials. The economic issue is as follows: the emergence of industries mobilizing local resources creates jobs and provides solutions to absorb the consequences of the current social and economic crisis.

Cellulose wadding: a virtuous material that struggle to access the market

Cellulose wadding insulation is one of the most interesting materials in terms of thermal and acoustic performance. Also, its rapid manufacture and low production costs, as well as its life cycle (fully recyclable material produced from recycled materials) adds up to a solid product to target the market.

Used for 70 years in the U.S.A. and in Europe, this insulation has proved its effectiveness and its sustainability. Over the last 4 years it has become considerably more popular in France (increasing approximately 30% per year) and now competes with conventional insulation materials such as mineral wool which represents 68% of the market.

But the wadding production companies are young and still growing. To continue their progress in a highly competitive market, successfully, it is imperative that they obtain a favourable technical assessment from the French Scientific and Technical Centre for Building (C.S.T.B.). Even if it is not mandatory, it provides a mark of quality guarantee for insurers, necessary when marketing a product.

Procedures subject to questioning:

In France, the C.S.T.B. is the lead agency responsible for assessing the suitability of processes, materials

and equipment for construction. The long and costly certification process provided by the C.S.T.B. appears to be blocking development of local and ecological materials "supported" by local SMEs.

Today, the future of these small local businesses is being challenged by the decision of the commission in charge of delivering the technical assessments to terminate evaluation of cellulose wadding by the 30th June.

Moreover, according to the information provided by cellulose wadding producers, it appears that the opacity and lobbying of powerful industrial networks, interferes with the objectivity of decisions taken during technical assessment procedures.

A thorough analysis of this case demonstrates that the technical evaluation process penalizes market access for small companies and the development of local materials. yet, at the same time, these small businesses would permit the creation of environmentally responsible short circuits, and the creation of jobs.

The European Cellulose Insulation Manufacturer Association (E.C.I.M.A.), who maintains that these regulatory pressures could make many businesses bankrupt as early as June, is trying to gain recognition in the political world of the unfair treatment and the urgency of revising the technical evaluation process. The chain of eco-materials has all the necessary criteria to win more markets as with insulation and is essential in the fight against global warming. The main obstacle to the emergence of new local industries lies in all the difficulties encountered by SMEs to obtain a favourable technical assessment from the C.S.T.B. when these companies are faced by competition from large industrial groups.

It is therefore imperative that the French and European authorities intercede and recognize the unfair treatment involved in the technical evaluation system by economic agents and enforce the validity of European standards and certifications for better market access for innovative companies.



Fifth step. Workshop in Brasov: "Involvement in URBACT LINKS network. Which added value for local governance processes?"

by Carmen Nechifor

Focus on Brasov's approach to the governance of urban regeneration and development processes. Good practices, future challenges and expectations towards the LINKS network

Inhabitants of Brasov's historic centre often ageing and low income, therefore they are unable to afford investments to restore their dwellings.

Need to rehabilitate many old buildings, public spaces and streets (Municipality is not allowed to finance restoration of privately owned buildings)

Need to convince inhabitants to use public transports (to reduce noise and pollution in the historical city centre).

Governance issues

For the rehabilitation of the historical centre there is clear political willingness and engagement but also barriers to overcome (e.g. the municipality is not allowed to support renovation costs for private buildings, not even for the facades). On the other side, some of the historical buildings belong (and are to be managed) to the municipality or to the Brasov County. In 2010 the Municipality has rehabilitated some squares and other public spaces.

Existing policies and projects

In 2009 an Integrated Development Plan (P.I.D.) for Brasov's Growth Pole has been approved. It is a strategic document for the sustainable development of the Metropolitan Area.

This plan was elaborated according to the principles of the Territorial Agenda for a Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Regions, the Leipzig Charter, the Green Paper for Territorial Cohesion, the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013, the National Strategic Reference Framework, the Central Region's Development Plan (to which belongs the area of Brasov's growth pole) and other strategic documents of national, regional, county and local level. The P.I.D. foresees policies and programmes according to the objectives identified. One of these is the protection of the historical and cultural patrimony.

Needs

Municipalities of Brasov's Metropolitan Area are committed at European level in the enhancement of our urban heritage assets since long time. They try to developed programs and actions to improve the quality of urban planning and fight against urban dislocation of public spaces or built heritage. To make progress on this work some essential needs have been identified:

- An integrated feasibility study and action plan for the restoration and eco-restoration of the historic centre are needed and this is gradually acknowledged at a broader level as the only way to reach successful results.
- It is necessary to lobby for changing or improving the legislation: most of the houses in historic centre are privately owned and the municipality is not allowed to have interventions on them.
- To find financial sources for eco-restoration
- To have an integrated policy for eco-renovation and sustainable development, improving energy efficiency of buildings and preservation of architectural quality
- To strengthen the integrated management of activities linked to the sustainable development of the historical city

- To strengthen the interests in the historic city centre

The overall challenge in urban renovation is that we have to do more with less local funding and human resources, therefore we have to be innovative and set up new strategies. Mix funding is an opportunity to set up innovative project such as eco-renovation or eco- restoration.

Good practices in Brasov

There are several examples of good practices in Brasov. Some of them have been examined during the workshop.

- Refurbishment of Unirii Square, with public budget
- Refurbishment of Sfatului Square, with public budget
- Conservation of Evangelical Church with public and private budget
- Refurbishment of the Hous "Red Inn" with private budget
- Refurbishment of the House " Leichman" with private budget
- Four areas of intervention have been identified:
 - Planning, coordination and control
 - Support for private owners
 - Public relations and awareness raising



- Strengthening professional capacity
- Some actions have been introduced and discussed during the workshop
- Public consultation,
- Fatzada Street Fest,
- European Heritage Days

The role of URBACT

Taking part to the URBACT LINKS Network is a chance to set local challenges and potentials, with the related knowledge, in relationship with a European context.

From a platform of in depth knowledge of local specificities we have to build local development policies based on variety. Knowledge of local circumstances is fundamental to involve the stakeholders and understand the absorptive capacity: how far can new materials, new production processes and new ideas be welcomed by a community?

The analysis has identified the following key elements:

- Smart Government to produce smart action plans (LAP)
- Efficient Policy Networks (ULSG)
- Social Capital
- Brain circulation/Brain competition
- "Gate Actors"
- Partnerships
- Intangible infrastructure: Culture + Image (Branding)

The boiled frog

The boiling frog story is a widespread anecdote of a frog slowly being boiled alive. The premise is that if a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out, but if it is placed in cold water that is slowly heated, it will not perceive the danger.

It is a metaphor for the inability of people to react to significant changes that occur gradually. People should make themselves aware of gradual change lest they suffer eventual undesirable consequences. The idea of LINKS project for Brasov is to illustrate the fact that change needs to be gradually accepted.



The role of the Order of architects of Romania in the URBACT LINKS network

by **Lorand Bartha**

The OAR (Romanian Architects Chamber) has the difficult task to rebuild the integrity of a neglected and many times declined discipline. After more than 50 years of dictatorship driven architecture and urban planning it is not easy to promote architecture as a positive element of a democratic society. Tough in the ten years of its existence, the OAR have made some victories, small but very important ones.

One of the most important tasks is the popularisation of our discipline, the presentation, trough exhibitions, and meetings etc. of the product of architecture, quality architecture and its positive impact on people's lives. At the central level, as well as the local, regional level we have organized different events opened to the public to try to make a connection between architecture and people. These events present best practices, the historic, cultural, aesthetic

and social values that architecture has, so that the citizens accept and in the end even argue for a better built environment.

On another level, the OAR promotes quality architecture and urban planning through design competitions. A selection procedure long forgotten by the Romanian society, the competition system, is considered that it has the best results when we talk about quality design. Our organization tries, with more or less success because of the administrative and bureaucratic procedures, to promote and to organize such competitions. In the last two years we were able to convince our municipality to have design competitions for the renewal of two of the major public spaces from Brasov (The Black Church square and the Post orchard – a popular green area for spending free time). Even if we know that these are only isolated examples, we constantly work on involving local authorities in organizing competitions and we hope that this process will have more and more results in the near future.

Besides promoting quality contemporary architecture, OAR promotes historical values as well. In a society where the cultural values of the past degrade from one day to the other because of the lack of funding but also because of the lack of interest (due to lack of proper education and, thus respect), a profession as the architects and its organizations must have a strong attitude towards protecting our history. And this also cannot be made otherwise than through educational events like exhibitions, presentations and also by fighting to be present – even if mostly only in a kind of “guest” role in the decision making groups or planning groups, as for instance is the URBACT LINKS project.

Even if our accomplishments are, as we consider, of minimal impact upon society, our role is to keep working on and to give the opportunity for building a healthier, more democratic and more valuable environment.



Double conversation with Dan Oprea (Depoul de Artă Urbană) and architect Johannes Bertleff (Exhibit Architectura)

Q: You are an artist/architect living in the city of Brasov and dealing with its urban realm in your professional activity. How would you describe in a few sentences “living in Brasov”?

DO: For me, living in Brasov, means living in the historical centre, where I was born and where I have my house. I feel very fortunate to be a Brasovian, a perfect place to raise a family, to be out in nature that is present everywhere, the climate is perfect, in a 3 - 5min distance, I have all the stores, banks, institutions, restaurants, markets, schools, sport arenas, and sport trails, cultural events, clinics, hospitals etc. Most of the historical centre is pedestrian, so the kids can play without being supervised, just go out on the street and meet other kids, there is no noise and exhaust fumes from cars and the air is very clean. You don't need air conditioning and you don't need to buy bottled water, because the tap water is coming from a mountain spring. (100m from my house)

JB: Professional aspects:

- (-) Poor quality of the valid masterplan of Brasov: The masterplan is conceived as a puzzle of existing regional urban regulations (PUZ). The masterplan includes no clear strategy for the development of the city.
- (+) The public acquisition for projects concerning the design of public spaces has improved in the last 18 months. Several architectural design contests has been organized (City Hall in partnership with OAR – architects chamber).
- (-) Because of the economic crisis and other reasons public and private commissioning has decreased heavily in number and importance.
- (-) The cultural openness of public and private beneficiaries is often not at high levels.

Other aspects:

- Poor cultural activities
- High quality of the natural landscape surrounding the city
- High quality of the cultural heritage of the city
- Low diversity

Q: What are the aspects of urban life that are part of you and which one do you refuse?

DO: Urban life inspires me and gives me lots of ideas, tools and audience. I like to discover people, discover places and collect stories about them. I don't like the trends of restaurants owners, who are opening more and more noisy terraces.

JB: Urban aspects that I like to participate:

- Cultural events (indoor and outdoor)
- Sport events (cycling events, skiing, etc...)
- Different fairs (slow food, traditional crafts, etc.)

Aspects where I refuse to participate

- Pop, country-music etc., concerts in public places (like in Piata Sfatului)
- Political meetings

Q: What kind of contribution would you like to give for a 'better Brasov' and how are you trying to do it?



DO: I started to bring my contribution to Brasov, 8 years ago, when I first renovated the ROPE STREET – an emblematic street for Brasov and for Romania, which was in a very bad shape and needed immediate attention.

Five years ago, I started fatzaDa Project, a social-cultural project, of urban art and culture, which in a very short time, became the most important festival of its kind. FatzaDa events take place during the entire year, involving artists from every art area and bringing thousands of people to the streets. I help to promote the local artists, raise the awareness about our cultural heritage, encourage community initiatives and find creative solutions to many community problems. So far, I have very good feedback about my projects.

JB: I would like to bring my contribution in promoting architectural quality, the importance of preserving (following the correct procedures) the build heritage and improving the cultural offer and the cultural life of the city.

I participated as an organiser of several events, programs and other actions:

- Organising architectural competitions (as representative of OAR)
- Organising architectural exhibitions in public places and architectural competitions for build projects
- Organising "ora de arhitectura" (the architec-



ture class) in several high schools of Brasov and Sf. Gheorghe.

- Organising public discussions about planned public projects.

Q: Can you tell a positive experience you are having with an initiative you are promoting in the city?

DO: I have many examples of people of all ages, who changed their attitudes and become more conscious citizens, who understand and appreciate our diverse cultural heritage and get involved in our efforts of rebuilding the historical center of Brasov. I have many examples of artists, who became much better, after giving them the opportunity to participate in our projects.

JB: All of the actions described above had have positive results.

Q: You contributed to the URBACT LINKS Network workshop in February and now you are answering these questions, therefore LINKS Partners owe you something. How can we help you in your mission?

DO: We always worked on an extremely low budget and we would like to be more internationally involved, to share our positive and not so positive experiences, to create intercultural projects and promote our culture and artists. Any help in that direction, would be highly appreciated.

JB: We would be grateful for any kind of partnerships to conceive and realise projects which have goals as described above or similar.

The experience of the Dutch managing authority.

Adri Hartkoorn introducing the Operational program "Kansen Voor West"

Participating to the thematic workshop in Brasov the Managing Authority representative from the city of Delft Adri Hartkoorn has introduced the organisational model of the Operational Programme "Kansen voor West" (2007-2013) (Chances for West) which involves 8 partners: the 4 major cities of the Randstad (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht) and the 4 Provinces of western Netherlands (Flevoland, Noord Holland, Utrecht, Zuid Holland).

"Kansen voor West" aimed at implementing the Lisbon strategy leading to economic growth and more and better jobs in the European Union. For the Randstad it means that the competitiveness of the region should be strengthened. That means investing in themes such as innovation, research and development, knowledge sharing, connecting education labour, human capital and sustainable energy.

Strengths and weaknesses of western regions of Holland

A few years ago the western regions of Holland were still among the top European regions. The reasons for their decline and loss of competitiveness have been identified as:

- Insufficient use of the potential of knowledge in the form of innovations and increased productivity
- Insufficient use of cooperative relationships between knowledge institutions and companies
- Insufficient commitment towards keeping creative talent
- Fragmentation in the labour market and low productivity



The methodology and objectives of this operational program contributed to a collective consciousness, a sense of urgency among all stakeholders, inspiring all parties to work together and put their shoulders under this important challenge. Compared to the gross regional product, the resources of the operational program were of course modest, therefore they have been focused on 3 priorities.

Priority 1: knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship

- Objective 1.1: Strengthening potential clusters through knowledge development, transfer and application
- Objective 1.2: fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in small businesses
- Objective 1.3: stimulate technological environmental innovations

Priority 2: attractive regions

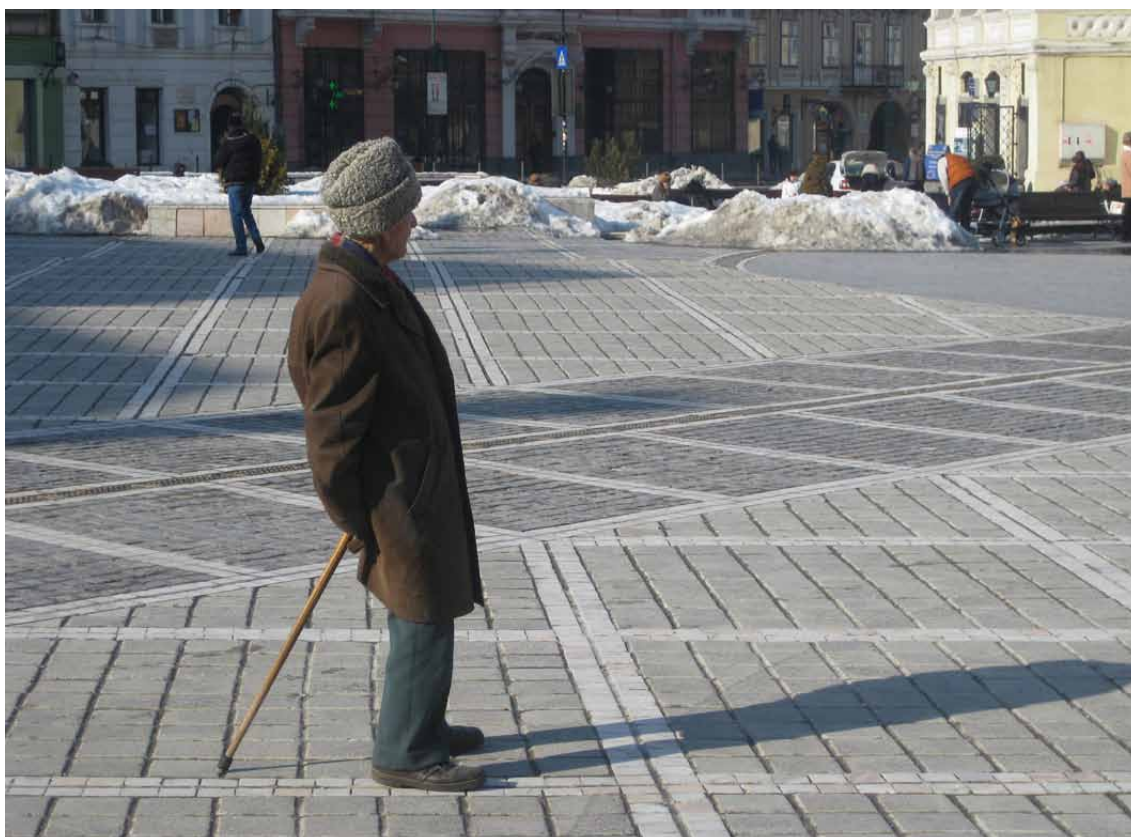
- Objective 2.1: Strengthen economic vitality while preserving environmental quality and landscape values,
- Objective 2.2: expansion and improvement in use of water and greenery to the city

Priority 3: attractive cities

- Objective 3.1: Improve business climate
- Objective 3.2: Improve quality of life

Managing authority

A peculiarity of this operational program is that the Managing Authority (MA) responsible for the implementation and daily management of the entire program, is hosted by the City of Rotterdam. This is the only European OP in which the Managing Authority is hosted by a city and this experience is particularly interesting in the light of the evolution of the next Programming period (2014-2020) when 5% of ERDF and ESF has been ring-fenced to be directly managed by cities.



Midterm reflections on the URBACT LINKS network

by Philip Stein

Discussions in the workshop confirmed that the LINKS project is fortunate in having many dimensions in terms of the type of outputs it can produce and the different levels of target groups which can be engaged. This is particularly true in respect of the positive diversity of partner Local Action Plans. Partners are clear that there is a different content, style, language and even form required, to address a European level policy maker or Managing Authority representative, or to support a local community in improving energy conservation of the historic urban landscape (i.e. through insulation of individual homes). This is also evident in the project's ambition to be involved both on the demand and supply side, and in the public and private dimensions of the eco-restoration question.

While the option is retained to provide input to the EU policy making level, the partners put forward the suggestion to use a staircase model on which to fix different types or levels of output. In this way pilot projects or action case studies, local action plan focus, guidance documents etc. can be conceived and targeted to achieve maximum impact.

The deliberation of what exactly constitutes a Final Report is now on the order book, with an opening to consider whether a document should be prepared in advance of the final conference or whether the final output should include input from that event itself. The purpose of the meeting was clearly not to draw concrete conclusions at this stage rather to ensure that an early deliberation can be initiated among the partner city representatives.

The decision has already been taken to hold the LINKS final event in Brussels with the full support of Anderlecht. This gives a potential dual opportunity to be present in both the EU sphere and at the grass roots level of a partner local authority. The possibility to hold part of the event in the EU parliament was

tabled which can have strong advantages in securing political commitment, participation and networking for partner cities. Some aspects are worth taking into account regarding this option: perhaps not ideal to accommodate the whole event – an EU auditorium however small is limited in the type of session it can organise; risk of political patronage taking over the event (to be avoided); similarly while this forum can encourage involvement of groups like Energy Cities, Covenant of Mayors again it is prudent to ensure that they stay part of the LINKS initiative rather than LINKS becoming part of their event.

The options are therefore open to reflect on the form, content and organisation where a number of parameters will ideally be brought into consideration:

- Partner meeting and open sessions
- Target audience or audiences
- Mixing up the form and content
- Formal and informal networking – e.g. political signatures
- Site visit and confrontation with local difficulties and initiatives
- Involving external contributors.

In all aspects of the culmination of the LINKS project there are decisions to be taken which will frame the activity pattern for project partners over the coming months. The Brasov meeting has been an important step in making these issues concrete and setting in motion the necessary dialogue to reach optimal conclusion.



Sustainable reuse of buildings. The Dutch approach

by Ilse Rijneveld and Wim van Unen

9th May 2012 the TU Delft and the city of Delft organized the symposium Sustainable Reuse of Buildings, the Dutch Approach. The participation of the Municipality of Delft to URBACT Network LINKS, future proof historic centres and the involvement of the TU Delft in the URBACT Local Support Group were the reason to organize this symposium in conjunction with a Network meeting at the Municipality of Delft. Since 2010 the city of Delft and the TU Delft are participating in this European project with the aim to stimulate sustainable development of historic cities. At the symposium the current Dutch situation was discussed. Since the possibilities for financing and the demand for new buildings in the Netherlands has considerably reduced the attention

for sustainable reuse of the existing building stock is growing.

The symposium took place in the most appropriate location: the colourful reused BK-city, a building that was built in the first half of the previous century built as the faculty for Chemistry, now the new accommodation for the faculty of Architecture of TU Delft. During the Symposium the task of sustainable use of the existing building stock were illustrated from different points of view. Furthermore the deputy mayor of the city of Delft Milène Junius and the mayor of Delft Bas Verkerk presented their view on the reuse of buildings in Delft and about European cooperation. Birgit Dulski, senior researcher in sustainable building at the Business University of Nyenrode, introduced her research findings on the building process. Paul Meurs, professor in Restoration at the TU Delft, pointed out the cultural historic value and the urban aspects of redevelopment. Michiel Haas, professor of Material science at TU Delft focused on the scarcity of rare materials. Hielkje Zijlstra, assistant professor at RMIT TU Delft, emphasized the



need for in depth analysis prior to redesign and Olivier Graeven, architect at Braaksma Roos Architects, presented a case study of reuse from an architectural point of view. The last speaker Rudy Stroink, owner at TCN project development, discussed the role of the project developer in redevelopment. Antonio Borghi, lead expert of LINKS, led the forum discussions in between these presentations.

Sustainable reuse

The symposium started by questioning the definition of 'sustainable'. As chairman of the symposium Job Roos, owner at Braaksma Roos Architecten and chairman of the department RMIT of TU Delft, emphasized that sustainability needs an integral approach considering social, economic, financial, cultural as well as in techniques and design, hence it cannot be captured in calculations only. He referred to an essay of Christoph Grafe, *Dierbaar is duurzaam* (dear is sustainable), in which the appreciation of a building is the starting point for sustainability.

The deputy mayor Milène Junius gave her view on the sustainable reuse of buildings and especially mentioned the policy adopted by the municipality of Delft to avoid vacancy and to stimulate temporary reuse. Furthermore she emphasized the cultural meaning of reuse and the importance of cheap temporary locations for experiment and creativity.

Tailor made

Birgit Dulski showed that in the Netherlands 20% of the building stock are traditional buildings, built before 1940. Especially for this buildings it would be possible to achieve considerable energy savings. She pointed out a growth of experiments in extremely low energy renovations. Nevertheless these projects, driven by high ambitions, are relatively expensive. She stated that too high ambitions of environmentalists versus a sometimes too conservative view of conservationists are an obstacle to proper communication. She pleaded for a more pragmatic approach, often 'tailor-made'. Small, specific and effective adjustments of a large number of buildings can produce much more energy savings. Furthermore she pleaded for effective regulations and stimulating policies to enhance the chance for success.

Identification

The second speaker, Paul Meurs talked about reuse at an urban scale. He presented the building as part of a collective understanding of the space and the identification of inhabitants with their surroundings. He mentioned that the high number of listed buildings in the Netherlands, 1,7% of the total building stock, forms quite an assignment to maintain in good condition. Furthermore he asked for attention for the public space as a binding element in the city. Also in the restructuring of the post-war modernistic areas the revaluation of the public space is a key issue. These neighbourhoods from the fifties have plenty of public green space but lack solutions for the current need for parking places. The redesign of the public space could restore the original quality of these neighbourhoods. Meurs pleaded for a more integral approach for sustainable reuse of existing buildings: an open and continuous dialogue between all stakeholders.

Redesign

Olivier Graeven and Hielkje Zijlstra approached the demand for sustainable reuse as an architectonic assignment. From the analysis of the surroundings, the history and the building they presented design solutions for renovation and reuse of a building. Zijlstra had elaborated this in her so called ABCD method in which 'understanding the building' is fundamental,

from context to detail. She showed an adjustment of a concrete façade panel in the reconstruction neighbourhood Jeruzalem, Amsterdam.

The panel that once was the visual expression of modern standardization and mass production, could only meet the modern insulation standards by adapting its thickness. By doing so the typical expression of the design of the dwellings could be preserved in the area that has now been listed as a national monument. The question remains if such an expensive and radical renovation of an existing building is financially affordable.

Olivier Graven presented a redesign of the mail sorting building TPG Post at Holland Spoor, The Hague. By placing a new volume on top of the existing building, the original landmark effect of the once futuristic building was brought back into its surroundings. He approached the redesign of the building as an evolutionary process that allows it to grow and to change, in a natural, logical and poetic way.

Materials

Michiel Haas questioned our understanding of sustainability by discussing the scarcity of materials instead of energy. The energy of the sun is endless but the availability of rare materials for our products is ending. He showed how this scarcity of materials influences the dependency in between countries and continents.

For example the production of advanced technology

products that are largely owned by Chinese entrepreneurs in Africa.

From this logic he argued that redundant buildings should not be considered as waste but as material suppliers, hence they should be demolished in a sustainable way. In this view throwing away materials is a waste of energy. In the ideal future situation we might think of materials that do not have any environmental impact and grow again during their lifespan. He introduced the concept of 'zero materials', in analogy with zero energy concepts.

Crisis

Rudy Stroink presented his vision on the future development of real estate market in the Netherlands. He started with the conclusion that real estate developments and their market in the Netherlands are derailed. He made a clear distinction between the crisis and the problems in the real estate market, taking into account that the latter will not be easily recover.

Given the fact that vacancy in the office market today is 20% and it is expected to raise up to 40-50%, we have more than enough buildings. As a consequence of this he expects prices to fall, so that the market will have to radically change.

Thereafter he showed the TCN concept of redevelopment. TCN invests in non-profitable buildings by finding new users that are looking for a cheap workplace, for example small creative industries and freelancers. Low initial quality of these locations are compensated by additional services and a sense of shared ownership, for example providing good coffee, free parking space or child care. TCN invests mainly in the community of tenants, instead of in the buildings only.

Stroink sees the different actors in the building process as parties that should create clearly defined conditions to realize new developments. In the future development of the Netherlands he expects the State to develop according to the American model, in which the role of the government as an investor will radically diminish. Stroink also stated that an integral approach is essential for reuse. All stakeholders





should perform according to their role in the process, stimulate the development process and create out of their own specialisation fruitful conditions for all stakeholders. In short he pleaded for transformation of projects into platforms for brand new and original creations.

The introduction of the American model in Europe, as Rudy Stroink mentioned, gave rise to some discussion. Emmanuel Moulin, director of the URBACT Secretariat, asked about the Dutch debate around social housing since this issue was not mentioned in the debate. This might have been due to the typical Dutch situation of the major influence of the housing construction associations and needed some explanation for foreign participants. Other participants in the room asked if for the transformation of lesser profitable locations the active role of the government as investor would still be needed.

LINKS

At the end of the day Frédérique Calvanus, coordinator of the LINKS Network and representative of the lead partner city of Bayonne, presented the goals of the LINKS project. She stated that in the rest of Europe the stock of traditional buildings is even bigger than in the Netherlands (30%) and affirmed that more attention and knowledge about traditional

building physics is needed, notably about breathability and thermal inertia. In the end of the session Bas Verkerk, mayor of Delft, reminded the fact that the 9th of May is also the day of Europe. The mayor stressed the importance of European exchanges and strongly advocated the social European alternative for the individualistic American politics and collective Asian market, taking the 'Dutch approach' to an intercontinental level. After all the symposium gave an impression how scarcity can and should actuate the formulation of new ideas and insights. Thinking about a sustainable future the integral approach is crucial. The symposium attempted to draw some outlines of this future.





Focusing on job creation through heritage protection in Kilkenny

by **Malcolm Noonan**

Kilkenny City is derived from the Irish, Cill Chainnaigh (meaning the Canice's wood). The medieval street pattern in Kilkenny is largely unchanged in 800 years since its foundation. While much of the building stock is Victorian/Georgian, the footprint and basic fabric of the buildings in the historical centre are of medieval origin. Some significant 16th century houses remain intact and the Tholsel (City Hall) was originally constructed in 1540. Its current form dates back to 1719. The Norman Kilkenny Castle (c. 1170) and the ecclesiastical sites of St Canice's Cathedral, the Dominican Black Abbey and St Mary's Church are of a similar vintage.

The challenges for Kilkenny are:

- Urban Mobility
- Unoccupied units
- Implementation of the conservation projects- Butler Gallery - St Mary's Church, The City Walls
- Protection of the built heritage
- Protection of the archaeological heritage

The local authority is meeting these challenges through

- The development and implementation of a mobility management plan
- Examples of public and Private Conservation projects
- Its conservation policies and objectives in its development plans
- Its control of development in the granting of planning permissions
- The dispersal of money through a Heritage Grants scheme



- Financial incentives through reduction in development levies
- Co-operating with the Heritage Council as a partner in the development of Conservation Plans and Projects for heritage buildings in the City e.g. St Mary's church and The City Walls and Kilkenny Archaeological Project

On the 30th of November 2012 the Mayor of Kilkenny Seán ÓhArgáin and Council member Malcolm Noonan met Irish MEP Nessa Childers to introduce her Kilkenny's priorities in the framework of the LINKS Project.

Press Notice

Presentation on URBACT funded project LINKS. The project is a partnership of 9 EU Cities concerned with the protection and consolidation of historic town centres and with the eco restoration of historic/listed buildings.

The project is coming to the end of a 3 year cycle. The ultimate goal of which is to inform EU, National and Local policies in best practice based on 3 years of research. A secondary outcome is to use the projects to leverage ERDF Funding for our chosen pilot projects in our respective cities.

Nessa Childers will support the Kilkenny URBACT project when they attend the European Parliament in Brussels during January 2013. The Kilkenny project team will present their findings to MEPS, policy makers, Environment and Climate Committees and other relevant stakeholders.

Nessa Childers is also supporting the application of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund for the Irish Construction Industry with specific emphasis on conservation training, to keep employment within the industry and directly assist the heritage sector and tourism industry.



Revitalising the historic centre of BUDRIO. Special report of the URBACT newsletter in July 2012

Sustainable building has become the aspiration for European urban development, but what about the thousands of historical buildings at the heart of towns and cities across the Union?

They may be symbols of their communities and magnets for tourists but these heritage buildings are also a major challenge for local authorities: they are expensive to heat and renovate, and can be awkward to live in.

URBACT's three-year LINKS project, which ends this year, has brought together nine provincial towns with historic centres to share experiences and ideas about how to safeguard this heritage and help their communities to thrive in the future.

Historic centres can become "museumised"

Many communities have witnessed their historic centres become "museumised" and lose their vitality in recent decades. In a spiral of decline, residents desert the centre and move out to the suburbs in search of cheaper, more comfortable housing that is easily accessible by car. In addition, historic buildings have a big impact on the environment in terms of energy consumption. The challenge is to improve the insulation and energy efficiency of these buildings, thereby making them more attractive places to live in.

Sharing experiences across Europe

The nine partner towns and cities – Anderlecht in Belgium; Kilkenny in Ireland; Brasov in Romania; Freiberg in Germany; Bayonne in France; Almeria in Spain; Veria in Greece; Delft in the Netherlands; and Budrio in Italy – all face common problems, albeit as a result of different circumstances. The Lead Partner is Bayonne, but here we will examine the project's benefits through the experience of the smallest par-



ticipant, Budrio, in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy. This fast-growing town of 20,000 people is 10km east of Bologna, but with its own history and identity.

Devastation by earthquakes

In May 2012, the people of Budrio were made dramatically aware of the fragility of their heritage when two earthquakes in nine days devastated the historic centres of towns less than 50km away, as well as killing 27 people. For Budrio's newly elected mayor, Giulio Pierini, it is clear that alongside the restoration of a historic building, action must also be taken to improve the integrity of its construction. "We have continuous monitoring of seismic activity but with a series of measures we could offer a new level of safety," he said.

The mayor hopes that the earthquakes can be the stimulus for discussion when Budrio hosts the last LINKS meeting on October 11-12, 2012.

Revitalising a historic street

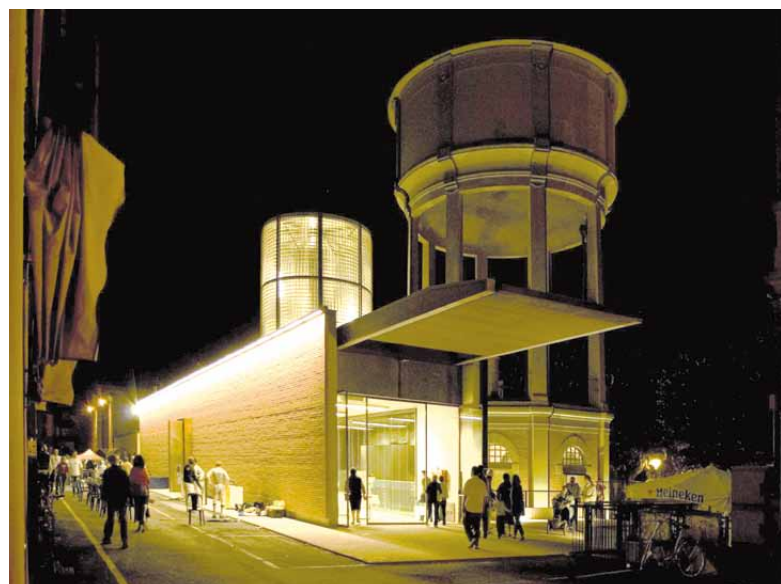
Reducing energy consumption by eco-restoration of ancient buildings is a priority in LINKS, and Budrio has begun an audit of energy consumption in all its public buildings as part of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan. But for the LINKS project it has highlighted culture. The town has a strong record of

restoring its old buildings, especially, the transformation of a complex of 19th-century water storage towers into a thriving arts centre, in consultation with the public. So for LINKS, Budrio focused on community involvement in revitalising one particular street in its historic centre, via Garibaldi.

The street houses the town's 17th-century theatre as well as a library and four museums. One of these is dedicated to the ocarina, a musical whistle invented here in 1853, which has tens of thousands of devotees in the Far East, bringing international tourists to the town. But despite the street's wealth of public buildings, according to one of Budrio's LINKS coordinators, Valentina Ballotta, they are not obvious from outside, and several of its shops had closed. "We wanted to illuminate these public buildings at night and also to revitalise the shopping street".

A plan involving the whole community

The municipality held meetings with local stakeholders – traders, companies, cultural associations and ordinary citizens – to work out a plan. They included a local company that makes energy-efficient LED lighting systems. When the plan is finally put into action, citizens will feel that they had a say in it. Of course, funding for such projects will be difficult. The municipality has already received a grant from Emilia



Romagna's Regional Energy Plan but it hopes to receive more, both from the region and the European Regional Development Fund. And, in keeping with the URBACT model, it also seeks funding from the private sector.

A big change in decision-making

"LINKS represents a big change for us," Giulio Pierini said. "Until now, as in all the local councils in Italy, many urban planning decisions were unilateral political or administrative decisions. Today we have chosen to share these decisions with the people involved. The effect is to make everyone responsible for the objectives that we set. That means that everyone can be proud of having been real protagonists in this process of change."

"Eco-restoration": a special case for ancient buildings

Budrio's theatre, which overheats in July and August, urgently needs a climatic retrofit. This and many privately owned historic buildings are subject to the strict regulations of Italy's cultural heritage conservation body, which can obstruct restoration. In its Local Action Plan the municipality is trying to smooth the process by piloting an information service for those who want to undertake eco-restoration of their buildings.

Energy efficiency in historical buildings is also a priority defined in Budrio Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), now in elaboration phase in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors, recently signed with European Commission. It is another important engagement of the Municipality in close synergy with Links aims.

One outcome that Budrio and its LINKS partners would like to see is a review by the European Commission of the rules governing construction and restoration. Eco-regulations insist on modern materials that may not always be sympathetic to the unique character of these heritage buildings. If the framework of these regulations could be more flexible, some towns believe, it could help Europe's historic centres become the vibrant eco-areas of the future. Building regulations, restoration techniques and funding are all likely to be discussed at the final conference.



Sixth step. URBACT LINKS final conference in Anderlecht / Brussels

How can the challenges concerning the environment and heritage building protection be reconciled to offer the majority of people sustainable and attractive places to live and work at the very heart of the city?

Urban, social and cultural challenges

Promoting heritage and avoiding city centres to become just museums has been the creed of numerous European historic cities and 30 years of sustained efforts were necessary to preserve threatened historic heritage and win back some inhabitants. To be really attractive for a large portion of active population these cities need to offer a viable alternative

to periurban residential areas. They must offer safe, comfortable and energy saving dwellings. The difficult upgrading of historic centres shows that the wish to live in a city centre is not only a matter of better built environment, but reflects the awareness of a more sustainable urban way of life in terms of consumption, transport, leisure patterns etc.

- How can we better understand and meet such expectations?
- How can we promote aged and worn out urban areas without moving the most fragile residents out?
- How can we maintain or regain a balance between the residential, commercial and tertiary functions?

To find an answer to these questions is key to keep the European compact city model alive and not just preserve its image.

Environmental and technical challenges

In order to achieve higher energy performances, heritage buildings have been mishandled for years, using standard techniques that were developed for post-war buildings. The results were poor in terms of efficiency and in many cases caused great damages³. Only recently it has been argued that techniques inspired from eco-constructions and traditional materials are the most appropriate and efficient to restore and upgrade traditional and historic buildings.

To be able to choose the best technical and cost optimal retrofitting solution it is necessary to consider the global consumption of energy during the whole life cycle of the building (construction/renovation, use, decommissioning, demolition), and not only during the next operating phase on which the EPBD is focused.

Consequently, a real revolution has to be carried out in order to durably restore built heritage: improve thermal comfort and energy efficiency, reducing the impact of retrofitting works on the environment. These were the technical objectives structuring the environmental part of the LINKS project.

Economic opportunities

This technical revolution will not occur if economic actors are not strongly supported to carry out this change looking for new markets and qualified job opportunities. In many cases, the local building chain is unable to meet the new technical requirements. The building sector needs to get re-structured, developing know-how and local business sectors. Mobi-

lizing a network of actors, identifying opportunities for the local economy, taking part in structuring the eco-restoration market and stimulating demand have been the priority objectives of the LINKS project at the local level.

Historic centres must evolve to exist

The LINKS partners have demonstrated that it is possible to combine heritage and environmental issues and to use the revitalisation of the historic centres as a very efficient tool for social, economic and urban development. Sharing a great variety of solutions and points of view it has been possible to debate and compare different approaches which became source of inspiration and new ideas for local solutions. The result of over two years of exchanges is now available to allow the stakeholders to submit concrete proposals for the social, urban, cultural, environmental and economic challenges related to the future of historic centres.

European Regional Development Funds must address historic city centres

Following the debate at the European Parliament the URBACT LINKS cities wish to express an additional recommendation to the Members of the Urban Intergroup. The reinforced urban focus of the Regional Development Funds should not miss the opportunity to recognise the key role of historic city centres for sustainable urban development. The ring-fencing of ERDF for cities represent a great opportunity to focus a percentage of these resources specifically for energy retrofitting of residential buildings in historic centres. The aim should be clearly identified as to provide exemplary solutions of eco-restoration in order to help municipalities to kick-start the mainstreaming energy retrofitting of the existing building stock, which represent the main opportunity to recover from the current economic crisis.

3 The major difference between a modern building (post-industrial) and an old building (built with traditional techniques, generally before 1945) lies in the management of moisture in terms of hygro-thermal behaviour. Modern buildings are generally made of vapor-proof envelopes. Thus, they are less sensible to the implementation of impermeable insulation layers. Traditional buildings are permeable to the water vapor, and this characteristic must be respected because humidity can cause a lot of damages. All intervention to upgrade the energy efficiency of historic buildings must therefore be technically compatible with the existing structure, particularly with the need for permeable fabric to "breathe".

Notes of the LINKS final conference

by Antonio Borghi

This is an attempt to summarise the key points of the LINKS network activities towards the conclusion of the project, activities that culminated in the final conference at the European Parliament on the 10th of January 2013.

The preparation work started one year ahead during the workshop in Brasov (February 2012) and continued during the meetings in Delft (May) and Budrio (October). At that point in time the network partners had reached a high level of internal cooperation and thematic explorations were completed or well underway. The question how to finalise the activities and prepare the final event was dealt with in these meetings with the help of Philip Stein and Alain Sagne and the support of the local partner, the city of Anderlecht, represented by Davy Fiankan and Florence Colard.

Already in the meeting in Brasov it was agreed that the final conference had to be an event of high exposure for the network partners, in order to attract the commitment of each one involved and at the same time to be rewarding for the work done during almost three years. The main political target of the final event was identified as to obtain political commitment and support of the elected representatives for the respective Local Action Plans. Bringing all the mayors together inside the institutions of the EU, the same that have supported and co-financed the network, was like closing the circle. Showing the EU policy makers the outcome of this activity of learning and exchange was even more important in the ongoing debate on the EU budget and the urban dimension of cohesion policy. As we know it is very difficult to measure the benefits of learning and exchange programmes with the old fashioned economic, social and environmental indicators used by the urban surveys and policy impact assessments.

Gathering together in the EU institutions was also seen as an opportunity to meet our representatives,

illustrate them the networks activities, witnessing the gaps and the potentials of the cities, exchanging on the most appropriate strategies to achieve "future-proof historic city centres". For this reason the LINKS network delivered the collection of the Local Action Plans and a brochure illustrating the Networks Recommendations to the EU institutions. These documents were collected edited and printed by the LINKS network coordinator Frédérique Calvanus (Bayonne) providing the basis of an exchange with the member of the EU Parliament Urban Intergroup and the representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee.

To complete the picture of the final conference we should not forget the "local dimension" that has been the cornerstone of the network activities. As one of the Commune of Brussels Anderlecht, was the partner in charge of organising the final conference, providing content for learning and exchange about the challenges of rejuvenating historic city centres. Following the well-established model of the LINKS thematic workshops, the municipality of Anderlecht organised site visits to challenged historic buildings (*École Vétérinaire*) and neighbourhoods (*La Roue*), organised presentations to illustrate the regional, urban and municipal context (Brussels Region, Brussels Capital, Anderlecht Commune) including sustainable development policies, area based regeneration projects (*Contrat du Quartier*), public and private initiatives (*École Vétérinaire*). The presentations and workshop sessions were hosted in a beautifully restored historic building (Espace 16Art in Rue Rossini, 16) same as the official dinner (*Tour&Taxis*). Again following the model of the LINKS Thematic workshops some "extras" were included in the programme, like the *Musée du Beguinage d'Anderlecht* and *la Maison d'Érasme*, two cornerstones of European culture dating back to the Renaissance period.

Being invited in the European Parliament has been an extraordinary motivation and a reward for the network partners to deliver high profile outputs, but does not mean that what happened during all the LINKS workshops was less important.



On the contrary, the level of exchange and learning was far deeper and more intense during the thematic workshops and the site visits in the partner cities.

The thematic reports and above all the strong relationships established between the partners bear witness to this. The awareness of the impossibility to transpose all those experiences into written outputs and to summarise them at the end of the project's life, motivated the partners to raise the bar of the expectations towards the final event, in order to avoid a conventional conclusions event, that might have been disappointing after the huge efforts done.

A three hours session to introduce and discuss three years of activity, including protocol and conclusions, is not much, but we accepted the challenge. We knew we had to be well organised and do our best, using the potential of a strong and engaged partnership. Here is a short report of the three hours session in the Parliament in the morning of the 10th of January 2013.

The MEP and President of the EP URBAN Intergroup, Mr Jan Olbrycht, introduced the session emphasizing the importance of historic buildings and historic urban fabric for European cities.

He highlighted that these buildings require special treatment for their energy upgrade and mentioned his own engagement to ensure the inclusion the objective of heritage preservation within the objectives of ERDF and cohesion policies. The current negotiations on the 2014-20 multiannual financial framework do not allow for detailed provisions for cultural heritage, whose financing should be dealt with in regional and urban policies. The overall and shared objective remains "preserving the past/preparing the future" and the EU institutions are willing to contribute to the creation of a stable financial and regulatory framework in this sector.

The Director of the URBACT Programme, Mr Emmanuel Moulin, presented the achievements and priorities of URBACT, focusing on the issues concerning cultural heritage and energy efficiency. He stressed out the importance of following an integrated approach in urban development policies, by involving all stakeholders (e.g. managing authorities and citizens). The opportunity to capitalise the concrete knowledge that has come out from the URBACT networks and capitalisation work streams should not be missed. Capacity building should also be addressed in order to grasp the economic opportunities provided by the building sector and finally "retrofit our way out of the recession".

Mr Jean Rene Etchégaray, Mayor of Bayonne, spoke on behalf of the LINKS Partner Cities. He explained how historic city centres can act as key drivers for sustainable development.

He presented the existing legislation, technological and social challenges, and explained the economic aspects. Policy makers should have an integrated approach and vision when addressing historical city centres. It is also crucial to use adapted or especially developed technologies when dealing with historical buildings. A realistic approach over the expected improvement of the energy performance of historical buildings is necessary. On the other hand, any measures taken to

rejuvenate historical city centres should ensure a balance between the residential, commercial and tertiary functions.

In a video projection that followed, representatives of "LINKS" network cities, with short statements and based on their experiences in the project, introduced the partnership and stated that it is possible to combine heritage and environmental issues and to use the revitalisation of the historic centres as a very efficient tool for social, economic and urban development.

Antonio Borghi, LINKS Lead Expert, presented the methodology and the key findings of the network.

From the methodological point of view he stressed the importance of creating a shared platform of knowledge and exchange between the partners who were coming from different cultural and professional background. To this extent the LINKS network has been a shining example in the extraordinary level of engagement and readiness to cooperate and contribute of each single partner. The organisation of thematic workshops and special meetings in each partner city ensured the added value of touching and feeling the local challenges and opportunities, something that cannot be channelled only via presentations and discussions. Once again it has been proved that despite the development of every kind of communication tools, face to face meetings and site visits are not replaceable experiences when dealing with urban policies.

In terms of content he underlined that all social, economic, technical, environmental, cultural issues are strongly linked to one another. A clear political vision and transparent administrative regulations are crucial in order to achieve high urban quality. Long term town planning visions are necessary and, on the other hand, citizens' participation has to be encouraged, as it is the key to the success of any urban development strategy. It is also important to keep in mind that there is no standard technical solution that



can be applied to improve the energy efficiency of diverse historic and traditional buildings. A different approach is needed every time, taking into account the specific characteristics of each case so as to successfully address the potential conflicts between heritage and energy efficiency. Regarding the economic aspects, one shouldn't oversee the opportunities that arise from the eventual labour intensive activities and the mobilisation of long supply chains that cannot be de-localised. But at the same time, we have to deal with the often too complicated engineering of the various financial instruments available (EU funds, national programmes, regional and local calls, public and private partnerships etc.). Within the minimum of 5% of ERDF ring-fenced for urban development, historic city centres must be addressed by specific measures.

Frédérique Calvanus, representative of the lead partner City of Bayonne and coordinator of the network activities from its inception, presented a series of recommendations to be addressed to EU policy makers on behalf of the Partner Cities.

The need to start seeing historical city centres as part of the solution and not as an obstacle towards meeting the EU 2020 and EU 2050 energy targets, was highlighted. The recommendations were organized in three categories according to the identified needs: 1) challenges for energy efficiency, 2) for economic growth and 3) innovative governance for an effective use of public funds. More specifically, in the context of promoting energy efficiency, it is important to adapt the energy assessment methods to the features of existing buildings. The reduction of the global environmental footprint of renovation works should also be considered as a criterion for a resource efficient policy. And last, but not least, a shift towards eco-friendly materials and practices by the means of specific attention to the characteristics of traditional buildings should be further on supported within the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and its difficult implementation path.

Regarding the need to increase the economic benefits of energy saving policies creating more and better jobs for the construction sector, it was recommended an effective accompaniment of measures at local level. Cities need to be supported in the implementation of training and capacity building schemes for the construction sector. Opportunities should be created for SMEs, especially in the eco-friendly sector, facilitating their access to the market, avoiding certification's barriers and heavy bureaucratic burden. Awareness raising of practitioners and decision makers is crucial to support the shift from a standardised industrial approach to a more environmentally sensitive local economy based approach.

Finally, regarding the need for a better use of public funds, it was noted that the some obstacles which hinder the effective cooperation of stakeholders are not sufficiently addressed by the regulatory framework and should be overcome. As energy upgrading and historic city centre regeneration are not short term tasks, a stable financial support should be ensured. A complementary, but very effective means of improving

sustainable city centre development is the dissemination of good practice examples as provided by the URBACT Program.

In the discussion that followed, members of the Urban intergroup provided their feedback on the recommendations.

MEP Mrs Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, highlighted the need for a stronger focus on heritage conservation when dealing with historical centres.

As she pointed out, only by taking into account all social aspects will any attempt to address the challenges concerning the environment and heritage building protection be truly successful. She pointed out some gaps in the current legislation dealing with energy efficiency that, as noted in the LINKS outputs, is too concentrated on technical and physical aspects, missing the key opportunity of engaging end-users in energy saving efforts.

MEP Lambert Van Nistelrooij stated that the methodological approach and thematic integration adopted by the URBACT LINKS network is an example European institutions should follow when promoting sustainable and integrated urban development policies.

Recalling the recent Smart Cities and Communities Initiative of the Commission, he reminded that historic centres are the smart cities par excellence. To this extend innovative technologies play a positive role in monitoring and improving the energy performance of historic buildings, such as micro generation of renewable energies, smart metering and smart grids. These new kind of tools are high-tech, but are having very positive impact also on historic and traditional buildings.

Corinne Hermant De Callathay, Urban Unit of DG Regio, stressed that cities are made of people and it is alarming that 1/3 of the European populations is leaving in periurban areas, in the so-called urban sprawl.

This is a consequence and a cause of decline for the European culture, which means economic and social decline as well. Recovery of European cultural, social and economic role is linked to the revitalisation of historic centres.

The morning session of the conference ended shortly with brief statements from representatives of the Architects Council of Europe, ACE-CAE, CECODHAS Housing Europe, Energy Cities and the Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency EUROACE, where the appreciation and support to the findings of LINKS was expressed.

The afternoon session was hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee, a not very well known, but historically fundamental institution of the EU. The EESC is a consultative body of the EU established by the Treaty of Rome in 1954, meanwhile it is worthwhile mentioning that the European Parliament has been elected the first time in 1979. Very influential in the legislative process, the role of the European Economic and Social Committee is to enhance the involvement of social and economic stakeholders from the member states in the decision making process.

The Committee is composed by representative of three categories of stakeholders: 1) employers, 2) workers and 3) various interests. Each country has a number of representatives linked to its size and their mandate is to issue opinions on matters subject of legislation to the Council, to the Commission and to the Parliament. Every two and half years the EESC elects a bureau made up of 37 members, a president and two vice-presidents chosen from each of the three groups in rotation. Furthermore the Committee has six permanent thematic sections: 1) Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT), 2) Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO), 3) Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC), 4) External Relations (REX), 5) The Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT), 6) Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN).

The LINKS network was invited by the section Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and Information society to illustrate and discuss the key points of the Local action plans prepared by the partner cities. The debate between the Committee's and the LINKS's cities representatives aimed at verifying consistency at various levels of governance focusing on the role of citizen's involvement in energy efficiency policies.

In its introduction to this session Stéphane Buffettaut, President of the TEN Section of the Committee, described the great challenge that energy dependency represents for democracy in the EU member states.

Energy prices being the consequence of the law of the strongest rather than the that of a balanced and fair market, he reminded the urgency of building a European Energy Community. Unifying the EU energy policy will enable "addressing its current shortcomings through joint policy-making, consistent implementation, pooling of resources and appropriate governance. Only such a comprehensive framework can make EU energy policy more efficient, reduce the cost, bring value to the citizens and raise the EU's profile vis-à-vis international partners." A Roadmap for the EU Energy 2050 has been co-produced by the Committee to reach this target of real European integration.

The first set of presentations of the afternoon was introduced by Edgardo Iozia (President of the Single market observatory). He recalled his experience as rapporteur of an opinion on "Energy education" commissioned by the Danish presidency of the Council(2012). Iozia argued that EU efforts on the transition towards a low carbon energy system require appropriate policy and the right regulatory framework. However, energy challenges have a strong societal and behavioural dimension. In particular, energy education can play a key role in helping people to adapt their behaviour to support the energy transition ahead and in contributing to reducing people's energy bills.

The first Local action plan of the afternoon session was Almeria's "People, skills and pride" illustrated by the Lord Mayor Luis Rogelio Rodríguez-Comendador. It was followed by the Bayonne's "General public awareness, the sine qua none key for success" presented by the LINKS Project coordinator Frédérique Calvanus. Local County and Borough Council member Malcolm Noonan illustrated the priorities of Kilkenny's Local action plan called "From cities leading role to citizen's empowerment. Ovidiu Razvan Fodor, Deputy General Manager of the metropolitan agency concluded the first round of presentations with Brasov's Local action plan "Are public grants a mandatory stage?". The debate following these presentations was moderated by Antonio Borghi, focusing on the possibility of pursuing the same goal and share a common vision maintaining the differences of the cultural background, social approach and economic priorities. Each Local action plan is illustrated in detail in the dedicated brochure.

The second round was introduced by Committee member Richard Adams, President of the Permanent Study Group on European Energy Community and Co-rapporteur Energy Roadmap 2050, towards a reduction of 80% of GHG emissions.

He reminded that global climate change is probable, with inevitable catastrophic effects on the biosphere, our living environment. How we produce and use energy is critical not only to our democracy, as stated by the President of the TEN Section of the Committee Stéphane Buffetaut, but first and foremost to preserve our living environment. New technologies are being developed to deliver alternative, low carbon energy sources and processes which can replace fossil fuels. European institutions are aware that energy is a strategic sector. We have to ensure that any new technologies to produce and deliver energy are developed with a strong and consistent ethical approach, in order to avoid new risks for the environment, for health or for democratic institutions.



This last session of the afternoon was moderated by Philip Stein, who assisted the LINKS network as a URBACT Thematic pole manager first and later as an external expert. Kleopatra Theologidou, scientific associate of the mayor's cabinet, introduced the local action plan of Veria "Heritage versus energy efficiency: still a conflict?". Milène Junius, Vice Mayor of the City of Delft introduced the local action plan "Delft creating history - Sustainable monuments within an integral approach". It was then the turn of Giulio Pierini Lord Mayor of the City of Budrio introducing the local "Culture System, a path from historic to sustainable cities". Concluding the presentations of the local action plans was Council member Christophe Dielis introducing the Eco restoration of the "École Vétérinaire, a pilot project to stimulate regeneration of a deprived neighbourhood".

This very intense day dedicated by the LINKS network to the European level of policy and decision making was concluded by Martine Bisauta. As Deputy Mayor for environmental issues at the Municipality of Bayonne, she has followed and actively participated to the network activities from inception to conclusion. In her conclusion speech she described the great engagement of

each partner in the network activities and the valuable and diverse contributions everyone brought to the discussion, reproducing a real European microcosm. Furthermore she expressed regret for having reached the formal end of the project, but also confidence that the seeds that have been sown will bear fruits in the near future.

I think this very short summary may have resumed the range of challenges dealt with in the framework of the URBACT LINKS network. As a matter of fact the thematic coverage was so broad that none of them has been scientifically threaten in depth. Nevertheless some original contributions have been proposed and tested by a representative group of stakeholders during the thematic workshops.

The concrete and pragmatic focus of the LINKS network reflects the multidisciplinary fields of complexity that everyone of us (professional or citizen) has to deal with in everyday life. The choice about the place we live and work may have been a natural one for the large majority of people of past generations.

Nowadays citizens has the opportunity and often the burden to decide where to live and most of them has to adopt one among a range of different lifestyles, in hope to make the right choice for her/himself and her/his family. Policy makers have the responsibility to orientate citizen's choices towards an enjoyable and sustainable way of life, considering the microcosm but also the broader and global perspective.

The URBACT LINKS partners hope to have provided some useful ideas and practical support to the municipal authorities on the way to this task.

Brussels' buildings energy policy

by Virginie Leclercq

The energy policy of the Brussels-Capital Region has developed from isolated experiences, initiated since 2004, in a coordinated and ambitious policy in the sustainable construction sector, imposing requirements aimed at nearly zero energy buildings for all new constructions as of 2015.

The Region has achieved its objectives mainly through demanding measures in terms of energy efficiency, since the urban area within the Region doesn't offer any great potential for the development of renewable energy sources. The Region's ambition can be approached from the angle of a familiar vision of the sustainable construction market according to the two key points, i.e., the offer and demand in sustainable construction. The measures have been developed bearing in mind that offer and demand must be balanced at all times.

As regards the demand in sustainable construction, numerous information, awareness-raising actions and financial incentives led to the development of an initial energy and climate culture. In 2007, the Brussels-Capital Region launched, among other projects, a major stimulation programme for the construction and renovation of very high energy and environmental performance buildings: the "Exemplary Buildings" call for projects.

This call for projects is aimed at all contracting authorities that are building or renovating in Brussels. From 2007 to 2012, five calls for projects have been launched, with 193 projects being selected. These projects represent a total area of 520,000m² of which 250,000m² are passive buildings.

This programme has proved that it is altogether possible to reach an excellent level of energy and environmental performance while respecting certain financial constraints. It is a major driving force in the construction and renovation of buildings with a very high energy and environmental performance.

Thanks to this evidence, the Region has been able to negotiate with the construction sector the obligation to reach the passive standard on all new public constructions as of 2010 and to include, in its legislation, the obligation to respect nearly zero energy requirements for 2015. Since 2007, thanks to many actions and projects implemented in the Region, 500,000 m² of new buildings have either already been built, are being built or are planned with passive standards. The Brussels-Capital Region has shown that what was considered an utopia can be a reality when the necessary means are implemented and used.

As regards the offer in sustainable construction, numerous measures support the sector; among other things, the Region has implemented a major training programme for architects, engineers, developers, project managers, energy managers, etc. (800 participants and 15 000 hours of training a year as of 2012) and negotiated (2010-2012) and implemented (2011-2014) an Employment-Environment Alliance for the sustainable construction sector in order to stimulate the sector and adapt the knowledge and expertise of the workers.

All constructions or renovations with high energy performance show us, year by year, the way to do it and to implement our ambitious energy standards.

Focus on Anderlecht

by **Frédérique Calvanus**

Who expected to find the Erasmus house in Anderlecht?

This surprising city spreads in multiple neighbourhood with pronounced identities. But, leaned against the *Gare du Midi*, the municipality first offers to the visitor the image of a former industrial suburb of Brussels, developed along the banks of the river Senne.

Indeed, Anderlecht is one on the 19 municipalities of the Region Brussels Capital located in the southwest of Brussels urban area and is the 8th most populated of Belgium.

The historic centres concentrated around the collegiate church Saint-Guidon and the Place de la Vaillance, shows nice brick and stone building built in the Flemish style. Nearby, the Erasmus House and *Musée du beguinage* are unexpected testimony of the 16th and 18th centuries.

Cureghem and the veterinary school

The district of Cureghem was a hamlet along the river Senne which counted many miles from which the industrial development of the city started.

The veterinary school has been found there in 1892 on the initiative of Leopold I, first king of Belgium. The construction of the building designed by the great architect Seroen in a Flemish neo-renaissance style, started in 1909.

This building has been chosen by the municipality as a pilot project within the LINKS project.

The site consisted originally in 19 separated buildings among which the administrative building was the most recognizable one, with its imposing dome in the middle of the roof.

In 1969, the Veterinary School lost its independence and integrated the University of Liege and in 1991, the building was abandoned.

The whole site has been classified in 1990 has a monument and heritage site.

All the building, except the administrative building, has been sold to private owners. The administrative building has been bought by the municipality.

The project

The administrative building will be transformed into a “business hotel” to support the development of local economic initiatives as well as a conference centre and an exhibition hall.

This project, running for many years, met in its previous stages a very strong reluctance from the heritage bodies, namely the Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites. Its main concerns were the potential damage caused by the insulations of the walls, in particular to the bricks and stones, but above all to the mortar joints.

A detailed expertise has therefore been made to assess the risks and practical difficulties to internal insulation of the building.

This study and the results of the hygrothermal behaviour of the walls led to a decision in favor of the eco-restoration of the building.

The eco-restoration of the buildings aims to reach the low-energy standard combining the rehabilitation of interesting internal elements (not classified) and external elements (classified).

- The back façade (brick) is the most vulnerable and will be less insulated (3 cm plaster)
- The more exposed façades of the highest floor, will be insulated with 8 cm instead of 12 cm calcium silicate to decrease risk
- The façade of the aula, with many decorative interior finishing, will not be insulated

As a result, the energy savings are less than with the initial options, but they represent a huge gain with respect to the initial consumption of the building, and they are still sufficient to apply for subsidies

The project is developed with the financial support of:

- EU Funds (3.9 million Euros ERDF),
- The Brussels Region, through subsidies of the Direction des monuments et Sites which will grant 80% of the budget for the renovation of the façades and roof, namely approximately 3 million euros.

Integrated approach, a key for... evolution

For the municipality of Anderlecht, the Local Action Plan is a road map for the local stakeholders to implement concrete solutions to the local challenges.

The Local Support Groups has had a major role in the choices and the definition of this Local Action Plan. But this success story met some obstacles and evolutions during the project.

In the first phase of the project, the only concern of the municipality was to manage the renovation of the Veterinary school which had been chosen as the pilot project of the city for LINKS

The URBACT Local Support Group was restraint to the main actors of the rehabilitation and their main objective was to get out of the conflicting position between heritage protection and energy savings.

From January 2012, the municipality decided to enlarge its approach and to widen the reflection led by the U.L.S.G to get a more ambitious and integrated Local Action Plan.

The basis of the Local Action Plan remains the rehabilitation of the veterinary school, but the idea is to use this experience as a key for sensitisation and training to eco-restoration.

To be more efficient, the Local Support Group is now organized in three sub-groups:

- The first one is responsible for the rehabilitation of the veterinary school,
- The second one is responsible for the sensitization and training of the general and professional public,
- The last one is in charge of the improvement of knowledge and awareness about eco-restoration.

The Local Action Plan of the municipality of Anderlecht is now based on the conviction that the greenest building is the one already built and subject to eco-restoration.

The municipality hopes that the eco-restoration of the veterinary school will help to promote eco-restoration and facilitate the development of a framework for green heritage building in the Brussels Region.



Refurbishment of the old veterinary school in Anderlecht

by Bart Blancquaert

The design of the renovation of the main building of the Old Veterinary School in Anderlecht is developed keeping in mind 4 key aspects: the historical value of the building, its influence on the surrounding urban tissue, the desire to make a sustainable building and, of course, the new functional program.

Refurbishing the Veterinary School has an influence on different levels in the urban tissue. Located on the axis of one of the main boulevards of Kureghem, planned as one of the focal points of this district in the early 20th century, it is clear that reinstating the building in its former glory will have a positive impact on the overall neighbourhood.

On a slightly larger level, the building will act as a new attraction pole next to the nearby town hall and railway station. Furthermore, taking into account its scale and historical importance the Old School

could even make a difference on the regional level of Brussels-Capital.

The functional brief for the building demanded a combined business and conference centre. As the buildings already had historical reception rooms on the second floor, the conference centre found its logical place up there, leaving all other floors for 6 growing start-up companies. This layout allowed us to integrate the new functions, while preserving the existing building as much as possible.

The opportunities posed by the iconic image of the listed building are undeniable, even if this means that the visual aspects of the building need to stay unaltered. As a new functional program inevitably has an impact on any building, the design principle was to make these changes in an almost invisible way.

On the other hand, the unlisted interior allowed making more visible interventions – updating the building to a new era. Nevertheless we tried to balance every intervention with the existing historical features. If possible, the design – or even the functional brief - was adapted so a maximum of the exist-

ing historic detail could be preserved. The aim here was to maintain the building's existing atmosphere as much as possible.

In this point of view the conservation of the extraordinary historic hall on the second floor made absolute sense, although this design choice had a massive impact on functionality, comfort and energy consumption.

As two supplementary emergency exits were necessary for the conference centre a compromise between the above mentioned design principles had to be found. Creating these extra stairs internally would cause a great loss of historic detail in the interior. Therefor external additions were designed, neutral and as transparent as possible, indicating the change of use of the building. Nevertheless these emergency stairs are conceived in such way that they can be disassembled without leaving any permanent marks on the historical building.

In the brief of this project, the Anderlecht Administration chose explicitly to reduce the energy needed for heating. The goal is a net consumption for heating of 60 kWh/m²a, whereas the current –simulated– consumption is at 200 kWh/m²a.

Our first calculations indicated that, under ideal conditions, a minimal consumption of as less as 25 kWh/m²a was possible. To achieve this a thick internal insulating layer needed to be applied to facades and roofs, including double windows with integrated sun control. However, even in this ideal situation, the thermal bridging of the connection between floors and walls would reduce the effectiveness of the insulating layer by more than 30%. Finally, to minimize the heat lost by ventilating the internal spaces, a balanced ventilation system with heat recuperation should be installed.

In reality this ideal situation was constrained by 3 aspects. First of all, after material analysis and computer simulations, the existing facades showed to be less frost resistant than hoped for. The insulating layer needed to be diminished, so the extra heat losses would allow the existing brickwork to warm up and dry out after rains, reducing the risk of frost damages. Due to this change, the simulated energy consumption rose to 40 kWh/m²a.

As mentioned before, our choice to preserve the historic hall had an important impact on the consumption of the building. Since the non-insulated hall consumes up to 125 kWh/m²a, our global consumption rose to 45 kWh/m²a.

Finally, our ideal script of insulating the thermal bridging led to the loss of several historic mouldings. The adapted solution led to a heat consumption of 48 kWh/m²a. This leaves us with a little margin, necessary to incorporate unforeseeable problems during the construction works.

By installing daylight dimming, occupancy controlled ventilation and a rain water recuperation system, the mere energy saving aspect was broadened to incorporate other sustainability issues. In this perspective also the waste management during the works was tackled, making the future construction site a leading example in Brussels on this particular point.

At the end of 2014 the works on this building will be finished and we hope it to be not very different from its historical state: the splendor of its rooms revived, modern technology almost invisibly incorporated and some distinct contemporary interventions marking a new period in its life.

Architecture: HASA-architecten & blancquaert| de keyser architecten

Building Physics: Daidalos-Peutz

Structural Engineering: BSTK

Installation Engineering: AA&O

Material Analysis: KIK-IRPA

Waste Management Evaluation: ROTOR



Hygrothermal analysis of the former veterinary school in Anderlecht

by **Roel Hendrickx**

The presentation deals with the decision process about the application of thermal insulation in the veterinary school in Anderlecht, from the point of view of conservation of the historical façade materials. Inside insulation is in many cases the only feasible option for retrofit of walls for better energy performance. The reason is that decoration on the outside prevents outside application and the absence of cavities in massive walls. However, inside insulation causes a certain risk for the wall and at the same time it is usually quite difficult to avoid thermal bridges.

According to the first estimations insulating the whole building, including 12cm of calcium silicate board on the façades, would lead to a drastic reduction of primary energy use for heating, by 53% or 58%, depending on the choice for the ventilation system. The largest gain is obtained by insulating

the roof and retrofitting the windows (with double windows). However the façades are still responsible for 22% of the heat losses.

The risk caused by internal insulation are threefold:

- The façade material outside the insulation layer will cool down and get wetter, which causes a greater risk on frost or other moisture-induced damage
- There is a risk for interstitial condensation
- Thermal bridges might lead to local mould growth problems inside.

The most important risk in Anderlecht is the first. Extensive hygrothermal simulations using Delphin 5 HAM-software were used to simulate the existing situation and 2 projected situations. As a result it was possible to estimate the number of risky events and the increase due to the proposed measures. Furthermore the building was used as a primary source of knowledge to estimate its response to various decay mechanisms: the effects of driving rain, the importance of orientation and protruding shapes in the façades, the typical decay mechanisms of the mortar, the brick and the Euville limestone, etc.

As a result, an alternative insulation plan was proposed, which would still give a sufficient improvement of energy performance, but minimise the risks on frost damage. It consists of a decreased thermal resistance on zones which are more exposed. This solution still allows to reach a low energy standard. It is the outcome of a debate between the engineer, the architect, the owner and heritage authorities. It can serve as a test case for future applications in a field which becomes increasingly important.

Introduction to the eight LINKS Local Action Plans

by Ilse Rijnveld

The acronym LINKS stands for 'low tech inherited from European historic cities as a key to sustainable development.' Eight European historic cities participated in this project and worked on local action plans to make their historic centre future proof by strengthening the quality of the city centre and by improving it.

The work of the cities can be categorized in five different themes: Urban development, Social aspects, Technical aspects, Governance and Economic aspects of eco-restoration. These themes are reflected in the different local action plans produced by each city and its local support group of stakeholders.

The local action plans emphasize the need for the integral approach to create a future proof city centre. To adjust cities to modern comfort standards the quality and restrictions of historic centres have to be taken in account. Both on an urban level, socially and on the scale of the building. Each plan attempts to provide a solution to local challenges connecting the different aspects in the development of projects.

Urban development

In the local action plans each city has its locally determined approach to urban aspects of development of the historic centre.

In the Greek city of Veria there is a plan to connect the remaining separated historic areas of the centre in order to restructure the scattered valuable remaining historic parts by redesign the public streets that connect these areas. Many cities propose to strengthen the quality of the historic areas with eco-restoration of public historic buildings as generators of public life.

This strategy can be found in the plans of Almería, in the low-energy renovation of the *École Vétérinaire* (Administrative Building) in Anderlecht, in the renovation of St.Mary's Church of Kilkenny and the eco-restoration of the cultural cluster in Budrio. In the cultural strategy of Budrio we see how the concen-

tration of public cultural buildings can be combined with a redesign of the connecting public space.

In each policy there is a need to find a balance between the economic development of the centre, the use of the city centre as a public meeting place and the needs of inhabitants of the city centre. The regeneration plan of Delft of the last 15 years is a good example of this strategy. In an integral approach of renovation and governance the re-use of historic buildings in the city centre is stimulated.

Social Developments

The regeneration of the city is deeply linked with its social structure. Any improvement in the city can only be successful if it will meet the needs of its inhabitants. Therefore all local action plans refer to the participation of citizens. Some good examples are the Eco-restoration of *Meson Gitano* and the School to learn craftwork in Almería. Here the social inclusion of the Roma population is related to the future development of the area.

In Brasov the public is involved by socio-cultural and artistic public events like the Fatzada project. In Veria the view of the citizens has been incorporated by a door to door questionnaire. And also in Anderlecht there is a strong relation between social issues and the need for eco-restoration of historic areas.

Technical aspects

A good eco-renovation of the historic fabric also implies an understanding of traditional building techniques and the cultural value of its heritage. The LINKS project has stimulated almost every city to work on technical guidelines and technical assistance to owners of historic buildings.

A good example of this approach is La boutique du patrimoine and thematic workshops from Bayonne where private owners, professionals and craftsmen can learn and exchange experiences about eco-materials and building techniques.

In Veria a research was carried out by the University for the assessment of the performances and technical characteristics of typical historic buildings and materials. Many cities show in exemplary pilot projects how traditional low tech renovation techniques can be combined with high tech low-energy retrofitting. In this project learning by doing is part of the

process. Examples of this approach are pilot projects like Ecolé Vétérinaire (Administrative building) in Anderlecht, 'Foundation 'de Witte Roos' in Delft and 22 Rue Bourgneuf in Bayonne.

Economic aspects

The quality of the historic city centre provides an important contribution to the attractiveness of the city for the location of enterprises. Furthermore its touristic interest can be a strong economic factor. Despite these advantages the market for the renovation industry is still small. Nevertheless it can create an important local economic impulse that depends on craftwork and tailor made solutions. High tech innovations for low energy interventions can be stimulated and promoted by exemplary retrofitting of public buildings. Especially in Bayonne pilot projects are used to stimulate demand and structure offer of eco-renovation services.

Governance

City renewal, the maintenance of its heritage and low energy retrofitting largely depend on non-commercial funding opportunities. In order to improve the area private owners have to be involved as well. In the LINKS project different possibilities for funding were investigated. Brasov is working on micro financing as a way to stimulate private owners to improve their buildings.

Many cities have involved their Managing Authorities to explore ways to use European funding for their project. For example Anderlecht, Budrio, Kilkenny and Veria. Furthermore pilot projects are promoted in order to lobby for an integral approach to eco-restoration on a national level.

Conclusions

The work with the local support group in order to create the local action plan has resulted in a kaleidoscopic range of plans, based on the local needs of each city. The work with different local stakeholders has been very helpful to overcome legal barriers in an integral approach.



Nevertheless the plans share some common needs: to relate eco-renovation to the urban context, to develop and disseminate widely knowledge on eco-renovation, to include inhabitants in the process and to look for funding opportunities for both private owners as public projects.

But above all there is the common view that the historic cities are key drivers for economic development and social cohesion for its combination of unique urban qualities, mix of functions and a strong sense of cultural identity.



LINKS Common Set of Principles and Recommendations

by **Frédérique Calvanus**

These recommendations form part of the conclusions which the URBACT LINKS partner cities have formulated as a result of almost 3 years of collaboration and exchange. They are summarized here to provide an introduction to the subject matter and points of discussion during the project Final Conference organized in Brussels on the 10 of January, 2013.

Historic centres must evolve to exist

LINKS partners claim that it is possible to combine heritage and environmental issues and propose to Europe to rely on its network of historic cities to promote a sustainable urban development, which is energy-efficient and resource-conserving, and also presents real opportunities for local economies.

It is therefore necessary to adapt certain modes of governance and the regulatory framework that can constitute obstacles to the urban, social and economic development of historic cities.

Historic centres have presented us with many characteristic principles of what we understand as essential in achieving sustainable cities - space saving, energy and resource efficient urban models, the crucibles of social cohesion and cultural identities.

However, these models have suffered during the past decades from very marked and societal trends throughout Europe. In many cases the old city has lost its attractiveness in comparison to later urban expansions - housing and functional areas on the

outskirts which have imposed other ways of living, and which are now in turn challenged by the social, environmental and economic crisis.

To revert to a more virtuous urban model, many European cities are working to re-appropriate and revitalise their old centres, but they face conflicting pressures and often confine themselves to sectoral and limited policies. Many issues, and energy efficiency is a particularly striking example, combine to crystallize understanding of the tensions between conservative and modern doctrines.

Therefore URBACT LINKS partner cities would like to focus the attention of actors at the European level on the future of historic centres, calling for a joint effort to again recognise them as key drivers for economic development and social cohesion, while preserving and enhancing their unique environmental urban qualities.

A sound revitalization of the historic centres is a key driver for a resource efficient Europe, an urgent social need, a source of new economic opportunities, but requires deep changes in professional practices, as well as a clear and stable financial support.

Methodology

The partners of the LINKS Network are urban practitioners facing, day in day out, urban challenges at the local level, but also working together with their respective managing authorities on projects co-financed by the EU. Their specific focus is targeted at applying urban development policies for the historic centres in their municipalities, and therefore the following recommendations reflect their concrete experience and wish for a more effective elaboration and implementation of local urban development policies. The evidence base for these recommendations is provided by the project baseline study and the case studies that were submitted by each partner city at the beginning of the project and since then have formed the subject of study visits and peer reviews during the transnational workshops.

Every local initiative has shown strengths and weaknesses, but it is not the purpose of the project to judge which have been the best practices and which the less successful ones. Both good and bad sides

of each case study and pilot project fed the work of the partnership and inspired the main outputs, namely: Local Action Plans and Operational Recommendations.

The following contains a list of proposed recommendations, resulting from the synthesis of an articulated debate between the partners in the last year of the network's activity. The proposed recommendations aim to improve the effects of the current policies to obtain:

- More sustainable and efficient energy retrofitting for a better and effective revitalisation of historic buildings
- More and better jobs for the construction sector, particularly in renovation activity, as real benefits of energy saving policies
- More innovative governance for a better and effective use of public funds

Historic centres can become tomorrow's 'eco-districts'

It seems common sense to say that one can find in Historic Centres nearly all the elements that constitute the «eco-district» magic mix most city planners dream to build today. Indeed, their urban forms are incredibly thrifty in terms of use of space, local building materials, closeness of urban services, social and functional mix, etc. Still, the objective evaluation of such characteristics remains to be elaborated.

Towards future-proof historic centres

The LINKS project's ambition was not to study the environmental virtues of historic centres in all of their constituents: the project has concentrated on the question of the ancient housing environment, its intrinsic qualities, the ways to protect and/or improve them.

The urban traffic, the impacts of tourism, or the functional, economic or social balances have been examined as indispensable urban quality factors to have inhabitants come back to and/or remain in historic centres. These elements indeed constitute urban control levers which cities should integrate to validate a holistic urban model before focusing on the validation of specific housing models.

The depletion of energy resources and the greenhouse gas emissions inferred by human activities are among today's top level environmental concerns. These two impacts generally constitute the priority targets of local environmental policies.

This is why the energy performances of ancient buildings and the improvement solutions that have proven to be compatible with the historic character of such constructions were a priority axis for the LINKS project partnership.

The energy dimension has been studied throughout the life cycle of a building, while keeping in mind the need not to aggravate either the other environmental impacts. The notion of eco-restoration developed within the framework of the LINKs project thus refers to the EU frame of reference concerning the Eco-conception of products (European directive 2005/32/CE).

Through the analysis of existing research, legal frameworks and policies as well as the experimentation of concrete local practices, the LINKS partnership wished to build and share a common set of principles and tools that will help European cities to keep feeling the beating heart of their Future-Proof Historic Centres.

Where can I find the LINKS outputs?

LINKS Network's project results – including the baseline study, six Newsletters, the reports of the thematic Workshops and activities at local level – are available at the URBACT project's website <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/links/homepage>

The synthesis of the work program and outputs is available in English and French at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/links/news/?newsid=956>.

The synthesis of the eight local action plans are available at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/links/news/?newsid=945>.

The set of common principles and recommendations at <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/links/news/?newsid=935>.

The video of the LINKS presentation of the project can be seen on Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mky9y66_jsU.

The full reports of the thematic workshops held in Freiberg, Almeria, Veria, Bayonne, and Brasov can be downloaded at the LINKS Outputs webpage <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/links/our-outputs>.

You can also find some informal reports on the network activities on the lead expert's blog www.welldesignedandbuilt.com/tag/urbact-links-network.



3. CONTRIBUTIONS BY STAKEHOLDERS AT THE FINAL CONFERENCE

Old European cities as a key for sustainability. The role of architects

by Selma Harrington, President of the Architects' Council of Europe

The Architects' Council of Europe was formed nearly 23 years ago, to advance – amongst other things - architectural quality and support sustainable development in the built environment.

Sustainability is not just about energy efficiency and protection of the environment. Economic aspects as well as social aspects also have to be considered and addressed. In this context, in order to face the existing challenges and turn historical city centres into tomorrow's eco-districts an integrated approach has to be adopted. To achieve this, there is a need to

promote and facilitate effective cooperation among all relevant actors and stakeholders: Local authorities, city planners and architects, institutional building owners or developers, construction companies, energy suppliers and of course citizen groups, have to be involved.

At a building level, architects have the very important role of coordinating those involved in a retrofitting project. It is through them that the much-needed "holistic approach" that sustainability in building design and construction can be ensured. Architects can understand and optimise solutions which meet client, user, technical and environmental requirements. Architects can also provide solutions in cases where there is a conflict between urban planning regulations and energy regulations.

In this sense, it is important to strengthen the role architects perform in sustainable retrofitting projects not only at building level but also – and most important of all – at more complex levels, such as when

dealing with city centres. The training of architects comprises a multiplicity of disciplines: their approach draws on both technical and cultural aspects of their education. They can understand the needs and limits of society, aesthetic principles, the cultural and historical linkage of cities. Therefore architects can be the coordinators of efforts related to the transformation of city centres.

As for the existing barriers to large-scale interventions, no single approach can be truly effective. In general terms, it is important for the Member States to recognize the specific character of historical buildings when implementing the Energy Efficiency Directive. The positive impact of the existing Granada convention (1985) signed by the Member states, highlighted the significance of the continuity of use of architectural heritage and it must be taken into account as we realise that more and more what traditionally was consigned under the term 'conservation' has to be looked at as the other side of the coin and the term 'sustainability'.

Training of qualified experts and conservation architects is of course crucial. Research on new technologies and materials that can be applied to historic buildings has to receive further support, and most important of all, regulatory conflicts that exist between national conservation policies and energy efficiency policies have to be eliminated.

The ACE holds itself ready to collaborate on future initiatives to advance these issues.

URBAN PRO. National plan for a sustainable urban regeneration of Italian cities

by **Ferruccio Favaron, CNAPPC**

Improving the city dwellers quality of life and the urban environment are both matters of great importance in the global vision aimed at a sustainable development.

City continues to be the most important attraction for people, goods and services: incubator of knowledge, ideologies and innovations. More than half of the world's population lives in cities, at the moment. The last half century's urban change has been exceptionally rapid and deeply rooted: gigantic and unstoppable migrations, too often unplanned, have generated unstructured and hybrid landscapes, where a large consolidated city and the new urbanization coexist.

In Italy, the development of the last decades has resulted in an unusual land consumption: beyond the logic of planning, wrong economic policies aimed at considering the brick as the principal mean driving the economy, over the past 15 years, have led to a use of about 500 square kilometres per year, around the historic cities centres, to the detriment of the agricultural areas. This unusual phenomenon must be stopped by making citizens understand that earth, as well as water and air, are exhaustible and non-reproducible goods.

Everyone must be aware that, due to the poor condition of the housing stock built after the war, the issue of a sustainable urban regeneration is the central problem for any future political program.

Italian architects are well aware that both saving land and sustainable urban regeneration, are two sides of the same coin, and that by controlling the first issue, we can encourage the second one.

The CNAPPC has promoted, with other stakeholders such as ANCI, Italian Regions, ANCE, LEGAMBIENTE and others, the National Plan for a Sustainable Urban Regeneration, consisting of a series of actions, studies, researches, and legislative proposals aimed at the transformation and the regeneration of urban areas, protecting the environment, the landscape and the limitation of the land use.

This program is part of the 'Pact for the cities recently presented at a Press Conference at the headquarters of Confcommercio in Rome.

The agreement marks the beginning of a process of collaboration aimed at overcoming the serious crisis that characterizes the Italian urban issue, interacting with the central Government and in particular with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and of Economic Development.

Through this pact named “Urban Pro”, a facilitation incubator of urban transformations, it is possible to define rules, models and tools to support the processes of transformation and optimization of resources.

This incubator will develop its activities taking into account that the National Plan for the city recently established, will need to fix qualifying interventions to enhance urban realities promoting the redevelopment of the inadequate building heritage, considering the following: static, energy, structures, material and immaterial infrastructures, urban commercial systems and networks.

It can be a control room able to deal with the Government action, by putting together the scarce resources allocated for the City Plan and other existing resources, unused or poorly used, such as those of the European funds, well aware that the barely 200 million allocated for the next five years, could hardly suffice and that we will have to identify taxes incentives aimed at regenerating the fabric of a city and ensure safety housing.

Something concrete with which to compare the programs of the upcoming elections candidates, informing them that in the 100 major Italian cities there is a concentration of 67% of the population, 80% of GDP and 75% of active enterprises. Not a book of dreams, keeping in mind that since the 1990s many European cities have been tackling the problem of an incorrect land use, pollution and energy consumption by implementing urban regeneration interventions starting from the renewal and the recycle of existing areas to the planning and design of new parts of the city, with the aim of reducing fuel consumption and introduce more sustainable life styles.

Interventions are now a reality for the regeneration of the consolidated urban tissues, implemented with the restructuring and building replacement, the use of non-polluting public transport, soft mobility, the use of renewable energy and energy-efficient materials, as well as achieve high standards of static and hydro-geological safety and architectural quality as well as social rehabilitation obtained by the design of appropriate spaces of collective life.

Renovate Europe Campaign

**introduced by Adrian Joyce,
EuroACE Secretary General**

Renovate Europe is a major EU-level campaign. Its headline objective is to reduce the energy demand of Europe's building stock by 80% by 2050 as compared to 2005 levels. Renovating the existing EU building stock is a real economic opportunity for Europe. It is a revenue-generating activity which contributes to urban renewal, strengthens social cohesion, boosts economic growth by creating local non exportable jobs (up to 19 jobs created for every 1 million invested), and leads to high public revenues (up to 5 additional budget revenue for every 1 of public funds invested). Renovate Europe has explored and documented the wide-ranging benefits that investing in the energy efficient renovation of the building stock can offer, drawing from practical experiences at the local, regional and national level, and emphasising the links with the EU Cohesion Policy and Growth Agenda.

That is why in the beginning of 2013 the Campaign has sent to the Finance Ministers of all EU member States a letter asking for a stronger commitment in the renovation of the existing building stock. Following, as an example, the letter that has been sent to the Finance Minister of Ireland.

Subject: Energy Efficient Renovation Programmes Boost Public Finances

Dear Minister,

There is an overlooked and highly cost-effective way to boost public finances in Ireland that will also lead to social and environmental benefits, namely investment in ambitious energy efficient renovation programmes that address the existing building stock. It is encouraging to note that the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland has already prepared the groundwork for Ireland in the form of a series of Roadmaps, including one on Residential Energy that addresses the housing

sector – the segment of the buildings sector that uses the highest proportion of energy.

I write to you on behalf of the Renovate Europe Campaign and its 21 partner companies and associations. We are working to create the conditions in which it will be possible to reduce the energy demand of the EU building stock by 80% by 2050 as compared to 2005 levels. If you and your government colleagues take account of the information that we are now sharing with you, it will be an important step on the path towards our goal and an important step in stimulating economic activity in Ireland.

Our experience of existing ambitious energy efficiency programmes shows that for each €1 invested by government, up to €5 returns to public finances in a short period, sometimes within just a year. In particular, this has been demonstrated in Germany and in Ireland. Building on such results, an important new Study that was carried out for the Renovate Europe Campaign by Copenhagen Economics, has monetised the multiple benefits of investing in energy efficient renovation and the key findings are that a significant increase in public revenue, coupled with a boost to GDP, will accrue in the coming years, if more countries adopt ambitious plans for the renovation of their existing building stock. You can find more detail in the attached brochure.

The report also identifies four no-cost actions that your government can take in order to stimulate this promising new market as follows:

- Modernise rent regulation to allow landlords and tenants to split the gains from energy efficient renovation of buildings
- Reform budget management of publicly owned buildings to allow for a longer term focus in investments and renovation of buildings. This will reduce longer term operating costs in the publicly owned building stock
- Remove or reduce favourable tax treatment of heating and electricity in buildings to render energy efficient renovation of buildings more attractive and provide direct net revenue gains to public budgets

- Develop well-designed risk-sharing programmes to help government as well as private building owners to realise cost savings with very limited budget costs

We believe that the current weak economic situation across most of the EU makes it timely to decide to put such programmes in place now, especially as the report concludes that it will be another 4-5 years before Europe gets back to its structural GDP level. This means that the conditions for investment in deep renovation of the building stock are ideal with under-capacity in the labour market to draw upon and with the cost of financing in most Member States at an all-time low. The hard facts brought to the surface by the Copenhagen Economics Study show that the resulting energy savings from renovation will be a net benefit to stretched public finances.

Aggregating the calculated benefits to EU level, Copenhagen Economics estimates that an ambitious programme of energy efficient renovation of the existing building stock could create up to 1,480,000 jobs, boosting GDP in the period to 2017 by up to €291 billion and delivering permanent annual benefits to public finances of up to €39 billion.

We attach to this letter a PDF version of the full report, but we would also be ready to send, upon request, some printed copies of the Study to you. Finally, we would like to suggest that a meeting be arranged in order to further discuss the best way for Ireland to benefit from this opportunity and to share more of our understanding of the issues at stake with you and your services.

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Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings, Advice series*, text and drawings by: Paul Arnold Architects, Contributors: Energy Research Group UCD, © Government of Ireland 2010, ISBN 978-1-4064-2444-7

Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE), *Europe's buildings under the microscope – A country-by-country review of the energy performance of buildings*, October 2011, ISBN: 9789491143014

The Intelligent Energy Europe project *New energy for old buildings* (New4Old) was committed to contribute to Renewable Energy Sources (RES) & Rational Use of Energy (RUE) market penetration in historical buildings through a two-fold approach: Creation of a network of Renewable Energy Houses (REH) which will serve as focal points for the sustainable energy policy discussion in the different EU Member States & contribute to the commercialisation of RES & RUE equipment. Capacity building among architects and planners through guidelines and training activities in the field of building integration of renewable energy and energy efficiency into historic buildings. Inspired by the success of the REH in Brussels, it is the intention of this project to lay the ground for the creation of publicly accessible REH lighthouse projects, which will serve as a base for further stimulation of the market replication of RES & RUE technologies in the respective countries. All REH of the network will always feature the latest renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies available and will serve as demonstration projects for the proposed communication and marketing activities. www.new4old.eu

The project *3ENCULT* is an FP7 project aiming at bridging the gap between conservation of historic buildings and climate protection, which is not an antagonism at all: historic buildings will only survive

if maintained as living space. Energy efficient retrofit is useful for structural protection as well as for comfort reasons – comfort for users and “comfort” for heritage collections. 3ENCULT will demonstrate the feasibility of “Factor 4” to “Factor 10” reduction in energy demand, depending on the case and the heritage value.

One of the Work packages analyses specifically the relationship between the current European legislation and historic buildings. *Relation historic buildings, EPBD and EPBD CEN Standards*, www.3encult.eu/en/project/welcome/default.html

The Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung (Federal Institute for Construction and Town and Regional Planning) in cooperation with the Technical University Darmstadt has developed a guideline with case studies from Germany and Switzerland *Energetisches sanieren gestalten. Leitfaden Baubestand nachhaltig weiterentwickeln*, Hrsg.: BM-VBS, Berlin 2010 (in German language only)

The EU URBACT network *HerO – Heritage as Opportunity* has presented a new strategy to manage the preservation of cultural heritage within town and urban development. The *HerO guidebook*, directed at town and city administrations and practitioners, shows applications and implementations of the new strategy of management as well as benefits and occasions generated by it. The *HerO policy recommendations* aim to present concisely and clearly the new strategy of management to politicians and policy makers. URBACT II network *HerO Guidebook, The Road to Success' Integrated Management of Historic Towns*, Stadt Regensburg, April 2011, www.urbact.eu/hero

Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings (recast)

Directive 2009/125/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of eco-design requirements for energy-related products (recast).

Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament

and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC

Cities of tomorrow. Challenges, visions, ways forward, October 2011, EC Report by DG Regio, available at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/citiesoftomorrow/index_en.cfm

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Copenhagen Economics, *Multiple benefits of investing in energy efficient renovation of buildings Impact on Public Finances*, Commissioned by Renovate Europe Campaign, October 2012

Build with CaRe is an international project with the ambition to help mainstream low-energy construction in the North Sea region and across the EU. Build with CaRe (BwC) is partly funded by the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, European Regional Development Fund. *Refurbishing Europe. An EU Strategy for Energy Efficiency and Climate Action, Led by Building Refurbishment*, February 2012

Malcolm Bell, Jez Wingfield, Dominic Miles-Shenton and Jenny Seavers, Leeds Metropolitan University, *Elm Tree Mews Field Trial. Evaluation and Monitoring of Dwellings Performance – Final Technical Report*, © Centre for the Built Environment, Leeds Metropolitan University. Abstract at www.jrf.org.uk

Draft Living Green Manual, Your Green Heritage Home: eco-renovation of an old building, Practical Inspiration Guide, 5 cases and what you can learn from them. Published by the Interreg VI-B Project *Living green Project*, available at www.livinggreen.eu/manual







AN URBACT II PROJECT

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting integrated sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT II comprises 400 different-sized cities and their Local Support Groups, 52 projects, 29 countries, and 7,000 active stakeholders coming equally from Convergence and Competitiveness areas. URBACT is jointly financed by the ERDF and the Member States.

www.urbact.eu/links



URBACT Secretariat
5, rue Pleyel
93283 SAINT-DENIS cedex, France
Tel.: +33 (0)1 49 17 46 02
Fax: +33 (0)1 49 17 45 55

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