



AUTHOR(S):

TITLE:

YEAR:

Publisher citation:

OpenAIR citation:

Publisher copyright statement:

This is the _____ version of an article originally published by _____
in _____
(ISSN _____; eISSN _____).

OpenAIR takedown statement:

Section 6 of the "Repository policy for OpenAIR @ RGU" (available from <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/staff-and-current-students/library/library-policies/repository-policies>) provides guidance on the criteria under which RGU will consider withdrawing material from OpenAIR. If you believe that this item is subject to any of these criteria, or for any other reason should not be held on OpenAIR, then please contact openair-help@rgu.ac.uk with the details of the item and the nature of your complaint.

This publication is distributed under a CC _____ license.

Commentary

Healthy City Manifesto

Can we afford to keep Urban Planning and Design away from Public Health?

Quazi M Mahtab-uz-Zaman*

Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

Abstract

Conventional notion and praxis of unravelling the discipline of 'urban planning and design' from 'built environment and health' [Corburn, 2004] has contributed to urban conditions unwieldy enough to question the liveability and sustainability [Hill & Peters, 1998] of environment. Growing evidence of unswerving yet meandering effects of the planning actions on environment; and subsequently on public health suggests bridging strong link between planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, zoning boards, city councils – all who make decisions on planning and urban design strategies [Botchwey et al, 2009]. By rejuvenating the subject of 'health and the environment', can we emphasize that the 'environment' should be understood as the interplay between ecology (biological), physical (natural & built), social, political, aesthetic, and economic environments [Institute of Medicine, 2001]? This commentary unfolds the notion of healthy city manifestos by exploring the theoretical linkage between urban planning and design and reinforces the needs for professionals' dialogue in generating hybrid discipline towards sustainable outcome in built environment.



*Lecturer in Urban design, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, AB10 7QB, Scotland, UK, E-mail: q.m.m.zaman@rgu.ac.uk

A general range of approaches prevail in juxtaposing disciplines such as ‘Land use planning and public health’; ‘Landscape and public health’; ‘Transportation –environment - public health’; ‘Area of mobility and obesity, asthma & mental health’; ‘Model of healthy urban planning; and ‘Healthy people 2010- interdisciplinary approach’. A new wave of hybrid professionals are emerging in the USA refocusing and reuniting three major disciplines, such as, city planning, public health and civil engineering as a response to industrialization and rapid urbanization, poor housing, inadequate infrastructure [Melosi, 2000; Porter, 1999]. In the UK, a similar call for a balanced approach is felt in the ‘Chadwick Report’ that has instituted to limit urban hazard through waste, pollution, rodent control by involving planners and urban managers working on demographic rearrangement and zoning provisions [Tesh, 1990; Chadwick, 1842].

World Health Organization defined ‘Health’ as a collective state of physical, mental, and social well-being ...’ (WHO, 1948).



Figure 1: *The determinants of health in our cities;*
this map uses the city as its focus.
 (source: <http://bnevel.uwe.ac.uk/who/healthmap/ccl.asp>)

The WHO Healthy Cities Network subsequently created a platform for local governments to engage in health development through a process of political commitment, institutional change, capacity-building, partnership-based planning and innovative projects. Health, being the business of all sectors, is understood as one of the critical tasks for local governments to protect and promote their citizens' health and well being by ways of using power and politics. The Healthy Cities movement instigates and promotes comprehensive and systematic policy and planning for health and emphasizes:

- *the need to address inequality in health and urban poverty*

- *the needs of vulnerable groups*
- *participatory governance, and*
- *the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.*

In response to the bigger ethos from WHO in 1948, 66 cities in European counter-part are now currently members of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network. Moreover, 30 National Healthy Cities Networks from across the WHO European Region actively delivers policies and programme within the national network of over 1400 cities and towns, and is regarded as the backbone of the Healthy Cities movement in Europe.

There are arrays of tasks within the network cities, such as, providing political, strategic and technical support to their members, represent a national resource of experience and expertise in health development and offer a dynamic platform for public health advocacy at the national and international levels, promoting general health facilities, non-communicable disease prevention, and environment and health.

There are many cities involved in delivering healthy city agenda with variable outputs yet to measure its merit to reflect on the bigger sustainable agenda. Cardiff defines its healthy city priorities through its strategic planning having number of initiatives, such as, the Proud Capital: the Cardiff Community Strategy (2007-17) and the supporting strategies, Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy (2008-11), Children and Young People's Plan (2008-11) and Safer Capital Action Plan. A model for Cardiff Healthy City (Figure 1) could be seen as one of many approaches worth mentioning here. This model recognizes the complex and related issues that affect people's health and well being. The development of the Integrated Partnership Strategy and the supporting strategies provides a common planning approach for 2011 and the partnerships have developed seven agreed outcomes for the city which include: People in Cardiff are healthy. The Cardiff WHO Healthy City Programme is integral to the delivery of this outcome for Cardiff.

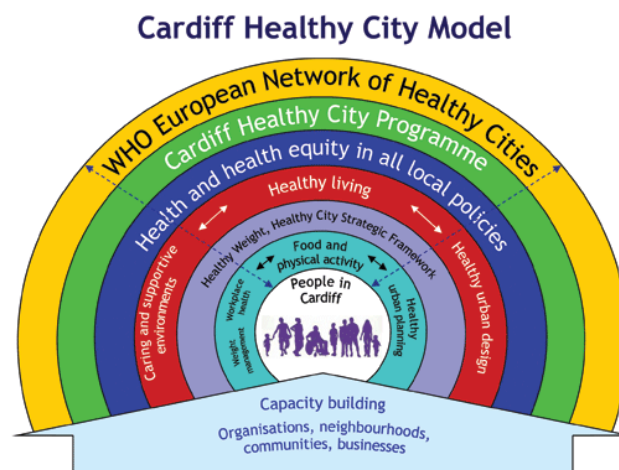


Figure 2: Cardiff Healthy City Model (source: <http://www.healthchallengecardiff.co.uk/eng/healthycity.php>)

UK Smart Growth Initiatives is reassuring us through six principles focusing on - a) ‘urban form’ prioritizing walking, cycling and public transport, b) private motor vehicles versus public transport, rail-based where possible; c) preserving countryside, farmland, natural beauty, open space, soil and biodiversity, avoiding urban sprawl and out-of-town development; d) heritage, street forms and settlement patterns; e) regeneration and a healthy mix of facilities; and f) the importance of civic involvement and local economic activity to improve the health of communities.

It is now the global attention towards the two major attributes of sustainability: ‘Environment and Health’ that trigger air pollution undervaluing urban identity (Utah, USA); Los Angeles county’s adoption of ‘Health Design Ordinance’ and amending planning and zoning code to “encourage a healthy lifestyle in the County by promoting walking, bicycling, and other exercise, and by creating better access to healthy foods.” (15 February 2013). This is a strategic response to the recurrent environmental problems generated from long journey-to-work syndrome (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Los Angeles recurrent environment problems from traffic and pollution and drafting ‘Health Design Ordinance’ (Photo credit: Iwan Baan, No More Play; source: <http://la.streetsblog.org/2013/02/22/zoning-a-healthier-los-angeles/>)

We cannot deny the traditional believe of Frederick Law Olmsted (Figure 4), still a new metaphor of defining parks as “the lungs of the city” (Figure 5) (Fisher, 2010), which is still valid today as a component of healthy urban infrastructure, and similar ideology of Patrick Geddes is vividly exist in Edinburgh city having mandatory provisions of parks (Figure 6) as element of refreshers for city dwellers. We can trace this ideology and ability of Patrick Geddes in delivering green city in 19th century, being endorsed by Charles Darwin in 1882 (Figure 7).

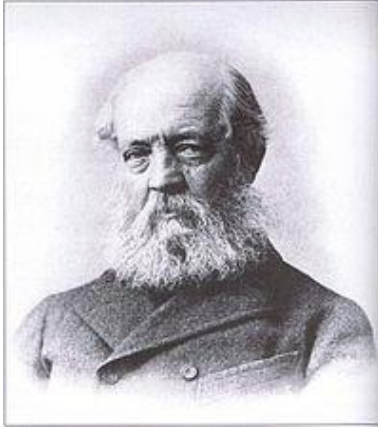


Figure 4: frederic Law Olmsted

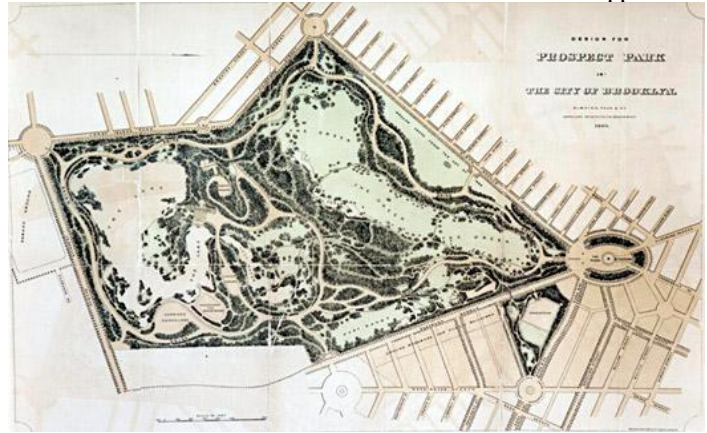


Figure 5: Frederic Plan (source: <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/frederick-law-olmsted-and-the-campaign-for-public-health/15619/>)

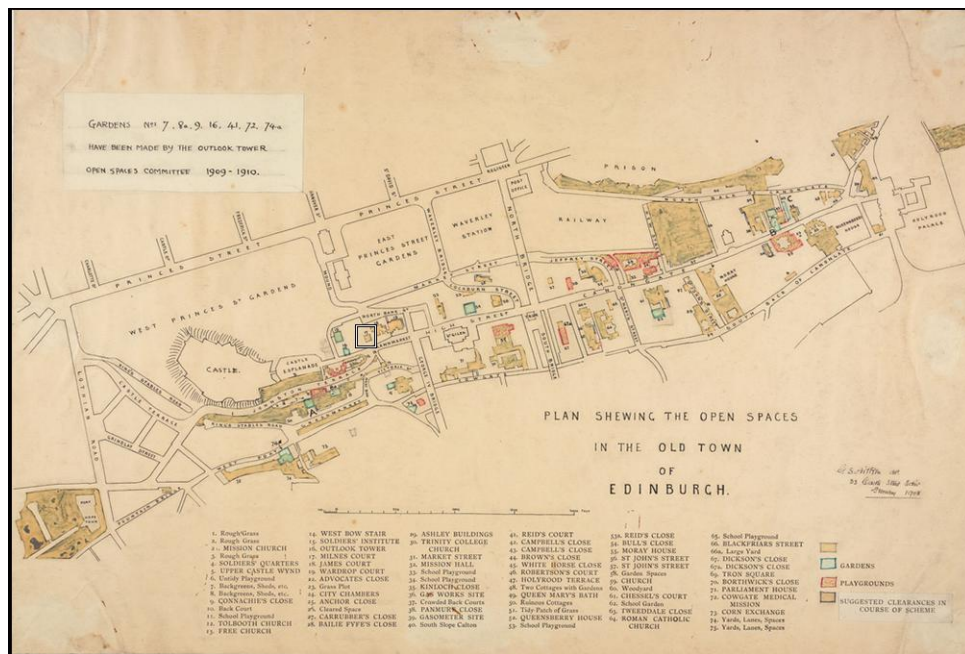


Figure 6: Plan showing the open spaces in the Old Town of Edinburgh (Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nlscotland/7166152417/in/set-72157630018004021>)

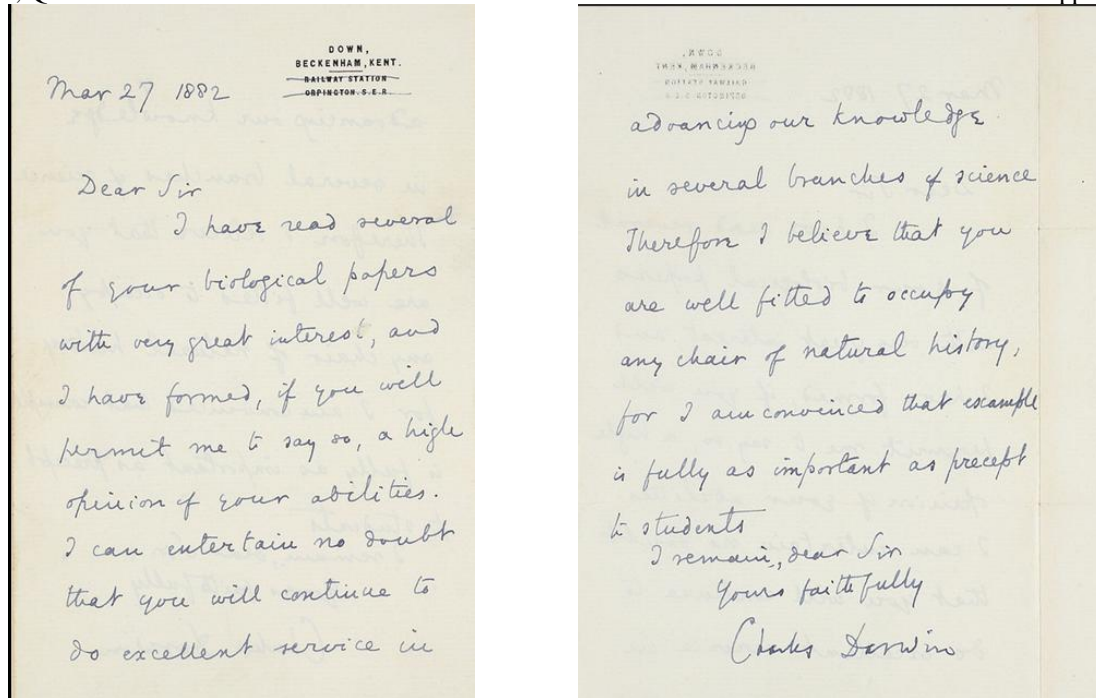


Figure 7: Letter from Charles Darwin to Patrick Geddes in 1882 Source:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nlscotland/7351385812/in/set-72157630018004021/>

In Edinburgh, as well as other cities, Geddes made use of disused and derelict spaces, however small, to create green spaces and gardens for the local inhabitants to tend and enjoy.

New initiatives are surfacing with the help of KTP industries, such as Philips's Liveable Cities Awards recognising Healthy Urban Infrastructures; Rain water collection in Yemen (Figure 8); and a pop-up modular park in Argentina (Figure 9).



Figure 8: Rain Water Collection in Yemen – Philips Liveable City Award 2011 (source:
<http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/cities/philips-livable-cities-award-winner-will-fix-water-shortage-in-yemen/536>)



Figure 9: Modular Park in Argentina (source: <http://popupcity.net/bottom-up-urbanism-works-an-update-from-the-livable-city-awards/>)

Eric Jaffe refers to the findings of a recent article in the medical journal ‘The Lancet’, which predicts the massive public health challenges (Figure 10) in China resulting from the country's urban influx of migrant workers and stretching the ‘ecological footprint’ (Warburton, 2007) by producing foods in Central Africa in exchange of industrialising agricultural lands in most of the fringe cities that were predominately agriculture.



Figure 10: Earth Overshoot Day marks the day in the calendar when 'humanity will have demanded an amount of ecological resources equivalent to what it takes nature 12 months to produce'. Photograph: AFP (Source: *The Guardian*, 2010 (<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2010/aug/19/earth-overshoot-day-environmental-debt>))



Figure 11: China's Environmental Crises (*China Dialogue*, 2007)

Shall we opt to shun away from the Pollution Map UK that the Royal Commission in Environmental Pollution has generated or the Dark Sky Scotland referring to the Air Pollution & Health Risks? Professor Jon Ayers of the University of Aberdeen, Occupational Health suggested a rising Asthma and Cardiac problem is evident as a consequence of locating primary

and secondary schools near major roads causing rising wheeze against higher traffic activity index. Urban Ecology, as a general term, sits today in a midst of other hosts of localized urban syndrome, notably ‘sedentary and urban confinement’ resulting in the ‘obese society’ that is the function of built environment as drafted by short-sighted approach to generic urban form.

Solutions are autonomously and slackly awaiting that the urban planners and designers need to evoke, such as, Transport Interchange (TOD); Smart Growth; Land use Planning & Intensive Landscape Urbanism – all are denominations of a hybrid approach to unite multi-disciplinary professionals. How far can we afford to broaden our perspective now by envisaging that a new HYBRID professionalism is the answer to the defying reality that our un-healthy city would need it immediately?

A new manifesto is what is left us to adopt in light of a revolutionary ‘Hybrid Professionalism’ and avoiding conventional seclusion that we inherited as ‘Idiosyncratic Professionalism’ in exile.

References

Botchwey et al [2009], a Model Curriculum for Course in the Built environment and Public Health – Training for an Interdisciplinary Workforce, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2009; 36 (2S).

Chadwick, E [1842], Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Laboring Population of Great Britain, Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.

Corburn, J [2004], Confronting the Challenges in Reconnecting urban Planning and Public Health, American Journal of Public Health, April 2004, Vol. 94, No. 4, pp. 541

Institute of Medicine [2001], Rebuilding the Unity of Health and the Environment: A New Vision of Environmental Health for the 21st Century, Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Melosi, M V [2000], The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present, Baltimore, Md: John Hopkins University press.

Porter, D. [1999], Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times. New York, NY: Routledge.

Tesh, S. [1990], Hidden Arguments: Political Ideology and Disease Prevention Policy. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Fisher, T. (2010), Frederick Law Olmsted and the Campaign for Public Health – Essay in Design Observer Group, Places, 15 November 2010.

Warburton, J. (2007), China’s crisis: a development perspective (part one), China Dialogue, <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/1418-China-s-crisis-a-development-perspective-part-one->