

CPUD '16
INTERNATIONAL CITY PLANNING AND URBAN
DESIGN CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS BOOK

Özgür Öztürk **DAKAM YAYINLARI**

April 2016, İstanbul.

www.dakam.org

Firuzaga Mah. Boğazkesen Cad., Çangar İş Merkezi 36/ 2, 34425, Beyoğlu, İstanbul

CPUD '16 / International City Planning and Urban Design Conference Proceedings

April 8-9, 2016, İstanbul

organized by DAKAM (Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Center)

Edited by: Hande Tulum

Reviewed by: Barış Öztürk

Cover Design: D/GD (DAKAM Graphic Design)

Print: Metin Copy Plus

Mollafenari Mah., Türkocağı Cad. 3/1, Mahmutpaşa/İstanbul, Turkey

ISBN: 978-605-9207-21-8

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III. CONTEMPORARY URBAN ISSUES
CONFERENCE PROCEEDING

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APRIL 8-9, 2016

ISTANBUL

THE DIFFUSION OF URBAN STRATEGIC PLANNING IN EUROPE SINCE THE 1990S. A PRELIMINARY MAP <i>MARTINA BUSTI</i>	11
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING <i>CEM AYIK, HATICE AYATAC, BEGUM SERTYESILISIK</i>	12
PERSPECTIVE OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT IN PRISHTINA / KOSOVO <i>ELIZA HOXHA</i>	20
THE ROLE OF LEISURE AND SPORT FACILITIES IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES <i>SARA GIULIA TRONCONE</i>	33
IMPACT OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN PARKS ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT <i>SHERINE ALY</i>	44
URBAN WATERFRONT RECREATION TERRITORIES: THE CHARACTER OF MODERN ARCHITECTURAL & LANDSCAPE ORGANIZATION <i>LIUDMYLA RUBAN</i>	56
ANALYSIS OF URBAN BOUNDARIES THROUGH VISUALIZATION: EMLAK BANKASI MASS HOUSING PROJECTS IN KARŞIYAKA <i>EZGİ KOCABALKANLI, AHENK YILMAZ</i>	69
SOCIAL CHANGE PROCESSES IN THE CITIES: ONLINE CITY ARCHIVES <i>ÇİÇEK COŞKUN</i>	80
THE POETICS OF THE ARABIAN SOUQ <i>JASMINE SHAHIN</i>	86
RETHINKING SUSTAINABLE HOUSING PLANNING FOR ECO-TOURISM AS EVALUATING THE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN WEB-GIS <i>JIN SU JEONG</i>	98
HOW EFFECTIVE IS STRATEGIC PLANNING ON ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY? <i>HOMA JAVADI</i>	110
EMERGING PLACES: TRANSFORMATION OF HOUSING AREAS IN TRABZON <i>BEYZA KARADENİZ, YELDA AYDIN TÜRK</i>	118
MANAGING ENERGY AND RESOURCE EFFICIENT CITIES: LEARNING FROM PAST AND PRESENT TOWARDS COMMON EFFICACY <i>CÁTIA RAMOS, MAURO COUCEIRO, NELSON BRITO</i>	129
WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN URBAN REGENERATION? - A COMPARISON STUDY BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND TAIWAN <i>FANG-TZU TSAO</i>	137

ELDERLY'S POTENTIAL ACTION SPACE : USING ACTIVITY-BASED APPROACH TO REVIEW LOCATION OF RELATED FACILITIES - AN EXPERIMENT IN TAINAN <i>DING-JHONG HUANG, HAO-CHING HSIA, KUANG-YIH YEH</i>	144
SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHILD- FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE <i>TÜRKAN FIRINCI ORMAN</i>	162
EVALUATION OF ACCESSIBILITY CONCEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER: THE CASE OF TRABZON CITY CENTRE <i>PELIN TATLI, ZEYNEP YILMAZ BAYRAM</i>	171
RESILIENCE OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS IN THE FACE OF RANDOMNESS: A SYSTEM DYNAMICS APPROACH <i>STEFANO ARMENIA, CAMILLO CARLINI, GEORGIOS TSAPLES CLAUDIA VOLPETTI</i>	184
LAHORE, URBAN CRISIS AND PARASITICAL EXPANSION: DESIGN SOLUTION BY BNU 'DWELLING ON WHEELS' <i>ALI MUHAMMAD AAREZ, SARWAR ZEESHAN, SHAHID HABIBAH, HAMEED MALIHA</i>	199
CREATING INCLUSIVE JOURNEY ENVIRONMENTS: URBAN DESIGNS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BICYCLE <i>PHILIP BLACK</i>	210
VELOROUTER - TECHNOLOGY FOR URBAN TRANSPORT INTERMODAL SUSTAINABILITY <i>EGILS GINTERS, ARTIS AIZSTRAUTS, MIKELIS BALTRUKS, YURI MERKURYEV, LEONIDS NOVICKIS, JANIS GRUNDSPENKIS, JANIS GRABIS</i>	211
CAN AN INDUSTRIAL 'DOMINO' CATALYST MEMORY AND ACTIVATE DEVELOPMENT? CASE OF FIER, ALBANIA <i>HAXHIRE DHIARI</i>	221
URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SHRINKING REALITY. THE CASE STUDY OF JAPANESE SUBURBS <i>PAULINA NEISCH</i>	222
URBAN CORRIDORS AS AN APPROACH FOR THE URBAN GROWTH OF CITIES. CASE STUDY: ALEXANDRIA COASTAL CORRIDOR, EGYPT <i>SHERINE ALY, WASIMA EL GAREM</i>	223
ANTIFRAGILE URBAN RENEWAL: THE REGENERATION OF TEL AVIV'S CENTRAL SLUMS <i>GABRIEL SCHWAKE</i>	236
URBAN GREEN SPACES AND URBAN PLANNING INSTRUMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES: PROPOSALS FOR RE - THINKING URBAN LEGISLATION IN SICILY <i>GERLANDINA PRESTIA, VALERIA SCAVONE</i>	250
SPANISH HOUSING IN NEW MILLENNIUM WITH PGIS SPATIAL PLANNING TO ADAPT CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY <i>JIN SU JEONG</i>	258

A LANDSCAPE OF MEMORIES: REVIVING THE HERITAGE URBAN LANDSCAPE OF MOTIYA TALAB, BHOPAL	267
<i>ASHWATHY ANAND, VINEETHA NALLA</i>	
SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION AND THE GATED HOUSING COMMUNITIES: DEMISE OF LAHORE; THE CITY OF GARDENS AND COLLEGES	284
<i>RAZIA LATIF</i>	
FROM ORCHARDS TO COMMUNITY GARDENS RE-IMAGINING DIALOGI DISTRICT IN THESSALONIKI	297
<i>ATHINA ATHIANA, AIKATERINA MYSERLI, KORINA VARVATOY</i>	
KNOWING THE CITY THROUGH PLACEMAKING	311
<i>HASEEB AMJAD</i>	
THE FUTURE OF PLACE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USERS EXPERIENCE AND PLACE MAKING	321
<i>H. A. ALBEERA, B. MEDJDOUB, A. AL-HABAIBEH</i>	
UNGOVERNABLE URBAN SPACE AND NEOLIBERAL COMPLEX EMERGENCIES: ECONOMIC EXCLUSION AND URBAN VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA'S NORTHERN TRIANGLE	330
<i>SAM TABORY</i>	
THE CHALLENGES OF THE DICHOTOMY OF CITIZENS LIVING IN A CITY WHERE THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IS HAMPERING THE VIEW OF THE ORIGINAL 400 MILLION YEARS OLD CITY SKYLINE	340
<i>SYEDAH SADIAH JUNAID, SYEDAH HAJIRAH JUNAID</i>	
BLACK SPACE: A SPATIAL NARRATIVE OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECT POST – APARTHEID PLANNING HAS ON BLACK PEOPLE IN THE CAPE FLATS, CAPE TOWN	352
<i>DENVER MARK HENDRICKS,</i>	
DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN A GOOD CITY MAKING, LEARNING FROM INFORMAL SETTLEMENT IN YOGYAKARTA-INDONESIA	358
<i>MUHAMMAD NELZA MULKI IQBAL</i>	
THE EFFECTS OF NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES ON THE USAGES OF PUBLIC SPACES	363
<i>ELİF KUTAY KARAÇOR</i>	
TRANSFORMATION OF THE URBAN SPACE IN HISTORIC CAIRO: CREATIVE PLACE MAKING IN AL-HUSAYN MOSQUE CONTEXT	369
<i>MOHAMED HESHAM, LOBNA SHERIF, MARWA KHALIL.</i>	
POLITICAL DECISIONS, SOCIAL CHANGE AND PLANNING – THE CASE OF DAHAB, EGYPT	382
<i>EMAN SHERIF, LOBNA SHERIF, MANAL ABOU EL-ELA</i>	

CLASHES BETWEEN HUMAN ACTIVITY AND VEHICLE: A DILEMMA FOR HISTORICAL TOWN IN MALAYSIA	392
<i>YONG ADILAH SHAMSUL HARUMAIN, NURFARHANA AZMI</i>	
DETERMINING TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR IN PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA	396
<i>AHMED MADHA – ALI DAWOD - HUSSAIN DHAFIR</i>	
METHODOLOGY TO DETERMINE CATCHMENT AREA AROUND TRANSIT STATION FOR PROVISION OF BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES IN INDIAN METRO CITIES	408
<i>TIRTHANKAR SARKAR, DEBAPRATIM PANDIT</i>	
THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF MEGACITIES: THE CASE OF METRO MANILA	409
<i>DAVID J. EDELMAN</i>	
GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS AND LOSS OF INDIGENOUS URBAN MORPHOLOGIES AND PROCESSES: CASE OF KARACHI’S OLD TOWN	444
<i>SUNEELA AHMED</i>	
ROLES OF WEEKEND MARKET FOR CREATIVE CITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF CHATUCHAK WEEKEND MARKET	456
<i>PODJAMAS CHAISURAPHAWAT</i>	
A NEW HEART FOR OLD DOHA, QATAR; FROM AN URBAN SLUM TO A SUSTAINABLE LIVING HERITAGE	467
<i>DJAMEL BOUSSAA, SHAIBU GARBA</i>	
RECOMPOSITION OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE HISTORICAL CITY. CASE STUDY OF PONTEMANCO VILLAGE, ITALY	468
<i>ENRICO PIETROGRANDE, ALESSANDRO DALLA CANEVA</i>	
PALMAS (BRAZIL) AND ITS HISTORY THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOODS JARDINS AURENYS: YESTERDAY AND TODAY	478
<i>ALDENILSON COSTA, LALITA KRAUS, FABIANA OLIVEIRA</i>	
POSSIBILITY OF LEED CERTIFIED CITIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO URBANIZATION ISSUES	488
<i>AYSEL YAVUZ, DUYGU AKYOL</i>	
INSTANCES OF EMERGING AGONISTIC SPATIALITIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY THE PRODUCTION OF DIFFERENTIAL GEOGRAPHIES IN THE PUBLIC SPACE OF ISTANBUL	501
<i>MANFREDO MANFREDINI, FARZAD ZAMANI GHARAGHOOSHI</i>	
THE PRODUCTION OF PLURAL EVOLUTIONARY SPATIALITIES COLLUSIONS AND COMPLICITIES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IN THE STREETS OF HANOI, VIETNAM	514
<i>MANFREDO MANFREDINI, ANH-DUNG TA, ASU BESGEN</i>	

THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN URBAN CITIES MEDIUM: A CASE STUDY IN PALMAS- TOCANTINS (BRAZIL)	527
<i>GLEYS IALLY RAMOS DOS SANTOS, CARLLA BRITO FURLAN</i>	
LAND AS A PLANNING RESOURCE AND THE IMPLICATIONS ON THE CITY'S GROWTH PATTERN: CASE OF DELHI	528
<i>SUMEDHA JAIN, VANITA VERMA</i>	
LAND TENURE AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES: QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM THE RECENT IRAQI	541
<i>LAITH H. AL-OSSMI</i>	
ART MUSEUM IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: THE ROLE OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART INSTITUTIONS IN THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF FRANKFURT AM MAIN	557
<i>MARIA MIKAELIAN</i>	
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING TRANSFER DEVELOPMENT RIGHT (TDR) FOR BUILT HERITAGE CONSERVATION	568
<i>JUN HOU, EDWIN H.W. CHAN</i>	
THE POSITION OF CULTURE WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: THE CASE OF VAN	575
<i>GÜLÇINAY BAŞDOĞAN</i>	
EXAMINING SPATIAL PLANNING AND URBAN GROWTH IN TERMS OF SAFETY: THE CASE OF SANTORINI ISLAND	586
<i>XENIA KATSIGIANNI</i>	
URBAN GOVERNANCE IN MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: CHALLENGES, ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS. CASE OF CONSTANTINE	587
<i>NEDJIMA MOUHOUBI, KHEDIDJA CHOUABBIA, SOUAD SASSI BOUDMAGH, YUCEF LAZRI</i>	
BIOGRAPHIES	593

CPUD '16 / International City Planning and Urban Design Conference

CPUD '16 / International City Planning and Urban Design Conference is held at Nippon Meeting Halls in Istanbul. The conference is coordinated by DAKAM (Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Center) and is organized by BILSAS (Science, Art, Sport Productions).

In the new millennium, the politics, needs, priorities and planning itself are in constant change and obviously new challenges in terms of city planning are put forward. Today many cities are working to encourage populations to return to their urban core through the creation of revitalization efforts to distressed neighborhoods and old downtown centers. Industrial zones are moving, life styles are changing and growth and immigration in mega cities are still an issue. Given the importance of cities as significant social, political and economic centers, the rethinking of planning comes at a principal moment when urban policy must be able to plan for a sustainable future in relation to the individual needs of neighborhoods, individuals and established urban systems.

Global politics may have different effects on every city in different parts of the world but the questions remain the same: Was the planning of a city proved to be the correct transformation? Has the right method of planning and execution been applied? What has been planned at different periods and what has happened in the end? How can the global criteria for city planning be defined for the future of the cities? And of course, how can planning thereby play a more significant role in inspiring and instructing the positive transformation of towns, cities, regions, and communities?

The conference will draw attention to present, past and future cities from all around the world to enable a comparative view. Rethinking planning seems necessary in a world where cities become places of commerce and economic opportunity toward a shared vision of how integrated systems can come together to create a shared sense of common future. From fundamental restructuring of the world's economy to climate change, the challenges of planning have changed dramatically. These challenges are daunting but they provide unprecedented opportunities for planning to have global impacts like never before. Good planning has galvanized revolutionary and evolutionary change over the years, raising quality of life for all by proactively envisioning better futures and rallying resources to realize them.

THE ROLE OF LEISURE AND SPORT FACILITIES IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES

SARA GIULIA TRONCONE

Sara Giulia Troncone, PhD candidate, Politecnico di Milano

Abstract

The question *What has been planned at different periods and what has happened in the end?* formulated to think on Cities and City Plans, offers the opportunity to make an analysis that starts from the city.

Contemporary cities are like databases that give us such a countless information.

The drawing up of the assumption of the conference underlines some specific issues: distressed neighborhoods, old downtown centers, moved industrial zones, changing life styles.

This paper offers an interpretation of this issues through the analysis of sport and leisure facilities.

City is both instrument and object of study.

The attempt was to identify the main sports venues and recognize the general urban design in which they are located. The recognition of the variety in its form and function lead back to the problem of determining how much such spaces are required and where it should be located. A weakness of the standard lies in its emphasis on the total provision of open space, with no guidance as to its location.

Location is allied to function. A hierarchy of open-space uses can be conceived, varying from those of purely local significance to those with regional importance serving the town or city as a whole.

In terms of active recreation, participation in many sports is only attractive if it can be reasonably frequent in a convenient location. The distinction in this sense between indoor and outdoor sports is somewhat artificial so far as an individual's recreation pattern is concerned: the difference may be of interest or of season, but all involve an active regard for physical exertion.

Newcastle upon Tyne is taken as a case-study to recognize the system of sports and leisure facilities in relation to the urban structure.

The analysis would be taken as a starting point to think about planning of leisure activities and make comparisons with other cities.

Introduction. Sport, City and Architecture

The research I am working on is about the relation in sport buildings between specialization and functional integration in the context of urban strategies. To analyze this issue Milan is the main case-study. The first goal is to identify macro themes that make possible the comparison between different urban context. There is a wide literature about sport buildings. We could find out three leading research lines: the sociological point of view focuses on the relationship among sport phenomenon, community and spatial dimension (Porro, 2001, Brohm, 2002, Augustin, 2007); the cases of mega-events deal with sport, city and urban regeneration (Amin and Thrift, 2001, Anholt, 2007); the technological matter relate building design to energy efficiency and innovative building materials (Richards, 2004, Culley and Pascoe, 2009).

The British context shows a different urban settlement from the Italian ones and provides interesting food for thought.

Pointing out few key stages in the history of British legislation about sport facilities helps and supports the understanding of urban stratifications.

Indoor swimming baths date back to the Baths and Washhouses Act of 1849 and Newcastle could claim to have the oldest public swimming baths in Britain: the original Northumberland baths had been built in 1839. (Gordon and Inglis, 2009) For other sports, George V Fund was established in 1936 to create or improve public parks and George VI Foundation to promote facilities for young people.

After that the most relevant facts were: the Wolfenden Report that, in 1960, revealed a shortage of sports facilities, and the Albemarle Report for the Central Council for Physical Recreation. The establishment of the Albemarle

Committee in 1958 to review the youth service came at a time of growing concern with the problems of youth. The aim was to bridge the gap between what is provided for social and recreational life of young people during formal education period, and what is provided thereafter. This report recommended building sport centres in London, Stoke and Newcastle upon Tyne (Houlihan and White, 2002).

Thinking of places for leisure, not only strictly related to sport, is possible to identify a hierarchy of spaces: the hierarchical nature of the arrangement of recreation facilities refers to neighborhood, local or city-wide populations. Most facilities operate typically at one level in the hierarchy: playground, tennis courts and art gallery, for example, at neighborhood, local and city-wide levels respectively. Open spaces, more varied in scope or form, are less easily characterized: urban parks range from simple grassed areas with no more than neighborhood appeal to large expanses with a wide range of specialized facilities serving the whole city.

In bigger cities the location within the urban fabric and the accessibility of the provision is significant as the function itself.

Three main distinct kinds of pattern are recognizable: cultural leisure, largely at the centre, serve a national, if not international, catchment; swimming pools and sport centres, far more widespread, with an essentially local function; main green areas and golf courses have a regional impact. (Patmore, 1983)

Open spaces and recreational areas are not synonymous. To fulfill its recreational role, open space takes many forms. Parks of varied design, whether informal open spaces, formal gardens, or areas of woodland, satisfy more passive needs. Specific demands are served by children's playgrounds and sports field, while areas of water, both natural and artificial, enhance amenity and add further opportunities for recreation.

The work carried out on Newcastle is based on a study-tour and on a direct experience of the city.

How to recognize the described structures in the urban context?

Walks in Newcastle upon Tyne

The city of Newcastle upon Tyne was chosen to make evidence of what could be the hierarchies described above.

A punctual reconstruction of the historical development of the city does not seem useful for the analysis. However, we start from a survey of the current city, with the organization of three different walks to story and describe the city and its leisure opportunities.

The planning of these routes was based on the identification of areas with well-defined character, in which the concept of recreational places is shown differently, but in coherence with the context.

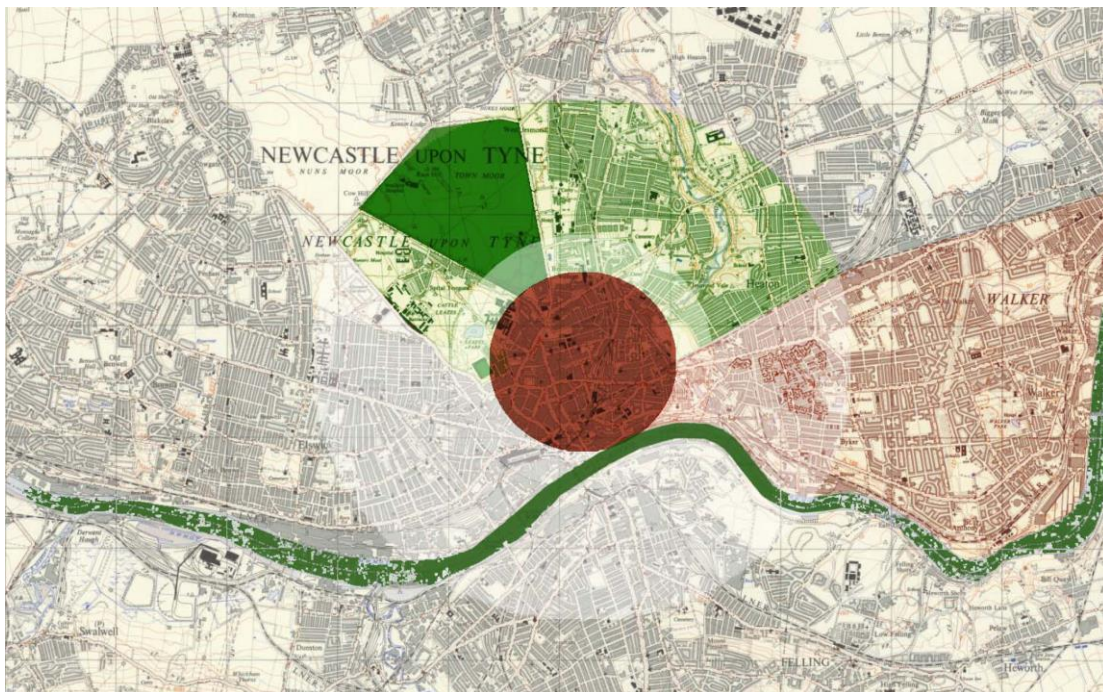


Figure 2. Scheme of the three walks

Walk 1: the city centre

The first walk is through the city centre.

The heart of Newcastle is quite compact for a city with such large a population, with advantages where business, education and entertainment are concentrated. The city center is limited by the two main places dedicated to sport: on the south by the **Tyne**, where rowing paralleled the emergence of Newcastle as an industrial centre, and on the north by the **Town Moor Park**, that remarkable survival of ancient privilege, dates 1357. The City Freeman had the right to pasture upon it, and have maintained the right to preserve the Town Moor as an open space. This is a common trait to many Anglo-Saxon cities and reminds the Boston Common, the oldest public park in the history of the USA, that in 1634 was designated as a common pasture.

The architectural rebuilding of city centre by Richard Grainger (1797-1861) and John Dobson (1787-1865) in the 1840s was a symbol of the city position as commercial, financial and cultural centre. The result is the best designed Victorian town in England. (Pevsner and Richmond, 1957)

Grainger's new central layout contained the Grainger Market, designed by Dobson, the Theatre Royal, by John and Benjamin Green (both buildings replacing earlier structures located elsewhere) and the Central Exchange, designed by Wardle and Walker.

Grey Street was the key part of redevelopment plan that provide a new and important link between the upper and the lower town. Architecturally the street is conceived as a series of long, symmetrical blocks of uniform height. The Theatre Royal is the greatest public building of the street, located at a key point on its curve and designed with a grand portico of corinthian pilasters that maximizes its impact.

The Grey's Monument, whose statue is placed on a 147 feet Roman Doric Column, closes the view culminating at the point where Grey Street and Grainger Street meet at their junction with Blacket Street, along which the medieval Town Walls formerly ran.



Figure 3. View of Grey Street. The Theatre Royal, on the right, and the Grey's Monument

To the left Eldon Square and on the right the main axis of the city.

At first the axis sequences the Tyne Bridge, Pilgrim Street and Northumberland Street. The continuity of the roads was broken by the construction of a traffic roundabout that works on different levels for the shunting of vehicles incoming in the city. Later we will come back to the sixties city project in which the roundabout was planned.

The perception of the axis, however, is guaranteed by the **Swan House** designed by Sir Robert Matthew & Partners in 1961. The building elevates on the traffic below with a bridge structure.



Figure 4. The Swan House

The importance of this place is also highlighted by the project developed in 1924 by Robert Burns Dick. The plan provided an intersection from the Tyne Bridge and feeding a new road to the quayside. A major new axial route would have led from the Tyne Bridge to Barras Bridge, running east of Northumberland Street (its northward section anticipating the present John Dobson Street). Another new north-south route parallel to this was planned to lie to the west of Pilgrim Street. The most impressive feature of the plan would have been a boulevard leading from Barras Bridge to a new Civic Center in Exhibition Park. The project was providing concentration of public main activities, of which a sport facility.

Although Burns Dick's plan was not realized some elements of the contemporary city make us able to recognize the most important aspects of this project; the location of the current **City Centre**, moved on the northern fringes of the city, and the redevelopment of Pilgrim Street.

The end of the Second World War saw the central area of Newcastle largely undamaged by bombing, and so it still represented an expression of Georgian and Victorian classicism. However, the whole conurbation was very run-down and also faced problems of severe traffic congestion. Little was done until the sixties, when Wilfred Burns (1923-1984) became the city's Chief Planning Officer, and Thomas Daniel Smith (1915-1993) was the Leader of the Council. They called for a comprehensively modernized city and the slogan *Brasilia of the North* came out. (Pendlebury, 2001).

This part of the city shows meaningful aspects of this plan though it was not completed in many important developments.

The building of the new Civic Centre, designed by George Kenyon in 1950 was part of this plan and is considered one of the most celebrated postwar municipal buildings in Britain (Encyclopedia of Contemporary British Culture, 1999). Construction started in 1958 and continued in stages until 1968. A distinctive character is the expressive articulation of distinct elements, linked internally by the staircase hall. With the instrument of the modernist architecture current at that time, it makes reference to the medieval city: the carillon tower similarly echoes the bell tower of St Nicholas's Cathedral.

South along John Dobson Street, at the crossing with Northumberland Road there is the **City Hall and Baths**. Planning began in 1921 as a result of which the Baths Committee opted for a multi-functional building combining baths and a public hall. This group of buildings, opened in 1928 and designed by C. Nicolas and J. E. Dixon-Spain, was the major public complex to be constructed after the First World War. The facade, in a classical composition, is tripartite. The central building is the entrance: three arches supported by square pillars leading through arched doors into an open entrance lobby, over a floor with windows and over again the final crowning. The symmetry of the facade conceals the structure's internal organization: the central entrance bay gives access to the swimming bath, and the right-hand colonnade to the concert hall.

On this site, during the nineteenth century, a cricket ground was situated between Ellison Place and Northumberland Street. This in turn was overlooked by the Northumberland Street Baths, a domed building of the 1837-1839, designed by Dobson: as mentioned, the first public swimming pool in Britain.



Figure 5. City Hall and Baths

Walk 2: stadium, parks and play

Thanks to the gradient of the ground on which the city was built, you can have distinct views of the stadium from different positions; here a truly representation of a Folk Cathedral. (Bale, 1993)



Figure 6. Urban landscape elements: Tyne Bridge, St Nicholas Cathedral, St James Park

This will be the beginning of the second walk, devoted to parks.

Running along Gallowgate to reach it, it seems very arbitrary the choice not to include it in the first itinerary. But looking at the city map is clear that this place represents the ending part of Leazes Park.

St James Park was actually built as part of the city's Town Moor. During the summer of 1886, Newcastle West End's supporters decided to build a 8 foot height fence creating a somewhat border from the rest of Castle Leazes and was the blueprint of the current St. James Park. The first Newcastle United game played here was in 1892 following the merger of West End and East End.

The early success during the 1900's now attracted huge crowds and a supposed 70,000 tried to gain entry to the game. However, although huge crowds were pouring in to watch Newcastle, there were still difficulties in further expanding the stadium.

Archibald Leitch (1865-1939), the football ground designer, in 1926, drew up plans to cover stands with seating at a higher level and terracing in front. (Inglis, 2005) However, the proposal saw the club conflicting with the corporation and the local residents of Leazes Terrace who opposed any potential expansion. St James Park had remained largely

unaltered. The fifties saw the introduction of floodlights around most top ground and St James Park was actually the third First Division ground to play under floodlights. However, there were many problems with the floodlights at St James, as the telegraph poles were too low which created many gaps and shadows. In 1971, Faulkner-Brown, Hendy, Watkinson and Stonor were invited to break the deadlock between the Club and the City by preparing a master plan for phased. Development of the ground beginning with the East Stand.

In the eighties two stadium tragedies changed the outlook on health and safety in stadiums. The Valley Parade fire meant the West Stand at St James was to be demolished and reconstructed because wooden stands were now seen as being too dangerous to host a football match, while the Hillsborough disaster ensured that teams in the top two divisions, with a capacity of over 20,000 had to meet with the all-seater regulation.

The new East stand takes the form of huge in situ concrete frame cast from an intricate striated form work. The frame provides a textured contrast at street level to the elegant sandstone of the surround Georgian terraces. Indeed, the east stand attempts to limit the perimeter height at this level cantilevering the upper parts of the structure above. During the nineties the demand for Newcastle United season tickets had proved problematic and there were proposals of Newcastle moving stadiums. Different locations were proposed; the most studied was to move into Castle Leazes. However, was decided against the proposed move and set out to redevelop the Milburn and Leazes stand with two double tiers, expanding the stadiums capacity to 52,000, in what we know St James Park of today.



Figure 7. St James Park in 1930, 1970 and today

This is an interesting case in which the stadium shows the stratigraphy of its history, and symbolizes the huge value of sporting sites as repositories of shared memories, the emotional connection that spectators and participants have with particular places and traditions.

As mentioned, on the south there is the City Centre, on the north the view opens to the **Leazes Park**. Parks represent, especially in English tradition, the place of recreation and entertainment from labor rhythms and urban landscapes. The main outdoor facilities are here; boating lake, tennis courts, bowling greens, play grounds, tea house and, of course, walks.

It's interesting to know that a proposal, dating 1861, centered on improving the Town Moor with walks, drivers and riders, and creating a continuous park from Castle Leazes to Brandling Village out of the south-east part of it. However, little was done until 1868, when a scheme for landscaping and beautifying the Town Moor by the ornithologist and landscape designer John Hancock (1808-1890) was laid. This scheme proposed a series of roads across the Moor, that would have been extensively planted with trees, especially around its edges, and in irregular belts extending to Castle Leazes. In the latter area a road, flanked by trees, would have extended to St Thomas's Terrace before curving round to cut northwards through the vicinity of Claremont Place into a more formal 'ornamental park' created in the south-east corner of the Moor. This, incorporating the area of the 'bull park' (now part of the present Exhibition Park), would have included paths and ornamental lakes.

The scheme was rejected and two separate parks were created: one at Castle Leazes and the other in the area of the 'bull park'.

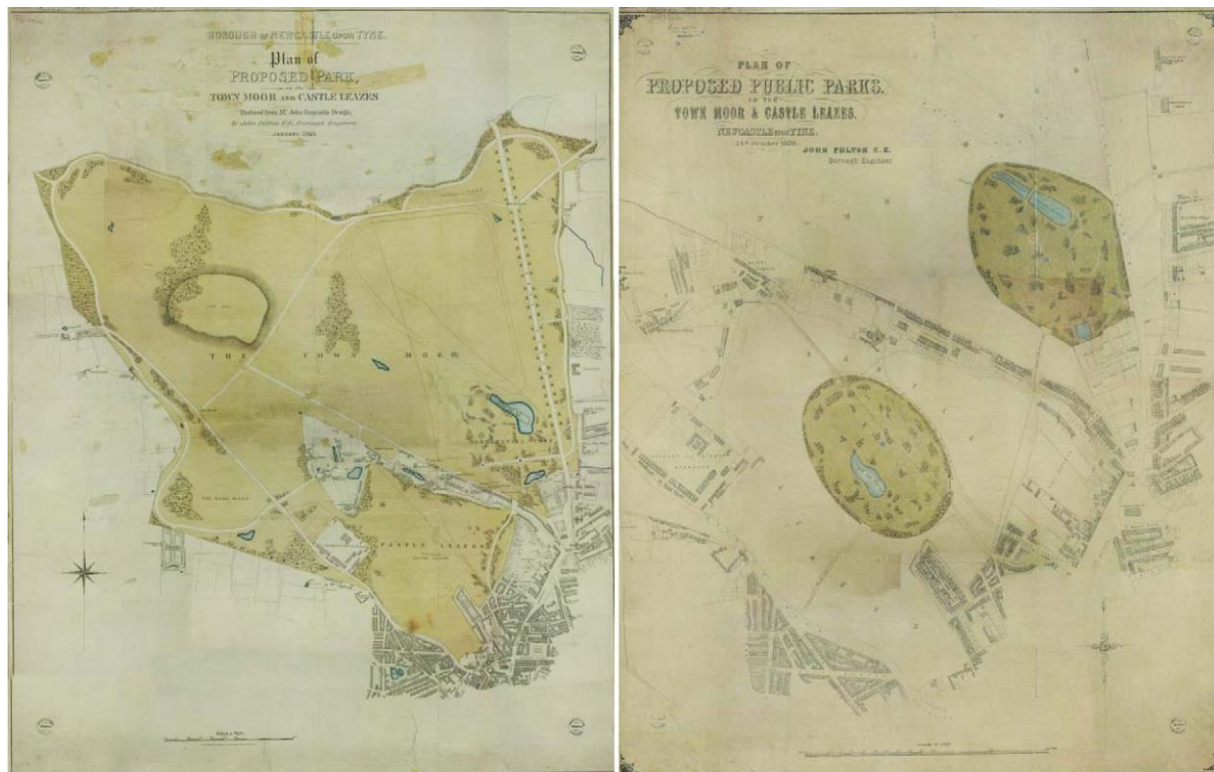


Figure 8. Plans of proposed public park on the Town Moor and Castle Leazes in 1869 and 1870 by John Hancock

Between this two there is the Royal Victoria Infirmary. On the north the **Exhibition Park** with other outdoor facilities and beyond the Town Moor, site of the biggest fair in Britain, The Hoppings, occupying 40 acres a mile away from the city.

This context exemplifies a theme that is common in sports facilities of the late nineteenth-early twentieth century: the link between exhibition park and recreational ground.

Possible references could be made to earlier Modern Olympic Games: in Paris 1900 sport venues were a temporary additions of the main *Exposition Universelle*; in 1904 the *Louisiana Purchase Exposition* was the site of the games. In these cases, the expositions, and then the games, moved from the reuse of areas contiguous to the consolidated urban core. (Gold and Gold, 2007) Going beyond the history of the Olympic Games: the Prater in Vienna, designed in 1929-1931 by Otto Ernst Schweizer (1890-1965) is just an example.

During the sixties was launched a landscape competition for a scheme that would develop the Moor as a family recreational centre. The most different facilities were asked for in this plan. Currently there is not so much of the winning project. A golf course and a horse-riding track are the main permanent activities at the Moor.

Crossing the Great N Road there is Jesmond, a residential suburb. The Mooracres Playing Fields, a sequences of outdoor facilities, separates the residential area from the main road. The heart of this community has been the **Jesmond Cricket Ground** since 1887. Designed by L. J. Couves & Partners in 1963, the current stands and, above this, the club's building that overlook the field through a terrace. The brick, which is used as the main building material, remind the architecture of northern Europe (Jan Wils, just to name one) rather than Victorian architecture of the neighborhood in which it is located.



Figure 9. The pavilion by L. J. Couves & Partners at Jesmond Cricket Ground

On the east there is the **Ouseburn Parks**: a five district green places make up by Paddy Freeman's Park, Jesmond Dene, Armstrong Park, Heaton Park and Jesmond Vale. Stretch 2 miles from end to end following the valley of the River Ouseburn, which, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was fast-flowing, sustaining water mills along its banks between South Gosforth and the Tyne. There, at the mouth of the Ouseburn, was a great variety of industrial activities including shipbuilding, with leadworks and glass making further upstream. The aspiration for each stage of development of the Ouseburn valley were profoundly different. Initially, the valley between Gosforth and Heaton was riddled with coal mines; it then became a wealthy merchant's landscaped park. Subsequently it was divided and partly planted as a Victorian woodland garden and then, at the end of the nineteenth century, it was given to the City as a public park.

Today it is a oasis of green near the city that, in its entire length, provides different opportunities for leisure time. Both the south and in the north areas are equipped for the most popular outdoor sports. In the north in particular, these are completed by facilities for indoor activities. The **Real Tennis Court** is a large indoor court built in 1894 by Frank West Rich (1840-1929). Built of red brick, it has four octagonal corner turrets and buttresses supporting the highly side walls. The south wall has six circular high-level windows; the north wall is similar but with arched ones. The playing area is also lit by continuous roof-lights, structured by a sequence of seven wooden, slender, trusses.

The **Jesmond Swimming Pool** was built in 1938 in a red bricks building, with a large skylight that brings light into the swimming hall. The pool was closed in 1991 and was taken over by not-for-profit trusts, a social enterprise: the Jesmond Swimming Project, formed 23 days before the closure, now led the response from the community.

Walk 3: what lies beyond?

The third and last walk develops east to the City centre, along the banks of the River Tyne.

If the first walk showed the Newcastle urban character and the second one its parks, this route has the intent to penetrate the immense suburbs surrounding the center.

The Est End developed in the late nineteenth century to house industrial workers. Coal mining had collapsed by the mid-twentieth century and shipbuilding began to decline in the sixties and seventies, with the last shipyard closing in 2006.

Two of these neighborhoods were chosen: Byker and Walker, that previously shared the typical urbanization of Victorian terraced housing.

To reach the first one, walk along the Quayside Park.

Quayside is an area along the banks of the River Tyne that was once an industrial area and busy dockside. Since docks became run-down, the area has been redeveloped to provide art, music and culture venues as well as new housing developments.

From here is possible to have a first view of the destination, just stopping halfway the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and look eastward: **Byker**.



Figure 10. The residential area of the Quayside in foreground, the wedge-shaped building of Byker in background

During the sixties, Newcastle City Council decided upon a policy of wholesale replacement of this residential area and Ralph Erskine (1914-2005) was appointed to mastermind the redevelopment. The estate as a whole was largely completed by 1981.

The development is divided into two parts: an eight storey linear block and an expanse of two storey houses configured as terraces.

The 'wall' element, the long building, is conceived as a barrier to protect the main site from both motorway noise and cold winds. It contains flats and rises in height from three storey at the east, to eight-storey portions, and then to the wedge-shaped, thirteen-storey block at the west end. The symbolism of a protective wall is powerful in Newcastle, given the historic legacy of Hadrian's Wall, that ran close to the site.

The project was developed in consultation with residents leading to the retention of a number of existing buildings on the site including a Victorian church and the Shipley Baths, 1886. The baths are incorporated into the 'wall' and converted for use as a climbing-centre.

The traditional architecture of the late nineteenth century British baths: red brick building and slate pitched roofs with large glass skylights. Going inside the building you can get the vital character of this place that the integration into the 'wall' has been able to preserve.

Keeping on east there is **Walker**, where was the largest single shipyard in the country. The development of this land is close to the Byker's one. Indeed, the main differences are in recent history. Here the decline of shipbuilding has been protracted and regeneration has yet to transform the landscape of this industrial ruins.

A replacement housing plan was not implemented, but an important leisure centre was built.

The Lightfoot Centre (1963-1965) by Williamson, Faulkner-Brown & Partners was conceived in the wake of the already mentioned Wolfenden Report of 1960 and promoted the construction of multi-purpose sports centres. Several are the public buildings designed by Harry Faulker-Brown (1920-2008), known for the drafting of the "Ten Commandments" for the design of libraries (Dewe, 2006)

This was one of the first indoor sport centre in the country, where a large capacity space was quickly adapted for large spectator events, public rallies and even religious ceremonies.

The structure is formed out of a series of laminated timber ribs, connected to a ring beam at the apex of the dome creating an unobstructed internal diameter of 61 meters making it the largest dome in Europe at the time of its construction; it was pioneering in every sense. Prefabricated, reinforced fibre-glass panels were used to cover the dome, allowing daylight to filter into the sports hall. The oculus at the centre provides natural ventilation to the interior.



Figure 11. The Lightfoot Centre, 1963-1965, by Williamson, Faulkner-Brown & Partners

Currently part of the building houses the library, moved from the Lady Stephenson Library, and a series of outdoor fields complete the offer of sports activities.

The architects claim to have modeled it upon Pier Luigi Nervi's Sports Palace in Rome. More generally, it is clear the reference to the experiments on the type of the sports hall during the sixties: like Nervi, also the works by Felix Candela, with the Mexico City sport palace, and the experimentation made by Kenzo Tange upon sport hall.

The paper would be a first, general, exemplification of how is possible to talk about sport venues not only referring to mega-events nor at the most advanced technologies, but also focusing on the urban and architectural aspect of the every-day leisure facilities.

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