

Institute for

Environment
Sustainability
and
Regeneration



STAFFORDSHIRE
UNIVERSITY

Public Lectures in Regeneration

“Placemaking: beyond architecture”

George Ferguson PPRIBA

Director

Acanthus Ferguson Mann Architects

Thursday 26 April 2007

Ashley Building

Leek Road campus

Staffordshire University

Lecture series supported by



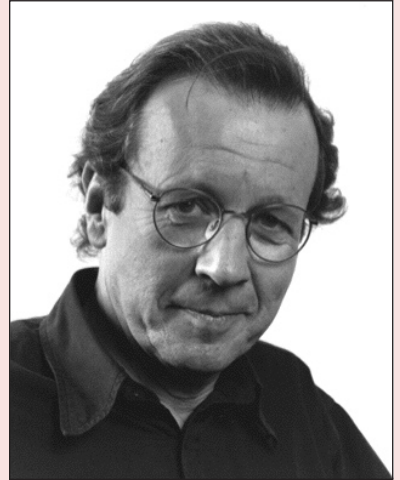
George Ferguson PPRIBA

Director

Acanthus Ferguson Mann Architects

George, past president of the RIBA, and Vice Chairman of the Academy of Urbanism, built up his own Bristol based practice in the mid-1970s and founded the national group of practices, Acanthus, in 1986. He has a wide variety of experience in architectural, masterplanning and regeneration projects of all periods and types that have been recognised with many awards. He writes, lectures and broadcasts extensively on environmental and architectural matters.

Apart from being involved in a host of regeneration schemes for a variety of clients, he is the creator/owner of the mixed use Tobacco Factory arts centre in South Bristol which has been a major catalyst for regeneration. He is also the inventor of the idea of the X-Listing of bad buildings for demolition, the inspiration for the Channel 4 series Demolition for which he was a joint presenter. He has honorary degrees from the Universities of Bristol and the West of England.



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More on the Tobacco Factory

George Ferguson is intimately involved in regeneration: George owns the innovative Tobacco Factory arts centre in Bristol. The centre was created in the 1990's in what was the old Wills Tobacco building which Imperial Tobacco had been using as offices. The building was scheduled for demolition, but George saved it and converted it into a multi-use building. The businesses it houses include a restaurant, a performing arts school, loft-style accommodation, a café bar, offices and the Tobacco Factory theatre - described as 'one of the most exciting performance venues in the country' with its 'intimate and raw', flexible-format, performing space that can accommodate an audience of 250 people. Yearly attendances have reached a staggering 39,000. With businesses, living spaces and cultural activities under one roof, the centre has acted as a focus for regeneration in the area. Read more at www.tobaccofactory.com/html/building_about_us.htm

More on the X-List

George is perhaps best known to the public as a co-presenter of Channel 4's four-part series 'Demolition'. When George became President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 2003 he made a 'wonders and blunders' tour around the country: taking a balloon ride over his home town of Bristol, visiting the cities of Northampton, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and travelling to the Shetland Isles. What George found convinced him that there were some really awful buildings around that should really be demolished! This led to his idea of an 'X-list': the identification of the buildings whose demolition or radical transformation would improve the local environment. His views of what X-listing should mean are radical:

- There should be a planning decree that X-listed buildings should not be considered for change of use or alteration, such as from office to residential use, without good evidence that this will bring beneficial changes such that the reasons for the original listing become invalid.
- There should be a stipulation that a demolition notice will be issued if such a building is vacant for more than, say, two years.
- Planners should be guided to encourage the replacement of such buildings with appropriate rewarding redevelopment.
- Finally, a major new grant fund should be established , equivalent to the funding available for repairing historic buildings, to help tip the balance in deciding whether to refurbish or demolish.

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Channel 4 ran a public poll to nominate the country's worst buildings: over 10,000 votes were received for over 1,000 buildings - some small, some large: most were no more than 50 years old, many were derelict and graffiti-ridden and associated with the drug culture and crime, many were empty homes. Tower blocks were strongly disliked, and many public buildings and so-called 'attractions' failed to inspire! The 'top' 12 hated buildings were examined in the 'Demolition' series.

View the buildings, their locations and read more at: <http://www.channel4.com/life/microsites/D/demolition/index.html>

The idea of a local X-list is interesting: what would you nominate for our area? Send suggestions to iesr@staffs.ac.uk

Forthcoming lectures:

- **Wednesday 16th May**

"Regeneration....don't leave it to the so-called experts"

Wayne Hemingway of Hemingway Design. Wayne co-founded the fashion label 'Red or Dead' and 'Hemingway Design' which specialises in housing and product design.

- **Thursday 27th September**

"Sustainable Urbanism: How To Do It - the Approach of John Thompson & Partners"

Marcus Adams: Managing Director of John Thompson & Partners, an architect's practice based in Hatton Gardens, London. Marcus, who hails from Stoke-on-Trent, is an architect and urban designer with substantial experience working on major mixed-use developments and large-scale regeneration projects.

- **Thursday 25th October** To be confirmed

- **Thursday 29th November**

"Urban Environments" exact title to be confirmed.

Professor Sir John Lawton. Sir John is President of the British Ecological Society and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.

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