

Institute for

Environment
Sustainability
and
Regeneration



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Public Lectures in Regeneration 2008

“Let’s Get Real About Buildings!”

Adrian Leaman

MD of Building Use Studies and
Secretary of the Useable Buildings Trust

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Staffordshire University

Lecture series supported by



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Adrian Leaman

Adrian Leaman has been managing director of Building Use Studies (BUS) since 1987. He specialises in the management and application of feedback from building occupants about their needs and requirements. This is then made available to property specialists, building designers and managers in briefs and strategic plans for the future. He is an accomplished motivational speaker at conferences, advanced courses and universities in Britain and around the world, and a widely-cited author, with over 150 publications.



Adrian also runs the popular website Usable Buildings (www.usablebuildings.co.uk) for the Usable Buildings Trust (founded 2004), a charitable trust which puts independent results from building performance studies into the public domain. Adrian also acts as Secretary of the Trust.

He has carried out pioneering and influential research work on occupant health in buildings ('sick buildings') in the 1980s, and productivity studies in the 1990s as well as the occupancy surveys for the internationally-acknowledged Probe studies of building performance. Two special issues of the research journal Building Research and Information (March and December 2001) are devoted to Probe.

From 1993-97 he was at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, combining this with his role at BUS. In 1998 he was Visiting Professor at the Department of Real Estate and Project Management at the University of Delft, Netherlands. In 2002 he was Visiting Fellow at the School of Architecture and Design, Victoria University of Wellington. He has also worked at the Science Policy Research Unit (University of Sussex), the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Bartlett School (University College London);

Adrian has project experience covering over 600 commissions. Clients include United Nations (UNDP), OECD, Department of Education (UK), Department of Environment (UK), Melbourne City Council, New South Wales Public Works, National Power, DETR (UK), British Airways, Building Research Establishment, Stanhope Properties, Xerox, Nokia, Interior, BiFM, Byggforsk (Norway), TNO (Netherlands), BP, Metropolitan Police Service, Unilever, Arup R&D, Bendigo Bank.

He collaborates with Bill Bordass on many projects in the UK. Their real-world and total building approach to problem solving uses strategic thinking about the future based on careful analysis of current performance and trends. Their respective databases on energy, user, health and occupancy issues are extensive, and have provided the models for many similar studies.

Some of the basic overview about usable buildings from:

www.usablebuildings.co.uk

Turn design intent to reality

- Know what is needed: Strategic Briefing
- Be clear what you want: Strategic Design
- Understand what you can do: The art of the possible
- Check that it works: Usability and manageability
- Say what you want: Specify: what, why and how.
- Get it done well: Communicate, train, inspect
- Finish it off: Commission, handover, dialogue
- Get the users to take ownership: Sea trials
- Make it work better: Fine tuning
- Spot unintended consequences: Avoid revenge effects
- Learn from it all: Share your experiences



Buildings should be ...

... safe, comfortable, convenient and healthy. People will soon notice if they are not ...or if what they want to do is thwarted, e.g. by poorly-functioning technology.

The best is usually the enemy of the good. Don't make things too complicated: "good enough" is usually sufficient, not necessarily "just right".

People must be able to get out of trouble. If things are not good enough, people need opportunities to correct things in their favour.

- Try to achieve balance between provision of appropriate conditions (which are acceptable most of the time) and scope for interventions (which must be timely and effective).
- Too much need for intervention is irritating. Not enough is annoying. Inappropriate automated interventions are exasperating!

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- If conditions are poor, people at least should be given trade-off choices so that they can minimise the worst effects. For example, in summertime, they should be given the ability to trade-off heat against noise.

Building users normally prefer ...

1. Predictable default states, which form the “background” to what they are doing and give a basis for habitual behaviour.
 2. Opportunities to make interventions or corrections if requirements or conditions alter.
 3. Clarity: the ability to act clearly, quickly and effectively ... and to know immediately that an appropriate response has been obtained.
- Usability is the satisfactory combination of all three, usually with most emphasis on 3. People tend to concentrate more on how things function, and less on the background context.

Much more including publications, links, examples and events at:

www.usablebuildings.co.uk



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