

# Dean's Roundup (Friday, 8 August, 2014) and Obituary to Professor Sir Peter Hall

**Roundup:** *Ceiling function*, the mathematical operation of rounding a number up to the next higher integer.

**Roundup:** a term in American English referring to the process of gathering animals into an area, known as a "Muster" in Australia.

**Rounding up:** when a helmsman cannot control a boat and it heads into the wind

**Roundup:** the plan for an invasion of northern France by Allied forces during World War II (Wikipedia)

**Dean's Roundup:** part blog, part bulletin; part honour roll, part curatorial [**cu**'**ra**-to'**ri**-al (ky<sup>oo</sup>r<sup>ə</sup>-tōr'<sup>ē</sup>-əl, -tōr'<sup>ə</sup>-) n. nounised by the Dean from curator + editorial]

Dear all,

Many will have heard the sad news of the death of Sir Peter Hall on July 30<sup>th</sup> 2014. Sir Peter was a Cambridge geographer turned urban planner who was one of the world's outstanding urbanists for half a century. His early classics *Urban and Regional Planning*; *London 2000*; and the epic *Containment of Urban England* were on my reading list as an undergraduate and I was inspired at all stages of my career by his breathlessly-paced lectures, always packed to brim with illustrations. I was always a little puzzled by Sir Peter. Normally I quickly lose interest in talks that are mostly information, devoid of formal theory and without a clear focus. But he always captured everyone's attention with his powerful geographical narrative. His art was that of the classic geographer. He was an empiricist. His talks made use of lots of maps. He viewed urban problems in an unsophisticated way, and articulated them in his talks and writing with immensely powerful fluidity. He would acknowledge a theoretical insight and defer to its bigger picture but would unswervingly return to the empirical narrative and let the maps, simple charts and pure weight of common-sense argumentation deliver his message. This is why he was so popular with the politicians leading on urban agenda in Westminster and Europe. He advised on and inspired left and right of centre urban policy, famously introducing the idea of de-regulated enterprise zones (inspired by Hong Kong) to the Thatcher government; and advising on Labour's eco-towns and High Speed Rail projects.

One of the few abiding theoretical notions that would frequently surface in his work was the idea of place and non-place (after Melvin Webber, a colleague of Sir Peter's at Berkeley). In this sense, there was in fact, a strong theory underlying his analysis: it was the simple proposition that space matters and that distance introduces friction to social and economic transactions. He would not have thought of himself as a transaction costs scholar but that is what he was. His fascination with the idea that computer and information technology might overcome the friction of distance was not so much an economic argument as an empirical discourse on the relevance of geography, understood in the traditional sense of space and distance. Nevertheless, his recent work on regional clustering won his team a shortlist position on a major international economics prize. Such is the power of simple ideas.

The last time I spoke with Peter was when he, John Friedman and I shared a stage in Xiamen University in 2007. The two of them were giants not only in intellect, but in personality, authority

and stamina and I was worn out well before they were, in a grueling tour that ended up in the remote mountains of Fujian province. In my HKU office I have a faded green lever-arch file that Sir Peter left behind at Reading University after moving to UC Berkeley and thence to the Bartlett. Mike Batty inherited Sir Peters Chair position and the file and I inherited it from Mike when I got my Chair at Cardiff (where Mike Batty had been Head of Department after moving from Reading and before moving to SUNY Buffalo). There is a palimpsest of urbanist ideas and activities on the spine of the box file: Property Rights / MIT symposium / Bellagio-Rockefeller Foundation / Methods MSc / and so on. Only faint impressions remain of Sir Peter's use of the box but I keep it because it symbolizes the palimpsest of urban scholarship and of the city itself.

Sir Peter had a part in the setting up of CUPEM/CUSUP (now DUPAD) and his legacy in HKU and the wider region will live on for a very long time.

Who will you pass on your lever-arch file to? It is never too early to invest in the next generation.

Congratulations to those mentioned below.

Chris

## Architectural Conservation Programmes

### 1. Dr. Hoyin Lee and Professor Lynne DiStefano

- ACP Director Hoyin Lee and Adjunct Professor Lynne DiStefano completed two consultancy reports commissioned by the Urban Renewal Authority in preparation for the adaptive reuse of a contiguous row of 14 units of shophouses on Shanghai Street, Mong Kok, 10 of which are Graded Historic Buildings:
  - (1) "Statement of Significance (Heritage Assessment) of Shanghai Street Shophouses, No. 600-626 Shanghai Street, Mong Kok" and
  - (2) "Design Guidelines for the Adaptive Reuse of Shanghai Street Shophouses, Nos. 600-626 Shanghai Street, Mong Kok."
- appointed a reviewer for two research proposals for the RGC Faculty Development Scheme and registered as a Referee in the RGC International Referee Register on 23 July

## Department of Architecture

### 1. Dr. B. S. Jia

- published the following article:

*JIA, Beisi : "Master Class - Shaping the Urban Traditions: Architectural Education on Open Building (3)" (Chinese with English abstract) , Architectural Worlds (No. 157), 2014:3 Vol. 29, Shenzhen, China. p. 30-35 (ISSN1000-8373)*

### 2. Mr. Yan Gao

- delivered a keynote lecture in the Extra Fabrica 2014, Design and Build Summer Workshop, Taiwan in June. EXTRA FABRICA is a 12-day 'in-situ' workshop exploring advanced digital fabrication techniques in direct engagement with urban situations, and in this case, in Taipei City. The workshop is accompanied by a one day international symposium with keynote speakers and round table discussants from UK, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and Israel. This event is envisaged as part of the wider agenda in establishing Taipei City as the 'World Design Capital 2016': an exemplary model of adaptive, sustainable and visionary urban development.
- published a peer reviewed paper, The Parametric and Building Information Modelling upon Architectural Design Practice, by South Architecture Magazine 《南方建筑》, DOI ref: 10.3969/j.issn.1000-0232.2014.04.000, Paper Ref Number: 1000-0232(2014)04-0000-00
- presented a research paper, Integrated Open Source Architectural Design for High Density Housing with Computational Control and Management Engineering the Paradoxes of Chinese Housing Architecture, in the 4th Annual International Conference on Architecture, July 2014, Athens, Greece.

- invited to join the research team in the projects, i.e. Material & Tectonics, Shenzhen Biennale in Venice Biennale, for the China Pavilion, the Venice Biennale 2014 International Architecture Exhibition – Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014 Venice Biennale in July.
- invited to present the competition winning scheme and the design process of the Lung Tsun Stone Bridge Preservation Corridor to the Architectural Service Department as one of the official Continuous Professional Education seminars in June.
- invited to the Perspective's Design Night Out as one of the Guest Speakers to share the design ideas and experiences under the theme of Design & Lifestyle in June 2014. The attendance covered a wide range of disciplines including interior design, graphic design, fashion design, product design and high tech companies.
- invited to monitor a session with the topic Urban Practice in the SmartGeometry Annual Conference 2014 at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in July. This panel focused on how young emergent and more established architectural practices are shaping urban presence as the way to foresee the future in Asia.

### 3. Mr. Stephen Lau

- completed a full training and examination course to become an Accredited Professional of the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) of UK.

It was the first professional training course undertaken by the BREEAM in Mainland China in July 2014.

- Stephen Lau and Dean Webster secured HKU funds to appoint Professor Phil Jones from Cardiff University School of Architecture as a Visiting Research Professor for 3 years. Professor Jones will help lead HKU's architectural science research interests into its next phase and will contribute to this aspect of setting up the new HKU iLab.

## Department of Real Estate and Construction

### 1. Professor K.W. Chau

- The 2014 Asia Pacific Real Estate Symposium (APRERS) organized by The University of Hong Kong (HKU), the National University of Singapore and Tsinghua University was held on 28-29 July 2014 at HKU. The symposium was hosted by HKU's Ronald Coase Centre for Property Rights Research (RCCPRR) and supported by The Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics (JREFE). After a vigorous selection process by the review committee comprising representatives from the three organizing universities and the JREFE editorial board, 8 papers were selected for presentation at the Symposium. The presenters, discussants and symposium participants had an in-depth discussion on each paper. The aim of the symposium was to foster academic debates and exchange of ideas on real estate research issues as well as providing suggestions and comments for the authors to improve the quality the papers . The presented papers will be revised by the authors and reviewed by other JREFE reviewers. The papers that have successfully gone through the review process will be published in a JREFE special issue.

The 2015 APRERS will be hosted by Tsinghua University in July. Call for papers and more information about the symposium will be posted on the RCCPRR website in January / February 2015.



### 2. Dr. L H Li

- has been invited by the Department of Urban Planning and Design in the University of Seoul to present a paper at the International Symposium on Urban Regeneration, in November, 2014 . This is part of the celebration of 30th year of Urban Planning and Design Education at the University of Seoul.

3. Prof Steve Rowlinson and Ir. Ronan Collins (a renowned Hong Kong-based BIM consultant)
  - hosted the CIC BIM Standards Stakeholders Forum on 22 July 2014 at the Department of Real Estate and Construction, HKU. The Forum featured the presentation of the draft CIC BIM Project Execution Plan, discussion, and comments from the participants on the draft Standards. The participants of the Forum came from the major local universities including the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the City University of Hong Kong. Prof Rowlinson and Ir Collins would compile and revise, as appropriate, the Standards based on the outcomes of the Forum.

## Department of Urban Planning and Design

### 1. CUSUP

- jointly organized a public seminar with The Hong Kong Institute of Planners on *Urban Governance, Land Supply, and Housing: Power, Politics, and Planning in England, Australia, and Hong Kong* on 19 July 2014. Speaking at the seminar were Associate Professor Nicole Gurrán of the University of Sydney, Professor Nick Gallent of University College London, Mr. Kar-kan Ling of the Planning Department of HKSAR Government, Professor Rebecca Chiu of The University of Hong Kong. This seminar was sponsored by a research project funded by the University of Sydney's International Project Development Fund. The seminar attracted an audience of about 300 people.



## 2. Prof. Rebecca Chiu

- gave a presentation on “Land supply, planning politics and housing in Hong Kong” at the Public Seminar on *Urban Governance, Land Supply, and Housing: Power, Politics, and Planning in England, Australia, and Hong Kong*, jointly organized by the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning and the Affordable Housing Research Network of The University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Institute of Planners, and sponsored by the University of Sydney, 19 July 2014.

## 3. Prof. Anthony Yeh

- was invited to be a juror of the *International Consultation on the Conceptual Urban Design of Bao'an West Dynamic Coastal Zone* of the People's Government of Bao'an District, Shenzhen and Urban Planning, Land and Resources Commission of Shenzhen Municipality on 25 July 2014 in Bao'an, Shenzhen.

## 4. Prof. Bo-sin Tang and Dr. Kenneth Tang

- gave a joint presentation about urban planning and new town development in Hong Kong on 10 July to a delegation of 27 students, teachers and professionals from SJB School of Architecture and Planning, Bangalore, India. The delegation included Dr. Ravindra, the former Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka and is now the Chairman of the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) in Bangalore.

