

INVENTORISATION OF MODERN HERITAGE: URBANISM AND LANDSCAPE

Thursday 13 March 2014 - Session One - Welcome & Introduction

Chair: Dr Miles Glendinning (Professor of Architectural Conservation, University of Edinburgh)

Welcome to The DOCOMOMO-International Day Conference on the Inventorisation of the Modern Urban and Landscape Heritage. I'm Miles Glendinning, chair of the DOCOMOMO-International Specialist Committee on Urbanism and Landscape (ISC U + L), the host organisation of this event, and before we get into our first session I'd like to say a few introductory words – firstly about our subject matter today, and secondly about some organisational aspects. Let's begin with the subject-matter: What are we aiming to get out of today's event, with its mixture of lectures, field visit and discussions?

I'd like to highlight three main themes, the first being the relationship between inventorisation or recording on the one hand and conservation on the other. This relationship is spotlighted in the very name DOCOMOMO –DOcumentation followed by COnservation – in that order. Documentation is seen as an essential first step before conservation, but also something that's worthwhile in its own right and has its own specific and distinctive values. Can it be an alternative to conservation – for example, in the documenting of housing areas that have been significantly demolished, as we'll see this afternoon on our field visit to Wester Hailes? Within Scottish government heritage circles this is a rather live issue, as up till now recording and conservation have been quite distinctively divided between two separate organisations, the Royal Commission and Historic Scotland, but these are soon likely to be merging with each other.

The second main theme I'd like to highlight is another definition issue reflected in DOCOMOMO nomenclature, in this case the name of the Committee on Urbanism and Landscape. It was created partly in relation to the cult of the heroic architect and the individual iconic building, to champion the cause of the collective heritage of ensembles and landscapes: but what does *this* mean for recording? Does it mean a more broad-brush approach, or different types of database? We can discuss that later in the morning.

The third issue I want to highlight is what I'll call in shorthand that of 'agency' – about the people and organisations involved in recording, and especially the contrast between the work of expert organisations, often at a national or

government level, and the work of volunteer groups, often at local community level. This is something that goes back to the early days of the conservation movement in the 19th century, in the contrast between French government experts like Prosper Merimee and English volunteer zealots like William Morris – but what form does it take today, in the recording of modernist urban heritage? We'll be able to see both approaches in action today in our expert lectures and in our community field visit to Wester Hailes.

These are just three possible areas we could discuss, but there are many others! Now, I'd like to touch on some organisational aspects of the day. As you'll see from the schedule, we have two sessions of lectures and discussion at the University, with a field trip in the middle to the Community recording initiative at Wester Hailes on the south-west outskirts of the city. The morning session is made up of a mixture of 25-minute lectures on broad, national themes, and shorter, 10-15 minute interventions focusing on specific case studies. The sessions are all being audio recorded for possible podcast release.

At the end of the morning, those who have booked for the Wester Hailes visit should proceed by local bus to Wester Hailes Westside Plaza, where Eoghan Howard will meet us to host our community recording workshop and local tour of what was once Edinburgh's largest area of postwar mass housing – now largely redeveloped, which makes the recording task partly one of landscape archaeology. The culminating evening event back here is Poul Sverrild's Masterclass, a separately-bookable extended lecture and discussion.

I'd like to move on now to introducing the three speakers of our first session. All three of them are closely connected with our twin-headed heritage system in Scotland, with Diane Watters and Dawn McDowell respectively representing the Royal Commission and Historic Scotland, and Geoffrey tell having been for many years the Head of Architecture at the Royal Commission. So all of them will doubtless have views on the pluses and minuses of the relationship of recording and conservation.