

## INTRODUCTION.

The analysis and study of how humans construct and inhabit their built environment is finely poised between the fields of architecture and sociology, connecting the line between the theoretical and the practical. For the creation of a truly positive space, first the workings and ideals of the human being must be considered. Geoffrey Scott dictates that “Architecture is subservient to the general needs of mankind” (Scott, 1914) This can be read as architecture manifesting itself as an expression of human life. It is through these statements that a concept for a hospitable environment should be formed.

The general form of urbanism throughout the 20th and 21st centuries has been large scale, atomistic, and centrally planned. The Post World War II fascination to adopt the city as a machine for living alongside the rapid urbanization of society has overseen the development of urban centres into largely car centric, zonal spaces focused rather upon the speed and efficiency at which the city can operate as opposed to the atmosphere and spatial experiences at human scale. Critical analysis of precedents, in both history and modern practice, are used in an attempt to create a contextually relevant design intended to reintroduce elements of traditional urbanism to Poole.

## TRADITIONAL URBANISM.

When considering an innovative approach to traditional urbanism it is important to understand the nature and social context in which traditional urban environments were created. In programmatic terms, the formation of traditional urbanism is defined and characterised



FIG. SUNDANCE FESTIVAL, PORTLAND

Green Hammer, (2012). Sundance festival. [image] Available at: <http://www.greenhammer.com/insight/blog/save-the-dates-ecotruster-summer-sundown-concert-series/> [Accessed 15 May. 2014].

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by spatial organisation arranged with the emphasis upon the human scale environment. The majority of the urban fabric is focused around walkable distances from the home to the workplace, commerce and public spaces. Alexander Nies writes in *Complexity and Urban Coherence* 'a city lives and works according to its network of connective paths' (A.Nies 1987) it is this statement that best summarises the ideals upon which human movement in traditional urbanism was considered.

In areas and urban environments that display permeable human centric networks there is more freedom for the expression of an innately more human lifestyle. Studies show that higher levels of social interaction and community involvement lead to positive health consequences and that social ties are encompassed within a broader concept of social capital. This is to say that communities with a higher level of social capital experience an elevated level of reciprocity, and thus form a more cohesive urban environment. Portland Oregon embodies this perfectly, whilst the broader urban environment persisted with urban sprawl, Portland implemented measures such as smaller streets, cycle orientated networks and urban growth boundaries. These changes had fundamental positive impacts on the way Portlanders lived. The reliance on the car was reduced '...leading to on average a 20% lower traffic flow throughout the city, and in turn shifted reliance to physical activity raising the standard of health across the city.' (Speck, 2009) Traditionalist urban environments are in essence a concentration of vital human services designed to allow for the facilitated travel between one

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place and another with a heavy focus on community orientation. This focus is designed to enable the community to engage more frequently both with and without intention, this spontaneous interaction has been found to increase trust amongst the individuals in the community and thus breed a sense of familiarity a trait many find key to the creation of a positive atmosphere.

Traditional urbanism however is not only supported through its proficient network of connective pathways, it can be said that truly successful urbanism encompasses a diversity and mixed use of infrastructure, a diverse range of housing and an emphasis on the public realm. Public spaces are to be treated as civic art representing an iconic or monumental centre to the newly designed space allowing for the place to adopt an identity. This is exemplified by Fig. (x) displaying the transformation of a space into a dynamic art form. Although perhaps of highest importance is the dilution of density between the outer rural and inner urban environments. This blurred boundary allows for the human occupant to discern the vitality of nature and their surrounding environment, creating a profound impact on human life.

When analysing the need for a reversion to traditional urbanism in Poole it is important to assess and critique respective approaches to urban interventions of this nature. This is due to the manner in which such interventions are carried out, the consistent reference to the past alongside modern application exemplify positive moral implications that dictate the creation of a successful space.

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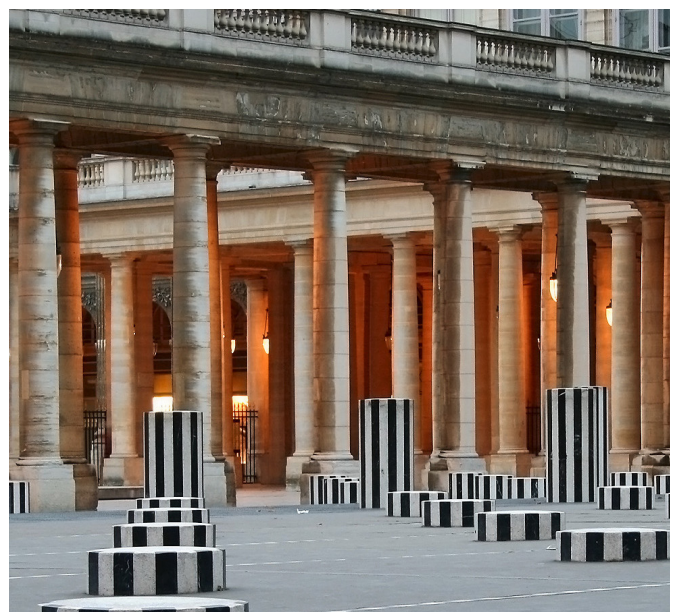
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The syllabus for ARC 552 states that “all architectural design is to some extent a predictive speculation; a projective proposition” (Unit handbook, 2014) This can be understood as; by identifying patterns in previous successful architecture, it is possible to draw conclusions and inspiration and therefore speculate as to the form and concept of the new intervention. This would suggest then that, as many believe, architecture is a continuous process that, whilst moving forward, must also make avid reference to its past to create truly positive spaces.

This idea is illustrated by Stefanie Leontiadis in *Syntax of intervention in historically significant urban open spaces*, Leontiadis states,

‘Historical spaces of momentousness are not just a gathering of old buildings but spatial compositions of memory and urban identification of adorning affiliation and reference to the past’ (2013, p.248)

This statement exemplifies the theory that architecture is very much a manifestation of cultural beliefs held by certain people at a certain time. That qualities both spatial and in construction reflect the views held by the social community at a specific time. This quote can be imagined in layering, each development, each addition to a space illustrates theoretical, practical and social preferences or views of an era. This is no better demonstrated than in gothic architecture where fascination with symbolism and monumentality displays a parallel between the social and moral beliefs held at the time. The community presence in the construction



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FIG. LES DEUX PLATEUX

Point Du Rencontre, (2013). Les Deux Plateaux. [image] Available at: <http://www.cndp.fr/collections/point-de-rencontre/monumenta2012/les-deux-plateaux/> [Accessed 15 May, 2014].

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of these huge cathedrals lead to ordained features as opposed to the preceding neo classical architecture reflective of the contemporary oppressive social nature.

### **MODERN URBANISM AND THE RISE OF INTERNATIONAL STYLE.**

It is with Leonatiadis's initial statement in mind that she moves on to say that 'it is however important not to exclusively worship the past' suggesting that whilst historical reference and social parallels are important, the designer must never waver from their pursuit of innovative representation of modern human life. It is with these considerations and statements in mind that the platform for new traditional urbanism is formed. It can be understood then that it is this element of Leontiadis' statement that has lead to the contrasting creation of traditionalist ideals in the form of modernist urbanism.

Corbusier, widely regarded as the god father of modernism held '...a core modernist belief in humanity's ever growing capacity for material betterment through scientific and technical innovation, and domination of nature' This belief was fueled by the want for sheer innovation, efficiency, and holistic grand scale developments aimed at attempting to achieve '...formal order, discipline, and heirachy' (Tzonis, 1986) These radical universal formulas were devised at every level of the urban fabric and were realised in the form of mass high rise housing, the abolition of the traditional fabric, prioritization of motorized movement and large scale urban space configuration.

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FIG. BAHAUS, DESSAU

Alberta Norweg, (2010). Bahaus Dessau. [image] Available at: <http://albertanorweg.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/ad-classics-dessau-bauhaus-walter.html> [Accessed 15 May. 2014].



The apparent trademark of modern urbanist design advocates a simplification of urban lifestyle into strict functional zones of land use. It is this ideal that lead to the creation of reliance on motorised transport. This over reliance is illustrated by the fact that spending on transportation now outweighs the cost of living expenses, with the '...rise in fuel costs reaching 75.5% compared with the cost of living rising 38% over the same time period' (RAC 2013) within the modern community.

The underlying concept behind modernism was the romantic association between dense populations, their spatial boundaries and the subsequent symbiotic nature of these establishments. 1928 saw the formation of the Congress International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), an organisation centered around the worlds most prominent contemporary architects, Gropious, Corbusier and Mies Van De Rohe to name a few.

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CIAM's objective was to spread the principles of modern urbanism of which these establishments became trademarks. It can be said that in theory the conceptual aim of the movement resolved the social needs of the time, where 15% of the world's urban population resided in slums and sub standard living conditions, mass social housing was used largely as a solution in an attempt to eradicate this pattern. Whilst the movement accommodated this social need, it was unable to address the social dynamics of family and community and this ultimately represents the reasoning behind the failure of the ambitious modernist dream.

Another, and perhaps more poignant flaw of modern urbanism was the distinct lack of reference to historical context of any kind. Paul Greenhalgh describes this attribute as 'anti-historicism' (Rowe, 2011) Examples of this can be found in both individual and large scale realisations; Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye presents no historic architectural design influence, explicitly expressive of 'form ever follows function' (Sullivan, 1896) the open plan interior and distinct lack of ornamentation were regarded as a revelation amongst contemporary 1920s design. On a larger scale, modernist social housing was in certain cases such as the Hufeisensiedlung, Horseshoe Estate, in Berlin. This development plays testimony to the successful modernist ideas of the time, citing its presence as a UNESCO World Heritage site as proof.

Regarded as a success, the innovative approach to the aesthetic represented progress, with

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other positive aspects cited as ‘proficient social continuity and a varied environment’ (Mill, 2011)

However, not all modernist social housing was regarded a success, during the 1970s modernist structures faced wide spread criticism, with regards to a number of socialist issues, resulting largely in the demolition of many projects, symbolised most clearly perhaps by the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing concept. The scale of the project initially drew skepticism, 57 acres of land occupied by 33, 11 storey tower blocks built in St. Louis, Missouri. The concept was aimed at reducing the dependency of those less financially secure on over crowded, low sanitation housing, and replacing them with geometrically clean, vertical homes, surely the modernist ideal. By the late 1960’s however, the features of architectural innovation associated with modernism had become social nuances, the stop gap elevators in particular faced heavy criticism for the incidental adoption as a hotspot for muggings. Details of a similar nature throughout the buildings lead to increased levels of vacancy and thus ultimately the failure of the project.

In a broader spectrum, patterns began to emerge attacking the lifelessness of modernist structures. The clean lines and purity of form, whilst widely accepted as progress lacked moral value and historic context, in the book *Cities and Design*, Paul Knox summarises the popular opinion of modern urbanist approaches as the “seamless aestheticisation of everyday life” (P.Knox,2010) perhaps more conceptually then, this dictation that these projects reject context and



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historicism is to say that modernism itself rejects the fundamental belief that architecture is the symbol and physical proof of human life. Projects such as Corbusiers L'urbanisme appear to suggest that these modernist structures are able to manifest themselves in an infinite number of contexts, disregarding the wider social impacts for short-term gain. This point of view is best encompassed by the statement of Lewis Mumford, historian and sociologist when referring to modernist interventions ‘the absolute folly of creating physical structure at the price of destroying the intimate social structure of a communities life’

**REALISATION OF FUTURE SCENARIO IN POOLE.**

The comparison and contrasting nature between the two movements is summarised by Debra Efroymsen.

“In the one, moments of pleasure and joy can be purchased; in the other, they are freely available in daily encounters on the streets, in parks and in other public spaces. In the one, possessions represent the highest pursuit of happiness, with a never-ending race to buy more and more in order to capture moments of pleasure, and with selfishness considered a virtue; in the other, happiness comes from interactions, from relationships, from people.” (Efroymsen,2009)

Efroymsens statements in ‘Public spaces: How they humanise cities’ leads to the belief that traditional urbanism is innately a more atmospheric and human approach to design encompassing both moral and practical values in the search for successful urbanism.



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In relation more specifically to Dialogues with Future Scenarios, Poole as an urban landscape presents many of the fundamental flaws associated with modernist urbanism. The politically motivated, top down nature of the urban planning removes the control of the user and juxtaposes with the traditional urbanist approach the project is attempting to achieve. Fig (X) displays the current functional zones within Poole, these spatial divisions were most prominently compounded due to the creation of the much maligned dolphin centre. Built in 1969 and extended in 1989, the shopping centre had at its core, positive social intentions of the time. Intended to market itself as a civic centre designed not just for commercial use but also as an innovate alternative to the traditional high street, encompassing community involvement. It was its intention, as was the modernist way, to create a concentrated community focused on facilitation as opposed to experience.

The obsession with progress and innovation lead many to believe that such projects could not fail, leading to the ignorance of the wider context, this is illustrated by prominent Mall architect Victor Gruen's now redundant statement '...we do not believe, we or anybody else will lose business because of this urban movement' (Gruen, 2003) He could in fact be no further from the truth. In Poole specifically the placement and arrogance of the structure lead to the isolation of a historic core route through the centre of Poole that pre dates the 1800's. This disregard

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for the urban environment, not just at the time of construction, but also of that that had stood previously, lead to the arduous isolation and eventual social degradation of the high-street and surrounding areas.

The fabricated disparity between the top and bottom of the high-street, alongside Poole's urban incoherence becomes the driver for a modern intervention, aimed at restoring social dynamic and a prosperous community. Due to the Dolphin Centres introduction, the pedestrian flow and movement has become channelled with the high-street acting more as a procession, drawing people through with no realised means to an end. The commercial aspect has faced decline and access to the high-street from residential areas is diluted. This is to say that Poole lacks sufficient access to what limited public spaces there are, within which there is almost no activity to suggest arrest and involvement. The way in which the proposed future scenario address these issues can be categorised into 3 phases; The first of which aims to restructure the form of the current high-street to provide a more adequate social dynamic, and increase contextual links throughout the town. During the initial research into the project it was found that a number of spaces surrounding the immediate vicinity of the high street were disused and unappropriated, These spaces presented an opportunity to expand the current high-street layout to form a more identifiable edged space as opposed to the linear nature of the current high-street. People are inherently social beings, unable to thrive without the interaction of humans, it can be said then, that this interaction needs a platform,

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a venue. It is through this deduction that the basis for the design is formed, the unappropriated space located behind the west face of the high-street is to be repurposed as the new boundary for which activity can flourish. The secondary purpose of such a move is to create a facilitated physical link between the modern developments of the high-street and the historically valuable Old Town. For a space widely regarded as Poole's most valuable asset behind its natural resources, the arrival at such a place appears to be incidental as opposed to an urban environment that encourages and directs movement towards its prize asset. The angle at which the proposed reconfiguration to the high-street is projected, encompasses the entrance to the old town creating a continuation of space and blurring the zonal disparity. At the human scale, this expansion of space also allows for the user to be more spatially aware and conscious of the space in which they inhabit. Being able to visually identify the Old town and high-street in spatial, walkable terms, allows for a more developed sense of place. Whilst this development aims at achieving a higher social coherence and awareness of the space, the decision to alter and expand the high-street can be viewed as a direct contrast to the traditional urbanist belief for the preservation of historicism, removing a cultural icon in favour of social proficiency.

‘Among the requirements that are satisfied, in part, in public spaces are the need for contact, the need for knowledge, and the need for stimulation’ (Gehl, 2001) Jan Gehl dictates that for a public space to be truly positive, it cannot solely rely on the reciprocal nature



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of its occupants. This is to say that to avoid dead space a function is required to maintain social involvement. The decision to incorporate an agricultural aspect within the high street was formed on a number of factors; primarily that looking to avoid inactivity borne of the urban landscape. This use of functional green space looks to address the ecological and social concerns raised by modern urban existence. The intervention looks to the user to become the catalyst for the function; this is based around the belief that when an individual is given control of their own environment, they become innately more responsible for the space. Thus to provide the community with a platform on which to actively participate in the growth of resource, it allows an element of diversity and choice within the community. Conceptually then, it can be said that by giving the user control of the urban environment, the community can create a nurturing environment expressive of human nature.

In broader terms, this phase of the intervention can be viewed as both a catalyst for the reduction in urban sprawl and the creation of social worth through the creation of 'micro-agricultures' throughout the urban fabric. 'My proposition is urban implosion rather than explosion' (Soleri, 1973) Paulo Soleri was a pioneer in the quest for social living advances often in the form of outrageous proposals aimed at containing the city within itself. It is with this statement in mind that a more tempered form for the intervention is manifested, the intrusion beneath ground level allows for the space to be occupied as dual purpose, whilst allowing

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for a physical representation of the communities endeavors to flourish at street level. It is possible to look to Peter Barber's Holmes Garden proposal, an example of agriculture used as a social tool to create a cohesive urban intervention. The proposal reads;

'the garden creates a homely, domestic atmosphere in the hostel. It will give participating residents an interest and outlet for their energy. It will help to foster a sense of belonging, self worth and empowerment amongst residents.' (Barber, 2013)

This design encompasses perfectly the social values the future scenarios aims to realise throughout Poole, the locality and humanism in the design creates a sense of self worth. Coupled with the opportunity for the 'farmers' to sell back to the community, this project presents both economic and social gain. Centering on ideals the future scenarios concept is founded upon are the creation and maintenance of a beautiful and functional garden supported by the community.

The final phase of the design was to approach the intervention from a wider urbanist view, the zonal segregation again presents issues with regards to access should the intervention be realised. Both the high-street and central residential areas share an adjacency, however the seamless movement between the two is obstructed due to the exterior of the high street, forcing pedestrian movement to be channeled through the pre existing linear space. This issue is addressed through added perforation between the two spatial boundaries.

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The east face of the high-street is to be transformed into a series of courtyard spaces looking to exploit the 360° degree nature of the geometry Fig. (X) Much like the urban fabric of Barcelona, these trimmed square courtyards invite movement through and into the new space. The encompassing nature of these courtyard aims to instill a mindset of complete urbanism, that is to say that the user is induced to feel fulfilled by a busy, diverse urban environment and thus creating a sense of social dynamism, the true aim of traditional urbanism. Accompanied by new, regular, widened routes that line the boundary between the two zones, the high-street's social presence looks to expand itself and engage - more indirectly - wider sections of the urban fabric. These added routes stem from a secondary intervention aimed at connecting the residential aspect of urbanism to the central focus of the high street. The subtle progression into a large manufactured space aims to dispel the harsh boundaries currently in place, it could be suggested then that this design presents a more holistic approach to urbanist design.

### CONCLUSION.

Bordering the residential area, a development of mixed use, diverse housing is enforced, the design of these homes looks to divert itself away from the private realm through the incorporation of garden roofs, and shared front terraces. The varied nature of these dwellings creates a broad sense of diversity, a contrasting approach to one of the key flaws in modernism. This new take on terrace housing owes largely its inspiration to the Borneo Housing Development in Amsterdam, a project that shares the belief of creating 'unique

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structures within the unified whole' (McManus, 2011). It can be understood through this statement that a sense of locality must be enforced not only at a small scale, but the culmination of project as a whole must evoke a strict identity. This final phase of development looks to enforce the core traditionalist beliefs of the walk able neighborhood, by blurring the spatial divisions and perforating access to a more central space, the community is presented with a platform on which to reciprocate and develop as a social unit.

Architecture is subservient to the general needs of mankind" (Scott, 1914) revisiting this quote, it is clear to see that the profound and most basic principle of architecture is to service and facilitate the human psyche and the manifested expression of such ideals. It can be said then that, when comparing both Modernism and traditional urbanism, the true positive spatial ideal is a middle ground between the two. The emphasis of the Traditionalist viewpoint is centered on serving human scale orientation, and the value of community, with the contrasting view of modernism placed on functionality, spatial delegation, and clean ornamentation. Whilst individually each movement has flaws the culmination of the two in the form of the future scenarios intervention retains the positives from both in an attempt to create successful urbanism.

The Portland case study reinforces the belief that the structure of our urban fabric has a direct correlation with our social and physical wellbeing, It can then

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be said that, surely the most important factor in any architectural endeavor must be the physical wellbeing of the occupant. In practical terms this conclusion lead to the future scenarios inclination to adhere more closely to the traditional urbanist outlook. This is not to detract from the Modernists stance on urban design, however the mechanical and process orientated nature attitudes towards human living don't fulfill basic human needs. Countless projects highlight this issue none more so than the aforementioned Pruitt Igoe. It can be said though that despite the interventions inclination towards traditionalism - the manner in which a blanket proposal is applied to Poole suggests that - despite the want to detract itself from centrally planned design, it does in fact adhere to this principle.

The true success of an urban intervention can never be measured fully until realised as the modernism movement found out so clearly. However it is the belief that by combining the positive concepts of the two urbanist theories, whilst maintaining a clear reference to user orientated design, the project is given the best possible chance to succeed and form the basis for a truly positive urban