

EDITORIAL NOTE

Re-Centring the Built Environment and Forms in a Transforming World

Across geographies and disciplines, the built environment is undergoing profound transformation. Urban expansion, demographic shifts, climate pressures, technological acceleration, and changing patterns of mobility continue to reshape how cities grow, how territories adapt, and how individuals experience space. In this moment of global uncertainty and renewal, Built Form reaffirms its commitment to centring the built environment as a critical lens through which contemporary societal change and forms must be understood. Planning, urban design, and architecture are fields concerned with form-making or spatial arrangement on the one hand; they also offer interpretive frameworks for navigating ecological fragility, social complexity, and technological possibility on the other hand. This issue of Built Form brings together contributions that reflect this expanded responsibility. Each article opens new ways of reading and reshaping environments in transition.

The article ‘The Syntax of Campus Planning: A Comparative Analysis of Qatar University and Education City in Doha, Qatar’ examines two emblematic academic landscapes: Qatar University and Education City. Through figure-ground mapping, space syntax, and morphological analysis, the authors reveal how campus design mediates movement, legibility, and climatic realities. Their comparative study highlights the tensions between scale and intelligibility as campuses evolve into larger, more fragmented territories. The findings offer a reminder that contemporary educational environments must be more than collections of buildings; they must be coherent, walkable, and socially legible spaces that support meaningful academic life. As urban campuses increasingly resemble micro-cities, the need to integrate historical campus models with contemporary infrastructural demands becomes ever more urgent. Territorial transformation is approached from another perspective in the article ‘Designing with Geomorphology: Adaptive Territorial Strategies for Regenerative Public Space in Southern Italy’. Here, regeneration is not framed as reconstruction but as reinterpretation. Instead of treating demographic decline as a condition of loss, the authors propose an alternative methodology—Reclaiming Without Antagonism—that views emptiness as a productive terrain. Through biophilic design, biomimicry, and Nature-based Solutions, the project reactivates interrupted metabolic flows and redefines the cultural meaning of voids. This contribution speaks to fragile territories worldwide, offering a replicable model for designing with, rather than against, ecological and demographic realities. Transformation also occurs at the level of perception and learning. The article ‘Teaching Architecture Through Film: An Interdisciplinary Approach’ presents an innovative teaching model where architecture is introduced through film. By focusing on experiential elements—light, sound, scale, landscape, and colour—students connect cinematic space to their own memories and bodily experiences. This pedagogical approach expands the cultural accessibility of architecture and demonstrates how new modes of education can cultivate architectural awareness beyond disciplinary boundaries. As built environments become increasingly complex, building public literacy around space is not optional but necessary. Historic cities, too, are re-contextualised through new tools. In a pioneering methodological contribution, the article ‘A Pioneering LISP Framework for Diachronic Urban Analysis’ introduces a LISP-based computational framework for analysing diachronic urban morphology. Grounded in the Italian school of urban morphology, the method automates the classification of urban elements across historical phases. The case study of Kashan illustrates how computational techniques can reveal spatial logics and typological transformations that traditional mapping alone cannot capture. At a moment when AI and digital methods are reshaping the discipline, this work offers a bridge between deep morphological theory and computational innovation. Finally, the article ‘Assessing E-Motor Bikes Adoption: Challenges and Opportunities, The Case of

Nyarugenge District’ turns attention to mobility transitions in rapidly developing urban contexts. Despite high awareness and perceived benefits, adoption is slowed by infrastructural and regulatory gaps. Yet the findings also highlight public support for environmentally responsible mobility solutions. The study demonstrates how transportation, technology, and policy intersect in shaping sustainable cities—reminding us that mobility systems are not neutral infrastructures but central components of urban transformation.

In addition to the research articles, Vol. 1, Issue 2 presents two thought-provoking viewpoints that extend our understanding of heritage in contemporary contexts. The first examines Berlin’s modernist social housing estates, highlighting how the preservation of twentieth-century welfare-state architecture can serve as a form of progressive urbanism. These buildings—once criticised—now offer lessons on social equity, civic engagement, and the political potential of housing in times of crisis, demonstrating that heritage protection can challenge market-driven urban development and reinforce inclusive planning. Complementing this, the second viewpoint explores Göbeklitepe’s unofficial heritage and associated local practices. By considering the intangible, living traditions of the local community alongside the globally recognised archaeological site, the viewpoint emphasises the value of inclusive heritage narratives that integrate local knowledge, ritual, and memory, enriching our understanding of both the past and its ongoing significance.

Taken together, these contributions show that re-centring the built environment and forms today requires more than designing spaces; it requires rethinking how we analyse, regenerate, teach, and inhabit them. The built environment and form are not fixed backdrops to human activity—it is an evolving medium through which societies negotiate identity, resilience, and possibility. This issue reflects the mission of Built Form: to connect research and real-world applications, and provide a platform where diverse voices and methods converge. We hope the works presented here encourage readers to envision new pathways for shaping resilient, legible, and meaningful environments. The transformations unfolding across our cities and territories call not only for technical expertise but for renewed imagination. In this shared endeavour, we invite both researchers and practitioners to continue advancing the conversations that will define the built environments and forms of tomorrow.

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