

Application to MICRA/CITIES Seed-corn fund

Principal investigator: **Stefan White**, Architect, Senior Lecturer, Coordinator, Manchester School of Architecture Projects design research unit (**MSAp**): s.white@mmu.ac.uk

Co-investigator: **Professor Simon Guy**, Head of School Environment and Development and Director Manchester Architecture Research Centre (**MARC**): s.guy@manchester.ac.uk

Title: **Activating Age-Friendly Manchester**: Age-inclusive urban design principles and practices

Project Objectives:

This project will contribute to developing and communicating national and international policy guidance for age-friendly cities. This project will construct the urban design perspective of a policy framework for an Age-friendly Manchester in collaboration with Manchester City Council, Keele University and the Beth Johnson foundation. This policy framework for an Age-friendly Manchester will be disseminated to Local authorities across the UK and Europe as part of the 2012 European Year of Active ageing and solidarity between the generations as well as Globally through the WHO Age-friendly cities network web-portal.

Summary:

Manchester Architectural Research Centre (**MARC**) and Manchester School of Architecture Projects (**MSAp**) design research unit will report on the unique inter-disciplinary collaboration between **MSAp**, Manchester City Council's 'Valuing Older People' team and its academic partners in social gerontology and community activism. This project will reflect on and collate design research undertaken over the last five years in order to provide a perspective on the principles of 'inclusive' urban design and case-studies of inclusive urban design practices. This work will be used to construct a set of principles and practices for interpretation as age-friendly city policy. This report will also make reference to the generic WHO age-friendly city guidelines and incorporate the research of our academic partners and collaborators in the preparation of the policy framework for Manchester. This work will enable existing research through design and participation to be valued and developed so that it can be make an impact with an urban design and local authority policy audience.

Background:

The World Health Organization (WHO) model of 'age-friendly cities' emphasizes the theme of supportive urban environments for older citizens. These are defined as encouraging 'active ageing' by 'optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (WHO, Global Age-friendly Cities, 2007). The goal of establishing age-friendly cities should be seen in the context of pressures arising from population ageing and urbanisation. By 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will reside in cities, with - for urban areas in high-income countries - at least one-quarter of their populations aged 60 and over. This development raises important issues for urban design: How can cities develop as age-friendly communities? How can urban design practices contribute to optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security?

The 'age-friendly' city perspective has been influential in raising awareness about the impact of population; the issues raised by the 'age-friendly city' movement are well recognised at the level of social policy and there is increasing awareness within relevant academic disciplines. Also, in the field of social gerontology, attention to environmental aspects of ageing has become of increasing importance, influenced in particular by policies designed to promote 'lifetime neighbourhoods'. However, research into ageing has been relatively detached from research into the nature of urban change and the role of urban design disciplines in the substantial task of designing cities which address these multi-disciplinary issues have been little explored. Research in this area is especially urgent given that 'age-friendly' policy approaches assume that the quality of the urban environment is a significant factor in achieving a range of ambitious social goals such as neighbourliness and social cohesion. In addition, while the disciplines of architecture, planning and urban design are seen as key influences in transforming the quality of urban life, thus far, the debate around age-friendly cities has had marginal impact on practices within these disciplines - whether at the level of research or in the development of design methodologies applied to shape experiences of urban change.

Context:

Since 2008, as part of Manchester City Council's 'Joint Health Unit' initiative and Manchester School of Architecture's community engagement and widening participation programme, MSAp has explored the inter-relationship between urban design, social gerontology and community activism with a view of addressing the call for active ageing and age-friendly cities. Inclusive urban design principles and practices have been explored through a wide range of collaborative initiatives undertaken between MSA students and staff, City Council officers, and Manchester Residents as well as academic partners in urban design, social gerontology and community activism. In 2009 this collaborative work gained an £18k Cabinet Office grant for developing its activities under the 'Generations Together' programme. For this project, MSAp produced and tested a number of participatory urban design techniques and community engagement practices exploring the involvement of older people in the design of Manchester, working with over 800 Manchester residents of all ages in inclusive urban design engagement projects, focussing on the development of an Age-friendly city. Our work has been instrumental in assembling an international inter-

disciplinary research network examining the development of age-friendly cities in the context of population ageing and urbanisation in collaboration with Professor Chris Phillipson of Keele University, Professor Dominique Verte at BAS, Brussels and Dr Birgit Wolter at IGF, Berlin. The team has bid to the ESRC to develop its network activities and also aim to produce a large EU bid for which we have garnered support from the EU Age Platform and WHO age-friendly cities programmes. This project would contribute to the continuing development of the network objectives by enabling the Manchester partners to keep step with the network.

Project organisation

Output timetable and costing:

Report: **Activating Age-Friendly Manchester**: Age-inclusive urban design principles and practices

February 2012 - July 2012

Stage 1: Reflection and review

Review (5 days Stefan White MMU FE 381£/day = £1905) + Reflection/meeting with external advisor £281.70 + £375 (Dr Robin Durie, HCG, Peninsula Medical School, Exeter (141.70 train +overnight stay 80+ 40 subsistence + 2x10 taxi fare to university + 4hr at 75£/ph)

Stage 2: Draft documentation for consideration by Age-friendly City Policy Framework partners for review and publication

Draft report (5 days MMU FE = £ 1905) Review/meeting external advisor £71 (11£ +2x20£ taxi + £20 food) (Prof Phillipson)

Stage 3 : Communication of report for Local Authority / Research audience

Final report / framework document (4 days MMU FE = £1524) MCC will bear the costs of dissemination and publication

Total Cost = 1905+281.7+1905+71+1524+300 = 5686.7 = £5986.70

Participants

Stefan White will be Principal investigator. The sums above are for replacement teaching costs for him and for expenses for meetings with specific external advisors.

Professor Thomas Jeffries at MSA will act as an advisor with regard to issues of urban design and regeneration guidance, offering his advice in kind.

Professor Simon Guy at SED will act in an advisory role with regard to urban studies and issues of urban planning, offering his advice in kind. As a significant addition, Prof Guy will enable findings from the 'Conditioning Demand: Older People, Diversity and Thermal Experience' project, funded by the EPSRC/EDF Energy Programme (People, Energy and Buildings) to be shared with this research team, thereby enabling an energy efficiency and diversity dimension to be addressed as part of the policy framework for an Age-friendly city (The research project examines the relationship between the demographic trend of an ageing society and the development of energy-efficient technologies).

Professor Christopher Phillipson at Keele will be an advisor for the drafting of the documentation appropriate to the Age-friendly Cities research agenda and is separately funded.

Dr Robin Durie of the Health Complexity Group at the Peninsula Medical School, Exeter will provide perspective outside of the existing project partners in order to help produce a review and evaluation of the work of MSAp. The HCG has recently reviewed the Manchester Public Engagement Beacon (of which the MSA project's work was affiliated) as part of the Connecting Communities programme and have expertise in understanding and communicating environmental interventions which promote community cohesion.

Paul McGarry, Senior Strategy Manager at the Valuing Older People team will advise on Policy drafting for the MCC project and is separately funded. MCC will bear the costs of dissemination and publication.

Professor Dominique Verte of Belgian Ageing Studies at the Free University of Brussels will also be consulted with regard to the promotion to older people of participation and community activism in urban design as a project partner in the ESRC international network bid.

Impact:

The policy framework for an Age-friendly Manchester will be of interest to an extensive range of users. We expect to be able to extend the impact of the work from Manchester to an international context. A core group of beneficiaries will be urban local authorities involved in developing age-friendly cities. An immediate reference group is the Global Network of cities involved in the World Health Organization (WHO) initiative around building age-friendly cities. This stretches across Europe, Asia and America and includes the involvement of public and private sector bodies and third sector organisations. The Ageing and Life Course Division of the WHO has agreed to support the work of the project and will publicise its activities through its dedicated 'age-friendly cities' website. Arising from this, a major academic beneficiary will be the variety of sub-disciplines working within the field of ageing, with the network seeking to raise awareness about the impact of issues such as urban growth and urban regeneration on the lives of older people. In particular the documentation would raise awareness of issues of Age in the fields of urban design and architecture.