

Announcement of the award of the 4th ISUF Postgraduate Bursary for evaluating the use of urban morphology in practice

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Urban morphological methodology and planning practice; A case study of The 'Plan d'Occupation des Sols' for Saint Gervais Les Bains (Haute Savoie, France);

The study will draw from previous research and publications related to the use of typological and morphological methodologies to prepare and produce local land use plans (Plan d'Occupation des Sols, POS) for local authorities in France (Samuels 1993; Samuels and Pattacini 1997; Samuels 1999; Pattacini 2001). The focus will be on the evaluation of the practical application of the plan for Saint Gervais Les Bains in the past ten years and the resulting built environment.

Saint Gervais Les Bains is a market town and tourist resort in the Val Montjoie, below the Mont Blanc massif in the French Alps. Following the adoption of the 'Loi de Montagne' in 1985, two land use plans (POS), which had zoned much of the land in Saint Gervais as constructable, were declared null and void. A new plan was then commissioned from Qualipos, a multidisciplinary team of consultants in 1997. The main aim of the new local plan, ratified in 2001 was to identify specific characteristics and qualities of the local environment, using urban morphology techniques in order to devise rules and design guidance to generate new developments better integrated in the existing landscape and the traditional built environment.

Similarly to the evaluation work undertaken for another French local plan in Asnieres-sur-Oise using the same typomorphological approach (Samuels and Pattacini 1997), the study will analyse recent planning applications and undertake interviews with the relevant stakeholders and principle actors to evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of the local plan since its adoption more than ten years ago. It will identify how the morphological content of the local plan has influenced the planning and design process and how it has contributed to develop the specific local character of this alpine town.

It is intended to have the research completed in time to be presented at the ISUF conference in Porto in July 2014.

References:

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Laurence Pattacini is an architect and urban designer. She is a part time University Teacher in the department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield and a PhD candidate. Her practice experience includes private consultancy with landscape architecture and architecture practices in the UK, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Italy. She has also been involved as a part time researcher in multidisciplinary research projects in the UK.

Ivor Samuels is an architect and town planner. Formerly Chair of the Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, currently Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Urban Morphology Research Group, Birmingham University. Practice has included private consultancy and local government in the UK, projects in France, Italy, Spain and former Yugoslavia. He has taught at universities in Denmark, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland, Latin America, the US and Australia,