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HERITAGE OF HEALTH WITHIN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY HISTORIC THEMATIC FRAMEWORK, AS PART OF ACCELERATED SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

This regional seminar is part of the online seminar series "Exploring the Twentieth-Century Historic Thematic Framework in European Context". The seminar is hosted by the University of Liverpool's School of Architecture and initiated and chaired by [Dr. Christina Malathouni](#).

Centered around Theme 2 of the ISC20C Historic Thematic Framework that embraces "Accelerated Scientific and Technological Development", this workshop focuses on three subthemes that relate to various aspects of health and healthcare: advances in delivery and administration of public health; development of new medical technologies; and advances in understanding of human behavior and mental health. With examples covering sites of both physical and mental healthcare, in diverse social, geographical, policy, and architectural settings, the workshop aims to open up the conversation around the particular difficulties of heritage relating to healthcare sites and potential benefits of engaging with the ISC20C framework.

Date: December 2, 2022

Time: 13:00 – 17:45 GMT

Location: Zoom Meeting

[Click here](#) to see programme details and register for this seminar.

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ABSTRACTS and BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES (in order of presentation)



Professor Cettina Lenza, Full Professor of History of Architecture, University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, Italy

→ *Mental health facilities in Italy: knowledge, conservation, reusing and valorisation*

Abstract:

This contribution concerns the former psychiatric hospitals in Italy as a neglected category of 20th century heritage. After an initial phase in which pre-existing buildings were adapted for the detention of the insane, from the second half of the 19th century onwards there was research and debate on the creation of complexes conceived specifically for the treatment of psychiatric illnesses, with studies on the different building types to be adopted – concentrated block, connected pavilions, village system - the building characteristics and installations. These experiments were the result of close collaboration between architects or engineers and alienists or psychiatrists. In many cases, they resulted in the creation of authentic micro-cities, with fences and gates, in-patient pavilions, office buildings, medical laboratories, ergotherapy workshops, collective services and facilities, gardens and agricultural colonies.

In particular, it will be illustrated the experience of the Project of National Relevance "Mental Hospitals in Italy between the 19th and the 20th Century. An Atlas aimed at the Analysis and Enhancement of the Historical and Architectural Heritage", which saw the collaboration of a group of researchers from seven Italian universities. The aim was to systematically map the psychiatric hospitals in the various regions of Italy, historically examining their genesis and transformations through archival materials, analysing the current state of use and conservation after their disuse following the so-called Basaglia Law of 1978 by means of photographic surveys and inspections, and making comparisons with case studies from the European scenario (France, Germany and England). The results were disseminated through a scientific conference and numerous seminars, collected in a collective volume and on a specially dedicated website, open to free consultation by scholars, but also by administrators and stakeholders, to promote the conservation and enhancement of these important manifestations of specialist architectural culture between the 19th and 20th centuries.

Biographical Note:

Graduated in Architecture from the University Federico II of Naples (1987), full Professor of History of Architecture at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli (since 2001), where she teaches "History of contemporary architecture" and "History and valorisation of cultural heritage". She was Dean of the Faculty of Architecture (2005-2009) and is currently President of the Degree Course in Building Sciences and Techniques.

National Scientific Responsible for the PRIN 2008: "Mental Hospitals in Italy between the XIXth and the XXth Century. An Atlas aimed at the Analysis and Enhancement of the Historical and Architectural Heritage", with publication of the results (Milan 2013).

Vice-President of ICOMOS Italy (since 2020), Coordinator of the National Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage and voting member of the International Committee on 20th Century Heritage. She is author of articles, monographs, critical editions, essays in collective volumes, and editor of proceedings of conferences and exhibition catalogue.



Megan Brien, Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholar and PhD Candidate, Department of History of Art and Architecture, The University of Dublin, Trinity College, Ireland

→ *Pre-existing spaces and extant relationships: remaking healthcare through interior interventions*

Abstract:

Ireland's national health policies from the mid-twentieth century onwards present a history of psychiatric care that is progressive both in its understanding of mental illness and in its planning for the provision of care. However, analysis of the building stock in use during this period reveals a disparity in the rate of policy introduction and its implementation in the provision of psychiatric services.

The attention of the Free State government of the 1930s and 1940s was primarily focused the restructuring of a public healthcare system to introduce modern general hospitals and the construction of sanatoria, as the ongoing tuberculosis epidemic posed immediate concern. In order to keep pace with social and medical reform extant building stock which included nineteenth century asylums, county homes and eventually sanatorium were repurposed as psychiatric hospitals. Analysis of the building stock in use and its respective interiors from the twentieth century provides an opportunity to reflect on a tangled history of architectural duality that presents itself as, on the one hand, progressive in terms of general hospitals' care and, on the other, passive in respect to psychiatric hospitals. This paper proposes to consider the disparate rate in change of the interior of these psychiatric hospitals in comparison to their architecture, to critically engage with narratives of progression that are apparent in medical histories. Analysis of the interiors of these repurposed sites reflects on how psychiatric hospital spaces were reused and reorganised according to changing needs, functions, and paradigmatic shifts in medical knowledge.

Formal architectural heritage evaluations on building structures have often overlooked or disregarded interior alterations as an obstacle to historical authenticity or architectural integrity. Rather than focusing on the architectural styles of these sites as simply visually or historically prominent, an analysis of the interior allows for a consideration of the social, cultural and medical motivations that reshaped the twentieth century psychiatric hospital.

Biographical Note:

Megan Brien is a PhD candidate in the department of History of Art and Architecture at Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin. Megan holds a master's degree in interior design from Technological University Dublin and a bachelor's degree in craft-design from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin. A Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholar since 2020, her current research concerns the history of twentieth century healthcare interiors. Megan's research titled "A History of Interiors for Autism in Ireland 1969 to present," aims to understand and examine how paradigmatic shifts in diagnosis alongside social and cultural changes in understanding are reflected in healthcare architecture and their respective interiors.



Dr. Christina Malathouni, Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor), School of Architecture, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

→ *Modest architectural designs vs. psychiatric reforms: contradictions in built representations of twentieth-century mental health advances*

Abstract:

The architectural and social history of the large asylums that dominated Anglo-American psychiatry since the nineteenth century has been the subject of extensive scholarship. Many of the surviving buildings have also been placed under heritage protection and given new uses that have allowed their maintenance, albeit not without controversy. However, considerably less attention has been paid to correlations between developments within psychiatry and the built environments that housed these during the twentieth-century. Until recently, the post-war period in particular had received exceptionally limited attention, largely affected by its association with deinstitutionalisation policies. However, this picture is fast changing as the findings of intensive research activity in related areas are coming to light and challenge earlier pre-conceptions and omissions.

This presentation focuses on the inter-war and post-war periods in England and developments that took place within the grounds of large asylums – or, as they were being re-labelled, mental hospitals. Existing evidence of incremental additions during these two periods highlights that Admission Units were considered particularly significant and received higher funding and architectural consideration than other new builds, such as Isolation Hospitals or Nurses' Homes. Numerous new Admission Units were commissioned and erected in the 1920s and 1930s across England and, following the interruption of most building activity during World War II, again made a priority during the 1950s and early 1960s, when limited funds were made available. These buildings appear considerably more modest architecturally, in comparison to the large scale and elaborate stylistic expressions of earlier asylums, and have been largely overlooked as regards heritage protection despite representing ground-breaking developments within psychiatry and related fields that led to the shift to mental health care. This presentation will look at a range of Admission Units from these two time periods and how these have been treated as regards heritage designation and protection.

Biographical Note:

Dr. Christina Malathouni is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) at the University of Liverpool School of Architecture. She qualified as an architect graduating from the School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, Greece, before completing an MSc and a PhD at The Bartlett, UCL, UK. She is a registered Architect with the Architects' Registration Bureau (ARB, UK) and an architectural historian. She also has extensive experience in the heritage sector, specialising in 20th-century architectural heritage, and is member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC, UK) and ICOMOS's International Scientific Committee on 20th-Century heritage (ICOMOS-ISC20C). She currently researches the history, and heritage potential, of post-war mental health facilities in England, as well as inter-disciplinary developments that influenced their designs and materialisation.



Harriet Richardson Blakeman, doctoral research student, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

→ *Evaluating the planning and design of early NHS hospital building: a Scottish perspective*

Abstract:

Post-war hospital architecture in Britain remains widely undervalued and under-protected through the listing process. There is a growing body of international scholarly literature on the development of hospital architecture in the twentieth century. In the case of the United Kingdom, the history of post-war hospital architecture has mostly concentrated on a relatively small number of examples, with a focus on entire new hospitals and works by major architectural firms. The first generation of hospital buildings constructed by the NHS in the 1950s and 60s were designed with an anticipated lifespan of around 50 years. Some have not even lasted that long. An increasing percentage of these buildings has been demolished, while many more are likely to be replaced in the next decade or so. These were designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind, and the changes that have been made tell us much about developments in medical care, technologies, patient needs and expectations. This presentation will demonstrate examples of hospital buildings designed and built for the NHS in the 1950s and 60s, with a particular focus on Scottish examples. It will aim to highlight the significance of these buildings in the context of post-war architecture generally and in the broader contexts of social and medical history. It will also consider some of the problems relating to conservation, such as the difficulty in meeting the listing criteria. There is a strong case to be made for the listing criteria to be revised to take account of the importance and value of later changes.

Biographical Note:

I am currently in my final year of a PhD in architectural history at the University of Edinburgh, researching the development of NHS hospital design in Scotland from 1948 to 1998. I graduated in 1983 with an honours degree in English and Art History, followed by an M. Litt from the University of St Andrews in Architectural History in 1985. From 1988-1990 I conducted a survey of Scottish hospitals funded by the Scottish Research Council. From 1991 to 2017 I was part of the Survey of London team, researching and contributing to the text of volumes on Knightsbridge, Clerkenwell, Battersea, South East Marylebone and Oxford Street. I originally joined the Survey to work on the London end of the nationwide Hospitals project, carried out by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England and went on to edit the resulting publication.



Jonas Malmberg, Senior Architect, Alvar Aalto Foundation, Finland

→ History and Contemporary issues at the Paimio Sanatorium

Abstract:

Paimio Sanatorium completed in 1933 was of key monument in the international career of architects Alvar and Aino Aalto. A sanatorium was particularly suitable for a building following the ideals of Functionalism. The entire complex, grouped together in several parts, was constructed in accordance with Aalto's philosophy, down to the smallest details of the furniture.

An additional operating theatre wing designed by Aalto's office was completed in 1958 and new staff housing was erected nearby in the 1960s. With the advent of antibiotics, tuberculosis could be cured, so the sanatorium was gradually converted into a general hospital from the 1960s onwards. After Alvar Aalto's death in 1976, his office, Alvar Aalto & Co, was in charge of alterations, under the leadership of architect Elissa Aalto until 1994. Since that the tasks have been carried out by other architects.

Over the years, the hospital buildings have been altered considerably, but the key characteristics of the architecture and even much of the original furniture have been preserved. In last two decades, hospital functions have been transferred elsewhere and new uses have been sought. Those must be in harmony with this unique architectural whole. As well as the issues of the management are crucial. For that the Conservation Management Plan completed in 2016 by Alvar Aalto Foundation provides good basis. Still there are some major issues; one has to do with the remote location. A one and half hour drive from the capital Helsinki, and 30 kms from the regional centre Turku is considered distant. Also, many parts have been tailored very specifically, like the operation wing for example. There is a vast number of similar relatively small rooms, in the contrary adjustable spaces for variable needs are limited. Still these issues must be resolved on seeking UNESCO World Heritage status.

Biographical Note:

Jonas Malmberg (b. 1974, Finland) is an architect (M.Sc. Arch; University of Oulu, 2002) and an art historian (M.A., University of Helsinki, 2012). Since 2012 he has been supervising restorations and preparing surveys at the Alvar Aalto Foundation. He is a member of the board of DOCOMOMO Finland since 2014 and is a voting member of the ICOMOS 20th-Century Scientific Committee (2018–2026). He was main author of the Paimio Sanatorium Conservation Management Plan 2016 and participated the Sevan Writers' House CMP (Armenia 2019), both within the Getty Foundation's KIM initiative. He has lectured various universities in Finland and abroad and co-edited the book *DOCOMOMO Suomi Finland – Register Selection* (2018). His previous places of employment include the National Heritage Agency, the Finnish Architectural Review, various architectural offices and the construction site of the Museum of Contemporary art by Steven Holl in Helsinki.



Dr. Nicholas Clarke, Section for Heritage and Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

→ *North-South trajectories in community care and health-care design: Dutch émigré architects in South Africa*

Abstract:

The Twentieth-Century Historic Thematic Framework is premised on an understanding that the twentieth century brought globalization and knowledge transfer on a scale previously unseen. This was due, in part to migration, especially from Western Europe to other areas of the globe coupled with unprecedented innovations in publishing and communication.

One vector of new insights in scientific and technological development was the migrant architect. This presentation will focus on migration parallel and movement of ideas between South Africa, and the Netherlands with special attention to the healthcare innovations implemented by Dutch émigré architects in South Africa spanning the period following the Spanish Flu pandemic to the post-World War II apartheid period. The Spanish Flu pandemic proved to be the catalyst for health-care development and urban regulations in South Africa. Dutch émigré architects played a disproportionately large role in this development.

Early projects, often executed for conservative communities of faith, predominately implemented a historicizing aesthetic, but closure analysis reveals that their conservative expressions belie their progressive nature. These examples illustrate that Modernity in twentieth century architecture is more than skin-deep.

These principles persist when health-care transitioned from a small-scale nursing-focused to a state-funded system which implemented an efficiency-focused Healthy Factory model in the early post-War period. These projects, executed by Dutch trained architects are more overtly aligned with the Modern Movement and greatly influenced by European precedents.

By case study analysis and presentation, the transference of architectural insights based on scientific and technological development from Western Europe to South Africa will be explored and illustrate the principal social, technological, political, and economic drivers that influenced health and community care facility design in South Africa during the Twentieth Century, expanding the current body of knowledge and contributing to the future assessment and valuation of this often still in use heritage.

Biographical Note:

Nicholas Clarke is a South African architect and lecturer at the section of Heritage and Architecture at the Delft University of Technology, where he defended his PhD thesis *How Heritage Learns* in 2021. He has co-authored and co-edited a number of award-winning publications on architectural heritage and conservation, focusing on shared heritage, resilience and sustainable development, including *Eclectic ZA-Wilhelmines: A shared Dutch built heritage in South Africa* (LM: Pretoria, 2014, co-edited with Karel Bakker and Roger Fisher) and *Common Ground: Dutch-South African*

Architectural Exchanges 1902-61 (Edam, LM Publishers, 2021, co-edited with Roger Fisher and Marieke Kuipers).

His architectural practice focusses on restoration and impact assessment and he is active in ICOMOS International's World Heritage reactive monitoring and advisory processes.