

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

Conference Keynote. Thursday 22nd June, 2017

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Abstract:

The term town planning was first used in Britain in 1906. The statutory practice of town planning stemmed from the Housing, Town Planning, etc Act 1909, which permitted local authorities under the close supervision of the Local Government Board to prepare such schemes for land in course of development, or likely to be developed. The schemes were particularly appropriate for suburban areas, where they regulated both the layout of land and the density of development, and reserved land for new highways.

At this time town planning had not established itself as an art or science, but practitioners in the activity were increasing in number rapidly. Many found it convenient to see their work as distinctive within a number of professions which came to engage in this area - architecture, surveying, municipal engineering and the law. At first these four professions sought to work collaboratively; however, Thomas Adams played a leading part in discussions that went beyond mere co-operation from 1910 onwards. In that year Adams was appointed the first Town Planning Inspector at the Local Government Board; he then began to meet regularly with a small group of practitioners, and the notion of town planning being an area of distinctive expertise took hold. A Council was elected and met for the first time in December 1913; Adams was elected President on 13 March 1914. An inaugural dinner on 30 January 1914 marked the public launching of the Institute, and the Articles of Association were signed on 4 September 1914, which is designated the date of the Institute's founding. The first three of the objects for which the Institute was established in the Articles of Association read as follows:

- To advance the study of town-planning, civic design and kindred subjects, and of the arts and sciences as applied to those subjects;
- To promote the artistic and scientific development of towns and cities;
- To secure the association, and to promote the general interests of those engaged or interested in the practice of town-planning.

The presentation at this conference will be based on the current activities and concerns of the RTPI. For a sample of details:

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/about-the-rtpi/>