TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Authentic Buildings for an Inauthentic Culture -

• Author(s) Name:
Alan Chandler

• University or Company Affiliation:
University of East London

• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
Our Built Heritage can be understood as a filter through which the significance of history is passed – as now becomes then, the everyday becomes memory, what of our built surroundings do we retain and read, or what is left to decay or lose? When policymakers or communities choose to remember, do they preserve historic architectural evidence as a form of cherished redundancy, or actively participate in the physical traces of previous activity and identity? Is our cultural identity founded on what we no longer do, or what we continue to achieve? With conservation used as a mask for national identity and a masque for neoliberal spectacle, we can return to William Morris to reinvest our work on architectural heritage with an alternative, inclusive political agenda. Morris’s vision of ‘intrinsic heritage’ teaches important lessons on how we frame history within contemporary production, articulating the tension between the conservation of
built fabric and the conservation of social fabric. Repair has cultural value and community benefit through the manner, purpose and skill of its making. For Morris scraping clean, conjectural ‘restoration’ and the inappropriate redevelopment of buildings were symptomatic of repressive political agendas. Morris saw the consequences of the ‘spectacle’ almost a century before Guy Debord.

I show, through Morris, that the oppressive processes of modernity are not challenged through the removal of the materiality of history but by the continued and persistent relevance of our historic environment. If heritage is stripped of its usefulness it becomes absorbed into the spectacle of capital, emptied of relevance and meaning. If ongoing repair, maintenance and active reuse, with craft production tied intelligently into modern processes, then heritage is a means of authenticating our social life and continue to be a place in which we dwell, not merely a space that we occupy.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Academic:
Reader in Architecture, UEL - Research leader for Architecture, PhD supervisor / examiner UEL, University of Edinburgh

Previous:
Architectural Association, Goldsmith’s College of Art, Cambridge University, Edinburgh University.

Selected research:
The Production of Heritage with Michela Pace, (Routledge 2019)

Palacio Pereira, Bi-Centenary of the Chilean Republic - First place competition for the restoration of a national monument (with Puga, Moletto and Velasco) - on site 2018

Obra Gruesca – Arquitectura Ilustrada por Smiljan Radic Vol. 1 of a monograph on the architect Smiljan Radic, 2017

Winner - John Betjeman Award for Church Conservation 2017, shortlisted - King of Prussia Gold medal for church conservation.

Exhibitor, lecturer and panel member of the Courtauld Institute ‘East Wing Biennial’, site-specific installations: ‘The Memory of Surfaces’, February 2016

Keynote Speaker at the XIX Chilean Architecture Biennale in Valparaiso on the socio-political role of Heritage in architecture, 2015

Concept, design and co-editor - ‘Fabricformwork’ (RIBA Publications), winner RIBA Presidents Medal commendation for university based research 2008.

Journal Publications:

Professional:
RIBA: Accredited Specialist Conservation Architect, Conservation Committee, Steering Group,
Conservation Register assessor