8th Fábos Conference on Landscape and Greenway Planning

Promoting Liveability in East and South-East Asian Cities - The Role of Green Infrastructure Design in Urban Planning

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Abstract:

Cities in east and south-east Asia are subject to extensive development pressures. Continued urbanisation, infrastructure redundancy, and changing economic conditions make investment in urban nature difficult. Moreover, increased instances of extreme weather and the challenges of designing places that (a) people want to live in and (b) have a high-quality of life is challenging for urban planners. To address these issues there is a growing discussion of how urban greening in the form of street trees, parks, water bodies, green walls and roofs, and small-scale interventions in urban nature can be used to future proof cities. The paper will build on this premise outlined by Mell (2024) examining how traditional landscape motifs and approaches to urban nature are being used in contemporary urban planning across east and south-east Asia. It will consider how innovations in urban greening are working alongside traditional forms of investment to support the design, delivery and management of high quality and liveable spaces (Cheshmehzangi, 2022).

The central argument of the paper is that current thinking on urban nature is reflective of traditional landscape form and function but is being applied within a contemporary framing. This allows landscape professionals to work more effectively with politicians, engineers, urban planners and communities to consider how nature can be designed into urban areas and what technologies can be used to effectively build infrastructure in the face of climatic change.

The paper concludes that investment in green infrastructure is varied and directed by nuanced urban agendas across east and south-east Asia. Therefore, to support liveability planners need to consider the synergies afforded by urban greening to regeneration, health and well-being, economic development and climate change adaptation. By highlighting examples of this process, the paper provides a set of best practice that can be applied in other locations to support enhanced quality of life.

References:

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Authors Biography:

Ian Mell is a Professor of Environmental and Landscape Planning at the University of Manchester, where he is also Head of Department. His teaching and research examine the intersections of theory, policy, and practice on the development of interactive and sustainable cities. His work explores green infrastructure planning globally, asking how political, temporal, and disciplinary variation impacts investment. He is the author of *Global Green Infrastructure* (Mell, 2016, Routledge) and *Growing Green Infrastructure in Contemporary Asian Cities* (Mell, 204, Routledge), and was a key contributor to the UK government's National Green Infrastructure Standard Framework (Natural England, 2023).