W92 - Procurement Systems

Professor Colin Davidson's productive involvement in CIB affairs dates back perhaps more years than he would care to mention!

A very recent example of this association was his initiative in organising the highly successful W92 Symposium in Montreal last May.

Information is indebted to him for the following review of the Symposium emanating from himself and the two Joint Coordinators of W92: David Jaggar and Steve Rowlinson.

Lorna Tardiff who was one of the keynote speakers on 22nd May with her Chairman Philip Bobrow.

Other Speakers included CIB Past President Gérard Blachère

Dennis J. Cahill (North Union Associates) and Christopher Gobin (Director of Research, Dumez S.A.)

During breaks, participants mingle with Business School staff and students in the atrium. (Photo: Dan Hanganu, Architect of the Business School)
Procurement - A Key to Innovation

It was this challenging theme that brought together about 100 experts for W92's 1997 Symposium. Held in Montreal from 19th to 23rd May, the Organisers - the IF Research Corporation (affiliated with the Université de Montréal) - chose to associate the power of procurement systems with the opportunity for much-needed innovation in the building sector.

What is the power of procurement - and why might it be a key to innovation?

On the power of procurement, there was little doubt expressed by the Symposium participants. Indeed, the leverage of procurement was taken for granted by most of the authors of the 85 papers published in the Proceedings. The importance of the building owner's decisions was clearly recognised as fundamental in setting up the framework for all subsequent activities - design and construction - and for their management. However, it is no longer sufficient to accept the important role of procurement; one must also be able to choose the best approach, that is to say the strategy best suited to the circumstances of each project, of its initiator and of its socio-technical and cultural environment.

On the key to innovation question, there was no such consensus. Indeed, the organisers themselves proposed, from the outset, two contradictory hypotheses: (a) building owners, singly or together, by their choices of procurement strategy can open the door to innovative proposals in design, manufacture and/or construction, or (b) building owners can view buildings as economic assets and have no desire to be involved in any way with their production, whether innovative or not. The Symposium participants imposed their views, suggesting that the two hypotheses were not so mutually exclusive as might seem at first, but are rather the extremes of a continuum.

The Symposium, held in the elegant and functional new École des Hautes Études Commerciales de Montréal (see photo), was structured to stimulate debate. Most mornings started with invited presentations by 'practitioners' of procurement from the public or the private sectors from Europe or North America. Then followed four sets of parallel workshops, which enabled the Symposium theme to be explored in more detail.

Each morning, the 'practitioners' situated procurement strategies in their contexts: public or private sectors, inter-firm integration or fragmentation, legal or learning environments, professional or contracting activities.

The workshops - scenes of argument and discussion - then examined the issue of procurement in terms of its legal, organisational, financial and functional impacts. Each workshop produced recommendations addressed to building owners and to the building industry; these recommendations were also discussed in the closing plenary session and are soon to be published in a synthesised form, together with the keynote presentations.

Procurement - the central domain of W92 - also interfaces with work of other CIB Commissions, particularly W87 - Post-Construction Liability and W65 - Organisation and Management of Construction. A special session was reserved to explore these broader CIB issues and to position W92's responsibilities within them.

Seventeen countries and all six continents were represented - though somewhat unequally; academics and practitioners from several professional domains participated in the Symposium, contributing to the broad spectrum of opinions that were expressed and to the richness of the debates.
The Québec Department of Industry, Trade, Science and Technology contributed a major and much appreciated grant to help with organising the Symposium and with ensuring its success; indeed, its success is the best 'thank you' we can extend to the Government of Québec.

David Jaggar and Steve Rowlinson (Joint Coordinators W92), Colin Davidson (Symposium Organiser)
September 1997

TG19 - Designing for the Ageing Society

The premises of SINTEF in Trondheim, Norway were the venue for the most recent meeting of TG19 which took place from 16th to 19th June 1997.

There were 15 participants from 9 countries.

The Coordinator Dr. Satoshi Kose reports that the following papers were presented and discussed:

- Coordinator's vision, by Satoshi Kose
- Notes on priorities toward designing for the ageing society, by Paul Grayson, Sylvester Bone, Satoshi Kose, Satya Brink and Jon Christophersen
- Results from a study of the design of barrier free housing in Norway, Germany (Hessen), Scotland, England and Italy, by Jon Christophersen
- Designing places that we can age into: The Singapore scene, by James Harrison
- Adaptable housing, by Denis Dawkins
- Brief account of recent and current work in the UK, by Sylvester Bone
- Sheltered housing or dwellings: which solution is better for aged people?, by Annalisa Morini and Rita Pomposini
- Elderly people in their socio-spatial context: some results from a survey in the Netherlands, by Olindo Caso
- Priorities toward designing for the ageing society, by Assunta D'Innocenzo
- Lifetime homes in Europe and the UK: European legislation and good practice for ensuring accessibility of domestic dwellings, by Ivor Ambrose
- Access to buildings, by Christian Woetmann Nielsen
- Design guidelines for barrier-free dwellings: Preparing for the coming aged society in Japan, by Satoshi Kose
- A postulation: Barrier-free designs for the elderly and the disabled will become an universal design, by Saeko Yoshida and Takeshi Endo
- Infopack: Housing designs and modifications for older people, from The Center for Universal Design

Draft Recommendations

There was also a thorough discussion of Draft Recommendations relating to Designing for the Ageing Society.

Dr. Kose summarises the reactions below.

1. Research on spatial requirements is necessary: Although there are cultural differences, there would be commonalities. TG19 should identify the similarities as well as the differences through research.
2. Technique for the modification of existing housing stock should be developed. It should extend from apartment units to single family dwellings. Except in the case of Japan where the average life of dwellings is just around 30 years, modification/rehabilitation of existing structures are of major concern.
3. Another issue concerning dwellings: In most countries, single family dwellings are not covered by stricter accessibility building regulations.
4. TG19 should work to define what is essential to being accessible and give full consideration to the input on this topic already made.
5. Needs of performance based standards; cost issues can be different in different countries; ageing population normally reject being lumped together with the group of disabled people.