Role of Young Civic Leaders in Urban Regeneration Initiative in Belfast

Steven J. Donnelly (MSc)
Doctoral Student (PhD Geography)
School of Natural and Built Environment
Queen’s University Belfast
Biography

• BSc Geography - *First Class Honours*

• MSc Urban and Rural Design - *Distinction*

• PG Associate of Royal Geographical Society (2016 - present)

• Contributor to Belfast Area Partnerships (BAPs) and Folktown CIC

• Director of Blackstaff Music Belfast - a music and culture start-up aspiring to further connection and promote local artists with the local and global. We also have interests in urban regeneration (*more later*)

• Research interests include historical planning practices and architecture, cultural geographies, new urbanism, pop-up urbanism, heritage studies and participatory planning
A programme synonymous to Dr Satish Kumar’s ‘GAP3063 Spaces of Urbanisation’ level 3 undergraduate module at Queen’s University

Encourages students to apply the fundamentals of this module to live urban projects in the city of Belfast - providing an alternative voice in the planning process (especially within the pre-planning and conceptual stages of property development)

Provides opportunities for students to learn urban planning and design principles including teamwork, communication skills and basic urban analytical skills (Land use, connectivity, legibility). In some cases, I would also encourage exploring the urban environment through different media i.e. photography and film

Aims to inspire geographers to enter the discipline of urban planning, or in my case, urban design. Several members of my undergraduate year went on to do masters degrees in planning and regeneration
ENGAGING THE IDEA OF UNITY BETWEEN THE PROPOSED SITES AND THE CUSTOM HOUSE SQUARE AREA

TWO WAY TRAVEL SYSTEM

Social/culture district

Future shopping district

Appropriate traffic measures may benefit the functionality of public transport but, as well as flow of human traffic to Titanic Quarter

END OF INNER CITY ONE WAY SYSTEM

Redevelopment of the area would involve the reconfiguration of road infrastructure to ensure ease of traffic flow, prevention of disruption to business and public transport, and the safety of civilians. Image: Google Maps.

Automatic Bollards as a mechanism of promoting pedestrianisation and interchangeable urban space.

Photo credit: http://www.secure-con-solutions.co.uk/images/gates/veltyl.jpg

"Introducing shared spaces have the potential to improve existing land use mix, pedestrian accessibility, aesthetic appeal, and encourage walking within the designated areas"

"stimulating private investment opportunities to promote economic growth in the area"

- Wooller et al. (2012)¹

To This…

L-R Clockwise: Massing Models of Sandy Row Belfast; Strategic Concept Model for Hastings, UK; Composite mapping for legibility, movement, nodal points, and macro-connectivity for Sandy Row, Land use and SWOT analysis for Sandy Row
Theorising the Urban: Marco and Microframeworks for PhD research on imperial urbanism and the architect.

and this too...
Project 1: Contained

- Contained was a **pop-up** neo-urban cultural hub developed by Square Pit Productions Ltd in 2014. The Young Civic Leaders NI assisted on its conceptual stages.

- Students were asked to develop ideas for the Donegall Quay brownfield site to be presented to the directors of Square Pit. These includes parks, sporting and leisure facilities, retail and a community centre.

- The project was officially constructed and implemented in October 2015 hosting a wide range of events and opportunities for data collection through public consultation.

- Student involvement in this project realised a strong pedagogical link between GAP3063 and the Belfast urban environment. Students were enthusiastic and brought their experiences back into their academic explorations.
The Site Today
New Projects

- BLKSTF interest in urban regeneration and pop up music - idea of converting shop fronts into temporary performance spaces (our ‘living gallery’ initiative) to raise awareness of vacancy of their viability (Steven Donnelly and Sean McDonnell, 2017-2018)

- BKLSTF working with AMPS Recording Studio, West Belfast Partnership Board in developing a new music venue at Conway Mill in West Belfast

- BLKSTF also work with Feile an Phobail to bring local musicians to a pop-up stage in Bank Square, City Hall and other locations in the city centre. We work alongside numerous community actors and agencies in these events

- YCLNI involvement Folktown CIC urban analysis for regeneration of Castle Street and its adjacent civic spaces (Co-ordinated by Sophie Rasmussen and Steven Donnelly, 2017)
Conclusions

• The value of young people’s voices in urban regeneration concepts, data collection, analysis and implementation

• Students gaining live experience and essential skills in urban planning through collaborative projects and think-tanks. Inspiring a new generation of planning professionals by encouraging undergraduate students to enter the fields of design and planning

• Feedback into improving teaching experiences using live local projects whilst developing strong bonds with local business and organisations to provide opportunities

• Pop-Up Urbanism as an experimental platform for data collection, inspiring collaboration and guiding design appropriately. Taking the planning conversation to a wider stakeholder network
Cheers!

Feel free to contact me:

sdonnelly766@qub.ac.uk
mob: 07540252921