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Crossing Fields: Examining vernacular architecture through the lens of landscape

'Everyone who has ever written about vernacular architecture has admitted that it is a very fuzzy concept. Now we have reached the limits of its usefulness... We should throw everything back into the pot and give it another stir.'[1]

A discernible shift in scholarship and practice in recent years signals a re-focus away from formal and scenic characterizations of vernacular architecture and towards more environmental, technological, and social conceptualizations. Some examples of these recent academic studies will be explored, including what we have called a 'utilitarian-landscape interpretation'.

This approach might be read as 'crossing fields' to achieve a fresh insight. A 'crossing fields' or 'zoom-back' method of observation is described by the authors of Made in Tokyo,[2] who examined the city's vernacular buildings together with their surrounding environments as a single system. This involves a deliberately superficial stance which is also perhaps a limitation of this methodology. However, momentarily setting aside the categorical distinctions between the fields of architecture, landscape, civil

engineering, geography etc., could well help to reveal the vernacular knowledge of these environments and contribute to a more sustainable approach to the creation of new ones.

Vernacular Architecture – a rather open field

The term 'vernacular' in relation to architecture is a broad term to which there are many disciplinary approaches. 'Vernacular' was first used in the nineteenth century by architectural theorists to refer to 'traditional rural buildings of the preindustrial era [...] that seemed not to have been "consciously" designed or affected by the intellectual and artistic currents of the Renaissance'.[3] Paul Oliver, in his Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, provides a useful definition: "Vernacular Architecture" comprises the dwellings and other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources, they are customarily owner - or community-built, utilizing traditional technologies".[4] Thus, vernacular architecture refers to structures or environments created by non-professionals, be they master builders or their successors, architects, designers, and engineers. This empirically based process of building is contrasted with 'high' or 'polite' architecture,[5] that is environments designed by professionally trained architects. Oliver offers his definition whilst at the same time warning of "the reductiveness of seeking a single definition".[6] This echoes Upton's concerns regarding the inadequacy of the term given that "an increasingly large number of apparently disparate kinds of buildings have been included under its rubric".[7] Oliver helps to narrow the realm by, for example, distinguishing a 'popular architecture' – speculative developments, suburbs, commercial (which are often referred to as '20th century vernacular architecture' particularly in the US) but admits this is not always clearly defined. Squatter settlements are sometimes termed 'neo-vernacular' - he

considers this valid - but 'neo-vernacular' is also used to refer to architect-designed buildings influenced by vernacular traditions. Furthermore, buildings can have characteristics of vernacular as well as polite, further adding to the "problems of nomenclature".[8] 'Vernacular architecture' is also referred to by many other terms; 'Primitive Architecture',[9] focuses on environments of primitive societies; Ethnographers refer to 'folk' architecture; the term 'indigenous' placed the architecture in a definable geographical setting; 'Ethno-architecture' was coined by Memmott and Bycroft in the mid 1970s to classify Australian aboriginal environments;[10] 'Traditional Architecture' is another much-used term, intended to emphasize the processes and technology but 'traditional' has its own implications and complications.[11] 'Anonymous', 'un-institutional' and 'informal' are also used interchangeably with 'vernacular'.[12]

The history of vernacular architecture is equally fuzzy because it is so interconnected and correlative with the history of 'polite' or 'monumental' architecture. From the mid 19th century, architects and theorists turned to 'vernacular architecture' as a corrective to the academic or classic tradition in professional architectural practice. Ruskin had argued that the rural peasant's house, built 'how he likes', in harmony with nature, was inherently in 'good taste,' in contrast to the work of professional architects which he claimed was disconnected from materials and structure, in particular in its use of manufactured ornament.[13] Inspired by Ruskin, the Arts and Crafts movement of the 1880s to 1920s, embraced the influence of vernacular architecture and the medieval cathedrals "built by unsophisticated peasants".[14] This surge of interest in everyday craftsmanship was paralleled in European countries through movements such as Art Nouveau, De Stijl, Vienna Secession, Deutscher Werkbund

all of which were to influence the development of European architecture. Again, from the 1930s, Architects turned to the vernacular in response to the perceived shortcomings in Modernism. Vernacular concepts are present for example in the work and writings of Alvar Aalto in Finland, Aldo Van Eyck in Holland, Loos in Austria, and Frank Lloyd Wright in the US.[15] Thus, although modernism and vernacular architecture are generally considered to be antithetical to each other, in reality since the early 20th century, modernity and tradition have been fused in a set of complex interrelationships characterized by ambiguity and fluidity.[16] Indeed, it has been argued that the vernacular played an essential role in the construction of modernist architecture theory, as the conceptual model for the notion of a 'modern vernacular for an industrial society'. Le Corbusier arrived at this concept by "layering on each other several discourses concerning regionalism, folklore, and the more complex concept of Sachlichkeit".[17]

In the post-war period of the1950s and 60s, architects again sought to appropriate simple traditional buildings to legitimize prevalent functionalist theories of design.[18] Bernard Rudofsky's influential 1964 exhibition in MOMA, "Architecture without Architects" and book of the same name marked a growth in popular awareness of vernacular architecture.[19] (Fig. 1) But its polemic title is misleading on two counts; the striking black and white photographs, taken with a highly-trained modernist's eye, strive to represent the essence of what functionalist modernism could be, and not it's antithesis.[20] Furthermore, it could be argued that many of the structures portrayed were created by the forerunners of, or contemporaneous equivalent to, the trained architects of today.[21] And so again, the attempt to segregate the 'vernacular' is questionable.

A further intertwining of vernacular with modernism - and postmodernism - was the 'traditionalism' movement, which promoted the integration of traditional skills and knowledge in contemporary building. Proponents include Hassan Fathy, Paul Oliver, the Development Workshop and CRATerre (housing with earth and other 'appropriate materials'), Rural Studio's work in Alabama, US.[22] The 'Critical Regionalism' of Aalto, Utzon and others and as framed by Frampton sought to resist the placelessness of 'Megalopolitan' development and find a place-conscious poetic through 'elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place'.[23] 'Indirectly' is a key word here as Frampton also warned against 'simple-minded' attempts to revive the 'hypothetical forms of a lost vernacular' but nonetheless, the debt to vernacular traditions is evident in the work of the critical regionalists. In the context of the US, vernacular architecture developed in correlation with the rise of industrialization in the US after the Civil War, and as such was constituent to the American industrializing project.[24]

Given the difficulties of definition and its interconnectedness with 'high' architecture', it is not surprising that the concept of vernacular architecture as a discreet field has been questioned.

Oliver has repeatedly argued for ''vernacular building' and 'monumental architecture' to be considered together as part of an interdependent totality'.[25] Upton agrees, proposing a complete rethinking of categorizations: 'Vernacular architecture is....something that does not exist....If our intention is to understand the built environment and the people who make and use it, the it seems to me we do ourselves a disservice by isolating and exalting some piece of it.'[26] Others echo this, calling for the reconceptualization of

'architecture' as a more inclusive and continuous field that includes the traditional and the everyday, for tradition to be understood not in terms of opposition to modernity but as 'a creative, adaptive and reflective process within modernity'.[27] However, notwithstanding these arguments, it is hard to deny the usefulness of having distinctions within expansive fields like architecture and architectural history. As Torgovnick argues, we make sense of our world, '…in the act of defining the other'. The problem with the particular field of vernacular architecture is that the structures and environments that are assigned to its ranks are treated in a particular way that limits how they are understood and what can be learnt from them.[28] While the field is open and fuzzy in how it defines itself, it is closed and restrictive in the techniques and methodologies it employs.

Limitations of the Field

An examination of the scholarship of vernacular architecture reveals that its restrictiveness comes from the field's ingrained focus on rigid typological classification twinned with an entrenched scenic stance towards rurality that extends back to the picturesque.[29] Typological classification based on form or 'features' is the hallmark of vernacular architecture scholarship. Classification is often used to trace regional commonalities and as a 'data points' for theories of cultural diffusion, particularly in cultural geography as epitomised by Fred Kniffen's diffusion arrows.[30] An example of a typological study is Brunskill's 1970 Handbook on Vernacular Architecture, which distinguishes three "size-types" of domestic vernacular architecture and goes on to examine the structures according to the construction, shape, and materials used in walling, roofing, and architectural details.[31] Illustrations in this study depict the structures diagrammatically as plans without a context.

Likewise, Gailey's studies of Ireland's vernacular architecture also focus on commonalities: 'All vernacular houses in Ulster have some things in common.' They are all, he says, single-storeyed; they all have the main kitchen hearth "along the main axis of the structure and all chimneys are sited on the roof ridge." And "most importantly," he says, "the main entrance... is either at the other end of the kitchen from the main hearth... or beside the hearth....".[32] Clearly, the focus here is on understanding plan types, construction types, and in particular (often internal) features, as well as on the evolution and distribution of these types. Commonalities are sought that indicate a pattern of distribution or evolution of a prototype. Although he acknowledges "adaptations", his methodology does not permit further exploration. Illustrations in this study depict the structures as isolated entities, suspended on a white page with neither the site nor its topography elucidated. (See Fig. 2).

The usefulness of purely typological studies of vernacular architecture has long been questioned. In 1983, Dell Upton argued against what he called an 'object-orientated approach', showing that tradition should be understood not as a "dull mimicry of previous examples" but as a 'shared body of knowledge in which choices arise out of the tension between individual inclinations and social context.[33] More recently, Vellinga has strongly denounced typological and regional categorization as reductive practices, pointing to the "passive and rather static entities" it produces.[34] He argues that these studies fail to recognise the "processual, heterogeneous and adaptive" aspects of vernacular building, which are arguably precisely why it is worth studying and where lessons can be learned for contemporary design and rural development. Such aspects might be, for example, the adaptation to a precipitous terrain by the creation

of a usable level surface; strategic use of vegetation for shelter and enclosure; resourceful use of sloping topography for access or shelter; use of rock outcroppings for spatial definition, etc.[35] Thus, vernacular space might be understood in terms of typical human and landscape situations rather than as a system of rigid typologies.[36] It is such typical human situations – and the human interaction with place - that is lost in formal typological interpretations.

The reduction of vernacular architecture to a set of formal typologies allows it to be misappropriated as a sort of visual short-hand for achieving 'architectural appropriateness' in a rural development context. Thus, replica details and forms have become a feature of popular architecture.[37] Throughout the 1990s, this 'vernacularization' or 'neo-traditionalism' has come to dominate commercial suburban developments in Britain and North America.[38] Ireland's sprawling one-off rural development is associated more with the frenzied bungalow-building in the 1970s followed by the boom-time adoption of the style and scale of georgian estate houses. Planners use the vernacular as a kind of panacea to mitigate this stylistic anarchy; The 'rural design guides' produced by county planning departments unambiguously promote a "neo-vernacular" design aesthetic.[39] The guides prescribe the replication of the generalised visual and formal qualities of vernacular architecture in new construction while treating as secondary the aspects of design specificity- pragmatic aspects such as shelter, access, solar orientation, rainwater, wastewater- that have resulted in the apparent visual integration that it seeks to recreate.[40] This is a planning control response to the visual aspect of the problem - one-off houses as scars in the landscape - rather than issues of environmental degradation, social isolation, service provision, etc. This visual objectification of landscape and its elements corresponds with what has

been called the "Rural Gaze"[41] and it is a phenomenon that extends back to the concepts of beauty defined by the picturesque movement.[42] The Rural Gaze concept draws on Michel Foucault's Gaze, an organised and systematic 'way of seeing', whereby what one focuses on and how one interprets it are determined by social norms.[43] Abram shows how it is at work in rural gentrification processes, conflicts over conservation and preservation, in development control and land use planning policies, as well as in obscuring the recognition of problems such as poverty and deprivation in rural areas. The cottage, which started to become aestheticized through the picturesque 'Cottage Orné' [44] has long become a popular image of domestic life, a commodity, which ironically today only the wealthy can afford to renovate and maintain.[45] In this reading of the cottage, its original history, meaning and connection with poverty are concealed. It is part of a picturesque landscape, to be gazed upon and preserved.

New Approaches

Alternatives to the picturesque stance towards landscape are offered for example in Spirn's reconceptualization of the meaning of landscape, calling for a revision of current definitions to be based on the combined etymological roots, Land + skabe or schappen. 'Land' means both the place and the people living there, while 'skabe' or 'schappen', like the German 'schaffen', means to shape or to make. Thus, an interactive process between people and place could potentially be implied in the word 'Landscape'.[46] Similarly, Ingold proposes a 'dwelling perspective' of landscape, according to which the landscape is constituted as 'an enduring record of - and testimony to - the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves'.[47]

Understanding landscape in these ways – as an interactive process and as a sort of registry of human action – makes the problems of subtracting its components as discreet formal entities to be compared and categorized according to the protocol of 'vernacular architecture' all the more apparent. Those components (vernacular architecture) are inseparable from this concept of landscape.

Although this vital relationship to landscape has not yet been fully explored, academic studies have, in recent years, moved away from picturesque interpretations, focussing less on formal qualities and more on environmental, technological, and social conceptualizations of vernacular architecture. Since the 1960s, both Oliver and Rapoport have been influential in focussing vernacular architecture studies towards the cultural significance of traditional environments.[48] Rapoport presents traditional societies as models operating on a consensual basis; The matching up between the rules and values of the group and its environment he says is the important lesson to be taken from vernacular architecture rather than its formal qualities.[49] This notion in turn might inform an approach to heritage and conservation, whereby the processes of its production rather than the finished artefact become the focus. Marchand for example has argued for a re-evaluation of tradition based on process and knowledge, whereby traditional apprenticeship systems would be valued and encouraged rather than preserving the physical objects they produce.[50] Other studies aim to draw lessons from the vernacular for developing empirically-grounded housing design methodologies. For example, Asquith integrates interviews, time diaries, spatial mapping and spatial configuration diagrams to illustrate how the influence of gender, age and time on the use of space may be measured and mapped, and how sometimes unexpected conclusions

may be drawn from this regarding the way in which families claim and use space in their home.[51] (See Fig. 3).

Memmott's studies of aboriginal camp architecture touch on the inseparability of habitation and landscape already described.[52] The studies observe and document an ephemeral architecture in which the structures themselves are not easily defined. The dispersed arrangement of the camps and the external nature of behaviour in camp settlements is captured in the documentation, which extends to include a wider site. The labelling and description of spaces are in terms of activities rather than form and features. (See Fig. 4). This starts to suggest an approach to drawing vernacular space that is not focussed on static forms but on their interaction with site and with a wider landscape.

In an Irish context, a new sensibility about vernacular architecture and rurality is uncovering exciting potentials for modes of habitation in the countryside.[53] A recent study of the perceptions of rurality amongst contemporary architects practising in a rural context points to a nuanced understanding of vernacular that "moves beyond form and physical preoccupations to link house-building with local and regional social needs".[54] Ireland's 2006 exhibition at the Venice Biennale curated by FKL Architects represented an important moment of reflective practice in Ireland taking a counter-picturesque, indeed radical position towards rurality, using it as a lens through which to examine settlement and land-use.[55]

The notion of the countryside as a source of progressive thought, a 'space of radical openness' removed from the homogenizing forces of the centre has been picked up by art and architecture practitioners including architect Dominic Stevens.[56] He has advocated an understanding of

vernacular as "a way of being, a modus operandi" that would include for example the process of neighbours helping each other to build their homes, and he has documented contemporary vernacular living situations including informal appropriations of barns and greenhouse tunnels as residences.[57] His description of vernacular architecture as "landscape rearranged" points again to the significance of the site in the creation of vernacular environments and to the inadequacy of the established methods of documentation in the field.[58] Another interpretation of vernacular is presented in relation to the ubiquitous barrel-vaulted 'Government Barn'. It can be read as a vernacular element in that it is "an empty architecture that is complete only when the space realised by the frame is filled by tractors, bales of hay, livestock or other machinery." The frame is subsumed into the vernacular building process and finds itself "altered, added to, dismantled, re-erected, shifted, according to fluctuations in agricultural practice, policy, or the provision of grants".[59] (See Fig. 5). Thus, a type is 'vernacularized', a melioration that Vellinga says also acted upon the British suburban "semi".[60] The barn frame is thus a unit of construction available to the vernacular builder much like the basic form of a cottage or out-house. It is in its interlock with its site that the design agency might be found. And it is in this interlock with its site that the established techniques in vernacular architecture studies can never properly illustrate.

Crossing Fields: Vernacular Architecture through the lens of Landscape

We have seen how readings of vernacular architecture are shifting away from typological and picturesque restraints, acknowledging heterogeneity, adaptability, and agency manifested through a knowing engagement with site.

But how can this engagement be analysed and conveyed? Over the last few years, we have been developing an interpretation of vernacular architecture that seeks to reveal this relationship to landscape, an inseparable part of an interactive process that is landscape;[61] The Utilitarian-Landscape interpretation has been defined as: A way of understanding vernacular environments in terms of the resourceful use of landscape elements by vernacular creator-agents for imperative utilitarian purpose - spatial definition, shelter, containment, access, agricultural function.[62] In order to analyse and illustrate this negotiated relationship with landscape, an analytical methodology was required that was outside of the established techniques used in the field of vernacular architecture described above.

The analysis methodology that developed draws mainly from the field of landscape architecture. The seminal landscape architecture studies by Clemens Steenbergen and Wouter Reh, for example in Architecture and Landscape: The Design Experiment of the Great European Gardens and Landscapes, presented detailed research into the strategic spatial thinking behind the great European gardens - the classic tableaux of the 15th and 16th century Italian Renaissance villa, the formality of the 17th-century French Baroque garden, and the scenic composition in the panoramic English gardens of the 18th-century. Their research represented a shift in interpretation of these gardens from the descriptive to the analytical. The authors developed a system of interpretation in order to help them analyse the gardens and understand the landscape design. This system was a development of a method described in Steenbergen's dissertation De stap over de horizon.[63] He treats landscape in terms of basic form, spatial form, and visual structure. In Architecture and Landscape he adds the fourth category, 'programme form'. (See Fig. 6)

The design of the landscape architecture is arranged into various treatments in which specific design themes are utilized. The landscape design can be 'read' according to these themes and identified by:

Basic form, or layout, resulting from the geometric rationalization of the topography

Spatial form, or the architectonic treatment of the landscape's three-dimensional space

Its 'visual structure' which incorporates the landscape's visual features

Its 'programme form', the spatial organization and interpretation of the programme.[64]

Applying the analytical system - Two examples

In utilitarian-landscape research, we apply these analytical treatments to simple architectonic configurations in order to interrogate and illustrate their interaction with landscape. We will now introduce two such configurations that we have studied with the aid of this system of analysis. The first is what we have called the 'Perimeter Configuration'. This case study is located in the foothills of the Derryveagh mountains, in the north-west Donegal Gaeltacht about 5km outside the town of Gort a' Chóirce/ Gortahork. (Fig. 7 & 8) The undulating Caledonian landscape is peppered with multiple lakes and waterways. The field pattern is typical of the post famine pattern of holding strips. This is a curving line of simple structures that runs parallel to the contours of the topography. The configuration is read from the road as an embankment of white-washed structures roofed with stone slates. The wall-like massing makes the group visually distinctive.

Considering the observations and analysis of this case study in the terms used in the critical system developed by Steenbergen and Reh, the treatments can be interpreted as follows:

Basic Form, or layout, resulting from the geometric rationalization of the topography, the 'earthworks' of the design: The linear configuration of building acts like a retaining wall to carve out a linear wedge, a level working surface that is parallel to the contours of the topography and on which the activities of the farmyard and family can take place. The surface is a protected terrace overlooking the steeply-falling topography of the site that runs down to the Glenna River, located approximately 500m to the west. Following the contour, the road to the north provides access to this surface.

Spatial Form, the architectonic treatment of the landscape's three-dimensional space: The linear space of the surface or terrace is formally defined by both the loosely conjoined line of building elements, and by the rigidly straight line of mature ash trees bounding the southwest edge. The perimeter configuration of domestic and agricultural buildings acts like a protective edge towards the road as well as a sheltering wall to the northern side, creating privacy. The trees define the line at which the site resumes its natural slope.

Visual Structure, in which the landscape's visual features are incorporated - in particular, for this analysis, this theme seeks to understand how the working landscape's areas of significance are visually incorporated : The linear surface or forecourt, defined on one side by the perimeter configuration and on the other by a line of mature trees is a strong spatial axis on the site, focussed unambiguously on the pointed mass of An Earagail/Mount Errigal. About

10km to the south, An Earagail/Mount Errigal is the highest peak in the Derryveagh range at 751m high, and Donegal's highest mountain. The elevation of this site combined with the flatness of the gravelled level surface, serves to bring the mountain into the immediate visual context of this site. The working surface affords surveillance as far as the Glenna River to the west and to the south-west towards tillage and animal-grazing areas. Breaks in the 'perimeter' gave visual access too towards the cottage and land at the north-east side, across the road, which was originally part of this property.[65]

Programme Form (the spatial organization and interpretation of the programme): The programme is organised around the level surface or yard, with each building having its own individual entrance off it. Thus the terrace is the fulcrum of the site's functionality; It acts as the connecting surface between domestic and agricultural activities, and it has an overview of the operations of the entire site. (Fig. 9).

The second vernacular case study we have examined with the aid of the landscape system of analysis is the 'Platform Configuration'. (Fig. 10 & 11) This case study is located at the base of An Cnoc Ramhar/Crockrawer Mountain in the Donegal Southwest mountain range, near the town of Na Glennta/Glenties, about 2.5km off the main road (R250) from Baile na Finne/Fintown. It sits on the south facing slope of the mountainside in a wide valley typical of the Caledonian folds of northwest Ireland that run in a line from Scotland. The flat plains of Abhainn Shrath Chaisil/ Stracashel River contain bog plots. The railway line from Ballybofey ran roughly parallel to the R250 so the property was once within walking distance from the train route and therefore would have been less remote and isolated than

today. Here, a south-facing grassed platform has been created overlooking the surrounding site, formed between the domestic cottages enclosing its northern side and by a retaining wall, pavilion, and greenhouse that define its southern edge and articulate the change in level. The two-storey pavilion, which is integrated into the terrace retaining wall, originally operated as a small shop, accessed from the platform terrace.

In this case study, one can interpret the treatments of the analytical system as follows:

Basic Form: In the case of the 'Platform Configuration', the southward sloping mountainside can be identified as the basic form or underlying geomorphology. This sloping terrain has been adapted for the utilitarian purposes of access and habitation, by forming it into two levels, one is the access level, a gently sloping area which steps up to the second level, the habitation level.

Spatial Form: This is the formation of a retaining wall and a platform, which become the key organising and enabling architectonic elements of the design. The programme structures themselves are positioned in relation to this platform and wall. Thus, the dwelling house sits on the platform, the steps in the retaining edge bringing the visitor up to this level. The structure that is located directly in front of and adjoining the retaining wall functions on the two levels; The stable was accessed from the lower level and the upper level of the structure housed a local shop.

Visual Structure: The terrace platform has two main spatial orientations, the first being its long axis, the axis of the cottage which runs parallel to the contours of the valley. The open western end of the platform allows low angle evening sun onto the terrace and graded access down to the surrounding fields. The other orientation is the platform's

cross axis which aligns with the valley, the entrance lane, the terrace stairs, and the front door of the cottage. The change in level along this axis is utilised to give a clear view from the platform level of anyone arriving from the road as well as towards the river and bog plots associated with the property. Thus, the road, entrance path, fields and bog-plots beyond are all incorporated into the visual structure of the configuration as well as the functional spaces of parking, paddock, stable on lower level, and the shop and domestic entrance on the upper level platform. The wider neighbourhood space of the valley and adjacent townlands are also within its visual realm.

Programme Form: Domestic Cottage, Greenhouse, Shop, Stable, Parking area for carts and bicycles, paddock for stallion, organised around the raised platform. The lower level of the pavilion, accessed from the lower farmyard level, stabled a stallion. The stallion was kept as a business for breeding and used the adjacent enclosed paddock for exercise. Horses, carts, bicycles and later, cars were parked at this lower level, and customers to the shop would ascend the steps to the terrace platform, which became a semi-public space between the house and the shop - The shop sold hardware items (scythes, spades etc.) as well as salted herrings and poitín, to the surrounding rural community. The green-house utilises the terrace retaining wall and the pavilion wall to provide enclosure and thermal mass. Being positioned at the lower level it does not block light or aspect from the platform terrace above. (Fig. 12).

Crossing Fields

A typological study of the two case studies illustrated might identify both as being a direct-entry typology, with whitewashed walls and pitched roofs, and with adjacent

outhouses. Such a reading fails to reveal the active design agency explicit in the adaptive negotiation with landscape. It overlooks the creation by the vernacular builders of a usable working platform in a precipitous terrain in one case, or of a linear configuration of structures that form a protective wall at the property's boundary in the other. Examining the environments using this landscape methodology helps to interrogate and illustrate the tactics. Both of the tactics show the adaptability, heterogeneity and specificity of these configurations and have equal and arguably greater value than their formal commonalities.

The notion of 'crossing fields' is described in Made in Tokyo which documents the non-architect designed structures that, the authors argue, make up the real lived experience of Tokyo city. (See Fig. 13). The authors have identified built structures where multiple programmes overlap, and where distinctions between building and infrastructure, between architecture and civil engineering, are blurred. They describe their method of observation as a 'zoom-back': 'We tried to view the full panorama – the building and the surrounding environment together – to see another facility. For the moment we forgot the categorical divisions between architecture, civil engineering, geography, and sought to see things as simple, physical unities..... A summary of our approach might be to say that we 'zoom back' looking for 'cross-categories' and 'urban ecologies'.[66]

Made in Tokyo uses the format of the guidebook, implying an expanding field of further examples to come. The labelled single-line isometric drawing is arguably the most important aspect of the analysis, and the architect-authors are famous for the quasi-scientific and humorous drawing style that they developed through this and other publications. The authors also gave nicknames to each case study. This is a

clever tactic that conveys immediately where the interest in the building is. It is also humorous, expressing the authors' 'fondness' for their discoveries but crucially it acts like a sort of branding exercise. The buildings may not have a known creator but now that they have a name, they are definable entities in the city with the potential to be read as pieces of architecture. They call their subjects 'Da-me Architecture' (no-good architecture), which they define as buildings 'giving a priority to stubborn honesty in response to their surroundings and programmatic requirements, without insisting on architectural aesthetic and form. Most of them are anonymous buildings, not beautiful, and not accepted in architectural culture to date'. As such the subjects are also 'vernacular', albeit a contemporary and an urban vernacular. Precisely because they are contemporary and urban, the work has the potential to refresh the understanding of pre-industrial and rural vernacular environments. Transferring the stance taken in Made in Tokyo to a rural pre-industrial vernacular context could help to shake off the defunct technological and taxonomic obsessions of twentieth century vernacular architecture studies described earlier.[67]

We have seen how vernacular architecture is a 'fuzzy concept', how the justification - and the usefulness - of treating it separately and therefore differently to other architectures is questionable. This is because of the techniques used in the field, which focus on the form and features of the building itself in a stand-alone condition as shown in some of the examples above. Our research aims to see vernacular configurations in relation to the surrounding environment, or more precisely, how the configurations have developed out of that specific surrounding context and geomorphology. When we remove the restraints and sentimentality associated with the study of vernacular architecture and examine it with this method adapted from

landscape architecture, we can uncover the design intent and often ingenuity of many of these environments. The approach is in clear contradistinction to that of standard typological studies of vernacular architecture. It is an approach that 'zooms back' from the built entities to examine a wider spatial context and 'zooms-back' from the limitations of the field of vernacular architecture to achieve a more complete understanding of the creation of these environments.

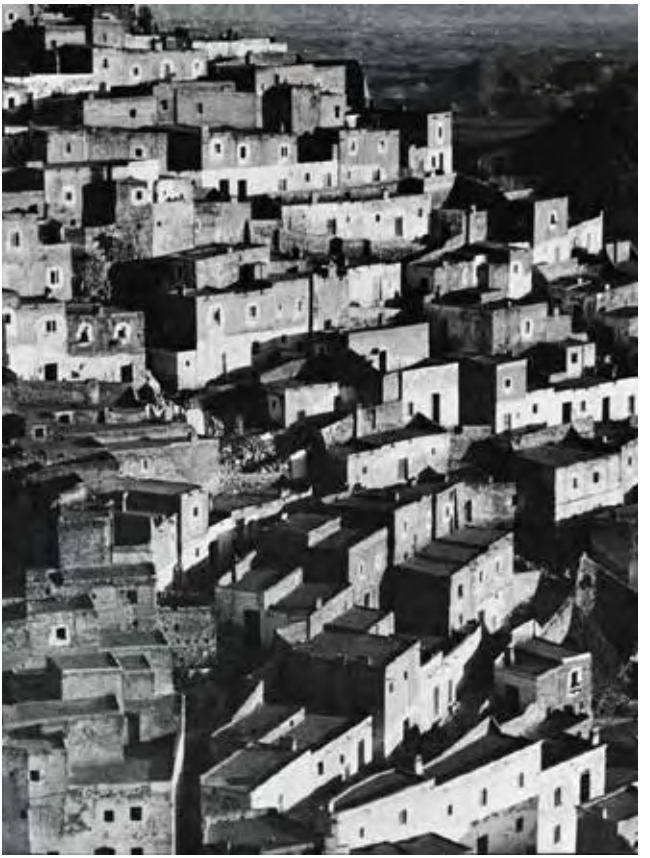


Fig 1

Mojacar Almeria, from Rudofsky's Architecture without Architecture: A Short Introduction to Non-pedigreed Architecture (1964). His intention was not to present a more humane architecture, as has been commonly understood, but rather to show what functionalism might look like (Scott and Beck, 2016).

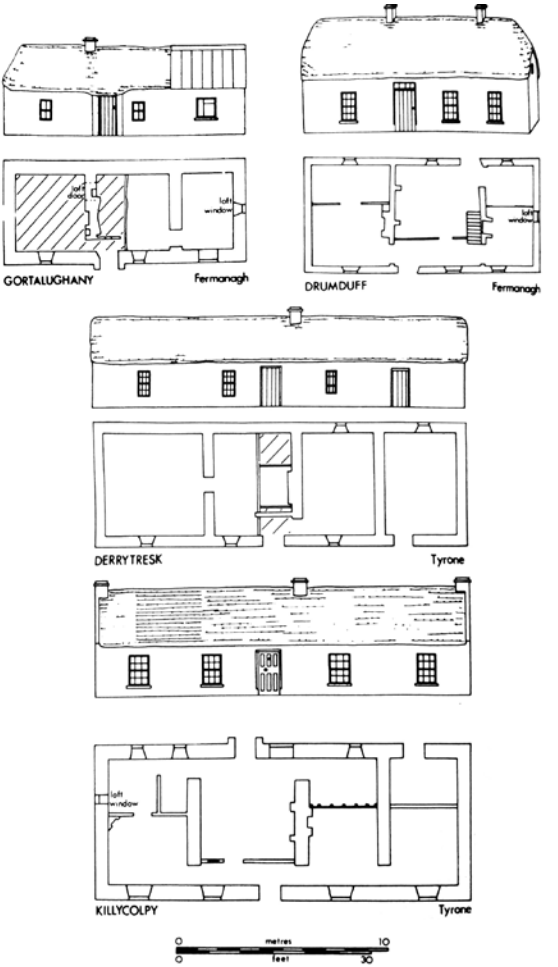


Fig 2

Gailey, A, Vernacular Housing in North West Ulster, The Buildings of Ireland: North West Ulster, the counties of Londonderry, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Tyrone (Alistair Rowan, Nikolaus Pevsner, 1979): Although he acknowledges "adaptations", his methodology does not permit further exploration. Illustrations in this study depict the structures as isolated entities, suspended on a white page with neither the site nor topography elucidated.

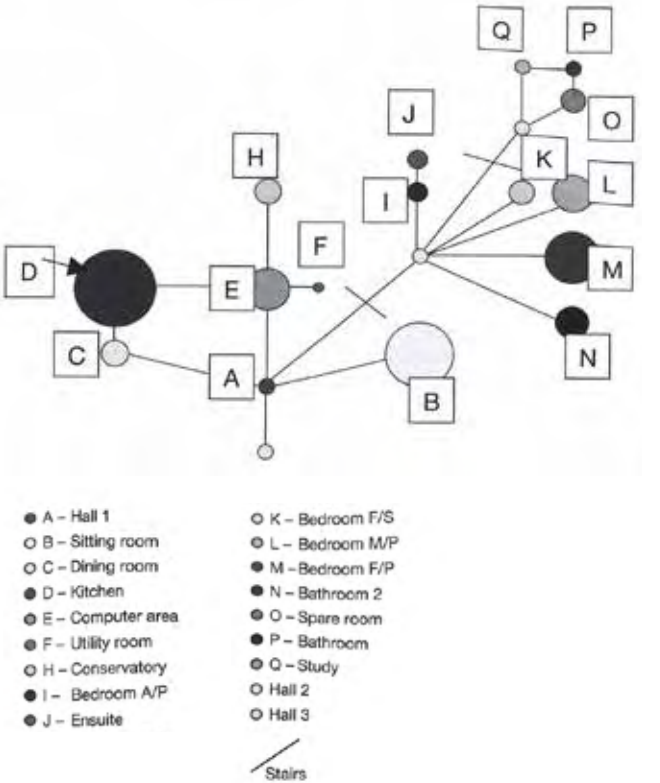


Fig 3

Asquith, 2006: 129 Lessons from Vernacular Architecture. The qualitative and quantitative research integrates interviews, time diaries, spatial mapping and spatial configuration diagrams, to shows how the influence of gender, age and time on the use of space may be measured and mapped, and how interesting and unexpected conclusions may be drawn from this regarding the way in which families in the UK claim and use space in their home.

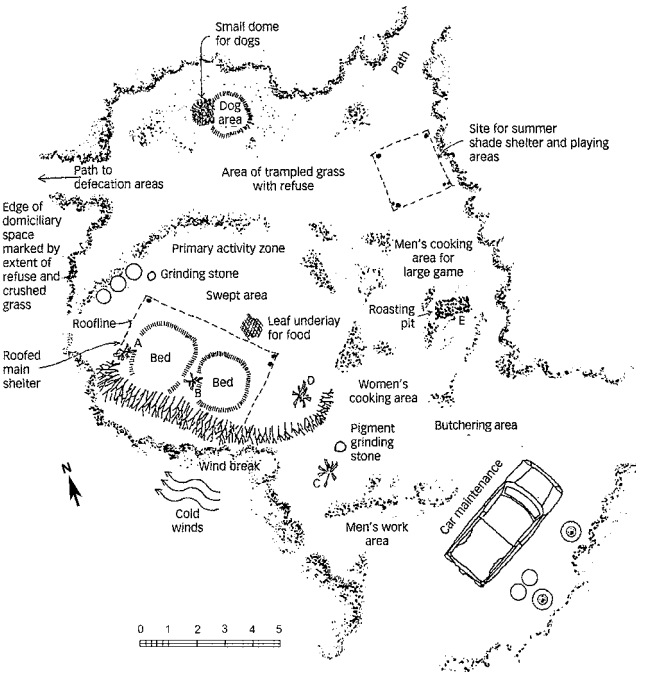


Fig 4

Memmott, P, Gunyah, Goodie and Wurley, The aboriginal architecture of Australia (2007): The winter domiciliary space of an Alyawarr family. In Memmott's pioneering work on the aboriginal camp architecture of Australia, the entirety of the site is necessarily illustrated rather than just the structures themselves which are very simple. This is because of the dispersed arrangement and external nature of behaviour. The camps had a highly structured spatial codes as well as a 'complex geography of place' including symbolic positioning.

Fig 5

By the 1890s Government barns were more common in Ireland than in Britain (Bell and Watson, 2014: 54). Boyd (2015) shows how the standard barn frame has been subsumed into an adaptive vernacular building process.

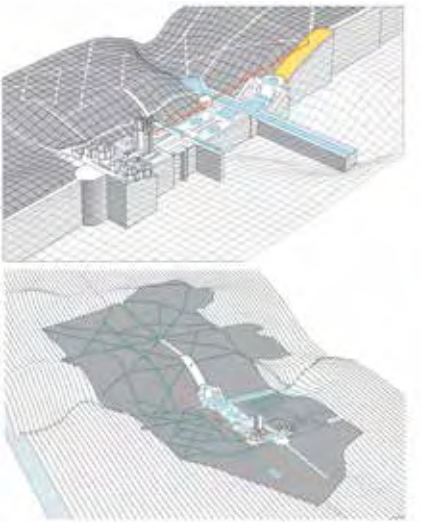


Fig 6

Steenbergen and Reh, 1996, Architecture and Landscape: The Design Experiment of the Great European Gardens and Landscapes. The critical system developed to analyse European Landscape Gardens

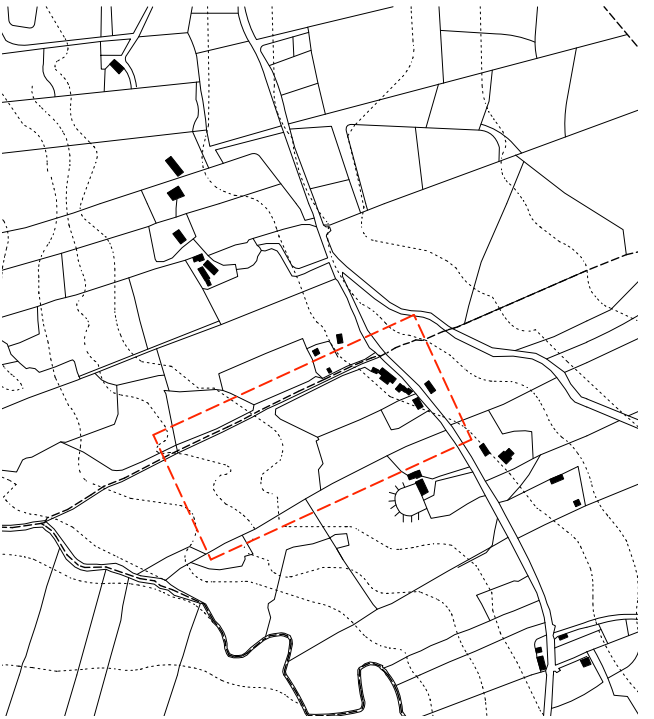


Fig 7

The ‘Perimeter Configuration’, Context

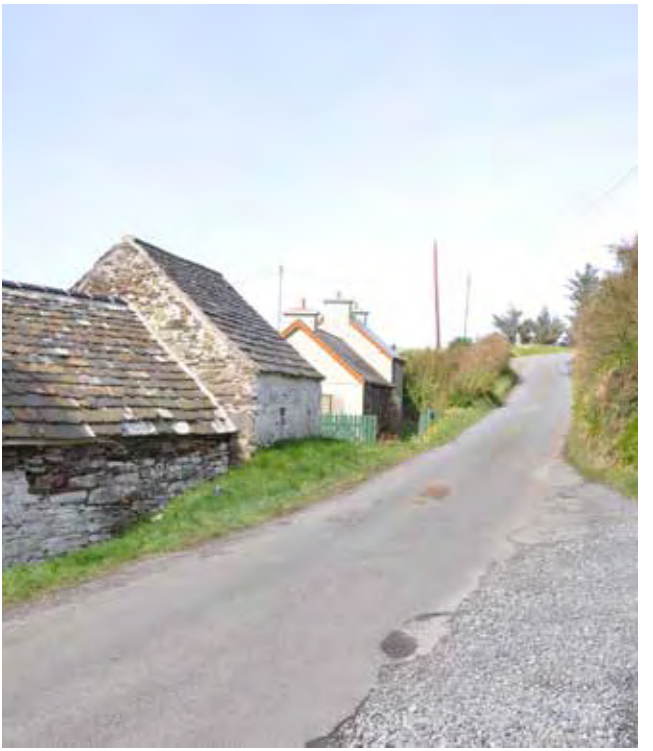


Fig 8

The 'Perimeter'

Fig 8b

The ‘Perimeter’

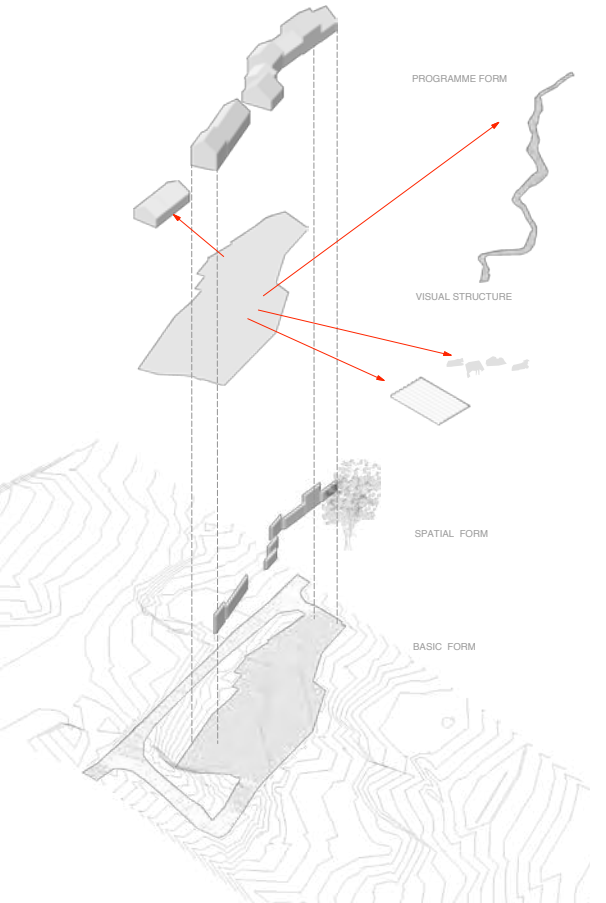


Fig 9

The 'Platform Configuration', Context

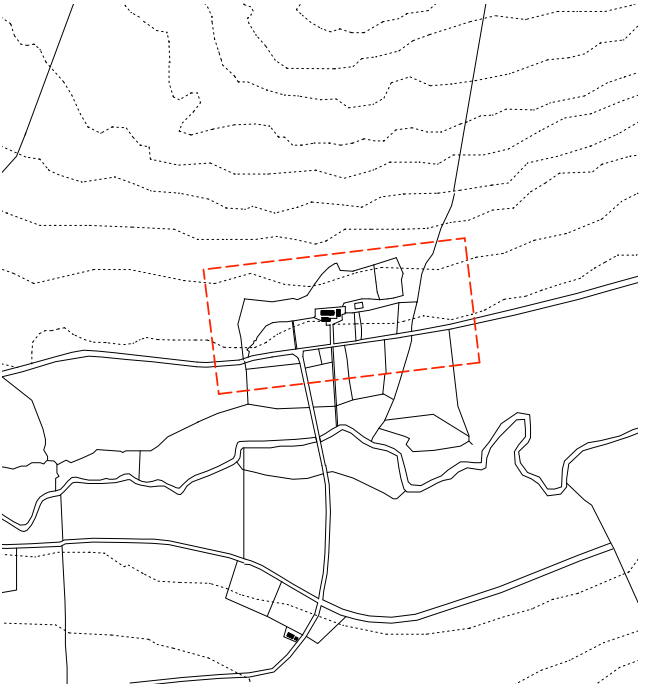


Fig 10

The 'Platform Configuration', Context

Fig 11

The ‘Platform’

Fig 11

The ‘Platform’

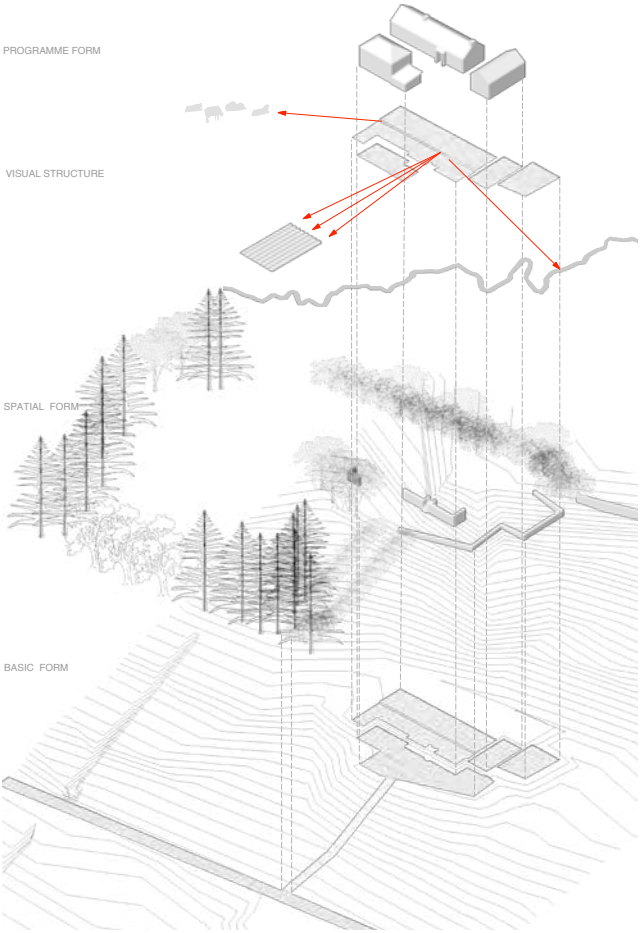


Fig 12

Landscape Analysis of the 'Platform Configuration'

機能＝地下道＋映画館＋居酒屋＋床屋＋店舗
場所＝中央区銀座
晴海通り歌舞伎座の近く○かつての橋の下長さ50m
に3つの映画館と数軒の居酒屋が並ぶ○通りを挟ん
で向かい合う相似形の店舗が地下への入り口○土浦
亀城設計

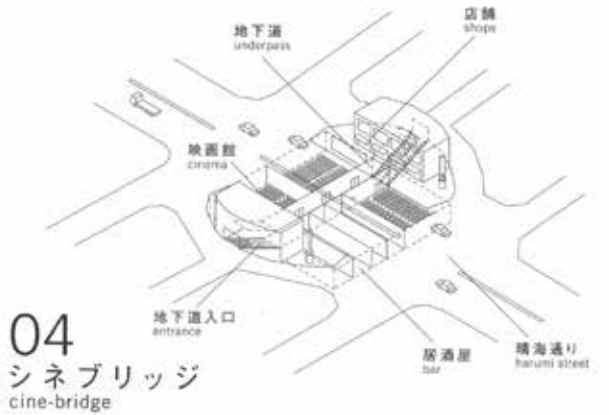
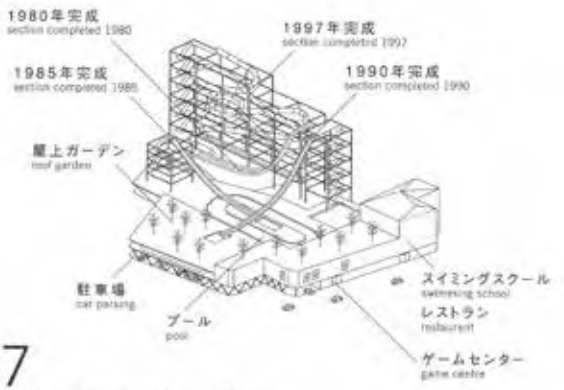


Fig 13 + 14

Two projects documented in Made in Tokyo (Tsukamoto, Kuroda, Kaijima, 2006): The 'Cine-Bridge, which is three cinemas, bars and store with underground entrance (underpass), and the 'Proliferating Water Slides', composed of play pools with towers restaurant over residential area, game centre, hall and parking.

機能ープール＋レストラン＋ゲームセンター＋ホール＋駐車場
場所ー足立区西新井
東京マリン○住宅街の巨大プール○1階はゲームセンター、駐車場、レストラン、その屋上にプールと植栽された庭○スライダーはさらなる刺激を求めて年々増築中



37
増殖スライダービル
proliferating water slides

Notes

1 Kaijima, M., Kuroda, J. & Tsukamoto, Y., Made in Tokyo, Tokyo, Kajima Inst. Publ, 2006.

2 Upton, Dell. "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," American Quarterly, vol. 35, no. 3, 1983, p. 262.

3 Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. xxiii.

4 Brunskill, R.W., Illustrated handbook of vernacular architecture, London, Faber, 1970, p. 27; Pevsner, N., An Outline of European Architecture, 5TH ED. edn, Penguin, 1957, p. 23.

5 Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. Xxiii.

6 Upton, Dell. "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," American Quarterly, vol. 35, no. 3, 1983, p. 262.

7 Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. Xxii-xxiii.

8 Guidoni, E., Primitive Architecture, Abrams Books, 1978.

9 Memmott, P.C., Gunyah, Goondie & Wurley, Aboriginal architecture in Australia, Australia, University of Queensland Press, 2007, p. xi.

10 Abu-Lughod, J., "Disappearing Dichotomies: First World-Third World, Traditional-Modern", Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review, vol. 3, no. 2, 1992, p. 9.

Abu-Lughod describes how three dichotomies have been used in characterizing different stages of development of human settlement: 'from rural to urban, via a process called urbanisation, from pre-industrial to industrial via a process called industrialisation, and from backward to modern, via a process called modernization'. The irony, she points out, is that regardless of the nature of development the term 'traditional' described the starting position for the three stages- rural, pre-industrial and backward. Accordingly it is no longer feasible to pinpoint exactly what we mean by the term 'tradition'.

11 Oliver, P., Shelter and society, London, Barrie & Rockliff/Cresset Press, 1969, p. xxii.

12 Ruskin, J., The Poetry Of Architecture, London, George Allen, 1905, (first edn. 1837).

13 Morris, W., Shankland, G. & Briggs, A., Selected writings and designs, Penguin, 1962.

The later style of "Old English" also leaned heavily on the farmhouse vernacular of the countryside, although without the ethical concerns of the Ruskinians.

Kostof, S. & Castillo, G., History of architecture: settings and rituals, 2nd edn, New York; Oxford Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 640.

14 Vernacular Finnish farmhouses with their loosely enclosed courtyards were important in Aalto's development of his concept of dwelling, and he was greatly influenced by the materiality and use of handcraft in vernacular architecture which he said generated an emotional response.

Aalto, A., "Motifs from past ages (1922)" in Alvar Aalto in His Own Words, ed. G. Schildt, Helsinki, Otava, 1997, p. 35.

Aldo Van Eyck employed an anthropological approach to the primitive building cultures of North Africa, drawing on their morphologies as well as their forms whilst fully identifying himself with modernism. His 1960 orphanage in Amsterdam is a developed example of his approach.

Strauven, Francis, Aldo Van Eyck - the Shape of Relativity, Amsterdam, Architectura & Natura, 1st edn. 1998, 2002, p. 120.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie House was a spatial development of the Shingle-style vernacular houses.

Kostof, S. & Castillo, G., History of architecture: settings and rituals, 2nd edn, New York; Oxford Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 683.

15 Upton, Dell. "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," American Quarterly, vol. 35, no. 3, 1983.

16 Passanti, F., "The vernacular, modernism, and Le Corbusier", Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, vol. 56, no. 4, 1997, pp. 438.

The concept of Sachlichkeit (in English "New Objectivity") was developed in Vienna and Germany at the turn of the century by such figures as Adolf Loos and Hermann Muthesius in reaction to expressionism.

17 Brown, R., & Maudlin, D., Concepts of vernacular architecture, SAGE Publications Inc., 2011, p. 340.

18 Rudofsky, B., Architecture without architects: a short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture, London, Academy Editions,1972.

19 Scott, F.D.E. & Beck, M., Disorientation: Bernard Rudofsky in the Empire of Signs, Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2016.

20 For example, in relation to Mayan traditional architecture, the Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World notes that 'The intellectual elite, the scientists and astronomers who devised a complex calendar, and discovered numeration and the use of the mathematical 'zero', may have provided the design skills to plan the temples.'

Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

21 Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 13.

22 Frampton, K., "Towards a critical regionalism : six points for an architecture of resistance" in The anti-aesthetic: essays on postmodern culture, ed. H. Foster, New York, New Press, 1998, p. 21.

23 Elleh, N., Reading the architecture of the underprivileged classes: a perspective on the protests and upheavals in our cities, Farnham, Ashgate 2014, p. 10.

24 Oliver, P., Shelter and society, London, Barrie & Rockliff/Cresset Press, 1969, p. 7;

Crysler, C.G., Writing spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Built Environment, 1960-2000, New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 77.

25 Upton, Dell, "The VAF at 25: What Now?" Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, vol. 13, no. 2, 2006, p. 12.

26 Asquith, L., & Vellinga, M., Vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century: theory, education and practice, New York; London, Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 86;

Brown, R., & Maudlin, D., Concepts of vernacular architecture, SAGE Publications Inc., 2011, p. 349.

27 Torgovnick as cited in Forty, A., "Primitive: the Word and Concept" in Primitive: Original Matters in Architecture, eds. J. Odgers, A. Sharr & F. Samuel, London, Taylor and Francis, 2006, p. 11;

Brown, R., & Maudlin, D., Concepts of vernacular architecture, SAGE Publications Inc., 2011, p. 342.

28 McMenamin, D. & Sheridan, D., "Interpreting vernacular space in Ireland: a new sensibility", Landscape Research, 2018, pp. 787- 803.

In a recent essay in Landscape Research Journal, we examined in more detail the influence of typology and the picturesque on received interpretations of vernacular architecture. We contrasted the restrictiveness of the associated techniques with the potential of emerging interpretations, identifying a new sensibility in approach to vernacular architecture and rurality in scholarship and practice in Ireland. Some of what follows here is drawn from this analysis.

29 His approach has been criticised for placing an undue emphasis on form and type at the expense of other factors that tease out social and economic meanings: "a featureless plain on which arrows floated".

Holdsworth, D., "Revaluing the House" in Place/ Culture/ Representation, eds. D. Ley & J.S. Duncan, London, Routledge, 1993, p. 95.

30 Brunskill, R.W., Illustrated handbook of vernacular architecture, London, Faber, 1970.

31 Gailey, A., "Vernacular Housing in North west Ulster" in North west Ulster: the counties of Londonderry, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Tyrone, eds. A. Rowan & N. Pevsner, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, p. 90.

32 He is describing here the legacy of archeologists in particular Henry Glassie, whose cognitive approach used artefacts to attempt to understand culture, rather than assuming behaviour in order to understand artefacts.

Upton, Dell. "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," American Quarterly, vol. 35, no. 3, 1983, pp. 272-4.

33 Asquith, L., & Vellinga, M., Vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century: theory, education and practice, New York; London, Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 86.

34 The strategies listed are identified and documented in the case study research previewed in Sheridan & McMenamin, "The utility and aesthetics of landscape: a case study of Irish vernacular architecture", Journal of Landscape Architecture, Volume 14, Nov 2012, p. 46-53.

35 In his essay 'Type, Field, Culture, Praxis', Peter Carl points to the dominance of the narrow concept of typology in architecture since the Enlightenment and he proposes the use of the term 'typicality' as a richer and more profound alternative; "The principal difference between typology and typicality is that the former concentrates upon [architectural] objects, the later upon human situations".

Carl, P., "Type, Field, Culture, Praxis", Architectural Design, Volume 81, Typological Urbanism: Projective Cities, no. 1, 2011, p. 40.

36 Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. xxiv.

37 Brown, R., & Maudlin, D., Concepts of vernacular architecture, SAGE Publications Inc., 2011, p. 351.

38 Scott, M., Bullock, C. & Foley, K. "'Design matters': Understanding professional, community and consumer preferences for the design of rural housing in the Irish landscape", Town Planning Review, vol. 84, no. 3, pp. 337-370.

39 This style-based reading of the vernacular in the Rural Design Guides has been identified in a number of publications, see Scott, Bullock, Foley, 2013;

Donovan, K. & Gkartzios, M., "Architecture and rural planning: 'Claiming the vernacular'", Land Use Policy, vol. 41, 2014, p. 334;

McMenamin, D., & Sheridan, D., "Interpreting vernacular space in Ireland: a new sensibility", Landscape Research, Vol. 44, 2018, p. 1-17 (799).

40 Abram, S., "The Rural Gaze" in Country Visions, ed. P. Cloke, Edinburgh, Prentice Hall/ Pearson Education Ltd, 2003, p. 31.

41 The term "picturesque' here refers to its original meaning as the aesthetic ideal introduced in the 18th century by William Gilpin in a series of essays. It became defined in the later 1700s as an aesthetic quality between the Sublime and the Beautiful, characterised in the landscape garden by wild ruggedness and in architecture by asymmetrical dispositions of forms and variety of texture.

Gilpin, W., Three essays: On picturesque beauty; On picturesque travel; and, On

sketching landscape; to which is added a poem on landscape painting, 2nd ed. Edn, London, R. Blamire, 1794.

42 Foucault, M., The birth of the clinic: an archaeology of medical perception, 2nd edn, London, Tavistock Publications, 1973.

43 In his book examining how the concepts and techniques of the picturesque remain at work in contemporary culture, John Macarthur describes the emergence of the notion of "cottage scenery" (or the Cottage Orné) in the picturesque movement in 1700s England.

Macarthur, J., The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities, London and New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 115.

Artists such as Thomas Gainsborough and Thomas Smith depicted cottages as naturalised features in a landscape, finding aesthetic potential in the squalid and decrepitude.

Brown and Maudlin make the point that the study of vernacular architecture was only possible following the picturesque and romantic movements that set indigenous traditional buildings, and the value of place and people, in direct opposition to the universal forms and values of Classicism. Traditional buildings became revered as artefacts of a nation's culture.

Brown, R., & Maudlin, D., Concepts of vernacular architecture, SAGE Publications Inc., 2011, p. 350.

Understanding the emergence of vernacular architecture studies as such, it is not surprising that the agenda of the picturesque is still discernible in the field.

44 Abram, S., "The Rural Gaze" in Country Visions, ed. P. Cloke, Edinburgh, Prentice Hall/ Pearson Education Ltd, 2003, p. 38;

Oliver, P., Encyclopedia of vernacular architecture of the world, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. Xxiv.

45 Spirn, A.W., The language of landscape, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1998, p. 16.

46 Ingold, T., "The temporality of the landscape", World Archaeology, vol. 25, no. 2, 1993, p. 153.

47 Crysler, C.G., Writing spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the BuIlt Environment, 1960-2000, New York,Routledge, 2003, p. 76.

48 Rapoport, A., House Form And Culture, 1st edn, London, Pearson, 1969.

49 Marchand, T.H.J., "Endorsing Indigenous Knowledge: The role of masons and apprenticeships in sustaining vernacular architecture – the case of Djenne" in Vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century: theory, education and practice, eds. M. Vellinga & L. Asquith, New York; London, Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 60.

50 Asquith, L., "Lessons from the Vernacular: Integrated Approaches and new methods for housing research" in Vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century: theory, education and practice, eds. M. Vellinga & L. Asquith, New York; London, Taylor & Francis, 2006, pp. 129-140.

51 Memmott, P.C., Gunyah, Goondie & Wurley, Aboriginal architecture in Australia, Australia, University of Queensland Press, 2007, p. 11.

52 McMenamin, D., & Sheridan, D., "Interpreting vernacular space in Ireland: a new sensibility", Landscape Research, Vol. 44, 2018, p. 802.

53 Donovan, K. & Gkartzios, M., "Architecture and rural planning: 'Claiming the vernacular'", Land Use Policy, vol. 41, 2014, p. 342.

54 Fagan, M., Kelly, P. & Lysaght, G. (eds), Sub Urban to Super Rural, Ireland's entry at the Venice Biennale 10th International Architecture Exhibition, The Architecture Foundation, Dublin, 2006.

55 Wigglesworth, S. and Till, J., 2003, p. 80.

56 Stevens, D., Rural: Open to All, Everyone Welcome, Ireland, Mermaid Turbulence, 2007, p. 55.

57 Stevens, D., "Field Work: Work done, lessons learned" in AlterRurality: exploring representations and 'repeasantations', ed. S.M. Pieter Versteegh, London, ARENA; Architectural Research Network, 2015.

58 Boyd, G.A., "Almost Nothing, Almost Anywhere: The Metal Barn in Ireland", Architecture : material knowledge. The Irish Review, no. 51, Winter 2015, no. 286, p. 2.

59 Asquith, L., & Vellinga, M., Vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century: theory, education and practice, New York; London, Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 90.

60 Spirn, A.W., The language of landscape, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1998.

61 Sheridan & McMenamin, "The utility and aesthetics of landscape: a case study of Irish vernacular architecture", Journal of Landscape Architecture, Volume 14, Nov 2012, p. 46.

62 Steenbergen, C.M., De stap over de horizon: Een ontleding van het formele ontwerp in de landschapsarchitectuur, Bouwkunde, Delft, 1990.

63 Steenbergen, C.M. & Reh, W., Architecture and landscape: the design experiment of the great European gardens and landscapes, Netherlands, THOTH Publishers, 1996, p. 14.

64 Griffith's Valuation, 1848-1864, National Library of Ireland, 2003. Available: http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/.

65 Kaijima, M., Kuroda, J. & Tsukamoto, Y., Made in Tokyo, Tokyo, Kajima Inst. Publ, 2006, pp. 18-19.

The notion of urban ecologies comes from a rejection of interpretations of that city as chaotic. Bow-Wow liken it instead to a rainforest, where there are: 'many types of creatures co-existing, whilst each constructing their own world. This is ecology, which understands the creature itself in relation to its living environment…If we stop using the metaphors of mechanistics and semiology and start using the metaphors of ecology, then it should be possible to discover layer upon layer of meaningful environmental unities, even within the landscape of Tokyo'. Tsukamoto, Kuroda, Kaijima, Made in Tokyo, 2006, p. 35.

66 Kaijima, M., Kuroda, J. & Tsukamoto, Y., Made in Tokyo, Tokyo, Kajima Inst. Publ, 2006, p. 19, 9.