



Funded PhD Studentships

A further 3 PhD Studentships in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University

The School is pleased to offer a further 3 funded studentships for doctoral research to begin in September 2010.

Studentship One (APL07): Planning for Small Town Growth

Small towns have often been neglected within future forming debates. As not truly 'urban' they cannot compete with larger settlements in terms of employment and service opportunity. As not truly 'rural' they are not as desirable for residence as their hinterlands. Their 'intermediate' nature also means that they are likely to fall outside of government support, where focus is often divided along urban/rural lines. Yet internationally small towns provide residence to sizeable populations, have cultural meaning in terms of social/economic heritage and are often called upon the help achieve planning goals relating to social equity, activity co-location, population growth and rural tourism.

Putting small towns at the centre of future forming debates, this PhD will look at their role as centres for rural housing growth. In terms of locations for rural growth they are often conceived as the most sustainable for new housing, where small town services, employment and public transport linkages provide an opportunity to live short distance lives and travel using environmentally less damaging surface modes. Yet such ideals of co-location of activity within small towns (working, shopping and enjoying leisure) and use of non-car modes of travel are in stark contrast to the realities of rural life, where the car dominates and the daily activities of residents are increasing complex. In terms of their perception as residential locations, there is a danger that the very act of permitting growth within small towns will challenge ideals of 'small town living' and their perceived desirability compared to major towns and cities.

This study reflects on the potentialities and threats of focusing housing development within small towns and policy responses which can better locate and manage development to produce more desirable outcomes. This studentship opportunity would suit someone with a good knowledge of planning issues and an interest in issues relating to rural growth. Conceptually this research will require an open mind to the contributions from

various disciplines. Experience in any of the following would be beneficial: analysis of qualitative and quantitative data; design issues; policy document analysis; and questionnaire surveys.

Informal enquiries are welcome; please contact Dr Neil Powe (n.a.powe@ncl.ac.uk).

Studentship Two (APL08): Inequality, Place and Space.

Social and spatial inequalities are increasing across many parts of the UK and EU, and may be expected to increase for the foreseeable future as deficit reduction measures are implemented in the UK and elsewhere. How far is 'place' central to the construction, maintenance and representation of social differences and divisions, and to life chances? How is 'place' itself constructed in the interests of the powerful? How far is planning itself complicit in this, and a principal arena for the exercise of power and the reproduction of inequality between places and people? A related question, posed in the EU Barca Report, is how far it is possible for the state to discharge its responsibility for spatial justice through relying on citizens' local place-based development initiatives, given their unequal assets, capacities and histories and in the context of broader economic, social and environmental processes. Does a mobilisation of 'big society' around place-based identities and symbolic constructions of place-based community offer a means of addressing inequality?

The project will begin by reviewing the latest work in planning, sociology and human geography on the relationships between place, space, inequality and power. Formulation of a specific research focus and appropriate strategy will follow this theoretical work and will draw on the interests of the successful candidate and the recent work of the lead supervisor, [Professor Mark Shucksmith](#).

Possibilities for a specific research focus might include:

- The performance and practice of place-based development;
- The exercise of discursive power in the social construction and co-production of rural places, and through the planning system.
- The relationship between spatial mobility and social mobility.
- The impact of policy and its mediation by actors in place.

Applicants are invited from a wide range of backgrounds, including sociology, anthropology, planning and human geography.

Informal enquiries are welcome; please contact Professor Mark Shucksmith (m.shucksmith@ncl.ac.uk).

Studentship Three (APL09): Future Landscape Imaginaries

For this research we define a landscape imaginary as an environmental vision or fantasy that is shared by a particular group. Such, for example, would be the dream-like vision of the classical landscape that eighteenth-century

landowners projected onto the British countryside. As much a way of thinking as it was a way of seeing, this imaginary initiated hundreds of building and landscape gardening projects, as designers and their patrons attempted to realise it in physical form.

Critical scholarship has amply demonstrated the ideological functions of such landscape imaginaries and their complex entanglement with conflictual social relations and power. However, while acknowledging the importance of these studies, those committed to constructively practising within the environment – those such as landscape architects, planners, architects, artists and engineers, who work in the context of an imperative toward action. – cannot be satisfied with critique as an end in itself. Their *raison d'être* is to intervene and inevitably their interventions must negotiate their relation to dominant imaginaries, even as they strive toward new possibilities. Moreover increasingly the activities of professional designers are informed by a vast array of landscape practices, which include walking, trespassing, monkey-wrenching, landscape photography, guerrilla gardening, protesting, and even swimming (the writer and documentary film-maker Roger Deakin drew attention to the dilapidations of waterways by swimming through Britain), potentially all of which are also of interest to this study.

Facing social, economic and environmental problems of unprecedented scale and urgency, it matters what landscape imaginaries we are in the process of constructing today for they will be productive of future realities.

While the exact title, topic and scope of the proposed research will be a matter for discussion between candidate and supervisors, it will involve an investigation of emergent landscape imaginaries and their influence upon new forms of landscape realisation and practice. In view of rapid urbanisation (the U.N. predicts that 60% of the world's population will live in cities by 2030), particular attention will be paid to urban or peri-urban landscapes and to the relationship between the urban and its hinterlands.

Applicants are invited from a wide range of backgrounds, including (but not restricted to) landscape architecture, planning, architecture, urban design, cultural studies, sociology and human geography.

Informal enquires are welcome, please contact Dr Ian Thompson (i.h.thompson@ncl.ac.uk).

How to Apply

These studentships are funded by Newcastle University and the University's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape. The studentships attract a bursary of £15,000 p.a. to cover fees and living costs for three years. This amount will cover fees and living costs (a successful non-EU applicant will therefore have a lower stipend for living costs because of their substantially higher fees).

Each studentship will carry an expectation of up to 100hrs of teaching per annum as part of the funding agreement.

Applicants should submit a full CV and covering letter outlining their ability to undertake the relevant project and their initial ideas about how they would build on their existing expertise to take forward the project's theme.

Applications should be **submitted by email** to Marian Kyte, Postgraduate Research Secretary (marian.kyte@ncl.ac.uk) by no later than **Thursday 22 July 2010**. Please indicate clearly in your letter (using the titles and reference numbers above) which studentship you are applying for.