

MANIFESTO

The Academy of Urbanism brings together a group of thinkers and practitioners involved in the social, cultural, economic, political and physical development of our villages, towns and cities, across Great Britain and Ireland. The Academy has been formed to extend urban discourse beyond built environment professionals, and to create an autonomous, politically independent and self-funded learned voice. We aim to advance the understanding and practice of urbanism by promoting a culture of scholarship through evidence-based inquiry, providing an inclusive forum for dialogue across all disciplines, sharing knowledge with the community and our peers and nurturing, recognising and rewarding excellence in achievement.

Principles

Urban settlements must perform at their fullest potential to advance the quality of human habitation and ensure the survival and recovery of the natural environment, at both a global and local scale. The practice of good urbanism can establish a high quality of living, nurture a healthy and creative way of life, support economic, social, political and cultural activity and deliver robust, distinctive and attractive physical environments.

The Academy of Urbanism asserts the following principles:

1. Successful urbanism is the result of a collective vision, realised through creative and enduring relationships between the community, government, developers and professionals involved in its design, delivery, governance and maintenance.
2. The culture or cultures of the people and the ecology of the place must be expressed at a human scale and through both physical and social structures.
3. The identity, diversity and full potential of the community must be supported spiritually, physically and visually to sustain a sense of collective ownership, belonging and civic pride.
4. Vibrant streets and spaces, defined by their surrounding buildings and with their own distinct character; should form a coherent interconnected network of places that support social interaction and display a hierarchy of private, commercial and civil functions.
5. There must be a permeable street network with pedestrian priority that gives maximum freedom of movement and a good choice of means of transport.
6. Essential activities must be within walking distance and there should be a concentration of activity around meeting places.
7. Places must provide a diversity of functions, tenure, facilities and services; have a mix of building designs and types; and include a variety of appropriately scaled districts and neighbourhoods.
8. The social, cultural and economic needs of all inhabitants must be capable of being met without detriment to the quality of the lives of others.
9. Security should be achieved by organising the urban environment in ways that encourage people to act in a civil and responsible manner.
10. The pedestrian environment should be closely associated with active frontages at street level and there should be an appropriate intensity of use in all areas at all times.
11. The design of spaces and buildings should be influenced by their context and seek to enhance local character and heritage whilst simultaneously responding to current-day needs, changes in society and cultural diversity.
12. The public realm and civil institutions must be supported and protected by sound and inclusive processes that respond to the local community and changing economic and social conditions.
13. Decision-making for the ongoing development and management of the urban fabric must engage stakeholders and the local community through public participation.
14. Diverse, accessible, affordable and active villages, towns and cities will encourage successful commercial activity, promote prosperity and support the well being of their inhabitants.
15. New and existing places must respect, enhance and respond to their local topography, geology and climate and connect to the natural environment within and around them.
16. Urban parks and other landscaped areas should provide space for recreation, encourage biodiversity and help support a balanced environment.
17. New urban forms should be capable of adaptation over time to meet changing needs and to promote the continued use of existing resources, including the built environment.
18. The built environment must seek to minimise the use of carbon-based products, energy and non-renewable resources.