

## Kaliningrad Presentation December 2015

*[1. Title – Trevor Skempton, Architect and Urban Designer, Liverpool]*

I'm delighted to be speaking to you again. Last year I explained the background to my urban design proposals for Kaliningrad. This time, I'll talk about my experience of urban design in Liverpool and 'critical reconstruction' in Berlin.

I'm sorry that I am unable to address you in Russian, but Olga Danilova is again here to interpret, and I hope that we'll be able to discuss the relevance of some of these issues to Kaliningrad.

*[2. Kaliningrad in the snow, with potential towers and reconstruction]*

The development of the Heart of the City is a fascinating process, and I'm very grateful to be involved with it.

I'm not going to talk about my own proposals for Kaliningrad, apart from showing a couple of slides to remind you of who I am and why I'm here.

*[3. Proposal for multi-purpose hall and roof garden, plus mixed-use tower, 2015]*

Here is a sketch from my Post-Castle competition entry, showing a multi-purpose hall and conference centre with the outline of a new landmark tower, which I envisaged could act as a counterpoint to a completed House of the Soviets.

*[4. Plans and elevations showing skyline proposals, 2014 and 2015]*

And here are my two skyline proposals, the first, from last year, with 'gothic' and 'classical' towers flanking the House of the Soviets, the second, from this year, with a single 'gothic' tower.

After my talk, a year ago, a student said to me that she was "tortured" by the idea of Post-Modernism [I don't know if she's in the audience here today]. I asked Olga if she really meant "tortured", and Olga said "Yes, that's what she said".

*[5. Caption – "tortured by.... Post-Modernism"]*

My response was that, speaking as a modern architect, I believe we must look for a rational response to communal concerns with issues of identity and memory.

*[6. Cover of book 'Britain's Lost cities']*

And so to Liverpool. The cover of this book on 'Britain's Lost Cities' shows the Custom House, which was damaged in the war, and demolished in the 1950s.

Liverpool has been in decline since it was the 'Gateway of Empire' 100 years ago. Before that, it had grown fabulously rich, not only from the transport of slaves from Africa to America - but also from being the main port of emigration from Europe to the New World.

*[7. The Cotton Exchange and the Sailors' Home]*

This wealth was reflected in the quality of its buildings, although this wealth failed to reach the poorest sections of society and the city had a reputation for its overcrowded slums.

These photos show the Cotton Exchange [left] and the Sailors' Home [right] – I remember them well, just two of the many fine Liverpool buildings demolished in the name of short-term profit or an illusion of 'progress'.

*[8. Liverpool built two of the World's largest cathedrals]*

It is interesting that, during its long decline in the twentieth century, Liverpool managed to build two enormous cathedrals, one Protestant, one Catholic. The gothic-style Protestant Cathedral, completed in 1974, is the largest in Britain.

*[9. Albert Dock in 1980]*

This picture shows the Albert Dock, one of Liverpool's many enclosed central docks, all of which had fallen into disrepair and abandonment by 1980. The decline of the port led to mass unemployment and serious social unrest.

*[10. My sketch of architect James Stirling]*

This is a sketch of the famous architect James Stirling. He was raised and studied in Liverpool, and used the robust functional architecture of the docks as inspiration for many of his projects.

*[11. James Stirling's Tate Gallery, within one corner of the restored Albert Dock]*

This is the Tate Gallery, designed by James Stirling in 1988 in one corner of the Albert Dock, after the dock had been saved from demolition and then restored to become a major tourist attraction.

*[12. James Stirling's Music School in Stuttgart, right. Everton Water Tower, left]*

And this [right] is James Stirling's Music School in Stuttgart, Germany, from 1997. On the left is Everton Water Tower, built in 1864.

*[13. Modernism, represented by Le Corbusier]*

Some people describe Stirling's work as Post-Modernist – although I'm not one of them. He was also influenced by Le Corbusier, whose work was the epitome of

modern design, with its dreams of social progress, its inspirational successes and its obvious failures.

*[14. A systematic approach]*

Sometimes, Le Corbusier showed a ruthless and systematic approach to urban design, sweeping aside established urban principles, notably in his proposals to rebuild Paris and Moscow.

*[15. Detail from the Nolli plan of Rome]*

As a complete contrast, this is an extract from the famous plan of Rome in 1748, by Giambattista Nolli. The public spaces [both internal and external] and streets appear as coherent white forms against the dark background of the buildings.

Our new approach to Urban Design recognises the enduring merits of this traditional focus on public streets and squares, defined and enclosed by the fronts of buildings and punctuated by landmarks.

*[16. St George's Plateau in Liverpool 150 years ago]*

Here is one of Liverpool's finest 19th century spaces – St George's Plateau. This is Liverpool's 'Acropolis'. There is a link with Berlin – St George's Hall [on the left] was a competition winning design by the 28-year old architect, Harvey Lonsdale Elmes, and he was directly influenced by Schinkel's work in Berlin. Note the informality of the movement of people and vehicles.

*[17. St George's Hall, 50 years ago]*

Here is St George's Hall, a century later, in 1965. By then, the building had become redundant – it had been spared from demolition, but no-one was really sure what to do with it. Nevertheless, work began on cleaning away the soot. Since then, the traffic has become worse, the street has been widened and the buildings on each edge of this picture have been demolished. There is discussion on how the damaging effects of modern traffic can be reversed.

*[18. St George's Hall with Liverpool Football Club supporters]*

This is St Georges Hall, after it had been cleaned and had re-emerged as a popular landmark and tourist attraction, here providing a backdrop to supporters of Liverpool Football Club watching a victory parade.

*[19. St George's Hall: interior views of the main hall]*

The interior has since been fully restored as a magnificent public space. Since the turn of the millennium, Liverpool has been looking forward; it was 'European Capital of Culture 2008' and St George's Hall is one of the jewels of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

*[20. Restored. Re-cycled industrial buildings – former matchworks, now offices]*

Elsewhere in Liverpool, more enlightened recent policies have included the re-cycling of former industrial buildings, like this former matchworks, now offices. After years of catastrophic decline, the population has stabilised and shown a small increase – the first for a century – it is now just under 500,000, at the heart of a compact ‘City Region’ of about 2,000,000 people.

*[21. The site of Liverpool ONE]*

But it is the re-engagement with a much wider retail and cultural catchment area that has driven the most ambitious of the city’s recent initiatives, the ‘Liverpool One’ project. These sketch plans show the site of Liverpool ONE, at the very place where the city was founded 800 years ago. The plans suggest the variations in density that correspond to this area’s decline and then rehabilitation.

*[22. The Liverpool ONE project – some organisational principles]*

A £1.200 million mixed-use development by Grosvenor, in partnership with the City Council – land assembly by the City, then a 250-year lease on completion. A City Centre Development Team, including architect, planner and other experts. A thorough and continuous process of consultation with the people of Liverpool. A prescriptive Urban Design master plan, by BDP [Building Design Partnership]. 25 different projects with their design teams, appointed in mini-competitions. Weekly iterative Design Review sessions, involving Grosvenor and City Council. 4 years of design, then 4 years of construction. Opened in Capital of Culture year.

*[23. Individual design teams]*

This photo shows one of many design teams, on site during the briefing process.

*[24. Design Review]*

Architect Rafael Viñoly explains his proposal for one of the projects, with the then leader of the City Council, Mike Storey, to his right. Selected City Councillors would attend some of the weekly Design Review meetings, especially when strategic or recruitment issues were being discussed. One Councillor, Beatrice Fraenkel, acted as the City Council’s ‘Design Champion’.

*[25. Stakeholders’ Conference]*

Large Stakeholders’ Meetings, open to all, were held every three months. At first, the project was named the ‘Paradise Street Development Area’, then later simply the ‘Paradise Project’. This was finally changed to ‘Liverpool ONE’ on the advice of branding consultants from London, who convinced us that the ‘Liverpool’ name was vitally important to people from outside the city, whereas ‘Paradise Street’ [the historic name] was naturally popular amongst Liverpool people [who make up only 10% of the catchment area].

*[26. Aerial view of Liverpool ONE]*

An aerial view of the Liverpool ONE project, knitted in to the network of streets. The boundary cannot be seen – that is deliberate, unlike in most other shopping districts or malls. Liverpool – the whole city, with all that it offers – is the brand.

Liverpool had insisted from the start on a different approach – all streets were to be open 24-hours and would be open to the wind and the rain. There would be no internal shopping malls. Because of resistance by conservative retailers to mixed uses, these other activities were placed in another layer of circulation, ‘folded over’ above the shops, with a variety of vertical connections.

*[27. A plan showing who designed what]*

Magazines published lists of the different architects responsible. In my opinion, the only way to achieve genuine ‘organic’ variety within an urban area is by fragmenting responsibilities in this way.

*[28. Urban Design sketch 1]*

This working sketch shows options for fenestration patterns and proportions in a replacement building. Such matters are important elements of urban design.

*[29. Urban Design sketch 2]*

This second Urban Design sketch shows the creation of ‘slot’ views of some landmarks, including the Liver Building and the Anglican Cathedral.

*[30. The Anglican Cathedral tower]*

The Anglican Cathedral tower, 1904-74, with earlier housing, from 1800-1830.

*[31. Brindley Place, Birmingham]*

Brindley Place in Birmingham was an earlier mixed-use city centre development, in which I was involved in the 1990s. The developer, Argent, felt the need for a focal point ‘landmark’ on one of the plots. This new ‘Venetian Gothic’ tower and block was designed by architect Dmitri Porphyrios, in 1998.

*[32. Sketch by Leon Krier]*

‘Anti-City’ sketch by Leon Krier

*[33. Caption – ‘An Urban Design Equation’ – Liverpool]*

This brings us to the new urban design agenda.

*[34. Caption – ‘ $UQ = D \times P \times M \times Q$ ’]*

This is my own simple equation, with values [say, marks out of ten] being given to each of the four variables, which are then multiplied together to give a rough measure of urban quality. It serves to maintain the critical focus on four prime issues, which need to be kept in balance with each other.

UQ: Urban quality

D: Density [excluding public open space]

P: Permeability [the ability to move freely in all directions]

M: Mixed-use and Diversity

Q: Design and Management Quality

*[35. Proposals for a 'Fourth Grace']*

These prominent waterfront buildings are known as the 'three graces'. Proposals for a 'Fourth Grace' – a proposal by architect Will Alsop, to a competition brief to integrate and connect the various components of the central waterfront.

It included the development of a 'Museum of Liverpool' with housing, offices, commercial and public facilities, and a direct link into the underground railway network. The scheme failed to win approval at the final stage, even though it had been a central part of Liverpool's successful European Capital of Culture bid.

*[36. Later proposals for the site – a museum by architects 3XN from Denmark]*

Imaginative, but ambitious, schemes can still contribute to the developing story and help to inform the brief for what is finally built.

A second competition for this site, focussing on the museum alone, was won by architects 3XN of Denmark.

*[37. As built – the museum alongside three separate commercial buildings]*

The museum is now a free-standing building, with the other functions put into separate blocks of housing, commercial facilities, galleries and offices.

*[38. Waterfront stadium proposal for Everton in partnership with City Council]*

Along the waterfront, at Kings Dock, this was a proposal for a 55,000 seat multi-purpose stadium, to be shared between Everton Football Club and the City Council. However, Everton walked away from the deal at the last minute. As in the previous example, this apparent failure led immediately to something else.

*[39. Arena, Conference Centre and Exhibition Halls]*

The City Council deciding to build an arena and conference centre on the site.

*[40. Sketch plan showing arena and conference centre]*

Here is a simple sketch plan of the arena, conference centre, hotel and multi-storey car park. The lack of a wide mix of uses means that, when there is no big event taking place, the large empty spaces can feel bleak and alienating.

*[41. Sketch showing arena with added mixed uses]*

This proposal shows the potential to place housing and mixed-use activities around the edge of the arena [as has already been done around the car park]. There is also the potential to route the popular public riverside walk [pale blue] through the atrium between the arena and conference centre [shown in yellow].

*[42. Caption – ‘Critical Reconstruction’ – Berlin]*

The notion of ‘Critical Reconstruction’ is associated with the influential work of Hans Stimmann in Berlin. I prepared two competition entries for Berlin in the 1990s, and was impressed by the disciplined approach to the city’s regeneration.

Hans Stimmann was, of course, one of the judges in the Kaliningrad competitions.

*[43. Postcards – Cut-out ‘New Museum’ and GDR ‘Palace of the Republic’]*

I bought these postcards in Berlin two months ago. One shows the classical ‘New Museum’, built in 1855 to plans by Friedrich August Stuler, a student of Schinkel.

The other postcard shows the Palace of the Republic, constructed from 1973 to 1976, with bronze-mirrored windows a defining architectural feature. It was built on the site of the former Berliner Stadtschloss (Berlin City Palace), which was damaged during World War II, and finally demolished by the government authorities in 1950, as they regarded it as a symbol of Prussian imperialism.

After German reunification, there was a prolonged debate about the future of the building. Despite the fact that the majority of East Germans opposed demolition, and protests by people who felt the building was an integral part of Berlin’s culture and modern history, the building was demolished in 2007.

*[44. Postcards – Cut-out ‘Bode Museum’ and ‘Jewish Museum’]*

Two more postcards. The Bode Museum is another example of Berlin classicism. The doctrine of ‘Critical Reconstruction’ advocated reconstruction of Berlin streets and blocks in accordance with these historic heights and proportions.

This approach was criticised by many architects, including Daniel Libeskind. Nevertheless, Libeskind [in his inspirational Jewish Museum, the subject of the second card] and other advocates of strident modernism, such as Frank Gehry, still managed to produce fine buildings within the strict overall constraints.

*[45. Model of the reconstruction of the Schloss, exhibited in the ‘Humboldt Box’]*

The decision to demolish the Palace of the Republic was followed by a decision to rebuild the Schloss. Here is a model of the reconstruction. The small modern building in front of it is the 'Humboldt Box', which houses exhibitions [including this model] and explanations concerning the Schloss and its proposed functions.

*[46. Re-constructing the Schloss, with the 'Humboldt Box' to the left]*

Here is the reconstruction in progress. The Humboldt Box can be seen on the left. When I asked if the 'Box' would be retained, as it is a popular modern building in its own right, I was told that a legal process is in place to 'ensure' that it will be demolished, before the Schloss can be opened to the public.

*[47. Impression of the Schloss reconstruction, with a 'modern' Eastern façade]*

Here is an impression of the completed building. A modernist façade replaces the façade of the Palace of the Republic, overlooking Marx-Engels Platz.

*[48. Impression of the Schloss courtyard, with modern and classical facades]*

And here is an impression of the public courtyard, with one side completed in a neo-classical style and the other in a simple modern style. This deliberate contrast is characteristic of much of the detail of the reconstruction.

*[49. Competition entry in 1993, Master Plan and sketches for the Spreeinsel]*

An International Competition, looking at the future of the Spreeinsel in 1993, attracted several hundred entries. My proposal included a remodelling of the Palace of the Republic with a new concave façade to Marx-Engels Platz, whilst I favoured rebuilding the West Wing of the Schloss, including the dome.

I advocated placing a new oval conference centre between these two elements. A comparison can be made with the functional programme for the Kings Castle in Kaliningrad, and the potential to make a link between pre-war and post-war history – West Wing of the Castle, a new public hall and the House of the Soviets.

*[50. Competition entry in 1992, Spreebogen].*

This was another major competition in Berlin, for the Spreebogen, which had attracted 700 entries. The brief was to provide a complex of buildings for the German Parliament which was relocating back to Berlin.

I proposed that the parliament buildings should be spread through a new mixed-use area of streets and squares, rather than a single large parliamentary campus [as has been built]. The historic Reichstag building itself is at the bottom right.

*[51. Reichstag building, with 'modern' dome]*

The Reichstag building itself has been restored by architect Norman Foster, who decided to put a new public space within a modern dome-like structure, rather than restore the historic dome.

*[52. Interior of new Reichstag dome]*

Inside this modern dome, public ramps lead up to an observation deck so people can look down on the parliament in session – the architect created a special free show for the German citizens, something more than the brief asked for.

*[53. Caption – Tourism and the Economy – Kaliningrad]*

Tourism and the Kaliningrad Economy

*[54. Top 5 Kaliningrad attractions: Number 5: Natural beauty – Curonian Spit]*

I've listed what I, personally, see as the top 5 attractions for a foreign visitor – of course, local people, and those from across Russia, may have different priorities.

So – in ascending order – my number 5 is natural beauty and the Curonian Spit.

*[55. Top 5 Kaliningrad attractions: Number 5: Natural beauty – Fortress Ring]*

There is also potential natural beauty in the green ring around the city centre.

*[56. Kaliningrad 2014 competition entry: Transport routes and Fortress Ring]*

In the first competition, I proposed that this green ring be developed as a linear park, including a circular route for cyclists and pedestrians – just as important as other aspects of transport within the city. You can see my three towers at the centre, the small triangle, square and circle next to Moscovsky Prospekt.

*[57. Kaliningrad 2015 competition entry: Transport routes and Fortress Ring]*

I retained the green ring for the second competition, but accepted the decision to remove heavy traffic from Moscovsky Prospekt. And there are just two towers.

*[58. Kaliningrad 2015 competition entry: Green Fortress Ring]*

Here is the ring on its own, to emphasise its physical and psychological potential.

*[59. Top 5 Kaliningrad attractions: Number 4: East Prussian history]*

My Number 4 in Kaliningrad attractions is the history of Königsberg and East Prussia. This is exemplified by the historic view of the Schloss, the King's Castle.

*[60. Sketches of partial restoration of Schloss]*

My sketch of this corner envisages a faithful restoration of the West Wing, but a new sculpture replacing Kaiser Wilhelm II and a new triangular landmark tower. This modern tower would be a stronger landmark, appropriate to the expanded city with its greater speed of movement, and a counter-point to the House of the Soviets – as well as providing valuable functional accommodation.

*[61. Top 5 Kaliningrad attractions: Number 3: A window into Russia]*

My Number 3 is Kaliningrad as a Central European window into modern Russia, which remains an intriguing mystery to many foreigners.

*[62. Top 5 Kaliningrad attractions: Number 2: Philosophers]*

My Number 2 is the Philosophers – Kant and others – and, of course, Euler's bridges.

So what is my personal Number 1? It's not football, not the Museum of World Oceans, not amber and not Kaliningrad Zoo, although they are all interesting....

*[63. Top 5 Kaliningrad attractions: Number 1: Soviet history]*

My personal Number 1 is Soviet history – the buildings, artefacts and ideas. The House of Soviets should, in my opinion, be completed to its original design, complete with Soviet iconography, but accommodating a mix of accessible public functions, including a hotel.

*[64. Hammer and sickle and baroque sculptures in a workshop, Tretyakov Gallery]*

With that in mind, my last slide is a photo I took in a workshop space in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. The Hammer and Sickle sits in front of a baroque Sculpture, awaiting the exhibition curators....

*[65. Thank you – большое спасибо]*

Thank You