

Three PhD Studentships in 'Adaptable Suburbs'

Adaptable Suburbs: a study of the relationship between networks of human activity and the changing form of urban and suburban centres through time

Following the recent award of a 3.5 year grant from the [EPSRC](#), the Adaptable Suburbs project is advertising three PhD studentships, as follows:

1. Space syntax analysis of 'emergent centralities';
2. Historical spatial ethnography
3. Commercial ethnography

UCL Department / Division: Bartlett School of Graduate Studies, Department of Anthropology

Duration of Studentship: 3.5 Years

Stipend: Full stipend of £15,590 per annum, rising annually, subject to nationality and residence status

Vacancy Information: The UCL 'Adaptable Suburbs' project invites applications for three 3.5 year fully-funded EPSRC studentships at University College London commencing 1st October 2010 (or soon after). The scholarships include full bursary and tuition fees. The students will be joining a team of researchers from the disciplines of built environment, anthropology and geomatic engineering. The studentships will be hosted by UCL Bartlett School of Graduate Studies (studentship 1) or UCL Anthropology (studentships 2 and 3) and will be supervised by the project team: Dr Laura Vaughan, Dr Victor Buchli and Dr Sam Griffiths.

The 'Adaptable Suburbs' project is focused on understanding how small centres of socio-economic activity emerge through time, using Greater London as its geographical focus. It stems from a previous project which looked at twenty of London's outer suburbs, see www.sstc.ucl.ac.uk. The research will provide evidence for policy decision making and for planning and design to improve the future sustainability of the aging built environment. It will also develop innovative methods for the integration of socio-economic data with information about the layout of urban areas. The project is funded jointly by the EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) and the ESRC (Economic and Social Sciences Research Council).

Eligibility: For nationality and residence requirements, please see <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/PostgraduateTraining/StudentEligibility.htm>. Candidates must have obtained a 2.1 or equivalent and a Master's degree in the relevant subject – see person specification for details. For 2010-11 EPSRC has stipulated that the minimum stipend will be £15,590, in addition to the tuition fee, which will be paid to the university from the project funds.

Applications should include a **CV, academic transcripts and a two-page statement explaining how your research experience and academic knowledge relate to the project in general and to the studentship to which you are applying in particular**. Applications should state clearly which studentship is being applied for and should be sent to: Dr Laura Vaughan <l.vaughan@ucl.ac.uk>, copying to Dr Victor Buchli <v.buchli@ucl.ac.uk> and Dr Sam Griffiths <sam.griffiths@ucl.ac.uk>. Please include a contact telephone number and an email address where you can be easily reached. Academic references will be taken up for all short-listed candidates.

We plan to interview shortlisted candidates on 27th September 2010.

NO AGENCIES PLEASE

Studentship 1

Location: Bartlett School of Graduate Studies

Title: Space syntax analysis of the emergence of ‘pervasive centrality’ in the Greater London area

Supervisors: Laura Vaughan and Sam Griffiths

Description: Space syntax computes street network accessibility from street to neighbourhood and city-wide scales. The methodology allows the physical form of the built environment to be analysed as a network of spatial relationships such that the social logic of that environment can become the object of research. As both a theory of society’s spatial organisation and a methodology that enables the properties of a spatial network (such as a street network) to be quantified, it lends itself to the investigation of the role of the spatial variable in social outcomes. The successful candidate for this PhD studentship, based at the Bartlett School of Graduate Studies, will be expected to employ space syntax methodologies to explore the phenomenon of small-scale centres of socio-economic activity (‘pervasive centrality’) emerging and declining in the Greater London area over time. Making extensive use of GIS technology, the student will work on a series of maps of Greater London from the early nineteenth century to the modern day, upon which the space syntax analysis will be based. The intention is to identify the ‘spatial signature’ of centres as they emerge at different scales over time through a syntactic analysis of road-networks and building development. A range of contemporary datasets will complement this historical research, drawing on disaggregated census data (to the street level) and an extensive range of data pertaining to socio-economic activity. The technology to link the spatial (syntactic) to the social data will be developed elsewhere on the project but the studentship requires participation in developing this technology appropriately. The datasets developed by this studentship will, at times, need to be shared with the other students on the research project, it is important therefore that the award holder helps to advance collaborative research between the different areas of the project.

Person Specification: applicants should have a first or upper second class degree in an architectural or urban design field and a Master’s degree in Advanced Architectural Studies or other space syntax centred studies.

Closing Date: 10 September 2010 at 5pm

Person Specification – Studentship 1

The following list sets out the skills and competencies required for this studentship.

Qualifications, experience and aptitude

Essential

- MSc. in Advanced Architectural Studies, or demonstrable knowledge of space syntax theory and methods
- First degree in architecture or a built-environment related discipline
- Competency in conducting quantitative research using geographic and socio-economic data
- Competency in the use of statistical software to analyse quantitative data
- Willingness to learn and/or improve skills in GIS to a sufficient level of competency for this research project
- Ability to write concise and accessible reports for a non-specialist audience
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Proficient in use of MS Office software and the production of online content for websites, blogs etc.

Desirable

- Experience of research in an academic environment
- Experienced in GIS technology
- Experience of communicating to diverse audiences
- Interest in the application of space syntax research to social and historical research
- Broad familiarity with anthropology, history and geography as research fields
- Experience in using databases and SQL.

Personal attributes

- A strong team player with good interpersonal skills able to build and sustain effective working relationships both within the *Adaptable Suburbs* team and externally, with project partners and associates.
- A self-motivated researcher willing to develop their technical and analytical skills and contribute to the overall aims of the research project in innovative ways.
- A high level of attention to detail in working methods
- Strong organisational skills

Studentships 2 and 3

A common concern of the *Adaptable Suburbs* project team, reflected in their previous work, is the question of “how the physical city both embodies and shapes the human city”. The two project studentships based at the Department of Anthropology will work together to produce a rich ‘spatial ethnography’ of selected case study areas in outer-London. The ethnographies aim to create a narrative of social practices in peripheral suburban settlements with a particular focus on commercial activities in order to reveal the socio-economic structure of suburban life and its particular texture, for example by examining the extent to which the built environment is implicated in the organization of social networks and the relationship of home and work. Studentship 2 has an historical emphasis, reflecting the concern of the research project in understanding how emergent socio-spatial processes relate to the adaptability of settlement forms over time. Studentship 3 comprises a commercial ethnography of contemporary suburban space. Both studies are designed to provide a complementary, qualitative perspective on the multi-scale space syntax analysis done elsewhere on the project. Arising from this work the research project seeks to develop methods for using ethnographic findings to interrogate the primarily quantitative methods from the fields of urban design and geography. Reflecting the multi-disciplinary nature of this research project between anthropology, history and the built environment, it is intended that both candidates will have Anthropology as their home department. They will be co-supervised by Dr Victor Buchli from Anthropology, with Dr Sam Griffiths (in the case of Studentship 2) or Dr Laura Vaughan (in the case of Studentship 3) from the Bartlett School of Graduate Studies, Faculty of the Built Environment.

Details - Studentship 2

Title: An historical spatial-ethnography and ‘auto-ethnography’ of suburban commercial practices

Supervisors: Victor Buchli and Sam Griffiths

Description: this studentship takes an historical approach to ethnography to assemble a detailed historical account of socio-economic practices in suburban space over time. It brings anthropological methods to explore historical questions of the relationship between the transformation of the built environment, commercial development, movement patterns and social networks in suburban space. Approaching the suburban built environment from a material culture perspective, the research will provide a detailed account of the historical transformation of the suburban streetscape and representative building types. Liaising with Studentship 1 to gain insights into the relationship between local and large scale spatial structures, this project must directly address the theoretical and methodological questions that arise when the micro-scale ethnographic approach engages with the multiple scale perspective of historical road systems analysis. Research for this studentship will draw on a wide range of cartographic sources, architects’ and surveyors’ plans, GOAD fire insurance plans and commercial directories as core empirical datasets. The ethnographic basis of the study will be provided by the systematic examination of local history sources (in both text, pictures and representative objects) and the assembly of an oral history archive in which the ‘remembered’ history of the suburb is recorded. It will also include work on an ‘auto-ethnographical’ project, in which local inhabitants will be asked to report and tag their local activities and networks on the project website. It is intended that the findings of the PhD research will help inform the research project’s overall aim of understanding processes of socio-economic adaptation in smaller settlements. The award holder will be expected to collaborate with their colleagues on the research project to facilitate this objective.

Person Specification: applicants should have a first or upper second class degree and a Master’s degree (an MRes is highly desired). One or more of these should have a significant anthropological component as well as another social science subject relevant to the research.

Closing Date: 10 September 2010 at 5pm

Person Specification – Studentship 2

Qualifications, experience and aptitude

Essential

- First or upper second class degree *and* a Master's degree (an MRes is highly desired). One or more of the degrees should have a significant anthropological component and another social science subject relevant to the research (such as Archaeology, History, Geography, Sociology, Economics, Development Studies, Political Science, Urban Studies or another discipline where a strong case can be made for relevance).
- An interest in material culture studies with a particular focus on the built environment.
- Demonstrated experience in ethnographic field work.
- Ability to write concise and accessible reports for a non-specialist audience
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Proficient in use of MS Office software and the production of online content for websites, blogs etc.

Desirable

- Experience of research in an academic environment
- Familiarity with GIS technology
- Interest in the application of space syntax research to social and historical research
- Familiarity with space syntax, history and geography as research fields
- Experience of participatory research

Personal attributes

- A strong team player with good interpersonal skills able to build and sustain effective working relationships both within the *Adaptable Suburbs* team and externally, with project partners and associates
- A self-motivated researcher willing to develop their technical and analytical skills and contribute to the overall aims of the research project in innovative ways.
- Strong organisational skills
- A high level of attention to detail in working methods

Details - Studentship 3

Title: A commercial street ethnography of suburban centres

Supervisors: Victor Buchli and Laura Vaughan

Description: this studentship will conduct research to provide comprehensive commercial ethnography of contemporary suburban space in Greater London. Key to this research project is devising a methodology in which the 'spatial culture' of suburban life can be revealed from the point of view of the people who live and work there. A transect taken through non-residential streets in several areas selected as case studies will provide a basis for meeting local people and starting the ethnographic study. The local commercial community forms the primary focus for the study, particularly with respect to their multiple roles in creating social relationships as employers, traders and residents and their daily movement patterns, which comprise an important aspect of the daily rhythm of suburban life. The ethnography will make use of cognitive maps to capture informants' reading of their spatial environments. Research for this studentship is intended to be collaborative with the historical spatial-ethnography that runs in parallel.

Person Specification: applicants should have a first or upper second class degree and a Master's degree (an MRes is highly desired) in anthropology, with demonstrated experience in ethnographic field work and an interest in material culture studies with a particular focus on the built environment.

Closing Date: 10 September 2010 at 5pm

Person Specification – Studentship 3

Qualifications, experience and aptitude

Essential

- First or upper second class degree and a Master's degree (an MRes is highly desired) in anthropology
- An interest in material culture studies with a particular focus on the built environment.
- Demonstrated experience in ethnographic field work.
- Ability to write concise and accessible reports for a non-specialist audience
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Proficient in use of MS Office software and the production of online content for websites, blogs etc.

Desirable

- Experience of research in an academic environment
- Interest in the application of space syntax research to social and historical research
- Interest in GIS and web mapping – as some of the analysis in the project will use qualitative GIS

Personal attributes

- A strong team player with good interpersonal skills able to build and sustain effective working relationships both within the *Adaptable Suburbs* team and externally, with project partners and associates
- A self-motivated researcher willing to develop their technical and analytical skills and contribute to the overall aims of the research project in innovative ways.
- Strong organisational skills
- A high level of attention to detail in working methods