Course 'Urbanism and Architecture in Context'

Course code 7xwx0

Examples of exam questions.

The examples underneath are about the books and the paper.
An additional 16 Questions about the learning material in the slides+notes have been shown as examples in the lectures.
In the exam there will be at least as many questions about the slides+notes as about the books.
The questions will be mixed, so they will not be in the sequence of the lectures or the chapters of the books.

Correct answers+ references are on the last page of this document.

1.

According to the book Urban Forms what is the main precondition for designing an urban tissue?

A. Thorough knowledge of architecture as well as urban design; Certainty about the availability of land or plots; Well established contacts with the stakeholders.
B. A main structure that allows for enough space for feasible forms of building blocks as well as sufficient access to the plots.
C. Define a ground set of rules regarding use and morphology which constitute a stable basis to develop tissues.
D. A site that is part of a fringe belt, providing enough freedom in design choices an allowing a plan that is large enough to constitute a tissue.

2.

According to the book 'Urban forms' What is the unique position of the Amsterdam urban plans of the early 20th century and the building blocks associated with them?

A. The plans cover a large area of the city whereas before only small neighbourhoods were designed. As such they exemplify the transition to large scale planning as advocated by the modern movement.
B. They combined rationalisation with the possibilities of the traditional urban block. They can regarded to be the last manifestation of the traditional building block before the modernistic approach to urban design became dominant.
C. The careful architectural elaboration that takes into account aesthetic considerations as well as the preferences of the average inhabitant. This is combined with special attention for the corners of the blocks that contribute to a recognizable urban environment.
D. The building blocks in these plans are no higher then four stories plus inclined roof. This was deliberately planned to ensure ample social control of public space, Besides that it ensures enough light in the streets, something that was no design consideration before.

3.

How was Ernst May influenced by English garden city ideas?

A. He finished his study as an architect in München where there is a large English garden which he visited frequently.
B. May had worked in Unwins office and garden city ideas were proliferated in Germany in the 1910's and 1920's.
C. Mays family visited England regularly. In this way he became acquainted with the typical British ideas about the pastoral architecture and landscape.
D. In his designs May closely followed the British handbooks that were publisiced at the beginning of the 20th century.

4.

What presumption underlies the analysis of the transmission of so called 'Architectural Models' in the book Urban Design?

A. The availability of radio communication or in later years other forms of wireless media.
B. The existence of schools of architecture and an international network of professionals.
C. The transmission of these models is always related to a given economic structure.
D. The transmission of models is dependent on a number of exemplary plans.

5.

At the end of the chapter about Le Corbusier in the book 'Urban Forms' reference is made to the British brutalist architects who tried to improve on Le Corbusiers ideas by making 'streets in the air' in stead of dark internal corridors, even linking 'streets in the air' of several buildings. These projects notoriously failed. Without going into details about that issue and bypassing the fact that one of those failures recently has been turned into a posh apartment building, what is the fundamental problem of 'streets in the air'?

A. Organizing the access of houses form 'streets in the air' leads to a considerable larger amount of public space with all costs and management problems associated with it.
B. It is in fact a gallery. It is part of a building designed as a whole and is only accessible from one side. This differs fundamentally from a real street with spontaneous variation and flexibility of use.
C. The necessity to provide separate zones for cars and pedestrians leads to very wide and therefore expensive constructions. Crossings and junctions are especially difficult to make.
D. The fundamental problem is that access to these 'streets' which must be either by elevator or very long ramps. Besides that it is impossible to enliven the streets with green or the usual street furniture.

6.

The Siedlungen (settlements) designed by Ernst May for Frankfurt are sometimes referred to as 'modernistic garden cities', There is some truth in this, however there is an important difference with the original idea, what is the difference?

A. May was a protagonist of modernistic architecture, Howard was a strong advocate of traditional building forms.
B. May saw green and gardens as a precondition of a healthy environment. For Howard gardens were a means of providing workers with the means to produce their own food.
C. May wanted to preserve the urban unity, not make new separate settlements as Howard had suggested.
D. May treated each garden suburb as a separate design assignment. In Howards ideas a garden city is designed as a whole.

7.

The Dutch 1901 housing law - which set an international landmark - had a considerable influence on the way urban design and planning developed in the Netherlands. What were the main new planning tools provided by this law?

A. Development plans (structure plans); expropriation of land for social housing; making projects by housing associations possible.
B. Empowering local governments to establish a planning office; making the cadastre data public; award towns the same authority in spatial planning as cities.
C. A coherent and extensive hierarchy of plans ranging from structure plans to sector plans; local governments establishing housing associations.
D. Maps and drawings based on accurate surveys; censuses providing demographic data; expropriate land for planning purpouses.

8.

What is a substantial difference between the traditional Paris building block and the Haussmannian blocks?

A. Traditional blocks comprise a diversity of building types that and adaptable by incremental changes. Haussmannian blocks have a planned multifunctionallity and are adapted by means of well designed outbuildings and inner gardens.
B. Traditional blocks are characterized by vernacular architecture and no regulations as regards building height or density. Hausmannian blocks have a prescribed architecture consisting of standard elements and a standard division of indoor and outdoor space.
C. Traditional blocks are very multifunctional and adaptable by incremental changes because of the amount of internal space. Haussmannian blocks have a reduced multifunctionallity and are less adaptable because of the lack of internal space.
D. Traditional blocks are characterized by traditional architecture and the presence of courtyards and industry in the center. Hausmannian blocks have architecture that was modern for the time and gardens in the center.

9.

The word 'rationalism', which appears in the book 'Urban Forms', has been used to label modernist architecture of the 1920's and 1930's. This could create confusion as the word can be interpreted in multiple ways. For instance at the department of Architecture in Eindhoven University there is a group 'rational architecture', but its approach nor its type of architecture resemble the buildings of the hard core modernists.

What do the authors of the book mean by 'rational' if they refer to modernist architecture?

A. Architecture as an abstract construction in which feelings and perception play no role.
B. Architecture that uses straight lines and symmetry as aesthetical means, independent of style.
C. Architecture that makes the form of the building dependent on research and marketing.
D. Architecture that integrates structural engineering, building construction and building physics into the design.

10.

What other name does Gehl use for social activities?

A. Parochial activities.
B. Collective activities.
C. Resultant activities.
D. Superficial activities.

11.

What hierarchy can be distinguished in forms of contacts?

A. From low intensity tot high intensity.
B. From social to individual.
C. From ordinary daily to special exceptional.
D. From formal to informal.

12.

Gehl points at two radical changes in the basic ideas of city planning, leading to what could be called three phases in urban design. What where the physical consequences for public space of the third phase in the development of urban space?

A. The appearance of large squares, avenues, green structures and traffic roads.
B. The appearance of more zoned en specialized urban space.
C. The disappearance of natural landscape and its substitution with artificial environments.
D. The disappearance of streets and squares as livable urban spaces.

13.

In the paragraph 'A Pleasant Place in Every Respect' of 'Life between buildings' Gehl gives a concise overview of the factors that contribute to public space that functions well because it is perceived as pleasant. What is the main factor he mentions ('main' because he devotes most of the paragraph to it)?

A. Usability because it forms the basis for people being present.
B. Activities in organized form or spontaneous.
C. Protection form danger, physical harm and the weather.
D. The materialization and detailing of public space.

14.

According to Gehl, why is the zone between building and public space, especially if it provides opportunities for people to sit or do activities, so important for life between buildings?

A. It compensates for a lack of space inside cramped houses and buildings.
B. A few long lasting activities contribute as much to meetings between people as many short activities.
C. It leads to more social control an thus to a safer public space.
D. It avoids public space being appropriated by inhabitants.

(Book 'Life between Buildings, Chapter 4 page 186)

15.

The word 'genius loci' can have several meanings such as the authenticity of a place, the essence of a place or the believe that there is a god that lives in a certain place. What is the pragmatic definition that is used in this course and that reflects the most common interpretation among professionals in the field of architecture and urban design?

A. The uniqueness of a place: those qualities that no other place possesses.
B. The peculiarity of the place: those characteristics that make it uninterchangeable.
C. Local specificness as expressed in the typology of buildings and spaces.
D. The character of a place as expressed in the way inhabitants interact with the urban environment.

16.

In collecting the necessary basic material for an urban research or an urban design, what is an important basic consideration?

A. What the scale of the maps is; The scope of the numeric data and the value of other data.
B. If the information is up to date and what its source and original purpose are.
C. If the information is available in electronic form and if it is public.
D. If the information is available in time and if it is official information.

17.

Statistical data play a very important role in modern society. Using statistical data, especially those data that are associated with the use of space, has a long tradition in urban planning and design. Many authorities provide data on their internet sites and there are also all types of numeric data, such as the way people assess their neighbourhood, crime rates etc. available from other sources. These are easy to collect and could be used in urban design and planning projects. However there is a catch often overlooked by beginners in the profession, which one?

A. To be useful data should be processed, either by using statistics or by visualizing them.
B. Only in relation with other material it is possible to form an opinion on the value of data.
C. Most data that are freely available are out of date or their value is doubtful.
D. Freely available data are not professional, they are aimed at the general public.

_____END OF QUESTIONS _____

Correct answers

Question Nr.	*Answer*	*Reference in study material*
1	C	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 8 page 162
2	B	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 7 page 156
3	B	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 7 page 151
4	C	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 7 page 136
5	B	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 5, last part
6	C	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 4
7	A	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 3 page 60
8	C	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 1 page 26
9	A	Book 'Urban Forms', Chapter 7 page 156
10	C	Book 'Life between Buildings, Chapter 1 page 14
11	A	Book 'Life between Buildings, Chapter 1 page 17
12	D	Book 'Life between Buildings, Chapter 1 page 47 and further
13	C	Book 'Life between Buildings, Chapter 4 page 173 - 180
14	B	Book 'Life between Buildings, Chapter 4 page 186
15	B	Paper 'Analysis, some general considerations', page 9
16	B	Paper 'Analysis, some general considerations', page 17
17	B	Paper 'Analysis, some general considerations', page 19