

Editor's Note

As *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* reaches its twenty-fifth anniversary, changes are in the works. Recently, I assumed a more ceremonial role as President of IASTE, with Mark Gillem taking over many of the administrative responsibilities of the association as its current Director. It is equally my intention to involve a new generation of scholars in running this journal. Although IASTE has a very active Executive Board, which has often served as an editorial committee for *TDSR* (with a further large group of IASTE members serving as advisors and peer reviewers), it is time to establish a formal editorial board and possibly appoint associate and book review editors. It is my hope this body and these individuals will be named before, or at, the next IASTE conference.

To move on to the business at hand, this issue begins with Robert Saliba's insightful examination of conservation strategies in the central district of Beirut, Lebanon. His study of recent design efforts to preserve, re-create, and reflect on the city's colonial heritage argues that such practices cannot be understood apart from the postcolonial/post-civil war contingencies of the city, nation and region. In particular, he describes how aspects of the city's early colonial modernity have now been fully historicized and decolonized in the service of profit and postmodern (or late-modern) image making, with mixed empirical results. Stephanie M. Hom next deconstructs the cultural effects of the Disney Company's themed attractions — in particular, how the It's a Small World ride presents a deceptively idealized global heterogeneity that spatializes the forces of contemporary imperialism. Although the article emphasizes how practices of "simulated imperialism" fabricate meanings out of essentialized hyperreal signifiers, it also suggests the possibility for resistance in the destabilized space between empire and hyperreality. Our third article, by Pamela Karimi, interrogates the relationship between material culture and architectural practice, using case studies drawn largely from Iran. Her examples of how material culture informs social practices of spatial transformation range from interior design, to building structure, to the "immaterial" effect of air pollution and dust in the built environment of the Middle East. Last, Karimi engages with contemporary technology and its creation of virtual worlds as a further area of interaction between social forces and architecture.

Moving from the Middle East back to the U.S., the theme of modernity is central to Jennifer Donnelly's analysis of the attempt to alleviate poverty through a program of slum clearance and public housing in Depression-era Cleveland. Donnelly argues that the idealism of the Modern Movement placed an undue burden on the residents of new public housing estates, at the very time the program institutionalized racial bias and locked the poor into a declining urban center. Finally, this issue includes a field report from Helena Webster, who looks at one specific architectural practice on Scotland's Isle of Skye. In the context of a re-awakened Scottish nationalism, Dualchas Architects has been able to revive interest in the vernacular Gaelic longhouse as a contemporary design referent by drawing critical ties between identity and the imaginary.

I would like to end this note by encouraging all our readers to join us next December for the 2014 IASTE Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, sponsored by the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Our biennial event will this time explore the theme "Whose Tradition?" encompassing ideas of authorship and agency. By now, members will have received the Call for Abstracts poster, but we also include it at the end of this issue. We look forward to seeing you in Kuala Lumpur in 2014.

Nezar AlSayyad
