



EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY NETWORK

PALAIS DES ACADEMIES

EAHN

SECOND INTERNATIONAL MEETING

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM 31 MAY - 3 JUNE 2012

COMMUNICATING ARCHITECTURE:

WORKING WITH DOCUMENTS IN CONSTRUCTION

SESSION PROPOSAL

While architectural drawings have always been at the centre of attention of architectural historians, the role of textual documents produced in the construction of buildings and their interrelationships with drawings remains under-investigated. This may well be because drawings and accompanying construction documents are often preserved separately in the archives and because architectural history has tended to focus on design while questions of the building process are dealt with by construction history.

The development of drawings, specifications, building contracts, bills of quantities and other construction documents depends on local building practices and law and their histories differ across Europe, but these documents can be considered to share some common characteristics. They describe and define the building prior to its realization. They are, to varying extents, instructions to workmen but also serve as legal documents. They are not the sole preserve of the architectural profession, but are the product of complex co-operation, conflict and negotiation between a wide range of actors and institutions. As such they may formally act as limitations but also have a constitutive role in the production of architecture.

We think that historical research of legal and regulatory documents in architecture has implications beyond procurement and construction history. In this session we would like to bring together a range of researchers to open up a discussion about the different meanings and values these documents hold and how they might be interpreted, critiqued, or used in architectural history and theory. We are particularly interested in what kinds of histories are made available through their exploration and how these documents might offer openings for questions in architectural history and theory that might otherwise remain under-explored. These questions might include:

How has architecture been encoded in the building process, either in individual documents or through their interrelationships?; *How* might we read these documents not merely for themselves or for their technical contents, but as historical accounts of specific processes and relationships involved in the making of architecture?; *What* are the interrelationships between text and drawing, and is it possible to discern a developing notation system between them that is typical of architecture and building?; *What* functions have these texts and drawings served during the building process, is there any continuity in their development, and can we speak of a specific form of architectural discourse that might emerge from this kind of study?

SESSION CHAIRS:

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The complete Call for Papers and Discussion Positions can be downloaded at the meeting website: www.eahn2012.org — or at EAHN website: www.eahn.org.

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IMPORTANT DATES

September 30, 2011:
submission of abstract to session chairs

October 31, 2011:
notification of acceptance

March 15, 2012:
submission of full papers

May 31- June 3, 2012:
2nd EAHN international conference in
Brussels