

Journal of Urbanism special issue call for papers

Unprecedented

Stéphane Sadoux, PhD, Grenoble School of Architecture

Anne Coste, PhD, Grenoble School of Architecture

Planners, urban designers and other professionals involved in place-making have for a number of years been practicing in the face of a wide range of environmental, social and economic issues, many of which are regularly referred to as “unprecedented” – climate change, the housing crisis, urban sprawl to name but a few.

This special issue of the *Journal of Urbanism* seeks to address the use of precedents in contemporary design theory, practice and education in a context of supposed unprecedented change and challenges.

It is well-known that the use of precedents in the design process is widespread and that precedents are a key component of designers’ knowledge. In a letter written in 1986 for the Harvard Architectural Review, Colin Rowe famously claimed: “I can never begin to understand how it is possible to attack or to question the use of precedent. Indeed, I am not able to comprehend how anyone can begin to act (let alone to think) without resorting to precedent”.

Planners and urban designers alike often look for inspiration in prior ideas, projects, plans and practices, not least because these precedents are believed to have been successful in the past. Precedents are sometimes copied, but they are most often used as a starting point: as part of the problem-solving process, designers are expected to enrich precedents, thereby generating new ones, to which subsequent designs will most likely refer to. However, when a new situation arises, the range of available precedents is narrower. The extent to which a given precedent may contribute to addressing current unprecedented issues may therefore be questioned. This is not to say that precedents should no longer be used, rather it implies that the way in which they are used may be subject to greater scrutiny.

Possible paper topics include:

- Contributions to advancing precedent theory in urban planning and design, particularly in the face of unprecedented contexts and uncertainty
- Case studies of precedent use in which uncertainty has been fed into the design process
- Analysis methods for precedents, in particular those using diagrams
- The reinterpretation and transformation of precedents to cater for unprecedented situations
- Challenges to the use of precedents in design theory, practice and education
- Transdisciplinary approaches to the use of precedents
- The use of precedents in recent new urbanism projects
- The use of precedents in the design studio

The journal welcomes papers from multiple geographies, perspectives and scales, with various methodological approaches. It encourages papers that investigate the use of precedents in an era of

unprecedented change from different angles, including theory, application, practice implications and education.

Guide for authors

To submit your paper, please click on the following link: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rjou>

On the “Details and comments” page, check “yes” under “Is the manuscript a candidate for a special issue?”

In the box, enter “Unprecedented” as the special issue title.

The review process typically takes 4-6 months. We insist on high quality peer review and strive for a minimum of three reviews for each paper.

Submissions due: Friday 26th January 2018

For further information, please contact:

sadoux.s@grenoble.archi.fr

coste.a@grenoble.archi.fr