

2010 Departmental Seminar

Tuesday, 30 March 2010

3.00 pm

Mechanical Engineering Seminar Room – E547

Tranquillity in the City

Professor Greg Watts

This seminar describes the potential of tranquil spaces to be used as restorative environments. The literature points to the importance of quiet areas, green spaces and natural surroundings in relieving stress and improving feelings of well being. Such tranquil environments are potentially well suited to the needs of the citizen because the stress of everyday city life can often involve intense periods of 'directed attention' over many hours, leading to stress and mental fatigue. At the University of Bradford in the UK research has provided a unique engineering tool for predicting the perceived tranquillity of open spaces in towns, cities and countryside. The tool has recently been used to carry out a tranquillity audit of the major parks in one city area. The major noise source in each case results from traffic on roads close to the boundaries. The results provide useful insights into the levels of tranquillity that can be achieved in such urban conditions and the effects of mitigating factors are discussed. Suggestions are made for improving the levels of tranquillity.

Professor Watts has a Chair in Transportation Noise at the School of Engineering at the University of Bradford. He has previously been employed in the Noise and Vibration Group at the Transport Research Laboratory in the UK where he has been involved in studies of quiet areas, low noise road surfaces, tyre noise, in situ noise barrier testing and developing test methods for vehicle noise.