

## **Vertical Cities Asia Symposium – Abstracts of Faculty Members**

Title: On Permanence in Urban Design

Author: Henco Bekkering, Professor of Urban Design, Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology

### **Abstract:**

To retain their "longue durée", cities need sound technical substance and networks. Just as important is that their physical structure contains meaning. The paper concentrates on the last, as the means to enable people to connect, mentally, to their environment and thus help sustain permanence - in a social and a physical sense.

Any urban design is always part of a context, a larger whole. Much more stays the same than changes. This is simply a question of scale: the scale of the context. As by definition realizable programs look alike at any moment in time and place, a process strengthened by the forces of globalization, the necessary differences to give a place its individual character can only be derived from the specific local characteristics and forces of the context. By referring to the context, the designer distills meaning from the existing situation. The result in any city is layered. The legibility of the historical layers results in historical continuity.

Differences in identities are needed in networks. If all nodes would have the same qualities, there would be no reason for the links between them.

The design attitude resulting from these standpoints is illustrated by some of the author's urban designs.