

The conference focused on the heritage of garden cities, particularly the Geddes master plan for Tel Aviv and the Kaufman Garden Suburbs in Jerusalem. Both plans connect human activity with nature in urban environments, and offer vital strategies for addressing climate change challenges in modern cities.

Throughout lectures, panels and workshops, participants have examined conceptual, design and infrastructural approaches to create high-quality green spaces in Israeli urban landscapes.

Multi-sectorial partnership

The international multi-sectorial partnership between Bezalel Academy, Liebling Haus, Tel Aviv Municipality, the Ministry of Construction and Housing in Israel and the UN-Habitat's Urban Thinkers Campus and Heritopolis initiative was made possible thanks to honest intentions of the institutions to broaden their knowledge sharing and mutual learning across sectors .

The connection, is an inspiring proof of the growing understanding that harnessing the quintuple innovation helix framework is the key to achieve a liveable worthy and inclusive space and to achieve the UN's SDGs in general and Goal #11 in particular.

As part of the conference, engaging the network of collaborations created, a new UN-Habitat Urban Lab was initiated by Bezalel Academy. The Academy, as member of UN-Habitat UNI, sees this important opportunity in leading an Urban Lab to deepen the research on the urban environment and the strong collaboration already ongoing.

Day I

Wed, 30/10/24, 9:30-18:00, Liebling Haus, Tel Aviv-Yafo

Relating to the centenary of the Geddes master plan for Tel Aviv, the participants in the first day of the conference were invited to participate in forming a vision and criteria for developing a sustainable public space, particularly open spaces and city gardens for livable neighborhoods.

The first day focused on giving knowledge on the conservation of landscape heritage, especially the heritage of the garden city in Tel Aviv-Yaffo. At its center, a dialogue between the various municipality units and stakeholders - planners, architects, gardeners and the city residents – has



*Prof. Elissa Rosenberg
@Liebling House*

broaden the tools for developing, maintaining and preserving the Geddes gardens (and other public spaces) according to the principles of the original plan, the challenges of the modern city, and the UN-Habitat's My Neighborhood principles for developing a sustainable urban space.

Agenda

- 09: 30-10: 00 Gathering and Registration
- 10: 00-10: 20 Opening Session and Greetings, Urban Thinkers Campus
- 10: 20-10: 40 My Neighborhood Principles, Arch. Adva Matar
- 10: 40-11: 10 The Garden and the Residential Block in the Garden City Legacy, Arch. Catherine Rochant, Shira Levy Benyamini
- 11: 10-11: 40 Transition and Departure to the Gardens
- 11: 40-13: 15 What's Happening in the Garden? Practical Workshop in the Gardens
- 13: 15-14: 30 Lunch Break and Return to Liebling Haus
- 14: 30-16: 00 Challenges and Opportunities in Garden Renewal Panel – Case Studies from Israel and Abroad, Arch. Prof. Tal Alon Mozes, Arch. Robin Winogrand, Dr. Ada Vittorina Segre, Arch. Marcel Troeger, Landscape Arch. Prof. Elissa Rosenberg
- 16: 00-16: 30 Coffee Break
- 16: 30-17: 30 How Do We Do It in the Garden? Round Tables to Formulate Principles and Tools for Garden Development, Maintenance, and Preservation
- 17: 30-18: 00 Closing Session, Dr. Yoel Siegel

Lectures Recordings:

Part 1 - [link](#)

Part 2 (after lunch break) - [link](#)



@Liebling Haus

Interim Conclusions and Tel-Aviv Declaration

The discussions of the first day of the UTC conference in Tel Aviv emphasize the need for a people-centered approach to urban planning, where community building is both the process and outcome. Green infrastructure must be recognized as foundational, equivalent to traditional infrastructure like roads and housing, and integral to fostering a tangible sense of place and engagement within communities.

A shift in language and policy is critical: moving from conservation to the active enhancement of biodiversity and nature, and from passive public participation to meaningful community engagement. Additionally, the concept of “landscape literacy” was highlighted, where naming and storytelling embed identity and purpose into public spaces, creating stronger connections between people and their environment.



*Gardens Workshop
@Liebling Haus*

These principles, alongside commitments to prioritize people, share knowledge globally, and implement enhancement-focused strategies for sustainable management, will form the foundation of the Tel Aviv Declaration. This document, formulated by a committee of experts from within the participating bodies of the conference, will serve as a guiding framework and contribute to key initiatives by UN Habitat, UNESCO, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As with other documents and communiqués concluding UN Habitat related events, the importance of the Tel Aviv Declaration is seen as both a reaffirmation and further development of the principles that guided Tel Aviv's Garden City model that are in keeping with My Neighbourhood design principles, the Historic Urban Landscape recommendations, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The Tel Aviv Declaration is an expression of our commitment to adopt these principles in our urban design and planning.

Tel Aviv Declaration – [link](#)

Day II

Wed, 13.11.24, 9:30-18:00, Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem

Jerusalem's garden neighborhoods, which were planned by Kauffmann and endorsed by the British regime, left a mark on the fabric of the city outside the walls. The second day asked to explore the concept of landscape heritage values in a 21st-century metropolis through the lens of My Neighborhood principles. This exploration involved studying Geddes's contribution to the planning of Jerusalem and in broader contexts, both local and international. Additionally, a policy makers workshop on the Garden City attributes of Nature-Culture was held as part of the Metropolitan Heritage Forum, and the opening event of Bezalel's National Urban Lab, with the support of the Ministry of Housing, ended the day's sessions.

Agenda

09:30-10:00 Gathering and Registration

10:00-10:20 Opening Session – Greetings, Urban Thinkers Campus, Arch. Adva Matar

10:20-11:00 Densification and Localisation – Keynote Lecture, Prof. Arch. Mike Turner

11:00-13:00 Densification and Localisation in a Biospheric Urban Space – Learning from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem – Panel, Prof. Elissa Rosenberg, Ms. Neomy Golan, Dr. Yoel Siegel, Arch. Sharon Golan, Prof. Els Verbakel, Arch. Danielah Smits-Possek [moderator]

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-17:00 The Garden City Legacy in the Metropolis: Values and Interfaces – International Workshop of the Metropolitan Heritage Forum, Launch of the Bezalel Urban Lab by UN-Habitat

17:00-18:00 Closing Session – Conclusions and Insights for the International Field, Dr. Yoel Siegel

18:30 The Urban Parliament UTC – Lecture at the MA Colloquium in Urban Design, Bezalel, Mr. Paulius Kulikauskas, UN-Habitat

Lectures Recordings:

Part 1 - opening, UTC in Israel, keynote lecture - [link](#)

Part 2 - experts panel – [link](#)

Part 3 - The Garden City Legacy in the Metropolis, Tel Aviv Declaration, the Urban Parliament - [link](#)

Second day and conference conclusions

On the second day of the *Livable Neighborhoods in the 21st Century Garden City* conference, held at Bezael Academy, the Metropolitan Heritage Forum Workshop took place on November 13, 2024. The workshop brought together students, practitioners, and academics to examine how nature-culture relationships are addressed in urban planning across the Tel Aviv metropolitan area. Participants engaged in a structured exercise using approximately 30 attributes of the Garden City model, predefined in an ongoing PhD research collaboration between TU Delft, Bezael Academy, and the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality. Each attribute represents a different aspect of the interaction between the built and natural environments and was used to evaluate various local policy documents, including conservation plans, strategic urban plans, and master plans from different municipalities in the metropolis.

The workshop was designed as a hands-on, collaborative process. Working in teams, participants were assigned a specific policy document and asked to assess the presence of the identified nature-culture attributes within it. Using a shared digital platform, they categorized each attribute into one of three options—whether it should be skipped, kept, or added to the document. After familiarizing themselves with the document's context through background materials, teams identified which attributes were acknowledged in the plan and critically assessed their relevance to the locality's specific urban and environmental conditions. The final stage involved a group discussion, where each team presented its findings, highlighting the quality of nature-culture relations in their assigned locality, the effectiveness of existing policies, and potential improvements.

The workshop results revealed that many of the predefined attributes appeared across multiple localities, reinforcing their metropolitan-wide relevance. However, the ways in which these attributes were integrated into policy documents—and whether they were included in conservation approaches—varied significantly between cities. For example, while urban parks were considered essential and favored in several localities, in Ramat Gan, they were perceived as excessive, with a greater need for smaller, neighbourhood-scale green spaces instead.



*Metropolitan Heritage Forum
Workshop - @Bezael*

A key takeaway from the discussion was the significant disconnect between policy documents and on-the-ground realities – many planning frameworks were perceived as outdated, failing to align with the actual attributes evident in the urban fabric, as well as with local needs and pressing urban conditions. Additionally, there was broad agreement among participants that heritage should be more systematically embedded in strategic policymaking, particularly in shaping a heritage-based culture-nature approach to urban development. These insights contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of heritage in metropolitan planning and will inform further international research, including PhD work at TU Delft in collaboration with Bezalel Academy, as well as reports for the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality and UN-Habitat.



Panel and audience



Experts Panel: (1 to r) Arch. Daniela Smits-Possek [moderator] Prof. Elissa Rosenberg, Ms. Naomi Tsur, Dr. Yoel Siegel, Arch. Sharon Golan, Prof. Els Verbakel - @ Bezalel

Appendix I

Tel Aviv Declaration

Celebrating the Centennial of the Geddesian Plan for Tel Aviv with *My Neighbourhood* principles

Gathering on the UN-Habitat Urban Thinkers Campus and in celebration of the Centennial of the Geddes Tel Aviv plan, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design and the Liebling Haus ‘White City Center’, together with the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing convened the Campus to discuss the historic garden city plans and their relevance for liveability in the 21st century.

Recalling Sustainable Development Goal 11 and specifically Target 11.7 to provide access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces

Recognising the principles of *My Neighbourhood* within the framework of the New Urban Agenda

also **recalling** the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the *Historic Urban Landscape*

and in **recognition** of the centennial of the Geddes garden-city plan for Tel Aviv and the vital role of his evolutionary planning we convene to affirm our commitment to the sustainable conservation of urban landscape heritage.

This year presents a key opportunity to reimagine urban areas—boulevards, paths, gardens, parks, and vegetation—by establishing policy principles that reflect the ideals of garden cities, inspired by Geddes, as standards for landscape heritage conservation in modern urban contexts, recognizing both cultural and natural values and the contemporary needs of our city and integrating these values with sustainable practises.

The Importance of Public Space as a cornerstone of liveable cities

Public spaces serve as cornerstones for creating liveable, compact cities. As land becomes increasingly scarce, pressure mounts to reduce allocations for public spaces. This trend often leads to privatization under the guise of enhancing the public realm, resulting in spaces that may become exclusive and inaccessible, perpetuating gentrification and inequality.

When designed thoughtfully, public spaces can foster social, cultural, and economic interactions, encouraging walking, cycling, and public transport. They are essential gathering places, where diverse communities come together irrespective of their social standing. Given the complexities of urban densification, we advocate for innovative planning mechanisms that prioritise public interest over market forces. We must resist the creation of “exclusive spaces” that perpetuate gentrification and disenfranchisement.

Recognizing the Value of Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is vital for sustainable urban development and shared well-being.

The planning principles that guided Tel Aviv's Garden City model are increasingly relevant as cities densify. In alignment with the UN-Habitat *My Neighbourhood* design principles and the UNESCO Recommendation on the *Historic Urban Landscape*, we urge planners, decision-makers, developers, and engaged communities to adopt the following principles for sustainable urban development in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA):

1. **Access & Connectivity:** Public spaces should be open and welcoming to all, centrally located, easily accessible within a 10-minute walk, and integrated into networks of streets and open spaces.
2. **Integrating the Built Environment and Public Space:** Urban public spaces should be well defined, framed by streets and buildings, creating a vibrant focal point for neighbourhoods and synergistically connected to metropolitan areas.
3. **Social Interaction and Community Engagement:** Public spaces are the heart of communities, fostering identity, pride, and social connections. They must be attractive, safe, and diverse in offerings for gathering, relaxation, and recreation.
4. **Promoting Cultural Diversity:** Ensure diverse cultural identities and create public spaces that enhance cultural expressions.
5. **Ensuring Biodiversity and Enhancing Ecosystem Services:** Public spaces must support ecosystem services vital for community well-being, improving air and water quality, enhancing resilience, and promoting environmental stewardship.

To realize these principles, we advocate for the following:

- Incorporate green elements in all planning evaluations and adopt the *Historic Urban Landscape* approach.
- Implement the *My Neighbourhood* principles to emphasize green infrastructure.
- Establish an international database to track urban changes via remote sensing within the framework of the proposed UN-Habitat National Urban Lab at Bezael.
- Integrate these guidelines in all relevant Impact Assessments by preparing recommendations that integrates accumulated knowledge at all planning levels.

These qualities are essential for enhancing everyday well-being and must be enforced to effective design governance.

As we reflect on the legacies of Garden Cities and their 21st century reinterpretations we recognise the enduring influence of visionaries like Patrick Geddes whose work on urban evolution and open spaces profoundly shaped cities in India, Scotland and Palestine and left an indelible mark on the Garden City Movement.

We call on all stakeholders to prioritise green considerations in all planning evaluations adopt the UN my neighbourhood principles and establish an international database to monitor changing urban landscapes.

Together, let us honour the legacy of garden cities and their relevance today by creating a sustainable urban future that respects our heritage while addressing contemporary challenges., recognizing the vital role of public spaces in enhancing community well-being, biodiversity and resilience against climate extremes.

Tel Aviv, 30 October and Jerusalem, 13 November 2024

Appendix II

Event invitation

A professional conference on the sustainable development of public spaces and the preservation of natural and built heritage

Livable Neighborhoods in the Metropolis

The garden city in the
21st century



סביבות מגורים עירוניות במטרופולין: עיר הגנים במאה ה-21

30.10.2024 · Wed · 9:30–18:30
Liebling Haus, Tel Aviv-Yafo

13.11.2024 · Wed · 18:30–9:30
Bezalel Academy of Art
and Design, Jerusalem

The conference is a collaboration of Liebling Haus, the Architecture School of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design and the Ministry of Construction and Housing, and takes place as part of UN Habitat's Urban Thinkers Campus events, to promote sustainable environmental and social settlement.

