

Dr Austin Barber

Senior Lecturer in Urban Development and Planning

[School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences \(/schools/gees/index.aspx\)](/schools/gees/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone +44 (0)121 414 2984 (tel:+44 121 414 2984)

Email a.r.g.barber@bham.ac.uk (mailto:a.r.g.barber@bham.ac.uk)

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK



About

Austin is an experienced teacher, researcher and writer who brings a passion for cities and urban life to all aspects of his professional work. He has played a leading role in development of planning education at the University of Birmingham and has established a research profile in the planning and regeneration of city centres and inner cities in Britain, Europe and North America.

Biography

Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, Austin's initial professional involvement in urban affairs was through his first career as a newspaper and freelance journalist. Over 7 years in positions in London, Birmingham and Plymouth he covered city development, economy and planning issues from a day to day perspective.

In the mid-1990s he shifted to the academic field, undertaking a PhD at the University of Birmingham and joining the **Centre for Urban and Regional Studies** (<http://www.curs.bham.ac.uk/>) as a lecturer in 2000. In subsequent years he has played a central role in planning teaching at CURS, underpinned by his extensive applied research for a range of funders from the public, private and charitable sectors.

Teaching

Austin is a committed and passionate teacher who has played a leading role in the development of planning education at the University of Birmingham. He is a founder and director of the MSc Urban and Regional Planning programme, fully accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute. He is heavily involved in the programme's management, recruitment and professional links. In addition he is co-ordinator of several modules at the postgraduate and undergraduate levels:

- Urban Property Development
- Integrated Planning Project
- Contemporary Issues in Urban Development and Planning
- Society, Space and Policy/ Economy, Space and Policy

Austin is especially keen on stimulating students' enthusiasm for urban place-making through projects, site visits, and fieldwork around the city of Birmingham, working in conjunction with practitioners from the public and private sectors.

Postgraduate supervision

Austin presently supervises two PhDs:

Jun-Hyeong Bak: *Land Use Planning for sustainable Development in South Korea.*

Daniel Smith: *Planning For Sustainable Urban Regeneration in European Cities.*

Funded by an EPSRC Doctoral Training Grant bid secured in connection with the Urban Futures project

Austin welcomes expressions of interest in undertaking doctoral research linked to his main areas of research.

Research

Austin's research focuses on the planning and regeneration of city centre and inner city districts in major cities. Particular strands of interest include:

- the rise of "city living" and new housing development in central urban areas
- socio-economic sustainability in the development of new inner city neighbourhoods
- innovative planning and development approaches in urban districts
- comparative study of these themes across European and North American cities

Current and Recent Research Projects

2010 - 2012

Resilience Through Innovation: Critical Local Transport and Utility Infrastructure

EPSRC

Co-investigator with colleagues from Engineering and Geography on research exploring the potential role of local transport and bespoke infrastructure innovations in creating more resilient urban communities.

2008 -2012

Urban Futures: From Sustainable Urban Futures to Implementation

EPSRC

Co-investigator leading CURS involvement in a four-university consortium and multi-disciplinary team comprising engineering, geography, urban design, architecture and environmental science researchers. Austin oversees work investigating socio-economic dimensions of planning for sustainable urban regeneration, incorporating comparative research in European cities.

2006-2010

Accommodating Creative Knowledge: The Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions in the Enlarged Union (ACRE)

European Commission FP6 programme

Co-investigator on the CURS team working with 12 partner universities in cities throughout the EU. Austin's research explored place-related dimensions of creative industries growth in major European cities, the role of "soft" location factors in policy-making, and the implications for the planning of city districts.

2003-2008

An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Urban Redevelopment: Birmingham Eastside as a National Demonstrator

EPSRC

Co-investigator leading CURS involvement in a multi-disciplinary team across two universities. Austin led work into planning processes and barriers to sustainability in Birmingham's Eastside regeneration area.

2006-2008

Leadership and Place-shaping for the Knowledge-Based Economy

Academy for Sustainable Communities

Co-investigator role focusing on the leadership challenges confronting planners and policy-makers in inner city districts, including comparative study.

2006

Small Business in Eastside

Groundwork Birmingham

Lead investigator on research investigating the effect of Eastside regeneration on its small business base and lessons for future planning approaches in the area.

2003

Live-Work Development in the West Midlands

Midlands Architecture and the Designed Environment (MADE)

Lead investigator on study into the experience and prospects for live-work development in a range of urban setting across the West Midlands region.

2002-2008

City Centre Living and its Planning Implications in Birmingham

Birmingham City Pride and Birmingham City Centre Living Forum (comprising Birmingham City Council, private developers, housing associations and resident groups).

Lead investigator on projects examining the dynamics and policy implications of the city centre housing market in Birmingham and other cities.

2002-2003

Cities and Neighbourhoods in Transition: Contemporary Urban Development in Birmingham and Lyon.

British Academy

Co-investigator on comparative research exploring major brownfield regeneration projects and creation of new inner city districts in the two cities.

2002

Brindleyplace and the Regeneration of Birmingham's Convention Quarter

Argent Group plc

Study into the regeneration impacts of the Brindleyplace development and its effects on the wider redevelopment of the surrounding districts of central Birmingham

2001

The ICC Birmingham: A Catalyst for Urban Regeneration?

NEC Group

Study into the regeneration impacts of the International Convention Centre, Birmingham. Launched at a major conference at the ICC to mark the ten year anniversary of its opening.

Other activities

Since 2006 Austin has served as a director of the Moseley Community Development Trust in South Birmingham. In this role he is responsible for planning and regeneration activities and acts as chair of the Moseley Regeneration Group, which comprises numerous local stakeholder organisations. The group is working with Birmingham City Council to develop a new official plan for the neighbourhood, the first time a community organisation has led such a process in the city.

Publications

Barber, A. and Pareja-Eastaway, M. (2010) "Leadership Challenges in the Inner City: Planning for Sustainable Regeneration in Birmingham and Barcelona", *Policy Studies*, 31, 4, pp 393-412.

Crossa, V., Barber, A. and Pareja-Eastaway, M. (2010) "Re-inventing the City: Barcelona, Birmingham and Dublin" in Musterd, S. and Murie, A, eds., *Making Competitive Cities*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp 67-92.

Lombardi, R., Porter, L., Barber, A. and Rogers, C. (2010) "Conceptualising Sustainability in UK Urban Regeneration: A Discursive Formation", *Urban Studies*, published OnlineFirst 29/6/2010.

Weingaertner, C. and Barber, A. (2010) "Urban Regeneration and Sustainability: The Role for Established Small Businesses", *European Planning Studies*, 18, 10, pp 653-1674.

Barber, A. and Hall, S. (2008) "Birmingham: Whose Urban Renaissance? Regeneration as a Response to Economic Restructuring", *Policy Studies*, 29, 3, pp 281-292.

Barber, A. and Blackaby, B. (2008) *City Living in Birmingham: A Second Independent Review*, Birmingham: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies

Barber, A. (2007) "Planning for Sustainable Re-urbanisation: Policy Challenges and City Centre Housing in Birmingham", *Town Planning Review*, 78, 2, pp 179-202.

Porter, L. and Barber, A. (2007) "Planning the Cultural Quarter in Birmingham's Eastside", *European Planning Studies*, 15, 10 pp 1327-1348.

Weingaertner, C. and Barber, A. (2007) *The Effects of Regeneration on Small Businesses in Eastside*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

Porter, L. and Barber, A. (2006) "Closing Time: The Meaning of Place and State-Led Gentrification in Birmingham's Eastside", *City*, 10, 2, pp 217-236.

Barber, A., R. Groves and A. Murie (2006) "Changing Housing Markets, Race and Community: Policy and Practice in Birmingham", in Beider, H. (ed.) *Neighbourhood Renewal & Housing Markets: Community Engagement in the US & UK*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp115-137.

Barber, A. (2004) *Live/Work Housing in the West Midlands*, Birmingham: Midlands Architecture and the Built Environment.

Barber, A. and Blackaby, B. (2003) *Filling the Gap: The Need for Middle Market Housing in Birmingham City Centre*, Birmingham: Birmingham City Council.

Barber, A. (2002) *Brindleyplace and the Regeneration of Birmingham's Convention Quarter*, Birmingham: Argent Group plc

Blackaby, B., Murie, A. and Barber, A. (2002) *City Living in Birmingham: An Independent Review*, Birmingham: Birmingham City Pride.

Barber, A. (2001) *The ICC, Birmingham: A Catalyst for Urban Renaissance?* Birmingham: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies

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