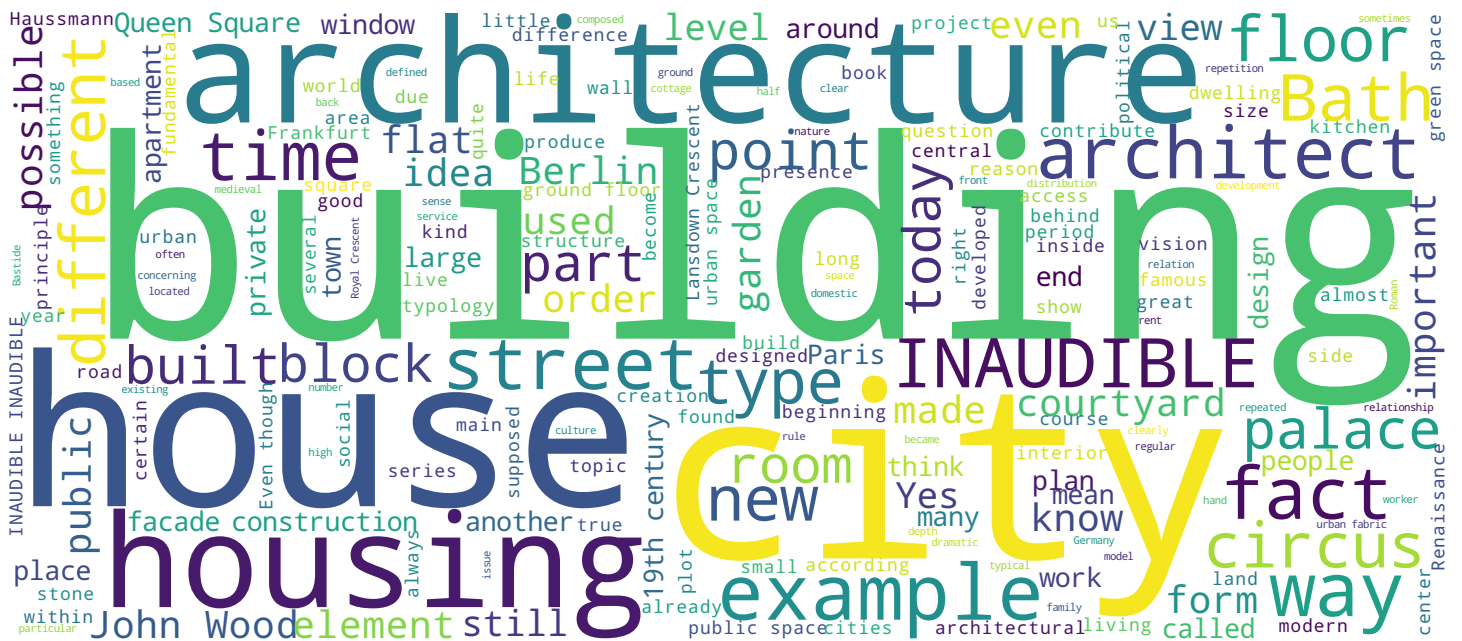


a Housing and Cities course video



EPFL





The City of Bath has a great capacity for typological adaptation. Here, the greatest architectural homogeneity allows for the greatest urban variety. It's the strength and the unequaled potential of this type of urban construction. It's the building and not the block or the road that defines the urban forms. In my eyes the city of Bath is really fantastic, because it is a quite particular case of developing a city which is actually very green like we used to say today. And it is due to the fact that there is no urban blocks like we used to know in almost all the european cities. The other topic is the fact that the city is very rich and very dramatic from the point of urban space and it is from the point of architecture very homogenous. I think that this topic is very important today because, architecture today is always trying to get singularity. This is the example of how the celebration of repetition and simplicity could produce extraordinary urban sets and urban spaces. The idea is very simple; at the very beginning. John Wood who was the very initiator of this city, from an architectural point of view produced in the centre of the city, in Queen Square, a building which is developed like a palace.

Notes

Summary



Obsession John Wood and the Creation of Georgian Bath

The Building of Bath Museum



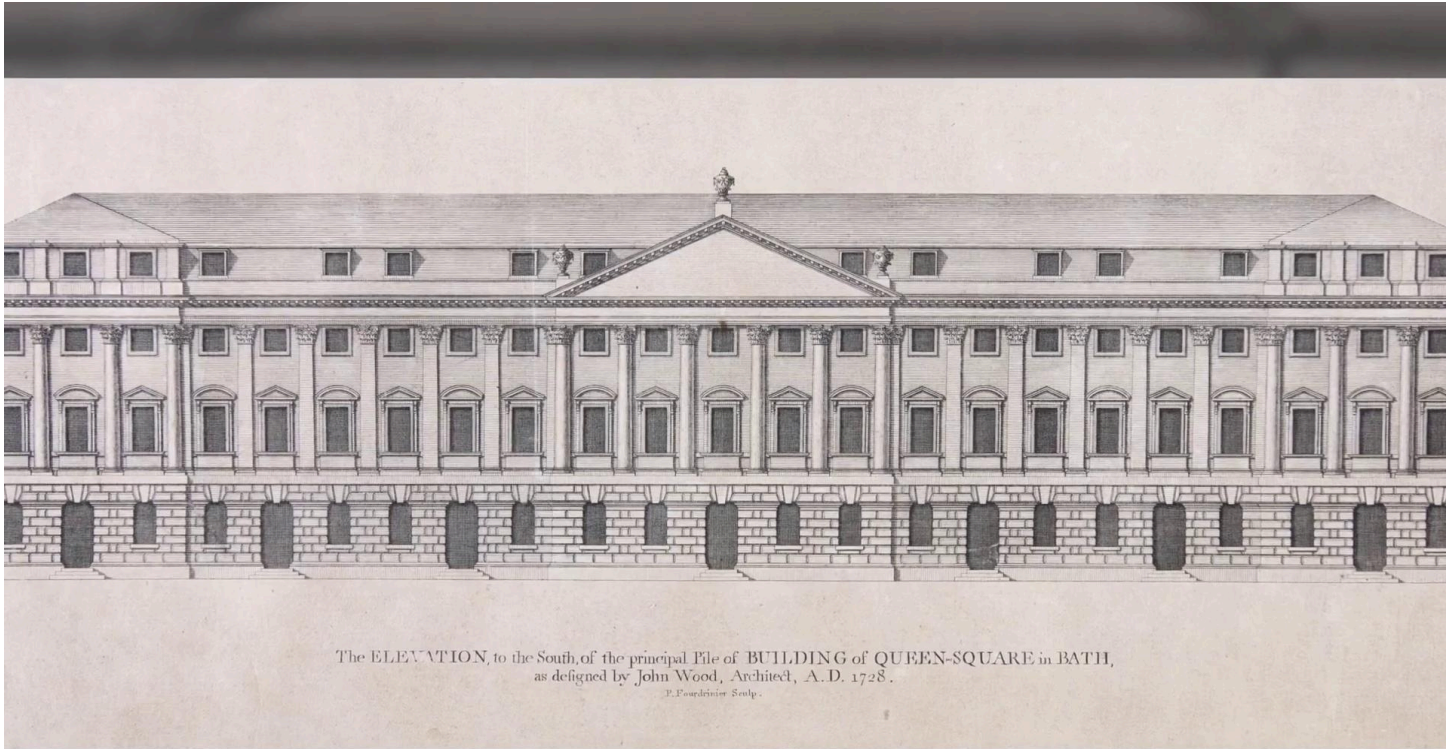
In reality it is the addition of many single houses. And this is the idea which is at the very base of Georgian architecture to repeat to single family houses, in order to get to the extraordinary presence of a huge urban piece, a huge urban fragment. That's the reason why this city shows that it is possible to produce spectacular spaces without producing very individual and the singular architecture.

Notes

Summary



2m 33s



In the book John Wood and the creation of Georgian Bath, published by the building of Bath museum, The authors describe Queen Square, the first major project successfully completed by John Wood in Bath. Built between 1728 and 1736, they say: "A Queen Square would create not just a building, but an entire space within the city influenced by what you'd seen being projected to the great squares in London and by Colin Campbell's designs for Wanstead house. Wood embarked on building his own Palladian Palace, a row of terrorist townhouses united by a single facade." The authors then go on to explain: "Speculative thing meant that while would lease the land from Robert Gay for one hundred thirty seven pounds per annum.

Notes

Summary

3m 28s





QUEEN SQUARE, BATH.

Each individual house or plot was then subleased to other individual builders or Masons. They would be responsible for the form of the house built behind the facade as long as the exterior elevation conform to Wood's design. Ultimately this meant less work and expenses for Wood.

Notes

Summary

4m 15s





Alors il place le terrain, il se trouve dans une condition géographique de très forte pentes ou chutes, grossomodo, et une relative platitude de l'Est à l'Ouest qui fait que, qu'il serait fermé comme il voulait à l'avance: un carré. Ce carré aurait été vicié par une pente sur les coté ouest et sur la pente gauche qui fait que, si vous regardez les resultats, la Queen Square finalement c'est un carré simplement dans un côté, l'autre il est la continuité d'une route qui descend et la route qui descend présente des maisons qui sont en escalettes, parce qu'elles sont en appui sur le terrain. Chose 1: le but, qu'est ce qu'il faut faire? On fait des lignes en horizontal là ou on peut, on creuse le terrain pour avoir la maison anglaise en contre pente et en pente normale, parce que Queen Square a aussi cette espèce d'adéquation de la typologie à la topologie sur ce depart. La troisième barre qui devait fermer les carrés virtuel ne le fait pas; il fait deux blocs et il ouvre, et en faisant ça, d'un coup le paysage rentre. The design of the city takes advantage of the presence of both public and private outdoor spaces such as the gardens that are paired with the houses.

Notes

Summary

4m 35s





The town is made of three to four floor houses for the public facade facing the street and another on the garden side. The gardens usually have the same width as the built plots unfolding in depth. Thus the greenery of the private gardens also contributes to making up the so-called "Green City". Specific rules were defined for the elements giving onto the public space. While there was a greater deregulation concerning the most private side of the houses. In 1754 construction began on the circus, a paradigmatic circular building designed by John Wood the elder. Here, we can already see how this type of reflection was applied behind a strictly controlled homogeneity on the street side. Each house in the circus has a somewhat similar, but different back facade and varying layouts. Even though this can seem contradictory at first sight, this approach can be very pragmatic, realistic and enriching. Here in the circus, the bow windows on the garden side become the defining element of each house extending the domestic space into the gardens. In the book John Wood and the Creation of Georgian Bath, The authors describe the building of the circus by saying: "Three months after the foundation stone was laid, John Wood died, leaving his son to complete his work."

Notes

Summary



6m 07s



There are many ways to interpret the circus and many things that can be read in its facade. Often mistakenly believed to be based on the Colosseum in Rome, the circus is actually a creation of all John Wood's obsessions, the influence of ancient Rome circles that drew its subtle presence of female sonic symbolism and the sheer force of over 600 columns all fused together to bombard the visitor with a mass of visual stimulants. Imagine the circus as would intended it to be without a treasons centre paved open space unlike Queen Square or the royal forum. The circus was envisaged as a structure where the only elements of nature to be found was the sky above. It was a dramatic and theatrical space where the architect took centre stage.

Notes

Summary

7m 36s





The Royal Crescent in Bath has no access and no central opening leading to a church will shatter, nothing blocks the view from it. There is no gilding whether a representative of secular or ecclesiastical authority to which it stands in a servile or dependent relationship. There is only a broad lawn which slopes gently towards the town and the countryside beyond lies at the front. A completely open view has been attained through the concentration of many individual lodgings. 30 small standardised houses fused into a single unit to produce the Crescent and his monumental impressiveness derives from the fact that these standardized units are added together without any separations. Not until all time to encounter similar undertakings." Historian Siegfried Gedeon eloquently described another of Bath's most emblematic housing ensembles: the Royal Crescent designed by John Wood the younger between 1767 and 1774. Here we can clearly see how private spaces can contribute to public richness. Together with the circus, the real Crescent is the most famous and the representative building in Bath. It is a curved the building with 114 unique columns posed on very simple base and it represents a typical architecture issue from the so-called Neil Palladianism.

Notes

Summary



8m 26s



This curved geometry is supposed to be in favor of the natural slope of the ground. But it is also in order to mitigate the austerity of the composition. The typical unit that you can see behind is composed by the entrance door and the two windows. At the very origine, the dwellings occupied the whole height of the building which is to say three stories, plus an underground story which is a typical topic of this architecture, the Georgian architecture; small courtyard giving light to underground rooms, which were originally used for a kitchen and services. But also beneath the sidewalk where I'm staying, there is a services room providing direct access from the street in order to provide the house with the cold and other necessary things.

Notes

Summary



10m 03s



The Crescent defines a large green space that was, at the time, reserved for its residents, even though it was destined for private use. This green space contributed to shaping the public space. This is also the case in other English cities such as the residential neighborhoods in London, according to the square model. Today, the central gardens are accessible and used by the public. The relationship between the building and the urban space is quite complex. Even if it is based on very simple elements. In fact, you can see that one can get the main entrance door through this passage which is actually like a bridge suspended between the two courtyards and then one finds that these huge sidewalk and underneath as I have already said there is service rooms, and then the roads are narrower sidewalk and then the Green. Even if the Green were supposed to be used exclusively by people living in the building, it contributes to the theatrical *mise en scène* of this part of the city. There are also extremely interesting solutions to articulate the frequent differences in level in ways that are very pragmatic and up to date. In the paragon, we can clearly see the ingenious separation between the road and the sidewalk.

Notes

Summary

11m 18s





The difference in level is solved differently on either side of the buildings to manage the access to the houses. Above, this produces a large sidewalk for pedestrians or gardens for residents with storage spaces below. Architect Walter Ison described this fascinating feature of the city in the book *The Georgian Buildings of Bath*. He said: "The Paragon Belmont Road in the early 19th century which can present a typical examples of terraced houses planned with the larger rooms placed at the back overlooking a beautiful view. Sites were sometimes chosen for the views they offered, in spite of the fact the building houses there only entailed costly preparations in constructing vaults and retaining walls. The Paragon is a representative example being sited on a narrow strip of land sloping between two roads having a difference of some 40 feet and then levels of the main front towards London Road presents a normal appearance At the rear is a great substructure of vaults supporting the hanging gardens entered from the basements of the house. Beyond the major episodes of The Royal Crescent and of the circus, the urban model is repeated in other areas with some formal variations with rounder or rectilinear shapes.

Notes

Summary

12m 55s





The urban fabric of the City of Bath shows that repetition and architectural homogeneity are not necessarily monotonous. The building that you see behind me is called the Lansdown Crescent and it is dominating the very centre of the city from a hill. It is representing the very typical Bath architecture, which is to say a very simple volume following the natural slop of the ground and the curve is also supposed to be a way for reducing the austerity of the architecture. The architecture is austere, why, because it is composed by a very basic and simple elements. As you can see a smooth facade and a set of windows which is repeated with a very regular rythm. The ground floor is characterised by a sort of verification, which is underlined by the shadow produced by any single block of stone and the upper floors are on the other hand very smooth. And one of the highest areas of the city of Bath is Lansdown Crescent, built during 1789 and 1793. from designs by John Palmer. The towers over the city to which it's connected through an old Roman road. Even though this crescent is not as acknowledged as others, it might well be the one that most shows the potential of this way of the building.

Notes

Summary

14m 18s





Its winding urban shape clearly corresponds to the topographical contour lines. This capacity of adapting the blocks in the slab formations to the variations of the terrain produces a city with an incredibly rich morphology and large green spaces. Historian Siegfried Gideon said: "Lansdown Crescent was not an isolated phenomenon. It's flexible planning survived into the early 19th century though too seldom, and can be found in the layouts of South Kensington and Edinburgh. During the last few decades, endeavours have been made to reconquer and to extend the lost knowledge of town planning displayed in schemes like Lansdown Crescent." In the end, it's a city made up of sequences of contiguous and homogenous unities: the houses. Each house in Bath is double facing. Each house in Bath looks out onto the street and looks out onto the garden. Not many cities can be so simply described.

Notes

Summary

15m 57s

