Patterns of space usage inside buildings are currently experiencing a noteworthy change. While function used to be a relatively clear descriptor of a building type including typical usage behaviours – everyone knew what a bank and a shop and a library was – the reality of what is happening inside buildings nowadays is much more complex, diverse and multi-layered than a single word can describe.

Examples of the new usage dynamics and the multifaceted nature of buildings include a café in Edinburgh that combines a cycle workshop and community meeting point; a series of lounges replacing the typical high street bank in the UK with a space that is open to customers, yet feels more club or café like with free facilities to use; shops that are less centred on the idea of selling goods, but rather on creating a customer experience or building relationships; the British Library acting as a temporary workplace, museum and event space beyond its function as a reference library; or the example of mixed-use high-rise buildings such as the Scala Tower by Bjarke Ingels Group or Dubai Renaissance by OMA, which create a vertical form of ‘urban fabric’ (Koolhaas) by uniting diverse land uses (residential, offices, leisure, etc.) under one roof, thus challenging the traditional understanding and differentiation between buildings and urban realm.

This raises the question whether we are indeed witnessing a dissolving of the traditional boundaries of buildings and building types.

In its early days, Space Syntax contributed a clear theoretical concept to think about buildings and the role of function. It argued that a building had two main purposes (Hillier and Hanson, 1984): firstly, to distinguish the inside from the outside, thus devising a system of boundaries and control, and secondly, to provide mechanisms of generating and constraining patterns of encounter and avoidance, i.e. bringing different sets of people together or keeping them apart. Based on this, in their seminal paper ‘What do we mean by building function?’ Hillier, Hanson and Peponis (1984) defined global function as a series of interfaces governed by integration and control. A typology, i.e. the ‘churchness’ of a church and the ‘schoolness’ of a school was defined as the interface between visitors or inhabitants and thus determined by the social and spatial operating systems of generating or constraining encounter patterns. This definition enabled an understanding of buildings as user-driven and allowed the flourishing of a rich research tradition of investigating complex buildings within their respective typologies, i.e. as separate studies of museums, offices, hospitals or schools.

We now face the challenge of new definitions of usage and an opening up of buildings to different behaviours. At the same time, the adaptability and sustainability of buildings becomes important, as buildings are increasingly transformed, often from one type to another (from warehouses to lofts, from churches to pubs, from factories to museums etc.), so the question what defines a building spatially and socially, what unites or separates buildings within and across typologies and how buildings transform and adapt is very timely.

Against this background, we would like to invite scholars to contribute to this Special Issue of the Journal of Space Syntax on ‘Changing Building Typologies’ with original research on the following possible themes:

- Substantiating or challenging the importance of building typologies;
- Comparing buildings within institutional types to describe commonalities and differences of morphology of one type including investigating the relationship to space usage and human behaviours;
- Comparing buildings across institutional types to describe general configurational properties of buildings;
- Creating new ways of describing, classifying and analysing buildings;
- Analysing and mapping the diversity of space usage patterns inside buildings of interest including methodological innovations to deepen our understanding of usage;
- Investigating the processes, drivers and consequences of the transformation and change of buildings.

Articles have to be based on high quality rigorous and previously unpublished research. The use of space syntax methods and theories is desirable, but other methods and approaches are equally welcome.

**KEY DEADLINES:**

- Abstract submission: 1 April 2014
- Invitation to submit full paper: 15 April 2014
- Full paper submission: 30 June 2014

Please submit a 500 word abstract by 1 April 2014 directly to the guest editor of this Special Issue Dr Kerstin Sailer (k.sailer@ucl.ac.uk) with the subject ‘JOSS Special Issue submission’.