PREFACE

This project has brought together two powerful and influential sources of change, CIB and EuroFM, to address issues that challenge some of the basic tenets of development in the built environment.

CIB is the international association providing a global network for international exchange and cooperation in research and innovation in building and construction. CIB supports improvements in building processes and in the performance of the built environment.

EuroFM’s mission is the advancement of knowledge in Facility Management (FM) in Europe and its application in Practice, Education and Research. An understanding of the processes behind the activities of FM is crucial to develop the profession. With this publication EuroFM provides a basis for such an understanding.

The project opens a new era in the relationship between CIB and EuroFM. CIB were one of the founding members of the EuroFM network. However, the project is the first joint project between CIB Working Commission W111 and the EuroFM Research Network Group.

Participants from both networks involved in the project and have developed a programme of collaborative research to promote, develop and share methods, processes and techniques for evaluating buildings-in-use from a user perspective.

Work in the project is now at the completion of its second phase, and has focused on the user experience of buildings and research in the workplace, rather than on laboratory or theoretical studies, and on applications of concepts of usability and manageability in practical situations.

The one day seminar, as part of the European Facility Management Conference (EFMC08) held in Manchester, is organised as three sessions, each of which will include short presentations of important aspects of the work by the main participants in the project. The seminar includes presentations of three case studies from Phase 2 of the work, and will discuss findings and conclusions from the project.
FOREWORD

A CIB working commission on Usability of Workplaces (CIB W111) has operated as an integrated network of researchers and practitioners since its inception in 2001. The network was originally formed as a task group (TG51) to investigate the application of an international standard on usability, previously applied in the evaluation of consumer products, to the built environment.

A first round of exploratory case studies (2002/05) sought to investigate the applicability of usability concepts and techniques, adapt them for use in the built environment and to identify methods and techniques that would enable a more positive user experience in organisational settings.

The work reported in this publication, is drawn from the second phase of the project (2006/08) which included a further three case studies, five workshops and will conclude with a one day research seminar. The work that comprised this phase of the project focused on contextual issues that were seen to define the difference in applying usability to the built environment as opposed to other consumer products.

Senior managers from leading organisations have participated in the network, coordinated by the research-based partners, and have been directly involved in the series of action learning workshops used the main vehicle for advancing the programme of work.

Participatory workshops provided the opportunity for sharing knowledge of user experience in the workplace, provided an independent review of practice and for sharing best practice. Host organisations received feedback from other leading-edge organisations involved in the project and recommendations for improvement, many of which have been implemented.

The network has provided new knowledge for action on themes including user experience, feed-forward processes, and has explored the links between the quality of the environment, health, well-being and productivity in the workplace. Each case has identified new appraisal methods and techniques. The network has also provided the opportunity for cross-cultural collaboration and information exchange.

Research-based partners also meet separately to reflect on the cases and workshops and to address philosophical, theoretical and methodological issues arising out of the work.

Professor Keith Alexander
Convenor CIB W111
Leader, EuroFM Usability Research Project
May 2008