

Letters from the Chair

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner

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Dear Friends of the Department of Architecture:

Department of Architecture Lobby Display System

On 16 November 1999, at a small ceremony in the Architecture Department Lobby (Gould Hall 208), the new display system was dedicated. The Department lobby is now suitable for small exhibits of work of faculty, professionals and students. The display system has two parts: one for permanent exhibit of faculty publications and the other for temporary displays of design work by faculty, professionals and students. The first design exhibit, in Fall Quarter 1999, was the work of Professor Dave Miller's firm, the Miller/Hull Partnership. The current (Winter Quarter 2000) exhibit is five recent architectural projects by Professor Emeritus Tom Bosworth.

The idea for the exhibit space was first proposed in Winter 1997 by an "ad hoc display committee" headed by Associate Professor Elaine LaTourelle. In 1997-98, Lecturer Jim Nicholls and graduate students Steve Brown and Ian Butcher developed a design for the modular display system. This was enthusiastically approved by the faculty and by the Department's Professionals Council in Spring 1998. A number of local firms, including Bumgardner, Cardwell/Thomas & Associates, LMN Architects, Mahlum Architects, Miller/Hull Partnership, Mithun Partners, NBBJ, Weinstein/Copeland Architects, and Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership (and some donors who chose to remain anonymous) contributed funding for materials, and this allowed us to go forward with fabrication/construction in early 1999. We invite alumni and friends to visit the Department and see how the lobby has truly been transformed.

Digital Design Facilities Under Construction

At the same time, Architecture Hall is seeing its most significant change in over a decade. In December 1999, construction began on the new design computing research space and electronic design studio on the basement floor, beneath the Auditorium. This project is part of the initiative by the Department and College to move into national leadership in design computing research and education. When completed in late February or early March, the result will be a computing research lab space where new directions in design computing software can be developed and an adjacent studio where such new developments can be applied to design work. Faculty offices for Professor Mark Gross, who will lead the research lab, and for Associate Professors Brian Johnson and Yi-Luen Ellen Do will also be included.

Our efforts to address the impact of computing in architectural design will not end with this project. We recognize that computing has completely permeated the professional practice of architecture and we need to address the integration of

computing across our design studios.

Design/Build Studios

Even as we address the impact of computing in architecture, we continue to develop our strengths and reputation in the areas of design/build and international education. In Winter 1999 the fifth Design/Build.Mexico studio, under the direction of Associate Professor Sergio Palleroni and Professor Steve Badanes, with over 30 students, completed the construction of the medical clinic that had been begun by our design/build students in 1998. The Winter 2000 Design/Build.Mexico studio, now on-going, with 25 students from the Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Construction Management, is constructing another elementary school, similar to the one built by UW students in 1996 and 1997. The program is remarkable, combining international experience, working with local communities, design, construction, and responding to users who typically do not have access to architectural services.

Spring Quarter 1999 saw the continuation of our design/build studios in the Northwest. A new collaborative design/build studio was led by Professor Palleroni and Assistant Professor David Riley of the Department of Construction Management (adjunct in Architecture); this studio worked with Red Feather Development, a Bellevue-based non-profit, on the design and subsequent construction of a 1300 s.f. house using strawbale technology on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana. This successful project, involving 14 students from Architecture, Construction Management and Landscape Architecture, has opened up opportunities for future projects with agencies like HUD, USDA, and NSF addressing both sustainable building technologies and the housing crisis facing economically distressed communities.

At the same time, the Spring 1999 H. S. Wright Design/Build Studio, with architecture and construction management students taught by Professor Badanes, designed facilities for Bradner Gardens Park, near 29th Avenue South and South Grand Street in Beacon Hill. Supported by a City of Seattle grant, the 12 students designed and built a footbridge, gateway and trellises, and the Spring 2000 H.S. Wright studio may return to this site to construct additional facilities.

International Programs

Our international offerings reflect the Department's response to the continued globalization of architectural practice. In Winter 1999, Professor Astra Zarina again led the Rome 2 studio, with students drawn from Architecture and Art. In Spring 1999, Lecturer Jennifer Dee worked with Professor Raimonda Modiano from the UW Comparative History of Ideas (CHID) Program to offer an interdisciplinary program in Rome for architecture and CHID students. In Summer 1999, Professor Zarina again led the Hilltowns Program in Civita. In Fall 1999, Professors Zarina and LaTourelle led the 30th Architecture in Rome Program with Teaching Assistants Robert Pellegrini

and Kate Kennedy. Simultaneously in Fall 1999, Assistant Professor Vikram Prakash led the Department's first program in India, based in Ahmedabad. Involving the well-known architect Balakrishna Doshi, this program brought together students from the University of Washington, the University of Michigan, and the University of Ahmedabad, to develop designs to respond to the crisis of urban growth in India. Finally, this quarter, Associate Professor and Associate Dean Trina Deines is offering a program based in the Rome Center addressing a project on the coast of Sicily. Next year's offerings will also be rich: In Fall Quarter 2000, the Rome Program will be led by Professors Miller, Ching, and Bosworth; Winter 2001 will see another design/build project in Mexico.

Annual Design Charrette

The Annual Design Charrette is another special activity that enriches our educational programs. In Spring 1999, with support from the City, County, SoundTransit, and the College and Department, the Charrette addressed the new Seattle Civic Center; on April 1 the four teams of students, faculty and professionals presented their designs for the new Civic Center in the Architecture Hall Auditorium. The final report, Charrette 99--The Civic Center as a City Place: Envisioning a Downtown District, was published in summer 1999 and has since been used by public officials and the civic center design team.

In December 1999, the University of Washington awarded a "Tools for Transformation" grant to Professor Sharon E. Sutton in support of the Design Charrette for Spring 2000 which will address educational facilities and outdoor spaces in Tukwila. Professor Sutton, who heads the College's Center for Education, Environment and Design Studies (CEEDS), will organize and lead the Charrette. The University is supporting this Charrette as part of its outreach to K-12 institutions in the region.

Faculty/Student Achievements

Achievements of faculty and students continue to enhance the reputation of the Department. Professor Dave Miller's firm was the focus of Ten Houses - Miller/Hull Partnership published in 1999; Professor Grant Hildebrand's book, The Origins of Architectural Pleasure was also published in 1999 and has received a number of favorable reviews.

Professor Dave Miller's firm, the Miller/Hull Partnership, received multiple design awards from AIASeattle in Fall 1999: a Merit Award for a Cabin and Pumphouse on Maury Island WA, and a Commendation for the Yaquina Head Interpretive Center in Newport OR.

Graduate student Christina Kilday received an Honorable Mention in the Second International Home Design Competition: "A House for the Third Millenium: Fixtures

and Furniture for New Domestic Environments" for her project for refugee housing. She was one of only two American students to win a prize in this competition. And, at the Fall 1999 "Chair Affair," a regional furniture competition held annually in Idaho, three of our students won awards (two were moved into the professional categories): Jeffery Frechette won "best chair" (professional), Katie Ellison for "best" in "open" category (professional) for her game table, and Trevor Schaaf won "best table" (student). All these projects were designed and built in the furniture design studio taught by Senior Lecturer Andy Vanags.

Professor Deines co-organized the ACSA (the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture-the professional organization of architecture schools) International Conference held in Rome in June 1999; and this year, Dean Finrow is serving as President of ACSA.

Support from Seattle Architects

The Department's strength is enhanced by the continuing support received from the Seattle professional community. The Department's Professionals Advisory Council provides support to the Department in numerous ways. Fall 1999 saw the second offering of the "Case Studies" class addressing project design and delivery in "real world" settings, taught by Rick Buckley of NBBJ. With the support of the Council the Department continues to offer the "Practicum," the class that places students in architectural offices at relatively high levels to observe and learn about professional firm management; this is now being offered each year in Spring Quarter and is coordinated by Rick Meyer of Callison and Senior Lecturer Doug Zuberbuhler. In Fall 1999, the Seattle firm Olson/Sundberg offered a graduate studio addressing three residential sites; this continued our efforts to involve local professional firms in studio teaching. In the last year the Department also benefited from the involvement of many local design professionals in studio teaching, lecture classes, critiques, reviews and juries. The number of local professionals who provide time to the school is extraordinary.

Faculty Changes

Next year, the Department will likely see additional change as we are currently involved in a national search for a new faculty member in the area of architecture and urban design. This position became available because of the previously announced departure of Professor Doug Kelbaugh, who left in summer 1998 to become Dean of the College of Architecture & Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, and because Professor Folke retired in June 1999. As a result, we need a new faculty member who can teach architecture/urban design studios, multi-family housing studios, and urban design history/theory. We received applications in January and we are currently reviewing submittals from nearly 50 candidates.

Dean Finrow to Step Down

In June 1999, Dean Jerry Finrow announced that he would step down at end of the

academic year 1999-2000 after five years as Dean of the College. The President and Provost initiated a national search for a new Dean; the Search Committee advertised the position early in Fall 1999, and candidates were asked to submit credentials by December. Over forty applicants responded and the Committee has since been reviewing the candidates' records, contacting references, and narrowing the list. As I write this, it seems likely that the "short list" will soon be announced and candidates' visits may take place late in Winter Quarter. Obviously this is a major change for the College and it has significant implications for the Department. We have been fortunate in working with Dean Finrow on a number of initiatives, such as design computing, and we hope that the Department will continue to have a good working relationship with the new Dean. Dean Finrow holds a tenured position in the Department of Architecture, and after a sabbatical will return as a Professor in the Department of Architecture, where we are certain to benefit from his experience in teaching, research, and administration.

Staff Changes

Within the Department we have said "good-bye" to Louise Eaton, who has been our Undergraduate Program Administrator since 1983. Louise decided to retire in Fall 1999 so she could spend more time with her family. We all miss her. We are fortunate, however, that we have been able to hire Kim Sawada, who had already been working part-time in the Department, as our new Undergraduate Administrator.

SoundTransit Impacts

In the coming year, the Department and College will face challenges in addition to the transition involved in welcoming a new Dean. Gould Hall has been identified as one of the University buildings likely to be most affected by construction of the SoundTransit light rail subway. The north entrance to the station at 15th Avenue NE and NE Pacific Street will likely be located in the area to the south of Gould Hall. The subway construction is likely to take several years and SoundTransit is seeking large staging areas for construction equipment and materials storage.

Master of Science (M.S.) in Architecture Degree Proposed

While the professional curriculum and the professional degree program will always be the core of our Department, we are very concerned about increasing our contribution to the "knowledge-base" of the design disciplines. There are two primary reasons for this: First, to be recognized as a resource for the professional communities in this region, we need to be offering new answers to critical questions and adding new knowledge in critical areas within our discipline. Second, in the context of a research university such as UW, a strong record of research productivity may be a key element in achieving increased recognition and support. These are some reasons why, for example, our new design computing initiatives are so important. In this regard, an article in the December 1999 Architectural Record discussed the contributions of research taking place in architectural schools to advances in

commercial architectural design computing; one of the four projects featured was the sketch recognition software project by Professor Do titled "The Right Tool at the Right Time."

In recognition of our need to contribute more to the "knowledge base" of the profession, the Department has developed a proposal for a Master of Science (M.S.) in architecture degree; if approved, this will offer the opportunity for post-professional advanced education. Such a degree program will allow specialization in a single focus area. If our proposal is approved, the first specialization the Department will offer will be in design computing, but we hope to expand our advanced offerings in future years. For example, the Professionals Council has proposed that we develop an M.S. degree offering in design firm management for practicing architects who wish to move into positions of firm administration.

Seeking Excellence

It is 3-1/2 years since Dean Finrow appointed me as Chair of the Department of Architecture. In this position I have had the benefit of his support as well as that of our faculty, staff, students, and professionals. Although we have faced challenges, support received from Dean Finrow and from many others has allowed us to continue to enhance the quality of our educational programs. With the continuing support of many individuals including alumni and friends, we will continue to strive towards our goal of excellence in all that we do.

Best wishes for the year 2000,

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner FAIA, Chair