

Letters from the Chair

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner

February 10, 1999

Dear Friends of the Department of Architecture:

Migrant Workers Housing/Design Build Studios

In July 1998, the front page of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* carried the first of a series of stories about the problems of migrant farm workers housing in eastern Washington. For several days, the paper told of the "appalling situation" as 60,000 migrant workers come to Washington every fall to pick fruit. This past year they harvested a record crop of apples and cherries. But many had no shelter and inadequate access to water and sanitation. Remarkably, as these conditions were making news, the Department of Architecture was already involved in an effort to begin to address improvements to migrant worker conditions. Associate Professor Sergio Palleroni was leading about a dozen students in a Summer Quarter Design/Build studio to renovate cabins and build a community center for apple pickers near Tonasket in the Okanogan Valley. In this way, Professor Palleroni, who, with Professor Steve Badanes, has led the Department's Mexico.Design/Build program in the squatter community of San Lucas outside of Cuernavaca for the past four years (as I described in previous letters), is now seeking to bring the capabilities of the Department to addressing similar issues in the farming communities of eastern Washington.

In turn, this new design/build effort attracted the attention of the leadership of the state government, which turned to the Department in late summer to produce computer renderings of proposed temporary housing for migrant workers; the computer simulations were carried out by Associate Professor Brian Johnson. Subsequently, Professor Palleroni was able to secure some funding from the state government to support future design/build studios which will address the migrant communities in eastern Washington. The next studios addressing these issues will occur later this year.

These studios are just one part of the Department's (and the College's) efforts to address the University's mission of teaching, creative work (research or practice) and service. As a state-supported institution, the University is charged not just with offering its educational programs, and not just with focusing on the generation of new knowledge, but also with bringing its expertise to bear on the problems of the State of Washington. This kind of service has been characterized by the Carnegie Foundation as the "scholarship of applications" and it reflects the best traditions of the architectural profession as well. For our students, design/build studios like these combine learning with service. They also teach a kind of "taking responsibility" because the projects must be carried from design all the way through construction.

The H. S. Wright Design/Build Studio in Spring Quarter 1998 was a similar kind of experience. In that studio, 13 undergraduate and graduate students under the

direction of Professor Badanes, constructed the main garden pavilion and outdoor work stations for the vegetable gardens that are part of Highlands Gardens, a low-income housing project (primarily housing Hmong refugees) in Issaquah--a project designed by Pyatok Associates, the architectural firm headed by Professor Michael Pyatok, and Stickney Murphy Romine Architects.

Digital Design Initiative/New Faculty

Even as we celebrate our continuing tradition of design/build studios, the Department is taking important steps to address the increasing impact of digital media within architecture. We are very pleased to announce that our faculty searches of 1997-98 were extraordinarily successful. By Fall 1999, the Department will be joined by Professor Mark Gross and Assistant Professor Yi-Luen Ellen Do. In addition, Lecturer Brian Johnson has also become an Associate Professor.

Professor Mark Gross comes to UW from the University of Colorado. He received his architectural education at MIT where he received his Ph.D. in 1986 in architecture with a focus in computer applications. He has an extraordinary record of research and publication in the area of design computing and has received over \$500,000 in research grants in the last decade for a variety of projects in computer applications in architecture, urban design, planning and related areas. Professor Gross has taught a wide range of courses in computer applications and digital media. Since 1990 he has directed the Sundance Laboratory for Design Computing in the College of Architecture & Planning at the University of Colorado in Boulder. At UW, we expect that Professor Gross will be a leader in the development of the teaching and research programs of the Department and College as well as directing our new design computing research lab.

Assistant Professor Yi-Luen Ellen Do received her architectural education at the National Cheng Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan, at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and at Georgia Tech where she completed her Ph.D. in architecture with a focus on computer applications (involving freehand drawing and use of computing in creative design) in 1998. Since 1994 she has been a research associate at the Sundance Laboratory where she has also taught on a part-time basis while completing her Ph.D. She has previously taught design and computing courses as a graduate student at Georgia Tech and Harvard. At UW, Professor Do will be involved in the development and integration of the design computing curriculum and will participate in the research efforts of the Department and College.

Associate Professor Brian Johnson previously taught at UW as a lecturer, and was appointed to the rank of assistant professor following a national search. He received his undergraduate education in mathematics and physics at the University of Puget Sound and his professional education in architecture at UW, focusing on computer applications. Professor Johnson has been very active in ACADIA (Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture), and was an organizer of the 1995 Seattle

ACADIA conference. He will continue to participate in teaching and research in design computing as well as in efforts in Web-based education and research in the Department and College.

In bringing Professors Gross and Do to UW and offering a permanent position to Professor Johnson, the university administration made a very significant investment in the Department and College. This month we begin planning for the remodeling of several rooms in the basement of Architecture Hall to become a new computer lab and design computing studio space. This remodeling will be constructed during the summer 1999 so that it will be ready for Fall Quarter. The university is also providing significant funding support for hardware and software for the new computer lab facilities.

These three faculty with expertise in design computing will give the Department the "critical mass" necessary to move us into a leadership position nationally in computing in architecture. We are fortunate that, in this period of tight budgets, the university administration has been willing to support our efforts to move into a leadership position in design computing. We were also fortunate in this effort to have the support of faculty across the College and across UW in the Computer Science & Engineering Department and in the Human Interface Technology Lab. We look forward to our new computer faculty building linkages across the College and University. The synergy that can result from working with these other units will be a significant contributor as we begin to move into a national leadership position in design computing.

Although Professors Gross and Do will not arrive until Summer 1999, we have begun to take some steps to initiate a greater integration of computing in our professional programs. In Fall Quarter, Professor Johnson participated in teaching Architecture 300, the first architecture studio in the undergraduate B.A. program, with Professor Frank Ching, Senior Lecturers Doug Zuberbuhler and Andy Vanags, and Lecturer Judith Swain. All students were introduced to three-dimensional computer rendering using Form Z, most used it to produce backgrounds for their required drawings, and some elected to produce their full presentations on the computer. Professors Vikram Prakash, Alex Anderson (see below), and Claus Seligmann will be introducing some additional computer applications in their sections of the Architecture 301 and 302 studios in Winter and Spring. In addition, Lecturer James Davidson offered his course, "Design in Virtual Environments," in Fall Quarter 1998 and is doing so again this quarter. And the Department has hired Anne S. Stevens, who previously taught at the University of California, as a part-time Lecturer beginning this quarter. She brings a background in fine arts as well as computing and is teaching a new seminar course in drawing and digital media involving the use of "Painter" software.

Faculty Changes

In Fall Quarter 1998, the Department also welcomed Assistant Professor Alex Anderson, who fills the position left vacant by the retirement of Professor Thomas Bosworth. Professor Anderson has come to UW from the University of North Carolina

at Charlotte. He received a Ph.D. in history/theory of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in 1997; he received his undergraduate education at Cornell University. Currently Professor Anderson is working on an annotated translation of Charles Edouard Jeanneret's 1912 *Etude sur le mouvement d'art decoratif en Allemagne*. At UW he is teaching architecture design studios at the graduate and undergraduate levels and is also offering a variety of history and theory classes.

Also this year, Professor Folke Nyberg has announced his intention to retire. Professor Nyberg has been a significant contributor to the Department's architecture and urban design teaching for many years, offering design studios in both architecture and urban design as well as lecture courses and seminars in Scandinavian architecture, regionalism, and theory. Professor Nyberg has elected to participate in the UW 40% rehire program, and we are fortunate to have the benefit of his continuing participation in the Department for five years to come.

Faculty Achievements/Student Awards

The record of the Department has been enhanced by a range of faculty achievements over the past year. The new structures textbook by Senior Lecturer Barry Onouye (with illustrations by Lecturer Kevin Kane), *Statics and Strength of Materials for Architecture and Building Construction*, was published by Prentice-Hall in Fall 1998. We expect to see *Ten Houses - Miller/Hull* by Rockport Publishers, on the residential design work by Professor Dave Miller's firm in early 1999. Professor Grant Hildebrand's new book, *The Origins of Architectural Pleasure*, is expected from the University of California Press next April; this will continue the explorations of human response to built spaces that Professor Hildebrand began in his 1991 book, *The Wright Space*.

Several faculty also won design awards from AIA Seattle in Fall 1998. A Commendation was awarded for an Observation Tower in the San Juan Islands designed by Professor Thomas Bosworth; Professor Emeritus Wendell Lovett also received a Commendation for his Cutler/Girdler Residence in Medina. Professor Dave Miller's firm, Miller/Hull, received multiple awards: Honor Awards for the Michaels/Sisson Residence on Mercer Island, and the Point Roberts Border Station at the U.S.-Canada boundary; a Merit Award for the Orchard Residence, Naches Valley; a Commendation for the Water Pollution Control Lab in Portland; and a Conceptual Citation for the "Park Gronde Ranch."

Students in our program also won awards in 1998. At the "Chair Affair," a furniture competition held annually in Idaho in the Fall, which draws entries from around the region, in the student categories, Todd Waffner won "best craftsmanship" for his writing desk and chair, and Ian Butcher won "best" in the "open" category for his kitchen work buffet. Both of these projects were designed and built in the furniture studio taught by Senior Lecturer Andy Vanags.

Professional Community Linkages

The Department continues to develop its links to the architectural professional community. In the last year, the Department's Professionals Advisory Council, under the direction of John Mahlum of Mahlum Architects, fostered the development of a "Case Studies" class addressing project design and delivery in "real world" settings. Rick Buckley, partner in NBBJ, taught the class in Fall Quarter 1998. He organized a series of presentations that looked at actual projects from design through construction; the presentations involved architects, consultants, contractors and clients and looked at the issues of project delivery from every side. At the same time, the Council has continued to support the Practicum Program--the program that places students in offices at upper management levels to observe practices in firm administration, project management, and related issues.

In the last year the Department also benefited from the involvement of many local design professionals in studio teaching, critiques, reviews and juries. Three Seattle firms took the lead in offering design studios to students in the final year of the professional program. In Winter Quarter 1998, NBBJ offered a high rise building design studio (led by Rick Buckley and involving others in the firm including Peter Pran); in Spring Quarter, LMN offered a performance hall design studio (led by Bruce Donnally and others); and in Fall Quarter, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca offered a studio focusing on the design of the Western Washington University Library (led by Dan Simpson with others). Members of the local profession also offered a variety of classes in areas relating to practice such as building codes, specifications, and the like.

International Programs

Faculty in the Department are also developing new offerings reflecting the continued globalization of architectural practice. In Summer 1998, faculty offered very successful programs in Italy (at Civita), in Scandinavia, and in Portugal. In Fall 1998, Professors Astra Zarina and Ron Kasprisin led the Architecture in Rome program with Teaching Assistant Tara Siegel; Professor Zarina is currently offering the Rome 2 program. Professors Sergio Palleroni and Steve Badanes are again leading Design/Build.Mexico. In Spring Quarter 1999, Lecturer Jennifer Dee and Professor Raimonda Modiano, Lockwood Professor of the Humanities, will lead a program in Rome for an interdisciplinary group of students drawn from Architecture and from the UW Program in the Comparative History of Ideas. And, in Fall Quarter 1999, in addition to the Rome 1 program that will be led by Professors Zarina and LaTourelle, Professor Vikram Prakash will lead a new program in Ahmedabad, India, which will also involve well-known architect Balakrishna Doshi.

Looking Ahead

It is nearly two and one half years since I was appointed as Chair of the Department of Architecture. In this position I have had the benefit of the support of our faculty and students, as well as that of faculty, students and administrators across the College and University. Together we are working to enhance the quality of our current educational programs, while at the same time we are undertaking some new initiatives. With the continuing support of many individuals including our alumni and friends, we will continue to strive towards our goal of excellence as we approach the new millennium.

As you face the coming year, on behalf of all members of the Department (faculty, staff, and students), please let me wish you a positive and prosperous 1999.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner FAIA, Chair