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Acknowledgements
Foreword

Matt Gaskin
Head of the School of Architecture

The School of Architecture, Oxford Brookes University has a longstanding reputation as a learning community that fosters diversity and innovation in architectural design. The School promotes design as a research led activity and consciously harnesses the areas of research excellence, including practice-led research, to inform student learning. As a result, students are exposed to an exciting array of ways to understand and practice architecture and are encouraged to explore their own preoccupations and thereby to build their own identities over time.

We actively promote student engagement with ‘live’ projects across all years. This ‘live’ work enables students to gain a deeper understanding of the world of practice and they are encouraged to link this work to their academic portfolio. The Live Projects Symposium will consolidate the School’s theory and practice and enable the identification of a distinct position.

The School recently joined five disciplines, including the School of Art, the Department of Planning, the Department of Real Estate and Construction, the Department of Computing and Communication Technologies, and the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, to form the new Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment. This development provides the School with exciting new opportunities to develop cross-disciplinary collaborations under our live projects umbrella.

My thanks go to the staff and students in the School for embracing this direction with energy and conviction. This booklet captures the live work from the programmes throughout the School and we owe a debt of gratitude to Harriet Harriss for capturing this critical in one coherent document.

We are all looking forward to the Live Projects Symposium where delegates from around the globe will come together in our School.
Editorial

Harriet Harriss  RIBA
Teaching Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Oxford Brookes University

The recent economic downturn and ongoing restructuring of both the professional training and practice of architecture, signifies a tipping point in the way we currently teach and practice architecture.

Architectural practices have often voiced concerns that schools of architecture do not provide students with the right set of skills needed in practice. Moreover, Schools often defend their teaching by emphasising the importance of developing creative and aesthetic capabilities that will generate good designers and ultimately good buildings and spaces. This kind of teaching is traditionally delivered through design briefs that present students with fictional clients and unlimited budgets.

‘Live projects’ is a term frequently used to encapsulate a model of architectural teaching that provides a community-situated design response to real time challenges, allowing students to experience key aspects of architectural practice, and in doing so gain more ‘practice-ready’ capabilities for students and often the community partners.

That ‘Live projects’ should be experiencing a renaissance during our current period of economic rationing is commensurate with Universities, public sector organisations and charities facing increased financial pressure to deliver to their clients effectively. Although this presents huge challenges in terms of resources, this is also an opportunity to establish partnerships that provide enduring benefits by mobilising students, faculty, and neighbourhood organizations to work together to solve urban problems that revitalize the economy, generate jobs, and rebuild communities.

In the USA, these partnerships are far more prevalent than in the UK. Through the US Land Grant system, many schools are enabled to run Community Design Centers these ‘resource units’ are often located on and off campus and provide effective, community-engaged scholarship for students from a range of disciplines. These kinds of learning environments have high success rates too but even though the Live Projects approach is a growing trend in the UK, universities here have some catching up to do.

Live Projects are not currently a mandatory element within the UK architecture curriculum, despite the fact that feature in many UK architecture schools. This is the heart of the problem and the main rationale for this particular booklet - something I and the many the other pioneering educators highlighted here would like to consider and where
appropriate, to change. Arguably, the most effective way to change this is to work towards capturing best-practice examples of live projects and defining their pedagogic as well as their practice-ready value.

This booklet captures the range of live projects taking place within the School of Architecture across every level of the BA and Diploma programs, within a two-year period between 2010-12. Some of the projects featured within this booklet form part of a broader, five-year research project, enabled by a Brookes Associate Teaching Fellowship and The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to get Live Projects on the architecture curriculum. The ambition and scope of all of these projects – delivered at every level within the school – provides evidence based insight into how ‘live projects’ can be designed and implemented, the challenges and pitfalls of such projects and some reflections upon what the learning capital of such projects is.

This wish to explore the impact a Live Projects approach can have becomes especially urgent when we think about how we can use it to teach architecture in a way that powerfully connects students’ academic development with an industrial application of their skills.

This point is a particularly persuasive one given the ongoing economic recession, increased financial pressure on public and private sector organisations, more scrutiny of spend and accountability, plus the restructuring of both the professional training and practice of architecture means the need to turn out creatively dynamic and practice savvy students is more pressing than ever.

These changes have created a dynamic that is probing and challenging the way architecture has been taught; a shift where the stress by some architecture schools on the importance of developing students’ creative capabilities runs counter to the call of architectural practices for students with the ‘right’ set of skills needed in practice. In this argument ‘right’ can often mean shorthand for ‘production line’ skills such as CAD and detailing whereas the creative capabilities involve developing the capacity to design buildings and spaces that deliver delight as well as functionality to the clients, the building’s users, and the public more generally. In contrast, the more academic orientated argument to weight students’ creative development more heavily than say their exposure to industrial life challenges, is the idea that good designers will design good buildings and spaces once located within the industrial context of practice. It is argued that the ‘open’ nature of such briefs encourage students to experiment more, so they discover and develop specific creative capacities and leave university with a more sophisticated design sense.

This is not necessarily a simple dynamic, as many buildings balance resource constraints with good design effectively and it could be argued that resource efficiency is a key feature of ‘good’ design. Of course what constitutes ‘good’ design depends on whom you ask, as it is unlikely to always be the same for a practice partner, a developer or a teacher of architecture.

The main point remains the same though: in highly pressured times such these there continues to be a real and
sometimes negative tension between an industrial need for schools of architecture to provide ‘practice ready’ students, and the continued defence by architecture schools of the need to focus on creative and aesthetic capacity development.

However - and this is absolutely to the point about the needs of industrial practice – the fiction-driven scenarios tested in architecture school design studios can lack industrial worldliness and do not equip students to situate their creative thinking within more practicable, executable contexts. If the ‘creative’ brief does mention clients or users, students are typically expected to rely on secondary or circumstantial data to drive forward ‘user-responsive’ designs. The result is that the vast majority of architecture students graduate without ever having client or user consultation experience. This lack of exposure to ‘practice reality’ is where all much of the students ‘blue sky’ thinking and advanced creative capacity building can miss a point of application; where all that brilliance, energy and potential can become misdirected and not serve the interests of the people for whom the building or space is intended.

The live projects approach to teaching architecture may help us stop this mismatch as it encourages students to be creative and find elegant solutions to design problems but also bridges the gap between academia and industry by blending the pursuit of knowledge with the pursuit of real world application too.

An initial analysis of the case studies in this booklet suggests they align with a number of established learning theories beyond the industrial drivers and ‘practice ready’ rationale. Firstly, in taking the students out of the design studio environment eulogized by Schon (1984) and into a community context, the live projects experience means students are placed in ‘situated learning’ contexts where the emphasis is placed on ‘whole-person learning’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.1), rather than on one aspect of the student’s development.

Secondly, the location of learning within a community context also means students are each required to begin by focusing on defining what the challenges and constraints for the project are before moving forward, so in essence immediately adopting a ‘problem-based learning’ approach (Boud, 1998). This has been identified as a very student-centered model of learning – one that allows students to define their own design brief, often in collaboration with the community members, leading to a more practicable or real-world applicable form of knowledge creation (Vygotsky, 1978) (Holland, 2005).

Thirdly, once the brief is defined, the students then engage in a process of ‘action-learning’ (Dewey, 1916) (Revans, 1982) and move beyond a straightforward ‘study’ of the problem into defining tactics for ‘solution finding’ – a movement that involves intellectual but also physical engagement in the task.

Fourthly, working with the community members, students also experience ‘engaged scholarship’ or ‘service learning’ (Welch, 2004) one benefit of which is increased ‘citizenry’ amongst students, a capability which responds directly to the ongoing challenge to architects to respond to the needs of the
community (Boyer, 1996). Although this is explored in more detail in the broader research project, the evidence seems to suggest a Live Projects approach may work to deliver an educational culture that can be linked to an industrial one—*a culture where personal, intellectual and societal enrichment are combined within the teaching programs*. Through a process of strategic engagement with the cultural assets and human resources within our local community, as well as in challenged communities across the world, the Live Projects approach may enable students, educators and other stakeholders to work together to ‘improve the human condition locally, nationally and internationally by engaging in active global citizenship, ‘to enable the global citizens of tomorrow to *lead lives of consequence.*’ (Oxford Brookes, 2010).

Finally, through these live projects and by joining it with the live projects of other innovative and talented educators we hope to be able to build the type of narrative required if this way of teaching is to be properly understood, and if appropriate, validated and placed on the schools’ curriculum.

In my view and in the view of others represented through the case studies presented here, it is something we very much need to do if we are to be able to properly grasp how this way of working can empower students and practices alike as we all move through what is proving to be an extremely turbulent early 21st Century.

References

- Revans, RW. (1998) *ABC of action learning*, Lemos and Crane
Community projects: a practice perspective

Dan Jones

Design tutor, Co-Director Civic Architects

My experience of co-design in practice stems from being co-director of a two-handed architecture firm, based in London, but one that is often commissioned to work with community groups in parish council settings across the UK.

In my experience, community clients find it difficult to say what they want until they know what is possible. From the start this creates the opportunity for an extremely fruitful exchange of information between the architect as ‘outsider’ and the client as ‘visionary leader’ or ‘expert user’ of the project. Architects might typically find this frustrating, complaining of clients who keep changing their minds. Putting it bluntly, community clients changing their minds as they become more specifically aware of how to use their design project, is exactly what we are looking for.

When the students engaged the different community partners and projects described in this book, the challenge appeared to be to do with understanding and assimilating the different technical and functional requirements of each particular brief; orchestrating these into a feasible architectural proposition, often within a few weeks.

During the Thame Fire and Police Station which I tutored first hand, this was improbable in any timeframe, even by the client team’s own admission. However despite time constraints in all of the projects, in many cases the students exceeded the not-meagre challenge of producing something meaningful simply by impressively taking some client teams to the point of furthering their aspirational requirements for the project, and reinvestigating their means to realise them.
Developing skills in understanding clients’ requirements – indeed how clients explain their requirements – may yet spur the live project students to change what is for architecture students typically an uncontested approach to designing their own major projects.

Asked by a student, ‘**what will writing our own briefs teach us?**’ it occurred to me that learning to operate interchangeably between the brief influencing the design and the design influencing the brief, as the live project required them to in the context of a real project and real people. This extremely worthwhile element in architectural education will have given each student the opportunity to develop a more realistic internal “voice of the client” that will prove be invaluable to them in industry too.

Professor Byron Mikellides

Live projects have had a long history at Oxford Brookes. They formed an integral part of the Architectural Psychology course in a module entitled Experiencing Architecture and Design; that ran from 1969-2008. The topics and degree of involvement varied greatly on what the project demanded over the years. The aim was to find objectively what clients wanted, test it, or carry out experiments within the criteria set out by the course requirements. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used for these studies. For example we carried out experiments in improving orientation within the campus using visitors to the ‘Oxford Polytechnic’ as we were once known and Oxford University. Another project involved improving spaces within the EMU (Educational Methods Unit) and the University provided money to implement the chosen changes.

During the Walter Segal era and his visit to the School, students took part in building a house in Milton Keynes with former student Phil Bixby, who visited us for over 20 years, encouraging participation in self-build projects. Questionnaires, interviews, and objective data gathering and analysis of data were offered to ‘Doric Club’ (our alumni), who wanted to get students involved in their practice based community projects.

In later years students got involved in live projects in cooperation with the Thames Valley Police Force and the practice with the Doric Club, addressing issues such as Accessibility and Designing out Crime projects. An exhibition of the students work was supported by the University and Doric Alumni who visited the University together with members of the Oxford City Council and local MP Andrew Smith. Students’ parents and other visitors came to the exhibitions. Some of the students’ design suggestions were incorporated in improving the various problem areas by the Oxford Council. Students also received certificates and prizes from the Thames Valley and Alumni for their professional work in the area.
Students reported special satisfaction in doing live projects, meeting real clients first hand and still talk about these projects in the various reunions of the Doric Club we have had. Reflecting upon over 40 years of live projects, it is clear to me that students derive much pleasure from doing something so useful in life so early in their course, and getting positive feedback from professional people - such as councillors, planners, police officers or architectural alumni – but also the clients – whose engagement and recognition of their work defines their sense of identity as architects.
Undergraduate Live Projects
OB1 LIVE 09: Fabrications
The Story Museum, Oxford
October 2011
6 week project

Tutors: Jane Anderson, Colin Priest, Colin Smith, Emu Masuyama, Orestes Chouchoulas, Milan Stamenkovic, Rob Houmuller

Community Partner: The Oxford Story Museum

Students: Year 01 BA Architecture

The Story Museum’s Cath Nightingale said: “They were asked to design seating for those listening to, and telling, stories.” Story Museum co-director Tish Francis said: “The designs were fantastic – we were surprised and delighted. The quality was amazing.” Continuing, “The Story Museum aims to surprise and delight – and we were thoroughly surprised and enormously delighted by the wit, imagination and enthusiasm which Oxford Brookes University first year architecture and interior architecture students brought to the assignment. They picked up the brief and ran with it, understanding our approach to story and storytelling and to the building itself.”

Key Learnings: The live build project involved group working, hands on building experience, presentation of proposals to the client and involvement within a larger architectural project due for completion in 2014.

Brief: The Story Museum invited year one architecture and interior architecture students to design prototypical environments for storytelling. The projects utilised everyday and recycled materials and ranged from interactive shelves to hybrid chairs and were all presented to representatives from The Story Museum.
OB1 LIVE
08:
Now Showing
Pop Up Cinema
Oxford Brookes
Campus
Feb 2011
2 week project

Tutors: Jane Anderson,
Colin Priest with Emmanuel
Dupont, Stephanie Schultze-
Westrum, Colin Smith, Mick Scott
and Amanda Li Hope

Brief: As the building works continue
around the campus the OB1 LIVE team
thought a moment to focus the School
of Architecture could be achieved with
a pop-up cinema. Located between
the Buckley and Abercrombie Buildings
the green space was occupied for
an evening of entertainment on a
shoestring budget using recycled
materials and leftovers.

With all students in Year One involved
in the design of its strategic parts, the
screen, the shelter, lighting, seating
and consumables the evening was
set to screen a selection of project
films and features. Through the wind
and the rain and technical difficulties
we encountered almost every design
problem imaginable. Those who braved
the elements enjoyed an evening
of experimental and memorable
entertainment.

Key Learnings: The live build project
involved group working and hands
on building experience and ultimate
occupation by clients from around the
school.
Brief: Film Oxford invited Year One Architects and Interior Architects to make proposals to improve the public face of their building. This included better accessibility for all, greater communication to the public about what they do, and clearer expression of the entrance to their building.

Project ideas were drawn, modelled and filmed to help Film Oxford re-imagine their building.

Key Learnings: The framework of the project was based around group working and solution finding for the client. With interactive presentation to clients using films and models students demonstrated innovative solutions and an awareness of accessibility and inclusive design.

Tutors: Jane Anderson, Colin Priest with Emmanuel Dupont, Stephanie Schultze-Westrum, Colin Smith, Mick Scott and Amanda Li Hope

Community Partner: Film Oxford
info_bench

Oxford Brookes University Architecture students bring fresh ideas to community space.

ReUse/ ReCycle/

With increasing levels of waste in our environment, the use of recycled materials is becoming increasingly important. The ReUse/ ReCycle project was developed to encourage the use of recycled materials in the design and construction of buildings.

Time: 10am - 3pm
Date: Saturday 26th June 2010
Location: Public Space opposite Abbey Road (on Stratford Highstreet)
Activity: Come and see how your public space could be made more useful with our prototypes

Contributors:

Oxford Brookes University Architecture students

Materials: recycled plastic, glass, and wood

Location:

Stratford

Canal

Stratford Station

pudding mill lane

Stratford Highstreet

Overground

Directions:

The site is 7 minutes walk from Stratford train station or Stratford tube station.
OB1 LIVE 06:
International Student Architecture Festival
Stratford High St
London
and Mount Place, Oxford UK
July 2010

Tutors: Jane Anderson, Colin Priest

Community Partners: Oxford City Council/London Festival of Architecture

Brief: Participants designed and brought a prototype INFO_BENCH, made of recycled materials sourced locally to Oxford and Stratford for the International Student Architecture Festival 2010. Along with other participants from other universities, students sited the INFO_BENCH in a public space chosen for the parity of context with Mount Place in Oxford - local housing, canal and common under-used public realm. For day one in Mount Place, a ‘Have Your Say’ salon for the local community. On day two, the bench activated the space with a participatory function - from being a photo-op to a place to have lunch to a stop off point along the fragmented Greenway.

Key Learnings: The framework of the project involved group working and solution finding. In adapting and producing an interactive prototype, students engaged in direct consultation processes and conversations with communities.
OB1 LIVE 05:
Strategies for place improvement
Mount Place, Oxford
Oct 2010
6 week project

Tutors: Jane Anderson, Colin Priest, Ana Araujo, Emmanuel Dupont, Andrea Placidi, Stephanie Schultz-Westrum

Community Partner: Oxford City Council

Brief: Oxford City Council invited first year architecture students to create designs to improve an under-used space in Jericho. The students’ varied and imaginative designs for Mount Place are under consideration by the council prior to public consultation. Tasked with exploring different aspects of the site – the sounds, smells and atmosphere, as well as considerations such as ownership and health and safety.

Following a site visit, the students presented their plans to an area committee meeting in St Barnabas School in September. They were well received and a working group of residents, local councillors and a council officer was formed to follow up on the ideas. With a notional budget of £10,000 the students came up with 18 scenarios. These included suggestions that the area could be contoured or terraced to offer different levels for seating; that it could encourage nesting birds with a ‘bird house’ and that a drinking fountain might be introduced for passing joggers. One plan, inspired by local window boxes, considered creating wooden ‘public window boxes’ where local residents might plant their own flowers. All the students wanted to retain the trees with one plan aimed at converting the area into an ‘arboretum’ with new wooden bench seating. Oxford City Council asked OB1 LIVE to design a public information board, installed December 2011.

Key Learnings: The framework of the project involved group working and solution finding. In adapting and producing an interactive prototype, students engaged in direct consultation processes and presented their proposals to local residents and counsellors.
TRADA

Timber Pavilion Competition
Unit H
Ecobuild London
(March 2011)
Architecture show
Oxford
(May 2011)

Winning Student:
Christian Spendier

Unit Leaders: Ronnie Maclellan, Elliot Wingfield

Students (fabrication assistants):
Austen Scott, Alastair Clarke, Johnny Lakin, Robert Boltman

Brief: Organised by TRADA in honour of the late Dan Kemp (founder of Timbmet), the competition invited students to produce an innovative timber installation for London’s EcoBuild Festival. The Timber Pavilion had to be incorporated into an exhibition space 5m x 4m x 3m and 1:10 scale models of 1:10 were a requisite element. Constructed to scale in Oxford the Timber pavilion was then transported to Excel Centre in East London where Ecobuild 2012 was hosted.

According to Christian, the student whose design was selected by the judges, the inspiration for the design is derived from patterns of grain found within natural timber and its physical properties. This is accentuated using scale and natural rhythm – passing through it one catches glimpses of light, as if moving through a forest. The final materials used express the versatility of engineered and sawn timber – the structure is built without the use of mechanical fixings, emphasising the practicalities of wood.

Jo Leeder, writing in AJ’s sustainability blog ‘Footprint’, described this as ‘the most beautiful display’ at Ecobuild, adding: ‘There was a range of models, all with different characteristics and uses of timber, but all were little delights, perfectly crafted and original pieces of work.’

Key Learnings: From concept to completion, the project underwent a process of regular reworking, development and iteration in order to fully adhere to the constraints of the brief. Christian felt that this process was enabled by working collaboratively - both with TRADA and other students, without which it would almost certainly not have been the success that it was.
The aim was to elevate visitors up off the ground plane to a position which they can view their surrounding community and urban typography. By providing small spaces in which conversations between community members and visitors can happen, the hope is to build the strength of the surrounding community through these conversations. Each space frames a specific view, which will hopefully inform the conversations between strangers when visiting.
Brief: The purpose of the project was to set up design strategies to extend – in time, use and space – the existing programme that Assemble have set out for the site, transforming Sugarhouse Lane into the collective’s home and a resource open to the local public. Therefore, consideration should be given to integrating new uses and activities in the programme as well as to extending the currently proposed workshop and studio space, performance/screening space, café, storage and other ancillary facilities.

Key Learnings: From an educational point of view, the legacy of this project is the demonstration of how students benefited from interacting with the established reality of a specific site and an existing client. This gave the students a sense of responsibility but also the acknowledgement of learning-to-seeing the given condition as the foundational inspiration for the architectural response. Students also learned that the unconventional combination of material and construction technique assembled in familiar architectural expression can establish an unexpected dialogue between the ephemeral and the permanent.
Post-graduate Live Projects
Brief: In July 2010 members of OxArch were approached by Pullens Lane Allotments and invited to work with the committee to develop a series strategies to enhance the sense of community and improve the facilities available to allotments holders. The brief sought to enhance the communal space for over 70 individual allotment holders, without the use of mains electrical power or a mains water source. The detailed brief was created through co-design; working with allotment holders to prioritise their needs and aspirations. The most urgent need identified was for a composting toilet, which was designed, constructed and is now successfully in use; built using reclaimed and locally sourced, natural materials. This intervention was used a catalyst around which support and enthusiasm was generated to pursue a more ambitious range of amenities which is on-going in collaboration with the ‘allotmenteers’.

Key Learnings: The students felt that the project gave them great experience of participatory design as they utilised games, workshops and other methods of engagement to empower allotment holders and other stakeholders to fully engage in the process; developing a detailed brief and initial designs in a collaborative way. The process of design was conducted in a very hands on way; creating, testing and reflecting in partnership with allotment holders, continually ‘learning by doing.’ In PLA/LIVE design and knowledge transfer become inseparable; ideas were explored and discussions raised in order to redefine the meaning of sustainability. This meant utilising low-impact/zero carbon design whilst also fostering community and social capital, creating beautiful spaces where inhabitants are empowered to engage and learn in a fun, collaborative way.
VULNERABILITY AND RISK

The role of green technology
Renikhet, INDIA
June-July 2011

Tutor: Melissa Kinnear

Students: Andy Edwards and Sarah Ernst (Sheffield University)

Community Partners: Architecture Sans Frontiers (ASF) UK, SEEDS India, Lok Chetna Manah, Mountain Forum Himalaya, The Walter Guiness Foundation

Brief: This workshop was the second collaboration between ASF UK and SEEDS India, exploring a range of small innovations in green technology from bamboo prototypes for earthquake resistant building to planted walls in the context of vulnerability and risk in the Indian Himalayas. Working alongside a local NGO participants will be able to use participatory tools to engage with the issues affecting the community.

The workshop embodied the developing pedagogy of ASF-UK which can be characterised by the phrase ‘learning in action’. The approach draws on the model of the design studio, which requires students to step out of the familiar didactic process of learning in order to develop judgement, and take responsibility for their own learning. It is problem-based and contextual, confronting real issues, on the ground, working with partners local to the context in question.

Key Learnings: The process allows students the freedom to develop their own ideas from the stimulus they have been given, and by doing so come to terms with a range of possible outcomes. The skill of learning from a problem, and not starting with a series of determined outcomes to choose from, explores how development can be augmented from a ‘top-down’ to ‘bottom-up’ approach.
BUILDING PLOT
Eden Project, UK
Sept 2009 Sept 2010

Tutor: Melissa Kinnear

Lead student: Andy Edwards
Ed Jaques (Glasgow), Jonathon Evans (Bath Univ), Anya Thomas (AA), Alistair Rennie (Brookes), Hanne Van De Berg (formerly Cambridge), Matt Dash, Eamonn Chapman, Junga Park (Brookes), Kyle Bush (Brookes), Andy Beynon

Community Partners: The Eden Project, Cornwall, ASF-UK, Cornwall Probation Service

Sponsors: Awards for All, Big Lottery Fund

Brief: The Building Plot is an on-going research project being driven by a partnership between Architecture Sans Frontières UK (ASF-UK) and the Eden Project to raise awareness about the issues of excess waste in the construction industry and develop more sustainable modes of practice by promoting reuse, innovation and training opportunities. The Building Plot aims to consider the number of unemployed individuals who could play a part in a new generation of sustainable construction workers by creating training courses targeted at sustainability and reuse.

Key Learnings: The learning process was one initiated with a group of volunteers who undertake an in depth study of the local context through the process of harvest mapping which developed into a series of building workshops centred on the process of learning in action specific to ASF-UK’s approach. The process of harvest mapping created a rich database of available resources within a small geographical radius; both material resources and human resources, which could add value to the project. Through a number of learning workshops master-builders, craftsman, students and vulnerable individuals were brought together to explore, create and test built prototypes using exclusively waste and reclaimed materials. The results were not only tangible structures but also a transfer and building of skills and knowledge between all parties involved.
Simple but strong roof construction

Roof and walls well braced

Avoid openings in end walls

Good strong foundations

Careful positioning of doors and windows
Brief: CARE International UK is one of the leading aid agencies involved in post-disaster emergency shelter response. Their on-line “toolkit” provides guidance and advice to humanitarian professionals across the globe. As part of the improvement of the technical guidelines of this toolkit, students from the Development and Emergency Practice masters degree developed real-life prototypes, physical models and graphic material to illustrate good building practice and simple engineering for emergency reconstruction. This work also leads into the development of teaching materials that will be tailored specifically to the needs of house reconstruction after natural disasters. It is intended that this work will be done in partnership with CARE and Save the Children and in co-ordination with other major agencies, to have a direct impact on the quality and safety of homes rebuilt after the devastation of storms, earthquakes or flooding.

Key Learnings: Some students with no technical background discovered that simple engineering principles are not as mysterious as they might have imagined. They all explored ways to communicate basic construction and structural principles to non technical people. No one was left with any doubt that good building practice is vital for ensuring quality and safety in post-disaster reconstruction; but also that simple inexpensive improvements can be easily communicated and implemented.
Brief: The earthquake in Haiti destroyed a quarter of a million homes. The Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) which is part of the School of Architecture and which specialises in Shelter after Disaster was asked to review a design for a temporary home. The design was submitted to structural engineering scrutiny, found wanting and then completely redesigned. The next logical step was to build a prototype in the grounds of the university campus. Over two days, towards the end of February 2010, half a dozen students from the School of Architecture and from the Development and Emergency Practice masters degree constructed the shelter using hand tools and nails. It was finally used to house some of the end of year exhibition.

Key Learnings: The physical construction of the prototype was an invaluable way of demonstrating two very simple techniques in the building of a strong timber frame: good connections through the use of hurricane strapping and well-designed bracing. It was an excellent learning experience for the students as well as being a demonstration of good practice; it found its way on to the UN official co-ordination site as an example of good practice.

CENDEP held a “rapid training” for Haiti in March 2010. The one-week workshop was open to qualified built environment professionals who were currently available to work in the relief effort but who lacked experience. The shelter prototype was used as an example of good construction and the importance of sound engineering. Several of the participants went on to obtain contracts working in Haiti – some of whom remained and continue to work there.
GLOBAL VERSUS LOCAL

Workshop
Ghana
Sept 2011

Student Facilitators:
Ben Powell, Sophie Morley

Community Partners: Architecture Sans Frontiers, VPWA (Volunteer Partnership West Africa), Sabre Trust, UN Habitat

Brief: One paragraph describing the aim of the live project This two week workshop was open to all built environment professionals and postgraduate/masters students interested in sustainable development. The key theme was exploring how a rapidly developing country such as Ghana, is increasingly turning its back on local construction, in favor of western principles perceived as the vision for a modern globalised society. The workshop compared traditional and contemporary construction practice in Ghana and considered the social, economic and environmental impact that the changing practices are having. The outcome of the workshop was a design and construction practicum based around a synthesis of local and global visions for a sustainable future.

Key Learnings: ASF-UK’s workshops embody ‘learning in action’, in which professionals are faced with real developmental challenges. Participants practiced participatory design techniques interacting with the community and sharing skills and knowledge.
GREENING DHARAVI

Urban Agriculture
Mumbai India
January 2011

Student Facilitators:
Caroline Dewast, Sophie Morley

Community Partners:
URBZ User Generated Cities,
SHELTER Dharavi

Brief: URBZ facilitates the production and exchange of information, knowledge, ideas and practices towards better cities for all. Two diploma students, Caroline Dewast and Sophie Morley, were invited by URBZ to organise a number of creative and interactive workshops for children at the Dharavi shelter. Their aim was to raise awareness on environmental issues also the benefits of growing plants which can be an easy thing to achieve even in extremely dense slum areas.

In order to do this they designed activities including a treasure hunt for the children through the streets of Dharavi exploring the hidden gardens and green spaces and a 4m long collage of their ideal garden space. The workshop culminating planting seeds and plants using recycle materials for pots. Through these playful activities we hope that the kids learned the simplicity of growing plants and the importance of the impact it can have to improve any urban environment. The aspiration is that in future the shelter users will create their own small green space in the slum.

Key Learnings: Although the students had run workshops previously, this was their first in such a dense urban environment which proved to be a real challenge. They also felt that working with young people encouraged them to make their process as open and transparent as possible, to ensure they worked collaboratively towards the same aims. They felt that environmental awareness and responsibility can seem complex and daunting to participants, however ‘breaking it down’ into smaller activities using play as a tactic proved an effective process.
This Live Project aimed to integrate peer to peer based education and learning in a new collaborative space; giving a new life to a tired Student Union bar and creating a central space within the campus that helps to bring together staff and students in a stimulating social learning environment. The complex brief and remoteness of the campus requires the space function as a learning zone in the day, whilst still functioning as a communal space in the evenings.

Key Learnings: The project allowed the students to act as project architects, dealing directly with clients, constructors as well as other stakeholders.
**PARTICIPATORY rapid appraisal**

- Stakeholder story understanding community livelihood
- Weaving skill
- Material storage in house

**Semi-structured interview**

- Community mapping

**Sharing & Processing Information**

- Drawing in small groups
- Are women vulnerable?

**PROJECT development**

Seasonal growth:
- Harvest
- Storage harvest
- Material preparation
- Small production
- Big production
- Production storage
- Selling to local tourism
- Selling to global market
- Training & workshops

**INSIDE**
- Core building
**OUTSIDE**
- Front of core building

There is a missing element linking the inside to the outside.

**Designing** a small catalyst project to implement change.

**CONTEXT of Morjim**

Exploring broad context:
- Richest state in India
- "Instable government lead by corruption"
- "Tourism has been said as one of the most important industries"

MORJIM at risk
MORJIM AT RISK
Creating a Space to Empower Women
Morjim, Goa, India
Jan-May 2011

Onsite Tutors: Prof. David Sanderson and Anshu Sharma
Design tutors: Charles Parrack and Melissa Kinnear

Students: Onsite research team: Jackie Cartwright, David Curtis, Natalie Daniels, Caroline Dewast, Hilde Dunker, Lucy Faulkner, Camilla Higgins, Sophie Morley, Daniela Mota, Kim Swallowe, David Smith, Martina Tomassini, Stephanie Wolfgang and Michele Young.

Community Partners: The International Centre Goa, Mr Sawant, Headmaster of Vidyaprasarak, Rekha Shenoy, Puja Batra, Dean d’Cruz, Prachi Pinglay of the BBC, Maria d’Souza, the Goan Café, Susegat and all the citizens of Morjim.

Brief: The aim of the live project was primarily to explore Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods of engagement. Through these tool students carried out a livelihood assessment: to identify the most vulnerable and why, map the key stakeholders of Morjim, identify three key threats and opportunities and assess the threats of climate change and any adaptation measures planned or underway. The second phase of the project back in Oxford was to design a solution responding to the issues identified onsite.

Key Learnings: The live project enabled a hands-on experience of participatory methods of engagement, learning to work with vulnerable communities. The project aspired to expose students to the complexities of the ground in order to understand potential mechanism of unlocking the access to basic needs and services. The design project development aimed at responding to the identified threats and opportunities enabling architecture to become a catalyst for development.
Brief: Thame is a village in Oxfordshire with a resident population of 11,000. Cuts to public services have meant that Local authorities are required to work with less capital investment and are seeking practical ways to reduce revenue expenditure. The proposed co-location of the fire and police station will significantly reduce overheads on premises and presents an opportunity and a challenge in terms of sharing resources whilst maintaining services. Students Laura and Steven began by meeting with the various stakeholders; ranging from council planning officials, the police and the fire people to gain a better understanding of their needs and aspirations. The limit on resources meant that imagination and tenacity were required.

Key Learnings: The students felt that they identified that they were designing service as well as spatial solutions. The complex relationship between the two different agencies shaped the configurations that were adopted, and led to the design decisions with regards to site layout, overlapping functions, access routes and parking. The experience of running a project and dealing with the everyday and mundane issues surrounding real clients proved invaluable, giving the students experience that has changed the way they see architecture in practice.
OXFORD PROBATION SERVICE

Public-Private Street-Service Interface
Oxford, UK
Oct-Nov 2011

Students: Yuting Cheng and Gregor Cernelc
Tutors: Harriet Harriss and Dan Jones
Community Partners: Lou Everett, Senior Probation Officer, Oxford Probation Service

Brief: The Oxford Probation Service had recently moved to a new location opposite the courts, after a hard won battle to relocate their services closer to the courts and city centre. One of the challenges facing probation services in general is the resistance from local residents amid fears that their clients will increase criminal activities in their area. Formerly and administrative building, the centre has built a functional reception area where clients await meetings with officers, requiring a level of privacy. The students design brief therefore sought to improve the presence of the probation service by creating an engaging façade and entrance to the building. One that would improve the waiting experience for the clients and also been seen by the passing public as an engaging, artistic and attractive design feature. Students Yuting and Gregor met with Lou Everett-Fletcher off site due to the sensitivity of the assignment. Together, they discussed evidence gathered by the probation service on user needs, both in terms of the service providers and service users. The students were then able to visit the site and act as observers, discreetly considering how the space was being used by the clients and also the way in which the public tended to approach the building.

Key Learnings: The students designs aimed to act as a visual provocation to reverse the roles of “watcher” and “subject”, hoping to challenge the stereotype of “offender” from the observer’s standpoint, emphasizing the connection to the street or “public realm” to reorient and reconnect clients with the outside world. This project also taught the students good relationships with strong lines of communication with the client.
Will and Rich participated in a range of meetings and workshops with the clients and the users. This gave them the chance to develop capabilities as co-designers. The idea that they developed requires ongoing, interactive engagement even after it has been built as pushes the idea of flexible, responsive and participatory design to its limit. The final design is in essence a kit of parts that slotted together, to be built by the student community, who would then take ownership over the hub. The walls of the hub slot into place and articulate in different directions to create tables or individual spaces. The surface of these walls are made from different materials, including blackboard or corkboard, allowing the students to write and pin items to them, the hub then creates a story during its time at a certain site that captures the contribution of all involved.

Key Learnings: The students felt that ‘real’ user consultations proved invaluable. At first it seemed difficult to work with the client to determine what they wanted as they didn’t have a clear brief, but eventually a flexible design was developed. It was also the first time they had to design within a ‘budget’ however this lead to some interesting design solutions that responded directly to the clients needs.
During days of higher wedding flow, both staircases will be used to prevent clashes of people moving in different directions.

Secure spaces are located further into the building, away from visitor circulation.

The reception desk is placed such that a single receptionist can address both groups of visitors in separate spaces.

The two groups of visitors are separated as early as possible to minimise shared spaces.

First Floor

Ground Floor
Key Learnings: Nicholas felt that despite having completed his first Practical Training Year, he had never before worked directly with a client. In doing so he identified that ‘getting all the stakeholders involved right at the beginning’ was crucial to encourage stakeholder engagement, but also helped him get a better sense of a greater set of requirements that were not written down in the brief.

Nicholas felt that, ‘Perhaps my biggest learning was that sometimes clients want things they can’t have, and that sometimes the client is not one person but a group of people whose conflicting desires can make taking a clear and focused idea forward quite a challenge to an architect. The ability to manage relationships is clearly of huge importance in terms of the success or failure of a project.’

Brief: County Hall, a Grade II listed building is adjacent to the main council offices and the castle complex. The county council intention is to relocate its existing registry office into this building. Client priorities require that proposals involve no new building and deliver a historically as well as functionally sensitive but affordable solution that embeds the facility the castle complex. The difficulty of the project lies in the requirement to accommodate grieving people coming to register deaths in the same space as a high number of large, celebratory wedding parties.
Brief: SOS is an Oxford based charity focussed upon protecting endangered Orang-utans in Sumatra. SOS tasked the students with designing an Eco Lodge in Sumatra that focuses on promoting awareness of conserving the local habitat for the Orang-utans, as well as providing a base camp for the SOS conservation volunteers and researchers in partnership with the local indigenous community.

Key Learnings: The students felt that working with the client in Oxford and in Sumatra was quite challenging. Lack of regular internet access in Sumatra meant long delays waiting for key site information.

However, they enjoyed running an ‘international’ project, although the face to face contact was really important. The close client relationship meant that they didn’t have to keep changing their designs. The students also worked hard to develop designs that both responded to the local vernacular and used traditional building techniques.

They also organised their group as if they were running a small practice office, and worked collaboratively but also ‘worked to our strengths’ and ‘perhaps most importantly we learned a lot from each other by sharing our skills.’
Oxford Academy is a state school for 11-18 year olds located in Littlemore, on the outskirts of the city. The Academy was built in the 1960’s and has been undergoing partial redevelopment. However, there are a number of smaller projects that urgently needed design input but were outside of the budget. These included a welcome sign for the school and a warm up/cool down space (known as a trim trail) between the playing fields and the sports changing rooms. The client has insisted that these elements needed to be affordable, practical and deliverable. Past attempts to meet these requirements by designers had proved unsuccessful due to financial and spatial constraints. There were a number of stakeholders including the City Council, school staff, pupils and the project architects that influenced the project development. In essence, the students were asked to work on sections of the school that the architects involved in the redevelopment did not consider a priority. The students chose to consider these ‘neglected’ elements as small-scale projects with big impact potential. This was most effectively demonstrated in how they handled the trim trail, transforming the ambition of the brief into an outdoor classroom facility for the whole school, providing spaces to learn, socialise, spectate, relax and reflect. This gave them the chance to develop capabilities as co-designers. The first week was relatively slow moving and consisted of researching cladding solutions without a real understanding of the site and constraints. After seven days of stagnation they visited the Academy and finally got an opportunity to understand the incredibly limited financial situation. The issue of not having material or money, although initially disconcerting, actually provided...
stimulation for the students to produce a more considered design. They spent the next week phoning local and national businesses with the goal of attaining some sponsorship for the project be it materials or funding. This proved very successful and they managed to get various companies across Oxford to agree to help them without even needing to perform a ‘hard sell’. Buildbase, Timbnet and Trespa were very keen to offer materials and off-cuts from their factories.

Working out who would help construct their classroom, with the hope of using the pupils, teachers, parents and the local community revealed the extent of the stakeholder desire to participate in the process. Finally in designing in a very real way, the students felt they made a tangible contribution to the school’s learning facilities.

Key Learnings: In the words of the students, it was actually really hard work! However, we considered this to the most valuable project we have done at university so far, to get away from the fantasy world of architectural education provided a refreshing chance to gain different skills. One of the main things we learned was the need to work faster. Compared to the time we are given in University to develop designs, the world of practice runs at a much quicker pace. The most important aspect to our designs was the research and sourcing we compiled. We wanted the schemes to be as realistic as possible, creating designs which were feasible for the Academy to consider and carry out. We spent a lot of time on this, which may of hindered our designs, but I was pleased with the outcomes. The projects were structured around the materials we could realistically obtain and how we integrated the design with the National Curriculum. The project also developed our ability to manage our architect/contractor/supplier relationships. This was due to the requirement of researching and sourcing local companies to make this project a reality.
Acknowledgements


Links: www.storymuseum.org.uk • www.oxfordmail.co.uk/archive/2011/10/25/Oxford+news+%28om_oxfordnews%29/9323193.Story+telling+chairs+designed+by+students/ • ob1architecture.blogspot.com/

OB1 LIVE 08: ‘Now Showing’ Oxford Brookes Campus Feb 2011


Links: architecture.brookes.ac.uk/galleries/ob1/ • ob1architecture.blogspot.com/
OB1 LIVE 07: ‘The public face of Film’ Oxford UK Oct 2011


Links: architecture.brookes.ac.uk/galleries/ob1/ • www.ofvm.org/ • ob1architecture.blogspot.com/

OB1LIVE 05: Strategies for place improvement Oxford UK Oct 2010


Links: architecture.brookes.ac.uk/galleries/ob1/ • ob1architecture.blogspot.com/ www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/headlines/4795918.Brookes_students_have_designs_on_city_square/
OB1 LIVE 06: International Student Architecture Festival 2010 Stratford High St, London and Mount Place, Oxford UK July 2010
Students: Tash Barry, Valentina Billios, Sarah Bevan, Debbie Botham, Jack Case, Joe Chilvers, Joe Giddings, Matt Gibbs, Helena Howard, Vaagisha Kapur, Ryan Kingsnorth, Marko Milovanovic, Stiliyana Minkovska, Charlie Palmer, Joe Penn, Louisa Preece, Bryony Preston, Shaun Ryder, Matt Sawyer, Dan Sweeting, Grace Wong, Sarish Younis
http://architecture.brookes.ac.uk/galleries/ob1/ http://ob1architecture.blogspot.com/


Sugar Lane Allotments (PLA:/LIVE) Oxford UK Sept 2010
Students: Andy Edwards, Sophie Morley, Alex Towler, Ben Powell. Pullens Lane Allotment community Pullens Lane Allotment, SCF; Student Community Fund

Vulnerability and Risk: June Ranikhet, India June-July 2011
Melissa Kinnear, Andrew Edwards + Sarah Ernst (Sheffield University) Architecture Sans Frontières UK (ASF-UK), SEEDS India, Lok Chetna Manch, Mountain Forum Himalayas. The Walter Guinness Foundation.

Building Plot Eden Project Cornwall UK Sept 2009 and 2010
Melissa Kinnear, Andy Edwards, Ed Jaques (Glasgow), Jonathon Evans (Bath Univ), Anya Thomas (AA), Alistair Rennie (Brookes), Hanne Van De Berg (formerly Cambridge), Matt Dash, Eamonn Chapman, Junga Park (Brookes), Kyle Bush (Brookes), Andy Beynon, The Eden Project, ASF-UK, LIVE Projects, Cornwall Probation Service, Awards for All, Big Lottery Fund
http://buildingplot2010.wordpress.com,

CARE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY TOOLKIT Oxford UK Mar 2011
Tutors: Bill Flinn Charles Parrack Students: Dave Curtis, David Smith, Anne Foley, Simon Harris, Guled Hassan and Rebecca Corn, CARE international, Kate Crawford

HURRICANE RESISTANT HOME (PROTOYPE, OXORD UK) Feb 2010
Tutors: Bill Flinn Charles Parrack Students: years 2/3 and diploma, Shelter after Disaster Program, Emergency Shelter Cluster Haiti
https://sites.google.com/site/shelterhaiti2010/

Local Vs Global workshop GHANA Sept 2011
Ben Powell, Sophie Morley, Architecture sans Frontiers, VPWA (Volunteer Partnership West Africa), Sabre Trust, UN Habitat
www.localvsglobal.wordpress.uk, www.asf-uk.org
Greening Dharavi, Urban Agriculture, Mumbai, India Jan 2011
Sophie Morley, Caroline Dewast, URBZ user generated cities, Shelter Dharavi
http://urbz.net/

Student Hub Harcourt Hill, Oxford Brookes University Jul 2011
Gareth Leech; Neil Burgess; Tutors: Matt Gaskin, Head of School, Harriet Harriss (RIBA) Senior Lecturer in Architecture
http://liveharcourthill.blogspot.com/

MORJIM AT RISK space to empower women INDIA Jan-May 2011
Lead student: Caroline Dewast. Onsite tutors: Prof. David Sanderson and Anshu Sharma Design tutors: Charles Parrack and Melissa Kinnear. Onsite research team: Jackie Cartwright, David Curtis, Natalie Daniels, Caroline Dewast, Hilde Dunker, Lucy Faulkner, Camilla Higgins, Sophie Morley, Daniela Mota, Kim Swallowe, David Smith, Martina Tomassini, Stephanie Wolfgang, and Michele Young. Centre for Development Practice Masters. The International Centre Goa, Mr Sawant, Headmaster of Vidyaprasarak, Rekha Shenoy, Puja Batra, Dean d’Cruz, Prachi Pinglay of the BBC, Maria d’Souza, the Goan Café, Susegat, and all the citizens of Morjim.
http://morjimatrisk.wordpress.com/

THAME FIRE and POLICE, OXFORDSHIRE, UK Oct-Nov 2011
Tutors: Harriet Harriss (RIBA) Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Dan Jones (RIBA) Director Civic Architects. Students: Steven Jones, Laura Norton Oxford County Council; Nigel Cunning, Hannah Wright Oxfordshire fire and rescue service: Peter Cleary, community safety thames valley police: Natalie Harvey, project officer, property services, Paul Purkis, business manager.
http://fireandpolice.blogspot.com/

Tutors: Harriet Harriss (RIBA) Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Dan Jones (RIBA) Director Civic Architects. Students: Yuting Cheng and Gregor Cernelc Community Partners: Lou Everett, Senior Probation Officer, Oxford Probation Service
http://yutingcheng.blogspot.com/

Tutors: Harriet Harriss (RIBA) Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Dan Jones (RIBA) Director Civic Architects. Student: Nicholas Addrison Nigel Cunning, Oxford County Council.

Tutors: Harriet Harriss (RIBA) Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Dan Jones (RIBA) Director Civic Architects. Students: Sam Mitson, Andrew Mckelvie, Dhiran Patel, Sirwan Qutbi. Community Partners: Helen Buckland, Director SOS.
http://dhirenpatelids2.blogspot.com/

http://willjgamble.blogspot.com/

http://natashalofthouse.blogspot.com/?zx=d0c88aae1ea15a44
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