Introduction

Undergraduate

First year

Vertical units A-H

Interior Architecture units

Postgraduate

Design Studios DS1-6

Special Routes/Masters:

International Architectural Regeneration and Development

Energy Efficient and Sustainable Building

Advanced Architectural Design

Urban Design

Development and Emergency Practice

Major Study

Research Degrees

RIBA Office-Based Examination

London Festival of Architecture/Prizes

Staff/credits
Introduction

The School of the Built Environment with its three constituent departments – Architecture, Planning, and Real Estate and Construction – is widely recognised as one of the world's leading centres for research and teaching in this field. Professional education lies at the heart of the School's activities yet, as the work included here demonstrates, professionalism does not in any way preclude creativity. In fact, quite the opposite: as the issues facing the planet become ever more pressing, the need becomes all the greater for creative approaches that not only provide solutions to immediate problems but contribute to new ways of thinking about the challenges we face. The work presented here shows how students at all levels in the Department of Architecture, from first year undergraduate upwards, are developing their creative abilities in ways that suggest they will go on to make a significant and creative contribution to the profession. As ever, I am pleased to write this foreword and unashamedly proud of the work contained in this yearbook.

Prof John Raftery
Pro Vice Chancellor
Dean, School of the Built Environment

Welcome to the Oxford Architecture Yearbook 2008, which showcases some of the student work carried out during 2007-08.

The year has seen a further expansion of the activities of the school, with eight Vertical Units in the BA and six DS studios in the Diploma. The introduction of new units has further enriched the diversity of the educational experience provided by the school. This has been reinforced by the re-shaping of our studios. Two large studios now accommodate students from second to sixth year in a learning environment where students learn from one another as much as from their tutors.

Highlights of the year included the Designs on the Planet workshop, attended by two-thirds of the UK's architecture schools, which explored ways of addressing climate change within the design studio. The Designs on the Planet agenda was taken up by SCHOSA – the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture – and is being rolled out to architecture schools nationwide.

Closer to home, Diploma students devised a weekly series of workshops on sustainable construction, which thanks to sponsorship from Ibstock will be repeating next year. Not to be outdone, first year undergraduates created an installation for the London Festival of Architecture which intrigued and delighted visitors to London's South Bank for two days in July.

Intrigue and delight were also the hallmarks of a major exhibition at the National Gallery of Arts in Albania. Curated by gallery director Rubens Shima, The City: Visions and Realities presented work from students of architecture and fine art at Oxford Brookes together with work by contemporary Albanian artists and students from Tirana. In a city undergoing massive expansion, the exhibition interrogated the urban experience and set out visions and strategies for change – and provided a ringing endorsement of the status of the work now being created in the school.

Prof Mark Swenarton
Head of the Department of Architecture

Facing page: The City: Visions and Realities exhibition at the National Gallery of Arts, Tirana, July - September 2008 (poster design by Genti Gjikola, Paul Nicholls, Adam Holloway).
First Year
BA Hons Architecture/Interior Architecture


This year we focused on architecture and the body through architectural design, critical thinking and experimentation. Semester one began with the construction of a made-to-measure device that would fulfill our intimate and functional requirements at a 1:1 scale. This was followed by the design of a shop to meet the needs of Cowley Road in Oxford. Semester two moved to the mind, with a house for an obsessive collector in Angel Meadow. The projects reflect the dynamic, physical and cultural contexts of the site, a collection and the book that inspired them.

Together we challenged conventions and explored new territories. We used a variety of forms of representation, integrated new modes of communication (ob1architecture.blogspot.com) and architectural exploration in preparation for the complexities facing the architects of the future (with thanks to Adam Arts, Nick Hayhurst, Stefan Kogler, Judith Loesing, Tim Rettler, Stefanie Schulze-Westrum, Takero Shimazaki, Peter Tompkins).
Facing page: Michael Bell, Shipwrecked; below: James Simcock Frankenstein’s House. Overleaf, clockwise from left: Ben Northover, House for Jeeves and Wooster; Aaron Browndown, Cowley laundrette; Hannah Davies, Princess and the Pea; John Hodgkins, Rehab House; Charlotte Griffits, Dream Catchers House; Lucy Dickson, Hide house: Seek house; Astrid Bois D’Enghien, House for a blind war veteran
Contemporary geographies are no longer bound together by the corporeal fabric of stuff but by attention spans, wireless flows and 24-hour television. The world of objects has been supplant by a world of exchanges and networks, invisible maps searching for territories, a new hybrid of landscape and event. ‘Place’ has become a shifting form of performance as these event-based organisational systems define communities and identities. Within the unit each year a specific event typology is examined, questioned and re-imagined in order to conjure alternative visions of the city. This year we followed the billowing dust of the Dakar Rally, peering through the veil of debris to engage struggling local nomadic communities. Working at micro and macro scales, sustainable ecologies of mutable architectures and event-based infrastructures were proposed. They are architectural responses that are neither built edifice nor dynamic organism but something in between (with thanks to Abi Abdolwahabi, Adam Arts, Darryl Chen, Jennifer Chen, Kate Davis, Andreas Helgesson, Matt Lucas and Barney Vaughan-Spruce).
We are concerned with site-sensitive architecture that relates to its time and place, continuously adjusting, responding and reacting to fit itself to the present state of its environment and inhabitants. Nothing stays still. Indeed, the only constant is change itself. It seems that reaction and interaction are pre-requisites for inhabiting an environment and sheltering occupants in such a level of flux. Why therefore should architecture be static?

Can a building not interact with its environment, be aware of those within and without, the changing weather and the movement of time? Form an alliance with those inhabiting it, seamlessly flow with the changing tides and the shifting winds, to form a constant; something beyond this flux which can be grasped hold of - the identity of that specific place? The unit explored these ideas, starting with an immersion in the site, including the design, making and use of a site-measuring device. An initial response to the site was made to capture something of its essence as a memento. This understanding then fed the major design projects for a weather station and a sailing school.
‘In this age of environmental concerns, some might be aghast at a study of driving. However, if we are to deal with the congestion, pollution, energy consumption and dangers that cars help create, we must consider that the politics of driving necessarily includes a consideration of the pleasures of driving in order to understand why people will not simply abandon cars even if affordable and efficient public transport were suddenly available’ (Iain Borden).

The focus of the Unit C studio was the critical study of the pleasure of driving. It emerged as a response to Iain Borden’s comment and took its title from Mitchell Schwarzer’s book Zoomscape (2004). Initially, the studio used filmmaking as a method by which to study both the site of the first project (the M40 strip from Oxford to Westway in London) and the experience of driving across the English landscape. This led to the design of an ideal ‘House of the Future’ which accommodated the needs of nomadic communities and the continuous traveller. Damon Ball embraced the brief by designing expandable ‘ladybird’ style carriages which attached to one’s vehicle and
plugged into refueling centres located all over the world and designed to float with rising water levels.

In semester two, using the BMW plant Oxford as a site, the studio investigated the consumption of cars as commercial fetish. Duncan Van Ellemeet adopted an interactive approach, designing a car part showroom ‘shelving unit’ in which, in the mode of shopping at IKEA, people could assemble their vehicle on site. Van Ellemeet’s project was self sustaining, making the energy it used from steam power. Conversely, Tom James reacted to the wasteful consumption of car sales. He designed a television-building which deliberately discouraged the buying of new cars. On its exterior screen it exhibits images of car accidents. On its interior, cars are dropped from a great height to show their fragility and the futility of buying a new car. Laboratory coats for the tour guides were designed to question the propaganda associated with car advertising.
The International Development and Emergency Practice (IDEP) studio explores the challenges of making appropriate interventions within low-income neighbourhoods, by looking at the social, economic and political undercurrents of a given place.

This year’s programme centred on Alexandra Township, a dense low income settlement of some 350,000 people located within Johannesburg in South Africa. Probably the wealthiest city in Africa, ‘Joburg’ has one of the world’s highest crime rates, while South Africa itself has one of the greatest recorded inequalities between rich and poor anywhere in the world.

Students engaged in a variety of activities including researching and role-playing the residents of ‘Alex’, invading a nearby site, becoming architectural design teams, and subsequently developing design schemes. These included HIV and AIDS clinics, waste recycling centres, performance space, a police station and housing.
January’s study tour focused on three aspects of Joburg life. The first was ‘architecture of the struggle’, commemorating the fight against Apartheid. The second concerned kitsch – the brash architecture of casinos and shopping malls, often copied from Italian renaissance.

The third aspect was low-income settlements. Two days were spent in Alex, hosted by the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP), a large-scale initiative which is building low-income housing and providing facilities and infrastructure.

The challenge throughout the visit was to ask the question, ‘I see what I see, but what am I looking at?’ Too often judgements are made on the physical aspects of settlements alone, without considering the non-visible elements such as politics, social differences and wealth that make up a city’s fabric.
Open School was a reciprocal agenda which took the architecture studio out of the university and brought users of space (school children) into the architecture studios. The unit considered a permeability of educational space physically, through the architectural proposals, as well as socially, through the research work.

The unit entered a live competition to propose a design for an existing derelict seaside pier, imposing its own agenda of designing a school for the pier with each student developing their own brief. The unit looked at a range of ‘open’ educational spaces, such as dance, mobile, environmental and nature study schools.

Pleasure and amusements were driving concepts for the schools, using the precedent of Coney Island in New York, with its infinite possibilities for reinvention. Proposals ranged from a massive physical intervention to an ‘invisible’ architecture, with the emphasis upon a sustainable approach.

In the spirit of openness, tutorials, working studios and crits were taken out of the
university and onto the beach, as well as other seaside public spaces and piers. The pier design was then brought back into the school, as gifts for children. These varied from a designed computer game to sand models, magic tricks and pocket architectures. The designs were then developed through a series of creative workshops with the children, who came from Bayards Hill Primary School in Barton, Oxford.

The final study was of the existing primary school, where students selected to design one of three options: a classroom, using retrieved materials from a fictional arson attack, with the possibility of a physical openness in its location; an entrance, using self-build to open the space up to parents and families to recreate the school; or the total reconfiguration of the school space to open the school up to the wider space of the city and beyond. Projects ranged from an underground bunker classroom embedded within the playing field/orchard, to architectural interventions and events in the city, created by children, which flow back into the school as spatial interruptions to the existing buildings.
As the rising seas threaten London, a new Thames barrier is built between Kent and Essex. An ‘Edge City’, comprising various fundamental, bad neighbour, and semi-legal building types, comes into being in the lagoon thus formed. Las Vegas, Dubai, and Venice, settlements characterised and indeed defined by their isolated circumstances and dramatic architecture, were some of the early references.

In the first semester students analysed the history, geology and sociology of the site, and were each given two recognised artists to study, representing mood or ethos, and tectonic sculpture. Using these tools, and exercises in collage and modelling, they developed their individual masterplans.

In the second semester, after a unit trip to Venice and Rome, students focused in on one structure/building type within their masterplan. Individual briefs were developed based on one of the building types they had been asked to include on their ‘Island of Life and Death’. The resulting piece of architecture formed the main detailed design project of the year, typically
springing from their masterplan project and the sculptural and philosophical investigations which had occurred as part of that work.

Unit F started the year by designing a whole settlement, by looking at the big issues at a large scale. What does any settlement need in order for it to provide for the physical, mental and spiritual needs of its inhabitants? What is the role of a church in today’s contentious and often secular culture? What do we think about prisons? Are they there to punish or to teach? How close can a society get to the reality of death? We think of Venice’s San Michele cemetery island....

By the end of the year students had learned that detail and small scale is as important as the bigger picture and that, as architects, we must be athletic in dealing gracefully with both.
This year the unit was concerned with transportation infrastructure, the relationship between local and international, the transient nature of city, urban influx and the re-introduction of the airship as mass transport.

The airship was chosen for its ability to connect communities and cities, to make journey an investment of time and experience, and for its inherent energy efficiency. Brick Lane was chosen as it represents edge city – on the cusp of the financial district of London, yet filled with a transitory community that is in a constant state of socio-economic, cultural and communal change.

Students were asked first to deal with the local – an urban villa designed to their fetish and specification. The second part of the brief, the airship terminal, explored the possibility of national and international transit from the heart of London. Projects ranged from huge towers that react to the wind, enveloping airships in their fabric, to vertical urban farm/hotels and massive concourses with beautiful folding roof structures.
The unit ethos and commitment was to weave through the complexities and contradictions surrounding the subject of sustainability, with a focus on domestic architecture.

From a formal point of view, the aim of the unit was to investigate the language of sustainable architecture, to criticise existing stigmas and stereotypes, and to develop propositional models informed by the playful interaction between material sources, production cycles and design rationales.

In particular, we were interested in nature and human intervention in it as a source of inspiration. We were looking at the planet as a resource of form diversity and were considering how this is modelled by the elements and how this could feed designers with abstract ideas of art forms, which could be expressed architecturally, in consideration of environmental applications.

The design curriculum for the year was split into three projects. Project 1 was a playful exercise aiming at familiarising students with
the use of energy and resources by mapping creatively a domestic routine of choice. This project formed a transition into Project 2 via a field trip to the Isle of Wight, which involved camping, as a means to provide a comparative parameter to the exercise carried out at home, and as a way to absorb the character and nature of the location which sited both projects 2 and 3.

Project 2 consisted of the design of an autonomous shelter for a discrete form of habitation, such as a writer’s retreat, a beach hut or other, inspired by the site visit.

Project 3 engaged the students with the design of a Centre for Marine Ecology. This had to host a variety of programmes, spanning from research labs to large-scale hydroponic cultivations as well as a variety of inhabitants, such as students, visitors and members of the new community who service the centre.
Second year students spent the first semester thinking about how to model interiors. Looking at the abstraction that occurs as one reduces scale. Starting by considering the difference between a scaled architectural model and a dolls house. An architectural model being the abstraction of architectural form and the space it contains, the dolls house an abstraction of all the bits and pieces that the space contains. The architect’s model is concerned with material, volume and light; the dolls house is more with the use of the space and the objects associated with that use. Does the dolls house contain lessons to learn in terms of its ability to open and close, its mobile relationship to context and its longer and more dynamic lifespan as a toy?

Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, the award-winning architectural practice based in London
and Bath, are designing the newly refurbished facilities at the Pegasus Theatre, Oxford; the client, public art consultant, planners, other design team members as well as the architects are currently engaged in lively debates about the new design. It provided an ideal opportunity for the third year students to oversee a ‘live’ project, to appreciate the different roles that the various parties have in the design process, and to try and extend these ideas in conjunction with their own.

By researching different theatre and performance types, the students analysed how an exemplar layout would work for a chosen performance within the chosen theatre variant. Then, after a presentation from the client and the project architect, they had to refine the design to take site and practical constraints into consideration. ‘A performance has a narrative expressed by the motion of the dancers, the speeches of the actors, the music of the players. Tragic. Comic. Poignant.’
For the second semester we looked at design competitions: their various forms, ways of thinking and graphic language. Firstly there is the open ideas competition, whose entries are not usually intended to be built but to disseminate new and maybe radical ideas and open discussion. Secondly there is the invited competition where a select group are invited to submit proposals for a specific project, the prize being not a public stage but the chance to build. This style of competition becoming a form of patronage is often not followed in the media until the project is completed.

The brief asked the students to undertake two competitions. The first was a short ideas competition for an exhibition by Architecture, Interior Architecture and Fine Art students from Oxford Brookes in the National Gallery of Arts in Albania. This two-week competition challenged the students to design a proposal for the layout of this exhibition, a demountable installation or display system that was able to exhibit a variety of media: drawings, models, projections, installations, text.

The second was an invited competition
organized by the Architecture Foundation to redesign the permanent collection and temporary exhibition space for the Museum of Garden History in the grade-2 listed church of St Mary’s Lambeth.

Finally, News Room explored news and the media. The TV in the front room opens an opportunity to experience other places, but also for TV companies to infiltrate our living space and project their version of events inside our subconscious defence. A polished version of the world awaits us at the touch of a button or a flick of a switch, yet increasingly this airbrushed version has been dramatized as reportage becomes more ‘real’, as endeavours are made to bring us ‘closer to the news, wherever it is, whenever it occurs’. Through a series of models and films, the students were asked to design a device that presented an aspect of the news of their own choosing. They then had to show this device in a public and private context. How could this system of broadcasting challenge the way that these two different environments were designed and how people interacted within them?
This year’s programme involved designing a new Pavilion for the Venice Biennale.

The British Pavilion in the Giardini was originally built in 1887 by the Italian engineer Enrico Trevisanato as a restaurant to serve the International Art Exhibition, a forerunner of the first Venice Biennale founded in 1895. It was bought for Britain by a group of private benefactors in 1909 and re-modelled into a gallery the same year by the British architect Edwin Rickards. Since 1938 the UK’s international cultural relations agency, the British Council, has been responsible for the British Pavilion, presenting many of the UK’s foremost artists at the Biennale of Art.

In semester one each student was paired with a living British creative: artist, designer, writer, philosopher, film maker, journalist. An exhibition of the creative’s work formed a preliminary short project and this was re-introduced at the end of the year as the first installation in the new Pavilion.

Students were encouraged to think about
the broader issues at stake - political and sociological as well as aspects of ‘national characteristics’; those general assumptions made by ourselves as ‘British’ or the generalisations made by people from other countries about us.

The proposition was to define ‘Pavilion’ in the broadest possible sense. The design project started during the field trip to Venice in semester one. The site was not necessarily that of the existing building and students were expected to find and research their preferred location during the visit.

In making a proposal for the new British Pavilion, we had the chance to offer a new and more appropriate facility for celebrating art and design; one which was far more than an inherited vessel. There was also a need for a re-evaluation of what it means to represent British creativity outside Britain.
'The purpose of the Polytechnic is to be a forum for the study of urban life and the production of ideas and artworks that enable participants and audiences to imagine and enact formal, civic, surprising, critical, helpful, questioning, funny, difficult, spirited, profound, demanding, beautiful, fleeting or perpetual interactions with the city, with other places, and with each other, that do not involve commercial exchange' (Ruth Maclennan, Polytechnical Institute for the Study of the Expanding Field of Radical Urban Life: A Manifesto, 2007). Architectural proposals were sought for existing and additional departments. These included the Department of Political and Social Recovery: the Lingering Place, Department of Contextual Readjustment, Hidden Museum of Archway, Department of Conductivity and Receptivity, Department of Density and Materials: Air Exchange, Department of Metamorphosis, Department of Chance Encounters and Opportunity, Department of Ear Cleaning, Department of By-Product Synergy, Department of Escapism, Department of Domestic Arts, Department of Jewish Reflection and Continuity, Department of Marx and McLuhan: the Hour of the Wolf.
DS3 projects explore the creation of connections: visual, physical and cultural.

This involves an engagement with site and a concern for discerning thresholds, not just the physical point of entry into and exit from buildings but also the invisible or almost imperceptible lines and boundaries that define territories.

This year’s theme focused on the notion of former prime minister Tony Blair bequeathing a building to the nation (of unspecified programme) as a legacy of his ten years in office.

The site for the project is located in the city of Durham, where Tony Blair spent his childhood, and is focused around the redundant ice rink in the city centre on the banks of the River Wear.

The stages of the project involved successively the design of a panopticon; an installation exploring the ten years in office of Tony Blair; and the legacy building itself.
‘Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument. Everything else that fulfils a function is to be excluded’ (Adolf Loos, 1910).

DS4 set out to investigate the legitimacy or otherwise of the above statement. The question posed was, ‘to what extent might usefulness interfere with or instead underpin architecture?’

During the course of the year we looked at three increasingly complex buildings: first a tomb for the student; then a multi-storey car park for 1000 vehicles; and finally a secondary school for 1000 pupils.

The tomb revealed personal histories, experience and beliefs, and it provoked some to express agnosticism and atheism. Projecting personality and conveying emotion proved more important than self-conscious aesthetic production. Many responded by making – casting, sewing – a maquette, some wrote, some drew, one made a film, and another a book.

Next, working in groups of three, DS4 produced six films and six car parks. Matter, obliquity and scale here proved to be the protagonists. It began with the car (and events
observed in car parks) but at a certain point algorithms, the properties of clay and timber, and the art of origami – in effect a chosen methodology or process, and reflection on a process – took over.

Finally, pedagogy, a vision of society, an attitude to Oxford and the meadow (and incidentally to James Stirling’s Florey Building), and geometry and matter enabled the school to eschew populism and a certain predictability. The successful schools proved to ‘function’ in that they exhibited both literal utilitarian characteristics (spatial and technical) and a deeper meta-functional nature, which may variously be described as social logic, material order or an ethical dimension. In effect they created enduring usefulness, in which significance, or the meaning a society ascribes to a building, becomes of vital importance.

The work of DS4 pitches the visceral aspects of matter and building against the functional and meta-functional aspects of buildings.
Nightmare Town looked at the dense core of London, in particular Soho. Here the old dubious and seductive pleasures of the city, its clubs, cafés and pubs rub up against the old staples of the movie and garment industry, the open vegetable market, art materials shops, and the newer influx of digital media and advertising companies.

The project started from the standpoint of designing from the detail of an interior, its objects and furnishings, for a particular cast of characters with a complex series of relationships. Three characters were then developed and seen as actors in a film. Each inhabited a set of rooms. The rooms and buildings they inhabit are seen as sets in a location.

The architect’s job is seen as providing the art by which everyday life is seen as theatre (with thanks to Olaf Bartels, Susanne Hoffmann, Saskia Lewis, Rolf Zimmermann).
Fields are multi-dimensional. They can be mundane or fantastic. They can be visible or invisible: but respond to detection. Fields have influence upon one another.

The unit investigated invisible fields through detection and mapping devices – radio waves, postal routes, wireless signals. Brick Lane was analysed using these devices and projects were developed to integrate the information collected; a new city topography was created.

Students were asked to propose a system – initially based around their invisible field findings and the creation of an airship terminal for Brick Lane – that created a dialogue between local, national and international fields.

This system manifested itself in diverse architecture propositions, ranging from a communal housing scheme with tea import and fermentation capabilities to entire cities in the sky.
Facing page, from top: Fiona Maclellan, site sections; Fiona Maclellan, winter tea room, below: Stuart Mansell, floating city site montage; David Werren. Overleaf: Iskandar Malek, airship terminal.
The International Architectural Regeneration and Development (IARD) programme aims to provide students with the knowledge, tools and skills that will enable them to play an active role in the re-use and enhancement of the built environment, including vernacular architecture. The regeneration and development project is the opportunity to put the theory into practice through a ‘real’ project.

This year the location for the international field study project was the village of Akcicek in Northern Cyprus. Drawing on the theoretical knowledge gained in the first semester, on returning to Oxford, the students work in groups to develop area-based regeneration strategies followed by individual projects developing one aspect of intervention in greater depth.

The aims of the project were to explore culturally and politically sensitive interventions that would support the conservation of historic buildings, promote sustainable development and make the village a desirable place to live.
The Energy Efficient and Sustainable Design programme aims to engage students with principles of social and environmental sustainability in the built environment by addressing community, resource efficiency and quality of life issues at the level of both masterplan and individual building.

The disused US airbase at Upper Heyford near Oxford formed the territory for exploring a bioregional approach to design. Working with North Oxford Consortium, which currently owns and manages the site, four large groups investigated the environmental, social and economic resources in the region and proposed various framework strategies for developing the site to make best use of these. The client was delighted and impressed by the depth of engagement as well as some of the novel solutions put forward. Following a critical review, students moved on to develop individual or group projects within the established frameworks. The work represents the continuing engagement of this Design Specialisation with the Oxfordshire locality, developing links with local communities.
The Nearest Faraway Place is always home. It is a way of seeing the familiar surroundings of the home as something extra-ordinary. ‘Life is heredity plus environment’ (Luther Burbank).

Students were asked to look at the cultures, movies, music, objects, family relationships, friends and home life that made up their personality.

Some, personal, were touching, elusive but often based on minute observation of character and place, giving an air of melancholy for a lost world of values.

Others sought to make proposals based on world news of hunger and nutrition, to propose a new form of agriculture. Sites for action were arrived at, some fictional, some actual, all quotidian. Whether abroad or in England the site responded to the actual requirements of a brief arrived at individually (with thanks to William Firebrace, Samantha Hardingham, Saskia Lewis, Mike Paris).
Facing page, clockwise from top left: Gemma Loving, Mitch’s house, Harriet’s bedroom, Harriet’s house, Tom’s bedroom, Harriet’s house, bedroom plan; below, clockwise from top left: Chatchai Ditsadee, floating farmhouse; Niyi Opebiyi, wedding tower; Prasanna Kaja, agriculture tower Hyderabad; Tim Gardiner, Unité d’habitation; Gemma Loving, Harriet’s house and Abbey’s kitchen. Overleaf, clockwise from top left: Chatchai Ditsadee, floating farm in the rice fields; Amit Dixit, a light coat; Aluetter Ruiz, cigar sniffobot, airobot in a courtyard, cool airobot
The main studio project took the ‘West End’ of Oxford city centre and attempted to produce a set of coherent design strategies for re-balancing this fragmented urban landscape. The students identified a number of design opportunities and motifs, including: the West End as a ‘gateway to the city’; the use of water and natural elements to underpin identity; and strengthening the potential of existing residential, educational, transport and other functions to create a vibrant and forward-looking city quarter.

As in previous years, the students worked in groups to produce an overall strategy/masterplan, and took parts of this for individual designs, re-testing these against the group vision as the project developed at a number of scales.
The work explored issues of identity, townscape, commercial and social coherence, and the aesthetic and sensory dimensions of place-making. This was reinforced through a public consultation exercise with residents and visitors to the area, bringing often abstract design thinking up against the pragmatic needs of local communities.
The Development and Emergency Practice (DEP) route explores tools and approaches for responding meaningfully to risk, poverty and vulnerability. For architecture students the challenge is to consider how form, materials and space interact with the social, economic and political contexts of settlements affected by rapid urbanisation, conflict and disaster.

To these ends this January’s field trip was to two low-income settlements, Nobody and Diseteneng, in South Africa’s Polokwane province. Students spent ten days working with counterparts from Polokwane provincial government, meeting with local communities, government officials and non-governmental organisations. In communities students used assessment techniques drawn from social science, including mapping, wealth-ranking and transect walks.

For Nobody settlement, Elizabeth Westmacott developed a garbage recycling plan that would benefit residents, while Sara Mairs proposed a sugarcane market to provide a community focus as well as a means for
improving incomes. For Diseteneng Naomi Shinkins sought to improve livelihoods through adding value to shacks, leading to better quality and longer-lasting shelter.

Concerning disasters, Sari Kaipainen explored responses to the Asian tsunami following fieldwork in India, while Giordana di Sarno proposed a network of emergency shelters for Naples for a future eruption of the Mount Vesuvius volcano.

In the UK Rona Inniss focused on asylum seekers by developing a meeting venue in Oxford, while Rachel Clegg researched flood risk along the Thames estuary, leading to buildings that considered water levels within their design. Mick Scott reviewed the special and spatial consequences of a divided Belfast and offered approaches for better integration.
The student is the catalyst for the Major Study, choosing his or her own focus and culminating in an original and self-determined research project. The Major Study can focus on the technical, social, economic, philosophical, artistic, theoretical, or historical aspects of architecture, or a combination of these.

This year a diverse and highly motivated group of students debated, explored and tested contemporary issues in architecture. Peter Collins (below right) opened up the symbiotic relationship between city and nature through an everyday journey between Oxford and London. John Economou charted the oddities of olfactory understanding and speculated on their implications for architectural form.

Abigail Myers set out parameters for the improvement of health care in the United Kingdom through historical research, focusing primarily on the Maggie’s Centres. Elliott Wingfield (below left and bottom) probed the practice of parametric design and explored the ramifications for design methodology.
There are currently 39 full-time/part-time UK, EU and International students within the Department of Architecture all working to complete one of the three routes offered: MPhil, MPhil transferring to PhD or PhD Direct.

Current titles include:
• The social value of hosts: tourism, gentrification and cultural assessment of living heritage places: the case of Thailand in the context of historic towns in Indochina
• Assessing the potential of ground source heat pumps to reduce energy-related carbon emissions from UK housing in a changing climate
• International aid responsibility – mechanisms of learning.

Our research students join a supportive environment and are allocated a supervisory team appropriate to their individual subject. A dedicated research training programme is run during the first year to provide training in research methodology and methods. Weekly research seminars enable students to share ideas and get feedback in an encouraging environment.

Due to the large community of researchers and scholars within the School of the Built Environment, it is a place where there is lively debate, considerable activity, and a friendly interest in those undertaking research here.
The RIBA Office-Based Examination provides a work-based route to qualification at Part 1 and Part 2 levels, and is designed to meet the needs of individuals who are employed full-time in architectural practice. The examination mirrors the curriculum, level and criteria applied to full-time architectural study in the UK, and leads to the award of the RIBA Certificate in Architecture (Part 1) and the RIBA Diploma in Architecture (Part 2). This route to qualification provides an alternative to university study, particularly for those who prefer to invest their personal development in practice.

The examination methodology requires that candidates engage in critical studies in relation to design, technology, cultural and professional contexts. The subjects are examined formally through written examinations, essays and coursework submissions, and through traditional graphic and verbal design presentations. Candidates identify both a mentor in practice and a personal tutor outside of the practice to support their personal development. Shown is the Part 2 project by Andrew Macken for an art gallery in Dublin Bay.
The National Architecture Student Festival 2008 brings together higher education students from across the UK with pupils from London schools and community groups, culminating in a series of temporary ‘interventions’ in key public spaces at each of the five LFA2008 Hubs. Oxford Brookes Year One architects proposed a lightweight structure celebrating The Sounds of the Place: the River Thames, Big Ben over the way, the carousel behind, the railway above and buskers below. Re-marking Hungerford Bridge, the designated site, with the imagined and the physical and asking, who is performing? Working with the Saison Children’s Poetry Library at the Royal Festival Hall, we wished to bring the library outside for the summer. Listening to the recorded sounds of the site, local school children imagined what they could be. These onomatopoeic words were then transcribed to the structure. Using recycled and locally sourced materials, the choreography of the Proscenium Pieces reveal the underestimated qualities of the everyday life of this transitory space. Performances took place on Friday 11th July along the South Bank from the Millennium Bridge to Jubilee Gardens and on Saturday 12th July around and over the Hungerford Bridge.

For more information: http://ob1architecture.blogspot.com/

With thanks to: Young & Webb Engineers, DLD Scaffolding, London Festival of Architecture team, CABE Space, EXYZT and the Saison Poetry Library.

Staff

Abi Abdolwahabi
Margaret Ackrill
Jane Anderson
Ana Araujo
Thomas Arnold
Lynda Ayre
Dr Bousmaha Baiche
Nick Beech
Paolo Bellini
Prof Ian Bentley*
Patrick Bonfield
Dr Rod Burgess
Andy Burns*
Prof Elizabeth Burton
Prof Georgia Butina Watson*
Dr Tonia Carless
Smita Chandiwala
Matt Clay
Mark Collett
Gary Collins
Margaret Cooke
Dr Jon Cooper*
Aaron Crawford
Bethanie Cunnick
Dr Carol Dair
Sally Daniels
Nicola Dempsey
Ben Doherty
Rute Ferreira
Dr Manuel Fuentes
Barti Garibaldo
Matt Gaskin
Rekha Giddy
Charlie Goode
Prof Brian Goodey*
Prof David Greene
David Grindley
Dr Rajat Gupta
Prof Nabeel Hamdi
Dr Mohamed Hamza
Mary Hancock
Anna Hart
Simon Henley
Michael Hill
Nick Hockley
Prof Andrew Holmes
Rev Prof Michael Humphreys
Prof Mick Hutchins
Andrea Immendifer
Prof Mike Jenks
Carsten Jungfer
Chris Kendrick
Maita Kessler
Andy King
Melissa Kinnear
Ronnie MacLellan
Ruth Macleannan
Tim Manders
Amanda Marshall
Lenka McAlinden
Tom Medcalf*¹
Javina Medina*
Prof Byron Mikellides
Lynne Mitchell
Claire Mountford
Prof Fergus Nicol
Laura Novo de Azevedo*
Prof Ray Ogden
Prof Paul Oliver
Dr Aylin Orbasli
Charles Parrack
Dr Brian Phillips
Dr Brigitte Piquard
Andrea Placidi
Colin Priest
Paul Proudman
Steve Race
Dr Shibu Raman
Geoffrey Randell
Dr Alan Reeve*
Dr Hom Rijal
Adrian Robinson
Richard Rose-Casemore
David Sanderson
Paola Sassi
Christine Sherlock
Toby Shew
David Shiers
Bruno Silvestre
Roger Simmonds*
Marta Solsona
Ro Spankie
Dr Sarah Stevens
Dr Fionn Stevenson
John Stevenson
Leda Stott
Prof Mark Swenarton
Allan Sylvester
Dr Igea Troiani
Humphrey Truswell
Dr Marcel Vellinga
Vivien Walker
Dr Nicholas Walliman
Dr Xiaoxin Wang
Helena Webster
Prof Jane Wernick
Anthony Wise
Liam Young
* Joint Centre for Urban Design

Published by Department of Architecture, Oxford Brookes University © 2008. Editorial: Bethanie Cunnick, David Sanderson, Mark Swenarton, Nathan Wiles and Kimberly Manning (design). Thanks also to the Oxford International Centre for Publishing at Oxford Brookes University and senior lecturer Sally Hughes.

Printed by Warners (Midlands) Plc.