RIBA

Royal Institute of British Architects

Report of the RIBA visiting board to the University of Lincoln

Date of visiting board: 24 & 25 March 2022
Confirmed by the RIBA: 18 August 2022

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1 Details of institution hosting courses
Lincoln School of Architecture and the Built Environment
University of Lincoln
Brayford Pool
Lincoln
LN6 7TS

2 Courses offered for validation
Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) [BArch (Hons)] – Part 1
Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) with Arts Foundation Year [BArch (Hons) with AFY] – Part 1
Master of Architecture [MArch] – Part 2
Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture [PGDip PPMA] – Part 3

3 Head of Lincoln School of Architecture and the Built Environment
Professor Stephen Pretlove

Deputy Head of Lincoln School of Architecture and the Built Environment
Dr Deborah Whelan

4 Programme Leaders
Dr Mark Olweny Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) [BArch (Hons)] – Part 1
Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) with Arts Foundation Year [BArch (Hons) with AFY] – Part 1
Peter Baldwin: Master of Architecture [MArch] – Part 2
Edward Farrell: Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture [PGDip PPMA] – Part 3

5 Awarding body
University of Lincoln

6 The visiting board
Professor Kevin Singh - Chair
Professor Sally Stewart – Vice Chair
Abi Van Hoorebeek
Steve McIntyre

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk – validation manager – in attendance

7 Procedures and criteria for the visit
The visiting board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria for UK and international courses and examinations in architecture* (published July 2011, and effective from September 2011)*;* this document is available at www.architecture.com.

8 Proposals of the visiting board
On 18 August 2022 the RIBA confirmed continued validation of the following:
- Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) [BArch (Hons)] – Part 1
- Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) with Arts Foundation Year [BArch (Hons) with AFY] – Part 1
- Master of Architecture [MArch] – Part 2

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- Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture [PGDip PPMA] – Part 3

9   Standard requirements for continued recognition
Continued RIBA recognition of all courses and qualifications is dependent upon:

i   external examiners being appointed for the course

ii   any significant changes to the courses and qualifications being submitted to the RIBA

iii   any change of award title, and the effective date of the change, being notified to the RIBA so that its recognition may formally be transferred to the new title

iv   submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the courses and qualifications listed

v   In the UK, standard requirements of validation include the completion by the of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

10   Academic position statement (written by the School)
Vision: Our vision is to be recognised globally as an integrated and interdisciplinary school that reflects and shapes the realities of practice in all aspects of the built environment.

Mission: Our mission is to inspire innovation in the design, and construction of buildings and cities through critically evaluating issues associated with sustainability, history, society, technology and wellbeing, to promote ethical and professional practice. We respond to global challenges, anticipate the needs of the professions and the built environment industries, and the requirements for professional accreditation. We provide an education which reflects the collaborative, interdisciplinary and evolving nature of the professions and industry.

Identity: We are an integrated School of Architecture and the Built Environment that supports design and technology students from diverse backgrounds and potentials, to achieve their best in a supported and structured manner. We consider the richness of local and international experience as a palette for self-development and exploration, and through our programmes, support students to pursue professional or cognate routes with confidence and maturity. Our well-qualified, diverse staff have strong grounding in design, humanities, science and technology, and leadership which promotes multiple lenses of design and construction.

The architecture programmes include the BArch (Hons) (Part 1), MArch (Part 2), and PG Dip in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture (Part 3). We have dedicated studios, student workrooms, a building science laboratory and student workshops that strengthen our culture of design and research. Our programmes equip students with the understanding and skills they need to operate effectively in the globalised, innovation driven context of integrated professional practice, and assist them in making agile life choices. Graduates are prepared for practice that designs and delivers projects through teamwork and collaboration with other built environment professionals. We achieve this by keeping current with trends and developments in practice.

1.   **Academic Position Statement:** Since the last Validation, the School of Architecture and the Built Environment separated from the School of Architecture and Design. We introduced cognate programmes, namely the

BSc (Hons) and MSc Construction Science and Management, and the BSc (Hons) Architectural Science and Technology. This expanded our staff cohort, and emphasised sustainability, and the broader built environment.

2. **Context: The University of Lincoln and its relationship with the city**. We are located on Brayford Pool in the heart of Lincoln which has a rich, well-preserved architectural heritage and urban form dating to Roman times. It is a laboratory for learning and teaching, providing immediate context for history and theory lectures and a good site for primary research of societal issues explored in written work. The city's long history is manifest in a varied physical grain which is an invaluable asset for studio projects. Local sites offer rich opportunity for analysis and first experiments with architectural responses in year one, to year five, in which students test locally, strategic, intellectual and practical responses to contemporary, global issues. Established relationships with local and regional communities generates research, and live and inter-disciplinary projects, reflecting our University's ethos of '*student as producer*'.

3. **Teaching and Learning.** We deliver architectural education through studio-led, project-based teaching, and emphasise learning through experiment. Apart from professional practice examinations, assessment is through studio work, essays and other visual / activity assignments, and dissertations. Studio work, essays and research projects have emerged as strengths of the School, allowing students to develop their own design and academic personality, giving them confidence and skills to progress in their professional journey. Projects are underpinned by relevant taught material covering history, construction technology, theory, society, design, and sustainability. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) underpin project briefs, as well as Learning Outcomes. Given the University's lead, we focus on sustainable cities and communities, renewable energy and materials, displacement and refugees, poverty reduction and inequality. These issues emerge naturally in post-graduate research projects, dissertations, essays and studio. We nurture confident, self-reliant, competent and empathetic students and thus send graduates into practice who contribute to society and the economy.

4. **Academic Community.** We have academic staff who come from the UK as well as China, Egypt, Iran, Ireland, Nigeria, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Uganda. Overseas practice experience, international research interests, with an extensive global network, allow for a global perspective to the School's curriculum design and teaching. Students come from a range of economic and ethnic backgrounds across the UK and abroad. Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.

5. **Our programmatic ethos.** The *Bachelor of Architecture* (Hons) (Part 1) introduces students to the professions. It is taught mainly through design studio in which projects integrate subject-specific knowledge and skills, acquired gradually across modules. Briefs are tailored appropriate to the level of study and increase in complexity, encouraging initiative and self-driven learning. In the first and second year, briefs are the same for all students, with perhaps choice of site, or client. In the third year, students select from several themes proposed by different tutors, allowing them to follow their interests, develop individual views, and begin to define their position in society and the profession. The *Master of Architecture* (Part 2) consolidates formative

education and experience in practice, challenging preconceptions of the discipline. It encourages engagement with contemporary challenges collaboratively so that students can synthesise their own philosophy. The *PG Dip Professional Practice and Management in Architecture* (Part 3) prepares students in employment for their professional careers. It broadens their theoretical and work-based knowledge, ability, and skills. Students demonstrate their understanding of the material applied in practice, in line with the RIBA's *Education Themes and Values*.

6.   **Our Unique Selling Point.** Our students are empathetic and aware of societal and human challenges. Many come from non-traditional backgrounds through routes facilitated by the parallel BA (Hons) Architecture programme and the Architecture Foundation Year (AFY), both of which allow for access to the validated BArch (Hons) programme. This transformative initiative supports the aims of the Architects Registration Board (*Modernising the initial education and training of Architects*, 2021) of transformation, broadened access, and broadened egress. Our graduates are thus able to work in many different practices, institutions and allied disciplines with confidence.

11   Commendations
11.1 The Board commends the School and its leadership for its attitude to change and continual improvement, this includes the genuinely collaborative and positive relationship with external examiners across the programmes.

12   Conditions
There are no conditions.

13   Action points
The visiting board proposes the following action points. The RIBA expects the university to report on how it will address these action points. The university is referred to the RIBA's criteria and procedures for validation for details of mid-term monitoring processes. Failure by the university to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

13.1 The Board is mindful that it has visited at a particular moment in time and whilst there is clear evidence of an upward trajectory there is an impression that improvements are often piecemeal and somewhat disjointed. The School should produce an aspirational, clear, decisive, and explicit narrative to dictate ambition, policy, organisation and operation. An assured overarching position will allow different voices to be harnessed and ensure a more strategic and holistic approach, to allow the School to speak with more confidence and clarity regarding its approach to architectural education.

13.2 The School should develop more structured physical, philosophical, and pedagogical links between the various cohorts and programmes to foster a greater sense of peer learning, a progressive curriculum, student journey, and collaboration amongst staff. Alongside this, project briefs should align with the overall aims and ambitions and be appropriate to the level of study.

13.3 In light of the essence of the RIBA Themes and Values, the School should develop strategies for a higher level of critical thinking and exploration at both Part 1 and especially Part 2 which fosters symbiotic relationships between

humanities, design, and technology, as well as staff research expertise to inform the curriculum, studio agendas, and timetabling. There should be an emphasis on a genuine and iterative design processes to avoid the superficial adoption of precedents in both design and technology.

13.4   The School should review its assessment, moderation and feedback practices to ensure complete clarity, consistency and transparency, including the relationship between day to day tutorial feedback, formative marks and summative assessment.

14   Advice
The visiting board offers the following advice to the School on desirable, but not essential improvements, which, it is felt, would assist course development and raise standards.

14.1   The University and the School's Academic Position Statement speaks of a commitment to the city and region but this is not explicit in the day to day ethos, curriculum, outputs of the students, and reciprocal relationships with employers. The School is strongly advised to review its intentions and operation to ensure they align in this regard.

14.2   The Board strongly advises the University to implement a structured marketing plan to focus on increasing the numbers of the Part 2 and Part 3 programmes to ensure their sustainability as well as their critical mass for the benefit of the student experience.

14.3   The School has some exciting and pedagogically interesting opportunities for collaboration and inter disciplinary working and is advised to forge significantly closer links with HKDI for the benefit of its students both in the UK and Hong Kong, as well as carefully considering the pedagogic opportunities of the various interior design programmes that are joining the School.

13.4   The School has a number of emerging and positive but disparate links with practice and the profession and is advised to develop a holistic strategy to support students in the integration of Technology, and for preparing students for life beyond graduation and employability in relevant architectural practices in line with the University's ambitions for business engagement such as KTPs and Degree Apprenticeships.

13.5   Whilst the Board welcome the recent improvements to the Part 3 programme, the School is advised to use the new Themes and Values as a catalyst for further developments including the need to reflect relevant contemporary practice, reconsider aspects of the delivery format, number of outputs, and assessment, as well as the influence of Part 3 throughout the School. A greater awareness of other Part 3 programmes/professional studies provisions in the UK would be beneficial, all of which may aid greater recruitment.

13.6   In the interests of reinforcing the recent good work of the leadership team, the Board advises that the School consider appointing a critical friend / consultant with significant experience in architectural education (and RIBA validation processes to address future visits) to help develop a coherent and strategic enhancement plan.

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14.   Review of graduate attributes

14.1   Part 1
The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met.

14.2   Part 2
The Board confirmed that all Part 2 graduate attributes were met.

14.3   Part 3
The Board confirmed that all Part 3 professional criteria were met.

15   Review of work against criteria
It should be noted that where the visiting board considered a criterion to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or a criterion clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic outcomes suggested a criterion was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

15.1   The Board made no further comments.

16   Other information

16.1   Student numbers
Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) [BArch (Hons)] – Part 1
Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) with Arts Foundation Year [BArch (Hons) with AFY] – Part 1: 145
Master of Architecture [MArch] – Part 2: 27
Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture [PGDip PPMA] – Part 3: 10 currently active.

16.2   Documentation provided
The Department provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation.

17   Notes of meetings
On request, the RIBA will issue a copy of the minutes taken from the following meetings: **These notes will not form part of the published report but will be made available on request. The full set of notes will be issued to the mid-term panel and the next full visiting board.**

- Meeting with students
- Meeting with staff
- Meeting with external and professional examiners
- Meeting with the head of institution