

Report of the RIBA revisiting board to the University of Kent

Date of revisiting board: 30 January 2023
Confirmed by the RIBA: 20 April 2023

1 Details of institution hosting courses

Kent School of Architecture
University of Kent
Canterbury
Kent
CT2 7NZ

2 Head of School

Chloe Street Tarbatt

3 Courses offered for validation

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice

4 Programme Director

Peter Wislocki

5 Awarding body

The University of Kent

6 The visiting board

Simon Gratton
Albena Atanassova

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, RIBA validation manager – in attendance

7 Procedures and criteria for the revisit

The purpose of the Board was to determine whether the conditions of validation placed on the course by the 2022 Visiting Board had been satisfied.

The visiting board was carried out under the RIBA Procedures for Validation, 2021 (available at www.architecture.com). The reports of 2021 and 2022 referred to the 2011 Professional Criteria. The procedures were adapted to allow the Board to function remotely.

8 Proposals of the revisiting board

The Board was satisfied that the conditions placed on the course by the 2022 Visiting Board had been satisfied. On 20 April 2023 the RIBA confirmed continued validation of the following course:

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice, Part 3

The next full visit to the Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice, Part 3, will take place at the same time as the revalidation of the Parts 1 and 2.

9 Standard requirements for validation

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 institution of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

10 Academic position statement for the Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice, Part 3

The PG Diploma in Architectural Practice provides a Part 3 programme alongside the well established architectural Part 1 and Part 2 programmes offered by the Kent School of Architecture Planning and Design (KSAP+D). The School's name was recently changed to reflect the diversification of its portfolio of courses, which now includes undergraduate programmes in Graphic Design and Spatial and Interior Design.

As such, the course benefits from KSAP+D's diversity of academic knowledge and research, and the cross-fertilisation between the disciplines of its staff. KSAP+D is strongly rooted in Kent while pursuing a broad outlook, and the Part 3 course reflects this, with staff and students mostly based in the region but professionally active across the UK and beyond.

Alongside KSAP+D's existing strength in research it is intended for the Part 3 programme and its core staff to develop a centre of professional expertise and academic excellence, with the aspiration to offer practice-based doctoral programmes, giving the practicalities of the Part 3 criteria and graduate attributes which the PG Dip programme addresses a much richer academic and professional context.

KSAP+D's situation on a hill overlooking the ancient cathedral city of Canterbury means the School is very close to continental Europe, and several key members of the team delivering the PG Dip programme are professionally active abroad, giving the necessarily UK-based Part 3 a wider international context. The University is located a short walk from HS1 trains which connect to London in less than an hour, so students are able to benefit from the wide cultural and architectural offers of the capital.

The School added a planning Masters to its portfolio in 2019, cementing its position as the leading provider of professional built environment education in Kent. This will also offer apprenticeship places to trainees. The School has developed many links with architectural and planning professionals in the county, and beyond, and students benefit from the wide range of practitioners who teach at KSAP+D, and who contribute to lectures and seminars in the PG Diploma programme.

The School is developing a L7 Architect Apprenticeship programme, which it is hoped to launch in September 2023. This will be a distinctive and progressive course, with entirely new modules, as opposed to a repackaging of existing part 2 and Part 3 modules. It is, however, anticipated that the Apprenticeship will contribute to the further evolution of the current Masters and Part 3 courses, reflecting wider changes in architectural education and practice.

What makes KSAP+D special

KSAP+D boasts a diverse group of some 500 students and approximately 50 teachers, a mix of some 20 academics and a large and diverse group of part-time practitioners, all part of a dynamic faculty within a modern but long-established university. The core group of academics runs KSAP+D's programmes, stages and modules, including the PG Diploma in Architectural Practice, but this academic direction is augmented by a much larger group of architect-practitioners and co-professionals. It is this engagement with professional, architectural practice and a wide spectrum of co-professionals that keeps the School relevant and practice-oriented.

From its launch, the Part 3 programme comprised entirely new modules. Many aspects of the PG Diploma curriculum are introduced at a more elementary level in an existing undergraduate Stage 3 module (Professional practice ARCH5550) and graduate Stage 4 module (Employability ARCH5400) which the Programme Director convenes and substantially delivers. The understanding of the Part 3 programme in the context of teaching of professional practice at Part 1 and Part 2 ensures that all three stages of architectural education are addressed at an appropriate level in relation to students' academic knowledge, practical experience and learning needs. Specifically, whereas Part 1 provides a basic introduction to all topics, Part 2 promotes lateral thinking and questioning of conventional practices, and Part 3 greatly deepens detailed knowledge as a basis for mature and responsible decision-making in complex and unforeseeable circumstances.

The Part 3 course has been designed to

- provide a gateway to professional practice, complementing Kent's established courses in architecture
- enable current Kent students to complete their professional training at the University
- offer graduates of other universities to complete their professional training in Kent
- be the only course of its kind offered anywhere in the county
- draw on the academic and professional knowledge and contacts of existing University staff
- enable the University to offer a graduate apprenticeship in Architecture

As above - the course is expected to attract students from the following groups (in approximate order of importance):

- Existing Kent students wishing to complete their professional training
- Graduates of other universities working and/or residing in Kent
- Applicants in London and the South East looking for an alternative Part 3 programme, attracted by the PG Diploma's USPs and/or other (personal, financial or logistical) issues

Course overview and distinctiveness

The PGDip's core curriculum is based directly on the RIBA/ARB criteria for Part 3 graduates (see <http://www.arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/>

ARB_Criteria_pt3.pdf), and the proposed schedule of lectures and seminars is derived directly from these criteria, which are common to all equivalent courses in the UK.

It is, however, intended that, within these criteria, the Kent PGDip has the following USPs:

- Exploration of alternative building procurement strategies, reflecting innovative practice (partly based on the staff team's personal experience)
- Emphasis on international practice (based on the proposed staff team's personal experience)

One of the USPs of the Kent PGDip in Architectural Practice is to be its international outlook. The Programme Director has extensive personal experience managing projects and businesses in the UK, France, Poland, Russia and many other countries, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Other senior members of the teaching team also have significant national and international experience in a wide range of practice settings.

11 **Conditions**

There are no conditions.

12 **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 2021 procedures document 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.

The 2023 RIBA Visiting Board's action points are intended to assist the programme team in the future development and expansion of the course.

- 12.1 The Board recognises the effort that the School has put into developing the student guide. Whilst this is work in progress, it is important that the Guide is more informative to prospective students including further detail on course timetable, module content, credits, associated costs, key members of staff and support available to students throughout the course.
- 12.2 The Board advises the School to consider providing formal written feedback to students at the end of each module to encourage greater critical reflection. This feedback could also be provided to the professional examiners. In addition, it would be beneficial to complement this with a higher number of in-person and group seminars where students can benefit from peer learning in addition to formative training as part of the course.
- 12.3 The Board welcomes the development of the Examiner's guide to help clarify their roles and responsibilities. Their role can be further strengthened and enhanced through the provision of Candidate feedback and through a formal briefing/training session to help the examiners to fully understand the processes in regard to the final interview.

13 Delivery of professional criteria

13.1 Part 3

The Board confirmed that graduates met the Part 3 professional criteria but refers the School to the condition and the action points.

14 Other information

14.1 Candidate numbers

7 (2022 cohort)

14.2 Documentation provided

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

15 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 next visiting board.**

- Meeting with the Head of School and Course Director
- Meeting with candidates
- Meeting with external and professional examiners