

**Royal Institute of British Architects**

**Full Report of the RIBA visiting board  
to the University of Huddersfield**

School of Art and Humanities

Department of Architecture and 3D Design.

Date of visiting Board: 28/29 October 2021

Approved by the RIBA: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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- 1 **Details of institution hosting course/s**  
The School of Arts and Humanities  
Department of Architecture and 3D Design.  
University of Huddersfield  
Queensgate  
Huddersfield  
HD1 3DH
  
  - 2 **Dean**  
Professor Nic Clear  
  
**Head of Department**  
Professor Patricia Tzortzopoulos  
  
**Architecture Co-ordinator**  
Dr Yun Gao
  
  - 3 **Courses offered for validation**  
Part 1 BA (Hons) Architecture  
Part 1 BA (Hons) Architecture (International)  
Part 2 MArch Architecture  
Part 2 MArch (International)  
Part 3 Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture
  
  - 4 **Course leaders**  
Bea Martin: BA (Hons) Architecture/Architecture (International) Part 1  
Dr Hazem Ziada: MArch/MArch (International) Part 2  
Jon Bush(interim): Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture
  
  - 5 **Awarding body**  
University of Huddersfield
  
  - 6 **The visiting Board**  
Kate Cheyne – Chair  
Anthony Petrilli  
Paul King  
Luke Murray  
Jayesha Fernando, RIBA Validation Manager – in attendance.  
Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, RIBA Validation Manager-as an observer
  
  - 7 **Procedures and criteria for the visit**  
The visiting Board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria for the UK and international courses and examinations in architecture* (published July 2011, and effective from September 2011); this document is available at [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com).
  
  - 8 **Recommendations of the visiting Board**

## 8.1

The Visiting Board recommends that continued validation be awarded to the:

- Part 1 BA (Hons) Architecture
- Part 1 BA (Hons) Architecture (International)
- Part 2 MArch Architecture
- Part 2 MArch (International)
- Part 3 Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture

The next full visiting Board will take place in 2026

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

## 10 **Academic position statement provided by School**

The teaching of Architecture at Huddersfield dates back 100 years to the foundation of part-time courses in architecture initiated by Norman Culley at the Huddersfield Technical College in 1921, making 2021 the centenary of architecture in Huddersfield.

In 1970 the College of Technology merged with the Oastler College of Education to become Huddersfield Polytechnic and in 1992 the Polytechnic became the University of Huddersfield. The Department of Architecture & 3D Design runs a full suite of validated architecture courses at Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3. These represent the core of the Department's activities alongside Architectural Technology, Interior Design, Product Design and more recently Surveying and Construction Project Management. The Department is part of the School of Arts & Humanities, formed in August 2021 from the merger of the schools of 'Art Design and Architecture' and 'Music

Humanities and Media'. The School of Arts & Humanities is a progressive academic environment incorporating five Departments, covering ten subject areas and providing nearly 200 separate courses at UG, PGT and PGR combining full-time, part-time and sandwich modes of delivery creating one of the largest schools of its type in the country. Arts & Humanities will enable the architecture courses to develop creative synergies between a wide range of subject areas, including Music, Drama, Film, History and English, building upon the broad base of inter and multidisciplinary expertise that already exist within art, Design and fashion.

In September 2019 the Department moved into the award-winning Barbara Hepworth Building (BHB). The opening of the BHB was part of a move toward greater integration within the art and design courses and to emphasize the development of a progressive environment suitable for the education of architects, artists and designers in the 21st century. The BHB is equipped with a high-level of traditional craft-based facilities and workshops alongside advanced digital resources, such as the Create-Lab, offering widespread resources for Teaching & Learning and Research. A further ambition for the BHB is for it to operate as a student-led 'maker-space', encouraging all courses to enjoy the facilities and expertise offered across subject areas, creating exciting opportunities for all students and staff. These ambitions have been partially delayed by the pandemic which have put on-hold the implementation of this collaborative approach.

An approach to architecture that creates a bridge between the arts and the built environment is even more important with the introduction of the humanities, music and film into School portfolio, and using the opportunities afforded by the facilities in the BHB through challenging disciplinary boundaries and leading on issues of the environment and social justice will make sure that architecture is at the heart of the cross-disciplinary activities of the School. One area that is of major strategic importance for the School and in particular the architecture courses is the relationship to the town of Huddersfield and Kirklees Council through the public engagement activities that have been developed across a number of subject areas; the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the Huddersfield Literature Festival, the Temporary, Contemporary arts initiative, Woven and the Drama Fest, are activities that are rooted in our locality, and very specifically the town of Huddersfield itself, but they engage with ideas that are of national and international significance. The award-winning Temporary Contemporary initiative has already had a significant impact on the Architecture courses through the ability to use spaces within the town for exhibitions, events and design projects.

In 5 REF 2014, the School submitted 13.9 FTE to UoA34 in Art and Design. Members from the Department contributed to REF 2021 submissions to both UoA13 (Architecture and the Built Environment – first submission for the University) and UoA32. UoA13 submitted 16.6 FTE (67% of staff) 42 outputs and 2 Impact case Studies. UoA32 included 29.9 FTE being 4 FTE from the Department, who contributed to 1 impact case study for the unit. The department staff have been particularly active in organizing and hosting a number of International Conferences, symposia and exhibitions. According to Scopus, UoA13 members delivered from 2014 to 2020 313 scholarly outputs, with 2,064 citations and an average of 6.5 citations per publication, and a 1.64 field weighted citation impact. Since last RIBA visit the Department has successfully launched professionally validated courses in Surveying and Project Management that share modules with the Architecture courses. It is intended that these courses become more integrated into the delivery of architecture so that students have a wider understanding of the construction industry, particularly as the Department has access to world-leading expertise in areas such as Lean Construction and high-level BIM integration.

The Department has a very diverse staff body representing 16 different nationalities, all staff are qualified teachers and required by the University to obtain a Fellowship of the HEA, something that contributed to the University receiving a Gold Star for its Teaching Excellence at the inaugural Teaching Excellence Framework. It is also a university requirement that all full-time staff have PhD's, the current percentage of staff with or undertaking PhD's is 80%. Additionally, all members of School and Course leadership teams, especially those with line-management responsibilities, have obtained membership of the Chartered Management Institute. The Department has very strong international links with partnerships with several international institutions (over 80 QS top 300 rated institutions globally) and the School is the home of a Confucius Institute. The International dimension is reflected in Architecture through the International course options at both Part 1 and Part 2. Our courses are committed to updating their agendas to reflect contemporary issues. This has been most evident in the MArch Part 2, where changes have been implemented to allow for a more speculative approach to final year projects which has seen success in the RIBA Dissertation prize, and a number of international awards and prizes.

The Architecture courses have a very diverse student cohort, and our course structures and teaching take into consideration the variety of skills that students arrive with, our courses are structured to embed skills through the development of project work to 'learn by doing'. The architecture courses also enjoy strong links to profession, and support in the delivery of many of its modules from external professionals especially as critics. Future plans include moving to a Level 7 apprenticeship to offer a flexible route to studying at Part 2 and Part 3 that reflects student needs and changes in profession, the implementation of this is planned for an 2023-2024 academic start. The Department is acutely aware of the profound changes and uncertainties around the direction of the profession, due to the effects of Brexit and the aftermath of the pandemic, so our goal is to be flexible and resilient in the pursuit of excellence. As the town of Huddersfield attempts to rebuild its identity as a cultural centre following the decline of the traditional manufacturing industries, the future of the architecture courses at the University are inextricably linked with this wider community project, as we too align our futures with the development of new digital and green technologies in the light of rapidly changing external forces.

## **11 Commendations**

- 11.1 The Board commends the scope and ambition of projects in the vertical studios at postgraduate level, and the confidence this affords students completing their Part 2 awards.
- 11.2 The Board commends the School on its engagement with the town of Huddersfield, Queensgate Market and Kirklees Council through the Temporary Contemporary initiative, and associated exhibitions.

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- 11.3 The Board commends the focus of broadening the opportunities for students via the international offer.

## **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 visits. Failure by the University to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

- 13.1 The School must continue to refine their ethos and distinctiveness and clearly set out a 6-year student journey.
- 13.2 The School must further define and develop the hybrid model of making architecture that allows for both an analogue and digital toolbox to evolve together.
- 13.3 The School must deepen the learning and teaching of resilience in response to climate emergency, environmental issues, and technical solutions through engaging more experts and consultants for workshops and seminars. The Board would like to see further application and demonstration of this knowledge in the student work.

## **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 Board advises the School to encourage student portfolios to fully capture the evolutionary journey of the design process and their early testing and explorations of an idea.
- 14.2 The Board recommends that the School reinstates their Part 3 programme, alongside a Level 7: Architects Apprenticeship in a reasonable timeframe.
- 14.3 The Board commends the strength of the existing staff community but urges the University to better support staff welfare to ensure a resilient and sustainable workforce.

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- 15 Part 1 BA (Hons) Architecture**  
**Part 1 BA (Hons) Architecture (International)**  
**Part 2 MArch Architecture**  
**Part 2 MArch (International)**  
**Part 3 Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture**  
 The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met by the graduates of the BA (Hons) Architecture programme.
- 16 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.
- 17 Other information**
- 17.1 Student numbers**  
 Part 1: 164  
 Part 2: 63  
 Part 3: 8
- 17.2 Documentation provided**  
 The school provided all advance documentation in accordance with the validation procedures.
- 18 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 budget holder and course leaders
  - Meeting with students
  - Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor
  - Meeting with external examiners
  - Meeting with staff