THE COWAN FAMILY
CREATING A LONG LASTING LEGACY

Conversation with George Galster | Sculpture by the Sea
Three bright students from The University of Sydney's Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning participated in the inaugural Smart Light Sydney festival from the 26th of May to the 15th of June with their installation "Lumenocity" exhibited in the forecourt of Customs House.

Sean Bryen (winner of the 2008 Leslie Wilkinson Prize in Architectural History and Theory), Sascha Crocker (winner of the 2008 Byera Hadley and Diana Inglis Carment Scholarships) and Andrew Daly (2008 University Medalist) developed Lumenocity as part of the Smart Light Walk, a series of dynamic light sculptures following a pedestrian route around the city’s harbour precinct.

Lumenocity is an abstraction of the city’s CBD, it is illuminated by the glow of energy-efficient fluorescents. The humming sound of the lanterns in the installation, the sound of consumption, build up to a chorus and serve as a counterpoint to the delicate appearance of the miniature CBD, a salient reminder of the price of Sydney’s luminous beauty.

The installation took up most of the forecourt of Customs House and was constructed by Concept Craft. “Concept Craft, along with Sylvania Lighting who supplied the lighting, have been generous supporters of the exhibition,” said Sascha Crocker. “With additional funding for materials coming from the Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning and The University of Sydney.”

“We are hoping that this installation becomes a meaningful contribution to the environmental, cultural and social discourse of the City of Sydney. The installation developed a considerable amount of interest from locals and visitors while we were setting up, with crowds of people talking to us about the project.”

Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning, Professor Warren Julian, who teaches one of the few courses in Illumination Design offered around the world, added, “The faculty is proud of the creativity and ingenuity exhibited by our talented students such as Sean, Sascha and Andrew. Lumenocity is a prime example of the blend of creative skills with cultural, theoretical and interdisciplinary foundations that underpin our approach to design education.”

For more information Smart Light festival visit www.smartlightsydney.com

Welcome to archetype

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archetype is published periodically on behalf of the Architecture Alumni Association and the Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning.

Julia Wilson Editor Carmen Lau Designer
Welcome to the Spring edition of Archetype. It is an exciting time at the Faculty. In July we appointed two new Professors of Architecture. The Faculty has not had two Professors of Architecture since 1999, when Professor Peter Webber retired. Our new professors, Sandra Kaji-O’Grady currently Head of the School of Architecture at UTS and Michael Tawa, currently Professor of Architectural Design at the University of Newcastle (UK) School of Architecture Planning and Landscape, will commence in January 2010.

The recently advertised Associate Professorship in Architectural History and Theory attracted an excellent field, including Dr Glen Hill, a well-known member of staff, who was offered and has accepted this position. On staffing matters my pending retirement has resulted in the recruitment process for the position of Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning, with advertising for this drawing an international response.

This issue of Archetype incorporates a number of articles on our students and young alumni and it gives me great pleasure to be able to share the success of our students with you. This includes sculptures exhibited in the inaugural Vivid Sydney Festival and the Sculpture by the Sea Festival. Construction of the exhibit pieces has been assisted financially by the faculty as we feel these are important vehicles to showcase the many varied talents of our students. Monica Earl, a 2009 graduate of the Master of Architecture won the prestigious NSW AIA Design Medal and we are also proud of her success in this competitive field.

This issue sees the launch of the HJ (Jack) Cowan Memorial Scholarship Fund. Jack’s dedication to the students of this faculty extended to his family with a generous donation to launch this fund. We are hoping to raise enough money for a perpetual scholarship fund and will be seeking the support of our alumni in this in the near future.

A summary of the findings of our recent alumni survey is also included in this issue of Archetype. It gives us an interesting snapshot of your needs and preferences. Key among these is an interest in ongoing education and professional development and we are reviewing our current suite of CPD and Professional Education options accordingly.

I trust you enjoy this edition of Archetype and as always welcome any feedback you would like to provide.

Best wishes for the remainder of 2009.

Professor Warren Julian
Dean
Welcome **Ms Lise Maddocks** our newest member of the Architecture, Design and Planning Alumni Association Council. Lise has a Bachelor of Commerce from McGill University, Bachelor of Laws from UNSW and attended Sydney University specifically to study a Graduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning. Lise is a full member of the Planning Institute of Australia and currently works as a Senior Planning Officer for the NSW Department of Planning.

**Dr Michael Rosenman**, Senior Lecturer Associate Dean (Undergraduate) has retired. **Dr Andy Dong** will take over as Head of Design Computing Discipline.

**Dr Greg Castillo**, Senior Lecturer, Coordinator Master of Architectural History & Theory program has been with the Faculty since January 2007 and leaves us to return to the United States to take up a position at Berkeley.

**Col James** was fittingly farewelled in April with a special lecture by old friend Paul Pholeros titled “New ideas or a Case for Recycling”. The lecture was taped and you can find the video located under News & Events - Podcasts on our website.

After the lecture drinks and speeches about Col’s long career followed, including speeches from Tom Uren AO and Mick Mundine. The speeches showed a deep respect for Col and his dogged commitment to Indigenous rights and inspirational teaching of his students over the many decades he was with the University. In 1994 Col was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for services to architecture and to the community. The Alumni Award for Community Service was also conferred upon Col in 2006 in recognition of his outstanding community services to the poor, homeless, disadvantaged and Aboriginal groups. We wish Col all the best and know that we have not seen the last of his lifelong work.

**Sydney University Designers Association (SUDA)** is the new and fresh name for the faculty’s student association. We changed our name so that we would represent the designers and the planners as well as the architects. Being a student in the Wilkinson building generally means keeping strange hours, often at the expense of human contact. Luckily, our regular designer drinks held in the courtyard give us the opportunity to catch up.

SUDA was fortunate enough to send delegates to Parallax, the annual architecture conference in Melbourne in May, with the generous support of the Faculty who funded the entry. This was a great opportunity to connect with the industry, see some fantastic and engaging speakers, with highlights including Aaron Betsky, Sou Fujimoto and Slavoj Zizek. Our delegates were Caitlin Nau, Dina Zhang, Nic Moore, Imogen Howe and Carly Martin.

This coming semester will be colossal, with some significant events being planned, not least of which is the graduation show. We can promise the Alumni a massive opening party and encourage attendance. We will also be seeking sponsorship from members of alumni, and ask that people contact us, if they are interested in getting involved.

**Promotions**

Congratulations to **Dr Rob Saunders, Dr Jan Fieldsend** and **Dr Chris Smith** all of whom have been promoted to Senior Lecturers in the recent University promotions program.

**Appointments**

**Dr Glen Hill** was the successful applicant for the advertised position of Associate Professor, Architecture History & Theory. Glen is also Head of the Architecture and Allied Arts Discipline.

**Dr Sarah Benton** was the successful applicant for the advertised position of Lecturer in Architectural Design and Digital Architecture.

**SUDA News**  **Nic Moore, Co-President, SUDA**

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JE: Your original training was as an economist, how did this prepare you for research into urban affairs?

GG: When I started to study economics the subfield of urban economics was just beginning. I was fortunate to be going to graduate school at MIT to study economics when the seminal thinkers of urban economics were getting their first fame. Most economic programs in the US are very myopic, training you to look at the world in a narrowly defined way. So my entire career has been spent trying to repair the myopia I was taught as a graduate student with healthy doses of other kinds of perspectives; sociology, geography, political science and planning.

JE: To what extent can you plan away urban problems or is it human nature that they will occur?

GG: Planning can make a huge difference to what type of problems you see popping up in your city. It’s easiest to plan away technological problems like multi-nodal transportation systems and public utility infrastructures. Not saying we have them, but it’s not beyond our capability. The social aspects of it, however, are much harder. Because unlike electrons that can move through a cable or water that can move through a pipe, people have this nasty thing called volition and consciousness and prejudices and all sorts of different motivations that confound sometimes even the best intentions of the planners.

JE: A central hub of your research and recommendations is the relocation of urban poor. As a planning official or politician, how do you overcome the Not In My Back Yard reaction?

GG: First of all there has to be a level of trust in those non-profit organisations or governmental agencies who are delivering the affordable housing around the question of how much affordable housing, at what kind of densities, of what kind of design and how they will be maintained. All these need to be dealt with by the supplier of affordable housing with the right answers as well as the public’s trust that those answers will actually be delivered.

JE: Is the model of isolated individual housing rather than blocks successful in the US?

GG: Absolutely, the construction of large-scale public housing developments in the US has essentially ceased for 30 years and that is a good thing. The major change in social housing that we have seen beginning in 1990s was the HOPE (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) VI project. Communities that have an old-fashion-style high density and run down housing development apply to Washington for a grant based on a physical plan for converting what usually are a series of semi-vacant or abandoned public housing buildings into a mixed income community on that same plot of ground.

JE: Does ‘organic’ market-forced movement, or gentrification, achieve the same results as planned movement of people out of high-poverty areas?

GG: No – in a pure market economy the governing principle of who lives where is driven by who has the money and can afford to be in the most desirable places. Affordable places change historically within any given city. So not only can the rich essentially govern where they want to live, because the market will respond to them, but then by default, if you work down, those with the most money get the best spots, what they leave over is the second best, for the next class down who can compete for this level and so on.
The trick is how to do this intervention in the housing market process. And this is what we in the US and Australia have not been able to do directly with public housing because it does not control a big enough share of the market. In Australia, 5% of housing stock is social housing. The US only has 1%, although there are rental vouchers available to a lot more people.

In the US, decent and affordable housing, supported by the government if necessary, is not a right or social entitlement. So low-income people are forced to scramble in the market for the cheapest housing available. And it is cheap only in comparison with what the rich pay. As a percentage of income it is hugely burdensome. Low income people in the US typically pay more than half their income in private-market rent, leaving paltry amounts for the rest of life.

**JE: What do low-income renters get for their money?**

**GG:** These are not high-quality housing options. The immediate home environment is unhealthy and the larger environment is full of barriers to advancement such as geographical isolation from employment and educational opportunities, as well as all the sociological problems of concentrated poverty such as social norms, role models, inducements to get involved in things like gangs, drug markets, and early teenage sex that aren’t going to promote individual economic advancement.

**JE: How does the rental voucher system work?**

**GG:** Here’s how the rental voucher (formerly called Section 8) system works; for each metro area there is an average rent identified for the distribution of various sizes of apartments, depending on the household size. They then ask the tenants to contribute 30% of their income to rent, and the government provides a voucher for the balance, based on the average rent. If people want to spend more or less of their income, it is up to them.

**JE: How would you change the system to work better?**

**GG:** We need to change the system to make it double sided. First, you make it a requirement for any landlord to participate in the voucher program if a tenant requests it. Secondly, and this is controversial amongst all my more liberal colleagues, you tell recipients of these scarce rental vouchers that they have to use them in a low poverty neighbourhood. It’s a tough decision. On the one hand you are telling people that they can no longer live next door to mum and have her look after the kids, but on the other hand, there are all the social indicators of what happens in high-poverty concentrations.

**JE: Why does taking people out of their existing high-poverty neighbourhoods work better than pumping money into providing more opportunities within these neighbourhoods?**

**GG:** I personally believe that for those who want to leave such areas we should facilitate and encourage that. I am very sceptical of the ability of federal, state and local governments to come up with enough resources to ‘gild the ghetto’ sufficiently to overcome the systemic barriers as to why that place doesn’t work so well.

**JE: Another topic you cover is urban sprawl. Is there a way that we can contain urban sprawl and should we be combating urban sprawl?**

**GG:** What we want as individuals can’t be generalised to the whole society because it becomes irrational. If everybody had a 2-acre plot, how could you ever service such a community with effective public transport, or build enough roads to keep them from getting congested. You can’t build a city based on this and we are seeing congestion now on circumferential highways that are forced to be built to service these low-density suburbs in most American cities. It is difficult to make public transport financially viable in low-density cities.

**JE: Onto the Global Economic Crisis, how bad is the foreclosure problem in the US and is this affecting all spectrums of American society equally?**

**GG:** The expectations are that one in 30 U.S. homeowners next year will foreclose and there have been estimates that lost property value, just due to foreclosures nearby, is around US$360 Billion in the next two years. That’s the lost value due to the neighbours around foreclosed properties having their value eroded due to under-maintenance associated with foreclosures. It is not just a monetary phenomenon, it is a real quality of life loss.

**JE: Is there an opportunity for public housing to buy out some of the foreclosed mortgages?**

**GG:** In principal it is a great opportunity. In practice I don’t think we have the institutional capability to undertake this. A year ago Congress passed a Neighbourhood Stabilisation Plan, where jurisdictions with a high rate of foreclosures could apply for a special allocation of moneys that they could use to deal with foreclosure crises. It was done on such a short lead time that plans were cobbled together and most plans focused on demolishing foreclosed properties.

**JE: Finally, what is your early take on Sydney as an urban centre?**

**GG:** My thoughts are almost entirely positive. I am a very visually oriented person and do a lot of painting, especially of urban scenes. So I am very drawn to the portrait of how the city lays itself out. And this is one gorgeous city, one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. This comes from the natural setting, with the incredibly intricate pattern of peninsulas and inlets creating interesting edges. Edges, which could be water, canyons, mountains, whatever, help make a city unique. The Opera House and the Harbour Bridge are the most famous but by no means the only outstanding illustrations.
A Lasting Legacy for Professor HJ (Jack) Cowan

On June 22, Jack Cowan’s family - wife Renate, daughter Judith and granddaughter Isabel visited the Faculty for afternoon tea with the Dean and a few of Jack’s old colleagues. The purpose of their visit was to donate $50,000 and their hope is to kick start a scholarship in perpetuity for research students in the memory of Jack who passed away in 2007.

Many of our Alumni have fond memories of Jack Cowan and to recognise his invaluable contribution the Faculty is creating the HJ Cowan Architectural Science Scholarship. This will support Architectural Science students and help them achieve excellence in their studies.

Jack Cowan dedicated over 50 years of his working life to this Faculty, he was appointed the first Chair of Architectural Science in 1953 and proceeded to create the Department of Architectural Science (now the Masters of Building Science), one of Jack’s research students, Peter Smith was the first PhD graduate in Architecture in Australia. He also masterminded the creation of the International Journal ‘Architectural Science Review’ which he edited for over 50 years. Jack also authored and co-authored 25 books.

The HJ Cowan Scholarship will continue Jack’s efforts to attract and retain the best students, assisting them to excel in careers in Architectural Science and provide enduring contributions to our community. More and more students have to juggle heavy course loads with paid employment in order to cover their living costs and study essentials. Scholarships not only reward outstanding students for their achievements, they assist deserving students to overcome financial hardship so they can concentrate on their studies and complete their university course.

With the initial donation of $50,000 from the Cowan family and a commitment from the faculty to donate a further $50,000 fundraising can commence to create an endowed scholarship fund that will require a total of $300,000. We hope you will agree this is a fitting tribute to a respected academic leader who inspired his colleagues and students.

As outlined above $300,000 is the basis for a Capital Preserve Trust for a scholarship in perpetuity and the proposed scholarship would support three students each year towards tuition. In the near future the Faculty will be sending out donation forms and details about the scholarship and we ask you to please give generously to ensure our future students also bear witness to Jack’s incredible contributions and help create a lasting legacy for generations to come.

For more information please contact Julia Wilson on 02 9351 5906 or j.wilson@arch.usyd.edu.au.
Master of Architecture Honours student selected for SCULPTURE BY THE SEA EXHIBITION

Nicholas Elias’s work, which forms part of his Honours Thesis, has been selected as one of only three site-specific pieces for the 2009 Sculpture by the Sea Exhibition.

Set in the middle of Tamarama Beach, Nicholas’s minimalist sculpture takes the phasing techniques used by 1960’s composer Steve Reich and applies them to an architectural context.

Nicholas, who has completed his Honours dissertation, is justifiably proud of his selection in this prestigious exhibition. “The Sculpture by the Sea Exhibition is a great example of the ways in which Honours work can make the transition from theory to tangible structures, and how research-based design can be at the forefront of architectural thinking in Australia.”

Construction of his exhibition piece is underway, following an injection of funding from the Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning. “I think it is important to support projects such as these that give our students an opportunity to showcase their incredible talents to industry and broader community” said the Faculty’s Marketing Manager, John Elliott. “We are in the process of formalising a program to fund student works for exhibitions such as this and the recent Vivid Sydney piece Lumenocity (see page 1), to encourage more students to participate in future years.”

Sculpture by the Sea runs from 29 October to 15 November, and includes around 100 sculptures set along the coastal walk from Bondi to Tamarama.

FIVE MINUTE GRADUATE

Caroline Pidcock Bsc(arch) 84’ BArch 87’

What made you choose Architecture?
I thought it might be a way of combining my interests in drawing, maths/science and what makes people tick. It nearly did engineering instead which would have harnessed my proven skills from school, but found architecture at the last moment. Thank god! I still can’t believe how lucky I was to find at the age of 17 a direction that continues to interest, challenge and reward me.

What kind of student were you?
I think I was a bit diligent... probably comes from being a first born daughter (had an older brother but four younger sisters). However, I don’t think I really hit my stride till after I started my own business and worked out what direction I wanted to take.

Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself as a student?
Understand that being in a place that is all about learning and discovery is a privilege that you should deeply appreciate and take advantage of while you can. What you will get from this is as much up to you as anyone or anything else.

What/who are your greatest influences?
The wonderful people in my life (especially my partner John McInerney) and the glorious power of nature, all of which energise and inspire me.

What are you working on at the moment?
I am the sole director of my own architectural practice, where I am lucky to have a number of great people helping me make this work well. We are involved in providing architectural and sustainable advice to a range of people and projects across Sydney and NSW.

My other “job” is being director of a business called Resource88 – Centre for Sustainable Practice. My aunt/mentor and I bought and renovated a wonderful building in Redfern, and are in the process of developing a community of businesses that are interested in exploring the potential of how to cooperatively work in sustainable ways.

What has been your career highlight?
Not sure I can limit that to one….

I continue to be delighted by clients who put enormous faith in me to help deliver results that address their needs, desires and aspirations.

Being the second female president of the NSW Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects was exciting, as was the reminder to many people that the president could be female!

Walking a line that has enabled me to meet and work with people such as Al Gore, Tim Flannery, Paul Gilding, Ian Lowe, Natalie Isaacs, Sam Mostyn and many others is truly wonderful!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?
The current world situation – economic, environmental and social – is a pivotal time for all of us. It is the people living now who will determine whether the human experiment will be able to continue. We are uniquely placed with the challenge to urgently re-evaluate how we live in the world and where we are going. I am optimistic that we will be able to understand what is really important, and find a way forward that will be truly sustainable and – wonderful.

As most of us live in cities, I am particularly interested in how this will work in such a situation. To address this, I have chosen to live and work in close proximity (3 mins walk) in the inner city. I hope that in 10 years I will be meaningfully connecting with my business and personal relationships by way of personal and various methods of low/non-carbon forms of communication; growing much of my own food in collaboration with my neighbours; and travelling in healthy low/non carbon methods of transport. It goes without saying that we will be living in buildings that through their design connect inately with their environment to provide delightful, healthy places that not only provide their own requirements, but contribute to the general community.
VODAFONE CHALLENGE

With the support of Vodafone, students in the Bachelor of Design Computing get a taste of real world mobile user experience design.

Vodafone provided students in the third year Advanced Interactive Multimedia Design class with several Apple iPhones to design applications which would be judged by a panel of academics and Vodafone representatives. Students were assessed on originality, design, user interaction, technical implementation and their presentation with prizes being awarded for the best three designs. The three best designs were awarded with an Apple iPhone sponsored by Vodafone.

Designs ranged from games, social networking applications, music visualisers and even using the iPhone as the controller for a remote control car. Lecturer Dr Martin Tomitsch said “I am really impressed by the standard of work and the time and dedication each student put in.”

Vodafone User Experience Designer, Dr Jurgen Spangl added “I expected good results but they’re even way better than what I expected. I hope they develop it further because while there is an investment of time, they can learn so much. I think there’s a lot of potential.”

First place went to Andrew Kurniawan for Double Jump, a cooperative platform game where users must work together to complete tasks. Andrew was surprised but “stoked” to win the first prize. “It is definitely something I want to develop further.”

Lucy Ro was awarded second place for designing Vertigo, a balance game where players can upgrade their characters through a points and reward system. Third place was awarded to Kristina Mah and Trent Robinson for Cheap Shots, a footy tipping application that allows users get live game updates as well as send a number of illegal football moves to provoke their tipping rivals.

Vodafone Head of Online Ms Jennie Bewes commented that the student’s applications had “been very well thought through from beginning to end. Seeing the visual design and how much they’ve achieved in such a short space of time is amazing.”

Ms Bewes was particularly impressed with the level of development for Cheap Shots, “I was a big fan of the NRL application. I think it has commercial viability to actually launch it into the marketplace.”

Ms Bewes hoped that all the student’s work would be developed further, “When you take it beyond the execution [of the design], even the concepts themselves have a lot more scope for development. As they were showing the designs I was thinking ‘Oh we could use that for this, that and the other.’ The core of the concept has so much opportunity above and beyond what they came back with.”

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VOD665/06/09
The Architecture Revue club, revived in 2006 after 13 years in abeyance, is embracing its fine tradition of inventiveness, particularly in the creativity of its stage sets, oversized props and brazen costumes, as it conspires to put on one of the most anticipated shows of the university revue season.

The 2009 Architecture Revue, Tall Storeys, revolves around the tension of the architecture studio on the night before final presentations, as students, sleep deprived and bearing the brunt of the world on their shoulders, are still scurrying to complete their final panels and models.

Based loosely on themes from Alice in Wonderland and The Wizard of Oz, the skits reveal what each student understands to be “the norm” for the last day of semester.

By overwhelming demand, there will be the expected barrage of random punch-line skits of dubious worth together with sensational and original high energy dances and songs.

You can help to make the 2009 Architecture Revue yet another sterling success. There is still time to get involved in a variety of ways – you can visit our web site, www.minima.com.au/archrevue for details on the show, tickets and sponsorship.

Hope to see you at one of our three performances from 17th – 19th September, 2009 in the fabulous York Theatre at the Seymour Centre!

Eliza Morton

Mark Tyrrell

Unlandscaped, the Landscape Architecture Australia prize for unrealized landscapes, seeks thought-provoking responses to contemporary issues. The prize promotes ideas and debate about landscape architecture by rewarding challenging new work. This year the award went to Mark Tyrrell who holds a bachelor of landscape architecture from UNSW and a Master of Urban Design from The University of Sydney. Mark currently teaches in both programmes.

The work began through Mark’s attendance to the 2007 Global Studio in Johannesburg convened by Anna Rubbo. The studio focussed on working on the ground in Diepsloot, an informal settlement or slum of 160 000 people. Over the following year, Mark undertook his urban design dissertation with the guidance of Barrie Shelton, focussing on Diepsloot as a case study and proposing a broader design methodology for undertaking urban design for capacity development in informal settlements.

Through combining Urban Design and ecology, Mark’s ‘environmental masterplan’ for Diepsloot provides a vision for turning a heavily polluted marshland in the centre of the township from a physical and psychological barrier into a social and ecological spine that spatially binds the community together whilst environmental quality.

Whilst the plan remains unbuilt, it has been developed with residents of Diepsloot and government offices in the subsequent Global Studios of 2008 and 2009 where Mark has worked in the role of design mentor.

The awards attracted over 50 entries from leading Australian firms and winners were announced at the national AILA conference in Melbourne on the 8th of May 2009.

All entries are published online at: www.archmedia.com.au/unlandscaped
In second semester last year, First Year students in the BDesArch degree took part in the pilot research project ‘Architecture Studio Archive’, which sought to comprehensively digitally archive the work they conducted in the design studio. The design studio is the primary vehicle for teaching architectural design; a centre of creative activity, with students producing works in both analogue and digital media (sketches, finished hand- and CAD drawings, conceptual and scale models and written work). Following assessment they either take their work home or abandon it to damage in the studio, meaning there is generally little or no record of its existence for future reference. Funded by a grant from the Teaching Improvement and Equipment Scheme (TIES), this project conducted collaboratively by Ross Anderson (Lecturer in Architecture), Michael Arndell (Assistant team Leader, SciTech Libraries) and Sten Christensen (Sydney eScholarship Repository Coordinator), promised retention of this broad range of material and the production a powerful, searchable digital archive in the Sydney eScholarship Repository. The overall intention was to establish procedures and protocols for digital archival practices particularly suitable to creative work in order to produce a template that could be broadly adopted in both the Faculty of Architecture Design and Planning and more widely. The principal outcome of the project, which has now been successfully completed, is a fully functional and readily accessible digital archive in the Architecture Design and Planning ‘community’ in the Sydney eScholarship Repository, openly accessible at: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/3633. It contains high quality digital files in a range of formats produced by students for their ‘Nine Quarter City’ project that saw students designing a single building with a complex international urban context. The project was advanced through a series of iterations with an emphasis on practical experimentation at a range of scales and in a range of media and the work was drawn together into a final presentation comprising a finely crafted model and panels of drawings. The material was carefully documented and uploaded into the archive, where it is securely stored for the students’ own future reference and is also readily available to staff as a resource for teaching, research, marketing and accreditation.
Careers can take some different turns. After twenty years counting the beans at a number of international banks, I decided to release my inner creative self. Leaving England by train, I travelled through eastern Europe before boarding the Trans-Siberian from Moscow to Beijing. It was while lodging with nomadic herdsmen in Mongolia I hit on the idea of studying a Masters degree in Architectural History at Sydney Uni. Don’t ask where the idea came from, though I blame it on too many glasses of fermented mare’s milk - Mongolia’s favourite tipple.

The transition from balance sheets to balustrades, from credits to Corbusier, proved painless. After all, nothing gets built these days without the money lenders agreeing. I remember introducing the Aboriginal Housing Company to the possibility of financing regeneration of The Block by selling development rights for the air space over the railway tracks in Redfern. Modern employees need a range of skills, and I don’t think I will be alone in asking where the idea came from, though I blame it on too many glasses of fermented mare’s milk - Mongolia’s favourite tipple.

I’ve always enjoyed history, and chose to write a Masters Dissertation on heritage conservation. After some persuading, Sydney University Press published an expanded version of the project as Sustaining Heritage: Giving the Past a Future (2007). This has received attention nationally and internationally, with unexpectedly high book sales in France - of all places. The following year I was lead editor on Dialogues in Urban Planning: Towards Sustainable Regions (2008). Publishing gives me a great a great sense of satisfaction, especially knowing that I was usually bottom of the class in English at school.

Friends often describe me a serial degree taker. My fifth degree, now nearing completion, is a PhD in Urban Planning. Contrasting different approaches to building the capacity of nonprofit housing providers in Australia, England and the US has been a great source of both inspiration and frequent flier points. I have interviewed a fascinating range of individuals, from Lord Mayors and Housing Ministers to inspirational tenants and front-line housing staff. Academic papers have been presented in Rotterdam, Dublin, Prague, Melbourne, Brisbane and Birmingham. Four months living in San Francisco as a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley was a highlight. It’s a tough life being a researcher, but someone’s got to do it!

Next steps are to broaden my knowledge of transforming public housing, and find ways to expand the supply of affordable housing. A couple of books are in preparation, both academic and travel writing (Empires of Iron will recount my tales from Siberia and Mongolia). I’ve promised not to take any more degrees, though that’s a promise I’ve broken in the past. As for banking, there’s no chance of me returning even if there were any jobs on offer. Thanks to Sydney University’s support, I’ve joined the creative class.

I was first introduced to the faculty by an intern of mine who was an international student within the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program. She had come to the school from a consulting background and thought I may be interested in providing some advice to the faculty on how they might better tailor the curriculum to suit more private practice expectations. As I had recently completed my Masters in Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, I was quite interested in understanding how that education would translate across cultures (as there is an apparent difference between Australians and Americans) and universities.

After a stint on the faculty’s professional advisory panel as the squeaky wheel when it came to high expectations for graduates of masters level programs, I ended up developing and teaching an elective class aimed at establishing an awareness within the graduates of how to be professionals within the work place. However, I probably learned more than the students did through this experience.

That was over seven years ago and as my teaching responsibilities have increased within the faculty, for I now teach the core course of Urban Design and Development Controls, so have my professional experiences. I currently work full time for PTW Architects as Practice Director for Urban Design. In this role, I travel throughout Asia, the Middle East and Australia developing large-scale masterplanning projects. These projects and the different cultures which come with a multitude of expectations and regulations help me to prepare and present the material in my course which is tested, suited to many, and hopefully in the end, inspires the students to a greater appreciation for the discipline as well as a desire to be the best within it.
ALUMNI SURVEY RESULT
Survey results yield positive feedback for Alumni activity.

In our last edition we invited our alumni to complete a survey to let us know how you feel about current and projected alumni activities, the type of activities that appeal to you, when and where you would like to attend and overall attitudes towards the University and your experience as a student and alumni member.

We received a great response from graduates of a range of programs from the 1950’s to just this year and the results are quite interesting.

Events
Overall our alumni respondents were more interested in maintaining contact with the Faculty via ongoing educational events rather than purely social or networking. This extended to attending lectures (such as our Thursday Night Lecture series) and more formal CPD short courses. Fields in which alumni are interested span the breadth of our programs, which is no surprise. Education directly related to your professional practice was most popular, especially when delivered from international practitioners, and the fields of sustainable design and urban and regional planning topped the list of subject areas of interest. We are currently active in developing both public lecture programs and short courses in these fields so we seem to be on track!

Graduation-year reunions were also popular with our respondents across all ages and programs. Our Alumni Co-ordinator, Julia Wilson, has put together a package that makes this easy for you to organise so if you are thinking of putting one together give her a yell.

Fundraising and support
It is warming to see a positive feeling to fundraising and support initiatives from our alumni, especially where your expertise can be shared through advisory panels and mentorship. The University’s new online social portal will facilitate mentorship of both students and new professionals. The Alumni Council will be working with the broader alumni body in the near future to harness this enthusiasm for support.

Your time at Uni
Overwhelmingly, our respondents enjoyed their time at University, with most positive feedback focused on the staff and fellow students and the social aspects of university life. Amongst alumni from our undergraduate programs, there was a strong feeling that your studies prepared you well for your first job.

Communication from us
The Archetype Newsletter remains the most popular method of communication from the Faculty, although our email broadcasts are also well received and are especially important for invitations to events. There was interest also in receiving employment information from us but not surprisingly this was most prominent from within our younger graduates.

And the winner is…
The lucky winner of our $250 Co-op Bookshop Voucher is Tessa Pollack, who completed a BA in Psychology and Anthropology at Sydney before undertaking a Master of Urban Studies, graduating in 1998. Tessa is now living in the Top End and is involved in the development of a public transport service for remote indigenous communities. There will be more about Tessa in the next edition of Archetype.

Additional feedback
We are always keen to hear from you if you have any ideas for events or would like us to work with you on reunions or CPD options. We have decided to keep the survey up online at www.arch.usyd.edu.au/alumni and would be happy to receive additional online surveys.

ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN AND PLANNING
2009 ALUMNI AWARDS

The Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning is proud of its alumni community and seeks to honour their efforts by acknowledging their achievements publicly. The Alumni Association is pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 Alumni Association Awards.

Alumni Award for International Achievement
Recognises the personal contributions that alumni who reside overseas have made to the enrichment of international society through their community or professional service.

Professor Lawrence W.C. Lai
(BScSoc(Hons) 1981, MTCplan 1985, MSocSc 1987, PhD 1995)

Alumni Award for Professional Achievement
Recognises outstanding achievements of alumni in their professional field.

Mr Andrew Andersons AO
(BScArch 1964, BArch(Hons) 1964 + University Medal)

Mr Mitchell Page
(BDesComp(hons) 2006 + University Medal)

Graduand Award for Contribution to the Diverse Life of the University
Awarded to a person who, in the preceding year, completed the requirements for a Bachelor’s degree of the University, and who has achieved a high standard of academic proficiency and contributed to the diverse life of the University.

Mr Andrew Daly
(BDesArch (Hons class 1 + Medal)

Alumni Award for Community Achievement
Recognises the personal contributions that alumni have made to the enrichment of Australian Society through their community service.

Ms Roya Ardjomand Baghai
(BScArch 1990, BArch 1993)

Ms Sue Clarke
(DipTCPlan 1964, BArch 1962 1962, DipBldgSc 1973)

Young Alumni Award for Achievement
Recognises outstanding achievements made by alumni aged 30 and younger to the University, local, Australian communities.

Mr Mitchell Page
(BDesComp(hons) 2006 + University Medal)

Voucher is Tessa Pollack, who completed a BA in Psychology and Anthropology at Sydney before undertaking a Master of Urban Studies, graduating in 1998. Tessa is now living in the Top End and is involved in the development of a public transport service for remote indigenous communities. There will be more about Tessa in the next edition of Archetype.

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Schedule of nominations for 2010
Call for Nominations: Monday, 1 February 2010
Closing Date for Nominations: Friday, 30 April 2010
Annual Alumni Awards Presentation - TBA
Finding your professional feet

with Building Services

John Fraser-Mifsud

Commercial Business Channel Manager with Daikin Australia, is one of the success stories from what industry leaders tell us is the best kept secret in the industry, the postgraduate Building Services program at The University of Sydney.

Like many of the program’s students, John came from a trade background in air conditioning and before that fitting and turning via a number of technical college courses. John’s solid practical background saw his career move to small project (up to $750K) management in a contracting firm. “During this time I also sold air-conditioning services to households at night. I was pretty busy but gained great experience. I did short courses in management and sales as well before moving up into corporate”.

That move came in 1996, when John started at Hitachi in first a technical then managerial role. “I realised I wanted to do something bigger, and started looking at MBA and technical programs, and considered a hybrid MBT but needed to build up confidence first.”

John met the late David Rowe, then co-ordinator of the Building Services and Facilities Management programs, at an open night, where he explained the program’s balance between science and engineering while maintaining a presence within cutting edge architectural design philosophy. “To be honest, all the talk about course structure didn’t really mean anything, but I went in with an open mind.”

The prestige of The University of Sydney was unimportant to John. “While institutional reputation is good, what mattered most was the course content, as well as the passion and knowledge of staff. Certainly David Rowe was influential in persuading me towards the Building Services program.”

John enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in 1998, applying the same level of commitment to studies that he had to his career. “Never underestimate the commitment you are about to make” he warns new students. “And don’t just learn what you already know. Pick courses that are outside your comfort zones and will challenge you. The breadth of options available for you to choose from makes it easy to put together a challenging program.”

John progressed well through his program, from the Graduate Certificate to Graduate Diploma and onto Masters, eventually graduating in 2003 with Honours. Along the way John’s work earned him three prestige Faculty awards, Dean honours list twice and the Design Science Prize award in 2003.

David Rowe recommended John complete his Masters the “only honest way, with an honours dissertation on thermal comfort. In doing my dissertation, this took 6 months of research and a further 12 of writing. It occupied all my spare time where I wasn’t at work. Luckily this was before kids.”

“David was a hard marker, but I put the effort in to ensure I got the 85% average needed to graduate with Honours.”

Poached from Hitachi to Daikin, the course helped provide important stepping stones in his career. “In the end it is not just the technical and theoretical knowledge you gain from a program like this that is valuable, it’s the confidence that you can make a difference at a senior level, especially when you are coming from a trade background. Completing this program truly did have a massive influence on my professional life.”

Fellow students and academics also proved to be useful in networking, especially breaking in to architectural circles. Networking opportunities were enhanced by block-mode delivery of units. “The intensives were just that; intensive. But they provided more opportunity to meet fellow students. The secret with block modes is to do the background reading and research. Don’t let yourself get left behind as there is no time to catch up. Even if you just do one or two units as non-award, they are a great opportunity to gain an understanding of core concepts.”

As Commercial Channel Manager for Daikin, John manages around 40% of revenue for this leader of air conditioning technology. With a competitive advantage in the market place based on a staff infrastructure to support consultants and stakeholders Daikin are dominating the industry, with most specifications for new systems calling for Daikin or equivalent. Working with ACADS-BSG who supply a range of building services software to the air conditioning industry, every project has its unique challenges. “My role cuts across financial, marketing, accounting, manufacturing and sales processes, with as key focus in driving business strategy and adding value to our customer base.”

If he had his time over, would John do the course again? “Absolutely. You can’t ask for more than the architecture, engineering and science mix you get from a building services program. It is interesting, challenging and a lot of work, but ultimately a really rewarding experience.”
We see great possibility in the MArch studio, as a place to trial and test ideas related to Sustainable architecture. A feature of the studio is a wish to engage with the wider community. We therefore jumped at the chance to work with Sancta Sophia and investigate the possibilities for future student housing. What we liked also though was that students would be producing designs for their peers.

On-campus accommodation is a pressing issue for Sydney University, with about 11,000 more students enrolled now compared to ten years ago. The brief from Dr. Marie Leech, principal of Sancta Sophia, called for a doubling of their current residential population on a tight site. Beyond this we asked students to offer their own take on the future of residential colleges in the university. Firstly, they studied some of the best examples of residential architecture of the past 100 years, examining how these buildings dealt with climate, place and what vision of community they embodied.

A series of lectures ran in parallel to the studio, focused on how the city and university of Sydney propose to become more sustainable. Some were held in Sancta Sophia so that discussion would be based around the site for the project.

Masterplans and early sketch designs saw students exploring the area around the residential college, looking for ways to connect Sancta Sophia to the university and neighbouring areas. Some students expanded the brief and looked at local food production, proposing urban farms, while others focused on programs for the social and economic sustainability of the college.

For many it was a steep learning curve - a new type of building, another way of thinking about architecture and a tricky site to do all of this in. All students worked particularly hard and we were very pleased with the results of the studio. There was a depth and intensity to each project and many thoughtful responses to the brief. The work was later exhibited in Sancta Sophia and we hope that some of the projects will inform the development plans for the college.

The project has contributed an immense body of creative work to Sancta Sophia College and it will be invaluable to us in our planning for the future. We are committed to social and environmental sustainability and the students were very sensitive to this in their planning and designs.

Listening to, and observing, the students’ presentations was a really wonderful experience for us. The range of interpretations - additions and extensions, extra floors, towers, finger buildings, green spaces, fine detail of accommodation design - was quite astonishing. It was quite a revelation to us that the same brief should spark so many creative directions.
The Faculty’s annual showcase of our research is coming up in October. This year Research Expo expounds the innovative research activities our staff and students are pursuing. The expanded 2009 Expo has more going on than any previous year.

Running from 2pm – 8pm, Thursday October 8, our staff and students present their work in a poster exhibition, ready to talk about how their study is solving problems, giving a coherent overview of the diverse range of topics from our major centres of research, Design Lab, sustainability, urban planning and architecture.

From 2pm, aided by crisp visuals, our research students give short, sharp 2 minute bites of where their work is heading.

Drinks, gorgeous food, awards, mingling and tours of our great labs and other facilities follow, before the evening program commences.

From 6pm our staff take you through the latest developments in sustainable building practise, planning for our urban survival and other solutions to our pressing problems.

We encourage our alumni to return to the Wilkinson Building, discover what our Faculty is contributing to the future, and become a part of our work.

If you or your company would like to sponsor a prize, please contact Julia Wilson julia@arch.usyd.edu.au or 9351 5906.

Watch our website www.arch.usyd.edu.au/research_expo for more details and updates, as the Oct 8 Expo draws near. Or drop Jennifer a line at jennifer@arch.usyd.edu.au or 9351 3606.

Architecture takes a prize at AMP’s Technology On Tap Open Mic Night

On Tuesday 23 June at the Paragon Hotel in Circular Quay PhD students were invited to share what they’re researching, how it helps to make the world a better place and why it matters to society.

Where big ideas and enquiring minds meet commercial minds and venture capital. Information meets entertainment. Science meets story. There were 16 researchers presenting their work as music, poetry, stand up comedy or other entertainment. Armed with a microphone each were given 2 and half minutes and the winner got $5000 research grant.

From the mouths of the winners: Jan Golembiewski

My own presentation was more comic than informative as I clambered up on stage wearing Heath Ledger make-up, a straight jacket and nothing else! Declaring that my roots founded the AMP who pays all the salaries in the room.

The $5000 first prize was given to Rosie, a UNSW student who, alas, did do really well. She sang her research and it came across as coherent, entertaining and important. But the second prize was the ‘people’s choice.’ Everyone had to SMS in their votes and - for most of the counting, I held second place beside Rosie. But Crighton, the tall dark stranger with a worthy (very P.C.) project, came from left of field, to ultimately outclass all of us in the final count. He won an iPhone and $1000. Good work! Three cheers!

Jan Golembiewski is a 1st year PhD candidate whose topic is “Mental as anything.” The importance of the built environment for mental health and well-being.

Crighton Nicholls

Jan and I were representing this faculty and both of us walked away with prizes, Jan with a special ‘Most Entertaining’ award which he ingeniously managed to auction off for $1000, and myself with the “People’s Choice” award – a new iPhone!

AMP were so impressed with the quality of all of the acts, that they generously awarded all contestants with $1000, so between the two of us we walked away with $3000 and a new iPhone, which was no mean feat given the quality of the acts!

Crighton Nicholls is a 3rd year PhD candidate whose topic is “The Adaptation of Technologies by Indigenous Communities: A Capability Approach.”

Eric Gordon Stevens (MBdgSc 1981), passed away on 4th June 2009, aged 81. Ever since his graduation he maintained a keen interest in the Faculty, and in traditional building trades such as stonemasonry.

He was teaching Architectural Drafting to students in TAFE when he enrolled in the Master of Building Science degree at Sydney’s Faculty of Architecture. He found the coursework provided helpful background for his teaching, but when it came to selecting a thesis topic, he thought about the growing interest in the conservation of heritage buildings. From his position in TAFE, he was aware that the number of apprenticeships in the traditional trades such as stonemasonry and solid plastering was falling drastically, at a time when it appeared that these skills would be essential for the conservation industry.

He chose the topic Stonemasonry of the Sydney Region and training of Stonemasons from 1788 to the present era. At the time, a master mason George Proudman was receiving some attention in the media, partly because he was working on very public restorations in Macquarie Street, but also because the sight of a working stonemason was so rare as to be newsworthy. With only one student at TAFE, the stonemasonry course in Sydney was discontinued - the nearest apprenticeship courses were then at Collingwood (Melbourne) and in Brisbane.

Although masonry continued through the monumental masonry industry associated with cemeteries, and was supplied in part by immigrant tradesmen, the specific skills and competencies necessary for conventional building work were in danger of being lost. Stone veneer was being used in framed buildings, but that uses a different range of techniques. Mr Stevens set about capturing as much information about the traditional industry as he could from the (mostly elderly) industry sources. He recorded the available information on specialised artificial finishes, such as the scagliola work in the Commonwealth Bank building in Martin Place, carried out prewar by Italian tradesmen behind curtains, to preserve the secrets of the trade.

He also took a number of elective courses in the university’s Department of Geology, particularly appreciating field trips with Associate Professor David Branagan. He also undertook extensive travels to active and former quarries, and noted (and encouraged) the remaining deposits of Sydney Yellow Block sandstone being cut and stored before the sites were developed.

After the closure of the stonemasonry course at TAFE, Mr Stevens urged his colleagues to restart the program, preferably alongside bricklaying courses because of the likely economies in staff and facilities. Copies of his thesis were circulated among the decision-makers, and remain in several TAFE libraries. Eventually teaching workshops were developed at Miller TAFE in south-western Sydney, in conjunction with the bricklaying facility, under the leadership of Mr Michael Landers. There are specialised rooms and benches for practices such as polishing and carving, with modern lighting and exhaust ventilation to avoid problems of stone dust. Now there are in the vicinity of 100 students enrolled in the various stages of the program.

The students have good prospects for continuing employment, with the conservation of heritage buildings well established, and good supplies of matching yellow block stone available. Although much decorative stone is sent overseas for cutting and polishing and re-importing, the repair and replacement of deteriorating structural stonework must be done locally and needs qualified tradespeople.

At Eric’s funeral, a representative of the Faculty paid tribute to his enthusiasm for his ‘cause’, and his contribution to the education of a new generation of masons.
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Phone: 02 9114 0941   E-mail: slalor@arch.usyd.edu.au

Thursday Night Lectures

TNLs investigate wide-ranging interdisciplinary ideas about the culture of architecture, planning and design, and to stimulate debate amongst professionals, the University and wider communities. The series seeks to be relevant and critical.

September 17

Measuring civic design: The case of the Sydney desalination project

Andy Dong

Introduction: Peter Phibbs, UWS

September 24

Topographic + suburban strategies

Rachel Neeson and Nick Murcutt, Neeson Murcutt Architects

Introduction: Maryam Gushesh, UNSW

October 8

Faculty researchers speak

Faculty Research Expo

Introduction: Alan Peters, Associate Dean Research

October 22

Thermal Delight in Architecture

Richard de Dear, FADP

Introduction: Bruce Forwood

RAIA CPD points: 1.5 (informal)

Artos Café is open before the talks.

Wine is available.

Time: 6.30 – 7.30 + discussion

Place: Lecture Theatre 1, level 2

Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning

The University of Sydney, 148 City Rd

NO CHARGE. No bookings required.

Series Coordinator: Anna Rubbo