

RIBA 

Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Visiting Board
to the University of Ulster**

Confirmed by the RIBA Education Liaison Group on behalf of
the RIBA Education Committee 10 March 2010

**School of Architecture and Design
Faculty of Art, Design and the Built
Environment**

M.Arch, Part Two

Date of Visiting Board: 02/03 July 2009

1. Information About the Courses

1.1 Courses offered for Initial Validation:

M.Arch, Candidate Course for Part Two.

1.2 Address of the Institution where the courses are delivered

School of Architecture and Design
Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment
University of Ulster
Belfast Campus
York Street
Belfast BT15 1ED

T: 08 700 400 700

W: www.ulster.ac.uk

1.2 Name of Awarding Body

The University of Ulster

1.3 Name of Head of School

Dr Barbara Dass, Acting Head of School

2. Membership of the Visiting Board

2.1 The members of the RIBA Visiting Board for the visit on 02/03 July 2009

Dr David McClean (Chair)
Elantha Evans (Vice Chair)
Lilly Kudic
Gerard Bareham
Norman Wienand (Co Professional member)
Alistair Stokes (Student/graduate member)
Mervyn Black (RSUA representative)

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk (RIBA) was in attendance as Secretary to the Board.

Mr Mark RO Olweny was in attendance as an observer

The Board would like to thank Ms Gráinne Dooher who acted as Institutional Facilitator.

3. Procedures & Criteria for the Visit

3.1 The Visiting Board was carried out under the 'RIBA Procedures for the Validation of UK Courses and Examinations in Architecture,' published July 2003, effective from September 2003 and 'Tomorrow's Architect,' published March 2003, effective from September 2003, For more information see www.architecture.com.

4. Recommendations of the Visiting Board Confirmed by the Royal Institute of British Architects Education Liaison Group on behalf of Education Committee, 10 March 2010

4.1 The Visiting Board recommends to the RIBA Education Committee Initial Validation with Conditions of M.Arch, Part Two, 2 years full time.

4.2 A Revisiting Board will take place in 2010. The next full Visiting Board should take place in 2013.

5. Recommendation of the Visiting Board to the Commonwealth Association of

Architects and the Construction Industry Council & EU Directive

- 5.1 The Visiting Board recommends to the Commonwealth Association of Architects that the CAA accredit the Part Two qualification.
- 5.2 The Visiting Board recommends to ARB that the Part 2 programme, together with a validated Part 1 programme and subject to satisfaction of the conditions given within this report, will meet all points of the EU Directive.

6. Criteria for Validation

- 6.1 On the basis of the sample of academic portfolios examined and subject to satisfaction of the conditions given within this report, the Visiting Board was satisfied that all the students graduating from the courses and examinations listed in 4.1 above satisfied all the Criteria for Validation (which are held in common by the RIBA for validation and the ARB for prescription).

7. Standards

- 7.1 On the basis of the sample of academic portfolios examined, the work from previous year of the courses listed in 4.1 was inspected during the visit and was found to meet the required standards.

8. Conditions of Validation

The Visiting Board recommends that the courses listed in 4.1 receive Initial Validation with Conditions. The Board had concerns about the lowest pass portfolio and the threshold standard. This was particularly the case in relation to the criteria for Design and Communications.

The Board considered that students needed to demonstrate significantly greater command of the full range of 2- and 3D communication media appropriate to modern professional practice. The Board was also concerned about the lack of evidence of design methodology.

- 8.1 The following conditions of recognition applies;

- a. The School must make a report to the RIBA Validation Working Group showing how the concerns giving rise to the conditions recorded in the Visiting Board report have been, or will be, addressed. This report should be submitted to the RIBA Education Department in time to be considered at the New Courses and Course Changes Group meeting on 24 March 2010. The report should focus on the need for a change in curricular content aimed to elevate the quality of reflective criticism of design and design process appropriate to a Part Two course.
- b. The School, in consultation with the RIBA Education Department, should appoint a professional advisor or advisors to work with the school and provide regular reports to the RIBA to offering reassurance that a viable academic plan to deliver the course objectives was forthcoming.
- c. A revisit by a subgroup (3 members plus secretary) will take place in summer 2010 or shortly thereafter at a date to be agreed mutually between the RIBA and the School. The subgroup will provide some level of continuity with the present board and will consider the work of the 2010

graduating cohort in order to establish whether the conditions placed upon the programme have satisfactorily been addressed.

9. Standard Requirements of Recognition

- 9.1 RIBA recognition of all courses/qualifications is dependent upon:
- i. external examiners being appointed for the course;
 - ii. any significant changes to the courses and examinations being submitted to the RIBA;
 - iii. any change of award title, and the effective date of the change, being reported to the RIBA so that, where appropriate, recognition may formally be transferred to the new title by the RIBA;
 - iv. submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the courses/qualifications listed in 4.

10. Summary of the Recommendations, Advice & Commentary Contained in the Full Report

The Board considered that the M.Arch displayed the potential to become a challenging programme which could improve the standard of architectural education in Northern Ireland. The Board was impressed by staff's achievement in only two years and by the programme leader and wished to offer support and encouragement. The Board also acknowledged the challenge faced by staff in establishing a new programme of architecture and by students forming the initial cohort, amongst faculty restructuring and changes of leadership. However, although the School was open to advice, in the Board's

opinion it needed to be more self-critical about the standard of academic outcomes particularly in relation to the quality of design programmes, the execution of design studio projects, and the integration of these outcomes with a robust technological understanding and expression. The Board hoped that the conditions and recommendations contained within this report would help the School to address its issues, with the aim of allowing it to achieve its full potential in the future.

- 10.2 The School's strengths include:
- Exemplary physical resources
 - The firm commitment of the institution
 - A strong, enthusiastic and committed staff body
 - Its position in a Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment which provides potential for developing synergies in research and teaching.

10.3 Recommendations

The Visiting Board has made the following recommendations. The RIBA expects the Institution to report on action taken or planned as a result of the recommendations in the annual monitoring returns submitted by the school and in the mid term review. Failure by an Institution to act on recommendations may result in a course being conditioned by a future Visiting Board.

- 10.3.1 The Board had concerns about the degree of technological integration and the convincing resolution of technical strategies in architectural design work. The Board recognised the opportunities for students to pursue specialist areas, but cautioned that an appropriate balance is required between this and the demonstration of fundamental technological principles. Structures in

particular, was a weakness that if strengthened would help to provide the necessary robust core to the course. It is intended that the appointment of a professional advisor, in conjunction with the newly appointed Professor of Architecture, will extend the school's benchmarking capability practices in other UK schools as well as those further afield.

- 10.3.2 The board recommends that content and diversity of curriculum is reviewed as it was clear that with such a dense curriculum, students did not have sufficient time to consider and develop an appropriate design methodology.
- 10.3.3 It is particularly important that students demonstrate a clear understanding of design process, and the methodologies appropriate to part 2 level study of both design studio work and extended written submissions.
- 10.3.4 The Board concurs with the External Examiners' concerns that the volume of work may be denying students the opportunity to comprehensively and rigorously pursue ideas both in the context of design studio projects and written submissions. The School is urged to review workload to facilitate reflection, and enable students to realise their full potential. It is recommended that revisions to curricular content are made which explicitly address these concerns.
- 10.3.5 The Board recommends that the School review the mapping in order to make more explicit the connections between the validation criteria, learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- 10.3.6 The Board recommends that the School make use of the full range of marks available, aiming for differentiation

between work that is at passing standard and that which is excellent.

- 10.3.7 The Board considered that there was disparity evident in the marking of the dissertation, with generous marking which distorted the overall portfolio mark; it is recommended that this be carefully monitored.
- 10.3.8 The Board recommends that the School encourages students to increase the comprehensiveness of design representation and media in portfolios to present the full range of digital and analogue communication techniques.
- 10.3.9 The Board recommends that the School make process and methodology explicit, particularly using model-making as a developmental tool.
- 10.3.10 There are issues of timing between the research elements of the programme and output. The Board recommends that the timetable be reviewed in order to strengthen and optimise this link.
- 10.4 **Advice**
- 10.4.1 The Visiting Board offers the following advice to the Institution on desirable, but not essential improvements, which it is felt would assist course development and/or raise standards;

There was no additional advice.

11. Summary of Previous Visiting Board Reports

The graduating cohort of 2008/2009 was the first one of the M.Arch programme and therefore the first opportunity to consider the programme for Initial Validation.

The present visit was the first Visiting Board to consider the M.Arch for exemption from Part Two of the RIBA Examination. The programme was granted Candidate Course Status for Part Two following an Exploratory Board on 10 March 2008.

12. Details of the Conditions in Item 8.

The Board had concerns about the lowest pass portfolio and the threshold standard. This was particularly the case in relation to the criteria for Design, Communications and Technology and Environment. The Board considered that students needed to demonstrate significantly greater command of the full range of 2- and 3D communication media appropriate to modern professional practice. The Board was also concerned about the lack of evidence of design methodology, and integration of appropriate constructional strategies into design studio projects.

13. Commentary

13.1 Self-Appraisal and Developments since the last visit

The Board considered that the Critical Self-appraisal was insufficiently critical and did not adequately demonstrate a sense of direction for the programme. However, the excellent introduction to the programme provided by the programme leader on the first day of the visit gave a clearer picture of this.

The former head of school departed at the beginning of 2009. An Acting Head had been in position for several months. During the visit the Board learned that a new Professor of Architecture had been appointed, who would also be Head of School and take up the post in 2010. When appointing to this post, the University sought an individual with academic and practice experience,

experience of partnerships which are part of the ethos of the university and who shares their belief in architecture as a social art. A second professorial chair is also to be advertised later in the year, probably with a more open-ended person specification.

The new Art and Design building in Belfast has been completed. The University is still seeking to expand its presence in Belfast and land adjacent to the site has been bought. Most of the Jordanstown campus is due to move to Belfast in the next seven to ten years.

13.2 Documentation and Arrangements for the Visit

The Board thanks the staff and students for their kindness and hospitality during the visit. Documents were sent in a timely manner. Documents were clear but tended to be repetitive. The programme mapping documentation was clarified by supplementary information. Portfolios appeared incomplete as models and some work were not presented with them. The Board appreciated the open discussions it held with all staff and students.

13.2.1 *Record of Academic Portfolios sampled during the visit*

The School provided the following portfolios:
M.Arch 1: 3 lowest, 2 middle and 2 high pass portfolios;
M.Arch 2: 3 lowest, 2 middle and 2 high pass portfolios.

13.3 Responses made to the previous Visiting Board report (and to reports of any revisits) and external examiner comments.

The School had taken the comments of the Exploratory Board seriously, making several changes to the present programme and attendant documentation as advised. These included editing and revision of the documentation, reduction of the workload in semester 2, the length of

dissertation, the pedagogic structure, the mapping of module descriptors onto assessment sheets and the requirement for an integrated building design in the design studio module. However, in the opinion of the present Board, concerns remain, for example with learning outcomes, not all of which were expressed truly as Masters level, with an overcrowded syllabus, the presentation of an artefact in place of a substantial written piece of work, and the clarity of mapping against RIBA criteria. These concerns remain in addition to those identified as the reason for the condition placed on the programme.

13.4 Context of the courses within the wider provision of the school and Faculty.

The Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment recently brought together the Schools of Art and Design; Architecture and Design; Built Environment; and the Research Graduate School which offer a wide range of programmes in art and design, engineering, property, quantity surveying, and housing among other things.

The Board applauded the rationale behind the Faculty restructuring and the potential it provides. The Board applauded the School's aspirations for interdisciplinary working and synergies but advised that management of these interfaces will be key. The Board concurred with the external examiner's praise of the use of varied media such as film used as a recording technique and that this could be usefully extended to design work. The School was well-placed to take advantage of the in-house facilities and expertise.

13.5 Detailed Commentary on the Course leading to Part Two qualification

13.5.1 Clarity, validity and achievement of course objectives
The programme leaders are aware of the need to establish a clear identity for the M.Arch. The School's aspiration for the programme was to explore architecture as a social art, taking advantage of its size, setting in art and design and built environment and its location in Belfast. The focus on Belfast is important but explored through a wider perspective. The Board considered that this was a valid approach and believable for a school in Belfast.

However, the Board considered that this set of principles needed to be rigorously embedded in the programme. There was little evidence of individual ambition and architectural aspiration in much of the work. There was also little celebration of history as a driver for design studio work, especially in the context of a culturally rich area such as Belfast and its hinterland. The aims and ambitions of the programme were convincing but it was disappointing that these did not manifest themselves in the work in a more compelling way. The board hopes that the school will develop a device to ensure that this develops naturally with the course.

13.5.2 Course design and content

The programme is classified as an undergraduate masters and all modules are set at masters level.

The Board acknowledged the effort to attempt to benchmark standards and encouraged the staff to take this further. Two visiting professors have also been appointed; one to advise on technology and management and one to advise on design.

The Board considered that there was too much content measurable against too many modules. The Board considered that some modules might be consolidated in order to allow for greater depth. In the Board's opinion, it was possible for students to become side-tracked by modules that were not wholly relevant to the programme. The Board considered that the core of the course needed to be more robust and at a suitable intellectual level in order to enable the multidisciplinary approach to which the School aspires. The Board noted the provision of Faculty teaching and learning scholarships for cross-collaboration in art and design and architecture.

13.5.3 Quality and coverage of the syllabus (including balance and integration between design/non-design work)

- *Design*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board confirmed that all graduates of the M.Arch programme met all Part Two criteria in the area of Design; however, the Board was concerned about lowest pass standards as outlined in paragraph 12.

The Board was impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff and commitment of students. The student support, the pride they felt in the School and programme, and the level of participation was evident. The group work endeavour was good. What students discussed and learnt as a group was seen to be valuable, but the group output was not evident in the work. The film workshop, however, was very successful.

The Board considered that, in certain respects, the framework was ingenious and could engender a different level of discourse as more international students joined the

programme. There was, however, little evidence of appraisal of design options. The level of architectural ambition was limited and there was no systematic testing as required by the Part Two design criteria that asks students to demonstrate the ability to "Generate and systematically test, analyse and appraise design options, and draw conclusions which display methodological and theoretical rigour." The Board, although impressed by the group exploratory models, considered that individual output was poor.

Staff hope that some changes already planned, such as module modifications and the re-timing of the dissertation, will help students address design earlier.

The Board wishes to stress the importance of an in-depth and substantial piece of written work as part of the Masters programme.

- *Technology & Environment*

Students demonstrated some awareness of structural strategies, but not at a level appropriate to postgraduate study compositions. There was no direct evidence of variations or options, despite the eloquence and excitement of those teaching. There was a lack of strategy and credibility in terms of students' construction work. There were very specific elements that covered aspects of the criteria, but integration of design was an issue. Neither did this come across in the final design thesis. All criteria were covered, but not at a sufficiently high level, technology was not integrated with design and not applied to the design context. At the lower end of achievement there was little or no evidence of constructional process. At the higher end of achievement there was no awareness of providing zones for environmental servicing. Whilst

several modules covered environmental issues, such as sustainability, these were not applied to students' work.

The Board noted that a new technology module 'Making Buildings' which has been introduced to continue to develop the strand of technology and delivery. The Board draws the School's attention to the need to inform students of this development at an appropriate time.

Tutors from Built Environment in Jordanstown come to Belfast and students also visit Jordanstown. The Board noted the wealth of opportunity for design linkages with Building Sciences and looks forward to this becoming more apparent in the students' work.

- *Cultural Context*

The Board draws the School's attention specifically to the requirement that students "demonstrate, within coherent architectural designs and academic portfolio, the ability to:

- Critically appraise and form considered judgements about the spatial, aesthetic, technical and social qualities of a design within the scope and scale of a wider environment
- Independently define, and critically appraise, their ideas in relation to a design and to the work of others."

The Board commended students' urban work. However, consideration of precedent was superficial and precedents were not always adequately referenced. There seemed little evident connection between design solutions and an understanding of the value of historical, technological, or theoretical precedents.

- *Communication*

The Board was pleased that students were beginning to discuss different media. However, this was not yet applied to critical appraisal or analysis of design work. The Board refers the staff to the following requirement that students "demonstrate within coherent architectural designs and academic portfolio the ability to:

- Use architectural representations having critically appraised the most appropriate techniques available for the representation of their particular schemes.
- Produce documentation and reports which are clear, analytical and logical covering a range of architectural issues of culture, theory and design."

Within the portfolios there was no focussed story or statement describing a scheme or clear declaration of objectives. The range of media was reasonably diverse but lacked serious application in the final design work. Consequently, design drawings often lacked the sophistication or invention appropriate to a Part Two course.

Being adjacent to the Art and Design subject areas, the potential for architecture students is enormous.

The dissertation length has been reduced to 10000 from 15000 words. Alternatively, students might present a combination of media and words (minimum 5000). The dissertation and final design project are intended to be integrative; the one should inform the other but students are free to investigate areas in which they are interested. The Board had concerns about the School's proposals regarding the submission of an artefact which are

expanded upon in paragraph 13.5.5. The Board wishes to stress the importance of a substantial piece of written work as a vehicle for establishing academic parity across the cohort.

- *Management Practice & Law*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board confirmed that all graduates of the M.Arch met all Part Two criteria in the area of Management, Practice and law.

13.5.4 Progression within the course

Progression rates in the statistical analysis were not immediately clear. Half the cohort passed the final assessment at the first attempt. However, the Board expressed serious concerns about the threshold standard at the end of year one of the M.Arch and at the point of award, as outlined in paragraph 12.

13.5.5 Assessment:

The Board was concerned about threshold standards at year one and at the point of award, hence the condition placed on the Part Two programme. The School should exercise great vigilance with regard to threshold standards to ensure that they are appropriate to the award level.

The Board draws the School's attention to the question of parity of assessment across different media. Some of the written dissertations were of a high standard. The Board was concerned about the School's intention to modify the requirement to a written submission plus an artefact. The Board considered that this might reduce the School's ability to moderate effectively, although staff noted in the staff meeting that there is expertise within the School

regarding the assessment of film, for example, versus written text.

The Board noted that the pass mark is 50% and distinctions are conferred on achievement of 70%. Under this system, the difference between competence and excellence is only 20%. The Board considered that the University's marking system provided little opportunity to enjoy the full range of marks and that the range between a fail and a distinction was too confined.

13.5.6 Admissions and arrangements for direct entry at a stage other than the start of the course

Applicants must have achieved at least a 2.2, RIBA/ARB Part 1 and have undergone a supervised year out. Applicants are interviewed with portfolio. The target intake is 25. No direct entry to final year of the M.Arch is permitted. Applications reportedly are very strong but given the commitment to quality, it is likely that BA entry numbers will settle at about 75 and Part Two numbers at 30-35.

The diversity of the student intake is set to increase as the programme establishes itself. Marketing information and the website have been revised with this in mind. The 2009/10 incoming cohort will include students from 10 UK schools of architecture, which staff have found encouraging. The Board was confident that the new intake would help to build the ethos of the course.

13.6 External examining arrangements

The Board was able to meet one External Examiner in person; the second contributed to the discussion by telephone.

All external examining systems were appropriate and the examiners themselves were content that processes were clearly explained. The Board supported the collaborative approach towards the School adopted by the externals. The School is responsive to examiners' comments and engages in open dialogue. The External examiners expressed great support for the School and the new programme, commending the strength of the staff team, the ethos and ambition of the programme and the commitment of the institution. The Board shared the external examiners' view that the potential of the course was tremendous but this had yet to be realised. The following reflects the main points of the discussion involving areas in which improvements might be made:

- Improvements were being made, such as the consideration of precedent. The Examiners considered that the technical lectures were good, but some aspects of technology were over-emphasised but presented in isolation. They had discussed with the School how to make technical teaching more design-oriented. The appointment of a Visiting Professor with a particular remit for technology was seen as a positive and confidence-giving move.
- The Examiners considered that the School was aware of weaknesses in design methodology and were taking steps to address it. At the lower end of achievement, students struggle to achieve appropriate depth.
- The design programme and projects were perhaps too ambitious in scale and scope and could be edited to allow for exploration of depth.
- The students face the challenge of being the first cohort of a new programme, and were not really

aware of the type of output to be expected from top-class Part Two graduates.

- Process could be less linear and its recording more organised; thus helping students to review their own work.
- The School itself was apparently unclear about the link between the dissertation and design project; the School might wish to make a decision about whether the one should directly inform the other or not.

13.7 Students

There was good representation of both years of the M.Arch. The students were broadly supportive, but whilst they could see and appreciate the aspirations of the programme, the first cohort inevitably felt the lack of higher years for inspiration and emulation. It was clear that communication with staff was good and students had already raised and addressed concerns.

The strengths of the School were seen as:

- Its location in the heart of Belfast.
- Staff, who are open and helpful, and their total commitment of the staff to the course and to the students
- The potential of the programme
- The school's vision of urban and social architecture and discussion of real issues in Belfast.
- The opportunity to question and influence and to make Northern Ireland a better place.
- The excellent facilities and access to staff from a wide range of disciplines.

- The amount of peer learning, reinforced by the size of the School and the enthusiastic and engaged student body
- The programme is engaging and challenging.
- Staff contact is good; staff are readily available.
- The opportunity to visit Boston and experience crits in the graduate school.
- A good rapport is being established between Part One and Part Two, with M.Arch students sitting in on Part One crits etc.

Although appropriate technical expertise was provided by external visitors on a regular basis, it was commented that this sometimes comes too late. More technical input in the sense of discussion with experts, would be welcomed.

Given the breadth of the course the Board was interested to know whether students felt that they had time to engage properly with areas necessary to inform the design or areas in which they are interested. Students reported that the School would support any strong interest. Work tended to be focussed towards the project but they might investigate areas in depth if they wished.

There is an active student society. There are also staff student/meetings and opportunities for feedback.

13.8 **Staff**

The staff body was fully represented in the staff meeting, including experts from other disciplines who contribute to the architecture programmes. The Board thanked the staff for the constructive discussion. The staff formed an extremely enthusiastic and cohesive team, including those based at Jordanstown. The Board noted that the split campus appears not to be a barrier.

The Board acknowledged the great involvement of part time staff and the appointment of design advisers although it did not have the opportunity to meet the design advisers.

The meeting was particularly useful for the Board in clarifying outstanding issues and queries regarding vision, benchmarking, assessment processes, design methodology and integration of technology.

Staff:student ratios are calculated at 1:14 across the course.

13.9 **Research**

The newly-formed Faculty is now home to three research institutes: the Art and Design Institute, the Built Environment Institute and the Research Graduate School. Architecture has been identified as an area for development. The Research Institutes and Faculty have contributed money towards a fund to assist in the development of collaborations and the dissemination of research output. As noted elsewhere, the establishment and exploitation of synergies is key. A workload allocation model for teaching and research has been implemented. Research is heavily applied and is not RAE-dominated, although the University has steadily increased its standing and performed well at the last RAE. The School has already been successful in securing AHRC funding for a project regarding religious architecture in a diverse world and £70k community relations council Funding for the Facilitation of Arts and Regeneration Strategy for an area of Derry.

Once architectural research develops a decision will be taken as to whether it will sit more appropriately in Built

Environment or Art and Design for future assessment exercises. There are now four PhDs broadly concerned with architecture.

13.10 Equal Opportunities

There are appropriate systems in place to promote equality of opportunity. The demographic among the students was appropriate.

13.11 Resourcing and facilities

The University has invested heavily in physical facilities, which are excellent. RIBA Visiting Boards have viewed the development of the Belfast campus at first hand in the course of several visits in recent years. The Board considered that the resources provided were exemplary, but that these could be better used to improve the quality of work across the majority of academic modules. The visual offer of what else was available to the students and staff was evident in the new building.

The eventual relocation of the majority of the Jordanstown campus to the Cathedral quarter of Belfast will bring subjects such as technology and management, urban design, housing and so forth geographically close. However, the Board did not feel that the split campus had presented any particular problems for architecture staff or students; it appeared to act as an integrated team. Some specialist areas will remain in Jordanstown.

- *Studios*

M.Arch and the BA have dedicated studio space, housed in the recently-completed building. Architecture also benefits from permanent gallery and crit space.

- *IT*

IT provision is appropriate, available both through the Corporate IT Laboratories in the Belfast Campus and the Learning Resource Centre. It is centrally managed IT. There is a regular cycle of review and replacement in which staff and students are consulted. Wireless network coverage is extensive. Software provision is appropriate.

In addition to the Faculty facilities, the M.Arch has its own computer room with two plotters. The plotters are run by a committee of students.

- *Workshops*

Architecture and design share a workshop which is constantly manned and can be used subject to induction. There is a rapid prototyper and a new laser cutter. Each year students undergo a revised induction. The school is considering developing a workshop 'passport' system which will record which induction the holder has undergone. Students also have access to a wealth of workshops in other disciplines such as textiles, ceramics, plastics, silversmithing and so forth.

Facilitation of multidisciplinary working is at head of school and budget level. The University can facilitate this in terms of funding and research activity.

- *Library*

The RIBA has visited the library in its former location in the course of several recent visits. The Library has now been moved to the main building. The School of Art is 160 years old and houses the best collection of art and design outside the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. It also houses a DVD and video collection and viewing equipment. Subject classes for students and

training for staff is provided. There are currently 4700 architecture items. The librarian considers that the architecture collection has been generously funded from the start. Regular stock assessment is undertaken. The acquisition policy is flexible. The Belfast library complements the collection in Jordanstown, which houses the collection concerning of building science, construction, engineering, technology, management, law and professional practice texts, journals and electronic resources.

14. Attachments

The School provided all advance and Base Room documentation as required under the Procedures for Validation.