

## **THE ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE**

**Summary of the full Report of a Visiting Board which took place on the 7 and 8 March 2002 and which has been confirmed by the ARB Board and the RIBA Education Committee.**

*It is strongly recommended that this report is read in conjunction with the RIBA ARB Procedures and Criteria for Validation. This summary has been approved by the chair of the Visiting Board and the Head of School.*

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The RIBA ARB Visiting Board took place on the 7 and 8 March 2002

### **2 Recommendations**

2.1 Following the recommendation of the Visiting Board, **Continued Validation** of the following courses was approved by the RIBA & ARB:

Part 1: 3 year full-time course and associated AA Intermediate Examination

Part 2: 2 year full-time course and associated AA Final Examination

Part 3: Professional Practice & Practical Experience Examination taken after a minimum of 24 months professional experience

### **3. Conditions of Validation**

3.1 There were no conditions attached to the recommendation

3.2 The next Visiting Board should take place in the academic year 2006/7.

### **4. Summary of the Commentary**

4.1 The visit showed the Architectural Association School to be continuing to look forward and to reinvent itself in the most nimble and responsive fashion. The Board was confident that the model of educational practice being developed by the AA had the potential to continue to enrich architectural education and the profession in the UK and internationally.

4.2 The School was fortunate in possessing an incredibly able, truly international team of academic staff. The Board had the highest praise for the way the staff at all levels responded to the Board's questions during the visit. The academic staff and students were supported by an exceedingly able, dedicated and caring team of support staff.

4.3 The Board noted the increased evidence since the last visit of cross-fertilisation of work across intermediate and diploma units. The continued expansion of graduate programmes and the resulting interaction particularly with the diploma programme had further enhanced the experience of AA students. The student experience was also greatly enriched by the extensive

programme of public lectures, the exhibitions organised by the AA and a wide range of publications.

- 4.4 The Board recommended that the School reconsiders the mechanisms via which it obtains feedback from its External Examiners. Separate Chief Examiners for Part 1 and Part 2 might allow more detailed and focused reports. If the External Examiners are not to write independent reports, the role of Chief Examiner might be rotated. A formal written report should be produced by the Part 3 Examiners.
- 4.5 The Board recommended that the School re-examine its work in the area of environmental design in both Part 1 and Part 2. The Board saw evidence of real commitment to this area in terms of the development of new courses and the usage being made of Hooke Park. The School is encouraged, however, to explore approaches, appropriate to its overall methodology, to ensure that the students' level of engagement with environmental design match those seen in the structures and materials areas.
- 4.6 The School was invited to review the operation of the "work shadowing" scheme operating in the Intermediate School. It was clear to the Board from discussions with the students that they were less than fully engaged with this activity.
- 4.7 The Board additionally commended:
- the School's ability to attract highly motivated, intelligent but also talented students from all over the world
  - the rigorous procedures that are in place for admissions with advanced standing and the support for students thus admitted
  - the ability of the course team to support students in getting "up to speed" in the first year of the programme
  - an impressive standard of written English in student work
  - the impressive facilities and supporting courses to enable students to exploit the extraordinary range of media available
  - the open jury system practices throughout the School
  - the ambitious attempts to address imaginative views of the diversification and globalisation of practice in the Part 2 Future Practice course
- 4.8 The Board additionally:
- recommended that more background on the work of the units to be assessed should routinely be provided for the external examiners
  - supported the recommendation in the 2000/2001 External Examiners Report regarding a possible restructuring to make the second and third year Part 1 work in the History and Theory area more distinctive.