

Royal Institute of British Architects

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

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee 17 September 2008

**School of Architecture,
School of Art and Design**

**BA (Hons) Architecture, Part One
Bachelor of Architecture (BArch), Part Two
Post Graduate Diploma in Practice and
Management in Architecture, Part Three**

Date of Visiting Board: 14/15th February 2008

1. Information About the Courses

1.1 Courses offered for revalidation:

BA (Hons) Architecture Part One

3 years FT or at least 5 years PT

Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) Part Two

2 years FT or (at least) 3 years part-time

PG Cert. Practice & Management in Architecture

Contributes to Part Three, part-time, 12 months minimum period

PG Dip Practice & Management in Architecture Part

Three, part-time, 12 months minimum period

1.2 Address of the Institution where the courses are delivered

Lincoln School of Architecture
University of Lincoln
New Architecture Building
Brayford Pool
Lincoln
LN6 7TS

T: 0152 288 2000

F: 0152 283 7136

W: lincoln.ac.uk

1.3 Name of Awarding Body

University of Lincoln

1.4 Name of Head of School

Professor Nicholas Temple

2. Membership of the Visiting Board

2.1 The members of the RIBA Visiting Board for the visit on 14 /15 February 2008:

Dr Robert Felix	(Chair)
Tina Frost	(Practitioner)
Lily Kudic	(Academic)
Simon Grattan	(Practitioner/Regional Nominee)
Paddy Conaghan	(Co-Professional /Non-Architect)
Andrew Usher	(Student Member)

One architect member had to withdraw due to illness. The Board remained quorate and proceeded with the assent of the Head of School and Chair of the Validation Committee.

Pamela Edwards (for RIBA Education) was in attendance as Secretary to the Board.

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, (as amended at RIBA Validation Committee 19.05.2005), the “RIBA Criteria for Validation”, published March 2002, effective from September 2003, and the “Description & Regulations for the Recognition of Courses, Programmes and Examinations in Professional Practice and Management, (Part Three) in the UK”, published November 2003.

For more information see www.architecture.com.

4. Recommendations of the Visiting Board Confirmed by the Royal Institute of British Architects Education Committee 17 September 2008

4.1 The RIBA Education Committee at its meeting on the 17 September 2008 confirmed **Continued Validation** of:

BA (Hons) Architecture Part One

3 years full-time or at least 5 years part-time

Bachelor of Architecture, BArch, Part Two; years full-time or (at least) 3 years part-time

PG Cert. Practice & Management in Architecture

Contributes to Part Three part-time 12 months minimum period

PG Dip Practice & Management in Architecture Part Three part-time 12 months minimum period

4.2 The next Visiting Board will take place in 2012

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 continue with their accreditation of the Part Two qualification.

5.2 The Visiting Board was satisfied that the Part One courses met the Construction Industry Council Common Learning Outcomes for Degree Courses in the Built Environment

5.3 The Visiting Board recommends to ARB that the Parts One & Two courses met all points of the EU Directive.

6. Criteria for Validation

6.1 On the basis of the sample of academic portfolios examined, 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

8.1 There were no conditions attached to the courses listed in 4.1.

9. Standard Requirements of Recognition

RIBA recognition of all courses/qualifications is dependent on:

- i. external examiners being appointed for the course;
- ii. any significant changes to the course 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 Recommendations, Advice & Commentary Contained in the Full Report

The Lincoln School of Architecture was established in 2003 when the Hull School, founded in 1932 by Sir Leslie Martin, relocated to Lincoln, where it is now an established part of the Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design, based in an award winning university building by Rick Mather.

The new location provides an excellent environment to strengthen learning within the studio environment, as the principal focus of the educational programme, and as the context for developing cultural and environmental underpinning of the discipline. Other strategic priorities include developing the research culture of the school, and the relationship between the studio, practice and research.

Following the move, student numbers have expanded, mainly in the BA (Hons) Architecture programme, and now include new students from non-traditional student backgrounds from within the local region. The expansion in students has been accompanied by new staff recruitment, with the aim of strengthening teaching and learning, supporting student retention and stimulating student recruitment to the School's Bachelor of Architecture Part Two programme. The new appointments are also designed to reinforce and develop the School's growing research culture and growing expertise in sustainable environments, technologies and design.

10.2 The School's strengths include:

- A strong collaborative relationship and excellent support from the university;

- an expanding staff team, representing a diversity of interests and skills;
- strong leadership and management by the Head of School and senior staff;
- excellent studio spaces with 24 hour access, including a recently acquired large 'crit' space that is also used for talks and exhibitions;
- a commitment to maintaining and enhancing academic standards within the opportunities of the new location;
- a thematic approach to studio, where distinct areas of exploration are encouraged – principally in digital design, sustainability, live projects and materials experimentation;
- the role of the dissertation in 3rd year BA (Hons) Architecture and 1st year BArch. Supported by group seminars, the incorporation of a significant piece of written coursework at both stages of the programme recognises the importance of textual research in architectural education and practice;
- good frameworks and positive support for student participation;
- excellent library and workshop facilities, with knowledgeable and approachable specialist staff;
- well integrated CAD provision backed up by a committed and accessible technical staff team.

10.3 Recommendations

- 10.3.1 There were no recommendations attached to the continued validation of the Part One, Part Two or Part Three programmes.

10.4 **Advice**

10.4.1 The Visiting Board offers the following advice to the Institution on desirable, but not essential improvements in relation to the PG Dip in Practice & Management in Architecture Part Three programme and examination:

The Board was confident that ARB RIBA Criteria and standards are being met. The Visiting Board strongly supports the School's proposed review, revision and intended expansion of this area of course provision and assessment.

In particular the Board supports strengthening teaching and learning and assessment of business and job financial management, to provide greater opportunities within written examination papers and documentary submissions - and prior to the final assessment stage of the Professional Interview - for students to demonstrate:

- they meet ARB RIBA Criteria for business and job financial management;
- their critical, analytic and evaluative abilities and applied professional judgement..

Additionally, the Visiting Board advises that the planned revision and desired expansion of the Part Three programme may be strengthened by including a review of best practice in Part Three teaching and learning materials and assessment methods in other centres that cater for mixed cohorts of local and remote candidates.

11. Summary of Previous Visiting board Report

11.1 The last Visiting Board to Lincoln School of Architecture took place on 20 and 21 November 2003.

The Visiting Board recommended: **Continued Validation** of:

Part One: BA (Hons) Architecture, three years full-time or (at least) five years part-time

Part Two: Bachelor of Architecture, two years full-time or part-time (at least three years)

Part Three: Professional Examination in Architectural Practice, part-time (at least 12 months)

The Board found that BA/BA (Hons) Architecture full-time and part-time courses met all the Criteria for Validation at Part One level, with the recommendation that assessment procedures and mechanisms be operated with greater rigour in assessing both design work and those areas of technology which are assessed through design outcomes.

The Board encouraged the formulation of a clear vision and agenda for the School's development, drawing on existing strengths in participative architecture and exploiting its location in the Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design.

The Board advised the School to investigate high failure rates in Part One and Part Two, focusing on whether a greater use of interim assessment in taught subjects might improve pass rates in those areas of the course.

The Board had found that the PG Dip in Practice & Management in Architecture Part Three programme and examination met all the Criteria for Validation at Part Three, but advised the School to consider providing some interim feedback following the written examinations to allow candidates to better prepare for the professional interview.

12. Details of Conditions in Item 8.

- 12.1 There were no conditions attached to the courses listed in 4.1.

13. Commentary

13.1 Self-Appraisal and Developments since the last visit

The Critical Self Appraisal set out developments since the previous visits and outlined ways in which issues raised in them were being addressed. It also indicated some of the opportunities and challenges presented by the University's new location in Lincoln, and the development objectives established following the initial period of consolidation.

Since moving to Lincoln, recruitment into the architecture programme has expanded rapidly, primarily at the Part One stage. At the last RIBA visit in 2003 there were approximately 400 students in the School, whilst today there are almost 550, with 330 in BA (Hons) Architecture.

The expansion in students has been accompanied by an increase in staffing that includes new posts designed to reinforce the research culture of the School and to strengthen teaching and learning, with particular reference to building technology and sustainability; to architectural history and the humanities and to digital design. The technical staff team has also been enhanced with a full-time CAD instructor, 0.4 CAD technician and 2 part-time workshop technicians.

The new building provides excellent facilities which have recently been enhanced by the acquisition of additional studios and a large gallery/crit/event space recently vacated by the School of Performing Arts.

Library and workshop provision is good, and the presence of the RIBA Regional Office in the School provides professional reference materials and good professional contacts for students at an early stage in their careers.

Since the last RIBA Validation Visit in 2003 the School has focused on a number of key objectives:

- Developing the research culture of the School;
- Forging closer links between practice, research and teaching;
- Improving the studio environment.

A new research centre – the Centre for Sustainable Architecture and Environments – embraces four active research groups: Cultural Contexts in Architecture, Design Dynamic Space, Liveable Cities and Sustainable Architectural Technology.

The School's emerging research culture is guided by the principle of research-informed teaching, which is a key objective of the University Strategic Plan, with staff encouraged to draw on their research interests when developing courses, and at the same time to use teaching as a mechanism for conceiving new research topics. In the 2008 RAE submission, 13.6FTE staff members were returnable (out of a total of 21.7FTE).

A recent change in university modular structures, from a 12 to a 15 credit point base, is being used as a positive opportunity to review and revise all undergraduate programmes, including BA (Hons) Architecture. This will be completed in 2008/9., when the current Part Two (BArch) 'm' level programme will also be revalidated.

Part Three saw a fall in recruitment following an increase in fees levied by the University. Since this was amended student numbers have increased in 2007/8 and the School hopes to bring the programme up to numerical strength over the next few years. A review and revision of the Part Three programme is currently planned.

In addition to the benefits brought by the move to Lincoln, there are also challenges in the School's new location. These include the low number of students returning after completing the BA (Hons) Architecture, preferring instead to transfer to courses closer to their 'Year Out' placements in larger urban centres, where they see greater opportunities to combine continuing part-time employment with their studies.

Also at the Pt 2 stage, there is evidence that some part-time BArch (Part Two) students can find it difficult to complete within the minimum three year timescale. This is being addressed through the appointment of a new programme leader, who has made changes to strengthen full-time recruitment to the course, and who is now going on to review the programme structure and three year part-time route.

Within the commitment to maintaining and enhancing academic standards, the School sees issues around completion rates at the Part One stage as being partly due to the large number of students entering the programme from non-traditional student backgrounds, sometimes with a poor appreciation of the demands of architectural study. The School is currently taking action to tackle this, through new tutorial appointments that will more strongly support individual and peer learning in the studio, and

through clearer frameworks to support progression and identify problems of non-attendance at an early stage. Plans for the future include continuing the successful integration of new staff; reviewing admission arrangements for undergraduate entry; increasing intake of international and European students; and strengthening the focus - in all programmes - on the need for cultural as well as technological responses to climate change and global warming. .

13.2 Documentation and Arrangements for the Visit

Documentation provided prior to the visit was clear and well organised and covered all necessary requirements. Additional documentation and a link to University on-line services were provided in the base room allocated to the Board during the visit. Where any further information or explanation was required on work under review, this was quickly provided by the Head of School and staff team.

The Board wish to thank the School for their courtesy and for the excellent organisation of the visit. In particular, it commends the exemplary arrangement for displaying portfolios reviewed by the Board in the large ground floor 'crit' and exhibition space. The combination of drawings pinned on walls and display panels, clearly linked to each student portfolio, enabled the Board to easily navigate through the required range of work. Where additional explanation or evidence was required on individual portfolios and projects, relevant staff were on hand to explain their development and assessment.

13.3 Record of Academic Portfolios sampled during visit

The Board considered the following portfolios from the 2006/7 graduating cohorts:

BA (Hons) Architecture (Part One)
 1st year: 3 lowest; 1 middle ; 1 higher portfolios from a cohort of (134)
 2nd year: 2 lowest; 2 middle; 1 higher portfolios from a cohort of (127)
 3rd year: 3 low; 2 middle; and 4 higher portfolios from a cohort of (83)

Bachelor of Architecture (Part Two)
 The Board reviewed the following portfolios from the range of work displayed across the Part Two level course units: 4 lowest; 2 middle; 4 highest from a cohort of (25)

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice and Management (Part Three)
 Sample of Part Three examination portfolios from the 2006/7 Examination:
 3 lowest; 1 middle; 1 high passes from a cohort of 15.

- 13.4 **Assessment**
 Assessment is generally based on project and course work, with formal written examinations occurring in only a few areas of the programme, such as professional studies, management and law, and professional practice and management.

13.5 Detailed Commentary on the Course leading to Part One qualification

- 13.5.1 **Quality, validity and achievement of course objectives**
 The Board found the aims and objectives of the Part One course to be appropriate. The Board welcomed the overall objective of developing students as enabling, co-ordinating and integrating designers, with a wide education and

skilled in both architectural design and architectural technology.

13.5.2 Course design and content

The Board found the course design and standards appropriate to meeting the course objectives, student learning needs and the ARB/RIBA validation criteria.

The Board noted the good use made of opportunities in the new building to strengthen the role of the studio as the focus for much of the teaching and learning on the BA (Hons) Architecture programme, with assessment based on project and course work, without formal written examinations. There is a common first year, shared with students on other design disciplines and a strong emphasis on peer learning

13.5.3 Quality and coverage of the syllabus

- *Design*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part One Validation Criteria in the area of design were being met by graduates from the BA (Hons) Architecture programme

The Board noted a good progression through projects of a developing scale and complexity, with a sound integration of technical knowledge with design ambition, development and realisation.

The Board welcomed the benefits for teaching and learning in design provided by the excellent 24 hour studio facilities on the new campus, the recruitment of more staff to work with students in the studios, and from the stimulus of the School's growing research culture, firmly linked to student learning.

- *Technology & Environment*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part One Validation Criteria in the area of Technology & Environment were being met by graduates from the BA (Hons) Architecture programme.

The Board found sound work in this area of the programme, with evidence that the previous Board's concerns about quality and integration of technical learning and assessment have been successfully addressed. The written work in this area showed interest and ability, and evidence of good tutorial support.

In particular, the Board commended the strong and sometimes inspired application of structural learning evident in many of the projects viewed, and hoped the School's present ambition, to develop professionals able to respond to the challenges of climate change, will lead to similarly inspired developments in the environmental work in students' projects.

- *Cultural Context*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part One Validation Criteria in the area of cultural context were being met by graduates from the BA (Hons) Architecture programme.

Work viewed by the Board demonstrated interest, ability and evidence of good tutorial support. There was a strong emphasis on developing study skills, essay writing and using IT in research, with a dissertation undertaken in the 3rd year. The Board welcomed the focus in this area of the programme on improving visual literacy and stylistic

awareness, and in enabling students to learn about the social and contextual factors that determine architecture and design.

Within this context, the Board noted the challenges the cultural context written workload may present for some students from non-traditional student backgrounds. The Board therefore welcomed the School's commitment to further develop contextual teaching and learning through humanities lectures structured around a series of historical, philosophical and cultural themes, and encourages the School to consider offering student learning services to further support success across the full range of Part One architecture students.

- *Communication*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part One Validation Criteria in the area of Communication were being met by graduates from the BA (Hons) Architecture programme.

Written and visual communication, as demonstrated in student essays, reports and dissertations, and in student design and technical projects, was of a good standard. Work viewed by the Board demonstrated interest, ability and confidence, with evidence of good tutorial support.

Student projects demonstrated good levels of ability to develop and communicate design thinking through hand drawing, and through the use of CAD.

Peer learning is strongly featured in the School, and in meetings with the Board students demonstrated good 'listening' skills and communicated with clarity and confidence.

- *Management Practice, & Law*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part One Validation Criteria in the area of Management Practice & Law were being met by graduates from the BA (Hons) Architecture programme.

The Board noted that professional studies are introduced at level 3 in a Technical and Professional Studies Module, designed to introduce the main administrative, legal and financial aspects of professional practice in the construction industry. An appreciation of professional issues is further supported through contact with the RIBA East Midlands office located in the School, and the professional literature resources held there.

Additionally, the Board noted that professional studies taught units are located in the PG Cert PMA Stage C1 during Stage 1 of Professional Experience in the 'Year Out', normally undertaken between the Part One and Part Two stages of the programme. This includes a taught unit of seminars and examination on professional practice and management and another that introduces the RIBA Plan of Work.

- *Preparation for Professional Experience*

The Board was satisfied that all the preparation for professional practice at Part One was appropriate.

The Board noted that the BA (Hons) Architecture level 3 Technical and Professional Studies Module that is designed to 'equip the student with the technical and professional knowledge and skills expected of a graduate student taking up their first post in practice', and the

support in finding Stage 1 Professional Experience employment provided by the RIBA East Midlands Regional office located in the School.

The Board also noted that completion of a minimum 6 months monitored professional experience, using the RIBA Professional Experience and Development Record, is a requirement of the Pg Cert PMA awarded on completion of Stage 1/ 'Year Out' professional experience.

13.5.4 Progression within the course

The Board considered the progression of teaching and learning to be appropriate. It noted the confidence expressed by students in the peer learning systems in place in the School, and in the accessibility of tutors for help in progressing individual project work. The Board also welcomed the system for issuing letters to students at an early stage on non-submission and non-attendance.

In relation to the high attrition rates in both earlier and later stages of the Part One and Part Two, while the Board recognised the School's commitment to maintaining and raising academic standards, it also suggested that the School may wish to consider introducing additional teaching and learning and personal support to meet the needs of mature work-based students and those from non-traditional student backgrounds, to support the integration and achievement of vulnerable students within the academic setting.

13.5.5 Assessment

The Board expressed confidence in the various systems of continuous assessment used within the Part One programme, and confirmed the findings of the Mid Term

Monitoring Visit that the previous (2003) Board's concerns about standards of technical work assessed within design portfolios have now been addressed. Indeed, in higher achieving students they found evidence of real strengths in controlling, integrating and communicating the technical elements of their design projects.

Assessment standard of written work (essays, reports and dissertations) reviewed by the Boards were of a similar reliable and appropriate standard.

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

The School seeks to recruit a balanced cohort of students, as found in the UK population, and takes positive action to attract suitably qualified individuals from under-represented sectors, notably women students. Applicants from overseas are encouraged, together with local applicants from Lincoln and the surrounding region. For those students where financial pressures are an issue, the part time programme and work-based learning (after level 1) are offered as a positive alternative.

Whilst all students need to meet minimum academic entry requirements, and 'A' level success forms part of the selection process, the School considers all candidates who can demonstrate the necessary skills, maturity of outlook and a clear interest in architecture. Whilst applicants may visit the School on Open Days and Application Days, the Board supports the School in extending formal interviews, with portfolios, in order to better establish the necessary qualities and commitment from the range of students who apply, including those from non-academic backgrounds. Interviews would assist both parties in making better

informed decision, and would more clearly identify any learning support needs of new students.

University systems for the Accreditation of Prior Learning, permit entry into the 2nd and 3rd years of the BA (Hons) Architecture programme.

Second year entry includes transfers from other validated UK architecture courses, and also of Malaysian students who have successfully completed a full-time diploma course in architecture in Malaysia, and students from the University of Ulster HND Architectural Diploma course (under a guaranteed Place Scheme) or similar by individual arrangement. Entry into the third year is restricted to students who have successfully completed the first 2 years of another UK or overseas validated architecture programme.

13.6 Detailed Commentary on the Course leading to Part Two qualification

13.6.1 Clarity, validity and achievement of course objectives

The Board considered that the aims objectives and content of the Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) course were appropriate.

13.6.2 Course design and content

The Board noted the objective at Level 1 of providing a platform for developing skills in research and analysis, and introducing them to specialist areas of study, leading to opportunities at Level 2 for students to develop their own programme of work within the studio framework, and to follow individual and specialist interests that further their personal career goals, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills for their future professional lives. The Board

appreciated the School's ambition to develop these opportunities further, through strengthening links to the School's research centres and to architectural practice.

13.6.3 Quality and coverage of the syllabus

The Board considered the quality and coverage of the syllabus to be appropriate. It noted the strong balance of design and technical content in student portfolios, and the emphasis upon textual as well as visual work.

- *Design*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part Two Validation Criteria in the area of design were being met by graduates from the Bachelor of Architecture programme. The Board found generally improving design standards, linked to expanded staff and tutorial support, with parametric design and generative components now taught at this stage, to expand the visual exploration of digital design. They also found some real strengths in the development of design ideas, and the integration of technical aspects and confident use of CAD, particularly in the work of higher achieving full-time and part-time students. They noted the aim for a finished building – of 'concept translated into detail design' - and the overall objective of developing students as 'enabling, coordinating and integrating designers, with a wide education, and skilled in both architectural design and architectural technology'.

- *Technology & Environment*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part Two Validation Criteria in the area of Technology & Environment were

being met by graduates from the Bachelor of Architecture programme.

As with the Part One course, the Board found much sound work in this area of the Part Two programme, with evidence that the previous Board's concerns about quality and integration of technical learning have been successfully addressed. The written work in this area showed real interest and ability, and evidence of good tutorial support.

- *Cultural Context*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part Two Validation Criteria in the area of Cultural Context were being met by graduates from the Bachelor of Architecture programme.

The Board noted the 8000 word 'Research Project' dissertation written during level 1 of the Part Two stage of the course, in addition to the Dissertation submitted in the BA (Hons) Architecture, and found solid work here that demonstrated both real interest in subject matter, and good tutorial support. They noted and welcomed the stimulus to this area of Part Two stage teaching and learning of the School's developing research culture, and the links being established with teaching and learning in the humanities in relation to architecture.

- *Communication*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part Two Validation Criteria in the area of Communication were being met by graduates from the Bachelor of Architecture programme.

The Board found a good range of communication methods employed in student work, and a good balance of developmental and presentation material in students' design portfolios. Written work was well expressed and professionally presented. In meetings with the Board the verbal communication of Part Two students was relaxed, articulate and mature.

- *Management, Practice & Law*

On the basis of the sample of portfolios provided, the Board was satisfied that all the Part Two Validation Criteria in the area of Management Practice and Law were being met by graduates from the Bachelor of Architecture programme.

The Board welcomed the emphasis on developing students personal monitoring abilities, and on developing their critical awareness of their professional development, through the use of a Personal Development Plan, reviewed as part of the end of year portfolio examination. Practice management is covered in lectures and seminars, with teaching and learning in this area assessed through a three hour written examination at the end of the unit (with an overall weighting of 80% written examination: 20% PDP.)

13.6.4 **Progression within the course**

The Board considered that teaching and learning progression was appropriate, and noted the School's commitment to maintaining and enhancing academic standards. However, they identified the demanding work loads of part-time students who opt to undertake the first year of the Part Two programme alongside the first year of professional experience (with PG Cert PMA workshops and PEDR recording in addition to Part Two level 1

studies and projects), as a possible contributing factor in the high attrition rates amongst part-time Part Two students.

This issue was raised by the Board with both staff and students, and the Board noted that both thought it was not a significant issue, because PEDR recording is not onerous, and because the informal work-based practice-related learning that takes place during this period contributes to both their professional experience and design and technical learning.

13.6.5 **Assessment**

The Board expressed confidence in the assessment criteria, arrangements and outcomes for the Bachelor of Architecture programme.

They noted the variety of assessment methods used to monitor and measure a student's progress and achievement, with formative assessment continuous throughout the course, and summative assessment taking place at the end of each unit of study.

13.6.6 **Admissions**

The Board noted that admission criteria for the Bachelor of Architecture course requires a good pass in a degree level that carries exemption from the RIBA Part One examination. International students with unrecognised degrees are accepted on the programme but are expected to successfully complete the ARB Prescribed Examination to gain this recognition.

The Board noted and applauded the School's commitment to expanding Part Two student numbers, by promoting the School's excellent facilities, and developing the

research and specialist aspects of the Part Two programme, to encourage more Part One Lincoln graduates to continue onto the Part Two course, and more Part One graduates from other Schools to make the move to Lincoln.

13.7 Detailed Commentary on the Course leading to Part Three qualification

13.7.1 Aims Objectives and Content of Part Three Course

The Board considered the aims and objectives of the Postgraduate Diploma in Practice & Management (Part Three) to be appropriate. In terms of content, the Board would have wished the areas of business and job financial management (covered in the professional practice module at the Part Two stage) to be more strongly revisited here, following the second post-Part Two stage of professional experience.

13.7.2 Quality and coverage of the syllabus

On the basis of the sample of work examined, the Visiting Board was satisfied that all the graduates from the University of Lincoln Part Three programme satisfied all the Part Three Validation Criteria.

However, within this context, the Board would wish to see greater opportunities in the documentary submissions of the Part Three examination, following completion of their second year of professional experience, for students to reflect on, appraise and demonstrate their *applied* understanding and levels of professional ability and judgement in the area of business and job financial management.

Similarly, the Board would have welcomed stronger opportunities for students to demonstrate their critical and evaluative abilities and applied professional judgement to the Professional Examiners in the written examination papers, and in the professional development /career evaluation document submitted by candidates, prior to the final professional interview stage of the examination.

The Board welcomed the development of publishing Part Three course materials online and on CD, and noted the confidence expressed in Part Three teaching and learning, and in Part Three staff, by Lincoln students.

The Board noted, following retirement of the previous Part Three course leader, that the Part Three programme is now run by a single staff member, with senior staff management support. The Board supported the School's intention for a second appointment linked to the desired growth in Part Three student numbers, and recognised the improvements to both resourcing the programme and to peer learning opportunities that proposed expansion of the programme and staffing could bring.

13.7.3 Assessment:

The Board found the standards and subjects of assessment of student work in the University of Lincoln Part Three to be appropriate to the requirements for ARB RIBA Part Three, and expressed confidence in the assessment outcomes.

However, the Board welcomes the proposed review of the Part Three programme and examination as an opportunity to develop greater opportunities for students to demonstrate - and examiners to more fully assess - *applied* professional knowledge and judgement, prior to the

final Professional Examiner Interview stage. The Board suggests this might be appropriately and effectively achieved through a review of written examinations, and by strengthening the evaluative requirements for the professional /career appraisal report submitted by students in the examination.

The Board saw the planned revision and desired expansion of the Part Three programme as an opportunity for the School to consider the introduction of such developments, and suggest the process might be helpfully informed by reviewing best practice in Part Three teaching and learning and assessment methods in other centres catering for mixed cohorts of local and remote candidates.

The Board noted the support and guidance given to the School by the Part Three External and Professional Examiners, and supported the recruitment of a female professional examiner to the programme, as supporting both equal opportunities and a diverse Part Three student recruitment.

13.7.4 **Admissions**

The Board considered that admission procedures for the University of Lincoln Part Three programme and examination were appropriate. The Board noted that students from other Schools, who have not taken the Lincoln Part Two course professional practice modules, are required to sit this assessment before being permitted to sit the Lincoln Part Three examination.

The Board noted the difficulties in retaining Part Two students at the Part Three stage when their professional experience employment is remote from Lincoln, where closer Part Three examination centres appear more

convenient. They also noted the temporary drop in Part Three student numbers associated with an increase in examination fees introduced by the University.

The Board supported the School's ambition to rebuild and expand Part Three cohorts now fees have been readjusted, while continuing to maintain and strengthen the generally complex individual entry criteria (over and above exemption from RIBA Part and Part Two) at this final qualifying stage. The Board recognised the improvements to both resourcing the programme and to peer learning opportunities the expansion of the programme will bring.

13.8 **External examining arrangements**

The external examiners interviewed by the Board were strongly supportive of the School and expressed satisfaction that their comments were noted and responded to by the University. External Examiners were satisfied with the range of student project work available for them to sample, and saw the clearly supported development 'from concept to realised design' as one of the real strengths of the School.

The External Examiners appeared well briefed on their roles within the School and expressed confidence in recent and current developments in teaching and learning, in new staff appointments and in the strengthening of the School's research culture.

13.9 **Arrangements for monitoring professional experience**

The Board noted the use of the RIBA PEDR framework and considered arrangements for monitoring Professional Experience were appropriate, while noting there were some instances, where students' resulting analytical and

critical abilities - as demonstrated in their Part Three examination written submissions and Professional Interviews - were adequate but disappointing. External Examiners pointed to the sometimes poor levels of professional experience monitoring by employers as largely responsible for this, and expressed confidence in the School's commitment to strengthening this element of the programme.

13.10 Students

The Board met with a good range of students from RIBA validated programmes and found them to be thoughtful, friendly and confident communicators who were enthusiastic in their support for the School. Students expressed enthusiasm for the excellent facilities available at the School, including good 24 hour studio access and excellent workshop and Library facilities, though Part Three students would like longer loan periods and better supplies of the professional documents required for the examination.

Students expressed confidence in the staff and in teaching and learning arrangements, and satisfaction with levels of individual teaching and learning tutorial support, and feedback, in the studio. They welcomed the stimulus of the new staff appointments, in terms of the range of research interests and contact with practice they provided. Students also expressed enthusiasm for peer learning opportunities in the School, but recognised the proactive approach required to benefit from them. Some students wondered if some of those who dropped out of the programme did so because of unrealistic or poorly informed expectations about courses and workloads, and suggested interviewing all Part One applicants with portfolios might be a way to deal with this.

Students appreciated opportunities to contribute through the LIN.CON student society - with weekly meetings with the Head of School and opportunities for organising an external lecturer programme and social events, and publishing a student newsletter - all of which contributed to a growing sense of identity and involvement in the School's new location in Lincoln..

13.11 Staff

The Board found staff to be enthusiastic and supportive of the School, with a developing integration of those who had moved with the School from Hull with the large number of more recent full-time and part-time appointments. Staff expressed confidence in the opportunities presented by the new location and enthusiasm for the new research culture within the School, which they felt provided 'a lot of healthy symbiosis'. They expressed confidence that this contributed to stronger tutorial support for student teaching and learning in the studio which, associated with new appointments, would help to counter the currently high attrition rates in both the Part One and Part Two courses.

The Board noted the continuing need for good staff briefing, induction and professional development opportunities to support these processes. They also noted the demands the growing research emphasis places on full-time staff, who tend to carry greater administrative and managerial responsibilities, and the need for the School to recognise this in new staff appointments and staffing strategies.

The Board noted the positive value to the School of the good proportion of part time appointments, that gives

students a valued exposure to a wider range of influences and professional issues.

13.12 Research

The Board found research to be of a good standard and range and welcomed the School's developing research strategy and ambitions, with the particular emphasis on creating links between the humanities and architecture, to better equip architects to respond to the challenges of climate change and global warming.

The Board welcomed the arrangements to channel research activity and knowledge into teaching and learning and staff development.

The Board also noted the good physical resource of the School's new Research Room, which served as the Board's base room during the visit.

13.13 Equal Opportunities

The Board found the University and School equal opportunities policies and procedures, and arrangements for transparency and fairness in assessment procedures, to be appropriate.

The Board noted the School's established arrangements for part-time and work-based study, for mature students and those unable to meet the financial requirements of full-time study.

The Board also noted the expanded recruitment, following the move to Lincoln, of students from the local region who were often the first within their family and peer group to embark on HE study or professional qualification. The Board saw the integration, progression

and achievement of such students within the academic setting of the validated architecture programmes - through appropriate additional teaching and learning support – as an opportunity for the School to both contribute to equal opportunities within the region, and to support student retention and achievement within the School.

The Board noted that approximately 75% of students on the RIBA validated programmes are male, and that the School's recruitment strategy includes a targeted recruitment of potential female students.

13.14 Resourcing and facilities

The Board found an excellent range of resources and facilities in the new building and campus, with the recently further expanded studio, crit and gallery space, and the CAD provision, being particularly worthy of comment.

Workshop facilities were of a similar high quality, with knowledgeable and helpful staff providing good technical support for student learning. The Board noted and supported the ambition for a further technical appointment to facilitate the developing design and research aspirations within the School. It encourages the School to continue to develop and make full use of these excellent facilities, and to extend their use in student learning in, for example, Technology modules at Part 2, where greater use of the workshop would further enhance students' understanding of materiality and the limitations of individual building components.

Library provision was excellent, up-to-date and had good links to the School of Architecture.

Printing facilities appeared adequate and appropriate, with no adverse student comment about costs or availability.

14. Attachments

Prior to the Visiting Board the School provided:

Critical Self-appraisal
Response to Questionnaire
Supplementary Information

In the Base Room the School provided:

Staff CVs
School Timetables
Most Recent QAA Report
Institutional Prospectus
Full Syllabus and Project Briefs/Course Documents for all three professionally validated programmes (Parts 1, 2 & 3)
Copies of examination/coursework questions and all other forms of assessments.
Course documents and student submissions for Part 3 Postgraduate Diploma in Practice and Management in Architecture (RIBA Part 3)