TEACHING-LEARNING-RESEARCH: DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTS

• Paper / Proposal Title:
  MSA Catalysts: Advanced Peer Learning through Vertical Group Projects
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• Abstract (300 words):
The Manchester School of Architecture has advanced peer-to-peer learning by linking multi-level group work with its outreach work. This pedagogic approach has become an essential vehicle to progress the School’s ambition to connect academia, the architectural profession and societal networks whilst offering a rich learning experience for the student. Embedded into the curriculum, the School adopts this approach at key points during the academic year, requiring students to collaborate through intense ‘vertical’ projects. Students from different levels of study across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes unite to explore an architectural proposal or contemporary agenda in relation to a live project as group work. The addition of external collaborators, who may act as client or participate as an active team member, enhances student learning, experience and debate. This paper will introduce and analyse this model’s pedagogy and good teaching practice through two examples of the School’s established peer learning projects, the Events Programme (2008 to date) and the All School Project (2015 to date).
Sitting at each end of the academic year and driven by live agendas, these vertical projects provide an experimental area for design and research. The All School Project (September) involves the entire school responding in teams to a single brief created in collaboration with a local external partner to rapidly produce 50 solutions to a single design or research question. The Events Programme (April) is a collection of 20 collaborative projects. Working with a live client, the brief for each 'Event' is prepared by groups of three or four students in the postgraduate MArch course and delivered to
groups of approximately 16 undergraduate students from the BA (Hons) course in Architecture Years 01 and 02. Activities during Events are researched, designed, planned and taught by MArch students who are then assessed on their project management and delivery.

Reflecting on their inception, evolution and ongoing legacy, this paper will demonstrate the effectiveness and value of this educational ecosystem and note the impact on skills and knowledge acquisition. The impact of these vertical projects will be mapped through specific examples to illustrate (1) built legacy, (2) legislative legacy, and (3) research legacy over the past decade in the city of Manchester and beyond.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Victoria Jolley is an architect who joined the MSA in January 2015 and has taught across the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A Fellow of the HEA and a member of SEDA, she co-ordinated the School's Events programme for three years from 2015. She is currently undertaking a PhD focusing on Central Lancashire New Town (1967), a part-realised super-city designed to accommodate 500,000 people. This has fostered an interest in garden cities and suburbs, new towns and dynamic linear growth strategies. In 2009 Vicky gained a Master of Philosophy by Research focusing on Lee House, Manchester (1927-31), an incomplete tall building that demonstrates the influence of the American skyscraper on 1920s British commercial architecture. Designed by Harry S. Fairhurst and Son, Vicky was introduced to the firm's early work after she graduated from Manchester University, whilst employed as an architectural assistant at the Fairhursts Design Group. Edwardian architectural pioneers and construction innovation remain a keen interest. On graduating from the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Vicky practiced in Manchester, working primarily in housing and building conservation sectors, and she co-ordinated the outreach programme at the Centre for the Understanding of the Built Environment. She independently continued her research interests and secured funding from the Research Trust Awards for a feasibility study for an exhibition of architectural drawings that was realised by the Manchester Architects in 2015. She continued working as an associate lecturer at the MSA and later gained a senior lecturer post at the University of Central Lancashire where she contributed to their new undergraduate programme.

Laura Sanderson is a senior lecturer at Manchester School of Architecture and a qualified architect. Her work is underpinned by the principals of Continuity in Architecture. The atelier focuses upon the process of analysing and understanding the nature and the qualities of place in order to develop new buildings and other elements within the urban environment. Over the last few years, the atelier has discussed Small Settlements, especially those surrounding the city of Manchester; producing research outputs in Bollington (2016), Bakewell (2017) and Rochdale (2019) including exhibitions, articles, book chapters and built interventions. This year the atelier is studying Shrewsbury, working
in collaboration with Shrewsbury Town Council on sites in the Historic Town Centre. Alongside her work in Small Settlements, Laura recently co-curated UnDoing (2019), an exhibition at Castlefield Gallery (with Stone, S.), featuring the work of a number of international artists and architects, exploring how buildings, places and artefacts are reused, reinterpreted and remembered. These themes will be further explored in ‘Remember, Reveal, Construct’ to be published in 2020 (with Stone, S.). Projects on the drawing board include a collaborative project with the Institute of Place Management, Simone Riddyard and Dr Luca Csepely-Knorr using a Serial Vision approach to the UK High Street. Laura has published a number of reflections on her pedagogic approach including her work in Continuity in Architecture, the 2014 Atelier [Zero] installation and the MSA Events Programme which has produced over 200 diverse live projects over the past decade.