



Annual Symposium 2020

A collaboration with AA Archives and RIBA Collections

ARCH/TECTURES

ARCH/VES

Session 2: PRACTICE/PEDAGOGY

14 August 2020 via Zoom

This session delves into the symbiotic relationship between practice and pedagogy that lies at the heart of the architectural archive. Bringing together a distinguished panel of historians, archivists (from a range of settings, including contemporary architectural offices), designers and educators, we will question what the terms of 'practice' and 'pedagogy' signify within each field, analysing how they operate and relate to each other.

Case studies and theoretical papers will address a broad array of topics, aiming to highlight areas of convergence, and perhaps of tension, between the disciplines. In an attempt to forge broad connections, discussions will range from speculative questions around methodologies used for archival appraisal, arrangement and description, to examples of ways in which teaching can 're-animate' the archive, to studies of the very practical issues surrounding archival capture in the digital environment of the modern architectural office.

Programme

- 14:00 *Welcome and Introductory Remarks*
Edward Bottoms, Eleanor Gawne, and Lexi Frost (AA Archives)
- 14:10 *The Epistemology of CI/SFB: Categorising Architectural Knowledge in 1960s Britain*
Adam Sharr (Newcastle University)
- 14:30 *From the Architecture of the Report to the Archive: Containers, Continents and Categories*
Albert Brenchat-Aguilar (Birkbeck, University of London)
- 14:50 *Curating the DEGW Archive as a Living Archive/The 'Living Archive' in Action*
Hiral Patel (Cardiff University) and Stuart Green (University of Reading)
- 15:10 *Appraise|Erase: Archival Practice and the Shaping of Architectural History*
Aymee Thorn Clark (Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners)
- 15:30 *An Architect in the Archives: EW Godwin*
Richard W. Hayes (Independent Scholar)
- 15:50 *Discussion/Break*
- 16:05 *An Architectural Magazine's Afterlife*
Stephen Parnell (Newcastle University)
- 16:25 *In Search of Value: Mining the Later Twentieth Century Collections at the Irish Architectural Archive*
Colum O'Riordan (Irish Architectural Archive) and Ellen Rowley (University College Dublin)
- 16:45 *Drawing on the Archive: Architectural Education and Archival Practice*
Edward Bottoms and Eleanor Gawne (Architectural Association)
- 17:05 *Teach (with) Architectural Archives, challenge the Canons of Architectural History*
Volker Welter (University of California, Santa Barbara)
- 17:25 *The AJ Davis Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Ideas for Revitalizing the Study of Early Victorian Architecture in the United States*
Horatio Joyce (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)
- 17:45 *Discussion*
- 18:00 *Close*

Abstracts

14:10 *The Epistemology of CI/SfB: Categorising Architectural Knowledge in 1960s Britain*
Adam Sharr (Newcastle University)

This paper is about a distinctive theory of architectural knowledge from the 1960s. The librarian Melvil Dewey – inventor of the famous Dewey Decimal system – knew that library systems categorise knowledge, and that they therefore propose an epistemology. What follows reviews the epistemology of an architectural library system adopted in the UK in the 1960s named – unglamorously – CI/SfB. It recognises and interprets the ideas of architecture, culture, and knowledge which that library system proposed.

From this historical distance, CI/SfB can be understood as a microcosm of a set of broader professional priorities from the time it was formulated. Its categorisations emphasised building types, building elements, the working of materials, structure, services, and technical performance over older priorities of architectural connoisseurship, history, and theory. It can be understood as part of a wider contemporary 1960s culture of taxonomy and typology, interpreting buildings as assemblages of forms, elements, and materials that – here – could be analysed to identify universal principles for modernist composition. CI/SfB thus provides an account of an idea of architectural knowledge proposed in influential quarters of the British profession at that time, and remains a notable object of study.

This paper outlines the history of CI/SfB, reviews its classifications, and accounts for its values. It finds an example of what the architecture of CI/SfB could have been like in Leslie Martin and Patrick Hodgkinson's 1962 design for London's Foundling Estate, as discussed in Martin's 1972 essay 'The Grid as Generator'.

While CI/SfB may have slipped from view, the architectural epistemology it described remains pervasively present in today's construction industry. Building Information Modelling, for example, and building regulations that systematise environmental performance, are the latest manifestations of the 1960s values represented by CI/SfB. Its faith in collaborative endeavour – trusting technical progress to make things better – remains appealing. And the library system provides an illustrative example for the study of architectural archives, opening-up wider questions about the nature of architectural knowledge and its classifications.

Adam Sharr is Professor of Architecture and Head of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University. He is Editor-in-Chief of *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly* (Cambridge University Press), Series Editor of *Thinkers for Architects* (Routledge), and Principal of Adam Sharr Architects. He is author or editor of seven books on architecture, most recently *Modern Architecture: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

14:30 *From the Architecture of the Report to the Archive: Containers, Continents and Categories*

Albert Brenchat-Aguilar (Birkbeck, University of London)

Literature on performance writing has a tradition of exploring the relations of the page between text (typography, paratexts, legibility, ink), image (dispositions, hierarchies, captions) paper (shape, texture, format) and blank space. These relations present the page as a site, a sort of playground where different actors and disciplines meet. Around this playground there is a *frame* that constrains and contradicts the possibilities of the paper: an assemblage of headings, confidential marks, captions, drafts, series, folders, boxes, archives, buildings and other material containers that frame the content of the page throughout its lifetime.

I here present a study of the frame in the reports of the International Planning Consultants working for the United Nations in the 1970s with an emphasis on Otto Koenigsberger's papers in the Architectural Association Archive. The objective of my essay is to identify and think through the unsaids of this collection of reports that a community of planners – who lived off the remains of the empire – wrote in order to provide guidance to other countries on wellbeing in urban environments.

I suggest that to study this collection of reports through their frame is to understand reports as material ecological architectures on their own: not only capable of defining and transforming the built environment in vast scales but also of explicating the relations between superstructural powers and their infrastructural propositions.

Albert Brenchat-Aguilar is 'jack-of-all-trades' at the Institute of Advanced Studies, UCL, where he has co-curated the public programme since 2018. He is also the Managing Editor of *Think Pieces* issues 1-4 and podcast [Talk Pieces](#). Until 2016 he was the editorial manager of the digital platform [Ceramic Architectures](#), and worked as an architect for the restoration and rehabilitation of Bombas Gens Arts Centre. He is a CHASE funded PhD student at Birkbeck School of Arts and the Architectural Association.

14:50 *Curating the DEGW Archive as a Living Archive/The 'Living Archive' in Action*

Hiral Patel (Cardiff University) and Stuart Green (University of Reading)

DEGW was founded as a space planning consultancy in 1971 and was ultimately subsumed by AECOM in 2009. Initially based in London, DEGW were prominent in shaping the field of workplace strategy globally. The archive of first 25 years of DEGW's work, along with two separate collections by its founders Frank Duffy and Luigi Giffone, was acquired by the University of Reading's Special Collections in 2016. A subsequent research and curatorial project adopted the concept of a 'living archive'. The paper describes this curatorial approach to the DEGW archive and the empirical work carried out in the form of exhibitions and events. The living archive concept manifested in three ways. Firstly through collaborative engagement with members of the DEGW diaspora, gaps in the archive were identified and supplemented. There was hence a strong emphasis on socio-material interaction between the archival materials and the community of ex-DEGW members, associates and friends. Secondly, the project comprised mapping the evolution of ideas and concepts in the current work of DEGW members. Thirdly, the archive was explored for possibilities to connect to current issues in the built environment and to provoke new challenges. Within the construction sector, awareness is required regarding archival methodologies that go beyond the scope of records management for legal purposes. The DEGW archive project presents an alternative approach to valuing, curating and researching built environment archives as living repositories of knowledge.

Hiral Patel is Lecturer in Advanced Building Performance Evaluation at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University. Her research investigates how building performance could be related to organisational outcomes and individual practices. She has expertise in ethnographic and archival research approaches to understand user practices in buildings. She is developing the practice of curating exhibitions as part of the analytic research process. Her research around the DEGW archive engages with such a curatorial approach and explores the linkages between organisational practices and the built environment to help understand the changing nature of 'work'. She has experience in industry-led research as well as architectural and project management work experience in the UK and India.

Stuart Green is a professor of construction management at the University of Reading. He has over 30 years' experience in construction policy research and related consultancy in the UK and internationally. Over the course of his career he has secured in excess of £7.5 million in competitive research funding, primarily from EPSRC. From 2007-2013 he served as a Core Commissioner on the *Commission for a Sustainable London 2012*. Stuart has also chaired the CIOB Innovation and Research Panel with the remit of improving collaboration between industry and academia (2011-2016). Publications include the 2011 book *Making Sense of Construction Improvement* (Wiley/Blackwell).

15:10 *Appraise/Erase: Archival Practice and the Shaping of Architectural History*
Aymee Thorn Clark (Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners)

Appraisal is a key archival practice which shapes, through the selection, rejection and destruction of material, the content of an archive. For many architects and architectural historians, architectural practice is the means by which the final work of architecture (the building) comes into being. The architectural archive acts as a supporting resource to preserve the process of (its) design and construction. This includes written, speculative and unbuilt works, the influence of which can eventually filter into a realised form.

However, far from being collections of ‘artistic drawings’, contemporary architectural archives also capture the business of architecture, due to legislation that governs the material produced by architects. The need to abide by retention periods, and advances in technology, have accelerated the production of information. This has led to the creation of large collections where it is difficult to determine what is significant and what will be valued in the future.

But when, how and who should take responsibility for appraisal when it could be perceived to be complicit in creating the mythology of an architect or work of architecture, or removing material from history all together? This paper is supported by research and case studies of the Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners archive.

Aymee studied architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, before completing a degree in History of Art and Masters in Architectural History, both at the University of London. Recently, she has completed her postgraduate qualification in Archival Studies at the University of Dundee. During her studies she worked on several architectural projects in London including the renovation of the Savoy Hotel and the British Museum WCEC throughout its construction. Experiences in practice and academia have reinforced her interests in the lineage of architectural drawing methods and typologies, the effects of collaborative working on authorship, as well as the changing role of the architect in the conception and construction of architecture.

15:30 *An Architect in the Archives: EW Godwin*
Richard W. Hayes (Independent Scholar)

Aesthetic Movement architect E.W. Godwin (1833-86) was one of the most talented figures in British design culture of the second half of the nineteenth century. An aesthetic polymath, he excelled as architect, furniture designer, critic, advocate of dress reform, and stage designer. Essential to Godwin's multi-faceted career was research in London's libraries and archives. An intrepid autodidact, he read and sketched extensively in the British Library, the British Museum, and the South Kensington Museum. Reading slips from these institutions and Godwin's own diaries reveal how London's research establishments played a vital role in his *habitus* – the skills, routine, and disposition characteristic of his practice. My paper situates Godwin's research in the context of Victorian self-culture and the studiousness shared by fellow architects of the Gothic Revival. Time spent in the British Library was as important to Godwin as construction site visits and meetings with clients.

By an ironic turn of fate, the archive has now become the prime repository for Godwin's place in posterity. For, more than any other architect of the Victorian era, his built work has been lost or compromised. His house-studio for James McNeil Whistler was demolished, as were the interiors he designed for Oscar and Constance Wilde. His studio for Frank Miles was never built as designed while his award-winning scheme for the Bristol Assize Courts remained unbuilt. The house he designed in Harpenden for himself and actress Ellen Terry was demolished. Even the location of his grave is unknown. What have survived are sketchbooks, office diaries, and scattered drawings from several projects: fragments of an architectural life. The second part of my paper therefore inquiries into the extent to which an architectural historian can make the case for Godwin's significance based on archival remnants rather than extant buildings. In particular, the Victoria and Albert Museum holds approximately seventy of Godwin's sketchbooks, which delineate a sophisticated design intelligence at work. But can consultation in the study room ever replace the experience of actual buildings when assessing an architect's achievement?

Richard W. Hayes is an architect and architectural historian, educated at Columbia and Yale Universities. His previous publications include *The Yale Building Project* (Yale University Press, 2007), a comprehensive history of an influential educational programme. He has also published extensively on the Aesthetic Movement, including a chapter in *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, edited by Susan Weber Soros (Yale University Press, 1999). The book received numerous awards and was selected as 'one of the most notable books of the year' by the *New York Times Book Review*. Since then, Hayes has published six additional essays and chapters on Godwin, including an article in the 2017 issue of *Architectural History*. Hayes has received grants and awards from the American Institute of Architects, the American Architectural Foundation, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the New York State Council on the Arts, EAHN, the MacDowell Colony, and Yaddo. A visiting fellow at the University of Cambridge in 2009 and 2013, he is now a life member of Clare Hall.

16:05 *An Architectural Magazine's Afterlife*
Stephen Parnell (Newcastle University)

Architectural periodicals have two lives and are read differently in each. The first life lasts a short period of time: only as long as it remains the 'current', most recent issue. It has many roles in this life: to act as a platform for debate, to disseminate up-to-date news and technical or professional information, to connect manufacturers to specifiers via adverts, to run campaigns, or to inform its readers about the latest buildings, trends, movements, ideas, or events. In short, it exists to unite the profession and to distinguish it from others.

The periodical's second 'afterlife' starts as soon as it is superseded by the next issue, when it is literally shelved. In this purgatory the magazine becomes accustomed to its new role as historical reference material rather than currency, enjoying its last few months of individuality before the inevitable binding. These shelved 'numbers' have traditionally been bound in volumes, usually stripped of their covers and adverts (and therefore their currency), in an undignified act of surrender to the archive.

Many an architectural history has plundered this 'archive' to extract evidence for its historical interpretation – evidence that is assumed to be an innocent recording. But how reliable is it really? This paper will explore the opportunities and dangers of considering the architectural press as the first draft of architectural history and, using in-depth examples from *Architectural Design*, offer some approaches to constructing architectural histories through magazines.

Stephen Parnell is an architect and architectural historian whose practice is in, research is on, and teaching is through the architectural press

- 16: 25 *In Search of Value: Mining the Later Twentieth Century Collections at the Irish Architectural Archive*
Colum O’Riordan (Irish Architectural Archive) and Ellen Rowley (University College Dublin)

There are persistent issues facing the Irish Architectural Archive (IAA) as it grapples with oversized and unwieldy collections of prolific later C20th architectural practices. The collections pose both accommodation and technological challenges; but they are most problematic in the disregarded buildings that they delineate. Herein lie the ‘undistinguished’ buildings of Ireland’s 20C architectural dark age: the architecture that the Irish love to hate.

From this basis of ostensible mediocrity, a research project into the architectural history of Dublin was commissioned in 2011. And suddenly these ever-accumulating, seemingly-undistinguished later C20th collections needed to be mined. The research project’s aim was to uncover stories of buildings’ origins and influences and the correspondence, records, drawings and photographs became valued archive material. In 2016, the first volume (1900 – 1940) of *More Than Concrete Blocks: Dublin City’s twentieth-century buildings and their stories* was published; in 2019, volume 2 (1940 – 1972), arrived and volume 3 (1973-1999) will be published by 2022.

This paper will explore the interrelationship between the archive and architectural history research through the lens of this problematised late C20th material. The paper will argue that value is best made when history and archive work off and with each other. The paper will present a series of case studies which have subverted and ultimately enriched the archivist’s and the historian’s value systems.

Colum O’Riordan became Archive Administrator of the Irish Architectural Archive in January 1994 and CEO of the Archive in 2013. A former Treasurer and Chairman of the Society of Archivists, Ireland, he has served on the Heritage Council’s Museums and Archives Committee and on the board of the Irish Architecture Foundation. He is secretary to the Buildings of Ireland Charitable Trust, a council member of the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland, and a member of the steering committee of the International Council on Archives Section on Architectural Records. His publications include a history of the Dublin Artisans’ Dwellings Company and a gazetteer of Irish court houses.

16:45 *Drawing on the Archive: Architectural Education and Archival Practice*
Edward Bottoms and Eleanor Gawne (Architectural Association)

Whilst the 'archival turn' in contemporary art theory and practice has been well documented, relatively little has been written regarding the impact of similar shifts within the field of architectural education. Over the last decade a number of leading architecture schools have been re-assessing the significance and value of their own archives, exploring the role such collections can play within their own pedagogy and practice. Indeed, in the last six months alone both the Cooper Union and Sci-Arc have launched major initiatives to catalogue, digitise and provide access to their archives of student work. Other US schools, including Yale and Princeton have likewise been transforming and opening up their collections and fostering partnerships with external architectural archives. This paper proposes to survey the current status of architecture school archives in the UK, mapping the scope and extent of the field for the first time and exploring the potential role of such collections within the context of design education and architectural history. Central to this will be a review of innovative models for teaching, engagement and interaction - revealing ways in which such archives are being re-animated by and for current students and practitioners. It is hoped that alongside providing an overview of the field, the study will raise questions as to the relationship between the more traditional architectural archive and the institutional research repositories which have now become obligatory across campuses.

Edward Bottoms is Head of Archives at the Architectural Association and a tutor within the AA's History and Theory Studies programme. He has overseen the establishment of the AA Archives in 2009 and its' development into one of the most significant UK collections relating to architectural education - currently comprising over 17,000 historic student drawings, teaching records and a unique photographic library of c250,000 images.

Eleanor Gawne has been Librarian at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA) since 2012. Her responsibilities include developing Library resources and services, and managing the Library's Special collections. From 2008-2012 as Head of Archive & Library, National Maritime Museum, she oversaw the planning and delivery of a new Library and large-scale digitisation projects. Prior to that, she worked at the Drawings and Archives Collection, British Architectural Library, RIBA, where she helped to manage the world-renowned RIBA collections.

17:05 *Teach (with) Architectural Archives, challenge the Canons of Architectural History*

Volker Welter (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Architectural history continuously responds to changes in, for example, stylistic preferences, academic fashions, theoretical approaches, and new methodologies. By comparison, architectural archives seem to be havens of stability that slowly but steadily grow if and when new collections of drawings and papers become available.

Focusing on the Architecture & Design Collection (ADC) at the University of California at Santa Barbara, which since its inception in 1963 has grown to ca. 2,000,000 drawings plus related papers and objects, this paper challenges the image of the architectural archive as a “conservative” institution.

Drawing on a decade of undergraduate teaching Southern California architectural history with original archival materials, I argue that while as an archive the ADC may be ‘conservative’, its collections are anything but ‘exclusionary’. Rather, the ADC’s holdings allow one to reconstruct the manifold and often surprising contributions to architecture and architectural history of members of social groups that old and new canons of architectural history (still) often leave unconsidered. The paper presents selected case studies of for example, gay and lesbian architects, self-trained ‘architects’, and women who designed and/or built their own houses.

The paper concludes by discussing some of the collecting practices that have made the ADC a surprisingly diverse architectural archive, and by reflecting on what may be needed to safeguard and expand that diversity in the future.

Volker M Welter is professor for history of architecture at the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of California at Santa Barbara. His most recent book is *Tremaine Houses: Private Patronage of Domestic Architecture in Mid-Century America, 1936-1977* (Getty, 2019). His current research projects focus on revival style in Southern California and on gay domesticity in Southern California.

17:25 *The AJ Davis Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Ideas for Revitalizing the Study of Early Victorian Architecture in the United States*
Horatio Joyce (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Who was America's first architect? In terms of artistic self-consciousness, the answer is surely Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-92). Davis' professional path set him apart from other architects. He trained as an illustrator and had aspired to be an artist. For practical reasons he settled on architecture, and artistic zeal shaped his approach to practice. A deft watercolorist, he produced dazzling project renderings in a range of styles—gothic, neoclassical, and Italianate. But his most enduring professional legacy must be his vast archive, which he spent the last quarter century of his life organising and re-organising after retiring. The majority of this material, consisting of hundreds of drawings, thousands of pages of correspondence, scrapbooks, diaries, and other records, has been in the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for nearly a century, where it remains only partially catalogued and rarely published.

This paper asks why, given the strength of the Davis archive, America's 'first' architect hasn't attracted more scholarly attention, and it proposes one potential direction for future work. I argue the neglect is symptomatic of a more general lack of interest in early Victorian architecture in the US, while also considering some of the unique challenges for the Davis archive in the collection of an art museum rather than a library. One particularly exciting possibility for the records, I suggest, is what new insights they bring to the rise of American nationalism. Indeed, they present a rare opportunity to investigate the relationship between the development of the architectural profession and the emergence of the modern nation state. This would not only contribute to core architectural history questions about the profession but also ongoing work in the field of American history that seeks to revise traditional narratives of nationalism, rooted in notions of American exceptionalism, by introducing comparative and global frameworks.

Horatio Joyce is the Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellow in the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He is researching and cataloguing its holdings of American architectural drawings and related records—including material by Alexander Jackson Davis, Ogden Codman Jr., and Frank Lloyd Wright—and is working to develop a major exhibition on American architecture during the Long Nineteenth Century.