



National
Endowment
for the Arts

UNIVERSITY- COMMUNITY DESIGN PARTNERSHIPS INNOVATIONS IN PRACTICE



Supported by The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation

Jason Pearson
Mark Robbins series editor

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**National Endowment
for the Arts**

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Washington, DC

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Rear view, showing
extension of entry
platform to create rear
deck.

In memory of

Samuel Mockbee

December 23, 1944–December 30, 2001

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Preface

Mark Robbins

Director of Design, National Endowment for the Arts

In travels across the country I am often reminded of the distance between professional discourse and practice in design and architecture and most aspects of popular and political culture. Design is rarely viewed as an essential force in making and remaking our society, and too often, social needs, education, and innovative design are perceived as separated by unbridgeable gulfs. This is unfortunate and unnecessary. Instead, the transformative power of design—to achieve aesthetic richness, as well as practical and programmatic ends—should be brought to the forefront in discussions about the very real problems of American cities and towns.

This publication grew out of a series of conversations at the National Endowment for the Arts about the ways in which our field could participate in strengthening the presence of the arts in communities across the country. The contents of the book, originally framed as a report, document work already underway through university-community design partnerships in cities and small towns across the country. The programs discussed fulfill social needs while also contributing significantly to both design education and design excellence. Our hope is that this collection of notable projects and programs will help to reinforce the existing network of community-based design programs, enhancing communication about best practices and at the same time perhaps stimulating the creation of new programs and possibilities for increased funding and support in the future.

Architecture is a cultural artifact involving memory and material culture as much as a considered response to the practicalities of program and construction. The projects in this book range from schools to neighborhood plans and reflect varied approaches to education through community-based work that often results in built projects. Yet all engage social factors and local histories, as well as the physical characteristics of place. They reflect the outcome of teaching that stresses rigorous investigations of both social life and architectural form. Such training on mapping, urban form, and building technology reinforces the importance of research in the academic design studio. The result of this pedagogy is clear in the nine programs presented in this volume. The remarkable quality of their work signals the possibility of creating a necessary bridge between the university, the architecture and design professions, and the society at large.

The ways buildings, cities, and entire landscapes are designed have economic, social, and political causes *and* consequences. Education necessarily involves students and the communities in which they work, as well as community leaders and elected officials. Each brings different knowledge and experience to the mix. Just as we should listen to the community we must also listen to and value gifted designers who, often through inspired leaps, realize not just functional sufficiency in their projects but the uplift generated by true innovation and vision. The programs featured here galvanize students to approach community-based projects, and by extension all public work, with the same vigor that they show in studio-based work.

It is our obligation as educators and architects to reveal the stunning complexity and nuance of community-based work—limited neither by our preconceptions, which freeze the growth and evolution of communities in some halcyon past, nor by older models of social organization, which no longer find real purchase in fact. To apply a generic approach or vision does a disservice to all communities that continue to grow and change. We need to be honest in showing a full range of options, not just the easiest sell as in the strategies of the marketplace. Without making a pastiche of regional building traditions—which in the end devalues those

traditions—buildings and landscapes can make a strong statement about cultural continuity and architecture’s role in community. The work of the Rural Studio, headed by the late Samuel Mockbee and Dennis K. Ruth, is perhaps the best known, but by no means the only, demonstration of this principle among the programs featured here.

Such programs achieve community outreach, formal education, and stimulating architectural and design production, generally with quite limited resources. They speak for engagement across disciplines and may serve to counter a diminished public role for architects. Separated from planning, landscape, infrastructure, and community development, the practice of architecture can too easily be marginalized, reduced to the service of specific market forces and the creation of isolated objects. By contrast, the hybrid work of university-community design partnerships often embraces the roles of planner, political activist, designer, architect, and educator in a mix that should be valued and encouraged. One hopes to see more of this design work built and more projects for community plans realized. Through this activity, suppositions can be tested and revised, to the benefit of the academic community, the design profession, and the broader society in which both work.

I’d like to thank those who have sustained this project since its inception, notably The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and its Executive Director, Sunny Fischer, for their early and generous encouragement and support. Jason Pearson, a former Graham Fellow in Federal Service at the National Endowment for the Arts, should also be recognized, not only for his authorship of the text but for his efforts in researching and assembling the program profiles. Over several months, and continents, he collected and shaped this material, developing and articulating a strong and perceptive view of these programs and their needs. Each of the participating design programs merits deep gratitude, for the work they do every day, as well as their contributions to this volume. The assistance of Jennifer Thompson at Princeton Architectural Press was vital to the production of this book, as was the initial interest of Kevin Lippert in publishing the NEA design series. Graphic designer M. Christopher Jones of The VIA Group and copy editor Ann Bremner

also have my appreciation for the visual and verbal clarity apparent throughout the book. Finally, I'd like to thank my colleagues at the NEA for their interest and faith in the project, and especially Kristina Alg, Graham Fellow, who has ably helped in the coordination of this publication and others in the series.

Introduction

When local communities face conditions of physical and economic hardship, human creativity is the most valuable, dependable, and limitless resource on which they can consistently rely for positive renewal. Success in these efforts requires the careful work of committed, innovative, locally engaged professionals who can translate local creativity into real, positive action and change. Design, as the specialized art of wielding creativity in practical and deliberate ways to realize innovative, unprecedented solutions to existing challenges, offers particular benefits in these contexts. Design professionals can be key catalysts in shaping a positive future, and university-community design partnerships have proved particularly rich contexts for such innovation in the practice of effective design.

At the heart of this book lies a conviction that design innovation is inseparable from social engagement, and thus inseparable from public service. Design professionals—from graphic designers to planners, architects to product designers—are in a unique and strategic position to influence the ongoing creation of the images, objects, and environments with which we surround ourselves. With that unique position comes a responsibility to understand and respond to a larger public good. Innovative and effective design not only serves the needs of an immediate clientele but also seeks to expand and diversify that clientele, offering inspiration and added value to a broader public with whom it may be shared.

This publication documents and describes varied instances of such

positive design practices, specifically in the provision of high quality, university-based design services to underserved local communities. When designers and communities such as these manage to provide unexpected solutions to the social and environmental challenges with which we collectively struggle, it is vital that their achievements be recognized, supported, and shared. It is equally vital that their approaches be examined and scrutinized as potential models for efforts in other communities. This book, therefore, both documents the work of individual programs and suggests a framework for sustaining and encouraging such design programs nationally.

Background

In October 2000, Design Corps, a Pennsylvania-based community design center, organized a conference titled “Structures for Inclusion: Designing for the 98% without Architects” at the Princeton University School of Architecture. The conference opened with the following statement:

Only two percent of new homebuyers in the United States work with an architect. This means that millions of people are living without the benefits of good design, as they have not had direct input in the creation of the spaces that they use everyday. And so good design is reserved for those with wealth and power who can afford the traditional fee structure. As architecture evolves with new technology, its practitioners must work to continue the tradition of service to the community on which the profession was originally based. “Structures for Inclusion” [aims] to present current methods of architectural practice that are reaching a more diverse clientele.

This book examines a selection of noteworthy university-community design partnerships as models of such socially engaged design practice that continues “the tradition of service to the community.” It documents the work of university-based design practitioners who have found ways to realize alternative design practices and discusses various possibilities for supporting these efforts and broadening their impact.

These university-community design partnerships offer one

example of an innovation in design practice that simultaneously provides design quality, pedagogical value, and community engagement. Through strategic use of university resources, these programs are able to bring design expertise to underserved communities, and the best examples provide services of impressive design quality in a teaching environment that contributes to students' own development as designers. Furthermore, many of the programs also provide long-term benefits as starting points for subsequent student, university, and community collaborations on other projects.

University-community design partnerships provide partial or full predesign, design, and/or construction services to their local communities. They are often directed by university design faculty, with the participation of undergraduate and graduate design students. Occurring in design schools across the country, these programs consistently deliver design expertise to local constituencies who otherwise might have little or no access to design services or advice. Frequently, they represent the only local resources for neighborhood revitalization and can play a pivotal role in neighborhood design and redesign.

The programs themselves, however, can typically be viewed as marginal to design school curricula. They often fall short of the dual goals of exemplary design and lasting social impact, and they are rarely integrated with broader university or national initiatives on community development. Although they may be valued by the particular local constituencies to whom they provide design services, they are only infrequently perceived as central components of the design education to which they contribute—or of design culture at large.

A Proposed Initiative

Against this background, a new initiative could be envisioned to enhance the existing nationwide network of university-community design partnerships. This initiative would strengthen existing programs and encourage the formation of new programs as national models. The initiative would

aim to support community design practice by promoting the full integration of community design into the curricula of university design programs nationally, specifically through the encouragement of innovative, rigorous design practice. Identifying and developing sources and directions of major support for these programs could serve as catalysts for sustaining and increasing longer-term state and university support.

One possibility for a new initiative would support community design programs that result in built projects and can demonstrate a clear plan for financial self-sufficiency beyond the initial grant period. Assistance would be provided in crafting proposals, site visits to funded programs to monitor and advise on progress, identification of talented designers, encouragement of staff lines with strong design credentials and expertise in community design, and assistance in the publication and dissemination of program achievements. Ultimately, the benefits of such a new program would include the completion of high quality built projects, the training of design professionals (both students and faculty) in sophisticated community-building activities, and a higher national profile for community-based design.

The current publication seeks to lay the conceptual groundwork for the possibility of such a new national program, with three specific objectives:

1. To survey the current state of university-community design partnerships nationally, with a particular emphasis on regional distribution and overall characteristics.
2. To provide a policy rationale and programmatic recommendations for philanthropic support of university-based community design activities.
3. To document selected best practices in the field of university-based community design, providing a more detailed picture of the diversity of successful approaches.

In support of these objectives, the text addresses the following questions:

- What is the current state of university-based community design partnerships?
- What role do university-based community design partnerships play in their host communities, in university design curricula, and in national design culture?
- Could this role be expanded? Could these partnerships be better integrated into host communities/university design curricula/design culture, and if so, how?
- In what forms are partnerships currently structured, and are certain forms of partnership more or less successful?
- What are the financial requirements of successful programs, and how are these met?

These topics are investigated in preliminary comments on “A Context for University-Community Design Partnerships” and in profiles of selected current community design programs. In addition, the publication examines how direct or indirect support might be provided for the activities of university-community design partnerships. “Strategies for Support” focuses specifically on the viability of philanthropic support with recommendations for a variety of support directions and criteria.

Acknowledgments

This book is based on a report that was commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and is part of a series of publications about design and the public realm. My work has been supported by a generous grant from The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, and the report would not have been possible without the encouragement of the foundation’s Executive Director, Sunny Fischer, whose clear understanding of the contributions of design excellence to social welfare is unique and deeply appreciated. The project and report were envisioned by Mark Robbins,

Director of Design at the National Endowment for the Arts, during my tenure at the endowment as a Graham Fellow in Federal Service. His dual commitment to social engagement and design excellence has been a foundation for the research, and his close participation has been invaluable to the framing and focus of the final document. The early research benefited greatly from the contributions of my research assistant, Casius Pealer, who communicated directly and repeatedly with many of the programs profiled here, in addition to assembling the basic data that has allowed me to present a broad national context for their work.

Finally, I am particularly grateful to the many community design experts and practitioners who have shared their work and knowledge with me over the course of the research. Without their assistance, this volume would not have been possible. Needless to say, any errors, omissions, or oversights are entirely my own.

J. P.

A Context for University-Community Design Partnerships

Historical Context

From the first emergence of architects as creators of public space in the Renaissance to more recent 20th-century institutions of socially engaged design, such as Walter Gropius's Bauhaus and Le Corbusier's Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), architects have understood the role of design as a concerted contribution to civic engagement and public interest. The 19th-century transformation of architects into professionals with an ethical responsibility to uphold the public good was founded on this history, and architects today continue to understand their role in this light. The expression and vitality of this public role has varied dramatically over time, however, with public engagement by professional designers and architects rising and falling cyclically in response to social and economic forces.

As a particular expression of public engagement by designers, community design practice in the United States emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s as part of broader contemporary social movements to improve social equity in all aspects of American society. Surveys conducted by the MIT Community Design Resource Center, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), and the American Institute of Architects (through its CDC Community Services Department) during this period suggest that there were typically between 60 and 80 centers in

operation nationally at any given time between 1970 and 1978. This level of activity ultimately resulted in the formation of a national network: the Community Design Center Director's Association (CDC/DA), later the Association for Community Design (ACD).

During the 1980s, a sharp reduction in federal support for social programs resulted in a precipitous decline in the number of community design centers operating nationally, and of the 80 centers originally documented in the early 1970s, only 12 survive to the present day.

Community design practitioners continued to refine their approaches to the participatory design process and socially engaged design, but these activities were undertaken in a dramatically altered context. Many practitioners elected to apply their energies to for-profit design practice as a mechanism for the delivery of community services. Major corporate design firms such as Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill initiated *pro bono* programs to design affordable housing and other community projects for city and public agencies.

Over time, community-based designers discovered that universities could provide an opportune host for the long-term provision of design services in the public interest. The recent growth in community design practice can be attributed in part to this trend. Another significant factor in renewed interest was the publication of *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice* in 1996. This influential report from The Carnegie Foundation demonstrated the importance of community service in architectural education and practice. By 2001 over 80 programs and centers providing affordable design services to local communities were operating across the country, with 70 percent of the programs located in universities. These university-community design partnerships afford substantial opportunities for sustained design excellence, as many of the programs profiled in this volume demonstrate.

Pedagogical Context

University-community design partnerships also occur in the context of developing national interest in project-based and service-based education. “Service-learning” and “project-based education” both refer to pedagogical models that encourage students to assume public leadership as part of their educational curriculum by applying theoretical approaches discussed in the classroom to actual projects in the real world.

In professional fields such as medicine, law, and architecture, licensing procedures already provide for some hands-on education in the form of postgraduate internship requirements. These opportunities typically occur in the last stages of prelicensing education, often without a precise relationship to the overall course of study or a necessary connection to public service. The effectiveness of this sequential approach to theoretical and practical education has been increasingly questioned in the higher education community, and there is growing interest in the principles of “service-learning” in both professional and academic contexts.

Between 1999 and 2001, the American Association of Higher Education has published a series of monographs documenting the value of service learning in 18 academic disciplines. These publications argue that the strategic integration of real-world projects into university curricula enhances students’ understanding of academic material by offering them an opportunity to apply new approaches to concrete social and environmental challenges, while simultaneously encouraging active participation in public life. As the success of such programs is proven in practice, service-learning approaches continue to expand in the academy, particularly in professional disciplines where interdisciplinary student collaboration on projects has emerged as an exciting possibility.

University-community design partnerships represent a particularly tangible version of the service-learning approach. By engaging students and faculty in the design and construction of actual built projects, these partnerships meet dual educational objectives, simultaneously educating students in the realities of public service and educating communities about the value of design in achieving a positive future.

Program Types

As community design strategies have evolved, a number of distinct models of practice have emerged. All provide design expertise to local communities, but they differ substantially in the relative priority placed on community, educational, and aesthetic objectives, and the benefits they provide are correspondingly diverse. In practice, most examples of community-based design fall clearly into one of three categories. Of course, fusions and blends of these approaches also occur, and programs that match one category in most areas may reflect characteristics of other approaches in response to specific needs.

University-Based Design/Build Programs

University-based design/build programs represent the most integrated approach to university-based community design practice, since they tend to prioritize educational, community, and aesthetic objectives as equally valuable components of the design process. In these programs, students design and build a community-based project as part of their regular academic coursework in a professional degree program. Communication with clients or end users is typically coordinated through a local nonprofit service organization; the faculty who lead the program frequently establish and maintain the connections to that organization.

Projects are typically small in scale, frequently completed within the period of an academic semester or quarter. Occasionally, programs are structured to allow for larger projects completed by multiple groups of students over several academic terms. Since the emphasis in these programs is on the completion of built projects, success is often evaluated on the basis of the quality of completed projects and their contribution to the life of the community.

University-Based Community Design Centers

University-based community design centers (CDCs) also provide university-based design expertise to local communities, but their leadership is not always drawn from design faculty, and they are less directly

integrated into the university curricula. Design faculty may be active in the work, but CDCs tend to establish independent relationships to university design departments. As a result, student involvement often occurs through internships or part-time employment, with occasional related design studios taught by associated faculty.

University-based CDCs frequently employ full-time staff and therefore tend to be better equipped to offer the continuity required for long-term community projects. CDC staff and associated faculty are often actively engaged as advocates and consultants in community planning, at times acting as liaisons between communities and government agencies.

CDCs, however, tend to place less (if any) emphasis on the completion of built work, and their contributions to the community design process often occur in the predesign phase: helping communities to assess needs, develop clear objectives, and specify program requirements for future built projects. Implementation of these projects is rarely seen as the responsibility of the CDC, and communities complete design and construction phases by contracting with private design firms.

University-based CDCs provide some educational benefits through tangential student engagement, but their primary focus is community service. Although many strive for aesthetic excellence, their circumscribed role in the overall design process rarely affords the opportunity to advocate strongly for those values.

Independent Community Design Centers

Independent community design centers are independent organizations that provide design services to their local communities at affordable rates. Although many independent CDCs may have originated in universities, they are typically distinguished by the absence of formal, ongoing relationships to educational institutions. The staff of these centers tend to think of themselves as members of the community, and their commitment to the locality is long-term and personal.

From a functional perspective, the design services offered by independent CDCs are indistinguishable from those offered by private design firms, and there is a corresponding diversity in their character, approach,

and scale. Independent CDCs may range in size from one- or two-person staffs to multi-office organizations employing hundreds, and they may undertake a wide variety of planning, design, and development projects.

What differentiates independent CDCs from their for-profit private counterparts is a client base drawn from historically underserved communities and a commitment to offering services at below-market rates. Unlike university-based programs, independent CDCs have the freedom to undertake projects of all scales and durations, with the larger centers offering a full range of planning, design, and construction services. Many centers also engage in community activism and advocacy, often offering economic assistance and job training as part of their approach.

Independent CDCs share with university-based CDCs a primary emphasis on community service. Their ability to maintain high aesthetic quality depends on the scale of projects undertaken and the political context in which they work. In general, however, the significant negotiation with local government offices required by the public nature of their projects tends to work against ambitious aesthetic standards.

National Distribution

National statistics for community design practice are unreliable, primarily due to the absence of consistent national surveys and documentation. The only centralized national network of community design practitioners—the Association for Community Design (ACD)—uses a relatively narrow definition of community design practice, and numerous university-based and independent programs are excluded from the ACD’s national directory. In spite of these uncertainties, however, the high proportion of community design programs founded in the last five years suggests that interest and commitment in the field is growing nationally.

The majority of community design practitioners appear to work through community design centers, more than half of which are located within universities. Of the 85 programs currently identified as providers of community-based design service, 11 (13 percent) are university-based

design/build studios, 48 (57 percent) are university-based community design centers, and 26 (30 percent) are independent community design centers.

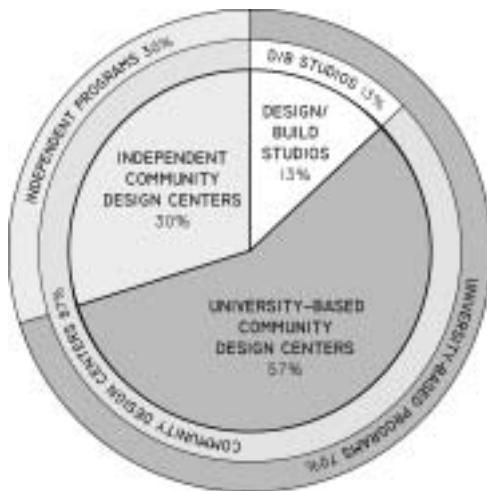
Most university programs are located in public universities, and particularly in public land grant universities. Only 10 (19 percent) of the 53 universities that host community design activities are private; 36 (84 percent) of the 43 public universities are state land grant institutions. This is not surprising, since the charters of land grant universities necessarily include a responsibility to provide community service as a component of their broader outreach mission.

As indicated on the illustrated maps, the 85 identified programs are distributed in 38 states across the country, with a strong presence in the South and Great Lakes regions. In part, this concentration in the geographical center of the country reflects a greater population of underserved rural communities that stand to benefit from the services of community design practitioners in these areas. Similarly, relatively light concentrations in the West and on the coasts seem to reflect the broader general availability of design resources, including for underserved populations, in these areas. Furthermore, programs in less densely populated areas of the country tend to serve larger regions, often offering services on a statewide basis, while programs in more urban areas of the country tend to concentrate their efforts in specific local communities.

Alaska: None identified



Locations of community design programs

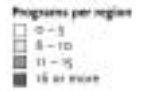


Breakdown of community design programs by type

Alaska: None identified



Distribution of community design programs by region



Alaska: None identified



Areas served by community design programs

Strategies for Support

Support for university-community design partnerships could have a significant impact on the field of community design, as well as on design education and community development. Opportunities exist for support through indirect policy-level advocacy and direct grantmaking programs. The strategies indicated below suggest possible indirect and direct approaches for support.

Support for the Field

The following are some of the areas in which advocacy and other types of indirect support might significantly benefit university-community design partnerships.

- **Dissemination.** The lack of adequate documentation and dissemination of exemplary practice is one of the most pressing needs voiced by leading practitioners in the field. Although many are tangentially familiar with each other's work, few mechanisms exist for sharing information about innovative alternative approaches. Sponsorship could include support for independent publication of best practices, panel presentations at national conferences, or a database of best practices with public on-line availability.
- **Networking.** Direct communication and networking among

practitioners represent other opportunities for sharing information and developing new strategies. Foundations might take a leadership role in catalyzing support for a meeting of practitioners to discuss strategy and share knowledge. Such a forum could also provide an opportunity for active student engagement in the spirit of the “Structures for Inclusion” conference cited in the introduction.

- **Coordination.** Community design practitioners are intermittently supported by a number of federal programs, including Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants. Advocacy for design quality in these contexts could make a substantial impact on the ultimate quality of design work supported by these federal programs.
- **Training.** As discussed elsewhere in this book, the skills required for effective university-community partnerships are unique but portable, and support for institutions that have not yet established strong design-build programs could include initial support for training sessions by experienced leaders in the field, either as visiting faculty or in the context of a national conference or symposium not unlike the “Structures for Inclusion” conference, which was funded in part by an NEA grant.

Support for Individual Programs

Direct grant support to individual programs remains a point of strong leverage for positive impact in the field of community design. The following values should be integral to any program of grantmaking to support innovative university-community design partnerships.

- **Flexibility.** The diversity of programs profiled in this publication demonstrates that effective, innovative, high quality community design practice can emerge from a range of approaches. Guidelines for support should therefore empha-

size performance standards, not program design. Any attempt to tailor guidelines to a specific model or approach will tend to discourage innovation unnecessarily.

- **Leadership.** Strong, inspired leadership is critical to the success of all of the programs outlined in this report, and evaluation of prospective programs should include attention to the proven leadership ability of their staff and the commitment of this lead staff to values of high quality design in the context of educational and community service.
- **Quality.** Application guidelines should establish clear and ambitious standards for design quality and should require applicants to demonstrate a basis for ensuring such quality. Guidelines should be specific about the definition of design quality on which evaluation will be based. An integrated definition that synthesizes educational, aesthetic, and community priorities could provide the basis for such clarification.
- **Impact.** Although there is undeniable value in university-community design partnerships providing support services that do not result in actual construction, commitment to integrated design quality argues for an emphasis on programs that provide educational and community benefits through the completion of actual built work. The scale of these built projects is less important, given differing capacities of individual programs, than their commitment to high quality physical results as a necessary outcome of the partnership process.
- **Assessment.** Application guidelines should require applicants to provide preliminary descriptions of expected project outcomes, and supported organizations should be asked to provide follow-up documentation of the impact of support. Though not necessarily a benchmark for evaluation, such information will aid in evaluating the ambitions of individual programs.

Selected Profiles

The following pages offer specific case studies as models for the community-based provision of design services. Although not all the documented programs are university-based, most involve opportunities for participation by students or young practitioners.

In general, the documented programs have established track records of successful work with their local communities, and the quality of their work has been demonstrated over a number of years. Each program represents a distinct model of practice and gives slightly different priorities to design pedagogy, project quality, and community engagement. Taken together, the programs present a broad spectrum of approaches to community-based design and provide numerous insights into the challenges and opportunities intrinsic to such practice.

Each profile includes detailed information about the specific organization of that program. Unless otherwise noted, this information was obtained directly from individual programs through surveys, interviews, and, when possible, site visits. Additionally, the profiled programs were able to provide detailed information about budgets and operations, enhancing their usefulness as models. (Variations in profile length reflect differences in the amount of information provided by the individual programs. Additional information can be obtained through the contact information at the back of the book.)

Format and Key Characteristics

Each profile includes summary information followed by descriptions of the program’s history and leadership, philosophy and working methods, curriculum/pedagogy, approaches to community engagement, and sources of support. Concluding remarks outline program representatives’ thoughts on future development. One or more exemplary projects are also featured in each profile—in the narrative, in illustrations, or both. Illustrations of completed projects are included to document quality and scale.

The following key characteristics recur frequently and might represent significant baseline characteristics for the support of continuing or future programs:

- Emphasis on innovation in design strategies.
- Synthesis of community, educational, and aesthetic priorities to achieve maximum value.
- Commitment to realizing built projects.
- Strong leadership with institutional support and community engagement.
- Long-term community involvement through partnerships.

Archeworks

Location Chicago, IL

Program type Independent design school

Lead staff Eva L. Maddox (codirector), Stanley Tigerman (codirector)

Total staff 4

Date founded 1994

Annual activity

Budget \$400,000

of projects 3

of students 10–25



Summary

Archeworks is an independent design school that offers a one-year curriculum in alternative design to undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals. The curriculum focuses on the provision of innovative, implemented design solutions to end users from traditionally underserved populations, employing a team-based multidisciplinary research and design method. Archeworks is not affiliated with a major professional design program, and the Archeworks curriculum is conceived as an alternative to traditional design education.

Mission

The mission of Archeworks is to address social needs by developing and providing alternative design education solutions through a multidisciplinary process. By involving participants in actual hands-on projects, Archeworks aims to expose them to problems that are not generally addressed in other established design institutions, breaking down conventional barriers between professional disciplines for the benefit of society.



History and Leadership

Conceived in the spring of 1992, Archeworks officially opened its doors in the fall of 1994 in a warehouse loft in near south side Chicago. Since its founding, Archeworks has strived to be a socially minded alternative to traditional architecture and design curricula. Founders Stanley Tigerman and Eva L. Maddox are committed to maintaining the school on an intimate scale, with a maximum of 25 intern students, taking their cue from precursors such as the Bauhaus school in Germany and Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin in Wisconsin. In 1997, Archeworks moved into its present headquarters in the design arts district of Chicago: a single-story building designed from the ground up by Stanley Tigerman.

Stanley Tigerman is a principal in the Chicago architectural firm of Tigerman McCurry. He is widely recognized as a leader in the architectural community, and prior to founding Archeworks, he was chair of the Department of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Eva Maddox is principal of Eva Maddox Associates, Inc., an award-winning multidisciplinary design firm. She was recently identified by *Crain's Chicago Business* as one of Chicago's most influential women.

Archeworks has a board of trustees composed of leading Chicago professionals, businesspeople, and public figures. Day-to-day operations are managed by Executive Director Molly Baltman.

p. 27:

Lakefront SR0, Chicago, 1996-97

The Archeworks project team redesigned one Single Room Occupancy unit to enhance accessibility for differently-abled tenants, developing prototypes for numerous furniture design modifications.

p. 28:

Accessible desk, Lakefront SR0

This desk is one of several furniture prototypes designed and built by the project team. Drawers are designed to pivot in both directions, allowing access from either side.

Philosophy and Working Methods

Archeworks' two cofounders take a hands-on role in the programs under study each year. The heart of the program is a yearlong, research-based, team-centered curriculum that leads to the development of innovative design solutions for real-world implementation. Design research undertaken by project teams includes library- and Internet-based background study, meetings with focus groups made up of proposed end users (i.e. HIV/AIDS patients, homeless people, school children, people with disabilities), and interviews with professionals working in relevant fields.



Research continues as part of the project development and implementation process.

Given the small size of the school, Archeworks teams depend on one another for mutual feedback and inspiration. The work space is an open warehouse that encourages cross-pollination of ideas between different teams. If a team is creating a device or product where prototyping is necessary, Archeworks offers a wood/metal workshop that provides interns with the tools needed to create models and, finally, actual products ready for testing by end users. Critiques held at the midpoint and end of the semester include community members, experts in related fields, and end users and offer an opportunity to share ideas and approaches across teams and groups of end users.

The school has also undertaken onetime special projects in parallel with its mission, including creation of the David Award for Excellence in Design for People with Disabilities, an international competition to bring original concepts, ideas, or products to the attention of the design community and to improve the lives of those with physical or mental

pp. 30 and 31:

Head pointer, 1995–96
This pointing device for persons with cerebral palsy was designed as both a piece of functional engineering and a kind of sportswear: lightweight, comfortable, attractive, and practical. The design is now being produced and distributed by a major medical equipment supplier.



disabilities. The results of this competition were published in a widely distributed catalogue.

Curriculum/Pedagogy

Archeworks accepts applications from students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as professionals at various stages of career development. Past interns have brought experience in art, architecture, art history, industrial design, interior design, nursing/health care, political science, education, creative writing, and urban planning. Typically one third of the students are architects, one third are designers in other media, and one third are trained in other areas. Interns pay annual tuition of \$5,000, for which scholarship support is sometimes available through corporate sponsorship.

Archeworks instructors annually create up to three project teams of individuals from varying disciplines with the belief that the best

solutions are discovered through a teamwork approach utilizing expertise from many backgrounds. Project teams include three to eight interns, with a maximum total enrollment of 25 for all project teams. The focus of each team is determined in advance by Archeworks instructors, with the opportunity for negotiation and revision by participating interns. As background for early research, Tigerman and Maddox teach parallel courses on ethics and on research and development, respectively.

The program's literature identifies four benefits that interns can expect to gain from a year at Archeworks: "Giving Back to Society in an Imperfect World"; "Socially Responsible Design with Real-World Implementation"; "Experience Working in Multidiscipline Teams"; and "Global Networking to Explore Alternative Careers." These benefits are all understood to derive from the unique process of working in teams to offer complete, innovative, implemented design solutions to end users in need.

Several projects have resulted in products that have moved into larger-scale production after completion of the course. Because the school differs substantially from existing models of design education, it has received significant attention and acclaim, including a P/A Award from *Architecture Magazine* in 1998 acknowledging Archeworks' role in pioneering multidisciplinary team approaches to service-learning.

Community Engagement

Archeworks engages end users for whom it develops proposals through direct partnership with local organizations and experts. Local partners have included, among others:

- **Lakefront SRO**, for a universal living unit for the handicapped or infirm elderly (with Knoll and USG).
- **Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago**, for a new head pointer for people with cerebral palsy (now available through Sammons-Preston medical catalog).

- **Women’s Self Employment Project**, for visual merchandizing techniques and concepts for women launching independent micro-enterprises.
- **West Humbolt Park Community Development Corporation and DePaul University**, for improvements to an underprivileged African American neighborhood.
- **Hektoen Institute and Cook County Hospital**, for a new medication carrier for people with AIDS and patient brochures to explain compliance.
- **Chicago Board of Education**, for a unique web site for the Piccolo School, a school the board of education has placed on probation, to facilitate communication between students, teachers, parents, and the community.
- **Teknion, Inc.**, for development of a car transfer device to help people with Alzheimer’s disease get into vehicles.
- **Illinois Department of Human Services**, for a new model office to motivate case workers and encourage self-esteem in people using the welfare system.

As the diversity of these projects suggests, the Archeworks team model allows for substantial flexibility in the provision of design solutions tailored to specific partners and end users. The yearlong duration of the curriculum also allows interns in-depth engagement with the community whom their project will serve.

Sources of Support

Archeworks is a nonprofit organization funded by foundation grants and individual donors, many of whom have been identified through the personal connections of the two cofounders. Partial support is also provided by a City Arts Program grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

In 2001, approximately 25 percent of the total budget was dedicated to staff expenses, including those of the executive director, her assistant, and outside consultants and facilitators. The remainder of the budget is allocated to operating expenses, of which real estate taxes for the downtown location represent an unexpectedly large percentage, currently almost 25 percent. Tuition payments contribute a fraction of total income. Most income comes from charitable contributions and biannual benefit events. Tigerman and Curry contribute their time on a *pro bono* basis.

Future Development

Currently, Archeworks is working to avoid institutionalization of its curriculum, which its leaders feel would undermine flexibility and benefits. Tigerman has scaled back his role in the curriculum in order to allow it more freedom, and he plans to focus his efforts on broadening national conversations about socially engaged design through symposia and other events.

Blue Soup Outreach

Location Southern California Institute of Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
Program type Design/Build Program
Lead staff Randall Wilson, Michael Pinto
Total staff 2.5
Date founded 1992 (originally called the City, Practice & Research Center; renamed Blue Soup in 2001)

Annual activity

Budget \$140,000
of projects 2–3
of students 120



Summary

Blue Soup is an outreach program of the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) that provides multidisciplinary design services in design/build, research, design, planning, community teaching, and publications to local communities in and around Los Angeles. Blue Soup applies the practical problem-solving skills of design to local challenges through partnership and collaboration with community-based organizations, with a strong emphasis on the integration of project implementation into the academic curricula. Blue Soup has recently shifted its focus from community service to

community collaboration, in which community partners contribute to the design process and help shape the final product and achieve positive impact at a social, political, and cultural level.

Mission

The overall mission of SCI-Arc is to test the limits of architecture in order to transform existing conditions into the designs of the future. Working in support of this mission, Blue Soup is dedicated to engaging the needs of the city and its inhabitants in a practical model that includes research, design, and implementation.



History and Leadership

SCI-Arc was founded in 1972; outreach programs at the school were formed in 1992 as the City, Practice & Research Center (CPRC), since renamed Blue Soup. Two staff/faculty members are currently devoted to Blue Soup outreach programming; temporary affiliations with the program are common.

Michael Pinto, who was named coordinator of Blue Soup outreach programming in 2001, is a member of the SCI-Arc design faculty and a privately practicing architect. He holds a B.Arch. from the Pennsylvania State University and an M.Arch. from SCI-Arc and is design principal at Osborn, a multidisciplinary design practice focused on community-based architecture. His responsibilities include developing new projects, recruiting faculty, researching funding opportunities, and planning marketing strategies. Pinto is engaged in the Blue Soup program part-time.

Randall Wilson is SCI-Arc shopmaster, a member of the visual studies faculty, and a practicing visual artist. He holds a B.F.A. from Colorado State University and an M.F.A. from Otis College of Art and Design. Wilson is a long-time faculty member who initiated outreach programming at SCI-Arc, maintains relationships with partner organizations, and develops new program ideas. He is engaged at Blue Soup full-time.

Cycles of Expression, Los Angeles, 1995–
In the first phase of this program, SCI-Arc students and community youth produced “pedomotive” vehicles from discarded bikes. Here the vehicles are shown exhibited at Grand Central Station in New York City.

SCI-Arc students later designed, fabricated, and installed 10 site-specific bicycle racks in Los Angeles as functional public art works through sponsorship by several local government agencies.

Philosophy and Working Methods

Blue Soup’s program philosophy and working methods coincide with the general institutional framework of SCI-Arc. Founded as a radical alternative to conventional architectural education, SCI-Arc continues to question conventional academic models. In contrast to programs with set philosophical positions, SCI-Arc is known for encouraging multiple viewpoints, functioning as a center for critical dialogue and new ideas in design.

In day-to-day operations, SCI-Arc’s students and faculty work

together as partners in intellectual cooperation. The faculty/student ratio is low, and learning is based on the needs of individual students. SCI-Arc is well-known for its action-oriented approach and its tradition as a social and design laboratory.

Each Blue Soup project deals with some form of practical problem solving. This might involve creating built structures or functional implementations, imparting vital skills to community members or groups, or producing design documents, master plans, or policy and program guidelines. In each project, Blue Soup typically delivers a different combination of these components of architectural practice.

Blue Soup projects generally fall into one of the following categories:

- **Design/Build.** Working with a community group to design and build critically needed projects.
- **Research, Design, and Planning.** Working with a community group to plan or design a project through any phase of the development process, including predesign, research and programming, or policy writing.
- **Community Teaching.** Developing innovative training and work projects with community members and youths in neighborhoods traditionally underserved by the arts and specialized education.
- **Publication/Documentation.** Producing project-related descriptive or promotional materials, which are often used to support community action.

Blue Soup works primarily in and around the City of Los Angeles. With the recent move of SCI-Arc to downtown Los Angeles, Blue Soup has renewed its interest in the urban core of the city.

The program actively seeks collaborations with organizations addressing social needs in unique ways. Relationships develop either through word of mouth or through opportunistic involvement on the basis of issues identified in the popular media. Although Blue Soup-initiated relationships do not always lead to real projects, the program



Above and p. 35:

Skid Row Housing Trust,
Los Angeles, 2001
SCI-Arc students designed
and fabricated furnishings
for a new satellite location
for this homeless housing
and advocacy organization
in downtown Los Angeles.
The students worked in
collaboration with
alumnae Chantal Aquin
and Rocío Romero, who
designed and coordinated
the project with students,
donors, and clients.

Right:

KAOS Network, Youth Arts
Space, Los Angeles, 2001
As part of a studio focused
on a proposal for a
contested public space in
the Leimert Park
neighborhood, students
renovated a storefront as a
vehicle for communication
and collaboration with the
community.



staff are committed to proactively identifying areas of need, in addition to responding to communities who initiate contact.

Local evaluation of individual project success is an important component of Blue Soup's working method. One component of the evaluation process occurs through Blue Soup's ongoing relationship with the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, from which SCI-Arc has received six consecutive grants. An evaluation panel reviews implementation of completed projects, and panel comments are integrated into each subsequent year's programming. Blue Soup also seeks direct feedback from the groups with whom it works one year after project completion. An internal process to evaluate educational benefits is also under development and will probably be based on surveys of former participants.

Curriculum/Pedagogy

One of the key objectives of the Blue Soup program is the education of students in the implications of working in the public realm by demonstrating that theoretical approaches learned in other studios are relevant in practice to the outreach projects undertaken by Blue Soup. By demonstrating the value of complex design research for real-life projects, Blue Soup acts as a hinge between often isolated areas of theory and practice.

Over the course of an academic year (three semesters), Blue Soup typically conducts five seminar courses and three studio level courses. Each course accommodates approximately 15 students, with a total annual involvement of approximately 120 students. Students are screened for participation in more advanced projects to ensure the possession of skills necessary for implementation of the design work. Students are generally involved with all aspects of a Blue Soup project, including budget, schedule, design, detail, construction, approvals, client relationships, and material technology. Each project is broken down into 15-week segments that work with the academic schedule, with longer projects broken into a phased schedule for completion by consecutive student teams.

Students receive academic credit for their participation in each

Blue Soup course. Depending on the scope of the course and the intensity of client involvement, students may also be employed as paid staff, i.e. as teaching assistants. In addition, students have volunteered when there is a compatibility of interests, although the program does not depend on student volunteers.

Community Engagement

In each project, Blue Soup utilizes links to the community established by a partner organization. Blue Soup participants and staff attend community meetings, frequent local businesses, and share special events and festivals as members of the community. Blue Soup does not consider itself an educator of the community but rather a collaborator that invites input and expertise. Blue Soup participants exercise a policy of reciprocal respect that allows all participants to learn from the process.

Groups that have collaborated with the program include The KAOS Network (a multimedia youth involvement project), the Chinatown Business Improvement District, the HeArt Project (which brings arts programming to continuation high school students), and the Skid Row Housing Trust (a homeless-housing organization). Blue Soup is currently pursuing a relationship with SCI-Arc's new partner high school, Manual Arts High School on the east side of Los Angeles.

Sources of Support

Currently, about half of the Blue Soup budget comes from grants and foundations, and the other half comes from school tuition and earned income. Financial support from SCI-Arc comes from the general operating budget of the school. The Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department is also a long-time partner and supporter of Blue Soup programs. Blue Soup's target budget for the 2002–03 year is \$149,700. This includes \$70,000 from grants, \$74,700 from tuition and earned income from

SCI-Arc, and \$5,000 from in-kind donations. As the program grows, Blue Soup is assessing its budget and attempting to increase outside funding. SCI-Arc has challenged the program to work towards financial self-sufficiency.

While the program has been in development, Blue Soup has not charged fees for its services. It has, however, asked for donations from partner organizations to cover expenses in each project. Decisions to provide service currently include consideration of partner organizations' ability to cover project expenses, the scale of the benefit that can be derived from the project, and the demonstrated need of the potential partners. Blue Soup hopes to increase dependence on grants and donations as a way to allow more freedom in the selection of projects for the program.

Future Development

Program staff believe that they have perfected strategies for short-term effectiveness but express concerns that the program lacks long-term strategies targeting specific alliances, relevant funding sources, impact assessment, and relevance to broader conversations about design. They are interested in targeting these areas for future development, when feasible, and in working to establish strategic alliances with like-minded and complementary institutions in the areas of public policy, land use, and real estate redevelopment in order to broaden Blue Soup's positive impact in local communities.

Blue Soup aims to eventually be perceived as a grant-giving agency that provides grants in the form of in-kind design service. This would allow Blue Soup to solicit applications for projects from prospective partners and be more strategic in its selection of projects to pursue. Projects could be diversified and resources directed toward the most appropriate locations.

Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative

and Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio

- Location** Cleveland, OH (affiliated with Kent State University, Kent, OH)
- Program type** University-based community design center
- Lead staff** Ruth Durack (director), Andrew Baqué (associate director)
- Total staff** 8 full-time, 2 part-time (+1 to 3 graduate assistants)
- Date founded** 1983 (Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio);
1999 (Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative)

Annual activity

- Budget \$800,000
- # of projects 12–15
- # of students 20–30



Summary

The Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) is the Cleveland-based urban component of the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio (UDC), a university-based community service organization committed to improving the quality of urban places through technical design assistance, research, education, and advocacy. The UDC offers architectural and urban design expertise in the service of urban communities, design professionals, and the planning and public policy work of state universities in Akron,

Youngstown, and Cleveland. The UDC maintains two offices, one in Kent and one at the CUDC.

Mission

The UDC's broad mission is to improve the quality of urban places in Northeast Ohio through technical design assistance, research, education, and advocacy. The CUDC uses its location in downtown Cleveland to realize this mission through the revitalization of Cleveland neighborhoods.

History and Leadership

The Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio was created in 1983 under the sponsorship of the Urban University Program, which supports the outreach and community service efforts of Ohio's state universities working in urban areas. Under its founding director, Foster Armstrong, the center expanded on the existing outreach and public service activities of the Kent State University School of Architecture and Environmental Design, focusing particularly on historic preservation and the problems of Northeast Ohio's smaller towns and cities. At the same time, working with studio courses at Kent State, the UDC undertook research into larger urban issues in Cleveland and other areas.

In recent years, the UDC has significantly expanded its technical design capacity, particularly through the 1999 creation of the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative. Since 1998, the center has been run by Director Ruth Durack, who oversees the technical content of all projects. She consults with Associate Director Andrew Baqué on the appointment of a project director for each CUUDC project. Junior staff time is allocated in monthly staff meetings according to the specific skills required for various tasks.

The UDC employs eight full-time staff, two part-time staff, and one to three graduate student assistants. All staff are paid at competitive rates.

Philosophy and Working Methods

The UDC provides technical design assistance to urban communities and neighborhoods seeking to become more livable places. The staff offer professional expertise in master planning, commercial district revitalization, recreation planning, design guidelines, historic preservation, residential re-development, campus planning, streetscape design, and other areas.

Typical assignments include urban design and planning projects such as neighborhood master plans, downtown redevelopment programs, commercial and industrial corridor revitalization strategies, streetscape improvements, and design guidelines. Most projects last 9 to 12 months, and

p. 43:
CUUDC Offices, Cleveland
As a downtown urban outreach office for Kent State University, the CUUDC office hosts design charettes, local planning meetings, informal exhibits, and social events, in addition to providing office space for the professional staff and studio space for the Graduate Program in Urban Design.



1



4



2



5



3

Canal Basin Charette, Cleveland, 2000

This weekend-long charette generated innovative design ideas for the reclamation of Canal Basin, once the entrance to the most important inland waterway in the United States. Participants included landscape design experts Stanley Allen, Ignacio Bunster-Ossa, Peter Latz, and Anuradha Mathur. The designers concentrated on developing process and identifying strategies for the gradual transformation of the site into a public amenity. Their ideas were widely publicized and generated new local awareness of the potential of the Cuyahoga Valley as a historic and recreational corridor.

1 / 2

Plan, seeding pattern proposal by Anuradha Mathur

3

Plan of analysis by Stanley Allen

4

View of Peter Latz proposal

5

Plan by Ignacio Bunster-Ossa

the center typically has 12 to 15 active projects in different states of completion at any time. To promote the continuing professional development of junior staff, the center attempts to create a small team for each project that remains involved through all phases of the work.

The CUDC is located in a renovated “flatiron” building in the heart of historic Cleveland, and its urban location affords significant opportunities to act as a catalyst for design activity in the city. In addition to housing the offices of CUDC staff, the building accommodates a design studio for Kent State University students, who may elect to enroll in urban-centered design studios conducted on-site by Kent State faculty and CUDC staff, and a large conference room that the collaborative makes available to the larger community for planning and design meetings.

The center organizes its activities around four interlocking goals, seeking to:

- **Develop information** about the physical environment and design and development issues. Sample projects include regional studies of the effects of suburban sprawl and an analysis of the barriers to production of affordable housing in Northeast Ohio.
- **Provide technical design assistance** to urban communities and neighborhoods seeking to become more livable places.
- **Inform decision-makers and the public** about the importance of good design in revitalizing old communities, building new ones, and protecting the natural and historic resources of the region. This includes suggesting design alternatives for areas under development.
- **Work cooperatively with educational, professional, and volunteer organizations** with similar missions, in such community activities as design workshops, demonstration projects, and public information meetings.

In all of its work the UDC seeks to encourage ecological integrity, protect natural and cultural resources, stimulate economic prosperity, enhance the public realm, and create sustainable, livable communities.

The UDC does not undertake construction projects.



University Circle Charette, Cleveland, 1999

University Circle is home to some of Cleveland's most important cultural institutions, but it suffers from an outdated traffic design that poses problems for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists alike.

The UDC was invited to develop proposals for the site, and it organized a weekend-long design charette with nationally recognized landscape designers Balmori Associates, Hargreaves Associates, Martha Schwartz, Inc., and Wallace Roberts Todd. The four teams' proposals were presented at a public session, and their common recommendation to "daylight" Doan Brook—a once-natural stream that currently flows through an underground concrete pipe—made a strong impression on the local community.

1
Landscape proposal by
Hargreaves Associate

2
View of proposed
multiuse paths by
Balmori Associates

3
Overall scheme by
Martha Schwartz, Inc.
and Hargreaves
Associates

Curriculum/Pedagogy

Connections between the UDC and the curriculum of the Kent State University School of Architecture are based primarily on the exchange of students and faculty. The UDC typically employs up to three graduate assistants for two semesters each year, paying both their tuition costs and a stipend for 10 hours of work per week. These assistants help to maintain academic connections between the UDC and the School of Architecture and to transfer ideas and techniques between design studios and the collaborative's professional practice.

Student employees are typically involved in data collection and neighborhood analysis, concept development, and the preparation of digital and freehand presentation graphics. Students are encouraged to participate in client meetings and public workshops, and the center attempts to assign them to projects that will be completed within their two-semester period of employment. Students who are not members of the staff are also strongly encouraged to participate in the UDC's public activities and any project-related meetings that could contribute to their professional development.

The graduate program, through which students can enroll in design studios based at the CUDC, involves approximately 12 students in each year of a two-year program and frequently uses UDC projects as studio exercises. Participating students are invited to observe project meetings and to participate in public programs that are hosted in the UDC offices.

Students also have the opportunity to participate in UDC research projects undertaken independently and through the graduate program of the School of Architecture at Kent State University. In these research projects, the UDC develops information about the physical environment and design and development issues with the goal of contributing to regional and national dialogues on urban design. Current research initiatives include an evolving study of the redevelopment of commercial corridors in Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs.

Interested faculty members are invited to participate in projects that would benefit from their experience or offer an opportunity to extend their research interests. Faculty are paid through project fees and do not receive

release time from the university. Only three faculty members have completed projects for the center over the last three years.

Community Engagement

The UDC and CUDC see much of their work as based on community service to underserved populations. Clients are generally groups that could not otherwise access technical design services, including community development corporations, local government departments, and nonprofit advocacy groups. The center only works on projects that are in the public interest and does not work for private developers. The center encourages strong participation from clients in every step of the design process, and clients typically serve as liaisons between the UDC and CUDC and the communities affected by a project's design recommendations.

The CUDC maintains a continuous relationship with three key agencies: the City of Cleveland's Community Development Department, Neighborhood Progress, Inc. (NPI), and the Local Initiative Support Coalition (LISC). Most funding for the community development corporations on whose projects the CUDC works is channeled through these agencies, and staff work closely with them to develop appropriate approaches for community involvement. Community relationships are further developed through project work; through participation in local and regional programs sponsored by groups such as the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency, Greater Cleveland Growth Association, and local chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and American Planning Association (APA); and through serving on neighborhood design review boards and the advisory boards of various nonprofit organizations involved in community development issues.

In addition to its service role, the UDC places a strong emphasis on advocacy to develop awareness of excellence in urban design through publications, public programs including design charettes and lectures, and direct advocacy by serving on design review boards and other bodies. Additionally, the UDC has begun two new initiatives: an awards program to recognize

contributions to the urban environment and an educational program for citizens and professionals who make decisions about the built environment.

Sources of Support

The CUDC is supported by the Ohio Board of Regents' Urban University Program and the School of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State University. The UDC's annual budget is approximately \$800,000, with funding sources as follows:

- University:** 51% (School of Architecture and university at large)
- State of Ohio:** 12% (Urban University Program)
- Foundations:** 25% (Cleveland, Gund, Wean, and FirstEnergy Foundations)
- Community:** 12% (project fees)

The center does not employ development staff, and the director works directly with the university's development office to raise support.

Future Development

Director Ruth Durack identifies the difficulty of supporting continuing professional staff development in new theoretical approaches and technical innovations in urban design practice as the greatest ongoing challenge to the attainment of consistently high design standards. The center has explored the possibility of establishing a "Designer-in-Residence" program through which to invite an experienced or uniquely qualified urban designer to Cleveland for an extended period to work on one or more specific local issues with national significance.

Design Corps

Location	Raleigh, NC
Program type	Independent nonprofit design service
Lead staff	Bryan Bell (executive director)
Total staff	6 (director + 5 interns)
Date founded	1991 (incorporated 1997)
Annual activity	
Budget	\$103,000
# of projects	varies
# of students	5 (post-degree interns)



Summary

Design Corps is a nonprofit organization that provides affordable, quality architectural and housing services at substantially below cost to low-income individuals and families through offices and partnerships in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Durham, North Carolina; and Newbern, Alabama. Design Corps is not housed within a university, but Bryan Bell, its founder and executive director, has actively encouraged university-community design activity through partnerships and conferences, including the “Structures for Inclusion” conference cited in the Introduction.

Mission

The mission of Design Corps is to provide the benefits of good design to those who would not otherwise have access to design services. The program places an emphasis on service to real clients, with whom Design Corps staff communicate directly to accurately establish needs and develop appropriate designs.



History and Leadership

Design Corps was founded by Bryan Bell, an Ivy-league trained architect who began his professional career working for the prestigious New York architecture firm of Steven Holl Architects. Finding himself increasingly frustrated with the lack of connection between his work and broader social challenges, he left this promising career in search of a way to offer his design services to a specific community he recognized as in serious need of better housing options: migrant farmers in rural Pennsylvania.

Bell initially went to work for Rural Opportunities, Inc. (ROI), a private, nonprofit regional community development and human service organization providing services to farm workers, low-income families, and economically depressed communities. Working at ROI, Bell obtained a detailed knowledge of both the specific housing challenges that rural farmers and migrant workers faced and the federal aid programs that were available to assist them. Based on the experience and information he gained with ROI, Bell founded Design Corps in 1991.

Design Corps continues to pursue the mission of providing high quality design services to low-income individuals and families in need. As the organization has developed, it has established two primary focus areas: a program to create affordable migrant farm worker housing for Pennsylvania growers and a program to provide affordable housing to full-time resident families in the area.

Design Corps is governed by a board of directors that meets annually to review and discuss the work of the organization. The board is composed of designers and nondesigners and serves as a multidisciplinary guiding body for the organization. Members of an advisory committee serve as references on particular matters such as grant writing, funding, community action, and design.

p. 51:

Design Corps fellow working with a family

The Moreno family at the groundbreaking for their home, Arendstville, Pennsylvania, 1996

p. 52:

Guest worker houses, Sunnyside Farms, Washington, Virginia, 2002

House for a cherry picker, New Oxford, Pennsylvania, 2000

Philosophy and Working Methods

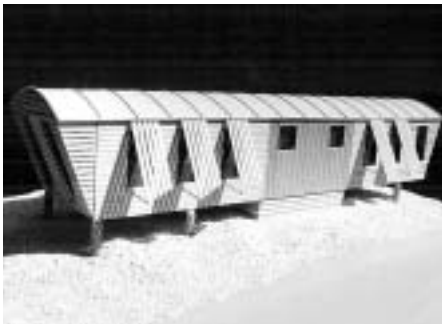
Design Corps is based on the idea that good design accommodates people

in their day-to-day lives with programmatic solutions, and in recognition of the fact that such good design is not typically available to the vast majority of the home buying market due to the expense of the standard design fee (10–15 percent of construction costs). Design Corps employs a more cost-efficient fee structure, which it calls “Direct-to-You” design, charging 0–3 percent of construction costs. The model was developed through research funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

To date, Design Corps staff have consulted on the design and development of affordable housing to seven nonprofit organizations on over one hundred rental and home ownership units. Staff participate in all aspects of the projects, including the successful application for over \$5 million in project support through eight sources of federal, state, and private funds.

Design Corps places a heavy emphasis on the role of good communication in the design process, encouraging staff to meet repeatedly with actual end user clients to discuss needs and develop solutions that address them. When designing a home for a single client, the Design Corps design process is structured around five client meetings. In the first meeting, Design Corps staff work with the client family to establish an appropriate budget for the house that they will build, including assessment of the family’s ability to contribute sweat equity to the project. Using a standard square foot cost, Design Corps uses this budget to establish the total square footage of the house. The family is then asked to complete a questionnaire that asks how they expect to use the space in their new house. Design Corps staff then work with the family to prioritize their needs and develop a basic program for the house that is appropriate to the established budget. These conversations form the basis of the design proposal that Design Corps staff present to the client for discussion and review. The final presentation incorporates changes on the basis of the client family’s response to the preliminary design. Families are also given an opportunity to create a wish list of items that can be included in the final design if contractor bids prove lower than budgeted.

Design Corps also designs rental housing for migrant farm workers. In these cases the client is typically a nonprofit organization or local



Migrant worker housing,
1997–2002
Manufactured unit for single
migrant workers. The design
expresses the clients' desire
for mobility.

grower who wishes to provide housing in order to attract seasonal workers during the harvest. Design Corps draws on field research among migrant workers to establish end user needs and then works with the actual client to provide housing that meets budgetary requirements and accommodates the programmatic needs identified by Design Corps research.

Design Corps evaluates its projects exclusively on the basis of client and end user satisfaction, providing client families with a post-occupancy survey that allows them to respond to the quality of both the design process and the completed house.

Curriculum/Pedagogy

Design Corps has organized and supervised 33 internships for architecture students from 12 universities over the last 5 years. The organization

is committed to encouraging, educating, and training design interns, students, and professionals in the techniques of providing quality architectural, planning, and design services to underserved individuals at below market rates.

In support of this ambition, Design Corps now offers five yearlong internships for young professionals who have completed a professional degree and wish to apply their design skills to meaningful social challenges. Internships are conceived as opportunities to train young designers in strategies that are accurate and responsive to community needs, and the program's name, Design Corps, expresses its ambition to create powerful experiences that will inform and inspire interns in future work with communities around the country.

Design Corps sees education and service as equal missions. Its educational goals are described in seven values:

- **Understanding Community.** Understand the community being served through direct communication with residents of the area and documented local sources.
- **Understanding Individuals.** Understand the individuals being served. Respect clients as unique people and include them in the design process, recognizing their expertise in their own needs, wants, and dreams.
- **Quality in Design.** Achieve the highest quality and consideration in design while respecting the economic circumstances of the client.
- **Quality in Construction.** Achieve quality in building, detailing, and construction through planning and attention.
- **Activism.** Initiate projects and take steps to complete projects by assembling teams of community activists to help define community needs and create appropriate design solutions to meet them.
- **Understanding the Big Picture.** Understand all the influences affecting a project.

- **Expanding the Profession.** Reflect and evaluate the state of the architecture profession. Expand the profession's ability to assist underserved populations.

These values are intended to provide alumni with the skills necessary to identify, organize, design, fund, and build solutions to meet local needs in their future communities and throughout their future practice. One of the first Design Corps' interns recently became director of the Community Design Center of the City College of New York.

Community Engagement

As a client-driven organization, Design Corps tends to take a less proactive role in the making of community, focusing instead on the provision of high quality services to clients on an individual basis. At the same time, the research that Design Corps undertakes in identifying end user needs in low-income communities represents a strong commitment to identifying community-level needs as a basis for appropriate design process.

Though it has not established permanent relationships with a specific region or community, Design Corps has worked with several community-based efforts as a consultant, including both university-based outreach and independent community initiatives. For university-based efforts led by Auburn University in Perry County, Alabama, Design Corps received direct federal support for an industrial park planning effort; worked with Auburn on a streetscape and economic development effort in Uniontown, Alabama; and developed the design and sought funding for a technology training and child care center in Marion, Alabama. Responding to the relative scarcity of accredited architecture programs across the country, Design Corps has also worked specifically to establish relationships with communities who do not have access to university resources, as exemplified by their work for the United Christian Church Assemblies in Taylor, Alabama.

Sources of Support

Drawing on the knowledge and experience gained by Bell during his time at ROI, Design Corps funds its work with an assortment of federal subsidy programs. Design Corps receives \$1,500 from the Federal Home Loan Bank for each of its new affordable housing designs through the Affordable Housing Program, which supports affordable housing with a 10 percent tax on the profits of savings and loan institutions bailed out by the federal government in the early 1990s.

Projects also take advantage of federal loan programs such as Rural Housing Services, which enables families to contribute up to 60 percent of the purchase price of a house through “sweat equity” by helping to build the house themselves. Until 1996, RHS required new houses to be built to standard house plans that were often too expensive for rural applicants, leaving many families without housing options at all. In 1996, however, design constraints were lifted, and Design Corps can now work directly with families to develop houses that are appropriate to their budgets and needs.

Design Corps interns are paid through the federal Volunteers in Service to America program.

Future Development

Bell hopes to eventually use the strategies and knowledge that he has developed in Design Corps to transform national housing policy for farmers and farm workers, developing a national housing program that provides tailored design solutions that respond to the financial capacity of the farming economy and provide for the daily human needs of farm workers and their families.

Detroit Collaborative Design Center

Location	University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture, Detroit, MI
Program type	University-based community design center
Lead staff	Dan Pitera (director)
Total staff	5
Date founded	1995
Annual activity	
Budget	\$300,000
# of projects	5–6
# of students	80 (10 part- and full-time student staff members, 70 students in courses taught)



Summary

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) is a year-round, multidisciplinary, non-profit center located within the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture. It is dedicated to “searching and (re)searching” architectural design and neighborhood development through the interaction of students, professionals, faculty, and community members. The center works exclusively with nonprofit community development organizations that promote quality design solutions that respond to locally defined concerns. It is a teaching center dedicated to educating future leaders in urban

revitalization and engages students, recent graduates, the urban community, and the professional architect.

Mission

The center defines its focus at the scale of urban neighborhoods, and it works to develop leaders in the broad Detroit urban revitalization effort, both among community members and among future architects and designers. Its intent is to teach and train students and the community in the art of urban architecture, to strengthen links between professionals and students and recent graduates, and to foster an alternative method for the integration of practice and academia.

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History and Leadership

Stephen Vogel introduced the concept of a design center during his first year as dean at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture. He brought Father Terrence Curry, an architect and full-time faculty member, to the university to lay the groundwork for the center through a Neighborhood Design Studio where students had the opportunity to work with community groups from the Detroit metropolitan area who were seeking to make a difference in their neighborhoods. Students worked closely with leaders from the community and local professionals to assess situations, evaluate opportunities, propose alternatives, and develop possibilities. The studio explored questions concerning the process, theory, and practice of working in collaboration with community and volunteer organizations, with special emphasis on the challenges posed for providing excellence in design. The Neighborhood Design Studio planning analysis continued with a series of focus projects identified with community organizations for further development, including housing, mixed-use, retail, streetscapes, an AIDS hospice, and emergency shelters. This studio involved into the Detroit Collaborative Design Center with a full-time professional staff.

In 2000, Father Curry left the center to accept a Loeb Fellowship at Harvard University, and the DCDC is now directed by Dan Pitera, who has experience as an installation artist in addition to being a licensed architect. Pitera came to the Detroit Collaborative Design Center from San Francisco, where he was president of the Center for Critical Architecture/The Art and Architecture Exhibition Space (CfCA/2AES), a venue for the exhibition of experimental architectural investigations. Under Pitera's leadership, the Detroit Collaborative Design Center has diversified the nature of its projects to include experimental installations that engage local communities in public dialogue about the value of design in the making of communities.

Philosophy and Working Methods

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center is conceived as a center for “searching and (re)searching” architectural design and neighborhood development within the School of Architecture. It works exclusively with nonprofit community development organizations to link students, local design professionals, community residents, and community-based organizations. The center seeks to enhance local leadership in the area of public design and to develop quality design projects that respond to locally defined concerns. Projects have included building renovations, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, new building construction, furniture and office systems design and fabrication, neighborhood planning, public design and planning workshops, and graphic design.

In addition to more traditional architectural and planning-related community design work, the center has also undertaken projects in less traditional community design areas, such as graphic design and public installation art. Graphic art projects have included posters to support local community initiatives, and installation art projects have focused on derelict buildings as a site for cultural expression as a means to catalyze public vision for change and revitalization. The center has also pursued unique opportunities to exhibit its work, having recently participated in *ArchiLab*, a prestigious design exhibition in France, and submitted its installation work for consideration for the annual P/A Awards organized by *Architecture Magazine*.

The center typically undertakes five to six construction and planning projects a year, charging slightly less than market rate for its services. To complete the actual construction phases of most projects, the center teams up with an appropriate local architecture firm. This process, as well as the active participation of at least one AIA member on the center’s board of advisors, has mitigated any concerns from the professional community about competition for local clients. The center has the reputation of generating work for local architects.



Homeboy Industries, Los Angeles, 2000

Homeboy Industries is an economic development program that seeks to create businesses to employ gang-involved youth who wish to redirect their lives. It was started in 1992 as the economic development branch of Jobs for a Future, an employment referral program that serves at-risk, gang-involved youth from all over Los Angeles County. Homeboy Industries runs a variety of businesses that employ representatives from different gangs to work side by side with their enemies to manufacture products and provide services. Through such employment, young men and women receive on-the-job training and preparation for future employment.

Homeboy Industries includes Homeboy Bakery, Homeboy Silkscreen, Homeboy Merchandising, Homeboy Landscaping, and Homeboy Graffiti Removal.

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center provided design and construction services to Homeboy Industries for the renovation of a 5,000 sq. ft. printing facility into Homeboy's main offices and training facilities. Total construction cost for the project was \$300,000, or \$75.00 per square foot. The facility is shown at 95 percent completion.

- 1** Main lobby and entry, with stretched fabric ceiling
- 2** Exterior view
- 3** Custom steel storage wall under construction
- 4** Opening night party
- 5** Office space during construction
Ceiling detail on p. 59 (left)

Curriculum/Pedagogy

The Dean of the College of Architecture at Detroit Mercy is strongly committed to ethical, reflective practice through academic education, and the Catholic underpinnings of the entire university reinforce the center's active community engagement and service. The DCDC has therefore received strong administrative and financial support from the University.

Approximately 80–100 students per year are influenced directly by the work of the center or the courses taught by DCDC. Center staff offer at least one studio per semester, in addition to more diverse elective courses that utilize community-based projects to teach core skills like CAD and post-occupancy evaluation. Participating students have expressed strong support for the role that the center plays in their education, and at least one former student staff member has gone on to start a design center of her own in another community.

One unique aspect of the Design Center is a program of two-year fellowships offered through the university and the DCDC to graduates of accredited architecture programs with one to five years of professional experience. Community Design Fellowship responsibilities include project design and follow-through, teaching within the architecture curriculum (one class/year), project management, computer design and modeling, project programming, feasibility reports, and community outreach.

Community Engagement

The Design Center has served 51 community-based organizations. Although its work has occasionally been in communities outside of Detroit (including projects in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and New York), it has undertaken remote projects primarily to broaden its experience and perspective in service to neighborhoods in Detroit. The center receives several calls per week from potential local clients and can select the most promising opportunities without needing to market its services.



Fire-Break, Detroit, 2000–

Burned or vacant houses are a common sight in Detroit, and their presence is a physical and psychological drain on the well-being of the city and its inhabitants. The *Fire-Break* project was organized by the DCDC to fabricate with community artists and residents a series of installations in and around the burned houses of the east side of Detroit. The project aims to transform this particular and distinct blight on the urban landscape into an asset through creative intervention and occupation.

The first two houses, *Hay House* and *Sound House*, were completed in June 2001, and the project was scheduled to continue through fall 2002 with *Light House*, *Skinned House*, *House Coat*, *Stitched House*, and *Green House*.

1

Hay House
A burned house was covered with bundles of hay referencing the urban farming occurring on the east side of Detroit. Local community members participated in the installation.
Wall detail on p. 59 (right)

2

Sound House
The house windows were covered with fabric, and musicians played inside. Visitors were able to listen to the house, but not to see the musicians.





Criteria for project selection emphasize opportunities to achieve high levels of design quality over other considerations, such as project scale or budget. The center has a strong commitment to grassroots project development and prefers smaller projects that emerge from community needs to larger projects that may lack strong levels of community engagement. Center staff suggest that design quality can be maintained most effectively in projects that include active engagement by the community, since client activism tends to translate into more effective final designs.

The preference for grassroots projects has not precluded the opportunity to work on large-scale projects, and in these cases, too, client activism is seen as a strong benefit in the design process. Current engagements include a \$20 million community center in the university area and a \$4–5 million gymnasium that celebrates people with disabilities at a Quaker Friends School near Detroit. The center hopes that the gymnasium design will serve as a model for similar projects at Quaker schools across the country.

Sources of Support

The Design Center's \$300,000 annual budget comes from a mix of university funding, project revenue, and increasingly, foundation support, including a generous recent grant from the General Motors Foundation. There are currently five full-time staff members, including a director and an associate director. The associate director's role is being expanded to emphasize necessary fundraising from private foundations. One student works full-time and two or three students work part-time at the center during each semester of the school year (including summer); similar numbers of faculty volunteer their time on projects related to their own interests and research.

Future Development

The center continues to advocate for stronger connections between local design centers, community-based organizations, and artists and architects who could provide valuable services to these organizations, and its ambitions for the future remain in this area. Continued publicity for and recognition of its work at the national and international level are seen by the DCDC as critical to continued local success, and the center expects to continue to explore options for the broader dissemination of its most successful projects.

Howard S. Wright Design/Build Studio

Location	University of Washington School of Architecture, Seattle, WA
Program type	Design/Build Studio
Lead staff	Steve Badanes (director)
Total staff	2
Date founded	1994 (intermittent work since 1988)
Annual activity	
Budget	\$40,000
# of projects	2
# of students	10–15



Summary

The Howard S. Wright Design/Build Studio is one of several quarter-long design/build studios at the University of Washington Department of Architecture that are available to professional degree candidates as elective courses. The studio annually completes two design/build projects for local communities in the greater Seattle region, typically through partnership with a local non-profit organization that has requested design/build services. Construction funding is usually provided by Seattle Department of Neighborhoods grants and the local business community.

Mission

Although the studio has not published a separate mission statement, course materials indicate a commitment to the premise that all architects' primary client is the society at large and that community outreach is a key component of education. Course materials identify collaborative, consensus-building design experiences and the development of communication skills as central goals, along with striving to integrate technology into the design studio and to redirect values toward community service and commitment.

History and Leadership

The University of Washington Design/Build Studio began in 1988 during a visiting professorship by Steve Badanes in the university's Department of Architecture and became a permanent part of the curriculum in 1994. Professor Badanes is a nationally recognized figure in the design/build movement through his private design/build practice, Jersey Devil Design/Build, which he founded in the late 1960s. Jersey Devil pioneered a new form of portable design/build architectural practice, undertaking one project at a time and setting up mobile Airstream trailer studios on-site for the duration of design and construction. Badanes has taught and lectured at universities around the country and abroad, and he is a regular faculty member at Yestermorrow Design-Build School, an undergraduate summer design/build institute in Vermont.

Damon Smith, who assists Professor Badanes with instruction and coordination of the studio, is an alumnus of the University of Washington Design/Build Studio and a founding partner of SHED (see p. 80).

Philosophy and Working Methods

The Howard S. Wright Design/Build Studio emphasizes effective student cooperation as its primary goal, and Badanes points to graduates' comfort and skill working in collaborative teams as a significant area of the studio's success. These values are communicated in practice through a standardized schedule Badanes has developed and refined over the history of the program. Site selection and program development are completed by Badanes before the studio commences, and the first studio meeting typically involves a presentation by representatives of the community for whom the studio will be completing design and construction work. Design work is done during studio time in rotating groups, using a consensus method with a facilitator and a written "group memory" to identify shared values and design ideas. These points of commonality are synthesized into a single design, which is developed into a presentation for the community.

Highland Gardens,
Issaquah, Washington,
1998
Pavilion roof detail
This detail is from one of
several pavilions designed
and built for the
community garden at this
award-winning public
housing project. The
housing was developed by
the St. Andrews Housing
Group and the Interim
Community Development
Agency in Seattle.





Bradner Gardens Park Improvements, Seattle, 1999–2000

Bradner Gardens Park holds particular significance in the history of community action in Seattle. Long neglected by the city and its parks department, the park was rescued in the early 1990s by a dedicated group of local residents, who reconfigured it as a public community garden. In the late 1990s, as real estate values improved, the city attempted to replace the park with a market-rate housing development, and the ensuing controversy galvanized the local community to establish the park as open space in perpetuity.

The Design/Build Studio participated in this process by offering its labor as an in-kind contribution to enable the community to obtain a matching grant from the city's Department of Neighborhoods for park improvements. Among the projects completed over two years were a wood and concrete footbridge, three decorative steel perimeter gates, and a pavilion canopy for the central meeting area.

Central meeting pavilion

The studio focuses on projects that can be completed by students during the 11 weeks available in an academic quarter. As a result, the scale of the projects completed by the studio tends to be small—park pavilions, playground furniture, and small building additions—but the cooperation required to complete construction within a limited time frame has produced impressive results. In all projects, the client organization provides a budget for materials, and students are responsible for site analysis and planning, project design, production of working drawings, materials procurement, fabrication, and scheduling.

Design quality in the studio is evaluated primarily in terms of appropriateness to the site, recognition of contextual environmental factors, integration of quality craftsmanship, and attention to construction detail. A premium is also placed on professional service to the project's community client. "Success means that we finish the project on time and under budget," Badanes says, "and that the quality of the design and craftsmanship is high." The criteria of evaluation therefore rest jointly on the design quality of the finished product itself and on the level of service the product provides to the community.

Curriculum/Pedagogy

The Howard S. Wright Design/Build Studio is one of four vertical studios open to both undergraduate and graduate students at the College of Architecture and Urban Design as "wild-card" studios, meaning that they do not fulfill specific curricular requirements. Other "wild-card" studios include foreign study, Design/Build Mexico (assisted by Badanes), and a furniture studio. Based on the distribution requirements of the college, undergraduate students are allowed one "wild-card" studio during their five-year degree, and graduate students are allowed two "wild-card" studios.

The design/build studio experience can have a profound impact on students' other coursework and on their long-term careers. In the short term, this can mean that students continue to pursue design/build



Danny Woo International District Community Garden, Seattle, 1989–2001

The Danny Woo International District Community Garden is a nationally recognized community garden led by the Interim Community Development Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the stabilization and revitalization of Seattle’s International District neighborhood without displacement and gentrification. The garden’s individual terraced plots, which number over 100, are tended by elderly residents of the International District,

most of whom live in the apartment buildings and single-room occupancy hotels adjacent to the site.

Through the Design/Build Studio, University of Washington students have contributed to the ongoing design and development of the garden by constructing varied features. A tool shed, entry gateway, kiosks, washing areas, seating, lighting, a pig roasting pit, and a barbecue area were designed and built between 1989 and 1991.

After it became clear that a number of the elderly users of the garden were experiencing difficulty in navigating its stairs and paths, the students returned in 1996 to design and build an accessible gardening area at the upper end of the garden, and alumni of the program are currently involved in a planning study for the garden’s impending expansion.



1
Aerial view, detail on p. 69
(left)

2
Overall plan

3
Planting beds with wash
stations

4
Water kiosk

5
Water kiosk detail

6
Pig roasting pit under
construction

7
Lower stair with student-
designed lighting

8
Terrace plots

9
Pig roasting pit



Experimental Education Unit, University of Washington, 1995, 1997

The EEU is a comprehensive early childhood learning center that provides inclusive integrated educational services for children with and without disabilities. Since 1969, the program has been housed in its own building, which includes a number of outdoor courtyards designed as play spaces for

the children. In 1995, the Design/Build Studio enhanced the main courtyard with a three-dimensional hanging labyrinth suspended from the courtyard's partial roof. In 1997, the studio customized a second courtyard with a contoured rubber terrain and tension membrane roof.

Hanging playground, detail of swing on p. 69 [right]

projects in their other academic studio work. Each year, several of the students who have completed design/build studios at the university opt to complete their thesis projects as design/build projects, often building on an earlier project completed by the studio. One student, for example, designed a lighting system for the Danny Woo International District Community Garden profiled in these pages, and the first project completed by the young firm SHED (see p. 80) started as a design thesis project.

Badanes's success in encouraging students toward alternative practice is further borne out by the number of alumni who go on to pursue careers in community design and activism. In Badanes's words, "You can't evaluate the full success of these programs until years later. I'm always getting a letter or phone call from a former student who has just completed a small but meaningful community project somewhere, saying 'I never could have thought we could do it if it hadn't been for your class.'" Badanes repeatedly emphasizes the value of the program for building a strong community of like-minded local professionals who are technically able and temperamentally inclined to dedicate themselves to positive civic engagement.

Community Engagement

The Design/Build Studio works only with community nonprofit groups and typically maintains an ongoing relationship with those groups over a number of years. The strength of these community relationships is enhanced by the program's emphasis on public projects and installations, which not only publicize the role of the Design/Build Studio in the university's commitment to community service but also maximize direct public access to the benefits of the studio's work. Demand for the studio's work outstrips its ability to provide service, and the studio is forced to decline many of the projects it is asked to consider.

The program also has an impact on the community through the continuing engagement of its alumni in community design activities. Since 1988, over 200 students have participated in the Design/Build

Studio, and many of them have been inspired to continue similar community-based work in their professional lives. Of these, some have moved into careers in community development, becoming in at least one case future clients for the studio. Others have gone on to develop their own design/build practices, often using their experiences at the University of Washington as a springboard for relationships with future clients.

Nonprofits are not charged a fee for design and construction services, but they are required to obtain funding for materials and property. Occasionally those goods are donated, but the studio faculty also helps groups write grants for funding. Community labor or matching funds are often required to meet budgetary requirements.

Sources of Support

The program is funded through an endowed chair, the Howard S. Wright Chair, which annually provides \$65,000 for the support of community-based design. The endowment was created by a donation from the Howard S. Wright Construction Company, a Seattle-based firm with strong ties to the university and a history of philanthropic activity. The School of Architecture and the university administration publicly acknowledge the value of the studio's work in the context of the university's broad commitment to community service.



Mexico Design/Build Studio
The Howard S. Wright Endowed Chair also provides support for an international design/build program run by Professor Sergio Palleroni in cooperation with Badanes. The studio has completed numerous projects in Mexico, including this school (left) and clinic (right).





SHED, Seattle, 1998–

SHED is a Seattle-based design/build firm founded in 1998 by Scot Carr, Prentis Hale, Thomas Schaer, and Damon Smith, four alumni of the University of Washington College of Architecture and Urban Design. Although the careers of many alumni have been deeply influenced by their experiences in the Design/Build Studio, SHED is a particularly useful example. The continuing work of these designers demonstrates the potential for the long-term impact of the studio on the design quality of alumni work and by extension on the built environment of their communities.

The firm's first design/build project, the Pike Place Market Heritage Museum in downtown Seattle, was undertaken by two of the founding partners as their final thesis project in the Department of Architecture, and the strong connection between the Design/Build Studio and the firm is direct, literal, and ongoing. The partners now participate as design instructors at the school and in the studio, and the firm's most recent public project—the adaptive reuse of an existing park building that includes a custom-designed solar panel roof system—has grown directly out of connections established through the studio.



1



2



3



4

p. 80:
SHED Office/Studio,
Seattle

SHED's four partners rent
an office in a converted
industrial building that
houses a number of other
artists and designers, with
whom they share a
common workshop.

p. 81:
Pike Place Market
Heritage Museum, Seattle,
1997-1999

1 / 2
Skylight

3
Custom light fixture

4
Entry detail

5
Entry

6
Entry after hours

7
Main gallery with shutter
doors open



5



6



7

In response to the success of the Design/Build Studio, the Department of Landscape Architecture initiated its own landscape-oriented design/build studio, which is required for all landscape architecture students. A portion (\$10,000) of the Howard S. Wright endowment income has been allocated to this landscape studio, and the construction management and real estate management departments receive \$10,000 and \$5,000, respectively, from the endowment for community-based curricular work. The remaining \$40,000 of the endowment income is allocated to the Design/Build Studio; approximately \$32,000 goes toward salaries, and \$8,000 covers basic tools, travel, and occasionally materials.

Staff and students typically use their own vehicles and tools to complete projects.

Future Development

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Badanes's approach is its demonstrated portability. In addition to the studio that he teaches at the University of Washington, he has also guest-taught design/build studios at numerous other universities in the United States and abroad, including in Africa, Europe, and Latin America. He stresses that the skills required to teach design/build studios are pedagogically unique, but not locally specific, and can therefore be translated readily to different geographical and cultural contexts. This is an area of potential future growth and development for the program.

The Rural Studio

Location	Auburn University, Auburn, AL (studio located in Newbern, AL)
Program type	Design/Build Studio
Lead staff	D. K. Ruth (director)
Total staff	8
Date founded	1992
Annual activity	
Budget	\$400,000–450,000
# of projects	4–7
# of students	30–45



Summary

The Rural Studio is an outreach program at Auburn University that provides design/build educational opportunities to students in the Auburn University School of Architecture. The studio, which is based in Newbern, Alabama, approximately 200 miles from Auburn, offers opportunities for students to complete design/build projects as studio coursework and thesis projects in coordination with local communities. Projects and courses are intended for the educational benefit of Auburn University students, and the resulting physical end product becomes a lasting contribution to the communities in Hale County and rural Alabama.

Mission

The mission of the Rural Studio emphasizes both pedagogical and community service objectives. Pedagogically, the Rural Studio seeks to allow students to put their educational values to work as citizens of a community. In engaging the local community, the Rural Studio seeks solutions to the needs of the community within the community's own context, rather than from outside it, applying theoretical approaches in real projects for real people.

History and Leadership

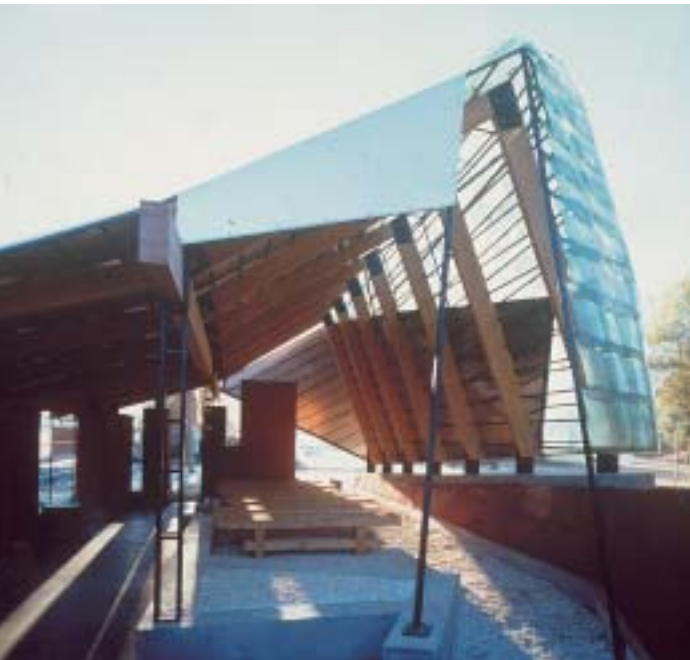
The Rural Studio was initially conceived by Professors Samuel Mockbee and Dennis K. Ruth as a method of improving the living conditions in rural Alabama and including hands-on experience as part of architectural pedagogy. Together, Mockbee and Ruth sought funding to begin the program, and a major grant from the Alabama Power Foundation in 1993 helped launch it.

Mockbee and Ruth continued to codirect the program until Mockbee's death in late 2001, a tragic loss for the profession as a whole and a particular blow to the Rural Studio, since Mockbee has played a pivotal role in its unique character and in the national recognition of its achievements. As an architect who had already established a strong design reputation through private practice, he was well known by other architects, and his leadership of the Rural Studio has been an important factor in the current heightened visibility of university-community design partnerships. His leadership of the Rural Studio has attracted both awards and media attention, and this exposure has contributed to the program's ability to publicize its activities and raise funds to support ongoing projects.

p. 83 (right) and p. 84:
Community Center,
Mason's Bend, Alabama,
2000
On a central site in
Mason's Bend, thesis
students built a
community center that
includes a transportation
stop for county-funded
mobile projects such as a
bookmobile and a
traveling health center, an
outdoor area for
community gatherings,
and a small chapel for the
local prayer group. The
glass wall of the chapel is
built from recycled
automobile windshields.

p. 83 (right):
Glass exterior wall, detail

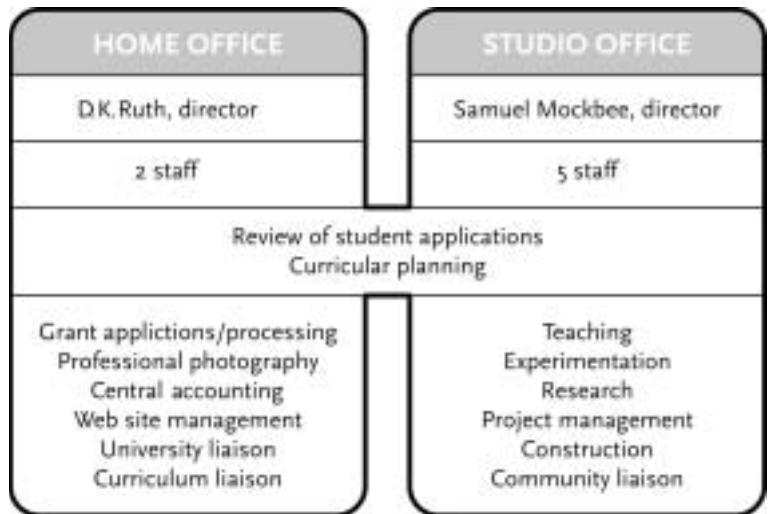
Below:
Entry and chapel



Philosophy and Working Methods

The practice of design for the Rural Studio represents first and foremost an opportunity to become actively involved in the life of its community. Faculty members advocate the development of an architectural theory based on real community issues—a theory of community-based architectural production that understands the community as a laboratory for innovation. Students live in the community, become members of the community, and design and building projects from within the community.

The Rural Studio is founded on the basis of two primary educational goals: to offer students an opportunity to make contact with real clients and communities, outside the comfortable boundaries of the school; and to inspire in students a sense of civic responsibility. In practice, these goals are realized in the experience of completing real projects for real communities. Students who complete the studio expand their understanding of design by actually building their own designs. Simultaneously, by taking students out of the university environment and placing them in a challenged region such as Hale County, the studio encourages development of students' social conscience.



Rural Studio
organizational structure
through 2001

For operational efficiency, the Rural Studio is divided into two separate offices: the studio itself, located in Newbern, Alabama, three hours drive from Auburn, and an administrative office, which is located on the university campus in the School of Architecture. This arrangement allows the studio and its participants to operate in complete physical isolation from the school, an important factor in encouraging students to become active members of the community. At the same time, the administrative office provides continuous coordination with university curricula and operations, while also acting as a liaison with outside organizations and funders.

The Rural Studio has established an impressive record for completing projects that attain the highest quality of design excellence under extremely challenging financial constraints, and this success can be attributed to four factors.

- **Staff talent.** The program was established by individuals with a committed ethic of high quality design, and this ethic has been maintained as staff and faculty numbers have grown.
- **Faith in student creativity.** Students at the Rural Studio are given the latitude to explore their own ideas creatively, and faculty repeatedly communicate their firm confidence in students' ability to be creative and achieve design excellence.
- **Commitment to continuity.** Design quality is maintained, in part, by the very process of continuing to build. Each new building sets the bar of design achievement higher for subsequent projects.
- **Community recognition.** Initial suspicion of the "strange" appearance of Rural Studio projects has given way to popular demand for and pride in their unique character and high design standards.

Over time, these factors continually enhance the quality of the Rural Studio's work by refining a process that successfully embeds the value of high quality design and construction in the ongoing relationship between the studio and its community.

Corrugated Cardboard Pod, Newbern, Alabama, 1998-99
Students experimented with bales of waste wax-impregnated corrugated clippings in construction applications. The Pod is one of several designed and built by students as housing for participants in the Rural Studio.

Harris House, Sawyerville, Alabama, 1996-97
This house was designed and built by students for a local family through coordination with the Hale County Department of Human Resources.
Detail on p. 83 (left)





Curriculum/Pedagogy

The Rural Studio offers two opportunities for students to participate in the program, both of which are voluntary: a second-year studio and a thesis studio. Students are selected for both opportunities through an application process that emphasizes the relevance of the experience for students' overall curricular objectives.

The second-year studio is an annual sequence of two semester-long studios for second-year students. Each annual sequence completes the design and construction of a single-family house in Hale County, with the fall semester emphasizing schematic design and design development, and the spring semester emphasizing construction documents and construction. Construction is often completed over the summer.

The thesis studio makes it possible for students to complete their fifth-year thesis project as a design/build project through the program. Thesis students typically work in teams of three or four, completing the entire process of design and construction in fulfillment of their thesis requirements.

The Rural Studio has also recently added a third studio, called the Outreach Studio, which is conducted during the summer recess with funding from the Jessie Ball Dupont Fund. The Outreach Studio brings together students from a range of academic and creative disciplines to work together on community-based projects in Hale County. Faculty are currently exploring the possibility of expanding the Outreach Studio into a one-year program for advanced visiting students.

One of the most innovative pedagogical aspects of the Rural Studio approach is the willingness to share projects across multiple studios, as demonstrated in the second-year studio. This allows Rural Studio projects to attain a scale and complexity otherwise impractical for the timeframe of a single academic semester. Furthermore, the Rural Studio approach establishes a precedent for complementary studio sequences that extends to other areas of the curriculum.

Newbern Amphitheater,
Newbern, Alabama,
2000–02

The Newbern Amphitheater consists of an open-air theater for lectures, films, and gatherings of the Rural Studio and Outreach Studio. It is also used by the residents of Hale County as a location for secondary community education and community events. The project is part of the Auburn University Outreach Studio, a cross-disciplinary program that brings students from across the nation to study and plan programs for a rural community.

Students working on construction of the amphitheater canopy

Opening night



Akron Boys and Girls Club, Akron, Alabama, 2000-01

For the Akron Boys and Girls Club, three Rural Studio thesis students made use of the brick shell of an existing 100-year-old building, which once served Akron and surrounding communities as a public market, to create a new facility that provides a meeting place for youth groups in the town. Akron has a total population of 528, and the building is located on one of the town's busiest corners, with the fire station and city hall directly across the street. With the local K-6 elementary school just blocks away and residential areas on all sides, the Boys and Girls Club is an ideal location for community and youth to meet.

The town uses the facility for community meetings and events, and the Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization (H.E.R.O.), with which the Rural Studio frequently collaborates on its public and residential projects, offers educational programming at the club.





1

Rear elevation

2

End view, showing new stair addition

3

Front elevation

4

Children's art workshop conducted at the Boys and Girls Club by H.E.R.O.



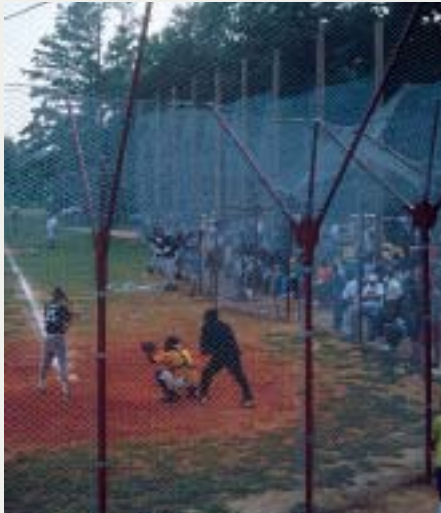
At a broad social and political level, the Rural Studio also offers Auburn University students a basic education in the realities of rural poverty. As architects, alumni will ultimately bear a professional responsibility to uphold the public interest in the work that they do, and their early personal experience of the strategies and benefits of direct community service and design for the common good represent a direct contribution to their professional educations.

Community Engagement

Though an active part of the Auburn University School of Architecture curriculum, the Rural Studio aims to be just as much a part of the local community with which it collaborates on projects. As faculty insist, the design and construction services provided by the studio are not imported to the community from afar but emerge from within the community itself. Faculty and students measure the success of their community outreach by the degree to which they are considered active participating members of the communities in which they work.

The studio is located in remote Hale County, Alabama, the center of what is called, due to its rich agricultural soil, the “Black Belt” region of west Alabama. According to the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) 1997 Alabama County Data Book, roughly one-third of the region’s residents live below the poverty level, with a per capita income of \$12,292—only 59 percent of the median U.S. per capita income. The unemployment rate (13 percent), is more than double the average for the state of Alabama. Over 60 percent of the population is nonwhite.

In this context, the Rural Studio initiates its projects through carefully established partnerships with local nonprofit organizations and state assistance agencies, in order to ensure that projects meet the needs of the local community. Rural Studio staff emphasize that they do not define project parameters but rather allow the community and its advocates to determine needs and identify potential sites and projects.



Newbern Baseball Club Renovation and Rejuvenation Project, Newbern, Alabama, 2001

Three fifth-year Rural Studio architecture students planned, designed, and constructed the rejuvenation of Newbern's community baseball field, located on a small piece of farmland that has been the site of regional games for the last 100 years. Students worked closely with the local community in the effort to upgrade and

redesign the field to reflect the town's deep love of baseball. In 2001, Newbern Baseball Club had its best year ever, with an average attendance of 500+ per game, and the Rural Studio has been asked to construct a Little League Field in 2002-03 as a direct result of the project.

In the case of the houses designed and built by the second-year students, referred to by the staff as “charity” houses, the Rural Studio has forged a partnership with the Department of Human Resources (DOHR) in Hale County, which provides the majority of state-sponsored health and human services in the county. DOHR case workers annually compile a list of three or four families who are in need of housing or require improvements to their existing housing and who are interested in participating in the program. Rural Studio students then interview each of the families as prospective clients and select the family with whom they feel most comfortable working. The selected family is understood by students and faculty alike as the client for the project, and family members remain involved throughout the design and construction of the new house. The total cost of these projects is typically \$20–25,000, most of which is allocated to “bricks and mortar” materials costs, with a small fraction occasionally used for technical consultants and tools.

The selection process for thesis projects is more diverse, and projects completed by thesis students have been initiated through an array of avenues, including personal student or faculty contact with client organizations, unsolicited requests from prospective client organizations, and preexisting relationships developed through prior Rural Studio projects. Budgets for these projects vary based on scale and can offer savings to clients of up to 85 percent on design and construction costs.

Individual funding for each Rural Studio project depends on the financial position of its client. Houses completed through DOHR receive partial materials funding through that agency, with supplemental funding from grants and donations; some “charity” houses are funded entirely by outside sources solicited by the Rural Studio. For other projects, particularly those in the thesis studio, materials and land acquisition are financed by the individual client, with students providing in-kind design and construction services.

Sources of Support

The current annual budget for all Rural Studio programs is approximately \$450,000, split evenly between project-related expenses and overhead/salary expenses. Of the total budget, 20 percent is covered by the Auburn University General Fund, and the Auburn University Outreach Provost provides an additional 10 percent. The remaining 70 percent is provided by external grants.

In spite of a strong record of private foundation support, the relatively even balance between operating expenses and project costs continues to prove a difficult challenge for the Rural Studio as it seeks funding from donors. Although foundations and other funders have been extremely supportive of the work of the studio, their guidelines often require dedicated support for specific projects, primarily for the legibility of impact such project support allows. For the Rural Studio, half of whose budget is consumed by operating expenses, this preference for project-based support has been a significant barrier to the maintenance and expansion of existing programs.

University financial support for the Rural Studio is complemented by an institutional atmosphere that is extremely supportive of outreach activities. As a land grant university, Auburn University has a long-standing tradition of integrating research, teaching, and outreach in the service of neighboring communities. The university has been at the forefront of national attempts to integrate faculty outreach activities into tenure and promotion considerations, and a recent report commissioned by the associate provost for outreach provides a clear framework for assessment of faculty participation in outreach scholarship.

Future Development

Before his death, Mockbee expressed strong interest in replicating the work of the Rural Studio in other contexts nationally and internationally. So far, these ambitions have been realized only through the “inreach” component of the Outreach Studio, which brings students from diverse backgrounds to Hale County for work with the local community. Arguably, the Rural Studio’s model of deeply engaged community practice suggests that any replication should emerge from partnerships between established practitioners and their local communities.

Studio 804

Location	University of Kansas Department of Architecture, Lawrence, KS
Program type	Design/Build Studio (semi-independent)
Lead staff	Dan Rockhill (director)
Total staff	1
Date founded	1995
Annual activity	
Budget	\$80,000
# of projects	1
# of students	12–16



Summary

Studio 804, Inc. is a university-based design/build studio and independent nonprofit organization through which final-year master of architecture students at the University of Kansas collaborate with Tenants to Homeowners, a local organization dedicated to providing affordable housing to low- and moderate-income residents. Students annually design and build one single-family house, and the house is sold to a qualifying resident in cooperation with local lending agencies.

Mission

The mission of Studio 804 is to design and build innovative architecture that serves to educate both the student and the community. Each project is conceived with two parallel goals: to allow students to experience all aspects of the architectural profession, from schematic design to construction, and to allow the community to witness experimental, nontraditional design and materials implemented in residential housing.



1



2



3



4



5

1603 Random Road House,
Lawrence, Kansas, 2001

1
Front elevation, detail on
p. 97 (left)

2
Illuminated utilities core

3
Entry detail

4
Rear entry

5
Cantilevered rear porch

History and Leadership

Studio 804 completed its first design/build project, a roof for the local Barber School, in 1995, and subsequent early projects included an artist's studio and a permanent weatherproof canopy over a courtyard at the School of Architecture. Since 1998, through the aspirations of students in the studio and under the leadership of Professor Dan Rockhill, the studio has expanded the scale and ambition of its projects to the current focus on affordable single-family houses.

Rockhill is an architect with a well-known design practice whose work has been recognized at the national level, including prestigious awards and project profiles in the national design press. His practice includes both historic preservation projects and highly experimental new construction, much of which incorporates custom components that he and his staff fabricate in their workshop for installation in their projects. He therefore brings to the leadership of Studio 804 a unique blend of contextual sensitivity, design talent, and hands-on construction expertise, and it is evident from the comments of students and other faculty that the strength of his leadership is one of the most significant factors in the program's ongoing success.

Philosophy and Working Methods

Studio 804 is an independent nonprofit organization with its own board of directors, budget, and commercial liability insurance. Each year, the studio undertakes the design and construction of a 1,300 square foot house that is fully accessible in accordance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards.

Design and construction of Studio 804 houses are coordinated through Tenants to Homeowners, which acts as the client for each project. Tenants to Homeowners (TtH) is a nonprofit community housing development organization that provides services to first-time homebuyers

in Lawrence. Its mission is to facilitate the sale of affordable renovated, rehabilitated, and new housing to low- and moderate-income residents who do not qualify for traditional home loans and to facilitate the empowerment of tenants to become homeowners through education, consultation, home improvement, and creative financing. In cooperation with five local lending institutions, Tenants to Homeowners sponsors the Homeowners Out Of Tenants program (HOOT), which helps low-to-moderate income residents to become homeowners within the city. Houses completed by Studio 804 are part of this program. Since 1998, when the partnership with Tenants to Homeowners was established, Studio 804 has refined its mission to focus on progressive architectural design practices and sustainable building delivery for affordable housing programs.

Studio 804 projects typically begin with an intensive two-week design charette; after that, construction begins immediately on a site already identified in consultation with Tenants to Homeowners. Throughout the design and construction process, particular emphasis is given to the custom use of new and innovative materials in creative ways to reduce costs while enhancing overall design quality. Projects also make use of recycled and salvaged material when possible.

Studio 804 gives particular attention to documentation and publication of completed projects as part of its broad educational mission. After the completion of each house, students photograph the project prior to occupation and design a publication to describe and document the project. Costs of printing are covered by project profits, and the finished documents represent an important record of the design process and an exemplary approach to the dissemination of innovative work. Information is also posted on a web site to further publicize the studio and its work.

Completed projects have received numerous awards in national competitions, including Archeworks' David Award for Excellence in Design for People with Disabilities, the International Design Resource Awards, the Residential Architects Affordable Housing Competition, and the ACSA American Institute of Steel Construction Competition.

1144 Pennsylvania Avenue House, Lawrence, Kansas, 1999

1
Passive solar polycarbonate-glazed stair core

2
School program
Local schoolchildren participated in a conversation about Studio 804's design/build projects including this house.

3
Side elevation during construction

4
The mayor of Lawrence and family on back porch during open house



Community Engagement

Ownership of houses built by Studio 804 is transferred to Tenants to Homeowners upon completion, and TtH then screens potential residents on the basis of income qualifications and facilitates the transfer of the project to a low-to-moderate-income family. The family is not usually identified until after the project is completed, but demand for Studio 804 houses is consistently high, and final ownership must often be determined by a lottery among an number of qualified applicants. Over the past eight years, Studio 804 has worked in at least three different local neighborhoods.

Curriculum/Pedagogy

Studio 804 is the final design studio within the master of architecture program at the University of Kansas. The three-and-a-half-year program is designed for students who already have an undergraduate degree in a field other than architecture. During the final semester in Studio 804, students are given the opportunity to synthesize the previous three years of design education in a real building. Students get hands-on building experience while balancing the demands of the program with the needs of the historic neighborhoods where houses are built. The studio aims to simultaneously educate students in all aspects of the architectural process and the community in the value of using experimental and nontraditional design techniques and materials in residential housing.

Rockhill's design/build studio is offered in the spring semester and is preceded by a prerequisite course taught in the fall by Professor Kent Spreckelmeyer. Although the courses are taught separately, the fall course focuses on the codes, zoning, site, and environmental issues that will ultimately inform the design/build project in the spring semester. Students therefore enter Studio 804 technically prepared to realize a safe and innovative building in a 15-week semester.

Students are given responsibility for all aspects of the project,

including budget management, contractor relationships, client contact, and community presentations. Rockhill acknowledges the challenges associated with structuring a disciplined process that allows students to be self-taught while still guaranteeing a high quality final product, but he emphasizes that it is precisely the freedom offered to students that ultimately results in the success of completed projects.

Evaluation of project success is based on whether houses are finished on time and come in under budget and with no injuries.

Sources of Support

Studio 804 contracts with Tenants to Homeowners to build each house with a total construction budget of between \$70,000 and \$80,000. The students' labor is free, and Rockhill's salary is covered by the university separately, so the majority of the budget is dedicated to materials, tools, and construction costs, including construction subcontractors when necessary. A third or more of the total budget typically comes from materials and services donated by local businesses and major building product manufacturers. Without these leveraged gifts, the projects would not be financially possible.

The house completed in 1998 provides a typical example of a Studio 804 project budget. The studio budgeted the cost of the house at \$62,000 to cover the costs of materials, contracts, and tools required for construction. Actual material costs were \$54,800 (\$41.00/sf) and tools and other costs totaled \$6,400, for a total cost of \$61,200, just under the initial budget. The house sold for almost \$75,000 after Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contributions, netting the studio a profit of \$14,000, which was deposited in a fund for future projects.

The university has been consistently supportive of Studio 804, and the dean of the School of Architecture has repeatedly praised the dedication of the students and faculty involved in the project. The completion of the Studio 804 house has become an important part of the culture of the school, and the ribbon-cutting ceremony is integrated with the





216 Alabama Avenue House, Lawrence, Kansas, 2000

1
Main bathroom
The main bathroom and half-bath utility room are paneled with extruded polycarbonate to allow natural light to penetrate the entire volume while still affording privacy.

2
Foundation under construction

3
Main living area and kitchen

4
Rear view, showing extension of entry platform to create rear deck

5
Entry canopy at night

For this house, Studio 804 took on the challenge of integrating unique architectural forms and the requirements of universal design guidelines with the usual budgetary constraints of their affordable housing projects. By using the driveway as a ramp to the entry porch, installing a sliding door to eliminate door swings, and recessing the front door's tracks within the finished floor, the studio was able to incorporate full wheelchair accessibility into a compelling residential design.

The house also makes use of extensive sustainable building practices and materials. It is built with recycled steel, and the students reused concrete formwork for the subflooring and framing materials. Sustainable materials used in the project include Plyboo flooring (a hardwood flooring replacement), recycled rubber flooring in the bath and utility spaces, and aluminum shingles cut from a local producer's waste.

Construction materials were donated by a wide range of local and national manufacturers and suppliers.

school's graduation ceremony as a confirmation of its importance in the overall curriculum.

Future Development

Rockhill would like his students to begin to work with prefabricated or manufactured building components in more urban, inner-city areas. Additionally, he would eventually like to be able to do multifamily mixed-use projects. He expressed interest in identifying project support for large-scale land purchases to allow students to work on larger, more public projects.

Yale Urban Design Workshop

Location	Yale University School of Architecture, New Haven, CT
Program type	University-based community design center
Lead staff	Michael Haverland (director), Alan Plattus (director)
Total staff	2
Date founded	1993
Annual activity	
Budget	\$50,000–\$250,000
# of projects	1–5
# of students	5–20



Summary

Yale Urban Design Workshop is a university-based community design center affiliated with the Yale University School of Architecture. The workshop offers planning and design services to New Haven neighborhoods and other Connecticut communities through a model of intense community-based participation. The UDW emphasizes planning and feasibility studies over design and construction in order to avoid competition with local design firms, but it has also completed built projects through extension and implementation of its planning recommendations.

Mission

Yale Urban Design Workshop provides a forum for faculty and students from the School of Architecture, as well as students and faculty from other professional schools at Yale, to study the issues, ideas, and practical problems of the contemporary urban landscape. The design process emphasizes intense community-based participation, and the community and interdisciplinary design team work as equals, sharing authority and expertise.

History and Leadership

Established in 1993, the UDW owes much of its current form to a design studio taught by Stanley Tigerman, now codirector of the Archeworks program also profiled in this book. Prior to that time, teams of Yale students and faculty had participated in design charettes in the region organized by other schools, but the School of Architecture's involvement in the New Haven community did not extend beyond the work of the Yale Building Project (see p. 116). The 1993 studio spawned the creation of New Haven Collaborative, a student-generated organization with representation from all of Yale's professional schools established to work collaboratively on real projects in New Haven. The collaborative formed the basis of the UDW's community involvement.

The UDW is staffed by two directors, each responsible for specific projects. Both are full-time faculty members at the Yale School of Architecture. Michael Haverland teaches 80 percent time in the design curriculum at the School of Architecture and, in addition to volunteer time, devotes the remaining 20 percent of his designated time, when fundable by UDW projects, to the UDW. He is a licensed architect. Alan Plattus is tenured, teaches full-time in the School of Architecture, and works on projects at the UDW as a volunteer. For large community charettes, the workshop engages a team of regular faculty members from the School of Architecture and from the Schools of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Law, and Management who volunteer their time not only to lead teams at the charettes but also during design development. For many projects, the workshop solicits assistance from local professionals with expertise not available at Yale and provides them a modest honorarium for their services.

The UDW has no advisory board and is governed by the dean of the School of Architecture. Advice is often sought from senior faculty members at the school, the school's advisory council members, and from regular meetings with New Haven's city planner and development director.



Dwight Elementary School, New Haven, Connecticut, 2000–01

The Yale Urban Design Workshop cites the addition to the Timothy Dwight Elementary School as the best-proven example of the merits of the participatory UDW design process. Students, teachers, and local residents were considered active members of the design team and were encouraged to contribute their expertise throughout the process. In keeping with the workshop's program philosophy, the expertise of community members of the design team was given equal weight in decision-making processes, and the school has been a tremendous success from the community's perspective.

The addition has also been widely recognized for its design excellence. Michael Haverland, who acted as project

designer, and the rest of the team were recognized by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture with its Collaborative Practice Award in 2000, supporting the unique nature of the design process and the high quality of the resulting building. Haverland also recently received an AIA New York Chapter Design Award and a design award from the Congress for the New Urbanism for the building. These recognitions for design merit have helped the UDW in advocating for the value of community-based participatory processes and challenge common perceptions that "design by committee" leads to the lowest common denominator of design quality.

p. 107: Planning session Teachers, students, designers, and members of the local community participated in these sessions.

above: Front elevation





Dwight Elementary School

- 1
Cornice detail
- 2
Entrance lobby
- 3
Multipurpose room
- 4
Side elevation
- 5
Brickwork detail

Philosophy and Working Methods

The UDW characterizes its commitment to community-based practice as an opportunity to expose students at the Yale School of Architecture to alternatives to conventional architectural practice. Recognizing that recent alumni of the Yale School of Architecture have tended to open small independent design offices serving primarily wealthy private clients, the UDW has attempted to resurrect an earlier spirit of cooperation and community design spearheaded under Charles Moore's leadership of the School of Architecture in the late 1960s.

The workshop considers all of its clients as equal collaborators. Clients are thought of as experts on how they live and work and would like to live and work in their communities, and UDW staff are thought of as experts in best practices and design skills. Client collaboration is identified as the key to success.

The UDW provides planning and design services to towns and cities in Connecticut and neighborhoods in New Haven, consciously limiting its work to Connecticut in response to Yale's status as the only school of architecture in the state. In order to avoid the potential for unproductive competition with local professionals, the UDW does not provide services that local architects are in a position to provide. Examples of noncompetitive services include engagement in time-intensive community processes that are not yet economically viable in the private sector and *pro bono* projects that are too small for consideration by local design practices. For similar reasons, the UDW does not typically engage in construction projects, limiting its services to planning, feasibility studies and schematic design, and assistance in hiring local architects. The Dwight Elementary School illustrated on these pages is an exception to this rule.

The UDW has made a commitment to achieving design at the highest level, even under conditions of constrained budgets and disadvantaged contexts, proposing that it is in these conditions that the maximum creativity and sensitivity is required. The UDW ensures design quality by operating under the same standards and scrutiny as the Yale School of

Architecture. Codirectors Haverland and Plattus both teach design studios at the school, which encourages discourse and debate between the on-the-ground projects and the theoretical pursuits explored in studios. Challenges to design quality primarily derive from limited time available for students and faculty to collaborate.

The workshop measures its own success by the direct effects that the planning and design projects eventually have on the physical landscape. This may take time, and can involve actual projects at the smallest scale, but plans that end up “on the shelf” are considered of no use. Plans are also considered successful if they can be used to generate grants, strengthen planning departments, and organize citizen groups.

Curriculum/Pedagogy

Graduate students from the School of Architecture typically work at the UDW during the academic year 5-to-10 hours per week as paid fellows. The number of fellows ranges from 3 to 15 during the year. During the summer, from 5 to 30 fellows work full-time on stipend, some supplemented by other university fellowships that specifically support community work. Project teams typically include one of the directors, one or two advanced students who have worked on a project at the UDW before, and a team of first- or second-year graduate students. UDW also invites undergraduate students from Yale College to participate. For community charettes, students frequently participate as volunteers for the weekend and occasionally then join the team to develop a final report. Because some projects last up to two years, student membership tends to rotate on an informal basis, with one of the two directors acting as the permanent staff on any project.

The directors’ parallel leadership of design studios and seminars at the School of Architecture helps to maintain a high level of discourse about workshop projects and helps relate UDW work to theoretical pursuits in the studios.

Community Engagement

Liaisons to the community are established for the UDW by presence on the ground, active engagement with residents, and commitment demonstrated by delivering products communities need. Historically, relationships between Yale and its economically disadvantaged neighboring communities have been tense, but the workshop has built trust with citizens, particularly in New Haven, over time through the incremental process of working together and by being both patient and responsive.

Community members are educated about design through community charettes where residents participate in the design process, and public exhibitions organized by the UDW. Haverland has also been involved with pilot programs for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, establishing guidelines for renovation in low-income neighborhoods.

Potential clients come to the UDW through referral, as the UDW does not market its services. In New Haven, requests from the city or from Yale on behalf of a community organization are common, and the UDW attempts to service all such requests when possible. For projects outside of New Haven, potential clients are asked to submit a project description, and the current team of UDW fellows and directors meets to establish which projects best suit the interests of students and the pedagogical mission of the UDW. Each year the UDW takes on one large planning project with a community-based charrette and several smaller feasibility studies or small-scale design projects.

Sources of Support

The workshop's annual operating budget has ranged from \$30,000 in 1995 to \$250,000 in 1997, and the UDW is financially autonomous from the School of Architecture. Yale University covers space costs and utilities, by providing office space and partial faculty time, and has recently allowed use of computer facilities at the school. Remaining salaries,

equipment, supplies, marketing, and other costs are borne by the UDW, whose cash income derives from project-related fees or grants.

Planning services provided to communities in Connecticut are supported by at-cost design fees, which cover student time, honoraria, supplies, and a small contribution to overhead. Funds raised by communities to cover these costs typically come from designated civic funds, donations, or small grants from banks and community development funds.

The UDW's New Haven work has either served local nonprofit developers or has been in cooperation with Yale University. Work for local developers is fee-based, covered mostly by technical assistance grants to the nonprofit developer. Work in New Haven neighborhoods has been supported by grants obtained in partnership with Yale University, including grants from the Fannie Mae Foundation and HUD.

The UDW has also worked directly for Yale University to assist in coordinating university planning projects with local community interests, for which the workshop has been able to obtain professional fees at market rate, paid in cash and in kind. In-kind payment has included additional office space, and cash fees contributed to the purchase of computers and equipment and supported *pro bono* work in New Haven.

The workshop directors are investigating the possibility of an endowment to address long-term financial sustainability.

Exhibition of design and planning process for Dwight Elementary School





Yale Building Project

The Yale Urban Design Workshop continues a tradition of community engagement initiated in 1967 with the founding of the renowned Yale Building Project, directed by Professor Paul Brouard, one of the oldest continuously operating university-based community design programs in the country. The Yale Building Project's programs have been a required component of graduate education in architecture at Yale for its entire history, and it offers students an opportunity to design and build a building as part of their graduate education. Indeed, some incoming students acknowledge having selected Yale specifically for the opportunity to participate in the Yale Building Project.

Over the course of its history, the Yale Building Project has adapted repeatedly to changes in funding and

partnership opportunities, and it currently partners with a local nonprofit organization to annually design and build one house in a New Haven neighborhood. The Yale Building Project is structured as a curricular subcomponent of the master of architecture degree program at the School of Architecture and as such provides all first-year students a service-oriented design/build experience by providing innovative, low-cost housing in distressed neighborhoods within New Haven.

The Yale Building Project has published a useful resource manual for the formation of similar programs at other universities. *The Yale Building Project: A Resource Manual* is a step-by-step guide to the detailed logistics of starting and running a university-based design/build studio.



2001 House, New Haven,
Connecticut

1
Stairway under
construction

2
Front elevation

Future Development

Currently, much of the UDW's efforts are targeted at revisiting communities in which the workshop has provided community-based plans since its inception. Many of these neighborhoods have been able to use plans developed with the UDW to organize and raise funds, and now they need design assistance to link the plan to architecture or advisors to guide the ongoing design process.

During the first five years, an emphasis on relationship-building drove involvement in a considerable number of towns and New Haven neighborhoods. Having now established its identity firmly among surrounding communities, the workshop plans to focus its efforts strategically on one large planning project each year, complemented by two or three smaller feasibility studies or design projects.

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Image Credits

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