A NEW HOME IN ROME

The Rome Program has been the centerpiece of the School of Architecture’s curriculum for more than four decades, creating an aspirational legacy for generations of students who spend their third-year immersed in the Eternal City’s awe-inspiring grandeur. A new University building on Via Ostilia, behind the Colosseum, presents an opportunity to expand and deepen the Rome Program’s international focus on traditional and classical architecture and urban design. The new space, estimated to open in the 2014-15 academic year, offers six times more space than the School’s current home, allowing the program to host more international conferences, more visiting scholars, and foster stronger connections with the University at large. The College of Arts and Letters also will have a presence in Rome, and the School envisions future partnerships with other University departments. Renovations of the former office building will allow the School to build lecture halls, library space, classrooms, and apartments for visiting faculty. After the move, the School will house students in apartments near the new facility in the popular 19th-century neighborhood, allowing them to experience the city closer to how Romans do.
We were trying to fundraise for a school in an underserved area of Uganda, Africa. BT is an international social-profit organization that encourages youth philanthropy to build educational infrastructure projects for under-served children in sub-Saharan Africa. BT currently works in Uganda, identifying areas with the greatest number of children who have the least access to a primary school.

Notre Dame’s involvement began last year when student Elijah Pearce ’09, attended a talk by BT president, George Srour, and decided to recruit fellow students to join their efforts. Over the next year Pearce, with the generous funding of Matthew and Joyce Walsh, brought together a group of six Notre Dame Architecture students to build the new school.

“With this project we were acting on two fronts,” Pearce said. “People tend to associate Americans with the future,” he says, “but we also noticed that San Gregorio did not have a lot of public spaces. So we created a sequence of places to make it even more beautiful and lively than it was before. We needed course credits. But we felt obligated through our conscience.”

The students’ designs take advantage of cross breezes to cool the building naturally. It is also oriented for optimal solar heat gain. Students redesigned piazzas to make them more inviting and added a campadile tower to designs for the new church, paying attention to time-proven techniques for making it earthquake-proof. In recent years, San Gregorio had become little more than a bedroom community for nearby L’Aquila, so the class included a primary school and a bretelle, an arcade combining a market and city hall, to restore the community spirit.

“We experienced a real sense of service in this project,” says Nicole Bernal-Cinemej ’10. “I felt I could give back to the world as a student of traditional architecture helping to rebuild an Italian town with integrity, even in a crisis like this. You need to build things that will endure.”

Young plans to return to San Gregorio to present the students’ designs to people throughout the L’Aquila region. The drawings envisioning a new San Gregorio will be displayed publicly, and Young hopes to find funding to publish a book. "I think we can help influence the discussion about how to rebuild," he says, noting that student designs from an earlier Notre Dame class are now under construction in Brandevoort, Netherlands.

In Italy, reconstruction after earthquakes is usually done as quickly and cheaply as possible in a generic modern style that disappoints survivors who are proud of their historic community. Young believes the students can spark a break-through in thinking about reconstruction because they are less bound by professional conventions.

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This article by Jay Walljasper (jaywalljasper.com), editor of OnTheCommons.org and Senior Fellow at Project for Public Spaces, originally appeared in the summer 2010 issue of Notre Dame Magazine.
IN ITALY’S RUINED ABRUZZO, ARCHITECTS ENVISION A TRADITIONAL FUTURE

The earthquakes that recently ravaged Haiti, Chile, and China also dominated the media with Richter-scale force. For a few days, it’s nonstop coverage as survivors are dragged from the rubble and families share their grief with the world. But as action shifts from the disaster itself to waiting to happen, it’s a real shock, say Brian Drost ’10. “You’d sit down to lunch with someone in the makeshift dining hall and realize that their house was over there in a pile.”

As the class toured the ruins of San Gregorio, shooting pictures, making sketches and taking notes, fire marshals urged them to keep moving in case another building collapsed. “There were some places we could not go at all,” Drost says. “You could see laundry hanging on clothes lines. It had been there since the quake.”

Younès—who developed close ties with local officials across Italy as director of Notre Dame’s Rome program from 1999 to 2008—visited San Gregorio in June 2009 to make arrangements for his students to study the damage and draft plans for reconstruction.

“We were completely levelled and others nearby were not damaged at all. I wanted to show my students why that was,” he says, noting that the Notre Dame Architecture School emphasizes traditional architectural styles and building methods to ensure that structures last a long time.

“‘That’s the heart of ecological, sustainable architecture—to build sound buildings and cities that endure.’”

During seven days in Italy the class visited several communities, Younès zeroed in on San Gregorio for the semester-long design project. “The town was a disaster waiting to happen,” he says, noting that after a severe quake in 1703 workers from Rome were hired to reconstruct it. “As Rome they always used mud from the Tiber River for mortar between the stones, which works well because it’s rich in clay. But the mud in Abruzzo is different. As it dried, it turned to sand. Which worked fine to hold the buildings up, but not in an earthquake.”

Returning to Bond Hall last August, the students—all in their fifth year—began work on plans for rebuilding San Gregorio. They spent the first half of the semester collectively drafting a master plan to rebuild the town, incorporating buildings they deemed salvageable along with new

Durability was central to the practice of architecture for millennia; it went without saying that a building should be made to last as long as possible, with materials and construction techniques chosen toward that end. Ephemeral, short term construction has become the norm today, but the increasing importance of sustainability has made permanent an essential of great quality. The colloquium will call on architects and academics to discuss the importance of enduring architecture, and the principles at stake, to review traditional methods from which practitioners may yet learn, and to present new techniques and materials that may yield durability.

2010 DRIEHUAUS AWARDS CEREMONY

The 2010 Richard H. Driehaus Prize and Henry Hope Reed Award were presented to Spanish architect Rafael Manzano Martos and Yale professor and preservationist Vincent Scully, respectively, at a ceremony Saturday, March 27 at the historic John B. Murphy Auditorium, Chicago.

Mr. Manzano is a Spanish architect known for his distinctive use of the Mudéjar style, a style blending Muslim and Christian influences. With this expertise and a command of the Western and Islamic vernaculars, Mr. Manzano designed hotels and other commercial buildings, along with homes and residential complexes throughout Spain and the Middle East. His best-known work includes state homes for Chueca Gutiérrez in Seville and Casa Romero in Marbella (now a Julio Iglesias property).

Accepting the award, Mr. Manzano said through an interpreter: “This prize honors an architecture that is eternally faithful to Classicism, a universal language that has remained valid for the last 25 centuries and handed down its colossal architecture and urbanistic heritage to the Western world. . . . you surprise me at this advanced stage of my life praising my work and its Classical roots and rewarding it so generously.”

Robert A.M. Stern, dean of the Yale School of Architecture, accepted the Henry Hope Reed Award on behalf of Vincent Scully, who could not attend. Dean Stern read remarks from Professor Scully: “I am deeply grateful for this award, and I sincerely regret not being able to be there to receive it in person. I am especially moved by the fact that it is given in the name of Henry Hope Reed, with whom, as an unbeatable young modernist, I used to disagree about everything some 50 years ago. But it is I who has changed more than he . . . the horrors of the urban renewal of the 1960s made me realize how destructive of the city modernist planning and practice was and so set me on a course at least analogous to his own.”

CHINA STUDY

Continuing the School’s relationship with the University of Nanjing, a dozen students spent 14 days studying architecture in the People’s Republic of China. The group was guided by Nanjing School of Architecture professor Zhao Chen who gave lectures on Chinese Wooden Tectonic Culture, Chinese Habitat Culture, and Chinese Architecture in Modern Period. With stays in Nanjing, Pingyao, and Beijing, the students had a chance to visit different regions and diverse sites from the largest oldest Temple of Confucius, established in 478 B.C. in Shandong Province, to the “Bird’s Nest,” the Beijing National Stadium designed by the firm Herzog de Meuron for the 2008 Summer Olympics. Plans are in the to continue the bi-annual summer program in 2012.
COMMON BOND

The School has developed a quarterly electronic newsletter with contributions from selected students, faculty, and alumni, in addition to the communications staff. More than just the news of the School of Architecture, it is hoped that "Common Bond" evolves as a vehicle to take the vibrant atmosphere of the School onto the Web. The newsletter is emailed from both the Notre Dame Alumni Association and the School of Architecture to ensure as many alumni as possible receive the news—the second Friday of the months of March, June, September, and December. If you have not received this mailing, and would like to do so, please update your email address with both the Notre Dame Alumni Association (irishonline.nd.edu) and with the School of Architecture by contacting Director of Communications Kara Kelly (kelly.166@nd.edu).

FROM THE 2009-2010 LECTURE SERIES

WHY ARCHITECTURE MATTERS

Paul Goldberger, Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic, lectured on "Why Architecture Matters," elaborating on the ideas in his new book of the same title. In addition to his many book projects, Mr. Goldberger lectures widely around the country. He appears frequently on film and television to discuss these issues, and is now at work on a program about the architect Benjamin Latrobe for PBS.

In his lecture, Mr. Goldberger argued that, like art, architecture functions to make life qualitatively better while speaking volumes about our culture's values. While it is no easy task for historians, critics, and citizens to articulate why, exactly, "architecture matters," the effort is crucial to understanding "why we love the way we do and what aspirations we revel from what we build." He warned against trying to enforce clear lines between "serious" architecture and "ordinary" buildings—they both speak volumes. "Both masterpieces and vernacular architecture shape our environment," he asserted, "and if we ignore one or the other, we ignore them at our peril."

INTERPRETATION AND PRESERVATION


Mr. Lambiriou, both an architect and archeologist, spoke about the ongoing excavation and restoration efforts at the Parthenon, emphasizing techniques for strengthening damaged parts of the building and rescanning recovered fragments. She also spoke of her most recent work on the Parthenon's north colonnade, and plans for interventions on the west wall of the cella from Latin for small chamber). "The Parthenon," she explained "was a building of complex use and symbolism, much of which is still the subject of scholarly debate: Was it a political statement, a temple, a treasury or perhaps all three?" As the debate goes on, reconstruction choices must be informed by this complexity.

ALUMNI TRAVEL TO ROME

The School of Architecture, in conjunction with The Victorian Society in America Summer Schools, will host a two-week course in the study of late 19th- and 20th-century Roman architecture, June 3 – 17, 2011. The first week, directed by Prof. Steven Semes, academic director of the Rome Studies Program, focuses on Roman architecture from 1870-1930. The second week, led by Antonio Saggio, a Rome-based architect and an expert on early 20th-century Italian architecture, focuses on Roman architecture from 1920-1950. The program is open to alumni and friends of the School, and participants may choose to attend week one only, week-two only, or both weeks. Through lectures, site visits, and tours of important buildings, participants will acquire a deeper understanding of the aesthetic, social, economic, and political forces that shaped our modern age. The School is pleased to partner with the Victorian Society whose summer schools were established nearly 40 years ago under legendary architectural historian Sir Nikolaos Pevsner and enlists the patronage of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Gloucester. Please see the September 10 issue of "Common Bond" for more information.

3D DOCUMENTATION OF THE ROMAN FORUM

In July, a team of School of Architecture faculty and students traveled to the Roman Forum—the center of political, religious, commercial, and judicial life in ancient Rome—to measure, document, and draw large areas of the historic site. The team used conventional and innovative methods, including a Leica 3-D Laser scanner, for measuring and understanding this World Heritage Site.

With permissions and interest generated by the Superintendente Architetto Roma, Ministry of Heritage and Culture and the Archaeological Service, the objective of this project was to accurately measure and draw the monuments and ruins at the Roman Forum. The students produced 27 scans, 30 panoramic views, scaled detailed images, in addition to hand-measured data. The information collected will be utilized by the Digital Historical Architectural Research and Material Analysis or D.H.A.R.M.A, a research team founded in 2007 at the School, in the course taught by Professor Krugali Uplekar Krasuce titled "Documentation of World Heritage."

The goal of the project is to merge all the data collected from the site to create watercolor renderings of the exact position and measurements of the ruins at the Forum—the centralised area around which ancient Roman civilization developed. In fall 2010, the World Heritage course will produce a large-scale color map of the site with sectional renderings that will illustrate the change in levels and placement of buildings of different time periods. The class will also pay attention to detail with hand-drawn frieze designs as part of the finish work.

The student researchers, under the direction of Professor Krasuce, also collaborated with James E. Packer, professor of Classics at Northwestern University and author of The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments in Brief, and visiting Professor Gil Gorski, an expert using FormZ software, which combines 3-D modeling and Photoshop, to beautifully and extensively illustrate the site. By determining the precise ancient appearance of the excavated buildings, these reconstructions will establish, as much as possible, the essential architectural blueprints for further study of the site.