



# AA Design & Make

AA Graduate Diploma (Design & Make) /  
MArch Master in Architecture (Design & Make)\*

AA Design & Make is a new full-time 16-month graduate design programme, located at the AA's Hooke Park woodland site in Dorset, southwest England. Starting in Autumn 2010, AA D&M is open to graduate students of architecture who wish to pursue studio- and workshop-based design and realisation of alternative rural architectures. On a yearly cycle, the programme will design and construct experimental buildings at Hooke Park, in the process creating new rural AA school facilities as a demonstrator of ecologically sustainable design.

The course is based on the philosophy that architects today learn best by imagining, developing and realising full-scale prototype structures through which ideas can be tested, documented and communicated. Through actual engagement in all the stages of making and building,

students have a unique opportunity to develop a rich phenomenal understanding of architecture.

Similarly, through realising real-life sustainable solutions within the environmental context provided by Hooke Park, a deep individual appreciation of ecological issues can be gained. The course is uniquely placed to benefit from exposure to the AA's design culture, the workshops and working forestry of Hooke Park, Dorset's rich craft tradition, and the expertise of a body of consultants and advisors engaged at the leading edge of design thinking.

The AA is seeking applicants for the Autumn 2010 D&M intake. This booklet explains the context and structure of the course, the developments being made in establishing the infrastructure of D&M, and the application process.



Students working in the Hooke Park Workshop, designed by Frei Otto, Ahrends Burton & Koralek and Buro Happold.  
Photo Valerie Bennett



Students using the teaching and workspaces in the main workshop building at Hooke Park. Photo Valerie Bennett



The 2006 AA Summer Pavilion, designed and built by Intermediate Unit 2, being re-erected at Hooke Park in 2007. Photo Martin Self



The AA has a long history of testing ideas through prototype structures. 'Open House Project' by Coop Himmelb(l)au, November 1988. Photo H el ene Binet

As cultures are driven towards the abstraction of the post-industrial 'knowledge economy', their material consciousness risks becoming lost. Know-how accumulated through the concrete practices of craft and industry becomes threatened as we move towards a pure information society.

Design & Make takes the AA's tradition of experimentation through making, and places it in the real-world context provided by Hooke Park. D&M students, by pursuing a concept all the way to realisation, directly experience the material culture of architecture. Through the agency of actual construction, they inevitably respond to the physicality of building. The indeterminacy of making feeds back upon design in a loop that refines and enriches the architect's knowledge and intuition.

Architecture is facing unprecedented pressure to reinvent itself in response to a new set of economic and environmental realities. The responsibility to pre-empt the needs of future built environments demands new approaches to urban and rural architecture and the relationship between them.

D&M at Hooke Park presents a unique opportunity to explore these new rural architectures, realising them as prototypes for testing. The aim is that the student intake will produce, as a group, compelling local responses (in terms of both discourse and artefact) to the global challenges facing architecture.

### Course structure

The 16-month course consists of two phases. Phase 1 (Autumn and Spring Terms) is focused on seminar- and studio-based learning and the production of Planning and Construction Drawings for the subsequent built work. Seminar courses in the history and theory of design-build and sustainable practice are supplemented by short workshops in forestry management, wood craftsmanship and contemporary fabrication technologies. Field trips will be made to orientate students within the culture, crafts and industries of rural southwest England. The Core Studio provides an induction to relevant contemporary design practices with the aim of establishing a shared design philosophy and skill-set within the D&M cohort. Workshops and critiques held by visiting staff from the other AA Programmes will place D&M in the wider discourse of the AA, both theoretically and in terms of design approach.

Towards the end of Autumn Term, the programme briefs for the design-build project(s) will be defined and small student teams will formulate design strategies and concepts for their realisation. Through internal debate, external critique, and the client criteria of Hooke Park's stakeholders, we will identify the scheme(s) that D&M will build. After Christmas break, D&M regroups into Project Studios, in which teams of students are responsible for design development of those scheme(s). Planning applications are made early in the new year, and a cycle of drawing, prototyping, design presentations and review brings us to the documentation phase through which construction drawings are complete by Easter.

Phase 2 starts after Easter break and continues to January of the following year, when the Design & Make Thesis is submitted. Vacation breaks are arranged to maximise the summer build period. Activities are now workshop- and site-based, with each student having roles in the fabrication and site processes and their management. With the unique situation of a forest, workshop and site all adjacent, students will be expected to test radical alternatives to the conventional processes of building, and the intellectual development of this testing will be documented in the D&M Thesis. Tutorials through Phase 2 will guide the development of each student's individual thesis, which will form an argument concerning a theoretical aspect of design-build or sustainability practice, using the built project for illustration and testing. Critical feedback is given through Thesis Presentations in November, and by the middle of Autumn Term, built projects are completed. The Design & Make Thesis and Project Documentation are submitted in January.



Students in the Digital Prototyping Lab, Bedford Square.  
Photo Valerie Bennett



At work in the Hooke Park workshop. Photo Martin Self



Hooke Park in bluebell season. Photo Valerie Bennett

### Hooke Park – History

Hooke Park is a 350-acre working forest owned by the Architectural Association and located in the west Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Designated as Ancient Woodland, the forest is a mix of spruce, beech and other species planted mainly in the 1950s. An active forestry programme maintains the woodland, with the objectives of sustainable timber production and improved biodiversity. As D&M develops its construction programme, students will work with the forester to determine strategies for best using the forest as a source of building material.

The existing buildings at Hooke Park provide a unique precedent for such strategies. In the 1980s Hooke Park was developed as a college for teaching and researching new ways of using wood in furniture and construction. A small campus was built in the forest, following the ethic of using low-value timber from the surrounding forest as construction material. The result was three groundbreaking prototype buildings, by award-winning architects, that demonstrate the potential of round-wood construction. The refectory and workshop (both by Frei Otto with Ahrends, Burton & Koralek and Buro Happold) and a dormitory building (by Ted Cullinan with Buro Happold) form the AA's existing educational facilities at Hooke Park and provide a valuable research resource.

Hooke Park is about a three-hour journey from central London. It is visited throughout the year by staff and students of the school's undergraduate units and graduate programmes. These visits allow AA D&M students frequent contact and interaction with all parts of the school community, as well as providing an opportunity to become mentors and contributors to other AA work and projects.

Located a few miles from the south coast of England, and in farming land full of history, Hooke Park is well placed to learn from a community rich in the crafts of rural living. D&M will seek to learn from local craftspeople with traditional skills in woodworking, boat building and construction. The aim is for a reciprocal knowledge-sharing relationship with the local community.



Stressed-skin box-beam component of 'Driftwood', the 2009 AA Summer Pavilion. Photos Valerie Bennett

### Hooke Park – Future

The AA has developed a strategic plan for the growth of its academic activities at Hooke Park. Core to this is an expansion of the teaching facilities, adding to the three existing buildings, and developing the construction ethic that they embody. Through phased construction by the D&M programme, new workshops, teaching facilities, student and staff accommodation will be built.

A Planning Application seeking outline consent for the improved facilities at Hooke Park was submitted in Autumn 2009. The AA has been working for several years in consultation with West Dorset Council, the local community and professional advisors and consultants to establish a suitable and sustainable plan for the future of Hooke Park. The educational activity of D&M is a fundamental part of this plan; if approved it will provide the planning framework in which D&M projects will be carried out.

The development of Hooke Park will provide teaching and research facilities and a resource for the local community.

The timber construction research at Hooke Park will be resurrected through Design & Make. Central to D&M's ambitions is the marriage of a craft-informed approach with the new technologies of digital fabrication and engineered timber.

### Caretaker's House

Design-build projects have begun in 2009. The AA's Intermediate Unit 2 is designing and constructing a new Caretaker's House at Hooke Park, and living there in Terms 2 and 3. By the time that the D&M students arrive in Hooke Park in 2010, the house will be nearing completion.



Photo Valerie Bennett



'Driftwood Pavilion' at the opening of the 2009 AA Projects Review exhibition. Designed and fabricated at Hooke Park by Intermediate Unit 2. Photo Valerie Bennett



'A Separate Place', Hooke Park, 2007, designed and made by an AA student team led by Jesse Randzio



'Twisting Concrete' Maeda Workshop, led by Shin Egashira as part of the AA|FAB cluster, 2008-9. Photo Valerie Bennett



Lunch in the Hooke Park refectory. Photo Sue Barr

#### Facilities

The facilities at Hooke Park include a dedicated Design & Make studio space within the workshop building, computing facilities, a small library, and the large fully equipped wood-working workshop. During term-time, lunchtime meals are available in the refectory.

Participants in the course also have access to all the AA School facilities in London, which include the Library, Photo Library, Computer Room, Wood- and Metalworking Workshop, Model Shop, Digital Prototyping Lab, Audiovisual Department, Bar and Restaurant. Further details are available on the AA School website: [aaschool.ac.uk](http://aaschool.ac.uk) and [aalog.net](http://aalog.net).

The D&M students will make regular visits to the main AA School for key design presentations and other special events, and will have full access to the school's renowned public programme of lectures, symposia, exhibitions and special events that bring leading architects, scholars and others to the AA each year.

#### Accommodation

For the first (Autumn) term of the course, the AA will provide accommodation near to Hooke Park. For the 12 months following the Christmas break, students will be responsible for finding their own accommodation in the local area. The neighbouring area includes remote farming hamlets, larger villages and small towns including Beaminster and Bridport.

#### D&M Staff

**Design & Make Course Director, Martin Self** is an engineer and designer who has taught at the AA since 2004. He was a founder member of Arup's Advanced Geometry Group, studied architectural theory at the AA, and has provided structural engineering and form-finding consultancy within practices such as Zaha Hadid Architects and Antony Gormley Studio. He was design team member and resident engineer for the self-sufficient Druk White Lotus School in Himalayan Ladakh. As Unit Tutor for the AA Summer Pavilion programme, he has spent a lot of time at Hooke Park.

Workshop technician, **Charlie Corry-Wright**, has worked in forestry, furniture making and traditional timber framing. He studied Forest Manufacturing at Hooke Park in 1990, and has lived in the forest with his family since 1994, when he moved on site to help build Westminster Lodge. Since 2002 he has overseen all of the AA's workshop activity at Hooke Park.

During Spring 2010, further teaching appointments will be made. Additional visiting teaching staff will consist of designers and academics from the AA, the UK and other European institutions, practising UK architects, Dorset-based builders and craftspeople. We will be consulting with the engineering expertise of Buro Happold, based nearby in Bath, and there are opportunities to develop academic collaborations in timber engineering research.

#### Degree Validation

In view of the independent status of the AA, the administration and awards of the MA, MSc, MArch and Research Degrees in the Graduate School are undertaken in collaboration with the Open University. The Design & Make programme's syllabus will be submitted for accreditation to the OU during Spring 2010. Upon validation from the OU, students who complete and pass the D&M course will be awarded the Masters in Architecture degree.

#### Application procedure

An application form and full details of the application procedures and fees for all Graduate School programmes are available from the website: [aaschool.ac.uk/admissions](http://aaschool.ac.uk/admissions)

Applications to the course are being accepted for intake to the Design & Make programme in Autumn 2010.

Students beginning the course in Autumn 2010 will graduate in January 2012, with each subsequent year's intake in the autumn overlapping with the final four months of construction of the previous year's projects.

Entry requirement for the programme is a five-year professional architectural degree (BArch / Diploma equivalent degree). Applicants are encouraged to apply early, as there is a very limited number of spaces available each year. Admissions decisions are made on a first-come, first-served basis, and a waiting list of applicants will be created following the acceptance of a full intake of candidates each year. Applicants must complete an application form, accompanied by the registration fee and original evidence of qualifications (copies will not be accepted). Academic and/or work references must also be provided. Applicants must submit a portfolio of design work (no larger than A4 format) showing a combination of academic and, if available, professional work. Applicants are encouraged to visit Hooke Park and to attend a personal interview. All documentation must be provided in English. Overseas students from non-English-speaking countries must demonstrate their fluency in written and spoken English, and are required to pass the IELTS examination with an overall grade of not less than 6.5. The Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English Grade C, or three years' study in a UK (English) university are also accepted; TOEFL is not.

Applications are due by 15 January 2010 (fee £35) or late applications by 12 March 2010 (fee £60). Applications made after this date will be accepted at the discretion of the school, space permitting. Enquiries should be addressed to: Imogen Evans

Graduate School Admissions  
Registrar's Office  
Architectural Association  
36 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3ES

Email: [gradinfo@aaschool.ac.uk](mailto:gradinfo@aaschool.ac.uk)  
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Course fees are subject to review annually. Fees for the four-term 2010/12 Design & Make course, and details of available bursary support, are currently published on the AA website.

#### Hooke Park Visit Days

Prospective and applicant students are invited to visit Hooke Park on 23 January 2010 (following the AA Open Day in London) or 23 April 2010, to see the facilities, the woodland, explore the local area, and meet the residential staff. Visits on other dates may be possible by arrangement.

[www.aaschool.ac.uk/study/designmake.htm](http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/study/designmake.htm)

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T 020 7887 4000 F 020 7414 0782  
Produced by AA Print Studio  
Art Direction: Zak Kyes; Design: Wayne Daly  
[aaprintstudio.net](http://aaprintstudio.net)  
Printed in England by Beacon Press  
Architectural Association (Inc.)  
Registered charity No. 311083  
Company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England no. 171402  
Registered office as above

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The Architectural Association School of Architecture is the world's most international school of architecture, with its 600 students drawn from over 50 countries each year. The AA's independence allows it to devise open and constantly evolving architectural programmes, and to explore and promote new ways of thinking about, practising and learning architecture. The AA Graduate School offers postgraduate and research degrees related to advanced topics and interests in architecture, urbanism, histories and theories. In order to arrange a visit, request a copy of the current School Prospectus, or obtain further information, please visit [aaschool.ac.uk](http://aaschool.ac.uk) or contact: Imogen Evans, Graduate School Admissions, Registrar's Office, Architectural Association School of Architecture, 36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES.

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