

Revamping of Architectural Education Being Pressed in Nation

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

American architectural education, scored by critics as still following 19th-century methods and ideas, is moving to meet the 20th-century crisis of cities.

Objectives and curriculums considered by experts to be far behind the needs of the times are being revamped by some of the country's leading professional schools. The purpose is to produce designers and planners equipped to deal with the increasingly complex building and renewal problems of cities on today's unprecedented scale.

Harvard University, which has been a leader in the field of architectural education through its top-ranking Graduate School of Design, is about to inaugurate an \$11.5-million campaign to enlarge the school's scope and activities and redirect its aims with an Advanced Program of Environmental Studies.

Harvard led an architectural revolution in the 1930's, under the direction of Walter Gropius as dean of the graduate school, that was virtually responsible in this country for the breakthrough for modern architecture. Thirty years later, it finds its program lagging behind radically changed environmental needs.

Other schools across the country are facing the same inadequacies in programs and funds. Concurrent with changes at Harvard, the University of California at Los Angeles is establishing a completely new school of architecture, to open this fall, to meet the new needs. The university is state-financed.

The Harvard fund drive will aim for a \$6-million building to house its school, a \$2.5-million endowment for four professorships in advanced environmental studies, \$2-million to strengthen existing curriculums, and more than \$1-million for workshops and laboratories in architectural technology, computer techniques and comprehensive design.

The campaign is under the leadership of John L. Loeb, chairman of the school's development program. Mr. Loeb, a prin-

cipal of the New York investment concern of Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades and Company, has made substantial university donations, including Harvard's Loeb Memorial Theater and New York University's Loeb Student Center.

Two million dollars are already pledged to the two-year campaign, which is just getting under way. An additional \$2-million Federal grant for building purposes will be available under the Higher Education Facilities Act.

Half of the Harvard program will be devoted to a new kind of advanced work on the doctoral level dealing completely with problems of the environment.

Significantly, only one of the four new professors in this program in environmental studies will be an architect or designer. The other three will be a scientist specializing in resources and ecology, or the forces of the natural environment; an authority in decision-making, or programming through computer and other modern mechanical techniques, and either an economist, a lawyer or a public administrator.

Goal Is Correlation

The objective of the program will be the correlated use of these interdisciplinary sciences and techniques, all of which are involved in modern building and planning dealing with large-scale problems of the environment.

Approximately 10 fellowships will be given in Harvard's advanced program of environmental studies. They will be similar to Niemann fellowships for journalists and those being sponsored by Harvard's Kennedy Institute that permit established professionals to return for specialized work, writing and research.

The second half of the program, on the undergraduate and master's level, will be a thrust to update education in architecture, landscape architecture

and urban planning and design, largely through training with existing problems, aided by specialized laboratory techniques. Workshops and laboratories will be emphasized in subjects such as computer graphics and building technology and structure. Field experiences in urban renewal will be integrated into the curriculum.

The program at U.C.L.A., developed by the new school's dean, George Dudley, will have an equally farsighted base. It will consist of studio work coordinated with the social, behavioral and technological sciences, engineering, economics, law and fine arts. The degree will be in urban design.

Medical Training Cited

Existing U.C.L.A. facilities, such as the Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, will also figure in the new architectural training. The graduate is expected to bridge the concerns of the architect dealing with single structures and the planner involved with the broad range of modern urban problems.

Experts in the fields of architecture and planning point out that the educational revolution is long overdue. They stress a similar revolution in medical education in this country in the 1920's, set off by the Flexner Report prepared on the subject for the Carnegie Fund in 1910.

The Flexner report scored the traditional system of part-time lectures by respected practitioners aimed at passing on existing knowledge and experience to students. It led to intensive curriculums of coordinated laboratory work and practical training in dual research and teaching programs, with the objective of producing new knowledge and progressively trained graduates.

Architectural education still follows the 19th-century master-student formula, with emphasis on present practice rather than the methodology of future solutions. The semester problem of a single building type or a grandiose architectural complex in pure design terms is still common.

Associate Dean William A. Doebele Jr. of the Harvard Graduate School of Design deplores the lag.

"It is a tragic social waste, in this period of urban crisis, to spend time and resources on this kind of teaching," he says.

It has also been pointed out that through lack of funds and facilities architecture and planning schools are unable to meet today's challenge, not only in terms of the quality of their graduates but also in quantity. They are failing to produce enough of the urgently needed properly trained personnel for urban work.

Particularly in planning, most schools estimate that two to three times as many qualified

applicants could be accommodated as present means can support, with a good proportion turned away and lost to the profession each year.

A \$100,000 study in architectural education being made now by the American Institute of Architects finds re-evaluation and revision of curriculums to be the trend in many schools. Of the approximately 80 architecture schools in the country, 60 that have been consulted are concerned with changing teaching tools and goals.

The study project has already advised the Universities of Maryland and Tennessee and Ball State University at Muncie, Ind., on setting up architecture schools according to the new interdisciplinary criteria. Cornell University has similarly assisted the University of Puerto Rico.

According to Dean Dudley, who has spent two years investigating architecture programs here and abroad, "We have nothing comparable to present laboratory research and testing techniques in the physical and social sciences for architecture and urban design."

"Private industry is making the breakthrough in technology that leads to the breakthrough in design that should be coming from university programs."

"This is where you must begin in education today. This is the basic involvement of the university in society."