

Architectural Association
School of Architecture

Prospectus
2023–24

Academic
Programmes



AA Prospectus 2023–24
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Welcome

Welcome to 2023–24 at the Architectural Association (AA). These pages describe a wealth of pathways into architecture, one of the oldest professions. The AA has educated leaders in this field for well over a century, but we have always extended beyond the confines of our ever-evolving profession. The process of architectural qualification is long, and while our work may seem practical and even useful, architecture is also instrumental in shaping the wider contexts for everything we do. As a result, we need a much more complex understanding of the world if we are to contribute something meaningful to it. By cultivating broad curiosity and actively engaging with the environment around us, we can add some intelligent delight.

The AA provides a platform for new voices to be heard and new approaches to be tested. Located at 36 Bedford Square, the school sits at the heart of one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, and behind our black door is a space for experimentation by students and staff alike. This is a place to try almost anything, to take risks and to reckon with failure as well as success.

We come together within the school in both structured and chance encounters. The AA, like London, is a site for multiple, layered conversations that take place across a multitude of scales, from the intimate and material to the global and conceptual.

We make the space for collective action and welcome creative outliers, understanding that bigger and more urgent questions emerge from ongoing debate. The conversations that start here or in our Hooke Park woodland facility resonate worldwide through our community. They proliferate and are carried forward to the many international locations that our students and staff call home.

While we know architecture has the potential and the responsibility to shape the world for the better, we also understand that its definitions are fluid and the world we inhabit is increasingly changeable. The range of topics and methods outlined in this prospectus describe an area of study that is one of the very last comprehensive interdisciplinary forms of education. This equips students with the intellectual agility to embrace the unknown challenges that lie ahead.

Our international and multi-generational community has the rare opportunity to support, promote and realise architectural ideas with the potential to effect real change.

All of this starts in our labyrinth of spaces in central London, whose scale obliges us to converse with one another. These spaces enable everyone to be heard. We come together in the bar and on the terrace, in the Lecture Hall and in the studios. Most importantly, we are in a public space. We are part of the city. There is no bell to ring, lock to turn or log to sign. Our door is open.

Ingrid Schroder
AA Director



Introduction

The AA is the oldest independent school of architecture in the UK. It was founded in 1847 as a student-centred collective that aspired to radically transform architectural education. Since then, it has fostered an environment that encourages students to speculate without limitations, take risks with confidence and cultivate individual, radical research that shapes the future of the discipline. The identity of the AA is informed by the contributions of its students, through its structure as a participatory democracy and as a result of their critical engagement with cultural discourse in London and beyond.

Today, the AA comprises approximately 1,000 full-time students, 8,000 members, 290 tutors and 130 administrative staff. It occupies ten Georgian houses in central London – eight in Bedford Square and a further two on nearby Montague Street – as well as a 350-acre woodland site at Hooke Park in Dorset. The school offers a broad range of flexible, self-directed programmes that empower students and staff to challenge established methods within contemporary architectural education and professional practice.

Prospective students can apply for the Foundation Course (AA Foundation Award in Architecture); the Intermediate Programme (years one to three of the five-year course in architecture) leading to the award of BA(Hons) in Architecture (ARB/RIBA Part 1); the Diploma Programme (years four and five

of the five-year course in architecture) leading to the award of MArch and the AA Diploma (ARB/RIBA Part 2); and nine Taught Postgraduate Programmes leading to MA, MSc, PG MArch, MFA and Taught MPhil awards, as well as the PhD Programme.

We also accept applications throughout the year for two RIBA Part 3 courses and a range of Visiting Schools that take place around the world, as well as a Summer School held at Bedford Square each July. Research develops elsewhere in the school within two AA Residences, Ground Lab and Wood Lab, which were established in 2019. Together, these courses, programmes and initiatives allow students from different backgrounds and with varied interests and ambitions to find their own path through the school.

The AA curriculum is enhanced by the Public Programme, which focuses on the unique opportunities and challenges of the present through a series of lectures, exhibitions, workshops, symposia and book launches, and by the Communications Studio, a media, publishing and graphic design studio. This year's Public Programme, which is free to attend and welcomes students, staff and the general public, will include exhibitions of the life and work of MJ Long, who was the architect of the British Library; *Chronograms of Architecture*, inspired by the diagrams of Charles Jencks; models of the many premises that the Warburg Institute has occupied

over time; and a multi-screen film project by Noemi Blager that looks at how we can do *A Lot with Little*. These exhibitions will shape themes for our termly lecture series, which this year will explore the gendering of space and objects, the role that smaller educational institutions can play in knowledge production and dissemination, and the practices that engage with social enterprise and promote environmental sustainability. This year, every unit and programme within the school will come together during Climate Matters week in Term 1 for a series of lectures, workshops and an exhibition that will encourage the AA to think collectively about how we, as architects, can mitigate our impact on the planet.

Publishing and cultural production are integral to AA life, and the school engages with a number of digital and print-based initiatives including the creation of new AA Publications that disseminate architectural discourse to a global audience; *AA Files*, the school's journal of record; the student-led *AArchitecture* magazine; and AirAA, a podcast and media platform.

Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) and Office for Students (OfS)

The Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture is a private Higher Education Provider with Taught Degree Awarding Powers. The AA is an Approved Provider registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and a Tier 4 Sponsor Institution registered with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). The AA is an Approved Institution and Affiliated Research Centre of The Open University (OU), UK. The OU is the awarding body for research degrees at the AA.

Our programmes, public events and publications exist alongside spontaneous discussions, unexpected encounters and vibrant exchanges that take place throughout the academic year. This confluence of activity keeps the AA in a constant transformative flux that permeates the spaces of the school, and the projects, ideas and ambitions of the students.



Spaces of the AA

The collision of productive and social space within the AA encourages constant interaction between programmes, students and tutors. The school occupies a series of idiosyncratic spaces that enable experimentation and exchange: from Georgian bedrooms, terraces, attics and crawlspaces in London to workshops, shelters, footpaths and student-built architectures within a working forest in Dorset.

Bedford Square and Montague Street

The AA resides in a row of Georgian terraced houses on Bedford Square in central London that form the core of the association and its operations, as well as a set of spaces directly behind the main dwellings and two further Georgian buildings on nearby Montague Street. Much of the character, tradition and diversity of the school can be found within the stately rooms and domestic spaces of our homes in London.



Hooke Park

In Dorset, the AA inhabits a 350-acre working woodland owned and operated by the school. Hooke Park is a growing educational space set within designated Ancient Woodland that forms part of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The trees inside the park provide the primary source of timber for student-led construction projects that are manufactured and assembled on site. Hooke Park is occupied year-round by the students and staff of the Design and Make Taught Postgraduate programme, and hosts short residential workshops for units and programmes across the school.



The Field Station, Hooke Park,
Dorset, 2023.



The AA buildings on Montague Street,
London, 2023.

Academic Programmes

The AA offers a range of full-time academic programmes. Prospective students can apply for the Foundation Course leading to the AA Foundation Award in Architecture; the Intermediate Programme (years one to three of the five-year course in architecture) leading to the award of BA(Hons) and the AA Intermediate Examination (ARB/RIBA Part 1); the Diploma Programme (years four and five of the five-year course in architecture) leading to the award of MArch, the AA Diploma and the AA Final Examination (ARB/RIBA Part 2); and nine Taught Postgraduate Programmes leading to MA, MSc, PG MArch, MFA and Taught MPhil awards; as well as the PhD Programme.



Foundation Course

AA Foundation Award in Architecture One year, full time

The Foundation Course is a one-year introduction to an art and design education. Students are encouraged to develop their conceptual ideas through experiments with a wide range of media in an intimate, studio-based environment. Through exposure to the wealth of academic offerings and intellectual resources at the AA, Foundation students are given access to the tools, strategies and methodologies that are developed within the school. The Course draws on different educational practices and the knowledge of experienced tutors and visiting consultants to offer dynamic, cross-disciplinary teaching within the context of a specialist architecture school.



Intermediate Programme

BA(Hons) in Architecture ARB/RIBA Part 1 Three years, full time

The Intermediate Programme empowers students to question how architecture manifests in the world. The First Year focuses on learning through making within a shared, open studio, and provides students with the academic and technical tools to develop their interest in architecture. Students are encouraged to focus on the challenges of the 21st century, while interrogating the foundational principles of architecture. They create an end-of-year portfolio comprising work in a range of media that is informed by various modes of argumentation and representation.

In the Second and Third Years, Intermediate students learn within the AA unit system, in which small year-long design studios bring together approximately 12 participants from both year groups. Students explore different approaches to the study of architectural form, typology, programme, site and fabrication alongside analysis of critical theory, environmental issues, structural design and modes of professional practice.



Ella Yun Hong, *In-between Cocoa*, INTER3, 2023.
Denys Lasdun Award for Excellence in Architecture
Joint Recipient 2022–23.

Diploma Programme

MArch and AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2 Two years, full time

The Diploma Programme introduces students to the study of advanced research and design methods, and new approaches to practice. Throughout its history, the Diploma Programme has fostered some of the most innovative, challenging and progressive thinking in architecture.

As projects are developed within the Diploma Programme's year-long studio units, students work to improve their technical proficiency and engage with a critical agenda relating to broader societal issues with which architecture intersects. Lively, informed debate permeates life in the Diploma Programme, inspiring students to develop rigorous, inventive design and research projects. This process allows students to find their voices as architects, but also offers a means of articulating ideas that they can carry with them into their professional careers.



Kelly van Homrigh, *Debt Has No Beginning – Sediment Should Flux*, DIP4, AA Dipl Hons, 2023.

Core Studies

Core Studies is part of both the Intermediate Programme and the Diploma Programme, and is a suite of compulsory course requirements that are central to the study of architecture. Its lectures, participatory seminars and workshops are designed to develop expertise in four key areas:

- Environmental and Technical Studies (ETS)
- History and Theory Studies (HTS)
- Media Studies (MS)
- Professional Practice (PP1) / Architectural Professional Practice (APP2)

Environmental and Technical Studies (ETS) offers a complete and coherent technical training that provides students at all stages of their architectural education with the capacity to materialise their ideas, concepts and ambitions. History and Theory Studies (HTS) includes courses that develop historical and theoretical knowledge related to architectural discourses, concepts and ways of thinking through writing. Media Studies (MS) introduces students to the media used by architects through engagement with practices such as drawing, physical model-making, 3D modelling, programming, filmmaking and photography. Professional Practice (PP1) prepares students in the final year of the Intermediate Programme for their year of practical experience, typically undertaken following the completion of RIBA Part 1, while Architectural Professional Practice (APP2) develops and expands on the themes encountered in practice with students in their final year of the Diploma Programme.

Electives

The Elective courses are available to Fourth Year Diploma Programme students and extend the scope of Core Studies. These courses address a wide range of topics, and provide insight into broader creative practices, interdisciplinary processes and new technologies.



Taught Postgraduate Programmes

The AA offers nine full-time Taught Postgraduate Programmes: advanced studies for students with prior academic and professional experience. The degrees offered include MA (12 Months), MSc (12 months), MArch (16 months), MFA (18 months) and Taught MPhil (18 months) options for a range of topics.

Architecture and Urbanism (DRL)

MArch

Architecture and Urbanism (Design Research Laboratory: DRL) interrogates the broader relationships within and beyond architecture by considering the futures of living, work and culture through advanced methods in design, computation and manufacturing.

Design and Make

MSc/MArch

Design and Make is based at the AA's woodland campus at Hooke Park in Dorset. The programme explores design at the point of physical production, demonstrating a vision for architectural education in which making is central to the design process.

Emergent Technologies and Design

MSc/MArch

Emergent Technologies and Design investigates new synergies of architecture and ecology through the intersection of computational design and fabrication.

History and Critical Thinking

MA

History and Critical Thinking is a platform for engagement with the contemporary through critical analysis of history and the politics of historiography.

Housing and Urbanism

MA/MArch

Housing and Urbanism addresses the complexities of urban transformation through design learning and investigation, focusing on the politics and practicalities that shape cities.

Landscape Urbanism

MSc/MArch

Landscape Urbanism investigates the role that designers can play when confronted with policies and regulations relating to landscapes and territories across the globe.

Spatial Performance and Design (AAIS)

MA/MFA

Spatial Performance and Design (AA Interprofessional Studio: AAIS) explores alternative methods of collaboration between multiple creative professions.

Sustainable Environmental Design

MSc/MArch

Sustainable Environmental Design engages with real-life projects that aim to improve the environment in cities and develop environmentally sustainable architectures.

Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities)

Taught MPhil

The Taught MPhil in Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities) examines multi-scalar questions that arise at the intersection of architecture, urban design and planning.



Four years, full time

The PhD Programme at the AA trains scholars and researchers in the fields of architectural history and theory, urban studies and technology. The Programme encourages rigorous and speculative dissertations that question architecture itself and its history, as well as its professional and disciplinary mandate. In parallel with the development of their individual theses, candidates are provided with a background of intense historical and theoretical thinking through weekly discussions with their director of studies and supervisor. This is supplemented by monthly seminars with guest scholars and an annual symposium that brings together invited guests and current candidates in a collective discussion. The AA is a Partner Institution and Affiliated Research Centre of The Open University (OU), UK. The OU is the awarding body for research degrees at the AA.



Lola Lozano Lara, *República de Argentina no101*, Mexico City, from the PhD thesis 'Vecindad: Redistribution of Domestic Space in Mexico City 1519–2021', 2023.

Professional Practice Part 3 (Part-time provision)



Professional Practice Part 3 is a seminar course and examination that allows successful candidates to register as an architect with the Architects Registration Board (ARB). The course is also available to registered professionals who wish to refresh their knowledge through Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

The course is accredited by the ARB and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and is offered twice per year during the academic cycle. The seminars for both follow the same ARB professional criteria and guidance. Early registration is recommended as places are limited, particularly for the spring course.

The autumn seminar course is full-time and is conducted over the first two weeks in September. Alternatively, the spring session is offered on Saturdays over a ten-week period from the beginning of January until mid-March. The seminar course covers topics central to professional and ethical practice, including business management, culture and ethos, the regulatory framework, planning building regulations and construction and design management (CDM), procurement, fire and life safety, and environmental sustainability. The [AA Part 3 Handbook](#) provides detailed information about the course and examination process.

Assessment consists of three written papers based on a fictitious project on a real site in London with several evolving scenarios, followed by an oral examination conducted with two examiners. These examinations take place immediately after each seminar course, and candidates sit in whichever session they choose; they register for their examination independently from the course itself. Candidates who are ready to sit the examination must first establish their eligibility by submitting their Initial Assessment (IA) documentation for consideration.

An optional two-day course, the Building Contract Game, is available for those sitting the examination, and involves teams working together to devise strategies that overcome contract issues and practical problems during project negotiations.

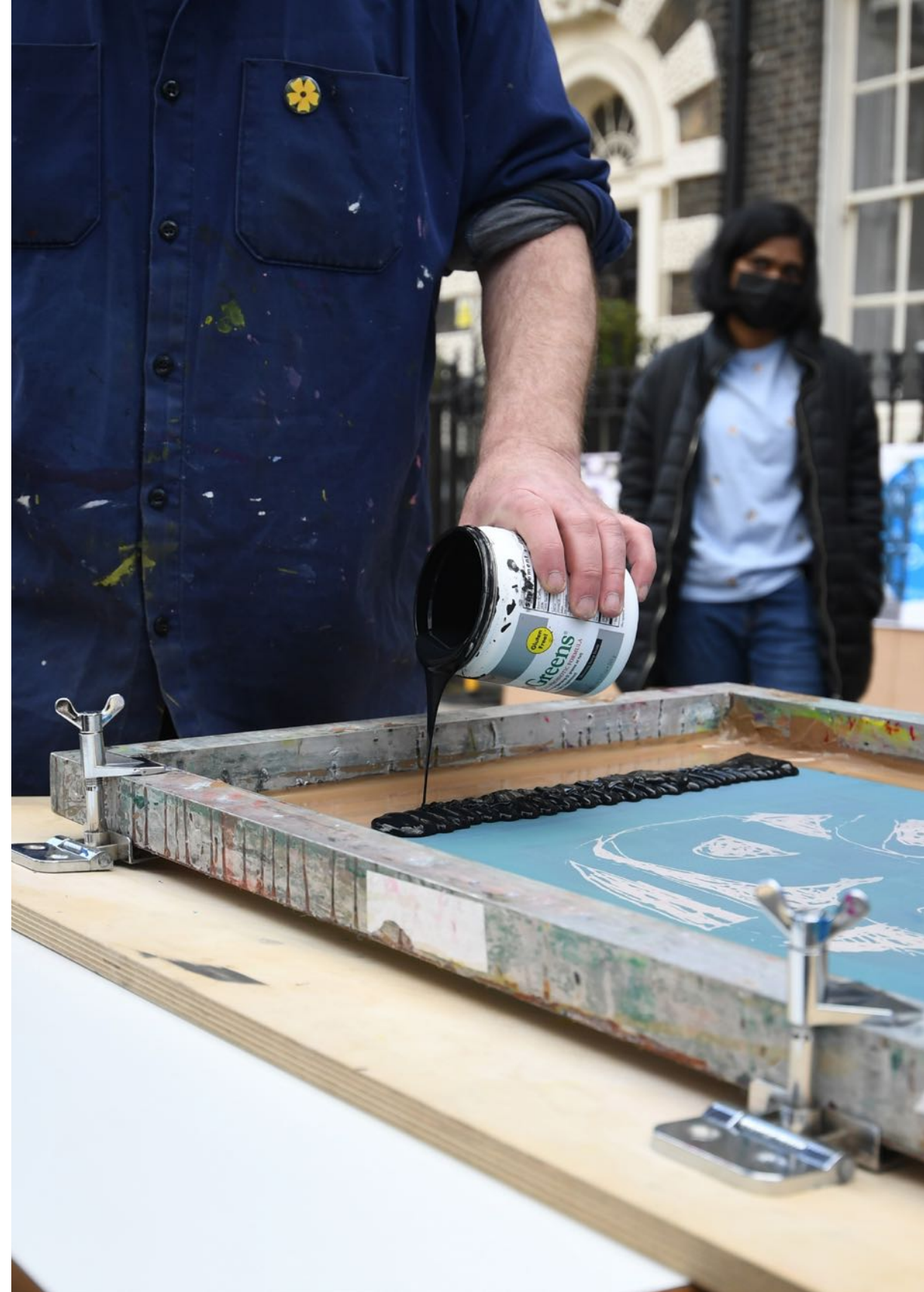
The programme welcomes candidates from all backgrounds and at a range of eligible levels of experience. We encourage all participants to engage, ask questions and debate relevant topics with the aim of becoming knowledgeable, responsible professionals.

LAWuN (Locally Available World unseen Networks) sits on the periphery of the school's academic programmes in order to make connections between units, programmes and people working and studying within different parts of the AA. LAWuN is critical, inclusive and committed to providing a space for students to detach themselves from the programmed curriculum. Its methods are undefined but include instigating conversation, sparking positive conflict, asking unexpected questions, collaborating on creative projects and hosting impromptu events. Gatherings are unscheduled, work is unassessed and participants can join for a fleeting moment, an afternoon, an entire day or not at all. Everything is open to everyone and the work is only as good as the participants make it.

Observations about LAWuN:

- Augments assessed student-driven projects outside of the unit structure
- Dedicated to asking questions, but not necessarily giving answers
- There is no right or wrong, just an interest in 'what if?'
- Affirms that design is explored through human behaviour and not a body of knowledge
- Acts as a daily itinerant to the educational structures while still being embedded within the school's everyday fabric
- Operates as a cross-school zone for curiosity

A final observation about LAWuN is that it is a place where a diverse array of students and staff can find community and support.



AA Visiting School

In addition to the AA's full-time courses, a vast array of short courses and workshops take place all around the world and online throughout the year as part of the Visiting School, as well as an Autumn and Spring Semester Programme that enables students from other universities to experience the AA for a term, and a Summer School, which is accompanied by a dedicated series of Public Programme events. These courses are led by notable and emerging architects, designers, critical thinkers and AA tutors from across the globe, and aim to generate new forms of teaching and learning, stimulating creative minds of all ages and backgrounds.



AA Visiting School

Courses, workshops and symposia within the Visiting School encompass myriad forms and agendas, and are built around project briefs pursued and shaped by small groups of participants. These programmes are driven by the idea that experimental, new and provocative forms of architecture are best learned by doing. The school promotes, tests and challenges contemporary global interests and issues in architectural learning by embedding a diverse group of creative participants and tutors in an array of rural, urban, international and online contexts. The Visiting School offers new and unexpected learning opportunities in the UK, continental Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas. Places on each course are limited, and anybody who would like to further their architectural knowledge and skills can apply. Transferable study credits are available.

Summer School

The AA Summer School presents a programme of design studios, seminars and lectures based on the AA unit system and offers participants a varied selection of design approaches, techniques and agendas within an inclusive and intimate educational environment. Summer School tutors, lecturers and critics include past and present AA staff as well as professionals from a diverse range of creative disciplines such as fashion, art, graphic design, industrial design, urbanism and film. The course is for current and prospective students of architecture from around the world.

AA Semester Programme

The AA Semester Programme runs twice a year: in autumn, from September to December; and in spring, from January to May. The programme is a full-time, 15 week studio-based course open to students, architects and other creative individuals from around the world who wish to further their knowledge, practice and skills in architecture. Tutorials, workshops, lectures and reviews are central to the programme, wherein AA tutors and external experts are invited to discuss projects and provide personal feedback to students. The programme is integrated with the school's undergraduate Core Studies courses and is designed to allow transferable study credits. Applicants require at least two years of study in architecture or urban design.

How to Apply

We encourage applications from prospective students who can demonstrate initiative in entering into the public forms of presentation, collective discussion and productive debate that permeate the AA, the architectural community and the world at large. We are keen to hear from independent, motivated and respectful individuals with the curiosity and ambition required to define their own unique path through a school that fosters a multitude of educational methods and agendas.

The AA is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and is the oldest independent school of architecture in the UK. As an Approved Provider registered with the Office for Students (OfS), England's independent regulator of higher education, the AA is a designated recognised body with the authority to grant its own taught degrees (Foundation, Bachelor and Master level), and is a licenced Student Sponsor registered with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). The AA is not a member of UCAS and all applications are made directly to the school. The application procedure is the same for all prospective students.

If you would like to apply, please read the information on our website about the AA's Academic Programmes and visit the admissions pages listed below for up-to-date entry requirements and application deadlines. There is one point of entry each year, in September, for all of our courses and programmes.

Open Days and Open Evenings

Throughout the year we hold Open Days for prospective undergraduate, postgraduate and visiting students.

To find more information, see full event details and to register your interest in attending, please visit www.aaschool.ac.uk/openday

Dates for these are as follows:

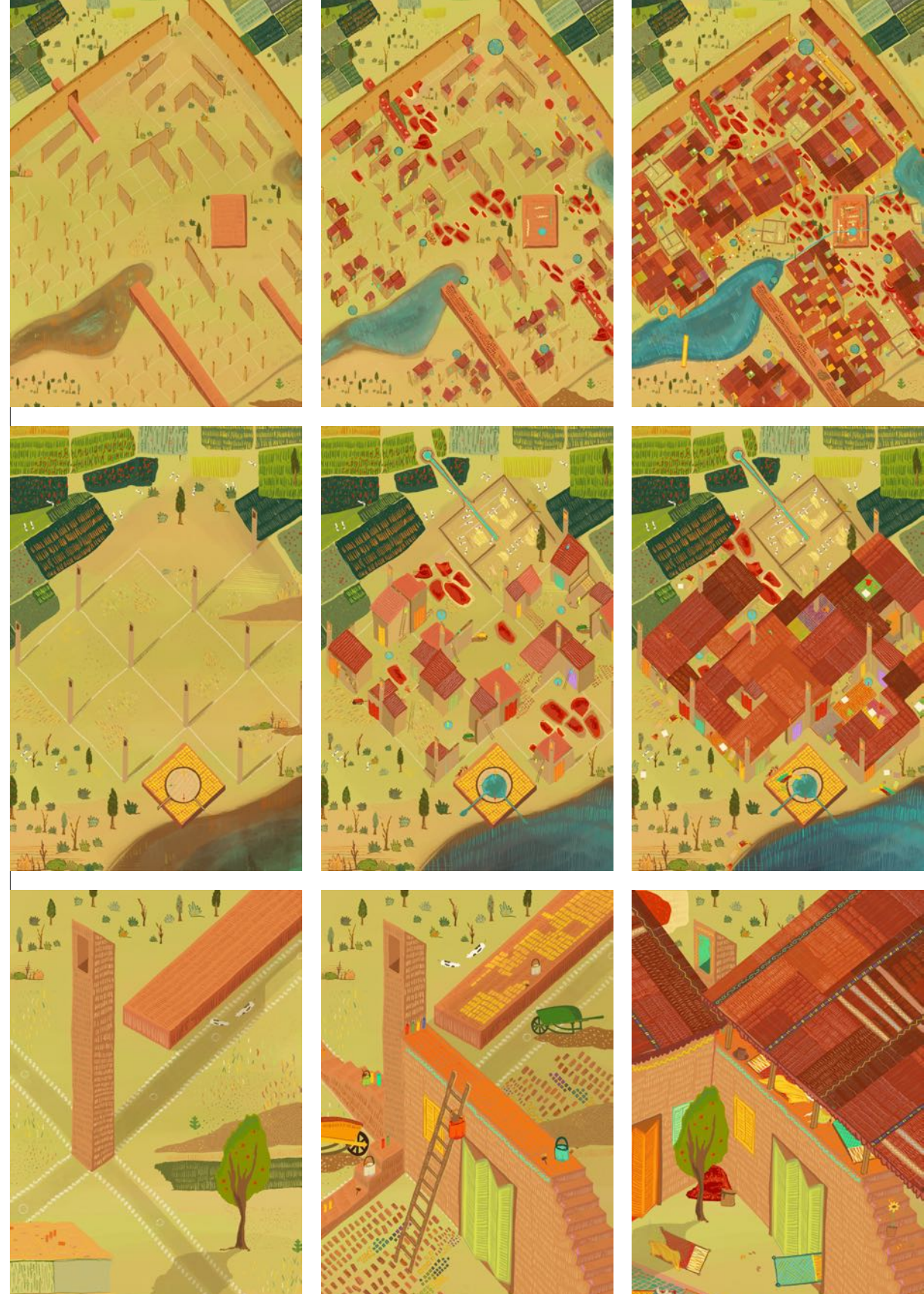
Open Days

Friday 13 October 2023

Foundation Course, Intermediate Programme and Diploma Programme

Friday 10 November 2023

Taught Postgraduate programmes



Ammara Asdar, *The Inbetween*, DIP15, AA Dipl Hons, 2023.

Fees and Financial Assistance

The Architectural Association is committed to ensuring that the most talented students from around the world have the opportunity to study at the school. Approximately one in five students currently receive financial assistance from a scholarship, bursary, hardship fund or assistantship.

[Find out more](#)

Entry Requirements

To learn about academic entry requirements and for more details for each programme, please click on the relevant 'Find out more' link below, which will take you to the AA website.

Foundation Course

The one-year Foundation Course leads to the AA Foundation Award in Architecture (FHEQ Level 4).

[Find out more](#)

Intermediate Programme

BA(Hons) in Architecture ARB/RIBA Part 1

The three-year BA(Hons) in Architecture ARB/RIBA Part 1 programme leads to the AA Intermediate Examination (ARB/RIBA Part 1). Prospective students can apply for entry into the first year, and applications can also be made for direct entry to the second or third year. Successful completion of the programme leads to an Unconditional Offer of a place in the first year of the MArch/AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2 (Diploma Programme).

[Find out more](#)

Diploma Programme

MArch/AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2

The two-year MArch/AA Diploma ARB/RIBA Part 2 programme leads to the AA Final Examination (ARB/RIBA Part 2) and the AA Diploma (AA Dipl). Prospective students can only apply to enter the first year of the Diploma Programme.

[Find out more](#)

Taught Postgraduate Programmes

The AA offers nine Taught Postgraduate programmes for students with prior academic and professional experience. All programmes are full-time courses of advanced study, and all students join the school in September at the beginning of a new academic year.

[Find out more](#)

PhD Programme

The PhD Programme at the AA is a full-time, four-year course and is open to students with prior academic and professional experience. The programme includes a PhD-by-design option.

[Find out more](#)

Professional Practice Part 3

Applications for the RIBA-accredited Professional Practice course are made directly by completing an online form.

[Find out more](#)

Applying to the AA Visiting Schools and Summer School

The short courses, workshops and part-time programmes of study offered by the AA Visiting School and the Summer School do not lead to formal qualifications or degree awards, instead promoting flexible, mobile and agile opportunities for learning. Transcripts are available upon completion of these programmes.

AA Visiting School

If you are interested in applying to one or more AA Visiting School courses, please check their individual web pages to submit an online application and make a payment. Most courses have limited spaces and run on a first-come, first-served basis.

[Find out more](#)

Summer School

Applications for the Summer School are made by completing an online form. Each year, applications typically open in mid-November and will be received until the following summer, when the course begins.

[Find out more](#)

Resources

Student Information

During their time at the school, students on all of our programmes benefit from friendly administrative assistance and a welcoming support service that can offer advice about all aspects of life within the AA. Find out more about student support, visas, housing advice and more:

www.aaschool.ac.uk/students

Fees and Financial Assistance

The AA offers a range of bursaries for new and existing students who demonstrate exceptional promise and financial need. All applicants are eligible regardless of age, nationality or background. Find out more about academic fees, the bursaries and scholarships available, and other sources of financial assistance:

www.aaschool.ac.uk/admissions/feesandfinancialassistance

Resources

The extensive resources and facilities of the AA are constantly evolving to reflect the requirements of the highest quality of contemporary architectural education. Find out more about these varied components of the school, which exist both on-site and online:

www.aaschool.ac.uk/resources
www.aaschool.ac.uk/onlineresources

Events

Before attending an open day or visiting the AA, we invite you to engage with some of the lectures, seminars and exhibitions that feature prominently in the day-to-day life of the school. Find out more about the Public Programme at the AA, a free and accessible series of events dedicated to advancing global architectural discourse:

www.aaschool.ac.uk/publicprogramme/whatson



Ludvig Holmen, *Machine Elven Chronicle*, DIP6, 2023.



Yue Jiang, *Courtyard House of Day-to-day Healing*, DIP19, 2023.



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