

# THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE AIA

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AIAUK CHAPTER

BY YU-NGOK LO



**Lorraine King, AIA**

*has lived and worked in the UK since 1982 and was a founding member of the AIAUK chapter in 1992. She was President of the chapter in 2002; Treasurer for 13 years and has been the chapter's Secretary for the past 5 years.*

The CONNECTION team reached out to the first international chapter of the AIA – AIAUK to find out some more about the programs they are offering to not only their general membership, but to their emerging professional members as well. We connected with Lorraine King, one of the founding members of AIAUK and the current secretary of AIAUK to talk about the things that are happening on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

**Yu-Ngok Lo (YL):** What are some of the programs AIAUK have to help AIA members (especially emerging professionals) practicing in the UK?

**Lorraine King (LK):** Yes, we have a very active Mentorship Meet Up program for young professionals recently set up by Chapter member Katharine Storr, AIA, herself a young professional. The program encourages emerging professionals to discuss career choices, etc., in alternating formal and informal environments. One of the goals of this group is to assist young people in passing their US registration exams, which are given in the UK as one of only a few locations outside the US. Our newsletter, a powerful tool to communicate to our members, contain detail stories of these new programs. The upcoming newsletter will also contain information on taking the registration exams in the UK.

In addition to the mentorship program, the AIA UK Chapter has been running a weekend Design Charrette for UK Architecture Students for over 20 years. Representatives from schools throughout the UK come to London to the Roca Gallery – designed by Zaha Hadid and home to one of the Chapters sponsors, Laufen – to tackle a different design brief each year. The students join up in teams – generally by school – and compete against other teams. For the past few years, the Charrette has been run by Robert Rhodes, AIA.

The AIA UK Chapter also runs an annual Design Awards program, which has – also over the past 20 years – become a major fixture on the UK architectural scene. Since the 1990s, this has included the

“Noel Hill Student Travel Award” (named after one of the founding members of the UK Chapter) for the winner of a special student category. The award includes a cash prize to facilitate student travel. Winners are invited to write about their travel experiences and their stories are published in our chapter newsletter.

As an encouragement to young professionals, the last two annual Design Awards have included a category for Young Professionals and we expect this category to be continued again in future Design Awards.

**YL:** What are the licensure requirements in the UK for US architects?

**LK:** We will be publishing an article written by Lester Korilius, FAIA, RIBA on our website regarding UK’s licensure requirements in a section dedicated to practice issues in the UK. The overall requirement for licensure in the UK and the US is similar. The UK license is divided into 3 parts, Parts I, II, and III. The first two parts relate to university education, with Part I being 3 years of education and Part II being two years of education. This is similar to the 5-year B Arch degree in the US. Part III is a professional practice examination that covers things such as contracts, project



administration, and UK specific items such as planning (zoning) permissions and rights of light. Candidates are also required to have a minimum of 2 years professional work experiences in the field of architecture prior to becoming eligible to take the exam.

Unfortunately, there is no reciprocity between the US and the UK for architectural licensure. In a typical scenario, for a US

architect to practice architecture in the UK, he/she must hold an architectural education equivalent to the UK Parts I and II. He/she is also required to pass the Part III examination mentioned above. It is worth noting that under the UK Architects Act 1997, the title “architect” – including the abbreviated form as in “AIA” – can technically only be used by trained professionals who are registered in the UK with the UK Architects Registration Board.

**YL:** Tell us a bit about the AIA RIBA keynote lecture series? What’s AIAUK’s relationship / partnership with RIBA?

**LK:** The AIA and the RIBA have mutual interests in the promotion of architects and the profession as a whole and we try to work with them whenever, and wherever possible. The Keynote lecture series has been one of the most prominent manifestations of this general cooperation.

The AIA/RIBA Keynote Lecture Series started in the late 1990s, with a lecture by Rick Mather, a prominent US/UK architect. Since then, it has brought renowned architects, including Cesar Pelli, Peter Eisenman, Ricardo Legorretta, Antoine Predock, Tod Williams / Billie Tsien, and most recently, Thomas Phifer, to the UK audience.



► **The AIAUK chapter has been running a weekend design charrette for UK architecture students for over 20 years.**

Many of the lectures have been held at RIBA’s London Headquarters, as 66 Portland place is in itself of significant architectural interest. The AIA works with the RIBA to organize the event; the AIA nominates and coordinates speakers for the event, while the RIBA leads the effort on publicity. Amrita Raja, AIA – another of our active young professionals – has taken over organization of this event with a commitment to bring in more prominent female architects over time.

**YL:** Anything you would like to add?

**LK:** We are very proud of our long standing Design Charrette and Noel Hill Travel Awards and the more recent Mentoring Program and Young Professional Design Award. We are a small Chapter, but we take our young professionals very seriously. You can also read more about our past via our old newsletters on the AIAUK website. ■



OPPOSITE: 2016 STUDENT CHARRETTE - Courtesy AIAUK

ABOVE LEFT: ARE WORKSHOP - Courtesy AIAUK

ABOVE RIGHT: KEYNOTE LECTURE AT RIBA - Courtesy AIAUK