

Art History 191  
Introduction to Architecture

Professor Jean Givens

## EXERCISES

Students in Art History 191 are responsible for successfully completing three of the eight papers listed below. The exercises will be graded on a scale of + (good), OK (satisfactory), and - (unsatisfactory). To pass the class, students must complete at least three of the exercises with either a "good" or "satisfactory" mark. **\*\*Extra credit option:** Completion of at least six of the exercises with either a good or satisfactory mark will improve your total course grade by one half a grade.

You are free to select any three, but you must hand in each exercise you choose to do on or before the due date; late exercises will not be accepted.

Written text should be brief--approximately two to three double-spaced, typed pages for each exercise. Some of the answers require you to include your own sketches or photographs, but it is the content and effort demonstrated by these illustrations that concerns me, not their final "polish." Please see me if you have questions.

1. Signaling meaning through space: Although it certainly doesn't resemble the buildings seen up to now in class, the Art Building was designed to advertise its use and the priority of certain spaces within the building. Or to put it another way, a visitor is supposed to know certain things about the building without being told. How does the architect indicate the main entrance? The location of the Art office? The Dean's office? Do the locations of these offices make their relative importance clear? What function is the Pit supposed to serve? Why is it located near the Atrium Gallery? Include a rough sketch to indicate the relative locations of these areas and the paths the visitor is expected to follow. (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 2/15)

2. Large-scale planning: We don't have the opportunity to visit Rome or Paris to consider the way in which scale and the layout of buildings affect the visitor's experience, but we can consider the same issues closer at hand. Indeed, a number of plans have been discussed to create what has been called "Storrs Commons" near the south end of campus. What do you think would be the social effect of building a new commercial center with shops and restaurants in the area marked "A" on the enclosed campus plan? What do you think would be the effect of such a center on the traffic patterns--foot and automobile--on campus? Who do you believe would take advantage of such amenities? The use of the term "commons" suggests that planners hope that such a center would create a sense of community by analogy with the commons around which New England villages often were built. In your opinion, what would be the effect of such a new center on the cohesiveness of the campus and town communities? (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 2/22)

3. Form and function: Many of the buildings covered thus far advertise their presence with distinctive features intended to make their function evident in the midst of other buildings. Your job for this paper is (1) to select three buildings on the Storrs campus that have been designed to

stand out and then (2) to explain what design features help identify the special character of each. Provide a rough sketch or photograph of each of the buildings you discuss. (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 3/7)

4. Changing tastes: Your job in this exercise is to compare the layout of the new (1998) South Campus dorm complex (labeled "B" on the enclosed plan) with either Shippee Hall, built in 1962 (labeled "C") or the Towers Dormitory Complex, built in 1961 (labeled "D"). Briefly compare the basic layout of the complex as a whole--illustrating your comments with a rough sketch--and what you can see of the organization of the rooms within. How does the layout of each kind of dorm affect how the students live and study in these complexes? (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 3/28)

5. Buildings that work: Buildings that don't: Some buildings are widely perceived as successful and supportive, others as not. For this exercise briefly discuss the features of either the Homer Babbidge Library or the UCONN Coop that either contribute to the building's function or detract from it. For this exercise, your opening sentence should briefly state what you believe your chosen building's key role to be. Include a rough sketch labeled to indicate the major functional areas within the building you choose. (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 4/11)

5. Landscape and setting: The most prominent landscape feature on the Storrs campus is Mirror Lake (between Route 195 and Mansfield Road.) Despite the pressure on available space on campus for new building projects, I know of no plans to impinge on this open space. Why do you think this is so? Why would the campus planners have left such a large open area? What role is it intended to serve? How are students and faculty intended to use it? Do the buildings that surround it take advantage of the setting? In your view, is its role primarily functional or symbolic? (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 4/18)

7. Architectural Planning and Scale Scale and the layout of buildings affect the experience of architecture. Indeed, in the last two years the plan of the Storrs campus has changed dramatically. The area in front of the Babbidge library was formerly occupied by a long parking strip--now replaced by the bricked pavement that passes in front of the Library. Traffic was redirected between the Coop and the Library, and the North Campus parking structure was built to accommodate the displaced cars. Why do you think the planners recommended these changes? What are the changes intended to symbolize? What effect do you think the changes have on the student experience of the campus? How important is it that as part of this plan the new, renovated library has a cafe that will be open into the late evening, especially on sports nights? (Due in my box in the Art Office by noon--Tuesday, 4/25)

8. The reuse of the past: Select a building on the Storrs campus that illustrates the "reuse" or quotation of architectural forms. Describe the forms that motivate your choice and identify the source you see behind them. Explain why you think the architect and the campus committees that approved the design might have found the reference attractive and appropriate to a university setting. Include a sketch or photo of "your" building. (Due in class, Monday, 5/8)