

Education at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

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Architectural education in Sri Lanka was pioneered in the early sixties by visionaries such as Dr. Justin Samarasekera, Prof. H. J. Billimoria and Prof. Rupert Peiris. During the formative years, they established a firm academic foundation and instituted a teaching curriculum at Moratuwa based on the model of the Bartlett School of Architecture in London.

Initially the course was established at the Institute of Practical Technology in 1965, which was later raised to the level of a College of Technology in 1967, by amalgamating it with the Ceylon College of Technology. In 1968 the Architecture course was absorbed into the University system as a Department under the Faculty of Natural Sciences and located in Ward Place, Colombo 7.

In February 1972, with the establishment of the University of Ceylon, which incorporated all existing universities including the College of Technology as campuses of a single university, the well-established Department of Architecture was moved back to Moratuwa as a department under the newly formed Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of the Katubedda Campus.

In 1972, Ceylon became a Republic and the

single University was re-named 'University of Sri Lanka'. In 1978, under section 139 (1) of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, the Katubedda Campus of the University of Sri Lanka acquired the status of an independent university under the name of 'University of Moratuwa', and the Faculty of Architecture gained independent status affiliating the Department of Architecture with the newly formed Department of Town and Country Planning pioneered by Prof. Neville Gunaratne. Later in 1983, the Department of Building Economics was added to the Faculty, under the stewardship of Prof. Siri Caldera.

By the late 1980s, the Faculty was well established with undergraduate courses in Built Environment (Architecture) and Quantity Surveying. Prof. Lakshman Alwis and Prof. Willie Mendis further consolidated the postgraduate courses in Architecture and Town and Country Planning respectively, which were developed to the present status of courses recognised by the international community. In association with the above courses, the Faculty now conducts postgraduate training programmes in Architectural Conservation of Monuments and Sites, Landscape Design, Urban Development, Housing Development, Land-use Planning & Resource Management and Project Management.

The Faculty readily responded to the man

power requirements of the country by creating new study programs to train personnel required for national development. Prof. Nimal de Silva commenced the ACOMAS course in 1983 in response to a national demand, under the auspices of the UNESCO - Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Project. During the late 1980s Prof. Ashley Perera expanded the post graduate programs in Planning to fulfil a requirement of the Urban Development Authority which created a demand for planners when they expanded their development activities to the provinces. The M.Sc. course in Landscape Design was commenced in 1987 by Archt Ms Shiranee Balasuriya, in association with Dr. John Byrom from Edinburgh, to fulfil a national demand for Landscape Architects whose task is to maintain a balance between the natural and built environment under the auspices of the UDA. In the year 2000, the undergraduate course in Design was commenced in the Department of Architecture to train students in the field of Fashion & Textile Design, Jewellery Design, Furniture Design, Ceramic Design, Graphic Design and Communication Arts. This pioneered General design education in the Sri Lankan University system as being the first-degree program in this discipline.

To be continued