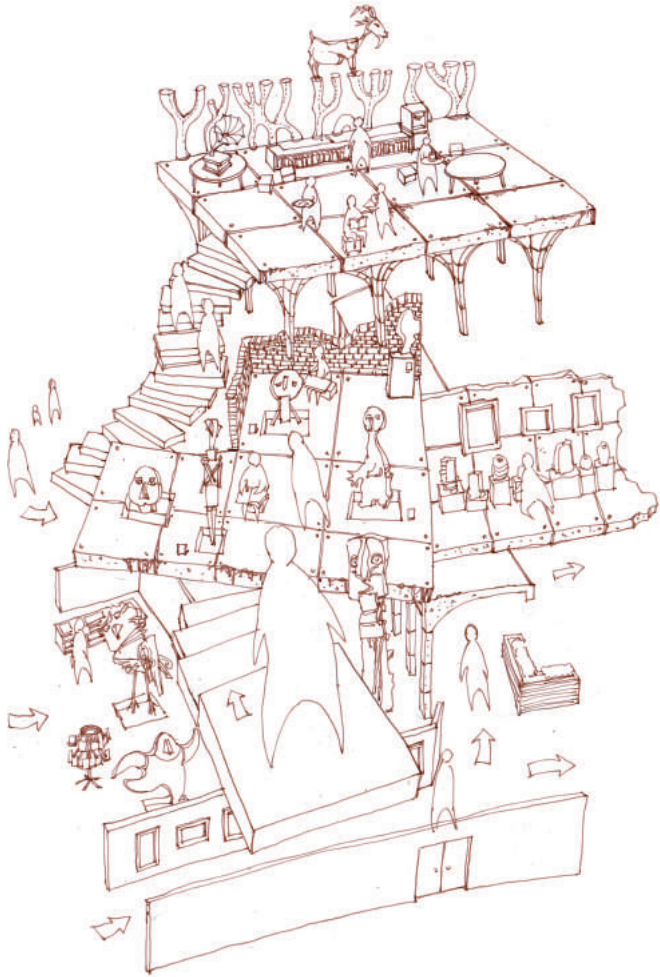


architecture + bluecoat



Whilst an interesting and significant building in its own right, Bluecoat is intrinsically linked to the progress and practice of architecture in Liverpool.

Linked exhibitions of rarely seen archival material and live events will explore a number of themes: the early architectural history of the Bluecoat building, the ever-changing nature of the physical space as it grew from a small parish charity school, to a building accommodating 350 pupils in a booming city and those who built it alongside the relationship to the wider built environment of Liverpool.

This thread will be followed through to the building's transformation into the UK's first arts centre. For several years in the early 20th century it was the location for the University of Liverpool's pioneering School of Architecture and Civic Design under Professor Charles Reilly, where the arts and architecture coexisted thanks to the influence of the co-resident Sandon group of artists.

The building later became home to Liverpool Architectural Society and of Liverpool architecture practices. The awareness of and affection towards the building from a large number of skilled architects is key to the renovation following the war damage of 1941 and this phase will be examined in the context of the numerous historic changes, and the extensive renovation and new building of 2008 to create a purpose built contemporary gallery space.

Architecture + Bluecoat: Process and Product draws on these themes and highlights new work produced by current students of the School of Architecture, responding to the existing structure and site of Bluecoat, imagining new solutions to the problems of accommodating the contemporary in the heart of a historic structure and suggests avenues for future discussion.

Bluecoat
School Lane
Liverpool L1 3BX
T 0151 702 5324



Architecture + Bluecoat Process and Product 22 April - 16 June 2017

Monday - Sunday 10am - 6pm

Exhibition at Bluecoat by the
Liverpool School of Architecture

Curated by Marco Iuliano
and organised with Jane Moscardini,
Carla Molinari and LSA's students.

Texts: Marco Iuliano (p.1-2),
LSA Studio Two (p. 3-4), Emily Harris (p. 5),
Gavin Davenport (back cover).

Layout: Luciano Striani
Printing: Printfine, Liverpool

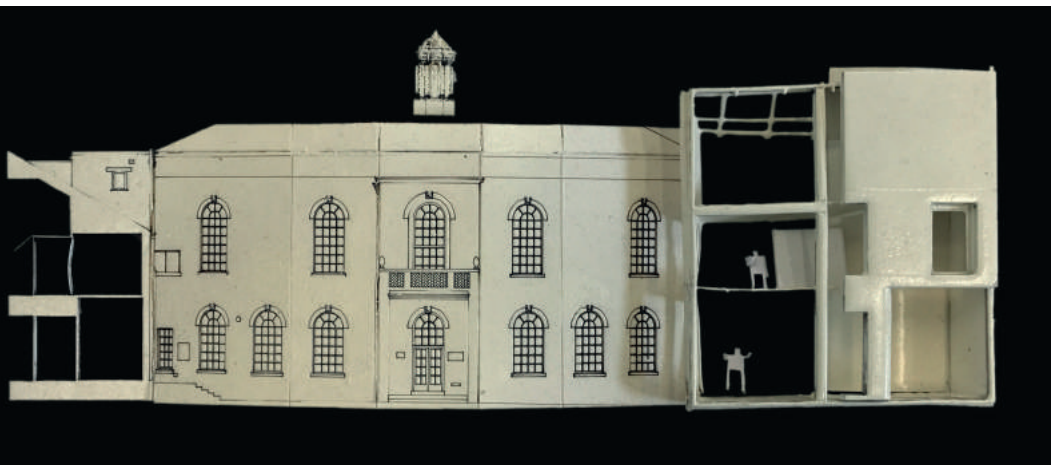
Students' works: Shan Yang (cover),
Siqi Chen (p. 1-2), Na Hu (p. 3, model),
Liu Xin (p. 3, plan), Yusheng Huang
(p. 4, sketch), Miao Yuwei (p. 4, axo),
Emily Harris (p. 5, development plans),
Ed Tan (poster), Renfang Man (watercolour).

Thanks to: Bryan Biggs, Gavin Davenport
(Bluecoat); Sandra Allen and Ben Duvall
(LSA); Lee Bennet (Sheppard Robson);
Jo Klett (University of Liverpool
Special Collections and Archives);
John McCall Architects (Liverpool).

with support from
SHEPPARD ROBSON

architecture + bluecoat

Bluecoat is Liverpool's pulsating cultural hub. It is the oldest building in town and the oldest UK arts centre, currently celebrating its 300-year anniversary (1717-2017). During the academic year 2016-17, the University of Liverpool School of Architecture established a close collaboration with Bluecoat, which was intended as a real, demanding client. The connection with the arts centre went beyond any expectation and generated an extraordinary exchange with the staff of Bluecoat, who constantly welcomed the students and the teaching team and participated in Studio criticism sessions during the reviews of the students' work. A rewarding pedagogical experience, now turned into a playful exhibition.



Architecture + Bluecoat: process and product is part of the wider show on the relationship between the discipline and the arts centre. It pays tribute to the tradition of arts and crafts without neglecting the contemporary digital realm. The purpose is to revive the traditional presence of architecture in the building: as the historical section of the show explains, the architects at Bluecoat were part of the original plan set by Charles Reilly at the beginning of the 20th century, when he was able to move the School of Architecture into the Bluecoat premises. Architecture in between the arts - a close interaction between disciplines that is also the core of the Studio pedagogy.

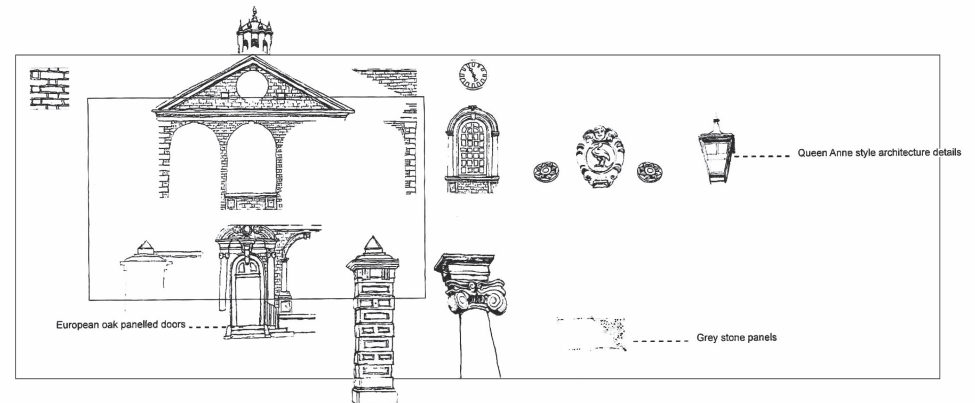
The students had to rethink (and re-build) the contemporary and successful gallery wing completed by BiQ Architects less than ten years ago in 2008.

Following an intense semester of study by the third year Studio Two students a cross-section of their work was selected for the exhibition. Craftsmanship as a way of thinking pushed the students to 'invade' Bluecoat and produce observational sketches, make trials on tracing paper and explore space via experimental cardboard models. The final stage of the process focused on digital work, with the students producing digital prints and laser-cut or 3D printed models. Technology is seen as an important tool exploited to deliver in collaboration with traditional, thought-provoking devices.

The architectural mock-ups on the closing wall of the show are hand-made and you can try to slot them into the site-model - but handle them with care please!

In the spirit of the partnership between the University and Bluecoat, alongside the Bachelor's work, space has also been given to the Master's study of unpublished architectural drawings housed at Bluecoat. This work has helped to reconsider the history of the building after the 1941 blitz and as a result of the collaboration, historically important material - 185 architectural drawings - will be permanently donated to the University of Liverpool Special Collections, which already holds a considerable amount of documents on Bluecoat during the early 20th century.

There are several people to thank for this joint effort: apart from Charles Reilly, without whom we would probably not be here celebrating Architecture at Bluecoat, they are listed at the end of this booklet.

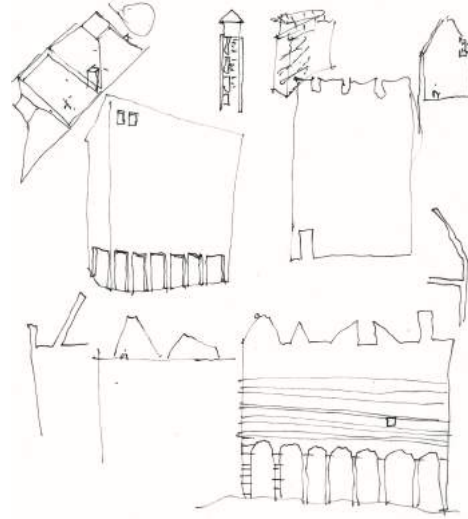


Process, stage 1 *sketching, mapping*

In the digital age, the importance of the sketch is crucial. Hand drawings are a tool to represent the world around us detached from a screen and then to think about the physical space: how do we perceive it? How is it organised? And, in a gallery, what is the relationship between the visitor and the artwork? How does the circulation work? This section shows some of the explorations the students were asked to make via sketches and collages, in order to map the existing environment and the immediate context.

Process, stage 2 *early concepts*

The relationship with the physical context brings in some crucial reflections to the design process. The project can be built only in one place: history and even constraints can act as a driver. We push to imagine different possibilities and to discuss them, in order to intellectualise the design. Explorations on tracing paper embed the previous studies and are the embryo of the project.



Process, stage 3 *craft a model*

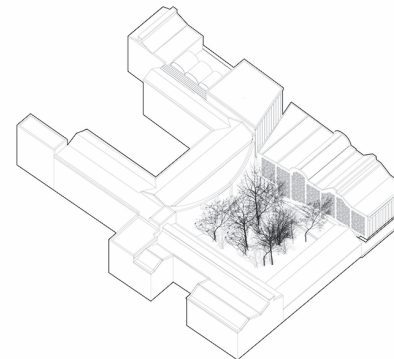
Usually models are a device to understand and facilitate the volume design and its relationships with the context. Testing shapes, changing forms, dimensions and combinations: the students used models in order to study different solutions, define the masses and the voids of their project, explore space, light, atmosphere, scale and proportion but also to understand the existing spaces of Bluecoat.

Product *digital representations*

This section shows the digital representations of the students' projects from the first phases of analysis, to the development of concepts and schemes through to the final visualisation. Digital tools are necessary instruments to express and narrate the design results, but also the different stages of the project. Technology allows powerful explorations and engages people, but it is fundamental for designers to combine the digital skills within the design process in a coherent way.

Trial *the results*

This section has been conceived especially for the exhibition. It aims to show all the different solutions developed by the students. You can take the 1:200 model and insert it into the site-model. What are the new relationships created? What kind of space results? How is the original Bluecoat changed by this addition? Find your favourite model and check the solution in the real context.

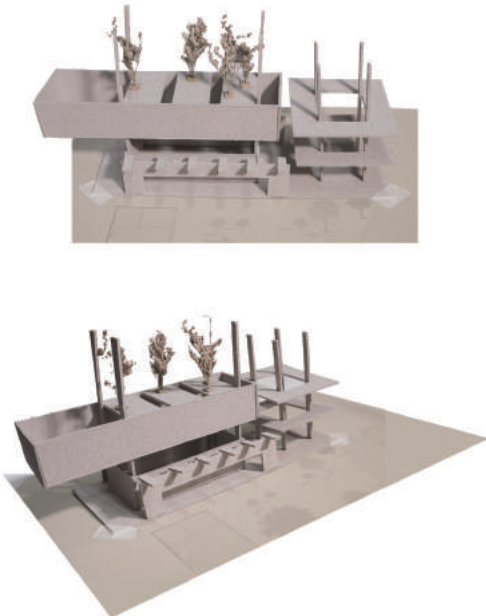
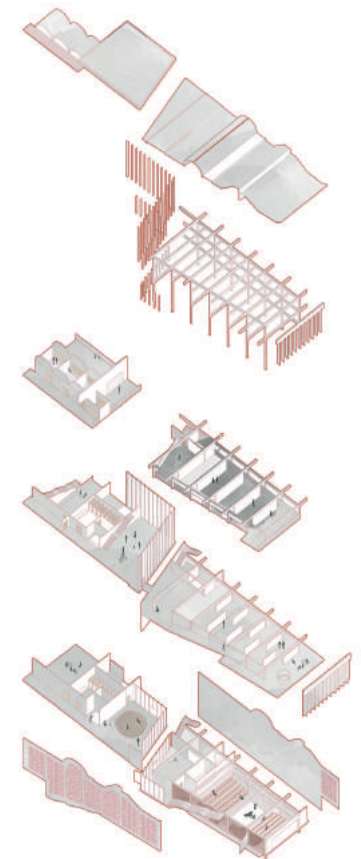


Studio Two: Marco Iuliano (lead)
Valentino Capelo, James Jones,
Carla Molinari and Jane Moscardini

Visiting Professor: Michael Wilford

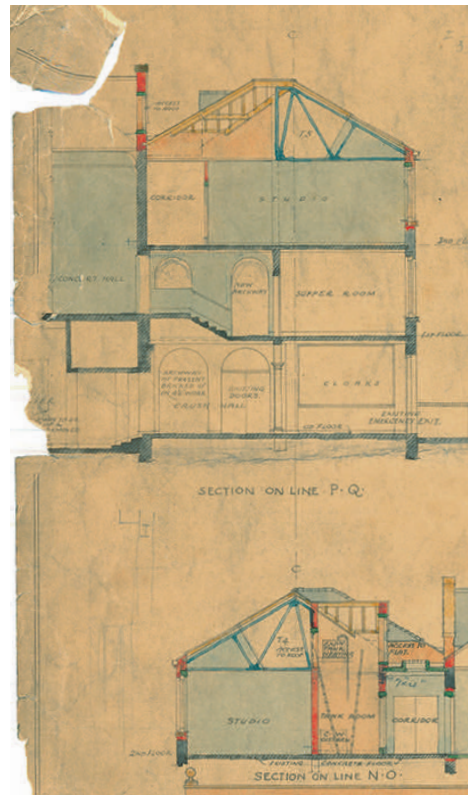
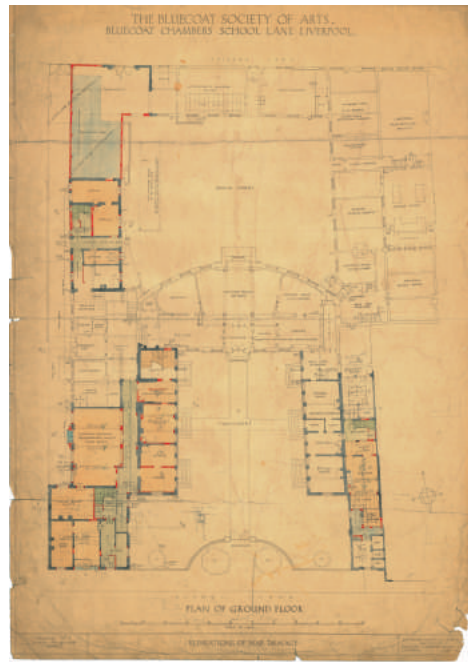
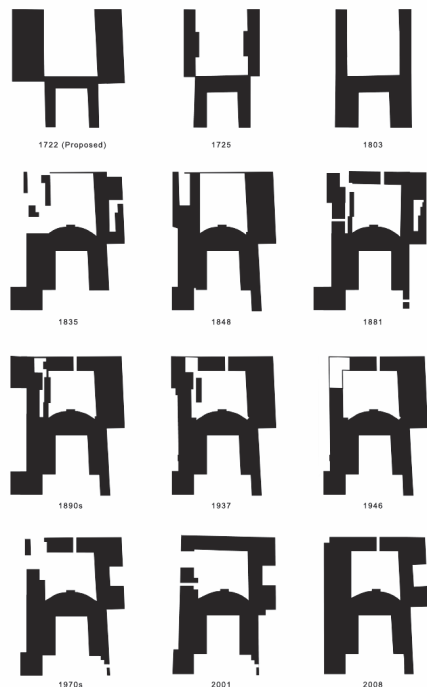
Students

Cristina Alexe, Xiangyu Chen, Siqi Chen,
Ka Cheung, Michael Egan, Chu Guo,
Yan He, Na Hu, Yusheng Huang,
Michael Hui, Huayu Jin, Justin Lau,
Sheng Li, Xiaojie Li, Yijia Li, Luqian Lin,
Xin Liu, Renfang Man, Jiani Lu,
Yixuan Mei, Yuwei Miao, Cheng Qian,
Kajetan Swieczkowski, Edmund Tan,
Kit Wan, Wiki Weng, Emma Yang,
Shan Yang, Xuhuai Yu, Jinbang Zhang,
Kexin Zhang, Ruihui Zhang, Xiaoran Zhang,
Benyang Zhou, Yingyang Zhou, Mingke Zhu



Bluecoat has an evolving layered history with an original Queen Anne Style forecourt and later Georgian, Victorian, 20th and 21st century additions. Previous research and analysis have overlooked the mid-late 20th century 'layer', which as an art centre is a very significant period. Historic drawings were recently discovered at the Bluecoat which had not been previously analysed for scholarly intent. The concept of authenticity is highlighted by these drawings demonstrating the significance of the heritage site.

Below: development of the Bluecoat, 1722-2008; Right: 1947 ground floor plan, elevations and sections (detail)



[...] I should be glad if you would inform the Council why, in my opinion, it would greatly benefit the University School of Architecture to be housed in the Old Blue Coat School.

[...] A well equipped school should in my opinion contain, in addition to studio and lecture rooms, museums of casts and models, a further museum of furniture and Applied Art. All these should be housed in a building of Architectural merit. By this I mean a building of fine proportion and shape rather than one of decorative or ornate character.

The new School of Architecture at Harvard - a simple classic building - contains all that I have suggested above and is a good example of what is required. The ideal position for such a building would be one which, while sufficiently near to the other University Buildings would yet to be accessible at all times to the Architects and their assistants who are at work in the town.

The Old Blue Coat Buildings, while not perhaps entirely the type of building one would erect for the purpose of a School of Architecture, yet in capacity, architectural merit and picturesque charm, and above all situation, so nearly fulfil the ideal that it would seem a great gain if the School could be permanently and adequately housed in them, especially if the rest of the building could be devoted to galleries and studios for Architects and other Artists. [...] A further gain would be accomplished by the housing of the Liverpool Architectural Society and its library, adjacent to the School as has already happened in the case of the Law School. [...]

Every Paris architect, of any standing, takes not only an interest but an active part in the working of the École des Beaux Arts, with the result that the School has for two centuries moulded the Architecture of France and latterly of America too. [...]

Charles H. Reilly



Photograph of the Bluecoat in 1913
Frieze noting: "University of Liverpool 1717
School of Architecture and
Civic Design 1910 Liberty Buildings";
University of Liverpool, Special Collections,
Sydney Jones Library [D340/1/1].

The School of Architecture was housed at Bluecoat from 1909 until 1918.