

Claire Robinson - Board Member at Large

Biography

Clare Robinson, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Arizona, where she teaches courses in modern architectural history and theory. Robinson earned a Doctorate in Architecture from UC-Berkeley, an M.Arch from the GSD, and a B.A. from Smith College. Since 2001, she has taught at several universities and has received grants and awards for her research. Her current research examines architecture and planning in the mid-twentieth century, focusing on social environments of college campuses for their educational, social, and economic import, and as well as suburban middle-class aesthetics. In this work, she addresses socio-economic conditions and the ways architecture has served and continues to be an instrument of social education and class realization.

Statement

Each time I have prepared an abstract, paper, and presentation for an annual ARCC conference, and every time I evaluate nominations for student research at my own institution, I am reminded of how the Architectural Research Consortium promotes excellence among students, faculty, and professionals. ARCC maintains a robust double-blind peer review process necessary to research, scholarship, and the production of knowledge. More important, the sum of ARCC's commitments to peer review, award programs, emerging scholars, and research culture, are invaluable to the field of architecture, research centers, and institutions of higher education. I would be honored to serve ARCC as an "at large" director by contributing to and strengthening programs in research, especially collaborative research across architecture's sub-disciplines.

As both a designer and architectural historian, my own research treats the totality of the built environment, including design processes and unbuilt work, as a manifestation of social, political, and technological change. Viewed in this way, architecture freights meaning, has various purposes, and provides evidence for political change, technological invention, and social ambition, among many other things. In my research, architecture and urban history not only informs current practices and theory (as precedents) but also models how architecture and the built environment embody a social, political, and economic present. As such, methods in architectural history, including visual, spatial, comparative, and discursive analysis, lend strategies to the interpretation of both the past and present. All this is to say that a historian's contribution to research culture is not merely context for the compelling societal and technological questions of today, but more accurately a suite of approaches that may rigorously examine present humanistic problems, including problems presented by science and technology.

As an at large director on ARCC's board, I would not only work to strengthen humanities research at ARCC and other conferences, but also seek ways to meaningfully link humanities research to research in science, technology, engineering, and math. Whether through research

at member schools, collaborative grants, or conference sessions, humanities research can contribute important cultural dimensions to studies concerning building performance, integrated technology, sustainability, and emerging building materials. I would also work with board members to develop strategies and facilitate efforts that enable research assimilation into curriculums and professional practice. Given my experience and role as an educator in a professional architecture program, I would place a focus on how research experiences may be introduced into undergraduate and graduate professional programs (where research methods are often minimally present) to expose future design professionals to the methods and merits of research. My view is that research in professional programs could distinguish and propel the profession of architecture forward, if not simply provide the seeds for research programs in professional offices. My interests and work as a director would thus complement ARCC's ongoing activities that support the exchange of information about research programs, projects, and infrastructure, and generally promote research culture.

As a director, I would willingly perform needed committee work, including everyday and extraordinary board activity. Having organized or assisted with conferences in the past, I am especially prepared to assist with or lead the organization of ARCC conferences in the future. Also, having founded a critical journal with architecture students, I am interested and able to support the dissemination of architectural knowledge through publications. Regardless of the specific roles I could fill, I would welcome the opportunity to collaborate, develop, and facilitate research with ARCC's board and member schools.