



TED CAVANAGH

Ted entered teaching from his own award-winning practice twenty years ago and continues to focus on architectural design. After a break to complete his doctorate in the history of technology, his design work is appearing again in international architectural magazines. In March 2004, his coastal design work appeared in *Architectural Design*, and a children's theatre for the coastal community of Chéticamp, completed in collaboration with **Richard Kroeker** and **Roger Mullin (M.Arch.98)**, will be in the May 2005 issue of *Journal of Architectural Education*. His work was published previously in *Metropolis*, *Architectural Review*, *Progressive Architecture*, *OnSite* and a number of times in *Canadian Architect*. Most of these publications demonstrate his belief in collaborative design and client participation.

Particularly since the loss of the professional Bachelor of Architecture across North America, debate has increased on the role of research in schools of architecture. Most schools now require a PhD degree in any new faculty hire, a simple strategy to elevate their research agendas. The question is: Will this new agenda advance the profession of architecture? Or, perhaps, since research has rarely been applied effectively, phrased less skeptically: How can research at schools of architecture advance the profession of architecture? Ted answers this way: "I think we need new models of cooperation that combine teaching and practice. Schools can advance the profession of architecture, extending the field, adding to its credibility, and do it in ways where academics don't compete with licensed practitioners. This is evident in our design research in ocean space; we're exploring new potential for architectural practice. I honour this principle in all my research."

At McGill University, Ted's teacher Peter Collins linked an understanding of building materials with architectural theory – something Ted has developed in practice and in teaching. While starting his dissertation in the History of Technology with Tom Peters at Lehigh University, he began to publish in history. Two articles on early balloon frame construction and one book review essay on technology and place appeared in

the *Journal of Architectural Education*. He is currently in his second term as a member of the *JAE* editorial board. With Ed Allen, he edited a theme issue "Construction and Context: History, Theory and Practice" in September 2004. Other writing includes a book chapter "Revaluing Wood" in *Sustainable Architectures* (Routledge, 2004) with **Richard Kroeker**, a chapter on the US frontier architect-anthropologist Oliver Smith in *Architects and Their Books* (UMass Press, 2005) and two books, one in a series published by the Library of Congress and W.W. Norton titled *Building with Wood*, a history of timber and lumber construction in the USA, and a second book based on his dissertation.

Like many, Ted believes that research must advance theory. The two concepts of "place" and "invention" are important to architecture. He seeks insight by studying two exceptional cases – the nineteenth century introduction of wood frame and the spatial design of the ocean today – to validate and challenge our understanding of place and invention. The case of the balloon frame raises issues of origin, epistemology, cultural invention, and technological hybridity. Its geographic diffusion considers standardization, rural frontier technology, and institution of cultural practice. He analyzes the technological and cultural implications of a practice that has resisted change and dominated competitive practices for two centuries. In the case of ocean design, traditional knowledge and vernacular practices of ocean use, settlement and inhabitation find no easy political or graphic representation in current government initiatives, environmental management or, indeed, in contemporary theories of place and locality.

How does this all come together? Realizing projects promoting real change is not based on single-minded creativity but, as Ted says: "It's based on working for diversity, both natural biodiversity and its human aspects – particularly the creativity found in plural points of view and multiple cultures. As architects we naturally cross boundaries and work on many projects at once; we have to understand how to do this better". Ted can be contacted by e-mail: ted.cavanagh@dal.ca