

## HONORARY GRADUATE

### Jane Beverly Drew

Jane Drew, an architect of international repute, has, through her involvement in the Department of Architecture of this university, made a valuable contribution to architectural education. She has used her considerable influence to re-establish the stature of architectural degrees at the 'open' universities in South Africa which were eclipsed during the apartheid era. She was well qualified to evaluate South African standards because of her unique experience in bridging developed and developing architectural practice.

In collaboration with acknowledged leaders in architecture in Europe, she was one of the leading exponents of the Modern Movement prior to World War II. Born in 1911, Jane Drew qualified at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, where she began to evolve a fundamental principle which later became the hallmark of her professional career: that teamwork and urban design, informed by social need, is the prerogative of the architect.

After the war she was appointed chairperson of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) exhibition on rebuilding Britain, held at the National Gallery. This was done in close collaboration with Kenneth (later Lord) Clarke and set the course for architectural developments in post-war Britain.

Following this, Jane Drew was appointed Town Planning Adviser for British West African Colonies, and she consequently worked extensively in Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia and Sierra Leone. A remarkable feature of her work in these countries was her ability to absorb social, cultural, technological and environmental factors and to synthesize them in the architecture of schools, colleges, housing and hospitals, and in town plans. This approach is most notable in the design of the University of Ibadan, and led to her being appointed to develop model schools for the Kikuyu people of Kenya.

Her architectural philosophy was marked by a rejection of colonialist attitudes. She recognized that appropriate architectural design should incorporate local social and environmental factors. The pioneering work that flowed from this philosophy formed the basis of her appointment as consultant to other developing countries, most notably India. Here, together with her partner, Maxwell Fry, and the leading French Modernist, Le Corbusier, she was commissioned to design the capital city for the Punjab at Chandigarh. Her particular contribution was in housing 20 000 people in under three years.

Jane Drew understood that to respond appropriately to the socio-economic needs of societies in less developed countries, further research was required. This culminated in several influential books on tropical architecture which she co-authored with Maxwell Fry.

Her influence on the Department of Architecture in this university, as well as the value of her theoretical and applied work, cannot be over-estimated. She has visited the department on several occasions, during which time she has given lectures and acted as external examiner and design critic.

Jane Drew stressed the role that the 'open' universities had played at the forefront of resistance to apartheid. Therefore, when in April 1986 the Royal Institute of British Architects decided, as a political gesture, to withdraw accreditation from the degrees of South African universities, including the University of the Witwatersrand, she was strongly opposed to this action. Her contribution and efforts have recently been rewarded by a reversal of the RIBA policy towards this university, as well as to the Universities of Natal and Cape Town.

Furthermore, she has the capacity to bridge the gap between the architectural imperatives of a developed and developing world situation. This is evident in her work in the United Kingdom, which includes factories for Rolls Royce; sea-rescue craft factories during the 1939-45 war; the Dow chemical factory in King's Lynn; exhibition buildings, such as those for the Festival of Britain; hospitals, such as at Torbay in Devonshire; and the Open University at Milton Keynes. In contrast, there are her universities, schools, hospitals, clinics and housing in Africa, India and the Middle East. These contrasts and the approach adopted to deal with vastly divergent social and contextual circumstances contain many lessons for contemporary architecture students at this university.

But these lessons are meaningful also for the practice of architecture in South Africa and the sub-continent as a whole. In the way that she has adapted international, Modernist, principles of design to the needs and concerns of disadvantaged communities of the less developed countries, she has provided an important beacon for students and practitioners. Her architecture is an excellent example of that which is appropriate to the further development of society in the region.

Jane Drew holds honorary doctorates from three universities: the University of Ibadan, the Open University, and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. She has been awarded five honorary fellowships by institutes of architecture in the United States and Africa, including the South African Institute of Architects. She is also an honorary fellow of Hull University, and she has held professorships at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University and the University of Utah.

We take pride in recognising the outstanding contribution Jane Beverly Drew has made to the theory and practice of architecture in developing countries, as well as to architectural education in South Africa, particularly at this university, by conferring on her the degree of Doctor of Architecture *honoris causa*.