**Association of Architecture School Librarians**

**2016 Annual Conference Report**

Jessica Aberle, Graduate Research Assistant

Architecture & Planning Library, The University of Texas at Austin

2016 Recipient of the Student Travel Award

I want to begin by offering my gratitude to the members of the AASL awards committee by providing me with the opportunity to attend my first AASL Annual Conference, which was jointly held in Seattle, Washington, March 10-13, 2016 with ARLIS/NA and VRA. I would also like to thank Mar González Palacios for all the work she did to organize this great conference!

Presentations

I was invited to serve on the programming committee for this year’s conference with Katie Pierce Meyer, Beth Dodd, and Mar González Palacios. While I have presented at conferences and co-chaired an unconference, I had not had the opportunity to participate in planning a professional conference. With the invitation, I made the decision to experience as many aspects of the programming part as I could- planning, moderating, and presenting. I spent the fall semester working with the committee to develop the lightning talks and paper sessions. As a member of the program committee, I also served as a moderator for one of the sessions. Prior to AASL I had not moderated a conference session, I realize now that like presenting moderating is skill that requires practice. Finally, the conference furthermore provided a platform to present on a DH project with which I was involved at Lehigh University. I gave a lightning talk on [Still Looking for You](https://memories.lehigh.edu/), which examines the intersection of place, memory, and identity, in the session, *Co-Constructing and Documenting Place*.

As my goal is to pursue a librarian position in an academic architecture library, I am interested in the role the library can play as not only a place of scholarship but also as a partner in the production of scholarship. I was therefore looking forward to several of the presentations. Luke Leither, Erin Carraher, and Greg Hatch from the University of Utah spoke about successful partnerships in their presentation, *Design-Model-Build: Interdisciplinary Partnerships with Real-World Impact*. By partnering with Carraher, Liether and Hatch were able to provide her students with “authentic learning experiences.” The studio focused on re-envisioning real spaces within the library. Viveca Robichaud presented her project, *Building South Bend: Past, Preset, Future*. The project was a collaborative effort between Notre Dame’s Architecture Library, Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend and St. Joseph County, and The History Museum. Her project is an example of the type of scholarship and collaboration, I would love develop. According to the website, “The goal of the project is to create an online resource to study the past, present, and future architecture in the city of South Bend. In order to achieve this the team has created a website, mobile application, 3D printed models, and an immersive 3D virtual tour of downtown South Bend in the 1920’s.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Finally, I found Robert Adam’s lightning talk, *A Year of Collaborative Outreach, Beyond the Stacks* *and on the Move*, incredibly useful. I particularly liked his implementation of the mobile library in which books are selected for and brought into the studios, allowing the students to examine and check them out. I am always looking for new ideas to engage students in their spaces more effectively.

Building Networks

One of the reasons I was excited to attend AASL this year was the chance to reconnect with my mentor, Ann Whiteside. Ann was the architecture librarian at the University of Virginia when I began my graduate studies and my model of architecture librarianship. She also hired me to work in the Visual Resource Center of the Fine Arts Library, providing my first opportunity to undertake library work. A few years ago, she and I established a more formal mentorship (via phone calls and email) to discuss current issues facing both academic libraries generally and architecture libraries specifically. During the conference we were able to meet and discuss both my progress in school and plans after graduation.

The conference also afforded the opportunity to meet other architecture and art librarians thereby expanding my professional network. As a member of the programming committee for this year’s conference, I had participated in numerous planning meetings with the other committee members. It was a delight to be able to meet and chat with them in person. The Strategic Planning Session not only provided insight into the history of our organization (which was greatly appreciated as a new member), but it also gave me the chance to meet other members of AASL and help map the organization’s future. As the conference was jointly held, I had the opportunity to meet the members of the Texas-Mexico Chapter of ARLIS/NA. I promptly became a member and look forward to working with my local peers.

Seattle’s Architecture

Finally, I want to conclude by thanking Chris Sala and Jeff Ross for putting together an excellent tour program for all of us. This trip was my first time to Seattle. The architectural historian in me was thus excited to experience some of the city. My favorite tour was “Pike/Pine: Change on the Urban Scale” with two guides from the Architecture Foundation. The tour was incredibly informative. The guides discussed the neighborhood’s transition from the automotive district of the early twentieth century (many of the buildings are former garages and showrooms!) to the counter culture/LGBT epicenter. The neighborhood is again in transition, and our guides discussed how the new changes are affecting the character of the neighborhood. Finally, I explored Seattle on my extra day thanks to a well-timed spring break. My hit list included Frank Gehry’s EMP Museum (I rather loved the ebb and flow the structure), the Seattle Space Needle, the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum, and Hat ‘n’ Boots. I love roadside architecture; therefore, I had been looking forward to seeing [Hat ‘n’ Boots](http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/2235) from the earliest days of preparing for the conference!

1. *Building South Bend: Past, Preset, Future*, accessed 5/10/2016, <http://buildingsouthbend.nd.edu/about/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)