RE: SOA Independent Student Travel Scholarships

Architectural History and Theory
Project: Dissertation Research, RIBA Archives, London, United Kingdom

I am applying for assistance to travel to the archives of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London, England, for two weeks of research during the summer of 2012. It is necessary for me to conduct research in the RIBA collections while writing my dissertation, entitled “‘The Architect in Every Home’: Television and Popular American Architecture.” I advanced to candidacy last fall (November 2011), and I need to conduct this research in the summer before focusing on writing. The RIBA archives contain the most important materials on the British component of my research on modern architecture, publicity, and television.

My dissertation will investigate institutional approaches to public relations and broadcast technology, focusing on Britain and America’s professional design institutes: RIBA and AIA. British architects were the first to engage television broadcasters in professional collaborations. In 1947, RIBA organized a subcommittee on Sound Broadcasting and Television as part of its Public Relations Committee. The subcommittee’s regular agenda topics included ways to use broadcasting media in publicizing the profession and how to promote radio and television broadcasts on architecture and related subjects. In 1964, the committee commissioned a six-month study by John Donat, during which he surveyed television and radio broadcasts on the subject of architecture and made connections with producers at the BBC and the Independent Television companies. RIBA also sponsored the Architects’ Radio and Television Club, an obscure group of architects that, in 1969, spearheaded the Campaign for Better Broadcasting in response to a BBC report, Broadcasting in the Seventies, that proposed ending the Third Programme radio network, the BBC’s leading source on cultural and art programming. Drawing from materials in the RIBA archives, I will reconstruct these institutional developments, presenting the RIBA’s approach to media as a progressive counterpoint to the AIA’s early efforts.

The RIBA archives include multiple collections relating to this history: Papers relating to the Campaign for Better Broadcasting, 1969-1970; Sound Broadcasting and Television Subcommittee minutes & papers, 1947-1961; Public Affairs Board minutes & papers, 1971-1975; and Films Subcommittee minutes, 1944-1961. These collections house a variety of materials, including drafts and copies of RIBA publications addressing public relations and
broadcast media; transcripts and meeting minutes for various subcommittees; correspondence; administrative files, including membership records and accounts; statements of other organizations in response to RIBA efforts; and press-cuttings related to publicity campaigns. These materials are housed in the RIBA Architecture Study Rooms in the Victoria and Albert Museum. I have communicated with archival staff and identified the extent of materials that relate to my project.

These extensive collections contain information and materials that are little known and yet to be fully exploited, making the archives an exciting resource for my dissertation. My work will be the first scholarly study of the relationship between publicity, broadcast media, and the design professions. Specifically, my dissertation will include the first history of the RIBA’s treatment of television, radio, and film media. I also intend to publish this material as a scholarly article and to present on my findings at academic conferences in the coming years.

**Estimated Expenses** (for June 1-15, 2012)
Flight, Austin, Texas to London, United Kingdom: $1,100.00
Accommodations, hostel/apartment sublet, 14 nights, $80/night: $1,120.00
Miscellaneous (transportation, food, bills), $70/day: $980.00
Estimated Trip Expenses: $3,200.00

**Project Schedule**
Fall 2011: Dissertation Colloquium; advanced to candidacy (November 2011)
Spring 2012: Literature review; research in US archives; complete dissertation outline
Summer 2012: Travel to RIBA archives, London, United Kingdom
Fall 2012: Writing period (continued into 2013)