

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Keith P. Mitnick, assistant professor of architecture, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of architecture, with tenure, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Academic Degrees:

M.Arch.	1996	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1987	Antioch College

Professional Record:

2002-Present	Principal, Mitnick Roddier Hicks, Ann Arbor, Michigan
2001-Present	Assistant Professor of Architecture, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan
2000-2001	Walter B. Sanders Fellow, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan
1999-2000	Lecturer, University of California, Berkeley
1997-1999	Junior Architect, JSW Architects, Berkeley, California
1996-1997	Junior Architect, Gensler Architects, San Francisco, California

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Mitnick teaches architectural design studios in both the undergraduate and graduate programs, has been a regular contributor to the M.Arch thesis program, and has introduced a seminar on architectural criticism that is much admired by students. Although Professor Mitnick’s design talents make him a natural leader in the studio culture of the College, he actively maintains studio’s creative and critical stance across his full spectrum of teaching. In describing his pedagogy, Professor Mitnick writes, “While these courses can easily be divided along the lines of design and criticism, it has been my aim to integrate the themes and methods of both by incorporating a strong theoretical framework in my studio teaching and encouraging a high degree of creative exploration in the seminars.”

In recent years, Professor Mitnick has been regularly coordinating the senior undergraduate studios, which are among the most demanding in the school. In one instance the studio work was exhibited at its study site, the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh; to achieve this is unusual in the College. Moreover, because coordinated studios are the lifeblood of architecture programs, in terms of time and energy devoted by all involved—typically six instructors, 80-90 students per semester, and 15 contact hours per week—an ability to raise the intellectual common denominators can have a widespread effect on the College.

Research – Professor Mitnick’s primary contribution lies in architectural design, and he has been designing at a rate that adds luster to the architecture faculty and program. Through his small firm, he has worked at institutional, residential, and landscape scales, and at each of these the work has earned recognition in the form of awards, competition winnings, and exhibitions. Such a broad trajectory is unusual for someone on the assistant professor track. Professor Mitnick has been the lead designer and point person for the direction and development of the firm’s work, initiating the conceptual directions and formal premises upon which the projects have been founded.

Broad recognition has been achieved in peer-reviewed venues: as finalist in one national and in one international design competition (respectively the Landed Competition sponsored by the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2005, and the Garden Festival Competition in Chaumont-sur-Loire, France, 2007), and as recipient of several design awards: the Design Vanguard Award sponsored by the leading American architectural publication, *Architectural Record* (2005); an ACSA Faculty Design Award, sponsored by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (2004); the Young Architects Forum of the Architectural League of New York (2004); and an "Unbuilt Architecture Award" sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects (2003). The latter four awards are the primary American programs for the recognition of promising architectural talent. Such an illustrious record of external validation at a national and international level is exceptional among recent cases of promotion to associate professor in the college's Architecture Program.

The design work has been featured in a remarkable range of periodicals, exhibition catalogues, and newspaper reviews, and has appeared in seventeen articles in four countries since 2002. Few design faculty members in the college have received such regular press coverage over this period. The firm's work was also included in seven peer-reviewed exhibitions and in another exhibition by invitation.

Through his design work Professor Mitnick has, in a relatively short time span, achieved significant recognition in his field. His agenda for future work is to pursue a broader range of project types that will enable him to expand upon the architectural issues addressed thus far in the practice. Professor Mitnick's theoretical approach to design fits well with the current objectives of the Architecture Program, just as his ongoing commitment to a speculative design practice holds great promise for the future development of the firm's work.

Recent and Significant Works:

- 2007 "SX/Green:Big Ideas, Small Buildings," Phyllis Richardson, London, pp 38-41 (for Split/View Pavillion) (Publication of design work).
- 2005 "Design Vanguard," Suzanne Stephens, *Architectural Record*, vol 193, no. 12, pp. 130-133 (Publication of design work).
- 2005 "If...Then/Young Architects 6," Stan Allen, Anne Resielbach, The Architectural League of New York, pp.98-123 (Publication of design work).
- 2005 AIDS Memorial Competition "Impromptu Vigil," California College of the Arts, San Francisco, California (Exhibition).
- 2005 "Signs of Materiality: Eduardo Souta Moura," *Betonart Turkish Journal of Architecture*, pp. 32-37, 89. (Publication).
- 2004 "Young Architects Forum Exhibit," Architectural League of New York, New York, NY (Exhibition).
- 2002 Faculty Design Awards Exhibit "Spertus Institute," Build Boston Conference, Boston, MA (Exhibition).
- 2002 Burnham Prize Finalists Exhibit "Spertus Institute," Spertus Museum of Jewish Studies, Chicago, IL (Exhibition).

Service - Professor Mitnick has been involved with two aspects of the Architecture Program most disposed toward intellectual currents in architecture, namely the program's curriculum committee (EPC) and annual searches for architecture faculty and visiting fellows. He has served three times on a faculty search committee, twice on the architecture fellowship search committee (once as chair), and twice on the faculty admissions committee. On a national level he has participated as a juror in a writing competition sponsored by the University of California, Berkeley, reviewed papers for the Berkeley-based journal *Places*, and reviewed papers and organized sessions for the ACSA, for which he was recognized with a service award (2005).

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I would not find his writing or course work as formidable if it were not backed up by design and I also find his design work to be the most rigorous of his contributions."

Reviewer B: "The student projects appear to be theoretically informed as well as formally advanced and engage [an] impressive range of scales, issues, and representational techniques. ... This studio has produced an impressive number of projects, many of which, although unbuilt, have been widely published and vetted by the architectural community."

Reviewer C: "The design work is consistent with his research and follows his thesis in a very disciplined way and is intimately connected to his written work."

Reviewer D: "The combination of intelligence of the design work, the proficiency of the built installation work, and the level of his production ... would make him a valuable member of any faculty."

Reviewer E: "In the past ten years I have reviewed many tenure dossiers, both as the chair of [my own] department of architecture and as an external reviewer. The candidates have been from universities such as Columbia, Princeton, Harvard, Penn, and Cornell. Mitnick's dossier is one of the best and amongst the top 10."

Reviewer F: "Mitnick seems a remarkable addition to your energetic faculty all who [sic] raise the level of the debate in most contemporary terms. ... the Spertus Institute, Burnham Prize is an impressive project for a ... architect, no for any architect given its urban context, cultural significances and frankly loaded tabernacle section."

Reviewer G: "In fact, the dossier presents an almost audacious breadth of thinking about writing about architecture."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Mitnick is a creative, promising architectural designer and an energetic critic, whose provocative body of professional work has gained a significant level of national recognition. By bringing this same speculative approach to his teaching, Professor Mitnick has proven to be a particularly valuable member of the Architecture Program's design faculty. These factors merit his promotion. The Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Executive Committee, and I are unanimous in recommending his promotion to associate professor of architecture, with tenure, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.



Douglas S. Kelbaugh, FAIA, Dean
A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

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