when the distinguishing ele-
uated—what he refers to as
and regions where they’re sit-
streets, neighborhoods, cities
emerging from the landscape.

Atkins Museum, in Kansas City,
MIT) suggests a giant sponge;
Simmons Hall (a dormitory at
in innovative ways. His
ings that use light and materials
in this great school."
Alan Brinkley introduced him
94th University Lecture
since 1981—appeared before
who has taught at Columbia
ful advice.
and computers, offering help-
go to his head. At Columbia’s

There was a time, Holl said,
would remain intact. Holl con-
said slyly, “is don’t always follow
from the existing structure,
to performing ways of building
which he considers to be a neo-
from the University authorities
the original site is still vacant.
thus “water is very important to
said he had grown up overlook-

Instead, he proposed building on
offered by the University.
rejected the site originally
art school at the University of
Holl was equally iconoclastic
Holl was barely backed his plan.
project produces maps that
address the problem by adding
in search of jobs, developers
have been putting up apart-
ment towers that bear no rela-
tionship to each other which in
Holl’s view diminishes the importance
of social interaction.
architect Rem Koolhaas.

The abstract forms of Holl’s
Iowa have been compared
dono a cubist construction
Holl said he had helped him
visit Iowa’s art department. “Once
they heard Picasso, there
wasn’t another bump,” he said,
said, referring to the some-
times tortuous approval process for a new building.

In Iowa City, where his new
art school at the University of
rejection the site originally
offered by the University. Instead
he proposed building on
the edge of a nearby pond. Holl
said he had grown up overlook-

The resulting building,
Holl’s building cantilevers
over the ground. As a result,
the original site is still vacant.
“They discovered they had a site
they didn’t know about,” said Holl—a key reason why
the University authorities
mately backed his plan.

The resulting forms of Holl’s
under the ground, in the

underground rooms will link
the old building to Holl’s addi-
tion, which will create new
sculptural elements within
an existing art park.

Holl was equally iconoclastic
in Cambridge, Mass., where
MIT commissioned him to
design a new dormitory. The
University told Holl that it
wanted a building as distinc-
tive as three of its other cam-
us landmarks—by 20th-cen-
ury masters Eero Saarinen and
Alvar Alto—but that the struc-
ture had to be made of brick,
and be seven stories high.

Holl asked for time to tweak
the plans. He wanted to find
ways to foster greater and differ-
ent forms of interaction among
students inside the building. He
also wanted the dorm to be
taller than seven stories, as well
as porous—allowing light and
views of the outdoors to pass
through the architecture.

For example, his Nelson-
Atkins Museum addition is defi-
nitely ‘in the ground.’
the museum’s competition called
for architects to propose ways
of building out from the back
of its existing building, which
Holl calls “the Metropolitan
Museum of the Midwest.”
Everyone else followed the rules,” said Holl, whereas
he took an unorthodox approach,
separating his buildings entirely
from the existing structure,
which he considers to be a neo-
classical temple to art. He got
the commission.

“The lesson to students,” he
didn’t always follow

Holl’s plan pleased preserva-
tionists because it meant that
the original museum building
would remain intact. Holl con-
trasted this approach to that
taken by the Metropolitan
Museum in New York as it
expanded. “The Met expanded
like a bag of cats—it grew and
grew and grew, and you can no
longer find the original build-
ing,” he said. In Kansas City,
underground rooms will link
the old building to Holl’s addi-
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The abstract forms of Holl’s
Iowa building have been com-
pared to a cubist construction
by Picasso—which Holl said
had helped him win over
Iowa’s art department. “Once
they heard Picasso, there
wasn’t another bump,” he said,
said, referring to the some-
times tortuous approval process for a new building.

Holl now has a much larger
project underway in China,
where, as people flock to cities
in search of jobs, developers
have been putting up apart-
ment towers that bear no rela-
tionship to each other which in
Holl’s view diminishes the importance
of social interaction.
architect Rem Koolhaas.

“Does anybody know an
operator for my cinémathèque?” he asked the Low Library
audience, only half-joking.”Right now, that’s the most
important part of this lecture.”

Composing, Policy and
Planning (GSAPP) has
transformed itself into a testing ground for new
ideas about the role of designers
in global society. Offering advanced
degrees in architecture, urban
design, urban planning, historic
preservation and real estate
development, the School currently
has an enrollment of 630 students
from some 55 countries.

Recently, the School has enjoyed
unprecedented visibility with two of
its most esteemed faculty being fea-
tured at University-wide events (see
write-ups above).

GSAPP has also been blazing a trail
with its active speaker series.
For instance, the Temple Hoyne
Buell Center for the Study of
American Architecture, a GSAPP affiliate,
recently organized an evening
lecture featuring Jose Rafael Moneo. This pro-
vided a chance for the Columbia

For more information on GSAPP, go to
www.arch.columbia.edu

In Iowa City, where his new
art school at the University of
Iowa is nearing completion, Holl
rejected the site originally
offered by the University. Instead,
his office worked with the
edge of a nearby pond. Holl
said he had grown up overlook-

The event featured
discussions from various
Columbia School of
Architecture students.

For example, the School’s
Spatial Information Design Lab (SIDL) is
entering the sec-
ond year of its
major block-by-
block study of
American pris-
oner reentry.

Directed by Laura
Kurgan of GSAPP
and Eric Cadara,
the project produces maps that
show the neighborhoods that have
the largest concentrations of former
prisoner inmates.

Because so little is done to reha-
bilitate former prisoners, and
many of them return to the
same neighborhoods with even fewer
prospects due to their prison
records, the great majority are re-
rested, creating a vicious cycle.

SIDL maps have already
been used in Congressional
hearings to document graphically
the neighborhoods with the highest
concentration of former prisoners and
discuss whether more justice dol-
lars should be spent on improving
these neighborhoods, particularly
given the expense of maintaining
state prisons, sometimes referred to
as ‘million dollar blocks.’

SIDL, which uses innovative
computer software, also exemplifies how
the use of advanced information
technology has been changing the
face of architecture studies. (See arti-
cle on page 7.)

GSAPP is also making strides in
publishing with two new publica-
tions: Future Anterior,
the first scholarly journal
devoted to preservation
theory; and VOLUME, an
experimental magazine
produced in partnership with
renowned Dutch
architect Rem Koolhaas.

The other news is that
Columbia School recent-
ly held its very first alumni weekend,
based around a lively symposium on
“The Future, for a New Con-
ception of the Environment.” The event featured
discussions from various
Columbia School of
Architecture students.