

PIP

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May/June 2015

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but our advice at this stage would be better.



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A change...

... in the political landscape brings the honeymoon period of imagining our democracy anew before the old cynicism sinks in. While I wait, my legs are crossed in anticipation of the Independent Options Appraisal into the Houses of Parliament's parlous state, due out in June. The eye-watering £3bn repair bill for Pugin and Barrie's 1870 building makes the 'scandalous' £414m paid for Enric Miralles' Holyrood in Edinburgh look positively parsimonious.

But why not move Parliament lock, stock and barrel out of the capital? Imagine: a bespoke building in central England that could be procured for a fraction of that £3bn. One that would portray new democracy, meet the needs of MPs, be a model of sustainable thinking, and erode the north/south divide. I've always dismissed the £43bn HS2 as a spectacular vanity project, but with a new Parliament directly above the Birmingham interchange connecting the north and Scotland

with London it would be a very different kettle of fish. The Palace of Westminster gets handed to SPAB to be put out to pasture, expenses claims from now Brum-based MPs fall, and the mother of parliaments does its bit for mother nature. Maybe the politicians' much-vaunted 'change in the political landscape' will only come about if they change theirs. But I think it'll take more than fingers crossed for that. ●
Jan-Carlos Kucharek, Editor



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Cover image: Wellcome Collection stair by Wilkinson Eyre, photographed by Edmund Sumner

Compendium

GRAHAM MATTHEWS



Rochdale uber alles

Some might see little reason for the architect in Rochdale to tarry, but that would be to ignore its lovely 1888 Alfred Waterhouse designed town hall with William Morris stained glass. Pevsner wrote that it had a 'rare picturesque beauty' and myth has it Hitler was so taken by it that once he'd conquered Blighty he planned to have it transported brick by brick to some Bavarian idyll. Think about that when you're waiting in its award-winning new bus station designed by AHR Architects, where Wicona's 3m high Wictec glazed curtain walling panels, giving 360° views of the concourse, are changing passenger perspectives too.

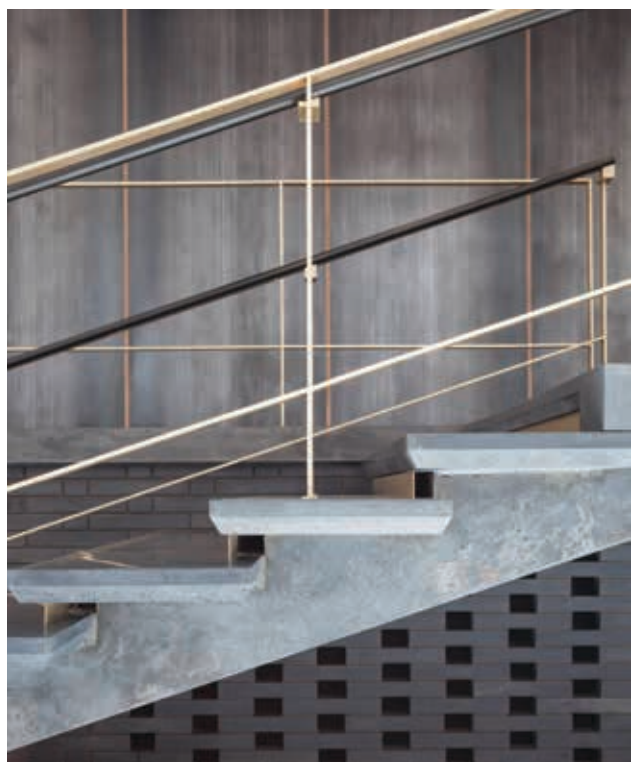
Ship shape

It looks like navigation was one of the inspirations for Marks Barfield's Pavilion in Greenwich – no surprise there as the area's famous for its historic maritime links. So it picked up on shipbuilding aspects too, using brass, copper, timber and steel. The complex suspended ceilings within and spanning the two gateway buildings were fabricated and installed by SAS International and were based around notional fields of magnetic attraction, alluding to the compass equipment crucial to maritime exploration. There was some exploration going on here too – SAS had never curved its Tubeline system before and it involved a CNC tube roller to produce the varying radii to create a skin that competently circumnavigates the form.

PHILIP VILE



MATT CHISNALL



Don't judge a Buckley its cover

There's a whiff of Guy de Maupassant's famed hatred of the Eiffel Tower in the press release for developer Derwent's new Buckley building in Clerkenwell, which emphasises how lovely London's other rooftops look from its roof terrace. But it's not that odd: eponymous architect Buckley Gray Yeoman has given the former factory an 'austere profile' that recalls the area's industrial past. It's a different story inside, however, where it has used a minimalist palette of luxurious materials, with metalwork by a suitably decadent sounding Italian firm. Marzorati Ronchetti was responsible for the reception's rich black iron wall panels, doors, staircases, balustrades and gorgeous metal handrails – bringing some Latin style to its Anglo Saxon austerity.

Made in Chelsea

Cladding manufacturer Kawneer has been busy on PRP Architects' £250m Portobello Square scheme in Kensington, regenerating the less salubrious-sounding Wornington Green estate. The concrete framed, brick-clad phase 1 has been fenestrated with its AA54 composite casement windows, AA543 tiltturns and AA720 doors in posh pewter, silver and champagne painted aluminium – all ensuring PRP gives the W10 area a little more TLC.



ANDY SPAIN

UPCOMING

May Design Series ExCel London, 17-19 May**Clerkenwell Design Week** London, 19-21 May**Design in Mental Health** NMM Birmingham, 19-20 May

GRAHAM MATHERS

Stamp of approval

Crossrail's so old hat: it's just a copy of the Post Office's 1927 Mail Rail that ran through central London to prevent your post getting caught up in the traffic jams. Twisted logic now meets the need with Royal Mail vans on impossible delivery schedules racing through the city but at least drivers can screech to a halt at the refurbished Mount Pleasant sorting office, clad in Technal's Geode-MX Visible Grid system. They should enjoy the light and views while they can – the delivery yard behind it has been sold and is set to become a contentious high density housing scheme approved by mayor Boris Johnson last year. So that's public land gone for a song for private profit – no more views and nowhere to park. If only it meant we'd get our letters faster.

**Turner prize**

Ironmongery fabricator Allgood won the Guild of Architectural Ironmongers' top accolade at its awards last month for its work with Caruso St John, making door furniture for refurbished rooms at the Tate Britain. The ironmongery was praised as not only visually attractive but adding to the building's functionality and longevity.

C(h)anadaliier

We've clearly moved on from the South Park movie's 'Blame Canada' song, where all the world's troubles are placed on the shoulders of the USA's Royalist neighbour. The Canadian High Commission in London sure has, with 57:157 – a stunning futuristic glass chandelier installed in its new, refurbished interiors, designed by Vancouver and Berlin based designer Omer Arbel and his multi-disciplinary design company Bocci. Each of bulbous handmade glass forms is one-way mirror-coated to create a reflecting form that responds to the ambient light in its 1829 stairwell – until it is illuminated, when it glows eerily from within. The result is a beguiling installation that, like the movie, is 'Bigger, Longer and Uncut' – in all the right ways.



Shoal of hard knocks

Not a day went by in early modernism without Le Corbusier hammering home the idea that we should be living in machines and wondering why aesthetically a house wasn't more like a boat. At the coalface of industry on a working dockside however, the benefits of modern industrial design were being realised with a far more robust pragmatism. Davey Lighting claims its Oceanic lamp was one of the earliest industrial lights on record, with a galvanised hook to clip it to beams and a guard to make sure that it could take the inevitable bumps and crashes. Viewed today as a design classic and starting at £285 for the small version, the only knock you're going to have to take now is on the cost.



Nineteen eighty-door

'When one door shuts another opens' could be the maxim of all those academics who thought their research had come to nought, only to find that it paved the way to a Eureka moment of another kind. It could also be a summary of the closing events of George Orwell's 1984, where the door of Room 101 closes

and the one in the rat cage over Winston Smith's head is opened. Bush House, the original site of Orwell's eponymous office at the BBC and now a refurbished addition to King's College, is having its Edwardian door sets upgraded by Dorma to ensure its mechanisms at least are no longer the stuff of nightmares.

Indie generation

Camden market, a Mecca for its second hand stalls and trinkets for the magpies of Europe's indie youth, now has something much bigger but no less sparkly to catch the eye. Nick Baker architects has installed 925 Kingspan Solar Varisol thermal evacuated tube collectors on the south face of its new, mixed-use development in the conservation area to create a distinctive facade that also reduces the building's carbon footprint. Placed horizontally in banks to deal with the curve of the site, the system doesn't employ the usual fixed sized panels but allows any number of tube collectors to be placed alongside each other to fill an allocated space – an eco allegory for all those emo teenagers who otherwise just wouldn't fit in.



Double glazing

Architect Cousins & Cousins has been commissioned to produce a jewel-like pavilion to take centre stage in St John's Square at Clerkenwell Design Week, running from 19-21 May. The husband and wife duo were inspired by Venice's Murano glass for their proposal for a double-sided, walk-through glass tunnel

using vertical glass panels of varying hues and transparency. The architect is teaming up with firm Gx Glass on 'Glaze', to demonstrate the versatility of the material. Held together by a light steel structure, the pavilion is intended, over the course of the event, to be the venue for talks by some industry heavyweights.

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BIM's journey isn't over

Manufacturers of building systems and products have always prioritised putting their technical information in front of architects and engineers, to make it as easy as possible for decision makers to specify them on projects.

Thirty years ago this information was physically distributed: manufacturers' plastic drawing stencils and associated paper catalogues were kept in the office library. By the turn of the century, the stencils were beginning to be replaced by 2D CAD blocks, with the catalogues distributed as digital PDF files on the world wide web. Today, in 2015, this digital revolution is continuing and the industry is now one year from the government mandate that all centrally funded construction projects will use building information modelling (BIM).

Initially, BIM was in many ways 3D CAD. Manufacturers started to make available 3D objects that looked like their physical systems and products. This allowed for the rapid generation of plans and sections from a 3D model. It also presented new functionality such as modifying

the geometric level of detail at a click of a button. But BIM has moved on since then. The geometric issues are now taken for granted and discussions are squarely focussed on the information. This is the I in BIM.

With BIM, each 3D object can have embedded and linked information. This could be the manufacturer product reference of a window, the recycled content value of an insulation board or the expected life of a boiler. This information can then be extracted from the model for scheduling and data analysis. The principles of providing geometry in terms of stencils and information in terms of a catalogue remain – but it is now delivered through a powerful digital object that performs both functions.

Setting the standard

There is, however, a big caveat here: the information must be authored to an industry standard. Architects and engineers do not want to have to post-process information because each manufacturer authors the data in their objects

to a different standard. When they schedule information from different manufacturers they want it to align. When they perform an energy calculation based on objects from different manufacturers, they want the information to be consistently presented.

A core objective in the government's 2025 strategy paper was to digitise the product manufacturing industry that serves UK construction. This will both benefit projects here and also create fantastic opportunities for UK manufacturers overseas. The combination of digital BIM objects and distribution through multiple channels on the web will be a once-in-a-generation 'game changer'.

With one year to go until the 2016 BIM mandate, the discussion on whether BIM is a good idea or not is over. However, the key question manufacturers must consider in terms of their BIM approach is this: What is their strategy in terms of the information in BIM? ●

Dr Stephen Hamil is director of design and innovation at the NBS

Books



101 Things I Learned in Engineering School

John Kuprenas with Matthew Frederick
Grand Central Publishing, £12.99, 224pp

This is a coffee table book. But imagine a coffee table designed by Gustav Eiffel on which sit cups designed by Pier Luigi Nervi, placed next to a smoking chair occupied by a caffeine sipping Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Okay, maybe not, but this quirky little primer has been sitting on my desk for the last two weeks and I feel remiss if I don't open it at some point each day and read a few of its engaging and pithy pages about the physics and discipline of engineering. Each statement is accompanied by a brief explanation and accompanying diagram. As an architect you'll definitely know some, might know others and won't know a number of them. It probably has a page covering that very statistical likelihood. A joy.



Morphing – A guide to Mathematical Transformations for Architects

Joseph Choma
Laurence King Publishing, £35, 232pp

While the classic platonic shapes have a dictionary definition, the rise of parametric design has seen an infinity of new plastic mathematical forms around that have yet to be named. Joseph Choma, who graduated in computation at MIT, has thoughtfully managed not only to name but to ontologically order them into 13 mathematical 'transformations', so that seemingly random 3D forms can be broken down into their constituent parts. As if that isn't enough he also provides the trigonometric equations that define those transformations. This is a technical tome less for those thinking traditionally about 'form follows function' and more for those that think 'form follows $f(x)$ '.



Starting a Practice: A Plan of Work

Simon Foxell
RIBA Publishing, £30, 164pp

Foxell's ominous opening line to his first edition, recommending architects to think twice before starting a practice, has not been tempered by the preface to the second edition, which elucidates on the crippling, eight year-long recession that we are just coming out of and which draws attention to how tough the competition is. That said, those earlier redundancies resulted in more new practices baptised in the waters of hard times and with the determination to keep afloat. For the ethereal architect the everyday pragmatics of running a practice can seem a dark art. Foxell's book continues to provide valuable guidance with updated information on electronic data transfer and social media as a marketing tool.

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Vatican clean-up



What: Lynton Conservation laser

Where: Vatican City Museums



You wouldn't normally associate tattoo removal technology with the preservation of Western art's most notable paintings and sculptures. But since Pope Francis' Vatican accepted the offer of Lynton Lasers state-of-the-art equipment for use cleaning the Vatican Museum's most precious works, the firm can consider itself as having earned a papal indulgence. In the way that Purgatory scrubs souls clean, so the laser technology has been employed since the 1990s to break down years of grime to the point where it simply 'dissolves away.'

Lynton Lasers' conservation specialist Martin Cooper has spent 20 years developing the technology – despite the firm's emphasis on its more lucrative business of tattoo and hair removal – and explains its basic principles. 'The laser emits intense pulses of pure light which are absorbed by dark surfaces more strongly than light ones,' he explains. 'A coloured pigment or a dark crust of built-up detritus will absorb the laser's energy, heating up far more quickly than the lighter surroundings. In effect, it means the laser discriminates between a 'dirty' and 'clean' surface'. He explains that the

magic wavelength of 1064nm strikes the right balance between targeting the surface contaminants and generating the right amount of light reflectance from the rest of the artwork to avoid damaging the surface.

The laser technology has been employed at all scales too. Aside from delicate artworks, building elements have been cleaned using the technique. Cutting his teeth at the Conservation Centre at Liverpool University, Cooper worked on restoring the bronze relief panels on the city's St George's Hall by Harvey Lonsdale Elmes. But he says it's also been used on Lorenzo Ghiberti's bronze 11th century 'Gates of Paradise' at the Florence Baptistry, on facade elements of Carrère and Hastings' 1911 New York Public Library, and on Edinburgh's 15th century Rosslyn Chapel – made famous by Dan Brown's 'Da Vinci Code'. The technique is faster than micro-air cleaning of stonework, but markedly slower than sandblasting; it's also far less aggressive and more expensive. As a result, Cooper sees take-up in large scale laser cleaning being focused around the variables of increased speed and reduced cost. ●

CLEANLINESS NEXT TO GODLINESS

Key to the development of lasers for medical, aesthetic and conservation purposes has been ascertaining the optimum wavelength and pulse lengths. Martin Cooper says that the Nd:YAG lasers are typically the best for conservation use, being highly efficient on marble, sandstone and terracotta – although newer Erbium lasers are proving particularly effective on frescos. For every application however, testing is imperative. 'With medieval sculptures and paintings in particular some pigments beneath degraded varnishes can be extremely sensitive to the laser pulses, so detailed analysis of substrates is necessary before using them,' he explains. Cooper adds that the real advances in the technology have reduced equipment size and cost – with lasers now starting at about £20,000. 'When I was working at the Liverpool Museum lasers would weigh 80kg, be the size of a fridge and needed to be wheeled about,' he says. 'The Vatican one is no more than 25kg – far more convenient when having to lug it up and down scaffolding.'



Left Before and after: Bronze panels at St George's Hall, Liverpool.

Above The Vatican Museum's halls.

Below Lynton Lasers' latest conservation equipment.



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- Pulse repetition rate: 1-30Hz
- Delivery system: Laser handpiece
- Working spot size: 1.5mm-8mm
- Mains supply: 5A@240V

Flooring for dementia patients

Putting the right texture, pattern and colour underfoot can make a critical difference to the health and comfort of dementia sufferers

Words: Pamela Buxton

Choosing dementia-friendly flooring requires a completely different approach to specification. As well as the usual balancing of practicality, budgets and aesthetics, specifiers need to prioritise the changes to perception and sight of those with dementia. Get it wrong with an ill-judged texture, pattern or use of colour, and the result can raise stress and increase the risk of falls among an already vulnerable user group.

With the number of dementia sufferers rising as the demographic ages, it's an issue of growing importance. According to the Alzheimer's Society, 850,000 people have dementia in the UK, a figure set to reach two million by 2051.

Considerable strides have recently been made in promoting dementia-friendly design, including a £50 million fund launched in 2012 by the Department of Health to create pioneering health environments for those with the condition. A new Health Building Note is being prepared to promote best practice for the design of environments for people with dementia.

'There's still a long way to go, but there's definitely an increase in awareness,' says Professor June Andrews, director of the University of Stirling's Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC), which provides advice, training and resources for how to achieve dementia-friendly environments and services.

'The real challenge is to make it aesthetically appealing without resorting to things that will cause difficulties,' she says.

In dementia-friendly refurbishment projects, changing the flooring is often the first priority according to IBI Group interior designer Lynn Lindley, who points out that traditional polished hospital floors are completely unsuitable for those with dementia.

'When we assess a refurbishment and look at the budget, flooring is the first move. That's the uppermost priority,' she says.

As sensory faculties weaken with age, the right choice of flooring is particularly important for dementia patients, who may like to wander through the ward or residence, but are often also frail and susceptible to falls.

The Alzheimer's Society reports that people with dementia can experience visuo-perceptual difficulties, leading to misperceptions and distortions of reality – a dark patch on a floor can be mistaken for a hole for example, and a glossy surface might be perceived as being wet. Changes in surface can be mistaken for changes in levels. Older people in general may also find certain colours harder to differentiate due to a thickening of the lens of the eye.

Taking this into account, dementia-friendly flooring needs to avoid anything that causes anxiety and deters patients from being able to walk safely across the floor without getting distracted or thrown off balance. This means avoiding flecks or sparkly specks, which patients may try to pick up, as well as shine, dark colours, and pattern, which can be seen as a physical obstruction. Spongy, noisy floors are not advised. But strong colours can work well.

'A large or busy pattern can confuse the eye, and cause hesitation if it looks like an obstacle or a hole. Shiny finishes can look unsafe, so a matt flooring is preferable and people can walk more quickly and safely,' says the DSDC.

Natural-looking effects such as wood are useful in creating a familiar, homely ambience. Colour and surface contrasts in particular need careful handling according to John Mellor, market manager at vinyl flooring specialist Polyflor. As a member of the International Dementia Design Network at the University of Salford, Polyflor has a particular interest in this area, which Mellor says is increasingly being raised by specifiers.

'In adjacent areas, the use of tones with



Below A seating bay in one of the wards at Croydon University Hospital, whose wood-effect vinyl flooring was not only matt and non-slip, but contrasted well with wall surfaces to help those with sight problems or dementia.





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similar light reflectance values (LRVs) are recommended instead of a sharp contrast which may confuse and be perceived as a step by dementia patients... However, appropriate contrast is required between surfaces such as floors and walls as well as between the floor and wall junction to reduce confusion for the visually impaired and those that experience gradual changes to colour vision,' he says, adding that it can also be used as a visual barrier to deter patients from entering places that are out of bounds, such as staff areas.

'A floor that is dementia friendly can help reduce anxiety and stress in a dementia patient who may be experiencing changes to their sense of sight, including loss of peripheral vision and changes to vision of colour,' he says.

Architects working in this sector are finding it easier to specify appropriate flooring.

'There's a good range of stuff available now. You don't have to struggle as much as you used to,' says Georgia Burt of GBS Architects, (see case study 2), who has found flooring manufacturers receptive to suggestions on more appropriate products.

It's still quite a task, however, to make a dementia-friendly environment that also feels and looks fantastic for everyone else.

Niall McLaughlin strived to avoid institutional connotations and create a convivial and bright atmosphere in his design of the Alzheimer's Respite Centre in Dublin. In the flooring, particular attention was paid to appropriate colour contrasts and acoustics. In such contexts, risk-averse management can be an issue in trying to create a rich environment.

'Some of these places can be managed to death in terms of specification,' he says.

'I like a challenge,' says IBI's Lindley, who has worked in this sector for the last four years.

'Polyflor, Altro and a few other manufacturers have made a huge effort to add products and that's been a great help. We now have a wider range to choose from,' she adds.

According to DSDC's June Andrews, selling the idea of dementia-friendly design to independent care homes and dementia-specific wards is relatively easy as part of a refurbishment or new build, since it brings staff and cost benefits as a result of calmer patients who are less stressed about their environment. As a result, they may be more able to reach, for example, the toilet in time, without being distracted or confused along the way by inappropriate flooring. The bigger challenge is introducing dementia-friendly principles throughout hospitals – which treat people with dementia in all sorts of other wards – and other health centre settings, and importantly in private homes, where the vast majority of sufferers live. 'I can't think of anywhere it isn't useful,' she says. ●

CASE STUDY 1

BELONG WARRINGTON

Client: CLS Care Services

Architect: Pozzoni

Familiar and homely flooring was specified at Belong Warrington, a home to 72 people with dementia.

The development is designed by Pozzoni, which specialises in older-care accommodation and is working on 12 dementia-specific projects. Residents live in 12 groups of six, each with a lounge, dining area and kitchenette, to create a 'family' setting on a domestic rather than institutional scale. A downstairs café is open to the public.

Pozzoni created open plan accommodation to assist in orientation, with bedroom and toilet doors, and has made the kitchen clearly visible. A similarly toned carpet – Danfloor

Equinox Tones – was specified for bedrooms and lounge areas.

'Everything is a uniformly flat colour, with any junctions between the carpet, edge slips and non-slip flooring in the same tone so that it's all perceived as a continuous surface,' explains Pozzoni partner Damian Utton.

Timber-effect Polyflor Expona flooring with a contrasting skirting is used in both the residents' kitchens and the downstairs café, which is open to the public. This was chosen because of its familiarity: 'everyone knows what wood looks like,' says Utton, adding that standards have risen a lot in care home design in the UK over the last decade.

Since it opened last year, Belong Warrington has been visited by care home owners and designers from all over Europe, including Oslo City Council. →



CASE STUDY 2

**BEACONSFIELD EAST WARD,
HILLINGDON HOSPITAL**

Client: Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Design: GBS Architects

Beaconsfield East Ward has been transformed into a dementia-friendly environment following a £550,000 refurbishment by Oxford-based GBS Architects.

The project reworked a 20-bed rehabilitation ward catering for many patients with dementia to create a friendly and attractive environment for patients and their carers. Central to the transformation was the bold use of art, colour, and crucially, new flooring to replace the shiny linoleum, which can be confusing to dementia sufferers.

GBS specified 590m² of Forbo Flooring Systems' Surestep Wood Decibel throughout the ward and corridors. This oak-effect floor replaces strident blue and yellow lino and helps create a 'comforting and domestic environment', according to GBS architect Georgia Burt.

'Making things look like you'd want



it at home makes a huge difference,' she says, adding that fear and uncertainty caused by an inappropriately designed environment can be very counterproductive to patient wellbeing.

She chose the Forbo floor after testing a large sample in-situ. As well as its oak design, the product was chosen for its matt

appearance and acoustic backing. By using it throughout the main spaces without threshold strips, the architect avoided the problem of patients with dementia becoming confused by changes of flooring at entrances. The floor also provides sufficient contrast with the walls, and colourful floral artwork in the bed bays,

day-room and corridors.

In the assisted bathrooms, GBS specified Altro Suprema II Dew SU2036, a soft grey that has no confusing flecks.

The 2,473 m² project, which includes a sensory room and sensory garden, won the Best Internal Environment Award at the Building Better Healthcare Awards 2014.

CASE STUDY 3

**DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CARE ZONE,
CROYDON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**

Client: Croydon Health Services NHS Trust

Design: IBI Group

IBI reconfigured two older peoples' wards at Croydon University Hospital, introducing a new dementia hub/café and incorporating safe wander loops with integrated seating, as well as activity zones, a quiet room and a sensory zone. The main change was the dementia hub/café, which replaces the nurse station and encourages staff to engage more directly with patients.

Another key innovation was removal of the vinyl floor which, with dark patches, shiny surface and low lighting, was everything you shouldn't have for dementia patients, according to interior designer Lynn Lindley.

This was replaced with Polyflor's fx PUR

product, a homely, easy-to-clean wood-effect flooring with added slip-resistance, chosen in a 'not too dark, not too light' shade that contrasted well with the walls. Joints are welded with no transition strips, which can be hugely problematic by causing anxiety and deterring patients from crossing thresholds. Patients were immediately less anxious about the replacement floor, according to Lindley.

Skirtings are coved for ease of cleaning. IBI chose an independent Gradus Sit-in vinyl product, welded to the floor.

In the washrooms, the firm used vinyl flooring with the same LRU value as the timber-effect flooring – a warm grey hue of Altro's Aquarius, which is matt and non-slip when wet or dry, shod or barefoot.

Construction costs were £985,000. Dementia-friendly work to a third ward is also proposed.



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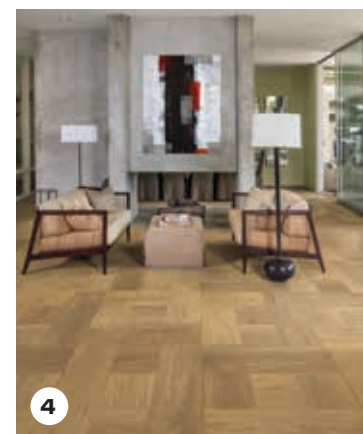
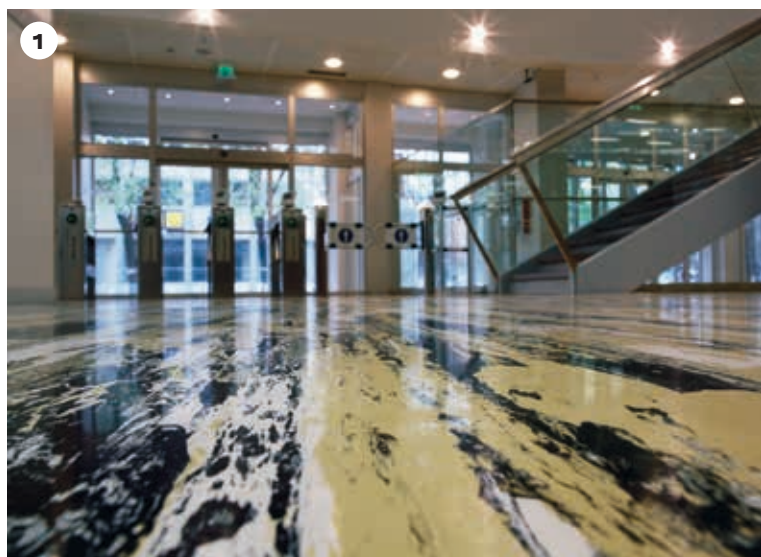
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Specified



1 Vario Vivace Nora

From an ant's eye view, this metro station floor is fraught with danger. Once the illusion of mountainous geological strata has been dismissed, it seems treacherous river rapids will buffet the hapless creature towards a 100ft foaming cascade. Where's Bear Grylls when you need him? Snacking on raw pigeon eggs while he clings to a distant crag – as usual. But unlike insects, humans will see that this exciting design is Vario Vivace – Nora's contribution to the Pirelli Tower restoration – energetically drawing workers into the building. Gio Ponti would love it. nora.com

2 Attiro fastening system Kingspan

He stood on one side of the room; she on the other. Through the crowd, across the wide expanse of Kingspan oak flooring, their eyes met, locked together as if by fate. Pure magnetism pulled one towards the other... Yes, when Kingspan says its floors have a particular magnetism, it's actually true: Attiro oak veneers come in lengths of 1200-2000mm, and are magnetically fastened to the company's steel encapsulated floor panels. So if on some enchanted evening you find yourself captivated by a pair of dark eyes, think Gone Girl and check out the floor fittings first. kingspanaccessfloors.co.uk

3 Venn mosaics Grestec

Before you alert us to printing a low resolution image, look again. This bathroom uses Grestec's Venn mosaic tiles for a bespoke pattern, so that slightly bitmapped look is all part of the top of the market luxury image. Makes you think about how people view the bathroom: functional washing point or luxurious relaxation room? This one's pretty functional: no paint to peel off, lino to curl up, or carpets to get sodden; plus ample shower, elegantly shaped bath for restful reverie, swirling pattern aiding the drift into psychedelic reverie... but wait! Where to put your glass of Bolly? grestec.co.uk

4 Bloc Collection Kahrs

Here's what I call a blocky sort of room. Aside from the vintage whisper of the sofas (Hmm... Kai Kristiansen rip off? Hans Wegner homage? Answers on a postcard, furniture fetishists), it's all blocks. It's a statement all right, but what's its message? New look on the block? Block buster? Chip off an old block? Ian Dury and the Blockheads? Err... Anyway, mitigating that uncompromising exposed concrete, Kahrs' Bloc Collection oak floor creates a relaxing, warm and welcoming ambience with 300mm wide staves that come up to 900mm long. Love it: Hit me... hit me... Hit!! kahrs.com



5
Sheet vinyl
Polyflor

Blue, blue, electric blue, is the colour of my... pew, I suppose, and skirtings of course, in this otherwise very neutral environment. But if you've had enough of shades of grey to last you a lifetime, remember that Acre Mills outpatients 'facility' (top ten annoying words contender) in Huddersfield is just the sort of place it should be used. Polyflor's sheet vinyl flooring from its Forest fx, Pearlazzo, Verona, Hydro Evolve and Finesse SD collections graces 3300m² here, helping create spaces with the perfect hygiene, sound and vision attributes for every healthcare need.

polyflor.com

6
Porcelain stoneware
Ceramiche Caesar

Howzit, brah, so you've got to fit out the new surfing/skating/boarding Volcon shop in Nantes, right, and it needs some, like, yer know, coool stuff to like walk on when you're checkin' out the wares, so we're thinkin' California edge meets French chic with a, like, swipe of Italian swagger... so we got some of the One and Gate porcelain stoneware by Ceramiche Caesar Made in Italy range – it's like loaded in a rad sort of way: warmth of terracotta, feel of cement; get you ready for epic surf, fully macking double overhead corduroy to the horizon. Lactronic, dude.

caesar.it

7
Diversity carpet
Grosvenor Wilton

Say what you like about these pages, they're all class. This Diversity carpet for example, part of 200-year old Grosvenor Wilton's first retail collection, has a top pedigree. Clearly aimed at the Hunter welly and Barbour waxed jacket set in their city Burberry mode, you could almost wear it. Remember when Julie Andrews in the Sound of Music cuts up the curtains to make her seven singing charges matching outfits? So if you need to present yourself to the wavering Tristram in unrefusable style, rolling up like Cleopatra in this would cut a classic/contemporary dash.

diversitycollection.co.uk

8
Timber-look flooring
Altro

You know how it is: you go upstairs and when you get there you think, 'now, what did I come up here for?' You're just turned 30 but that glimpse of life marching on hits hard. Is this what awaits? Happily, as greater longevity sees the number of dementia sufferers grow, ways to help calm confused and anxious patients are rising too. Warrington Hospital says its pioneering new ward is getting amazing results using clear and homely decor that includes Altro's Wood Safety and Aquarius timber-look flooring. And both clean easily, addressing that other unwelcome aspect of our dotage.

altro.co.uk



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Why we should loosen our green belts

Below Aerial perspective of the fictional city of Uxchester.

Garden city principles could be used to enhance and extend urban centres – but there is a catch

Words: David Rudlin

At the start of 2014 I had no idea I would end the year with a picture of myself in the Oxford Times under the title Garden City Guru, but this is what comes from winning the Wolfson Economics Prize, which in 2014 had focussed on the role of garden cities in addressing the UK's housing crisis. Until then I'd spent 20 years or more arguing for urban development, usually against advocates of garden cities. It is no wonder that fellow urbanists like Richard Rogers were 'disappointed' in me. He wasn't the only one: planning minister Brandon Lewis put out a press release the day after the announcement saying our proposals were not government policy and wouldn't be implemented. I wanted to reflect on the debate that has followed the prize and about the balance between town and country.

The reaction to our proposal is a symptom of a debate that has once more become polarised. For years the garden city lobby had argued for them as an alternative to real cities, saying people were voting with their feet by moving out to suburbs and that any policy that prevented them from doing so was an unreasonable intrusion on their civil liberties. Since we shouldn't build on the green belt, which was what was exercising Brandon Lewis, we should instead build freestanding garden cities. Throughout most of

We should use the garden city principle to extend small cities by taking a confident bite out of their surrounding countryside



the 20th century this argument won the day.

Then in the last decade of the century there was a fight back by the 'New Jacobites' – described by their critics as slavish followers of Jane Jacob's 'cult' of urbanism. They believed cities had been losing population for decades and that there was plenty of scope to develop urban housing without risking town cramming.

Not enough homes

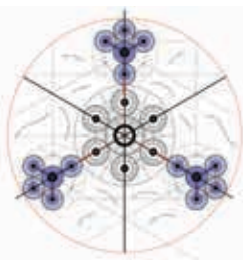
But from the mid 1990s the debate swung the way of the urbanists. First John Major's Conservative government and then New Labour adopted targets for 60% of housing on brown-field land. Lord Rogers was asked to convene the Urban Task Force and within a few years we had an urban white paper, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and a raft of pro-urban planning policies. By 2008 more than 80% of all new housing was being built within urban areas. The results can be seen in a remarkable revival of our cities.

The Urban Renaissance, as it came to be called, seemed for a while to be a new consensus. Models like the Urban Village in the UK and the Pedestrian Pocket in the US recast the utopian ideals of the garden city in an urban context and were supported by organisations like the Town & Country Planning Association. Cities were regenerated and the green belt safe – what's not to like?

The problem was that we just weren't building enough housing. We increased the amount of brownfield development but never found a way of supplying the 40% of homes that should have been built outside urban areas. This lies behind the current debate on garden cities. Some, like Richard Rogers, see it as an attempt to turn the clock back and believe that even talking of developing green fields will cause the housebuilding industry to lose interest in urban development. It is a view with which I have some sympathy. The last thing we want to do is restart urban sprawl.

Important ground

It was in this context that Urbed decided to submit an essay for the 2014 Wolfson prize, not because we were changing sides in the debate, but because we felt that, as urbanists, the ground was too important to cede to the garden city enthusiasts. We argued that we should



Left A development of Ebenezer Howard's garden city diagram, showing 'snowflakes' of new communities ordered within the green belt.

Below Overall plan of Urbed's fictional town of Uxcester.

reintroduce the target of 60% of all new housing to be built within urban areas and suggested many parts of the country have capacity to accommodate far more than this. However, many places suffer intense pressure for population growth but have precious little urban capacity. These are generally smaller historic cities and larger towns, like Oxford, York, Chester, Taunton and indeed Uxcester – the fictional city of our Wolfson essay.

Over to economics

Some people in the countryside lobby will say that these cities are full, and that further growth should be diverted to places with the

capacity to accommodate it. This of course is not the way economies work. If we stop these places from growing, housing becomes unaffordable (the Centre for Cities shows that housing in Oxford costs 15 times the average salary, in London housing is 'only' 10 times). This in turn affects the economy because employers can't recruit, and creates congestion as people are forced to live in cheaper surrounding towns and commute in, while new housing is pushed beyond the green belt into less sustainable locations.

What then is the alternative? Well, all over the country the response of beleaguered planning authorities is to search desperately for

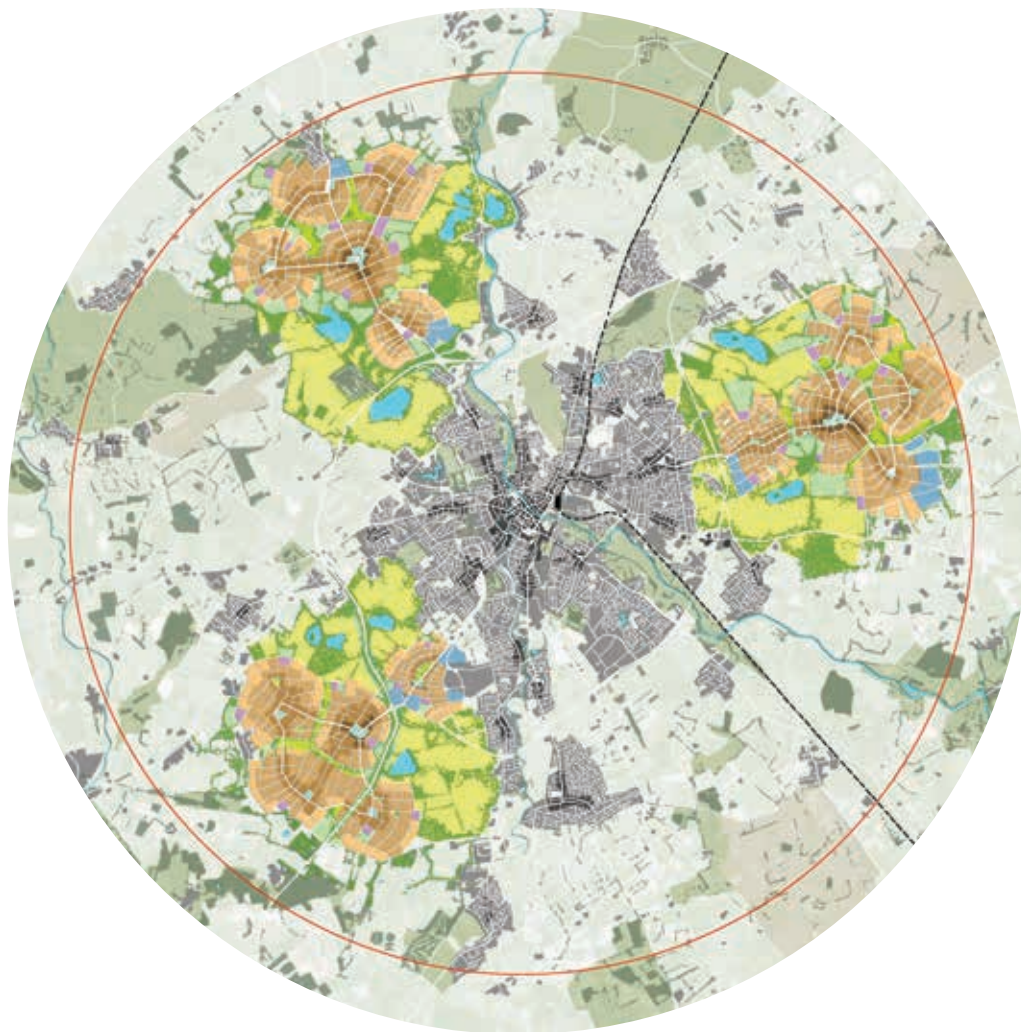
fields around the edge of their settlements that can be allocated for housing without causing too much offence. The garden city lobby's alternative is to build a new town, maybe a series of new towns, as a recent Policy Exchange report suggested. We believe that nibbling around the edge of the green belt is no way to create sustainable development, and that you can't build free-standing garden cities from scratch in a field in the middle of nowhere. As a nation we tried that through the new towns movement and failed completely to create places that had the intensity, character and diversity of even a common-or-garden market town.


A confident bite

We should instead use the garden city principle to extend small cities like Uxcester by taking a confident bite out of its surrounding countryside. We calculated that cities like York and Oxford could double in size by using only 5-7% of their green belt. These extensions should be large enough to provide a full range of facilities and services and to be linked back to their host city by a new tram system. In this way the garden city can be used to enhance and support existing cities in the spirit of Edinburgh New Town or indeed the original railway suburbs around London. Residents of the extensions will have access to all you expect in a city, railway station, hospital, university, theatre and of course city centre shops – none of which a new freestanding garden city could provide.

The problem for Brandon Lewis and many other politicians of all persuasions is that the 'big confident bite' that we are suggesting needs to be taken out of the blessed green belt. Once you have made all reasonable efforts to use urban capacity within towns and cities, the green belt is the next most sustainable place to build. Ruling out any development allows it to throttle successful cities, causing them to overheat, and pushes new development into unsustainable locations. We are not suggesting that the green belt be abolished – far from it – but we need to allow it to flex and adjust and to have the confidence to be able to extend successful cities in a way that enhances both the city and the countryside – as we did in the past. ●

David Rudlin is manager at Manchester urbanism consultancy Urbed





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Spanish tiles are renowned for their diversity, style and attractive finishes. But they have a huge range of applications too

Inspired by centuries of artisan skill, Spain's tile manufacturers are reinventing tradition while looking to the future with the latest technology. In answer to architectural demand for a natural material that will perform long term, Spanish tiles are pushing production boundaries and exploring new territories for ceramics. From air purifying facades through non-slip floors to bespoke urban furniture, Spanish tiles are right for the job.

Above and beyond

Spanish tiles intended for architectural use often exceed industry standards – for example floor coverings with the highest anti-slip ratings, durable, slim-line porcelain slabs in ultra-large formats up to 1.5m by 3m, and technical porcelain with water absorption as low as 0.1% (0.5% is the industry threshold). Many manufacturers are achieving significant eco certification and introducing products with a high percentage of recycled content, including mosaic ranges made with up to 100% recycled glass.

Creative technology

Progressive glazing solutions range from dirt-repelling finishes to UV resistant colours, reactive glazes, phase change capability and pollution absorbing facades. New methods of mixing ceramics with resin, infusing with

metal or adding photo-luminescence for signage demonstrate the kind of breakthrough technology that Spain regularly produces. Pioneering production has also given traditional ceramics a new role in architecture: anti-slip finishes can now be achieved on high-gloss flooring and new ranges of 'technical terracotta' have been created for exterior and high traffic applications. Meanwhile, the latest inkjet technology permits impressive visual effects, even on textured or extruded surfaces, further enhancing the design potential of Spanish tiles.

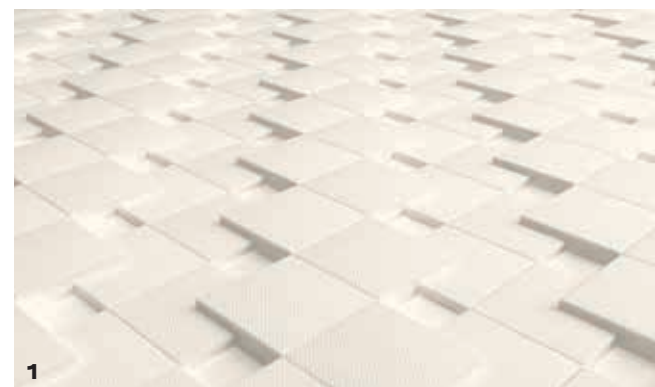
Inventive installation

Manufacturers offer an impressive range of unusual formats and profiles, some of which can be installed over existing surfaces to save time, cost and landfill. Expertise in innovative systems of dry installation for ventilated facades, cladding interior walls or fitting raised-access flooring is also available from an industry that prides itself on service. Covering all requirements, special pieces such as porcelain steps or drainage for swimming pools enable integrated, high-performance solutions. Spanish specialists also offer modular systems of 'volumetric ceramics' designed for decorative walls, sculptural facades and high-impact urban furniture. From aesthetics to performance to sustainability, Spanish tiles have the future of ceramics covered.

1. Peronda's 3D multi-layered Core tiles are an innovative mix of ceramics and resin.

2. The Arena Corinthians World Cup Stadium in Brazil was clad in 12,000m² of Levantina's TECHLAM NEU slim profile 1m by 3m porcelain panels.

3. Volumetric extruded porcelain Life Arq tiles with UV resistant glaze by Natucer form the facade of this library in France.





3

4. City technical porcelain by Grespania offers urban paving with heavy-duty breaking strength and impressive R12 slip resistance.

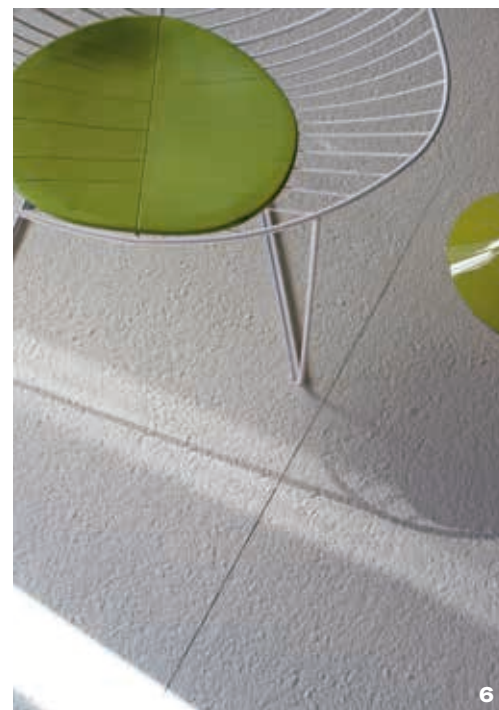
5. Tempio ventilated facade systems using advanced extruded porcelain tiles by Ceramica Mayor create interior and exterior cladding for a University in Sydney.



4



5



6

6. Concrete by Inalco: 100cm by 100cm textured rectified porcelain tiles, ideal for high traffic zones.

7. Interior porcelain flooring by Saloni ensures anti-slip safety in a busy M&S store in Holland.



7



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Below Looking south past Central St Martins to central London. With lockers, changing cubicles and kiosk, the natural pond installation is intended to entertain as well as educate.



King's Cross Pond Club

A 'living laboratory' for natural water filtration is providing wild swimming in the heart of the city

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photographs: Brendan Bell



At the far end of Argent's King's Cross development in central London, to the south of the new student housing block, the east of a building site and north of Stanton Williams' Central St Martins art college, an experiment is in progress. It might not at first look like one; a bank of freshly turned earth, now peppered with thousands of wild flower and grass seedlings, and a path running up through it to reveal a curved pond of clear, silvery-green water, its rippling surface glinting invitingly in the sun. But this is Ooze Architects' 'Of Soil and Water', an art installation cum 'living laboratory', a public bathing pond and created urban wetland, that celebrates the interactions of water with the earth and humans that use it as an example of a natural, self-sustaining closed loop. Opening this month, the art installation will evolve, mature and self-maintain in full view of the new community being built around it, in conjunction with its swimmers. A 40m by 10m curved form, running to nearly 3m at its deepest, King's Cross Pond Club will be the UK's first public, man-made, naturally purified outdoor bathing pool.

Rotterdam-based Ooze's enthusiasm for its project is infectious. When PIPmet partners Eva Pfannes and Sylvain Hartenberg the firm had spent the last three days planting seedlings that were specially grown in a biodynamic nursery in Germany and driven over in a van from Dortmund. A Cubitt Park community event the weekend before, which drew dozens of volunteers, saw most of them set into the bank, but

the main concern at the moment are the crucial plants nestled in the pond's 'Regeneration Zone' – part of a Limnology strategy that will see the water purified by nothing more than filtration and biological processes. If they thrive, they will not only oxygenate the water, but absorb toxic nitrogen and provide a perfect environment for phytoplankton and zooplankton to grow – nature's own disinfectant.

The Ooze partners' provenance might belie the strong eco-bias of the firm they started up together in 2003 – Pfannes worked in Zaha Hadid's and Hartenberg at commercial firm Sheppard Robson. As part of the Relay Arts Programme set up by the King's Cross Central Partnership to promote arts in the area, the firm was invited in 2013 to make a proposal for the site with Slovenian artist Marjetic Potrč on the back of the 'Between the Waters' project it designed and constructed at Emscherkunst 2010 – a public art triennial in Germany. Here the Emscher canal, which had become an open sewer servicing the mining area, was connected to the Ruhr 80m away via Ooze's installation. This took raw sewage from a makeshift toilet on the canal side and ran it through natural filtration and cleansing systems to feed a market garden before leading to a single tap on the Ruhr side where visitors could drink naturally cleaned water. Pfannes recalls that initially there was a lot of public suspicion of the highly visible system, with visitors refusing to drink it. 'People are used to water being

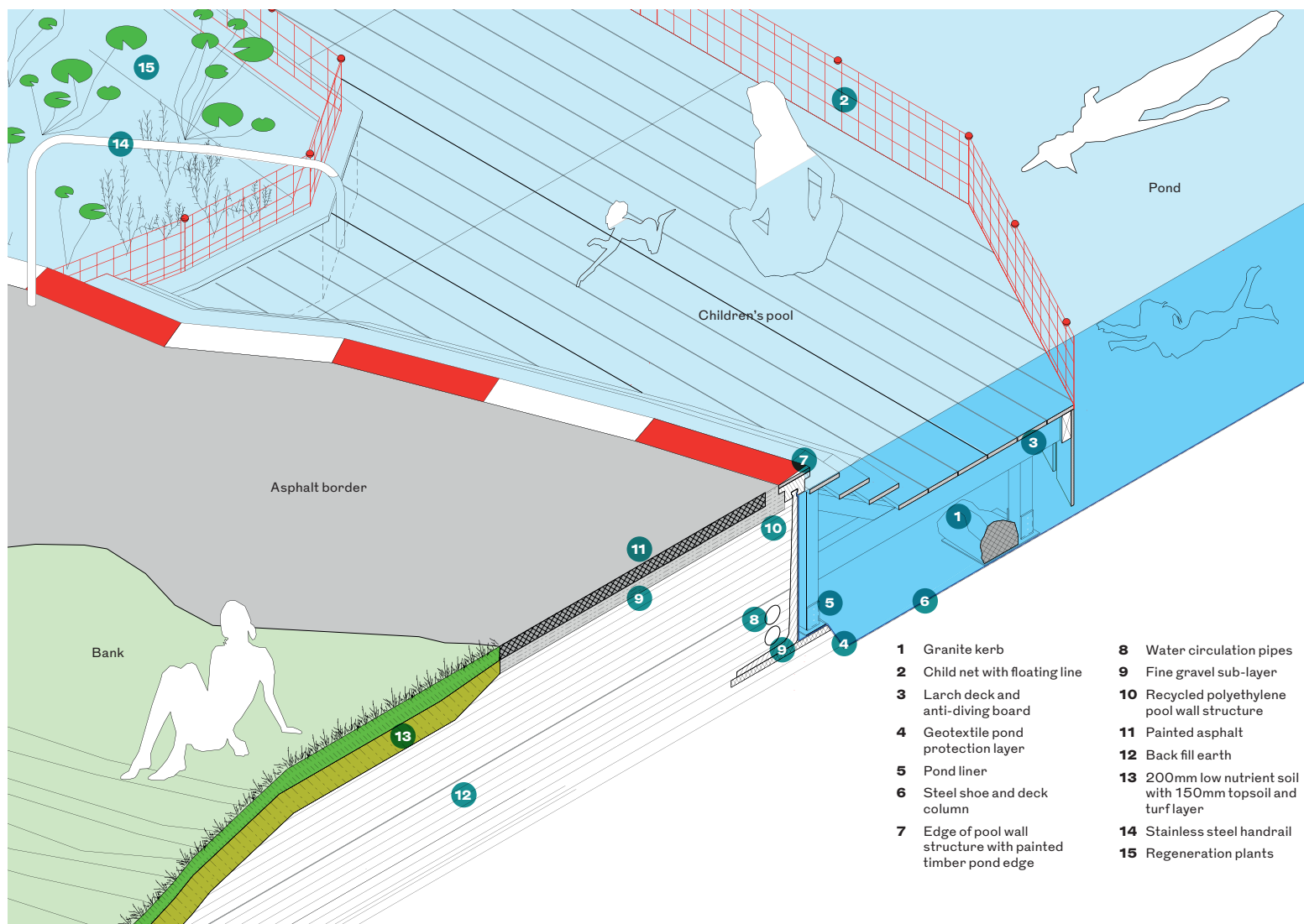
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Section through earth bank and pond wall



The art installation will evolve, mature and self-maintain in full view of the new community being built around it – the UK's first public, man-made, naturally purified outdoor bathing pool

chlorinated but it's a disinfectant and it kills everything, so when we drink it it's dead,' she says. 'But when you turned on the tap at the triennale it had oxygen and cleansing bacteria in it – it was alive!' This upturning of preconceptions is what saw the firm invited by Relay Arts to make its proposal for the Pond Club. The architects claim there's a societal perception of sewage only served by dependence on chemical hygiene and centralised processes, which the Pond Club aims to challenge with new, holistic approaches to waste management.

The 600m³ volume of water that the firm installed in conjunction with Austrian natural pool designer BIOTOP through its UK partner Kingcombe Aquacare relies completely on simple filtration, water plants and nutrient mineralisation to keep the water clean. It is designed to deal with 163 bathers daily, but Ooze argues that the pump filtration systems could be done away with if the amount of planted area were

increased. Driven by the water quality factors of limnology and hygiene, the pond is divided into three sections – a swimming zone, a regeneration zone and a plant filter marsh zone – to ensure swimmers do not stray into the sensitive plant areas. The regeneration zone comprises Helophite plants like water lilies and Canadian Pondweed that absorb nutrients and transform them into plant mass, as well as harbouring healthy zooplankton and micro-organisms which kill the algae that can contaminate the pool. In the plant filter zone of water mint, Norfolk reeds and marsh marigold, gravel beds provide a good environment for the biofilm organisms that reduce the content of harmful germs as well as using calcium to bind phosphorous elements (flocculation) while buffering the water's pH-value and filtering out particulates.

To help maintain the health of the water there are several pumps and filters, including a phosphate one, through which water is

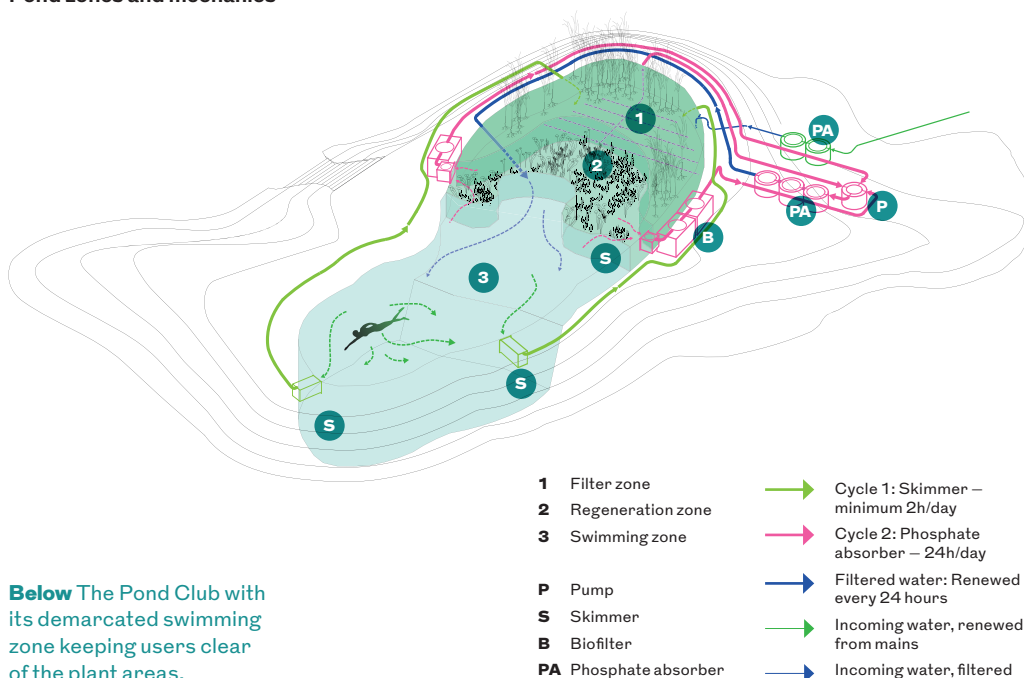
circulated via surface skimmers – with the whole volume of the pond run through them every 48 hours. The pool itself, which steps from 1.2m to 2.8m deep, was formed from 120mm thick 'L-shaped' recycled polypropylene walls fixed to the ground and sprayed with a thin layer of concrete, over which was laid a geotextile layer. A waterproofing liner was then run over this. It was originally intended to be recycled polyethylene, but was substituted at the last minute by the contractor for PVC as it was easier to install.

Ooze explains that the pond was elevated as part of the artistic intent – a 'sleight of land' rendering the whole body of water invisible from the general level of the park. It also created a bank of earth on all sides, two faces of which required co-ordinating with Robert Townshend, landscape architect for Cubitt Park. The north and east sides meanwhile have been allocated as a 'pioneer landscape', with over 4000 biodynamically grown plants hardy enough to deal with poor industrial soils. The firm has split the banks into four areas representative of humid, rich, meadow and forest zones and populated it with nearly 80 different species. It has not concentrated on looks either, but on bringing balance to the soil – producing decisions like having stinging as well as purple and gold nettles. 'Nettles are important for the soil,' says Pfannes, 'They really are healing plants.'

Given the singularity of the intent, it's a shame that the pond is only budgeted to be there for two years, although Ooze hopes the levels of community interest and engagement so far will auger well for it to become less of an installation and more of an implementation within the bigger King's Cross landscaping strategy. Ooze meanwhile is eyeing bigger fish – its proposal for a constructed wetland installed in steppes down the slopes of a Rio de Janeiro favela is under consideration by the local government, with the research funded by the Dutch government. It's part of a bigger strategy not only to clean up the Rio slums but to reduce some of the 20,000 litres/sec of raw sewage pouring from the city into Guanabara Bay. Ooze is looking at five pilot projects and is getting positive backing from the usually suspicious community leaders there, seeing the work as a way of recognising and legitimising the favelas themselves.

'As a firm we are keen to connect nature and the urban,' says Hartenberg, talking animatedly about how waste processing, sewage and landfill have been relegated to the unseen peripheries of our cities. 'We want to decentralise the processes and make use of nature to deal with the urban environment as it will if it is allowed to.' It might be small for now, but in the bigger picture, what the firm's Pond Club represents is anything but a drop in the ocean. ●

Pond zones and mechanics



Below The Pond Club with its demarcated swimming zone keeping users clear of the plant areas.



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1
Porous landscaping
Bituchem

Here once trod swashbuckling sailors and swooning maidens – think Horatio Hornblower, Jack Sparrow's Elizabeth Swann, James and Anne Onedin... bustling around Plymouth's Royal William Victualling Yard, whose clock tower (above) still chimes. Still those ghosts boast and flirt on the estate, spruced up for today's happening people with trendy flats and eateries. Now a car park, this area accommodates less glamorous forms of transport, but laid with Bituchem's Natratex Porous landscaping for even water absorption, it's perfect for keeping the admiral's wife's petticoats clean. bituchem.com



2
Soakaway system
ACO

Fans of comfort-TV sleuthing dramas will be excited to see that the Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway – star of many such sets – has a new Restoration & Education Centre, sustainably kitted out with ACO's StormBrixx soakaway system. We can only hope the station master doesn't arrive one morning to find a barely dead hand protruding from the hardcore. Exasperated by Miss Marple's interfering, Midsomer Murders' DCI Barnaby's only hope of gaining any sense of power could lie with one of the heritage line's steam driver courses – a snip at £400! aco.co.uk



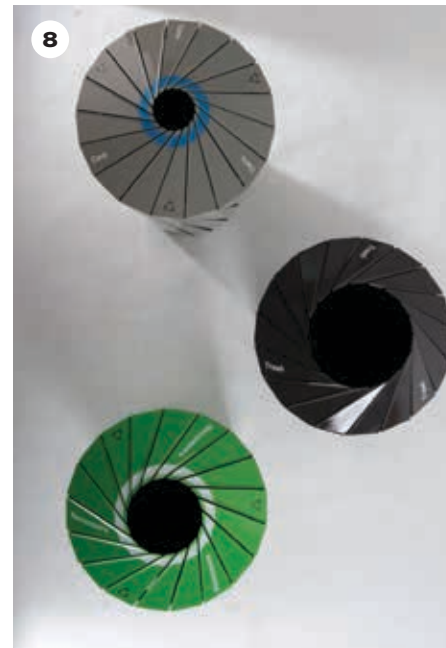
3
Sienna paving
Tobermore

Runway-greedy Heathrow always was the glamour puss of airports. As a child I joined a friend's birthday outing, which simply involved visiting Terminal 2 and peering at the tarmac where celebs like the Beatles and Marilyn Munroe had waved at ranks of screaming teenagers. Our pleasures were simple. The new T2, the Queen's Terminal, is retaining its glittering image with not just a wavy roof, but landscaping that actually sparkles. The exposed granite of Tobermore's Sienna and Sienna Duo Silver paving is as hard-wearing as it is glam. All together now: OMG!! Kiss me Zayn! tobermore.co.uk



4
16 Bocci

Boing!! Old hippies might die, but their legacy lives on. Here Bocci has created an illuminating version of the trees in the cult 1960s TV series The Magic Roundabout. This one, 16, is made of layers of coloured glass, lit by an LED and attached to an armature. Slightly more sophisticated than the originals admittedly, and useful as well as decorative, but is Dougal grumbling at Florence beneath it? Where is Dylan and his guitar? Do Ermintrude's warblings waft over the breeze? We could get lost in a psychedelic reverie here... but boing!! Time for bed, said Zebedee. bocci.ca



5
Mellifont block pavers
Kilsaran

Art Appreciation class, Sandymoor School in Cheshire: 'Now children, what are we reminded of by this meticulous random paving at our school entrance – Mellifont block paver supplied by Kilsaran in a three size mix using a Rustic, Charcoal and Curragh Gold colour blend? Is it the pointillists, who used many coloured dots to create shade and tone, or the bold coloured squares of Mondrian perhaps? There's even a hint of Rothko's Black in Deep Red. Yes, Eugenie, you've got it – it's Carl Andre's Equivalent VIII writ large! Oh, George... no, don't do that George...' kilsarangroup.co.uk

6
Blue Pennant stone
Forest Pennant

Little Boy Blue had the blues: he needed some sustainable stone to build a wall to hem in the sheep and the cows. But could he find any? He ran round searching like a blue arsed fly, he asked til he was blue in the face, he looked out into the wide blue yonder, thought blue sky thoughts, and screamed blue murder in his frustration. He was in a blue funk. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, the man from Forest Pennant appeared. 'We've a chance that comes once in a blue moon,' he said. 'We've dug deep in our Barnhill quarry and found great reserves of Blue Pennant.' Well, that LBB was tickled pink. forestpennant.com

7
Piatto block paving
Brett Piatto

Students at Edinburgh Uni's Deaconess House accommodation had better shape up. In today's fees-driven academia, their tutors appear to have installed a performance bar chart in the quad, to either shame or motivate them. Brett Landscaping's robust and durable Piatto block paving in Silver Granite and Dark Basalt combine with soft turf – perhaps metaphorically reminding hapless students that any who see study as a soft option will soon hit the hard realities of life: so get up, put that Jagermeister shot down, and knuckle down to your studies. Big brother is watching you. brett paving.co.uk

8
Waste bins
Landor

From bench to bin... no, I'm not talking about the office worker's lunch, hopefully opened as they sit in the spring sunshine of New York's Central Park but speedily revealed as less than palatable. I mean these stylish numbers from Landor, trash cans colour-coded for recyclability and inspired by the 1939 Corona Park bench, which now grace said open space. In a country that reportedly trashes 40% of its food – \$165bn worth – and recycles more than a third of its waste, bins are big business. So whether you're dumping your pizza, paper or pepsi, in stylish NY even the garbage is modish. landor.com

Spiral stair, Wellcome Collection

Elegant and conspicuous, Wilkinson Eyre's stair finally completes Wellcome Collection's revamp

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photography: Edmund Sumner

Resembling a gargantuan DNA string taken right out of the 60s sci-fi 'Incredible Journey', Wilkinson Eyre's new spiral staircase in the upper lobby of London's Wellcome Collection is doing some organic connecting of its own. The stair is part of the firm's project to update Wellcome's public exhibition and outreach spaces to deal with burgeoning visitor numbers – projected to reach up to a million a year over the next decade. The £1.1million steel and glass spiral staircase, elegantly linking the foyer space to first floor galleries, and second floor library, AOC-designed reading room and restaurant, is a key circulatory link, performing the dual function of opening the spaces out to the public in section as well as acting as a visual signifier of the wholesale internal reinvention behind its 1930s neoclassical facade.

With the lift core and stair hidden at the back of the building, Wilkinson Eyre was keen that the new vertical circulation should also form a strong visual statement. Associate Gabi

Code says the firm did use DNA as an inspiration, but that in fact the form of the handcrafted steel stair was based on far more practical concerns. Visibility was all – hence the decision to make the outer balustrade glass to accentuate the movement of visitors through the space. This left the inner balustrade and soffit of the stair to be formed of 8mm thick mild steel plate, brought over in 12 sections and welded together on site. Code says there was a desire to avoid the idea of applique and to allow the materials to speak – even on making a distinction between outer and inner steel surfaces. As a result, the outer face was shotblasted and simply lacquered while the internal was shotblasted, cold-sprayed zinc and then hot-sprayed with stainless steel. While the stair design was modelled in Rhino, the firm was keen, in an increasingly pre-fabricated world, to express the hand-made quality of its rolled and pressed plates; so much so that just polishing it in situ took one man a month's labour to perform.

Engineered by AKTII, part of the stair is box section, but the main supporting load is carried by the spiral of the curved steel soffit connecting back to the building's original secondary steels supporting its laminated timber joist floors. Reflecting the lighter footfall to the upper reading room level, the Mareuil limestone treads reduce in width as it ascends between floors, creating a strange trompe l'oeil perspectival effect when looking up from the ground floor stairwell. The firm reconfigured the circulation areas on both floors to create generous spaces that not only give the stair room to breathe as a sculptural object in itself, but will allow for those projected visitor numbers.

Wilkinson Eyre's spiral intervention has proved a bold master stroke in a building that formerly lacked any sectional logic, creating new gallery conditions and a circulatory artery that should keep Wellcome Collection's vast medical archive, and the public's future access to it, in rude health. ●

The circulatory link performs the dual function of opening the spaces out to the public in section as well as acting as a visual signifier of the wholesale internal reinvention behind its 1930s neoclassical facade



Above AOC's new second floor Wellcome reading room with Wilkinson Eyre's reconfigured book stacks above.

Right The curious spiral stair geometry feels hand-designed and wrought.

Below From the foyer (with Antony Gormley sculpture), the elegant steel spiral is a clear sculptural statement announcing the raw circulation strategy.



Specified



1
SaphirKeramik
Laufen

They say mountain dwellers live by big ideas, and Swiss firm Laufen, which has presented the world with 'bathroom culture since 1892' embodies that in its PR, citing 'solutions that break the boundaries of bathroom design'. Its 'revolutionary' SaphirKeramik can create strong, thin-walled shapes such as the shelf-washbasin above. It could be seen as a metaphor for Switzerland itself, perfection ringed by the Alpine range with three distinct languages. Or with a central tap squirting upwards it could represent Lake Geneva's fountain. But hey, false modesty never got anyone anywhere.

uk.laufen.com

2
Sofa 2002
Thonet

Thonet, the master of bentwood furniture, has thrown caution to the winds and put plump puffy pillows on its latest sofa. Seen here in a comforting 1970s brown, the whole lot looks misleadingly precarious. In a sort of counter-intuitive visual game, the Sumo-style cushions are seemingly held hopelessly in check by a thin string of bentwood, looking ready to burst asunder at any moment. But the strength is of course in the frame, while the giant cushions are just great big softies. You have to sympathise – after 200 years' bending wood the designers deserve a soft landing.

thonet.com

3
Velo House
Kiwi & Pom

When Norman Tebbit advised people to get on their bikes and seek work during the 'Yosser Hughes' recession, he can have had no idea how successful that notion would become. Growth in the activity for both pastime and transport has prompted this Velo House, kitted out by design consultant Kiwi & Pom. It's a pit stop, cafe, shop, workshop and general hangout for the cool of Tunbridge Wells... yes, that last might sound a bit of a non-sequiteur, but that's the point. Why no local Sir Bufton Tufton has written to the Telegraph about it yet is the real mystery.

kiwiandpom.com

4
Shower cabinet
Bathroom Brands

The world of bathrooms has been taken by storm with the discovery in a Chateau attic of a Louis XIV freestanding shower unit. Now cleaned up and restored to a suitable location, a grand period drawing room, its cleaning powers are accentuated by putting it beside a young lady who clearly needs a good soap and scrub... no, you guessed it – in fact this is Arcade Bathrooms' Piccadilly shower temple, a period piece shown last month on its stand at ISH in Frankfurt. Remember that magician chap stood in a box over the Thames? I feel an art act coming on...

bathroombrands.com

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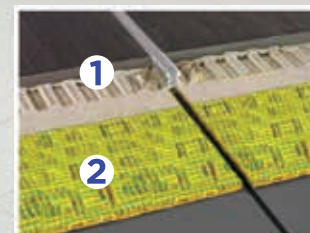
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New references for Taralay floors Gerflor

International vinyl flooring specialist Gerflor has refreshed its Taralay Impression range with a host of new colours, including for the first time, wood effect designs. The range offers 160 references, of which 110 are new and 21 wood effect. Taralay Impression Compact, Impression Comfort and Uni Comfort are available in 2m wide sheets and are treated with ProtecSol®, for maximum hygiene.

www.gerflor.com



High performing stone-effect tile Tile of Spain

Traveller by Spanish manufacturer Roca is an attractive stone-effect wall and floor tile made with 40% recycled porcelain. Designed for superior technical performance in public and high traffic environments, it offers an anti-slip finish and a selection of easy-to-install rectified formats, including an expansive 60cm by 120cm option.

www.rocatile.com



Technology boosts new Fastcoat Watco

Watco's new Fastcoat series (floor paint, anti-slip paint and primer) offers huge improvements in all areas of floor coating performance. It owes its this to Watco's adaption of the latest Polyaspartic resin technology in preference to the epoxy resin based solutions. Polyaspartic gives Fastcoat easier application, a very hard finish, longer lifespan, and greater chemical and UV fade resistance.

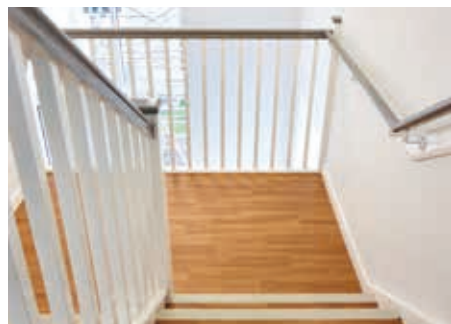
www.watco.co.uk



Safe and dry with Mapeguard Mapei

Mapei is pleased to announce the launch of Mapeguard WP200, a flexible, thin-layered waterproofing / anti fracture membrane, and Mapeguard WP Adhesive, a two-component reactive adhesive, to its waterproofing and ceramic product lines. Mapeguard WP200 is an alkali-resistant, waterproofing and decoupling membrane best suited for use under ceramic and natural stone tiles in wet and damp areas.

www.mapei.co.uk



Luxury vinyl for affordable homes Polyflor

Rhondda Housing Association chose Polyflor's high design, high performance vinyl flooring for its new Llys Graig Y Wion social housing development in Pontypridd. Acoustix Forest fx PUR sheet vinyl flooring in European Oak 3345 was installed in communal areas including stairwells, hallways and landings, with Colonia PUR luxury vinyl tile in English Oak 4435 throughout the living spaces.

www.polyflor.com



Verona comes to Sutton Academy Polyflor

Polyflor's Polysafe Verona PUR vinyl safety flooring in two complementary and stylish shades has been used to help create an eye-catching dining hall for pupils at The Sutton Academy in St Helens. As part of a major refurbishment, over 400m² of Polysafe Verona PUR flooring was installed throughout the dining and seating areas. Verona flooring in Biscotti 5212 and Dolphin Grey 5203 shades were used.

www.polyflor.com



In the pink with new look parquet Junckers

Junckers has added a new look to its collection of parquet floors. Made in solid oak, Single Stave Blocks floor has been given a contemporary, Scandinavian update with Rustic White Oil. More shades, such as Anthracite Grey, Black, Walnut, Cherry and Mahogany, can be achieved with Junckers' Rustic Oil, which is easy to apply, and can also be over coated with a lacquer for durability.

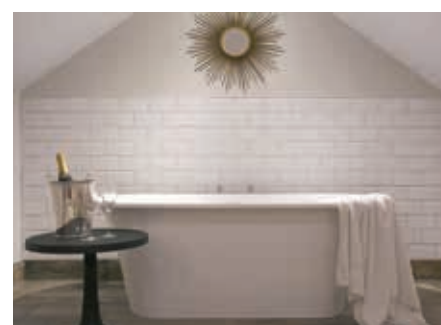
www.junckers.co.uk



Solvent-free seal saves time Fila

Fila's solvent-free, stain-proofing protector – FILAMP90 ECO PLUS – is a high performance impregnating seal. Part of Fila's award-winning Green Line, it is designed for natural stone and polished porcelain surfaces, and contributes to LEED credits. It can be used internally and externally, on food contact surfaces and where residual moisture is present, cutting application time by up to 80%.

filasolutions.com/en



King's Head toasts Kerakoll Kerakoll

Kerakoll products were chosen for tiling during the renovation of the mediaeval King's Head Hotel in Cirencester due to the company's excellent technical support. In addition to tile adhesive and grout for both floors and walls, its products were used to soundproof the floors of the bathrooms, prime wood and level floors. They were also used to tank shower and bathroom floors and prime the walls.

www.kerakoll.co.uk



Food for thought on flooring Mapei

Mapei UK's Mapefloor CPU range has five new products in its industrial flooring line. The new floor systems will comply with EC norms regarding hygiene and safety within areas used for food and beverage production and storage areas. All products can be applied on 'early age concrete' and can be used in conjunction with Mapei's range of fast-drying screeds, admixtures and sealant products.

www.mapei.co.uk



Pipe covers protect property Contour Casings

Damage to rainwater downpipes and soil pipes can have major implications and Contour Casings has introduced a comprehensive range of anti-climb downpipe covers. Precision engineered, they can be warranted for up to 25 years and the range suits cast iron, plastic and aluminium rainwater and soil pipework. They can be used in isolation to cover the lowest 2.5m -3m of the pipe, or as a whole system.

www.contourcasings.co.uk



Gen up on the latest SuDS Interpave

Trade association Interpave has published a new edition of its 'SuDS + Permeable Paving Today' guide, reviewing the latest government measures for implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The free downloadable guide is essential reading for all those involved in development. It explores the latest thinking on SuDS as part of urban design and initiatives to deliver them.

www.paving.org.uk



Waitrose's sustainable drainage ACO

A Waitrose store in Stratford-upon-Avon has used ACO Water Management's Qmax® slot drainage system and KerbDrain®, a combined kerb and drainage system, to manage surface water on the new car park and the approach to the store. Qmax 225 is easily integrated into a SuDS application and allows for the fast, efficient removal of water from the surface, while KerbDrain offered flexibility.

www.aco.co.uk



Individualise your bathroom Duravit

Created by the French designer Philippe Starck, the ME by Starck collection satisfies the desire for pure aesthetics and focuses on the essentials. With minimalist design, it places the person and their sense of style at the centre of the bathroom. A vast choice of individual designs in washbasins, toilets, baths, shower trays and accessories all form part of this individuality-driven collection.

www.duravit.co.uk



BIM objects available from NBS BAL

BAL's market-leading range of tile adhesives, grouts and ancillary products are now available as downloadable BIM objects on the NBS National BIM Library. BAL has worked with NBS to ensure all its products are authored to the trusted NBS standard and are compatible with CAD systems from Autodesk, Revit and Archicad. BIM objects are also accessible from BAL's improved website.

www.bal-adhesives.com



Comfort and style in the office Boss Design

The Boss Design Group unveiled Mea, a new self-adjusting task chair, at the Salone del Mobile in Milan last month. Available in high or low back options, this model features matching or contrasting seat and backrest liners that may be specified as upholstered or veneered. Founder Brian Murray said, 'As we expand with a new showroom in Dubai... it is only fitting that we propel the innovation of office seating to new heights.'

www.boss-design.com



High design for Agent high table Lyndon Design

Lyndon Design, the leading manufacturer of upholstered handcrafted seating and furniture for commercial interiors, has introduced a new high table to its popular Agent collection. The table's robust yet elegant white MFC top creates a durable finish. Available in size 1050mm by 1800mm, it comes in an American Black Walnut or European Oak frame to suit a variety of styles.

www.lyndon.co.uk



Transform rooms in hours David Clouting

Interior Film from David Clouting is a range of self-adhesive, decorative films manufactured by LG Hausys. Rooms can be dramatically transformed in just hours. Films can be adhered to most substrates including: wood, metals, plaster board, plastics and melamine. Air free technology gives a bubble free finish, while finishes include: exotic woods, leather effect, textured metals and natural stone.

www.davidclouting.co.uk



Classic Cell cubicles for Five Guys Kemmlit

Five Guys, the US burger restaurant chain, has just opened in Glasgow. In keeping with its retro décor, Kemmlit's Classic Cell cubicle system in a brushed stainless steel finish was installed in the restaurant's washroom. Classic Cell, with its straight profiled lines, is a design classic and features 42mm thick smooth surfaced welted doors and sound reducing floor to ceiling dividing partitions.

www.kemmlituk.com



LEDs for Knightsbridge ACDC

ACDC has supplied LED products to the Knightsbridge Estate in London. Tightly controlled dynamic white LED lights with a range of 2,700K-6,500K were specified to allow the hue to be individually tuned and seasonally adjusted, with some RGB functionality. To meet the spec, ACDC produced a specially adapted Plaza fitting from its Floods range, plus adapted versions of Blade and Fino Linear.

www.acdclighting.co.uk



See how to step into the future Cyberhomes

Smart home systems specialist Cyberhomes is exhibiting on Stand L230 of the May Design Series at London ExCel from 17–19 May. There will be a working demonstration of a Savant control system, as well as the brand new Samsung 78in 4K Ultra HD TV. Experts will be on hand to discuss this fast-moving technology, including lighting systems, smart home components and integrated interiors. www.cyberhomes.co.uk



Art Deco building reborn SWA

Steel Window Association member the Window Repair Company has played a critical role in the refurbishment of Newcastle's 1930s grade II listed Co-op department store, which is to become a Premier Inn with retail outlets and gym. The firm renovated 2000m² of steel windows, needing to replicate only 12 of the originals. Most of the work was done on site by the six-strong team over 10 months. steel-window-association.co.uk



Easy does it with new tile fixer Weber

Saint-Gobain Weber has introduced another innovative and easy-to-use tile fixing product – weber.epox easy. This two-part epoxy resin adhesive and grout can be used for interior and exterior applications on floors and walls. It is formulated for fixing tiles where very high bond strength, robustness and flexibility are required and for grouting where chemical resistance and/or complete impermeability is necessary. www.lovewebber.co.uk



A Victorian addition to the family Redland

Redland is introducing a new tile colour to its hugely successful Rosemary Clay Craftsman range after an increase in demand. The Victorian colour is darker and grittier than the original Albury and Hawkhurst, giving roofs a greater depth of texture and character. A unique process gives Victorian the look and style of a premium heritage tile with the strength and reliability of modern-day manufacturing. www.redland.co.uk



Fire safety in public buildings Nullifire

An advantage to using a modern water-borne intumescent coating system such as Nullifire's S707 range is the absence of solvent smells. While original solvent based products typically contained 200 g/litre of VOCs and gave off fumes for a long time after application, the water based option is down around 20 g/litre, and can therefore be sprayed quite close to where other trades are working. www.nullifire.com



How to win BREEAM approval Schueco

Schueco has produced a guide and comprehensive set of documents to assist architects in the selection of Schueco aluminium windows, doors and facades best suited for BREEAM projects, the world's most widely used standard for sustainable design. It explains the BREEAM basics, and demonstrates the influence Schueco products can have on the BREEAM-categories where credits are scored. www.schueco.co.uk



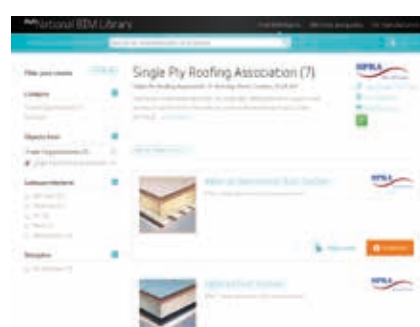
Sainsbury's gets Senior Senior Architectural

A new, thermally-efficient curtain walling system developed by leading fenestration systems designer and manufacturer Senior Architectural Systems has been used on Sainsbury's eco store at Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield. The SF52 structural silicone glazed curtain walling system has been installed to the main entrance elevation, giving the new store a dramatic facade and sense of light and space. www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk



Communication to publishing Signbox

Architectural sign specialist Signbox was commissioned to devise and implement a bespoke brand communication solution to bring the intricate interior concept to fruition for publisher UBM's new headquarters in London. The project called for a series of bespoke wall art installations, made of CNC machined Medite MDF, fabricated and painted to a high quality finish at the entrance to each floor. www.signbox.co.uk



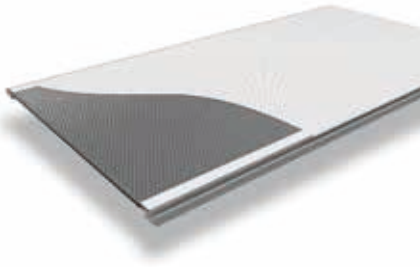
5000 downloads match the best SPRA

After last year's launch of its BIM objects on the NBS National BIM Library in April last year, demand for the Single Ply Roofing Association's generic BIM objects now matches those of some of the top manufacturers – unprecedented for a trade association. Seven objects are available to download, covering warm roof systems with adhered and mechanically fixed components, and green and inverted roofs. www.SPRA.co.uk



C18th house, C21st heating Stokvis

Heating and hot water services at the De Vere Hotel near Reading, centred around an 18th century mansion, have been brought right up to date through the installation of two Stokvis Econoplate E4B59+1R packaged plate heat exchangers. These offer very high flow rates direct from the boiler plant, with no need for storage, avoiding problems of cycling to maintain temperature or the risk of Legionella. www.stokvisboilers.com



Acoustic panels minus the stress Hunter Douglas

Hunter Douglas presents XLnt, new, composite ceiling panels with a swing-down system and absorption value of $\alpha_w 0.75$ and A2 Eurobrand classification. Layered composition gives the panels an unrivalled stiffness, largely a result of the honeycomb aluminium inside them. Even the largest, at 1.25m by 2.5m, do not bend or sag, offering architects design freedom without any need to worry about tensile stress. www.hunterdouglascontract.com



Tuned in to Bush House refurb Dorma

Restoration and modernisation of the former BBC HQ Bush House in London saw DORMA supply a range of door controls and floor springs. With the building stripped back to display its original Edwardian features, DORMA products were specified on various packages of works for their compact and elegant design, long term durability and ability to provide safe, secure and reliable access. www.dorma.com



Abloy's key to security Abloy UK

Security expert Abloy UK has launched a new PROTEC2 CLIQ Key and Cylinder, a web-based security management solution, which allows for the remote management of disparate or large electronic master-keyed sites at any time, from anywhere in the world. The new PROTEC2 CLIQ Key has a larger memory capacity and 3500 locks or lock groups can now be programmed. www.abloy.co.uk



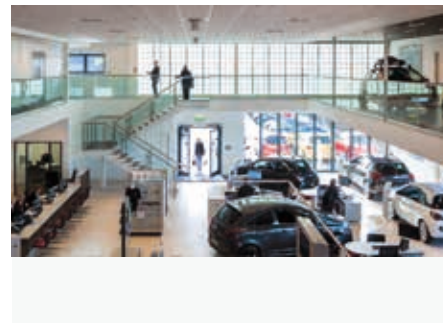
NotOnlyWhite picks HI-MACS LG Hausys

Renowned Dutch brand NotOnly-White has again opted for HI-MACS® to create its new collection Scape 2015, designed by Dutch designer Joost van der Vecht. The firm's acrylic stone was chosen for this new basin collection due to its excellent hygienic properties. In addition to being waterproof, it is also extraordinarily effective at repelling stains and is resistant to scratches and wear. www.himacs.eu



Towering work for St Barts Pendock

Well known for the supply of column casings and other types of moulding, Pendock provided bespoke units for the new St Bartholomew's and Royal London Hospitals, to conceal the heavy-weight stanchions supporting the glazed roof and other elements to the 65,000ft² St Barts medical facility. The column casings were finished in either a Soft White or Grey Dust Gloss in the £97,000 contract. www.pendock.co.uk



Lighting up retail Structura

Highly insulating Kalwall is frequently specified for retail projects, from supermarkets and warehouses to places like this spectacular 2300m² Thurlow Nunn showroom designed by Bisset Adams. Here it diffuses daylight evenly and deeply and, seen at night, emits an attractive ethereal glow. Kalwall is also widely specified for the refurbishment of aged cladding and rooflights. www.structura-uk.com/kalwall



Step up with superior ladders DR Services

Offering high aesthetic values and superior craftsmanship, MWE library ladder systems are now available for distribution and installation by D R Services. They offer precision, functionality, attention to detail and a hint of luxury for commercial or residential environments. Made from stainless steel, they are engineered to blend ergonomic simplicity with excellent contemporary aesthetics. www.drservices.co.uk



New Horizon in rooflights Lumen

Lumen has launched its new rooflight, the Horizon, which incorporates a high performance triple glazed Pilkington Activ self-clean unit and is handmade in sustainably sourced Accoya. Offering compelling environmental advantages over other hardwoods, Accoya has superior dimensional stability and exceptional durability, with a 50 year life span. Horizon comes in a variety of colours both inside and out. www.lumenrooflight.co.uk



Period windows enhance hotel Mumford & Wood

Reclaimed furniture, vintage features and a shabby chic style lend a fabulous atmosphere to Artist Residence London, a Regency townhouse boutique hotel and restaurant in London's trendy Pimlico Village. Mumford & Wood's double glazed, timber Conservation™ box sash windows and doors were specified, the high performance engineered products offering superb thermal and acoustic performance. www.mumfordwood.com



Lounge porcelain in prestige spec RAK Ceramics

Weston Homes plc has specified RAK Ceramics for its new development at Preston Hall, near Aylesford in Kent. The new, luxurious homes are located within a former grade II listed historic mansion. Beige and grey-toned porcelain finishes, from RAK's best-selling Lounge Collection, were chosen for all bathrooms and en-suites – on floors, walls and countertops. The tiles also offer resistance to water, stains, abrasion and impact, as well as easy care. www.rakceramics.co.uk

Sign Up

Clive Albert, director at Edinburgh's Malcolm Fraser Architects, gives us three of his specification favourites



MARMOLEUM FLOORING – FORBO NAIRN

The practice has specified marmoleum flooring in our buildings for more than 15 years. Its environmental credentials are unbeatable: made of 97% natural raw materials, 72% of which are entirely renewable and the material itself is 100% biodegradable. But it's also the product's resilient performance characteristics that ensure that we keep specifying it. We have buildings more than 12 years old with footfall of over 70,000 annual users. This flooring, with good regular maintenance, still performs and looks great.

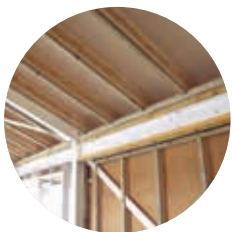
forbo.com/flooring



VELUX MODULAR SKYLIGHTS

Velux rooflights are generally associated with residential conversion work, but recently the firm launched a modular skylight for commercial applications. It has a simple, refined design, with the actuators for opening vents and roller blinds integrated and concealed into the frame of the skylight, so there is no visual difference between fixed and venting modules. The system has a U value of 1.4 W/m²K with standard double frame unit, falling to 1.00 W/m²K with standard triple glazing. Support and consultancy are excellent.

modularskylights.velux.co.uk



NATURAL BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES

Wherever possible the practice uses vapour open or 'breathing wall' construction. We have worked with Natural Building Technologies, in particular using its wood fibre insulation and vapour control insulating boards. This allows moisture to move from both inside the building and within the wall towards the outside and benefits the health of both users and the construction. The system avoids relying on a PVC vapour barrier internally, which keeps air born moisture zipped up inside the building and its VOC content, and is likely to be breached during construction and trapped interstitially.

<http://www.natural-building.co.uk/>

...Sign Off

Jan-Carlos Kucharek enjoys three of this issue's out-takes



LEAKS AREN'T EVERYTHING

On March's World Plumbing Day – 'a time to reflect how we can...raise plumbing standards in the UK', water supplier Severn Trent urged customers to 'avoid rogue plumbers'. What?! Every time I pore over Yellow Pages from 'AAA' to 'A Plumber', I put my feet up, confident that an expert is dealing competently and economically with the dripping overflow. And in this selfie culture is it any surprise that a WaterSafe survey's found most customers felt a plumber's appearance was more important than qualifications? So if he looks like George Clooney, he'll be more able to clear that blocked 'U' bend? No s**t Sherlock! Or more likely, a whole load of it...



MAD REALE RID

The Italian Villa Reale di Marlia near Lucca has seen a lot in its time, according to estate agent Lionard, which just sold it. The 1800s palazzo has a lovely English garden around its 'Green Theatre' of high yew trees, where 'demon' violinist Paganini purportedly deflowered Napoleon's sister. If that wasn't enough to set fans aflutter, the name of later owner Carlo, Prince of Bourbon, was mud in polite society when he married an Irish commoner: he lost the estate – after fathering a son whose loopy religious antics had him dubbed the 'Mad Prince'. A luxury hotel chain's just bought the villa off the Pecci Blunt Counts – another name rolling off the tongue in all the wrong ways.



NO, MR BOND...I EXPECT YOU TO TILE...

Famous for covert operations in the world's most glamorous parts, you wouldn't associate Southampton with James Bond, but it seems the city's 1920 Bursledon Lodge was home to Mansfield Cummings, founder of MI6 and the original 'M'. The unassuming house originally sported 'safe' terracotta tiles; which, when it came to refurbishment by the new family 'planted' in it, were cunningly replaced with very convincing Rosemary Clay 'doubles' by Redland. Specified using the firm's free-of-charge SpecMaster service, it also meant they didn't need to get in the Q for a QS – so saving a pretty Money Penny at the same time.

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