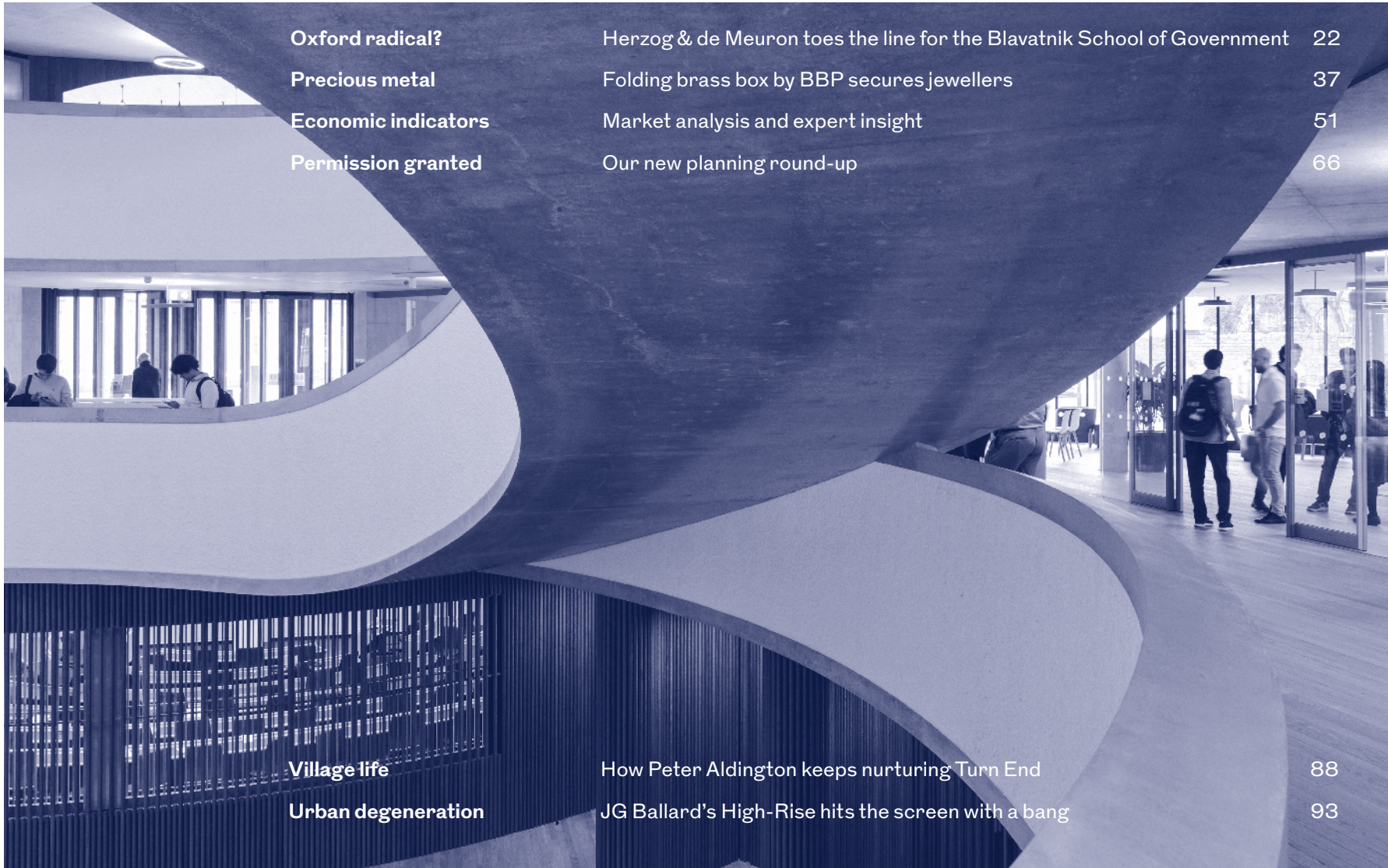


RIBA

J April 2016

The RIBA Journal

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1

Buildings



HERVÉ ABBADIE

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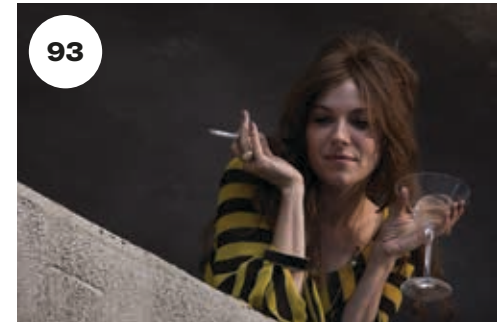
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1: Buildings

'Manners maketh man' – and buildings. But those fearful of prostrating themselves before the conventional god of politeness could try instead the backhanded compliment to historic form, as Herzog & de Meuron did by inverting the Oxford quad with its Blavatnik Centre (p22). Stylistically, of course, polite and mannered have come to mean something quite different; sadly 'rude' hasn't made it into the style lexicon. There are so many opportunities for a building to be either polite or less than, not only to its im-

mediate surroundings but also to those that use it. It can lead the way to its entrance with grace and purpose or blank those unfamiliar with it; it can slam a double door in the face of those entering the lobby or rub cheaply up against them as they grasp handle or handrail. Sometimes of course it is sheer awkwardness, the building has never had space to learn to behave well. Add another responsibility to your heavy load: it is up to its architect-parents to bring their building up right. ●

Below Hugh Broughton's new gallery for the Portland Collection at Welbeck.



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We had very simple undiscussables – like young people deserve the best provision and the community deserves access to it

Isabelle Priest
talks to Burntwood
School's team:
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burntwood-school](http://ribaj.com/buildings/burntwood-school)

Offices have been pepperpotted at the ends of the bays, rather than clustered defensively together, so everyone is part of the studio culture

Eleanor Young
looks around
Westminster School
of Architecture:
[ribaj.com/buildings/
university-of-
westminster](http://ribaj.com/buildings/university-of-westminster)

Portland placed

Hugh Broughton's home for the reunited Portland Collection at Welbeck Abbey is an assured addition to an architecturally eccentric estate

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Hufton+Crow

As Hugh Broughton says, he might not have seemed the obvious choice to design this Nottinghamshire art gallery, given that his last high-profile project was the walking village of Halley VI, Britain's Antarctic Survey Station. And when it came to the competition to design a home for the Portland Collection at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire, he was up against all the well-known names with a lot of experience of that building type. But he also had under his belt the well-received Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery, completed in 2012. And this is an old-money commission where personality counts for a lot. He and his client, William Parente of Welbeck Abbey, latest of the wealthy family there going right back to Bess of Hardwick in Elizabethan times, just hit it off.

The result is good: a very personal building, built to last, that has a very public function. The Welbeck Estate is unique, the result of a mania for building by the distinctly eccentric 5th 'burrowing Duke' of Portland in the 1860s. He kept a large permanently-employed workforce not only to dig the network of subsurface tunnels and rooms that he favoured (he wasn't keen on being seen in daylight) but also all manner of other buildings, in a vaguely Tudor style appropriate for a descendant of Bess. The resulting village, at a discreet distance from the main house, is like a 19th century stab at a business park – which is pretty much what it has become. Later additions include a typically boisterous range of workshops by John Outram, and the existing Harley Gallery for contemporary art. This is a 1994 conversion of the Estate's gasworks building, originally needed to provide light for all the buildings and tunnels. The gallery is part of the public face of Welbeck, along with a good farm shop, garden centre in the vast walled garden, and tours

of the state rooms of the main house.

Just as the old building is for new art, so the new building is for old art. It sits right next to the Harley Gallery but is not joined to it. The Portland Collection is the cultural patrimony of the dynasty to which Parente belongs, accumulated over nearly 500 years. Among much else, it contains a Michelangelo drawing and the only surviving painting by Marcus Gheeraets the Elder – of Queen Elizabeth I. There are Van Dycks, Stubbses, a remarkable collection of portrait miniatures arranged here by Sir Peter Blake, fine silverware, and Royalist memorabilia including the pearl earring worn by King Charles I at his execution. Parente succeeded to the estate in 2008 and set about unifying and presenting the collection, then dispersed in various family houses. Hence this gallery.

The site was forlorn: the roofless stone hulk of the 'tan gallops', once a covered all-weather training ground for racehorses. Broughton has dropped his new building between these walls, resisting his natural urge to reveal the stone inside (not good for hanging art) except where his cool limestone foyer with its cantilevered roof abuts it. The design emerged in intense collaboration with Parente. Instead, the steel-framed building is clad externally in well-proportioned Danish brick with flush lime-mortar pointing. Above this rise the curving zinc-clad roofs of the gallery, their joints rolled rather than the more usual standing-seam.

The pièce de résistance here is the 22m oak-floored Long Gallery, which you enter directly from the foyer. The tall curved cycloidal roof made of fibrous plaster sections rises to a full-length glazed light slot that allows indirect daylight only. The burrowing duke would feel at home here. At present the silverware is displayed in a glass cabinet at



IN NUMBERS

880 m²

gross internal area

£4.73m

construction cost design

1538

date of oldest work displayed

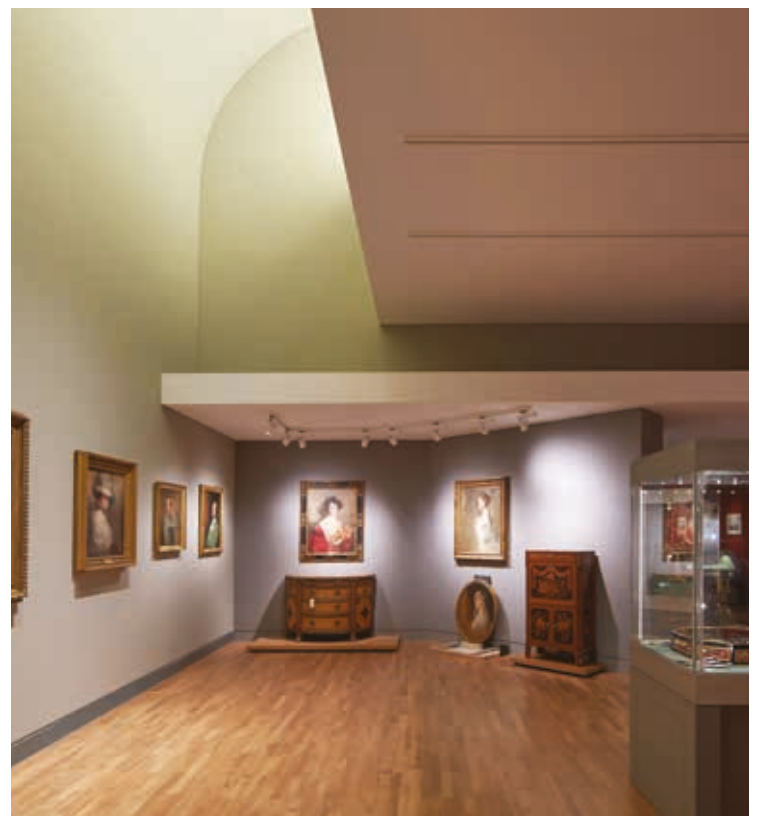
22m

length of Long Gallery

Top The new gallery is set behind the existing stone walls of a former indoor gallop, while the entrance pavilion extends in front.

Opposite left The Long Gallery with cycloidal roof and ridge rooflight.

Opposite right The Large Gallery is subdivided, with filtered daylight from cowl-like north lights.



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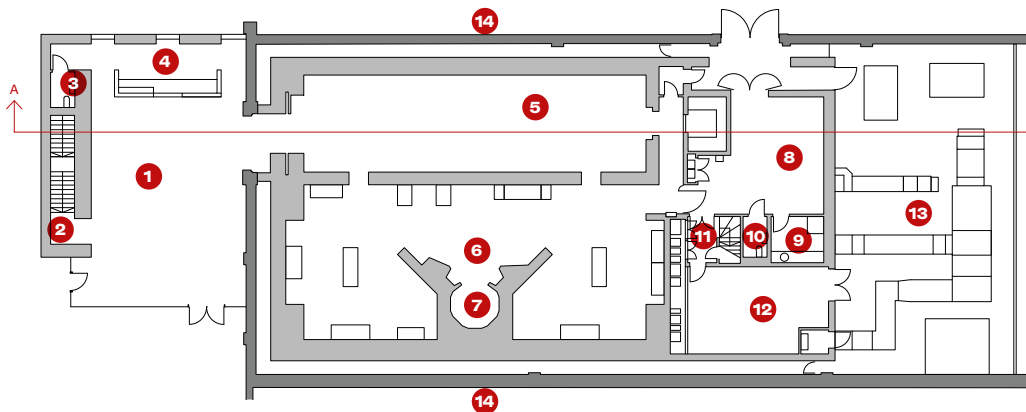


Left In the entrance pavilion, views link to the wider Welbeck landscape. Entrance to the gallery is through the retained walls of the former gallop.

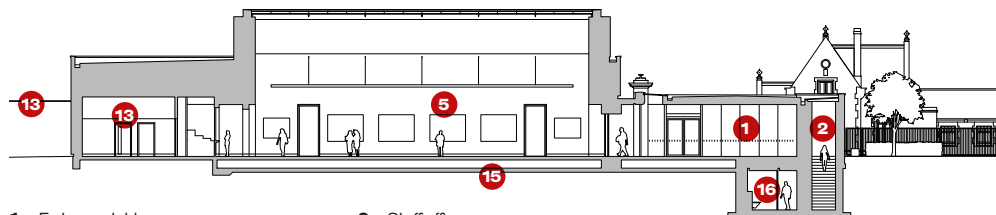
the far end of this as a focal point. From here you move right to smaller gallery spaces. North lights produce a wash of daylight when required, or are closed off with external shutters – very necessary for delicate works such as the Michelangelo. The volume is broken into smaller areas for specific displays: items from the collection will regularly change.

The Portland Collection building feels very assured in its proportions, materials and siting. For instance, Broughton places three large windows behind the limestone reception desk in the foyer which give long views across the lush green landscape of the 6000ha estate. Outside, a simple resin-bonded gravel surface to the yard visually connects the various buildings, old and new, in the yard. Heating and cooling are wholly provided by air-source heat pumps, a heat recovery system and a remote photovoltaic array. There is nothing superfluous here, and – apart from some clumsy light fittings in one of the displays – nothing that feels out of place. Welbeck is one of the country's lesser-known historic destinations but with this gallery it is, as Michelin would say, worth the detour. ●

Ground floor plan



Section AA



- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Entrance lobby | 9 Staff office |
| 2 Stair to basement | 10 Accessible staff WC |
| 3 Disabled WC | 11 Stair to plant room |
| 4 Reception desk | 12 Plant room |
| 5 Long gallery | 13 Services area |
| 6 Large gallery | 14 Existing Tan Gallop wall |
| 7 Miniatures Octagon | 15 Service void |
| 8 Loading bay and packing area | 16 Basement WCs |

0 5 10m



Credits

Client The Harley Foundation
Client advisor Malcolm Reading Consultants
Architect Hugh Broughton Architects
Exhibition designer Ronayne Design
Structural engineer Price and Myers
Services engineer AECOM
Quantity surveyor Ridge
Lighting designer Speirs and Major
Acoustic consultant Ramboll
Landscape consultant Dominic Cole Landscape Architects



ISABELLE PRIEST

Above Visitors enter the museum through 'la rue noire' — black stone and concrete-lined trenches either side of a new foyer buried beneath the original oak front doors. The rest of the lower ground floor is opened up to extend exhibition space, while a new glazed crown contains a library, multimedia centre, seminar room and temporary exhibition gallery.



To never forget

In the still-scarred landscape of Verdun, scene of France's worst WWI battle, Brochet Lajus Pueyo Agency's contemplative renewal of the memorial and museum mourns the loss of life and rejects the divisiveness of war

Words: Isabelle Priest

More than three hundred thousand people died at Verdun, in a battle that lasted 300 days from 21 February until 18 December 1916: that's 1000 people losing their lives every day. A further 400,000 were injured. Sixty million shells were fired, around 100,000 a day. It's not the bloodiest battle of the First World War – there were 1.3 million casualties at the Somme – but in the minds of the French, it's their equivalent, the one they remember and mourn. Almost three-quarters of the French army fought there and 100 years on it still represents for them their determined spirit of resistance. It was also the last battle in history won by France using only its own resources.

The lasting importance of Verdun to the French identity and conscience is testified by the extraordinary number of journalists that showed up at the press preview of the renewed Memorial of Verdun by Brochet Lajus Pueyo Agency last February, and the coverage it is getting across the news and media in France to commemorate the centenary of the battle. Organised buses brought 59 journalists and more turned up independently. Quite a few were from Germany, some from Spain and the Netherlands, but most were French – which also shows how the battle remains slightly obscure to other nations. A dedicated and varied programme of events is also under way through the 300 days, including a special gathering for heads of states from former colonies that helped the French fight.

The Memorial of Verdun is in the north-west of France, near the cities of Metz, Nancy and Luxembourg, 100km from the closest

German border, but far enough away to be very different from them all. The area is rural and pretty but not thriving. There is a sense that the population is leaving and will not return. Many buildings are collapsing, appear unoccupied, and there is little renovation.

And yet it is heartening to see how differently the First World War is commemorated country by country. Whereas the British and Commonwealth sites have a toughness and detachment, and are defined by a certain gung-ho attitude, the French are poetic in their remembering, deeply attached to the site, details, la terre and le témoignage (stories). A softness to the voice and delicate words accompany the explanations and atmosphere around Verdun.

The land, which stretches some 17,684ha, still bears the scars of the battle but without any sense of preserving camaraderie or heroism. The forest has regrown, but still discernible at the base of every tree trunk are craters from the shelling as well as the occasional decaying trench structure. It's a terrain that changed beyond recognition; nine whole villages were eradicated, pumelled into a lunar landscape: in places 6m were blasted off the height of hills and former inhabitants were unable to return because land ownership boundaries were no longer traceable. Today it is beautiful in an awe-inspiring sense, and tragic at root. Nature is slowly taking its course, and it is possible to walk on the paths and tracks that crisscross the landscape to solemnly enjoy it.

It is this setting and delicacy – though

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JEAN-MARIE MANGEOT

not in the sense of trying to evade the reality – that inspires the poetry behind the renovation and extension of the Memorial of Verdun.

'Here you are in a landscape where 80,000 bodies are still left in the ground where they fell,' said Édith Desrousseaux de Medrano, curator of the permanent exhibition. 'The 'red zone' is effectively a giant cemetery protected by the state as a sanctuary. The Memorial of Verdun finds its strength in the fact that these men are still there under the earth, French and German together, in a 1.5km radius.'

It was with this 'always present in the mind' that the memorial authority worked with the architect and the exhibition designer, Agence Le Conte/Noirot, on the remodelling.

'It is a considerable but modest renovation,' explained architect Olivier Brochet.

While the original building is in the style of the 1930s monumental architecture of the ossuary that faces it, this particular memorial was built between 1963 and 1967, an idea born in 1959 and realised by the veterans of the war and their families.

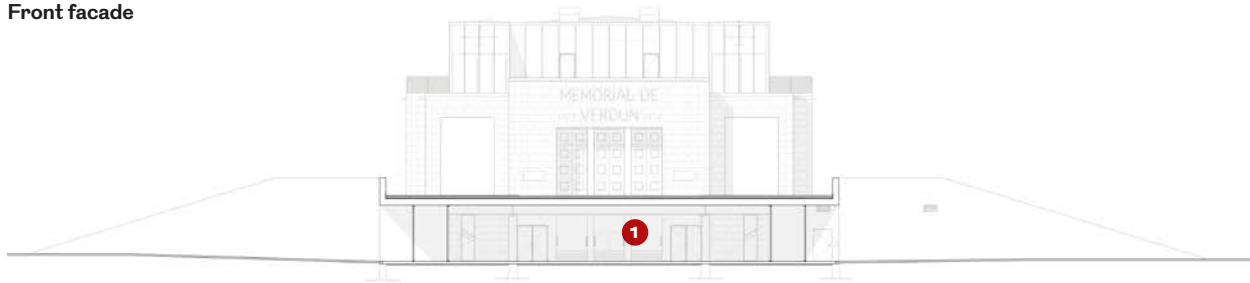


HERVÉ ABBADIE

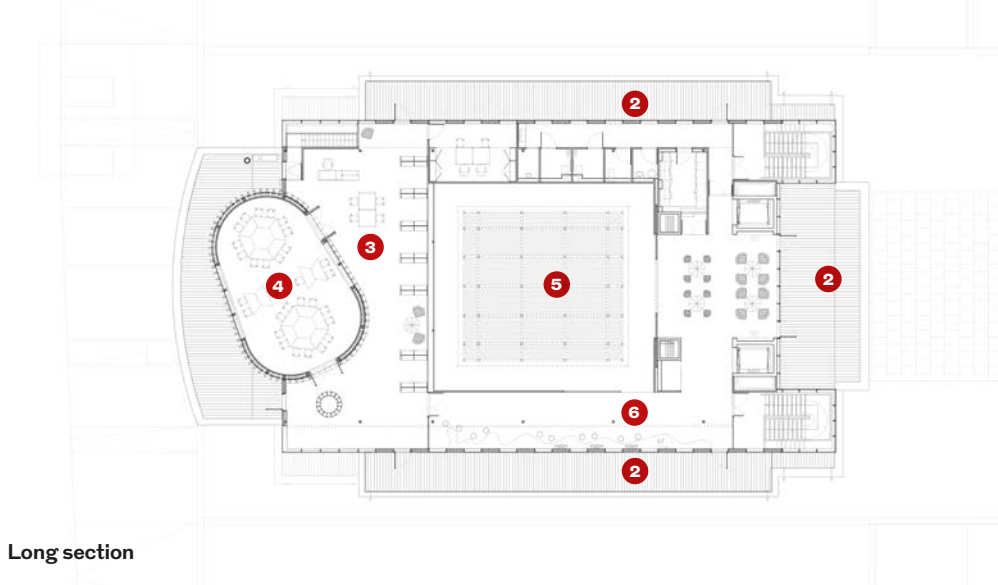
Top Display showing the types of communications used during the conflict, including pigeon post, wired lines and signal lamps.

Above New oak staircases either side of the closed former entrance lead to the museum offices, third floor educational spaces and rooftop terraces.

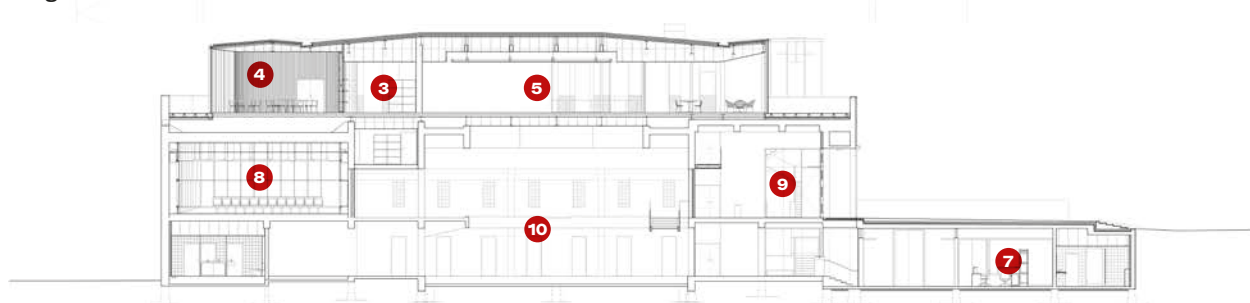
Front facade



Third floor plan



Long section



IN NUMBERS

1,900m²
additional space€12,520
budget10,000
items20
complete uniforms7,000
photographs

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Open terrace over battlefield
- 3 Library
- 4 Seminar room
- 5 Temporary exhibition space
- 6 Multimedia learning centre
- 7 Shop
- 8 Auditorium
- 9 Former entrance hall and refurbished stairwell
- 10 Double height exhibition gallery

'In this way it is very much a memorial and not a museum,' said Antoine Prost, chairman of the Memorial Museum's Scientific Committee. The building had contained a museum element, with a small eclectic collection of donations from the original families and others, but it was never formally curated.

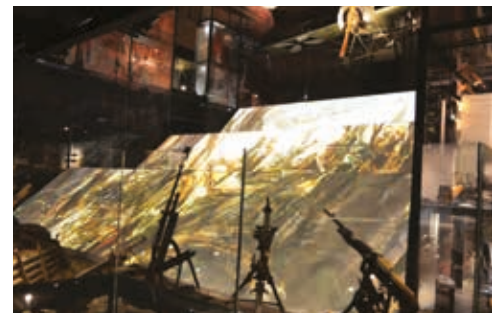
Now, 47 years after its inauguration, the committee gathered to question what to do for the 100-year anniversary battle commemorations. The last veteran – or 'poilu' (hairy) as they are nicknamed in France – Monsieur Lazare Ponticelli, had died in 2008 and his express message to Prost only a few months before at the age of 110 was 'never forget us'. It was decided to do a complete renovation,

commissioned through open competition.

The refurbishment was seen as an opportunity to create a centre of interpretation for the event, aimed particularly at young people whose connections to the world were increasingly weakened 'now that there are no more poilus'.

The museum's curation and contents, which are evoked through the building itself, would explain what happened and who fought there, and tell their stories.

Yet in stark contrast to the debacle around this year's Australian memorial event in the Somme, where the Australian government is actively preventing British attendance, official or otherwise, at this poignant and



Above In the retained central double-height void, an aeroplane crashes into the 'battlefield space' with guns on the ground pointing while short film clips play on the rising trench.

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Top Glazed arcades around the temporary exhibition gallery form a light and refreshing space.

Above The building now includes a number of educational spaces, including this library as well as an auditorium and seminar room.

Below Four open terraces on the new top level give visitors 360-degree views across the forest toward the ossuary, scarred landscape and beyond.

evocative site in France, the talk is no longer about French soldiers or a national memorial. It is about the soldiers of Verdun, with no distinction between nationalities.

‘There were few differences between the French and German experiences – just minor nuances,’ explained Desrousseaux de Medrano. ‘I spoke earlier of the bodies and mud mixed up all around; in the trench opposite, people were living the same reality.’

So the remodelled Memorial of Verdun has been accompanied by a lot of other work to change mindsets. It is now a site of both memorial and explanation – towards a peaceful and united Europe. This ‘little revolution’ in thinking will see the building ceremonially reopened by the presidents of these two formerly warring nations, Francois Hollande and Angela Merkel, on 29 May. It’s an aim that, as the world war generations fast depart us, Britain is struggling to reconcile with.

And the result is nothing short of remarkable, speaking of an unusual level of collaboration and respect between curators, architecture, landscape, history and people. Its architecture is modest and restrained but sensitive – and unforgettable. ●

WHAT'S INSIDE

Visitors enter the buried foyer which contains the ticket office and shop. The museum also now starts on this level in the body of the original structure. Displays on the lower ground floor concern life on the front line. As visitors go up the building, they move further away from direct fighting to back line services and home front. Much of the existing structure is retained, including a dramatic double-height void and exposed ceiling. The space is dark and atmospheric, with inventive moments that include the recreation of an ‘overturned terrain’ for visitors to walk across. Through the hall, up new oak stairs, the glazed floor is a much-needed moment to pause and reflect on the exhibits and architecture. Visitors return to daylight, absorbing new views of the battlefield today.

Credits

Client Comité National du Souvenir de Verdun

Architect Brochet Lajus Pueyo Agency

Project manager Société d'Équipement du Bassin Lorrain (SEBL) / Agence Le Conte / Noirot

Quantity surveyor Overdrive

Structural engineer Khephren Ingenierie

Exhibition design Le Conte / Noirot Agency

Exhibition curator Sources Agency

Landscaping Let's Grow

Lighting design 8'18"

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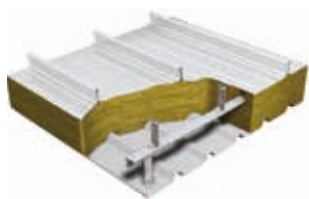
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'Modern Forms – A Subjective Atlas of 20th Century Architecture' is on show at the AA Gallery in London from 30 April-28 May, aaschool.ac.uk A book accompanies the show

House of Soviets, Kaliningrad, Russia 2012

Photograph: Nicolas Groszpierré

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek

With an online archive of architectural images – first from the former Eastern Bloc, then Europe, the Middle East, Iran, the USA and Brazil – you might be surprised that Pole Nicolas Groszpierré's specialisation is not in photography but political science – he even has an MSc from the LSE. Perhaps that explains his need to audit his hundreds of imag-

es of lauded, strange or unsung architecture, amassed since he threw in the day job at a Polish TV station in 2003 to pursue his true interest. Even the economics was a means to an end – to better understand the architecture as a function of its political and ideological context – and his images of these decaying buildings have a palpable sense of failed ideals. It's epitomised in this shot, set in the former east Prussian city of Königsberg. With every trace of its pre-WWII German inhabitants eradicated, the 1960s commu-

nist regime even cleared the remains of the city's bombed-out medieval castle to build its House of Soviets. But the schloss had its revenge when new foundations subsided so much that construction was abandoned in the 1980s. Vladimir Putin's visit to the city in 2006 drove the city powers to some extreme cosmetic surgery, cladding its ailing concrete bones in an imposing new skin. This behemoth, never to be occupied, is a ghost structure, a modern 'Potemkin village', literally and metaphorically. ●

Political spin

Herzog & de Meuron has given Oxford an impressive building, but is it radical enough to deliver the rethink that would match the new school of government's democratic aspirations?

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photographs: Iwan Baan

The Blavatnik School of Government viewed at dusk from the main facade onto Walton Street; partially reflecting, partially transparent, a building half dematerialised.

A lot of investment can be bound up in a name; its invocation can call to effect renown, remembrance and – dare I say it – revenue. As one of the few global 800-year old institutions and with the Rhodes statue debacle still rumbling on, Oxford University is probably more aware of this than most. But as the dean of the new Blavatnik School of Government, Ngaire Woods, concedes, Oxford is bound by the weight of its history. And as Einstein could have told them at his 1931 Rhodes Lecture on receiving his honorary doctorate, time is relative and mutable – like a reputation. Oxford might have produced 25 British prime ministers and 35 heads of state in its time, but when it comes to its four year old school

of government, Woods concedes that the university is playing catch up. Competing on the global stage and dealing with the likes of Harvard's Kennedy and Princeton's Woodrow Wilson Schools of Government – the former with a reported \$1 billion endowment – you're going to have to up your game to stay in the running.

Cue Leonard Blavatnik, Russian media tycoon, offering to stump up £75 million for a dedicated building worthy of the university's world class status – designed by celebrity architect Herzog & de Meuron – to house Oxford's fledgling school of government. This imposing new concrete and glass structure of stacked concentric cylinders on the western side of Oxford's new Radcliffe



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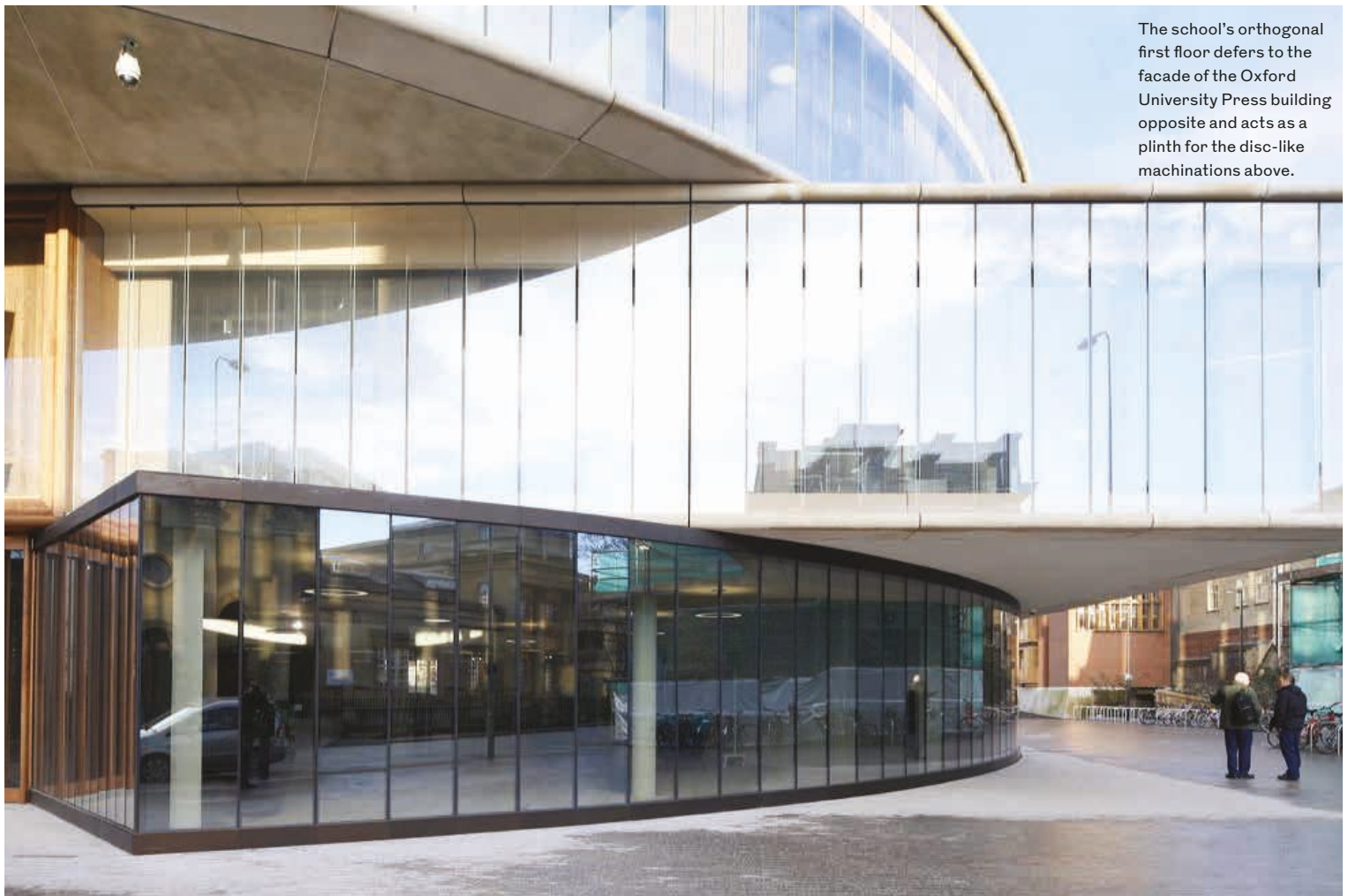


LPS 2081: Issue 1
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The school's orthogonal first floor defers to the facade of the Oxford University Press building opposite and acts as a plinth for the disc-like machinations above.

IN NUMBERS

8
levels

550
students and faculty staff

10.5 x 3.2m
first floor picture window

49%
lower energy use than a comparable building

107
pv panels

500m²
green roof

Infirmity site is the result of a strange alchemy of Blavatnik's thinking and the dean's concept for the school – Woods was originally sceptical about having a building at all. She says she would have 'been happy to teach out of a Portakabin and use all the money for scholarships and faculty salaries' but as time went on and the idea of 'communicating the vision of the school' gained emphasis, she embraced the idea of a permanent structure. It can't be often that someone has to create a business case for giving away a fortune, but Woods' change of heart was partly due to Blavatnik 'helping me understand that working from a Portakabin would have been freeriding on the university's name' and the idea that in a world where a week's a long time in politics, the perception of permanence, Oxford notwithstanding, was key.

'There's a lot of fly by night stuff in public policy,' she says, 'and when sharing sensitive data, the building's solidity has to convey that you're not just here today and gone tomorrow'. So Woods resisted the temptation to be a Blavatnik refusenik.

Similarly influenced, Herzog & de Meuron sought to respond to the rare urban typology that the college

quads generated with its 9800m², £55 million building. That's no surprise, considering the context of its Radcliffe Infirmary site. Although the old hospital and Radcliffe Observatory have been connected by Rafael Viñoly's new Mathematics faculty, the rest of the site behind Blavatnik, reserved for the future Humanities faculty and library, could be considered a ground zero by Oxford standards. The firm was helped by Henry Underwood's adjacent Greek Revival church and the neoclassical Oxford University Press building opposite; but that aside, there was a lot of room for interpolation. Jacques Herzog wanted to resist the tendency 'to be modern but polite in front of the old colleges, as that way you can lose your own identity.' Woods' aim meanwhile was to bring people together as 'better government is about better communication', and for the new building to reflect notions of the transparency of democracy. Herzog's response, thinking laterally about the problem, was to invert the usually lifeless exterior college quad form and turn it into a social heart rather than an antiquated point of distribution.

The result is the imposing, sleek, concentric building

now filling in the former void on Walton St, and on the surface it ticks all the boxes laudably. It's about democracy, so it's circular, political transparency so it's glass, and Oxford, so there's stone. I'm slightly thrown when Herzog refers to it as a gateway building as you have to go around rather than through it – so one assumes a broader interpretation – but as a form it's compelling. The double skin facade is a thing of elegance; its tall, thin outer sheets of glass, clamped between bullnose slab edges of reconstituted stone, echo the delicate stone tracery of the Bodleian's Old Schools Quad. Ostensibly there to protect the horizontal blinds of the inner skin and act as an acoustic baffle (it's a naturally ventilated building), the effect is to shatter the surroundings of St Paul's, the OUP and Niall McLaughlin's adjacent Somerville College dorms and almost dematerialise the sizeable Blavatnik in broken reflections. Save, it seems, for the first floor front elevation, which bookishly responds to the built line of the OUP building opposite and acts as a plinth for the formal gymnastics above.

Those slipped discs on the outside generate the rotunda and amphitheatre-like forum space within; seven floors of shifting concrete slabs, one sunk down, the others spiralling up and away in a shape-shifting parallax. An obvious reference is Frank Lloyd Wright's New York Guggenheim and there's more than a passing allusion to Mecanoo's Library of Birmingham, but with the Blavatnik's academic programme devoid of either the art or the books, it's understandable that H&M resorted to shifted floor slabs to maintain the spatial interest. It's not that there isn't an immediate power to the volume: there is, but it's one that gradually discharges as you ascend and as the nature of the programme reveals itself, as public areas make way for private.

Up to the first floor level, the flow of spaces from forum to lecture halls, to amphitheatre to café and first floor common and meeting areas, is open and seamless but, like politics, you don't get far before the bureaucracy starts to creep in. The seductive curve of the grand staircase only runs between lower ground and first floor seminar spaces; beyond it an alternative, less

What you initially perceive from below as continuous is in fact contiguous; with floors no longer intuitively connected by round circulation voids but separated despite them



Above Internal wall linings of rich stained oak reinforce the high quality finishes, if resulting in a vague moiré effect. A lightweight, white 'sonar' spray render dampens the acoustic effects of circular forms.

Left Above the first floor and no longer part of the vertical circulation, the spaces around the circular voids feel 'left over' and contingent.



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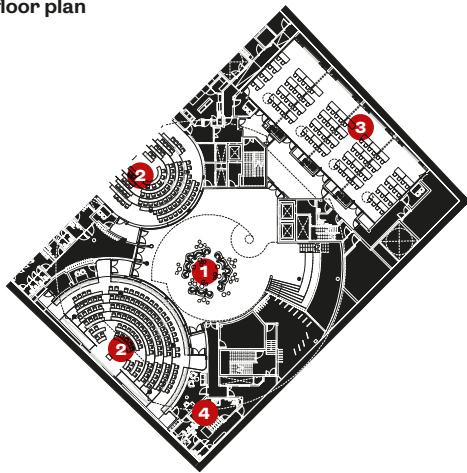
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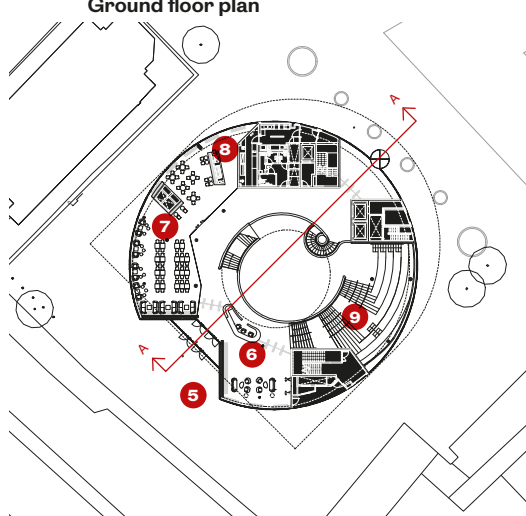
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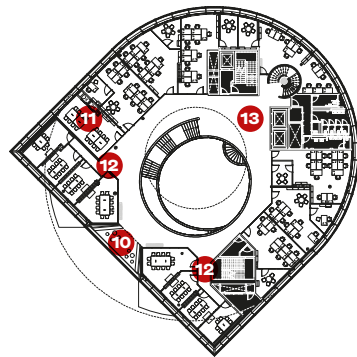
Lower ground floor plan



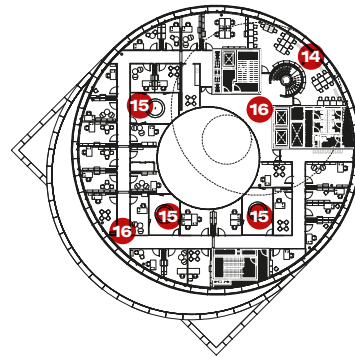
Ground floor plan



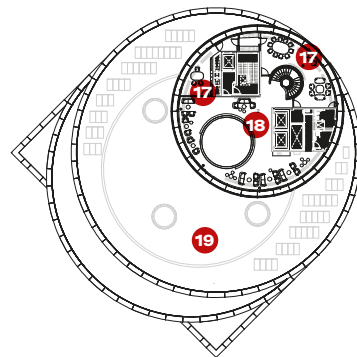
First floor plan



Third floor plan



Fifth floor plan



- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Forum | 11 Multimedia room |
| 2 Lecture theatre | 12 Teaching/ break out spaces |
| 3 Seminar room | 13 Research centres |
| 4 Green room | 14 Study room |
| 5 Main entrance | 15 External courtyard |
| 6 Reception | 16 Offices |
| 7 Restaurant | 17 Benefactors' rooms |
| 8 Servery and kitchen area | 18 Senior common room |
| 9 Forum/ informal breakout | 19 External courtyard below |
| 10 Exchange area | |

0 5 10 20 50m



open and decidedly orthogonal system of circulation begins to inform the design, feeding more private and, at the third floor, completely enclosed office spaces. What you initially perceive from below as continuous is in fact contiguous; with floors no longer intuitively connected by round circulation voids but separated despite them. You sense H&M is aware of this, putting a lot of time and effort into creating the beautiful concrete spiral staircase at the north east end of the building to lash all the lobbies together. Those secondary glazed corridors,

like a square peg in a round hole, result in some strangely shaped office and research spaces, further complicated by the small external courtyards to bring in more daylight and air. Privacy curtains are provided in these spaces, and just a few are drawn, which speaks well of the users' desire for visual connection to each other, but these monkish rooms nonetheless feel sequestered. This might be necessary but it's antithetical to the idea of communality and connection espoused in Woods' bigger idea- as if a deferential,

Credits

Architect Herzog & de

Meuron

Client The University of Oxford**Electrical/ mechanical engineering/ HVAC/ lifts/ acoustics and lighting**

Hoare Lea

Landscape design

Townshend Landscape

Architects

Structural engineering

Pell Frischmann

Cost consultant EC

Harris

Sustainability consultant

Aecom

Design and build**contractor** Laing

O'Rourke

Facade engineering**consultant** Murphy

Facade Studio

Planning consultant

Montagu Evans

Project manager Oxford

University Estates

Services Gardiner &

Theobald

Security consultant

Horus Security

Consulting

Suppliers

Carpentry/ flooring AC

Flooring

Ceiling CG Reynolds**Electrical/ lighting**

Crown House

Technologies

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Beever

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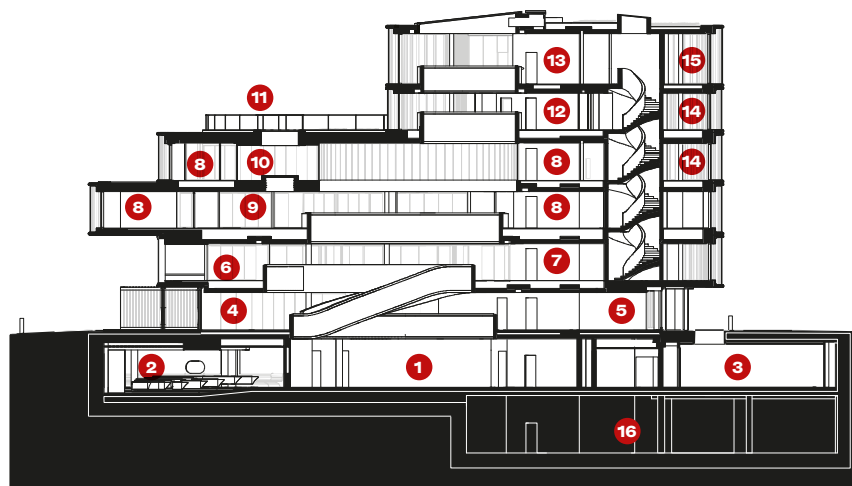


Left A corporate rather than academic feel to the spaces pervades but is allayed on closer inspection by the raw concrete slab soffits, beautiful cast stairs and general quality of light.

cellular corporate coolness has eclipsed the academic aspiration. In line with corporate thinking, the most indulgent spaces – and the ‘Blavatnik Study’ for visiting dignitaries and the like – are placed on the upper level, an unusually high concrete upstand offering more than a modicum of security from the floors below. There’s comfort to be drawn from the materials of the building; the oak floors, stained oak dowel walls and smooth white, raw GGBS concrete, augmented by some impressively performing white acoustic spray render, is no less homogenous elsewhere than seen at this topmost level. But for some reason I just found myself craving a library here; some mark of cosseted permanence in all this flexible, connected, hot desked space. It’s a strategy not helped by the lecture spaces being buried in the lower ground, which hides the democratic process of debate from the public – precisely where it should be expressed. Maybe I’m just getting old.

If Woods was looking for a bold and high quality addition to Oxford’s modern oeuvre, I’d say she’s achieved it; H&DM is master of its craft and its latest building underlines the firm’s ability to confound expectation even in a sensitive environment such as this city. That said, with an internal layout and programme reifying the problems of big governance – disconnection, labyrinthine bureaucracy and the status quo – I wonder if Woods strayed too far from her original ideals. Nowadays democracy is probably not circular but eccentric, politics is anything but

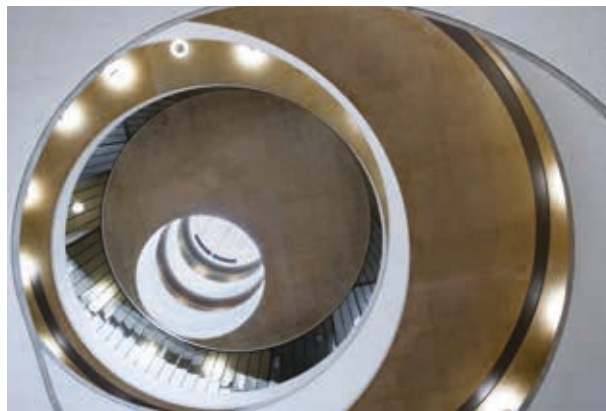
Section AA



- 1 Forum/informal breakout
- 2 Lecture theatre
- 3 Seminar room
- 4 Reception
- 5 Rear entrance
- 6 Exchange area
- 7 Research centres
- 8 Offices
- 9 Multi-use area
- 10 External courtyard to offices
- 11 Terrace
- 12 Junior common room
- 13 Senior common room
- 14 Study area
- 15 Benefactor’s room
- 16 Basement plant area



transparent and all that is solid can melt into air. A great building might not end up changing the world but I'd expect it to offer an enlightened reading of it – for example as Stirling did in 1971, when he questioned how students might interact in his flawed Florey building. The Blavatnik School is here, it's claimed, to address the fundamental issue of better governance; but it attempts it by adopting a literal, reactionary spatial language and programme, bouncing the world off its glass walls, leaving its 120 students breathing its naturally ventilated but rarefied air. Woods buckled when she should have remained brave. Perhaps her idea of Portakabins and scholarships was the truly radical act and merited investigation by her architect; imagine her international cohorts parachuted, like the building itself, into the city of dreaming spires to question everything; organising themselves and mobilising in transient spaces that could be moulded to their own purposes, devoid of assumptions and preconceptions. An end to Einstein's same questions/different answers conundrum: an environment where ideas would speak, freed from the structures that would restrain them. ●



Above The view up from the forum space to the sixth floor rooftop is dramatically dizzying.

Top A breakout space behind of the largest single sheets of glass in Europe gives students a fine view to the OUP's 1830 neoclassical facade; this feels like a really nice office building.

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Jewellery box

Using automatically closing and opening perforated brass screens, BBP has created a magical golden box to encase a Copenhagen jewellers

Words: Pamela Buxton Photographs: Jens Markus Lindhe

When the owner of jeweller Trollbeads approached architect BBP, it was thinking only of changing the windows in its newly-acquired Copenhagen premises and incorporating an apartment. It ended up with something rather more spectacular – a deeper, taller building dressed in a patterned brass cladding screen that folds up and down like a Venetian blind.

This extraordinary building is situated in the historic centre of the Danish capital in a terrace between houses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. The site was a 1964 office building set back from the pavement and rising six storeys. Trollbeads owners Lise and Peter Aagaard wanted to convert it into their company headquarters with an apartment for their use above. Given the nature of the business, security was a high priority.

With the client wanting a highly glazed elevation, BBP partner Ebbe Wæhrens swiftly arrived at the brass curtain concept – knowing that achieving permission for a mainly glass facade in such a historic context would be most unlikely. His solution was to replace the original facade and its wooden framed windows with a glass skin using Schueco's stainless steel Jansen Janisol system – but then to overlay this with a perforated brass screen. This veiled solution gave the 'polite' appearance necessarily for planning consent and added another layer of security while granting the clients' original wish for a glass house, says Wæhrens.

'It's hi-tech, very elegant and sophisticated but discreet and concealed,' he adds, describing it as an 'inverted' curtain wall.

While it may be polite, it's certainly not boring. For this house has three distinct modes. In the morning when the office opens, approximately half the screen folds up automatically to reveal conventionally-proportioned windows on the main and rear facades, scaled to match its neighbours. Occupants can lower individual blinds from

Below Enclosing the building from roof to floor, the copper screen facade is peeled back to expose the windows during the day.



the inside if required to screen the sun during the day. All raised blinds lower automatically when the office is vacated in the evening, to transform the elevation into a closed, burglar-proof vault.

Aside from the roof terrace and a small sixth floor balcony, the screen remains folded up only at the main and adjacent vehicle entrances, where it forms a canopy aligned with the lowest canopy on the adjacent building. Another canopy at third floor level aligns with the roof cornice of its neighbour.

The third mode comes in the evening, when the building is illuminated with a golden glow by ceiling downlighters along the inside of the facade, highlighting the perforations in the screen and revealing the modern glass house behind. The whole thing resembles a giant, precious jewellery box. This lighting turns off automatically at midnight.

BBP worked closely with the engineer of the brass curtain, dynamic facade specialist Art Andersen Copenhagen, to realise the Venetian blind screen concept. For the perforated screen, both client and architect wanted a 'noble' material redolent of the silver and gold used in Trollbeads' jewellery, just as the curtain walling relates to the firm's signature glass beads. Brass was a practical and affordable choice that gave the desired golden appearance. KME's Tecu Gold alloy was specified, an alloy of 89% copper but with 5% aluminium, 5% zinc and 1% tin to ensure it wasn't too shiny. The pre-patination gives a slightly matt effect that won't darken with use.

The 1mm thick brass screen was made from a combination of 1m x 300mm hinged

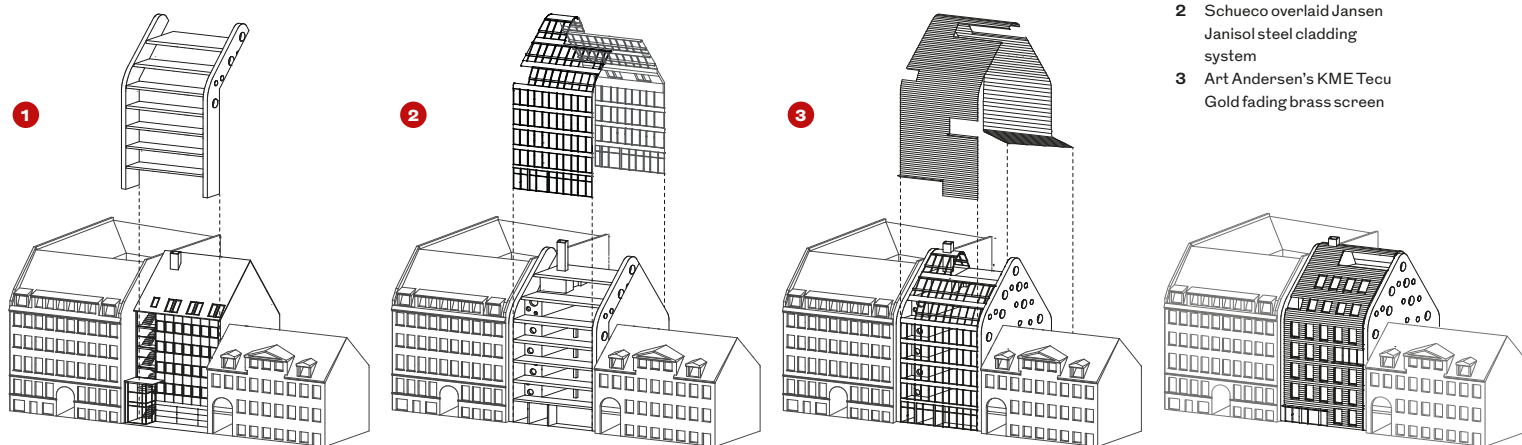
In the evening the building is illuminated with a golden glow by ceiling downlighters highlighting the perforations and revealing the glass house behind



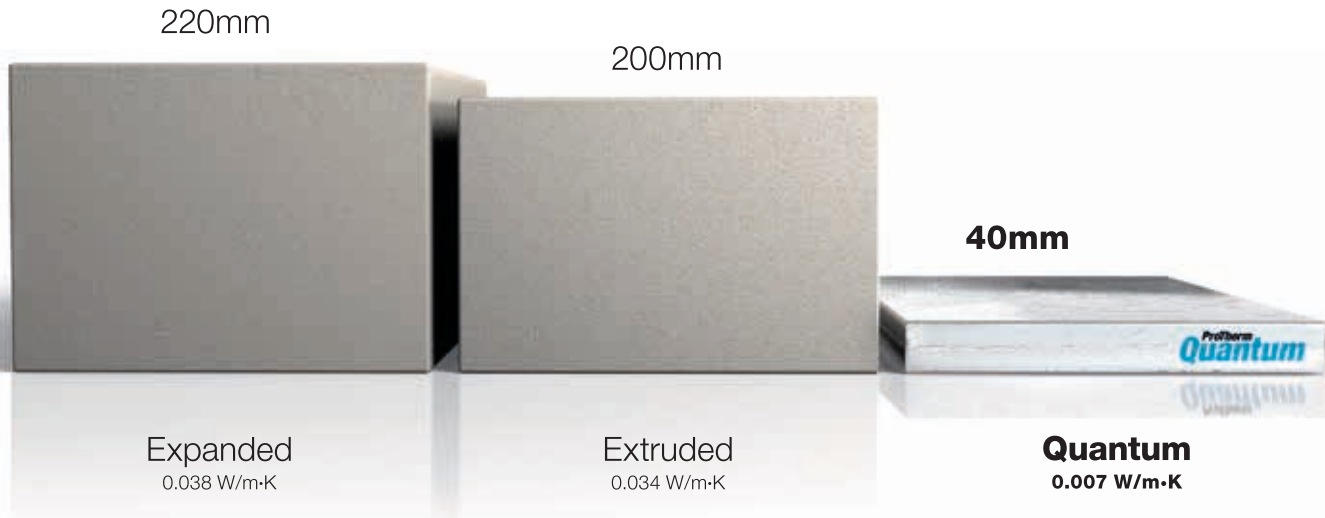
Above To reduce solar gain or at the end of the working day the facade can be closed.

Left The original 1960s building before its transformation.

Diagram showing new 'skins' applied to the existing building



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single panels for those areas that open and close, and 1m x 600m double panels with a bend in the middle for the other, fixed areas. These panels were fixed onto one-storey-high stainless steel frames which were then mounted on the building, leaving 300mm between the glass curtain walling and the brass screen. A motor to the left side of each frame connected to the right side with an axle activates spindles inside each side of the frame to lift and lower the hinged panels.

Wæhrens' concept for the screen perforations was inspired by the thickets of thorns used to protect treasure in fairytales. He commissioned textile artist Lene Toni Kjeld to produce the repeat abstract pattern for the perforations, which needed to give an optimum of 25% open-ness. Any more, and the holes would become too prominent and stop the elevation reading as a facade with windows when it is in open mode and seen from afar. By limiting the number and size of holes, patterns only become evident closer up.

The design incorporates seven variations of pattern created with holes – made using a

programmed revolver punching machine – ranging from 6-10mm in diameter.

A full-size prototype was made and put through a wind tunnel test to prove the screen's robustness in storms and to allay fears that it might whistle.

At the same time as replacing the facade, Wæhrens suggested enlarging the building by 2.5m at the front to fit adjacent building lines. Wæhrens thinks of the extended house as operating like a Venetian merchant's house – with deliveries safely loaded on the ground floor, office and stock on the first, and above that, two floors of living accommodation and a roof terrace, with the two party walls raised and reshaped in order to follow the line of the neighbouring mansard roof.

This proved the most complex and challenging part of the project, since the curtain walling carries on right up over the rounded mansard to form the pitched roof. It was achieved using the Vitral stainless steel roof system. The gable side elevation is treated differently and playfully with large circular fire windows – visible only from afar – inset

in the 800mm thick wall.

Wæhrens enjoys the fact that while the windows in the seemingly 'open' part of the elevation don't actually open, those in the 'closed' section can be opened for ventilation behind the protection of the screen.

He hopes that the resulting building, which took some six years to realise, is both 'subtle and noble', respecting nearby historic properties and the 60s base building while creating very much a contemporary intervention. It's certainly been a hit locally, winning awards from the City of Copenhagen, Danish Architects' Association and Danish Steel Institute. ●

Credits

Architect BBP Arkitekter

Structural engineer Orbicon

Lautrupvang

Brass curtain engineer Art Andersen

Copenhagen

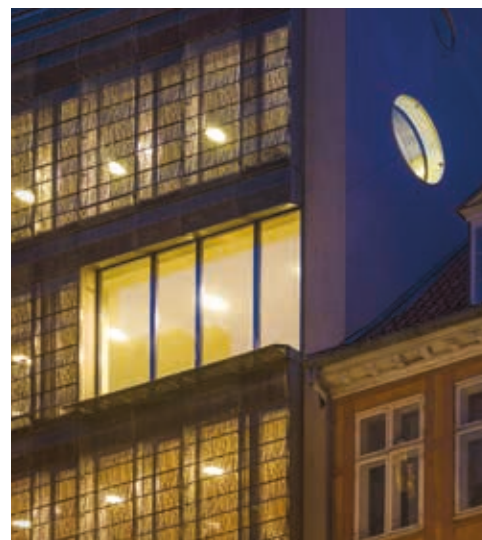
Contractor Kai Andersen



Left A closer look reveals the punched holes in the copper skin and the folding mechanism.

Right Looking out through the facade from inside the building, patterns in the mesh can be clearly seen.

Below right Internal downlighters shine through the patterned brass at night, giving the building a golden glow.



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2: Intelligence



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Where people
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Dr Hugo Spiers



Dr Hugo Spiers of UCL's Spatial Cognition Group on how neuroscience is breaking out of the lab and into the city

Dr Spiers was speaking at the Conscious Cities conference. Full report at: ribaj.com/culture/cities-on-the-brain

Tell us about London taxi drivers' hippocampus

For The Knowledge the drivers have to learn 250,000 streets, which can take four years. The longer the driver works the larger the posterior hippocampus area of the brain becomes. It shows that using it to navigate space it is like a muscle, it grows physically. There have been about 12 different studies, I have worked on nine. We find drivers don't often 'think' about routes, they 'just know'. And even an amnesic driver, with no hippocampus, could still navigate the main and arterial routes – which fits with the idea the memories are consolidated elsewhere in the brain.

What do the place cells and grid cells of the hippocampus do?

These are really jaw dropping. The idea is that for every part of space that you occupy, many place cells – neurons in your brain – 'like' it and fire action potentials: there's massive activity from cells telling you that 'you are here'. One of the big questions has been how place cells know where to fire. They basically need a metric system and grid cells give that latitude and longitude system. We have also found that place cells provide our memories with a bedrock of episodic space – a spatial temporal code.

Can neuroscience inform our understanding of space?

Without a doubt. But does it provide any guidance for architectural design? That is very questionable. Which should you trust, brain measurement or what people say? I would trust what people say.

You are taking neuroscience out of the lab. Why is that important?

It is massively important to take people out into the street – I am one of the few neuroscientists in the world who does it (people want nice data). My experiments are complex and expensive with virtual reality and film, but with the boom in big data we are starting to be able to analyse complexity and we can also use mobile EEG [electroencephalogram] head sets for measuring electric activity in the brain. It is going beyond universities too – I have an interesting major project coming up with Deutsche Telekom to reference spatial navigation. I think we are on the cusp of a time when we can start to understand spatial cognition, social cognition and how we use our brain to construct its own sense of reality.

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Where people
liveDesigning &
building itView of Victoria Pier and
The Deep, designed by
Farrells in 2004.

Come and get it

Years of under investment and lost industry have painted Hull as a town where little happens. A group of determined and optimistic architects is changing all that

Isabelle Priest

'You can't ignore the impact of the UK City of Culture,' says director of Hodson Architects, Mark Hodson. 'When Hull won the bid against Leicester, Dundee and Swansea Bay in 2013, it was almost not believable. But the momentum began the next day and there has been such a change in 18 months.'

Today, as the city prepares for the spotlight in 2017, £80 million is being pumped into a major projects programme including city-wide street improvement by ReForm Architects, a full refresh for the city's museums and a city centre cruise terminal for 2021, plus recently approved proposals for a 3500-seat multipurpose venue by AFL and

redesigned Beverley Gate entrance. The plan is to create a long-term legacy that will drive cultural wealth, spending, footfall and a mid-week business scene, as well as tie its disparate heritage back together by decluttering the public realm. One development area is the former fruit market. A plan incorporating local and national architects – including Hodson Architects and Sarah Wigglesworth Architects – will bring residential and commercial accommodation but retain its 'feisty, hard-won arts community and galleries'.

'Hull is a brutally commercial city,' says Garry Taylor, a planner and major project developer at Hull County Council. 'It was built off the back of whaling, chemicals and fishing. It is constantly changing and evol-

ing, and has had five or six city centres over the centuries, giving it a wealth of history.' After heavy bombing during the Second World War – it was a drop-off point for excess bombs – influential planners proposed utopian ideas, of which 'luckily little got delivered'. But in the 1980s the city lost its major industry, fishing, and began to suffer from layers of under investment, which as David Piercy of Piercy Design explains saw the death of the city centre as larger businesses relocated to the M52 corridor. The early 2000s focused on iconic projects, including The Deep by Farrells and one of England's largest BSF programmes. Today's policies aim to bring the population back to the city centre by unlocking space at shopfront level, alongside regenerating former fish working factories and docklands into mixed-use communities. 'There are some wonderful parts in the city – the docks, marina, old town and many parks,' says Jonathan Smith, director of Jonathan Smith Architects. 'Hull doesn't get the press it should.'

It is fair to say that Hull's architectural community is small. While most practices have fewer than 10 people, the city does have some large firms, such as the 138-year-old



NEIL HOLMES



Top Humber Street during the Freedom Festival in 2012 before landscaping improvements.

Above Construction is under way to transform Humber Street into a pedestrian-friendly zone.

Gelder & Kitchen which designed the original Baltic Flour Mill in Gateshead. A few practices disappeared in the recession, but new ones are opening all the time with a changed and positive attitude. 'I like the opportunities,' explains Jamie Ashton, partner of A Space Architects which started in 2009. 'There are decent jobs, and I've got to know engineers and the people around the construction industry here. There are advantages in that.'

Around the city there are clear creative districts, with the fruit market being key. 'There is a buzz in the town centre, good pubs and the city isn't expensive. Rents are low for good flats,' says Smith, whose son is studying architecture here. There is also the Humber-side Society of Architects which meets every month. Hodson resurrected the RIBA Humber branch three years ago to revive the region's architectural heartbeat. It has formulated itself as an activities branch, organising building visits, CPDs and events – in part making up for the loss of Arc, the architecture centre which closed in March 2013.

At the heart of this community, though, is the new school of architecture with its alternative vibe, steeped in user participation and community. Many of the directors of Hull's practices graduated from the old school, which shared this ethos, and decided to stay. So the school's move to Lincoln in 2000 ripped out the impetus to meet and interact as an architectural community. In some ways this was advantageous to the practices it left behind, but 'The great efforts of Bridget Hansford and Gary Hornsby of Salt Architects to relaunch the school means the community is very different to four or five years ago, says Hodson. Alongside the City of Culture, the new school is pulling the architectural community back together.

'In many ways there was a huge gap in the city from university to practice. The previous course was a kind of alternative education with Dutch and Scandinavian architecture as the mantra,' explains Hodson. 'At the time it wasn't possible to find a similar ethic in practice in Hull, but we're trying to change that.'

Nevertheless, it's sometimes felt that local talent is overlooked for bigger, national and international names for the most prominent projects. While the city may lack the capacity – and practices the constant stream of work – that would be required to gear up for a big project, many feel it could be possible to partner up. Yet Hodson affirms it was

'EXCITING, ENORMOUS POTENTIAL BUT WEARY'

Jamie Ashton, partner, A Space Architects

A Space Architects is a two-person firm operating in Hull and nearby Gilberdyke. The practice was founded in 2009 by Jamie Ashton and Howard Bruce while Ashton was building his own home. Ashton, originally from Botswana, moved to the city in the mid-1990s for his Part 1 and Part 2 at Hull School of Architecture and ended up staying in city because he found lots of opportunity for design-based architecture. Today, the practice has 20 projects on its books and while much of its work has been for private domestic clients – new builds and renovations – it is expanding into the third sector. On starting A Space Architects, the directors had to support the practice by doing project management on the side but it has now found a regular stream of work through advertising in local papers and magazines and via word of mouth. One of A Space Architects' designs features on TV programme *Building The Dream*, which dramatically boosted traffic to the practice's website.

Below Newly completed house by A Space Architects.



'RESILIENT, INVENTIVE AND FRUSTRATED'

David Piercy, director, Piercy Design

Piercy Design was set up by David Piercy in Hull city centre in 1992. Piercy, originally from Scotland, moved to Hull straight after finishing his degree at Dundee University on a job offer at a time when there were few in Scotland. He worked in commercial practice for 10 years. Today Piercy Design employs four people, but over the years has fluctuated between that and around 12. More recently it has found that as technology has improved it can do more with fewer people. The practice focuses on residential projects in Hull and East Yorkshire with many of its schemes in the £1 million to £3 million budget range. It has also built up a reputation for listed buildings and conservation, finding a lot of opportunity for such work in the city as historical buildings are brought back into sustainable use. The practice says that one of its ingredients for success is the fact that it never moved out of city centre, as many businesses did in the 1980s and 1990s. Its location is convenient for meeting clients, planners and building control, as well as keeping it well known in the community. Piercy sees many architects quietly making their name in the city: 'The culture of architecture is solid in Hull. It may be simple at times, but there are many inventive strands.'

necessary to get national practices working in the city 'to kick those within up the back'.

The overwhelming sense is that, with the right interest and architects, Hull is full of potential. 'There are areas still blighted by poverty, but also many pockets of land that have stood empty for years, and fabulous buildings which would make fantastic conversions,' says Smith. The city council recognises that past projects could have been designed better, and it is taking steps to address subsequent problems and quality. 'What European cities do well is quality over quantity – even if one does less, quality is important,' explains Taylor. 'For that reason, we are using materials such as deep granite that will last. It adds complications and takes longer, but we feel it's worth it.'

The city is also increasingly forward-thinking and aspirational, looking to Liverpool, Newcastle and Manchester, as well as over the North Sea, for ideas on how to restructure its centre. Many opportunities coming into the city circle around Siemens' new rotor blade manufacturing, construction, assembly and service facility being built at Green Port. The plant will employ 1000 people. While Hodson sees this as a 'double whammy lift' with the City of Culture programme, Smith's hope is that some of this interest in green infrastructure can help develop the city's reputation for sustainable and environmental architecture, with particular energy ploughed into resolving previous underinvestment in housing. There are also opportunities to build on the 2007 floods, its position below sea level, and the city's physical and historical ties to the Netherlands and use it as a testbed for pioneering progressive water management in the UK. The city's renewed and deep-rooted alternative ethos at its school of architecture and surrounding community makes it likely to succeed. ●



Above Hull Venue by AFL Architects received consent in early March.



Above Hodson Architects has been commissioned to develop a bungalow module after completing Villa Place for Goodwin Development Trust.

'WATCH THIS SPACE'

Mark Hodson, director, Hodson Architects and incoming chair RIBA Yorkshire

Hodson Architects is a nine-strong practice on the north and south of the Humber river. The practice opened its Hull office only six months ago to take advantage of the great opportunities in the city. Much of the firm's work is in the third sector, community projects housing and education. It is part of the regeneration team for the former fruit market area of the city, and other projects include five recently-completed terraced houses for Goodwin Development Trust – set in the middle of a run-down estate with every conceivable style of housing at the edge of the city centre – a bungalow scheme for the same developer and the conversion of a church as a performance and arts centre for the City of Culture. Hodson, who studied in the 1980s, says he is 'by far the oldest member of his team' and believes the work is there in Hull: 'Running a practice in the city is about growing your own, getting staff young, taking on interesting work and engaging with the staff. It is about creating an attractive practice; scale of projects is not the issue. For example, one of the projects exciting everyone the most at the moment is a chalet on the beach.'

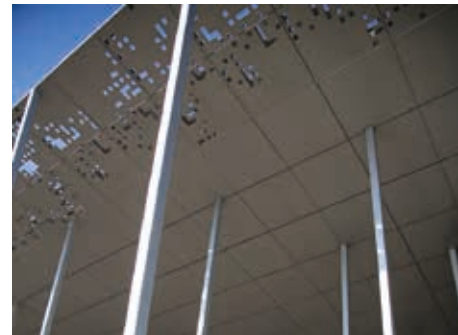
'GOOD GRAFT ETHIC, CREATIVE YET CHALLENGING'

Jonathan Smith, director, Jonathan Smith Architects

Jonathan Smith founded Jonathan Smith Architects in 2010 as a regional practice working from Beverley, just outside Hull in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Born in Hull and educated at its school of architecture, Smith worked for big practices in Leeds before setting up on his own to work on smaller projects and be his own boss. Since then, his two sons have joined practice, the older already an architect and the younger working while living in Hull and studying at the renewed school of architecture. The firm's projects are mostly niche, one-off schemes across a broad spectrum, from houses and restaurants to hotels and student accommodation. The Hideout project is a small apartment-hotel refurbishment in a former 1980s office building in the old town, designed for people on business visits. Smith believes the lower budgets in the city are good for its architecture: 'You have to be really creative to get joy into projects. Marrying client aspirations with budgets is satisfying work, but it can be a Herculean task to get an interesting project through planning and in budget.'



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Follow the long view

Why it's worth keeping an eye on the size of work being let, not just the overall value, in the RIBA new series on economics

Brian Green

March's official estimate of overall construction output prompted some rather downbeat headlines. In truth the figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) were pretty much in line with the general picture emerging over recent months for activity within both construction and the economy at large – a bit underwhelming.

It's generally unwise to focus too much on a single month's data point, as many do, particularly when it will almost inevitably be revised in coming months.

It's generally unwise to focus too much on a single month's data point, particularly when it will almost inevitably be revised in coming months

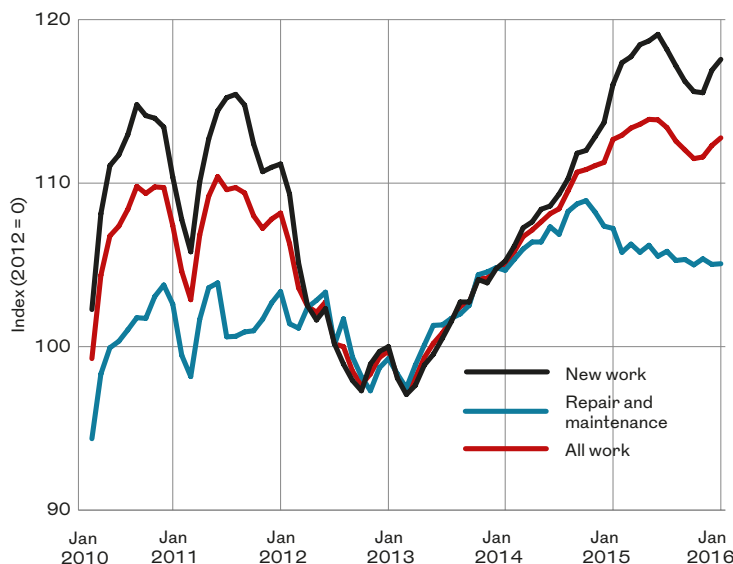
In many ways the revisions of past data in the latest figures held the most interest. While fairly modest in scale, they subtly lifted the short-term trend and eased what was beginning to look like an uncomfortable but steady downward path. As a result, construction output in the final quarter of 2015 officially rose slightly rather than fell slightly.

Construction output is hard to measure in fine detail and the data should be seen in that light. It's generally wiser to scan a range of sources over a suitably long timeframe.

Statistics showing the amount of new orders let to contractors, released by ONS in parallel with the output figures, helpfully adds to the pot of indicators. They provide some indication of how much future construction work is being pumped into the pipeline, and can also give us a sense of client confidence.

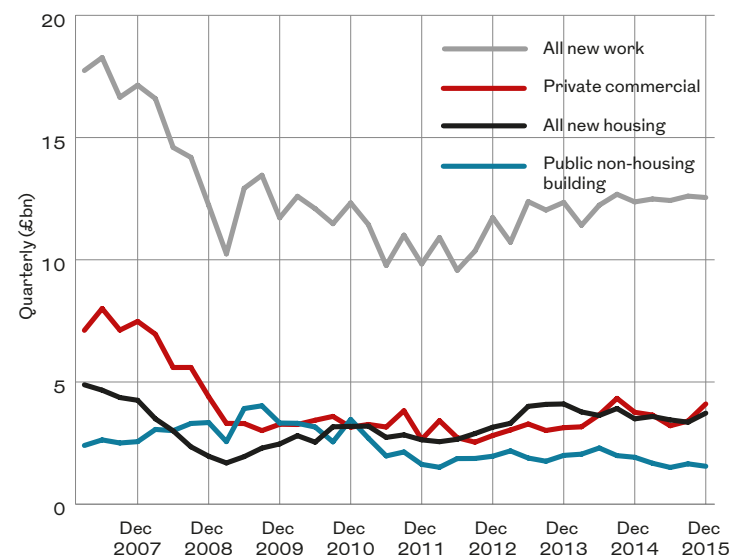
Chart 1 shows, in index form, the changing level of new construction work, repair and maintenance and all construction output. Chart 2 shows new orders won quarterly for three building sectors and all new work.

1: GB construction output



Source: Office for National Statistics
Notes: Seasonally adjusted estimates of the volume of work

2: Construction new-work orders



Source: Office for National Statistics
Notes: Seasonally adjusted estimates of the volume of new orders for construction.

Given the uncertainty inherent in the statistics, the broad picture we might draw from the output figures is of rapid growth from early 2014 followed by a pause starting in the middle of last year. Looking at new orders, this seems reasonable given that growth in orders seemed to slow a year or so earlier.

The pattern in output is echoed in the index provided by procurement bodies Markit/CIPS and the Bank of England Agents' scores. These data all point to growth softening from a year or so ago. Indeed, the Markit/CIPS index score for February was 54.2. That's the lowest since June 2013.

So it should be no surprise to see a tempering of expectations among architects. The RIBA Future Trends Survey continued to signal further growth in December, but expectations fell back after what looked like a possible rally in November (see Chart 3). Looking along the time series it appears that since about last summer architects have been rebasing their expectations downward.

One point worth noting about confidence is that it tends, broadly speaking, to be a bigger factor in decisions over large contracts than smaller contracts. This is to be expected, as on average they take longer to complete so carry a larger risk.

Using Barbour ABI data, it's possible to look at the proportion of contracts by size. Chart 4 shows in bar form the number of con-

tracts awarded in the month in Great Britain worth between £100,000 and £1 million. The lines show the proportion of contracts between £100,000 and £1 million and between £1 million and £2 million.

Confidence factor

We see that in late 2011 and early 2012, during the recovery, the share of smaller contracts awarded declined despite a stable if not increasing number of smaller contracts awarded. While part of this decline may be down to inflation, the data does seem to support our thesis that stronger economic activity prompts more confidence in larger projects.

For architects it's worth being aware of the mix in the size of contracts. First, in many small practices smaller contracts are the bread and butter workload. But even for larger practices, it's worth remembering that bigger contracts are riskier not just for clients, but throughout the supply chain.

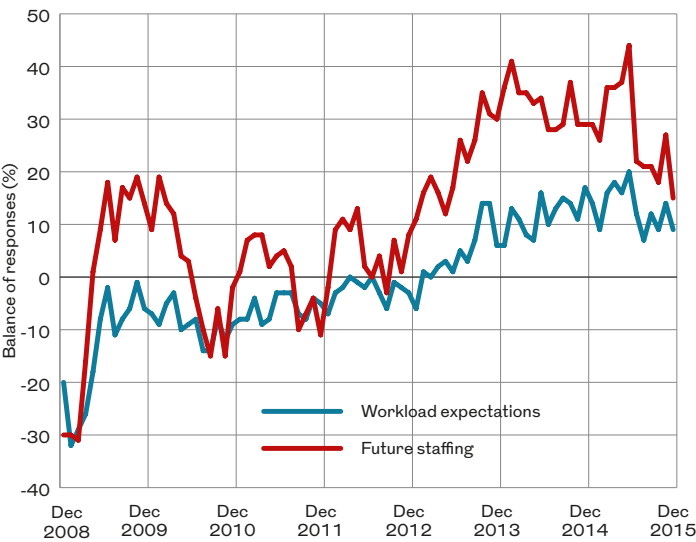
Having a balanced portfolio of smaller and larger work seems a sensible strategy, especially when there is increased uncertainty.

This doesn't mean that the overall number of smaller contracts increases when times are tough, just that they appear to be more likely to go ahead and possibly less prone to delay. And should they fail, the consequences will tend to be less damaging.

To get a clue of confidence in the smaller

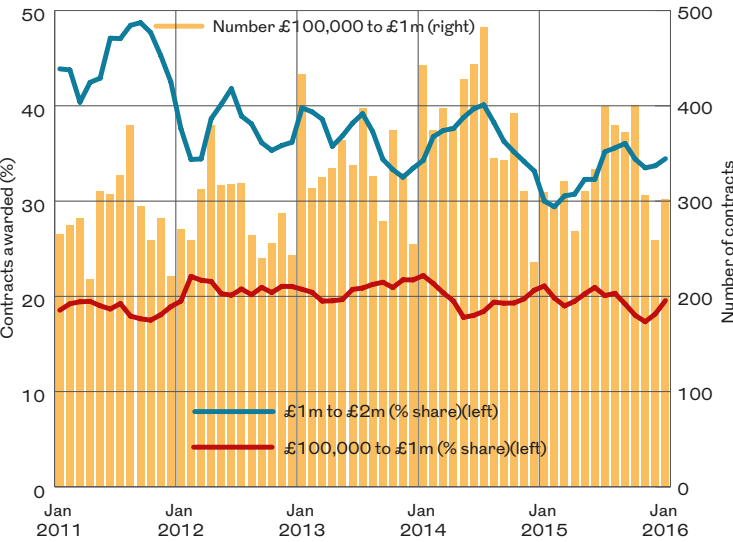
Confidence tends, broadly speaking, to be a bigger factor in decisions over large contracts than smaller ones

3: Architects workload expectations



Source: RIBA Future Trends Survey
Notes: Balance (%) between practices expecting more work in coming three months and those expecting less

4: Number and share of smaller contracts awarded



Source: Barbour ABI
Notes: Data kindly provided by Barbour ABI and is yet to be published in a forthcoming home-improver report.

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Even for larger practices, it's worth remembering that bigger contracts are riskier not just for clients, but throughout the supply chain

end of construction contracts we can look at the state-of-trade survey produced by the Federation of Master Builders. Chart 5 clearly shows a similar pattern to that which we are seeing across many indicators, with the growth in workload and expectations softening rapidly from the middle of last year.

Many factors will influence the level of smaller building works. For instance, the apparent decline in the government's ambition to green the built environment will have removed some of the buoyancy from the repair and maintenance market. But plenty of prospects remain.

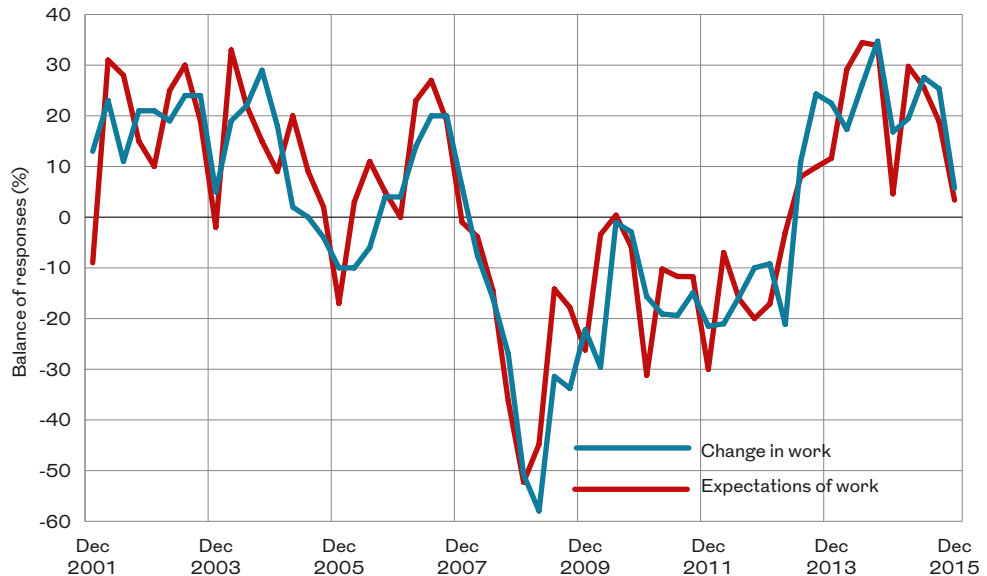
Domestic work

A report soon to be released by Barbour ABI examines the home-improver market. Chart 6 is taken from data it will present. It shows quarterly planning applications for home improvement projects tracked against gross domestic product, a measure of underlying economic activity.

There's a hint in the data for the final half of 2015 that things may be set to cool a little. But generally the trend is positive. What's more, the report notes a link between car sales and home improvements, both big-ticket household expenditures. Home improvement activity seems to follow moves in car sales about six to nine months later. Encouragingly, 2015 was a bumper year for car sales. So fingers crossed. ●

The RIBA Journal's essential dissections of the construction economy appear fortnightly on ribaj.com. Read about where to look for the positives in the industry at ribaj.com/intelligence

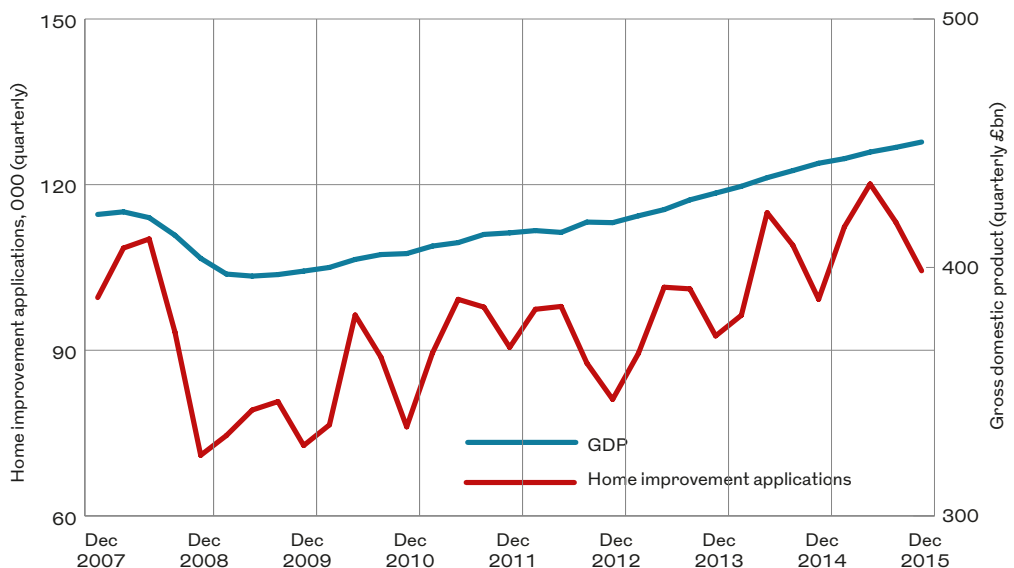
5: Federation of master builders State of Trade workload growth and expectations



Source: Federation of Master Builders State of Trade Survey


Notes: Balance (%) between firms undertaking more work and less work in the past three months and the balance between those expecting more and less work in the coming three months

6: GDP and home improvement planning applications



Source: Barbour ABI, Office for National Statistics

Notes: Home-improvement data was kindly provided by Barbour ABI and is yet to be published in a forthcoming home-improver report. The number of planning applications has been shown quarterly to help see through distracting volatility. The GDP figures are monthly volume measures seasonally adjusted

A photograph of a modern multi-story apartment building. The building features a mix of light green, white, and grey panels. Several balconies are visible, some with glass railings and others with wooden railings. The building has a curved, cylindrical section that stands out. A teal-colored text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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An isometric illustration of a city scene. In the center, the words "BIM" and "BRICKS" are rendered in large, 3D block letters. "BIM" is teal and enclosed in a teal rectangular frame, while "BRICKS" is dark grey. To the left of the text are three stacks of gold coins. To the right is a green recycling bin filled with grey blocks. Further right is a construction site with a red crane, a yellow excavator, and a small house under construction. In the bottom right corner, there are three white wind turbines. The background features various city buildings, roads, and green spaces with trees.

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Internal
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Many routes to profit

Aziz Mirza sifts through half a million pieces of information to help you find your level in the industry

Aziz Mirza

Architecture: it's a diverse profession, ranging from thousands of very small practices to 100 or so large ones. The business needs of a one or two person practice will surely be very different from one employing more than 100 staff. How do you decide who to compare yourself with? The RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey provides the information that practices need to measure against others, and investigates key aspects of the business of running an architectural practice.

Larger practices are more focused on new build work; smaller ones on refurbishment. Larger firms have more clients and jobs, and the jobs they undertake are bigger. Small practices are very much focused on private housing, in particular for private individuals; large companies have a much wider spread of activity. A third of large practices' revenue comes from work outside the UK; it's virtually zero for small firms.

The paradox is that, despite their diversity, practices of all sizes share many features: they are generally headed by those who own them, most are limited liability companies and the type of service offered is broadly similar, with little evidence of specialisation or diversification beyond core design services.

The annual RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey is now being analysed for the RIBA by The Fees Bureau. This vast data analysis exercise – participation in which is exclusive to RIBA chartered practices – comprises more than half a million individual pieces of data and offers a stack of business information to members. We've taken a fresh look at the whole survey, refining what information is collected, and how it's analysed and presented.

Practices' business ambitions and char-

acteristics vary by size, so rather than having a single benchmark for the profession, our approach has been to break the data down into a wider range of company sizes than before, to allow you to benchmark your practice against the average for your size. But in this new take on the exercise, we've gone a step further: the new interactive Benchmarker, now available online, allows you to compare your practice with others sharing whatever matrix of variables you choose. So you can compare with others of similar revenue, geographic region, percentage profits, area of work or type of service. While we've analysed the statistics and interpreted the results, the Benchmarker lets you delve deeper

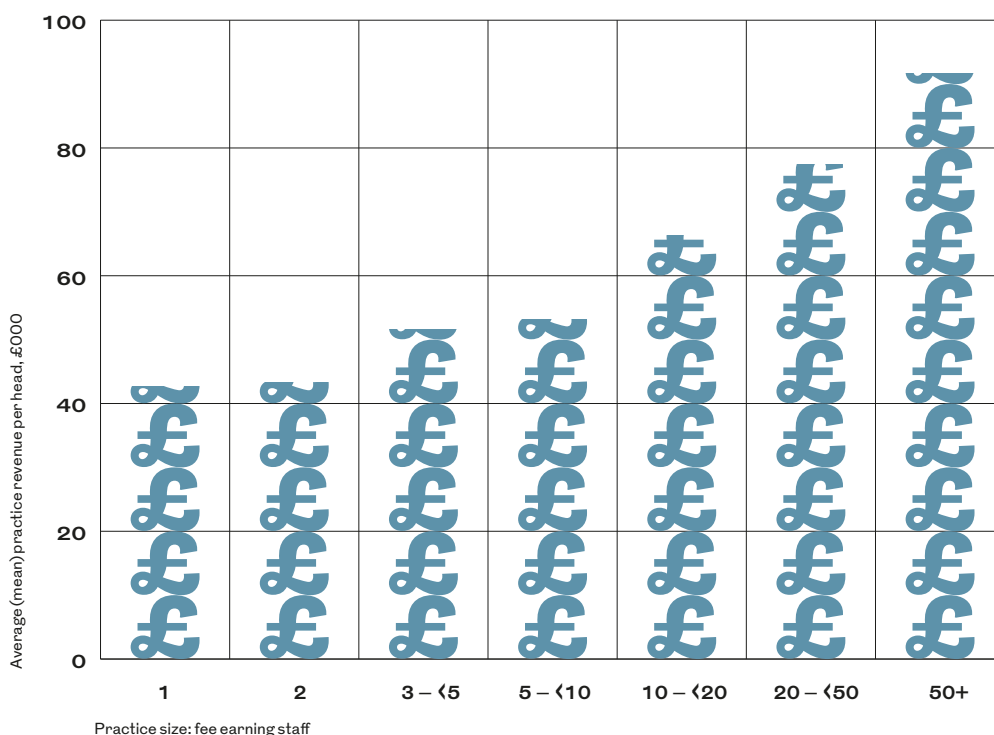
into the data to find the level most relevant to your own practice.

There's a wealth of data to explore with the report and the Benchmarker. Here we look at the four key strands of information.

Revenue

This benchmark shows that average revenue per head clearly rises with practice size, although increases are strongest from 10 staff upwards. Revenue per head is almost identical for one and two person practices; stepping up by a quarter for practices with 3-5 and 5-10 staff. Again, there is very little difference in the figures between these two groups. The survey results suggest that growth in

Average practice revenue per head, all fee earning staff



size only really starts to have a positive impact on practice revenue per head once a practice has 10 or more staff. From here onwards, the bigger a practice gets, the higher its revenue per head, showing a strong relationship between size and revenue. Growing a practice from (say) three to six people seems to have very little impact on the revenue achieved per head; but grow from 20 to 25 and the effects are more rewarding.

Profits

One of the principal aims of running a business is to make a profit. On the face of it, the figures appear to show that small practices make greater profits per head than large ones. But because profit includes the dividends paid to sole principals, partners and directors, they not only reflect the investment made in the business over years, but often include directors' regular pay. Average profits per fee earning staff are therefore highest for one and two person practices. Interestingly, average profit per head is very similar among the next four size groups, covering practices with between three and 50 staff; each size group reports average profits per head of between £16,000 and £18,000. The figure falls to £13,000 for the largest practices (50+).

Growth in size only really starts to have a positive impact on practice revenue per head once a practice has 10 or more staff

Expenditure

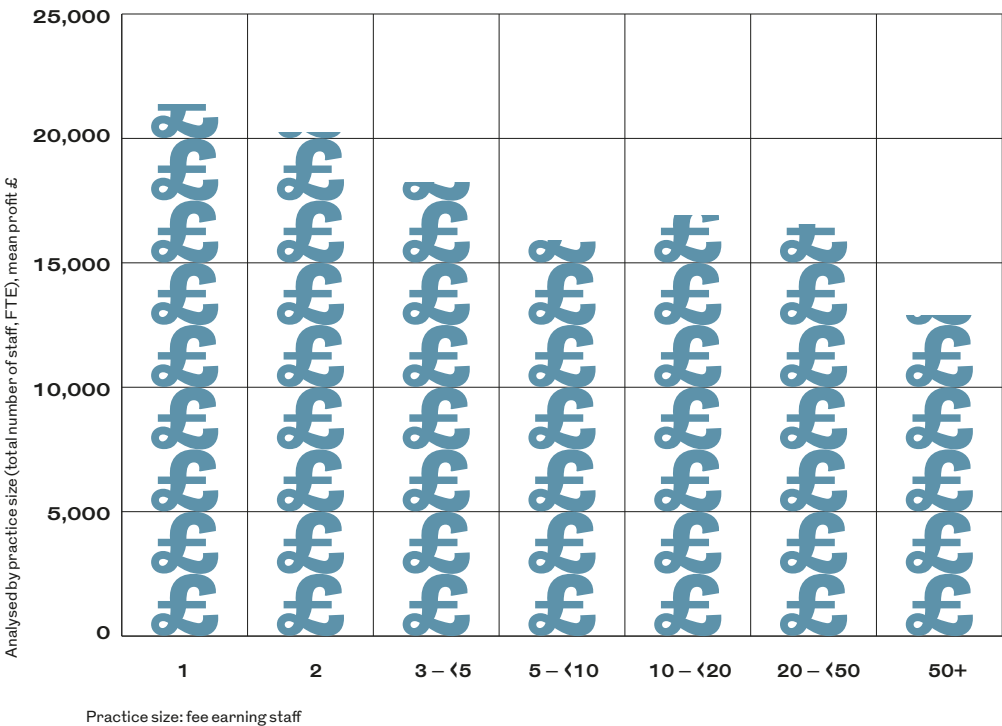
Expenditure as a proportion of revenue rises as practices get larger. However, if we exclude salaries from the figures, then expenditure as a percentage of revenues becomes much more even across the practice sizes – between 38 and 45 per cent of revenue across all but the very smallest (one and two person) practices.

More than half of average practice expenditure is spent on personnel. It's a remarkably similar proportion for all practice sizes with five or more staff, accounting for between 41 and 49 per cent of revenue. Many other elements of expenditure account for similar proportions of revenue across the practice sizes: spending on premises is between five and seven per cent of revenue for all sizes; four per cent is spent on IT, marketing, financial and legal activities by businesses with between two and 50 staff; practices with three or more staff spend two to three per cent of revenue on travel. The larger firms, with 50 or more staff, spend more than others on IT, marketing, financial and legal (six per cent of revenue) and other items including PII, capital equipment and R&D.

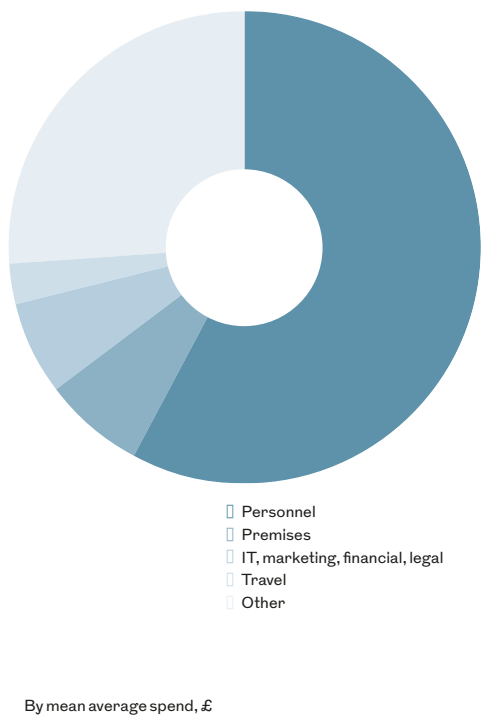
New business

The survey asked practices how many projects they had bid for in the last year. The

Average profit per head, all fee earning staff



Main source of expenditure



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survey defined a bid as when the practice has formally sought to offer services for a particular job or to a client. This could be in response to a site visit or a request for a quotation, or through a competitive process. The average number of bids made ranged between 17 for one-person practices through 30 for those employing five people, to over 50 for firms with between 10 and 50 staff. The average for 50+ practices is 123 bids. On average, over half (55 per cent) are successful – although the success rate falls with an increase in practice size, from 62 per cent for one-person firms to 37 per cent for 50+. Comparing the number of bids made with the number of projects worked on in the year shows equal number of bids and live jobs for small practices, while in larger practices the number of bids made is about half the number of jobs being worked on.

The most common method in which bids for new work were won was by a direct appointment by the client, with no competitive process. This method secured 56 per

cent of successful bids made by practices in the last year, ranging between 70 per cent for a one-person practice to 27 per cent for 50+ staff. The next most commonly successful method, for 20 per cent of bids, was a competitive bid or financial tender. Framework agreements achieved six per cent of successful bids, while four per cent were the result of being invited to a competitive interview without any formal pre-qualification.

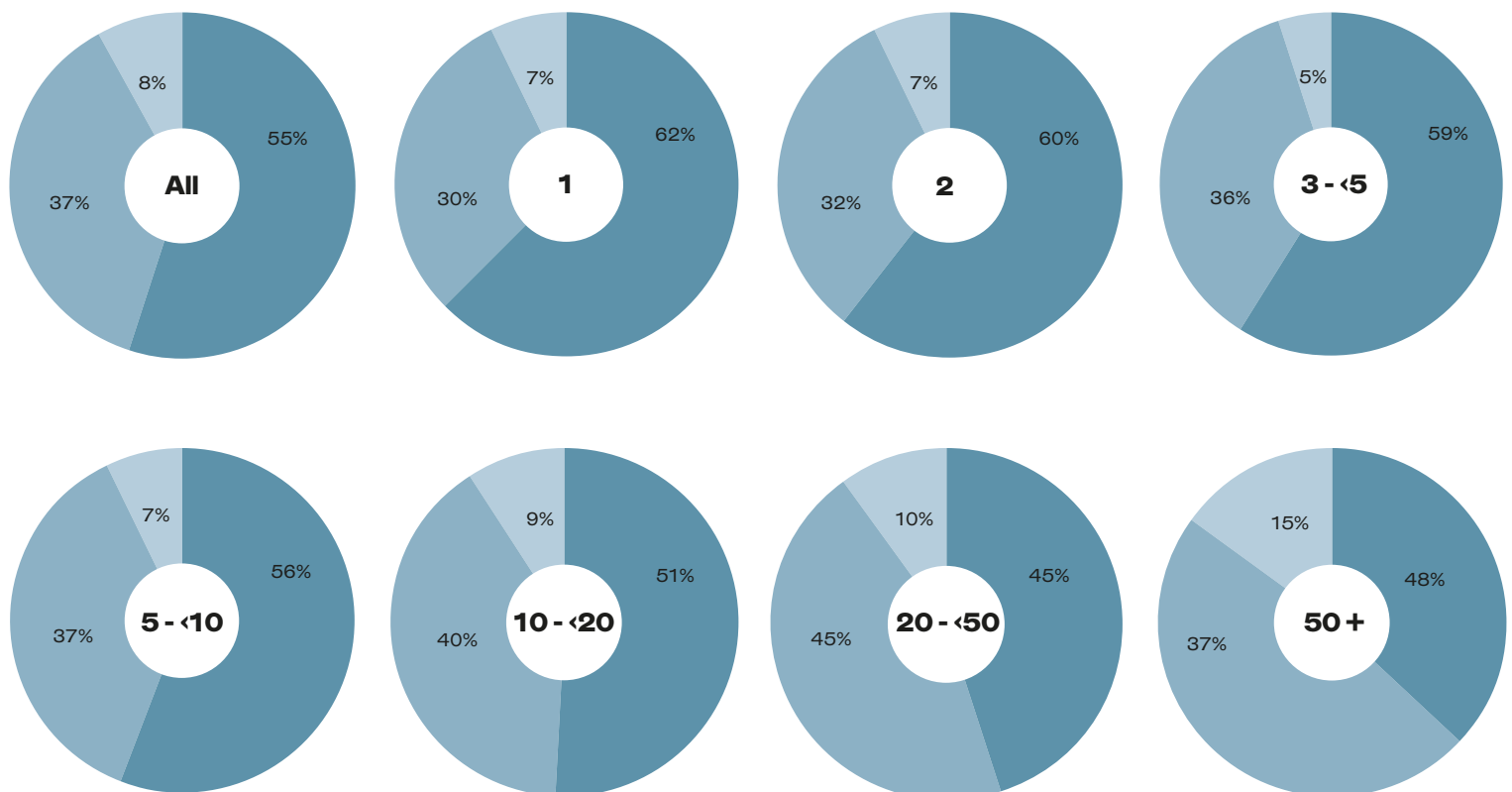
The methods of winning new business show, again, the dichotomy in the profession between small and large practices. Framework agreements, PQQs and design competitions only account for really significant numbers of bids for larger practices – those with 20 or more staff. It is these practices that spend meaningful sums on marketing/PR staff and activities.

These are the main points from four of the 10 areas of research. The full survey covers a wide range of business activities including staff salaries and numbers, business policies, work areas, and international activity. ●

RIBA chartered practices can access the full report and the Benchmark, at ribabenchmark.com. Aziz Mirza is director of The Fees Bureau, which analyses and reports on the Benchmarking Survey for the RIBA.

Outcome of bids made in the last 12 months by percentage and size of practice

■ Successful ■ Unsuccessful ■ Not known



Enter Eye Line 2016!

This will be the fourth year of RIBA's Eye Line, our annual celebration of the best drawings – in every medium – by architects and students from across the world, partnered this year by AVR. Entries are open now.

This is the award that separates the drawing from the project. We don't run crits on the merits or demerits of the scheme in question, we don't care if it is 'real' or imagined, we just want to see the best skills in architectural depiction, whatever the style. Hand-drawn, computer-aided, or whatever combination of techniques come together to make the image. You can be a seasoned practitioner or a rookie student, everyone is equal.

Over the years, the scope of Eye Line has increased. It was immediately successful; we launched it on a wing and a prayer in 2013 – part of our 120th anniversary year – and were astonished to receive 250 entries, totalling well over 700 drawings. That year practitioners including Niall McLaughlin and Robert Adam entered, but the top award went to Tom Noonan for his Bartlett diploma project 'Reforestation of the Thames Estuary', a quite astonishingly detailed and beautifully drawn narrative imagining a new sustainable-industry future.

Then 2014 revealed two new talents as joint winners: Amelia Hunter of the Royal College of Art and Kirsty McMullan of the University of Brighton school, with very different but equally lyrical interpretations of very practical projects – a hotel in a riverine landscape, and an 'Everyday Museum of Everyday Portland'.

The top prize in 2015 was won by a practitioner and teacher, Hamed Khosravi from Delft in the Netherlands, with three remarkably accomplished drawings from different competition entries which nonetheless read as a kind of triptych. That year one of our judges was that most architectural of artists, Nathan Coley. 'We should not shy away from



'Sugarburgh' by 2015's second prize winner Farah Farina Fadzil.

unfashionable adjectives like beautiful', he remarked.

And so to 2016. 'I'm especially pleased to welcome AVR London as Eye Line partner this year,' says RIBA editor Hugh Pearman. 'Architect-led, the company is in the business of very high quality architectural visualisation. Like us, it wants to encourage, recognise and – through its Anise Gallery – display the best drawings by practitioners and students alike.'

Our judges will be chaired by RIBA editor Hugh Pearman and include Will Alsop, Eric Parry, Joseph Robson, curator and art consultant Jes Fernie – responsible for the RIBA Gallery's 'Creation from Catastrophe' show – and previous winner Amelia Hunter (now with Studio Weave). We want not only to see your best architectural depictions, we want to be drawn into your imagined worlds. ●

A retrospective exhibition of the first three years of Eye Line is at Anise Gallery, London, from 7 to 28 April. Anisegallery.co.uk



RULES

All entries must be sent electronically to eyeline@ribaj.com – details below. We want to find the best representations of a building design or concept through visual means. Any medium is allowed – hand-drawn or via keyboard, collage or any combination or overlay of methods. It can be ultra-detailed, close to abstraction or photo-realistic, whatever: it's up to you.

The work must have been produced within the three years up to the closing date in June 2016, and must not previously have been entered for Eye Line.

Entries should be two-dimensional artworks – we will not consider movies or photographs of models – but within that constraint we will judge all methods and media equally.

There is a maximum of three individual pieces per entry, to be sent as medium-resolution JPEGs via a file-sharing service.

Information required

Title of work (if applicable)

A short description of the work

Size of the original work

Date it was done

Organisation where you work or study

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Deadlines

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Late June: Judging and shortlisting.

August: Winners and commendations announced in special issue of the RIBA J.

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The way we'll work tomorrow

Will technology destroy or improve your job? Actually, forget 'job' and think 'tasks' – that come together in different ways

Daniel Susskind

There are two futures for the professions. Both rest on technology. The first is reassuringly familiar – it is a more efficient version of what we have today. Here professionals use technology to streamline and optimise the traditional ways in which they have worked, largely since the middle of the 19th century.

But the second future is a very different proposition. Here, technology not only streamlines the established approach, but it actively displaces the work of traditional professionals. Increasingly capable systems and machines, operating alone or with users that look quite unlike those professionals, take on tasks that we have assumed can only be performed in the traditional way.

For now, and in the medium term, we expect these two futures to develop in parallel, but in the long run we see this second future dominating. We will find new and better ways to produce and share expertise in society, and our traditional professions will be steadily dismantled. This is the argument of my new book, *The Future of the Professions*, co-authored with Richard Susskind.

Professionals tend to respond enthusiastically to the first future. Doctors see the promise of using remote monitoring devices to keep in touch with patients from a distance, and teachers accept that online material can help in the classroom. Accountants adopt tax computation software that allows them to perform tricky calculations, and architects embrace computer-assisted design software to design more complex structures.

The response to the second future, though, is more sceptical. We think this is misguided. In some cases there is a reluctance to imagine how things might be done differently – what psychologists would call a strong 'status quo bias' for our existing insti-

Professional work
is increasingly
disaggregated into
component tasks

tutions. In other cases the problem is 'technological myopia' – a tendency to judge future technologies in terms of what currently exists today. A bad experience with a friend on Skype, for example, leads to the dismissal of a future in which any type of virtual interaction takes place.

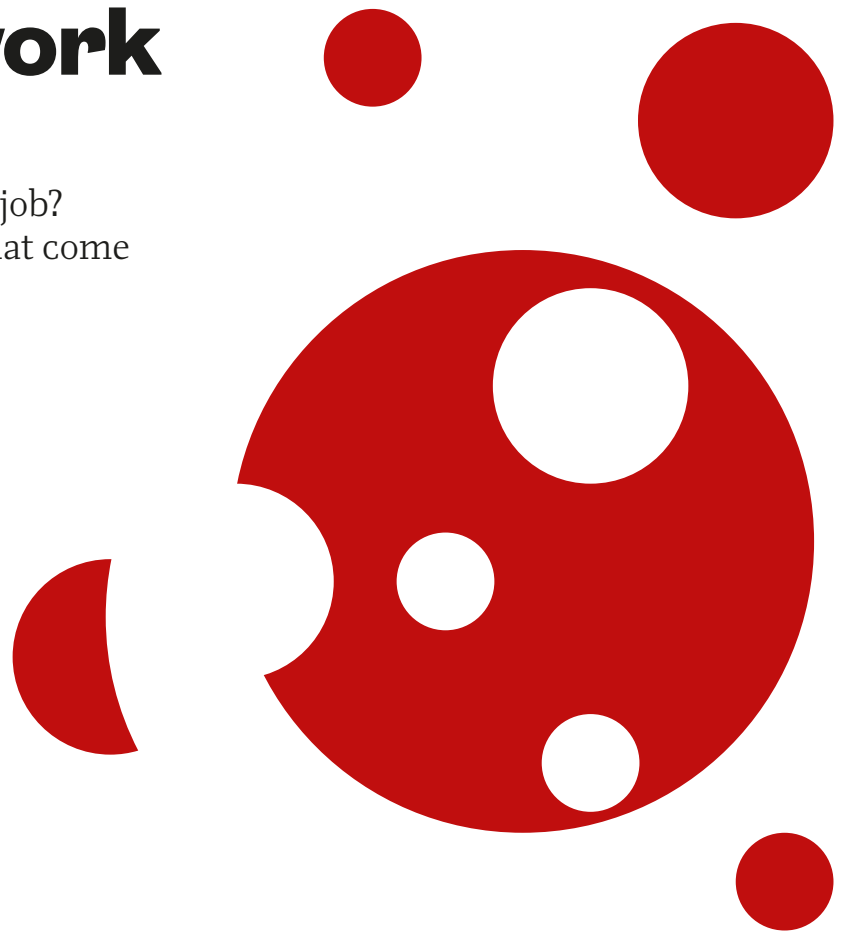
But there are deeper misconceptions at play here, too. For architects who are thinking through the future of their profession, understanding these is revealing.

Tasks, not jobs

The first mistake is to think in terms of 'jobs' – about 'lawyers' and 'doctors', 'architects' and 'accountants'. This encourages us to think of professional work as monolithic, indivisible lumps of endeavour, but in practice professionals perform many different types of 'tasks' or activities in their jobs.

This jobs mindset is particularly unhelpful in thinking about the future. It nurtures a vision that, one day, an architect will turn up at work to find a robot in their chair, or a priest will discover an android standing at the pulpit. Their 'job' will have been entirely replaced by a machine. We don't believe this is how change takes place in the professions.

Technology does not displace entire jobs; it changes the 'tasks' that people do in their jobs. This is why a 'task' mindset is more appropriate. In journalism, for example, when Associated Press introduced algorithms to computerize the production of earnings reports, it was able to produce 15 times as many



as when it relied upon human beings alone. But this was not the end of financial journalists; it changed the tasks they performed. Similarly in architecture, CAD software does not replace architects but changes the tasks that they do.

Sceptical architects often argue that, because their job requires 'creativity', they are immune from the changes we describe. The 'task' mindset shows why this argument, and others like it, is flawed. Certain tasks in their job may require 'creativity' – but not all their tasks do. As professional work is increasingly disaggregated, or decomposed, into component tasks, this 'argument from hard cases' – where professionals point to particularly hard tasks they perform and draw a general conclusion about their job – is misleading.

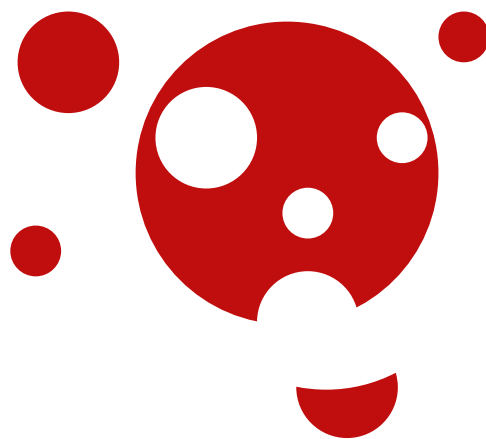
Architects need to recognise this underlying churn in the types of activities they undertake, to anticipate the new tasks that will have to be done, to identify those that require their unique talents, and to develop the skills that will therefore be required in years to come. In our book we set out 12 of these new tasks; many – 'knowledge engineering' and 'process analysis', 'system designing' and full-time 'empathizing' – are unfamiliar to professionals. In many cases, they will not be performed by traditional professionals at all.

Many possible futures

The second mistake is to think too narrowly about the future. Current commentary on the future of work can tempt us to think in a binary way – that the future is either traditional professionals or increasingly capable systems and machines acting alone.

In our book we instead set out six alternatives to the traditional professionals. Only one of these reflects the traditional alternative. We call this the 'machine-generated' model. In law, for example, Lex Machina is a system that can help predict the outcome of patent disputes more accurately than leading lawyers. In architecture, Autodesk's 'Project Dreamcatcher' is being developed in this manner – it is a system that tries to generate design options based on a limited set of high-level criteria with limited, if any, input from a traditional architect.

But there are other alternative models. Consider the 'networked experts' model. This still involves human professional providers. But unlike the traditional model where experts work alone or in relatively sta-



The 'networked experts' model still involves human professional providers. But unlike the traditional model, here they gather instead in virtual networks

ble organisations, here they gather instead in virtual networks. Platforms like 10 EQS and Axiom Law, for example, support virtual teams of consultants and lawyers. In architecture BIM is often performed in this spirit.

A second alternative is the 'communities of experience' model. Here recipients of professional advice – patients, students, clients, and so on – gather online and share their own experiences and advice. At PatientsLikeMe, for example, 350,000 people share their insight with one another on how to solve their health problems. In the tax world, people struggling to complete their tax returns online can learn from the experience of others at TurboTax's AnswerXchange.

A third alternative is the 'knowledge engineering' model. Here the expertise of a specialist is articulated and captured, and made available in a system for lay people to use. The best known legal brand in the US, for example, is not a traditional law firm, but LegalZoom.com – a company that has automated the production of many legal documents, modeled on the expertise of lawyers, and makes these available online.

The challenge for architects is to review all six of the alternative models and explore how to integrate them alongside their traditional practice.

Why do we have the professions?

The final mistake is to forget why we have the professions at all. We have the professions because they are, in analogous ways, a solution to the same problem – nobody has sufficient specialist knowledge to cope with all the daily challenges of life. Nobody can know everything. We turn to professionals because they have the knowledge, the skills, the experience, and the know-how – what we call the 'practical expertise' – which we need to make progress in life.

When we began the book in 2010 our main interest was in the work of the current professions. We saw two futures for them, as set out before. But as our thinking progressed we realised a more important question had to be addressed – how do we produce and share practical expertise in society?

The usual answer to this has been 'through the professions'. This is their purpose. But these traditional professions are creaking. Most people and organisations simply cannot afford the work of first-rate professionals, or indeed any professionals. The finest practical expertise is a very scarce resource.

As we move into an internet society, then, we should ask whether there might be new ways of organising professional work, new ways to produce and share practical expertise in society, new ways to solve the important problems that, traditionally, the professions alone have solved. The six alternative models point to different ways of doing this.

Too often we forget the purpose of the professions. They exist to solve important problems; the important problems do not exist to provide a livelihood for traditional professionals. It is not the purpose of ill health to provide a living for traditional doctors, or of the law to provide a living for traditional lawyers, or of our need for well-designed space to provide a living for architects.

This is why if technology offers ways to make practical expertise available, ways that are more affordable and accessible than the traditional approach, we should embrace them – in all professions, architecture included. ●

Daniel Susskind is a lecturer in economics at Balliol College, Oxford and co-author of *The Future of the Professions* (OUP, 2015)

Nobody likes gaps!

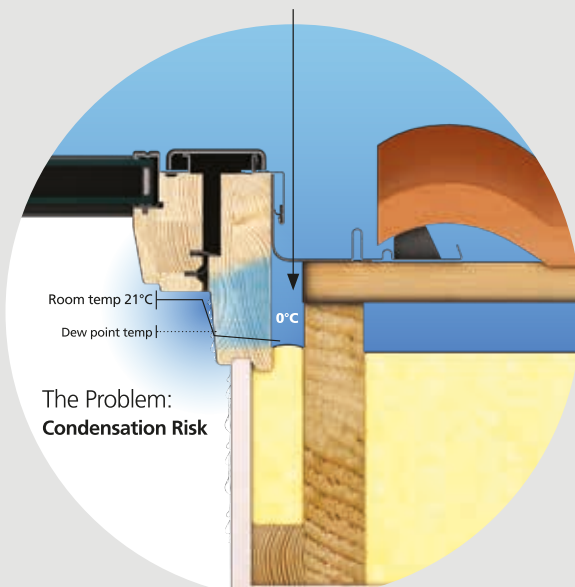
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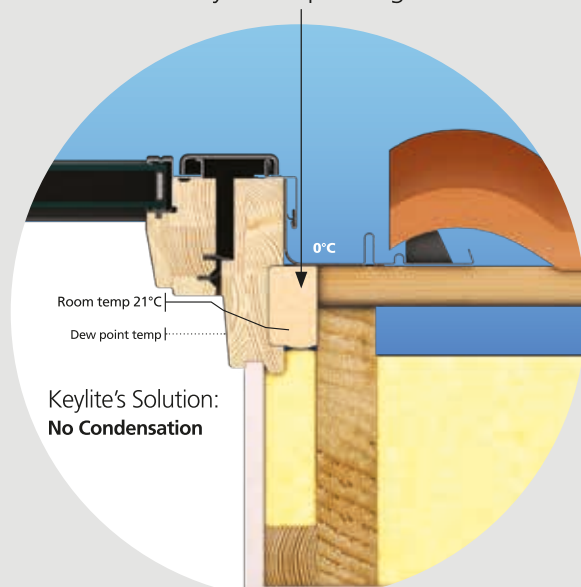
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Designing &
building It

Page of consents

RIBA's twice monthly planning roundup is a timely update for readers on recent permissions gained by UK architects, both here and abroad. Find it updated regularly on ribaj.com



COVENTRY STUDENT VILLAGE

Total area: 10,690m²**Client:** Gateway Developments**Architect:** Fraser Brown McKenna

Planning authority: Coventry City Council

Planning reference: P/2015/3153

It's a case of little and large in Coventry, where Fraser Brown McKenna's 586-room student village, on a site close to Coventry University's Priory Street campus, gained permission at the end of January. Fronting London Road, a string of three-storey grey brick-clad 'Edwardian' townhouses create a street line and a foil to the site beyond while above them three towers rise to 10, 12 and 14 storeys. The 21 townhouses accommodate 175 of the bedrooms, with 411 in the towers, clad in a variegated matt, satin and semi-gloss finish. The emphasis is on sociability, so the towers have double-height communal study spaces on every alternate floor. The landscaped courtyards between them are intended to foster a traditional collegiate feel.



BUTTERFLY HOUSE, ALRESFORD, ESSEX

Total area: 239m² + 40m² garage**Client:** Karen Beale**Architect:** MatchBox Architects

Planning authority: Tendring District Council

Planning reference: 15/01686/FUL

MatchBox Architects (MBA) had a Paragraph 55 private home passed through planning without objection with its ecologically driven 'Butterfly House' proposal. Situated outside the village of Alresford, the home is set within a landscape designed to encourage birds and bees back to an area previously used as a commercial orchard. The scheme is designed with a simple pallet of gabions, exposed concrete, glass and timber and is designed to be viewed in glimpses past the trees that line the nearby road. It's a good case of where 'putting yourself out there' can get you; MBA managing director Neil Scroxtton met the client after she watched him lecture on engaging an architect at last year's National Homebuilding and Renovating Show. MBA is based in Northamptonshire and Surrey.

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY BUILDING, CAMBRIDGE

Total area: 2600m²**Client:** University of Cambridge**Architect:** RH Partnership

Planning authority: Cambridge City Council

Planning reference: 15/1683/FUL

The £22 million development of Cambridge University's Chemistry department will provide much-needed additional space for new initiatives into the study of neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, Type II diabetes and other related illnesses. RHP's new four storey building will be built on the site of the departmental car park on Union Rd and defers to the scale of the neighbouring streets. The lower level brick facade of the Incubator Unit will make way at first and second floor levels for the lab spaces, expressed as a copper-clad box. The programme includes laboratories, specialist equipment and meeting spaces. Livingstone Eyre's garden courtyard will serve as an entrance plaza.



CAMDEN LOCK MARKET, LONDON

Total area: 11,150m²

Client: Market Tech Holdings

Architect: Piercy&Company

Planning authority: London Borough of Camden

Planning reference: 2015/4774/P

Piercy&Company has staged a multi-faceted intervention in London's Camden Market with a masterplan that aims to 'reveal the site's historic fabric and reconnect the market with its arts and crafts, maker-focused origins.' The wider proposal includes opening up the site's East Vaults and Dead Dog Basin, which remain untouched since they serviced the grade II listed Interchange building (left). The masterplan reconnects the market with the canal and creates new routes, while the new market building is a lightweight, metal-clad construction reflecting the site's industrial vernacular.

STAPLEFORD GRANARY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Total area: 827m²

Client: ACE Foundation

Architect: Moses Cameron Williams

Planning authority: South Cambridgeshire

District Council

Planning reference: S/2431/15/VC

The next phase of the development of the Victorian Stapleford Granary into an inclusive arts centre gained permission in February. Client ACE Foundation is a Cambridge-based charity founded in 1958 to develop cultural understanding through education, with emphasis on disadvantaged communities both here and abroad. With the granary already significantly refurbished, this phase will see the renovation of the remaining farm buildings and barn into reception space, meeting rooms and workspace, connected to the granary with a new glazed link and entrance. Low energy, passive principles will be used to create comfortable, well-lit and flexible spaces.



RUSKIN SQUARE TOWER, CROYDON

Total area: 23,225m²

Client: Schroder UK Real Estate

Architect: Make Architects

Planning authority: London Borough of Croydon

Planning reference: 13/03396/PRE

The slow conversion of Croydon continues with the second landmark building on the 186,000m² Ruskin Square site, a £500 million development being driven by both Schroder UK Real Estate Fund and Stanhope. Make's 13 storey commercial tower is 63m tall, will offer retail and dining at lower levels and is designed as BREEAM Excellent. The new building 'draws on the vernacular of the Croydon borough' and stands next to a now topped out tower and the site's first residential block, which will complete this summer.



HEARTSPACE, SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY

Total area: 12,400m² (new and existing)

Client: University of Sheffield

Architect: Bond Bryan

Planning authority: Sheffield City Council

Planning reference: 15/02907/FUL

Following the likes of Wilkinson Eyre's 2012 Forum for Exeter University, Bond Bryan has gained permission to build 'Heartspace' for Sheffield University's Faculty of Engineering. This is the third and final phase of the firm's development framework for the St George's campus. A four-storey atrium, beneath a dramatic undulating glass roof, will be inserted between the grade II listed Mappin Building and the 1885 Central Wing, uniting the faculty's labs, teaching spaces and offices with a new café and collaboration space.

EBBSFLEET GARDEN CITY HOUSING

Total area: 18,163m² (Circle site)

Client: Circle Housing Group

Architect: Lee Evans Partnership

Planning authority: Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

Planning reference: DA/15/01229/ECREM

The architect has been working with Land Securities, Circle Housing and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to help deliver the next phase of the new garden city, known as Castle Hill South. The 150-home development includes a two form entry primary school, community centre and commercial facilities. The firm has also carried out proving layouts for 375 affordable units on behalf of Circle Housing, and phase 1 of the proposal, 125 units, won permission last month.



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ST PAUL'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, LONDON

Total area: 1400m² (school building) 900m² (sports pavilion)

Client: St Paul's Girls School

Architect: John McAslan + Partners

Planning authority: London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Planning reference: 2015/02035/FUL (main school site) & 2015/02037/FUL (sports field site)

John McAslan was appointed as strategic estate advisor to the famous west London school in 2010 to identify future development opportunities. The firm has received planning permission for two new buildings to complement the grade II listed main school structure, designed by Arts & Crafts architect Gerard Horsley in 1904. The Brook Green campus will have a new school building intended to house the sixth form as well as the history and geography departments, with a reconfigured 'Forum' building that will contain staff areas, meeting rooms and offices. A new pavilion for the sports field will replace the present inadequate facilities, with construction intended to start in April. Work on the new school block will start on site this summer.



THEATRE SQUARE, SWISS COTTAGE, LONDON

Total area: 0.6ha

Client: Essential Living

Architect: GRID Architects

Planning authority: London Borough of Camden and DCLG on appeal

Planning reference: 2014/1617/P

GRID Architects' £100 million scheme for a mixed-use private rental housing scheme gained permission last month in London's Swiss Cottage. The Borough of Camden originally refused the 184-flat scheme in September 2014, but the Planning Inspectorate overturned the decision, 'noting the significant social the development would bring'. A 1980s office block facing onto an existing public square will be demolished to make way for a stone, terracotta and copper 34-storey residential tower of 130 apartments joined to a mid-rise podium block of 54 family homes, flexible retail space and a new community centre, with a proportion of this affordable.



MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT, HIGHGATE, LONDON

Total area: 3600m²

Client: Archway Apartments

Architect: pH+

Planning authority: London Borough of Haringey

Planning reference: HGY/2015/2517

pH+ architects has taken a little of what it found and worked with it to create this mixed use development in the Highgate Conservation Area in London. Preserving a Victorian shopfront on the Archway Rd, the firm has extended the basement behind as affordable workspaces for local businesses. Above that is a modern brick development of 25 apartments over four floors with both private and communal outdoor space. The architect says it respected the village-like scale of the area, using materials and pitched roof forms that make clear reference to the surroundings. Balconies are recessed into the main facade to reduce their impact. The quieter side facade will have four family duplex apartments at ground and basement levels.

THE PERFUME FACTORY, ACTON, LONDON

Total area: 1.16ha

Client: Essential Living

Architect: Squire and Partners

Planning authority: London Borough of Ealing

Planning reference: PP/2015/4551

Developer and operator of homes for rent Essential Living has received planning permission to redevelop the former Elizabeth Arden factory in west London into more than 534 homes with over 6500m² of new commercial space. The site is a stone's throw from the Old Oak Common Regeneration Area, a zone prioritised for investment funding by the mayor of London. Part of the client's longer term plan to deliver 5000 private rented homes across the capital and the south east, this is one of the largest consented schemes in the country designed for rent. The £200 million development was designed by the architect to maintain a 'modern art deco influence throughout'. With 5000m² of external landscaping, onsite concierge and dedicated family blocks, the aim is to engender 'a real sense of community among renters'. The development adopts Squire's almost trademark formal language, with towers less 'perfume factory' than 'perfume bottle'.

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With the post Olympics sports sector booming and broadening, clients want architects' skills throughout the scheme

Matt Thompson

In the wake of the 2012 London Olympics, the focus has been on sports participation. Realisation has dawned among policy-makers that being active is a panacea. It improves physical and mental wellbeing. It helps solve the funding crisis in the NHS. It teaches social cohesion. And where they draw spectators, elite sports boost the economy. This philosophy underpins the development of new sports infrastructure, and so of course architects designing it must take note. In its latest sector-by-sector round table meeting, the RIBA's Client Liaison Group found out how.

Sports building procurement in the UK is diverse. Clients range from sophisticated developers to multi-headed committees of volunteers. Some large projects – think of the Olympics – are publicly funded. However, many are also privately funded, often by owner-occupiers, their planning and business justifications aimed at future-proofing them for the duration of the asset. Smaller projects tend to rely on some public funding, which depends on how closely the proposal aligns with government policy. Published in December 2015, its new policy affects sports infrastructure by preferring co-located services, multi-sport facilities, focusing on the 'customer', making better use of school facilities, and more efficient procurement.



There are those who can put the nuts and bolts together and those who can inspire

Charles Johnston

In short, it wants value for money.

While this fragmented landscape of course makes different demands on architects, there are nonetheless common themes. Whether to win funding or planning permission, all parts of the sector are under increasing pressure to serve the social good, maximize their use and generate income. Far more than just accommodating sport, the assets have got to really sweat.

The humble cricket pavilion should attract users all through the year, while stadiums need to adapt to trends that characterize the march of the millennials. This means anticipating further impacts from digital technology and changes in customer behaviour.

Valuable skillsets

For most sports clients, the emphasis is on place-making and the user experience, forcing the reinvention of sports facilities as community hubs with extra built-in uses including bars, libraries, shops or health centres.

Clearly, these needs play to architects' strengths, particularly at the pre-construction phase. David Brooks Wilson, member of the estates committee at Marylebone Cricket Club, said architects perform best when free to concentrate purely on design. 'Their skillsets are masterplanning, intelligent design and a vision that lifts the soul and defines what the client wants.' Michael Cunnah, former CEO, Wembley Stadium, is equally en-

thusiastic but stressed the need for business savvy: 'Good architects bring ideas from all over the world, then iterate with their eye on the business plan.'

For Julie Clark, head of sport and leisure at consultant PwC, architects add value in the way they engage with the community to 'bring the project alive by helping the non-specialist to visualise it'.

Building on that, Ralph Luck from King's College London sees value in locally based architects because they will be keyed into local issues. Jessica Gavaghan, director of Wrenbridge Sport, said she sometimes uses two architects for this reason, acknowledging that the 'good ones' are happy to work together.

Charles Johnston, director of property at Sport England, divided the profession roughly into 'those who can put the nuts and bolts together and those who can inspire'. Justin Smith, head of estate development for the All England Lawn Tennis Club, saw a more nuanced picture, acknowledging differences in training, skills and experience. A successful relationship is about getting 'the right architect with the right client for the right project'.

The right match

To that end, architects have to appreciate these differences. Michael Cunnah thinks there is an important educational role for

Architects bring the project alive by helping the non-specialist to visualise it

Julie Clark





Getting architects to engage in the supply chain 'really does create a better project'

Justin Smith

architects, particularly as many clients will only ever build once. Before they can do so, though, architects must understand, as Jon Stemp, director of proleisure, put it, the 'philosophical DNA' that drives clients' business decisions. Only then is it possible to interrogate the brief. He was in no doubt that this is only possible if clients are prepared to facilitate openness and provide for in the programme and budget. 'If the industry can create room for the architect to challenge assumptions and the client's thinking, that's where they can add most value.'

There was a difference of opinion about how early architects should be involved in any discussion. In the experience of Philip Johnson, senior principal at Populous, too detailed a brief can close down options or make false assumptions, creating problems later on. Clark agreed. She likes the architect involved as part of the wider project team in feasibility and cost planning.

But Johnston wanted business plans before architectural ones. 'Too often people come to us with a design and then back-engineer a justification.'

Stemp thought that 'asking architects to do something too early and out of their skill zone makes life very difficult for them.' He rates development proposals on the Football City Group's seven value metrics, which it uses to help architects 'to achieve more'.

Engaging in the supply chain

Clients think architects add less in later stages of a project, although of course buildability, for example, is important, which means an open dialogue with the contractor. As Ralph Luck said, 'I feel a lot more comfortable knowing the architect and contractor have spoken to one another and that it will work.' For Justin Smith too, getting architects to engage in the supply chain 'really does create a better project.'

The sector inevitably requires specialist knowledge. As Arup's Andrew Lerpiniere, UKMEA Arts & Culture Leader, confirms, things can go 'horribly wrong' when non-specialists slip up. The problem is that lessons are never shared across the industry, so mistakes are repeated. Every new project is a steeper learning curve than necessary. This is especially disastrous for publicly funded once-in-generation investments, according to Johnston.

Inexperienced practices can still get involved, especially for their local knowledge. Although Johnston recognised the shared value in employing smaller practices in this way, Cunnah was hesitant. 'If I worked with someone who hadn't designed a stadium before I would worry about waste.' Smith was concerned about the risks involved, too, suggesting it might be a challenge for the RIBA more than the client body.

It is clear though, that clients' chief strategic priority is to accommodate future uncertainty from policy and other emergent trends. Stemp recognised that the sector is subject to more change because 'millennials' are fundamentally different to baby boomers. 'What works now won't in five years' time, which is a problem for buildings designed to last 20 years plus.' Cunnah summed up the need as 'infinite flexibility'. Now there's a challenge for all architects. ●



PHASE TWO OF RIBA FOR CLIENTS

The RIBA for Clients initiative continues, with broader client engagement and more challenging research into value measurement in order to build a body of evidence that can be used by the RIBA and its members.

The wider client survey will launch on the main stage at Grand Designs Live in London in May and will be widely promoted. Questions have been phrased to secure useful answers; for example, they should reveal professional needs and could be used for tailoring products and services, programmes and initiatives that would help the profession to succeed.

The results will be announced at Grand Designs Live and UK Construction Week in Birmingham in October. Other outputs will be client films, client case studies and articles in the RIBA Journal and on architecture.com.

CLIENTS INTO SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE

In response to client feedback that architects need to improve their listening skills and understanding of clients' needs, the RIBA is also planning an initiative which introduces clients in to schools of architecture, running as a pilot from September.

The problem is that lessons are never shared across the industry and so mistakes are repeated

Andrew Lerpiniere

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True friends?

Do you work for friends as a favour on the side? This could make you think twice

Stacy Sinclair

Are you happy to share your expert knowledge to help a friend? The recent case of Mr and Mrs Burgess v Mrs Lejonvarn may change your mind.

Here, the court found that a professional consultant did owe a duty of care in tort when performing gratuitous services for friends.

In 2012, Mr and Mrs Burgess decided to landscape their garden in Highgate, London. They obtained a quote from a well-known landscape designer of approximately £200,000. They considered this to be too expensive and consulted their friend and former neighbor, Mrs Lejonvarn, a Netherlands-registered architect living in London.

Mrs Lejonvarn informed the Burgesses that she believed the works could be completed within a smaller budget. Mrs Lejonvarn, who had in the past provided gratuitous design services for the Burgesses, began to provide design and project management services for the landscape project. The parties did not sign a formal contract and Mrs Lejonvarn did not ask for payment from the Burgesses. It was her intention to charge a fee for detailed design work at a later stage in the project.

However, as the project progressed, the Burgesses became concerned about the quality and cost of the works. The relationship between Mrs Lejonvarn and the Burgesses deteriorated. Ultimately the Burgesses engaged the landscape designer who had provided the original quote to complete the project. The Burgesses then commenced proceedings against Mrs Lejonvarn, claiming in both contract and tort for the increased cost of completing the works (including remedial

works). The maximum value of the claim was approximately £265,000.

At this particular trial, the court considered certain preliminary issues in the case in the hope that the answers would clarify matters and enable the parties to settle their differences without recourse to a full trial.

Accordingly, the judge held that there was no contract between the parties: there had been no offer and acceptance capable of giving rise to a contract, as well as no consideration. Therefore the Burgesses's claim in contract failed and the judge went on to consider the claim in tort.

In this respect, the judge observed that the losses claimed by the Burgesses were 'pure economic losses' (see definition below), and noted that while there were conflicting authorities as to whether a professional designer in the construction sphere owes a duty of care in respect of pure economic loss, on balance, a duty is capable of being owed and that 'a duty of care extends to the protection against economic loss in respect of both advice and any service in which a special skill is exercised by a professional'.

The judge therefore found that Mrs Lejonvarn owed a duty of care in tort to the Burgesses. The duty covered the selection and procurement of contractors and professionals, project management and supervision of the works, and detailed design work. The judge qualified the duties by holding that Mrs Lejonvarn should be judged by the standards of a reasonably competent architect and project manager, and not by the standards of a structural or geotechnical engineer.

Finally, the judge held that the Burgesses and Mrs Lejonvarn had discussed a budget of £130,000 on two occasions and that Mrs Lejonvarn knew the Burgesses were relying on that figure. Mrs Lejonvarn therefore assumed responsibility to the Burgesses for the accuracy of the budget figure.

While this judgment highlights the inherent risk to professionals in offering informal advice, it is important to note that the court emphasised that: 'this was a significant project ... approached in a professional way. This was not a piece of brief ad hoc advice of the type occasionally proffered by professional people in a less formal context. Instead, the services were provided over a relatively lengthy period of time and involved considerable input and commitment on both sides.' ●

Stacy Sinclair, Fenwick Elliott LLP

Ultimately the Burgesses commenced proceedings against Mrs Lejonvarn. The maximum value of the claim was approximately £265,000

IN PLAIN ENGLISH: PURE ECONOMIC LOSS

This is a loss which is purely financial. It is not caused by physical injury, damage to 'other' property. The cost of repairing patently defective work or any diminution in the value of a property as a result of the presence of a patent defect generally is pure economic loss.

Where parties are not in contract with each other, the law is hesitant to impose a duty of care in respect of pure economic loss, as it would lead to the ambiguous situation of liability in an indeterminate amount, for an indeterminate time, to an indeterminate class of people (*Ultramares v Touche*, 1931).

In this case, Mrs Lejonvarn did not deny that a duty of care could arise, but challenged the scope of the duty, arguing that a duty of care in respect of pure economic loss could arise from advice given, but not from a duty to perform a service. The judge rejected this argument.

Further, the judge referred to the case of *Lidl Properties v Clarke Bond Partnership* (1997) where a duty of care had been found to exist with regard to the giving of gratuitous advice in the construction sphere.

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Figure it out

Maria Smith takes a deeper look at women in architecture



Maria Smith

Like many, I was shocked to read the results of the recent Architects' Journal Women in Architecture survey.

The interpretation of the data is extremely simplistic, and the numbers themselves appear to be handled without rigour or genuine intellectual curiosity. As such, the problematic conclusions effuse a scent of whingey entitlement and lend very unfortunate support to the notion that women are technically inferior. I'm confident that this is far from the intention and don't believe I'm in opposition to the surveyors' stated goal of gender equality. So though this may make me unpopular, I offer my perspective in the hope that it might advance the debate in some small way.

As of 31 December 2014, the number of Arb registered architects residing in the UK was 31,290, of which 7,648 (24%) were female. This has been steadily increasing by around 1% annually, which makes sense given that the proportion of female applicants to the register was 36% in 2014 and has averaged 34% over the last few years. This clearly suggests a direction of travel toward gender parity – and at a fair speed.

The proportion of women on the register however, is just one measure. It does not take

into account whether these architects are practising, their role/status within practice, their pay, or critically, whether the women who are practising are doing so in a hostile, sexist environment. The problem is that much, much, much, much more information is required and it needs to be collected, analysed, and reported impartially, with academic rigour and a genuinely open mind as to what the results might be. While I applaud the general intention of the AJ Women in Architecture survey, I feel it falls well short in most of these respects.

Perhaps the main problem is the sample. At just under 1450 respondents it is small: if all were from the UK they would represent less than 5% of architects registered here. However my main criticism here is the lack of clarity as to the sample's characteristics. We aren't told what proportion of respondents are men, where they are practising, if they are in practice whether they're qualified architects, their age, level of experience, the type of practice they work for etc.

Without this information it is impossible to adjust for reverse causality, which is a huge risk with self-selecting samples. For example, one of the findings was that more than 90% of UK respondents believe having children hinders their careers. That only 30% of the respondents had children (for reference, the UK figure is over 80%) might indicate that female architects are much less likely to have children than non-architects: however another reading is that childless women who feel that having children hinders their careers are disproportionately likely to fill out a survey about women in architecture.

The interpretation of the results may be coloured by an understandable bias, but this does not explain the AJ research team's poor handling of the figures. The report is littered with proportions adding up to more than 100%, inconsistent histogram brackets, telling repetition of percentages, and generally suspect visualisation of data.

Perhaps the most worrying message to come out of the survey was the headline purporting that the gender pay gap is widening at the top level of practices. This is an extraordinary simplification – at best unhelpful and at worst damaging to gender equality.

This assertion is based on figures for directors and partners of companies, so is not about how much people are being paid, but how much they're paying themselves. What

Do women pay themselves less because they prefer to have a greater reserve in the bank, or because their firms are less profitable due to risk-averse behaviour?

might a closer look at this disparity tell us?

A study published earlier this year (Faccio, Marchica and Murac) showed 'that firms run by female CEOs tend to make financing and investment choices that are less risky than those of otherwise similar firms run by male CEOs'. Are women paying themselves less because they prefer to have a greater reserve in the bank, or because their firms are less profitable due to risk-averse behaviour? Do women tend to be less aggressive when asking for additional fees? Are they choosing to take on less profitable work which they feel is more ethical? There is an enormous number of reasons why women leaders of companies might be earning less. Also, these figures were for salaries before bonuses, dividends, benefits etc. The full picture is substantially more complex.

The steady increase in the proportion of women in architecture tells us things are changing. I'd like to see a radical change in how this discussion is framed. We must move away from generic indignation and start to properly interrogate why both men and women practise architecture the way they do – and if gender is relevant to this question, how? ●

Maria Smith is a director of architecture and engineering practice Interrobang and curator of Turncoats

Secret of a good night's sleep

Teamwork and standard approaches have proved the winning ticket for ensuring reliable and efficient fire proofing at Premier Inn

What price to sleep safely when it comes to firestopping? None, if Whitbread's approach to fire specification at its Premier Inn brand is anything to go by. The £1.4 billion hospitality firm sought a review of firestopping across all its UK hotels in 2011, after a malicious (but non-fatal) fire was started at its Silverstone hotel. This was to ensure clear strategies for detail design and chain of responsibility for installation and certification; to give Premier Inn the peace of mind necessary for a company whose core business is sleep.

Whitbread asked Hilti to get involved in the firestopping specification for the Premier Inn brand, which is building more than 40 new hotels (over 5400 new rooms) a year. Together with the firm's two project architects, Allison Pike Partnership and Axiom, it sought a proactive strategy to counter the root cause of poor specification – weak design and execution. This required the architect to assume more control over the detailing of the usually contractor-led, descriptive rather than prescriptive, specification, while keeping the whole process commercially viable. Premier Inn has been honing its own prefabricated timber construction system; and as a way of meeting the firm's expectations, Hilti showed that with its European Technical Assessment (ETA) approvals defining specific fields of application, the use of 10-12 standard technical details for their construction could effectively capture more than 80% of UK-wide firestopping scenarios. When necessary, its in-house engineers could provide bespoke solutions from its range without delay.

Here, we look at the positive impact that the adoption of an ETA approved specification has had on the project team. As Paul Dunlop, associate director at Allison Pike explains: 'Good communication between consultants and suppliers is key to ensuring the right products are specified in every scenario. Hospitality is the mainstay of what Whitbread does and it's only when they know their customers are sleeping safe and sound, that they can too.'



THE CLIENT

Richard Aldread, head of new construction (regions), Whitbread

We embarked on a company-wide review of fire spread in all our assets in 2011. We've always tended to performance-specify works – even when it's developers doing turnkey projects on our behalf. We want to specify what's best for a situation and decided to go with Hilti to supply our firestopping products as we felt it was the market leader and because of the one stop shop service it provided.

The firm's in-house engineers advised our consultants on standard details, but the firm was also great on our refurbishment and period properties, which proved more bespoke and complex. Hilti supplied the products with the works done by FIRAS accredited installers and monitored by the project architect and our clerk of works – it was only considered complete when he'd signed it off. We saw the ETA as going over current UK guidance and used it to generate the standard penetration details that went into our internal WHISDOM project management database.

Hilti's catalogue of firestopping solutions made the architects' job easier as it could specify from this and incorporate it into the base build. It was advantageous for us in that it meant that from design through to installation and sign off, there was always a clear chain of responsibility in place.

THE SUPPLIER

Alastair Brockett, fire engineer, Hilti

We met Premier Inn through Disley-based Allison Pike, the architect working on about a quarter of its projects. At the time Premier Inn was looking for a concerted UK-wide firestopping approach for all its assets, and my role was to ensure that the products it was looking to install in its hotels had been tested to form the basis for a standard fire specification.

Performance specs can leave a bit to be desired, as contractors can make decisions based on little marketing information and without understanding the finer points of firestopping. With Approved Document B, there are two ways to demonstrate compliance; either you show a standard installation and prove how you're meeting it or you go through BS7974 and use fire safety engineering principles to prove your case.

We advised Allison Pike and Axiom and from those discussions the architect prepared details and specified products, which would go to form part of Whitbread's contract documentation. This meant that regardless of where the hotel was or who was building it, they'd all be working to the same specification. The products supplier doesn't do sign off – that can only be done by a FIRAS accredited installer or accredited third party inspector. Either way, the contractor is ultimately issued with a Certificate of Conformity for the firestopping which will form part of the building's O&M manual.





THE ARCHITECT

**Paul Dunlop, associate director,
Allison Pike Partnership**

We are one of the two lead practices involved with Premier Inn's design information. With performance specifications in general we found it was difficult to get independent testing information from contractors on the firestopping products that they were installing. Hilti on the other hand tested all its products in a whole range of situations. For us it was important to know, for any given wall build up, that penetrations were code compliant. The plus for us was the firm's technical knowhow and ability to advise and offer engineered solutions when necessary.

Over the time that we've worked on Premier Inn's prefabricated lightweight timber frames we've been developing standard solutions for penetrations through walls and floors, when we would consult with Hilti. Previously, we would have specified two-part intumescent mastic for about 50% of penetrations, but it was a time consuming process and after reviewing with the company, we found better products suited to each situation.

Because the installers were all FIRAS accredited, they were fully trained-up and could self-certify. Also, they were required to photograph and document penetrations, confirming who installed it, what product was used and the fire rating achieved. The firestopping was reviewed by the client's clerk of works, Building Control and us during construction and at sign off.

That gave everyone confidence in the completed installation.

THE INSTALLER

**Mark Stone, managing director,
Fire Management Ltd**

We deal with architects a lot – usually once the building's on site. Individual trades can have their own ways of doing things and situations can arise where details that need to be approved diverge from the standard. There are four types of plastic pipe being used on Premier Inns – PVC, ABS, PP and HDPE – and if any one is installed in a particular scenario, it might need to be reviewed. Under the ETA you have more onerous testing regimes and Hilti has solutions for every single type of pipe; so you can discuss it with them and get a solution quickly, reducing programme delays.

On site, a lot boils down to the skill levels of the previous trades. If penetrations are badly cut, there are knock-on implications for firestopping. And what they've used matters too. Things like Kevlar coated ductwork proved a challenge because of heat conductance and mixing plastic and metal components. Remember, we might be working on many projects at one time, with mechanical contractors solving the



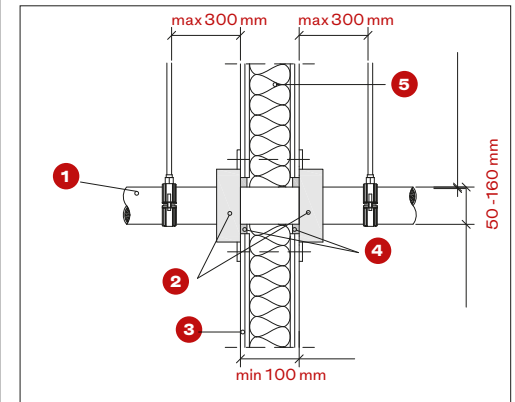
same problem different ways. On site it was important to have a team that was both knowledgeable and responsive enough to deal with problems quickly as they arose.

As a FIRAS accredited installer, we were a one stop shop with certification. It's odd to think a hotel might be built to higher standards than an NHS hospital, but Whitbread was acutely aware that safety underpins its whole business model.

STANDARD PENETRATION DETAIL: EXAMPLES

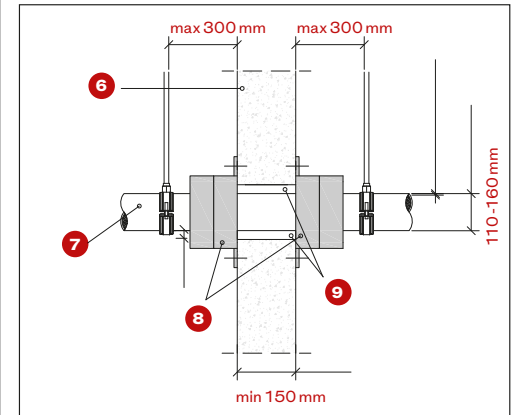
Firestop collar :

Straight plastic pipe in a flexible wall



Firestop collar endless :

Straight plastic pipe in a rigid wall



- 1 PE pipe according to EN ISO 15494 and DIN 8074/8075
- 2 Hilti CFS-C-P firestop collar
- 3 2 x min 12.5 thick boards
- 4 Annular gap fill material:
Hilti Firestop Acrylic Sealant CFS-SARC on both sides with depth >25mm from the surface of the wall.
Gypsum plaster or cementitious mortar over the entire thickness of the wall.
- 5 Mineral wool
- 6 Comprise concrete, aerated concrete, brickwork, lime malm bricks or masonry. Min density of 650 kg/m³
- 7 Geberit Silent db20 pipe
- 8 Hilti CFS-C EL firestop endless collar
- 9 Annular gap fill material:
0-15mm gap: Hilti Firestop Acrylic Sealant CFS-SARC on both sides with floor.
0-40mm gap: Hilti Firestop Acrylic Sealant CFS-SARC on top side with floor only with depth >25mm, backfilled with mineral wool.
0-40mm gap: Cementitious mortar acc. EN 998-2 group M10 over the entire thickness of the wall.

The plus was Hilti's technical knowhow and ability to advise and offer engineered solutions when necessary



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3: Culture

Ideas grow in fallow times

Even economic fears hold a silver lining



Hugh Pearman Editor

'For anyone involved in construction at the moment, amber lights should be flashing,' said our new economic guru Brian Green in a recent piece at ribaj.com, adding however that things are OK for now. Others warn that we are at the top of the economic cycle, or that we never truly recovered from the last crash, or that the China effect is dampening global trade via commodities prices, or that the approaching referendum on the UK's membership of the EU is unsettling the markets, or that our budget deficit is still growing, our trade balance is shocking, sterling has caught a huge cold... insert your personal economic Armageddon scenario here. By the time you read this everything will probably have changed again, not necessarily for the better.

There is only one certainty in the economy – that it goes up and down. Former Chancellor Gordon Brown made himself a victim of Canute-scale hubris by claiming his policies would mean 'an end to boom and bust'. The construction economy exaggerates this inescapable undulation. For us the peaks are sharper, the troughs deeper, than for the gen-

To some extent such big-ticket schemes can act as economic regulators. But where does all this leave architecture?

eral economy. This being the case, the only remaining problem – unfortunately the biggest, most intractable problem of all – is timing. When to get in, when to get out? When to expand, when to sit tight, when to contract?

This probably explains our present Chancellor's fondness for massive transport infrastructure projects such as Crossrail 2 and the planned HS2 and HS3 railways: the Keynesian economic stimulus such projects provide is proven and predictable even if their political, social and environmental consequences are less certain. The Blair governments' huge investment in schools and hospitals had a similar if less wide-ranging effect, though heavily mortgaged via private finance deals. To some extent such big-ticket schemes can act as economic regulators. But where does all this leave architecture, especially if you are not in the right sector at the right time?

Architecture is different to construction. As we always say apropos of our ever-popular Eye Line drawing competition, launched for the fourth year in this issue on page 62, architecture does not have to be built to exist. If it did, where would that leave Archigram? That is no comfort, of course, for architects with mouths to feed. The Archigram team members all had day jobs elsewhere.

So nobody likes an economic downturn? Well, there are compensations. In a downturn, the froth comes off. Rampant speculation reduces. All those horrible new towers (and the good ones) in the pipeline for our big cities suddenly get mothballed. And those economically fortunate architects who at the peaks tend to be so overworked they can hardly think, suddenly have plenty of time to think. We can't be full-throttle all the time.

But having lived and worked through a number of booms and busts, I've noticed one thing. The best ideas in architecture tend to emerge during troughs, not peaks. That's when the profession is at its most ingenious. The ideas are then banked, ready for the upturn. Or so we hope. ●

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House style

Oliver Wainwright
plays Spectre



Oliver Wainwright

It's hard to feel much more like a Bond villain than when you're lying on the grey leather mattress of the triangular concrete daybed in the Sheats-Goldstein house, beneath a sharply faceted concrete ceiling, looking out through the floor-to-ceiling windows at the skyline of Los Angeles. At the touch of a button the glass walls slide away, leaving nothing between you and the sheer drop down to a jungle canopy below. Flick a different switch and a wooden deck glides back to reveal a bubbling hot tub; another tap and a cinema display folds down from the ceiling. All that's missing is a laser death-ray and a pool of man-eating piranhas.

Few people could play the part of the client of this ultimate bachelor pad better than James F. Goldstein, the self-styled Beverley Hills playboy who has spent the last 40 years remodelling and extending the lavish hillside home that John Lautner built in 1963.

'We said we'd keep going until it was perfect,' growls the septuagenarian Goldstein from beneath a sequin-encrusted cowboy hat. 'No matter what it cost or how long it took.'

Originally designed for an artist-academic couple and their five children – who stayed for only two years, perhaps because of all the sheer drops and sharp concrete angles – the house was snapped up by property investor Goldstein in 1972, after a spell in the hands of less tasteful owners. 'It was all orange shag-pile carpet, green painted walls and formica worktops,' he recalls. 'So I called up Lautner and said I wanted to fulfil his vision.'

After replacing the mullioned windows with frameless glazing and remodelling the study as a breathtaking master bedroom,

It was all orange shag-pile carpet, green painted walls and formica worktops. So I called up Lautner and said I wanted to fulfil his vision

Goldstein caught the building bug and continued to expand and embellish, installing streamlined concrete furniture to Lautner's designs and embarking on a gargantuan entertainment complex next door. It contains a private night-club (where Beyoncé and Rihanna recently held their birthday parties), topped with an infinity tennis court, which will soon be joined by a glass-walled cinema and another swimming pool, lined with lapis lazuli. 'The builders haven't left since 1979,' grins Goldstein, 'much to the disappointment of my neighbours.' And the chagrin of architecture purists too: his souped-up brand of turbo-Lautner is vulgar in the extreme.

Locals include the likes of Rupert Murdoch and Sandra Bullock, although they're not very close: Goldstein bought up most of the surrounding four acres, which he has filled with an exotic jungle of ferns and palms. A cantilevered concrete staircase weaves through the lush planting to an enigmatic bunker, where a bank-vault door swishes open to reveal a private 'skyspace' installation by James Turrell.

Long a favourite location for films and commercials – it played the home of a loan-shark pornographer in *The Big Lebowski* and appeared in *Charlie's Angels* – the property was recently back in the news when Goldstein announced he would leave it to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) when he dies. It is a coup for the museum's director, Michael Govan, who has been looking to add a landmark of LA's 20th century domestic architecture to the collection for the last decade.

It is welcome news given that few of LA's famous homes can actually be seen in the flesh. The Eames House is run as a private attraction, charging \$10 to look through the window, or \$275 to step inside, while Pierre Koenig's Stahl House – made famous by Julius Shulman's photograph of its cantilevered living room floating above a twinkling night-time panorama of LA – can be visited by appointment for \$60. But most other iconic houses of the period remain in private hands, safely removed from the sprawl of LA – a place Lautner himself despised. When asked, at his 80th birthday celebration, what he would do to improve the city, he said he would simply construct a gigantic concrete boulder, take it up to Mulholland Drive and roll it down the hill. ●

Oliver Wainwright is architecture critic at the Guardian. Read him here every other month and at ribaj.com

NO KIDDING

On a tour of the Sheats Goldstein house, the building's manager recounted some of the stranger scenes she has seen here over the years – perhaps none more surreal than when she walked into the kitchen to find Ashton Kutcher in his boxer shorts, milking a goat on the countertop into a bowl of cereal.



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Cop this, kids

We can make our children proud of our legacy here



Jane Duncan

I am already proud of the achievements of my kids, but I am starting to consider whether they will be proud of me.

My generation has a lot to answer for: consumerism, overuse of finite resources, galloping technological advancements, instant global access, growing urbanism, and medical advancements that keep us alive for longer.

We are also the generation that has the greatest opportunity to make the decisions which will affect the lives of our children, and theirs in turn. All children have the right to access basic services and resources, such as safe water, sanitation, adequate nutrition, good health, quality education, clean air and energy, but millions of children around the world are denied this right every day. Conflicts, disasters, increasing population, urbanisation, over-consumerism and climate change threaten access to these basic services.

COP21 in Paris last December was a critical turning point – a fundamental pivot toward a zero-carbon and climate-resilient world which took 20 years to achieve. It moved 195 countries towards understanding the collective responsibility for the future of our planet. Determining exactly how they will decarbonise is the next step, and with the impacts of climate change already upon us, speed is essential.

Sustainable development requires our concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, resilient future. To achieve sustainable development, it is crucial to harmonise three

Are we getting results? Do our buildings and interventions do what they promise?

core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These are interconnected and all are vital for the well-being of individuals and societies.

Architects have a critical role. Many of us already embrace the principles of sustainable development in our designs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities adapt to the effects of climate change – like droughts and flooding.

But we are not seeing the speed of change, nor the scale of innovation that is required. Existing UK building stock is fuel hungry and, with one in 10 households in fuel poverty, incremental progress in tackling sustainability threats is simply not enough. It's absurd that it takes roughly three times the energy to keep a house in the UK warm and dry as it does for an equivalent property in Sweden.

Investment in truly sustainable programmes creates business challenges for both government and clients that will require collaboration, innovation and transformation across the industry. As architects we need to examine our own progress and identify where we stand on the path to sustainability and resilience. Are we getting results? Do our buildings and interventions do what they promise?

We must urgently set carbon budgets and establish whether we meet them (a requirement of the UK Climate Change Act) but those budgets are obviously meaningless if they don't factor in the performance gap. Recently launched data from the government's Building Performance Evaluation projects found strong evidence that carbon emissions from new homes are two or three times higher than design estimates; on non-domestic buildings they are on average 3.8 times higher. We have an urgent need to drive up real performance disclosure on buildings through better prediction tools, energy literacy, and regulatory compliance change.

As a profession we pride ourselves on our growing inclusiveness, social purpose, environmental awareness and place making skills, but we need to do better on sustainability. We must drive these matters up the government's agenda, take leadership and push from a truly collaborative industry approach. If not now, then when?

Surely we should aim to create beautiful places with social, economic and environmental performance and net positive impacts. Then our kids might look back and be proud of us too. ●

@janeduncanPRIBA

EXTRA COLUMN

Senior members of the RIBA are invited to attend the Doric Club lunch this summer. The lunch provides an opportunity to keep in contact with the Institute and come together in the Florence Hall among friends, former colleagues and contemporaries to celebrate the past, present and future of architecture while supporting architecture students facing financial hardship. Find out more at architecture.com/doric



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RAMSA
ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS



Peter Aldington's Turn End, celebrated in a new book, should be on every architect's must-see list. His village in a village encapsulates the architect's belief that a new building must be a part of its surroundings – preferably with trees

Words: Eleanor Young Portrait: Paul Wilkinson

Grown in the landscape

'This house cost £6000 to build; that new double-glazed unit cost £4000,' says Peter Aldington ruefully. This expanse of glass, invisible behind its veil of translucent fabric layers of blue and green, was imported to replace original single pane window.

His home, Turn End, is the quintessential architect-designed house of the sixties built by an enterprising, hands-on architect and his wife Margaret. Set on what was then the edge of the Buckinghamshire village of Haddenham, it took the local language of historic enclosing white wychert walls (of limestone laden earth and straw) and pantiles. The pair grew a house and a garden around its courtyards and lofty single story volume – and a colony of other spaces, houses to sell, a practice office, a gardener's cottage, flats. Over 50 years hundreds have published, celebrated and visited it, drawn by the domestic vision, the architecture and the gardens. They will be held together in perpetuity by the self-sustaining Turn End Trust.

Early photographs show that the kitchen, its concrete blocks and timber brightened by occasional moments of intense green, has changed very little. A green phone, circa 1970, remains as a decorative relic thanks to its colour; the Bernard Leach pottery has been put on the higher shelves in recognition of its art status. Aldington and I drink from the work of a later Leach – John – mouths on

mugs that still bear the granular hallmarks of their earthy origin. Even on a chill March day the depths of the pond look inviting, the rocks and Robinia making a rich miniature landscape enclosed by the wings of the house and the wall it is built onto.

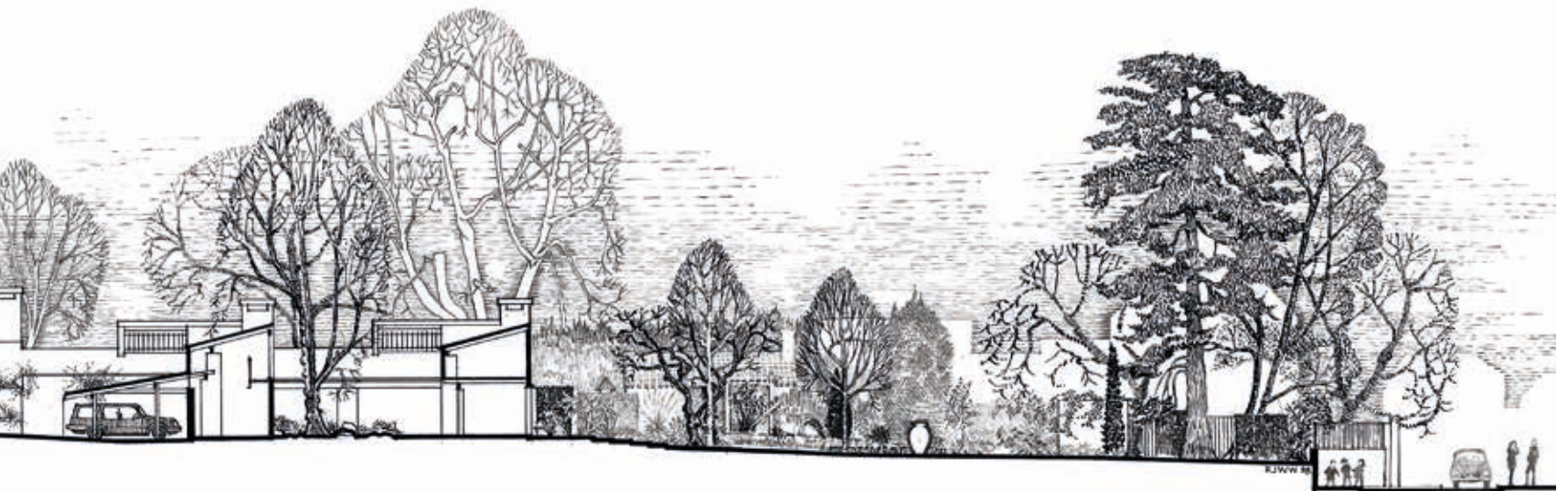
Aldington has made landscape and Turn End his project since he retired from practice at the age of 53 in 1986. Made miserable by the battle for good architecture, he walked home across the garden from the office Aldington Craig and Collinge for the last time. 'To achieve something you were satisfied with you had to go through hell. It was a pleasure getting the job and a pleasure handing it over but the two years in between were hell.' And there was the way his drawing board was disappearing, quite literally, under a mountain of administration as the buildings got bigger. Yet he has now spent many many hours going through the practice archives, designing and working out how to properly print and publish a book of the houses he designed.

But back to that 6m² glass, carried precariously through the garden's winding paths on a bitter February day last year. With time for reflection, would Aldington design his home differently now? He is certain he would: 'Regulations change, the walls are thin, energy was cheap. Insulation would be the main thing.' The large single glazed panel just bled warmth. Two layers won't stop Aldington

Right Peter Aldington in the oranges and greens he loves by the water tank of his garden borehole.

Below From Walnut Tree to Haddenham High Street, a section through Turn End house and garden.





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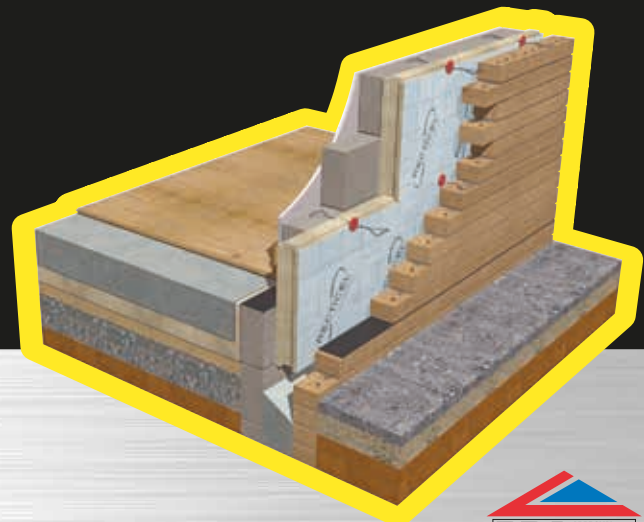


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donning his pair of orange fleeces but they have made the cold more comfortable.

It seems a humdrum concern for an architect whose handling of space, marrying of landscape and architecture and development of the modernist rural vernacular have won him listings for all nine of the complete houses he designed. But it demonstrates the concerns that drove these – the way people lived, the materiality, the place of architecture. In his practice the briefing process became an art, his non-architect partner John Craig drawing out the brief from the client through discussion and testing. 'It was a long process, maybe six to nine months, but at the end I could look at the document and absorb the brief in half an hour. The design then plopped out very quickly.' In the book those briefs are distilled to their essence, for one house it reads 'an overriding requirement for sun in every room, one room receiving sun from dawn to dusk, part to be capable of becoming a self-contained flat should circumstances change'.

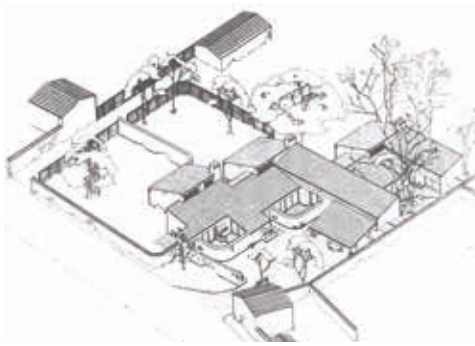
Aldington returns frequently to this process as he thinks of how his clients' homes came into being. 'John was their man in the office,' he says. He had great confidence in the power of the briefs: 'I didn't expect to alter the design and usually I didn't have to.' Take Anderton House in north Devon (1971), now let out by the Landmark Trust. Client Ian Anderton often took his work home and wanted to attend to it with an airy view. May Anderton – an old family friend – disliked the clutter and wanted it tidied away in an office. Craig wrote both stories. Aldington designed a carrel in the living room with a low wall to hide the clutter – and this became the nexus for the house. It took a little convincing though: he tells the story of sitting on a plank at the half built house with the Andertons, and May saying she would put the washing machine in the space. Aldington threatened to walk off the job. It stayed. Later she reported it was the best bit of the house.

The first house Aldington designed, Askett Green (1962), he ended up renting back from the client (who has since returned and still lives there). So he got to test some of his ideas, how the snug didn't feel quite as snug as he had hoped as your eye rested not on the stove but, less cosily, ranged over the living room. 'I also learnt not to build fridges into brick holes,' he says. 'I don't think they have ever been able to change the fridge.' More profoundly he learnt something about village



Left Through that double-glazed unit to the pond landscape on one side, and the path through living spaces to the garden beyond.

Below The colony of courtyards, houses and gardens that make up Turn End.



building. 'An architect shouldn't come along with hard earned middle class money and plonk a posh house in the middle of a village, but should build a bit of village.'

His own home, Turn End, is dug into the village, low rise in deference to the original permission for bungalows on the site and picking up materiality from the cottages around it. In a warm Lancastrian burr that matches his expansive beard, Aldington focuses, with effort, on talking about his own projects and practice. But it is obvious that for many years he has been trying to block out the spectre of the new housing that faces him beyond the precious walnut tree at the entrance to Turn End. This was once the outskirts of an historic village, but Wimpey-style homes mushroomed alongside even as Turn End bloomed. Now they stretch for miles.

'It is easy to say when you are standing back without a family to support, but I don't think architects should be designing that sort of housing. It brings the profession into disrepute,' he says. Aldington is happier out of those compromises. 'Born to be a plantsman,' he says contentedly as he shows me around the garden, hellebores and snowdrops, a tall pot by Monica Young curling and

coiling towards a horse chestnut tree along a beautifully off centre vista.

There were already two books: *A Garden and Three Houses*, and *Aldington*, Craig and Collinge. Architect John Pardey, after visiting Turn End, suggested one on the practice's houses but it was when Aldington realised the firm's archive was about to be moved to a new home as part of RIBA Collections that he started systematically pulling together material for this book, designing it himself as he sought the right publisher. *Houses: Created* by Peter Aldington has come together as a scrap book, though rather more stately than the image of paste and sugar paper that conjures. The houses are presented through contemporary accounts, original photographs, sketches and technical drawings, listings citations and Craig's beautiful drawings, with occasional planning refusals thrown in and even an Anderton House-inspired short story.

Despite his short and rural architectural career Aldington has found supporters for the book in contemporary practice and even as my short Turn End visit draws to a close, two calls come through – one from Sarah Wigglesworth Architects – to arrange a visit. Looking after Turn End is a full time job that he and Margaret share with a gardener and handyman. Ahead lie the projects of replacing its original asbestos gutters and readying the garden for its first openings of the year in May. From behind his walnut tree, Aldington revels in this and the world he has created for himself and for future generations. It is an enviable existence. ●

Houses: Created by Peter Aldington, RIBA Publishing, 272pp, £40

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Infernal tower

Affection for the vintage of JG Ballard's novel adds nostalgia to the explosive political and psychological powder keg that is High-Rise

Phil Pawlett Jackson

Nothing I'd read about this film prepared me for the stomach churning violence of it, but it is intelligently made and breathlessly visual. Deemed unfilmable for 40 years, J G Ballard's novel has long loomed large in the imagination of architects. The dystopian narrative considers the fate of sophisticated residents as they settle in to the eponymous high-rise, a fictional luxury development in Docklands presided over by penthouse resident and designer Anthony Royal (played by Jeremy Irons).

Gazing up the cliff-face of the block's possibility and terror, director Ben Wheatley has brought the building to life in an exquisite film that is, like the book, unhinged and snarling with savage political prescience.

In this prophetic work, Dr Robert Laing and the cast of proto-yuppie sophisticates move into a new exclusive enclave in east Lon-

don on the eve of Thatcher's rise to power. And if High-Rise was not built in Canary Wharf then, it is certainly available for sale now.

Amy Jump's script retains this political dimension of property, which has renewed salience in 2016. In one devastating scene a group of privileged, white, male upper floor residents plots to Balkanise the lower floors, dangling the carrot of social advancement by property ownership, in garish allegory for Help-to-Buy. Meanwhile Royal, a 'modernist by trade' also indulges his wife's predilection for baroque furnishing. It is as if Wheatley's team has torn pages from the interior design of Donald Trump's Manhattan apartment to make a Richard Hamilton collage. Elsewhere the heroic, dilapidated aesthetic recalls Iwan Baan's photographic veneration of the Torre de David vertical slum in Caracas.

This riot of references invites viewers to consider the self-serving subterfuge of society's elites: in response to the seventies oil crises; and today, seeking tribal security among their own during the financial crisis.

From the tower of Babel to the more recent left-field economic hypothesis for predicting crises – the 'Skyscraper Index' – tall buildings have attracted unusual attention from visionaries and doom-sayers. They are both a totem for fetishised building technology and a lightning rod for social discontent. And, while it would be a significant under-reading of Ballard to view his 1975 book, High-Rise, as a story 'about' a skyscraper, a

Above Raw concrete meets 1970s kitsch in Wheatley's film.

If High-Rise was not built in Canary Wharf then, it is certainly available for sale now

mere cautionary tale about tall buildings, or a parable for Paddington Pole protesters, the titular tower is yet the central character. Its malevolent anthropomorphism is faithfully rendered from the book as an inhabitable Frankenstein, ironically well-tailored to serve the residents' mania and narcissism.

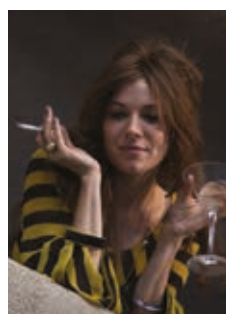
Drawing from the text and from Ballard's known admiration for the stark concrete expression of Goldfinger's Trellick and Balfron Towers, the production team have fashioned an iconic form in a mannered, and quite British, brutalist style. It also borrows the muscular swooping soffits of Preston Bus Station, and bristles with the Barbican's armoured corrugation of béton brut shuttering.

The upper echelons of this rugged, leering monolith veer off vertiginously to the right, in form as in political outlook. This gives the deranged elevation a look of having been built to match a recorded image on a paused VCR, skewed and flickering with psychotic menace as the power fails on the lower floors.

The original High-Rise was written as the last in an informal quartet, preceded by Atrocity Exhibition, Crash and Concrete Island, which Ballard completed in the early seventies. They marked a move away from his earlier, more conventionally located science fiction towards an obsession with what he considered the strange psychopathologies of modern urban life.

Wheatley's tower achieves this in the ominous hulk viewed from a distance and briefly also when the lower floor maverick, Richard Wilder (Luke Evans), forays into the rotted ducting of the building's cadaver. However, the scope to survey the dysfunctional organ systems and dissect the mechanical servicing visually on screen has been constrained by budget, relegated to a worthy speech by Laing (Tom Hiddleston) observing the lifts as heart chambers and arteries to the building. Other visceral medical footage makes the point, but the relation between the dying whole and the individual warring parts is lost. So is the important and subtle vertical pecking order – measured on a scale of balconies up the building's elevation – so the crucial stratification of class is obscured in the film.

The allegorical role of the architecture as a whole recedes as the claustrophobic orgy of chaotic human violence gathers pace. Here Wheatley incisively gives priority to the psy-



Above Sienna Miller is Charlotte Melville.

Below Paradise Garden atop a dystopian nightmare.

chological turn inwards, very much Ballard's intent, accurately rendering the film more Oedipus complex than Edifice complex.

Ballard created this regressive man-eat-dog human zoo as a fully believable Petri dish for unfettered deviant human instincts. This is a portrait of the engine room of contemporary consumer capitalism, where the home is completely objectified as a theatre for voyeurism and the projection of fantasy.

In the maelstrom of the high-rise, Laing is shown returning to childhood, his suit shrinking through the film to preppy shorts and undersized shirt, finally losing the tie.

However, Laing's passivity as a protagonist presents a problem for film adaptation, so Wheatley has developed a second empathetic character, Toby, as Charlotte Melville's bastard child with Royal. This character is approximately the same age as the director was in the seventies, and gives us the precocious child's-eye view. It is a manoeuvre made popular by Wes Anderson, who also visits this era's kitsch to sentimental ironic effect in films like *The Royal Tenenbaums*.

The film is a nostalgic period drama piece which fetishises the seventies aesthetic, complete with the mid-century furniture that today's hipsters covet to set among the Barbican flats their parents have bought them. The danger is that these are precisely the forces energising social division.

Following Ballard's 1970 exhibition 'Crashed Cars' of three wrecks in a Camden gallery, Jo Stanley, the actress employed to conduct interviews semi-naked with the guests at the private view, reflected that the event was something of a 'bourgeois binge'. Among the film's great strengths, it could be added that in this way too, Wheatley's interpretation of Ballard is peculiarly Ballardian. ●

The allegorical role of the architecture as a whole recedes as the claustrophobic orgy of chaotic human violence gathers pace



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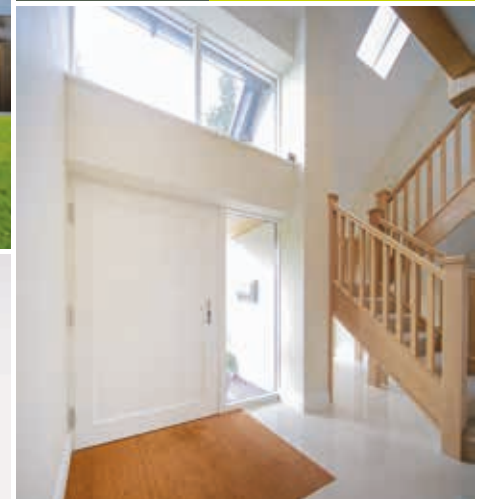


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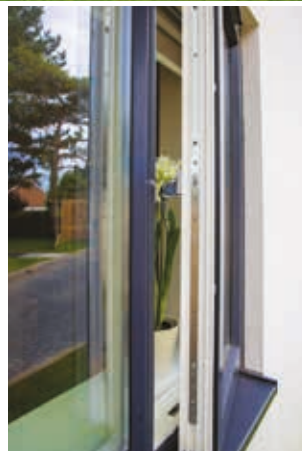
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Scotland's big party

The RIAS celebrates its centenary this year and it means to have fun

Hugh Pearman

You have to hand it to the RIAS, the RIBA's sister organisation in Scotland. The Royal Incorporation is 100 this year – happy birthday from us! – but this is also the Scottish Assembly's Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design. The idea of the larger celebration is to include everything from fashion to engineering, including renewables. It would perhaps be easy for architecture to get lost in the mêlée. Instead, the RIAS has spent the last couple of years planning one of the biggest architecture programmes I have seen since 1984's UK-wide Festival of Architecture.

Its members will have one programme of centenary events while the general public will get the Festival. The former will include an annual convention in Edinburgh in May which bursts with national pride, bearing the name 'World Greats and Great Scots'. That tells you that they have international and English speakers as well as natives and those from the Scottish diaspora, so you will find Rafael Moneo, Benedetta Tagliabue, Eva Jiricna, Alison Brooks and Ian Ritchie there alongside the likes of Robert Adam, Rab and Denise Bennetts, John McAslan, Neil Gillespie of Reiach and Hall, David Page of Page + Park, Donald Canavan of Hurd Rolland, glass engineer Tim MacFarlane and so on.

The outward-facing festival is another thing entirely. Neil Baxter, secretary and treasurer of the RIAS, thinks his organisation has scored a first here. He says: 'This is not only the largest architectural festival in Scotland's history but has the greatest geographic reach of any arts event ever. Most islands, many remote communities and every local authority

Above *Adventures in Space – 1950s Forbidden Planet.*

Right RIAS founder R Rowand Anderson whose work is featured in the *Out of Their Heads* exhibition.

The 'Ideal Hut Show' sees 20 standard prefab garden sheds 'pimped' by a selection of architects, artists, designers and celebrities



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area will host events, community activity or some of our educational programme.'

Key to this is Baxter's 'umbrella' model. By bringing in over 100 partners including government, arts, education, business and international organisations, he reckons the total value of what is happening amounts to some £3.5m. To sustain this, the incorporation's chapters and partner arts organisations are each asked to concentrate their efforts for just one month – the months being spread out.

This all amounts to more than 400 events and exhibitions right across Scotland. Some are conventional celebrations of architects and places, others are more off-the-wall, such as the 'Ideal Hut Show'. This initiative sees 20 standard prefab garden sheds 'pimped' by a selection of architects, artists, designers and celebrities. Artist Adrian Wisziewski started things off with the first. The 20 Ideal Huts will tour Scotland from May to September.

No such celebration would be complete without Gillespie Kidd and Coia's ruinous St Peter's Seminary in Cardross, which is where the Festival started on 18 March, exactly 50 years after the building first opened.

Of the mass of events, the 'Coast to Coast Journey' sounds intriguing – described as 'a customised architectural craft taken along the Caledonian Canal and playing host to changing art work along the way'. Meanwhile the touring 'Scotstyle' exhibition of photographs will feature 10 buildings from each decade of the 100 years of the RIAS, 1916–2015. The public had a say in the nominations. ●



RIAS

Festival of architecture details at foa2016.com/
RIAS events at rias.org.uk/

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- Chris Macey, Group MD, Wintech Group



ROS KAVANAGH



ALICE CLANCY

Left Last year's winner: Dun Laoghaire Lexicon library and cultural centre, Dublin, by Carr Cotter & Naessens Architects.

Above Unobtrusive framing maximises sea views from the library.

Past and present danger

Begun in optimism, the tale of post-war public art has some shocking passages

Pamela Buxton

Vandalism, vitriol, theft and destruction: public art inhabits a dangerous world, as is clear from Historic England's new exhibition Out There: Our Post-War Public Art.

Held at Somerset House, the exhibition focuses on the plentiful public art created between the 'brave and brutalist' years of 1945 and 1985, and the varying fates of this work. It is both an uplifting and dispiriting story. While the exhibition evocatively communicates the spirit of optimism and post-war emphasis on the value of public art within public space, it equally eloquently illustrates the threats to those artworks ever since.

A wall of shame at the end of the show documents some of the many lost artworks – stolen, destroyed, or removed from public view. At least some, like Barbara Hepworth's Two Forms (Divided Circle) which was stolen from Dulwich Park in 2011 and probably melted down, were enjoyed for many decades before being so tragically lost. Even worse was the fate of Barry Flanagan's glass fibre sculpture on Laundress Green in Cambridge, which was vandalised repeatedly when erected in 1972. What was left of it was permanently removed after only a month.

After viewing images of the art-rich environment of the Festival of Britain in 1951, it's shocking to learn the fate of many of its pieces. When Labour lost the general election in October 1951, support for the festival and its legacy faded and the South Bank site was swiftly cleared. Only 14 of the 30 sculptures survived, along with a handful of the 50 murals. Perhaps it seemed a great idea at the time to turn the Skylon into scrap and souvenirs such as letter-openers.



Perhaps it seemed a great idea at the time to turn the Skylon into scrap and souvenirs such as letter-openers

Public art will always polarise opinion. Archive newspaper coverage and film footage show forceful, often negative, reactions to many pieces when they were first installed. Yet time often softens opinion. And community and heritage group campaigns have helped save many artworks, including Elizabeth Frink's Desert Quartet in Worthing.

Curated by Sarah Gaventa, this engaging show gives well-deserved credit to the great patrons of post-war art such as the school building programmes in Leicestershire and Hertfordshire. Who can imagine such an enlightened approach today? Several new towns were also significant public art patrons, notably Harlow, where the arts trust commissioned 65 pieces for Frederick Gibberd's new civic centre (of which seven were stolen), including Elizabeth Frink's charming Boar in the Water Gardens.

The London Underground has been a long-standing patron, commissioning artists such as Eric Gill, Henry Moore, Jacob Epstein and Eduardo Paolozzi. Among commercial clients John Lewis notably commissioned Barbara Hepworth to create a piece for its Oxford Street store. The Arts Council's Percentage for Art Scheme, set up in 1988, prompted new commissions in both public and private sector.

Out There also considers the future for public art. Would temporary artworks solve the maintenance headache of some permanent pieces? Is this the smart way forward or a loss of nerve? Some of the last words in the show go to developer Stuart Lipton, who nicely sums up the crux of the matter, which both sectors would do well to remember: 'There is a feeling that anything beyond function is indulgent and unnecessary. But it is about improving our quality of life.' ●



Above Before it was dismantled, Eduardo Paolozzi's mural welcomed passengers to the depths at Tottenham Court Road Underground Station. **Top** In 2006 thieves stole one of the three figures that make up The Watchers by Lynne Chadwick at Roehampton University.

Out There: Our Post-War Public Art, until 10 April 2016, East Wing Galleries, Somerset House, Strand, London. somersethouse.org.uk

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Patrick Hodgkinson

1931 – 2016

Architect known for London's Brunswick Centre, a successful and influential practitioner and inspiring teacher



Patrick Hodgkinson, who has died aged 85, was in the 1960s one of England's most successful and influential architects, running a practice from his large house in Bayswater and driving a dark blue drophead Aston Martin. He was the architect for the redevelopment of the Foundling Estate – later the Brunswick Centre

– having acquired the commission when working with Leslie Martin in Cambridge. There he designed Harvey Court, transforming an initial scheme by Martin and Colin St John Wilson into the canonical brick stepped section. The building and partis influenced a whole generation of architects and students and was described by a young Cedric Price in *Granta* as a 14th century building with 13 amp plugs – much to Patrick's enjoyment.

He had also had considerable influence on the design of the Oxford Law Libraries. Martin may have heard of this talented student through Aalto – in whose office Hodgkinson had worked in 1956 before graduating from the Architectural Association – but more likely via Wilson scouting for talented young architects. Harvey Court demonstrated his ability to fuse rationalist principles with Aalto's profound humanism. Originally asked to become involved in a housing project for the London Borough of St Pancras he became a central figure in the Martin Studio. When that project failed to proceed he continued to flourish under Martin's benign aegis but regrettably developed a lifelong rivalry with Wilson.

Hodgkinson was one of an extraordinary group of students at the AA including Kenneth Frampton, John Miller, David Gray, Adrian Gale and Neave Brown – who has said he was 'the most prescient of his AA cohort, for Frampton 'the most talented' and for Miller 'he stood out as a star'. His 1953 Brixton Housing Project developed ideas in contradistinction to the then LCC fashion for mixed development, inspired by Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* and *Unité* in Marseilles. Here he explored the ideas of low rise high density in an attempt to renew the city in a more English ways building on the precedent of the Georgian

terrace, enriched with sectional complexity and providing a direct relationship to the ground and street. These were ideas later developed by Martin and colleagues in the Land Use Built Form Centre in Cambridge.

His relationship with the Brunswick Centre ended when McAlpines, which had bought the site from the original developer, imposed an unrealistic programme for the working drawings and he felt compelled to resign. A very difficult time followed: a major commission in Oxford, Wellington Square, foundered; he failed to land the deanship of Cornell while tutoring at the AA with David Shalev (David Chipperfield was one of his students) and his second marriage was in trouble. Salvation of a kind appeared in the form of a teaching post at the University of Bath where he established himself, carving out a role as a passionate and inspired teacher. His illustrated talks on Utzon, Aalto and Mount Athos are still vivid in my mind from the early 1990s when I got to know him while teaching there.

It was in this mode that his teaching career came to a close around 1995. Still combative, he saw off attempts by other architects to alter or extend the Brunswick until Allied London had the inspired idea to appoint him as architect for the refurbishment in the late 1990s. Assisted by Levitt Bernstein under the guidance of his old assistant David Levitt, he masterminded a transformation of the then unloved and unpainted SS Brunswick into a more intimately scaled and lively shopping concourse – with Waitrose at its northern end and the previously utilitarian southern entrance transformed with Carluccios and French Connection replacing the ramps for service vehicles. It meant that the long period in the wilderness, during which he never doubted the good sense and architectural and urbanistic value of 'his bit of Bloomsbury', was rewarded by Mike Ingall of Allied London's faith in him.

I have lived in this building for over 20 years and grown to appreciate what an extraordinary achievement it is. Few architects can boast of anything comparable. As Alan Powers wrote some years ago about the portico to Brunswick Square: 'Against the evening light, or on a winter's evening, the tall thin columns standing out against the chiaroscuro background provide one of the few genuinely sublime architectural sights of London.' ●

Brendan Woods

In Memoriam

JOHN GILBERT O'NEILLY
ELECTED 1950, CAMBERLEY

NOEL LESLIE WARMAN
ELECTED 1951, RYDE

GEORGE RAYMOND GLENNY
ELECTED 1953, GERRARDS CROSS

ALFRED SIDNEY COOK
ELECTED 1954, BROMLEY

ANTONY CURTIS WOLFFE
ELECTED 1963, CASTLE
DOUGLAS

JOHN FRANCIS WADE
ELECTED 1968,
PETERBOROUGH

HOWARD ANTONY FAWCETT
ELECTED 1974, GREAT
MISSENDEN

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Katie Wilmot
National Council member, 2013-2016



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Exchange

The other side of Norton Folgate

We refer to the letter concerning Norton Folgate, signed by Paul Monaghan, Joe Morris, David Hills and Paul Williams (RIBA Journal, March 2016).

Leaving aside professional conduct issues, anyone expressing their personal opinions publicly should have regard for accuracy before impugning the reputation of a professional firm.

The signatories assert there is no Burrell Foley Fischer (BFF) material regarding the alternative scheme for Norton Folgate apart from what they describe as 'nothing more than a felt-tip pen sketch' and add that 'no drawings have been submitted to the local authority or any other statutory bodies'.

In fact the scheme commissioned from BFF by the Spitalfields Trust, to meet the priorities of their brief, exists in the form of a comprehensive pre-app proposal dossier which was submitted to Tower Hamlets as a pre-app request in September 2015. The same document was hand delivered to Boris Johnson at the Greater London Authority at the same time. Both the GLA and Tower Hamlets confirmed immediate receipt.

What is more, costed proposals have been prepared by cost consultant Gardiner and Theobald LLP and the project viability verified by Jackson Stops (Valuation). The Trust has also consulted Historic England.

The signatories' assertion that by accepting instructions from a charity such as the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust an architect is 'a gun for hire against other architects' completely misses the point.

It is surely clear that it is the brief to which architects are asked to respond that determines to a large extent what they produce, and it is not unusual for a groundswell of concerned opinion to arise when the wider public feels threatened by



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the potential loss or damage to places where they live and work and which they value.

For BFF these are valid matters of architectural discourse. Alternative proposals should surely be evaluated on their merits and in relation to the issues they address, and not become the focus of aggressive uninformed comments.

The consideration that comes into play is whether one wishes to accept a brief that will cause irreversible harm to the historic environment where other alternatives may exist that would avoid this happening.

The issues raised by Norton Folgate are not dissimilar to those raised by Smithfield General Market, on which Burrell Foley Fischer LLP acted as campaign architect for SAVE Britain's Heritage.

Following the recommendations of the Inspector at the public inquiry, the then secretary of state for communities and local government, Eric Pickles, rejected proposals for the substantial demolition of the non-listed General Market and retention of just the facades, making new case law on planning in conservation areas.

Demonstrating the viability of the re-use of the existing buildings was a key factor in the decision. It is significant that those who were once among the supporters calling for the demolition of the buildings, are now lauding the General Market as a unique heritage and cultural asset and are promoting the buildings as a new home for the Museum of London.

It is the architectural and planning issues that matter and that are being fought for, not architects that are being fought against. Is it so hard for the signatories to accept alternative proposals as a focus for valid debate rather than see them as a cause for vilification?

John Burrell, Burrell Foley Fischer LLP

Correction

Our legal column, The Morning After (RIBAJ, January 2016), on the case of Lloyds Bank plc and McBains Cooper Consulting Ltd, wrongly attributed responsibility for not realising the loan facility would have to allow for professional costs as well as the cost of the works to McBains Cooper rather than the Bank, as set out in the official court judgement. RIBA Journal apologises to McBains Cooper for any embarrassment caused.

Tweetback

We returned to Stirling Prize-winning Burntwood School to interview the clients (ribaj.com)...

Adam Wood @woodadam_ V good article: nice to read importance of school curriculum design thinking + autonomy given to clients who cared

And readers liked our film review of Ballard's High-Rise (p93)...

Lesley Kempson-Marsh @LesleyKempson @RIBAJ I absolutely loved this article. This film will shock & arouse every one of the senses

Columnist Maria Smith received support for her tough questioning of the Women in Architecture Survey (p77)...

nicky watson @nickywatsoncg Good piece @Mariaismsmith

Hana Loftus @hanaloftus Yes to @Mariaismsmith for getting on paper all the stuff I've been ranting about for the last week!

But another reader noticed an (inadvertent) all-male line-up in one of our articles...

Mark Benzie @hantsarchitect Quite shocking @RIBAJ the official publication of @RIBA has a men only round table discussion in this issue



W: www.geberit.co.uk

Title: Embedding Acoustics into Design

Bathroom noises, caused by sanitaryware and pipework, can be an issue in multiple floored buildings, such as hotels, offices and apartments. This new CPD by Geberit is designed to help architects understand and combat this problem. Providing a technical insight and definition of 'noise' and its causes, the CPD covers current British Standards relating to limiting bathroom sound, plus Geberit's thorough approach to noise reduction; which starts with good design and ends with appropriate product choices and correct installation techniques.



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C: Dan Atherton
T: 01925 577711

Title: Sound Absorption and the Rise of Reverberation

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Title: Ceiling Solutions for Education

Following the launch of Phase 2 of the Government's Priority School Building Programme (PSBP), Armstrong's new CPD is designed to help architects better understand the new PSBP designs for schools and meet acoustic and thermal requirements to create a more energy efficient and comfortable learning environment. It earns RIBA members double points and meets RIBA's core curriculum subjects of designing and building it (design, construction, technology and engineering) and climate (sustainable architecture), both at a general awareness knowledge level.



E: Elizabeth@urbanfront.co.uk

Title: Specifying Hardwood Timber Doorsets

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In two RIBA assessed seminars, Comar, one of the UK's leading aluminium systems companies, outlines:

Title 1: Stand & Deliver: a Study of Curtain Walling

The design of curtain walling, its properties and how it is used by specifiers. This seminar aims to offer an understanding of the points of H11 in the NBS specification system, and how best to make use of it.

Title 2: Designing Functions & Reliability into Entrances

The issues that influence the function of main entrance design and technology. This seminar aims to offer an understanding of how user expectation influences door design and links this with hardware selection, entrance configuration and floor finishes.



Kawneer wins two firsts at Prime Four

Architectural glazing by Kawneer has been specified for the £14million De Vere Village Urban Resort at the Prime Four Business Park near Aberdeen. Kawneer's AA®110 zone/mullion-drained curtain walling, has been used alongside the manufacturer's AA®541 top-hung casement and AA®543 tiltturn windows and series 190 heavy-duty commercial entrance doors. The aluminium systems were specified by frequent Kawneer users Halliday Fraser Munro architects for their familiarity with the use of the systems through past projects.

www.kawneer.co.uk



Trafford Youth Centre flooring challenge met by Gerflor

When Trafford Borough Council wanted a warm, easy to maintain, comfortable floor for a multi-use area in the Old Trafford Youth Centre they turned to international flooring and interiors specialists Gerflor. This challenging remit would suit Gerflor's Taraflex™ Multi-Use 6.2 perfectly. Trafford Borough Council already use Gerflor's popular Taralay products in their Primary Schools and Community Centres throughout the Borough, so they were already extremely confident in specifying Gerflor products for this latest project.

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Kawneer systems help deliver a super-school

Architectural glazing systems from Kawneer have been specified for the largest learning facility in Wales. Kawneer's AA®100 zone-drained curtain walling combined with patterned glass was specified by HLM architects for Penarth Learning Community, a £48million super-school in South Wales. A wide variety of Kawneer window and door systems were used on the project, including the AA®541 top and side-hung casement windows and AA®3110HW horizontal sliding anti-ligature windows installed in the respite area which is a specially-designed system for people with learning difficulties.

www.kawneer.co.uk



School wins race against time with KINGSpan TEK

The Kingspan TEK Building System of structural insulated panels has been installed as part of a modern, energy efficient classroom block at Boyle and Pety Primary School in the Yorkshire Dales. Architect John Wharton collaborated with Roger Tiffany Ltd on the project, creating a sensitive design which provides 100 m² of additional pre-school space, whilst also complying with the tough National Park planning requirements.

e: literature@kingspantek.co.uk
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New Solid Hardwood Floors for Museum

The Musée de l'Homme in Paris has re-opened to the public following extensive renovation works.

Nearly 5000m² of Junckers solid hardwood flooring has been fitted throughout the museum's expansive interior as well as in the administrative offices.

Dedicated to anthropology, the Musée de l'Homme first opened its doors in 1937 to coincide with the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne. The impressive exhibition spaces now feature Junckers solid Oak and Black Oak floors finished in UltraMatt lacquer, which provide a warm and natural backdrop to the extraordinary exhibits while at the same time being hardwearing enough to withstand heavy footfall expected in public buildings.

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Kawneer systems meet Part L

Elements from the complete range of architectural aluminium glazing systems from Kawneer have been used on the £20million redevelopment of a primary school in Lambeth.

A special requirement of the brief was that the buildings should meet Part L of the Building Regulations.

Kawneer's AA®100 zone-drained capped curtain walling, AA®540 fixed light and AA®541 top-hung casement windows, and series 190 heavy-duty commercial entrance doors, feature throughout the 1.5-hectare site.

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Metalline specified on iconic office refurbishment

Metalline glazed in Ultima insulated panels have provided the finishing touch to the external façade of the recently refurbished council offices in Eastleigh Hampshire. The exterior façade featured a range of horizontal, corner and vertical Ultima sandwich panels glazed in on all four sides to a Kawneer structural glazed system. Each of the 50 vertical panels were manufactured by Metalline in aluminium in 3150 mm lengths and joined together to form an impressive 6300mm long aspect.

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Comar 5P.i Advanced Window System

Integration is the key factor which underpins the latest new product launch from Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems. Their market leading Comar 9P.i Framing system offers fast-track semi unitised construction for floor to ceiling glazing, allowing tilt/turn or casement windows to hang direct from the Comar 9P.i Frame as well as rebated doors. With the addition of thermal foam and triple glazing Comar 9P.i offers U-values down to 0.77, creating a future proof solution.

www.comar-alu.co.uk



Heradesign makes a bold statement

French business school INSEEC has recently expanded its central London campus, and designer Catherine White was commissioned to design a professional and welcoming interior. Heradesign high-performance acoustic ceilings from Knauf AMF were specified for the campus entrance, reception and meeting rooms. Heradesign is an innovative range of ceiling tiles and wall panels manufactured from sustainably sourced wood-wool. Heradesign was chosen for its excellent sound absorption properties and colour options.

www.amfceilings/heradesign



HENK SNOEK / RIBA LIBRARY PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTION

Baldwyns, East Grinstead (1961)

This truly original country house is the result of the free hand given by owner Fred Kobler, managing director of Grand Hotels in Mayfair, to architects Bronek Katz and Reginald Vaughn. They were asked for a 'non-traditional' design, which would also eschew traditional materials such as brick and wood. As the site was not visible from the nearest road, the architects were also given no restrictions on external treatment by the local Town and Country Planning Authority. This photograph shows the fully glazed hall in the centre, with a partially

cantilevered upper floor bedroom on the left and the hyperbolic paraboloid roof of the living room on the right. The structure is a frame of steel tubes and external walls are made of vitreous steel panels of various colours.

Katz, born in Warsaw, had moved to the UK after qualifying as an architect in Vienna. In the 1930s both he and Vaughn had worked for Maxwell Fry, whose comparison of one of their designs to a Mondrian finds resonance in the composition of Baldwyns' main elevation. ●

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