No typecasting

Great view of the gasworks

Eye Line winners get communicative

Cotswolds welcome Chris Dyson's industrial aesthetic

Sealed to savour

Jestico + Whiles protects and displays its Graphene Institute lab

Here's health

How can architects help strengthen the NHS?

Tired menu

Dining at the archi-caff with Maria Smith

Money no object

Oliver Wainwright stumbles on Russia's profit-free research
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We’ve cleaned up our cities, but architects are going back to black

Masonry, solidity and texture dominate the Stirling shortlist as the prize returns to basics

We link between architecture and performance art

Planning was an easy ride in the Cotswolds for Chris Dyson’s gasworks house extension

FCBS gives students at Manchester Metropolitan University a place to let their hair down

Below nano-scale work means Jestico + Whiles’ National Graphene Institute had to be planned to the last miniscule detail

Building pathologist Michael Parrett opens his files

The increasingly urgent issue of city resilience stepped up a gear at an international event

Maria Smith finds the cupboard is pretty bare when it comes to architectural ideas

The NHS is a huge client – what can architects contribute?

Putting all your documents in a contract can cause trouble

The cupboard is pretty bare when it comes to architectural ideas

Architecture simultaneously is and is not the same thing as the resulting building

Oliver Wainwright visits Russia’s silvan silicon valley

A sense of social responsibility is part of being an architect

Eye Line winners show the enormous diversity of skills deployed in drawing architecture

India’s master architect, Charles Correa

Opinion and comment from readers

Oscar Niemeyer’s Towers of Congress in Brasilia, shot by Monica Pidgeon

Drawing with a typewriter: Eye Line commendation Luma Ifram’s Carpenter’s Estate series

Buildings can be unforgiving aspic-picklers of an obsolete brief

Pierre Wassenaar looks to the future of his buildings:

http://is.gd/fasterhorses

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The RIBA Journal August 2015
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'It’s the pot calling the kettle black.’ Not that there is any name calling going on here. But there is a question mark: Is soot being rediscovered? Certainly new sections of our cities are looking darker and sootier, while millions from the Heritage Lottery Fund are spent on sandblasting. Black panels, black bricks, did I spot smoked glass over there? Even inside: the sink doesn’t truly come clean, dark concrete setting off vulnerable exposed copper pipework, Tom Dixon’s black Beat shades casting the island unit into pools of shine and shadow. David Adjaye was ahead of the game, ‘aestheticising industrial toxicity’ with his Dirty House in 2002, but now darkness has descended and black buildings are commonplace. And they have an unequivocal presence. Once smoking coal—carbon-coating pots, pans, kettles and whole streets—was banished from the city and the desire for modernist white cauterized, architecture could start reinventing its dark side. And it has.

Below Laser cut nicks create a diagrid on the metal balusters at Manchester Met’s Union by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.
Stirling Prize shortlist 2015
Words Hugh Pearman

Once we’ve all gone through the customary annual ritual of ‘why on earth is building X on the Stirling shortlist when the much more deserving building Y is not?’ and had a little lie-down, this turns out to be an interesting if subdued best-of the RIBA and RIAS awards. It is an icon-free year, for a start, which is a relief. Aside from Richard Rogers’ firm, ‘Starchitects’ are conspicuously absent, though well-known names are there. And revised rules mean the prize has returned to its UK roots.

So the awkward business of overseas buildings by overseas architects competing for a predominantly UK prize is no more. Indeed, even buildings in the rest of Europe by UK architects no longer qualify. The RIBA is to launch a new international award to cover those areas. However, buildings in the UK by RIBA chartered architects based outside the UK do count, as do buildings in the UK by International Fellows.

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What this all boils down to is a straightforward pyramid system: from the RIBA regional awards and the RIAS awards in Scotland come the national awards, from which the Stirling Prize shortlist of six is in turn selected. There are no unexpected arrivals from elsewhere. So what the Stirling jury visited was a cross-section of post-recession UK architecture, ranging in value of construction cost from £1.8m for Reiach and Hall’s Maggie’s Lanarkshire to £132m for Rogers Stirk Harbour’s Neo Bankside development.

Let’s start with that. The six-strong shortlist balances the superprime luxury London housing of the Neo Bankside mini-forest of mechanistic apartment towers next to Tate Modern by Rogers Stirk Harbour – which introduces a new landscaped public realm weaving through them – with London social rented housing in the form of Niall McLaughlin’s Darbishire Place in Whitechapel for the Peabody Trust. This is an understated five-storey brick block that repairs a group of six original mansion blocks – one lost to a WW2 bomb. Made different from its forbears by its generous corner balconies as much as its stripped-back appearance, it reinvigorates this perennial housing type.

Education is represented by AHMM’s Burntwood School in Wandsworth and Heneghan Peng’s new Stockwell Street Building for the University of Greenwich. Burntwood has something of a 1950s modular-system look to it – deliberately, this being a reference to the buildings of that era that it replaced – with some originals by Sir Leslie Martin retained. Good to see deep moulded pre-cast concrete cladding units back in the
The RIBA Journal August 2015

The RIBA Journal August 2015

game, and adroitly handled, especially on the corners. At Greenwich, Dublin-based Heneghan Peng (a chartered RIBA practice) has achieved the difficult task of inserting a stone-clad building which contains the architecture school and university library into a World Heritage Site, backing onto a busy railway line and taking up the curve of the street in front. A triple-height crit space forms the focal point – no hiding place for students.

Culture comes in the form of The Whitworth gallery in Manchester by MUMA, arguably the highest-profile project on the shortlist in terms of press coverage so far. It’s a subtle mix of refurbishment, new build and landscape that recalibrates the whole place.

And finally, the continuing excellence of the programme of Maggie’s cancer support centres is recognised once more, this time for Maggie’s Lanarkshire by Reiach and Hall. This is a pavilion in a (perforated) walled garden, a place clearly intended to be a calming, therapeutic environment. The architect looks to the sky as well as to the ground in a sophisticated sequence of spaces, inside and out.

The shortlist contains one winner of two previous Stirling Prizes – Rogers Stirk Harbour; plus three practices which have previously been shortlisted – AHMM, Heneghan Peng and Niall McLaughlin. So welcome to this year’s first-timers in the nail-biting world of the Stirling shortlist, Reiach and Hall and MUMA.

The panel was chaired by practitioner Philip Gumuchdjian alongside RIBA president-elect Jane Duncan, and consisted of regional and national awards chairs from across the UK. Mostly noted practitioners, they judged alongside conservation specialist Paul Velluet and former City of London planner Peter Rees.

What does this half-dozen projects tell us about architecture in the UK right now, apart from the fact that London continues to boom? That late glass-and-steel high-tech continues its run, courtesy of Rogers Stirk Harbour, but that – while some other projects also exploit the qualities of transparency and veiling – it’s mostly all about the judicious deployment of masonry now, whether brick, stone or concrete. There’s a return to depth, solidity and texture here, and a rediscovery of the virtues of plainness. This might not necessarily please the picture editors of the national media who always prefer shiny colourful buildings, but it’s to be welcomed as a spur to ‘good ordinary’.

And as for the likely winner – since only one of those I had earmarked for the shortlist actually made it there, never have I felt less able even to guess at what the judges will go for on October 15, which tells you how wide open it is this year. Good luck to them all.
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In case you’re wondering, photographer Ros Kavanagh holds a degree in architecture. That might not be immediately evident from this still taken at a rehearsal of the Pan Pan Theatre Company’s production ‘Crumb Trail’ at the Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival in 2009. But if architecture’s the mother of all the arts, it’s no surprise to see the Irish photographer crossing her disciplines.

‘I hold it still as the genesis of my approach to work,’ he tells us. ‘My main offer is documentary. I record work; whether it is a building, a performance, a design, an installation or piece of art.’

Kavanagh has always been intrigued by stage design and the way it helps optimise the power of a script and the specific choreography of a performance. He’s fascinated by the smoke and mirrors of it all, saying: ‘Materials are not what they seem, what looks like a thick concrete wall is actually a skin of plaster over canvas, that heavy plinth will hover in the air at some point.’ It is this antithesis of truth and honesty to materials that seems to thrill him.

For ‘Crumb Trail’, Pan Pan played on the practice of taping out areas in rehearsal spaces in black box theatre; where the spatial conceit of newly defined limits becomes a site within which performance is enabled; what he calls ‘true form follows function’. His image, emerging from the shadows, was a spur of the moment shot; using a fast shutter speed and with no care for perspective or alignment. The opposite of his architectural work, it is uncomposed – but no less balanced or beautiful.
Before my visit, the only orange I had associated with the Cotswolds was the flashing curls of Rebekah Brooks’ hair, lording it over the media and political powerhouse of the Chipping Norton set; a hot-headed anomaly in a landscape of rolling green and honey-coloured stone. But down the road from ugly tales of tabloid hacking, more balancing literary forces to come into play. Perhaps it was Laurie Lee’s idyllic upbringing in the village of Slad and his vivid memoir ‘Cider with Rosie’ resonating with writers, but something persuaded award-winning author Jeanette Winterson to split her time between her home in London’s Spitalfields and this scenic Cotswold idyll.

It turns out the stone cottage she bought, with land and coppice on the village’s edge, came with its own gasworks. They weren’t for her property, but for the nearby manor. Here, in bygone days, some poor servant might be sweatily shovelling lime and coke in a hot furnace to fuse calcium carbide, with water a core ingredient for acetylene, which was created here then piped along to the owners of the stately pile beyond the trees, to light their ruddy complexions with its gas.

The Spitalfields connection accounts for the fact that Princelet Street firm Chris Dyson Architects was commissioned by Winterson to submit a proposal to Cotswold planners to turn the 1877 gasworks into a writer’s retreat, with a number of study bedrooms ex-
tending out in an L-shape at the back of the house to form a small monastic cloister, each window looking out pensively to the woods and hills beyond. The nimby-free surprise of getting permission to carry out this proposal in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was only matched by the nature of the cladding material – corrugated steel with Corten coating – rendering the building an almost iridescent orange. When Winterson decided to sell the site on with planning to a couple of East End friends, she wasn’t baulking at the radical cladding, but was perhaps moved by the dawning realisation she might be more misanthropic than she had first thought: the writer’s commune was ditched in favour of a luxurious timber-framed three-bed extension. The rusty-orange cladding however, in all its shocking splendour, remained.

Dyson’s planning argument that his corrugated sheeting was part of the formal language of this agrarian community was plainly bang on the button. To drive the point home, the client points out over the fields to a large rusty green barn apparently owned by a member of a stadium rock band, and used for storing his collection of cars; and though it pops up unabashedly over the ears of wheat, you probably wouldn’t look at it twice. In fact, the firm was so convinced that the industrial aesthetic was key to the design, it even felt vindicated in referencing its underground acetylene tank in plan and belatedly proposing one above ground, appended to the extension’s end as the client’s TV room and study. The bold, two-storey drum went ahead after a smooth re-submission and a year after completion, the client tells me, some bemused villagers think it’s a mini gasometer – and even then aren’t bothered.

As for the interior, the contemplative spirit Winterson engendered for her fictional commune remains in palimpsest. Fully-glazed cloister circulation around the courtyard that would have fed the writers’ ‘cells’ now leads to generous white-painted rooms with views more indulgent than monastic, out to a nearby copse or rolling landscape; big picture windows framing texturally distinct yet similarly verdant experiences of nature. On a hot, hazy English July afternoon it is almost too much for the senses: the sound of cuckoos somewhere in the blue, the blue against the green; and against the green, the orange. •

Below: By contrast the south elevation looking back to Winterson’s cottage is less open, using the industrial aesthetic to full effect.
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Keeping the students happy
FCBS has drawn inspiration from the city’s pubs for Manchester Met’s new Union

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Hufton+Crow
Below Between two Manchester Metropolitan campuses: Birley Fields ahead of it, All Saints behind.
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What do students expect from their union these days? Well, not a crumbling eighties building on the wrong side of the campus certainly. Aware of this, Manchester Metropolitan University had been planning to rescue its old union with Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios coming on board to work the same kind of magic it had on the Stirling shortlisted reclad tower at the nearby school of art.

But the options, the cost of refurbishment and the westward shift in the university’s centre of gravity with its developing Birley Fields campus began to make a new site between the two centres look more attractive. The diagram is simple: a tower alongside a top-lit, clear-span hall, because what students want from their union is play, pool and video games with space to talk and eat and drink. In the evenings it is ‘wild’ (according to FCBS’ project partner Simon Doody) with space to dance and drink and all the sound systems that go with that. But during the day the whole space is opened up as a free-flowing ground floor with hot beverages and soft drinks as much as with lager; the bars don’t have to be the main focus. And that’s important bearing in mind the increasingly diverse and studious student population and events where bars need to be locked away.

Outside, the graphite brick is almost as dark as the black on the school of art, which is all but next door. The Union’s interior was conceived quite differently, inspired by the local Victorian faience-faced pubs and playhouses – including The Salutation next door which has been run by the union since 2011. The union’s mustard ceramics live on in that spirit; as an inverted playhouse.

From the start the project was conceived as hard wearing and self finished. Doody studied at the Welsh School of Architecture in the days of the Terminal, when the carpets of this Cardiff bunker of a student’s union oozed the beery aroma ofBrains SA all day. Here in Manchester concrete floors in the drinking and circulation areas avoid such

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**IN NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross area</td>
<td>3,998m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction cost</td>
<td>£7.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per m²</td>
<td>£1,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contract**

- Design and build

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**Ground floor plan**

[Diagram of the ground floor plan showing different areas such as Main entrance hall, Reception, Union shop, Lounge, Hall, Bar, Deliveries and storage, Post graduate suite, Meeting room, and External plant.]

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**Right**: Quiet areas for study, the bespoke legs lightening the look of these sofas.
The green ceramics of Manchester play-houses are alluded to by the handrails’ incongruous flash of yellow. This colour pops up again in the union in narrow bands of yellow tiles on the reception desk and bar, acoustic panels, furniture and an ‘interior’ wall of cutaway corner on the modest Boundary Street and the non-descript Higher Cambridge Street.

During construction, precast panels of engobed bricks went up in two-storey lifts, the double-height order expressed on the main façade to Higher Cambridge Street with just a double soldier course splitting the brickwork and building in two, though with more playfulness on the blank wall at the back. Semi-glazed above and glazed below, they are designed as hose clean. After all, whatever the variety of things students want from a union, this place needs to be able to cope with bladders being released after a big night out. As Doody says matter of factly: ‘It’s a big pub, is this.’

Below: Hanging tubes of LEDs make the foyer space seem even taller.

Below: The fabric vent tubes avoid condensation and create a dramatic ceiling plane over the hall.
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When you’re dealing with the minute detail of graphene, a safe environment is key. Jestico + Whiles’ Institute secures and shows off the lab

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Hufton+Crow
As a building, Ortus had to be **innovative, sustainable, durable** and meet the highest standards of design and construction. Using **brick** illustrated all of these vital factors, as well as providing **tone, texture and variation**.

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A floor plan bright with vibration contours is the first thing project director Tony Ling, of Jestico + Whiles, shows me of the National Graphene Institute. For him it was the starting point of the project. ‘All science takes place at the nano-scale,’ he explains. The tiny shift as a lorry rumbles past can jiggle the scanning electron microscope or shift the tiny speck of graphene into the wrong place on its silicon slide. For it is graphene we are talking about here. That stuff of pencils that was isolated in 2004 as sticky tape peeled off sticky tape layer to leave a single atomic layer of two dimensional hexagonal lattice. For this Manchester University academics Sir Andre Geim and Sir Kostya Novoselov were awarded the Nobel Prize and knighthoods. It carries high hopes in microelectronics and hydrogen fuel cells, and has already caused minor ripples in areas like light bulb filaments. Flexible yet 200 times stronger than steel and hugely conductive, it is not surprising this is considered as a wonder material by some.

In T-shirt and jeans the casually lunching Novoselov, who was the very engaged user client for the project, talks about the National Graphene Institute. ‘The people and the building are quite different,’ he says. This isn’t surprising. His colleague Geim has complained very publicly that the £61m cost was invested in the building industry rather than graphene research – in fact £35m went on what we understand as construction. However, with 230 researchers across the University of Manchester, in many different disciplines, and up to 120 in this building, the collaboration this new institute can engender is all important. The clean rooms are at the crux of this as a working environment in which scientists come together. Once those bonds of familiarity are formed, people behind blue body suits and masks meet and exchange ideas: and the atrium, break out spaces and open plan labs come into play.

**Below** Most of the ground floor is devoted to a 3m high plenum for servicing the largest clean room.
So for Novoselov the building is about collaboration. But first, at their hub, it is about ‘world class clean rooms’. So back to those vibrations. Ground investigations showed a stable layer of shale 4m below ground, then bedrock. Anchoring the slab into the shale and placing the largest of the two clean rooms directly on top of that in the basement was far cheaper than bulking up the structure at higher levels. Piled columns that pass through the slab separated by soft joints support these higher levels. But a clean room is more than a series of super clean labs. Keeping down dust particles with 50 changes of air an hour means they are built as ‘ballrooms’ with three layers. The filtered air is dropped in from above in a huge plenum, 3m high in this one and accessible by gantries. Extracts in the perforated floor return air through the ‘dirty’ corridors, which also house a multitude of gases and pumps. Underneath is 1.2m of plant. And while we are on plant, you should know that it makes up 45% of this building, including air handling, ultra pure water distillation and exhaust fans. In fact its west section mainly houses plant with a separate structure to ward off any untoward vibrations.

Jestico + Whiles deals with this 1000m² ballroom in a satisfying way that sets the tone for the building. The glazed edge of the ground floor allows passersby to peer into the clean room – past a cut-away wall of the service floor and the internal viewing corridor with its concrete curve. Glimpses of scientists stooped over their tools and the machines themselves invisibly whirring away on experiments will enliven this rather dull street, as will possible displays projected onto the wall. From the foyer the clean room plenum is on display, stretching into the technical distance. At the entrance there is no doubt this is the heart of the building, in comparison the slim atrium rising above is negligible – despite the shining surface of Mary.
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Griffiths’ graphite artwork facing its top three storeys.

The dark heart of the building is conceived as the labs in which light must be strictly controlled. Jestico + Whiles not only buried it in the centre of the plan but also clad it in a black high shine PVCu surface normally used for hygiene. And excitingly for physicists, who breathe scrawled equations, it can be written on. Unfortunately there is not quite enough articulation of the separateness nor design and build care, nor justification for stopping and scribbling in the corridor for this to look convincing. But open laboratory areas ringed with offices and alongside a top lit atrium do make it look like a place where researchers will come together, as does the top floor of seminar rooms and roof terrace.

How much of this can you spot from outside? The lower clean room is visible, and the academic atrium with its angled glass panels breaking into the facade panels to go up and over the roof. But much is cloaked in a rainscreen cladding of incredibly shiny black mirrored stainless steel panels, called Rimex. This obscures the extra 2m projection on the south facade to hide a 7m high liquid nitrogen tank. Ling likes the way you can see the depth where the cladding is cutaway in horizontal bands higher up the building, referencing Herzog & de Meuron’s de Young Museum (though that surely avoids the clunky galvanised square sections that support this rainscreen, all too visibly from inside). Rimex screens on the roof terrace, narrowing at one end, might be expected to shield the planted roof from the worst winds or frame views of the city. But no, this is about creating a shape for the building says Ling. It also, very subtly, spells out that this is a place of science. Laser-cut holes in the 80% solid sheet vary in tiny increments to spell out equations in Novoselov pixelated handwriting. Here are the building blocks of graphene; if only you could see them more clearly.

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**Below** Clean room to the right, Manchester’s earth contained behind the concrete to the left. The internal viewing corridor has its pair at street level.

**Below** Glimpses into the clean room and a glazed stack of circulation above the entrance cut into the screen with its barely legible equations.

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**Credits**

Architect: Jestico + Whiles
Client: University of Manchester
Structural engineer: Ramboll
M&E consultant and technical architect: CH2M Hill
Main contractor: BAM Construct
Project manager and quantity surveyor: EC Harris
CDM co-ordinator: Keelagher Okey Klein
Approved building inspector: HCD

Stainless steel outer cladding: Rimex
Composite inner cladding panel: Eurobond
Curtain walling, windows, rooflight: Schueco
Revolving door: Boon Edam
Sliding doors: Dorma
Roof / biodiverse roof: Soprema
Paving: Marshalls
Lifts: Kone
Partitions: British Gypsum
Moveable partitions: London Wall
Glazed partitions: Planet
Wall cladding: Altro Whitrock Chameleon
Resin flooring: Altro Altroscreed Quartz
Spiral staircase: Spiral UK
Ceilings: Sas, Ecophon Owa
Lighting: Fagerhult, Deltalight, Whitecroft
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Generating energy in style

Energy supplier E.ON’s new power plant is stylishly dressed in the metallic colours of Ruukki composite panels.

One of the UK’s leading energy suppliers, E.ON Energy has completed its state-of-the-art power plant on the Isle of Grain in Kent. Recently handed over by main contractor Kier Construction, the design and build scheme uses Ruukki composite panels in metallic colours.

The project was specified in 2013 by Maidstone-based GDM Architects. Ruukki introduced the firm to its SP2D composite panels and worked closely with the lead architect from early on, covering the design requirements and assisting with spec writing. NBS specifications are now available for Ruukki’s products, making the process more efficient for designers and architects at specification stage. Ruukki’s samples also helped GDM create a design that met the requirements of standards and regulations.

Expertise and experience
Cladding firm Metclad has been installing Ruukki panels for many years; that good relationship and smooth co-ordination between all companies involved helped achieve this eye-catching building. A key factor in the planning was Ruukki’s expertise and experience, leading to a solution that met design requirements and building performance criteria.

Ruukki panels proved to be a cost effective, aesthetically pleasing and thermally efficient choice of cladding panels. Close co-ordination of the 900mm deep panels with window openings and door penetrations, together with careful positioning of joints, has combined to produce a sharp crisp elevational treatment to a large building facade.

Paul Trigg, associate director, GDM Architects

Design alignment
The composite panel chosen was a 900mm wide module, specified to match the design of the building and matching the window and door openings to produce crisp, clean lines across the facade. With its low thermal conductivity ratio and concealed fixing joint design, this energy efficient and fire safe PIR core panel provides excellent thermal insulation properties. The panel’s concealed fixing method gives facade designers clean lines without obtrusive cover flashings. It is ideal for facades demanding high thermal insulation and strong visual appeal. Ruukki’s SP2D PIR UK panel has also been tested to BS8414-2 and has BR135 certification for use in buildings with storey heights above 18m.

Panel solution
Work started on site last year is now complete. Metclad installed around 3000m² of Ruukki SP2D 100mm composite panel, most of it coated in metallic silver with a small amount of dark silver in specific areas. The panels also featured a micro rib surface.

Ruukki sandwich panels are cost-efficient prefabricated elements consisting of an inner insulation core between two colour-coated steel sheet layers. Insulation can be mineral wool, polyisocyanurate (PIR) or glasswool. A wide range of colours and surface types are available. Panels are LPCB approved and CE certified.

Find out more about Ruukki composite panels visit www.ruukki.co.uk/sandwichpanels or call 0121 704 7300.

Client: E.ON Energy
Main contractor: Kier Construction
Installer: Metclad
Architect: GDM Architects
Michael Parrett

After 40 years as a buildings pathologist, consultancy director and former SPAB trustee Michael Parrett (left) has been honoured with an ‘eminent fellowship’ of the RICS. We ask him about the damp and the dead.

I suppose it is in way, although in America I’d officially be called a ‘forensic investigator’. I think it is best summed up by RICS’ Professor Malcolm Hollis, who wrote the equivalent of the surveyor’s bible. He said building surveying was an art but building failure a science. As pathologists we have to go from a symptom to a cause to a source to get to the root of the problem.

Architects should be creating structures that are alive, beautiful and robust and I only get involved when that intention goes awry. When a building’s in trouble it’s my job to work out why – and who or what is responsible for it. I’d like to think, like an architect, I’m also speaking up for a building and giving it a voice.

Yes, it helped dispel a few myths about rising damp, which most architects would put down to a breached or absent horizontal damp proof course. But there’s no empirical evidence to support that. It’s going to be something like blocked cavity walls, raised external ground levels, leaking water mains or blocked air vents under suspended floors. And some commercial firms have a vested interest in pumping stuff into walls that doesn’t actually deal with the issue.

I went to a wharf building refurb where myriad design and build issues led to spectacular failures. It had tiny openings to the Thames instead of picture windows, single glazed rooflights with terrible condensation and interlocking gutters with no rainwater outlets. It required a huge, costly gantry on one side just to clean the gutters and windows – it was a horror story.

Not with off-site passive house construction, but the problem’s fraught in retrofitting where buildings are completely sealed without adequate venting. I work in social housing and mould is on the increase: I deal with over 300 ‘prejudicial to health’ claims a year. We need an interdisciplinary design approach to looking at the consequences of airtightness in existing buildings.

Yes, it can be like that! I’m staying in a hotel at present which reminds me of SPAB founder William Morris’ advice that regular maintenance is the key to staving off decay. I stay in lots of hotels and some can be scary. I always have a camera with me to catalogue the horrors!

‘Building pathologist’ all sounds very ‘Crime Scene Investigation’

Most architects are fascinated by the lives of buildings. What is it to be fascinated by their death?

You were involved in the BBC2 show ‘Raising the roof’?

What’s the scariest pathology incident you’ve been called to?

With airtightness a key component for reducing heat loss, do you think sealed buildings are contributing to poor internal environments?

When you visit someone’s house do you find yourself treating it like a crime scene?
Prepare for the best

Cities looking to secure their futures are putting resilience to stresses on the urban landscape at the top of their agendas. An international RIBA summit jump-started the process.

By Richard High

From faceless politicians telling us we have enough to make it through austerity, to football managers explaining their team lost because they didn't, resilience, it seems, is everywhere.

And with the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs estimating that continuing population growth and urbanisation will add 2.5 billion people to the world’s urban population by 2050 – nearly 90% of this increase concentrated in Asia and Africa – resilience is becoming ever more important in the design of buildings, neighbourhoods and city master-planning.

Defining city resilience

But what is city resilience and what role do key stakeholders – architects, designers, urban planners and citizens – play in ensuring a city is resilient? At a stimulating international event in London last month, leading exponents of the subject enlightened the audience at the RIBA’s Designing City Resilience 2015 summit.

They asked whether city resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems in a city to survive, adapt and grow, despite stresses and shocks. Or is it fundamentally a design problem? Can it be addressed by considering the interdependence of a wide range of factors and systems, professions, foresight, leadership, technology and design creativity, that can create cities resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges they face in a fast-changing world?

It is the former for Dr Nancy Kete, managing director of the Rockefeller Foundation, which is leading the charge on resilience and set up the 100 Resilient Cities Network in 2013. Speaking at the event, Dr Kete said a city should ‘engage all its stakeholders, and embody complexity and the idea that the future will be different from the past’.

It is this complexity, says Jo da Silva, director of international development at Arup, which has written the handbook of City Resilience – a critical definition. ‘We live in cities that are phenomenally complex and resilience is about how we allow them to innovate. The capacity of individual communities, institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive, no matter what chronic stress they are under, is also key,’ she adds.

Community engagement

While common problems for cities include leadership and strategy, health and well-being, economy and society, infrastructure, and the environment, the qualities of resilience – reflective, robust, redundant, resourceful, inclusive and integrated – also play important roles in shaping how they adapt and survive.

Involving a city’s citizens is therefore critical to creating resilience, insisted Mat-
The RIBA Journal August 2015

The Taylor, chief executive of the RSA and the sharp-witted summit chair, as it directly affects their quality of life. As a result, devolving power to cities, particularly to a more local level, is a critical step.

He points out that people are more likely to become engaged when their neighbourhood is affected, and it is certainly easier for municipalities to mobilise citizens to tackle a common cause, such as inequality, obesity or education, on a local level.

**Places and people**

Architects, says Professor Helle Søholt, founding partner and CEO of Gehl Architects, need to remember that cities are for people: ‘We cannot have resilience without community. Architects have an obligation to make sure they are for everyone. In Denmark, for instance, a quarter of all property development must be social housing and owners must live in their properties to avoid speculation and ghetto-isation.’

She adds that while urban environments have always had different communities and cultures, the concept of resilience takes a long term view. It is the job of architecture to join the dots, she says, so a cohesive community can emerge, grow and mature.

However, cities are complex and incomplete systems and those with high levels of outside investment are at risk of collapse. Saskia Sassen, professor of sociology at Columbia University, argues that they should be understood as a type of socio-ecological system, one with an expanding range of articulations with the biosphere’s ecologies.

Today, most of these articulations produce environmental damage. The conundrum for architects and other stakeholders is how to use them to help cities contribute to environmental sustainability.

But urban environments need to optimise liveability and improve societal outcomes for citizens, argues Sascha Haselmayer, chief executive of Citymart. Human interaction and the integration of existing characteristics into planning and design are central to the resilience of a city – which should be designed around its citizens.

**Long-term value**

In the past five years, interest has grown in the potential for digital technologies such as smart phones, cloud computing and open data to contribute to urban development and resilience, through improvements to services and infrastructure.

These technologies are creating long term value, through moves such as innovative investment strategies in people, places, transport and infrastructure. Combined with business and social innovation they can bring new opportunities to strengthen our cities.

Access to government data, explains Accenture’s director of global cities Jen Hawes-Hewitt, is allowing digital entrepreneurs to support urban problem solving. The development of apps such as Streetbump, in which citizens become the ‘sensors’ that di-

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**We cannot have resilience without community. Architects have an obligation to make sure they are for everyone**
City resilience

The RIBA Journal August 2015

rect city hall to fix pot holes, is just one example of the interactivity of technology and people in effecting change in their communities.

In the commercial sector, she adds, companies like Uber and Airbnb are just outliers of a service-led, more circular economy – which has the potential to make our increasingly dense urban environments do more with less.

Many will argue, however, that this citizen-led ‘bottom up’ approach to city resilience and development needs to engage with the ‘top down’ approach to governance, planning and architecture from city hall. It is at the interface of the two that city resilience must grow and evolve, to avoid the risk is of creating two distinct, disruptive elements.

Preparedness

The threat of floods, storms, earthquakes and other natural hazards are important factors to consider for cities, which are often coastal, when planning resilience strategies.

The watchword is be prepared. With this in mind, in March 2014, mayor of New York City Bill de Blasio established the Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR). The organisation leads implementation of recommendations laid out in ‘A Stronger, More Resilient New York’ and 2015’s ‘One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City’.

Daniel Zarrilli, director of the mayor’s office of recovery and resiliency, says: ‘Our neighbourhoods, economy and public services will be ready to withstand and emerge stronger from the impacts of climate change thanks to these strategies.’

However, factors such as location, population and assets mean that each city responds differently to stresses. Here, the summit drew inspiration from close to home, as well as mega-cities. Sarah Toy, Bristol’s strategic resilience officer, says the city is working to ensure its policies and actions create a healthy, safe and flourishing environment.

‘Using a resilience lens will ensure, for example, that our transport schemes deliver social, environmental and economic benefits and do not inadvertently impact negatively on other parts of the city system – such as food growing or child poverty. It gives us a practical way to understand city complexity and plan and design for uncertain times ahead,’ she says.

Outcomes

Resilience is a complex issue that requires positive engagement between all the key stakeholders – architects, designers and urban planners and citizens. Only by working together can these groups help cities successfully grow, evolve and respond to the challenges they face. The alternative is a chaotic and disruptive city that fails to survive.

Left At the heart of the summit was the City Resilience Challenge, a workshop-based initiative in which participants came together to study real figures from cities around the globe and address the real life challenges faced by four imaginary cities, collaborating to establish a concept for city resilience, alongside a strategy for achieving it.

TALES OF THE CITY...

New York’s specific set of stresses led the mayor’s office of recovery and resiliency to develop ‘OneNYC: The Plan for a Strong and Just City’. ‘We have been tested in many ways,’ says the office’s director Daniel Zarrilli, ‘prompting us to determine what resilience means to us.’

Past threats and tests include Hurricane Sandy, 9/11, ghettoisation, infrastructure failure and underinvestment, while future threats include climate change, a growing population, increasing inequality and aging infrastructure. This plan is organised across four strategic sectors: for growth, equity, sustainability, and resilience. Investments will be made in buildings, infrastructure, coastal defences, and strengthening community, social and economic resilience.

Disaster preparedness is at the heart of the plan, with both government and the private sector supporting community groups, businesses and infrastructure to withstand climate change threats, including rising temperatures and sea levels.

It requires leadership, says Zarrilli, but by launching OneNYC the city has expanded its commitment to resilience to prepare for the city’s fifth century.

‘Implementation is never easy, but we can meet this challenge by collaborating and working across domains,’ he adds.

Daniel Zarrilli presented his city’s resilience plans as part of the Designing City Resilience summit alongside city resilience officers from Chennai and Barcelona. See other contributions to the debate at ribaj.com.
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The NHS is the biggest client for healthcare buildings in the UK, but projects can be complicated to manage. How can architects add value?

Matt Thompson

Despite burgeoning demographic, epidemiological, and economic pressures that might fuel a construction frenzy, the current NHS mantra is in the opposite direction. Investment either addresses an historic maintenance backlog or goes into upgrading or refurbishing existing infrastructure. The King’s Fund has criticised this work for being rapidly redundant, out of date, over-specified, inflexible, expensive to operate or reconfigure, and difficult to finance.

What’s more, the NHS estate has surplus land (over 640ha in 2014), according to the ‘Five Year Forward Plan’ – the Conservative government’s transformation strategy. It offers a glimmer of hope that with more entrepreneurial development skills, these assets can be sold or rethought.

A recent RIBA round table with clients asked how architects can add value. Contributors agreed the estate should be squeezed for optimum value and that architects had a significant role in imagining how to do that and delivering solutions fit for the future. As John Cole, former chief executive of Health Estates Investment Group in Northern Ireland, said, ‘The architectural profession’s core skills of visioning, strategic planning, devising solutions and making places will be essential.’

Architects could help in several ways. Making the estate work harder by, for example, sharing premises with other public services or commercial sectors, is one idea. Others include conceiving new kinds of buildings such as, for example, modular hospitals that respond flexibly to local need.

Swimming against the tide

It is a huge task. The way the NHS constructs business cases, its inconsistent, often convoluted and restrictive procurement processes, its organisational structures and focus on the short-term inhibit the kind of radical solutions that might help.

Indeed, the architect tends to be distanced from the head client, lost in the contractor-led supply chain and strangled by red tape and the need to comply with Health Technical Memoranda (HTMs) and Health Building Notes (HBNs). ‘The appointment of an architect is just another step in the bureaucratic public procurement process,’ said Cole. ‘Often it is the contractor who selects the design team, further reducing the connection between client and designer.’

However, John Hicks, global lead for healthcare at Aecom, pondered the potential for architects to ‘shift the conversation away from HTMs into healthier lifestyles and mergers around healthcare.’ Christopher Shaw, senior director at Medical Architecture, identified a vacuum preventing such conversations. ‘No-one knows how you might change planning systems, adapt the way that we use budgets, or what the relationship is between capital and operational expenditure.’

Andrew Simpson, of Dominic Lawson Bespoke Planning, thought that manoeuvring into these conversations is difficult under traditional procurement routes. He advocated RIBA Competitions as a viable alternative, where the architect can be appointed as the lead professional ‘to develop the brief as well as to be the designer.’

Regardless of how, clients want architects to dive in. Mike Pringle, president of the Royal College of GPs, pleaded for leadership: ‘Please be brave. We need you to make a difference.’ According to Alan Kondys, health sector director at Vinci Construction UK, architects should embrace a co-ordinating role. ‘Somebody has to do it, and I think the architect is in the best position.’ However, Skanska director Mike Major warned that the door will not stay open indefinitely. ‘Architects should not underestimate the threat from people outside the profession.’

No conversation is credible though without a good working knowledge of health service provision. Shaw again: ‘We need to really understand what clients’ business and clinical strategies are.’ In Kondys’ experience,
architects must challenge the client on several levels. How well is the building aligned to their estate strategy? How well does that strategy underpin their clinical strategy? And how robust is the clinical strategy? ‘The clinical strategy will improve health outcomes; the building merely enables that.’

Hone your soft skills
People skills, personality and communication matter. Paul Mercer of Tangram Architects believes clients want to be inspired, while Major needs to be confident that he can get on with the individuals in his architecture team. Independent consultant Dr Barry Trindall said that since some healthcare clients are comparatively inexperienced, ‘a good architect also needs to educate’. For example, in primary care, Pringle emphasized the need for creative guidance through good communication. ‘GP practices need examples of how forward planning produces buildings that remain fit for purpose 10 years down the line.’

In such a complex sector, consulting all the stakeholders is critical. Cole regarded facilitating in-depth iterative dialogue between an informed client, key user representatives, especially patients and staff, and the architect as ‘the most important determinant of success’. Since staff costs are so high, and because staff are critical to getting better health outcomes, Phil Nedin, healthcare facilities consultant at Arup, thinks their needs must be centre-stage. ‘Better environments improve staff morale, which in turn allows them to give a better service’

However, no solution is immune to the rapid pace of change in service delivery, so building in truly sustainable flexibility is equally important. Major again: ‘Smart clients avoid filling their site with ramshackle stuff which they then have to demolish and rebuild over time. Flexibility costs more money up front but not in the long term.’

Should architects have experience in the sector? Trindall regarded it as critical: ‘I do not want to pay for their learning curve.’ David Kershaw, programme director at Balfour Beatty, on the other hand argued that ‘the best solutions don’t arise simply because the architect has done it previously’. Shaw’s advice to practices wanting to break into the sector was collaboration, and targeting smaller projects for primary healthcare to begin with.

As the de facto standards in healthcare design, HBNs and HTMs were generally considered not fit for use. Keith Millay, UK managing director at Steffian Bradley Architects, warned against designs that are too rooted in them: ‘They shut down any opportunity for innovation. The architectural process transcends that – that’s where the value lies.’ But clients fall back on them in the absence of better alternatives. As Major puts it, ‘No one’s going to be sacked for complying with HBNs’.

This is a hot topic. Kershaw has been involved with various academic bodies and is struck by the ‘quite remarkable’ lack of evidence. As well as leveraging design research, architects should make a point of following up on how their designs perform in use. Michael Phiri, author of ‘Evidence-based Healthcare Design’, calls for architects to collect ‘the softer evidence’. Without it, architects are less able to persuade clients of the benefits of investing in good design.

The market’s priority is to remodel existing stock to serve changing healthcare work flow, rather than to design new buildings, and architects aligned to respond to these demands will benefit. More importantly, clients and users are more likely to get buildings fit for the challenges ahead in a fast-changing healthcare economy.
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Too much detail

Think it’s best to include all those documents in the contract? Sometimes less is more

Angus Dawson

Assembling building contracts can be a complicated and confusing task. What are the pitfalls and how can these best be avoided?

Building contracts invariably include significant amounts of paperwork, including plans and drawings, tender returns, qualification documents and post tender correspondence. But a tendency to supply as much detail as possible, ‘just to be on the safe side’, can create significant confusion, with discrepancies and divergences and the inclusion of documents whose status is unclear. It is often difficult to sieve through all this and establish the true intention of the parties.

Off the programme

The recent Scottish case of Martifer UK Ltd v Lend Lease Construction (EMEA) Ltd highlights the dangers of including documents which do not have a clear status.

The court had to consider whether an outline programme included in a subcontract was binding on the parties. While the case was heavily fact dependent, the court gave some helpful observation and guidance.

It explained that including a document in a contract does not automatically mean the parties intend to be bound by it. Whether it does will depend on the terms of the contract and the intention of the parties, but the mere fact of including a document in a contract does not oblige either party to comply with it.

The court also reinforced the widely held view that, unless expressly providing for this, parties are unlikely to intend to be bound by a programme included in a contract. If the programme were to be binding, the almost inevitable failure of either party to comply rigidly with it would lead to breach.

On the facts, the court held that the programme was not binding on the parties.

There are a few other areas where failure to take time on the assembly of the contract can lead to headaches in the future.

Discrepancies and more

The aim should always be to assemble a set of contract documents without discrepancies and divergences or irrelevant material. While contracts include provisions on how these are to be dealt with, time should be taken pre-contract to try and iron them out. Arguments and costly disputes can then hopefully be avoided. Thought should also be given to how any schedule of clarifications or post-tender correspondence is dealt with. Is the status of this clear within the contract?

Another issue is whether the contract particulars have been completed accurately and in full. All too often we see contract particulars which state that a particular item is to be confirmed or agreed. Are the interim payment dates clear, are the insurance arrangements agreed and have these been confirmed by brokers; is it clear whether any optional limitations on liability apply?

Then there is the matter of whether the correct contracting parties been identified in the contract. Numerous cases have been heard by the courts regarding identity of contracting parties. The case of Hamid v Francis Bradshaw Partnership went all the way to the Court of Appeal over whether a contract had been entered into by Mr Hamid in his personal capacity or with a limited company he owned. It is of fundamental importance that parties agree and recognise who they are contracting with and that they are correctly identified in the contract.

Take your time

While considerable time is usually invested in tendering and negotiating a commercial deal, all too often assembly of the building contract is left too late and not given the attention it requires. Start the process early and give it the time it deserves.

Angus Dawson is a partner at Macfarlanes

The court also reinforced the widely held view that parties are unlikely to intend to be bound by a programme included in a contract.

Liquidated damages

Liquidated damages, or Lads, are damages payable for delay in completion of the works. They are a pre-agreed level of compensation the client will be entitled to if the works are completed late. The idea is that the parties understand the financial implications of a delay in completion at the outset of the project and that the client does not have to demonstrate or mitigate its actual loss if the works are completed late. A few specifics:

The level of damages should be a genuine pre-estimate of the loss likely to be suffered if there is a delay – in practice, the level of Lads the client is able to impose on the contractor is often less than the actual loss it will suffer.

If there is a significant variation to the contract, it may be necessary to review the level of Lads. This will particularly be the case if there is a major omission from the contract works.
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Cottrell & Vermeulen architect Paul Taylor said:

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Starved
of ideas

Maria Smith visits the young designers’ archi-caff

‘Young’ architects are a bit like pizza delivery guys. They pick up yummy pizzas topped with exciting ideas from the invention ovens on the peripheries of our understanding and deliver them to the centre; to the middle-of-the-road mainstream.

The ovens are challenging, angry places that steal raw ingredients from fashion and literature and economics and bake them onto deep, architecture bases (my favourite are the ones with pop-reference cheese oozing out of the crusts). Our young architects loiter around the ovens poised to seize on a pizza that represents the opposite of their teachers and their parents. They shove the freshly baked progressive pepperoni or reactionary romana into the pizza box of emerging architecture awards and bring it to the Man who is working late in the office and doesn’t know how to cook anyway. The Man builds the big buildings in the middle of our collective comfort zone.

As with everything else, there are fads in pizzas toppings, fads in dough, and fads in the shape and colour of emerging architecture award pizza boxes. As each fad swells, the Man will pay more and more for it, leading to a tasty sweet spot where the Man will pay lots but the young architects and the awarding bodies aren’t bored with it yet. But then the fad dwindles and slightly younger architects deliver us the hot new pizzas, this time with a sourdough base.

Remember the bedaemoned pop-up? Pop-up pizzas were all the rage. Now you can only buy them frozen in Tescos: £5 with a half-baked garlic baguette. So what of narrative architecture – possibly the Hawaiian of archipizzas, having arrived on the scene some time ago but yet to shuffle off the menu?

Narrative architecture started appearing in earnest in the 1980s in opposition to style and technology. It was a way to foreground the experiential and to bring sensuality back into our built environment. In 2006, when all planning applications required a Design and Access Statement, writing about architecture became something we all had to do – which was a lovely boost for narrative architecture. Since then, narrative architecture has become an increasingly popular pizza, which has all but destroyed its deliciousness.

The power of narrative is threefold. First, it offers an alternative to imagery: it gives people a mental image they can easily pass on to others. Secondly, it enables the expression of movement, transformation, and all the temporal aspects of architecture that we discuss as designers but which often evaporate in the face of a building’s inevitable stasis. Finally, narratives enable us to construct apparently logical arguments for why a design is good without relying on anything so taboo as subjective opinion or judgements of taste.

This last power is especially pernicious. The growth of architectural narratives has in no way expanded the rationalist consensus through which we must justify designs. Nor has it expanded the diversity of designs that can be justified. We work in an industry where only three kinds of justification are viable, only three stories can be told: utility, history and modesty. This is not the delicious pizza topping of my dreams. Utility is fine and always will be – there’s nothing wrong with saying a room is this big because this many people need to be able to do this activity in it. History felt great for ages, a wonderful treasure trove of excuses for architectural play. But the flip side is if you’re building on an unremarkable piece of land with no past baggage to write home about you’ll be crippled – forbidden from inventing new stories. Then finally we have modesty. ‘Oh, oh, do grant me planning because you can’t actually see my building except from space and even if you could it would look so beige and inoffensive you wouldn’t even notice it’. Such modesty is unattractive. Confidence and a big sexy smile is attractive.

Like all great junk food, narrative architecture pizzas are so delicious, it’s going to be tough to give them up. Narrative is so warm and rich, like blue cheese drooling over parma ham, that it’s too easy to stuff our faces and forget our skylines, I mean waistlines. And while we’ve been gluttonously slurping up ‘once upon a times’, representation has been preparing for a coup. We got bored of talking about representation in architecture. We shouldn’t have. The next scrummy pizza is illustration. The invention ovens’ end of year shows marked this clearly. The pizza box awarding bodies lie procumbent in an antechamber.

Maria Smith is an architect, writer, teacher and alto
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Auto enrolment with NEST. It feels good.
The sinuous curves of the Thames inspired Stanton Williams’ design for this amorphous-shaped block of 116 high end residential apartments on the north bank of the river at Pimlico, just moments from Tate Britain.

The building’s facade resembles a series of strata, its curved strips of limestone cladding at each floor level alternating with bronze-coloured metal and glass bands that form windows and balconies. Step-backs on the upper floors help define the roofscape and provide large roof terraces for penthouses.

Riverside Walk’s massing and its curved shape were informed by factors including the winding river, height restrictions and protected views of the Houses of Parliament from Hungerford Bridge, as well as efforts to maximise viewing angles of at least 180° from flats towards central London and the suburbs.

Doriano Chiarparin, associate at Stanton Williams, told RIBA Journal: ‘Decisive to the design was the brief from client Ronson Capital Partners to create an original and unmistakably residential building that could not be confused with an office block. That led us to think of balconies, but rather than make them a stuck on element, the challenge was to make them sculptural and integral to the building form.’

In plan, the windows and cladding are laid out as two curved ribbons that pull apart and come together at various points to form the crescent-shaped balconies, which differ in size and shape depending on the size of each apartment and its orientation.

Each balcony structure comprises a cast in situ concrete slab with prefabricated steel end sections, which is connected to but thermally separated from the main building’s concrete structure. Balconies feature hardwood timber decking and are clad, externally, in curved limestone panels, topped by a frameless curved glass screen.

The balcony floor slabs were waterproofed using the alpha-hybrid liquid waterproofing product Hydrostop EU AH-25, supplied by roofing specialist SIG Design and Technology, following consultation with the architect and main contractor Sir Robert McAlpine.

‘Initially, we considered using a hot-applied waterproofing system, but realised that a cold-applied product was much more practical,’ said Chiarparin. ‘It meant less interference with the cladding installation and less time had to be assigned to Health & Safety procedures related to the use of gas and open flames. The Hydrostop product also has a very good performance warranty.’

The numerous cleats and bolts linking into each balcony made application of a homogenous liquid layer more straightforward than the cutting required to install a sheet membrane solution. In addition, using a liquid made it possible to waterproof the prefabricated steel balcony ends ahead of installation and before the remaining areas were waterproofed.

SIG D&T provided Knight Asphalte with design and technical advice, and technical inspections on site. It also trained the roofing contractor’s staff to use the product, both on site and at the firm’s offices.

‘We looked at half a dozen liquid products and were very impressed with the technical performance of AH-25,’ said David Knight, technical director at Knight Asphalte. ‘It was the best fit to the project constraints, having just received its Agrément Certificate, which was essential for the contract. Many liquid products have a pungent smell, but AH-25 doesn’t smell at all. It’s a new generation technology and it actually works.’
Let’s float the idea

BACA met space, style and conservation requirements with a house that floats when it floods

Sheathed in its homogenous skin of shimmering zinc diamonds, architect BACA’s new house on the banks of the Thames at Marlow in Buckinghamshire already has a strong sense of the contemporary – but there’s some striking goings-on below ground level too - for though it might not look like it, this is the UK’s first amphibious house. Having bought a stunning riverside site with an existing bungalow, the client was keen to create a modern three-bedroom home, but a number of factors stood in the way. Just 10m from the riverbank, the house regularly suffered some degree of flooding so any new proposal had to be raised 2.5m to deal with a 1 in 60-year event. But the local conservation area placed limits on the height of any two-storey home. With its space needs conflicting with these constraints, the client turned to BACA, a firm experienced in planning and designing floating homes.

BACA proposed a two-storey home built on a floating concrete platform sunk within a steel-encased concrete box, with living areas at ground level and bedrooms in the basement. The innovation is that when the site floods, the building becomes buoyant. ‘As with any building, the superstructure is fixed to foundations, but these aren’t fixed to the ground. When the floodwaters come and hydrostatic pressure increases, the building starts to float within its dock,’ says BACA director Robert Barker – like an ark rising above the flood.

So how did BACA express its innovative ‘aquatecture’? ‘We saw it as an opportunity to think differently, to try and express a sense of evolution, a reinterpretation of a marine tradition,’ recalls Barker. For that the firm looked to SIG Zinc and Copper’s NEDZink NOVA, its titanium zinc product with a pre-weathered grey finish. The firm had initially looked to the local vernacular of timber weatherboarding but was drawn instead to the ad-hoc industrial sheds that peppered the island as well as wider marine architecture references. It became clear that it wanted to express its pioneering building using a modern aesthetic. ‘We began thinking more about engineering structures like the Thames Barrier and the fact that zinc was traditionally used to protect the hulls of boats from rust, so the material seemed particularly applicable here,’ adds Barker. They also enjoyed the reflective quality of the zinc, alluding to the rippling surface of the nearby Thames; as well
as the diamond-shaped shingles, which had a dynamic all of their own.

These characteristic shingles, which completely cover the timber-framed house’s walls and roof, were manufactured and installed by Kingsley Specialist Roofing, a member of the Federation of Traditional Metal Roofing Contractors, which has years of experience using both SIG’s NEDZink and KME copper sheet products. The 2000 zinc diamonds, measuring 300mm by 300mm, were formed at the firm’s Sussex factory, with SIG Zinc and Copper involved at the start of the design and fabrication process. Procurement manager Daniel Madell says the main challenge here was the setting out, adding: ‘We were using a shingle tile system, effectively panels that are cut and bent allowing them to interlock on all four sides. Concealed fasteners and clips fix the zinc shingles to the 18mm plywood substrate from which the adjoining panel is then hooked over the top using a single lock welt.’

Bespoke detailing benefited from the intrinsic malleability and flexibility of the NEDZink product, particularly around the ‘dolphins’ – the visible recesses on the side elevations. These house the thick, solid steel posts rising out of a steel ring beam at the bottom of the dock and act as a guide for the house to rise up in a flood scenario. ‘We had to continue the cladding pattern and wrap in behind the dolphins to create the seamless look,’ says Madell. ‘The great thing about zinc is that it is flexible enough to deal with specific details like this.’ It also accounts for the bespoke flashings creating the interesting visual detail at the wall/roof interface.

It is this detail that helps create the slightly abstracted ‘home’ form. With the house designed the way it is, the idea of guttering away run-off seemed perverse, so BACA thought it better to simply allow the water to run directly along and down its surfaces into the ‘dock’ void. This led to the question of whether continual run-off might lead to localised staining, but Barker is unfazed by this, saying: ‘The good thing about specifying zinc is that its character only develops more through patination over time.’ And with the Amphibious House’s built-in floating resilience now allowing it to easily withstand a rare flood event and SIG offering 25-year warranties on NEDZink NOVA, they figure there’ll be plenty of time to test the theory.

Opposite page The amphibious house with its distinctive NEDZink shingles looks anything but – until the nearby river floods.

Left Bespoke NEDZink shingles being fixed to the plywood substrate.

Left Detailing of the NEDZink shingles is crisp – particularly around the ‘dolphins’ holding the steel guide post for the house to move up along.

In the event of a flood, the house’s dry dock floods and the building begins to float within it.
Guarantees are designed to offer peace of mind in case things go wrong, but in reality getting the right cover can be a minefield. All too often, it’s only when they are needed that any shortcomings in the guarantees come to light. Then, rather than making a claim that will swiftly resolve the issue for you and your client, you may find yourself in a situation where no one will accept liability, or where one of the key parties involved in the roofing contract is no longer trading.

So beyond minimising the chances of problems occurring in the first place by careful product selection and the use of trained subcontractors, what can specifiers do to avoid this? There are several issues to bear in mind.

**Read the small print**

Ross Finnie, sales director SIG Design and Technology, on what roofing specifiers need to know about guarantees

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**What do you want cover for?**

Some guarantees are for product/materials, others for workmanship, installation or design. When you specify be clear what you want – if you are after latent defects cover or insolvency, for example, make sure you ask for it specifically – never assume it’s included. Always carry out due diligence on a guarantee up front to find out exactly what cover is being offered.

**What’s the right insurance?**

Increasingly, clients and specifiers request insurance backed guarantees as a way of reducing the risk. However this alone is not enough: you need to see the wording of the manufacturer’s and/or contractor’s guarantee and the detail of the policy behind it to assess if the cover is appropriate. All too often, specifiers and clients don’t really know exactly what is being covered because it isn’t clearly defined, and they haven’t asked enough questions to find out. Types of cover range from product guarantees to latent defects insurance (see right), but wordings vary depending on the insurance company.

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**Ask a professional**

Don’t rely solely on the manufacturer’s advice. Always seek additional information on the insurance being offered from an independent adviser who is Financial Conduct Authority regulated. Talk to them to better understand what the various insurance policies that could apply actually cover.

Consider possible scenarios that you might need cover for, including worst case.

Independent advice can be particularly important when assessing a product guarantee from a manufacturer. Ask an FCA-regulated adviser to analyse what is covered if the product is faulty – for example does it cover just the replacement of the materials or the whole cost of replacing the roof including labour and access? If you don’t ask the right questions at this stage, when you do need to call on your guarantee, you may find you don’t have the degree of cover you expected.

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**Do the due diligence**

Carry out financial due diligence on the stability and credibility of the manufacturer, designer or installer – how long have they been trading? Do they have a good reputation within the industry? Some companies offering guarantees for roofing may not be financially stable enough to sustain lengthy insurances, which could be on their balance sheets for 10 or even 20 years, and some policies may cease if the company stops trading. A lot of guarantees appear to have insurance backing but make no mention of any insurer or the Financial Conduct Authority, which regulates the sale of insurance products. These will invariably be guarantees backed by the manufacturer only, which is of no value if they cease trading.

Always read the small print. Also be aware if some manufacturers are actually agencies importing other products, which might simply fold if claimed against.

**Consequential loss**

Make sure you’re fully protected for the potentially substantial consequential losses of a leaking roof relating to the occupants and their business. This can be considerable if it involves damage to equipment and relocation. Find out if the policy covers loss of earnings. Since remedial work could be lengthy and this could affect cash flow, find out how long resolution of a consequential claim is likely to take (it also might be covered by other insurances such as buildings and contents insurance).

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**Insurance options**

- **Professional indemnity insurance**: This is bought by designers/architects and covers their legal defence costs and damages in the event of being sued by their clients for professional errors or omissions.
- **Public liability insurance**: covers the legal liability to third parties for bodily injury, damage to property and direct consequential losses (excluding products).
- **Product liability insurance**: covers the legal liability to third parties, for bodily injury, damage to property and direct consequential losses arising out of the products sold/supplied/installed. The replacement cost of the defective product itself is excluded.
- **Insurance backed guarantee**: steps in to fulfill the written guarantee of the manufacturer/installer, should it cease trading. Depending on the wording, it can cover defective, design workmanship or materials.
- **Latent defects insurance**: protects against design workmanship or material defects after completion causing damage to the building, and in most cases ensures the policy holder can go straight to the insurer rather than to individual parties. Some may have an initial guarantee period where the contractor is still responsible, during which insurers provide insolvency cover only.
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Imagination unchained

Our Eye Line drawing competition celebrates unbuilt architecture

Hugh Pearman

I’ve always been fascinated by the mysterious way architecture gets transformed into buildings. Mysterious because the architecture simultaneously is and is not the same thing as the resulting building. Something is drawn or modelled, by whatever means, notes are appended in various ways, and these jointly serve, filtered through and modified by sundry intermediaries, as a kind of instruction book to the fabricators and builders. In that instruction book, the architect says here you are, this is the size and shape and layout of the building that everyone has agreed, this is what it should be made of. Now you get going, and I’ll pop back from time to time to make sure you’re doing it properly. (I simplify.)

And so the alchemical miracle takes place, and gradually the architecture of the drawing becomes the architecture of a building. It will never be identical to what you drew on screen or paper, because the original work of architecture existed, and continues to exist, as a drawn rather than a built thing. The status of that drawing is fascinating. Is it, in a Platonic sense, just a pale shadow of what the architect imagined, imperfectly set down? To an extent, but then the very act of drawing stimulates ideas in exactly the same way that for writers, the act of writing does. You have to do it in order to be able to do it. After all the brief-taking and analysis, you have to start.

The appeal of self-building, even of composing a building directly from available materials rather than via a drawn intermediate stage, is therefore obvious (if rare in the latter case) to those concerned with the most direct transmission of the idea to built form. But for now, since it is time to reveal the winners of our Eye Line drawing competition, I’m concerned with architecture as it is drawn.

Eye Line, now in its third year, has been won by a young practitioner, Hamed Khosravi from Delft, with his ideas-competition entry for a project in Tehran. Many other practitioners entered — such as Melbourne-based Anton James with a commended landscape scheme. But Eye Line is especially popular with students because, for most of them, the imagining of these worlds is absolute architecture, unfettered by tedious constraints, following their own logic. Indeed (sidestepping the education debate here), many use their time as students precisely to make architecture that you would not expect to encounter in built form, even if technically it could be.

It is nonetheless real architecture in this drawn-only form, as two of this year’s judges, former winners Amelia Hunter and Tom Noonan, will attest. Hunter is now in practice in Copenhagen and London, Noonan is with Hawkins\Brown — satisfyingly, working on the new Bartlett building, his alma mater. Oh yes, it’s a different discipline, building. But there’s a different glory to the unbuilt kind of architecture, as you’ll find on the following pages.
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Remote-controlled drones fly over a sandy beach dotted with bronzed sunbathers by the sparkling waters of the Ob Sea. This might not be how you picture Siberia, but it is the scene that greeted me in Akademgorodok, 2000 miles east of Moscow. Hidden in the sprawling canopy of birch and pine forests between Kazakhstan and Mongolia, is the unlikely home of Russia’s answer to Silicon Valley: I had come to see the ‘Silicon Forest’.

Founded by the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1957, Akademgorodok (which literally means Academy Town) arose from Nikita Khruschev’s plan to huddle the Soviet Union’s sharpest scientific minds together. At its peak, it was home to 65,000 scientists and their families, working on secret nuclear experiments in a silvan campus of laboratory buildings, which still line the wide avenues that slice through the forest. Bearded scientists scurry between the trees while students loll outside street-corner cafés, enjoying all-pervasive free wifi and eyeing each other up.

Since the brain drain that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, the town has enjoyed an unexpected rebirth having been decreed by Putin the new centre of Russia’s drive for technological innovation. The likes of IBM, Intel and Schlumberger have set up outposts here, attracted by the cheap, highly skilled labour. And it has spawned some surreal architectural consequences.

At the end of one avenue now looms a gigantic building in the form of a neon orange archway. Comprising two towers leaning precipitously inwards, joined by a glazed walkway, it has an uncanny resemblance to OMA’s CCTV headquarters in Beijing – as if that glowing chiselled loop had mated with a Transformer and begotten this souped-up triumphal arch of technology.

This is Akadempark, Putin’s retro-futurist answer to the backyard sheds and garages of Silicon Valley. Two conjoined silos of start-up incubator offices stand on a podium of conference suites and cafeterias, the foyer decorated with waterfalls and green walls.

Inside, I meet a young company developing a mail-order 3D-printing service and a group modelling computer game environments for a US gaming giant. Upstairs are post-production companies, with something that involves a big inflatable dome, while another floor houses armies of nomadic wifi-workers, tapping away on desks arranged between zig-zagging steel struts – a detail that emulates OMA’s interiors, but filtered through the inimitable Siberian Design Institute.

On the roof I find another drone. This is Optiplane’s flying device: it can travel horizontally at great speed, but take off and land vertically with extreme precision, designed for a future of flying deliveries.

‘The Akadempark is a great place for us to meet small, like-minded businesses,’ says Optiplane co-founder, Kirill Yakovchenko, as he steers his copter in a vertiginous loop above our heads. ‘We have access to big workshops with every machine we need, which we wouldn’t be able to buy ourselves. They also arrange speed-dating events with potential investors to help get our ideas out there, although we haven’t managed to attract much interest yet. It’s quite hard being based out here in the middle of nowhere.’

But others see the seclusion as a benefit, freeing Akademgorodok of the inflated hype around Skolkovo, Medvedev’s tech centre on the outskirts of Moscow, where the echoing corridors of David Adjaye’s monumental school of business and management grossly over-anticipated the bustle it would foster.

‘We’re lucky that kind of money doesn’t come here,’ says programmer and Akademgorodok resident Dmitri Lebedev. ‘It inflates land values and wraps an artificial blanket around businesses. It’s like animals in a zoo: when you let them out, they will die. We thrive here, leading a wild life in the forest.’

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

Social responsibility and ethics are an essential part of the architect’s role

Architects place huge value on professional standards and their role in supporting public interest, working hard to build better environments for people to live and work in.

While these principles shape the work of practitioners around the world, changes to the environment within which we operate lead us to question the compatibility of these values with current trends in urban development, procurement and the challenges of increasing globalisation and competition.

The architect’s role in construction workers’ welfare, the displacement of communities caused by urban regeneration and the impact of international investment in new housing are three issues that have been under the spotlight in recent times. Accusations of complicity as part of the supply chain involved in such projects are concerning for all those affected, particularly as our profession has always had a strong moral compass with a long and proud history of social activism. The importance architects have given to sustainable and accessible design illustrates the profession’s sense of responsibility and adaptation to support society better.

But is there more we could do? Could our Institute do more to help local authorities to stand up to developers who see affordable housing policies as an inconvenience rather than a fundamental part of their role?

The RIBA Code of Conduct’s guiding principles cover integrity, competence and skill – including requirements that members have regard for the effect of their work on its users and the local community. Whether to make changes to the Code is part of our discussions as we develop the RIBA’s strategy and business plans up to 2020. Ethics, as always, will form a core part of this strategy and we are committed to showing even greater leadership on issues they encompass. Earlier this year we announced our co-founding of an International Ethics Standards Coalition and we are developing more guidance for members in the area of social responsibility and ethical practice – ironically, one of the recommendations of the recent Edge Commission Report on the future of professionalism, ‘Collaboration for Change’.

Many of these ethical issues are actually symptoms of other failings and conflicts. For example, in many parts of the UK, particularly in cities like London where the shortage of new homes is most acute, the housing market has reached the point where only the wealthiest can contemplate buying their own home. The lack of affordable housing is why the RIBA is part of Homes for Britain – a campaign that brings together architects, housing associations, house builders, planners and landlords to call on the government to make tackling the housing crisis a priority. That this needs a greater focus and incentive to build more high quality affordable homes is beyond doubt – it isn’t an issue that can be solved with one sweep of a pen. Over recent years, the RIBA has argued that local government and housing associations should be given greater freedom to invest in building new homes. Moving forward, we’re looking at how the rules around viability and affordable housing requirements can be clarified and strengthened to enable local authorities to stand up to developers who see affordable housing policies as an inconvenience rather than a fundamental part of their role as good corporate citizens.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed their thoughts on ethics, and other important issues during our recent discussion sessions and online consultation on the RIBA Strategy 2016-2020. If you haven’t been able to participate, or have further thoughts to share, please do email me at president@riba.org.

Stephen Hodder

We’re looking at how to help local authorities to stand up to developers who see affordable housing policies as an inconvenience rather than a fundamental part of their role.

RIBA/AJA STIRLING EVENT

The RIBA takes Stirling to Jersey with a special RIBA/AJA Stirling Prize debate as part of the Jersey Architecture Biennale 2015. Inaugural Stirling Prize winner Stephen Hodder MBE will introduce the event, followed by Tony Chapman who will share the history of the Stirling Prize, including a film about James Stirling. The day will conclude with representatives of each of the six short-listed architecture practices discussing their designs, chaired by Hodder.

Friday 18 September, 10.30am – 4pm, St Helier, Jersey. Tickets are free but booking essential. Book via jerseyarchitects.com/events

Holly Exley

The RIBA Journal August 2015
Perhaps it was Selo’s provision of a financial incentive to the entrants of the third RIBA Journal Eye Line competition that had the judges wondering what the colour of money was – it seemed to be yellow. The £2000 first prize has created more of an international pull too, with significantly more entries from Europe and the US – a fact reflected in the following pages. But the colour?

After sifting the initial 217 entries to a final 40, RIBAJ editor Hugh Pearman wondered if the move away from monochrome might be due to the fact that this year’s projects are ‘less dystopia and more fairground’. This lemon curd optimism resulted in the Hokusai-cum-Metabolism of Adam Roberts’ ‘Kyomachiya Futures’, Michael Powell’s Plutostatum and Mery Hermita Samosir’s ‘Boolean Strategy’ but it was the sunflower caramel of a sugar arcade proposal that finally whetted the judges’ appetites. Dystopias continued to make their presence felt however, generally in their signature black and white. Charlotte Wilson gave us a challenging view of central London fracking, Dominic Dickens posited the unrelenting grid of his ‘Drop Dead City’ and Soon Min Hong gave a prescient re-reading of the thrill ride experience in colour with his ‘Risk Theme Park’.

The target for this year’s judges – Pearman, artist Nathan Coley and previous winners Amelia Hunter (2014) and Tom Noonan (2013) – seemed to be a drawing not that represented a proposal but that was propositional in itself; one that through the act of rendering intimates other possibilities, liberating rather than closing down the viewer’s thinking. The judges’ language seemed to skirt around the same inscrutable issue but the criteria were fixed and incontestable. Coley was looking for ‘drawings that record a process rather than just presenting a result’, Noonan craved ‘work that pushed some boundary of representation’ and Hunter sought something ‘on the edge of bravery’.

As it turns out, the judges were less swayed by the time a drawing might have taken, than by the immediacy of its visual communication. And size didn’t matter either – some 2m long drawings were summarily dispatched leaving others no bigger than a sheet of A4. Even a stimulating and clear programme might stumble before a vague, even surreal narrative. The drawing was everything. As a stopped clock tells the right time twice a day, so vagueness can be captured in a moment of needling clarity. Coley put it most succinctly when he said that a drawing is not a ‘closed device’ but an evolving interrogation: ‘We want people to manifest a consciousness of the type of drawing they are doing – is it correct for the feeling they want to express?’ After seeing this year’s winners, we hope you agree that they are.

**The power of suggestion**
The unrelenting, brutalist nature of his critique of the slab typology in Tehran took on a wistful softness when applied to his ‘Variations in Urban Garden’
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Second winner
Farah Farina Fadzil, University of Greenwich, London
Sugarburgh: A Sugar Arcade

In Farah’s syrupy fantasy Mary Berry rules as Queen of Sugarburgh. In this city, the topography is a table top, beneath which a whole newly melted world ‘drips’ down only to freeze into a caramelised ‘brittle’ urban landscape. Farah’s caramel ‘secretion towers’ here seem formally to fill the void left between French Art Deco and Italian visionary Antonio Sant’Elia’s Futurism. All is meticulously drawn in 0.1 black ink and then drowned in caramel amber watercolour. Beguiling the judges with the concept as they dived into the immersive richness of the images, all put the entry in their top three. With its amber hues redolent of Soane’s ‘dull religious light’, the pervasiveness of the single colour was ‘strangely refreshing’ for Hunter, while Noonan echoed its ‘eerie quality of light’. Pearman was rapt by their sheer presence; while Coley, oddly for an artist, advised that when discussing it, the judges ‘should not shy away from unfashionable adjectives like beautiful’.
The RIBA Journal August 2015

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Culture
Eye Line drawing competition

Third winner
Neil Spiller, Hawksmoor chair of architecture and landscape, University of Greenwich, London

Longhouse

Pearman praised the boldness of the dean of the University of Greenwich’s submission, leading to a discussion about whether the former Bartlett tutor’s body of pedagogical work might make him the subject of more or less criticism. In deliberate counterpoint to the surreal digital output of most of his students, Spiller has remained devoted to works in pen on paper, and the Longhouse submission – presented as a real house for a professor of Surrealism – is no exception. Here, Spiller sets Henry Moore against Francis Bacon in a fight for supremacy of his initial conceptual studies for the ongoing design. Noonan was impressed by the butter paper ground plan that, like Mike Webb’s seminal ‘Temple Island’ project, ‘intimated its intuitive, time-based nature’. Coley picked up on Pearman’s registering of the work’s ‘reflective quality’ by noting that drawing dimensions were all in inches rather than centimetres. The third prize was best summed up however by Hunter, who felt it important to recognise people ‘who spend their lives interrogating the act of drawing itself’.

An explosion of colour and sweetness:
Farah Fadzil’s ‘Sugar Arcade’ (previous page) trumps the powerful entry by her Greenwich architecture school head, Neil Spiller (this page).
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Culture
Eye Line drawing competition

**Commended**
Anton James, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia
Bungarrribee Parklands

RMIT professor and landscape practitioner Anton James’ loose, conceptual sketchbook paintings attempt to get to the core of creating a new 345ha park in Western Sydney on a brownfield industrial site. His loose, intuitive style of representation is the tracking of a response at its genesis, a gathering of conceptual forces. There’s a nod to Will Alsop in their fluidity and, as Noonan notes, in his simple plan pictogram, a semblance of a Cedric Price ‘big idea’. While the judges felt that in isolation the individual drawings might signify little, taken together, as Pearman sums up, ‘in a few deft, elemental lines and splashes of colour, a sense of the landscape, context, challenge and response begin to emerge.’

In a few deft, elemental lines and splashes of colour, a sense of the landscape, context, challenge and response begin to emerge.

**Commended**
John Kirsimagi, Harvard Graduate School of Design
St Augustine Beach Puppet Theatre

Kirisimagi’s proposal for a theatre on a Florida beach makes marionettes of us all using a building with a party hat on, intended to play the role of a puppet; a festive yet empty prop, changing with the light and looking down on the performers on the beach below. The slightly ghostly presence was created using Photoshop to create a collage of paper and model photographs. The judges were impressed by its Superstudio-like flatness and emptiness and by the boldness of the composition. The simplicity of the images all contributed to the atmospheric effect. Pearman was drawn to its ‘straightforward technique and cool sparseness’, with Hunter remarking on its ‘confidence and control’.
The delicate axonometrics of Hall’s Ise shrine echo the traditions of Japanese shrine-building, where, since the 7th century, the woodland shrines are destroyed and rebuilt every 20 years in a continuous cycle of continuity and impermanence. Based on the indigenous narrative of hand scroll paintings, Hall has looked to see how the traditional skill might be used as a representational tool for the architecture – perhaps it’s no coincidence that kami in Japanese can mean both ‘deity’ and ‘paper’, depending on the characters used. Coley could not comment on the architecture but was struck by the delicacy of expression. Pearman was encouraged by the presence of and representation of humanity in the images – a fundamental component of the shrine building process. Fine, tiny and almost Luddite in execution, he saw the pieces as both ‘off kilter and artful.’

Hall has looked to see how the traditional skill might be used as a representational tool for the architecture.
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Who will be the 20th RIBA Stirling Prize winner?

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Visit architecture.com/RIBAStirlingPrize to see this year’s shortlist and to book your tickets. #StirlingPrize
Commended
Luma Ifram, Royal College of Art, London
Carpenters Estate Series

Of all the works submitted, Ifram’s typographical pictorial studies, fashioned from conversations with residents of an east London estate and an old style typewriter with black and red ribbon, caused the most lively debate. Perhaps, as Pearman said of the process of recording, the medium spoke metaphorically of some otherwise unheard voice. Coley seemed romanced, in a Tinguely-esque way, by the idea of ‘using a machine to build a machine’, saying ‘whatever you think about it, it’s doing something no-one else is doing – proposing rather then presenting.’ Noonan was more guarded, excited by the potential of its ‘teetering on the edge of something’ but wanting to know ‘how much further she could have pushed the machine’. Hunter however ran with its elemental nature, calling it ‘a good antidote to aesthetic porn’.
Commended
Skye Yuxi Sun, Royal College of Art, London
Treasure Island

Skye Yuxi Sun’s initial proposition at first seems fantasist — an archipelago of islands acting as a tax haven for the world’s wealthiest elite, constructed in the middle of the Thames estuary? Skye seems to look at it with humour, a near-extinct polar bear luxuriating in its own freezing pool. But as she pulls back in scale the idea doesn’t seem quite so strange; the islands, rendered out of the white of the page, have real form. And her island plan engaged. ‘There’s a layer of pure seduction,’ says Noonan. ‘It could just as easily be a constellation’. And would it matter? Far from rendering the project absurd, a gnawing awareness of its ultimate tangibility creeps up. Wealth and decadence merge suddenly with viability — this is Grexit, pursued by bear.
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We provide the design support you need for the front, back and interior of any facility. For all traffic types, through a single point of contact. That’s market leading.
Charles Correa
1930 – 2015

India’s pre-eminent architect and disciple of Corb, whose designs include the Mahatma Ghandi memorial complex and Toronto’s Ismaili Centre

Charles Mark Correa had presence, physically and intellectually. Tall, silver-haired from middle age, combative in debate and with a mischievous wit, he was an acolyte of Le Corbusier but whose own work went in a very different, more mystic and organic direction: an architecture that grew up with and helped to define modern, independent India. For him context was everything, whether that was for a cultural centre or a complete urban district. He received the Royal Gold Medal of the RIBA as early as 1984, the Praemium Imperiale a decade later, and the Aga Khan Award in 1998, and came to be known as modern India’s greatest architect.

In 2009 in the RIBA’s Florence Hall I was in the replica Cabanon on display there – Corb’s holiday hut – when the lofty, unmistakable figure of Correa appeared in the doorway. We’d not met for years. He’d been in Lisbon, overseeing his Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown, arguably his last great work (it was to open in 2011). For him, he explained, Lisbon and London were both relatively close in Europe so it was worth taking one more flight just to experience the Cabanon. He appeared to more than fill it. We met again in 2013, when his exhibition at the RIBA celebrated his gift of his lifetime’s archive to the Institute, a very valuable resource indeed as the exhibition demonstrated. There was the sense that he was tidying up, to an extent getting his affairs in order.

We finally crossed paths in Toronto in late 2014, at the opening of his Ismaili Centre there, sharing its parkland site with the Aga Khan Museum by Fumihiko Maki. Correa’s prayer hall in the centre, a beautiful space beneath a double-skin opalescent glass roof that acts as a beacon at night, is all about the numinous quality of light and that, he said, was something he owed to Frank Lloyd Wright. No trad architectural religious references for him (as it happened a Roman Catholic), rather something subtler. ‘You have to have the freedom to speak in your contemporary voice,’ he said. ‘You devalue that if you just make a cartoon version of history. There’s no need to do golden domes.’ Tiring quickly by then, it seemed to be with satisfaction that he announced: ‘This is my last building.’

Correa crossed cultures. Born in Hyderabad (now Secunderabad), he studied first at the University of Bombay, proceeded to the University of Michigan, thence to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He learned from Louis Kahn and Richard Buckminster Fuller, and returned to an India where Le Corbusier, Max Fry and Jane Drew were building Chandigarh. He was later to adopt the large round black-rimmed spectacles associated with Corb. But when he set up his practice in 1958, he steadily developed his own voice through such projects as the Mahatma Ghandi memorial complex in Ahmedabad, completed in 1963 and – thinking on the very large scale – his 1964 proposal with Shiresh Patel and Pravina Desai for New Bombay. Though he became chief architect for the new city from 1970-75 and was in 1985 made chairman of the National Committee on Urbanisation by prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, he experienced frustrations in being only partly allowed to achieve his urbanistic intent.

Architecture that is open to the sky, the courtyard form, the labyrinth, the mandala, deployment of the ordering and enclosing geometry of the curve – these are Correa’s architectural legacy. Typically, when he finally engaged with high-rise building in the Kanchangjunga apartments of 1984, he cut deeply into the form to bring in the light and air. This was housing for the affluent, but all his life he worked on low-cost housing schemes as well. His 1962 ‘tube house’ in Ahmedabad should be studied by anyone interested in compact, replicable mass housing.

Although he was commissioned to design housing in Peru as early as 1969 and in the 1970s was a consultant to the United Nations HABITAT, it was relatively late in life that he began to acquire significant commissions outside India – returning to his alma mater MIT in a collaborative team to build the McGovern Brain and Cognitive Science Complex, completed in 2005.

Correa was above all an architect of conviction, social purpose and lyricism. As his old friend and architect colleague Jasbir Sawhney said in tribute: ‘To me, what Satyajit Ray is to films and Tagore to poetry, Charles Correa is to architecture in India.’

He leaves his wife Monika and daughter Nandita. ♦

Hugh Pearman
Short shrift
I thought it rather sad having read Derek Walker’s obituary (RibaJ July 2015) to find at the end a little note stating that a longer version had been published in The Independent.

What does that tell us about our profession when we have to read an edited down version of a respected colleague’s obituary? Surely this is where we should see the full version?

However, I suspect this won’t be a problem when I move on.

Tim Wilson, Harrogate

Elephant in the room
Readers loved our ‘Parting Shot’ RIBA photo archive shot of Sir Hugh Casson’s Elephant House at London Zoo (RibaJ July 2015) but noted today’s absence of pachyderms…

Anatoly Patrick @AnatolyPatrick
Love #LondonZoo. Lived next door once, and could hear the elephants trumpeting in their stylish #brutalist home.

gillian darley @gillian darley
I see it’s the Tapir House now. Doesn’t have quite the same gravitas or anthropomorphic elements playing out …

Resilience rage
Our report on the two-day international conference ‘Designing City Resilience’ at the RIBA (page 30, this issue) started a semantic discussion on the R-word....

Richard Ashley @RichardAshley99
What’s the next overused word one wonders? Sustainability-resilience-common sense? (I know it’s 2 words). Resilience now meaningless.

FionaG @FiDaisyG
@RichardAshley99 A resilient system keeps working for the people included; a sustainable system keeps working for the whole planet.

Richard Ashley @RichardAshley99
@FiDaisyG I disagree profoundly (and even have journal papers). Resilient systems are those that recover from shock to then function.

FionaG @FiDaisyG
@RichardAshley99 Apologies – I meant that all sustainable systems are resilient but not all resilient system are sustainable.

Richard Ashley @RichardAshley99
@FiDaisyG Now there I do agree with you.. hence we need to recover the sustainable agenda.

Bad plan
…doubts were expressed over the government’s proposal to remove the requirement for planning permission on brownfield sites...

Clare Murray @ClarehMurray
Recipe for disaster... quality, need and effect on neighbours?! No planning means no daylight, sunlight – overshadowing.

Valued Costed
… and we’re always happy to be of service, so liked this tweet:

Zara Bloomfield @zara_bloomfield
Your ‘Costed’ feature in PIP supplement was incredibly useful for roofing & cladding, are there any more of these planned? #architect

RIBA Journal @RIBAJ
@zara_bloomfield Thanks! Every issue of PIP has a ‘Costed’ on a different aspect of specifying for building.

Recipe for disaster... quality, need and effect on neighbours?! No planning means no daylight, sunlight – overshadowing

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Find us on Facebook & Instagram
Title: How to Avoid Screed Failure
This seminar covers the different types of floor screeds and their applications. Participants will learn about causes of failure as well as how they can specify the ideal screed solution.

Ian Jones  
T: 01270 753000  
E: ian.jones@flowcrete.com  
W: www.flowcrete.co.uk

C: Tom Herring  
T: 01582 869 010  
E: toh@idealcombi-direct.com

Title: Good window and door design to meet legislative requirements
Idealcombi’s CPD has been designed to make architects aware of window regulations which could become a nightmare at the later stage of a project. The CPD will look at challenges such as Lifetime Homes, SBD, Acoustic solutions, U & G Values, Ventilation and how sometimes the various requirements can conflict on each other.

Ronacrete makes high performance polymer modified cementitious and resin based products in the UK and China. Ronacrete products are listed on RIBA Product Selector, NBS and the National BIM Library.

C: Sean Parr  
T: 01543 443000  
E: cpd@geze.com  
W: www.geze.co.uk

GEZE is a world leader in manual and automatic door and window control systems, glass products, and smoke and heat ventilation.

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.

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F: 01788 552 812  
E: info-uk@nora.com  
W: www.nora.com/uk

Title:  
Rubber Floor Coverings - a product with fascinating properties
Our iPad based, interactive seminar looks at the technical and aesthetic aspects of specifying resilient floorcoverings, the properties of rubber and the quite unique design impact that can be made to any interior.

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W: www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk

Title:  
At ease: 2015’s most influential ideas
The latest design and construction innovations are discussed in this CPD. The new product presentation is supported by slides, audio and video content.

T: 020 685 9685  
W: www.comar-alu.co.uk  
E: projects@parksidegroup.co.uk

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.

Title: Guided Tour of Roca London Gallery
A 45 minute tour exploring the different environments of the Zaha Hadid-designed Roca London Gallery.

Located in Chelsea’s Design Quarter, attendees will discuss the various aspects of the Gallery’s conception and construction.

E: cpd.contact@uk.roca.net  
T: 0207 610 9503  
W: www.rocalondongallery.com

Title: ‘Why WRAS’
Hansgrohe has a new RIBA approved core curriculum CPD about WRAS (Water Regulations Advisory Scheme) called ‘Why WRAS’. Content discusses the importance of compliance to ensure successful project specifications and explores the risk of non-compliance which can have far reaching implications across all the stakeholders. The Regulations apply to all commercial buildings such as hotels, large housing projects and offices. Hansgrohe has over 800 WRAS-approved products across a wide range of collections, award-winning designs and price-points.

T: 01372 465 655  
E: expertise@hansgrohe.co.uk  
W: www.hansgrohe.co.uk

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Byrne House
Gareth Pywell, founder of POW Architects, specified three neo™ roof windows for his own central London home. Internally each neo™ has been fitted with a concealed cill motor and white linings to form a continuation with the contemporary décor. Gareth commented "Externally the plane of the roof remains unbroken. There is nothing not to like about this wonderful product".
Photography credit Andy Haslam
www.therooflightcompany.co.uk

Cembrit slating expertise now available in print
Cembrit has developed a ‘A Guide to Double Lap Slating with Fibre Cement Slates’ to provide specifiers, craftsmen and trades people with the relevant information for the successful design and installation of pitched roofing with fibre cement slates. The 80-page document, demonstrates how Cembrit’s knowledge of double lap slating and fibre cement technology offers users peace of mind not available from other suppliers, as well as highlighting the range of slates and accessories the company offers.
www.cembrit.co.uk

Rodeca panels help to colour the Olympic Park regeneration
Work has just begun on the installation of 1,400m² of Rodeca’s translucent polycarbonate cladding panels on the former Olympic Park. The 50mm wall panels were specified by Hawkins\Brown architects for existing and new circulation cores or staircases at the former international broadcast centre at the heart of the 1.2million ft² Here East campus – the regeneration of London 2012’s state-of-the-art media facilities.
www.rodeca.co.uk

BIM instructional video published by Kawneer
Hot on the heels of the launch of its BIM capability, leading architectural aluminium systems supplier Kawneer has released an online video showing how to incorporate one of its BIM models, hosted on the bimstore website, into a building design.

The 10-minute step-by-step guide provides specifiers with a complete walkthrough of how to incorporate Kawneer’s AA®541 casement window into a typical project, including into curtain walling.
www.kawneer.co.uk

Contour Casings takes a lead role in improving UK classroom hygiene
An innovative antimicrobial coating agent has succeeded in wiping out almost all bacteria that are usually present in classrooms.
Contour Casings, a leading manufacturer of LST radiators and radiator guards, and a long standing BioCote® partner, was a lead participant in the study. All Contour LST radiator guards incorporate the BioCote coating in their ‘final finish’ as standard.
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www.wsitch.co.uk

New Haddonstone catalogue launched
Haddonstone has launched an inspirational new 216 page catalogue containing the world’s most comprehensive collection of fine architectural stonework and landscape ornaments. The catalogue has been divided into colour coded sections including a ‘Latest Designs’ section highlighting recent collaborations with Robert A.M. Stern, Adam Architecture, the Soane Museum and Octagon Developments. Haddonstone designs range from classical and traditional to contemporary, Haddonstone also create custom-made designs
www.haddonstone.com

Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems are constantly looking for ways to exceed what the market demands. Current trends are for window and door systems to provide aesthetics as well as achieve environmental, security, thermal efficiency and life cycle targets. Therefore, Comar are pleased to launch their latest development: the Comar SP1 Eco+ range. Using aluminium the Comar SP1 Eco+ system is 100% recyclable.
www.comar-alu.co.uk

Spa-like cleanliness within a sleek and streamlined exterior
Winner of two prestigious design awards, for its outstanding product design coupled with sophisticated technology, the Geberit AquaClean Mera takes the comfort and convenience of a shower toilet to a whole new level.
Picking up the Design Plus Award powered by ISH 2015 and the Red Dot Design Award 2015, the Geberit AquaClean Mera impresses not only with its aesthetic appeal, but also because of its array of intelligent comfort functions.
www.geberit-aquaclean.co.uk
VMZINC launches first engraved zinc surface

In response to feedback from over 400 architects, VMZINC has developed AZENGAR®, the first engraved rolled zinc facade and roofing material. As the lightest shade of zinc available, its surface has a matt appearance, the engraving giving rise to delicate variations in light refraction. It is unaffected by fingerprints and therefore ideal for both exterior and interior use.

White Oiled Parquet Floor in Solid Oak New from Junckers

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

Saunders are sold on Kawneer

Aluminium systems by Kawneer were the default specification for Saunders Architects when it came to the glazed elements of a new retail park.

Kawneer’s AA®100 zone-drained curtain walling, AA®541 fixed light windows, AA®543 tiltturn vents and series 190 heavy-duty commercial entrance doors feature on four units at Bell Green Retail Park in Sydenham, south east London.

Exams and push ups, University of St Andrews chooses Gerflor

The University of St Andrews turned to international flooring and finishing solutions specialists Gerflor when they were looking for a best all-round solution that would deliver durability, ease of installation and performance. Taraflex™ Sport M Comfort was specified. Their sports hall would need a total 600m² of this remarkable product, which went down over the old floor bringing it up immediately to the new European standards for shock absorption.

Bang & Olufsen Home Integration

World First Class Danish home entertainment systems brand Bang & Olufsen has launched their unique design studio in London. The specialist team of Home Integration Experts work closely with architects and designers in providing complete design, supply, installation and aftercare service to the end user.

Authentic Shades With Modern Appeal

Bringing shades to life that stretch back hundreds of years, the Crown Trade Historic Colour Collection draws on eight of the most distinctive architectural and design styles to influence British interiors. Featuring the major design movements of Palladian and Neo-Classical, Regency, Arts & Crafts, Gothic Revival, Victorian Eclectic, Art Deco and post-war ‘50’s Sketchbook’ the collection enables specifiers to introduce shades that are personal to the design of an historic building.

nora nTx

Fast, efficient and cost effective nora systems has launched a pioneering and innovative installation technology called nora nTx. This new system halves installation time and considerably reduces costs. It works on all conventional subsurfaces – even on existing floorings – and can be walked on and cleaned immediately after it is installed. This helps to minimise downtime, especially for renovation work during ongoing operations. The system is also completely moisture tolerant.

Aperam stainless steel shingles for 80,000 sq. ft. M&S

Aperam 0.6mm thick stainless steel façade shingles have been used on the 80,000 sq. ft. £65m Marks and Spencer’s at Glasgow Fort Retail Park. 2K, the smoothest of the non-reflective, polished finishes was specified to provide a distinctive entrance feature when approached from the motorway. Stainless steel is estimated to have saved around 18 tonnes in façade weight over an equivalent in zinc or copper.

Harnessing technology to create better buildings

Interflow UK has 25 years’ experience in supplying and installing rugged and reliable solutions for sealing utility service entries, air cleaning and filtering together with stainless steel in-floor drainage. Interflow UK are the sole distributor of a specialist range of products for the built environment. Sealing systems for utility ducts from leading manufacturer DOYMA are complimented by the famous puddle flanges from FRANK, the shear- tolerant solution from Konex.

DORMA’s new ST FLEX Secure automatic sliding door combines contemporary aesthetics with maximum security, to provide a stylish sliding door with the latest in anti-intruder and anti-vandalism protection. The ST FLEX Secure allows building entrances to maintain a welcoming front of house setup, retaining transparency without compromising on security. Compliant with disabled access legislation in the UK and Ireland, this fine-framed frontage can be fully integrated with DORMA access control, for a discreet access solution.

nora systems has launched their unique design studio in London. The specialist team of Home Integration Experts work closely with architects and designers in providing complete design, supply, installation and aftercare service to the end user.

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Towers of Congress
Brasilia, 1957-1964

This spectacular photograph of the Towers of Congress in Brasilia, taken from the Federal Supreme Court, is the result of a perfect marriage between the work of a great architect, Oscar Niemeyer (1907-2013), and that of a talented amateur photographer, Monica Pidgeon (1913-2009). Pidgeon, born Monica Lehmann in Chile, returned to South America in 1962, and took a number of remarkable shots of Brazil’s recently completed capital. Her interest in Brasilia had already produced an article in the November 1958 issue of Architectural Design – which Pidgeon had been editing since 1946 – featuring a discussion on the problems of capital cities between Brasilia’s chief urban planner Lucio Costa, Denys Lasdun, Peter Smithson and Arthur Korn, chair of MARS town planning sub-committee. The article was illustrated by Costa’s sketches and photographs of models of Niemeyer’s buildings, as well as two sets of plans for the reconstruction of Berlin’s city centre, one by Korn and Stephen Rosenberg and the other by Alison and Peter Smithson. ● Valeria Carullo
SonaSpray K-13 Black - fast & economical acoustic finish

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Grand Designs London 2-10 May 2015