

RIBA

The RIBA Journal

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Through the oculus at Ryder's Manchester Library
Photo
Morley von Sternberg



RIBA  Enterprises

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Architect:
Foster & Partners

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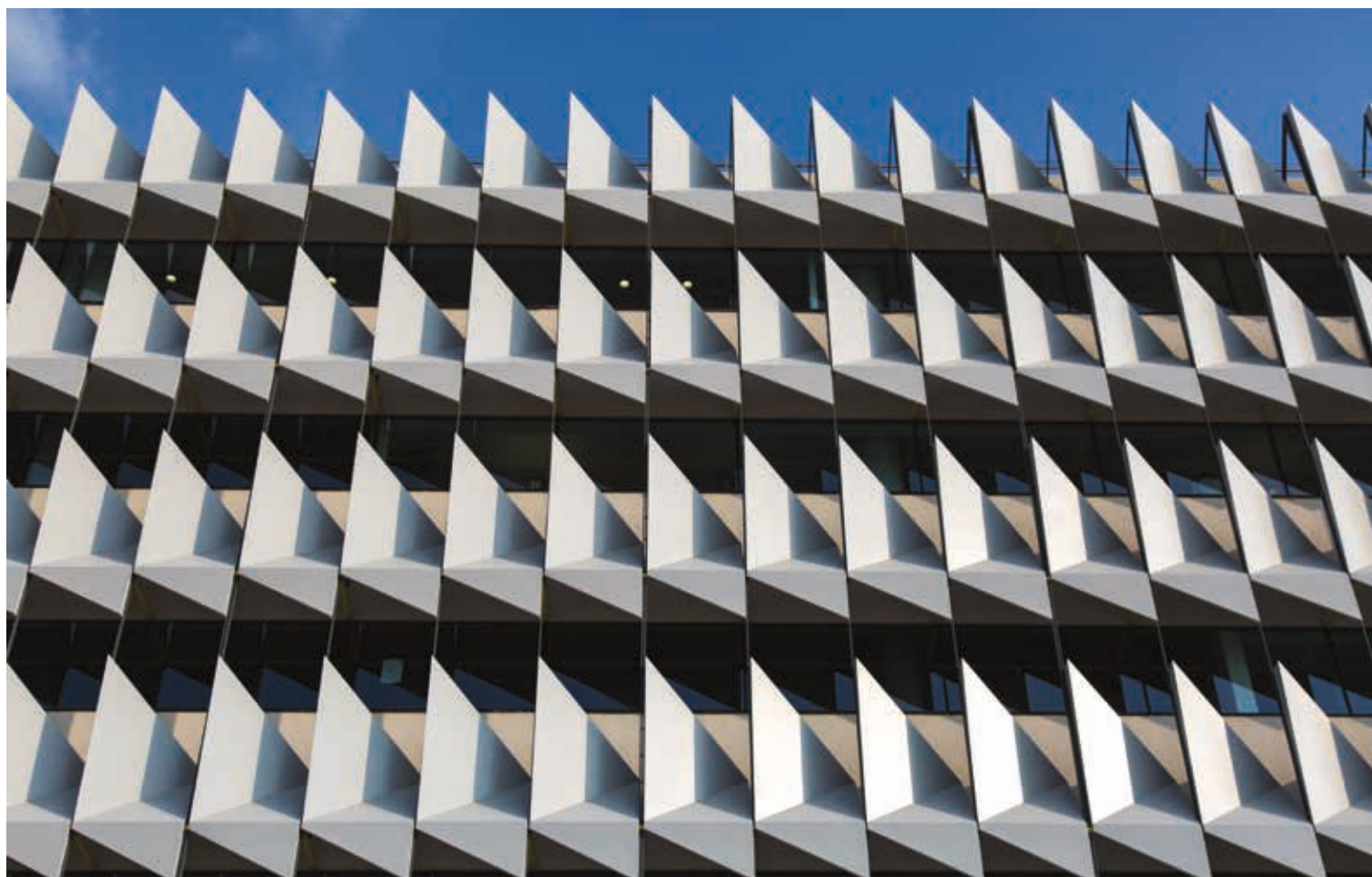
1: Buildings

There was a point at which sustainability looked like it might change the face of architecture. And more particularly its rooflines. Stroll along Manchester's Oxford Road and you cannot fail to notice the exuberant and excessive chimneyscape of the Contact Theatre, Alan Short's demonstration of natural ventilation applied to the revamped sixties theatre (completed in 1999). From Feilden Clegg Bradley's jaunty solar chimneys for

the BRE in Garston (1996) to the formal bronze affairs at Portcullis House (2001) the chimney looked prevalent enough to trigger a counter movement of architects promising clients that chimneys weren't essential for a sustainable building. We have in fact learnt how to turn whole buildings into chimneys, the science and modelling behind it ensuring that atria, as at the Siemens headquarters in Masdar City, and voids, as at the centre

of Manchester Central Library, perform as strongly as they need to for cool, conditioning free natural ventilation. The Venturi effect of funnelling air has proved more significant to the body and innards of architecture than more recent, and celebrated, Venturi theorising about Las Vegas and ducks. Now practices can resist bolt-on green bling technologies – but only if they go beyond fabric first to build the basics into their designs. ●

Folded steel insulation on the facade of
Sheppard Robson's Masdar City HQ for
Siemens, page 24



NICOLE LUETTECKE

WoodBlock House, London
dRMM

Words Lee Mallett

Photographs Alex de Rijke

'We've tried pretty much every material over 27 years in construction and I've come to the point where I don't see any downside with timber,' says dRMM's Alex de Rijke.

How irresistible, then, to be asked by aptly-named artist Richard Woods, whose work is all about colourful printing on timber, to design a new home and studio for him and his family in Bethnal Green. Even more irresistible, being sandwiched between a demure house by Sergison Bates and a white block by Caruso St John, not to turn up the volume in a witty way.

WoodBlock House is a colourful intervention in Coate Street, opposite a red brick council estate. FAT's blue house is round the corner, making for a lively node of contemporary interventions celebrating Hackney's artistic and entrepreneurial renaissance.

It brings to mind London's tradition of artists' homes-cum-studios. Past RIBA president George Aitchison's studio home for Lord Leighton in Kensington and Frederick Wheeler's St Paul's Studios on Talgarth Road,

for instance, were designed in a late 19th century period of expansion, while Adjaye Associates' Dirty House for shadow artists Tim Noble and Sue Webster, or Hawkins Brown's studio for Rachel Whiteread down the road in Shoreditch, share similar ambitions – to combine art and life. Oscar Wilde (and his wife Constance who commissioned Tite Street's white interiors) would have approved along with all the aspirant aesthetes who have remodelled Shoreditch, or are busy 'work-living' in Hackney Wick. The artist's home/studio is an ideal way to exist in London.

Hackney's planners remain wary, however, of 'live-work', and on this former tyre-fitting site insisted on a clear separation between studio and residential uses. The arrangement consists of three boxes set one above the other, with a smaller studio on the second floor for Richard's wife, children's illustrator Jessica Spanyol, while a rooftop library 'shed' pops out on top.

Woods' studio with 'shop window' fills the entire ground floor and is divided into office/designing space and a making-space out back, with access to a back yard.

The first floor is a living space flowing round a central island of services and out onto a terrace overlooking the yard and side

Below The front elevation sports Richard Woods' product, bringing a splash of colour to the street, and features a 'shop window' entrance to the workshop and 'fake' front door – the real entrance is in the side alley.

Opposite Rear elevation, with second storey clad in Woods' colourful timber panelling, and first floor external terrace.

Below The staircase projects out from the side elevation to meet the wider second storey, providing cover over the side alley and more bedroom space.





access passage – a handy place for bicycles, deliveries which don't need to clutter the interior, and for moving larger pieces out from the studio and into the street.

Pulling back the side elevation to the adjacent Sergison Bates house also allows framed views of their delicate treatment of the brick party wall from inside the building.

The second floor, in contrast to the free flow of space on the first, compartmentalises bedrooms and bathrooms, distributing them around the outside of the plan and stair core. From the first floor this extends out to the wider second floor, overhanging the passage-way and helping protect it from the elements.

Art can be displayed on generous first and second floor landings while Woods' coloured timber planks feature on the main stair.

A bright band of Woods' smooth product clads the top storey, advertising his wares. Rougher hewn larch clads the lower storeys and all is constructed, apart from the ground floor slab, in structural cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels with windows – some small, some floor-to-ceiling – punched through its structural integrity.

Raised wooden floors accommodate horizontal servicing – electrics, plumbing – which rise up the building vertically in the

external insulation zone behind the cladding and only pop out where required, to meet fittings mounted directly on timber CLT surfaces. In Woods' tall-storey studio, the timber finish is painted white.

Overlapping of the CLT panels along the flank elevation to the side-passage allows the structure to be expressed internally as well as outside, and adds texture. The windows are double-glazed timber units, and guess what the living room stove burns? It augments the passive and active thermal solar gain to heat the house. The main studio slab has under-floor heating.

Three cheers then for eco-friendly CLT and timber cladding, for colour and for mixed-use. Maybe the WoodBlock House in land-use terms is a model for densifying areas of industry in east London, that might let more valuable residential use cross-subsidise the creation of more modern making-space. Construction cost for the 257m² building was £510,000, excluding fees. Speed of construction and the elimination of wet trades make CLT an interesting proposition for developers. Planners should take note too. 'Keeping on keeping in keeping' is a boring way to manage London's built environment, so thank you, Hackney planners. ●

IN NUMBERS

£510,000
construction cost excluding fees

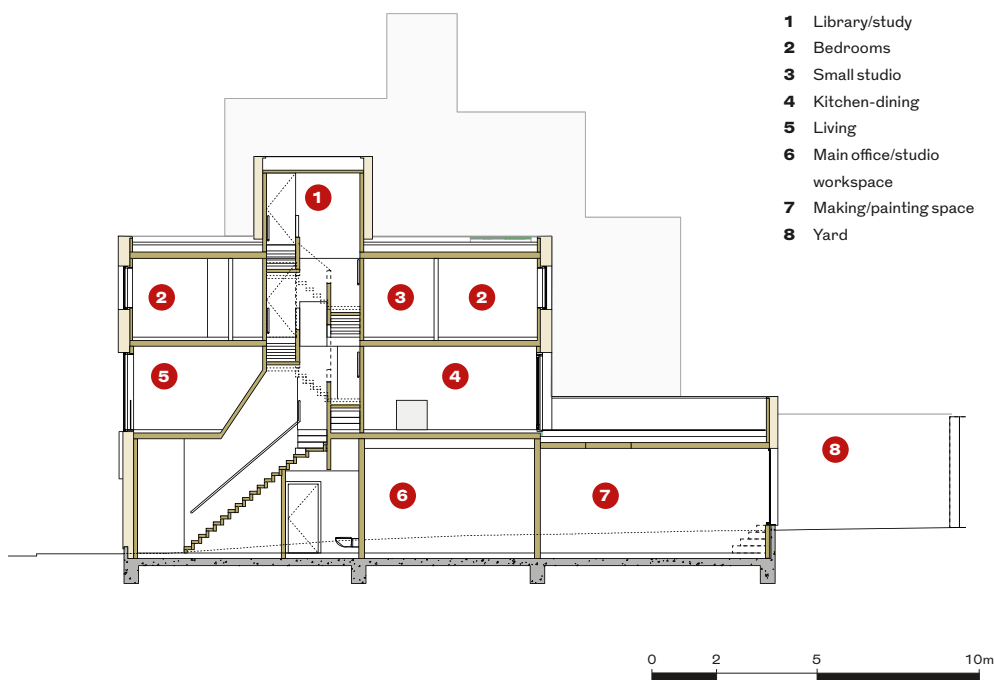
200m²
site area

323m²
gross external area

257m²
gross internal area

4
storeys

Long section



Credits


Architect dRMM

Client Richard Woods

Structural engineer Timber First

M&E consultant Michael Popper Associates

Main contractor Cape Construction



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Towards Holme Fen

Words Eleanor Young

Photograph Simon Warner

'A lot of what we talk about in composition is something more functional,' says photographer Simon Warner. Thus his investigation in exhibition form into the picturesque, exploring the ideas of landscape geographer Professor Jay Appleton. In 1975 Appleton wrote *The Experience of Landscape*. It set out the behavioural instincts that drive our understanding of place; the basic desire for

prospect and refuge, from the cosiness of the hearthside to the grand prospects that allow us to feel a mastery of our environment – whether checking for predators or looking for food.

It touched Warner. 'Beauty and felicitous design operate at a deeper level of human instinct,' he says. After a lifetime as a photographer, Warner found a huge number of his shots picking up on these fundamental themes. *Towards Holme Fen*, taken in Cambridgeshire, has many of the traditional elements of composition, with the central

division of the promising broad track setting up a tension with the claggy ploughed fields and an appeal to the needs of our hunter-gatherer ancestors. But reading it by Appleton's theory, the open fields are perfect for hunting or cultivation, while the edge of the woods offer shelter and a place to see without being seen. ●

Image, Instinct and Imagination: Landscape as Sign Language, Royal Geographic Society, London until 16 May; then Dean Clough Galleries, Halifax 7 June-7 September; and Matthew Gallery, University of Edinburgh, 26 September-4 October





A different reading

After its £40m refurbishment by Ryder Architects, Manchester Library works much better, but an injection of arrogance could have added some presence

Words Eleanor Young Photographs Morley von Sternberg

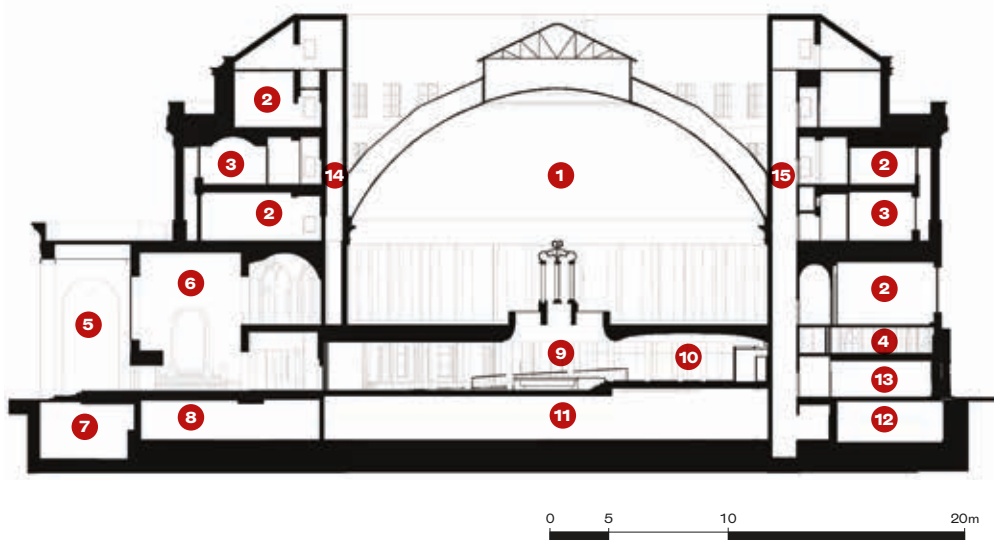
Emanuel Vincent Harris, architect of the 1930s Manchester Central Library, was a showman. His set piece circular library seems far bigger than it is, a wedding cake roof hiding the real reading room dome, plentiful pillars giving no hint of the modern steel structure working hard inside, its inches-deep Portland stone and oak implying something more solid.

That hasn't made the library any less cherished. It is Grade II* listed and was the third busiest library in the country even before refurbishment. Despite a cramped introduction to the building, the reading room of

the Great Hall on the upper levels was always a wonderful discovery. But some quirks of Harris's design did seriously limit how the library was used. In common with others of the time its floors were held up by the bookshelves themselves, giving little flexibility in shelf positioning. Not only do people expect direct access to books now, even more so since self check in, but the book stacks meant that only 30% of the floor space was accessible to the public. It also made awkward demands of circulation: readers had to go up to the first floor reading room to order a book

Section

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Great Hall (reading room) | 9 Exhibition space |
| 2 Open library | 10 Archive open access space |
| 3 Meeting room | 11 Archive storage |
| 4 Retained book stacks | 12 Plant room |
| 5 Portico | 13 Van dock |
| 6 Shakespeare Hall | 14 Riser shaft |
| 7 Plant room | 15 Goods/staff lift space |
| 8 Interpretation/exhibition space | |





IN NUMBERS

£40m
contract sum (approx)

12,500m²
gross internal floor area

£3,200/m²
gross internal floor area

NEC3 Option C
Target Cost Contract

Previous page Through the oculus, crowns and centre of the reading room issue desks, to the roof of the Great Hall.

Left Gold leaf and Portland stone lead to the glass and steel of the vertical circulation core.

Below left Ceiling of the grand entrance space of the Shakespeare Hall. The floor plane has been cleared of anything but a few helpers to guide visitors in the right direction.

Below right Oculus from ground floor mezzanine, with some light making its way through the vertical circulation core to the left.

and then librarians descend to the two floors below to get it. Not only did readers have to use the stairs: symmetry meant one staircase was never enough, there had to be two.

In Ryder's £40m reconfiguration of the library air rather than books move through the central void from the newly public ground floor. The two major moves that have allowed this change – and the opening up of around 70% of the library – have effectively gutted the building: removing the book stacks and floors and inserting new vertical circulation. It seems radical for a sound building but for the project team and English Heritage, it was an effective way to ensure that the library continued in its original use.

All but one tiny quadrant of the book stacks were removed, along with all the inner circle of floors – which could not exist without them. This has allowed the ground floor to become a true entrance to the library. Through the historic arches it welcomes visitors with plethora of choices: café, exhibition, film booths and local studies and family history library. To the first time visitor, the absence of a central desk or any obvious route can seem a bit bemusing, but staff are on hand at the door to welcome and direct people. The open plan form for most of the ground floor seems natural and having the café at its centre was deliberate. But the overspill of a café atmosphere and oversized screens of the exhibition conspire to make this noisy, visually busy and far from simple to navigate for those wishing to go beyond the café. Once settled, however, each element of the ground floor – from the furniture of the café to the self-contained film booths, to the

radial ceiling servicing – is well appointed.

The second major move is the new vertical circulation. This is more visually radical but follows the well-worn modern lexicon of glazed insertions defining themselves very differently to the historic structure. The new lifts and stairs were essential to unlocking the project which goes beyond the 1934 library building into the Town Hall Extension, also designed by Harris and curving protectively around the library. The lifts connect directly down to the crux between the buildings. Here the library continues at basement level and a customer service centre above pulls together council services in what has been seen as the ideal delivery (and property rationalisation) model in recent years. The Town Hall Extension is being reworked by Ian Simpson Architects, as is the covered link at ground level which traverses the historic cut-through between buildings and has been much debated. The link's beautiful stainless steel soffit is unlikely to compensate for the loss of truly public access, but it helps the council bring together its services.

Around the outside layers of the plan are other specialist libraries – a music library, business library and so on. On the ground floor at the front they are stone panelled, at the back timber-lined, each with a certain character of its own. Historic panelled rooms, the office of the chief librarian for example, have been converted into lettable meeting rooms and tiny offices brought back into use as study carrels for hire. Offices upstairs allow for some of the back of house library functions, cataloguing and archive work on sensitive material, including film,



which is now kept in the basement store.

But all these workaday elements – including archive storage – pale into insignificance beside the beautiful, restored reading room. Here the sound levels drop and a studious atmosphere seems naturally to assert itself. The magnificent dome has had the 1960s asbestos scraped off and been acoustically re-lined but is still quite live – careful what you whisper. It is hard to believe that the whole floor has been completely rebuilt and lined with modern servicing, ICT and power. Because, like many of the great reading rooms, reading is not that apparent in here. The bound books lining the walls are dressing for the calmest place to open up your laptop.

Among the restored furniture is the ring-shaped central issue desk, which was vinyl-topped for many years. This piece is at the centre of this project, but is easy to overlook until you reach this level. It links ground floor café and first floor reading room, creating an air path between the two, which continues up through the grilles at the top of the dome. The spiral staircase descending from the issue desk was removed and replaced with a ring of glass (sections on actuators,

ready to open if needed). Inside that is an attenuated circular construction, referred to during building as the ‘oculus’ but resembling a crown, or a series of crowns because above it in the reading room is more original joinery, four scagliola columns and an ironmongery confection reputedly donated by Harris from a well head in Italy.

The detail of the crown is a testament to the collaborative process of design and build that saw the professional and contractor teams co-located down the road in Manchester – with two Ryder teams, one acting for the client, one novated to the contractor. But that detail also reveals a lack of design vision – the arrogance that can make a building great and something that Vincent Harris had in spades. On the ground floor the historic fabric, furniture and fittings give this building its sense of quality. The impressive crown is now obscured by an interactive LED display, the grand connecting view up through it to the reading room is unlikely to be noticed due to a chunkily-designed piece of exhibition paraphernalia below it. With more space, and more of the arrogance of Harris, this ground floor could have been something special too. ●

Credits

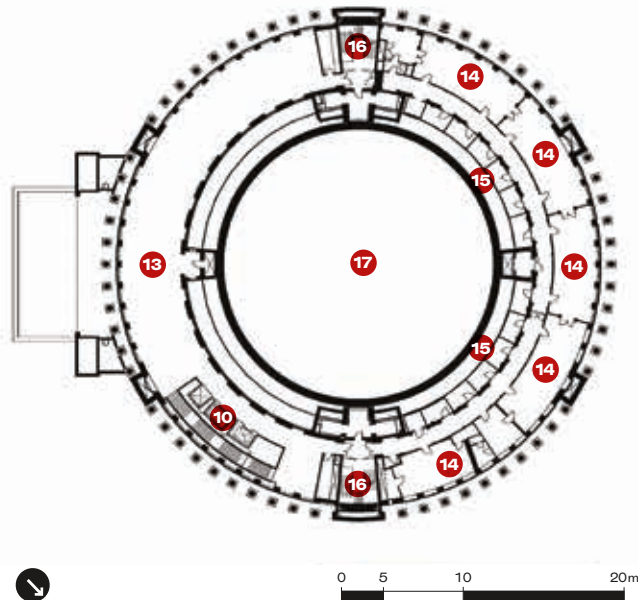
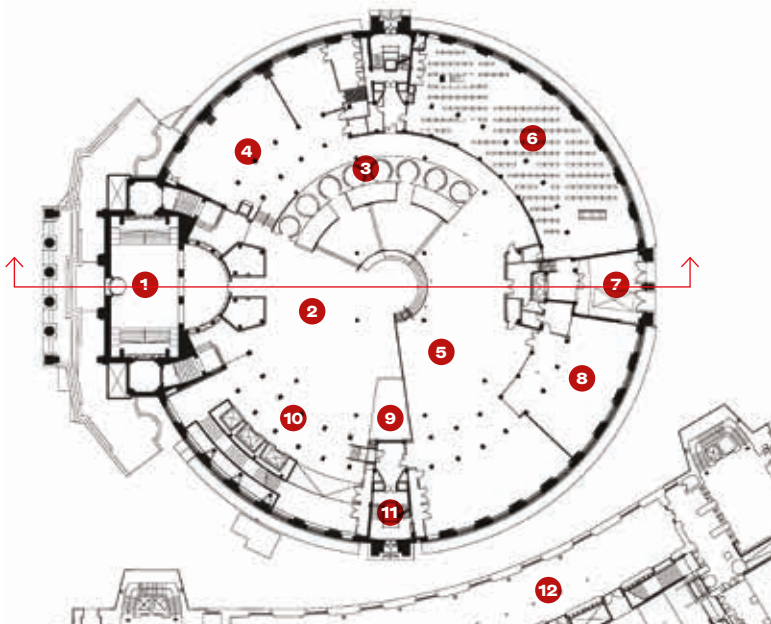
Client Manchester City Council
Architect Ryder Architecture
Contractor Laing O'Rourke
M&E service NG Bailey
Structural engineer URS
M&E engineer BDP
Heritage advisory HOK
Cost consultant Davis Langdon

Suppliers

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Glazed screens Komfort
Sanitary Armitage Shanks, Twyford, Lovair
Ironmongery Laidlaw
Doors TDSL
Lifts Ansa
Specialist paint TOR Coatings
Stair fabrication Shawton Engineering
Signage Rivermeade
Stage lighting Northern Stage
Stained glass Recclesia

Ground and second floor

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1 Shakespeare Hall | 6 Retained book stacks | 13 Open library |
| 2 Exhibition space | 7 Van dock | 14 Meeting rooms |
| 3 Film viewing pods | 8 Archive search room | 15 Study carrels |
| 4 Flexible performance space | 9 Café servery | 16 Staff stair |
| 5 Archive open access stock | 10 Vertical circulation core | 17 Void over Great Hall (reading room) |
| | 11 Goods / staff lift | |
| | 12 Town Hall Extension | |





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Slice of Coin Street life

Allies & Morrison's Rambert building at Waterloo is one step ahead, infilling a space that is yet to be created with understated class

Words Hugh Pearman Photographs Nick Guttridge

Simon Russell Beale, playing Lear at the National, becomes steadily more stooped and crooked as the play progresses and his character's physical and mental infirmities increase. Beale needs physiotherapy to keep him limber in this demanding role, and luckily, there's a place just round the back of his theatre where he can get top-notch physio attention. It's called Rambert, and this famous contemporary dance company is the latest cultural arrival on London's South Bank, in a home designed by Allies & Morrison.

Not that this is a public auditorium, because Rambert is a national touring company, deliberately with no 'home' theatre. In

London, it normally has a season at Sadler's Wells. This is its centre for rehearsal, recording (original contemporary music being intrinsic to the Rambert ethos), equipment storage and workshops, admin, public archive and the aforementioned physiotherapy rooms. Dance is an injury-prone art form, and Rambert takes the view that prevention is better than cure. And Beale's is not the only interest forthcoming from the National: creative synergies between dance and theatre are being mooted, now the two organisations are hugger-mugger.

Other organisations will be closer still, however. The Rambert building is presently



Right The main Rambert Studio runs the full width of the building at the rear.

Far left Facade of the building on Upper Ground makes a visual statement of the two smaller studios.

Near left Function drives the form from the inside out.





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curious in appearance – a deep plan with front and rear elevations but blank insulated-render flanks – because it is to be just one slice in a whole terrace of buildings laid out in a masterplan by Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands for Coin Street Community Builders on its last big plot of land. It will abut a leisure centre (which includes swimming pool) of the same height on its eastern side and a taller bookend office and retail building on the west, with a pocket park next to Waterloo Bridge. The next slice east beyond the leisure centre will be Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands' once-controversial Doon Street residential tower, rising to 43 storeys. But that's all in the future: for now, Rambert is the first to be built, and it stands in splendid isolation.

This is a tough building which is essentially all 'back of house' including a lot of space to store the company's touring equipment. An articulated truck can park inside

via the get-in at the rear. There is a public aspect to it, however: in return for the gift of the site from the landlord, Coin Street Community Builders (annual ground rent one peppercorn per year plus a pair of ballet shoes 'if required') Rambert has a community dance programme so you can come here to take part. You can also – by appointment – visit the company's archive in the basement, where as well as the rolling-rack storage there is a small permanent display.

This, then, is a curious typology: part industrial, part corporate, part performance arts, part museum, part fitness centre, all on a tight landlocked site. Its width was dictated by the dimensions of the ideal dance stage plus run-off space, which you encounter in the large Rambert Studio at the rear. Add the thickness of the walls with services, and that led to 18m overall. Clear spans are created – full width of the building in the main studio

IN NUMBERS

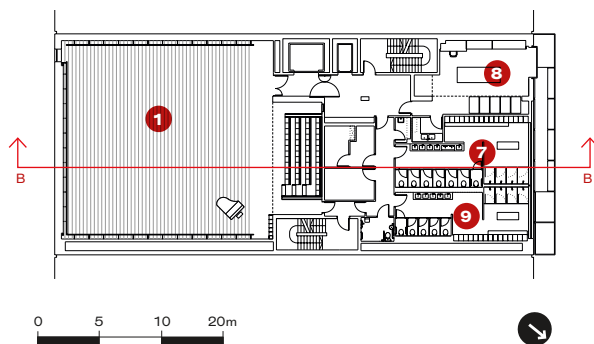
£9.1m
total contract cost

£2,626
gifa cost per m²

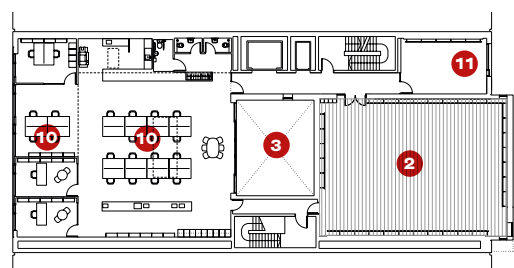
3,465m²
area

BREEAM Very Good
at design stage

First floor plan

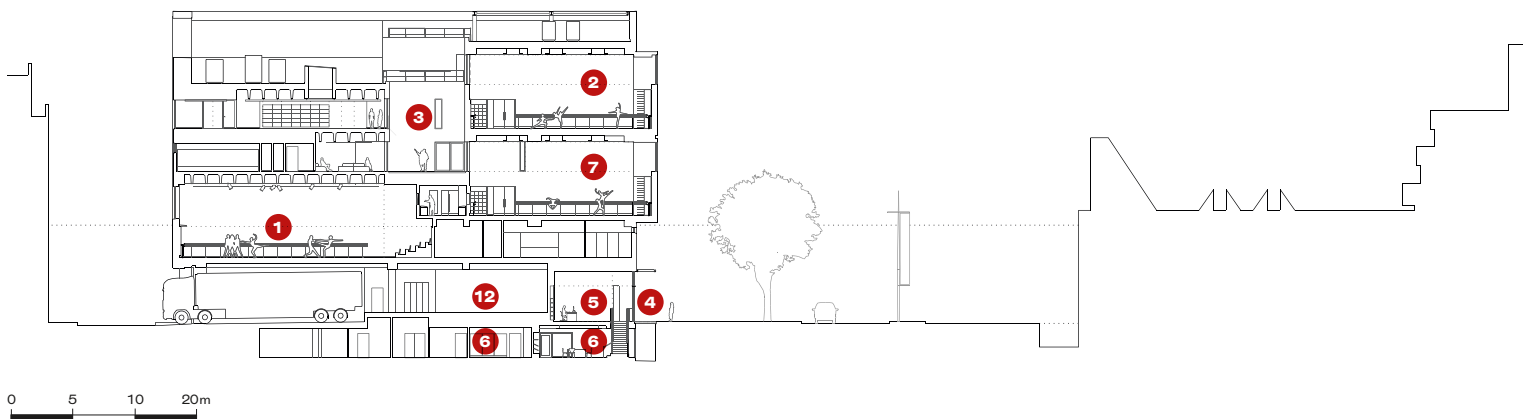


Fourth floor plan



- 1 Studio A
- 2 Studio C
- 3 Raised courtyard
- 4 Entrance
- 5 Foyer
- 6 Archive
- 7 Studio B
- 8 Wardrobe
- 9 Public changing
- 10 Offices
- 11 Individual studio
- 12 Stores

Long section



– using double T-section precast concrete beams designed for hanging considerable weight of scenery if necessary. Scooped out of the box is a small open courtyard half way up the building which – apart from being something of a calm oasis in this busy part of town – is intrinsic to the building's natural-ventilation strategy. The heat sink effect of the exposed concrete is also important here. Only the main studio – because of the need for sound recording quality – is sealed and mechanically ventilated.

It's all a relatively straightforward business of half levels between front and back, with diagonal views between them. Subtly coloured polyurethane resin flooring (the type with a bit of give to it) is used in all the common areas, with vertically cantilevered glass balustrades on the stairs leading down from the main foyer, to keep transparency in

the building. The main elevation on Upper Ground plays some simple but assured architectural tricks to articulate what is just the front of a rectilinear box. The two smaller dance studios are cantilevered forward, their faces clad in bronze anodised aluminium planks of varying reflectivity: the facade proper is of pale grey precast concrete panels. At the rear the same game is played – the cladding and fenestration arranged according to the internal uses – but using render.

This is designed to be a background building with a touch of class. Its logic is clear, its manners impeccable. Visually, it will recede as development arrives to either side of it. For now, it has a curiosity value as an infill building that arrived before its gap even existed. In the overall picture of the South Bank's cultural mix, Rambert's potential is intriguing. ●

Credits

Architect Allies & Morrison

Client JCC Ventures

Project manager Davis Langdon

Main contractor BAM Construction

Structural engineer AKT II

M&E engineer Norman Disney & Young

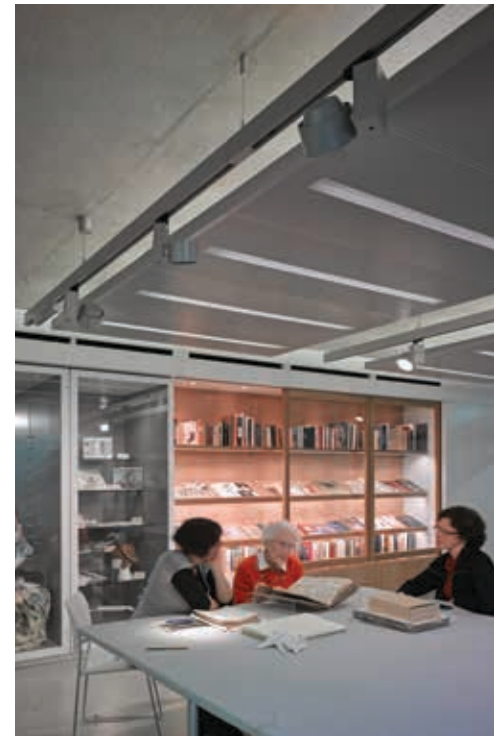
Quantity surveyor Gardiner & Theobald

Lighting consultant Speirs & Major

Below The foyer, kept very restrained, also leads down to the archive department.



Below A permanent museum display forms the wall in front of basement archive storage.



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City limits

With no extra budget for low energy targets, Sheppard Robson avoided importing expensive technologies for Siemens' Masdar HQ. Future investment in the workforce is surely the only real sustainability

Words Jan Carlos Kucharek Photographs Hufton+Crow



Left The formal face of Siemens' new Masdar HQ, in preparation for the intended public square to be realised in front as the city is built out.

Above Siemens acts as another city building block attached to the central complex of buildings making up the Masdar Research Institute.

A distant sight from the Dubai-bound highway, obfuscated in a heat haze on the plane between Khalifa City suburbia and the periphery of Abu Dhabi airport, Masdar City appears at first indistinct on the horizon. Yet on approaching it is revealed for what it is: raised above the flat datum of the desert and standing in relief against its dusty yellow, it configures itself as an isolated citadel of rich terracotta – and, since Sheppard Robson's new regional HQ for German firm Siemens recently completed – of pale, faceted steel.

This illusory first impression, contrasting with the true solidity of this desert development, could be read metaphorically. The creation of Masdar City has to some extent been a game of smoke and mirrors: the concept of a pioneering sustainable city in an aggressive, arid context would seem to an impossible contradiction. Yet since 2007, when Foster + Partners was brought in to devise the masterplan for a 600ha trophy project on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi and to design its sustainability showpiece, the Masdar Research Institute, it has refused, despite a crippling global economic downturn, to surrender itself up to the sands. This latest office building, knitted into the northern edge of the Institute complex, not only generates critical mass for Masdar's sustainability agendas; it's an exemplar of economic

viability – which is crucial if the city is to reach its projected 2030 maturity.

To call the Foster + Partners project the Arabian stallion to Sheppard Robson's camel would be trite, but there's an element of truth to it. Conceived in an economic boom, the Masdar Institute was intended to be the poster boy of the scheme. With performance levels 51% better than the 2004 ASHRAE benchmark, and up to 68% better than comparable Abu Dhabi building stock, it comfortably met sustainability criteria – but at a cost. Foster + Partners' commitment to precision-engineered quality meant its signature curved terracotta dormitory and ETFE laboratory facade panels were pre-fabricated and brought to site, with high spec installed mechanical plant imported from the US. Add in the fact that the whole facility was up on a 10m high concrete podium, to be rolled out across the site, under which jetson-like driverless cars of the city's eco-friendly personal rapid transport system (PRT) were intended to shuttle residents and workers from centre to city edge where their cars were parked, the whole thing smacked of blank cheque economics.

In today's tougher financial climate, the Siemens regional HQ is something of a paradigm shift for Masdar City, involving a reappraisal of all the givens. First,

Below The ramped area below the Siemens HQ not only connects ground with podium with seating and cafés, it provides a comfortable shaded public plaza of itself.

Below centre The nine atria, of which the open ones are part of the building's cooling strategy, also mean staff are never more than a few metres from daylight.

Below right The north-west elevation takes good advantage of its steel sunshading facade to cut out low west light and demonstrates the strategy of the escape stairs, made external to reduce added cooling load on the building.



IN NUMBERS

3

Estidama Pearl rating

65%

energy demand reduction
over UAE offices

50%

operational carbon
reduction over UAE
offices

20%

on-site renewables
provision

24°C

average internal ambient
temperature6 l/day/m²

water demand

with Google about to launch a driverless car, leaps in hydrogen fuel cell technology and a new urban metro link proposed, the 'closed system' of the PRT has been replaced by an 'open' one, allowing the city to adopt multiple transit technologies concurrently and obviating the need to extend the podium. Second, to reduce embodied carbon, procurement models should encourage local construction techniques and sourcing; and thirdly, government owner/developer Mubadala is expected to step back from its stringent carbon reduction demands to create conditions ripe for 'musataha' third party investment. This last was a self-realisation for Masdar – while born of zero carbon, it has to relax this demand to survive.

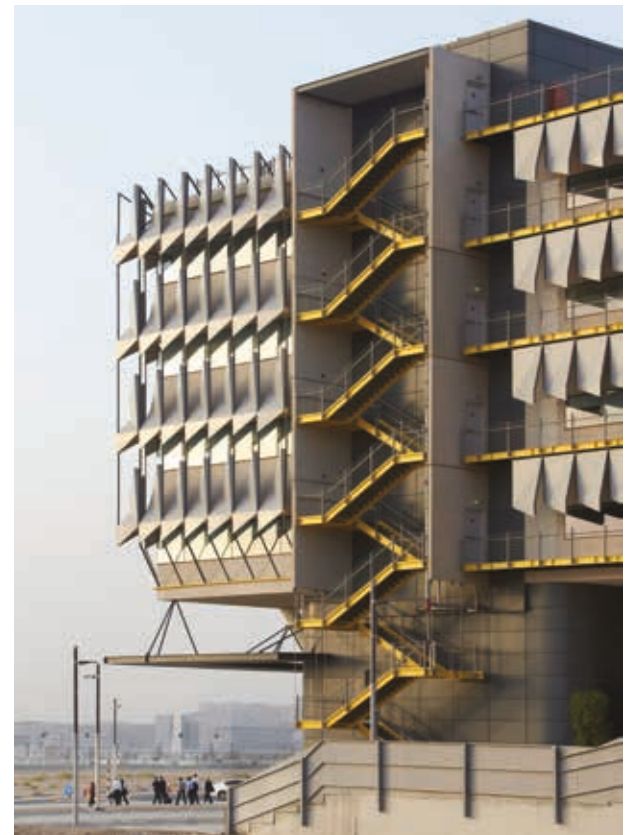
Evangelical design manager of Masdar City, which answers to Mubadala, architect Chris Wan, was clear about the terms of Sheppard Robson's challenge – both carbon and cost: he aims to make it sustainable in the long term, based on a viable economic model. For the 22,800m² Siemens HQ the firm had not only to achieve cost certainty, but also LEED Platinum status which could not come at a premium – the scheme was going to have to compete favourably in terms of build quality and cost with any other downtown city office. Also, in a slump, the practice was given a budget in 2010 around

half that of the Fosters building completed three years earlier. Guided by partner David Ardill, Sheppard Robson began an 'inside-out' parametric design process, optimising variables of the 85m by 85m site, its orientation, user requirements, core positions and daylight demands, which was analysed via Masdar's sustainability indices. Ardill says this was interesting, as while LEED criteria are based on energy use, the UAE's Estidama Pearl criteria are water driven, and Masdar's own key performance indicators are carbon-based. At higher levels the standards began to conflict, triggering the search for a 'sweet spot' that optimised all three.

The parametric process ran models for up to 140 floor plates. Then the aim was to close down the design, making later 'revisits' unnecessary. Any design had to take account of the masterplan which is orientated north-west to face the prevailing wind and increase shading levels once built out, but gave the Siemens building a 15% higher energy load than an 'ideal' north-south alignment. A four-storey 4500m² floor plate of nine atria and six edge cores is raised over a shaded public realm area, ramped up to reconcile the city's new grade datum level with the Institute's podium. Not part of brief or budget, this was subsidised by high 91% floor plate efficiencies, far exceeding the 83% budgeted for. →



PAUL MOWMULLIN



Sheppard Robson worked with tenant Siemens to understand needs such as hot desking strategies. It chose a 15m structural grid to give column-free office spaces that, with the atria, meant staff were no more than 7.5m away from a natural light source. Siemens' desire for a dedicated entrance meant two cores coming to ground – a narrowing device creating the funnel geometry for the Venturi effect, accelerating the prevailing wind south-east to the podium and up through the three open atria. To lock down costs, issues like glass to wall proportions were almost fixed from the outset, with performance demands setting U-values and daylight, to a ratio of 33%.

Everything about the design has been analysed and optimised, with real effort put into minimising material use to cut embodied carbon. This accounted for the 400mm thick post-tensioned void-formed flat slab – claimed to cut concrete use 55% – and creating clear runs for soffit services. The building volume was tweaked at the earliest stages to give the most efficient wall to floor ratios to minimise external surfaces, and thus heat gain. And Ardill's team obviously spent a few Arabian nights developing the dramatic external steel shading facade. This was folded to keep it thin but strong, and articulated differently on every face to deal with the worst effects of a penetrating sun while

maximising views out for users, and removing the need for solar coatings on the glass.

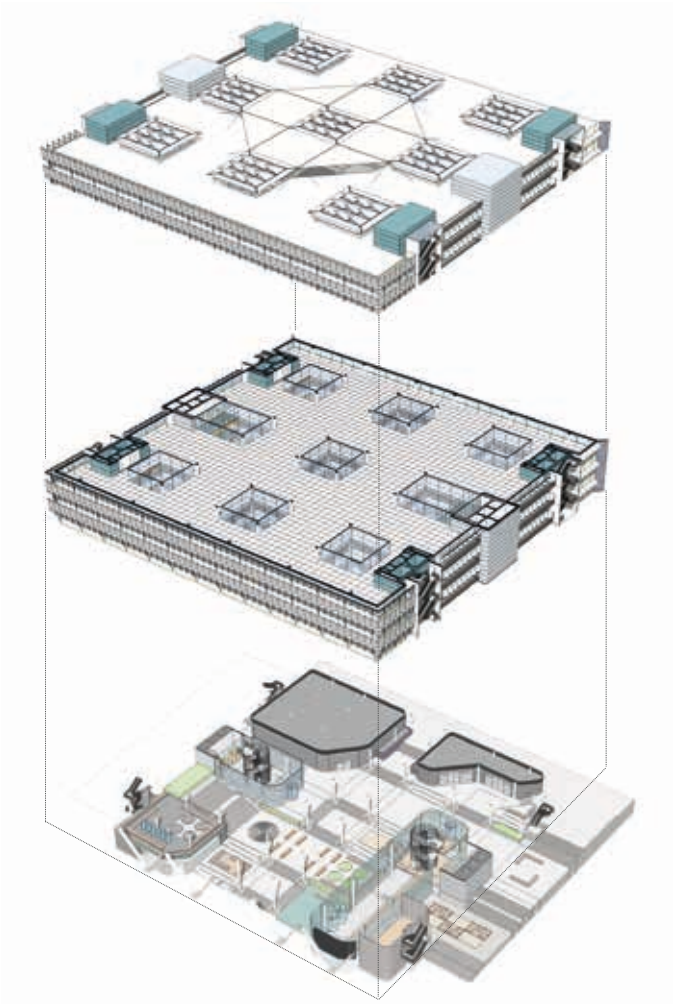
Sheppard Robson's approach has been ground-breaking, evolving a strategy that met energy use targets without incurring the carbon penalties of imported systems. Its innovation was to adopt simple, robust, locally available technologies and combine them cleverly, with 'quick wins' and nimble moves. For the facade, decisions like using cores as a buffer to reduce heat gain on sun exposed sides (and cooling load by having external escape stairs) were obvious. But choosing to cast facade upstands in concrete rather than risk air penetration through badly laid breeze block (also giving structural stability), or having glazing units flush with the finished face to minimise sand build-up, were more nuanced. And the decision to use steel only in tension, such as with the suspended spiral staircases was not only elegant: hanging off Macalloy bars meant less use of the material. All had incremental, positive effects on both energy use and cost.

Masdar City director Anthony Mallows concedes that the procurement approach in evidence on the Siemens project counterpoints the Foster+Partners scheme; one opting for the higher cost off-site prefabricated, engineered approach; the other lower →

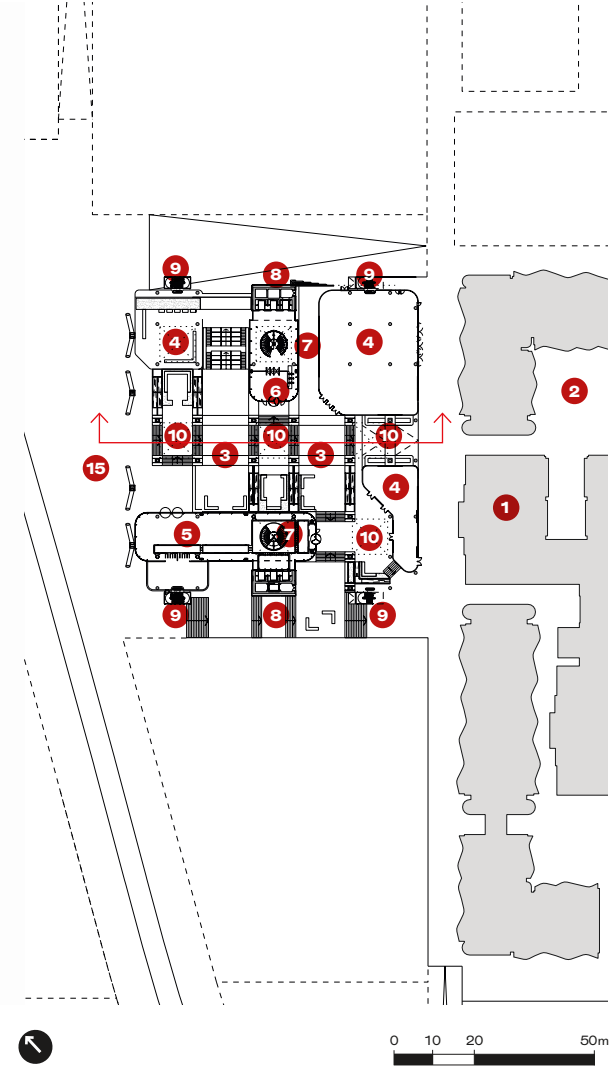


Left The stainless steel stair and lobby walkways are hung from Macalloy bars, getting the minimum amount of material to work hardest in tension.

Isometric



Site plan



- 1 Masdar Research Institute
- 2 Podium level
- 3 Open stairs from podium to grade
- 4 Retail units
- 5 Siemens office entrance
- 6 Tenant space entrance
- 7 Suspended steel staircase
- 8 Service core
- 9 Stair core
- 10 Atria voids
- 11 Fabric roof to atria (open sided)
- 12 Siemens roof garden
- 13 Office space
- 14 External steel facade shading
- 15 Grade level and car turning zone

Transverse section



cost, but with qualitative constraints of using unskilled labour and local supply chains. But he's aware that if Masdar is to realise its potential as a viable city quarter, it's going to have to be through a combination of the two, stating the city's new story as being 'about the sustainability of the process itself rather than just the buildings and neighbourhoods it produces'.

Sheppard Robson's pushing of the low-tech envelope does however raise the question of how far the strategy can be applied. Masdar's Chris Wan – whose mantra throughout was 'Lock the brief. Lock the budget. No value engineering' – is more aware than anyone of the correlation of cost/m² to use of local labour. Here's a thing; Ardill claims they budgeted for a base build of Dhs7200/m², but design efficiencies managed to drive the figure down to Dhs6500/m² – that's £24m rather than £27m, in line with Wan's boast that design and project management together shaved 15% off the budget. It means that an LEED Platinum and Estidama 3-Pearl building was delivered not only on time and on budget, but for significantly less than they expected. That said, Wan admits that most of the 'low hanging fruit' have been picked but he still sees potential in BIM and is aware that future carbon savings from the current 40% to 80% and beyond may only be met by

incremental performance as long as the 'sustainability for zero additional cost' status quo remains in place.

By my reckoning then, two scenarios for Masdar's build-out begin to present themselves, both involving additional expenditure. Either the use of unskilled labour is continued and a push made for off-site fabrication to get the requisite quality, or investment is made in the workforce to develop the skills that can be then carried forward into future projects; it's only this way that, say, Masdar's eight residential neighbourhoods which are likely to be procured via third party developers, stand any real chance of meeting sustainability demands. Also, given the UAE's questionable reputation for guest worker treatment, the Estidama Pearl rating's 'social' component – which covers worker rights and accommodation and which Masdar is signed up to – is a real step forward. If this thinking could be combined with a long-term programme of worker training and investment in those building the city, encouraging skills development and transfer across projects, a truly holistic model for Masdar's construction becomes apparent. If this city is really about ground-up rethinks, Siemens could be the catalyst for a social and sustainable approach for the region that would be nothing short of game changing. ●

Below Masdar looking from the south-west – a citadel that wants to be a city. Siemens sits on the opposite corner.



Credits

Architect Sheppard Robson

Structural engineer Aecom

Engineer Aecom

M&E consultant Aecom

Project manager Morganti

Main contractor Al Fara'a General Contracting Company

Suppliers

Concrete/precast Al Falah Ready Mix Factory LLC

Concrete Blocks Hussain Mohd. Abbas Block Factory

Flooring Systems RAK Ceramics (landlord areas only, C&S building)

EIFS System/ Insulation BASF

Tension Steel Rods Macalloy

BMS Siemens

FAHU Flaktwoods

Glass Emirates Glass

Gypsum boards Gypsemna

Fan Coil Units Carrier

MEP Insulation Kimmco

Solar Water Heating System HRS

hidden innovation

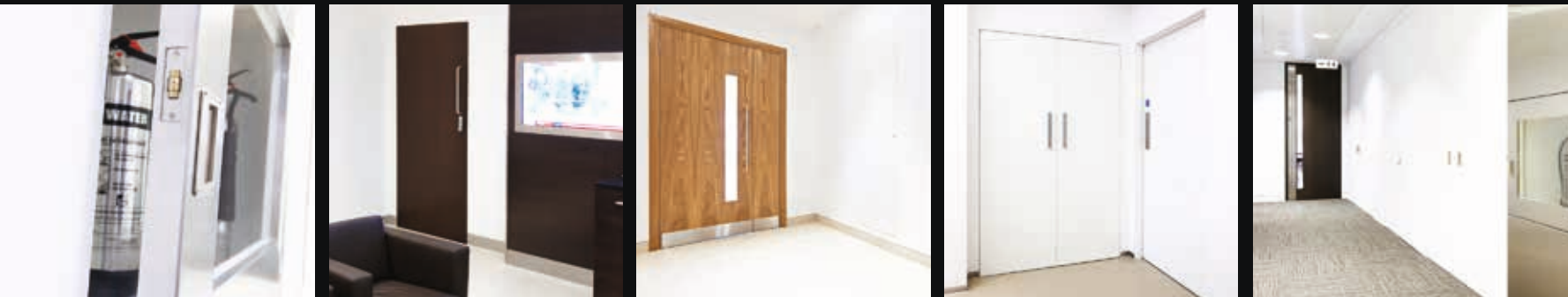
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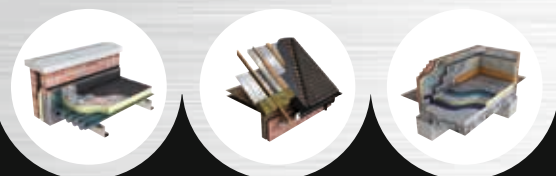
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INSULATION EXCELLENCE

Fifties revival

Replacing the facade on a grade II-listed residential block required John Robertson Architects to find an approach of a different stripe

Words: Stephen Cousins Photographs: Tom Cronin



Great Arthur House was completed in 1957 and forms the centre piece of the Golden Lane Estate near London's Barbican, one of the most important residential redevelopments after the Second World War.

The grade II-listed, 16 storey residential tower block was the first of its type to breach the 100ft height limit in the City of London, providing 120 one-bed apartments for key workers including policemen, teachers, and ambulance workers. The building was the first designed by the newly-formed practice Chamberlin Powell & Bon, which would go on to design the adjacent Barbican Centre, considered by some to be the UK's greatest example of integrated urban planning.

But unlike the Barbican's heavy concrete structure, Great Arthur House relies on a light and economical style of architecture made popular by the modernist, post-Bauhaus movement, its east and west elevations split elegantly into six vertical bays and 16 horizontal strips of glass with bright yellow spandrel panels. On the roof, two huge concrete wings containing the block's water tanks extend out in a dramatic curve reminiscent of Le Corbusier, which were described by architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the first time that such arbitrary, purely decorative or purely expressionist motifs appeared in London'.

Fast forward to today, and Great Arthur House still stands strong, but its distinctive elevations are in a state of severe disrepair, suffering from extreme rainwater penetration, condensation and jammed windows.

As a result, the building's owner, the City of London Corporation, decided to replace the curtain wall in its entirety, working with John Robertson Architects (JRA), consultant engineer Mott MacDonald and English Heritage to devise a double-glazed facade system to visually match the original but also meet the latest building standards and provide an average 31% saving on residents' heating bills. The £6m scheme (around £50,000 per flat) was recently granted planning permission by the City of London and a cladding

contractor is expected to be appointed soon. Great Arthur House’s curtain wall framing system, originally manufactured by Wandsworth firm Quicktho, was crudely assembled compared to today’s standards, incorporating hundreds of single leaf sliding windows more commonly used in caravans and London Routemaster buses.

‘An original advertisement for Quicktho promised “rapid fitting, faultless action, perfect ventilation and reduced body weight”,’ recounts John Robertson, founding director of JRA. ‘Well, today the windows certainly have perfect ventilation, they leak like a sieve, and as for faultless action, the window sections slide on felt runners, rather than metal tracks, and have nearly all jammed up.’

The thin 4mm-wide window sections are not thermally broken, so the temperature gradient between the outside and inside is acute, causing severe condensation. ‘In several flats the residents have had to cut away the plaster on the internal walls as it had become saturated and rotten,’ he adds.

An investigation into the existing facade structure, by JRA and Mott MacDonald,

revealed several cost-saving construction short cuts. The Quicktho extrusions had been applied using wood screws in horizontal teak boards that were fixed to the concrete slabs. Also, upstands behind the cladding panels were constructed from cheap hollow pot and around half the distinctive dimpled yellow glass used to cover the spandrel panels had been replaced with poor quality replicas, compromising the uniformity of the original design.

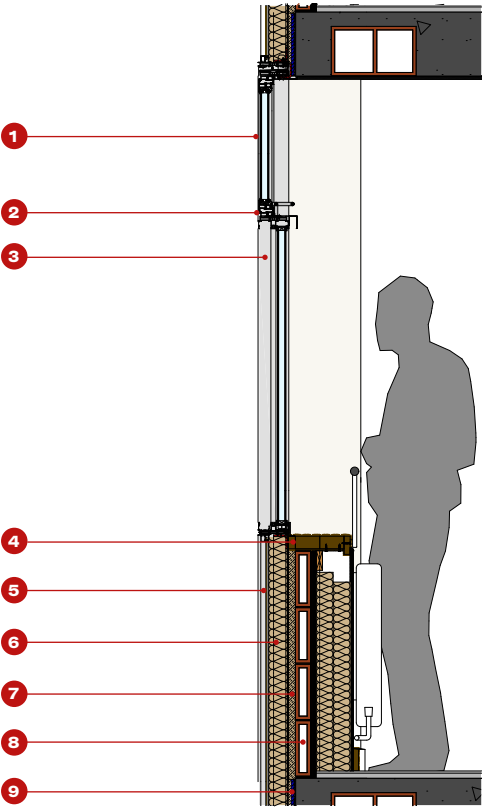
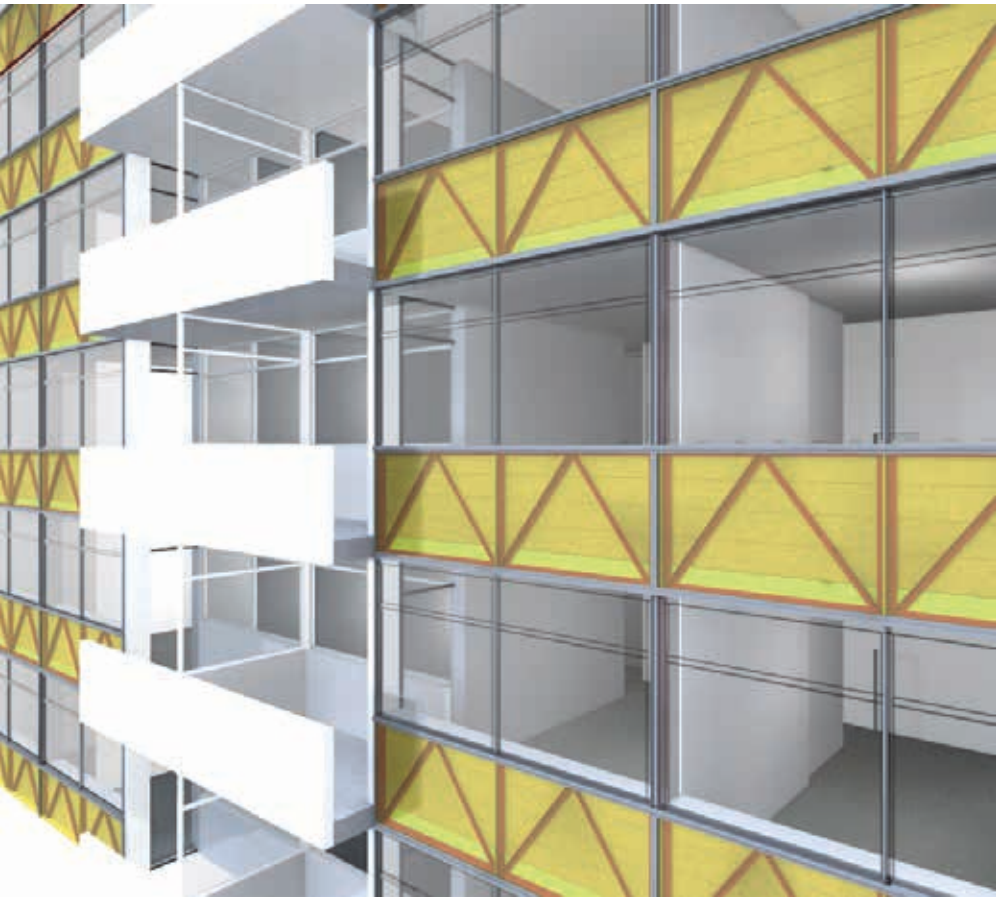
Devising an appropriate replacement curtain wall raised a number of challenges. The team’s structural investigations revealed that the scheme’s original builder, Wimpey, had installed just one thin rod of rebar in the slab edges, rather than the two larger rods specified in drawings produced by the scheme’s original engineer Ove Arup.

A computer model of surveyed stress levels in the building, developed by Mott MacDonald, confirmed that the slab edges had almost no capacity to bear any extra weight created by a new double glazed curtain wall system, which would be roughly double that of the existing one. The only option was for

Below left Incorporating steel Vierendeel trusses into the spandrel panels will allow curtain wall modules to transfer loads into existing shear walls.

Proposed typical cladding section

- 1 Double glazed top light
- 2 Natural anodized aluminium transom
- 3 Double glazed horizontally sliding window
- 4 Steel truss member
- 5 Single glazed spandrel panel
- 6 Insulation integrated into cladding panel
- 7 Insulation between cladding panel and existing upstand
- 8 Existing hollow clay pot upstand
- 9 Steel plate replacing teak. Fire-stop insulation between steel and cladding panel





Phase change plasterboard – thermal mass without the weight

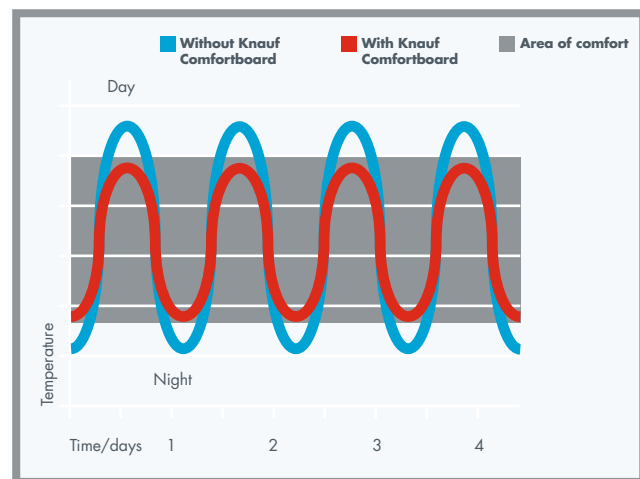
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the panels to transfer facade loads directly to the building's main concrete shear walls, which run laterally across the building and are in good structural condition.

'We had the idea of incorporating a Vierendeel steel truss within the thickness of each 6m wide cladding unit's insulated spandrel panel. Once hooked into position this will span the shear walls,' says Robertson. 'The truss acts like a bridge transferring loads to the shear walls, and avoids the need to fix each unit along the slab, which might have caused the slab and cladding to deflect.'

JRA's final cladding panel design features a thermally-broken double glazed window with sliding sections, and an insulated spandrel panel below, which together will keep the flats warmer and virtually eliminate the risk of condensation. Although the upgrade to performance increases the facade's depth considerably, the transoms and mullions will only be only around 10% wider so the overall appearance should be very close to Chamberlain Powell & Bon's vision. Spectrographic analysis is also being carried out to ensure the correct shade of yellow is used for the

covering on the spandrel panels.

Perhaps the most demanding challenge was to design a system that could be installed with minimal disturbance to the block's residents. Panellisation and offsite manufacture will help speed the process of installation, but JRA also proposes to install a temporary wall of structural insulated panels (SIPs) inside each apartment along the perimeter edge. Once in place this will allow the residents to go about their normal business, while contractors dismantle and replace the facade from a mast climber outside.


'We will remove and replace the cladding in sections of three floors at a time, reusing the SIPs as we move up,' says Robertson. 'The total programme is around 76 weeks and we expect each floor to take at least a week. The residents we've spoken to are pretty enthusiastic about the changes, although the curtains in some apartments are permanently drawn – they're the ones that worry me.'

Perhaps the promise of a 31% saving on heating bills and an end to sodden walls will be enough to reassure owners having to shell out after the slow death of Quicktho. ●

The truss acts like a bridge transferring loads to the shear walls, and avoids the need to fix each unit along the slab

Below About half the dimpled yellow glass panels in the facades are damaged or have been replaced with poor quality replicas. The new glass will be designed to closely match the material and colour of the originals.



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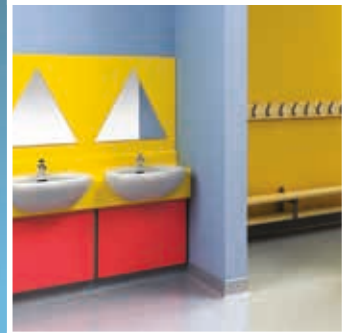
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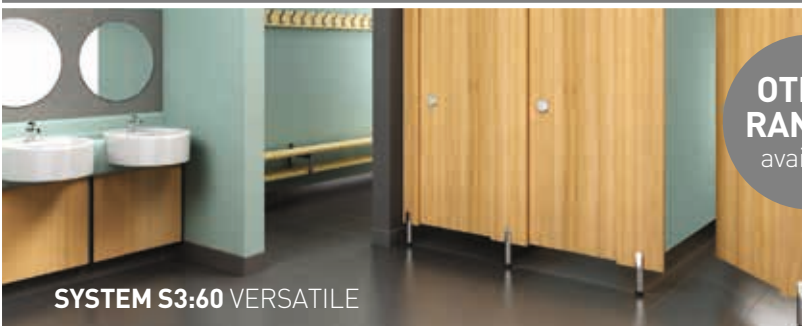
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Eye Line 2

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Enter the RIBA Journal's drawing competition

When we launched Eye Line last year, 250 of you entered, from all over the world. Clearly our idea – that this award should recognise the pure art of architecture, as distinct from functionality or buildability – struck a chord. And it was notable that everyone from well-known practitioners to as-yet-unknown students entered. Of course: the

one thing that unites all architects of all persuasions is the depiction of a concept. And if that depiction takes on a life beyond its subject matter, so much the better.

Last year's overall winner was Tom Noonan, part 2 graduate at Hawkins\Brown, with his extraordinarily detailed and intriguing work 'Reforestation of the

Thames Estuary' a manifesto design which verged on both the obsessive and sublime. Tom joins us as a judge this year. Also on the panel are artist Susanna Heron, artist and architect Narinder Sagoo of Foster + Partners, architect and visiting professor Alan Dunlop and RIBA Journal Editor Hugh Pearman.

Rules

The rules are very straightforward. As last year, we want to find the best representations of a building design or concept through visual means. Any medium is allowed – hand-drawn or via keyboard, collage or any combination or overlay of methods. It can be ultra-detailed, close to abstraction or photo-realistic, whatever: it's up to you. The work must have been produced within the three years up to April 2014,

and must not previously have been entered for Eye Line. Entries should be two-dimensional artworks – we will not consider movies, photographs of models or strong relief – but within that constraint we will judge all methods and media equally. There is a maximum of three individual pieces per entry. Size of the original work is irrelevant, but we cannot handle originals and so require a digital version of the work in medium-resolution JPEG form for entry.

Send via a file-sharing service such as Dropbox, Hightail or similar.

Do NOT send email attachments and do NOT send original artwork. Please make sure you include your email and postal addresses and phone number with your file transfer message.

Send to eyeline@ribajournal.com

We shall devote the August issue of the RIBA Journal to this, in which we will publish the winners.

Deadline for submissions:

Monday 9 June

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2: Intelligence



Designing &
building it

Richard Wilson



The new Terminal 2 at Heathrow opens for business in June. Just unveiled is sculptor Richard Wilson's mighty 'Slipstream' in the building's huge entrance atrium



PHOTOS: HUGH PEARMAN

What does 'Slipstream' represent?

I've taken the Edge 540, a stunt plane used in air races, put it in a computer, and allowed it to make manoeuvres and tumbles to give myself shapes and forms and undulations. It starts with a completely abstract situation, and as it halts over the bridge, it turns into a realistic sense of what has generated the form. It talks about velocity and journeying. It has a history in Futurism. And for many, this will be the gateway to the cultural capital of the world.

What were the constraints?

They were the restrictions of the canvas – the void of the space. We had to position the work off the columns. It wasn't to touch the floor, or conceal wayfinding, etc. This is not a gallery, the rules are very different.

Who did you collaborate with?

I brought what I call the 'dirty hands brigade' with me, as opposed to the art world. People who could prove it could be done. I worked with engineers Tim Lucas and Ralph Parker of Price and Myers, and fabricator Commercial Systems International from Hull. I dealt with the aesthetics and meaning. Between us we covered every aspect.

Passengers will experience this work from all angles, including above. Is that unique?

We had to consider it from this side, that side, above, below – it's difficult to do, especially working with 3D forms on a flat screen, which I did with Price & Myers. This space is the equivalent of Tate Modern's turbine hall – it's the turbine hall of West London. It's nice to have another space like that, and a privilege to have been able to work on this scale. I've spent a lifetime playing with architecture, it's the scale that I've adopted. Those spaces that can be quite huge.

So how is it constructed?

There's a substructure, spanning the 18m distances between the columns and carrying the tonnage. It's bridge-building. Overall the piece weighs 77 tonnes. A lot of the substructure just supports its length on four rings which work off those columns, holding the steels that run between them. The other structure – which Ralph Parker was much involved with – was dealing with the kind of shapes we had to cut from the aluminium to get that skin to undulate and form itself. You can't just cut squares and tile it as if it was a roof. We had to follow aeroplane-building procedure. The lines of rivets describe the flows. Thousands of different moments make up the complete skin. ●

ENDURANCE TEST

What's the durability of public art? A bespoke work of art like Slipstream is tied to the lifespan of the building it is in, and can't easily be moved elsewhere – though it was assembled in sections so could presumably be dismantled the same way. It would need another huge volume with equivalent column spacings. 'You normally sign a contract for anything between three and 60 years,' says Wilson, a veteran of public art commissions. 'But of course, in 10 years' time they may change their minds, Boris might get his island airport, or they may want to extend this so it links with Terminal One.' That's certainly the plan of Heathrow's owner: the new terminal will eventually double in size, including the entrance atrium. So if politics dictate, Wilson may find himself being called back for a Phase 2 Slipstream.



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Leading Questions

'Custom Build' is something distinct from the one-off homes of Grand Designs or the celebrated social self-builds of the 1980s and 90s

in 2011, initially to provide short-term development finance to innovative 'custom build' schemes. Administered by the Greater London Authority in London and the Homes & Communities Agency nationally, the fund is designed to cultivate pilot projects for a new mode of housing delivery in the UK; and in coining the term, set up the idea of 'Custom Build' as something distinct from the one-off homes of Grand Designs or the celebrated social self-builds of the 1980s and 90s.

Key definitions

Essentially, custom build has come to mean two key things: first, that some kind of 'enabling' role is played by a third party to smooth the road for aspiring self-builders; and secondly, that the end product is customised to better suit the needs and desires of the eventual occupants. As policy, it seeks to turn

Successful collective custom builds will depend on who does the enabling

Sam Brown

As it becomes largely accepted that we could do more to build a greater volume of better quality housing, the notion of 'self-build' is receiving evermore attention in relation to housing and planning policy across the country. In the spirit of localism, many people are now asking themselves whether, since house-builders seem unwilling to build decent houses, we couldn't make a better job of it ourselves. About 10,000 households a year succeed in doing so, yet around 6m people would if only it were easier.

In designing the National Planning Policy Framework as one of the principal instruments of localism, the government responded to lobbying from the National Self Build Association (NaSBA) and, for the first time, placed a duty on councils in paragraph 159 to, first, 'measure the demand of' and secondly, 'provide for' those that wish to build their own homes. The Chancellor's 2014 Budget speech in March announced that the government will consult on a new 'right to build', giving citizens a right to formally challenge authorities that leave this duty unaddressed, and set out what is effectively an expansion of the Custom Build Loan Fund programme. This is a £30m pot established



Below Bringing together local authority and developer stakeholders in Leicester.

some of the frustrated aspiration of a potential nation of self-builders into completed homes on the ground. The fund, in line with the general fixation on proving 'self-build at scale' as a mainstream housing delivery option, prefers multi-unit sites to individual homes.

More cynically, the term has also come to mean that self-builders' equity is captured by private developers before homes are even built, simply allowing otherwise conventional development to proceed with greater certainty and profits to be made with less risk, in return for letting occupiers choose the finishes. For every supporter of custom build there is an equally vehement detractor, protesting at the missed opportunity to involve people meaningfully in the design of their homes and neighbourhoods – and the promise of the more affordable, equitable, enjoyable and sustainable way of life that implies.

Three types of custom build

The nature of the stimulus on offer and the often onerous associated pre-qualification procedures, coupled with a risk-averse housing sector and hamstrung local authorities, has resulted in the developer-led models of custom build developing the fastest, and shouting the loudest. But some local authorities, such as the London Borough of Lewisham, have a historic track record of innovation in this field, and organisations such as the Community Self Build Agency have also enabled other public bodies to deliver collective self-build models where training of the unemployed or vulnerable is part of the package. Our short, investigative research project, *Motivating Collective Custom Build* took the view that other parties could also play an enabling role in motivating a greater uptake of collective forms of self-provided housing.

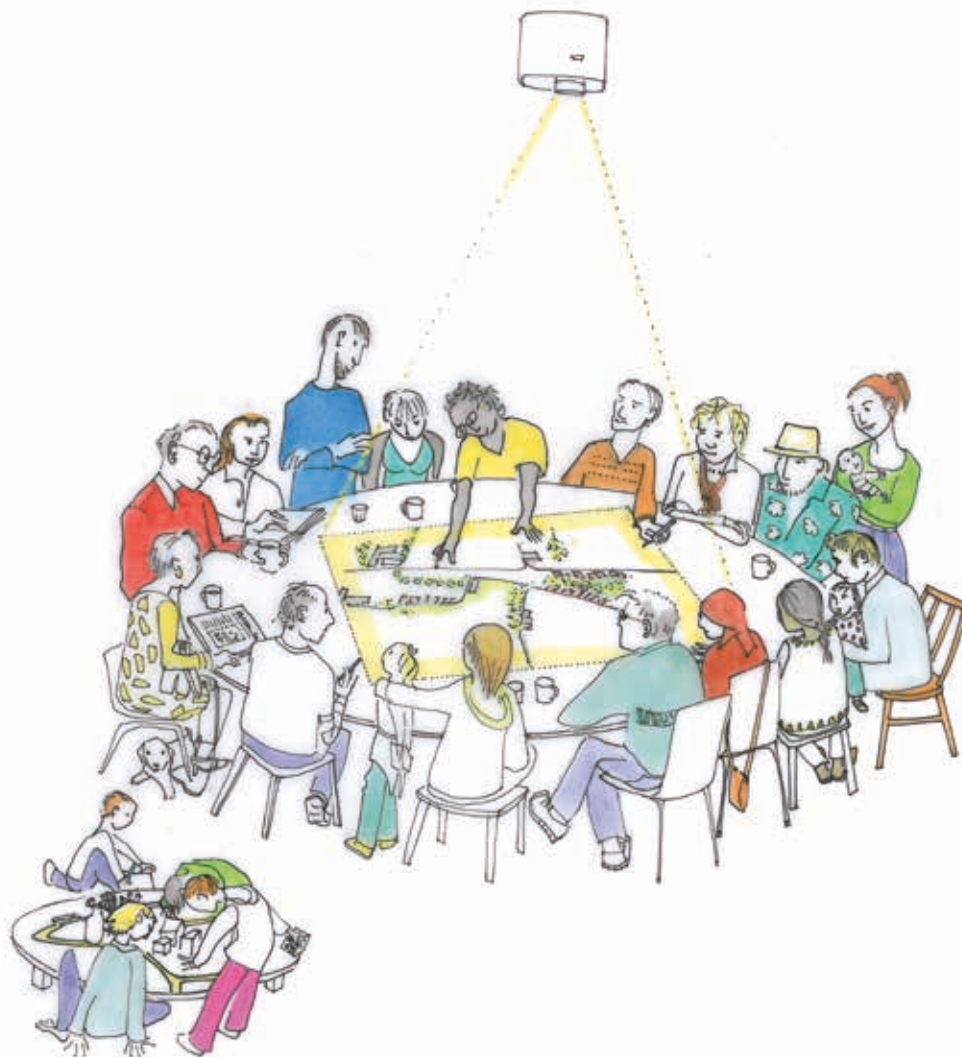
We found three broad types: Independent Group Custom Build, where a group forms to make a site viable, but is otherwise independent of outside assistance and often led by a core group of strong individuals; Developer-Enabled Custom Build, which includes both the 'development manager' type, leading development on larger sites, and a 'home manufacturer' type, offering a complete 'custom' design solution on individual sites or small groups of sites; and Supported Community Custom Build, referring to both an 'assisted community' model where a local authority or other organisation assists an otherwise independent group through grant, land

A combination of factors has led to the developer-led models of custom build developing the fastest, and shouting the loudest

or expertise, and an 'enabled community' model, where a group of people is formed and led by those same organisations. The opportunities for architects, therefore, also vary widely – and there could be a lot of business in custom build if we understand the sector.

Cornwall proves the point

Igloo Regeneration's pilot project on HCA land at Trevenson Park, near Pool in Cornwall, for example, is regarded as 'proof of concept' for large-scale developer-led custom build in the UK. The developer is currently shortlisting applicants for its home manufacturer framework, a large number of which are partnerships between architects and small developers or local contractors, bidding speculatively in response to a competition call to develop customisable house types, with Igloo handling the site infrastructure. But this probably won't pay very



Above The varied needs and desires of self-builders (still from film).

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highly in terms of design fees in the traditional sense. Interestingly, the shortlisting focuses intently on the processes and materials that applicants will use to liaise directly with customers, as Igloo believes neither builders nor architects are particularly good at listening. Ted Stevens, chair of NaSBA, agrees, stating that although the one-off house model is perhaps a form of practice that architects identify with, they are rarely good at delivering the service that these individuals need. Instead, through 'over-the-top' projects that treat the brief 'like a college exercise' and 'with no handle on costs', architects often contribute to the perception of providing your own home as an onerous task, and one especially prone to the risks of budget over-run. 'Most people in this category will have budgets of around £200,000,' says Stevens, 'and they need to stick to them.'

Architects' role

Beyond the de-risked developer-led model, the most interesting opportunity will present itself to architects that initiate collective

The German Baugruppe, or building group model, sees multiple households come together, usually to build custom-designed, private apartment blocks, but commonly with egalitarian features

custom build projects themselves. In Europe, where self-provision of housing has largely remained part of popular culture, architects have played critical roles in bringing about user-led schemes, developing new business models to best serve the market. Some architects in the UK are showing a great deal of interest in ideas such as the German Baugruppe, or building group model, where multiple households come together, usually to build custom-designed, private apartment blocks, but commonly with egalitarian features – such as providing communal spaces at the top of buildings where ordinarily the most lucrative penthouse apartments would be located.

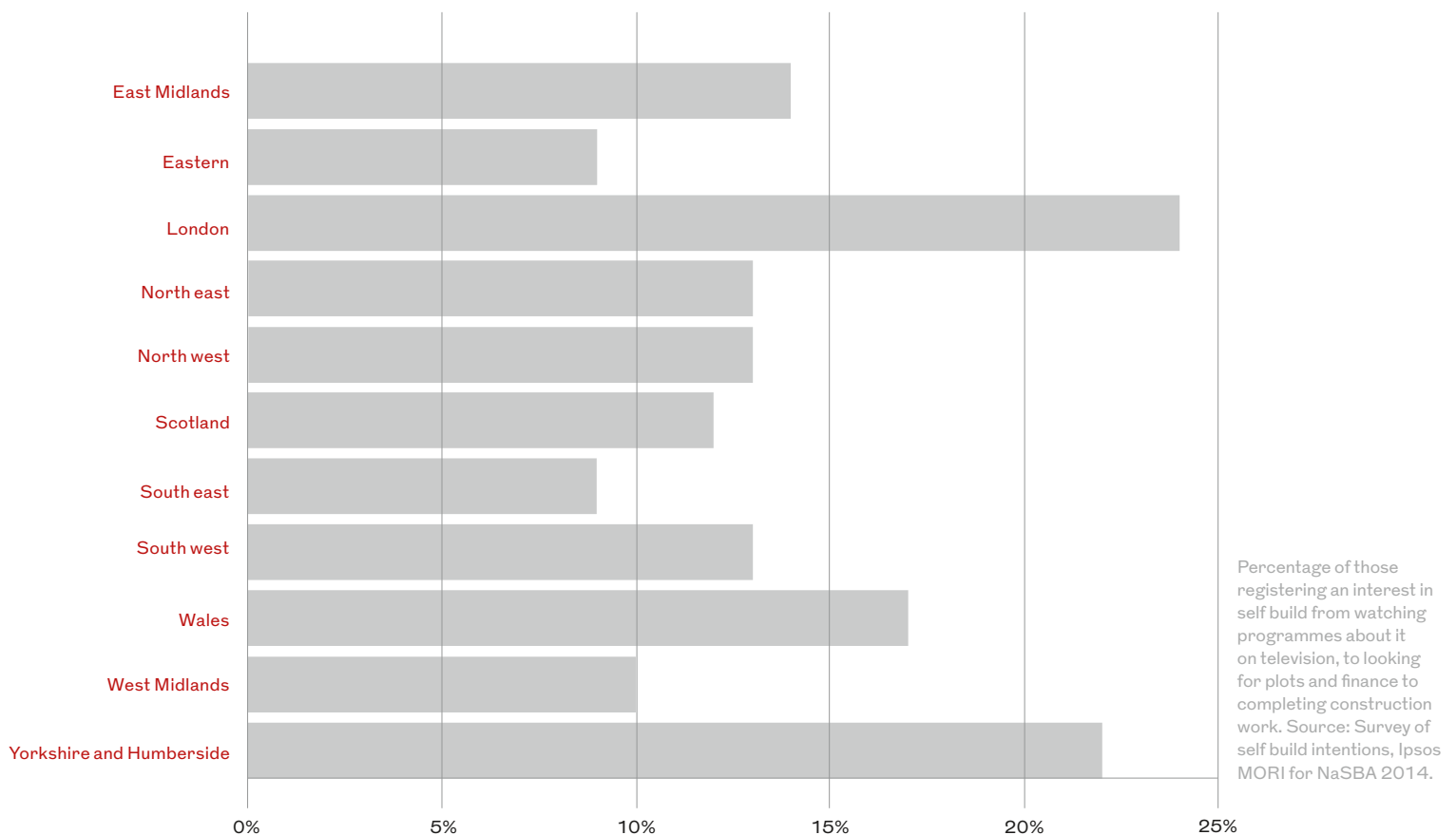
But as Stevens points out, such models will need adapting for the UK. We will have to work out where and how we make our money, or what other value can be derived from the process, perhaps as part of the mix of work that a practice does. UK versions of Baugruppen are likely to be slow-burning, and will require leadership in the 'community architecture' vein. Those that embrace the

IN NUMBERS

12%
researching and planning
self build

2%
actioning self build
(source Ipsos MORI)

Regional interest in self build



challenge will need time to learn the different techniques needed – facilitation, negotiation, project-management, finance – and they'll have to become mini developers in their own right, working directly with tricky individuals. But as far as finding land goes, if the HCA can sell land to the likes of Barratts or even to some of the smaller custom build developers selling 'custom-lite' off-plan, why can't they sell it to architect-led partnerships that can get their head around development economics? Architects are also well-placed to work on behalf of grass-roots groups and orchestrate applications for some of the £17.5m 'Community Right-To-Build' fund, recently re-designed to give community groups support in developing proposals pre-planning, rather than just executing them post-approval.

Designing partnerships

But why is it that we feel the need to find and protect a role for architects in custom build? Do we have the right skills, or even aptitude? Baugruppen are often supported by secondary-level, inter-disciplinary organisation organisations such as Stattbau, that can connect groups with a design team, land, finance and other tools to help manage the process,

and it is difficult to think of organisations that have this capacity in the UK. As architects, we are often the 'inter-locaters' in development, tasked with speaking multiple languages at a range of scales, and what we do is as much about learning and teaching, and taking others along with us on a journey, as it is about creative flair or technical expertise. As ever, it comes down to design. But rather than becoming fixated on the formal or aesthetic qualities of a scheme, we may be better placed to design development partnerships that pull together the capacity to mitigate the perceived risks of self-build with the ability to construct a shared vision around the aspirations of a complex set of stakeholders. I believe that providing we continue to learn from our own British experience as a profession, as well as from contemporary international examples, we certainly have a place at the table as part of a team that enables the procurement of good housing through collective forms of custom build. ●

Sam Brown of Sheffield School of Architecture helped deliver the Motivating Collective Custom Build practice-based research project, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council: collectivecustombuild.org
He also works with Jon Broome Architects

DESIGNING THE DEVELOPER

London's Lewisham Council is offering residents a rare opportunity to work together to build their own homes on a site in Ladywell, seeking to re-establish the innovative track-record of supporting group self-build in the borough in the 70s and 80s.

Kareem Dayes is a 26 year old whose father built a house for his family nearly 30 years ago in one such project, Walters Way. As a musician, Dayes cannot afford to live locally, and so set up a community organisation, RUSS, to promote the idea of building affordable, sustainable homes. RUSS – the Rural-Urban Synthesis Society – lobbied Lewisham Council which designated a self-build site last May.

RUSS is also an established Community Land Trust (CLT), and wants to establish a delivery partnership as part of the plan. The CLT is a membership organisation governed by a board of directors, including a seat for the council. By 'designing the developer' in this way, RUSS seeks to access council-owned land to build on and borrow against; as well as 'sweat equity' from its members to cultivate a much wider range of benefits – not least by setting up a more holistic route to affordability and appraising development goals beyond the financial 'bottom line'. Expertise from RUSS's experienced board, which includes architects, will mitigate the perceived risks of resident-led development, and by giving existing residents a voice through membership representation, it is hoped that a positive approach to development can be propagated.

RUSS has a draft plan to create a sustainable neighbourhood based on significantly reducing costs, first by incorporating a high level of self-help labour, and secondly by providing a mix of homes to rent, buy or part own/part buy.

Local residents support this approach in principle and RUSS has put it to the council, which will decide shortly how to proceed with the site.

Below At LILAC in Leeds the co-housing group acted as client appointing both contractors and a design team.



SAM BROWN

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Ambition in residence

Can Bristol build the best homes in the UK? This debate asked if the city's pocket sites could work in favour of pocket practices

Rob Gregory

With an audience of 200+, many wanted to know the answer to this debate's headline question, Can Bristol Build the Best Homes in the UK? Four panellists wasted little time getting to the point. Managing director of HAB housing Mike Roberts started the discussion with trademark directness: 'Can Bristol do it? Of course. But will Bristol do it? No.' Fortunately this was not his conclusive statement, but a way of getting the ball rolling in an excellent discussion organised by the tireless director of the RIBA's South West Office, Jon Watkins and his team, with a bit of help from us at the Architecture Centre.

The second panelist was Jackson Moulding, self-build guru, director of Ecomotive and vice chair of NaSBA (the National Self Build Association) who came bristling with optimism, fresh from the inaugural meeting of the self and custom build All Party Parliamentary Group Meeting in London. He began, 'Why do I bang on about self-build?' before drawing on substantial personal experience of community led development and direct action; a process that he said 'brings people into the mix by allowing future residents to participate in design and build, [giving] them faith, and leading to the making of homes, rather than just the rush to build anonymous, overpriced, low quality houses.'

Next up was Robert Knight, operations director at Igloo Regeneration, who focused

on how to create the right environment to enable it all to happen. Identifying 'over-valued land' as one of the greatest barriers, Knight called for greater trust and collaboration between landowners, developers and future residents, to create the sorts of communities and places that he said encourage people to stay in homes five times longer than average.

Finally, Alison Brooks focussed on design, reframing the issue with an alternative question: is Bristol brave enough to build the best homes in the UK? 'Is Bristol brave enough', she asked, 'to say that housing here is not primarily an investment product? Houses are central to the economy and heritage of our cities, she said – if the design of homes is understood to be part of urban design, affecting our streets, our infrastructure and supporting our economy, by creating attractive and aspirational places where people want to live and work. 'Can Bristol be brave enough to ignore the advice of property agents and recalibrate the way we measure value? Why can't we build homes that have the same quality as period properties from previous generations?' she asked, calling for homes to be measured and valued on the quality of volume, space, light, character and detail; none of which, she reminded the audience, is taken into account in standard property valuations.

In response to the panelists' calls for higher levels of engagement, empowerment, trust and design bravery, it was time for the mayor, George Ferguson, to respond, which he did by posing another key question. For the first time I have heard him make explicit reference to being an architect mayor, he

'While some councils have to convince their citizens to me more active; in Bristol it is the other way round'

Below Bristol mayor George Ferguson responds to calls for design bravery.



asked, 'How could it be possible not to build the best homes in Britain when we have an architect mayor?' He set out his determination to make Bristol a test bed for doing better things and described his office as a laboratory of new ideas and new ways of doing things – Bristol Fashion.

In the hour of questions and discussion that followed, many issues were raised by the audience, including how to use undervalued green space, and why the mayor was unable to 'call-in' poor schemes – due to limits in his mayoral power. Not surprisingly, however, in a room dominated by ambitious architects, landscape architects and community representatives, the key issue was how do we bring sites forward that enable small practices, developers and community groups to design, deliver and invest in? Having heard the debate, Brooks asked another insightful question, openly suggesting she may have missed something by asking: 'Really? Does Bristol have a housing crisis?'

She may well have hit the nail on the head. Yes, Bristol does have a housing need – as do most cities. But Bristol is a city where the scale of opportunity for volume house building is relatively limited, as Ferguson confirmed by reminding us that the city's largest site, in Hengrove Park, has capacity for only around 1000 new homes. Surely therefore the opportunity exists for Bristolians to do it for themselves, in smaller more innovative ways.

Bristol is defined by its entrepreneurial, independent and innovative spirit, and as Moulding clearly articulated: 'While some

Below Bristol's major community self-build site, in the district of St Werburghs, was completed in 2005.



Left Best homes in the UK? Alison Brooks' Newhall Be, Essex.

PAUL RIDDLE

councils have to convince their citizens to be more active; in Bristol it is the other way round.' Ferguson agreed by saying that it was on the city's many publicly owned 'pocket sites' that the real opportunities laid in waiting for the audience of 'pocket practices'. 'We need to look to our smaller sites', he concluded, But how to do it? Harry Rich, chair of the event, asked each panelist to give the mayor one piece of advice, with the most structured answer coming from Brooks, who seemed clear in the strategy she would adopt.

First, commission a strategic city plan, then identify development sites that bring forward different parcels, briefs and mixes of tenure; thirdly launch an open design competition for each site, and finally act as client to streamline the delivery of planning consent. Through this, she said, he could truly 'offer opportunity and experience to the small practices and help meet Bristol's housing need.' ●

Architect Rob Gregory is programme manager at Architecture Centre, Bristol



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Where people
live

Farrell: what now?

The Review has been published, but the minister is cautious. How much change can we really expect?

Eleanor Young

At the launch last month of his Farrell Review, Sir Terry Farrell said that when he had been asking for advice on how to make a review stick he was advised that he would have to turn himself into a 'raving nutter'. His government-commissioned report calls for a clutch of fundamental changes: revolutionary change in the culture of planning, education for a more representative profession, the appointment of a chief architect to connect disparate departments, policies and industry itself, the launch of 'urban rooms' to help understand the environment (past, present and future) and a more wide ranging role for design reviews. The report suggested they might be renamed PLACE reviews and look at the whole gamut of Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering. As a final cherry on top the review suggested an annual international exhibition of architecture to celebrate the UK's architecture as an economic and cultural success.

Farrell is ready to take a breather; but is also, he says, committed to being that nutter and working through the recommendations, one chunk at a time. The RIBA welcomed the review and called for the government to take a role in implementing it. 'We hope the government will map out in detail how it will take the Review's recommendations for-

ward,' said RIBA president Stephen Hodder (see page 75).

The government is still in budget-cuts mode and culture minister Ed Vaizey was generous with his time but not his promises. He distanced himself from action or funding commitments: 'I am lending my support. I hope the professions embrace it to the full.'

Speaking to the RIBA Journal, Vaizey praised the report's wide ranging nature. 'I've known Farrell for many years and particularly admire his work in planning,' said Vaizey. 'He could have kept it a simple report on professional education. But he chose to make it more wide ranging.' The minister conceded that the proposal for a chief architect would 'bear examination' but was wary of how it might fit with others, perhaps most obviously within the Construction Leadership Group.

On the back of extensive cuts to Cabe and architecture centre funding, the suggestion that cities should each have an 'urban room', seemed to contradict the current direction of travel. Vaizey was cautious. 'How realistic is this?' he asked. However, he said a pilot and local authority and industry funding would make a stronger case for government support – with a glance towards Bristol mayor and former RIBA president George Ferguson, who was in the room. What Vaizey has more influence over is heritage, and since the review was commissioned English Heritage has seen major structural changes. Whether single co-ordinated responses from PLACE review panels and EH are possible remains to be seen.

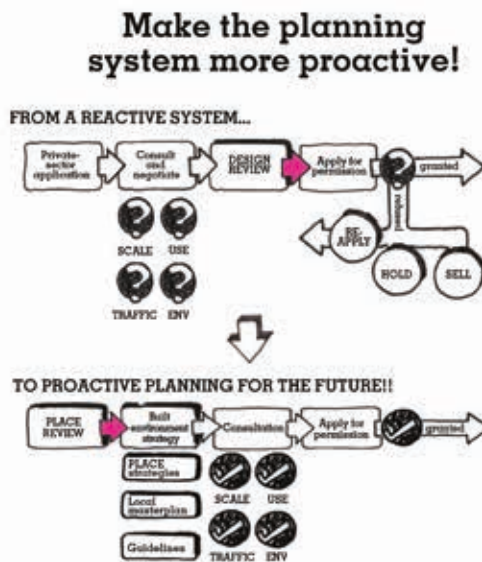
Farrell's passion is clearly planning,

Vaizey distanced himself from action or funding commitments: 'I am lending my support. I hope the professions embrace it to the full'

hence the call for a proactive system. At the launch he insisted that in no other country do plans come to the table with so many issues undecided. This, he says, makes for a hugely labour intensive system and one where the design and layout barely get a glance. He believes the problems lie in the culture of planning, rather than its instruments. But the review's specific recommendations tinker at the edges of the system with no mention of increased planning resources. This probably makes strategic sense given the upheaval the planning system has gone through with the National Planning Policy Framework.

What it addresses in less depth are some of the very live issues around value – of good design and the work of the architect. The review called for a combined industry effort to encapsulate such values in a new method of valuing property, as last year's RIBA120 Series on value called for (RIBA, November 2013), and a change to the Treasury Green Book to embed it in government thinking.

There is nothing very radical in this review, nor will it greatly change how the government treats architecture or resources the system. But the process of putting it together and distilling many informed views does provide an opportunity for an agreed approach to improving the way our places come into being. Over the next few months RIBA will look at some of the themes in more detail. ●



Where people
live

Being Safe

Home or alone?

Private or isolating? Though popular, courtyard housing depends on the individual

Paul Wynn

The past decade has seen revived interest in courtyard housing. Peter Barber at Donnybrook, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios at Accordia, and most recently Alison Brooks Architects at Newhall Be, have used the courtyard house to provide family homes. But do people like living in them? What do they like and dislike? If we are going to use this typology on a wide scale we need to know.

In 2012 I undertook a qualitative survey of residents at Bishopsfield, Harlow, designed by Michael Neylan in 1960 and arguably the most famous courtyard-housing scheme in Britain. Semi-structured interviews found opinions divided, but 90% of participants said they liked their homes.

Residents were positive about the house designs, particularly the courtyard garden and the light and sense of space it brings inside the home. Every room has a connection to the garden and it is used as much as any other room: 'It's as if the garden doesn't get weather, it's another room,' said one.

Neylan intended each home to be able to be adapted by residents and the design and construction has allowed all manner of changes, providing for a range of people. A typical comment was: 'Not just one type of person lives here; we're not all arty liberals. You'll see people that have turned their homes into an English cottage, with garden gnomes. You can do what you want here.'

For residents, Bishopsfield evidently has a strong identity; people feel part of a place greater than their home. It is less clear how

much they identify with their own home and lane. Residents have to explain to visitors how to navigate the estate to find their home.

The relationship with the car has proven the most divisive element of Bishopsfield. Neylan, in accordance with the logic of the time, gave the street to pedestrians, separating them from the vehicles placed beneath. This has brought benefits that residents universally enjoy, most of all safety. But it also generates some of the biggest complaints. The garages are dark and unwelcoming and the lack of car access to the front door is an incredible inconvenience. More than this, it has reduced the independence of the elderly, who must rely heavily on neighbours.

Child friendly

The estate is seen as a good place for children, both residents and visitors. The steep lanes, ramps, steps, podium, squares and green wedges are considered a safe playground. The homes' internal arrangements allow good supervision of children: 'We can let our child use the house freely, and they have become much more confident and independent,' is a common response.

Residents enjoy the privacy created by the design of their home. But the high degree of privacy places emphasis on individuals to actively engage with their neighbours, something that not everyone is able to do.

As one person said: 'I like the privacy with no outward-looking windows but I can see how it might be difficult. I broke some bones a while ago and there was just the garden to face every day.'

Most residents feel that the estate has a good sense of community due both to its design and the people in it: 'You can't help but get to know people here... you have to walk up the lane past each other to get to your house.'

Bishopsfield residents have been active in creating the community, through events and campaigns organised by the residents' association. Many made the choice to live in Bishopsfield. Some consider themselves to be private people and decided to live there because of this, while others were aware of the active community and wanted to be a part of it.

However, courtyard housing offers a particular way of living and it is not suitable for everyone. For some, particularly the elderly, they are too private, and can leave people feeling isolated. Courtyard housing relies on good neighbours and works best when people have chosen to live there, rather than finding themselves allocated a home. But generally, to judge from Bishopsfield, people who live in courtyard housing greatly enjoy it. ●

Paul Wynn is an architectural assistant at Rick Mather Architects. His dissertation on Bishopsfield, supervised by Mark Swenarton, formed part of his MArch at Liverpool School of Architecture

A series of private courtyard gardens defines the plan at Bishopsfield, Harlow.



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External
managementInternal
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Office affairs

Running the business can be one of the hardest bits of practice. There's plenty of CPD out there to help though

Joni Tyler

Taking care of 'the business of business' is fundamental to professional architectural practice. Architects work for, manage or own businesses; work for and manage clients, stakeholders, teams and projects. And they need to manage their careers and personal development. Grounding in the relevant essentials, and training, make this easier.

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The two business-focussed core CPD topics require at least two hours each a year. External management covers clients, users and delivery of services, and looks to the outward-facing elements of running a business. Internal management includes professionalism, practice, business and management and examines the inside of your business. ●

For advice finding and accessing relevant CPD, phone 020 7307 3797 or email cpd@riba.org. You can also keep up to date through our weekly news updates, and connect with the RIBA, NBS and each other on Facebook, Linked In, Twitter and on RIBA Knowledge Communities. Joni Tyler is RIBA head of CPD.

ARCHITECTURE FOCUSED ADVICE FROM THE RIBA

The RIBA's 2014 CPD series includes two detailed seminars to be held at 14 locations in England:

- **Managing client expectations:** the architect's liability and the management of risk. Dyfed Griffiths from the University of Bath will look at how you can address the challenges of meeting the client's expectations and the mechanisms through which you can manage liability
- **Clear communications:** how to get your message across: with Richard Fallon of Communications Now, acquire key skills to effectively manage the challenging communications in your professional life, and get the outcomes you need. architecture.com/cpd2014

- **Berrymans Lace Mawer:** solicitor offering free CPD Providers' Network seminars, ribacpd.com
- **The RIBA partners with the Cass School of Architecture** on the Return to Practice, Mini MBA and Business Essentials for Architects advanced CPD courses
- **At your desktop,** NBS TV can provide hours of free, on-demand CPD video learning on business issues as well as other design topics. thenbs.com/nbsTV/
- **You can access dozens of on-demand videos** from past American Institute of Architects conventions. Sessions are reasonably priced for 1-1.5 hours of CPD on a huge array of topics. <http://convention.aia.org/event/convention-home>
- **RIBA Publishing** has many titles to use as informal, self-directed learning, including the Good Practice Guide: Starting a Practice by Simon Foxell ribabookshops.com
- **Finally, save 11-12 November** for this year's Guerrilla Tactics small practice business conference and CPD days – packed with challenging, enlightening sessions to put you and your business at the leading edge.

BUSINESS COURSES AND SOURCES

Business skills don't have to come with specific architectural content. Local adult education short courses can assist, for example, City University in London

- **Institute of Directors** events allow members and non-members to network and gain important knowledge to help you and your business. Other professional bodies that provide training are the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD), Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
- **The Federation of Small Businesses** is the UK's largest campaigning pressure group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms. With 200,000 members across 33 regions, FSB provides business services and protection, documents, statistics, services and local meetings and more. fsb.org.uk
- **Many National Enterprise Networks** provide free and low cost help, advice, training and more. For example, East London Small Business Centre offers a four day start up course, one-to-one business counselling and much more. Your local resource can be found at nationalenterprisenetwork.org

A wealth of support, advice and expertise is available through government services and agencies. Much is free

- **Many UK Chambers of Commerce** provide business training events. Brighton and Hove Chamber, for example, operates as Sussex Enterprise, arranging a wide variety of business training. britishchambers.org.uk
- **The British Library Business and IP Centre** can help you start, run and grow your business, with face to face services and events in London and a website. bl.uk/bipc

Web based information: A wealth of support, advice and expertise is available through government services and agencies. Much is free: see greatbusiness.gov.uk. You can also get business support and advice over the phone on the government's business support line: 0300 456 3565

- **ACAS:** employment advice for employer and employee. Anyone can get free advice (and learning) on its website or by calling the telephone helpline. For employers, more specialised services include training, workplace projects, conciliation and mediation. acas.org.uk
- **The Donut websites**, such as Start Up Donut, help businesses through reliable information and resources that can save you time and money. startupdonut.co.uk
- **Two key online resources**, packed with useful articles for informal learning, are the Business Balls and Mind Tools websites businessballs.com and mindtools.com
- **Free emails and social media** from government departments (such as UKTI) keep you informed
- **You can also learn from social media**, free emails and blogs courtesy of The Economist, the Financial Times, Bank of England, Personnel Today and others
- **Mentoring:** mentorsme.co.uk is Britain's first such gateway for small and medium-sized enterprises. The free site offers businesses access to a list of quality-assured business mentoring organisations across Britain, offering face to face mentoring, online services and CPD videos.



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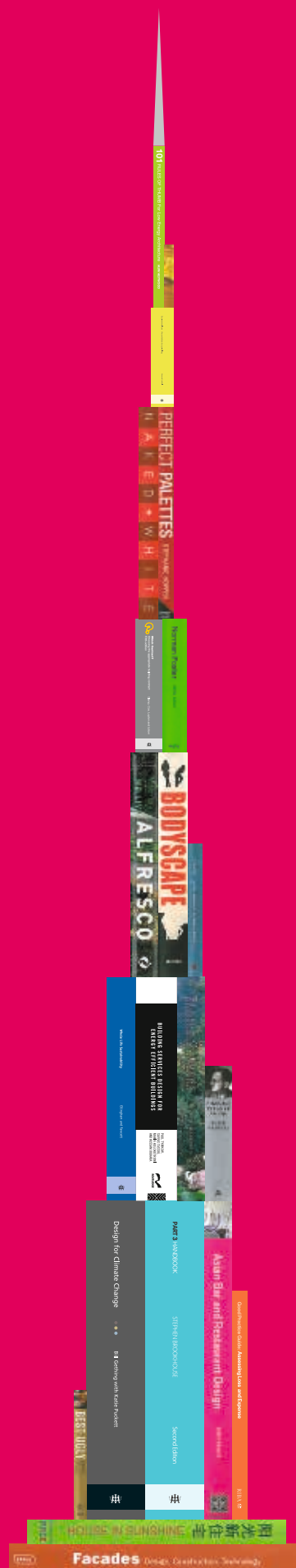
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External
management



Internal
management

They did it first, miss

Custom and practice alone won't get you off a negligence charge, but it can play a part

Alistair McGrigor

Imagine you've designed a block of luxury apartments at a prestigious London address. With completion occurring, you have organised a reception in an apartment on one of the top floors, inviting some of your most important clients whom you wish to impress. As your caterers make the final preparations for the event, they suddenly realise the water supply to the apartment has ceased.

This was exactly the situation in a recent case involving a development in Knightsbridge, where WSP was M&E engineer. When the architect's caterers realised the water supply had stopped, the water system pumps were turned back on to urgently restore supply. But the sudden surge caused by the water rapidly pumping into empty pipes caused them to fail catastrophically in two places, leading to substantial flooding.

The question is whether WSP was professionally negligent not to have suggested the installation of surge arrestor valves at the top of each riser of the water system. The issue of sudden surge of water up empty pipes was at the time relatively unknown.

The test for professional negligence was set by a doctor's case from 1957, which states

that a professional 'is not guilty of negligence if he has acted in accordance with a practice accepted as proper by a responsible body of medical men skilled in that particular art'.

However, it is not enough simply to follow a body of opinion if it does not have a logical basis, and that requires a two fold test.

First, the body of professional men must have directed its mind to the comparative risks and benefits relating to the matter, therefore it is the process and not the result of the expert's reasoning that is material in the eyes of the courts. Secondly, as a result of that process, a defensible conclusion must have been reached. This conclusion must be internally consistent, must make cogent sense as a whole, and cannot fly in the face of proven extrinsic facts relevant to the matter.

The judge in the Knightsbridge case applied these tests and deduced that WSP was simply following the general view at the time (mid-2005), ie, most M&E engineers were not fully aware of the risk of sudden surges leading to catastrophic flooding. However, the judge confirmed that a professional person is not exonerated simply by proving that others would have been just as negligent.

The fact that industry practice as a whole had not led to the adoption of surge arrestors did not alleviate WSP's liability, because it was not clear that a proper body of professional M&E experts had actively considered the risk and concluded logically and rationally that surge arrestors were not needed.

However, while WSP may have failed the test of professional negligence, the property owner still had to prove its loss was caused by WSP's negligence. On this point, the judge held that even if WSP had suggested at the time that surge arrestors be fitted, it is unclear that the client would have definitively taken that advice and installed them. Indeed, the judge pointed out that even following the catastrophic flooding, the client had not inserted surge arrestors in the building. On that basis, WSP was not found liable for causing the loss as a result of professional negligence.

These tests of an M&E engineer and its design will apply equally to any architect when designing a building. Architects should take heed that 'everyone designs it this way', is not necessarily a viable defence against a claim of professional negligence, if that design has not been properly examined by a body of professional opinion. ●

Alistair McGrigor is a partner with Nabarro

The body of professional men must have directed its mind to the comparative risks and benefits relating to the matter, so it is the process that is material in the eyes of the courts

STEP-IN RIGHTS

When granting collateral warranties to beneficiaries, you may have noticed clauses dealing with 'step-in rights'. These permit a beneficiary to step in and become the architect's employer if the actual employer defaults in its obligations. Usually these rights are granted only to a bank or, for example, to the developer in a warranty post-novation of the architect's appointment to a D&B contractor.

The clauses apply both where the employer has defaulted in making payments to the architect, and where the employer has defaulted in its relationship with the beneficiary. For example, if a developer goes bust or meets financial difficulty and therefore defaults under its loan agreement with the bank, the bank will be entitled to step in and take over to ensure the project is completed.

Alternatively, if the developer fails to pay the architect, the clauses would oblige the architect (before terminating its appointment) to notify the funder to let the funder step-in instead.

Usually step-in rights oblige the beneficiary (when stepping in) to pay all sums outstanding and due to the architect. Without that protection, any sums not paid by the original employer might remain outstanding and the architect might not be able to recover them from the beneficiary.

External
managementProcurement
& contracts

The circle of life

All the world's a Plan of
Work stage



Maria Smith

Without B for Brief, or C for Concept, without D for Developed or Detail, or even at a stretch K for Construction, the new plan of work is difficult to bond with. If only there were a way to swap its sensible numbers for a different sequence, perhaps one more associated with love or time or gods or some other emotive hook...

*All the world's a plan of work stage
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their roles and their scopes of work;
And one design in its time plays many parts,
Its acts being seven stages.*

At first, Stage 1, Preparation and Brief: the infant, mewling and puking in the primordial gloom of the potential projects folder. No design yet exists in this suckling stage, only vague goals breastfed in the privacy of an unbooked meeting room; building a bond with baby-design. This is the Sunday of a project: the dawn.

And next Stage 2, Concept Design: the whining school-boy with his satchel, skinny with inadequate adjacencies diagram.

A shining morning face slowly discerns as the design emerges, creeping like snail, burdened by what it still needs to know. Harsh days pass and with every sheet of trace, every one saved as sketch file, a young mind's neural pathways are forged. No stage is in equal parts so unpredictable yet predictive; so brimming with prospects yet defined by pioneering pedagogies and niche house styles. This is the Monday of the project: with wavering illumination by the goddess moon on this first day of real work.

And then Stage 3, Developed Design: the lover, sighing like a furnace in anticipation of this romping, sensual stage. With concept in place, it is a lithe body ready to explore new-found carnality and feeling. Pubescent design indulges to distraction in materials, details, acoustics: her skin, her eyebrow, the sound of her voice. It revels in possibilities, unafraid of final consequences or exact specification. But all comes crashing down, as with woeful ballad our adolescent must reconcile with the design team, must be subjected to risk assessments, cost plans, change control that wounds with the pain of unrequited love. This is the Tuesday of a project: a sensory day of conflict and longing in the name of the gods Mars and Tyr, son of Odin.

To Stage 4, Technical Design: a soldier. Full of strange oaths sworn at design freeze, the young-man-design graduates to real, professional involvement with the world. Bearded and donning a new level of autonomy, Design Esq. spars with knightly specialist subcontractors, vowing to reach its fullest height in technical virtuosity. Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel, it boasts strength to defend its ripening form and protects pride and ego at all costs. The architect watches from the wings, hoping stern education and excessive front-loading of detailing will guide our zealous warrior. This is the Wednesday of a project: a day of distinction and battle in the name of the gods Mercury and Odin himself, father of all.

And then Stage 5, Construction: the justice, in fair round belly fat with specifications and eyes severe but secure in the formality of contract management. Full of wise words dispensed at length at site meetings, this stage claims the authority of plentiful but recent experience. The justice is a mirror to the lover, hands-on at last and relishing physicality with the renewed vigour of post-self-conscious middle age. This is the Thursday of

The lover, sighing like a
furnace in anticipation of
this romping, sensual stage.
Pubescent design indulges
to distraction in materials,
details, acoustics

a project: a day of strength and hammering in the name of the gods Jupiter and Thor.

The sixth stage, Stage 6, Handover and Close Out, shifts into old age as if towards the innocence of youth. As the project heads towards completion, the matured design eases into its slippers. With spectacles on nose, old-man-design is sensitive to defects and spends his days making the best of slightly too far gone predicaments. Nevertheless his youthful hose are well saved in preparation for the exuberance of awards and the naivety necessary for the next project. This is the Friday of the project: a day of support and communication in the name of the goddesses Venus and Frigg, wife of Odin.

Last scene of all, Stage 7, In Use, ends this strange eventful history. The operation and maintenance manual its last will and testament, the post-occupancy evaluation its obituary, these final hours descend into second childishness and mere oblivion. This last scene mirrors the first and the design enters once more the primordial gloom, ready for the next incarnation. This is the Saturday of the project: a day in the name of Saturn, god of time, generation and dissolution. ●

Maria Smith is a director at Studio Weave

Hello Future

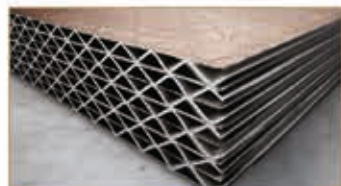


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3: Culture

Where's the killer punch?

Skyline campaigners need to show some muscle



Hugh Pearman Editor

Ever since James I asked Inigo Jones to do something about it, we have been pretty helpless in the face of London's expansion. James and Inigo could no more stop London's sprawl outwards than today's Prince of Wales can stop its sprawl upwards. Not that this prevents him trying: his Prince's Foundation has now issued a report calling for a 'midrise solution' to London's housing crisis.

But there's another show in town, the Skyline campaign. This is a rather diffuse, herbivorous affair. New London Architecture has commissioned some commendably revealing research into the pipeline of tall buildings being planned in London. The much bandied-about headline figure is a sobering 236 towers presently proposed of 20 stories or higher – in many cases much, much higher. Some are the commercial skyscrapers of the City of London, Canary Wharf and so on, but most are residential. The Skyline campaign, unlike the Prince, is not anti-tower. It just wants better towers, in the right places, to be considered strategically. Its members – NLA, the Observer, and the Architect's Journal – seem to have slightly differing views on exactly what they want. The NLA, headed

Let's be honest, 'a more joined up plan' is not exactly a killer slogan like 'No more towers!'

by Peter Murray, wants a 'Skyline Commission' reporting to the mayor. That's another quango to add to all the others that have so far failed to get to grips with the matter of tall buildings in London. What are the chances of this succeeding where those have failed, especially as mayor Boris seems to think he has plenty of advisers already, thank you?

Others in the campaign seem to veer towards – well, what, exactly? I asked Rory Olcayto, acting editor of the AJ, to put it in a sentence. He produced: 'We're demanding a more joined up plan to determine where we put these towers, and rules to govern their scale and appearance.' Few could disagree – as Sir David Chipperfield, a campaign signatory, put it: 'It's like voting for good weather.' But let's be honest, 'a more joined up plan' is not exactly a killer slogan like 'No more towers!'

In fights like this, in London especially, the carnivores always win. The carnivores are the developers who have the money and the land. Even if the land is local authority owned, even if local authorities manage to extract their pound of flesh in the form of social or 'affordable' housing, the money men still call the shots because they have the ultimate sanction – they can just walk away. And in the case of these 236 towers, the carnivores have pretty much won already. Half of them already have planning permission, and I wouldn't bet on the planning system changing from its reactive, piecemeal mode to the necessary pro-active, strategic mode before the other half get approved too.

Yes, we need that better planning system: it's highlighted in the Farrell Review as well. But remember the joint London tall buildings policy put together in 2007 by Cabe and English Heritage, in a rare collaboration. It too was well-intentioned, vague, herbivorous. The carnivores rang rings round it. Something much, much tougher is needed. How about a 10-year renewable moratorium on buildings in the capital over 15 storeys? I can hear the howls of protest now. ●

'I'd like people to think it has a gravitas and a sense of beauty and civic purpose; that it's meaningful and contributes to London's architecture'

James Timberlake on Kieran Timberlake's new US embassy p76

'In my own mind the building is much better than the English think – but not quite as good as I wished it to be'

Eero Saarinen on his 1955 US embassy p98

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Piling up the now

Herbert Wright looks into
the future



Herbert Wright

All architects and designers (even those working with Prince Charles) are futurists, in as much as they're generating the shape of things to come before they exist. And they're not the only ones: sci-fi film makers have been conjuring the future city at least since *Metropolis* was released in 1927. Sure, all that art deco, streaming masses, and multi-layered transportation in Fritz Lang's masterpiece looked rather like contemporaneous New York on steroids, but urbanistically, it was saying 'the future is now, just piled up more'. The same seems to be the case in the latest credible celluloid crystal ball, Spike Jonze's film *Her*. The near-future Los Angeles has contemporary skyscrapers, just more of them. Indeed, supplies of suitable LA high-rise ran low and they threw in a load from Pudong, Shanghai, even shooting there.

Her has other interesting design threads. For example, where are the cars? Everyone's walking or emerging from metro systems, which may be normal in Europe or New York, but LA? That seems a leap too far; unlike the film's unseen character, Samantha – the operating system avatar that Joaquin Phoenix falls in love with. Once she's learnt enough of human ways, she floats off to higher planes of thought. Computers that use human language and learn, like Samantha or HAL in Kubrik's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, are already here. Apple's Siri enables iPhones to listen and talk – and you get way more conversa-

Computers that use
human language
are already here.
With Apple's Siri
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conversation
than with an
emo teenager or
immigration official

tion than with an emo teenager or immigration official. Most advanced is IBM's Watson, which won the American TV quiz *Jeopardy*. Machine intelligence is entering the everyday by stealth. It's already taken over telephone help lines and Tube ticket offices, and (as noted here before) it's annexing retail. Civilisation as a whole is a few steps away.

So what about the built environment in an AI-ruled world? The first thing to note is that architecture to house the computers themselves was never up to much because they just don't care about appearances (yet). When corporations had mainframe computers, they were installed in back-office buildings, usually humdrum but with a few heroic exceptions, such as Lloyds Bank's Sampson House, a heavily massed exercise in streamlined brutalism by Fitzroy Robinson completed on London's South Bank in 1979. Now that computers are pocket-sized, it's their servers that demand space. Researching data centre architecture is difficult because IT has hijacked the word architecture, but we all know they can occupy faceless sheds that give big box retailers a run for their money in the bland stakes. Data centres are responsible for two per cent of CO₂ emissions, so design has a lot to play for. Arup's Citi Data Centre in Frankfurt (2009), with its vast green roofs and green walls, is a seminal step.

Cooling is more important than ever, and guzzles water as well as power. Maybe it's worth thinking about floating data centres in the atmosphere. Indeed, we already refer to collective computing power and data storage as The Cloud. Hang data centres from tethered blimps, and they could use the wind to drive power turbines as well as drawing more from the thermo-electric effect over the adiabatic temperature differential along the tether. Plus they could keep an eye on us.

The new Big Brother in The Cloud v2 will doubtless think about the best architecture for us, its underlings. Let's hope we're pampered like pets rather than suppressed like a plague of pests. We'll have iconic cultural buildings to make us feel civilised, seductive stadia to channel tribal impulses into sporting events, and luxurious crashpads with views, but in gated estates. If there was trouble, we could easily be shut in and contained.

Hold on, isn't that future now, we're just piling it up more? Er... who's in charge? ●

Trained physicist Herbert Wright is an architectural writer, historian and art critic

SHARE THE PAIN

Dodgy foreign money drives London's property market, we are told. But the UK has other brilliant cities to attract the world's oligarchs, with great universities for their kids, and creative hubs bursting with ideas where investors can launder funds. Awake, Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham – go market luxury apartment towers in the Far East! Get the cash! And take some pressure off us Londoners!

Cold comfort

Ulaanbaatar is very cold and even more polluted. Post Soviet updating is essential – and inspiring

Tanja Smith

What hits you first is the cold. Freezing air blasts against your skin the moment you step off the plane. Welcome to one of the coldest and most heavily polluted cities in the world, Ulaanbaatar. And it's winter, when temperatures plummet to -30°.

My first impression was one of awe. The city is enormous and a weird mixture of St Petersburg and Bangkok. In the shadow of a snow-covered mountain range, Ulaanbaatar runs west to east along the valley.

Although my hair froze once, strangely enough the temperature wasn't debilitating. The air is dry and, dressed warmly, you could go about your business happily.

Ulaanbaatar has a familiar feel as a city, but there are sharp reminders that you are somewhere different – the language, very few western faces, foreign signs and traffic mayhem, with loud horns going off constantly.

I was amazed to see the number of dogs roaming the streets. One day we came out of a meeting to be greeted on the street by an open vehicle with a decapitated sheep in it. Not a common sight in Newcastle for sure!

Architecture is a bit of a stir-fry too, with clear evidence of the former communist-era. Established old buildings rub shoulders with modern high-rise, while the odd traditional monastery and a sweep of endless Ger villages are a reminder of the city's rural roots.

People living in the Ger villages on the mountain slopes burn raw fuels and anything they can find to keep warm. This smog drifts down into the valley and because there is very little wind, the pollution just lies there.

Many buildings in Ulaanbaatar date from

Ulaanbaatar is the second most polluted city in the world. Wherever you go there's a haze, and the strong smell of smog leaves a bitter taste in your mouth

the Soviet-era and lack even polystyrene insulation or double glazing. In such a cold and polluted environment, this is having a real impact, especially on public health.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Ulaanbaatar is the second most polluted city in the world and it certainly has its work cut out to rectify this. Wherever you go, there's a haze and the strong smell of smog leaves a bitter taste in your mouth.

How does this affect those who are in it day after day? Once out of the city and into the Ger villages, it gets even more oppressive.

When you see the extent of the problem, you feel the need to do something about it. This is not just a local issue. The heavy pollution is a threat to the global environment.

That's why I'm here, as part of the team at Gradon Architecture to improve people's lives by designing sustainable environments with energy-efficient, socially responsible buildings and spaces. We're trying to make a small difference with far-reaching benefits.

We've just submitted design proposals for 50 energy-efficient homes in the Nukht Valley part of the city and are working with Mongolian partners on master-planning to improve building stock for the 'Ger-communities'.

These projects should be the start of much improved living standards for the friendly and homely Mongolians. Through sustainable design, I'm hoping Mongolia's famous blue sky will shine through a little more. Judging by my experience in Ulaanbaatar, that blue sky can do amazing things for the soul. ●

Tanja Smith is a chartered architectural technologist with North East practice, Gradon Architecture

MONGOLIA IN NUMBERS

8m
population (UN, 2012)

4
people per square mile

16.7%
growth rate, first
quarter, 2012
(source: BBC)

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abandoned

Below Gers in the snow, the chimneys from their stoves protruding through the roofs.



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Our acoustic products were first certified by the BBA in 1994. Along the way there has been many significant developments, 2001 saw proposals for tough new changes to Part E (Resistance to the Passage of sound) of the Building Regulations in England & Wales, driven by the fact that more than two thirds of all complaints to local Environmental Health Offices related to some form of domestic noise.

At the time BRE also estimated that in new dwellings, as many as 40% of separating floors may fail to meet the required standard. The intention then, was to improve the overall standard whilst reducing the failure rate to below 5% over the following 10 years. This would be accomplished by a clear (higher) performance standard, along with the introduction of Pre-Completion Testing.

The response from the industry to these proposals, was to develop (led by the House Builders Federation) a complete set of 'Robust Details' (later to become Robust Details Ltd), that would ensure consistent performance levels were achieved time after time, thus making the requirement for testing on site unnecessary (Approved Document E, 2004 amendments).

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have reported that "The net effect of the policy over the period 2003 – 2010, assessed in terms of preventing 'failures', was estimated to have been about 198,000 attached houses and 111,000 purpose-built flats"

In 2010 Scotland also saw Section 5 (Noise) of the Technical Handbooks updated with the intention of improving the sound insulation of attached new or converted homes; along with a published collection of 'Example Constructions' that specifies could refer to (which importantly, also contains details on test information which should be sought from manufactures to demonstrate their products are suitable for use). The requirement to demonstrate compliance through pre-completion testing (PCT) was also introduced. Just as in England & Wales some 8 years earlier, 2012 saw the launch of Robust Details for Scotland and also Northern Ireland, albeit with fewer constructions to select from.

At the A.Proctor Group we are constantly looking at new ways to improve the experience for the end-user by listening to our customers and rejuvenating our range, incorporating more recycled & locally-sourced components to give them the performance & economic advantages required.

We offer a comprehensive range of acoustic services, including: Acoustic design consultation based on drawings, Batten overlay drawings, Acoustic flooring take-offs, Vibration isolation specifications Laboratory & site preliminary or comfort testing.

Sound insulation in buildings requires a "system approach" using a combination of products and components. The wide range of acoustic product test data and the very nature of sound insulation performance do not lend themselves to a straightforward design process. In our experience the most common causes of failure to meet the required performance levels are the specification of or substitution for, unsuitable materials.

The A.Proctor Group have been providing technically advanced acoustic solutions to the construction industry since the 1980's. A technical support team with over 50 years experience in construction acoustics between them are on hand to assist with compliance at all stages, from design and specification through to construction advice and on-site or lab testing. With a comprehensive range of products, full BBA certification and several decades of acoustics experience, the A. Proctor Group are a company you can depend upon.●



Sitting on the top of the bay

Cornwall is about more than holidays, but even a busy practice in St Ives has time to go surfing

Rachael Gaunt

The thriving network of creative businesses in St Ives, Cornwall, includes PBWC Architects. The strong tourism economy creates high demand for buildings with residential potential and this has forced creatives to find other types of space for their studios. It makes this a great town to visit during the annual 'Open Studios' fortnight, as you get a glimpse of the 'other St Ives' behind the picture postcard harbour. It exposes a range of creative working spaces from old pilchard cellars to, in our case, a former petrol station.

After six years looking for a new studio we bought the station, perched on a cliff edge overlooking St Ives, in February 2013. With a need for rapid progress we managed the demolition and construction ourselves and moved in to our 'Atlantic Studio' that October, ahead of our 40th birthday in December.

We are particularly focussed on doing the best work we can during the day so our evenings and weekends are free to enjoy all Cornwall has to offer

Even our contractor clients were impressed by the speed at which we achieved this.

We documented the process of creating 'Atlantic Studio' with the help of a specialist architectural time-lapse company, also based in St Ives. At our 40th party we projected the film onto the outside of the new studio and the film is now on our website. My favourite moment is when the demolition machines toss aside the massive petrol tanks. Our new studio allows us to work in agile ways in tandem with providing a wider range of services. Staff and clients love our new home and we feel it gives the practice a great foundation for the next 40 years.

The other strong foundation is our very diverse range of work: from state of the art lifeboat stations for the RNLI and single classroom extensions to primary schools, through to master planning of £40m college campus schemes. Historically our work has been based in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. We made a strategic decision several years ago to use BIM and REVIT software, which has allowed us to work as part of dispersed design teams on large-scale commercial projects. We are lucky that the fastest broadband speeds in the country are in St Ives and other parts of Cornwall. This means we can work with the latest technology via cloud based rendering and hosting platforms and still have time to check out the surf at lunchtime.

Work/life balance is hugely important at PBWC Architects and we have a clutch of keen sailors and surfers in our team. So we are particularly focussed on doing the best work we can during the day so our evenings and weekends are free to enjoy all Cornwall has to offer. We have a natural passion for the sea and a particular skillset for marine and coastal architecture. We are as comfortable designing for the sea as we are for dry land. We think our awareness of extreme coastal environments creates a unique advantage around the coast of the UK and beyond. From our location in the far west, we have designed and constructed schemes from Blackpool to Bournemouth.

We are optimistic about future architecture on the edge of Cornwall and the UK allows us to combine great projects with a great lifestyle while embracing change and innovation in the ways we work. Forget any preconceptions about ice creams and pasties, we can show you another St Ives. ●

Rachael Gaunt is director of PBWC Architects

IN NUMBERS

24,704
residents in Hayle and St Ives (2011)

259,679
visitors to Tate St Ives 2013 (source Alva)

535,300
residents in Cornwall (2011)

697km
Cornish coastline (source Cornwall Council)

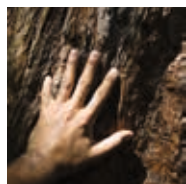


Left Padstow Lifeboat House (2006), one of a number of RNLI stations by the practice.

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Farrell is just the beginning



Now the Farrell Review is published we must move on from campaigns to action

Stephen Hodder

Terry Farrell's review of architecture and the built environment could not have come at a better time. We have gone through a period of rapid change in built environment policy, from planning changes to housing to an increased focus on sustainability. It's time to take stock of where we have got to and to provide a steer to help bring about a cultural shift in the way we think about and shape the future of our villages, towns and cities.

There is growing acknowledgement of the importance of architecture and this is reflected in greater public awareness of and interest in the impact that poor buildings and environments can have on our everyday lives. Yet there is still so much poor quality architecture we must ask why this happens.

The RIBA contributed extensively to this process so we are pleased that the review has reflected many of our recommendations.

We championed the need to focus on a more co-ordinated and consistent approach

An understanding of architecture needs to start at school age and more should be done to properly integrate architecture into the curriculum

to design across government and the need for stronger leadership from decision-makers. This has been sorely lacking for many years.

The review's focus on changing the dynamic within the planning system is right. The planning system is unnecessarily adversarial, too reactive and often fails to provide the vision required to set out a clear plan for the future of places. Much has been done by the current government in shaping the National Planning Policy Framework with that objective. To achieve the culture change needed will require a significant shift and expansion in resources within planning departments. If we believe that planning can play a positive role in delivering great places and setting strong expectations on quality, then we have to start resourcing it properly.

The focus on PLACE is important and reflects much of the thinking over the last decade and beyond. Creating great architecture and successful places is fundamental. Too much poor quality architecture comes about from both a lack of focus on how to create successful places and a failure of professional teams to work together enough.

An understanding of architecture needs to start at school age and more should be done to properly integrate architecture into the curriculum. It is important too that architects and other professionals engage more with the public on architecture and in what is happening in their town or city.

For the profession, the review reflects much of our thinking on architectural education to improve greater access and more interdisciplinary understanding.

The RIBA will examine this report in detail to look at where we can help shape change together with the Farrell team and other partners. This is the opportunity for government to step up to the plate. It does need to commit to changes of policy and practice to enable some of the aspirations of this review to happen. I don't believe it is enough to say that the industry should continue to campaign – this is what the production of the review should do. We will continue to work with the government to advance many of the issues. A government commitment to an architecture policy with a senior cross-government champion to make it happen would demonstrate a significant challenge to the industry that it will champion the thing we hold most dear – good architecture. ●

@HodderPRIBA

ARB REVIEW

The government is conducting a review of the Architect's Registration Board to understand if protection of title should remain and if so whether Arb is effective and value for money. RIBA Council has made clear that the RIBA supports protection of title in the interests of the consumer and would wish for Arb to be retained, but for areas of overlap and duplication to be removed. The RIBA is working with the government to shape the outcome of the review.

In 2017 London's new \$1bn US embassy complex will open. James Timberlake, of its architect Kieran Timberlake, feels a realistic appraisal of the design will vanquish its critics

Words Jan-Carlos Kucharek Portrait David Vintiner

Defender of the faith

Kieran Timberlake partner James Timberlake, though silver-haired, remains a strapping fellow. Especially when his face is six inches from yours and he's hauling you up off your toes by your lapels. Maybe it's something I said. 'It's not a moat,' he intones slowly, smiling, before resting me back down on my heels and smoothing my collar down, 'It's a pond.' True, maybe the word 'moat', suggesting at least defensiveness, is too loaded a meaning; but we are looking over the hole in the ground that'll be the new American Embassy in London, and what's the meaning of 'pond' anyway? Something in your garden? A component of a SuDS strategy? The Atlantic? It turns out it's actually all three to Timberlake, hence his robust distinction.

Timberlake's actually quite jovial, but you feel that since his firm won the embassy competition in 2010, he's been forced into defending the proposal, and you get the sense that, although it broke ground only last November, he's still playing catch-up. Kieran Timberlake, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, was one of four firms whittled down from a longlist of 39 US practices to work up proposals for a new embassy on the

2ha site at Vauxhall's Nine Elms. The other three on the shortlist – the internationally famous Morphosis, Richard Meier and Pei Cobb Freed – made the Philadelphia practice definitely the least known; but its glass cube with ETFE outer skin, orientated to compass points and set within a landscape of grass and water, won the jury over – if not the critics, who mostly picked it to pieces.

Timberlake puts the firm's low UK profile down partly to the fact that it favours getting work and building out to entering expensive competitions, and partly to an obsession with such contests in the British architectural press, which is prone to speculate exhaustively on the possible winners. Being set against obviously better known names, he thinks, made the press harder to convince. 'Opinion seemed based on asking how the design could possibly be worthy, not whether it was,' he says. 'People were asking how an emerging firm could have won the competition, as if we didn't have 30 years of work behind us. I feel the British press and public had picked their favourite to win and we weren't it.' This UK view might have been compounded by the stateside opinion of then New York Times'



Kieran Timberlake's
James Timberlake
surveys the firm's
embassy site – part of
the ongoing regeneration
of the whole Vauxhall
area.



critic Nicolai Ouroussoff 'having made up his mind that Thom Mayne should be the anointed one for the embassy'; a partisan view that Timberlake still takes umbrage with and that he saw as closing down a bigger conversation about the design. 'Sure, ours didn't have the pedigree of Meier or the formal language of Morphosis, but it was reasoned and highly performative. I can understand if people just said it was the most pragmatic approach, even if it wasn't the most visionary, but it was dismissed as a souped-up office building by a "safe pair of hands".'

So who's behind the pair of hands? Born in 1952 in Ohio, Timberlake grew up in Michigan, the son of an Episcopalian minister who headed two churches, both of which were extended and altered by local architects. Timberlake recalls spending his early years 'crawling over buildings'; so much so, that by the time he was five, he already knew his vocation. After architecture school in Detroit, he went on to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1977, a school still highly influenced by the teachings of former head Louis Kahn. It's here that Timberlake met friend and business partner Ste-

phen Kieran. Both went on to win the Rome Prize (where Timberlake would spend a semester being tutored by Jim Stirling) and to work together at Venturi, Rauch and Scott-Brown's office. Given that his firm's largely institutional output seems to combine a US modernist vernacular and high-tech, where does his seven years at Venturi's office manifest itself? Timberlake says it was expertise in typologies, not styles. While respecting its trailblazing postmodernism, Timberlake thinks Venturi 'had a problem with monumental space in a way that Jim Stirling didn't,' calling Venturi's National Gallery extension 'clippings of great buildings that leaves you uncomfortable... unsatisfied.' But the pair also wanted to carve their own path. 'Venturi was a father-figure to us, but to grow, while you might love your father, you have to reject him, don't you?' he says philosophically. There was pragmatism too: 'Copying Bob's work on his home turf in Philadelphia? We would never have been hired!' he adds. And they wanted to set up a different kind of practice. Both teaching part-time, Timberlake says they viewed a research-based aspect as critical to their

identity and it still underpins the likes of the high-tech, sustainable, recyclable Cellophane House for New York's MOMA and the SmartWrap for the Cooper Hewitt School. It may be this research that won the practice the American Institute of Architecture's prestigious Architecture Firm award in 2008, two years before it bagged the embassy.

The practice has moved from education and institutional buildings for the likes of Yale, Rice and Cornell Universities to a future high-rise in New York, new hospital and 25-storey commercial building in Philadelphia. Timberlake cites a range of modern precedents for these, as eclectic as Bob Venturi's were classical. Corb rolls off the tongue, but time spent in Italy means Luigi Moretti's considered rationalism is cited, and the 'picaresqueness' of Carlo Scarpa. He also mentions 19th century architect William Strickland, 'an English transplant to the States', whose Greek revival work in Philadelphia, detailed so the glass is almost flush to its stone face, 'remains modern even now'. Perhaps due to his alma mater Pennsylvania, his deepest respect is for Louis Kahn's humanist modernism. It's no coincidence that Timber-

Below The north elevation of the proposed embassy building, acting as balancing pond, public realm and security system. Timberlake notes that two of the other shortlisted schemes would have been walled.



Below The east elevation of the embassy with its ground level public entrance pavilion and high performance ETFE secondary facade.





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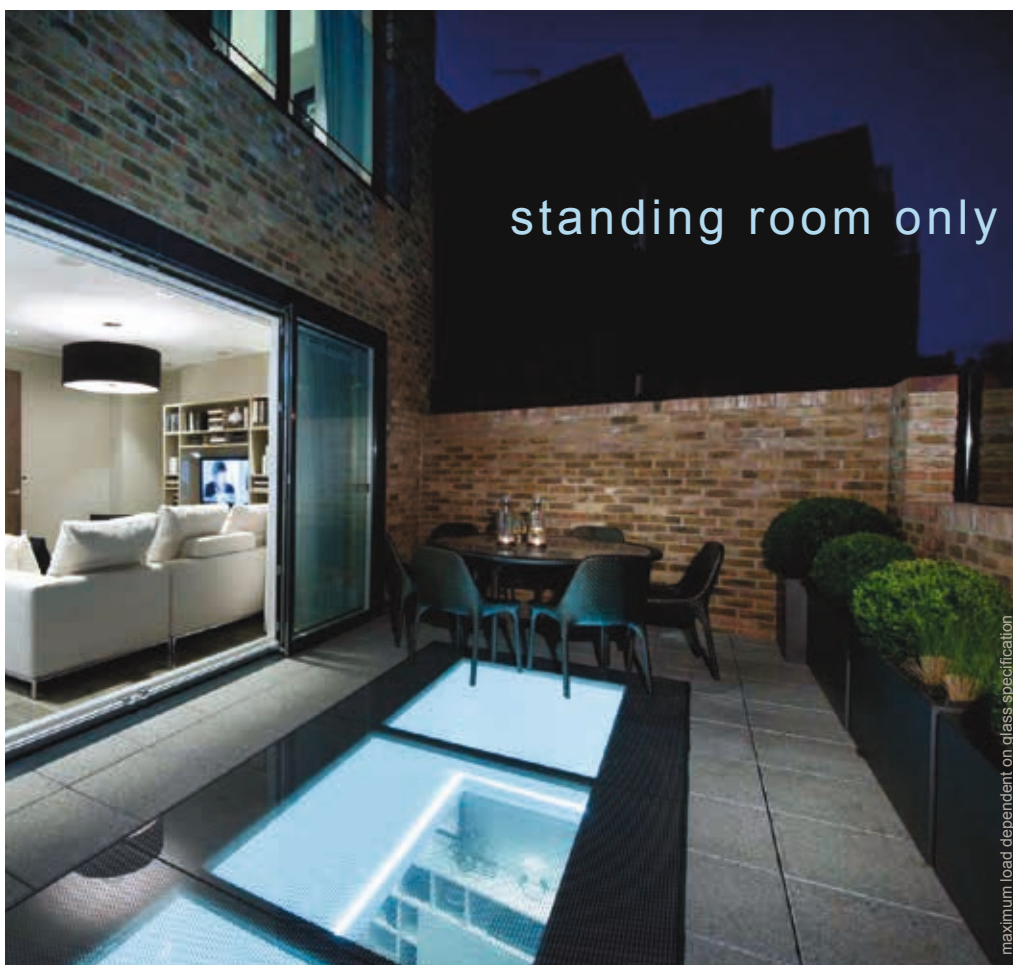
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lake's London visit coincides with the return leg of his trip to Dhaka, where he's taken his students five times to analyse its urban form and water management, and to visit the great man's greatest work. Though never taught by Kahn, he says 'there's aspects of his work that both Stephen and I have great respect for. Kahn was about working at human scale but making powerful, primal spatial moves. His working with both simultaneously gives it that monumental, civic quality.'

I ask Timberlake if he thinks he's gone some way to producing 'that civic quality' at the American embassy, and he answers with an unequivocal yes, despite the limitations that a building of this nature imposed on them. It all comes down, he argues, to the cubic form. 'Forget the other whizz bang shapes, the cube is the most symbolic form – certainly the most timeless – present in ancient, neo-classical and modern architecture. We studied its proportions and detailing, especially at colonnade level where it meets the landscape. But here, orientated as it is, it's also the best performative object for the site'. They have thrown everything at it, making sure the integration of technology far exceeded the other schemes. Its skin, he states, is high performance and finely detailed, with climate-sensitive internal conditioning sys-

tems and PV-impregnated ETFE, 'so we're likely to be a net exporter of energy by 2020.' He also argues that Kieran Timberlake was the only firm that looked seriously at taking the security constraints and integrating them into the landscape, so 'it's seamless to the visual understanding of the concept'. Hence that contentious water feature as both balancing pond and security measure.

It's Timberlake's view that an understanding of what the building is, rather than what it represents, would help. True, it's a civic building with a public face and diplomatic purpose, but it is also, he adds, echoing jury member Richard Rogers criticism when it won, 'an office building'. Above all, it's a highly secure facility – which meant the architect's desired off-site fabrication was ruled out instantly as a security issue. Overlooking this reality is one reason why the design has been misunderstood, Timberlake believes: 'Security is seen by the profession as unarchitectural, undemocratic even; but to expect buildings widely accepted as terrorist "targets" to be as accessible as, say, the Pantheon, is just naïve,' he says. But he adds a caveat. 'This is probably the most democratic building you can imagine under these circumstances. It took a lot of convincing the Department of State to give a third of

the site over to public realm, linking up the Nine Elms site. It's also unlike any American embassy building in the world: in that regard I think it's changed the post 9/11 discourse.'

The jury's out for Timberlake as to how the critics and the public will react to the firm's platonic volume, but given the bad reception that Eero Saarinen's Grosvenor Square embassy has never got over, he's not holding his breath. But he sees the design as tough, budget-driven stuff, secure but expressive, and he's hoping the building will silence its critics. 'I'd like people to think it has a gravitas and a sense of beauty and civic purpose; that it's meaningful and contributes to London's architecture. I don't expect people to love the embassy like the Gherkin, but I'd want them to understand it through the lens of modern American architecture and how it expresses itself abroad.'

He hopes the common links to a picturesque garden tradition shared on both sides of the pond will win the UK public over; sky gardens running up through the embassy, linking it to the landscape below. 'It attempts, against the odds, to create humane public spaces, in a context that's highly private,' he concludes. 'I think it'll be a lovely, welcoming place to be – name a modern landscape in London that achieves that.' ●

'I don't expect people to love the embassy like the Gherkin, but I'd want them to understand it through the lens of modern American architecture and how it expresses itself abroad'





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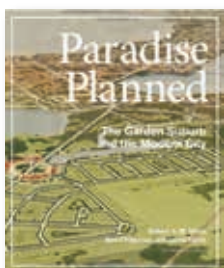
Paradise lost

A history with a mission, this sometimes detailed tome on garden suburbs aims to mobilise its readers

Mark Swenarton

Paradise Planned is a heavyweight tome – literally. With more than 1000 pages and measuring 310mm by 260mm by 80mm, it is the largest architectural history book I have ever tried to study. At 6kg, it is also the heaviest.

The book is big and heavy for a reason. Its purpose is to establish the lineage of a particular approach to the design of towns – the garden suburb – stretching back 200 years, beginning in Britain and the USA and spreading across the globe. But this is not for historical or archaeological reasons but



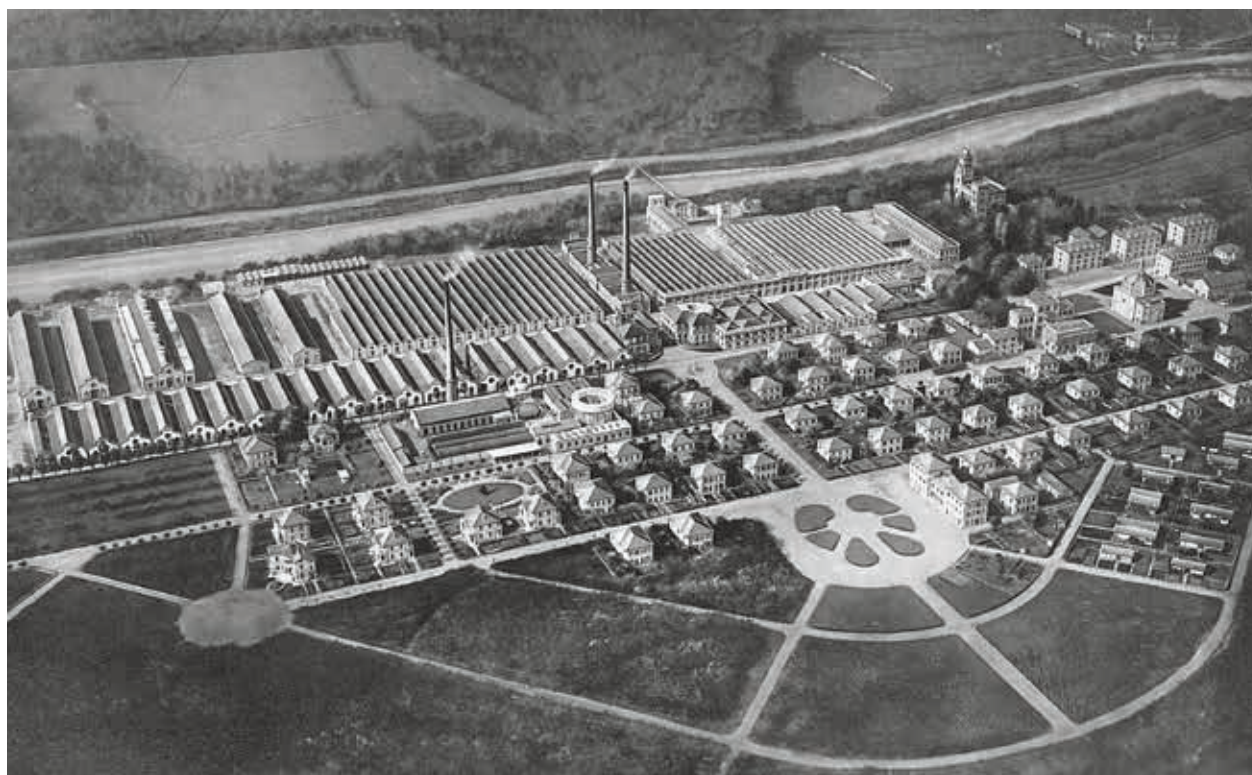
Below 19th century workers' village, in Crespi d'Adda in Lombardy, based around cotton manufacturing.

because, we are told, this way of designing towns holds the key to the future of our cities. Robert Stern is a practising New York architect whose interest in the garden suburb goes back 40 years; and his co-authors are not academics from Yale, where he heads the architecture school, but colleagues from Robert A M Stern Architects. This is history by and for practice.

The argument is set out in the final chapter, 'The Fall and Rise of the Garden Suburb'. It is the story of a 'tragically interrupted tradition', in which the long and glorious history of town building represented by the garden suburb was brought to a halt in the US in the 1940s by the automobile. Planners 'caved in to the nation's love affair with the car' and, as sprawl became the norm, western nations abandoned 'the glorious metropolitanism of the 19th and early 20th centuries'.

But then in the 1960s and 1970s came a reaction and young architects 'began to argue that Garden Suburbs were models for future planning'. One, namely Robert Stern, 'called on architects to examine without prejudice' the garden suburb and, in his (unrealised) 1976 Subway Suburb, showed how it could form a model for present-day cities. Other (realised) projects followed: Seaside and Celebration in the US, Poundbury in Dorset, etc. We are now at a crossroads: will we follow the

This is the story of a 'tragically interrupted tradition', in which planners 'caved in to the nation's love affair with the car'



model of the garden suburb, 'the best template yet devised to achieve a habitable earthly paradise', or will we allow our cities to collapse?

This then is history with a purpose. The aim is not so much to understand as to mobilise, by describing and documenting hundreds of projects from around the world. In other circumstances these might be arranged alphabetically, geographically, or even digitally on an app; but here they are set out in a broadly chronological order. Aspects that are not germane to the mission are downplayed or omitted, most obviously the social goals that were central to so many of those who 'settled' in the garden suburbs, and the political objectives which led to these projects being funded or subsidised by the state. In this sense *Paradise Planned* is the history of garden suburbs sanitised for an American audience, an echo of what Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson had done in 1932 when they emptied European modernism of its social content and turned it into 'the international style'.

Within these quite serious limitations, how successful is the book? The writing is clear and fluent, free from pretension and packed with relevant information; and each entry includes a good bibliographical note listing the main sources. So if you want to know about Finchley Garden Village in London or Crespi d'Adda in Lombardy or Jardin Europe in Sao Paolo, you will find a good thumbnail account here (more than a thumbnail for the most celebrated projects), often including quotes from the main authorities, as well as a list of sources for further information. Given that more than 1000 projects are covered, this is no mean feat. In addition, the visual documentation is exceptional. Most

This is history with a purpose. The aim is not so much to understand as to mobilise



Left A home between the city and the countryside: Stern's unbuilt 1976 Subway Suburb.

Below A 'Bolshevistic' undertaking? Yorkship Village, part of the American WW1 programme plan from the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

projects get at least four images (and some many more), the majority in colour, typically including the layout plan and/or aerial photo and a number of street views. Sarah Acheson is credited as picture researcher and she did an amazing job.

It is not surprising that the most successful parts of the book are those dealing with the USA. In particular there is an excellent section on the emergency housing that was conceived and built during the World War One to meet the armaments needs of the US government. This involved the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the US Housing Corporation building more than 70 garden suburbs, mainly in shipbuilding and armaments towns strung along the east coast. In architectural ambition as well as scale these eclipsed what was done in the comparable programme in Britain. The authors do them proud, supplementing the characteristically detailed and informative project descriptions with, uncharacteristically, a good overview establishing the context and explaining how, the moment the war ended, Congress demanded an end to these 'Bolshevistic' undertakings. If there had been more historical explanation of this sort elsewhere in the book, its claims to be the 'comprehensive monographic treatment' of the subject would have been a lot more convincing. ●

Mark Swenarton is James Stirling Professor of Architecture at Liverpool University.



Paradise Planned. The Garden Suburb and the Modern City

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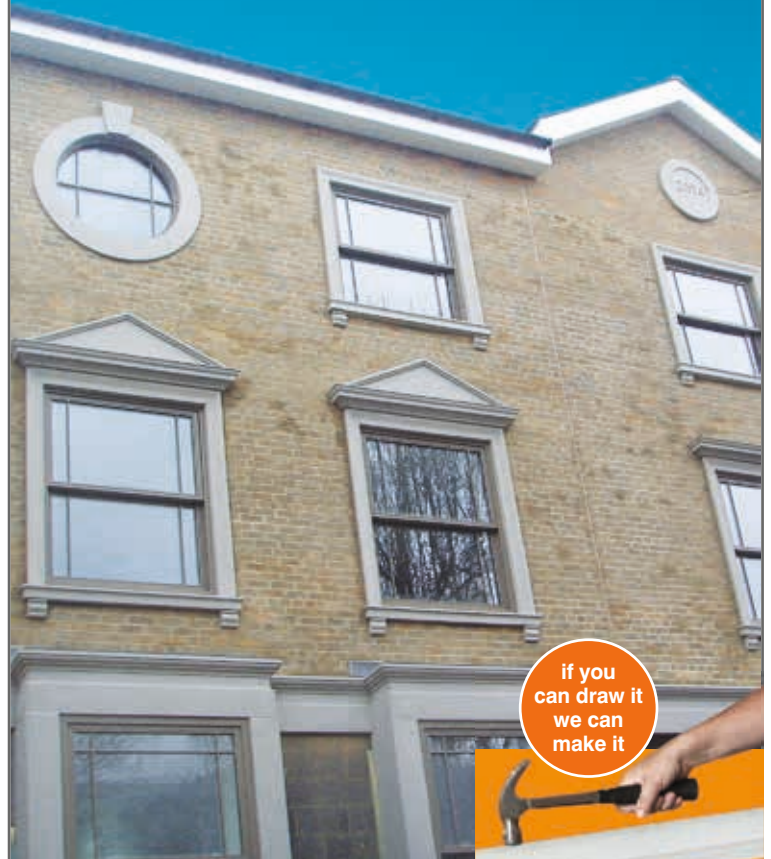


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Kent's many splendoured things

Master of many trades yet professional of none, William Kent's designs set the pace for 18th century style

George Saumarez Smith

In the same room in which David Bowie's career was celebrated last year, the V&A is now staging the first ever major show on the work of another icon of British style, William Kent. Subtitled 'Designing Georgian Britain', the show tackles the major themes of Kent's life – which include the shifting political landscape, the role of patronage in design, and the shared language of the visual arts.

The bandwagon of early 18th century British taste, highly decorated and extravagantly gilded, was designed by Kent and ridden by him to maximum effect. His career was extraordinarily varied, leaving the impression that he must have been supremely versatile as a designer, and deftly opportunistic. To modern eyes he might look at times to have spread himself too thin, a jack of all trades but master of none, but this show proves otherwise.

We start with Kent's early years in Italy, cultivating wealthy patrons on the Grand Tour and trying to establish himself as a decorative painter. We see him returning to Britain to design furniture, theatrical sets and costumes, and funerary monuments. Then we have his great schemes of country house decoration: Holkham, Houghton and – less well known – Wanstead and Raynham.

The elaborate Kentian chairs, tables and mirrors are all here. But the tone changes with a shift to London; we see Kent as the visionary designer of an emerging world city. Here are his grand town houses and his unbuilt project for a new House of Parliament – and a spectacular model of a royal palace in Richmond, never before publicly displayed.

At the end, almost as a vision of the after-life, we have Kent as the designer of Elysium,



KENT BY WILLIAM AIKMAN, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

the heavenly landscape. This, perhaps, is his greatest legacy. Films bring the landscapes of Rousham, Claremont and Stowe to life.

The common thread in Kent's work, which ties this show together, is that he remained at heart a graphic draughtsman. In his drawings he reimagined a version of Italy which became recognisably British. These, rather than the furniture and pictures here, are surely the truest reflection of his personality. He could be witty and light-hearted, or deeply serious. Sometimes these moods reveal themselves on the same sheet of paper, a sober Palladian facade enlivened by doodled caricatures in the margins.

The exhibition raises interesting questions for architects. It is hard to imagine how he could build so much without an architectural office, though he collaborated with architects, sculptors and other designers.

But perhaps most of all, this show questions the role of the amateur. Kent is the opposite of the professional architect, his career developing through a chameleon-like adaptability rather than by following a more academic, single-minded route. As we become ever more specialised, visit this exhibition and note: professionalism has its limits. ●

George Saumarez Smith is a director of Adam Architecture

The common thread in Kent's work, which ties this show together, is that he remained at heart a graphic draughtsman

William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain

To 13 July
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Right Interiors at Chiswick House show Kent's rich mixture of skills. Here the gallery as painted by William Henry Hunt.



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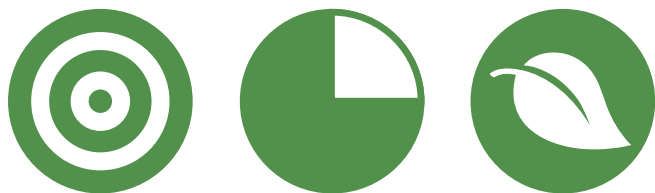
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The RIBA J Sustainability Conference

Tuesday 24th June 2014

A Green Future for the Built Environment?

Targets, Metrics, Holistics



How far are we down the zero carbon road? Join us at this one-day RIBA J Conference supported by Arup Associates as we take a step back from the sustainability frenzy to look at the bigger picture. Are our regulatory targets not only realisable but underachieving? What criteria should form the true measure of sustainability? And can joined-up thinking create a new green paradigm?

8:30 am – 5:00 pm, 24th June 2014

Arup Associates, 8 Fitzroy St, London W1T 4BJ

Book your place at www.ribajournal.com

Speakers include:

Rab Bennetts Founding Partner, Bennetts Associates / **Rory Bergin** Head of Sustainability, HTA / **Peter Caplehorn** Technical Director, Scott Brownrigg / **Lydia Dutton** Project Manager, Argent LLP / **Richard Francis** Principal, The Monomoy Company / **Bill Gething** Sustainability Consultant, Max Fordham / **Adrian Hewitt** Projects Director, Emergence Ltd / **Kate Ives** Development Director, First Base / **Miles Keeping** Head of Real Estate, Deloitte / **Dr Sebastian MacMillan** Course Director, Built Environment, University of Cambridge / **Sunand Prasad** Senior Partner, Prenoyre & Prasad / **Lynne Sullivan** Partner, Sustainable by Design / **Stephen Taylor** Associate Director, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris / **Chris Twinn** Twinn Sustainability Innovation / **Polly Turton** Senior Consultant, Arup

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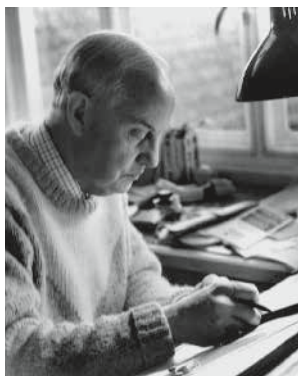
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Tom Manning

1924 – 2013

Designer of a wide range of typologies – new build and conservation – best known for his award-winning terrace of 13 houses on Richmond Green



Tom Manning, who died in late September 2013, was a leading light in that generation of architects who returned from military service in the Second World War – in his case, as a young officer in the Royal Artillery – to complete their training, and who then worked for the next 40 years or more to create a humane,

civilised and unpretentious modern architecture, much of it for public sector clients.

Until his retirement in the early 1980s, Tom Manning was the senior partner in Manning Clamp + Partners, which he founded with Hugh Clamp in 1956 and based in elegant late-17th-century offices on the southern corner of Richmond Green in Surrey. Together with his original partner – and later with others, Alexander Hamilton-Fletcher, Phil Butchers, Tony Dick and John Ball – Tom Manning was directly responsible for the design of a wide range of buildings, including the competition-winning Carnatic Halls of Residence for the University of Liverpool, housing for both local authorities and housing associations, local authority schools and swimming pools, almshouses, residential development for the Crown Estate, and private houses. Under his direction, the firm also undertook significant conservation work, including work at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, The National Physical Laboratory at Teddington and in a number of Anglican churches in south-west London.

Born in India in 1924 and educated at St Paul's, Tom trained at the Bartlett School of Architecture at London University, where he also taught in the early 1950s – his

students including the late John Darbourne. Under his leadership, Manning Clamp + Partners provided a sound and unrivalled training for many young architects, who owe him a great debt of gratitude for his quiet and calm influence as teacher and mentor.

Tom's sensitive approach to the design of new buildings and to the alteration and extension of those already existing between the 1950s and 1980s is reflected nowhere more clearly than his terrace of 13 houses on the north-east side of Richmond Green for the Crown Estate, completed in 1970 (Civic Trust and Ministry of Housing and Local Government Awards, 1970) and his new buildings for St Mary Magdalen Almshouses near the River Itchen in Winchester, completed in 1984.

As well as the demands of running the practice, Tom was much involved in working for the local community in Richmond, and played a key role in the re-establishment of the Richmond Parish Lands Charity. As a trustee, he was responsible for commissioning a masterplan for the redevelopment of the Queen's Road Estate at the edge of Richmond Park, and for its realisation by London and Quadrant Housing Trust, involving the construction of some 400 new homes by Darbourne & Darke between 1978 and 1984. Popular with residents, the Queen's Road Estate became a blueprint for similar schemes throughout London. It remains, 30 years later, a benchmark for high-quality, affordable housing for local people.

A person of great integrity, modest, unassuming and soft-spoken, Tom was a delightful company, with a gentle wit, a kindness and a love of life that endeared him to all who knew him. His much-loved wife Rene, the centre of his life for more than 60 years, died on 4 January this year. Tom and Rene are survived by their daughter, Julia, and their two sons, Paul and Matthew. ●

Paul Manning

In Memoriam

PATRICK HORSBRUGH
ELECTED 1949, UNITED STATES

ERIC CHARLES BROWNING
ELECTED 1951, HOUNSLOW

DOUGLAS ALEXANDER
ELECTED 1951, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE

GEOFFREY WILLIAM MILLS
ELECTED 1951, WARLINGHAM, SURREY

KENNETH WILLIAM LANE
ELECTED 1955, BECCLES, SUFFOLK

CHRISTOPHER FYSON STELL
ELECTED 1956, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE

TREVOR ANDREW RICHARD DAVIES
ELECTED 1961, BRIXHAM, DEVON

KENNETH GEORGE CLAXTON
ELECTED 1962, PETERSFIELD, HAMPSHIRE

GLADSTONE FITZROY BARKER
ELECTED 1966, BARBADOS

CHARLES WILLIAM ATTWOOD
ELECTED 1974, BECKENHAM, KENT

CAROLINE DELILAH ANNE LWIN
ELECTED 1985, HASTINGS, EAST SUSSEX

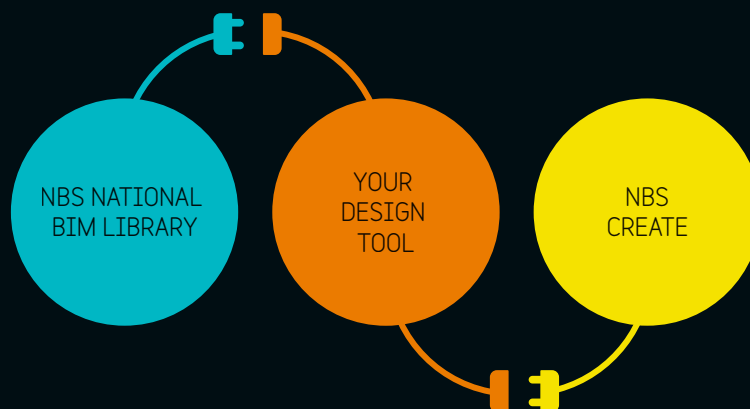
ANEURIN JOHN
ELECTED 1949, NEWPORT, GWENT

ERNEST DAVID KAY
ELECTED 1949, HOLMFIRTH, YORKS

To inform the RIBA of the death of a member, please email membership.services@riba.org with details of next of kin



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Exchange

Problems with politics

Your publication in March RIBA J of Abe Hayeem's anti-Israel rant is so full of inaccuracies that it is a sad departure from your usual high standard. Similar misinformation appears to have generated this month's Council decision to call for a boycott by the IUA of the Israel United Institute of Architects.

Is it your role, or even that of the RIBA, to meddle in high minded politics? If it is, can we now address our attitude towards the Institutes in China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Russia, for a start? If not, unpalatable inferences may well be drawn.

Daniel Rosenfelder, London NW3

Our part at Heathrow

Congratulations to Karen Rogers (RIBA J April 2014, page 70) and the whole team on completion of a spectacular new Terminal 2 at Heathrow. The article states that Pascall +Watson was brought in to 'get the snagging done'. Our role was much more significant.

We engaged with the T2A project in February 2011 to design and develop the internal environments. Our role has



Is it your role, or even that of the RIBA, to meddle in high minded politics?

Daniel Rosenfelder

encompassed the conceptual evolution of individual spaces, stakeholder management, development and testing of operational layouts and selection of finishes. We completed all the technical design of the architectural systems and components, including full mock-ups and prototype testing. Having concluded the concepts, we worked alongside the client, contractor and specialist design teams to further develop the detail and lead co-ordination of the whole building. We've supported the physical construction activities and we are rightly proud of our contribution.

Steve West, Pascall + Watson, London SW15

Grotesquely inappropriate

I read with interest Rob Ellis's letter (RIBA Journal, March 2014), as I was similarly removed from Arb for late payment of the annual fee. Summary removal should be the ultimate sanction in cases of gross misconduct; it is grotesquely inappropriate for what is no more than late payment of an administrative fee. But most alarming is the RIBA's inadequate response. The Architect's Act needs radical revision to better safeguard the legitimate interests of the profession, and Arb's powers must be explicitly circumscribed – the issue is important, so let's have a real debate. The RIBA seems to have too few crusaders, and too many time-servers. If no one there can do better than this, and Arb continues to be a part of my professional life, I see little point in continued membership.

Brian Edmonds, via email

Tweetback

gillian darley @gillindarley
Interesting appraisal of Nairn and Banham from @RIBAJ, two divergent creatures of their moment? (April issue, page 61)

Paddy Lynch @padlynch
@gillindarley @RIBAJ Banham the victim & cause of a lot of bad faith? Nairn ditto conflicted & confused in a period of bad faith generally?

gillian darley @gillindarley
@padlynch @RIBAJ Nairn knew what he liked and disliked – it is just that as time went on there seemed more of the latter than the former...



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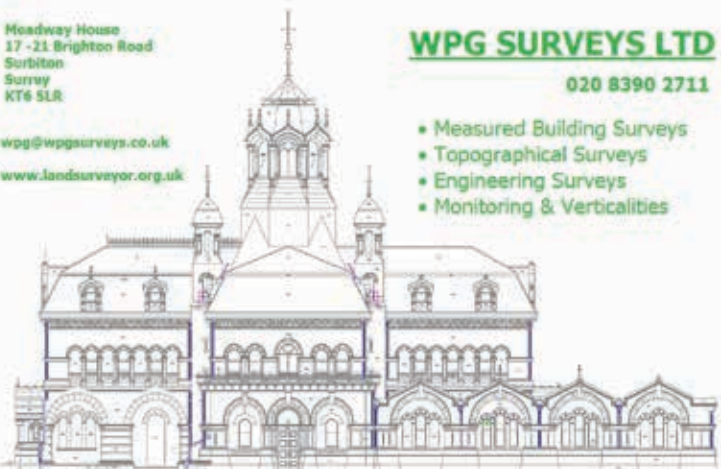
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In two RIBA assessed seminars, Comar, one of the UK's leading aluminium systems companies, outlines:

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

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

Title 2: Designing Functions & Reliability into Entrances

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



C: Ben Piercy Specification Consultant

T: 0330 100 0313

E: ben.piercy@bioclad.com

W: www.bioclad.com

Title: Antimicrobial technology for internal PVC wall cladding

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T: 0207 652 9459

E: London.showroom@amx.com

W: amx.com/eu

Integrated Control

This seminar covers the reasons for integration and is designed to help you deal with your clients and other design team members who wish to install a variety of electronic systems into their homes or other premises.

AMX explain how connecting people effectively with their buildings and communities provides value for all concerned.



C: Gareth Dixon, Russell Calder

T: 44(0)207 940 0000

E: gareth.dixon@havwoods.co.uk

E: russell.calder@havwoods.co.uk

Title: The use of wood flooring in sustainable architecture

Provides an understanding of the ecological benefits of specifying wood and the main legislation involved; different types of wood flooring construction, installation methods and the difference between oiled and lacquered finishes together with indicative cost comparisons.



AVAILABLE NOW AT:

W: www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk

Title: Suspended ceilings and the environment

Available through www.ribacpd.com, Suspended ceilings and the environment has been designed to provide architects with an improved understanding of how suspended ceilings can help reduce our impact on the environment. The 44-minute CPD meets the RIBA Core Curriculum criteria of climate (sustainable architecture), designing and building it (design, construction, technology and engineering) and knowledge level (general awareness).



T: 01788 513 160

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.



T: 01284 701696

E: bilcouk@bilco.com

Title: Natural Smoke & Heat Exhaust Ventilators Seminar

Our CPD seminars, at your premises cover:

Document B, EN 12101-2, BS9999 and BRE79204

– how they apply to natural smoke ventilation

- Legislation and the specifier
- Typical use and types of smoke vent
- Control system options
- Design considerations when specifying.



C: Gill Webster

T: +44 (0) 1942 295500

E: cpd@kalzip.com

W: www.kalzip.com

Title: Discussing Standing Seam - 21st Century Design

Kalzip 'Discussing Standing Seam - 21st Century Design' CPD Seminars are being held at many locations around the UK. These forward thinking, practical seminars address the most common issues surrounding current trends and the future direction of standing seam design for the building envelope.



C: Sean Parr

T: 01543 443000

E: cpd@geze.com

W: www.geze.co.uk

Title: 1 Glass Door Assemblies – Selection and Specification

This seminar on glass door assemblies provides architects with valuable guidance about glass and how it can be used within door situations throughout a building. The 40 minute seminar provides information about the beneficial properties of glass and the latest regulation and legislation.

Title: 2 Removing Barriers to Access

Title: 3 Safeguarding Pedestrians from Accidents at Power Operated Door sets - EN 16005

Title: 4 Designing Effective Heat and Smoke Ventilation



Be sure to specify an MCS 012 approved mounting kit

By the end of March 2014 any mounting kit used to install solar panels on a pitched roof must comply with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme's MCS012 as one of the main eligibilities to qualify for the Feed-in-tariffs. To ensure that it was ready for the introduction of this scheme, the BBA invested in a new test rig so that the weathertightness and resistance to wind uplift tests could be performed. So to avoid a rush of applications as the deadline approaches, the BBA advises that manufacturers make contact as soon as possible.

In addition to MCS012, the BBA can provide product approval to the requirements of the other Microgeneration Certification Schemes (MCS):

Solar Heating Collectors (solar thermal systems), Solar PV (photovoltaics), Micro and Small Wind Turbines, Heat Pumps, Biomass Micro CHP (combined heat and power).

For more information and a quotation contact the BBA;

e: customerservice@bba.star.co.uk

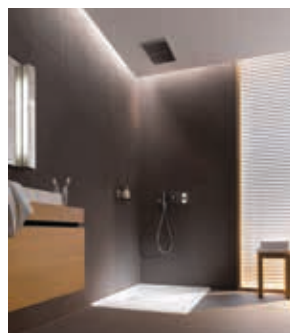
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Brass quays

Renovation of the Strömkajen quayside in Stockholm has included a range of new terminal buildings characterised by Nordic Brass cladding. Swedish architects Marge Arkitekter designed the series of modern buildings along the water-front to defer to their historic surroundings and prioritise open views of the Royal Palace. Roofs and walls are clad with Nordic Brass, which harmonises well with the stone and stucco facades and creates a sculptural architectural expression.

w: www.aurubis.com/finland/architectural



Bette launches new extra-large shower floor sizes with special 'no silicone' option

Bette is introducing four extra-large sizes into its innovative enamelled steel BetteFloor Side flush-to-floor shower area range and is also, for the first time, providing the option of ordering the product with Bette's BetteUpstand, which does away with the need for silicone where the shower floor meets the wall tiles. The new sizes are 140 x 120 cm, 150 x 90 cm, 150 x 120 cm and 160 x 120 cm.

w: www.bette.co.uk t: 0844 800 0547



Crushed, the exquisite new door handles by Philip Watts.

Crushed handles are hand made in the UK, using age old techniques from Philips own workshop in Nottingham. Shown here cast in solid bronze, these handles make a beautiful addition to any door or drawer.

Crushed handles are also available cast in solid brass and aluminium.

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w: www.philipwattsdesign.com



Urmet's IP door entry platform IPervoice in London dockside development.

Property developers St. George needed a system for a phased multi-block development that could sit on a site-wide IP backbone. Urmet's technical department in Italy set about making some bespoke changes to the software that would allow the apartments in each block to start with a number one. This type of 'secret prefix' allows for multiple non-consecutive apartment numbering.

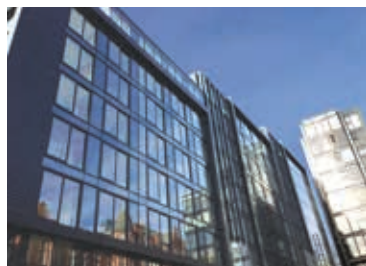
w: www.ipervoice.co.uk



John Brash Cedar shingles roofing solution for listed highland cottage

The external refurbishment of The Bothy at Gorthleck was required due to the failure of the existing heather roof. The roof was re-specified using Canadian Cedar Shingles to achieve a natural roofing finish for this woodland retreat, which was both watertight and aesthetically pleasing. The sweeps and curves of the roof create a stunning effect for the woodland retreat. This visual effect was created with painstaking attention to detail and exceptional workmanship.

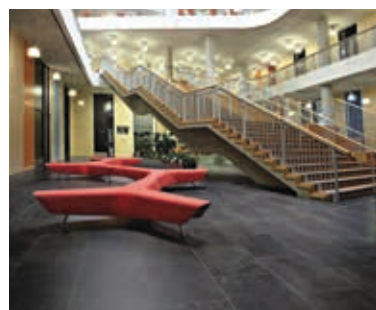
w: www.johnbrash.co.uk



Kawneer go the Quartermile in Scotland.

Glazing systems from Kawneer feature on one of the largest and most comprehensive regeneration schemes in Scotland. Kawneer's AA®110 SSG and AA®110 curtain walling, AA®603TE tilt slide doors, AA®4110 sliding doors and AA®100/AA®110 concealed window vents feature on a total of four new-build apartments blocks at the Quartermile development, installed by Kawneer-approved specialist sub-contractor Charles Henshaw and Sons.

w: www.kawneer.co.uk



Newly updated Art Select collection takes Karndean Designflooring into new territory

The UK's market leader in luxury vinyl flooring Karndean Designflooring is unveiling its newly updated premium collection of Art Select Stones and Woods. The updated collection features new slate, marble, travertine and limestone designs and three parquet colours, each perfectly crafted to match full size planks from Karndean's Art Select Oak Premier and Oak Royale ranges. Uniquely, each design has been created from its original inspiration stone recovered from various locations throughout the world including the steps of a former 'Parliament House' building in Melbourne, natural hot springs located in Yellowstone National Park, USA and a quarry in the Province of Massa, Tuscany. From the striking earthy tones of Karndean's new Art Select Travertine designs – Washburn, Caldera and Gallatin – to the contrasting rich and cool hues of Art Select Slate – Melbourne, Canberra, Oakeley and Corris – and understated and classic look of Art Select Marble – Otono and Fiore – and Art Select Limestone – Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Herm, there's a stone design to match all commercial schemes.

w: www.karndean.com



Gerflor solutions 'Clic' into place at an extra-care housing development

The hard-wearing, waterproof Creation Clic System was specified to bring the feel of a "boutique hotel" to the public areas of a new extra-care housing development.

Architects Hackland + Dore decided the wood effect, bevel-edged 'planks' made by vinyl flooring specialist Gerflor – and installed by Gerflor partner Veitchi – were perfect for the complex in Penicuik, Midlothian.

Available in 12 wood effect designs, the looselay vertically interlocking planks have a wear group T rating and an overall thickness of 6mm, while the polyurethane treatment PUR+ provides excellent resistance to scratching and can be cleaned easily and hygienically.

Laid without the use of adhesive, the Creation Clic System can be installed over existing flooring, or sub-floors with up to 7 per cent moisture content.

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e: contractuk@gerflor.com

w: www.gerflor.co.uk



Showerwall launches six new luxurious designs

The Showerwall waterproof wall panelling system has been updated with six luxurious new décors, reflecting the trends for natural marbles and stones in bathroom interiors and providing an easy-installation, easy maintenance alternative to tiles. A new brochure and sampling is available. Showerwall's six new design additions extend the range to 39 laminate designs in total.

w: www.showerwall.co.uk



Levolut excels in Exeter

The new Research Innovation Learning Development Centre (RILD) in Exeter is a world-leading medical facility, with a distinctive, fixed external Solar Shading solution by Levolut. Based on its Infiniti® Fin system, the solar shading solution helps to control light, heat and glare levels, without compromising the thermal performance of a curved, glazed envelope.

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w: www.levolut.com



Laminates for life

Abet Laminati's compact grade laminates are colouring The Healthy Living Zone which forms part of the Wigan Life Centre. The facility uses a combination of compact grade laminates from the Colours and Legni woodgrain ranges. Abet Laminati's High Pressure Laminates are a popular choice for this type of heavy duty application and are commonly specified for lockers, table tops, vanity units and cubicles.

w: www.abetuk.com



Wintech Engineering CWCT Section 9 Hose Testing and BSEN 13051:2001 Spraybar Testing

Spraybar Testing is suitable for open-jointed systems such as rainscreen cladding, unsealed patent glazing, opening lights or doors. Hose testing is intended for testing permanently sealed joints to ensure that the performance of the system has not been reduced by the fabrication and installation processes.

w: www.wintechtesting.com



Saint-Gobain leads the UK with BES6001 for responsible sourcing

Saint-Gobain Glass has become the first glass manufacturer in the UK to be awarded the coveted BES 6001 accreditation "Very Good" standard for its responsible sourcing of materials. The award, which was made after independent assessment by BSI, the awarding body, states that the company operates within strict standards of supply chain management and environmental and social responsibility when managing relationships with suppliers. Dave Redford, Purchasing Manager, said:

"Our customers know that we have always taken our environmental responsibilities very seriously and this accreditation is one more way of proving our dedication to the responsible sourcing of our products. It shows that we have sourced our constituent materials responsibly as well as having good internal auditing of other factors such as legal compliance, training, waste management and water usage. We are very proud to be the first UK glass manufacturer to gain this accreditation."

Responsible sourcing is recognised within the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH), BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) as well as other established sustainability assessment methodologies.

w: www.saint-gobain.co.uk



Solid Oak Floors Unify New Museum/Gallery Space

750m² Junckers solid hardwood flooring has been installed throughout the newly redeveloped The Higgins Bedford. The £5.8M project, funded in part by Bedford Borough Council and the Heritage Lottery fund, has joined together three previously separate buildings into a new, fully renovated facility, which apart from the existing art gallery and museum now includes space for temporary exhibitions, space for learning and activities, a café and a shop.

Junckers wide board Oak Harmony floor serves as a unifying element to the new interior and acts as an elegant backdrop to the collections and exhibits. Solid Oak is easy to maintain and very hardwearing, even in a high traffic area open to the public. Installed by Junckers' Approved Contractor PICA Flooring, the floor at The Higgins is guaranteed for 25 years.

t: 01376 534 700 w: www.junckers.co.uk



Tarkett flooring put to the toughest test

GREAT flooring deserves perfect cleaning – and now Tarkett's products are going under the spotlight in a new national showcase for innovative cleaning. The company has teamed up with cleaning experts Scot Young Research (SYR) Resilient to provide all the flooring for a new test centre being built at Lye in the West Midlands. The centre will be open to the trade by the end of April, offering demonstration facilities for technologically-advanced cleaning machinery and advanced products. SYR Resilient manager Steve Parry said: "We've had a partnership with Tarkett for many years – I've a background in flooring myself and believe there's no other company like them in the business. We appreciate the innovation that Tarkett put into all their flooring products because we are innovative ourselves. The centre is the first of its kind and will lead the way in cleaning research and development." Tarkett's range of floor, wall and installation solutions, including Granit Safe. T, Eclipse Premium, Safetred, iQ Optima and ProtectWALL, is being installed at the centre.

For more information about Tarkett's range of flooring solutions
e: uksales@tarkett.com t: 01622 854 040



Kawneer systems help WWF HQ achieve a carbon first

Glazing systems from Kawneer were used on the new headquarters of the World Wildlife Fund for many reasons, not least their ability to enable savings in terms of energy and impact on the environment. Kawneer's AA®100 and AA®100 SSG curtain walling, concealed vents, AA®3110 horizontal sliding doors and 190 heavy-duty entrance doors were installed by approved specialist sub-contractor JPJ Installations.

w: www.kawneer.co.uk



Johnstone's delivers on home front for Housing Leeds

The perfect combination of service and product from leading paint manufacturer Johnstone's Trade has ensured that Housing Leeds' 2014 cyclical maintenance programme has got off to a flying start. Internal redecoration of more than 30 sheltered homes and community spaces commenced in January and the project has benefited from the specification of Johnstone's innovative Flame Defence System.

w: www.johnstonestrade.com



Residential safety updated.

The latest issue of 'Residential Safety Update' - looking in-depth at topical issues surrounding fire and carbon monoxide safety in housing - has just been published by Kidde Fyrmetics, the world's largest smoke, heat and CO alarm manufacturer. Intended for social housing providers, house-builders, specifiers, electrical installers, landlords, fire brigades and all those involved with safe housing, Residential Safety Update covers a wide range of subjects.

w: www.smoke-alarms.co.uk



Lorient's success continues in Global Connections.

The 45 Regional Finalists in HSBC's Global Connections 2014 competition have been announced and Lorient Polypoints is proud to announce it is a Regional Finalist for the South West & Wales. Having previously been an Area Winner, this is a significant achievement as the field narrows to only the best in the UK.

t: 01626 834252

e: mktg@lorientuk.com

w: www.lorientgroup.com



Low maintenance peace of mind for retired homeowners

PVC-U roofline products, cladding and Tudor board from Swish Building Products have been used to complete a new McCarthy & Stone Retirement Living development in Epsom. Supplied through an approved, local stockist, the 16mm square fascias and soffits in black foil create a strong, light-weight and low maintenance roofline, while the Tudor board, also in a black foiled finish adds a point of interest to the façade.

w: www.swishbp.co.uk
t: 01827 317 200



Kawneer systems help light up UK's first super-school.

Elements from all of Kawneer's portfolio of architectural aluminium systems have helped the UK's first super-school achieve a BREEAM "Very good" rating. Kawneer's AA®100 curtain walling and slope glazing, AA®541 and AA®3110 windows along with AA®605 and series 190 doors feature throughout the £36million Bolton St Catherine's Academy, Greater Manchester.

w: www.kawneer.co.uk



Osmo protects inside and out

An extension to a residential property in Buckinghamshire highlights the diverse range of wood finishes from Osmo and how these eco-friendly products provide outstanding protection and aesthetically pleasing results both internally and externally. Built in the 1980's, this four-bed detached home had an unfortunate north facing patio, which, due to lack of sunlight was rarely used. With the prospect of a promising summer, the homeowner decided to make the most of the patio area by erecting an extension and extending the kitchen, utilising the unused space. Jeffrey Powell Associates was the architect for this project and designed an oak framed extension. To ensure the timber would be protected against UV rays and eliminate algae and fungal decay, two coats of Osmo's Oak UV-Protection-Oil was applied to the frame, door and windows. By absorbing into the oak, the finish allows the surface to remain healthy and elastic, preventing it from drying and becoming brittle. As well as protecting the wood, it provided a satin-matt, clear finish which creates a rustic appearance which highlights the benefits of having wood installed, and fits in nicely with the rest of the property.

w: www.osmouk.com t: 01296 481 220.



SFS intec fixes the face of Tesco store in Woolwich development scheme

SFS intec has supplied a range of high performance fastenings to securely and aesthetically fix the rainscreen facade onto the newly built Tesco Extra store in Woolwich, London. Standing at 17-storeys high, the development features approximately 7,000m² of cladding panels, designed to create an attractive and colourful finish. Using over 500,000 of SFS intec's fastenings and fixings, the zinc rainscreen panels have been held in place using New Generation SX stainless steel fasteners to secure the rail bracket to the rail system; MDH and MIDSR insulation fastenings for fixing the insulation through to concrete; and TUS rivets to enable an aesthetically superior blind fix of the high pressure laminate element of the rainscreen cladding. SFS intec's TUS rivets hide neatly behind the panel and as it cannot be overdriven, there was no risk of the panel dimpling. Sitting securely behind the panel the TU-S rivet allows for natural expansion and contraction of the panels, ensuring that they remain securely in place and minimising the potential of panel deformation. Similarly, the stainless steel SX fastener with EPDM washer ensures a secure, unrivalled pull-out performance.

w: www.sfsintec.biz/uk



GEZE UK Launches RIBA-Approved CPD On Glass Door Assembly

GEZE UK has updated its RIBA-approved CPD seminar on glass door assemblies to provide architects with valuable guidance about glass and how it can be used within door situations throughout a building.

The 40 minute seminar titled 'Glass Door Assemblies – Selection and Specification' provides information about the beneficial properties of glass and the latest regulation and legislation.

w: www.geze.co.uk



Metalline on parade in Mayfair

Architectural Metal fabrication specialists Metalline have supplied a range of bespoke anodised aluminium rainscreen panels and perforated shutters, to the side, rear and front of a luxury residential development in Hanover Street in London's Mayfair district. Fabricated on a CNC turret punch press using high grade 957S aluminium, the exterior featured hook on rainscreen panels finished in bronze anodised and aluminium infills in a red polyester powder coating.

w: www.metalline.co.uk



Ecobuild proves perfect springboard for residential launch

Elta Fans have reported an excellent response to the launch of their new residential product range. Elta chose Ecobuild as the platform to launch the new range, recognising the important role that ventilation has to play in achieving the healthy, energy efficient and sustainable homes of the future. The interest from visitors was exceptional, with many taking the opportunity to consider products for actual live projects.

w: www.eltafans.com



Alu-Timber EFT Curtain Walling, Framing, Windows & Doors

Alu-Timber and 3D Aluminium Plas have worked on a new build Academy in West Sussex. This new £28M Academy replaces the existing college and has allowed the previous college to expand its capacity from 1,100 to 1,400 students. Alu-Timber EFT is a 60mm aluminium/timber curtain walling system which offers Capped, 2sided Structural Glazing with vertical or horizontal capping and 4sided Structural Glazing.

w: www.alutimber.co.uk



Marley Eternit plays a part in Coronation Street's new Underworld

Roofing manufacturer Marley Eternit has played a part in transforming one of the most famous roofscapes in the UK. The new Coronation Street lot in Trafford has been built by ITV and international consultancy and construction company Mace as a direct replica of the original lot in the city centre, yet on a larger scale to accommodate the demands of high definition TV. While some small features have changed, the producers of Coronation Street have faithfully recreated most of the street as part of the two and a half year construction project, even down to the smallest details such as cobbles and roof tiles. Therefore selecting the right building materials was a vital and time consuming part of the scheme. While many of the roof tiles on the terraced houses had to come from salvage to retain the authentic aged appearance, architectural consultants Jenkins Design Services specified Marley Eternit's Modern concrete tiles to replicate the contemporary pyramid roof on the Underworld factory's iconic brick tower. Adrian Bleasdale, ITV Project Leader, explained "The Coronation Street project started several years before we even broke ground at the Trafford Wharf Road site. Materials were being sourced in 2008 from all over the UK and Europe and this continued well into 2013. Sourcing the right product was essential as Weatherfield had to look and feel the same, down to the smallest detail."

t: 01283 722588 w: www.marleyeternit.co.uk



Dorma makes a grand entrance at Cambridge shopping centre.

At the Grand Arcade shopping centre in Cambridge, the upgrade of two main customer entrances had to meet exceptionally high performance standards. Specified to improve internal comfort levels for customers and reduce energy costs for retailers, a series of automatic swing doors from industry leader DORMA proved the perfect solution. Designed by architects Chapman Taylor and built by Coulson Building Group, the £220 million Grand Arcade originally opened in 2008. With concerns about heat loss from the premises, owners Universities Superannuation Scheme re-appointed Coulson to install two new entrances – featuring toughened glass and DORMA ED 250A automatic closers to minimise energy loss. Taking just two weeks to complete – with all works completed out of hours between 11pm and 6am – the specification and installation of DORMA ED250A has helped to improve thermal performance and functionality whilst retailers' energy bills will be significantly reduced. "DORMA ED250A automatic swing doors were chosen because of their high performance standards and installation options," said Robert Addison, Assistant Project Manager at Coulson Building Group. "The doorsets have been well received and generated large amounts of praise – with members of the public even stopping to congratulate the team on a successful, trouble free installation."

w: www.dorma.com



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US Embassy Grosvenor Square London, 1955

Grosvenor Square was first linked to the US in 1785 when the first US minister resided there. During WW2 the American Chancery was located on one side with Eisenhower's headquarters opposite, and the area was dubbed 'Little America'. When a competition was held to design a new Chancery in 1955 entrants were encouraged to 'grasp the historical meaning of the particular environment'.

Eero Saarinen triumphed with a design intended to respect the square's Georgian character. Its Portland stone facade was to harmonise with the surrounding buildings as it darkened in time to match its neighbours. The sturdy rectangular form represented US democracy,

punctuated by lattice-like fenestration and crowned by a 35ft gilded aluminium eagle by Theodore Roszak.

The building received a frosty reception from the architectural establishment with Reyner Banham dismissing it as 'monumental in bulk, frilly in detail'. The predicted weathering by soot was thwarted by the 1956 Clean Air Act and the London Observer likened the gleaming edifice to 'costume jewellery'. Saarinen himself was not uncritical, responding 'In my own mind the building is much better than the English think – but not quite as good as I wished it to be'. ●

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