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Awards 2014
RIBA recognition of excellence starts in its regions. Our special issue presents them all with an architect’s overview from each area

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Richard Leeney
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Visiual fixings

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washrooms worth experiencing
Many years’ thought and design have gone into this issue, by architects across the UK. The 119 buildings that won an RIBA Regional Award this year are all featured, a recognition of the inventiveness and effort that make architecture in the UK so exciting. The RIBA Journal editorial team has added its voice to the citations by the RIBA jury chairs to give you an insight into the best of British. ‘How to speak of place without resort to the obvious and banal’ is the question Piers Taylor poses for architecture. In this issue we see the forms and material of landscape and city invested in the best of the buildings. We have also asked local practitioners to give a flavour of their region.

Some strong themes emerge along with the award winners, which Hugh Pearman explores in more depth on page 66. Most notable is the rethinking of the town hall. As public sector spending has been cut local authorities have been consolidating their property, bringing together small offices under one roof; sometimes new, sometimes a historic structure reclaimed from the ravages of time and council accretions. That is not to mention the civic endeavour of two major city libraries in Birmingham and Liverpool. These are the buildings that successfully manage to balance good value, performance and ambition, as a good building must. For each winner we have included the contract value wherever it was supplied and the gross internal floor area so you can understand some of the constraints as well as a snapshot of what was achieved.

Library of Birmingham: value, performance and ambition, page 56

Merging architecture and sculpture – North East

Geology, geography and place-making – South West
Meredith Bowles, Cambridge: East Anglia is curiously conservative – a rural region with three university towns; Cambridge, Norwich and Colchester. It retains a medieval quality, the result of massive depopulation in the 19th century. It is the English region with the highest proportion of the population living in the countryside, as well as a higher than average age, earnings, and conservative newspaper readership. Support for contemporary architecture in the 20th century came largely from the universities, with buildings such as Faber Dumas or Stansted airport being an exception to the rule. But in recent years the conservative stranglehold has loosened, with schools, community buildings and private institutions wanting buildings of quality. The Norfolk and Suffolk coasts – Islington-by-sea – produce individual one-off houses; an exception in both value and taste.

Jay Merrick introduced the regional Awards at Downing College Cambridge, hosted by RIBA East in Quinlan and Francis Terry’s Howard Theatre, as if to make the point. Jay’s introduction expressed distaste for the fashion to create ‘world class’ buildings, noting the shortlist’s quiet and thoughtful integrity. These express something of the region; quiet and considered, many in rural locations. The universities and colleges again provided opportunities for larger buildings. A number of shortlisted housing schemes reflected the region’s growth.

Proctor Matthews won an award for its Colchester supported housing scheme, although not for its Great Kneighton housing for Countryside, the best developer housing in Cambridge. Representative of the best conservation work on medieval buildings – of which the region has much to treasure – Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects was rewarded for painstaking work on Finchingfield Guildhall. Cowper Griffiths Architects won Architect of the Year; working in the region since 1985, it has

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**Special Awards**

Conservation Award: Finchingfield Guildhall
Sustainability Award: Ash Court
Small Project Award: Wildfowl Cottage
Client of the Year: High House Artist Studios
Architect of the Year: Cowper Griffiths Architects
Emerging Architect of the Year: HAT Projects
Building of the Year: The Arboretum

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**Broombank, Suffolk**

SOUP Architects for Sophie Humphreys  
GIA 325sqm

Emerging from a banked landscape, Broombank’s grey brick walls serve to define the lower level of this indulgent family home, orientated to make best use of the views across to Suffolk’s wetlands. There are a lot of architectural moves going on here, from the grand timber-lined entrance that offers views up and out through a large atrium roof, to smaller details such as the wooden wall that slides away to join the family room with the rest of the house or folding shutters that reveal a bedroom in the atrium space. This opening out and closing down of spaces lends adaptability to the home and allows for changing use configurations.

The judges thought that the ‘careful geometric and material choices were augmented by exemplary control of light and views.’ A sense felt nowhere more strongly, perhaps, than in the main living space, where the glass wall slides away to completely open up the home to the landscape in which it sits.
This Cambridge college, established in 1869, was the country’s first residential college for ladies and became mixed-co-educational in 1976. Set two miles out of the historic centre, it is a rambling Victorian pile set in 33 acres of grounds. The new student accommodation takes all its cues from the existing building with regard to form and materials.

The bedroom facade faces east, giving morning light and stunning views over the gardens. Common rooms meanwhile face west, becoming part of communal courtyards that interact with the existing complex of buildings.

But this building doesn’t just look good. It uses its site and responds to it, the articulation of the facades being part of a bigger environmental strategy. With triple-glazing, MVHR, window sensors to control each room’s heating, a thermal mass strategy and integrated PVs, its performance is outstanding.

It simultaneously culturally reassuring and a slightly uncomfortable fact that the almshouse typology, far from being defunct, is still with us. Many examples of historical almshouses still exist in Essex, but here architect Proctor and Matthews has brought it bang up to date with its latest scheme of 29 apartments and six houses for the homeless. Beyond a gabled gatehouse six building clusters are arranged to create two landscaped courtyards.

The two-storey blocks are of crisply detailed brick with different textures of brick facing – most notably the perforated bond of the upper level cloisters which creates a wonderful dappled effect, while ventilating the corridor. There is a level of attention to detailing at work here that would put most housing schemes to shame, never mind accommodation for society’s most vulnerable.

This fact was not lost on the judges, who were impressed with the scheme’s ‘robust and adaptable form that is elevated by a commendable attention to detail and a generosity of space and spirit’.
More touches of Scandinavian Empiricism here at Stanton-Williams’ archive of the manuscripts and personal collection of one of the UK’s greatest 20th century composers. Nestled confidently but deferentially within the gardens of Benjamin Britten’s Red House in Aldeburgh, the judges noted that ‘the clarity and elegance of the building form belies the complex brief and specialised demands of the archive’. And it’s true. The high environmental conditioning demands of the collection are notable purely by their absence, seamlessly integrated into the meticulously detailed concrete and timber interiors and bespoke furniture.

Outside, red brick walls and crisply detailed openings come together to create extremely simple formal massing that, badly handled, can result in cacophony. But the architect has built its reputation on refined detailing, and here (and one hopes Britten would agree with us), it sings.

Built in 1470 by a Guild of priests to educate the boys of the village, the Guildhall has been a place of learning for over five centuries. Its postwar restoration was of poor quality and in 2008 a trust was set up to oversee the stripping back of the higgledy-piggledy oak structure and subsequent uncovering of past layers. Every part of the mortice, tenon and peg structure has been sensitively restored, with new community functions of shop, library and placed within. The main hall has been restored to its full splendour, replete with burn marks on the timber from the long tapers that lit it. A ‘beautifully judged renovation’, said the judges.

Not only that, but to help with the upgrading of the public realm, the firm created the theatre’s new ticket office and café in an adjacent pavilion building, bringing life to the urban square. Deceptively simple in design, the pavilion references the chapel in both form and materiality, with the kind of crisp and minimal detailing upon which the practice has built its reputation.

Acme Studios has supported the arts since 1972, and in commissioning this purpose-built, 39 studio and four live/work units in Thurrock, it is supporting architects too. Aspiring to be a world-class centre for technical skills, crafts and artistic production; High House Production Park is home to the likes of the off-site technical department of the Royal Opera House.

The scheme is a testament to HAT Projects’ skill in creating an materially and spatially elegant building despite financial constraints. The judges saw High House as a prime example of what a proactive client/architect relationship can yield.
Wildfowl Cottage
5th Studio for Stuart Duncan
Contract £100,000. GIA 37m²

It’s seldom that a panic room is considered a thing of beauty, but here on the Cambridge fens, clad in timber shingles to complement the main refurbished grade II listed house, this small addition achieves the feat consummately. 5th Studio’s design is a response to the client’s need for an elevated extension to act as a refuge in the case of flooding, allowing continued occupation in the house until the waters receded.

But it is also an escape into light, with a huge horizontal window offering expansive views across the landscape and a sizeable light cannon drawing luminescence down into the space. It is a bijou thing this, but in its formal look and spatial richness, it sits confidently alongside the original building, with, in the way of the best architecture, one enriching the other.

The Arboretum, Burnham
Cowper Griffith Architects
GIA 459m²

There is almost a civic presence to this one-off house set between protected woodlands and a flood plain in a historic village. A massive flint wall is juxtaposed with lightweight timber structure and cladding. The judges remarked on the impressive entrance sequence from the lower level entrance floor to the upper ‘living’ level ‘through material progression and manipulation of light and views’, including privacy; with ample use made of rooflights to draw daylight deep into living spaces.

With a range of materials evident on the facade, the judges were impressed by detailing at their interfaces, creating what they called ‘an exceptional piece of architecture delivered by an outstanding practice.’
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Buildings
RIBA Regional Awards

East Midlands

Derek Latham, Derby: At the transition between the upland Peak District and the lush Trent Valley, Pevsner summed up Derbyshire as ‘having everything but a coastline’.

But add the rest of the East Midlands and the omission’s resolved, with the ‘bracing’ beaches of Lincolnshire reaching down toward the Fens – the Stump of Boston in the south and the dramatic hilltop cathedral and castle of Lincoln further north, with the new University of Lincoln around ‘The Pool’ as a modern model of educational regeneration.

The golden limestone and Collywestern slated villages of Northamptonshire nestle into the shire around the expanding county town of Northampton, looking to grow its town centre without losing its more intimate character.

Leicester’s retail offer has benefited from the stylish additions to Highcross of a stainless steel clad multiplex and the patterned facade of John Lewis. With Grimshaw’s Space Centre and Vinoly’s ‘Curve’, the buildings are as cosmopolitan as its people.

Nottingham Universities’ new Jubilee Campus by Hopkins and then Make, also ‘raises the bar’, as does the Contemporary by Caruso St John, next to the Broadmarsh Centre which is currently suffering an ectopic pregnancy before rebirth.

Derby’s reputation as a high-tech engineering city is not matched by its buildings. The successful Westfield Shopping Centre may beat Leicester economically, but not architecturally. The new velodrome on Pride Park is a start, and the recent fire at the Assembly Rooms may provide an opportunity to offer a new face to the Market Place.

Meanwhile, not to be complacent, the local architect’s society, NDSA, are proactive, with regular events promoting architecture. ‘Nott: Just A City Exhibition’ is currently running in a vacant shop unit in Nottingham and has attracted hundreds of people through its doors with lectures, children activities and workshops as well as local university and practice work.

Derek Latham is founder of Lathams, Derby

Noel Baker School with St Martin’s School
Nicholas Hare Architects for Derby City Council
Contract £33.5m. GIA 17,670m²

Bringing together the demands of a standard comprehensive and special needs school, the new complex provides a stimulating, child-friendly environment for pupils and reflects important changes to the way the school is structured. The main building, formed of three interconnecting clusters described by the architect as ‘butterflies’, has a sense of intimacy despite its serving over 1,500 students.

The cluster geometry creates a clever arrangement of regular and bespoke rooms along open circulation space with central feature staircases. These bespoke rooms at the ends of each wing are ‘inspiring spaces’ and are used for art, science and craft. At the centre of the clusters are quiet learning zones that encourage individual study.

Colour is used with intent and natural light floods into the spaces creating warmth and drama.

The judges thought ‘the finished building is a testament to the strong leadership by the client, a thorough interrogation of the brief and a strong vision for a better learning environment’.

The RIBA Journal June 2014
The Studio, Derbyshire
Studio Gedye for Studio Gedye
Contract £25,000. GIA 35m²

The fact that computer firm Apple started in a garage means that there’s a lot to be said for cottage industry – and the concept is well represented here at The Studio, where a local architect has added to a garage to create a striking working environment.

Simon Gedye built the studio himself entirely from timber and with no concrete foundations. It improves the appearance of the garage and creates a connection to the main house across the garden. The ‘elegant composition’ of timber cladding, glazing and brise soleils is spacious inside, filled with mellow, diffuse light.

The judges noted that the building had been carefully crafted and built, but with great consideration given to its everyday use: ‘the most appealing aspect of the scheme is its casual simplicity and effortless charm.’ Built on a small plot with next to no budget it is ‘a beautiful example of calm, enjoyable architecture’. 

College Court, Leicester
Associated Architects for University of Leicester
Contract £13.3m. GIA 6,500m²

Built in 1960 as College Hall residence by Sir Leslie Martin and Trevor Dannatt, but semi-derelict since the early noughties, College Court is the successful conversion of this grade II listed former hall of residence into a residential conference centre.

Both architect and client committed to retain the atmosphere of the original building in a transformation that was ‘both dramatic and subtle.’ Major alterations to the fabric were, the judges stated, carried out ‘with great care and honesty’, preserving traces of previous use. The architect consulted Dannatt to replicate the spirit of the original, and created a sense of authenticity throughout. ‘College Court is a wonderful example of a listed building carefully transformed for a new use,’ the judges concluded. ‘Thoughtful and sensitive interventions ensure the elegance and charm of the ensemble continue in its new life.’

St Joseph’s Church Hall, Derby
Evans Vettori Architects for Nottingham RC Diocesan Trustees
Contract £3.36m. GIA 144m²

St Joseph’s new multi purpose hall in the centre of Derby forms a focal point for existing adjacent buildings without diminishing the position of the church at the centre of the scheme.

The judges lauded the strength and clarity of the concept, with facing bricks continuing the existing elevations.

The logic of the fenestration is self-evident, with the large feature window connecting the hall and its occupants to the mature trees outside.

Internal detailing and joinery is well executed using a high level of craftsmanship and balances the robust with delicacy of touch. Responding to the physical challenges of a steep plot and the need to underplay itself relative to the adjacent church, the architects have ‘made a difficult site look easy and a utilitarian building appear elegant’. 

The RIBA Journal June 2014
High Edge, Matlock
Evans Vettori Architects for a private client
Contract £347,000. GIA 187m²

This new family home overlooking Matlock and the River Derwent, inspired by the fact that the area was known a century ago as ‘Little Switzerland’, uses a Swiss chalet as a leitmotif. It is, the judges claim, ‘an excellent example of how knowledge of local history can influence design and lead to inspiring architecture’.

An outward-facing gable under a prominent roof, its sloping soffit experienced everywhere internally, provides a variety of individual and voluminous internal spaces. The building displays an impressive range of traditional and contemporary craftsmanship, and despite many planning and construction constraints, feels natural and in repose. Carefully chosen materials, delicate details and eclectic fittings give the house a unique character and clever internal spatial plays are only eclipsed by the stunning views out across the valley.

Quarn Lodge, Derby
Simon Foote Architects for private client
Contract £240,000. GIA 245m²

Embracing elements of both the old and new, Quarn Lodge is a grade II listed former park-keepers lodge, restored and extended to become a four-bedroom family home. The distinction between old and new accommodation is clear both internally and externally, with the two playfully juxtaposed.

The timber extension sits deferentially behind the ‘public’ face of the fully refurbished lodge, becoming more apparent from the garden and a nearby footpath.

The extension’s open plan kitchen, dining and living spaces counterpoint the small rooms of the original lodge. At the interface of the two a striking staircase of cantilevered timber treads has been hung off the old building’s side wall. On both levels generous glazing gives lovely views to the wooded landscape. With both massing and material choices deftly handled, the judges declared that the challenge ‘has been met with panache’.
Daisy Froud, Hackney: Steen Eiler Rasmussen, in *London: The Unique City*, locates the source of the capital’s character at the confluence of tradition and liberalism. Long-established as both trading city and seat of power, London has a strongly-defined centre that, through economic and demographic pressures, has trickled largely unplanned into the land beyond. Cultural forces – particularly a preference for single houses over stacked dwellings, and belief in the importance of open space – then shaped the form of that ever-expanding hinterland of neighbourhoods (until it was ‘belted’ with green last century.)

Rasmussen wrote in 1934, but his words still apply. And that is one thing I love about working in London – things do not change. London is both invigorated and haunted by the masonry weight of its past. For the practitioner, all architectural opportunity is here: from permanent palaces, both despotic and democratic – and regularly in need of extension or renovation – to world-famous temporary pavilions. Meanwhile the idea of the ‘village’ hangs on in communities, even in the densest inner areas. This may seem perverse, especially when one is trying to build something, but ultimately it can produce wonderfully localised yet contemporary forms. Particularly in brick. We do beautiful things with brick!

But in London everything also changes, and changes fast, as epitomised by debates over whether we are ‘losing control’ of our skyline. ‘Creative destruction’ is our status quo. It’s normal not to visit an area for a month or two, then return to find a new tower popping up or a vast crater opening down. This tension between the drive to remain a ‘global city’, and the lingering imperative to provide for citizens through production of public spaces and affordable housing, makes London a fascinating (if troubling) place to operate. And all the time, the big grey river keeps rumbling through, reminding us of connections – and responsibilities – to both our past and to the rest of the world. 

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**King’s Cross Station redevelopment**

*John McAslan + Partners for Network Rail*

Contract £547m. GIA 31,254m²

Take one Grade 1 listed 19th century structure, restore it and turn it into a 21st century transport hub. Simple. And amazingly, it does look both simple and inevitable, but it was of course fiendishly complex, above and below ground. The work ranged from out-and-out conservation work – much of it all but invisible – to the showpiece new western concourse that allowed Lewis Cubitt’s train shed to be cleared of clutter and restored to glory. Lost spaces have been reclaimed and both old and new benefit from their adjacency. One can criticise certain details but as the judges said, overall it’s ‘an example of what can be achieved by a motivated and skilled team that has worked imaginatively with constraints to achieve an outstanding outcome’. 

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Daisy Froud, The AOC, Hackney
The Shed, Waterloo
Haworth Tompkins for the National Theatre
Contract £1.2m. GIA 628m²

Described as ‘more of an event/ installation than a building’, The Shed, built of steel, plywood and red-stained rough-sawn timber, may be fine as a temporary replacement for the National’s Cottesloe Theatre while that space is being altered by the same architects, but it’s all about the exuberant appearance. ‘It is so mute yet contains so many references: a bouncy castle, Battersea Power Station, the NT’s own fly towers and lift structures, a wild West fort, one could go on,’ says the jury. By being so wildly red, this timber box-with-chimneys effortlessly manages to make itself the centre of the whole of the monochrome riverside. The judges noted that the architect does a good job of rationalising why it turned out the way it has. Perhaps – but it’s also obviously huge fun. That’s what’s so great about temporary buildings, they let you play a little; Haworth Tompkins has several serious permanent buildings among the awards – but even in those there’s always an endearing touch of mischief.
London Aquatics Centre, Queen Elizabeth Park
Zaha Hadid Architects for the Olympic Park

It cost a bob or two, and had to convert from ugly-duckling Olympic Games mode to the graceful swan of its final intended form with sloping glazed walls, but everyone agrees it’s been worth it: we have one of the great architectural spaces and today it’s a public swimming pool that anyone can use. Yes, its shape is all about the fluidity of water in motion, but what about function? ‘It works very practically and is well built with very high quality finishes,’ said the judges.

All this on a very restricted site, and it’s pretty good sustainability-wise. As the judges add: ‘This is a great building of our times.’

115 Golden Lane, Farringdon
Amin Taha Architects for private client
Contract £650,000. GIA 720m²

This is the architecture of scrape and reveal, yielding opulent austerity. A solid, unremarkable but good brick-and-iron commercial building has had years of thoughtless accretions removed to bring it back to its original fabric – with in-keeping ultra-restrained new elements. Check out the structural waxed steel bookcase, off which a steel stair is cantilevered. Polished concrete, oak and glass provide the rest of the palette. Original timber beams are revealed. A Miesian glass-box meeting room appears to float in space. Outside, imaginative bronzed steelwork is used for laser-cut security screens. It’s about 20% cheaper than a standard refurb and looks great. Not your ordinary office, for sure.

The Garden School, Hackney
Gollifer Langston Architects for Hackney Council with Mouchel Babcock
Contract £13.1m. GIA 4,923m²

This is hard work, finely resolved: a Special Educational Needs school for children from 5-19 at the extreme end of the autistic spectrum, built on a difficult urban site. This building is being secure without showing it, in a school where young and secondary age pupils share facilities. ‘A wonderful and uplifting place that is clearly enjoyed by staff and pupils alike’ said the judges.

Saxon Court and Roseberry Mansions, Kings Cross
Maccreanor Lavington for King’s Cross Central Partnership
GIA 13,854m²

When this development arrived, the King’s Cross megaproject started to seem serious. It’s a well-detailed residential scheme falling into two sections with differing but complementary architectural treatments. Rising to 16 storeys at its highest, Saxon Court is a mixed-tenure block with balconies while Roseberry Mansions contains 40 flats for the elderly, with a first-floor communal area and a colour scheme that identifies each floor. ‘This is a very serious and considered piece of architecture that takes this building typology to a different level,’ remarked the judges.
It’s not the individual architectural elements that matter here, said the judges. It’s the overall achievement of managing to drive a 400m long new railway viaduct, vital to the Thameslink route, ‘right through the heart of a much loved historic London market without killing it.’ There was fierce opposition and it took a long time and colossal ingenuity. But the end result shows that this trickiest of tasks has succeeded to the extent that, they say, someone teleported from 2006 would hardly notice the difference. That’s hardly the case, but this is conservation with intent.

High Street 2012 historic building conservation
Julian Harrap Architects for Tower Hamlets council
Contract £4.5m

The before-and-after pictures here are astonishing. Previously grossly neglected and altered buildings come right back into focus as handsome backdrops to the teeming East End. This is the best kind of facade job: Harrap’s team has repaired and reinstated frontages over four years along the A11, tackling more than 70 historic buildings and taking their 1900 appearance as its goal. It encourages positive change and further investment — and proves how in the right hands, even with myriad owners and difficult conditions, a little townscape money can go a very long way.

Lens House, Canonbury
Alison Brooks Architects for a private client
GIA 169m²

There can’t be that many derelict four-storey semi-detached Victorian villas in leafy, pricey Canonbury, but Brooks’ clients found one and have spent six years restoring and extending it in three phases. Conservation area and protected tree notwithstanding, she has managed to make something pretty special here: ‘a rich and engaging series of spaces relating to each other and to the garden: every element of the design is beautifully considered,’ said the judges.

The extension is all but invisible from the street; it is trapezoidal — a Brooks trademark — and unusually clad externally in Corian. You can believe it when they say it’s ‘a wonderful place to live and work’.

Thameslink Programme – Borough Viaduct, Southwark
Jestico + Whiles for Network Rail
GIA 8,500m²

Blackfriars Station Redevelopment
Pascal + Watson for Network Rail
GIA 14,000m²

Some have estimated the cost of this much-delayed, and technically hugely difficult, project at some £635m all in. It’s true that it is a uniquely ambitious engineering and building project — central to, but a financial drain on, the Thameslink programme. It is a very large station spanning the river bank to bank on an existing expanded railway bridge, plus a new interchange with the Underground. It provides great views without spoiling any from elsewhere, and its naturally ventilated sawtooth roof arrangement is also a mighty photovoltaic array. It is, no question, a wonder.
The Shard
Renzo Piano Building Workshop for London Bridge Quarter
Contract c. £435m. GIA 120,000m²

What can you say about The Shard, at 306m and 87 storeys the tallest building in the European Union, in the context of a regional award when national and international ones beckon? The judges chose to concentrate on context. Seen from Parliament Square, they said, ‘If one looks through the gap between Big Ben and Portcullis House, the Shard appears next to the spires of the Palace of Westminster with the inevitability of an established and historic part of London’s skyline.’ This is 120,000m² of mixed-use accommodation that is, thankfully, well dressed. One must argue with the fatuous description of it as ‘a genuine vertical village’ as if it were the Archers come to town, and it’s by no means as elegant from all views as they claim, but the jury citation is spot on when it describes how the angled splinters of facade break down the bulk and work well visually on a typical London grey day.

Luker House, Barnes
Jamie Fobert Architects for the Luker family
GIA 328m²

It’s that pale brick, polished concrete, white plaster and timber aesthetic. Very familiar, but here done with total assurance and with a very unusual plan and aspect dictated by this difficult landlocked former industrial site. ‘It is difficult to evoke the quality of visual refinement within this building,’ said the judges. ‘Wherever you look there are combinations of planes, surfaces and light of an unusual quality.’ Essentially it is a one-sided building but the handling of daylight is such that you’d hardly notice. And the client, a services engineer, helped with the building, with some fitting out still to do and the garden to finish. Even as it stands it is very impressive.

Woodblock House, East London
dRMM Architects for Richard Woods
Contract £510,000. GIA 257m²

As featured in May’s RIBA Journal, this is a house and studio which uses the artist’s own works in timber both externally and internally – apart from being an almost wholly timber construction as is often the dRMM way. It’s ‘joyful and sensual’ said the judges. It’s both a workplace — including a printing workshop on the ground floor – and a family home above, with terrace. A tiny study perches right at the top. The artist was much involved with the design, not least making its trademark elements. Structurally it consists of two boxes of cross-laminated timber or CLT, a very sustainable material. The house is in something of an enclave of showpiece architect-designed homes, and more than holds its own.

The Workshop, Camden
Henning Stummel Architects for Henning Stummel Architects
Contract £700,000. GIA 250m²

Architects can sniff out promising premises, they’re trained for it. Never more so than when it’s for their own use. Thus Henning Stummel found one of those London oases — an industrial workshop hidden through an arch off a busy street — and made it a home and studio for his practice inspired by that lightweight workshop’s structure. ‘It demonstrates that with enormous constraints a skilled architect can craft a building of significant architectural merit — it is clearly a building that is a joy to live and work in,’ said the envious judges.
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London School of Economics Saw Swee Hock Student Centre
O’Donnell + Tuomey Architects for the LSE Estates Division
Contract £24.1m. GIA 6,100m²

They relish difficult sites, do O’Donnell+Tuomey, multiple Stirling Prize nominee but never yet the winner. This remarkable student centre, its impressive London calling-card, is generated both by its constrained site and its network of surrounding streets, which the practice sees as spiralling up into the building. The complexity of form, with its angled intersecting and part-perforated walls, is then worked out in an astonishing number of English hand-made brick specials, not one of which had to be cut.

A lot of different functions are arranged in spiral fashion in the resulting spaces, from a basement club to a rooftop gym. There are architectural delights at every turn. The judges talk of the architect achieving its quality of design-build craftsmanship ‘though sheer willpower’. It obviously took everyone – client, planners and builders – with it. One would hope this fascinating building goes a very long way in this year’s awards.
**The London Library, Westminster**

*Haworth Tompkins for the London Library*

**Contract £10.75m. GIA 3,000m²**

How to transform a much-loved institution and keep its shabby-genteel character? The London Library is not unlike some of the gentlemen’s clubs that surround it in St James. If you’re a member, you’re loath to change it. But that sort of challenge is meat and drink to Haworth Tompkins. The jurors confessed they had trouble working out what was new and what was old – ‘the improvements have been made in a way that is seamless with the existing fabric.’ It has taken seven years so far, and that’s just the first phase. But it’s so good, it will help greatly in the fundraising. Never mind the lifts and the periodicals storage, look at the toilets – each one fitted out differently by artist Martin Creed with different marbles and tiles. Despite the rationalisation, one hopes it will remain a place where writers can get ‘pleasurably lost’.

**Milton Court and The Heron, City of London**

*Davidd Walker Architects for Heron International*

**Contract c. £89m. GIA 35,000m²**

A concert hall, two theatres plus rehearsal, teaching and office spaces for the Guildhall School of Music — and a 28 storey apartment tower which helped pay for all that. This is a classic tower-and-podium arrangement which has yielded a fine new performance venue for London, with a club and courtyard garden for residents on the Guildhall’s roof. The podium cultural elements are predominantly white, the tower predominantly black, and their intersection is deftly handled. As built, David Walker Architects worked alongside RHWL. The judges noted that Walker’s concept was ‘a masterful strategic development’ which apart from its cultural contribution continues the Barbican tradition of high-rise city living.

**JW3, Finchley**

*Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands Architects for JCC Ventures*

**Contract c. £12m. GIA 4,971m²**

JW3 is about Jewish life and culture but is open to all, a secular building that includes restaurant, auditorium, cinema, meeting rooms and rooftop nursery, and mounts an ambitious programme of activities. ‘Very sophisticated and well resolved both conceptually and in its detail... everything you touch feels considered and crafted,’ said the judges. A significant building for multicultural London.

**Tree House, East London**

*6a Architects for a private client*

**GIA 57m²**

It’s a not unusual problem: how to make an awkward house accessible to an increasingly immobile and wheelchair-dependent family member. Here, the task has been done ingeniously and with joie de vivre. The original 1830s joined pair of listed cottages had many level changes, not least from the back of the houses down into the much-loved garden. This project realigns the house, makes a virtue of the necessary ramps – one curving round a Sumac tree — and creates a new simple timber bedroom building in the garden, which is informally shared with those of neighbours. It’s a beautiful response to a tricky challenge.
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Buildings
RIBA Regional Awards/London

Tate Britain, Millbank Project
Caruso St John for Tate
Contract £23m. GIA 6,600m²

Everyone – including us, in December 2013 – goes on about the Art Deco-ish staircase and the early Scandi-modern influences in this Tate remodelling, but in practical terms it’s all about some very acute replanning of the old gallery’s always problematic semi-basement and first floor levels, plus some quietly opulent gallery refurbishments. Members appreciate the new first-floor café and bar, the hoi polloi have a hugely improved basement café, while there is also a fine events space in a previously partitioned-off large room overlooking the river. This project has found a fruitful language to mediate between the neoclassical and the modern.

Brent Civic Centre, Wembley
Hopkins Architects for the London Borough of Brent
Contract c. £85m. GIA 40,000 m²

For a council uniting the functions and staff from 14 buildings, Hopkins has produced a civic castle of distinct grandeur, with generous public spaces leaning towards the informal. In the old civic-pride manner, the building includes public facilities, while the council chamber has a sense of dignity. The judges noted that the building is highly energy-efficient, making good use of natural light and ventilation, and shows Hopkins’ typical ‘truth to materials’. It’s come from a design-build set-up, with Hopkins novated to the contractor, Skanska.

One Pancras Square, King’s Cross
David Chipperfield Architects for Argent
GIA 6,192m²

How to make an ordinary speculative office block memorable: express its frame with lattice-patterned sandcast iron columns. This is a gateway building for the vast King’s Cross Central development and you don’t have to look far to find a historic precedent for cast-iron pillars. On the southern facade, valuable floorspace is devoted to a deep balcony for the upper floors which doubles as solar shading. With a double-height ground floor, tall ceilings and an entrance of Italian marble and white polished plaster, this is a workplace with a lot of the palazzo about it. It’s rare for spec offices, even low-energy ones like this, to get much of a showing in awards, but Chipperfield is famous for finding architecture outside the brief.

Clothworkers Centre, Victoria and Albert Museum
Haworth Tompkins for the V&A
Contract £2.2m. GIA 3,345m³

Haworth Tompkins’ pared-down aesthetic – respecting the virtues of the existing and the marks of time – is a natural for this job, involving Henry Tanner’s tough-as-old-boots 1890s building, originally the Post Office Savings Bank, with glazed brick interiors. Against these the architect set clearly-defined new elements in black and gold. Well-daylit new workrooms have moveable furniture to cope with changes in patterns of use in the study and conservation of textiles and fashion.
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Fig. left: Gira Control 19 Client, glass black/aluminium,
Fig. right: Gira Control 9 Client, glass black/aluminium

Mobile operation using smartphones and tablets

Convenient mobile operation of the complete building technology is possible with the Gira HomeServer/FacilityServer app — using an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch, and now also Android devices. The user interface in the uniform Gira Interface design provides easy-to-understand and intuitive menu guidance and displays all the functions at a glance.

The Gira HomeServer/FacilityServer app is available in the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Fig. left and right: Gira HomeServer/FacilityServer app on the iPad and iPhone
Buildings
RIBA Regional Awards/London

Ortus, Denmark Hill
Duggan Morris Architects for Maudsley charity
Contract £4.65m. GIA 1,500m²

This came in the top four of the London regional heat — and you’ve seen the competition. Rational, beautiful, a bit Danish in feel in Denmark Hill — this is the Maudsley Hospital charity’s mental health education and events centre, next to the Institute of Psychiatry. For once it is not design-build but procured, without overspend, through construction management. It has an appropriate sense of lofty gravitas and tremendous internal spaces, particularly the generous stair with informal lecture area at its base. A pure and lovely building.

Rambert, Waterloo
Allies and Morrison for Rambert
Contract £9.1m. GIA 3,465m²

As featured in May’s RIBAJ, this is paradoxically a freestanding infill building, the first of what will be a terrace of adjoining buildings by Coin Street Community Builders. Three dance studios, a historic archive, equipment storage and workshops, administration and a secret courtyard form the ingredients of a split-level surprisingly deep building for this touring dance company which ‘has the air of a monastic institution’. It is simple, effortless, and beautifully crafted.

Pegasus Academy, Croydon
Hayhurst & Co for Pegasus Academy Trust
Contract £4.3m. GIA 1,567m²

One can have reservations about those gold shingles. But young children might love their glittery school, made of two Victorian school buildings. The roofscape brings everything together, peaking over a new infant school extension. Inside are nicely-proportioned, well-lit spaces with timber soffits and a variety of teaching spaces rather than standard modules. Roof spans increase according to the age of the children. The judges said: ‘This is an assured building from a hitherto little known practice packed with architectural ideas.’ We look forward to hearing more of Hayhurst.

Otts Yard, Tufnell Park
vPPR Architects for a private client
Contract £693,922. GIA 243m²

Two new houses on the site of a derelict workshop surrounded by 23 party walls and accessed by a long narrow passage. Only in London are such sites valuable enough to generate high-architecture responses such as this: twin houses riffing on the trapezoidal shape of the site, breaking this down into a riot of triangulation that runs through from the entrance courtyard to the planted roofs. Complex but not overly so, it seems. They’re not big, but they make the most of what they have by inserting mezzanines into the volume. The result, said the judges, is folly-like, but the sense of fun is balanced by a rigorous attention to detail.
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Alex Monroe Studios, London
DSDHA for Alex Monroe
Contract £439,000. GIA 115m²

'A cheeky little project' said the jury, chaired by Grimshaw’s Neven Sidor, approvingly. This corner wedge plays knowing games with London-ness, not least in pretending that the entirely new ground floor was a pre-existing Victorian shop front associated with the adjoining terrace, given a somewhat off-kilter three-storey overbuild. The little project even dares to take on its fellow award winner, the nearby Shard, by going all thin and vertical with its ribbed grey-bronze zinc cladding – which the planners strenuously resisted at first. Inside, it’s all about the workshopy exposed CLT panel structure for this fine contemporary metalworking jeweller. Is this turn-of-the-20th century Manhattan? No, it’s the clever urban referencing of 21st century Bermondsey, and none the worse for it.

Arts Centre at Lady Eleanor Holles School, Hampton
Walters & Cohen Architects for the school
GIA 4,718m²

‘Gentle and thoughtful’. We need more schools projects like that. As much as the main wood-lined performance space, it’s the sequence of well-planned daylit rooms and passages which make this an intriguing place to be. It helps sort out the circulation of the whole school. The large hall is in dark grey seamed zinc, lower elements are white render with timber windows. It’s low-key, human-scale and BREEAM Excellent, and cleverly uses the same timber forms inside and out for solar shading and acoustic purposes. Logical and elegant.

Drapers Academy, Havering
Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios for The Drapers’ Company/Queen Mary University
Contract £21.4m. GIA 10,692m²

No swoops and whorls here, this is a rational, calm building, well sited and ‘exquisitely detailed’ according to the jury. Organised around the client requirement for open access to its science and maths specialisms, stepping down its sloping site, it is mainly on two storeys with an internal ‘street’ and courtyard. Single-story elements sit lower on the site.

This being FCBS, sustainability is exemplary, from ground source heat pumps to photovoltaics and sedum roofs via natural ventilation and good daylighting. And some might see a satisfyingly 1950s touch in some of the knobbly brickwork. If only all schools were this good.

Oily Cart
Hawkins Brown for the Oily Cart theatre company
Contract £358,690. GIA 270m²

Modest though it is, this adaptation of a grade II listed Victorian school annexe for a children’s theatre company has intelligence and bags of style. The spaces are logically reorganised, 50% more floor area found – and something remarkable made of the ultra-PoMo freestanding external lift tower, which becomes a magical golden turret in part-perforated, part stippled, part patterned anodised aluminium. This then acts as a marker for the company’s presence in a run-down urban setting. A new mezzanine level inside the old building plays a similar trick, becoming a kind of timber treehouse. Whimsy for its own sake can go badly awry, but not here: you sense that both architect and client just loved letting rip in this way.
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North East

Gordon Murray, Newcastle: As a ‘foreigner’ I can draw obvious parallels between Tyne and Wear and the Clyde – the massive post industrial regeneration now gathering pace as we endeavour to move out of recession, the creative re-use of built heritage; and differences – topography, light and language.

Yet I revel in Northumbria’s comfortable atmosphere, from Durham to Berwick. One of the finest British post-war civic buildings is Newcastle Civic Centre by city architect George Kenyon. Built in 1967 it is distinctively Scandinavian in its origins. However, its import lies in its merging of architecture and sculpture. The magnificent circle of bronze, man-sized, sea-horse heads that adorn the tower encapsulate a serendipity between the craft traditions of the area’s shipbuilding and heavy engineering, and the world-renowned sculpture department at Newcastle College of Art where the heads were cast.

In this they are forbears of Anthony Gormley’s Angel of the North. So it is no surprise that the area’s single Stirling Prize winner is a piece of engineering – Wilkinson Eyre’s Millennium Bridge – which itself continues the intertwining of art and engineering. Yet awards say more about the preoccupations of the jury than about the prevailing qualities of the region’s built environment.

It would be fatuous to draw any conclusions as to the direction of travel of architecture in RIBA North East from this year’s shortlist. If its Stirling Prize winner is about sculpture then these schemes are mostly jewellery – exquisitely crafted small pieces. With two Russell Group universities and two leading schools of architecture, a strong contemporary artistic scene – from the College of Art to the Baltic (itself an RIBA Award winner) the region has a strong base of excellence, creative endeavour and innovation which could be better harnessed by more enlightened clients – to the benefit of the built environment with prosperity as its legacy.

Gordon Murray is a partner in Ryder and professor of architecture and urban design at the University of Strathclyde

**Special Awards**

Architect of the Year: Napper Architects
Client of the Year: Durham County Council & Seaham Harbour Marina Community Interest Company (for Seaham North Dock)
Building of the Year: Seaham North Dock
Conservation: Roomzzz - Friar House Apartment Hotel
Emerging Architect: Mawson Kerr Architects
Sustainability: Maggie’s Newcastle
Small Project: Treetops

**Window on Wild Lindisfarne, Lindisfarne**

*Icosis Architects for The Holy Island of Lindisfarne Community Development Trust*

Contract £300,000. GIA 60.6m²

This visitor centre has been designed to draw attention to the rich wildlife and habitats en route to Lindisfarne Castle. The building is very simply and clearly crafted, breaking through the stone of the wetland boundary wall with a distinct and contemporary reinterpretation of it. A sequence of planes steers the visitor through the building from the dark to the light and creates open views over the wetland. Slots in the walls frame glimpses of the castle and a lookout tower.

The building is topped by a thinly expressed self-seeded green roof formed from soil excavated for the development. This is an exquisite and delicate building carefully integrated into a truly exceptional setting.
Seaham North Dock, Co Durham
Napper Architects for Durham County Council & Seaham Harbour Marina Community Interest Company
GIA: 574m²

This confident building sits alongside a listed dock structure. Working to an imaginative brief, Napper’s simplicity and detail reflect modest maritime references in its ship-like linear form and ‘prow’ – from which a glazed café and terrace face south west to the outer harbour and the open sea.

In addition to the café the building supports a marina created in the dock, animating its waterfront with its changing rooms and showers and space for 12 marina-related businesses.

Maggie’s Newcastle at Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne
Cullinan Studio for Maggie’s
Contract £11.5m. GIA 300m²

No Maggie’s Centre is ever anything but interesting. This one has a Japanese style grid underlying the structure and the way internal divisions are dealt with, but that never takes precedence.

The centre has the Maggie’s trademark sense of warmth; its nurturing, protective ideal mirrored in the way the earth is drawn up round it into berms. Exposed concrete mass, natural ventilation, low G-value glazing and shading roof forms allow generous visual connection to the external area without overheating. It is also connected the hospital’s district heating and has 60m² of photovoltaics — thus its Regional Sustainability Award.

Treetops
Howarth Litchfield
Contract £200,000. GIA 290m²

This transformational project, with the architect’s wife as client, reinvented a modest 1964 two storey house on a large, steeply sloping suburban woodland site. The works revealed and recreated the dual mono-pitch form of the original building. An extended terrace and its columns become part of the roof form to provide solar shading for what looks like a wholly new building.

The fabric performs to Code Level 5 through over-cladding of the existing building with insulation and render, enlarged high-performance windows with solar glass, high sun shelter from the roof overhang, and natural stack ventilation. With ground source heating and PVs it can be completely off-grid.

Roomzzzz – Friar House Apartment Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne
Mawson Kerr Architects
GIA 950m²

Despite its buzzy name, this is a strong piece of conservation-led design. The derelict late Georgian house has been sensitively converted to provide 14 luxury suites for an apartment hotel. Internal alterations respect the subdivision and grain of the original interior while establishing a clear distinction between new and original fabric. Original modest slots to help light semi-basement rooms have been extended; their chamfering and lining with white glazed brick and protective clear glass balustrading means the rooms can be used as further suites, promoting the hotel’s viability.
Buildings
RIBA Regional Awards

North West

Dave King and Jonathan Falkingham, Liverpool: Working in the north west is either a blessing for an architect or fraught with trial and tribulation – it depends how you practise and what kind of designer you aspire to be. First there’s accommodation – there are wonderful office premises to be had at a fraction of inflated London prices and it’s the same with residential property, which is seductive to the experienced architect with a family. Very beautiful countryside is within easy reach and London’s just over two hours away by train, making it possible to do business in the capital on a ‘day return’ basis.

Now for the downside – commissions, more and more of which emanate from public, government and OJEU sources and are being awarded only to London-based practices. Of course there is an argument for this when an outfit with a proven track record and large resources pitches for out of town work. The same travel arrangements can apply in reverse and a regional ‘outrigger’ office at a very economic rent can look attractive to work hungry metropolitan practices.

But even though the – extremely supportive – RIBA actively supports the wealth of established award winning practices in the north west, this rather perverse logic can trip up a regional practice pitching for work in London, even though regional practices can be more than a match for those based in the capital. Perhaps they don’t sing their own praises enough or move in the right circles. There’s definitely still a London-centric balance in terms of events available for networking. Sadly ‘north of Watford’ is still heard; even the demeaning ‘provincial’.

Recently, though, organisations such as ‘Liverpool in London’ (chamber of commerce) are tilting the balance to the regions. The 2014 ‘festival of business’ is imminent. Architects here must ensure their ambitions include the south east since they have the talent and the infrastructure. London is a world city just a commute away. OJEU take note.

Dave King and Jonathan Falkingham are founders at shedkm

North West Special Awards

Architect of the Year: BDP
Client of the Year: Enterprise South Liverpool Academy
Building of the Year: Everyman Theatre
Conservation: Liverpool Central Library
Emerging Architect of the Year: 5plus Architects
Sustainability Award: Trafford Town Hall

Number One Riverside, Rochdale
FaulknerBrowns Architects for Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Contract £42.5m, GIA 17,000m²

Already possessing a grade I listed Victorian town hall, Rochdale’s new £42.5m HQ consolidates 33 council sites, centralises service delivery and acts as a catalyst to regenerate the town centre. Boasting a publicly accessible ground floor with customer service centre and restaurant/cafe spaces overlooking the River Roch, ‘both internally and externally the building elegantly communicates the desired openness between the council and the general public, encouraging inclusive interaction’.

With a restrained and co-ordinated palette of contemporary materials, and a sustainability strategy that has resulted in a BREEAM ‘Excellent’ rating for the building, the architect has given the city a new administrative headquarters that is a 21st century evocation of civic pride that William Henry Crossland embodied in his first town hall 150 years before.
If you ask ME, technical expertise can help create your building vision.

It’s not easy finding a supplier whose support network is just as good as their products. Which is why I was so pleased with Marley Eternit’s overall offering. They provided me with the traditional materials I was looking for and technical guidance for my complex rainscreen design. After an initial consultation and site survey, their Technical Services recommended the Birkdale fibre cement slates. The performance, design flexibility and colour match were key in helping the building naturally bed into the surrounding landscape and also added real value to the facade solution I had in mind.

Rob Martin - Architect - Tally Ho Training Centre
Nicol Thomas Architects
Liverpool Central Library
Austin-Smith:Lord LLP for Liverpool City Council
Contract £50m. GIA 12,012m²

Overseeing the removal of 20th century additions to post-1860 civic buildings on William Brown Street in the historic St George’s quarter of the city, Austin-Smith:Lord at the same time inserted a new library building behind the listed facade. The new spaces exhibit clear organisation set around a central atrium. One of the biggest changes has been making the library’s old Picton Reading Room, Hornby Room and Oak Room fully accessible and linked back to the main central atrium space of the new library. All these rooms have been restored to their former glory and are key to the new library’s spaces.

Beneath the Picton Reading Room, the Picton Library has been opened to the public for the first time, providing young readers with a dedicated space that justifies not just the increased enrolments at the library, but the fact that it has become a visitor attraction in its own right.

The RIBA Journal June 2014
**Everyman Theatre, Liverpool**

Haworth Tompkins for The Liverpool and Merseyside Theatres Trust

Contract £13.3m, GIA 4,300m²

Working with the client for years to gain an understanding of its needs, Haworth Tompkins has created a new 400-seat theatre, rehearsal rooms, public foyer and cafe area along with administrative offices on the site of the original 19th century building.

The whole has been fitted out not only with the firm’s trademark tactility, but with materials salvaged from the original site — not least 28000 stock bricks from the site’s Hope Hall chapel. With a facade of 105 ’Everymen’ portraits etched on its external aluminium shutters, a singlemindedness of intent manifests itself from inside to out. Details such as stairs, handrails, rough sawn floorboards and lighting have been meticulously considered and executed to give depth and cohesion to all the spaces.

A sense of material and spatial continuity is rare in any modern building, but here there is a sense that it reaches back into the very history of the building itself. As such, the Everyman deserves its standing ovation.

**Enterprise South Liverpool Academy**

BDP for Enterprise South Liverpool Academy

Contract £22m, GIA 10,433m²

This school aids the argument that good design boosts academic performance: it already shows marked improvements in both attendance and exam results, providing 1100 secondary students with state-of-the-art facilities that meet the needs of 21st century teaching.

Shimmering shingles on the robust metal exterior are counterpointed internally by wood finishes that bring warmth and acoustic benefits. The whole building is organised around a central ‘heart’ space; a ‘light and airy volume that has spirit and life and where users feel welcome’. Its materials and the acoustic treatment ensure the scale is not overbearing. The space can be used to bring together the whole school or for more intimate performances.

The concept and execution of the school demonstrates how, by working closely with the stakeholders and users, BDP has ‘delivered a building that more than meets the school’s agenda and pedagogy, while giving the local community a building to be inspired by’.

**Trafford Town Hall**

5plus Architects for Trafford Borough Council

Contract £17.3m, GIA 12,200m²

Grade II-listed Stretford Town Hall, built in 1933, was steel-framed with a skin of Flemish bonded brick. The building had a municipal robustness typical of the time, and was interestingly extended in the 1980s to become Trafford Town Hall complete with a subterranean nuclear fallout shelter. Both were demolished when 5plus Architects extended and refurbished the original. Its contemporary yet respectful addition, claim the judges, ‘exhibits a high standard of design and quality to rival the listed town hall’. A landscaped courtyard links old and new elements, faced by a new internal street that acts as a double-height circulation zone for the new extension. This — well-lit, naturally ventilated and with a BREEAM Excellent rating that also covers the original town hall — is, said the judges, ‘testament to the highly sustainable strategy created across the site’.

**DAVID BARBOUR**

**BECCY LANE**

**PHILIP NELLE**

**RICH LANE**

The RIBA Journal June 2014
Northern Ireland

Alan Jones, Belfast: The border and coast make our region a compact microcosm. Architecturally speaking, the relatively small population of 1.8 million punches well above its weight. It could be argued that our desire to excel is fuelled by the historical ‘fight to survive’ tension between the Planter and Gael.

Here, finely crafted Belfast-made timber windows completed the best of our architecture and that of London too, and the largest anodizing tanks in the British Isles serve both aeronautical and architectural construction. The frontier spirit of previous decades is evolving into a more considered architectural stance. Projects such as the MAC, Lyric Theatre, Giant’s Causeway Visitor Centre and the refurbishment of the Guildhall in the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture, have increased the design awareness of those in government who control procurement, showing them how investment in architecture brings about positive social, economic and environmental change.

Some practices demonstrate that smart working and focused effort is rewarded with making quality architecture appear relatively easily. Increasingly, practices’ skills are being recognised by those outside our system – with commissions across the mainland and for prominent London sites and beyond. We are also making inroads into the Republic of Ireland too. Our graduates can remain local or pitch for positions in premiere practices elsewhere. We hope that those who leave return to reinvest their experiences and skills.

With the transfer of planning powers to councils, local architects can approach and support the decision makers and help ensure the fuzzy handover period is minimised. The impact of the newly appointed creative director of PLACE is already being evidenced and a strengthened, more pithy, revised version of architectural policy will also help ensure the continued upward architectural trajectory of this proud and precise periphery of Europe.

Alan Jones is director of architecture (education) at Queen’s University Belfast and president of the Royal Society of Ulster Northern Ireland Special Awards

Architect of the Year: Hall McKnight
Conservation Award: Consarc for the Guildhall
Small projects: McGarry Moon for Loughloughan Barn

Loughloughan Barn, Broughshane
McGarry-Moon Architects for a private client
GIA 110m²

This is domestic design with an agricultural twist, set on a dramatic site in County Antrim overlooking a lush farming landscape with distant views of Slemish mountain. Using the traditional vernacular barn form found there, the architect has maximised the potential of both typology and site with a carefully detailed contemporary design. In line with the barns’ usual simple material use, the restrained palette of materials uses stone, timber, glass and zinc – all finely detailed at their interfaces.

Despite transformation of the internal space, the form and feel of the original barn is maintained. Living spaces and master bedroom on the first floor take advantage of light and views, with minor bedrooms below. At the corner of the living room the structure cantilevers out over the stone wall to create a stunning viewing point to the landscape, dramatically interconnecting inside and out.
In a country still coming to terms with its divisive past, the architect was asked to design a commemorative space for members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which superseded the Royal Ulster Constabulary in 2001. The new memorial needed its own identity distinct from that of the RUC’s.

The new memorial uses both modern and traditional materials, perhaps referencing the country’s residual dualisms. Oak panelled walls and beech hedges delineate a gently sloping route through a garden to an outdoor room clad in black back-sprayed glass panels. This outdoor room is a calm and contemplative space, open and enclosed at the same time.

A muted palette of Irish limestone, oak and wood is expertly considered and combined creating an ‘exceptional public space which radiates a great sense of peace, dignity and stillness’.

Derry-Londonderry’s Guildhall has been part of the city’s history since John Guy Ferguson’s neo-gothic design was completed in 1890. Consarc Architects was appointed in 2010 to consolidate the structure – damaged in a fire in 1908 and bombs in 1972 – repair the sandstone, and replace damaged stained glass.

Externally, two new public plazas link the building better to its city context. The dark and institutional interior has been opened up and reconfigured as a public space, with the council chamber reinstated on the first floor creating an elegant and dignified new civic amenity; the judges calling the restored Guildhall ‘a master class in conservation practice’.

So understated is this infill into the terraces of the Falls Road, that you might walk past without any awareness of the good works going on behind its door. This ‘Home from Home’ initiative by the CLIC Sargent cancer charity allows kids and their parents to stay in a welcoming, domestic environment while undergoing treatment at the nearby Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Behind an unassuming but well-detailed and restrained brick facade are shared living, kitchen and dining spaces and en suite bathrooms, providing for up to four families. The architect has opened up a staircase to draw light deep into the building, a courtyard garden has been incorporated, and bedrooms have mountain views. Simple moves well executed; and a worthy project creating a supportive, restorative environment.
Rupert Cook, Winchester: Winchester, where Architecture PLB was founded just over 40 years ago, sustains a high density of architects and practices. Many have spun out in some form or another from the council’s Hampshire County Architects, whose catchment has expanded significantly in recent years due to procurement initiatives, to deliver projects with other major authorities in the area. Many are sole practitioners or with a few staff catering to people investing in their own homes through extensions or major refurbishment, and to smaller scaled public and civic projects.

We were also fortunate to benefit from Hampshire commissioning, during the public sector procurement drought of the 1980s, which helped establish our strong reputation for school design. Looking back at the final years of Building Schools for the Future (circa 2008-9) – where our reputation and projects were national – we suffered less badly than some; three projects were stopped for review. Portsmouth was cancelled, Herts and West Sussex Academies were re-started. The first major project for Herts is now complete, has morphed into the primary expansion program and is beginning to address the transition to secondary.

We faced a choice; export our education expertise or concentrate more locally, even in a mature market. The schools work is now mainly London or for unitary authorities. Our local concentration was on housing in Winchester and around. More importantly, our London effort has been on some major clients in the university sector. In addition, we took a sideways step into student residences – a sector badly needing some design.

Smaller practices in the area seem to have weathered the storm of recession better: an old college friend (efrancisarchitects) who also moved here from London maintains an ever growing waiting list. The challenge remains, as ours was 15+ years ago and again recently, on how to diversify, remain recession proof and enjoy the day-job.

Rupert Cook is director at Architecture PLB

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**Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford**

**Rafael Vinoly Architects for Oxford University Fixed Assets**

GIA 20,195m²

The complex mathematical paving at the entrance to the Mathematical Institute is a marker of client expectations while the square precast grids of the facade give a mathematically rationalised pattern to the exterior and allow for the incorporation of louvres.

Part of a masterplan for the University of Oxford’s Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, the institute’s glazed atrium is intended to allow views through to the observatory while also creating sociable space (complete with walls ready to be written on). This is in contrast to the more cellular offices and spaces which provide work space for 500 plus academics and support staff, and an education space for international research fellows, lecturers and undergraduates. “The geometry and layout is complex and eccentric in its historic setting,” said the judges.
Exbury Egg, Exbury, Hampshire
PAD Studio for SPUD
Contract £40,000. GIA 17m²

Artist and architect hatched this design after being inspired by a nest full of eggs. Tethered on the River Beaulieu in the New Forest, it was put together using age-old boat building techniques; becoming an object of art in itself.

The cladding gives a unique pattern to the structure which is different on every angle and forever changing. It is also somewhere to live for the artist, containing a bed, wet room and desk space as a base for studying the shoreline. The egg shape must have given the design team many challenges, including the restrictions of buoyancy.
Stonehaven, Kirtlington  
Yiangou Architects for a private client  
GIA 400m²  
Extending a former rectory with a swimming pool and modern amenities in a contrasting style, these buildings adopt a barn profile but the details are beautifully executed, pushing the boundaries of available technologies, particularly in the use of unique UV-sealed corner window glazing in order to make the most of view.

Oxford Martin School  
Berman Guedes Stretton for Oxford University Estates Services  
GIA 1,675m²  
This is a modest refurbishment for an institute that thinks big about the global issues of the day. The spaces for fellows to gather and study adapt the grade II-listed building imaginatively. A new disabled entrance inside the Sesame lift and clever retracting steps provide a playful and discreet solution to the previous lack of access. The modified gallery and new arrangement is imaginatively thought through.

Radley College Clocktower Square,  
Design Engine Architects for Radley College  
GIA 2,084m²  
A stripped back brick colonnade is given character by the expressive roofscape lined with CLT. This attractive addition to the school campus has large communal spaces as well as galleries and 10 classrooms. Some interesting spaces and junctions are cleverly applied to the historic buildings. This new structure is an intelligent enclosure of spaces between existing buildings and deals with different levels. Confident creation of space encourages unforeseen use; simple sustainable technology keeps its demand for heating and cooling low.

McCall MacBain Graduate Study Centre, Wadham College, Oxford  
Lee Fitzgerald Architects for Wadham College, Oxford  
GIA 825m²  
The original Blackwell music store was an Oxford and an architectural institution (designed by Gillespie Kidd & Coia and listed). Now it has been taken into the college behind it, as a graduate study centre: the new contemporary extension provides access from the existing quadrangle to the refurbished store with a staircase and lift tower. Quirky spaces show a sensitivity to the old with cleverly specified materials executed skilfully, such as a the coarse Ashlar stone. Bookcases, replacing those previously destroyed, are beautifully detailed, tactile, clever and exciting, with evidence of traditional craftsmanship. Building and landscaping bring out the best of each other, and the public face to the street is almost unchanged – although the shop entrance is now permanently closed.
The Kench, Hayling Island
Meloy Architects for a private client
GIA 66m²

Forget the revolving timber summer house. This summer house does detail beautifully, especially the tiling in the bathrooms, which somehow resembles a 3D puzzle. It also is tightly planned with creative space-saving solutions to make the best possible use of a limited area. Rooms are arranged to make the most of the views over the Kench. The house sits well among the other chalets and the coastal landscape.

The Harding Communication Centre,
Pangbourne, Reading
Mitchell Taylor Workshop for Pangbourne College
Contract £1.5m, GIA 785m²

An aluminium performance box and timber-clad classrooms for music and ICT make this an apparently simple new building. The first that visitors see on entering the school, its distinctive modern image has an important message. But that also disguises a more nuanced section that uses its footprint tightly. Bespoke baffles were among the architect’s inexpensive and ingenious solutions. The effect is of a playful and highly designed space for the school.

New Music School at Stowe,
Buckingham
Nick Cox Architects for Stowe School
Contract £3.95m, GIA 1706m²

‘Every boy who goes out from Stowe will know beauty when he sees it all the rest of his life,’ said Stowe School’s founding headmaster. The design of the new music school responds confidently to its classical and landscape context both in form and in high spec materials, including stone cladding. The massing of the building is discreet and low-key, using changing ground levels to good effect while respecting the classical context and design principles associated with it. The foyer is already well used as an informal social space and the auditorium addresses the acoustic challenges of any such space.

Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth
Wilkinson Eyre for Mary Rose Trust
GIA 5,133m²

Protecting and preserving the historic artefact of the once-submerged Mary Rose, while allowing public access to it, makes this project hugely complex. It feels like a treasure box (from lighting to showcases) of precious gems, creating a stage for the experience.

It is quite an achievement to ensure that from a single viewpoint both the Mary Rose and her recovered artefacts can be seen. With the main display at the end of the building, circulation spaces are free flowing to avoid congestion. While the exhibition takes centre stage, externally the distinctive maritime lines of the design work well in dockyard home, the simple clarity of the materials and lines offering an ideal backdrop to viewing the exuberance of the nearby HMS Victory.
The South East

James Galpin, Tunbridge Wells: The South East has seen a healthy upturn in workload over the last two years. Due to our proximity to London, the effect of the Olympic Games and the creation of the various major new commercial developments in the capital have sent a ripple of workload – both workplace and retail – out towards the surrounding counties.

Demand for housing in the region is also higher than ever and the consequent upturn in house-building has given rise to Section 106 payments allocated to local authorities to provide additional school places. This is a welcome change for architects in the learning sector, who have suffered in recent years through the cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future programme. The current focus within education is on the provision of primary places, and the long view is of course the next round of development which will need to cater for the same population growth at secondary level in a few years’ time.

Despite rising material costs of up to 10% per annum, contractors are returning keen prices for work which will suit their marketing purposes, and a new focus on amicable team-working and quality of product and service has been one positive outcome of the recession. Maintaining quality is a continual challenge in frugal times and a responsible choice of procurement is key to ensure that the focus on craftsmanship in both design and delivery is maintained. It is therefore even more commendable that this year’s RIBA Award entries reflect a consistent high quality of architecture – with enlightened, committed and passionate clients being supported and guided through the building process by innovative and visionary architects.

With a clearly visible commitment to design quality and a drive to find new ways to build sustainably and responsibly, there is a great deal of delight being created in the South East.

James Galpin is an architect with Hazle

Wedge House, Thames Ditton
SOUP Architects for private client
GIA 320m²

Sliding this four bedroom house onto the end of the garden at the clients’ parents’ home required some well handled geometry. The building is primarily triangular in plan: kitchen and utility along the site boundary, and living room to the garden. It is the entrance that ties them all together, set under the cantilevered first floor to which stairs lead up. Sliding panels and doors work inside and out to cleverly link and close spaces. Minimum detailing and finishes of western red cedar and dark grey render soften the whole house from the outside.
Art and craft is the subject of this museum and the architecture is a sublime way to appreciate it. A traditional barn and the former school are linked with new tiled and copper-clad buildings that also give a new entrance to the museum on the village green. Great skill ensures beautiful spaces are created out of the limitations; in one room a nave-like narrow ceiling places Eric Gill’s printing press as the altar, while air handling equipment is concealed on either side. Both Shakerish and very English, with all the quirks that implies. ‘An exquisite experience’ say the judges. And so it is.

The fine, rather modest symmetry of the existing crematorium had to undergo change to keep up with regulations on cremation. At the same time its two chapels have been enlarged with dynamic glulam extensions edged with large picture windows. A dramatic decorative steel screen picks up on the leading of the 1959 glass, while the copper wrap to the new wings clearly expresses the intervention.
**Chalk Ridge, Guildford**

Scd Architects for a private client  
GIA 490m²

While professing an unostentatious single storey to the roadside, away from the road this house drops down an extra storey with the slope of the site. The two wings, set either side of an entrance, curve around and into the garden. Entrance level living spaces rise into the gable of the house, a mezzanine above. Bedrooms hunker down in a stone plinth but lose neither light nor views thanks to projecting bays and corner windows.

**Red Bridge House, Crowborough**

Smerin Architects for a private client  
GIA 360m²

Structural gymnastics and non-domestic materials define this dramatic box. Living spaces cantilever out over an internal swimming pool, while in front of them the double height loggia is defined by stainless steel ties. The northern, entrance facade is in Corten, with a Corten footbridge to signal the entrance.

**Hadlow Tower, Hadlow**

Thomas Ford & Partners for The VIVAT Trust  
Contract £3.1m. GIA 401m²

The ruined brick stump of this Georgian viewing tower and folly has been re-iced with the rich ornamentation of its earlier life. A forensic study underpins this project which also inserts a new steel structure in the core to make a flat that the building preservation client lets out. A labour of love, “this is an extraordinary achievement,” said the judges.

**Science Building, Benenden School, Cranbrook, Kent**

Hopkins Architects for Benenden School  
GIA 2800m²

This science building expands the school courtyard with an internal atrium, from which classrooms, via balconies, are fed. This simple diagram is enlivened by a cylinder “pod” of breakout space projecting into the atrium and a lining of timber panelling. Well detailed and neat.
The Novium, Chichester  
Keith Williams Architects for Chichester District Council  
Contract £4m. GIA 1300m²

Straddling the ruins of a Roman hypocaust (heating system), this well mannered modern building is organised around a grand enclosed concrete stair which sets up the narrative experience, leading the visitor through galleries to a high view over Chichester. Reconstituted stone panels add a gravitas that relates the project to other significant public buildings in the city.

Farningham House Cottage, Farningham  
Emrys Architects for a private client  
GIA 160m²

A corridor might seem a very small thing and can often be rather mean. But this glazed structure brings light and connection to a house, stable block and detached outhouse – uniting them even as it cuts into their fabric with surgical precision. It forms the edge of external courtyards and discreetly allows renovated spaces from guest room to kitchen to sit comfortably together. ‘What appears a clever and minimal sleight of hand has unlocked a congested backyard,’ said the judges.

Brighton College Boarding House, Brighton  
Allies and Morrison for Brighton College  
GIA 1758m²

Brighton College’s beautiful 70 bedroom boarding house has flint facing into the courtyard, and brick facing out. The simple plan, with a common room at the top, is based on two gabled forms. Knapped flint was cast into the panels; the mortar pointed in situ. The judges said: ‘These elevations offer immense reward, employing subtle imbalances to the symmetry and deft deployment of aluminium sectional detailing to provide crispness.’

The Ritblat Building, Hilden Grange Preparatory School, Tonbridge  
Hawkins\Brown for Alpha Plus Group  
Contract £4.1m. GIA 1473m²

This is a packed lunch of a building. Two classroom wings sandwich a playground and, below that, a sunken canteen and assembly space. Both wings are constructed in cross laminated timber panels, which are exposed internally. But from the outside they look very different: one pitched with timber shingles to wall and roof, the other an angled grass roof with vertical timber boarding. Keeping the horizontal circulation under cover outside helps animate the space with use.
Piers Taylor, Bath: There’s a general presumption that the provincial is less important than the metropolitan. Not so. I’ve always loved provincial architecture, as there’s more opportunity to deal with the particular. The South West – even its cities – is still defined by its landscape. Its geology and geography are almost always evident in the best architecture here; almost all the place-making stems from the physical attributes of place.

Glenn Murcutt talks of the astonishing continuity of materials in the Cotswolds that he saw as a student in 1969; where limestone was taken from ground immediately adjacent to settlements and used for roof coverings, window mullions, walls, lintels and floors. I remember driving through the Cotswolds with him in 2002, and witnessing through his eyes the tragedy of the banal new built landscape, nearly 40 years after he had been so inspired by it; seeing it now, as designed by our planning system, where a concrete block dipped in stone dust constitutes an appropriate neo vernacular in the eyes of a dim-witted planning official.

This is possibly a response to over zealous and misguided futurists in the 1960s who wanted to banish all traces of the local, but either way, it is recurrently the regulatory context in which we work here, one which calls for an enforced inappropriate response to place. All too often, we need to smuggle architecture through a system that tries to banish it. We have extraordinary responsibility as architects to go beyond this, to persevere against the odds, and it is our duty with our work to endure, and show the way. Yet the question remains – how to speak of a place without retort to the obvious or the banal.

A building can help make or break a place or a community. Architecture wears its principles on its sleeve: a wonderful morality and dignity is evident in the best of it. Post industrial revolution, post postmodern, post oil, post economic stability – it was never more important for architects to produce exceptional work that speaks of its provenance.

Piers Taylor is head of Invisible Studio

Poole Harbour Second Crossing
Wilkinson Eyre Architects for Poole Borough Council
Contract £11.9m. GIA 2,825m²

Wilkinson Eyre, with its acknowledged expertise in this typology, was asked to create something of elegance and grace that also solved the problems of a town brought to a standstill every time its sole lifting bridge opened to let maritime traffic pass through. Within sight of each other, the two bridges now operate in sequence, so one is always open to serve the town.

The judges called the Twin Sails Bridge ‘a triumph’. While its lifting methodology is tried and tested, the architect’s decision to split the road diagonally is a tour-de-force. When open on its hydraulic rams, the bridge presents itself as two triangles to the sky, ‘looking like two passing super yachts’. These are monocoque structures in Corten steel so the inner voids never need maintenance. Walkways at the outer sides are cantilevered off the heavier traffic-bearing central portion to provide elegantly thin leading edges.

DAVE MORRIS
Good allusions are rarely drawn from the idea of ‘tobacco-stained’, but the smoky brown of SOM’s Imperial Tobacco HQ by SOM only refers to the best aspects of classic Chicago modernism. But while its unchanging rusty patina had a timeless quality, the rest of the building had fared less well since closing in 2003.

Ferguson Mann’s intervention to turn this defunct commercial building into an aspirational apartment living concept has been a huge success, despite the challenges it presented. Lower floor areas converted easily, but at upper levels, the architect had to cut an atrium out of the deep plan, not only creating dual aspect flats that can breathe, but introducing a slice that pulls natural light into the building’s heart.

With generous internal floor to ceiling heights and effective space-planning, Lakeshore is a successful conversion ‘where the original architecture retains all of its power’, said the judges.

Architecture Archive, Somerset
Hugh Strange Architects for private client
GIA 120m²

A working farm is not somewhere you’d expect to find a private architectural archive, especially one as well hidden as this, but here the architect affords the archive the luxury of gradually revealing itself to the observant viewer. What initially looks like a long low farm shed becomes on closer inspection two distinct objects – the new timber one encased chrysalis-like behind the stone.

Above the ground floor archive is the owner’s office and residence, the structure’s walls and roof formed of cross-laminated timber. This adds not just aesthetic homogeneity and warmth, but is an active part of a thermal mass strategy to meet domestic and archival storage needs. Some design decisions, it was noted, seemed almost counter intuitive, producing ‘a kind of indulgent garden shed, but an incredibly architectural and sophisticated one’ – a space of restrained indulgence.
**Royal William Yard Staircase, Plymouth**  
*Gillespie Yunnie Architects for Urban Splash*  
Contract £250,000. GIA 45m²

With conversion of the administrative and barracks blocks of the former naval base arguably going to be one of the best examples of its kind in the UK, proposals were invited to bring the 12m high retaining wall at the far end of Plymouth’s Royal William Yard into the fold.

Projecting from the top of the wall, the new staircase has a vertiginous upper landing of glass that separates the existing monumentality from the crisp, heavy steel lining of the staircase now connecting the park space above with the main development at shore level. This potential heaviness is counterpointed by the stair’s delicate return and projection from the massive stone to touch lightly down on the flagged floor.

The stair structure, of steel side girders, clad externally in dark blue-grey powder-coated panel is accentuated at night with constantly changing LED illumination, bringing added nocturnal magic to what the judges describe as: by day ‘matter of fact, muscular, yet poetic’.

**Porthmeor Artists Studios and Fishermen’s Cellars**  
*Long & Kentish Architects for Borlase Smart John Wells Trust*  
GIA 1,719m²

Refurbishing the old Cornish studios of the St Ives School, one of the UK’s most influential 20th century art movements, to improve their accessibility and thermal performance, the architect aimed as much as possible to retain the building’s existing state. This involved much painstaking removal, insulation and reinsertion, installing anew staircase and lift, and preserving the atmospheric fishermen’s cellars below. A new level of studios were added to keep rents affordable.

**Stonehenge Visitor Centre, Wiltshire**  
*Denton Corker Marshall LLP for English Heritage*  
Contract £6.9m. GIA 1,590m²

Denton Corker Marshall’s Stonehenge visitor centre is finally leaving its understated mark on the Wiltshire countryside. In a sense, its positioning was of more import than the building itself, particularly obscuring the parking from the World Heritage Site. The project is formed of two boxes nestled beneath a huge, slightly curved canopy roof with fritted edges, supported on a forest of thin steel columns.

The two boxes deal with the visitor needs of the centre – one clad in sweet chestnut contains the exhibition and toilets; the other is glazed and holds a café and shop. Dealing solely with user needs, there is a clarity to these spaces, as all other administrative functions are sited in a dedicated building by the coach park. Such bigger picture thinking drove the design, helping maintain the Stones’ eerie yet fragile sense of isolation.

**Officer’s Field, Dorset**  
*HTA Design LLP for ZeroC Holdings*  
GIA 9,333m²

Built by the developer responsible for Prince Charles’ divisive Poundbury scheme, these 58 houses, initially built to accommodate sailors in the 2012 Olympics, is a ‘remarkable achievement’, say the judges. With precious few outstanding developer-led housing schemes in the UK, this is one.

Homes at Officer’s Field mainly face west, and are mostly terraced, but through clever massing appear detached. They are simple forms with pitched roofs and rendered walls, with low Portland Stone walls delineating the space round each house. Together the massing and materials offer ‘a richness and a layering to the ensemble’.

Exploiting volume and natural light to create variation and internal drama, the scheme was rated by the judges as ‘right up there with Accordia’.
The Exchange, Cornwall
Burwell Deakins Architects for Combined Universities in Cornwall
Contract £6.6m. GIA 2,700m²

Sitting alongside a 'formidable' piece of brutalism, offset by lovely views to the Fal estuary, the Exchange, with its recessed glazed facade and oversailing timber roof soffit, presents a friendlier face to the town. It contains teaching, library, student services and social and study areas around an internal street – and extension of the existing library. Of seemingly prosaic formalism from the outside, the building’s internal workings prove more surprising — the ‘street’ is in fact a series of stair routes and landings allowing students to use the whole top-lit zone reading, writing, chatting and moving through the space. Glass-fronted lecture halls create an interplay between these closed spaces and the main study zones. Judges felt the internal complexity evoked the best principles of learning environments.

The Wilson, Cheltenham Gallery and Museum
Berman Guedes Stretton for Cheltenham Borough Council
Contract £4.5m. GIA 1,294m²

It took Jane Lillystone, Cheltenham’s museum and arts manager, years to gather funds to build this extension on an infill site, uniting two parts of the gallery and effectively creating a small, interlinked museum ‘complex’.

The building is planned with ‘striking clarity’. New galleries hover over a public ground floor reception space and a narrow atrium continuing an elegant suspended stair ‘that looks as good looking up at its underbelly as it does standing on it’. This simplicity of organisation is reflected on the front elevation, which is largely glazed, but screened with glazed tubular ceramic louvres. All in all, a top-class gallery ‘that makes the complicated look easy’, say the judges.

Westering, Devon
Annie Martin for James and Melissa Brooks Warner
Contract £450,000. GIA 210m²

Westering is a modest three-bedroom home in Dartmoor National Park, designed for a newly retired couple. The judges noted the simple legibility of its layout, with the lower ground floor sunk into the sloping site between local granite retaining walls, putting south-facing bedrooms beneath an oversailing cedar-clad upper level of living and dining spaces. The judges’ verdict: It is carried out with ‘an optimism and simplicity that marry with down-to-earth detailing, avoiding the vanity detailing of chic urban houses’. And it generates more energy than it uses too.
Gareth Davies, Cardiff: I have lived and worked in Wales most of my life and despite the many differences with England it has many of the same problems. Recession hit Wales hard with many casualties within the profession and it is only now starting to recover, mostly in the residential sector.

I represent a large practice here, but most are small one and two man bands that work in a different bit of the economy. Mine is driven by the public sector, OJEU’s, PQQ’s, ITT’s and frameworks. Theirs is more private sector, secured through word of mouth recommendation or just continuing to give clients a damn good service. If you are good at either then you will probably have generally succeeded during this recession.

Wales is a beautiful country with fantastic natural resources but a fragile economy. One of its problems is poor connectivity, with many areas still blighted by poor internet service. This restricts economic growth affects the work of rural practices.

Local authorities are now under severe pressure, with 2014 seeing the first full impact of public spending cuts which will continue for the next three years. The major impact will be on revenue funding and jobs, but it will also affect capital spend. Practices that have relied heavily on this will need to supplement it with private or overseas work.

My colleagues ‘across the water’ (Severn Estuary) often say to me it is much easier in Wales, because there is less competition and the procurement processes are simpler. To a degree that is true, but Wales has embraced frameworks and if you are not on any you will find it tough. That is why the division between small and large practices has grown, with smaller practices unable to fulfil the PQQ qualitative criteria.

Coming out of this recession, the way forward for all practices appears to be the private client; the trouble is that Wales hasn’t enough of them. We have the architects and the right skills to really make an impact.

Gareth Davies is UK business development director with Stride Treglown.

Copper Kingdom, Anglesey
Donald Insall Associates for Menter Mon
Contract £650,000. GIA 400m²

The Copper Kingdom explains Anglesey mining history. Copper ore was delivered by tram to copper bins and then loaded onto clippers. This scheme is based in the shell of an existing bin which has been extended with simple lime mortared stonework, a slate roof, a face of mixed of copper cladding and industrial scale doors of unfinished copper. The raw rock face inside the building creates a real connection to the material the industry was based on, a focus for the visitor experience and a hint of life underground. The centre is planned around timber versions of the copper bins which contain all vertical circulation and mechanical services.
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New Barn, Pantybara Farm, near Newcastle Emlyn  
Rural Office for Architecture for Rural Office for Architecture  
Contract £80,000. GIA 75m²

The design of this replacement barn in the architect’s farmstead is rigorous and disciplined. The structure of this modern interpretation is in engineered timber while externally the careful detailing ensures a restrained look in timber with a corrugated roof. An austere interior of concrete floor, exposed dry lining boards and plywood house gives the family a temporary home while work is carried out on their own house. A central core separates the two open ends of the barn with two Dutch-styled stoves to provide the heating.

Galilee Chapel, Vale of Glamorgan  
Davies Sutton Architects for PCC of Llantwit Major  
Contract £520,000. GIA 150m²

A new roof and a new life for the 400 year old ruined Galilee Chapel has created a dignified exhibition space for ancient Celtic stones. It also accommodates the everyday use of nearby church and community. Both conservation principles and innovation have been required. The ruined side walls have been framed in stone and glazed extensively, allowing natural light to flood in. Local stone, lime, natural slates, limewash, oak boarding and frameless glazing all give the Chapel a feeling of permanence and quality which allow it to sit well beside the existing church, without hiding its more contemporary detailing. ‘This was a confident solution to a difficult brief,’ said the judges.
Old Farm Mews, Dinas Powys
Hoole and Walmsley Architects for a private client
GIA 558m²

A clever three-dimensional jigsaw of spaces and levels achieves an impressive density for these homes, with surprisingly large rooms looking out over private space. The houses set up a rhythm for the new street frontage in stone, white render and dark zinc cladding. A privately funded urban solution with inventive spaces succeeds on a tight footprint in this Cardiff commuter village.

Stormy Castle, North Gower
Loy & Co Architects for a private client
GIA: 725m²

Built partially into the hillside on the Gower Peninsula for a local couple, this brave contemporary design is striking for the way quality light reaches deep into the interior. The palette of materials is kept to a minimum — polished concrete floors flowing throughout, shuttered concrete walls, crystalline white ceilings, full height glazing to maximise the views and Corten steel accents. The judges called it ‘a tour de force in terms of space, natural light, level changes and connection to the landscape’.
West Midlands

Dhiran Vagdia, Coventry: The Midlands has been busy building its way out of the recession. Birmingham Airport is expanding; the excellent motorway network is continually being improved. Works to the M1/M6 interchange at Junction 19 are under way. HS2 or no, this is still a very well connected area.

As an architectural practice based in Coventry and Warwickshire, we are seeing Midlands businesses actively dissolving East/West regional boundaries, aspiring to strike up collaborations irrespective of regional location.

Such collaborations and construction successes are routinely celebrated, through both commercial success and events such as the annual Midlands Business Awards and Celebrating Construction Awards, which brought together and recognised Midlands businesses as representative of wider, inclusive region.

Architecturally, the Midlands has its fair share of inward investment and excellent client vision; its architecture is recognised on a regional and national stage, if not international, with continued examples of excellence. The shortlisted RIBA Awards over the last few years are testament to this ambition.

Specifically Coventry, on our doorstep, is moving forward. Architecturally, it flies a high flag, the historic legacy of Sir Basil Spence, city architect Sir Donald Gibson and the first pedestrianised city centre in the country, and more recent fantastic projects in the city, university and beyond. European investment is improving our public realm and highways: the A45/A46 Tollbar Island works are under way, the game-changing office development at Friargate, and massive investment around the airport (Coventry Gateway) show commitment to the area.

The benefit to us as a practice? We can get to clients more quickly. We can service them and work with our partners more quickly. We can be competitive over a larger geographic area, and maintain a wide portfolio of projects. Our sphere of influence is growing.

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Dhiran Vagdia is director of Vagdia & Holmes

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The filigree on the elevations is the signature of this landmark new library, creating a strong sense of place and ever changing vistas from within. The library is a significant public investment, playing an important role in Birmingham’s Centenary Square. It has set a precedent for the scale of other buildings there, which helps to animate the place and set up a sense of enclosure. The building’s intriguing section connects the internal atrium to the square outside, creating a number of levels where users can enjoy the spaces. The journey through the building reveals itself through an interlocking atrium, connecting volumes and providing glimpses of natural light. From the ‘Harry Potter’ rotunda to the ‘Willy Wonka’ glass lift, the library is a journey of discovery and fun, for all ages and backgrounds. It is an impressive and bold addition to the city.
Centre of Refurbishment Excellence (CoRE), Stoke-on-Trent
Purcell for Stoke-on-Trent City Council
GIA: 1,697m²

Re-use of the iconic kiln structures as heat recovery ventilation units — and as meeting rooms — is a stroke of genius at the Centre of Refurbishment Excellence. And the spatial quality created around them for teaching, seminars and exhibitions is extraordinary.

As an exemplar sustainable project the centre also showcases the reinstatement of historical structures and demonstrates modern technologies that optimise energy performance. Re-used materials and the sourcing of similar products (local brickwork, timber sash windows and reclaimed Staffordshire blue tiles) were key to preserve the character of the old buildings, while new interventions are clearly expressed as modern components, both externally and internally. The industrial-chic approach is in keeping with the identity of these historical gems.
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**Stoke-on-Trent City Centre Bus Station**
Grimshaw (with SBS Architects) for Stoke-on-Trent City Council
GIA 1,925m²

A warm timber soffit welcomes passengers to Stoke Bus Station while the eloquently sweeping and rising roof structure leads pedestrians effortlessly towards the city centre. Part of the city’s wider regeneration plans, the bus station has transformed an important arrival gateway.

The steel-plate girders and blue Staffordshire bricks refer to the industrial past. The elevated concourse offers passengers distant views over the adjacent busy traffic island, creating a strong defensible presence.

Movement of buses and passengers are clearly separated. Transparency and continuity in materials makes the structure an integral part of the public realm, linking the arrival area to the emerging public square. The width of the concourse narrows as the footfall reduces towards the end stops, creating a tapering plan to the south.

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**New Teaching Block, Ashperton Primary Academy, Ledbury**
Warren Benbow Architects for The Governors of Ashperton Primary Academy
Contract £930,000. GIA 884m²

Timber and coloured chimneys. You might think you’ve seen it before but the connection to the existing school and the simplistic ‘linear’ organisation of the new extension at Ashperton School are well considered: covered, external spaces for virtually year-round use, extra spaces from the overhangs on the south elevation (also providing shading) and great views out north.

There is honesty in the construction and finishes here. The intelligent use of orientation, and simple passive venting of teaching spaces through the coloured chimneys, give the scheme a low-cost, long-term sustainable design and a distinct signature. It was all achieved against a challenging funding stream.

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**Waverley School, Birmingham**
AHMM for Lend Lease and Birmingham City Council
Contract £19.8m. GIA 13,275m²

The design for Birmingham’s first school to take children from primary years through to sixth form works with the sloping site to create a hierarchy of heights to the blocks. It introduces stepped landscape terraces and sets up a comfortable relationship with the suburban neighbours.

Dark, textured and well-ordered brick elevations inspired by Victorian railway arches have a confident civic language and provide an interesting canvas for school life – expressed by contrasting colours and deep external terraces. Working with designer Morag Myerscough to develop a strong identity for the school has made a vibrant and playful learning environment.
With a brief for a collegiate language, a well laid-out site plan integrates part of the existing building with new-build, helping to create a legible, inviting entrance sequence as well as freeing up more space for sport and play. The angled/kinked arrangement breaks up the long blocks and ‘hugs’ the open spaces surrounding the buildings. Crafted brickwork detailing with vertically proportioned openings and piers provide a strong language for the new build, breaking up the horizontal elevations. The bold, sculptured volume is carved out to provide useful covered external terraces. It also rakes to express the profile and volume of the academy’s theatre, a legible and confident marker for the main approach.

The Lighthouse, Aston, Birmingham
Associated Architects for Birmingham Youth Services
Contract £4m. GIA 1,930m²

Sitting on a hill, The Lighthouse is a clearly visible beacon of hope for surrounding communities that struggle with deprivation. Its cantilevered polycarbonate box hovers above a fully-glazed base spelling out the functions within: a sports hall and theatre stage above open-plan ground floor training and teaching spaces. The cantilever helps shade the transparent ground floor and frames panoramic views.

Internally, investment priorities were good lighting design and playful furniture and equipment, while the concrete structure has been exposed for thermal mass. Spatial planning for the public areas avoids corridors or dead spaces as well as offering good surveillance with minimal staff to help provide a safe, secure environment.

Parkside, Birmingham
Associated Architects for Birmingham City University
Contract £42.7m. GIA 18,500m²

Facing the city’s new park, this is the first significant building in the urban regeneration of Eastside, bringing the university and students into the city as part of a new city campus. It places teaching and creative courses under one roof, a purpose-made facility with central atrium and circulation to encourage cross-over of skills and ideas and showcase the range of disciplines. It is well executed. The prioritising of high-quality materials and detailing to the key circulation areas demonstrates a rational, considered approach to maximising the budget. A further collaboration with theatre and lighting design facilities and editing/digital arts helps to create a truly exceptional centre for inspiration to students across a wide range of disciplines. The home to Birmingham’s School of Architecture, it has a stimulating yet informal environment that encourages a studio-based approach offering formal and informal teaching spaces as well as workshops, seminar areas and cafés.
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Charlotte Harrison, York: Five years’ practising in Yorkshire has been beneficial both professionally and personally. Moving the office from Hackney to York puts us at the centre of a region famous for its National Parks, stalwart pride and sport (a clutch of Olympic medals and now the Tour de France).

It is a pleasure to work in such Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as the North Yorkshire Moors, east coast and the Wolds. And we are privileged to be working on York’s Scheduled Ancient Monuments – which might not have happened in Hackney!

The local architectural community has received us warmly, with the regional team providing an excellent hub that has successfully re-ignited several local branches, as well as making a vital contribution to the Love Architecture Festival.

Culturally there is plenty to stimulate the cosmopolitan appetite, for example Wakefield’s Hepworth gallery, Leeds’ Henry Moore Institute, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Thirsk’s Rural Arts programme and York’s medieval heritage.

Yorkshire delivers on variety, scale, contrast and richness. Architecturally it is beginning to benefit from regeneration projects: Sheffield and Wakefield are interesting examples, Bradford hasn’t quite happened yet and Hull is waiting in the wings.

Regarding the general appetite for contemporary design, London is still a universe ahead. There are flurries of activity which can excite, and the planners/English Heritage are supportive, which is welcome, but the wider client base is still to be convinced.

The flipside is that we exist in a less self-conscious and perhaps less aggressive business environment that is not concerned with being ‘on trend’. The pace may be slightly gentler, and that may attract a more mature architectural practitioner.

Charlotte Harrison is a partner at Mass Architecture, York
Manor Works, Sheffield
00/ for Manor Development Company
Contract £2.7m. GIA 1,600m²

Another fine mesh you’ve got us into. This is a community building with an industrial ambience, no jolly condescension and absolutely no ghastly murals. That’s because it has a serious purpose as a business incubator for the deprived Manor Estate and beyond — helping to bring forward a new breed of entrepreneurs through its offices, workshops, co-working space and meeting rooms. As with much of Sheffield, it is on a steep slope and makes the most of that in the way it distributes its spaces. Its concrete, blockwork and plywood finishes might seem Spartan in the photos, but in fact it has a warm, almost domestic character.

The high-security perforated metal skin has delicacy too and will act as a matrix for climbing plants. It uses cheap materials such as basic insulated panels and an up-and-over garage door that doubles as a security shutter and an entrance canopy. And here’s another thing: this is an example of what used to be known as ‘community architecture’ designed in collaboration with local residents. “Tough but tender” say the judges. Sheffield steel, anyone?

Underbank House, Holmfirth
Howard Evans of Prue Chiles
Architects for private client
GIA 29.5m²

Hurrah for the unconventional house extension. What could have been a standard glass and steel box with a green roof instead becomes a rocky outcrop here in ‘Last of the Summer Wine’ country. The impression is that it is carved out rather than built up, a cave filled with light. Seen from its parent 18th century cottage above, it becomes part of the garden terraces and drystone walls on this steeply sloping site. But the stone peels away on the south and west elevations, framing distant views. It is all about making a domestic retreat that keeps its counsel outside, its secrets revealed only to those invited in. All very Yorkshire, then.

Entrance building, Franklin College, Grimsby
Hodson Architects for Franklin College
Contract £800,000. GIA 424m²

If brick can be ethereal, this building does it, using the material with much delicacy. It’s a small gateway building working as a fragment of a masterplan, but the most important fragment: the way in to the school campus. The old device of a clocktower is revisited with verve and originality as an implied displaced panel of the trabeated facade. That in turn takes its cue from the existing solid 1950s brick buildings with their large Crittall windows. Behind, a generous ETFE-covered courtyard can accommodate exhibitions and college gatherings to parties simply and cheaply.

Sometimes such buildings seem strained or awkward. Not here, where the architectural assurance matches the warm relationship between architect and client.

Oakfield Special Educational Needs School, Hull
Wright and Wright Architects for Oakfield School
Contract £9.6m. GIA 4,760m²

No shapeism here: the architect keeps everything plain, simple and crisply rectilinear. It’s tough as it has to be, its users being around 90 primary and secondary boys with social, emotional and behavioural disorders, or SEBD. Large windows and generous courtyards provide high levels of daylight and corridors are wider than the norm, forming a loop with no potentially troublesome dead ends. The layout allows discreet surveillance but is dignified, calm, humane, tolerant. ‘It was a humbling experience to visit this incredible school, which has been designed with great care and consideration for its staff and pupils,’ the judges report.
Seizure Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park
Adam Khan Architects for Arts Council Collection
Contract £148,000. GIA 150m²

Think you know minimalism? You don’t until you’ve seen this ultra-reduced building. Never has Pevsner’s famous distinction between ‘architecture’ and ‘building’ been so firmly overturned. This crude shelter, made of uninsulated concrete planks and a beam-and-slab roof with a removable metal section, contains the remarkable work ‘Seizure’. Artist Roger Hiorns filled the interior of a condemned London council flat with copper sulphate solution, then drained it to reveal a magical blue crystalline transformation. Just a ‘building’? By no means. Pure architecture.

West offices – new HQ and customer centre for City of York Council
CSP Architects (Crease Strickland Parkins) for York Investors LLP
Contract £32m. GIA 14,603m²

As different as could be from nearby Doncaster’s civic offices, York had a similar brief for accommodation and services – only here the site was York’s original railway station, grade II* listed. Nestling beneath the grassy bank of the city’s medieval walls, the building has been stripped of its insensitive additions and given a new large-floorplate insertion and circulation cores – in the large open space once occupied by the railway concourse. A remaining section of the original station canopy, slid outside the footprint to make this possible, becomes a grand bicycle park. That released the original stone buildings with their cellular plan to be what they wanted to be – cellular. The new floor plates are connected to the existing building via ‘light touch’ bridge links. The result is ‘durable, efficient and delightful’ said the judges. Enlightened adaptation and re-use, we call it.

Scale Lane Bridge, Kingston upon Hull
McDowell+ Benedetti for HCA and Hull County Council
Contract £6.6m. GIA 275m²

It’s a first – a bridge that can open with people on it. Given the increasing number of pedestrian bridges which act as destinations in themselves, it was quite something to come up with a wholly original idea, as McDowell+ Benedetti manage in this international competition winner. This bridge rotates open across the little River Hull from a lane in the old town on the west bank to the land of new developments on the east. It is ‘a spectacle and fairground ride rolled into one, a pleasurable and memorable experience,’ say the judges. It includes a circular cafe and even has its own integrated light show and soundtrack when on the move.

Wakefield One
Cartwright Pickard Architects for Muse for English Cities Fund
Contract £15.25. GIA 14,063m²

It’s those terracotta baguettes again, sort of. And the proud civic crest. The second award-winning project in Yorkshire by Cartwright Pickard also won it the Regional Architect of the Year for the region. And it’s the third set of civic offices to feature this year. As the judges noted: ‘Wakefield is one of a number of councils leading the way in Yorkshire who have invested in a thoughtfully designed building that will serve them well for the next 50 years.’ Its BREEAM Excellent accreditation will cut the running costs of this modern civic palazzo, which also contains a public library, museum and café.
What do the awards tell us?

Public buildings stand out this year, but most encouraging is that the huge variety represented by the winners tells us British architecture is alive and kicking

Words: Hugh Pearman

Already our published crop of 119 RIBA awards from England, Wales and Northern Ireland contains intriguing possible contenders for the Stirling Prize. There will be a handful more to choose from – Scotland declared too late for this issue’s deadline. The national and EU awards are announced on June 19, then the Stirling Prize shortlist on July 17, and the Prize itself on October 16.

As ever, since the RIBA started giving awards for individual buildings in 1966, one must compare apples and pears. We don’t envy the judges the job of setting Adam Richards’ universally-praised little Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft (£1.1m, RIBAJ November 2013) against Caruso St John’s ingeniously historicist Tate Britain revamp (£23m, RIBAJ December 2013), say, or either of those against Renzo Piano’s Shard (several hundred million, RIBAJ September 2012). These have already got two stages further than Zaha Hadid’s Riverside Museum in Glasgow, which in 2012 didn’t even make the Scottish shortlist. No such rude treatment for double Stirling winner Zaha this time round: her fine Aquatics Centre in London’s Olympic Park has emerged sleekly from its 2012 chrysalis to pick up a regional award.

In the less formal early years of the Stirling Prize, contenders could be summoned to the shortlist despite a thumbs-down from the judges of earlier heats – the separate Stirling jury could overrule them. Today, that isn’t allowed. However, the awards structure is still not quite pyramidal because of the separate and ever-controversial EU entry – in theory the entire Stirling shortlist could consist of buildings outside the UK. It is harder than it used to be for non-UK architects building in Europe to get on that shortlist, but not impossible: they have to be RIBA chartered architects, as the two shortlisted Danish practices this year are. The EU shortlist of 11 is stuffed with former Stirling winners (Hadid, Foster, Wilkinson Eyre, Chipperfield, Rogers Stirk Harbour) as well as Hall McKnight, Maccreanor Lavington and Peter Cook’s CRAB Studio. Then come the Danes - Bjarke Ingels’ BIG and 3XN. Which will make it through?

But to return to the examples here, it is hardly surprising that many of the strongest candidates have already featured in RIBAJ and other media, whether that be Ditchling (maximum architecture on a minimum budget) the folded brick facades of O’Donnell + Tuomey’s masterful Saw Swee Hock Student Centre at the London School of Economics, the grand civic statement of Mecanoo’s Library of Birmingham, the sense of thespian history in Haworth Tompkins’ first all-new theatre, the Liverpool Everyman, or the mix of careful conservation and exuberant structure at the remade King’s Cross Station in London by John McAslan and Partners.

There is also Hopkins’ most powerful building since the Velodrome, the Brent Civic Centre. This reflects a strong strand in the regional awards, with such new civic centres of equal ambition to be found in Doncaster and Wakefield (both by Cartwright Pickard) York (by CSP Architects) Rochdale (FaulknerBrowns) and Trafford (5plus Architects). Hopkins return to the fray with its carefully-considered St George’s Chapel in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk – these days a theatre, with a new café building, and as importantly including the creation of a new pedestrian square in the old town there. Over in Chel-
Clockwise from top left: Entrance building, Franklin College, Grimsby, by Hodson Architects; Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft by Adam Richards Architects; LSE Saw Swee Hock Student Centre by O’Donnell + Tuomey Architects; Hadlow Tower by Thomas Ford and Partners.
It’s a year when size and scale seem to matter less than usual. There are some very large projects and some excellent and unusual small works.
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Patricia Brown, deputy chair of the Mayor of London’s Design Advisory Group, settles into another seat – as chair of this year’s London Festival of Architecture.

So how has your experience been so far being new chair of the LFA?

Patricia Brown

It’s been fine. I’ve been working on the funding challenges for the event, which has always run on a shoestring. My job is to grow the stature and reach of the event to try and generate funding. We want to make this year’s festival as exciting for the public as we can – there’s loads of events they can engage with, articulate and use to question what London is about. Architects sit at the nexus of the built environment – and I’m hoping I can tap into that to diversify the funding base.

What’s with this year’s theme, CAPITAL?

Patricia Brown

The term was coined by Martin Colthorpe who was brought in to develop the ideas for the festival. I found the theme really exciting, as the word has so many connotations; cultural capital; a financial capital, the digital capital of Europe... it all resonated with me.

Could the LFA could emulate the success of the London Design Festival or do you think people relate more to products than architecture?

Patricia Brown

I’ve got huge respect for the organisers of the London Design Festival who pitch it perfectly between a design and a commercial event. Part of that was done by promoting it in the public realm. dRMM’s expanding stair was theirs, but it was an architectural object. Part of their success was crossing into the commercial realm. But events like London Open House where the public will queue around the block to get into a building give me hope that LFA can be far more than we think.

You mention the public realm: having imported the idea of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to the UK from the US, what’s your idea of ‘public realm’?

Patricia Brown

With less and less money to maintain our public spaces, the BID principle enables businesses to make financial and intellectual contributions to the public realm. Initially we won £5m of government funding to initiate private sector investment in central London. There are very few real public spaces here; London has always been a commercial city defined by the great estates – The Crown, Grosvenor and Bedford. People want nice, clean, safe places, and aren’t bothered who pays for it. Our role is to ensure that spaces created through BIDs are assets for the millions who use them every day.

So what are you looking forward to most from this year’s LFA?

Patricia Brown

I’m looking forward to the discussions arising from the housing and tall buildings debates, the Siobhan Davies dance events, and a front row seat at the Royal Academy for the LEGO battle. I’m hoping to have the stamina for the V&A Lates. I love the way this festival goes from highly playful to the deeply serious, shining the spotlight on what an incredible place we live in. It has its problems, but as a city, it has good bone structure.
Secure by design

Sustainability goes beyond energy efficiency. One London borough has come up with a funding initiative – and the architect a robust design – that omits any hostages to fortune

Photographs: Tim Crocker

Stephen Cousins

At a time when local authorities across the UK are struggling to find the money to build new affordable homes and reduce their expanding waiting lists, the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham is showing how it can be done without any grant funding or cross-subsidy from market housing.

The council has two schemes on site, designed to deliver a total of 477 affordable and social housing units for its most hard-up residents. Close to Barking town centre, William Street Quarter, designed by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM), will provide 201 dwellings spread across three large concrete apartment blocks and several rows of pre-fabricated terraced housing. The eastern end of Thames View Estate, designed by Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE) and located at the gateway to Barking Riverside, will provide 276 homes, comprising 151 family homes, 35 duplex flats and 90 one and two-bed flats, built in traditional brick and block.

Both projects are being developed by Explore Investments, a Laing O’Rourke company, for a total cost of £75m, split roughly equally between the two. Together they are the first social housing in the UK to be funded entirely by private investment.

William Street Quarter is being built by Laing O’Rourke’s contracting arm using primarily off-site manufacturing techniques, while Jerram Falkus Construction is building Thames View’s five town house-style blocks in traditional brick and block.

‘We were looking visually to do something good, ordinary and recognisable as a home,’ says Andrew Beharrell, executive director at PTE. ‘What particularly excited us was chance to build an entire neighbourhood of houses with gardens and apartments, many of them garden maisonettes. Since mid-90s, rising property values in inner London – and therefore the density and height of development – means we very seldom get to build family neighbourhoods like this.’

Long gestation

Plans to transform the two sites date back several years. They were originally conceived in 2007 as a pilot project under the Labour government’s Local Housing Companies (LHC) initiative, set up to help councils meet their housing targets. This would have seen Barking & Dagenham put in the land for free, matched by equal investment from a private developer to build the homes. The sites were previously occupied by notorious high-rise housing estates, built in the 1950s, which were demolished and cleared in 2007.

A masterplan and detailed first phase were developed for William Street Quarter, but the LHC pilot projects were disbanded soon after due to funding complications, and the council could only together scrape enough money – from the Homes and Communities Agency – to build 31 terraced homes there. They were completed in 2011.

‘We were left scratching our heads as to how to fund the remaining properties,’ says Jeremy Grint, head of regeneration at...
The general scale is low with brick detailing crisp and balconies and garages bringing a splash of colour to the development.
By demonstrating the credit quality of the borough, and putting together a detailed structure, we secured investment a lot more cheaply than normal bank finance.

Barking & Dagenham Council: ‘The land at Thames View wasn’t worth anything, and the land at Williams Street Quarter wasn’t worth as much as it had been four years earlier, due to the onset of the recession. What’s more the private sector was showing little to no interest in housing development.’

With scant sign of a solution, the council called on Explore Investments to find an alternative vehicle to develop the sites. Explore was already a partner in the borough’s Local Education Partnership, Thames Partnership for Learning, which was set up to deliver new BSF schools, but the LEP’s wide remit also made it suitable to deliver regeneration projects and housing.

Institutional investors
‘The two sites were not viable for development or sale, so we looked at other approaches. It was clear there was strong demand for affordable housing in the area, with many thousands of tenants on the council’s waiting list and a significant under-supply of affordable homes,’ says Andrew Shepherd, at Explore Investments. ‘We developed a model based on the idea of seeking funding from institutional investors, including large pension funds who had money but were perhaps nervous of banks or other forms of investment. By demonstrating the credit quality of the borough, and putting together a detailed structure, we secured investment a lot more cheaply than normal bank finance, allowing us to unlock the sites and begin development.’

The funding package is being pulled together by asset management firm Long Harbour, which agreed to provide the money on the basis that Barking & Dagenham council will manage and rent the properties and pay it an annual sum equivalent to the total cost of raising and borrowing the money, over a 60-year lease. At the end of the lease, when the development costs have been repaid, full ownership of the properties will be transferred back to the council. The authority has also set up a separate company, Barking & Dagenham Reside, to manage rentals and maintain the buildings. Around three quarters of the properties across both schemes will be let out at 80% of market rent, the rest will be a mixture of homes for people in employment at 60-65% of market rent and homes for social housing at 50% of market rent.

‘Of every £100 in rent collected by the council, between £50 and £70 will go to Long Harbour, with a significant proportion held by Reside to cover management, maintenance, and lifecycle costs,’ says Shepherd. ‘The properties are entirely self financing using the rent, and a major condition of investment was that they remain quality assets that are properly maintained and managed to a good standard throughout.’

Meanwhile, using the LEP as a vehicle for procurement removed the need to go through the lengthy OJEU pre-qualification process. As a result financial close on the schemes was reached in just 11 months.

As a model for affordable housing delivery, this arrangement is not without risk. Significantly, it is difficult for the council to guarantee that it can rent all the properties for the next six decades or at high enough rents to keep up repayments.

‘It is certainly sustainable in the short to medium term, but rents fluctuate in relation to inflation, which makes it difficult to predict what might happen in the housing market over 50 to 60 years,’ says Grint. ‘However, the properties are in very accessible locations, they are built to a high standard with high energy efficiency designed to reduce tenants’ bills, and they are all being let below market rent, which together should increase the likelihood we can rent them out in future.’

The council also has some flexibility to increase the provision of affordable housing and reduce the social housing within the developments to increase rental income if required, although that isn’t yet the plan.

Despite some uncertainties, the private investment model could provide a sustainable solution for other councils, provided they are in the right area, says Grint: ‘Although the high land values in inner London would make this type of thing close to impossible, there may be other outer London boroughs with lower land values and property prices where it could work, Bexley being one example,’ he concludes.
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BIM has finally become established. Could architects take stewardship of the tool?

Adrian Malleson

For the last four years, NBS has been running the UK National BIM survey. The findings have mapped the rise of Building Information Modelling from a niche activity by a handful of practices to a widespread technique for design and delivery. Headline figures from this year suggest that awareness of the tool is now near universal and that, for the first time, it has been used on at least one project by a majority (54%) of those in the design team.

A range of professions completed the survey, but what do architects think?

In the UK BIM has an importance beyond its intrinsic value. In 2016, the government will mandate its use on publicly-funded work. So practices have two years to get ‘BIM ready’ if they are to win these commissions. As we would expect, most architects now use BIM.

The survey gives credence to the government strategy. With 50% of architects thinking ‘The government is on the right track’, they expect BIM use to become near universal: 82% expect to be using it in one year’s time, and over 90% within three. But what is the BIM that people expect to adopt?

BIM maturity is described by its different levels – from 0, the use of CAD, to 3, integrated and interoperable information provision. The government is mandating level 2 for 2016. Three-quarters of architects are aware of these levels with 59% having reached the required government standard.

As BIM maturity grows, and brings with it greater collaboration among and beyond the design team, so too does the need for standardised ways of sharing information.

Industry Foundation Classes (IFC) is a platform-neutral, open file format, that allows models to be shared among the design team, irrespective of software choices. IFC is used by 47% of the architects surveyed, so nearly a half use a data structure that is, in principle, software agnostic.

For the first time, BIM has been used on at least one project by a majority of those in the design team.
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Construction Operations Building Information Exchange (COBie) allows the design team to use BIM to embed and deliver the information that supports the use and maintenance of a building. Given the emphasis on soft landings, it is perhaps here as much as anywhere that cost savings for the client can be realised. But it’s also here that most work needs to be done, with only 16% of architects providing information in this way. Whether that’s because so few want to produce COBie drops, or because there are so few clients demanding it, the data doesn’t tell us.

The survey also looked architects’ attitudes towards BIM. Comparing the views of those who have adopted it with those who haven’t, we are able to see how expectation compares to experience. Just 6% of architects who have adopted the tool wish they hadn’t. But of those who haven’t nearly a third say they’d rather not.

There is a need for dispassionate expertise about the tool. Across all disciplines, only a quarter told us that they ‘trust what I hear’ and nearly three-quarters agree that ‘The industry is not clear enough on what BIM is yet’. Are architects its experts? Well, we asked people how confident they were in their knowledge and skills in the subject. Across the professions, 46% were confident, and for architects this rises to 50%. Other professions are slightly ahead, notably structural engineers and architectural technologists. Only a third of contractors were. This may offer architects an opportunity to become the trusted source for BIM knowledge.

There are design advantages for practices who have adopted the tool with a majority saying it improves visualisation, information retrieval and delivery time. It looks to make good business sense too, despite the high outlay for tools and training. Most think the tool brings cost efficiencies and 48% that it increases profitability (37% were neutral, 31% disagreed). Most strikingly, 71% felt it gave their practice a competitive advantage.

Those who have adopted BIM are more likely to be positive about it than those who haven’t. More than two-thirds say they have adopted BIM successfully. Experience better expectation. BIM adoption may be less onerous, and more beneficial, than it looks.

The full report is available at NBS.com

Adrian Malleson is head of research, analysis and forecasting at NBS
Welcome to our new Steel Intelligence supplement, published in association with Tata Steel and the British Constructional Steelwork Association. These pages will showcase the latest design solutions for steel framed buildings, such as FaulknerBrowns’ Derby Arena and Monument Place, David Walker Architects’ new office on a tricky City of London site. It will give valuable insights into technical aspects of designing with steel, kicking off with thermal mass in lightweight buildings. As well as looking at the latest projects, we will celebrate the best from the past, with structural engineer Jane Wernick choosing Stansted Airport as her most inspirational steel structure.

Pamela Buxton, supplement editor
London may have its Pringle, but Derby will soon have not just a velodrome but a multi-sports centre covered in gold, silver and bronze metal shingles that incorporates a cycling track among its many sports and uses.

Designed by FaulknerBrowns, the 14,500m² arena is nearing completion at Pride Park on a former car park close to the city’s football stadium. The arena grew out of Derby City Council’s leisure strategy for two major new dry and wet sports centres. After advising on the strategy, FaulknerBrowns was part of the Mace-led team that won an OJEU competition for the dry sports part of the scheme, and was later novated to contractor Bowmer and Kirkland. As the project developed, so did City Council ambitions, leading to the inclusion of a velodrome and scope to host entertainment and conferences, all within the same £26m budget.

With such a complexity of sports and functions, flexibility and cost-effectiveness were essential. Another factor was the site’s landfill past, which meant piled foundations and a relatively lightweight structure were required.

Engineer Arup says a steel frame was the only option to deliver all this with the 85m-wide roof spans needed to create the column-free arena. The 1300t steel structure, delivered by Barnsley-based Billington Structures, is configured using a perimeter column grid of 6.5m, each picking up the huge trusses that support the roof.

‘The aim was to design it as efficiently and rigorously as possible, delivering maximum functionality and operational flexibility. Architecturally, it needed to co-ordinate with the sports overlay so there was no need for additional structure for netting and lighting,’ says FaulknerBrowns director Nigel Tye.

The design team was faced with an extremely tight site sandwiched between two boundary fences and with a car parking requirement for match-day access for the football stadium. As a result, the only set-down area for construction materials was

A greater game

Widening ambitions for Derby’s new multi-sports centre created a complex set of demands. A lightweight steel frame was the answer

Words Pamela Buxton
the centre of the arena itself.

‘The key constraint was the tightness of the site with boundary fences on two sides of the arena. So we had to rotate the track by 45 degrees to make it fit, and configure the other accommodation below and around it,’ says Tye.

Unusually, it was decided to lift the 250m cycling track to first floor level to give easy access to the infield, which is the size of 12 badminton courts. Main auditorium seating is to the south, opposite the entrance, with sightlines designed to give good views of the infield courts as well as the cycling.

‘There is completely unimpeded access to the central area – you can even drive vehicles in, which opens up a wealth of opportunities for using the central space,’ says Tye.

The concourse follows the contours of the cycling track to curve up at the north end to meet the hospitality area, where there is additional balcony seating over the arena. In total, the arena can seat 5,000 including 3,500 in temporary infield seating.

Externally, the architect began with a square form, then rounded the corners and pared it back further to reconcile the balance between accommodation and budget. This was then ‘peeled’ up by 4m at front and back to mark the entrance and service point. At the front this creates an imposing entrance, with fitness facilities, hospitality and plant room stacked above. After first considering a cantilever, the engineer came up with columns in ‘V’ pairs to provide structural support and visual interest.

As well as the roof, the perimeter column grid supports the auditorium seating and the track. Columns are 400mm in diameter and spliced at second floor level, giving two 11m stretches. All connections are bolted via short stub plates, pre-welded to take the beams.

Seating is supported off the main columns via steel raker beams that follow the line of the terracing. These support precast concrete terrace units.

One of the main challenges on the project was avoiding the timber structure of the cycling track, which was installed by a
velodrome specialist. Below the track, the arena floor – in-situ concrete on a steel deck – supports the 4m wide cantilevered run-off inside the cycling track. Another issue was the dynamics – it was essential, for example, that activity in the fitness suites didn’t transfer through the structure to other areas. Arup ran dynamic analysis modelling tests during design development to establish that the proposed stiffness of beams was sufficient.

A distinctive slash of windows over the entrance emphasises the point of arrival with further slashes at the end of the track. Long aluminium lapped shingles are intended to give an impression of movement, as well as suggesting the cycling track itself.

A secondary steel frame creates the cladding substructure. Anodised metal shingles were fixed to plywood that was attached to curved hot rolled purlins, in turn fixed to the columns.

Tye points out that the arena has been delivered for a fraction of the cost of the Olympic velodrome while providing a wider variety of uses and potential for community participation. ‘We’re on a journey to deliver as much for their money as possible,’ he says.

The arena is being fitted out and is due to open at the start of next year.

See the video case study online at: www.steelconstruction.info/Video_case_studies

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**ROOF TRUSSES**

Twelve huge roof trusses (above) up to 85m long enabled the design team to achieve the column-free interior essential for sports arena use. The combination of the trusses’ size and their position 22m above the ground created a considerable challenge, according to Billington senior design engineer John Camm, who says the 5m truss depth was at the upper limit of what could be transported on a trailer without a police escort. The trusses have diagonal members at angles of 30-45º between the 305mm open section parallel chords. Each truss weighs 34 tonnes and was formed from four sections, bolt-spliced on site. During erection, the middle two sections were bolted together and lifted into position before being joined by the two end pieces. Hot rolled steel purlins link the trusses at 6m spacings, topped with the profiled roof deck, which naturally adapts to the gentle curve of the roof.

Trusses are deliberately aligned with the three 6.5m wide sports courts to accommodate netting and lighting for each space and so avoid additional secondary members. They also incorporate access walkways.

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**V-COLUMNS**

According to Billington, the eight pairs of feature ground floor columns (above) at the arena entrance were the most challenging part of the structure. Each pair of V-shaped columns, made from 457mm circular hollow sections, required very careful support before being anchored into the floor slab. The columns support the structure from first floor upwards and help provide a focal point for the entrance.

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**Credits**

Client Derby City Council
Project manager MACE
Architect FaulknerBrowns
Engineer Arup (Structural, Civil, Services, Fire, Acoustic)
Contractor Bowmer and Kirkland
Steelwork contractor Billington Structures
Frame choice
Thermal mass is a controversial and complex subject that often leads to argument over the merits of lightweight vs heavyweight frame construction. However, effective thermal mass solutions can be achieved with any well-designed structural solution as part of an Integrated Fabric Energy Storage (FES) solution, and all steel framed buildings incorporate the optimum 100mm concrete needed for this in their floor slabs. In multi-storey buildings, the upper floors provide the most thermal mass potential.

Three common floor forms can be used to achieve this in steel framed buildings: precast concrete units, composite slabs and shallow floors. Solid or hollow core precast units can be supported on the top flanges of beams or on the bottom flanges of Asymmetric Slimflor Beams (ASBs). Composite slabs comprise reinforced concrete cast on profiled steel decking and are usually supported on the top flange of downstand beams. Shallow floor systems such as Slimdek comprise composite ASBs supporting deep profiled metal decking.

Thickness
Thermal mass works by using the ability of materials within the fabric of a building to absorb, store and release heat energy and in doing so reduce variation in internal temperature. This helps maintain thermal comfort and prevent daytime overheating by absorbing heat from solar gains, human activity and electrical equipment. Heat stored during the day is purged overnight by using either natural ventilation and/or mechanical means so that the building is then able to repeat the process the next day.

There is general consensus among the BRE, Concrete Centre and CIBSE that when considering a diurnal 24-hour cycle in a UK-type climate, a thickness of 75mm-100mm of concrete in the floor slab is optimal since heat energy cannot easily be extracted from anything any deeper than that. There is therefore nothing to be gained in thermal mass performance by a greater thickness of slab. Anything greater than the optimal level is potentially wasteful and raises extra cost and embodied carbon issues.

Three ways to the ultimate thermal mass:
From top, precast concrete units, composite slabs, shallow floors.
Exposure
One of the biggest misconceptions about thermal mass is that having sufficient mass is enough in itself. What really counts is not just that the optimum level of thermal mass is present, but that it is exposed so the heat energy can get in and out. This means that it remains accessible and is not masked or isolated by raised floors, suspended ceilings, carpets or, in the case of walls, dry lining. However, accessibility can bring acoustic, aesthetic and cost considerations to achieve a pleasing finish to a floor slab. Exposed soffits aren’t appropriate for every situation but there is a greater acceptance of them in, for example, more informal office environments. There is also scope for the use of permeable suspended ceilings that still allow a large proportion of the heat to be absorbed by the floor slab.

Integration
Thermal mass is not an isolated design concern but should be considered as part of an integrated, holistic solution — simply exposing the upper floor soffits is not enough. Building orientation, fenestration, shading and servicing should be considered to achieve a natural ventilation strategy. Generally it is easier to ventilate naturally in a rural or suburban environment. It is also much easier to do so in buildings with intermittent occupancy like offices and schools than in hotels and restaurants that don’t allow for the night time cooling phase.

Building location and type
Location is an important factor — thermal mass with passive FES is not always appropriate in city centres where air quality, external noise and security may preclude a natural ventilation strategy. Generally it is easier to ventilate naturally in a rural or suburban environment. There is also scope for the use of permeable suspended ceilings that still allow a large proportion of the heat to be absorbed by the floor slab.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?
Engineering experts discuss the issues they encounter when incorporating thermal mass in steel buildings.

Fergal Kelly, director of structures, development consultancy Peter Brett Associates
There isn’t much formal education on thermal mass at degree level — it’s something you pick up from industry literature — and the general misconception among clients, architects and even M&E engineers is that concrete buildings have inherent thermal mass, and steel buildings don’t. Steel construction can achieve the same performance — although an expanse of exposed composite decking isn’t always what people want to see. A good compromise is a precast concrete slab with a flush soffit within a steel frame. Systems that use water pipes embedded within a concrete slab seem encouraging from the steel frame point of view since this gets around the potentially difficult issue of exposed soffits.

Angus Palmer, technical director, Buro Happold
People have got the message now that thermal mass doesn’t need 400mm of concrete. As a structural engineer I have no problem mixing steel and concrete. Using concrete planks on a steel frame is a good solution — you get the best of both worlds. One of the biggest challenges is the aesthetics of exposed ceilings. You have to manage expectations so that everyone understands what they’re getting and careful attention to detail is needed as everything remains visible.

Edward Murphy, technical director, Mott MacDonald
There is a lot of interest in using thermal mass to meet the new CIBSE TM52 and Education Funding Agency guidance on thermal comfort limits in schools. Contractors with lightweight standardised solutions are asking how they can add mass to steel framed structures, perhaps not realising there is already enough mass in the concrete floor slabs. What’s important is a good connection between the room air and the available concrete, so we maximise the amount of cooling from the available soffit area.

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Michael Sansom is associate director of the Steel Construction Institute and lead author of the publication Steel Construction: Thermal Mass which can be downloaded from www.steelconstruction.info/Steel_construction_news
Any redevelopment in the City of London risks opening a Pandora’s Box of archaeology, none more so than at Monument Place, a location steeped in history. Close to the site of the Roman bridge over the Thames, not only was the spot likely to be rich in Roman remains, but it is also bounded by Pudding Lane, starting point of the 1666 Great Fire of London that the Monument commemorates.

This important historical context was a major influence on the unusual path to redevelopment of Centurion House and its £22m rebirth as Monument Place. David Walker Architects was approached by developer Rockspring as part of a developer competition to come up with a refurbishment and extension of the 1980s building, which provided 61,000sq ft of offices but failed to maximise the potential of the site, suffering from inadequate energy performance, layout and cladding.

Initially, to avoid lengthy archaeological investigations at this sensitive site, they chose refurbishment rather than redevelopment. But as the design developed, it became apparent that to expand the building and improve the efficiency of its floor plates—which had three separate cores and escape stairs—would be...
extremely complex without achieving all that a new build could.

‘By the time we rationalised the plan into a single core (with a single stair), rearranged the bulk and massing, and replaced the cladding, there was very little of the existing structural frame left,’ says Walker.

Instead, the design team eventually proposed demolition and redevelopment to increase the accommodation while using the existing foundations. This called for a careful design of the new steel structure – provided by Severfield-Watson Structures – so as not to overload the piles. Some archaeological digging was inevitable with the relocation of the core – revealing a remarkably well preserved stretch of 2000 year old timber wharf piling and a small bath house – but retaining the foundation raft and pile caps meant that the extent of this was greatly limited. ‘New build construction was pretty much cost neutral [compared with refurbishment] but qualitatively it was much better,’ says Walker.

As a result, there was a net gain of 30% additional area despite a gross increase of only 15%. The building height was extended from 9 to 10 storeys, but the extra space was primarily due to the inclusion of a single stair rather than three as part of a fire engineered solution – thought to be the first time this had been done in a City office. By positioning the stair core in the middle of the plan, the design team could demonstrate – with the aid of evacuation models – that it did not exceed 18m evacuation distances, avoiding the need for a second core. This translated directly into savings, estimates Walker, of around £5m in terms of additional usable office space.

The key to the success of the structure, says WSP associate director Aret Garip, was locating the building’s original construction calculations and verifying the loads. They could then establish that the existing piles would support the new building, which was of lighter construction than the original but one storey higher. The new building follows the same basic footprint with a column every 3m, but with a relocated single core.

‘We worked with the existing site constraints and turned them into a positive outcome for the project,’ says Garip. ‘The 3m column grid maintained the existing load paths and also suited DWA’s facade. We achieved stiffer floors and incorporated shallow beams around the perimeter.’

But whereas its predecessor had floor plates with 10 scattered columns, at Monument Place, WSP could limit the columns within the plan to two by using 15.5m span 525mm beams, picked up by columns every 3m along the perimeter. The only variance from the original perimeter grid pattern was along Upper Thames Street.

To achieve the extra storey within the massing suggested by the refurbishment
Three-Metre Grid

Universal Columns measuring 305mm by 305mm are arranged every 3m to align with the existing foundation pads (above). These are linked by 250mm deep, 3m long perimeter beams. Within the plan, floor plates are spanned by a combination of 15.5m rolled beam and fabricated steel I-sections measuring 530mm deep and 250mm wide. In response to the tight floor to floor heights, the engineers used a metal deck with a very shallow profile of 46mm compared with the more usual 50mm.

Option, the architect had to work with tight floor to floor heights of 3.5m, giving eventual floor to ceiling heights of 2.6m.

Walker repositioned the entrance from Lower Thames Street to Monument Street, designing it as a colonnaded loggia which incorporates the re-routed High Walk. This walkway previously proceeded along the Upper Thames Street facade of Centurion House, blocking out views from the office inside. Unable to remove it entirely, it was instead re-routed along the Pudding Lane facade. On Monument Street, the building is chamfered and rises to 10 storeys, but on Lower Thames Street it steps down to seven, with landscaped roof terraces at fifth and sixth floor level and continuous glazing between horizontal bands of stone.

The resulting stone facade delivers the transformation of the site that the developer was after. On the Monument Street facade David Walker was keen to combine generous 2.6m by 2.2m floor to ceiling glazing with stone cladding to give the building a solid character suitable for the City of London context rather than a more ethereal one of glass. Here, a stainless steel frame gives the windows more emphasis and sparkle – part of Walker’s interest in achieving texture and specificity within a facade without ornament.

Portland was chosen for its texture, using a total of 2,500m² shell-rich Roach Portland on the lower levels and the clearer Basebed Portland above. The stone acts as a rain screen and is mechanically attached to continuous rails fixed to the unitised aluminium frame. It is left open-jointed to ventilate the cavity and to emphasise each stone element while being clearly legible as hung rather than load bearing. ‘It’s a City material. This building is very London,’ says Walker.

In total, the project increased net lettable area by a third to 75,000sq ft and achieved a BREEAM ‘Excellent’ rating.

Above The entrance loggia is clad in shell-rich Portland stone and incorporates access to the re-routed High Walk.
I could equally have chosen the beautiful and amazing engineering achievement of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, or Peter Rice’s station roof at Lille TGV with its ingenious arches and cable truss-supported roof. But in fact Stansted Airport is for me one of the most inspirational steel structures.

The clear organisational structure of the airport itself is both enabled and enhanced by the expressed, prestressed, steel towers which support the uncluttered roof, 12m above the concourse. They are on a 36m grid, with branches that splay out to support the roof on an 18m grid.

We [at Arup] had the – now rare – luxury to spend 18 months refining the design of the towers. Normally, we design a building to tight deflection limits so as to make sure the finishes don’t crack, but at Stansted, the towers are actually allowed to sway quite a bit – up to 100mm. Rather than put in more steel to stiffen them, we agreed that so long as the structure was strong enough, and wouldn’t buckle, we would work with Foster’s team to develop details for the perimeter glass walls that could accommodate the movement.

As a result, the towers are light and elegant and the high, undulating roof gives a great feeling of light and space.
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Who carries the can?

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Doug Wass

A defect in a construction project can often be the result of breaches of contract by a number of different parties. In those circumstances, it is usually open to the client to recover all of its losses from one party even though more than one party has caused them.

For example, if the defect is the result of poor workmanship by the contractor and a failure of the architect to notice it during an inspection, the client is entitled to recover all its losses from the architect.

Liability limit

To limit its liability, the architect can claim a contribution from the contractor to the sum it is ordered to pay to the client under the Civil Liability (Contribution) Act 1978. This would result in the court ordering the contractor to pay a contribution which it considered ‘just and equitable’, taking into account the extent of the contractor’s responsibility for the client’s losses. A substantial contribution would usually be appropriate where the contractor carried out defective work and the architect’s only breach of contract has been a failure to notice it.

However, the ability to make a claim for a contribution from the contractor is no help if it is not in a financial position to pay it. The architect is then left having to compensate the client much more than might be considered a fair reflection of the extent to which the architect is responsible for the client’s losses. This can lead to substantial increases in architects’ insurance premiums.

To avoid these problems, architects often try to include a net contribution clause in their appointments. This seeks to limit the architect’s liability to the client to the amount that it would be fair and reasonable for the architect to pay taking into account the extent of its responsibility and the responsibility of other parties for the client’s losses. However, it has been unclear whether or not such clauses are enforceable.

Is it fair?

In the case of West & Another v Ian Finlay & Associates, it was argued that a net contribution clause in an architect’s appointment was unenforceable because it was unfair under the terms of both the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 and the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999.

The Court of Appeal decided the clause was not unfair under the terms of the Act, first because it was prominently located in the appointment and so the client ought reasonably to have known about it, and secondly because the parties were in a relatively equal bargaining position, so the client could have sought to renegotiate the clause or appoint another architect.

The Court dismissed the argument that the clause was unfair because it did not cause a significant imbalance between the parties’ rights under the appointment, contrary to the requirement of good faith.

As a result the Court enforced the net contribution clause. However, it indicated that, before entering into the appointment, the architect should make it clear to the client that the clause would leave the client rather than the architect exposed to irrecoverable losses if a contractor or consultant who is jointly responsible with the architect for losses to the client becomes insolvent.

Many clients are not prepared to accept net contribution clauses in appointments, but architects should seek to include them if possible. To limit the chances of the court refusing to enforce a net contribution clause, the architect should write to the client before entering into an appointment, specifically drawing its attention to the clause and briefly explaining its potential impact.

Douglas Wass is with Macfarlanes LLP

The ability to make a claim for a contribution from the contractor is no help if it is not in a financial position to pay it.

QUASI-CONTRACT

A quasi-contract is a concept invented by the courts to enable them to order one party to pay for work carried out by another in circumstances where they have not reached agreement as to the terms of a contract governing their relationship. For example, construction work is often carried out by a contractor at the request of a client while the parties are still negotiating the terms of the building contract which is intended will apply to the work. If the parties are unable to agree the terms of the building contract, the contractor may be left with no formal contract on which to base a claim against the client for payment for work it has carried out. To avoid an unjust situation where the client can take the benefit of the work without having to pay for it, the courts can decide that the conduct of the parties gave rise to a quasi-contract, pursuant to which the contractor is entitled to be paid a reasonable sum for work it carried out at the client’s request.
The deadline is near: you have days left to enter EyeLine, the award that recognises the pure art of architecture, as distinct from functionality or buildability. Last year everyone from well-known practitioners to as-yet-unknown students entered. Of course: the one thing that unites 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 June 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

**Late June:** Judging and shortlisting.

**August:** Special issue of RIBA Journal, winners published, celebration party.

Get sending in your work right away, don’t wait until the last minute. We want to celebrate the art of architecture.

**eyeline@ribajournal.com**
Teach taut
Maria Smith goes back to the foundations

Dear architectural educators and reviewers of architectural education,

We have a fantastic opportunity on our hands. Rising university fees are a blessing in disguise for they have necessitated a review of our long and prohibitively expensive architectural education. But while fees are the straw that broke the camel’s back, they are not the only problem; architectural education is broken and in dire need of overhaul.

There’s been a lot of talk about closer relationships with practice. At first glance this seems like the easy fix we need: you earn while you learn and the cavernous gap between education and practice is bridged and forgotten. But I can’t help feeling this isn’t right. Yes, practice has been lumped with the role of picking up the shortfalls of education, but this doesn’t mean it’s best placed to play it.

Oscar Wilde said: ‘Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.’ This could be the motto of architectural education. Somewhere along the line, education decided it wasn’t its place to teach huge chunks of the practice of architecture. A real life architect and tutor told me that he can’t understand why his students aren’t deliberately happy to be doing everything they’ll never be able to do in practice. So, education isn’t just failing to prepare students for practice; it’s actively providing a counterpoint?! I can’t accept this. I can’t accept that architecture can only be studied by the independently wealthy, and I can’t accept that architecture can’t be taught in a protected environment dedicated to imparting and exploring knowledge. So, architectural educators and reviewers of architectural education, I say to you: do not squander this opportunity presented by increased fees, and do not give up on architectural education.

In his early career, Picasso painted academic realism with the proficiency of a great master. By contrast, first year architecture students are not only expected to immediately paint like a cubist, they’re expected to invent cubism. A key problem with architectural education is that from day one, students are asked to subvert architecture, something they know almost nothing about. This approach over-values pretentious drivels and under-values knowledge, precipitating twin villains: arrogance and ignorance.

The key to mending architectural education is therefore to overhaul first year: to make first year an intensive crash course offering a foundation in everything from historic buildings to insurance requirements.

Here’s the rub: no design in the first year.

In your first year learning the piano do you compose a concerto, or do you learn to play the instrument? In your first year learning to write, do you author next year’s Man Booker Prize winner, or learn the alphabet and how to spell your name? Just as these things require some basic skills that need to be mastered first, so does architecture.

It is not good enough that the average graduate knows almost nothing about historic buildings beyond Modern or ‘probably Victorian’.

It is not good enough that the average graduate wouldn’t know how to start a measured drawing and their CAD levels are a soup of ‘this one’, ‘another idea’ and ‘final final’.

It is not good enough that the average graduate doesn’t know the first thing about where wiring disappears to behind the light switch, or what a bending moment is, or which tools are used to work which materials.

It is not good enough that the average graduate has never handed in and received constructive feedback on a programme, area schedule, cost plan or bill of quantities.

It is not good enough that the average graduate learns about insurance and contract negotiation at the very end of their education when it is the understanding of the interrelationship between law and design that can truly empower us as a profession.

It is not good enough that the average graduate has no idea that architects spend 90% of their time doing the under-respected tasks above and it is not good enough to say these things can only be learnt in practice.

Of course these topics can be taught. Of course students should be able to learn in an environment where the chance of making a mistake is accepted and relished as part of the learning process. Of course students should be offered some grounding before they’re asked to reinvent the wheel and then be subjected to a human-sacrifice-like crit where old men shout at them for not understanding that which the old men have refused to tell them. So I dare you: remove design from first year and instead teach architectural history and practice. Then? Perhaps two years’ combined practice and design, then a year’s placement and difficult professional exam: three years in school, two in practice - done.

I do believe there’s still a place for specialist masters courses in environmental design or history and theory and so on and that these should be valued but not a requirement. I also believe that this first year could be used as a one year conversion course. A new set of possibilities are opened up.

Do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully, Maria Smith

Maria Smith is a director at Studio Weave
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Hugh Pearman Editor

I have been to the marshes of the Hoo Peninsula, a beautiful if at times bleak place on the Kentish side of the Thames Estuary. A landscape of muddy creeks and pastures, the occasional concrete and brick remains of wartime defences, and a fair bit of shoreline flotsam. But marvellous overall, especially for lovers of Dutch-landscape skies and a sense of vastness rare in England. The flatness is relieved by wold-like hills that overlook it to the south; with few people, the gurgling song of larks fills the air.

Further east, it gets industrial. The tip of the peninsula, where Thames and Medway meet, becomes the Isle of Grain, home of a long-defunct oil refinery with mothballed oil-fired power station, plus a brand new gas-fired version and a liquefied natural gas plant. Waste heat from the power station re-vaporises the liquid gas for customer use – one of which is the station itself. If you must burn fossil fuel, this is a pretty efficient way to do so. Barn owls and bats share this industrial habitat – as once did malarial mosquitoes.

Why am I telling you all this? Because the Isle of Grain and a large chunk of the rest of the Hoo Peninsula – plus a lot of land reclaimed from the estuary – is the site of the proposed new ‘Thames Hub’ airport conceived by Foster and Partners and supported by the London mayor, Boris Johnson. The Government’s Airports Commission, chaired by Sir Howard Davies and with urban consultant Ricky Burdett of the LSE on his team, was last December on the point of ignoring this proposal for extra airport capacity in the south-east. The Commission thinks one extra runway is all we need by 2030, and that Heathrow or Gatwick can best provide it, with another needed by 2050. Rumour has it that after pressure from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, the Commission reluctantly agreed to ‘further study’ on the estuary option, which is ongoing. You sense their hearts are not in it.

So, I love places like the marshlands of the Hoo Peninsula, where even the parts not engulfed by the new airport would be sliced through by roaring high-speed road and rail links to the capital. I should be signing petitions against the very idea of a new airport there. But I’m not so sure. Maybe this is exactly where a new London hub airport should be.

I’m familiar with the arguments against, especially those that point out it’s not ideally placed for the rest of the country. As well as the wildlife, there’s a sunken ship full of WW2 bombs nearby, plus all that flammable industry. Then I hear planes whining overhead, one after the other, on the way to Heathrow and I imagine more of them. And I think: Gatwick, maybe. Heathrow – don’t be daft, please not. But if we took a really strategic, long-term view of what London needs, we should be courageous. The greatest good for the greatest number means transferring the airport hub from Heathrow to the Thames Estuary. I’m looking forward to the concept plans from Maccreanor Lavington, Hawkins Brown and Rick Mather Architects for a future Heathrow as a new urban district of London. As for the Hoo Peninsula, I’m prepared to get my remoteness fix elsewhere.

‘You are the height of a child. The worst thing is drinks receptions and staring at people’s backsides. Those I dread’
Alan Stanton

‘A tottering keystone appears to be just about to brain an oblivious Virgin and Child sitting beneath’
Niall McLaughlin

Flights of fancy
It’s time to be ambitious about London’s main airport

Rumour has it that after pressure from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, the Commission reluctantly agreed to ‘further study’ on the estuary option.
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Sandwiches and water
Herbert Wright’s view from the Vaporetto

Maybe the Coop supermarket on the Fondamenta Santa Chiara, below the Piazzale Roma in Venice, is still the only place in town where you can buy an English-style sandwich – you know, the triangular white form, cut, curated and displayed in the mini-vitrine of its own packaging. Maybe we’ll die in a palazzo. Maybe not. Maybe Venice is the future as well as the past of our civilisation, whatever wistful musings on its built environment the Architecture Biennale may offer.

And maybe I’ll actually get to the Biennale one day.

I’ve never made it before, but I got pretty close in 2008. That was the one when Aaron Betsky curated lots of digital, futuristic stuff on the theme ‘Beyond Architecture’. Just a week before, I was in town looking at a newly delivered design that was digital, futuristic and beyond budget- Calatrava’s new fish-bone bridge (since named the Ponte della Constituzione). There are distinct advantages to not being in the legendary swing of the Biennale’s allegedly Fellini-esque opening parties. For example, rather than have to share a floor in mainland Mestre you can get a room in Venice proper. There is no looming mountain of exhibition agenda to work through at the expense of seeing perhaps the most sublimely magical built environment in Europe manifested in reality. But there are drawbacks too, like no ligging possibilities-outrageously, you have to pay for food and drink yourself. And with tourists inflating the price of a slice of pizza to Ryanair-like heights, a Coop sandwich can be handy.

This year’s Biennale theme is Fundamentals, turning back to the basic elements that constitute buildings rather than showing off projects. In March, curator Rem Koolhaas produced a montage of ‘then’ and ‘now’ pictures contrasting vernacular architectures in 1914 with 2014’s glass towers (strangely the UK ‘then’ is Lutyens’ New Delhi). Shame there was no Netherlands shot of his 150m-high triple glass towers now menacing another water city, Rotterdam, but he’s making a point: contemporary architecture is ‘not in particularly good health’. What a good job, then, that after 104 years no-one has yet heeded futurist Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, who repudiated ‘ancient Venice, exhausted and ravaged by centuries of pleasure’. He urged blanket redevelopment, but everyone knew it was crazy talk. Not even Frank Lloyd Wright or le Corbusier designs have breached Venice’s conservation lobby. Scalfarotto’s no-nonsense neoclassical San Simeone Piccolo church looks like a modern intrusion, and that slipped through the net in 1738.

So, what of the future? Is it the sunlit proto-Photoshop perfection of Caneletto’s Venice, or Guardi’s grimy, slightly distorted version, under skies that suggest stormy weather to come? Will the city pulse with Carnival, ache with the forlorn love of Mann’s Death in Venice, or subside into du Maurier’s Don’t Look Now sorrow, maybe even with a horror ending in a palazzo featuring a freakish knife-wielding psycho dwarf in a shiny mac?

In Venice, fondamenta also means the open canal-side, which flooded increasingly often. Latest IPCC worst-case predictions say sea levels could rise 98cm by 2100, but in a couple of years the multi-billion-euro MOSE project should be finished, its tidal barriers protecting the city and lagoon against surges of up to 3m. There are other dangers but it looks like Venice’s worst peril will soon pass.

In 2100, with populations falling and the elderly dominating society, beautiful cities will be preserved, probably as museum habitats gated in environmental protective structures, just like Venice. The biggest danger may be a proliferation of English-style sandwiches. •

Trained physicist Herbert Wright is an architectural writer, historian and art critic.
Back of the net

At once frustrating and fabulous, Brazil is most of all exciting and welcoming

Julia Feix

I arrived in São Paulo in 2013, to set up an F&M satellite office, ready to submerge myself in South American culture that couldn’t be further from Britain’s stiff-upper-lip approach to business and life in general.

But running a small foreign architecture practice in the seventh largest emerging market in the world is… complicated. While a ‘European approach to design’ is in high demand, the bureaucracy is frustratingly inscrutable and the financial investment required means there are more larger international practices than small ones like us. But we have made some great connections. The UKTI was a big help in establishing links with local practices, and while ‘import’ taxes here are eye watering, there is a way around most problems in Brazil.

This is a big year for the country; on 12 June São Paulo hosts the World Cup Opening Ceremony. Many question whether a country crippled by corruption, with a severe housing problem, shoddy public transport system, lack of quality public education, and a health system on its knees, should be investing in one of the world’s biggest sporting events.

Of 81 infrastructure projects promised for May 2014, from transport system upgrades like a new monorail to airport extensions and stadiums, only a fraction are complete.

In São Paulo, the plan was to use the existing Morumbi stadium but it was later decided to extend the Arena Corinthians instead, in a different part of town, close to the international airport. After a race against time, and accompanied by unhelpful cynical commentary from the public, the stadium will be handed over shortly, £30m over budget.

To deal with the traffic the government has just authorised a ‘jeitinho brasileiro’ (Brazilian way) plan: match day = public holiday!

As we found with the London Olympics: everyone moans and fears the worst, but once it’s started, pride, excitement and joy take over. Not a single taxi driver here has a good word to say about the Copa, but once Brazil reaches the final all will be forgiven!

I hope that June’s tourists will take away more than just their match ticket stubs: an impression of what challenges São Paulo faces as well as a sense of the beauty that coined the phrase God is Brazilian.

São Paulo is the largest city of Brazil and the largest city proper in the Americas: the wider metropolitan region is home to over 20 million people. That’s a LOT! Close to a third live in slum-like conditions, and up to 70% of the housing is thought to be sub-standard. At the same time, Forbes’ List of Top Ten Billionaire Cities ranked São Paulo sixth in 2013, being home to 26 billionaires with a combined net worth of US$120bn.

Some of São Paulo’s greatest architecture, including Oscar Niemeyer’s impressive Copan building, can be found in the city centre, but the lack of heritage protection policies has left most of these buildings vandalised. There are many renovation projects and with the city’s hipsters and urban pioneers (among them many young artists, designers and architects) moving back in, hopes rise for a slow but confident recovery.

São Paulo has an excitingly vibrant underground culture and the street art scene is incredible; the food is fantastic, and the beaches are superb. But it’s the people, above all, that make Brazil exceptional: emotional, very welcoming and so passionate. There are more reasons to visit Brazil than the World Cup, but visit you must.

Julia Feix is a partner of Feix + Merlin Architects

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Architect.com is being relaunched, to do more for members and draw in the public

Stephen Hodder

This month sees the launch of the new architecture.com website, the culmination of nearly two years’ work. We all use websites, apps and social media in such a different way to the last incarnation so it was clear the website needed to be significantly improved for RIBA members, and with an eye to the global audiences that websites can capture. With such an auspicious URL the aspiration to be the digital destination for those interested in architecture and the built environment was both logical and ambitious.

The launch is phase one of architecture.com’s transformation from a corporate website to a go-to destination for all those interested in architecture and architects – befitting its domain name. From easy to understand explanations of architectural styles and trends, to online galleries of RIBA exhibitions, the site should be brimming with ideas to educate and excite visitors.

It was evident that the vast amount of information available on the old website was difficult to find. As a consequence, user experience was made a top priority in the re-design but without sacrificing the quality of information available. This has led to over 10,000 pages of content being moved and ordered to create a much more accessible and enjoyable experience for visitors to the site.

The aim was to create a more dynamic website with editorial content at the forefront – like many leading websites. This content continues to focus on demonstrating the value of architecture through informative, shareable and thought provoking web articles. The approach enables the RIBA to fulfill its charter for the promotion of architecture as well as demonstrate to the public the value of using a chartered architect.

In a previous column I mentioned our work with RIBA for Clients. The ‘Find an Architect’ area of the website is a key component of this work and I believe its relaunch over the summer will bring the most immediate and immeasurable benefit to RIBA chartered practices. Potential clients will be able to browse the site to find relevant practices who meet their needs with better tailored searchable areas and distinct areas for chartered practices to showcase their work with good quality larger images, details and company profiles. Examples of projects, profiles of architects and easy to use search functions make finding the perfect architect easy and inspiring. It is up to you to ensure that the content you upload for your practice inspires and details the right kind of information for clients, and that you update your page with new projects so it displays your practice at its very best. Of course, I have been instructed to make sure my own practice is doing exactly that!

Now that the website has launched, the team will continue to upload fresh and regular content additions that will engage and inspire our target audiences. For the public it has informative, topical content that interests and increases our engagement on architecture and importantly is designed to be easily shared on social media.

RIBA members have a dedicated section where they can take advantage of research and information, insider knowledge, high-quality support services, world-class CPD and lots more. We will also continue to share our lobbying and campaigning work – hopefully now you will be able to find it!

Naturally it is a work in progress with content being added all the time. I hope you enjoy visiting the new architecture.com and help share the information that is on there through your digital channels and with prospective clients. Do let me have your feedback.

@HodderPRIBA
The first time I visited Stanton Williams’ Sainsbury Laboratory in Cambridge I was swept away. The smooth planes of limestone and concrete, languid stairs, light, sensual soffits of the labs, embedded nooks, abundant planting, etched lines; it calls out to be touched. When, in 2004, a seemingly unpromising scheme for a new square alongside the Tower of London opened I expected very little, but in this space, amid the muck and clutter of central London, you could mentally freewheel or even take an ecstatic spin.

For almost 30 years Stanton Williams has been designing some of the most sublime and simply elegant places in the country, as evidenced by the Stirling Prize for the Sainsbury Laboratory and regular awards, this year for the Britten Pears Archive in Aldeburgh.

So I am a little embarrassed to be asking the practice’s director, Alan Stanton, to talk less about design and more about his personal career – particularly something that generally goes undiscussed: practising with limited mobility. It turns out I am not the only one. Other people’s embarrassment is something he has to face every day, and once he had got used to not being able to get around so easily it was one of the hardest things. ‘When you rock up in a wheelchair people are embarrassed and don’t know whether to help etc,’ he explains. ‘You learn to be assertive: it has made me larger than life for a shy person.’

As we settle into our discussion the first thing Stanton wants to do is set the parameters. ‘It would be nice if it was not a glorification of my career,’ he says. ‘It would be good if it reaches out to other people.’ For years he used crutches; now a wheelchair. He has never been a campaigner for disability rights. Although he has taken to the platform to discuss such access he has more often lectured on the practice’s work. He has never joined a special group (‘I don’t think one exists, we are probably all in denial’); and he barely talks about it with friends. ‘Piers Gough [of CZWG who uses a stick when walking] is a friend, but we never talk disability.’

Stanton, who has nothing to prove architecturally, does want to show that you can make a great career out of architecture, whatever the impediments. To show how, we must go back to his own career. Out of the Architectural Association, Stanton spent a year with Norman Foster post Team 4 and trying to get to the US. Once at University of California, Los Angeles, on a fellowship taught by Archigram’s Ron Herron and Warren Chalk, he and other students wanted to make things at an architectural scale. ‘We got cheap materials and a fan and did air structures. We had an immediate reputation for doing crazy things.’ Chrysalis, as the amorphous group was known, was even commissioned for projects such as the Pepsi Pavilion at the Osaka Expo (RIBAJ, March 2013). Then in California, age 27, just after graduating, a viral infection got into Stanton’s spine. He could no longer use his legs.

Back in London for medical advice, he got a call from Richard Rogers to work on the Pompidou, a project he saw as like Chrysalis but with huge budgets and potential. Then the realisation hit that there was a building to design, starting with car parks and a base- ment. ‘It was tough, challenging, exciting.’

But not easy. ‘Paris was a difficult time,’ he says, less because of the reality of a major project, than because he was having to make major adjustments to his personal life, moving around on crutches. ‘I was not as quick or agile as I used to be, it was a bit of a struggle getting up and down stairs but I could do it. Getting a car modified was my saviour as I couldn’t walk long distances… but, especially when you’re young, you just keep going.’

In the following years he commuted to Paris regularly with his own practice, working on a gallery at La Villette Science Museum with Mike Dowd and collaborating with Renzo Piano. ‘It was the 8.28 at Heathrow’s Terminal 2,’ he says, not quite wistfully. He met Paul Williams in 1983 at the Tate (now Tate Britain): one wanted to do more architecture, the other exhibition design. Setting up as Stanton Williams they got to do both.

Young families and plenty of international commuting experience meant they both wanted to see if they could make practice work in the UK. From shops and exhibitions to visitors’ centres, galleries and public spaces they have peppered the country with great architecture. Could this UK-based approach be why their subtle, nuanced, contextual designs have not won them the same starchitecture status as the starker international projects of their contemporary David Chipperfield?
In disability terms, the world is a different place to the seventies, when Stanton was adjusting to crutches. ‘There has been hugely valuable legislation,’ he says, thinking of the National Theatre (which he was later to work on), completed in 1976 with no lift access to several foyer levels – ‘quite extraordinary... Like sustainability, it would be nice to think that access would just become part of good quality design, with care, thought, attention to detail and a generosity of space,’ he says.

Even though attitudes are changing, Stanton still experiences the ‘does he take sugar’ phenomena. Out with his wife Wendy it is she who will be asked ‘would he like to go through this door?’ When he shifted to a wheelchair five or six years ago, he found it liberating being able to go further but it was a big mental step. ‘I had to swallow my pride,’ he says. ‘You are the height of a child. The worst thing is drinks receptions and staring at people’s backsides. Those I dread.’ Then there was what clients might think. ‘In fact, people are very helpful,’ he says. ‘Though obviously you have to perform and do your job.’

His office now is a 50m long space, all on one level – much simpler to negotiate with 45 people and projects. Before going around the office he will ‘pre-think’ and gather everything that is needed. And he knows he is lucky now. ‘When I was started out as a young architect I was on my own, doing all my own typing and photocopying. Now I am in an office with a team and fantastic people around me.’ He is one of four design directors, each taking responsibility for individual projects while still work closely with each other.

Visiting sites is unavoidable. It is usually manageable, though there are places where Stanton has relied on colleagues climbing to the top to take photos. He clearly relishes the time he was lowered by crane to examine a hole in the ground or when he has been carried up a difficult flight of stairs. ‘People are amazingly helpful,’ he says. ‘Two big builders pick me up and whizz me to the top of the building. We have a very positive meeting afterwards.’

It is the sort of heart warming story you’d need to hear if you or your wheelchair-bound child was considering a career in architecture. Stanton’s disability extends only to his legs, but his advice is not to be deterred. ‘The great thing about architecture is its broad spectrum. You can be very specialised or general: there is a chance you can find that architecture will work for you, your limitations and allow you to play to your strengths.’ And there are fringe benefits, no London congestion charge and a blue badge – so every morning he drives through central London to the Islington office of Stanton Williams. Just turned 70 he still enjoys the challenges of new projects and is not planning to retire any time soon. Looking from the other end of the career spectrum, he says: ‘Anyone with a disability going into architecture needs to try and he confident, even if you have to fake it. You have to reach out to people.’

‘Two big builders pick me up and whizz me to the top of the building. We have a very positive meeting afterwards’

Top: Stanton Williams directors from left: Paul Williams, Patrick Richard, Alan Stanton, Peter Murray and Gavin Henderson. The four design directors and managing director Murray work closely together.

Below left: The Stirling Prize winning Sainsbury Laboratory unites botanical science and architectural beauty.

Below: Britten Pears Archive in Aldeburgh, a small gem among far larger projects.
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Eternal problems

Architecture’s idealised role in renaissance art is more disturbing than idyllic

Niall McLaughlin

As a child I always had a problem with representations of heaven. What kind of place would it be and where would we live? I settled on an endless grid of huts in an arrangement that would have satisfied Hilberseimer. After all, it had to be very generalised, typical and, well, eternal. Any knots, blemishes; any trace of the particular would have been worn away by the endlessness of it all. Readers of Dante’s Divine Comedy will have experienced some of the same problem. After the terrible vicissitudes of Hell and the long slog up Purgatory’s alp, Paradise seems – dare I say it – a little boring.

I encountered some of this challenge going around the collection of Early Renaissance paintings featuring buildings in the National Gallery in London. With the exception of the odd excursion to Carthage, Mycenae or Florence, the great majority of works depict a northern Italian fantasy of a Romanised Holy Land. In genre scenes depicting the Annunciation, Nativity, Life, Death and Deposition of Christ the architecture has to do the job of establishing an idealised elsewhere-everywhere outside time within which the stiff hierarchies of eternity can be disposed. Given the almost ubiquitous presence of the Virgin Mary, the order of choice is Corinthian to emphasise her femininity and purity. We are brought into an architectural realm that is invariably impressive but rarely touches that part of us that longs to be situated or at home in a place.

The painters use architectural elements like arches, colonnades and drapes to create frames, thresholds and spatial recession. They make a now-and-always world set apart from the messy flow of people in time. In one painting, a Virgin and Child perch on a patch of grass in front of a ruined temple forecourt as if they would instantly age and wither if they stepped onto the cracked pavement.

The conceit of an architectural form creating a place outside time allows the painters to experiment with the powerful effects of perspectival recession, centralised framing and manipulated parallax. The House of Mary, the Stable of the Birth of Christ and the Temple in Jerusalem are treated as stiff set pieces for exercises in architectural propriety and formal virtuosity. Few examples break the mould. There is a tiny wooden primitive hut by de’ Roberti whose woven wattle screen would have touched Gottfried Semper. In Botticelli’s Adoration of the Kings he depicts an overblown stable, perhaps a ruined basilica. A tottering keystone appears to be just about to brain an oblivious Virgin and Child sitting beneath. It hints at the troubled mind behind his blithe assemblies.

My favourite painting is Carlo Crivelli’s Annunciation. It is almost deliberately unlovely. How can so much skill be put into making an image with so little to like? Everything leads back to the odd aperture in the wall through which the Holy Spirit penetrates the sanctuary of this grown-up child’s home. She is not really beautiful, but
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resisting and shrinking away as adolescents are inclined to do. As the frightening little dove shoots down a laser line of light to intimate the Immaculate Conception, we, the viewers, are allowed to pull back a curtain and peer into the neat room with its flat, unruuffled bed and secretly witness this terrible incursion. Across the street a small girl, exquisitely dressed, but without any natural grace, peers into the opening made by the descending dove. Meanwhile, the Angel of the Annunciation has been waylaid on the street by the local bishop to discuss his architectural model of a new plan for the town. There is something of the oily mandarin about the Angel. He appears to be dispatching a tiresome task before getting down to the serious business of town planning. The architectural model has a strange presence. It seems to contain the Virgin’s house, the street, arch and city wall that we see in the painting. The juxtaposition of the men on the street and the transfixed girl in the darkened room underline the sense of an awful event happening in plain daylight. The architecture is everywhere, framing, separating, supporting, distancing, enveloping and penetrating. The highly rendered surfaces of stucco, tapestry, peacock’s wing and strange fruit battle it out with a relentless perspectival recession. It is exquisite, indifferent, even slightly repellent.

It is only when we get beyond the different painters’ fascination with a generalised Roman idyll that the buildings take on an inviting aspect. When they depict the ordinary vernacular of Italian towns, the status of the architecture changes. It becomes an active participant in the human drama. Veneziano depicts a miracle in a street in Florence. A widow is crying for her dead son and the everyday buildings around catch up her terrible plight. The street seems to draw in to a circle of gazing and mourning; the buildings become a ring of grieving faces. In the Annunciation by the Master of the Judgement of Paris we see a flat chested, girlish Virgin, alert like a startled deer, intertwined with the ordinary world of her house and garden. The painted stars on the ceiling of her room and the exquisite foliage in the hedges all suggest a woven world of small things, of particulars. This domesticity even appears to stay the terrible messenger with his burden of love, death and a lifetime of grief.

One of the best-known paintings to architects will be Antonello’s St Jerome in his Study. It seems to touch on some longing in designers, a world within a world, a human scale microcosm. Look closely and the scene speaks less of ease. The steps are too steep, the chair is heavy and conceals little to comfort, the bookstand is rather remote for comfortable reading and the shelves are lumpen. The intimacy promised by the image gives way to a formal staging. Our eye wanders away across the gloomy recesses of the church surrounding his study. Perhaps it stands for the bible that he is translating. It is a cold and forbidding place. In the painting beside this one, Catena depicts St Jerome. He has pulled off his slippers and tucked himself into a corner of a room where light falls in from a window and he peers closely at his work. Everything conspires to situate him at his task. If these two rooms are bibles, I know which one I would like to live by.

Níall McLaughlin is an architect

The Angel of the Annunciation has been waylaid on the street by the local bishop to discuss his architectural model of a new plan for the town. There is something of the oily mandarin about him.
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Hans Hollein
1934 – 2014

Pritzker Prize-winning postmodern architect who asserted: ‘Architecture is without purpose. Form does not follow function’ aged just 29

You have to admire an architect who, as early as 1963, had the nerve to write: ‘The shape of the building does not develop out of the material condition of its purpose. A building should not show its purpose. It is not an expression of structure and construction, it is not an enclosure or refuge. A building is itself. Architecture is without purpose. What we build will find its usefulness. Form does not follow function.’

The then 29-year old Hans Hollein, who has died aged 80, was a visiting professor in Washington at the time, a return following an earlier long sojourn in America to conclude his studies - first at IIT in Chicago, then at the University of California in Berkeley. Intrigued to find that the United States had no fewer than seven towns named Vienna, he had driven across the continent, using these towns as a random framework to guide his route. That route brought him into contact with the aged Frank Lloyd Wright and with Richard Neutra and Rudolf M Schindler, the all-American architect and the Viennese émigrés. Hollein chose to return to Austria rather than remain in America, his European sensibility however forever altered by the experience. What he did not want to be, as the quotes above make clear, was any kind of functionalist. For him, architecture had to reclaim its status as an art rather than a science. Hence, a year later, his famous collage ‘Aircraft carrier city in the landscape’ which challenged formal architectural preconceptions while simultaneously skewering militarism.

He was of course far from alone in questioning modernist orthodoxy – it was in the air at the time, with Robert Venturi and James Stirling among many others starting to be known for postmodern awkward-squad-dism. And a postmodernist was what Hollein became after he started his own practice in 1964 – at first as a civil engineer rather than an architect, which adds practical piquancy to the romantic mix. Soon, however, he had begun to make a name for himself with little opulently idiosyncratic shops which Vienna has always generated. His Retti Candle Shop of 1964-5 led to the oft-cited 1972 Schullin Jewellery shop, the one with the artful ‘crack’ in its facade, a symbol of modernist decay which is also a characteristic flash of wit. Thin pickings for a nascent career perhaps, but in these early days he was also the editor of Bau magazine, writing for other magazines and teaching. He also became one of Alessi’s stable of designers.

Hollein gradually became known for larger projects, his breakthrough coming with the Abteiberg Museum in Mönchengladbach (1972-1982) in which this contemporary art museum – playing, as so often, with geometry – dissolves into a hillside, landscape and architecture combining as a place of public resort. It still looks fresh today, unlike some of his later more overtly PoMo work such as the mixed-use commercial Haas House of the late 1980s, its brittle reflectiveness and broken grid patterning being more than a little intrusive right next to St Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna. At the turn of the Millennium he returned to a lifelong fascination – the buried building, a concept he had explored in a project for a Salzburg Guggenheim – with the remarkable Vulcana museum in the Auvergne, symbolic architecture conceived as a journey to the centre of the earth.

The only Austrian architect so far to have won the Pritzker Prize (in 1985, commended for his ‘wit and eclectic gusto’) this energetic wild man of architecture was also made an international honorary fellow of the RIBA in 1993. Predeceased by his wife Helene in 1999, he is survived by his children Max and Lili.

Hugh Pearman
The RIBAJ Sustainability Conference
Tuesday 24th June 2014
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How far are we down the zero carbon road? Join us at this one-day RIBAJ 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?

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Find out more and book your place at www.ribajournal.com
Moat and beam
I accept James Timberlake’s assertion that the lake around the new US embassy is ‘not a moat’ (RIBAJ May 2014). But I cannot be alone among those who have looked at the site plan and seen the shadow of the ‘Fortezza da Basso’, built in 1534 at the prompting of the Emperor Charles V to protect Alessandro de’ Medici from any more trouble with the uppity citizens of Florence.
Brian Knox, London N6

Positively chilling
‘Parting shot’ is the first thing I turn to in the impressively improved RIBA Journal.
A small taste of the ‘frosty reception’ of the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square (RIBAJ, May 2014) as it neared completion, was someone’s addition of an ‘A’ at the front end of contractor Pauling’s signboard.
James Lewis, via email

A reader writes
As the ‘new look’ journal gathers momentum with its varied and often thought provoking articles, I can’t help noticing the paucity of letters from readers. The April 2014 edition included only five which covered less than a single page out of the 110 page total.
Do members of the architecture profession really have nothing to contribute to the ongoing debate on the state of architecture in this country or the content of the articles, or is correspondence not seen as important by the publishing team?
Brian Collins, Edgware, Middlesex

No laughing matter
How sad that at a time of serious debate about protection of title and the role of Arb, the best you can do in reply to Rob Ellis’s letter on Arb is give space to the fatuous ‘humour’ of Bob Reynolds (RIBAJ, April 2014). Arb does far worse than simply ‘apply the regulations with enthusiasm and zeal’, and indifference to summary removal from the Register is a luxury only available to those such as Mr Reynolds who have, for all relevant purposes, left the profession. For those of us who continue to make a contribution, these are serious issues, which really should be debated more intelligently than this.
Brian Edmonds, Sainte Maxime, France

Protective stance
I read Brian Edmonds’ letter (RIBAJ, May 2014) and agree with everything he said.
For some time now, I have felt that Arb has spent more time ‘beating up’ its members rather than tackling the problem of protecting the function of architects. I have written many letters over the past two years. Responses from Beatrice Fraenkel (chair) and her colleagues essentially point out that only the word ‘architect’ is protected.

As an approved planning agent at a local authority, it grieves me to turn up to ‘agents meetings’ and find I am only one of a small band of architects among ‘architectural’ consultants who are by definition portrayed as no different to the architectural profession. These ‘practices’ hide behind names which the general public can easily confuse with real architects’ practices.

I understand that Arb and the RIBA are reviewing this situation and I would urge members to lobby hard for a real change in the law, to protect the future of our profession.
Doug Fowler via email

Radical step
I wonder if you shouldn’t have provided a link in the RIBAJ to independent advice on the issues regarding the RIBA and Arb, to enable a considered choice to be made; eg http://www.aaruk.info/AARU.htm. You can see the government position on this page.

Having read it all myself, I am coming to the view that it would be in both our and the public’s interest to drop architects’ registration altogether – as seems to have been advocated by several RIBA reports.
Peter Dew, Abu Dhabi UAE

CORRECTION
We’re sorry that gremlins struck in the credits on page 22 for Allies & Morrison’s Rambert building last month. The credits should have read:
Architect: Allies and Morrison
Client: Rambert
Structure and services engineer: Buro Happold
Project management: Aecom
Contractor: VINCI
Construction UK
Quantity surveyor: Gardiner & Theobald
Specialist AV: Charcoalblue
Lighting consultant: Speirs + Major
A perfect fit
**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 H1.1 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.

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**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.

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**Title: Specification considerations for brick slip and tile finishes for modern architecture**

This newly accredited CPD concentrates on the specification of brick slip and tile finishes. The CPD provides an overview of the systems available and outlines the many considerations when specifying these finishes as part of an overall façade system. It then looks at the wide range of materials available in the collection alsecco range of brick slip and tile finishes and a number of relevant project applications.

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**Title: Swimming Pool Construction**

Mapei (UK) has launched a new Swimming Pool Construction CPD seminar. The new technical seminar will assist in the specification of correct materials, in accordance with current BS and EN Standards. Seminars can be arranged to suit group or specific needs. The new CPD is 30 minutes duration, followed by a Q&A session.

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**Title: Wood Ceilings: The Beauty and Benefits**

Created to help architects and specifiers gain a clearer understanding of how such a traditional building material translates to contemporary design and architecture; covers the aesthetic and practical uses for wood and the wide design flexibility available to the specifier. It also highlights how the use of wood supports responsible design and provides an important guide to the performance standards that can be met through the use of wood systems.

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**Title: Glass Mosaic, Its Applications & Installation**

In this seminar participants will learn about the origins of hand-cut smalti, the dazzling beauty of authentic gold tesserae, the distinctive contribution of glass mosaic to historic buildings and art forms, the variety of tile formats and pre-formatted patterns available to today's designers, and the innovative modern techniques for speeding up the tile laying process.

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**Title: 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 through-out a building. The 40 minute seminar provides information about the beneficial properties of glass and the latest regulation and legislation.

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**Title: Removing Barriers to Access**

This seminar will assist in the specification of correct materials, in accordance with current BS and EN Standards. Seminars can be arranged to suit group or specific needs. The new CPD is 30 minutes duration, followed by a Q&A session.

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

This seminar will assist in the specification of correct materials, in accordance with current BS and EN Standards. Seminars can be arranged to suit group or specific needs. The new CPD is 30 minutes duration, followed by a Q&A session.

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**Title: Designing Effective Heat and Smoke Ventilation**

This seminar will assist in the specification of correct materials, in accordance with current BS and EN Standards. Seminars can be arranged to suit group or specific needs. The new CPD is 30 minutes duration, followed by a Q&A session.
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Getting the slate edge
Marley Eternit’s Duo Edgemere tiles have been used to give a slate like finish on an award winning roofing project for ten prestigious new build homes in the highly desirable Cults area of Aberdeen.
The Cala Homes development at Hayfield Orange includes ten detached luxury properties finished with a distinctive exterior. After appointing Marley Contract Services to complete the roofing contract, Cala Homes specified Marley Eternit’s Duo Edgemere tiles in smooth grey to complement the stone finish of the homes. Marley Eternit’s concrete plain tiles were also used around the dormer windows on the luxury homes. The high standard of work on the project resulted in Marley Contract Services winning the 2013 National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC) Scottish Contractor of the Year award. Marley Eternit’s Edgemere is a range of large format concrete interlocking tiles with a thin leading edge providing a number of slate like appearances at a more attractive price. For further information about the range of Edgemere tiles, visit: w: www.marleyeternit.co.uk

Junckers’ sporting excellence
The 2014 Commonwealth Games, Glasgow has no fewer than five Junckers’ specialist floors and sub-flooring systems at the various venues, including in the main stadium, the Emirates Arena. Junckers Premium Sports Flooring Systems provide a complete solution to all sports flooring needs, for multi-use, ball sports, dance and performance, conforming to all standards. w: www.junckers.co.uk

Exciting new Array sample released
Heckmondwike FB has released a sample card demonstrating its newly extended range of Array carpet tile colours. Six exciting new colourways including Copper, Marble, Peacock, Violet, Emerald and Fuchsia, have been carefully selected to reflect current trends in furniture design and seating. These latest designs are displayed in the eight page sample card, which is available to order directly from w: www.heckmondwike-fb.co.uk/ newarraycolours

Polyflor is in vogue at SRG Apparel
Polyflor, the UK’s commercial and residential vinyl flooring specialist, has just announced a diverse range of its flooring products have been installed in the new state-of-the-art 40,000 sq ft head quarters of fashion house SRG Apparel, in Manchester. Over 750m² Polyflor products were specified by Jenkins Design of Bury, and installed by Bramhall Flooring, including Expona Control, Expona Design, 2000PUR, Polysafe Arena and Modena PUR. Senior Interior Designer Louise Grimes from Jenkins Design, comments “my clients brief was to provide staff with an energetic working environment which would encourage creative thinking. We decided to specify Polyflor products as they offer fantastic on-trend design, whilst at the same time providing the necessary durability and safety.” SRG Apparel designs, creates and supplies to UK market leading retailers such as River Island, Next, Tesco, Asda and New Look to name but a few, assuring the head quarters will be exposed to a heavy footfall on a daily basis. Within the entrance hall a contrast of Expona Control in Warm Grey Concrete and Polysafe Arena PUR in Brushed Titanium was chosen, creating zonal areas throughout the first floor. Developed for use in commercial areas which receive a high level of traffic, Expona Control is the first flooring product to marry the design benefits of traditional LVT with safety flooring. w: www.polyflor.com e: info@polyflor.com

Leaderflush Shapland’s technical expertise and health sector experience ensures it understands the requirements of its customers and delivers the solutions and products they need.
Leaderflush Shapland understand the varying demands placed on doorsets in different parts of a health sector building. HTM 58 identifies these as heavy duty, severe duty, high security duty, fire resisting and x-ray grades. The onsite testing facility ensures its performance doorsets go beyond standard requirements through replicating what happens in the field during testing and making sure the tests reflect the environment the product is going into. As well as being able to cope in the toughest environments, the Leaderflush Shapland product ranges are designed specifically to address issues of concern in the sector and to comply with legislation.
New product development manager Stephen Hutsby explained how Leaderflush Shapland’s integrated doorset concept meets these requirements: “By integrating the doors, frames and ironmongery we are giving specifiers peace of mind that each component is compatible and fit for purpose, as well as providing a convenient single source supplier.” w: www.leaderflushshapland.co.uk

Abloy locks in London
Security expert Abloy UK is delighted to announce the opening of its new London Showroom, located at the Building Centre on Store Street from 14th May. The launch of the showroom coincides with Abloy’s 50th anniversary, and will feature Abloy’s market-leading products such as electric locks, CLIQ Remote and compliant access controlled door solutions. Visitors will be able to get hands-on experience, with interactive demo points while Industry professionals will be on hand. w: www.abloy.co.uk/london

Leverlux impresses in Washington
The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art in Washington State, USA showcases a motorised solar shading solution from Leverlux. 250mm wide extruded aluminium Aerofoil Fins have been applied externally across a curved, south-facing glazed elevation. Intelligent controls and motors automatically adjust the angle of the Fins to control daylight, heat gain and glare levels.
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Product update

Tarkett LVT installation goes swimmingly at fitness centre

A King’s Lynn swimming centre that has almost a quarter of a million visits each year has revamped its viewing area with the help of Tarkett flooring. The 100sqm area of the Norfolk St James’ Swimming and Fitness Centre has been installed in Tarkett’s iD Inspiration 70 luxury vinyl tiles (LVT). The installation was carried out by Featherby Flooring and users and staff at the centre are delighted with the finish.

The company has never used Tarkett flooring before however now plans to use Tarkett LVT in the future and has already lined up a 500sqm residential role for the product in a large executive house. Manufactured with a 0.70mm transparent PVC wear layer, the flooring is hard-wearing so ideal for areas that experience heavy footfall. Tarkett’s LVT range is 100% recyclable and includes a minimum 48% recycled content. VOC emissions are also below quantifiable levels, contributing to an optimal indoor air quality.

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Quadrant Carpets’ Brings New Life to Worship Space

Under the direction of an innovative minister the vacant church St. David’s in North London has been revitalised. Quadrant Carpets was chosen as the carpet supplier for the worship space, which is configured in the original Greek cross formation and retains its central presence within the building.

Quadrant Carpets proposed the Change range, from its Powerbond Essentials Collection with its improved acoustic absorption and excellent thermal insulation.

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The PURE Touch Tap

The PURE Water Company supplies an alternative to the traditional hot tap – The PURE Touch Tap is operated via remote touchscreen control to deliver chilled and hot water to self-serve tea points. This product can be integrated into fit-outs and new builds with the PURE Link system to distribute drinking water throughout a building from a central cooling and filtration plant.

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w: www.purewaterco.co.uk

Armstrong Ceilings reign at Kings

Engineering students at the University of Edinburgh are getting a little extra help with their studies from Armstrong Ceilings. Wood lay-in tiles and a customised wood canopy are helping to define and soften a new student work/social area as part of the interior refurbishment of the Hudson Beare Building on its Kings Buildings campus.

In addition, the main lecture theatre features Armstrong’s Ultima OP tiles.

t: 01622 854 040
w: www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk

Jutland clubs together for housing development

Cembrit has provided uniquely shaped fibre-cement slates to a new housing development situated within the picturesque Old Hamberstone Conservation Area in Leicester. The Beeches consists of fifteen affordable houses and two apartments and is surrounded by fields which were once a medieval farming community, several listed buildings and a Church. The developer wanted the properties to blend in seamlessly, as well as over 220 dazzling tiles in graphite with individual stars cut out.

t: 01622 854 040
w: www.cembrit.co.uk

DRU Fires heralds exciting new product launches at Hearth & Home 2014

DRU Fires will be exhibiting at Hearth & Home, Harrogate Exhibition Centre, June 8/10, 2014. Stand number C55. Hearth & Home is the only UK trade show devoted entirely to fires and fireplaces, including gas, electric and solid fuel appliances. It will be DRU’s first participation since 2007.

The company is exhibiting new models from its contemporary gas fires and DG wood stove ranges.

w: www.drufire.co.uk

Cast stone for public walkway with incredible views

Edenhall cast stone has been used to detail the public walkway of a major residential riverside development situated next to the Tower of London. Edenhall supplied an array of bespoke wetcast stone for the enhanced riverside public walkway, including an elliptical planter weighing 6 tons and cast as a single piece, steps and copings for the walkway and coping stones for the river wall. The stone was precisely cast following a detailed site survey.

t: 01622 854 040
w: www.edenhall.co.uk

An ace performance from Medite Tricoya

Medite Tricoya has recently been utilised in the restoration of divider boards at Newcastle Golf Driving Range in Northern Ireland – a total of 30 sheets used as the divider between each bunker.

The extreme durable MDF panel product was selected for its versatility, high strength and lightweight characteristics, as well as being cost effective for the project. Specified in a thickness of 18mm, the divider between each bay gives the golfer extra privacy and safety to practice.

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w: www.meditetricoya.com

Result for Orion Primary School

The stars are shining at the new Orion Primary School in the London Borough of Barnet thanks to its exciting new Supacord carpet, supplied by UK-based fibre bonded carpet manufacturer Heckmondwike FB. Heckmondwike FB supplied 2,600m2 of their stunning Supacord carpet tiles in purple, graphite, orange, willow, azure, blueberry, emerald, steel and violet, as well as over 220 dazzling tiles in graphite with individual stars cut out.

w: www.heckmondwike-fb.co.uk.
Wolf Systems’ easi-joist solution to
Grand Design
Wolf Systems’ easi-joists have been chosen to support the suspended timber floors of a zero-carbon self-build in York (as featured in a series of Grand Designs). Architect, Martin Walker, wanted a modern, spacious, low-energy house; his wife Kae wanted a cozy family home. Martin’s design used a structural frame of sustainable glulam beams with modern highly-insulated panels.

w: www.wolfsystem.co.uk

Newquay’s Pride at New Maternity
Unit at Bronglais Hospital
An extensive collection of Polyflor flooring products have been installed in the new Maternity Unit at Bronglais Hospital in Aberystwyth. Craftman Flooring Ltd of Swansea installed over 5000m² of 2000 PUR, Pearlazzou PUR, Polysafe Hydro Evolve, Polysafe Standard PUR and Polysafe Wood FX PUR. This vast array of products featured through the delivery suits, as well as the usual support rooms and offices, w: www.polyflor.com

Pasquill supplies roof trusses and
Posi-joists™ for major new Mental
Health Facility
Pasquill has completed a high profile project as part of a £42m new acute mental health facility in Hertfordshire called Kingsley Green. The UK’s largest roof truss supplier provided roof trusses and Posi-joists™ in a carefully co-ordinated initiative involving four of its branches. The contract saw Pasquill work to tight time constraints on behalf of the timber frame company Innovare Systems.
w: www.pasquill.co.uk

designer and manufacturer Senior Architectural Systems has predicted a rise in the sales of secondary glazing systems this year, with the high performance product increasingly being specified in the hotel sector. Due to changes in Building Regulations, Standards and Codes of Practice over the years, secondary glazing systems are increasingly being specified to improve the quality of accommodation which guests receive.
w: www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk

Saint-Gobain Weber EWI gives
“lift off” to airy house rebuilds
Airey houses in West Norfolk owned by Freebridge Community Housing are being restructured and clad with BBA and Energy Saving Trust listed External Wall Insulation (EWI) by Saint-Gobain Weber to improve their thermal performance and aesthetics. The installation by Cornerstone involved lifting and supporting the entire roof structure as well as removing the front and back framework.
w: www.netweber.co.uk

Metal Technology Systems
Metal Technology Systems have completed work on a new glazing system at School Building of the Year Hillview School, Kent. To meet the building’s natural ventilation strategy an inward opening, tilt - before -turn vent behind a fixed blade louver was used in combination with a top hung casement allowing each room’s natural ventilation to be managed individually. The tilt mode offers reduced ventilation while the option to open the vent fully in the turn mode offers instant ventilation.
w: www.metaltechnology.com

Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems
Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems has recently completed works on London’s newest terminal at Southend Airport. To create a continuous glazed facade Comar 6EFT 4sided SG was selected as it offers architects a flexible solution, providing a structurally glazed solution, with options for facets, concealed vents and an extensive range of profiles that cater for large structurally glazed panels.
w: www.comar-alu.co.uk

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 a new extra-care housing development. Available in 12 wood effect designs, the looselay vertically inter-locking planks have a wear group T rating, while the polyurethane treatment PUR+ provides resistance to scratching and can be cleaned easily and hygienically. Also specified were Escort Decowood timber effect handrails from Gerflor’s SPM range.
e: contractuk@gerflor.com

Senior predicts boost for
secondary glazing systems
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w: www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk

SWA member supplies W20
windows and doors for Bermondsey
Town Hall
In 2010 the local council vacated the impressive Bermondsey Town Hall building which has now been reborn as luxury apartments. Having first replaced the windows in the late 1980’s West Leigh was delighted to revisit the building to refurbish and upgrade all windows as well as installing additional W20 windows and doors for access to patios and terraces.
w: www.swa-member.co.uk

The Rooflight Company
For the Granary in Barking, eighteen bespoke neo™ Steel roof windows were specified to mirror the existing fenestration of the new copper clad extension. For the original building, Conservation Rooflights®, up to 3m in length, were specified. “I specified the Rooflight Company due to their ability to meet a traditional and contemporary brief” Nick Macarthur, PTE Architects.
w: www.therooflightcompany.co.uk
t: 01993 833108

Polyflor Takes Pride at New Maternity
Unit at Bronglais Hospital
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w: www.wolfsystem.co.uk
Product update

Engineered wood panel manufacturer, Norbord, relaunches AZT safety campaign
After the success of the pioneering “Accidents – Zero Tolerance (AZT)” safety campaign at the three Norbord plants in the UK in 2007, a “rebranding” exercise has been completed so that employees are reminded of the importance of the message. The campaign was developed by teams from Safety, Marketing and IT, together with an external design company, with the aim of refreshing the look of AZT.

Shingle roof provides solution for school in conservation area.
Western Red Cedar Shingles were specified on the new performing arts space at Frensham Heights School in Farnham, helping the building blend into its natural environment overlooking a woodland glade. As the roof weathers it will soften and provide a low maintenance durable roofing solution. Due to the use of the facility, the roof build-up had to achieve a high acoustic specification.

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.

Heredesign helps happy healthy learning
Heredesign ceiling panels from Knauf AMF have been specified for one of the country’s first certified Passivhaus primary schools. Wilkinson Primary School building utilises high levels of natural light and ventilation to create a healthy and positive atmosphere that helps motivate the pupils and aid concentration. Heredesign played a key role in creating these feel-good rooms with 2,000m² ceiling panels installed in the classrooms, sports hall and circulation areas.

alsecco launches creative brick slip and tile range
alsecco has sourced one of the largest and most innovative ranges of brick slip and tile finishes, available to you now under one roof, as collection alsecco. alsecco ensure the thermal performance of your building with high performance, BBA-approved insulated systems to suit all types of project and specification. With the addition of collection alsecco to the portfolio, alsecco offers one the most comprehensive ranges of brick slip and tile finishes.

New liquid waterproofing system - The No. 1 'Fix-R' for flat roofs
Suitable for new build, repair and refurbishment projects – as well as balconies, terraces and walkways – FIX-R is a single liquid hybrid polymer system that is isocyanurate free and contains no solvents. Unlike other waterproofing systems, it has very low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which makes it virtually odour-free and it is not classed as a hazardous product.

Glassolutions project as Waverley steps gives Edinburgh a lift
Glass and glazing specialist GLASSOLUTIONS has played a key role in the £9.5m project to upgrade the famous Waverley Steps at Edinburgh station. Prior to the access improvement programme, “The Steps” were fully exposed to the elements and aesthetically unremarkable. The challenge was to balance the history and historic appeal of the station’s architecture with contemporary need and modern design. As well as providing lifts and escalators, the solution entailed extensive glazing in a self-supporting fully-glazed structure utilising advanced glass technology from GLASSOLUTIONS. SGG STADIP SECURIT® clear heat soaked toughened laminate safety glass was used in both the canopy and the portal screens to create a robust, safe and attractive glazed feature. The 21.5mm glass used in the canopy comprised triangular glass panels, bolted to steelwork via cast stainless steel SGG SPIDERGLASS® fixings for which specially designed brackets were painstakingly designed. The striking stainless steel lattice frame is supported by large stainless steel tree structures, designed by Jefferson Sheard and engineered by Arup.

Norbord’s flooring system seals success in the fight against wet, squeaky floors
Cabezdek provides a safe working platform in the build process and, as it is protected by a film, the floor is pristine when this film is peeled away. Once the floor has been laid it is designed to withstand all weather conditions and will remain unblemished for 62 days. The film is now secured by rollercoating which gives a more consistent adhesion on each board providing another layer of protection against moisture ingress.

Safety + Design + Confidence - Forbo's new step collection
With an increased use of safety floors in the private sector the demand for warmer and more welcoming finishes is growing. Forbo’s advances in technology see revolutionary STEP safety crystals embedded throughout the wearlayer, providing a fully slip resistant solution. The entire collection meets with the prevalent UK slip standards; wet Pendulum test >36 and >20 surface roughness, as well as EN1385 for sustainable slip resistance.

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Noraplan® Stone combines modern style with timeless reliability. 

The original re/f_lection-breaking stone is now joined by a new, smooth surface option available with a new surface option. The new AF/Armalex Class O product merges together the entire range of tubes, self-adhesive tubes (AF/Armalex Class O Self-Seal), sheets, tapes and pipe supports together under the same product group and harmonised technical values for the first time.

www.nora.com/uk

Dorma launches energy saving automatic sliding door system

DORMA has launched its new ST FLEX Green energy-saving automatic sliding door system which combines outstanding thermal insulation and a slimmer profile. The ST FLEX Green achieves U-values of between 1.4 and 1.8W/m²K and has been designed to suit with the appearance of DORMA’s standard ST FLEX and ST SECURITY systems. This enables designers to incorporate sliding doors with varying functions within a building.

www.dorma.com

IronmongeryDirect reveals more products in new catalogue

Over 500 new items have been added to the IronmongeryDirect collection. 

www.ironmongerydirect.co.uk

The original ‘Warm to touch’ handrail

Fabricated from galvanized mild steel tube, Stargard is skewed in a tough impact resistant 4mm PVC coating that provides a continuous smooth finish in both 42mm and 50 mm diameter. Available in a range of PVC colours, Stargard can incorporate LED insert lighting for health, safety and security environments and can be further enhanced when incorporated with PVC sleeved or stainless steel balusters, or the company’s range of Glassrail structured glass balustrades.

www.handrailsuk.co.uk

Redefining a classic

It’s time to bring new life to an old favorite. To celebrate its 25th anniversary, noraplan® stone is now available with a new surface option and a fresh, contemporary color palette. The original reflection-breaking surface is now joined by a new, smooth alternative. Featuring a discreet, non-directional scatter design, noraplan® stone combines modern style with timeless reliability.

www.nora.com/uk

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 heat tightness and resistance to wind uplift tests could be performed. 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;
ecustomerservice@bba.star.co.uk

www.armacell.com/uk
www.armacell-productselector.com

www.armacell.com

www.johnstonestrade.com

St Mary the Virgin church illuminated by Concord

St Mary the Virgin Church in Cottingham has benefitted from a new lighting solution built around the Concord Beacon LED High Output. The Beacon LED High Output is a high efficiency LED spotlight with a cutting-edge cooling fin design to maximise thermal management and reduction of LED junction temperature. The new lighting design makes the most of the beautiful medieval setting, lighting the whole building so all pews and aisles can be used.

www.concord-lighting.com

www.dorma.com

Johnstone’s Trade cleans up at Southmead Hospital

Johnstone’s high performance Microbarr range has been used on the brand new £630 million Southmead Hospital Bristol. The range has been developed to help prevent the spread of harmful bacteria that can lead to the proliferation of ‘superbugs’ like MRSA and E.Coli and was the perfect product for a project of this scale and significance. More than 32,000 litres of Microbarr Anti-Bacterial Acrylic Matt in Brilliant White were used.

www.johnstonestrade.com

w: www.armacell.com/uk w: www.armacell-productselector.com
Museum of Modern Art
Rio de Janeiro, 1958

The Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro was designed by one of the great Brazilian modernist architects, Affonso Eduardo Reidy (1909-1964), credited by many for creatively adapting Le Corbusier’s ideas and use of concrete to the Brazilian landscape and traditions. The photograph, taken in 1958, shows the spectacular view of the ‘Sugar Loaf’ Mountain and the Guanabara Bay offered by the wall to ceiling glazing of the future restaurant in the administration building, here used as a temporary exhibition space while the actual museum was being built. The same uninterrupted views would be a defining feature of the museum gallery, which had been designed as a very large space devoid of intermediate pillars or fixed partitions, so as to provide maximum flexibility for the display of exhibits. The museum had been conceived as a low, horizontal volume whose presence would not compete with the magnificent surrounding landscape. It was part of a complex that included the aforementioned administration building and a theatre, all set within a landscaped park designed by Roberto Burle-Marx on land recently reclaimed from the sea.

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