August
2014

Truly fine lines
Imagination and skill triumph in our Eye Line drawing competition

Inner strength
Outer restraint gives way inside RSHP’s British Museum

On the level
Luis Laplante and benjamin + beuchamp’s exquisite Somerset gallery

Light catcher
Clark Institute gets a sparkling extension from Tadao Ando

Behind the aluminium curtain
Marc Mimram’s practical lesson at Strasbourg architecture school

Going, going, Gove
Our schools need decent design, whatever he said

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Eye Line commendation: 2121 Bird Eye City View Drawing
Povilas Jurevicius
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The 2014 Stirling Prize shortlist, announced last month, bridges the north/south divide in terms of geographical location of projects, giving us representation from regional, London-based and international architects, and with all but one of them publicly funded and/or accessible. However, this relatively balanced list will probably do nothing to halt the opinionated bun fight that inevitably occurs among the profession once the winner is announced.

This shortlist is, in alphabetical order by practice name: Manchester Metropolitan University School of Art by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios; the Everyman Theatre Liverpool by Haworth Tompkins; the Library of Birmingham by Mecanoo; the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre at the LSE by O’Donnell + Tuomey; the Shard, London Bridge, by Renzo Piano Building Workshop; and the Aquatics Centre, Queen Elizabeth Park, London by Zaha Hadid Architects.

It’s a strong shortlist – with even the contentious Shard making its presence felt here as much as it does on the London skyline. RIBAJ’s editorial staff did feel a slight twinge of sadness that the list is sans Gill’s Great Ditching Museum by Adam Richards, which we saw as a subtle modern iteration of the Arts and Crafts movement that is so sensitively placed within its understated vernacular. The shortlist is also, for architect O’Donnell + Tuomey, its fifth Stirling Prize nomination; having missed out in 1999, 2005, 2011 and 2012. Perhaps this will be its year, but there’s strong competition. Whoever wins will miss out on the crock of gold this year, with the £20,000 prize not being reinstated until 2015, courtesy of Brockton Capital – but it would be nice to see a building that celebrates the craft of architecture – and there’s more than one – take the prize. •

The winner of the 2014 RIBA Stirling Prize will announced on Thursday 16 October at 66 Portland Place.
Hauser & Wirth: Bruton, Somerset
Laplace & Co, benjamin + beauchamp

Words Pippa Goldfinger
Photographs Hélène Binet

For those of you not familiar with the contemporary art world, the name may not mean a lot, but with galleries in Zurich, New York and London, Hauser & Wirth tops today’s art world power lists and makes Charles Saatchi look like small fry.

Those art capitals have had their place in the sun for long enough, now it’s the turn of Bruton, a small town in Somerset, and Hauser & Wirth couldn’t have picked a lovelier spot. Durslade Farm is situated on the outskirts of the town in beautiful grade II listed farm buildings overlooking lush countryside.

The original farm comprises an eccentric farmhouse built in 1776 from the local pale blue Lias stone with red brick detailing and beautiful stone mullioned windows purloined, one suspects, from some earlier, grander establishment. The threshing barn is equally antique while other simpler farm buildings were added in the 19th century.

The Argentinian-born, Paris-based architect Luis Laplace has worked alongside local practice benjamin + beauchamp, drawing on the ancient but tough farm architecture to create a variety of gallery spaces, an education room, bookshop, restaurant and bar. Where possible, the fabric and structure of the old buildings have been scrubbed up, repaired and exposed, showing off their inherent utilitarian beauty.

In the smaller galleries, where the rough surfaces might detract from the more intimate scale of the artworks, the walls have been plastered and painted white. At present the trusses remain unpainted but the approach is to see what works with the artwork.

New buildings form their own ‘cloister’ and use complementary but different materials: rough cast pale grey-brown brick, warm and soft enough when viewed against the original masonry of the farm. The buildings are simple without being arrogantly minimalist, and appear grounded in their setting.

High colonnades are formed from sandy
coloured precast lintels and columns, picking up on the colour of the lime mortar. Local contractors and craftspeople have been used where possible – particularly successful are the giant doors in chunky oak with huge galvanised steel ironmongery.

Inside these new buildings are the sleeker and more controlled spaces, though the usual gallery tropes of shadow gaps and concealed lighting are avoided.

After the simplicity, rugged and refined, of the farm buildings and new galleries, the interior of the farmhouse comes as a shock. It is designed as a guest house or home for an artist-in-residence, and Laplace has let his imagination run riot. It features vintage wallpapers, murals, coloured sanitaryware and vivid walls, driven partly by what he found while peeling back the layers of history within the house and partly in response to the artwork around him. This is like the fantasy house of an eccentric relative. It won’t be to everyone’s taste but it does make a refreshing change from the ubiquitous, sleek Babington House style of most nearby accommodation.

The outdoor courtyards have striated rough cast flooring, like the cleanest farmyard you could imagine. Perfect for when the Somerset weather turns nasty. The planting by star landscape architect Piet Oudolf is lovely – it looks rather formal in its immature state, but one can imagine the frothy grasses softening things up by September.

Walking around the site, one has the feeling that all involved, from the client to the subcontractors, care passionately about the project, in fact you can see gardeners and electricians slightly mesmerised by the artworks as they arrive and the sheer beauty of their current workplace.

Laplace has spent a lot of time in Bruton and is now greeted in the high street by the locals who have taken to the gallery and all it is bringing to Somerset. Co-founders Iwan and Manuela Wirth have also made a huge effort to engage with the community in Bruton and neighbouring towns. There is a real sense that this wonderful gallery will become a Somerset asset as well as an international art destination.

### Credits
- **Concept architect and interior design** Laplace & Co
- **Conservation architect** Benjamin + Beauchamp
- **Project management and quantity surveyor** Jackson Coles
- **Landscape designer** Piet Oudolf
- **Landscape design and implementation** Petherick, Urquhart & Hunt
- **Main contractor** Emery Bros
- **Structural engineer** Andrew Waring
- **M&E engineer** Peter Deer Associates
- **Contractor (farmhouse)** Ellis & Co

### In Numbers
- **1,267m²** existing buildings
- **551m²** new buildings
- **1,818m²** total building area

### Site Plan

1. Farm house (artists accommodation)
2. Education space
3. Office
4. Gallery entrance
5. Gallery restaurant
6. Gallery
7. Workshop
8. Car park
9. Cattle yard
10. Farm yard
11. Sculpture court
12. Cloister court
13. Meadow garden
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Heydar Aliyev Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan
Zaha Hadid Architects
Photograph: Hufton+Crow
Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Why is photographer Nick Hufton so enamoured with Zaha Hadid’s curvaceous behemoth in Baku? He could, after all, have chosen any photograph at all from a portfolio of images that would seem to be a roll call of Britain’s best architects and architecture. It turns out that the reasons are predicated on its photogenic nature. ‘I love the centre’s depth, the reflectivity of the floor and cladding and how, with its curves, it’s constantly modulating and changing as you move around it – it’s more of a sculpture than a building’ he says. But there are more subtle things about it that only an experienced photographer might pick up on. Like the dull yellow light off its huge expanse of glazing, set against a clear sky. ‘Yellow and blue can be difficult colours to photograph together, but here they work wonderfully,’ he notes, like he’s observing the phenomenon of Goethian colour theory.

Hufton concedes that the centre’s functions rattle around inside a shell that’s far bigger than its programme, but recognises that the bigger story is about how a country markets itself to the world; and in that way, perhaps there is an affinity of intent between the subject and the image-taker. Hufton has known business partner Al Crow since junior school – they both choose to live out of the rat race with their families in the same town in Hertfordshire, and from 2002 they beat down architects’ doors with postcard packs of building images, speculatively shot, in order to win commissions. Twelve years later, the business now comes to them – their ongoing work with Apple even tided them through the lean years of recession. ‘We’re just two mates that take photographs together,’ says Hufton affably. Perhaps; but like Hadid, you sense method behind the madness.

‘It’s constantly modulating and changing as you move around it – it’s more of a sculpture than a building’
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You are in a forest. It stretches as far as you can imagine, mile after mile of it, covering the hills and valleys of Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Small towns and villages, farms and sawmills, have carved out niches in the forest over time. Almost everything apart from public buildings is made of or clad in timber, to the extent that the occasional brick house is almost shocking. But nothing is as shocking as the original Clark art museum of 1955, built in 140 acres of parkland on the edge of colonial-era Williamstown.

This weird neoclassical edifice was built by architect Daniel Perry, in solid, glistening white marble. Built to last, with no regard to expense, it looks like a large mausoleum – indeed, that was the intention. Its art-collector founder Sterling Clark, together with his wife, fellow collector and former French actress Francine Clary, turn out to be buried beneath what were originally its front steps, now a rear terrace.

In this museum-tomb respect alone it resembles Britain’s Dulwich Picture Gallery, except that here the tomb is out of sight and out of mind. The point about the Clark is its collection – relatively small but mostly good, particularly strong in the French Impressionists and the sundry sculptures and art-objects that the Clarks collected, especially during their years in Paris from the early 1920s. But an equal selling point is its Walden-ish location, up here in the forest close to Vermont and upper New York state. Sterling Clark had toyed with the idea of leaving his collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, or building his own museum there, but in the end decided to head for the hills, making the museum also an art research institute associated with the town’s venerable Williams College.

A brutal-but-interesting extension clad
Ando’s new building (left) connects via a granite-clad walkway to the original 1955 neoclassical marble museum (right). The complex is set on a series of broad shallow lakes.
in pink granite (another material associated with tombs) followed in 1973, the Manton Research Center, designed by the noted modernist Pietro Belluschi with The Architects Collaborative, founded by Walter Gropius. The usual clutter of associated lesser buildings also arrived, until, eventually and inevitably, the time came to sort out the whole campus. It has taken a long time. Director Michael Conforti and his trustees first initiated a masterplan in 2001; the brakes inevitably went on during the financial crash, but they have seen it through with a programme that includes two buildings by Tadao Ando, a thorough refurbishment of the original building by Annabelle Selldorf of New York based Selldorf Architects (now refurbishing the Manton building), and a comprehensive landscape reworking by Reed Hilderbrand of Cambridge, Massachusetts. New York’s Gensler acted as executive architect and sustainability consultant. All in all it has cost $145m.

First of the Ando buildings, in 2008, was the Lunder Center, home of the Williamsburg Conservation Center, but also with gallery space. Conceived as a ‘chapel in the woods’, away from the main museum, it freed up the main site for the big number: Ando’s new Clark Center, the gateway to the campus, with three generously scaled, temporary exhibition galleries, a cafe, and a shop. However, it is much more than a container – it acts

The distinction between the work of the various designers started to blur: it’s sometimes hard to know where Ando’s work ends and Reed Hilderbrand’s begins.
as an ordering device for the whole site.

Conforti, who I meet on the eve of the museum’s reopening on Independence Day, reflects that the long gestation of the project engendered confidence between the participants – in particular Ando, who visited frequently, and came to trust the landscape architects. In consequence, the distinction between the work of the various designers started to blur: there’s a particular new low external marble wall outside, crowning a landscaped slope as if slid out from the body of the original museum, which looks absolutely right but Conforti can’t recall whose idea it was. Similarly, since Ando’s new building commands a series of three broad shallow pools gently gurgling down the slope, and is orientated and shaped to bring the landscape into the composition, it’s sometimes hard to know where his work ends and Reed Hilderbrand’s begins. And finally, he and Selldorf overlap where the Ando building sends out a diagonal link to the original museum that culminates in a new lobby in the same architectural language as the rest of the new building.

Conforti says the museum chose Ando, from a roster of big names, for two reasons in particular: because he was not a maker of self-consciously ‘iconic’ buildings; and because he was skilled at building downwards and bringing light with him. It was always clear that the new centre should hunker down in the landscape, against the backdrop of hills, rather than start competing with either the natural surroundings or the original 1955 museum.

Ando’s response is a composition of solid wall, glazed pavilion and reflection from water. The principal freestanding walls are very bold, made of big slabs of the same pink, heavily veined granite as the 1973 building, but much more deftly handled. In just three long sections they manage to funnel you towards the entrance, define one edge of the first lake, enclose the entry courtyard, slice right through the new building, and re-emerge in the diagonal link to the revived old
There are other walls, of course, in Ando’s celebrated smooth pale in-situ concrete, and these were carefully done – and in some cases taken down and redone – to the master’s satisfaction.

In fact as you approach it from the car park, the whole building appears to be a wall. From the other direction, across the lakes, it appears as a single-storey glazed pavilion. It’s only when you are inside and find you can look downwards as well as sideways – that there is a larger lower level – that the success of the project becomes clear. The museum chose wisely: Ando has indeed brought daylight down – and via reflections off water, back up again – in a thoroughly assured manner. The lower level cannot quite avoid the sense of being subterranean (galleries seldom have a sense of the outside world any-

way), but the rest of the spaces, such as the cafe, are just fine.

Ando is the headline name here, but there’s another subtle architect at work. Sell-dorf has done a fine job of working within the traditionalist domestic-scale interiors of the 1955 building. She’s carried out some quite radical re-ordering of rooms and extended the usable gallery space considerably within the marble shell, while breaking down some larger spaces into more intimate rooms, such as one devoted to Degas and his little dancer.

I’m prepared to bet that most previous visitors will be largely unaware of the extent of her work, which is exactly the point.

The Clark, then: a small art museum originally conceived as a monument that has found a way to grow out of its monument-ality. You have to admit that’s clever.

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**Credits**

**Client** The Clark Art Institute

**Architects** Tadao Ando

Ando Architect and Associates

Selldorf Architects

Gensler

**Landscape Architects**

Reed Hilderbrand

*In Numbers*

- $145m project cost
- 3,954 m² new building
- 4,000 m² original building
- 56.6 ha campus size
- 1,000 new trees
- 3 reflecting pools

*Left* Ando concrete meets Ando water: ground level of the new building opens to the hidden depths.
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The first of three tricky tasks facing Rogers Stirk Harbour was this: how to insert a £135m factory into Georgian-rich Bloomsbury, between Bedford Square on one side and the British Museum’s Edward VII wing on the other? Because a factory is essentially what the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre at the British Museum is – complete with offices, distribution warehouse and movements of large trucks. It’s at the top, laboratory-grade, end of the industrial scale. Yes, it contains the big new exhibition gallery where the recent Vikings exhibition was staged, but that is just a fraction of the whole. Not for them the grand public promenade of Foster’s millennial Great Court project.

Their second task was to make convincing architecture out of what is not only industrial, but back-of-house, space. The WCEC, as it is known for short, is the opposite of a gateway building. It’s an extension that – truck movements aside – is entered from the...
main museum buildings lying alongside and behind it. Graham Stirk, the partner in charge here, admits this was a challenge. A visible entrance and the sequence of spaces behind it makes a building more legible. Without that, you are really just designing boxes, in this case a rear and side extension that happens to be highly visible while also being very secure and private. So – one would like to think in memory of Inigo Jones and his plain barn-church in Covent Garden – Stirk and the Rogers team set out to design the handsomest boxes in England. The building, then, is expressed as four linked green-roofed pavilions rather than as a slab-structure.

And the third task? To make pleasant subterranean spaces. This is an iceberg building. Planning constraints forced the maximum height of the building down to the cornice level of the Edward VII wing, while the minimum height – where it approaches the backs of the Bedford Square houses – becomes the ground. In consequence the whole building is sunk deep into the ground, as the section shows, while a fifth pavilion is wholly sunken, its glass roof set among gardens. The mighty hole they dug to drop the whole sequence of pavilions into was as impressive as the hole they dug to build the Pompidou Centre.

Beyond the massing of the building and the need to mostly obscure its visible operations, was the tricky business of material contextualism. A nod to the museum’s Portland stone was in order. Now Rogers does not do punched-window masonry over a classic prefabricated steel structure, as this is. So the
Great Court Level 02

1. Great Court
2. Anterooms
3. Exhibition gallery
4. Roof of sunken pavilion
5. King Edward VII wing
6. Circulation cores
7. Conservation labs
8. Offices
9. Plant room
10. Object distribution
11. Collection stores

Cross section
design evolved with two skin materials – long planks of obscured glass screening the curtain walling, interspersed with tall sections of fossil-rich Portland stone deliberately sliced delicatessen-thin. The main museum is smooth Portland, of course, but RSH went for the livelier texture of the roachbed variety. The visual solidity of the mother museum is rejected in another way, too: the new building, though rectilinear, eschews conventional corners, adopting instead the device of overshooting plates. This further emphasises the thinness of the stone sections of cladding.

Patterning on the kiln-fired glass cladding planks (an obscured section with a clear edge running round each one) is a bit of an architectural in-joke: it’s of the skyline of Portland where the stone – cut in identical-depth pieces – comes from. Despite all this classiness in design and making, and the way this system allows the workers to see out while outsiders mostly can’t see in, this cladding can’t avoid looking just a bit like those 1970s draughty frosted window louvres. Oddly it’s on the western elevation, directly overlooking the back of the Bedford Square houses, that the glazing becomes completely clear, though with brises-soleils. The whole new complex is free-standing but very close to the old buildings: one consequence of that is some fine architectural chasms, glimpsed from the glazed links, between old and new.

So from outside this is as self-effacing and
conservative a Rogers building as you could imagine, and a little disappointing for that. Inside however, they let rip with the industrial aesthetic. The look is very lab-like, workbenches festooned with suction pipes to remove unwanted dust and fragments. At the top is a roof-lit studio where light materials such as paper and textiles are worked on. There are offices and communal areas aplenty. At the bottom is the heavy stuff – the get-in for the large stone object workshop can accommodate an Easter Island statue. The wholly sunken pavilion has a toplit atrium and glass pavement lenses in its walkways, so daylight levels are good. Stirk talks of the need for adaptable spaces that can absorb future pieces of as-yet-uninvented equipment. So it’s long-life, loose-fit, in the famous phrase of Alex Gordon. Stirk had high-ceilinged New York warehouses in mind and there’s something of that generosity of space here. He also fully subscribes to the Louis Kahn “served and servant spaces” philosophy. Vierendeel steel trusses define a ceiling zone where all the overhead equipment is visibly housed. And one complete floor above the exhibition gallery – which is 70m long by 16m wide by 6 high - is an impressive, generously arranged, plant room.

Rogers’ Meccano-like constructional clarity is present and correct throughout – you can see how everything bolts together, in square-section dark grey-painted steelwork, and it’s neatly and satisfyingly done. Vivid Rogers colours are only apparent in the lift cores. This is very far removed from the cramped and dingy basement rooms where many of the staff previously
worked. Notoriously the largest object they could previously X-ray was a mummified cat. Now they have hospital-grade facilities.

However, it’s really all about the trucks. The world’s great museums are forever exchanging objects with each other, and many will now send materials to be conserved here. Cavernous vaults to contain some 200,000 delicate organic objects from the collection are ready to receive their cargo, once every object has passed through a freezer to kill any bugs. The BM previously had no lorry get-in, and large objects had to be manhandled up the front steps. A conventional ramp to a basement would have wiped out way too much square footage, apart from looking vile. The solution is a bit of urban trickery: a full-size articulated truck lift masquerading as a section of granite pavement rises from the ground to swallow the vehicles. A convoy of three can be stored inside the building if need be.

The WCEC finally gives the British Museum the scientific and conservation facilities that it deserves, and consolidates its international reputation. We the public will mostly never see these spaces, apart from our journey through the openings made in the back of the Great Court, anterooms and then the glazed link to the new gallery. Stirk has plans to set up a circuit-route from other galleries to the new space so it is no longer a cul-de-sac. But it’s the workers who win out in this building that celebrates the secret life of this cultural factory. You may not see them, but you’re glad they’re there. 

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**IN NUMBERS**

- **18,000 m²** gross internal floor area
- **£135m** project cost
- **£5,000/m²** approximate construction cost
- **19.8kg/m²** annual CO₂ emissions

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**Right** Graham Stirk, partner at RHSP, is the lead architect for the WCEC. Here are some of his new friends.

**Left** Typical working environment for conservators in the north west corner of the complex. Note the ceiling ‘servant zone’.
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Strasbourg’s curtain call

If you’re designing a school of architecture, why not make the building itself a lesson? Marc Mimram takes a bow

Words: Stephen Cousins Photographs: Julien Lanoo

Schools of architecture in France are normally on the edges of cities, so when local architect Marc Mimram had the opportunity to design a new school slap bang in the centre of Strasbourg, just a stone’s throw from the main railway station, he saw a rare opportunity to create something notable that could itself help students understand the composition of buildings in the urban landscape.

La Fabrique, which translates as the factory, is the €16m first phase of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Strasbourg (Strasbourg School of Architecture), built for client the Ministry of Culture and Communication. The second phase involves refurbishment of the adjacent building, Le Garage, due for completion in December, to which it will link via a footbridge.

Mimram’s 4,500m² building resembles a stack of two-storey glass and metal boxes that are rotated relative to each other, like a Rubik’s Cube. The three blocks house classroom and studio spaces and are subtly twisted so that their picture windows face prominent city landmarks – part of the architect’s plan to connect architecture with the city. These blocks are raised up on just eight slender columns to leave the ground floor entirely open and transparent, creating space for an exhibition area and a meeting place for students and the public. Two auditoria are accommodated in the basement.

La Fabrique’s highly angular facade is softened by panels of wrinkled aluminium mesh, installed over glazed walls to create an opaque tissue-like effect, which is enhanced when the building is lit inside at night. The mesh panels are also broken up by large floor to ceiling picture windows on each level.

‘Being a professor of architecture myself, I thought when I designed the building that the best lesson for students would be to give them as direct a relationship with the city as possible, provide great views, and make the structure as transparent as I could,’ says Mimram, who is the brains behind the Hassan II Bridge in Morocco, which won the 2013 Aga Khan Prize for architecture. ‘However, I wanted to avoid a “glass box” – now a redundant architectural concept – or a bland rectangular building with small windows, which French building regulations are increasingly pushing architects towards.’

As a civil engineer and an architect, Mimram’s other ambition was to express as much of the structural steel frame as possible.
to help students understand how the load bearing system resolves forces.

‘I’m wary of the current trend for incorporating insulation in the outside layer of the building fabric, so that structure is concealed. Conversely, the idea of exposing structure on the outside, made famous by architects like Sir Richard Rogers, is unsound for thermal energy conservation due to cold bridging,’ says Mimram. His alternative was to keep the steel structure inside, partially-visible behind the double glazing and mesh curtain, but when lit from inside at night, the entire facade is rendered transparent, its steel skeleton revealed in silhouette.

The building’s rotated form helped maximise the available volume within the compact site, and was in part dictated by the peculiarities of French planning constraints. The two lower blocks cantilever out towards the street, while the top block steps back.

This also enabled the creation of triangular external roof terraces, used for teaching, another effort to connect students to their surroundings. In addition, it allowed a large staircase to be accommodated at the heart of the building where students can display work for crits, with a specially-designed rail at the top for hanging models.

The extensive use of metal structure is a reference to the site’s industrial past and Strasbourg’s 19th century architecture. Mimram also wanted to explore the relationship between structure and envelope, which has been a cornerstone of architectural practice since the Gothic age, and was first expressed in metal structure in the 19th century.

The steel frame is a hybrid, alternating between an ordinary and a Vierendeel truss, with no diagonal beams, on each floor. Vierendeel trusses create openings for the large picture windows and the two types are

1. Entrance/Reception
2. Central circulation/Crit space
3. Basement lobby
4. Lecture theatre
5. Cafeteria
6. External stair and bicycle storage
7. IT room
8. Cafe office
9. Seminar room
10. Small studio space
11. Large studio space
12. Rooftop terrace
aligned in different directions on each floor, giving the frame a semi-random appearance.

‘The location of vertical and diagonal beams was calculated using a special calibration to ensure each steel member is as thin as possible,’ says Mimram. ‘Although the frame is not super efficient in terms of structure, it is very effective at creating the specific views of the city we wanted, and providing a structural lesson for students.’

The aluminium mesh curtain is designed to mimic a soft fabric curtain and appears to move with the changing light on the north and west main elevations, an idea inspired by Mimram’s father who was a tailor. To achieve this effect, different irregularities and undulations were introduced into the strands of mesh in each panel, which were manufactured by a specialist in Italy.

La Fabrique is entirely naturally ventilated and certain mesh panels were designed to slide sideways to allow the windows to be opened from inside. The mesh is also aligned to reduce solar gain, and cut down glare where students are working at computers.

Natural ventilation forms part of the building’s environmental strategy, which includes the use of geothermal energy for heating, and super-insulated triple glazing to achieve an overall carbon footprint of 4kgCO$_2$/m$^2$.

‘French regulations require low energy consumption for public buildings and we expect to achieve between 50 and 70kWh/m$^2$, which is quite respectable. We are checking to see if performance in use meets with design expectations and so far it is looking good,’ says Mimram. If the figures stack up, the building could provide valuable tool for teaching environmental sustainability, as well as structure, to the next generation of aspiring French architects. •
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Sir Peter Hall

The leading Bartlett School planning professor revisits his 1998 book ‘Sociable Cities’ and rings the changes in his newly revised 2nd edition.

Why did you feel a reappraisal was necessary in the new edition of Sociable Cities?

So many things have happened in 16 years. The book came out in that period of great optimism a year into the Blair government. Since then we've been through a colossal world economic crisis, change of government and subsequent austerity. I had to update the message. Despite that, the book’s main stance is that the Garden City model is as relevant as ever.

With prices rising exponentially, isn't the housing crisis primarily an economic rather then a planning one?

Yes, but the main problems are that we are only building 40% of the housing that we should be; and most of that is dreadful. With localism, funding initiatives should come at local level, with more public/private partnerships. The days of wholly state funded council housing are over, but the private sector isn’t the whole solution either. I’m encouraged by innovative sovereign wealth funds being picked up by forward-thinking councils like Manchester to fund housing.

The Wolfson Economics Prize winner is announced this month offering £250,000 for putting forward a model for a privately funded Garden City approach...

Our proposal for that got commended but not shortlisted. In a sense the book is an extension of that proposition for a new garden city in the Rugby/Daventry area funded by public/private partnerships like the Milton Keynes Development Corporation model. We believe that financial models based on long-term returns are key to success, as building new communities takes time and massive investment.

You mentioned Letchworth but isn’t it just an anachronism?

Letchworth is a glorious place but was a financial disaster, as all the early garden cities were – clobbered by investors after a quick return. It didn’t break even until the 1950s. Ebeneezer Howard thought it could be done without government investment; but his lieutenant Frederic Osborne realised it was needed to create infrastructure for the towns. He saw through the larger and more successful post-war garden cities.

No – to function, a garden city needs a population of 200,000+, not 32,000. The book argues that Howard’s terms need to be reappraised. His garden cities were satellite sub-units of an existing city and linked to it by an ‘inter-municipal railway’, not entities in themselves, and that is always forgotten. Our Wolfson proposal was predicated on doing just that and opening up a closed-down section of Midlands railway to connect our garden city with the proposed HS2 line. Sadly, that might have been a bridge too far for them.

The CASE FOR GARDENS

Asked if gardens are relevant at all in a new, denser urban model, Hall argues that in the Northern European urban pattern, they remain relevant to our mode of living. He cites Dutch garden city developments as extremely successful precedents, but ones needing modification for the larger scale of London

Hall recently spoke to London mayor Boris Johnson about updating The London Plan, and was concerned that the need for the Plan’s quota of 49,000-62,000 new homes a year over the next 10 years has seen under 19,000 built. Hall warned that ‘a serious deficit is looming’. His answer is the creation of more urban villages on the model of Stratford City using public/private funding models and perhaps development corporations. Ebeneezer Howard’s famous rallying cry of ‘Where will all the people go?’ Hall declares, remains prescient even now.

Intelligence is officially approved RIBA CPD. Look out for icons throughout the section indicating core curriculum areas.
Accentuate the positive

We all know good design can transform lives for the better. Why is the profession so bad at articulating that to the public?

Professor Flora Samuel

We all know that good architecture can make a great difference to people’s lives but as a profession we are not very good at proving it.

At a time when value has to be shown and legislation even demands social value from public organisations, an Arts and Humanities Research Council investigation hopes to demonstrate where that value lies in the arts.

During a year-long review by the Sheffield University Home Research Group (of which I am a member), supported by the RIBA in consultation with a large network of industry and academic experts both within and without architecture, over 100 reports and advisory documents have been trawled through.

Those seeking government funds need to prove the social value of what they do. A recent survey of 70 registered providers and other housing professionals revealed that although nearly all the participants believed good design was very important for wellbeing and pride, very few of them had any idea where evidence might be found to prove this.

Yet the 2013 Public Services (Social Value) Act states that an organisation procuring public services (including local authorities, government departments, NHS trusts and housing associations) must review how the services commissioned and procured might improve social value in an area, and state how, through the procurement process, these improvements can be secured. But housing bodies have started passing the liability on to architects by asking them to fill in questionnaires on how social value will be achieved (look out for housing association body HACT’s tool for measuring the social impact of housing providers).

Little understanding

Results from our pilot study suggest there is very little understanding of what architects do, a supposition backed up by a 2012 survey of 2,031 British adults conducted by www.in-building.org, which showed that 15% didn’t even know that architects design buildings.

Not only that, but the profession itself struggles to articulate its value. Three documents provide the bedrock to assessing value: David Halpern’s 1995 book Mental Health and the Built Environment; Matthew Carmona’s Bibliography of Design Value (CABE 2001); and Morris Hargreaves McIntyre’s 2006 Literature Review of the Social, Economic and Environmental Impact of Architecture and Design, commissioned by the Scottish Executive. Our project brings them up to date.

But the problem is that architecture receives scant mention in any of them – a disaster from the point of view of anyone trying to sell the brand ‘architect’. If it is mentioned, the focus is on buildings, which are of course the product of a team, not just architects.

A further issue is the difference between architecture and construction. We have taken the stance that providing a warm non-leaking environment should be a given and, although it clearly has value, does not provide evidence of cultural value added by architects. The team’s unanimous conclusion is that any future framework of value needs to focus on the process of working with architects rather than the final product.

Social skillset

We must do more to promote the skillsets of architecture, which are about so much more than just building buildings. If we separate practice out into value types or priorities, for example commercial, social and cultural – and we know that they are not mutually exclusive – we are better able to describe with clarity what architecture is. Building on the work of Halpern we have set out, as a start, the five part skillset of social architecture.

Architects’ values

- Transforming mental and physical states – creating environments to transform the way we feel and think. We now have a strong body of evidence to prove that good design in healthcare environments does affect how people feel – indeed that good design is good for you. There is also a reasonable body of
Architecture receives scant mention in any of the three documents that provide a bedrock to assessing value – a disaster for anyone trying to sell the brand ‘architect’. Evidence to suggest that good design is good for business. The evidence base for housing is much more shaky, although the importance for wellbeing of allowing people to influence the form of their built environment is fairly conclusive. Rigorous post-occupancy evaluation of housing will provide vital evidence.

- Changing networks and communities – creating built, and other, frameworks for community interaction. Architecture is notably missing from policy discussions in this area, yet this is an important area of business for many community-based practices.
- Identity, belonging, heritage and social labelling – co-designing curation/branding of place to have a positive impact on residents’ feelings about the value of their place in the world. Anna Klingmann, in her powerful book Brandscapes, suggests architects need to take control of this aspect of their work, using it for social good rather than manipulation.
- Transformation through the design process – facilitating fulfilling learning through co-design. It has been shown that an influx of professional attention can help community self-esteem grow. Klingmann says the profession does too little to sell the benefits of working with architects as part of ‘the experience economy’.

- Rigorous recording and representation of events – mapping and representation of space in use, networks and events; in doing so providing important evidence of impact. Architecture consistently undersells its ability to map and represent space use, networks and events, and so provide important evidence of impact. This is not so in Denmark where precise rigorous public space studies developed by Jan Gehl and his team gave the politicians the evidence to push through the changes that have since made Copenhagen into one of the world’s most liveable cities.

These are important skills that make a difference. The public image of architecture is truly limited, a situation not helped by a sceptical government and media. We need the simple tools that the Cultural Value of Architecture project is providing to move us forward so we can communicate and evidence architecture’s value.

Flora Samuel is professor of architecture at the University of Sheffield School of Architecture. Download the full report or have your say on definitions of architect practice types at: culturalvalueofarchitecture.org www.hact.org.uk

Timeline of relevant literature


The RIBA Journal August 2014
Slim pickings in the free world

Michael Gove’s free schools programme gave architects limited opportunities, but some exciting challenges

Holly Porter
Michael Gove has gone but his influence on education lives on. His first definitive policy as education secretary was to create the free schools programme – a violent reaction to the excesses of the Labour government’s Build-ings Schools for the Future initiative (BSF), which he axed in 2010. Politically, he was setting out his stall: he needed to do something that was cheap (the funding pot was empty) but full of enthusiastic political rhetoric.

Based on the US Charter School movement, Gove’s free schools allowed anyone to apply to set up a school of their own. It could be any type of school, but you couldn’t run for profit, and you had to be able to demonstrate the area’s basic need for the school. Free schools were not about fancily designed buildings but educational outcomes.

Free schools were based on classic Tory values: fast-paced reform, empowering communities and individuals, taking power away from local authorities, and centralised funding routes. To support this vision, the Department for Schools and Families was replaced by the Department for Education (DFE). The Education Funding Agency (EFA) was also born, set up by the DFE in April 2012 in an attempt to improve efficiency, accountability and transparency in the education sector – and to manage the funding, delivery and procurement of education projects, including free schools.

Space standards, specifications and price points were all slashed. The space standards bit was interesting: although less area was funded (a 5-10% reduction on Building Bulletins), there was more flexibility on how space was allocated. The loosening of space standards encouraged alternative building typologies to be used – old warehouses, office buildings, hospitals or existing schools. But as an architect the rest of it made for pretty depressing reading: limits of external materials, no atrium spaces, no flexible partitions etc.

Gove’s background in journalism and natural aptitude for soundbites led to the free schools movement making the headlines in 2010 as he made clear his staunch views on the unimportance of design. Gove’s view was that there was no concrete evidence to link educational outcomes to good design, and therefore it was irrelevant. In his view, consultants and in particular architects were fleecing the taxpayer with fees. To quote Gove: ‘We won’t be getting Richard Rogers to design your school. We won’t be getting any award-winning architects to design it, because no one … is here to make architects richer.’ I’m not sure which architects Gove has met, but he obviously wasn’t hanging out with people I know. When it comes to salaries in relation to educational attainment we are the running joke of the professional classes.

Empowering the community
By September 2015, 331 free schools will either be open or in the pipeline. Attainment in those that have been visited by Ofsted has been judged ‘good’ in 69% of free schools, compared to 64% of all other state schools including academies. So have these politically motivated environments delivered as expected against their own objectives since their inception four years ago? Not quite.
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Challenges of lower budgets

The EFA price standard for a free school building is £1,113/m² – almost half the standard budget of a BSF scheme. The impact of this is that there has been a significant move towards standardised product solutions.

Obviously prefabrication is not new to education buildings – systems such as CLASP were used widely in the 1950s, and the Victorian school design with its centralised halls and u-shaped classroom configurations off from it could also be said to be standardised in some ways. Innovation is very often borne out of adversity and financial challenge, and for larger free school projects the development of standardised manufacturing methods is exciting for the construction industry.

Key players such as Laing O’Rourke and Portakabin have invested these types of construction methods. There are a range of efficient standardised solutions that are really cost effective as new builds over 2,000m²: volumetric, panelised, concrete, cross-laminated timber, steel – allowing higher build quality at a better price. My own practice, Surface to Air, is involved in modular school design, spearheading Portakabin’s product in the market and looking closely at the car manufacturing industry for inspiration. The primary Riverside free school in Barking was our first free school as Surface to Air – delivered in seven months.

But on smaller free school projects most building works simply involve extension or partial remodelling – making standardisation virtually impossible. This makes it hard to achieve the price points on these projects. When you add the most commonly used procurement route for such projects – uncompetitive call-off contracts – these clients end up paying through the nose, for something they could have procured for themselves more cheaply and most certainly more quickly.

What next?

There have been some relatively interesting developments in standardisation designs with larger schools. I fear, however, that free schools will join the long cycle of politically motivated education design programmes cut just before they hit their stride following a change in the political climate. We need cross-party strategies on these issues, pulling the best minds from every party, not throwing out the baby with the bath water after each change of government. We need to pull together the good elements that work in schools, and keep working at them. As design professionals, we also need to demonstrate that design does affect attainment. We must learn from the hard blows dealt by Gove and the recession if we are to move forward.

The big problem is that the effect of design is very difficult to quantify. It is easy to measure the value of a QS on a project, or a structural engineer or contractor. But the concept, strategy and design vision are difficult to measure. This has been recognised by the Construction Industry Council in its work on design quality indicators, though it has not cracked the problem yet.

What we need in education are evidence-based design studies similar to those carried out by Roger Ulrich for the health service. He proved that patients recovered faster using fewer drugs when they were in well-lit acoustically controlled private rooms with pleasant views. Without comparable evidence for education buildings, we could end up with a building programme that counts the cost of everything, yet understands the value of nothing.

Mark Featherstone-Witty – the man behind the Brit school in Croydon, whose alumni include Amy Winehouse and Adele.

Holly Porter is founding director of Surface to Air Architects

In the beginning all kinds of community groups applied. Community free school groups abounded, led by individuals such as Jon de Maria, who successfully campaigned to convert Bolingbroke hospital in Wands-worth into a new secondary free school.

Four years on, however, there are relatively few new free schools in the pipeline. The main success stories involve a limited number of major players; primarily existing outstanding schools or academies wanting to extend their catchment, such as Oasis, Ark and Harris. While these providers may all be truly excellent, they are not the groups originally envisioned to take up the programme. Why did this happen? My hunch is that most parents are too busy trying to earn a living to go about setting up their child’s school.

And then there were the faith schools (115 of the original applications were in this category). Empowering the community can be a dangerous thing for a politician, as it tends to come back to bite you on the backside. Gove, Birmingham, ‘Trojan horse’ – enough said.

This is not to say there is nothing interesting coming up. Two of the most significant community-led projects are the Powerlist Post-16 Leadership College focusing on law and finance (the brainchild of Michael Eboda, chief executive of Powerful Media); and the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, co-founded by Sir Paul McCartney and Sir Paul McCartney.

The price standard for a free school building is £1,113/m² – almost half the standard budget of a Building Schools for the Future scheme
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Time and again, lead can provide the solutions to tricky construction problems, a RIBA Journal seminar heard

Words: Ruth Slavid

When an architect starts talking about lead, you can be confident this is someone who really cares about their buildings since it often provides the solution to interesting problems those architects have set themselves. As Edinburgh-based Richard Murphy of Richard Murphy Architects put it, ‘lead gets you out of tricky corners.’

Murphy was speaking at the RIBA Journal seminar ‘Lead – Sustainable, Versatile and Modern’ sponsored by the Lead Sheet Association. His concern with detail is such that he needs a material with lead’s versatility. So, on his latest house, the first he has actually designed for himself, he is using lead on the roof to make the solar panels look as if they are intended rather than stuck on afterwards – ‘You just would use lead for this wouldn’t you?’

Murphy described this house, which includes a disappearing corner and a hidden bath, as ‘one quarter Soane, one quarter Scarpa, one quarter eco-house and one quarter Wallace and Gromit’.

In reference to the way Scarpa at Castelvecchio used obviously inserted planes of different materials to indicate how the building had been altered, Murphy added vertical planes of lead for his conversion of a mews house in Edinburgh. He used it in a similar manner at the Fruitmarket gallery in Edinburgh. When it came to Dundee Contemporary Arts, Murphy felt the colour of patinated copper would be more appropriate – and was shocked by how much more difficult the material was to work with.

Architects should not think of lead purely in terms of solving problems, argued Andrew Barnett, senior partner at Hopkins Architects. ‘Lead is often relegated to very difficult circumstances,’ he said. That is not the case at his practice, which has celebrated the material because it shows ‘the mark of the maker’.

Hopkins has used the material widely on roofs – at the David Mellor cutlery factory in Derbyshire, at Glyndebourne and most recently at St George’s Chapel in Great Yarmouth, where it provides a linking element between the restored building and a brick pavilion that sits alongside it. But like Murphy, Hopkins has not restricted the material to the fifth elevation. Following the success of its first building for David Mellor, the practice designed an office and showroom in central London. The location was very different but the link came from the use of lead – this time as a cladding material made up into panels. Barnett said the practice learnt ‘that lead can be used in a very modern way, similar to other panellised systems’.

Foster Wilson’s Parabola Arts Building for Cheltenham Ladies College comprises a new oval structure alongside an existing building. The new building’s curved roof has a complex geometry and some three-dimensional curvature, so lead was the obvious solution. ‘Can other materials take on board the subtle curves needed?’ partner Edmund Wilson asked rhetorically.

The weight of the material was also an advantage in terms of acoustics, obviating the need for the use of heavy plasterboard to increase the roof’s mass.

Gavin Sargent of WCEC Architecture described a new private house on which he used 13 tonnes of the material. It was an ideal solution for this hybrid of traditional and contemporary design, he said, because ‘it has a long life, and can be worked to produce bespoke and watertight details in three dimensions.’ He also pointed out that, while it can be considered expensive, lead’s low maintenance requirements and long life actually make it very good value. And, he added, because it is seen as a traditional material, it can help convince planners overseeing a conservation area to accept a more contemporary design than they may have done otherwise. All projects used BS EN12588 rolled lead sheet. • www.leadsheet.co.uk

Left Richard Murphy is using lead on a house roof to complement the solar panels.

Above Roof on Hopkins’ restored St George’s Chapel, Great Yarmouth.
Home and away

Our second report from the RIBA/NBS economics panel looks at the chronic lack of housing supply and opportunities abroad

By Adrian Malleson and Adrian Dobson

The second session of the RIBA & NBS Economics Panel met at the RIBA in June, this time to talk about international working and UK housing, as well as to revisit the prospects for the UK construction industry. Five experts came, each with their own view of the market. Sharing their insights were Simon Rawlinson, head of research and insight at EC Harris; Cluttons’ research director Sue Foxley; economics director at the Construction Products Association, Noble Francis; Peter Oborn, RIBA vice president international; and Adrian Dobson, RIBA director of practice. Chairing the discussions was Adrian Malleson, head of research at RIBA Enterprises.

State of the market

The market for UK architects looks strong and is improving. GDP is forecast to rise by at least 2.5% per annum in the next few years. The UK is outperforming almost all other European economies. Construction growth is set to exceed that of the general economy. Led by activity in the housing sector, we have seen four consecutive quarters of construction growth, and five of rising business investment. ‘We can now be much more positive about future growth,’ Francis noted, ‘but it is of course from a very low starting point.’

The picture of growth is backed by the RIBA Future Trends survey. It shows three consecutive quarters of growth in the value of work in progress for architects, up about 10% on an annual basis. Dobson pointed out that ‘it too is from a very low base, and there still seems to be quite a lot of spare capacity, so we aren’t yet seeing any overall increase in margins, or aggregate levels of employment’.

Concerns remain of course. Foxley pointed out that EU economic recovery is still a worry, and Rawlinson observed that it was lumpy across sectors. The panel was also clear that continuity of policy, legislation and taxation was required to give the industry stability – extreme or ad hoc policies were damaging. But the consensus was clear: the recession was over, and we could look forward to a more stable market.

UK average house prices were up around 10% on last year, Francis told the panel, with London seeing a near 19% year-on-year average increase. Prices in London were now 32% above the 2008 peak. As Foxley put it: ‘When it comes to housing, London operates in a global rather than national echelon.’ This house price inflation is not a direct result of government schemes but is due to a chronic lack of supply. While building is accelerating (there’s been a 21% increase in housing starts), production cannot meet growing demand.

Getting capital for a deposit is a challenge for many. Foxley pointed out that evidence from the rental market suggested people are moving to cheaper properties and locations to try to save towards deposits. Those who do have London property are hanging on to it.

New models

The UK housing market has some deep problems that won’t be solved overnight. The panel saw the need for new models to get houses built. The incentive for developers is to maximise the number of units produced, not to meet the needs of occupiers. We need to shift towards the right kind of properties being built. More social housing (not just ‘affordable’), and more self-build need to be an increasing part of the mix.

Rawlinson suggested architects might adapt to the business process behind house building. ‘I would definitely encourage architects to design projects with the developer’s cash flow in mind,’ he said. ‘Design strategies which allow phased construction and gradual release of units to the market will be welcomed’. And improved infrastructure can draw more areas into the economic centres of the UK, particularly London. Might High Speed 2 result in one or more new towns, plugged directly into the capital?

The panel consensus was that housing’s year-on-year price increase would fall back a little. The sales market has slowed over the last month, partly due to a lack of affordable properties, so we could expect price increases to dip – but there won’t be any crash.

Francis noted: ‘Canada and Australia have a property bubble; we have a chronic lack of housing, particularly in London.’

The UK housing market consistently fails to meet demand, which translates into seemingly ever-rising house prices. That failure can lead to poorer buildings, communities and environment, but this gives design professionals opportunities. Architects and others can have an increasing role in creating the kind of built environment we need.

The panel pooled its thoughts on where
the UK construction industry should export its expertise. While the UK architectural services industry runs a healthy trade surplus, Francis noted a significant deficit in our balance of trade for construction products. To export better, we must all play to our strengths.

**Nuanced picture**

It is tempting to look at the fastest growing markets and think this is where we need to be. Some are growing staggeringly quickly: for example China used as much cement in three years, 2011 to 2013, as the US did in the whole of the 20th century. If you’re looking for scale and growth, go to China. But the panel painted a more nuanced picture. It’s people that do business, and a successful overseas business is based on good professional relationships. Foxley pointed out that movements of expertise and capital are inter-related.

The panel also pointed out that the UK’s position as an international business centre gives us a real advantage. Relationships formed in the UK with workers from overseas help us. First, when those who have worked or studied here return to their native country, they may become ambassadors for UK business. Secondly, relationships formed in the UK can become the foundation for our working in overseas markets. International working is a two way street. Our openness to worldwide business here helps us when we go there.

When discussing international working, another theme emerged, the importance of standards. We need to be at the cutting edge of innovation here to influence and survive. There is competition though. LEED has a good foothold in the Middle East as the default sustainability standard, which helps the US export, because its designers, contractors and manufacturers already work to those standards. But UK standards can win ground too, already having a foothold in many Commonwealth countries. Oborn noted that UK Trade & Investment has a large appetite for promoting UK consultancies, notably in the Middle East and China, who demand increasingly high standards. Dubai, for example, is fast becoming a hub for design excellence. Oborn stressed that this is about working in partnership; professionals from each country developing together their expertise and specialist knowledge.

Partnerships need to form within the UK too. Different professions can work together to enhance our offer. We create the built environment through multi-disciplinary working. The demand for scale and reach in overseas markets means there’s a need to work together to provide ‘single point’ solutions.

For professionals looking to start working overseas, the panel advised: do your research. Learn what the clients need, learn about the culture and be aware of it – it’s a partnership after all. But avoid the temptation of chasing every opportunity that comes your way. International working for the long term is built on a coherent, long-term strategy, and all work sought should form a part of it. Oborn stressed that the UK professional community would help, saying: ‘Go, seek advice – there’s plenty; and people are willing to give it.’
Tender thoughts

A client pursued for unfair tender documents could make you share the costs

Angus Dawson

Although no formal contract is ordinarily entered into between an employer and a contractor regarding the conduct of a tender process, the courts have, for a number of years, accepted that an implied contract may arise on submission of a contractor’s tender. This places certain limitations on the manner in which the employer is entitled to conduct the tender process. The implied terms provide a level of protection to contractors who may expend a significant amount of time and money tendering. The much more prescriptive rules that apply to tendering in public procurement are a subject in their own right and are not considered here.

In private sector tendering, the courts have made it clear that employers must comply with any specific procedures set out in the tender documents. Failure to do so may lead to a claim by an unsuccessful contractor that its tender was not considered in accordance with the rules. In such a situation, the employer may look to recover sums from the architect if it assisted in the preparation and implementation of the tender process.

In Gerald Scott v Belfast Education and Library Board the court confirmed the principle that an implied contract may arise on submission of a tender. The judge stated that the contract may be inferred from the manner of the tendering process and the presumed intention of the parties. How do we know what the terms of this implied contract are though? Fortunately the judge shed some further light on this issue, making clear that the implied contract requires the employer to act both fairly and in good faith. The judge identified three areas in which the concept of fairness applies: fairness in the nature and application of the tender procedures; fairness in the assessment of tenders according to the tender criteria; and fairness in the evaluation of tenders in a uniform manner and as intended by the tender documents.

The judge went on to identify two particular areas where unfairness may be caused to a tendering contractor. The first is if there is a mistake in the tender documents which leads the contractor to adopt an approach to the tender that is different to that intended by the documents. This may result in unfairness as different contractors may respond to the mistake in different ways. Any distortion in tenders is potentially unfair.

The second area is if there is an undetected ambiguity in the tender documents. This too may lead to differing responses from contractors, rendering the tender process unfair. Not all ambiguities will however result in the fairness of the tendering process being questioned. An ambiguity in the tender documents must be material and have a significant effect on the tender. In order to give rise to a claim, the ambiguity must cause the contractor to submit a tender which is more than negligibly different from what he would otherwise have submitted.

If a tender process is not conducted fairly the employer risks a claim from any unsuccessful contractor and may look to an architect who has been involved in the tender process for any losses it suffers. If a successful claim is brought, the employer may be required to pay the contractor its loss of profit on the project. Careful attention therefore needs to be paid to this early stage in the letting of contracts. Particular care needs to be taken to treat tenders fairly and avoid mistakes and ambiguity in tender documents which could give rise to a claim.

The contract may be inferred from the manner of the tendering process and the presumed intention of the parties. How do we know what the terms of this implied contract are though?

Angus Dawson is a partner with Macfarlanes

PRACTICAL COMPLETION

In a claim for damages for breach of contract, the claimant has to show that it has mitigated its losses. The principle of mitigation prevents the claimant from recovering losses that it could have avoided by taking reasonable steps. This means the claimant has to take steps to avoid unreasonable costs and take steps to minimise those losses it has incurred. The courts will reduce damages to the extent there has been a failure to mitigate. Under an indemnity, by contrast, the claimant does not have to show that it has mitigated its losses. Under an indemnity, losses are recoverable on a pound for pound basis.
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Could anonymity remove the crippling need for rationale?

Maria Smith

As I walk through the door I’m flushed with exposure. This is a mistake. No. I push through and it’s like passing through a space that is only large enough for my body; all my clothes and affectations are scraped away. I sit on a stackable chair. I wonder how many you can stack and whether this was a key criterion in specifying the chair, that it could be squirreled away after the meetings. I can feel that my posture is contrived, as if I were sitting naked and wanting to minimise contact. As others walk in they too seem to pass through a filter, but for them it’s to be a fine mesh separating each of their molecules and settling them back together more gently. I envy the confidence with which they walk and regal blue risers and stripy mullions, and remind myself why I’m here.

The person next to me is possibly talking to me. I can’t bring myself to break the noise of my consciousness to find out. This is a support group for people compelled to remain anonymous, how is he expecting me to engage? I wonder if his compulsion manifests as a need to present alternative personalities. Foist somebody new on the world every five minutes and nobody will ever suspect if five in a hundred are real. I contemplate this. The part of me that I tortured to bring here suddenly wakes up, maybe this will generate ideas.

As my pathetic conflict plays out, the person who may or may not have been talking to me addresses the group. Oh. He asks who wants to begin. A woman across the room stands up. She is dressed entirely in purple. The rims of her glasses are purple, rose-tinting her view of me, I assume. She introduces herself and, before the acoustic panels can finish absorbing her name, she launches into a diatribe about how difficult it is to be an author of adult fiction, how society insists she pens under a pseudonym, and something about not being able to pick her children up from school. I’m terrified that my offering will sound as trivial as hers, and will be met with as little compassion as I’m granting her.

Another person stands up to speak: an old man. No, a young man dressed as an old man. His beard has been left to grow out and boast its greys, while his luscious black mop is buzzed. I instantly like him in the way my people are wont to like the enforced reserved. It transpires that he is a professor of some obscure branch of anthropology. He describes how he is unable to present any theories as his own; that his papers are full of fictional references or genuine references stretched to such extremes that they in no way serve his point. Just as I’m beginning to respect him, he falls into a tirade against society’s inclinations to only believe quotes or references, to only believe second-hand information. I am disappointed: this sounds like a lack of original thought. Something niggles that he and I share something. My posture slumps slightly with the weight of belonging. Suddenly I feel compelled to present a self to these people.

I knock the stackable chair on my way up and it clatters crudely. Eyeballs pivot towards me like a flock of pickled eggs. Perhaps pickled eggs rule the world. Perhaps their veil of vinegar protects them from adverse interactions. I want to laugh at my fantastic sense of humour. I say hello. I tell them that my name is John and that I am an architect. I tell them that I have found a solution in anonymity: that all architects should shed their identities so that they can design like dead people: without the crippling need for rationale. I tell them that I came to this meeting for a last moment in a world that wants me to be myself, but that I am now formally beginning my campaign for anonymous architects, never to be credited again, never again to produce reconcilable justification or ‘refine’ an already anorexic pallet.

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The second set of air quotes wakes me from my trance. I calmly pick up my coat and bag and go forth to design with the joy and relish of the dead. I invite you, reader, to do the same.

Maria Smith is a director at Studio Weave
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3: Culture

Totally transformed
Our new digital dynamic

By communicating an imagined reality, architectural drawing is fiction. The wonder of it is that it can be turned into fact. The glory of it is that it does not have to be.

We now have a digital presence of – we hope you’ll agree – quite some verve and loveliness.

Building studies, profiles, columns and some technical articles will appear online first, plus product information to inform your specification. The print magazine will carry an edited selection of these. And finally? The third plank of our strategy is our live events programme. So far this year we have run successful events on custom-build housing and sustainability. Coming up are RIBAJ-branded conferences on BIM through the Plan of Work, Opportunities in Education Buildings, and in November our major event with NBS Live: Digital Thinking, Smart Building.

All this is done on a self-sustaining basis: the journal, based in RIBA Enterprises, is not funded from your membership subscription, but from the income we generate. This investment in print and digital versions helps to secure that income for the future by being attractive to our readers (an audited 27,613 in print, countless more online) and our advertisers, sponsors and awards partners.

As you browse the site you will see that everything is sorted not only by article type but also geographically: your UK region or nation is specifically represented along with other worldwide projects. As the site develops, and more archive content is added, this will become a significant searchable resource. If you want to know about new content at regular intervals, sign up to our email newsletters via the homepage. And of course let us know not only what you think about the RIBAJ, not only about buildings and projects you’d like us to consider for publication, but also about issues concerning you in the world of architecture generally: all contact information opens up from the bottom of the homepage.

Taken as a whole, this transformation of the RIBA Journal is the most significant in the 121 years since 1893 when President John Macvicar Anderson merged the learned and the professional publications to make ‘The New Journal’. Once again, we’re new.

Hugh Pearman Editor

So – our transformation is complete. Last year’s project was the total redesign of the RIBA Journal and our Products in Practice supplement in print. This year it’s the reconstruction of our website, starting from first principles. Ribaj.com is very different not only from our previous offering, but also from other sites in our field. There’s still plenty to do, not least uploading archive content, but we now have a digital presence of – we hope you’ll agree – quite some verve and loveliness.

We have kept it simple and flexible: this site adapts to your devices automatically, from desktop widescreen via tablet to your phone. No need for a separate mobile app.

This raises the question: what’s a magazine? Well, your monthly print version will continue to arrive on your doormats, but we are now pursuing a digital-first policy. Online, we are not monthly but daily, as new material is added. It has material from both the RIBAJ and PIP. A roster of contributors, both new and familiar, is taking part in this new venture, from Charles Holland and Elly Ward championing “ordinary architecture” to Adam Nathaniel Furman’s selections of

HOLLY EXLEY

Stephen Hodder

We couldn’t carry on in the way that we had with BSF; there was a lot of money spent that the users of those buildings would not see. But we have thrown the baby out with the bath water.

Stephanie Staley

P54

Eye Line competition

We now have a digital presence of – we hope you’ll agree – quite some verve and loveliness.

Telling architectural archetypes.

Building studies, profiles, columns and some technical articles will appear online first, plus product information to inform your specification. The print magazine will carry an edited selection of these. And finally? The third plank of our strategy is our live events programme. So far this year we have run successful events on custom-build housing and sustainability. Coming up are RIBAJ-branded conferences on BIM through the Plan of Work, Opportunities in Education Buildings, and in November our major event with NBS Live: Digital Thinking, Smart Building.

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Oxford University’s new Mathematical Institute facility, the Andrew Wiles Building, was officially opened in October 2013. The building’s design and the stunning Penrose paving, by Rafael Viñoly Architects, is architecturally sympathetic to the Oxford skyline. Named after one of Oxford’s most celebrated mathematicians – Professor Sir Andrew Wiles.

Installed by Vetter UK, a subsidiary of Laing O’Rourke, Hardscape supplied Royal White and Kobra grey ‘artscape’ granite with polished 30mm s/steel inserts. Other paved areas, designed by Townshend landscape architects; European Amarelo Reale and Roriz granite setts, kerbs and edgings with West Pennine sandstone paving, cladding and copings and Neland Siena and Nero WF clay pavers.

For further information on Hardscape’s Artscape process and paving products range please visit: www.hardscape.co.uk or call 0845 260 1748.
Hurra! four Libraries

Herbert Wright channels his inner Molesworth

Who would have ever believed it that great edifices built for swots would be so exciting? Yes I am talking of that most hallowed (here I clear my throat) Typology, home to great tomes and ‘shhhhh QUIET Please!’; namely the Librarie. (NB I had hitherto thought Typology to be or not to be the study of Type as in the great Detective with magnifying glass deducing from whom the blackmail note is from etc. etc.).

It seems only yesterday that 2 Great Libraries, Mecanoo’s Librarie of Birmingham and Austin-Smith/Lord’s rebidding of Liverpool Central Librarie had revealed themselves as fantastick adventures in internal space (as opposed to Outer Space where naturally you would need a space suit). Not only that but both had steaked a claim as The Largest New Librarie in All Europe. In days of Your these fine Cities may well have gone to war over such claims, but I imagin Health & Safety regulations have prohibited the use of Catapulte (pocket-size or big-wheel road-version), and besides both parties must be soothed by being awarded Regional RIBA Awards for the A4-said 2 Edifices.

Anyway that is all Olde Hat now becos along comes another Largest New Librarie in All Europe just opened this month (August), and it two is SUPER-WIZZ even for those who are by no means a swot. I refer of corse to the National Librarie of Latvia in Riga, by a steamed Latvian-by-berth arkitekt Gunnar Birkets. No he was not in the RAF but rather has been in the USA working since the 1950s and has produced many buildings of grate merit, including I mite add the Duluth Public Librarie in Minnesota (1980) that onestly looks like a silver FLYING SORCER stretched back along a hovering horizontal trajectorie WOW! Among the many most Interesting Fakts about the new Latvian job is that its shape is inspired by not 1 but 2 locale faerie-tales viz. The Castle of Lite and The Glass Mountain. The later was about a fayre Princesse stuck at the topp of a glass mountain so slippery no man however brave could get a grip and reech her. Obv. this legend was befor the great skyscraper-scaling Alain ‘Spiderman’ Robert.

p.S. Talking of the Francais it must be noted from fr. lessons that Librarie in fr. meens Bookshop, tho I have yet to see our over-the-Chanel brethren offer kash for anything in my locale Librarie, possibly becos the books are somewot dog-eared and unembellished often with faskinating skribbles hem-hem in the margines, in the grate tradition of medi-evil illustrators but with a Biro or (I think) ketchup, not the same palet of gold and coloures at all. Why in Paris the biggest librarie had to be named the Biblioteque Nationale just to stop Parisiennes trying to bye the books and emptying the place, wot unspekable chic. On a skool trip I do recall the grate edifice(s) (1995) by Dominique Perrault was like stood up books for giants, son dout if bilt now the Francais woud make it look like 4 Kindles or sumsuch.

Soon I feer the locale librarie will shut for savings (not just daylite but eternally), a great Tragedie. Indeed daylite is already provided courtesy locale robbers who availed themselves of the metal roove (rotters). Yet paradoxically the A4-mentioned ginormous new Librarie doth rise. Hark, is the Librarie the cathedral of our time viz. those big new atriums that reach for Heaven? Shorely that is better than Yet Another Ikonic Art Gallerie for cissies cos you can bone up about Space in a Librarie. If the Francais hav not alredy bort the book that is.

Trained physicist Herbert Wright is an architectural writer, historian and art critic.
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Postcards from home

Sheffield Society of Architects is celebrating its 125th anniversary with an exhibition of images of the city sourced by its residents.

Dr Stephen Parnell

In this digital age of instant communication and immediate recording of everything, it’s increasingly rare and delightful to receive a physical postcard with a picture of a place on one side and ‘wish you were here’ message on the reverse.

To mark its 125th anniversary, the Sheffield Society of Architects, a chapter of the RIBA, asked Sheffield residents to send them a postcard with an image of their dearest places in the city and a reason for its selection on the back. The idea was to recover and record a history of everyday Sheffield architecture from the point of view of the people who live in and experience the city, instead of the usual top-down history of significant buildings selected by architectural historians.

We received a generous response of photographs, sketches, and poems. These included the usual landmarks, both extant and lost, such as ‘the Hole in the Road’ (Castle Square), alongside more personal places that wouldn’t traditionally be included in an architectural history, such as people’s back gardens.

We chose 125 of the nominations to reproduce in postcard format, and cut them with slots so they could be used to build houses à la Eames’ House of Cards. These also became the exhibition catalogue. We selected 34 to create human-scale postcards, which slotted together to form the exhibition. They were curated to describe a cross-section of Sheffield places from the historic to the contemporary, from the traditional to the modern, and from the personal to the well known.

The selection of the nominations was based on three criteria: first, of course, a great image; a story that linked the person with the place, giving the postcard a particular vitality that the image alone couldn’t portray; and a place that resonated with Sheffield’s identity. Places such as now-closed Castle Market, and Jefferson Sheard’s recently listed Moore Street Substation all received multiple nominations. Equally, Henderson’s Relish, the Peace Gardens with their balls of steel, the Crucible, and Allies & Morrison’s Cheese grater car park, have all become Sheffield institutions in their own right.

There were also numerous omissions: I was surprised not to see any mention of the meeting point Coles Corner, or either of the football grounds.

The exhibition was designed to be deliberately non-linear and demountable in order to travel around Sheffield and pop up elsewhere in a different configuration. It opened in June at the Millennium Galleries to help launch Sheffield Design Week, and then moved to some empty stalls at the new Moor Market. Almost all of the contributions were by non-professional image makers and this was also deliberate. The only narrative I wished to present was the fondness in which Sheffield is held by the people who make it.

As Ian Nairn wrote of Sheffield in 1961, ‘it is typical of this exciting, exasperating city that it never seems to assume its true importance’. As the city struggles to redefine and redevelop itself again for the 21st century, this sentiment remains so true. But as this exhibition demonstrates, Sheffieldders love their city and its places through which they define their lives.

Dr Stephen Parnell is a lecturer at the Department of Architecture and Built Environment, University of Nottingham.

DEAR SHEFFIELD will be at the Moor Market in Sheffield (RIBAJ February 2014) until the end of July; at the Arts Tower in Sheffield, 3-6 September and 13-17 October; and the Sheffield Institute of Arts at Sheffield Hallam University at the end of September.

DUNCAN LOMAX
Must try harder

School building policy has lurched from one extreme to the other: we need some balance.

Stephen Hodder

It’s not easy to argue the case for more spending on anything at the moment. But that is what we have had to do on schools. A measure of our society is how we treat our children. The need for school places is increasing, and incredibly 80% of schools need repair and maintenance work or to be replaced completely. At the same time there is a widespread view across the industry that the current school building per square metre costs are just too cheap.

Building Schools for the Future, the previous scheme under the last government, wasn’t a perfect programme. It was complicated: the procurement process was drawn out and contained duplication, and the brief from a passionate head teacher was sometimes a little too individual. The RIBA campaigned for a long time to simplify the process and create savings. But a great deal of learning, and the development of best practice for school design, took place during that programme. And not only good but great practice: creating inspiring, uplifting and productive places for students and teachers alike. The programme was conceived with a vision of the future – with a level of flexibility to the designs to allow for wider community use and changes in education.

We couldn’t carry on in the way that we had been; there was a lot of money spent that the users of those buildings would not see. But to borrow an oft-used phrase in policy – we have thrown the baby out with the bath water. Current schools delivered through the government’s Priority School Building Programme are required to be delivered on a budget of £1113/m². This is undeliverable – not only because material costs are higher due to inflation in this economic climate, but also because it means cutting corners and reducing spending on corridors, ancillary, outside and assembly space. I believe we will pay the price for this in the long term.

As architects it is our responsibility to understand how our buildings create and affect communities of people. And so it is our responsibility to be direct when we know the outcomes may be adverse.

Following last month’s major reshuffle of the government Michael Gove has been replaced as secretary of state for education by Nicky Morgan. Will she reshape any of Gove’s policies ahead of the election?

Governance review group

You will have read that RIBA Council has agreed to set up a governance review working group, and there is some speculation as to the reasons why. Quite simply, a periodic review was agreed when the Institute was restructured some four years ago to ensure that our governance structures and processes are robust and fit for purpose. I am confident that in the main we have the right structures in place. But it is right and effective to go back and look at it from time to time, to be sure that all is how it should be. There are some things we might want to improve on – ensuring that there is a clear link between elected councillors and the membership; involving those elected councillors in committees, working groups or other important work at the RIBA; and that we have clear and transparent reporting processes so the rest of the RIBA membership knows what is going on. A focused review will help us do all of that. I look forward to giving you an update on the groups progress in the autumn.

We couldn’t carry on in the way that we had been but – to borrow an oft-used phrase in policy – we have thrown the baby out with the bath water.

@HodderPRIBA
“Technology is a modifier for reinvention. Collaboration technology in particular will introduce new ways for architecture to be realised in the future. Revu is our digital collaboration and problem-solving tool. There is nothing else that comes close to it in our industry.”

Henry Lau
Senior Architectural Designer
HNTB
The beauty of possibility

‘Everyone can draw’, a prominent architect once told me while foolishly encouraging me to take part in a sketching project. Ha ha ha. That’s like me saying ‘Everyone can write.’ As Wittgenstein suggested, in certain environments you can get by on primitive languages of very few words. On a building site (interestingly, he having also designed and built a house) an unskilled worker could theoretically get by on just four, he suggested. Obviously one would not expect that worker to produce an award-winning novel, or even much of a Tweet, with ‘block’, ‘pillar’, ‘slab’, and ‘beam’. Anyway, there neither writing nor speech was required: only basic understanding of what someone else was saying.

That’s no bad starting point: one’s ability to understand the work of others. Reading and interpreting drawings is not so different from reading a novel or poem: we can turn the marks on the page or screen into a world which we can comfortably inhabit. We suspend our disbelief, we put ourselves into those narratives. By communicating an imagined reality, architectural drawing is fiction. The wonder of it is that it can be turned into fact. The glory of it is that it does not have to be.

An architect’s basic drawing tries to convey physical form in an immediately comprehensible manner. This can be very beautiful – note the drawing of a Selmer clarinet by one of our winners, George Saumarez Smith of Adam Architecture. It is as minimal as you can imagine, but all the information is there, conveyed with a superb elegance of line. Other drawings, in whatever medium, go into parallel universes of the imagination – especially, of course, the student entries. Eye Line celebrates the power of architectural drawing for its own sake.

This year’s Eye Line judges were: architect, academic and noted draughtsman Alan Dunlop; artist Susanna Heron (a frequent collaborator with architects); last year’s winner Tom Noonan, presently working on rebuilding his alma mater the Bartlett with Hawkins\Brown; Narinder Sagoo, partner with Foster and Partners who leads by example when it comes to excellence in drawing in all media; and me, supported by my colleague Eleanor Young.

We declared a joint winner in Amelia Hunter of the Royal College of Art, and Kirsty McMullan of the University of Brighton (now Part 1 assistant at Spacecraft Architects). Their projects are both grounded in place: Hunter’s strategy for Maidenhead’s waterways; a museum of the quarries of Portland in Dorset for McMullan. They demonstrate the beauty of possibility.

As Dunlop put it: ‘The second year of Eye Line has produced an even more remarkable series of images from clearly talented young architects and artists. Although the work overall was deeply impressive, the hand drawn images of the joint winner were stunning and, frankly, humbling.’

Hugh Pearman
Joint first winner
Kirsty McMullan
The Everyday Museum of Everyday Portland

‘Kirsty has made her drawings move,’ said Susanna Heron. ‘Yet she is not trying to impress us.’ Despite that, the judges were impressed with every single one of the three ‘very strong’ entries by McMullan. The puppetry suggested by the expressive hands on the section is a thought provoking way of showing images and, not content just to use these images of hands plucking at strings, McMullan also gave them a sense of animation with a series of drawings, almost like an artist’s cartoon or early preparatory sketch where conditionality is everything. This was a very deliberate attempt to expose the influence of the architect/curator in these drawings for McMullan’s part 1 project at the University of Brighton for the Everyday Museum of Everyday Portland, with Catrina Stewart as tutor. So was the use of Letraset-style annotations, that set off an interesting discussion among the judges about the importance of these letters to them. They were used with an artistic and discerning eye and made up for a thought provoking set of drawings. ‘I am going to go on thinking about that,’ said Heron.
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Culture
Eye Line drawing competition

Second winner
James Hughes
Acoustic Promenade Score

The texture of the paper and visible application of Indian ink made all the judges take note of James Hughes' three works exploring the soundscape of the city, refuting Juhani Pallasmaa's statement that 'the contemporary city has lost its echo'. This is another entry from an RCA graduate, Hughes having created this series of drawings for his MA. Alan Dunlop pointed out the clever way Hughes painted in the shadow. Part a device for mapping sound, for example from the corner of Ludgate Circus, it was the materiality and composition that struck the judges. 'It is very bold, and very interesting spatially,' said Susanna Heron. 'I really like these in terms of composition.'

Third winner
George Saumarez Smith
Clarinet

As Saumarez Smith's drawing of a Selmer Bb clarinet came up on the screen there were murmurs of delight among the judges. 'I want to draw a clarinet,' said Narinder Sagoo. Then, less wistfully: 'It is an example of how people develop an ability to judge scale.' This measured drawing, apparently from Saumarez Smith's notebook, has an economy of line and detail that all the judges appreciated. Hugh Pearman pointed out how he had elegantly answered the question of how to show cork with just a few dots. Susanna Heron was intrigued by how he had judged where on the clarinet the division of the notebook should fall. 'The relationship with the fold is very skilful,' she said. Saumarez Smith's linocut also attracted the judges for a different craft — this time representing a ceramic pattern.
**Commended**

**Christos Kakouros**

Morpheus Neighbourhood

This complex happy stage set borrows the ancient Greek god of dreams to collect human stories. On a social housing site on a major north London artery everyday fragments are preserved. This was developed as part of Kakouros’ third year project at the University of Westminster with tutors Julian Williams and Jane Tankard. The Tintin optimism of the drawing with its rubber duck, surely a reference to the work of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, left the judges debating the methods of production. The considered hues and textures were both exciting and intriguing – take a closer look at the ripped and undulating fabric below the duck. ‘He is an illusionist,’ said Hugh Pearman.

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**Commended**

**Oliver Pershav**

Messy Interior

The judges speculated that the full complexity of Pershav’s drawings had something of a Magnus Magnusson logic to them: ‘I’ve started so I’ll finish’. Perhaps a passing resemblance to David Shrigley might be spotted but the detail and the subject matter take them well beyond the work of the humorist’s drawings. Pershav’s Mechanised Architecture School took outlined drawings of the mechanical means of production – camera, coffee machine, CNC cutter — to give a sense of the way a student might be fed through this complete system. Messy Interior (right), part of his Architectural Association diploma project with tutor Natasha Sandmeier, started with a drawing snaking its way around the edge of a paper. The mess is highly controlled, ordered and believable; if rather perilously stacked.
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Culture
Eye Line drawing competition

Commended
Steven McCloy
EU: The Gardens of Paris Fantastica

These pencil drawings, with their added blue hue, caught the judges’ attention for the formal picture book portraits of busy, populated cityscapes. The strong focus on a repetitive, animated foreground and the long vistas show a Paris co-opted to the cause of European harmony and integration with a nod to the Bartlett’s CJ Lim. ‘Lovely illustration,’ pronounced Susanna Heron. Alan Dunlop was impressed with the sense that McCloy had got the whole thing mapped out in his head. The Lowry-like figures and Magritte men with brollies give a sense of humour to the proposal that belies the underlying projects’ more bureaucratic messages.

Commended
Kevin Kelly
Temple of Narcissism, section

‘It is quite extraordinary how he draws landscape,’ said Narinder Sagoo, looking at the three fantastical drawings submitted by Kelly. If a sketch is a word, then some of Kelly’s drawings were ‘shouting out words from a dictionary’. But the section shown does more, it draws it out and ‘tells a story’. Kelly’s 0.025mm flexible nib Rotring takes over when the B pencil leaves off, with drawing as much part of the design process as production — here exploring a hermit’s pilgrimage. Kelly himself studied at Manchester School of Art and the Bartlett. The influence of architectural illustrators, such as Neil Spiller, on the biomorphism of the images was clear, but the judges also saw parallels with cartoonist Gerald Scarfe and pictures by Hieronymous Bosch, which perhaps lent it an air of familiarity. ‘This is relentless but well composed; an exquisite doodle,’ pronounced Tom Noonan.
Commended

Povilas Jurevicius
2121 Bird Eye City View

‘I like the lack of perfection,’ commented Susanna Heron. Three very different drawings showed a range of styles and materials, all exploring suspended forms and megastructures of a sort. The one that graces the RIBAJ cover this month particularly demonstrates how Jurevicius can concentrate the intensity of his effort where it is needed, allowing the lines beyond that to fade into sketchiness. His ‘multiple tongues’ showed a consistency of thought process and the importance of the dominant, angular line in the structure of his submitted pieces.
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Brian Henderson
1928 – 2014

Bon viveur and one half of the leadership of YRM during its pioneering years, internationalist and promoter of multi-disciplinary working

Sporting fine suits and a full head of white hair contrasting magnificently with his famously ‘expensive’ complexion, Brian Henderson was one of the stand-out characters of his generation of leading architects. Brian’s extraordinary constitution allowed him to enthusiastically pursue his interest in architecture and the very best things in life. He created a sequence of beautifully designed homes for his family and friends that were known for their generous hospitality. He also travelled extensively, combining these architectural adventures, and indeed his daily life, with lunches that often lasted into the evening. Brian’s character was rich in contrast. He communicated in clipped asides and humorous stories, often told at his own expense. He loved to escape his cosmopolitan London life for his Wiltshire home and to summer in remote Tiree. Being Scottish he also enjoyed the best malts and, on occasion, would sport tartan trousers – while warning against men in kilts.

As an architect Brian made his mark as one half of the duo (the other being his partner and lifelong friend David Alford) who led the second generation at architectural practice Yorke Rosenberg Mardall. Their vision of the firm’s future was defined when they worked together at the start of the Gatwick Airport project. There Brian developed his interest in the craft and design of the internal spaces and, as well as buildings, he went on to design many fine interiors and pieces of furniture. The scale and international nature of this project, allied to the cosmopolitan creative legacy of the founding partners – an Englishman, a Czech and a Finn – defined the duo’s pursuit of a new model of an architecturally and socially committed practice, later renamed YRM, that was supremely professional, international and eventually multi-disciplinary.

Brian was born in Scotland in 1928 and educated at Edinburgh University. He moved to London working briefly for Basil Spence before moving to YRM, eventually retiring as chairman. During his five decades there Brian helped the practice shift from a public sector base to a broader range of work embracing the important, and by the 1970’s more acceptable, idea of ‘commercial’ work. That YRM worked internationally was a sign of the both UK’s economic difficulties and the senior partners’ vision of a global practice engaged in a much broader debate about architecture. As well as its London base YRM had offices in Hong Kong, Australia, the Middle East and Africa, where it designed and built the essential large scale urban infrastructure of airports, hospitals, universities, offices, schools and housing.

In their redefinition of the practice the partners also established a different multi-disciplinary model, developing their own outstanding team of service engineers, YRME, which was encouraged to also engage with the best rival architectural practices (it worked extensively with Richard Rogers on Inmos and other innovative projects). Later it acquired leading structural engineering practice Anthony Hunt. The conclusion of this pursuit of a new model was the pioneering, if ultimately ill-fated, decision to float on the London Stock Exchange.

As a senior partner, Brian’s architectural hand can be clearly detected in many projects – most notably the later phases of Gatwick, including the ‘blue’ North Terminal and his largest ever challenge, the monumental but simple design of the then controversial nuclear power station, Sizewell B. Brian was also closely engaged in The Michelin Building and worked in collaboration with SOM on the recently listed Wills Tobacco Factory.

Beyond the practice Brian was a supporter and advisor to many individuals and organisations. Under his presidency, the Architectural Association Council established the AA Foundation, a separate charity from the AA, which was a model he had first encountered in the US. Brian was trustee and later chair. Both his children studied architecture: Annabelle runs her own practice while Fergus, no doubt inspired by Brian’s sybaritic tendency, is the owner and chef of St John. Brian died on Thursday 19 June at home in Wiltshire where he lived with Elizabeth, his wife of 57 years. ●

Simon Alford

In Memoriam
Independent report discovers the savings of Roofshield versus alternative membranes

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From the mouths of babes
What a delight to read Maria Smith’s column, Teach taut (RIBAJ, June 2014). I was rolling on the floor doubled up with laughter by the time I was half way through. And I am certain that the rest of us ‘oldies’ are all in the same state.

I am still in practice and am completely gobsmacked by the arrogance and lack of knowledge of the average architectural student.

What Maria Smith describes as an ideal training was how we were trained back in the fifties and sixties. We did practical building from year one – bricklaying, plastering, plumbing and so on – and what we didn’t know about bending moments; and the huge joke of ‘every couple has its moment’ annually produced by our structures master – remains with us all to this day. We had to be able to paint, draw, photograph and make models. We spent a week, as a whole year, sketching in places like Cambridge and Norwich. We physically built shops and offices – okay, we put the precast staircase in back to front twice but we had done the design and calculations for the reinforcement – and we knew all about planning and building regulations plus the awesome lectures on professional practice from the older architects.

Crits!! Oh, the joy, the misery. I could go on but old people can be very boring; suffice to say that we enjoyed every minute of our five years together.

Please listen to Maria Smith.

From an old and experienced architect –
Ann Levitt, Birmingham

Questions of retrofit
Probably too late I know, but I have only just read the June issue while on a trip to Oman.

The RIBA Journal is now such a delight to read that I am always referring others to your articles. Hugh Pearman reflects wisely on the 119 RIBA awards, but as he asks: ‘What do the awards tell us?’.

I have two questions; why am I not surprised that there are so few retrofit/reuse projects (only 14) when making better use of the buildings we already have is such a major opportunity; and where is the awareness that the climate is changing?

Everyone has to submit the project contract sum, the gross internal area and a comprehensive sustainability statement. Of all the projects, 36% failed to declare their cost but you do not publish any of the design energy data. It may be difficult to compare the delightful Ditchling museum and the major Tate Britain refit but without the comparative energy data, are we just playing with (beautifully detailed) new shapes?

Robin Nicholson, London

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

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The design of curtain walling, it’s properties and how it is used by specifiers. This seminar aims to offer an understanding of how user expectation influences door design and links this with hardware selection, entrance configuration and floor finishes.

**Title 2: Designing Functions & Reliability into Entrances**

The issues that influence the function of main entrance design and technology. This seminar aims to address the understanding it is used by specifiers. 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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**Havwoods**

C: Gareth Dixon, Russell Calder
T: 44(0)207 940 0000
E: gareth.dixon@havwoods.co.uk, russell.calder@havwoods.co.uk

**Title: The use of wood flooring in sustainable architecture**

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

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**Calor**

T: 0800 121 4561
E: askcalor@calor.co.uk
W: www.calor.co.uk/business

**Title: Low carbon energy solutions for non mains gas areas**

This seminar provides an introduction to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and its credentials as a clean and efficient, low-carbon energy for modern businesses off the mains gas grid.

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**Urban Front**

E: Elizabeth@urbanfront.co.uk

**Title: Specifying Hardwood Timber Doorsets**

Learning Aims include information on insulation, passive house, challenges with maintenance, accessibility and door security.

The learning outcomes are:
- Improved ability to specify hard wood timber doors
- Understanding Passive House doors
- Awareness of challenges with hard wood doors
- Better understanding of accessibility, sizing & longevity.

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**Rivermeade Signs**

C: Marion Phelan
T: 020 8896 6906
E: marion.phelan@rivermeade.com

**Title: Wayfinding and Best Sign Practice**

The CPD looks at what constitutes ‘Best sign practice’ and how good signing can help everyone; not just those with disabilities. Specifically:
- how signing for the disabled can be well intentioned but is often poorly thought through
- the choice of typography and colour ways to aid legibility
- why the layout of information on a sign is so important
- helpful and misleading symbols and arrows
- case study Whitley Court - what do signs look like when they are specifically designed to assist a variety of visitors with different disabilities.

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**Schlüter Systems**

E: training@schlueter.co.uk
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**Title: 1 Integrated Solutions for Tiled Wetrooms**

The session will provide the information and knowledge required when specifying an integrated solution for wetroom installations; Schüller’s waterproofing and wetroom range will be explored and explained.

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**Product update**

**Polyflor: Polysafe Verona PUR**
Polyflor is delighted to announce the launch of Polysafe Verona PUR; the latest advancement in safety flooring design from the Polysafe range.

Verona offers a clean and fresh look that is completely carborundum-free, containing no visible dark aggregate. Featuring a specially engineered emboss and unique matt finish, Polysafe Verona PUR uses complementary coloured quartz in the vinyl to harmonise with the base shade and generate slip resistance. The result is an aesthetic safety floor that looks like a smooth vinyl with virtually ‘invisible’ slip resistance once laid on the floor.

Designed for areas where underfoot safety is paramount due to risks of wet spillages or contamination, Polysafe Verona is suitable for both traditional safety flooring locations as well as the more design-led, high visibility areas within commercial and residential settings.

w: www.polyflor.com
w: www.nationalbimlibrary.com

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**Peerless warranty launched by Armstrong Ceilings**
The first 30-year warranty in the ceiling systems sector has been launched by Armstrong to meet the increasing focus on risk management. Unique to Armstrong, it is designed to give 30 years’ total confidence in the system specifiers have chosen. It applies to mineral and most of their metal tiles with 95% and higher humidity resistance when combined with a selection of its market-leading grids.

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**Ancon extends its award-winning TeploTie range**
Ancon continues to lead the market in low thermal conductivity wall ties, with an extension to its TeploTie range that sees it now suitable for surface fixing to an in-situ masonry leaf or structural frame.

The new Teplo-L-Tie comprises a pultruded basalt fibre body set in a resin matrix giving a thermal conductivity of just 0.7W/mK, minimising heat loss across an insulated wall cavity.

w: www.ancon.co.uk

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**Kilsaran leads the way in hard landscaping BIM objects**
Kilsaran International is the first paving manufacturer to release a fully rendered, 3D library of BIM objects as part of a BIM roll out plan for the coming months.

By simulating the construction process BIM reduces wastage, time and cost by identifying any design changes or snags before the build starts. Additionally the software stores objects and further product information streamlining the building process.

w: www.kilsaraninternational.co.uk

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**MUTLIKWIWK FRAMES**
Multikwik’s market-leading sanitary frames have played a major role in creating a sleek and stylish finish to over 250 bathrooms at The Movement, a new vibrant and sustainable community development in Greenwich.

Chosen for their sturdiness and ease of installation Multikwik sanitary systems offers complete design freedom, maximising bathroom space, even in the most compact bathrooms and washrooms.

w: http://www.multikwik.com

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**Kawneer helps deliver a NHS record**
Glazing systems from Kawneer were used generously in the biggest single investment in North Staffordshire healthcare in the 155 years of the NHS. Kawneer’s AA®100 curtain walling and ACS windows, which were pre-glazed and fitted to pre-cast concrete panels on site prior to installation by Bennett Architectural Aluminium, feature on Phase 2 of the £215million redevelopment of the University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust.

w: www.kawneer.co.uk

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**Comar**
Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems have completed new build waterside residential development, Q Apartments, at Tanners Wharf, Bishop Stortford. S Comar 5Pi open-out and tilt & turn windows, with Comar 7Pi rebated doors were selected for the apartments with Comar 7Pi AFT Commercial Doors for the main entrances. For safety, the Comar 7Pi AFT Commercial Doors were fitted with Anti-Finger Trap stiles which were hang directly from the Comar 6 curtain walling.

w: www.comar-alu.co.uk

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**LATHAM’S LATEST SURFACES WINFAVOUR WITH A&D SECTOR**
Two of James Latham’s latest additions to their surface solutions portfolio – Mirror Gloss and Natural Touch – both part of the innovative and ‘on-trend’ Kronodesign range - are generating massive interest from the A&D sector. Mirror Gloss, which pushes the boundaries of depth and definition, colour and reflective gloss, comprises 20 highly durable, scratch resistant, light and colourfast decors that include 14 sparkling gloss colours, four wood grains and two fantasy decors.

Natural Touch is the first ‘embossed-in-register’ melamine board where the grain texture precisely matches the surface finish. Now, the authentic look and feel of real timber - the graining, the subtle variations of shade and tone - is accessible on almost any project. Natural Touch is pre-finished, extremely durable, easy to work with and offers consistency in both colour and grain. This means that architects, interior designers, contractors and furniture makers can now achieve an authentic rustic realism using melamine.

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Granwax Launches New Online Store

Granwax, the manufacturer of high quality wood floor seals, finishes and maintenance materials has launched its new website, www.granwax-direct.co.uk. The new features enable quick and easy access to detailed information on Granwax’s range of finishes, cleaning and hygiene products, abrasives and ancillaries at competitive prices. The new website provides the ultimate user-friendly experience with improved navigation, functionality and new content.

www.granwax-direct.co.uk

TOP MARKS FOR WOOD ENERGY AT OKEHAMPTON COLLEGE

Okehampton College is benefitting from energy savings of £25,000 a year following the installation of a 199kW Hargassner wood pellet boiler from leading biomass specialists Wood Energy Ltd. The boiler is housed in a unit which was fabricated on site and integrated to the existing heating system via a single flow and return offering a fully containerised solution for the biomass heating boiler and fuel.

www.woodenergy.com

Kawneer helps new BREEAM school

Glazing systems from leading architectural aluminium supplier Kawneer have helped a new £24million school achieve a BREEAM “Excellent” rating. Two types of curtain walling - AA®601TE casement and AA®601TE parallel opening windows as well as AA®605 swing doors and series 10D zone-drained - are complemented by Senior’s aluminium SCW+ curtain walling systems and SD commercial doors were specified for the Essex-based project by designers NPS Group.

www.kawneer.co.uk

eRDS Solutions has launched a new online room data sheet application for use by the whole construction team. The software is designed to revolutionise the management of electronic room data sheets and to integrate them with BIM and COBie. Building owners, architects, project managers and related specialists can now benefit from a more user friendly way of managing all Room Data information.

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UZIN is renowned for problem solving solutions and technical service, visiting building sites and providing expert advice to architects and flooring contractors. As part of this ethos we are now providing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and are part of the RIBA CPD Providers Network, delivering CPD seminars to clients at their offices. The seminar ‘Modern Installation Systems for Floor Coverings’ provides a detailed overview of the correct specification process for perfect flooring installations:

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The RIBA Journal August 2014
Marely Eternit
Marley Eternit’s Riven Edgemere slates have been used to help transform a derelict piece of land into a state of the art residential home for people with mental health and learning difficulties.

Oak House was carefully designed to be sensitive to the local residential area, characterised by semi-detached, post war, municipal housing, as well as the site’s industrial heritage and adjacent rail line. Marley Eternit’s Riven Edgemere concrete interlocking slates were chosen by main contractor, Bullock Construction as a cost effective alternative to natural slate.

www.marleyeternit.co.uk/edgemere

Hunter Douglas solution
Hunter Douglas has created a solid wood linear open ceiling for The Pavilion in Western Red Cedar. The wood has been fire treated and is suitable for internal and external applications. Internally the wood is interspaced with a black non-woven felt to provide acoustic absorption, externally Hunter Douglas employed a powder coated black metal infill for durability and to prevent damage from wildlife.

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ASSA ABLOY UK–CHOICE FOR LONDON UNIVERSITY
ASSA ABLOY UK has supplied products to a student residence development being built for King’s College London University. ASSA ABLOY Access Control’s Aperio™ locking solution has been fitted on 2300 doorsets; the RFID wireless door control solution allowed for the upgrade of mechanical locks so that they could communicate with a complete access control system and can be fitted without the need to modify any doors.

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MUMFORD & WOOD CONSERVATION™ WINDOWS
High performance timber windows and doors by Mumford & Wood have been specified for a beautiful rural country retreat near Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire. Georgian-style sash windows from the Conservation™ range were specified, including an unusual three-pane top sliding sash over six-pane bottom sliding sash configuration. These double-glazed, energy rated windows have modern pre-tensioned spring balances in place of traditional weights and pulleys.

www.mumfordwood.com

LEVOLUX CREATES CURVES IN CRAWLEY
The £39 million transformation of the former Sussex House site in Crawley Town Centre is impressing residents and visitors, with its curvaceous Solar Shading and Screening Solution by Levolux. Bronze coloured rectangular-shaped Fins, each measuring 175mm deep by 50mm thick, have been applied vertically, creating an attractive façade for the landmark development.

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Kawneer’s healthcare window stars in new video
A video demonstrating how well its AA®3110HW horizontal sliding window meets the requirements of mental health units has been unveiled by Kawneer. The five-minute video shows the performance of the window system when under sustained attack, demonstrating its security credentials in this environment. The frame and the perforated security mesh passed the test with the glass staying intact for 45 minutes.

w: www.kawneer.co.uk.

Stacks of benefits with Wessex ModuMax mk2 BIM objects
Hamworthy Heating has extended its Building Information Modelling (BIM) library to include BIM objects for the recently upgraded Wessex ModuMax mk2 condensing boiler range. The parametric models, which are loaded with extensive metadata and optional pipelists are available to download now from www.hamworthy-heating.com/bim.

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Survey shows importance of safety
Supermarkets, hospitals, stations and schools have all featured on a list of places Brits would consider suing should they take a tumble while on the premises. To help prevent slips Tarkett is expanding its industry Safetred safety range with two new collections, Safetred Ion and Safetred Aqua.

The Safetred Ion collection is available in Linen and Contrast. Linen is available in 14 colours with a woven pattern effect designed to be more homely. Contrast is a decorative, three dimensional, multi flake effect safety floor suitable for entrances and corridors and available in six colours.

Tarkett’s Safetred Aqua range has an improved specification that includes specially designed top embossing, as well as aluminium oxide particles. It’s suitable for barefoot and shod and for use in wet and dry areas, so is ideal for the leisure, healthcare, aged-care and hospitality industry.

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Survey shows importance of safety

The RIBA Journal August 2014
Council specifies Marley Eternit fibre cement slates and Cedral Weatherboard for school refurbishment

Marley Eternit’s Thrutone fibre cement slates have been specified by Milton Keynes Council for a striking 2,000 square metre school roof replacement project in the historical town of Newport Pagnell, which also used the company’s Cedral Weatherboard to replace existing cladding. The existing slate roof on one of the town’s primary schools was deteriorating and in need of complete replacement. The council decided to use fibre cement slates as a more cost effective solution for the roof refurbishment but wanted to make sure they complemented the school and its surroundings. Marley Eternit’s fibre cement slates were chosen because the blue black colour closely matched the original slates on the roof and the surrounding buildings.

Building contractor Neville Special Projects also replaced existing cladding with Marley Eternit’s fibre cement Cedral Weatherboard around the high level windows to improve insulation and weatherproofing. The extensive colour pallet of 22 factory applied colours (including three woodstain finishes) provided the flexibility to select a colour that would both complement the Thrutone slates and blend in with the historical surroundings.

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

DW Windsor Lighting

DW Windsor has supplied its stylish low voltage Garda LED illuminated handrails to enhance eight stairways and five bridges at Manchester University Art & Design Building. The specification for the stairways achieves lighting levels of 100 lux at floor level, with full 3-hour emergency output and DDA compliance.

Architects Filden Clegg Bradley Studios identified the Garda handrail as meeting both aesthetic and technical requirements.

w: www.dwwindor.com

BRETT MARTIN DAYLIGHT SOLUTION IS A WINNER AT SPORTS HALL

Brett Martin has provided 350m² of its Marlon Clickfix104 to the Sheffield Community Academy in Walsall bringing excellent levels of diffused natural daylight into the facility. Finished with grey powder coated glazing channels, the glass clear effect Marlon Clickfix polycarbonate sheets were used for the interlocking panel glazing system creating a seamless façade for the sports hall.

w: www.brettmartin.com

Timber Expo – showcasing sustainable innovation

The Timber Focus seminars are taking place at Timber Expo on 07–08 October at the NEC, Birmingham and feature 50 half-hour sessions arranged in eight core themes. The free seminars are designed to appeal to everyone interested in timber, but particularly architects and engineers who are increasingly using more sustainable timber products throughout the built environment. Book your free place today.

w: www.timber-expo.co.uk/book

Supplying doorsets to the education sector that make the grade

Performance doorset manufacturer Leaderflush Shapland Laidlaw has successfully supplied more than 11,000 performance doorsets to schools in the past year. Offering a range of high quality products Leaderflush understands the regulatory requirements and best practice guidance that applies to educational institutions and provides a service designed to ensure the right doorsets are specified on each project.

w: www.leaderflushshapland.co.uk

Antislip timber decking specified for London development

3John Brash timber decking has been specified at a vibrant new development at One Church Square in Pimlico, London. Western red cedar cladding was used for the building envelope and 3John Brash timber decking was chosen to complement the rest of the timber use. Other considerations for the specification were anti-slip provision, and fire retardant treatment for the elements of the decked areas that form part of the fire escape.

w: www.3johnbrash.co.uk

Metalline make The Point

Architectural metal fabricator Metalline have installed their aluminium metalwork on The Point office redevelopment in Maidenhead. Involved at design stage with architects Darling Associates, Metalline presented the aesthetic benefits of Feature Beam and provided examples of the crisp horizontal line appearance that can be achieved when specifying their aluminium pressing.

As a result they secured an order for over 800 linear metres of Feature Beam.

w: www.metalline.co.uk

Gerflor

4,800m² of DLW Linoleum’s Marmorette range has been fitted during the £16 million Glasgow Royal Infirmary University Tower refurbishment.

The hard-wearing, low-maintenance design classic was specified for laboratories, offices and medical teaching facilities because of its colour range, environmental credentials and natural hygienic properties.

e: contractuk@gerflor.com

Junckers

Junckers new Saw Mill Oak is a solid hardwood floor with the rustic look and feel of an aged floor. The rough, irregular transverse lines created by a band saw add a lot of character to the wood, with a patina that will only improve with age and usage. Saw Mill Oak is made of solid hardwood oak in either a 22mm board or a 20.5mm wide board plank. The floor is delivered untreated with a choice of on-site finishing treatments available. The floor can also be used untreated.

w: www.junckers.co.uk

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Edwin Smith’s archive is one of the gems of the Robert Elwall Photographs Collection at RIBA. Acquired in 2002, it reveals the outstanding talent of this British photographer, who will have his first major retrospective later in the year. Smith (1912 – 1971) first pursued a career as an architect and had a lifelong ambition to become a painter, but it was photography that made him a household name in post-war Britain, especially through the texts he was regularly commissioned to illustrate. A number of these books were devoted to Scotland, including The Making of Classical Edinburgh, published by Edinburgh University Press in 1966. Smith’s images are highly evocative of the beauty of the Scottish landscape and of the elegant restraint of the capital’s Georgian architecture. As this image shows, they also feature moments of everyday life, which the photographer often captured with a touch of humour, aided by his remarkable powers of observation. ● Valeria Carullo

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