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An Englishman’s home is his castle, and this year’s RIBA Manser Medal shortlist proves the saying true. This year’s contenders also give us a wonderfully eclectic overview of the English obsession with domesticity, its physical expression, and the technologies that facilitate it. Astley Castle enables us to live the dream with a modern-day insertion into its ancient structure. At Crowbrook meanwhile, massive panes of perfect glazing create the seamless flow of its interiors into the landscape beyond, while Slip House’s hybrid MMC construction has not only created a volume of machined precision, but one that performs environmentally just about as well as is possible.

Techniques aside however, the metaphorical idea of the home continues to fascinate. At Rockmount we see homage to the ideologies of the great modernist Case Study Houses of 60s, transplanted from the west coast of America to the west coast of England. And bringing us full circle, Downley House (above), like Astley Castle, follows in the footsteps of Scotney Castle, a new house rising Phoenix-like alongside the ruins of the old. The British delight in the house, as merely one element in a greater landscape aesthetic, endures, 200 years after the ‘Essay on The Picturesque’ was first published. So if Uvedale Price is turning in his grave today, it’ll only be to cop a better look.
Downley House, Hampshire
Birds Portchmouth Russum
Words Hugh Pearman
Photograph Nick Kane

Down a steep rutted track, in a secluded valley in the South Downs National Park, cloaked by trees, is an unexpected hamlet, once part of a country estate to a grand house that is now a school. It has only five or six houses but one, set slightly apart from the rest, is new and remarkably interesting. Little surprise there, as this Manser Medal shortlisted house is by the ever-distinctive Birds Portchmouth Russum.

This is a £2.5m house for a family of four and their guests. Accordingly it is divided in two: family quarters one side, guests the other. Between them is a large, high dining room and entertainment space – a modern reinterpretation of the Great Hall. So far, so logical – and indeed this is a rational response to the clients’ brief. But BPR – who cut their teeth in the office of Stirling Wilford – are also romantics. They see this house not only as a (characteristically late Stirling) cluster of forms, a mini-village in itself, but also as part of the overall landscape, a portal to the rural idyll.

The clients are fine wine enthusiasts. They met at a wine tasting. Their wine cellar is proudly displayed at the heart of the house. But not so proudly as the great hall, which takes the form of a huge oval wine barrel. This runs from front to back of the house, its glass sliding doors opening onto courtyards at each end. The entrance courtyard is defined by the ruined, stabilised remains of the flint and brick cottage that once stood here. A previous planning permission was to rebuild and extend that house, but BPR saw its potential as a picturesque ruin, forming part of the overall composition and acting as a screen between the new house and the others across the lane.

Built of cross-laminated timber and Glulam, clad in oak at the front, render at the rear and copper over the great hall (which, in a shift of imagery, from above resembles a locomotive charging into the hillside), this house is a sophisticated sequence of spaces inside, giving framed views of the landscape at key points. Its rear block, with a viewing terrace, will be covered by climbing plants as the ruin in front is. Its style might be described as narrative or symbolist or magical realist but is, in the end, pure BPR. The landscape likes it.
If there’s something of the Pierre Koenig about shedkm’s Rockmount, it’s no coincidence. Director Ian Killick says that in its drive to create the dream home for a successful couple and their four kids, the practice was much inspired by the 1950s American Case Study Houses which combined a level of abstracted formal detachment while engaging with their context. And what a landscape; as its name suggests the house, surrounded by National Trust land on the Wirral peninsula, enjoys an elevated, exposed topography looking out over the Dee estuary, Welsh hills and the Irish Sea.

The Manser Medal shortlisted house is cruciform in shape. With to-die-for views to the sea, the main living/dining space faces west, while to the east the children’s bedrooms look south over a more sheltered private garden area. Below these is a playroom directly accessing this, utility rooms and guest bedroom. To the north, and slightly separate, is the parents’ bedroom, counterpointed to the south by the more public swimming pool – ideal for a family ‘that spends a lot of its free time outdoors’, as evidenced by the built-in barbie next to its sun terrace.

Locally-sourced red sandstone walls form a lower-level plinth from which the upper balcony springs west towards the view – the gymnastics being achieved courtesy of a pair of long, thin exposed concrete slabs, making up the structural sandwich that forms the main body of the house. The floor to ceiling glazing in between them decadently integrates the living spaces with the landscape in a language that directly references the great US modernists. But it’s a decadence to be shared only by the invited few; to the north, the house’s entrance approach, clad in discreet black timber, reveals little of the views to be enjoyed within.
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Crowbrook
Knox Bhavan
Words Eleanor Young
Photograph Dennis Gilbert

Front on, Crowbrook looks straightforward: a black timbered modern bungalow with a picture window. But with Knox Bhavan you should never expect anything to be plain. This house is a magical breeze of interlocking spaces flowing one into another, with reflections of plants and slivers of views. Windows, mirrors and a double height space at the crux of the plan make the 195m² volume feel like far more.

This is lucky, as clients Mark and Bea De Rivaz moved here from a larger house. Mark’s declining mobility was making it harder to get around, and little tucked away bedrooms meant they couldn’t enjoy the full house. At Crowbrook guest bedrooms are conceived as sleeping pods that open up to the house, while accommodating grown up children and their families. The footprint of the previous bungalow on this Hertfordshire site is expanded with projecting bay windows, their ledges becoming seats, desks and even bunks.

Doors slide open as the house flows from room to room and into the garden. But before you are thrown to the edges by the quality of light, see the landlocked bathroom. This internal room has rooflight reflections of the trees behind and oblique slot windows borrow light and space from the adjoining room.

Architect Sasha Bhavan set herself a series of tasks and rules, to minimise circulation; to keep edges thin from the copper roof trim to the fixed glass to ensure the frames are barely there; and to use inexpensive materials not costly surfaces – plain white tiles, plain engineering brick – but pushed these as far as she could, as she did with the largest off-the-shelf panes of glass she could find. As steward of Bedford Estates, client Mark originally worked with Knox Bhavan on its café for Russell Square. The Manser Medal shortlisted house shares the way the café greets the landscape, but with a far more complex and nuanced interior life. *

*
'To be honest, it still feels a bit like a dream,' says architect Carl Turner a year after moving into the Manser Medal shortlisted house he designed for himself and his partner. Slip House sits behind the 30s suburban home they bought seven years ago. 'We didn’t even want to live in the house we bought,’ he tells me. ‘We only got it because we saw the potential of the land at the back of the site.’

Realising that plan seems to have caught them by surprise. ‘To say we were shocked when we got planning would be an understatement,’ recalls Turner. Lambeth Council was somehow sympathetic to their desire for an extremely minimalist, impeccably detailed steel structure, that not only used innovative hybrid construction techniques and materials, but challenged the notion of suburban zoning. Turner admits that ‘what really terrified us was that we were going to have to build it as designed’. He recalls that at the time that they used ‘guerrilla tactics’ and downplayed the sui generis ‘Live/Work’ component of the scheme (Turner’s practice office now happily and messily occupies the ground floor), but the council was never anything other than completely sold on the notion of reintroducing forms of industry into suburbia. ‘We’re interested in a model of flexible living, creating patterns of daytime occupation and the need for cafés and shops,’ he says, ‘It’s not only very English, it’s a perfect suburban model.’

Turner says that during the design his and partner Mary’s roles split; she taking on the role of the client. An advertising executive, she was seeking a calm, monastic retreat from the cacophony and temporality of the day job – and Turner admits that Slip House’s pared back, crisply finished interiors of white larch and floated concrete floors were primarily at her insistence. Don’t let all those milky Linit glazed panels fool you – the windowless flank walls of the home are highly insulated SIPS panels, helping it perform to Code Level 5. This also helps to account for the quality of light inside. It’s an uninterrupted and serene space internally – perfect for light watching.

‘At any time of the day the light can be quite beautiful – and even at night in the glow of the street lamps,’ says Turner; proving that even if the house is monastic in principle, it can still have its moments of indulgence.
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“Our single source approach provides absolute peace of mind for contractors and specifiers alike.”
Paul Leadley, Special Projects Manager
If Cristobal Palma has dual perspectives in his work, it will in no small measure be due to his international education. Born in Santiago, Chile, Palma came to London to study at the AA, where he got as far as the second year of his diploma before deciding to try his hand at architectural photography instead. Spending half his time in London, he established a reputation here, working for the likes of Zaha Hadid and Alison Brooks, but decided to set up full-time back in Santiago after the birth of his son in 2008. There’s a lot of new buildings to be photographed on the continent and Palma’s established good relationships with its architects, notably fellow Chilean and the decidedly un-Latin sounding Pezo von Ellrichshausen. Here he’s created a pavilion in Denver that, simple on the surface, merits further interrogation. ‘I really liked the spatial qualities of the project, as did the charismatic fellow photographer in this picture,’ recalls Palma. ‘The way light filtered through the wooden structure and the almost church-like atmosphere of the place.’ We, however, were more struck by its intriguing plays on sight lines; dual perspectives indeed.
A string of clerestories gives artists even light while smaller windows open on the Royal Opera House’s production workshops opposite. Aluminium and brick give the building a reflective quality.

ACME Artists’ studios
HAT Projects

Words Eleanor Young
Photographs Hugo Glendinning

‘It’s a place where buildings are what they are, not contrived,’ says HAT Projects’ Hana Loftus. Purfleet is typical Thames Estuary – big sheds, distribution centres and fragments of housing. Designing artists’ studios here, as HAT has done, raises eyebrows in some places but space is cheap. It is quite different from the firm’s Jerwood Gallery in historic Hastings.

Working on High House Production Park – an Arts Council and public sector initiative that brought the Royal Opera House to this part of Thurrock – and for ACME Studios, HAT drew on ACME’s expertise. Research into artists’ spaces with Central St Martin’s isolated some of the qualities of the old light industrial premises that artists favour – putting the space and art before the building.

ACME was also clear on the mix of unit sizes and the net to gross ratio. It didn’t want to force creative interaction, though perhaps it might come to pass in the wash up space and or slightly generous concrete staircase that looks over the Dartford Crossing. Working hard within the £836/m² budget to ‘bring out the poetry’ with the stair and top lit corridors was coupled with discussions with the QS about which blockwork wall was cheaper.

‘People work here for many hours a week,’ explains Tom Grieve of HAT. ‘We wanted each studio to feel like a good place to be, within our grid system.’ Forty-three studios of different sizes, depths, proportions and window configuration create different relations between walls, windows and light for artists to choose.

‘There is a place for design as a discipline – not just making beautiful things but also things that work,’ says Loftus.

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<td>£1.8m</td>
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<td>2412m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>2151m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>£836/m²</td>
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Light and variety of spaces were all the embellishments needed; the architecture is designed to play second fiddle to the making of art.
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Community service

JW3 is London’s latest, US-style, centre for the Jewish community

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Hufton + Crow

It’s hard to imagine that the original design for this project came complete with an underground swimming pool. Now the re-engineered Jewish community centre JW3 sits alongside the busy Finchley Road in north London with the sort of pared logic, flexible floorplates and restrained circulation that one expects from Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands.

The cultural connection comes with the materials and the external form. The main entrance is by bridge, over a courtyard that is protected from traffic noise by a retaining wall and a glass screen. The screen may take its clues from Tony Fretton’s Camden Arts Centre opposite but there it is draped with trees and woodland planting. JW3’s face is more visibly a barrier, however neat the planting solution – one section shrubs and a bench in front, the next a kitchen herb garden behind the screen. Alongside, a nine storey tower preserves the residential units that previously occupied the site.

Philanthropist Dame Vivien Duffield instigated the project, based on a US model, but the brief adapted to its north London context as it went along. So out went the swimming pool, but the screening room, youth club, nursery, dance studio, hospital consulting rooms and demonstration kitchen make for a complicated set of functions, which will have to develop a character based on use rather than the design. But that shouldn’t be a problem: the first season includes Ruby Wax, Zoe Wanamaker, singalong Mary Poppins, a mouse taxidermy course and Superhero Sunday.

The painted steel fin balustrades on the bridge are delicious and double up at intervals to take on a more supportive role. Brass and anodised aluminium are used throughout the building for window frames, panels and banisters (alongside a handsome bronze recessed channel). Internal spaces are liveable but unremarkable. The entrance onto a mezzanine level feels compressed and, leading immediately to a resources room, banal. The ground floor – with bar, restaurant, theatre and courtyard – is the place to feel at home for both Jew and gentile, where the compression makes a comfortable space for the bar while the restaurant’s double height gives breathing space as you leave the theatre, probably still laughing.
Opposite While the community centre is buried on its sloping site the residential tower alongside climbs up the hill. Close to the tower’s flank has an interesting ripple texture, but from a distance it appears unappealingly blank.

Below left Dappled light is the pleasing product of dealing with shading on the main facade.

Below right and bottom left Hit and miss brick on the stairwell has the same effect to prevent overlooking into homes beyond.

Bottom right The underside of the entrance bridge, a steel balustrade giving it a delicate presence in the courtyard below.
**Buildings**

Community centre

### IN NUMBERS (EXCLUDING RESIDENTIAL)

- **£12m** contract cost
- **£3,894/m²** gross internal area
- **3,082m²** gross internal area
- **3,318m²** gross external area

#### Section AA

1. Youth centre
2. Multipurpose hall
3. Hub
4. Cafe/bar
5. Screening room
6. Reception
7. Offices
8. Arts and crafts studios
9. Dance studio
10. Drama studios
11. Learning centre
12. Nursery terrace
13. Arts studio and organic cafe
14. Language lounge
15. Science and discovery
16. Drama music and performing arts
17. Nursery
18. Residential

#### Section BB

12. Learning centre
13. Nursery terrace
14. Arts studio and organic cafe
15. Language lounge
16. Science and discovery
17. Drama music and performing arts
18. Nursery
19. Residential

#### Ground floor plan (courtyard level)

- Architect: Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands
- Client: JCC Ventures Ltd
- Project manager: Davis Langdon
- Main contractor: BAM
- Structural engineer: AKT II
- M&E engineer: Norman Disney & Young
- Quantity surveyor: Gardiner & Theobald
- Lighting consultant: Speirs & Major
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*Based on generic rating for UK and Ireland produced fibre cement slates – (Element ref: 812410008)
Music to the ears

Culture is alive and kicking in the City of London, where three new auditoria are making a bid for public attention

Words: Hugh Pearman  Photographs: Morley Von Sternberg

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama has been based in its purpose-built Barbican home since 1977, but has never really been on the performance-going public’s radar. This is set to change however. Almost by stealth, the school has built itself three new auditoria including a sizeable concert hall, to be frequently open to the public, on the same street as the main entrance to the Barbican complex. A large new theatre foyer at street level leads you to the 600-seat concert hall, a 220-seat theatre and a 120-person studio theatre. What you won’t see so much of are the ancillary spaces of a performing arts school, from rehearsal rooms to administrative offices. At a cost of £89m, this is one of the most significant cultural developments in the area for years.

In the British way, its genesis was not straightforward. It has come about as the result of a property deal, reminiscent of those 1960s schemes which saw new theatres buried beneath office blocks as planning gain pay-off. This scheme is much smarter – the main auditoria are slightly above, rather than beneath, street level – but the principle is the same. By allowing a developer to build a tower of very upmarket apartments that sell for eye-popping City prices, the cash was leveraged to build the school’s new facilities. Between them, the developer, Heron International, and the Barbican’s owner, the Corporation of London, have put up £75.5m of the overall cost.

There are two firms of architects involved. David Walker Architects has worked on schemes here since the late 1990s, when an office development was mooted on what
had been a fire station site, with some new facilities for the school included. That scheme was ditched, and Walker proposed a more slender residential tower that was adopted by both City and Heron. Following the usual lopping-off of upper floors that London planning always seems to require in the vicinity of St. Paul’s, this scheme – complete with new music school – got planning permission in 2006. At this point, the arts team of architect RHWL was brought on board to develop the Guildhall School part of the development and to be executive architect for the tower.

Strolling round the scheme with Walker and RHWL’s Barry Pritchard, it quickly becomes apparent how surprisingly large this scheme is. In mid-20th century tower-and-podium manner, the dark tower interlocks with the pale box of the school and its (very corporate-feeling) long glazed foyer. Inside, an atrium runs from top to bottom of the Guildhall complex, naturally toplit through a glazing slot. The freestanding concert hall is a relatively conventional broad coffin-shape, the main theatre (shoehorned ingeniously into the bottom of the tower) is a no less conventional horseshoe-shaped multi-tiered auditorium to teach the art of voice projection in the real world: though the upper tiers are very shallow. Other theatre and rehearsal spaces sit beneath the two main auditoria. Arup Acoustics and Theatre Projects contributed.

For all its transparency, from outside in daylight you could still be unaware that theatres lurk inside, so glassily restrained is the architecture: one hopes that the coming and going of students will provide the necessary buzz. Lit up in the evenings, however, it’s a different proposition. Culture has elbowed itself just that little bit deeper into City life.

At a cost of £89m, this is one of the most significant cultural developments in the area for years.
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Critique
Diocesan offices
Catholic tastes

One faith, many references... the offices of one of Germany’s biggest Catholic dioceses have a new home that is eclectic enough to fit their context

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek  Photographs: Roland Halbe

Right The mix of local vernacular and post modern influences generates a strange but compelling facade. This view is of the main entrance hall looking southeast.

Left On the ‘office’ side of the new building, the language is more deliberately post modern.
On entering, the first thing you notice is that the German town of Rottenburg’s cathedral isn’t symmetrical. It’s not very big either, but it’s the asymmetry that hits you first, a quirk of the town’s growth. From the base of its 13th century stone tower first came a Lady Chapel, followed by the town’s market square, but by 1644, when they got around to building the actual church of St Martin, the alignment of the market place in front made extending the nave along the tower’s axis impossible, so they merely built it further to its south. None of this would have had any historical bearing were it not for the fact that in 1828, with a protestant king ensconced in the regional capital of Stuttgart, a Jesuit college in the town and a theological faculty about to be set up at the nearby University of Tübingen, the catholic diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart found itself politically plumping for this humble and off-kilter church as its new Cathedral. The decision wasn’t popular – even its first Bishop wanted it demolished, but later plans for a grand new edifice were never carried out. No surprise that it’s famous for being the smallest cathedral in the country.

Unlike St Martin’s, German architectural practice Lederer Ragnarsdóttir Oei has no such problems with symmetry, seeming to have embraced it with almost religious zeal in its latest building for the Diocesan Curia, which has just opened in the town. Commissioned to allow the church’s dispersed regional administrative functions to be brought together, it also connects existing period buildings on the site to each other. The firm is at ease working with existing conditions. Similar formal and material games to those displayed here can be seen in its Ravensburg Art Gallery (PIP June/July 2013), whose high performance Passivhaus body is cleverly shrouded in an ancient brick cloak.

LRO is itself interesting. A Stuttgart firm founded in 1982 by Professor Arno Lederer, all its partners went to the city’s university. Considering that Marc Oei’s father is Chinese Indonesian and Jórunn Ragnarsdóttir was born in Finland, you might have expected the practice to have a rather more international outlook; but one small
house in Reykjavik aside, all its output is concentrated in south west Germany. Some might view this as provincial and unambitious, but it means that over the last 30 years the firm has quietly and happily developed its own style, with one eye on architectural influences and the other on the presence of a strong and increasingly familiar local vernacular. It also seems to have generated in their work a contradictory sense of honed naivety that’s both confounding and refreshing in equal measure.

In this regard, the €35m, 12,000m² diocesan offices at Rottenburg are pretty much a text book example of the firm’s thought processes and work. Oei explains that its strangely eclectic mix of modernist and classic language is partly due to the context and to the project’s 11 year gestation period, adding sagely that ‘sometimes it’s not good to think about things for too long.’ By ‘too long,’ I take it he means not more than a century, as Oei says the firm’s heroes are the likes of Corb, Jacobsen and Aalto. The last perhaps more than the other two – one of Lederer’s mentors was Swiss architect Ernst Gisel and, Oei recalls, he did a stint working for the Finn. Certainly, the Aalto-like curves that Gisel adopted for his 1990 Jewish Museum in Frankfurt are echoed here by his understudy for the entrance elevation.

This is the public face of a 100m long, four storey high row of private stacked office cells that run behind the hall, along the line of the town’s now-lost Roman wall. Placed centrally relative to this, the combined building is a model of symmetry, a body with lanky arms stretched out in a rood embrace, linking the two other 17th century buildings on the complex. The other new and highly visible component is the wall that runs east from the entrance elevation and down the hill of Obere Gasse. Behind this at ground level sits the diocesan archive reading room, above two other levels of subterranean archive storage; making a picturesque planted courtyard of what was formerly a car park.

Oei explains that entrance hall position was predicated on the site of the Old St Joseph’s church, which was burned out and demolished at the end of the
IN NUMBERS

2m
Catholics in the diocese

15
office buildings formerly occupied

300
office staff

10,190m²
area of existing buildings refurbished on site

12,290m²
new build offices

36
plug-in lights making up the bespoke old entrance hall light fixture
18th century. A baroque plan of four semi-circular side chapels and a bigger curved chancel, its absence left a mark on the complex; and it was one that LRO was keen to fill. The choice of brickwork for the hall and wall is an interesting one. Oei says the more formal, civic architecture of the town tends to be distinguished by different materials; it is of no object to him here that the existing buildings there are all white-rendered.

The highly distinctive facade of eccentric curves used both for the roof profile and the triangulated arches of the entrance, Oei adds, are ‘ghosts’ of the curves of that original baroque plan, and a broad reference to the west elevations of traditional churches; but it creates a novel elevation of obscure provenance. Above the entrance doors strange protruding glass boxes denote the conference rooms area. ‘You don’t need big windows for these spaces but special ones,’ says Oei. ‘There are mirrors on the wall reveals that create a strange effect.’ He doesn’t explain further but I want to see the trick.

In the small courtyard to the west of the hall the true eclectic nature of the design begins to manifest itself, with a whole number of architectural styles evident. Here we’ll see a 17th century elevation, a curved modernist stair meeting contemporary punched brick windows and an office corridor elevation that blends floor to ceiling punched openings with upper level Oxenaugenfenster, ‘cow’s eyes’ – elliptical windows effectively constituting a form of classical entablature. This whole concrete elevation is coated in a thick, prickly, overblown artex-like white render. Meanwhile, the north elevation is devoted to marking the office ‘cells’ with individual angled windows that repeat unrelentingly from one end to the other, save for an arced window in the centre and the JJP Oud-like stair towers at the ends. As you move around the exterior, it turns out references are alternately classical, modern and post-modern, depending where you choose to rest your eyes.

But whatever’s going on outside, nothing prepares you for the hall’s interior, which seems to sublimate all three simultaneously. Above a floor of red marble planks,
three banks of six white painted concrete semicircular balconies project into the hall space, beneath round rooflights. On seeing them you might think anything from Johnson Wax to Philip Johnson – the geometry, although suggested elsewhere on the exterior, surprises; a child-like evocation of clouds parting. Again, Oei has little to say of this ‘instinctive’ response short of the notion that it is a reversal of the old baroque church’s side altars, eating into the void rather than carving out space for it. The office areas that the hall feeds, as requested by the client, are ‘cells’ that, despite the views, have a sombre monastic quality that will appeal to lovers of St Jerome, and the access staircases at the far ends are a definite tilt to modernism; but you keep coming back to the counter-point of the hall, where this dreamy po-mo gesture keeps holding your attention.

The pure eclecticism on show here, the juxtaposition of influences and narratives and their almost casual pulling together to generate form is not something, if I’m honest, I’d normally recommend. But LRO, nestled in its corner of southern Germany, seems to have been ferreting away at the technique for years and seems wholly comfortable with expressing it. Oei says they have always been relaxed about their precedents, picking things from the past and ‘reinterpreting them’, always resistant to the idea of architectural dogma. They also feel unencumbered with the responsibility of having to ‘do something new’. Oei calling the work of the practice ‘conservative’, although he admits that his partners probably wouldn’t agree with the statement.

On balance, I think that I would – but even if it is conservative, it is design thinking being applied with nuance and humour. LRO is no game changer, but is proving itself a skilled post modern practice in the best sense of the word. A review of Arno Lederer’s mentor Ernst Giesel in the Süddeutschen Zeitung once said of him that he’d ‘managed to be an innovator without being polemical, modern without resort to mere style.’ The comment seems to sum up where LRO is coming from. As the Father, so the Son...
More visitors and fewer emissions add up to a sustainable business for the National Glass Centre

Words: Amanda Birch

Not many architects would envy Faulkner Browns Architects the task of refurbishing Sunderland’s National Glass Centre. When the building opened on the River Wear waterfront in 1998 it was awarded Millennium Project status in recognition of its creativity and innovative environmental approach. However over the last few years the Gollifer Langston-designed centre has struggled to attract visitors, despite its free entry, public galleries and glass-making demonstrations. The University of Sunderland, which took over management of the languishing Centre in 2010, immediately embarked on a £2.3m refurbishment programme to reinvigorate it.

‘The centre has suffered as a business and its maintenance regime hasn’t been as robust as it could have been,’ says Iain Garfield, head of estate services at the University of Sunderland. ‘It also bore significant value engineering when it was built’.

When FaulknerBrowns was appointed in 2011 its brief was to improve the layout, increase visitor numbers and make the building more energy efficient. But that wasn’t easy. As you might expect, the National Glass Centre is a largely glazed building housing furnaces, kilns and other hot glass-making equipment. In spite of a prominent location, its partially buried downward-sloping ramped entrance isn’t particularly welcoming or obvious.

‘The centre is a large two-storey building and it would take a big budget to get everything right. We didn’t have that so we focused on improving the quality of the studio environment and the customer expe-
experience,’ says Steve Dickson, senior director at FaulknerBrowns. ‘The two-phased project wasn’t just about energy-saving, it was about making the building a destination that works and adds value to Sunderland University campus and the wider region.

To improve energy efficiency, most architects would have begun by insulating the building’s envelope to make it more thermally efficient, but the tight budget didn’t allow for this. Instead, money was spent on rationalising the interiors and services and upgrading equipment in the hot glass shop.

The first phase of work started with the lower ground floor, which contains the studios used by the university’s educational programmes. It includes the hot glass shop (where the glass is made), the cold glass studio and the student area for glass and ceramics, which can now accommodate 100 more students. The shop and restaurant are also here.

There were originally two hot glass shops containing kilns, lehrs, furnaces and other equipment in opposite parts of the building. But in an inspired move, the architect relocated and amalgamated the two spaces to create one large hot glass studio by the shop. Two new large picture windows – each 2.4m tall by 5m wide – create a visual connection between the shop and the hot glass studio and enable the public to view the glass-making process.

A public viewing gallery with tiered seating within the hot glass studio now helps glass blowing demonstrations. A cold glass studio and a flame studio behind the hot glass area have are available for schools and the public.

A big chunk of the budget was invested in improving the services in the building. Originally everything, including the kilns and furnaces, was gas-fired, which was very energy intensive. By thermally modelling the building, the services engineer JH Partners was able to make significant adjustments. ➔
‘Due to the nature of what goes on in the centre, the building consumes a huge amount of gas and electricity,’ says Craig Jordan, partner at JH Partners. ‘So I couldn’t flag it up as a carbon neutral development. But comparing it to other glass facilities, the improvements we’ve made are pretty good.’

These have involved recovering heat from the hot glass area, where the furnaces are. A new extract hood and air-handling units re-circulate heat around the building. Running the furnaces and kilns on electricity has slashed energy costs: for example, the original gas furnaces consumed 120kW/h, while the electric ones need just 25kW/h.

The second phase of work concentrated on the ground floor or public entrance level. The architect has reconfigured the spaces – previously a confusing series of small galleries – to create four large gallery and education spaces which are much clearer in their navigation and identity. The largest, the Temporary Gallery, is environmentally controlled, allowing the centre to display international standard exhibitions for the first time. High efficiency LED luminaires and focused spotlighting have been installed in all the spaces, including the permanent Heritage Gallery, which explores the history of glass in Sunderland.

Since the National Glass Centre re-opened on June 29 visitor numbers have swelled, clearly demonstrating a renewed interest in the facility. Over 28,000 people visited during July compared to 10,200 in July 2012. However, it’s still too early to provide any concrete data on the energy savings made. But Garfield estimates that between £40,000 and £50,000 in energy consumption will be saved each year, while the payback period of the capital expenditure spent on the project is estimated at five to six years.

‘The sustainable element of this project wasn’t just about reducing carbon emissions,’ says Steve Dickson. ‘It was about the sustainability of the business and making the building more effective by getting more people in there. If the public don’t visit the centre then it’s a waste of a resource’.
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Adam Nathaniel Furman

One of this year’s Designers in Residence at the Design Museum talks about juggling jobs, academia and Maiolica

How did you marry the residency with the career?

It’s open to people who graduated up to five years ago and was the last year I could have applied. It was just at the right time. A month earlier my own firm, Studio Madam, had just finished a two-year long flat remodelling in a Grade II* listed Georgian terrace in Clifton, which meant I had time to work on it. I’m doing my part 3 at Ron Arad’s office, which really encouraged me and gave me a month off and every Friday for the project. It still meant 6am starts and late nights!

When we first looked at your blog we couldn’t work out if you were an architect or ceramicist

When I was at the AA I wanted to become a connoisseur in some area of art, purely for the joy of it. All I could afford was ceramics – it’s the only discipline where you can still buy a piece of incredible artistic value for a relatively small outlay. My diploma work might have looked like it was formed of huge, playful porcelain skyscrapers, but I’ve always been incredibly serious about what I do. If my work’s ironic, it is only in an artistic sense; I reject Umberto Eco’s claim that all post modernism has to be ‘ironic’. Take Luigi Moretti’s Girasole in Rome – it’s incredibly sophisticated.

What’s the theme of your three-month residency?

The narrative of the show is a ‘Cabinet of Curiosities’ – all produced by a mad fictional blogger and designer who exists in a fever of thought and production. Beside the ceramics, the blog is as much part of the creative process and explains how the 40-odd objects came about. Initially the ‘designer’ has a critical standpoint about random things, like ancient Rome and 3D scanning, or the link of formal ornamentation and hyperanxiety, and all the objects arise from his fictional dialogue.

How did you create the pieces?

In the UK I work with George Lee of Lee3d who’d make the 3D positives of my ‘totems’, which I’d blister my hands sanding. You make a plaster mould, do slip casting and end up with the completed porcelain totem. To get them painted I contacted everyone from the RCA whose stuff I’d ever liked and two graduates who’d done amazing work got back and helped out.

So what’s the favourite piece in your collection?

A tiny bowl by 19th century Bologna firm Fabrca Minghetti, the master of Maiolica production until WW1. Its form and sprezzatura of colouring say a lot about the things I feel most passionate about – a little piece of architecture in its own right.

The RIBA Journal October 2013

Chasing clearer clauses
– Douglas Wass

The dating game
– Maria Smith

2: Intelligence

NURTURE NOT NATURE

This year the Design Museum’s Designers in Residence programme was based on the idea of identity, with designers invited to explore how design can be used to convey a sense of identity through objects or mediated experiences. The work of the four designers – Eunhee Jo, Chloe Meineck and Thomas Thwaites as well as Furman – is on display at the museum until 12 January 2014.
Flying high

UK airports are straining at the seams. Is an island hub the answer?

Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Last month the Davies Commission published over 50 expansion proposals from UK airports. The task of the independent commission, set up by government, is to identify the best options for increasing UK capacity and maintaining the UK’s global hub status. It is due to publish recommendations in 2015, but will compile an interim report at the end of this year to suggest ‘credible’ long term options. London’s airport capacity is the key issue, with Foster+Partners, Make Architects, Grimshaw, Farrells (pictured) and Gensler all weighing in (see page 46); but to capture more traffic, both Birmingham and Manchester put forward radical expansion schemes, although according to National Air Traffic Services traffic remains well below its 2007 peak.

But then individual proposals take no account of the complex relationship between the London airports and those in the rest of the UK. According to Neil Squibbs, partner and head of aviation at Buro Happold, the problem is that, with a dearth of slots at Heathrow, provincial airports connect better to the Schiphol and Frankfurt hubs. ‘Creating a new dedicated hub outside London would free up slot capacity. The Foster+Partners proposal (see page 46) could mean for instance that you check in at Cardiff, Leeds or Newcastle and fly to the new hub for your onward international connection – the whole island in effect becoming “air side”. This would mean a core change in UK airport connectivity, affecting rail and road travel and perhaps, arguments for HS2.’

Squibbs thinks that the general upgrading of UK airports has been on the cards since 2008, when BAA was forced by the Competition Commission to sell Gatwick and Stansted, meaning a bun fight between them all for air traffic. ‘Gatwick for instance is mopping up China routes that Heathrow hasn’t capacity to take,’ he says, adding that with a moratorium on a new runway until 2020, Gatwick’s future capacity is also capped.

Rodney Fewings, aviation consultant at Cranfield University, says whether airports succeed or fail is all about critical mass, geography and connectivity. ‘You can be as political as you like, but the issue is to ensure that airlines want to fly into your location,’ he says. ‘Manchester might not be a financial hub like Edinburgh, but it has a huge catchment and up-to-date facilities – and their quality is more important than ever. And in a competitive market driven by capturing airlines’ business, airports must rely less on landing fees and more on revenue generation at terminals – hence the “airport as shopping mall”.’

But expanding a terminal also means increasing airside logistics, perhaps even beyond the airport itself. The US concept of the ‘airport city’ is making itself felt in the UK, with commercial business attracted to the connectivity airports offer. But, says Fewings, they must be both a major gateway hub airport and fully linked to transport networks. ‘Outside Heathrow, the only other airport city going ahead is at Manchester. It’s certainly not happening at Luton, Stansted, Gatwick or Birmingham,’ he points out.

Fewings adds that the London airport question is 20 years old, but he’s keeping an eye on developments at Heathrow and Manchester: ‘The only other unknown to my mind is whether Scotland goes independent, which could see Edinburgh airport expand as its de facto international hub,’ he says, ©
National carriers seem to be concentrating on fewer and bigger airports like Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. If they establish themselves there, airports start to see growth concentrated in the vicinity. Being based in Manchester I’d say it’s arrogant to think the country wants to go to Heathrow to catch a connection – it’s about best meeting local customer need. As a true international hub, last year Manchester handled over 20m passengers and has a high demand for airline servicing, logistics and freight handling – it directly employs over 40,000 people in the area.

It’s not just about the airport though, but the fact that businesses want to invest in the connectivity driving the airport city concept – in offices, leisure, hospitality and conference centres. As a property consultant in Manchester, CBRE is involved in the build out of 2.5million ft² of office space on 100ha of airport vicinity over the next 10 years; the total build running to 4.5million ft² of logistics, hotels and retail. The whole development is predicated on the connectivity and catchment area of the airport.

The selling points for airport cities are location, transport and a robust masterplan. As airports can bring all this together there’s a compelling business case for investors to make it a destination in its own right. Old style business parks were built with road access only, but the demand now is for multi-modal forms of access – rail, trams and buses. You could find all that in a city centre, but the opportunities are rare. All those modes are present at an airport.

The airport city marks the next breed of business parks – connected and enjoyable places to work and relax.
London Hub City: Grimshaw’s approach is to make London the hub for all the satellite airports around it, splitting aviation capacity between the existing sites and ensuring that it is no more than a half-hour journey into the city ‘hub’ after leaving the aircraft. Marked improvements to baggage handling and customs would be required – not to mention a third Heathrow runway.

Aecom and planner Quod have claimed that closing Heathrow would have massive economic implications, and that expansion of the airport could be carried out seven years faster than any proposed expansion in the Thames estuary. Their £18bn expansion would require the construction of a third and possibly fourth new runway on the west London site.

London City: Foster+Partners’ £24bn proposal with engineer Halcrow is a belt and braces approach to creating a future-proofed hub for the UK. Buildable within 16 years, it would create a four-runway airport capable of dealing with up to 150m passengers a year. The proposal involves the creation of three new runways on the site. A new Crossrail link would connect the airport to Stratford in 25 minutes and give access by rail to the North East and Scotland. With the M11 as well, Make says Stansted would be better connected to the rest of the UK than any other airport.

Gatwick: Sir Terry Farrell has proposed an expanded £10bn Gatwick Airport, complete with a second runway. The aim is that the airport, as part of a ‘constellation’ with Heathrow and Stansted, would use existing infrastructure and have less environmental impact than the development of a single ‘megahub’ airport. Cost is also lower at up to £9bn.
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Michael Marshall
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Michael Marshall
Adrian James Architects

—

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Architect Stephen Townsend
Associated Architects

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In the loop
Are BIM’s advantages easily realisable in commercial development?

Andrew Barraclough

Is BIM really the panacea for architects that many claim? The six prestigious commercial office projects we explored in our research for the British Council for Offices revealed tangible benefits for architects and the wider project stakeholders. But how can these be transferred to everyday practice?

Small practitioners have invested considerably in BIM and there should be a demonstrable return. We found examples where speed, efficiency, accuracy and co-ordination benefited architects, the wider project team and ultimately the end user – occupier or tenant. However, the real help, where true value creation takes place, is when data is transferred between parties and embellished to meet the needs of that part of the process.

As a minimum, all architects engaged in RIBA Stage 2 – Concept Design, and Stage 3 – Developed Design, will realise benefits on any typology, even if the project doesn’t proceed beyond Stage 3 or others complete the design. This may not directly benefit the author of the design, but for the recipient a well developed model at the conclusion of RIBA Stage 3 would help enormously. Of course the greatest benefit comes through the delivery of full services from inception to completion and beyond.

Co-ordinating design
Our research findings confirmed that the single most beneficial aspect of BIM for the architect relates to the improved ability to co-ordinate the design across the entire multi-disciplinary team. For architects acting as design team leader with responsibility for co-ordination, BIM has the capability to deliver substantial improvements in the quality of technical design. These correlate directly to reduced clashes, less rework and significantly fewer requests for information. Co-ordinating the design for commercial office buildings is complex, so investing in getting it right early in the process saves resources and protects profits.

Improving building performance is another key area where BIM can deliver benefits. Buildings which are planned efficiently, deliver outstanding net to gross floor area and are economic to operate will always be attractive to developers, investors and tenants, given the high cost of land and the risks associated with development. Our research provided several examples where the model allowed the co-ordinated design to be interrogated in a far higher level of detail to demonstrate ‘fit’ and reduce superfluous space. This typically led to more creative structural solutions, condensed plant rooms/risers and overall improvement.
No matter how well something works, it can always be improved...

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BIM may have the greatest impact on operation and maintenance over the life of the asset.

Pivotal role
Our research findings suggested that BIM may have the greatest impact on operation and maintenance over the life of the asset, but while such benefits and cost savings are starting to emerge, there is little evidence of BIM data being used as the source of information for facilities management (FM) systems. Inevitably there will be developments in existing computer aided and BIM-based FM systems, which with accurate geometry allow the user to ‘walk through’ space and interrogate assets. Architects have a pivotal role to fill here and will need to ensure that building elements are correctly tagged with an appropriate level of detail using common libraries of components.

The architect has a key role in creating flexible space plans where floor plates can be reconfigured easily for future use. Modelling space with multi-dimensional attributes, all of which can be easily manipulated, gives tenants confidence their needs can be met over the life of the asset. Updates of Cat B fitouts deliver valuable data for the tenant, landlord and potential future tenants when a break in the lease occurs.

Another major role for architects is the marketing of commercial office buildings, and not just through the quality of the design. BIM enables the creation of immersive marketing media using virtual technologies to help prospective tenants really understand and appreciate their space. We predict that these technologies will continue to develop and improve; and rapidly become the new norm, making it increasingly difficult for existing CAD platforms to compete or deliver.

New skills
While BIM has many advantages for architects, there are much wider implications for the profession and the way in which it participates, or not, in the delivery of integrated BIM. The growth in BIM has led to an explosion in the volume of data available to the architect and the wider design team. This places a new emphasis on data management and the need for new skills to fulfil this role. Evidence suggests that individual design disciplines have trained staff for this, but the greater challenge relates to the need for those who can ‘integrate’ models as they develop and pass between stages from design to fabrication, manufacture, construction and operation.

The need for an integrator presents both an opportunity and a threat for architects. We predict this will quickly develop into a specialist position and deliver enormous value. Designers and specifically architects are well placed to fulfil this role, but in the absence of willing candidates contractors are likely to step in and exert far greater control over the process of design and construction.

Andrew Barraclough is a director at HOK

Tried and Tested
HOK was appointed by Grosvenor Estate to plan for the adaptive reuse of 29-37 Davies Street, which provides 38,000ft² of office and retail accommodation. The development, due to complete in December this year, will use BIM geometry and data developed through design and construction for the future management of the facility. A number of key initiatives have been trialled and will be implemented including:

Asset Tagging Key assets have been tagged and can be interrogated via Navisworks through the online operation and maintenance (O&M) manuals to deliver data in Cobie format for sharing with a CAFM system. All the data will be linked and accessed via computer tablets for use by the building management team.

Online FM tools The management of all key services, including security and the building management system, is linked to a tablet, along with access to the O&M manuals. For this trial project conventional paper-based O&M manuals will also be available.

Tenant fit-outs Leases clauses are being rewritten to actively encourage the incoming tenant to design its fit-out in a model environment compatible with the base shell and core model. The tenant will also be required to update the model to reflect any subsequent changes so that at the end of the lease term the model will be available for the next tenant or as a base for any improvement works.

Geospatial Information System (GIS) estate model The broader vision is to provide a portfolio solution for managing the entire estate in a consistent and easily accessible way. The Davies Street development is being used as the trial project for this initiative, which will develop and grow as new projects are realised.
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Made in Wales

There are revolutionary rumblings in Wales. Dan Benham thinks the country is dynamic enough to take a lead

Dan Benham – born, bred, trained and practising in his capital city. He is the 32 year old who made possible the first architecture pavilion at the National Eisteddfod, he is a member of design-led practice Loyn & Co Architects and he is the new president of the Royal Society of Architects in Wales.

Of course, he is a great cheerleader for Wales and for design in the country. ‘It’s a tipping point in Wales,’ he says. ‘Wales wants to be an exemplar place for design and architecture. And there’s great talent here. I’d love to hold a flag and lead everyone to the Assembly,’ Benham says, only half joking.

‘It feels like it could be a design revolution. Wales is small enough to do well,’ he says. ‘Architects can champion that and bring others alongside, we can’t do it on our own.’ He has led Cardiff’s Design Circle for two years and enjoyed the way that what is actually the Royal Society of Architects in Wales’ southern branch has pulled in other professions, from planners and surveyors to artists and photographers. ‘It’s not just architects who care,’ he says. ‘It’s a more European approach.’

That matters to Benham. He looks to Europe for inspiration for many things, from effective procurement weightings and well chosen juries within the OJEU system to the model of Freiburg’s development in Germany. Could a more independent Wales, advised by its professions, be heading that way?

There was perhaps an equivalent sense of hope when Cabe and the Design Commission for Wales were founded in 1999 and early 2000s and, briefly, it seemed good design was being taken seriously by government. Not only this, but the access to decision makers here is heady in comparison to England or Scotland. ‘I could ring up and meet an Assembly member in the next two weeks and it could be in policy in two years,’ says Benham. He believes the only way to set the agenda is by regulation – and justly so, as in the next year the Assembly will decide on the definition of sustainable development and set out national housing policy.

Housing has dominated Denham’s architectural life. The practice office where he served his year out and later took his Part 3 is in Penarth, a little 19th century resort perched on the cliffs around the bay from Cardiff. The practice has been designing interesting, characterful private homes for many years but has also done some unlikely one-offs. Aberthaw

Homes for Gwalia demonstrate a development of the terrace typology in the designs of Loyn & Co, an abiding interest of Benham.
Dan Benham on Cardiff Bay

‘I would probably take a bulldozer to the lot…”

On Procurement

“So many buildings in Cardiff are trash. The question is how can you get councils and the public to express dissatisfaction with buildings”

On RIBA Awards

‘Do people understand Welsh architecture? I think it can be seen as too cuddly’

On his Idol

‘If I could bring Zumthor to Wales that would be amazing’

On Home

‘I have just turned sheds into terraces in the garden of my Victorian house. The decking folds into seats – we should do it more in our public spaces’
Power Station education and visitors’ centre was one of these. Completed in 2010, it supplied the meat of Benham’s thesis on learning spaces. An ‘axis of energy’ draws out the lines of the power station and environment, huge fins housing all the energy systems behind moveable mesh, an oversized gutter and a rainwater tank. This was an experiment in didactic building. ‘Can architecture be a teacher itself?’ asks Benham.

Another emblematic project in the office is housing for Gwalia housing association in Waunarlywdd near Swansea. Here a generous interpretation of the terrace is used to delineate varying degrees of public and private space. Benham delights in not having to deal with developers’ pavements and grass verges – and in the fact that you will be able to buy homes for £130,000 under shared ownership schemes. Shared and communal spaces drive much of the practice’s architecture.

At Cardiff Bay, the firm’s residential project for Igloo, alongside Roath Lock and Porth Teigre where Doctor Who is filmed behind FAT’s crazy facades, makes up for some of the many missed opportunities in the Bay. With spaces to meet and interact, and roof gardens, Benham is delighted that so many in the design community – and his own wife – have already expressed an interesting in living in one. The historic Welsh terrace was the theme for his first radio discussion. Party walls save energy, orientation is flexible and adjustable public/private layers make it a model for the 21st century, he argues.

How to make better places to live is at the core of Benham’s interests – from social spaces to the RIBA’s calls for space and light, to the battle in Wales between infrastructure spending and densification to create social cities. Housing will also be at the forefront of architectural conversations in the region for the rest of this year, with the RSAW conference drawing out some of the themes as a Housing Bill comes in front of the Welsh Assembly this autumn.

If the energy of the moment could be directed towards improving housing, that would be truly valuable.

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‘Architecture has long had just a black box TV screen and exhibition at the National Eisteddfod but I felt it needed more,’ says Benham. ‘So in 2012 we set up an architecture pavilion — good promotion for a young practice as well as for architecture. Coombs Jones won the competition to design it with a reinterpreted landscape in architectural form (above). I raised the £20,000 to make it happen from councils, private clients and goods in kind. There were some sleepless nights. But right from the jury panel meetings we were discussing the big question: What is design in Wales? I was chuffed, even with the negative comments. Just having the conversation is important.’

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DEFINING WALES’ LEGISLATIVE PATH

The Sustainable Development Bill, now in consultation, has been renamed the Future Generations Bill and will be introduced to the National Assembly in summer 2014. The Housing Bill goes in front of the Assembly this autumn and is expected to cover tackling homelessness and empty homes; improving standards in the private rented sector; increasing the supply of housing; and improving its quality.

RSAW Annual Conference 2013: The Place of Home. Speakers include architect Alison Brooks and Wulf Daseking, former chief planner of Freiburg, Germany. Includes practitioner masterclasses on housing design. 14-15 November, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff. For more information see www.architecture.com/wales or call RSAW on 029 2022 8987
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Medite: Raising the standard of MDF
The Business Benchmarking Survey of RIBA Chartered Practices 2012-1013 shows a wide range in profitability

Caroline Cole

In theory, profit is a pretty straightforward concept: maximise your income, minimise your outgoings and you’ll make a healthy one. In practice, it’s all a bit more complex.

In the 2012/13 Business Benchmarking Survey of RIBA Chartered Practices, we were pleasantly surprised to see that practices averaged almost 22% profit, substantially higher than the benchmark of 15%. An encouraging headline – but this figure conceals dramatic variations in fortunes across the country.

In the West Midlands a remarkable 70% of practices exceed the benchmark; and 68% in the North East. But it drops to only 47% of practices in Yorkshire and 56% in the North West. Both these regions, alongside Wales and East of England, also have an alarmingly high percentage of loss making practices. However, on its own, profit to turnover is rather meaningless and has little bearing on the profit that practices achieve in real money. So more interesting are turnover and profit per fee earner.

Across the survey, turnover per fee earner averages £80,000, but in East of England and Wessex this plummets to £60,000. In Northern Ireland, Scotland, South West and Wales the figure is still below £65,000. Four regions average £70,000-£75,000: North East, South East, North West and Yorkshire. In London, practices average an enviable £98,000.

So why this discrepancy? The benchmarking survey does not delve into the details of fee levels. However, we know from previous surveys that some client sectors deliver considerably higher fees than others. Equally, it would be fair to assume that within the domestic market, where most small practices operate, fees will vary in line with the local economy. We know that larger practices, operating nationally and internationally, average almost twice the turnover per fee earner of small practices. So it is hardly surprising that those in East of England, for example – where 84% have fewer than five people and only 5% have above 20 – average such a low turnover per fee earner. By contrast, 14% of practices in London exceed 20 people.

Danger within

However, many internal operating factors also affect profitability: the practice structure – the ratio of different fee earners – headcount, salaries and charge out rates; the amount, value and level of spare capacity; the ratio of fee earners to non-fee earners; and the level of fixed and variable expenses.

Looking at profit per fee earner, London practices top the list with an average £23,000 profit per fee earner, around 23% profit, which is good but not that good: practices in West Midlands average a 27% margin, as do those in Northern Ireland and South East; in Wales this is 25%. At the other end of the scale, practices in North West average only 11% from a very reasonable turnover per fee earner of £74,000; as a result, they average one of the lowest profit per fee earner figures: under £8,200. Similarly, practices in Yorkshire achieve only 16% from a healthy £75,000 turnover. However, the region suffering most is Wessex. Here, practices average one of the lowest turnover per fee earner rates, and scrape 12% profit per fee earner: just £7,300.

It is worth noting that all figures quoted here are averages and in some of the smaller regions loss making practices and a few larger practices can affect the overall figures. In every region some practices perform very much better, and some very much worse, than these figures suggest. So, if you are thinking of setting up shop in another region, do your homework at a local level. It goes without saying that you should also aim to be as efficient as possible so, even if your income is relatively small, you make it work as hard as possible.

Caroline Cole is director of Colander
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The process has not been managed properly. Key Performance Indicators and the process of identifying problems to the client (while taking care not to unwittingly breach insurance policy terms by incriminating oneself), a climate that encourages early reporting to the client in that vein, should help control other parties who are not performing.

Paper management is crucial. The administrator must operate an efficient written system to respond promptly to contractors’ requests and correct any misleading impressions – particularly requests for confirmation of verbal instructions and architect instructions.

A strong contract administrator will also be flexible enough to acknowledge where information that it has issued during the design stage may need to be amended or augmented, even if this gives rise to an entitlement to the contractor to an extension of time. ‘At large’ and dangerous

The administrator must be fully familiar with the terms of its contract (surprisingly, some do not hold a copy). Particular attention must be paid to the time limits within the contract form, so the administrator can issue the certificates. Otherwise, if a contract is allowed to become ‘at large’ so that the client’s ability to claim liquidated and ascertained damages is compromised, a clear and probably readily identifiable sum can be claimed to be the administrator’s responsibility.

A contract at large also poses the danger of the administrator not awarding an extension of time (EoT) when it knows one is due. It must be firm and remain resolutely independent of its client. If the architect doesn’t issue an EoT, the independence of the administrator will be compromised, leading to more problems and undermining the probity of any EoT award. Depending on the contract form, the administrator is likely to be obliged simply to award an EoT, regardless of what it receives from the contractor. This is distinct from how a loss and expense claim can be dealt with.

Another key area of contract administration involves the adequacy of identifying defective workmanship throughout the project. Most architects now appreciate that they should agree to no more than periodic inspection (not supervision) but what that involves will depend on such things as its agreed frequency, whether the client has a separate clerk of works and whether the administrator is resident. A proper line of communication to the contractor means the administrator will know when key items are visible for inspection.

Practical completion and final certification are fraught with complexities. Practical completion remains at the discretion of the administrator and must be exercised sensibly and robustly if the CA is to resist pressure (usually from the client) to certify. The building contract will stipulate when final certification is to be issued, although architects still avoid issuing a final certificate if they can.

There is not a great deal of available case law on contract administration – presumably because many disputes are resolved by mediation or adjudication (which tends to be publicised only if the courts get involved). The spectre of adjudication means administrators must be even more on their mettle, because there is now high speed dispute resolution if the administration is found wanting.

Mark Klimt is a partner at DWF Fishburns and an RIBA specialist practice consultant

Power behind the design

Contract management is what most often makes or breaks a project, not design

Mark Klimt

A third of PII claims relate to contract administration, according to the RIBA Insurance Agency. But how a project is set up is often the key to its success – and avoidance of claims.

Key consultant roles need defining and the contract administrator (CA) needs to establish where he/she fits in.

The CA must be robust and firm. If there are separate appointments with other consultants and the contractor, it will have no contractual power to compel them to perform. However, an efficient system for logging and chasing outstanding information gives the project the best chance of staying on track and protects the administrator from claims that...
From the outset it was decided the government construction client would provide a ‘pull’ for the use of BIM (building information modelling). But is this drive clarifying what is needed and when? What is meant by verifiable and compliant data? And how does it all relate to the new RIBA Plan of Work?

Data, often a number linked with units, is mostly short pieces of information, frequently without context, usually written into specifications and lists to define equipment and materials. It is essential for the purchase of materials and to construct and operate an asset. Data brings commitment and certainty, reducing the risk of misunderstanding of words and verification processes used to test completeness.

Text documents are often used early in a project for defining outcomes, constraints, target setting and strategy. They are also used for performance specifications, eg cladding or engineering controls, and to define operational processes such as cleaning or fault finding. They usually contain data.

A project moves quickly from the defining stage to the development of an increasing amount of generic data, including geometry. A lot of output is in the form of text documents which provide cohesion, inform the client and enable other team members to produce data.

By the end of the design stage output needs to be much more in the form of construction data. Suppliers and specialist contractors take performance specifications in text format.

Words or data: which should you use when to keep things clear for the whole team?

Rob Manning

Sometimes one discipline has a different level of data definition to the others. As a result the whole team is uncertain about the validity of decisions.
and deliver design data using the proprietary products required for construction. Data made available at handover will inform an asset register and be supplemented by text documents for facilities management. The BIM verification process recognises text and data.

Sometimes, it is obvious at a certain work stage that one discipline has a different level of data definition and geometric detail to the others. As a result the whole team is uncertain about the validity of decisions being made both by the team and the client at that work stage. This might have happened at stages C, D and E using the previous RIBA Plan of Work because use of documents giving clarity about what should be delivered was not widespread.

**Making it all match**

How can we align the delivery of text documents and data? A review of documents showed that across disciplines the work stages were not well aligned; they described what we did rather than delivered, focused on design professions and paid little attention to suppliers, specialist contractors, operators and clients, and gave limited emphasis to strategy and operation.

The government BIM strategy called on the supply chain to adopt common work stages and most significantly to identify the data and geometry deliverables at each work stage.

This is important to ensure that the client, consultant team, construction team and operator know what they and others should expect to deliver at each work stage. A unified plan of work will make clear what each party should put into a stage report.

More importantly from the government BIM perspective, the construction client will be able to test that the information complies with the requirements of its chosen data file and verify that information needed for decision making is in place. It has a contractual role.

The RIBA Plan of Work 2013 will support the construction industry into the future with eight agreed work stages.

In a digital plan of work the first task is to identify text documents for each work stage. Institutions including the RIBA are working with the Construction Industry Council to identify the text descriptions of what each discipline needs from others at each work stage, and when to deliver it. The next step will be to identify at each work stage the specific data and geometry that should accompany the text documents to move into a digital world.

Rob Manning, BIM task group CIC

**MONEY IN THE SKIP**

30% of the construction process is rework

3-5% of construction turnover is lost at discipline interface and interoperability

Source: Andrew Pearson, associate director, Interserve Construction, HMYOI Cookham Wood Report

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Sharpen your clause

Limiting your liability needs more than a clause – be sure it is clear and enforceable

Douglas Wass

Architects should always seek to negotiate a clause limiting the level of their liability to clients under the terms of their appointment. This is to ensure that first, their professional indemnity insurance is sufficient to cover any claims, and secondly, the risks they are taking are proportionate to the fees they are paid.

However, the validity of such clauses can be challenged under the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 if the client is a consumer and the limitation of liability is included in the architect’s standard terms and conditions. Most clients will be consumers for the purposes of the Act.

What’s reasonable?

Such clauses will only be considered valid if the architect satisfies the court that the limitation of liability is reasonable. The court will take into account factors such as: the resources which the architect could expect to be available to it to meet the liability; how far it was open to the architect to cover itself by insurance; the relative strength of the bargaining positions of architect and client; and whether the client knew or ought reasonably to have known of the existence of the limitation of liability.

If a challenge is upheld, the limitation of liability will be unenforceable, meaning the architect may be exposed to claims substantially exceeding the level of its professional indemnity insurance, threatening its solvency.

Fortunately, the courts recently gave clear guidance on the circumstances in which limitations of liability could be unenforceable.

In the case of The Trustees of Ampleforth Abbey Trust v Turner & Townsend Project Management Ltd, the client successfully argued that a clause limiting the project manager’s liability to either the value of its fee or £1m, whichever was lower, was unenforceable under the Act.

Influential appointment

The court was heavily influenced by the fact that the project manager’s appointment included a clause requiring it to maintain professional indemnity insurance (PII) with a limit of indemnity (£10m for occurrences arising out of any one event) which was substantially higher than the limitation of liability. This was because the court considered that it was unreasonable for part of the cost of maintaining the substantial level of insurance to be passed on to the client through the fees of the project manager when the client would not obtain any material benefit from that insurance due to the limitation of liability.

More recently, a challenge to the validity of a clause limiting the liability of the consultant to either the value of its fee or €50,000 failed in the case of Elvanite Full Circle Ltd v AMEC Earth & Environmental (UK) Ltd. The court concluded that the parties were experienced businessmen of relatively equal bargaining power and that, therefore, the court should not interfere in their contractual arrangements unless one party had unfairly taken advantage of the other. There could be no question of unfair advantage in this case because the client was aware of the relevant terms and had generally understood them.

While architects can change neither the strength of their clients’ bargaining position nor the ability of architects generally to obtain insurance to cover any liabilities they may incur to clients, the cases show architects can take steps to reduce the risks of limitations of liability being successfully challenged. In particular, they should expressly draw limitations of liability to the attention of their clients in writing; and ensure their appointments do not require them to maintain a level of PII which is materially different from the level of the limitation of liability.

Doug Wass is with Macfarlanes

The project manager’s appointment required it to maintain PII with a limit of indemnity which was substantially higher than the limitation of liability.

INTERPRETATION

Lawyers often advise architects on the proper interpretation of contracts but what does ‘interpretation’ actually mean? In the leading case of Investors Compensation Scheme v West Bromwich Building Society it was described as ‘… the ascertainment of the meaning which the document would convey to a reasonable person having all the background knowledge which would reasonably have been available to the parties in the situation in which they were at the time of the contract.’

The court will take into account the previous negotiations of the parties and their declarations of subjective intent when deciding on the meaning of the contract. However, the court will consider anything else which would have been reasonably available to the parties and would have affected the way in which the words used in the contract would have been understood by a reasonable person. The courts rarely simply review the contract to determine what the words should be interpreted to mean. Therefore, to advise on a contract’s proper interpretation, lawyers usually need to consider evidence of the factual and commercial context in which it was negotiated and to review relevant contemporaneous documents.
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Who’s got hold of the remote?

How to keep calm with your subcontractor

Maria Smith

Being subcontracted can be like dating someone who thinks they’re better than you. They pay for your dinner, expect you to hang on to their arm like some wet lettuce, hold the remote, explain the news to you, and justify half truths and withheld information with claims that they’re protecting you.

Subcontracting, however, can be like dating someone who thinks you’re better than them. They expect you to pay for dinner, hang on your arm like a wet lettuce, gaze at you limply as you decide which channel to watch and, if it’s the news, explain the background, and they expect you to skim the stress from any situation and feed it to them pasteurised.

Subcontracts, like unequal (or perceived unequal) relationships, are a fact of life, so how do we handle them? How do we judge from the first tender moments whether this is a relationship that will warm the cockles of our hearts, or one that will end in slammed doors – coming off their badly-made hinges? What are the tell-tale signs to look out for?

It may not at first be clear that the union is doomed, set on unequal footings. Your date may, in your eyes, be just like you; an architect who you perhaps even studied with. You might feel confident that you will have shared aesthetics and collaborative ideals. You might even decide to share each others’ meals and get the chocolate brownie with two spoons, and then lo, down the line they use you as sacrificial human shuttering. They start turning up late but still expecting to see the entire film in the 25 minutes left before some arbitrary time in their arbitrary calendar. They bring over all the ingredients for a slap up meal, and then reveal that they expect you to cook it, and they’ve invited their mum over. They continue these power moves until you realise that their true nature is cowardly and incompetent and that they’re using you to make themselves look good. My advice? If dinners turn out to be ingredients, slip away quietly while they’re busy scrawling your initials all over the to-do list.

When your date is of the artistic persuasion, they may well relish the imbalance of responsibility. This might suit the situation just fine, or it might bring irritations. The first will probably be figuring out where (and whether) you stand. Excessively creative sorts can one minute humbly defer to you on which route to take or which insurances to carry, and the next hold forth loudly and stubbornly in out of context jargon. You will eventually realise that they are measuring things on a scale perpendicular to yours and that for the relationship to continue, you must accept a level of charming bewilderment. In such situations you can only do your best to decipher their units of measurement and focus on the good times.

Cheerful terms

The polar opposite of the artist date is the engineer date. The engineer will cheerfully set out the terms by which they need you and you need them. They are more than happy to let you hold the remote so long as you let them voiceover your choices with know-it-all comments that cut a little too close to the bone. They – more easily than is wise for their temperament – find themselves buying all the dinners and explaining the news. This position does not suit them well for they are happy and amenable by nature and reluctant to risk upset for good of the consortium. So give them the car keys if you must but back-seat drive like your life depends on it.

If dinners turn out to be ingredients, slip away quietly while they’re busy scrawling your initials all over the to-do list.

The first tender moments (excuse me but that pun bears repeating) in the skilled hands of a contractor are often dangerous: it’s easy to get carried away. They usually begin by trying to please, and promising more than they can really deliver. Too soon you imagine the beautiful product of your union. Reality hits hard if when the relationship gets serious, they start to really let you down. Sometimes it seems they have charmed even themselves and expect you to understand and excuse the optimism of the early days. They might even make the dreaded mistake of mentioning past relationships – ‘so-and-so never minded’. Your toes curl. You sleep on the sofa. This tense time often kills the relationship in an emotional and dramatic way, but you can also pull through and find that sought after long term alliance. Slightly sadly, it may depend heavily on filtered understanding, but nevertheless, it is a love of sorts. Just persevere through the hard times for as long as is bearable but, in anticipation, stay cool early on and don’t sleep together on the first date.

Maria Smith is a director at Studio Weave

MEANWHILE... this month I’ve been excavating Scottish granite, had success with Highways Act Section 38 Agreements, and joined the inaugural rehearsal of the Studio Weave orchestra
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Having worked in the construction industry over the last 40 years, I have witnessed the drive to develop new, cheaper and better products that will provide increased reliability. Like many people I perceived lead as a reliable but old fashioned product mainly for use on historic building or conservation projects.

My perception has changed dramatically, however, since becoming chief executive of the Lead Sheet Association (LSA). This supplement provides unequivocal evidence of the role lead can play as a contemporary building material and how it compares favourably when measured against the criteria used to select construction materials today.

I was delighted to see this supplement’s exposure of the range of projects produced by some of our leading architects – demonstrating the versatility of BS EN 12588 Rolled Lead Sheet. As well as having great aesthetic qualities, lead also has impressive green credentials. British Standard Rolled Lead Sheet is now in the BRE Global Green Guide with ratings of A or A+ on most standard roofing and cladding installations. Moreover lead has the lowest carbon footprint of most roofing materials and is 100% recyclable. At the LSA we now describe lead as the ‘new’ eco-friendly material.

The projects in this supplement confirm that lead compares very favourably with man-made products, but perhaps more importantly lead has better lifecycle costs and provides peace of mind to specifiers as well as clients as a result of its tried and tested performance over hundreds of years.

We are delighted to have collaborated with the RIBA Journal on this supplement and we hope the range of projects demonstrating the material’s versatility will inspire its greater use across the industry.
It’s always satisfying to see a tried and tested traditional material finding modern uses. And with rolled lead sheet, its virtues are aesthetic as much as practical. True, it has an admirably long lifespan – no problem specifying for a 60-year life or more, so life-cycle costs are impressive – but beyond this its malleability, colour and texture are finding new adherents. This is a material that can wrap around complex shapes in a way more rigid modern products cannot. And it ages very gracefully.

To this, add its eco-credentials. Lead sheet enjoys a BRE Green Guide rating of A+ and A in vertical cladding and roofing applications. Its carbon footprint is considerably lower than, for instance, copper, zinc or stainless steel. Its low melting point means that when manufactured or recycled it requires far less energy than other metals. Being 100 per cent recyclable with zero degradation means it need never go to landfill. Practically all the lead sheet available in the UK has previously been recycled anyway from other sources, such as automotive industries. This, then, is a zero-waste material. It requires no special handling beyond standard construction industry precautions, and is usually installed by skilled contractors backed by guarantee.

This supplement looks at ways architects have exploited the properties of this versatile, low-maintenance British Standard material for modern applications. At the Lead Sheet Association, we offer a lot of technical advice, are a very active RIBA CPD network provider, and provide free AutoCad details. And those lead RIBA Awards plaques you receive? We’re proud to be the long-term sponsors of those.
Modern masters

Some of the best known names in the business have been using lead to design contemporary classics.

There was a time in the 1980s and 90s when architects began to rediscover traditional methods of construction. This was partly because they found themselves working more in historic parts of town, partly because – unlike the postmodern period of the 1980s – traditional methods had an honesty to them. It was all about ‘truth to materials’, as William Morris and the arts and crafts movement would have put it.

Today we wouldn’t think twice about this but at the time it was contentious. When Michael Hopkins or Renzo Piano started designing buildings of load-bearing masonry and timber rather than clip-together high-tech parts, it seemed revolutionary. Both went on to rediscover lead sheet: Hopkins in buildings ranging from those for designer, retailer and master cutler David...
Always in architecture you look for the transition building, the precursor of a trend. One candidate in this case is the often overlooked Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster. Designed in the early 1980s by Powell and Moya, it is an interesting hybrid of modernist influences, all deployed to reduce the bulk of a very large building in a historic context – facing Westminster Abbey, right next to Central Hall. Its palette of materials includes pale concrete, stainless steel, glass – and lead sheet, laid tautly over plywood panels, as cladding. That, and the roof in the same material, made this the building with the most leadwork in Europe at the time. Its success lies in the way that it still looks remarkably fresh 30 years later, plus its deference to its neighbours. Its influence, however, seems to have been pervasive.

•

Turn broken down into the small overlapping panels of the individual lead sheets. The more you look at these roofs – like the carapaces of primeval beasts – the cleverer they become, not only visually but in the way they allow gaps for air handling and servicing, while appearing from a distance monolithic.

Award-winning architects of a more arts and crafts persuasion also re-adopted the material: such as Ted Cullinan in England – consider his exemplary, rough-hewn 1992 Fountain’s Abbey Visitor Centre with its swooping cloister roof – and Richard Murphy in Edinburgh, in many house extensions, art galleries, and the first of all the Maggie’s Centres. Murphy in particular used it not only for roofing purposes but also – like Hopkins – in vertical facade panels, part of his Carlo Scarpa-inspired layering technique.

Mellor in Derbyshire and London, through his Glyndebourne Opera House, to his Haberdashers’ Hall, a 21st century home for a city livery company. There, the lead-sheet roof is subtly organised into diamond-shaped panels which are mirrored in the form of the timber paneled ceiling to the great hall beneath. Hopkins Architects is still at it, as you will see in his latest completed project overleaf, a theatre in Great Yarmouth.

Piano’s most notable use of the material is in his Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, three concert halls arranged around an open-air forum. How to articulate the bulk of these large, necessarily windowless buildings? Piano’s solution was pure architecture. He designed wrap-around facades for the halls, divided into large scalloped sections – broadly front, back, sides, roof – which are in turn broken down into the small overlapping panels of the individual lead sheets. The more you look at these roofs – like the carapaces of primeval beasts – the cleverer they become, not only visually but in the way they allow gaps for air handling and servicing, while appearing from a distance monolithic.

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Café ruse

Hopkins’ new cafe pavilion is central to the restoration of a theatre’s 300-year-old home
Great Yarmouth, in Norfolk is a classic kiss-me-quick English seaside resort with piers, promenades, games arcades, miles of sandy beaches and – in a nod to history – a popular line in traditional horsedrawn open carriages that take you for a trot along Marine Parade. It has other historic moments, however, and one of them has just been completely transformed and extended. A few streets back from the front you’ll find St George’s Theatre. 

Built in 1714-21 as St George’s Chapel, it was one of the finest Baroque churches outside London. This wealthy provincial town was trying to out-Wren Wren, and doing pretty well at it. Grade 1 listed in 1953, deconsecrated in 1959, it then entered the first of its periods of dereliction, finally being declared redundant in 1971. But it was salvaged as a theatre by a group of concerned townsfolk, and operated until 2006 when it was declared structurally unstable. Abandoned for a second time and declared ‘at risk’ by English Heritage, it once again faced oblivion. But in 2009 a properly-financed scheme to restore and extend it, and to landscape the square around it, was drawn up. The Heritage Lottery Fund was a funder. Hopkins Architects got the job. Work began in 2009 and has just completed.

Key to the scheme is the new pavilion at one side of the much-patched old chapel. Designed in classic Hopkins mode as a brick, lime mortar and glass building with apsidal ends and glass flanks, its long, high roof is finished in the same lead sheet as the complex, lovingly-restored theatre. On the main building the new Code 6 leadwork plus insulation replaced an earlier (though not original) defective copper roof. The pavilion is done in the same grade. ‘In terms of materiality we pretty much kept the new building in line with the old one – lead, brick, oak,’ says Hopkins project architect Steven Clarke. ‘The rounded ends reflect the rounded portions of the old chapel.’

It is very simple in concept. Kitchen and stores are in one end, toilets at the other, and the oak-lined café sits in between the two, opening up to the newly-landscaped square on either side. This traffic-calmed space is earmarked for outdoor performances. The pavilion – its pitched roof braced internally by elegant stainless-steel tie rods – has a ridge vent detail in the leadwork to air the timber structure beneath; café ventilation is via shallow louvring beneath the eaves. The new building gives the theatre exactly one-third more floor area, and is kept deliberately low so as not to compete visually with the presence of the tall old chapel. There was some discussion about whether leadwork relatively close to the ground might attract thieves, says Clarke: it is accordingly security-marked, though it was felt that its visually prominent, overlooked location would act as a deterrent.

This is in one of the historic, but neglected, parts of town. The improvements are part of a greater plan to revitalise the neighbourhood. History and modernity here come together in particularly fruitful fashion.
The Midas touch

Alchemy played a part in this extension to the Old Grammar School in Lewes, West Sussex

Lewes, in West Sussex, has one of the biggest concentrations of listed buildings in the country. These include an integral part of the High Street, Lewes Old Grammar School, which has been there since the early 18th century. Since it is over 500 years old, that’s quite a recent move but suffice it to say that the pupils of LOGS (as it is inevitably called), now co-educational, are a permanent feature of the town. Even so, the school didn’t get an easy ride from the planners when it proposed to extend one of its newer buildings upwards to make two new science classrooms.

An ingenious aesthetic response to the locale by Liam Russell Architects uses a curving roof of lead sheet over a lightweight timber-framed structure. Lightness was important because this new superstructure sits on a 1970s two-storey science block, and the existing foundations had to take the weight. Lead sheet may be heavy in itself, but not relative to the whole.

The £550,000 project was largely new-build, with elements of conversion to integrate new classrooms with the building below.

The leadwork is interspersed with panels of local flint: existing windows were replaced to relate to the new structure. The key design principle, agreed with English Heritage, was to wrap the lead cladding and flint panels down to the heads of the ground floor windows.

Liam Russell says: ‘The use of lead was key to the acceptance of the design, as both lead and flint are traditional to the area and imbue a feeling of quality and a conscientious approach to the work. Lead and flint used in a contemporary idiom, and improvement to the existing building, were critical in obtaining the support of English Heritage and Lewes District Council for the project. All parties felt that lead was the most true, high-quality material to work with, in particular when dealing with a legacy as long as the school’s.’

But there was another reason for using lead. Given the age of the school, Russell thought of a medieval alchemist, stooped in his laboratory, struggling to turn base metal – lead – into gold. The shape of the building, which unlike the materials is unusual for the area, derives from that. It’s a nice touch.
Winchester architect Chaplin Farrant Wiltshire designed organically shaped double-curved rooflights for a pair of dance studios in nearby Eastleigh – part of the expansion of The Point Dance Centre. Set on top of pyramidal roofs finished in terne-coated stainless steel, these forms needed a more malleable material. Lead sheet was the obvious choice.

The bespoke forms were made by local boatbuilders, with the leadwork applied by GSLsouthern. They provide north light for the studios. Architect Philip Davis of CFW describes them as: ‘A unique and attractive design as well as a showcase for what is possible in lead sheet.’

As time passes and weathering occurs, the two materials are – as the architects predicted – starting to match in colour.
Pass with distinction

Rising above the obvious is the mark of a good house extension – here are two with a difference

**The house** extension is one of the staples of good architecture, a professional calling card. In a world of glass-box add-ons, it’s a challenge to come up with something distinctively different. But this is what these two rural examples achieve. Both exploit the aesthetic virtues of lead sheet and both use it for facing as well as roofing, playing off other materials.

For architect David Rea, his garden room pavilion in Forest Row, Sussex, is ‘a new smaller landscape of construction’ in the Wealden landscape of tightly rolling hills. Attached to a typical mellow brick-and-tile old Sussex house, it expresses itself in a very different manner.

‘The way the building sits bedded in the contours of the site is made even more natural by the forms and materials used,’ he says. ‘Two dominant and interlocking forms express the articulation of the internal space, defining it further by a contrasting use of two natural materials, lead and timber. Glass screens provide views to the surrounding gardens.’

A raised floor level for the central pavilion ensures the best views. It’s a masonry structure clad entirely in patinated lead sheet. ‘The soft and worked appearance of the patinated lead which clads both roof and walls is divided by welts to give definition to the form,’ says Rea. He uses triangular lead fixings as a subtle decorative device. The colour works especially well with the silvery-grey weathered Siberian larch.

Over in Somerset, meanwhile, architect Designscape has built a different kind of garden room, straight off the kitchen of an old Bath-stone village house, to make a new dining room. ‘Despite the contemporary design of the new room, we were keen to respond to the historic nature of the host building and use a sympathetic and traditional material in a modern manner,’ says project architect Mark Wray. ‘Unlike other cladding and roofing solutions, it is a high quality, recyclable and long-lasting material that has both a warmth and character to it, which enabled us to achieve a timeless quality to the architecture.’

Designscape adapted details from the Rolled Lead Sheet technical manual, having consulted LSA technical officers and the local sub-contractor that warranted the work. Code 6 lead is used throughout – for vertical cladding and roof finish, as well as the box gutter and flashings to the horizontal rooflight. A highly-insulated roof and high performance glazing make it thermally efficient.

‘This collaborative approach at the design stage, combined with the high skill levels and experience of the leadworkers on site, enabled a smooth construction process,’ says Wray. The building was shortlisted for this year’s RIBA Awards.
Pretty much every new building in Shetland has to be prefabricated, and this is true of the 100-bedroom Moorfield Hotel by Ica Architects in Brae. But this did not preclude traditional finishing materials as used round the islands: render, locally sourced stone, and leadwork.

The bulk of this three-storey building is reduced by the use of a sequence of dormer windows to the second floor bedrooms. In fact they are more than dormers. ‘The second-floor bedroom modules are clad in lead sheet which disguises the fact that they are full bedroom modules and creates the illusion of dormers within the roovescape,’ says Ica’s Nicholas Roberts. Neat leadwork in this exposed location by Fulton’s Plumbers.
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This business of magazine redesign is like waking up to find yourself inhabiting a new body. Or what I imagine that would be like, since unfortunately I have to make do with the body I’ve always had. Still, at least we at the Journal are not in the position of Kafka’s protagonist in Metamorphosis. We have moved up the evolutionary scale rather than down. But we did await your response to the new RIBAJ with trepidation because – well, you never really know. What seems good to a team of editors and designers and advisers does not necessarily chime with everybody.

Nor should it, actually. You don’t want the dismissive ‘It’s OK I suppose’. And you REALLY don’t want your redesign to be so light-touch that readers hardly notice at all. No, what you want is lots of people to absolutely love it, and some people to absolutely hate it. That way, you know you’ve got something with a bit of zing to it. Something that will be noticed.

So we released images of the design first on social media. The response was good, in fact way better than good, it was verging on the ecstatic. We apologise for retweeting a lot of these, but believe me, there were very many more, all positive. People started to speculate on the cover inspiration – was it 1960s Blue Note jazz album covers? James Bond opening credits? The Golden Section? (Answer: all three, but also our own back catalogue).

Then the magazine started to land on people’s desks, and thankfully sanity returned. Along with those offering unsolicited congratulations – the vast majority, to our gratification, from all generations and all parts of the country and overseas – were some complaints. The reader who hates the new design and picked it apart in detail. The one irritated to find it now too large for his filing system. The other one who complained that the postman has to fold it to get it through his letter box. The one who felt we should include a section every month on such-and-such. The one who misses a regular item from the previous iteration of the magazine. Some think that there is a case to be made for more Institute-related material, though other readers dislike that. Most like our lovely new matt paper, but a few object to the difference in print quality that results. And so on.

All this was, and is, brilliant. Sometimes, as an editor, you get the feeling you are shouting into a void. You produce a magazine, you get little or no response. What do the readers think? You don’t always know. Well, this time we do know, and your response has buoyed us and your Institute up: keep the comments flowing, please. Here’s the thing: unlike many buildings on completion, a magazine is by its nature adaptable. This design is deliberately very flexible: we can use it in all kinds of ways, and we will. There are already adjustments we want to make. Thank you for talking to us.

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Hugh Pearman Editor
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Midlands discography

Herbert Wright wonders if Birmingham is going round in circles

On 8 October 1965, prime minister Harold Wilson opened London’s GPO (now BT) Tower and, via the new microwave link, called George Barrow, lord mayor of Birmingham. Barrow could have complained. His city’s sister tower was a 152m-high bare, square concrete stick, while London’s was the brilliantly bizarre rotunda-headed national icon. Second best has long been Birmngham. Some say the Brummies like to moan, but I suspect Barrow was too polite.

There seemed little to moan about at Birmingham’s cute little Moor Street station on NS2 (that’s Normal Speed 2, as opposed to Virgin’s NS1, or – arriving nowhere soon – HS2). The city is visibly refreshed by its new library, canalsides and pedestrianised shopping streets are thronged, industrial premises are far from vacant with Mittelstand firms, art and music is alive in Digbeth, and after dark, sportswear is no longer compulsory. After the last century’s near-death experiences of the blitz, ruthless redevelopment, no-mercy road schemes and the wheels falling off the motor industry, Birmingham has bounced back big time. Even New Street Station, against which Euston looked positively glamorous, is getting a make-over in Foreign Office’s shiny deconstructivist/Gehryesque remodelling.

From an urbanistic viewpoint, Birmingham raises some interesting questions. Does the city offer clues about what London would be like if 15 years of foreign slush money hadn’t driven development, and mayors were unelected? Can something be salvaged from the legacy of 60s motorway madness? And does Birmingham have a secret protocol about circles – yes, the geometric ones?

Birmingham’s centre may bustle like London’s, but is cycle-free, public transport is basically just buses, car parks proliferate, and multi-lane A-roads are impossible to cross by foot. Some patches, still untouched by regeneration, feel like declining American inner city. In 2008, even Birmingham City Council got confused, depicting the Birmingham, Alabama, skyline on a leaflet distributed city-wide. But city pride is resurgent. Light rail is coming into its heart. There’s a Big City Plan – large on offices, public realm and traffic-free routes. It includes creating Golden Square, not square at all but a focus for the Jewellery Quarter, which is rather like Hoxton after a city-evacuation order.

I wonder if a secret protocol really is in play. Recalling the city’s popular 60s icon, the 25-storey Rotunda, Birmingham has been subtly working circles back in. Its new library is covered in 5,357 of them, and Future Systems’ globular Selfridges has 15,000. John Lewis will be round. Bizarrely, considering its inland position, Birmingham has not pigeons but seagulls – which wheel round in circles. There’s more. City status was achieved only in 1889. If all buildings exactly 1,889m from Paradise Circus are plotted on a map, they actually form a circle. Uncanny.

City status was achieved only in 1889. If all buildings exactly 1,889m from Paradise Circus are plotted on a map, they actually form a circle. Uncanny.
A NEW CONCEPT OF BATH
by
Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners
Luis Vidal + Architects
Times are a’changing

As society emerges from the fallout of recession, Yorkshire bears the scars of transition.

Irena Bauman

Humanity is in a state of interregnum: the transition between one order that no longer works and a new one not yet fully articulated.

In Yorkshire the physical fabric is scarring as the decline of the old order and incubation of the new play out their narratives. The two intertwine to create some incoherent places.

Leeds is celebrating the only new retail centre to open in 2013 just as retail declines fast enough to knock Mary Portas off her ‘High Street Revival Queen’ pedestal.

The tail end of the ‘investments through debt’ era is also visible in the publicly-funded Regional Development Association projects now completing. These now dazzle in their ambition. The brightest is the mirror pool development in new City Park, Bradford, which has transformed the feel of the city centre with its world class public realm. It was completed just a few months before the announcement that the National Media Museum, a key cultural institution flanking City Park, might have to close due to funding shortages and the cost of running the Science Museum in London.

Not all projects emerged intact. Many were shelved after the financial crisis in 2008 and are re-emerging now, modified for new circumstances. So the toxic land assets, bought by RDAs for more than their market value, have been transferred to the HCA and local authorities. These organisations are charged with preparing the sites for partnerships with the private sector, a process aided by a notable drop in development ambition. Our mixed use schemes such as Tower Work in Holbeck, Leeds, and Fruit Market in Hull will come to market soon but previously exemplar, low carbon, innovative neighbourhoods will be replaced by maximum residential dwellings.

Even in neighbourhoods with relatively little regeneration the transition shows. In a deprived Sheffield neighbourhood a Michael Gove standard template primary school is about to land on the flattest part of the site, dressed in striped grey and blue boards bought in bulk for schools across England and value engineered of all ambition, vision or innovation to fit the £1100/m² budget. Up the road a lack of operational funding is closing a five year old £1500/m² Sure Start flagship project.

On the up side, a new type of developer is forging the path to the new order – inspirational building projects such as LILAC Low Carbon Cooperative in Leeds and the Hebden Bridge Town Hall Trust (pictured), conceived and delivered by innovators committed to a place and the ideal of a more just society.

Irena Bauman is a director of Bauman Lyons Architects, Leeds
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Sizzling Sichuan

China’s boom was the antidote to survive British recession

Charlie Sutherland

We were approached in 2006 by a young Phd graduate of Edinburgh University exploring the possibility of collaborations in China. Although busy, we were intrigued and were the only practice out of the five invited in Scotland to respond. At that time China was still viewed with some scepticism.

Seven years on our collaboration with Pansolution International has completed a number of commissions and won several competitions, one of which, a major city museum, is nearing completion in Chengdu (pictured).

As a result the practice operates in two extremely different worlds, which is enlightening and frustrating in equal measure.

We were immediately immersed in the frontier land of economic growth and optimism which offered incredible opportunities mired in hazards. At one point we were planning the eastern expansion of Chengdu with a total population greater than Edinburgh while our only work in Edinburgh was an allotment shed of 25m² that was going through a difficult public consultation.

Our collaboration in China has been pretty fruitful for a number of reasons. Our two practices are quite well balanced and mutually supportive. Pansolution, a young practice of Tsinghua graduates, would gain prestige and access to larger government contracts with a Western partner on board (then a prerequisite for high profile projects) and we as a small UK design practice could only operate in China with such support.

The directors were very well connected – a highly active alumnus from Tsinghua University has led to significant government work.

Since we began working in China there has been a huge shift from the major economic centres to cities like Chengdu, which has become one of the leading centres for international investment and seen its status rise accordingly. We were very fortunate to have been involved in the early stages of this.

We have witnessed incredible upheavals, not least the power struggle which culminated in the new leadership a year ago and a devastating earthquake in Sichuan in 2007, massive contradictions of rapidly acquired wealth alongside third world poverty and huge generosity and welcome despite rising nationalism and intolerance of foreigners.

We are very fortunate to have had not only this cultural and architectural experience, but also to be part of what can only be compared to the rapid industrialisation of Europe and America – a period of great invention, vision and injustice in our own time – and hopefully in a small way bring experience our legacy to new challenges in China.

While the work in China has helped us survive this particularly difficult period in the UK we have also completed some smaller projects closer to home, such as the Edinburgh Sculpture workshop, Grizedale Artists’ Residence in Cumbria and a number of private houses. We have recently won competitions for larger scale work locally.

Our Chinese experience and portfolio has had a more direct influence, seeing us shortlisted for some much larger projects such as Dundee V&A, Windermere Steamboat Museum, and Kongsberg Town Hall; and winning with Gross Max the Tempelhof Airport competition in Berlin.

It is ironic that we have had to find work nearly 5000 miles away in order to be considered for anything larger than an allotment shed but we are not complaining.

Charlie Sutherland is a partner of Sutherland Hussey Architects, Edinburgh
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Housing comes first

Quality and space remain at the forefront of our concerns

In my first month of being President of the RIBA I sense the level of expectation and am grateful for all the good wishes. I will do my best to meet those expectations. I will champion a programme for the Institute to become a hub for clients, optimising opportunities for our members; oversee a membership review; continue to work for closer engagement between schools of architecture and practice; and promote architecture to a wider audience. And I will continue to campaign on important issues to ensure that the RIBA has a place at the table during government discussions.

One such issue which the RIBA has been working on for some time is housing. The government is reviewing the various sets of standards and regulations that apply to housing in England. It is a much needed review of a disparate and sometimes overlapping set of standards, something the industry needs clarity on. It is also an opportunity to ensure that the core components for delivering quality housing are in place so that this country produces homes that people want and that are fit for the future. This government favours deregulation and cutting red tape, so it is significant that the RIBA’s major campaigning issue for the introduction of minimum space standards is still on the table.

As we seek to address the housing crisis, there has never been a more critical time to debate what the wider industry should deliver. This is one area of opportunity for our profession, and one that the new Client Liaison Group will be examining.

In my view one of the things that the RIBA is doing better and better is making the vital link with what the public wants. In numerous pieces of research RIBA has found that confined space is a major reason why people choose not to live in new build homes. In particular many private sector homes in England today fall short of the London Housing Standards, the only current standard. This indicates that the market is not delivering. When asked, four out of five members of the public say that they would buy a new home if it met space standards. This is important; it is not just we architects who say that quality matters, because we know it does, but that view is borne out in independent objective research.

This marks a significant shift in the RIBA’s approach, and is something that I will continue to champion. It is important that we translate what architecture means for people. And as architects we can be campaigners. You, your colleagues and your clients can support the campaign. Visit www.withoutspaceandlight.com and email your support to the government.
When I suggest meeting in London, Witherford Watson Mann’s home city, William Mann directs me to the Island Café in Flatiron Square – though he warns it’s nothing like the practice’s Stirling Prize and Manser Medal shortlisted precious, historic Astley Castle. Sitting under the café’s new canopy, designed by the firm, Stephen Witherford is resigned about the now-varnished timber of the structure, and the cup of strong hot tea he is given rather than his ordered cappuccino. ‘It shows Michael [the owner] is caring for it,’ he consoles himself. ‘That’s what my dad would do.’

Caring is something the practice is pretty expert at itself, from the detail of the Whitechapel Gallery, as executive architect to heroes Robbrecht and Daem, to its ambition to build for the public in housing and urban realm. The three directors set up in practice in 2001 on the back of a European housing competition win, though that didn’t proceed. Its first housing scheme, in Gistel, Flanders, will only complete next year, but another residence, Astley Castle, has brought it attention.

But back to the Island Café, which, like the square it sits in, is part of an ongoing project, Bankside Urban Forest. You don’t need an architectural pass to feel comfortable here, there are builders, workers, a couple of young mums. The quietly dynamic paving elevates the sometime shabby square, chequerboard coding it, with triangles intersecting in a angular figure of 8. Witherford calls it an ‘urban interior’. It is just one of several projects in this part of south London that the Urban Forest has given a helping hand to. It gave a narrative to this area in rides and a stream and clearings, identifying opportunities and encouraging communities and landowners to realise them.

The word ‘negotiation’ keeps surfacing, not quite accompanied by a sigh. ‘Public space is the most difficult to pull off,’ says Witherford. ‘It is just the amount of time spent negotiating, even beyond completion. In public

Stirling and Manser shortlisted for its famed Astley Castle, Witherford Watson Mann seems to have arrived

Words: Eleanor Young  Portrait: Carol Sachs
United they stand
From left: Christopher Watson, William Mann and Stephen Witherford outside their Amnesty International base in East London.
Architects can now design specialist bespoke washbasins in lengths of up to 3.6m using Miranit, the exceptional moulded solid-surface from Franke Washroom Systems.

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Miranit Bespoke (left) is available as Matte or High-Gloss White, the range offers four styles of washbasins; straight, D shape, L shape and corner-convex.
space no one person has a clear mandate.’ As we walk around Southwark he and Mann show the results of those hours – sometimes nothing, as the partner has pulled out. Along the Thames the story changes: negotiation for the Greater London Authority was given added impetus by the London 2012 Olympics as the practice reworked £4m of public landscape. Here negotiations paid off: one win was the Oxo Tower agreeing to change its staircase configuration and make more space for the thronged Thames Path – avoiding the expensive alternative of building out over the river.

‘Does Bankside work break even?’ I ask tentatively. ‘Flatiron haemorrhaged money,’ responds Witherford with a certain nervous glee. The Thames Path, for the GLA, was more rewarding – there is only so much negotiation you can do when the clock is ticking. Mann is more measured: ‘We never lose too much, we never make too much.’ But it is actually third director Chris Watson who they credit with having his ‘head on the finances’. As with everything from design to competition, Witherford, Watson and Mann collaborate closely in their 12-person practice. The three directors had known or known of each other at Cambridge but then went their separate ways, including to Tim Ronalds Architects (Watson and Mann) and Eric Parry Architects (Witherford). By 2003 they were Witherford Watson Mann and working on the Whitechapel Gallery extension, won with two other schemes in just six months. That could have been overload disaster for the small practice but it managed. The housing in Gistel is still moving slowly, but Whitechapel and Amnest y International’s London office have been winning awards for some time.

The practice has always done competitions – although sometimes that means setting the bearing for design on very limited clues in a brief. The partners decided from the outset not to do single homes, or teach, immediately. They have a sense of the practice being like a studio. ‘We want to be intimately involved,’ says Mann. ‘And we go and see things together.’ Recent visits include Alvaro Siza’s housing in The Hague, Hertzberger’s Central Library in Appledorn and Peter Zumthor in Kolumba (the north European tendency is due to Mann’s weekend base in Brussels).

With 6A and Jamie Fobert, Witherford Watson Mann is one of the talented practices of this generation which the recession has prevented from building a significant volume of projects. Mann can date the almost-move to the big time to a scheme of 70 houses in Bois-schot, Flanders – rural, generous yet compact – had the practice won it. Instead Witherford Watson Mann has existed on a diet of smaller projects. ‘With these we have maintained the authorship relationship. Big projects roll away from you too quickly,’ says Mann. Less tangible processes and projects have replaced the business of managing a growing office. Thoughtfulness and exploration are defining features, with many competitions spawning ideas before they ever get built. Thoughts from...
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the Booshot housing have resurfaced in 27 homes in North West Cambridge where it is collaborating with Maccreanor Lavington.

In its east London office, the practice tests and retests its ideas with models of many components. There is Astley Castle, a complex jigsaw of elements that allowed the firm to try out less obvious solutions, and another with scaled brick and stone surfaces to ‘see’ the space and convince the client. In pride of place at the entrance are beautiful miniature sculptures of laser-cut granite samples, the method already proving itself on site for a Roger Hiorns’ sculpture in Bristol’s Temple Quay. Neighbours and occasional lunch partners from Caruso St John pop in to make use of the brick library. A model of a north London pumping station sits with viewing balcony and dovecote – a gesture to a lost tower. ‘The thing with refurbishment,’ explains Mann, ‘Is that people still want transformation, something that wasn’t there.’

And so it was with the reworking of the entrances and studio spaces of the Royal Opera House, where the practice wanted to be truly radical and make people feel at home. An exceptional list of architects boiled down to two last winter and Stanton Williams and Withersford Watson Mann were subject to a second competition with a more refined brief. The practice treated the issue as a question of retention of audience, rather like at Amnesty, its first building. ‘It was a huge step up for us,’ they say, sanguine about not winning. And if clients sometimes like the destination but not the route, the practice wants to take them there with drawings, sketches and storytelling.

It’s getting a little easier now. Being invited to competitions is a start and the Stirling shortlist has vindicated clients who took a punt on the practice, as well as giving a fillip to the office, and sending out a message to other architects. ‘You have to exist for a long time for people to have confidence in you,’ says Mann. Now, 12 years on, the quality of the work is starting to speak for itself.
Wisdom made precious

The influential Joseph Rykwert receives the RIBA's Royal Gold Medal next year

Hugh Pearman

Architecture needs people who stand apart and interrogate it. Not necessarily as critics of buildings – we are too a penny – but as thinkers who in turn shape the way we think about things. Joseph Rykwert, who will receive the 2014 RIBA Royal Gold Medal as approved by the Queen, has been in fruitful conversation with architecture for some 60 years. He published an annotated version of Alberti’s Ten Books as early as 1955. His first book to make a real impact, The Idea of a Town published in 1963, typically concerned itself with the lessons of the ancient world, and sounded a warning about the direction being taken by post-war town planning. With Rykwert, it is never about the purely functional, the picturesque or stylistics: his appreciation of the value of the human and the symbolic is one of his great contributions to architectural discourse.

Rykwert was born in Warsaw in 1926, came to Britain on the outbreak of war in 1939, trained at the Bartlett and the AA, worked for Fry and Drew, Richard Sheppard and Ove Arup, and as Eric Parry says in his citation, ‘next to his writing desk he has always maintained a drawing board’. However, he appears to have slid into academia like a duck into water. The fact that his nomination was supported by former Royal Gold Medallists David Chipperfield, Frank Gehry and Renzo Piano, tells you a great deal about the man. He is a teacher, has taught at all the top schools internationally and the Universities of Essex and Cambridge in particular, and his wisdom and insight, communicated with his characteristic good humour, have been widely influential.

As RIBA president Stephen Hodder says: ‘Joseph’s writing and teaching are rare in that he can deliver the most profound thinking on architecture in an accessible way.’ Nonetheless, I was daunted in 1996 when his mighty work The Dancing Column appeared. A whole book on the origins of the Orders of classical architecture, when modernism was once more reasserting itself strongly after a decade of dubious post modernism and cod-historicism? Rykwert put me right. ‘I had early decided to be a “modern” architect,’ he wrote, ‘but I considered that “classical” architecture incorporated some important and timeless rightness.’ The book drilled right down to the origins of architecture, the building as metaphor for the human body. It allowed him, he said, ‘to think anew about what people expect from buildings’. The notes and bibliography take up a third of the book. I am still daunted.

Rykwert responds to the honour – given for lifetime achievement – thus: ‘What makes the gift doubly precious is that it does not come from my fellow-scriveners, but from architects and builders – and suggests that what I have written has engaged their attention and been of use, even though I have never sought to be impartial but have taken sides, sometimes combatively. So I feel both elated and enormously grateful.’

The actual presentation of the Royal Gold Medal will not take place until 26 February, 2014. Unlike with many another recipient of the honour, in this case we need the time lag. We need to get reading, and re-reading. Rykwert never believed in the Year Zero, tabula rasa theory of modernism. For him, there is only architecture, and to understand and practise that you need to know your history.
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Close, but no cigar

It’s trying, and full of ideas, but with hardly any architecture the scattered Lisbon Triennale is too much like hard work

Hugh Pearman

‘But is it architecture?’ asks chief curator Beatrice Galilee in one of the e-books planned in lieu of a conventional catalogue by her Lisbon Architecture Triennale. It’s not out as I write this, but the title suggests she is anticipating one of the main criticisms of this show – namely, that there is hardly any architecture in the conventional sense to be seen. That’s if you can find the venues where the Triennale is taking place, which is by no means easy as they are scattered all over this beautiful, fascinating but very dispersed and hilly city. Take good walking shoes, or keep a taxi on standby.

The reason is that this is a getting-back-to-the-roots show. ‘Starchitects’ (sorry) are thankfully conspicuous by their absence – apart from a good exhibition of Sou Fujimoto’s design thinking at the still-remarkable Belem Cultural Centre by Salgado and Gregotti, 20 years old and still pristine in its Italian Rationalist megalomaniac vastness. But that show was taking place anyway, with or without the Triennale. No, ‘Close, Closer’ as the Triennale is titled (something to do with getting closer to the real essence of architecture, with a nod to Corb’s ‘Vers Une Architecture’, says Galilee) represents the profession at a moment of self-reflection, even self-doubt. What are architects for? Do they even have to do buildings? Can’t they help society in other ways?

Well, yes they can – though I suggest that miming the playing of golf in a symbolic performance loosely based on the Eames’ ‘Powers of 10’, on an unshaded tilted oval stage in the searing midday heat, is not one of them. A cloud-shaped object emitting random noises doesn’t get us far, either. Yes, both happened. More to the point, perhaps, is the ‘Crisis Busters’ programme – Portugal’s economic and political disorganisation aptly represented by the stalled, never-finished building project of Paulo Mendes da Rocha’s National Coach Museum in the Belem district. That’s not exactly an advertisement for the power of architecture, which is another reason to understand why Close, Closer veers away from the built and designed, towards social engagement.

At one point the Crisis Busters assembled – again, in the solar crucible of the city square – to describe their projects through loud-hailers. This was often incomprehensible but one thing was notable: on a show of hands, only around half of those involved in the programme described themselves as architects. As one of the organisers put it, ‘Architects

Left Architecture by occupation. ‘The Institute Effect’ starts to colonise a stripped-out office floor.

Right Real or fiction? Food politics in the Palacio Pombal.
are becoming less and less architects.’

Depending on your point of view, this is either a good or a bad thing. One thing is for certain, however: the Triennale is largely invisible in the city, but for posters carrying slogans such as ‘Tactics not systems’. As a phrase that’s scarcely likely to engage the public and probably isn’t intended to. Unlike the Venice Biennale, there is no obvious focus for big displays. However, it has three main shows, and many associated events. The most crowd-friendly of these is ‘Future Perfect’ in a museum made out of an old power station. By architect-turned neo-Futurist Liam Young, it is a rather beautiful realisation, through giant model and immersive set design, of a city of tomorrow as made and remade by a new bio-technocracy served by robots. For Young, the role of the architect becomes that of a storyteller. He would be a good designer of sets for Ballardian sci-fi movies. And as we know, earth-based sci-fi tends to become, or at least influence, reality.

The second major show is ‘The Real and Other Fictions’ curated by Mariana Pestana in the gloriously crumbling Palacio Pombal. Pestana also tells stories, which appear to vaguely concern notions of democracy. You’re meant to participate, not just observe. Take part in dinners, debates, fall asleep in a black, soft, breathing room, imagine utopias. It reminds me very much of the sets of site-specific theatre, and needs tight orchestration to work – which was not in evidence when I visited. Still, it makes some sense seen merely as a series of building-related installations.

Third up is ‘The Institute Effect’ in Lisbon’s design and fashion museum, itself in the shell of a marvellous former 1950s banking building. It’s more a series of workshops than an exhibition, though objects will accumulate. When I dropped by, the first ‘Institution’, Fabbrica, was building furniture, especially library and meeting furniture, to kit out an empty floor. It was a kind of interior design, you could see something taking shape. Successive groups will bring ideas and rules. In a way, it is architecture by occupation.

Elsewhere you’ll find someone making tiles from photos that people send in which are then assembled into panels to clad a derelict building. As if the Portuguese need any lessons in tilework. There’s an empty shop turned into an exhibition about the politics of protest and public space – probably the most immediately relevant thing I encountered. That sort of thing.

It’s hard work, basically. And it all feels very like a student show. Politically engaged, done on a shoestring, full of ideas, not quite sure how best to pull them together, putting it out there anyway, over-inclined towards the reality-avoidance tactic of the art installation. The odd community-designed shack aside, it almost perversely avoids anything that might possibly be mistaken for a thought towards the design of an actual building. But in tracking down its various manifestations, you will properly encounter decaying, glorious Lisbon. You know that something will emerge from all this, because something always does emerge from such periods of architectural introspection. That something, in tough places in tough times, ought to come from the streets, not official masterplanners. If it can be constructive rather than destructive, building rather than rioting, that will be a start. ✿
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As seen on TV

TV and the Stirling Prize have parted company but better public awareness is the partnership’s legacy

Steve Parnell and Nathan Breeze

In October 2005, the TV listings for the coveted primetime Saturday night slot showed two competition shows go head to head. A Channel 4 show celebrating the year’s best building went up against ITV’s flagship singing contest, The X Factor. For those involved in founding the RIBA Stirling Prize, such exposure must have exceeded their highest hopes in their bid to raise the profile of architecture in Britain.

First discussed in 1994 by the RIBA Awards Group, the Stirling Prize was intended to do for architecture what the Booker and Turner prizes had done for literature and art; namely to promote it to a wider audience. Named after the late British architect James Stirling, the prize was launched in 1996 and is awarded annually to the building that ‘has made the most significant contribution to the evolution of architecture in the past year’ by an RIBA-registered architect.

In its inaugural year this was deemed to be Salford University’s Centenary Building by Stephen Hodder. While the result was greeted favourably by those who feared the award would be dominated by more established names, there was an acknowledged lack of high quality projects emerging in Britain at the end of John Major’s Conservative government in an industry still recovering from the early 1990s recession. As a result the following year allowed projects completed anywhere in Europe to be shortlisted.

In the early years the organisers sought to raise the mainstream profile of the award in various ways. The judging panel, typically comprising the RIBA president, the previous year’s winner and a journalist from the media sponsor, was joined by a high profile ‘lay’ person such as Stella McCartney or Tracey Emin. In the run up to the awards ceremony, the RIBA invited William Hill to offer odds on the shortlisted buildings while an exhibition at Portland Place presented all the category award winners that formed the long-list.

The ceremony itself aimed to be a star-studded event with exclusive guests from the construction industry and beyond. Special guests from the Labour government were invited, such as culture secretary Chris Smith (1997) and trade and industry secretary Peter Mandelson (1998), the latter a late stand-in for Prime Minister Tony Blair. Since its first three years at Portland Place the ceremony has been hosted at various venues, often designed by architects shortlisted for the prize itself.

Television was always the key to boosting the Prize’s mainstream appeal. This idea drew mixed reactions from the architectural community who feared it would prioritise PR

WHERE ARE THE WINNERS BUILT?

- Germany: 2
- Italy: 1
- Spain: 1
- Scotland: 1
- Cambridgeshire: 3
- Other English regions: 3
- London: 6
- Wales: 0
- Figures to 2012

The middle-aged truth about Stirling Prize winners

Average age of winning architect(s)
- Average Age = 56
- Figures to 2012
friendly style over substance. Nevertheless, it was agreed that the benefits outweighed the negatives. In 2000 the RIBA managed to convince Channel 4 that architecture, buoyed by some high profile lottery projects, had the growing popularity to make the show a success. Furthermore it argued that architecture could be as controversial as the Booker and the Turner, a claim supported by Will Alsop’s expletive-ridden acceptance speech after his Peckham Library was announced as winner. Approximately one million viewers watched the first show and it became an annual event for the channel.

The following year saw the battle of the large millennium projects with Wilkinson Eyre’s Magna Centre narrowly defeating the bookies favourite, Nicholas Grimshaw & Partners’ Eden Project. Perhaps the most critically acclaimed project of the year, conversion of the Bankside Power station to the Tate Modern, was not shortlisted. Failing to register with the RIBA in time, Herzog & de Meuron was not eligible to enter. It did taste victory, however, with the Laban Dance Centre in 2003.

Following the success of Grand Designs, Kevin McCloud took over presenting the awards ceremony from Waldemar Januszczak in 2004. Talkback Productions’ revamped show employed McCloud’s accessible style, focusing on the story behind each of the shortlisted projects. In addition, the ceremony was broadcast live for the first time. This shift was seen as evidence of architecture’s confirmed mainstream appeal, further supported by the 2004 winner, Foster and Partners’ Swiss Re building. Unlike any other winner of the prize before or since, the ‘gherkin’ captured both the public’s and the media’s imagination and was the unanimous choice of the judges. ‘Iconic’ thus became the buzzword inside and outside architectural circles.

In contrast, Chipperfield’s Museum of Modern Literature demonstrated restrained elegance and Accordia became the first housing project to not only make the shortlist, but to win the Stirling Prize. By 2009 the global economic crisis was a reality. After fears that the prize money would have to be withdrawn, a record low number of viewers watched Richard Rogers win his second Stirling Prize for another low-key project, the Maggie’s Centre. Channel 4 subsequently decided to stop broadcasting the awards and the ceremony instead moved to become a special feature of The Culture Show on BBC2. Despite high profile back-to-back wins for Zaha Hadid in the following two years, ratings continued to drop in a less desirable time slot. In 2012 the awards ceremony ceased to be televised.

It is perhaps no surprise that the media profile of the Stirling Prize over the past 17 years reflects the latest economic cycle of the construction industry. As well as the Millennium projects, the artificial boom of the New Labour government offered affordable financing of projects large and small. Meanwhile programmes such as Talkback Productions’ own Property Ladder and Grand Designs encouraged the public’s skirmish with property and, arguably, interest in architecture. From the media-friendly affair with ‘iconic starchitecture’ to regular controversy such as this year’s revived Park Hill, depicted as a ‘concrete monstrosity’, the prize has given the media something architectural to focus on.

The current separation of the prize from television – though not the BBC website – is an opportunity for the award to re-establish its values. During its founding, Mary Stirling was adamant that it should be used to help the younger generation of architects as her late husband had struggled for recognition early on. Refreshingly, this year’s shortlist is made up of less established names not previously nominated for the prize.

The ceremony aimed to be a star-studded event. Special guests from the Labour government included culture secretary Chris Smith and Peter Mandleson.

The media-friendly affair with ‘iconic starchitecture’ to regular controversy such as this year’s revived Park Hill, depicted as a ‘concrete monstrosity’, the prize has given the media something architectural to focus on. From the media-friendly affair with ‘iconic starchitecture’ to regular controversy such as this year’s revived Park Hill, depicted as a ‘concrete monstrosity’, the prize has given the media something architectural to focus on.

Steve Parnell is an architect, critic, and lecturer in architecture at the University of Nottingham

Nathan Breeze is a fifth year M.Arch architecture student at the Bartlett, writing a dissertation on the Stirling Prize and mainstream media

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The Stirling Prize’s TV ratings: a story of decline

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Obituary

David Nicol Barclay 1929–2013
Pioneer of regionalism and a practice moderniser

David Barclay’s death leaves the world a poorer but better place for the influences he shared with those who knew him. None who had even the briefest acquaintance would fail to be aware of the true spirit of the man. He epitomised all that was best of the ‘English Gentleman’.

Born in Cambridge, his upbringing based on a love of music, truth and a deep sense of duty towards others, laid the foundation for his life. In 1937, the family moved to North Shields, and at the outbreak of war he was evacuated to Penrith in Cumberland.

In 1947 David became a sapper in the Royal Regiment of Engineers. Later commissioned as an officer in the Artillery, 80th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, he saw active service in Egypt in the Suez Canal Zone.

At 20, having decided that architecture was for him, he attended Christ’s College and the University School of Architecture. His degree prepared him for continuing architecture studies at Birmingham School of Architecture, and he was awarded the diploma in architecture in 1954.

In Birmingham he joined the practice of John P Osborne and Son, which was involved in a wide cross section of projects including schools, commercial, conservation and private housing. In 1955 he completed his professional final exam, becoming a registered associate of the RIBA. During the next 10 years of architectural practice, and following previous inclinations, he joined the Birmingham Bach Society, later becoming secretary and then chairman.

These were busy times for David. In 1968 he married Joan Maxwell Steen, daughter of a mathematician and fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge. David took on the role of honorary secretary of the Birmingham and Five Counties Architectural Association which became a trust: he then led the smooth change over to the first RIBA regional office, the West Midland region, and was its first regional director, from 1967-1974. His attention to detail and management skills were pivotal to laying a firm foundation for the future and the RIBA region’s continuing success.

In 1975 David and Joan moved to Highgate, in north London. Practising as an architect gave way to four years as director of the RIBA’s Practice Department, supporting architects in practice and providing guidance. As well as managing relations with government departments and organisations within construction, he did much to develop the professional indemnity and contractual forms and professional codes we still have today.

David’s enjoyment of classical music eventually saw him become chairman of the London Bach Society. Maintaining his strong concerns for architectural practice, in 1983 he became an honorary member of the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association. That year he also helped found W87, a commission of CIB (the International Council for Building Research) studying post-contract liability and insurance.

In 1994 David retired from the RIBA as a staff member to devote more time to his church interests – in particular as a ‘wandsman’, the equivalent of a verger, at St Paul’s Cathedral. Finally he became a member of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a Freeman of the City of London. Having successfully nursed his wife through four years of cancer treatment, he was himself diagnosed with the disease, which proved terminal. It was never in his nature to give up, and he remained optimistic and brave to the end.

David Nicol Barclay 1929–2013
Pioneer of regionalism and a practice moderniser

To inform the RIBA of the death of a member, please email membership.services@riba.org with details of next of kin.
September's wrong
I write to highlight the ‘subscription creep’ that the RIBA has adopted in recent years. I remember not so long ago legitimately paying my fee in February of the year of membership.

Now we are hardly into September of the year before the membership, and demands for subscriptions are already arriving. Good accounting practice I’m sure, but don’t think I’d get away with it if I tried it on my clients.

Steve Clutterbuck, Isle of Wight

Grim tales
I always appreciate the Journal and as someone who loves to draw was particularly interested in the Eye Line competition (RIBA Journal August 2013). You asked what the works tell us about architect’s view of the world.

I found the illustrated examples thoroughly depressing. I don’t doubt the great skill shown in these works, but the view must be among the bleakest possible, bordering on the worst sort of dystopian nightmare.

I can’t believe architects as a whole see the world this way. Do none see beauty and light and colour and joy?

Crawford Mackenzie, Dundee

Books and users
Jan-Carlo Kucharek concludes (RIBA Journal September 2013) that Birmingham Library is ‘a truly civic building, designed for its users and not, like the British Library, for the books’. Perhaps the Birmingham building needs more than a few days to establish its user credentials. The British Library has been proving its civic presence, and delighting many users, for over a decade and a half. Principles of Scandinavian humanism, the insights of Adrian Stokes’s psychology of space, and a level of programme research now impossible in practice, placed the user, in fact, at the forefront of its conception. I recently spent hours studying 18th century drawings in its Map Room – the uppermost ‘terrace’ of the ‘hanging gardens’ that order the Humanities Reading Room; a research made possible, and pleasurable, by spaces alive with natural light, subtly balanced between intimacy and prospect.

Professor Stephen Kite
Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University

At one
At last the RIBA Journal is one magazine, without the awful separation of articles and RIBA news. I welcome the changes. The navigation will take some getting used to but I like the wider format, change in paper and the other subtle changes. Well done.

John Assael, Assael Architecture, London

Bolder, better
Congratulations on the new bold RIBA Journal and the strong clear typeface – matching the quality of the photographs.

It is now a pleasure to read all the magazine and I am sure it will have a positive impact on all who receive it.

Robert Bailie, East Moseley, Surrey

Fresh and good-looking
Congratulations on a great re-design of the Journal and PIP...a joy to read!

I love the bold headlines, layout and use of typefaces and graphics (the articles and features seem to have gone up a couple of notches too!). If only more of your full-page advertisers could also up their game with better graphics. I admit I prefer the printing on PIP’s slightly glossy paper to the matt of RIBAJ). Can’t both be the same?

Well done to you and Matt Willey for achieving something fresh and good-looking enough to be sought after when it arrives in the office each month.

John Lyall, Lyall Bills & Young Architects, London

Enlightening contemporary examples
I’m full of praise for the new format of the RIBA Journal. Examples of contemporary design in Products in Practice are also very enlightening. Years ago I worked for Tecton – then the best example, together with Corbusier, of modern architecture.

Geoffrey Mackenzie
Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear

We welcome letters but retain the right to edit them:
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Why I’m still a member
What an absolute delight! For months I have been grinding my teeth about the ‘trade magazine’ presentation of the RIBA Journal and wondering whether it was worth retaining my RIBA membership to receive it… then your elegant September publication drops through the letterbox. Very many congratulations to all concerned on this transformation: excellent page layout, clear and elegant typography, consistent presentation of interesting projects with, at last, readable plans and sections – and all on a distinctive matt paper that accepts good image reproduction. Brilliant!

The clarity of the three new main components (especially the specific designation of a section for ‘Culture’) is very welcome. I hope that within this you will be able to include serious report and discussion of architectural education, and serious book reviews.

I also very much hope you will be able to resist commercial pressure to reduce the white spaces that give editorial pages elegance and distinguish them from advertising.

Your new Journal is the reason that I, and probably many others, will now continue to retain RIBA membership.

Peter Sparks, Cambridge
PS For the first time, and though not a practitioner, I read all of PIP. Content as well as redesign prompted that.

It’s a Wowser
When I opened my copy of this month’s Journal I just said ‘wow’. This is the best edition of the journal – one just wants to sit down and read every article (well nearly every).

Brian Maze, Maze and Dean

I love the new layout and feel of the latest issue. Modern, professional and great coverage.

Yaamin Sharif

III-conceived and tasteless
As invited in your accompanying letter to the relaunched RIBAJ, I comment as follows:

1) The new RIBA logo is ill-conceived and tasteless. It is too big. The capital letter J, by virtue of its form, clearly shows the difficulty of introducing J into the accepted RIBA title – and why it has not succeeded. The small printed title ‘The RIBA Journal’ beneath the big logo is more than adequate to inform the reader of the magazine he is about to read.

2) Why on earth do we require an unnecessarily exclusive and prissy RIBAJ condensed font. First, it appears as a total contradiction of the new logo, with its overpowering font style and weight of lettering. It does not appear to add anything to the general text of the journal. Just confusing.

3) The journal is much improved but suffers from heading up each section with the oversized weight and style of the new logo. The wider format, paper quality, photography, printing, etc is much improved.

Ray Berry, Middlesbrough

No room on the shelf
I opened the new look Journal with dismay. Another designer’s folly to render obsolete a storage system that has served well for years! I am put off by the size before I even reach the contents. Storage space is at a premium, and now it just does not quite fit. I’m fine with change and updating but some changes are made for change’s sake and are irritating, just irritating. It will have to go to recycling, rather than kept for reference. Sad and wasteful.

I have subscribed for 46 years; it is the first ‘new look’ that has driven me to complain.

Maurice Green, London

AS THINGS STOOD: OCTOBER 1963
Fifty years before BIM, the RIBA held a conference to discuss unifying drawings information across consultants and contractors. Computers were the answer, said R Iredale.

There must be a genuine acknowledgment that industrialisation or mechanisation will extend into our practices [and] a willingness to accept it as being a good and healthy thing.

For our standard information, we recognised all the parts of the building, and defined what we meant by these. We recognised the processes and have compiled an assembly manual. We were then able to think about the kind of information that was necessary to describe these parts and processes to different members of the building team at different stages of the process.

We came to the conclusion that there were eight different classes of information…the next aspect was our decision to be able to use computers for compiling, collating and analysing data about our building parts and processes.

By the use of punched cards with micro-films of drawings on them, we have the graphic representation of the component with written information. All the information about a part of process is stored in a very small area, and easily retrievable. By combining the coding and computers with our assembly manual, and using network analysis, we are able to programme the project in advance, and re-programme it.

The RIBA Journal October 2013
Architectural Ironmongery

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Remember if you are a member of the RIBA you get free access to our digital edition, all you need to do is apply online.
ASSA ABLOY

C: Claire Jones
E: Claire.jones@assaabloyuk.com
W: www.assaabloy.co.uk/apero

Title 1: Keyless Access Solutions

The new seminar, accredited by RIBA, aims to deliver a better understanding on keyless access solutions such as ASSA ABLOY Access Control’s wireless Aperio™ locking solution and the technology involved, alongside the different types of products included and their individual features and benefits.

ASSA ABLOY Access Control will also introduce visitors to the very latest standards and regulations that affect keyless access solutions.

iGuzzini

C: Sarah Longhurst
T: 01483 468 000
E: info@iguzzini.co.uk
W: www.iguzzini.com

Title 1: Better Light for Life
Title 2: CO2 Relighting: The Route to Sustainable Lighting
Title 3: Detailing the Dark
Title 4: LED: Lighting the way Forward

iGuzzini specialises in architectural lighting and prides itself on its modern concepts which adhere to current environmental issues whilst retaining maximum cost effectiveness.

MechoSystems

C: Nancy Kerr-Jones
T: 01908 361310
E: nancy.kerr-jones@mechosystems.com
W: www.mechosystems.co.uk

Title: CPD Title: WindowManagement™
a pre-requisite to day lighting & lighting control.

MechoSystems is a globally recognised innovatory in the commercial Roller Blinds market, with over 50 year’s experience in this product category. Our CPD covers aspects of Window Management™ from fabric type & selection to how automated shading controls can enhance the energy performance of commercial buildings.

FunderMax

C: Paul Hughes
T: 07852 867472
E: paul.hughes@fundermax.biz
W: www.fundermax.at

Title: An Introduction to High Pressure Laminates in rainscreen cladding systems

FunderMax Exterior is a high-performance, high-quality cladding/construction product, which is available in large format panels for cladding balconies and building facades. The range offers an extensive choice of finishes, including metallic, gloss, woodgrain and individual décor.

ALUK

C: Jordan Kingman
T: +44 (0)1633 810440
E: j.kingman@aluk.co.uk
W: www.aluk.co.uk

Title: BIM: Aluminium Façade Systems – modelling, design, construction, standards and collaboration

Attendees of the CPD presentation will learn about façade system 3-D objects, including information on modelling and system parameters, design and construction processes, such as BIM tendering and clash detection, as well as standards and regulations.

GEZE

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

Title: 1 Removing Barriers to Access
Provides guidance for the use and specification of door control devices so that doors do not become obstacles. Now completely updated to include the latest standards and legislation.

Title: 2 Safeguarding Pedestrians from Accidents at Power Operated Doorsets - EN 16005

Title: 3 Designing Effective Heat and Smoke Ventilation

Title: 4 Glass Door Assemblies – Selection and Specification

C: cpd@zehnder.co.uk
T: 01276 605801
F: 01276 605801
E: sales@zehnder.co.uk
W: www.zehnder.co.uk/specification

Title: Radiant Heating and Cooling
The radiant heating and cooling CPD from Zehnder explains the technology further and examines the benefits the system can offer in comparison to traditional methods of heating and cooling.

C: Sarah Longhurst
T: 01483 468 000
E: info@iguzzini.co.uk
W: www.iguzzini.com

Title 1: Better Light for Life
Title 2: CO2 Relighting: The Route to Sustainable Lighting
Title 3: Detailing the Dark
Title 4: LED: Lighting the way Forward

iGuzzini specialises in architectural lighting and prides itself on its modern concepts which adhere to current environmental issues whilst retaining maximum cost effectiveness.
**Fläkt Woods tames the elements at new WWF HQ**

Fläkt Woods, in partnership with Vision Vent, has designed, supplied and installed four bespoke rotating wind cowls for the WWF’s new Living Planet Centre in Woking, Surrey. Built on a brownfield site, the building will be the new headquarters for the conservation organisation and, when completed, will be at the forefront of sustainable building design with a BREEAM ‘Outstanding’ rating.

w: www.flaktwoods.co.uk

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**Ideal Commercial**

Leading UK commercial boiler manufacturer Ideal Commercial has supplied six high efficiency Imax Xtra floor-standing boilers that have been installed in Wigan Life Centre, an award-winning £200m development that combines a wide range of services for the local community such as Healthy Living facilities, a 25m swimming pool, adult and children’s libraries and a variety of support services.

w: www.idealcommercialheating.com

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**Mapei’s protective waterproofing system provide watertight solution**

A system of Mapei’s cementitious waterproofing products has been installed by specialist contractors Preservation Treatments as part of the refurbishment of Raynes Park Station’s old ticket office in Greater London. The original concrete framed structure has been converted into a new retail unit as part of the station’s refurbishment works.

w: www.mapei.co.uk  t: 0121 508 6970

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**Light Bell by Piero Lissoni**

Suspended general lighting luminaire for indoor mounting. It has a high efficiency latest generation LED light source and a low-loss technical thermoplastic diffuser. The luminaire housing is made of spun aluminium, available in external matt white finish with silver anodised interior, external matt black with gold interior, and external polished aluminium with silver anodised interior.

w: www.atrium.ltd.uk

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**The Hunter Fan Company Ltd**

We are now the exclusive distributors of Waste King disposal units in the UK and EC. Waste King have been making these for over 50 years and are the second biggest producer globally. They were rated as the No 1 waste disposal unit by the independent US Consumer Report magazine and are considered to be the best performing units offering the longest warranties.

w: www.waste-disposal-unit.com

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**Entry opens for inaugural building façade competition**

To celebrate its 10th anniversary The Society of Façade Engineering* has announced the launch of FAÇADE2013, an international competition designed to recognise, promote and reward excellence in this key element of building design and construction. The prize will be awarded on a project basis with entries welcome from individuals, projects teams and companies from around the world.

w: www.sfecompetition.org

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**Quintet Showering from AQATA**

Aqata has expanded its range of uniquely shaped shower enclosures and matching low level shower trays to offer customers a wider choice of complete Quintet showering solutions. New for Autumn 2013, three new sizes of 35mm low level Quintet shower trays: 1000x1000mm, 1200x900mm and 1400x900mm have joined the existing 900x900mm model. In addition, a new size 1000x1000mm Spectra SP500 Quintet enclosure has been introduced to the successfully established Spectra collection of luxury, frameless shower enclosures. This means that Aqata’s Spectra SP500, Minimalist M500 and Exclusive Solutions ES500 Quintets are now available to order in four sizes, complete with coordinating shower tray. For stockists contact Aqata.

w: www.aqata.co.uk  t: 01455 896500  e: sales@aqata.co.uk

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**Tap into Rain Water and Save on Bills**

AquaTech Pressmain’s Rain Water Management System collects rain falling on your roof which is directed through guttering into a tank outside and pumped into the property to a specially-adapted header tank in the loft, to flush your sanitary wear. With average UK water bills £334 a year and rising, there couldn’t be a better time to install the system.

t: 01206 215121

w: www.aquatech-pressmain.co.uk

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**Prestigious gallery showcases the imaginative work of Faber Blinds**

Faber Blinds worked closely with the architect and contractors at the Pace Gallery in London to provide motorised roller blinds in each window space, blackout to the rear with screen to the front, with the fabrics running in recessed side channels. The EOS 500 blinds are controlled by a central, GPS-linked Hunter Douglas EOS Touch system to provide appropriate shading for exhibitions whatever the weather.

w: www.faberblinds.co.uk

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**Waste King EZ-mount Built to: -Grind -Perform -Last**

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**The Society of Façade Engineering**

*Note: The Society of Façade Engineering is a professional body that represents the interests of façade engineers and designers, promoting best practice in façade design and construction. The FAÇADE2013 competition is open to individuals, projects teams and companies from around the world. For further information, visit www.sfecompetition.org.
Comar Window Systems Improve Performance
With ever-increasing demands on the performance of glazing and opening vents, Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems have developed and tested their aluminium window systems to meet the very latest performance and specification demands, ensuring their clients have a future proof solution. The Comar range of solutions, offers a single source solution that achieves an increased range of window sizes.
w: www.comar-ahu.co.uk

Knauf insulation launches a comprehensive state of art Bim library
In preparation for the introduction of mandatory Business Information Modelling (BIM) on all government funded projects from 2016, Knauf Insulation has launched a comprehensive library of BIM objects. The objects are free to download from the Knauf Insulation website, offering specifiers easy access to key insulation components that can be incorporated into BIM designs.
w: www.comar-ahu.co.uk

Design with storage in mind
Architects looking to improve their understanding about designing storage and maximising space can now undertake a core curriculum RIBA-approved CPD course led by Link 51, the UK’s largest manufacturer and supplier of workplace storage solutions. Design with Storage in Mind – a Specifier’s Guide is a one-hour seminar that provides best practice guidance on the specification of storage schemes.
w: www.link51.com

Johnstone’s reigns supreme at Rainford High
The refurbishment of Rainford High Technology College in St. Helens has been given a helping hand thanks to a new paint specification featuring products from Johnstone’s Ecological Solutions range and Ambrose Ellis Painting Contractors. Johnstone's Ecological Solutions products were specifically specified for their suitability in the education sector thanks to many being low odour and having a low VOC content.
w: www.johnstonestrade.com

Interface Creates Sustainable Flooring Design for The Co-operative
Interface worked with The Co-operative to develop a sustainable flooring design for the company’s new headquarters, Angel Square in Manchester city centre. In line with its ethical approach to business, The Co-operative required a flooring solution that would help developers to construct one of the most sustainable buildings in the UK, while at the same time creating a contemporary design.
w: www.interface.com

Polypipe leads revolution in rainwater harvesting market
Polypipe, the UK’s largest plastic piping systems manufacturer, is reinforcing the success of its unique RXL Rainwater Harvesting system by calling time on traditional GRP tank systems as it takes the rainwater harvesting market into an exciting new era. The company isdiscontinuing GRP tank lines as a result of the popularity of its unique Rainstream RXL tank systems.
w: www.polypipe.com/terrain/

Architectural Profiles Ltd works with Trowbridge to take on climate change.
Wiltshire County Council’s workplace transformation scheme has seen Trowbridge County Hall redeveloped with the specific aim of reducing energy consumption by 40%. “We started by looking at the building envelope first, improving insulation and air-tightness to reduce the energy demand of the building,” says engineering consultants WSP project manager Andrew Selway.
w: www.archprof.co.uk

Kährs new Harmony Collection reflects contemporary woodland trend
Kährs new Harmony Collection reflects the key trend for rustic natural surfaces with subtle design features. The cost effective range includes fourteen designs, each crafted in Sweden from sustainable European oak and ash. Hand-brushing removes pulpy softwood to expose natural graining and annual rings, which reinforce the natural look.
w: www.kahrs.co.uk

Laminating history
Abet Laminati has opened a museum to celebrate its 50th anniversary. The displays, at the company’s Era factory near Milan, are organised chronologically to take the visitor on a historical tour of laminates in design. Over the years, the company has worked with some of the world’s most famous designers including Karim Rashid, Ettore Sottsass, Giulio Iacchetti, Alessandro Mendini, Philippe Starck and Francois Brukhardt together with new designers such as Bethan Wood.
The museum, designed by architect Matteo Scalise, comprises 600 square metres and includes over 137 pieces of art which demonstrate the versatility of high pressume laminate. Visitors can study how the results of the dialogue between manufacturer and designer have evolved over time and, as the tour progresses, how they became more imaginative and intricate. It also includes information about Abet Laminati’s culture of research, innovative experimentation and creative concepts.
ABET LAMINATI
w: www.abetak.com t: 020 7473 6915

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w: www.interface.com

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ABET LAMINATI
w: www.abetak.com t: 020 7473 6915
Metal Technology hits the heights at Olympic Way.
Metal Technology has supplied its innovative architectural aluminium products on one of London’s tallest buildings. Designed by Hunt Thompson and built by main contractor Donban, the new 4 star, 20 storey, 235 bedroom Park Inn Hotel and 158 apartment building sits at a prominent junction adjacent to Olympic Way, only 300m from Wembley Stadium. Each home has generous outdoor space and spectacular views of the iconic home of football. The design called for visual impact and high performance from door, window, curtain walling and Brise Soleil systems. Metal Technology System 9 and 10 single / double – action pivot commercial doors offer both standard and anti-finger trap forms as well as a fully rebated option with butt hinges. Double and single door leaf options are included in the range and a variety of door jamb and stile formats offers the designer the flexibility to achieve the entrance required. The fully complementary System 5-20 Tilt and Turn Window provides all the advantages of polyamide thermal break technology in meeting current thermal building regulation requirements. Tilt ventilation and the ability to clean the windows from inside the building make System 5-20 the easy choice for any application.
w: www.metaltechnology.com

Expona doubles up on innovation
Expona, Polyflor’s world renowned Luxury Vinyl Tile brand synonymous with high design and quality has been dramatically re-launched! With a 20 year history and global sales of over 35 million square metres, Expona is widely regarded and respected across the world. In the most exciting development in LVT for quite some time, the new Expona offer is formed of two design focussed collections across two specifications.
w: www.polyflor.com

Landmark Information Group launches Promap Plug-In for AutoCAD 2014
Landmark Information Group has announced a free new AutoCAD 2014 plug-in for its Promap digital mapping service, which simplifies the process of integrating digitised Ordnance Survey MasterMap data directly into the CAD application. Within the AutoCAD 2014 environment, users can now access the ‘Promap Data Services’ plug-in to digitise their area of interest using Bing Maps, and from this, request pricing for purchasing Ordnance Survey’s MasterMap. Once the file format and gridlines have been confirmed, the required dataset is then downloaded directly into AutoCAD for immediate use. Carole Ankers, Product Development Director, Landmark Information Group said, “For anyone looking to incorporate accurate OS mapping into their AutoCAD projects, the new Promap plug-in creates a seamless and simple way of doing this. Within a few clicks, accurate topography data can be integrated within the CAD system, saving time. We have developed this in response to our clients’ feedback and so are pleased to launch the new plug-in today.”
w: www.promap.co.uk/autocad.php

Heradesign Fins by Knauf AMF are Creative to the Core
Heradesign Fins by Knauf AMF have been installed under the barrel vaulted roof in a new triple height studio at advertising agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty’s refurbished London HQ. Designed by architects and designers, Urban Salon, the Fins create a bold architectural statement and are perfect for this modern space. They are practical; providing solar shading and sound absorption.
E: info@knaufamf.co.uk

A Unique Solution to Service Riser Vents from Step on Safety
Service riser openings in buildings have long been the bane of the construction industry, as it is often unclear whether they are the responsibility of the main contractor or the mechanical/electrical contractor. Anti-slip flooring specialists Step on Safety, has developed Riserdeck™, a unique lightweight riser floor system that uses durable and corrosion-resistant materials.
w: www.steponsafety.co.uk

Geze UK’S Designer doors complement comfort and care
Billed as the ‘best in the UK’, Marie Curie’s new multi-million pound hospice in Solihull boasts state-of-the-art facilities, fixtures and fittings designed to provide comforting and enriching end-of-life care for patients. From whirlpool to widescreens, Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall Architects insisted upon high quality, long term value for money specifications.
w: www.geze.co.uk t: 01562 463000

Mumford & Wood is CE Compliant
Timber windows and doors manufactured in the UK by specialists Mumford & Wood are now CE Mark compliant in accordance with mandatory European law. The company has undertaken a rigorous process to ensure products and the supply chain are covered by the new regulations. These award-winning products are Energy Saving Trust recommended and BSI Kitemark accredited.
w: www.mumfordwood.com

The Senator Groups’ new Environmental Management Division SUSTAIN launches as a result of their unique and innovative approach to sustainability, waste management and carbon emissions. Their day-to-day business revolves around three dedicated Recycling Centres, they recycle 93% of their waste through 3/4 waste (reducing their carbon footprint to virtually zero) and all their products are 99% recyclable. Their actions speak louder than words. No ifs, No buts. No maybe.
w: www.senator.co.uk

The RIBA Journal October 2013
Johnstone’s continues investment

Leading paint manufacturer Johnstone’s has continued to invest in its specification team with the appointment of four new Specification Development Managers. Each of the new Specification Development Managers will be responsible for their own area. Johnstone’s nationwide specification network works closely with architects, specifiers, and main contractors to create specifications which are suitable for each project.

w: www.johnstonestrade.com

Clay tiles from a ‘very good’ responsible source

Marley Eternit clay roof tiles have been awarded a ‘very good’ performance rating under the BES 6001 framework standard for the responsible sourcing of construction products. The rating has been given due to the implementation of a range of sustainability and environmental initiatives such as sustainable manufacturing and a high degree of material traceability from a responsible source. The tiles are manufactured at Marley Eternit’s state of the art facility in Keele, which has the largest clay plain tile production capacity in the UK. BES 6001 is the ‘Framework Standard for the Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products’ by the BRE. Marley Eternit’s clay tiles had previously achieved a ‘good’ rating and the reassessment this year resulted in an improvement to ‘very good’, meaning the company achieves the maximum credits towards BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes. Sarah Jackson, marketing product manager at Marley Eternit, explains: “Material traceability is an important part of the BES 6001 accreditation. Our clay plain tiles are manufactured from locally sourced Etruria Marl, which is generally accepted as the finest clay for strength and durability, from a source operating to internationally recognised management systems and BES 6001.”

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

2x35W Helvar led driver released for Linear luminaires

Helvar has expanded its 70W LED driver platform with the release of the LL2x35, a new two channel LED driver. Available either as fixed Constant Current or DALI dimmable, the extended 2x35W LED platform offers luminaire manufacturers increased flexibility in their transition to LED products for linear and 600x600 applications, such as offices, classrooms and call centres.

w: www.helvar.com

Rooflight

Refurbishing the key historic site of Tower Works in Holbeck, Leeds, called on materials of a high quality with aesthetics and performance standards that are consistent with Grade A office design. A total of fifty motorised roof windows were specified for this project. Fifteen bespoke Conservation Rooflights® were approved in various sizes. Five standard neo™ 56 were also specified.

w: www.therooflightcompany.co.uk

t: 01844 260 006
Hydrotech reaches new heights on The Shard.
The Shard, Western Europe’s tallest building, is the latest in a long line of prestigious London landmark projects to be protected by Alumasc’s Hydrotech hot melt waterproofing system. This iconic building joins well-known developments such as Canary Wharf, Bishopsgate and Tate Modern where Hydrotech has been successfully used, signifying new heights for the market leading structural waterproofing system.
A total of 3500 metres of Hydrotech has been installed across various levels of the 310m (1,016ft) landmark building, whose glass façade now dominates the London skyline. Designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, the building comprises offices, restaurants, the 5-star Shangri-La Hotel and residential apartments. Hydrotech was specified by affiliate architects, Adamson Associates following its effective use on projects such as Canary Wharf. Its high performance and flexibility of installation, made it suitable for use on several areas where alternative products were not an option, despite a number of challenges posed by weather, intricate design details and the unique logistics presented by a building.
w: www.alumascroofing.co.uk  t: 0808 100 2008

Levolux makes news in London
The London 2012 Media Centre is equipped with a custom Solar Shading solution, from Levolux. This comprises its Sunbreaker Brise Soleil system and its Infiniti® Fin system, applied across and above glazed openings. The fixed shading devices help to maintain a carefully controlled environment, both during the Games and in legacy.
w: www.levolux.com  t: 020 8863 9111  e: info@levolux.com

New guidance on roof U-value calcs
Dow Building Solutions has released a new guide on making U-value calculations for inverted flat roofs. Authored by Dr Steve Johnson, Technical Manager for the STYROFOAM and XENERGY extruded polystyrene producer, the paper outlines key considerations to bear in mind, including:
1. U-values and the importance of location.
2. Design and declared lambda values: knowing the difference.
3. Roof build up and potential condensation effects.
*With the spotlight turning on the actual energy performance of buildings – not just the designed performance – ensuring U-value calculations are robust is a responsibility the industry must take seriously,* said Dr Johnson.
*“The inverted flat roof is a building element with many unique aspects, which must be tackled at the outset in order to avoid errors when making U-value calculations.”* The paper includes information on making corrections for rainwater cooling and moisture absorption, key issues for the inverted roof application.
Copies are available from e: dbsuk@dow.com w: www.styrofoam.co.uk

Two New Senior Appointments to the BBA’s Management Team
The BBA is pleased to announce two new senior appointments to its management team. Both are new roles created to improve processes within the organisation and capitalise on new opportunities in the construction market. Peter Maddern has been promoted to Head of Contractor and System Certification with responsibilities for the BBA’s installer and management system businesses while Fanoula Ziouzia has been promoted to Head of Business Development and Administration. Peter has been with the BBA since 2002 when he initially joined as an inspector for replacement windows after the BBA secured the inspection business for FENSA. He soon worked his way up to become the BBA’s FENSA Window Inspection Manager and was latterly Inspection Manager for the whole of the BBA’s installer and inspection schemes. Under Peter’s guidance the BBA’s Inspection and Installer services have grown significantly, and they are now a major part of the BBA’s overall business. Fanoula Ziouzia has been with the BBA for 6 years and has worked as a project manager and latterly as a team leader for a department responsible for new product development.

‘Drag and drop’ changing places
Specification of accessible toilets is now available with just a mouse click through innovations at Clos-o-Mat. The company, has added a full Changing Places accessible toilet CAD download to its website www.clos-o-mat.com. As a result, specifiers wanting to include the state-of-the-art toilet facility can simply ’drag and drop’ the complete drawing and specification criteria into their plans.

ANCON leads the way with CE Marking of brick support systems and windposts
ANCON has achieved all the necessary welding and factory production control certification to CE-mark its structural steel components, including masonry support systems and windposts, under the EU Construction Products Regulation. The certification followed a thorough audit of the company’s design and fabricating operations in accordance with EN 1090.
w : www.ancon.co.uk/CE

New solution conquers backwater and sewage surcharge
For water companies looking to reduce the number of their properties listed on the DOS register – comprising homes that have experienced flooding or that may be at risk of flooding – a new solution from Fernco Environmental now offers the ultimate in protection against backwater flooding and sewer surcharge into the home.
w: www.ferncoenvironmental.com
**Heckmondwike**

A new centre for pupils on the autism spectrum at a school in Bedfordshire has been hailed as exemplary and praised by experts in Special Educational Needs (SEN) for its innovative design, which uses colourful carpets from Heckmondwike FB to meet the special visual and spatial needs of its pupils. The new Nightingale Centre, features 240m² of Supacord fibre bonded carpet.

w: www.heckmondwike-fb.co.uk.

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**Architectural seals reimagined – Lorient’s new AURA® range**

For almost 35 years, Lorient has been designing and manufacturing the highest quality sealing systems for performance doors across the world. Today Lorient is unveiling a new and exciting range of contemporary architectural seals under the brand name of AURA®. Every detail of the AURA® product range is considered and designed to integrate more successfully into beautifully designed doorsets and floors.

w: www.lorientuk.com

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**Alumasc Rainwater Launches “Blue Book” Technical Resource**

Alumasc Rainwater has launched its new technical brochure providing comprehensive technical and installation advice on its extensive range of market leading metal rainwater systems. Known as ‘The Blue Book’, this substantial new brochure has been designed as an aide for Architects, Specifiers and Contractors, outlining full technical details of all product ranges, providing dimensions, installation instructions and NBS specifications, with a clear colour-coded product selector for ease of reference and a full colour photo gallery showing the products in-situ. The Blue Book features Alumasc’s pre-painted cast iron range, which boasts a highly durable four-coat factory-finish available in eight standard heritage colours. Lasting up to seven years before re-painting is required, all products carry Alumasc’s certified paint mark which confirms the four-coat system, giving reassurance that the range is fully protected against the elements. The range is priced at only 13% more than the primed equivalent, but offers impressive cost savings of up to 60% on installation time and 30% in materials. A short-term investment, that translates into a significant long-term saving.

w: www.alumascrainwater.co.uk  t: 0808 100 2008

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**Timber windows by Lomax + wood are the smart choice for Chelsea**

600 bespoke, high performance timber sash windows, designed and produced by Lomax + Wood (previously Ambass-A-Door), have been installed in the extensive refurbishment of Holbein House, Chelsea SW1 to replicate the original single glazed windows and to meet local planning requirements. Lomax + Wood excel in providing a full suite of products which are ideal for new build and heritage projects.

w: www.lomaxwood.co.uk

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**Sliding solutions brochure launched by Kawneer**

A specifiers’ guide for sliding solutions for architectural doors and windows is contained within a new brochure from leading aluminium systems supplier Kawneer. The 16-page guide explains how Kawneer’s sliding doors and windows match the requirements of a diverse range of new-build and refurbishment applications including residential, education, healthcare and commercial.

w: www.kawneer.co.uk

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**Junckers Unique Clip System the Solution in Listed Building**

Kensington Palace State Apartments in Kensington Gardens, managed by Historic Royal Palaces, has recently been represented and re-opened to visitors. The client chose Junckers solid hardwood floors in an oiled finish for a sophisticated, high quality look for the newly opened Piggot Galleries where the exhibition Fashion Rules is currently showing with a stunning display of modern Royal dress. As Kensington Palace State Apartments is a building of special architectural interest and highly protected fixing to the original fabric are strictly controlled by English Heritage, Junckers Wide Board Oak floors were specified and installed with Junckers’ unique, floating clip system which meant there was no need for glue or nails. Historic Royal Palaces’ architect, Carden & Godfrey worked closely with contractor NDB to provide specially-designed details to resolve the junctions between the old and new joinery.

w: www.junckers.co.uk  t: 01376 534 700
Culture
Parting Shot

E1027
Monte Carlo, 1929

A summer retreat in a remote position above Monte Carlo, E. 1027 was the first house by Irish furniture designer Eileen Gray, built for her lover and collaborator Jean Badovici in 1929. The name is a cipher of Gray’s initials and those of the Romanian architect and editor of L’Architecture Vivante, the numbers representing the alphabetical positions of J, B and G respectively. A simple ‘maison minimum’ with the inhabitants’ comfort at its core, every element of the design strives to make the villa a humane dwelling rather than just a collection of beautiful volumes.

Le Corbusier’s controversial involvement with E. 1027 began when he painted eight gaudy murals inside, claiming that he had added interest to dull walls – an act Gray described as vandalism. He subsequently built a two-storey hostel overlooking the house and erected his own retreat Le Cabanon nearby, encroaching on the visual isolation evident here.

Badovici died intestate in 1956 and for decades the house was left empty, allowing it to fall into a state of semi-dereliction. It is now undergoing restoration with plans to open to the public soon.

Justine Sambrook
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