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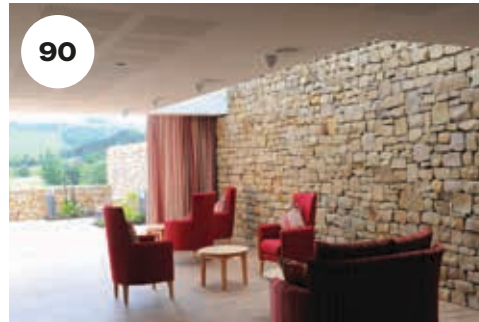
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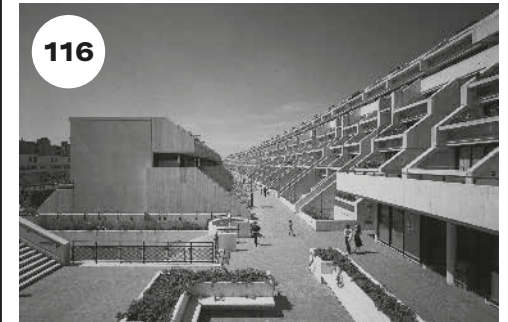
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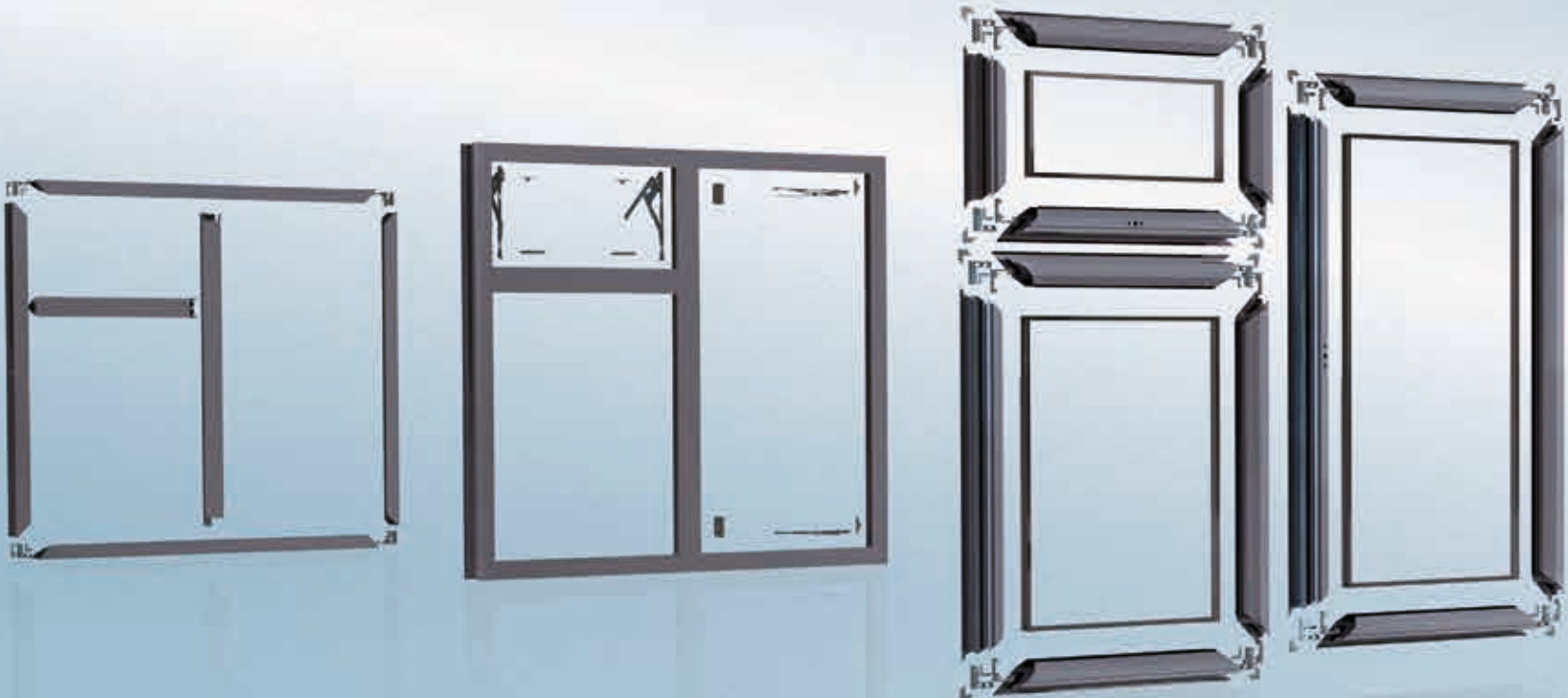


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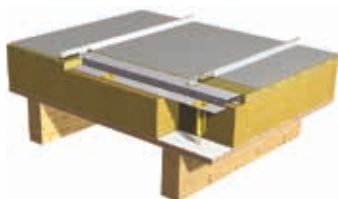


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1: Buildings

Hidey holes are rarely the old furniture of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Now they are the servant spaces that flick past in chase scenes as the fugitive bursts through the fire door, up the escape stairs and sprints across the roof, vaulting plant as they go. The forbidden

spaces of kitchen or backstage are where the workers toil, invisible in the public interior until ready to be presented. Here you can hide. Iris scanners and ID cards stop neither fugitive nor architect. But sometimes they do feel forgotten by design. ●

Below Tate St Ives' new extension,
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A genetic algorithm creates optimal shade shapes that simultaneously provide the most diffuse daylight and ensure no direct sunlight hits artwork on the walls below

Stephen Cousins explores the new glass pyramids of the Hayward: ribaj.com/haywardpyramids

Keep the faith

Nearly 30 years ago six people clubbed together to buy a derelict chapel in Halifax for £25. Evans Vettori has helped fulfil their vision of it as a thriving arts centre

Words: Jan-Carlos Photographs: Mark Hadden

Robert Evans, architect of Square Chapel Arts Centre, which is appended to Halifax's wonderful 1779 grade I listed Piece Hall, confesses that its BREEAM-rated loos do smell a bit ripe at the moment – but that, he adds brightly, is actually the sweet smell of success. Because nobody, including the arts centre itself, seems to have been prepared for the immense popularity of the venue since Evans' Vettori's unifying intervention.

But that's thespians for you. Here, they're so enthralled with the roar of the crowd that they've forgotten about the smell of the greasepaint, so it looks like the arts centre staff will need to change the filters on the

waterless urinals more often to deal with the inevitable result of so many locals slaking their thirsts, cultural and literal.

T'was not ever thus. Halifax, in Yorkshire's West Riding, may have fared better economically than its neighbours when the industrial revolution killed the cottage industry of weaving, but Piece Hall's 315 little rooms, where 'pieces' of cloth were traded, were no longer viable – a fate to be visited on the mass produced iteration of the craft in the 20th century.

The town's dependence on weaving is manifested by the massive 19th century Dean Clough carpet factory running along

IN NUMBERS

£6.6m
project cost

1,927m²
gross internal area

£2,462
build cost per m²

£1.7m
raised by
Square Chapel Trust



Left Square Chapel west entrance. Machined copper panels of the new auditorium counterpoint the blank freestone walls of the Piece Hall. The spire of the 1855 Square Chapel is behind.

Right Nestled between the new auditorium and the south wall of the Piece Hall, the arts centre's new heart is an isosceles triangle.







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the banks of Hebble Brook, which finally closed down in 1983. New owners are now attempting to fill its half mile long volume with hotels, leisure, events and tech start-ups. The Viaduct, home of the Northern Broadside theatre company, is one of them; and it, along with the Square Chapel Arts Centre in town, is helping keep Halifax's cultural life alive in the wake of recession and funding cuts.

When in 1988 the six founders of the arts centre bought Thomas Bradley's 1772 Palladian red brick, grade II*-listed building – described by Pevsner as 'one of Yorkshire's greatest Georgian chapels' – it was in such a parlous state that they got the whole thing for £25.

They renovated the roof first, not because it was in any worse a state than the rest of the structure, but so they could begin using the space. There are even old photos of classical quartets performing wearing hard hats, with the audience wrapped in supplied blankets to ward off the cold for lack of glass in the window openings.

In time offices were created from unwanted furniture and a bar built from old kitchen cabinets was installed in the chapel's lower entrance level. A small group of volunteers meantime helped keep the music events, theatre productions and cinema nights running on a shoestring budget.

Current director David McQuillan started in 2003 as an outreach worker before his success raising funds for the nearby Orange-box youth project saw him appointed in 2008 to do the same at the Square Chapel. Funding was secured from the Arts Council after Evans Vettori's dramatic arrowhead roof proposal beat stiff competition to win the commission to restore Bradley's chapel and link it to the imposing colonnade and courtyard of Piece Hall. Square Chapel then needed match funding. The lion's share was to come from The Monument and George Martin Trusts

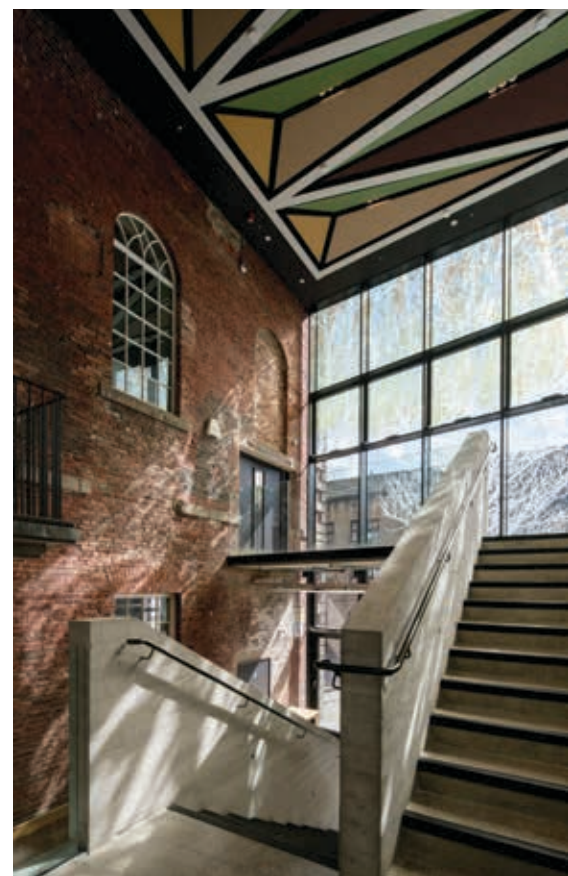
Classical quartets wore hard hats in early performances

Left The Square Chapel, new library and Calderdale industrial museum, all append to the grade I Piece Hall.

and Garfield Weston and Wolfson Foundations, but McQuillan gives equal credit to the volunteers who baked scones and sold them during performance intervals, saying that whether it was 20p, £20 or £200,000, every penny went into the pot.

The steel roof, formed of triangular infill panels in brown, green and yellow, might be the most conspicuous aspect of the design, but Evans Vettori also had to deal with dramatic falls across the site as the town slopes away to the river valley. This results in the sectional drop at the east end, where the firm installed a grand concrete stair to take people up to the main lobby from the lower level entrance, new offices and back of house spaces. It also holds the structure back from the stabilised west wall of Bradley's chapel, creating a triple height space, revealed in its entirety to theatregoers, diners and bar flies alike: the visible roof line of a past extension, blind windows and stone dressings – even the old burglar alarm, charmingly redundant.

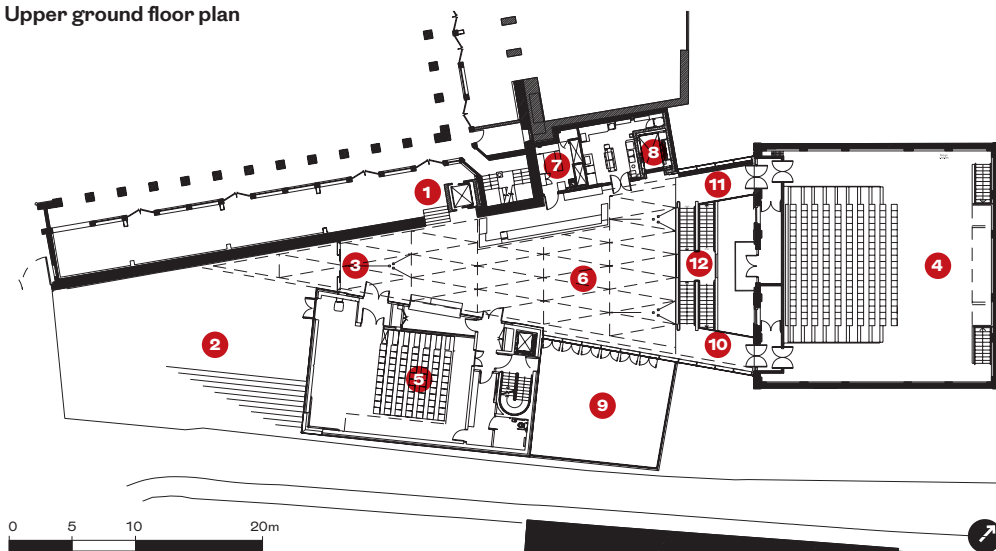
Though economic factors might have dic-



Above Square Chapel's west face now addresses the arts centre's new restaurant and lobby.

- 1 Exit to Piece Hall
- 2 Entrance plaza
- 3 Main entrance
- 4 Bradley Square Chapel
- 5 New auditorium box
- 6 Foyer and bar restaurant
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Goods lift
- 9 External terrace
- 10 Spring bridge
- 11 Autumn bridge
- 12 Stairs down to toilets/offices/storage

Upper ground floor plan



Everything seems to have happened through some osmotic activation of will

tated the thickish steel sections, the roof is a delicate thing nonetheless. Evans Vettori and the engineers could not impose any new loads on either of Bradley's structures, be it Piece Hall or the chapel. So everything is carried on three structural trees – a metal metaphor, McQuillin tells me, for the real ones that were removed to build the new arts centre. The trees are echoed again in the leafy colours on the angled canopy soffit, which has led the two entrances to be dubbed either the 'spring' or 'autumn' bridges – green is the dominant shade on one, and brown on the other. And there's even the etching of branches on the south wall glazing to stop solar gain. It's no coincidence that McQuillan, a fine artist by training, spends his spare time painting woods.

But then everything here seems to have happened through some osmotic activation

of the will. After the 2010 bid win, during design development and inspired by the vision, even the Arts Council felt it could be pushed to include another auditorium if it provided extra funding. With nearly £4 million secured, Evans Vettori initially imagined this as a triangle to the west, reflecting the arrowhead; then placed it to the north near the 235ft Square Chapel spire, the last vestige of the burned-out 1855 church the then congregation had expanded into. In the end it was English Heritage, keen to reinstate the line of the former accretions to the back wall of the Piece Hall, that had the architect position it squarely to the south.

The simple, burnished copper box that Evans Vettori built, sitting on its rectangular stone plinth, restores a sense of the tight-knit quality of Blackledge, the lane leading down to the river, and frames views to the woods on the other side of the valley. Internally, it also helps define the third face of the triangular lobby, creating a hidden space that, entered from its western apex, expands with sudden drama. Beneath the canopy, views out to Blackledge and the south Rose window of the Square Chapel generate a strange but pleasing urban quality; a large, enclosed interior space offering mediated views out to the street, the steeple and ultimately to the expanse of the Piece Hall itself.



Completion of the £6.6 million arts centre has also been blessed with serendipity. On the other side of the spire Halifax's new library is rising, drawing people down through the courtyard; and next to that, galvanised by the Square Chapel's success, a nascent Calderdale Industrial Museum looks to emulate its business model.

None of this was considered when the arts centre budgeted £360,000 as its annual takings from its bar and kitchen. McQuillan tells me they took £20,000 in their first week. Nor did they factor in LDN Architects' restoration of the Piece Hall with Gillespies (a tad heavy handed) landscaping of the courtyard, but it's obviously had an effect. Square Chapel Arts Centre predicted average nightly audience numbers rising from 100 to 120 – they've now reached 160.

From the original six founders, a staff of 55 now man the centre with 70 volunteers still coming in to do a shift, just because they want to. With its south facing terrace, it also seems to have become the go-to spot for local office workers' Friday night drinks. It's hard to write a dispassionate account of Square Chapel, as in a sense, the physical architecture is secondary to the vision and tenacity of those who brought it about; for whom the idea of the arts centre was as concrete and permanent as the cast bar the architect has designed for the main space. Those core unwavering qualities were there from the day a cellist first turned up in a hard hat and drew a note in a derelict chapel. ●



Above The new 120 seat auditorium offers state of the art theatre facilities.

Left Square Chapel arts centre looking west up Blackledge: box and terrace reinstate the line of the original street.

Client Trustees of Square Chapel

Architect Evans Vettori

Main contractor

Wildgoose Construction

Landscape and planning

consultant, landscape

Re-Form (Leeds)

Structural engineer/

M&E/lighting & acoustic

consultant Arup

QS/planning supervisor

Bernard Williams

Associates

Project manager Kier

Theatre consultant

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**009 (Enclosures, badlands and borders)**

Photograph David George

Words Jan-Carlos Kucharek

David George never imagined being a photographer. It was only when a bad motorbike accident left him out of action for months that he quit his job at an oil refinery to pursue a degree in fine art and photography. Before this, all he knew about the subject was that his father shot one roll of film on a Brownie camera on summer holidays and another at Christmas. But his old workplace must live on in his mind, merged in the formative influence of photographer Edward Weston and

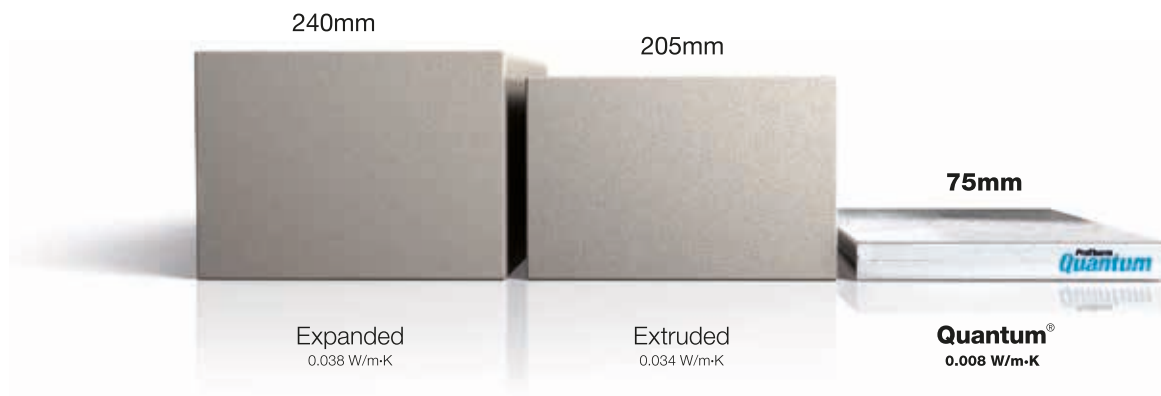
his epic depictions of the American landscape, its people – even its vegetables.

Before becoming famous, Weston spent all his money on film; apparently he only used food as a subject so he could eat it afterwards. It's a Calvinistic approach to the medium that has fed into George's own sparing use of shots, even when using digital cameras. His skill, gleaned from 20 years in the business, makes him selective; though he concedes that with today's technology, it doesn't take much skill to take a good photo. But it does take a lot to make a great one.

George won't be drawn on whether he sees this as a great photo; he'll only say that he

thinks the image is part of the ongoing narrative on the sublime in the English landscape, first defined in the 18th century by Edmund Burke. His memories of taking it are less so; a slightly drunken chat in a pub about a decommissioned power station in Kent leading to a late night stumble across the fields at 2am, and having to fight off territorial cows with his tripod. The painterly quality is evinced from the long exposure, making a distinction between the inanimate man-made and animate nature. But for the sublime, look to the strange, slow bleed of electric blue on the horizon; to this day the photographer is at a loss to account for its origin. ●

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Art and light soften this Cornish split

Jamie Fobert and Evans & Shalev form an odd couple at Tate St Ives, but the Atlantic light, and the art, make the relationship work

Words: Robert Bevan



'This is a town of tiny rooms,' observes Jamie Fobert of St Ives. He's standing in what must be the town's largest space by far – the 500m² gallery in his extension to Tate St Ives, which opened last month.

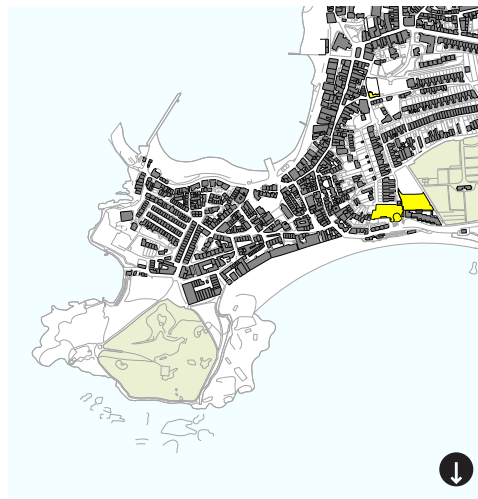
It has only arrived after more than a decade of kerfuffle with local residents who feared a massive architectural outcrop above the lichen-spattered slate roofs of the cottages that jigsaw down the hill to the harbour. At one stage the Tate considered moving its operation elsewhere in Cornwall because of the impasse.

The locals needn't have worried; two competitions and a land swap later Fobert's extension is barely visible unless you are paddling at low tide and look straight back up Porthmeor Beach.

Because the extension is hidden in a 9m deep slot cut out of the cliff and screened by a drab new block of sheltered housing flats by local practice Poynton Bradbury Wynter Cole, the view is still dominated by Evans & Shalev's curious amalgam of postmodernism and brutalism of 1993. Rough as a barnacle on the exterior and with a ferocious rotunda entrance, inside this dirty white, prickly structure are soothing gallery spaces arranged enfilade where baroque light washes

Opposite The new upper storey of Tate St Ives has emerged above Porthmeor Beach after a decade of wrangling.

Below Site map showing the museum's location in lime green.



down large covings from rooflights hidden along the margins of each room.

Fobert's is the second stage of the Tate St Ives' expansion; Evans & Shalev was also invited back to extend its own work in a highly successful project that opened at the end of March.

In the 20th century, St Ives was the locus of modernism in English art outside London. In a spirit of innovation and radicalism, Hepworth, Nicholson, Gabo and others settled in the fishing village from the 1940s onwards, continuing a tradition that stretches back via the celebrated ceramicist Bernard Leach to the 19th century. On the St Ives peninsula big skies and surrounding seas bounce the soft Atlantic light in all directions.

Seeking to safeguard this heritage, the Tate acquired Barbara Hepworth's nearby studio and sculpture garden in 1976 after Hepworth burned to death smoking in bed, and in 1984 held a competition for a new gallery for contemporary work that was won by Eldred Evans and her partner David Shalev.

Evans' early career included working and playing with James Stirling and being described as the 'brightest student at Yale' by fellow student Richard Rogers, but her modernist work was largely unrealised or



Exterior visualisation showing the entire Tate St Ives redevelopment, including sheltered housing and the green roof over the new galleries.

Large rooflights which protrude out of a landscaped roof bring light into the new Jamie Fobert Architect-designed galleries below.



was demolished. She may well reject the postmodern label but that's precisely what her comeback pieces – the law courts at Truro and Tate St Ives – were, even if here on the coast this is expressed as classically derived severe geometries rather than funny finials and, as mentioned above, somewhat brutal with it.

The massive entrance drum with its coffered soffit was inspired by the rotunda at the National Museum of Wales and also recalls the town gasworks that once stood on the St Ives site. From angles where the drum doesn't dominate, the gallery's volume successfully mediates between the cottage grain of the lower town and the 19th century villas on the clifftop.

The practice's new work begins immediately after the rotunda, shifting the reception back a room so it now sits opposite Patrick Heron's immense stained glass window. This is the beginning of the gallery's picturesque internal route up the cliff face (the severe level changes had to be tackled either outside or in) via a series of lobbies, half landings, windows to the ocean, and an elaborate, meandering, staircase that in its ladder detail has something of the Mackintosh about it.

Many of these spaces have now been refurbished and will hold the permanent collection that tells the chronological story of St Ives art from the 19th century onwards. Grey paint and the subtle wash of St Ives light punctuated by sharp cornices and architraves are a handsome frame for one of the country's most vital art traditions, while the upper levels of the rotunda offer two dress circles for larger works from the 1960s and '70s.

Evans & Shalev's boldest intervention in its own work was infilling a light well to create a stack of new learning spaces. This insertion is topped by the Clore Sky Studio, a semi-circular learning space at the top of the building which gives on to a roof terrace and has a conical slate roof topped by a lantern. From the outside it looks like a vernacular move that embeds the addition more positively in the townscape, but from within the white space appears to have a vague sectional relationship to Stirling's Venice Biennale bookshop.

The art gallery was recently included in the Twentieth Century Society's 100 Buildings 100 Years celebration and will no doubt be a tentative candidate for listing soon.

Before that happens, further changes to the entrance sequence would be beneficial, including removing the bin stores from along a grubby fin wall which is your first physical encounter with the building when arriving from beach level.

While Evans & Shalev was revisiting its earlier work, Fobert was refining his extension. The first version involved a dramatic staircase contained in a blade leading up to the new gallery wing on a former car park on the clifftop. Cornwall council's purchase of the site allowed it to be altered. Some social housing units were demolished and the sheltered housing block constructed, freeing up an area directly adjacent to the Evans & Shalev enfilade – once 900 or so truckloads of granite had been chiselled away.

Fobert's second version of his gallery (for which he had to hurdle another competition) is now the crescendo after the small rooms of the enfilade. A limed oak portal with a horizontal emphasis makes you duck before you enter the heightened scale of this new wing, a vast raw concrete room built into the cliff. An inspiration was Sverre Fehn's Nordic Pavilion at Venice, expressed here in the concrete beams that span the space. But whereas

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Fehn's building is flooded with light, here it is carefully controlled: six whopping concrete lanterns up to 4m in height are located above the 1.2m deep beams that are themselves 5.5m above the concrete floor.

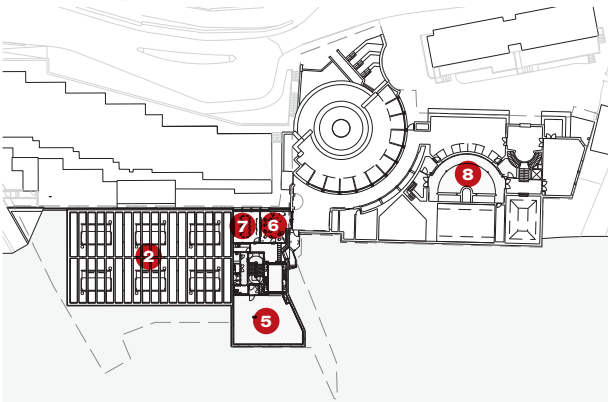
Externally these rooflights (and the north wall of the gallery where an alarming gouge in the slope separates gallery from neighbouring housing) are clad with granite blocks and they create volumes in a landscaped area that echo the stone chapel in the graveyard next door.

Working with environmental engineer Max Fordham, Fobert's aim was to capture and filter southern light without it hitting the walls. According to Fobert's recounting, Fordham thinks that designing art galleries with north light was 'the biggest mistake of the 20th century'. North light is perfect for creating art, reckons Fordham, but too cool and blue for viewing it.

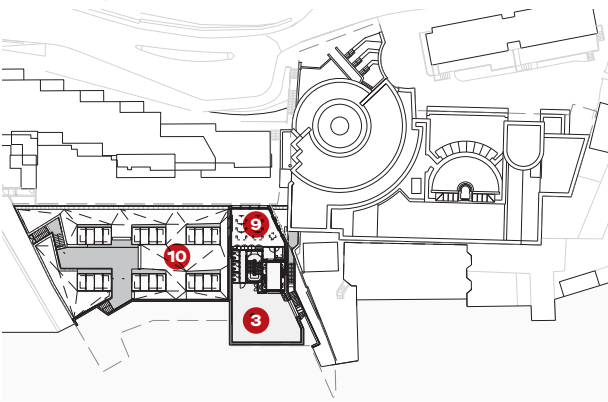
The natural light is most welcome in the face of the trend for many galleries to be windowless in order to allow for as many different art media as possible – an approach recently taken to the extreme in Thomas



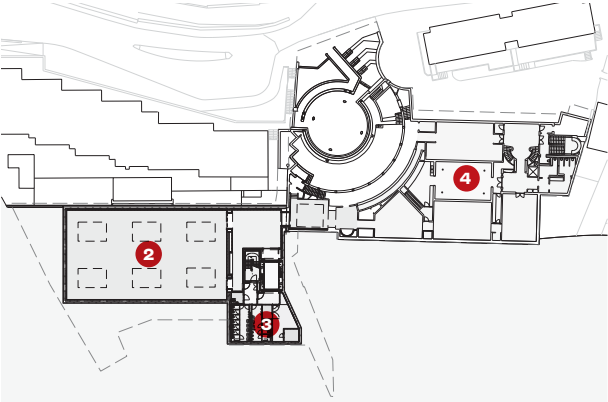
Fourth floor plan



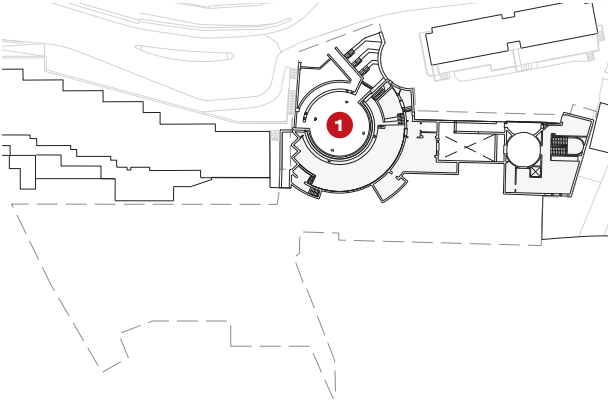
Fifth floor plan



Third floor plan



Second floor plan



Above The protruding granite-clad rooflight volumes could be small chapels linked to the graveyard next door.

- 1 Lobby
- 2 Gallery
- 3 Plant
- 4 Foyle Studio
- 5 Art prep room
- 6 Staff room
- 7 Meeting room
- 8 Clore Sky Studio
- 9 Office
- 10 Roofscape





TOPS ON TOP

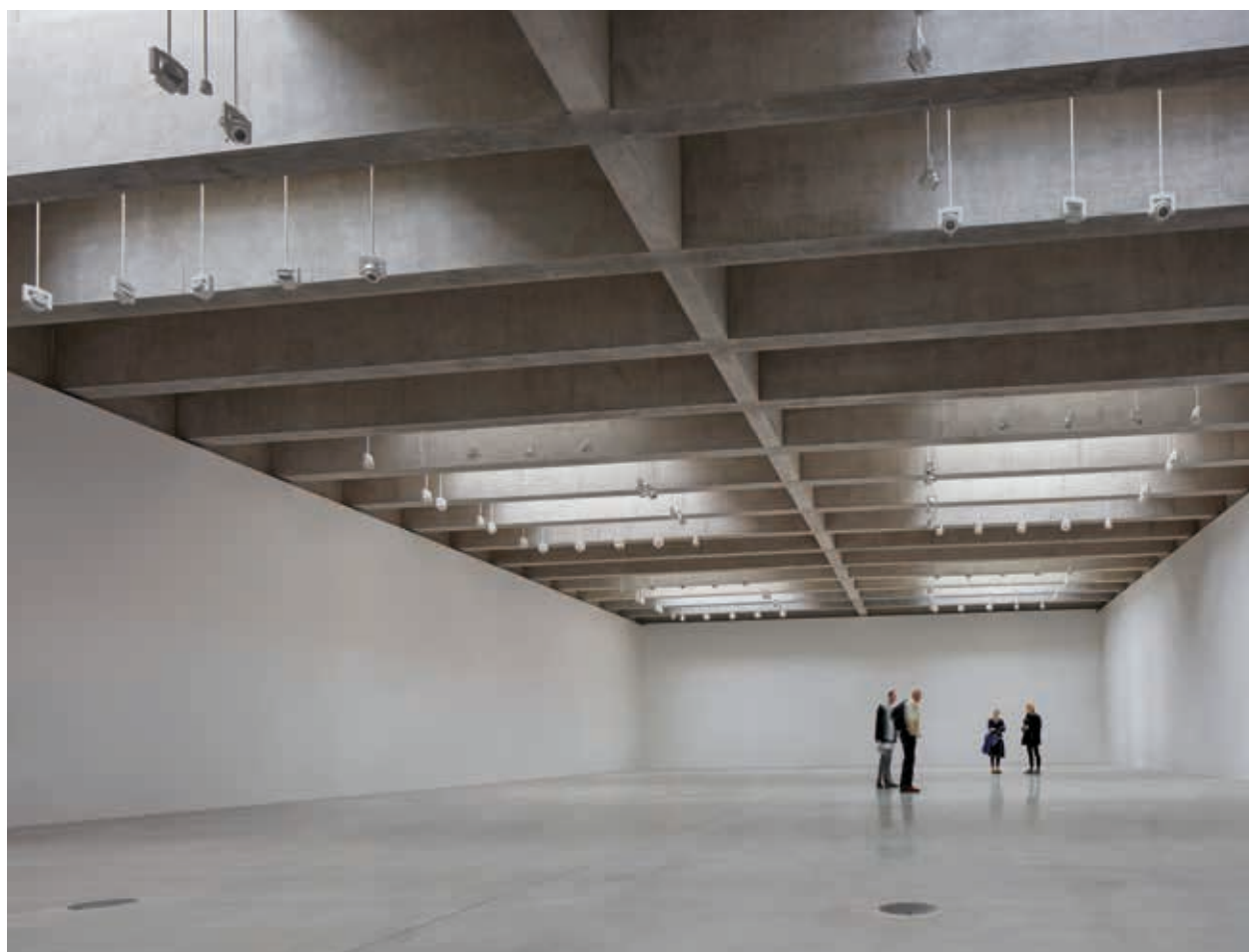
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DENNIS GILBERT

IN NUMBERS

1,325m²

Total building area

500m²

Main gallery

2012

Architect's appointment

2017

Project completion

Credits

Architects Jamie Fobert Architects and Evans & Shalev**Client** Tate**Structural engineer** Price and Myers**Services engineer** Max Fordham**Landscape** Jamie Fobert Architects with Rathbone Partnership**Construction** BAM**Project management** Currie and Brown**Faience** Froyles Tiles**Granite** De Lank Quarry**Concrete** Thames Valley Construction

Heatherwick's claustrophobic gallery spaces at Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town.

'The light is the reason artists came to St Ives in the first place,' says Fobert.

Even so, having the daylight pool at the centre rather than continuing the margin wash of the Evans & Shalev spaces emphasises the discontinuity in character between old and new wings. There has been little attempt either inside and out to unify the two and they physically connect for only a 4m wide strip.

Fobert's gallery can be subdivided in multiple ways with temporary walls that bracket to fixing points on the beams, but for the opening show of Rebecca Warren's sculptures it is used as one large volume.

A vital contribution of the new wing, and the second reason for expansion beyond the gallery's burgeoning visitor numbers, is improved art handling.

Before Fobert's addition, only smaller art works could easily be handled which limited the type of contemporary additions. Now a ceramic clad turret acts as a hinge between

Above The interior of the new 500m² submerged gallery.

The different approaches to lighting emphasise the discontinuity between the two wings

the new gallery and the older building. It houses a large lift that descends to the gallery floors from a get-in at clifftop level, plus offices and a staff room.

Concrete lined internally, on the outside the turret is covered in stacked, overlapped tiles between anodised aluminium verticals. The tiles are a delicately misty blue-green whose appearance changes with the weather. Initially, when seen from Porthmeor Beach, it appears an overly strong gesture, but it grows on you. From the town side, all that's visible is a small pavilion and the giant folding doors of the get-in at the end of the car park.

Evans & Shalev's approach is almost the inverse of Fobert's – the former uncompromising on the outside, almost gentle within, while Fobert combines external reticence with a statement interior. The first suits the historic artworks well, the second is right for the contemporary ones. While this makes for slightly 'odd couple' arrangement, it is one that works because the light and art are at the heart of the relationship. ●

The living is easy

Gira technology helps make state of the art living in Fitzrovia's Artisan complex



Although located in the heart of London, Fitzrovia is the polar opposite of the neighbouring West End with its thriving business life. This unconventional district is known for its lively art scene, and has always held a fascination for famous personalities, for example Virginia Woolf, George Bernard Shaw and Arthur Rimbaud. Even today, poets, designers and musicians are drawn to its many bars, pubs, and concert venues, and it is also widely known for its traditional handicrafts. There is no better place in the whole of London to combine business with pleasure, inspiration with relaxation. In 2016 The Sunday Times even bestowed Fitzrovia with the honour of being London's most liveable district.

In the heart of Fitzrovia, London project developer Dukelease has transformed six buildings into 13 luxurious apartments and penthouses. Various retail units are also housed on the ground floors. The result is the Artisan complex on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Goodge Street. The name refers to the district's tradition for handicrafts, which became a planning guide for the conversions. The goal was to maintain the look of the existing buildings, while

Left The Gira KNX system can be controlled using Gira touch sensors and iPads that are attached as wall panels.

Right In the heart of London, project developer Dukelease has renovated six buildings, transforming them into 13 luxurious apartments and penthouses.

Below right Residents can control and view the technology via the special interface design, and play music using a multi-room system.

creating modern and exclusive interiors. This has led to a visually stimulating contrast: uniquely contemporary architecture which does not deny its historical roots and urban planning context.

Some of the unit interiors were designed by London architect Rolfe Judd. Spacious apartments and exclusive penthouses with high-end equipment have been created. This is apparent in the materials used and in the exquisite kitchen and bathroom furnishings. The decision to equip apartments with the most modern building technology – a KNX system from Gira – went without saying.

From the start, Dukelease was clear that the prestigious project should combine living comfort with security and energy efficiency. Through Gira's 'Great Britain' branch, contact was made with Rolfe Judd by key account manager UK, Muir Baxter. A KNX system was installed in several of the Artisan apartments. For over 25 years, this system has been the internationally recognised standard for a wired bus system. With KNX, a control line is laid alongside the power supply. The cable forms the electronic network through which the control commands are sent.

Gira touch sensors have to be installed instead of traditional switches. The sensors make a building intelligent, because they send the commands to, say, the lights and blinds. In this way, different lights can be bundled into light scenes, which are activated with just a fingertip. Or the blinds can be controlled automatically, using a time schedule that has been saved beforehand and which takes into account weekends and holidays. As well as classical switches and sockets, the Gira touch sensors were realised



HUFTON+GROW



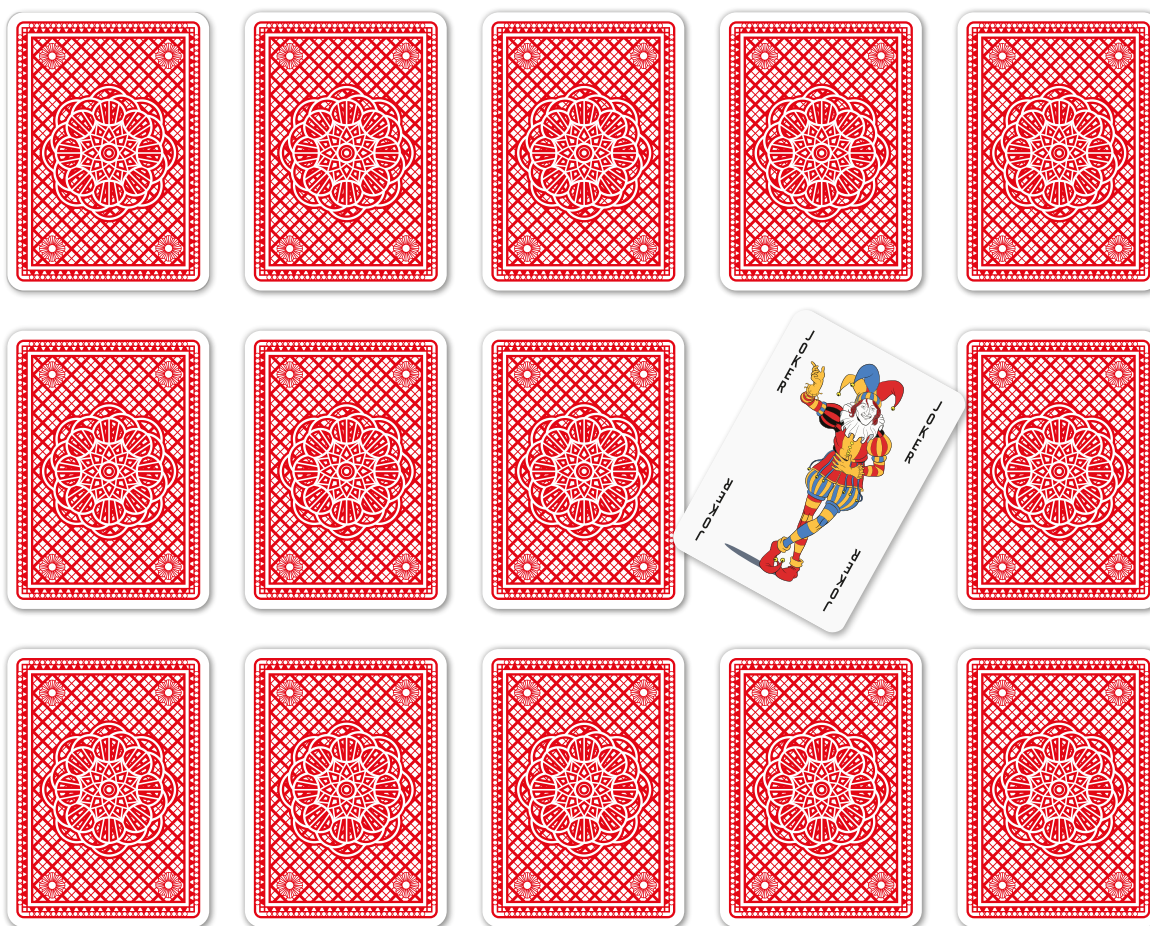
in the design line Gira E22 in aluminium, which is mounted flat on the walls.

Also used in the Artisan complex is the Gira Homeserver, which guarantees even more living comfort and security. The HomeServer allows, for example, the visualisation of the building technology using a special interface that can be accessed via an iPad. Not only can residents control the smart home functions, they can also view and check them. An integrated multiroom system enables music to be played as well. The technology was installed by London's smart home specialist Sagar Smart Homes. ●

www.gira.com/uk

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Adagio on Eastside

Birmingham Conservatoire, designed by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, brings a chunk of much-needed quality architecture to the city's Eastside

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Hufton + Crow

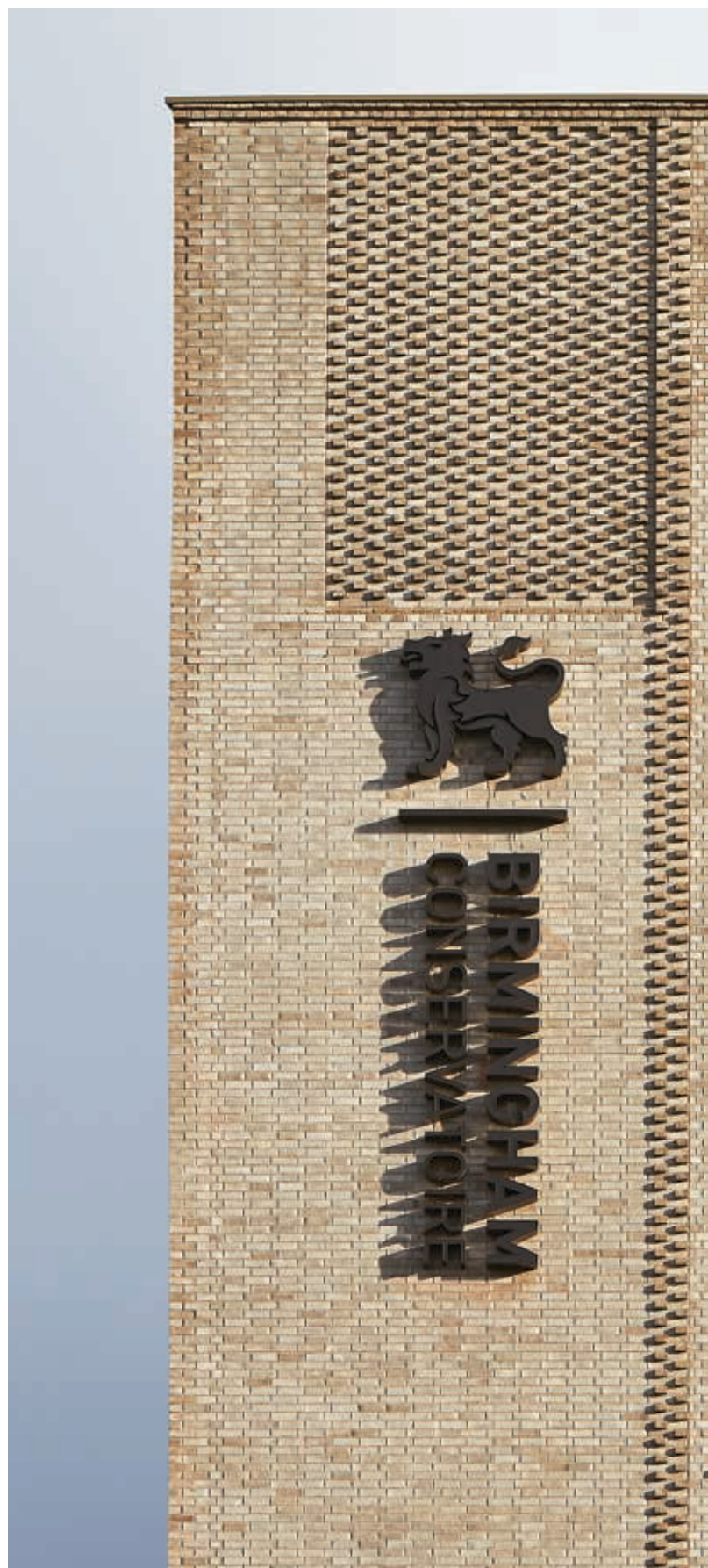


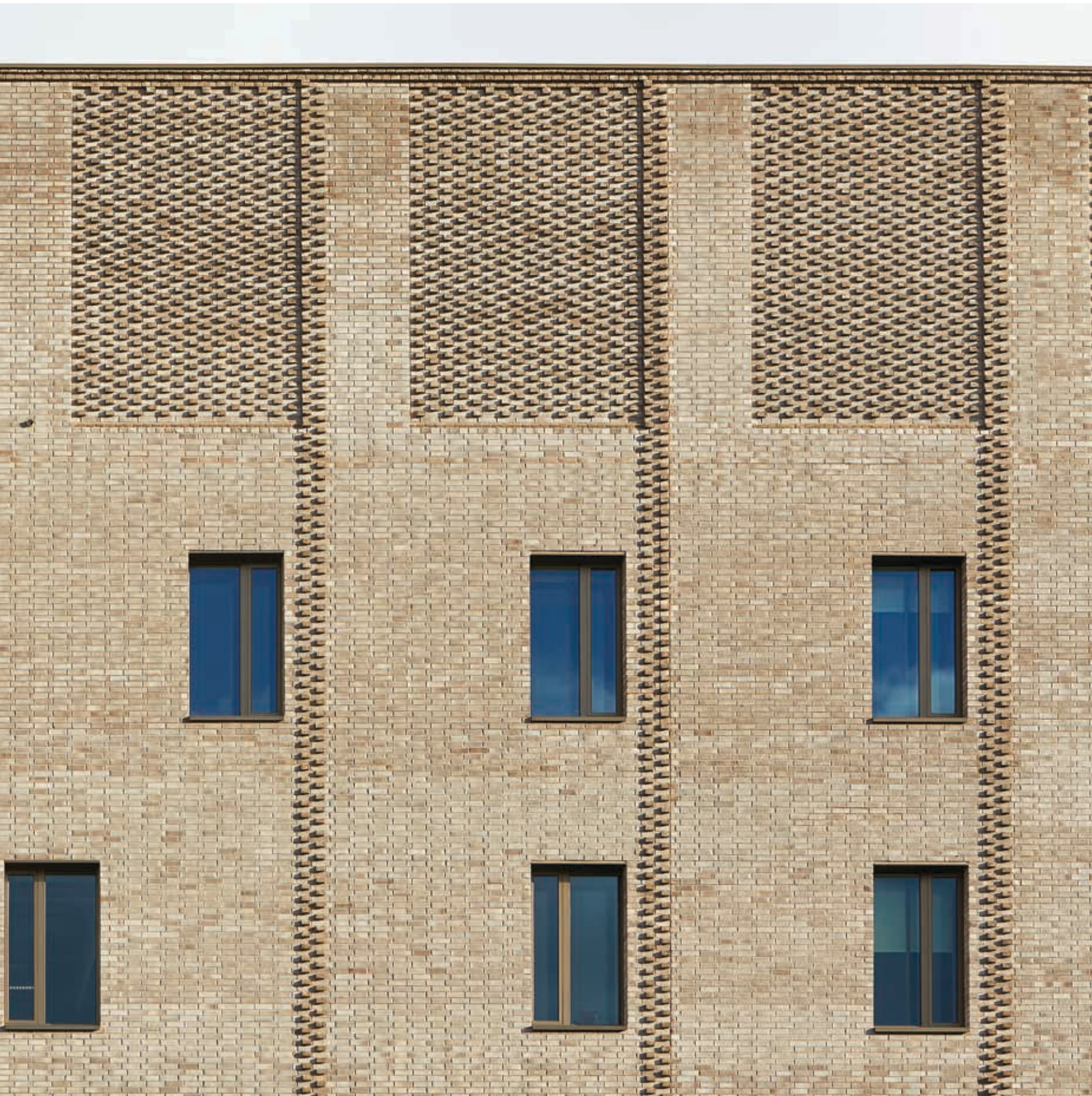
Like city centre approach roads across the UK, Jennens Road in Birmingham is full of large, cheap, shouty blocks with a panelised inhumanity that is acceptable only when viewed from the equally invidious position of a traffic jam. Attempts to break up the mass with nominal attic extensions or different types of panel layered on something rather similar seem destined to fail, the materiality is just not convincing. Any density gains from five or ten storey blocks are lost to car parking and dual carriageway.

When I saw the early visualisations of Feilden Clegg

Above The Conservatoire presents an unapologetic volume to the dual carriageway.

Right The bricks' tactility and warmth when you are up close is belied by the restrained approach to articulation, but their added depth and shadow work well in this city context.





It's all in the shadow and detail and suggestion. Jarman thinks of it as an 'urban castle'

Bradley Studios' designs for the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire facing Jennens Road in Eastside I understood the critical reaction in the city. The blank red brick facades looked harsh, a reminder of the concrete brutalism of the ring road and Bullring that the city was working hard to soften. In response, partner Tom Jarman went back to them with a softer buff brick and a design of rhythmic vertical lines of protruding perpendes that visually anchor occasional windows while giving some sense of articulation, or maybe even decoration. It's all in the shadow and detail and suggestion. Jarman thinks of it as an 'urban castle'. Though the cognoscenti might view this sort of brick and detail as unimaginative, it is done subtly and well. Seen against Jennens Road – or even the back of its neighbour, Grimshaw's Millennium Point – it looks like a work of genius. Having seen how it is handled one might even revisit fears of a 'blank' Birmingham red stock brick facade and see how it could have drawn out echoes of the city's not-so-distant great edifices.

But how did the conservatoire come to be stuck out on the edge of Eastside? Navigate the remnants of John Madin's Birmingham Library on the other side of the centre and you may still see the signs promising that the Conservatoire is open there – pointing to dingy stairs in a concrete undercroft that even bright geometric signs can't quite cheer up so close to a building site. Argent's development Paradise is taking over this part of the city, first with hoardings and cranes, then with 1.8 million square feet of offices. The International Convention Centre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre are sitting out the development alongside Mecanoo's city library. The Conservatoire, one of the elite group of music teaching colleges, recently awarded a coveted royal title, has been brought into Birmingham City University, thus its triangular plot on Eastside where the university is rapidly expanding its campus.

This has been an area in flux for some time. Many plans have been put on hold by the long gestation of HS2, which would cut through it and come to rest at the



Right Do we see here the influence of the Smithsons' conglomerate ordering?



Paul Winch Furness. Source D&D London

Traditional style outside. Exceptional performance inside.

When converting a Listed C19th gym into a restaurant for the King's Cross Central Limited Partnership, architect Allies and Morrison found that the Janisol Arte steel renovation window from Schueco Jansen delivered the perfect combination of appearance and performance. With narrow face-widths of just 25 mm or 40 mm, a wide range of opening types, multi-point locking and U_w values from $0.8 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$, Janisol Arte is also soon to be available in stainless steel and Corten steel. www.schueco.co.uk

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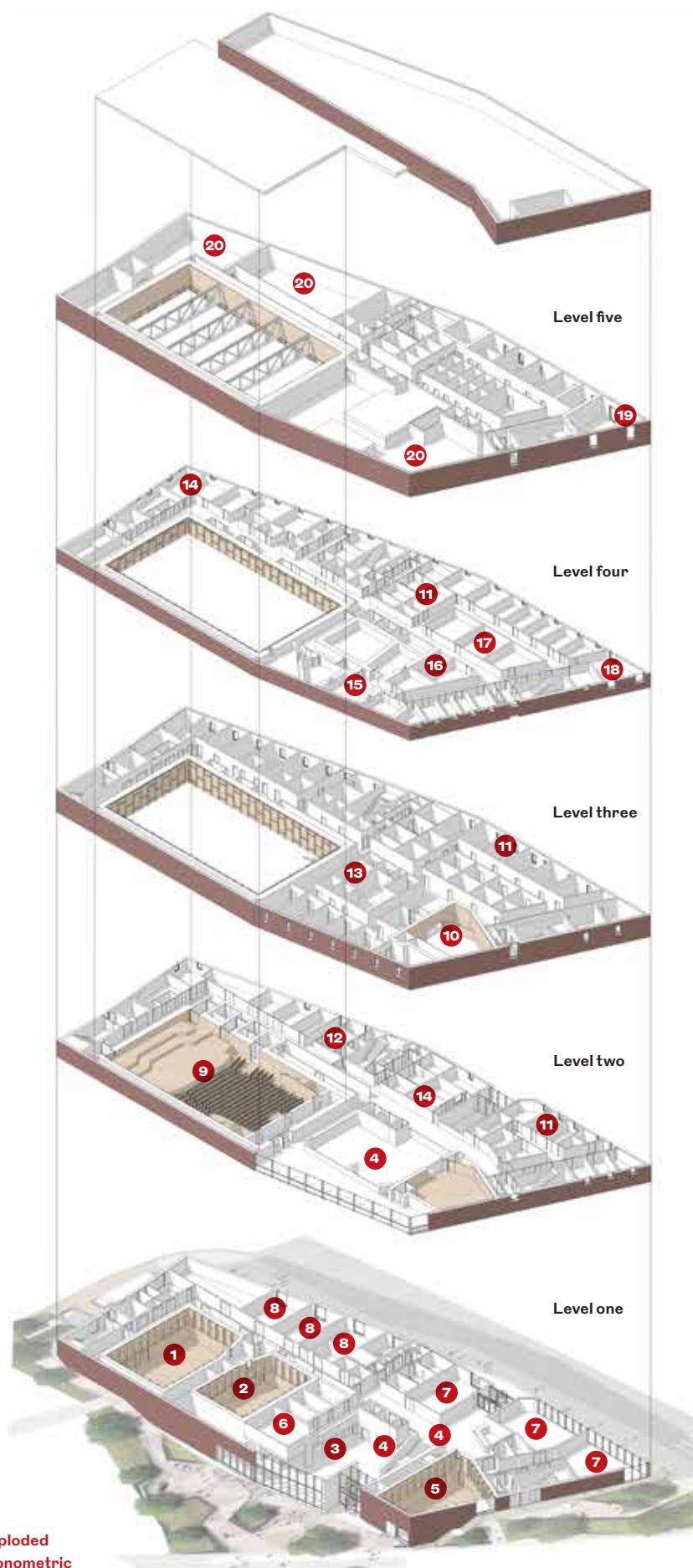
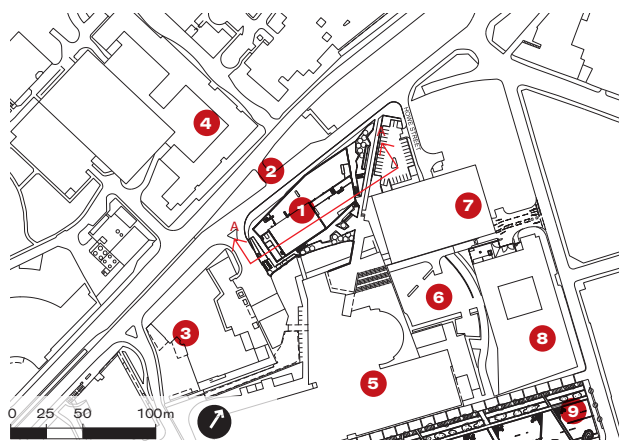
He perches at the piano and drops into a piece you feel he has wanted to play in these spaces for some time

old Curzon Street Station. However, the city invested, with some foresight, in Eastside City Park, an intense and well used park designed by Patel Taylor which holds a great sense of city promise. Getting to it from the Conservatoire involves a convoluted set of level changes through Millennium Point or a car park.

This sloping site – with its 3m drop – also defines the lower storeys of the building. Enter from Jennens Road and the building is set out before you, reaching up to the concert hall one way and stepping down the other to a lower route to Eastside through a convivial café in a double height space with chamber recital hall off it. The foyer has the polite spaciousness of the best concert hall foyers, a backdrop that will come alive with the warmth of audience anticipation and, more often here, of music students. The working atrium allows watching and participation. An organ studio is designed with the focus of a chapel while black box studios add an extra dimension to what the conservatoire can offer. Tucked away in a corner, almost in a basement and with quite a different character, is the conservatoire's very own Eastside Jazz Club, where leaning on a bar for a smoky evening mesmerised by the piano seems all too natural.

Project architect Colin Cobb was hearing these spaces even as he was perfecting their technical details, visiting recording studios and collaborating with the acousticians. As we walk round he perches at the piano and drops into a piece that you feel he has been wanting to play in these spaces for some time. The recital hall is the least remarkable of the performance spaces, part rehearsal room for the main concert hall above, part flexible space with bleacher seating ready to roll aside.

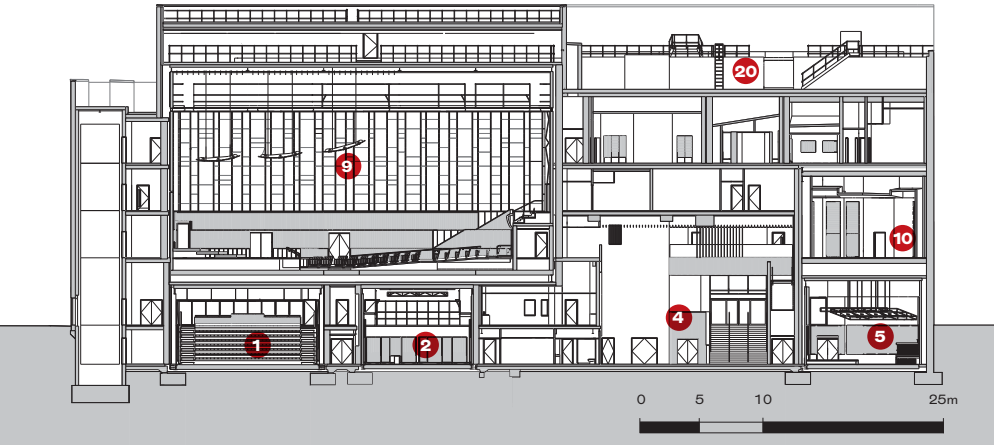
Location plan



Exploded axonometric and section

- 1 Recital hall
- 2 The lab
- 3 Bar
- 4 Entrance foyer
- 5 Eastside Jazz Club
- 6 Production office
- 7 Workshop/lecture space
- 8 Chamber music room
- 9 Concert hall
- 10 Organ studio
- 11 Practice room
- 12 Soloist room
- 13 Reed making room
- 14 Ensemble practice room
- 15 Live room
- 16 Edit suite
- 17 Music technology computer lab
- 18 Jazz practice room
- 19 Percussion room
- 20 Plant

Section AA



Below Birmingham Conservatoire is a very different sort of building for this road feeding into the city centre.

Location plan (opposite)

- 1 Conservatoire
- 2 Jennens Road
- 3 Ormiston Academy
- 4 Student accommodation
- 5 Millennium Point
- 6 Cinema square
- 7 Multi-storey car park
- 8 BCU Parkside building
- 9 Eastside City Park



But as Cobb picks up the rhythmic pace on Nils Frahm's Hammers the room expands and stretches – the sound flexing then concentrating the mind.

There is no such performance on the main stage where conservatoire principal Julian Lloyd-Webber is leading a tour. Instead Professor Lamberto Coccioli, architect-trained but here head of music technology and client lead through the project, takes over the controls and demonstrates the concert hall in its many, differently lit, guises. The lights show it as rather beautiful with its bowing zigs and zags of panels above a tripartite plinth of end-on ply. As this is a place of teaching above performance, the 191m² stage is designed to take an orchestra of 120, while it seats an audience of just 493. This wouldn't make


IN NUMBERS

£42.5m
construction cost

£4,106
gifa cost per m²

10,350m²
area



Above The chapel-like organ studio.

Left From the south entrance up into the building the stepping up of the site is embodied in the building. Screens and timber give an interesting level of modulation.



Above Recital hall and rehearsal space.

Right Lighting picks out the different strata in the room.

commercial sense (though some of the staging can be removed to allow an extra 53 seats) but will likely make full scale performances very powerful. This is the driving generator of form and structure for the whole conservatoire, the 800m³ volume and acoustic box-in-a-box required for the best performance – inevitably leaving some rather blank walls which are partially compensated for by the texture of the bricks.

There are practice rooms on every floor. Beyond level two, where there is no longer an excuse for larger performance spaces and the circulation that goes with that, they feel rather like they close in on you. But these cellular spaces are necessary for the 650 students who need to perfect their art with six or more hours of practice a day – much of the teaching in one to one classes. The previous building had an 80% occupancy rate, this one has an extra 25 practice rooms – most with opening windows, a recognition of the exertion that goes into playing an instrument, though the university rule is to avoid opening windows. And though they might look similar, different types of instrument did demand different designs – brass and percussion, for example,

Brass and percussion practice rooms are set up on the fifth floor with a very thick floor slab insulating the rooms below

being set up on the fifth floor with a very thick floor slab insulating the rooms below.

The conservatoire is a strange hybrid of a cultural building and a higher education one. The £42.5 million project came in at a budget of £4,106/m². There were savings: for example the stairs to the first floor will seem narrow when there is an audience and there were cuts elsewhere. The target cost was originally lower, pegged on build costs in the education sector, but there was recognition by the client that acoustics and the huge volumes of the concert hall required more money if this was to be a world class conservatoire. But the contribution of this building to the site is equally important and starts the process of investing Eastside with a much-needed sense of permanence and solidity. ●



Credits

Architect Feilden Clegg

Bradley Studios

Client Birmingham City University

Main contractor

Galliford Try

Structural/civil engineer

White Young Green

M&E/cost consultant

Hoare Lea

Landscape Planit-ie

Acoustics Hoare Lea

Project manager

BCU In-house PM

Theatre consultant

Charcoalblue

My MacEwen: Copenhagen Street Food, Christiansholm

This year's MacEwen Award winner Ayre Chamberlain Gaunt finds inspiration in an example of architecture for the common good in Denmark



ACG (2)

There is something refreshingly simple about ordering food from a market and eating alfresco; white polystyrene trays overfilled with a local seafood risotto, or maybe a napkin-wrapped ostrich burger and sweet potato fries. Why not then perch inside a modified shipping container to watch life unfold in one of the most dynamic cities in the world? A meeting place, an area to explore, a space to eat, to drink, to refresh; a terrace from which to gaze, a shelter from the rain, a chair from which to soak up some sun.

Copenhagen Street Food, an eclectic collection of 39 food stalls, hot food vans, containers and bars, occupies one of several former newsprint storage buildings on Christiansholm, an artificial island in Copenhagen harbour. When the Danish press moved out, a number of lofty concrete framed warehouses were left vacant, and these have since become homes for everything from a contemporary art gallery to a studio for a fashion designer and the creatives who favour industrial chic, in this case the architectural practice COBE.

Christiansholm, or Paper Island as it is often called, enjoys a prominent position alongside the harbour with panoramic views across to Lundgaard & Tranberg's Royal Playhouse and the neighbouring Opera House by Henning Larsen. Although previously cut off



from the rest of the city, a recently built footbridge has helped transform this area into an energised urban destination.

Run by its own association, Copenhagen Street Food is a fantastic example of creative reuse. It has a bustling street environment that welcomes people inside historic industrial warehouses and establishes a unique and versatile setting. The buildings, in their new lease of life, provide a backdrop to the varying activities that unfold. This is architecture in its simple, raw state.

The tenants are here on a temporary basis while an ambitious masterplan for the area is finalised, but one hopes the new proposals don't lose the spirit of what has made these spaces so special. ●

Left and below Repurposing an empty warehouse for a succesful interim use: street food.



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anything else is just concrete



Homes

None of our examples of houses and housing on the following pages could be described as conventional. You think you know what a barn conversion looks like? Think again at Cob Corner, an example of 'slow architecture' which toggles between solid and void and which, in its juxtaposition of honest repair and newbuild, would surely have satisfied the founders of SPAB. Or take the extraordinary Caring Wood in Kent, a complete newbuild, where families gather to play in an abstracted and beautifully-made homage to the oast houses and tile-hanging of the Weald.

While we're on rural references, an utterly different example is provided by the Newhouse of Auchengree in North Ayrshire, which combines local forms with the no less honest vernacular of the metal farm shed – while end on (see our cover) it is almost a child's symbol of a home, a piece on the Monopoly board.

Our other examples are in town, though in the case of the Black House in Hackney – an example of lightweight timber-framed prefabrication perched on top of an existing building – one can perfectly easily imagine it demounted and trucked to a clifftop, say,

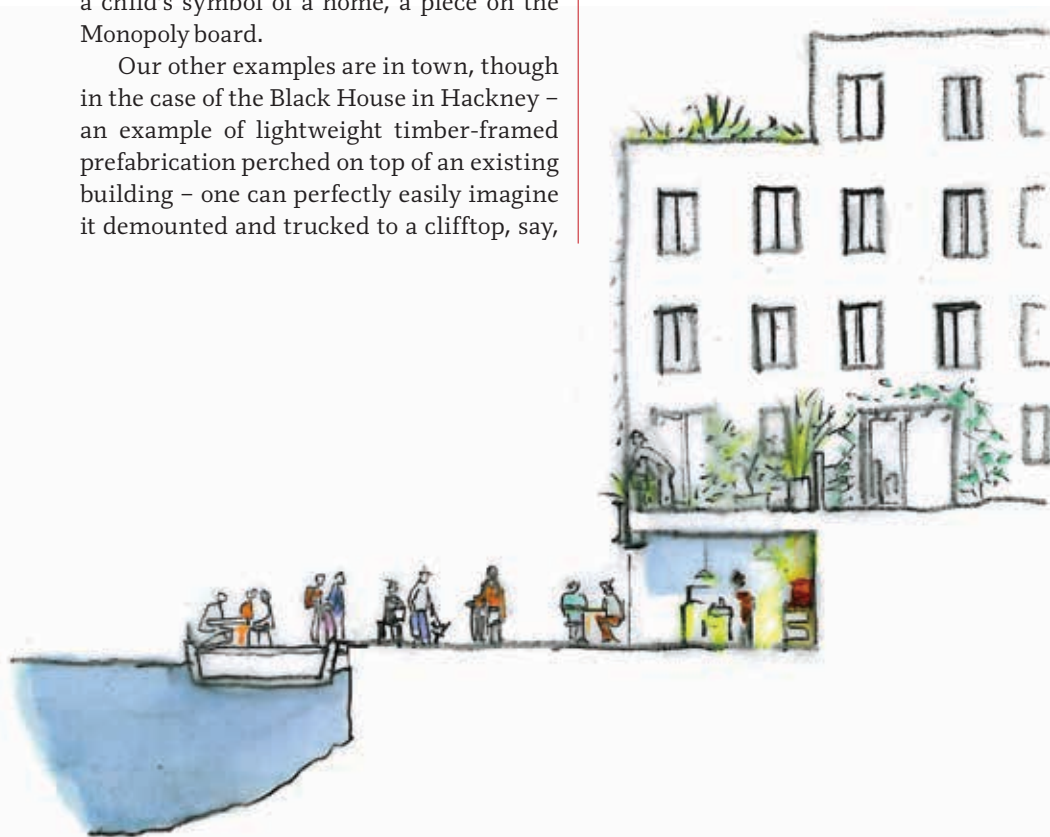
Now perched on top of an existing building, one can easily imagine it demounted and trucked to a clifftop, say, gazing out to sea

gazing out to sea. Not so, however, for our examples of 'batch housing' – that interesting area occupying the space between the one-off house and volume building. If the Malings at Ouseburn on the edge of Newcastle-upon-Tyne is a significantly large and high-density example of this genre, it has nonetheless, by design, the feel of a tight local community. Meanwhile Moray Mews in the Finsbury Park district of north London is an object lesson in delicate densification, inserting a strip-terrace of new homes into what is just about the narrowest, most confined site imaginable for such a development.

Three of the one-off homes here – Cob Corner, Caring Wood and Auchengree – are on the 20-strong longlist for the RIBA House of the Year Award, always one of the most popular and widely-publicised of the RIBA's awards, not least through its associated four-part television series presented by Kevin 'Grand Designs' McCloud. The shortlist, and eventually the winner, will be revealed episode by episode from the start of November. Houses are architecture's way into the public's affection. And if you can design a good house, you can design a good anything. ●

Above Section through the building and landscape of Caring Wood, page 48.

Left On the banks of Newcastle's Ouseburn, a new community, The Malings, page 74.



Mind the gaps

David Sheppard's home and studio is defined by the spaces between and above the old barn walls

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Joakim Borén

A steady sun warms the stones, sweetening the raspberries, drying meadow grasses. Cob Corner faces into it, patterns of deep wooden louvres turning the house into criss-crosses of light. Architect David Sheppard would love to design his own new home from scratch, by the sea. Here, for his home and studio in this inland corner of Devon, he inherited cob walls, the massing of barns, a rushing leat on their edge and the corner of a shallow valley.

But he actively chose these conditions

– taking a risk on the site even after others had been refused planning under a regime that prohibited more than a 10% rebuilding of barns.

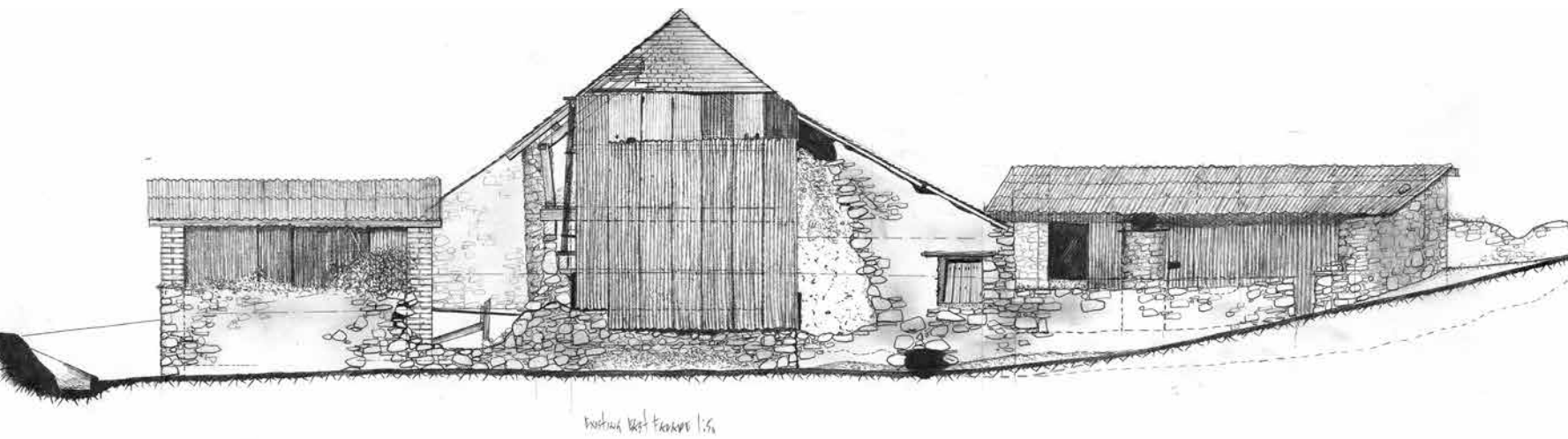
Sheppard put down a hefty deposit and agreed an option to buy from the farmer, if he got permission, then set about building a case that he was merely filling in the gaps between the barns' dilapidated walls with glass. Not really wanting a glass home, he bought 250, 40mm thick, hardwood panels, previously

Below The three volumes of the original barns are still visible in the rebuilt Cob Corner.

used for stacking engine mountings, from a salvage yard and these layer the glass, acting as a foreground to the valley landscape.

The three segments of the old barns maintain a certain separation: a studio and courtyard; the main barn volume with kitchen below and living room above, both defined by the lumps and bumps of the cob wall; and to the side cellular spaces of small bedrooms. The crux between living and sleeping is a staircase of green oak, still massive though





Above and below The barns in the dilapidated state they were when Sheppard bought them.

Left An intimate corridor to the bedrooms.

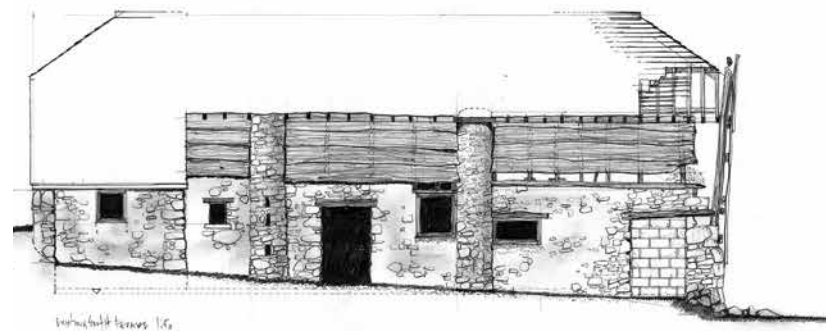


it has shrunk into place over the 15 years that this house has been in the making.

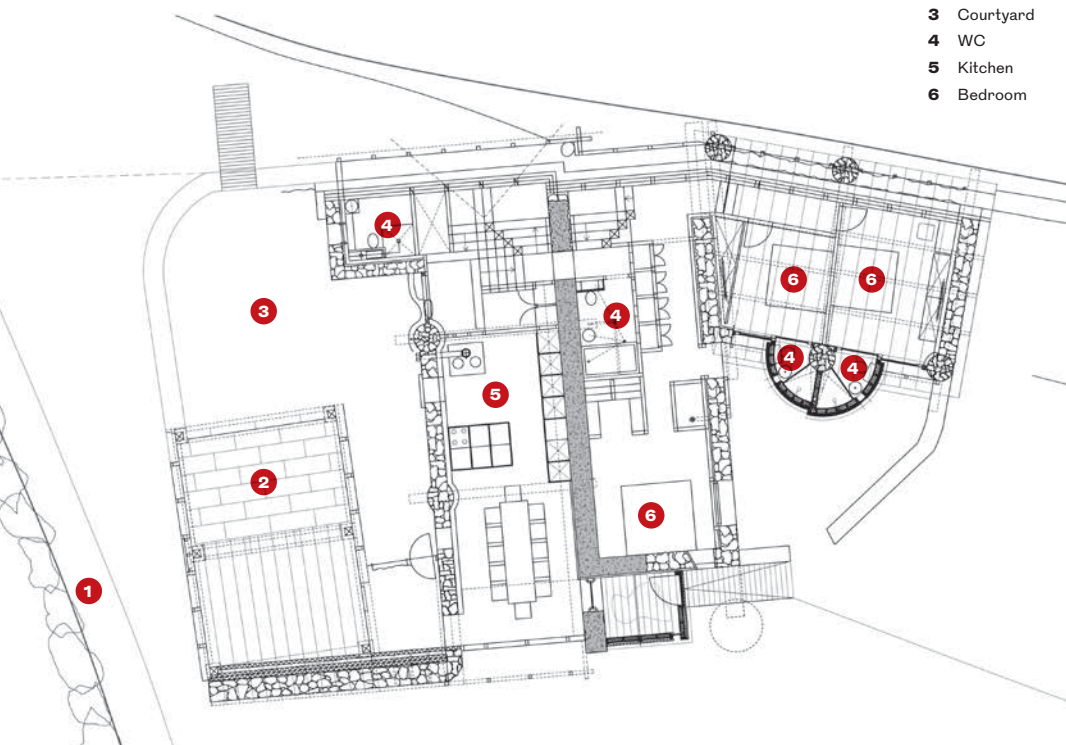
Repairs were in keeping but, like much in this house, expressive detail and the story of the making is kept visible. Perhaps this was easier as Sheppard's brother was the carpenter in the early stages. Pegs securing the beams project rather than being sawn flush, and cross beams were added to the A frame in green oak to bolster the roof over the living room. This is craft hi-tech.

Cob Corner is a very solid house, with its river stone and cob walls, slate roof and wooden floors taking over from crumbling breeze blocks and rusty corrugated iron. Yet what marks it out are the gaps, the skipping syncopation of the timber louvres to the front of the house, the slim lines of glass delineating the panels of the studio walls, the spaces between shrunken green oak posts.

There are unexpected holes in walls, windows to the lane at ground level alongside the bedrooms and huge sliding doors and slatted hinged panels where the hay would have been loaded into the loft – now allowing the manoeuvring of a grand piano or Christmas tree into the first floor living room. The



Ground floor plan



- 1 Leat
- 2 Studio
- 3 Courtyard
- 4 WC
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Bedroom

What marks
Cob Corner
out is the gaps

Right Pivot door and
pivot shutters.

Below From the lane the
house is visibly dug into
the slope. Much of the
end wall can be opened
up, as it would have been
when a linhay barn.



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Left The elevated living room takes advantage of beautiful roof trusses, new and old.

Credits
Carpenter
 Terry Sheppard
Structural engineer
 Chadwick Associates
Lighting consultant
 ERCO
Plumbing and heating
 Andy Plumber
Landscape
 Mike Westley, initial
 concept design
Boot room and
Bathrooms Sherwell
 Valley Builders
Green oak
 Sherberton Farm,
 Dartmoor

Over time they have made small additions using permitted development

panels on the studio open onto the courtyard or close the building right down. The gappiest gap of all is the way the floors are pulled back from the cob wall at first floor level so that only the rafters visibly meet the wall, a reference to how stored hay used to be pushed over such an edge to animals below. These elements add a complexity that such a hand-made building might miss out on in the logic of construction.

The marks of a loved home, with inventive detail, are visible in the sliced column of grinding stone making steps into the courtyard and the cross-section of tree trunk that pivots to cover the loo window for privacy.

Over time Sheppard and his wife have made other changes – interestingly, using permitted development for small additions that would probably not have got through in the original planning permission. One is the boot room and porch, which insulates the kitchen from draughts and damp coats, its glass roof cutting apparently unfeasibly into the stone wall (the 100mm seal helps). A semi-circular drum of vertical black-stained timber on the front of the bedroom wing has given two bedrooms their own showers. A switch of the sliding doors means French windows have become bathroom doors and a fixed panel looking onto the raspberry bed – though what sounds simple was obviously a complex combination of screws, sliders and rehanging so as not to waste this investment in good doors.

The green of the fields, visible from much of the house, is a reminder that water is as essential as sun to this agricultural landscape. No matter the weather you enter under an outsized lead gutter, which has its parallel in the leat at the other side of the house, and somehow embeds you in its landscape of the Erme Valley. ●

Left Sheppard's studio can be opened up or closed down depending on weather, privacy and occupation.



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Case study

Queen's Wharf, a development by Mount Anvil, consists of 165 riverside apartments on the Surrey Bend of the River Thames in Hammersmith. This striking building has impressive brick features and has been shortlisted for the Brick Awards 2017, Large Housing Development category.

The stepped recess above each opening forms the fundamental brick detail across the main facade. A bespoke prefabricated B.O.S.S. solution accommodated the stepped brick element for a range of opening widths.

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controlled conditions, making B.O.S.S. unique. Bricks are taken from site and cut to 25mm slips and bonded to IG's structural stainless steel units. The genius in the technology lies within IG's patent. The stainless steel is perforated to allow the BBA approved epoxy adhesive to protrude through the perforations to create a mechanical lock.



COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Queen's Wharf

PRODUCTS USED

Brick Feature Lintels & B.O.S.S.

ARCHITECT

Assael Fourpoint Architects

CONTRACTOR

Mount Anvil

BRICKWORK CONTRACTOR

McDonald Brickwork

BRICK TYPE

Smeed Dean Islington Rustica



Brick Feature lintels on housing projects

IG Brick Details

Innovation in materials and manufacturing enables complex brick detailing with offsite quality from IG.

IG offers a technically advanced, offsite solution for an extensive range of brick slip installations including arches, panels, soffits and architectural features. The IG Brick Details range, which consists of Brick Feature Lintels and Lightweight Brick Headers and Sills, enables intricate brickwork detail to be carried out in a factory controlled environment.

Offering a bespoke design service, IG's engineers develop unique solutions to complicated brickwork over openings. Every Brick Feature Lintel is manufactured to order, ensuring that each individual unit is customised according to the size, shape and aesthetic requirements of the project.

Derrick McFarland, managing director of IG Lintels, explains: 'The IG Brick Details range offers builders and contractors a

unique way to enhance the quality of their brickwork detailing in a highly labour efficient way at a time when skills are acknowledged to be in short supply onsite. Architects and developers require high quality finishes and this offsite solution offers the assurance that the finished brick detailing will be as designed.'

Each Brick Feature unit is produced using exactly the same brick as the main project in factory controlled conditions, which offers greater certainty of the visual quality compared with brickwork built onsite. This eliminates the need for specialist brickwork contractors spending hours onsite, cutting bricks to suit complicated structural openings.

Brick Feature Lintels can accommodate a large range of bond patterns, and with segmental arches, flat arches, gothic and parabolic arches as well as apex arches and bullseyes, the possibilities are endless.



Above left The Queens Wharf project featured IG's B.O.S.S. system to achieve the stepped brick element over the openings.

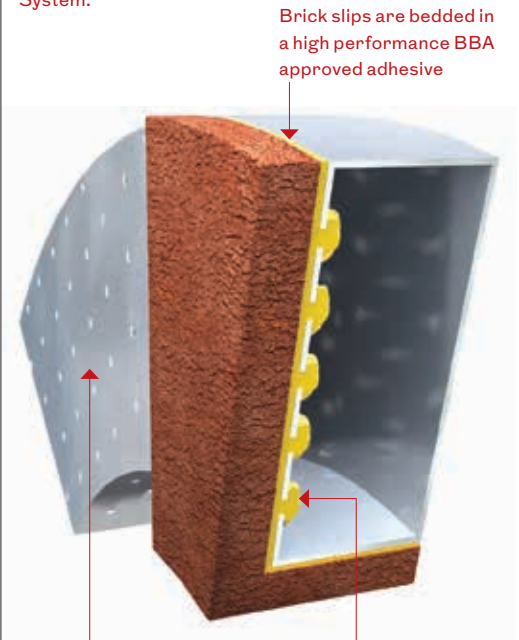
Above Intricate arch detail in a private dwelling.

Above right IG Brick Feature Lintel in production.

Bottom right Brick Feature arch in a replacement dwelling project of traditional terrace homes.



Below Patented Brick Slip System.



Perforated design allows the adhesive to pass through the steelwork

Brick slips are bedded in a high performance BBA approved adhesive

The adhesive 'mushrooms' to form a mechanical lock to the inner side of the steel

For more information on Brick Feature Lintels or to use IG's free design service contact sales@iglintels.com or speak to a member of the technical team on 01633486486.

Village people

Caring Wood is four homes in one, inter-generational holiday living clustered like a hamlet on a Kent farm

Words: Pamela Buxton

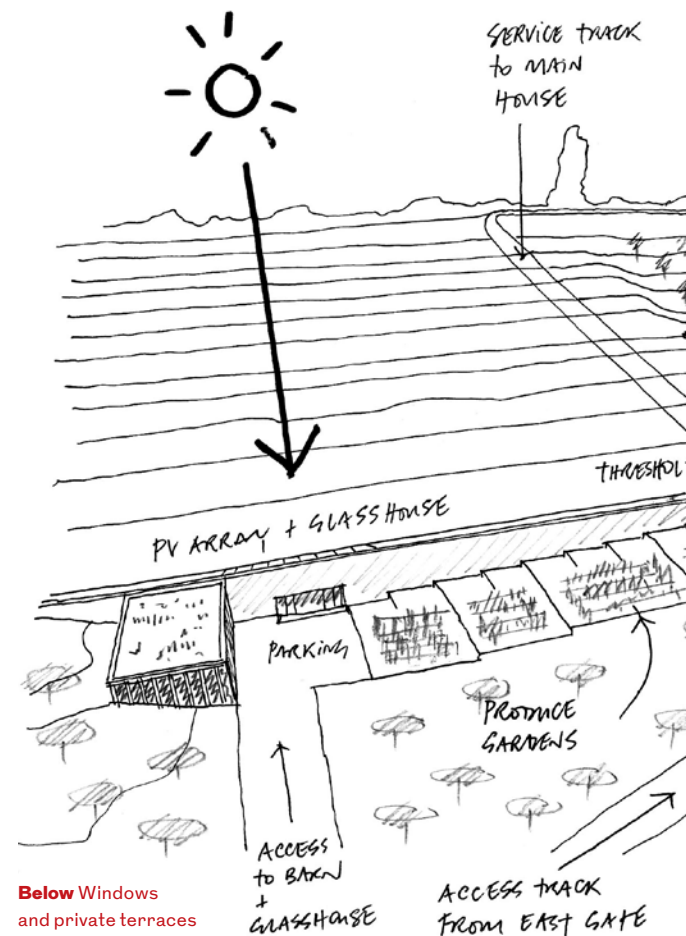
Can a house be like a village? Perhaps – if it's Caring Wood, the extraordinary multi-generational family holiday home in Kent.

Designed by James Macdonald Wright and Niall Maxwell and long listed for the RIBA House of the Year award, Caring Wood manages to be both one home and four at the same time. At 1443m², this generous country house accommodates an extended family of 15 arranged into four immediate family units

– each topped by a distinctive oast-house roof – with shared communal space. Along with the dual-oast form of the nearby housekeeper's lodge, the assemblage has the clustered effect of a small hamlet nestled into the hillside.

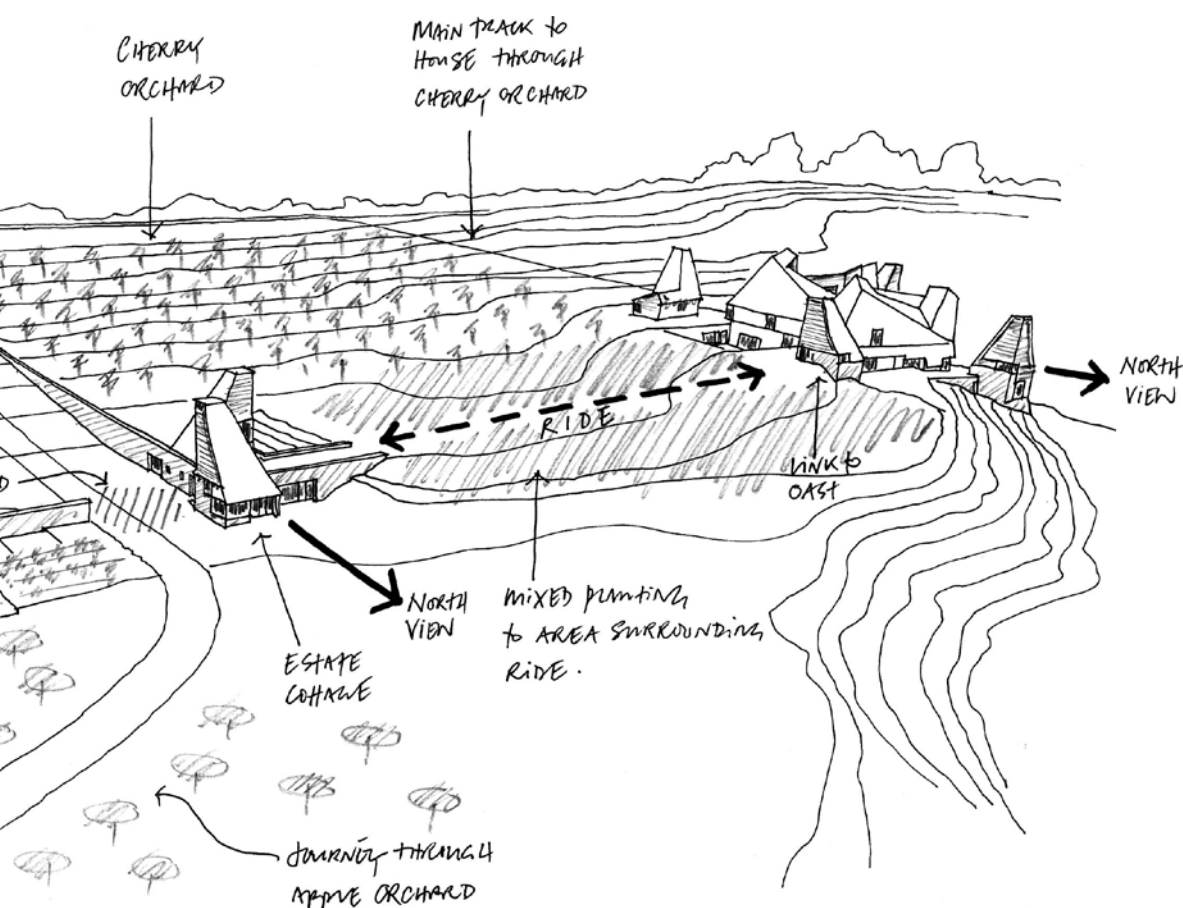
Macdonald Wright's parents-in-law are the clients. They wanted a second home for themselves and their three daughters and their families, and asked him to find a site within easy reach of London. An added

Caring Wood resembles a cluster of dwellings when viewed across the landscape.



Below Windows and private terraces are carefully placed to avoid overlooking.





Left Site overview.

Below Caring Wood's distinctive form takes inspiration from vernacular Kentish architecture.

dimension was the inclusion of a semi-public performance space for chamber music recitals, as well as space to house the clients' collection of modern art.

After deciding on a farm site near Maidstone with enviable views of the North Downs, Macdonald Wright invited Niall Maxwell of Rural Office for Architecture (with whom he both studied at The Bartlett and worked at Ellis Williams) to collaborate on the design – and provide necessary objectivity given his own family connection.

Both enjoyed the project's luxuriously slow pace – design development took more than two and a half years.

'The "slow architecture" process allowed us to work differently to usual,' says Maxwell, who believes the project is a model for how small practices can deliver big buildings.

As a contemporary PPS7 house, the project had to demonstrate innovative and exemplary design. Despite the precedent of planning consent for a substantial new house on the site, the architect didn't take permission for granted and went all out to create a carbon neutral home that was progressive yet rooted in local vernacular.

'We're trying to reinvent the English country house. I became interested in the idea of what that could be in the 21st century,' says Macdonald Wright, who was clear from the outset that the new house had to be a 'house of Kent'.

'For me it was very much about working with local materials and working with



HEIKO PRIGGE

The architect went all out to create a carbon neutral home that was progressive yet rooted in local vernacular

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- 1 Entrance
- 2 Gallery and music
- 3 North oast
- 4 East oast
- 5 South oast
- 6 West oast
- 7 Void
- 8 Kitchen
- 9 Dining room
- 10 Sitting room
- 11 Library
- 12 Courtyard
- 13 Terrace

Credits

Architects James Macdonald Wright and Niall Maxwell

Project management and design advisor Macdonald Wright Architects

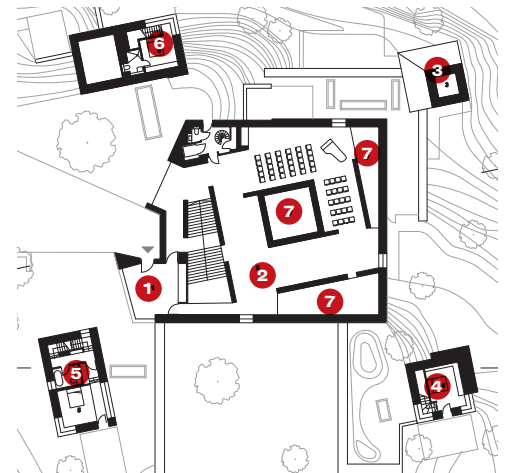
Executive architect Rural Office for Architecture

Structural engineer Price and Myers

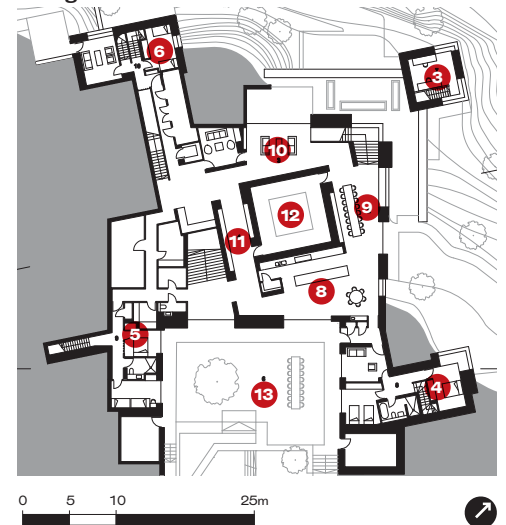
Services engineer Synergy Consulting Engineers

Main contractor Cardy Construction

Entrance level



Living level



Landscaping works closely with the barns.



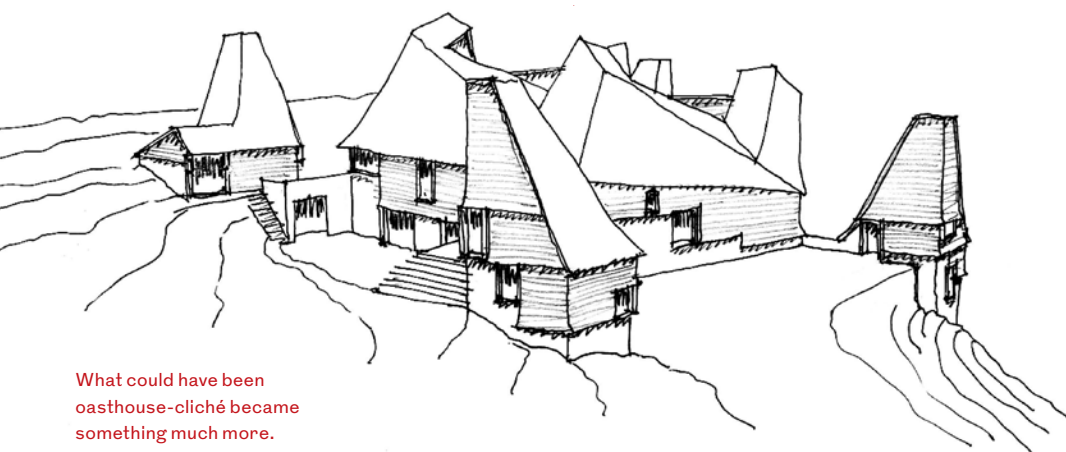
JAMES MORRIS (2)

vernacular themes. It has to be rooted in the place,' he adds.

Macdonald Wright also had a long-held interest in the work of CFA Voysey, Edwin Lutyens and Richard Norman Shaw, and their influence can be felt in Caring Wood's Arts & Crafts flavour – and in particular its distinctive roof.

The design team swiftly came up with the oast house concept, but initially shelved it on the grounds that this traditional building type was too obvious. However, it returned to the distinctive form as an ideal way of realising the passive stack ventilation while creating dramatic internal volumes.

Its first design arranged four distinct family quarters within a compact cluster set against the north-facing hillside. This was rejected by the client, who wanted a more spread out, village-like approach. The response was a dynamic 'pin-wheel' plan, with the four approximately 100m² wings more



What could have been
oasthouse-cliché became
something much more.

dispersed at each corner. The performance space and gallery lead off from the ground floor entrance, with a grand tapering staircase leading down to the main communal areas and access to three of the wings. The entrance to the grandparents' quarters lower down the hillside is on the next floor down. Each wing has four rooms arranged over more than one level, all carefully oriented to avoid overlooking while maximizing the views. A green roof is pulled up over the entrance to the wings to give the illusion that they are separate buildings.

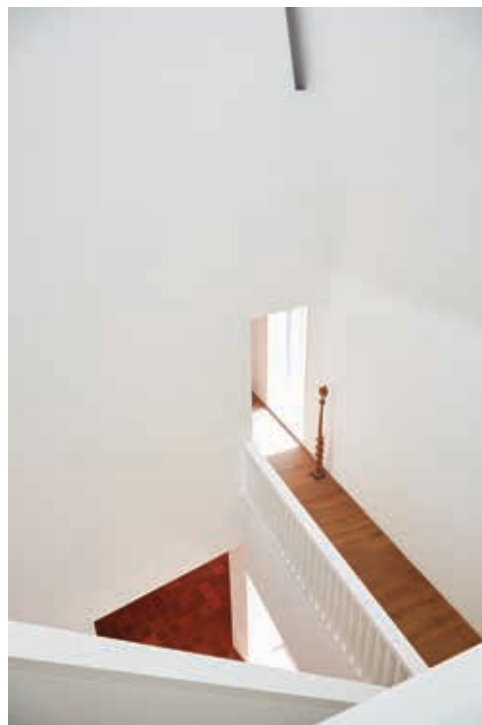
While the building form initially draws the eye, it's the local materials that are the unassuming stars. The architects used stone from a nearby quarry for the ragstone walls combined with locally-coppiced, sweet chestnut finger-jointed cladding and 146,000 handmade peg tiles for the showpiece roof. Conceived as a cloak being draped over the cross-laminated timber structure, this undulating form lifts to form an 'eyelid' over some of the windows.

Visiting it this autumn, I was struck by the contrast between the generous social areas and cosier private spaces of the oasts – when only a few people are staying at the house, they can retreat to their own space rather than feel as if they're rattling around. Which is just as well, for there is no getting away from the fact that Caring Wood is a huge house of many different levels, wings and orientations. There are no fewer than eight staircases and an abundance of hidey-holes – fantastic for games of sardines and hide and seek. It's no wonder that the kids like to use walkie-talkies to locate their cousins.

It does have a beautiful sense of calmness – the white-walled interior is simply kitted out with inset oak joinery and flooring of either

There are no fewer than eight staircases and an abundance of hidey-holes – fantastic for games of hide and seek

Below Views through and out of the house are carefully choreographed.



Right The tranquil courtyard is the inner sanctum.

clay floor tiles or engineered oak. As well as the pleasure of looking out over the countryside, the family can enjoy a fine terrace and pool complete with cascading water features. There is also an unusual, timber-lined courtyard tucked away at the heart of the plan without the distraction of the landscape views. This inner sanctum acts as a condensed cloister where the clients like to walk and talk, the sky visibly framed at the top of the high courtyard walls.

Macdonald Wright reckons it'll take quite a few years for this house, and the estate's 27,000 newly-planted trees, to bed in. But the clients are already delighted, even if they and their family are still working out quite how best to appropriate all the many spaces. And just as the sweet chestnut cladding and clay roofing will acquire their own patina as they age, so will the internal spaces as the family learns to grow into the house, slowly, over time. ●



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Highly distinctive

The slim VELFAC frame design also delivers a highly distinctive, contemporary finish. Uniform sightlines are maintained across all VELFAC units, whether fixed or opening, creating a sharp, flat exterior finish. This adds character to individual dwellings and, if used across multiple building designs, can create a 'signature style' across a scheme.

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Ideal for high density, complex schemes

Excellent insulation also means impressive acoustic control, making VELFAC the ideal solution for high density housing, inner city projects or developments close to transportation routes. Add Secured by Design accreditation, and every box is ticked for the potential developer and buyer.

And it's not just product performance that attracts clients. As a well established, successful company VELFAC has the capacity, and knowledge, to handle complex residential projects of every size – from plot by plot developments to some of the largest projects in Europe. It's this combination of building experience and product excellence that continues to bring VELFAC new business across the UK. ●



NINEWELLS, CAMBRIDGE

Ninewells comprises 270 family homes and apartments, showcases innovative architecture and sustainable design, and has won a number of prestigious awards including 'Best Out of London Home' from the London Evening Standard New Homes Awards. The VELFAC system features throughout the development, maximising natural light, enhancing countryside views, and providing window-walling to match the aesthetics of VELFAC windows and doors. 'The slender VELFAC composite window and door frames result in large glazed panels which are ideal for window (and door) sections up to 2.4m high,' says Denis Devane, senior technical co-ordinator at Hill (a housebuilder working in a joint venture with developer Bushmead Homes). These larger windows are used to increase solar gain, further improve energy performance, and flood the spacious interiors with natural light, enhanced by a white paint finish.



AVONDALE SQUARE, LONDON

At this seven-storey block of 18 affordable homes, reForm Architects has used VELFAC glazing to deliver an innovative response to local housing needs, with a building that meets demanding daylight and energy targets while also guaranteeing low lifetime costs. 'We specified VELFAC for a number of reasons,' says reForm director Andrew Dawes. 'The composite frame is very popular with tenants as they like the warm inner wood frame and the security of external aluminium. By installing VELFAC triple glazing we could also meet the ambitious low energy targets set by Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, and also those of the City of London Plan, which asks for CO₂ emissions at 19% lower than current building regulations. Triple glazing also provides excellent acoustic insulation – ideal, given the busy inner city location – and the windows also meet Secured by Design standards, again very relevant to the location.'



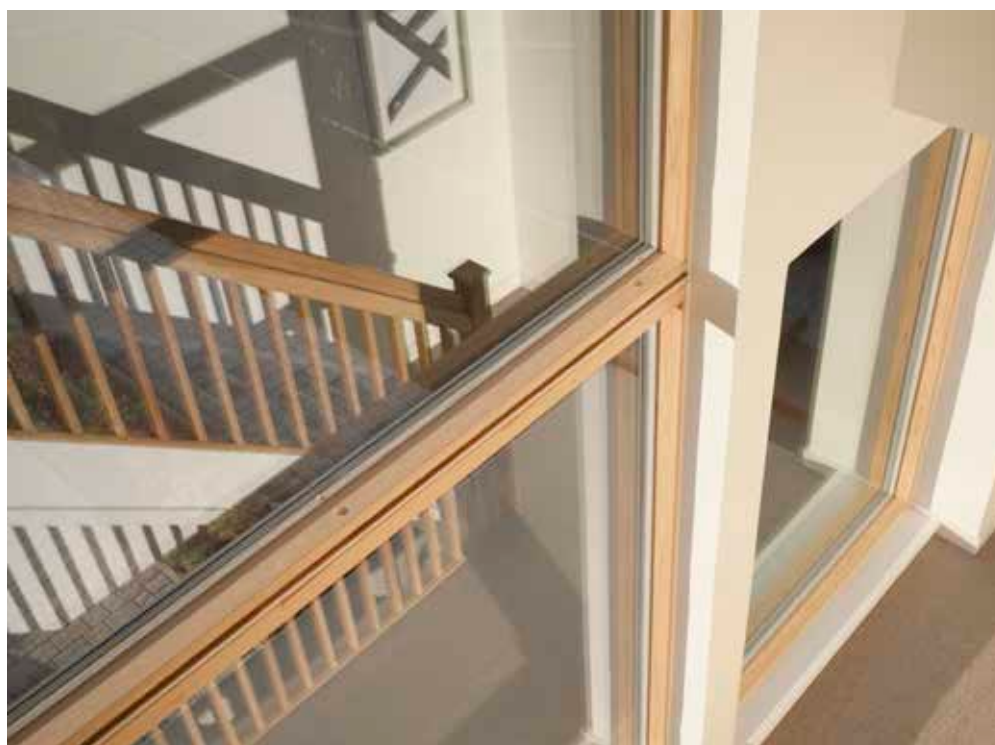
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GREAT KNEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE

VELFAC glazing is installed throughout Great Kneighton, specified for its impressive thermal and acoustic insulation and seamless, contemporary design, enhanced by the composite frame construction. Great Kneighton is renowned for innovative design and an emphasis on sustainability – both characteristics of developer Countryside Properties, a longstanding VELFAC client. At Great Kneighton, many homes deliberately exploit the VELFAC slim frame design to maximise natural light while also enjoying the exceptional levels of thermal and acoustic insulation. With its uniform sightlines, VELFAC glazing also delivers the seamless, stylish and contemporary finish demanded by the Great Kneighton concept, while the versatility of the system allows the same window style to feature across a wide range of different house and apartment designs.



Basic instinct

Newhouse of Auchengree, by Ann Nisbet Studio, is unmistakably new but its form is as old as the hills that surround it

Words: Kieran Gaffney Photographs: David Barbour

Newhouse of Auchengree owes a debt to the planning guidance for new single homes in the North Ayrshire countryside. The guidance includes a requirement, stringently enforced, for 'exceptional' design. This clause gave license to the architect to push for an innovate, bold and committed design.

Ann Nisbet had spent eight years at Dualchas, eventually running its Glasgow office before setting up her own studio in 2013. Dualchas can take much credit for improving the design quality of houses in rural Scot-

land. This mini-renaissance was deliberate and political; it draws on the 'blackhouses' of the Western Isles in a move towards a new Scottish vernacular based on simple forms, narrow plans and steep pitched roofs.

Like several highland practices, Dualchas has a spinoff kit-house business which supplies on-brand, simple and affordable homes. The client for Newhouse of Auchengree originally approached this business to procure an off-the-shelf house, but Nisbet demonstrated that a kit house wouldn't do this site justice.

Below The Newhouse: traditional vernacular translated into a new guise.

When she set up her own practice they commissioned her as their architect.

The clients, a retired GP and a pharmacist, had modest ambitions for a practical house: with the main functions located on the ground floor to ensure that the dwelling would meet their needs as they grow older.

The architect describes the result as 'a contemporary farmhouse, which draws on the inherent characteristics of North Ayrshire's unique rural vernacular to create a building that reflects the identity of the area'.



It is easy to be sceptical about the well versed idea of a rural vernacular; how was it actually used to drive the design beyond aesthetic considerations? But there is a convincing explanation of how the form follows that of North Ayrshire farms. These are typically arranged as a two storey main house with distant views, surrounded by a collection of single storey lower and subservient outbuildings which provide shelter from the weather.

On the way to site Nisbet points out a neighbouring farm following this arrangement and on arrival at Auchengree the pat-

Driving towards and passing through the pend on arrival is beautiful and hypnotic

Below The annex, right, is independent of the main house. The separating access porte cochère (pend) gives an agricultural, yet grand, sense of arrival.

tern is clear. The two storey house contains the main living spaces, a linear single storey building contains the master bedroom and an annex with an outbuilding completes the cluster. The annex is particularly unusual because the two bedrooms and shared bathroom are entirely separate from the main house, you access them from outside. The architectural result is clear, consistent and strong.

This typology of a collection of buildings has several advantages. For a start, it reduces the visual impact of one big building, which is favourable in planning terms. The architect





was keen to avoid large areas of expensive circulation and in this the house excels. The form maintains the intimacy of the house while the clients are on their own but it is large enough to accommodate visitors.

It seems increasingly common for houses with seemingly free sites to manifest into a collection of buildings, think houses in Dungeness by Nord et al. Here the architect set out and built in a vernacular style that favours small concise buildings rather than a big volumetric statement: 'bold without being showy' is how the architect describes it.

The access pend, or passage, is key to the success of the house – an unusual architectural decision that works well. The experience of driving towards and passing through this space on arrival is beautiful and hypnotic.

The use of zinc as the dominant material is generally well handled and makes the house shimmer, pale blue/grey in the weak Scottish sunshine. A glimpse of the sky framed by an opening in the main elevation further strengthens the move. The architect says this was one of her first design ideas, sketched out in early thinking and retained as a key driver of the project.

By contrast, black-painted Douglas fir shutters and outbuilding offer a relief to the zinc and an interesting up-close textural detail with knots in the wood crossing lines between the varied board widths.

To argue the case for the ad-hoc informality of this house one can contrast the project with Baron House by John Pawson in Sweden. That house offers some similarity; set in a similar rural landscape, viewed in the round,

Above Zinc reflects the drama of the Scottish skies.

Right Simplicity and crisp detailing pervade, both outside and in.

Credits
Architect Ann Nisbet
Architects
Client Michael and Sally Law
Structural engineer Peter Brett Associates
Main contractor 3B Construction
Planning authority North Ayrshire Council

with a courtyard and a pend. However with a deeper plan and hence a more massive roof it takes on a monolithic form. Its formal courtyard and classical organisation might be seen as Swedish while Auchengree's collection of informal buildings are distinctly Scottish.

One could argue that the contrast is one of confidence. Interestingly, Nisbet says this is the first opportunity she has had to build a two storey house, Scottish planners being fixated on the 'storey and half'.

If there were a complaint it is that although the long front elevation is incredibly successful the short gabled elevations have less presence. This seems churlish however because the house is a pleasure to experience, it is admirable in its confident abstraction and honest practicality. ●



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THE ART OF HEATING

Right up our alley

Peter Barber has done it again with a mews that turns a wasted London strip into a row of well considered homes

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Morley von Sternberg

This little mews development is exactly what everyone is supposed to be encouraging. It takes a run-down alley in the Finsbury Park area of north London, and densifies the area in an intelligent and logical manner. It makes a terrace of private-rented homes that respects its context and its neighbours. The client is a solo small builder who appreciates good design and directly commissions his trades. It's the kind of scheme – with limit-

ed access, concerned planners and multiple overlooking and party wall issues with watchful neighbours – that most conventional housebuilders reject as too much like hard work. The occasional one-off house in such places is the more usual upshot. But these awkward sites are meat and drink to Peter Barber Architects.

Barber's practice – with his co-director Phil Hamilton leading on this job – is known

Below Barber's bird's eye axo of the scheme shows just how constrained the site is, hemmed in by neighbouring gardens.

for its social and charitable housing and a more enlightened kind of estate regeneration, as at Colindale in further-north London (RIBA October 2015). We profiled him and his practice in the first year of our MacEwen Award for his exceptional contribution to housing. Moray Mews is a little unusual for the firm in being a wholly private development, but it's on the right kind of scale, and the way it came about was very old-school.



These awkward sites are meat and drink to Peter Barber Architects

The builder/developer, Roberto Caravona, had been knocked back by a planning refusal for an earlier scheme by other architects. Pondering what to do next, he found himself walking past the shop window of Barber's studio in King's Cross. Intrigued by what he saw there, he went in and introduced himself. And so started again from scratch, and the new Moray Mews came to be.

I meet Barber there on a damp autumn morning, and by chance Caravona is there too, tidying up the end house which terminates the mews for a viewing by potential buyers/tenants. The sales market is very slow in London, he says, especially for bespoke homes hovering around the £1 million mark (just into a higher stamp duty band) which land and building costs suggest even here, in a poorer corner of north London than some. He owns this whole one-sided mews – buildings on the north side, garden walls of the next street on the south. He earlier made flats in a couple of retained buildings



The houses front a narrow alley where vehicles are allowed only occasionally.

Left Familiar compact courtyard form, here done in stock brick with projecting glass bays.



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The row is terminated by a house across the end commanding a view down the alley.



IN NUMBERS

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gross internal Area

£1.6 m
construction value

– former pub and workshop – at one end, and the Barber-designed development of eight houses continues on from these. Caravona wants to sell some of them to release capital for the next project. This is how small builders operate, and it's not so different from the way the existing Victorian streets round here were built. But for now, they are all rented.

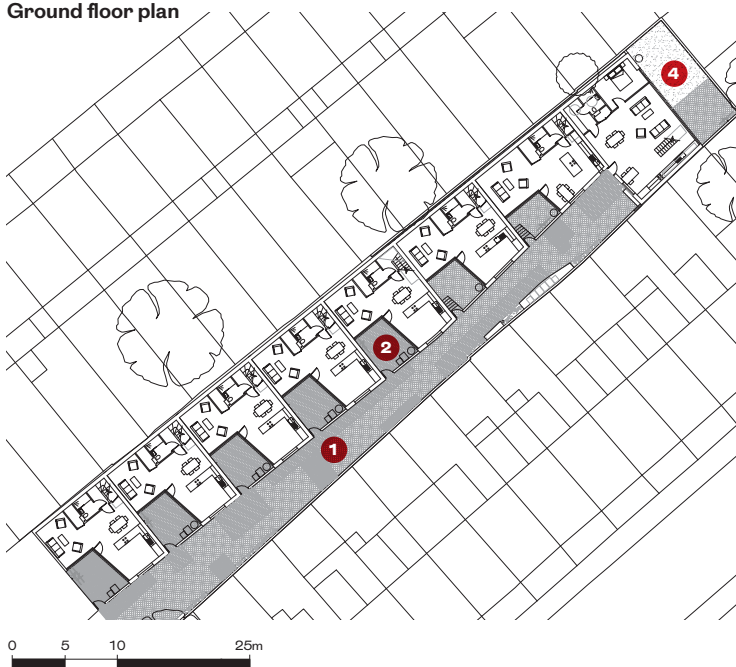
Some negotiation with planners and neighbours took place during design: in the event the houses in the eastern half of the mews, built on the former overgrown waste ground, were part-sunk into the ground and given sloping roofs towards their rear, intended to be planted. This was in acknowledgment of the fact that the neighbours at this point were used to seeing a jungle, not buildings, at the ends of their gardens, so the impact was minimised.

The end result looks somehow inevitable: a neat little row of brick houses with

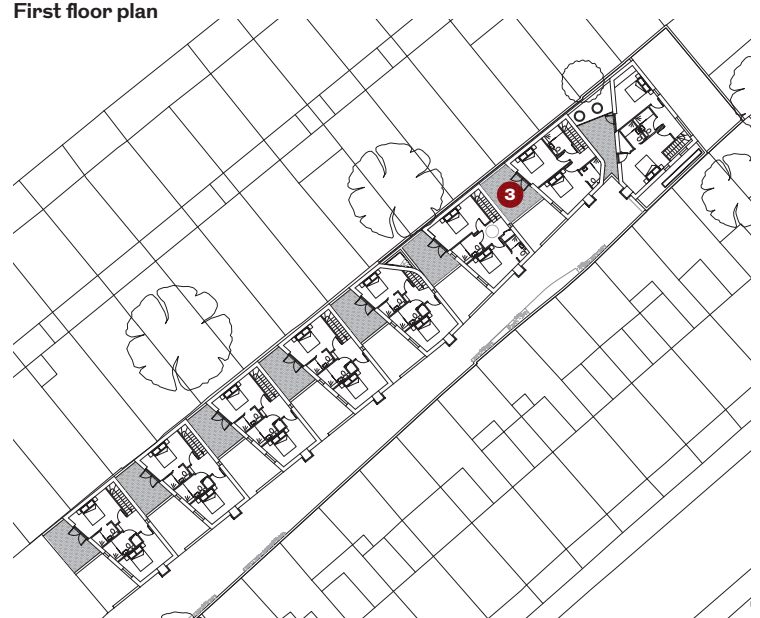
Planted sloping roofs
acknowledge the fact that
the neighbours were used
to seeing a jungle

- 1 Moray Mews
- 2 Typical private courtyard
- 3 Typical private terrace
- 4 Garden

Ground floor plan



First floor plan



The little yards and terraces provide the space, light and ventilation needed

first-floor projecting glass bays very much in the Barber compact aesthetic, their little yards and terraces providing the space, light and ventilation needed. The alley is paved in reused granite setts (some were already here) and the garden walls running along the south side have been mended but kept as a masonry patchwork. The larger house at the end commands a view west down the mews. It's a civilised little enclave and this new community is starting to personalise its various outdoor spaces with pot plants and the like, as Barber notes approvingly.

Inside the layouts are broadly similar if varying slightly in shape of floorplate: entry from the mews to a defensible outdoor space (at street level or sunken) via some fine chunky wooden gates, big living/dining area, one bedroom downstairs and two upstairs, a variety of glimpsed views deftly achieved without overlooking. The boss house at the end has a good delicate folded-steel-and-oak staircase descending through the space exactly to the architects' designs, and opens up at the rear to a conventional ground-level



Above Entrance courtyard and terrace of first house: privacy with high quality joinery.

garden. Upstairs in the sloping-roofed types, the pitch is a bit startling, the roof coming down very low at one end of one upstairs bedroom I saw.

It is all very well finished inside in the manner familiar to us from the 'contemporary living' lookbook beloved of upmarket estate agents: nothing to frighten the horses here but nicely done. The achievement of this little development is not in radical interiors, rather in the fact that it got built at all and successfully handles daylight, open space and privacy issues on very compact plans. It is all just about as tight as it is possible to be, to the extent that vehicles are seldom allowed along the alley, but the overall feeling is one of congeniality. In its modest way, it's an exemplar in how to insert good new housing into existing streetscapes. ●

Left In the end house, a bespoke steel and oak stair treads lightly.



Credits
Client Roberto Caravona
Architect Peter Barber Architects
Structural engineer BCS Consulting
M&E engineer Energy Calculations Ltd
Contractor Roberto Caravona
Developer Roberto Caravona
Acoustic consultant Acoustic Associates Peterborough
Projecting glass boxes Allglass Facades
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Sustainability starts at home

Zip Water UK explores the importance of modern design in tackling modern problems when it comes to drinking water

Shelter is a fundamental human right. However, throughout the history of housing in the UK, it has become so much more than this. Residential architecture has shaped this country, reflecting seismic shifts in culture, society, politics and technology. Over the past 200 years, the design and construction of our housing has grown from a necessity to provide basic human habitation into a drive to provide the very best quality of life.

During the Victorian era a national concern for public health, especially in urban areas, looked to housing as a way to combat problems of overcrowding and poor sanitation. As residential design developed, this trend continued with the ambition of improving not only basic health and safety but the overall wellbeing and happiness of families and communities. From the introduction of building regulations through to the invention of labour saving appliances for the home, the innovations have been unrelenting and continue apace with modern technology.

Further to this, building design can have a powerful effect on people, communities and social cohesion. Marrying function and style, contemporary architecture weaves its use of space, light, geometry and materials to have a tangible effect on our mood and wellbeing in the home. The power of residential architecture cannot be underestimated when it comes to defining the nation's welfare.

It is clearly significant that health and wellbeing overlaps with design and planning at every turn. Similar to the provision of shelter, the provision of water is linked intrinsically with public health. We can draw a parallel between the advances in our basic right to shelter with our basic right to water and sanitation – what are the innovations in this area and how do they affect our quality of life?

Water supply has been a crucial logistical challenge since the very dawn of civilisation. Where water resources or infrastructure are inadequate for the population, people fall prey to dehydration and disease. From the first Greek and Roman 'plumbing systems' to the modern day, people have devised ways to provide fresh water into their households.

Safe, clean water has been a major objective in our more recent history. The

Opposite The HydroTap All-in-One Celsius Arc has five water options.

Right The elegant 'swan neck' design is available in 12 finishes..

first documented use of sand filters to purify the water supply dates to 1804 in Scotland when the owner of a bleachery, John Gibb, installed an experimental filter, selling the surplus to the public. Following this, the first treated water supply in the world appeared in London in 1829. This installation provided filtered water for every resident of the area and the network design was widely imitated throughout the UK in the following decades.

Developments in the strict regulations and treatment of UK tap water mean we now have one of the best supplies in the world. However, it could be argued that drinking water is one area that has seriously lacked innovation within the home until very recently. The humble tap has remained fundamentally unchanged, supplemented only by the kettle and water filter jug.

To continue to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation we must embrace innovation in this area. Yes, we have the basic provision of water – ways to heat it, ways to filter it – but water can be so much more than this. The current boom in wellbeing culture and the need for convenience in today's busy world go hand in hand with the recent growth in popularity of filtered drinking water appliances, which are gaining traction as a must-have in residential new builds and retrofits.

Responding to this rising demand for high-function, life-improving kitchen appliances that are wrapped up in cutting-edge design, Zip Water UK – the brand behind the world's most advanced drinking water appliances – has launched the new HydroTap All-in-One Celsius Arc. Introduced last month, the new All-in-One instantly dispenses five different water types from a single tap: filtered boiling, chilled and sparkling, plus unfiltered hot and cold water for washing up. The next step in residential drinking water, the tap delivers all these functions through an elegant 'swan neck' tap design available in 12 finishes. Simple to use and offering a wide range of water options, it's easy to see how the HydroTap All-in-One Celsius Arc will improve the



lives of its users, saving time and increasing health and wellbeing.

With its innovation in filtration, delivering water that's 25 times more filtered than a water filter jug, the HydroTap not only eliminates the need for a kettle and an additional mixer tap, but also stocks of still and sparkling bottled water. This is especially important when considering the huge negative impact of bottled water on the environment that has hit the news in the past few months. This planet-wide catastrophe is now effecting our water supply, with a recent study revealing that billions of people worldwide are drinking water contaminated by plastic particles. Dr Anne Marie Mahon at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology says plastic fibres, which are 10 microns in diameter, are not currently filtered out in our drinking water systems. The Zip HydroTap removes particles bigger than 0.2 micron with the MicroPurity filters – that includes plastic fibres with a 10 micron diameter.

In both the UK's housing and drinking water arenas it's clear that modern design needs to tackle modern problems such as this, including global warming, climate change and pollution. The house-building industry has contributed to carbon emissions reductions using ground-breaking new energy technologies and by drastically improving the thermal performance of buildings. This focus on sustainability crosses over into household appliances. The HydroTap's use of the latest advanced energy

efficiency technology brings it in line with this new era of stylish residential design that has sustainability at its heart.

We are lucky in the UK to be able to push the boundaries of design in order to elevate basic human needs such as housing and water to new heights. A home is so much more than shelter and similarly, we don't only drink to stave off dehydration – it is a matter of lifestyle. It's important that we celebrate the inspiring work by designers, architects, planners and manufacturers to improve health and wellbeing in our country, which is a huge part of our cultural narrative. However, it's clear that to look after people, we must look after the planet they live on. The value of emerging technology in both of these arenas will help us meet tomorrow's challenges and create happy, healthy communities. ●

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More room on top

Simon Conder's Black House is a rooftop home, a lightweight timber dwelling that stands alone despite its lofty location

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Paul Smoothy



Simon Conder is taken aback, slightly. In the few months since he last saw the new two-storey rooftop 'Black House' he designed in London Fields, Hackney, its surroundings have transformed utterly. As completed, it was an elevated eyrie with clear views on three sides. Now, it is being hemmed in by big new blocks, replacing most of the low-rise workshops next to the railway line here. Luckily our photos were taken before this part of the East London building-boom onslaught. Equally luckily, Conder's contribution remains different enough to stand out easily from the herd.

'I think of it as a garden shed,' he says of the building, made of a laminated larch portal frame infilled with structural insulated panels (SIP) and clad in black-stained southern redwood lapped planks. It happened this way because his client owns the building below, which houses her design agency. Although a typically stout, thick-walled late Victorian industrial building, it has very little by way of foundations so whatever went on top had to be lightweight. Conder considered a polycarbonate box before, working with engineer Fluid, he came up with the timber-frame-and infill panel solution. It sits on a new hybrid concrete/steel ring beam holding together the top of the existing walls and concealed by recycled stock brick.

Prefabrication helped considerably, given the problems of access to the site. The sections of the envelope were made in Barnsley, trucked down and erected by crane over a fortnight, after which construction continued inside. The black timber cladding is a reference to various buildings round about which use this material – though it

Left As the new blocks of flats sprout round it, the Black House loggia sets a higher tone.

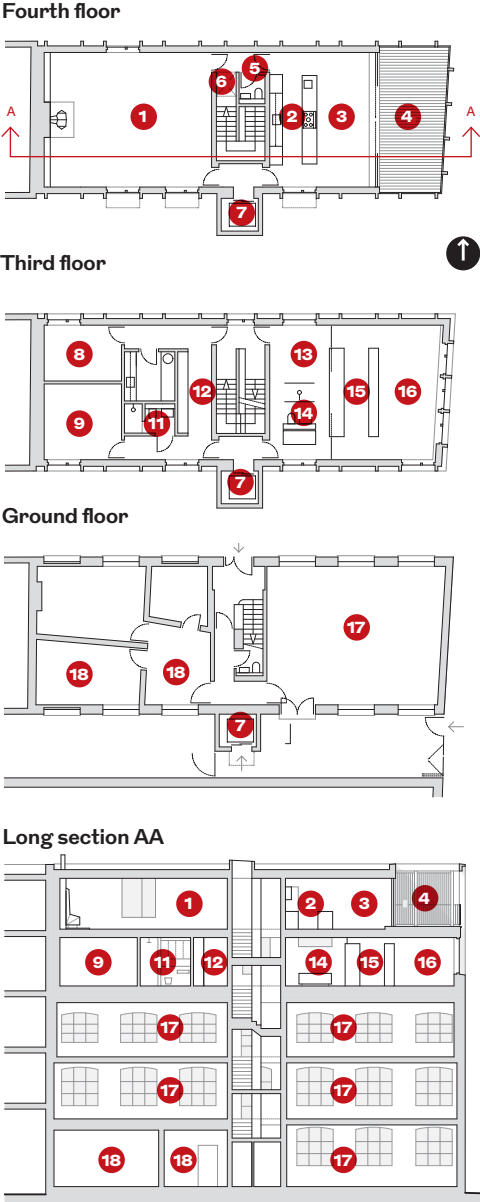
Opposite Lightweight timber-frame structure sits on a concealed ring beam.





Above Not a bad view, though east London building is rapidly filling it.
Below View from loggia into dining/kitchen area.

- 1 Living room
- 2 Kitchen
- 3 Dining area
- 4 Terrace
- 5 WC
- 6 Rooflight above
- 7 Lift (main access)
- 8 Guest bedroom
- 9 Studio
- 10 Utility room
- 11 Shower room
- 12 Hall
- 13 Gym
- 14 Master bathroom
- 15 Kitchen
- 16 Master bedroom
- 17 Existing design studio
- 18 Existing recording studio



The black timber cladding is a reference to various buildings round about which use this material

also reminds me of the tall fishermen's huts on the shingle at Hastings, particularly on its south elevation where a lift shaft (same cladding, but structurally cross-laminated timber or CLT) drops to ground level. If this is a shed, though, it is a noble one with its high-level loggia, proportioned just so.

The spaces inside are straightforward enough: two bedrooms, study, utility room and gym on the lower floor, living, kitchen/dining and an open terrace in that loggia on the upper. The staircase from the building below is extended on upward into the apartment, daylit from a simple skylight.

Conder is famous for his one-off houses – they all appear in a new book of his, 'Small Works'. This is the first to be perched on top of another building and it is very much a thing in itself rather than an extension. You can imagine it re-erected on a lower plinth elsewhere. It would work. ●

Credits
Architect Simon Conder Associates
Structural engineer Fluid Structures
Environmental engineer XCO2 Energy
Quantity surveyor Listers
Contractor Famella
Timber prefabrication subcontractor Constructional Timber
Gross internal floor area 255m²
Construction cost confidential



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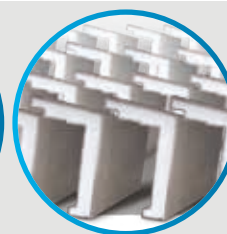
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Staying power

Diligent and determined management of the difficult years of recession has paid off for the award-winning bricks of York Handmade

The York Handmade Brick Company has established a first-class reputation for manufacturing bespoke bricks for the quality self-build residential property sector. Based at Alne, near Easingwold, in the heart of the Vale of York, York Handmade has won a host of awards for prestigious home-build projects across the UK.

As one of the largest independent brick-makers in the north of England, the company fought very hard to keep momentum going during the recession. As a result it is now well-equipped to take advantage of the upturn in the construction sector, especially in the self-build market. York Handmade has invested in the future by spending £65,000 on refurbishing its two kilns, which has increased production and efficiency. As confidence returns to the property market,

the company is reaping the benefits of this investment and of its determination to battle through the difficult times.

There is now increased demand for its award-winning bricks, which are being used across the country. For example, the company recently supplied one of its established clients, Heritage Homes, with bricks for a prestigious new housing development in Newton Abbott, Devon. This underlined York Handmade's credentials as a national supplier and the company recently provided bespoke handmade bricks for a number of outstanding new houses in Surrey, Sussex and the Home Counties.

York Handmade, which celebrates its 30th anniversary next year, has won a succession of Brick Development Association awards, the Oscars of the Brick Industry. In

Above Moses Dell near Radlett, a sophisticated 21st century home in woodland.

Below Tugill Cellar, near Leyburn in North Yorkshire — 'one of the most stunning wine cellars in the north of England'.



2012, for example, the company triumphed in the Best Single House category for Four Oaks in Little Bedwyn, Wiltshire. One judge said of Four Oaks: 'This was the highlight of all my viewings this year. The design of this fantastic building is ambitious with the rhythm of the landscape setting off the brickwork.'

Other stunning houses built with York Handmade's bricks include the winner of Best Potton Home award in 2011, a magnificent self-built home at East Knoyle, near Salisbury, and Moses Dell, a luxurious and sophisticated 21st century family home in woodland near Radlett in Hertfordshire. The latter gave York Handmade the chance to showcase its increasingly popular long Maxima bricks, which are rapidly becoming its USP. Maxima bricks are much liked by architects because they lend themselves to innovative and bold designs.

Meanwhile York Handmade has helped to create 'one of the most stunning wine cellars in the north of England'. The firm supplied high-quality bricks and specials worth £70,000 for the cellar at Tupgill Park, the estate near Leyburn, which includes the Forbidden Corner visitor attraction. The



Above The Grange, a superb new-build house in the classic style near Sheffield.

Below Millington Hall at Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire. A 16th century heritage public house and restaurant, it was shortlisted for the Refurbishment Award at the 2005 Brick Awards.



'York Handmade's bricks represent around 4% of the cost of a new building, but can account for 70% of the look'

specials included rib vault bricks and vault headers, together with dog-legs, bottle-holder bricks and a unique brick door.

David Armitage, chairman of York Handmade, commented: 'In providing the bricks for the cellar at Tupgill, which is home to one of the finest and most popular tourist attractions in the county, we have consolidated our reputation as the leading supplier of bespoke and special-shaped bricks in the UK.'

'This is one of the most visually stunning jobs that we have ever undertaken and we are delighted and honoured to have played our part in creating such an aesthetic feast. Apart from our traditional bricks, we also created some specials which we believe have contributed to an astonishing room.'

He added: 'It is significant to note that York Handmade's bricks represent approximately 4% of the cost of a new building, yet they can account for 70% of the look. The slight extra cost of using our bricks is marginal, yet the resulting brickwork will give a building unique character. Not only can we offer bricks in at least 10 blends, but a variation can be achieved by mixing combinations of the basic colours. We are extremely flexible in our ability to produce bricks of any size, shape or finish to customers' specifications.'

And Armitage practises what he preaches – his own home in the picturesque village of Nun Munkton, near York, was built with his own bricks. ●



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Alne, near Easingwold, nr York YO61
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darmitage@yorkhandmade.co.uk
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One of a kind

At The Malings in Newcastle Ash Sakula provides 76 homes that each feel as though they were individually designed

Words: Isabelle Priest



Below View of The Malings from the river barrage by the mouth of the Ouseburn tributary.

Architect Robert Sakula is right, there isn't that much that links housing and houses. I too was wondering why we're including a 76-unit developer scheme in Newcastle in a section largely dedicated to private houses. But if there is a big batch contestant that could compete with small batch housing or even individual homes, The Malings is up there, showing others how it can be done.

Designed by London-based Ash Sakula Architects for Manchester-based developer Igloo, The Malings sits beside the Ouseburn, a small tributary lined with industrial ruins that flows into the Tyne just beyond the Millennium Bridge in the east of the city. The project has received a bit of press coverage over the years, being part of a wider drive to transform this former cradle of industry into a trendy cultural quarter for live bands with an alternative vibe to the short skirts and more manufactured music of the city centre.

Construction of the first of three phases began in 2013 but only now are all of its distinctive fanning finger terraces complete and the last of the new residents moving in.

The project dates back to 2010, when Igloo asked Ash Sakula to draw up a masterplan for the entire valley with Studio Egret West. Governments changed, councils faced new challenges and what had been a huge job became a more modest one – to replace 'an empty ugly 1980s building' known as the Ice Factory with some of the first homes in the area for more than 60 years.

'This kind of project required a pioneering spirit,' explains Sakula. 'The obvious thing

This kind of project required a pioneering spirit. By creating fingers, each space opens towards the river

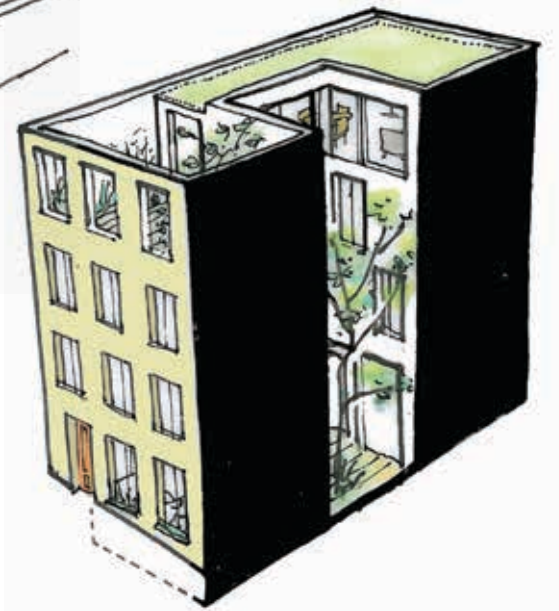
Below A terrace showing stacked duplexes adjoining a house with a rear garden.

Right An example of the detached tower houses placed between the finger blocks.



Below The courtyard homes with a rooftop terrace.

Bottom The Malings, seen here from behind, is located in the east of Newcastle. Excite's Toffee Factory is on the facing bank of the river and the Tyne Bridge is visible in the distance.





would have been to lay out blocks of homes to follow the contours of the steeply sloping site. But by creating the development as fingers, each home opens towards the river and southern sun, catching glimpses of the valley.'

The five fingers radiate out from the back of the site, stepping down 8m and stretching 60m towards the river. In between there are new streets for access, communal gardens and even a 'village' square, all tied together by one of the most enjoyable ingredients of a medieval town, a hidden alleyway that crosses the site laterally.

'This is a very simple architecture of timber frame, brick, windows, doorways and drainpipes,' says Sakula. The project takes the best of what he has seen, no doubt from all over the world, and mixes it all together in a little ravine in Newcastle. The architectural excitement comes from the roofline and the drama of the sloping site, as well as that unexpected masterplan.

Seen from Excite's Toffee Factory shared workspace on the opposite bank of the Ouseburn, The Malings is noticeably different in form to everything around it, but its local red brick means it fits snugly into its setting. The buildings tumble down the river bank, the fan-shaped fingers inviting people up to explore.

So what makes these homes akin to individually designed private houses? Well, nearly every one of them has its own unique plan. Among multiple types, some are Parisian-style flats around a courtyard, some are stacked duplexes, others terraced houses, back-to-backs and even local typologies such as Tyneside flats – pairs of single storey flats within a two-storey terrace. Three of the homes are detached San Gimignano-like

Above Section drawings through the different types of housing units.



Right Aluminium rainpipes disguise the vertical joints between the bricks and carry water around the site for reuse.

towers standing tall between the fingers at the open end by the river.

On top of this, all the properties have their own architectural characteristics. There's a wide palette for the front doors, inspired by the sharp colours used by Malings pottery which used to be based nearby and after which the development is named. All the homes have their own front door to the street as well as outdoor space – either a small garden or a large rooftop terrace. Each homeowner has a virtually unique property with many of the practical and emotional rewards of individually commissioned private houses.

Given the complexity involved in drawing up such a detailed scheme, the result is quite astonishing and full of invention. Homes overlap and lock together like a puzzle. Ash Sakula managed to achieve the desired density of 137 homes per hectare, but it had its work cut out. For starters, it persuaded the council to relax the usual rule of 21m distance between facing windows at the upper part of the scheme. And to come in within budget it designed the scheme without any cut bricks or specials. Instead, the bricks



Above Ash Sakula's design prioritises communal spaces, gardens and allotments over private gardens

weave together at the corners, overlapping and protruding if necessary. It's a neat detail.

Igloo did its fair share too, convincing the authorities to classify the light industrial and live music background noise characteristic of the area as the 'ambient noise level'. This was to protect The Malings from anti-noise legislation that has seen residents elsewhere close clubs or stop church bells and cricket net practice, meaning it would retain its edgy identity.

The residents are extremely proud to live there, keen to show Sakula and me around their homes. Inside the individual character might be provided by a top floor kitchen or a four-storey stair from the front door to the upper floor of a stacked duplex. Ceiling heights are more generous on living room floors than bedrooms, and upside down layouts are used to make the most of the views. They are spacious too.

Conversely, although each property feels unique and private inside, step out of the front door and a communal life opens up, capable of accommodating residents from babies to 91-year-olds. Larger communal allotments are prioritised over private gardens, fences





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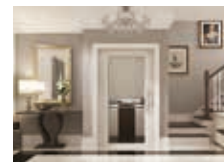
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between property boundaries are replaced by benches, bins are stored centrally so neighbours bump into each other, and the ground floor by the river is given over to communal bike storage.

Circulation is also designed to make the pedestrian experience the most appealing – there are tight turning circles for cars, porches over entranceways for sheltering from the rain and a new riverside walk. In the future two planned retail units along the river promenade should create even more of a buzz.

The project takes sustainability seriously too, cramming in so many good ideas that every inch of the site has been put to use. There is a blend of green and brown roofs, as well as photovoltaics. Rainwater is collected in rain gardens, via the rills in front of the houses and attenuated in the swales along the promenade. Most people would only notice these measures as a green and pleasant place.

Overall, Ash Sakula's The Malings is a fantastically well planned, designed and built project demonstrating that new-build, batch-built properties can have character. It has created a community that feels tight-knit, and in contrast to Igloo's early belief that it would have to sell the homes at a cut price to entice people into the area, it's becoming a sought-after place for Newcastle's intelligentsia – university lecturers, artists, designers. A new hipster lifestyle café cum ceramics workshop has just opened behind the development. If every new housing project took on board even a handful of the multitude of ideas at The Malings, I'm sure their communities would feel more connected and happier.

Yet this enormous success feels slightly dangerous for this historic setting. Igloo still has the option to develop multiple sites down the valley. Ash Sakula has over the years consulted on as many as nine of them. One such site is over the water, another is the timber yard next door. Much more development, even as high quality and intellectually ambitious as this one, would start to break up the spirit of what makes the valley so charming and appealing beyond The Malings – an almost bucolic landscape threaded with romantic ruins and ongoing light industrial activity. I'm confident though that if there is more development Igloo is the right one to do it. Any developer that appreciates the need to provide a spot for toe-dipping in the river has got people's physical and emotional well-being at heart. ●

Right Each home has an outdoor space whether that is a rooftop terrace or ground level garden.

Below One of the new flat interiors, here shown in the show home.

Credits
Architect, landscape designer and community engagement Ash Sakula
Developer Carillion Igloo
Contractor Gentoo Construction
Structural and transport engineer Civic Engineers
M&E consultant Max Fordham
Environmental engineer AMEC Environmental and Infrastructure
Project management Buro Four
Planning consultant Cundall
CDM co-ordinator Schal
Cost consultant Gleeds
Bricks Ibstock Birtley
Northern Buff
Timber frame Karlin
Windows and doors West Port
Ironmongery Eisenware
M&E sub-contractor Lorne Stewart
Structural steelwork A M Fabrication
Podium deck Northern Steel Decking
Precast stairs ACP Concrete
Timber stairs GD Woodworking
Sliding garage doors Automation Security
Kitchens Roundel
Roofing Roofclad



New ideas are needed for housing

Can new housing models such as customisation help close the performance gap in housing? Architects and house builders discussed the challenges and opportunities at the Recticel round table event



ALEXANDRA KISS

With housing in crisis it's an opportune time, said Nigel Bidwell, chairing the Recticel round table on housing, to consider alternatives to traditional house building models that offer more flexibility such as customised design. As Michael Holmes of NaCSBA put it: 'Government does recognise that the housing market is bust. It's in listening mode, and realises that throwing money at the big house builders won't ever bring prices down.'

But what are the alternatives?

Potential for custom-build

Some 53% of us would like to build our own house. But while few will ever be in a position to realise a Grand Designs-style self-build, there is potentially more scope for custom build housing, which, says Holmes, takes away the risk associated with such projects. Instead, buyers work with a specialist developer who provides a menu of design options, ideally within an overall masterplan. Participants discussed the wide

spectrum of potential choice, which ranged from choosing fit-out and configuration to shell-and-core developments that the owners fit out themselves.

Eric Holding of JTP Architects questioned whether the market was allowing people to personalise their space or was instead curtailing their lifestyle.

But would more custom building raise design standards? Not necessarily.

'More customisation might result in

more diversity but not necessarily in good design,' said Holmes, who added that this can be addressed with design codes and development masterplans.

Caroline Dove of HTA cited the situation in rural Ireland, where it is common to self-build homes from templates, although this often results in houses with a poor relationship to the landscape.

The BRE's new Home Quality Mark will, however, include custom-build warranted housing, confirmed BRE's Richard Cobb.

Challenges to take-up

Participants identified two key barriers to greater custom house development – unavailability of land in the right location and a lack of understanding of what custom build entails and can offer.

'We know people want more choices. You have to have the right land in the right place and the right people who can see how it works,' said Dove, who has been working on the Heartlands custom development for

'Sometimes choice can be paralysing... Everyone is petrified of making the wrong decision'

Carillion igloo in Cornwall.

She said simplicity was the key – HTA's design uses off-site construction and would take only six months to build. However, progress at Heartlands has still been slow, with, she said, 'not quite the appetite from local people, and not enough people who want to move to Cornwall and build their own house and hold on to it'.

Perhaps it's not so surprising that the market is reticent, says Gus Zogolovitch of Inhabit Homes, who pointed out that this was often the case with pioneering new concepts.

'Sometimes choice can be paralysing... A house is the biggest purchase 95% of us will make. Everyone is petrified of making the wrong decision,' he said, adding that communication of what custom design can offer and 'hand-holding' throughout the process were crucial.

Luke Tozer pointed out the opportunities for using new technologies such as VR to communicate custom design to potential buyers, or on-line specification.

And it's not just potential buyers who need help to understand custom build, said Zogolovitch, it's a learning curve for everyone from financiers and contractors to building inspectors, and warranty or service providers.

Financial innovation is also needed to enable different approaches to self and custom-build. This includes a way of enabling those who might wish to buy a shell and core for fit-out to get a mortgage (currently not available if the property isn't habitable). Although unusual in the UK, organising your own fit-out of a house is seen as the norm in many other countries, explains Zogolovitch.

Innovative disruptors

While custom build has yet to happen on a wide scale, there are plenty of new approaches emerging that offer either more choice or different financial models.

Liz Gibney of Home Group described how the housing association's Persona brand offers buyers a degree of choice in how the money is spent on their fit-out.

'We're trying to move away completely from how a standard developer would work. We offer as much house in terms of volume as possible, then [customers] choose what they have in it.'



ALEXANDRA KISS

Sarah Davies of Pocket Living described her company's model for compact individual units combined with shared amenities such as a communal roof terraces. Pocket is also developing sharing units for people to buy homes together in Haringey.

'Buyers would rather have smaller houses in better locations,' she says, adding that millennials tend to have fewer possessions (such as books, DVDs or records) and be less tolerant of commuting than previous generations.

Zogolovitch also cited the LILAC (Low Impact Living Affordable Community) co-housing co-operative in Leeds, where all members pay a flat 35% of their income to gain an equity share.

Demand and expectation

'Where people want to live, supply is a major issue,' says Holmes, one of many who expressed concern that major house builders had become land banks.

But Zogolovitch wondered if we were asking the wrong question in considering how to meet housing supply in such areas, and whether instead the issue was how to address the demand imbalance – how to make areas with low demand and land values more attractive for development through, for example, greater employment opportunities.

Gibney's Home Group had experienced this in Cumbria, where it had found it a challenge to achieve sustainable development.

While there was agreement that a more stable housing market is necessary to help make ownership more affordable, Zogolovitch questioned the assumption that buying was always a better financial option than renting, and asked whether we should necessarily expect housing to increase in value.

More housing would mean that buyers would look harder at variables such as running costs. Many around the table were concerned at the poor construction skills of an industry that is still, as Holmes put it, 'addicted to brick and stone' rather than Modern Methods of Construction, making it harder to achieve high performing, well-insulated buildings.

'The insulation is so important if you're going to be spending £200, £300, £400,000 on a house where you'll be staying for a long time,' said Recticel's Jon Parsons.

Impact of greater choice

Even small steps in smaller markets such as custom build can start to drive changes in the bigger market, said Bidwell.

Providing a product that gives a full spectrum of choice can only be a positive, added Holmes: 'If we can increase choice, other house builders will have to raise their game to compete. ●

WHO WAS THERE

Nigel Bidwell Partner, Farrells (Chair)

Sarah Davies Head of project management, Pocket Living

Caroline Dove Partner, HTA

Paul Forrester Technical services manager, Recticel

Liz Gibney Head of place, Home Group

Eric Holding Head of strategic projects, JTP Architects

Michael Holmes Chair, National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA)

Paul O'Brien Architect, Carl Turner Architects

Jon Parsons Specification manager, Recticel

Nick Peck Contracts manager, Mentmore Homes

Luke Tozer Director, Pitman Tozer Architects

Gus Zogolovitch Founder, Inhabit Homes

Richard Cobb Senior housing professional, BRE

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2: Intelligence



Internal
management



Where people
live

Finn Williams



Public Practice is a new social enterprise that aims to broker year-long placements for outstanding architects and urban planners with local authorities as a way of bringing a long lost sense of agency back to the planning process. We speak to its founding chief executive.

You talk about 'planning for the public good.' Does that mean it hasn't been recently?

No, there are many planners working for the public good, but in difficult conditions, and with fewer resources. It would be too easy to blame these difficulties on funding cuts. But as long ago as the late 90s government reports were highlighting design capacity as an issue. The loss of capacity probably started when local authorities stopped delivering housing in the late 70s. In 1976 49% of architects worked for the public sector; in London it's now 0.13%.

So what is the Public Practice initiative?

It places talented built environment professionals on the frontline of local authorities, to work in strategic, place-based roles with real agency. It's like being the film producers of places, assembling the script, funding and cast to deliver better environments for everyone. Every LA we've spoken to has said that their number one problem in terms of capacity is attracting the right people. We're a not-for-profit broker that aims to provide a pool of skilled talent (associates) they can draw from – while paying associates a market salary.

And you say associates will be on placement for 90% of the time?

Yes. The other 10% of the time they will work together as a cohort to produce collective planning research. We're hoping this R&D component to the placement will help generate new thinking that can be disseminated to all authorities we work with through reports and events. The cohort is intended to be a support network, allowing associates to bounce ideas off each other and share skills.

There are sponsors involved, some of whom are major developers like British Land and Berkeley. How do you avoid conflict of interest?

We've structured ourselves so there is no conflict. It's interesting to compare our model with Planning Performance Agreements, where developers effectively pay for an LA officer to help determine their application. This is widely accepted practice, but we've set up our model because it's far less open to conflicts of interest than PPAs. Our founding partners include the mayor of London, Local Government Association and Future Cities Catapult, which are looking at the bigger picture, divorced from any particular site or application.

So where do I sign?

Applications are invited from architects, urban designers, planners and related disciplines from 30 October. You can apply online at www.publicpractice.org.uk. It's a three-stage process: application, an assessment day and then interviews with LAs before placements start in April 2018.

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

Informal settlements are hard to control and monitor but are growing at an uncontrolled rate, and many are illegal

Edward Dale-Harris analyses the disastrous mudslide in Sierra Leone: ribaj.com/freetownmudslide



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

Internal
managementDesigning &
building it

Do the right thing

Just defining ethical priorities can be a minefield, never mind enforcing them. But, as evidenced by the RIBA's new CPD subjects, there's no getting away from it

Matt Thompson

As professionals who recommend what clients' budgets are spent on, architects seem well placed to influence the industry's ethical standards. That's on paper. In reality, the situation is much less straightforward. Clients' only obligations are to comply with the law and to further their intrinsic purpose which, in the commercial world, is to make a profit. All the rest is vulnerable to retraction at any point if that purpose is under threat.

So how can architects persuade their clients to buy responsibly from sustainable, safe and fair sources? What framework, evidence, and tools can they lean on to make a change for the good? And does the future hold any hope for better progress?

Whatever our moral standpoint, business and ethics are uneasy bedfellows. There are regular news stories about businesses behaving badly. Given the number of participants on construction projects, that ought to make us twitch uncomfortably. How do we guard against contamination by association, especially to unethical practices down a distant supply chain?

A web of laws has gradually tamed the most egregious excesses of business, forming an increasingly tightly knit cocoon while it metamorphoses, we hope, into a form fit for the ideal circular economy.

Despite this, ethical positions are tough to legislate for and even harder to make water-

tight. For every canny law-maker there's an even cannier player determined to beat the system. So a ruthless business owner can comply with the Modern Slavery Act simply by publishing its anti-slavery statement, even if that says it does nothing. So doing the right thing comes down to persuasion.

The ethical lingua franca for business in our Internet-accelerated world is summed up in the phrase 'enlightened self-interest'. This is essentially the utilitarian avoidance of negative feedback loops. Thus, I will look after the environment because my reputation and business depends on it; I will not screw with my supply chain because I need their goods to build my building; and so on.

That barely settles the matter, though. In the realm of sourcing construction materials and products, ethical priorities are far from

A ruthless business owner can comply with the Modern Slavery Act simply by publishing its anti-slavery statement, even if that says it does nothing



clear-cut. Product A might be selected over Product B on the grounds that the chain that produced it treats its labour fairly. On the other hand, Product A might be high in embodied carbon, or uneconomic to recycle.

There are many voluntary schemes, policies, protocols that promote the ethics legislation can't reach. The granddaddy of these is the UN Global Compact (UNGC), which has the goal of creating 'a more sustainable and inclusive global economy.'

The RIBA has signed up, adding gravitas to the profession's already profoundly ethical code of professional conduct and practice. By aligning itself to the UNGC, the institute has joined a network committed to achieving 17 sustainable development goals. To emphasize the point, the RIBA has added 'architecture for social purpose' to its CPD curriculum. A brochure celebrating this spells out some of the things architects can do.

Other parts of the industry are trying to define the terms of reference for specifiers. Most interesting of these is the Action Pro-



Left APRES identified Westonbirt Arboretum's Wolfson Tree Management Centre as somewhere that ethical sourcing had made a significant difference with substantial reductions in carbon and re-use of the client's natural resources. Instead of an off-the-peg steel shed the building by Invisible Studio with Buro Happold is timber-framed with logs from the site.

gramme for Responsible Sourcing (APRES) at Loughborough University, headed up by Professor Jacqueline Glass. Its helpful 2015 manifesto, published by the Institution of Civil Engineers, was informed by input from construction representatives and experts in transparency, traceability, provenance, supply chains and ethics from fashion, food and consumer retail. It distils the issues into 10 robustly thought-through principles (see right).

Fine words, but how do they translate into action? The biggest stumbling block is trust. How can the specifier sitting in an office in central London be confident that the man in Africa who extracted the ore that made the metal used in the part that was added to the engine for the boiler she wants for a building is not subject to unsafe working conditions?

The truth is, she can't. Unfortunately, there is no unified 'Fair Trade'-style system of ethical assurance – just a bewilderingly large patchwork of narrow options. APRES's Ethical Sourcing: a Designer's Guide clarifies the

complexity to some extent. It sets the context, defines the issue, and introduces the relevant standards and certification schemes (the usual instruments for giving assurance). The section on Products – understanding trade-offs for specifiers, while three case studies including Crossrail and Westonbirt Arboretum briefly outline how ethical standards have been packaged up in practice.

Rafal Andruszkiewicz, scheme manager at testing, inspection and certification body Exova BMTRADA, oversees FSC and PEFC certifications used to assure that timber products come from sustainable sources. Trust is generated not just from knowing that a third party has certified the product but also because suppliers have to be in it to win it. As he says, 'For them, certification is a business opportunity. And the last thing any of them wants is an environmental activists' protest outside their offices.'

There is a digital technology on the horizon – blockchain – that bridges the trust gap.

MANIFESTO FOR ETHICAL SOURCING IN CONSTRUCTION

- 1** Procure labour, materials, products and services only from organisations demonstrating and implementing zero tolerance to bribery and corruption.
- 2** Adopt the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code and work collaboratively with all supply chain organisations on its implementation.
- 3** Evaluate and address together the economic, social and environmental sustainability challenges and impacts of sourcing labour, materials, products and services.
- 4** Demonstrate a traceable and transparent supply chain for labour, materials, products and services.
- 5** Benefit the health, safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders including the natural environment.
- 6** Demonstrate materials are of legal origin.
- 7** Optimise social, environmental and economic impacts and opportunities of complex/manufactured products over their entire lifecycle.
- 8** Design, specify and procure materials, products and services with the greatest circular-economy benefits.
- 9** Design, specify and procure using credible and recognised responsible sourcing and certification schemes, where available.
- 10** Foster and communicate a business culture of openness, collaboration and accountability in order to achieve and demonstrate the principles of this manifesto.



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Of all the client types, public bodies are most receptive to embracing ethical sourcing

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David Hughes, director of project managers Hanga Ltd, thinks it holds good potential in construction. It has already been rolled out in the food industry, which has similar ethical sourcing concerns. As he says, 'The benefit is that you can virtually eliminate the risk of falsified records and remove the need for third-party certification at every stage.'

None of this is any use, however, without client buy-in, and that's the big challenge. Of all the client types, public bodies are most receptive to embracing ethical sourcing. Accountable to the taxpayer and serving the greater public good, their intrinsic purpose is already aligned.

This was certainly the case for the London 2012 Olympics, where the ODA gave ethics visibility using a 'balanced scorecard' system to assess bids. Kevin Owens, now director of Wilson Owens Architects, was design principal at the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, an experience that spliced ethical principles into his professional being. He recalls that, while successful, applying the sustainable sourcing code was challenging: 'The immovable deadline was used as an excuse not to go to a specified source. The closer we got, the more our controls were stretched.'

Arup's Carol Lemmens is global head of consulting and involved in Arup's role as global knowledge partner for the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the think-tank behind the circular economy. As he says, 'The shorter clients' return horizons, the harder it is to gain traction with ethical concerns. A dogmatic approach won't work.'



Above Crossrail is one of APRES' case studies on ethical sourcing for its attempt to dig into the supply chain in the many places where certification doesn't exist with a checklist and scoring for suppliers. Shown here is McAslan's Bond Street for Crossrail.

Instead, he advocates three pragmatic tactics. First, frame the issue in what he calls 'policy windows', ie identify how an ethical approach benefits your clients' objectives. This is what the RIBA's Client Liaison Group means when it urges architects to 'talk their client's language'.

Second, monetize the advantages and downside risks of externalities. When someone else's lax ethical standards lead to disaster upstream in the chain, the downstream owner's brand will suffer. What is it worth to avoid that eventuality?

The third acknowledges that, in response to consumer demand, pension funds increasingly use socially responsible funds. Since developers depend on such funding, this knowledge can be used to win traction, nudging client behaviour in the right direction.

While there is an emergent consensus about what we mean by ethical sourcing, it is still far from mainstream. The RIBA Professional Code commits architects to act 'conscientiously and responsibly' and to 'respect the relevant rights and interests of others'. No wriggle room: you have to try. ●

RIBA UPDATES CPD CORE CURRICULUM

The RIBA has revised its 10 annually mandatory CPD curriculum topics for chartered members from 2018. See the full descriptions at architecture.com

1. ARCHITECTURE FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE

Understanding the social, economic and environmental benefits architecture brings, and having the knowledge and skills to make informed, fair, and ethical choices.

2. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Understanding your legal, professional and ethical duties in relation to construction site and workplace safety. Having the knowledge and skills to develop and manage appropriate strategies, processes, tools and systems.

3. BUSINESS, CLIENTS AND SERVICES

Understanding the principles of good business practice and service provision, and the relevant legal frameworks. Having the knowledge and skills to ensure your business is managed competently, ethically, effectively and efficiently.

4. LEGAL, REGULATORY AND STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

Understanding and keeping up to date with legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. Having the knowledge and skills to apply these to other CPD Core Curriculum topics.

5. PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS

Understanding the legal and regulatory basis of procurement. Having the knowledge and skills to negotiate consultant procurement and win work, and ensure the right contract.

6. SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

Understanding the legal and regulatory basis and principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Having the knowledge and skills for low carbon, low energy design, with effective client briefing and management.

7. PLACES, PLANNING AND COMMUNITIES

Understanding legal, regulatory and policy frameworks and relevant planning processes and procedures. Having the knowledge and skills to create successful buildings in the context of neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

8. CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

Understanding the legislative framework and principles of conservation practice. Having the right knowledge, skills and techniques, or access to the right specialists, to work on conservation, historic and listed projects.

9. DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY

Understanding and keeping up to date with technical, design, engineering, services and technological issues. Having the knowledge and skills to deliver a successful building process using the latest technology.

10. INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Understanding the legislation and principles that apply to creating inclusive environments. Having the knowledge and skills to develop and implement inclusive design strategies and methods.

Sustaining momentum for greener living

A conference organised by the RIBA and Dow considered progress on sustainability in the built environment – and how to take it forward



Electric and hybrid vehicles are becoming familiar sights on our streets, low energy lighting is commonplace and recycling of waste is a must. We have made progress in putting our lives and our consumption of natural resources on a more sustainable footing over the past decade or two.

In the built environment we can measure the progress in products, technologies, developments, business processes and policy documents. But the rapid pace of technological change, shifting political sands and the lessons emerging from buildings themselves – around the gap between designed and built performance – raise questions about what sustainability means for tomorrow's buildings, and how the industry can continue to drive progress.

'I don't think anyone anticipated the speed of change we're seeing now,' said Rab Bennetts, founding director of architect Bennetts Associates.

He was speaking at the conference Sustainability – where are we now? which was organised by RIBA and manufacturer Dow Building Solutions in September to take stock and consider where we go from here. The event was chaired by Bennetts, with an expert panel comprising Dr Owen Abbe, associate director of sustainable products at building science centre BRE; AHR director Dr Judit Kimpian, chair of the Architects' Council of Europe sustainability group; Joan Ferrer, technical sales manager at Dow; Mark Harris, head of technical services and operations at roofing specialist Radmat; John Davies, head of sustainability at developer Derwent London; Chris Twinn, founder of consultancy Twinn Sustainability Innovation; and Katy van Geffen, project architect, David Miller Architects.

The development of more sustainable office buildings, housing, schools and universities across the UK can be attributed

The panel for the conference Sustainability – where are we now?

to a succession of policies and standards, as well as the work of the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) and others. It has been aided by the uptake of BREEAM, which has been applied to such high profile projects as Bennetts Associates' 5 Pancras Square, and other buildings at London's King's Cross.

Radmat's Harris, who chairs sector body the Green Roof Organisation, praised the London Plan: 'It has been the single most important document for us, in driving sustainable green roofing. It has given the opportunity for the mayor to drive the agenda, and we hope other mayors will follow suit.'

But policies come and go, and the government's determination to cut red tape, which saw the scrapping of the Code for Sustainable Homes, has shifted client



Joan Ferrer (far right), Dow's technical sales manager.

perceptions. 'Sustainability has lost its aspiration for some clients – they can no longer say they want to achieve a high level of the Code for Sustainable Homes,' said David Miller Architects' van Geffen. 'In the residential sector there's often a disconnect between the client at development stage and the end user. The developer may focus on profit while the end user is unaware of sustainability benefits.'

The government's light touch approach, relying largely on building regulations, won't be sufficient to promote sustainability because, as Chris Twinn put it: 'Regulations don't drive the leading edge of the market, they catch the laggards.' BRE's Abbe took up the point: 'Regulations are intended to be all encompassing, so that the lowest can climb the ladder.' Sustainability's future depends on a different approach, he said. 'It is more a question of driving awareness and understanding.'

The London Plan's requirements show the industry can go beyond building regulations, and manufacturers can meet that market demand, said Dow's Ferrer: 'We have the

knowledge and the products to do better than building regulations.' But, he added, 'We have to be sure that the products we put in the market will allow people to achieve what they want.' That has led much recent sustainability research and industry effort to focus on building knowledge and certainty.

On the client side, there are initiatives such as the LENDERS project, which brings the UKGBC, mortgage lenders and the building industry together to build an evidence base for including energy bills in mortgage affordability calculations. Or there's the European ABRACADABRA project, which is looking at the non-energy-related benefits of deep retrofits.

At the same time, the industry is gathering data to inform its understanding of how products, systems, buildings and their users all work together in an effort to help close the performance gap.

The real world performance failings of sustainable buildings have led the word sustainability to become associated with a 'credibility gap', said Architects' Council of Europe's Kimpian. That has contributed to the prevalence of a string of alternatives to the S word, such as resilience, whole life or even just quality. Kimpian led the development of Carbon Buzz, the platform established by RIBA and CIBSE to crowdsource data on building performance at design stage and in use. 'In the absence of a regulatory drive it's up to bodies and universities to work together to create and monitor data,' she said. 'We do know a lot, but we should be able to design a building where users can intuitively do the right thing. We need to be more aware of outcomes and conclusions.'

Developer Derwent London is, said



Dr Judit Kimpian, director of sustainable architecture and research at AHR.

'We can't design the perfect building of the future. Let's not lose sight of simple adaptability'

Michael Mamalis, partner,
Grayston Alan Durnell

'We've got a fragmented playing field now, with the Home Quality Mark, zero carbon and wellbeing'

Stephen Edwards, sustainability manager, Catalyst Housing

Davies, 'obsessive about data'. 'We manage our buildings so it's important for the tenant experience, maintenance costs, our knowhow and our future buildings,' he said. But he also lamented the fact that there is no facility in the capital to allow the developer to compare its data with others'.

Building information management (BIM) holds the promise of embedding data into building design, construction and ongoing management, although there are challenges to be overcome, with Kimpian drawing attention to the need for the design profession to become 'more data literate as a profession'. She explained: 'As a profession we're not clear on what information we want to extract at each stage.'

David Miller Architects is among those already applying BIM to projects. Van Geffen said its adoption in the very early stages of a project raised questions about what information should be incorporated into the model. Nonetheless she believed BIM could not only provide a framework for data, but could also help designers make the case for sustainability.

Twinn said BIM could also offer an opportunity for designers to regain lost responsibilities by taking on the role of 'custodians of the process'. 'We are the only people who consider long-term value, comfort and wellbeing of occupiers,' added Kimpian. Sustainability's name may have changed, but the future of sustainable building looks to be in the hands of the architectural profession itself. ●

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In a confusing world...

Empathetic, considered design makes a huge contribution to the quality of life of dementia sufferers. Award-winning sector specialist Glancy Nicholls shares its key principles

Gesine Kippenberg

Dementia is affecting a growing number of people as our societies continue to age. As well as affecting memory, reasoning and behaviour, the disease may also impair perception and interpretation of sensory signals.

Sensitive environmental design is paramount for the reduction of common stress factors. Appropriate and empathetic design can provide a dignified environment for the patients as well as their families and carers. A case in point is Glancy Nicholls' Meadow View Specialist Residential Care Centre, which gained several RIBA awards this year.

When tendering for its first dementia care centre 10 years ago, the practice embarked on a 'crash course' to learn all it could from the Alzheimer's Society, the University of Stirling's Dementia Services Development Centre and the latest research projects.

Now it is a recognised leader in the field and its work is informing Stirling University's research. Glancy Nicholls' Perry Tree Centre in Birmingham was the first dementia care centre to be awarded a gold award from the University of Stirling.

Associate director Lisa Deering explains how perception and processing of visual and audio signals is affected by dementia and the design principles that help create a comfortable home for care centre residents.

What inspired your work?

The Netherlands is one of the most forward-thinking countries, having built a pioneering scheme (Hogeweyk in the town of Weesp) for dementia sufferers that consists of an entire self-contained village, with

shops, theatre and post office. Residents live in 'houses' designed to reflect the decade their memory has regressed to. With only one way in and out of the village, they are free to move about and interact with others in a safe environment. Residents' relatives are reassured that their loved ones are fully monitored with cameras and carers in normal everyday clothes.

While the cost of building and maintaining a facility like this is not currently feasible in the UK with our health and social care system, it provides ideas and concepts that can be incorporated into smaller scale projects. Our designs are informed by several key principles.

Easily navigable spaces with visual clues

When designing the layout it must be remembered that residents have moved from a familiar home environment. Some dementia sufferers do not find adjustment easy, commonly forgetting that they have moved or why. Their cognitive ability to learn a new route or layout is often limited.

They tend to look for familiar elements for orientation or rely heavily on what is immediately visible. Living areas should follow a simple layout with visible destination points that do not require the residents to

A contrasting threshold strip may be interpreted as a step or in extreme cases a hole



remember where to find them.

Cognitive impairment can affect the ability to interpret bodily signals such as the need to go to the toilet. Therefore, a toilet should be in close visual proximity to all communal spaces in addition to the en-suite provided in each bedroom, which should be visible from the bed space.

It is important that there are no dead ends. We locate the bedrooms in the centre of the residential clusters and an activity space at either end. This arrangement allows a resident to go in any direction and find a destination activity point.

Diversity of scale and programme

Residents have different requirements based on their preferences and severity of their condition. Some may enjoy a larger and busier communal area, others may prefer a smaller quieter space. We provide activity spaces of varying scale and size and differentiate areas within larger lounge and dining spaces using furniture and finishes.

Careful acoustic design

Dementia sufferers can be a lot more susceptible to noise disturbance than others, as they may not be able to decipher the source of the sound which can prove upsetting. Acoustics form an important aspect of the design.

We treat every floor and every resident bedroom as a standalone unit from an acoustic perspective. We use blockwork party wall construction between bedrooms. While this may seem high spec, it provides a robust detail that achieves all acoustic requirements and is less susceptible to compromise by later alterations.



High lighting levels and daylight

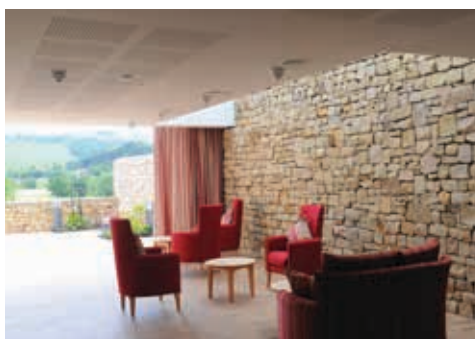
As we age, our eyesight deteriorates and the amount of light we need for tasks increases. A 75-year-old needs nearly four times the amount of light as someone in their 20s. Our colour contrast and depth perception also diminishes. This is aggravated in dementia sufferers as the disease may influence the way the brain processes visual signals.

Because of this, we incorporate large areas of glazing to maximise daylight. Not only does it provide a more even distribution of light but also better colour rendering and thus colour contrast. This is important as it aids residents' ability to understand and navigate their environment. Lounge and dining areas are designed with glazed doors and side windows leading out into external spaces, with large glazed partitions to corridor areas to improve their visibility.

Carefully consider colour and contrast

We spend a significant amount of time choosing wall, floor and furniture finishes. Stark colour changes of the flooring should be avoided. Even a contrasting threshold strip may be misinterpreted as a step or in extreme cases a hole. This can result in residents not wanting to cross these areas.

On the other hand, some colour contrast may be important to distinguish key elements such as doors in corridors, furniture, or sanitaryware. Toilet doors should have higher contrast to make them easily identifiable, whereas doors to staff and store areas should be the same colour as the surrounding walls. By blending them in we minimise the risk of residents trying to access these areas and getting frustrated by their inability.



Top left Early concept for the dementia element of Belper Village & Community Care Centre, Derbyshire.

Top right Landscape proposal for Oakland Village & Community Care Centre, Swadlincote.

Above Meadow View long term activity area, Darley Dale.

The type and location of patterns must be carefully considered too. Impaired visual perception may result in residents misinterpreting them. Flecks on carpets or countertops are often misconstrued as dirt specks and can result in the resident trying to pick up or clean the area. Bold stripes can be perceived as bars or residents may try and pick flowers from floral patterns.

Access to external spaces and landscaping

All long-term residents have direct access to a secure and inspiring external environment to facilitate the health benefits of sunlight exposure and contact with nature. Vitamin D is known to increase bone strength and muscle performance, resulting in fewer falls with reduced severity when they do occur.

Gardens need to offer a range of spaces. Safe and secure paths that provide 'green' walks with regular resting points can reduce

stress levels and provide activity and social interaction. Raised flower beds and vegetable plots encourage gardening for those more active, as well as quieter areas for reflection.

Addressing the needs of family and carers

One of the biggest issues affecting dementia patients and their families is the social stigma still associated with it. Often the dementia sufferer is cared for by immediate family until they can no longer cope. This puts a lot of strain on close relatives and carers.

The Dutch 'Alzheimer cafés' first focused our attention towards the relatives and carers of the person with dementia. The building design needs to express dignity and respect for both the dementia sufferer and their family and friends. The buildings should have a hotel feel rather than that of an institutional care environment. Architecture, interiors and signage should not be patronising.

All our schemes provide community facilities offering a welcoming environment where carers can go for advice, support or respite care. This can vary from a day care facility and café to community rooms, restaurants and bars. All have been designed for use not only by dementia sufferers but also the general public.

Can the average care home afford design excellence?

Cost should not compromise good design. A lot of our work has been for local authorities with limited budgets who need to demonstrate value for money. As with any other development, the success derives from understanding the client's aspirations, requirements and budget, allowing us to interrogate the brief and separate the necessities from the 'nice to have'. We incorporate simple and effective detailing early on.

Glancy Nicholls is out to tender with a further scheme for Belper, Derbyshire. After consultation with council and community groups, it was agreed to relocate the town library into the development. By providing facilities that are accessible to the wider community, the architects aim to raise awareness of both the condition and the support available to sufferers and their families.

As the older model of strict separation is increasingly called into question, it is to be hoped that this model inspires wider application around the country. In the end, dementia concerns us all. ●

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Town hall tyrannies

The randomness of planning approvals raises some disturbing questions



Maria Smith

One of the darker voices in my head says that planning authorities are more or less king-makers, with the power to make the cunning and lucky a tidy sum on a good development. This naughty voice gains frightening credence when the planning process presents little rhyme or reason.

When idly perusing the quarterly statistics for planning applications from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the first thing I noticed for the year ending June 2017 was that the City of London granted 99% of its major and minor planning decisions. At the opposite end, the five local authorities that granted the lowest proportion of planning decisions were outer London boroughs: Enfield, Harrow, Newham, Hillingdon and Hounslow. In fact, of the 15 authorities with the lowest percentage of decisions granted, 10 are in outer London. Why is it harder to get planning permission here?

Where is it easier? Of the 21 local authorities that granted over 95% of decisions, 17 are north of Cambridge, and 14 of these are north

of Sheffield. Geographical insinuations aside though, what really struck me was how much the proportion of successful applications varied at all. Even excluding Development Corporations and the City of London, the percentage of decisions granted ranges enormously from a whopping 98% in Wigan down to just 61% in Enfield. What makes some authorities grant so much and others so little?

I wondered whether the boroughs granting a higher percentage of decisions also tended to bring fewer applications to decision. A well-resourced, hands-on application process might nip unfavourable development in the bud. The numbers did not support this theory though.

What about scale? The percentage of minor applications also varied tremendously, from 14% to 63%. Inner London tended to have a higher proportion of minor applications but outer London was representative of the national situation, which shows no correlation between the proportion of minor applications and percentage of decisions granted. So no, it doesn't seem to be about scale.

While outer London authorities in general are granting a smaller proportion of permissions, this isn't the case for all: Sutton, Merton and Ealing are all granting more than 85% of decisions, only just below the national average. Is this a clue? I've collected various data on all the London boroughs (don't ask me why) so I compared everything I could think of, but found nothing. It doesn't seem to be geography, or population, or job density, or persons per hectare, or number of businesses, or education level, or the percentage of people who visit museums or the percentage of people who feel they can get along with people from other backgrounds. There isn't even any correlation with whether political control of the borough rests with Labour or the Conservatives. Perhaps it isn't something that tells us of the culture of the citizens of the borough. So what then?

Nationally, major applications for 'general industry/storage/warehouse' achieve a 97% success rate; whereas minor applications for dwellings, 74%. We all know the seemingly disproportionate difficulty of securing planning for small housing projects. I'm sympathetic to the argument for expanding the remit of permitted development, allowing innovation to flourish where the risk is smaller and relieving our beleaguered planning departments. I eagerly compared

What if a series of ever so slightly brasher decisions leads us to a world where an application for planning permission amounts to an application for prosperity: permission to be rich?

numbers of dwellings granted with the percentage of decisions granted and was there a correlation? No! So what is it? Why do some authorities grant planning to so many more projects than others?

There is supposed to be a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' but there seem to be wildly different interpretations of this phrase across the country. Perhaps all this comes down to 'sustainable development' being nigh on an oxymoron. Perhaps this lack of decisive guidance is letting sinister human nature bloom. What if a series of ever so slightly brasher decisions leads us to a world where an application for planning permission amounts to an application for prosperity: permission to be rich? What if this then gets out of hand and a sweeping change of government abolishes private development altogether? What if all construction becomes nationalised and an application for planning permission becomes an application for your project to be built by the state? What if we all have universal basic income so everybody spends their time generating value in whichever way they find interesting and architects sit about imagining designs and submitting them not for awards but for nationalised construction? But I digress, or am becoming hysterical: there's a naughty voice in my head saying planning authorities are more or less king-makers. ●

Maria Smith is a director of architecture and engineering at Interrobang



Advantages of using drones to reach those inaccessible areas for complete point cloud capture.



Take to the skies

Aerial surveying using drones and a range of sophisticated technologies can produce better surveys that are quicker and much more thorough – and they're cheaper too

When creating drawings or models of high level detail, visual access may not be possible using terrestrial surveying methods. However, the use of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) is now supplying high levels of accuracy. The technology is evolving rapidly, further increasing the advantages.

Remote licenced pilots can operate throughout Britain with permission from the civil aviation authority.

Speed and accuracy

High definition cameras and LiDAR (light detection and ranging) mounted to drones provide accuracy that is second to none, which coupled with certified UAV pilots ensures a quality, informative survey.

Compared to traditional land surveying, drones can pick up millions more points with their advanced data capture, and cover a vast area of land in a far shorter amount of time. They can also be tethered to monitor specific issues over long periods, again allowing for greater detail and a far more accurate survey.

A drone saves approximately two thirds of the time used by traditional methods.

Photogrammetry and orthomosaics are sometimes required in infrastructure and site planning. These surveys stitch together multiple aerial shots to create a single image from which measurements can be taken, or converted into a point cloud to create a 3D model or the production of a 2D drawing.

Models can also be created from the UAV survey point cloud, creating useful visualisations for architects and designers. These models can be imported into BIM or CAD packages for convenience.

Internal surveys and inspections

Drones can be used in internal spaces, which can be useful in areas which are unlit, hazardous or confined, enabling a safer and more accurate inspection.

Structures often need to be inspected over time. Drones save on costly manual inspection fees – for example scaffolding hire or a mechanical platform. Their surveys can

be used to inspect for uses including general maintenance, roofing, solar panels, structural damage and corrosion. The images can be used to prepare a report or a specification of an acceptable standard for the remedial works required, and for a return visit to check that the works have been brought up to an acceptable standard.

Thermographic and other UAV surveys

Various types of thermographic surveys can be undertaken depending on the situation, including: coupled structural thermal analysis, insulation monitoring, leak detection and hot spot identification.

Topographical drone surveys can create point clouds of millions of points, accurately, in limited periods of time and in hard to reach or vast areas. By the use of photogrammetry software, advanced algorithms and GCPs (GPS derived control) gives an accuracy of 1 -2 cm in XYZ co-ordinates.

LiDAR surveys can achieved an accuracy of sub 5mm. ●



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RISING STARS

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2017

A brave and resourceful lot

Origin is thrilled, once again, to be championing the RIBA J's Rising Stars.

One of the main reasons for our involvement is because the initiative resonated with us. Like the entrants, Origin is essentially in its infancy in its overall journey and potential. Since establishing in 2001, we've certainly made our mark in the fenestration industry by rewriting the norm with our fresh thinking, innovative product developments, unparalleled lead times and unmatched support for our customers.

We believe the future for entrants and Origin alike will be filled with endless opportunities. So we want to embrace that, collaborating with those who share this enthusiasm and passion, and are looking to question the norm and excel from there.

Ben Brocklesby, sales and marketing director, Origin

RIBA Journal and Origin inaugurated Rising Stars last year, but it was this year's longlist that really made us understand how important an award it is. As several of the 2017 cohort remind us, those eligible to enter – by having qualified professionally within the past 10 years – will all have qualified into a world much altered by the financial crash of 2007/2008.

Across the spectrum, from global politics to individuals driven to food banks and economic migration, the effects of this episode in history are still playing out. Most of this year's entrants are millennials, and in contrast to the way many newspapers depict this generation, we have discovered a brave and resourceful lot.

They had to be. With traditional routes through the architectural profession often closed to them, they found other ways of working, making money and using their spatial and architectural skills.

This year's award includes many young practices as well as architects who moved into project management, diversified into digital fabrication or took up charity work. While no one would advocate another financial crisis, it is often said that they breed creativity and spur on new thinking. The 2017 Rising Stars cohort is a testament to that. Let's see where they take it over the next 10 years.

With thanks to our judges, architect Mary Duggan of Mary Duggan Architects; John Nordon, design director at PegasusLife; David Miller of David Miller Architects; environmental engineer Mark Skelly, director, Skelly and Couch; and RIBA Journal's executive editor Eleanor Young.

Isabelle Priest, assistant editor, RIBA Journal

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Tumpa Husna Yasmin Fellows

Project architect, co-founder, trustee, Mannan Foundation Trust and
 architect Proctor & Matthews
 Part 2: 2008 Part 3: 2011



People respond to adverse events in different ways. For some it's a moment to retreat and reflect, while others find it gives them strength to take on challenges that they might not have otherwise. Tumpa Fellows is definitely one of the latter. After her father's death, in 2011 she, her mother and her three sisters took over his charity, the Mannan Foundation Trust, which helps disadvantaged people in the remote, low-lying village of Rajapur in Bangladesh where he was born.

As the architect of the family (two of her sisters are doctors), Fellows decided to use her professional skills to create a permanent home for the charity's teaching and healthcare work. This has become the Rajapur Women's Literacy and Healthcare Centre. The aim of the centre is to empower local women by providing income generating and literacy skills, as well as free healthcare.

The project started in 2013 and went on site in 2014. While employed full-time at architecture practices in London, Fellows organised the fundraising and designed the building, making it as economical as possible to fit a £20,000 budget. It is intended to be resilient to the area's challenging climate, including annual flooding and temperatures that can reach 45°C.

A kind of Francis Kéré in the making, Fellows spent a lot of time in the community, observing how it builds and how existing methods could be adjusted to improve the quality of the spaces in the centre. For example, to tone down the noise of rain on the metal roof, Fellows inserted a thin layer of foam insulation underneath.

Constructed from rammed earth and bamboo, the building sits on stilts over a natural ditch so it benefits from evaporative



Above Women made the rammed earth blocks at home.
Below left Local people were employed for labour.

cooling through its special perforated blocks.

For the build Fellows led a team of volunteers offering professional services and employed local people for labour. The community was involved from the very beginning through workshops and by the adoption of simple building techniques with the aim of instilling self-sufficiency.

The project also tackles social issues, including the fact that most girls in rural Bangladesh do not continue education beyond the age of 11. Fellows tried to encourage the women to engage with the work on site, but a strict code of cultural practice restricts them from working in public, side by side with men. To solve this, she set up a system whereby women built rammed earth wall blocks at home, allowing them to be central to the construction process.

Overall, the judges praised Fellows for 'having it all' – natural leadership, a collaborative mindset, energy, social awareness and a hard-working attitude. Mark Skelly thinks she demonstrated a lot of drive in picking up her father's charity, while Mary Duggan says she is simply incredible.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

The industry should do more to address gender inequality by ensuring that both males and females receive the same opportunities to take on responsibilities. It is the initial opportunity that female architects lack which causes them to fall behind compared with their male equivalents, resulting in pay inequality.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

I would like to pioneer the use of architecture to improve the lives of disadvantaged people in Bangladesh and the surrounding countries. I believe one way is to help people learn the value of their village amenities/resources by instilling confidence to encourage them to take ownership through collectiveness and community projects.



JTP

Anna Howell

Senior urban designer, JTP
Part 2: 2017



The judges were impressed both by Anna Howell's achievements at JTP while studying, and the faith the practice is putting in her by allowing her to open a Bath studio within a year of completing her part 2 in January. 'To let someone set up a Bath office is impressive, you are underwriting it,' says John Nordon.

On joining the practice as a part 1 Howell discovered her interest in designing at an urban scale. She took a masters in urban design while working in London at JTP part-time on a study of urban densities which has continued to inform the practice. She then studied for her part 2 as an office-based exam at Oxford Brookes, winning student prizes on both courses. The judges consider this quite an achievement given the move from the practical matters of office and projects to a wider creative space and back again.

Her main project is Southall Waterside, a new neighbourhood of 3,750 homes in west London. She has taken it from due diligence and consultation to on-site co-ordination, while maintaining a strong relationship with the client.

Her referee, JTP managing partner Marcus Adams, has high praise for Howell: 'Anna is a rare and exceptional talent,' he says. 'An architect and urbanist, she is confident across a range of scales, contexts

JTP

and environments. Cool under pressure, she combines client confidence with creativity. Anna is hardworking, determined and driven, yet understated and respectful in her demeanour.'

It may be these traits that have allowed her to drive important elements of change in the practice. Five years ago she helped put JTP at the forefront of BIM-enabled masterplanning with her project at Southall, which was the practice's first attempt at BIM at an urban scale. The methodology developed for this continues to be used in the practice and gives clients chances to test and measure viability, composition and design options.

With an increasing number of masterplans requiring design codes coming into the office, Howell was at the forefront of developing a system to ensure a balance between coherence and flexibility for areas that would inevitably be handed over to housebuilders. Through workshops and using her project as a pattern, this has become the basis of a new way of working for the practice.

As Howell sets up JTP's Bath studio, she is getting out to see important players in the region with the aim of bringing in work from the South West.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

There is often a disparity between what is taught in architectural schools and the reality of practice, leaving many students underprepared or underwhelmed. I believe a broader range of young people from a variety of backgrounds should have alternative opportunities to enter the profession through routes such as apprenticeships and work-based learning, to diversify the profession and give greater flexibility to architectural education.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

I am excited to see that Bath is finally acknowledging its river frontage and realising the benefits this can provide to the city's urban fabric. I would like to tackle one of the missing pieces at Green Park, which is not a park but two run-down car parks and a road bridge, carrying a constant flow of pedestrians into the city centre. I can see an opportunity for a series of carefully considered public realm interventions that could connect the riverside masterplan with the increasingly popular Kingsmead Square, and could transform this well-trodden route into a vibrant place for visitors and residents alike.

Top left Howell is project lead for a garden city at Long Marston Airfield near Stratford upon Avon.

Bottom left Bid submission for new London neighbourhood.

Ben Ridley

Director, Architecture for London Part 2: 2008 Part 3: 2011



Left Polished House, Islington, by Architecture for London.

JIM STEPHENSON

Ben Ridley founded Architecture for London (AFL) in 2009 at a relatively early stage in his career, initially because the recession made finding decent employment in an established firm difficult. Yet, conscious of his limited experience after graduating from the Bartlett (with first class honours, distinctions and awards) he employed more senior architects to develop the knowledge in the practice as well as his own.

It was this move that particularly impressed the judges, showing a self-awareness that many young architects are not confident enough to admit. It also no doubt helped AFL find its feet. Like many practices, it initially focused on private residential work, and gained a reputation for considered, smaller scale projects, including the Polished House, an extension and refurbishment in Highbury, London. Since then AFL has remained consistently profitable and has grown to 10 people. It has expanded into other sectors and larger scale projects, for which it has won numerous awards including those run by New London Architecture.

The judges found it interesting that AFL focuses on London, which means its manifesto is defined by the built environment issues facing the city: how best to build homes for Londoners, what makes workplaces fit for the 21st century, and how to reinvigorate public

spaces so that they engage and excite. This decision has refined its skills in challenging projects with constrained sites, complex stakeholder groups and heritage assets.

On top of this, Ridley has become a certified Passivhaus designer and developed a unique 'healthy homes' design process at AFL. This allows the Passivhaus skills to be disseminated to all members of the team, so that they inform more of AFL's projects.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

The risk-averse culture in the industry is not beneficial for nurturing young architectural talent and is something I'd like to see improved. As a smaller practice we find it difficult to meet the increasingly tough criteria for many expressions of interest and competitions in relation to turnover and previous experience. I have always found it fascinating and inspiring that the 1952 Barbican competition was won by Geoffry Powell in his 30s, when he was yet to even set up in practice with Peter Chamberlin and Christoph Bon.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

I have a keen interest in the hidden potential of infrastructure in London. A recent proposal for Old Street roundabout seeks to improve the public realm, resolving issues arising from vehicle-dominated 1960s urban planning, and creating start-up workspaces for technology companies. I am also exploring 'meanwhile' uses of railway arches at Loughborough Junction as community workspaces.

Arthur Mamou-Mani

Director, Mamou-Mani Part 2: 2008 Part 3: 2011

Arthur Mamou-Mani is a French-born architect who came to the UK 'to follow in the footpath of the great high-tech and ground-breaking architects, such as Norman Foster and Zaha Hadid'. He graduated from the Architectural Association in 2008 at the height of recession – in common with many of this year's shortlist. His difficulties in finding a job made him question the validity of architecture business models, especially compared with young coders who can self-initiate a company with angel investments.

Mamou-Mani set off in his own direction using the knowledge of digital fabrication and parametric modelling he had acquired at the AA. In 2011 he founded Mamou-Mani Architects, a firm that specialises in digitally designed and fabricated architecture, then he

set up a digital fabrication laboratory named Fab.Pub in Hackney.

It is this 'enormous amount of energy' that caught the judges' attention. By giving designers access to the technologies of both coding and making, Mamou-Mani has helped break down the barriers between architects and related professions such as contractors, engineers and designers in other fields.

One of Mamou-Mani's first opportunities to act as entrepreneur-maker was The Magic Garden, the RIBA Regent Street Windows project for Karen Millen in 2013. It won the Crown Estate Award and raised profits at the flagship store 20% by attracting more visitors.

Karen Millen has since created a dress inspired by Mamou-Mani's original piece and commissioned the firm on five further schemes. The project inspired a passer-by who commissioned the practice to design a hotel for the space tourists of Virgin Galactic as well. Mamou-Mani has also been working on open-source software, Silkworm, that sends information to 3D printers directly from Curve plug-in. The tool has helped push 3D printing to its limits.

Before founding the practice, Mamou-Mani worked with Atelier Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid Architects and Proctor and Matthews

Architects. In a short time Mamou-Mani has gained enormous traction with high-profile clients, which impressed the judges. 'The work is both sculptural and mathematical, a combination that is difficult to do well,' notes Mark Skelly.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

I want colleagues to not be afraid of the future, but fully embrace it. New technologies such as robotics can positively break barriers between professions. Projects can become products and the countless hours we spend on R&D can bring royalties. I want to empower new architects by teaching them about entrepreneurship and fabrication.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

Airports – the cathedrals of our time. I believe new kinds of airports will emerge in the near future; with the rise of drones, spacecraft, airships and hyperloops, we will travel further and faster. Airports will be the connection point for all these types of circulation. They will be more central, vertical and larger. It will be fascinating to see how digital fabrication will impact transportation; structural trusses will self-generate, be 3D printed or robotically assembled to achieve fully adaptable envelopes.

Below The Karen Millen window design completed by Mamou-Mani Architects using digital fabrication.



Úna Breathnach-Hifearnáin

Project architect, Purcell
Part 2: 2012 Part 3: 2014

The judges recognised Úna Breathnach-Hifearnáin's dedication to her project Aerospace Bristol and its detailed design and delivery. 'She is passionate and making a difference,' says Eleanor Young.

This is a museum to celebrate and remember Concorde, and Breathnach-Hifearnáin's nomination makes clear that she understands the personal attachment people had to the aircraft and took the time to educate herself on the subject.

'When Úna joined Purcell two years ago she impressed immediately with her creative problem-solving and passion for delving into projects to understand them fully,' says her referee, associate Rob Gregory. 'As a colleague,



Left Concorde Aerospace Building, Bristol at dusk.

QUINTIN LAKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Úna is incredibly generous with her time and expertise. Her dedication and good nature makes working with clients and tough deadlines much easier on her team.'

She has the hallmarks of a good project architect and more, Purcell explicitly saying that deep involvement in one project, which could be all consuming, doesn't mean other more mundane activities are ditched.

The judges were also pleased by the positive and proactive way that contractor Kier was mentioned in Breathnach-Hifearnáin's entry, a missing element from much architectural discussion.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

I would love it to become more inclusive, to engage with young people more and to give those less advantaged the opportunity to study and enjoy architecture. Introducing the idea of architecture to younger minds may give them the curiosity required to pursue it as a career.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

Dún Dúchathair on the Aran islands in Ireland. Simply for the solitude of place. There on the boundary of land and sea a terraced wall surrounds the remains of some early dwellings known as clocháns. I have imagined creating something magical there ever since I first visited as a child.

Declan Sharkey

Principal, Populous
Part 2: 2009 Part 3: 2010

'He arrived at Populous and very soon was leading on their core business,' says Rising Stars judge John Nordon. This was recognised this year when Declan Sharkey became the practice's youngest principal, at the age of 32. His projects include QPR Stadium and Elite Training Facility, Real Madrid Stadium, Copenhagen Arena and Nanjing Olympic Village.

His reference from Populous managing director for EMEA, Christopher Lee, explains his value: 'He is a natural leader with incredible attention to detail, an astute business acumen and a particular flair for problem solving. Since joining the firm seven years ago, he has quickly become one of the practice's key leaders.'

That leadership is demonstrated by the way he runs multiple projects simultaneously,



Left Real Madrid Stadium.

currently in Finland, Ireland and Italy, taking the lead on everything from design to client liaison, planning, programming and contract issues. He heads the firm's global training centre group in EMEA and mentors younger architects.

Sharkey also takes his expertise into the field, as when he was chosen to lead an international group to audit India's major sports venues for the All India Football Federation. He continues to be involved in his family's joinery workshop business.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

In an industry of multiple consultants, architects should bring unrivalled knowledge and value to projects for clients, in part by offering a more comprehensive service.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

I would like to spend more time in Asia developing a sustainable, adaptable sports facility. The cultural and political differences within each city make this the ideal area to develop a modular, multifunctional venue that could be adapted in scale and use to suit the city, country or region.

Nathalie Baxter

Project architect, FaulknerBrowns
Part 2: 2014 Part 3: 2016

Nathalie Baxter impressed the judges with the way she spotted an issue – the lack of voice for recent part 3 graduates – and is doing something about it. After gaining her part 3 at Newcastle University last year (winning the prize for best graduating student) she set up the Young Architectural Practitioners Forum with the RIBA in the North East and was then elected chair.

The launch brought together 80 young professionals and has been followed through with clearly defined aims and a series of events allowing a different kind of learning and communication in the region. Baxter has presented the ideas to members nationally to encourage the idea of the forum to be adopted across the RIBA's regions. 'She is opening up the debate on what a part 3 architect is,' says judge Mary Duggan.

Baxter runs the forum alongside her first post-part 3 job as project architect, a 4,000m² owner-occupier office in Durham which includes the largest porcelain cladding modules in Europe. She is now broadening her interest in collaboration to the wider industry, having won a scholarship and the support of her practice to study interdisciplinary design and management.

Her referee, practice partner Nicholas Deeming, says: 'Nathalie has an outstanding skill set... Her inspiring attributes have allowed her to develop strong working relationships with her colleagues, students and wider project teams.'

The judges were impressed with what Baxter had achieved in the three years since completing part 2. Her entry and those of two shortlisted colleagues from FaulknerBrowns, each at slightly different stages of their career, highlighted 'something very good' going on in the practice, the judges felt.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

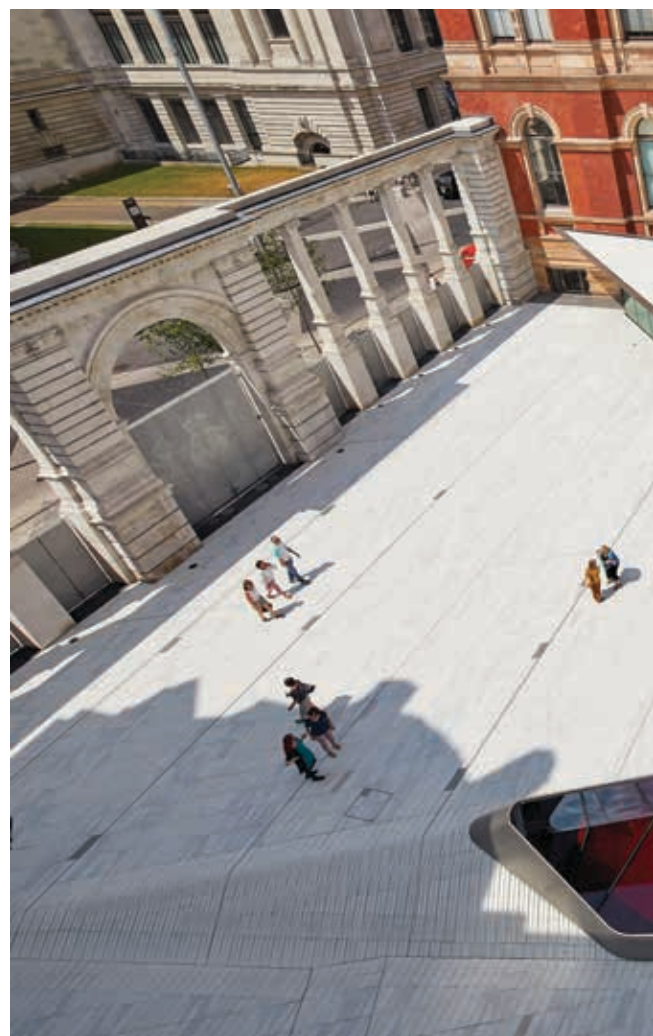
I am frustrated by the procedures and processes we are constrained by as designers and the effect on our outputs. We have not yet found a truly collaborative way of working in our interdisciplinary teams which allows us to achieve our potential as an industry. My scholarship to do interdisciplinary design & management at Cambridge University will be looking for solutions.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

We provide spaces for people which at their most basic provide shelter but at their most successful allow them to thrive. I have a great interest in developing housing solutions in the North East which respond to the growing demand in an innovative and thoughtful way.

FAULKNERBROWNS

Below Baxter on site at the CEF office project in Durham, inspecting the porcelain cladding.



Matthew Wilkinson

Associate, AL_A
Part 2: 2008 Part 3: 2013

It takes tenacity to stick working for the same company for so many years at the beginning of one's career. So often pay rises, promotions and recognition are only achieved by moving elsewhere. This is particularly the case in practices where directors operate as 'creatives' without the kind of corporate systems that usually bring these issues up.

Wilkinson's trajectory shows holding on can pay off. He was made an associate within four years of joining AL_A and only five years after gaining his part 2 at the Bartlett.



Left The V&A extension.

Below Wilkinson's work with the practice's local primary school.

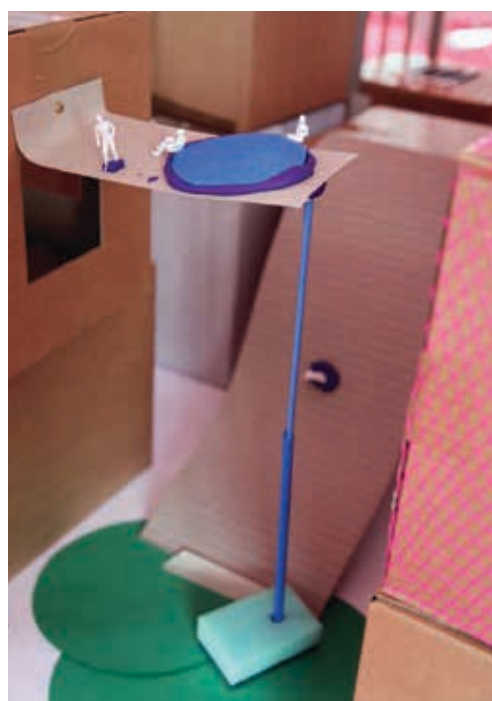
HUFTON + CROW

'I could have left three months before the V&A [extension] landed on AL_A's desk. It was that moment,' explains Wilkinson.

That was in 2011 and Wilkinson has spent the past six years working almost exclusively as project architect on the courtyard and gallery scheme. He is regarded by the practice as the expert who is put in front of the TV cameras and newspaper journalists to answer all the difficult questions.

'There is some strategy to it,' Wilkinson explains on the question of whether AL_A has a system for keeping young architects in the practice. 'Amanda [Levete, practice founder] quite deeply believes in youth. She's always been super supportive. The directors are quite young. She often says that if you give out responsibility and ownership, you get much more of a response.'

For the V&A, Wilkinson ensured that the design was realised without compromise and to exacting standards, as well as pushing it beyond expectations. For example,



he brought together historical evidence, construction programming, visitor flow studies and specialist opinion in a compelling justification for modifications to the Aston Webb screen. The ceramics research took Wilkinson on a journey through Stoke, Limoges, Barcelona and finally to Tichelaar in Holland. This enabled the realisation of the world's first porcelain tiled courtyard and ultimately the first piece of furniture to be crafted in silicon carbide through a self-generated project called Ceramic Table.

Since the V&A, Wilkinson has lead the submission to restore and reimagine the National Trust-owned historic house Clandon Park in Surrey, which burnt down in 2015 – a project Levete said 'would be good for his mind' after working on one project for so long. Again, Wilkinson has expanded the project so it has the potential to redefine the experience offered by the National Trust. His charity work includes contributing to projects for the Art Room through architecture workshops at the AL_A studio, Article 25, Maggie's and the Willow Foundation.

The judges praised Wilkinson for managing the V&A so early in his career, with David Miller noting: 'It is an incredibly difficult project to see through.' Mark Skelly thinks Wilkinson is most likely to be at the top of the next generation. Wilkinson's energy for architecture is summed up by his response to being asked what's next for him: 'I just want to do it all again.'

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

As a creative profession, we are overflowing with innovation but it is difficult to align this with programme, procurement and risk. At the V&A we benefited from exceptional levels of client commitment, but not all clients are so brave. It is easy to understand a brief requiring 'tried and tested' technology – but is this restricting progress? Could clients be offered financial and advisory support – for example using Heritage Lottery Funding – to encourage a greater commitment to technology and innovation?

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

Olympicopolis is an emerging project for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park that includes performance spaces for Sadler's Wells, a V&A Museum, the first non-US Smithsonian outpost and buildings for UCL and the Royal College of Fashion. This is a very youthful piece of city, the community is still settling, and the project is a generation-defining opportunity for a profound reconsideration of culture, education and place in London. It is thrilling to think about what Westfield [shopping centre] and the V&A have in common.

AL_A



Left Housing at McLeod Road, Anney Wood, London, designed by Paul Ruff to use a modular construction process.

Paul Ruff

Director, Ruff Architects Part 2: 2007 Part 3: 2009

Paul Ruff's practice Ruff Architects is only three years old yet it has already established itself among an impressive list of clients including Stanhope. This, along with the way Ruff set up his practice, prioritised certain aspects and grew the firm to six people so far, gave this year's judges the confidence that he has the capacity to improve the industry.

A comment from his referee, Pinnacle Regen managing director Chris Turnbull, was difficult to ignore: 'In terms of the industry's Rising Stars, Paul should be top of your list,' Turnbull says. 'He is an individual who is already making a difference in architecture and the built environment and will be for years to come.'

Ruff is one of only two nominations this year who is explicitly working with modular construction and doing so creatively, with high quality design. At a time when the profession and even the political establishment see modular construction as the future of architecture, Ruff Architects is spearheading how it can be implemented – from single dwellings using modular elements to full volumetric design on a 50-unit mixed-use scheme in Abbey Wood and a 410 unit scheme in Stockwell, both in London.

With a background of running multimillion pound projects at AHMM and

Ian Ritchie Architects, Ruff quickly brought a variety of projects to his own practice, from complex inner-city masterplans to detailing bespoke joinery for private clients.

His expertise lies in his ability to tailor his services, from nurturing personal relationships on residential projects which have featured in *The Sunday Times*, to developing a commercially savvy approach as a core team member on large schemes. The work has a common denominator of quality and innovation regardless of sector or tenure. Social housing schemes on site include 21 flats and 19 terrace houses in Oxford, originally conceived with HAB Housing, on which the practice is executive architect.

'We try to better the quality of housing provision project by project, addressing wider issues of housing waiting lists and government construction targets,' Ruff says. He is an invited lecturer and critic at Oxford Brookes University, and guest critic at Central Saint Martins.

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

Housing is always at the forefront of architectural discussions. While delivering many different tenures in the studio, from private rental, market sale to 100% affordable, the quality of what is delivered remains paramount. Creating a home is different to providing housing stock. 'Home' lends itself to something outward looking and community creating, a pride in our towns, cities and urban environment. Through quality and thoughtful design at the smallest scale, the largest elements can change for the better.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle? London's Zone 4!

Angharad Palmer

Design manager, Pocket Living Part 2: 2011 Part 3: 2014

Angharad Palmer moved from Hawkins\Brown to London starter home developer Pocket Living because she wanted to understand where clients were coming from.



She has made headway in bridging the gap between the expectations and knowledge of her colleagues and of architects.

On tight city sites, Pocket develops homes at 20% below market rate for locals who might otherwise be squeezed out of the city, and the quality of the architecture is paramount. Pocket already had good architects working for it, from Haworth Tompkins to RCKa and Gort Scott, and Palmer takes seriously her role of educating practices about the risks and costs associated with development. She briefs architect teams on ethos, branding and design methods as well as reviewing and guiding tender production.

When Palmer led a design competition for a community building at West Green Place,

Haringey she worked up a fully developed brief to bring in emerging practices, including setting up plans for the winning team to be paired with more experienced hands. In the end this was not required by the winner, Dyvik Kahlen, and the brief and worked-through design went straight through planning. Practical completion should be less than two years after the competition launch.

Palmer has taken ownership of continuous improvement in design and quality issues. An internal 'lessons learnt' programme at the end of each project is starting to embed some of the best practice in procurement and design management in the minds of project managers and other

team members. Externally she has used peer reviews on projects at similar stages to share information, critique and set up creative dialogues between practices and Pocket.

Her work on turning Pocket into an 'active BIM client' has already seen the company issue its standard flat specifications as a Revit model and in future there will be efficiency improvements for the developers as practices are asked to submit tender information in standard formats.

Russ Edwards, outgoing head of design at Pocket, brought in Palmer and describes her as 'spectacular'. 'Angharad... has been instrumental in lifting the bar for Pocket's innovative portfolio of starter homes,' he says. 'Her tenacity and uncompromising belief in the role of design quality in housing delivery has allowed her to become integral to the business within a short period of time.'

The judges were excited to see architectural skills brought to bear outside traditional practice. 'You have got to find ways to unlock what you can bring,' says John Nordon. Now her boss has departed, the question is what next for Palmer?

What would you most like to improve about the industry?

Clients need to change their attitudes towards architects, and architects need to find a way to return to the old notion of 'master builder'. Architects have been stripped of too many responsibilities and to regain status something needs to be done to reverse this.

As a client, the way we function at Pocket Living is a step ahead of some other clients in the industry as we have a team of architects working as advisors in house. This helps protect the architect's concept from corrosion or dilution as a result of the value engineering that is common in design and build contracts.

I would advocate that clients employ more in-house architects and design advisors in order to steer the project in a more competent manner. In turn they can expect higher design quality.

Architects need to be more commercially minded and understand developers' financial drivers better. This will allow them to gain the client's respect and work more in collaboration with them to achieve the best results.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

I'd like to continue working on small infill sites in London to try and alleviate the housing crisis in the city using modern methods of construction.

Left Site for a design competition organised by Palmer, for a community centre in West Green Place, Haringey, north London.



HTA

Shortlist



**Max Dewdney, founder,
Max Dewdney Architects**
Pushing boundaries in practice
and academia.

'I want to design 700 pocket playgrounds for London... This is an exciting way to create and test ideas and give back to the city with small transformations having a big impact.'



**Benjamin-Murray Allan,
director, estudio b**
Talented designer looking for
collaborations and challenges.

'Our greatest challenge is dealing with density in cities and how we can remodel or repurpose the existing building stock, both high and low, to provide safe and uplifting places to live.'



**Alexander Blackmore,
architect, Hawkins\Brown Architects**
Maturity beyond his years in
collaborating for innovation.

'Data has become the 21st century's crude oil... as creatives, we can define patterns and trends. Data should not only shape our experience and use of infrastructure, but how our cities are developed...'



**Anna Parker, director,
Intervention Architecture**
Entrepreneurial teacher and young
practitioner forging an ambitious path.

'Collaborative practice, particularly between large and small firms... allows for an information exchange that may enlighten methods of working, and a greater creative focus.'



**Nick Heyward, project director,
FaulknerBrowns Architects**
Versatile architect actively looking beyond
the practice to build the profession.

'Young architects [need] to become involved in the positive promotion of our profession through the clients, contractors and sub-consultants, to create a truly collaborative ethos within the industry.'



**Lee McLaughlin, partner,
FaulknerBrowns Architects**
Sets high standards in design and
business, and has the tenacity and
judgement to achieve them.

'I'd like to think we can see opportunity where others can't... I'm open-minded and optimistic about the art of the possible.'

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3: Culture

A wider quest for talent

Positively discriminating AF course for architectural writers is welcome activism



Hugh Pearman Editor

Who gets to write about architecture, and how? It appeals mainly to those with arts degrees, of course. In my case English Literature served, though I can reassure you that my three editorial colleagues studied architecture. But however they get into it, those of us who do tend to be mostly white and middle class.

So let's get a new generation of writers going who are a bit more diverse and can bring new perspectives. I'm very happy to announce our support for New Architecture Writers, a course established by Phin Harper of the Architecture Foundation with Tom Wilkinson, history editor of the Architectural Review. Its board includes architects and academics Farshid Moussavi, Lesley Lokko, Adrian Lahoud (architecture dean at the RCA), David Ogunmuyiwa and Shumi Bose.

Here's the thing: the course is squarely aimed at 'black and minority ethnic emerging writers who are under-represented across design journalism and curation.' Yes, this is positive discrimination. As such it

Minorities are disproportionately affected by such issues with much more limited resources to aid themselves, while non-minorities are free to pursue the bajillion other avenues available to them

has already attracted some criticism on the grounds that those who do not fit this description are excluded. To which the best answer came from architect Piers Taylor on Facebook: 'For the same reason there isn't a White History Month or a Straight Pride Week: because minorities are disproportionately affected by such issues with much more limited resources to aid themselves, whereas non-minorities are free to pursue the bajillion other avenues that are available to them.'

When I first heard about it, I had no hesitation in immediately offering the RIBA's services. Any editor is constantly looking for new and different voices and viewpoints, even with all our usual constraints of limited space and money. All publications, in print and online, need that refreshment. Here is a potentially rich new seam of talent. Who would not jump at that?

The course will be free, consisting of a series of evening workshops, talks and writing briefs spread out over 12 months. There will be one-to-one mentoring from experienced design critics and editors throughout, at both professional and consumer-press level. The idea is that the participants will work towards a piece of original writing being published by the Architectural Review. We'll play our part by also offering an outlet for their writing, and the mentoring that goes with that. Both the Architecture Foundation itself and the Royal College of Art are supporters, and other media outlets are welcomed.

There's a lot of goodwill for this project. While it's true that the world of architectural/design writing and curation is relatively small, there's no reason why those of us who happen to be here should keep it to ourselves. Besides, as I know very well, writing skills, once learned, can be applied right across the media. I'll be fascinated to see who applies, what new approaches will emerge from the course, and in due course how this will affect the tight little world of the architectural media. For the better, I'm convinced. ●

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

'Sometimes simply adding a window to a room or altering the connections between rooms can transform an uncomfortable house into an uplifting home'

Bernadette Balfe, who has died aged 55: ribaj.com/bernbalfe

'It's low function combined with amazing curves. It led us to make an ultra-complex curvilinear object out of flat sheet'

Pamela Buxton meets the enthusiasts at **Stoke Architecture** Day: ribaj.com/stokearchitecture

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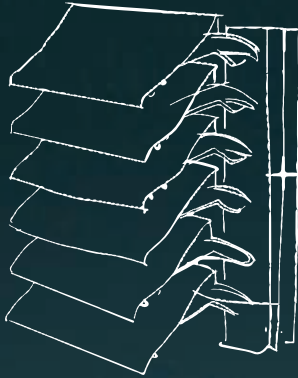
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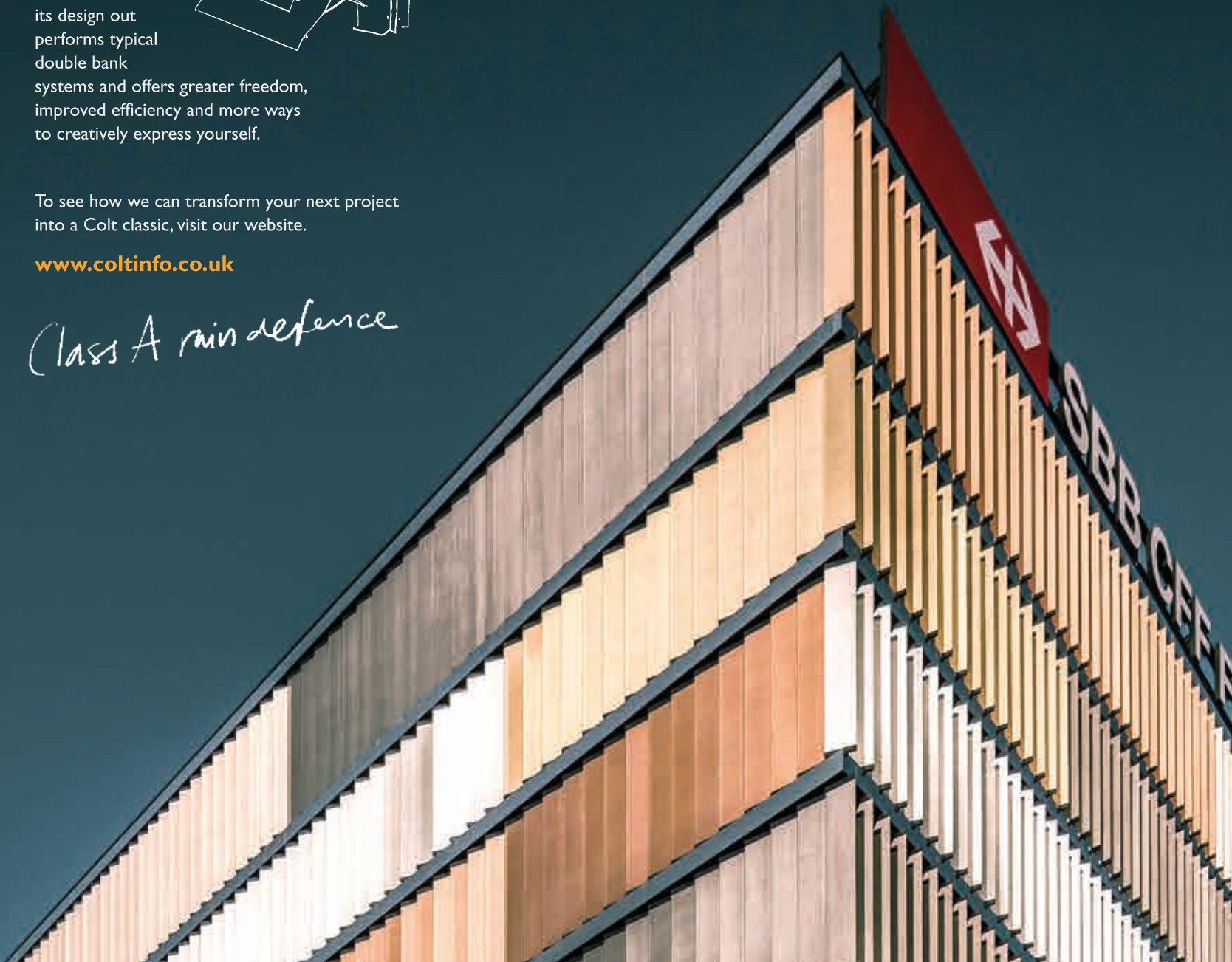
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Class A rain defence



Coasting along

Will Wiles strolls along the prom, and finds it wanting



Will Wiles

They call it 'Great' Yarmouth but really it's just OK Yarmouth. What would Make Yarmouth Great Again would be a splendid modernist megastructure, a slab wall facing out to the North Sea, balconies glittering in the sunrise, and perhaps the whole thing could ripple, suggestive of waves on the beach. Or ziggurats – they've always been popular.

In the absence of other pressing national priorities, I say we get on and make this happen right away. It has always seemed strange that, though we built motorways, vast housing estates and International Style offices and hotels in city centres, the UK never got a properly modernist stretch of seaside. The first family holidays we took abroad were to Brittany in France, and the gleaming white citadels of resorts such as La Baule might have been from another world – think of the astonishing curved fins of the Wave Building, which was more Galactic than Loire-Atlantique.

The vast expanses of scoured sand helped frame the impression, which is why I suggest Merely Adequate Yarmouth, although it's partly also payback for a sub-par week I spent there 20 years ago. And it's in Norfolk, where as luck would have it Denys Lasdun has already built a superb prototype for the kind of resort hotel I have in mind, although due to an oversight it is quite far inland and filled with students from the University of East Anglia.

A little hard to imagine, isn't it? That simply isn't the way we have developed our

Denys Lasdun has already built a superb prototype for the kind of resort hotel I have in mind, although due to an oversight it is quite far inland and filled with students from the University of East Anglia

coast. Instead we are largely left with resorts inherited from the Victorians, and little of their ambition to build by the sea. Decades of unfashionability and neglect also worked their powers of preservation, as Britons went abroad from the 1970s and there was little need to brush off Le Corbusier's proposals for Algiers as a possible option for Broadstairs.

The Victorians loved the seaside because they believed it possessed health-restoring powers. And it did in a way, just by getting them away from the polluted and toxic cities.

In other words, the Victorians used the seaside as a way of escaping from the ecological consequences of their society. Today, the seaside may be the place where those consequences are felt earliest and most keenly. In a warmer, stormier future, we will have to invest millions, hundreds of millions, in protecting the shoreline of this island. Which is the underlying paradox of seaside architecture: it has been a bit brutal all along. The bow windows and tea rooms are held safe by many tonnes of uncompromising concrete, shaped into sea walls with scalloped profiles not unlike Victorian mouldings, but on an altogether different scale. Sea defences have a primal modernism all of their own: consider the tetrapod, the four-footed, poured concrete objects that are piled along shores and moles to break the force of the waves.

Why should we think about the seaside at all right now? Out-of-season resorts have a melancholy appeal that's unlikely to draw in holidaymakers; they need an economic model that doesn't depend on the variable British summer. The time is ripe for an architectural rediscovery of the seaside town. It's cheering that dRMM's Hastings Pier was shortlisted for the Stirling Prize this year. And, reflecting on it, piers in general suggest that the Victorians might have been well aware of the architectural paradoxes of the resort. They balance heavy engineering with considerable delicacy, a feat the Victorians perfected. It's a combination that matches their faintly absurd mismatch of form and function – all this blunt, difficult intrusion into the pounding, corroding ocean, solely for the purpose of entertainment and distraction. Behind the peeling paint of the amusements and the faded 19th-century gentility, the off-season seaside resort always provides a great deal of stimulus to new architecture. It really is so bracing. ●

Will Wiles is a journalist and author. Read him here every other month and at ribaj.com

PILLOW TALK

No country has embraced the stark concrete form of the tetrapod quite as enthusiastically as Japan – great stretches of the mass-manufactured objects have become an inescapable part of the national scenery. Though viewed by most as an ugly necessity, they are embraced by some – literally. (Or should that be littorally?) According to *Ars Technica*, Japanese fashion brand Maniapparel makes soft grey tetrapod cushions for your sofa. They are rather charming.

Devolution revolution

Localism's slow but inexorable expansion needs – and benefits – architects



Ben Derbyshire

Devolution now appears to be an irresistible force in UK politics. RIBA's report with IPPR North, 'Closer to Home', argued last year that England is not one housing market but many. It suggested that significant powers over planning and housing should be handed to the new mayors, who are best placed to tackle affordability and supply, if the government is to meet its housebuilding target.

One of the reasons for my profound satisfaction in the award of this year's RIBA Royal Gold Medal to Neave Brown is that his oeuvre, and the output of Sydney Cook's Camden Architects Department, in which he worked, (I recommend Cook's Camden by Mark Swenarton, just published), reminds us of the possibilities that localism can bring. He shows with flair how architects can be inspired by their local context to build innovative, relevant and beautifully designed housing that delivers wellbeing and resilience in local communities. It is particularly striking that among his nominees were many of the residents of Alexandra Road. A lesson for our time, surely?

It may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that the future of the planet relies on the success of sustainable, resilient urbanisation, and that central government policy and actions should be (and increasingly are) complemented by governance at the level of cities

Celebrating and promoting the work of architects is one of the best ways of achieving the RIBA's charitable objective of advancing civil architecture.

and city regions. But what does that mean for the RIBA – and you, our members?

I believe that celebrating and promoting the work of architects, wherever and however they practise, is one of the best ways of achieving the RIBA's charitable objective of advancing civil architecture. While the RIBA's policy team in London concentrates on engaging at national scale, at regional level it's much more realistic for the profession to reach, mingle with and influence politicians, policy makers and other environmental stakeholders. This can be extremely rewarding for local practitioners, a proposition borne out by RIBA branches and local societies such as Manchester Architects. But the phenomenon is patchy and not everywhere enjoys this kind of energy. I'd like to hear your views on what I and the RIBA can do to further support such local engagement.

Many London practices are building up staff teams outside the capital, seeing opportunities from broadening and diversifying. Regional devolution creates a huge opportunity for architects to be part of the beauty, celebration, growth and leadership of places across the UK while sustaining London's role as the global hub for expertise and talent.

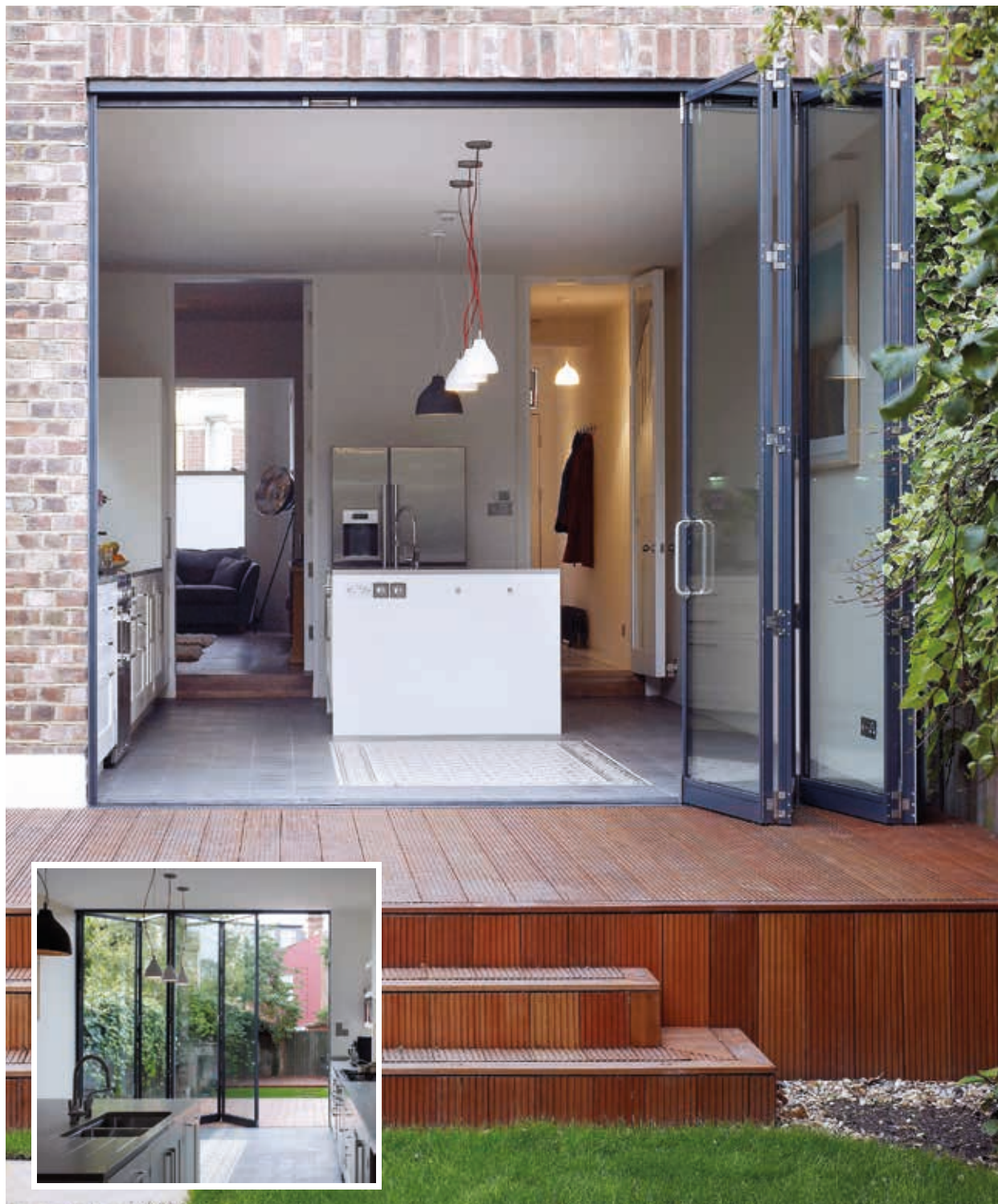
The RIBA has done a superb job of ensuring that ministers understand and appreciate the importance of mutual recognition of qualification between the UK and EU and the opportunities to expand arrangements between the UK and other key markets for architecture. Last month the RIBA hosted two secretaries of state at the launch of Sir Peter Bazalgette's review of the creative sector. A big focus of that review is the support needed for SMEs, a huge part of our sector, who wish to export. I'm also very excited by the proposal for 'creative clusters' supported by funding, where localities would pitch for government and industry support to direct growth and policy development in their area. I hope these ideas will be taken forward by the government as part of the 'creative sector deal' it has committed to. And as Brexit negotiations continue, I will be doing my part as your president to ensure the experiences of architects and practices up and down the country are heard and listened to. To help me in that role I'd encourage you to let me know your views on how, if at all, Brexit is affecting your decisions and planning for the future.

Do let me know your thoughts. ●

president@riba.org, [@ben_derbyshire](https://twitter.com/ben_derbyshire)

ON THE PARTY CONFERENCE CIRCUIT

In September and October RIBA president Ben Derbyshire spoke at the Labour and Conservative party conferences, at receptions held jointly with CIOB, RTPI and RICS. He emphasised the importance of working collaboratively to ensure that built environment professions have a strong voice. See a full report and find out more about the RIBA's work to represent you at architecture.com



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The sky's the limit

Physical fun and artistic illusion catch the locals' attention at Hull Minster's new 'church hall'

Hugh Pearman

The day I called in on Trinity Square in Hull's old town, the workforce completing A Hall for Hull was rushing to get things as ready as possible for a preview opening. The perforated galvanised-steel columns by Chilean practice Pezo von Ellrichshausen were all present and correct but the painting on them of the three optical illusion works by Swiss artist Felice Varini was still in progress. The architects – for whom this commission in Hull was as different as possible from their previous acclaimed UK outing in the Royal Academy's 'Sensing Spaces' exhibition of 2014 – explained their thinking.

This is a four-way collaboration between the City of Culture, RIBA, British Council and Holy Trinity church – the largest parish church in England, medieval in origin, its title recently upgraded to Hull Minster. The installation is conceived as a hypostyle room, but roofless. It takes its place in the newly-landscaped piazza in front of the church. As Mauricio Pezo explains, the columns rely on gravity, with thick and heavy steel base-plates. But also, as Sofia von Ellrichshausen continues, on proportion. Their ratio is 3:1, at 6m high by 2m wide they are wide enough to be stable. The height corresponds to the base of the minster's west window behind them.

Each of the 16 columns – fat enough to be Romanesque – is a chamber. An open doorway leads into each, and they are bigger than they seem at first glance: four people can fit in reasonably easily. A Hall for Hull is the latest large-scale artwork in a series that began with a mighty 75m wind turbine blade laid right across Victoria Square by artist Nayan Kulkarni. If that (now away spinning somewhere) was a good conceptual one-liner, the



A Hall for Hull, sponsored by Wedge Galvanising, is at Trinity Square, Kingston upon Hull, until the end of the year.



Top Architects Mauricio Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen. **Above** Artist Felice Varini.

Hall for Hull is more subtle. Its position suggests a memory of an earlier church or temple here. Its precisely geometric spacing is subverted by the painting of Varini, who sets up three viewing corridors (Trois Points de Vue) to make his work – ignoring the obvious one, the central axis onto the church. Seen randomly, his marks recall the incisions in fat Norman columns. And randomly is how you will mostly see them: getting them set up exactly in your line of vision is not easy.

Of the columns themselves, 'Obviously they have a connection to the whole history of architecture,' says von Ellrichshausen. 'You can read them as columns, but you can also read them as rooms. We like to operate on that limit of what you understand and what you don't, so it's both. And we really like the idea of letting people do whatever they want with them. I'm sure we'll see kids running in and out of them – and we'll see what adults do with them.'

The two architects fall to discussing the available lighting in the square – there is plenty from the recently-installed lamp standards. One produces red light, which they decide is fine. When dusk falls, the columns take on a different, more filigree, character.

However you view the work as a piece of architecture and art, it does function like a building in being a condenser, drawing people in to inhabit it. And in particular, it brings eyes in a new way to the minster, once one of the rather neglected glories of Hull, now seen on a new kind of stage and itself undergoing a considerable restoration as an active church. Time will tell. Greater appreciation of the church and of the old town in general should be the legacy of this project. ●

Above A sense of the Romanesque, or ruined temple: the Hall for Hull in front of Hull Minster.

We really like the idea of letting people do whatever they want with them. I'm sure we'll see kids running in and out of them – and we'll see what adults do with them

ANA GROVETTO

CHIARA TIRABOSCHI

THOMAS ARRAN

Humanity as a design tool

With the award of this year's Royal Gold Medal, Neave Brown's real legacy of how to design sociable housing for dynamic communities wins timely recognition



GARETH GARDNER

Jan-Carlos Kucharek

This isn't the first time I've met Neave Brown. Three years ago, I was playing a ball game with Joe and Luca some kids of friends who live at his 1977 Dunboyne Rd flats, where he also lives. It involved throwing a ball up and down from one of the access stairs. After a while, I noticed an old gentleman standing nearby, watching the game with an engaged, wry smile. When I asked if we were bothering him he replied 'not at all', and asked us to keep playing. It turns out that was Neave.

Eighty-eight years old now, seated in his easy chair, still as bright-eyed despite ill health, Brown confesses he's 'dumbfounded' to have been awarded the 2018 RIBA Gold Medal. Fifty years ago he, and others including Peter Tábori, Gordon Benson, Alan Forsyth, Ted Cullinan, Bill Forrest and John Green were assembled under Camden Council chief architect Sydney Cook to propose an alternative to the high-rise 'Ville Radieuse'

thinking that saw council house tower blocks growing on London's cleared bomb sites. The result was a mini golden age of pioneering modernist social housing that flourished in north London from 1965-1973.

Theirs was similarly high density proposition, but low-level modernist in aesthetic, with Aalto-like humanism and consideration of context – all fuelled by post-war Keynesian thinking and the welfare state. 'Created for that period after World War II, we hoped we were part of a new, evolving approach to housing,' Neave tells me wistfully. 'Of course Thatcher brought an end to it all. Years after I thought it would be seen as a historic episode that came and went and may be viewed with curiosity by someone in the future. I never imagined the ideas would have ongoing relevance.'

But if his ideas for social housing remained beneath the surface, he feels it took the Grenfell Tower disaster to make them prescient again. 'The fire is galvanising housing issues,' he says of the soul searching that's been precipitated in its wake. 'We could see at the time

'After 1978, it was effectively the end of my career in England'



Above The 1978 Alexandra Road flats in Camden took Neave Brown's ideas of noble domesticity to city scale.
Left Garden elevation, Winscombe St, 1965.
Below The 71-unit Dunboyne Road flats took Winscombe Street's ideas and created a housing form, each with generous terrace.



they were built that it wasn't just about the segregation of society's poorest but that the plans for these blocks, squeezing cores to a single lift and stair, were a disaster waiting to happen.' By contrast, the likes of Brown's 518-home Alexandra Road, and Patrick Hodgkinson's Brunswick Estate, found joy in varying housing types, using stepped sections and spatial standards enshrined in Parker Morris' game changing 1967 space standards. Winscombe St, the five homes Brown designed with a loan from Camden Council for his housing association in 1963, distilled the report's thinking into a considered exercise in how modern families might re-imagine occupying space. This small but perfectly formed work, which caught the attention of Sydney Cook, ultimately won Brown Alexandra Road, designed 1967-69. Historian Mark Swenarton, author of Cook's Camden, calls it 'the most celebrated housing scheme built in Britain in the past half century'.

Quite where his egalitarian social housing ideas hail from is a mystery, even to Neave. Born in Utica, New York, in 1929 to an American mother and British father, the young Brown lived in upmarket Bronxville, followed by three years in England at Marlborough College. Self-awareness dawned on him here. 'I was just called 'the yank' at school', Brown recalls; but it seems a badge he wore with pride. 'I was a young American and had no understanding of the class system. Everything at school was authoritarian in nature, from the headmaster down to appointed prefects; a social pecking order I simply couldn't relate to'. But he was inspired by his young teachers, brimming with new ideas in the immediate aftermath of the war; one 'even giving me a copy of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto to read'. Perhaps it was this radical text, as much as old boy and AA alumnus Bill Howell, that had him switch from reading English at Oxford to the AA in 1950; 'the only modernist school in Europe run by left wing thinkers who had fought in the war and who wanted to change the world'.

By graduation his ideas were already fully formed. 'We were designing housing,' says Brown, stressing the last word, 'not social housing; homes for a mixed, developing, dynamic community.' This was laid out in his 1967 manifesto 'The Form of Housing'; and it wasn't about theory but practicality. Brown points from his seat out past the large, sliding black timber doors to his own balcony on the

I thought it would be seen as a historic episode that came and went and maybe viewed with curiosity in the future. I never imagined the ideas would have ongoing relevance



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Dunboyne estate. 'While we were being inventive with new forms, it was all designed with thought and care. Detailing was simple. Fencing was nailed together, uneven, to avoid jointing, we used cheap galvanised mesh, fair-faced blockwork. It was all cheap and cheerful. We came in on jobs at 25-30% less than the QS was estimating', he tells me. It made cost overruns that later befell the more ambitious Alexandra Road hard to bear but not inexplicable.

Completed 1978, the heroic 400m long housing scheme running alongside the west coast mainline became a victim of circumstance, constructed in the biggest UK recession since the 1930s. And with a three-day week and budget cuts came new social thinking about tenant liaison and giving people what they thought they wanted. In the ensuing public inquiry looking into cost overruns taking it from £6m in 1971 to £20m in 1978, Brown says he was accused of bad planning decisions, inability to project manage and resource and design incompetence. He became a scapegoat in an enquiry that was a battleground for partisan council politics in a wider climate of a central government cost-cutting and economic downturn. In the final report Brown was fully exonerated but the damage was done. 'After 1978, it was effectively the end of my career in England,' he states, not without a tinge of bitterness, 'No-one's employing an architect tainted by a public enquiry, whatever the outcome.'

Luckily, on the continent, people saw his work differently. Stuck with exhibition design here, his ideas carried on developing in Eindhoven with his high density mixed community Medina housing (1993-2002), a sublimation of all his formal ideas about urban living. It might be, as Swenarton terms it, 'his final master work', but for Brown, it's more than that; it represents the kernel of an idea that might facilitate the renaissance of a new, state-funded social housing programme. 'In Holland, social housing is publicly financed; from concept to consultation, design to construction, occupation to maintenance. It's all factored in, so that when the design life of the development is up, the increased equity can finance the next tranche of social housing. It's a model we need to adopt here.'

But recognition has finally come at home. Perhaps it's his suture, delicately stitched through time, linking his modern forms with those of the past, that explains why he's



Above The concrete stairs of Winscombe St, Simple materials, designed for permanence.

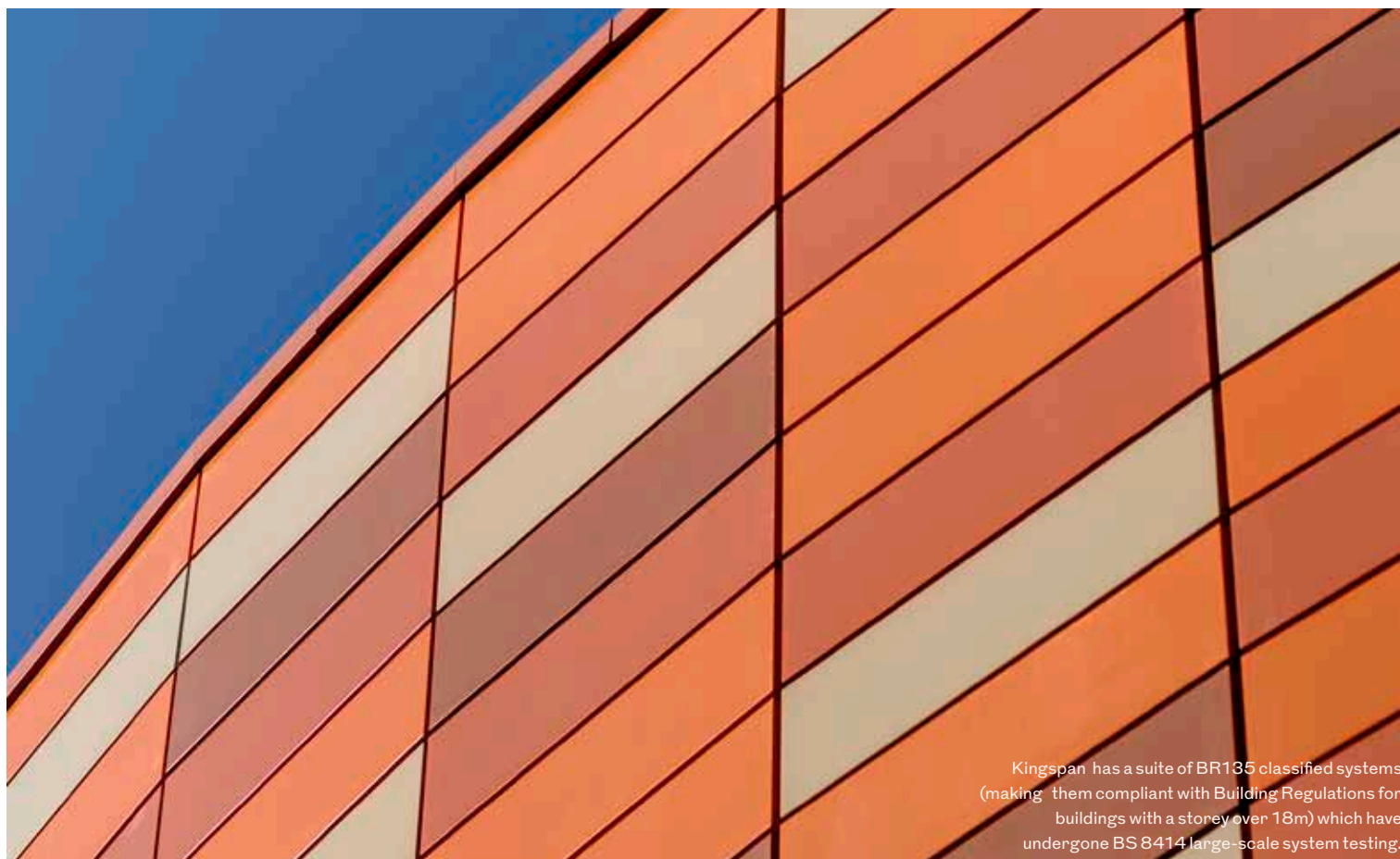
Right The 2002 Medina housing complex in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Neave Brown's final built project continued to develop his complex sectional ideas.

the only living architect to have had all of his buildings listed; one based, he says, 'on London's Georgian squares, with housing about them, a public route through it and gardens in the middle.' But the influences are wider; Corb and Aalto yes, but Empiricism and classical Japanese architecture too. 'People think architects think in a linear way, but they don't', he adds. 'They can be influenced by ancient buildings, the 18th century or a thing they saw the day before yesterday – they cherry pick from history.' Those touches with a familiar past account for why his buildings are so loved by those living in them.

With the award there's a new-found serenity and purpose from someone who was hung out to dry and never going to work again. Prophets never welcome in their home town? That may have been the case, but the man responsible for turning social housing thinking on its head, now has one of the world's major architectural awards sitting round his neck. And time hasn't dampened either his zeal or relevance. 'For years we've crammed the underprivileged into unsuitable homes that were only bringing profit to developers and contractors – which then become a liability for the state to deal with – all done with eyes wide open,' he says, his own aflame. 'Can you imagine anything more socially corrosive than that?' ●

Medina housing, might be, as Mark Swenarton terms it, 'his final master work'





Kingspan has a suite of BR135 classified systems (making them compliant with Building Regulations for buildings with a storey over 18m) which have undergone BS 8414 large-scale system testing.

Education's critical role in fire safety

Mark Harris, Divisional Building Technology Director at Kingspan Insulated Panels, talks about the importance of effective fire performance and the company's education programme

Why is large-scale system testing so important?

As a manufacturer of system solutions, we believe that the only way to fully understand how a combination of products is likely to perform in a fire is to test them as they would be used in an actual construction. In other words, as a complete building system, on a scale that tests both the design and the different components that make up that system.

If you look at the tests that are used to determine non-combustibility for example, they are bench-scale tests looking at small samples of product in isolation. The interaction of these products with other system elements in a fire scenario cannot be

predicted, without a large scale system test. It's very important for specifiers to have a full understanding of the different tests - both product and system - that underpin current Building Regulations, hence our education programme (see details below).

What large-scale testing do Kingspan products undergo?

Kingspan products have been subjected to large-scale system tests for well over 20 years, and the results have been backed up by how well they have performed in real fires. These include insurer-approved system tests, and more recently we also have a suite of BR135 classified systems (which makes them compliant with Building Regulations

It's very important for specifiers to have a full understanding of the different tests that underpin current Building Regulations

for buildings with a storey over 18m) which have undergone BS 8414 large-scale system testing.

What should the role of the architect be?

Putting architects back in control of projects is fundamental to ensuring that 'as built' matches design, that value engineering doesn't lead to cuts in quality and long-term performance, and that issues of fire safety are being kept front and centre of every decision.

The RIBA Plan of Work provides an excellent tool to check that the correct approach is being taken at each stage of a build, from design to completion.

How can manufacturers help?

As a manufacturer we see it as our responsibility to provide as much clear and proven information as possible, so that specifiers can make informed choices about what will work best in their projects. We also believe that we have a duty to both provide systems that have undergone large-scale testing, and to support our customers with technical guidance and installation training so they can take the as-tested system right through to construction.

What is the fire education programme that you are running?

Kingspan Insulated Panels is running a series of CPDs, workshops, webinars and



Above Mark Harris, Divisional Building Technology Director
Kingspan Insulated Panels

seminars looking in detail at:

- The difference between various facade and rainscreen systems and insulated panel systems.
- Fire testing of insulated panel and facade systems for compliance and insurer-approval.
- Clarity on Building Regulation requirements and property insurance requirements across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.
- The behaviours of insulated panel systems in real fire scenarios.

WEBINAR DATES, 2017

- Thursday 9 November
- Thursday 16 November
- Thursday 23 November
- Thursday 30 November
- Thursday 7 December
- Thursday 14 December
- Wednesday 20 December

Time: 13:00 BST

Visit our website to register

www.kingspan.co.uk/fire-education

CPDS, WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

To arrange a face-to-face CPD and/or tailored workshop at your premises, or to attend either of our upcoming seminars, please contact us using the details below.

6 Dec: Building Centre, London

7 Dec: Kingspan Insulated Panels Headquarters, Holywell

Tel: +44 (0) 1352 717251

Email: fireinfo@kingspan.com



Above BS 8414 large-scale system test
on Kingspan's insulated wall liner
panel with aluminium hook-on cassette



Above Kingspan systems combine the high-end aesthetics of a rainscreen façade with the performance and installation benefits of insulated panels, whilst providing life and property fire safety protection.

Despite living in 'an age of ecocide', Rachel Armstrong sees natural wonder all around. It's integral to her teaching, research and output

Words: Eleanor Young Portrait: John Faulkner

Tales of the unexpected

Professor Rachel Armstrong is intense. Her almond eyes hold my gaze unerringly, even while she dives me down into unfamiliar concepts and complex language, surfacing again with words like 'masks', 'witches', 'cockroaches' and 'natural computing'. After 15 minutes I free myself to take a deep breath. I came to Newcastle University's school of architecture to understand this remarkable woman, who seems to have strayed into architecture only to turn it on its head from a cellular level with an eye to the cosmos. Neither inventor nor scientist, she is engineering biology in brick form to digest human waste and from it produce clean water, produce energy and reclaim phosphates. Or, as she puts it, 'a programmable metabolism with structurable module'.

From the Bartlett to the University of Greenwich and now Newcastle University, she has given a seriousness to the apparently far-fetched concepts of student projects. She wants to use organic processes to create architecture that can grow, respond to its surroundings or self-heal. She has worked with artists and explored and communicated ideas using art at the Venice Biennale in 2014 with protocells (or smart droplets) around underwater features to re-grow the land with a limestone-like reef. She employs a storyteller

Right Divining the future from her office in Newcastle: Rachel Armstrong.

'It was very moving... Your emotion goes with the cockroaches'







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and is about to start testing materials in tanks in the university's new labs. Prue Chiles, acting director of architecture at Newcastle, describes Armstrong's research group, Experimental Architecture, simply: 'It is future looking, about living systems.'

Her twitter feed leaks at the seams with stories of space, biology and remarkable inventions. So I was primed for eclecticism – but not for her room of masks, a four-headed duckling, marionettes, stoppered fluids, crystal balls, and things draped and wrapped. She uses the masks to introduce students to natural computing. They sort and order them in different ways, giving them value and values. It's a reminder that the binary numeric calculations of digital computing lack the instillation of a value system, 'a way of exceeding the mathematics,' she says. She extrapolates this method to living things, how they work together and how they can be recalibrated to work in different and unexpected ways. Armstrong wants to 'bring analogue computing back into design'. This year she will teach a third year studio, Ecological Palace, starting with a bird house and the migrants and natives that will dwell in this space. 'There is an urban tendency not to see nature. This is a way of helping people think.'

A bird house may sound a little fey, but in one experiment she sent two Madagascan hissing cockroaches into the stratosphere, protected by a spell (yes, a spell). She tested out designing for extreme temperatures – 'a real concern for architecture'. With them were a heating element to stop them freezing to death, CO₂ sensors and a camera. Watching the footage it became clear that the heating wasn't working. 'It was very moving,' she says. The cockroaches slowed down until they were quite still. Armstrong felt empathy as much as responsibility. 'Your emotion goes with the cockroaches.' It is her way of making ecological thinking real. Happily the cockroaches warmed back into life on their return.

This kind of experiment is a reminder of why she uses art. 'It doesn't have to come with an explanation... it starts a conversation.' For her the questions started in childhood, working out what could and couldn't be controlled, that spiders don't eat wasps and that earwigs run in circles. 'There is something different when the world squirms, something you couldn't fix or control.' That doesn't mean she hasn't tried; biology was a little too descriptive and synthetic biology – engineering with



In a leper colony she realised the space around the body was an essential part of the body and soul

living things – still in its infancy, so she went into medicine. It was when she worked in a leper colony and saw the ways these quite different anatomies adapted their surroundings that she realised the space around the body was an essential part of the body and soul.

As she talks, Armstrong's powerful hands scoop the world to her. It was through hands that she shifted from her medical trajectory. She went to an exhibition by Helen Chadwick and saw traces of illness in the self-portrait photographs of hands (holding a brain). Insisting on warning the owner of those hands of her worries, Armstrong met Chadwick, who was intrigued by the strange way Armstrong spoke and asked her to collaborate at Venice Biennale. From there it was small steps to working with other body artists like Stelarc and being invited by Neil Spiller, who was interested in technology and the body, to teach at the Bartlett and then Greenwich. She was ex-

cited about architecture and architects. 'They are incredible thinkers and provocateurs.'

She moved to the Newcastle school of architecture because it was right in the heart of a science campus, for the art school next door and the chemistry outreach – and perhaps the professorship. Three years later she is still excited by the vessel owned by marine applied sciences, with sensors to scan the near shore of the sea and see ground being made. It is a new frontier. 'And the skipper is called Neil Armstrong!' she gleefully tells me, loving the echoes with space. Such changes 'are not visible in the city, in which we build for stasis'.

There is an extra environmental edge to Armstrong, borne of living in 'an age of eco-cide'. The bioreactor brick she is collaborating on deals with our mounting waste, the way water is used and dwindling phosphate reserves. More experimentation and testing is needed to make a bio-film that performs as they intend – all to make something that could be as ordinary as a brick. She hopes to use the marine sciences facilities, and the thought plunges her into other worlds. 'We use water as a commodity, but in cosmic terms liquid water is very uncommon in this universe.' She lists the miraculous properties of H₂O. Water connects, is the universal solvent, can crystallise things, has magnetic and electrical properties and a quantum spin. 'The world is strange,' she says, 'even though we have made it ordinary.' ●

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David Marks

1952 – 2017

One half of London Eye and i360 designer Marks Barfield, fearless player of the long game who changed the way the profession thinks and works



David Marks, who died in October at the age of 64 following a long illness, helped change the way we consider what the profession is and does. Interwoven with what was a relatively conventional if innovative practice with conventional clients, he and his wife and partner Julia Barfield ran an alternative, risk-taking entrepreneurial practice,

the one that conceived and built both the London Eye and Brighton's i360. In these two cases the architects remained firmly in charge of both the construction and the operation of the visitor attraction once built.

We used to joke about how I had rejected the original idea for the London Eye. This was true up to a point. It came about because in the mid 1990s I ran an ideas competition in The Sunday Times, assisted by the Architecture Foundation, for architectural projects to mark the impending Millennium. Marks Barfield entered with a model of a landmark big wheel, engineered by Jane Wernick. It was greeted largely with indifference by the judges, who liked none of the entries enough to declare a winner and so we had to declare the whole competition void.

Typically David took this rebuff calmly and it only spurred him to develop the idea further, gaining publicity, refining the design, raising finance, signing up business partners, finding a site and eventually getting planning permission for the Eye as a temporary structure only: later it was agreed it could be permanent. Almost as dramatic as the finished object was the way it was built: floated up the Thames in segments, it was assembled flat across the river on piled platforms, then raised slowly into position with a giant crane, which failed on the first attempt.

Built just in time for the Millennium, and wholly privately financed, the Eye was a huge success from day one but had a mountain of debt. Marks and Barfield sold out

in 2006 so as to recycle their stake into the i360 – which promptly hit a long delay occasioned by the financial crash. Again, Marks played a long game, kept plugging away, and so the i360 – with one large vertically-rising pod rather than many rotating ones – was finally built. For both attractions he ensured that a proportion of the ticket sales benefit the local communities.

The signs of promise were there in the early days when, as students at the AA, Marks and Barfield found themselves living as squatters in a condemned street in south London. They did up a house, organised the other residents to make a park out of waste ground nearby, saved the street from demolition, and lived ever after in the same house, lately much enlarged. Later, as a practice hit by the recession of the early 1990s, they pooled their resources with similarly-affected Bennetts Associates and both emerged stronger in consequence.

Marks was a very tall man with considerable presence, who chose his words carefully and seemed almost shy. Although he took hair-raising financial risks with his pet projects, even mortgaging his house against the initial costs of the Eye, he had an air of great serenity which served him well. He is rightly described as fearless, and one of his great contributions was a new kind of collaboration: not only with engineers, but also with financiers. His progressive design instincts also found clients elsewhere, as with the Treetop Walkway at Kew Gardens, again engineered with Wernick.

Born in Stockholm, raised in Geneva, he finally came to London to study at the AA in 1972, studying under Keith Critchlow. After working for others – in Marks' case in the Richard Rogers practice as part of the crack team on the Lloyd's of London building – Marks and Barfield, who had married in 1981, set up their practice in 1989 in Clapham, close to where they lived. David Marks is survived by his wife Julia and their children Benjamin, Maya and Sarah. The practice continues under Julia Barfield and the team of directors: Ian Rudolph, Gemma Collins, Ian Crockford and Magali Thompson. ●

Hugh Pearman

IN MEMORIAM

CHRISTINE ANNA SHERWOOD PERCIVAL
1951, LEAMINGTON SPA

GEORGE ANDREW HAYES
1952, NORTHWICH

NEIL MACFADYEN
1953, LONDON

JAMES EDWIN DODGSON
1956, NESTON

MICHAEL EADE FOSTER
1957, HASLEMERE

LYNDALL ELIZABETH MARION LEET
1957, THURSO

ALWYN GORDON ROBSON
1963, AMBLESIDE

DEREK WILLIAM ARTHUR COVERDALE
1966, IPSWICH

BRYAN ROBERT AVERY
1970, LONDON

ROBERT WILLIAM JAMES CHITHAM
1972, HEREFORDSHIRE

GABRIEL PETRU MUSAT
1993, LONDON

BERNADETTE NORA ANNE BALFE
1996, EDINBURGH

JOSEPH ANTHONY WALSH
1996, DOWNPATRICK

ARTHUR PLAYFAIR HOLT
1951, WILMSLOW

ROY ALFRED WILLIAM ORRIN
1958, COLCHESTER

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

Exchange

Help Lubetkin's health centre

I recently visited Lubetkin and Tecton's Finsbury Health Centre with a friend who works for the NHS. I had not been to see the building for 35 years or so, since I was an architecture student.

I was quite shocked to see the poor state of repair that the NHS property division has let this important building get into. I was especially dismayed as its website tells the visitor how important the building was both as the precursor to the NHS and as one of the first modern buildings in the country.

I have contacted NHS Property Services as the company responsible for the maintenance of this property to ask why it has failed to look after it, but I have received only a standard acknowledgment letter saying that 'my case has been logged in our system'. No further contact.

It's such a shame that such an important building is not being looked after. Perhaps other readers anxious about the fate of this pioneering and listed building might care to contact customer.service@property.nhs.uk and also request an answer – quoting the case number, PSC-00368-B3X5.

All help gratefully received.

Roger Mason, Norwich

What we can learn from Grenfell

The whole problem of mass housing, whether in town or country, is a question of culture – Them and Us. At both national and local level, politicians regard housing as beneath them, something for others to deal with and preferably to do so as cheaply as possible.

Throughout the country the mass housing going up will be the slums of



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tomorrow, both in size of building, layout, planning and quality. Insulation standards have not been improved, delayed at least three times by the government at the behest of the builders.

In cities the design and lack of management of tower blocks is a scandal. Over 11 storeys, or beyond the height of a fire ladder, how is escape possible with only one staircase? All tower blocks should have a separate fire proof concrete escape stair shaft away from the building and connected to it at each floor. Maintenance of all access, stair lobbies, circulation spaces, fire barriers etc should be compulsory and regularly inspected.

As for building regulations and their supervision – though in principle these may be sound – are in practice most likely to be behind the times in dealing with modern construction and refurbishment measures. It is a matter of culture, with local authorities trying to do everything on the cheap, with the demise of building inspectors or privatisation of them.

Self regulation by builders equals no regulation.

PG Reader, Exeter

Disappointment at the RA

First I'd like to say how much I appreciated the August issue of the RIBA Journal, which I read from cover to cover. The review of the new buildings was excellent, and the Grenfell fire coverage restrained and considerate, particularly Maria Smith's excellent column.

On the other side I visited the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and was most disappointed in the architecture gallery. Am I under a misapprehension that it should show architecture as art? The walls lined with CAD drawings of foundations and service pipes were incomprehensible to a 71 year old retired architect, never mind the general public! I watched with interest and noted that the most popular exhibit was the history of HKPA. One comment I overheard was 'Whatever happened to rendered drawings?'.

The Eye Line winners in the August RIBA J would have been wonderful contributions to this room rather than electronically generated pipe runs!

Jack R Cotterill

Tweetback

Always pleased to see a problem solved, in this case about Ralph Erskine's Byker Wall development:

Paul Swaddle

@paul_swaddle

#architecture / #urbandesign friends - a curator friend would like access to Byker Wall archives/history. Any help appreciated!

Paul Swaddle

@paul_swaddle

Replying to @paul_swaddle

@RIBAJ and 6 others

Thanks for everyone who helped with this – the entirety of the Erskine Byker Wall job files (550 boxes) are held at the V&A RIBA Archive.

Nicola Rich's online article on the wellbeing and mental health policy of leading practice Stride Treglown was much shared...

RIBA Journal

@RIBAJ

A happy employee is a better employee:

Nicola Rich on @StrideTreglown mental health policies #ribajintelligence

Paul Fox

@fox_paul

Replying to @RIBAJ @

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That is why giving energy to building teams is a mental health win. In strong teams people feel supported, taken care of, part of something.



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Saving energy, improving lives

This winter will be a lot cosier for the residents of The Crofts in Smethwick, secure in their newly-insulated towers

ROCKWOOL® and Rockpanel® have joined forces in developing a high performance, fire resilient cladding project which has transformed three high-rise residential towers for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

The Challenge

The Crofts in Smethwick consists of 270 homes in the Ashcroft, Birchcroft and Elmcroft towers.

These three blocks, constructed in the 1960s, were in universally poor condition, showing signs of major wear and tear to the building fabric, windows, roofing and balconies. In the absence of any wall insulation, they were also proving very difficult to heat and it was especially challenging to keep tenants living in fuel poverty warm.

The Solution

This two year project for contractor Keepmoat Regeneration has involved a dramatic, top-to-bottom renovation of each tower at The Crofts.

Among the substantial improvements that were implemented were flat-to-pitched roof conversions with solar panel installations, new windows, and the installation of a highly efficient, aesthetically attractive and non-combustible insulated cladding, supplied by ROCKWOOL and Rockpanel.

ROCKWOOL Rainscreen Duo Slab® is a non-combustible dual density insulation board that was fitted at The Crofts. It offers a robust outer surface and a resilient inner face designed specifically for use in this type of high rise development. Made from stone wool, Rainscreen Duo Slab is A1 fire rated for optimum fire resilience. Delivering effective thermal insulation of 0.035 W/mK, the product has been tightly butt jointed at The Crofts, knitting together to minimise any heat loss that could arise from gaps between insulation boards.

For the exterior cladding the extra fire safe facade board Rockpanel FS-Xtra has



Above The Crofts in Smethwick clad with Rockpanel Colours.

been used to provide the attractive aesthetic finish on the project. Applied on top of an aluminium supporting structure and fixed with blind rivets, these Rockpanel FS-Xtra boards, in combination with ROCKWOOL Rainscreen Duo Slab, meet the requirements for European fire class A2-s1,d0. The boards also weigh very little compared to others and can be easily worked with on site, with no special tools required. This saves installation time and costs. A mixture of vibrant Rockpanel Colours, such as RAL 3009 and 5011, has been supplied at The Crofts.

The Result

'These improvements have made a massive impact on both the internal and external appearance of the blocks, as well as the local skyline. And the much improved insulation offered by the eye-catching cladding will

help reduce fuel bills for tenants,' said a spokesperson from Sandwell Council.

A huge uplift in energy performance will result from these improvements. In fact, Sandwell Council estimates that, in total, approximately 9,600 tonnes of carbon will be saved every year.

Ultimately, the project has made a significant impact in the local community. These three tower blocks are not merely visibly transformed, they are more energy efficient residences and are also beacons of hope for tenants and the community of Smethwick. ●



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HENK SNOEK / RIBA COLLECTIONS

Central Police Station, Queen's Gardens, Hull, 1962

Hull was one of Britain's leading ports and a thriving centre of commerce from the Middle Ages. Its prosperity continued into the 20th century, reflected in a wealth of impressive architecture. But it was badly bombed by the Nazis in 1941 and rebuilding was slow and inconsistent, based on a reconstruction plan by Edwin Lutyens and Patrick Abercrombie which was never fully realised.

The plan envisioned a new civic heart for the city concentrated around Queen's Gardens, a large public park constructed from the old Queen's Docks – infilled in 1935 with a pedestrian boulevard and ornamental

gardens. Frederick Gibberd was employed to oversee its post-war remodelling, setting it below the surrounding road to emulate the appearance of the former docks and introducing public art to animate the space.

Gibberd also masterminded Lazenby and Priestman's Central Police Station of sea-green slate and Portland Stone, as well as designing the nine-storey, Festival of Britain-style, Hull College. That block, with its distinctive roofline, dominates the Gardens but was described by Pevsner as 'alas run-of-the-mill'. ●

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