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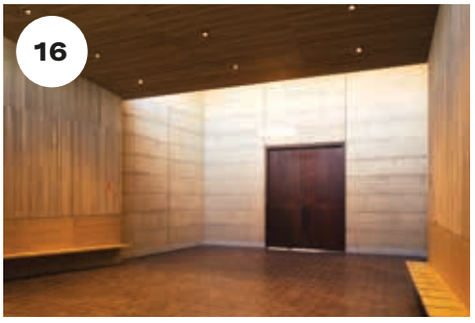
1 Buildings

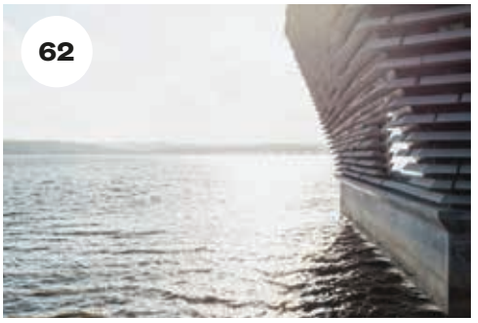


On the cover
American School in London arts building by Walters & Cohen. Photograph by Filiz Erol

2 Intelligence

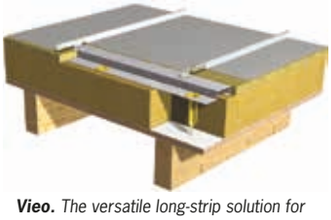
A box-shaped concrete monolith will lie semi-submerged on the coastline
Stephen Cousins reveals the delights of deep sea dining: ribaj/deepseadining

3 Culture



PEFC
abc Net average circulation 28,054 Audit Period: 1/7/16 - 30/6/17
RIBA Enterprises

INNOVATIVE



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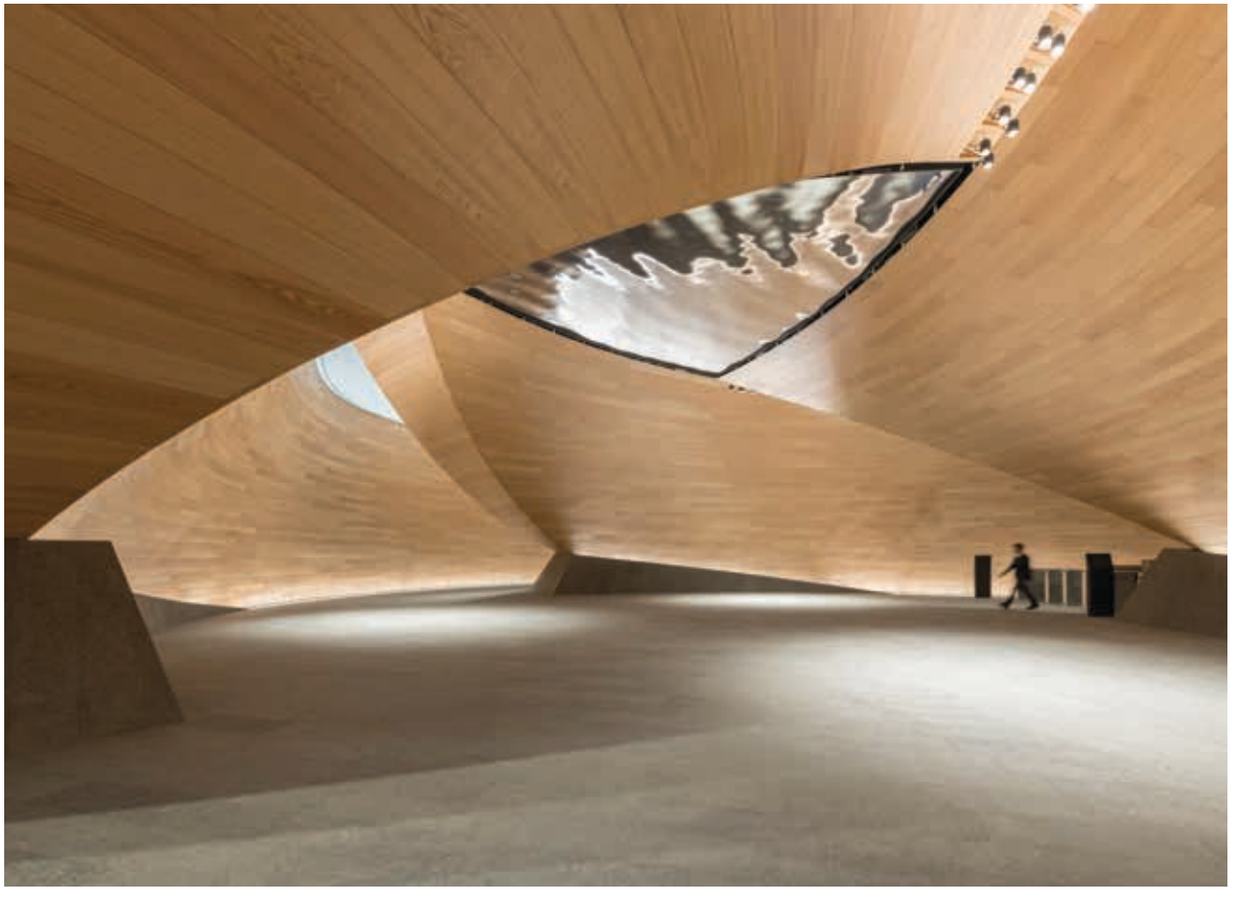
1: Buildings

Is it possible to spend too much on a building? It's not a question we often have to deal with, but the arrival of Foster's Bloomberg HQ in the City (P24), widely quoted at £1 billion, raises the question. This is a sumptuous media palace that makes the BBC look utilitarian. Also this month, two fine music and arts educational buildings, in Somerset (P8) and north London (P32), show how private schools still exert considerable patronage now that the state sector is sadly languishing. And then we come to the fascinating matter of death, and the revival of the art of symbolism in funerary buildings: a new cemetery complex (P16) that fuses the ancient and the modern.

Below The ultimate luxury of empty space: foyer of the new Bloomberg HQ (P24) with artwork by Olafur Eliasson.



NIGEL YOUNG

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Cool and damp climatic conditions plus the smell and flickering lights evoke the atmosphere of the original

Pamela Buxton steps back 20,000 years to see Lascaux's cave art: ribaj.com/lascauxIV

The development contains an underground speakeasy accessed only by a secret passageway

Maria McLintock bounces into ZAPspace: ribaj.com/trampolining

What won Hastings Pier the Stirling?

How dRMM's reinvented pier won this year's most coveted prize

Words: Isabelle Priest Photographs: James Robertshaw

An architect friend predicted it would win – it had to he told me, it's such a weird typology.

That alone didn't convince me that dRMM's scheme would be this year's Stirling Prize winner. Until the announcement none of us at RIBA Journal had visited the project, nor had I ever been to the stretch of the south east coast between Brighton and Folkestone that in recent years has become packed with exemplary contemporary architecture – from the houses at Dungeness to HAT Projects' Jerwood Gallery. I'll admit that on paper, Hastings Pier seemed no more likely to win than the others: it's not the first pier to be re-imagined as a contemporary multi-purpose space after all. White Arkitekter kicked off the idea at Southend in 2009.

Nevertheless, a prize is awarded as much for what is visible as for what is not. The context of Hastings Pier is as important as its finely detailed components and architectural invention. And, well, at a time when the nation seems gripped by nostalgia, in search of a prosperous future to be made from the relics of its grand historical past, perhaps Hastings Pier – literally rebuilt from the ashes by people pulling together – is the perfect answer.

Let's be clear, the pleasure pier is a distinctly British phenomenon. The first recorded structure opened in 1814 on the Isle of Wight, and while there are now piers all over the world they're in our national psyche, intertwining the nation's success with theirs. Every time a pier gets a knock it is felt by us all. It's therefore only right that when a pier comes along that can put the nation a little more at ease, it is deserving of Britain's highest architectural award. It's a good building too.

Like other pleasure piers, Hastings' was first built when railways transformed seaside towns into popular resorts for mass tourism, when sea air was believed to be particularly beneficial for health. When it opened in 1872, it would have given these tourists the proximity to the sea they desired. At its peak in the 1960s its Victorian ballroom hosted Jimi Hendrix and The Rolling Stones. In our modern context, however, this kind of Victoriana has struggled to survive, becoming home to mega amusement arcades and fish and chippies at best, and at worst a tendency to fall into disrepair, get demolished or be ravaged beyond salvation by storms or fire.

The same is true at Hastings. After years of neglect it was closed in 2008 following storm damage, before being burnt down in 2010. Afraid it would be lost for good, a group of local people and pier enthusiasts joined forces to form the Hastings Pier Charity dedicated to saving it and establishing a new role for pleasure piers in the 21st century.

With the help of Heritage Lottery Fund cash, dRMM has created a design that has provided not only a blueprint for how existing piers can be reimagined, but also an evolving role for architects in the production of the built environment. Here dRMM became as involved as the charity as an agent

Left Visitors can walk all over the deck and building – which gives new views out to sea and a sense of fun.

Below left Even on a rainy autumnal day the project captures Archigram's Fun Palace spirit with its colourful beach huts and flapping flags.

for change; helping campaign, getting the community on board and attracting funding.

dRMM has given Hastings Pier a new lease of life. The new-look pier has been repaired and rebuilt, then repurposed for modern life where maintenance costs are fully accounted. The project has been dealt with in two parts – the original ironwork column and truss structure, and the deck above with its two pavilions. The architect has adopted the same approach to each; to carefully survey what remained after the fire, keep what is salvageable and replace with contemporary versions what is not.

A happily patchwork building is the result, where galvanized steelwork sits beside weather beaten Victorian ironwork below deck and a small new contemporary visitor centre replaces the original ballroom above, to co-exist with a restored Victorian pavilion that has been glazed and made into a new café. New is cut into old; minimalist balustrades weave between ornate originals and timber salvaged from the fire clads the new building, nailed up in a herringbone pattern for an architectural twist.

The vast pier deck is set aside as an uninterrupted 277m long flexible expanse for large-scale concerts, markets and public gatherings. The new timber-clad visitor centre in the centre of the pier also has a roof top viewing terrace, reached by a Villa Malaparte stair at one end of the building and providing a dramatic space for visitors to experience magnificent views along the coast and out across the English Channel.

Timber is used throughout, much of it reclaimed from the original pier: reclaimed scorched timber was also used to create the pier's new furniture, made locally as part of an employment initiative. Inside spaces are simple, defined by wood lined walls and large windows. There's a shop, office and two rooms for events, one with a fantastic end window facing out to sea.

Overall, Hastings Pier is a stripped back project that has been carefully executed with an aesthetic that feels characteristic of the seaside. Its already greyed timber contrasts beautifully with the surprisingly azure sea. With its trusses and many component parts, colourful beach huts and triangular flags, it references both serious architecture and Archigram's Fun Palace aesthetic too – even on a slightly rainy autumnal weekday.

This year's Stirling Prize winner shows that the smallest buildings can win the biggest awards. ●

'This project shows that local communities working with architects can make a huge difference. Councils should take inspiration from Hastings Pier, and open their eyes to the unique assets that can be created when such collaborations take place'
– Judges' comment

Classical descant

Eric Parry's Cedars Hall for Wells Cathedral School is a solo performance that harmonises with its medieval surroundings

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Dirk Lindner

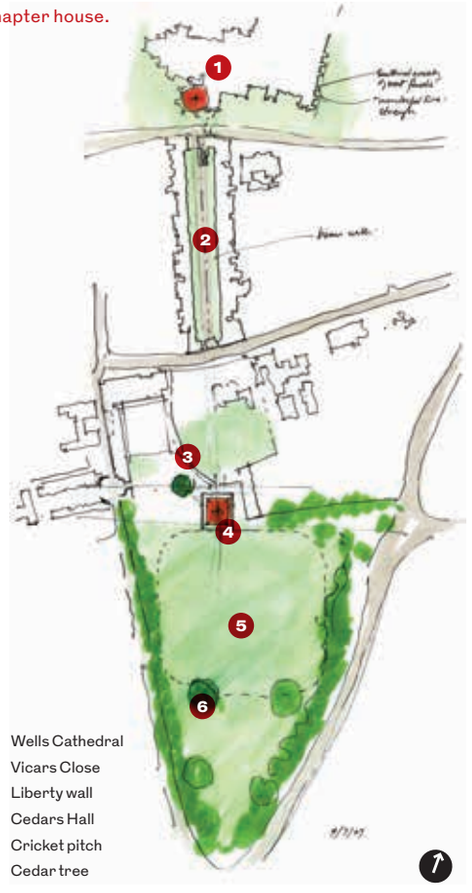
There is a famous photograph of the sun illuminating the worn limestone steps of Wells Cathedral's chapter house. On the similarly worn roots of a cedar tree, within the sound of the cathedral bells, a new home for music in the city was conceived: Cedars Hall.

This Somerset city has music writ through it with the rehearsal and performance spaces of Wells Cathedral School – one of just five specialist music schools in the country – dotted around the cathedral precincts. Foremost among them is the gothic cathedral itself; alongside it the medieval Quilter Hall where smaller concerts take place. Eric Parry Architects' Cedars Hall joins these ancient buildings, giving the school a music centre with a tunable space that is fully geared up for recording and invisibly kitted out with power and data cables, which cannot be inserted into the listed stone structures. And, despite a difficult gestation, Cedars Hall's 400-seat concert space shares a robust materiality and sense of being grounded in its location.

I walk to the cedar tree with architect Tim Lynch, kicking silvery trails in the deeply dewed cricket pitch. Above us are the Mendip hills but turning towards the city it is the cathedral you see rising behind the school buildings, the historic Liberty wall thrown loosely around it. The concert hall sits on this falling ground. Despite its inevitable bulk, with a minimum 10m internal height required for acoustics, the building secured planning without going to committee. Lynch puts it down to the school's work with its neighbours and strategic planning by advisor architect Colin Stansfield Smith who had identified this site before the competition.

But much of the success of the building is the way Parrys has handled the ground

Cedars Hall on axis with Wells Cathedral chapter house.



1 Wells Cathedral
2 Vicars Close
3 Liberty wall
4 Cedars Hall
5 Cricket pitch
6 Cedar tree

From across the cricket pitch the importance of sinking the volume of the hall into the ground, and reducing the massing at clerestory level, is clear. Left is the school's reception, right are red timber-clad music practice rooms.

IN NUMBERS

£6.2m
contract value

1,458m²
gifa

From outside there is the promise of an inhabitable space, not just an imposition of a building

Entering at a lower level (left) takes you into the ground floor of the building, alongside the Liberty wall, which the stone is intended to tie in with.

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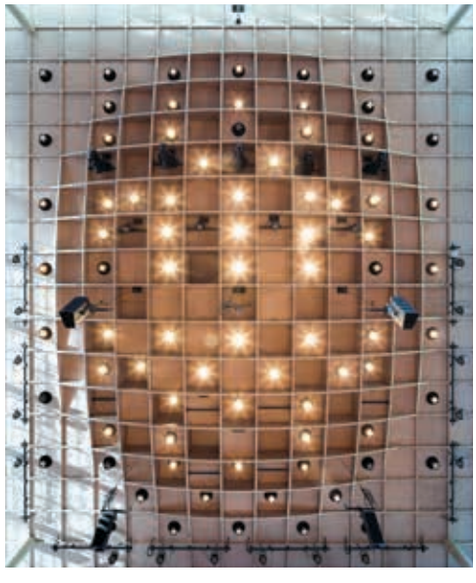
Trunks of weathering steel draw on verticals in the landscape

plane, digging the volume of the hall into the slope (a little less deeply than originally planned thanks to old mining chemicals contaminating the soil). Unlike most concert halls this has windows, so the meeting of the ground level outside and the gallery level inside has some significance, imparting a sense of the building in the landscape. And from outside there is the promise of an inhabitable space, not just an imposition of a building. Music practice rooms have been pulled out of the main volume with the intention that they are embedded in the Liberty wall, they are conceived as stone continuum. This is hard to read from the cricket field as the sections of wall not obscured by a tall yew hedge have yet to weather into a comfortable backdrop – the new mortar is the same composition as the historic mix so is currently lighter. However, from the playground to the junior school on the north, where the spoil is moulded into a stepped mound to the timber-clad rear of the hall, the building becomes a more convincingly part of the Liberty wall.

Externally, the trunks of weathering steel forming the vertical panels draw on the verticals in the landscape. The height, proportions (they are 5.5m high by 2m wide) and simplicity of them in concert with the glass panels is calm and spacious. You can imagine this steady building acting as a foil to the animation of the pupil orchestras inside. Despite the elegance of the facade, Parrys was assiduous in ensuring details on corners were styled to give a sense of a monolithic material rather than thin sheets, and the red MDF and ply panels bring the intensity and rhythm inside. Many of the panels are affectionately called 'sharks fins' as they are moved to tune the hall. Where circulation and tech spaces overlook the hall the clear glass is replaced with black without a break in the rhythm.

The potential problem of landscape views distracting musical concentration is offset by the way the hall's volume is gathered in by the gallery around the edges – so most of the audience and performers sit cossetted below ground level in a smaller space. The belly of

Above The panels of red continue inside. Between them can be seen either the beautiful grounds or their reflection in darkened glass panels.

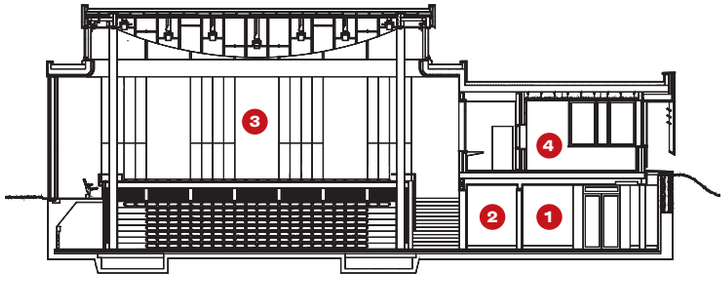


Below The belly of the LVL ceiling survived value engineering as a necessary part of the acoustic strategy.

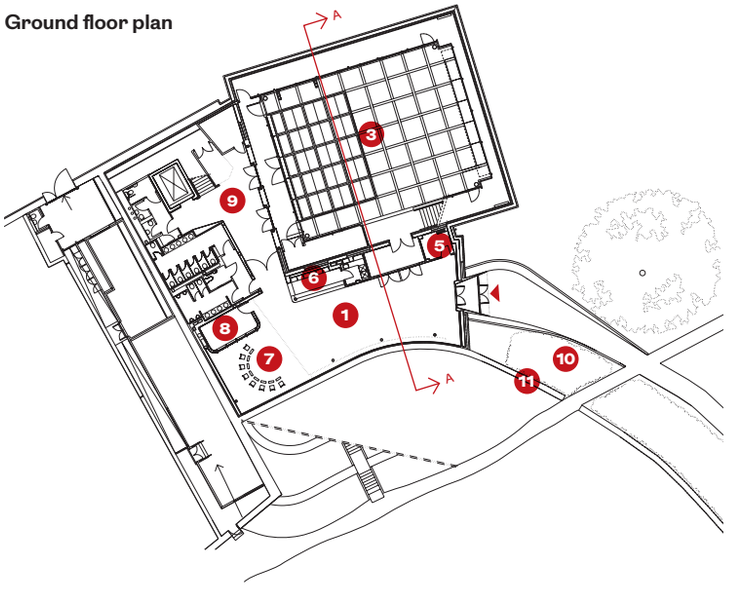
the CNC-cut beech LVL acoustic grid and the inset clerestory also add a sense of enclosure.

The fundamental idea of a high acoustically performing building with windows – especially at this scale of project – sowed the seeds for some of its struggles. Acoustic insulation of 65dB was the original aspiration – higher than any competitor music schools – but required a specialist contractor from the continent to take on the envelope. It would have been a large subcontract for a relatively small building, but by bundling projects together, including a Parry-designed maintenance building and cricket pavilion, the school initially attracted large contractors. However, it gradually became clear that the chosen contractor didn't want to take on the risks. Along the way there was much value engineering, a change to the structure – and after serious consideration whether an extra 18dD isolation was worth an extra million pounds it was decided that no, it was not, when the worst sounds were sportsfield cheering and the occasional jet. So no huge subcontract and the contract for

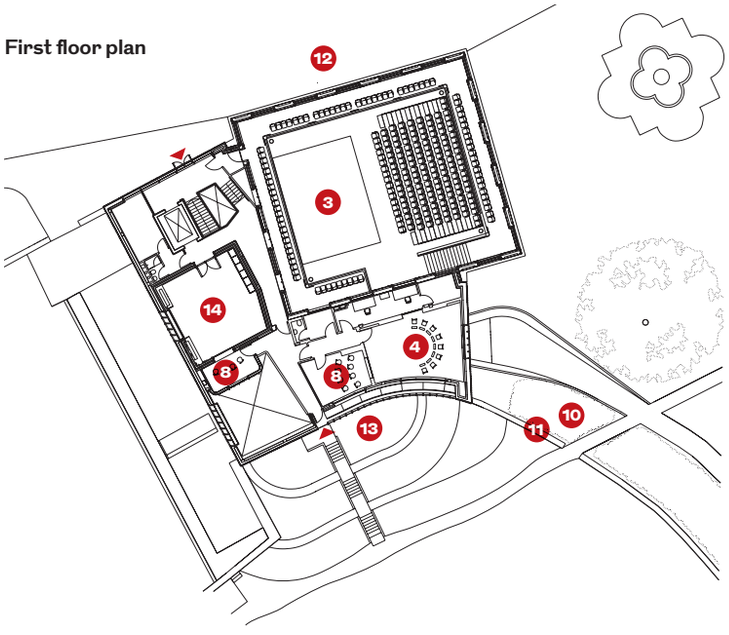
Section A-A



Ground floor plan



First floor plan



0 5 10 20m

Right The double height space of the foyer works during the school day as a practice room (with an observation room alongside), and as part of an extended foyer for events.

1 Foyer
2 Lobby
3 Recital hall
4 Woodwind rehearsal
5 Box office
6 Bar
7 Brass rehearsal
8 Rehearsal observation
9 Backstage
10 Yew hedge
11 Listed Liberty wall
12 Cricket pitch
13 Amphitheatre/slope
14 Percussion

Above The back of the building, in natural timber, picks up the line of the Liberty wall.

Credits
Client Wells Cathedral School
Structural & civil engineer Momentum Consulting Engineers
M&E engineer Buro Happold
Acoustic consultant Gillieron Scott Acoustic Design
Theatre consultant Charcoalblue
QS QSPM
Project manager QSPM
Main contractor Shaylor Group

Cedars Hall alone was relet to a smaller contractor, eventually costing £6.2 million, just over £4200/m².

I visited at the dog end of the half term holidays with the builders in for snagging and a Marie Celeste of crushed plastic cups and tangles of chairs in the rehearsal rooms. These rooms, despite the innovation of observation rooms alongside, now being appropriated for other musical purposes, are obviously the back of house school territory. And empty, the foyer has the same sense. However, there was evidence of it in active use as a temporary gallery, if not as a brass rehearsal space, and it has the bones of a welcoming double height gathering space. But it is undoubtedly the concert hall and its place in the landscape that steal the show.

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Avenue du Président Léopold Sédar Senghor, Dakar, 2017
Photograph Guy Tillim
Words Jan-Carlos Kucharek

This seemingly nonchalantly-taken, innocuous street shot in Dakar, Senegal, in fact marks a complex layering of history; but award-winning South African photographer Guy Tillim, whose work captures contemporary life in Africa, might object to that assumption. He'd argue this photo could have been taken on any of the Western-style grid of streets around the capital's Place de l'Independance and be of any of the imported modernist buildings populating this end of the Cap-Vert. Except I don't think it could; the street, named after Senegal's first post-independence president, actually strikes a strong diagonal across the colonial plan to deferentially address Senegal's natural coastline and the Atlantic beyond.

Sorbonne-educated, Senghor was first a literary poet, setting up the Marxist intellectual movement Négritude while in France in 1935, a name derived from a French racial slur; applying it to a new philosophy based on African culture, values and aesthetics. Setting up the Senegalese Democratic Bloc in 1948, which came to power in the 1951 legislature, Senghor also believed that in creating his 'l'Athènes de l'Afrique', maintaining a relationship with the past power would help ensure a peaceful transition. The poet statesman might have been right; the fathers and grandfathers of the gentlemen in this photo have never experienced a civil war or coup.

So the Terragni-like vanilla modernism on show here wouldn't have bothered Senghor. Apparently, by his rationale, 'sub-Saharan Africa and Europe were part of the same cultural continuum, reaching from Egypt to classical Greece, through Rome to the colonial powers and the modern age'. Tillim, I suspect, would baulk at this Wikipedia reading. 'I wanted to try and marry the streetscape with the people,' he tells me.' To generate a neutral image to simply act as a frame through which you begin to look.'

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By the book

Waugh Thistleton delves deep into Jewish ceremony to produce a cemetery extension steeped in symbolism

Words: Laura Mark Photographs: Lewis Khan

Right The rammed earth prayer halls lit by clerestory glazing which allows light to flood into the double-height space.

Left The new buildings sit within a landscaping scheme designed by J & L Gibbons.

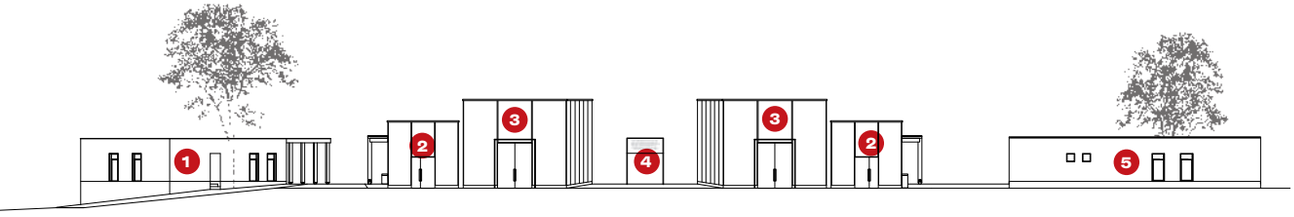
The Orthodox Jewish community has been burying its dead at Bushey Cemetery on the outskirts of London since 1947. Its new extension by Waugh Thistleton, which provides room for a further 8,000 burials, means it will be able to continue this tradition for years to come. Its official opening in May was a momentous occasion for the community, heralded by the chief Rabbi as a 'milestone'.

But how do you create a fitting place that stands up to the traditions and values of the religious community? On this site the previous building was merely a place to shelter, resembling something more like a dilapidated community centre than a place where the deceased can be buried with dignity. Yet they are complex places, often holding deeply personal emotional significance for families and individuals while also having a specific place in the heart of the community.

1 Reception and meeting point
2 Cohanim room
3 Prayer halls
4 Prayer arch
5 Mortuary

0 5 10m

North south elevation



The scheme was heavily influenced by the processional nature of Orthodox Jewish burial

Right The Cohanim rooms are separated from the prayer halls, which are seen here as standing taller.

Below A covered walkway built from larch glulam provides a processional route for the burial.

Left Looking through to contemplative views.

Below Oversized CorTen doors mark the points of entry and exit.

As Avriel Bar Levav, a professor at the Open University of Israel, comments: 'The cemetery is a meeting place not only for the dead and the living but also of ideas – of spiritual, emotional and aesthetic trends and conceptions.

'The outcome of this gathering is a whirlpool, the result of the combination of utterly different ideas stemming from diverse sources, yet influencing and shaping the visitor's world, who in each tour of the cemetery takes a trip to his or her future.'

Here, the cluster of six modest buildings – one of the first new interventions at the site in more than 50 years – marks a piece of history for this particular community.

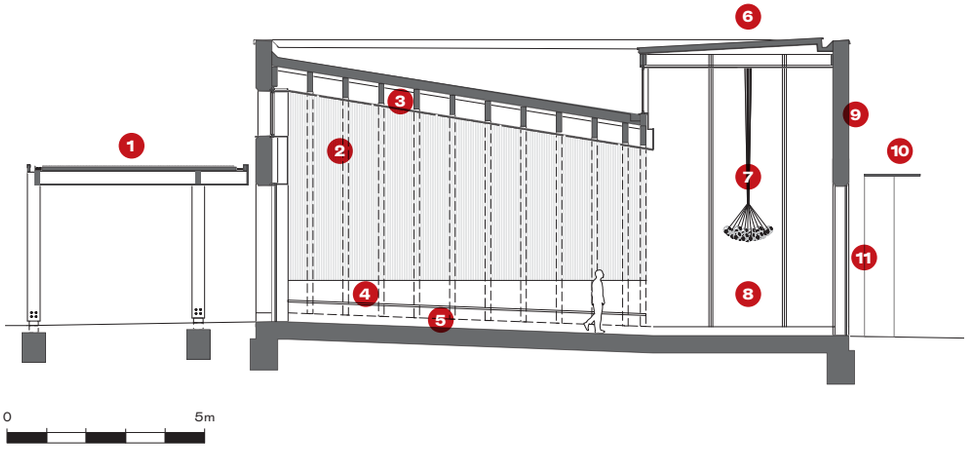
Waugh Thistleton's scheme, which includes ceremonial spaces and service buildings, has been heavily influenced by the processional nature of the Orthodox Jewish practice of burial. The buildings are laid out to facilitate the movement from arrival, to congregation, to prayer, procession to the graveside and then a return to pray. Each point of the process is mapped out and marked by contemplative views using the site's established trees as key markers.

Jewish law requires that whenever possible the burial must take place within 24 hours after the death. This process begins with the Taharah – a ritual cleansing during which members of the community, known as the Chevra Kadisha, wash and clean the body. This happens on site at the cemetery in its new mortuary where the white, clinical rooms look out to landscaped ponds behind the buildings.

Then during the Levayah or funeral – friends and family accompany the body to its resting place in a show of respect. Mourners arrive at the site through a timber reception building which opens onto a timber colonnaded walkway, forming the processional route to the prayer halls. These are entered from the west and exited to the east before the mourners head between the buildings and on towards the graveside.

The two prayer halls, set within monolithic rammed earth blocks, are contemplative spaces. At 7m they are the tallest buildings on the site, made almost tomb-like by flat roofs, smooth earthen walls and oversized CorTen doors marked out by simple canopies. Inside, the floors ramp down towards where the body is placed, offering a feeling of procession and focus. Congregational areas of

Prayer hall section AA



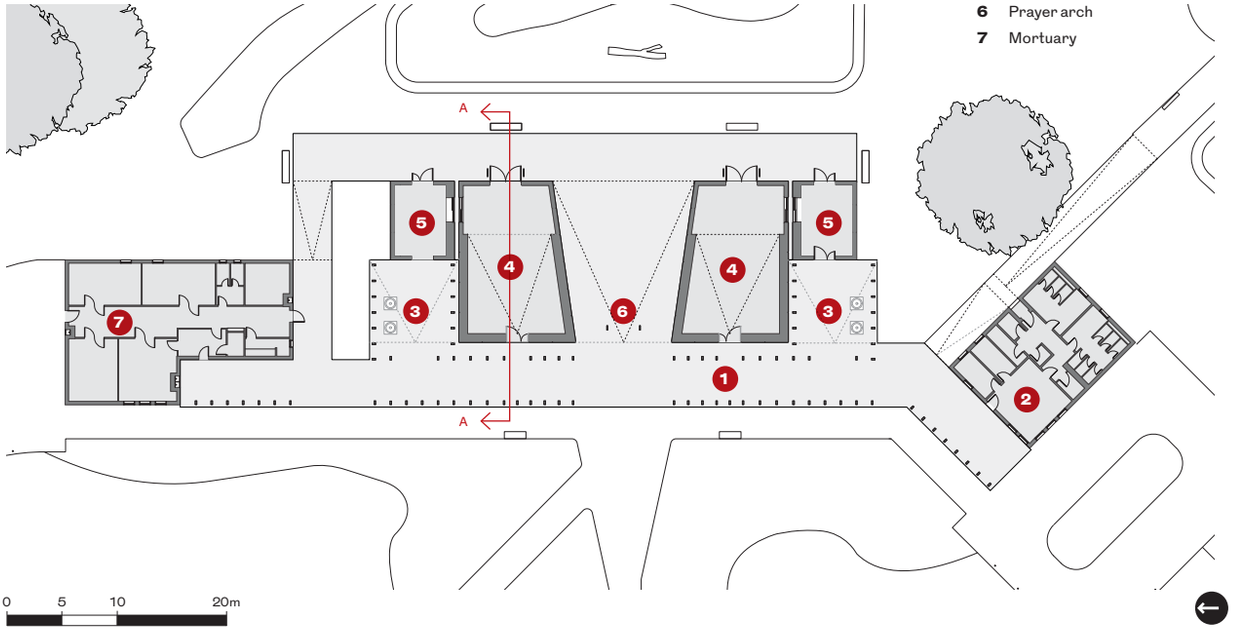
Prayer hall section AA

1 Larch glulam canopy
2. Oak slats to walls and sloping ceiling
3 Glulam roof structure
4. Oak bench
5. Sloping floor paved in earth brown encaustic tiles
6 Zinc standing seam roof
7 Blown glass pendant light
8 Rammed earth walls exposed internally
9 400 mm thick rammed earth wall
10 CorTen steel canopy
11 CorTen steel doors

Ground floor plan

1 Meeting point and arrival area
2 Reception
3 Hand washing areas
4 Prayer rooms
5 Cohanim rooms
6 Prayer arch
7 Mortuary

Ground floor plan



IN NUMBERS

661 m²
gross internal floor area, total

218 m²
gifa, mortuary

130 m²
gifa: reception office / café / ancillary space

115 m²
gifa, prayer halls (2 of each)

31 m²
gifa, cohanim rooms (2 of each)

8.5 ha
landscaped site

Credits
Architect Waugh Thistleton Architects
Client United Synagogues
Structural engineer Elliot Wood
M&E consultant P3R
QS Deacon & Jones
Landscape consultant J&L Gibbons
Project manager Deacon & Jones
CDM co-ordinator Vance Miller
Building inspector Assent
Main contractor Buxton
CAD software Vectorworks

Left In time the landscape in front of the building will changes as it is used as a cemetary.

the prayer halls are lined with English oak; in contrast the rammed earth is left exposed in the ceremonial spaces.

Beside each prayer hall sits the Cohanim Room – a place specific to the traditions and rituals of Orthodox Judaism. Cohens, believed to be descendants of Aaron the High Priest, are not permitted to come into contact with a dead body, or to enter a building in which a dead body has lain at rest. Therefore, the Cohanim room, with its separate structure, offers Cohens a space where they can both see and hear the funeral without coming into contact with the body.

The use of rammed earth, itself not commonly used in the UK, is highly significant here as a means of symbolism. The earth was mixed with limestone, sand and a small quantity of cement and water to create what is better known as stabilised rammed earth. But essentially the walls have been formed from earth excavated to make way for the buildings. Jewish law, or halakhah, states that 'the body in its entirety is returned to the earth in a way that allows for natural decomposition to occur' and there is a deep connection with this process of natural life cycles. Here, the building reflects this with a sense of passing from earth to building and then at the end of its life to the earth again. The material also gives a sense of calm and a sombre, simple approach. It possesses a beauty not unlike a poured concrete wall.

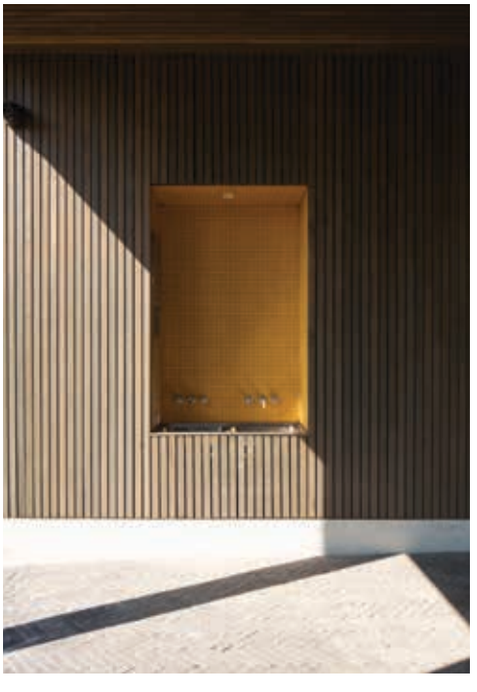
Above Inside the prayer halls are lined with oak and feature oak benches for the congregation to sit.

Right Areas for the washing of hands are discretely placed within the building's external walls.

Rammed earth gives a sense of calm and a sombre, simple approach

The connection to nature extends beyond the buildings. The site has been planned as a whole and the prayer halls and surrounding ancillary functions sit in the landscape as if it were a country park rather than a cemetery, almost hidden from view at its lowest point. Reed beds, ponds and swales provide natural water retention – essential for when grave stones cover the 6.5ha site. There is consideration for the future too. By placing the buildings at the far edge of the extended plot, any future need to extend can be done beyond the prayer halls and administrative buildings, making them then central in the plan.

This is one of the most significant Jewish burial sites in the UK, and what Waugh Thistleton has done is provide a building which with time will have significant cultural value. It doesn't shout 'wow' or 'look at me', but is a place of gravitas and tranquillity. It will go down as a new approach to this often-overlooked typology. ●



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Written in stone

Foster's new European HQ for Bloomberg is about permanence and legacy – but is it mired in the uncertainty of the City's future as a global financial hub?

Words: Isabelle Priest

Maybe it looks like a curious decision now: to build something so weighty, so visibly long-lasting, and to expend so much time and money doing so. Bloomberg's new European headquarters in London has been nearly a decade in the making. Some media outlets suggest it cost £1 billion, and it has taken a 13,000m^2 plot in one of the world's prime commercial spots – opposite the Bank of England, next to Mansion House, St Stephen's Walbrook and No 1 Poultry on Queen Victoria Street in the City.

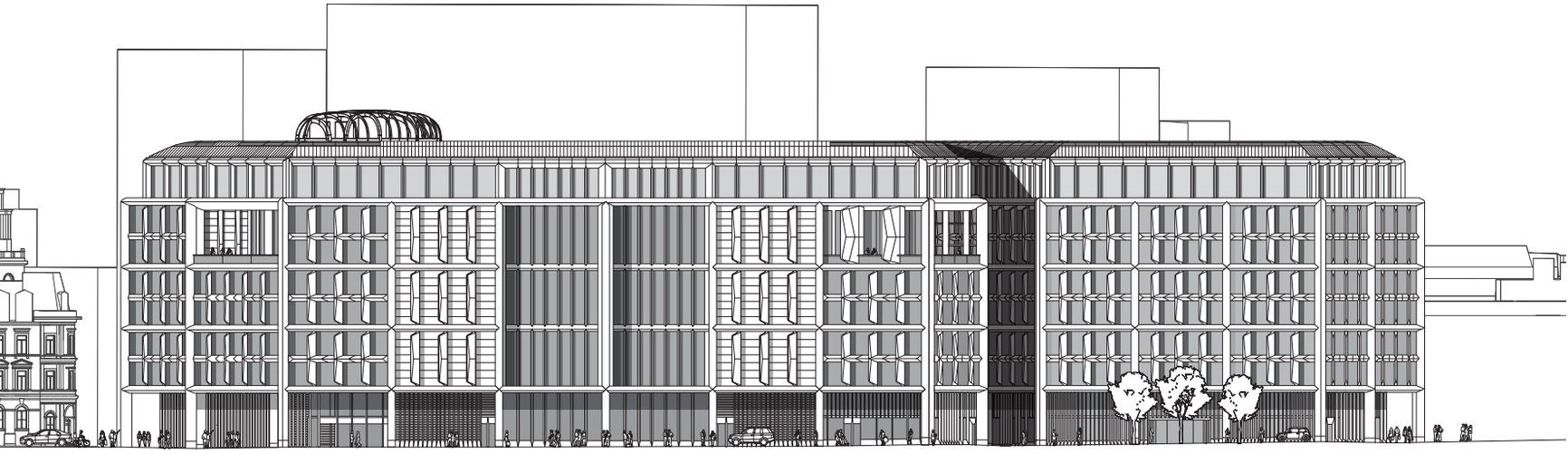
Certainly, on the morning of the press opening of Foster + Partners' megalith in October, the front page headlines of City AM are again at pains to stress that the City of London as a financial centre is irreplaceable in Europe, this time quoting the Bank of England's Sir Jon Cunliffe, and there's an undercurrent in the speeches at the press conference too. This building 'shows that despite Brexit, London is open,' says London mayor Sadiq Khan.

'Whatever London's and the UK's relationship to the EU proves to be, London's language, time zone, talent, infrastructure and culture all position it to grow as a global capital for years to come,' says Michael Bloomberg, the founder of this unrivalled media and financial organisation. 'We are very optimistic about London's future. We are really excited to be a part of it.'

Sitting in the audience in the 'Pantry' on the sixth floor of the new office, surrounded by a giant load-bearing stone structure with 900m deep reveals, I could

NIGEL YOUNG/FOSTER+PARTNERS

North east elevation



IN NUMBERS

1.3ha
total site area

107,000m²
gifa

6700
work stations

600
tons of bronze

believe them. The architecture might be brand new – the construction team cleaners, we are told, left only moments before we arrived – but there's a sense that it has already been here for a long while. What we see is an incredibly permanent and solid architecture. What we feel is an architecture of continuity.

Listening to the speakers, with a huge view of St Paul's Cathedral dome behind them, on one of my own milestone birthdays, what also registers overwhelmingly is that it has been commissioned and designed by two men of advancing years.

Now, this is not a commentary on where power and money lies, but about the importance of architecture and art and how it can be used to shape the legacy of great individuals. In their later years many people's thoughts naturally turn to preserving the past, doing things in the present and creating something for the future.

This new building does all three: it respects the past, acts for those in the present, and anticipates a different future. Its backdrop has changed; London thrived after the financial crash when this building was conceived – the City gave the impression that it could resist all. We don't know what is to come, but this is architecture of the steadying hand, carried out by firms and people well experienced in life's ups and downs.

Located on the site of the former Bucklersbury House, the 14-storey modernist Legal & General office by Campbell-Jones & Sons, Bloomberg's European HQ rehouses the 240AD Temple of Mithras which was moved from the site in 1954, curating it into a free interactive museum; it provides a single workplace for 4,000 UK employees previously scattered over four separate buildings; and it invents architectural and technological solutions for a future that could be even more densely populated, with greater extremes in weather and pollution.

In essence this is a building about doing 'the right thing' – which it achieves in stone. Bloomberg HQ was dreamt up long before any hint that there would be so much opposition to that: zero-hour contracts weren't widespread and America didn't have a climate change denier at its helm. Yet in contrast to the typical 25-year cycle of a commercial speculative office development, 'there wasn't a formal lifespan involved'. The two Bloomberg HQ creators – its patron Michael Bloomberg and its designer Norman Foster – have, at undisclosed cost, gone to every length to ensure this is one of the most significant buildings for a generation to rise in the City.

'For many companies our size,' says Bloomberg, 'building a new headquarters would have meant a great skyscraper. Given the price of London real estate and the cost of construction materials the economics of that would bear it out. But at Bloomberg we have never made decisions based on short-term cost, we have never cut corners on investment in our people or our products and that's the beauty of a privately held company. You don't need to make decisions based on shareholder gains – we've always taken the long view and placed great value on being good neighbours to the cities that host us.'

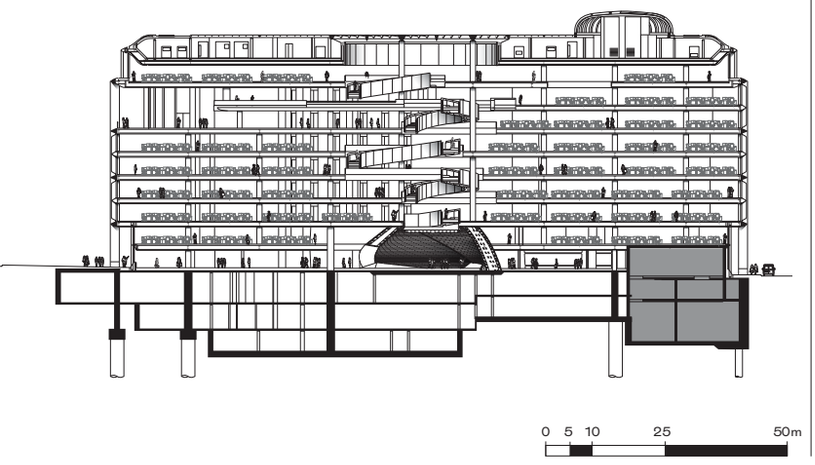
From the exterior, the architectural tactic is a deductionary one. The client wanted to preserve, enhance even, the sight lines to St Paul's, so the architect filled the site with a 10-storey volume, from which it cut away three corners to create three new plazas for public

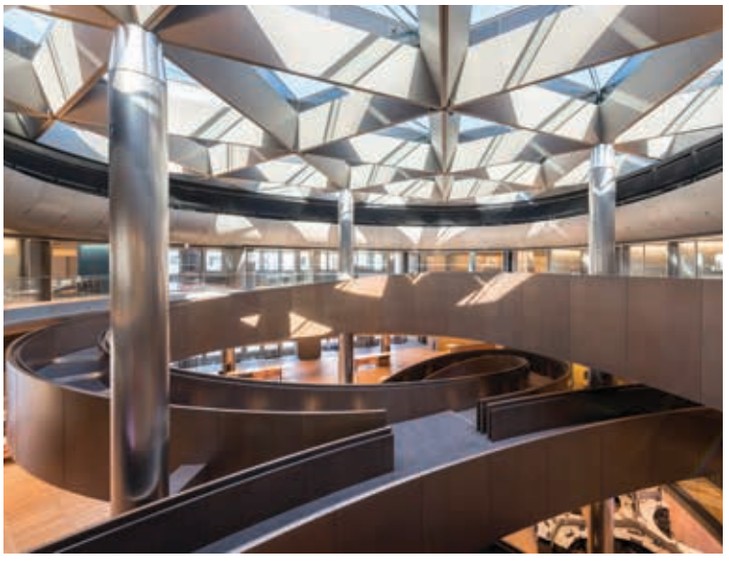
NIGEL YOUNG (2)

Above left Bloomberg has commissioned world famous artists to develop integrated and applied art for the building. Here is one part of Christina Inglesias' Forgotten Streams, a piece that evokes the lost Walbrook River, on one of the new public squares.

Right View from Cannon Street Station showing the gap where the arcade begins.

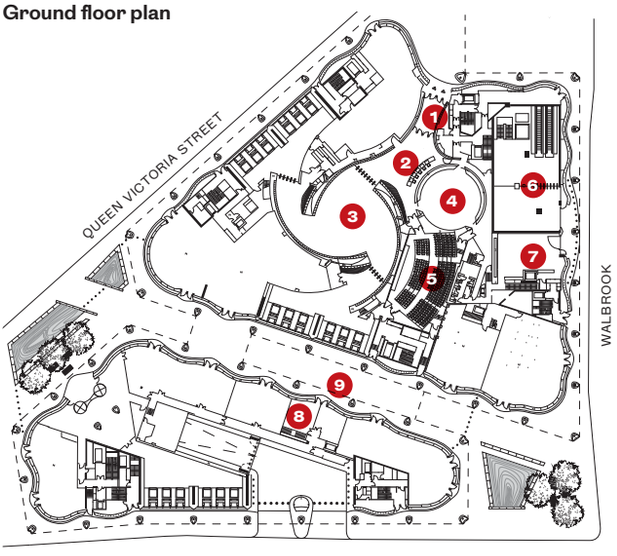
Section



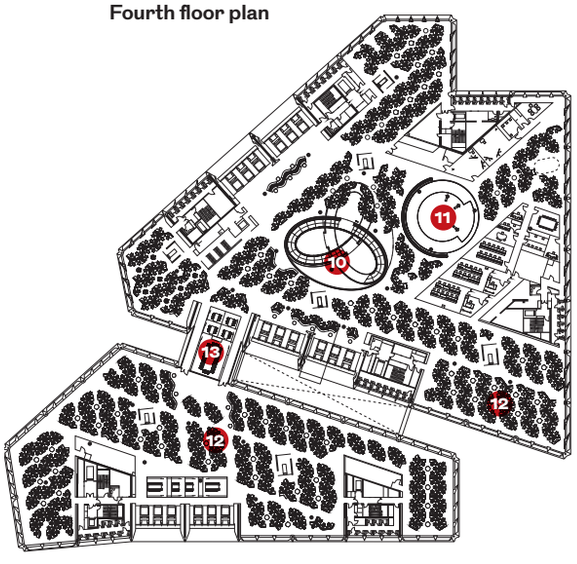


Above The upper three floors are more open to the rounded skylight.

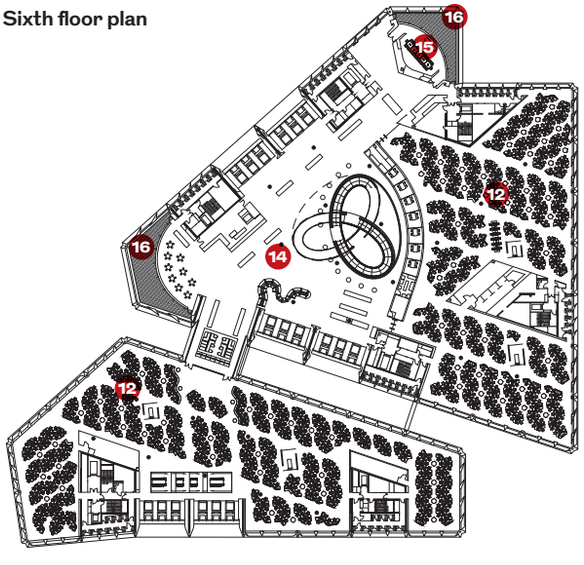
Ground floor plan



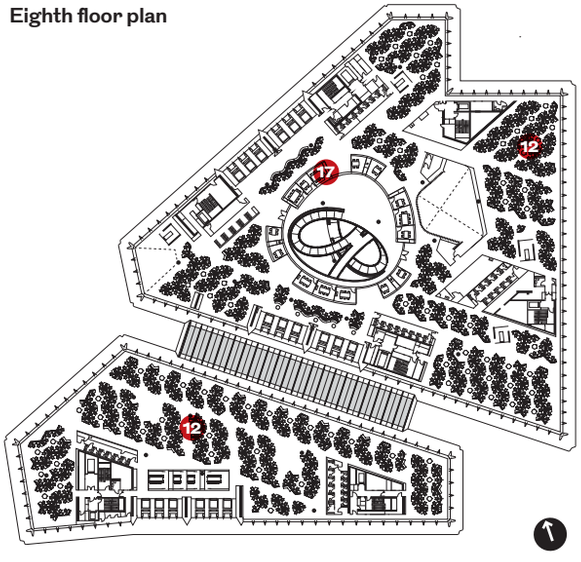
Fourth floor plan



Sixth floor plan



Eighth floor plan



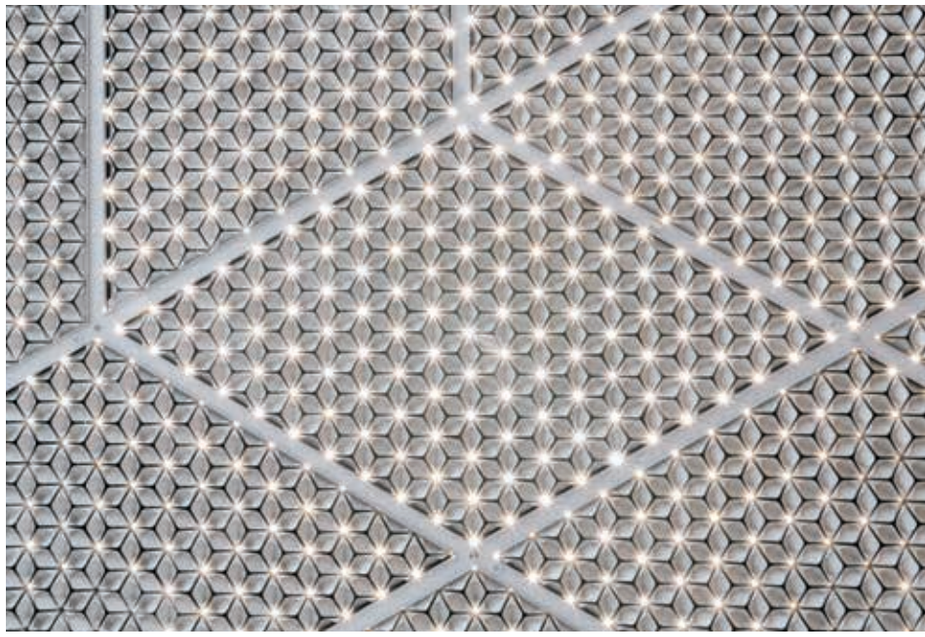
1 Entrance
2 Reception
3 Vortex lobby
4 Pre-function room
5 Auditorium
6 Underground entrance
7 Temple of Mithras museum entrance
8 Retail
9 Bloomberg Arcade
10 Staired ramp
11 TV studio
12 Office floor
13 Bridge over arcade joining north and south buildings
14 The Pantry
15 Boardroom
16 Outdoor terrace
17 Meeting rooms

amenity as well as a new arcade through the middle that re-establishes the route of the Celtic Watling Street and gives easier access to Cannon Street Station. The architecture is what is left over: two triangular plots. To the north is the main 70,357m^2 building, with its entrance overlooking the Magistrates' Court, while a 36,940m^2 structure to the south houses two floors of rooms for teaching clients how to use the Bloomberg terminal. These two plots more or less inform the whole design, including its triangular column grid inside.

The facade continues this theme of trying to create a very civic, bedded-in building, being almost classical in composition. The structure is made of the same Derbyshire stone as the Magistrates' Court opposite, and is expressed on alternate floors to scale up to size. In the true classical way the facade has a bottom, dominant middle and top (here recessed), before being broken down in scale again by a varying rhythm of bronze alloy fins and louvres depending on the solar shading required. It's a 10-storey building that feels more like six or seven (though with 600 tons of Japanese bronze alloy and 84,000m^3 of stone it is a bit too heavy). Within the bronze frames, windows are set clear or opaque depending on the function behind in vertical blocks so that when looked at head on, the street front appears almost mannerist – like Dutch townhouses lined up in a row. At the base, an undulating elevation is set back behind a stone arcade.

The inside feels like a totally different building, which project architect Michael Jones, senior partner at Foster's, says is intentional 'in that British kind of way',

NIGEL YOUNG (3)



Above Detail showing the 2.5 million aluminium petals that make up the ceiling for cooling, acoustics and lighting.

but I find it hard to believe. A small reception area leads to a huge architectural American redwood vortex with the first part of Olafur Eliasson's No Future Is Possible Without A Past artwork at its top (see image on page 5). A triple reciprocal structure, each shell leans on the next to enclose a space for people to spin off in different directions between the slots, like balls in a game of roulette or bagatelle. Elsewhere, 50% of the ground floor is for public use – a shared auditorium, retail units, a new entrance to the tube and the separate public entrance to the reburied temple at Roman street level 6m below.

The upper levels are again a different building from the ground floor. The core is broken up and pushed to the edges, leaving room for an elliptical void at the centre that has been filled with a dramatic bronze-clad stepped ramp that curves 120° through every floor, making an open heart for the flow of people and information, as well as creating dynamic diagonal views between levels. Although it is impressive, it strangely bears no relation to that vortex downstairs. In the larger north building, floorplates carry 600-700 desks each, arranged in clusters of six around small circular meeting tables.

Anyone venturing beyond the ground floor is taken by lift directly to the sixth floor and the Pantry, a social space that can be used for company events and meetings. At this point the building opens out even more into a completely column free space. An enormous circular

Left The Bloomberg Arcade diagonally cuts through the middle of the site. It provides a new public thoroughfare re-establishing Walbrook Street.

This is architecture of the steadying hand, by those well experienced in life's ups and downs

opening a further two floors up lets light into the space through a flat rounded skylight in the roof, which though dramatic makes this part of the project seem stumpy, as though it should be domed.

The other innovations are pretty technical. The lifts have been developed with Kone to cantilever off the external stone frame; the architect has invented a raised all-timber floor and resolved accessibility issues using magnetic fixings. But the most remarkable is the ceiling of polished aluminium petals that was manufactured in Glamorgan and is at once a low-energy cooling system using air that enters the building through the bronze gills on the facade, an acoustic panel to regulate noise, and a light fitting that helps reflect and disperse LED lighting, making them more effective. It's stunning, and it is these kinds of innovations that will inspire better performing buildings for a changing environmental future in buildings beyond this one. Desks, lifts, ceiling cooling and flooring were all developed with industry (90% of the project costs were spent in the UK) as mini technical competitions, built 1:1 as prototypes and tested at extremes. The effort paid off with a 98.5% BREEAM outstanding rating and a building that is said to use 70% less water and 40% less energy than a typical office.

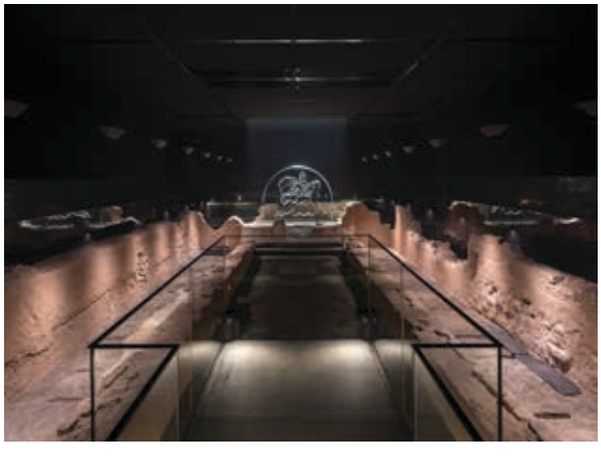
The most disappointing part of the project is, however, what has been provided for the Temple of Mithras. Set two floors below the street, it is in a black tiled tank reminiscent of a large business hotel basement swimming pool, reached via two awkward and narrow staircases in a dog-leg series and another black tank exhibition room. Money spent on a tasteless timed experiential display using light and sound would have been better spent on the architecture. Perhaps a void making the temple visible from the street above would have made it seem more treasured.

Nevertheless, it is difficult not to be impressed by the significance of the overall building, both as a commitment to a foreign place and workforce by a privately owned company, and as a consumer of physical material and intellectual thought. Great buildings span the millennia in a way that little else does. By inheriting a building of concrete and glass and leaving one defined by stone and bronze, Bloomberg and Foster show they understand this as clearly as the Romans who built the temple below. Bloomberg's European headquarters is a huge piece of city designed in the knowledge that to survive it must be uncontroversial and civic outside yet provide solutions to longstanding problems within.

To end with the same slightly rhetorical language, Michael Bloomberg closed his speech at the press opening with his usual casual and perhaps indifferent tone: 'Maybe 1,800 years from now Londoners will discover the remains of this building, just as the Temple of Mithras was discovered here, and by then they may consider the Bloomberg terminal as primitive as the tools we now display from the Roman temple. We all know that no structure can last forever but we can hope that the impact of the technological innovations that we are pioneering and the values that guide our company grow and will be felt here in London and around the world long after we are all gone.'

In the changing, solidifying style of Foster's recent architecture you get a sense of the part this new building will play in his epitaph too – the building to end them all, the one he wants to stick around. I have a feeling it will. ●

Above View from the 6th floor Pantry over St Paul's Cathedral. It is used as a space for taking a break and holding meetings as well as events.



Left The Temple of Mithras is 7m down at 'Roman street level'.

JAMES NEWTON (2)

Credits
Client Bloomberg LP
Development manager Stanhope
Architect Foster + Partners
Development advisor BNP Paribas
Construction manager Sir Robert McAlpine
Structural engineer AKT II
Services engineer Sweco
Lift consultant Sweco
Cost consultant AECOM
Lighting designer Tillotson Design Associates
Acoustic consultant Sandy Brown Associates
Landscape consultant Charles Funke Associates
Planning consultant DP9
Art consultant Nancy Rosen Inc
Facade consultants FMDC, BMT Group, Optis
Natural ventilation consultants Breathing Buildings, Wirth Research, Price Industries

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Solo for flute

Working among the stucco of St John's Wood, Walters & Cohen reinvented the Doric column for its building facade

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek

When architect Walters & Cohen was appointed to build an extension to the American School in London's St John's Wood, its feeling was not to repeat the past – in any form, as it turns out. The 1971 red-brick design by the Fitzroy Robinson Partnership might have been surprisingly modernist for this tree-lined suburb of grand white stucco homes, but it was also quite flawed. The low-level, expansive campus, while using a novel hexagonal form as an ordering device for classrooms, also suffered from a deep, largely internalised plan. The upshot, over time, was that the odd-shaped open plan classrooms proved inflexible for modern teaching and light levels were generally found wanting, especially for art and design subjects.

Their desire was to comprehensively address these past failings with an orthogonal, materially-innovative new arts block at the south end of the site facing the old school across a playground, that now ran above a subterranean pool complex and a rail tunnel. But they were to fall at the first hurdle. For while Westminster planners were fascinated by their and Arup's proposal for a facade formed mainly of composite crushed glass, which generated an effect of diaphanous, shoji-screen-like opacity, it also rang alarm bells for them. Though the local authority first suggested to the school that it run a competition for this prominent site, it was also resigned to the fact that in this affluent residential neighbourhood, material experimentation such as this was likely to attract the attention of local Nimbys, who had not only the will but the wherewithal to make it very hard to get through planning. For the architect, this realisation forced a design rethink that on the surface at least was as conservative as its original proposal was radical.

Below left Looking east along Grove End Road, the ASL's new Arts block abstractedly references the adjacent 19th century villa.

DENNIS GILBERT

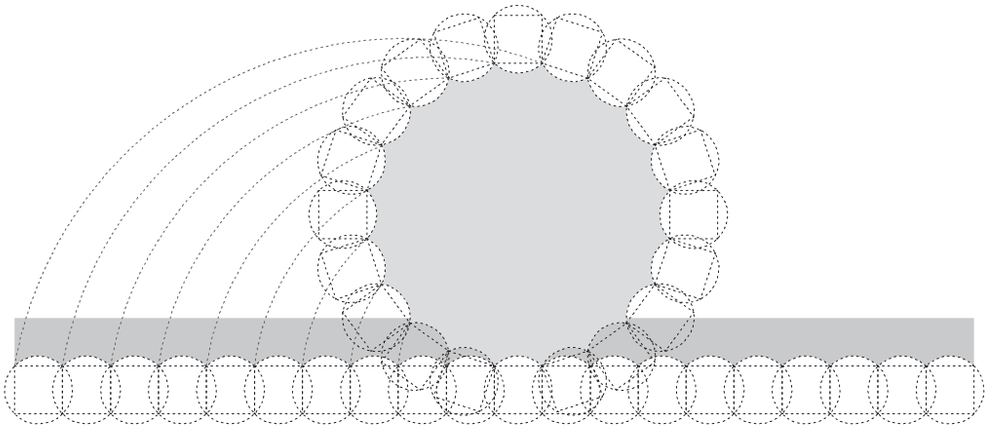
Back to the classical

The fallback, explains Walters & Cohen associate Tim Hardy, was to seek recourse to the classical, stuccoed townhouses that those wealthy objectors were likely to be living in. 'We decided that the way forward was to pick up on the language of classical architecture but to do something contemporary in its interpretation,' explains Hardy. 'Our big concern was that in working with it we wanted to avoid the baggage that came with its use; basically, while we wanted a civic expression, we didn't want it to look like a turn of the century bank.'

Inspired by the adjacent white stucco neo-classical villa, the firm picked up on its formal rhythms but used a design wholly based on the flutes cut into Doric columns. It

'In effect, we were taking a classical Doric column and rolling it out flat'

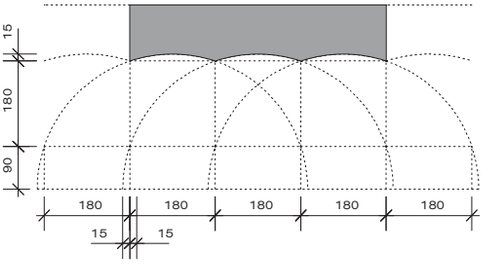
Below Walters & Cohen's design rolls out the flutes of a Doric column.



Below Flute width was based on Vitruvian principles and the building's scale.

Middle Stone cutting machines worked to millimetre precision.

Bottom Unmodified straight runs of fluting were rejected after initial studies.



was helped by the likes of Vitruvius and Alberti, who had conveniently conducted their own studies of classical antiquity; so armed with the established context and 12m height of the new building, it didn't take long for the firm to settle on a flute width of 180mm, in accord with the scale of the design. 'In effect, what we were doing was taking a classical Doric column and rolling it out flat to respond to the module of our building.' But, as he elucidates, it wasn't quite that simple. Having given up on stucco sprayed sculpted rigid insulation affixed to concrete panels, the design team resorted to old school approaches, opting for 115mm thick panels of self-supporting buff Portuguese limestone, offset from the concrete structure.

Working out how to cut flutes into the stone panels led the architect to Belfast-based specialist stone worker S McConnell and Sons, whose CNC-cutting experience on the Lady Diana Memorial fountain in Hyde Park and architect Ian McChesney's lozenge-shaped granite benches at Argent's Granary Square in Kings Cross, stood them in good stead here. Hardy says it was through conversations with the fabricator and the realisation that every stone could be cut however it chose that led Walters & Cohen to make the flutes 'fade' gradually as they ran up. For him, it changed the design concept fundamentally, 'making the whole look less severe and more playful,' adding: 'It then became a matter of the degree to which the fluting dissolved as it ascended.'

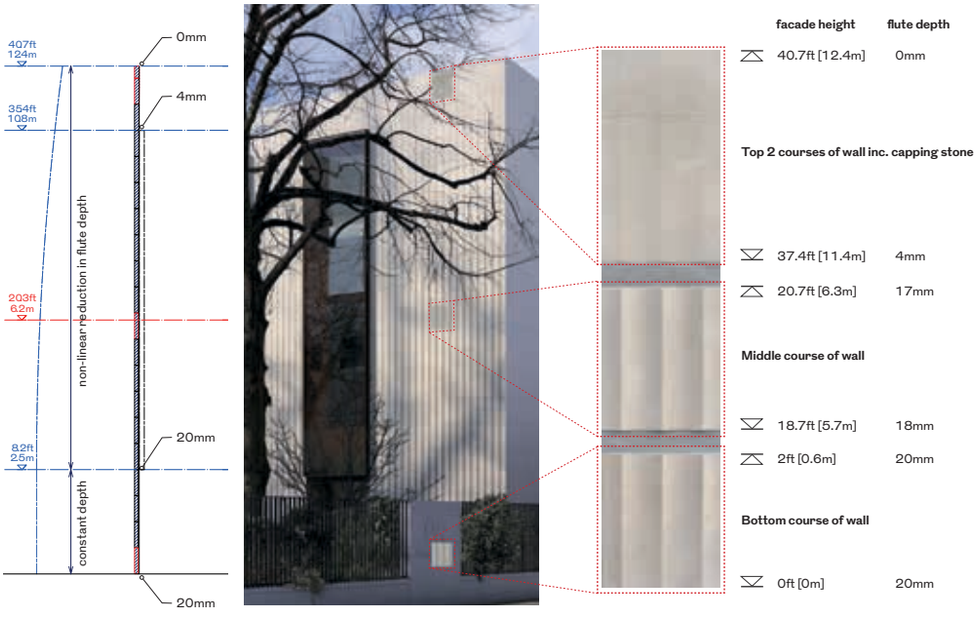
Hardy explains that the firm made a deliberate decision to eschew traditional classical referencing; reversing the concept of the classical rusticated base with increased delicacy of orders and ornamentation on ascending. He says that instead they wanted the greatest tactility of the stone to be expressed at ground level, becoming less 'wrought' and more solid as it rose to parapet level.

When to fade

The manner in which the 180mm wide flutes should diminish from 20mm depth at ground level to 0mm at parapet became the subject of numerous studies. Results showed linear reduction lost the flutes too early, so the firm went for a non-linear approach, keeping a constant 20mm from ground to 2.5m height, reducing to 15mm as far as 7.4m height, falling to 6mm to 10.8m height and dissolving to zero at the 12.4m parapet.

For fabricator McConnell's Alan McConnell, this presented many challenges. The architect had modelled in 2D Vectorworks and SketchUp but all this information now needed to be input to the bespoke 3D engineering software from which the cutting schedule for each 1200mm by 600mm stone panel could be programmed. Cutting required pinpoint accuracy to take the stone from its 20mm depth to zero, with cutting blades running 24 hours a day to incise each of the 1,200m^2 building's flutes along its length, the depth changing at every point along its section.

Facade design



Section 3D visual Sample panel elevation

'The machinery and blades needed to be in perfect condition,' says McConnell. 'We had to make metal templates of the top and bottom of each stone panel to ensure flute sizes were going to align on consecutive panels.' File sizes for the 3D model were huge, he recalls. 'Towards the top we were working with cutting radii of 1.8km.'

Cutting the corners

Cutting schedules for panels also had to be overlaid on the fluting layout to check that vertical joints were centred as much as possible in the middle of any channel rather then towards its arris. Interfaces at the building corners were particularly challenging, with flutes meeting at ground level to form a 25mm arrow-head detail in plan which morphed into a standard 90° flat interface at the top. If all this wasn't taxing enough for the skills of McConnell's CAD technician, every single cut stone panel had to be hand finished to sand away minute striations formed by adjacent blade runs to form the flute.

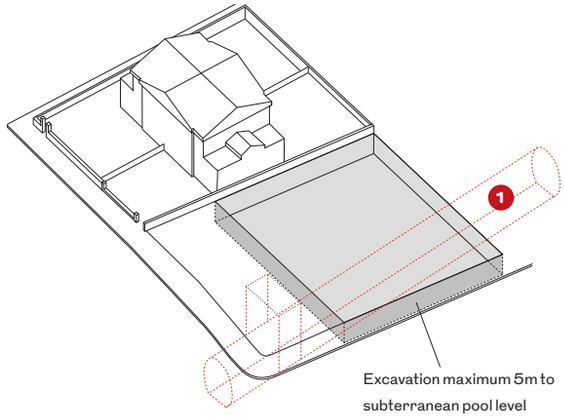
Whether all this technical expertise and finessing of the stone translates into the finished facade is a matter of subjective opinion. For Walters & Cohen's Hardy, the building rewards repeated viewings, with the flutes capturing sunlight across their surface in different and subtle ways (see cover image). But Alan McConnell concedes the subtlety might be lost, feeling that 'to the common eye you might not realise the work and the challenge of it', and I'm minded to agree with the fabricator. With all classical references removed, such as a frieze plinth or congé or any form of entasis, it's as if the facade had become an exercise in reductio ad absurdum, the fluting abstracted to the point where it too ceases to reference anything classical at all. Although this could be read as 'post modern', Walters & Cohen's own iteration of the 'decorated shed' – a design of minimalist solidity rather than challenging nuance.

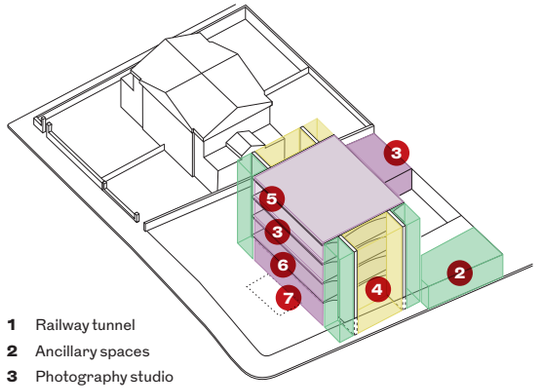
But for Hardy the process has revealed methodologies for stone cutting that, freed from the pre-empted planning constraints of a site like this, could trigger amazing proposals from the firm or possibly herald a new age of ornamentation generally. As a designer, it's also reminded him of the pivotal role of the craftsman: 'The reason we could do want we wanted here is that there was a technician who understood the technology in the same way a traditional mason understood a hammer and a chisel.'

Right Sandwiched between service blocks and facing the original school, the north elevation of ASL's Arts block reveals its open plan nature.

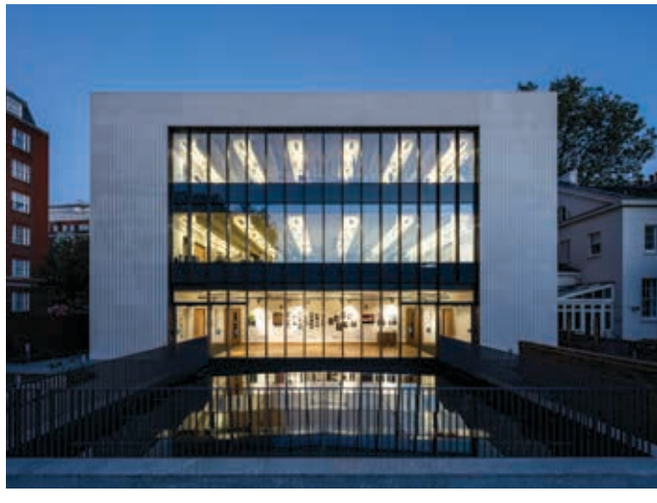
Every single cut stone panel had to be hand finished to sand away minute striations

Design strategy





1 Railway tunnel
2 Ancillary spaces
3 Photography studio
4 Vertical circulation
5 Fine art studio
6 Art gallery
7 Sculpture and ceramic studios



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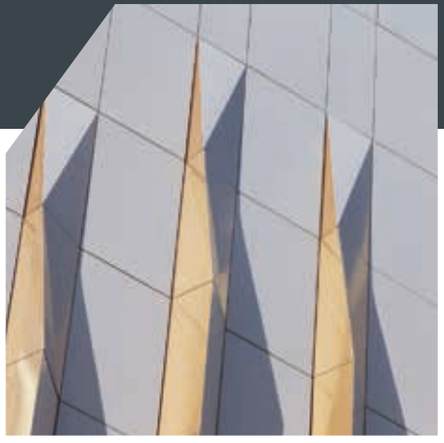

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Left ,The ground floor of the showroom showing the Legno+Color.
Above ,The large mezzanine provides a meeting space.

The natural choice for Smeg's West End flagship store

Kerakoll's Design House Collection flooring gives retailer's leading London store a stylish finish

Architects Matteo Bazzicalupo and Raffaella Mangiarotti of deepdesign, alongside industrial designer Edoardo Radice, were responsible for both the exterior and interior design of Smeg's new flagship showroom in London which has just been opened at 14 Regent Street. The showroom's large windows make the building practically transparent, allowing the whole of the double height cube-shaped layout of the ground floor to be viewed easily from outside. A large mezzanine level overhangs the large centrally positioned counter and features a dedicated design lounge and meeting space. The interior design is minimalist but made warm and welcoming through the use of stone and wood. Features such as glass surfaces, large modular display furniture, counter tops in marble, unfilled travertine, and wooden slats that elegantly cascade down the staircase, all echo the architectural style of Mies.

All three floor levels are covered with the same beautiful industrial wood flooring in solid whitewashed oak, which has been laid to give the impression of infinite wooden strips.

The flooring is from the Kerakoll Design House Collection. This is an integrated interior design project comprising 10 innovative materials including cement, resin, micro resin coatings and wood. Legno+ Small Natural is solid oak 42mm by 300mm by 10mm flooring with chamfered edges and ends and a hand-worked finish, which is covered in situ with two micro resin layers, one decorative, the other protective. It was laid to the ground floor, basement, lower basement and mezzanine.

Before laying, the subfloor was consolidated using EP21, a liquid damp proof membrane, and L34 Flex was used as the adhesive. Both these products have very low VOC emissions and are solvent free.

Kerakoll supplied a team of four for the project, which helped with the flooring specification and provided technical assistance. ●

KERAKOLL
The GreenBuilding Company

Architect: deepdesign
Fit out contractor: Area Sq
Flooring contractor: Parquet Italia
Flooring supplier: Kerakoll
Karl Beeden, project manager, Kerakoll UK
Piero Viscardi, product manager, Kerakoll Italy
Giovanni Piretti, product manager, Kerakoll Italy
Carmelo Avveduto, product manager, Kerakoll Italy
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2: Intelligence

Design, construction and technology

Rafael Moneo

MASSIMILIANO POLLES

Last month Rafael Moneo, 80, was the inaugural recipient of the Soane Medal. The architect of the National Museum of Roman Art in Merida and the extension to the Prado Museum considers the death of modernism and architects in a more humble role

How do you feel about receiving the Soane Museum's very first Soane Medal?

I was unaware of the estimation with which Sir John Soane was still held in by British architects so to receive the inaugural Medal and to be considered part of his lineage is a true honour.

Do you see any parallels in your achievements with the work of Soane himself?

I wouldn't dare to assume that I shared the same psychological characteristics as Soane, but I know that he lived for architecture with a committed passion, and I'd hope that I share something of that trait. I can understand the fact that Rome was a determinant factor in his life, and the powerful influence in his life of great teachers; in Soane's case George Dance and for me it has been Jørn Utzon. The methods by which Soane experimented with light in his buildings, particularly at Dulwich, paved the way for the modern museum environment.

In your Soane lecture you seemed to deliver a eulogy to modernism but not say what might replace it?

I think it's very hard to say what that is; what I do believe is that the most recent architectural language does not seem to be dictated by chronology or narratives. What I was saying is that architectural history still seems to use the concept of modernism as a pivot point in contemporary discourse but I actually think that it, and its references, are no longer relevant. We need a new way of looking at history.

Do critics need to help define the new context of architecture? Can't architects do that?

Not on their own – they are too immersed in the subject to be able to analyse it objectively. That's why critics, along with social commentators and historians, need to help move the discussion forward; to understand the criteria that are informing the development of architectural language and form. We need to think of architecture in less formal and more reflective terms.

How do you feel your own oeuvre has contributed to the discussion?

I suppose that in my own career and life I've resisted egotistically seeing the idea of the building as an isolated object; that everything I've done tries to relate the design to a broader social or urban context. We should pay respect to the implicit forms that have been part of urban growth; to understand that buildings are not the product of working in isolation but a co-dependent relationship with the city itself.

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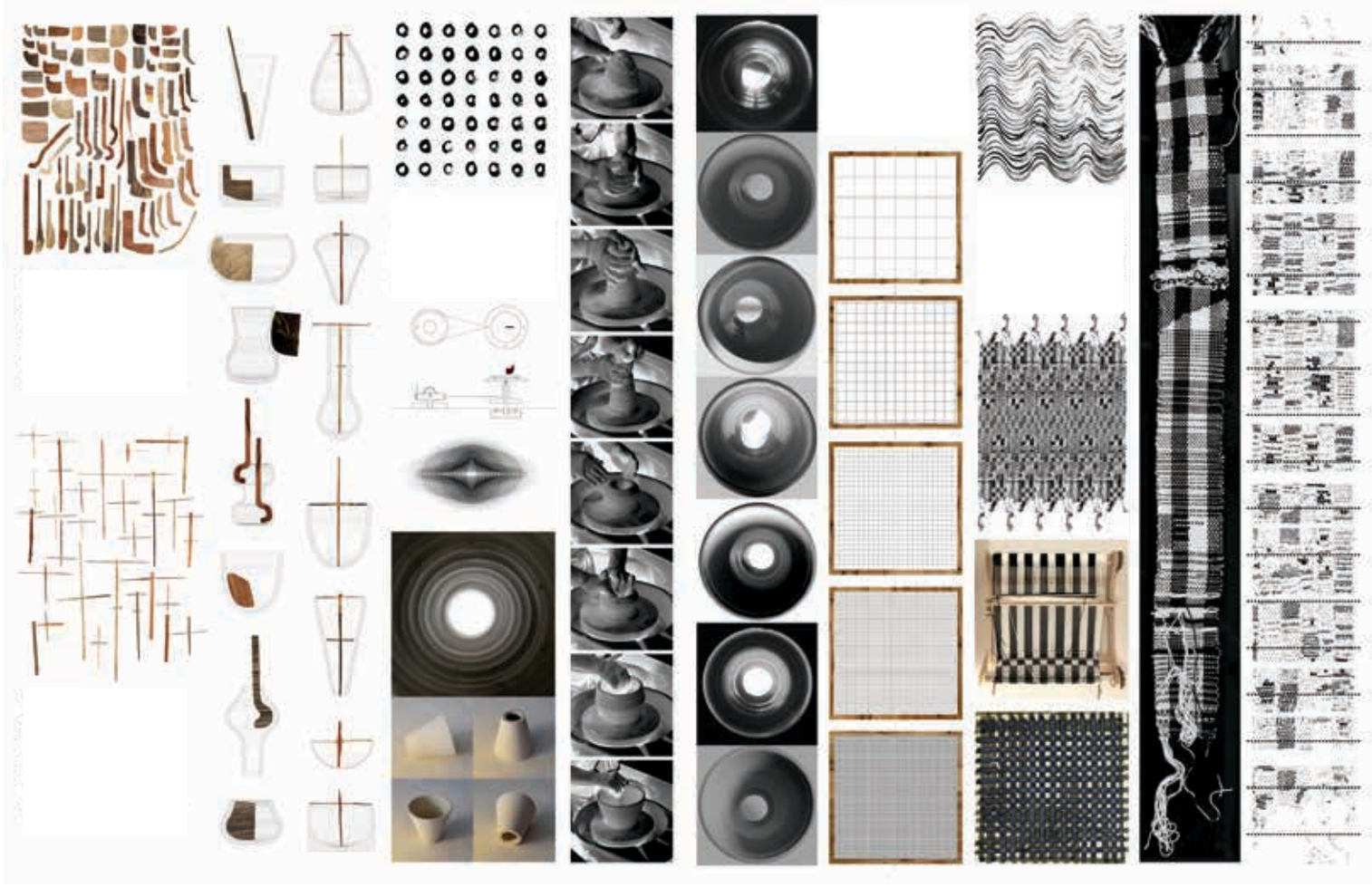
Intelligence is officially approved RIBA CPD. Look out for icons throughout the section indicating core curriculum areas.

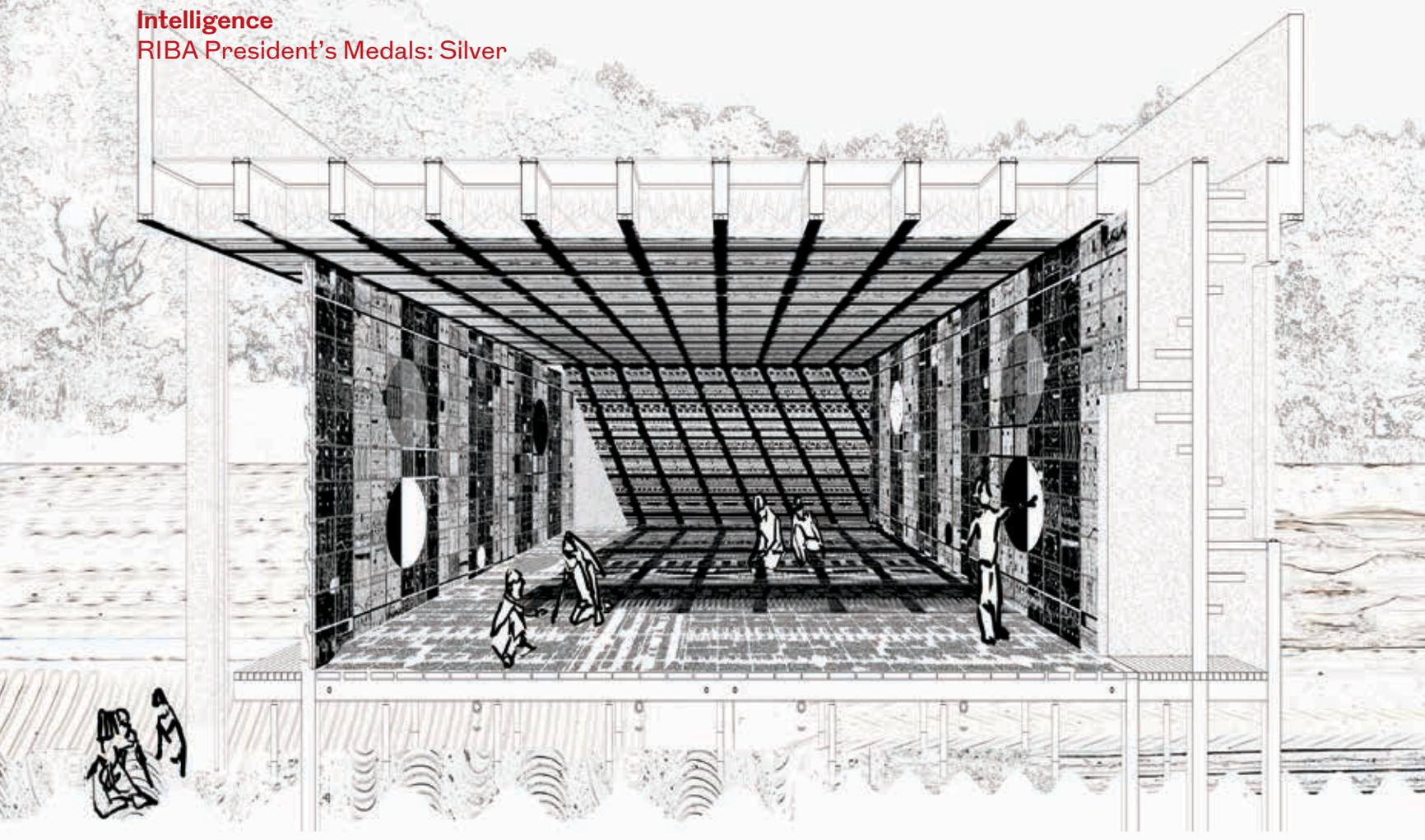
President's Medals 2017

Winners of this year's Silver, Bronze and Dissertation awards look at subjects as intricate and pressing as tools and mark-making, London's housing crisis and the bleak dwellings of 19th century slateworkers. The Research Award (page 45) goes to a study of Japanese 'ultra modernism'

Words: Pamela Buxton

He explores how tools such as scale sieves, axis measures and line tools are used and what they produce





Daniel Hall

Cycles of Toolmaking: An Optic, Tactile, Haptic, Material, Scalar and Pedagogic Study

Cooper Union, New York

Tutor: Lauren Kogod

Daniel Hall's project combines two of his interests: tools and their mark-making and transformative potential, and experimental play in the city.

His research included a month travelling in Japan visiting ceramic manufacturing towns and investigating places of play. Both informed the direction of the medal-winning project. In this, Hall designed a 'Sensorium' in the ceramic town of Mashiko, a community-led place for learning that replaces a school damaged in the 2011 Tohoku earthquake.

Hall analysed play spaces and the way they influence a child's sense of scale and direction, and documented ceramic production and use from clay extraction to the manufacture of building materials and domestic objects. He methodically explores how tools such as scale sieves, axis measures and line tools are used and what they produce, from thrown pottery to perforated ceramic tiles.

'Patterns emerge, as cycles of tool marks are used and misused. Embedded in the character of these patterns are indicators of time, scale, movements of the human body, and a genealogy of tool evolution,' he says.

His Sensorium draws on this research: 'The cycle of processes generate layered patterns that function at different scales: masks of light, constructors of shadows, surfaces for haptic physicality, guides for water and air movement, insulators of temperature, frames of dimensional reference, cosmological orientation, and marks on the landscape.'

The Sensorium features a gridded concrete framed roof punctuated with voids embedded with glass curvatures that translate light through concentrated brightness, reflected gradients, and blocked shadows. Its design was informed by Hall's research into the angling of the sun, carried out using a plexi glass line tool box to analyse wave refraction and curvature. On the underside of the roof, ceiling tracks for sliding partitions allow the space to be configured as required. Ceramic floor tiles have patterns of texture and glaze co-ordinated with the position of the under floor heated floor according to density of clay and glaze type.

COMMENDATION

Danielle Fountain, De Montfort University
Tutors: Ben Cowd; Sara Shafiei

Tom Hewitt, Northumbria University
Tutor: Shaun Young

Ivo Tedbury, Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
Tutors: Manuel Jimenez Garcia; Giles Retsin; Mollie Claypool

SERJEANT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DRAWING AT PART 2

Thomas Parker, Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
Tutors: Nat Chard; Emma-Kate Matthews

SOM FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP UK AT PART 2

Andres Souto, Royal College of Art
Tutors: Satoshi Isono; Clara Kraft; Guan Lee

SOM FOUNDATION COMMENDATION AT PART 2

Claire Longridge, Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Tutors: Mark Dorrian; Aikaterini Antonopoulou

SILVER MEDAL JUDGES

David Gloster
Sean Griffiths
Alan Jones
Jing Liu

Kangli Zheng
Castle in the Sky
University of Nottingham
Tutor: Alison Davies

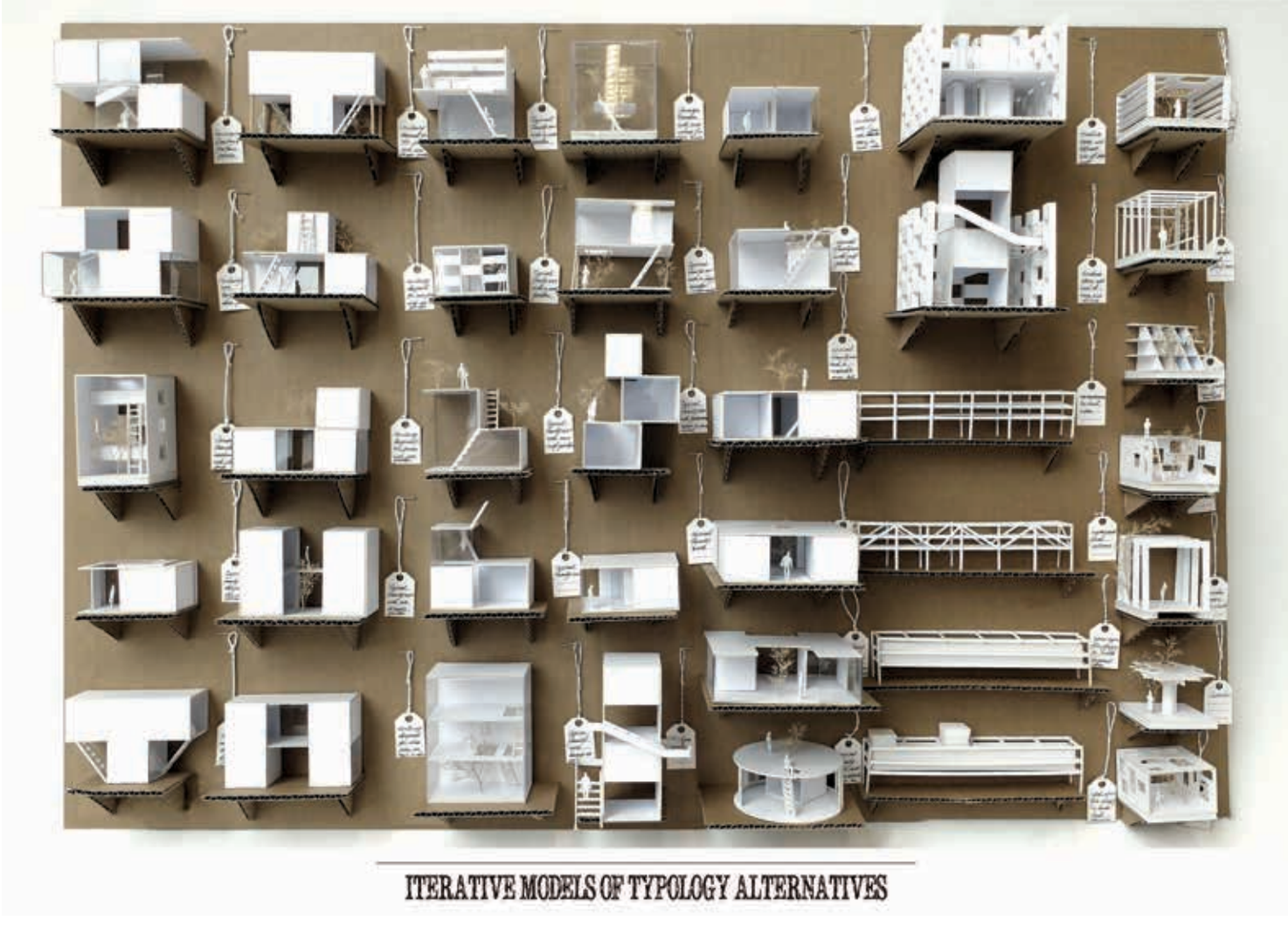
Kangli Zheng tackles the pertinent subject of London's housing crisis in his project Castle in the Sky. He deliberately chose one of the most expensive parts of the capital – Kensington – where high property prices and the high prevalence of overseas investors make it hard for ordinary people to live in the area.

Instead of decentralisation and high rise – both of which he views as failed – he identifies spaces above terraces as potential development sites for new housing, in particular suggesting properties left empty and dormant by overseas investors. Taking inspiration from Yona Friedman's influential Mobile Architecture theories of the 1950s and 60s, this concept is facilitated by the construction of a carefully-positioned steel superstructure that accommodates the new aerial homes and associated public space.

Zheng explores the potential for a combination of various house typologies including co-living and family units all created using the 'room box' system in conjunction with solar energy collection and rainwater harvesting. Rather than have a fixed space function, each box can accommodate a range of configurations chosen according to its desired use – such as kitchen, bedroom, utility, storage – as specified by the resident. The arrangement of the desired number of boxes is combined with a 'house skin', available in a variety of cladding and opening options.

Zheng's aim is to provide freedom of choice for the box owners, rather than impose a design and use. The architect's role is to act as a guide.

The project also explores ways of increasing social interaction within the new community, not only between horizontal



ITERATIVE MODELS OF TYPOLOGY ALTERNATIVES

Each box can accommodate a range of configurations, chosen according to its desired use

neighbours but at multiple levels. Zheng carried out research to explore the optimum spaces between people for communication (1-2m horizontally, 0-94-1.4m vertically) and looked at ways of facilitating this within the Castle in the Sky concept. He advocates incorporating several voids near or along a main circulation route to encourage people to stop and communicate, and considers the use of stair seats and vantage points to enhance interaction opportunities. Further 'space gaps' are advised between housing units, again to encourage communication.

Zheng sees many advantages to the proposed sky community, not only for the residents of the room boxes who will gain the opportunity of an affordable home, but for those in the terraces below. All, he says, can benefit from the public spaces and viewing facilities incorporated in the new aerial community, which will provide new opportunities to appreciate the beauty of the city.

HIGH COMMENDATION & SOM FELLOWSHIP COMMENDATION
Luca Garoli, Queen's University Belfast
Tutor: Keith McAllister

COMMENDATION & SERJEANT AWARD
Gabriel Beard, Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
Tutors: Luke Pearson; Ana Monrabal-Cook

COMMENDATION
Shi Yin Ling, Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
Tutors: Paolo Zaide; Tim Norman

SOM FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP
Andrei-Ciprian Cojocaru, University of Greenwich
Tutors: Nicholas Szczepaniak; Jonathan Walker

BRONZE MEDAL JUDGES
David Gloster
Izaskun Chinchilla
Pippo Ciorra
Alan Jones
Tracy Meller

Rhiain Bower

Baricsio: The Slate Quarrymen's Barracks in North West Wales

University of Westminster
Tutor: Harry Charrington

Baricsio is the story of the humble barrack dwellings of Welsh migrant slate workers. Rhiain Bower's choice of subject was prompted by her interest in workers' housing and also her family history – a great great grandfather had worked in the slate quarrying town of Blaenau Ffestiniong in the 19th century.

Slate was the primary industry in Wales by the end of the 19th century, centred on Snowdonia in the north west. During her research, however, Bower was surprised to find that there was very little documentation of the barics (barrack) buildings that housed the baricsio workers from Monday to Saturday while they were away from their homes and families. She supplemented the scant available material with her own fieldwork,

Conditions were generally harsh – dark, cold and cramped (men usually slept two to a bed) with little furniture... shared sanitation was a privy over a cesspit

trudging around the ruins of the sometimes remote slate barracks and recording them in photographs and plans.

The barracks themselves were built from unsaleable quarried slate and were, says Bower, generally small, squat versions of the vernacular cottage of one to four rooms, often built to share gables to create a row. At Anglesey Barracks, accommodation consisted of two rows of 11 units separated by a 7m wide 'street'. Construction was akin to dry stone walls, with few if any architectural embellishment beyond the occasional slate dripstones over doors and windows. These were a sharp contrast with the stone houses built for the managers.

Conditions were generally harsh – dark, cold and cramped (men usually slept two to a bed) with little furniture. Walls may have been unplastered and windows shuttered rather than glazed. Shared sanitation was a privy over a cesspit. There were a few exceptions – at Dinorwic, for example, the owners built an on-site hospital, which also had a much better standard of construction.

Bower's dissertation explores not only the barrack buildings themselves but the way of life of those who lived there. She looks at the harsh realities of the migrant workers' commute from their homes (sometimes as far as 25 miles away) on a Monday morning and also the lives of the matriarch-led families left behind. Once at the barracks, the men had to contend not only with finding a way to live with each other, but also with potential tensions between them – both within the Welsh workforce and with the English or English-speaking managers. There might well also have been tensions between the migrant slate workers (who often had smallholdings at home) and the surrounding community.

Bower considers the life of the men outside the slate works and the barracks, and the importance of the chapel (or capel) and the cabin, which was a sort of social club. Both places offered an element of community life away from the bleak sleeping quarters.

'With poetry and political discussions there was a sense of community and an understanding of their culture and where it fitted within the wider British culture, which they wouldn't have had otherwise,' she says.

The remnants of the barracks, still scattered around the Welsh countryside, are a poignant testimony to the harsh way of life that the slate workers endured. Bower notes that most of the barracks have been left to fall into ruin, and concludes that it is important this little-documented industrial architecture, and the lives of those who lived there, are remembered.

'It's sad but also quite poetic. They were built out of the landscape and now they are returning to it,' she says.

COMMENDATION

Christopher Rogers, RIBA Studio
Tutor: Timothy Martin
Naomi Rubbra, Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Tutor: Giorgio Ponzo
Rory Sherlock, Architectural Association
Tutor: Mark Campbell

DISSERTATION JUDGES

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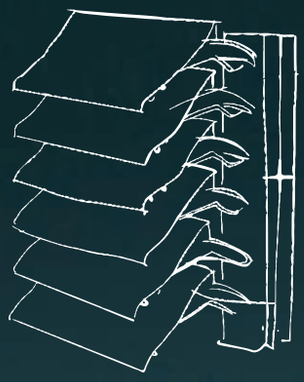

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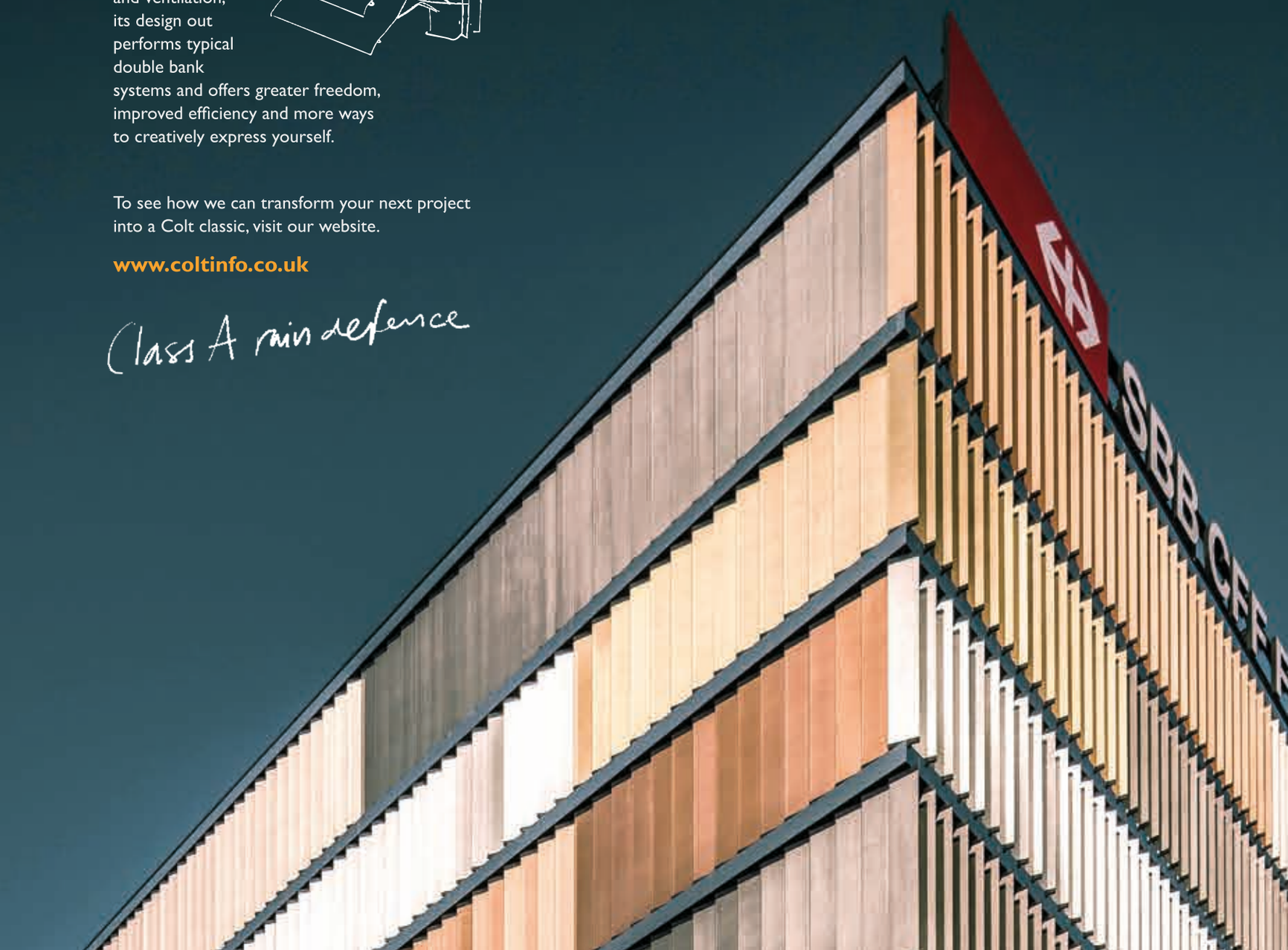

Modernity in Manchuria

Edward Denison and Guangyu Ren probed history's record of power in Manchuria and the ultra-modernism it produced in their award-winning research

Below The Asia Express, the South Manchuria Railway's 'ultra-modern' high-speed train at Dalian's 'ultra-modern' railway station with 'ultra-modern Manchurian girls'. Source: Ultra-Modernism — Architecture and Modernity in Manchuria', Denison & Ren.

History is a record of power. The 20th century – modernism's century – was dominated by the West; its official history bearing testimony to the West's dominance of 'others'. Modernist architectural history is a canon constructed by, for and of the West. This has major consequences for architectural encounters with modernity outside the West, which are routinely overlooked or possess an assumed inferiority; a postulation asserted through inauthenticity, belatedness, diluteness and remoteness – geographically, intellectually, and even racially.

Modernist architectural history is a canon constructed by, for and of the West

This condition will be obvious to anyone who has studied post-colonialism, though the hysteria this autumn surrounding the open letter by Cambridge University students to 'decolonise' the English Literature syllabus and the unconscionable way that certain newspapers and online media have misrepresented it reveals how far we still need to go to make education fit for the 21st century.

While the popular and populist interpretation of demands for a more inclusive curriculum is framed as yet another attack on the identity of the already privileged, some

academics have tried to focus on the actual motives and reality: decolonising the curriculum is not about narrowing learning by undermining the canon, but widening it so that future generations can learn about the full range of experiences that more accurately reflect the reality of our past and the present.

For architects, this necessity carries particular significance because most of those trained or practising in the 21st century will derive income from projects beyond their national and, probably, continental borders. Such projects will also just as likely be in modern urban environments that, due to specific cultural, political and socio-economic conditions, are quite unlike anything in Europe or North America. It is imperative therefore that tomorrow's architects have an education with a historical perspective that equips them to deal with the challenges of working outside their geographic and cultural base – something the Western canon is ill-equipped to do in a globalised world. The conspicuously male line-ups of Vitruvius, Brunelleschi, Alberti, Palladio or Le Corbusier, Gropius and Mies Van der Rohe do little to inform any architects practising in Africa, the Middle East or China, to name but a third of the world's landmass and population.

It is worth repeating that this is not about attacking the canon, but augmenting it with other voices and precedents.

Manchuria, the name given to the vast northeast region of China beneath Siberia and flanked by Mongolia and Korea, exemplifies this point. Despite being subjected to Russian (1896-1905) and then Japanese (1905-1945) modern urban planning and architecture on an unprecedented scale (approximately 100 towns and cities were developed by the Japanese), Manchuria does not feature in modernist historiography.

Ultra-modernism in Manchukuo was ideologically ubiquitous and became manifest in all essential facets of modern metropolitan life

Japan annexed Manchuria in 1932 and rebranded it Manchukuo. Such was the speed and intensity of Manchukuo's encounter with modernity and its distinction from Western precedents, the Japanese branded it 'ultra-modernism'.

Ultra-modernism in Manchukuo was ideologically ubiquitous and became manifest in urban planning, architecture, transportation, communications, photography and film – all essential facets of modern metropolitan life in Manchukuo. The jewel in Japan's imperial crown was the vast new capital of Hsinking ('New Capital'), the city's nomenclature echoing the ultra-modernity on which empire was built.

Beyond merely recording and analysing the numerous modern urban plans and thousands of buildings, this research focuses on the architectural outcomes of Japan's imperial project from 1931, including transportation and communication (railways, roads, telegraphy and radio stations), trade and industry (ports, mines, factories, manufacturing and agricultural facilities), leisure and entertainment (shops, department stores, cinemas, bars, cafés, resorts, spas and sporting facilities), health, education and public services (schools, nurseries, hospitals, clinics and fire stations), military and law enforcement (police stations, residences, barracks, and dormitories), and residential (private apartments and houses, and public housing).

The research also aims to extend our understanding of how we construct histories of modernism, which were founded on the assumed equation of Westernisation and modernisation and the West's subjugation of others. Japan – the first non-Western nation to modernise – complicates this assumption. In Edward Said's seminal thesis on imperialism, 'Orientalism', Japan is framed as a 'complicated exception' – it would have to be if Orientalism is defined as 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'.

Shmuel Eisenstadt, the social scientist and architect of the theory of multiple modernities, claims Japan was 'the most important test-case – and paradox' because of its unique example as a fully modernized non-western state. Manchuria therefore, due to the scale and scope of architectural production at that time, exemplifies and exposes the way in which architectural experiences outside the West can encourage a more nuanced understanding of post-colonialism, and, conversely, how the marginalisation of these experiences constrains architectural knowledge and undermines its impartiality.

This is not about attacking the canon, but augmenting it with other voices and precedents

Eisenstadt argues that 'Western patterns of modernity are not the only "authentic" modernities'. The acknowledgement of the possibility, let alone the existence, of 'new configurations of modernity', whether multiple, plural, alternative, indigenous, colonial, entangled, has only occurred relatively recently, helped in part by globalisation enriching our understanding of and connections between the West and 'others'.

This research seeks to make a contribution to this shift and to encourage the formulation of truly global architectural histories. Its main conclusions reveal the extent to which Japan sought an empire founded on the projection of modernity that was distinct from Western precedents – not merely modern, but ultra-modern – and demonstrate how this has, in part, caused its relative absence from the modernist canon since.

The research therefore is intended not only to make a contribution to architectural knowledge in a field that has until recently been almost entirely overlooked, but in doing so also provides a critique of the way in which architectural history (of modernism in particular) is constructed. It also provides important context to the rising tensions in the region, the seeds of which were sown in Manchuria, which bore witness to the start of the Second World War and may yet witness the third. ●

This work forms part of a wider study spanning 15 years culminating in the recent publication of the first English-language book to focus exclusively on architecture and modernity in Manchuria: 'Ultra-Modernism: Architecture and Modernity in Manchuria' (HKUP, 2017).

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Places, planning and community

Reviving a 60s new town

Peabody has taken over London's Thamesmead, with bold plans to mend and expand its broken brutalist dream

GEORGINA DAY

A Peabody member of saff tends flower beds at Thamesmead.

Georgina Day

There is a memorable video about the early days of Thamesmead which shows the first residents, the Gooch family, moving in on 3 July, 1968. Trees that are little more than twigs, windows still with their film on them, as the happy family unpacks family photos. Their infectious excitement is set against the brutalist concrete planes that defined this out-of-London new town.

A lot has changed since then. As flaws in the original thinking began to reveal themselves, the GLC which ran it was dismantled and replaced by complex organisational arrangements. Funding and resources were cut, leaving Thamesmead poorer and without a captain, to drift into decline.

In 2014 Peabody acquired the site, and Thamesmead had a steward once again. Talk of a 'whole place philosophy' for once does not sound hollow. If Peabody gets it right, this new phase may transform not only Thamesmead, but also, over time, how we think about regeneration in general.

Thamesmead is east of London and south of the River Thames. Built from the 1960s onwards, it has 50,000 residents, though it was originally intended for up to 100,000. Although it is popularly characterised by its concrete, modernist aesthetic – as vividly portrayed in Clockwork Orange and more recently Misfits – you are in a bricky suburbia within just a few minutes walk from brutalist towers. It has enviable green and blue landscapes that are protected as Metropolitan Land – lakes and rivers, a generous Thames river frontage and 30,000 mature trees – which can at times feel exhilaratingly wild.

Few visit, but you should. Just remember

They want to double the capacity of Thamesmead and revitalise the existing fabric

to pack a sandwich. The population is half that of Rugby or Dover; and famously there is not a single table service restaurant (or bank for that matter), and only a spattering of local shops aside from the large Morrisons, which means if hunger strikes after a busy morning exploring, you are out on a limb. It would be okay, perhaps, if in addition to your hunger, you didn't have to keep back-tracking after wrong turns into dead ends. And don't expect to last until you get home – Thamesmead is poorly connected not only internally but externally too. The hunt for a bite to eat is a page in the catalogue of Thamesmead's urban design crimes.

All change

This is set to change. This most recent chapter of Thamesmead's history begins with two events. First is significant improvements to the site's connectivity: the Elizabeth Line opens at Abbey Wood in 2019 and there is talk of extending the DLR to the area in the future. Secondly, Peabody's acquisition of the site in 2014 means it now owns 65% of the land across an entire town, and 85% of the developable land.

I went to speak to John Lewis, executive director of Thamesmead for Peabody, and his colleague in charge of landscape and design management, Phil Askew at their Passivhaus zinc-clad retrofitted offices. They are practising what they preach by bringing much needed active street frontage to one of the main roads in Thamesmead.

The plan they set out is bold. They want to double the capacity of Thamesmead (creating 20,000 new homes and 20,000 news jobs) and revitalise the existing fabric with better connectivity, more facilities, and an improved built fabric and public realm. In the pipeline are some serious chunks of city-making. Peabody is already on site with a new high street

that connects Abbey Wood station to a new town square. There is a waterfront strategy along 5km of the Thames, a forward looking plan for its huge swathes of industrial land and the re-invention of a historic landfill site as a new piece of outer London.

It is also a sensitive plan, grounded in real curiosity about what is existing and the needs of local residents – an early indicator that it is being handled well is that across the four major planning applications that have just gone in for 2000 new homes (three outline and one detailed), there was only one objection.

Askew explained that they are finding that there is 'loads you can do without doing any building' – for example improving way-finding and activating under-used green spaces. Where there is uncertainty, they are experimenting – as with lighting, testing the best way to improve the feeling of security across green spaces at night.

Making it real

Peabody understands that Thamesmead will only really begin to work if residents take a lead on the transformation too. Though houses and balconies flourish with individuality, the formal public realm cries out for particularity and organic stories to take root and break up the rigid grain. Wandering around on a bright blue day there is almost no-one around – no-one energising the rich bounty of woodlands, parks, courtyards and watersides. In a bid to activate Thamesmead, Peabody is working with community groups to establish new uses – to re-instate Thamesmead's historic nature reserve, and to establish commercial urban food growing. Askew says they are trying to get people 'to take their fences down' – spill out and introduce the messiness and colour of public life to the area.

The question all Jane Jacobs-inspired urbanists have grappled with and that Peabody now faces, is how to move from top-down to home grown initiatives to allow well meaning intentions to become real life experiences. Over by the lake I came across a planting bed outside one of the towers that could have been a guerrilla gardening exercise. As I reached for my camera, a woman in a Peabody fleece came over and began tending to it – which was in some sense disappointing. Observing my interest, she explained that last week someone nicked the centrepiece.

While Peabody has been busy working through these softer strategies, it is serious about getting spades in the ground too. There are five year and 30 year plans. Lewis points out that people 'have invested decades of their lives into this place' and are yet to see anything happen, and Peabody is keen not to over-promise and under-deliver.

To kick things off, architect Proctor & Matthews has begun with South Thamesmead; the first phase, Southmere Village, starts on site imminently. The design team including Mecanoo Architecten, landscape architect Turkington Martin, and Peabody's in-house designers, has re-imagined the arterial stretch in South Thamesmead that connects Abbey Wood station to a new town centre by the lake. The 2,000 new homes are here, a new town centre with a library by Bisset Adams and a walking route off the main road.

Iconic Southmere Towers across the lake.

GEORGINA DAY

Solid urban thinking in the masterplan seeks to respect the existing context. It takes its block plan from the surrounding site, and while it is 'bricky', pre-cast concrete features on the elevation reference the more well known architectural icons of the area. It borrows from the original masterplan using the calming and positive effect of water, re-imagined in a playful way – channels lining the route from the station terminate in a water feature in the main square.

Righting the past

However, the masterplan also seeks to avoid previous mistakes. It is positively pious about connectivity – way-finding and connections are paramount. Architecture is diverse and particular – a step away from the repetitive forms of some of the original estate.

There are flashes of brilliant good sense in some of the site wide thinking, such as the run of flexible ground floor units for commercial, retail or community uses which are adjacent to the neighbourhood squares lining the new pedestrian route. But in general, though new South Thamesmead has been designed well, it still lacks the X-factor.

More concerning, perhaps, is that the masterplan does not provide one of the main things that Thamesmead is missing – the type of informality that enables residents to take ownership. Everything is designed finished. Unlike many of the existing houses at Thamesmead which had large gardens to enable extensions as families and aspirations grew, this denser masterplan leaves no such room. This could have been a moment to make some bold architectural moves, leaving parts of the architecture and public realm deliberately and interestingly incomplete.

What is certainly true is that it's great news for Thamesmead to have a steward again. As we have seen, Peabody is testing out where its role ends, and where the activation of local networks begins. And the spirit of collaboration is evident with boroughs and professionals. This is localism with guts – locally rooted power structures, capacity and resource. Can it make the leap from top down to lived empowerment that Thamesmead is so desperately crying out for, and convert some of that big thinking into bricks and mortar? If it can, Thamesmead may once again be a poster-city for regeneration. ●

Peabody's architectural framework is up for review next year

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Who bears the brunt of time delays?

Clarity over the burden of concurrent delays means contracts are likely to change

Douglas Wass

Employers can delay construction works in many different ways. For example, they may restrict access to parts of the site, instruct variations to the scope of the work or provide design or other information later than the contractor needs it. Any well drafted building contract will provide for the contractor to be granted an extension of time where employer action delays completion to avoid the draconian consequences of the prevention principle – explained below In Plain English.

However, as architects who act as contract administrators will know, sometimes a delay to the completion of the works is concurrently caused by more than one event. This is not a problem where either the contractor or the employer is responsible for both events – the contract administrator must not grant the contractor an extension of time in the former case and must grant it one in the latter.

But what if delay is concurrently caused by an event which would entitle the contractor to an extension of time (for example, the late provision of design information) and one which would not (for example, the need to remedy defective work)?

After considerable uncertainty over what a contract administrator should do in those circumstances, the answer from the courts has become clear. Unless there is clear wording to the contrary in the building contract, the administrator should grant the contractor an extension for any period during which delay is being concurrently caused by an event which would entitle the contractor to a time extension and one which would not.

However, what remained unclear – until the recent case of North Midland Building Limited v Cyden Homes Limited – was whether or not a clause in a building contract which expressly states that the contractor will not be entitled to an extension of time where a period of delay is concurrently caused by an event for which it is responsible and an event for which the employer is responsible would be effective.

In this case, the contractor argued that a clause which made the contractor responsible for delay in these circumstances offends the prevention principle and so results in the contractor being allowed a reasonable period within which to complete the works and the employer being unable to claim liquidated damages.

The employer argued that the prevention principle did not apply because the contractor was being held liable for a delay which would have been incurred regardless of any acts of the employer.

The judge agreed with the employer and made it clear that it is a matter for the parties to decide how they allocate the risk of delays concurrently caused by one event for which the employer is responsible and one for which the contractor is responsible. It is not the role of the court to save a contractor from a bargain that it has freely chosen to make.

This decision is likely to lead to clauses of this nature being included in building contracts much more often. As a result, it is important that architects who act as contract administrators carefully review the extension of time clauses in contracts to ensure that they fully understand how they deal with problems associated with delay concurrently caused by events for which different parties are responsible. The financial consequences of extensions of time being wrongly granted can be substantial. Employers may be left with no alternative but to seek to recover from contract administrators any losses which they suffer as a result of extension of time provisions not being properly applied. ●

Douglas Wass is a partner at Macfarlanes LLP

The prevention principle did not apply because the contractor was being held liable for a delay incurred regardless of any acts of the employer

IN PLAIN ENGLISH
PREVENTION PRINCIPLE

Building contracts usually require the contractor to complete the works by a certain date and impose liquidated damages on the contractor if it completes the works late. The prevention principle provides that the employer cannot require the contractor to complete the works by the agreed date and claim liquidated damages for its failure to do so if acts of the employer have prevented the works from being completed by that date. Instead, the contractor's obligation to complete the works by the agreed date is replaced by an obligation to complete the works within a reasonable time and the employer's right to claim liquidated damages is replaced by a right to claim damages reflecting any actual losses it suffers as a result of any failure of the contractor to complete the works within a reasonable time. The prevention principle does not apply if the building contract provides for the contractor to be given an extension of time reflecting any delay caused by the employer.

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Open up to Prop Tech

Modern technology could make our lives so much easier – if only we'd let it

HOLLY EXLEY

Maria Smith

From CAD to BIM to 3D Printing, Con Tech – or Construction Technology – has changed the way we draw, design and build, but the current generation of Prop Tech has the potential to change the way we practise.

What comes to mind when you think about Prop Tech? Zoopla? AirBnB? Do you think about Prop Tech as something that's relevant to architecture? Or at all?

Last April, the University of Oxford's Said Business School published Prop Tech 3.0: The Future of Real Estate. The report defines Prop Tech 1.0 as technology developed from 1980-2000 chiefly to organise and analyse data describing the performance of the real estate industry. It rates as late stage Prop Tech 1.0 the likes of Rightmove (started in 2000). Prop Tech 2.0, which the report places us in the thick of now, is characterised by ecommerce, social networking, open-source software and the multi-platform world. For example, Opendoor has been labelled a potential Amazon of property as it buys any house within days, does the repairs and then offers the market a quality assured or even standardised product. Or Knocker, hailed the Tinder for real estate, essentially provides an interface for Zoopla's enormous database: swipe right to arrange a viewing. Prop Tech 3.0, the report predicts, will be characterised by blockchain (the under-pinning of crypto-currencies) and AI.

But before we get too excited about replicant architects, we must remember that the built environment is notoriously slow, and still has much to learn from Prop Tech 2.0. Do some current platforms and technologies signify a shift in the wider industry that we could exploit or prepare for? Here are a few punts.

Fee proposals, scopes of work, variations, fee draws and so on could all be organised via an online platform accessible by both client and consultant from any device, saving us and our clients time and angst. They could be modelled on platforms like Goodlord, No Agent and Fixflo. Goodlord manages tenancy agreements. No Agent allows landlords to manage their property online, and Fixflo collects information about repairs and compiles them into concise reports. The way these platforms broker interactions between tenants and landlords reduces admin and improves relations. Sounds ok to me!

Imagine if the Architect's Job Book were a piece of software, holding your hand through each project, prompting you to scope a survey or arrange a pre-app meeting or update a risk register. The users of Re-Leased enjoy a cloud-based property management software that prompts inspections, lease re-negotiations and so on. While this might sound a bit 'death of the professions', automating repetitious processes and organising information are the bread and butter of such technologies. Imagine making a site inspection by taking photos and dictating comments to your phone that are automatically formatted and collated by the time you get back to the office. Mindworking automates the production of marketing information for estate agents. Imagine that we too could automate the production of repetitious elements of reports from design and access statements to snagging lists.

Regulation compliance software is already with us to an extent. IES, for example, helps us meet Part L, but as BIM workflows now keep our designs in live schedules more easily processable and comparable with a myriad of design standards, we might soon be able to check our designs against all the building regs, Eurocodes and more. The Prop Tech provocateur here is the Depository, the UK's first-ever letting regulation compliance platform. While this will start out like a spell checker that only tells you the word doesn't exist in the dictionary, with a dash of AI these compliance software packages will be asking 'Did you mean to create a pinch-point in this fire escape route?' in no time.

Imagine that we too could automate the production of repetitious elements of reports from design and access statements to snagging lists

The shift that I'm in some ways most excited about is how sophisticated listings platforms will change the way clients and architects find each other. What is the Zoopla of architecture? Matchmaking in our industry is woefully behind the times, either powered by procurement sites that belong in the 1990s or privilege- and prejudice-perpetuating networking that belongs in the 1890s. I can't wait for the industry forecast by the likes of Buy Architecture or Built-ID, the former providing a platform where architects can sell the existing copyrighted designs, and the latter describing themselves as Shazaam for the built environment. The technology already exists to dramatically overhaul shopping for architects. Realyse, Hubble, Land Insight are but a few of the Prop Tech platforms that afford users powerful search tools.

On this, as with many innovations our industry is reluctant to take up, the barrier is less technical feasibility than cultural upheaval. It will be easy to shop for architects as soon as architects are willing to be shopped for. ●

Maria Smith is a director of architecture and engineering at Interrobang

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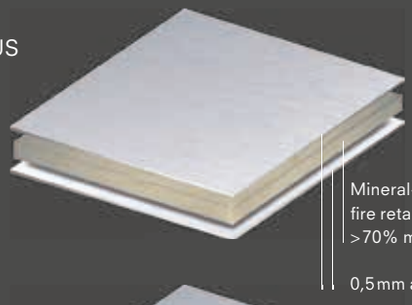

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3: Culture

Passing interest

Existence is in the eye of the beholder. Is it time for another prize?

HOLLY EXLEY

Hugh Pearman Editor

After this year's Stirling Prize ceremony – back at London's Roundhouse and back on form, I thought – there was a bit of banter reported on social media about an imagined different, perhaps complementary, award: the Cedric Price Prize. Or perhaps that should be just the Cedric Prize. This was prompted by the Stirling Prize winner, the phoenix-from-the-flames rebuild of Hastings Pier by dRMM. Alex de Rijke had commented, on receiving the award, that maybe the difference between his project and others on the shortlist was the fact that he hadn't really done a building at all, but made a public space.

I like the idea of a Cedric Prize. Tempting to make it, given Cedric's famous ability to argue a convincing case for not doing buildings, for the most significant absence of architecture, the most highly-charged void. By this I would want not a designed space at all, nor even a space defined by surrounding buildings. Just somewhere where something could have happened but thankfully didn't. Chunks of proper Green Belt where predatory developers have been seen off, they would count. Especially when the green belt in question surrounds a town with plentiful available brownfield land and suburbs ripe for densifying. 'This woodland copse was not bulldozed by FastBuck & Co Housebuilders because everyone repeatedly told them to go away including – finally and conclusively – the planning appeal inspector'.

One wonders whether, if still alive, he would actively consider sabotage for his now-listed-and-being-refurbished Snowdon Aviary at London Zoo

But it turned out that the Cedric Prize idea was for 'a structure that can accommodate change, a celebration of the temporary'. Of course: Cedric's Potteries Thinkbelt and Generator projects spring to mind, and he always claimed to hate the idea of permanence – such that one wonders whether, if still alive, he would actively consider sabotage for his now-listed-and-being-refurbished Snowdon Aviary at London Zoo. I think he would have liked the way that dRMM's Hastings Pier is a real tabula rasa, a platform inviting temporary events and uses: something also much in tune with the thinking of the Archigram set.

Contrariwise, Price once pointed out that one of his favourite annual excursions, to the Royal Show at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, was essentially to a real town – because every time he went to see it, there it was. Intermittent certainly, but also permanent in its regularity. Sadly this contention was subsequently disproved because the Royal Show ceased to exist in 2009. Cedric did not live to lament its sad demise, but he was right. There are two Glastonburys, after all: the little Somerset town with a population of under 9,000 and the other, much larger, noisy and colourful place, population 135,000, that always seems to be there.

Given the immense proliferation of awards now, it wouldn't surprise me to find there is already a dedicated temporary-structures prize. They form a part of our own annual MacEwen Award and the Civic Trust Awards, to name just two. The Cedric Prize, of course, would be big on wit and astonishment. Every building is temporary. Even Stonehenge.

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Thinking outside the silo

The fall and rise of Jo'burg's Ponte City tower

HOLLY EXLEY

Oliver Wainwright

It was the 'gateway to Johannesburg' when it opened in 1975, the premier apartment complex in South Africa, complete with shopping mall, bowling alley, swimming pool and tennis courts in its labyrinthine podium. Designed by 29-year-old architect Rodney Grosskopff, Ponte City Tower stood as a majestic concrete cylinder, its 54 storeys crowned with the biggest illuminated sign in the southern hemisphere. Aimed exclusively at the country's white ruling elite, it contained the most expensive flats on the continent: the six triplex penthouses had their own saunas, wine cellars and barbecue patios – plus dedicated rooms for servants.

But 20 years later, it was the most potent symbol of Johannesburg's drastic urban decay. Nicknamed 'suicide central', the building had been taken over by gangs, its electricity and water cut off and its vast inner atrium piled with trash to the 14th floor. As one resident puts it, it was 'a place where you could get an acid trip, a gun, an illegal passport or a prostitute, all within five minutes.'

Standing on the sloping bedrock at the base of the building today, looking up through the vertiginous bush-hammered concrete tube to a small blue circle of sky, it's not hard to see why Ponte City has been used as a location for a number of dystopian sci-fi films. Off-limits for years, and still in the centre of a no-go neighbourhood, it is now possible to visit thanks to Dlala Nje, a young social enterprise that runs tours of the building and the surrounding area, ploughing tourist dollars into running a kids' community centre in the building.

'We wanted to make a safe space,' says Franck Leya, a young tour guide and Congolese refugee, who has lived in the tower since the mid-2000s. 'It's a place for children to come and do their homework after school and just hang out, without being pestered by gangs.' Taking over one of the former retail units at the base of the building, the youth club set up by Dlala Nje (Zulu for 'just play') is one of a number of optimistic signs of the troubled building's recent revival.

'It's a place for children to come and do their homework after school and just hang out, without being pestered by gangs'

Ponte Tower leaves its dark past behind.

Hillbrow, where Ponte City rises from a rocky slope, had always defied apartheid's 'whites only' designation. It was a cosmopolitan neighbourhood of artists and intellectuals where interracial mixing was common. After fruitless attempts to control who lived there, the authorities washed their hands of the district, cut off power and withdrew policing. In the 1990s it became a refuge for black newcomers from the townships and elsewhere in Africa, who moved into the tower as whites fled to the suburbs. Built to house around 3,000 people, at the height of its occupation the building was home to 10,000.

Its owner embarked on a clean-up in the early 2000s, before a developer arrived at the peak of the property boom in 2007 with a plan to return the tower to its former glory. It stripped out half the apartments, evicted 1,500 residents and fitted out a handful of flats with luxury finishes, giving them names like 'Zen-Like', 'Moroccan Delight' and 'Old Money'. It didn't last long: the 2008 global financial crisis put paid to these high-end ambitions and the building reverted to its original owner, complete with a new pile of trash in the atrium from the strip-out.

Now the complex is back on the up. Renovated for the 2010 World Cup, with new lifts and finger-print security, it is neither exclusive enclave nor den of iniquity, but a cross-section of working and middle-class residents, from teachers and nurses to students and Congolese, Nigerian and Zimbabwean immigrants, along with the occasional hipster. As a story of apartheid hubris, calamitous collapse and tentative revival, this bold building is a poignant barometer of the fortunes of the wider city itself. ●

Oliver Wainwright is architecture critic at the Guardian. Read him here every other month and at ribaj.com

DOWN THE TUBE

Ponte City Tower has long been a star of the silver screen: alien space ships hovered over it in District 9, gangsters staged dogfights in its cylindrical core in Chappie, and Navy Seals stormed through the building in search of Congolese warlords in Seal Team 8: Behind Enemy Lines. Resident Evil took it a step further, placing the tower in the middle of a gutted metropolis at the end of human history.

Spreading the word

Our mission is to promote culture, and there are plenty of ways to do it

HOLLY EXLEY

Ben Derbyshire

Before we recruit a new chair of the British Architectural Trust Board – the rather grand title for our sub-committee at RIBA responsible for cultural activities – I want to share my thinking on our cultural mission. This reflects contributions from those who took part in my 'FutuRIBA' tour as well as correspondence and conversations with members, potential members and cultural experts.

The RIBA's Royal Charter calls on us for 'the general advancement of Civil Architecture, … promoting and facilitating the acquirement of the knowledge of the various arts and sciences connected therewith.'

For our cultural work, then, our message is that we can help society at large explore and understand how architecture can create great places. Our exhibitions, talks, debates and events must be relevant and engaging to our public audiences, not introverted or self-seeking. The public and our clients too often see us as precious, too concerned with peer approval and not delivering value as they see it and on their terms. In everything we do we must dispel this perception.

I believe that engaging with you, RIBA members, to help shape and deliver our cultural mission will demonstrate that we are a knowledgeable and skilful profession and will help encourage our peers to become proud members of the RIBA. I want to be able to channel your passionate enthusiasm for our mission in more member generated activity that conveys our value to society. Please share your ideas with me.

Our social life as architects is an important part of our cultural life. I'd love to open a members' bar!

Our remarkable architectural collections span drawings from the 15th-century to the cutting-edge research published in contemporary books and journals from around the globe. I have created a new post of vice president for research to strengthen collaborative research activity, bridging practice, academia and industry – and ensuring that our collections are the foundation for scholarly activity. One day we hope to become a recognised independent research organisation (IRO), and to open our outstanding library and collections seven days a week.

The clamour grows louder for Portland Place to become much more of a home for architecture, a place that exudes creativity and exemplifies our cultural and public purpose. It should be the capital's centre for passionate and far-reaching debate and discourse about architecture and how it shapes all our lives. It should also become our home in London, welcoming, sociable, convivial. Our social life as architects is an important part of our cultural life. I'd love to open a members' bar!

Over the past four years we have made remarkable strides in our cultural activity, opening architecture galleries in both London and Liverpool, engaging new audiences, partners and charitable funders. We have hosted talks and debates that continue to attract ever younger, more diverse, audiences of both architects and the public. With a generous grant from the Clore Duffield Foundation we are creating a Clore Learning Centre at 66 Portland Place, to engage with learners of all ages. Our National Schools Programme trains and supports members as Architecture Ambassadors, to work in creative partnership with teachers and pupils, a combination that is proving inspirational for all involved.

We know that we can only ever attract a small proportion our potential public audiences to our physical spaces in London and Liverpool. More and more we must reach out beyond them, to make the most of our regional, national and international membership structure; building up existing and new partnerships with other cultural and architectural organisations; and maximising our reach and inventive digital and media content.

In London, Liverpool, around the UK or globally, we need to engage in issues that capture the imagination of the public and are relevant to their lives. Let us focus on that. ●

president@riba.org, @ben_derbyshire

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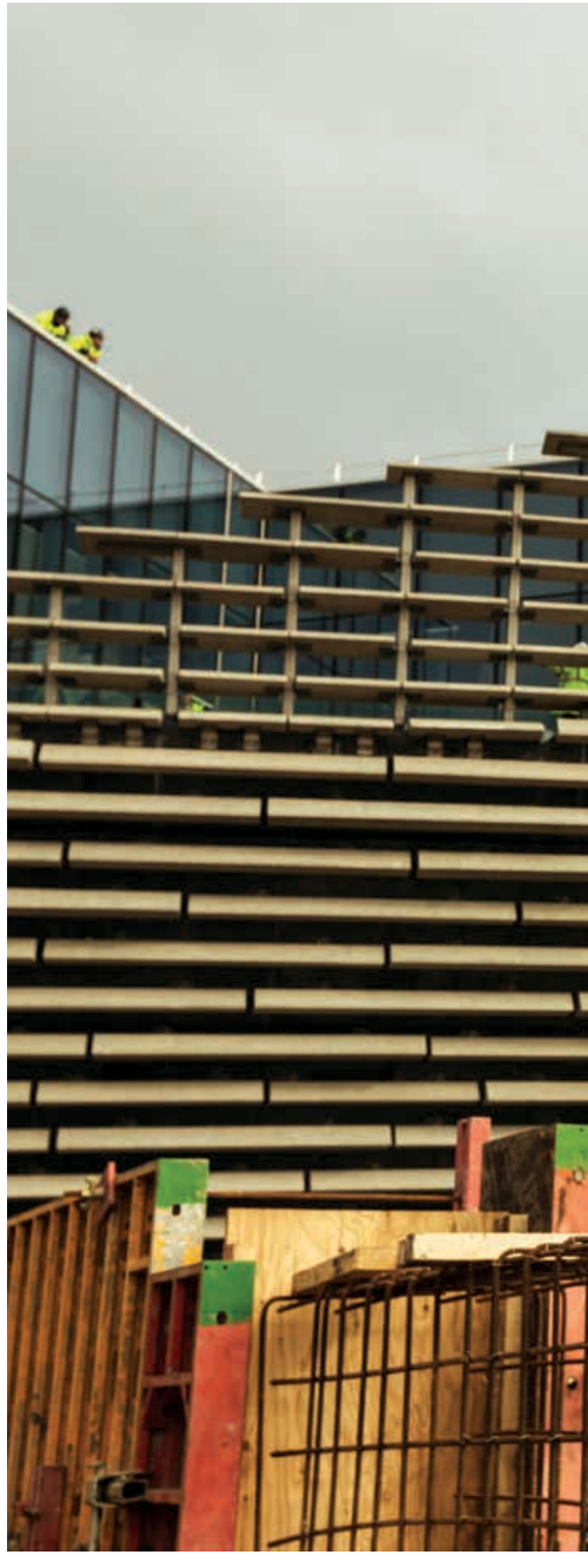
From 1 January 2018, RIBA chartered practices operating in the UK are required to pay at least the living wage (as defined by the Living Wage Foundation) to all staff, including freelance staff, in addition to students. You can find out more about chartered practice membership at architecture.com

In many ways, Kengo Kuma has a traditional Japanese approach to architecture. But he thinks his V&A Museum of Design Dundee is a very Scottish project

Words: Hugh Pearman Portrait: Ross Fraser McLean

Man behind the veil



Kengo Kuma is quite possibly the only person on Earth who can make a high-vis jacket and safety helmet seem stylish. Photographed against the background of the River Tay, the horizontal concrete strakes of his V&A Dundee rising into the sky behind him, he appears absolutely at home. And when I catch up with him at a meet-the-press event in the boardroom of the V&A in London a few days later, again he moves into the slightly daunting space like a natural. Rake-thin, with a shock of greying hair, he is dressed top to toe in black, of course, with skinny trousers and slightly curious soft shoes with a waffle pattern on them. 'For this special site,' he says, of Dundee, 'We shouldn't build a box.'

Nor has he. He has built two linked boxes, the larger of the two projecting into the estuary itself, which do everything possible not to appear box-like despite the annoyingly persistent need of museums to have windowless spaces for exhibitions. His concrete shells are double-curved – to respond, as he carefully explains, to the problem that exercises architects almost more than form itself: things that don't line up on plan. Right next to his new museum, moored in a special dock, is Scott of the Antarctic's ship Discovery (it was built near here). And there is the town's main street, Union Street, which runs from St Mary's Church in the town centre down to the waterfront. The two are not quite at the same angle. So Kuma warps the building to acknowledge both axes. Possibly only an architect would notice that this is why he has done this.

Then comes the historic reference. Once upon a time (1844) Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited the city, arriving on the royal yacht. A triumphal arch was built on the Dundee quayside to welcome them – in painted wood for the event, but then later, much more grandly and elaborately, in stone to commemorate it. This arch – a defiantly

It's been a rough ride but Kengo Kuma can now see his V&A-branded Scottish museum nearing completion.

This is an architecture that prizes understatement, transparency, indeterminacy

Left Kuma's soft-pencil concept sketch shows how the two parts of the building link at first floor level to form an implied arch providing outdoor shelter.

Below It's now set on a concrete plinth projecting into the Tay estuary, but Kuma originally wanted the horizontal strakes to descend into the water.

strange, tall and spindly affair – lasted until 1964 when, with the waterside docks in decline, it was dynamited and the docks filled in to allow the Tay Road Bridge to be built. Kuma (along with some other entrants to the V&A competition, notably Steven Holl) was taken by the idea of this great lost water gate, and decided to make his museum into the form of a bridge, an arch formed by the link between the two buildings. This has the advantage of making a sheltered outdoor space, something that the virtually two-dimensional original arch did not. What Kuma refers to often as the 'hole' in his building is on the axis of Union Street, connecting it visually to the Tay.

There is another visual reference, this time to the Scottish coastline elsewhere. Kuma explains that he was taken by the striated form of the sedimentary cliff formations in the area. This led to his solution to the black-box problem: a cladding made of horizontal precast concrete strakes, hung off the shells of the buildings. Having set up a complex geometry to the non-boxes, these then become complex items in themselves,

ROSS FRASER MCLEAN

with multiple variations. At times like this you need an engineer like Arup behind you, as Kuma has.

Kuma, who studied at Tokyo University and at Columbia University in New York, first emerged as an architect of note after setting up his own office in 1990. He combines a large commercial practice (offices in Tokyo and Paris) with teaching at a number of schools and universities. Although he began practice with some startlingly full-on post modern projects involving colossal classical column-heads – and is by no means averse to trying out later fashionable architectural tropes, paying occasional homage to the layered, stacked work of architects such as Diller Scofidio and Renfro – he quickly settled into a manner if not a style that marks him out. This is an architecture that prizes understatement, transparency and indeterminacy. These are aspects of traditional Japanese architecture which he generally does without too much recourse to traditional lightweight material. Sometimes though – as in his 2002 house in the 'Commune by the Great Wall' which is one of the best in that

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curious architectural zoo – he opts for bamboo, a material full of associations for both Japanese and Chinese.

He is clear, however, that he has not imported a 'Japanese' building to Scotland. But he is fascinated by the various cultural connections between the two countries, be it the Japanese influence on Charles Rennie Mackintosh (a Mackintosh oak tea room interior, in storage since the 1970s, will take pride of place in the new museum, though it's the Mackintosh late watercolours he's referring to) or the engineering cross-talk between the companies and universities of the two nations. 'The in-between space is very important for Japanese architecture,' he muses on the subject of his linking 'arch', 'but here the materiality is totally different. Scotland has a strong, unique topography and we're trying to express that strength.'

He is clear, however, that he has not imported a 'Japanese' building to Scotland

Above Ship ahoy! That's Scott of the Antarctic's vessel Discovery on the right, Kuma's cliff-vessel of the V&A Dundee taking shape on the left.

Below Originally meant to project much further from the Dundee waterfront, now the museum just dips its toes into the waters of the Tay.

Thus the veil of concrete strakes covering the building is deliberately far from delicate, with each strake having a roughcast finish. Inside, all is light timber finishes. One original design detail of the building has been modified however: he'd wanted the strakes to continue down the façade into the sea where they would presumably have taken on something of the slimy, seaweedy character of maritime structures. Instead, the building will sit on a neat concrete plinth finishing some way above the waterline. It's the latest regularising of a design that – at competition stage – he'd envisaged as sitting on a new isthmus, à la Sydney Opera House, projecting much further out into the estuary. Cost-cutting followed and the building landed back on the dockside with a much-reduced watery footprint. Even so its quoted cost is now more than £80 million compared to the £45 million originally cited. Both Scottish and UK governments, along with the city and the Heritage Lottery Fund, have topped up the finances to allow it to proceed.

The building is called the V&A Museum of Design Dundee but in truth the great London institution has only a 20% stake in the enterprise, which will essentially be Scotland's national design museum. But its incredibly valuable name is over the door. Its importance for Kuma is clear – his first building in the UK is one of its most prestigious. We don't build all-new museums very often. Will he pull it off? To find out we'll have to wait until summer 2018.

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Housing's golden age

This account of Sydney Cook's work in Camden is a paean to a lost period of social aspiration in housing

Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Living on the edge of Gospel Oak estate, perhaps I've become inured to the fact that I'm surrounded by work from the glory years of Sydney Cook's directorship of London Borough of Camden architects. And it seems it's still resisting gentrification. Queen's Crescent has a Costcutter, but Franks, opened in 1946 and still cash only, is the only supermarket on the locals' register – though rumours persist of it selling up to Tesco. But this will come as no surprise to academic Mark Swenarton, who admits in Cook's Camden that his book will end up further fetishising the UK's great modern estates, losing the ordinary in the process. Oscar Wilde was right: every man kills the thing he loves.

But at least they're going down (or is that 'up'?) in a blaze of glory. Swenarton's 300-page paean to Camden architects Neave Brown, Peter Tábori, John Green, Gordon Benson, Alan Forsyth and Bill Forrest is a highly researched, well photographed and illustrated document of their housing work before Margaret Thatcher dismantled the UK's social housing programmes in the 1980s.

The main body of the book's 12 chapters details the breakdown of the history, context and designs for the major Camden estates – Gospel Oak, Neave Brown's Fleet and Alexandra Roads, the beautiful yet notorious trackside Maiden Lane estate (being regenerated via developer buy-in as part of its rebranded 'Camden Collection'). Notable primarily for the fact that their highly bucolic setting would make them anathema in the current political and planning context are Benson + Forsyth's Hampstead Branch Hill and Peter Tábori's Highgate New Town estates, which remain stunning examples of housing by any measure, let alone social.

TIM CROCKER (2)

Left George Benson and Alan Forsyth/LBC Mansfield Road upper maisonette looking from living space to kitchen.

Their highly bucolic setting would make them anathema in the current political and planning context

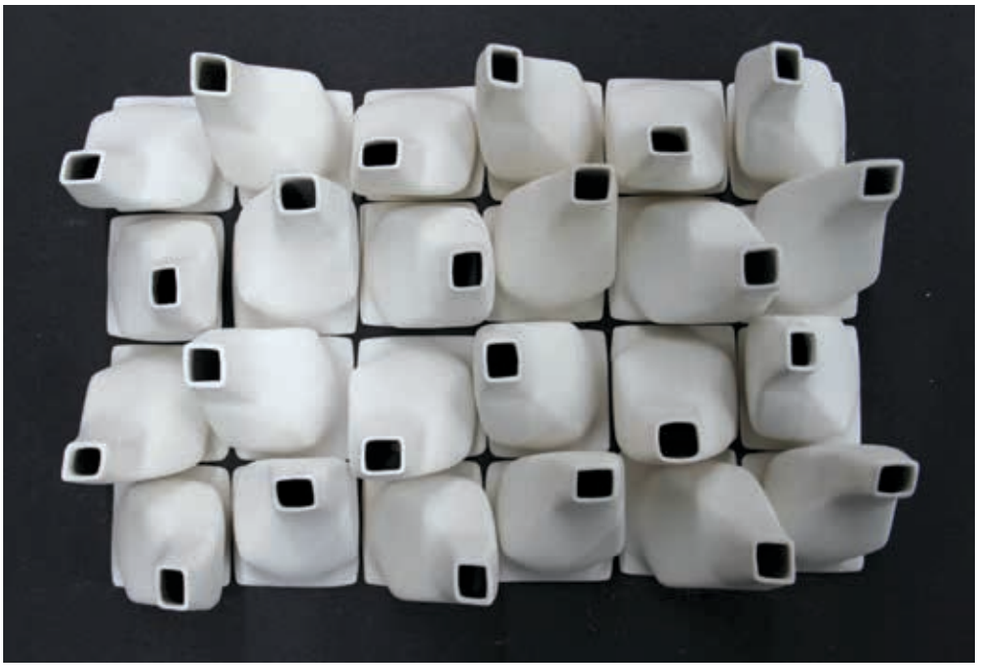
Above Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth/LBC Branch Hill, 1973.

Bookending this writing on the estates – supported by Martin Charles' contemporary photos and Tim Crocker's beautiful, current and more humanistic shots of the lived-in flats – are sections that establish the context of both Cook's tenure and that of his successor Alfred Rigby. The timeline in the introduction establishing the individuals, schemes and politics at play over the period is useful and informative.

And in the bold, orange-paged appendix there are touching recollections of Sydney Cook by key figures of the time, a reprint of RIBA Gold Medallist Neave Brown's seminal 1967 treatise The Form of Housing, and a glossary of the Camden projects entirely attributable to Cook and Rigby. With copious footnotes and index, Swenarton's book serves as the definitive account of a brief period in London's architectural history when mass housing was driven not by economic agendas but by social, spatial and aspirational ones. ●

Cook's Camden: The Making of Modern Housing by Mark Swenarton. Lund Humphries HB 327pp £45. ribabookshops.com

Bright idea for building



CREDIT ECA LAB

A new type of porcelain, strong and translucent, could transform architectural facades

Stephen Cousins

Artworks made from a new type of porcelain, that is both strong and super-translucent, are on show at RIBA North's Cerámica exhibition in Liverpool.

The eight cone-shaped objects were produced by Budapest-based artist Edit Szabo, using a combination of clay and thin glass fibres. Kiln firing at high temperatures strengthened the material compared to conventional porcelain, even at a thickness of just 1-2mm, and made it glow brightly when illuminated from behind.

The material offers great architectural potential, says Amanda Wanner, a curator of the exhibition and co-director of the Environmental Ceramics for Architecture Laboratory (ECAlab): 'If the goal is to create a very strong material, then the glass fibres could act as a form of reinforcement mesh. Porcelain is known for being translucent, but the inclusion of the glass creates a very powerful optical effect, if applied externally it could really make you question the nature of an architectural facade. Ceramic tiles or faience tend to appear heavy and solid, but this material produces a different effect.'

Szabo was one of eleven ceramicists invited by Cerámica to interpret an engineered architectural ceramic component, a light diffusing sinuous cone, using their individual approaches to ceramic making.

Her previous work in ceramics has focused on acoustic treatments, such as the development of ceramic acoustic walls installed in Budapest. For Cerámica she went back to the drawing board to try to imbue the material with translucence and the ability to radiate light.

> She went back to the drawing board to try to imbue the material with translucence and the ability to radiate light

Some of Szabo's artworks feature small fragments of glass fibre mixed into clay, others feature entire glass threads wrapped around the surface of the cone in the glaze.

Mixing glass and ceramics has proved problematic in the past because glass melts at a different temperature to clay causing unpredictable results in the kiln. Rosa Urbano Gutierrez, co-director of ECAlab told RIBAJ: 'We assumed that the moment the glass cone went into the kiln it would melt; the geometry and therefore the internal transmission of light would be lost. But that didn't happen here – when the material was fired it became stronger.'

The material is also simple to mould and manipulate, adds Wanner: 'Porcelain is a very temperamental material that fractures and dries out quickly before it goes into the kiln. Szabo's additions enabled her to work it much better in its raw state.'

Cerámica will showcase the experimental design methodologies employed by ECAlab, a group of designers, engineers, architects and ceramicists set up to exploit traditional techniques and digital engineering processes and create new applications for ceramics in architecture. ●

Below Cerámica Z Translucent Wall

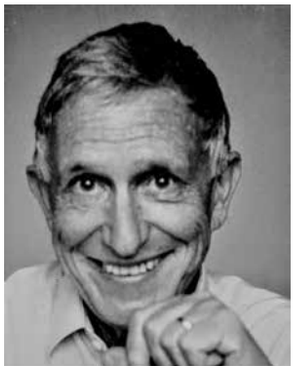
ECALAB-ARTIST-WENDY-LAWRENCE

Above What happens if you combine clay and glass fibres?

Cerámica will run at the RIBA's new National Architecture Centre on the Liverpool Waterfront, to 10 February, 2018

Gabriel Epstein 1918 – 2017

Passionate architect, one founding half of Shepheard and Epstein, who brought a belief in people-focused design to his prolific international work



Gabriel Epstein, who died in Paris aged 99 last July, was one of the two founders of Shepheard and Epstein. He was known for his approach to urban design, as evidenced in the development plan for Lancaster University and numerous housing projects, and for his belief in a practical, robust, people-focused modern architecture that was designed to last and integrate with its surroundings.

Born in Duisburg, Germany in 1918, he fled the Nazis with his family and moved to British Mandatory Palestine where he was apprenticed in 1937 in Jerusalem to Erich Mendelsohn, an architect he admired but did not emulate.

Architectural Association studies from 1938 were interrupted by the war. He joined the Palestine Regiment in 1942, then the Royal Engineers, stationed in North Africa. He graduated from the AA in 1949, where he taught until 1956, and became its president in 1963. He became a British citizen in the 1950s.

Gabriel joined Derek Bridgwater, co-author of 'A History of Cast Iron in Architecture', and Peter Shepheard (later RIBA president), in their Mayfair office in 1949. The firm became Shepheard and Epstein and later Shepheard Epstein and Hunter. It was known for its schools, universities and public housing, a holistic approach to site and context – herbivores rather than brutalists – and finding virtue in delivering buildings of quality within the challenging constraints of the Housing Cost Yardstick and the University Grants Committee.

Lancaster, one of the 1960s crop of new universities, was won in 1963 through competitive interview, during which Gabriel sketched the essential concept of the spine and loop road, the modern equivalent of a walled city, gradually growing from the centre and thus always appearing complete from the inside. The colleges were layered mixed-use buildings: residential on top, teaching in the middle and social and retail on the ground floors. On a greenfield site, it was significant change of scale for the practice. Sir Charles Frederick Carter, founding vice-chancellor, described the project as 'one of the major achievements of British architecture [which] set new standards and precepts for all university and urban plans'.

Other projects from Gabriel's period include Liverpool Students Union, plans and buildings for Warwick, Keele and the Open Universities and Chelsea College, a masterplan for the University of Ghana, buildings for the University of Louvain in Belgium and housing at Royal College Street, Gough Grove and Pigott Street in London, recognised in Housing Design, Civic Trust and RIBA awards.

Further afield he acted as a jurist for international competitions such as the Neue Staatsgalerie, and as planning consultant for the Universities of Konstanz in Germany; Makerere, Uganda; Pôle Universitaire and Université du Plateau St Martin in France; and the Quartier Léopold and European Parliament Complex in Brussels.

From 1979, he split his time between London and teaching at the University of Stuttgart, as director of the Institute of Public Buildings and University Planning, and professor at its Centre for Infrastructure Planning. He retired from the practice in 1986, and lived in Paris with his wife Josette and three children.

Peter Hunter, who joined the practice to form Shepheard Epstein and Hunter in 1962, recalls: 'Gabi was a passionate and emotional man. His family, Josette and architecture were his raison d'être and inspired all his ideas to provide delight and enjoyment to people living, learning or working in his buildings and his "spaces in between", which he regarded as of at least equal importance.'

IN MEMORIAM

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MARSHALL KENNETH LEVY
ELECTED 1956, NORTHWOOD

EDWARD LESLIE JONES
ELECTED 1961, WALSALL

JOHN ERNEST GIBBONS
ELECTED 1964, PATHHEAD

TARSEM SINGH FLORA
ELECTED 1967, CROYDON

MARIA LUISA PLANT ZACCHEO
ELECTED1972, LONDON

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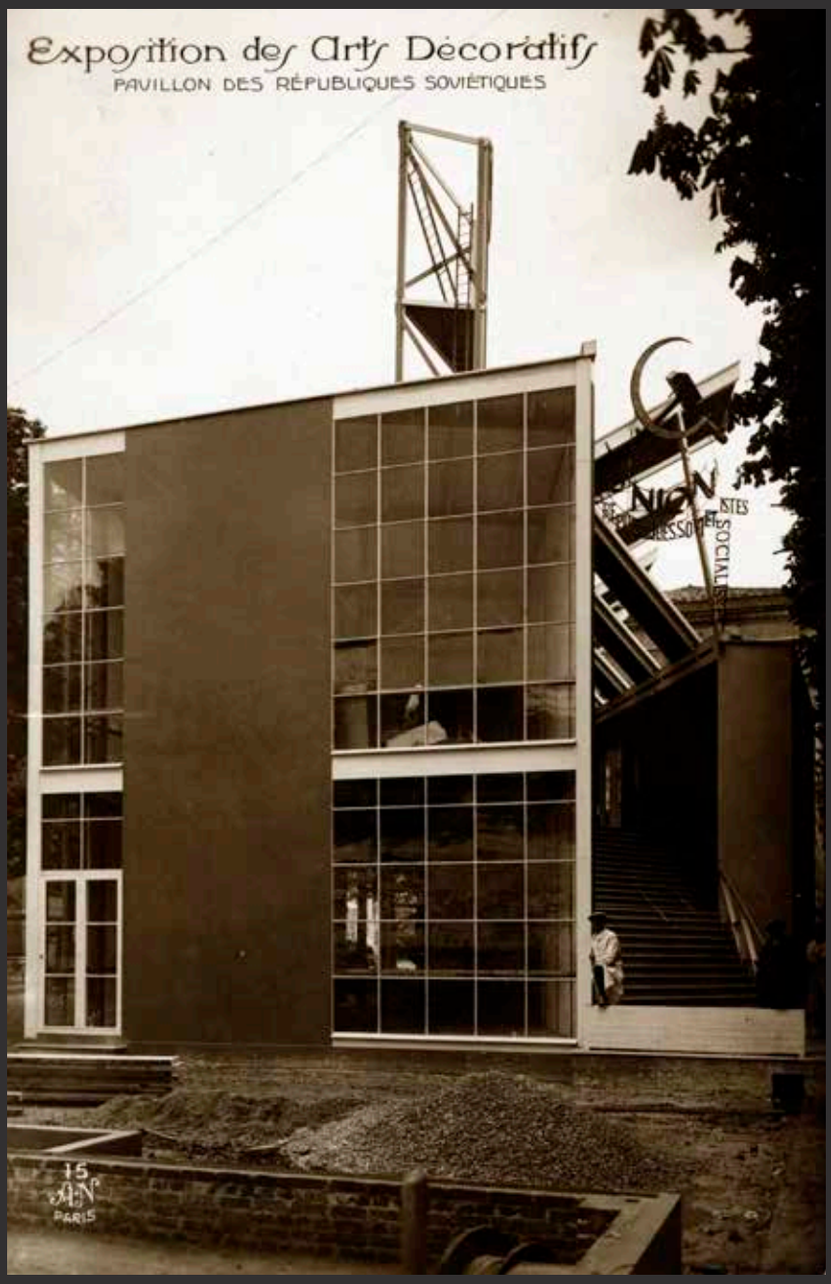

RIBA COLLECTIONS

Soviet Pavilion, Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes Paris 1925

As the centenary of the Russian Revolution comes to a close, it seems fitting to focus on the great innovations that followed it in the field of architecture. Suprematism and constructivism brought their own revolution in the arts, and visionary architectural projects by El Lissitzky, Vladimir Tatlin and the Vesnin brothers brought the attention of the international community to the cultural ambitions of the young Soviet state.

When the Soviet Pavilion was erected in the grounds of the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925, it must have looked like a building from the future among all the Art Deco pavilions and street furniture. The structure was based on a dynamic composition of two glazed triangular volumes joined by a diagonal staircase which, in the words of its architect Konstantin Melnikov, 'goes out to meet the crowds'. Thanks to the pavilion, Melnikov acquired instant international fame; during the course of the 1920s he went on to build other key projects of the Soviet avant-garde such as the Rusakov workers' club and his own house in Moscow. ●

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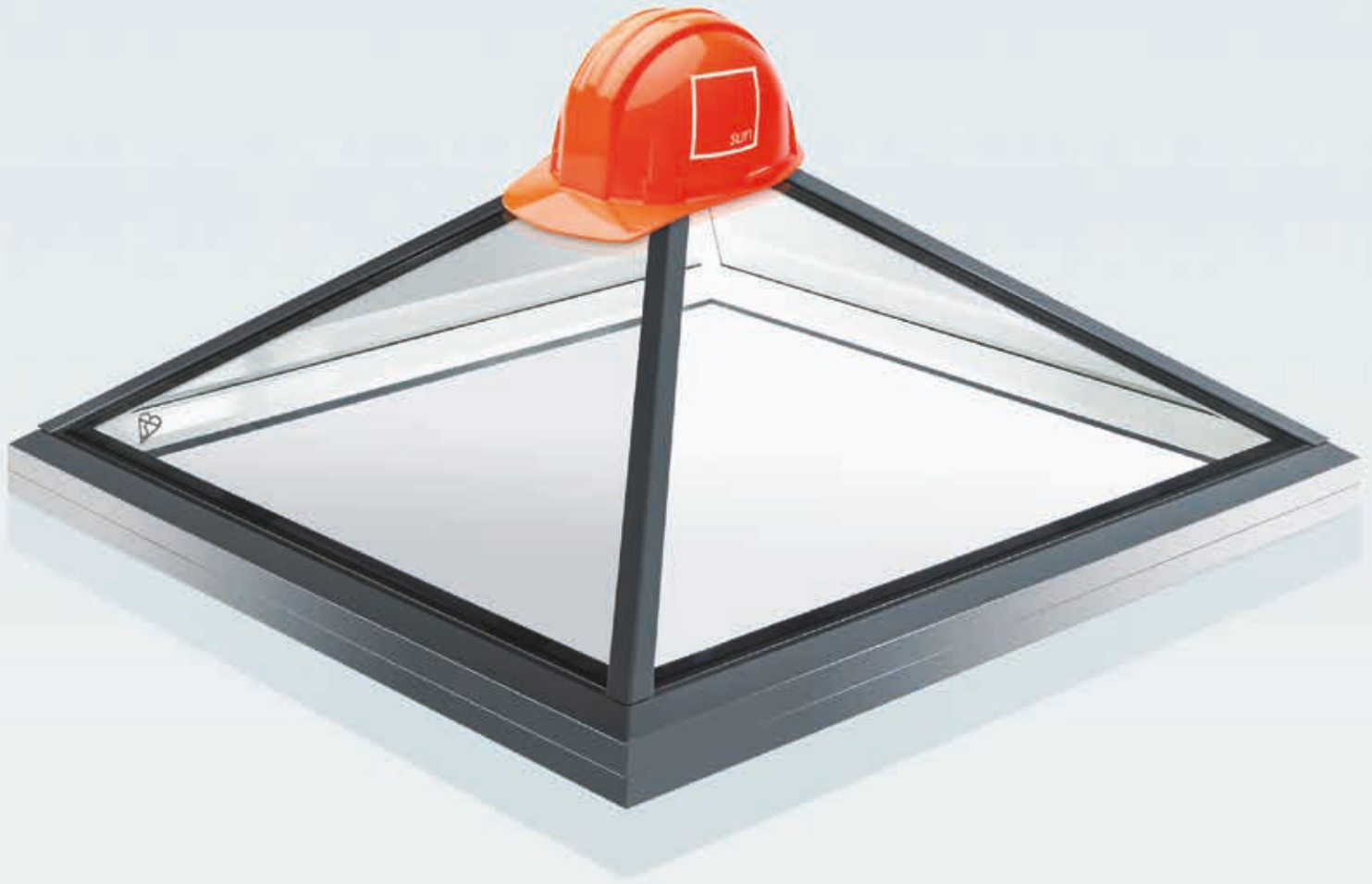

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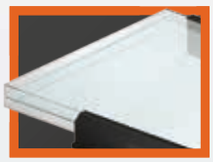

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