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The pink one

Early learners

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East to West

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1: Buildings

If anyone is still under the misapprehension that new-build is superior to refurbishment, we beg to differ. In this issue we present two very fine examples of each. On the newbuild side: MUMA's exemplary civic centre and nursery in the centre of the new North-West Cambridge township is wonderfully well thought through and

crafted, while the little pink Salmen House in Plaistow by Office S&M is all about subtlety and detail. Meanwhile on the refurb front Here East by Hawkins\Brown repurposes a huge London 2012 media hangar while Aerospace Bristol by Purcell (below) is a museum which appropriately enough includes a real wartime hangar. It's all good. ●

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

I said 'I wonder what is left to invent for the design industry?'

Stephen Cousins on the genesis of a scale ruler to decipher confusing drawings:
ribaj.com/scalerule

I went, in my 70s, to art school ... it's absolutely staggering and unbelievable for me to be here

Neave Brown on his RIBA Royal Gold Medal, housing, and his life for and after architecture:
ribaj.com/neavebrownrgm

Aerospace Bristol, from the hangar floor, page 28



JACK HOBHOUSE

Salmen House, Plaistow, London
Office S&M

Words Isabelle Priest

Photographs French + Tye

A blown-up pink Monopoly house scattered on the edge of the board, a giant new Liquorice Allsort, or a heavily adapted Corbusier house in Pessac. It seems hard to believe from the outside, but this building's design is substantially informed by its local context. It is the final piece in a terrace of 1950s system build houses in Plaistow, east London, but built 60+ years later. Around it is a mishmash of house building styles from the past two centuries: Victorian workers cottages, Edwardian speculative houses, 1930s bays and beyond, all layered with individual customisation over the years to varying degrees of taste.

Yet, look closely and the window sizes do replicate those on the Victorian homes over the road, the fibre cement roof tile does match the neighbouring slate, all the houses along the street do have porches and blend the render opposite with the pebbledash behind, and you've got something like the stippled effect here. Just when you think the crazy colours are chosen to subvert it all, you'd be wrong on that too: the Germolene pink is a perfect continuation in gradient from the dusty shades of blush pink and orange concrete panels along the row, and the jade green terrazzo plinth and sap coloured entranceway could be the front garden bushes the house replaced. In that contextual framework, it is only the exact composition that changes, with the young London-based practice Office S&M drawing on Edward Hopper's *Drug Store* (1927) and the materials themselves.

'It's so familiar that many people think it is a refurb,' explains co-director Hugh McEwen.

But the house is a new build, on a side gar-



den attached to the neighbouring 1950s former end of terrace. Young developer/private landlord Isla Kennedy bought that in 2015 to branch out from refurbishment to new build, and this has been designed as build to let – unperturbed by garden grabbing guidelines in this downbeat area of Newham that wants more infill and is even doing it itself.

Office S&M had to keep costs down, and has designed a three-bed, three-bath 87m² house costing £205,000 that can be let out equally to young professionals, as it now is, or to a family, with even a fully accessible granny bedroom downstairs. Its principal idea externally is to celebrate geometrically its corner presence by turning openings and recesses around the corner and rotating the entrance towards the crossroad, and putting a mini-me bin house on the corner too. There's colour

Above Green on green on green: geometric entrance door detail.

Left Bathrooms are composed to have more value than the sum of their low-cost, durable, parts.

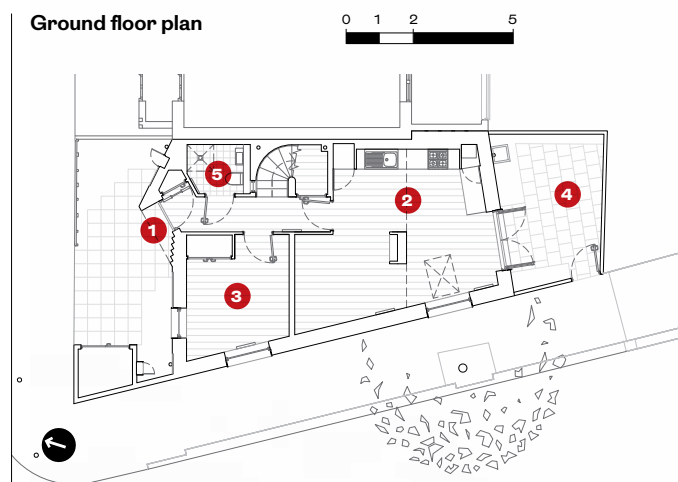
Right Gable end; terrazzo forms the plinth and frames windows.

Far right The entrance porch at once protrudes and recedes.

Credits

Architect Office S&M**Client** My Property and Home**Contractor** Catalin London**Structural engineer** Structuremode

Ground floor plan



- 1 Entrance porch
- 2 Living space and kitchen
- 3 Downstairs bedroom
- 4 Garden
- 5 Shower room



The project has been about removing structure but still making space



everywhere – pink tinted gravel, a pink bespoke steel railing and polished green-framed openings that bounce in the light.

Inside though, it's about white and black, except in the bathrooms where, for example, blue grout has been used. The plan is formulated around the cranked entrance porch, with the axis of the house shooting through to the rear living space and up a half spiral stair to the attic-less roof. There's one bedroom downstairs and two upstairs, which reach 4m to the rafters to give a sense of spaciousness.

To remain on budget, the project has been about removing structure but still making space. For example, to avoid the cost of underpinning the party wall, the slab is cantilevered by 650mm from new foundations behind. Meanwhile, the entire building is constructed as a single skin of blockwork with 200mm thick external insulation and rendered. To minimise steelwork a blockwork pier doubles as shelving and breaks the rear living space into areas to support the back of the house where it meets the single-storey kitchen dining room.

Although Salmen House's architecture is incredibly new – breaking from the biscuit-coloured trends all around – it is also remarkably congenial. There's an air of Viennese cocktail bar with the richly ornamented terrazzo, stepped door frame details, and bare bulb lighting stuck in the wall beside big round frosted hanging lamps. There is also a touch of FAT on the exterior but inside features have been made from ordinary objects. The kitchen is 100% IKEA, bathroom bulbs cost £2 each and the skirting is £2.50 for 3m.

A small but growing community of architects and designers like S&M and Studio Rhonda are re-injecting spirit and personality into the home. Office S&M doing a rubber clad extension in Walthamstow. It's not whimsical, it's contextual and about time. ●



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HADDONSTONE

Mondadori Editorial HQ, Milan, Italy

Photograph Karina Castro

Words Jan-Carlos Kucharek

If, as Portuguese photographer Karina Castro attests, a great building reflects the personality of its creator, then there may be a double life being lived in Segrate, outside Milan. To deal with the rapid expansion of his publishing business in the 1970s, owner Giorgio Mondadori, enamoured by the curvaceous signature modernism of Oscar Niemeyer's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasilia, the Itamaraty Palace, asked for his

own iteration of the design to act as the firm's HQ. Set astride an ornamental lake, with two low, curved forms stretching out from the main body of the building, its rhythmic arches, altered slightly by Niemeyer, still more than echo those of its Brazilian counterpart.

The photograph also taught Castro a few things about herself. The day of the shoot was overcast – usually her ideal light – but the building's sensual flourishes and deep-set facade compelled her to return the next day, on a sunny late afternoon, to realise this umber-soaked shot. 'It's a very private company – security cameras are everywhere – and

access to the building was difficult,' she recalls, 'but the urge to shoot it with its shadows, and reflected, reminded me of the value of persistence when you have an exact image in mind.'

Quite what she has planned for the next building she really wants to meet – the Zinc Mine Museum, a cluster of structures in rural Allmannajuvet, Norway, designed by Peter Zumthor – is anyone's guess, but she's up for the challenge. 'A good building, for me, is really like a human. It's alive and resonates with you on a very personal level; my job is merely to draw out its character so it reveals itself to the viewer.' ●



Fertile ground for creativity

Will collaboration flourish at UCL's impressive shared facilities for architecture and engineering at Here East?

Words: Pamela Buxton Photographs: Tim Crocker

I needn't have worried about finding University College London's new east London outpost when I arrived at Hackney Wick. You really can't miss Here East, the huge former broadcast centre for the London 2012 Olympics, situated near the edge of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Just to make sure no-one fails to spot it, the name stands tall in supersized bright orange lettering on the roof.

Since 2013, Hawkins\Brown has been transforming this 72,000m² windowless box – originally designed by Allies & Morrison for legacy conversion – into Here East, a technology and creative campus with an intriguing mix of tenants from BT Sport to choreographer Wayne McGregor. A 'gantry' of studio shed structures and making spaces

– designed in collaboration with Architecture 00 – is under construction at one end of the facade overlooking the park, and the V&A is recruiting an architect for a £25 million collections centre in another part of the building.

Here East is now also home to UCL's 6,200m² new teaching and research facilities including robotics and advanced prototyping space, for joint use by the Bartlett's faculties of the Built Environment and of Engineering Sciences, as well as accommodating the new UCL Bartlett Real Estate Institute, a late addition to the brief. This £12 million fit-out has been designed by a separate team at Hawkins\Brown which, in a happy coincidence, has been working with UCL on its Bartlett estates development since 2012 – most recently completing a refurbishment of

IN NUMBERS

£12m

UCL fit-out

6,200m²

teaching and research facilities

450mm

thick 'strong floor'

2

Harvard-style lecture theatres



Left Studio space is designed to be easily reconfigured and is positioned at the front of the ground floor to take advantage of the glazed elevation.

Right Entrance of UCL's new Here East base, which occupies part of the former broadcast centre for the London 2012 Olympics.









the Bartlett School of Architecture's 22 Gordon Street home (RIBA, September 2016). The Here East base is the brave forerunner of UCL's ongoing shift east, which will culminate in 2021/22 with the completion of UCL East campus south of the ArcelorMittal Orbit. This significant change of geographical focus is highly appropriate, says Bartlett dean Alan Penn, given that the whole concept of the Thames Gateway was dreamt up by the late Bartlett professor of planning and regeneration, Peter Hall. Now UCL has the chance to participate in that vision.

Penn is enthusiastic about the scope for interdisciplinary collaboration across the faculties that Here East offers in these co-facilities, as well as the sheer scale of the shared space – both internal and external – that the departments had craved for years. He sees it as a great educational opportunity.

'Putting the two faculties together potentially takes the architectural studio down a different line [with people] rubbing shoulders with those doing very hard science. I think some very interesting collaborations will come out of that,' he says. 'One of my ambitions is for architects to understand how these technologies work so they can appropriate their potential for the built environment. It's very much the future of architecture.'

Hawkins\Brown's task was to create an agile environment that would optimize this new collaborative ethos while retaining the atmosphere of creative intensity found at



Left A 'runway' thoroughfare leads past the auditorium towards the robotics, testing and fabrication spaces.

Right View into the robotics hall with the structural testing facility to the right.

the Bloomsbury base. So can a new building really change the culture of how these UCL faculties work? Just a few months after the university has started to move in, it's far too early to tell. But even before you get inside UCL's new building, the practical advantages are clear. In the yard outside, students from the new Engineering and Architectural Design course are already using the large external space to build temporary structures. Bigger spatial gains are to be found inside, where the cavernous, 10m high interior is ideal for housing large-scale equipment such as test-rigs and the like.

Penn cites Cedric Price's Fun Palace concept as a reference for the flexible nature of the new UCL space.

'We designed it to be loose-fit to make it as flexible and future-proofed as possible,' adds Hawkins\Brown associate Tom Noonan.

The core challenge was making what was basically a big dark shed fit for human occupation while at the same time accommodating the highly-controlled requirements of the testing, fabrication and lab areas. Key

Penn is enthusiastic about the scope for interdisciplinary collaboration

considerations were health and safety, and making the most of the natural light from the glazed facade already introduced along the 280m front elevation. According to Noonan, this logically led to the positioning of all teaching and studio space at the front of the building with manufacturing and testing, workshops and laboratories at the rear in artificially lit, mechanically ventilated spaces. A 'runway' thoroughfare stretches from the entrance to the back of the building, dividing controlled lab areas on one side from large test-rigs on the other. Here the architects made their biggest structural intervention – the creation of a 450mm thick 'strong' floor using 56 mini-pile foundations, which involved breaking and reinstating the protective gas ground membrane. Between the lobby and the workshops, a multi-use 'Spanish Steps style' auditorium space with views onto the workshops is designed for lectures, events, crits, performances. An extended mezzanine contains additional studio spaces on top of the labs and the new Real Estate Institute at the front of the building.



Left The main auditorium operates as a multi-use venue for lectures, crits, performances and other uses. Extensive use of plywood is combined with bright rubber flooring.

Right A plywood utility wall runs the length of the runway, incorporating touchdown areas and views through to the laboratories beyond.

Below Exploded axonometric



Credits

Client University College London

Architect Hawkins\Brown

Principal design advisor Turner & Townsend

Main contractor Paragon Interiors

Structural engineer and MEP consultant Buro Happold

Cost consultant AECOM

Planning consultant Deloitte

Fire engineer & acoustic consultant Buro Happold

Project manager Mace

Approved building inspector JLAB

Everything is designed for ease of reconfiguration, with mobile studio furniture, high-level power and data on extendable cables, and plywood modular utility walls with integral storage and touch-down areas. In the rear zone, moveable glazed aluminium partitions screen-off test areas.

For such a heavy-use building, the architect chose robust, self-finishing materials, with the warmth of the plywood contrasting with exposed concrete and bursts of yellow highlights, most noticeably on the rubber auditorium floor. This stripped-back approach provides a calm and ordered backdrop to the messy activities.

'It's raw, robust and industrial – a blank canvas to accommodate the creativity of staff and academics,' says Noonan.

The stripped-back approach provides a calm and ordered backdrop to messy activities

Ground floor plan



A similar aesthetic with a higher spec is used in the Real Estate Institute, which features two Harvard-style lecture theatres for executive level education.

At this early point, there are still challenges for UCL, which is trying to encourage student flow between the Bloomsbury and Here East sites. It might be only 30 minutes away from Gordon Street, but even six years on from the Olympics it still feels like a something of a brave new world, with the surrounding urban context still taking shape. However, Here East's growing tenant mix is promising, with the UCL students – adding to those of fellow higher education tenant Loughborough University – bringing visible liveliness to this fast-evolving complex.

UCL's new facilities are undoubtedly impressive. But it's the much hoped-for cross-fertilisations and inter-faculty collaborations that take place within them that are the real prize. While these, like the surroundings area, will take much longer to crystallise, the early omens are good. ●



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Civic steps

MUMA's successful Whitworth approach travels to add civic presence to North-West Cambridge

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Alan Williams



Primary shapes, primary colours – inside a nursery classroom

Right The community centre rises above the court of the nursery playground.



The little rattly blue bus starts off quite full outside Cambridge railway station, destination Eddington. I'm sitting right at the front. As our round-the-houses journey proceeds, clumps of passengers disembark at various colleges, faculties, research buildings and residential areas. Finally the bus enters an enormous half-finished building site. We stop outside a Sainsbury's as the rain lashes down. I turn round and look back down the bus. Nobody left on board, but for me and the driver. The new township of North-West Cambridge is still a work in progress. But it contains one of the best new buildings I've seen for quite a while. One that fully understands its civic duty.

The resulting complex shies away from ostentation, but has considerable presence

Stuart McKnight materialises, under an umbrella, cheerfully undaunted by the climatic conditions. The building – community centre plus nursery school – is by MUMA, best known to date for its 2015 Stirling Prize-shortlisted Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, an extension/refurb project won in competition that not only cemented the name of the practice but also helped catapult the gallery's then director Maria Balshaw to the top job at the Tate in London. Gillian McInnes, Simon Usher and McKnight (the MUM of the practice name) are a group of Mackintosh school-trained architects, one-time staffers and later collaborators with Michael Wilford, who set up their practice in 2000. They take the craft and technology of architecture very seriously indeed, as was clear from the Whitworth: the combined community centre and nursery here in Cambridge carries over some of the same ideas into an all-newbuild project. Fastidious, that's the word for them. In a good way.

Faced with a flattish green field (this was Green Belt land sacrificed by Cambridge as part of its expansion as a stealth new town), how do you find context? MUMA had a masterplan by AECOM to work to – one that it managed to tweak quite a bit. First it slightly rotated its building off the masterplan grid so as to make more gathering-space back from the street edge where its building adjoins Marks Barfield's circular primary school, completed earlier. This also gives the complex more of a presence when seen from the market square opposite: instead of looking face-on at just one elevation, you see the depth of the building. Then the firm found just enough of a gradient in the land to be able to build up to a shallow terrace in front of the community centre, a bit of a plinth, so helping to define it. Finally it went higher than originally envisaged, breaking through a notional 10m height limit up to 16m.

Now come the references. Academic Cambridge is all about the combination of relatively tall buildings (chapels, dining halls) with courts. McKnight relates how MUMA kept on coming back to this. Why not build something with a bit of the loftiness of King's College chapel? Why not refer back to the monastic origins of the university by arranging the nursery school round a cloister containing playground and garden? And why not combine these two forms, the chapel and the court, the former public, the latter largely private?



Playing to the gallery – technical access into the top level of the community centre is via a timber corkscrew stair. Brick texturing is for acoustic diffusion.

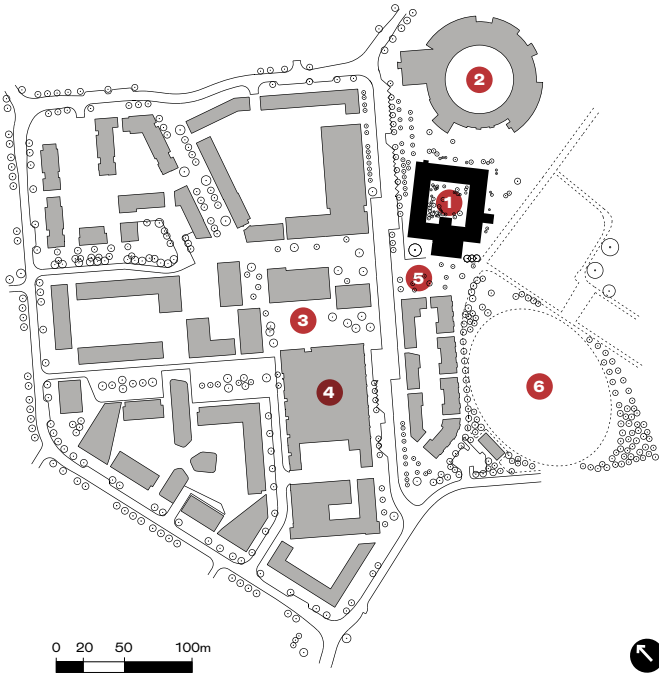
Credits

Client University of Cambridge
Architect MUMA
Structural engineer/
MEP consultant Aecom
Main contractor Farrans Construction
Project manager Turner & Townsend
Cost consultant Gardiner & Theobald
Landscape consultant Sarah Price Landscapes
Theatre and acoustic consultant (Community Centre) Sound Space Vision
Facade engineering FMDC
Lighting design Lumineer
Access consultant Centre For Accessible Environments
BREEAM consultant NHBC

The resulting complex shies away from ostentation, but has considerable presence in its creamy-pinkish brick (pale brick is shared by many of the buildings here in north-west Cambridge, itself a reference to much of the brick in the historic city). But nobody textures it quite so richly as MUMA, inside and out. This is more Denmark than Cambridge.

The community centre is much more than a hall. It is a fairly sophisticated multi-purpose theatre, naturally ventilated, its largest 200-person hall a double cube with a naturally long reverberation time which is then damped down as necessary by electrically-operated acoustic blinds and curtains. From outside it is an incised brick box with one tall vertical window on its west, town-facing elevation, long high-level horizontal ones on its main flanks, and a ground level window looking out across the preserved fieldscape. Near the entrance is a prominent flush-set stainless steel downpipe, and above it a notch cut in the roofline from which issues a water spout. This is MUMA's way of guarding against drainage blockages: if the system blocks, the water will simply cascade from

Siteplan of central Eddington



- 1 Community centre and nursery
- 2 Primary school
- 3 Market square
- 4 Supermarket
- 5 Community square
- 6 Cricket field

Right Tholos-like form to the nursery classes with their rooflights and acoustic ceilings.

Below Walled garden opens off a community room. Air intake 'rose' for natural ventilation system is set in a diaphragm wall.



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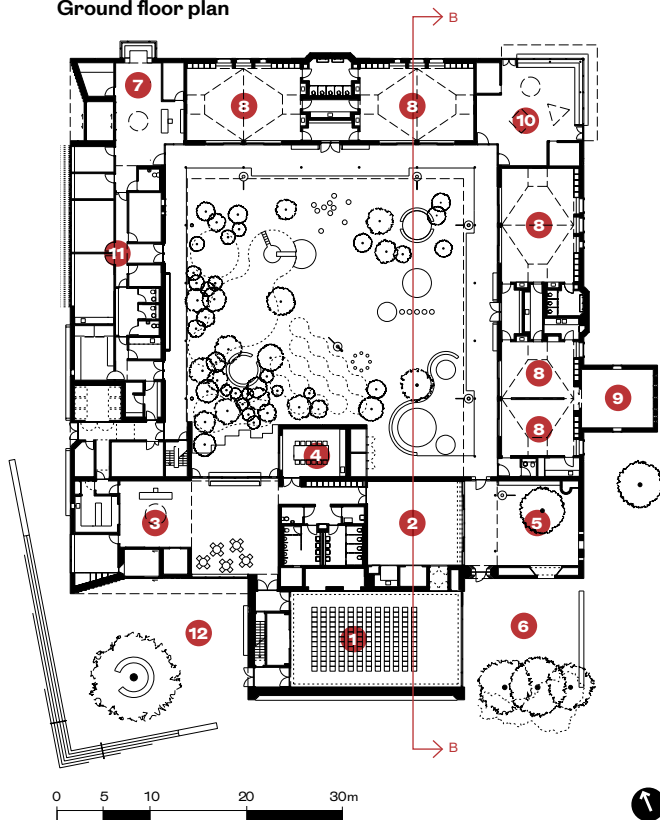
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Ground floor plan



- 1 Main hall
- 2 Multi-purpose room
- 3 Foyer/reception
- 4 Small multi-purpose room
- 5 Walled garden
- 6 Main hall garden
- 7 Nursery reception
- 8 Classrooms
- 9 Sleep room
- 10 Nursery communal room
- 11 Nursery administration wing
- 12 External terrace to community centre

Above right Exterior of nursery sleep room.

Bottom right Sleep room interior, the glass lenses arranged as constallations.

Below Is it a chapel or a dining hall? In fact it's a community hall that's also a theatre and concert hall.



the spout, so alerting everyone. Such a humdrum thing, given the high architectural treatment. As at the Whitworth, long carved benches are built into the walls of both community centre and nursery school – either in Purbeck limestone or (in the nursery school) terrazzo. The same limestone is used for flooring in the community centre.

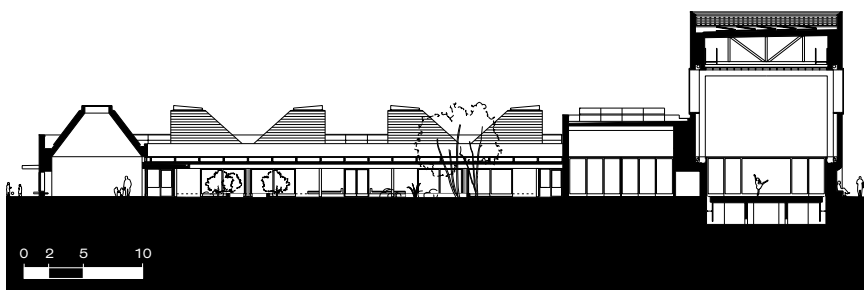
Externally the brick is subtly patterned in strata of stretcher and soldier courses, and becomes perforated at the top: an expression of the natural ventilation/cooling strategy. This was tricky: air is drawn in through a 'sunburst' grille in a diaphragm wall in a little courtyard at the rear, and travels through a basement labyrinth to be cooled by the ground before rising by stack effect to be expelled at roof level – but it is all done while also being damped down by thick acoustically-absorbent surfaces to ensure no sound penetrates the envelope in either direction. Sound and air move in different ways so this was a delicate balancing act between the services and acoustics consultants.

Inside the main hall, the brick ends are textured for acoustic diffusion – as are the timber flanking panels at floor level. Seating can be arranged in





Section



Left The bus stops here: community centre acts as a civic crown between market square and preserved fields.

Above Section across halls and nursery court.

so making corridors unnecessary. In the rooms, generosity of space extends vertically into the tholos-like roof lanterns, externally clad in cedar shingles. A sleep-room for the very youngest is softly daylit through glass lenses arranged in the shape of constellations. And windows looking across an intervening garden to the primary school allow siblings of different ages to see and wave at each other.

Great fun is had with the various circular (and in the case of the nursery, also triangular and square) apertures: the brickwork is exemplary throughout, as is the natural lighting (the building is BREEAM Excellent). The building was only partly in use when I visited, with external landscaping works still to be completed: even so, and on a dismally wet day, the high intelligence, wit, clarity and quality of this township centre came across strongly. It cheers you up to encounter such a place: it helps to restore your faith in what architects can do. Civitas is well served here. ●

Below Private though it is, the nursery enjoys focused views out across gardens landscaped by Sarah Price.

various ways and shunted away beneath the gallery. Structurally it is a delicate arrangement of laminated portal frames braced at one point between floor and timber-grid ceiling, above which is a technical level plus acoustically-damped exhaust air plenum. From the gallery rises a very architectural double-curved plywood spiral stair (though with a steel newel clad in timber). It's very tight, intended only for technical access, but expressed as an architectural foil to the rectilinearity of the chamber.

There are two smaller community rooms as well, plus a kitchen/bar: this is a place that can cater for most things from a chamber music recital or an amplified rock event to a wedding. The attached nursery school is a very different proposition. It is simple – single-storey round a courtyard – but done with the same attention to detail. It has to be secure and not overlooked – the court form sees to that, and provides a playground that doubles as a garden (landscape is by Sarah Price who also made the new gardens at the Whitworth). In one corner, for instance, is a mini-orchard made from 'retired' commercial fruit trees. A covered way with timber soffit around the court provides circulation,



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Eye Line 2018: enter now!

We announce the 2018 Eye Line judges. This year there's a new category for practitioners and a link with the RIBA's world-famous Drawings Collection



Eye Line, the RIBA Journal's acclaimed annual award for architectural image-making skills, is now open for 2018 entries. Once again we are delighted to be in partnership with architectural visualisation experts A-VR London. As ever, Eye Line is free to enter online.

In its sixth year we are expanding Eye Line in three ways. We are launching a category exclusively for practitioners. We are setting up an Eye Line Gallery at the RIBA HQ in London to exhibit our winners and commendations. And from this year onwards we are also partnering with the RIBA's world-famous Drawings and Archives Collections (DAC), based in the Victoria & Albert Museum. The DAC will approach prize winners to discuss the possibilities of adding their entries to the Collections.

We make no distinction between 'hand drawing' and computer rendering skills – not only because both are of equal value in our view but because so many architectural depictions layer several techniques to produce the final image, so making such distinctions meaningless.

We also want to encourage more practitioners to enter. There is a great difference between a tutored student producing a stunning image of an imagined world, and a busy practitioner producing a competition entry or rendering for a real-life client – or drawing imagined possibilities.

So we now have two categories:

- Student category: images made by those in architectural education or submitting images made when they were studying.
- Practitioner category: images made by those fully qualified and working in practice, either for real-life projects or done to explore ideas and experiences.

Of course practitioners have always entered Eye Line alongside students, but we want to foster the skill of communicating architecture through the image on a practical level.

Last year's overall winner, Matthew Kernan of Queen's University Belfast, brought richness, humour and allusion to the images

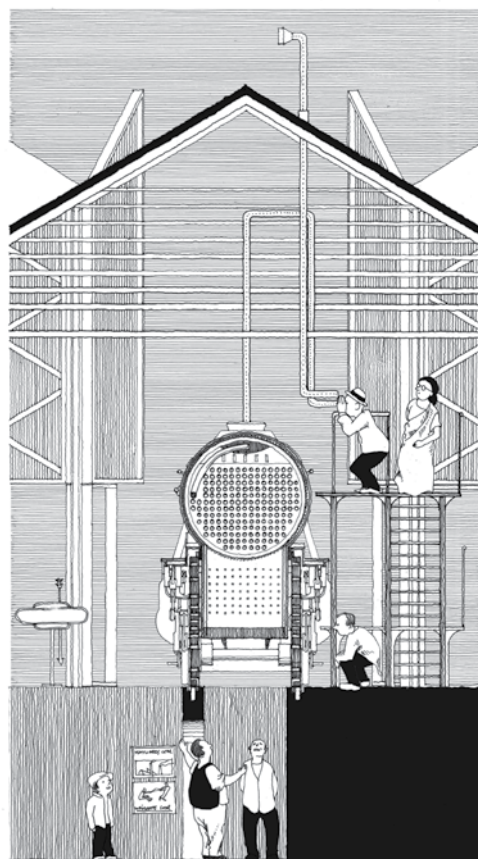
of his Tower House project. Our judges include Kernan, artist Deanna Petherbridge RA, RIBA president Ben Derbyshire, Chris Wilkinson of Wilkinson Eyre, RIBA editor Hugh Pearman and Joseph Robson, founding director of A-VR London.

Robson says: 'Having recently completed CGIs for two major public realm projects – Oxford Street's pedestrianisation and the proposed, light artwork illuminated River by US artist Leo Villereal, to illuminate 15 of central London's bridges – one is reminded of the incredible charge of architectural drawings to explain, convince and seduce. We're excited to discover how Eye Line's entries will beguile again this year.'

You heard him. Practitioners and students – get image-making, and enter! •

Winning and commended entries will be published in the August issue of RIBA J as well as exhibited at RIBA HQ.

Below Commended 2017, railway museum
by Jonathan Chan of Hawkins\Brown.



RULES

We seek the best 2D representations of a building design or concept through visual means. They may be hand or digitally drawn, incorporating collage or any combination or overlay of methods. Video and straight photography excluded. Enter in either the student or practitioner category. The RIBA Journal reserves the right to reallocate to a different category if deemed necessary.

Maximum of three images per entry, which can be from different projects, or all from the same project.

Joint entries on which more than one person has worked are permissible.

All entries must be uploaded via the link below. We cannot accept physical works.

Images must be at 300dpi, file size maximum 25Mb.

The work must have been produced within the three years up to the closing date of 23.59 on Tuesday 12 June, 2018, and must not previously have been entered for Eye Line.

Information required

Title of work(s) if applicable, and medium.

Name of the author(s) of the work.

Name of organisation where author works or studies.

Email, postal address and phone number.

Dimensions of the original work as presented (or as you would wish it to be presented) in mm.

Date it was completed.

Key dates

Deadline: Tuesday June 12, 23:59.

Judging: 28 June.

Winners and commendations announced:

August issue of RIBA J and online.

Exhibition opening: September.

Correspondence only (not entries):

eyeline.ribaj@riba.org

Enter online here:

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Looping the loop

Purcell's reincarnation of a hangar at Filton for Bristol Aerospace Museum displays the exhibits in their own historic and significant setting

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Jack Hobhouse

The long green hangar doors are part rolled back. Parading in the gap, the giant, robot-like landing gear of the Airbus A340-600 plays with your sense of scale. In just over a century since this hangar 16S was built in 1917 aircraft have supersized. It originally housed newly finished aircraft as an 'acceptance' hangar, has been a base for mending light aircraft and was most recently used by the air ambulance. Now, as Bristol Aerospace Museum, it houses a Sea Harrier – or Harrier jump jet as I knew it as a child – and buses, trams, missiles, a Bristol Type 173 double rotor helicopter and the innards of many other flying machines.

Over the years, Filton airfield just outside Bristol was the testing ground for many of these vehicles as well as, more famously, for Concorde. When BAE sold it off for development two hangars went to the enthusiasts who over the years had been collecting planes and their parts for Bristol Aero Collection Trust. With money from the Heritage Lottery Fund Purcell has transformed the first of these. RIBA Rising Star Úna Breathnach-Hifeárnain was project architect for the £16 million conversion of this building and the new gallery next door – devoted to the last Concorde to fly. She has come to love the historic Belfast

Right The Bristol Type 173 double rotor helicopter was a prototype that was developed through the late 50s and 60s – but is invested with a contrasting modernity by its positioning alongside the brick piers.



Left Outsized Airbus landing gear takes pride of place behind the hangar doors at the entrance.







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Repairing the trusses
Each dark stained Belfast truss spans 24m and is made up of many pieces of laminated softwood, across the span and on the timber lattice above. The Belfast trusses have survived remarkably well – the most damage being where they meet the piers and water from the roof has got in. Softwood repairs have been spliced in, left unstained to make the refurbishment quite clear.

Timber trusses bring a unifying materiality to the collection

trusses as much as the delicate exhibits that have been wheeled in under them.

In fact the three bays of timber Belfast trusses make up the only intact timber triple bay in the country. The 24m deep structure, reaching out over a total 73m, was designed just as wide spans were switching from timber to steel. Each truss comes to rest on brick piers which split the bays as they run the width of the building in pairs. These trusses bring a unifying materiality to the diverse collection. As you weave between exhibits the parallel structures impose an order from above, their latticework a reminder of the timber planes of early aeronautical pioneers – who may have had a hand in the hangar design too.

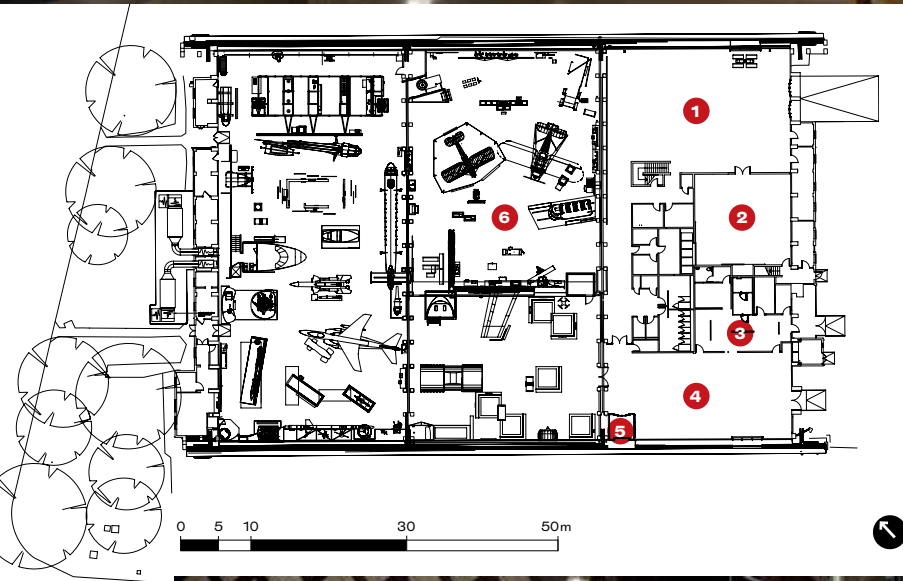
The bays are used to organise the plan. The second and third are given over to the exhibition while the first carries the rest of the load of ancillary but essential spaces – reception, shop, café, education rooms. Nevertheless, from the entrance to one side, glimpses into the exhibition are visible from the ticket desk. The workshop-classrooms are kept enclosed, warm and quiet with an interestingly timber clad box (on the angles, you see the influence of the contractors' foreman, a joiner by trade, who worked closely with Breathnach-Hifeárnain on the setting out). Each education room has its own character. A galvanised 'balcony' makes one just right for testing the aerodynamics of paper planes. Another is up in the roof, close to the trusses, and this one also looks out over the café towards the promise of the Concorde shed.

The café itself is a double-height space with south-facing gaps in the hangar doors shaded by appropriately industrial looking galvanised mesh from Elefant Gratings. New high-level windows and original Crittall windows (blacked out in the other bays for the exhibition) keep this bay as light as possible.

Before the museum took over there were walls up to 2.7m between many of brick piers. Purcell tried to do away with these but the exhibition designers at Event wanted some walls for display and light control. So they have been reinstated between the entrance bay and the exhibition, except where a 2.9m wide pane of glass forms an entrance to the exhibition by sliding out of sight when the museum is open.

Ground floor plan, hangar 16S

- 1 Entrance and shop
- 2 Making studio
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Café
- 5 Exit to Concorde hangar
- 6 Exhibition



Left The boxed form of making spaces and classrooms and kitchen. The setting out of the timber picks up on the diagonals of the trusses.

A galvanised 'balcony' makes one room just right to test the aerodynamics of paper planes

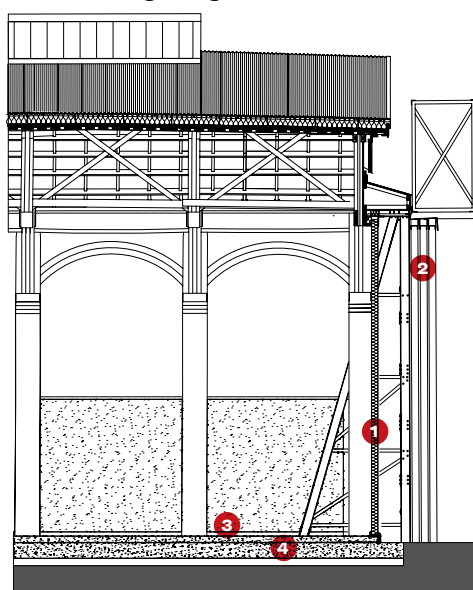
The brick piers themselves took some cleaning up; in the initial enabling contract the brick was partially cleaned to remove lead paint.

The enabling contract was also an opportunity to remove the sinusoidal tin roof with its asbestos layer. It has now been replaced with a sandwich of crinkly tin inside with insulation and a steel roof on top.

A new floor was also needed – mainly to bring power for individual exhibits and displays, something that would have been messy to deliver from above, alongside the trusses. Adding cables and a new layer of concrete to a concrete floor sounds simple, but it was not straightforward. Surveys showed a 250mm drop between the floor level of the first and third bays. So an average extra 150mm depth of concrete ranged between 80 and 200mm – 80mm being the minimum required for extra strong steel floor boxes. Spreader plates are still needed when a heavy exhibit, like the Harrier or a Bloodhound Missile, is wheeled in.

A big question was how to get delicate planes into place. To cross the threshold they need to ascend 150mm and there was concern that some timber-framed aircraft would

Section through hangar doors



- 1 Insulation with wall panel internally
- 2 Hangar doors
- 3 New floor
- 4 Existing floor

Top right The making space, part of the museum's education facilities.

Below The grey fabric services ducts are recessive.

Door to wall

The steel panel doors were not secure enough for the collection which includes some priceless pieces. Nor did they help maintain a reasonable temperature. So they have been reconfigured as walls with 125mm insulated panels behind them on the new floor plinth. Panels are removable, allowing planes to be wheeled in and out.

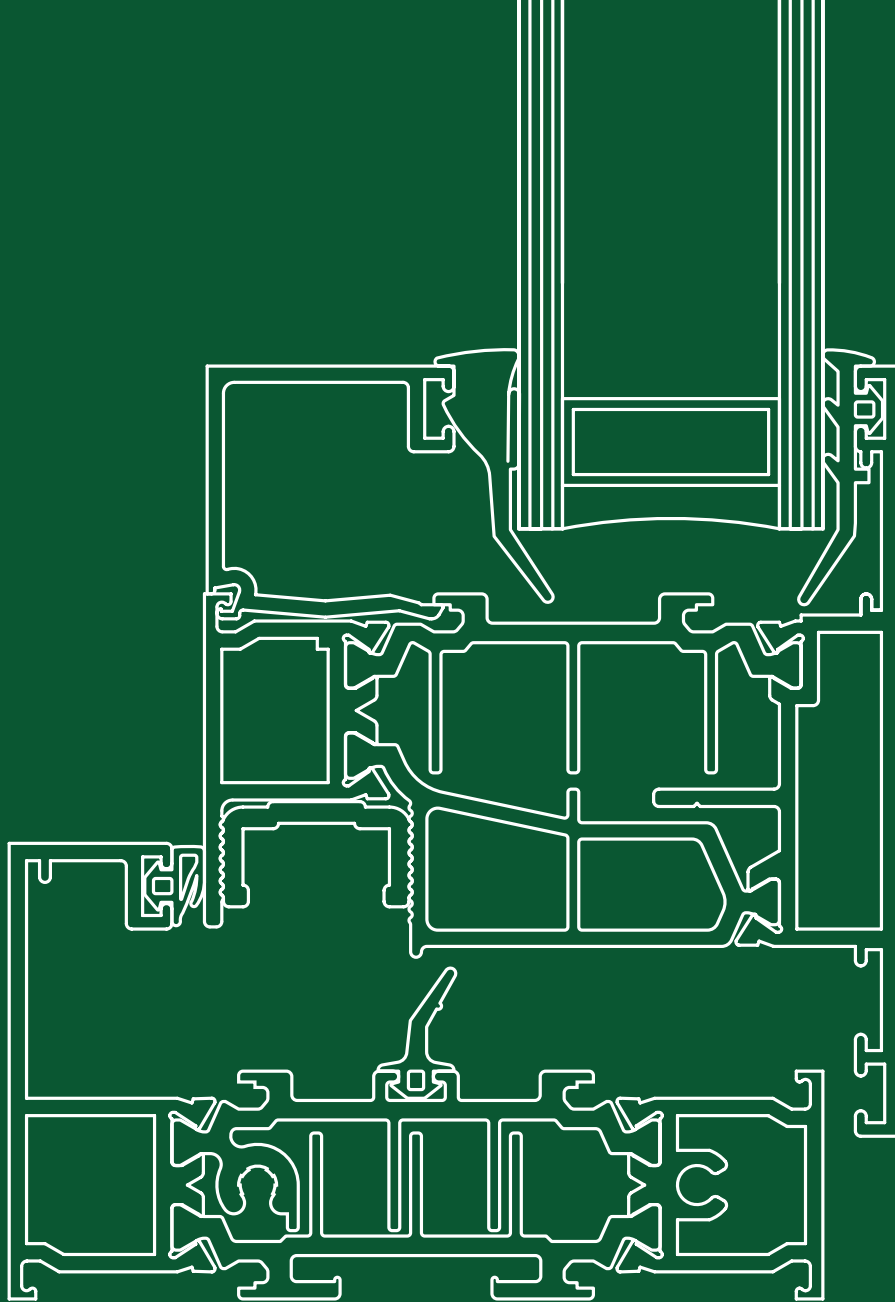


come apart with the slightest flex. Despite efforts by expert members of the trust with Breathnach-Hifeárnain and contractors Kier to devise a ramp, the most delicate exhibits were eventually craned into place. Planes and other vehicles were brought in early and kept encased in plastic while work went on around them. This meant they could be brought through the hangar doors, which hang off a gantry connected to the roof and allow the hangar to be fully opened up. The hanger doors have now been given an extra secure and insulated layer. But there are still removable panels to allow reconfiguration in the next few years – including replacing a replica of the Bristol Fighter with a restored original.

Looking at the ceiling the discipline of the servicing is particularly noticeable. Breathnach-Hifeárnain wasn't hoping for much when Kier started on the building. Behind the panels of the Concorde gallery the servicing was all over the place. But when it came to being on show the pipework is supremely neat, its lines of silver like army columns, marching in order over the terrain of trusses. Ductwork is camouflaged with grey fabric ducts working with grey radiant panels, all leaning towards the industrial but without the shiny machine visibility of the pipes.

While the new Concorde gallery appears a high definition, technical space – rather like its main exhibit – the 16S hanger has a character and complexity that is very different. Both its building and its exhibits speak of a different time; of human scale, invention and rapid change. The electronics and robotics of future flying will also be on show, but it is hard to believe that the huge grey hangers of the modern aerospace industry that cluster around Filton will create either objects or architecture that are quite so engaging. ●





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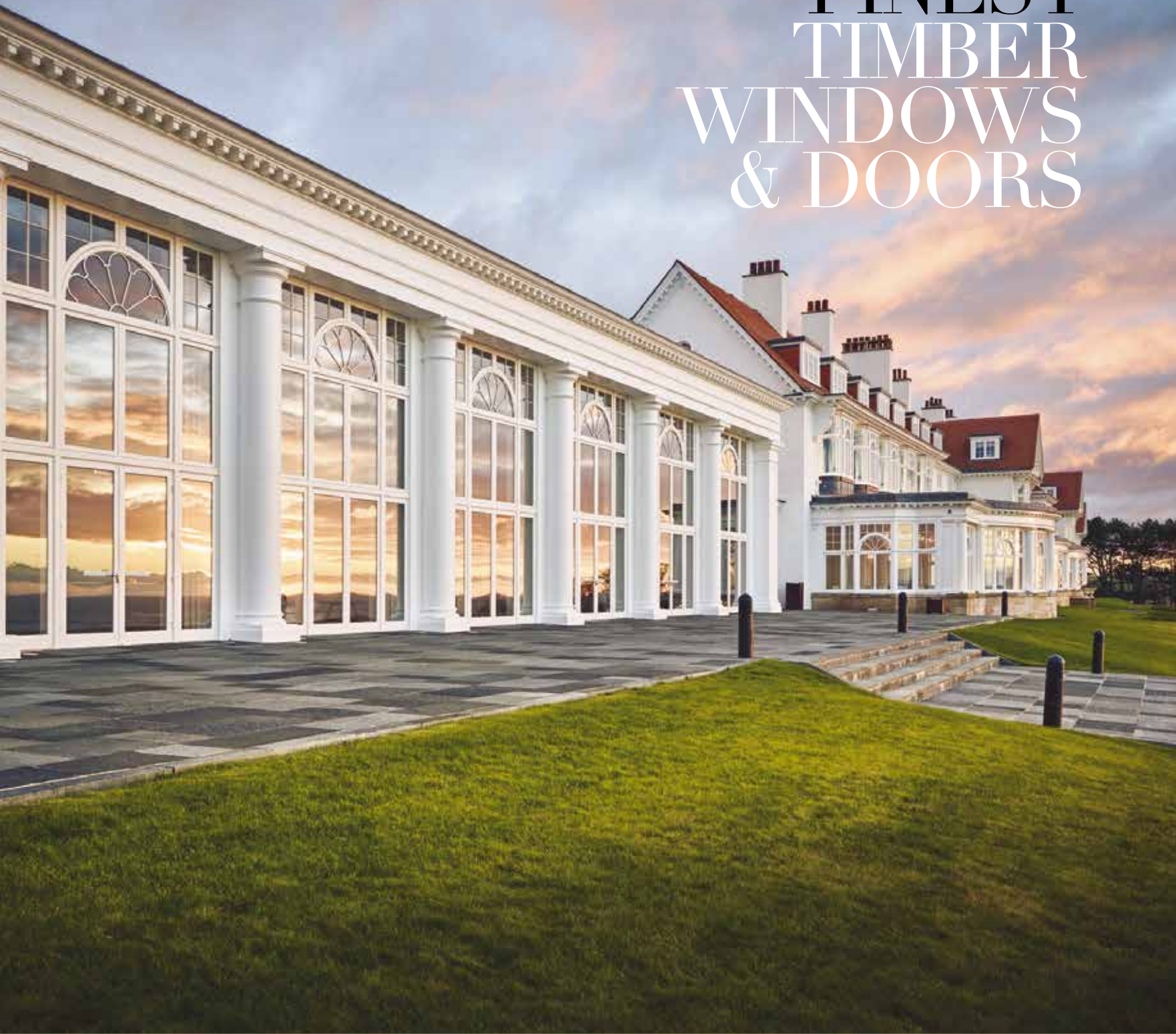
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Stephen Richardson



The World Green Building Council has convinced Europe's banks to offer preferential mortgage rates for better-performing homes – a scheme piloting this June. World GBC technical lead Stephen Richardson hopes they'll be a gamechanger for Europe's €7 trillion mortgage market

Isn't this just banks jumping on the sustainability bandwagon to find a financial product to sell?

That's a cynical view you have! No, I think banks are recognising that about a third of their assets are locked into property and that as regulation gets tighter, bad energy performance is a risk. You're now hearing terms like 'green value' – the price premium someone's willing to pay for a sustainable property; and 'brown discount' – the reduction on a property's market value due to bad performance. The EeMAP (Energy Efficiency Mortgage Action Plan) aims to leverage finance available to buy better performing buildings.

Will the mortgages incentivise the market to pay a premium for energy efficient homes?

The reality is that energy efficiency is not at the top of the list when buying somewhere; it's a more emotional than hard-headed decision, involving many factors. But attaching preferential interest rates to sustainable properties builds a more compelling case for buying an energy efficient one. Regulation is a driver - the government's consulting on its Clean Growth Strategy and this will support the green mortgage initiative.

But what about mortgages on the existing housing stock?

The €100 billion annual shortfall in investment for building energy efficiency takes account of Europe's poorly performing existing stock. And this project is about old homes as well as new. The Green Deal failed because there was the question of who pays the loan; a green mortgage deals with this. Re-mortgaging and upgrading not only increases a property's value, it makes it more attractive to buyers, who'll pay less interest on a loan to buy it. Only 1% of EU stock is upgraded annually – we need that to triple to meet climate change targets.

What was the World GBC's involvement?

We were at the heart of it! With the Build Upon Strategy we supported governments to produce nation renovation strategies as part of the EU Energy Performance Buildings Directive. Knowing that investor finance was crucial, we brought in the European Mortgage Federation, RICS for valuation expertise and E.ON for consumer intelligence, among other partners. This consortium helped push the Mortgage Action Plan.

So what kind of preferential rate?

We can't stipulate that – we're not rate setters. The banks have to evaluate that through risk metrics. We're hoping for a tiered approach like the Netherlands which is a trailblazer in green mortgages. An EPC rating of 'A' gets a better rate than 'C'. It's all about incentivisation.

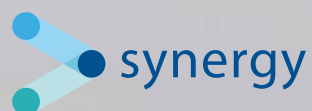
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Households in London were spending on average about £2,600 a year in 2014 and 2015, but over the past two years that average annual spend has fallen to below £2,000

Brian Green reveals how home improvement is starting to fall prey to recession: ribaj.com/doingupgoingdown



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Good guys

Second Home is a client many architects would dream of working with

Isabelle Priest

If there was ever an argument in favour of the value of bold and brave architecture, Second Home is it. Since the shared workspace company opened its first location in London's Spitalfields only four years ago, it has found that companies based there create jobs 10 times faster than the national average. One renewable energy start-up named Bulb that began with two people two and a half years ago now has 143. Another, Threads Styling, started in one of Second Home's private studios and now has five. In fact, companies are growing so quickly that last year Second Home had to find a solution for them.



'The biggest studio we had when we opened was for 50 people,' explains co-director Rohan Silva. We've just sat down in one of the bookable shared meeting rooms in the original part of Spitalfields' Second Home, having done a whistle-stop tour with the other director Sam Aldenton. Downstairs is the orange café booth seating bulge designed by Spanish firm SelgasCano that instantly put Second Home on architects' radar. Its snug-in shape, transparency to the main space and street, buzzy colours and clattering, impermanent materials have come to define Second Home as a company – open, creative and energetic.

In the meeting room there is polymethyl

methacrylate plastic all around us. We're deep into the plan but everywhere plants are growing in pots and if I stand up I can see across the floor through many rooms from one side to the other. Perhaps it's just the bright yellow floors and mirror floorplate trims, but the space has a flavour of Richard and Su Rogers' 1960s Wimbledon house.

So while Second Home's objective is to make other companies grow quickly, its own is too. What started as two floors of a former factory in east London for 350 people has now spread across all five floors to house 1000. Its largest studio can take 150, but Silva wouldn't be surprised if it has teams of 200 before too long. What's more, Second Home has opened a bookshop called Libreria over the road, a school in an urban slum in Kibera, Kenya, a workspace in a redundant part of a market hall in Lisbon and another new workspace for 250 members in Holland Park in the past two years alone.

I've come to speak to Aldenton and Silva, who arrived in the co-working space business from different angles – multi-occupied office management and government policy on Tech City respectively. We want to discover what Second Home wants from its buildings and how its architects – until recently exclusively SelgasCano – create successful collaborative

Top Second Home Holland Park occupies the photo studio in the mod classic film 'Blow Up' (1966).

This image Reflective surfaces, oranges, yellows and greens give an energetic feel to Second Home Spitalfields.





Creativity matters. People are increasingly having to create their own jobs

Left Rohan Silva (left) and Sam Aldenton at Spitalfields.

Right Libreria bookshop is arranged horizontally by theme to encourage intellectual encounters.

workspaces and Second Home isn't just for techy start-ups, its workspaces support all kinds of industries. Santander's investment fund was an early occupier, but there are also roaming members who can drop in when they want. This mix of big companies with early stage ones is the whole idea. The firm's mission is to support creativity and entrepreneurship by building a community of organisations that draw on each other's skills and knowledge.

'We are engaged with the question of where the jobs of the future are going to come from,' explains Silva. 'Creativity matters, because that's one thing the technology, software, algorithms etc are pretty rubbish at. As technology automates more of what we do, the question becomes how can we make high quality jobs. Creativity and entrepreneurship are important because people increasingly have to create their own jobs. We've gone from 700,000 small businesses in the UK 30 years ago, to 5.5 million today.'

Silva and Aldenton don't think creativ-

ity just happens; you have to create environments, communities and cultural programmes that make it more likely. This is where José Selgas and Lucia Cano, Aldenton's wife's aunt, came in.

Second Home's recipe is to use buildings 'that other people might not look at' and transform them, leaving the architect to design everything down to the furniture. Early on, the brief included private workspaces, a drop-in area, a café and hotdesking areas, but it's more than that. Aldenton and Silva say the architects themselves can't necessarily put a finger on it – a lot comes down to intuition. At Spitalfields, Aldenton told SelgasCano to make everything straight to be cheaper, but when it came back with curves they quickly understood about giving people the freedom to do what they do.

Nevertheless, there are elements that can be deciphered. The thing that hits you first is the colours, which are chosen to create an uplifting, optimistic environment and bring life to the old buildings Second Home reinhabits.



This is part of a sustainable approach – focusing resources into reuse, repair and recycle rather than demolish and start again. The second thing that strikes you is the variety of spatial experiences on offer – from studios to cafés and large desks for co-working. Each Second Home location is tailored to the local business demographics. The largest studio at Holland Park, for example, is for 10 people as it is a mainly residential area.

Biophilia is another aspect, and Second Home employs a team of gardeners to deal with the foliage. But it is more than stuffing plants into buildings. At Spitalfields, the materials may be man-made but the forms are from the natural world – curves, bulges, the lack of spatial repetition. Every element exposes visitors to new experiences; the design is complex, in a way unwieldy, but an adventure to move around. It's that kind of continual provocation that Silva and Aldenton believe spurs creativity.

'In the natural world, every tree is different, every snowflake is different,' says Silva. 'We didn't evolve in environments that look anything like the grey sterile buildings that we build today.'

Consequently, at a future site in Hollywood, LA, SelgasCano is taking biophilia one step further. Instead of filling it with full-height trees as at Holland Park, it is taking the building out to nature. Eighty studios will be spread across a 90,000ft² campus, connected by walkways, trees in between.

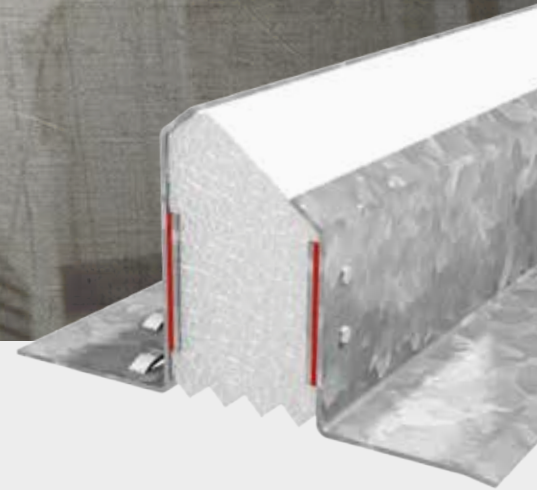
Another major element of SelgasCano's work is about experimentation. All locations are recognisable as 'part of the same family', but they all have their own architectural peculiarities. At Spitalfields 2.0, an outdoor pond rings the upper floor like a moat and acoustic insulation is made from hanging upturned orange felt hats. At Holland Park, a double skin clear roof stretched over the



Every pound spent on attending Second Home's cultural programme goes to the school in Kibera.



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Second Dome, a pavilion for Second Home events, was commissioned from Dosis to help it get building experience.



courtyard can be pumped with soap bubbles for warmth. In Libreria, a mirrored ceiling and end wall make a small space feel like Jorge Luis Borges' infinite Library of Babel.

Yet pushing boundaries carries risk. At Spitalfields, for example, Second Home fell out with the ponds contractor and so the snagging is unfinished. 'With any creative process, there is an element of risk because if there wasn't it wouldn't be creative,' says Aldenton. 'But doing this is quite hard.'

In fact, what Aldenton and Silva end up doing is run around trying to get everything in a design on price, materials as well as labour.

'Take the methacrylate plastic,' adds Silva. 'It hasn't been used in an office before. Consultants, engineers do two things when something comes up that's new: the first thing is say you shouldn't do it and then that it will cost you. I was thinking perhaps there is a reason why it hasn't been used before until an old sea dog engineer said: "Listen, the reason it has never been used in Britain before is because it has never been used before. Go for it."'

Subsequently, the pair admit that if they hadn't been such outsiders to the industry, there is no way they'd have had this kind of guts. They're hardened enough now to plough on regardless though. For a new site in Lon-

don Fields, they have spent 18 months in planning to replace the facade of an awkward 1960s building with an ambitious ETFE topographical structure reminiscent of Frei Otto's work, but because it is considered unusual, everything has to go to design committee.

'A committee of 20 people is never going to agree on anything,' says Silva. 'You have two choices if you are rational – luckily for now we are not. Choice 1: do something so bland it doesn't go to design committee. Option 2: make your thing really bland to get it through design committee. Option 3 being spend 18 months fighting for what you think is good. It has cost us a lot as a business.'

Yet it's clear this struggle is the only way Second Home thinks it can get the environments it needs, and they have become quite reflective about the industry as result, seeing flaws that others accept as par for the course, for example how few new materials ever get into British cities – though as Silva says: 'Generic architecture is really bad for creativity

Generic architecture
is really bad for creativity
and entrepreneurship

and entrepreneurship.'

Nevertheless the struggle is working: Second Home is growing so quickly that its collaboration with SelgasCano can't keep up. It has had to hire other architects to help. However, instead of organising competitions it has commissioned the architects SelgasCano has recommended. The first, Cano Lasso, is Lucia Cano's father's practice that is now run by her brothers. The other is Dosis, a young firm run by one of Selgas' students at MIT that is experimenting with pneumatic structures. If the next project goes ahead, Dosis will create a 40,000ft² hub in west London at the Royal College of Art. Cano Lasso is designing the London Fields location to create a family friendly environment to overcome the impediments to entrepreneurship faced by parents – it will have a nursery, tables with rounded corners, a soft floor made of recycled tyres and an adult climbing frame to mix things up.

In all, Silva and Aldenton go out of their way to get good architecture and thus make good clients too. When SelgasCano presented them with the first plans for Spitalfields and the flying table on a winch they'd been discussing was missing, Silva and Aldenton asked for it to be put back in. To which Selgas and Cano responded: 'Oh cool, clients that actually want us to do the good stuff.' ●

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Make it feel real

A stadium may be packed with individuals but, as RIBA Rising Star Declan Sharkey explains, if it's well designed the space can make the crowd feel and act as one

Declan Sharkey

Authenticity is key for every architect and designer. Of course, we all have (sometimes wildly) different definitions and interpretations of what constitutes 'authenticity', but I think we are all probably closer together than we think. Or like to think, perhaps, given the competitive nature of our industry. For me, an authentic experience is one that translates the feelings of togetherness and cohesiveness of a collective of individuals – whether it be two, 1,000 or 100,000 people – into a very particular place or space.

It is that collectivity that creates opportunity, but also confusion. How do individual notions of an authentic experience combine, merge or collate? From my own experience in sports and entertainment design, the difficulty of finding one authenticity to represent to thousands or even millions of individuals with their own perspectives is often the biggest challenge. When large groups of people gather to watch an event (whether sporting, musical or perhaps a developing field like eSports) or to travel (in airports and train stations), or even to learn (in schools or universities), the individual and the collective are in sharp focus.

Very few attendees of a 60,000-seat stadium or a 10,000-capacity arena will have ever met before – or indeed will meet again – but that doesn't stop them becoming a



community rather than simply a collective of individuals in that moment, watching that live event.

In the moments when being a new parent allows, I've spent time thinking about how a community forms, and dissipates, in a space in just a matter of hours, or even minutes. The anthropologist Victor Turner has talked about this phenomenon, albeit in less populous terms, in his exploration of 'communitas' and 'liminality'; when individuals are removed from their everyday societal structures of living and are drawn together as a community through a 'moment of magic'. If you have been lucky enough to go to a fantastic gig, or a great match, you will have felt the crowd rise, react, and in that moment, come together as a community. It is those moments, I think, that designers strive for.

If you have been to a fantastic gig, or a great match, you will have felt the crowd rise, react, and in that moment, come together as a community

What we can do as designers to achieve this is to plan spaces and places that allow that moment to occur. For example, the experience of the supporter is always at the heart of a stadium designed by Populous, and is expressed in key ways including the approach, the discovery, and the intensity of the game or event. The best buildings and venues are both natural conduits and amplifiers of the experience, of the moment that is brought to life by whatever is on show.

Another interesting and vital component of the communitas theory is that it is not static, but moves flexibly in time and space. As occurs through all generations, a cultural shift is affecting the business of sport, and the communities that surround it. As we move from 'Gen Y' to 'Gen Z', we are moving from a generation that loves to document life experiences to a Snapchat and Instagram Story generation who want to share experiences as they happen. It's a generation that wants to be 'present' both physically and digitally. The game of the future will be a local portal to a wider global community, and it will be instant.

So this is a call for the authentic. For all architects and designers and creatives to seek out that 'moment of magic' that links architecture and people. It is hard of course, but it's worth it. ●

Declan Sharkey is a principal at Populous
Rising Stars 2018 is open for entries: ribaj.com

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Still jam tomorrow

Are we looking at the wrong problem in our complaints about work done for free?



Maria Smith

The received wisdom is that we architects don't value ourselves, our time, our ideas, or each other. We give everything away for free and in the process undercut each other and cheapen our entire profession. On top of this, clients are exploitative, the industry is oversupplied with architects, and procurement is excessively bureaucratic. All this amounts to a grinding sense that architects are getting a terrible deal.

I'm sure there's some truth in this. Where there's smoke there's fire. What do you think? If you had to guess, what percentage of time would you say we spend working for no fee? Twenty percent? Thirty? According to a recent RIBA survey, it's more like seven percent. I was surprised.

We asked practices to tell us: on average, how much time does your practice spend on fee proposals, expressions of interest, PQQs? And: on average, how much time does your practice spend on competitions and early stage speculative work to get a job off the ground? We asked them to split their answers into time spent by fee-earning or technical staff, and time spent by non-fee-earning or support staff. We also asked for some background information on the age and size of the practice and which sectors they

predominantly work in. We received only 28 responses, so we must be careful in our interpretation of the results, however these were from practices of a range of sizes (from single figures to over 100) and ages (founded from 1962 to 2014).

We learned that spending around 4-10% of the practice's total resources on speculative work from fee proposals to open competitions, is normal. Most practices returned answers within this bracket though some practices reported spending less and some closer to 20%.

We also asked: what do you think the amount of speculative work required says about the state of our industry? The answers here were largely unsurprising with many comments along the lines of 'architects lack confidence in the monetary value of their work,' 'architects' work is undervalued and taken for granted,' and 'architecture is cheap and not taken seriously'.

I think we can all relate to this sentiment, and unpaid work is clearly a contributory factor, but I worry that the 7% of our resources that we spend on what is essentially business development is not the just recipient of this ire. I worry that the notion that we should be minimising or even eliminating this 'work for nothing' could imprison us in other ways.

Yes, we must guard against powerful clients taking advantage, but perhaps it's more important to reform how work is won and refine our business model to accommodate a realistic level of judicious business development. Many practices do this very well already, but there is also a definite and loud collective whinge that suggests this sort of speculative work is at best a necessary evil that would ideally be stamped out; and at worst unethical.

What is it that we're objecting to exactly? That fee proposals incite a race to the bottom? That expressions of interest are a thinly veiled hunt for the biggest name? That PQQs are a farcical form of political procrastination? That competitions and unpaid feasibility studies are exploitation? Or are we objecting to competition in general?

We need to be careful here. We all know the arguments. Competitions can offer new practices opportunities; can allow practices to branch out into new sectors; and can enable a gestation period for innovative ideas that would likely be shut down by fortnightly client meetings. These are things worth protecting. The problem then, is not with

The notion that we should be minimising or even eliminating this 'work for nothing' could imprison us in other ways

the level of speculative work, but with the nature of it. Perhaps partly because we've been so vociferously complaining about spending inordinate amounts of time working for free, it no longer brings these advantages.

This notion that an ethical competition is a two-stage process with an expression of interest based on previous work and a second phase with an honorarium is flawed. Unless fastidiously adjusted, this process still favours established practices with their recognisable names and gleamingly relevant track record, and the meagre honoraria are often woves in sheep's clothing as a few hundred pounds seems to disproportionately lift clients' expectations; we end up doing a fiver's worth of work for a quid instead of a quid's worth for nothing.

These well-meaning gestures do not address the systematic problems. We do not need more apologetic competitions, we need a vigorous redressing of business development practices in architecture that nurture a sustainable, diverse, equitable profession. Otherwise, as the White Queen explains to Alice, 'The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday – but never jam to-day.' ●

Maria Smith is a director at Interrobang architecture and engineering and Webb Yates Engineers, and is co-chief curator of the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2019

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3: Culture

Where's the spark?

There's offence in the relentlessly inoffensive



Hugh Pearman Editor

May I share a problem with you? A problem I have as an editor? It's – come closer, let me whisper in your ear – Generic Space. It is the curse that goes on giving. But I'm wondering if I am wrong to hate it as I do. Perhaps this is about me. I need help and understanding.

Generic Space is not necessarily bad architecture. On the contrary, it is perfectly OK, even quite good. It wins awards. It is impeccably modern, in a slightly mid-century way, but with a bit of added richness in materials and texture. It is very much the thing for urban dentistry, where you are inserting an implant into a street. Replacing an earlier implant, for such is the nature of cities.

Generic Space is usually speculative – described as 'mixed use' which means mostly offices with a skirt of retail. So far, so conventional – commercial areas have always done this. But Generic Space has developed. There may well be planning gain in the form of streetscape improvements or 'affordable' apartments, probably built elsewhere, as a quid pro quo for what is always a much greater square footage of offices than was previously on the site. Again, this seems reasonable enough. Cities must develop in a balanced way.

Why do I sigh heavily when a hopeful architect sends me images of an obviously intelligently-designed new building

Generic Space has now colonised the roofscape – an aspect of densification usually generated by the need to step back as more floors are crammed on. So what used to be a forgotten place of water tanks and lift motor rooms and ductwork and cleaning-cradle hoists is now routinely organised into roof terraces with cafés, even clubs with pools.

These too are good places to be. Where the Hotel Cipriani in Venice led – its rooftop dining terrace always being one of the focal points for the more fortunate visitors to the Venice Biennale – surely humbler buildings can follow? Roof gardens and terraces have a long history: a history revived in the 1990s by Stirling and Wilford in their Number One Poultry building, now listed. Nobody ever admits it, but the mix of uses in that utterly individualistic building has actually become the template for Generic Commercial Space.

So why do I sigh heavily when a hopeful architect sends me images of an obviously intelligently-designed new building with all these ingredients, logically organised and delivered with quiet assurance? I think it is because there is seldom much actively to object to. It is inoffensive. It does not scare the design review panel or the planners. It acknowledges context. It is better than the unfashionable thing that was there before.

At this point a klaxon goes off in my head. IS IT THOUGH? Better, I mean? Better than the postwar implant it is usurping? The great merit of some of those, from the 1950s to the 1980s, was that they showed a touch of individuality, a bit of pizzazz or even just – especially from the 1950s – understated subtlety.

All buildings give away their date. Nothing is 'timeless'. But am I wrong in thinking that there used to be greater variety of approaches? That things were less generic? Of course we should all be encouraging the 'good ordinary' as that is what defines our towns and cities. Everything can't be a landmark. I just want to be surprised a bit more. Is that too much to ask? ●

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'The meeting of these four like minds was central to driving the development of the Glasgow Style'

Pamela Buxton speaks to Mackintosh show curator Alison Brown: ribaj.com/mackatkelvingrove

It is as if one of the best writers on the process of making cities had been asked to write a memoir but once started couldn't resist returning to the issues that have plagued him over the years

Tim Abrahams reviews Richard Sennett's new book: ribaj.com/rsennettbook

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My kind of building

Never mind the critics, Will Wiles knows what he likes



Will Wiles

Coming back from Norwich, where I had been visiting an exhibition about megastructures at Norman Foster's Sainsbury Centre (see p65), the train passed close to my home in Stepney. I see those trains every day but am rarely on them, and piqued by the (to me) topsy-turvy view, I tried and failed to pick out my block of flats, lost in London's boundless jumble. But one building did stand out, helping me get my bearings. It always stands out: the immense blue and grey hulk of the Royal London Hospital, designed by HOK and completed in 2012.

It's not a pretty building, more a Star Trek Borg cube in Lego. Its tremendous bulk is more suggestive of heavy industry than human care, even without the utilitarian blue cladding – it better resembles a nuclear power plant or a server farm than the sprawling 19th century buildings it succeeded. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment savaged its design when it first appeared in 2004, calling it a failure that repeated the mistakes of the 1960s. 'What looks new and modish now may look dated even by the time the building is finished, let alone decades later,' Cabe wrote to Tower Hamlets council, the planning authority. 'We believe that buildings have a duty to represent more enduring qualities.'

Well, it proved more enduring than Cabe, and it has some remarkable qualities that have won it a place in my heart. It's not an architectural appreciation, not really. (Eventually the next generation of bright young things may start arguing that some of these PFI beasts are good, actually, but today is not that day.) Nor

My appreciation of the Royal London is rooted in nothing more sophisticated than its sheer size

is it strictly to do with the fact that both of my children were born there, although that has made me put aside any knee-jerk 'ugh' disregard and properly look at the place, which is always a worthwhile thing to do with a building.

Fundamentally, my appreciation of the Royal London is rooted in nothing more sophisticated than its sheer size. 'Higher than the handsomest hotel/The lucent comb shows up for miles' Philip Larkin wrote of the similarly unmissable Royal Infirmary in Hull. He called that modernist slab by YRM a 'clean-sliced cliff', and the Royal London is likewise more terrain than architecture – a neighbourhood mountain, continually reminding you of its existence, easy to pick out from afar.

Closer up, its bulk creates curious illusions. The design comprises two towers of 17 storeys each, but both are so broad as to appear squat, and the overall proportions are those of a smaller building. Therefore, at mid range – for instance on our street, which points directly at it – it seems to be far closer than it really is, and less vast. But walk in its direction, and it does not seem to get closer, only bigger and bigger. A similar state is described by the philosopher Edmund Burke in his description of the sublime, summarised here by Rosalind Williams: 'When an object is both simple and vast... the eye cannot rest. The image is always the same and seems to have no bounds. The eye is therefore cast into a state of tension, and the mind experiences the state of sublimity.' Burke called this the 'artificial infinite'.

The Royal London is also forcibly connected to its wider surroundings by a bit of futurist dash. It is topped by the helipad of the London Air Ambulance, and the urgent comings and goings of the helicopter regularly draw the eye towards the giant on the skyline. My (non-religious) wife confesses to an urge to genuflect when the air ambulance hurtles over, and it has an unmistakeable seriousness of purpose, like the maroon used to summon lifeboat crew.

On a neighbourhood level, this big dumb object functions like Bruno Taut's concept of the 'stadtkrone' or city crown, an artificial peak as urban focal point – appropriately, the old Royal London buildings at its foot are being converted into a town hall for the borough. Maybe every place could use a megastructural helicopter roost. It's also a reminder that buildings are a bit like people – you can't choose the ones you end up liking most. ●

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

INSIDE OUT

But what's it like on the inside? I can speak only for the ninth-floor maternity unit, which is clean, spacious and brightly lit, mostly by artificial means. But the size of the building does encroach, the labyrinth of corridors and lift cores that connect you to the front door, that sense of unbearably complicated services pressing in from all sides ... As a distraction, the views of London are absolutely exquisite, worthy of the 'handsomest hotel'. It's a good view of Whitechapel, too, but with the nagging sense that something big is missing.

The fee/risk equation must change

Convincing clients of our exclusive value is the only route to a fairer deal



Ben Derbyshire

I campaigned for RIBA Presidency with the mantra #ChangeIsNecessary. During the campaign and my first nine months as president I've met RIBA members across the country who are changing how we train the next generation of architects, and seen how new technology is transforming how we all work. I've been struck by the huge appetite for change from both within our profession and those we work with. It's been thrilling to see the passion and dedication of RIBA members and their commitment to making a real difference to the society we serve.

Alongside these uplifting conversations about the future, an equally important part of my job is addressing the frustrations and challenges faced by architects: Brexit, diversity, fees and procurement require urgent reform.

I see the role of RIBA president as both a champion for architects and architecture in the wider world and as a driver of change within our profession. That is certainly how I want to approach the issue of fees and procurement. My predecessor Stephen Hodder's excellent work looking at how our clients see us doesn't make for an easy read, but if we want to change the status quo, we all need to think about how we can win the battle for hearts, minds and higher fees. But this is not just about changing attitudes and behaviours in our clients – we

To win a place on the framework, bidders had to agree to waive 100% of their fees if planning permission was not granted

also need to look at ourselves.

Late last year, a large housing association, Sanctuary Housing, came to market looking for architects to join a new framework. While housing associations can make excellent clients, this one was far from enlightened. To win a place on the framework, bidders had to agree to waive 100% of their fees if planning permission was not granted. The case raises a number of practical and ethical concerns. For a large firm, absorbing the costs of months of staff time would be painful, but this sort of risk would threaten the survival of a small company and its ability to meet obligations to staff and other clients. No business – let alone a charity with a healthy surplus and £500 million turnover – should be asking those who work for it to take such mammoth risks.

The RIBA made a formal complaint to the government about these terms. Despite some warm words, the decision came down to whether they excluded small businesses. Unfortunately, the housing association was able to point out that 90 firms bid for the work – of whom 75 were prepared to accept the very real risk that they would not be paid – as proof of support for the policy. Of these 75, 68 were small and medium sized practices. The case was lost and the procurement has continued.

I hope that those who win business from this framework are paid well for their work, but I worry that the demonstrable willingness of architects to work for free will be exploited by this client and others in the sector.

What can we do? Fee scales and protection of function always come up in these discussions. I am unconvinced of their practical benefits and certain that their political and legal feasibility is close to zero. The answer must lie in making the case to clients that architects offer more than just good design – they bring long-term value for money in a way no other partner can. When we bid for work, are we sure the fees on offer are enough to enable us to safeguard the value of our service to current and future clients and maintain our professional obligation to resource projects sufficiently? If the answer is no then we as a profession must say no to exploitative behaviour by refusing to bid for work under such conditions.

We will keep pursuing Sanctuary Housing to make the case for a new approach: the success of our campaign depends on architects saying enough is enough: we will be stronger in the long run if we take a stand today. ●

@ben_derbyshire or president@riba.org

DORIC CLUB DRINKS RECEPTIONS

This year the RIBA Doric Club is hosting four drinks receptions in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and London. These informal social events are for Members who are retired and/or over 65 and offer an opportunity to remain in contact with the Institute and come together with friends, former colleagues and contemporaries to celebrate the past, present and future of architecture. You can book online at architecture.com/doric

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Japan's Junya Ishigami first attracted attention with his invisible architecture; now, through exploration of landscape, memory and scale, it is the architect himself who is disappearing

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Portrait: Oliver Knight

I'm not here

Junya Ishigami's hat has got bigger. Back at the 2010 Venice Biennale, when he won the Golden Lion award for his installation 'Architecture as air: study for Château la Coste', to become architecture's next bright young thing, from memory he was only sporting a fedora. A delineation of space using almost invisible nylon microwires as structure, his ephemeral display was apocryphally ruined one night by a Venetian cat tramping over it.

Eight years on, at the press opening of his solo architecture show at Paris' Fondation Cartier, wearing black, skin-tight designer jeans, Cuban stacked heels and black pencil tie outside his jumper, Ishigami is the antithesis of invisible; and with a gallery chock full of built and on-site projects behind him, I sense he's not inclined to answer questions about those more diaphanous early years. He's also now wearing a wide-brimmed Stetson. Perhaps he's got his gravity-defying engineer Jun Sato to fashion a larger diameter ring beam round his old hat and disperse its felt over the wider surface area – either that, or fame is directly proportional to brim size. Looking at the model of the new Kanagawa University

canopy, a single, 12mm thick, punched steel plate stretching 110m across its sunken site, I implausibly assume it's the former.

But this is how it should be. Ishigami's show, the first devoted to an architect at the Fondation, is entitled 'Freeing Architecture' and its 20 projects, like that award-winning 9.5m long, 3mm thick pancake flat metal table he designed back in 2005, revels in pushing the boundaries of implausibility. Here you'll find 1km long cultural centres on Chinese lakes, paper thin walls of concrete higher than the depth of rural gorges they're sitting in, or cast as clouds floating on Copenhagen city harbours, and a propositional piece where a reservoir reveals a manicured landscape as water levels change.

Ishigami has a very un-Japanese demeanour, with all the politeness but none of the deference. As he conducts his walkthrough with me a translator is there but he has no need of her; that instilled cultural fear of getting it wrong is not present in him. If he can't think of the right word or phrase he plucks out another, without breaking his train of thought. This shouldn't come as a surprise; Ishigami

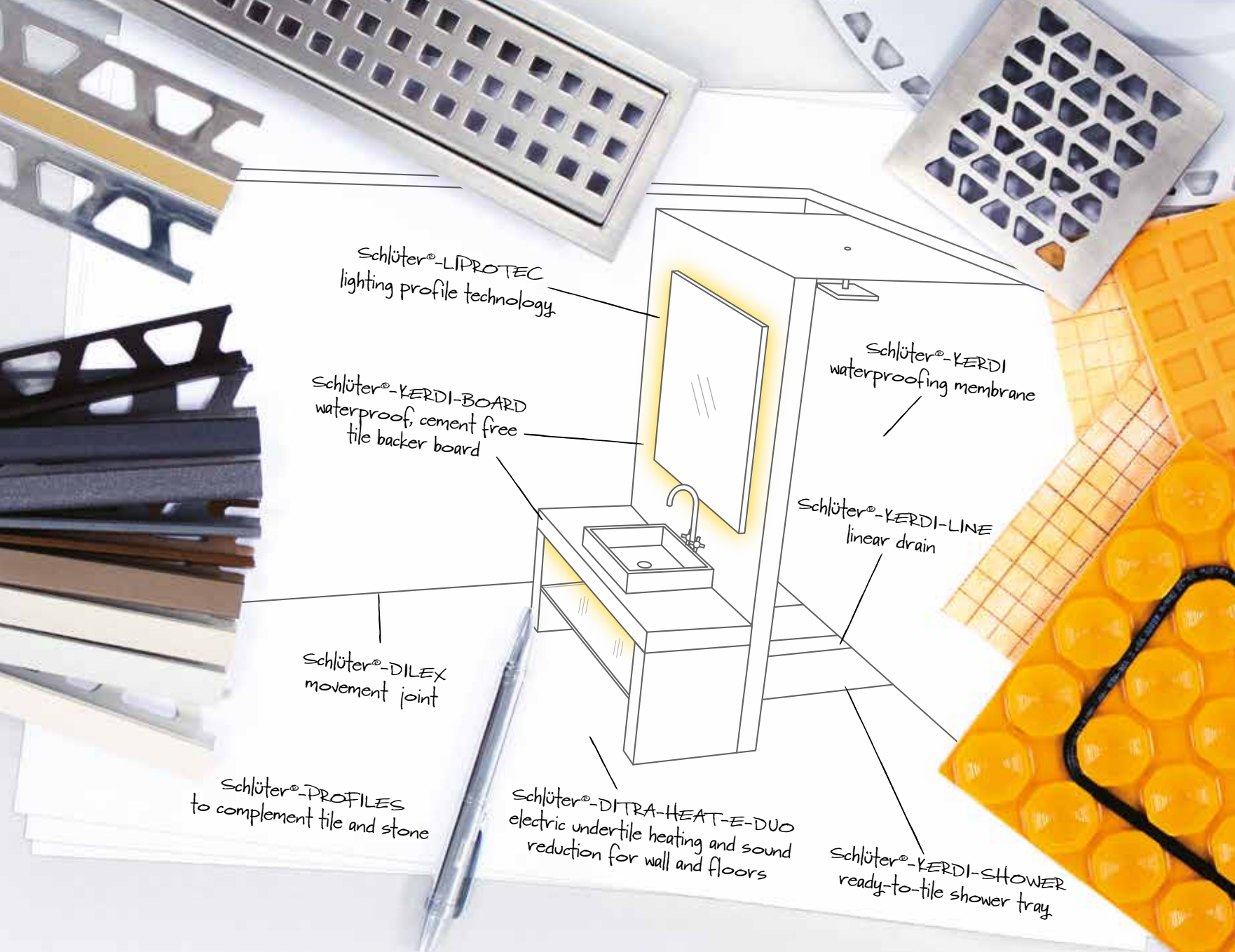
has come a long way since his four years at SANAA, the spatial fascinations of that global practice now sublimated into his own material and conceptual ones. He may have started with invisible installations or a one tonne aluminium balloon the size of a super-tanker's prow floating ethereally in a Tokyo art gallery, but he now has projects all over the world and is a visiting professor at Columbia and Harvard; the confidence is thus a given. It also takes its toll – balancing all that with running a busy office must be tiring – and at 44, he's not as fresh-faced as I was expecting. With normal work hours reportedly running from 10am to midnight (that fits with the level of industry evident at this show), he looks as old as his overworked young interns must feel.

And what becomes rapidly evident from looking at the work is that it is not about 'style'. Despite his professed admiration of Corb and Mies, there's very little formally that connects any of his projects; his response seems more contextual and instinctive. 'We live in a hyper-connected world and it's easy to go anywhere so I think the role for architecture is to create something specific to the

'Some structures and buildings should be as transparent, or as heavy, as the landscape in which they are placed'



Right Ishigami beside the large-scale model of his 'Chapel of Valley' in Shandong, China. Tall and narrow, it is, he claims, a distillation of the valley itself.



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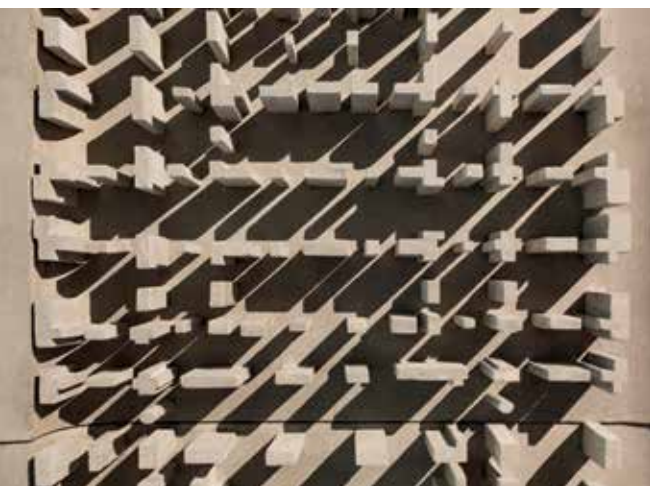
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'To me it's very important that a building should integrate with its environment'

Left The model of the 19th century Moscow Polytechnic Museum proposal. Ishigami digs down to reveal a whole new gallery level from between its original foundations.

Right Random columns are encountered like trees in Ishigami's 2008 KAIT Workshop in Kanagawa.



JUNYA ISHIGAMI & ASSOCIATES (2)

JEAN-BAPTISTE LE MERCIER

client, the site and the culture in which it is placed – and I think that demands a “freer”-mode of thinking from architects,’ he explains, justifying the title of the show.

Other architects might come out with a similar assertion, but what seems different, and arguably uniquely embedded in Japanese culture, is the traditional symbiotic relationship of its architecture to the landscape in which it sits, of its Zen-like consideration of ‘nothingness’, of its acknowledgement of temporality. What other culture could justify the logic of destroying and rebuilding its temples every 20 years; that structure can, and sometimes should, be ‘removed’? Yet all that is present here. ‘For me it’s very important that a building should integrate with its environment, to activate and maximise the potential of its context,’ Ishigami tells me. ‘Some structures and buildings should be as transparent, or as heavy, as the landscape in which they are placed; so I want to embody the nature of that spirit in my designs.’

It expresses a more rounded thinking that seemed absent from the gravity-defying thrall of his first installations. He admits evident levity in the 60m high ‘Cloud Arch’ in Sydney and lightness to the wilful ‘House of Peace’, his concrete cloud seemingly floating in Copenhagen harbour for the Danish NGO HOPE. These projects might accord more with his earlier studies, but there’s another dimension to his recent output that gives form to the notion of weight as much as lightness.

In this territory you’ll find a 2012 competition win: the 40,000m² Moscow Polytechnic Museum, restored above ground but now perched on revealed 19th century foundations at the end of a long, landscaped descending ramp, to create a new subterranean world of gallery space dug out from the voids between footings. Their onerous density and weight counterpoint the delicate caprice of his 2008 Kanagawa University KAIT workshop of random columns, forming copses and clearings, like Moscow, for users to appropri-

ate as they wish. Or the polarised scales of the concrete ‘Chapel of Valley’ in Shandong, China. ‘I want to make the same kind of space as the valley feels,’ says Ishigami. ‘It’s just 130m² and 1.3m wide at the entrance but it’s 45m high so feels tall, dark and narrow – it’s like a more extreme valley.’ Even the construction method oddly suits the context, the slip-form technique used to build dams.

But there’s also that consideration of the landscape – so as to not to unduly interfere with it but still making evident the intervention of the architect. So at the Park Groot Vijversburg with Studio Maks, ‘the plan was defined by enclosing the existing park path to create the new glass building but so it just disappears’. This, he says, helps you read the park in a new way, adding ‘It’s the same old route, it’s just been re-framed.’ Likewise, at his Botanical Farm Garden Art Biotop in Tochigi prefecture in Japan, in order to develop a hotel site, Ishigami has, Macbeth-like, moved a wood to an adjacent meadow and re-contoured the whole to create a new, constructed wetland landscape of islets with a tree on each. Building on his earlier concept, these telly-tubby hillocks will appear and disappear as water levels change. ‘Originally the site was a forest, then paddy fields and now it’s a meadow,’ he explains ‘So I wanted to superimpose the three histories on the one site to reflect all of its pasts. The environment’s history is important to me.’

Maybe so, but in the dramatic outcrops of Dali in Yunnan province near Tibet, it seems Ishigami’s wrestling with his own conflicted response to the potential destruction of its landscape through over-development. In his eight villas aside a stream, the indigenous megaliths found in the area form the structure



I am Groot: the Vijversburg visitor centre follows its same old paths.



GIOVANNI EMILIO GALANELLO

for the 300m long villas' over-sailing roof, with all the living areas consigned to spaces between the found boulders. 'I want to keep the real landscape protected inside the building as outside it will inevitably change,' he says, resigned; but in doing so he creates designer homes that, behind their formed glass walls, will be as a museum or nature reserve – perversely frozen in vitro while the inevitable happens outside. It's like an architectural reading of Wilde's *Dorian Gray*.

But it's when Ishigami engages with memory and the passage of time that his work verges on the sublime; when the logic by default leads him to cancel himself out of the design equation altogether. His Noël house and restaurant in Yamaguchi prefecture, for the famous chef who in 2008 commissioned Ishigami's ultra-thin tables for his French restaurant, responds directly to the client's desire for a modern space bearing the hallmark of age, 'wanting it to feel like a wine cellar, but in a modern, architectural way.' The result is a structure where the earth acted as a mould for his concrete pour before the interstitial soil was dug away to reveal his strange, cave-like form. Encrusted in the ground it was cast from, it bears the imprint of time in a way no new material ever could, Ishigami feels: 'Natural age is more real than any architectural phenomenon (simulacrum?), and over time and use, this too will be worn away.'

Most affecting, though visually the least arresting, of his projects is a dementia care home in Japan. For Ishigami, who's also designing a new family home on the site of his grandmother's house fuelled by his own childhood remembrance, the power of memory is everything. Thinking laterally, and aware that the common tatami mat module would facilitate their easy linking, he proposed assembling 40 houses marked for demolition



When Ishigami engages with memory and the passage of time his work verges on the sublime

Above left Solid and void celebrated: The Yamaguchi house and restaurant.

Above right Old houses assembled and repurposed at The Home for the Elderly in Tohoku.

Below A huge, thin steel shade stretches out to create the Multipurpose Plaza at Kanagawa University.

Junya Ishigami: *Freeing Architecture* runs at the Fondation Cartier, Paris until 10 June.



LUC BOEGLY

from all over Japan at the Tohoku site. The aim was to create an inter-connected complex of small buildings with old materials, carpentry and techniques, whose spaces would act as a form of mnemonic device for its elderly users; familiar rather than institutional. It's a shame the project has been mothballed, but Ishigami seems sanguine: 'The idea of old things and accepting their value and relevance to new architecture is part of what I mean by "freeing it"; that it can be repurposed.'

Conceptually, that's what he's attempting at his grandmother's house, where encroaching development has eroded the purity of his childhood memory. Here, a grand curved timber roof sweeps down dramatically to face the south garden, its eaves just 1.2m above a lawn that stretches up away from it, a single line of low glass keeping the eye trained on this patch of garden and not the changes around it. It's of no matter to Ishigami that the window is totally unsuited for adults viewing without stooping; the play on scale is integral to the design. The position we're being asked to adopt is one from our past, when 'a table to an adult is a building to a child.'

You might bear that analogy in mind if visiting Ishigami's future Multipurpose Plaza at Kanagawa University, its students' heads protected from stray baseballs from the nearby training ground by his 7,700m² column-free, wafer-thin steel plate roof. 'The building is conceived as a megastructure but despite its size it adopts a domestic scale – about 3m in height,' he says, before inserting one critical detail. 'The soffit actually changes according to the climate. On summer days when the steel expands, it will drop to around 2.3m,' he adds excitedly. 'Really?' I reply, alarmed, trying to visualise a slump that large in something that heavy, that's that close. No wonder he wears a hat. ●

JUNYA ISHIGAMI & ASSOCIATES

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Room within a Room

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Antonello da Messina's 1475 painting of St Jerome in his Study was not only a great Renaissance perspectival study but presented viewers at the time with a novel notion of space – that of 'a room within a room'.

St Jerome sits within a raised wooden structure, a carrel: his study. His slippers are at the foot of the steps, a cardinal's hat behind him. Around him is his lectern writing desk, plants, bookshelves and all the appurtenances of his status and biblical meditations.

The overall idea is of a small space of intense study within a much larger architectural volume. But in depicting it, could Antonello da Messina have, in fact, created the first hot-desking workstation?

The brief

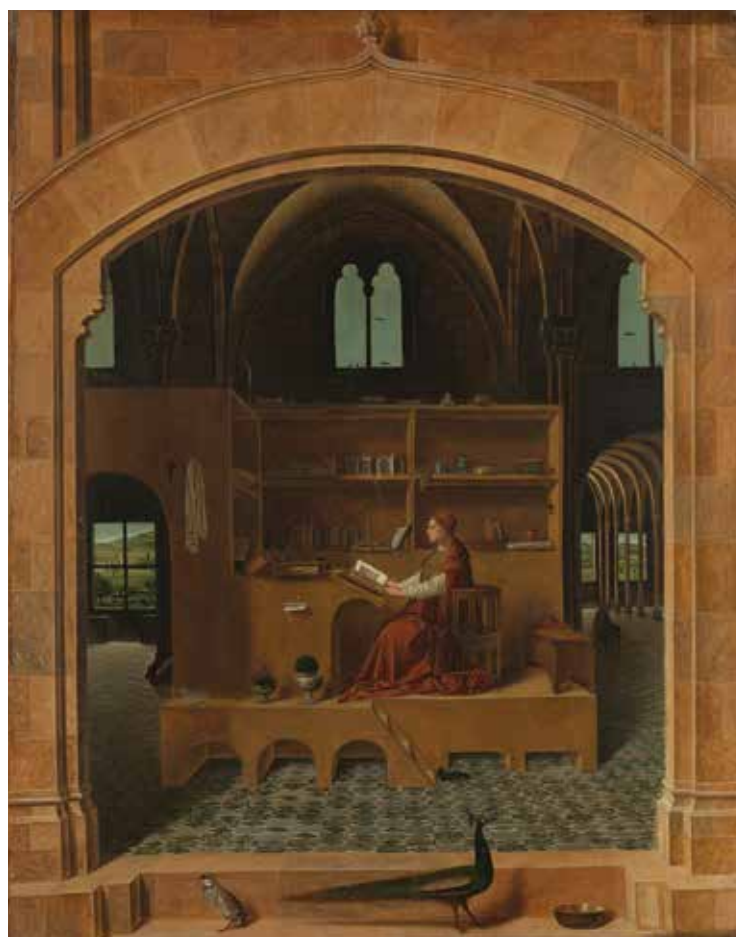
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Right St Jerome in his Study. Antonello da Messina, c1475.



THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

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- Please email questions to ribaj.roominaroom@riba.org

Deadline for entry: 19 June 2018

Please email your entry to: ribaj.roominaroom@riba.org

East meets West

Tradition, modernity, pastiche and cultural fusion: what is the architectural style of the British mosque?

Pamela Buxton

I grew up in Woking, home of the UK's oldest purpose-built mosque. With its distinctive green domes and exotic decoration, the Shah Jahan always cut something of a dash in the mundane commuter town environment. Along with Frederick Gibberd's splendid Regent's Park Mosque, it is one of a British

group that have recently been listed, or in the case of Shah Jahan, given a listings upgrade.

Shahed Saleem's new book *The British Mosque – An architectural and social history* is therefore particularly well-timed. Published by Historic England, this first ever survey of the typology is a fascinating story, taking in 130 years of mosques from the early Victorian pioneers through phases of adaptation, pastiche and historicism and right up to the emergence of a new, more contemporary narrative for the 21st century.

There are now 1,300 mosques in Britain of which approximately 200 have been purpose built. Yet, as Jonathan Glancey asserts in his foreword, there are few architecturally outstanding mosques. Nor are there many overtly modern mosques. Even the Regent's Park mosque's rare fusion of Islamic and modern architecture received a lukewarm response from critics for its treatment of decoration when it opened in 1977.

'From a conventional architectural viewpoint, most mosque buildings don't qualify as being noteworthy, largely because they are self built and self designed on very limited resources,' says Saleem, a lecturer at the

There are approximately 200 purpose built mosques in Britain. Yet few are architecturally outstanding



Left Designed by English architect William Isaac Chambers, the Shah Jahan Mosque at Woking in Surrey (1889), was commissioned as the exotic centrepiece of an Oriental Institute founded by Hungarian Jewish linguist Dr Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner. With its distinctive spherical green dome, Chambers' interpretation of Mughal architecture almost perfectly captures the spirit of 19th century Orientalism, says Saleem.

University of Westminster who is also the architect – with his practice Makespace – of two of the latest mosques to be built in the UK.

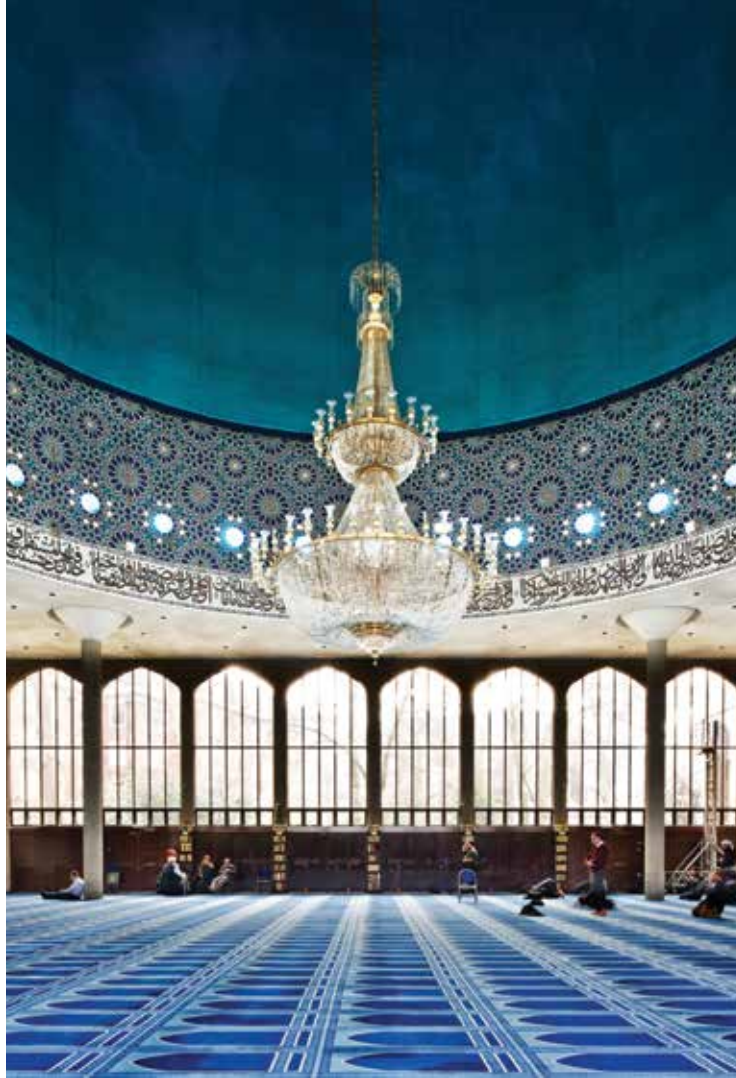
‘A lot of contemporary criticism of Muslim architecture is that it’s nostalgic, pastiche and of little merit. But I think there’s a more complex story to the history,’ he says adding that they are one of many strands of built heritages that were previously unrepresented in mainstream architectural discourse and are now being recognised – along with other non-Christian religious and LGBT buildings.

The history of the British mosque interweaves with the development of the Muslim communities they serve. It is a story of negotiation and identity, not only in relation to the surrounding urban and cultural context but with the evolving outlook and values of their various communities. Rather than make value judgments, the new book demonstrates the evolving ways in which architects have responded to local vernacular and addressed different built expressions of Islamic identity.

With a few notable exceptions, early British mosques were generally grassroots, ad-hoc projects adapting and extending homes and other buildings with limited scope for architectural expression. Purpose-built mosques didn’t take off until the 1980s and 1990s, when they presented new opportunities to reflect Muslim culture and identity. Recognisably Islamic signifiers such as domes, minarets and arches were often sampled in a quite literal way while at the same time adopting aspects of local vernacular.

‘That gets translated in our design culture as pastiche, which has a negative connotation as being without merit,’ says Saleem.

From around the start of the 21st century, he detects the emergence of a more historicist approach as mosque designers such as Atba Al-Samarraie sought an authentic Islamic architectural identity that takes direct inspiration from historical precedents in Muslim countries. In some cases, as at the Sheffield mosque, this involved a move towards a Middle East/North African visual language rather than a South Asian aesthetic as mosque procurement moved from the first to the second generation of Muslim immigrants. In doing so, mosques become more of a complete Islamic object rather than an amalgamation of Islamic and vernacular styles, notes Saleem. However there were always exceptions, such as the Scottish Baronial-influenced



Left Frederick Gibberd's Regent's Park Mosque (1977) was one of a small number of prominent Muslim landmark buildings designed in the late 1970s and 80s that made, says Saleem, a bold new statement on the emerging public face of Islam in Britain. The male and female prayer halls are housed beneath a golden dome with three storey wings housing the library, reading room, entrance hall, and minaret. Although poorly received by critics on its completion, the mosque has recently been awarded grade II* listed status.

Purpose-built mosques
presented new
opportunities to reflect
Muslim culture and identity



Left Makespace wanted to convey a sense of permanence and solidity in the design of the Hackney Road mosque in East London (2017), situated alongside to a grade II listed terraced house whose flank wall is covered in Victorian lettering. The concept was that the new facade be treated as a part of a large pattern inspired by Anatolian tilework, and should appear as if carved out of stone. This is combined with a perforated metal screen created from the fretwork pattern on the windows at the Shah Jahan mosque in Woking, a motif chosen as a conscious reference to British mosque history.

A modern office interior featuring a large wooden table with a thick, dark X-shaped base. Two men are seated at the table, one using a laptop. To the left of the table is a tall, black shelving unit with a geometric, hexagonal pattern, holding various plants and books. The floor is covered in a large, multi-colored wood plank pattern. Large windows in the background offer a view of a city street with cars and buildings. The lighting is bright and natural, with some decorative hanging plants visible in the upper right corner.

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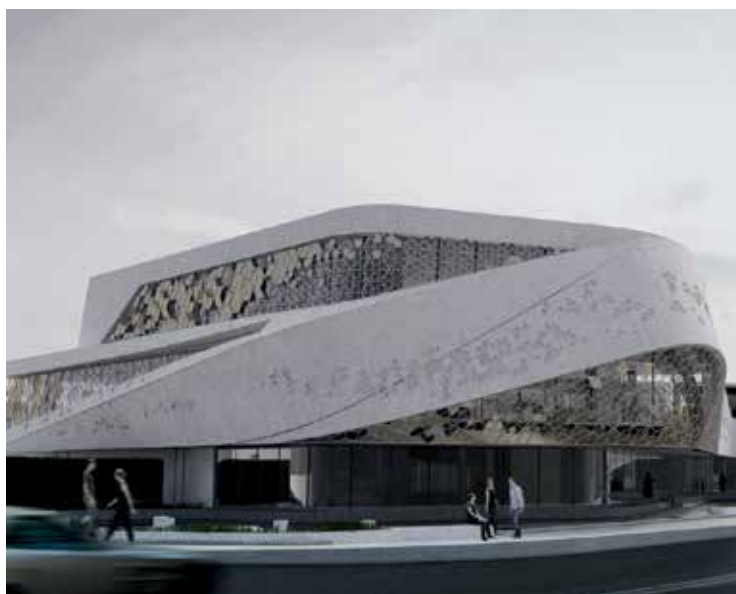
FLOORING SYSTEMS

Why have mosques generally been slow to move away from conservative architecture?

Edinburgh Central Mosque of 1998.

Over the last decade, more contemporary alternatives to the historicist aesthetic have also been emerging as a handful of architects explore new ways of expressing Islamic identity within architecture. Often, this involved questioning the need for traditional signifiers such as domes and minarets without losing connection with what people have traditionally known as mosques. These include Saleem's own mosque projects in Hackney and Aberdeen, and Marks Barfield's larger-scale Cambridge mosque, with its extraordinary tree-like structure, currently under construction.

Mangera Yvars Architects' dynamic North Harrow Community Centre project is unusual in that it includes space for worship within a wider community building. Recent initiatives such as Open My Mosque, which campaigns for more mosques to improve their accommodation for women, suggest that some traditional approaches to mosques are now being challenged. But why have mosques



The British Mosque An architectural and social history by Shahed Saleem, published by Historic England, HB £60.

generally been slow to move away from conservative approaches to architecture?

'The act of reinterpretation requires a community to have achieved a certain amount of confidence and security, and this is a negotiated process that happens over time,' says Saleem. But that doesn't mean mosques should become a completely Western building type, he adds.

'They should always retain an element of otherness. Their distinction and their strength is that they also relate to another culture and another place.' ●

Left Mangera Yvars Architects won a competition to design the North Harrow Community Centre (Saalam Centre) in 2005. The 5,000m² project, which includes space for 700 worshippers as well as sports, leisure, library and other community facilities, is on site with the basement sports hall complete. The design has a dynamic, curving form with a decorative facade. This depicts the client group's epic journey from East Africa to the UK through geometric patterns relating to Tanzania, India and Persia. Patterns from William Morris and the Arts and Craft movement relate to the Harrow context. The practice hopes the rest of the construction will complete in the next 18 months.



Left Marks Barfield is on site with the Cambridge Mosque, designed in conjunction with Keith Critchlow, an expert in Islamic art and architecture. In the main prayer hall, tree-like columns rise to form the roof structure. Externally, the building will be enclosed in light buff masonry in reference to the local context. Saleem describes the design as conceived as 'an expression of English Muslim architecture' that, like Regent's Park Mosque, carefully negotiates tradition and modernity. Expected to complete early next year, the mosque will hold up to 1,000 people.



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Where it all began

The biggest exhibit in this celebration of high-tech in Norwich is the building itself

Isabelle Priest

East Anglia does not immediately spring to mind as a place that gave birth to one of the only architectural movements that ever started in Britain. But add the Willis Building, completed in 1975 in Ipswich, to Norwich's 1978 Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (both by Foster & Partners), and you could say that the 'high-tech' architecture of the 1960s to 1990s had East Anglian beginnings.

It's appropriate then that, 40 years after the Sainsbury Centre was opened, the building and the achievements of its architectural milieu are being celebrated in a new exhibition which renames the genre 'Superstructures', and tells the story of architecture's post-war fascination with technology, lightweight structures and engineering.

The building itself is the largest object in the show. The fantastic, vast hangar-like space still makes you gasp and feels every bit as modern today, so it's disappointing to discover that its anniversary exhibition has been poked into four windowless spaces in the basement; fake plastic girders strung up to the ceiling. No matter how gripped you are by what's on show, it's impossible to shake the thought that it would be better to be upstairs, absorbing the atmosphere and mega architecture of the real thing.

However, once you've got over these spatial issues, what of the exhibition?

Curated by head of the School of Critical Studies and Creative Industries at Kingston University, Jane Pavitt (also of the V&A's Postmodernism exhibition), and Renwick Gallery curator in charge Abraham Thomas, the show begins with a new 3m-long model of the Sainsbury Centre itself and a two-part series of delightful ink and marker Birkin Howard perspective drawings of the centre as it was conceived. The curators wanted the show



Left Hong Shanghai Bank by Foster + Partners.

No matter how gripped you are by what's on show, it's impossible to shake the thought that it would be better to be upstairs

to 'unpack the term high-tech to develop a more nuanced definition away from style', to see it as an attitude, process or movement.

From here follows a long corridor charting a linear process of how high-tech developed, rooting it very firmly in the trajectory of history from British Victorian engineering. The interpretation begins with the metal roof of the now-demolished Hungerford Fish Market (1830), the Crystal Palace (1850), and Fowler and Baker's Forth Bridge (1882-1889), moving very quickly to Buckminster Fuller's 1937 Dymaxion Car and 1965 Geodesic Dome, the Japanese Metabolists and the influence of the Festival of Britain and Archigram, mixing in Superstructure projects such as Ian Ritchie and Volkwin Marg's 1993 Messe-Leipzig Garden Hall in a large model along the way. It identifies the 'kit of parts' approach of high-tech as emerging from Jean Prouvé, sourcing original panels that demonstrate using off the shelf extruded aluminium and steel sheeting to create architecture. In the background lurks the 'white heat' of technological revolution, and the anxieties and challenges of the Cold War.

The collection of models is outstanding

After this point the exhibition is arranged over two large galleries according to building type: factories, transport and infrastructure, corporate campus, private homes and retail. Each section is brought to life by a mix of technical drawings, photographs, prototype building parts and models, which tend to be vast – several square metres – in size. While many of the drawings are recognisable from books and other exhibitions, the collection of models that has been brought together is outstanding. On display are contemporary models of Cedric Price's work, Team 4's Reliance Controls Factory (1965), Foster's Stansted Airport (also East Anglia, 1991), Grimshaw's Waterloo (1990) and Jean Nouvel's Fondation Cartier (1991), on loan from organisations all over the world as well as architecture studios. Many of these models are as old as the Sainsbury Centre itself, yet are presented immaculately.

There are holes in the exhibition though. Most obviously, it neglects to explain the profiles of the architects involved and how they are interconnected. There is only a handful of firms presented in the exhibition, but it deals firmly with built or proposed buildings only. While architect visitors might not notice, so distracted by the incredible models, representation of the architects and their backgrounds would have provided an additional tempo to the show that is missing and have given a more thorough context for why it happened then.

In this same way, it is unclear where the

Above Inmos Central Spine painted by Ben Johnson (1985).

Below Crescent Wing, Foster + Partners.



contextual references for high-tech exhibits at the beginning are collected from; whether they are the interpretation of the curators, researched from quotes and secondary sources, or through conversations with the architects. Whichever is the case, the way the story of high-tech adamantly begins in the 1830s but completely skips modernism feels deliberately provocative, especially as the overarching narrative on display – machines for living, kit of parts architecture, industry-inspired and clean construction buildings – reads very much as a continuation of the principles of modernism, perhaps more accurately realised than the early modernist projects. Also, until you open the catalogue there's no discussion of the fact that this architectural approach shares the same timescale as post-modernism – how they co-existed and what was going on culturally that enabled them both. Indeed, the same goes for the commercialisation of architecture – note that, in contrast to the previous period of brutalist architecture, there are no welfare state projects here.

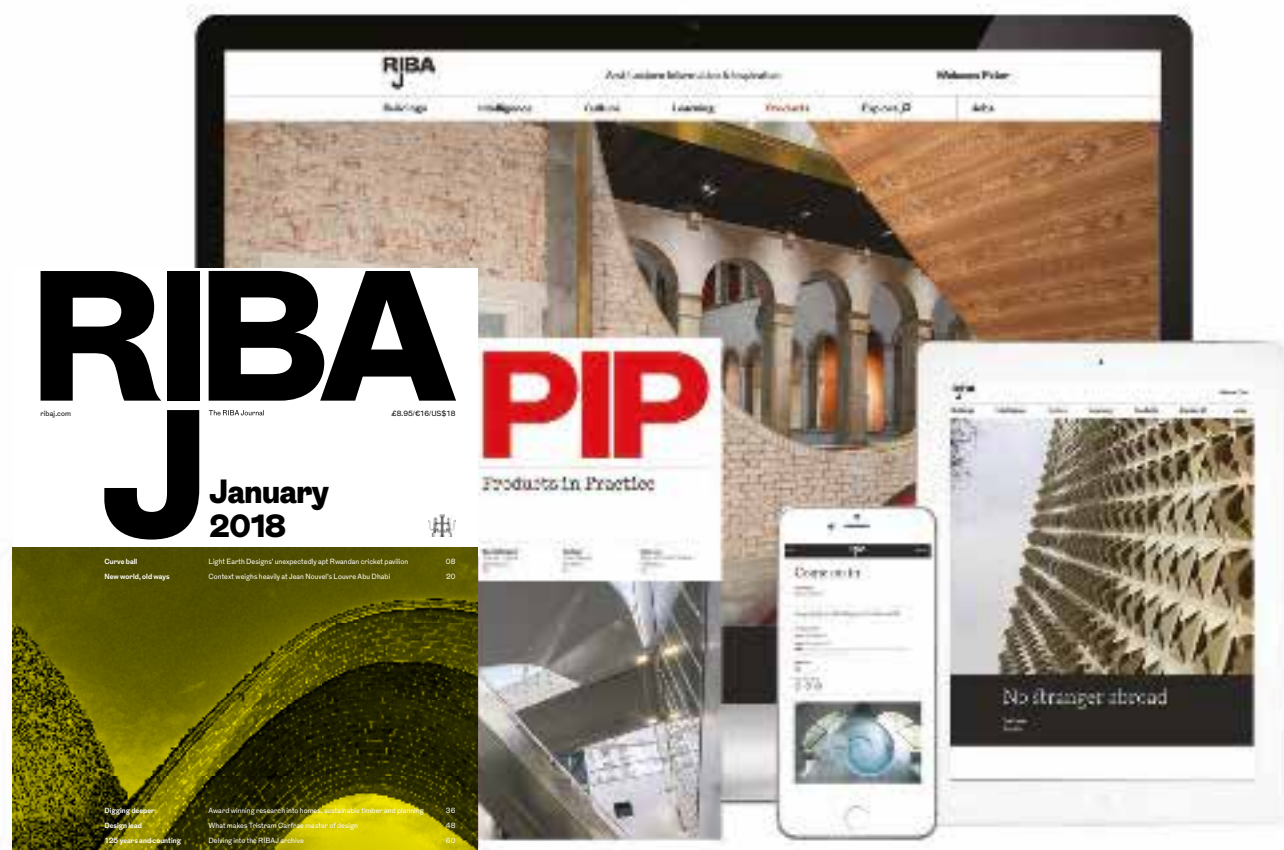
This brings up the final point that, since all these architects are still alive and working, the exhibition could have included video interviews with them speaking today. This would have added diversity and been an excellent research resource into the future.

In all, if you haven't been to the Sainsbury Centre, and if you like models and technical drawings, it's definitely worth the trip, and Denys Lasdun's 1960s ziggurat student housing and Architype's thatched Enterprise Centre (2015) are just metres away too. ●

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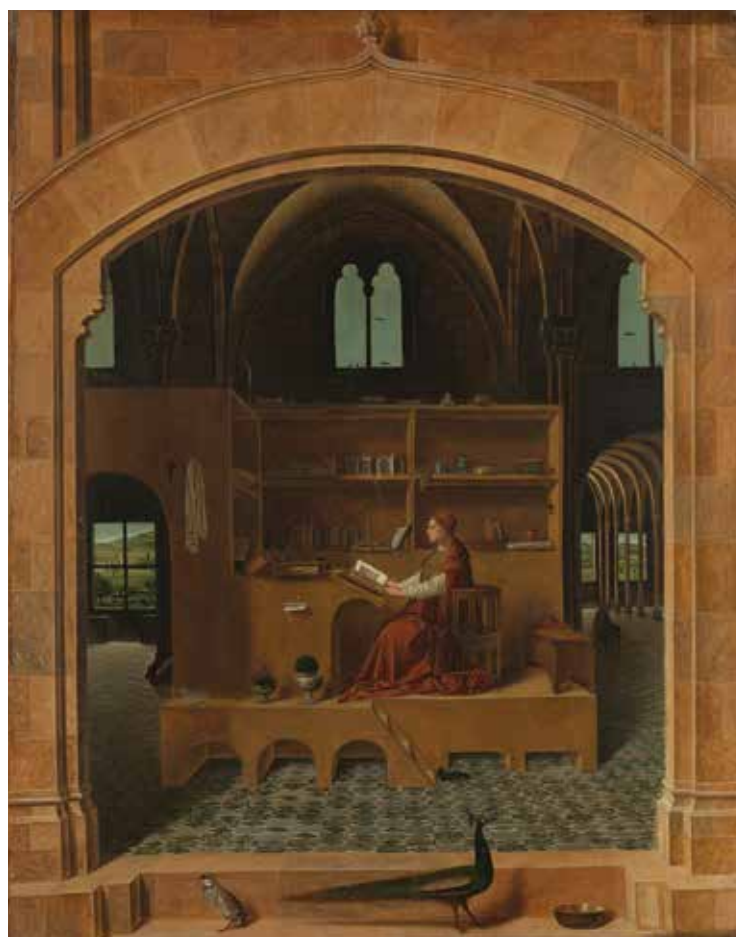
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Right St Jerome in his Study. Antonello da Messina, c1475.



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Sherban Cantacuzino

1928 – 2018

Tireless secretary of the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC), who founded the Pro Patrimonio Foundation of Romania and convinced the UK government to include design quality in the planning system



Sherban Cantacuzino was an architect, conservationist, writer, lecturer, critic, teacher of the history of architecture and secretary of the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC). When he was 11 he left Romania for Paris and then an English education with his mother and sister, by which time his father was stranded

at home amid WWII and the subsequent Communist regime. The family never again saw George Matei Cantacuzino – described as a Ruskin of Romania – despite constant attempts to do so. But though Sherban lived with the fact that his father was cruelly restricted for 32 years of both their lives, there was an extraordinary parallel in their cultural trajectories.

Sherban studied architecture at Cambridge, a subject his father had also studied. There he met such contemporaries as Philip Dowson – later head of Arup Associates – who often recalled Sherban's greatest skill, as a cook. Later, lunch at the RFAC, courtesy of Sherban's own hand, became a treasured event.

He started his architectural career in practice but soon took to writing about it. There were many books. He was also editor of the *Architectural Review* from 1973 until he became secretary of the RFAC in 1979. He remained in this post until his retirement in 1995. But retirement meant continuing the many important initiatives he had taken on through his career. For instance, his prolonged intervention to stop the destruction of the Rosia Montana Mountain in Romania by reckless gold mining was nothing short of courageous.

But probably his most important initiative was to found the 'National Trust' for his homeland, the Pro Patrimonio Foundation of Romania, in 2000. This work has

significantly changed for the better attitudes to conservation in Romania. Whenever Sherban went to Romania in the post-communist era he was revered – treated like a prince because he was indeed a prince, descended from the two great families Cantacuzino and Bibescu.

Sherban's work at the RFAC outshone all his other contributions to the architectural world. He led the charge to convince the British government to include design quality as an integral part of the planning system. He took every opportunity to meet senior planning officers up and down the country while going about RFAC business, to enlighten them about design quality. He always said: 'Beauty is a matter of consensus and an absolute value: distinguish between what you like and what you know to be good.' In recognition of this work he was awarded the CBE in 1988.

Other, honorary, posts included fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and chairman of ICOMOS UK, taking care of World Heritage Sites. For 30 years he was a stalwart member of the organising committee of the Architecture Club – now in its 92nd year. He and his wife Anne enjoyed lunch with club members at the top of the Gherkin just last August in honour of his long service.

His books included *Modern Houses of the World* (1966); *Great Modern Architecture* (1966); *New Uses for Old Buildings* (1975); *Saving Old Buildings* (1980); *Architecture In Continuity* (1985) and *Re-Architecture* (1989). He also wrote a book commissioned in 1994 by the government heritage department entitled 'What Makes a Good Building'. It was a seminal work which led to the start of design guidance notes, helping to consolidate objective, qualitative analysis.

Sherban was a tall, larger than life, authoritative, gentle and generous soul who was ready to help anyone who asked. Later he struggled with leukaemia. He leaves his wife Anne, two daughters Ilinca and Marina and five grandchildren. He will be greatly missed. ●

Richard Coleman

IN MEMORIAM

ERIC JOHN REDSTONE
ELECTED 1955, BOGNOR REGIS

ARTHUR CRISFIELD PERKINS
ELECTED 1960, GILLINGHAM

COLIN FLORENTINE JACKSON
ELECTED 1966, MIDHURST

HENRY JAMES MICHAEL GREEN
ELECTED 1966, LONDON

JOHN HOWARD DUNCAN FRASER
ELECTED 1969, LONDON

JOHN KINNERSLEY
ELECTED 1972, TARPORLEY

STEVEN LEE LANGHORNE
ELECTED 1988, BRISTOL

ANTHONY WILLIAM BUTLER
ELECTED 1952, TEDDINGTON

CHARLES GORDON MACKETH
ELECTED 1962, POULTON-LE-FYLDE

FRANCISCO JOSE YEABRA RUIZ
ELECTED 2015, ALMERIA, SPAIN

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RIBA J125 YEARS

Lubetkin v Wornum

Hugh Pearman

Following the history of the Journal decade by decade since it was founded in its present form in 1893, we reach a tumultuous time: 1933-1943. What to select from a period that covered everything from the increasing adoption of modernism to preparations for another war?

This was when Lubetkin and Tecton (with engineer Ove Arup) came to prominence, and in 1934 three very different London buildings were completed, or nearly: what seemed the future, as represented by Lubetkin's High Point and the Isokon apartment block in Lawn Road, Hampstead, by Wells Coates; and what quickly seemed the past, as represented by the RIBA building at 66 Portland Place, a competition win by Grey Wornum.

Not that Wornum's building was traditionalist, exactly, more that it was a compromise stylistically. It has elements of Swedish classicism, of deco, and of arts and crafts, with a dash of that cinematic-ocean-liner modernity known as moderne. Such as the library, where I sit writing this. It is one of the most successful spaces in the building and was regarded as such from the outset.

This was the RIBA's centenary building and the Journal devoted one complete issue and a large chunk of the next to it, including three pages of press notices. 'Modesty, which should have forbidden us to reproduce some, if not all, of the press notices below, has fortunately been off the job lately,' observed an editor, known only as PJ.

'An interior of exceptional quality' said The Builder. 'A work of genius' said the Architects' Journal. The Times, while praising its neighbourliness in the streetscape, spotted a problem: 'It is felt to rely a little too much upon decorative details and not enough upon architecture pure and simple... the mother of the arts has been a little too indulgent as a parent.'

The Manchester Guardian praised Wor-

In 1934 three very different buildings were completed: High Point, Isokon and 66 Portland Place. Which won the most esteem, in the end?

num as 'an informed and cunning craftsman' working with 'chaste joyfulness' and noticed that he was 'taking advantage in its great girders and stanchions of the new engineering possibilities of the time'. It didn't much like the relationship of the double-height front window with the square entrance beneath. The Scotsman saw contemporary speed-car and ocean-liner references: 'Here is a building as lovely as the "Blue Bird" or the "Queen Mary", and for similar reasons'. Indeed – Wornum did interiors for liners.

The Observer was ecstatic: 'The architect... has crystallised the functions of the building into a simple monumental idea which every mind can grasp, comprehend and retain.'

The New Statesman, however, was not. 'Fine workmanship, "safe" taste... what an opportunity has been missed... this prosperous and slightly pompous interior.'

Criticism also came from the chair of the competition assessors, Robert Atkinson. 'The plan is somewhat complicated (a defect, I fear, of the programme). The RIBA was rather asking for a quart in a pint pot.'

So which won most esteem, in the end? Coates' and Lubetkin's modernism or Wornum's 'Swedish Grace'? The former, according to the heritage markings. The Isokon Building and High Point are both Grade I listed. 66 Portland Place is – so far – a mere II*.

Below 66 Portland Place by Grey Wornum in 1934 – before later extensions. The Observer was ecstatic in its review; the New Statesman was not.





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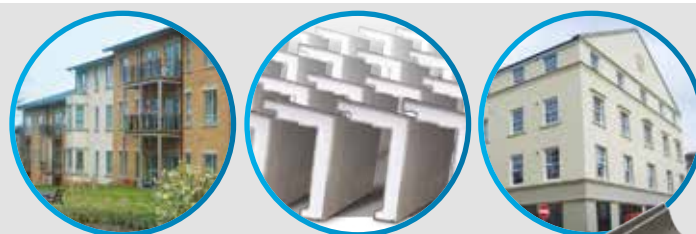
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You were intrigued by our Besties – and gave us pointers for next time

Hugh Pearman

Last month we unleashed our 'Besties' on an unsuspecting world. We gave a weighting to each of 20 award schemes, and to stages within multi-level awards, then did a lot of ferreting around to see who had won them, crunched the numbers and gave a ranking to nearly 100 practices according to their tally over the past year. Overall winners were AHMM, with Reiach and Hall close behind.

Practices understandably trumpeted their appearance on the list. But we know that this is a scheme that can be expanded and refined, and we asked for comment and suggestions. In particular, I asked members of our readers' 'Litmus Group' for their views.

A minority sees no particular value in awards at all – 'It's not very Tao, is it?' speculates Wayne Head of Curl la Tourelle Head, who adds: 'How many awards are apportioned to private, commercial projects which have been well funded versus the total number apportioned to publicly funded projects where typically the funding levels are much lower?' Sumita Sinha of Ecologic Architects says: 'I am not a fan of the architectural awards system – what about the architects who broke moulds, created legacies and innovated? Some of them have done fewer projects and might have won fewer awards but these enduring creations serve to inspire others.'

In contrast Neil MacWilliams of MICA says: 'I really like the idea and think you are on to something here. It's one of those examples of an idea that you are surprised someone hasn't already done.'

'The thinking behind the Besties came across as logical and fair, I'm sure there will be some discussion on the weighting but I thought this was a great starting point.'

Most of our respondents mulled the idea of adjusting the results to remove the obvious big-practice advantage. For MacWilliams,



'The one thing I'd have really liked to see is which practice was winning the most awards per staff member and/or per architect.'

Dhruv Sookhoo, housing expert at the University of Newcastle, proposes grouping the larger practices and giving their awards a value of one, say – then adding a multiplier for smaller and medium-sized firms as defined by the RIBA. 'That would encourage recognition for younger practices and create realistic expectations among clients about what an excellent, but small practice can achieve.'

Sarah Castle of IF:DO ran some calculations. Divide the scores of the practices by their headcount, and the rankings – including the winners – change radically, she says. 'Or alternatively a "best of the small" list to really celebrate those smaller practices making a big difference.'

Several readers suggest other, more specialist awards. Sole practitioner Stuart Hatcher remarks: 'I absolutely agree with your comments on the lack of recognition for heritage and "traditionalist" practitioners – no points for winners of awards by SPAB or The Georgian Group, for example.'

Reader Simon Carne queried the accumulated scores we let practices win for each stage of the RIBA system – 'Scoring points for the same project across essentially the same award scheme seems perverse.' So too does Richard Crowson of Watson Batty Architects: 'Perhaps the highest credit for a single project only should be included and other lower ranking credits discounted.'

And finally – some awards are just cynical. Several respondents raised the cost of entering certain less rigorous awards versus the benefit, if any, received from them.

'I have to admire you for being brave enough to try something so subjective and throw it out there!' says Hazel Rounding of ShedKM – noting that a medium-sized practice such as hers which has won awards for every one of its projects to date can still have a drought year between completions. She too is on her guard against some of the iffier awards out there, wryly commenting: 'I daily receive emails effectively telling me I can "buy" an award by accepting a nomination and then being hounded to sponsor an event.'

Thank you everyone. Informed by all this, we are already evolving a plan for next year's Besties. Dare we say, after only one year, that they'll be bigger and better than ever? For sure. ●

I'd have really liked to see which practice was winning the most awards per staff member and/or per architect



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marno.herinckx@riba.org

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Elevated rapid transit system Chicago, 1892

This photograph of Chicago's elevated rapid transit system, otherwise known as the 'L', was taken by architectural historian and writer Colin Amery in 1977, when he and Lance Wright devoted a special issue of the *Architectural Review* to the American city. The network of elevated trains, an iconic symbol of the city of Chicago, began operations in 1892 and was at the time one of many similar systems built in American cities. These were subsequently replaced by subways, and today Chicago's network is the only one surviving in a US downtown area.

It is the product of the city's very fast growth in the last decades of the 19th century and the consequent need for an extensive and efficient mode of transport. In the 1890s the different elevated train lines were connected in what is now known as the Loop, thanks to a steel structure by bridge designer John Alexander Low Waddell. Today the 'L' is such a distinctive element of the city that it has been frequently used as film location, starting with the 1973 classic *The Sting* (1973). ●

Valeria Carullo

Editor
Hugh Pearman

Executive editor
Eleanor Young

Senior editor
Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Assistant editor
Isabelle Priest

Design
Linda Byrne

Advertisement manager
Richard Tomlin
+44 20 7496 8329

Account manager,
Midlands and North
Ashley Powell
+44 (0) 7501 466 660

Account manager,
London and South
John Ward
+44 (0) 7741 265 696

Digital operations
manager
Pete Songi

Director of commercial
development
Steven Cross

Director of RIBA
Services
Debi Lyon

Telephone
+44 20 7496 8300
Fax +44 207 374 8500
firstname.surname
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