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Warwickshire house dares and wins New gallery for Yorkshire Sculpture Park Bridge specialist branches out Peter Cook's three essential books

The RIBA Journal May 2019 Vol 126 Issue 05



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Buildings



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1: Buildings

A house, a museum, a gallery, a refurbishment. But all what you might call concentrated architecture, in that they pack ideas, allusions and technique into their programmes. The house in Warwickshire by BPN Architects is almost a distillation of the early 20th century industrial aesthetic. Hopkins' refurbishment of Sert's brutalist tall gateway building at Harvard goes back to the original architect's intentions and makes clear the division between new and old; Feilden Fowles' utterly different ground-hugging gateway gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park is rooted in the materials of place; and Carmody Groarke's eagerly awaited Windermere Jetty Museum again evokes industry – this time the ad-hoc forms of factory and boatyard sheds. The reference game is in full swing.

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For me, this is real ingenuity at work, cut-and-paste at concept level perhaps, but done with a real sense of verve and wit. What do YOU think?

Hugh Pearman enjoys some trad quirkiness: ribaj.com/ neoclassicalmews

The Weston, Yorkshire Sculpture Park's new gateway gallery, page 22.



PETER COOK

One that got away

Only the brave and determined stand a chance of getting an individual contemporary house past the planners in Warwickshire

Words: Isabelle Priest Photographs: Felix Mooneeram

The story of what is happening in Stratford-upon-Avon planning district is worrying. In recent years areas of Warwickshire have, like other rural councils, seemingly adopted an obstructive approach to new homes that aren't part of huge development sites, including on the former airfield at Wellesbourne and outskirts of Leamington Spa (opposite the Vitsoe factory). The council has to build 14,600 homes and it looks like it has decided that the people who need them want to live in identikit ones on large housebuilder estates accessible primarily by car and lacking facilities. More recently, it also seems to be sidelining the advice of the Midlands design review panel MADE because of the possibility that architects and the panellists are in it together, as if there isn't something suspicious about relationships with these housebuilders and obstruction to proposed unobtrusive individual homes elsewhere.

The issue is exemplified in the village of Moreton Paddox, eight miles east of Stratford-upon-Avon. From its position on an elevated plateau, it is possible to see two miles away the 1,600 glaringly new, bright red Noddy houses going up at Wellesbourne. The village itself, however, is relatively new and unusual too. It occupies the site of a former manor by the same name completed in 1915 by WH Romaine-Walker for the Garland family of Moreton Morrell Hall nearby. The family was ruined by the Second World War

Credits Client Steve Smith Architect BPN Architects Structural engineer Webb Yates Concrete contractor Jon Johnstone Construction M&E Greenways Concrete Smiths Concrete Waterproofing CETCO Windows Monk Metal





This image The structure was cast in situ. To achieve the column-free living space here 70 tonnes of steel were required.

Left The Ghost House, so named because it is mostly below ground, is approached via a concrete walkway between two black ink-dyed pools.





Above A stair from ground floor leads down to the entrance courtyard and front door, following the existing contours of the land.

and the house demolished in 1959 before the land was sold off as smaller private plots, each taking a section of the original ornamental gardens with them.

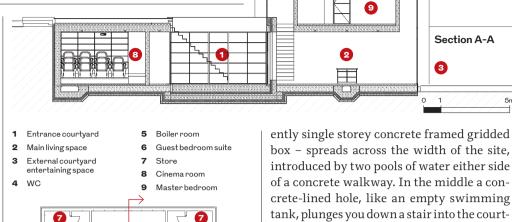
Consequently, Moreton Paddox is primarily a hamlet of one-off 1960s houses, spaced out around the original grand U-shaped approach to the manor. Newer infill houses of eclectic post-war styles have been built since, creating a very suburban setting with open front lawns; from ground-scraping futurism to 1980s mock Tudor and early 2000s neoarts & crafts. Many of the first homes are now also being revamped with more contemporary facings - white render with expansive aluminium framed glazing and bifolding doors. This makes the village interesting because it depicts seemingly every fashion for domestic architecture since 1959 like pages from a history book.

But building here from scratch is tough now - as Learnington nightclub owner Steve Smith found out in 2003 when he bought one of Moreton Paddox's 1980s executive-style homes that came with two redundant outbuildings on the plot opposite. His intention was to first convert those into simple dwellings before rebuilding the house. However, what looked to him like a straightforward, unobjectionable job in an aesthetically incongruous modern neighbourhood, wasn't. Planning approval was refused multiple times. As they couldn't get permission for straight up conversion they eventually went down the exceptional Paragraph 55 route for the outbuildings site instead. Smith taught himself SketchUp, hired Birmingham-based BPN Architects and after tens of thousands of pounds, multiple inspectors, 10 years of wrangling and still dozens of objections, got a scheme through planning for a mirrored floating volume that cantilevered over the 3.5m slope of the plot.

That was eight years ago. Yet The Ghost House present today is very different from the one that received approval. Having fallen out of love with the project, Smith parked it before going back a year later with fresh ideas - this time for full concrete after Tadao Ando. Interior designer Adrian Baynes from Baynes&Co, who had worked with Smith on his bars, came up with the basic premise of the plan - a somewhat Japanese semi-buried building and an external stair into a sunken courtyard to welcome you.

Construction started one year ago with BNP Architects who reworked the plan and the building is now complete - more symmetrical than before and larger, but still barely visible from the lane, tucked as it is behind a neighbouring generic red brick outbuilding on its L-shaped plot. Only the new black-painted horizontal fencing leads you round. From there the house - an appar-

Below In guest bedrooms, the disappointment is that the bathroom doesn't open to the courtyard to let in more light and a better spatial flow.



Ô

yard at the project's primary level. Ahead, the front door leads into a concrete column-free living space with recessed strip lighting, a single kitchen worktop and another vast grid glazed wall onto another, bigger, sunken courtyard. On the back wall two facing stairs in black steel lead to the master bedroom, forming an intriguing sculptural V-shaped set piece. A perimeter corridor sweeps around the entrance courtyard at lower level, leading to two guest bedroom suites with further courtyards of their own and a cinema room across the far side. Upstairs, the master bedroom has a bathroom cut out of the rectangular plan on one side and a walk-in wardrobe directly opposite. Like many rooms in the house, it is lit only by rooflights. It's a curious design that, unusually for a Paragraph 55 house, makes little attempt to engage with surrounding views.

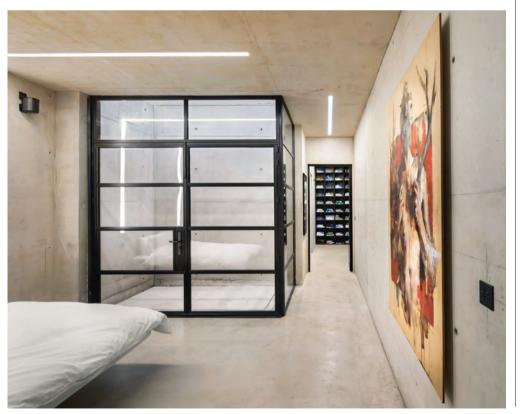
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Rather, The Ghost House is highly urban materially and spatially and is more about recreating the loft living experience its owner had in Leamington. The project has been well executed and is - another reflection of its owner - astonishingly ambitious as well as daring and outrageous in an area that is shot through with false conservatism. The plan is slightly strange, as is the lack of vertical windows that overlook the landscape and village, which might not have been the case if there had been only one designer, but we need buildings like this in places like this and up against councils like this. Therefore it's good news that BPN and the client haven't been put off and are already working on two more new houses in Moreton Paddox.

Yet the project took years and enormous financial and legal power. Obstructive attitudes are making interesting bespoke contemporary architecture the preserve of the risk-takers and very wealthy, while the rest of us must live down the hill in Wellesbourne.



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Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris

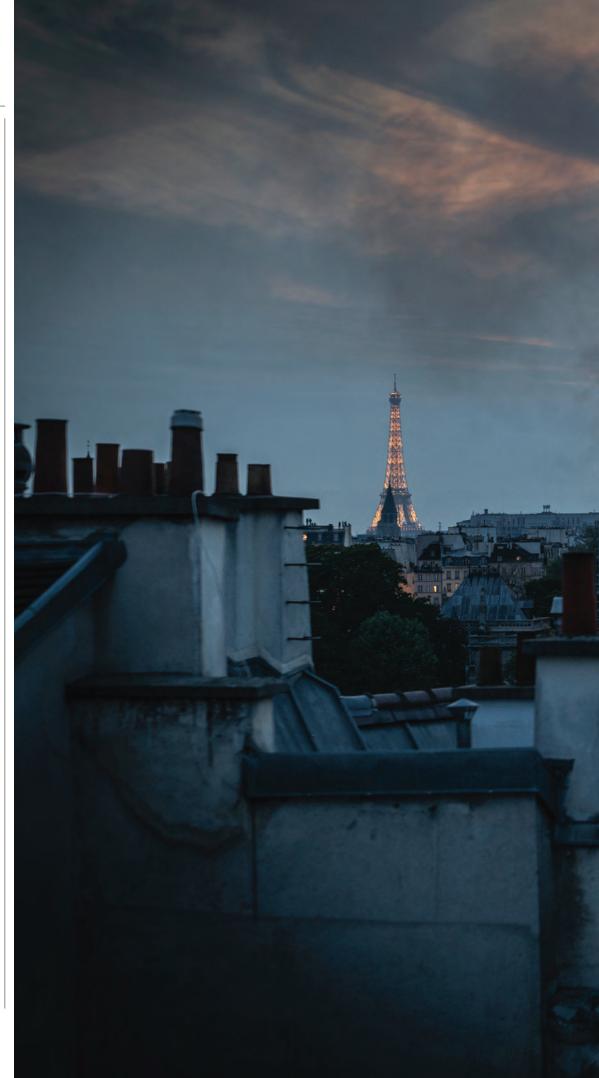
Photograph Veronique de Viguerie Words Isabelle Priest

Notre-Dame de Paris, one of the world's most important and visited cathedrals, caught light on the evening of Monday 18 April. Here it is, photographed by Veronique de Viguerie, as the sun sets over the city and fire engulfs the roof.

The fire is believed to have started in the attic at around 18:50 local time, spreading rapidly across the upper structures of the building. By the time this image was taken, the spire above the crossing – first built in the 13th century but recreated in the 19th century (see Parting Shot, p74) – had collapsed and firefighters were concentrating their efforts on extinguishing flames in the northern bell tower to prevent further major destruction.

As the sun rose next morning most of the cathedral, under renovation when the fire started, had been saved, and people breathed a sigh of relief for what could have been much worse. The roof sculptures had been taken away for conservation only days before. Three of the four rose windows, the bell towers and a lot of the artwork had survived as well as much of the vaulted stone underside of the attic, although the condition was yet to be carefully analysed.

Nevertheless, French president Emmanuel Macron pledged within hours to have this icon of France and religious faith restored to glory within five years, and by Wednesday the prime minister Edouard Philippe had already launched an international competition that might design a new spire 'that reflects the techniques and challenges of our era'. At the time of going to press, the restoration cause had received more than €1 billion in private donations.





Buildings Museum

Take me to the water

Carmody Groarke's Lake District boating museum has been a long time coming, but it's been worth the wait Words: Isabelle Priest Photographs: Christian Richter

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> Apparently I'm not the only person who has been impatiently waiting for the new Windermere Jetty, Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories to open. According to its director Liz Moss, the €20m development was primarily funded through national organisations - the Heritage Lottery Fund, RDPE and Department of Culture, Media and Sport via the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund – but the $\pm 3m$ that wasn't came from local benefactors, patrons and individuals for whom the delay was an enormous frustration.

> Likewise, for the RIBA Journal, the building had been on the 'verge of completion' for two years, getting bumped from our list of upcoming building studies month after month. It wasn't so much the subject matter of the museum that interested us, although the stories element in its name was curious, but Carmody Groarke's design, depicted in drawings as a squat cluster of dark buildings looming over the lake surrounded by a deserted moody landscape.

> That might sound like something from a sublime British 19th century painting but it looked more suited to Scandinavia, a private summer house on the fjord's edge, than to the English Lake District, which for so long, beyond the priciest hotels, has belonged to a lovely but



15

Buildings Museum

passé holiday experience of drinking milky tea and eating scones and ice cream under sopping parasols on the lawn outside a pitstop café waiting for the rain to stop. The new museum, which replaces the Windermere Steamboat Museum that closed here in 2006, is the first contemporary building of scale on the lake shore in more than 50 years too.

But the tempestuousness of the fictional scene caught up with reality and the project became beset by problems, including Storm Desmond in December 2015 which washed away parts of the A-road from Windermere to Keswick only a month after phase 1 had gone into the ground. Havoc ensued, construction works had to stop and in light of the flood risk the Environment Agen**Right** The third gallery from the pier splays out from the entrance in plan.

Below The overhanging entrance projects into the gravel and concrete forecourt.

Bottom right The main gallery – not just boats but the paraphernalia of leisure in the Lakes.





cy ordered building levels to be changed and reed water filtration beds to be set further back among other structural alterations. Heavy vehicle access was disrupted as well.

Yet, now the building has opened, the local response has, Moss reports, been overwhelmingly positive – the vastness and quality of it. 'There's an understanding,' she says, 'of why it has taken so long. Anyone can see it is a complex design and build.' And even though it seems like a cliché, on visiting the building on the dullest of drizzly mid-week days in early April, it is clear from the architectural perspective that it has been worth the extended wait too. Turn your back to the manicured Picturesque landscape of white cottages up the bank and the building feels of the cloudy slate-coloured water and surrounding flat top mountains currently dusted with snow.

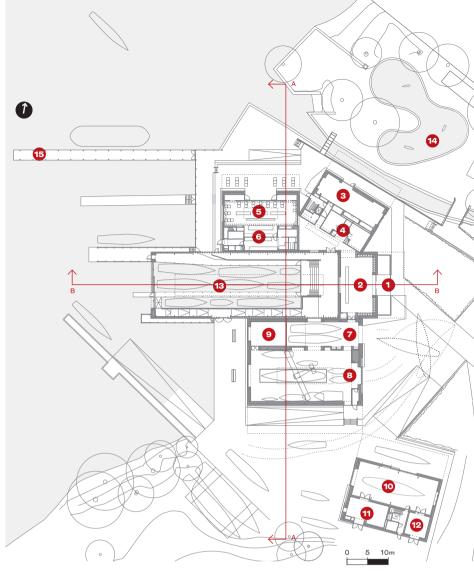
Located along Rayrigg Road that runs nearest the lake by the town of Windermere, up from Bowness Bay, the new Jetty Museum is almost undetectable from the roadside, hidden by rolling pastures, spinneys and hipheight mossy dry stone walls. Pass through the boundary gate, however, and a deep forecourt sets the building back as far as possible, protected by a ring of local stone. There, it is laid out in two imposing parts coming forth from the lake: the larger, to the right, is a trio of connected industrial shed-like forms shifted at angles based on the waterline behind. Tarmac and concrete hard landscaping crosses the site through beds of gravel, contrasting with





Above It was almost inevitable a boathouse would be central to the design. The large sliding doors are 5.6m high and 4.3m wide to allow boats in and out of the museum.

'There's an understanding of why it's taken so long; anyone can see it's a complex design and build'



Floorplan

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Reception3 Learning space
- 4 Cloakroom and WCs
- 5 Café
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Gallery 1
- 8 Maingallery
- 9 Temporary exhibition space
- 10 Conservation workshop
- 11 Woodworking room
- 12 Engineering room
- 13 Boathouse
- **14** Boating pond (under restoration)
- 15 Piers
- 16 Office

the shifting geometries of the building.

The central volume thrusts forward, projecting out, while the far sides of the sandwiching elements have deep overhangs, which appear to sail over the water. To the left is a single scaled down shed with its own overhang facing the museum entrance, protecting an active boatyard – the first sign of the building's purpose. A member of the conservation team is washing down a small vessel outside as I arrive.

Elements are solid and opaque, the heavy corrugated oxidised copper cladding facades already greening slightly. There are only single openings at the gable ends. The space under the middle cantilever, however, is glazed, revealing an enclosed interstice lined at the back with reddish tinted Douglas fir that gives the way in an inviting glow.



Buildings Museum

Lakeland Arts wanted to present the boats as designed, crafted works of art in a white wall gallery setting

Right The new café with its rooflight is reminiscent of a pleasure cruise boat.

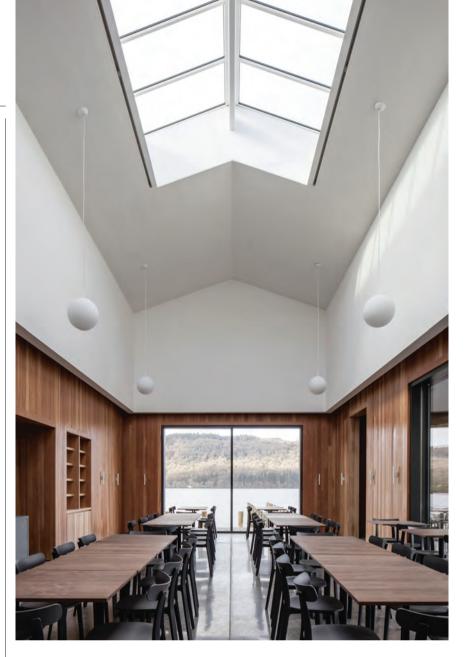
The building belongs to Lakeland Arts, a Cumbrian arts and heritage trust that has social history at its heart and was founded in 1952 to display local contemporary and historic art. By the time it came to acquire the collection of the former Windermere Steamboat Museum it already had two sites and three buildings – the Abbot Hall Art Gallery, the Museum of Lakeland Life & Industry and Blackwell, the arts & crafts holiday villa of the wealthy industrialist Edward Holt nearby.

The Steamboat Museum, on the other hand, had grown out of the private boat collection of local enthusiast George Pattinson, who with his brothers owned and ran the lakeside site as a sand and gravel pit – hence the beds of grey gravel in the new landscaping design. As Pattinson began to collect more vessels in the 1970s, a tarpaulin went over them, followed by a more conventional building which opened in 1977. In the 1980s the museum was receiving 80,000 visitors a year. However, by the late 1990s the site had become tired and costly to run so it closed.

Whereas that building was more about accommodating the boats themselves, in 2007 Lakeland Arts' then director Edward King had the idea of displaying the collection in a contemporary building, unlike anything else in the Lake District. It could lease 7.5 acres of land from the South Lakeland District Council, incorporating some

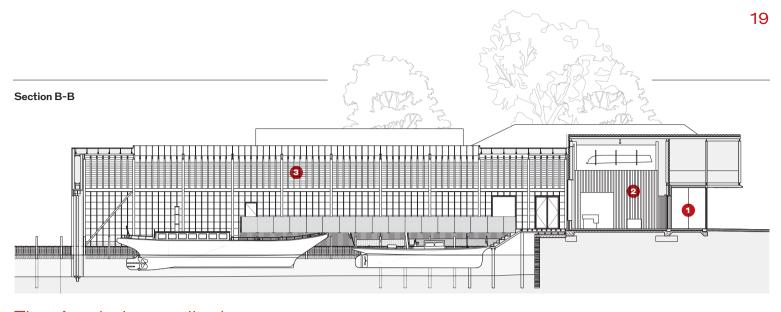






Credits Architect Carmody Groarke Client Lakeland Arts Structural & services engineer Arup Landscape architect Jonathan Cook Landscape Architecture Exhibition design Real Studiog of the foreshore, as well as conserve the local heritage of boating and associated crafts by preserving the 40 historical vessels it had so far. In contrast with the previous ad hoc nature of the museum, Lakeland Arts wanted to present the boats as designed, crafted works of art in a white wall gallery setting. People would still be able to get close to them and they would be restored to usable condition, even if most would stay off the water.

On entering through the glazed sliding doors, the reception opens out before you; a full height space engulfed by the warmth of the timber panelling. The desk – a long stone plinth – spreads across the width of the volume. The shop shelving is laid out either side symmetrically and an upturned 5.8m long rowing boat floats overhead, suspended from the ceiling's apex, poised with its paddles. It's the kind that used to be found in the city parks of Liverpool, Manchester and Durham, made by Borwicks. Beyond the reception counter, through a pointed picture window, is the boathouse, where the lake enters the building and doors open onto the scenery. From here visitors can catch a ride on the 1902 Osprey, which was used as a passenger boat from the 1940s, or another historical vessel.



There's a dual pace, allowing some visitors to appreciate the larger scale and others to delve further

Museum facilities come off to the right of the reception – the learning centre with views on three sides, WCs, offices tucked into the roofspace and the café with 96 covers inside in a separate joined volume behind. It's a pretty magnificent space with timber lined walls to first floor level, white rendered above, and a huge skylight that is a reminder of the 1879 steam yacht Brittania's skylight on display in the gallery over the way. Sitting under it gives the feel of being out on the water already.

On the opposite side of the reception, 200 years of boating and leisure history are set out in a series of three galleries. The first of these rooms, painted in duck egg blue/grey, houses two steam launches stored on rigs as if they are about to be cast onto the water. Dolly, from 1850-60, was on Windermere before it was moved to Ullswater where it sank in 1895 and was pulled out in 1962. Kittiwake was used by the Edith Cavell Home of Rest for Nurses in the 1920s. A wall of miscellaneous treasures portrays the paraphernalia of boating gone by – old steering wheels, flags, life rings, anchors, propellers, rudders, jackets, cushions, navigation lights, steam kettles and other canoes and kayaks.

The largest room, a white space beyond, contains 14 vessels, including Beatrix Potter's tarn rowing boat from 1890, a tea hamper from the same year, the UK's earliest motorboat, and crockery from Brittania. There's a dual pace, allowing some visitors to appreciate the larger scale and boats themselves and others to also delve further through information contained in drawers and on stacked story cards that places the boats in the context of who owned them, where they lived, how they were used, and who maintained and worked on them. You can't help but go around with a warm feeling. The third gallery is

Entrance
Reception

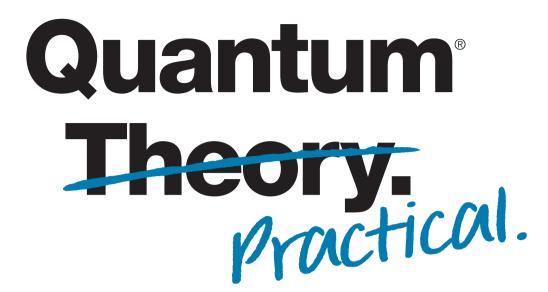
3 Boathouse

Below The conservation building includes an engineering room and workshop as and is part of the museum tour. temporary exhibition space that when I visited was being used to screen a specially commissioned film of a dance performed in the part-complete building, choreographed by Sara Wookey.

From there visitors are led outside to the conservation workshop and then to the boathouse itself which currently moors six vessels on the water. Timber walkways allow visitors to get close to them. The connection between land and water constantly plays out in the building: the gnarled trees hanging over the bay and four new piers are visible from the picture windows at the ends, maintaining that metaphorical connection between them and the museum as the conduit of the stories of the lives alluded to in between.

Carmody Groarke has delivered the building as proposed, impeccably detailed and conceptually thorough. It is, as expected, a breath of fresh air in the architecture of the Lake District, but its collection is surprisingly fun and interesting too.







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to the wall

Dividing line, noise mitigator, deferential newcomer – Feilden Fowles' gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park has its work cut out Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photographs: Peter Cook

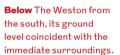


Executive director of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park Peter Murray might describe the wall of its new Weston gallery and café as the psychogeographic dividing line between a modern landscape and the Picturesque nature of the park, but if truth be told things are a little more complicated than that.

It's true, the M1 motorway does drive itself determinedly through the rural landscape to the east, but once you've passed through the single hole in architect Feilden Fowles' thick, iron-oxide-stained, earthy millstone-gritty wall, the first sculpture I clocked peeping its head above the treetops to the west - part of the 'big reveal' - was Arup's Emley Moor TV mast. Taller than the Shard, it stands defiantly showing the finger to the Picturesque landscape created here by Capability Brown contemporary Richard Woods - but then I'm probably talking out of turn. Were he alive, 18th century Picturesque proponent Uvedale Price would probably consider its death ray transmitting potential as embodying the very principles of the Sublime

Previous page The Weston's east wall, separating park from car park and motorway.

Right Defining the YSP's perimeter with galleries: to the north the Underground, to the south the Longside, and now to the east, the Weston.









that he espoused; his all-important 'Et in Arcadia Ego' factor.

Either way it proves nothing is quite black and white; not least in the YSP's 500 acres of rolling green fields and contemporary art. Remember, the English 'Romantic' landscape was merely, as artist Richard Wentworth points out in an essay marking the building's opening, just another way of seeing; a form of artifice contrived as a re-evocation of the natural one that a succession of Inclosure Acts and creeping industrialisation had destroyed. Murray remarks on the 60-year-old motorway's background noise that the crafted wall is partly designed to arrest; but this is what it sounds like when an ancient, disappeared landscape hires the 20th century to rough-up the 18th century pretender. This, my friends, is payback.

So, in all, I'm bemused by the deference that Feilden Fowles has afforded, on both sides of its wall, to a location that's been interfered with so significantly in the past; not least in the fact that this fine new gallery, café and shop grows out of a bund and expands out into a depression, both formed when the site itself was an open quarry a century ago. I'm happier with the architect's more practical notion that the building forms the third element of a triptych of gallery spaces defining This is a location that's been interfered with significantly in the past

Above Beyond the wall: once through, the YSP's Picturesque landscape is revealed to the viewer.

Below The west elevation's subtle curve 'embraces' the landscape.



the north, south and now eastern perimeter of the YSP site; and that in a sense the aesthetic language it employs stands in counterpoint to the other two buildings there. Feilden Clegg Bradley's YSP visitor centre might look fussy and dated, but the structural simplicity of the practice's adjacent 2006 Underground Gallery holds its own and Tony Fretton's 2003 Longside Gallery, reifying the modern agricultural aesthetic, still works well. Here at The Weston, meanwhile, everything rests on the symbolism of the dividing wall.

But being rested on, as it turns out, was part of the problem. The wall was originally intended to be rammed earth, but the fact that it was emerging out of the bund and therefore had to retain earth made this proposition unviable from the outset. Which led Feilden Fowles to consider casting it in concrete using stone from local quarries as aggregate in the mix. The result brings a satisfying grain and texture to the wall, layered in its strata, not only evidencing the incremental two months it took to cast, but the iterative process of experimentation with aggregate size and blend.

It seems clear that this was a fraught journey for both parties: the architect had never built using a technique that involved so many variables of composition, pigment, curing time and post-casting jet-washing methods.



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The client too, having selected a young, ostensibly untested firm to build the gallery, was understandably concerned when it first set eyes on the lack of finesse of the life-size wall control samples produced by a concrete contractor, who initially must have been painfully unclear of the design intent. In addition the architect, looking for some sustainable innovation from its engineer, plumped on a novel labyrinth of unfired clay bricks arranged in the void of the wall's west return as a means of naturally conditioning the gallery air. Announcing proudly at the press view that this is the first example of this technology being used in a UK gallery, the YSP director of programmes pipes up 'So it had better work!' You get the sense, even now, that The Weston was all about walls, damn walls and logistics.

So, given the pivotal role of the wall as a demarcator of the 'profane' landscape from the 'sacred', you'd imagine that, once you pass through it, it's all sweetness and light; and

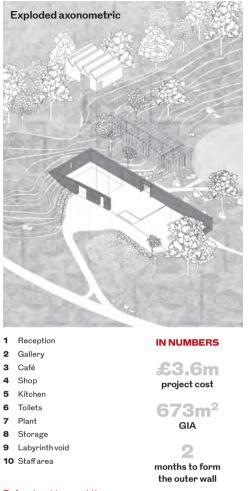
Gallery space You get the sense the 1 Reception area 2 Shop 3 Weston is all about walls, Café 5 Servery Plant 6 damn walls and logistics 3 5 North-south section

27

Spatially it has the naturalistic, contemplative feel of a Japanese tea house

you'd be right. Feilden Fowles has created a tall, curved elevation of glass and timber facing west, embracing the expanse of the YSP site, allowing light to flood into the reception and café area. Materials are simple: cast terrazzo floors and Douglas Fir columns and roof structure, with the facing wall of the loo and kitchen area all finished in hygroscopic lime wash plaster with a pleasing 'hand-made' feel when seen in the sunlight. Spatially, it has the naturalistic, contemplative feel of a Japanese tea house – there's even a hearth in the middle of the room to warm your pot on.

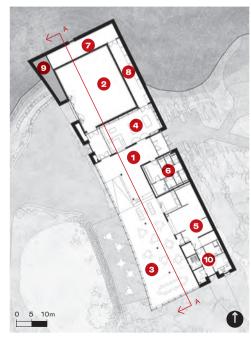
This 'quick win' aside, greater experimentation went on in the gallery space nestled into the bund to the north, where white display walls hiding low level air feed and high level extracts are layered onto another concrete wall supporting the north facing



Below Looking east the Weston is deferentially nestled into the landscape. rooflight glazing. With an elegant bullnose, courtesy of the choice of narrow timber slat shuttering (matching the recessed track lighting width), it has a satisfying, resolved brutalist quality. When first cast that expression was as satisfactory externally – raw, confrontational perhaps; but the section detailing required to insulate and waterproof it, partner Fergus Feilden explains, compromised its final iteration. So they settled on covering the whole caboodle in scalloped GRP panels that subtly insinuate the presence of the rooflights behind when viewed in the right light.

But this subtlety, as exemplified by those washboard scallops, ultimately grates. The Weston is a perfectly fine building, but perhaps the firm has not been true to the visionary precedents it looked to as its inspiration. American land artists Michael Heizer and Robert Morris chose to work at huge scale, boldly making marks with their man-made forms on an ostensibly wild American landscape. By contrast, the wall here seems somehow emasculated, diminutive; aiming to make some differentiation between two landscapes, both sides of which in their own ways carry the historic imprint of power. But why should the building defer to the landscape on principle? Why should it to the sculpture? Are these assumptions set in stone? In the end, the architect conceded that they were, and we got gifted cast pebbles instead of menhirs.

Ground floor plan





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Still brutalist, but lighter and brighter

Hopkins' 'radical re-appraisal' of the Smith Campus Center at Harvard adds communal space, daylight and greenery without compromising the brutalist original Words: Stephen Cousins Photographs: Nic Lehoux

Harvard University's first high rise was built in the 1960s on a focal plot on the campus, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to a design by Josep Lluis Sert, a future AIA Gold Medallist and founder of the discipline of urban design.

The 10-storey, H-shaped concrete building, then known as the Holyoke Center, was more recently renamed the Smith Campus Center. It housed university offices and services, and over the years had its internal layout extensively modified.

The latest overhaul, by Hopkins Architects and local executive architect Bruner/ Cott, is described as a 'radical reappraisal' that completely reconfigures the ground, first and ninth floors, while leaving levels three to eight, which contain offices, intact.

The brief was to open up the building to create new communal areas and reinstate its status as a 'front door' to Harvard, providing eateries, shops, event space, offices and social and study areas. Many facilities will be shared by students and the local community.

Sert was dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design and head of the local planning department, which perhaps explains the building's extreme height. Although it is not historically protected, it belongs to a Below The clean lines, glass and steel of Hopkins' Harvard Commons pavilion contrasts with the original concrete brutalism. Credits Architect Hopkins Architects Executive architect Bruner/Cott Architects Structural engineer Arup M&E Arup Lighting and acoustics Arup Landscape Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Cost consultant Faithful & Gould Main contractor Consigli

wider conservation district and the renovation had to pass several public hearings before being approved.

Andrew Barnett, senior partner at Hopkins, told RIBAJ: 'The Cambridge Historical Commission could see that we were working with Sert's architecture, rather than against it, and that our design had emerged out of an understanding of Sert. It wasn't something completely foreign and implanted.'

The design retains the original concrete column grid, but introduces new steel and glass structures and extensive planting including living walls and landscaped





terraces. 'Our design makes it very clear where the new architecture begins and ends,' says Barnett.

Sert's building is raised above the ground with independent pavilions that appear to slide out at the base in two and three storey layers. The Holyoke pavilion on the east side was demolished down to street level and replaced with a new Harvard Commons pavilion, supported on steel columns founded on strengthened versions of original concrete columns in the two-storey car park below. New floors are hung from the roof to avoid adding new columns in the car park, which was retained and extends across the entire footprint.

The Dunster Pavilion, on the west side, was demolished inside and the facade retained. The Welcome Pavilion, to the north, was partially demolished to create a new 'front door' to Harvard, a double height glass lobby carefully detailed to slide out from under the structure of Sert's second floor. This opens the building to a brick paved public plaza and views towards the historic Harvard Yard across the street.

Sert described his architecture as

Above The triple height, skylit Harvard Commons replaced Holyoke Pavilion. Below Arcade looking east into Harvard Commons. **Bottom** Now enclosed, the arcade links the Dunster Pavilion on one side and Harvard Commons on the other, beyond the leafy 'vitrine'.





'tentacular' and in a bold move his 1958 design for the building included a long central arcade, connected to a central garden courtyard, which he envisaged would one day reach down to the Charles River, requiring demolition of the buildings in its path.

But this never happened. Although the arcade was built it was filled in over the years and there was an extension built over one end. Nor did the courtyard garden ever make it into the final design.

Hopkins returned to Sert's original concept in a drive to reintroduce light and landscape into the heart of the building. The concrete infill screens were removed and an open landscape 'vitrine' inserted between the arcade and Harvard Commons. Although inaccessible, the vitrine is open to the sky and planted with indigenous species that will change in colour and appearance throughout the year.

The arcade is lined with food vendors and seating and intersected by new glass and steel bridges. Irrigated living walls at each end delineate lobbies to the pavilions. Branching off it is Harvard Commons, a new tripleheight skylit space surrounded by partial

Buildings Refurbishment

Now the arcade is a place to pause rather than a place of passage

floors that offers various seating options.

'Now the arcade reads much more strongly,' says Barnett. 'Our landscape architect describes it as a place to pause rather than a place of passage. The spaces around it are connected so you can move from one pavilion to another; they were separated before.'

Similar ideas filter up to the first floor where collaboration and meeting rooms and quiet study areas look out onto a multi-layered outdoor terrace with wooden decking and lush planting. Level nine was never intended to be part of the renovation, until designers saw its potential during an early tour of the site. 'The facade breaks down into of a series of pavilions at roof level, mimicking the lower floors, so it made sense to make interventions here too,' says Barnett. The cellular offices were knocked through to create a series of formal and informal meeting spaces with views over the river to Boston.

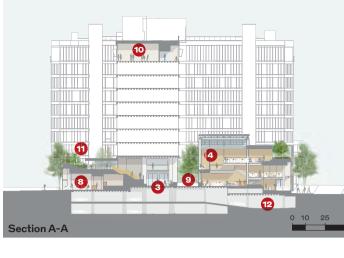
The existing building was generally complex to work through and understand, with poor tolerances in the concrete, thin waffle slabs and constrained floor to ceiling heights that limited the space for new services.

Additionally, seismic regulations required intricate movement joint details between new and old structures and existing columns had to be underpinned to improve load bearing capacity.

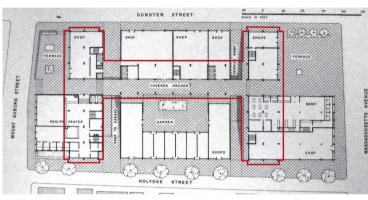
Crisp shadow gaps mostly separate new construction from older concrete, but the interface is also celebrated in certain locations, such as the vitrine, where massive steel brackets are fixed to board marked reinforced concrete columns.

Hopkins' respectful treatment smoothes the edges of Sert's grey brutalist landmark, helping to ensure that Harvard retains its position as one of the world's most prestigious universities.

Right 'Floating' floors and bridges eliminated the need for extra supporting columns in the basement car park.

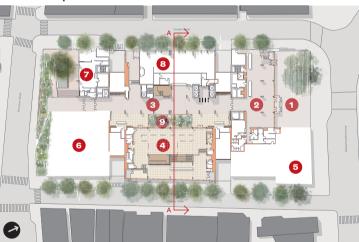








JANIE AIREY







- Forbes plaza Welcome Pavilion
- 2 Welcon 3 Arcade

1

Sert building above

- Harvard Commons
- 5 Cambridge trust
- B Health services
- **7** Restaurant
- 8 Dunster Pavilion (café/ restaurant)
- 9 Planted 'vitrine'
- **10** 10th floor
- **11** Dunster roofgarden
- 12 Underground car park





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Bridges and more – Moxon Architects profiled **38**

2: Intelligence



Conservation & heritage

Becky Clark

Design. construction

& technology



The CofE director of churches and cathedrals, and secretary of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, talks about Notre-Dame and how they are trying to ensure such an event never happens here. What was your first reaction on hearing of the fire at Notre-Dame cathedral last month?

What is the likelihood of such an event occurring to an English cathedral?

Does the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England have safety protocols in place when restoring its cathedrals?

In what way do you think any measures might be improved?

What do you think of France's idea to hold an international competition to design a new spire for Notre-Dame? My first concern was for the safety of anyone who might have been in there; the fact no-one was harmed was testament to how well the evacuation was handled once the alarm was raised. Watching it on TV, once the spire fell I grew increasingly concerned that the towers would go. It was encouraging to see drone shots reveal the stone vaulting for the most part holding up. There was logic to the way the firefighters dealt with the blaze – dumping water on a superheated structure could have caused catastrophic thermal shock.

Thankfully, such events are vanishingly rare. The last major event for us was at York Minster when lightning struck the roof and caused a fire – ironically, an 'Act of God' for insurance purposes – that cost £2.5 million to put right (around £7 million in current value). The fire at Windsor Castle was another order of scale altogether (£36 million). I'm not saying it couldn't happen, but we have very robust policies for high-risk activities such as hot works. Peterborough Cathedral has built-in fire compartmentation into its roof structure and Hereford has installed a fire suppression system. It's about assessing individual risk in specific circumstances.

The CFCE doesn't offer technical guidance – it performs an equivalent role to listed building consent in the secular sphere. But the Cathedrals Architects Association shares a body of knowledge on restoration and safety issues. There are technical training courses run by Purcell for churches and cathedrals. The firm's partner Jane Kennedy used to be chair of the CAA.

You can't plan for everything but as far as possible we have good procedures. The main concern is life safety; fire compartmentation and suppression are secondary.

It's potentially very exciting but my instinct is that the restoration of Notre Dame will be very drawn out. There might be political pressures to complete quickly but restoration processes are complex, inter-linked and inter-dependent. You can't treat one aspect in isolation from any other. There's nothing to say that cathedrals can't accommodate new design. Some, like Norwich, have taken to them excellently, but it should be seen as a holistic process.

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The clients had rejected the design and sued the architect for significant damages under a number of heads

Catrin Rees on why a written brief is essential to avoid 'wow' turning into 'wonky': ribaj.com/ wowtowonky



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



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Conservation & heritage Design, construction & technology

No bridge too far

For a bridge specialist Moxon Architects has an eclectic workload: hotel refurbs, private houses, a farm shop. Oh, and HS2

Eleanor Young

You may have seen one of Moxon's beautiful bridges. In London's King's Cross, Somers Town bridge marks out a delicate rhythm over Regent's Canal; while in Taunton the arches of Moxon's first bridge span the Rive Tone, taking traffic while maintaining the delicacy of a footbridge; and the practice is developing 60 bridges and 17 viaducts along the HS2 rail route in one of its most sensitive sections, through the Chilterns. At the same time Moxon is designing, and sometimes building, six houses in the Cairngorms National Park. And it has just completed a fantastical hotel there, reworking it for those who love tartan Victoriana spiked with modern art and spa treatments. This eclectic mix of projects is a result of the expertise and geography of founder Ben Addy.

Like a clutch of other specialist bridge architects, Addy learnt his craft with Jim Eyre at Wilkinson Eyre. After a time collaborating with Amin Taha, another Wilkinson Eyre alumnus, Addy struck out on his own: incorporating Moxon the day he got his part 3. Many practices start general and small and find a specialism emerging through chance and much effort. For Moxon, expertise on bridges has expanded into wider work. There were dramatic sculptural proposals for competitions, including a curvaceous plastic form imagined for the V&A's Contemporary Gal-



Above Ben Addy of Moxon in the courtyard at the Fife Arms, Braemar, Cairngorms. The stripped trunk is a typical Highland detail.

The practice is surprisingly evenly split between London and the Highlands lery, a welling up of bronze as a water fountain built for the Royal Parks, and, inevitably, commercial fit-outs. Moxon has just won a mixed-use new build and a bridge from two major London developers.

One significant departure for the practice was the design and delivery of a hotel, the recently completed Fife Arms, for Iwan and Manuela Wirth, better known as the pair behind commercial gallery chain Hauser and Wirth. To understand this we have to follow Addy back to 2012 when he found a ruined farmhouse for sale at Crathie, near where he grew up in Aberdeenshire. Perched above the clear flowing River Dee and Balmoral Castle, facing south into the sun and the corrie of Lochnagar rising to the high plateau of



the Cairngorms, it proved irresistible. With one foot in his west London office, and still teaching at the Bartlett, he made the little house weathertight and established ordered, stripped back rooms of bleached simplicity paired with unexpected warmth; all in black and white around a stove. Outside one shed holds his mountain rescue gear; another he built roughly by hand as a sitooterie with a whisky collection. But first he worked up a small studio in an outbuilding to give him a space to dream and draw for competitions. Or so he thought.

In fact, the small practice is surprisingly evenly split between London and the Highlands studio, which is bursting at the seams. Addy and a colleague in the latter are working on HS2 but overall he says the fees each office commands are broadly comparable, as reflected in salaries. 'We get the same fees, sometimes more, in Scotland,' he says, though this seems hard to believe in sparsely populated Deeside. Some might put this down to the oil and gas money of Aberdeen an hour east, some to a privileged strand of tourism since Queen Victoria established a summer base here, others to one good practice making its mark. So what does this work consist of?

Last year a refurbishment and extension of the Cairngorms National Park Authority office was completed with simple CLT and larch cladding. And there are those houses in the landscape. But it is the work for the



Above left Historic staircase and modern art: Fife Arms, Braemar, Cairngorms. **Below** An innovative overhead lines structure for trains undergoing testing.

Above Fife Arms courtyard. A new, rational extension to the hotel, with Louise Bourgeois spider. Wirths that has dominated the Crathie office over the last few years. It started with a bridge for their estate. With hill water flowing into the burns and annual melt water swelling the River Dee, this is a land studded with bridges including elegant white Victorian footbridges that developed into a kit of parts that was shipped all over the British Empire. Addy was happy to continue that tradition with the £50,000 Wirth bridge. It was never realised, but led to the reordering of a kitchenette, worth €2,500 – barely worth invoicing for. Then came a 'wee cabin', Culardoch Shieling, a refuge high in the Cairngorms. And a yoga studio. Then, when the Wirths bought a local hotel, the Fife Arms, Moxon was asked to look at how to make it work.

The Victorian hotel's mish-mash of additions meant there was plenty to do. Moxon dug a basement into the degraded rock above the granite to bring the scattered servicing into one place and replaced a complex of roofs to reinstate the original horseshoe plan and add a green-roofed extension and courtyard. A new route 'skewered' through the centre of the building means that from the friendly pub entrance the village community can walk through the hotel to the Louise Bourgeois spider in the courtyard and the spa behind.

Under a layer of interior decoration, Moxon's contribution has to be judged on the seamless running of the hotel. Until you understand that the practice, with quantity surveyor Cromar Brooks and Addy's con-



As your own contractor 'no one's cooking up claims'

struction firm TOR Contracting as principal contractor, took on much of the building work and managed 45 separate contracts as well as having 38 people in the team at the height of the project. At first it was 'terrifying' he says.

For Addy, being part of the contractor is about closing the loop on good construction instead of being just a third of the equation as architect. 'You know you are getting maximum value for money.' Take a glass to glass corner detail: 'It is a doddle,' he says, yet expensive and difficult according to most contractors. The same applies to a concealed gutter, but 'it is just about where you put your rainwater goods'.

Commissions for the Wirths continue with another Braemar inn and, at the Hauser and Wirth gallery in Bruton, Somerset, a farm shop. But in Scotland at least, after the hotel project Moxon has stepped back, just securing planning and designing a few key details, even as TOR continues its work.

For now Addy is 80-90% occupied with HS2. Working with a route and heights fixed by an act of parliament, Moxon's efforts are going into engendering lightness and celebrating structural power. 'It is a serious challenge to civils infrastructure,' he says. There is lot of making the most of the span to depth ratio - bearing in mind the demands of high speed, which mean barely any deflection is allowed. Addy has found comforting parallels in debates over the construction of the Great Western line and the etchings of the huge embankments being thrown up: 'Brutality comes from the shock of the new. It was incredibly stark going through the landscape.' Working with Mott MacDonald, Moxon has developed a beautiful prototype overhead line system that combines structure and electrical protection using compressed beech ply.

Back home in the Highlands, Addy is using 15 years of Moxon savings to build a new office that will blackly edge a local quarry site. He delights in working with TOR again with the freedom to get the steel frame directly from an agricultural barn contractor. 'There is no one cooking up claims,' he says happily. Here he has truly closed the loop as architect, contractor and client.



Above Quarry Studios, a new Aberdeenshire office for Moxon, currently being built by TOR.

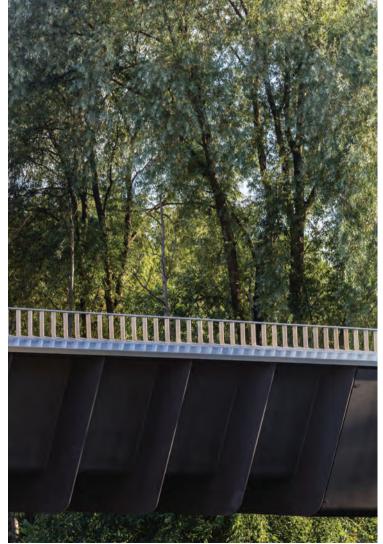
Right Somers Town

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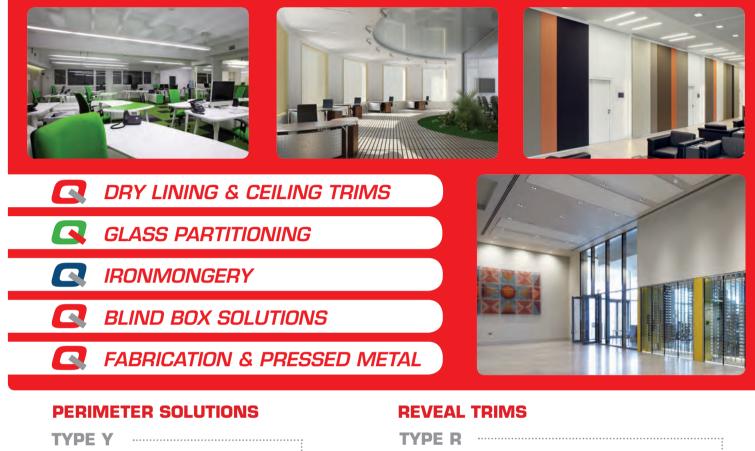




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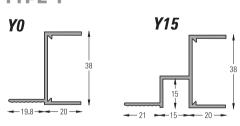


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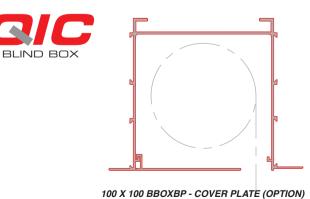


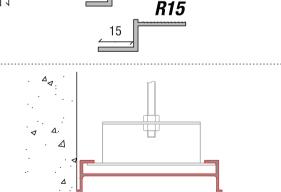
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Intelligence In school



& technology

ldeas burn white-hot here

burn hot Above Supergraphics and industrial style balconies pep up what used to be a rather blank

media centre for the

London 2012 Olympics.

Below UCL's Here East research and testing facilities, converted by Hawkins\Brown.

East is about fully realising the talent, imagination and aspirations of our students in ways that are not constrained by the stereotype of the profession. Around 50% of all our courses are non-accredited, which tells you an awful lot about where the subject is going. Here East is about offering something new and exciting that can challenge the boundaries of the curriculum and hopefully, one day, be welcomed inside those boundaries.'

Although the site has only been open just over a year, exciting insights are already coming from undergraduates on the MEng degree in engineering & architectural design, and post-grad courses in design for manufacture (MArch), design for performance & interaction (MArch) and situated practice (MA).

All courses are research-led. A key focus is to examine how designers can better exploit and extract value from technology to catch up with peer industries such as the automotive or aerospace sectors.

Students in blue lab coats and goggles

The RIBA Journal May 2019



Bartlett students venture way beyond the traditional curriculum in a high-tech, hands-on 'play space'

Stephen Cousins

Architectural studies are expanding beyond the traditional confines of the profession to interact with other forms of practice such as urban design, computer science, architectural history, manufacture and performance.

Nowhere are these shifting boundaries more apparent than at University College London's (UCL) high tech new research, robotics and testing centre at Here East in Stratford, the former home of the London Olympics Media Centre recently converted by Hawkins\Brown.

Inside a cavernous 2,000m² hall, affectionately known as the 'play space', undergraduate and masters students from the Bartlett School of Architecture interrogate new ideas and processes using robotic cells, advanced fabrication equipment, environmental chambers and structural testing rigs.

The facility is part of the 6,000m² UCL campus at Here East and was developed jointly by the School of Architecture, the Faculty of the Built Environment and the Faculty of Engineering Sciences to help consolidate crafts and manufacturing efforts with science, technology and design. Resources are shared by other departments, including Computer Science, the Institute of Sustainable Heritage, and the Institute of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering.

Bartlett director Bob Sheil says: 'Here

44



We don't do things for students; we teach them to do things for themselves

Below Kuka manufacturing robot.

Right Manufacturing research space.

operate brake presses, CNC machines, guillotines and robot-driven plasma cutters to augment their understanding of fabrication processes and opportunities to identify and design out issues that architects often miss.

'We don't do things for students, we teach them to be in position to do things for themselves,' says Peter Scully, co-director of the design for manufacture course, and technical director of B-Made, the acronym for The Bartlett Manufacturing + Design Exchange, an initiative led by the School of Architecture. 'This is "industrial-light", not full-on hell for leather production, but more about encouraging students to think in line with the challenges of manufacturers.'

Other students are exploring the possibilities when the pathway to technology is relatively easy and does not require much development. One PhD researcher on the design for manufacture course is using a Kuka high accuracy industrial robot to imprint steel plates with 3D geometry to boost their inherent strength and rigidity.

A custom effector moves in response to a design in parametric 3D software, pushing against the metal to form 'ribs' in stratified layers. It's hoped the research could result in a new type of facade panel that requires





less strengthening, or a design that could be spread across multiple panels to create a self-supporting facade.

The hall is filled with the buzz of drones in a fenced off zone, where researchers from the Autonomous Manufacturing Lab, part of the UCL Robotics Institute, work to develop a team of UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) capable of 3D printing concrete structures.

Using drones in place of conventional construction methods can have multiple benefits, such as the ability to adapt to diverse site scenarios, reduce construction time and eradicate safety risks for human workers.

Beside this is a large scale 5m³ environmental testing rig, the first of its kind in the world, able to simulate the effects of earthquakes, extreme temperatures and driving wind and rain on building structures. Architecture students can also test their concept models in an 'artificial sky', a 5.2m diameter geodesic hemispherical dome fitted with over 800 LEDs and a parabolic reflector, designed to realistically simulate the effects of different daylight conditions.

As a very tech and engineering-oriented facility, UCL at Here East competes with the likes of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US and ETH Zurich in Switzerland, but the focus on humanities and sciences is a key differentiator. 'We're not just interested in the measurement of ideas, we're looking at the immeasurable, the social, the cultural and heritage,' says Sheil.

Part of the play space functions as a garage for the Mobile Heritage Lab, a research vehicle fitted with environmental monitoring, imaging and chemical analysis equipment that can be used to engage with the public and professionals in museums, heritage and archaeological sites across the UK.

The sheer number of activities and technologies is vertigo-inducing, but diversity can be a catalyst for creative disruption. Encounters between disciplines have led to 'water-cooler' moments whereby new research projects are cooked up.

'Conversations between different departments have been sparked from observing each other's work,' says Sheil. 'For example, computer scientists and environmental engineers have taken part in architectural crits and commented on the value of public discussion of a project in its infancy and feedback from experts.'

The Bartlett wants its research to incentivise the construction industry to take up new technology and make greater progress in areas like sustainability, off-site prefabrication, building repairability and maintenance.

Closer ties with industry are expected to result from the launch of a new MScI Architecture course in 2020. The five-year integrated Masters for Part 1 and 2 students was conceived to cut the cost of architectural education and will see post-grads spend their fifth year based in practice or industry (the Bartlett can only charge 20% of their tuition fees in the final year).

It is hoped students will spend time at Here East and employers will put them on projects that involve research exchange with the Bartlett. 'It's about trying to accelerate the exchange of knowledge between places like Here East and practice,' says Sheil. 'We want to reduce the typical intergenerational lag, whereby students graduate with state of the art knowledge but their lack of experience means that resource is underutilised.'

With many studios constricted by shrinking profits and staffing resources, investment in research and development can be a difficult cost to justify. Future collaboration with UCL researchers could reduce that burden and drive technology into a sector that desperately needs to innovate.



Slim solution

The enhanced FWS 35 PD façade from Schueco UK gives architects new design solutions. An ultra-slim 35 mm face-width providing narrow sightlines, a stunning all-glass corner option and the ability to accommodate Schueco AWS 114 opening window units, make this system the complete slimline solution for both commercial and residential projects. Available in two versions: .HI (highly insulated) or .SI (super-insulated, delivering Passive House values). For German engineering made in Britain, there's only one name. **www.schueco.co.uk**



Competition IG Lintels

Spanning Suburbia

Who doesn't love a suburban home? Our competition invites architects to rethink the typology for the 21st century

Suburbia, that early 20th century typology, still holds a fascination for the architect, despite the rise of the larger metropolis and megalopolis. Even in our modern world, the aspirational middle-class values it embodies retain their draw. History has charted suburbia as a battleground for artistic movements –from Mod to punk and now bedroom-generated electronic music; and that's tracked by competing architectural styles: arts and crafts, neo-vernacular, modernism... even post-modernism.

Now we are asking architects to rethink suburbia with a design for a one-off house which expresses the needs and aspirations of its occupants and is highly creative with a wide range of lintel features. These styles have stood the test of time. From the first inter-war estate housing to the rise of the archetypal 1950s semi-through to the toy-town developments of the 80s that characterised the free-market expansionism of Thatcher's Britain, the utilitarian nature, flexibility and potential for expansion of suburban housing endured.

With such potential for the individual to put their stamp on their home over its long life, the suburban house reflects the lives of its occupants. Mass-produced by default, over time it embodies the potential to express its owners' taste in the most curious ways – a kind of architecture without architects.

Inspired by this our competition, Spanning Suburbia, in conjunction with the UK's largest steel lintel manufacturer, IG Lintels, invites architects to offer us their own vision with a design for a 21st century suburban family villa – whatever that might constitute; perhaps non-nuclear, online, atomised! **Above** In Chestnut Hill suburb, Philadelphia, Robert Venturi's 1964 Vanna Venturi House. **Below** One of IG Lintels' Bullseye Feature on a house at Potter's Hill near Bristol, UK.



CRITERIA The main construction material should be traditional brick or block, and the main structural support for its features should be the steel lintel. Each entry must incorporate at least three of the following features in their designs (entrants will be provided with weblinks to IG Lintels technical product information and technical telephone support will be available) :

- Gothic arch
- Parabolic arch
- Bullseye window
- Apex arch
- Segmental arch
- Semi-circular arch
- Sun lounge
- Corner windows
- Square bay windows
- Splayed bay windows
- Glazed apexes
- Brick feature details

Using these lintels, our challenge to you is to create a home that meets the needs of its contemporary occupants; which can be minimalist or highly decorative; restrained or exuberant. Whatever the formal language, thermal comfort and efficiency is a key consideration. Rooms may be functional but must include an abundance of natural light and decorative features.

THE SITE Entrants are at liberty to pick their suburban site – but we will want to see evidence of it – as the building will have to respond to the context you have decided on. Why did your fictional residents choose the site?

JUDGING Judges will be looking for a winning design that is highly creative in its employment of a wide range of lintel features, and which joyfully expresses the needs or aspirations of its occupants. It should be energy efficient, it may be innovative or playful. The winner will be the design that best embodies the utility, contingency, personality and joy that the best suburban homes can manifest.

SUBMISSIONS Entries must include the following and be laid out on no more than two A3 sheets, supplied electronically as pdfs:

- Site plan and critical images of the chosen site
- Plans of the villa, including north point
- Elevations and a key section
- Axonometric or 3D visualisation showing lintel construction methodology
- Optional supplementary images you consider helpful

PRIZES There will be a cash prize of £2000 for the winner and £500 for each of the three commended entries. Winning entries will be published in the September 2019 issue of the RIBAJ.

ENTER HERE ribaj.com/spanningsuburbiacompetition

Deadline for entry: 14 May 2019

Entry support: info@iglintels.com Further information: iglintels.com/special-lintels





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Horror show

With no written brief, chaotic notes and no client sign off for design changes, a home cinema dream became a courtroom drama

Angus Dawson

A recent high profile case involving the design aesthetics of a home cinema highlights the importance of having a clear, written brief and obtaining client sign off to design changes (as well as the flaws of using Pinterest).

Philip Freeborn and his wife engaged Daniel Marcal, a registered architect, to help convert the pool house at their home in Barnet, north west London, into a function room and to build a cinema.

The plans for the cinema evolved and it was eventually decided that it would be housed in a glass box suspended from the ceiling of the pool house supported by four legs. The photographs of the 3D mock-up show a sleek design with glass walls, four slender legs and open tread stairs. The photograph of the finished cinema shows a wooden box with glazed panels and spider bolts, supported on six legs and, to adopt a phrase used by the judge, a 'wonky industrial look'.

The clients were distinctly unimpressed ('shocked' is a phrase that comes up in the

judgment) and the matter ended up before the courts.

What comes out loud and clear from the judgment is that, aside from any design issues, Marcal failed to follow good practice (including the Architect Registration Board's code of conduct) and this played a significant part in him being found negligent. The lack of a written contract, no written project brief and no meeting minutes confirming what was discussed and agreed with the clients or planning or progress reports all contributed to this finding.

Marcal's day books, notebooks and sketch pads which he sought to rely on in his defence were described as 'confused, confusing and chaotic', containing a 'tumble dryer of misinformation' which could not be readily understood '... let alone relied upon in the absence of any supporting contemporaneous document evidence'.

Clear client communication, backed up with good written records, will help architects avoid being in the same position. There should be a written contract which confirms the scope of the retainer, the fee and who is responsible for what. The initial brief should also be recorded in writing (and tie in with any descriptions, drawings, sketches or 3D models showing what will be delivered) and any subsequent changes should be documented and signed off by the client. 'Relying on sample boards, mood boards or Pinterest pictures is not sufficient for both architect and client to have clarity as to what has been designed and what was to be built.' Meeting minutes should be written up and circulated to all attendees and monthly progress reports should also be distributed. The judge reinforced that this approach should be adopted irrespective of project size and the type of premises and client involved.

Damages tend to be awarded for the cost of rectifying defective work, which in this instance was actually relatively limited. However, as the judge felt 'this particular ugly duckling...[could not] be turned into a swan' and because it was so far adrift from what the clients had been led to believe they would be getting, it was not reasonable to expect them to get used to it and demolition was the right option. The clients were therefore entitled to recover the costs of demolition, the wasted costs of the original works and, also unusually, a sum for distress and inconvenience. • Angus Dawson is a partner at Macfarlanes LLP The judge described the architect's records as 'a tumble dryer of misinformation'

IN PLAIN ENGLISH – ASSIGNMENT

A party to a contract can transfer their rights and benefits in that contract, subject to the express terms of that contract, to another party. This is known as assignment. From a client's perspective that could involve the right to receive the services while for a consultant it could be the right to receive payment. Obligations cannot be assigned – they can only be transferred by way of a novation. An assignment which satisfies certain statutory requirements is a legal assignment – all other assignments are equitable.

There's more to MDF than meets the eye

Michael Willoughby joined RIBA Journal's round table with MEDITE SMARTPLY prepared to be surprised. He wasn't disappointed



48

What are the myths and truths around MDF specification in construction? In an effort to find out, a selected group of eight specifiers, from joiners to sustainability experts and architects, gathered in London with RIBA Journal senior editor Jan-Carlos Kucharek. Over lunch they discussed their perceptions of medium density fibreboard, got to know some of manufacturer MEDITE's products, and learnt something new about the material and its modern-day properties.

Far from being a predictable discussion about this ubiquitous building material, there was a surprising amount attendees didn't know about the various products in the company's MEDITE MDF range and how the Irish company has moved the product forward. For instance, it has championed zero-added formaldehyde products since the 80's, has been the first to offer flame retardant MDF products to the market, and has a range of products for exterior applications. Matt Blackden, associate director at Emrys Architects, spoke for many there when he said his perceptions of MDF hadn't changed since woodwork lessons at school. Then, he'd learnt that

MDF was 'structurally consistent in every direction and very malleable'.

Definitely not cardboard

He added: 'Timber represented artisanal work and MDF represented modernity. It was something I could do anything with and was fluid and pretty much consistent throughout. I didn't know there was also an exterior grade product option - I'm learning this today.'

MEDITE SMARTPLY's product manager Colin Wheatley had been debunking the common but incorrect assumption that MDF was compressed cardboard and unsuitable for the elements. In fact, he explained, MDF is an engineered fibre board made by grinding softwood chips from sustainable small diameter pulp wood and saw mill offcuts, that is heated with steam to soften the wood fibres (a process known as defibration), and binding the dried fibres back together with the natural resin (lignin) in the wood which is what holds a tree together, and the addition of added resin and wax. This cotton-wool-like fibre is then compressed in a high temperature press forming the smooth and consistent MDF

Left Architects and installers chewed the cud at an informative lunch with Medite Smartply.

Right MEDITE TRICOYA EXTREME (MTX) scotches the idea that exterior environments are no place for MDF.

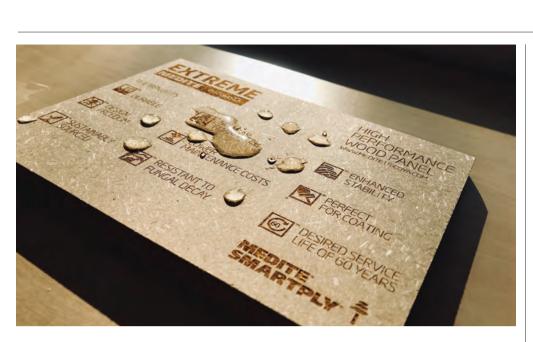
material everybody recognises.

An external MDF has been available from MEDITE since the 90s but this has been further innovated with the world's first extremely durable acetylated MDF panel that is completely weather resistant with a warranty of up to 50 years in external conditions. To prove his point, Wheatley once dropped a sample of MEDITE TRICOYA EXTREME (MTX) into a glass of water in the presence of renowned architect Peter Cook. who had expressed scepticism that it would survive the event they were attending. Wheatley countered that it would still be there in 50 years, revealing that acetylated wood samples had been buried in the ground as part of its testing programme and these are dug up annually to check they are still holding out. He gave Cook the sample to take home and enjoy.

Robust and decorative

Belen Lopez Barrera, architect at Arup Associates, was interested to find out that this specific exterior product, MEDITE TRICOYA EXTREME, was not only lighter than an aluminium weatherscreen or Masterboard panel, but more importantly, was the most dimensionally stable wood product in the world. Unlike conventional softwood or even tropical hardwoods, It hardly moves and does not crack when exposed to extreme changing external conditions and coatings can last up to 12 years before reapplication is needed, due to stability of the paint film on the substrate.

Like Masterboard, some MEDITE products have enhanced flame retardant



properties, notably MEDITE PREMIER FR EUROCLASS B & C. This suits applications where a Euroclass C or B flame retardant substrate is required under building regulations, with the panel having a reduced flame spread and smoke development.

As with all MEDITE products, PREMIER FR MDF has very low formaldehyde emissions. The compound, also used in toothpaste, occurs naturally and is even found in oak trees. Nevertheless, it is a carcinogen and an irritant to the mucous membranes and the gut; prolonged exposure can lead to asthma-like symptoms and dermatitis if high exposure occurs. The good news is that MDF such as MEDITE's and other wood based panels are strictly limited to emission levels of formaldehyde by E1 European standards (\leftarrow 8mg/100g Oven dry wood) which means dangerous exposure from their use is impossible.

Furthermore, MEDITE has adopted a more stringent CARB2 & TSCA compliance level for formaldehyde emissions which is the minimum requirement for wood panels used and produced in the US, and is a further reduction on the European E1 minimum requirement.

As a result of uncertainties around the use of formaldehyde of any level, green building standards such as LEED and WELL have implemented credits for the use of no added formaldehyde wood panels, this being the lowest possible level to meet and the same as found in natural wood or tomatoes.

Other green building standards are considering making no added formaldehyde

products a prerequisite. Such credits would be guaranteed with products like MEDITE ECOLOGIQUE, EXTERIOR and FR ECOLOGIQUE, premium specifications made with zero-added formaldehyde, far beyond any formaldehyde emission regulation commonly tested for.

More recently, projects under the updated BREEAM new construction framework can gain additional credits for using wood products like MDF that meet specific VOC (volatile organic compound) limits as well as formaldehyde emissions, an indicator of the expected shift toward more in-depth lab-based test requirements for construction products in the future.

Ever more sustainable

Gordon Emm, director at bespoke Joinery company Brown & Carroll, said he specified MEDITE ECOLOGIQUE – made using a special zero-added formaldehyde resin – on things like vitrines in his high-end fit-outs because he considers the extra quality offers a museum-grade solution. Spraying it with a hard-wearing water-based lacquer gives it a superb and compliant finish, he said.

The name ECOLOGIQUE highlights the sustainability of MEDITE's products and attendees were surprised to discover that MDF is generally made from wood offcuts that are of little use for anything other than biomass burning. MEDITE is a division of the state-owned Irish forestry business Coillte ('forest' in the Irish language) which owns 7% of Ireland's land mass – more than 440,000ha – so there is no shortage of such offcuts.

Made of offcuts, MDF is inherently sustainable

It is currently a challenge to recycle used MDF from the construction industry, but UK organisation MDF Recovery has been looking to develop a commercially viable way of recycling it into newly produced MDF or into wood fibre insulation materials. It has the potential to be the next big development in the area of MDF reuse. MEDITE is always looking to the next generation of products and sustainability drives and welcomes commercial developments in this area.

MEDITE SMARTPLY has also tried to push a social purpose too, partnering with a charity in north east England that makes bird boxes, and a social enterprise in west London making furniture. Both organisations offer carpentry training to people rehabilitating after prison or substance abuse. As well as using laminated or lacquered MEDITE products in fit-out or MTX for external durability, more decorative uses for the products were also shown. One homeowner in the Channel 4 show Grand Designs liked the look and feel of exposed MTX so much they decided to stain it with a black finish rather than lacquering it in their bathroom.

Meanwhile, artists and designers use MTX to simulate other, heavier and more expensive materials. One fashioned what seemed to be 30-tonne girder from it while another produced a 12m CNC'd statue to mimic Balinese stone. Machined in a nearby workshop, the artwork was finished with oil and resin with a grain-like pattern showing through.

Speaking of MTX, MEDITE SMARTPLY's Wheatley said: 'It is lightweight, sustainable and indistinguishable from the real thing –except when you touch it.' Just one more surprising revelation in an afternoon of them.





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3: Culture

Planning flaws

Fresh back from Hong Kong, Hugh Pearman wonders how useful the aesthetic agonising of our planning system is



Hugh Pearman Editor

In the UK we operate in a system of planning officials and committees, many now guided by separate design review panels mostly comprising architects and other builtenvironment professionals. So I got away from all that and spent some time on the other side of the world in a place where none of it seems to apply: Hong Kong.

The former British colony provides a lesson in super-density of course – a function of the shortage of buildable land, which is why they are forever reclaiming it from the sea to build on. Cheek-by-jowl living, working and playing is the norm, but how is it controlled? The answer I got from everyone I met is that it isn't really – only in the crude sense of applying plot-ratios to govern overall height and how much of the plot you can totally fill. I didn't get the impression that there was a great deal of agonising over aesthetics. Rather like Dubai, there is so much going on that

НОГГУ ЕХГЕУ

Could things be any worse if there was no planning at all? They might even be somewhat better good architecture just gets lost in the crowd, and the ensemble effect becomes the thing. It works for them, and for much of the world.

I found myself wondering if this mattered much. After all, it's not as if everything that gets built in the UK is of supreme quality, for all the aesthetic agonising that we go in for. That's why we have awards – in fact, the best awards system in the world – to single out the good stuff, to make the case for quality. Similarly the buildings we cover in this magazine are the good ones, not the dross, for all that we offer robust critique. The same is true of all architectural media.

Those who sit on design review panels will be familiar with the situation whereby any of the (invariably good) architects on the panel could do a better job than the (often not nearly so good) architect/developer presenting some disappointing scheme or other. But that – maybe with a few improving tweaks – is what will mostly get built. Lifting overall quality is a far harder task than heading off the occasional potential horror. But what if we've got it wrong, and shouldn't even try?

I'll return to Hong Kong in future issues: it's fascinating for all kinds of reasons. As for here, plenty of people in the past as well as the present have argued that planning controls don't really work, indeed act to constrain supply, push up rents and house prices, and stifle creativity. As long ago as 1969, 'Non-Plan' was devised as a concept by Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall and Cedric Price, published in New Society magazine. Years later Barker summarised this as: 'Could things be any worse if there was no planning at all? They might even be somewhat better.'

Well maybe, in some places – though try to persuade people living on the edge of the Green Belt or in National Parks. I don't recommend it. But be honest: secretly it's an appealing notion, isn't it?

Let us know your thoughts: letters.ribaj@ riba.org •

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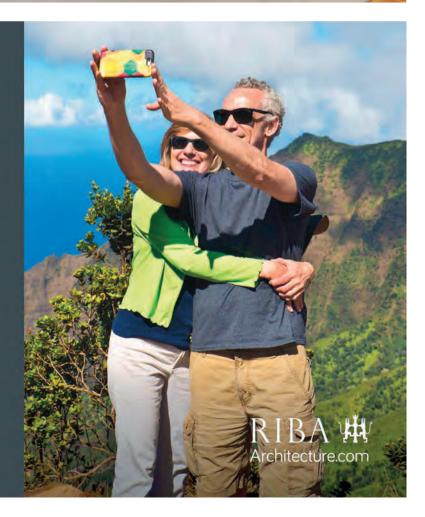
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For wilful neglect

Sometimes there's a case not to improve – but how do you keep that under control?



Will Wiles

What is the most neglected principle in urban planning? Being neglected isn't the same as being forgotten, or to be little-known in the first place. It is more purposeful. It's something that has deliberately been left to wither. The perfect example would be the first part of the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the US. Everyone remembers and quotes the second part, about the right to bear arms. The first part, about the importance of a well-regulated militia, is neglected, because it contextualises and qualifies the second in a way that is politically unhelpful to the people who want to open their beers with automatic weapons.

So what's the urbanist equivalent of the well-regulated militia? It's to be found in Jane Jacobs's The Death and Life of Great American Cities, at the head of chapter 10, in her third condition of the successful neighbourhood: 'The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones.'

This is the chapter that 'placemakers' reach for when retaining and sprucing up an old warehouse or pumping station or clock tower at the middle of their multi-million-pound mixed-use development. But part of it is carefully neglected, and funnily enough, it's the part that concerns neglect.

With the words: '... buildings that vary

It's in neglected and run-down spaces that low-yield but socially valuable enterprises can be set up in age and condition ...' Jacobs more or less makes a case for neglect, possibly even for vacancy, abandonment, decline and ruin. It's in neglected and run-down spaces that lowyield but socially valuable enterprises can be set up – by people and organisations that can't afford brand new or refurbished space.

In 1961 New York, Jacobs might have found it hard to imagine that a city might run out of the run-down, with far vaster crises needing to be addressed. She was making a case against large-scale, blank-slate redevelopments that made everything anew. Nevertheless today this is exactly the shortage that is making hyper-gentrified, hyper-financialised cities more and more difficult to live in and enjoy. Further, it's this shortage of genuine dilapidation that leads to the Potemkin perversity of 'artwashing' and eerie start-up hives like Here East in Stratford, east London. In narrow terms this whole phenomenon is only a problem in the 'world' cities that have been the great winners of the past two decades; outside London there are still cores of British cities that have derelict buildings galore, and few takers for them. But I would argue that the conundrum needs to be considered when a place is approaching regeneration, not left until gentrification takes off.

Jacobs's neglect principle isn't overlooked for devious reasons, just because it's inconvenient. It illustrates a wider problem with the urban formula set out in Death and Life. Jacobs was very shrewd at describing the conditions that allowed a neighbourhood to, in her words, 'spontaneously un-slum' itself. But that process is hard to control, and can barrel uncontrollably into socially exclusive, culturally sterile over-regeneration, where a neighbourhood is a dormitory for the rich, a cash cow for landlords, and a blank space on the map for everyone else.

Is this inevitable, or can the delicate balance that allows a neighbourhood to stay inclusive and welcoming be maintained indefinitely? The 'mix of conditions' rule shows how difficult this is. How on earth can you legislate for neglect? Farmers do have their fallow fields, but when businesses need premises and people need homes it would be monstrous to deliberately restrict use of a building in order to let it decline. It may be the insoluble paradox of urban ecology: sometimes degeneration is as important as regeneration.

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

SEIZING THE MOMENT

Shameless plug: in an overheating, hypergentrified city, alienated creatives start to hanker for a more run-down and dangerous past, and see what they can do to restore it – as coincidence would have it, this is the theme of my new novel, Plume, which comes out on 16 May.

HOLLY EXLEY

POE is the way ahead

Updated guidance to the RIBA Plan of Work aims to take the drive for sustainable construction beyond good intentions



Ben Derbyshire

A quarter of UK carbon emissions derive from housing. Despite good intentions to reduce this, many new and refurbished homes have been found to use twice the amount of energy aimed for. We know housing is a political issue, so you would think a thorough understanding of how to achieve quality outcomes would be central to government strategy. Sadly, this is not the case. Housing development takes place largely in the absence of a comprehensive system for establishing performance in terms of standard setting, testing or feedback in use. It has been said that people are better informed about their breakfast cereal than they are about their homes.

In recent times, governments have taken the view that housing standards, regulation and guidance have stifled the market. The regulatory space has arguably become overcrowded, but instead of an effective programme of rationalisation, the tendency has been to strip away worthwhile checks and balances. The dearth of feedback loops in the built environment generally, and housing in particular, has left the homebuilding industry lagging far behind almost all other aspects of consumption. It's not just cornflakes that you can rely on for predictable performance It is said that people are better informed about their breakfast cereal than about their homes these days. White goods, cars, communication systems, leisure and tourism services are among a wide range of industries subject to open systems of feedback on standards of performance that are clearly described.

If we are to move towards reliable delivery of meaningful built performance, we need a theoretical basis for doing so that is accessible and understandable. Energy consumption is part of it, but there are other aspects too, particularly the impact on human wellbeing. Unless and until we have suitably universal systems for standard setting, predicting, measuring, feedback and learning from the outcomes, we will be hampered from overcoming these existential threats.

Post-occupancy evaluation (POE), the assessment of how building performance measures up to the expectations of the team that designed and built it, has huge potential but is still rare in private and public sector contracts. The RIBA is calling for POE to become a requirement in public sector capital funding programmes and for all housing providers to consider its benefits. We'd like to see ministers appoint departmental POE leads and to spearhead reform and share data between and within departments and with contractors and designers. POE adds less than 0.25% to the project cost, but would have enormous benefits for existing and future buildings.

An industry consensus is emerging on the key sustainable outcomes that the RIBA expects to become the standard measurables for all projects in the future. New RIBA guidance to be published towards the end of the year will fully embed sustainability into the RIBA Plan of Work and provide the means for teams on any project to target sustainable outcomes in the brief, manage their delivery through each stage and undertake meaningful analysis up to three years after handover.

Led by members of the RIBA's Sustainable Futures Group and supported by professionals across the industry, this work will result in an updated guide to using the RIBA Plan of Work. Supporting this will be detailed guidance on 'sustainability' and 'plan for use' strategies that define standard tasks for the prediction and measurement of a core set of outcomes, for use in a new professional services contract for post-occupancy evaluation.

If you have any questions or comments about the updated RIBA Plan of Work guidance please email practice@riba.org. • @ben_derbyshire president@riba.org

CLOSE THE GAP

The **RIBA** recently published guidance on closing the gender pay gap, outlining a range of effective measures to improve gender equality. This is accompanied by a #CloseTheGap pledge, developed by a core group of gender pay reporting practices, which commits participants to several actions including operating fair, equal and unbiased recruitment and promotion procedures, supporting flexible working patterns and appointing a Diversity Champion. All RIBA chartered practices are encouraged to sign up: architecture.com/ knowledge-and-resources/ resources-landing-page/ gender-pay-gap-guidance

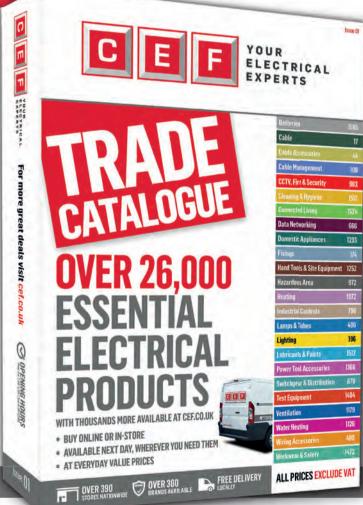
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Eye Line 2019: Judges announced

As we move towards the deadline for entries to our annual drawing competition, six illustrious names have signed up to judge your work

It's Eye Line time! The original annual award for architectural image-making skills – let's call it 'drawing', though we welcome all media and combinations of media – is now open for 2019 entries. As ever, it's purely the power of the image that we're interested in. How well do you communicate an idea or record an existing building or place?

This is the seventh year of Eye Line, and my, how it's grown. Once again we invite entries in two categories: practitioners and students. We will exhibit winners and commendations at the RIBA as well as publishing them in print and online. And our colleagues at the RIBA's world famous Drawings and Archives Collections (DAC), based in the Victoria & Albert Museum, will scrutinise the winners for potential inclusion in the collections.

We make no distinction between 'hand drawing' and computer rendering skills. Both are of equal value and anyway, so many architectural depictions layer several techniques to produce the final image. All are welcome.

We DO distinguish between practitioners and students however, as the conditions under which you work are very different.

Student category: images made by those in architectural education or who are submitting images made before fully qualified.

Practitioner category: images made by those fully qualified and working in practice, either for real-life projects or to explore ideas and experiences.

Last year's overall winner was Tszwai So of Spheron Architects with An Echo in Time, drawings for a Brussels memorial to victims of 20th century totalitarianism. His main charcoal drawing The Messenger will take its place in the RIBA Collections.

Other practitioner winners and commendations were Rory Chisholm of Donald Insall Associates, Jolene Liam of Studio Egret West, and Alan Power. Student laureates were Jacob Hoeppner of the University of Stuttgart, Lucinda Anis and Chris Hamill



Above Last year's student winner was Jacob Hoeppner from the University of Stuttgart with his drawings titled Museum for Mies: Mies with Stirling I, II & III.

from Cambridge, Caroline Bernard of Kingston University and George Allen of the Royal College of Art.

Now it's YOUR turn. This is an international competition. Practitioners and students – get image-making, and enter!

JUDGES

Patty Hopkins, Hopkins Architects Anne Desmet RA, artist Neil Spiller, architect, academic and editor of Architectural Design Wen Quek, architect partner, Cullinan Studio Tszwai So, co-founder of Spheron architects and last year's Eye line winner Hugh Pearman, editor of the RIBA Journal

eye line

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 deadline of 23.59 on Monday 10 June, 2019, and must not previously have been entered for Eye Line. Enter online at:

ribaj.com/culture/enter-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: Monday 10 June, 23:59

Judging: end June. Winners and commendations announced: August issue of RIBAJ and online. Exhibition opening: August. Correspondence: eyeline.ribaj@riba.org

Winning and commended entries will be published in the August issue of RIBAJ and exhibited at the RIBA The Office Group believes profits depend on happy clients. Working closely with architects to make well designed spaces is a critical part of that

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Portrait: Ivan Jones

Good day at the office

The Office Group's Charlie Green and co-CEO Olly Olsen are in the business of changing the way we work. Since 2003 - when, with just £100,000, they set up and fitted out their first 'designer' 510m² co-working space in Islington - the developer has experienced an exponential trajectory, with a management buyout in 2010 by Travelex founder Lloyd Dorfman when they had seven buildings in their portfolio. A massive injection of capital in 2017 from the Real Estate arm of investor Blackstone means TOG now owns or leases 35 co-working properties in London and is worth in excess of £500 million. Nearly 18,000 users, from one-man band entrepreneurs to medium-size tech companies, all miners in the digital economy, bustle around TOG's 160,000m² of prime, architect-designed, commercial real estate; spaces that, with breakout lounges, cafés and bars, are more like boutique hotels and private clubs than offices.

But then, as a youthful-looking 49-yearold Charlie Green explains from the firm's Smiths Building HQ in Fitzrovia, changing the services office market in a fundamental way was always the intention. Though stylishly attired for a 'big meeting' today, he's usually as dressed down as his offices' co-workers.

That's the thing about TOG. From the old-school English boiled sweets in glass jars in the reception via its carefully selected designer furniture here and in the tastefully fitted-out cafés; to, in this case, the chronometer-like manifestation on partition glass to intimate the building's original provenance, it's about using architects to push the firm's brand values in the market. This is no coincidence - Green graduated in estate management at Oxford Polytechnic in 1992 during a recession. Irked by how badly real estate seemed to be marketed generally, things changed for him only after a lucky break, aged 27, at fledgling serviced office company MWB Group, which set itself up intending to rival (and be bought out by) Regus group.

The industry was modelled on 'getting people to sign up to spaces for nine months and then making money at every opportunity after that...but I couldn't get my head around the idea of copying a business model that was already deeply flawed – a place people only wanted to be in the short-term,' he



Bucking the trend of conventional office space: Charlie Green at TOG's Smiths Building HQ.



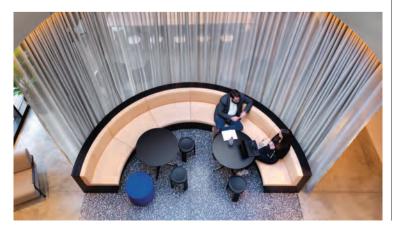
Culture Profile

recalls. And that's when the penny dropped. 'We wanted to flip the philosophy on the head. We thought: "Let's get someone signed up for nine months and then work out how to make them stay".' For Green, that involved three key elements: 'providing value rather than ripping off, having a level of service in the building that proves you care about the tenant, and thirdly, but most obviously, addressing the design of the building'. And, he explains, it was MWB Group's acquisition of the designer Malmaison hotel chain that he and Olsen looked to in directing the future path of Office Group's own identity: 'We realised the design was something we could hang our hat on - an expression of our ethos to the market.' And to add to that, TOG came into being just as technology was changing the world of work, from Google 'break out spaces' and 'hot desking' to facilitating the go-getter Hoxton tech-head with a laptop. It's been the role of TOG's architects ever since to embody this new flexibility and informality.

And they've used a roll-call of architects: Buckley Gray Yeoman, dMFK, SODA, Stiff+-Trevillion, Morrow & Lorraine, Stanton Williams, Metropolitan Workshop, AHMM, Archer Humphryes, Shed Architects. TOG was first influenced by design-led developer Derwent London, but with major players like British Land, Grosvenor, Land Sec and even the Crown Estate now looking for their share of the co-working pie, the architects are, says Green, all charged with the same, demanding brief: How to help us move forward with a distinct offering to the market. It's an aspect we've never lost sight of since we started.'

The approach starts with the buildings they choose to occupy. 'We know every building is different, and as a firm we love a story,' Green adds. That resulted in the chronometer manifestation in their own offices, and is

Below Universal Design Studio's fitout at Stanton Williams' Tintagel House refurb in Vauxhall.





TOG came into being just as technology was changing the world of work. TOG's architects embody this flexibility and informality

reflected throughout the firm's portfolio: in Stanton Williams' retention of the doors and ironmongery from the former police station that is Tintagel House at Vauxhall, the woody, gentleman's club feel of Archer Architects' 22 Manchester Square and the symbolism of the timber butterfly-wing ceiling in the firstclass lounge on the 24th and 25th floors of the Shard by Archer Humphryes. Green says they do their homework when choosing architects, 'knowing who is fresh, exciting and creative, having a sense for a project and who would be suited to it.' Some of the larger firms are appointed based on the ability to take the job on and see it through; others, like dMFK, were personal friends. Some just come to their attention. At Stockholm Design Fair the firm met Note Design Studio, who didn't get commissioned until nearly a year later for the Art Deco Summit House in London's Red Lion Square with its faeiance façade - 'it's going to be different to anything we've done before'. They're also commissioning Norm, which revamped Arne Jacobsen's SAS Hotel in Copenhagen, in what seems a shoo-in for TOG's slightly retro-chic aesthetic.

Green says they enjoy appointing younger, smaller firms who are keen and prepared to work with a client that is fully involved. Its noticeable that TOG has shirked highly aestheticised practices who may have their own design agendas. 'Malleability is key. We need architects who know where we're coming from, with a commercial viewpoint, design intelligence and a grasp of tenant needs,' Green tells me. 'Alarm bells ring for me when an architect tries to convince me an element it's specified is 'cheap' or 'cost-effective'; we know what things cost as we've been so long in the business.' But they also look for intuitive nous. At Tintagel House, fitout architect Universal Design Studio proposed a £30,000 pink terrazzo reception desk that was far Above There's a club class feel to Archer Humphryes' fitout of the 24th and 25th floors of Renzo Piano's Shard.

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above TOG's usual budget. 'But we came to accept the view that its specification had to take account of what would draw people to work in this location and the kind of quality they should expect throughout. Our instinct would have been to spend less on a desk in Vauxhall than we would in Soho – but in the end we decided to spend three times that.' But TOG also appreciates gutsy players. 'The best architects for us are the ones who can tell me when I have a bad idea but are able to embrace and take on board a good one,' he adds.

Is it all about the architecture? It's true that Green has a 'deep interest' in design, but make no mistake - TOG is first and foremost a property company with its eye very much on the bottom line. Green's at home talking about the options inherent in newbuild, Shell & Core, Cat A and Cat B fitout ('If it's Cat B it's around £50-£60/ft², then you have FFE on top') but what he doesn't let go of is ultimate control on those all-important finishes; in that regard, D&B is out of the question. 'As a firm, we'd rather take the cost risk and have the certainty that we are delivering something really beautiful; some of the intent and feel is lost when you hand it over to someone else to carry out.' Green mentions a fifth floor they had entrusted to a D&B contractor above the four they had carried out themselves on one of their central London properties: "Shame" might be too strong a word...'

But in developing TOG's bespoke aesthetic identity, Green is clear that its offering is more mainstream than some of its competitors', that the 'element of neutrality' makes good business sense. He sees TOG's style as quite distinct from Rohan Silva's Second Home with its niche brand identity. 'The type and nature of their members is key to them; we

Below Thomas House in Victoria, London: Regency style facade with interiors by SODA Architects.

Green is clear that

TOG's offering is

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sense





are more agnostic. If you push design too far and it all comes out pink and orange you end up alienating a lot of people, so we're always looking for a balance,' he tells me. 'That said, we encourage the architects we work with to start with their dream for the space and pull it back from there. In our time as a business we've become good editors - we don't embellish, we reduce down.' Green is also keen to distance himself from Second Home's elite community and WeWork's youthful demographic: 'We're not creating a community per se but an environment that's agile and flexible and which challenges the traditional lease. Any sense of community is a consequence of the original lease offer, not a pre-requisite.'

So where are they going? Green says that despite their aim to keep expanding the London co-working market, they have no global plans just yet. He feels the New York market is attractive but complex, the only iron in that fire being the Flatiron Building, which they are still in the running to redevelop. Otherwise they are sitting pretty here. I ask, maybe facetiously, if he thinks you can overdesign an environment so much that it reduces rather then improves productivity. 'I've never been asked that question before,' he replies and pauses before answering. 'The thrust of our bars, roof gardens and social spaces is about having fun, but also giving our tenants choices about where and how to work, because I'm convinced everyone is at TOG to seriously build their business.' And it's in the interstitial spaces, the liminal zones, that perhaps genius is sparked. 'Guidance tells us a corridor should be 1.2m but in our buildings it's 1.6-2.2m. We do that because we want people to feel like they can breathe and if they are happier because of that, they just might do business better.'

Above Green in the reception foyer of the Smiths Building. Not just for show, it's also a coworking space.

Promotion SterlingOSB Zero competition



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Raise the roof

Our annual Norbord SterlingOSB Zero competition is all about making the most of the urban roof, a potentially exciting space that is often overlooked. $\pounds 2,500$ awaits the winner, so get thinking! Deadline for entries is 1 July, 2019



In the drive to densify our cities, if you can't build out, you build up. The apotheosis of this is the high-rise but time, sustainability and urban re-purposing considerations have softened the edges of the initial frenzied drive to build high to more thoughtful inner city development.

In SterlingOSB Zero's 2019 competition, we are asking readers to investigate this fuzzy edge and invite propositions for appropriating urban roof areas and positing new uses for these redundant spaces. You may be interested in formalising a drive for how we might tackle the inner-city housing crisis. You may feel that occupants of sui generis live/work spaces might work better with their heads in the clouds. Perhaps you imagine a new leisure and communal proposition could benefit from the light and air that a rooftop site would afford them. A Fun Palace in the sky!

Whatever inspires you, Norbord is offering a top prize of $\pounds 2,500$ for proposals

Left Bennetts Associates' Shaftesbury Theatre in London's West End extended the grade II listed Edwardian building.

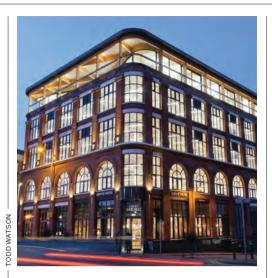
Right RMI Architects' Weaving Works Glulam extension on a Victorian linen warehouse in Belfast.

that use SterlingOSB Zero but which allow you to untether your imaginations! As Tennessee Williams wrote: 'Nothing's more determined than a cat on a hot tin roof': so get determined – and get designing!

The brief

RIBAJ/SterlingOSB Zero's Raise the Roof competition is seeking imaginative proposals for transforming redundant urban roof spaces to new uses, formed predominantly from . This could be residential, mixed-use, commercial, or for communal/leisure purposes. The nature of the programme should be clearly stipulated and will form the basis of consideration of the proposal. The design may or may not feed off the use of the existing building below, but any new rooftop use should consider an independent mode of access to the roof space as part of the design.

While we do not seek to limit the imaginations of entrants, we would ask you to bear in mind the nature of SterlingOSB Zero and to ensure that propositions consider the material's capabilities.



'The sky's the limit, if you have a roof over your head'

Sol Hurok, American impresario 1888-1974

Below Kraus Schoenberg's Hanover House refurbishment and extension in the Little Germany quarter of Bradford.



CRITERIA

Design a rooftop space of up to three storeys on an existing building of your choosing, which posits exciting, imaginative new urban uses. There is no limit to the size of the roof you select or to how much of it the intervention fills.

The overall context and the building upon which the proposal sits will be considered as part of the proposition. Entrants should demonstrate how SterlingOSB Zero has been used in the new proposal and how its bespoke and high strength features have made it an integral part of the design.

Being a speculative intervention, we do not expect entrants to adhere to current building guidance. Given the exposed nature of any proposition, entrants will need to employ cladding materials to cover the SterlingOSB Zero. The nature of any internal finishes may also be considered.

JUDGING

Chaired by The RIBA Journal, judges will look for imaginative uses of SterlingOSB Zero and innovative spatial proposals. These should consider the structural, acoustic and thermal demands of the design. Pre-fabrication, panels or CNC fabrication may all be considered. Other materials may be used to clad and fit out the proposal but it structural integrity is intended to be predicated on the use of SterlingOSB Zero.

The winning proposal will be the one that, in the minds of the judges, generates a solution that is spatially powerful, visually exciting, reflects the logic of the entrant's programme for the site and existing building and best potentializes the under-used spaces of rooftops, while making good use of SterlingOSB Zero's properties.

ENTRY FORM Go to ribaj.com/raisetheroof

SUBMISSIONS

Entries must include the following and be laid out on no more than two A3 sheets, supplied electronically as pdfs:

- Plan and sections explaining function
- Elevations, with existing building, showing the external look of the intervention
- 3D Axonometric
- Any supplementary images you may consider helpful to explain the scheme.
- An explanation of no more than 400 words on a separate sheet describing the nature of the proposal.

NOTES

- The judges' decision is final
- First prize is £2500. Three commended prizes of £250
- No correspondence will be entered into by the organisers or judges regarding entries and final decisions
- Shortlisted entries will be notified in writing
- Shortlisted entries will be invited to the prize giving event
- on Thursday 26 September 2019
- Please email any questions to ribaj.raisetheroof@riba.org

Deadline: Entries should be received by 23:59 UK time on Monday 1 July 2019.

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

Culture Books

Herr Bauhaus

64

Fiona MacCarthy's exemplary biography of Walter Gropius presents him as a tragic but unexpectedly sympathetic figure

Gillian Darley

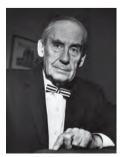
Walter Gropius, as everyone with any grasp of 20th century architecture knows, was a stern figure, seemingly as geometric and monochrome as his buildings. Fiona Mac-Carthy set herself the task of extracting quite another man from behind the clichéd picture, even if the jacket of her penetrating, exemplary, biography seems to bear it out: her subject, photographed by Irving Penn in 1948, stares unequivocally back at us. But, using much unpublished material, especially the diaries of his second wife, Ilse (Ise), MacCarthy reveals a Gropius of surprising complexity, a tragic but also a sympathetic figure.

Several things have conspired to fog the picture. Nothing was louder, more self-serving or meretricious than the voice of Gropius's first wife, Alma Mahler. After the disintegration of their relationship their daughter Manon was to be a pawn in her charge. Alma disliked the 'impassioned modernism' of the Bauhaus, her own blowsy taste embodied by the grotesque spectacle she would make of their dying teenaged daughter, set on a throne, decked in her own jewellery, like a (just) living Schiele. Gropius was kept in cruel ignorance until too late.

Divorced in 1919, severely traumatized by military service, Gropius found a visionary outlet in founding the Bauhaus. From the



Below Walter Gropius on receiving the Royal Gold Medal at the Royal Institute of British Architects, London.





brave experiment in Weimar came fellowship, creative common purpose and renewed pride in his battered country. 'The old stuff is out.' No professors, just masters. A course which would integrate workshop-based arts and education in the most free-flowing way possible - though there was, as yet, no architecture per se. His colleague, the graphic designer Herbert Bayer, could still see the soldier in Gropius, contrasted with Johannes Itten, of the shaven head and Mazdaznanism, who was (luckily) soon replaced by Moholy-Nagy - Gropius's most loyal supporter. The students, women heavily outnumbering men at first, were radical and open-minded, often foreign and, the conservative citizens of Weimar suspected (wrongly), mostly Jewish. Later, others entered the mix, hard-line communists and constructivists among them. Gropius negotiated the political shoals, guarding his neutrality with care and nurturing the local mayors who initially supported his enterprises, in Weimar and Dessau.

After two tumultuous love affairs, Gropius found the companion in life and work he had been looking for. He married the impressive Ise Frank in 1923; he was 40, she 26. By the time almost the entire Bauhaus staff from Weimar arrived in Dessau in 1925 she was 'Frau Bauhaus'. Fiona MacCarthy, also William Morris's biographer, identifies the Traumatized by war and divorce, Gropius found a visionary outlet in founding the Bauhaus strong connections between the arts and crafts movement and the Bauhaus – their practices, products and associated utopian communities. When Nikolaus Pevsner showed the famous Emery Walker photograph of Morris to Gropius he said, 'So that is Morris. I have never seen a picture of him. And yet I owe him so very much.'

Gropius was not that great a designer, rather an ideas man and a charismatic team-leader, more engineer than architect. He excelled as a teacher and as a public speaker. MacCarthy quotes the stage designer Lothar Schreyer, at the Bauhaus from 1921, describing his 'enchanting, sympathetic attitude especially to the younger generation.' Ise's diaries reveal a surprisingly relaxed, widely observant Gropius, fascinated by the 'architecture without architects' of southern Italy and the anarchic street life of Naples.

The Bauhaus, through the friendships, loyalties and interdependencies that centred on its first master, long outlived its physical location or even its European roots. Mac-Carthy identifies 'a strange sense of enduring love between them ... with Gropius himself at the centre of activity, so full of ideas and dedication'. The Bauhausler were scattered by the war and divided by politics, geography and circumstance, but, with some tragic exceptions, mostly re-emerged in the USA with their ideals intact.

For Walter and Ise Gropius the journey took them to London, where his poor English was an impediment, while she, English educated, became his voice. Even though he was enormously admired, patronage proved harder to secure. Encouragement and support came from the remarkable Pritchards of Isokon, and so Gropius began work with Max Fry, but their only substantial building, its brief suitably idealistic, was



Left Harvard Graduate Centre, Cambridge, Massachusetts, designed by Walter Gropius and The Architects Collaborative,

Gropius was

an ideas man

engineer than

architect

and charismatic

team-leader, more

bell. & MAINWRIGHT/RIBA COLLECTIONS

Henry Morris' Impington Village College.

In reality, Walter Gropius, a WWI veteran, may have been less acceptable for commissions in England than an emigre in flight for his life from the Nazis. MacCarthy leaves that question open; in 1934 Gropius had turned to Goebbels for support in a dispute over the design of a national trade pavilion. However honourably he behaved towards Bauhauslers in trouble Gropius's impulses remained proudly German, like those of his contemporaries Mies van de Rohe and Nikolaus Pevsner, as he came to realise that to be avant-garde was almost as dangerous as being Jewish. Gropius was naïve, Ise more attuned to reality in Nazi Germany.

In 1936 the couple left London for Harvard, where Gropius had been appointed chairman of the Department of Architecture. Eventually he became a resentful cog in a complex machine. The USA offered many rewards but post-war practice with The Architects' Collaborative (TAC), and even gigantic commissions like Baghdad University, were nothing to the happiness of return to Germany in the 1960s, working with Rosenthal on porcelain and glass factories and products. The circle had turned right back to 1911, and the Faguswerk. But now the Bauhaus approach lay behind arts foundation courses around the world - a momentous cultural shift, set in motion by Walter Gropius in 1919. His life is carefully and subtly told here. Gillian Darley is a writer and biographer

Walter Gropius by Fiona MacCarthy, Faber £30

Left A science lab at Village College, Impington, designed by Walter Gropius and Edwin Maxwell Fry.

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RIBA # Appointments

Job Board of the Royal Institute of British Architects

Culture Influential volumes

Cook's books

What inspires Peter Cook? The CRAB director shares the particular importance of just three influential volumes from his overloaded shelves

Words: Helen Castle

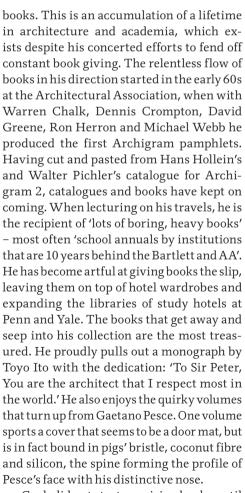
Peter Cook is a native of jury panels and lecture platforms the world over, so it is a surprise to find him quite so at home in north London. From the street he is visible, seated at his drawing board in the bay window of a handsome, gabled brick Victorian house. Rotring pen in hand, he is drawing 'a spoof of an Italian hill town' for the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition, enjoying the scurry of passers-by on a spring morning.

All the rooms and the connecting corridor of his ground-floor flat are lined with



Below Cook's gift from Gaetano Pesce, the monograph 'Il rumore del tempo', has an interesting binding.





Cook did not start acquiring books until he was in his 20s. He read Le Corbusier and One volume is bound in pigs' bristle, coconut fibre and silicon, the spine forming the profile of Pesce's face with his distinctive nose

Below Cook's front room is lined with an eclectic range of books and his son's old toys.





Nikolaus Pevsner when he was 14 or 15 at school, leaving at 16 to study architecture at Bournemouth College of Art. His grant meant he could not afford to buy books, so the library was his only source for books. He somehow got away with borrowing Banister Fletcher (A History of Architecture) for the entire three years of his degree. At the AA, he was taught by John Summerson who brought renaissance history to life. He continues to delight in rereading Summerson's Georgian London.

There is a loose 'Cooky system' in the flat for the shelving of books. The corridor houses series such as Architectural Design and theory books; biographies live in the bedroom – Bertrand Russell, Salvador Dali, Augustus John and Frida Kahlo – with 'standards you can't throw away', like Peter Ackroyd's London: The Biography, and a cluster of his wife Yael Reisner's volumes in Hebrew. There are monographs in the back living room and 'everything recent' in the front room, which is now used as a study, but was his son Alexander's room before he left home to join the music industry, the soft toys of his childhood remaining among the books.

Helen Castle is publishing director at the RIBA. Peter Cook will be talking on 'Sniffing and Responding' at RIBA Book Club, 66 Portland Place, at 1pm on 28 June. ribaj.com/petercookbookclub

Above Cook is enjoying Kurt W Forster's recent biography of Schinkel.

COOK'S TOP THREE READS

Reynham Banham's Theory and Design in the First Machine Age

Banham was instrumental for Cook. Written in 1960 – the year Cook graduated from the AA – the work covers the first 30 years of the 20th century. Rather than championing modernism as a style, as his teacher Pevsner did, Banham departed from the formal approach and provided a new understanding of modern design as technological evolution. Cook gained from Banham 'an enthusiasm for the mechanics of architecture and an understanding of the interplay between people'. Delight in the mechanical in architecture and people persist. His copy of Banham is very much a live book: an MIT 1980s edition, it is interleaved with his own sheets of copious notes.

Wolfgang Pehnt's Expressionist Architecture

As part of the 2017 CRAB Studio exhibition that toured Hamburg, Cologne and Munich, Cook and Yael Reisner were invited to the Munich Library to talk about their favourite books. He chose Banham and Reisner selected Pehnt's Expressionist Architecture. 'Yael drew the short straw,' he says. 'Pehnt was in the audience and had gone off expressionism, strongly disassociating himself from the book he wrote 45 years ago.' Cook, though, has used it assiduously since buying it in 1974; with over 400 illustrations, it compiles images of the work of all the major expressionist proponents, including Bruno Taut, Hans Poelzig and Hans Scharoun. Since writing his AA history thesis on Rudolf Schwarz, Cook has had 'heavy leanings towards the Germanic - an attraction towards everything German'. This was cemented by a comment from James Stirling at a New Year's party in the late 60s, that: 'you ought to look at Germany'. That led to teaching there and a professorship in the 80s at Hochschule für Bildende Künste Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main.

Kurt W Forster's Schinkel: A Meander through his Life and Word

Six months ago, Cook picked up Forster's biography of Schinkel 'when moseying around the bookshop in the architectural association close to the cathedral in Barcelona'. He was unable to put it down, 'thrilled by how readable it is. A Swiss writer looking at a Swiss architect, it expresses a preoccupation with Swiss landscape with a healthy dose of romanticism creeping into Swiss rationalism.' He is delighted that people are surprised he is reading about Schinkel, unaware that he 'was a romantic under the skin'. Since first becoming aware of 'the battle between the rationalists and the romantics when reading Le Corbusier and Goodhart-Rendel' at Bournemouth, he has 'come down firmly on the side of the romantics'. He is 'fascinated by romantic objects left in English gardens, such as Stourhead, and the contrived landscapes of Kyoto'. He's riffing on this romanticism as he returns to work on the Tuscan hill town at his drawing board in the bay window. Yael drew the short straw. Pehnt was in the audience and had gone off expressionism

Below Heavily used, Cook's selected titles are annotated, marked with Post-Its and interleaved with pages of notes.



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FRIDAY 28 JUNE PETER COOK:

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RIBA Bar 66 Portland Place, London. W1B 1AD. 1pm – 2pm £5 Members, Students & Friends of RIBA. £10 Non-members.



Sir William Whitfield 1920 – 2019

Prolific architect known for Whitehall's masterly Richmond House, who mixed modernism with traditionalism, and began architecture school at the age of 15



ROLAND JEFFERY

The architectural output of Sir William Whitfield, who has died aged 99, had roots in concrete and brick brutalism but took contextual postmodernism to a Palladian mansion that traditionalists admired. Principal of a small office for almost 50 years, his diversity of work was shot through with recurring themes and was

distinguished by thoughtful synthesis of precedent.

Whitfield joined Newcastle School of Architecture at the age of 15 on the basis of a drawings portfolio. Having also read planning and worked with Durham architect JS Allen, he attracted attention in 1954 as part of the trio that promoted a 'New Barbican' in the City of London. Strongly figured towers of record-breaking height featured and though unbuilt it galvanised the City into action and development a decade later.

A clutch of buildings for Durham and newly independent Newcastle University followed in 1960-70; his long facade of beautifully detailed copper fenestration and daring cantilevers against the quaint neo-Jacobean 1920s Union Club still looks good today.

Whitfield's 1961 competition win for government offices and a conference centre in Broad Sanctuary, opposite Westminster Abbey, gained him a profile and coverage, though it fell victim to Leslie Martin's plan to raze much of Whitehall. The facades would have had rectangular modules dimensioned to echo Pugin's on the Palace of Westminster while slender towers around blocks of accommodation articulated servant and served elements.

Glasgow University Library (1968) also boasted towers around reading room blocks. Successive alteration has diminished its monumental power, but the adjoining Hunterian Art Gallery retains hammered concrete and Whitfield's Mackintosh House evokes Toshie on the spot where his and Margaret's flat once stood; inside a gallery, outside a ghostly palimpsest.

Whitfield's extension to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in the City ran hammered concrete against the baroque of John Belcher's 1892 original and Joass's extensions. Beautiful detailing managed to win round a profession often cautious of statement architecture. Sections of neo-Joass work by Whitfield fooled many, but helped make the joins work, even if doctrinaire modernists felt 'replica' a contextual step too far.

Whitfield became the go-to architect for cathedral deans: his Chapter House at St Albans featured load-bearing Lutyensesque brickwork. A guest house and conference centre in the cathedral close at Canterbury nodded to Tudor precedent and made knapped flint almost playful alongside stone and green oak; while Hereford's Mappa Mundi library had roots in both arts and crafts and nonconformist gothic. These three projects faced dogged opposition, but have worn well. Whitfield was the assessor for the Hostry at Norwich Cathedral, won by Michael Hopkins. He was restoration architect for Hawksmoor's Christ Church Spitalfields 1970-2000 and surveyor of the fabric at St Paul's Cathedral 1985-90. He sat on the Royal Fine Art Commission and was trustee of the British Museum.

In 1986 Whitfield returned to Whitehall for Richmond House, a headquarters for the Department of Health. On this fearsomely awkward site between the Cenotaph and Norman Shaw's New Scotland Yard, he inserted substantial office plates, layered and staggered in both plan and elevation to give every office natural light. Fine cast concrete staircases and soffits lent internal gravitas while beautiful detailing and leadwork did the same externally. Facing the Cenotaph, its recessed composition of bay windows and turrets evoke, but at no point directly copy, Tudor precedent. Now grade II* listed, it is scandalously earmarked for demolition behind this facade to make way for a temporary Parliament building.

Paternoster Square, one of the great planning gridlocks between traditionalists and modernists, was finally built to Whitfield's masterplan with some buildings to his own design. It reads as a piece of urban fabric rather than a through-designed development. The way it frames views of St Paul's while ducking the St Paul's Heights cones and providing commercial density is a triumph.

Whitfield suffered a stroke five years ago and died at St Helen Hall, Co Durham, the 18th century Palladian House he rescued from demolition and surrounded with a new Vanbrughian garden to his own design. • Roland Jeffery

IN MEMORIAM

William Prophet Smail ELECTED 1951, BATH

John Peter Jeffree ELECTED 1952, MAIDSTONE

Peter Keith Collymore ELECTED 1956, WINCHESTER

Richard John Faircliff ELECTED 1963, MORETON-IN-MARSH

Stephen Van Egmond Irwin ELECTED 1966, TORONTO

James Joseph P Smyth ELECTED 1975, COUNTY WICKLOW

Muttucumaru Subramaniam Sridharan ELECTED 1976, NEW MALDEN

Gareth John Simmons ELECTED 1997, CORNWALL

Clifford Harry Barnett ELECTED 1949, LEEDS

Bryan Dryden Atkinson ELECTED 1953, ABERDEENSHIRE

Edward Charles Best ELECTED 1955, LONDON

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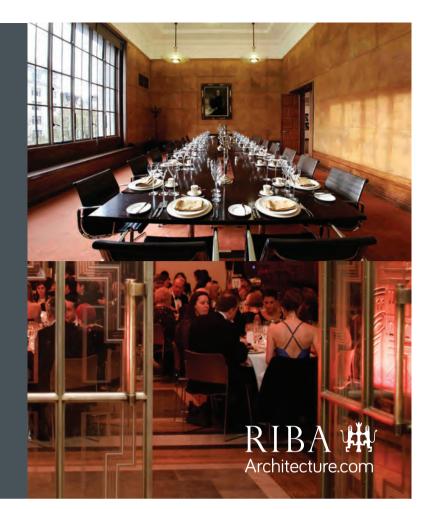
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Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools

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The **FOUNDATION FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS (FTS)** – the state agency responsible for new school building and the upgrading, renovation and repair of the school infrastructure in Malta – invites Expressions of Interest from senior civil/structural engineers to work on its ongoing and planned schools development programme under a definite three-year Contract of Service.

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- at least 8-10 years of relevant professional experience in schools development and renovation projects;
- working knowledge of, and experience in, engineering software packages; and
- project execution capability.

Appropriately qualified candidates, with good command of written and spoken English, are to send their CV and covering letter by email to <u>info.fts@gov.mt</u> and indicate their salary expectations.

Exchange

Only the Soanely

It seems questionable to regard as merely 'fashionable' the retention of successive layers of building fabric in order to create a consistent narrative describing the development of Pitzhanger Manor ('Freedom to shine', RIBAJ and ribaj. com, April 2019). However, what is never out of vogue, in our profession at least, is the desire to obliterate the work of other hands in order to present the illusion of a single, guiding vision. In her sneering dismissal of the work of skilled and dedicated Ealing Council officers in the transformation of a municipal lending library into a centre for the arts worthy of significant lottery funding, Pamela Buxton is as mean-spirited as she is ill-informed.

It was council officers who brought in experts such as Ptolemy Dean and Ian Bristow, whose pioneering work on historical paint analysis developed from his 1976 PhD thesis on the interiors of the house. The neutral colour scheme Ms Buxton so derides was, in fact, a code to alert future restorers to areas of original paint in good or poor condition or where it had been completely lost. Finally, it was council officers who defined the parameters of a new future for the house and gallery with a conservation management plan that led to the appointment of Jestico + Whiles and Julian Harrap Architects.

Does any of this matter when Pitzhanger has now 'got its soul back'? Future historians may argue that it does, very much. **Gavin Leonard, via email**

All together now

I was intrigued to read your leader ('Special delivery', RIBAJ March 2019) on architects taking over the designs of others. It is a contentious subject because of potential



 $conflicts \, of \, design \, ethos \, and \, delivery \, skills.$

When I was at (the late lamented) YRM Architects and Planners, I was involved in three projects where this was the case.

The first was an office building in The Hague with YRM as design architect and Groosman Partners of Rotterdam as executive architect. The second was for the abortive headquarters for Abbey National, with James Stirling. YRM was to be the delivery team. We had several design meetings with Stirling's team (he sitting in grandeur at his desk in Devonshire Place while the project team assembled around a fine dining table behind him). I believe the relationship would have worked, albeit largely to the future credit of the designer.

The third was the Leo Burnett building, in Sloane Avenue, London.

YRM was one of four competitors, of which Stanton Williams was the winner. YRM was subsequently appointed to lead the design team. The resulting building was a success and the relationship between YRM and Stanton Williams as joint design and delivery architects was a very good one. (I subsequently left YRM as director to join Stanton Williams as associate partner). The fitout was then carried out for Leo Burnett by Fletcher Priest, with close reference to YRM Stanton Williams.

That project was a good example of a unified architectural team, retained from inception to completion.

I tend to agree with your views about the potential lowering of detail standards where architect A is not fully retained by the client after architect B has come on board. In summary, if the two firms share standards and expectations of success, the resultant buildings should succeed. If Architect B is merely a working drawings machine, this probably won't be the case. **Richard Griffin, London**

Credit due

As our Panopticon project is mentioned favourably a number of times in your article on Nick Hare's UCL building in Bloomsbury (RIBAJ April 2019, p18), an attribution is always appreciated.

Edward Jones, Dixon Jones, London

Thank you for this clarification. Dixon Jones was indeed architect of the intriguing earlier Panopticon project on this site – Ed The neutral colour scheme at Pitzhanger was, in fact, a code to alert future restorers to areas of original paint in good or poor condition or where it had been completely lost

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Notre-Dame de Paris Paris, 1163 onwards

Like many major European monuments that have survived the centuries, the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris has been reborn many times. Built from 1163 onwards, it was expanded in its current Gothic forms over the course of two centuries, with its majestic west front completed in the 13th century, and became a point of reference for churches all over Europe. Remaining relatively unchanged until the reign of Louis XIV, the cathedral suffered many considerable alterations due to changes in architectural taste and was then substantially damaged during the French Revolution. Thanks to a renewed

interest in Gothic architecture in the mid-19th century, a restoration campaign was started in 1841, led by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste Lassus. This work resulted in significant reconstruction of parts of the cathedral, according to the practice adopted by restorers of the time. Being restored again to different standards at the beginning of the 21st century, Notre-Dame has just managed to survive another potentially catastrophic event – the fire of April 2019 – and will be renovated once again for the benefit not only of the French nation, but of us all. • Valeria Carullo

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Architectural Acoustic Finishes

Project: Product: ROVI, Ottolenghi Oscar Elite smooth acoustic plaster

OSCAR

acoustics

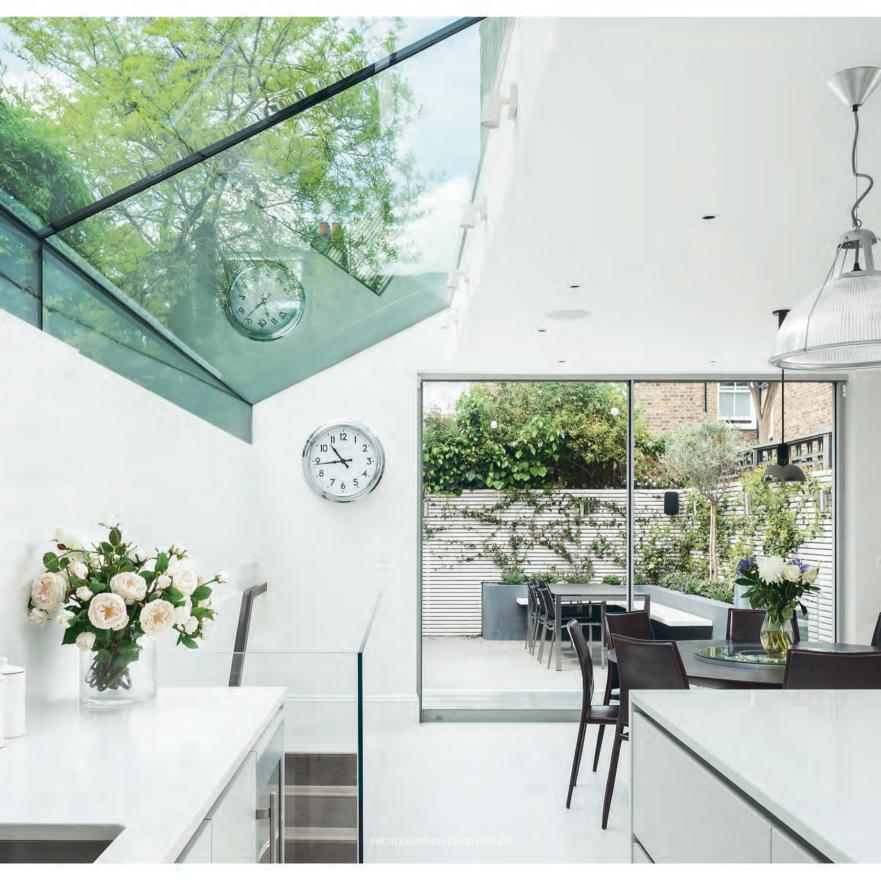
Having used Oscar Acoustics' architectural acoustic finishes in his last three restaurants, Yotam Ottolenghi understands the difference they can make. The design brief was to absorb just enough sound to ensure easy conversations across a table but to still leave an atmospheric buzz.

Oscar Elite is the smoothest acoustic plaster on the market & has been installed in NOPI Soho, Ottolenghi Spitalfields & now recently opened ROVI in Fitzrovia.





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