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Buildings



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Axonometric of SODA's reinvention of Raymond Revuebar in Soho











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Gardening delights

- museum

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Porous story envelope

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1: Buildings

Sunderland, Somerset, Soho. A brick office hangar by Ryder, a rural garden museum-as-landscape by Stonewood Design, a theatrical box of tricks as part of a complex urban redevelopment in the capital's night-time economy by fast-emerging practice SODA.

None of these could be described as orthodox. Indeed

perhaps the most conventional of our building offerings this month is our fourth, a technical study of the new building at the London School of Economics by the traditionally adventurous Rogers Stirk Harbour: but this too contains a seam of surprise. Think of a typology, then rethink it. They all did.

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07

To provide a safe crossing for pedestrians at Ludgate Circus, Thomas Dunn proposed tight, circular staircases and walkways, which might, worried the client. have attracted 'sightseers and idle people'

Pamela Buxton enjoys the London that might have been: ribaj.com/ unbuiltlondon





The RIBA Journal December 2019



IN NUMBERS

200 employees

10m² per member of staff

£8m construction cost

2,485m²

Left Approach to Tombola's new office from Panns Bank. The original office, Wylam Wharf, is the pink building in the distance.

Below Front elevation.
Tombola began as a
stationery shop in 1897
before becoming the
UK's largest printer of
bingo tickets and scratch
cards. The current
business broke away in
the '90s to go down the
tech route.

Compare the banks of the river Wear in Sunderland today with the images on the history trail signboards dotted along it and you'll find the scene almost unrecognisable.

I'm at the top of Panns Bank, named after the salt panning that once took place here, looking north across the river. In the historical image the other side is much closer, packed with brick and stone buildings standing shoulder to shoulder. Slate roofs rise in chaotic tiers behind, intercepted by poker straight alleys leading to the river and by the charging cliff pier of the second Wearmouth Bridge, designed by Robert Stephenson.

Today, there is a longer version of the bridge – the 1927 Mott, Hay and Anderson replacement – but it is surrounded by banks of grass and trees. It's impossible to detect that this was once a merchant port and shipbuilding industry hub. The water is tranquil, its edge verdant and fresh.

The same applies to the southern side. Old buildings, docks and jetties have been swept away without trace, replaced by millennium university halls. Only the narrow stone-walled road has slipped through time, hemmed in by the trunk road behind. As an industrial target, the area was, of course, bombed during the Second World War, but

photographs shot as late as the mid-1980s show densely built up Victorian streets.

This finer urban grain is what Newcastle-based Ryder Architecture has tried to reintroduce at the bottom of the bank along Low Street with its new office for online gaming company Tombola. The street once had 40 pubs on it and the architectural rhythm would have been warehouses, workshops, factories and yards – a vernacular of brick, steel, glass and pitched roofs.

When Tombola CEO Phil Cronin approached Ryder in 2015 the company was occupying one of the two surviving bonded warehouses on the quayside, Wylam Wharf. With now 263 employees, and a further 225 off-site, it was bursting at the seams. The brief was loose, but Cronin had just acquired the Scotia Engine Works shipbuilding site next door and had a more social office in mind.

'They didn't know what they wanted,' explains Ryder senior architect Paul Milner. Tombola had decided to stay in Sunderland, where it was founded, but the new office needed to help retain and attract staff as competitors were setting up satellite offices in Newcastle that were draining local skills.

'The existing building was also not inherently suitable for modern business – very



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Buildings Office



cellular, low ceilings, little windows that didn't make the most of the attractive quality of the quayside,' says Milner.

Against Ian Darby Partnership and Space Architects, Ryder was asked to develop an idea. But it was only after the studio won the job that everyone realised the initial L-shaped proposal in similar language to the bonded warehouse would struggle to meet the accommodation schedule. There was talk of adding different types of workspace, encouraging multidisciplinary working through chance encounters and of keeping the original warehouse, as well as potential growth beyond these plots.

During these conversations the concept of a campus and grander gesture emerged. The original proposal has become the first phase of a three-part development along the riverside. This new office provides the social hub, gym, auditorium for the company's weekly address, CEO's office and workspace for 200 people. The warehouse is being refurbished to accommodate 90 employees, and Ryder is doing feasibility studies on a 1990s Jane Derbyshire Architects building on the opposite side of Wylam Wharf which Tombola bought at the end of 2018.

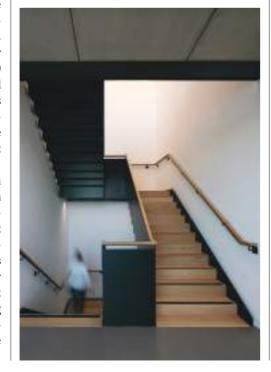
Whether you take this first project as a standalone building or as a barometer for a future tech campus on the Wear in Sunderland, it is rather exciting. In its materials it raises the permanency in quality of the surrounding built environment. In its forms and volumes, it references local noteworthy architecture and re-establishes the long-lost closer grain that makes it a more interesting and hospitable place. Inside, it creates an inspirational workplace – one that would make me stick around too.





Top left Stepped auditorium seating occupies the middle of the building. Top right Rooflights add drama to the top floor. The CEO's office is in the middle above the entrance, like a factory managing director's.

Above Axonometric drawing of Tombola's office - a bit of plant tucked into the roof. Below One of the two steel folded stairs, pushed back to the rear of the building.



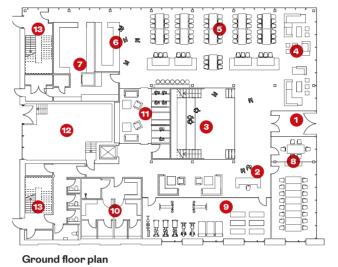
At an urban level, rather than pursue the L-shape, the plan became square and the building is pushed back to the road to recreate a hard street line. It butts up closely to the neighbouring electricity substation too. Along these sides the walls are solid and monolithic, constructed to proportions that resonate in the area and from long, salty, slightly warped Petersen bricks that bring back a manmade quality. The clay roof tiles merge into the facade and openings are varied - deep window reveals adopt the appearance of former warehouse doors, infill bays tell a story of a building that has evolved over time. With its three gable ends the party wall blends factory-like sawtooth with warehouse. Approaching from Panns Bank, there's a moment where the building's familiar textures and colours would have you believe it is not brand new.

Turn beyond the Low Street corner, however, and the finer grain evaporates. The building, sat 30m apart from Wylam Wharf, embraces a sense of movement around the site. There are no fences, and views through from the grade-II listed Quayside Exchange behind are preserved. The river presents itself in front of you, and there is a flattened green for outdoor events between the buildings. Here the elevation is entirely glazed except for a framing perimeter of brick that traces the silhouette of the building but stops short of the ground floor to the river. The glazing creates a complementary relationship with the solidity and small windows of the original office opposite, showing its yellow and red reflection.

Discreet glass double doors in the middle of the elevation take you to an unexpected interior. Whereas the exterior is heavy and



Section A-A



Credits Architect Ryder Architecture Client Tombola Structural engineer

1 Entrance

6 Café server

4 Sofa breakout space

M&E Desco Project manager Ward 13 Stairs

8 Meeting and training

11 Ouiet breakout space

under auditorium seating

9 Gym

14 Teapoint

15 Open plan office wing

16 CEO's office

17 Void

18 Meetingarea

Second floor plan

Electrochromic glass removes the need for solar shading

Left The openness means staff always have views of river and port.

monumental, inside it feels like a huge external covered three-storey space, where rain could pour in through the wraparound and apex openings in the roof. Exterior materials - brick, steel, glass - are carried through inside. The only softening surfaces are oak. In the centre, open to the whole, is the auditorium stair, and a big digital screen displays the number of people using Tombola in real time. It's also where Cronin wants to have more evening socials - films, drinks, live events. To the right of this on the ground floor is a lounge space, social hub and café where staff can have breakfast, lunch and soon maybe even dinner with uninterrupted views of the river and the context - which explains the suspended brick wall on the outside. Ryder has achieved those views all over the building by using Saint Gobain's electrochromic SageGlass which changes tint depending on luminosity, removing the need for solar shading. The kitchen too is open, so no member of staff is treated as back of house. The rest of the floor has a training room, booths under the auditorium seating for more intimate meetings, a gym and changing rooms with ridiculously nice lockers.

Two stairs are located along the back wall either side of the auditorium stair, dividing the office floors above into wings that meet in the middle around the tea points. Clear glass balustrades and detailing maintains sightlines between them. Services are tucked away into the bones of the building: cooling pipes in the concrete floor plates and behind the oak slats in the roof, cabling in the structural steel columns, flush integrated lighting, plant in a trench beneath the auditorium stair. Detailing is impeccably refined. The horizontal mortar in the brickwork, for example, is recessed while the vertical joints are flush. The whole building aligns to a 1.2m-wide module based on the glass that was so important for the views; there are shadow gap details, no architraves, inset door roses, minimal surface mounting. As its architect Paul Milner says: 'It's the employees that bring colour to the building.' I'd say it is full of character anyway.



Guggenheim Bilbao

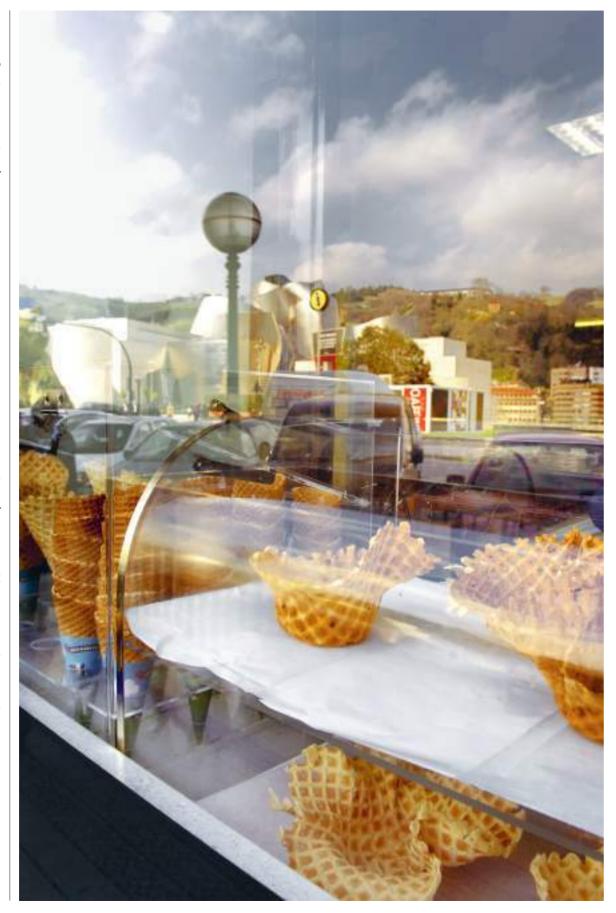
Photograph Paolo Rosselli Words Jan-Carlos Kucharek

It's got to be pretty difficult to upstage Frank Gehry's stunning 1997 Bilbao Guggenheim, but Milan-based photographer Paolo Rosselli seems to have done it – with ice-cream cones. Having started his career in New York in 1977, for 42 years Rosselli has travelled the world on commissions developing his view of the image of architecture. It's been a curious journey for the man who spent years recording the great sacred temple architecture of India, to be treating the iconic buildings he now shoots with a degree of irreverence – as with the Guggenheim.

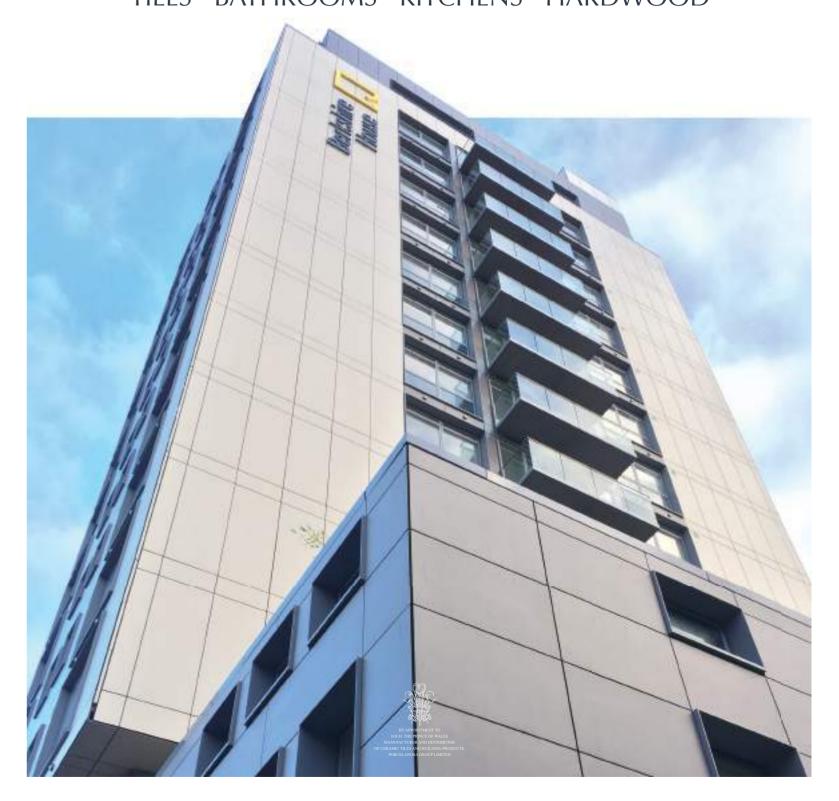
'I want to make architecture answerable to the present – to de-monumentalise it,' he tells me, before adding, 'But it is fantastic. Gehry was one of the first to grasp that a new language of architecture was developing. He indicated a new, dramatic way of conceiving a building.' Rosselli, just as he did when shooting temple architecture, likes to record buildings that evidence such shifts in the cultural landscape.

He feels his fascination now is the genius loci and getting under the skin of the city. It comes as no surprise then to discover that for a book documenting the cool, deferential, formal urban forms of his industrial home city of Milan, he hung out of a car window as it sped along its grand vias – an aesthetic interpretation of 'drive-by shooting'.

Aged 67, he's not stopping, acknowledging the changes even in the nature of the image, where everyone is now a photographer. 'It's not a time of purity and specialisation,' he muses. 'It's one of plurality, and I feel comfortable with that.' But in an age where older people feel marginalised and youth entitled, his art can still talk about this. The allusive form of the wafer is just one part of it. 'I want comment on time itself,' he concludes, 'and speak of a structure built forever and an ice cream melting.'



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Newt and branch

Massively reworked over six years, The Newt, named for the 2000 creatures it relocated, is a total celebration of the garden

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photographs: Craig Auckland

Putting into context Stonewood Design's new 'History of Gardening' at The Newt, set - literally - into the bucolic south Somerset hills, head of programmes Arthur Colt has got his work cut out, as the new hotel and visitor attraction has a layered geographic, temporal and architectural past. Geographic for sure; up outside the village of Bruton overlooking the Somerset flats west towards Glastonbury Tor, Cadbury Castle and 18th century Stourhead in the distance, with its faux 'King Alfred's Tower'. And temporal: The Newt is the former Hadspen House estate, 800 acre residence of the Hobhouse family since 1775; an estate that, since being created by William Player in 1687 quarried from the area's warm,

tawny stone, has been the site of interventions that have altered the landscape it sits in.

Architectural too: under the stewardship of its past owner, academic Niall Hobhouse, the estate's working farm, Shatwell, was turned into a hotbed of architectural experimentation. A Cedric Price inspired masterplan would come to be populated by Hugh Strange's delicate 'Drawing Matters' archive, Stephen Taylor's masterfully pomo cowshed, the timber Grandorge Pavilion and Álvaro Siza's buttercup yellow columns, transposed from their courtyard siting at a 2014 Royal Academy show and now rising brightly out of the muck alongside a timber obelisk designed by the Smithsons. William

Right Map of the central part of The Newt estate.

- Threshing barn/ Farm shop/Cyder pres

- 4 The Story of Gardening
- 7 Kitchen garden and gy





Buildings Museum

lonstoren's ethos of a working garden; and their Newt hotel, spa and visitor attraction is no different – except the star of the show is apples, not grapes. Over 250 varieties now sit in the Parabola's walls, with a further three thousand trees GPS-located in Cartesian array elsewhere; ready to be wassailed, not, Cole says, on the ascribed Twelfth Night but mid-March, when the owners find the climate more tolerable. It seems the sheer weight of investment can even bend time.

And in the tradition of the great landowners of old, for the last six years the Bekkers have been working on the site's 'capabilities'. Local architect Benjamin and Beauchamp designed the barn-like estate offices to the west of the main house (now a hotel, restaurant and spa) and the complex of new buildings north of the Parabola. At the latter, its convincingly

Player started it all with his French gardens of limes and elms set out on 300 acres of the estate; Hobhouse has complemented it with his own 'Hameau de la Reine'.

And then there is the Parabola. Tumbling down a south-facing slope, the 18th century, 9ft high walled plot, originally the estate's kitchen garden, was the focus of modern landscaping interventions. First, Hobhouse's mother, Penelope, made it the subject of her book 'The Country Garden'; followed by Canadian horticulturalists Nori and Sandra Pope with their 1987 'Colour by Design'. Hobhouse killed all his darlings when he bulldozed the garden in 2007 and threw a competition for a new one, won by landscape designer Sarah Price against the likes of FOA. In the interim and in a bout of exquisite ennui, the Parabola was turned over to a free allotment for the local community before Hobhouse cancelled the project altogether and retired to Shatwell, putting house and grounds up for sale in 2013. With its £13 million price tag piquing actor Johnny Depp's interest, it was finally snapped up by billionaire South African coms magnate Koos Bekker and partner Karen Roos.

Forbes Rich Listers and owners of South Africa's luxury Babylonstoren hotel, vine-yard and garden outside Cape Town, the Bekkers arrived with big ideas for developing the estate. And with a cheque book to boot, they had French landscaper Patrice Taravella oversee a redesign of Hadspen. Cole jokes that Taravella doesn't choose a flower unless it fruits, but his approach underlined Baby-

Above The 5m high entrance café/reception looks west back across to the canopy of the trees in the adjacent dell.

Right The Hadspen stone concrete aggregate wall increases in height as the north end of the building burrows into the hillside.

Credits
Client The Newt in
Somerset
Architect Stonewood
Design
Structural and civil
engineer Hydrock
Services engineer E3
Cost consultant Synergy
Contractor Beard
Construction
Planning consultant AZ
Urban Studio
Exhibition designer
Kossman de Jong
Glazing consultant
Glass Light and Special
Structures
'Viper' architect Mark
Thomas Architects
'Viper' engineer Henry
Fagan and Partners

Suppliers
Local aggregate
concrete Woodmace
Glazing and glass doors
IQ Glass using Roltrac
mechanisms on doors
Flooring Sphere 8
Joinery Edgewood
Balustrades MJ Patch



rendered threshing barn is the entrance part of the new visitor experience, which starts to unfurl with its farm shop and cyder press, and ultimately unravels in the freedoms of access to the fields and woods around.

But for the signature intervention, the client brought in Stonewood Design, appointed on the strength of its 2015 RIBA award-winning Gloucestershire Pod Gallery. The architect felt its 1000m2 'Story of Gardening' museum was as much part of the weighty architectural legacy of the site as it was of The Newt's expanding visitor experience. Originally to be sited further south, it was moved to its current position only when the Bekkers decided to install a winding treetop walkway, 'The Viper', in a dell on the estate's east side. Initially conceived as separate experiences, the merging of the two turned out to be mutually advantageous. Shipped over from South Africa, the steel and timber Viper starts on the museum's roof and, after a lively 6m snake down through the canopy, terminates at the timber deck entrance at its far end.

Distracted as you are by the treetops themselves, the revealing of the glazed facade of museum out of the side of the dell is all the more surprising for the fact that it's done by degrees, a twist on the traditional Ha-Ha. The glazing, close to the woods, behaves like an invisibility cloak, the building's principal elevation reflecting the treescape and stealthily hiding what is effectively a concrete bunker.

The impressive, 5m tall glass bi-parting doors – indeed the whole east facade – was designed with glazing consultant Tim Macfarlane, who helped generate its seamless reflectivity. Stonewood partner Nicola Pisanie insisted on a structure-free facade and

From the west, the balustrade is the only intimation that

Top East west elevational section showing the relationship of building to walkway to dell.

Below When the museum and walkway were brought together, the logic of both as part of the garden journey became apparent.

anything is here at all



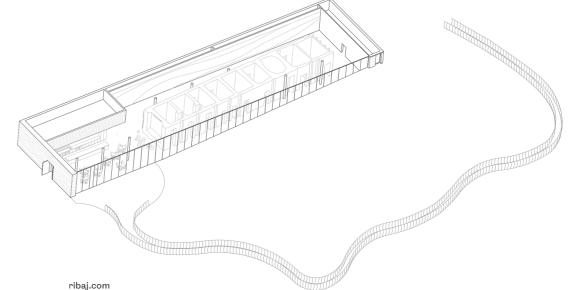
Macfarlane delivered neither fins nor steel toggles, but huge 60mm thick panels, with 10mm structural silicon joints instead sliding into deep stainless steel channels at bottom and top. A steel fascia is fixed back to this, hiding the channels, and acting as the attachment point for the building's roof balustrade, a slightly uneasy variant of the walkway's curved one. From the west, sitting squarely in the estate's deer park, this balustrade is the only intimation that anything is here at all. As herds wander unrestricted over the museum's intensive grass roof, the industrial Roltrac doors below open and close for visitors with the discreet firing of a pneumatic piston.

17

To the south, disappearing into the hill, is the 1m thick wall of rough, rammed concrete and Hadspen stone aggregate, whose 600mm striations, like those of Stephen Taylor's Shatwell cowshed, record the daily 'lifts' that created it. A deep rusted steel reveal frames a huge oak door whose patinated steel handle is fashioned into a spade form – the symbol of Irish St Fiacre, the patron saint of gardeners – taking visitors to the oak-sett pathway, that leads to the old 'Druid Tree' yew safely at the far reaches of the estate.

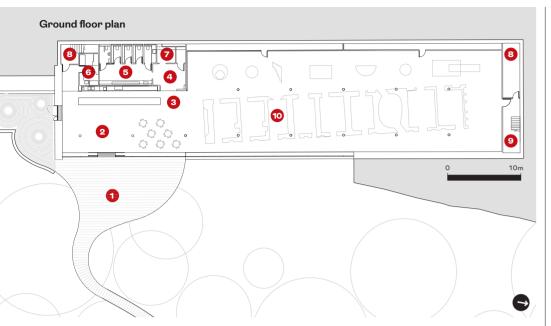
Internally, it's about little more than the poured resin floor and finely-finished concrete soffits, where services run neatly below with heating and air-conditioning kept to a minimum. The primarily audio-visual, interactive nature of the exhibition needed only the heating, and it's in keeping with the nature of the experience that visitors, while shedding muddy boots to walk around in the socks provided, might keep on their coats as they do so. This utilitarian quality is reflected in the design of the toilets too, crisply fitted out in white and green tiles. Sourced from Amsterdam, even the long sink trough is made of them, their edges finished with satisfyingly complex ceramic bullnoses. This, and the white marble finishes of the long reception desk that doubles as the café's servery, reinforce a civic aspect in a sylvan setting.

Other than the east elevation's hypotenuse of glass and wall that marks the gradual

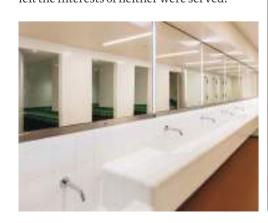


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Buildings Museum



burrowing of the building into the hill; internally, the architecture makes way for Dutch exhibition designer Kossman de Jong's whacky whistlestop tour of the world's gardens through time. Drawing visitors in and out of an artificial box hedge, guided by high tech tablets, there are individual vignettes of, among others, medieval, Japanese, Renaissance and modern garden designs. Opposite, garden equipment from wellies to hoes runs along the far wall, while between the two curious interactive exhibits challenge you to dig for soil knowledge or teach you how to prune. It certainly doesn't have the archival collection, or indeed the English particularity of Lambeth Palace's garden museum - by comparison this is all quite low-brow - but I found myself surprisingly entertained, and so would my mum. Piet Oudolf has even had a nose around. An immersive VR headset presented Tivoli's stunning Villa d'Este. It was great, but set alongside Babylonstoren's own garden, I felt the interests of neither were served.



Above right Kossmann De Jong's 19th Century garden installation **Below centre** The

traditional Chinese

Below right WC walls and sink trough are clad n curved green and white Dutch tiles.

- 3 Servery/desk

2 Café reception

- 7 Store room/office

1 Viper treetop walkway

- 8 Plantroom
- 9 Escape stair
- 10 Kossman de Jong





Earlier that day, Arthur Cole recalled the Parabola's less glamorous allotment period, when locals occupied the sloping walled garden. 'It was first in, first pick for plots,' he tells me. 'But as the compost heap was at the centre, if you were at the top, gravity helped you down to it. At the bottom, you were always pushing a full wheelbarrow uphill; so it made sense to get in early.' It's a Sisyphian task we can all relate to; a sublime 'memento mori' in the finest traditions of the picturesque. But top or bottom; in the end we all return to the compost heap.

intended for exclusive clients 'like Beyonce

headlining at Glastonbury'. It all seems very

rock'n'roll.



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Left The roofline gives away the new spaces built round Walker's Court and the perforated brick skin is new but the famous Revuebar neon sign is back. Bottom right Brewer Street frontages respect the narrow plot widths of the district with a mix of retained and overclad facades and new-build.

Soho never has been as good/bad as it used to be. The latest crop of memoirs from those who inhabited London's famous permissive zone concerns the 1970s and 1980s. When I first knew the place around then, the nostalgia was all for the 1940s and 1950s. The film and theatre and music industries, the artists, the sex clubs and dive bars, the cheap rents exacted with menaces. Doubtless people in the late 19th century talked with fondness of the pre-cholera Soho when it was all music halls and heart-of-gold prostitutes, those in the late 18th century remembered the time when it was distinctly posh before all the aristos moved to Mayfair and the French arrived, and if you follow it all back there was probably someone somewhere lamenting the bricking-over of one of Henry VIII's old royal hunting grounds.

All this got an airing in a recent 'Negroni Talk' in Soho's Groucho Club (itself a 1980s arrival), stimulated by the arrival of the new Boulevard Theatre by architect SODA on the site of the famous/notorious former Raymond's Revuebar. The Negroni talks are a congenial



At the turn of the 1980s I knew Raymond's Revuebar not as a strip joint but as the home of the knowingly-named Comic Strip, crucible of alternative comedy, MC'd by Alexei Sayle, having moved there from the slightly earlier (and still existing) Comedy Store. Television soon claimed the troupe, from Rik Mayall and Ade Edmonson to French and Saunders. And now I've gone back there and it's changed a lot, though the Revuebar dancing neon sign is still there, remade. The all-new Boulevard Theatre is squeezed into its corset of an alley – Walker's Court – so tightly that it's bulging out a bit.

The bulge announces a small (165- seat) circular multi-function theatre, where the auditorium revolves into different configurations as well as the

IN NUMBERS

3,900m²

£40 million total construction cost

8 types of brick

165
seating capacity of

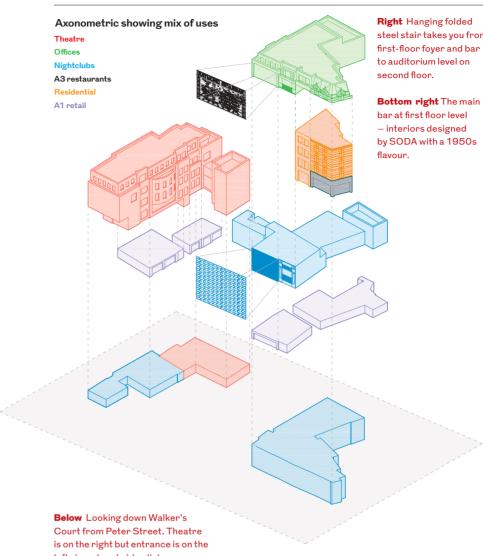
Below Theatre auditorium in daytime conference mode. Both levels revolve independently to achieve different

theatre configurations.

stage being able to revolve AND rise and fall. It and its associated spaces form the western side of a ± 40 million development of the properties on both sides of Walker's Court by SODA- mostly new though with some restoration of facades – for the Raymond family's Soho Estates. On the eastern side and extending along Brewer Street there are two existing nightclubs (one being extensively remodelled) retail, offices, and apartments.

It's a typical Soho mixed-use jumble, in other words, and despite the larger floorplates behind the facades SODA, headed by Russell Potter and Laura Sanjuan, has gone to great trouble to maintain the street appearance of historic narrow plot widths – generally around 15 feet – where buildings of different ages and materials rub along. In pursuit of this variety they have used eight different types of brick in different colours and textures, some glazed, some perforated as a screen around a retained 1960s building. The Soho grain is respected.

Unusually these days, the architect is also







responsible for the interiors, even the graphics. Indeed, the contract was traditional rather than the now ubiquitous design-and-build. Naturally there are plenty of theatre-specific technicalities to deal with, hence the presence of theatre specialist Charcoalblue in the consultants' mix.

Your progress from street to auditorium is designed to make the most of the limited space available. You enter a little foyer in a new building (the previous one was a brothel, says Potter matter-of-factly) on the northeastern corner of Walker's Court. From there you climb a stair or take a lift, and cross the alley in a glass bridge giving views north and south across Soho and with solar shading provided by a panel of real lace sandwiched in the ceiling glass. This is a reference to the net curtains of the various, ah, leisure establishments for which the area was and still is known.

You arrive in a restaurant and bar space occupying most of the first floor of this side of the court. Materials and colours refer to the nighclub vibe of the old place – reds, pinks and golds plus marble and dark-stained timber. Up another stair, this time a hanging steel one (or a second lift) to the second floor where you can finally cross a foyer to the 'stalls' level of the theatre. One level further brings you to the gallery level.

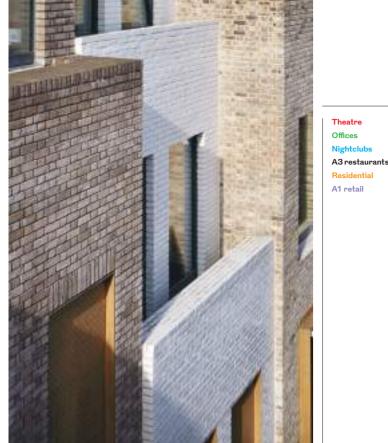
It's amazing they've been able to cram it all in, really:



200



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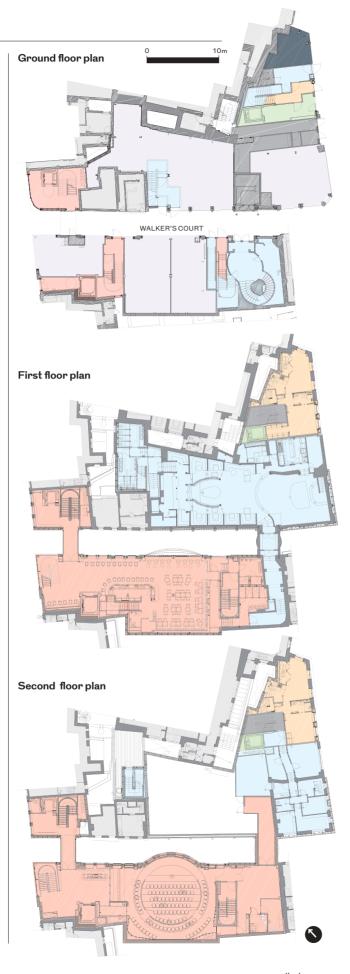
this traditional necessity, making use of every inch of space, contributes to a hugger-mugger feel that is very Soho. Technically speaking the revolving auditorium is no mean feat – it can rotate 360° at stalls level and 270° in either direction at balcony level, while maintaining all the power and data connections. Why the need to rotate at all, you might ask? Seven possible different staging configurations allow maximum flexibility of use, essentially. It can't move while occupied by people (or rather, it can but that would require a level of insurance normally associated with fairground rides, so that's out) but since it only takes around three minutes to do, it can be done between acts of a play, for instance. The seating is clever, consisting of removable leather bucket seats with tip-up squabs that can be stacked horizontally like supermarket trolleys. It was developed by SODA with seating specialist Race, and can be arranged around the circular stage on both levels, or as raked conference-style seating on the stage itself.

This pocket theatre lacks any kind of flytower, back



Top left In total eight different brick types are used including roughglazed white.

Left Dressing rooms with bespoke furniture.



CritiqueBoulevard Theatre



Suppliers
Structural glazing
Cantifix
Theatre seating Race
Furniture
Acoustic cladding Auter
Concrete flooring
Lazenby
Blinds Lutron
Brickwork TBS,
Wienerberger, Engels
Baksteen, Vandersander

Left Looking up at the double-deck glass bridge with its lace interlayer.

External render Sto



or side stages – there is, however, theatre storage and an electrical control room as well as offices and dressing rooms on the fourth (top) floor, and a reasonably large double-height rehearsal space on the second floor.

Toilets are on the first (restaurant) floor, which links via an existing bridge across the southern end of the court to the existing 'the Box' cabaret early-hours nightclub. Below that is the next phase of the project, the revived and previously somewhat fighty Madame JoJo's basement club. That has been excavated down so as to be more spacious than it was originally.

Above the clubs on this eastern side of the court are offices, culminating in a roof terrace: the easternmost part of the block contains three apartments on the upper floors while the ground floor is bookended by retail units either side of three entrances; to the offices, residential, and nightclub.

The plans are very complex as this description makes obvious, and moreover during the course of the project have changed more than once: originally there was not going to be a theatre at all, for instance, let alone an ambitious revolving one. The end result is totally fascinating. There is plenty of conventional redevelopment going on in Soho but this is assuredly not it. It harks back to an earlier age of the night-time economy while, technically at least, looking forward to the next. And when I dropped in on a rehearsal for the opening production, the musical Ghost Quartet – lights down, the whole theatre team in full attendance – it felt right. Intimate, involving. Actors and audience sharing the same confined space. It's a good start. I feel the elusive spirit of Old Soho should be OK with this. •

Left The circular auditorium bulges out across Walker's Court.

Below looking north up Rupert Street, the remade Raymond Revuebar neon sign announces the reborn entertainment complex. Client Soho Estates
Architect SODA
Theatre consultant Charcoalblue
Acoustic consultant Sandy Brown &
Charcoal Blue
Structural engineer Tier Consult
M&E consultant Thornton Reynolds

Project manager Development
Managers Ltd (DML)
Main contractor Blenheim House
Construction (BHC)



OS Gleeds

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The Centre Building opened its doors to students at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) for the first time this autumn. Designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSHP), the 16,000m² scheme consists of two linked steel-framed blocks, of six and 13 storeys. The lower floors house a café, lecture theatres, a basement auditorium and seminar rooms, while the upper floors are home to five academic departments. The blocks look out over a new public square, designed by RSHP to improve connectivity and to give the congested Holborn campus a much needed focus.

RSHP won the RIBA competition to design the £78 million scheme in 2013 with a proposal that set out to encourage academic collaboration and which embraced sustainability in response to the LSE's requirement for a BREEAM Outstanding building.

Collaboration is encouraged by the Academic Stair, a giant staircase that zig-zags up the main block from level three to 12. Viewed from the square, it appears in the facade as a series of stepped, double-height windows. It is designed to encourage serendipitous dialogue between departments while providing informal places for staff and students to interact. Two further staircases act as circulation and meeting spaces: one ascends from the entrance through the atrium separating the two blocks; the other, which incorporates terraced seating, descends to the main lecture theatre hidden beneath the new square.

To meet the brief's sustainability requirements, RSHP designed the 10 departmental floors served by the zig-zag stair to be naturally ventilated. It is an ambitious solution for such a congested central London site;

Left The statement Academic Stair makes its presence felt on the principal elevation.

Below The new building, stitched into the dense urban LSE campus.



ribaj.com

one that necessitated RSHP working closely with environmental engineer ChapmanBD-SP to develop a holistic solution coupled to a carefully engineered building envelope. 'The natural ventilation has got to work, there is no plan B; there isn't even any riser space to add cooling in the future,' says Tracy Meller, the RSHP partner who led the project.

The natural ventilation design was driven primarily by the need to minimise overheating rather than to meet the fresh air requirements of the occupants. Floor plates are deliberately shallow to encourage the cross-flow of fresh air. 'The majority of the floors are just 13.5m wide,' she says.

Thermal mass has been added to the exposed steel-frame through the use of 'cheapas-chips' precast concrete plank floors, which Meller says are 'more usually used for car parks than academic buildings'. The concrete is exposed as the soffit of the floor below; its thermal mass helps moderate temperatures by absorbing heat during the day.



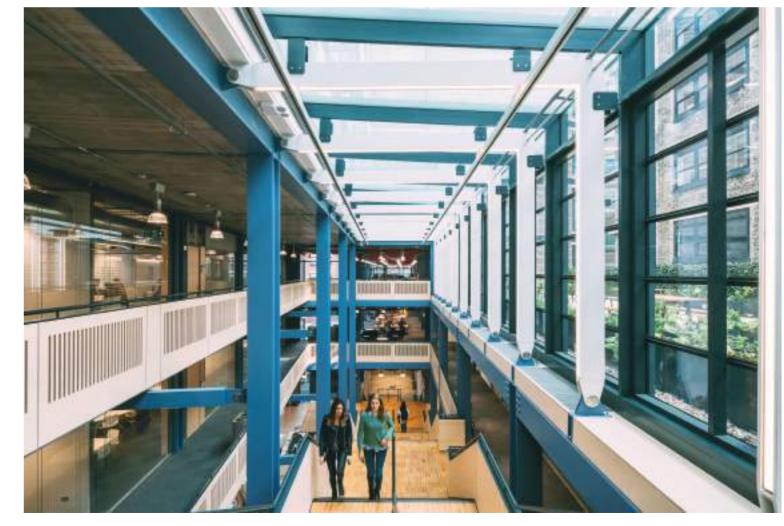
Above One of the facade's K-nodes on the building's flanks.

Below The atrium viewed from the second floor.

Solar gain is carefully controlled. The main facades face east and west; lower floors are shaded by the surrounding buildings but the upper floors are exposed to uninterrupted solar radiation. These facades incorporate vertical aluminium fins of various depths to shade the glazing from the oblique sunlight. Parametric modelling by ChapmanBDSP ensured the fins are slimmer on the more sheltered lower floors to maximise daylight. 'We worked hard to get a system that worked; lower down the building is overshadowed but as you go up the building the louvres get deeper to combat solar gains,' explains Meller.

These fins are a subtle grey when viewed from Houghton Street, home to some of the LSE's older buildings, whereas viewed from the square they are accented in bright yellow. 'We wanted the building to appear more playful when seen from the square,' she says.

The success of the natural ventilation depends on there being open plan spaces on each side of the floor plate to facilitate air



AS SOUZA

ribaj.com

The aluminium cladding package cost £1.5m more after the Brexit referendum

movement across it. Most academic floors are a carefully controlled mix of open plan and cellular accommodation. 'We have to keep at least three open plan bays, one on one side of the building and two on the other side,' says Meller.

As might be expected, there was a big debate on the amount of open plan versus cellular. 'The estates department wanted most spaces to be open plan because it's a much better use of space, whereas the majority of academics wanted their own offices,' she says. RSHP's approach was to create a 3m wide facade module that works regardless of whether a space is open or compartmented, adding future flexibility to the scheme while cleverly shifting the burden of allocating floor spaces to the LSE estates team.

Each module has a large glazed panel to maximise daylight in the space. Above the glazing is a smaller actuator controlled window that is opened and closed by the building management system to moderate the ventilation rate throughout the day and to enable the floors to be purged of residual heat overnight to recharge the thermal mass.

The module also incorporates what Meller describes as a 'windoor' – a large, hinged opaque panel adjacent to the glazing that can be opened inwards by the occupants to boost ventilation. When the windoor is open, the BMS turns the heating off. 'It's a managed ventilation system that gives users control,' she explains.

In contrast to the naturally ventilated upper floors, mechanical ventilation supplies fresh air and cooling to the lower floors. The plant room at basement level 1 houses most of the MEP plant including a biofuel-fired combustion CHP engine, which burns waste from



1 Teaching and learning

5 Lecture theatre

7 Roofgarden

Above The Academic Stair, which moves diagonally across the facade of the building.

IN NUMBERS

£78m total cost

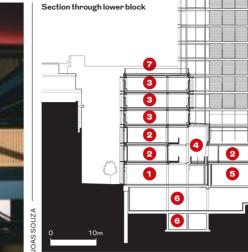
16,000m²

13 storeys

3m

width of facade module





the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries to provide the building's heat and power. The engineers claim its carbon emissions are significantly lower than they would be for a gas CHP. Other sustainability features include rainwater attenuation and harvesting tanks and photovoltaic panels on the roof.

The project was constructed by Mace under a design and build contract. In addition to the challenges of such a constrained, central London site, the team also had to deal with additional costs resulting from the fall in the value of sterling after the Brexit referendum. For example, the cost of the aluminium cladding package, which was being fabricated in Germany, increased by £1.5 million. 'We suffered quite extreme value engineering,' says Meller. 'The drop in the value of the pound as a result of the Brexit referendum meant the cost of many packages went up overnight; since the budget was fixed, we had to find the money by value engineering the scheme - we ended up doing four rounds of VE.'

Despite this obviously painful exercise, the team deserves enormous credit for delivering such an impressive scheme that meets the LSE's brief for encouraging interdepartmental collaboration and sustainability. What's more, the building is the first on the campus to achieve a BREEAM Outstanding rating. •

Left View from the LSE ibrary plaza.



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Changing times technology

2: Intelligence



Andrew Forth



In the run-up to the election Andrew Forth, RIBA's head of policy and public affairs, explains how the RIBA's manifesto lobbies politicians to create a built environment that is 'safer, better and more sustainable'

Why did the RIBA feel it was necessary to bring out a manifesto of its own?

So with Brexit topping the agenda, how will you make sure architects' interests are represented?

The RIBA has already declared a climate emergency – how does the manifesto expand on

Post-Grenfell, and after the Hackitt review, what more can government do to ensure a tragedy on that scale is never repeated?

The manifesto states that housing should be greener, safer and better designed. How can the planning system better facilitate this?

This election is significant in its potential for there to be a ground shift in the make-up of Parliament and the changes that might bring about. A lot of MPs are standing down and there will be new and inexperienced MPs coming in without any formed view of the value of architecture and its benefits for society. And it's likely only one key issue will have defined their campaigns.

The manifesto is just a part of it - we are talking to built environment organisations and professional bodies like the CIOB and RICS to develop common policies to help mitigate the effects of Brexit. Whichever party comes to power, the Brexit issue needs to be sorted. A No Deal Brexit will be disruptive to professional qualifications, product standards, migrations and visa policies. It would dismantle overnight a structure built up over 40 years, without an idea of what would replace it.

It points out that a 'business as usual approach' from government will not wash; we need a sustainable methodology to procure buildings on a mass scale. It's about zero embodied carbon as well as operational, and constructing at lowest cost works directly against sustainability. The issue has to be looked at in the round as part of the government's industrial strategy - not just new construction but also retrofitting existing building.

We need strong, clear guidance on fire safety. Banning use of combustible materials on high-rise buildings has been a challenge - but we seem to be winning the argument. A second means of escape in high-rise as regulation. And improved fire warnings and mandatory sprinklers in newbuild and converted housing - rules extended to refurbishment too. Our overriding aim is that buildings need to be safer by design.

There's a few things. We need a greater number of players in housing – not just volume house builders but greater input from social landlords, community housing trusts and self-build. And the planning system needs investment, and central government must stop undermining the process by overturning locally-made decisions. Heavy restrictions on Right to Buy receipts also mean councils get only about half the revenue the policy generates. Whatever the merits of the policy, the sale of one house does not mean the creation of another.

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

Word has it that the AIA may change award judging criteria to emphasise metrics and data. which would mean only the most demonstrably sustainable projects will get national plaudits

Tom Kundig explains how practices in the US are responding responsibly to the climate emergency: ribaj.com/ kundigonclimate



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

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President's Medals 2019

Pollution and flooding take us from Sydney Harbour to New Orleans' levees with the winners of the President's Silver and Bronze Medals. Then two dissertation medal winners both take a closer look at housing design, studying the changing family unit, and provision for it, and discovering how greater consultation with residents would improve design today. Finally the Research Medal maps the spaces and power of India's colonial administrative bases, cutcherries.

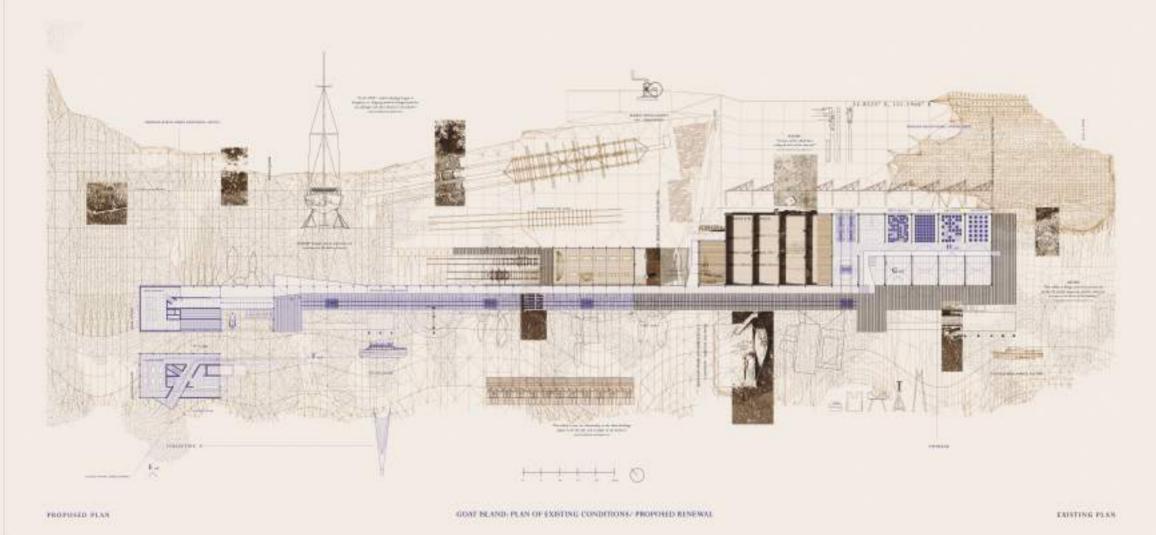
Interviews: Pamela Buxton

Below Blueprint for Renewal: Existing and Proposed Conditions on Goat Island.









Intelligence RIBA President's Medals: Silver

Victoria King **Surface Tension: Blueprints for Observing** Contamination in the Sydney Harbour Estuary

University of Melbourne Tutors: Gini Lee; Alan Pert

Victoria King's project was inspired by her great grandfather, who was a boat builder in Sydney Harbour, and by her father's stories of growing up in the harbour environment.

Her survey and research into the harbour's past, present and future revealed the impact of 200 years of industrial use - both in terms of the physical remnants of wharves, shipyards and other infrastructure, and the less visible but rising levels of pollutants in the harbour such as micro-plastics and heavy metal contamination. Plans for the Western Harbour Tunnel, due to start next year, are expected to have significant environmental ramifications. Realising that data on contamination in the harbour was not being systematically documented, she developed proposals for a network of monitoring and observation sites across the estuary, and explored instances where contamination can provide opportunity for renewal.

King's proposals are based on the sites of three 'micro-narratives' that she identified in her research relating to the modification and contamination of the harbour environment. The Vessel is at Snapper Island, the smallest island in the harbour, which was originally an oyster reef but was re-formed through land reclamation into the shape of a ship and subsequently served as a nautical training centre. The Cardinal Mark is located as a marker for the site of the proposed harbour tunnel, which entails the relocation of 500 tonnes of contaminated sediment. The Slipway is on one of the harbour's last remaining covered slipways, in a dilapidated wharf on Goat Island.

In this way, King used familiar objects of harbour infrastructure as the basis for new infrastructure addressing the future of the harbour.

'Each of these sites became an observation point for me to help address what I saw was a gap in observation and data collection, and in the understanding of the threats being introduced into the harbour,' she said.

Top right Material Survey: Material Representations of Biotic and Abiotic Artefacts.

SILVER COMMENDATIONS

Finbar Charleson

London Euston Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL Tutors: Jakub Klaska: Dirk Krolikowski

Samiur Rahman

GramLiving University of Greenwich

Tutors: Thomas Hillier: Pascal Bronner

Piotr Smiechowicz

The Moon Catcher London South Bank University Tutors: Lilly Kudic: Luke Murray

RIBA PRIZE FOR SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AT PART 2 Findlay McFarlane

Blotting Ornithologics: The Calcutta Institute of Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Tutor: Dorian Wiszniewski

SERJEANT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DRAWING IN PART 2

Rachel Wakelin

Avian Air – A Tropospheric Bird Sanctuary University of Westminster Lindsay Bremner; John Cook; Ben Pollock

MEDALS JUDGES: SILVER & BRONZE

Chair: Professor David Gloster RIBA director of education Liliana Giraldo Arias Architect and territorial planning consultant, coordinator of the Modern Territorial Ordinance Plans program for the National Planning Department of Colombia and the World Bank

Sheila O'Donnell Founding director of Dublin practice O'Donnell +Tuomey, winner of the 2015 RIBA Royal Gold Medal

Liam Ross Architect and senior lecturer in architectural design at the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Narinder Sagoo Art director at Foster +

Nicky Watson RIBA vice president education and north east representative on the RIBA Council

Annabelle Tan

Wetland Frontier

Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL Tutors: Johan Hybschmann; Matthew Springett

Annabelle Tan's masterplan to revive a vulnerable, flood-prone area of New Orleans fosters new resilience for both the physical landscape and the communities that live there.

Straddling a 6ft levee, the Wetland Frontier project aims to facilitate regeneration of the Lower Ninth Ward community and the adjacent Bayou Bienvenue Wetland Triangle by restoring a lost wetland. In doing so, Tan explores an alternative approach to the traditional narrative of the city's struggle for survival against nature. Rather than continue as victims of natural disaster and climate change, communities will be empowered to harness the economic, recreational, education and ecological benefits of the new wetland, working with nature instead of against it.

'The ambition of the project is to lift both community and wetland simultaneously and bilaterally,' she says. 'The community and new stakeholders would restore the wetlands, and the growing ecosystem would give value back to the community in a self-perpetuating cycle that assured the long-term sustainable livelihood of both people and nature.'

The project's programme encompasses facilities to oversee the wetland restoration, a public park, and a housing development that fosters new life to rejuvenate the existing community. The architecture is designed with resilience to embrace the dynamic changes in nature and enable residents to 'ride out' the storm through the help of 'floating' service cores. It is arranged as a main megastructure supplemented with temporary structures built using river silt to suit the shifting needs of the restoration work. Initially this would include volunteer hostels, co-living units and single apartments. The megastructure forms the basis for the family housing that then, over time, extends north over the levee towards the wetlands and south towards the existing community.

This wetland-based regeneration would boost the neighbourhood's perceived value.

'Hopefully, this jump-starts a wider regeneration of the neighbourhood which has not received the proper attention from the government or corporations since Hurricane Katrina [in 2005],' she says.



BRONZE COMMENDATIONS

Imogen Dhesi

Riad Al Nisa Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL Tutor: Barry Wark

Samuel Kerin

The Coventry Ring Road Press, University of Nottingham Tutors: Negin Ghorbani; Farida Makki: Anna Mill

Paula Pocol

Somers Town Community for Women University of Greenwich Tutors: Benni Allan; Kieran Hawkins

SERJEANT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DRAWING IN PART 1

Thomas Faulkner

Common Fields: An Architecture in Response to the Digital Interface, Architectural Association Tutors: Ryan Dillon; David Greene

Left Model of Annabelle Tan's Wetland Frontier project, which looked at regeneration based on restoring a New Orleans wetland.



Naomi Rubbra

Towards Effective Architectural Practice: Lessons from the Elthorne Housing Estate

Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL
Tutor: Edward Denison

Naomi Rubbra's dissertation draws on her research among residents of the north London estate where she lives. Concerned that housing architects had been acting on assumptions of what people need in order to live a good life rather than engaging with them directly, she set out to explore how better awareness of their needs can result in a more effective architectural practice.

In her dissertation, she sets the scene for her own research by analysing social housing trends in the 20th century including the Parker Morris Report (1961), which was influential in shaping architects' perceptions of occupiers.

'They were working off assumptions that were either embodied in given guidance or through their education, and these weren't being challenged properly,' she says.

These assumptions included the working of the home based on the nuclear family, and on streets modelled on theory. Even today, she adds, architectural education needs to do more to ensure that students appreciate the limitations of their own views and learn how to get a better understanding of the problems

they're trying to solve through direct contact with users, whose views are too often ignored or marginalised.

The dissertation also looked at the work of social scientists in the 1970s. These include Jane Darke – who she tracked down and interviewed this year. Darke's work revealed a dichotomy between architects and the users they were designing for.

Rubbra's own research focused on building real knowledge of residents' needs through the perspective of the vulnerable demographic of elderly people on the Elthorne estate. She did this through conversations including 'walking interviews' to see the estate through their eyes, sometimes with the help of a body camera. This showed the importance of often-overlooked issues such as the provision of places around the estate to sit and





rest and the difficulties of uneven surfaces.

Her research into what matters in the home led to a project designing a chair for resident Ophelia, who has osteoporosis, that allowed her to sit comfortably on her knees. She also held a community workshop to create a collective memory of the estate using folded paper models.

'I was nervous. You're not taught about how to meet people and talk about architecture in a very general way. It's a very different way of doing architecture to going into a workshop and making models.'

She points to hard data on the long-term value of understanding the diverse needs of residents upfront in terms of 'health, wealth, society and community'.

'If you're designing a place for people from the point of view of a child or elderly person, you're going to be making a better place for everyone,' she says.

Rubbra, who is now working at Levitt Bernstein, is optimistic that there has been progress on meaningful engagement through direct contact, recently through the work of practices such as muf architecture/art and Sarah Wigglesworth Architects in particular.

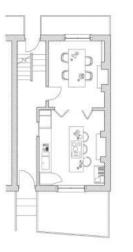
'The idea of direct contact should be a given. Only then can you truly understand the user and what they need,' she says.

Top left Collective memory of a community – knowledge and insight into how people work together.

Top right 'In your lap' review — part of critiquing design intent.

Left Building Ophelia's chair through a shared 'knowledge-based' practice.









Above Cambridge Heath (now Mare Street), floor plans, 2017.

Below Cambridge Heat (now Mare Street), 2017.



Ruth Pearn

Ages Through the Terrace: The evolving impact of age on social and spatial relations in the home

University of Westminster Tutor: Harry Charrington

Ruth Pearn's dissertation examines changing perceptions of age over time and the role of age as a factor influencing the spatial organisation of the home.

She chose the subject in response to the recent resurgence in multi-generational living driven by a shortage of affordable housing and care provision. This, along with changes to the traditional post-war nuclear family structure, is creating new, sometimes challenging, dynamics for domestic organisation.

'Today, our domestic architecture increasingly fails to support the new experiences of social groups, particularly young adults and the elderly,' she says.

Her dissertation demonstrates how attitudes to age have changed historically. This is amplified by her research into three family terraced dwellings close to each other in Hackney, east London, built in the 1790s, 1870s and 1970s. These were chosen as times when new ideas on ageing, childhood, and adulthood respectively were emerging. Each case study tells the story of the spatial arrangement of a middle class home in the context of societal norms of the time. For example, the late 18th century house focuses on the extended nature of the family, which included a live-in maid and apprentice, and in particular an older widowed mother. We learn about the relative status of the elderly, and discusses whether/how widows were able to retain some autonomy over their personal space and possessions.

A case study of a Victorian terrace examines the increase in the prescribed uses of rooms including the provision of a nursery. The most recent case study is of a three bedroom house originally built for key workers in the 1970s, with two single rooms for teenagers in addition to the main bedroom. Their

Georgian terraces, based on classical proportions, are particularly good at adapting

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RIBA President's Medals: Dissertation

bedrooms are discussed as places of sanctuary away from the open plan living area.

As well as the historical analysis, Pearn analysed their contemporary spatial arrangements and uses. The newest property, for example, now includes two grown up children in the small bedrooms, while the Georgian house has adapted to different uses and configurations over time but is currently returned to a single house, with the occupants considering how to make provision for the possibility of grown up children returning home. The Victorian property has been divided into flats.

Her conclusion is that flexibility and ease of adaptability is the way forward to producing housing suitable for today's changing ways of living. This includes provision for a more multi-generational way of living.

'The key message in terms of architecture is quite clear – not prescribing or predetermining how spaces might be used,' she says, adding that homes need to be able to shrink and swell according to changing need.

Georgian terraces, with their spaces based on classical proportions, have been particularly good at adapting, whereas what she describes as today's 'more functionalist' housing often proves too rigid.

'In Georgian London, high mortality and migration led to diverse and changeable households. Our homes today are becoming similarly unpredictable as people are choosing to live in different ways and the understanding of family is more fluid'.

She adds that new forms of housing are needed.

'In Britain, there's a cultural notion that adulthood is achieved by owning your own home. While ideas are starting to shift, the housing market has been slow to diversify in response.'

Below Christchurch Estate, 1972. Photograph by Richard Einzig (Architects' Journal, 07.02.1979).

DISSERTATION COMMENDATIONS

Lou-Elena Bouev

A Sense of Place for the Displaced Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London Tutors: Shumi Bose; Oscar Brito

Fiona Grieve

The Reception of Refugees in the UK University of Westminster Tutor: David Deriu

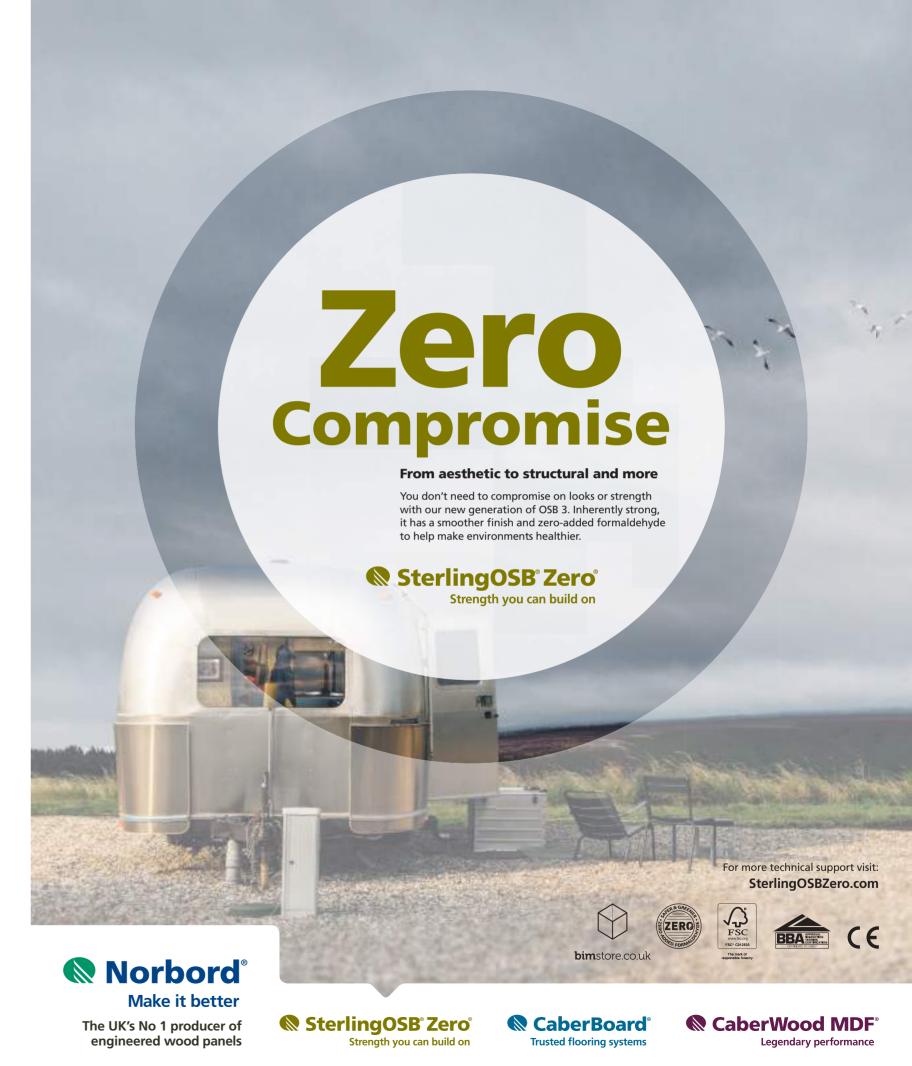
RIBA DISSERTATION MEDALS JUDGES

Chair: Dr Harriet Harriss Dean of the Pratt School of Architecture in Brooklyn, New York.

Nick Axel Deputy editor of e-flux Architecture
Professor Shawn Rickenbacker Professor of architecture
at the City College of New York, and director of the J Max
Bond Center

Dr Ingrid Schröder Director of the MPhil in architecture and urban design at the University of Cambridge Sally Stewart Head of the Mackintosh School of Architecture, at The Glasgow School of Art





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Inside the cutcherry

Tania Sengupta's research ignores the grand buildings of colonial India to examine its everyday spaces of 19th century governance

Tania Sengupta, Bartlett School, UCL

Focusing on the province of Bengalin eastern India from the 1820s to 1860s, my study shifts attention to the interior regions of India and the ubiquitous, ordinary spaces of everyday provincial governance of British colonial rule as embodied in the district cutcherry (colonial office). In 1765, the British East India Company had acquired from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam the rights of agricultural revenue collection of the fertile eastern provinces of India. Through the late 18th and 19th centuries, provincial cutcherries developed as tax collectors, forming the nerve-centres of zilla sadar towns (headquarters of revenue districts), which dotted the agrarian interior of Bengal.

Influence of knowledge on space

My research pursues paper and paper-work as fundamental organising elements of colonial governance which produced and was fed by a spatial logic starting from the interior spaces of cutcherries to urban sites and regional geographies. Following from this, it looks at the architecture, spaces and material culture associated with colonial paper-bureaucracy in Bengal. A key dimension is how colonial knowledge on revenue transformed into material forms and spaces. Of particular significance in the provincial cutcherry were land record rooms (which stored revenue knowledge in material form) and clerical offices (where paper-process was mobilised).

For the research, I combined extensive on-the-ground documentation of the material fabric of the buildings with archival research in India and the UK, looking at governmental papers, period literature and art.

Below Barrack type cutcherry, Bengal

Early cutcherries inhabited residential building types such as bungalows and often combined offices, courtrooms and domestic spaces, blurring their boundaries. From the 1820s, as a number of Indian domestic and global wars for Britain ended, the Company's revenues stabilised and the need for office space grew, a new 'barrack type' of cutcherry appeared. This saw the formal separation of provincial colonial and domestic office space. It consisted of a linear chain of generic spaces, reached by a verandah on two or all four sides.

Land records take pride of place So pivotal were land records to British colo-

nial rule, that record rooms formed the heart of the cutcherries and other spaces such as general offices and courtrooms were arranged with respect to them - not the other way around. Record rooms were typically $18\text{-}20 ft\, by\, 40\text{-}50 ft\, modules\, with\, barrel\, vault$ roofs and increasingly fitted with grilles, louvres and wire mesh to prevent human, weather and insect intrusion. From the archival records of communications between the headquarters at Calcutta and district cutcherries it becomes apparent that the design and layout of record rooms was a major pre-occupation of the Company. Through the highly prescribed spatial arrangements of paper records on record racks and their protocols of naming/labelling, record rooms also tried to reproduce a de-facto mini-map of the revenue geography of the districts of Bengal.

Bureaucratic work created its own spatial cultures. Clerical work took place in interconnected open office spaces which, due to profuse doors and windows to ease the tropical climate, also became porous and fluid; controlling access to/through them became impossible for colonial authorities. A key group of the cutcherry amla (administrative clerks)

were the munshis, Persianette officers, who had been part of Mughal bureaucracy. As the colonial project to shift embodied revenue knowledge from the munshis to English paper records advanced, the English replaced the munshi offices by around the 1860s, taking over the premium location next to the high official's chambers and courtrooms.

However, there were still large gaps between the colonial authorities' revenue knowledge and realities of the Indian hinterlands. British officers had to use lower level cutcherry staff as their intermediaries for a range of informal tasks within and beyond the cutcherry. These lower level employees had virtually no formal spatial provisions within the cutcherries, but wielded forms of indirect power through their mobility and direct contact with the local population in bazaars, other town-spaces or villages. The ad-hoc, incremental nature of development of cutcherry premises in fact enabled their appropriations in numerous ways especially by Indian employees and visitors, often beyond the control of colonial authorities.

Paper's economic impacts

Despite its attempts to use only imported paper from Britain, the cutcherry's paper governance also became dependent on supplies from local bazaars as well as the extant Indian (formed during Mughal and colonial times) paper economy stretching from Kashmir to Bengal. Hence the logic of paper spilled out into and was also shaped by other town spaces (such as bazaars) and regions (paper supply networks). The cutcherry's bureaucratic spaces also held culturally produced meanings for Bengali employees - challenging notions of universal experiences of capitalism and secular modernity - who in fact sometimes acted to subvert their instrumentality.

Research Medal category winners will be featured in the January issue of RIBAJ



Business, client & services

More cash all round

The RIBA annual Business Benchmarking survey reveals more work, more income – and more costs

Adrian Malleson

With a weak economic environment, political uncertainty, and reticent investors, the results of this year's RIBA Business Benchmarking survey demonstrate the ongoing resilience of UK architecture. Revenues are up on last year, workload is increasing and our international presence is growing. However, it's not all positive. Costs are on the rise too, so the increase in revenue has not translated into a commensurate rise in profits.

The benchmarking report provides us with a data set like no other. Each year, all RIBA chartered practices are required to complete the survey. It's a detailed survey, and respondents take the time to give detailed practice information. It covers several significant areas, including practice revenue, expenditure, profits and type of work. It also covers remuneration, how practices are run, and international working.

The RIBA Business Benchmarking survey lets us understand in detail the business of practising architecture.

Revenue

For the seventh consecutive year, since 2012, the total revenue of RIBA chartered practices has risen. So too has average revenue per practice and average revenue per head.

Over time, the rise in total revenue each

year has been significant; on average 12% annually. In total there has been an 125% increase in RIBA chartered practice revenue, from 2012 to 2019. This year saw an even greater rise; total revenue earned by RIBA chartered practices is up from £3.2 billion in 2018 to £3.6 billion in 2019. This rate of growth significantly exceeds that of the general economy and the construction industry.

Practice revenue is concentrated in certain areas. London practices generated 62% of all revenue, up from 60% in 2018. This revenue share far exceeds any other area; the next largest contributor is the North West, which generated 9%.

It is the large practices, those with a hundred or more employees, that are driving revenue growth; since 2015 they have brought 70% of the total growth in architectural revenue. Their total share of revenue has risen from 39% to 47%.

Not all practice sizes and not all areas are seeing their revenue grow.

Expenditure and profit

Expenditure is on the rise. In 2017 and 2018 practice expenditure rose by 7% each year, but in 2019 it rose by 16%. Increases in revenue have very largely been taken up by increases in expenditure. Profits per practice are broadly stable, or for some practice sizes, very slightly down. But as a percentage of turnover, profits are down even in the larger practices.

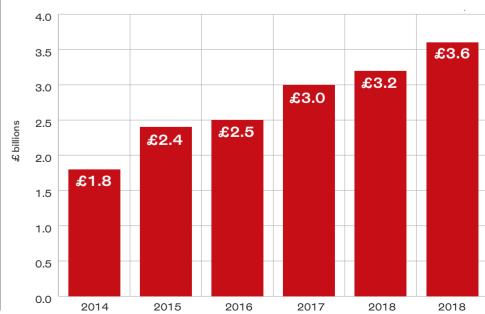
More revenue has been earned through more work, and more work has needed more people to do it

The most significant outlay for any practice is people; payroll costs make up around two thirds of average practice expenditure. This year, payroll costs have increased again. This isn't bumper pay rises all round. Instead, more revenue has been earned through more work, and more work has needed more people to do it; headcount is now 8% higher than one year ago. Although revenue is up, profits are flat.

Business planning

One way to ensure long term business profitability is to plan for the long term, with an eye on potential risks, as well as the opportunities. Most RIBA chartered practices have in place a business plan that lasts for two years or more, and over a fifth have a plan for five years or more. On the other hand, that still means that for almost half of practices planning for the next year or so only is the norm.

Total revenue earned by RIBA chartered practices



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RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey

The proportion of practices that have a business plan that extends beyond one year has barely changed since 2015.

Positively, the benchmarking data shows significant advances in support for all staff. There's still much to be done, but since 2015 there have been significant increases in the proportion of practices providing equality, diversity and inclusion training for staff members. There has also been a substantial rise in practices implementing strategies to support flexible working and to support staff development and retention (such as post maternity returnee programmes); and those implementing recruitment strategies to address under-represented groups, or characteristics, within the practice.

Work types

As the graph (right) shows, RIBA chartered practices are working across the range of building types. Architects add value to any building. A diverse project portfolio often increases practice resilience, as sectors rise and fall (has university work peaked? will we see a renaissance in local authority housing?).

Work type does vary by practice size; smaller practices earn a greater proportion of their revenue from one-off housing and house extensions. Commercial becomes more important as a practice gets bigger. Medium-sized practices get as large a proportion from health, education and other public work as do the 100+ employee practices.

International work

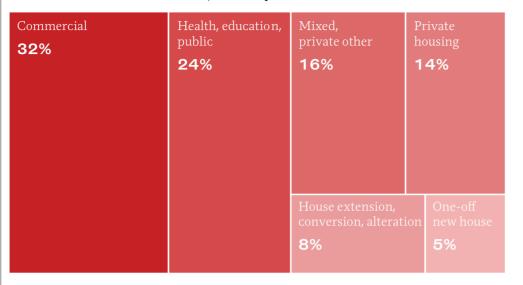
The Office of National Statistics tells us that in 2017 (the last year for which figures are available) UK architectural service generated a positive trade balance of over £500 million. The RIBA Business Benchmarking survey shows chartered practices at the forefront of international working.

The revenue from international work increased by 22% in 2019. Chartered practices earned £625 million from projects outside the UK. Truly, the UK is a global hub for architecture.

It is larger practices that are doing most of this international work; three out of every four pounds from work outside the UK is generated by practices with 100 or more staff. The EU is a significant market for international work, but it is one of four 'big' regions: EU, Asia, Middle East and North America.

This has been a challenging year for

Architectural work sectors share of revenue, 2019 survey*



International work - Revenue shared by region, 2019 survey*

Asia 28% EU exclude Europe 23%	_	Middle east 21%		North Am 17%	erica
		Europe excluding EU 4%	South Americ 3%		Austra- lasia 2%

*Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding

architects, but, by and large, it is one that has been met. The coming year looks as if it will bring its own challenges, but we're yet to see what those will be. Orderly resolution of the Brexit question is so important to restoring some market certainty and confidence.

This article has concentrated very much on the business of architecture; making enough money for a practice to be viable. As we start to act on the realities of a climate emergency, it's unlikely that the benchmarks of a business will only be financial. Many practices already run their business with a clear view of a sustainability that extends well beyond finance. •

Adrian Malleson is head of economic research and analysis at the RIBA

Revenue from international work increased by 22% in 2019. Truly, the UK is a global hub for architecture

Thanks to the Fees Bureau and MRM, our research partners. Most of all our thanks to those who complete these surveys. The full report is available to RIBA chartered practices on ribabenchmark.com. from 6 December.



More for less

Janisol Arte 2.0, the new version of Schueco Jansen's steel renovation window, delivers in three key areas: appearance, performance and affordability. Still retaining elegantly retro looks, the window is now available in both high-grade austenitic 1.4401 stainless steel and Corten steel, with laser-welded profiles for wider mullion spans. Add in more profiles, improved insulation, increased corrosion resistance and a new lower cost and Janisol 2.0 is an unbeatable proposition.

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The RIBA Journal December 2019 ribaj.com



Revolution is in the air

Standardisation, DfMA, AI, IoT. Where do architects fit into technical innovations?

Matt Thompson

A pot of taxpayers' money destined to revolutionise the design, construction and management of built assets is being spent - apparently with very little engagement from architects.

Called the Transforming Construction Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, it was conjured into existence along with the Construction Sector Deal after the government heeded evidence from many sources, notably the Construction Leadership Council's 2016 Farmer Review, which sports the not-sosubtle subtitle, 'Modernise or Die'.

Grossly simplified, the fund was justified as follows. Construction outputs underpin the nation's social, economic, and environmental

future wellbeing. But industry productivity is comparatively low and its long-term value suspect. Facing new threats such as climate change, skills shortages, and an ageing population on one hand, and huge infrastructure spending plans on the other, the industry does not have the capability or capacity to deliver.

Fortunately, there is a glimmer of salvation. Applying new digital and advanced offsite manufacturing techniques such as machine learning and robotics to construction could prepare it to meet these threats. Think Lego crossed with Minecraft, sprinkle in a few buzz-acronyms including MMC, BIM Level 3, DfMA, AI, and IoT, and you get the picture. And since the government can force change with its brute buying power, the initial focus is on publicly funded projects such as transport, social housing, schools, and hospitals.

At first glance, this looks to be all about builders and manufacturers, and so of marginal interest. On closer inspection, though, it could threaten architects' whole raison d'etre. After all, if designs are standardised for fast, cheap, boxy factory production, wherefore architecture?

In fact, neither take is right. According to the man in charge of the Transforming Construction fund, challenge director Sam Stacey, far from making architects redundant, the direction of travel makes them all the more important: 'It could get over-technical and nerdy unless the architects are involved. We need them to optimise value for the whole

You can tie R&D into live projects by leveraging funding

life of buildings and make this wonderful for the world instead of just efficient.'

That said, he recognises the profession's tendency to, as he puts it, 'stick its head in the sand. I studied architecture for three years. We weren't encouraged to understand how buildings get built or, quite frankly, pay a great deal of attention to end-user feedback.'

No need for knicky-knacky boxes

Architect Jaimie Johnston, head of global systems at Bryden Wood, a multi-disciplinary practice overtly focused on R&D and already a beneficiary of Transforming Construction funding, thinks the feared 'knicky-knacky boxes' vision of the future is illusory.

For him, architects' creativity and design freedom is already heavily constrained by regulations and standards. 'Hard-coding' manufacturability, deliverability, cost-efficiency, and good co-ordination simply acknowledges that reality, freeing up architects to concentrate on adding value in a way that won't get diluted later on.

'How many architects have burned through client fees working out how to lay out one-bed flats and all come up with pretty much the same answer? Automating repetitive

processes allows rapid prototyping with better certainty - and better quality outcomes.'

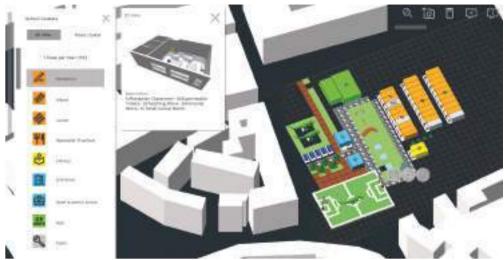
Imran Kassim, regional director at AHR, another of the practices that secured funding in Round One, is clear that reports of the death of architects are greatly exaggerated: 'Commissioning clients aren't going to settle for blander or worse performing buildings. The architect is best placed to make sense of this new way of working together - understanding the essence of what society is looking for and what the cultural drivers are. Architects have always answered the thousand social, economic, environmental and functional problems at every step of the way, and I don't see that changing.'

Stephen Good is director for the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, involved in channelling applications from Scottish firms to the Transforming Construction funding. An architect with strong commercial bona fides with Anderson Bell + Christie, he moved to developing offsite factory production capability for main contractor CCG, which resulted in the prize-winning 2014 Commonwealth Games' Athletes' Village.

He is also optimistic. 'Along with their traditional place-making skillsets, architects are needed to standardise the invisible bits in DfMA (design for manufacture and assembly): ensuring elements plug together properly, are efficient, responsible in terms of materials and systems, and that potential for mass customisation is built in.'

So what, exactly, is the Transforming Construction fund? Much of its £170 million has already been deployed along a broad strategic front. A good chunk has gone to creating the Construction Innovation Hub, a triumvirate comprising the Building Research Establishment, Manufacturing Technology Centre, and Centre for Digital Built Britain. Another wad has underwritten the Active Building Centre, a programme to promote the large-scale deployment of energy-positive buildings. A lesser amount is incubating an information-sharing forum called Network Plus, led and managed by the Bartlett in collaboration with Imperial College London

Left Architect AHR has been involved in DfMA schools projects for many years. At the just-completed Highcliffe primary school in Birstall, Leicester, a modular approach reduced the programme by 50% and complied with the DfE's challenging performance specification



and the WMG (Warwick Manufacturing Group, part of the University of Warwick).

All these facilities are up and running, gagging to collaborate with industry to meet the Construction 2025 Strategy ambitions.

Benefits of R&D

The remaining not-insignificant cash is dedicated to R&D, allocated competitively to strict criteria. Round Two was announced earlier this year and has just closed.

Round One, worth £13 million and released last year, launched a competition for corporate R&D projects to increase productivity, performance, and quality. It's notable that, of the 25 successful consortia, hardly any included architectural practices.

One of the very few was Bryden Wood. It was part of a consortium delivering the SEIS-MIC (Standardisation of School Components) project, which has created a harmonised digital modular build design library that can be used to configure any new school. Launched in June 2019, it can be used by stakeholders to massively speed up early design optioneering. As Johnston says, 'Without accelerating the early stages, there will be no time left to design good versions of this stuff, and that will be the death of good design.'

Carrying out R&D is far from easy but still worthwhile, says Stacey. He has extensive experience from his former role as director of innovation, industrialisation and business improvement at Skanska. 'If you're clever, you can tie R&D into live projects by leveraging funding to go the extra mile that your fee does not cover.'

He also extols the virtues of R&D tax relief, which SMEs can claim if they make

Above School design for the Minecraft generation: Bryden Wood's open-source Seismic web app, supported by the Transforming Construction fund, massively speeds up early school design phases and features T-Rexes and Loch Ness Monsters to appeal to all stakeholders.

a technological advance and solve a technological uncertainty in the process. 'An enormous proportion of what architects do potentially falls into those categories,' he says.

Jaimie Johnston's primary motivation is about solving critical global challenges. 'It's asking what it looks like to produce faster, better performing, functionally amazing, self-optimising, re-purposeable, recyclable, circular-economy buildings. That's only possible with R&D. Even when it fails, the learning is always positive. And it saves us from cranking the same handle all the time, which helps to attract and retain talent.'

Stephen Good has practical watchpoints for those chasing this latest funding round. Paying close attention to the competition criteria goes without saying. Beyond that, you must collaborate with cross-disciplinary partners and clearly target desirable outcomes. 'Most importantly, you must want to do it regardless - funding is just the icing on the cake.'

It's just over a century since the Bauhaus and Deutscher Werkbund conceptualised architecture as industrial product design. This time, the vision looks to be on firmer technological foundations. Everyone agrees that architects are still central to the plot. With coders and data analysts using a new palette of techniques likely to feature in the new team mix though, they'd better get ready to evolve. What better way than through R&D?



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Living design

Winners and judges from this year's Spanning Suburbia competition discuss the ideas behind the designs

Last July, RIBA Journal and steel lintel manufacturer IG Lintels ran its 'Spanning Suburbia' competition, challenging readers to design a suburban home which fits the changing needs of contemporary families. It asked architects to re-evaluate what it means to live a suburban lifestyle today and to interrogate the concept of suburbia itself.

Last month we ran an open critique between judges and winners, to learn more about their inspirations and to further the discussion about an appropriate architecture for suburbia.

Three of the judges, RIBAJ's Jan-Carlos Kucharek, IG Lintels MD Derrick McFarland, and Tsuruta Architects' Taro Tsuruta met competition winner Tom Atkinson with collaborator Ryan McStay, and commended entrants Andrew Drummond of RHP, David Parsons and Sam Selenky of Selenky Parsons and Kenneth Fraser of Kirkland Fraser Moor.

'Suburbia both fascinates me and makes me recoil in disgust', proclaimed Spanning Suburbia winner Tom Atkinson. An inflammatory statement, but one which illustrates polarised attitudes. While most people in the UK live in suburban settings, seeking affordable comfort, convenience and community - and compromise - others, certain urbane architects included, balk at life spent in Metroland.



Above Tom Atkinson's winning submission Villa Trio: A semi-detatched house for Chingford.

Below Kirkland Fraser Moor's Dovecote House commended

Suburbia needs good design

In Atkinson's view, overlooked suburbia can become 'a new battleground for good design'. At a time of housing, economic and environmental crises, architects - equipped with design nous and modern technologies are perfect to solve key problems.

One solution to our demographic issues, said Atkinson, is increased suburban densification and flexible architecture to facilitate it. His winning design, Villa Trio, addressed these concerns at neighbourhood level: homes with a small footprint are envisaged in a tessellating arrangement to maximise density. A fixed range of archedlintels allow the semi-detached units to be adapted at ground level to mixed use; these vary according to individual need - garages, flats or shops – but their appearance is standardised along the street. His design won praise for recognising social complexity, and, said Kucharek, for 'accepting the prosaic nature of suburbia and working with it'.

Use of as many arched lintels to 'Sir Basil Spence on acid'

This appreciation of the need for adaptability in the days of the 'sharing economy' finds its way into several of the designs. Andrew Drummond's Suburban Loft has an independently-accessed wing intended for use as Air BnB accommodation or as a 'nanny/manny/granny flat'. In Selenky Parsons' Villa Me!, flexible living and sleeping arrangements are informed by research into individuals' needs for privacy and social interaction in the home. The result is suitable not just for nuclear families but also for house-shares, suiting the mentality of 'a group of people who decide, 'if we can't individually get on the housing ladder, why not all club together and get a mansion', observed Atkinson of the design.

Separate but together

'Families evolve, kids don't necessarily move out, older relatives move in', says Parsons. Many existing suburban houses comprise a sequence of isolated rooms, and people retreat to their bedrooms as the only place to 'pin their identities'. Villa Me!'s adaptable interior layout turns this situation on its head. 'What we hear from many of our



are doing their own thing...we looked towards creating that sense of cohesion', explained Sam Selenky.

Villa Me! both confused and amused the judges with its eccentric exterior. The deliberate use of as many arched lintels as possible drew unusual comparisons to 'Sir Basil Spence on acid' and MVRDV's Dutch Pavilion at Expo 2000. 'We wanted to see how far we could take it' said Selenky. 'The site we chose is a genuine road where most of the houses are gated and feature porches with Doric columns...we wanted to nod in the aesthetics to what people like in the area but in a way that they probably wouldn't like.'

Selenky's point that 'there is a pastiche element to suburbia which we wanted to have fun with and play with' borders on the postmodern; and an equally tell-tale postmodernist influence asserts itself in the 'super-ornamentation' of Kenneth Fraser's Dovecote House – admired by judge Taro Tsuruta. Elaborate pargetting on the gables, and oversized elements such as overhanging eaves and circular picture windows, reference the popular code while adding an element of theatricality. In Fraser's view,

ornament, is a relevant discourse again, which it hasn't been for the last 20 years'.

The competition environment turns out to be a perfect setting for further witty (or wicked) experiments on what exactly is imagined of, and permissible in, a suburban home today – as Andrew Drummond also found. He admitted to being 'a bit cynical' with his entry, deliberately layering on features that estate agents would love to market. Suburban Loft is a slick, Louis-Kahn-inspired 'Grand Designs bucket-list' home, embracing suburban artifice and reinterpreting familiar features to appeal to modern urban tastes. Tudor beams give way to exposed steel lintels in a sort-of faux industrial warehouse conversion. 'Estate agents love a master suite', he quipped - and of course there's a swimming pool.

Crucially, by consciously pandering to homeowners' materialistic fantasies, Drummond highlighted the enduring nature of suburban aspiration. 'I imagined what Jeremy and Margo from 70s sitcom The Good Life would have been like today, based on a caricature of myself and my friends', he joked, 'but I also looked back to my parents' generation and their hopes and dreams'.

In the original judging, Villa Trio narrowly beat Suburban Loft to the winning position, after the judges had grappled with the moral quandary of allowing selfindulgence to override a social conscience. The issue continued to divide them even after months had passed. 'There's certainly an element of 'I really want it, but should I want it?', mused Kucharek, thinking of Suburban Loft's swimming pool. Derrick McFarland retorted emphatically: 'Of course! I can see myself moving in right away!' •

Left The prizewinners and judges, from left: Andrew Drummond, judge RIBA Journal's Jan-Carlos Kucharek, Tsuruta, Ryan McStay, David Selenky, Kenneth Derrick McFarland.

Above Selenky Parsons' Villa ME!. commended.

Tom Atkinson, judge Taro Fraser and IG Lintels MD



as possible drew comparisons

clients is that they want spaces which allow the family to be together while individuals 'postmodernism, as expressed through

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3: Culture

Nourish and flourish

Hugh Pearman chews over the many benefits of the communal breaking of bread



Hugh Pearman Editor

'Nothing in the world is better than lunch', announced Ian Martin, noted comedy scriptwriter and erstwhile architectural journalist, when arranging such a lunch in Soho recently to include him, me, and our right honourable and learned colleagues Cath Slessor and Christine Murray. Having known Ian since around 1980, I knew to book the afternoon off for this. And indeed we started at 1pm and finished at 4pm. On a Monday. This was actually quite abstemious by Ian's epic-lunching standards, but he had work to do, scripts to polish. And anyway, who ever made a Venn diagram in which the circles of 'lunch' and 'companionship' could not intersect with 'work'?

I think the immediate past president of the RIBA, Ben Derbyshire, might agree. His practice HTA is 50 years old and now 200-strong. It's always been about lunch, apparently. The founding quartet of Bernard Hunt, John Thompson, Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester (a trained and practising architect) and Edward Burd used to meet daily for lunch at either Burd's or Thompson's

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and Edinburgh. It's obviously good for the staff but it was also noted early on that clients would increasingly tend to book meetings for 12.30 in order to catch the HTA lunch. HTA's version of an anniversary book is a book of recipes. It's called 'The luncHTAbles'. A mere 22 of the firm's projects are presented from the 50 years, concisely illustrated and described. These are vastly outnumbered by the 58 recipes, each properly presented with professional food photography, all drawn

seafood, breakfast specials and puddings. I am not the most adventurous of cooks but I'd feel confident tackling these recipes which are mostly pretty simple, even basic, but good and non-wasteful. The diametric opposite of those fiddly modish recipes with a daunting list of expensive ingredients that you can never buy in small enough quantities.

from the expertise of the practice's chefs and

other staff. There are vegan and vegetarian

dishes, pasta, meat and game dishes, fish and

house in Camden Town. When the practice grew they made sure they had a kitchen and

communal lunches. So it has continued to

this day, with the kitchen as the visible heart of the HTA offices in London, Manchester

It's an attitude to life. I think also of Cullinan Studio's long tradition of the Friday lunch, always prepared by one of the team on a rota; of the communal kitchen tables of Snøhetta in Oslo and their six other global locations, providing delicious healthy food for everyone; the fact that every Maggie's Centre is designed around the kitchen table; the way one of our MacEwen Award winners in 2017 was the Sheffield Foodhall project, built of donated materials and using donated food cooked by volunteers for customers including the homeless and socially isolated: and the work done in feeding and helping people by the charity Crisis. Consider supporting such charities.

As the man said, nothing in the world is better than lunch. Especially at this time of year.

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

'I find the process of designing temporary shows intoxicating. You can often actually feel the space being captured and created around vou. You don't get that feeling of immediacy with architecture' Stanton Williams' Paul Williams tells Pamela Buxton why he loved doing Bridget Riley's Hayward show: ribai.com/ rilevatthehavward

Venn diagram in which the circles of 'lunch' and 'companionship' could not intersect with 'work'?

Who ever made a

The RIBA Journal December 2019

UNITED WE STAND

Supporting women in

architecture is one of the

aims of a new union for

architects - the Section

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of the United Voices of the

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Women's work

Two new books start to redress the overlooking of women architects



Oliver Wainwright

Jadwiga Grabowska-Hawrylak, Raili Pietilä, Flora Ruchat-Roncati - just three of the many names I hadn't even heard of, but about whom I'm now compelled to find out more, after flicking through the new Phaidon book, Breaking Ground: Architecture by Women.

Grabowska-Hawrylak was one of Poland's most important 20th century architects, author of some strikingly sculptural high-rise housing blocks in Wrocław in the 1970s, where great ribbon-like balconies ripple across the facade and wrap around the half-moon windows, forming a giant vertical basket-weave of concrete.

Pietilä was a pioneering Finnish architect who, with her husband Reima Pietilä, developed an organic form of modernism, embodied in the craggy roofline of the Finnish embassy in New Delhi and the faceted crystalline form of the former student union building for Helsinki University of Technology. It is Aalto with the geological heft cranked up.

Ruchat-Roncati was prominent in Switzerland's influential Ticino school of architecture, conjuring enigmatic concrete structures decades before Valerio Olgiati became every student's pin-up idol. She was the first woman professor and chair of architecture at ETH Zurich in 1985, and designed some dramatic bridges and tunnel portals for the Transjurane motorway, creating architecture as forceful as the Jura mountains.

There are many more such discoveries in this new book, compiled by Dr Jane Hall, member of young collective Assemble, who recently completed a PhD comparing Lina Bo Bardi and Alison and Peter Smithson. The

information about each figure is brief, but the breadth is impressively wide, shining a welcome spotlight on lesser-known names.

Recent vocal campaigns have helped to highlight overlooked contributions of many women, from Denise Scott Brown to Madelon Vriesendorp, and this book helps expand the canon. As Hall writes: 'Because authorship, over and over again, has been attributed, celebrated and promoted by and on behalf of men, this history needs correction.'

It was no easy task. She says many practices rejected the inclusion of certain works due to their female partner's lack of involvement in a particular building's design - overlooking the fact that her role might have helped realise the project in ways that didn't necessarily involve design. More than men, Hall writes, 'women are subject to the ongoing propensity to treat the act of design as the essential contribution to the built object rather than the "back end" of managing architectural production.' The prolific output of Studio Libeskind, for example, owes just as much to (his wife) Nina Libeskind's fearsome politick-

From Aino Aalto to Eva Zeisel, edited by entine Fiell. From textile and graphic designers to ceramicists and architects, it provides a kaleidoscopic catalogue of the last century of bold women creators. Austria's first female architect, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, designed the pioneering Frankfurter Kitchen of the 1920s, a state of the art functionalist concept based on time-and-motion studies of how to optimise the layout for ultimate efficiency. With fold-down ironing board, swivelling stool and integrated aluminium storage containers with handles that enabled their contents to be poured easily, it was hailed as the 'housewife's laboratory', even if today it seems to perpetuate a rejected model.

From Lilly Reich to Zaha Hadid and beyond, this book presents an extensive cast of women designers who have made the world a far richer place. As the Fiells write in their introduction: 'By introducing a female sensibility to problem-solving, they have contributed to a psychologically broader and more humane understanding of design.' •

Guardian. Read him here every other month and at ribaj.com

Raili Pietilä and her husband developed an organic form of modernism - Aalto

with the geological

heft cranked up

ing as it does to Danny's dynamic doodles. Breaking Ground is joined by another much-needed new book, Women in Design:

mother-daughter duo, Charlotte and Clem-

Oliver Wainwright is architecture critic at the

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A fair day's pay

... for a fair day's work. A new compact?



Alan Jones

A development company was recently challenged on when it would respect architects' practices, and its reply focused on salaries: 'We'll respect you when you respect yourselves.' There wasn't an opportunity to query the developer's appreciation of keeping a contemporary practice in business – from lawyers' fees for bespoke contracts to the increasing cost of professional indemnity insurance, IT and securing new work.

Practice is an art, a science and a business. Efficiency and effectiveness, entrepreneurship and professionalism receive a lighter touch in architectural education, but surely it is the learner slopes of the profession where the habits of the future practitioner are formed. Where does the culture of long hours and minimal business planning begin?

A valuable education involves significant personal change. It supports students as they learn but there is also a responsibility to prepare people for the world beyond academia, especially when higher education costs so much for so many.

But transformation is avoidable. Erik Erikson and, more recently, Mirjana Domakonda identify 'extended adolescence' which implies a tacit agreement that 'we will be gentle on you, if you, students, are gentle on us'. Education leading to a profession must surely be affected by this?

In Defining Contemporary Professionalism, edited by yours truly with Rob Hyde and published by RIBA in September, Peggy Deamer sets out her well-argued case for unionised practice, with an understanding of economics, transparency of fees and salaries and calling out poor professionalism. In the same publication, Chris Boyce outlines the case for making money, professionally, and Indy Johar calls for a move away from fees related to construction cost towards the value of problem solving and environmental and spatial stewardship. Peter Holgate and Paul Jones question if universities are an appropriate location for creating future architects.

These contributors highlight the interdependencies of education, business, hours and salaries, with value. It is a complex ecosystem that requires acknowledgement of our generational differences, a holistic approach and a team effort towards a common goal.

Some might argue that we knew what we were letting ourselves in for before embarking on the journey to become an architect. But I believe we can change our situation if academia, practices, graduates, employers and the RIBA work together.

We work to earn a

living and only the

privileged few can

say otherwise

Enter the RIBA Code of Practice, stage left and a pilot of The Compact, stage right.

Only RIBA Chartered Practices are committed to the RIBA Code of Practice (2019), requirements that are above minimum employment legislation, to champion fair and diverse workplaces. That gives confidence to members working in those practices. Anyone can contact professional.standards@riba.org to report an example not meeting the Code.

The Compact is an agreement between graduates and chartered practices employing them. It addresses the transition to the workplace and promotes best practice for the benefit of all. The pilot will start in January 2020, with the aim of chartered practices and validated schools meeting its requirements by 2021. Representatives of our schools have already given an encouraging reaction.

Chris Boyce challenges us to acknowledge that we work to earn a living, and only the privileged few can say otherwise. To increase the diversity of our profession, we need to be more valuable and effective through education and practice.

We are taking the high road of more impact, responsibility, expertise and value.

Hence, we must support and challenge each other to be better. We can start by defining what we expect of each other. If you wish to participate in the pilot of the Compact please email compact@riba.org.

president@riba.org@alanjones2008

RIBA DEMANDS ACTION ON HOUSING, CLIMATE, SAFETY - AND BREXIT

The RIBA has called on the political parties to step up and tackle the serious crises in housing, climate and building safety in its 2019 manifesto, published in November. The RIBA's Future Trends survey shows that political uncertainty is affecting confidence in the wider construction sector, and practices are reporting project cancellations. The RIBA is calling on the next government to resolve Brexit so that the UK can start building.

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- The thermal comfort recommendations in schools and how to meet Building Regulations Part L
- The effects thermal comfort can have on both the learner and educator in a learning environment
- Daylighting and the impacts on health, wellbeing and
- Insulation solutions to meet thermal comfort and daylighting requirements within an education building









- 1 Watch a CPD video and you'll be re-directed to the quiz
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James Gorst has designed many remarkable homes over his long career and it turns out his London office is one too

Words: Eleanor Young Portrait: Ivan Jones

Home front

Stepping from Lamb's Conduit Street into the front room of James Gorst Architects' central London office, you are surrounded by a warm intensity of saturated green wall, hundreds of books and robustly handsome dentil cornices. A bold painting mixes up the colour and energy of the room. It is as beautiful as you might expect from an architect who has spent his career designing remarkable homes.

But nothing is quite as it seems. The aesthetic experience might kid you this is just a decoration job on the Georgian townhouse, but the walls are lined with 40mm cork insulation and covered in lime plaster. And when Gorst jumps up to check the chicken ('20 minutes at 210 degrees') you realise you are in his home, not just a beautifully appointed tiny office for him and business partner David Roy.

As the rooms unfurl the picture becomes clearer. Here is the meeting room cum dining

room with special, block-printed wallpaper and the piano nobile of the second office, alive with industry, then follow the Georgian curves of the handrail under a clerestory light upstairs to the bedrooms.

The story of Gorst's practice is the story of his life. He has been in and out of architecture, rejected for study by Cambridge for his portfolio of postcard tracings, returning to study it half way through a history degree, doing up his homes in Bristol, Islington and Suffolk with his own hands for the love of it and making more money that way than ever from clients. In his 30s he gave up on architecture as being too subject to clients' will and whims. He came back for a client who trusted him with a complete job: paintings, textiles, specially designed furniture, fabric walls, marbles, three veneers. Gorst still works with him periodically and has dinner



There is a pleasure in not being too serious, for example in the long-running battle with interior designers



with him. Over nearly 40 years of practice he has witnessed the lives of hundreds of clients and been embroiled more or less with their relationships, finances and dreams, from his brother, personal friends and acquaintances, to a wider network of the privileged, designing their city pads and country homes.

His short stints with postmodernist John Outram and modernist Denys Lasdun, in the latter days of his practice, have left Gorst oddly interested in labelling his own work. He did classicism, and postmodernism, then worked his way through to arts and crafts before persuading clients to commission him for modernism - in his hands a freer style he could make his own. That is to say, Gorst calls it modernism but the traces of historical styles that have gone before cannot be denied and the sumptuous exaggerations of some of his work means that includes a trace of postmodernism, if one chooses to isolate some elements from the whole

There have been RIBA Awards and critical acclaim along the way. The late Charles Jencks (see obituary, p63) approved of his 'urbane' postmodernism in Islington, while other recent projects include his old office at the House of Detention in Clerkenwell, converted and then rented to the London boss of Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), and most recently Hannington Farm which made the RIBA's House of the Year shortlist. After we met

Gorst was racing back to the family home in Framlingham, Suffolk to watch it on TV with his wife and 10-year-old twins.

He has only employed people in the last decade, since he was 50. David Roy was one of those, arriving as a part 2 student. He is still there, running the practice of six with Gorst and, one suspects, picking up much of the hard work between the elements that Gorst revels in – the people and the materials.

Gorst, lightweight body warmer pulled over a shirt, has an animal energy and trusting way of speaking lightly, but frankly, of setbacks and road blocks. In a recent monograph he talks about leaks on projects and a lack of insurance and in person he takes potshots at planners as well as amusing sideswipes at his own clients. Roy is a little more circumspect and smartly turned out, but his face creases into a smile just as often. There is a pleasure in not being too serious, for example in the long running battle with interior decorators. Ahead of one skirmish the practice came up with panelled walls to assert the architecture inside as well as out. 'Quandam dubitare panellare,' they quote to each other in cod Latin; when in doubt panel it. Normally in lovely timber. 'It makes a difference if your life is lived in front of walnut,' says Roy. 'It elevates an argument,' adds Gorst.

Material discussions underpin much of the practice's work. 'We talk so much about solidity and tactility,' says Roy. 'I would love to do a completely concrete house,' adds Gorst. This assertion has to lead on to discussions of action on climate emergency by the practice - beyond being one of the hundreds of signatories of Architects Declare. Hannington Farm, which is 1,512m², uses cross-laminated timber, reed beds and boreholes to push towards sustainability. Gorst feels he has already moved a long way over his career. 'There has been a big change, you used to specify teak or mahogany without a second thought.'

Retirement is in the back of his mind, though it is clear he loves life, work and the team. But when he does retire, the London office/home goes with him, as pension and income for a young family. The grand property plan of moving the office into rented space while cashing in on the rent of the House of Detention foundered with economic uncertainties so the practice moved into Gorst's London family home. Perhaps Roy will be able to buy another home for the practice, or will just rent. In the meantime other projects are calling - houses, a village hall in Gorst's Suffolk home town, but also a temple, now on site for White Eagle Lodge in the South Downs, where ley lines meet spiritualism and a pendentive stone dome at the heart of series of spaces will realise the ceremonies of the group in built form.

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Richer – but poorer too

There's no doubt that Banister Fletcher's tome is all the better for its heavy revision, but the reduced role of its drawings hurts

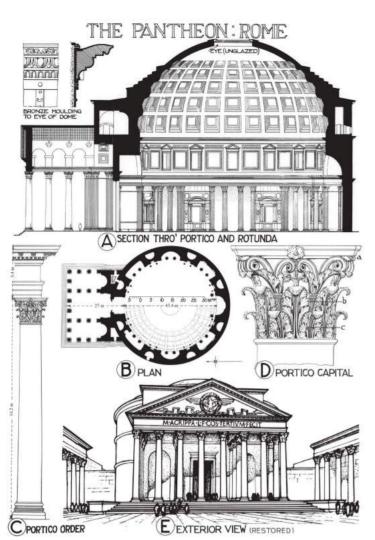
Ed Crooks

Several years ago, when the Sheffield School of Architecture moved back to the top floors of the newly refurbished Arts Tower, the first images to adorn the fresh white walls were the large plate prints of Banister Fletcher's intricate composite drawings – hung with an urgency that implied architecture simply could not be taught without their presence.

That Fletcher's drawings found relevance in architectural education a century after their publication is testament to the communicative power and accessibility of these studies, yet simultaneously raises difficult questions regarding their role in the context of Fletcher's broader 'history'.

Now widely criticized for its distorted colonial world view, the 'History of Architecture on the Comparative Method' was first published in 1896 under the authorship of Banister Fletcher and his son Banister 'Flight' Fletcher. Updated throughout the 20th century by Flight, it gradually increased in scope, but maintained its distinct Western bias towards the definition of 'architecture'. In the 65 years since his final update, further editions have gone some way to righting the wrongs of the original's highly-flawed comparative method. But with the 21st edition, editors Murray Fraser and Catherine Gregg have implemented the greatest leap in the palimpsestic growth of this tome, commissioned by the RIBA and University of London.

Now retitled the 'Global History of Archi-



Left Banister Fletcher plan, section and restored view of the Pantheon, Rome (c. 114–123 CE).

tecture', the book has been entirely rewritten by 88 scholars, each engaged in primary research in their respective field. It adopts an objective overview of global architecture, consciously distanced from Fletcher's authoritarian standpoint, where colonial notions of 'otherness' pervaded – from the famous illustrated 'tree' to its discriminatory structure of 'Historical' (ie Western) and 'Non-Historical' (everything else).

In the most significant structural change in the book's history, this new edition takes the form of seven chronological sections from 3500BCE to present, each subtly representing a theme, beginning with 'intentionality' and ending with 'modernity'. Within these sections the globe is subdivided into geographical sectors, which, as Fraser describes, are a practical methodology for containing an area of study - awarding no priority to any significant event or region. This siloing serves to emphasise the artificiality of such divisions when they meet greater global forces, and in the case of this updated edition it is a highly effective strategy. Reflecting a broader shift in scholarship from western-centric viewpoints, it gives more equitable weighting to the various geographical locations, guiding the text not by Fletcher's false narrative towards a supreme style, but by a vast multiplicity of overlapping influences.

Undoubtedly much of the appeal of Fletcher's original book lay in the lavish drawings that provided the framework around which the text was woven. This has traditionally given the feel of a narrated slideshow, and in a move away from these singular viewpoints, it shouldn't come as a shock to see the original drawings here playing a significantly reduced role.

Yet it does. Where once they sat as full-page integral items, here the drawings are used selectively, shrunk on the page and captioned, their function largely assumed by a plethora of other image types. After over a century, some detachment from the original does feel necessary, but in re-evaluating their relevance, the original drawings' relationship to the text is at times abstracted to the point of critique – occasionally confusing the premise of the book between that of a global history of architecture, and a self-conscious assessment of Fletcher's previous work.

Fraser holds that past attempts to standardise through drawing have been futile owing to observer bias, so this book's approach is one of purposeful visual heterogeneity. While this new approach is very welcome, retained original drawings remain extremely effective, allowing one to read relationships between local families of buildings (ie English Early Renaissance plans, or French Gothic details) – or to describe singular buildings through compositions that leap between plan, section, elevation, detail and ornament. Where new inclusions take up the mantle with fresh drawings – for instance Adam Hardy's beautifully illustrated

Sir Banister Fletcher's Global History of Architecture (2019), Bloomsbury Publishing. section on the Indian Subcontinent 600-1400 – show the potential of this technique. So it does seem a shame that this isn't continued throughout the updated global scope of the book, where many key examples are limited to a single drawing or photograph, rather than a rich variety of drawn views.

Irrespective of this, the book's greatly increased range is remarkable, providing an encyclopedic global picture in which every reader will almost certainly find something new. Such is the extent of its reach that, following decades of successive growth, the million words of this edition spill over into two monumental volumes, also making this the first edition to be available digitally.

Online the book is formatted as a series of Wikipedia-style long-form articles – perhaps a missed opportunity for greater engagement with a medium that offers so much interactive potential. However, one can imagine this is a first step towards successive editions that may further embrace digital possibilities.

Banister Fletcher was adept at using various means to communicate ideas, collecting lantern slides and selling large plate prints of his drawings as both a commercial and academic enterprise. So it seems fitting that the book now looks to employ contemporary modes of dissemination, welcoming new audiences to a work that, following a thorough reappraisal, will no doubt remain a vital part of the architectural canon.

A contentious classic reinvented for a new generation through previously unheard viewpoints – and not a moment too soon.

Edward Crooks is founder of Edward Crooks studio and runs the BA Architecture studio Civic Expression at Central St Martins

stance Adam Hardy's beautifully illustrated | CMIC Expression at Central St Martins

as a shock to see the original drawings here playing a significantly reduced role. Yet it does

It shouldn't come

Right The Ibn Tulun
Mosque, Cairo, Egypt
(879). One of many
examples use to illustrate
cross-cultural flows, with
its design deriving from
an earlier mosque in
Samaria.

It is consciously distanced from Fletcher's authoritarian standpoint, where colonial notions of 'otherness' pervaded

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Obituary

Charles Jencks 1939 – 2019

Renowned founder of Maggie's Cancer Care centres and author of The Language of Post Modern Architecture, a thoughtful, approachable theorist and lover of debate



Everybody in our world knew Charlie Jencks, or felt they did. If you hadn't met him personally you'd have been to one of his lectures, or benefited from one of his often provocative back-of-hall interjections, or been involved in one of his large-scale landscape projects, or encountered him in his role of chief design client for the

chain of Maggie's Centres set up in memory of his second wife, herself a landscape architect, Maggie Keswick.

If you hadn't done any of that you'd most likely have read one of his books, the likeliest candidate being his 1977 work 'The Language of Post-Modern Architecture' which was one of the most successful architecture titles ever, going through seven editions. This – along with his earlier 'Modern Movements in Architecture', derived from his Bartlett PhD thesis – was my introduction to the rapidly-shifting world of architecture when I entered it around that time.

Charles, always approachable, had few airs and graces but no false modesty – you always sensed he KNEW he was right, though this was forever arguable. A sociable man, he loved a debate, possessing that real American courtesy that likes to listen. He constructed a kind of rangy persona for himself – you could call it dandified and rumpled at the same time, typically involving brightly coloured cord suits and casually-flung scarfs, often topped with a fedora. Above all, he was a highly subjective cataloguer and categoriser of architecture, forever inventing and pigeonholing splinter-movements and influences, drawing flow charts to explain it all.

Postmodernism was of course meant to replace the modernism that he claimed had died in 1972 with the demolition of the vast Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St Louis, Missouri, by Minoru Yamasaki, just 20 years after it was complete. He was forever adjusting his worldview, happily later publishing a book on what he called 'late modernism'. But his original stance holds, I think: if we are not all postmodernists now, we are certainly mostly

pluralists, and he was instrumental in promoting the growing acceptance of a richer variety of different styles.

Unlike many theorists he also practised as a designer himself, usually in collaboration: for instance his own house, now grade 1 listed, was a work carried out with Terry Farrell and Michael Graves and also included much of his own furniture. He was an early and evangelical convert to the workability of MDF as a base material. It is intended that the house should become a museum, open to the public by appointment.

As a landscape designer his trademark – derived from Maggie's work – was the large-scale landform with pools of water in the interstices, organised along scientific-mystical 'cosmological' principles in which the helix and the spiral loomed large. Complexity theory was there too. Some of the gardens for the Maggie's centres are organised on these principles. For all their deliberately other-worldly appearance they are his take on the 'universe in miniature' concept of certain historic gardens.

His tally of Maggie's cancer caring centres – now 24 of them, 22 in the UK – are his and Maggie's main legacy. The first, at Edinburgh, was designed and later twice extended by Richard Murphy, based on Maggie's own concept brief. All the subsequent ones, no matter how many and varied the architects and how they interpret the brief, comprise the same basic ingredients. These are informal places of domestic scale, nearly always associated with a garden of some kind, where the kitchen table is at the heart of the plan and where various spaces from relatively public to private are provided: cancer support is also for the wider families of those directly affected. Usually placed close to hospitals, they are completely different in mission, feel and architectural quality.

Jencks was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1939, graduated first in English Literature and then a master's in architecture at Harvard, then in 1965 moved to the UK, enrolling at the Bartlett for his PhD under Reyner Banham. His first marriage to Pamela Balding ended in 1973, and he met Maggie at the Architectural Association. They married in 1978 and she died in 1995. He married Louisa Lane Fox in 2005 and is survived by her and by his four children from his first two marriages.

Hugh Pearman

IN MEMORIAM

63

Geoffrey Montague
Simmons
FLECTED 1953, FARNHAM

Nigel Simon Copleston

Roberts ELECTED 1974,

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Patricia Gupta ELECTED 1975, ESSEX

Stephen James Barter

Andrew Peter Bruce

Bulbeck ELECTED 2009, LONDON

Bernard Joseph Bull ELECTED 1954, BLACKPOOL

Ronald Arthur Green

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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

ribaj.com The RIBA Journal December 2019

Exchange

Battersea battered

In her assessment of the current redevelopment at Battersea Power Station (RIBAJ October, p31), Isabelle Priest portrays the involvement of the Malaysian consortium since 2012 as something of a revival in the building's fortunes after years of dereliction. In my view this is not the case, and better options based on trust ownership, enabling a wider consortium of interests, could and should have been pursued.

It is true that Battersea Power Station languished for many years. It is clear that it should have been placed in a lotteryfunded trust. The building could then have been repaired to a conservation standard: with key views protected, the chimneys repaired (not rebuilt - the Twentieth Century Society made a convincing case that this was not necessary) and existing fabric conserved. In this way, in time and in a consortium of other interests, the building would have become another great London institution alongside the British Museum, the National Gallery, the South Kensington Museums and the Tate. A major new cultural centre with free access at the heart of the development would in turn create the interest and incentive to redevelop the vacant sites around.

It is the lingering thought of what ought to have been that makes the current prospect at Battersea Power Station all the more dismal. The whole financial and organisational model for the repair and reuse of the building as part of a commercial development is shown to be flawed.

Battersea Power Station is in fact listed grade II*, not that you would know that from the treatment being meted out to it.

And all this destruction for what? Yet more luxury flats (you rightly point out there is little affordable housing) offices and a shopping mall. Perhaps this is the final



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Something to get off your

and most tragic loss of all: the building's dignity of purpose. A paradox of these early 20th century power stations was the care expended on the interiors that were only ever seen by a few engineers. The listing and retention of Battersea Power Station offered the opportunity to for everyone to see and experience them as new museums, galleries and exhibition spaces. You show an image of Halliday's 'A' Station turbine hall with the giant pilaster order crudely interrupted by a shopping gallery. A building described by Gavin Stamp as 'one of the supreme monuments of 20th century Britain' – reduced to this.

Keith Garner, London SW11

Jencks remembered

Your obituary of Charles Jencks (online and p63 this issue) captured his spirit and his importance, particularly his almost obsessive desire to catalogue and understand the shifting sands of architectural thought after the collapse of any faith that was left in modernism in the early 1970s.

I knew him at the AA, when his latest passion was the promotion of the role of signification in the designation of architecture. John Andrews and I, as bursary recipients in the Diploma School, were required to work with Charles on a history of post-war buildings in London.

Charles wanted us to describe the architecture in the guide in terms of symbols, with minimal words, in much the same way a Michelin guide used symbols to indicate what is available in each establishment it reviews – a knife and fork for a restaurant, a bed to indicate overnight accommodation, and so on. He wanted us to come up with our own symbols for assessing architecture. The idea wasn't well received by the students, although we all enjoyed Charles's energy and enthusiasm for the guide, which we felt was a somewhat superfluous project.

I described this process in my eulogy for John at his cremation earlier this year. With the passing of John, Charles, and Florian Beigel last summer, we have lost some highly original thinkers in British architecture.

Alan Power, Alan Power Architects, London

Remembering Ted

News of the death of Ted Cullinan, immensely influential and loved architect, teacher and Royal Gold Medallist, came in as this issue of RIBAJ was going to press. Our obituary will be in our next issue. Here are just a few of the immediate responses:

'Architecture has lost a

pioneer. Ted will be sorely missed and fondly remembered for the incredible contribution he made to architecture and society. He was a radical thinker, well ahead of his time on environmental issues and building sustainably. Not only did Ted shape our landscape – leaving behind dozens of ground-breaking buildings - but he inspired the next generation as one of the great teachers of our times. Alan Jones, President, RIBA

A huge loss — Ted was an inspiration to generations and admired by fellow Royal Academicians as an ardent champion of socially and environmentally responsible architecture.

Kate Goodwin, Drue Heinz curator of architecture, the Royal Academy

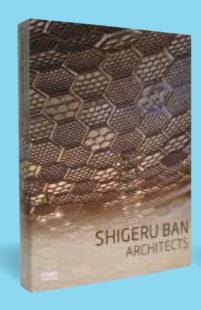
One of the good guys, in every sense. We're losing so many of them. A proper builder. Rowan Moore, architecture critic, the Observer

Ted, RIP. Such a joy to have known. What a loss. What a legacy. What a man. Piers Taylor, Invisible Studio, Wiltshire

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Torten Estate Dessau, Germany, 1930s

As the Bauhaus centenary year comes to a close, the legacy left by Bauhaus émigrés in this country is still an object of debate, and undoubtedly difficult to define. A significant moment in the narrative that traces the movement's influence on British modernism was the lecture delivered by Walter Gropius at the Design and Industries Association in London in May 1934, on the occasion of an exhibition of his work held at the RIBA that month and shortly before his immigration to Britain. A translation of his text, by MARS founder and contributor to the Architectural Review P Morton Shand, was read out by

Gropius - according to Maxwell Fry, barely understanding the English text.

Nonetheless, the lecture was reported to have had a great impact on its audience, as did the exhibition. That featured numerous drawings and large format photographs of his work, including the Torten Estate in Dessau seen in this image. Both lecture and exhibition emphasised the need to find a solution for the pressing housing problems that were common to most European countries

Valeria Carullo



architectural acoustic finishes

Designed by architects Dexter Moren Associates, the five star Hilton London Bankside near Tate Modern & The Shard, represents the next generation of design-led Hilton Hotels.

Our Oscar Elite exceptionally smooth acoustic plaster was spray applied to the ceiling throughout this stylish hotel lobby, creating a calm & relaxing environment without design compromise.

Photo by Katherine Jane Wood Photography











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