

MacEwen Award 2020

Park Palace Ponies, Liverpool

Shelter from the Storm, London

Margate Caves, Kent

Grand Junction, St Mary Paddington

Tŷ Pawb, Wrexham

Beacon of Light, Sunderland

Plus five shortlisted projects

The RIBA Journal

February 2020

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Buildings that benefit the common good, plus diversity with BFA and RGM's Grafton. Join the debate at: letters.ribaj@riba.org

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1: Buildings



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This is our annual issue that showcases a different kind of architecture. Our MacEwen Award is all about social responsibility, 'architecture for the common good'. That's deliberately vague – we never know what we're going to receive and are often surprised, but our judges know it when they see it. It attracts entries from well-known names and relative unknowns alike. And while we don't rule out zingy architecture and large budgets, we are equally impressed by projects with virtually no budget and little or no visible architecture. Just ideas that have borne fruit.

The skills of architects often lie in enabling, organising, persuading, re-using: these are the more unsung

aspects of design perhaps, but they can lead to projects of great impact. Relatively small interventions can rescue buildings and give them and their communities a new lease of life. Let's not forget that this year's Royal Gold Medal winner, Grafton Architects, was originally part of an extraordinarily fertile grouping of Irish architects including fellow Royal Gold Medallists O'Donnell + Tuomey. Originally with little work, they applied their collective thinking to re-imagining a whole section of Dublin previously earmarked for clearance – and were able to follow through and implement it. Just ideas, as we say. But what powerful ideas they can be. ●

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'We fought quite hard for the chimney. If we'd had square-edged shingles and no chimney, it would have been a very different building'

Chris Dyson
Architects on its new
dinosaur-friendly
café in Crystal
Palace: ribaj.com/crystalpalacecafe

Below MacEwen Award 2020 winner,
Park Palace Ponies, page 12.



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Buildings
MacEwen Award – judging



Climate leads MacEwen agenda

In the year of snowballing climate awareness, award judges give the environment priority

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek



JONATHAN COLE

If it felt, by the end of the MacEwen award judging process, that there was a greater emphasis than usual on projects involving re-use, it may have been due in no small part to judge Cecilie Sachs Olsen, who had a sustainability axe to grind. One of the three curators of last year's Oslo Architecture Triennale, Olsen had devoted the whole of that event to curating a collective vision for urban degrowth predicated on a radically reduced global carbon footprint; and when it came to scrutinising the 30 longlisted projects for this fifth year of the award, she was taking no prisoners.

That she was at the other end of a Skype connection only increased her resolve to convince the other judges of her agenda. These were planner Kathy MacEwen, daughter of Malcolm and Anni MacEwen, the former RIBA editor and planner, after whom the award is named; MawsonKerr's Dan Kerr, one of the architect enablers for the Star and Shadow Cinema collective in Newcastle, last year's MacEwen winner; Hana Loftus, co-director at award-winning practice HAT

Projects; Kathryn Tombling, director and head of housing at BDP and award sponsor; and award instigator and RIBA editor Hugh Pearman. Gathered in a meeting room at BDP's Clerkenwell headquarters, all needed to be won round.

The approach certainly helped whittle down the longlist, which saw some ostensibly worthy projects fall away in the wake of the developing theme of 'loose-fit and long life'. Specificity of purpose for instance, such as the educational one of aLL Design's zany, eye-catching Neuron Pod in east London, failed to capture judges' imaginations. 'Do we need profligate statement buildings when we need to be thinking about ones with multiple purposes if we build at all,' challenged Sachs Olsen. 'I'm not convinced this is what we need now. I get the good intentions but it could have been done in a way that made a

magical classroom experience but with a bigger sustainability message.'

Any inkling that renewal was being done for renewal's sake also met with judges' opprobrium. An impressive piece of landscaping at Birmingham's Centenary Square seemed to remove a sizeable patch of green and replace it with hard paving, saying, according to Kerr, 'nothing really about either sustainability or biodiversity'. Civic though it was, it slipped off the shortlist, whereas the stacked timber pallets of the learning landscape for Plymouth's Riverside Primary School stayed on. So Hauser+ Wirth's indulgent rural regeneration of Braemar's Fife Arms checked out too, while tp bennett's Manchester office Windmill Green and Featherstone Young's Ty Pawb car park, both refurb, clocked in. 'The default position in the office sector seems to be demolish rather than re-use,' Pearman noted of Windmill Green. 'This is a nice riposte to that.'

As an award for 'architecture for the common good,' it's a surprise that housing exemplars have not figured more on this longlist; but these remain few and far between. This year saw two apparently similar projects submitted: community land trust development Manor Farm, Stretham, by Haysom Ward Miller and Mole Architects' Marmalade Lane co-housing, both in Cambridgeshire – but both came in for criticism. Loftus praised the former's 'exemplary community involvement' and 'leverage of market-led housing and imaginative house types to produce a

Top Prickly issue: aLL Design's Neuron Pod classroom space in Whitechapel, London.

Right Manor Farm: Nice facades, shame about the lanes.



NICK CAVILLE/BDP



tenure-blind result'; but having visited it, she felt 'they bottled it on the design. There's a lot of parking courts, the public realm is low quality and the scheme's integration with the existing community is poor.'

There was less criticism of the ultimately shortlisted Marmalade Lane but it still left judges sensing a dubious community-led message from 'fundamentally pretty well-off people clubbing together to develop a site'. MacEwen however felt 'it's an intergenerational scheme, which is good to highlight,' and Kerr liked the way that it had broadened public perceptions of co-housing, adding that 'it's had a direct effect on a scheme we're doing in a deprived area of west Newcastle – the project exemplifies what a different model can do'.

The shortlist rewarded clear, aspirational thinking over acceptance of the status quo. So Holland Harvey's sensitive homeless shelter and community café subtly drawn out of a disused supermarket on a London council estate made the grade, whereas Reed Watts' Commonweal pods for rough sleepers didn't. An elegant, flat-pack, stop-gap sop to societal homelessness 'did a beautiful job but

it's a conflicted solution to a problem that shouldn't exist.' By contrast, Kathryn Tombling saw Shelter from the Storm as 'embedded in the community; the interaction of the public with the homeless done in an intelligent, spatial way to make a very rich project'.

In the end, the lion's share of the shortlist and individual winners comprised either bottom-up community endeavours or highly effective, top-down community support structures. What makes the award always such a pleasure to judge is the notion that it looks at the building only as part of a wider process of social engagement. This year's winner did not disappoint in this regard, with physically the lightest of architectural touches compared to its enabling impact on the urban community.

In a rare intrigue, the MacEwen experienced some shortlist hard-bargaining, resulting in one entry falling off the initial dozen-strong shortlist; with Sachs Olsen agreeing to Sunderland's embodied carbon-rich Beacon of Light staying on it only if Middlesbrough's Greatham Creek seal and bird Hide project came out. With most enjoying the student-built project's fun, scale and imagination, the rusted steel and cubic tonnes of concrete groundworks were seemingly at odds with the damaged landscape it purported to heal. 'It's really sweet but I think they got it wrong', mused MacEwen. 'It is contradictory, cherishing nature using the very materials that are synonymous with its destruction,' noted Sachs Olsen. Last minute sustainability horse-trading at a MacEwen at the decade's start, in which ponies galloped off with the award. ●

ALEX BLAND



Top left The MacEwen judges at BDP's Clerkenwell offices. **Left** Water features replace grass at Centenary Square, Birmingham. **Top right** Heavy is the head... Nick Tyrer's steel crown on top of concrete.



2020 LONGLIST

Community endeavours

Grand Junction at St Mary Paddington by Dow Jones Architects

Greatham Creek seal and bird hide, Middlesbrough, by Leeds Beckett university students led by architect Nick Tyrer

Higham Hill park theatre, Walthamstow, by vPPR architects

Margate Caves improvements, Margate, by Kaner Olette Architects

October Books, Southampton, by Darren Bray, Studio BAD
Park Palace Ponies, Dingle, Liverpool, by Harrison Stringfellow
Shaftesbury Hall community centre, Bounds Green, London by Mulroy Architects

Education Initiatives

Castlebank Horticultural Training Centre, Lanark, by EKJN

Neuron Pod, Whitechapel, by aLL Architects

Riverside Primary School outdoor classroom, Plymouth, by University of Plymouth architecture students

Soil Association HQ, Bristol by Askew Cavanna Architects
Torriano Primary school lab, London, by Hayhurst & Co
Urban Room, University of Reading, by Invisible Studio

New approaches to housing
Manor Farm community land housing, Cambridge, by Haysom Ward Millar architects

Marmalade Lane co-housing, Cambridge, by Mole Architects

Support structures

Beacon of Light, Sunderland, by Faulkner Browns

Commonweal Pods, by Reed Watts

Forgotten Veterans HQ, Portsmouth, by Deniz Beck Partners

Maggie's Centre, Oldham, Manchester, by dRMM

Shelter from the Storm homeless shelter, London by Holland Harvey

St Agnes Lodge refuge, Bristol, by Askew Cavanna Architects

Ty Pawb cultural centre, Wrexham by Featherstone Young

The Ark children's hospice, Barnet by Squire & Partners

Urban and rural revitalisation

Argal workshops, Falmouth by Gluckman Smith

Centenary Square, Birmingham, by Graham Massie Architects

Fife Arms, Braemar, By Moxon architects

Hatch startup business centre, Manchester, by Planit-ie

Windmill Green office retrofit, Manchester, by tp bennett

Arts regeneration

Artists' Studios, Sway, Hants by PAD Studio

Potemkin Theatre antepavilion, Haggerston by Maich Swift

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Park and ride

The winning MacEwen Award scheme, Park Palace Ponies offers children skills rarely seen in the inner city. Architect Harrison Stringfellow enabled the dream

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: HSA

IN NUMBERS

1893
first built

513m²
GIA

£50,000
cost

5
number of ponies

Park Palace Ponies

Liverpool

Architect: Harrison Stringfellow

Delight builds on delight. First, discovering that architects Sarah Harrison and Su Stringfellow have known each other since they met at school aged four. Second, that they have a five-strong studio in a shop in the legendary Penny Lane. 'We wanted a shop because we wanted to be somewhere people could see what architects do,' Stringfellow explains. It's very public: in your ears and in your eyes, you might say. The barber shop of the song, I later discover, is about a five minutes' walk away. And then thirdly, when I go back to the original Beatles' 1967 promotional film for the song – one of the very first music videos – there they are, the Fab Four, riding horses through a city. This brings me to Harrison Stringfellow's project Park Palace Ponies, two and a half miles west of their studio. This is a riding school for the urban youth of south Liverpool – the Dingle area and beyond – which is every bit as surreal as any of the images in that film. Because it is inside a derelict music hall-turned-cinema.

In a way this is just a fortunate accident. The original idea, which came from their client Keith Hackett who had been behind another thriving community venture nearby, Toxteth TV, was for a new-build facility – as that was. Hackett had taken to equestrianism and soon realised that the whole business of horses – their welfare, their tackle, their grooming, the organisation of them as much as the riding and the companionship of them – together presented a package of fascinating skills that urban kids seldom have a chance to experience. 'But collectively we felt that

Left Something of a Detroit vibe: the ponies' riding hall is made in the late Victorian Park Palace music hall. That ceiling IS safe.

Below Not where you'd expect to find a horse – the old theatre turned cinema has found a new use.





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Buildings MacEwen Award – winner

the success of the project depended on the buy-in of the community,' says Stringfellow, 'their support would be critical to issues of security.'

Hence the new charity taking a lease on the old 1893 music hall on the corner of Mill Street. Having closed as a cinema in 1959 and subsequently been used as a factory and for storage, the open covered space was just big enough to make a covered riding school for young children, with stables and a shipping-container office placed in a yard outside: the theatre itself, complete with patch-repaired ornamental ceiling and proscenium arch of Corinthian columns and broken pediment, is unheated and ventilated through high-level air grilles. Harrison Stringfellow put together a strategy for the venture which also included five acres of grazing on various sites nearby (there is plenty of council-owned open land though housing is now starting to encroach) plus an arrangement with local allotment holders to use the manure produced.

Community is important here: the Park Palace, as Hackett points out, is pretty much on the dividing line between South Liverpool's two Irish communities – the orange



Above Simple layout: riding hall and preparation area, with stabling and admin outside and grazing out the back and nearby.

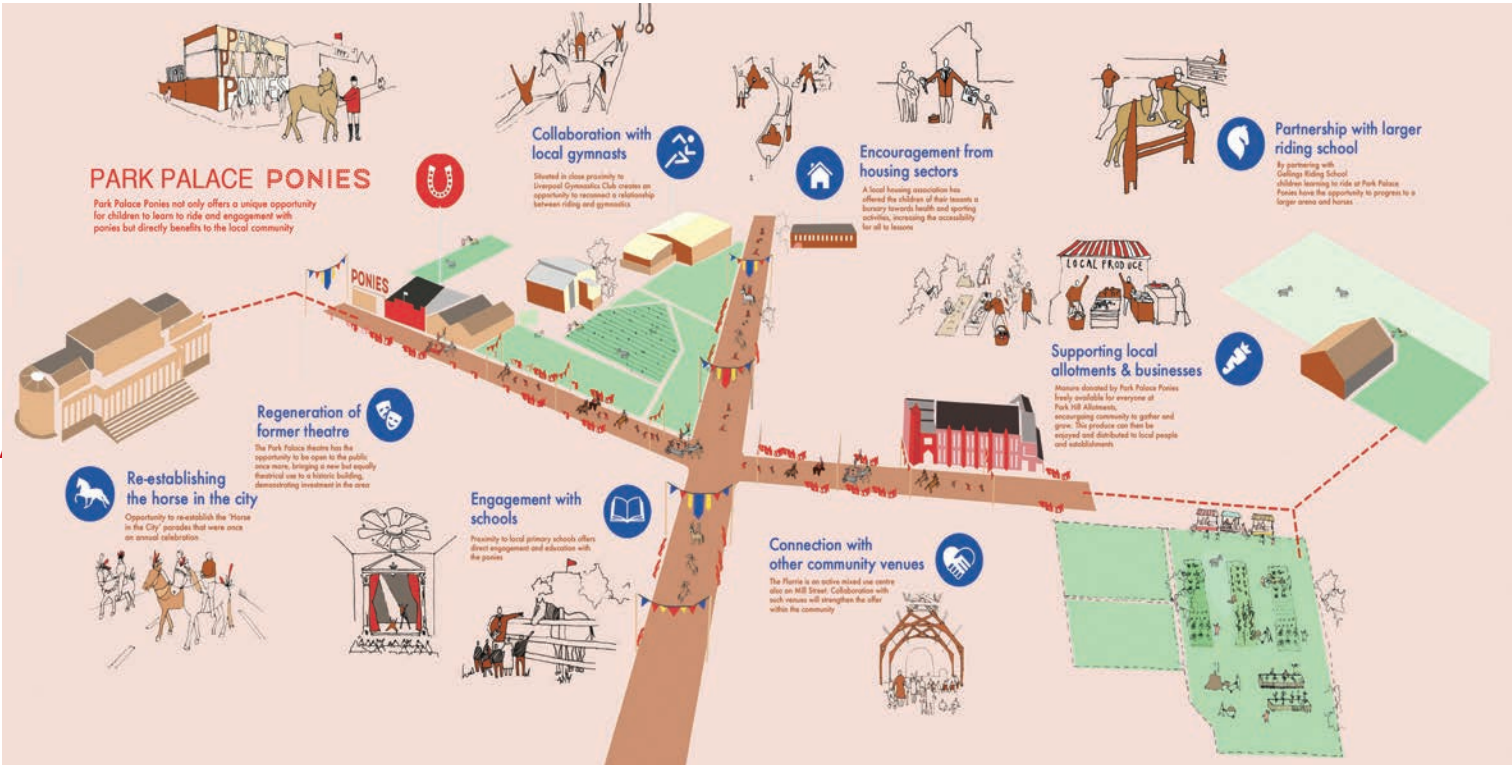
Below The stables are standard items recycled from elsewhere, stores are in a shipping container.

and the green. He points out a 'Peace Wall' enclosing a housing estate across the street: deemed at one point to be a necessary measure during marching season. But in the memory of the community, he says, the Park Palace was neutral ground: everyone went there and mingled. In the community consultation sessions organised by Harrison Stringfellow, this affection for the place came through.

Started as a 12-month trial, the venture has been a considerable success and so continues: one school party was leaving and another arriving while I was there, the ponies trotting gently round their arena (it's not big enough for cantering, I was told, and children wanting to progress graduate to a bigger riding school further away). The community has bought into it, as have the powers that be, notably the British Equestrian Foundation which funded the pilot period.

There is almost no new 'architecture' to be seen, it's all in the planning and consultation and enabling. Physical works on site are done in self-build, DIY fashion: indeed I found Hackett himself there painting a wall in a back room. Having proved itself, it could now become permanent and the architect





has put in a planning application. As a way of bringing life and interest to a neglected part of town, it's terrific.

Of course there's a 'ruin porn' aspect to this – there's no doubt we judges all loved the seductive image of the horses in the old music hall and, as Hana Loftus observed, it has a post-industrial Detroit quality to it. But as she added, 'They've done the minimum to the building to make it do what it needs to do – there's no gestural anything.' For Dan Kerr, last year's MacEwen winner, it was the way a threatened building first acquired a new temporary use, and could well now become permanent, that appealed. Cecilie Sachs Olsen, a curator at the recent Oslo Triennale with its theme of 'degrowth', sees it as exemplary in its incredibly lean use of materials (even the stabling is second-hand and the arena barriers demountable and re-usable) to achieve a

There's something
Detroit about this and
how urban farming has
been reintroduced there

Judge Hana Loftus

Above Infographic of how Park Palace Ponies draws from and impacts the wider area.

Below It's not just riding; a lot of skills are needed to look after horses and local businesses, including the architect, sponsor the scheme.

Credits
Client Park Palace Ponies CIC
Architect Harrison Stringfellow
Structural engineer Elliot Bond Consulting

considerable beneficial social impact. And Kathy MacEwen pointed out the therapeutic qualities of riding – her own parents after whom the award is named, both partially disabled 'with two good legs between them' as they used to joke, themselves took to riding for this reason.

So this steampunk, anti-posh Liverpoolian youth version of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna is the MacEwen Award 2020 winner. For a project cost of around £50,000, Park Palace Ponies has got the horsepower. ●

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Route to a safe passage

Dignity, optimism and inclusivity – Shelter from the Storm works as a homeless refuge and an estate café

Words: Hugh Pearman
Photographs: Nicholas Worley

Shelter from the Storm
North London
Holland Harvey

Here's a sobering thought: around a third of the homeless people looked after by the charity Shelter from the Storm (SFTS) at any one time are, according to its director Sheila Scott, in full time employment – but don't have enough to pay their rent, so are evicted. Their guests – typically there for four or five weeks as they are helped to get their lives back on track – are all ages and sexes. Among their number are business people and professionals who have found themselves struggling. It's time for most of us to reassess our stereotype idea of what a 'homeless person' is.

This knowledge informs the design of young architect Holland Harvey for SFTS's new base in a north London 1970s council estate – unusually singled out by the MacEwen judges for special distinction as our only 'highly commended' project. It's about dignity, a non-institutional feel, optimism, and involving the surrounding community. 'We had to understand the mindset of a person entering a shelter, as a guest, for the very first time. Sensitivity, domesticity and warmth were key to this project,' says Jonathan Harvey. The 20-strong practice is committed to a strong strand of pro-bono work in its portfolio, preferring to use its time productively on that rather than entering long-odds competitions.

Once Islington Council had provided the site – a dark, medium-sized, former



The interaction of the general public with the homeless in an intelligent, spatial way makes it a very rich project

Judge Kathryn Tombling

Left Just another hip café? No – this is the public face of an unusual homeless shelter made from an old supermarket space in a council estate.

Below On a previously lifeless service street is the guest entrance and reception for the facility beneath a deck access walkway.

estate supermarket beneath a decently-built deck-access slab block – the practice had just four weeks to design and get planning approval for it, Harvey working with his colleague Chloe Anderson and SFTS clients Sheila Scott and Matt Conlon. Despite a public meeting to explain the project, this accelerated programme at first raised hackles among the neighbours, given that the site had previously been known for anti-social behaviour and given the stigma of the word 'homeless'.

But they won through at a tumultuous planning meeting and today most of the early protestors are reconciled with this well-designed and run project, and some volunteer there. It's easy to see why. This is good design on a budget, with a kitchen and community café at its heart. The discreet supervised guest entrance at one side of the building provides a welcoming introduction and an interview room while the community café entrance at the other side (the original supermarket frontage) is inviting, even intriguing:



certainly reassuring to passers-by, though this is in a lightly-trafficked pedestrian part of the estate.

The architect has made good use of its experience in commercial café and domestic projects. ‘There’s diversity in the work we do which means we have a network of consultants and clients we can call on,’ says Anderson. Indeed its introduction to SFTS came via another client, a successful bakery chain which is represented on the SFTS board.

The male and female dormitories (38 beds at present, divided into four-bed sections) are basic but good, with individual storage. There are good showers and support spaces, with the right degree of privacy afforded within what has to be a communal facility. There is training provided when necessary (lessons in English, the benefits system, healthy eating and so on), and a space for community events.

The finishes and fittings are appropriately tough, secure and safe but don’t have that look about them, and that took a lot of work and cajoling to achieve. Just getting a satisfactory timber floor rather than vinyl or linoleum was a battle they won. Offsetting the potentially chilly feel of affordable white tiles in the showers with a warm sage-green colour elsewhere was another. Exposed services and raw surfaces are softened by pendant globe lamps, furniture is mostly good second hand or transferred from SFTS’ previous premises near Camden.

Unlike those, this one is effectively per-



IN NUMBERS
38-42
beds
£450,000
total construction cost

manent, which allowed the tight budget to actually be a little more generous. Construction cost was £450,000 plus VAT but there was a lot of gifting from suppliers on top of the pro-bono work by consultants. ‘We wandered round the Clerkenwell showrooms begging,’ recalls Harvey.

Our MacEwen judges were, as you’d hope, impressed by this example of enlightened change of use. As Kathy MacEwen put it: ‘What a great idea – it’s a community café that the homeless also use. It’s about not knowing who’s homeless or who isn’t when you’re in there.’ BDP’s Kathryn Tombling observed: ‘It’s a dignified and lovely environment to be in.’ And Cecilie Sachs Olsen added: ‘I really like it. This is a structural way of embracing rather than dealing with homelessness. It’s a much more holistic approach. Integrating and erasing boundaries, it shows a lot of care. It’s a careful and responsible approach.’

For Matt Conlon as a day-to-day manager of the project, it’s working. ‘Since we’ve been here, things have been so much calmer,’ he said. That is down to the thoughtful layout, where both entrances and all the communal areas can be taken in at a glance from the kitchen. From the guests’ point of view the environment feels reassuring and friendly. This is shelter in the best sense of the word. ●

Above Holland Harvey’s axonometric drawing of the shelter layout – public entrance at the front.
Left Tough but classy – the washroom area.
Below Drawing of the women’s dormitory, with four-bed cubicles and individual storage.



HHA (2)

Credits
Client Shelter From The Storm
Structural engineer Price and Myers
Services engineer Hoare Lea
Hospitality consultant Ennismore



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Light in a dark place

What began as the restoration of a visitor attraction is now a source of community wellbeing in a deprived bit of Margate

Words: Isabelle Priest Photographs: Rich Chivers

It's nice and all from
the right heart

Judge Hana Loftus

Below Architecturally the visitor centre had to fit into a mixed spot with rendered social housing on one side and a listed flint building on the other.



KANER OLETTE

Margate Caves
Margate, Kent
Kaner Olette Architects

Community consultation rarely gets good press. Clients tend to see it as a burden and when Sarah Vickery, chair of the Margate Caves Community Education Trust (formerly Friends of the Margate Caves), came to fill out funding applications to get the former tourist attraction reopened, that's how she saw it too; a long-winded 'box ticking exercise'.

That was back in 2013. The caves, an 18th century chalk mine, had been a tourist attraction since 1863 but had been shut for nearly 10 years. A health and safety prohibition notice was served on them in 2004 and seven years later the council submitted a planning application to build seven houses over the top that would have effectively closed them for good.

As lease-owner of the nearby Shell Grotto, Vickery felt losing one of the town's main visitor attractions for a handful of houses was a bad deal for Margate and called a public meeting to stop it. Of the 100 people who attended, the group that emerged would have been happy with restoring the caves' interior enough to reopen as piece of heritage and just replace the knackered Portakabins that had served as the reception since the 1950s. But the consultations revealed that local people also really wanted a community facility; something that could operate as a village hall for sewing clubs, church groups and the like.



Above A long single counter greets visitors as they arrive. The strips of lighting recall the flint stratifications in the caves below.

Below left Nearly every old house in Margate has a cave of some sort under it but the majestic Margate Caves are the largest known ones. Murals were added up until the 1980s. Restoring them will require another round of funding.

Below The short section through the caves. There are two ice houses within them plus a 13m well.

Credits
Architect Kaner Olette Architects
Client The Margate Caves Community Education Trust
Structural engineer The Morton Partnership
Geotechnical engineer Graham Daws Associates and High Peak Geotechnical
Civil engineer CTP
M&E Hawden MEP
QS Betteridge & Milsom
Contractor Broom Construction

'The site is on the border of Cliftonville and Margate,' explains Vickery. 'Cliftonville used to have very big hotels. There was always a ballroom you could use, but they have all gone.'

The tourist attraction's community function as well as the good work the organisation is doing locally led this year's MacEwen judges to commend it. Margate still has its problems, despite the national attention garnered for its regeneration springing from the Turner Contemporary. The two wards neighbouring Margate Caves are in the 10% most deprived in the UK, with entrenched generational poverty and 53% child poverty. Causes include a transient population, poor housing managed by absent private landlords and health and addiction issues as well as poor educational provision over decades. The average reading age for a middle aged person is that of an eight year old. London boroughs are relocating housing-list residents there too.

'On Northdown Road,' says Vickery, 'the





experience was so different to the Turner, you may as well have been on the moon. The need was there. The brothel, people trafficking... on the evening we opened a murdered body was being carried out of the house over the road.’

Consequently, the project became as much about the community as visitors. The two components financially support each other: by effectively making each part separate buildings, the scheme received both Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery capital funding – one of the few in the country that has been awarded both.

Architect Kaner Olette has been involved almost since the beginning, contorting the process and design to the changing dynamics of the project. Most of the time the team was working blind – they say the council didn’t want to engage and there was fake information that the caves were full of poisonous gas. The restorative and conservation work on the caves themselves was the critical issue. They had to be engaging and something people would pay to see. The architecture was about ensuring the interface with them was right – the entrance, interpretation aspect, tunnel, accessibility, handrails and lighting.

From the street the building is a simple slanted form with ramps up behind an existing crazy paving retaining wall to bridge the 2m level difference. The narrative is monochrome too, but the inverse of the caves. Externally the building is Italian black brick, like the flint stratifications with white specks of chalk, held together by dark mor-

Above The community space can be divided into two by concertina partition walls. Each part has its own kitchenette and access to the garden.

IN NUMBERS

£945,000
total building contract cost (excl fees)

£90,000
total caves restoration cost

290m²
GIFA

£3,258.62
cost per m²

20.8
kgCO₂/m² (A rating)

Below View of the community space from the rear garden.



This is a financially sustainable asset for the wellbeing of the community

tar. The building curves at one end to make way for telegraph pole wires that could not be moved because of the tight budget. Bright blue window frames add a pop of colour that helps the building stand out. The entrance is cut deep into the elevation with a brick soffit and patterned detailing that accentuate the cave analogy. This opens into a large bright white all-in-one visitor reception, café and shop, positioned along a single long counter so one person can manage the whole process. To the left is the ticketed interpretation room and tunnelled entrance to the rather surprising and church-like caves, to the right is the community room, which is also independently accessible via a side entrance when the museum is shut. The space can accommodate 100 people theatre-style or be divided for use by two groups simultaneously. Prices are low, like those in the café: £20 for half a day.

To date the room has been used for book launches, children’s clubs, self-help groups, and recently had its first wedding enquiry. But what makes the building a MacEwen Award commended project is how it has got the community involved. One hundred people volunteered for the archaeological dig (it’s on the edge of an Iron Age fort), 3,000 locals have visited the caves for free since it opened in August, and it will soon start running accredited tourism training courses and a community gardening programme on the scrub land above the caves. The scheme is a financially sustainable asset for the wellbeing of the community. An elderly neighbour who had initially behaved antisocially has become one of the café regulars, and when someone attempted to break in four days after the centre opened, another neighbour became de facto community watch. In an area long-accustomed to mediocrity, the project has also raised aspirations of what the built environment can be and the self worth it can provide. This was done by grassroots action, with locals, volunteers and professionals putting in more effort than they had to. As judge Hana Loftus remarks: ‘It’s nice and all from the right heart.’ ●

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Born again

A bold new building has turned a heritage white elephant on a deprived inner city estate into an active community hub

Words: Eleanor Young

Photographs: Anthony Coleman

Grand Junction

St Mary Paddington, London

Dow Jones Architects

A warm café onto the canal, kids' activity upstairs behind the glint of faience, a majestic nave set out for events. This is Grand Junction, St Mary Paddington, full of life even on a grey weekday thanks to the work of Paddington Development Trust and Dow Jones Architects.

Once the tallest building round here, St Mary was a mission church originally squeezed between tight terraces alongside the Grand Union Canal. Now, just a few hundred yards from the Westway flyover, it is one of the few historic remnants among the sixties tower blocks of London's Warwick Estate. Here 40% of children live in poverty, despite the gleaming offices being built nearby. Grenfell Tower is not far away.

The church wasn't well used. The north door was blocked up and Father Henry Everett inherited around 20 parishioners when he took over a decade ago. He and Paddington Development Trust, which was already running community activities nearby, saw its potential. 'The estate lacked anything remotely uplifting to be proud of,' says Father Henry. This 1869 grade 1 listed church, designed by GE Street, was important in defining the ambition for quality architecture – and for unlocking sources of funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund in particular.

Architect Biba Jones of Dow Jones describes the project as a staircase and lifts, but



By the once-barricaded north door, St Mary Paddington now has a welcoming café, one of the front entrances for the scheme.

Right Inside the education room in Dow Jones' extension to the church.

It seems a sign that community is listened to and valued

Judge Dan Kerr

it is much more than that. A new building offers spaces for community use and opens up access to the reconditioned church for more. It slots into a few metres (2.5m at the narrowest) between the west face of the church and its neighbouring school, rising to three storeys and down to the level of the newly restored crypt. Café, loos, community and education rooms – all with level access – work for the church too (not to forget the secret door in from the school). Outside light changes the nuances of the new structure's faience every time you look at it, and with its projecting top windows and signage it acts like the welcoming beacon both client and practice desired.

MacEwen judges were particularly impressed with the way the project works with the listed church and the role local residents played in getting a strong solution. Last year's MacEwen Award winner, Dan Kerr of Mawson Kerr Architects, said: 'It had the greatest numbers of letters of support at planning received by Westminster and had been on the Heritage at Risk Register. It seems a sign that the community is listened to and valued.' Judge Hana Loftus added: 'Next to a grade I church it would have been an uphill struggle.' A dedicated group of residents was closely involved over the four years from pre-planning to detailed design. Biba Jones is clear that the firm's voice helped to ensure the value of a strong modern design was appreciated through the planning process.

Local involvement has built a sense of ownership, community and goodwill around



Section through extension



the project. Two interns and two apprentices were recruited and regular volunteering sessions saw 40 people scraping the brick pigment on the Victorian concrete and digging out the soil of the casual drainage channels in the crypt before sifting it for archaeological finds. This volunteering required some organising by the architect as well as two extra site huts, including a ladies' loo.

A heritage group of residents worked with the team to depict the area's history in

**IN NUMBERS**

£3.5m
total contract cost

£2,191/m²
Cost of new building

3114m²
GIFA (new building)

Above The nave of the grade 1 listed church has had its ceiling cleaned and restored.

Below The crypt has been brought back into use as well as being made accessible.

tiles that punctuate the walls of the concrete stairwell on the new building. Local people came in for scaffold tours and could join workshops with artist Linda Florence to design tiles that were used to enliven toilet cubicles. These and ceramic signage by David Sudlow and Simon Leach mark this building out as special.

This project has drawn a community together in turning a heritage white elephant into a valuable asset, recovering its original purpose as mission church, although with a wider remit. Run for six days a week by the Paddington Development Trust (reverting to Father Henry on Sundays) it is used for yoga, youth work, drama, Black History Month events, films, boxing and screen printing, and is able to draw events that bring in revenue, like the launch of Music Declares Emergency. 'It lifts the feel of the neighbourhood,' concludes Paddington Development Trust's Toby Gale. ●

Credits

Architect Dow Jones Architects

Client Paddington Development Trust and the Vicar and Parochial Church Council of St Mary Magdalene, Paddington.

Structural engineer Momentum

MEP engineer Max Fordham

Quantity surveyor William G Dick

Approved building inspector Assent

Interpretation Simon Leach and David Sudlow

Artist Linda Florence

Access consultant Access = Design

Catering consultant Lynda Brewer

Main contractor Lengard

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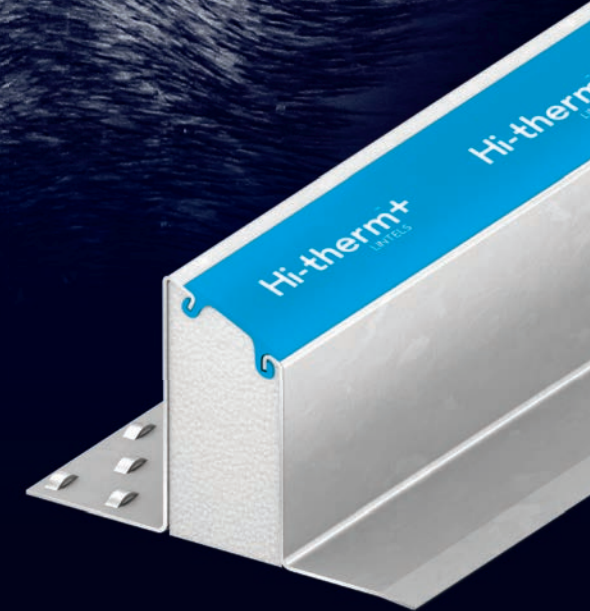
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The art of mixing it

Tŷ Pawb houses a market, multiple community events and an art gallery all in one former car park

Words: Michèle Woodger
Photographs: James Morris

Tŷ Pawb
Wrexham
Featherstone Young

It was a cold, mizzling day when architect Sarah Featherstone, curator James Harper and I visited Tŷ Pawb, Featherstone Young’s newly-refitted arts centre and covered market in the north Welsh town of Wrexham. The name means Everybody’s House, and like a house, it accommodates and welcomes one and all: gallery visitors, shoppers, passers-through, and rain-soaked journalists unprepared for the wet Welsh weather.

Funded by Arts Council of Wales and the Welsh government, Tŷ Pawb is a ‘quiet retrofit’ of a former multi-storey car park. The imposing and awkwardly-placed brick behemoth had loomed since the 1990s over a no-man’s-land at the end of the high street, near a collection of warehouse-style superstores that skirt the ring road at the edge of town. The site had also housed the ‘People’s Market’, one of three markets in Wrexham, but whose popularity had dwindled over time.

From the outset it was agreed that relocating the Oriel Wrecsam gallery (Tŷ Pawb’s previous incarnation) should not displace the stall holders. Yet, perhaps inevitably, this group put up the most vocal opposition. Featherstone says one particularly grumpy poster saying ‘If you want art...go to Chester!’, became an impetus to prove art needn’t be a minority interest. That art gallery and market vendors could not only coexist harmoniously, but actively benefit each other, led to an innovative business model which integrates the revenue-generating market and car park into the programme of the inter-



Buildings
MacEwen Award – commended

It’s a good example to highlight an approach to re-use that really works
Judge Cecillie Sachs Olsen

nationally-recognised arts organisation. The concept is as timely as it is original: ‘Every town in Britain has a car park like this’, states MacEwen Award judge Hugh Pearman. ‘If we are going to have fewer cars, we’ll have more of these [opportunities] for re-use’.

After leaving its original home, Oriel Wrecsam temporarily moved into a vacant unit alongside the traders, initiating a relationship which would develop organically over time. The liminal location of the site turned out to be key to the project’s success and its identity as a place of connectivity. Much like the covered arcades elsewhere in the town, Tŷ Pawb now acts as a convenient and convivial cut-through between the disparate shopping areas; four entrances enable this circulation, and an improved entrance on the out-of-town-facing side significantly lifts that profile of both building and street. Combining market with art gallery, and linking previously unconnected retail zones together, has healed several ‘physical and psychological rifts’, says Featherstone.

The budget is £4.5 million, which judge Kathy MacEwen points out is ‘a lot of money for Wales’. But rather than wasting this on what Featherstone calls ‘prettifying’ the exterior, the beauty of the radical new model lies on the inside. The set-up makes use of an experimental concept which the architect



Left The ‘People’s Wall’ is a trivision billboard featuring work by artists with the community. Integrated seating allows shoppers to ‘inhabit’ the wall.

Right The flexible ‘People’s Square’ can be partitioned with plastic strip curtains for different uses



describes as ‘baggy space’ – minimal-intervention, loose, permeable spaces, defined and shaped by different uses at a given time. Judge Cecilie Sachs Olsen points out that sometimes non-prescriptive interior spaces risk being unsuccessful: ‘too generic and generating waste through constant rebuilding, unlike stable rooms’. But this is not the case here: ‘This is more solid, permanent and serious’, she observes.

Deviating slightly from the original brief, the portion of the ground floor designated specifically to the arts centre comprises one large gallery and one performance space, with acoustic panelling and retractable seating. A semi-open space, formed by the backs of these two defined rooms and the gallery shop, can be used for virtually anything: smaller-exhibitions, workshops, events – it’s an open proposition.

Around the perimeter of the ground floor are the integrated market stalls and a food court; with an open space in the middle called Sqwar y Bobl (People’s Square). Here, moveable street furniture, seating and tables – designed and made by local artist Tim Denton in collaboration with school groups – helps to extend the streetscape into the building. Free wi-fi encourages people to linger and settle.

Part of this central area can be further screened off with translucent plastic strip curtains – a nod to the retail/market aesthetic – which divide the space into smaller zones. On the day we visited, a local adult daycare group was busy enjoying a Christmas lunch; music from the band entertained both diners and shoppers while the partitioning created a cosy, semi-private space for those eating. There is a genuine sense of community integration and a generosity to the architecture. This is a ‘good example of an approach to reuse that really works’, says Sachs Olsen.

Maximum visibility was crucial to the design, partly to allow light into a deep plan, but also due to the art centre’s strategy of making art accessible. The main gallery has three internal windows which allow shoppers to see directly inside. On the upper floor, studios rented to artists and meeting rooms for gallery staff overlook double-height spaces onto the market below. Blockwork, timber panelling and mesh screens (an admirably ‘restrained’ palette, says Pearman) are all placed to offer glimpses between sections. A window into the remaining car park frames a sloped spiral ramp, giving the impression



The former car park is now a welcoming arts centre revitalising the surrounding streets.

IN NUMBERS
£4.5m
total contract cost

£1,215
cost per m²

3,050m²
ground floor

655m²
first floor

Below A gallery benefits from an impressive double-height space, overlooked by offices and studios.



Credits
Architect
Featherstone Young
Design team Sarah Featherstone, Benedetta Rogers, Ed Soden
Structural engineer
Civic up to stage 3; Haltec stage 4-5
Services engineer Ingine, formerly Michael Popper Associates, up to stage 3; ESD stage 4-5
Civil engineer Civic up to stage 3, Haltec stage 4-5
QS Stockdale stage 3, SP Projects stage 4-5
Building contractor
Wynne Construction
Artist/furniture maker
Tim Denton
Graphics/signage Elfen

that vehicles are about to coast gently down the stairwell. This playful element embraces the mixed uses of the building: art is omnipresent in everyday scenes, and everyday scenes have the potential to become artistic.

Tŷ Pawb subscribes to ‘Arte Útil’, a curatorial approach which sees art as a vehicle for positive social change. The schedule for the day of my visit is a good indicator of the breadth of the programme. It was: a disability voting workshop, Santa’s grotto, an exhibition of artists’ prints and a mentoring programme with Ghanaian artist Harold Offeh. The latter is related to Tŷ Pawb’s involvement as the leading Welsh organisation at the Venice Art Biennale. In addition to the above, Tŷ Pawb collaborates regularly with artists for the ‘People’s Wall’, a huge indoor trivision billboard. The current artist is Lydia Meehan who works with asylum seekers in Wales.

If the team here wasn’t busy enough, Harper often find himself addressing left-field queries from the general public and stall holders, including being told face to face what people do and don’t like about what’s on in the gallery. Other, less courageous, curators might find this outside the job description but all the team take it in their stride. This unexpected outcome of sharing space offers a rare and valuable opportunity to gain direct, immediate feedback from a demographic that would never ordinarily engage with the arts. ‘It’s certainly never boring,’ he assures me, as the band plays Elvis Presley in the background. He’s not wrong; the venue has clearly taken on a life of its own. ●



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On the ball

FaulknerBrowns' Beacon of Light uses sport to help bring social benefit to Sunderland's residents. It's a runaway success

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Main image: Jill Tate, other photographs: Richard Chivers



Beacon of Light Sunderland

Architect: FaulknerBrowns

Probably one of the largest projects to be submitted for the MacEwen award, and in close proximity to the Stadium of Light, Sunderland's £18 million Beacon of Light was initially written off by the judges as a form of glorified leisure centre; but, in the manner of a great sporting underdog, it bucked the assumptions. 'I passed over it and then came back to it, finding it fascinating the second time around,' said judge Kathryn Tombling. She wasn't alone. It made it through as one of our four 2020 commended projects.

This was also due in no small part to being championed by judge Dan Kerr, who had visited the 11,200m² facility just after it opened last year with, admittedly, the same preconceptions – only to have them overturned the minute he walked in past its huge, illuminated polycarbonate screen.

Of course, the showstopper is the ETFE-roofed, outdoor 4G artificial pitch that crowns the top of the four-storey building, clear-spanned by a lofty 'domeblerone' steel structure and set within the opaque poly-

carbonate panels that are more suggestive of the delicate shoji screens of the Far East than Sunderland's north east. But that is really only the start of the story.

The Foundation of Light charity is now in its 18th year. It started out in makeshift office space offered by Sunderland football club's charitable arm, and is now an independent charity looking to deliver real social benefits to the city's residents, employing 150 staff across four sites and with a fundraising turnover of £5 million a year. 'We were one of the first charities to use the hook of football as a gateway to wider community engagement,' says Beacon of Light general manager Phil King. 'And what we've created here, in the Beacon's four dedicated zones, hopefully

I was blown away by how much the community was involved at different levels involving the whole city

Judge Dan Kerr

delivers not only in sport but in education, employability and mental health.'

That might not be obvious when you first walk in to the Beacon's ground floor 'street' however; there's a curious, corporate feel to FaulknerBrowns' architectural language, but a glance right to its sizeable indoor arena gives away the building's focus on sport as the driver for all its other initiatives. Here, at any time of the day or evening, you'll see kids, adults and older people engaging in football, futsal, tennis, netball, badminton, judo, even paralympic sport boccia. On the day we visited, over 55s table tennis matches were in full swing, the space hireable by local groups at highly discounted rates due to the funds raised by renting the halls out for big corporate events or conferences. 'The business model is a social enterprise whose profits are reinvested in the charity to keep everything affordable for the community at point of use,' King tells me, before listing what else they run here.

A prime focus is on health and wellbeing. The five-a-side community football initiative 'Man V Fat' challenges its overweight players to win their league not just by playing, but by shifting pounds as a team

Buildings
MacEwen Award – commended



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Left The Beacon of Light looking west over the River Wear.

Right The main east elevation accesses both the centre and, via a separate door to the left, the school.

Below There's a rather corporate architectural language experienced from the 'Street', but it masks some real community endeavours on every level.





that makes the Beacon feel so energised.

Probably the best example of this is in the 60-pupil school on the second floor, specifically for those kids who have been excluded and referred from schools or the local council. With classrooms, science labs and IT suites, it's a high teacher-to-pupil ratio Ofsted school, sandwiched between the community functions below and that heavenly pitch on the roof. King adds there were understandable concerns about this being programmed into the facility, as there were certainly no precedents that they were aware of when they did it; but that it has been a real success story. 'You feel as if this place is transformative for them,' he tells me. 'They might have a bad home life or other negative influences, but here they can check all that in at the door and inhabit a supportive and completely different, aspirational space.'

All connected by a grand stair rising

Above Rising to the state of the art 4G pitch on the roof brings a gasp of delight.

Bottom left The basement arena can be used for community and corporate events.

Bottom centre Work Zone helps children and adults develop skills in catering, mechanics and construction.

Bottom right Lit in Sunderland's colours on match days, the Beacon of Light is a civic as well as a community marker.

Credits

Client Foundation of Light

Architect FaulknerBrowns Architects

Engineering Shed

Environmental/M&E engineer

JH Partners

Quantity surveyor/cost consultant

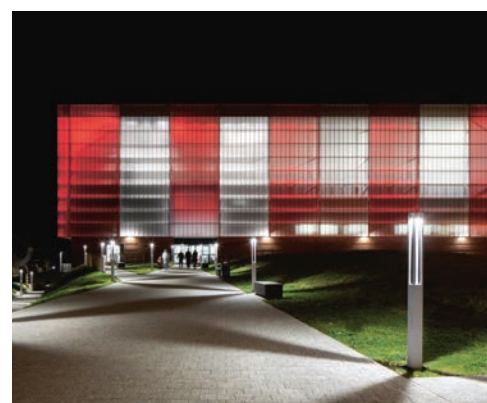
Identity Consult

Planning consultant Wardell Armstrong

Main contractor Tolent

from the 'Street' level, its 73 steps might be a reminder of the year Sunderland last won a major title; but with the foundation's football scholarship producing, I'm told, seven players from last year's women's World Cup England squad, the only way is indeed, up.

'It's meaningful and a significant scale of project,' offered MacEwen judge Hana Loftus. 'It's saying that community architecture – and this award – isn't just about cute little grass-roots projects but strategic, large-scale ones.' And with more than 6,000 people a week using its sport and outreach services, that scale component is key, thinks King. But, he feels, the numbers should not distract from the Beacon's power to inspire on an individual level. 'There aren't many sports facilities where you enter a space like this; so when you see young kids walk up the steps for the first time to the rooftop pitch, you feel that, for them, it's a bit like a dream.'



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Buildings
MacEwen Award — shortlist



39

Shortlisted schemes

The judges praised five other projects for their commitment to the common good

Words: Michèle Woodger

Part of the concept is that it's the architecture that makes a difference

Judge Hana Loftus



JON CARDWELL

Maggie's Centre
Oldham
dRMM

The inimitable Charles Jencks, who died only months ago, left an invaluable legacy – the 'Architecture of Hope' that are the Maggie's Centres. dRMM was engaged to design the one at the Royal Oldham Hospital, offering free practical and emotional support for cancer patients and families.

It was a simple brief with complex needs: a practical, anti-institutional, undaunting facility which would raise the spirits, yet situated in hospital grounds, with numerous stakeholders as well as budgetary and time constraints.

The form of the building, the materials

palette and the detailing demonstrate considerable thoughtfulness. The building itself is a 260m² timber structure, pioneering in its use of hardwood CLT and wood fibre insulation, which judge Dan Kerr found to be 'really forward-thinking'. This contributes to a breatheable, healthy environment; one of dRMM's main aims was to 'challenge the paradigm of unhealthy hospitals'.

Thermally modified tulipwood planks clad the exterior. Floor and furniture colours were chosen for their light-reflectiveness and their positive psychological impact. Metal door handles were eschewed in favour of oak, granting relief to chemotherapy patients who feel pain on touching cold objects.

The Oldham Maggie's Centre is raised on six columns that shelter a garden framed by

pine, birch and tulip trees. At the centre of the light-filled building, with its view over the Pennines, a mature tree has been left in situ as a powerful 'emblematic presence'.

The centre has social benefit beyond its immediate function, including in the use of local supply chains during construction. As is the case with many Maggie's Centres, educational visits from schools, architecture students, NHS staff and overseas medical professionals directly help with advancements in cancer care, and inspire the improvement of hospital facilities at home and abroad. As judge Hana Loftus nicely puts it: 'They are an amazing organisation doing incredible things – such impact... part of the concept is that it's the architecture that makes the difference'. ●



Goldsmith Street by Mikhail Riches with Cathy Hawley
Winner of RIBA Stirling Prize 2019 and
Neave Brown Award for Housing 2019
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Buildings MacEwen Award – shortlist

MacEwen
award

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Residents enjoy shared ownership and use of the Common House (right) and its facilities including a garden offering space for play and growing plants.

Marmalade Lane Co-housing Cambridge Mole Architects

With 42 homes over 0.9 hectares, Marmalade Lane is the largest co-housing development in the UK. Mole Architects worked with clients and commissioners TOWN, Trivselhus, Cambridge City Council and K1 Co-housing to deliver this successful and popular scheme.

The two- to five- bedroom houses and apartments have numerous shared facilities including gardens, laundry, a hall and kitchen for shared meals, a workshop, a gym and a 'common house' for guests. All residents have a financial stake in the common property.

Key values at the heart of this development are sustainability, intergenerational living, community spirit and diversity – and an acknowledgement that social interaction and shared responsibilities create a supportive, vibrant neighbourhood. Eliminating isolation for older residents was crucial: 'It's an intergenerational scheme which is important in this world,' judge Kathy MacEwen observes.

Residents, a mix of retirees, professional couples, singletons and multinational fam-

ilies with children, chose one of five 'shell' homes, then customised floorplans, kitchens, bathrooms and external bricks. The closed panel timber frame system provides thermal efficiency, mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems ensure comfortable environments, and air source-heat pumps provide low-carbon electricity. 'The planning is very clever,' says judge Hana Loftus. 'They get a lot of different house types into something that looks the same from the outside, and is finished to a really high standard.'

The scheme has residents' resounding approval. Homeowner Jan Chadwick says: 'The design has fostered our social interaction [which is] the glue that keep us together.'



DAVID BUTLER (2)

Riverside Community Primary School Outdoor Classroom Plymouth, Devon

BA Architecture, BA Education Studies and
BA Early Childhood Studies students and
academic teams, University of Plymouth

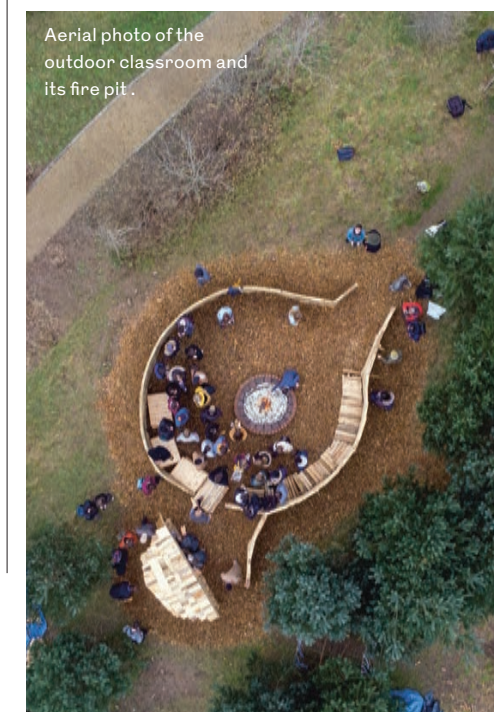
Riverside Community Primary School is on a hilly site close to the river Tamar in Plymouth. Its grassy garden should have been an idyllic setting for learning and play, but in the 10 years since it opened, teachers and pupils had been unable to enjoy the space because it was buffeted constantly by strong winds.

A team of first year BA Architecture students from the University of Plymouth helped revitalise the plot, in collaboration with students from the Early Childhood Studies and Education departments. The main objective was to develop an outdoor learning space with a fire pit as a focal point. The aspiring architects would experience various job stages, from briefing to post-completion evaluation, within a live nine-week time frame.

Students grouped into teams to generate a design concept and propose it to the school. Each scheme had to include locally sourced

It's educational aspiration and answers to the community

Judge Cecilie Sachs Olsen



Aerial photo of the
outdoor classroom and
its fire pit.

recycled timber; in the end the entire structure (with the exception of a brick surround for the fire pit) was of recycled materials, including 130 timber pallets.

A six-week consultation narrowed the proposals down to five: the site was replanned and students regrouped for the construction phase. The key feature of the new garden is a 13m long and 1.6m tall undulating wall, its size and form based on children's body scale.

University staff say the exercise 'had a significant impact on students' learning, developing group working skills and experience of progressing a project through from planning to implementation'. The future architects discovered the socio-economic and ecological challenges facing the community, and the requirements for designing an enhanced and safe learning environment, as well as the practical elements of progressing a design to a 1:1 scale and hands-on making. 'I like it. It's educational aspiration and answers to the community,' says judge Cecilie Sachs Olsen.

Kathy MacEwen agrees: 'Thinking about my dad [Malcolm MacEwen, whom this award is named after] one of the things he did was to open architecture to communities.'

ANDREW MORRIS



Windmill Green Office Buildings
Manchester
TP Bennett / FORE partnership

Windmill Green, an 80,000ft² office building in Manchester, is the first multi-let office in the city to be rated BREEAM Outstanding. It began life as a vacant 1970s concrete office block that was acquired by FORE Partnership, a real estate investment firm, which engaged architect TP Bennett to carry out a deep retrofit.

The project is a commercial one ‘with good intentions’, as judge Cecilie Sachs Olsen puts it. FORE was adamant that reducing the carbon footprint and promoting healthy living be intrinsic to the design; one way of doing this was to retain the concrete frame. An efficient facade system interprets local character through the use of terracotta. Bifacial solar panels, ultra-efficient LED lighting and underfloor displacement ventilation with exposed soffits were introduced. Biophilic features include a green wall, a green roof and an apiary. ‘Developers and commercial architects need to be doing more stuff like this,’ says judge Hugh Pearman. ‘The default position today seems to be to demolish rather than reuse. This is a nice riposte to that, and worthy of commendation.’

The building also has a cycle entrance, 40 bike racks, 32 lockers, shower facilities, maintenance centre, a Brompton Bike rental and a free fleet of scooters, made by a local business.

Windmill Green has been a springboard for social initiatives such as a construction skills programme creating 16 apprenticeships for local people, and offers free space for community groups and charities.

The judges were impressed that a commercially driven venture should place sustainability and community so firmly in the picture. ‘It has social impact. [You can see] that they have tried here,’ says judge Hana Loftus. ●



A new facade increases thermal efficiency.



A green wall teaches pupils about biodiversity.

Torriano Primary School Lab
Kentish Town, London Borough of Camden
Hayhurst and Co

When the teachers at Torriano Primary School in Camden engaged Hayhurst and Co to build a STEM Laboratory for their own pupils and others in the district, they hoped that working with an architect would ‘bring a little magic to the table’. They wanted pupils to experience a sense of wonderment about science, technology, engineering and maths.

Nothing says fairy-tale more than a castle turret, and the Victorian school building had an unused, two-storey one. The architects created a small roof-top extension, an external ‘learning terrace’ and a living wall, in just 51m² – turning it, in judge Hugh Pearman’s words, into ‘an intriguing place to go to do science’.

The lab is for practical experiments, so the

architects adopted a similarly hands-on approach with the designs, asking pupils, teachers and the artist-in-residence to test, draw and model activities. The result is a breathtaking double-height space occupied by a laminated plywood superstructure. This is also a piece of science apparatus – a literal and metaphorical framework for learning. Items can be dropped from, threaded through, projected onto and clamped to the frame. A black-out area can be used for light-based experiments. Constellations are etched into the faces of the timber; these provide fixing points as well as being useful learning tools. ‘The space is playful and well-used... it makes use of what they have,’ says judge Cecilie Sachs Olsen.

A planted wall teaches about nature and biodiversity, and, thanks to the flexible, non-prescriptive interior, the space has the capacity to evolve naturally too. ●

KILIAN O’SULLIVAN

WALL JEWELLERY



K
KELLY HOPPEN
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2: Intelligence



Sustainable
Architecture

Bo Asmus Kjeldgaard



So is Copenhagen an example of 'hedonistic sustainability'?

Ten years after you implemented it, how is the programme going? Will it reach its goal?

What's the single biggest policy that will have contributed to achieving the goal?

Isn't it just about the small scale? Could these policies be implemented in a bigger metropolis like London?

What can we do to help arrest global mean temperature rises?

You've started a consultancy, 'Greenovation'. What are you doing now and what scale of client are you advising?

I'd like to think so. When I got the mandate to make the city an environmental capital in 2010, I knew we had to change the system. Copenhagen's story was about green growth, better citizen and life quality; but we needed everyone to be a stakeholder in that future. It was also about changing the idea of sustainability as suffering. We argued that taking a bike means fewer cars, more trees, cleaner air – and you might engage with other people on a bike! It all makes for a more liveable city.

It's moving forward. It helped that we adjusted the plan between 2017-2020 to make sure we were still on course. It involved extra investment of DKK800m (£92m) to reduce business consumption of electricity and boost green mobility. This was partly because the city is affluent and growing by around 1000 residents a month. But it's not only about adjustments for that but being seen to be on the case with the carbon neutral plan.

Production of energy; 80% of the goal is about changing energy sources. Copenhagen is now negotiating with municipalities to generate electricity regionally. Part of the plan also uses biomass, whose sustainability is now being questioned by the UN, as if everyone used it as an energy source, there simply wouldn't be enough of it. We are now looking at defining 'sustainable biomass'.

The key is ensuring that there is cross-party political consensus to a plan being implemented. If the long-term policy is stable and unwavering, everyone can get behind it. I'm really encouraged by young people's climate awareness nowadays. Change feels more possible when it's bottom-up as well as top-down.

Stop the carbon quotas trade for a start. It's not about technical fixes but concrete, achievable plans from every city. The challenges, with floods and fires, are formidable. In a short time the biggest refugee problem will be climate migration ones. The time to act is now.

We're mostly advising city leaders. We're working with a few Spanish and German cities on their sustainability strategies – and even the Bangladesh government. We're also working on the development of a start-up that turns sewage into not only fertiliser but energy. In five years we hope to launch it as biofuel for jets...

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

For construction, Brexit uncertainty has been a drag anchor. But does this election result free it from its flirtation with recession?

Brian Green isn't convinced as he sifts the data: ribaj.com/postelectionoutlook



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



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statutory compliance

Pride, not prejudice

Racial and gender diversity is an acknowledged issue in the profession. Four young black architects have taken it on and their organisation, BFA, is gathering pace

Shahed Saleem

‘If you want to be a successful architect, if you’re passionate about architecture, you’re going to have to think outside of the box’. Selasi Setufe’s comment comes towards the end of two hours of intense conversation with the four founders of Black Females in Architecture on a quiet Saturday morning in east London. To write about them I’ve been trying to work out how to summarise both our discussion, and the organisation. But it’s not an easy task – the issues they are tackling and the themes they are addressing are wide ranging, relevant, progressive and urgent.

BFA was not planned, rather it emerged organically through the chance meetings of these four women, Setufe, Neba Sere, Akua Danso and Alisha Morenike Fisher, at various architecture industry events over 2017 and 2018. Drawn to each other through the shared experience of being black women negotiating a white male dominated industry, rather than shy away, they were pitching in. At the time Sere was a trustee of the Architecture Foundation, and Setufe an RIBA trustee. All four are recent graduates, and the breadth

Black Female Architects co-founders, from left: Alisha Morenike Fisher, Selasi Setufe, Akua Danso and Neba Sere, shot at Second Home.

of experience that they have already notched up, in life and work, is diverse and engaging.

BFA co-director Setufe was born and raised in Barking, east London, although she spent a few childhood years in Ghana. After her Part 1 at Portsmouth she spent two years out, when she worked in a practice in Lublijana, before completing her Part 2 at Manchester School of Architecture. After that she set up her own practice, Crystal Design Studios and started working with Elsie Owusu Architects. She recently left to join Public Practice, through which she is now working in her local council’s development team.

Sere is from Cologne in Germany and came to the UK to join the MArch course at Central Saint Martins where she explored ideas of participatory design and community engagement. This interest continued after her graduation when she went on to work for the community organisations Roman Road Trust then Build Up Foundation, before taking this experience into her current role at Penoyre and Prasad.

Danso grew up in Tottenham, London, took her Part 1 at the University of Kent and was then an intern at the Architectural Review, also working in small practices. Her Part 2 at the University of Liverpool included a six month Erasmus placement in Berlin, and on completion of the course she joined Scott Brownrigg, where she now works.

Morenike Fisher, also from north London, took her Part 1 at Hull which she completed with support from an RIBA student fund. Having graduated in 2017 she worked with Hunt Thompson Architects for 11 months before moving to Sweden to run her own company involved in environmental sciences. Following this she worked at Public Practice before moving to project development at Arcadis, where she is now.

Urgent message

When the four met they were operating in different spheres of architecture, each with their various networks and trajectories. Through their conversations and growing friendships they realised that the race and gender discrimination that they may have experienced or observed, and put to one side, was shared, so betraying a structural problem in the profession of architecture itself. The four set up a WhatsApp group to stay in contact and continue their discussions, and added more women with shared back-

A 2016 DCMS report showed that architects are 90% white, and 97.5% come from ‘more advantaged backgrounds’

grounds as they met them, and the network grew. The urgency of their message was illustrated with its speed of growth, as they were very quickly at the 250 WhatsApp group limit. So began the formalisation of the network into an organisation, a process that is still under way. Through the continued sharing and articulating of experiences among themselves, the group found that as much as race and gender-based inequalities, they were also raising questions about the nature and experience of architectural education and practice itself, and how this is affecting a new generation which is trying to navigate it. Here the intersectionality of BFA’s observations and critique were not only salient but threw up further questions that go to the heart of architecture’s future.

Held back by low income

A 2016 report by the Department for Culture Media & Sport showed that architects are 90% white, and 97.5% come from ‘more advantaged backgrounds’. It is clear that these are the kind of statistics that underline one of BFA’s central concerns, that the industry does not represent the society it serves, and that it is not structured to enable people from lower-incomes, which is where a large number of BAME candidates come from, to access it or survive in it. We talk at length about the need for transparency within the profession, how students from BAME and lower-income backgrounds should know about the costs both of education and of expected earnings, which do not often correlate. The point is pertinently made: if you come from a low or one-income household, or have caring responsibilities, or your income is used to support family members, then the debt that you incur through architectural education, the length of time you have to spend not earning, can make your earning ability in practice

untenable. The result is a vicious cycle where architecture becomes more and more elite, and less and less diverse. While architecture schools are now showing diverse student bodies, attainment gaps are increasing and progression from Part 1 to Part 2 is disproportionately low for BAME students.

Flexible thinking

BFA is acutely aware of these realities, and rails against them by proposing a flexible and inventive approach to architecture. It insists that not going on to Part 2 is not a failure, and that successful interdisciplinary careers can be pursued where collaboration, project-based initiatives and networks open up new possibilities. To build capacity and provide opportunities for its members, BFA has a series of regular events based on mentoring, networking, promoting and making black women practitioners visible – plus ‘living room sessions’ to provide a safe space to share experiences, a book club to discuss wider issues, and research projects. The founders are active public speakers with a growing international presence, having recently addressed forums in Melbourne and New York.

Throughout our conversation a number of key themes and issues circulate and overlap: that the experience of black women in architecture is specific, and that BFA exists to create a space where these experiences can be shared and addressed; that the power of architecture lies in its ability for social engagement, and it is through collaborations across disciplines and individuals that positive change can be affected; that architecture needs to diversify in order to properly reflect the realities of the world that it operates within; and that with diversity comes new narratives that must be placed within the culture and practice of the profession. BFA exudes energy, passion and dynamism, and these four women have a message that resonates and is spreading. Along with advocacy for black women, this is an initiative that has the potential to speak for many, and so influence the production of architecture, inspiring buildings and spaces with social purpose and a responsiveness to the contemporary, complex and diverse worlds that we inhabit. ●

Shahed Saleem teaches architecture at the University of Westminster and is the author of ‘The British Mosque, an architectural and social history’



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Jane Duncan opened proceedings with her presentation 'The role of the architect after Grenfell.'

Fire safety gains momentum

As safety climbs back up the political agenda, the issues – and some solutions – were discussed at a RIBA J/Hilti conference

Safety in buildings has been put firmly back on the policy agenda. In last October’s Queen’s Speech, the government confirmed it would implement the recommendations of Dame Judith Hackitt’s review with the introduction of a building safety bill for England. The background briefing note issued by the prime minister’s office alongside the Queen’s Speech made clear its objectives. These include ‘providing clearer accountability for, and stronger duties on, those responsible for the safety of high-rise buildings throughout the building’s design, construction and occupation, with clear competence requirements to maintain high standards’.

The RIBA and its expert advisory group have been working towards these objectives through measures such as the planned fire safety overlay to the RIBA Plan of Work,

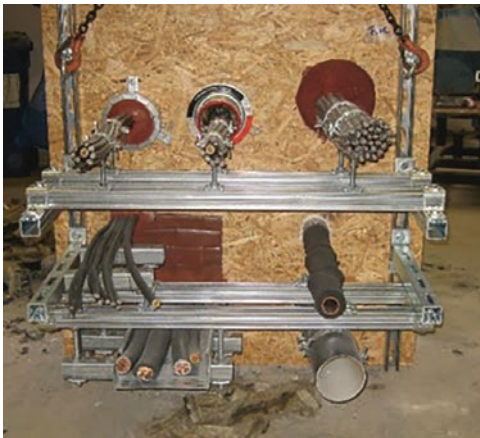
and improved fire safety training for both practising and student architects. Past RIBA president Jane Duncan, director of her own practice and chair of the RIBA fire safety expert advisory group, has urged architects to take on the principal designer role. Speaking at the conference ‘Raising the bar in passive fire protection: The evolving role of architects post-Grenfell’ late last

The number of layers in CLT may make a difference to the char rate of 0.6mm or 0.7mm per minute

year, which was hosted by RIBA Journal in association with Hilti, she said: ‘If architects are acting as lead designers, then we need to step up.’

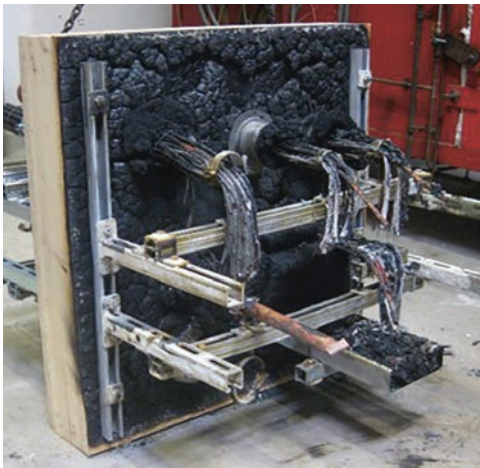
Change has begun

The two and a half years since the Grenfell Tower fire have seen other changes. The government has banned combustible materials in the external walls of high-rise residential buildings over 18m. But there have also been further fires in lower rise buildings, such as the Beechmere residential care home in Crewe, Cheshire, and an apartment building at The Hamptons, in Worcester Park, south west London. ‘In these fires we haven’t seen fatalities thankfully, but there is a concern that these were in timber frame buildings,’ pointed out Duncan. Weaknesses were also exposed



Left and below Hilti fire engineer Alastair Brockett highlighted the benefits of the tested performance products showing how it performed in one of their test rigs.

Right Brockett outlined various means that Hilti had employed, such as the CFS-SL sleeve and CFS-CC collar, to mitigate the potential fire effects on solid CLT construction.



by an independent review of housebuilder Persimmon’s operations, whose findings were published last December. This noted that missing or incorrectly installed cavity barriers in the housebuilder’s timber frame homes were ‘a systemic nationwide problem, which is a manifestation of poor culture coupled with the lack of a group build process’.

Working with layers

Such occurrences have put the spotlight on the fundamentals of design and installation of passive fire protection, particularly when using offsite construction systems. Manufacturer Hilti has worked with timber system manufacturers and Marriott’s Moxy hotel brand to improve protection for cross laminated timber (CLT) construction. ‘Timber is a very predictable material in fire, but the layers in CLT can give variation in the amount of timber lost in a fire, the char rate,’ says Alastair Brockett, firestop engineer with Hilti. ‘Generally, research has shown that the multi-layer systems, with their thinner layers, have greater average

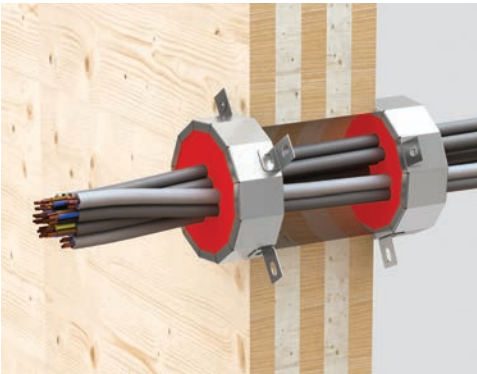
char rates. The number of layers may make a difference to the char rate of 0.6mm per minute or 0.7mm per minute, which doesn’t sound much, but that becomes important over the duration of a fire.’

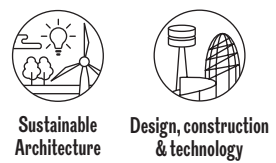
Intumescent sealants are conventionally used to fill services openings in timber systems to prevent spread of smoke and fire, but Hilti came up with a solution that is as pre-fabricated as the timber system itself, as Brockett explains. ‘It seemed crazy to bring in wet materials for a dry construction method, so this is a dry-fit firestopping using intumescent blocks, which doesn’t depend on adhesive or installer skill and can be checked visually to ensure it has been correctly fitted.’

Passive protection

Until recently, firestopping has typically been something of an afterthought during design and construction. ‘When it comes to buying and specifying fire safety products, we’re not experts. We need to skill procurement,’ Niall Rowan, chief executive officer of the Association for Specialist Fire Protection (ASFP), told the audience. Hilti’s Brockett meanwhile says passive fire protection is receiving greater attention. ‘Architects coming to our CPD seminars tell us that their university training didn’t cover firestopping but now, particularly in the light of Grenfell, there is a focus on fire protection. For me, firestopping is a basic minimum requirement for all buildings.’

With insurers also putting a greater focus on fire safety, as noted by one of the conference attendees, there is added impetus to act now. As Richard Hull, conference chair and professor of chemistry and fire science at the School of Physical Sciences and Computing, University of Central Lancashire, stressed, ‘While we are waiting for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s actions to come into force, architects can show solidarity and say we can do better.’ ●





Awards go greener

Sustainability criteria in the RIBA Awards are becoming increasingly stringent

Eleanor Young

In 2019 the top level of the profession firmly grasped the need for change in the face of the climate emergency with Stirling Prize winners signing up to Architects Declare. This year it must make good on those promises and start the transition to carbon zero buildings. As hundreds of practices log in to the RIBA Awards system they will see that the institute is doing its part too. There has long been a requirement for sustainability information in entries, but now the judging criteria for all the awards embody these values. Winners should be environmentally sustainable and must supply information about energy in use, embodied carbon and water use. The sustainability form has mandatory fields (which depend on project size) and entries will not be shortlisted if they are not filled in. However, the awards group and the visiting judges, who are primarily practising architects, are aware of how long even urgent sustainability measures take to feed into

projects. Those completing in time for the 2020 awards are likely to have been designed some years ago. But all submissions with a construction cost over £1 million must submit data for operational energy, embodied energy and potable water use. Where does sustainability information come from? On larger projects consultants will have it. A little less data is required for buildings below £1m this year and should be available in building control documentation and bills – there is advice in the notes on the sustainability form. Part L information or predicted operational energy use (TM54 or Passivhaus) and water use can be submitted for 2020-2021 to demonstrate how the project has achieved 2020 targets. However, data on actual operational energy and water use will be viewed more favourably. There is more guidance on how to achieve this in the guide, RIBA Sustainable Outcomes. The higher the award, the higher the sustainability bar: for National Awards and the Stirling Prize longlist projects will have to submit predicted or actual operational energy use data and demonstrate how they have achieved 2020 targets. Energy in use, embodied carbon and water use are agreed to be the key areas for improving sustainability of buildings. They are enshrined in the RIBA 2030 Challenge, which the awards will be increasingly aligned to. The RIBA is working with the CIC, UK Green Building Council, Architects Declare and the UK Committee for Climate Change to ensure these are industry wide metrics. The RIBA has also been advocating operational energy be adopted in Part L of the building regulations. The target figures on each measure between now and 2030 show a clear path to net carbon. HOK's Gary Clark, chair of the RIBA

No sustainability information means no shortlisting sustainable futures group and a sustainability advisor to the RIBA Awards, says: 'November's UN Emissions Gap Report states a 7.6% reduction in carbon emissions is required every year over the next 10 years to keep global temperatures within 1.5% of baseline.' Beyond this the ramifications of climate change, including more frequent extreme weather events, become increasingly serious. Requirements for awards entries will ramp up too. By 2022 failure to submit in use operational energy and water use data will mean projects are not shortlisted. By 2025 submissions will have to achieve 2025 targets or better to be considered and by 2030 they will have to achieve 2030 targets.

Chair of the RIBA awards group, Jo Bacon of Allies and Morrison, says: 'Environmental performance is no longer detached from architecture. A lot of Stirling shortlisted schemes had good sustainability metrics... We want people to demonstrate the strength of their environmental credentials. If they are not there we need to be able not to shortlist them for the highest level of awards.' Last year's RIBA Stirling Prize winner, the Norwich social housing of Mikhail Riches' Goldsmith Street, came very close on embodied carbon and carbon emissions to the levels required by the 2030 in the 2030 Carbon Challenge. Yes it was Passivhaus, yes it had a client who wanted a sustainable project, but it shows that meeting the 2030 Climate Challenge is possible. ●

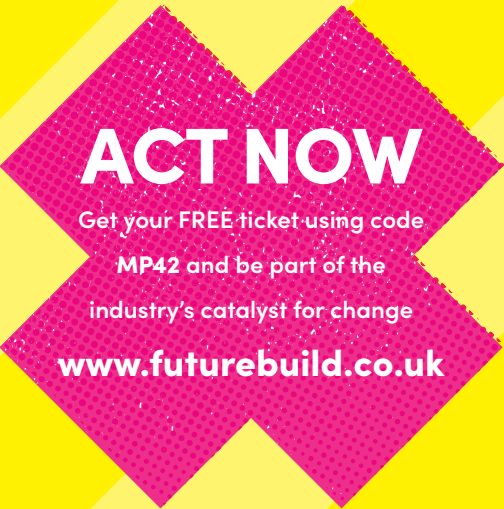
The RIBA Awards deadline is 20 February See architecture.com to enter

Section through the Stirling Prize winning Goldsmith Street which had an operational energy prediction of 16.5kWh/m²/y and embodied carbon of 336kgCO₂/m².



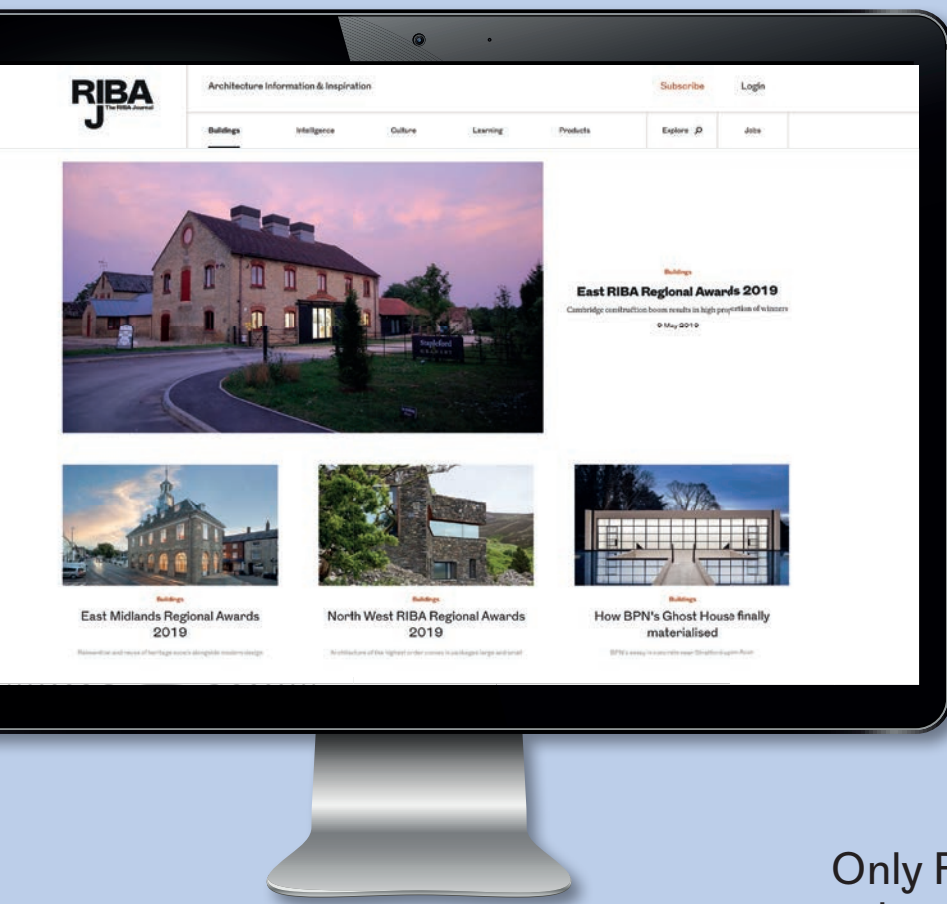
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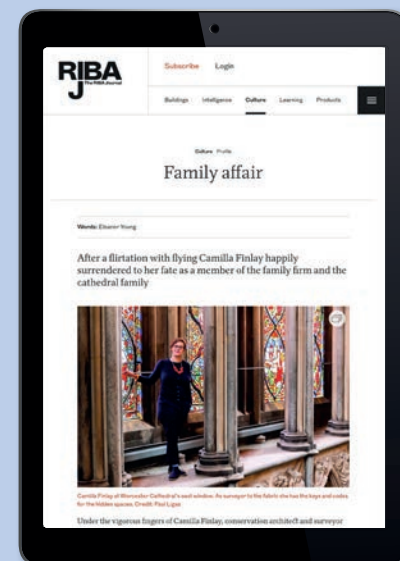
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Modern traditionalist
– Richard Griffiths
60

Dublin's gold standard
– Grafton Architects
64

3: Culture

Fashion victims

Where will the architectural pendulum swing next?



Hugh Pearman Editor

One of the truisms of the built environment is that the once-despised becomes accepted and praised while the once-accepted and praised becomes despised. Wait long enough and the cycle may even repeat. Happy the architects, such as Sir Denys Lasdun, who live just long enough to see their work, having fallen into disfavour, swing right back into fashion.

In his January column Will Wiles noted the ever-shortening timescales between good buildings being built and moves being made to protect and preserve them. The record is surely held by Nick Grimshaw's Waterloo International Terminal which was threatened by an air rights development before it was even built in the 1990s, leading to considerable protest which saw off the predatory project. Yes, it happened: a preservation battle for a building still at design stage, and I was one of the many signatories, at a time long before too-easy online petitions. The building should be listed now, of course, but we'll have to assess the impact of the commercial development that eventually IS happening to this breakout building by Grimshaw, namely a two-level

foodhall/entertainment venue below the tracks in the former international passenger waiting areas, not above them. It is due to open in 2021.

One consequence of the telescoping preservation timetable is overlap; one section of the commentariat continues to denigrate perfectly good buildings while another praises them to the skies. We see this with brutalism, we see this with postmodernism. So many people still regard certain now-listed buildings as crumbling hellholes simply because they happen to be council housing made of concrete. All concrete is not the same of course, any more than all brick is the same, but just try telling them that. And you still encounter sharp exchanges between the pro and anti when it comes to PoMo, though that is more of an intra-professional squabble: I get the sense that the general public is blithely unconcerned about that one.

So here is the next test: the identikit edge-of-town greenfield housing estates churned out by the volume builders. They vary in their quality but there is an average type of house involved – vaguely traditional-looking apart from the bleak road layouts. While in the 1970s and 1980s, say, neo-Geo or faux Regency were popular with the builders, for some reason these days they nearly all have to have a slightly Victorian air to them. Very seldom terraced, though: with rare exceptions the volume-housebuilding world is all about detached houses with narrow wind-channelling gaps between them.

However, this has happened before: Sir John Betjeman was the first to find merit in the endless semi-d's of inter-war suburbia he called Metroland. Who are we to assume that today's equivalent homes (though in some cases notoriously poorly built and usually not rail-connected) will not come to be loved for similar reasons? The only thing we can be sure of is that tastes change. Which is why anyone trying to codify 'beauty' as an aspect of home-building is on a hiding to nothing. ●

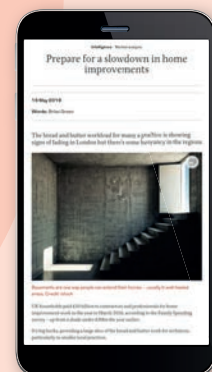
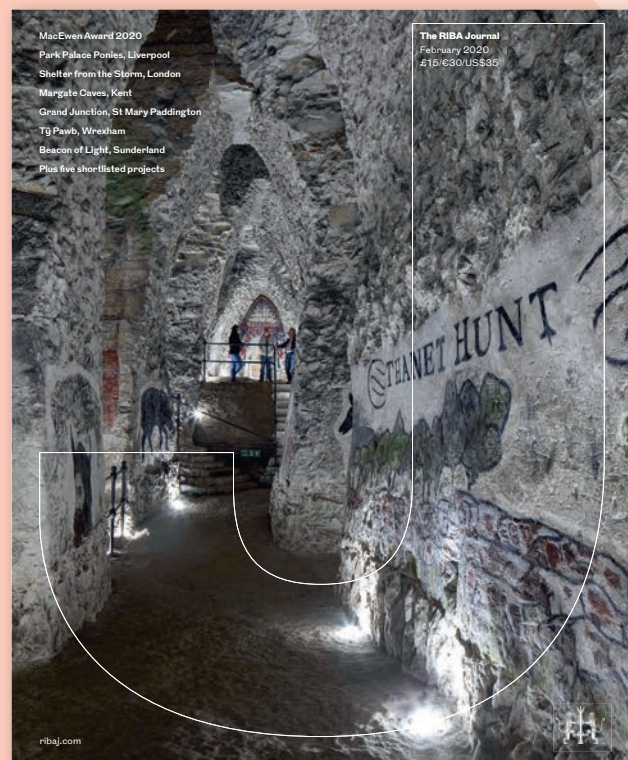
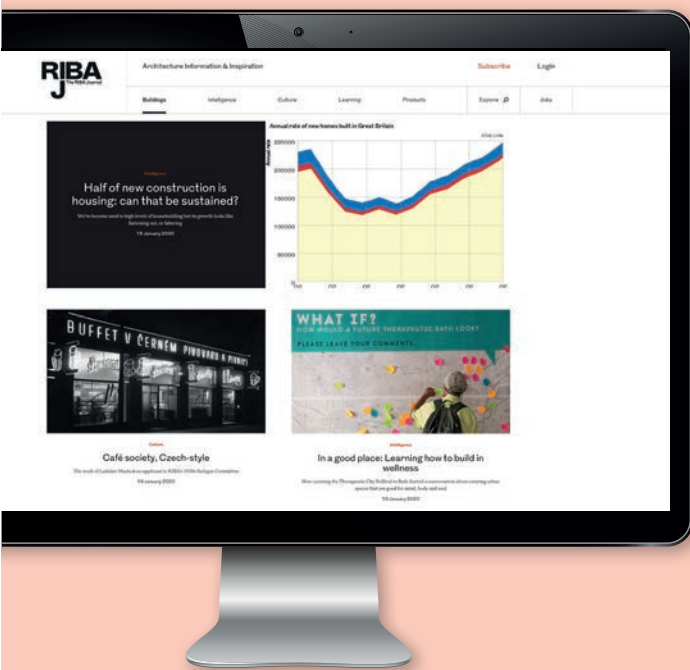
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Play, according to the renowned educator Friedrich Froebel, is a free expression of what's in a child's soul

Pamela Buxton at the Wellcome Collection's Play Well exhibition
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Who are we to assume that today's equivalent of Betjeman's Metroland will not come to be loved for similar reasons?

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Culture
Wiles & Wainwright

Sinister cities

Do techno cities symbolise a brave new world or an oppressive tyranny?



Oliver Wainwright

Like a supercharged humanoid set to default TED Talk mode, Bjarke Ingels leapt to the stage of the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January to unveil his latest bold vision of the future. The Danish architect responsible for conjuring a power plant with a ski slope on top and an apartment block in the form of an undulating figure of eight has now turned his hand to crafting a whole new city – with a radical vision for its modes of transport and the structure of its community.

‘Normal streets are a mess,’ Ingels declared, standing in front of a gigantic screen that showed a conventional city street being sliced up into three different ribbons, creating separate streets for fast-moving autonomous vehicles, people-powered bikes and hover-boards, and pedestrians. The three separate arteries would be woven together through neighbourhoods planned around a 3x3 block grid, each cluster framing a central courtyard or park, the network creating ‘a wide variety of intersections between humans, animals, vehicles and even robots.’

This heady new place is the dream of Japanese car manufacturer Toyota. The company has commissioned Ingels to masterplan its new ‘living laboratory’ to be built across a 175-acre site in the foothills of Mount Fuji. Initially planned to house 2,000 people, the Woven City will see timber apartment buildings draped with greenery and topped with swooping roofs of photovoltaic cells, stuffed full of the latest artificial intelligence tech-

The homes are described as ‘test sites’ for the company’s future technologies, with every bit of data harvested and processed for its commercial gain

Below Ingels’ plan for Toyota’s city of the future includes substantial data gathering opportunities for the Japanese firm.



nology. The smart homes will know when to restock your fridge and take out your trash, and even monitor how healthy you are.

‘Combining the traditional craft of Japanese wood joinery with new robotic production methods,’ the solid timber buildings will stand on top of a subterranean realm, where water filtration systems and hydrogen power storage will mingle with driverless delivery vehicles servicing the city’s residents above.

The plan appears to have much in common with the principles of many postwar town plans, with people separated from cars and the messy business of servicing and deliveries swept beneath an elevated podium. Yet there is an important difference. While New Towns were the work of the state, every aspect of this new city’s residents’ lives will be monitored and managed by the private interests of Toyota. The homes are described as ‘test sites’ for the company’s future technologies, with every bit of data harvested and processed for its commercial gain.

Ingels’ plan joins a host of similar megalomaniacal urban schemes by high-profile designers for tech companies, all looking to expand their influence beyond the bounds of their conventional businesses to every aspect of the city.

OMA, for example, is working on a company town for Facebook in Menlo Park, California. Google has pumped serious cash and city-making expertise into a new urban planning branch of its company, Sidewalk Labs, and Thomas Heatherwick is designing a 2,500 home scheme in his trademark Hobbit-meets-Avatar aesthetic. Again, the question is what purpose its high tech data will serve. Several high-profile members of the project’s board recently resigned over data protection and privacy issues, while one critic has described it as ‘a colonising experiment in surveillance capitalism attempting to bulldoze important urban, civic and political issues’.

While the slick presentations of Ingels et al are seductive in their technocratic logic and blue sky dreaming, it is important to remember that cities are not machines that can be optimised, or laboratories for running experiments. They are living, breathing, messy, vital places run by democratic process, not the commercial desires of chief executives and their shareholders. ●

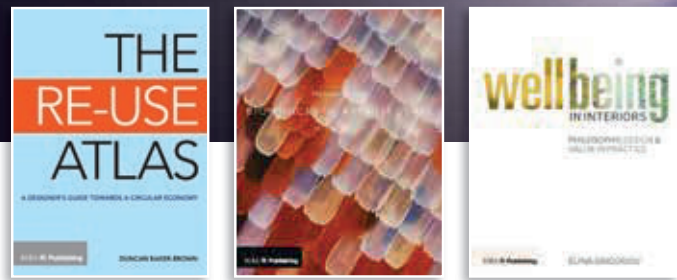
Oliver Wainwright is architecture critic at the Guardian. Read him here every other month and at ribaj.com

STYLE SHOCKER
Chinese telecoms giant Huawei has taken the company town in a totally different direction from the sleek visions of BIG, OMA and Heatherwick. Its sprawling Shenzhen campus looks like Poundbury on steroids, comprising a fruity buffet of classical palaces, baroque mansions and medieval castles where its 30,000 staff live and work.

HOLLYEXLEY

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A team of individuals

The 2020 Royal Gold Medal award to a practice recognises collaboration



Alan Jones

The 2020 Royal Gold Medal for architecture is being awarded to Grafton Architects, as a practice. Normally the Gold Medal goes to an individual or a pair of individuals and very rarely to a group or practice. This could be a beginning of a new era, when we focus less on individuals at the top of practices and acknowledge that it is all the practice contributors coming together effectively that makes really great architecture.

Practice and business are becoming increasingly complex and demanding for a single person to have sole oversight and leadership. As I visit practices I find more and more have changed, or are in the process of changing, to an employee ownership trust. In 'Defining Contemporary Professionalism' Denise Bennetts sets out very clearly why and how the London and Edinburgh based Bennetts Associates did so. Trusts are internally more 'open book' with fee levels, outgoings, extent of profitability, opportunities

with collective ethics, responsibilities and risks being more broadly known and agreed across the practice. So we are becoming more collective and relying on each other.

Although recognising individuality, separate backgrounds and trajectories, we also need a clear definition of our core; of what is central to be a contemporary, competent professional architect. An architect's professional individuality must obviously in addition to central core competency.

In these times of high expectations and risk, practices need their team of individuals to have expertise along the flow of work, from securing business through to physical realisation and review. The myriad skills and talent, facing outward towards client, user and society, to understand the technical, regulatory and environmental demands and the business and running of the practice, all work together to create complementary forms of success.

We must remember to resist being drawn to and employing those who are the same as ourselves, and to seek out diversity to complement and challenge. As early as 1999 John Worthington, of DEGW fame, argued that our profession should acknowledge different types of architect and that we should 'educate for diversity'. That call must be tempered with a definition of the core competence of a contemporary professional architect subjected to government directed regulation, with the additional peaks of expertise that are necessary to excel and go beyond the minimum standards of registration.

The new RIBA CPD recording platform went live in 2019 and we will soon be launching our online CPD delivery system – RIBA Academy. It is an important tool in maintaining and evidencing competence and expertise; what is core to maintain registration and what is enhancement for delivery of greater levels of service, positive impact and personal progression. Personal spider diagrams of profiles of expertise, overlaid with those of colleagues, could create a revealing multi-layered studio mesh confirming essential individuals, team depth, CPD requirements and aspects needing external input.

The award of the 2020 Royal Gold Medal to Grafton Architects highlights that successful and effective practice is the combined effort of a team of individuals. Long live collaboration! ●

president@riba.org @alanjones2008



ILLUSTRATION: HOLLY EXLEY

Grafton Architects' office in Dublin.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTION: EXPULSION

Following a hearing on 9 August 2019 an RIBA Hearings Panel found that David McSwiney of Leicestershire was guilty of breaching of Byelaw 4.1 and Principle 1 of the Code of Professional Conduct in relation to a conviction of a criminal offence on 28 April 2014, in that he was convicted of committing an act outraging public decency. He was sentenced to a 12-month community order with a supervision requirement; to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work and pay compensation, a victim surcharge and costs totalling £245. This conviction resulted in a hearing of the ARB Professional Conduct Committee on 20 September 2018. At this, he was found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and issued with an Erasure from the ARB Register. Following the hearing, Mr McSwiney was issued an expulsion from RIBA membership.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTION: EXPULSION

Following a hearing on 9 August 2019 an RIBA Hearings Panel found that Ibiapuye Tonye Ekineh of London was guilty of breaching Principles 1, 2 and 3 of the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct. He was found to have failed to pass on his client's money to London Building Control or Thames Water or to arrange a refund. He failed to deal promptly and openly with his regulator, failed to carry out agreed architectural services after being paid, and failed to ensure he had adequate and appropriate insurance.

Mr Ekineh also failed to provide accurate drawings, measurements and plans in accordance with the requirements of the brief and Building Regulations. Further, he failed to ensure that his terms of appointment, scope of his work and/or the essential project requirements were clear and recorded in writing. He failed to adequately, if at all, explain to his client the implications of any conditions of engagement and how his fees were to be calculated and charged. In addition, Mr Ekineh failed to have in place (or have access to) effective procedures for dealing promptly and appropriately with disputes or complaints. Further, he failed to co-operate with an investigation under RIBA's disciplinary procedures. Mr Ekineh was issued an expulsion from RIBA membership.

Richard Griffiths' work is both traditional and modern; he captures the feel of a place and runs with that, mixing new and old craft to renowned effect

Words: Hugh Pearman Portrait: Wilde Fry

In the mood

'In theory you could get eight people in here,' says Richard Griffiths. We're in the family cabin he built three years ago in the shell of an old agricultural shed near Blythburgh in Suffolk, one of a pair of buildings he has done on a 1ha patch of land he has, overlooking the floodplain of the Blyth river. The other, now sold on, is a larger earlier barn conversion. The cabin is compact but ingeniously planned. Small though it is, the architectural and artistic references here are ambitious.

There's the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright to be found here which also 'relates to a pre-classical articulation of English interiors,' he says, pointing out that the horizontal banding to the interior is in the manner of Hardwick Hall for instance: panelling to a certain height, and then frieze and ceiling treated in one pale colour. Similarly the


way the spaces of the little house connect in an enfilade down one side is like many a country house, while his deployment of elements plugged into one side of the house is derived from the Arts and Crafts houses of Baillie Scott. On the exterior, the way he has integrated a row of 10 dark photovoltaic solar panels into the reddish corrugated Corten roof is, in his mind, a Rothko moment. The whole place is a highly insulated timber-frame construction done to near-Pasivhaus standard. Furniture is mostly mid-century Scandi-modern.

Richard Griffiths Architects, a practice now 25 years old, is both a noted conservation and new-build firm. You might think that a Griffiths building is more traditional in character than many but you'll always find he brings something new to the table – even

where, as in his gatehouse tower for Brighton College in 2015, he was ostensibly completing an unfinished design by Sir Thomas Graham Jackson, a pupil of Sir George Gilbert Scott whose buildings form the original core of the school (RIBA Journal, February 2015). Now, 125 years after Jackson's original design drawing, some simplification was in order and both modern and traditional construction methods used. The effect is the thing: it is honest and believable.

Griffiths is good at catching the mood of a place and taking it from there. He trained at Cambridge first as an engineer (he was dreaming of bridges and dams, he says) before he switched to architecture. There he started to evolve his ideas: not to be a narrow conservation architect but, as he puts it, to practise 'architecture in the context of old buildings'.






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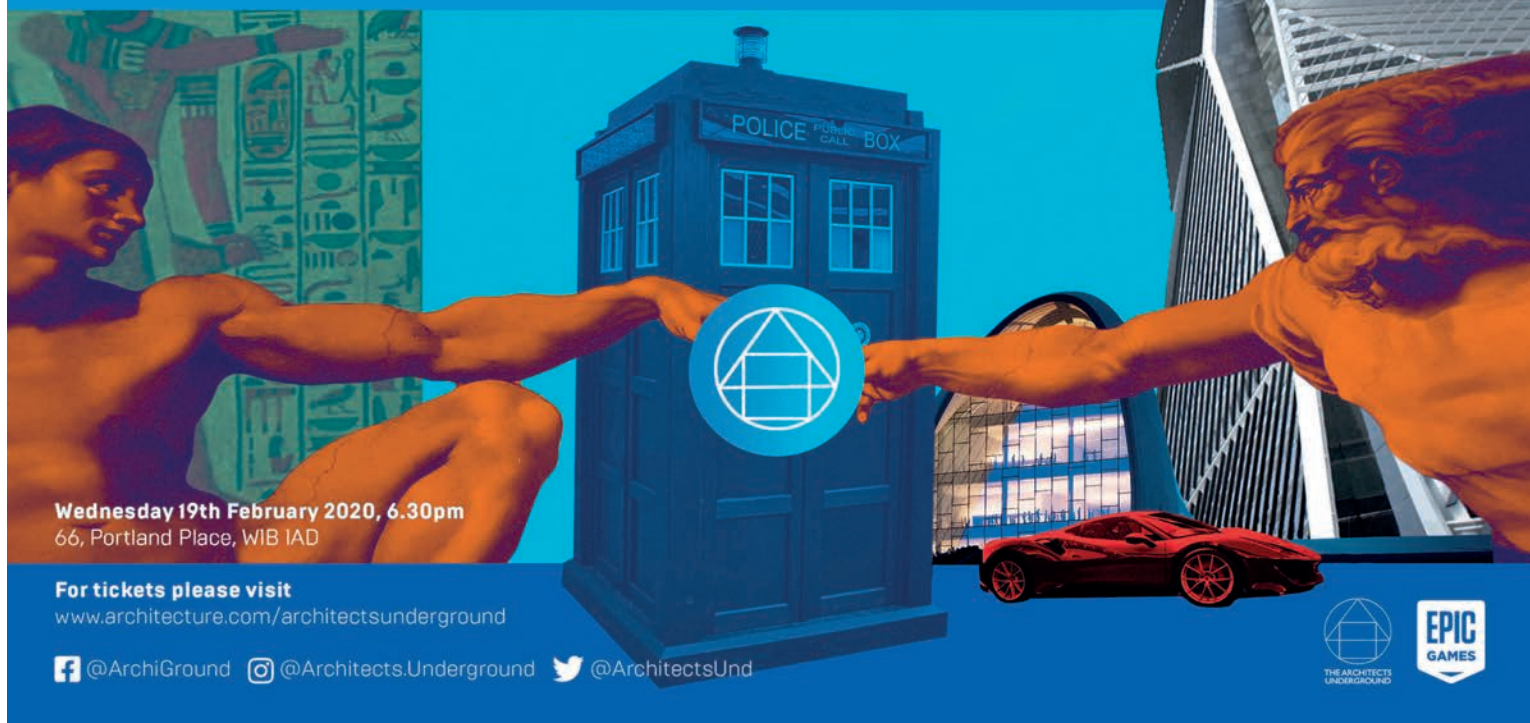
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Culture Profile

Naturally enough, he went to work for Julian Harrap who was himself ploughing that furrow, having previously worked as a modelmaker for Jim Stirling. 'It was about new and old together as a way of producing an architecture that is as interesting, if not more so, than all-new building,' he says, citing the example of Harrap's later work with David Chipperfield on Berlin's Neues Museum as an example. Come the recession of the early 1990s, however, the Harrap office was short of work. Griffiths set up on his own in a back bedroom with a project he'd brought in and started at Harrap's: the National Trust's closed and decaying Tudor Sutton House in Hackney. An exemplary community-led project saw it restored (including some 200 year old cobwebs) but in a way that showed the layers of history – Tudor, Georgian, Victorian, 1980s squatted, and Griffiths' own contemporary layer. As part of all this he introduced 43 hinged panels you can open to see what lies behind. Sutton House proved to be his passport to a rich vein of projects. And, he says, 'I did my first five-plank door there. Tudor technology'. In his 25th-anniversary book 'Old Buildings, New Architecture' he recounts how he first encountered an original example of this door type in his restoration of Eastbury Manor in Barking. It's a lamination technique: a typical example would have five vertical planks on one side clenched by 10 horizontal ones on the other, though there are lots of variations, some with vision panels cut out in the squares where planks overlap. Most architects specify doors as ready made products but the bespoke five-plank door is almost a Griffiths signature.

Classic Griffiths is his small complex of new buildings at Southwark Cathedral. He'd become the cathedral's official architect but hadn't expected to find himself in charge of its successfully-funded Millennium project which needed a total redesign. Key to this was a new refectory and library building at right angles to the cathedral, defining a new entrance courtyard, a memory of a cloister. The new north entrance from the river side is set in a second block of meeting rooms parallel with the cathedral. All this involved demolishing some of the 1980s work of the predecessor architect and dean, which was somewhat controversial at the time. Working with the aptly-named Ptolemy Dean (now surveyor to Westminster Abbey) Griffiths evolved an architecture which is a fascinating hybrid

'It was about new and old together as a way of producing an architecture that is as interesting, if not more so, than all-new building'

of ancient and modern, its materials creamy-brown stone, flint, oak and copper but also paired arched ribs of smooth precast concrete to the library. That's a reference to ES Prior's equally ribby interior of St Andrews, Roker.

As with his hotel extension at St Pancras Station – done in the manner of Scott, not least because pointed windows fitted into the huge pre-existing two-storey steel lattice truss built to carry a previous rejected design over a 30m loading bay – this kind of work is the opposite of the received idea that a new extension should be an obvious visual foil or contrast to the original architecture. Instead it draws on and blends with the original architecture while not slavishly copying it. This is acceptable practice now and Griffiths' work has done much to make it so. But he does the architecture-as-contrast thing too, and singles out his turn-of-the-century work at Lambeth Palace.

That job sets delicate but still carefully crafted modern elements in steel, glass and pale ash timber against the heavy ancient masonry. 'It's the one that in the most obvious way talks about how old and new can contrast and yet speak to each other,' he says. For him it's a spectrum all the way from careful restoration at one end to clearly modern at the other. 'The criterion is ultimately about architecture rather than morality – which is where most people go wrong I think.' ●

See examples of Griffiths' work on ribaj.com

The view across the Suffolk marshes with a Griffiths barn conversion to hand.



Made in Dublin

Grafton Architects receives the RIBA Royal Gold Medal this month. Eleanor Young talks to its founders about their architectural development, their favourite and famous projects, learning and teaching

You are known as educators. Who were your own early influences?
Yvonne Farrell We studied architecture at University College Dublin where we were very lucky as we arrived at a time of huge change in thinking and teaching. Ivor Smith had taken over the running of the school and with him came the ‘flying circus’: Ed Jones, Chris Cross, Fenella Dixon and others – tutors who were young architects, all rationalists and all building. Cathal O’Neill had worked with Mies van der Rohe in Chicago, others with Louis Kahn – their influence was very strong in the school. We were reading Kenneth Frampton’s Critical Regionalism and going to concerts – which were really like lectures – given by the Irish composer Seán Ó Riada, who was fusing traditional Irish and European musical influences.
Shelley McNamara As students, we were reading extensively about architecture; about our own place and this fed into our understanding of ideas from different



Above Shelley McNamara (left) and Yvonne Farrell with a model of UTEC, Lima.

Below The Grafton team.

disciplines relating to place; to the classical, global and European cultures. There were similarities in spirit with critical regionalism; we found it this deeply inspiring and challenging.

In the best known Irish architecture there is a particular tectonic thinking around massing and materiality. How much are you responsible for that, as teachers?
SM A lot of young Irish architects were given the chance to teach: Michael McGarry, Siobhán Ní Éanaigh, Sheila O’Donnell, John Tuomey, Shane de Blacam, John Meagher, for example. A certain bond was built up and, over 25-30 years, a common culture. It is not hierarchical, there are different ages and backgrounds teaching studios from generation to generation. The scale of Ireland and Dublin, Cork and Belfast means that it is quite a cohesive culture. There are extraordinary architects coming up after us. We did have an influence because we were very passionate. We were so hungry for progress from the very beginning of our studies, wanting to contribute to the development of contemporary architecture in Ireland.

The framework for Dublin’s Temple Bar cultural quarter (1992-96) as Group ‘91 was the first time you came to international prominence. What was special about that?
YF In the late 80s there was very little work for architects in Ireland. We began to organise exhibitions, hoping to foster a love of city. For one, together with seven small practices, we worked on samples of urban housing for public discussion. Then, when an international competition for the Temple Bar Area of Dublin came about, those same practices formed Group ‘91 to enter. The whole area had been frozen awaiting demolition for an enormous bus station. Group ‘91’s proposal retained buildings and made new public spaces. Having won, each of our practices got a project to design.

GRAFTON

You founded Grafton in 1978. What was your first significant project together?
SM It was really important when we started to get school extensions and new schools to build. That led to other local authority projects like County Meath’s Solstice Arts Centre in Navan (2006), and to university projects. Trinity College’s Parsons Building (1996) for the Department of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering was only 1,000m², but it was a significant project on the historic Trinity campus. That had a huge impact on us and our standing.

How did you get your breakthrough project for Università Luigi Bocconi, Milan, Italy (2008)?
YF In 2002, there was a competition for a new Bocconi University project in Milan. Ten practices were invited from around Europe, in which the main partners would be directly involved in the design. It was very large – a 45,000m² building. We hadn’t done anything of that scale, but we had so many projects already built that the client was confident we could manage this much larger and more complex commission.
SM At the time we were collaborating with structural engineer Roughan & O’Donovan on motorway bridges in Ireland. With their spans of 60-70m these structures impressed us by their efficiency of span and capacity for elegance. We thought if you could do it on a bridge, we could do it within a building. In our Bocconi entry, we reluctantly positioned two columns to prop the 22m cantilever we had for the projecting Aula Magna. When we won, our Italian structural engineer, who did a lot of civils work, confirmed that we could take out those columns. This was terrific and reassuring news for us!
YF We took a shoebox full of our own structural studies for the project to the engineers in Milan for discussion. They were impressed that as architects, we had carefully thought our structural proposals through. Those models definitely gained us a level of respect, showing that the architecture for this building would be twinned with structure from the start. That 22m cantilever that Shelley spoke of, together with the 8m high, clear-glass window below it, simultaneously frames the city for the student and brings it into the campus.

You won the RIBA International Award for your university campus for UTEC in Lima, Peru (2015). It seems to show the same structural heroism.
SM The power of structure to liberate space grew out of each project we built. With UTEC, we saw how structure could have its own impact. We had developed an interest in the work of South American architects. For example, Paolo Mendes da Rocha buildings that could be bridges. In Lima, structure has to deal with seismic issues too.
YF When we were in UTEC just after the scaffolding had been removed, we both felt that the spatial enclosure

We did have an influence because we were very passionate. We were so hungry for contemporary architecture in Ireland

was more powerful that we had imagined. Architecture is not just a theoretical exercise. It is a felt experience.

With your school of economics for the University of Toulouse, just completing, your interest in the walls, buttresses, ramps and towers of the city are explicit.
SM The Toulouse project was really challenging. In Milan the city structure was more familiar, strong, rational and rigorous. In Toulouse, it is picturesque with the Garonne River, the Canal de Brienne and wonderful bricks. We found it really hard to find a language for the shape and quality of the site. We wanted windows, but with the intense summer heat we needed to reduce the amount of glass. So, the question was: how do you hold the surface? Using fragments of the city: colonnaded cloisters, buttresses, and so on, we worked using a method of collage. It is a fan-shaped plan, we started to call it the sundial, and it really brings the city in.
YF The building heightens the awareness of where you are in the city. It frames the Garonne River or the cathedral spire. Architecture has the capacity to help you enjoy the places more.

You have now done many projects for universities. You have one under way in London at LSE and one just complete, Town House for Kingston University.
YF With each institution we take on we try to understand their different dreams and stories. We try to find practical solutions but also add another ingredient to spatially tell the story of transformation. That might mean drawing people into a place where thresholds are not offputting or a completely new representation of the institution.
SM At the Institut Mines Telecom in Paris Saclay, France, we bring people together and the same is true

Below Inside Grafton’s Universidad de Ingeniería y Tecnología, Lima, Peru (2015).



IWAN BAAH

in Kingston. The Kingston Town House is not owned by any one department. It is open to all – an antidote to compartmentalisation – which shows Kingston University's progressive ideas of education.

You are using precast concrete frame on Town House. Do you see yourselves taking prefabrication further?

SM In the Town House, we have both a prefabricated structure and facade. We were influenced by Jørn Utzon's Paustian House with its elemental columns and beams. It ties into the idea of repetition and economy – ease of construction is directly connected to these. Kingston was the first time we were novated to a contractor. Lots of decisions were influenced by this and the way the construction industry works. Precast is very economical in the use of materials.

In your manifesto as curators for the Venice Architecture Biennale (2018) you describe the earth as a client. How are you responding practically to climate emergency?

YF We continue to try to understand each material: in situ concrete, precast concrete, timber, steel, stone. It is frustrating that there is no clear answer as to which is the most ecologically responsible use of material.

SM We have always been irritated by lack of respect for beautiful materials; people take ancient, incredible geology and use it in a cheap way that loses all its qualities.

YF For Bocconi University, we chose a stone called Ceppo. In that quarry in the mountains, the method is to cut out 9m by 9m cubes of solid stone. As they cut, we realised we were carving into a mountain to make a mountain. It made us acutely aware that what we specify as architects brings its own kind of responsibility.

SM Architecture is not claiming enough territory. We need a sense of structures, of environmental control and of comfort. We shouldn't undervalue common



Above Bridge thinking – School of Economics, Università Luigi Bocconi, Milan, Italy (2008).

sense. Economy pushes against generosity, less space and volume often means more technical kit is needed. We need to remember that there are free elements for us to use: the pleasure of sunlight, moonlight, air, shade. **YF** When a young Swedish activist lays at our door that we must be more conscious of what we do, we take note. With areas of Australia, a first world country, burning out of control, we see how fragile our earth can be. It takes time for fully sustainable projects to come into being. But thinking about climate, use of materials, etc is changing. For us, architecture is the physics of culture.

You wanted the Royal Gold Medal to go to the whole practice – all 40 of you. How have you built up your team?

SM We were down to eight architects in 2008 during the recession. We have increased gradually, to the largest we have ever been. We have mostly Irish architects and many of them we have taught, so they understand what we are about. Our core group has been with us for eight or 10 years or more. It is important to have both consistency and change. We want to keep the spirit of an atelier and cannot take sole credit, that would be dishonest. Architecture is always a collaborative affair.

YF All those who have contributed over the years are still Grafton Architects in spirit. We all share a belief that architecture is of such cultural importance that the day to day difficulties are worth the effort.

An internationally renowned practice headed by two women is unusual. Have you had a harder time because of it?

YF We have been lucky because we are Irish women. While becoming architects, we received the benefits of education and the support of our families. People before us cleared the decks, campaigning for votes for women, for example. Just before we came to UCD, female students had not been allowed to wear jeans in college! All our lives, we have come across people who believed in us and in architecture. It is important that the voices of women are heard. Imagination is not a gender issue. ●

The 2020 RIBA Royal Gold Medal will be presented to Grafton Architects on 13 February.

PAOLO TONATO

Below Building as collage: taking the forms of Toulouse to make the School of Economics, Université Toulouse, France (2020).



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John Stiff 1930 – 2019

Successful architect who withstood enough booms and slumps to advise his son against joining the profession – but ended up in joint practice with him



It is common enough for children to follow their parents into architecture but more unusual for parent and child to find themselves sharing a practice. In the case of John Stiff, both happened. His son Michael Stiff had established a promising practice in the 1980s with Andy Trevillion while he, having made his successful career in other practices, wanted a change of pace as he neared the enviably young retirement age – 60 – he had set himself. So they merged their firms for a few years.

John Stiff was born in Slough to Stan and Ada, Stan being a steam engine driver on the GWR. John left Slough Grammar School at 16 and after a stint of National Service in the RAF, which he thoroughly enjoyed, and which allowed him to expand his jazz repertoire, he decided to become an architect. By then married, he was encouraged by his stepfather in law to sign up to evening classes at Regent Street Polytechnic. He worked for British Rail architects department during this time.

A year before qualifying in 1961 he entered the world of commercial architecture, joining Scherrer and Hicks (Anglo-Swiss architect Emil Scherrer was a tutor at the poly). With them he built schools – including the 1965 Islington Green school, now demolished – housing and Croydon Crematorium East Chapel extension, of which he was very proud. It is where his father was cremated.

In 1972 when Scherrer and Hicks retired, he teamed up with John Spratley and Partners which was based in Abingdon. He opened the London office, building it up into a very successful commercial business designing warehousing, offices, residential and factory projects, working with developers such as Martin Morris and Martin Landau. At this time John bought and rebuilt a

house near Shere in Surrey, the area he stayed in for the rest of his life. But times were tough: recessions and the oil crisis made it a roller coaster ride, which is why he always advised his son not to take up architecture.

He did, though. As Stiff+Trevillion got going in the mid 80s, John had separated from John Spratley, and was looking forward to retirement and new challenges. As the Thatcher boom took hold, S+T found itself ‘ghosting’ projects for JSP. It made sense for the two practices to merge to enable John to be sure that his business had a future before stepping aside. Operating as JSP London, it gave the younger half a valuable grounding in large commercial schemes, typically office headquarters and distribution centres in the M25 and M4/M40 growth corridors.

The venture worked, and with the recession that struck in 1990, John’s long-planned departure was timely. The younger generation carried the business on, developed it and flipped the name back to Stiff+Trevillion in the early 90s. John took an Italian property that had been jointly purchased and part developed in 1987, developed it out and sold part of it. Still young by architectural standards, he continued to do private commissions for the next decade or so.

Michael Stiff says of the father-son relationship: ‘Working together was a great leg up for us, it gave us a great deal of responsibility and allowed us to design and construct new buildings, something that a small young practice rarely did. There is no doubt that the experience of working with him set up systems and protocol that we continued to use for many years. I have always thought that Stiff+Trevillion was formed from the open and democratic world that I experienced as a student at Rock Townsend, combined with the commercial edge we learned with John.’

John Stiff is survived by his wife Marsha, children Andrew, Kate, Michael and Suzanne, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. ●

Hugh Pearman and Michael Stiff

IN MEMORIAM

David Russell Craig
ELECTED 1963, HERTFORD

Stuart Alexander Beatty
ELECTED 1964, TWICKENHAM

Brian Charles Goldsmith
ELECTED 1969, LONDON

Andrew Walter Sparks
ELECTED 1987, SOMERSET

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

Exchange

In the gutter

Re the editor’s January column (‘Fantasy Future’, p53) ‘Dreams’ seems to imply wishing the impossible and therefore accepting the impossible.

I remember Ronald Bradbury, the Liverpool City Architect, lecturing the students of the Liverpool Architectural Society in the sixties. I have never forgotten his words – ‘You students need to study drains, not dreams’. In his vote of thanks student Brian Anson – later to be saviour of London’s Covent Garden (who suffered a stutter) - let it rip with: ‘Doctor Bradbury you are a f – f – f – f – f f*ck*ng awful architect.’

The raw and honest truth was that the city architect WAS awful. How refreshingly brave of Brian Anson to tell him and these enthusiastic students the truth. Enlightened education will produce good architecture. But people must learn what good architecture is. And following the money may well lead you to some of the worst architecture.

PS. Thank you for editing a fine RIBA Journal.

Carl Thompson, St Tropez, France

Broken dreams

You plot a better world but aren’t you looking back through rose tinted glasses? There is so much about the modern practice of building design and construction that has proved beneficial, more complex maybe, but inevitable in a fast changing world. There are also numerous and often apocryphal examples of how it was once so much simpler and efficient, but my recollections are as much to do with split responsibilities, poor teamwork and manufacturers and suppliers who over-promised. That’s before adding contractual disputes and wider professional responsibilities. Go back far enough and the architect (before the title) didn’t just plan and calculate cost for the client, but also built and managed the workforce. That’s



no solution to modern society’s needs, nor would it satisfy its demands.

Keep up the good work. Your challenge is to make 2020 the year for optimism.

Simon Carne, Barnes, London

Late lament

Will Wiles (RIBA January 2020 column on preserving 21st century buildings) could also raise a flag for the later C20th mega buildings. Mine are (or were) Fawley Power Station, Southampton, with its magisterial clerestory and circular control room, now being demolished; and Dartford’s Littlebrook power station chimney, demolished at the end of last year. Were they on London’s West Way and 40 years older would they have had such cavalier treatment?

Simon Lanyon-Hogg, Winchmore Hill, London

Hi tech – low art?

The University of East Anglia recently hosted the region’s annual RIBA lecture, given by the partner of a well-known firm led by a knighted ‘starchitect’ with a global remit. From the outset it was clear the firm had moved decisively from the traditional core base of architecture as expounded centuries ago by the Roman architect Vitruvius. He laid down the three principles needed for a building to qualify as architecture; technical ‘firmness’; social ‘usefulness’ and artistic ‘delight’. The leader of the firm was the son of an engineer and clearly had a similar mindset, which helped him as a leader of the hi-tech movement from the 1970s onwards.

The partner praised the energetic collaboration between all the parties engaged in the project, especially the engineers, to respond to the ‘green agenda’. Though eminently praise-worthy it left me wondering how artistic ‘delight’ could retain its theoretical autonomy when the quality of the designs depended so much on the interaction between elegant technology and social relevance. This fear was confirmed when the speaker dismissed the artistic approach of the late Zaha Hadid. But Vitruvius was a military engineer, so was his mind-set closer to the ethos of our speaker than competing schools of thought? Is design in architecture much more of an applied than a fine art? The debate continues.

Richard Harbord, Gunton, Norfolk

The raw and honest truth was that the city architect WAS awful. How refreshingly brave to tell him

Carl Thompson

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Restaurant 'Cerny Pivovar'
Prague, 1934

Following a sharp rise in the late 1930s in the number of central European architects seeking admission to Britain, in January 1939 the RIBA set up a special Refugee Committee, which was tasked to strike a very difficult balance between giving assistance to foreign architects who could no longer find work in their native countries (and were, in some cases, also in physical danger) and safeguarding job opportunities for local architects in a period of economic uncertainty. Among the numerous Czech applicants was Ladislav Machoň (1888-1973), a prolific architect who had worked on a great variety of

projects, from housing to government buildings. The photograph shows one of his restaurants in Prague, where he also designed the very popular Automat Koruna, a modern type of self-service buffet. Interestingly, Machoň also designed an automat in London's Regent Street in 1938, but it is unclear whether he ever managed to leave his country before the outbreak of World War Two. He was, however, still practising in the late 1940s – one of the fortunate aspiring émigrés who succeeded in surviving the Nazi era. ●
Valeria Carullo

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Sub editing
Alysoun Coles
Gail Novelle

Design
Linda Byrne

Production
Richard Blackburn
Jane Rogers

Advertisement manager
Richard Tomlin
+44 (0) 20 7496 8329

Account manager,
Midlands and North
Sunil Shah
+44 (0) 7501 466 660

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

Advertising and
digital support
Charlotte Collins
+44 (0) 20 7496 8326

RIBA Publishing
marketing
Charmian Beedie
Vanessa Newman

Publishing director
Helen Castle

Telephone
+44 (0) 20 7496 8300
Fax
+44 (0) 207 374 8500
Email
firstname.surname
@riba.org

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