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'We believe designers hold the key to save vast amounts of carbon and cost and this tool can help them do it'

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ribaj.com/7dbimtool

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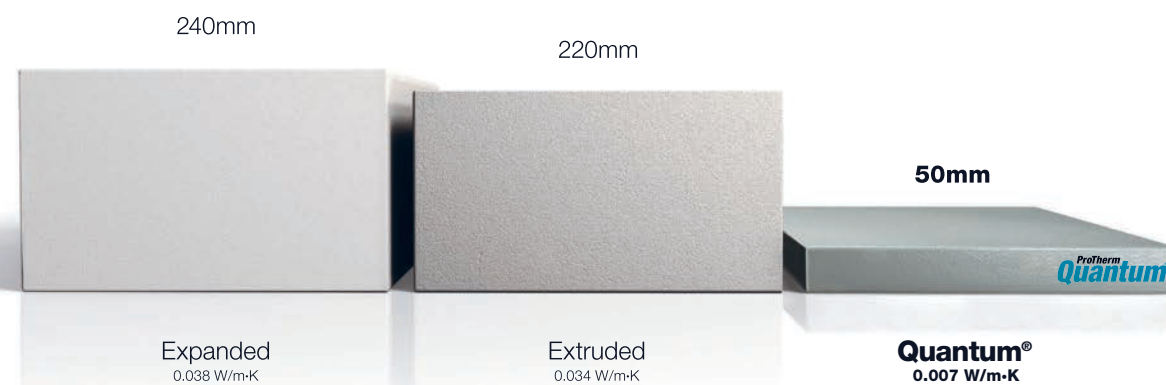


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07

1: Buildings

We have for you a quiverful of smaller and very diverse buildings and spaces, always satisfying. It's an especially rich mix in form, colour, texture and materials. Starting with a project that was a rapid but beautifully considered response to the Grenfell tower tragedy, a place of quiet contemplation. Followed by a little linking building that not only pulls together two previously separate Norfolk schools, but celebrates the fine public architecture of the immediate postwar period. Then we leap across the globe to Melbourne, Australia for the first of an occasional series on houses internationally. Back to Surrey for the latest Maggie's Centre, this one in vibrant red ceramic,

showing that there are still plenty of design iterations to explore for this most humane of briefs. A spin down to the south coast finds us inspecting a subtle and allusive new visitor centre for Walmer Castle. And we round out the section with another return visit to the 1950s: a photo-essay on London's overlooked Regent's Park Estate, prodded into fruitful new life by the demolition rigs of the HS2 railway.

If that's not enough for you, at the back of the magazine there is plenty more: we present our 'Future Winners' selection of fast-emerging regional practices. Comments? Do talk to us via letters.ribaj@riba.org.

Matt Gibson Architecture thinks
outside the box for Melbourne's
Mixed Use House: page 16.



SHANNON MCGRATH

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A sobering thought is that a post-fire 'archaeological' survey of charred remains might be the only chance to record the remnant evidence of original historic interiors

Help building your historic building fire strategy from RIBA's Ingval Maxwell and Paul Chatham: ribaj.com/firein-historicbuildings

Quiet at the court

Plants, water and natural stone give Lynch Architects’ garden at Westminster Coroner’s Court a classical air – secular yet spiritual, grave but comforting

Words: Michèle Woodger Photographs: David Grandorge

Coroner’s Courts are sombre places where controversial, upsetting cases are heard. Westminster Coroner’s Court, on Horseferry Road, is a solemn, grade II listed late-Victorian building. It is not large, yet it serves four London boroughs. Plans for an extension had been ongoing between Lynch Architects and the client for some time, but work on a memorial garden was precipitated in the aftermath

Below The remembrance garden salvages a strip of land to the side of Westminster Coroner’s Court.



of the Grenfell Tower fire of June 2017. After that, the Court was overwhelmed with cases, and, grieving families were often exposed to media attention outside the building. Lynch Architects was asked to respond to this unacceptable situation with urgency, and the garden opened in 2018 but kept discreet and unpublished until now as planning is going in for wider changes. The space now offers privacy and refuge to witnesses and relatives of those whose deaths are being investigated. It is safely enclosed, with a 2m gate screening out the road, helped by an existing tree. It is paved in a pale natural stone, which, combined with three square, cream-coloured concrete planters, gives an uplifting lightness. The planters double as seating, illuminated from below, giving an ethereal quality to the space at dusk. An antique limestone fountain, reclaimed from salvage, matches the pallor of the concrete; its Victorian provenance in keeping with the language of the exist-



ing building. The sound of trickling water soothes, mesmerises and cancels the intrusive noise of traffic and passers-by, animated by the rustling plants. Elements in the garden are consciously abstract, their ambiguity allowing visitors to take from the space what they will. Distracting, or perhaps disguising the wall of the mortuary (an administrative-looking 1980s addition) is a large concrete niche, its sides textured but its interior smooth and tactile. Deliberately devoid of any characteristics,

Above The niche of the monument echoes shapes inside the Victorian building and that of its proposed extension, now in for planning.

Credits
Architect Lynch Architects
Structural engineer Bryan Packman Marcel
Landscape design Richard Nye
Lighting design Candra
Lighting design contractor Heeran Construction

Deliberately devoid of any characteristics, the large concrete niche is symbolic in its emptiness

it is symbolic in its emptiness. Resembling a doorway that cannot be traversed, it was partly inspired, explains Patrick Lynch, from the impenetrable doorways of Michelangelo’s San Lorenzo Chapel in Florence. At times sunlight casts shadows so your own self appears in the niche – a memento mori. At sunset, it takes on an other-worldly, pinkish glow. The niche continues an arch motif from throughout the court building. For example, arched window seats offered places of intimacy in an imposing public building, says Lynch; similarly, in a setting which embodies the faceless machinery of the ‘State’, the garden is a place which nurtures the individual. The neighbourhood is home to several cathedrals – including the neo-byzantine Westminster Cathedral (1885) – and ecclesiastical references find their way onto many surrounding facades. In a nod to this history, the Trajan lettering on the niche has been cast in Perpetua, a typeface designed by Eric Gill, and who carved the Catholic cathedral’s Stations of the Cross. A building by Lutyens is visible from the courtyard, drawing an unintentional link between different architectures of memorialisation in London. When faced with devastating news, banal details often stick: drab furniture, laminated blue-tacked notices, peeling ring-binders – the sad trappings of a municipal building add insult to injury. This had to go. The project certainly succeeds in its aim, having a ‘positive effect on the Coroner’s Service’, according to coroner Dr Fiona Wilcox. It is both classical and minimalist, secular yet spiritual, and carries the gravitas of the Victorian building into the modern space. It is thoughtfully-designed, well-executed in quality materials and creates a calming oasis in frantic central London; the architecture of solace. ●



Restoration of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp
Photograph Karin Borghouts
Words Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Karin Borghouts remembers her many visits to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts as a painting student at Antwerp’s Academy in the early 1980s – in particular, artist James Ensor’s 1889 ‘Entry of Christ into Brussels’; a great, riotous canvas in which a diminutive Lord is lost; sandwiched between a baying melee of capitalists and socialists. A key example of early expressionism, its crowds were a far cry from the museum’s, whose huge galleries were silent and mostly deserted. ‘The place felt like a mortuary for art,’ she recalls.

Four decades later she’s back wandering the halls, but this time capturing the restoration and expansion of the museum by Dutch firm KAAAN Architecten – a process that started in 2011 and will complete next year. A huge neoclassical pile, it was only in recording the works that she reacquainted herself with its sheer scale. ‘It’s grandness writ large, as if it were made for giants,’ she tells me. ‘Of no human measure – I love that aspect of it.’

Much altered over its life, the area Borghouts chose to show was ‘interstitial in both space and time’; a large niche off a main gallery, later sealed off and used as a painting store, and now being re-revealed and returned to its original purpose. She merged two 70mm tilt and shift lens exposures to

ensure the trueness of those tall 19th century columns – an optical sleight of hand that the ancient Greeks would have taken into account in their original columns’ entasis.

By contrast, Borghouts had a recent commission to record Belgium’s oldest prison at Merksplas on the Dutch border. First built as a workhouse, it’s noted less for its 18th century main block than the contemporaneous penitential landscape it sits in; a 60ha gridded plan of ‘Great Farm’, school house, chapel, fields, woods, peat bogs and access roads, all bounded by an octagonal canal, and now a heritage area. But still 750 inmates and 150 detained immigrants are crammed into its cells, creating a riot of their own; the din gradually lost across the grass and marshes. ●

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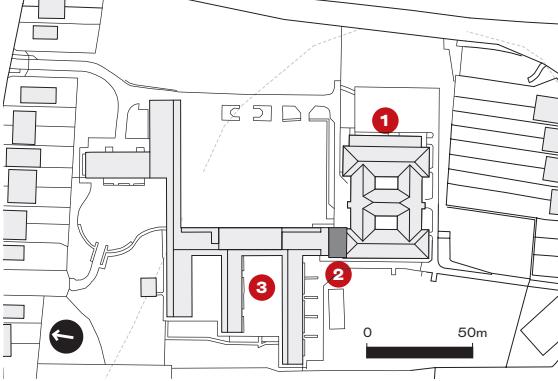
CLT and glass ingeniously unite two school buildings in DK:CM’s exercise in architectural continuity

Words: Hugh Pearman
Photographs: Neil Perry

It’s a little project in the eastern flatlands of Norfolk. Not much more than a glazed wooden pavilion joining two masonry-built schools of different eras across what was previously an 8m gap. The box provides a point of arrival and distribution for the now combined school – the infants and juniors of the Wroughton Academy, sponsored by the Creative Education Trust (CET). It also acts as a gateway and visual link between the green playing fields on the western side and the southern end of the large hard-surfaced playground on the eastern side. That, plus an office and meeting room and some integrated furniture, is about it really. But this small insertion has made a big difference. Its effects encompass the whole school.

This is in the suburban hinterland of Gorleston, originally the next and very second-fiddle seaside resort and harbour down the coast from Great Yarmouth, at the mouth of the Yare. It is not a particularly appealing place. From the mid 20th century the Gorleston sprawl west of the Yare gradually joined up with that of its larger neighbour to make it one big indeterminate area with green patches in it. It’s a district of bungalow estates, interwar and postwar pebbledashed semi-detacheds, 1970s carport variegated, some new infill, a large industrial estate to the north – and, running along the eastern edge of the school site – the raised concrete viaduct of the A47, Great Yarmouth’s bypass. The sea may be quite close as the crow flies, but there is absolutely no sense of it here.

The conjoined schools are very different.



- Site plan**

 - 1 Infant school
 - 2 New link building
 - 3 Junior school
- Credits

Client The Creative Education Trust

Architect DK-CM

Structural engineer Structure Workshop

M&E engineer OR Consulting

Building control/CDM MLM

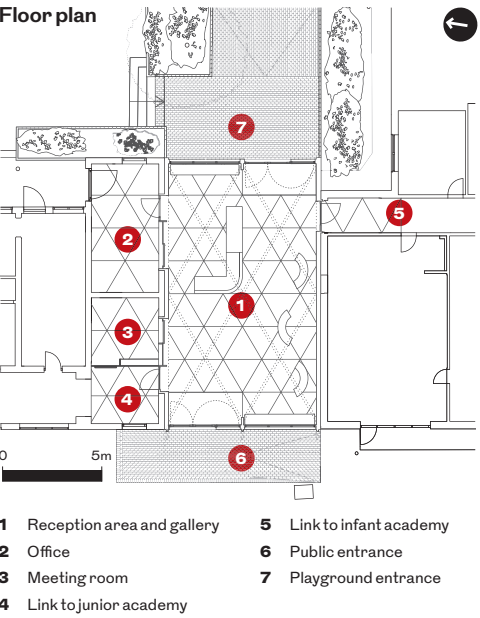
Project management/ QS Burke Hunter Adams

Main contractor Elm Contracts

Structural CLT and Glulam subcontractor Constructional Timber

The much larger junior school at the northern end of the site is an accomplished piece of work from 1950, a lofty single-storey affair arranged in wings, displaying many of the characteristic architectural tics of the time including high-level clerestory windows and abundant natural ventilation. The infants’ school was built at the start of the 1990s in the blockworky, oversailing-roofed manner of the time, sadly not a patch on the equivalent work of Hampshire county architects at this period. Inside it feels relatively dark and poky. But overall the academy has clearly been at work: this is one of these schools where you are met by polite and engaged pupils who have been briefed on who you are and know exactly where to take you.

If you’ve seen some of the earlier work of DK:CM (David Knight and Christina Monteiro’s practice) such as its Barkingside civic centre upgrade (RIBA), January 2016), you will know that the pair have a fondness for mid 20th century municipal architecture. They immediately saw the virtues of the 1950 building with its raking crosswalls and well-composed fenestration, to the extent that they modelled their infill building on it – only in cross-laminated timber rather than brick or concrete. As Emily Campbell, the CET’s director of programmes, puts it: ‘The original Wroughton Junior School, which opened in 1950, is a significant example of the ambition and progressiveness of post-war school design and of the “open air schools” movement. The new link building reasserts this ambition in contemporary terms, borrowing the sense



IN NUMBERS

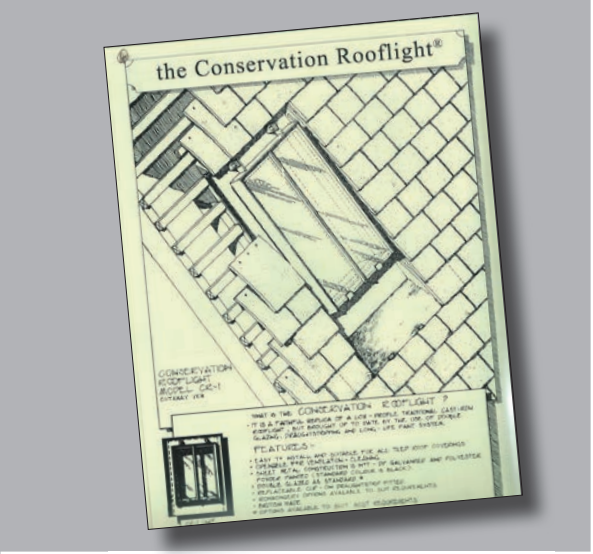
850 pupils
138m² GIA
1950 original building opened

of space, scale and character of the original building but in new materials and using extensive off-site construction.' The CET has a significant architectural remit, with Sasha Bhavan of Knox Bhavan on its board among all the financial, legal, business and educational types. This modest building marks the trust's first exercise in new-build.

In fact, the idea is that the building is to an extent an educational tool in itself, its clarity of structure made apparent. The diagrid of exposed laminated timber beams forming its roof are echoed in the triangulated patterning of the floor. Its purpose-designed moveable curved benches/storage units can be organised into an impromptu mini-auditorium. Overall the new building is clearly related to the 1950 original while being very obviously from a contemporary mindset. Perhaps subliminally it might trigger something in a child's mind, start a line of enquiry. The educational environment is an important factor: from such small beginnings, who knows what may result? ●



Right Clerestory glazing borrows ideas from the 1950 junior academy building.
Below The external form of the 1950 school directly informs the design of the new entrance pavilion, right.
Bottom left Impromptu auditorium set up for a talk by the architects.



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Home extension

Mixed Use House steps from commercial to residential Melbourne with an inventive approach to urban living

Words: Justine Clarke Photographs: Shannon McGrath



Walking down Wellington Street in the inner Melbourne suburb of St Kilda, the striking, modulated facade of No 111 does not immediately present as a family home. Sitting easily among a collection of smallish commercial buildings, it appears as a rather more polished and skilfully designed counterpart – a showroom and office perhaps? Speeding along the Princes Highway on its other side, the building's sleek northern face aligns neatly within the slightly ramshackle built edge, set behind a small park with tall eucalypts.

Mixed Use House finds its conceptual impetus in this context. Wellington Street is a leafy thoroughfare running parallel to the seven-lane arterial route, and forms the edge of an increasingly affluent residential area to the south. The streetscape reflects this interstitial aspect. Mid-rise commercial and apartment buildings lie on the north side; individual houses and established gardens sit on the south. This reiterates the zoning regulations; business on one side, residential on the other. Mixed Use House plays in the space between, jumping across the street into the commercial. The result is an inventive domestic project that explores an urban housing model with broader applicability.

The site had been on the market for some time before the current owners saw opportunity where others had found problems. Sandwiched between buildings, highway and street, the long narrow block was in a great location – close to St Kilda, the city, schools and universities. As a builder/developer and interior designer, the couple did not have conventional expectations about what their house should look like. They knew they'd need to be clever to construct a house in the business zone, knew who they wanted to design it and were ready to work collaboratively to realise it.

The commercial zoning necessitated a mixed programme, but Matt Gibson Architecture + Design saw potential too. Mixed use became a way to think through the project and its possibilities, not just a means to navigate planning regulations. It wanted to explore the conjunction of domestic and commercial architectural modes and languages,

Left On the residential district side of the street the facade has the effect of modules popping in and out.

bearing in mind the growing challenge of providing housing for families in Australia's inner cities, where tiny apartments proliferate.

While both client and architect adopted an open-minded and flexible approach, Mixed Use House does not represent a radical rethink of domestic life. The family structure it accommodates is a modest expansion on the nuclear model – one that is increasingly prevalent in Australia, as children remain at home into their adult years. In this case, the brief was to accommodate seven to nine people; parents, a young child and two adult children along with partners.

The elongated, contained site suggested a vertical compound. The clients expressed a clear desire to be connected as a family, yet have their own space. They were interested in a house that felt more like a hotel. They preferred crisp, clean interiors. Practically, there was a need to draw light into the deep plan.

The architect organised the house through five horizontal layers, punctuated by a glazed atrium through the three middle



Above The highway elevation is flat with a more commercial office appearance.

IN NUMBERS

440m²
area
(on 185m² site)

£1.7m
total contract cost
(AUD2.3m)

£2,647
GIFA cost per m²
(AUD5,200)

Below Looking down onto the first floor kitchen from the atrium's galleried landing.



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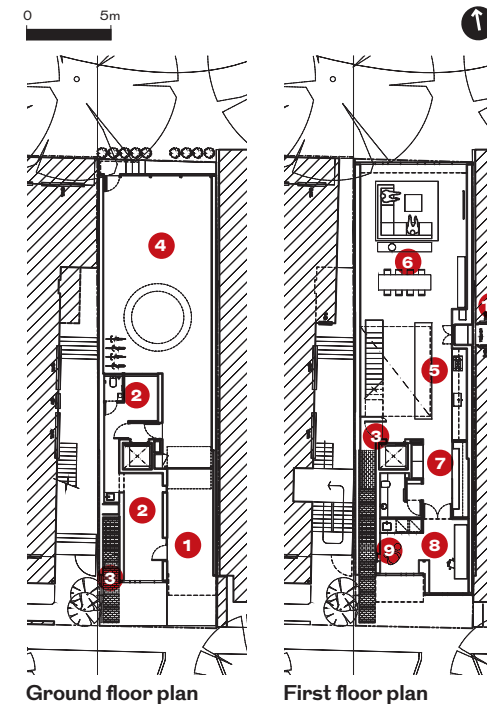
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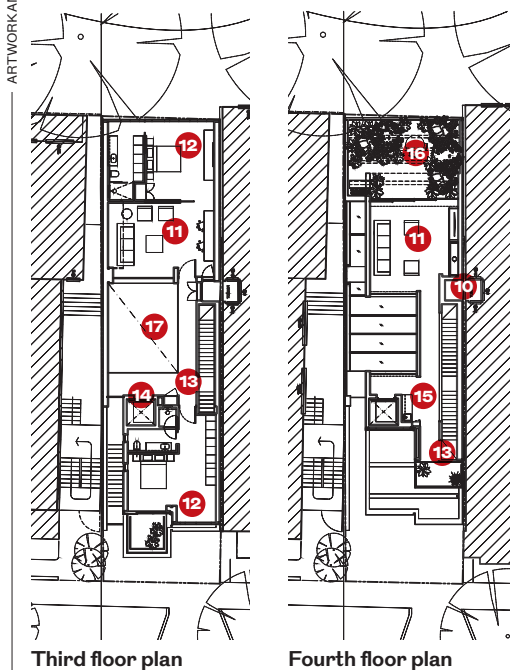
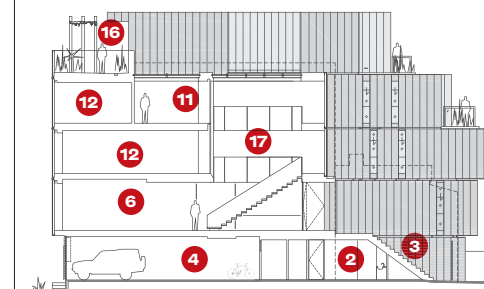
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Buildings House

There is plenty of storage, but inhabitants probably need to be quite disciplined about it



- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Tenant entrance | 10 Cooling stack |
| 2 Commercial space | 11 Secondary living room |
| 3 Residential entrance | 12 Bedroom |
| 4 Parking garage | 13 Stair and landing |
| 5 Kitchen | 14 Lift |
| 6 Dining and living space | 15 Bar/kitchenette |
| 7 Scullery | 16 Terrace |
| 8 Study | 17 Atrium |
| 9 Laundry | |



opportunities – the atrium stair becomes a sculptural element; a second ascends the full height of the top three floors in a single run.

The desire for a hotel-like atmosphere brings particular requirements in a house replete with family possessions and daily routines. The stuff, mess and labour of domesticity is invisible in a hotel. The everyday workings of the kitchen, toaster, kettle and so on, are concealed in the 'scullery' – increasingly common in new Australian houses. It sits adjacent to the main kitchen, and beyond the 'public' space of the atrium, hidden behind folding doors. There is plenty of storage throughout the house, but inhabitants probably need to be quite disciplined about it. The planning has also led to some curious conjunctions. On the first floor street edge, a home office shares space and views with the laundry. Though potentially awkward, it suggests an intriguing conflation of work life, domestic labour and the street.

As an infill building, its form and massing



Left View across atrium to bedrooms and separate living rooms.
Bottom left Like a kind of maisonette, the kitchen and entrance are on the first floor at the bottom of the atrium. Beyond are the study and laundry.
Bottom right One of the highway-side bedrooms, with the structure left exposed on the ceilings.

Top Looking down onto the residential entry abutting the neighbouring property. The stairs take visitors to the first floor. **Middle** The top storey includes a lounge, bar and rooftop terrace. **Bottom** Blending domestic and commercial characteristics, the house has the tenants' entrance on the right at ground level.

Credits
Architect Matt Gibson Architecture + Design
Interior Design Matt Gibson Architecture + Design in collaboration with DDB Design
Builder DDB Design
Planning consultant Hansen Partnership

were developed by identifying the maximum envelope and then cutting away a front set-back and a side entry lane, inserting the atrium and small lightwell, and segmenting the front of the house into eight long parallel volumes, two per floor. These were pushed in and out to create an articulated, animated elevation to the residential street. From inside, they modulate the spaces at the edge. From the street, the effect is of pods popping in and out, each framing a discrete function, providing a varied sense of occupancy and a captivating street presence.

The building's northern face is flush, with each level glazed as a single plane across the width of the house. The freeway provides a colourful, ever-changing view, and a mostly gentle background hum. Tall eucalypts occupy the foreground, with the city in the distance. The presence and effect of these three aspects changes as one moves up the building.



Little stretch is needed to imagine three or more generations in the house

At the communal level, elegant tree trunks frame the zooming traffic. In the bedrooms, the tree canopy creates more intimacy, rendering the freeway more distant. The roof terrace affords long views over the city, with the freeway and trees far below.

This is a generous and accomplished house for a family with the insight and imagination, practical and professional skills and budget to realise it. When I visited, there were only two people in occupation – a parent and adult child – with cats. The ground areas designated for commercial use were being used as family storage. It was easy to envisage different people, individually and in groups, at home in different parts of the house. The multi-generational family this house was been designed for is nuclear, albeit older, but little stretch is needed to imagine three or more generations in the house, or a group of people related in other ways. There is also clear potential to activate the commercial tenancy spaces as part of such an arrangement.

This flexibility, and the capacity to adapt to household configurations, is the potential of this house. The vertical compound idea might be explored in other projects and scenarios. The question is, how might these ideas play out in less affluent circumstances? ●

Justine Clark is an architectural editor, writer and researcher, director and co-founder of Parlour, based in Melbourne, Australia

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Kind crimson

Red gives a warm welcome at Maggie's at The Royal Marsden

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photographs: John Short



Above With its welcoming, south-facing courtyard entrance, ARD's Maggie's Centre and its black garden room nestle comfortably in Piet Oudolf's garden.

Below The building's north face offers more enclosed, views from within its red terracotta cladding.

With 27 Maggie's Centres opened since the first in Edinburgh in 1996, I'm ashamed to admit that designer Ab Rogers' Royal Marsden centre in Sutton is the first I have visited. I'm also sad to add that my own uncle in Wiltshire, being treated for oesophageal cancer at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, hasn't visited one at all; although I'm encouraged to hear from Maggie's co-client Laura Lee that they are in the process of identifying a site and naming an architect at Bristol to plug the M4 cancer support gap between Swansea and Oxford.

It won't be before time, at least from what I've gathered from my uncle's experience. A three-month course of chemotherapy and radiotherapy had his children juggling their own family lives to make the regular 50-mile return trips to the hospital. Add to that the constant sickness, daily regimes of medications and the need to source appropriate food, all the while having to negotiate the delicate

balancing act of love and guilt, responsibility and obligation. It's a learning curve all families affected by cancer live through; and for my uncle's it seems there's no other guidance than information on the clinical process and implications of the treatment itself.

Sutton shows how much less stressful it can be when there's a Maggie's offering emotional and practical support – not only for those going through cancer, but for anyone directly affected by it. The second-hand experience of relatives goes to the core of what the charity's about – creating an environment that lets people offload, dealing with questions and fears and offering a physical and mental breathing space to help sufferers and carers come to terms with the illness.

At Sutton, the spatial subtlety of this approach might at first be lost on the visitor. Perched on the edge of the massive Royal Marsden hospital site, and clad in multiple hues of red terracotta panels, the building seems to brightly spiral out on itself like a Catherine Wheel let off in a car park. But the



Above At ground level, social spaces of varying sizes and natures, flow one into the other.

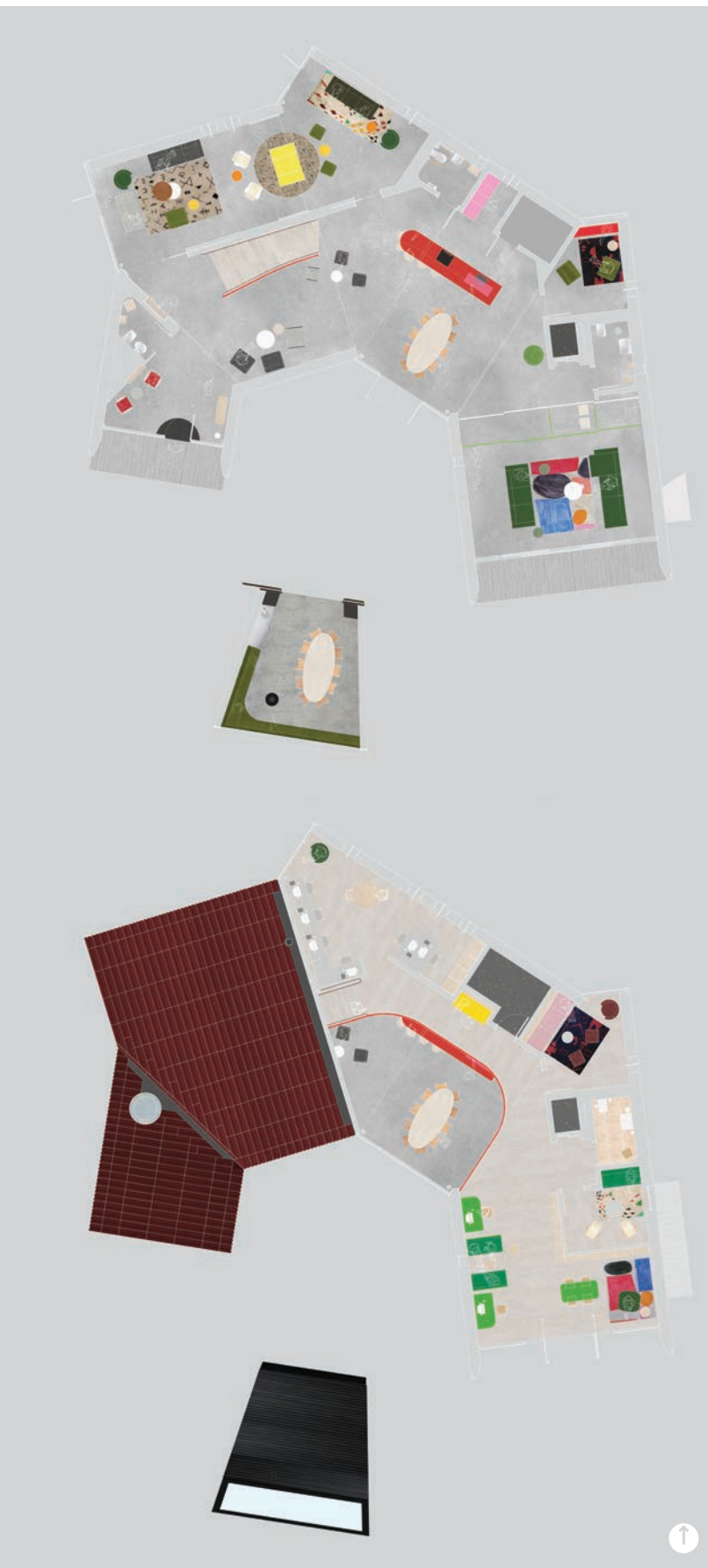
Below The red, wrapping staircase and cooking area identify the kitchen as the centre's nucleus.

Credits
Client Maggie's Centres
Design Ab Rogers Design
Landscape Piet Oudolf
Structural engineer Milk
M&E engineering BCA
QS Gardiner & Theobald
Building control Butler & Young
Fire engineering Omega
Contractor Sir Robert McAlpine

Marsden is going to become a £2bn hub for cancer research and treatment – the biggest in the country – and Rogers wanted his four intersecting volumes to stand out now, while addressing their current surroundings. Not only from the bleak agglomeration of hospital blocks to the east and the generic stockbroker belt residential area to its west, but even from the future research blocks that will lord over it. This is why the bright, terracotta carapace stretches up the walls and across the building's roof to make it Rogers' 'beacon-like' object in the landscape.

And you've got to admire the bravura of an approach – given the therapeutic environment – that resembles meat in a butcher's shop window; eschewing the clinical conventions of neutral, pastel shades. Rogers admits that initially some eyebrows were raised on the client side with the proposed colour when I ask if the client had asked him to 'just make it green'. 'We thought red was a colour you simply couldn't shy away from. We wanted it to be, in every sense, the beating heart of





IN NUMBERS

4
volumes12,000
garden plants27
Maggie's centres

Left The open, spiralling plan allows users to move through and occupy space as they choose. Discrete observation from upper level offices is provided by well-considered sight lines.

Below Glazing not only floods the space with south light but is used in an architectonic way to delineate the four volumes.

the centre,' he replies. Laura Lee reinforces the point: 'Pale blue, green and pink might be the institutional 'calming colours' but after a while they can really grate,' she says. 'Some might say red's about blood and trauma, but to others it's warm, cossetting and welcoming. When you have cancer, you're still alive and curious, and we want users to actively engage with and respond to the building; so it's not about the colour but what you do with it.'

It's an intention helped by the fact that Dutch plantsman Piet Oudolf was appointed to landscape the area around the new centre on space clawed back from the hospital's oceanic parking allocation. Now his tussocks of hardy perennials stand buffeted by a wind that would have merely whistled past painted bay lines; instead dousing the centre's vermillion in a wash of his pale green. Oudolf's planting also frames the curious, black-painted timber 'garden house' that addresses the main elevation of the centre. In a first for the charity, Rogers has created a form of 'primitive hut', complete with wood-burning stove, built-in seating and kitchen facilities. But, says Rogers, it too is in line with the ethos as related by Maggie Keswick in her book 'The Front Line', where she pointed out that people confront cancer in different ways, and may use different kinds of spaces in which to do it.

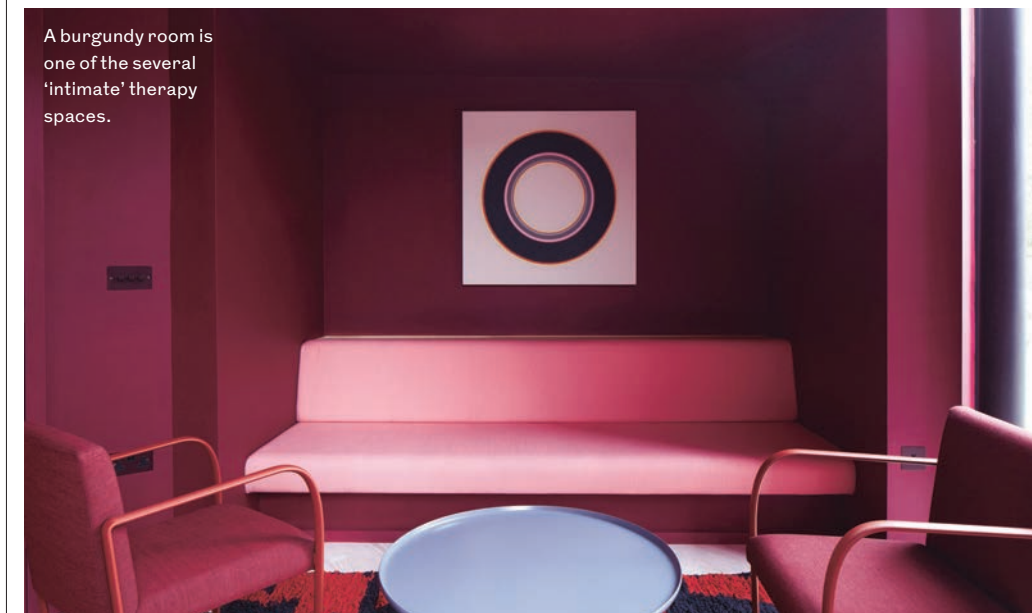
This is reflected in obvious and nuanced ways in the main building too. At both levels it's about not just the communal focus that all Maggie's Centres share around their kitchen tables, but the interlocking volumes around this one that permit varying levels of expo-

South sectional
elevation to courtyard.

sure and privacy, so users can find their own levels of comfort while flowing through its openness; something based as much on the orientation of the space to the sun as on the volumes' differing sizes. More delicately, it's evidenced in the passive observation of the entrance, obviating the need for a reception desk where you'd 'check-in', or in the way the lack of signage to the loos invites a simple conversational exchange – intimating a domesticity in contrast to the formal, clinical oncology spaces across the way. Like the other Maggie's, the plan encourages exploration, while providing immediate legibility.

I'm interested, given how much physical sickness chemotherapy can cause, in how the kitchen came to be the focus of it all, when I now know that persuading cancer patients to eat can be a constant battle. 'The kitchen symbolises the place where conversations happen and the sense of the domestic home; it's not necessarily about the food,' says Lee. 'It's true that there's an emotional tension around food and we're just having those conversations in the place where the tension occurs; we're not trying to deny the realities of the illness.'

On the day I visited, with this winter's rare sunlight captured by the huge windows around, there was a healthy buzz to the place. There's the press for sure, enjoying Ab Rogers' red-themed lunch; but others too round the table and elsewhere in the space, seated quietly or engaged in their own conversations. And I've had mine, because the space and the organisation it houses enabled that for me. At one point I stared with Laura Lee over at that vaguely coffin-shaped shed yawning up at an angle out of Oudolf's grasses. 'The garden house was an interesting step for us,' she tells me. 'It's black; which again, is a difficult colour – and a bit surprising. But we like being surprised, don't we?' ●

Single colour themes
are used to define
the building's various
social spaces.A burgundy room is
one of the several
'intimate' therapy
spaces.

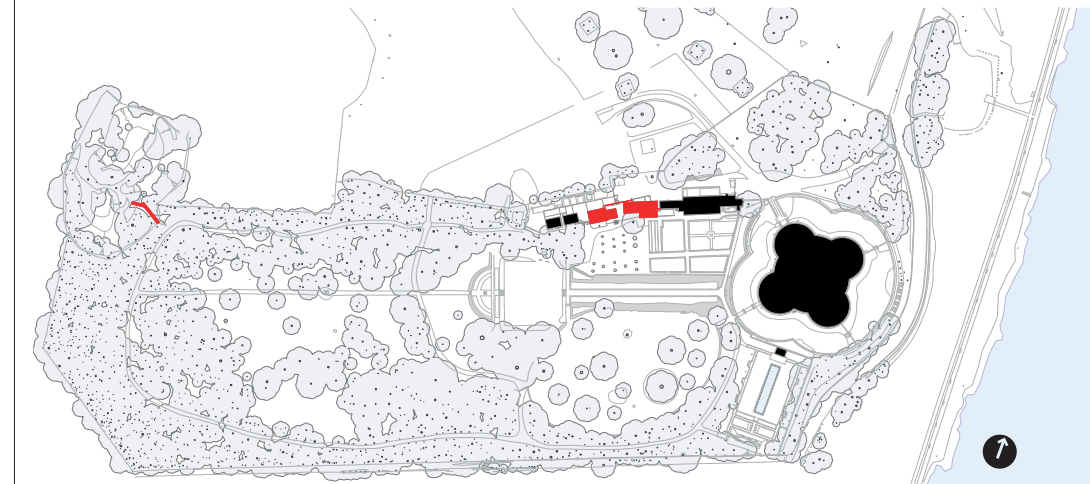
New words, old themes

Pale bricks on a concrete plinth tie together existing brick wall and the rag stone of the castle. Site plan (right) shows new buildings and stairs in red.



Adam Richards quotes historical references in a modern language in his development of Walmer Castle's grounds and facilities

Words: Charles Holland Photographs: Brotherton Lock



Walmer Castle was constructed in 1540 by Henry VIII to defend The Downs, a stretch of the English Channel off the east Kent coast. It has a quatrefoil plan with four semi-circular bastions around a central, taller tower, all set within a deep moat. It is a muscular, imposing structure offset by domestic insertions following its conversion into a residence, first in the mid-18th century but with notable later interventions by the Victorian architect George Devey.

The resulting interior is deeply bizarre, a Georgian house stretched and squeezed into a very unconventional plan. An elongated cross-axial corridor connects the main rooms, their formal arrangements clashing with the curving outer walls. 18th and 19th century domestic furnishings sit alongside deep reveals originally intended for canons. It is like an unintentional satire of the English officer class, as if tea and cucumber sandwiches would continue to be served mid-battle.

The battles never came and Walmer Castle is now the official residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a largely

ceremonial position previously held by Lord Wellington – who died in his sleep here – and, more recently, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Like much former government property it is now run by English Heritage and is open to the public.

When English Heritage became a charity in 2015 it was granted a 'dowry' of £80 million to spend on capital improvement works. This money initiated a fundamental change in how the organisation commissions new building work. Head of National Projects Nichola Tasker saw this as an opportunity to be more ambitious and to employ emerging and innovative architectural practices rather than conservation experts.

Walmer Castle sits in beautiful grounds that combine both formal and picturesque planning. The gardens are popular and are busy with visitors all year round. Despite this, the existing café – in a windowless room at the centre of the castle – was unappealing and had no dedicated space for the large number of children and school groups that come to visit.

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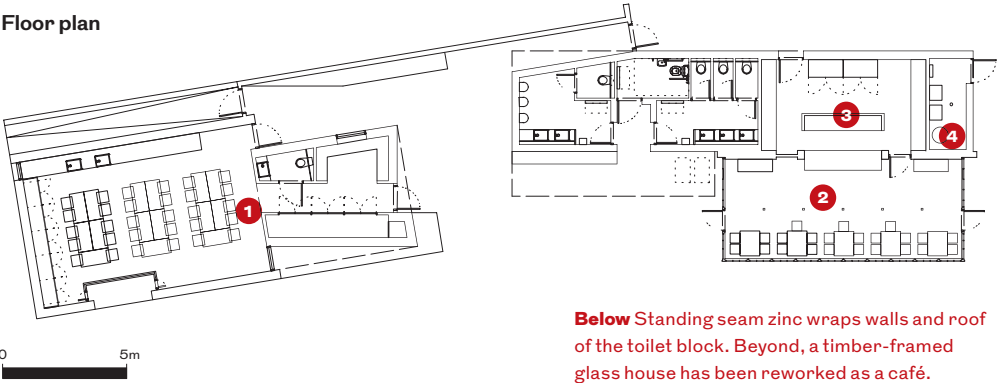
Buildings Visitor centre

English Heritage commissioned Adam Richards Architects to develop a feasibility study for developing the castle's grounds. The resulting masterplan includes improvements to the gardens as well as several new buildings. Some areas of the gardens were previously inaccessible, including an area known as the Glen – a former chalk quarry. Dead trees and vegetation were removed and a long, steep, timber-clad staircase designed by Richards now allows visitors to access the quarry's crater as a picturesque walk. Elsewhere, children's play equipment and interpretative sculptures designed by William Hardie have been added to encourage families to spend more time exploring.

Adam Richards has also designed a new learning centre, a garden café and public toilets, significant new additions given the



Floor plan



Below Standing seam zinc wraps walls and roof of the toilet block. Beyond, a timber-framed glass house has been reworked as a café.

Above The buildings are positioned along the line of outhouses between the kitchen garden and car park.

IN NUMBERS
£935,288
contract cost
£3,425
GIFA cost per m²
200m²
area

- 1 Learning Space
- 2 Glasshouse Cafe
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Plant Room



sensitivity of the setting. These elements have been designed as three separate buildings grouped in a loose row to one side of the formal gardens. They extend an existing collection of buildings including a cottage – available for short stays – greenhouses and a tall garden wall that conceals storage facilities and service access.

The garden wall forms a datum for the new elements which have an external material language of purple/grey brick walls and zinc-clad roofs. The walls of the learning centre sit on a thick datum of bush hammered concrete that slides out from under the building at the edges to offer a generous wedge of bench seating. The brick above is both rich and mute: a dense, surface with joints of lime mortar that appear satisfyingly thick due to the slimness of the brick proportions. Tonally it relates to the rag stone of the castle, forming a bridge between that and the red brick of the existing garden walls.

The roofs and the walls of the new toilet

block are clad in standing-seam zinc, patinated to a dark bronze. The shallow pitches and wedge shapes recall Richards' own house Nithurst Farm in Sussex (RIBA, November 2019), as well as his work at Ditchling Museum, the work that first caught the eye of English Heritage. His new insertions here are similarly well-handled, walking a line between low-key deference and a refined form of commentary on the setting.

The interior of the Learning Centre focuses on a large five-pointed arch that frames a vast picture window. The form of the arch refers to similar openings in the bastion walls of the castle, originally used as canon positions. Richards employs the Tudor arch



Above A rooflight in the learning centre brings in light while windows bring in views.

Left The learning centre's vitrine window sits under an arch reminiscent of those at the castle.

Credits
Client English Heritage
Building contractor Walker Construction
Civil and structural engineer, project management Historic England
Services engineer Martin Thomas Associates
QS Press and Starkey
Landscape designer LUC

here for less aggressive purposes but in doing so makes explicit a relationship between picturesque and military design and the fact that both are concerned with the control of views and territory.

Although this form of quotation and overt contextuality can be seen as broadly post modern, Adam's work avoids that style's more obvious mannerisms. This distance is accentuated in his interiors, which – both here and at his own house – are more modernist in material and feel. In the buildings at Walmer, a pared-back palette of exposed brick, timber tongue and groove cladding and polished concrete floors provides suitably robust interiors with subtly abstracted visual associations.

Adam Richards has developed a personal language that nonetheless draws extensively on historical precedents. At Walmer, what at first appear as almost arbitrary shapes become, on closer inspection, cleverly aligned and subtle acts of composition. The angles and inflections allow for the contemporary elements to defer to the historic ones in a way that seems fitting without being overly ingratiating. It is – overall – an exemplary piece of work, one that fulfils the client's brief to introduce sensitive but clearly contemporary modern architecture to its historic site. ●



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High speed dividend

Things are changing again behind Euston, where the impact of HS2 is resulting in some high quality new social housing

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Wilde Fry

Below These allotments were once the terminal basin of a branch of the Regent's Canal. Now they are an unexpected urban oasis overlooked by social housing from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Central though it is, few people are aware of London's Regents Park Estate. That's because this is not posh Regents Park, though there are one or two surviving fragments of Nash to be found there. Besides, although it was originally part of Nash's grand plan, it's in a different borough and a different volume of the Buildings of England. It's a large postwar council estate, built by what was the Borough of St Pancras from 1951 onwards, designed by various architects starting with the prolific Sir Frederick Gibberd. But the time-capsule nature of the place has been rudely interrupted by a new railway line: HS2, which is lopping a corner off the estate. Three of the original Gibberd L- and T-shaped blocks have now been demolished but forward planning by Camden, paid for by



HS2 to the tune of £40 million, has yielded a good result: eight excellent new blocks by architects Mae and Matthew Lloyd, slotted into the existing street layout, mean that displaced residents have been given better new homes in their neighbourhood, along with much-improved landscaping by East. Time for an urban ramble, then. I and photographer Wilde Fry meet architect Alex Ely of Mae in a new café in the super-glassy 'Regents Place' office district west of the Euston Tower, but we don't want to linger there. A different kind of reality awaits just a few yards north, sandwiched between Albany Street, Hampstead Road and the great railway cutting leading into Euston Station. It's the widening of that cutting for HS2 which has led to the estate reorganisation. We bring different areas of interest to this. Ely knows all about the architects of the postwar period and the planning row of the late 1940s that brought the estate into being. The area, always a 'service zone' for workers in the Nash masterplan and gradually filled with industrial buildings and modest spec-built homes, had become very run down and been declared a slum, although it had not been particularly badly bombed. Ely relates how there was resistance at first to the idea of

Top left Frederick Gibberd blocks coming down to make way for new HS2 tracks into nearby Euston.
Top right Some Georgian and Victorian fragments survive.
Right This mini tower by Matthew Lloyd Architects was one planned to replace the demolished blocks. CE Varndell was the Crown Estate's architect in the 1930s.



In a world of gentrification and social cleansing, this feels like real London

a modernist clean slate, but the progressives – among them Sydney Cook, later to become chief architect for Camden – won through.

I am also keen on the first big slum-clearance social housing here, the contiguous Cumberland Market Estate. This is a grand series of neo-Georgian blocks built for the Crown Estate in the 1930s, complete with be-cloctowered entrance block, by architect C E Varndell. He got a street named after him. As built, the eastern range of Varndell's 600-home complex (now run by Peabody) rose right from the wharfside of the terminal basin of an arm of the Regent's Canal. Cumberland Basin was where the boats loaded with coal, stone, hay, vegetables, even live-stock, arrived, and the square of Cumberland Market square just to the south was where London's hay market was sited: one big customer was the nearby cavalry army barracks on Albany Street, still there today.

In the early years of the 20th century the square with its cheap rentals had become a haunt of artists, notably Robert Bevan's Cumberland Market Group. But both the Market and the canal basin had closed for business by the 1930s, and during the war this branch of the canal was filled in with



Above Alex Ely of Mae showed us round the Regent's Park Estate.

Below New block by Mae with community centre beneath.



rubble from the Blitz, brought in trucks from sites of destruction all over the capital. Later a layer of topsoil was added and the basin is now a large area of allotments, an urban oasis if ever there was, with birds chirruping and bees buzzing. 'I'd rather have this than a typical landscaped square,' observes Ely.

As we stroll around the newer estate, it's hard to make out much of the Nash master-plan, disrupted as it is by the post-war replanning. On the map, though, you can see it. The ghost of Nash's sequence of squares continues southwards along Osnaburgh Street, now fragmented and subsumed into the council estate: after Cumberland Market comes Clarence Gardens, then Munster Square – the last two remade with low-rise terraces of houses and maisonettes in curious pinkish-purple brick by architect Armstrong and McManus, concluding the original estate. This seems to have been a reaction against the earlier arrangement of discrete, taller blocks by Gibberd, architect Davies and Arnold, and the borough architects: a conflict is apparent between the 1950s 'townscape' ideals of the estate with its abundant green space and long views, and the densities required. Even the Armstrong and McManus section has a couple of tall towers to get the number of units up. But this slightly chaotic planning regime with its visible 1950s shifting of aesthetic gears has resulted in a diverse and to my mind agreeable place. In a world of gentrification and social cleansing of 'regenerated' council estates, this feels like real London.

Let's note however, that it's one rule for the poor, another for the rich. While HS2 has led to demolitions of many homes here, a little further north where Nash's Park Village East flanks the railway, no houses will be lost. Instead hugely costly engineering gymnastics

will put the HS2 tracks into a double-decker 'dive-under' there, all to maintain what is of course a conservation area with well-heeled and vocal residents. It should be said that Camden opposed HS2 from the start, and extracted as much mitigation and compensation as it could.

So our walk takes us past eight new infill blocks – some by Mae, some by Lloyd. The quality is palpable, from Lloyd's gateway tower of modelled brick on the Hampstead Road to Ely's continuous-balconied block on Robert Street, designed to echo in a rather different manner the deck-access Armstrong and McManus blocks opposite. Both firms of architects respond subtly to their surroundings in this way (and Ely points out that his 'blade columns' in Robert Street are a homage to Denys Lasdun's nearby Royal College of Physicians). Lloyd's are slightly more richly-textured, Ely's cooler, but they are both keenly aware of their contexts. I suppose this is the brickly 'New London Vernacular' but it's a distinct cut above most of it. If all new council housing was designed to these standards, we'd be living in the New Jerusalem. Which is apt in a way, because to my mind the 1950s Regents Park Estate was planned and built with much the same ambition. ●



Left C E Varndell's 1930s highly accomplished neo-Georgian social housing for the Crown Estate has lasted well, now run by Peabody.

Far left Site plan of the estate with new blocks marked. Those in red by Mae, those in dark grey by Matthew Lloyd Architects.

Below New block on Robert Street by Mae runs its balconies contiguously to create a deck-access effect in response to its 1950s neighbours – and tips its hat to Lasdun's nearby Royal College of Physicians.



Eye Line 2020: call for entries

Could your drawings join our illustrious gallery of previous winners? Show us how you communicate architecture

It's back! The 2020 edition of Eye Line, our international competition for drawing and rendering skills, is now open for entries. As ever we ask for images in two categories – student and practitioner – that brilliantly communicate architecture, in any medium or combination of media. It's the pure art of architecture we're interested in: 'New Imagined Worlds' is the subtitle this year.

We are especially pleased this eighth year of Eye Line to be partnering with Delta Light, the international architectural lighting company. Themselves committed to the art of architectural illustration, they are kindly hosting our launch event and judging.

We are looking for images of all kinds, from hand-drawn concept sketch to technically proficient layered render. For us,

We ask for images that brilliantly communicate architecture, in any medium

'drawing' includes any method by which the power of an architectural idea is communicated. This includes depictions of existing buildings as well as works of the imagination.

Practitioners and students enter in different categories:

- Student category – images made by those in architectural education or who are submitting images made before final qualification.
- Practitioner category: images made by those fully qualified and working in practice, whether for real-life projects or to explore ideas and experiences.

We will exhibit winners and commendations at the RIBA following a winners' party there, and will publish them in print and online. And our colleagues at the RIBA's Drawings and Archives Collection, based in the Victoria and Albert Museum, will inspect our winners for potential inclusion in the collections.

Last year's practitioner winner was Ed



Above One of 2019's Eye Line commendations – 'Hot air balloon building', gouache on card, by Milan-based Ylia Filatova.

Crooks for his series of pen-and ink fantasias on Lutyens' Castle Drogo commissioned by the National Trust: student winner was Theo Jones from the Bartlett with his series 'Unfolding Julian Assange's Home of Diplomatic Containment' made in Photoshop and Illustrator. Commendations in all media ranged from sparse elegant line drawings via water-colour on cardboard.

Every year we are gratified by the originality, wit and talent represented in Eye Line: a truly international, free-to-enter award conducted online. Practitioners and students – show us your best drawings! ●



EYELINERULES

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

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

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

All entries must be uploaded via the link below. We cannot accept physical works. Images must be at 300dpi, file size maximum 25Mb.

The work must have been produced within the three years up to the closing date of 23.59 on Monday 8 June, 2020, and must not previously have been entered for Eye Line.

Enter online at: ribaj.com/culture/enter-eye-line

Information required

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

Name of the author(s) of the work.

Name of organisation where author works or studies.

Email, postal address and phone number.

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

Date it was completed.

Key dates

Deadline: Monday 8 June, 23:59.

Judging: end June.

Winners and commendations announced:

August issue of RIBAJ and online.

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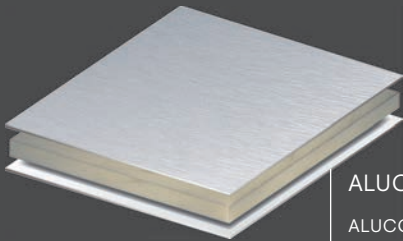
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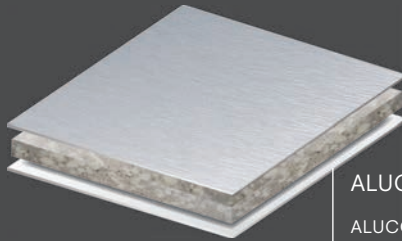
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Countdown to zero –
Carbon neutral practice
48

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In School
50

2: Intelligence



Bean Beanland



He wasn't waiting with bated breath for the budget, but when Rishi Sunak gave it on World Plumbing Day, we asked Bean Beanland, chairman of the Ground Source Heat Pump Association, about its role in a zero-carbon future – and what part the government should play

You must be pushing sustainable electrification of the grid rather than moving towards a hydrogen-based fuel economy, aren't you?

It's not a case of either/or. We need both, as well as other technologies if we're going to hit the 2050 zero carbon greenhouse gases target. But as one delegate at a recent conference said, why would you use valuable hydrogen to heat a room to 21°C? It's best used for high temperature industrial processes, heavy transport and fuel cells. And the hydrogen industry won't even be ready to contribute to the gas grid for another 10 years. The UK has a lot of catching up to do with heat pump deployment – Poland is ahead of us at the moment.

So how do you intend to increase the uptake of heat pump technology in the UK?

We have a government that imposes low carbon levies on electricity of 14-18% and subsidises fossil fuels. Those subsidies must be reduced so the market understands the true value of the energy it uses and starts to insulate buildings better. The average carbon factor is about 127gCO₂/kWh. A ground source heat pump with a 4:1 ratio efficiency emits 32gCO₂/kWh compared with 215gCO₂/kWh for a typical gas boiler. Seen in those terms, the carbon argument is clearly on the side of heat pumps – using them we're 80% there! If only electricity was 4p/kWh like gas, rather than the 16p/kWh it is!

But it's expensive to install...

Well, in domestic and commercial projects the technology is still subsidised as we can enjoy the fruits of the Renewable Heat Incentive, which should result in a capital return inside the term of the scheme. Ironically, it is due to run out on 31 March 2021; as the government will only pay out on operational systems, and given the time it takes to install them, only a small number of projects are likely to benefit from it.

So how does an architect convince a domestic client to install it?

You're right, it's a challenge. But we have to convince people to think in the long term. Energy prices are going up – no question – and if you want to reduce exposure to inflation you need to act now. A heat pump cuts that problem by two thirds instantly. The government seems to think not only that cutting carbon doesn't come with a cost but that it's fine to remove any incentive to insulate properties. It's wrong on both counts, but while we have short-term energy policies extending no further than the next election, we're stuck with it.

So don't expect big commitments from the government?

It requires policy and leadership; and at the moment, that all seems to be coming from a teenager's bedroom in Stockholm...

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM
Housing has seen a 6% rise in the volume of work and a rise of 9% in cash terms. More worryingly, renovation, maintenance and improvement work in private housing is down almost 2% in 2019 to its lowest level for three years
Brian Green investigates a possible 'Brexit bounce': ribaj.com/brexitbounce



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



Three steps to carbon zero heaven

Feeling overwhelmed by carbon zero demands? All that’s needed are a few simple actions to take advantage of the help that’s out there

Words: Eleanor Young

Anyone attending the numerous seminars and activist groups around construction and climate emergency would be overwhelmed by questions about units of measurement and debates about the methodologies used. So how can you start designing for net zero in operation and embodied carbon?

There are simple actions to get you designing for climate emergency, even before your office has the skills to operate and evaluate the available tools for a full lifecycle analysis. This work is coming from practising professionals in construction. LETI (London Energy Transformation Initiative) is a group that banded together and essentially crowd-sources its guidance. It has shown the power of cross-disciplinary working, and reading its documents the Climate Emergency Design Guide and Embodied Carbon Primer will give you the rules of thumb for different areas – from building substructure, through superstructure, to internal finishes.

The pathway of incremental reductions in emissions has been mapped out in the RIBA’s 2030 Climate Challenge initiative. Then there are the key design principles from the its rigorous piece of work, The RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide 2019, which ties design aspirations and actions to UN Sustainable Development Goals, a framework that has international standing for business and government. The design principles for reducing operational and embodied carbon are produced as cut-out-and-keep posters (p44-45).

Get your clients on side

Client priorities – cost, buildability, programme, tested technologies – often frustrate

the best intentions, report practices, even those with established sustainability credentials. Aligning yourself to your clients’ drivers can make this easier – which is why the Sustainable Outcomes Guide is so valuable. However, many sectors have their own tools. Peter Fisher of Bennetts Associates explains that adopting assessment tool Science Based Targets has helped its conversations with big developers which also use it. In the investment world asset managers and investors are no longer just ticking the corporate social responsibility box in the annual report for the environment. The environment has become a business risk that must be addressed, and so the conversation changes with tools like

Penoyre and Prasad has pledged to give all clients a net zero design option at stage 2, for free

real estate benchmarking GRESB playing an important role. Notably, leading London developers are investing in developing a Building For Performance rating tool based on Australia’s NABERS.

Beyond those developers that retain their assets are hundreds of others, from house-builders and householders to local authorities and cities (the majority of which have declared climate emergency), schools and hospitals. Penoyre and Prasad has pledged to give all clients a net zero design option at stage 2, for free. This kind of practical pledge and setting targets for the practice – and talking about them – is essential. The RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge does this and practices from



Haworth Tompkins to Studio Bark and Pad Studio are among those that have signed up.

At Grimshaw Architects, Paul Toyne, one time ecologist and director of sustainability at contractor Balfour Beatty, is grappling with project choices – particularly tensions around work in sections such as transport

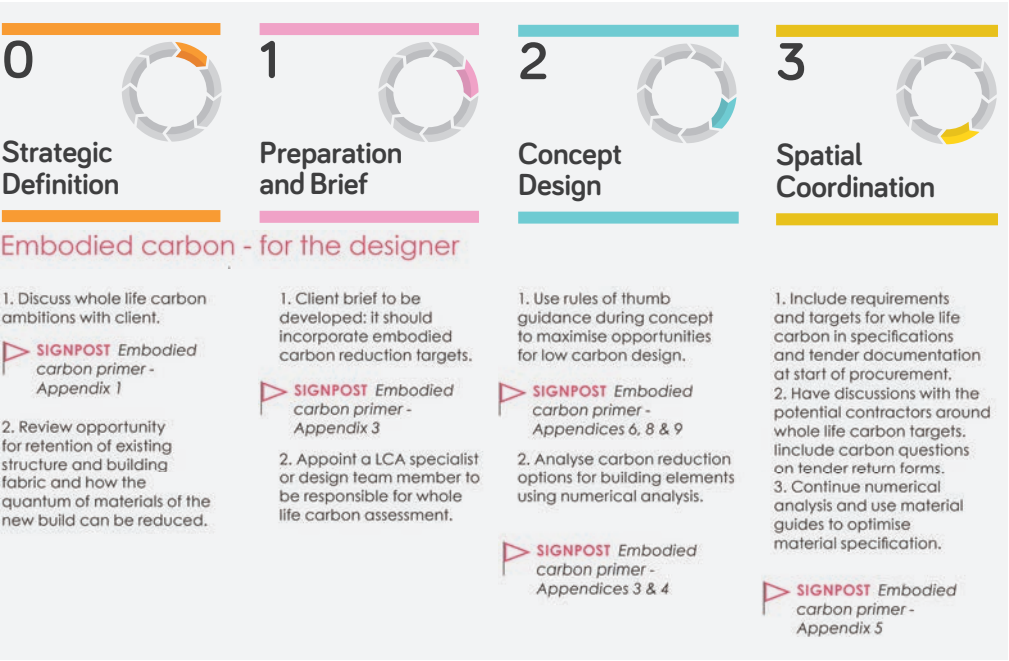
Above Grimshaw’s Dubai Expo 2020 Sustainability Pavilion. Perhaps not the most sustainable project, creating expo pavilions, but this draws attention to natural world, ecology and technology. It captures water from the humid air, as well as solar power.

and aviation (air travel being one area where there is no low carbon option in prospect). With Grimshaw promising net zero carbon ready buildings and infrastructure by 2025, and to deliver socially and environmentally regenerative buildings by 2030, it needs to ensure it has clients who buy into that.

‘This is difficult,’ says Toyne. ‘At what stage do you say “no” if it is an unsustainable outcome?’ His plan is to make it part of the conversation with the client, from what it says in the bid to the negotiation of the contract, which could include a requirement for shared access to post occupancy data on bills. ‘We need to have the tools and capacity for clients to have confidence in value.’

Do it yourself

Another starting point for many practices is their own operations. Grimshaw has set itself challenging targets on this to have carbon neutral operations by the end of this year – ahead of projects. Changing to renewables tariffs, renegotiating leases and setting up simple video conferencing or offsetting will have a smaller direct carbon impact than bringing in a project at net zero, but they bring the lessons home, as pointed out by Edmund Fowles of Feilden Fowles





at a recent RIBA Climate Challenge 2030 event. ‘It is an educational tool for the team, we can only learn through actions and going through it ourselves.’ It can become a small-scale demonstration project to show clients. Fowles might have added that doing this as the organisation that bears the costs is also important to understand.

Get interested in embodied energy

We have got some way on dealing with carbon in use (operational carbon) but have neglected the substantial embodied carbon that goes into buildings as they are built. This is making up a bigger percentage of carbon as the energy grid has decarbonised, with coal-fired power stations closing in the UK.

The fundamental questions on embodied carbon have to be whether a new building is needed and then what can be re-used – from foundations and frame to doors and windows – a case made strongly in the latest Heritage Counts report. LETI says it is possible to reduce the embodied carbon of buildings by

10-20% with simple cost neutral measures, though more than that is needed to keep on the pathway to reducing greenhouse gases.

Fisher of Bennetts also says embodied energy is where it gets exciting for architects thinking about new build. Here you have to really consider materials, starting with the foundations, which come at a huge carbon cost. If you make the building lighter you can reduce the carbon in the foundation. Building lean and keeping things simple is also critical – from the envelope to self-finishing surfaces and the M&E kit inside. Just put less in.

Doing the rounds on the sustainability lecture circuit are some dire pictures of recommended dull simplified boxes of buildings, though they are offset by more inspiring exemplars like RIBA Stirling-prize winning Haworth Tompkins’ Everyman Theatre, and Goldsmith Street housing in Norwich by Mikhail Riches. But people do warn that the way we look at buildings (like fashion) will have to change. One academic has even proposed a new term to describe buildings that are ugly through the way they harm

the environment, defornocere.

The goal should be understanding and reducing whole life carbon – not only where things come from but also how they change through their lifecycle, including how maintenance can be programmed in concert with changing leases. Capturing that information on whole life carbon data is what Simon Sturgis, sustainability expert, has been working on for the London Plan, which will be published later this year. Approximately 150 referable schemes (mostly larger or taller) that go to the mayor’s office each year will be required to submit information on durability and flexibility, on design for disassembly (for example using lime rather than cement mortar on brickwork) and on low carbon materials and operational energy.

Over the years it has been medium sized buildings with passionate clients that have been leading the low carbon charge. But to avoid increased extreme weather events and the other impacts of the climate emergency, architects of all building scales and types need to be designing for net zero. ●

STIRLING SUSTAINABILITY

Annalie Riches, co-founder at Mikhail Riches, explains three things that made a difference to Goldsmith Street’s sustainability credentials

Learning from a previous project

Goldsmith Street is the result of learning from another project, Clay Field. We need to learn from what we do through post occupancy and desktop analyses so we can do better next time. We are now trying to learn in turn from Goldsmith Street – testing the effectiveness of the approach and analysing the carbon footprint. We need to share our research freely.

Making the most of what is there

There are freely available natural resources that every site has: wind, rain, sun. There may also be materials. We need to harness these and mitigate their effects. In Goldsmith Street it was solar gain during the winter.

Being in control of the process

It’s clear from the government-proposed changes to Part L that it really does not care about the climate crisis – however most people do. We must persuade our clients to do better and to procure projects under traditional contracts. We need to ensure that contractors are building to ambitious targets because design and build does not guarantee us the power to do that. Goldsmith Street was procured as a traditional contact, which allowed us to monitor environmental performance and specify materials that had to be used in construction.



Above The traditional form of contract of housing at Goldsmith Street, Norwich, allowed Mikhail Riches to thoroughly check the sustainability of the products it specified, as with these tiles.

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Net zero operational carbon design principles

- **Prioritise retrofit of existing buildings**
- **Prioritise fabric-first principles for building form and envelope**
- **Fine tune internal environment with efficient mechanical systems**
- **Provide responsive local controls**
- **Specify ultra-low energy appliances**
- **Specify ultra-low energy IT**
- **Prioritise maximum use of onsite renewables appropriate to context**
- **Demonstrate additionality of offsite renewables**
- **Offset remaining carbon through recognised scheme**

Key design principles should be followed through all stages of the RIBA Plan of Work 2020, with the emphasis on energy efficiency measures before renewables or offsetting are considered.

See also: LETI's Climate Emergency Design Guide

Source The RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide 2019



Net zero embodied carbon design principles

- **Prioritise building re-use**
- **Carry out whole life carbon analysis of all building elements**
- **Ethical and responsible sourcing of all materials**
- **Use low embodied carbon and healthy materials**
- **Minimise materials with high embodied energy impacts**
- **Target zero construction waste diverted to landfill**
- **Promote use of local natural materials**
- **Consider modular off-site construction systems**
- **Detailing to be long life and robust**
- **Design for disassembly and the circular economy**
- **Offset remaining carbon emissions through recognized scheme**

Key design principles should be followed through all stages of the RIBA Plan of Work 2020, with the emphasis on energy efficiency measures before renewables or offsetting are considered.

See also: Targetting Zero, Embodied and Whole Life Carbon, LETI's Embodied Carbon Primer, RICS professional statement, 'Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment', Methodology for calculating embodied and whole life carbon performance of buildings BS EN 15978:2011

Source The RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide 2019

Planning for the future: rooftop SuDS

In the wake of recent storms, Bauder discusses how flat roof design can offset future changes in weather patterns using green roofs and blue roofs to reduce localised flooding and standing water



Surface water flooding is becoming increasingly prevalent as existing drainage systems struggle with the higher volumes of rainfall. The UK faced 116% of average rainfall during December 2019 according to the met office, and already three storm events in 2020 including Ciara and Dennis. The Environment Agency’s (EA) preferred policy has moved from flood barriers and large-scale water management, to controlling water as close as possible to where it lands through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

How a green roof can control rainwater run off

Green roofs have become popular for their many documented benefits, with planning authorities favouring their inclusion especially if the design contributes to achieving sustainability objectives, including biodiversity net gain. An additional advantage is that green roofs act in exactly the way the EA SuDS policy requires. The roof attenuates large amounts of water, delaying its progress into the drainage network – typically rainwater landing on a green roof will take 20 mins to work its way through the different layers. Furthermore, around half the rainwater

landing on a green roof will be held at roof level and never enter the outlets or gutters; the greater the depth of the green roof’s build up the more water is attenuated. A typical Bauder green roof system comprises FLL compliant substrate that offers water retention of 35%-45% of the volume of the substrate itself – but without risk of compaction – to allow excess water to flow freely to outlets, negating any risk to the building structure from extra weight. The drainage layer, available in 20mm, 40mm or 60mm depending on system requirements, provides continuous drainage in hard and soft landscaping. The boards store water in cup-like compartments for the vegetation to use and have small holes on the upper surfaces to allow excess water to flow gradually from the rooftop. When used underneath hard landscaping, the drainage layer is filled with gravel to give a higher compressive strength. Water storage capacity varies depending on the depth of the cups and whether the board is filled or empty.

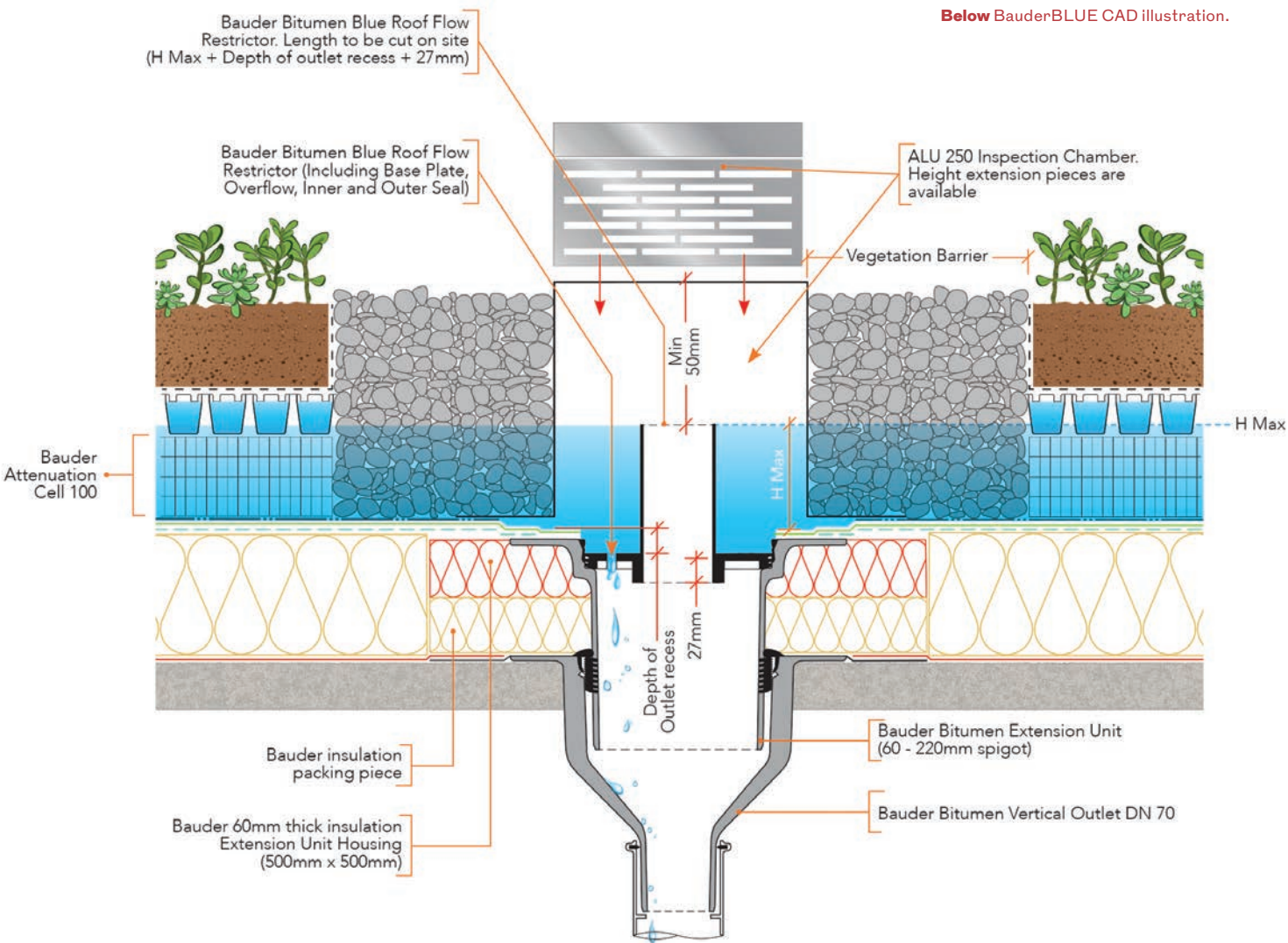
Bauder green roof DSE boards and water storage volumes per m²		
	Empty	Mineral filled
DSE20	7.4 litres	n/a
DSE40	13.5 litres	3-4 litres
DSE60	n/a	10-12 litres

Above BauderBLUE on the Department of Engineering building at Cambridge University.

The overall water retention and runoff rates of a green roof system will be dictated by the sum of the system layers, including the landscaping. As a general rule, the deeper the substrate, the higher the average water retention will be and the lower the annual run off rate. Thus, a green roof can significantly help in managing rainfall levels, but what about stormwater, especially if the water falling is heavy and over a short period of time? This is where a blue roof plays its part.

How does a blue roof alleviate storm events?

Blue roofs are sustainable drainage solutions designed to manage stormwater on a flat roof. The runoff rate from the roof is carefully controlled to meet SuDS requirements and reduce flood risk. The BauderBLUE Roof System attenuates water from a flat roof over a 24 hour period via a restrictive flow outlet. Egress rates are determined by the local planning authority and are often set at 5-10 litres per second per hectare, which is the runoff rate of a



greenfield site. Calculations are carried out to establish the exact design of the flow restrictor to meet the necessary rate of water runoff. These calculations are bespoke and take into account the rainfall characteristics of the geographical area of the project. The design of the BauderBLUE roof must consider the required target out flow and the maximum live load that the building can withstand. This will decide the maximum height that the attenuated water can reach – the ‘H-max’ value. When the water level reaches the H-max, it will drain via the central overflow pipe positioned within the outlet. These overflow pipes will be set at the same height throughout the roof. Although an unlikely scenario, this provision for a ‘once-in-100-years’ storm event plus 40%, will ensure that the structural integrity of the building is always preserved.

The product in practice
Last year, Bauder installed a BauderBLUE roof on the new building for the Department of Civil Engineering at Cambridge University. The Bauder technical team designed a roof system combining a blue roof, a green roof and a solar PV array, believed to be one of the first of its kind in the UK, to meet the sustainability requirements of the client.

In summary
Including a green roof in the construction of a building will assist in managing rainfall; couple this with a blue roof and stormwater can be attenuated to levels that then allow the water to pass slowly into the drainage system over a 24 hour period, counteracting flash flooding. ●

To learn more about how Bauder can support your project with a green and/or blue roof, we provide lunch-and-learn CPD seminars. To book your presentation call Jonathan on 0845 271 8800 or email us on connect@bauder.co.uk. As a single source supplier, Bauder provides waterproofing systems, green roof and blue roof construction that meet sustainability objectives, and with our network of approved contractors carrying out the installation, we offer comprehensive guarantees.



Now we must act on 2019 awareness

At the start of one small practice's journey to carbon zero Matthew Barnett Howland looks at how to start the transition and what's next on the plan

History is likely to show that 2019 was the year in which the world at large finally woke up to the extent to which our ways of life are damaging almost every ecosystem on earth. Climate and ecological emergency was declared, pink boats blocked the streets, and school children went on strike.

But with the advent of 2020 and all the clarity of vision this implies, more than a shift in consciousness is required. Apparently this is the decade with a deadline – from the targets set out in the IPCC 2018 report on global warming to our own RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge. In view of these high-level targets set by respected international and national institutions, it is increasingly hard to avoid the feeling that it is time for deep-rooted professional as well as personal action – my environment is your environment, so sustainability is inescapably a social issue.

What does this mean for a small business on the high street and the kind of architecture it produces? Does it simply follow the growing range of design guidance and methods of quantitative assessment that are available to meet regulatory targets? Or should it attempt a fundamental transformation of how it thinks and works – should 'not business as usual' become 'not architecture as usual'?

Our primary long-term commitment is to a tailored design approach



So how do we change the wheels – or even the whole engine – without stopping the car?

What must we do?

The development of a specific approach tailored to suit the size and nature of a practice depends first on how the problem is formulated. On one hand, CSK is a group of up to a dozen architects whose core activity is the creation of physical structures, material environments and sensory experiences. We tend to think about architecture in tangible, qualitative terms – spatial character created by structure, linings and finishes, quality of light and materials, methods of fixing and tectonic language, building form as a product of plan and section etc.

On the other hand, the environmental impacts of the design and construction industry are time-based processes that unfold across every stage of a building's lifecycle, and are often imperceptible. For example, significant embodied carbon emissions are generated by the manufacture and transport of products before they constitute the fabric of a building, and even emissions created by operational energy during the life of the building are not readily perceptible. Destruction of habitat and pollution are usually caused by industrial processes remote to where we live, work and create buildings, often in other parts of the world. Destructive demolition and the associated downcycling of materials happens long after the design process, and usually after our own lifespan.

I first started to seriously explore the idea

of making direct and legible connections between the immediate and visible character of the architectural object and the less visible processes that comprise its overall lifecycle with Cork House (RIBA), September 2019, together with its co-designers Dido Milne, director at CSK, and Oliver Wilton of the Bartlett. Building form and spatial character were the result of decisions on metrics such as landscape biodiversity, embodied carbon and circular economy, across key stages of the building's lifecycle including resource, fabrication, assembly, and the building's end of life. This general principle of a whole life approach to sustainable architecture has an existing lineage, but to emphasise the focus on the connection between building as both process and product, we coined the phrase 'Form Follows Lifecycle'.

Broadly speaking, the aim is to apply this kind of approach within CSK Architects, and so develop a design methodology in relation to environmental sustainability that is as simple and holistic as possible. Oliver and I continue to develop this approach together outside the practice, and as an architect with a background in environmental design and sustainability at large, he will provide consultancy to the office.

How should we do it?

The idea of developing a concerted and highly structured response to the climate crisis was first raised with CSK directors and associates in October last year, with formal monthly meetings since November. Prelim-

Intelligence Climate emergency

inary discussions explored what notions of 'sustainability' we share, and which issues are most important to us. The results were diverse, but more importantly we felt our collective understanding of the subject as a whole was relatively superficial.

Four part plan

We agreed a loose four-part working process that would enable us to make a more informed decision about what we commit to, and how we do so in a way that suits our specific business: literacy and education, commitment, operational change, and monitoring.

We launched the literacy and education process in December, giving each member of the working party a copy of Simon Sturgis' 'Targeting Zero' as a (rather unfestive) Christmas present. Other CPD activities include site visits to projects based on plant-based materials that are unfamiliar to the office including hemp insulation and cladding, and forthcoming in-house sessions on the circular economy and Passivhaus, and Green Register training on low carbon technologies and life cycle assessment of building materials.

We have also used Cork House site visits to generate discussion and debate between the office and other interested parties, including architects and engineers; local planning departments; developers and contractors with a record in sustainable construction technologies; trade organisations; architecture students and lecturers; design students from local schools; a sustainable awards charity; and existing clients with a growing interest in how they might respond to emerging environmental issues.



Above Windsor Road, this mainly residential scheme of 21 town centre flats with contextual brick façade has recently received planning permission, and is currently under review with the developer and consultants regarding options for a low embodied carbon primary structure.

Opposite This project for a small house above a steep hillside will include a whole life carbon assessment that will provide quantitative feedback on its whole life design approach – low embodied carbon timber structure, prefabricated dry-jointed construction, breathable building envelope using plant-based materials, and design for disassembly.

Below The environmental sustainability of the design approach for this outdoor activity centre in Marlow is a key aspect of fundraising for the project, which includes on site renewables and a bolted timber construction.



CSK ARCHITECTS (3)



In terms of general commitments, we reviewed our practices in relation to the 11 points set out by Architects Declare, and decided it was both legitimate to sign the declaration and useful to show support. We will review progress on these points every six months. We signed London Energy Transformation Initiative's 'Key messaging document' that responded to the Part L Building Regs consultation, as well as Architects Climate Action Network's open letter to the secretary of state, Robert Jenrick. We also completed a government survey in response to this consultation process, based on LETI/ACAN's recommended responses.

However, our primary long-term commitment is to the development of a tailored design approach and related in-house 'design manual' that will result in operational change across all our work.

To implement practical change, we want to achieve a balance between the depth, breadth and speed of change – both in regard to maintaining a viable business and the risk of diluting the principles we wish to embed. So we have agreed that in the first instance we will trial the principles of an emerging 'Form Follows Lifecycle' design manual on small projects with willing clients. We aim to start reporting on these with the next article.

Voice on the ground

When it comes to monitoring and assessment, the outcomes of this whole exercise are of course unknown. At worst, targets won't be met and our very best efforts to design buildings that are genuinely environmentally sustainable across their whole lifecycle could result in a less sustainable business. Even then, this exercise will at least contribute to an understanding of some of the trade-offs between different metrics at different stages of the building lifecycle.

At best this column will provide a useful and successful case study for other practices attempting a comparable transformation within similar constraints. If nothing else, this postcard from an office on the high street will record some of the realities of attempting deep operational change within everyday constraints, and toss a grain of real-world feedback into the loop of international agreements and overarching predictions that swirl above our day-to-day existence. ●

Matthew Barnett Howland is director of research and development at CSK Architects

Design, construction
& technology

No ivory towers here

Collaboration and practical experience underpin an ethos of social and environmental responsibility at Sheffield School of Architecture

Words: Stephen Parnell

Below Sheffield Youth Takeover: Forge the Future! Student Anna White's live project, codesigned via workshops with 12 local teenagers, proposes a headquarters for youth-led city design and activism.



ANNA WHITE, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

As I approach the Arts Tower in Sheffield, I pause to take a photo and tweet 'Home is where the Arts Tower is'. By the time I'm on the paternoster, nearly 30 years after I first ascended to the 13th floor to start my architectural education, likes start infecting my Twitter feed. HLM's 2011 refurbishment has clearly not diminished people's affection for the country's tallest university structure, home of Sheffield University's School of Architecture (SSoA) since it was completed in 1966.

'The School's ethos is about social and environmental responsibility through architecture,' says its head, Karim Hadjri. 'Sheffield graduates are professionals concerned with the wellbeing of communities and societies and who are committed to tackling environmental challenges – the key crucial issues of our time.'

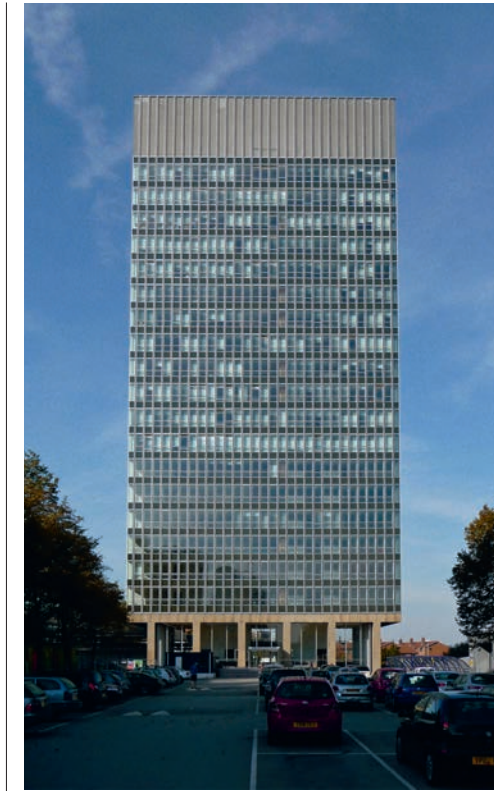
Sheffield has long had a strong reputation for architecture. In the 1970s, with David Gosling as head, BDP founder Sir George Grenfell Baines set up his teaching practice there. Its reputation for social engagement emerged in the new millennium under

Peer-learning and co-operation is the cornerstone of an SSoA education

Jeremy Till, when 'live projects' became a foundation for architectural pedagogy. 'Live Works' maintains an office in the city centre, a cross between an Urban Room and an architectural office providing design and research services for the local community, in which students can get involved. Students do their first small live project in the first year, experiencing direct exposure to the Sheffield public with a small construction in the city. The bigger projects happen in the first six weeks of both MArch years; students have been involved with a range of live projects for over 20 years now.

So the school engages with the community, but what about practice? SSoA doesn't do apprenticeships. Instead, it started a 'Collaborative Practice' route through the MArch four years ago. Students spend four days a week of the first year in practice, with modules focusing on reflective design and practice replacing the university-based design studio. They are paid for their time in practice and receive a subsidy on their fees. The programme director, Satwinder Samra, explains that 'we wanted to create a better relationship between university and practice. Students actively reflect on their everyday experiences, which become live academic content.' There are only 12 students on this route, mostly in London practices. These students meet weekly at one of these offices and fortnightly with Samra too, either via Skype or in an office. The practices that first signed up to the programme were alumni Carmody Groarke, Hawkins\Brown, Proctor & Matthews, AHMM and Penoyre & Prasad, but the list is growing annually as the programme gains interest from both students and practices (around 40 practices are signed up). A nice benefit is that the programme demands responsibility from the practice: they must be willing to mentor students and take their development seriously which means they can't be employed as CAD monkeys, a common Part 1 student complaint. The arrangement also handily frees up studio space in a very full Arts Tower.

But does this kind of practice-based



HUGH FEARMAN

Above Arts Tower, Sheffield, home to Sheffield University's School of Architecture.

Below Students work with playworkers and local families to co-design play structures in a live project with Pitsmoor Adventure Playground.



SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

programme constrain the students' critical and 'blue-sky' speculative thinking about what a future architecture and practice could be, the kind of thinking that MArch courses around the world famously encourage and which tend to grab the headlines? The students I put this to responded that regularly meeting other students and maintaining their reflective journal created a space for this kind of dialogue between themselves, a space which liberated them from the inevitably vested interests of both practice and academia. Touché.

The same students also claimed that their time management and work/life balance was better when they returned for their final year (studios close at 9pm). And they were more likely to do a joint thesis project with another student, a feature of the SSoA MArch that has obvious mental health benefits.

Peer-learning and co-operation is the cornerstone of an SSoA education. In a fiercely competitive and masochistic world, where students wear badges on their sleeve for how many all-nighters they've achieved, or how destructive a crit they've survived, a more collaborative, non-confrontational, less heroic/macho approach sounds like progress. And the empowerment that they gain results in student initiatives that address current issues such as, for example, the Matri Arch collective (@Matri_Arch_) – 'raising issues facing women and non-binary people in architecture' – and the Climate Emergency Committee set up to interrogate SSoA's response

Right Trovare Casa, a new mode of travel agency, provides a meaningful platform to help new arrivals to Milan by offering them temporary support and services to aid the onward and upward movement of the city's transit migrant population.

to the climate crisis. ‘The staff were kicked out at the first meeting,’ says John Sampson, MArch co-director, with Cith Skelcher. He explains that as a school, they try and practice what they preach, with field trips only to places students can get to by train, for example.

Sampson invited me to sit in on some reviews (‘crit’ is considered a four-letter-word at Sheffield). Students presented their work on two immense touch-sensitive screens (each big enough to accommodate four A1 sheets apparently), rather than pinning up paper. While this experiment clearly alleviates the time pressures and expense of printing, it also inevitably tends to result in a very linear narrative and a discussion around the last slide, losing any chance of an overall ‘exhibition’ effect of the student’s work. Nevertheless, it was obvious how comfortable and confident the students were with leading the discussions – becoming an equal among the invited critics (including Andy Groarke, Anna Liu, and Stephen Proctor). No badges for surviving destructive crits here, then. But like everything at SSoA, the emphasis is on process rather than product, which is probably why I’ve not written about the projects themselves – all of which, across Parts 1 and 2, feature unheroic, socially engaged buildings ‘tackling the key issues of our time’. •

Stephen Parnell is an architect and historian of post-war architecture

METRICS
Part 1 students 415 (including dual honours Architecture & Landscape and Structural Engineering & Architecture)
Part 2 students 120 MArch, 24 Collaborative Practice, 8 MALA (dual Architecture & Landscape)
Floor area for Parts 1 & 2 1684m² (3.01m²/student)
Tutors per BA student
Y1 1:16/17 (2 tutorial days per week)
Y2 1:15/16 (2 tutorial days per week)
Y3 1:14/15 (2 tutorial days per week)
Tutors per MArch student 1:12 (1 tutorial day per week)
Studio opening times
Weekdays: 8am–9pm Weekends: 9am–5pm



EMILY GLYNN, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD



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ONE STEP AHEAD.

Granada's glazing turns derelict listed railway station into modern workspace

As part of a £120 million redevelopment scheme at Peterborough's Fletton Quays, Granada Glazing was selected to design, manufacture and install a bespoke arched secondary glazing system, reducing energy consumption and shrinking the building's carbon footprint



Constructed in 1845, the grade II listed building housed Peterborough's first railway station and had been derelict for over 40 years. Renovation of the Victorian railway sheds was a major part of the riverside site's development, creating the city council's new office, Sand Martin House.

Secondary glazing is an ideal solution to reduce heat loss while preserving a facade's essential character. Granada's aluminium arched heritage hinged frames with double glazed units were specified with the dual purpose of improving thermal and acoustic performance to suit the building's modern commercial use.

The enhanced U_w -value of $0.8W/m^2K$ provides a considerable reduction in heat lost through the building's original single glazed steel windows (a single glazed metal window will generally achieve a U_w -value of around $5.7W/m^2K$). Decreasing U -values lowers energy consumption and leads to reduced energy bills.

Due to the building's grade II listed status the secondary glazing installation had to be discreet and unobtrusive. Granada Glazing's arched hinged units achieved the most sympathetic solution in harmony with the style and aesthetics of the existing steel windows.

Above Large hinged units designed, manufactured and installed by Granada Glazing to increase thermal performance.



Below The grade II listed status of the building required the secondary glazing to be invisible from outside.

Granada's secondary glazing can reduce heat loss by as much as 65% while substantially improving a building's security and acoustic performance



Above Arched hinged secondary window with argon filled 28mm double glazed unit to reduce heat loss.

Left To match the style and visual aesthetics of existing windows, Granada Glazing can powder coat in-house in over 200 RAL colours.

Granada Glazing offers a bespoke curving service at its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, where aluminium frames can be shaped to follow the most challenging arched or curved windows.

Secondary glazing is frequently installed within listed properties, conservation areas and sites with high noise pollution because of the enhanced thermal and acoustic benefits.

When correctly specified and installed, secondary glazing maintains a building's charm and character while bringing the glazing system firmly into the 21st century.

Left For enhanced security, Granada's range of hinged units incorporate multi-point locking. The multi-point locking system securely locks the panel in place while the integrated Q-Ion seals provide enhanced thermal and acoustic performance.



For commercial properties that only require access to the external windows for maintenance or cleaning, Granada Glazing offers a removable handle which prevents unauthorised use of the window. This option is part of the Granada Glazing Anti-Ligature range, often specified for installation in schools, hospitals, nursing homes and custodial facilities.

To find out more on this project and how secondary glazing can reduce noise, retain heat and improve security scan the QR code or visit: www.gsecg.com/fletton-quays



For more information on how we can assist with your next project or to book Granada Glazing's RIBA Certified CPD seminar, please telephone 01909 499 899 or email: info@granadaglazing.com

GRANADA
secondary glazing



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Architecture's influencers
— Oliver Wainwright
59

Future winners
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3: Culture

Fallout from Coronavirus

Could Covid-19 also leave
greater environmental action
in its destructive wake?



Hugh Pearman Editor

A society suddenly becomes less dependent on movement. Human Resources departments hastily test their firms' abilities to operate entirely from home if necessary, setting up the systems to do so. The annual calendar of global meetings is rapidly rearranged – MIPIM, the Milan Fair, our own Venice Architecture Biennale. Add in all the equivalent meet-ups for the other professions, industries, trades, charities, governments, sports – a vast and constant mingling of people. Such restrictions are unprecedented outside war or natural disaster.

Consider the lockdowns which began in China and spread globally alongside the Covid-19 virus itself. At first it was faintly comic: the self-imposed quarantining of those of us who have been in contact with someone who had met someone who was possibly in contact with someone else diagnosed with the disease. But it escalates, and depending on when you read this will have reached new levels: predicted at the time of writing is the closure or restriction of many places where people routinely come together. Already

empty tables gleam in silent restaurants.

All this allows us to reappraise the way we live and work. Not of course that such a particularly nasty disease is a cloud with a silver lining: we'd all obviously rather the disease and fear of it, and the healthcare, economic and supply-chain consequences of the pandemic, did not exist. The potential threat to civil liberties and democracy is a real concern: once politicians and their advisers find they can restrict movement by edict, close Parliament and so on, they need very careful watching.

And yet – this enforced experimentation in different ways of living and working is hastening what was happening anyway. Many have pointed out that the global climate and biodiversity emergency deserves an equivalently far-reaching response. But as the climate emergency accelerates alarmingly and demonstrably, it is too often ignored because it does not immediately and visibly affect most people's lives in the same way as a virus.

One of the most telling images in the relatively early stages of the spread of the disease was the satellite shot which showed the amount of atmospheric pollution – in particular NO₂ – produced by China before and after that country's increasingly draconian lockdown. Suddenly the air was so much cleaner. Another moment was when airlines started cutting back on flights. Again, a reduction in air travel has long been promoted as necessary to cut down on CO₂ and NO₂ emissions. And then it just happened, willy-nilly.

People have always travelled, always traded. And always recovered, eventually, from the onslaught of epidemics and wars, with painful memories of the experience and victims we have known. If COVID-19 leads to a worldwide economic slump as seems likely, then of course we will all feel the consequences. Just maybe, however, we might also emerge with a different attitude to our place in the world and how we operate on it. I would like to think that attitude might be one privileging balance over destruction. ●

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

'It's time to review our description of architecture as something only physical'

Pamela Buxton gets immersed in Architectural adventures in mass media at the RIBA: ribaj.com/freestyle

One of the most telling images was the satellite shot showing China's atmospheric pollution before and after lockdown. Suddenly the air was much cleaner



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#instalike: is my selfie hip?

Instagrammisation makes everywhere look cool – actually it's anything but



Oliver Wainwright

What could be more Instagrammable than the little stretch of white powder sand at the bottom of the cliffs below the dramatic Mayan ruins of Tulum? At a pristine spot on the east coast of Mexico's Yucatán peninsula, the pre-Columbian stone ziggurats perch at jaunty angles above the beach, emerging from lush palm trees and manicured patches of lawn, populated by sunbathing iguanas.

What the photographs tend not to show is the long line of tourists along the clifftop, each waiting for their turn to be snapped in front of the picture-postcard scene. Nor do the images capture the thudding sound of electronic dance music from the beach bars nearby, or the Starbucks at the ruins' entrance.

Just 15 years ago, Tulum was no more than a few shacks on the beach, with intrepid backpackers chilling in hammocks. This short coast now sees over 300,000 visitors a year, lured by the promise of 'barefoot luxury' boutique hotels, full-moon dance parties and the aura of spiritual wellness. You can party all night, then recover with 'sound healing' the next day, steam in a traditional Mayan sweat-lodge and have your Aztec astrology chart read. \$12 cocktails offer further enlightenment: lemon for purpose, passionfruit for attunement, pineapple for liberation.

It has become a favourite destination for the fashion crowd and the Hollywood jet-set; people flock there in the hope of spotting Demi Moore sunbathing, Jared Leto partying,

With endless treehouse nests and wicker man effigies, it looks like Burning Man has washed up on the beach

Below It's some kind of café, but mostly a selfie backdrop.



or Justin Bieber drunkenly exposing himself at the Mayan ruins. In 2017, Copenhagen's celebrated Noma restaurant opened a pop-up in Tulum, serving meals for \$600 a head. Rooms at Be Tulum, a place of 'rustic charm and raw natural beauty', go for \$2,000 a night – more than the Four Seasons in Paris. Bjarke Ingels is a regular; Thomas Heatherwick has been commissioned to masterplan Hobbiton delights across a swath of virgin jungle.

The rapid influx of this wealthy fashion-conscious crowd has spawned a peculiar kind of architecture. Tulum has followed a very different path to Cancún, 130km up the coast, which boasts a Costa del Sol landscape of all-inclusive resorts in high-rise concrete blocks. Tulum favours hippie-luxe, a consciously crafted aesthetic of curved plaster walls and roofs thatched with palm fronds, accompanied by nest-like cocoons, canopies and enclosures woven from wiry bamboo and rattan. With endless treehouse nests and wicker man effigies, it looks like Burning Man has washed up on the beach.

All these structures are designed with one thing in mind: creating the perfect backdrop for your next Instagram post. From pod-shaped swings to elaborate thrones backed with woven dream-catchers, Tulum is a landscape of stage sets for selfies. Even the beach-side cabins are finely tuned for Instagrammability. Many cabins feature tiny private pools, barely more than a foot bath, but guaranteed to add that essential bit of glimmering turquoise to the backdrop of a photo and send a message of exclusivity to your thousands of followers. Some, like the jungle cabanas of the Papaya Playa Project, even seem to have been designed with drone photography in mind, each featuring an oval rooftop pool that shines amid the jungle canopy.

Ironically, the desire to make each new boutique wellness retreat more exclusive, unique and postable than the next has led to a weird feedback loop where the more they try to stand out, the more they look the same. At a courtyard of curated food truck stalls, complete with rustic hand-painted signs and tacos being hawked from retro trailers and Air-stream caravans, I could be in Williamsburg or Hoxton, surrounded by the same people taking pictures of the same things, and exactly the same crowd they'd be back home. ●

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

UP SH*T CREEK

The rapid development of Tulum has a darker side, not least when it comes to sewerage. According to Mexico's environment ministry, 80% of the cenotes (caves featuring swimming lakes) in the Yucatán are now contaminated, with researchers finding traces of Tulum's particular cocktail: skin-care products, cocaine, Viagra, and ibuprofen.

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Mirror, signal, manoeuvre

How far will you go to consider, commit and deliver?



Alan Jones

Mirror, signal, manoeuvre. That's the rule of the road. Bike or car, you need to be aware of what is around you, signal intent, and then act. 'Mirror' heightens awareness and deciding intention, 'signal' tells others your intent and 'manoeuvre' is when you act. As we travel, we do this time and time again; we consider and decide our intention, communicate it and then act. Sometimes it is subtle; others much more overt. Can we do the same – as future architects in RIBA validated schools, as individuals, as practices and as a profession?

There is so much choice and so many demands on how we spend our money, energy and time. As individuals we are having to decide between a growing number of essential and personal regular commitments, including relatively new arrivals like Sky, Spotify and Starbucks. Equally, practice overheads are rising, with annual software renewals and increasing professional indemnity insurance. Decisions have to be made.

Many students join the RIBA as an indicator of their commitment to the profession.

This gives them access to support and resources in the early years of their professional journey. Each year most architects in practice consider and commit to a greater level than the threshold professional and ethical standards set by Architects Registration Board. Signalling that commitment, each architect joins the RIBA, with the letter enclosing their membership card stating this 'membership demonstrates your commitment to the highest professional and ethical standards'. The 2019 RIBA Code of Conduct applies to every chartered member, so the consequent manoeuvre is to act by knowing and delivering, personally, on those standards.

Deciding to take the next step, a practice can reflect and commit to good conduct and best practice as a complete business. Deciding together, committing to the new 2019 Code of Practice, both inwardly and outwardly, is a commitment as a practice, and to the act of practising.

From a sole trader, starting at £100 membership fee, to a multi-office national practice, becoming a chartered practice makes greater commitments on staff and wages, client services, and business benchmarking, environmental and design policies. The Code explains that each chartered practice 'reflects critically and to continually strive to improve' – in essence to be more professional. And of course, there are the benefits, advice and tools from committing to chartered practice.

Chartered practices can also decide to commit further, to the 2030 Climate Challenge, setting gradually increasing targets above current standards for operational energy use, embodied carbon and water use reduction. In the context of the climate emergency, I encourage all Chartered Practices to commit further, signing up to the 2030 Climate Challenge and its targets for operational energy use, embodied carbon and water use reduction. Sunand Prasad, past president of the RIBA and co-founder of Penoyre & Prasad, advises: 'An ethical commitment to strong awareness of consequences leads directly to adherence to evidence, to honesty, openness and sharing of information and knowledge, to learning lessons from previous instances of practice.'

How far will you go along the 'high road', to consider, commit and deliver, better? Clients, insurers and society are watching us. ●

president@riba.org alanjones2008



Above Consider, commit and deliver – approach your architectural journey as if you were driving.

RIBA COMPETITION: HOME OF 2030

There's still time to enter the government's open ideas competition seeking designs for homes 'fit for the future'.

In the first phase, architects, designers and manufacturers are invited to come forward with initial concepts for low carbon, energy-efficient, age-friendly homes. The homes must meet the needs of the country's growing older generation and use the latest technology to improve their quality of life. In phase two, three finalists will have the opportunity to partner with developers to deliver homes on a site owned by Homes England. Enter before 15 April 2020.

architecture.com/competitions

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Image courtesy of David Godfrey

Culture Exhibition

Head to the coast

Norwich exhibition shows how art deco became the style that transformed British seaside resorts for a new age of mass tourism

Isabelle Priest

On a cold Tuesday afternoon, the downstairs halls at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich are thronged with middle-aged women, early pensioners and the odd student with their mother, excitedly nattering as they view the exhibits. Art Deco by the Sea opened a week ago and, according to curator Ghislaine Wood, the museum had its busiest Sunday for a long time. And the visitors are not the usual art audience. Certainly, as I go round strangers stop me to ask what tempera is and if Kenneth Dalglish and Roger K Pullen's Marine Court apartment block in St Leonards-on-Sea is still there? The conversations I'm overhearing include how they used to go to Butlins in Skegness as children and what fun dressing up in the evenings was.

Art Deco by the Sea is Wood's third major exhibition on the style. Both its predecessors were for the V&A; the Ocean Liners: Speed and Style inaugural show for Dundee in 2018 and 2003 Art Deco 1910-1939, which is one of the museum's most popular London shows ever (bigger than Bowie). But this one presents art deco specifically in relation to the British coast between the wars – its impact on design, architecture and material culture as well as the way people experienced the seaside – in a county noted for its long sandy beaches and holiday pursuits.

Although the term art deco was only coined in the 1960s, the style emerged in France before the First World War. Its



Above Southern: Camping Sites in Southern England, Southern Railway poster, 1935.

Below Portobello Lido, Edinburgh, photographed by Valentine, 1936.

development only accelerated afterwards, precipitated by a profound re-evaluation to 'return to order' which informed the search for a way of embracing all forms of design that was reassuring, accessible, national, modern and reflected the plurality of the contemporary world. With its use of new materials like aluminium and plastic, references to ancient civilisations, naturalistic motifs and sharp geometries it was a complex, eclectic, total art style that drew on tradition, classicism and handcrafts, but also celebrated the avant-garde, mechanised and machine made as well as movement and speed.

Inspired by the glamour of the South of France, in Britain art deco came to be associated with pleasure, leisure and escape. It was the style chosen to transform British seaside resorts for a new age of mass tourism as the 1938 Holidays with Pay Act came into being. Coastal resorts were revitalised, splashed with colour and fun, transport networks upgraded and hotels, apartment blocks, cinemas, lidos, parks and promenades built, tapping into a growing preoccupation with health, fitness and outdoor activity.

Spiralling down into the gallery hall, the exhibition opens with Fishermen and Visitors, showing how the influx of tourists shared traditional coastal communities with fishermen, boat builders and other local people. Six block colour graphic prints designed by Tom Purvis for LNER depicting East Coast Joys visualise the attractions on offer – walking, sunbathing, sea sports and fishing.



BRUCE PETER COLLECTION

The next space groups together painting from the period, the landscapes frequently representing a coastal experience untouched by industrialisation, but also showing the seaside activities people pursued and how they arrived there, spurred on by bold graphic advertising. Artists like Ernest and Dod Procter and Richard Ernst Eurich used strong outlines, simplified forms and areas of flat colour that adopted cubist techniques but were also a reaction to international abstract art. Thomas Martine Ronaldson's Summer 1928 presents a woman in a stylish bathing suit and cap, while James Walker Tucker's Hiking 1936 perhaps shows strong women in a nationalistic way.

Gallery 2 is devoted to Designing the Seaside, showing how art deco refashioned the seaside from urban planning to individual building facades, interiors and furniture. A multitude of examples are given and a series of roomsets bring the subject of the exhibition to life. Buildings shown include Dreamland in Margate, developments at Frinton-on-Sea, and the Midland Hotel in Morecambe, down to its crockery. There's a recreation of a typical interior that veers towards the classical end of the art deco spectrum, with armchairs by Paul Follet Waring, contrasting with a more modernist take nearby which features tubular steel chairs and a Christian Barman electric fan heater manufactured by HMV. This duality also occurs in the industries that came to be based by the sea; Poole Pottery and EKCO Radios. The last gallery is devoted to the enjoyments of the period, highlighting the lived experience – mannequins diving into a pool, funfair rides, exercise, evenings on holiday.

Overall there are 150 objects, from revealing swimming costumes and bias-cut evening gowns to brochures, ceramics, tex-

Right Summer, Thomas Martine Ronaldson, 1928.



tiles, carpets, photographs and films. What's interesting is not only the diversity of places – you'll see Cleethorpes, Blackpool, New Brighton, Lowestoft – but the variety of activities on offer for different social classes.

What isn't explored is the fate of these places and art deco as foreign travel began to tarnish the lustre of the British seaside resort. The style fell seriously from grace during the 1950s, when many buildings were torn down and it became synonymous with dilapidation and a bygone era. This happened to the resorts as well. Today coastal communities are more likely than other types to be worse off for average earnings, employment, crime, health and education, and questions swirl about what the catalysts for change could be. In investigating art deco 100 years on from its heyday, perhaps this exhibition will help provide answers as to how these places might be celebrated now; but overall it's a fun, lively, insightful and thorough presentation of the period. You should dive in too. ●

At the Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, until 14 June (£13) then Liang Art Gallery, Newcastle, 11 July – 10 October 2020

Below Designs for Midland Hotel, Morecambe, Oliver Hill and John Dean Monroe Harvey, 1932.



Below Leaping Deer vase, Carter, Stabler & Adams Ltd, Poole, painted by Eileen Prangnell c1935.



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Second Skin

This year’s RIBA/ SterlingOSB Zero competition challenges architects to take a moribund building and transform it into something repurposed, re-invigorated – and environmentally-efficient. Our winner will bag a £2,500 prize. Deadline for entries is 22 June 2020.



Re-use. Re-purpose. These words, rarely uttered in the past by any aspiring architect, are becoming mantras in the construction industry’s drive to cut carbon and meet climate change commitments. And, at the same time as guidance demands higher thermal performance, issues like housing are pushing planners to create policies like office-to-resi to deal with the pressure.

Some architects have already stepped into the fray at varying scales and to different ends. Take Belgian firm Rotor, which has carved a niche for itself taking defunct office buildings to pieces to methodically re-use the floor, wall and ceiling finishes in new projects. Or at the other end, Caruso St John’s Lycée Hôtelier International de Lilles, turning a dilapidated 19th century factory complex into state-of-the-art education facilities by stitching shiny, new elements piecemeal into the restored old skin in a cunning suture. Or another Belgian practice, De Vylder Vinck Taillieu, whose Mies van der Rohe Prize-shortlisted PC Caritas consolidated and upgraded the structure of a former psychiatric clinic in Melle and populated it with greenhouses to start bringing it back into use.

The RIBA is asking architects to take up the gauntlet and have a go themselves, by entering our 2020 ideas competition, ‘Second Skin’. In our sixth year of collaboration with sponsor Norbord, we want to challenge you to come up with proposals that take existing, dated, energy profligate buildings and give them a 21st century re-boot; re-purposing them with Norbord SterlingOSB Zero to generate both a new functionality and improved environmental performance. So impress us; there is a prize of £2,500 for the winner. ●

Left DVVT’s PC Caritas takes a derelict psychiatric building and dramatically brings it back into use.

The brief

The existing building being enacted upon can be any one you choose, and so can the end purpose once converted. But what we want to see is a thorough, considered and imaginative approach to that conversion using SterlingOSB Zero. The new use could be residential, commercial or leisure or indeed any other purpose, but the nature of the conversion should be clearly stipulated and will form the basis of the judging of the entry. As part of the proposal, we would be intrigued to see the re-use of extant materials, especially if in new and novel ways.

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

CRITERIA

Take an existing building and propose a new use that capitalises on the original building and its context and which potentially performs far better environmentally. There is no limit to the size of the building; it can be as small or as large as you wish.

Entrants should demonstrate how SterlingOSB Zero has been used in the proposal and how its nature and high strength features have made it an integral part of the design.

As it is a speculative intervention, we do not expect entrants to adhere to current building guidance but would expect ‘common sense’ to apply to the proposal. Any SterlingOSB Zero used externally should be adequately protected with a proposed cladding material. This may also apply to the internal finishes.



Above Belgian firm Rotor carefully removing materials to allow them to be re-used on other projects.

Below Architect Brian Heron’s reconfiguration of the water tower on Denys Lasdun’s 1957 Keeling House with SterlingOSB Zero created a new home for him and his young family.

Deadline: Entries should be received by 23:59 UK time on 22 June 2020
Please email your entry to: ribaj.secondskin@riba.org

JUDGING

Chaired by the RIBA Journal, the judges will look for imaginative uses of SterlingOSB Zero, as part of an innovative spatial proposal that best answers the stipulated criteria of the competition. The proposition should consider the product’s structural, acoustic and thermal aspects. Pre-fabrication or CNC fabrication may be considered. Other materials, including those used on the existing building, may be used as an integral part of the new proposition but it is expected that, in the main, the design will employ SterlingOSB Zero.

The winning proposal will be the one that, in the minds of the judges, generates a solution that is spatially powerful, visually exciting, reflects the logic of the new programme for the existing building of choice and which potentially modifies, for the better, the context for which it was originally designed. Re-use of the building’s existing materials is not a pre-requisite, but judges will look positively on imaginative or innovative re-purposing.

ENTRY FORM

[Go to **riba.org/secondskin**](https://www.riba.org/secondskin)

SUBMISSIONS

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

- An explanation of no more than 400 words on the entry form, describing the original design of the building as well as the nature of the re-purposing.
- Plans and sections or internal explaining the nature of the intervention on the existing building.
- External elevations, if necessary, denoting whether there has been any change to the external look of the building as a result of the intervention.
- 3D Axonometric or perspective images that convey the nature of the intervention.
- Any supplementary images you may consider helpful to explain the proposition.

NOTES

- The judges’ decision is final
- First prize is £2,500. Three commended prizes of £250.
- No correspondence will be entered into by the organisers or judges regarding entries and final decisions.
- Shortlisted entries will be notified in writing.
- Shortlisted entries will be invited to the prize-giving event in September
- Please email any questions to ribaj.secondskin@riba.org



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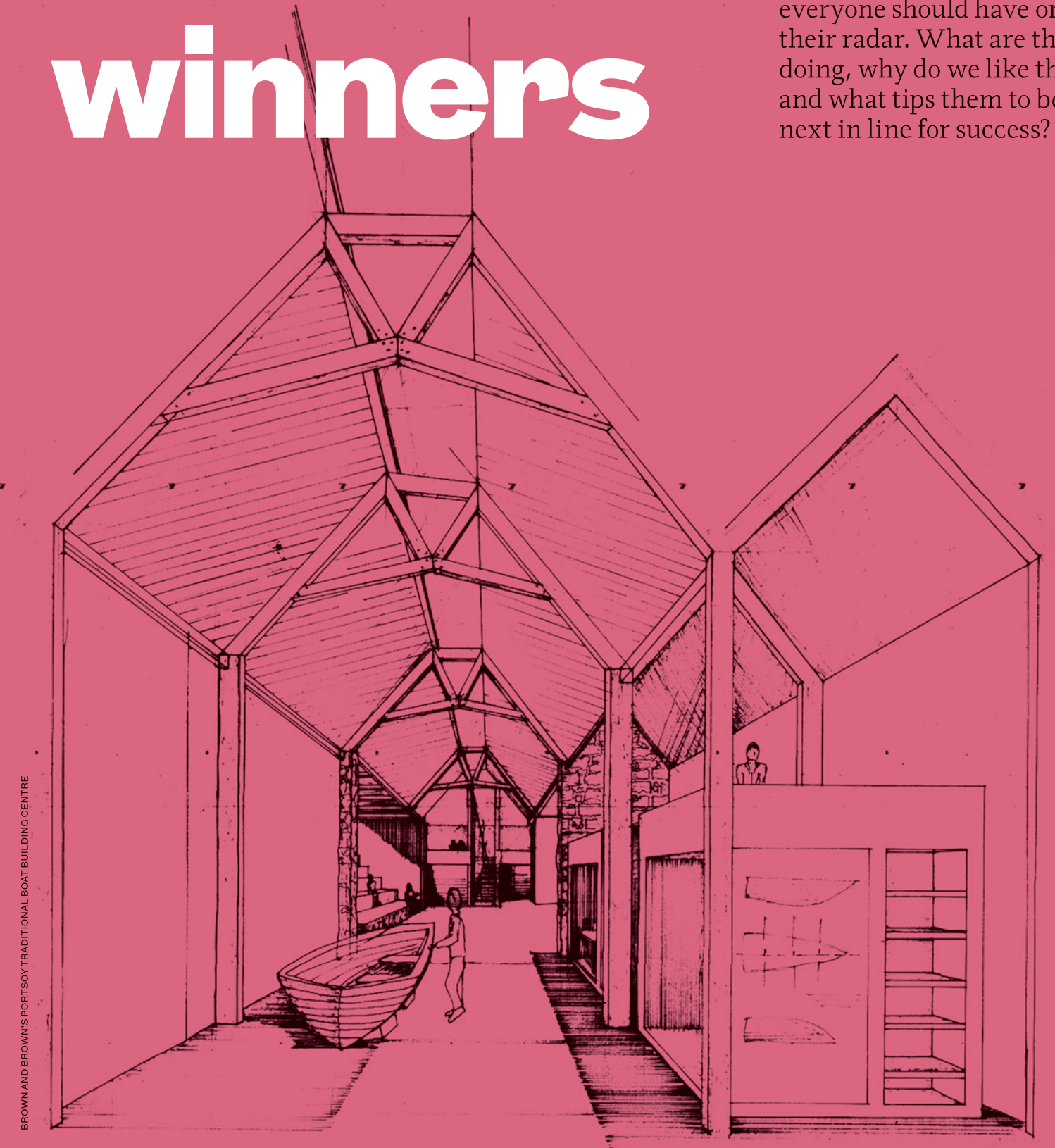
Bridging the world
from Dorset
78

Small town office,
big ambitions
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Future winners

In this annual antidote to the plethora of awards, we bring you four smaller practices from across Britain that everyone should have on their radar. What are they doing, why do we like them and what tips them to be next in line for success?



BROWN AND BROWN'S PORTSOY TRADITIONAL BOAT BUILDING CENTRE

ribaj.com

The RIBA Journal April 2020

Work-life balance is at the core of this practice in rural Scotland, a husband and wife team that is very selective of its projects – and its clients

Words: Isabelle Priest
Portrait: Reuben Tabner

The conversation I had with Andrew Brown on the Friday after I visited his practice Brown and Brown in the Cairngorms didn't really reflect my experience of going there. We were catching up by video call because such was the snow on the Monday that the schedule was virtually abandoned. The sunshine the previous day was glorious but 24 hours later what is usually a one-hour journey had taken three. The direct route was impassable and the nearest detour was two hours. There were no tracks in the road, the risky driving made worse by my being in a hire car. By the time I arrived at Brown's studio 500m up off the main road through Strathdon, it didn't feel safe or sensible to stick around. The revised plan was to head towards Aberdeen to see some projects but when his daughter's school rang to say it was closing early that got cancelled too.

Consequently, the first thing to say about Brown and Brown is that although its website says Inverness and Aberdeen, it is actually rural and operating in sometimes extreme conditions. The firm is headed by Andrew and his wife Kate. The pair met while working for a large commercial firm in Glasgow after Part 1 (taken at Strathclyde and the Mac respectively) and they've stuck together during the contortions of their careers. Kate specialised in conservation and did a master's in planning, Andrew qualified as an architect. Today, Brown and Brown is an evolution of the small design company Kate founded when they lived on the Isle of Skye after working for the Highland Council, but I get the impression she takes a back seat on public-facing duties. She's in charge of the practical and financial side of the business and didn't join the call. Andrew deals with enquiries and design.

When I visit their studio – a monopitch



Brown and Brown



NIGEL RIGDEN (2)

freestanding building next to their 1980s house (which they plan to redesign) – there's also Michaela Hunt, a Part 2 who relocated from Suffolk in February. Perched on the hillside, the studio's minimal lines cut a sharp box against the fogging sky and land. The team moved in the week before; the external timber cladding was yet to go on. All black outside, inside the studio becomes all white and a wood burner sits in front of a panoramic floor-to-ceiling window. With four desks, a meeting table and low cupboards, the warm, man-made serenity offers a striking if surreal contrast with the outside.

The building is about creating work-life balance for the principals, extracting the office from the house. Andrew works flexi-time between 6am and 2pm and Kate doesn't have set hours. They are building a practice around their lives. Location is one aspect, though Andrew is from Glasgow and Kate from Yorkshire. They ended up here after practice in Edinburgh – Andrew at Richard

Murphy Architects then briefly RMJM, Kate at Simpson and Brown – via Skye where Andrew worked for Rural Design, which seems to have been particularly relevant to the architecture he now produces. He then got a post at Aberdeen's Robert Gordon University that prompted the move and enabled the launch of Brown and Brown in 2010. He did that until five years ago.

What's attention grabbing about Brown and Brown though, especially given its inclusion on a list of firms we tip to win big awards, is its reluctance to grow, an attitude that perhaps stems from their experience of being at big firms when the financial crash hit and seeing millions of pounds worth of work and dozens of staff lost in the space of a weekend.

'We don't want to be on the ladder of increasing size and importance of projects,' says Andrew. 'We turn down most non-domestic things we get asked to do. We find a lot of freedom in domestic.'

Here and left: Portsoy Boatbuilding Centre, 185m² interior for the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival. A timber structure sits inside existing stone walls in the local conservation area.



We turn down most non-domestic things we get asked to do

Left: Andrew and Kate Brown in their new studio at Strathdon.

Instead, the firm has a 'laser beam focus' over what and whom it works with. Clients aren't connected by job, wealth or location but personality. Brown and Brown even carries out light psychographic analysis (eg Myers-Briggs) to decide which relationships could succeed. It gets most projects through enquiries and word of mouth and has put a lot of effort into conveying the work it wants through its website. It pre-qualifies potential clients by sending them a six-question survey about what is important to them in a project. This precision came about in part through the help of a business adviser Andrew met via the Scottish Cultural Enterprise Office's programme Creative Leaders in Transition. The mentor had founded a successful independent film company and has helped Andrew initially then both of them to figure out the direction of the business and give them confidence to say no when something isn't right.

'Doing good houses is about learning how people live and that's a bit about learning who they are; it ties up with design,' explains Andrew.

Don't mistake this for Brown and Brown not having much work, however. The practice has a 37 projects at different stages, a crazy number given the size of the team. It makes you wonder how true Andrew's emphasis on work-life balance is. He talks about not working overtime, taking care of yourself to do your best work and being able to leave early after a productive day's work, he certainly presents a convincing case, but I get the feeling it is all tightly controlled underneath too.

The youngest of the practice's clients is 26, the oldest in their 80s. Some own multiple companies, are CEOs, diplomats, one works in a library. Some live in London, some are local, some Scottish, English, EU or interna-

Below and right Spyon Cop, a £240k, 123m² single storey holiday home under construction up a track in the Cairngorms. Visualisations were used to help the client make decisions about the project.



TOUCH 3D



tional. The most northern job is Thurso 3.5 hours away, the most southerly overlooks the Cumbrian coast. The cheapest is £135,000, the most expensive is effectively unlimited, but the mid-range is usually £300-400k. Projects are houses to live in, retire to or holiday from and the difference in budgets doesn't leap out at you. With the freedom of choice of clients, the effort that goes into them is similar and that is evidenced in the designs.

What unites the work is an approach to context whether a site is rural, as many of Brown and Brown's projects are, or urban. 'If you have such dramatic scenery it seems to me that should lead the buildings to go in the opposite direction,' Andrew explains. A visit to Zumthor's Vals Therme in his fourth year at university was the gamechanger. At just 17, he had been an extremely young un-

dergraduate and he hadn't known buildings could be that way, so considered – the manipulated views, light and shadow, a single material. It was then that Brown really started to develop an interest in architecture.

Brown and Brown used to cite Scandinavia as an influence (Andrew did an Erasmus year in Gothenburg), but it seems his time at Rural Design was particularly formative. Until then he'd never designed a house and didn't realise some architects spend so long thinking about, for example, door hinges. You can see its influence and that of another Skye practice, Dualchas Architects, in Brown and Brown's stripped back architecture – albeit less vernacular, political, more Miesian and international. The very concept of the practice is a kind of east coast, Cairngorms National Park version, designing

for not particularly hospitable places. It is pleased to follow the trajectory those firms helped set. And the authorities managing the protected landscapes it works in seem to agree that simple forms are less disruptive as the studio hasn't yet had a project called in.

'We're quite Scotland-centric, not by choice, just how it's worked out,' says Andrew. 'Realistically, I don't think people see us from outside our geographical area and that's OK, it can take a day to travel to a site. To get to our job in Lewis, you've got three hours' drive from the office then a three-hour ferry and an hour's drive on the other side. There are only two boats a day so if you aren't on the early one you might have to stay over. But these are wonderful locations that you want to work in... The weather has to play a part to a degree.' ●



This image Bridge of Don, an urban family house in Aberdeen. A water main across the site resulted in the living room being raised – and enjoying the views.
Left Brown and Brown's 2015 refurbishment of Heath Cottage, the directors' former home.

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Stonewood Design



From left: Adam Chambers, Matt Vaudin, Nicola du Pisanie and Ross McDonald in the new Corsham studio.

With interesting projects and high quality of life, this Cotswolds practice is determined to maintain the sweet spot it finds itself in

Words: Pamela Buxton
Portrait: Edward Moss

There can't be many architectural practices that are mistaken for noodle bars. But then Stonewood Design is hardly a run-of-the mill practice. Emerging out of a construction company and based on the edge of the Cotswolds, it has built up an impressive track record in the transition from quirky small projects to major ones, including a 20-home development and creative workspace building for Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios.

Stonewood now finds itself in a good place, enhanced by its move to self-designed premises in the village of Corsham. A year ago it felt emboldened enough to open a fledgling London studio, and as this begins to bear fruit, the practice seems about to enter a new phase in its development.

'We're at a sweet spot in terms of the types of projects we're doing and quality of life,' says partner Matt Vaudin. 'The Holy Grail is how to keep that.'

Certainly, visiting them at the end of the winter, it's obvious that the practice is delighted with its new home, which is a clear expression of the 20-strong practice's highly crafted philosophy. The noodle confusion derives not so much from the studio's appearance – although its entrance does have a Wagamama-style long wooden table and benches – but from its former incarnation as a Chinese takeaway. This is just one of the listed building's former uses: it's also been a malthouse, general store and Salvation Army gathering place. Stonewood has enjoyed 'listening' to the stories of the building's past and keeping its flavour as it has transformed the interior with newly configured levels and supporting structure. There's good visual communication between the different levels, and the big picture window on the high street connects the practice with the village.

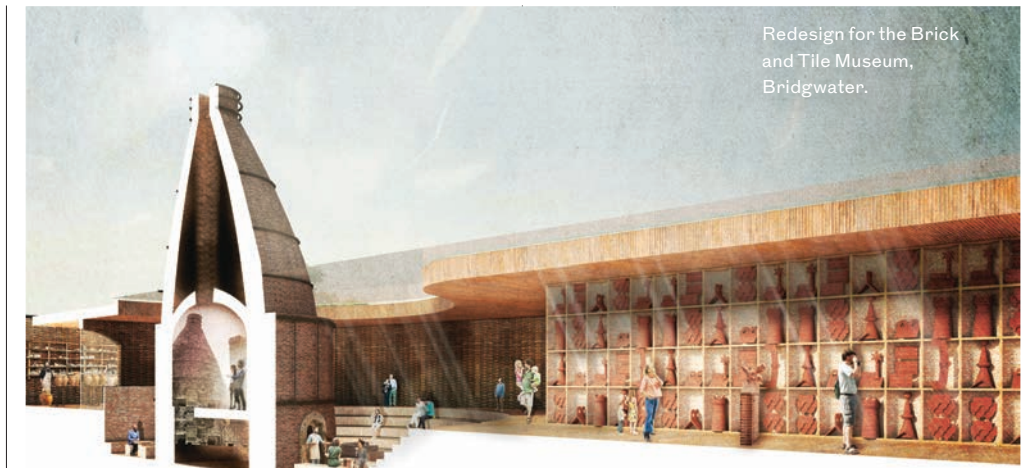
Stonewood didn't want sterile; any suggestion of blandly covering up the historic masonry or painting over the plaster was soon dismissed. The exhortations 'Prepare to meet thy God' and 'The wages of sin is death', hangovers from the building's Sally Army days, are still visible on the beams.

Stonewood's unusual beginning as part of a building company has helped shape its philosophy and development. It was founded in 2010 by Nicola du Pisanie, one of four principals who have all worked at the Bath offices of Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios. She joined Stonewood Builders as its in-house architect (one of the directors was a neighbour in Bath) and then set up Stonewood Design working from the same premises. She was joined in 2012 by husband and former FCBS partner Matt Vaudin, whom she'd met when they both worked in London for Arup Associates, and the following year by Adam Chambers, winner of the RIBA South West Project Architect of the Year Award 2019. The London office is led by Ross McDonald, who rejoined Stonewood after seven years at Alison Brooks Architects.

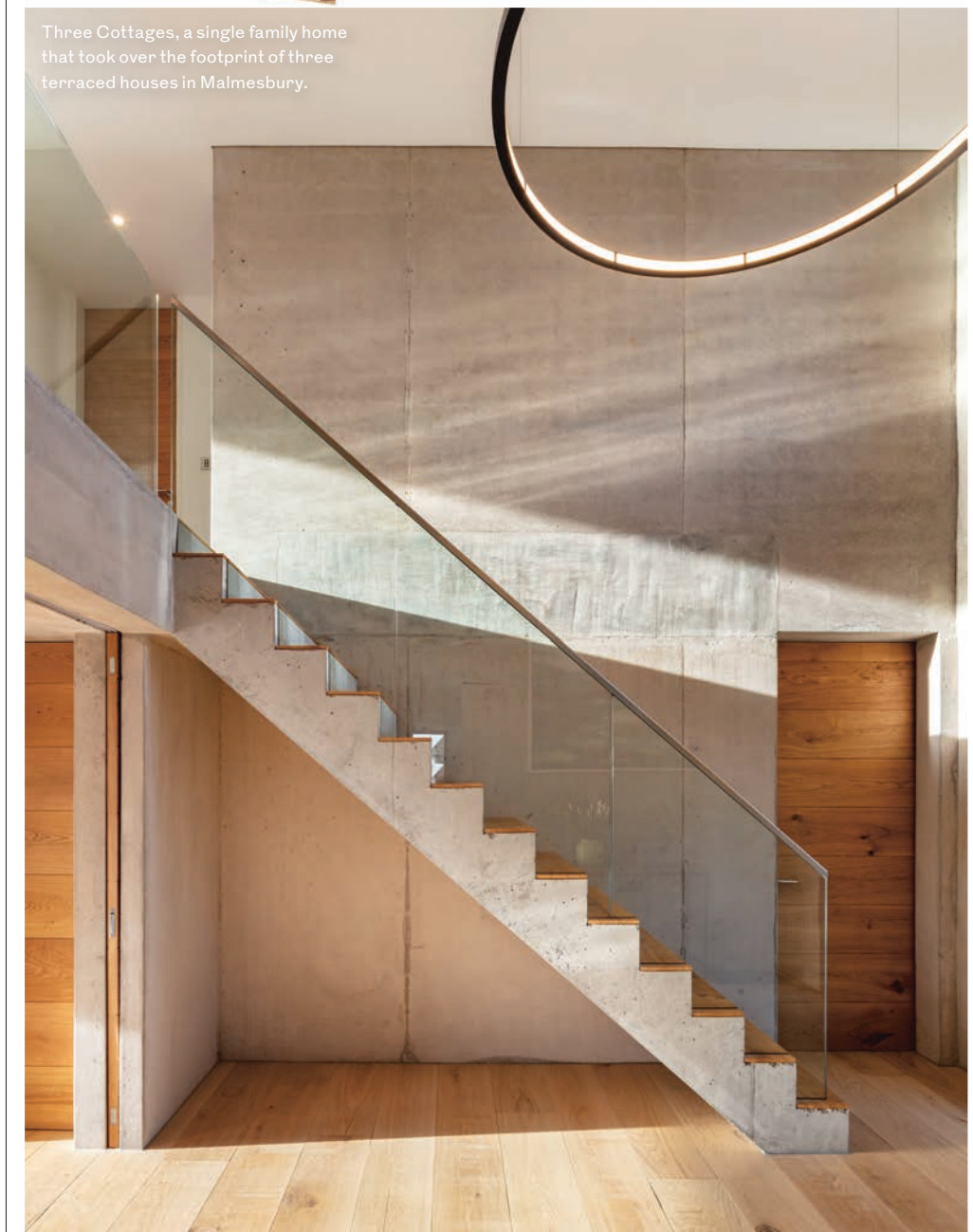
She may well be being modest, but du Pisanie says she 'didn't have a clue' about the craft of putting a building together when she first joined Stonewood Builders, which works extensively with listed structures. She does now, and this understanding of craft and material, and how to work with a builder, are a central part of the practice's approach.

Stonewood Design likes to get its hands dirty experimenting with materials, to the point that it's had to install a shower. 'Just divine' says the effervescent du Pisanie, as she recalls using manure, egg yolk, milk and hay for rammed earth construction. She delights in the ancient techniques involved in the recreation of a Roman villa as part of a museum near Castle Cary, including collaborating with a potter on the clay tubuli that ventilate the hypocaust floor of the bath house.

Like any emerging practice, Stonewood has had its share of modest, unexciting projects that don't feature on its website. But these helped enable it to pursue quirky, more promising work and it wasn't long before the firm found success in the RIBA Awards with Pod Gallery and Myrtle Studio. The former is rather extraordinary, the insertion of a gallery within a listed barn in Gloucestershire, the lightweight timber intervention clearly legible within the host building like an oversized piece of furniture. The latter is a cop-



Redesign for the Brick and Tile Museum, Bridgwater.



Three Cottages, a single family home that took over the footprint of three terraced houses in Malmesbury.

We are ambitious for our projects but not in terms of size, turnover or awards

Bottom Kingswood Prep and Pre-prep School in Bath.

Right Timber_Mill_Box, a 20-home scheme with business space in Wiltshire.

per-clad garden retreat nestled harmoniously in the contours of the landscape.

While Stonewood takes part in invited competitions, it has never been what Vaudin calls 'a bidding machine'. It was able to grow organically as it took on larger work, notably the £5 million classroom and hall building at Kingswood Prep School (RIBA, March 2019). This was a game changer and was won through competition against a shortlist of more established names including FCBS. Located in Bath, this combines a brick plinth with cedar cladding to give a pleasing hint of woodland fairytale.

The practice has also had considerable success in the cultural sector. It recently finished the Story of Gardening Museum at The Newt



country estate in Somerset, a 1,000m², green-roof-topped building that disappears into the landscape except for one fully glazed facade and a highly textured, rammed concrete and stone side wall (RIBA, December 2019).

The challenge has been to retain the ethos of the small projects as it takes on larger ones. The principals talk of a common highly crafted approach, rather than a common result, running through its work, with an emphasis on 'listening' to both the client and the site.

'We let the building tell us what it wants to be. Each design is appropriate to its particular site as we work with its stories, context, history, craft and materiality,' says Vaudin.

As it grew, the practice naturally moved away from its original host company, with whom it had always had a loose-fit relationship. But latterly the two have been working together again after former Countryside Properties director Richard Cherry paired up with the builder to form a new development company to pursue larger projects. These include Somerbrook, a development of 38 houses in north Wiltshire, 88 Passivhaus homes at Severall's Field near Cirencester and one of the practice's juiciest current projects – Timber_Mill_Box housing at Gabriel's Real World Studios in Box, Wiltshire. Here, the plan is to design 20 houses and a workplace building for the creative industries with a focus on sustainability and community.

While the practice has signed up to Architects Declare, it doesn't feel the need to shout its sustainability credentials – that's just how it designs. Similarly, while du Pisanie is not looking to be a role model for women in architecture, as founding director she is one

nonetheless, and the practice has a healthy 50-50 men-women ratio.

Other current work includes affordable housing in Kingston, a 10,000m² aviation museum in Surrey, a small private museum in Cornwall and a mixed-use project at Castle Cary, which showcases cheese production.

Getting work doesn't seem to have been much of a problem – maybe helped by the less competitive scene in the West Country – but Vaudin admits to fretting about maintaining that sweet spot of type and amount of work. While Stonewood Design hopes to grow in London, it doesn't want to get much bigger in its Cotswold base in terms of staff numbers.

'We are ambitious for each of our projects, but we are not ambitious in terms of size, turnover, awards etc,' says du Pisanie. 'We do have the ambition to maintain the beautiful mix of amazing projects that we currently have. This size is really fantastic,' she says, gesturing to the team beaver away behind her. 'We know every person in our office really well. We have such an amazingly loyal team who work really hard.'

Quality of life and team wellbeing are important here. People tend to stay – two of its Part 1 architects are continuing for a second year out – and the practice likes to have fun. When I visit they are looking forward to a practice family away weekend in Devon. 'We care passionately about our work but we don't take ourselves too seriously,' says Vaudin.

With its firm foundations and strong pipeline of choice projects, Stonewood is well placed to continue its upward trajectory. 'We're just enjoying the rollercoaster and seeing where it will take us,' says Vaudin. ●

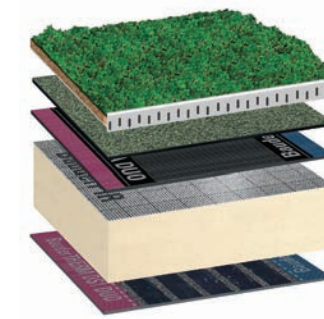


Project: Lagg Distillery
Location: Isle of Arran
Specifier: Denham Benn
Approved contractor: Greenroof Ltd

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BEaM

Huge bridge projects from Bahrain to Washington are benefiting from the input of this small consultancy based on the Jurassic Coast in Dorset

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Portrait: Pete Millson

At first glance, BEaM's Bridport office is, one assumes, pretty much like any other rural Dorset practice. Until you spot the large Texas Longhorn skull on the far wall. And, between the two sash windows that offer a view to Colmer's Hill on the outskirts of the town, the four clocks denoting local times in Mumbai, New York, Copenhagen and Calgary, Canada. Ironically, sitting on the mantelpiece below the dead cow, there's another one, labelled 'Jurassic Coast'. 'That's GMT – minus 200 million years,' says the B of BEaM, Keith Brownlie, 'because it sometimes feels like it!'

And, a stone's throw from those jaw-droppingly vertiginous oolitic cliffs, you can see what he means; especially when, for most of your working day, you're probably looking



Below Copenhagen connection: BEaM's Christian Ernst.

Above James Marks (left) and Keith Brownlie, spanning the world from Bridport.

at views of Bahrain, Oslo or Washington. For BEaM is, in effect, an architectural bridge building consultancy, and they're working all over the world – from Bridport. Brownlie says the global reach accounts for why he and fellow partner James Marks are looking so relaxed while drinking green tea in the middle of the day: 'This is our downtime. Usually, the phone doesn't start ringing until the end of the day...'

Brownlie and Marks first met when the former was a director at Wilkinson Eyre. Brownlie had cut his teeth on the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and other infrastructure projects in the 90s by the time Marks joined from Foster + Partners in 2000. He worked in and then headed the bridges team under Brownlie for the following 12 years. The pro-

Culture Future winners

fessional partnership continued after Brownlie chose to quit the practice 'without a plan' in 2011, just before the firm's International Finance Centre in Guangzhou completed.

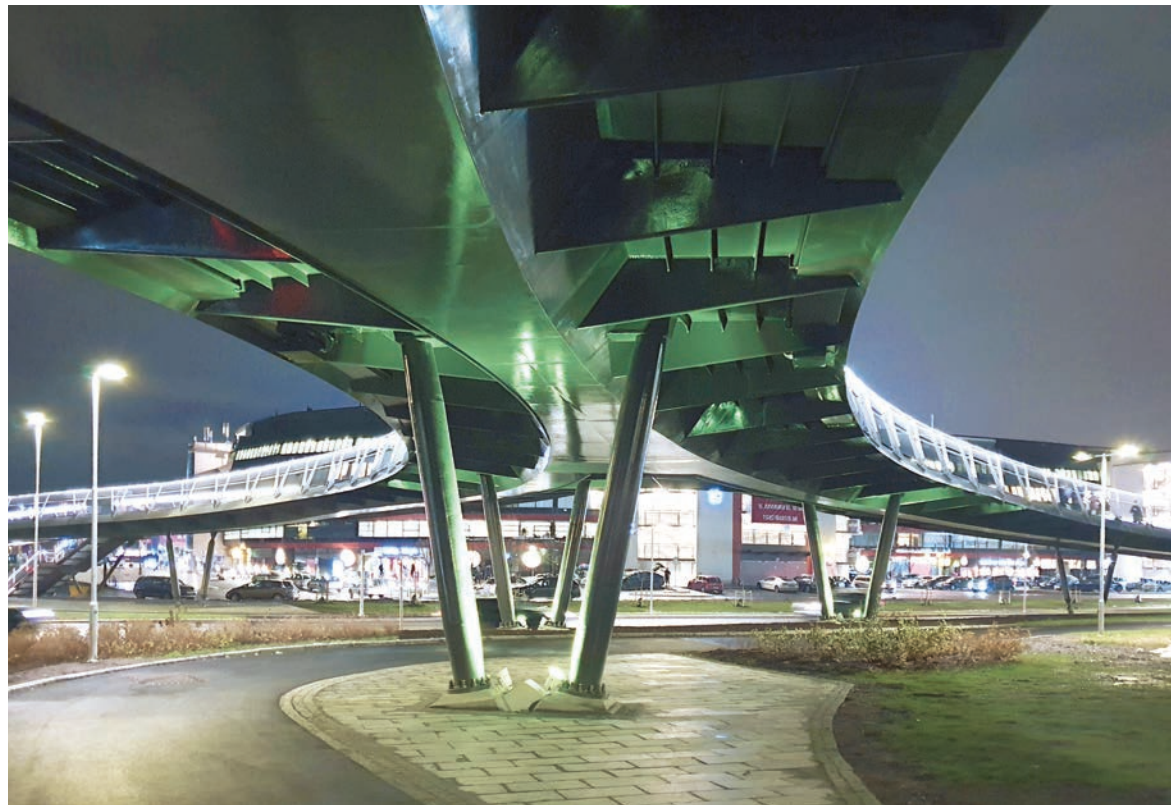
After retiring with his partner to their second home outside Bridport, Brownlie says he'd barely had the weekend off before he was asked to take on a consultancy role for a bridge project in New York. He realised that, starting a new practice in his 40s, he wasn't about to be gifted a meaty dream project and he certainly wasn't going to start doing house extensions. 'But typologically, I had the full Rolodex on bridges. I knew everyone in the world that we needed to know, so I launched into bridge design.' With work coming in, and with Marks looking to relocate with his kids nearer his wife's family in Dorset, it was serendipity that BEaM came to be based in Bridport.

Partner Christian Ernst, based in Copenhagen, joined later in 2011. 'I first cognitively met him on an IABSE (International Association of Bridge and Structural Engineers) study tour of Switzerland looking at bridges of the great master Christian Menn,' recalls Brownlie. 'And we struck a deal at a triannual footbridge conference, in Wroclaw in Poland.' They remain, despite the workload, a core team of three, who occasionally pull in help



Top and above The arches of BEaM's Frederick Douglass bridge, now under construction, challenge Washington's height codes. The bridge is due to complete in 2021.

Below Oslo's Ullevål Stadium bridge, opened last December, rationalises the movement of bikes and pedestrians while negotiating complex subterranean services.



from the shared architects' office Ernst works in and use freelance modellers and visualisers they know and trust. Their geographical location is immaterial – this is about a virtual working – and the niche aspect of this business serves them well, says Brownlie, allowing them to stay small but effectual: 'We only work for engineers or contractors, and our design input may only amount to a small percentage of the job, but it's the most impactful.' Technological progress in networks and cloud-based storage has been crucial, adds Marks. Wilkinson Eyre, I'm told, spent serious money on connectivity and hardware, but 'with reliable rural internet connections, we could set up business here in a way that would have been impossible 10 years ago.'

Successfully completion of BEaM's first built project, the Tappan Zee cable stay bridge over New York's Hudson River, saw it added to its US contractor's preferred consultant list, thus ensuring a steady stream of work – and there could be lots of it. Brownlie notes that tens of thousands of utilitarian bridges built in the US in the 1930s are now reaching the end of their functional lives and a rolling programme of works is published at the start of every year: 'It's an exciting time. We only need 0.01% of that and we're in business.'

And BEaM seems very much in business. Right now steel arches are being craned into place on its Frederick Douglass bridge which replaces a 70-year-old steel crossing over Washington's Anacostia River. At 45m high, the new bridge challenges this conservative city's stringent height codes. Brownlie feels no US architect would have dared compromise its historic L'Enfant urban plan; but that their bridge, named after a 19th century black social reformer, deserved both the appellation and dispensation.

Of course, the firm enjoys these showcase projects. But BEaM's Manama Crossing in

We like the malignant typologies – the boring, dirty projects

Right The Kingston Third Crossing in Ontario, a competition BEaM won in 2018.

Bahrain, won as part of a competitive bid to the state's Ministry of Works, is another project with a clear architectural aesthetic, and exemplifies how 'malleable' and pragmatic the firm has to be as part of contractor consortia. Designed as two lanes in either direction, the bridge was selected by the prime minister with a later requirement for 12 lanes, with no change to the appearance. 'It was a lot of work to revisit it and maintain the proportions,' adds Marks.

Then there is the recently completed Ullevål stadium bridge in Oslo, part of the city's integrated cycle superhighway, where the firm rationalised a brief to build two bridges over two main roads by proposing a single ring of structure that ran over both. 'There were a lot of utilities running beneath so we had to hold the whole thing up with limited touchpoints,' Marks explains.

But he adds that for all the 'signature' bridges – such as the CAN\$180m Kingston Third Crossing, in the Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage site in Canada; the Gordie Howe crossing, part of a \$2bn infrastructure development on the US/Canada border; and the 'showy' regeneration-led, \$600m I-395 viaduct for the Miami Department of Transportation – there's a string of more prosaic



infrastructure works that they're just as happy to dirty their hands with. The practice is 'light on ego' and contractors like that, so there's a feasibility study for a light rail project in Calgary; and BEaM is quietly smoothing the bumpy interfaces between three international consortia on stretches of the 22km long, \$2.2bn Mumbai Trans-harbour link. 'We like the malignant typologies,' says Brownlie.

BEaM, working with AECOM or WSP, is happy to face up to the big-hitters like ZHA, F+P and BIG on tenders, but feels that if the style of the latter three is what the client wants, it's unlikely to win, so it is choosy when it comes to competitions. Its view is that with the Middle East, it's 'the flashier the better' while the US wants 'as cheap as possible'. 'We find in competitions that clients want something they've never seen before,' says Marks 'and usually, there's a good reason why they haven't – it's called gravity. Everything we do has a structural reason and we don't want to just offer them an undeliverable vision.'

Brownlie and Marks speak in almost hushed tones of those creating the true undercurrents of bridge design: 'Genius' Belgian engineer Ney & Partners and the 'very clever'

German Schlaich Bergermann. With them, it's almost the King's New Clothes; both, feels Brownlie, 'keep removing material so the client's paying for next to nothing'.

But when asked about their favourite bridges, minimalism is off the agenda and expressionism is firmly on. Marks is inspired by Christian Menn's gloriously chunky Ganter Bridge in Switzerland and Brownlie by Sergio Musmeci's wildly plastic Ponte Musmeci, spanning 560m over Potenza's Basento river in southern Italy. That is the subject of a competition seeking proposals for its restoration and increased visitor access, which BEaM thinks is 'a dream project for pontists – but I don't think we're Italian enough.'

That doesn't matter, as there's plenty of work in the pipeline. Bound up in contractor consortia, their name might not be hitting the headlines but they feel confident that they have established a solid design niche in the infrastructure world, where their role is small but the effect is big; all done with humour from a seaside town and sans the architectural ego you'd expect.

'We like their boring, dirty projects,' says Marks, before Brownlie finishes for him. 'Yeah. It's like steering a supertanker with a small rudder while they're not looking!' ●

This image Bahrain's Manama Crossing, widened from four to 12 lanes with no change in proportions – or complaint from the architects.



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With CVs grounded in big London practices, this family team's ambitions go way beyond its Marlow base

Words: Isabelle Priest
Portrait: Ivan Jones

'We didn't always think we were going to start a practice in Marlow,' explains Steven Clarke, one half of Buckinghamshire-based Napier Clarke with his wife Amy Napier the other. 'That wasn't always the intention.' After Manchester School of Architecture the couple had started their careers in London and spent 15 years living there until moving to Marlow in 2010 after the birth of their second child. 'I was still commuting for three years. We were always thinking should we set up an office in Marylebone? But the reality was it just didn't fit with family life balance.'

They had chosen Marlow because of its proximity to this part of London, one they tended to use most because it was where they met working at Hopkins Architects; Napier between 2001 and 2011 and Clarke from 2004 to 2014 after five years at Arup Associates. At the time it would have been more natural to move from their flat in Kentish Town to east London and set up a studio there as many of their friends did, but Clarke says 'it didn't feel right'.

Yet Napier Clarke didn't appear immediately. It emerged out of freelance work Napier did on return from maternity leave; a former boathouse refurbishment in Norfolk and a local Marlow project. 'We were living it,' explains Napier. 'Steven coming home in the evenings to discuss work.' The Boathouse was shortlisted for three RIBA Awards (small project, conservation and sustainability) which reassured them that after so long in big practice they could still design. But the company was only incorporated in 2014 when they finally got a job with enough fees for Clarke to leave Hopkins. That was Pennycroft, a 430m² new build house nearby.

With advice from Napier's dad, a success-



Napier Clarke



ful businessman, Napier and Clarke realised there was opportunity in Marlow, that they didn't need to commit to London to get work.

'The quality of the architects here was different to what we could offer. There was a window to bring new ideas and thought that people couldn't find... There was a lot of pastiche going on – there still is,' says Clarke.

It is not the practice's intention to be local, however, and it reviewed the decision recently before buying a permanent office above a tile shop on one of Marlow's main shopping streets. Should the practice move to High Wycombe with faster train lines? It still has ambition for a London studio at some point but maybe one in Birmingham first. It does want a project base locally but also to reach further afield for different, more technically complex types of work the pair were used to. A Hopkins scale practice is far off, yet the aspiration is no slimmer. Given the office's location in a comfortable home counties town surrounded by upmarket interiors shops like Fired Earth, this seems surprising. Napier and Clarke are intriguing, gently quirky and quite tranquil. They don't come across as hard-nosed, out to smash the status quo.

For them it's all about making sure the work becomes commensurate with their experience. Keeping a wide network of contacts is partly how Napier Clarke has expanded its breadth. A local client representative, for example, introduced the directors to Gage Properties for a job to convert and extend another boathouse, this one on the Thames, seven miles from the office, into nine homes – three in original buildings, six as attached terraced longhouses. The Old Boathouse is currently the practice's biggest scheme by number of units. The herringbone black and

Above The runner-up competition entry for Johnson Matthey Innovation Centre in Sonning.

Opposite Amy Napier and Steven Clarke with Frida the dog in their new studio in Marlow. There is still a bit of renovation work left to do.

Below Samarkand, a 1970s and '80s house refurbishment project. The practice is doing more and more of these.



white cladding, corrugated metal roof and powder coated metal details evoke the older buildings in a contemporary arrangement.

Finnamore Wood, a project it picked up by recommendation, has a similar approach; five houses this time on the 24ha wooded site of a former young offenders institute in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The single-storey barracks have been reinterpreted as a series of passive-designed staggered low-rise barns in flint and timber.

The practice also enters the occasional competition, where there's a personal or professional experience connection and every box can be ticked. Amazingly, it won the first it entered, for a new visitor centre and learning building at the Black Country Living Museum in 2015 against 23 Europe-wide entries. Clarke, who grew up in Yardley Wood, pulled a Birmingham-based team together, including a close engineer friend from school. Napier, who is from Sheffield, had also worked on Hopkins' Holkham Hall visitor centre, which meant the firm had strong CVs for the task. The design's steel frame and profiled metal cladding links the new building to the industrial heritage of the museum and its location near Dudley. Part of a bigger masterplan by Glancy Nicholls, it will sit at the high point, overlooking an expanded, recreated town.

This approach fits with a pattern of Napier Clarke's work that is contextual in situation, form and materiality. Unlike fellow future winners Brown and Brown's deliberately contrasting method of design, this work is purposefully sympathetic, referencing immediate conditions, even being subservient. It's an instinctive response to briefs, but happens to help with planning approval in often densely populated contentious areas.

Housing projects help turnover but it is things like the museum that will expose us as a practice

At Pennycroft, for example, it was a planning requirement that the house should have an arts and crafts bias, which explains the traditional brick and tile, asymmetrical entrance and triptych and clerestory windows. However, it was the practice's decision to demolish the existing house to better align the new one with its suburban neighbours. At Project 17 to 21, another private house, this time won through a competition advertised in the Architects' Journal, the design is set apart from the original listed house, wrapping along the contour of the land to half disappear.

'You can do housing projects, which will help turnover, but it is things like the Black Country Living Museum that will expose us as a practice,' adds Napier.

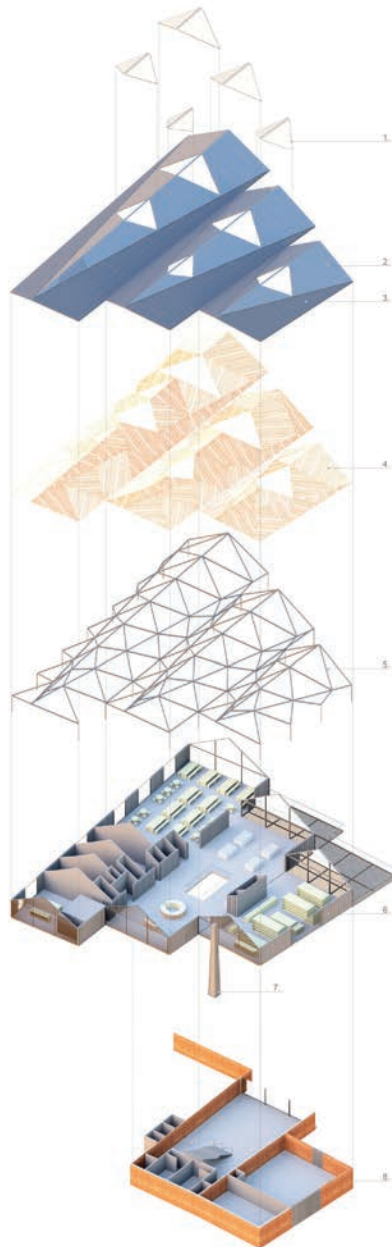
So what next? Napier Clarke has 24 projects on its books and four more waiting to be photographed, including a pro bono science room for the directors' children's school (hopefully a foot in the door to the education sector). It wants to hit more £3-10m projects, ultimately expanding the office from four to around 20 people, which would be possible in the new office by extending at the rear. The Birmingham studio may materialise in the next year as Clarke sees similar opportunities to Marlow there – a number of good practices but not many to step in alongside HS2 and the Commonwealth Games in 2022. He's also personally invested: 'It's frustrating the way things work there with so much knocking down and starting again. The city doesn't seem to understand that buildings can last more than 20-30 years.'

The thirst for bigger and different work is also about being able to implement knowledge and interest in architectural sustainability strategies. When domestic clients are faced with spending £30k on a heat pump or a better kitchen, they'll nearly always choose



Above Interior of the Black Country Living Museum visitor centre due to open next year.

Below Exploded axonometric drawing of the visitor centre.



the latter, which doesn't compare with the emphasis the pair were used to at Hopkins.

An international RIBA competition project last year shows Napier and Clarke have the appetite and acumen to do it. They came second to Hawkins\Brown in the scheme for an innovation centre for Johnson Matthey, a sustainability tech company with 14,000 employees. Its products include retrofit emissions filters for buses. Napier Clarke went in with the exact team Clarke had worked with on the 2013 WWF-UK Living Planet Centre in Woking: Expedition Engineering, Atelier 10 and Grant Associates. Inspired by the sustainable products, spiral airflow movements and local vernacular structural frame systems of the site in Sonning, the design was a timber gridshell hyperbolic cone that spun into the landscape – context responsive and show-stoppingly elegant. ●



Pennycroft, an arts and crafts-inspired five-bed house in Great Missenden.

ribaj.com

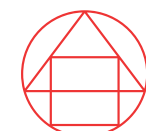


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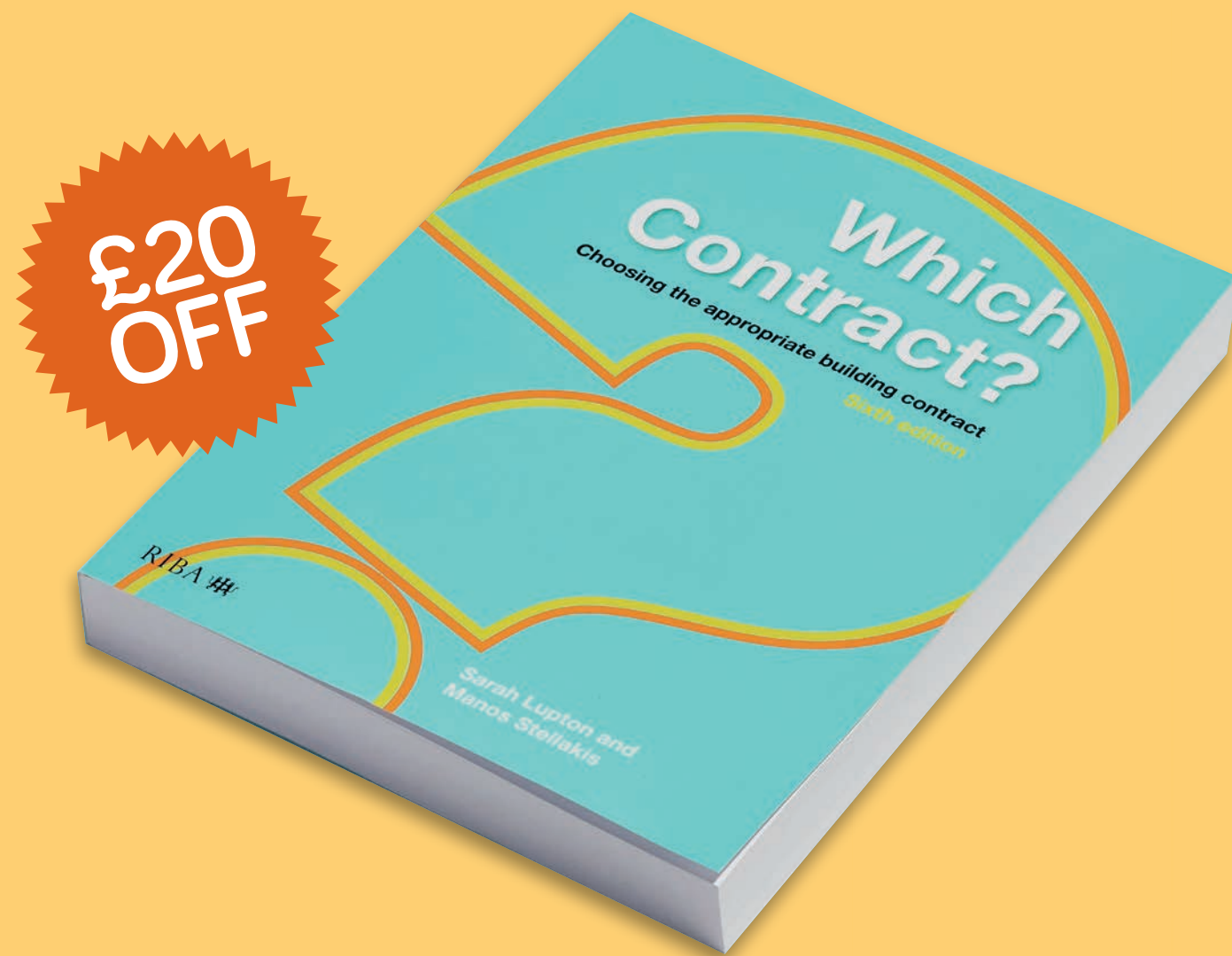
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Obituary

Paul Koralek 1933 – 2020

ABK joint founder whose early success with Trinity College's Berkeley Library was later blighted by the 'monstrous carbuncle' derision of the firm's National Gallery extension



'It's a great privilege as an architect to be allowed to put a building on this planet of ours, to occupy a certain amount of space on it. One is setting the stage for what people want to do, need to do, CAN do. So there's a dialogue there: about how subtly the stage is set up to allow people to be what they are.'

Paul Koralek said this in October 2017 at the 50th anniversary of the opening of the building that had made his reputation as a young architect: the Berkeley Library at Trinity College Dublin. Aged 28, Koralek had won the 1960-1 international competition, one of 350 entrants. Previous competition entries had dissatisfied him and remained unsent but this, he decided, he would send in whatever he thought of it.

Having to his astonishment won, he travelled to Dublin and properly took in the site and the surrounding historic buildings. This immediately changed his thinking: his winning design – set back behind a podium plaza beneath which were the library stacks – had been visually a more lightweight composition of concrete columns and beams. He changed it externally into a much more massive, granite-clad affair and the building became a carved object, even its curved-glass windows (as John Tuomey pointed out at the event), give the impression of being sculpted.

By this time Koralek had joined in practice AA friends Peter Ahrends and Richard Burton, the A and the B of what became ABK. Together they interrogated and refined the design, which then turned out to be well over budget. Salvation came from the client, who suggested that rather than reducing the ambition and fine materials of the proposed building, the college should find more money, which it did. At an eventual construction cost of some £600,000, the investment paid off handsomely in the form of a durable and adaptable building that many acclaimed later architects – Tuomey and Niall McLaughlin among them – credit with inspiring them to enter the profession.

Koralek was quietly effective, who with ABK developed one of the most distinctive and original practices of its day, always at a fruitful tangent to mainstream modernism. 'It was an intense and lifelong collaboration that was first and foremost a friendship,' he said. And he could command: one of his first acts when the Berkeley Library started on site was to condemn the first concrete work and have it demolished. After that, the work was exemplary. As his daughter Katy Ricks, puts it: 'A man of few words, he was patient and stubborn in equal measure.'

Ahrends and Koralek had both been child émigrés with their families from the Nazi regime. In the post-war years much in architecture was being reconsidered from first principles, including the tenets of modernism. Having worked at first for the still-young Powell and Moya on nurses' housing in Swindon, he went on to a stint with Marcel Breuer in New York. From here he entered the Berkeley Library competition, and Breuer's influence is clear.

Many other buildings in Ireland followed, at Trinity and elsewhere – and the ABK name continues in a Dublin-based practice. But from London it designed buildings ranging from factories to libraries, a series of stations and bridges on London's Docklands Light Railway, and – a Koralek exercise in dealing with urban complexity – a top-lit John Lewis store in Kingston that straddles a ring road. ABK also designed the British Embassy in Moscow.

It is of course known for another celebrated competition-winning design, Ahrends' National Gallery extension in London – derided by Prince Charles in 1984 as 'a monstrous carbuncle'. Six months earlier Koralek had been made a CBE. He recalled that they had tried pointing out that a carbuncle was also a rare jewel, but ABK lost the job and the adverse publicity halted new commissions for a long time. Existing clients stayed loyal and jobs slowly returned: but one will forever wonder what the firm could have achieved without that huge, unexpected setback.

Paul Koralek is survived by his daughters Katy Ricks and Lucy Linderth and three grandchildren. The surviving member of the original ABK trio is Peter Ahrends. ●

Hugh Pearman

IN MEMORIAM

Beryl S Trevor-Roberts
ELECTED 1944, LONDON

Dennis Frederick Lambeth
ELECTED 1952, EXETER

Barry Rivers Russell
ELECTED 1956, WEST
WITTERING

Ian Richard Latter
ELECTED 1968, WALTON-ON-
THAMES

David Penistone
ELECTED 1976, BURY ST
EDMUNDS

Edmund Opoku Taylor
ELECTED 1974, GHANA

John Carey Robinson
ELECTED 1976, GAERWEN

Justin Hilary Chambers
ELECTED 1961, BROMLEY

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

Exchange

Oast boast

‘A truly original work of architecture’ (or ‘innovative’ as paragraph 79 of the NPPF would say) is a high bar. Was this the challenge facing ACME at ‘Bumpers Oast’ (March 2020 p8)? Your short piece should mention it if it was. Can it be ‘one of the great houses of the past decade’? I doubt it. Certainly much to enjoy but there are four staircases, extensive demanding external wall areas and volumes within such a contrived plan. The traditional oasthouse builder would revert to rectilinear spaces when function demanded it. Jo Noero’s comment in the January issue is worth repeating: ‘In southern African languages there is no disinterested version of beauty, things are only beautiful if they are functional’. In the current climate this seems to be more appropriate.

Simon Carne, Barnes, London

Diversity issues

Regarding ‘Pride, not prejudice’ (RIBA] February 2020 p46): it is good to read about these young black women who are trying to change the perception of architecture as a profession dominated by white men. Indeed, that such an article should appear in the RIBA] is also ground breaking. However, the feature does not actually define the context or the history – and relies on vague insinuations about problems faced by black women – ‘the race and gender discrimination they may have experienced or observed, and put to one side, was shared, so betraying a structural problems’. That ‘throughout our conversation a number of key themes and issues circulate over and overlap – that the experience of black women in architecture is specific’ – but we are never told about those specific problems that ‘black women’ suffer which others – brown, pink or yellow – are not affected by.

The article doesn’t mention the context



of the shared struggle to recognise and change the barriers presented by the intersectionality of race, gender and class in architecture. Architects For Change at the RIBA, the Stephen Lawrence Foundation, Society of Black Architects, Women in Architecture, Matrix are just a few organisations that have fought for equality, diversity and inclusion to be recognised within the profession and in education.

As chair of the Architects for Change, I was part of a panel with Doreen Lawrence which examined why BAME students leave architecture, and the answers were surprising – gender and class were more likely to invite prejudice than skin colour. My 2018 book, Women in Architecture, also examines these issues. But at the very least, you could have asked a young black woman to write this article – and we might have been given some answers. And the writer could have shared some good news too – that now 28% of architects are women and that numbers of BAME architects is now around 7%; and that the work goes on, unrecognised.

Architects for Change celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2020.

Sumita Singha, founder, Architects for Change, equality forum at the RIBA

More diversity issues

RIBA is evidently working towards its ‘diversity target’ in its award of five honorary fellowships for this year. All are women, all are white and all are based in London.

Gruffydd Price, Snowdonia

Correction

The article Growth and violence in Herzegovina (RIBA] January 2020 p45) omitted Bosnia. It should have been titled ‘Growth and violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina’. It was on the work of the category winner of the RIBA President’s Awards for Research cities and community The Gulf in Bosnia and Herzegovina: An (Un)Intentional Consequence of Peace.

Something to get off your chest?

We welcome letters but retain the right to edit them: letters.ribaj@riba.org
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Can it be ‘one of the great houses of the past decade’? I doubt it

Simon Carne

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June Park's House
7 Fitzroy Park, Highgate, London ,1951

Among the women architects practising in Britain after the Second World War, June Park (1920-2018) is perhaps one of the least known – this year marks the centenary of her birth. The daughter of portrait photographers Bertram Park and Yvonne Gregory, she enrolled at the Architectural Association in 1938, and among her teachers were Frederick Gibberd and Felix Samuely. After graduating she worked for a few years in the offices of Ed Mills and her old tutor Gibberd before starting her own practice in 1945.

After a few small jobs she had the opportunity in 1949

to work on the conversion of two houses for the Finnish Legation in Belgravia, and subsequently took on mostly residential projects, including the house in Highgate (seen in the photograph) she designed for herself and her second husband, Finnish architect Cyril Mardall. June Park's houses featured in a number of 1950s publications, such as the House & Garden Book of 30 Better Houses, and she herself later wrote two books on similar subjects: Houses and Bungalows (1958) and Houses for Today (1971). ●

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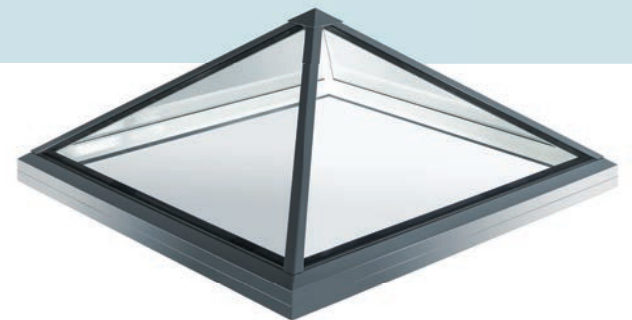




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