MAD’s Beijing kindergarten

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True grit: Anna Heringer profiled

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In architecture every period takes issue with its past. The 1960s took vengeance on the Victorian and Edwardian. Appreciation of the 1960s only truly started in the past 15 years. And now the 1980s and 1990s are getting the wrath – even if in certain young architectural circles pop bubblegum clashing colours are finding their way into paint specifications. It seems the age range for buildings to be at their blinkest is between 30 and 40 years post completion – not old enough to be looked upon wistfully and so old they appear clumsy and prohibitive to contemporary usage. Richmond House in Whitehall springs to mind.

Architects critiquing the architecture and decisions of the recent past is a theme that runs through nearly all this month’s building section projects – usually by way of demolition. Ma Yansong at the YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten in Beijing couldn’t stomach the recent ‘fake’ buildings he found on site at his first visit. Maec’s Sands End Arts and Community Centre in Parsons Green, London, rebuilds on an earlier site that was perhaps wrongfully swept away in the 1980s, although at Carlisle Cathedral Priory Feilden Fowles takes away the 19th century porch designed by GE Street.

We like to think what we do now is sensitive and with good reason, and perhaps you’ll agree with the writers that these examples are. Yet another building also springs to mind – Make’s oversized Atlas Building tower in Old Street, London, which replaced a solidly built 1980s office adding 302 luxury apartments, a decision that made some sense two years ago but doesn’t look so appropriate now. Who knows what this pandemic might do to shorten that magic 30-40 year tiredness factor. Studio Bua’s house and cultural retreat shows another way.
Welcome aboard

Denizen Works’ floating church is more than a place of worship

Words: Kate Jordan  Photographs: Gilbert McCarragher

Genesis, the Diocese of London’s new floating church, is a building that shines, literally and figuratively, out of the turbo-developed territory controlled by the London Legacy Development Corporation. It’s a small miracle that Genesis came into being at all, given that the LLDC does not permit single-faith places of worship within its boundaries. There is a visible absence of community-led facilities within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and its environs; something that this floating church aims to address through its radiant appearance and welcoming spirit.

The unusual project, which was designed by Denizen Works with Turks Shipyard and naval architect Tony Tucker, was commissioned by Denizen Works to serve the parishes of St Paul Old Ford and St Mary of Eton, as well as reaching out to new communities. Though it isn’t the Diocese’s first foray into water (it has another boat further down the Lee Navigation, where Genesis is currently moored), the mission of this one is to establish itself as a visual beacon of modern Anglicanism – the brief was to create a ‘conspicuous presence’. It has achieved this to great effect, although there’s little to alert the casual observer to the fact that it’s a place of worship. Indeed, what’s striking about Genesis is that it’s much more than a church. In addition to formal services, the promotional literature suggests that it might accommodate such activities as ‘parent and toddler groups, lunch and supper clubs, Pilates classes, support workshops and counselling’. In this respect it follows the growing trend towards mixed-use spaces in contemporary church design.

Under the guidance of Reverend Dave Pilkington and led to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised to practice co-director Andrew Ingham’s idea for a ‘kinetic’ roof that could be raised. The raised roof features a large halo-like oculus.

Inside, Genesis is simple, pleasing and surprisingly spacious – it can accommodate up to 60 passengers when stationary. The boat is entered midship with an office, kitchen and toilet to one side and a large ‘assembly space’ to the other. The latter gestures towards a traditional church, without any clumsy references. The window seats give a sense of side aisles and bays, while the central section is reminiscent of a nave, culminating in something like a sanctuary. This effect is amplified when the roof is raised, drawing the eye towards the compact, flat-pack altar. This is a confident, authentic space that defines itself on its own terms.

Murray Kerr is right when he describes the floating church as a ‘first step in our thinking about how communities can continue to be served as they grow and move away from traditional locations and building types’. Genesis illustrates how the church might adapt to transient communities who have new ideas about what it means to be spiritual.

To read a longer version of this article visit ribaj.com/genesis
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Buildings

Photograph

House R128, Stuttgart
Photograph with Zooey Braun
Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Designed in 1999 and built in 2000, Werner Sobek’s House R128 in Stuttgart is a case study house that embodies the sustainable philosophy of its architect. Home to Sobek and his partner, the ‘R’ of ‘R128’ stands for Römerstrasse, the long road that winds up from the basin that the city sits in. The ‘128’ denotes its position at the top of the hillside, commanding a dramatic view over Stuttgart; the Teutonic equivalent of Pierre Koenig’s 1960 Stahl House.

House R128 is as uncompromising now as Koenig’s Case Study House 22 was then. Built on a steep plot of land, the four storey, cubic, highly insulated, glazed modular home was designed as fully recyclable, with zero heat energy and zero emissions in operation. With its plug-in or screw connections, it was assembled in weeks and can be disassembled as quickly. Temperature shifts are balanced by a thermal energy store and its electricity is generated by solar cells, with every item in the house computer controlled.

It would have been a simple journey for photographer Zooey Braun to have made it up to the bucolic site; living as he does at the ‘downtown’, city end of the same street. On the day of the shoot, the weather wasn’t perfect, in fact it looked like rain; and Braun, disheartened at the dull of the day, was considering calling the whole thing off. But at the building’s foot, below the machined access bridge ushering you to the upper reception level, something caught his eye.

Even in the shadowless light, the nearby bank of fronds and ivy, damp and glistening, was looking particularly verdant and beautiful and the lower level glazing, more reflective than transparent, served to dissolve the building altogether.

‘It doesn’t explain how the house looks,’ he tells me of the picture, ‘but it does show its nature, exposed on all sides to the beautiful greenery.’

‘Wouldn’t you want to live there?’ I ask, exposing my own green-eyed monster.

‘I think I prefer my 1930s flat.’
The sound of silence
Deeply peaceful but not mute: every detail of Studio Bua’s Icelandic cultural retreat has a story to tell

Words: Guja Dögg Hauksdóttir  Photographs: Giovanni de Roia

I open my eyes after a deep sleep and meet the sharp gaze of a small bird positioned on a rough wooden rafter that sticks out of the exposed, softly swept concrete wall. After a moment I realise the life-size bird is not real, it is cut out of wood and painted in its natural colours, white and grey and black. I cannot see the feet due to the bird’s position high up, just below the ceiling.

I arrived at Nýp cultural retreat on the Skarðsströnd coast in west Iceland late last night after a long drive from Reykjavík. I was tired and it was too dark to sense much more than the comfortable scale of the room. It is light now and wonderfully silent, as blissfully quiet as the neatly cut wooden bird that continues to stare at me. The silence is by no means mute, as I eventually notice when I look around. The room is unusually rich in narratives, delivered through non-auditory elements, which appeals to my curiosity and imagination. The colours are natural, the same as the bird’s. Materials and texture, form and proportions are teasingly just a bit off the ordinary. This ignites a search for the stories that lie all around.

These lie in the smallest detail as well as the bigger picture. Nýp consists of a little group of small-scale buildings, tucked together under a hazardously steep slope, with a vigorous mountain river flanking the site. The buildings gaze towards the breathtaking view over Breiðafjörður bay nature reserve, with the tides that speak of sea birds and seals, purple glossy seaweed from the ocean forest and silvery dry driftwood from Russian forests, repeatedly emerging and disappearing.

The architecture at Nýp mediates between old and new narratives, linking invisible but palpable traces from the Middle

IN NUMBERS
380m²  total internal area
£160,000  cost of extension and conversion of former sheep shed
£80,000  farmhouse refurbishment cost over period of 10 years
£1,616  cost per m²

Left Nýp cultural retreat sits on the Skarðsströnd coast in west Iceland.
Above Section through the guest bedroom wing.
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furnished with a long table for entertaining that can quickly be removed to make space for a concert, lecture or poetry reading. The room has wooden floorboards rescued from a desolate farm nearby. Ceramic tiles made from clay sourced from the next valley are arranged by a reused iron fireplace. Hidden inside the concrete walls of the hay tower is a small kitchen. On the rear gable a horizontal window has been cut out towards the massive mountain slope and a rhythmical series of generous skylights have been placed in the roof above.

Meanwhile, the former residential part of the site has been gently restored with new insulation and windows resembling those of the 1930s. Parts of the original panel-clad walls have been replaced with exposed concrete, echoing the contemporary design features of the building. This adds to the various narratives of the old house, with its clashing elements of modernist corner windows and cottage style built-in cupboards and cosy nooks. This intimate and personal atmosphere is enhanced by vintage furniture and contemporary artwork such as etchings, drawings, paintings and small sculptures together with a compilation of round stones and shells from the seashore.

To the east of the farm, a greenhouse has been erected over old concrete foundations. The polycarbonate clad steel structure is bolted down to withstand the wind that intensifies in strength down the valley. An organic kitchen garden is sheltered within the void of the open foundation structure. The architect has also laid out new woodland, emphasising the sustainable ethos of the place.

Lastly, there is the adjoining new guest wing where I woke up to a staring bird. Parts of the old sheep shed walls have found a new voice in the rebuilt and redesigned structure, with a combination of sensitivity and disciplined boldness. The guest shed has a separate entrance from the back of the building, reached by a traditional turf-topped low stone wall. The glazed, double-width entrance doors invite you into a long, naturally lit gallery space for changing exhibitions. From here is access to three en-suite guest rooms facing the wide view of the bay. All internal doors are reclaimed and restored from 19th century houses. A handful of handmade local clay ceramic tiles add a warm touch to the smooth concrete floor.

Nýp cultural retreat, with its tactile materiality and restrained spatial expression, has led me to contemplate the dialectics of silence and sounds in telling stories. The place embraces you quietly. Regardless of the weather, temperature, wind or tide, you feel slowed down, silenced, in a good way, and opened up to the effortless conversation of past and present.
Divine light

In creating an airy café, Feilden Fowles has modernised the Medieval and let the sun into Carlisle Cathedral’s Fratry

Words: Eleanor Young  Photographs: Peter Cook

Carlisle Cathedral lost its monastery to dissolution under Henry VIII, and stones from its nave were seized during the English Civil War to shore up the outsize Carlisle Castle. In the 19th century its Fratry hall had a makeover, first from Robert Smirke then by GE Street – who added a porch and lowered the door turning it back to front. The 20th century contributed extensive tarmacking around the cathedral precinct, among the standing ruins of the monastery cloister.

Cathedral visitors in the 21st century could marvel at the off-centre gothic nave and the historic arches that have settled on soft ground into gravity-defying mishapes. But getting a cup of tea, that essential visitor experience, meant descending awkwardly into the crypt of the Fratry.

This was the problem that Feilden Fowles’ competition winning scheme had to solve, along with creating a space for education and reinvigorating the hall of the Fratry, once the monks’ refectory. The practice proposed a new, stripped-back modern pavilion, connected to the Fratry by a glazed link replacing Street’s porch, and with the historic doorway raised 1.7m to the level of the hall, to allow another entrance accessing the crypt to be punched into the wall below.

Making the case for removing the porch on this grade 1 listed building wasn’t too difficult – entry had previously taken people past the loos and kitchens; a new entrance was undeniably needed. But it was the local campaign on the style of the pavilion that nudged the practice into developing it beyond the rectilinear precast concrete colonnade. The rounded dropped arch of the cathedral’s west window provided a model.
The purity of precise lines of the CNC-cut red Loccharbrigs sandstone and the elegance and lightness of these arches make this pavilion, giving it a quality that throws the rounded sandstone of the ruins into gentle relief. If you want to – and I do – you can also read into it a certain PoMo sense of fun, taking historic references and playing with them. So the keystone is done away with (as on the Smirke door), and the coping stones deliberately misaligned so drips don’t automatically head for joints; solid stone is shaved to slender as it meets large panes of glass. Each arch is displayed in a rectilinear frame. The scalloped corners do a spirited little curve into themselves that suggests a religious niche, though the coping continues on into the corner with the straight lines of modernity.

For the cathedral dean Mark Boyling it was important that the new building was welcoming, as the very solid walls of the Fratry could never be. The pavilion touches the ground lightly with plenty of views in. Its stone arches are self-supporting but the building’s openness comes down to the steel frames that also keep the café column free. The steel beams are tapered to give a thin leading edge – their depth hidden in the cleanly detailed zinc roof. The new link intensifies the rhythm on the fenestration and is crowned by a diagrid ceiling. As you mount the steps to the Fratry hall, this diagrid draws up your gaze from the hard-working connecting space with its scissor lift, stairs and a chunk of boxed-in concrete to stabilise the base of the Fratry’s medieval ravelle wall (mitigating against the unknown effects of a Roman drain).

Suppliers

Windows, doors and curtain walling (pavilion and link) Janisol and Viss Hi, Schuco
Bronze link structure Victoria John of London
Standing seam zinc roofing (pavilion and link) Rheinzink / Hempstock (installer)
Lift (link) Premier Lifts
Floors (undercroft, link and pavilion) HTC Superfloor, Set in Stone
Acoustic ceiling (pavilion) Autex Cube
Lime plaster (pavilion walls), Regency lime plaster
Red Umber Mike Wye

We wanted to bring spaces back to their original grandeur
ranged against the limits of history and the cathedral precinct, and translated into simple, beautifully executed moves. With a café that bakes its own cakes the kitchen area could have taken a large slice of the pavilion but instead it is more of a servery – with baking and more complex preparation elsewhere in the cathedral precinct – leaving plenty of space for tables, even set at Covid regulation distance. Loos are at a premium so there are more at different levels. The team benefited from the experience of lay canon Bryan Gray who is behind welcoming service stations such as Gloucester Services, designed by Glenn Howells, and could closely advise on catering and too capacity as well as provide a expert client hand at tricky moments.

This is Feilden Fowles’ first heritage project and it shows the same dedication and calm inventiveness that the practice has applied to its studio and Oasis Farm Waterloo, and to the Stirling shortlisted Weston at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. In the cathedral precinct, the reinvigorated Fratry extends its gentle influence beyond its walls with a café courtyard and new planting. It makes for a breathing space from the shops and arcades of the city, and a chance for the cathedral to extend its welcome in a very accessible and elegant way. It bodes well for the next chapter of the cathedral’s life in the city.

You can read into it a certain PoMo sense of fun, taking historic references and playing with them

Credits
Architect Feilden Fowles
Client Carlisle Cathedral
Structural engineer Structure workshop
M&E consultant BCA
Quantity surveyor, project manager, CDM coordinator, FPJ
Approved building supervisor Carlisle City Council
Main contractor Cubby Construction
CAD software used Powerdraft
Surveyor of the fabric Buttress Architect
Concept landscape architect Petherick, Urquhart and Hunt
Conservation structural engineer Stand Engineers
Archaeology Cumbria Archaeology

Right! The features of the pavilion soften the cleanness of the pavilion.
Below: The café opened in summer and the courtyard was in full use.
Bottom left: The servery has been kept small.
At Mae Architect's Sands End Arts and Community Centre, on the site of what was once part of Europe's largest plant nursery, people now grow and flourish.

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek  Photographs: Rory Gardiner

It's a mark of the influence and affluence of 19th century horticulturalist James Veitch, that his nursery empire stretched from the King's Road all the way to philanthropist Charlotte Sullivan's Broom House estate in the Fulham Vestry, just east of the newly-founded Hurlingham Club. Established in 1840, the nursery employed plant collectors including noted botanist brothers William and Thomas Lobb, and dispatched them all over the world to bring back plant samples to sell to London's horticultural elite. At its peak, Veitch & Sons ran the largest family-run plant nursery in Europe, introducing 1281 varieties into the domestic market, from the Monkey Puzzle tree to exotic orchids. The RHS Veitch Memorial Medal, inaugurated then and still presented annually, pins the dynasty in time – but by 1910 the business had folded and the lean-to greenhouses that lay at the north end of the 21 acres of land donated by Sullivan in 1903 to the Borough of Fulham for the benefit of the local community, quietly rotted away unseen next to the gatekeeper's lodge behind South Park's imposing brick and terracotta wall, before finally being swept away in a 1980s-style clear out.

Sands End Arts and Community Centre, designed by Mae Architects, seems, like the medal, to be an invocation of the Veitch legacy; referencing as it does the simplicity of those old lean-to glasshouses – but here writ large to look over the wall that had always hid them. The centre is also a homage that's clearly channelled through Stirling and Gowan's 1962 Brunswick Park Primary School in Camberwell, explains project architect Michael Dillon. Its dramatic, compass-set, strut-propped monopitches are echoed here, if to a lesser degree, but the principle's the same. Brunswick Park's barrow-like mound is its dramatic, compass-set, strut-propped monopitches are echoed here, if to a lesser degree, but the principle's the same.
has here been supplanted by South Park’s defensive brick wall; their end glazing allowing both to act like a periscope, drawing in high-level light from an open sky above rather than a congested urban realm without. But here they serve an auxiliary intent, surmounting the boundary wall to create a statement entry to the park. This achieved, it slopes back away from the roads to deferentially reveal the locally listed mock Tudor gatekeeper’s lodge; which, now being converted into an art gallery for the park, acts as the historical focus of the new centre.

Its formal homogeneity is testament to the conviction of the architect to develop the design despite the lack of a clear brief from the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. With the former Broughton Rd community centre displaced to make way for luxury homes, Dillon explains that the borough was keen to create a new centre that made use of a redundant site at the park’s north west corner, addressing users from Parsons Green and placing it next to the borough’s biggest housing estate, Sullivan Court. Funding for the £2.75 million centre was secured from Chelsea FC and Thames Tideway super sewer development levies, but the reality was while the council wanted something for the whole community, it wasn’t quite sure what.

As things stand, the borough is in the process of setting up a charitable trust that will run its new hall, meeting rooms and arts space, but Dillon spells out what this is: ‘What we’ve done here is a shell building. Our brief was done here is a shell building. Our brief was 

It might have been down to the budget, but the simple, robust material choices made throughout are manifestly from the minute you enter through the park gates. The huge spruce CLT fins that modulate the yawnings north and west glazed elevations reveal the structure within, while giving lovely internal views out to the canopies of the mature trees on the site’s perimeter. They will also lift the eye above the traffic-lined busy Peterborough Road. ‘We wanted the building to connect with the park setting and high level windows also meant that we weren’t overlooking local residents, so it worked on several levels,’ explains Dillon.

What works too is his choice of warm, ‘Nougat’ facing brick from Dutch firm Stone Cycling, using 70% recycled material and 30% clay, complementing the Edwardian wall’s battery terracotta dressings. By way of working into the material, main elevations were specified, at added cost, as sawn-faced rather than the natural finish of flank elevations, creating a subtle hierarchy all of its own. Cheaper than reconstituted stone, it was clearly more expensive than brick; evidenced in the way that Mac cut costs and saved £27,000 on the contract sum by cleverly laying the bricks on their side, to generate a random module that is familiar yet unexpected the same time.

The brick theme occurs in plan too, where dark pavers give the ‘outer’ courtyard a low Countries feel that expands borderlessly all the way through the reception area, café and centre is open. It also reveals the monopitch roof over the four sections of the four blocks, intersecting as pairs on an L-shaped plan. At this corner, the relationship of the inner ‘park’ courtyards—an aspect of the firm’s planning strategy,
- surprising and delightful. Daylight streams in from the park courtyard side, the projecting CLT trusses forming a simple cloister offering shelter when glazed doors are open. With budget in mind, visual proximity, as shown here, influenced material choices – such as the use of pre-patinated copper on the cloister roof contrasting with the more distant specification of the monopitches, clad in corrugated roof sheeting. But crisply junctioned at the ridge line and flank wall parapets, fixing bolt positions aligned, it's the details that make this decision a well-mannered and reasoned one.

With the charitable entity yet to be set up, Sands End is still waiting for the people who will bring its hall, meeting room, nursery café and arts space alive; so it is hard to make a call on how the space will be occupied, but I'm sure South Park founder Charlotte Sullivan would find the new centre most agreeable, and so will today's users. And while it makes complete sense in plan to have created a single, controlled interior space as an entrance to the park, I'm left wondering if two blocks separating outer and inner courtyards, linked by a covered, exterior passage might have better served to create a true, open and welcoming entrance to a park so defined by its enclosing wall. To breach its mass in plan as well as elevation, let the leaves blow freely through and cleansing rain rinse away those pavers' chalky bloom.

North south section AA

1. Park gates
2. Outer courtyard
3. Nursery garden
4. Park courtyard
5. Gatekeeper's lodge
6. Main hall
7. Cafe and kitchen area
8. Meeting room
9. Corridor to WC and plant areas
10. Nursery garden
11. Nursery entrance
12. Storage
13. Corridors to WC and plant areas
14. Pre-school nursery
15. Nursery entrance
16. Storage

Above The café looking west to main reception, with main halls to the right. Partitions and sliding doors make the space flexible.

Below Approaching from Parson's Green, the centre makes more of a statement.
MAD Architects’ YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten is in east Beijing, in a neighbourhood that has been transformed over the past few decades. Here, as in many areas of the city, the traditional ‘hutongs’ – residential districts characterised by narrow alleys and single storey courtyard houses called ‘siheyuans’ – have made way for wider roads and modern multi-storey blocks. The new kindergarten, however, weaves around its urban environment, including one of the last siheyuans in its district, between ancient trees and next to a 1990s building. Catering for around 400 children aged from two to five years, the kindergarten is right in the middle of it all. It’s an historic setting – the oldest parts of the siheyuans date from 1725 – but also a rapidly developing one.

MAD founder and director Ma Yansong’s design features a colourful floating roof that seamlessly integrates and protects the existing buildings and trees. The roof is envisioned as an escape for children, symbolic of freedom and imagination. Little artificial hills and a slide create a playful landscape. Below the roof, the interior spaces unfurl with an open, free-flowing layout that also is designed to encourage exploration, creativity and inclusivity. Here teaching space merges with the library, amphitheatre and gymnasium. Three new courtyards centred around three ancient trees punch up through the roofscape, flooding the interior with daylight and opening up to the ancient hutong buildings to create a compelling dialogue between old and new. In a city that is changing at rapid pace it shows it’s possible to move forward without forgetting the past. From the moment the building opened at the start of the last school year, it received praise and recognition from the Chinese architectural profession for its alternating views of old and new and the way they stimulate understanding of place and history.

‘Now it isn’t just the naughty kids who can climb all over the roof. The floating roof of MAD Architects’ Beijing kindergarten weaves together past and present and encourages the children to explore.’

Words: John van der Water
Although the building is open for children at the moment, visitors are prohibited because of the pandemic so I talk to Ma Yansong on Zoom as he quarantines in Xiamen having recently returned to China from the United States.

John van de Water

Thinking about Covid and its impact, isn’t this pandemic a perpetuation of your design philosophy of ‘Shanshui-City’? That is, a quest for a more inclusive and balanced relationship between urban life and nature?

Ma Yansong

Yes. And I’ve been talking about this long before Covid. It is increasingly important to include more nature and space in our cities as it will create more opportunities for sustainable life and beauty. But of course, I recognise the tension with the existing conditions and density of many Chinese megacities. Still, for the future of Chinese urbanisation, I foresee less dense, smaller cities, well connected and of a far more manageable scale.

JVDW

A challenging future ahead — and considering its scale, MAD has a very diverse portfolio of numerous large projects. What’s the significance of a much smaller project like the YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten in your work and thinking?

MA

For me, a project like this is probably more important than for any other architect in our office. It compensates for the daily pressure of working on large urban projects and complex cultural contexts. Working on a kindergarten seems more cherishing, more tangible than large scale projects.

JVDW

Are kindergarten projects therapeutic?

MA

Yes, kindergarten projects are about healing myself...

JVDW

How come?

MA

When designing kindergartens, I imagine myself being a child again. Growing up in Beijing, going to a courtyard school myself, I enjoyed my childhood so much. I remember that we, naughty kids, always wanted to climb on the courtyard building’s roof. I guess now, that was to escape the spatial constraints of the courtyard building and to cross boundaries to discover new worlds. And the brilliant thing about the YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten was that I could provide opportunities for a new young generation to climb on the roof!

JVDW

As you grew up in Beijing, how close to your heart is this project, if you put it into the context of the urban transformation the city has experienced over the last decades?

MA

It’s a showcase project to me, allowing me to present my attitude to Beijing’s urban issues in one single scheme. You know, in China people tend to think ‘new is better’ and as a result many old buildings have been demolished. Or vice versa, when traditional buildings are considered valuable, they are newly built, often lacking true identity. We can’t only have two options, demolishing the old or having nothing new. I think there’s a third way to create new things.

JVDW

And for this ‘third way’ to create, I guess you were lucky to find an old courtyard building on the site? Even though the extension of the old courtyard house was a poorly designed – fake – addition?

MA

Very lucky! At the initial site visit, I was very clear about two aspects. First, history was key. In China, one of the bigger challenges in the education system is finding ‘the real’. Why have so many fake old buildings been constructed? I believe this ‘new-old’ is confusing to people. This issue is important for children too. So I decided to demolish the ‘new-fake’ part of the old courtyard building and add a really new building next to it to make ‘the real’ very obvious.

IN NUMBERS

9,725 m²

site area

10,778 m²

floor area

3,500 m²

roof play space

21.1 m

building height

Left Ground floor and roof axonometric. Ground floor spaces flow into each other, abandoning the idea of traditional classrooms.

Below Old and new up close, a place for children to explore and play freely.
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[LEFT] Side, stair and stepping elements come together in one of the courtyards.

**Buildings**

**Kindergarten**

[GROUND FLOOR PLAN]

1. Entrance
2. Car entrance and parking
3. Auditorium
4. Gymnasium
5. Siheyuan
6. Open plan informal teaching space
7. Courtyard
8. Teaching space

---

**JVDW** What about the second very clear aspect?

**MA** In China we often talk about our cultural past, about our over 6,000-year-long history. But how does this relate to me personally? This positioning is a significant topic for me, as is finding out its relationship with contemporary design. The second aspect was, how I could bring inspiring moments, thoughts, even philosophies from the old into a new space for this kindergarten.

**JVDW** How did these aspects translate into your design?

**MA** I imagined children growing up in an environment that would contribute to their idea of ‘real’ – in a kindergarten developed on the spatial qualities of a Beijing courtyard house: its core emptiness, its trees, an abundance of open space and air. That, combined with an accessible roof that allows for imagination... In essence, an environment for children to discover how to see history and to define their own relationship with history.

**JVDW** In Europe many kindergartens can be understood as ‘spatial translations’ of the educational philosophy they accommodate. To what degree was the school’s philosophy leading in your design, in addition to what you just described?

**MA** Our client has built many schools in China. But given the context of the existing buildings on the site, they were open to something special and different. I believe children are often controlled too much. We chose to combine the existing ordered, organised nature of the courtyard with a new building that has a large degree of freedom. Freedom on the roof for children to run around and play. Freedom under the roof, in an interior without classrooms.

**JVDW** It intrigues me how the design blurs boundaries and has many ‘dialogues’ between interior and exterior, old and new, ground and sky and formal and informal spaces, but was freedom as a concept difficult to convince a client about?
Well, the open floor plan became a recurring discussion. Our client had never realised this before. We had to address practical issues like noise control and how to avoid creating too much distraction for children so that they would not lose their concentration. But eventually, we were able to convince our client with this free open environment and natural atmosphere.

JVDW: You mentioned nature before. Can you elaborate on this idea, does it include topics like nature inclusiveness, circular building and, for example, sustainable design?

MA: For me, nature is more of a philosophical construct. I consider nature being the ‘soul’ of a space. In this design, the ‘soul’ is derived from the spatial qualities of the existing courtyard building. The new addition adds to these qualities with its circular courtyards and trees. The essence of the design is about the relation between people, open space and nature. I believe this is more relevant than just applying new materials or high technology.

JVDW: Arguably the most important question: do have any idea how the children experience your design?

MA: They never told me but they seem to enjoy it! And I’ve met several parents who told me their children are very happy there. Some parents even told me they’d wish to have attended a kindergarten like this. That’s a big compliment! Me too, I would have loved to attend this kindergarten myself!

John van de Water is founder of NEXT architects and author of You Can’t Change China, China Changes You. He has lived and worked in China for more than 15 years.

Credits

Architect MAD Architects
Client YueCheng Group
Executive architect China Academy of Building Research
Structural and mechanical engineer China Academy of Building Research
Facade construction Beijing Jangho Curtain Wall System Engineering Co
Interior designer MAD Architects and Supercloud Studio
Landscape architect ECOLAND Planning and Design Corporation

Right: The auditorium punches above the roofline behind the siheyuan.
Below: The open plan layout where reception merges into teaching and play spaces.
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Roger Watts

It’s panto time and Russian architect Vladimir Somov’s nutty but run-down 1987 Dostoevsky Drama Theatre in Veliky Novgorod is in line for a revamp. The competition for the job is being curated by Haworth Tompkins director Roger Watts. RIBAJ asks him what’s behind it.

How did Haworth Tompkins end up being involved with this crazy Russian project?

Somov was an eccentric architect and this was a fantastic, sculptural, futuristic building in an otherwise ancient city. The competition is for emerging architects and so my “curator” role was set up to help with both selection and in mentoring through the design process. Competition organiser Strelka KB asked us to join in a consultation role. It’s an unusual and exotic building and it feels right to hand it over to the next generation of thinkers who will approach its challenges in a fresh way.

Tell us something about Somov. He said he designed it so you could drive a tank from the street to the stage...

He was a Russian radical and abstract painter too, which was politically brave at the time. He saw his design as a form of “total theatre”, so both building and its sculpted landscape were part of a wider imaginative experience, away from reality – a primer for the theatrical event within. It’s a mix of brutalism and fantasy.

Seeing it in the wider context of flexible performance spaces it isn’t that innovative. What’s unusual about it is the abstraction of the whole design; it’s super-saturated with curious forms both in and around it. The auditorium’s fairly conventional but as a whole it’s got incredible energy and power.

It really is quite special; full of exposed concrete carved with sumptuous and alien decoration, quite the opposite from the rationality of Lasdun’s National Theatre! The big challenge for the eventual designer is that they’ll need to work harder to make it more open to the public, be open all day, have cafés and events to embed it in the city’s life. It has clear accessibility and sustainability issues at the moment so it will need work to overcome these and realise its potential. Hopefully young firms will approach it with a new bravery.

And what are the main challenges?

There was a longlist earlier this year which got whittled down to three. We were looking for a sensitivity to the building and its issues and to see if they could handle its hard-headed practical problems and precious, surreal nature. They had to provide examples where they displayed both these aspects. The competition has very specific requirements but it is also open to blue sky thinking. We are having three rounds of final presentation and judging this month. We will approach it with a new bravery.

And how did you get to the shortlist of Archiproba Studios, FORM bureau and Rhrisoma group?

It’s a mix of the relative novelty of contemporary practice and the importance of emerging building culture. Archiproba Studios is a group of six young architects with several prominent projects in the portfolio. FORM bureau is a small group of three designers with a highly innovative and positive profile and Rhrisoma group is the next generation of thinkers who will approach its challenges in a fresh way.

Only on ribaj.com The £18 million proposal was supported by high-profile patrons Ed Sheeran and Dermot O’Leary

Jan-Carlos Kucharczyk’s round up of planning permissions is back: ribaj.com/planningconsents

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Keeping afloat – Benchmarking survey

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2: Intelligence

Optimistic outcomes – President’s Medals

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President's Medals 2020

Sustainability and renewal mark both the Silver and Bronze President’s Medal winners this year, with a proposal for a co-operative geothermal energy plant and a system to make much fuller use of the whole tree in timber buildings. And in the Dissertation award, a visceral description of a 1980s gay bar sparks an investigation into queer vernaculars.

Interviews: Pamela Buxton

Below Masterplan for using geothermal power as a community asset.

Right Buildings for local businesses cascade down the hill, steel frames infilled by their artisan users.

Rob Beeny
Devil’s Valley Geothermal Co-operative
University of Westminster

A study trip to Tuscany sparked the idea for Devil’s Valley Geothermal Co-operative, a re-imagination of a rural power station as a community asset. Briefed to explore changes within the countryside, Rob Beeny was drawn to the dramatic infrastructure of geothermal energy visible in the Devil’s Valley.

‘There are amazing concrete cooling towers with all this pipe and ductwork that dances across the countryside,’ he says.

Discovering that the withdrawal of government green subsidies was threatening local residents and businesses that benefitted from the cheap renewable energy, he designed a masterplan for the scenario of a decommissioned power plant. This is imagined as being used by a new local co-operative which drills a new well and uses the renewable power to support a thriving artisan community.

The architecture of the development is a series of linear structures cascading down the hillside. Businesses including fish farms and those making honey, wine, cheese and malt beer are positioned along the pipeline according to the amount of heat they require. Their facilities get lighter and less solid as the temperatures generated by the power source decreases, culminating in greenhouse-like structures. Steel-framed on concrete pilotis, they are infilled with local materials; in the spirit of the shared endeavour, Beeny envisions the artisan community constructing the buildings themselves.

The development also includes a large communal hall/barn for use by co-operative members and the public. A public thoroughfare runs through the development, with the geothermal pipe on display as it runs down the hillside. The deliberately high visibility of the renewable power source is important, says Beeny: ‘It’s about celebrating the fact they own this amazing infrastructure and are looking after it.’

Terraces formed on either side from displaced land are cultivated so the power station “blurs” into its surrounding landscape. The resulting development enables a rural co-operative to regain control of its socio-economic future by controlling its own geothermal well and pipeline.
One Tree Manual explores a more circular approach to timber construction, resulting in an architecture for a timber institute derived from the properties, materiality and growth cycles of a Scots pine tree. Briefed to explore the symbiotic coexistence between buildings and ecologies in the Anthropocene, Tengku Sharil Bin Tengku Abdul Kadir aimed to rethink construction in respect to where building materials are derived from, and how this resource is used. ‘How we think about that is sometimes overlooked because we are constantly talking about the design itself,’ he says.

Sharil’s starting point was the realisation that 81.6% of a tree is typically wasted in the conversion of a tree to timber. His aspiration was to get this down to zero in his proposal for a timber institute in suburban Stockholm. The site is a field alongside a forested area with no urban logging restrictions. The institute is proposed as an experiential learning centre for timber production within a new, live plantation.

He first investigated the different timber products derived from conventional timber production, looking at where in the tree’s life these came from, and analysed where the waste occurred in the process. He then proposed an alternative, more circular production process that maximised the tree’s potential as a resource, including producing cast paper from pulped timber offcuts for use as timber screens and roots as biomass. Pine resin is turned into an amber, light-filtering material for use as the library wall. Sharil estimates this strategy would reduce tree wastage to around 20-10%.

The architecture of the institute is generated by the requirements of the timber production, with visitors experiencing the lifecycle of the pine tree as they journey through the building, passing through the canopies of the trees along a raised walkway. The trees are incorporated within the timber structural system of the building, with pines planted in a regular 5m grid as the main structural columns, and a rubber-lined, expandable joint enabling the structure to incorporate tree growth.

The resulting institute is a built ‘timber atlas’, encompassing growing, manufacture, learning and making. •
When Lizzie Osborne found a newspaper reference to a 1980s gay bar in Huddersfield described as a 'cesspit of filth', their interest was piqued.

'I was curious to see what makes somewhere eligible to be given such a visceral description. I wanted to understand the space and figure out how to describe queer history through architectural thought and drawing,' they said.

The result is the Medal-winning dissertation Cesspits of Filth: Queer Vernaculars in West Yorkshire 1975 -1985, presented in a distinctive fanzine-style that conveys a vivid flavour of time and place. This extends right down to sections named after tracks on playlists at The Gemini Club, the venue on the outskirts of Huddersfield town centre that provides the focus of the dissertation.

Kept under police surveillance and repeatedly raided, the club received the back of their hands when Lizzie Osborne found a newspaper reference to a 1980s gay bar in Huddersfield had the emotional weight of a palace for those who used it,' they said. 'When you go to your first gay club, the quality of that space and your experience of it never really leaves you.'

The dissertation seeks to challenge the idea of what is thought deserving of study, and what constitutes the vernacular. It argues that such a space can be seen as a distinctive form of vernacular architecture for queer culture in that region at that time.

‘At the centre of the idea of the vernacular is survival and the use of local materials. This is particularly the case with marginalised groups who have had to adapt and move around as they’re displaced,’ they said, pointing to the way that gay venues often appropriate the ‘unwanted void’ that are left behind by the city. In doing so, such venues are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of gentrification and regeneration.

Rather than attempt to design a new gay club, Osborne decided to ‘test’ the information they had found on the Gemini by creating a series of immersive tactile spaces based on the fabric of the club. This architectural study was informed by both functional planning drawings and Osborne’s research into the user experience, and included objects with camp qualities to them or objects that can be subverted in a camp way.

'For me, as part of a separate generation of the queer community, I was trying to understand a piece of history that was very much hidden and obscured,' they concluded. “Osborne’s dissertation investigates the history of the club in the social context of the time, piecing together the spatial and emotional experience of those who went there through archive research at the Bishopsgate Institute and the West Yorkshire Queer Stories project in particular. This use of first person accounts gave a social and emotional dimension to site analysis that Osborne feels should be more widely used in architecture. ‘A small gay bar on the edge of a ring road in Huddersfield had the emotional weight of a palace for those who used it,’ they said. ‘When you go to your first gay club, the quality of that space and your experience of it never really leaves you.’

The dissertation seeks to challenge the idea of what is thought deserving of study, and what constitutes the vernacular. It argues that such a space can be seen as a distinctive form of vernacular architecture for queer culture in that region at that time. ‘At the centre of the idea of the vernacular is survival and the use of local materials. This is particularly the case with marginalised groups who have had to adapt and move around as they’re displaced,’ they said, pointing to the way that gay venues often appropriate the ‘unwanted void’ that are left behind by the city. In doing so, such venues are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of gentrification and regeneration.

It challenges the idea of what is thought deserving of study, and what constitutes the vernacular.
Resilient profession hangs on

Although by May 2020 seven years of revenue growth had ended, practices have held up well against multiple challenges. The full impact of coronavirus, however, will not show until next year.

Adrian Malleson

Each year, RIBA chartered practices provide detailed information about their business performance through the RIBA Business Benchmarking Survey. For a detailed understanding of the state and business of architecture, it’s unique.

In the 2020 report, the seven-year run of growth in revenue came to an end. The 2020 report describes practices’ financial information up to May 2020, so captures only the very early effects of Covid-19. Assuming the pandemic is over by May 2021 (an assumption based mainly on hope) we will see its full effect next year.

Context

The period of rapid revenue growth has come to an end, but practice revenue and profitability are holding up.

Last year, when looking at the 2019 results of the survey, there was ‘a weak economic environment, political uncertainty, and the reticence of investors’. Things looked uncertain here, however; the largest practices have increased their profits while medium and smaller practices have seen them fall back slightly. Overall, profits are around 13% of revenue. Remember though, benchmarking data takes us to May 2020. We’re likely to witness intense pressure on profits through 2020 and into 2021.

The results mark the end of a sustained period of growth. Revenue has been holding up, but the challenges that chartered practices face already and over the coming months will be testing. The monthly RIBA Future Trends report will continue to give a snapshot of how architects feel about future work. For now, after a dramatic fall and recovery in confidence, architects remain positive. Next year’s benchmarking survey will give us the full picture of the damage Covid-19 has inflicted.

Thanks to those who spent the time completing the survey this year and to the Fees Bureau and MRM, our research partners. RIBA chartered practices can access the full findings at www.ribabenchmark.com

Revenue and profits

In 2020 RIBA chartered practices together brought in revenue of over £3.5 billion. However, although their number has increased, this is less than in 2019. A small fall of 1% last year marks the end of seven years of growth, during which year-on-year revenue rose by, on average, 12%. For these seven years, practices’ revenue growth has been three times the average rate of the construction industry, and four times that of the overall UK economy. That remarkable performance passed this year, and architectural revenue will continue to be under significant pressure during the pandemic and our recovery from it.

Geography of revenue

One constant over the last few years has been the increasing importance of London to UK architecture. While we’ve seen regional hot spots, most notably in the North West, the capital continues to dominate the UK profession. And London’s pre-eminence continues to expand. For the first time, in 2020, London generated over two-thirds of all chartered practice revenue, having increased its share of the architecture market by over 10% in just five years. The importance of London, as both the leading region and a global hub for architecture, make it particularly sensitive to the current twin threats of a no-deal Brexit and the potential pandemic-driven shift away from city centres.

International

In the last set of available data, architecture contributed more than £450 million to the UK trade balance, exporting 12 times more architectural services, by value, than it imports. RIBA chartered practices play a very significant part in this. The value of international work has more than doubled since 2013. In 2019 we saw the value of international work jump by over 20%, from £513 million to £625 million; that growth has been consolidated in 2020, although not built upon. In 2020, chartered practices carried out work on overseas projects to a value of £624 million. Overseas work accounts for 38% of total revenue. For the profession, this is a rise from 20% of all international work to 38%. The value of Middle East work is back to the level of levels that we last saw in 2015 and 2016. Inauspiciously, after successive years of growth, the value of work from the EU has fallen this year, by over a fifth, although there is still more work from the EU than there was three years ago. Trading in Europe is likely to become more challenging, and it is the region in which practices with fewer than 100 employees are most likely to work. As an aside, for the first time, the RIBA Benchmarking Survey asked about the value of work in the Arctic or Antarctic. It’s pleasing to see that RIBA practices are creating buildings in all parts of the world, even if polar work accounts for less than 1% of all overseas work.

Flattening expenditure

Turning to expenditure, for the first time since 2012, expenditure has flattened.

By quite some way, staff are the largest cost category for practices. In 2020, 58% of total expenditure was for staff. From 2012 to 2019 total staff costs had been increasing each year but this too came to an end in 2020. Total staff costs are now 5% lower than in 2019. A small and years will be testing. The monthly RIBA Future Trends report will continue to give a snapshot of how architects feel about future work. For now, after a dramatic fall and recovery in confidence, architects remain positive. Next year’s benchmarking survey will give us the full picture of the damage Covid-19 has inflicted.

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The Science of Silence

By Hugo Carter

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Glorious mud
— profile

To the letter
— review

Speeding change

After Covid, we must use the crisis to build a better world
Bye, 2020

The year that changed everything... but did it?

Verity-Jane Keefe

Such high hopes. Such a well-rounded even number. 2020. Big energy. Time to blow the dust off the last decade of nonsense and the horror of the 2019 election. YES. This was going to be the year when things changed. When people started to do what they said, rather than performing what they do. Dear 2020, I couldn’t have been more wrong. You have challenged and squelched our perceptions of what aboultry can be, draining the optimism and throwing us zinger after zinger.

We’ll call this a pre-emptive review of the year. A listicle, a top ten, round-up, a romp through – the spaces of which are usually filled with witty and wry observations of what the year has served up. At the time of writing, there are 64 days left of this foul beast of a year. I will hold on to a glimmer of optimism that by the last time this is published, the outlook might be a little better. So let’s go back.

January. Begins with a small residency in Scotland – stargazing out over nuclear submarine circling waters. Walking. Writing. Taking solitude. I find an abandoned botanical gardens and house and fall in love and take on 2020, told via a cross-country zoo and rainbow-illustrated watercolors in holding power to account, head to the Foundling Museum to see the Covid Letters, and then lockdown. If this was a review of the year I’d give those moments on the picket line four stars. The last time I was in a full place. The last time we populated busy public spaces inside and outside together. The last time I hugged people goodbye with abandon.

What we know has happened over the rest of the year, I don’t need to synopsise. (Time – peppered with clapping, slop-geeking, norm-busting, reworking, replanning, panics, George Floyd, Bosnia-Tunisia, decolonising curriculums, holding the mirror of lack of diversity squarely in the face to practice, Paradise burning, art worker redundancies, £40 temporary extra Universal Credit, Rashford for PM etc. Don’t bother visiting 2020, it doesn’t live up to its early hype.) I struggle to break it up in to ‘Things That I Have Done’ as what really makes April different to June beyond changes to rules, new slogans, more confusion and a change in temperature? We have adapted practice and behaviours, adopted new language, and only time will tell what the future will bring – what the world will look like. Everything is different, and much is the same. Being in a supermarket is different, a gallery, a museum, the workplace. Experienced have changed. The clocks have changed. The last time I was in a full place. The last time I was in a full place.

Dear 2021, I REALLY hope all those promises everyone made this year have been kept. That privilege is acknowledged, those books that have been read, we still support our communities, city lives still our to enjoy, Trump isn’t president, Universal Credit gets extended, and hope creeps out for everyone.

The mansion and Botanical Gardens in Scotland is now listed for sale. Someone buy it and let’s all move there. »

Verity-Jane Keefe is a visual artist. What really makes April different to June beyond changes to rules, new slogans, more confusion and a change in temperature?
Renew must be a design watchword

Is it time to redefine design towards renew, reuse and repurpose?

Alan Jones

Recently I needed an additional shelf in my home office, and instead of my mind running to bespoke folded brushed stainless steel with countersunk socket head screws, or to opening a catalogue, I gave myself a local ‘scrap yard challenge’. Finding a length of extruded aluminium profile, previously part of a building, with steel brackets conveniently still fitted, I washed, cut, sealed and fixed it to my study wall. It resonated with the rough concrete wall behind; reusing and repurposing the structural leftover was low cost and the next step in evolving in the space I currently spend most of my time working. This small intervention was an engagement with, and improvement of the existing building.

However even in traditional contracts and appointments, architects have finite engagement with the client, users and even the long-term success of the building – how it is occupied, how it performs and evolves over time. Contemporary procurement fractures that engagement even more. Furthermore, the widespread culture of architecture awards does not wait for the making good of defects nor submission of post occupancy evaluations – which in themselves are valuable feedback and reasons for architects to engage long-term with building owners and users. Collectively, such evaluations produce an industry wide data set, of evidence of success and potential improvement.

Happy D.2 Plus. Design and technology perfectly combined.

The perfect combination of iconic design and innovative technology: the bathroom classic Happy D.2 Plus with harmoniously rounded corners in new Happy D.2 Plus. Design and technology perfectly combined.

France will bring in a repairability index for consumer goods this January – how might such a system be applied to architects’ practice?

Other professions and industries engage with long-term client care and ongoing maintenance, repair and renew. A significant part of the renewal of our profession is likely to be the redefining of architects’ appointments, awards, education and how we consider success, towards the longer term use of buildings and spaces, and carefully considering the balance of ‘how it performs’ and ‘how it is used’ with ‘what it is’. Awards focusing on longevity also seems necessary.

The French government will introduce a repairability index for consumer goods in January 2021 and I wonder how such a system might be applied to the practice of architects and the projects we become involved with. Already the cry of ‘the most sustainable building is one that already exists’ connects existing building owners and users with material, energy and performance. There is an increasing appreciation of need for whole-sale adoption of post-occupancy evaluation and building performance management from inception to completion project, be it new build or refurb, which will create a new engagement with the consumer, client and user – their needs, evidence, standards and outcomes.

In his book The Good Ancestor, Roman Krznaric explains how everyone ought to be considering the impact of their actions – decades, centuries, and millennia from now. As architects and future architects, we have a greater chance than many to leave a positive legacy. Focusing on evidence and benefit, social and environmental performance, we can positively affect the future; future users and future generations as they use spaces and places, new and renewed. What will be our legacy and how shall we be remembered?

Recently a hearing of the Professional Conduct Committee on 28 September 2020, Anthony Pettorino was deemed to have breached RIBA Code of Professional Conduct in relation to Principle 1 that he acted dishonestly and/or without integrity by using client monies for his own benefit and he failed to avoid a conflict of interest or declare it to the affected parties.

The further breaches he committed were; in relation to Principle 2 he failed to ensure that the terms of appointment, the scope of the work and/or the essential project requirements were clear and recorded in writing. Lastly, he breached Principle 3 in that he failed to ensure that the terms of appointment were effectively, nor did he maintain and/or provide adequate records of costs.

France will bring in a repairability index for consumer goods this January – how might such a system be applied to architects’ practice?
Anna Heringer loves mud, and has won some big prizes for her rammed earth designs. For her, architecture is not just building but a route to human development.

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek  Portrait: Peter Untermaierhofer

As I sift through Anna Heringer’s mass of online content – be it the latest TED Talk, or a Harvard GSD Loeb Scholar lecture or an AR Architectural Review panel discussion – I’m more distracted by her clothing than by what she’s saying. I mean, the Loeb lecture was in 2012, the Architectural Review panel discussion in 2016 and Alejandro Aravena’s Biennale in 2018, so four years divide the three events; but in all of them the German architect seems to be wearing the same, simply fashioned top. Talking to her recently on her winning the 2020 Obel Award, the question of whether it is or not precedes my congratulations.

That €100,000 prize could buy a lot of clothes nowadays. ‘It probably was the same top – or at least one of three versions,’ Heringer replies enthusiastically, quite unabashed at being asked. It turns out she has a temperate one, ‘and a summer version and a winter one. Thinking about how we consume spurred me to create a clothing label,’ she says. ‘It probably was the same top – or at least one of three versions,’ Heringer replies enthusiastically, quite unabashed at being asked. It turns out she has a temperate one, ‘and a summer version and a winter one. Thinking about how we consume spurred me to create a clothing label,’ she says.

As a 15th-year architecture student, she couldn’t ever imagine herself in a normal architecture; because when you start to understand globalism through what you wear, you begin to alter your relationship to it. ‘Her DipDii Textiles co-op is a small ethical step in a country where over 80% of its cheap labour force turns out clothes for markets in the West, generating over US$30 billion in exports. So for her the enterprise is not only an expression of architectural intention but a whole way of living. It’s an outlook she developed from an early age. An only child, Heringer’s father was an ecologist and a scout and holidays of her youth were spent with her scout group foraging in the woods for both food and shelter and an enduring effect: “Making a tent, kitchen, toilet, furniture; the idea of creating a small village in a couple of weeks and leaving no trace at the end of it was something that shaped me. It was my first urbanism.” The NGO year-out work in Bangladesh that was following by architectural studies at the University of the Arts in Linz. Heringer laughs now at her dalliances with Deconstruction, especially given that she couldn’t ever imagine herself in a normal office. But as she tried to reconcile her passions for social justice and the environment, it was a rammed earth workshop with ceramic artist and designer Martin Rauch that proved her Road to Damascus conversion.

“I just put my hands in the mud and that was it,” she recalls. “It’s a material that’s free, ecological, low-energy and its working is the biggest part of its budget so the money stays with the people who work it. The realisation defined everything that she has done since, adding.” You can use it, repair it and recycle it without loss of quality, return it to the earth. It’s an outlook she developed from an early age. An only child, Heringer’s father was an ecologist and a scout and holidays of her youth were spent with her scout group foraging in the woods for both food and shelter and an enduring effect: “Making a tent, kitchen, toilet, furniture; the idea of creating a small village in a couple of weeks and leaving no trace at the end of it was something that shaped me. It was my first urbanism.”

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women in hand sewing, creating quality garments sold in the West that allow the village to invest its profits into a five year plan with Dipshikha. That means access to doctors, women’s health services and other community needs, even livestock. But there are less tangible benefits too. ‘Women are freed from the trap of home, with a clean, bright workplace that empowers them,’ says Heringer. It’s even about shifting perceptions of ‘untouchable’ widows: where at the last Durga Puja Hindu festival, Heringer dragged them up on the stage to dance. Being from outside the community has helped her break boundaries within it. I ask Heringer if she hasn’t since created a cozy place for herself as not only a Great White Hope but plumping envisage teaching roles at the likes of Harvard GSD and ETH Zurich that play off a trendy niche expertise, but she rejects the assertion. It’s about the survival of her dream too and the Obel cash was a surprising and welcome boon for the firm. It can’t cure properly and cannot balance interior humidity, which rammed earth walls can.’

Taddakthrithing space in Vorarlberg, Austria, is at the historic Saint Michael’s boarding school in nearby Traunstein where the architect finally will be able to build on (and obviously with) home ground. Here at the alma mater of erstwhile Pope Benedict XVI, Heringer has, with the help of executive architects, been charged with the construction of a load-bearing timber student dormitory and rammed earth forum building. The result of a 2015 speculative workshop with the school, the campus buildings will break ground next year. Heringer sees it as something of a coup as she insisted on the same ethical stance – ‘no grade, high priced concrete sourced from Pakistan. Rammed earth would have been a cheaper option that could have used and developed local skills. Heringer likes to think of it like Anandaloy – in an alternative reality where the nascent state used nothing but its own resources and skills.

‘Louis Kahn’s masterpiece, even now, is an icon for the nation,’ she muses, ‘but how much greater it would have been built from rammed earth – out of the very ground they would later fight for?’ It’s far more than a challenge to history but an open question that binds the notion of social justice to the physical land itself, born of her own experience: ‘Rammed earth is perfect because you need is time and dirt and water, and the financial horizon. While the firm has done small projects in Germany responding to the community-based nature of making, such as its altar at St Peter’s Cathedral in Worms and planning stage. For the last three in hotter climes, the technology is known as: ‘Concrete is a shitty material for hot countries,’ she tells me. ‘It can’t cure properly and cannot balance interior humidity, which rammed earth walls can.’

But performance aside, Heringer’s ultimate objective is the egalitarian world that can be dragged from the mud, and the establishment of Bangladesh as a nation proves the point. The construction of a post independence legislature for the region, the National Parliament House in Dhaka, involved high grade, high priced concrete sourced from Pakistan. Rammed earth would have been a cheaper option that could have used and developed local skills. Heringer likes to think of it like Anandaloy – in an alternative reality where the nascent state used nothing but its own resources and skills.

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The right type

On the M1, the rail network, roadworks, even the government website – Margaret Calvert’s work is familiar to everyone via her transport signage.

The graphic designer Margaret Calvert is not a household name, yet we all know her work. Directional road signs all over the land are designed by her (with Jock Kinneir), as well as all those memorable road sign pictograms such as the ones for road works and children crossing. Not to mention many of the nation’s rail, airport, ferry and hospital signs of the last half century. Ever looked at the government website – of that sign in the exhibition too. A recent reworking, and good to see a large version male figure replaced by a woman. It’s a pleasing reworking, and good to see a large version of that sign in the exhibition too. A recent photo of her holding a handbag incorporating the original road works sign suggests that, unlike pop stars who don’t want to play their old hits, she still embraces her early work. And with hits like these, why not?

FELIX SPELLER FOR THE DESIGN MUSEUM

type

The right

deserves her own show, Margaret Calvert:

for National Rail, again with Kubel. She rich -
designing the new Rail Alphabet 2 typeface
signer of the RIBA Journal typefaces).

too (designed with Henrik Kubel, also de-
latest Covid restrictions? That’s her typeface

data. It was a huge endeav-
our at a time when graphic design wasn’t re-
ally recognised as a discipline. Kinneir and

Calvert were rigorous, considering size, font,
word shape, arrangement, reflectivity and
colour, informed by extensive tests carried
out for visibility at different distances. The
new font, named Transport, was used in up-
per and lower case within clearly designed
signs, with colour-coded backgrounds to de-
note different road types. Calvert also worked
on the pictogram signs. For the children
crossing sign she wanted the image to appear
caring, so made the girl the older figure hold-

To appreciate the significance of the road
sign project, the exhibition conveys the road
network’s previous mish-mash of signage.

Calvert chose a slab serif design for New-
castle’s Metro system because she felt it suit-
ed Newcastle’s distinctive architecture. Now
known as Calvert, this lettering has proved
long-lasting and after 40 years, it is still in use
on the Metro and many buses and ferries in
the north east. It is also the Royal College of
Art identity. The exhibition tells how this
design was derived from a proposal for a
new town in France, which was rejected for
looking too English. The show also includes:

earlier work for P&O, in which Kinneir and
Calvert created a label system for passengers’
luggage that didn’t rely on language but used
colour and pattern to convey international
regions and different ports within them.

Top right Paddington
Station featuring Rail
Alphabet.

Left Margaret Calvert –
Woman at Work exhibition
at the Design Museum.

Margaret Calvert: Woman at Work, until 10 January 2021;
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BEYOND

"There was a risk. When we were considering back in April whether to go ahead with our /fifth annual Rising Stars Awards in the midst of a global economy principles. Six taking on the problem of construction waste by applying circular economy principles is critical,' adds fellow judge Shahed Saleem, 'as machines reaching into is really exciting,' says Jo Dimitri, one of this year’s winners are more various in their skills, achievements, goals and ambition. We have seen entries from architects with fire safety specialisms, professionals’ ordinary work. The winning cohort includes an archi-...
McAulay was galvanised by the 2018 IPCC Report detailing the catastrophic impact of global warming and the need for urgent action. He was shocked by the lack of impact of global warming and the need for sustainability.

‘innovative’ self-driven teaching about fresh and different way.’ This is how he is getting the message out there in a fresh and different way. Part 1: 2008 Part 2: 2011

He surveyed fellow students to identify gaps in their knowledge and came up with the idea of the Anthropocene Architecture School. It started its public life as an exhibit at Scotland’s Architecture Fringe as he finished his Part 2 at the University of Strathclyde in 2019. Then with Extinction Rebellion he led a session for the public, NGOs, activists and architects to look at what was holding back their cities’ emergency response. Next came his Crisis Studios which paired industry tutors with students to design sustainably.

The RIBA Journal December 2020


Coordinator, Anthropocene Architecture School

Sust  ainability warrior and ‘significant influencer’

She said: ‘Scott is an exceptionally proactive, engaging, articulate spokesperson for the modern architectural profession. He has an extraordinary ability to get things done.’

How would you most like to improve society through architecture?

I want to empower society: democratising architecture and its knowledge, removing barriers to access and participation – particularly on the built environment’s potential to be a climate solution. If we are to decarbonise society, the public must understand the impact of buildings and their operations upon climate change. This means creating educational opportunities from school age upwards, sharing our knowledge outside of architectural institutions in new ways in public spaces, and urging fellow architectural practitioners to champion a Green New Deal.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle?

I would love to tackle the deep-green retrofit of 66 Portland Place to turn it into a live classroom, aiming to be the first Living Building Challenge certified retrofit in Europe – creating a 2030 Challenge exemplar.

A new book by McAulay co-edited Activism in Architecture, published by the RIAS Quarterly.

A view from inside CRISIS STUDIO

CRISIS STUDIO

[Image of CRISIS STUDIO]

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First, architects can enable circular operations; we can lobby against the use of virgin materials which are unnecessary in creating resilient, functional and attractive buildings. We can advocate the dismantling of embedded systems that restrict material reuse, from taxation to warranties. Second, the design industry has a responsibility to empower local communities. This pandemic has highlighted the importance of localism. We are uniquely placed to support community projects, from inception and stakeholder engagement to communication, spatial requirements, and tangible outputs.

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Above: Design for a sustainable community centre for Upper Norwood Library Hub.


Below: ‘Significant influencer’ as described by her colleague and mentor Seth Morgan.

Annabel McAulay:

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Annabel Koeck’s significant contribution to Grimshaw’s comes both from her ability to lead complex projects and her contribution to office culture, says her referee Angela Dapper. He surveyed fellow students to identify gaps in their knowledge and came up with the idea of the Anthropocene Architecture School. It started its public life as an exhibit at Scotland’s Architecture Fringe as he finished his Part 2 at the University of Strathclyde in 2019. Then with Extinction Rebellion he led a session for the public, NGOs, activists and architects to look at what was holding back their cities’ emergency response. Next came his Crisis Studios which paired industry tutors with students to design sustainably.

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BUSHRA MOHAMED
Champion of multigenerational living with a human-centric approach

Bushra Mohamed is another member of this year’s cohort who spent her early life in Kenya. She came to the UK aged 12, moving to Letchworth Garden City. As a place which demonstrates strong ideas and ideals about housing and public space, it fostered a strand of thinking that runs through Mohamed’s work and impressed the 2020 judges.

In 2018, with Nana Biamah-Ofori, Mohamed set up the interdisciplinary research, design and architecture partnership Studio Nyali. It emerged out of her teaching at Kingston School of Architecture. ‘Student demographics are changing,’ Mohamed explains, ‘and experiences aren’t homogeneous.’ The idea was to close the disconnect between her experience of architecture, and understanding. The studio is dedicated to including other narratives and ‘non-traditional’ perspectives to better serve a pluralist society.

Its work has a particular focus on housing, including the Compound House, a type of multigenerational living well-documented in West Africa. This research has been discussed as part of the Architecture Foundation’s 100-day studio and will be published in the forthcoming instalment of the AA Files.

Studio Nyali has subsequently collaborated with Mary Vaughan Johnson, Michael Badu and Matthew Blanderfield within the teaching studio at Kingston and is currently working with ArchAfrika on its contribution to the European Cultural Centre’s exhibition at the Biennale Architettura 2021.

‘Bushra has the ability to be in two places at once and manage that well. What I like about her work is that she plays these two different roles and has a human-centric approach,’ explains Klaus Bode.

‘She has also conveyed that in the most simple and constrained way in her drawings,’ says Mary Arnold Forster. ‘I like to see drawing.’

In addition to this Mohamed has wide professional experience. After her undergraduate degree at Nottingham Trent University, she spent two years working at RGP Architecture where she says she ‘really started to find a voice when discovering places walking and cycling around London’ – like the way the facade is pushed back at the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green to allude to a public square in front.

Since then she has spent varying amounts of time across a number of practices – Assemble, Adam Khan Architects (on social housing) and DRDH Architects, as well as a year spent in a studio in Rotterdam, where she worked on many housing competitions for Dutch cities and appreciated the practitioners’ productivity in giving high density projects a civic quality.

For the past two and a half years Mohamed has been working at David Kohn Architects where she leads a number of arts, cultural and residential projects. She is part of the crossdisciplinary team that won the £60m market project in Birmingham which is due to begin next year.

With David Kohn she is also co-leading a diploma unit at the Architectural Association, focusing on the crucial role markets play in supporting the performative aspects of civic life.

Her collaborator Halsey, architect of Muf Art/Architecture and Mohamed’s March tutor, says: ‘Bushra is collegiate and generous by nature with a gift for retaining close ties and collaborations. She has a strong spatial and material sensibility and an impressive work ethic.’

BUSHRA MOHAMED


Champion of multigenerational living

FABRIZIO MATILLANA
A true balancing act between quality design, community and planning needs

Fabrizio Matillana stood out for this year’s judges as a qualified architect and planner who is aligning the two disciplines by bringing design thinking to planning issues. After 10 years working for Farshid Moussavi and other large firms, he recently joined Enfield Council’s Strategic planning and design department as principal urban designer. Previously he had helped empower communities and collaborated with the Community Action Group for Holloway and Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum, advising residents on how their preferred brief could be delivered via an alternative scheme.

At Enfield Council, he has applied his knowledge to promote clear and positive planning advice – an aspect judge Alex Ely felt uses his skills to strengthen the planning system. He is now leading the urban design advice for Meridian Water Phase 1 and large projects at Edmonton Green Shopping Centre and Southall Gas Holders. He advocates dual aspect homes, clarity in tall building heights, meaningful communal spaces for housing and for carbon issues to be considered early.

‘One of Fabrizio’s many strengths,’ explains referee Tom Rumble, urban design lead at Enfield Council, ‘is his hunger for knowledge, showing initiative in researching topics for the local plan, making connections across subjects and interrogating the status quo. This is complemented by a rare and genuinely collaborative approach to make the most impactful recommendations that satisfy both private and public sector goals. He quickly gained our confidence, thereby leading negotiations on some of Enfield’s largest and most complex proposals.’

‘Matillana shows a true balancing act between quality design, community and planning needs,’ says Klaus Bode.

How would you most like to improve society through architecture?

How planning policies are worded has an impact on architecture. Communities benefit when policy is attuned to improving quality of life. There is a looseness of language in key statutory documents like the National Design Guide and London Housing SPG. I would like to move discourses away from ‘high quality’ or ‘beauty’, favouring clearer definitions, supported by evidence and promoted by a broad professional base that link design quality with environmental footprint.
The obvious dedication of Ingrid Petit to ‘living her job really well’ as Judge Mary Arnold-Foster puts it, impressed all the panel. That might be on a precious and complicated heritage project or back in the office leading winning bids or bringing in new systems. While some Rising Stars have had to go outside their practice for their challenges, Petit arrived at Feilden Fowles with a hunger for site experience, which she got.

On the Fratry building at Carlisle Cathedral she was involved from the first client meeting and held onto her role in this important heritage project, despite her lack of experience at the time. She did everything from the diagram to images to details, took on client presentations, met planners and answered Heritage Lottery Fund queries, helped investigate hours of movement of the historic Structure and delved into drainage. ‘I know everything inside out,’ she says.

The project combined high-tech (CNC-cut stone, 3D modelling) with low-tech (specialist hand-carving) to make a beautifully simple accessible entrance to the grade I listed building. Her client, the Dean, praised Petit for her calm and pragmatism that made even dealing with problems on this medi eval abbey site enjoyable. Collaboration and a remarkable attention to detail to work with a wider vision of the Fratry and the café which widened the brief. ‘She has brought to the project not only a very well-organised mind and project management skills, but a hunger for site experience, which she got. And she is covering a wide territory,’ says Alex Ely.

As the Fratry went on site so did the Pettis. ‘Her determination, diligence, patience and ability to explain complex principles helped make the messages about the challenges in sustainability much more palatable,’ says outline Peter. ‘It was quite a bit of work. The method of creating sub teams was important in making it an inclusive process,’ says Petit.

The Fratry at Carlisle Cathedral, designed by Ingrid Petit of Feilden Fowles, takes on the challenges of the historical and the contemporary, bringing an old and new world together.

Committee of architects and architectural assistants

Faul Daramola, Sophie Zar James, Tatiana Di Romo, Giuseppe Ferrigno, Kate Ridley, Rosemary Scott (clockwise from top left)


This collective of architectural professionals is unified by the ambition to eradicate waste from the construction industry. In 2019 the committee founded Re-Fabricate, a project inspired by the circular economy which asked participants to collaboratively develop products that reuse waste for construction.

Launching at the RIBA Sustainability Festival, the team recruited members, negotiated funding, generated an online presence, and organised and hosted a series of events and workshops for participants and the public. Between February and June 2020, six multi-skilled teams developed products and business proposals that enable reuse of an assigned waste material. The results ranged from WWWood, a biodegradable acoustic panel produced out of timber waste, to UPlastic, an incentivised plastic recycling app, and GlassPass, a glass-based passport system that records the material’s DNA to enable reuse of an assigned waste material. The results ranged from WWWood, a biodegradable acoustic panel produced out of timber waste, to UPlastic, an incentivised plastic recycling app, and GlassPass, a glass-based passport system that records the material’s DNA to ensure it can be sorted and reused effectively.

The success of Re-Fabricate has resulted in several commissioned talks and a feature in the RIBA Journal (September 2020). On top of this, the above projects are all being taken forward and are looking for funding to become commercially available. The committee is now developing Re-Fabricate 2021 and looking to maximise its impact through education, wider industry collaboration and engaging regions outside London.

Judge Jo Dimitri comments: ‘This is something fresh, innovative and new, tackling the issue of climate change. The group has taken a lead in the field that is original. Doing this as one person wouldn’t work. The method of creating sub teams was important in making it happen.’

‘We did that the team is pushing the boundaries of architectural practice using their skills,’ says Alex Ely. Klaus Bode, meanwhile, thinks the focus on materials is particularly strong as we move towards zero-carbon production.
ZOE CAVE

Resilient ‘force of nature’ who helped reinvent Open City in the face of the pandemic

Deputy editor and development manager, Open City
Undergraduate degree: 2014 Master’s: 2019

How would you most like to improve society through architecture? As a tool to get the voices of those often neglected heard. I would like to improve society through architecture by giving everyone an equal stake in moulding the built environment. I intend to challenge how we view the environment and the interaction between people and ecology to argue for architecture in which humans and other organisms live in union.

What existing building or place would you most like to tackle? Kate Macdonald’s (grade 1 listed) 269 Leahey Court Road is an exemplary social approach to sheltered housing. It is a building that has all of the elements, including a covered walkway. Not only is it now incongruous, it is too large in the winter and becoming hazardous. I would like to tackle the walkway because consideration of the modern mundane bits of architecture would protect the bigger ambitions of the design.

Shawn Adams

Talented designer, architectural writer and pathfinder for aspiring architects

Part 2 graduate

Adams only finished his masters this year, during the pandemic, but he had already started using his talents to make change. He co-founded the Power Out of Restriction Collective for PoR, which aims to help and inspire the younger generation, and joined the Architecture Foundation’s New Architectural Writers (NAW) scheme, a free programme for BAME design critics, while also working periodically.

Referees and RCA tutors Daniel Fernández-Pascual and Alex Schroeder know Adams’ designs and the wider impact he is making, ‘Shawn is an extremely talented architectural designer paving the way for a new generation of BAME architecture practitioners while enhancing the voice of under-represented communities in London and beyond,’ they say. ‘He is already leaving his profound mark on the profession and the urban fabric.’

His most recent project, Plinths and Tapestry, has been published in the Financial Times, Architecture Journal and the RIBA Journal and was exhibited at the Betty Project gallery, while his writing with NAW has taken him into magazines such as Vice and Icon. He is using his talents and seeing the environment and the interaction between people and ecology to argue for architecture in which humans and other organisms live in union.

What would you most like to tackle? I would like to address the space of opportunity. Creating opportunities for working class, BAME, and misrepresented students. For those who dream of studying architecture but think they can’t do it, then don’t you see anyone that looks or speaks like them. I want to help tackle pressing global and social issues such as the climate crisis, racial injustices and gender inequalities. In terms of geographic places, I want to start in London and expand to the UK, Europe and eventually the world.

What existing building or place would you most like to improve? As a tool to get the voices of those often neglected heard. I would like to improve society through architecture by giving everyone an equal stake in moulding the built environment. I intend to challenge how we view the environment and the interaction between people and ecology to argue for architecture in which humans and other organisms live in union.

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ST Martin’s as he now does. ‘I don’t know anyone who has been a lecturer,’ he says. Equally he never thought he would be a pioneer, as he has proved to be. Since 2015 he has done educational outreach with the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, of which he is an alumni, for the City of London and in schools.

There are others out there who have not seen someone of the same race and working class background as me, so I push at each area,’ he says. He likes the idea that those that follow can just message him for a word of encouragement.

What did he have was youth clubs and volunteers just a little older who organised sports, music and creative activities and he gave them the confidence to stand and speak. As those very youth clubs are closing down and he and a group of like-minded friends sat together to found PoR, how could they offer the same hope, encouragement and voice? ‘We took our passions and made them more tangible,’ he explains. In Wandsworth, London, PoR is leading co-design at a Carnegie’s Community boxing gym, giving gym goers a real say in change. ‘We can relate to these people, we also played pool and table tennis and went to the tuck shop… We couldn’t really make it other- wise.’ Working with MAKE Architects PoR has also helped launch The People’s Pavilion for young people to design a Structure in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

His interest in the next generation when he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable,’ said judge Alex Ely. Klaus Bode pointed out that he is just a graduate is commendable.’
THE 2020 SHORTLIST

Alex Ball, Richard Markland Architects
Applying virtual reality to concrete pours

Geethica Gunarajah, IF_DO
Proving herself with design flare and mentoring

Catalina Ionita, Coda Studios
Engaging on ethics and sustainability

Farran Keenan, Wolff Architects
Shaking up processes for sustainability

Carla Novak and Adam Hiles, Novak Hiles Architects
Establishing creative design practice

Ben Porter, Hawkins\Brown
Coding for efficiency

Pati Santos, The Good Thing
Practice for wellbeing

Kike Sanyaolu, Galliford Try
Problem solving and working for BAME women in construction

Oliver Thomas, BIG
Aspiring archi-preneur and design technologist
Anthony Paul Rossi
1932 – 2020

Expert in conservation and heritage, particularly known for his work with church buildings for which he was awarded a Papal Knighthood.

In Memoriam
David Myl Thomas Elected RIBA (1966/1976)
Alien Dunegan Elected RIBA, FMV, F. FRANCE
Traver John Hobbs Elected RIBA, LINCOURN
James Coke Elected RIBA, GLASGOW
Robin Michael Briscoe Elected RIBA (1991)
David Charles Ranney RIBA 1976
Maria Alice Plunkett, Lady Derwen Elected RIBA County of WELSH R. ISLAND.

Anthony Rossi has died aged 88.

Anthony Rossi came from a family of Norwich silversmiths, who originated from Como. His parents moved back to Norwich in 1938 and he was educated at Norwich School. He was then articled to the highly respected Norwich architectural practice of Cecil Upcher & James Fletcher Watson. After two years at the Polytechnic School of Architecture in London, followed by his National Service, he worked in Norwich with several Norwich firms, including Wearing,Haslett (1966-1972), before taking the newly established post graduate diploma in conservation at the University of York. He married Claire Statham in 1963 and they had four children.

In 1974 he moved to Derbyshire to join the newly re-vitalised Derbyshire County Council’s conservation department as its historic buildings advisor. His willingness to freely share his expertise, self-effacing extensions or empathetic new buildings within their curtilage.

The key example of his rescue of the 17th century Hopkins’s House on Greenhill, Wirksworth, was the most significant derelict building in the town. The roof and floors had fallen in, but carefully sifting the rubble he was able to resurrect many original features in the process of repair and re-use. Using trades under his direct control rather than a building contractor he painstakingly pieced the property back together on an extremely limited budget for the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust. This was a turning point for the Wirksworth project, established by the Civic Trust and Monument Trust to revitalise and regenerate this Derbyshire town. Elsewhere, his work to stabilise and make accessible the ruins of Hardwick Old Hall was ground-breaking and exemplary. In March 1997, with a high reputation, he returned to Norwich to establish his own practice. Projects of note included the repair of the near derelict Thorpe Hall in Norwich and the historic Woolmarket and Paston. He tended Blickling Hall and Flatford for the National Trust as well as working for several preservation trusts, local authorities and historic churches, frequently in cooperation with English Heritage.

A devout Roman Catholic, he undertook work for the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia and the National Shrine at Walsingham and acted as architect to the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich for 11 years. He designed the new Roman Catholic church in Little Walsingham in 2006 as a carbon neutral design using 90m ground probes to provide under floor heating and 180 photovoltaic cells on the roof for all additional energy need. He was awarded a Papal Knighthood in 1998 for his outstanding contribution to the Church. He generously gave his time to other denominations too.

Softly spoken and modest, Rossi adopted a low-key, ascetic way of life with the air of a slightly eccentric Oxford don, and a bone dry, subversive sense of humour. He will be sorely missed by his wife, children and 12 grandchildren.

Charlotte Stoddard

In the RIBA of the death of a member, please email membership.service@riba.org with details of his family.

To all our members, please remember that the right to have your letters published is retained. If you are not a member of the RIBA (please list place here by the architects) were digitally removed, but not on the other, so there was a consistency we hadn’t spotted ourselves. However there’s no roof-removal going on; there’s a terrace up there at that point.

The RIBA Journal
December 2020
ribaj.com

Expert in conservation and heritage, particularly known for his work with church buildings for which he was awarded a Papal Knighthood.
The Palazzo del Lavoro in Turin, one of the most remarkable achievements of the great Italian engineer Pier Luigi Nervi, was designed in collaboration with the architect Gio Ponti for the Expo 61, which celebrated the centenary of Italy’s unification. The vast roof of this exhibition space was supported by 16 independent ‘umbrellas’, each made of steel beams fixed to a central concrete column and separated by strip skylights; Nervi’s solution not only reveals but emphasises the role of the structure in creating architectural space. The exterior of the building was glazed all around.

This photograph, taken by the then Architectural Design editor Monica Pidgeon, shows one of Nervi’s columns in the background of Ponti’s exhibition display. This, as in many previous expos, celebrates technological progress – specifically, in this case, its role in the future of the Italian economy. The expo also aimed to leave a legacy of reusable infrastructures to the city of Turin. The building stopped being used in the 1970s and, in spite of a series of proposals for its adaptation, is now in a grave state of neglect.

Valeria Carullo
Further proof that light never gets old.

Introducing The Parchment Works, a 17th Century ruin returned to life by Will Gamble Architects using Maxlight architectural glazing.

Winner of British Homes Awards Home Extension of the Year, British Homes Awards Interior Designer of the Year and shortlisted by Architects’ Journal Small Projects 2020 Award.