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by Tamas Bujnovszky

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1: Buildings

Communicating the architectural history of a place or type of building runs through all four of this month's building studies. In Hertfordshire a new equestrian manège for a private client takes on the aesthetic of the listed farm and 12 existing stables. In Wolverhampton, Associated Architects is fitting a new university faculty for the built environment into a redundant brewery site using the surrounding industrial language of saw-tooth roofs, steel and the Midlands colour red, giving people a much needed boost of optimism. Meanwhile, Hugh Pearman visits his old school where buildings designed by E H Burnell and W Campbell Jones, their brickwork and buttresses, help him understand the new intervention by Bell Phillips Architects. At BORD Architectural Design's Aquaticum waterpark in Hungary it's not the architec-

tural history of the place that informs the design, but a thrilling cacophony of architectural references dramatically thrown together from around the world. Yet there's another strand of stuff taking place among these buildings too, a glimmer of hope on the role of architects in the building process – the bulking out of work and a return, perhaps, to traditional values. The manège was a satisfyingly chunky job for Atelier Architecture and Design because the practice also took on the role of main contractor. Likewise, Bell Phillips' appointment in Tunbridge Wells came out of an initial overseer role to survey the school's fabric pro bono, and then the building work was carried out by traditional contract too – trust that paid off for all parties and is reflected in the quality of the resulting building. ●

Skinner's School by Bell Phillips Architects, page 14.



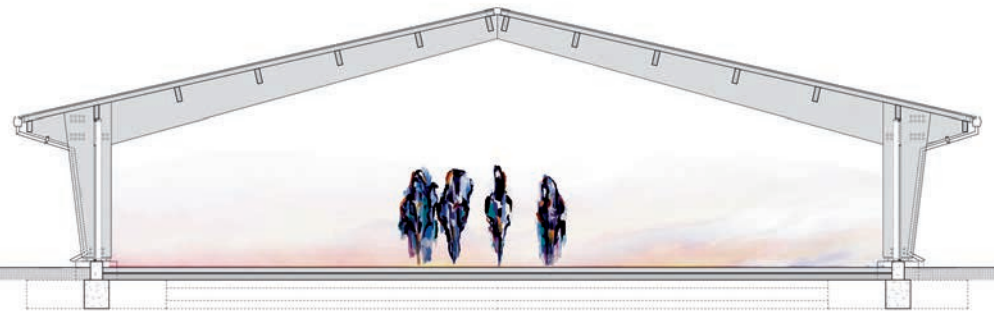
KILIAN O'SULLIVAN

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM
Despite the anger he channels at the elitist state of land ownership, there is a lot of positivity in the book
Sarah Featherstone reveals her favourite book of 2020: ribaj.com/shrubsole

Never mind the weather

Glulam and glass give views without the English rain

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Dennis Gilbert/VIEW



A concept car, a pavilion for the Turin Winter Olympics and the British weather were the inspiration for this covered manège in the Chilterns. Fabrizio Giugiaro is a product designer near Turin; his father is a legend in car design and he carried on the tradition with Italdesign. In 1998 he designed the super glazed Structura concept car that was all frame and glass – perfect for taking in the passing views – from which grew a glass and timber frame Olympic pavilion among the trees of a Turin square. And when he set out to give his daughters a riding space out of the rain at the family’s listed farm in England, Giugiaro wanted to make it an airy experience too, with views of the Chilterns. He also wanted the smell and feel of timber and the simplicity and strength of a glulam frame.

Glazed gable ends mean views straight out onto the landscape.



Hertfordshire-based Atelier Architecture and Design developed Giugiaro’s idea, with a 20m span portal frame using twin glulam columns. Between them sits aluminium-framed curtain walling. Steve Melvin’s early sketches show the ribbon form of horses dancing under an elegant, minimal roof. There is something to this, though of course the reality is more complex: Hopkins-style steel ties across the glazing, doors to push open and gallop rails around the glass to discourage the stray hoof.

Over this year’s unusually hot summer – when the family was kept in the UK by Covid travel restrictions – the manège remained a cool and calm place for the horses. The roof is well insulated (150mm of insulation) using Kingspan trapezoidal composite panels over exposed glulam beams. The two angles of the roof have two purlins at the top to leave a ridge vent to draw out warm air. Though a single horse may work up a sweat in the manège there are rarely more than three or four in there at a time, so the air inlet vents at eaves level – and sometimes the doors being left open – allow enough air through for effective natural ventilation, says Melvin.

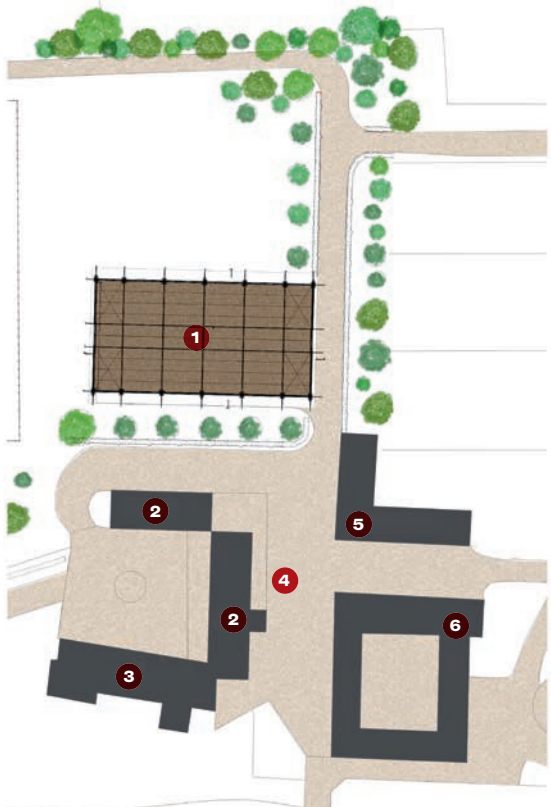
In some ways the simple form is like the storage barn that had already had planning permission in almost the same position. And its form has hints of the agricultural, though it was inevitably pricier than a standard barn. But the tradition it draws on most is that of the farm; before Giugiaro took over it already had 12 timber stables and plenty of horsey activity including an outdoor manège. In fact Giugiaro’s daughters didn’t ride in

Above The manège terminating the stable yard.

Below The overhanging and well insulated roof ensure the manège stays cool.

IN NUMBERS
£800,000
approx contract cost
684m2
GIA
£1170
cost per m²
JCT Management Building Contract 2016

- Site plan
- 1 Manège
 - 2 Barn
 - 3 Farmhouse
 - 4 Yard
 - 5 Outbuildings
 - 6 Stables



Gallop rails around the glass discourage the stray hoof

Italy, thanks to nervous horses and a difficult riding style, confides Giugiaro. It was only in England that they were introduced to gentler horses – a particular boon for Giugiaro’s disabled daughter who can enjoy ‘driving’ the horse. The stables are also home to Millie McBride Dressage so get regular use.

For Atelier this was a large job as it also took on the role of main contractor. Some things came easy – like the glulam frame, thanks to a close collaboration with Buckland Timber. Others, particularly the ground works, were more of a struggle. A hugely wet start, finding unexpected existing footings on the site and some inaccurate soil investigation meant everything took longer. And preventing water from getting to the specialist dressage on top of limestone dust and limestone scrapings was critical – it was down to Atelier to address any problems with remedial drainage. Melvin estimates there was a substantial saving on the contract cost but that the practice paid for it in time and worry. Giugiaro too wonders out loud why it took so long, a whole year to build, when the frame was up in just two and a half weeks. But now it is done and Melvin’s dancing horses can ride off into the Chilterns sunset (and back around), while keeping nice and dry. ●

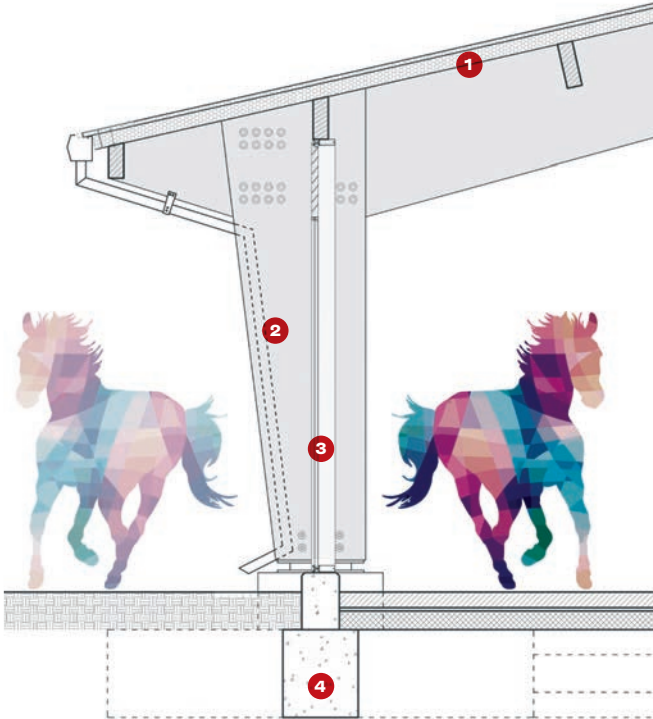


Credits
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Architecture & Design
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Structures
Lighting Your Digital Home
Foundations Eagle Nest
Drainage LID
Timber frame Buckland Timber
Roof Hallford
Refurbishments
Curtain Wall All Glass Systems

Above Double glulam columns frame the manège.

Below The building is used by the family and dressage riders including one specialising in nervous horses.

- 1 Composite roof
- 2 Double glulam column
- 3 Hidden downpipes
- 4 Pad foundations



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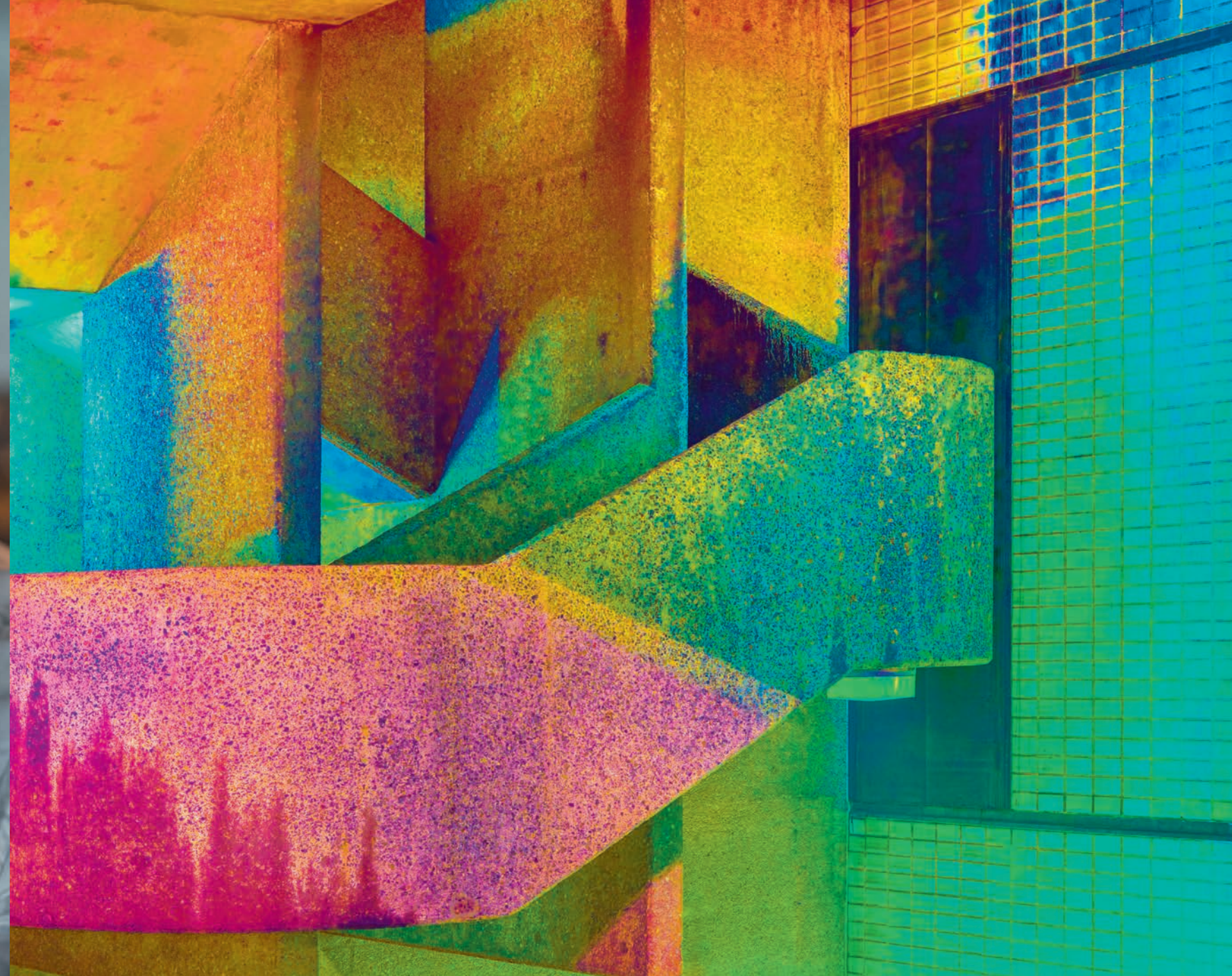
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¹ RPW-303: Testing as of March 02, 2020 by AMD Performance Labs on a production test system comprised of an Intel® Xeon® W-2125, 32GB DDR4 RAM, Windows® 10 Pro for Workstations, 64-bit, System BIOS 1.11.1, AMD Radeon™ Pro WX 3200, AMD Radeon™ Pro Software for Enterprise 20.Q1/NVIDIA Quadro P1000, NVIDIA Quadro® Optimal Driver for Enterprise (ODE) R440 U4 (441.66). Pricing based on publicly available information on amazon.com as of April 14, 2020. Prices subject to change. Results may vary. RPW-303

Nvidia Quadro P1000 cost of \$339.00 on Amazon.com viewed on 14 April 2020. AMD SEP of \$199.00. All pricing in USD and may vary regionally. AMD SEP pricing correct as of 01 August 2020.



Photograph: Museum of London

Image: Christopher Hope-Fitch

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek

At first glance it looks like thermal imaging and, in a way, it is; but look again. What strange insulation arrangement would account for that diagonal line on the concrete balustrade or the curious, cold blue triangle trace on the insitu concrete pier?

This is an image from photographer Christopher Hope-Fitch's personal project Brutalism in Colour. His day job is producing lifestyle shots for Getty Images but maybe it was 10 years spent in the black & white department of a specialist photographic lab in central London that led to him creating these supersaturated images.

Of course, brutalism lends itself to black & white photography, its sculptural nature responding well to the play of light and shadow, while the medium binds the style in both time and perception. But it was during Hope-Fitch's nocturnal shoots in the city that the photographer noticed the delicate colours that its surfaces absorbed when illuminated at night.

This image of a staircase outside the Museum of London is the happy accident of sodium street lights mixing with the Barbican Highwalk's tungsten and the fluorescent light of the stair. 'A couple of the tubes were also on the way out and go greener before they blow,' he says, though despite his Sony A7R2's 'incredible sensors', picking up the subtlest colour differentials, he wasn't sure

what the result would be. So yes, it's thermal imaging; not of the structure but of the light that is striking it: the red, yellow, green and blue denoting the heat they emit onto a receptive surface. But there's a time limit to Hope-Fitch's chromatic experimentation. He tells me of a recent shoot in Portsmouth, with its new low-energy, bright white, LED street lighting. 'London's skies currently throw up all manner of colours in the process but at this shoot there was nothing – I was rather thrown by it,' he recalls.

He shouldn't be. What Hope-Fitch's work is marking is the end of an era, a cessation of the heat bleeds of the past and a time when sustainable LEDs will, by default, see a back to the future, nocturnal return of brutalism's signature monochrome. ●

Old boy on the block

Hugh Pearman goes back to school, and finds he likes it better now

Photographs: Kilian O'Sullivan

A complex thing to build, the west elevation of the new centre takes its cue from the buttressed 19th century school hall nearby.

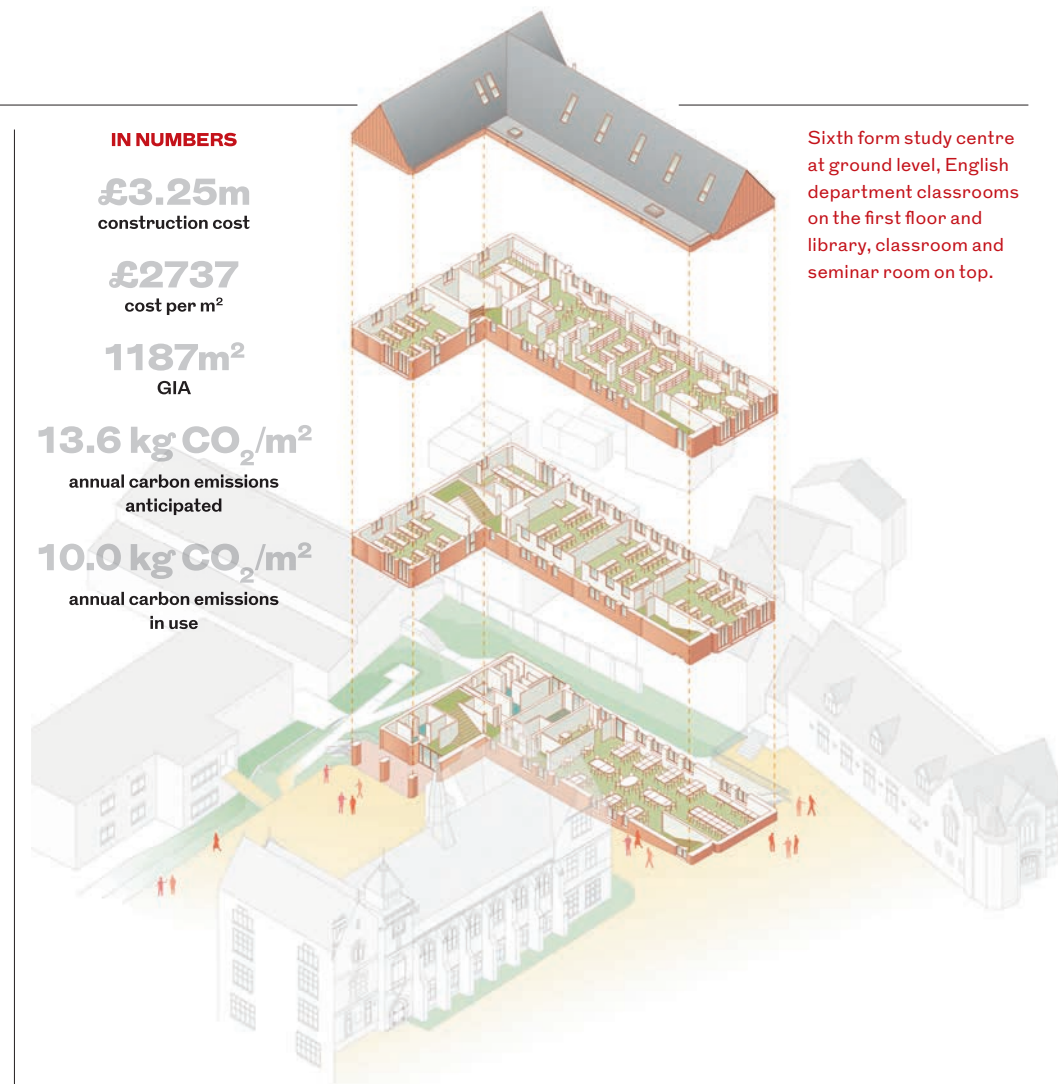
Buildings School

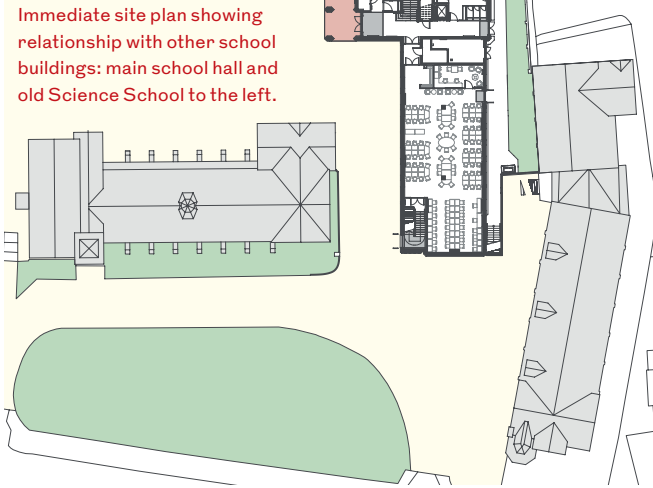
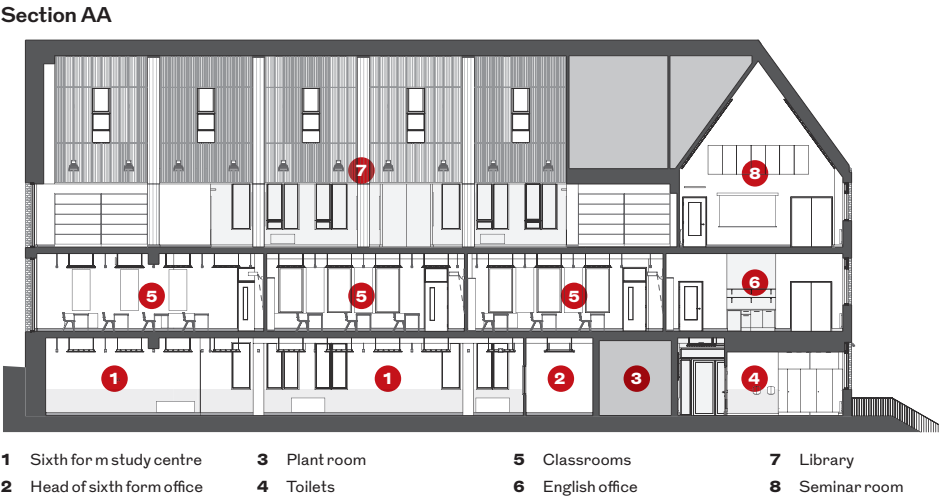
It's a strange business, going back to a place you last walked out of 46 years ago expecting never to return. Especially when it is your old school: the Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells, a state all-boys grammar then and now. I become uncomfortably aware that I am carrying a leather satchel, something that we growing-up boys felt was very much beneath us at the time. Satchels were a primary school thing. The idea of an adult carrying one would have struck us as bizarre.

Nonetheless, despite all the ad-hoc changes over the years, once through the gates I know pretty much just where all the important places are to be found. But for one big change, the thing I had come to see. A large new block by Bell Phillips Architects, containing a sixth form study centre, library and English department classrooms. It's the first properly planned and designed addition the school has made since its modernist 'new wing' (neither new nor a wing, but not bad) of 1960. There have been several other buildings since then as the school has expanded and no doubt they work fine but there has been a lack of architectural quality, consistency and clarity. Unlike that muddle of buildings occupying the lower centre of the site, the new three-storey block is perched high, visible from the street, right alongside the original buildings. Something much better was required there.

This is the first built educational foray by a practice that is known especially for its residential work. It turns out that partner Tim Bell is another, younger old boy: the commission arose after he'd done a chunk of pro-bono work for the school establishing the siting and feasibility of the desired new building. It was a direct appointment and the work was done on a traditional contract, which was pretty much the way they did things when the school was first built. Better still, it was left to the school itself to oversee, rather than being handled remotely at county level. The Skinners' Company still owns it.

To understand the new building with its steep-pitched roof and deeply-modelled brickwork, all you need to do is glance at the original buildings of 1886–1899, set back from St John's Road, the main route into town from the north. From the street outside, reading from north to south, you get the first two buildings by architect E H Burnell: the large freestanding headmaster's house (also for many years a boarding house); and the





main original red-brick-and stone-dressings school building complete with clock tower and buttressed hall with central flèche, in a Tudor/gothic manner.

Grafted onto the southern end of that a decade later, the Science School in a more Arts and Crafts style is by W Campbell Jones (his firm still existed half a century and two world wars later and was called back to design the ‘new wing’ in urbane bricky-modern manner, a remarkable act of slow-burn repeat patronage). To the right of the original Science School and back a bit used to be the school’s old gym of 1900: this and some ancillary structures were demolished to make way for the Bell Phillips building. Finally the southernmost structure, also from around 1900, is Byng Hall, a former church institute acquired in 2003 to become Skinners’ music and drama department, with auditorium. By a different hand, it’s in turn-of-the-20th century gothic. Taken as a group, these make up a handsome range of complementary late Victorian buildings that I was surprised to find is not yet listed.

Bell anyway treats this context as if it was, carefully designing his new addition in a way that draws upon the form, massing, orientation and materials of the originals. In particular, the hand-laid brickwork of his vertically-striated street elevation nods to the brick buttresses of the original school hall. Just as the Campbell Jones Science School moved the architecture on a notch while staying broadly sympathetic to the original, so the intention with the latest building is plainly to bring that visual evolution forward 120 years while keeping some of the finesse of the originals. It’s no copy though. Mortar is coloured to match the brick. No stone dressings. Artificial slate roofing makes a contrast

The main donor gave money on the strict proviso that it must in no way be spent on anything to do with sport

with the clay tiles of the old buildings, I note, probably a function of cost.

At a glance it might seem a somewhat conservative response, but then this is a conservative school in a generally conservative town. Its ethos probably suits the spirit of the times right now rather better than it did the hippyish zeitgeist of the late 1960s and early 1970s when I was being sporadically anti-establishment there.

Despite its links to a medieval City livery company and its inherited public-school way of going about things (all-boys, house system, a cadet force, big emphasis on sport and competition, uniform little changed since long before I was there), Skinners has been part of the state system since 1948, a choice made following the Education Act of 1944. Later Kent stubbornly kept its selective grammar schools going, along with the 11-plus exam that you have to pass to get in there, when most of the rest of the country went comprehensive. With local authority control and relative lack of cash came piecemeal development over time plus the lack of a guiding masterplan. Compare, for instance, the similarly-sized nearby affluent fee-paying Sevens School: there, under the direction of architect Tim Ronalds, a well-funded masterplan is being built out (RIBA, December 2018). State schools seldom get to build such lavish facilities. Of course private donors were needed here as well. I was cheered to find that the main donor gave the money on the strict proviso that it must in no way be spent on anything to do with sport. I would like to meet him and shake his hand, once such a gesture becomes safe again.

On a very tight site, Bell Phillips is attempting to re-establish order from the



Above Top-floor dual-aspect classroom commands views across the site and beyond.

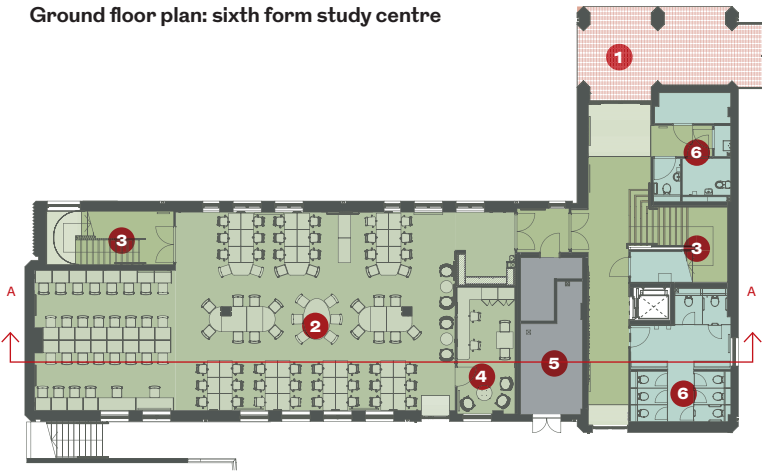
Below English department classrooms on the first floor borrow extra daylight via a corridor.



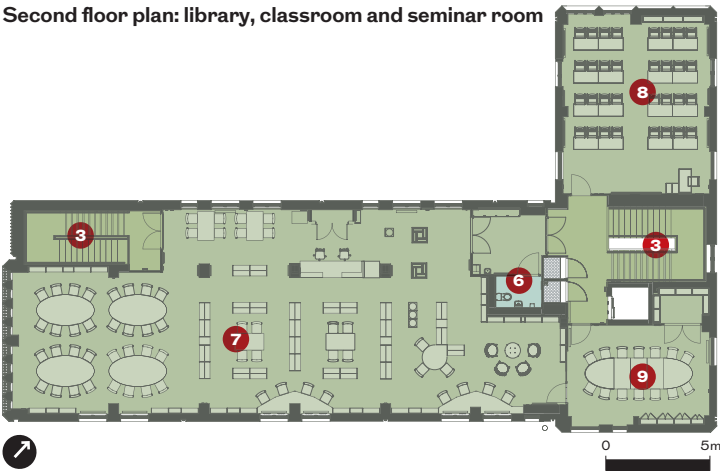
front. Given that the school is much enlarged – five-form entry compared with the three-form set-up I knew, total pupil numbers 1,119, some 325 of whom are in the sixth forms – the need for a better library, more classrooms and improved sixth form centre was clear enough. So was the need for a higher quality new building. The result is a lot of presence as well as accommodation for the money, working out at £2,738/m². Each day 800 pupils use the new English classrooms and the sixth form centre will take 175-225, while the library takes 80 students for private study at any given time.

The new centre is effectively a gateway building, given that most pupils enter at this end of the school. From there you walk down between it and the old Science School to find yourself in the main yard, a dispersal point across what is now a very busy campus. The new block has a short return wing onto this yard with the same gable-end elevational treatment of 45° brick piers and deep lintels, providing a formal and active enclosure to

Ground floor plan: sixth form study centre



Second floor plan: library, classroom and seminar room



the space that was lacking previously, and including a short entrance arcade giving protection against the weather.

Inside it's about making the maximum usable spaces, with the money for superior finishes concentrated in two areas – the eucalyptus-lined stairs and the top-floor library which goes right up into the pointy roof. That is lined in acoustically-backed timber slats. The height befits a library: it's a good space to be. A top-floor classroom and seminar room also benefit from the extra height. Elsewhere, the rooms are more functional, well daylight, many dual-aspect, with exposed services. Strategically-placed large windows give new views of the distant hills.

- 1 Entrance arcade
- 2 Sixth form study centre
- 3 Stairs
- 4 Head of sixth form office
- 5 Plant room
- 6 Toilets
- 7 Library
- 8 Classroom
- 9 Seminar room

Below left Main staircase is lined with Eucalyptus wood.

Credits
Client The Skinners' School
Architect Bell Phillips Architects
Structural engineer Built Engineers
M&E/Fire consultant Hilson Moran
QS Gleeds
Contractor BBS Construction

Below right Ground floor entrance with stair on the left, school crest to the right and exposed services behind ceiling acoustic panels.

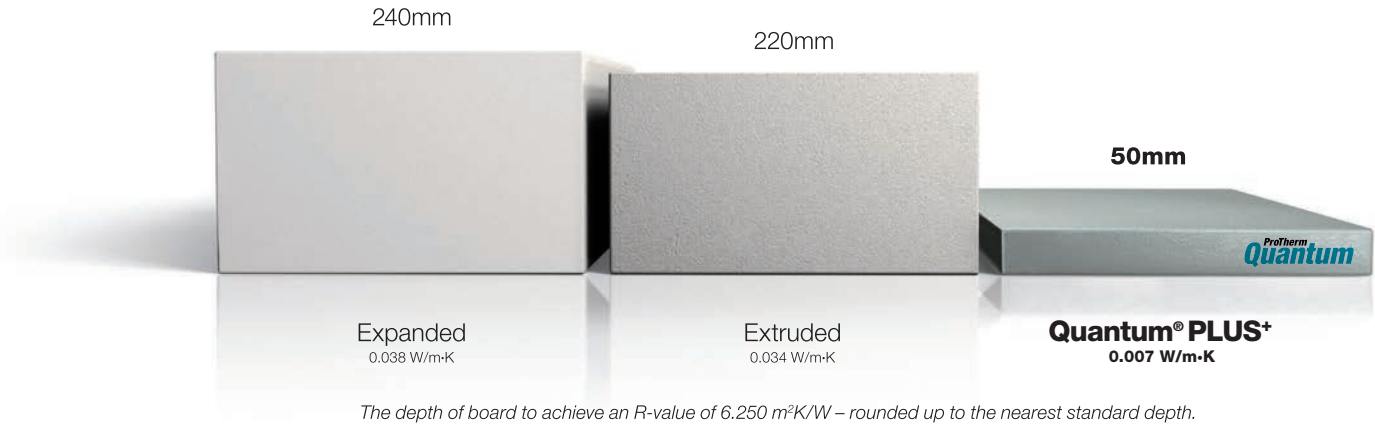
Remembering the packed classrooms, many in freezing 'temporary' wooden huts with coke stoves, others more than a little dungeon-like; and the tiny library with its electric fire I got to use in the old school house half a century ago, naturally I see a huge improvement. Who wouldn't, over that time-span? The key difference apart from personal comfort is the provision of good space for private study which was not something we had much of at all. But overall, this is a new building that feels properly school-like. One that communicates something of the architectural history of the place. I'm glad they invited me back. Perhaps this was a kind of closure. ●



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Rising from the ashes

Can Associated Architects' School of Architecture and the Built Environment propel University of Wolverhampton – and its surroundings – to the higher plane it seeks?

Words: Jan-Carlos Kucharek Photographs: Hufton+Crow

It was almost a century ago, but 1927 was a year of firsts for Wolverhampton. England's first traffic lights were installed in Princes Square in the centre, their poles still painted perkily in original 'Belisha beacon' stripes. Later that year, the A4123 'New Road', opened by Edward, Prince of Wales, connected Wolverhampton to Birmingham with the 20th century's first intercity highway. And had Florida's Daytona Beach not been a far more glam place to zoom past the chequered flag, perhaps English speed driver Henry Seagrave might have sped along New Road in his city-built Sunbeam 1000HP, the supercar that helped propel him to a 200mph land speed record and become part of history.

Listening to Wolverhampton University vice chancellor Geoff Layer in the YouTube ribbon-cutting ceremony of its new £26 million School of Architecture and the Built Environment, you'd think the glory days were

still around; but 'firsts' are well and truly consigned to the past, especially here. In both the Complete University and Guardian University Architecture course guides, the school ranks second from bottom, not helped by the fact that it's still seeking ratification for its RIBA Part II course. But Layer's genned up on classical rhetoric, saying how the 7,900m² SoABE campus, on its brownfield site east of the centre, 'puts the city as well as university on the map', stressing that it 'transforms not just lives but transforms communities, transforms business and transforms professional practice.' That's a triumvirate of superlatives; but there's also a niggle, like the eventual pronunciation of the acronym, that actual performance still needs to be endorsed by a wider public outside of the organisation.

But it deserves full marks for effort thus far. The city's Springfield brewery sits on a 5ha site just to the north of the railway station



Looking across SoABE's atrium to the south end of the brewery, its clock tower and chimney and the 'heritage entrance'.

Below left View west past the brewery gateway and stable blocks to the courtyard and new school. The train viaduct is behind with the tower of St Peter's church in the distance.



on the east side of its raised viaduct. Opened in 1892, the large, red-brick complex was characterised chiefly on the east end by its ornate ironwork courtyard entrance and its clock tower, clearly visible above the level of the residential housing around (discounting the noughties high-rise slab of student living now muscling in between it and the station). Shut down in 1991, the Springfield brewery was bought by a residential developer and messed around with in an ungainly manner until the 2008 crash meant the site was abandoned again – to suffer further decay and then arson. It was only when the university saw the potential of expanding its campus eastwards past the ring road, via a charming industrial route over James Brindley’s Birmingham canal and under the viaduct, that things started looking up again. The initial £26 million development to create SoABE is just one quarter of the £100 million projected investment in the cleared site to create the built environment campus that Layer is so effusive about in his video.

Birmingham firm Associated Architects with Rodney Melville + Partners, with plenty of experience between them in academic and heritage sectors, were appointed by the university in 2017 to take what was left of the brewery and turn it into a state of the art built environment faculty to catalyse the regeneration of the area. Dealing with demolition, remediation, site contamination and Pleistocene glacial till geology, it’s testament to the will of all involved – not least proactive local

BEN MOPHEE (2)



With an MMC aesthetic, the west elevation has repeating bays of precast concrete, vertical louvres and metal panels. The architecture studio runs below the length of the roof.

Credits

- Architect** Associated Architects
- Heritage architect** Rodney Melville + Partners
- Client** University of Wolverhampton
- Structural engineer/landscape architect/acoustic consultant** Atkins
- M&E consultant** Couch Perry Wilkes
- QS** Faithful + Gould
- Project manager** Rider Levett Bucknall
- Approved building inspector** City of Wolverhampton Council
- Main contractor** ISG LLP
- Fire engineer** Jeremy Gardner Associates
- Planning consultant** Delta Planning
- Cladding contractor** Britannia Site Solutions
- Precast concrete contractor** FP McCann
- Specialist joinery** J&P Carpentry and Joinery
- Furniture** bof

IN NUMBERS

3

buildings saved from demolition or collapse

2700m³

spoil removed from site

400m²

reclaimed cobbles

686,000

man hours' construction

Below The campus approaching from the south reveals fully the blending of old and new. The old brewery offices on the right will with luck be assigned as the campus bar.

planners – that you could stand in a fully operational campus building three years later with old clock tower, brewery chimney and ironwork gateway all returned resplendent.

These aside, for the most part it’s the spirit of the brewery that remains rather than the building itself. While the south side of the complex has been restored and the factory offices against the perimeter wall retained, the fermenting halls that would have faced the viaduct have been replaced by a new steel-framed workshop and teaching block, leaving just traces on a west wall. Likewise on the east wagon courtyard side, another new teaching block picks up on the old footprint of a factory quadrangle – now a central atrium in the new complex. And running along the eastern edge of the site are lovely period stable blocks, the section to the north of the Springfield gateway forming part of Thomas Telford University Technical College and the southern half becoming the university’s Elite Centre for Manufacturing and Skills (ECMS). Paved in local granite with plaza seating rising out of the level changes, it’s a pleasing, open yet enclosed space; which one hopes will become an integral part of the campus’ social life – especially if those old brewery offices are turned into the union bar they are begging to be.

Associated Architects wasn’t only reconciling a new programme with an existing structure but was also keen to make a mark of its own, using a stated strategy of ‘complementing and contrasting’ on a project that, for funding reasons, needed to be turned around



Ideas jostle, a couple of which might have been re-evaluated had there been time for things to gestate and settle

quickly. The firm was appointed in late 2017 and listed building consent received in April 2018, when enabling and demolition works began, and by October it was already building. Timing, it appears, drove the choice of steel structure, although there was also the overriding desire to make the new building a showcase for offsite construction. This resulted in large, precast concrete panels brazenly embossed with super-sized ironwork motifs of the gateway, and red, brown and gold Tecu metal cladding panels and red-painted vertical louvres in front of the glazed west facade. Other ideas that made it include the gestural industrial saw-tooth roof reference.

Though well-intentioned, these seem overwrought together, with lots of ideas jostling, a couple of which might have been re-evaluated had there been time to allow things to gestate and settle. Luckily, the new building is citadel-like, which allows it to be perceived at a distance from various angles, and the moves made at scale work. The east side’s jutting, angled Tecu gables create a statement entrance from the courtyard with an interesting assemblage of old and new elements to the south, and to the west, there’s impact through brute repetition. Overall, the composition seems to work approached from any side – and probably looks good from one of those passing trains.

Internally, it’s all about the atrium, sitting within a big doughnut of academic and workshop spaces, which acts as the focus of the new campus. Entered from either the ‘heritage entrance’ on the south side or from the wagon courtyard on the east, it rises through the full height of the building and gives imposing views of the brewery chimney. A grand stair with motif-etched solid steel balustrade, part of a west service spine, takes users up through departments of engineering, quantity surveying, planning, building control and building services, construction and



Above Workstations populate the open areas at first and second floors on the atrium’s north side, with seminar and workstation areas on the east.

Below The grand connecting staircase runs up the atrium alongside the service spine.



facilities management; with the architecture BSc and future Diploma sat at the top in a ‘superstudio’ running the whole 56m length of the building’s west side.

Associated Architects has achieved a lot with a little, given the amount of co-ordination needed to marry the levels of existing structure with the new building and programme. And in places it’s fine stuff – notably at the south end. This is where admin and teaching spaces skew about existing steels and arched windows to yield double height sections tucked behind brick elevations – both surprising and pleasing. The profiled glass panelled upper teaching space by the clock tower has lovely light by day and acts as a campus beacon by night. Even the architects felt it necessary mark the specialness of this wing, choosing original brass Jacobsen door handles rather than the more modern, black-painted iterations it specified everywhere else.

But other specification choices are more curious. While I really enjoyed the atrium’s imposing birch plywood fin wall, which helps create spot-on acoustics for a sizeable space, the grey ceramic floor tiles are disappointing. I’d have preferred a polished concrete finish, or the cobbles from the wagon courtyard running in and through. This and the choice of cement board lining the atrium side walls of

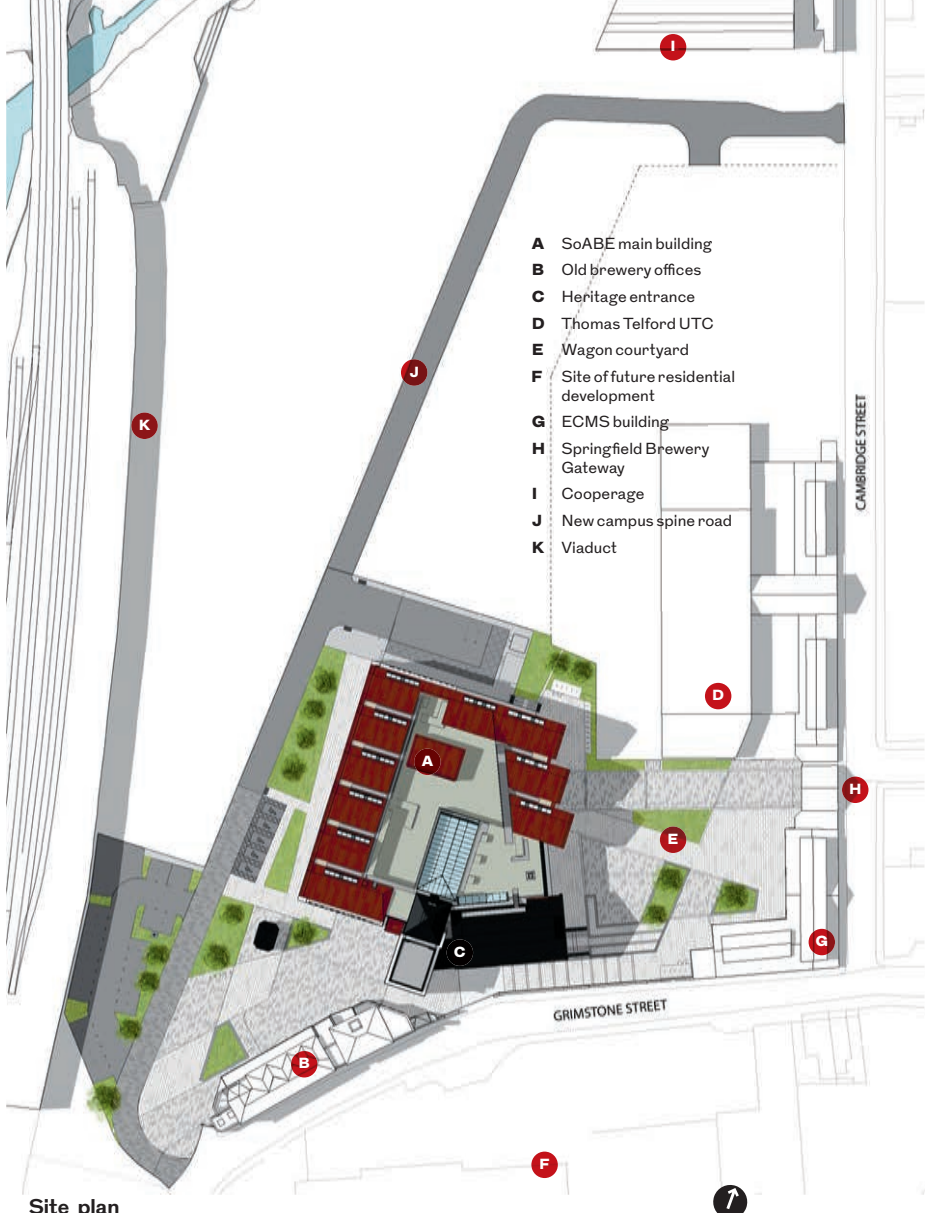


Left Study spaces in the old south block each have presence and character.

Below left The upper level study space, with porthole windows and profiled glass lantern, acts as a beacon for the campus to the city.



- 1 Heritage entrance
- 2 Atrium/exhibition space
- 3 Service spine: Lifts/WCs/storage/plant
- 4 Staff offices
- 5 Teaching room
- 6 Main lecture hall
- 7 'Heavy' workshops/lab spaces
- 8 Wagon courtyard entrance
- 9 Online teaching rooms
- 10 Teaching rooms
- 11 Materials workshop
- 12 Brownfield research office
- 13 PhD research room
- 14 Flexible teaching spaces
- 15 Black box
- 16 Architecture studio
- 17 ADT Studio
- 18 BIM studio
- 19 Civils design studio
- 20 Model making

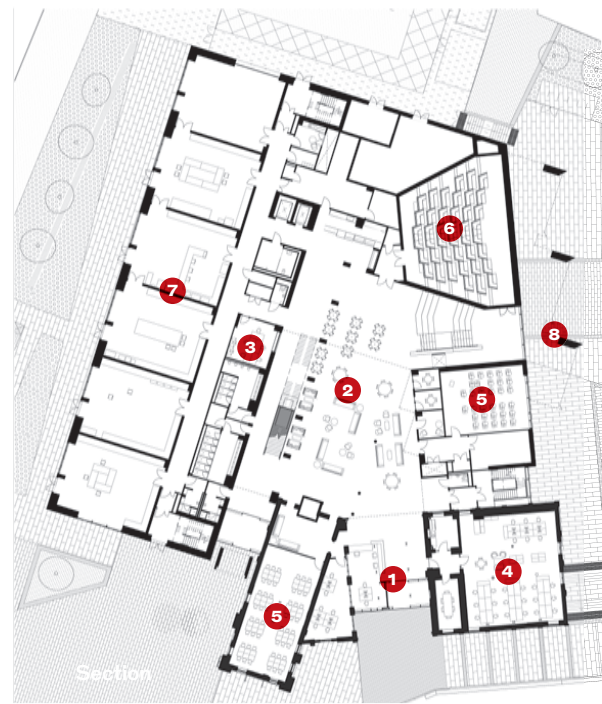


Site plan

Ground floor plan

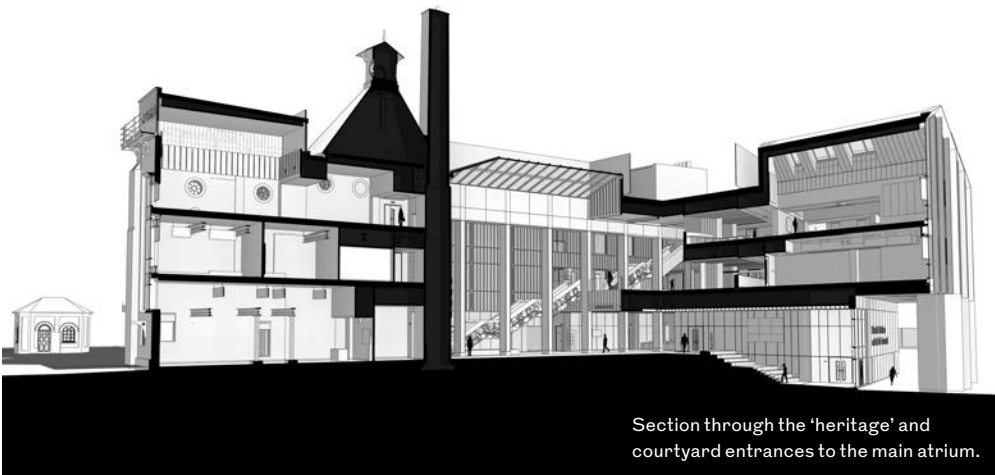
First floor plan

Second floor plan



Section

Buildings University



Section through the 'heritage' and courtyard entrances to the main atrium.

a good lecture hall and up the huge steel columns along the big staircase smack of decisions driven by cost and time. After all, the existing ones are all elegantly exposed, and you're going to ask a student to ruminate daily on what a column wants to be, why not intumescently coat it and leave it there open to view?

In the modern blocks on the north, east and west, the architect was asked to create big teaching spaces around the atrium, and has duly done so. Dedicated workstation areas on the north side are augmented by even more 'breakout' workstation spaces on the east. Here too are the glazed seminar 'boxes' projecting into the atrium, which look dramatic outside and in but are distracting enough to leave me wondering what one learns in them exactly. And it's at this point that I remind myself that I'm in a built environment faculty rather than an architecture school. Here,

even the assigned architecture spaces in the saw-tooth roof feel more like pleasant offices than a studio, though huge rolling white partitions do apparently allow for more flexible future layouts as space is better occupied. But with workstations dotting every carpeted inch of breakout space and the model making area fetishised in a service spine glass box between teaching rooms and ground floor 'heavy' workshops on the west, study areas have the sense of being isolated from areas of actual making, which seems strange. Associated Architects director Richard Perry, whose own training involved the cut and thrust of getting models in and out of a pater-noster lift in Sheffield, concedes the same unease with the interior's corporate nature, but is optimistic that time will force a reappraisal of the spaces to bring those assigned breakout areas into more contingent and experimental use – perhaps sans carpet.

I hope he's right. You can see the university's – even the city's – need for a 'finished' building to create critical mass on a large site where proposed similar treatment for the derelict Cooperage to the north – due for similar treatment – still feels a long way away. At £3,300/m² the architects have delivered well here for the client but it feels like the product of construction is trumping the process and I'm not sure what message that communicates to its students. But I'm encouraged by Perry's optimism and architecture course leader Andrew Cunningham's take on how the course structure here is founded on challenging its students to engage critically with 'live' projects in the city – learning firmly based in the real world. They might start by disrupting the pre-determinacy of the very space they study in; a course of action which, not being a first for students per se, might be prerequisite to the school's becoming so. ●



The SoABE campus building viewed from the wagon courtyard.

Wild swimming

BORD Architectural Studio's waterpark in eastern Hungary distils the essence of the forest surrounding it

Words: Isabelle Priest Photographs: Tamas Bujnovszky

There is something about swimming in central Europe, with its baking continental summers, access to thermal waters and the culture of Turkish baths left by the Ottoman Empire. Switzerland has amazing public pools, some on the banks of lakes where you can jump from one to the other. Hungary is water obsessed too. Budapest has atmospheric 100-year-old open-air spas in the city centre, and swimming is the country's second most successful Olympic sport after fencing, followed by canoeing. It won gold for water polo at the Brazil Olympics in 2016. Keep half an eye on competitive swimming and you'll find a Hungarian in the line-up. For a nation of 9.7 million it does well.

But look at its geography and you might be puzzled. It is landlocked, and lacking many of the mountain lakes that form an integral part of, say, the Swiss Alps.

Hungary did once have access to the Adriatic Sea, when a sliver of its boundaries extended to what is now Croatia. But after its coastline was lost in the carve-up of Europe following the Second World War, and Communism restricted travel even between Eastern Bloc countries, Hungarians had to find their own ways to enjoy water. Holidays at Lake Balaton, central Europe's largest stretch of fresh water, are a national tradition, and spas are designated medicinal in ways that are now unknown in the UK. You'll find

At 196m long, 26m wide and 12m tall, the central building contains three main pools as well as thermal, diving and relaxation pools and an adventure cave.



IN NUMBERS

5,624m²
total water surface

11,900m²
total floor area

4,008
visitor capacity

1,340m²
green surface

£23.9m
total cost (9.5bn HUF)

Left The architectural mountainous valleys of waterfalls and tumbling greenery that Hungary lacks.

‘waterparks’ too, ones that will shatter your illusions about the slightly sorry type you might spend an afternoon at with the kids in Newquay or Blackpool. People go to them for a week at a time.

Enter Peter Bordas, director of BORD Architectural Studio, and László Papp, mayor of the far eastern Hungarian city of Debrecen, who has been continuing his predecessor Lajos Kósa’s mission to radically reshape the city as a gateway to Transylvania and beyond, drawing tourists and business – BMW Group opened a new 400 hectare site here in May. At 16, Bordas was a champion BMX rider for Hungary and, speaking on Zoom with a cheeky glint in his eye, it’s obvious he’s still driven by thrills – snowboarding, cycling, sailing. The pair’s latest creation is Aquaticum, a waterpark in the Nagyerdei forest north of the city. Imagine the excitement of having these project images appear in my email inbox after a summer cooped up at home in the UK.

Before we talk about the architecture, you need to understand Debrecen. With 200,000 people, it is the second most populous city in Hungary. It has the largest university. It’s the cultural and scientific centre of the region with influence on neighbouring countries because of its airport. It has always been an important place, yet it is located in the dry Great Hungarian Plain, 30km from the nearest river and 100km from the nearest mountain. The city emerged from the meeting point of three international trade routes, connecting Vienna, Bucharest, St Petersburg, Istanbul, Poland and the Balkans. ‘In Debrecen,’ says Bordas, ‘everything



Above Behind the low entrance building, the spectacular blue end portico welcomes visitors, its diving platforms and pool just out of sight.

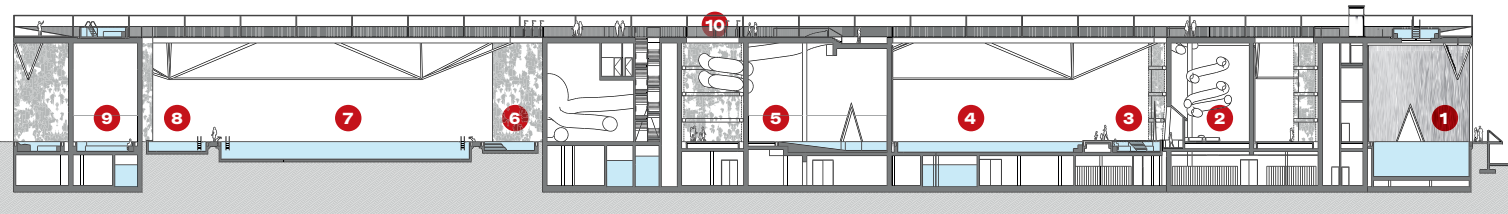
Below Waterpark in the forest: the university’s classical water tower and BORD’s renewed stadium beyond. The green roof of the far long entrance building rolls into the lawn.

is big. The city is set out along two avenues crossing north-south and east-west as lots of gardens and agricultural plots.’

In the 1930s the municipality developed a recreational urban park by inserting a stadium, zoo, artificial lake, thermal baths and waterpark in 300ha of ancient oak forest. Residential blocks were added during the Communist era. However, by 2010, the area was lifeless and abandoned. The stadium closed in 2000 and the key to the pitch was lost. Over the years the swimming facilities were extended in a haphazard way and were in a terrible condition.

Since then the mayoral office has gone about transforming the whole site through a series of 10 international architectural competitions, of which Budapest-headquartered BORD Architectural Studio has won four. It started with the stadium between 2012 and 2014, followed by enlargement of the artificial lake





I couldn't tolerate
it if a building didn't
have dynamism

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Diving pool portico | 6 Relaxation pool |
| 2 Water slides | 7 Main pool |
| 3 Pool bar | 8 Training pool |
| 4 Adventure pool | 9 Thermal water pool |
| 5 Adventure cave | 10 Sundeck |

Below Like opening a waterfall with your hands: one of the four jumping platform openings behind the entrance.



and renewal of the open-air theatre, and completion of the area's first international school to attract businesspeople and their families. The council has also built a velodrome, and retail and restaurant units. The competition for the waterpark was launched in 2015.

‘When I was younger, I couldn't tolerate it if a building didn't have dynamism,’ explains Bordas, who commissioned a video of a troupe of parkour tracers climbing, leaping, vaulting, rolling and free-running all over the new Aquaticum buildings. ‘I liked movement and visible structures. The waterpark didn't need to reflect existing buildings around it because they are not valuable enough.’

The brief was to create a popular spa suitable for all ages, but because the park is protected by the Natura2000 EU natural reserve programme the scheme could not extend beyond the 1930s plot. BORD's concept was to distil the experience of everything you see and feel in forest – the colour of water, the sky, greenery, trees up close – onto the site and ‘compress [it] into a pack’; ‘an oasis locked up in a box’. The 12m tall blue painted glass walls have water rippling over them to create moving reflections. The tall green walls opposite every blue one recreate the experience of being in a mountainous valley enveloped by luscious shrubbery and falling water. The triangular openings are the negative space you would create by using your hands to part open a waterfall, like passing through a curtain. Grey tiles in the swimming pools reflect the blue of the walls and sky. The looping rooftop sundeck is at tree crown level, giving visitors forest and city views. This vertical element is particularly thrilling in the context of being in the middle of a huge, waterless natural plain.

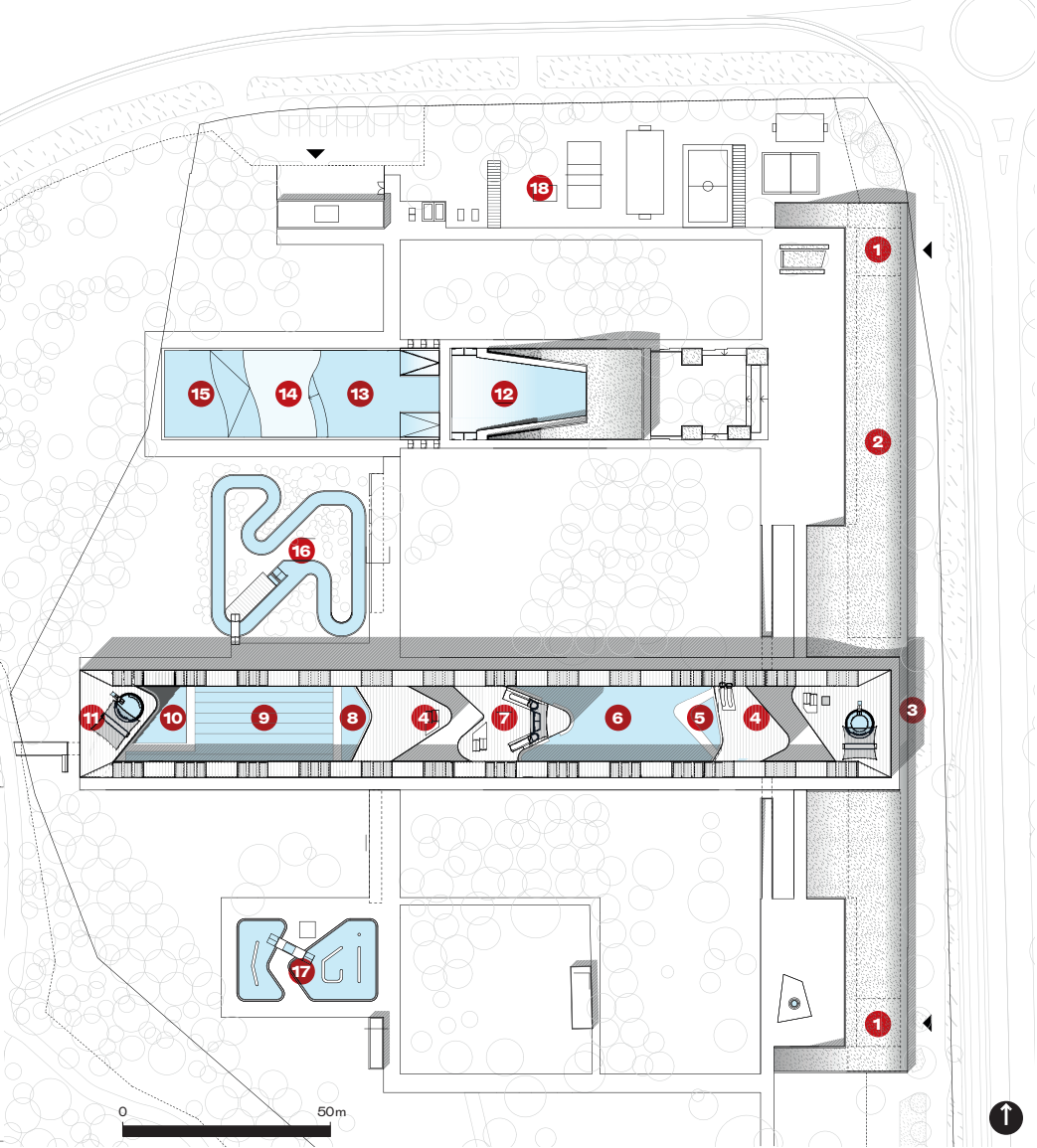
‘There aren't any waterfalls in Hungary, so this was an extra dimension,’ says Bordas. ‘The blue walls expand the experience of the building and make it more appealing in winter when a pure concrete wall would be especially cold and uninviting.’

The other principal idea was dictated by the decision not to chop any trees down in pursuit of rearranging the site layout. The main pool sits in the same position as the original, the orientation maintains its east-west linear plan, and facilities are built up vertically by a central boxy composition of uprights, planes and surfaces that come together spaced out around rectangular shapes of water as a 196m long mega fun palace instead. The structure is open. Water and flora appear on horizontal and vertical planes, people move



- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 Entrance | 7 Adventure cave | 13 Kids' pool |
| 2 Changing rooms and food court | 8 Relaxation pool | 14 Spray park |
| 3 Diving pool portico end | 9 Main pool | 15 Paddling pool |
| 4 Water slides | 10 Training pool | 16 Lazy river |
| 5 Pool bar | 11 Thermal spa water pool and cave end | 17 Thermal pool |
| 6 Adventure pool | 12 Wave pool | 18 Playgrounds and sports courts |

Above Light, air and openness – the rooftop decks for the pursuit of sunshine, health and views.



in, out and through, as does light, shadow, breeze, wind and rain. Zoom out to forest scale and this tightly packed but porous structure behaves like a gleaming rectangular high-level boulevard, a giant concrete stepping stone between the lake and the stadium. The children's area, lazy river pool, paddling pool, kids' pool, wave pool, playgrounds, sports courts and toilet blocks are scattered in a mosaic to the north and south between newly planted trees. The enormous length, water pools, crossing overhead structures, pipes and gangways lend something of the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex to the project, combined with the sparkle of the Case Study Houses settings in the Hollywood Hills.

Yet the way the central piece lands so unapologetically is very OMA. And in the exposed underside of the painted reinforcing steel structure, there is old-school Rogers. The contrasting deeply sensual pleasure of Zumthor's Therme Vals is evoked in the way the golden yellow mineral-rich thermal water pool is positioned at the far forest-facing end of the block so you can swim from outside to inside through the triangular opening while being enclosed



Slip into the golden thermal waters at the opposite end, which is enveloped by ancient oaks.

This is a condensing building, a wild, energetic tour of architectural experiences, packed together on a crisply mown lawn

by trees, nature and a separate, slower, quieter, tranquil atmosphere. But as the greenery grows and takes over the building, trailing the industrial steel frame awnings, wrapping around the coloured tube waterslides, disguising their ageing, falling and dripping from every surface, it turns into Ricardo Bofill's La Fabrica in Barcelona too. And wait! I detect Art Deco as well in the carefree spectacle of the open-ended, imposing entrance-side portico with its semi-circular pool underneath and four jumping platforms. It's there also in the flying catwalks for glamorous scantily clad bodies to bask in the sun. Where do you place the architecture of the low long entrance building with its rolling wave green roof? NL Architects, Hopkins, Pagade Architectes? You decide.

This is a condensing building; a wild, energetic, 'dynamic' (as Bordas says) tour of architectural experiences, neatly packed together and laid onto a crisply mown lawn. It's monumental, subverting, a perfect backdrop for selfies and marketing the city. The municipality recognised during the competition



that the design would be a draw for visitors. And this summer they came, from all over Transylvania, Poland, Ukraine and western Hungary, which is often conceptually cut off from the east because the river Danube divides the country in two. You can catch a carrot and ginger smoothie for breakfast at the green health bar, or a beer in the afternoon. Even the mix of grapevine, Japanese maple, creeping ivy and bamboo planting take you around the world in only a few steps.

The project is also clever, using surplus heat and gas from the natural thermal water to power it, so that in summer 70% and in winter 50% of its energy comes from renewables. It is BORD's first zero-emission scheme. Aquaticum's success arises from the richness and extent of its architects' searching, travelling, keeping in touch with their senses and replicating those feelings. While we are stuck at home or in our offices, the project is a reminder to not necessarily resume the old ways of long hours and drudgery. Get out, see stuff, push yourself and experience the extreme – perhaps jump off a few things too. ●

Above Crazy whizz-bang slides, flying catwalks and fast-growing Jumanji vines.

Below Visitors to Debrecen multiplied this summer.

Credits
Architect BORD Architectural Studio
Client Debreceni Gyógyfürdő
Landscape Gardenworks
M&E BORD Architectural Studio
Structural engineer Hydrastat Mernoki Iroda
Glass design Zsolia Szonyegi
Graphic design of glass surfaces Rotblau Labor
Construction Hunep



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Wetherby Building Systems is proud winner of the Architectural Merit Award.

Excellence in wall insulation on display

As insulation grows ever more important, this year’s INCA awards demonstrate outstanding innovation and variety

For almost 40 years, external wall insulation (EWI) in the UK has been represented by INCA, the industry’s trade association, and INCA is now a flourishing organisation with its membership comprising the premier system designers, component suppliers and installers. Technical standards and excellent workmanship are the mantras of INCA and the highlight of its calendar is always the annual INCA awards, showcasing the best in external wall insulation. This year’s awards were presented in an online ceremony to members and the winning projects demonstrate the tremendous variety of schemes carried out in both newbuild and refurbishment sectors and for residential, commercial and educational buildings. EWI is a technology comprising

As construction has moved towards faster, more energy efficient and sustainable building methods, EWI has become the perfect partner

insulation boards fixed to either masonry walls in a refurbishment setting, or to the sheathing layer of newbuild schemes employing steel framing or a concrete frame with SFS infill. Beyond these common construction types, other less prominent building methods such as timber frame, ICF and offsite construction can also benefit from the use of EWI. Designers of EWI systems provide project-specific specifications outlining the adhesive and mechanical fixings of the insulation boards and the systems are finished with either high-grade decorative coatings or brick finishes. For nearly 50 years in the UK, EWI has been popular in the field of social housing refurbishment but this background of treating the solid wall housing stock and non-traditional low and high rise properties has been matched by the use of EWI on new developments, most notably large scale commercial or apartment projects. As construction has gravitated towards faster, more energy efficient and sustainable building methods, EWI has become the perfect partner with its ability to incorporate suitable insulation types, simple design and construction without the need

for cavities within the wall build-up and aesthetically pleasing finishes. As systems are tested and certified by bodies such as the BBA as complete systems, a specifier simply specifies the system in its entirety with all supporting data such as U-value and windloading performance provided by the system designer.

What seems to have characterised this year’s INCA awards, according the judging panel, is the uptake of brick finishes by architects and contractors as the finishing layer of the EWI system, with both the Architectural Merit and Architectural Design Awards being won by projects with clay brick slip facades. This reflects the rapidly growing popularity of brick slips as part of an EWI system instead of more traditional brickwork for a concrete or steel frame structure. The benefits of adopting this construction method are numerous, but include: far fewer bricks being delivered and stored, a simpler design negating the need for a cavity, and an installation method which makes the wall watertight sooner and can be carried out in a flexible sequence to best suit the needs of the overall building programme.

Les Quennevais School in Jersey is the winner of the Architectural Merit Award, a £38 million development to construct a school for the future using Wetherby Building Systems’ EWI system. The 8,500m² scheme was to become the largest brick building on the island so created tremendous visitor interest. Specialist contractor Fox



Above The Globe Works in Birmingham by Alsecco secured the award for Architectural Design.



Below These blocks in Glasgow, refurbished by Sto, are highly commended by INCA judges.

Contracts completed the installation and incorporated varying thicknesses of stone wool insulation fixed back to both blockwork and SFS to achieve a u-value of 0.30 W/m²K. The smooth white brick slips have created a desirable learning environment for generations to come.

Winner of the INCA Architectural Design Award is The Globe Works in Birmingham with Alsecco as the EWI system designer and WFS/Weatherseal Facades the installer. This is a major student accommodation scheme in the iconic Gun Quarter and was planned with more than a nod to the area’s industrial heritage. Five linked blocks of five to 10 storeys was designed by Steve Ritchie Partnership and constructed using SFS with insulated infill panels, and the facades completed with Alsecco’s Ecomin 400 clay brick slip system with two complementary brick slip colours and ceramic slips at many window details. Different thicknesses of stone wool insulation were used to create different recess areas far more easily than would have been achieved with traditional brickwork, from which it is indistinguishable. The clean cut lines and coursing, as well as accurately struck mortar joints, demonstrates the workmanship for which INCA members are renowned.

In keeping with schemes that have featured in previous years of the awards, The Cedars Development in Glasgow – three significantly sized residential blocks refurbished to ultra-low energy standards with the Sto StoTherm Mineral EWI system – was awarded a highly commended in the Architectural Merit category. Designed for longevity and ensuring critical fire performance, the StoLotusan surface will provide excellent protection against algae growth and staining. These blocks are now a striking feature on the Glasgow skyline. ●



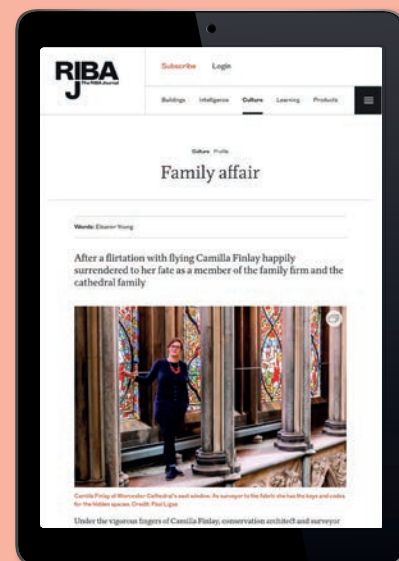
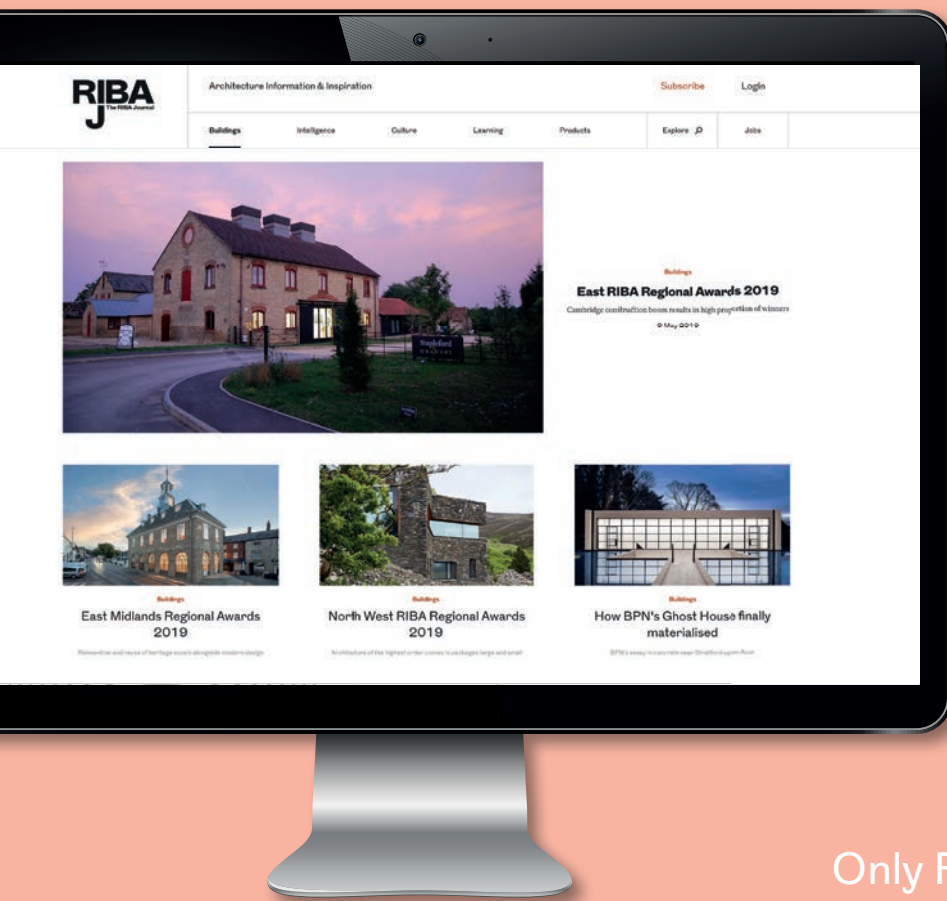
The recognised Trade Association for the External Wall Insulation Industry

For more information on these schemes and a full list of INCA members, visit www.inca-ltd.org.uk

This year marks the 40th year of INCA and entries to the 2021 Awards promise to be just as varied, bold and innovative as the 2020 winners have proved to be.

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Identity heft –
Lesley Lokko profile
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Play it cool –
decarbonisation
44

37

2: Intelligence



Conservation
& heritage



Design, construction
& technology

Dong Mei



BCKJ ARCHITECTS

BCKJ Architects, set up by Dong Mei and Liu Xiaochuan in Beijing, has won the Royal Academy Dorfman Award for Architecture. A £10,000 prize marking exceptional emerging talent, BCKJ is lauded for its approach to nature, cultural heritage and social engagement. Dong Mei spoke to Pamela Buxton

BCKJ is not part of the mainstream of architecture in China. How would you sum up your overall practice ethos?

Whose work do you draw inspiration from (either past or present)?

Is awareness growing in China for the need to design more sustainably and contextually?

You discuss retaining natural beauty and modernisation. How hard is it to marry both when there is such pressure for growth and urbanisation?

Tell us about some projects you are working on at the moment, and your aspirations for these

What would be your dream project?

The difference is that we've broken away from the assembly line and carry out more in-depth research-based practice. We approach projects looking at their unique characteristics to solve each problem. Prioritising problem solving means our work pays more attention to inner emotions than current fashion.

I read Luis Barragan 20 years ago and he said that his work had nothing to do with fashion, but focused on tranquility, beauty and emotion, and I was moved by that. Other influences are Peter Zumthor, Sverre Fehn, Renzo Piano, Geoffrey Bawa...

Due to the economics of rapid urbanisation, Chinese architects prioritised cheap, mass-produced materials for construction and few practices designed for local conditions. Recently, there have been great improvements in building standards, and sustainable technologies. So sustainability is no longer unfamiliar but we need to adopt circular thinking that suits local conditions.

In China's urbanisation process, more and more sustainable technologies have been applied through vigorous government promotion in recent years. But I feel sustainability is about more than that: we need an overall cycle of economic and cultural continuity. There is still a long way to go to establish circular thinking at different levels.

I look forward to the construction of Wuhan Shuiguang Church, bringing spiritual comfort to people there after Coronavirus. Also, the Gongliu Butterfly Museum in Ili, Xinjiang, creating opportunities for tourism in the area. We're working on the renovation of Feiqi Airport in Hefei, where the 2022 China Horticultural Expo will be held. It's hoped that via this expo the city's public space will be revitalised.

Designing a Vipassana meditation centre that shelters the soul in a beautiful natural environment. See the full interview at ribaj.com/bckjdorfman

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It suddenly became clear to me that the work of Foster and Rogers was the future which I wanted to be part of, so I rushed home

Chris Wilkinson on a career in architecture:
ribaj.com/wilkinsonhindsight



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social purpose

Culture revolutionary

From Johannesburg to New York, Lesley Lokko’s writing, teaching and speaking has engendered debate on cultural identity in architecture. Now it has won her the RIBA Annie Spink Award for outstanding contributions to architectural education

Portraits: Murdo MacLeod

Eleanor Young

‘She was causing so much upheaval... quickly building up into massive explosions... it was wild, exciting, exhilarating... ideas were flying, adrenalin was pumping... After the explosions everyone was on shifting dynamic ground, what began to take form was truly transformational, innovative, progressive, and painstaking process.’ So writes Mandy Shindler, an alumna of the University of Johannesburg’s Graduate School of Architecture, of its 2014 founder, Professor Lesley Lokko.

As Lokko is awarded the biannual RIBA Annie Spink Award for outstanding contributions to architectural education it is worth following this story through and discovering what it meant to the education of one architecture student. ‘I had never in all my years having studied in South African schools, and now a typical South African University, even considered the possibility of education being uplifting, inspiring and motivating. Instead the tradition in South Africa seemed to me one of what we’d call vasbyt (hold tight, or literally, ‘bite tight’)... An education was something to be endured.’

In autumn 2020 Lokko hit the news in

the US and UK for her resignation from the Spitzer School of Architecture at The City College of New York, less than a year into the job. She explained the perfect storm of leadership and institutional issues together with a weight of expectation to be a ‘superhuman’ as a black woman bringing change to a school on entrenched tenured staff – all in a time of a pandemic and with minimal back up and resources: ‘I realised I would be working 18-20 hour days and still couldn’t turn the ship around,’ she says. She has won the Annie Spink Award against that background, selected from a strong field of nominations.

Enriching architecture

The judges said: ‘She has pioneered for and cultivated critical debate about identity in architecture. In so doing, she allows our discipline to be enriched by many new voices, traditions and dreams, enabling students and educators to find their place in architecture, on their own terms, galvanising others in the field to address a more pluralistic, inclusive, and open culture of education.’

This critical angle was visible from when Lokko came to architecture in her late twenties and wrote her PhD thesis on the



Lokko grew up in Scotland and Ghana, and is living between the two. She is pictured here in Edinburgh.

‘She has pioneered for and cultivated critical debate about identity in architecture’

Right After educating graduate students Lokko’s next challenge is setting up the African Futures Institute.

relationship between race and architecture. Early on she edited and published an influential reader, ‘White Paper, Black Marks: Architecture, Race and Culture’, which stamped her mark on this nascent field. She surprised herself at getting the book published. ‘At the end of my fourth year I sent a book proposal to Routledge,’ she explains. They wanted it. Drawing it together put her in touch with others exploring these issues, including critic, architect and educator Michael Sorkin who later persuaded her over to New York. ‘It started a lifelong conversation,’ she says. Teaching at London schools, developing an MA in cultural identity and globalisation, seemed to set her on the path of academia.

But when you look up that important work now you find a clue to another of Lokko’s careers – as a novelist. Alongside her PhD and building her own home in Accra, Ghana, she married her own experiences and the Time Out A to Z of writing a blockbuster and came up with a book deal. Over a decade it lasted for more than 10 novels delving into race and identity with a heady dose of romance. ‘And beauty,’ she adds, ‘But I was a B-list author, it became a formula. I wanted to do something different.’

Political imperatives

After years out of teaching that different thing came from a rare architecture lecture in Holland, where an invitation took her to Johannesburg University as external examiner. She wasn’t impressed with the architecture school: ‘It was terrible’.

So, of course, she landed up teaching there, and eventually pushing them to set up a graduate school. As South Africa erupted in



student protests in 2015, going from #RhodesMustFall to #FeesMustFall, she saw a unique political space emerging: ‘Decolonisation was on the agenda like never before.’

And she had the tools to make the most of it in teaching architecture, a development of the unit system that came out of the AA in the 1970s. She called it Unit System Africa: ‘It allows teaching to be transformative, over a longer time frame and with the concept of co-creating.’ It was this system that opened student Shindler’s eyes to the joys of learning. But it wasn’t the only change to the teaching. ‘It was at that point I realised teaching could be a political act,’ says Lokko. She brought in young teachers, only just emerging from the protests themselves and hungry for action – the results could be seen in projects bursting with ideas – and in the popularity of the school. ‘It almost exploded, there was more demand for places than we could cope with.’ It went from a dozen to over 150 students. It has been described as radical and transformational by other educators – Lokko’s energy went into making it that for the students.

She sees the summer 2020 protests in the West over racism as part of a continuum of what she was working on with students in Johannesburg. ‘For students to be their complete authentic selves, to give their all, we need to deal with the elephant in the room.’ She recalls a conversation with a student with a Moholy Nagy collage. The underlying layer was indistinct and when Lokko pressed her she realised the girl was crying. It was an image of Durban beach front, a reference to a social media post by a white South African about ‘black monkeys’ on the beach. But the student didn’t want to make it any clearer

for her mixed class, she didn’t want to upset the balance, ‘we have to be polite and cool or we don’t know where it will go’. Lokko says: ‘It cannot be that students have a secret life they want to deal with, yet in the classroom, where you open things up, they close up for fear of confrontation... and remain silent.’ At GSA transformative pedagogies of critical inquiry tried to allow students to either design conventionally or to come sideways at a project to allow students to think differently.

Making issues meaningful

Opening up those hidden spaces around both racism and race has been one of Lokko’s strengths. In recent lecture she gave a hint of the riches that can come from understanding race in its many forms. ‘In the context of architecture race encompasses many deep and profoundly imaginative conditions – everything from language colour to surface, sensuality, ritual and migration and the long and wonderfully complex story of diaspora.’

From post apartheid to Black Lives Matter, there is serious work to be done channeling issues into something meaningful. It is a task that Lokko doubts many institutions in the West can do; she is suspicious of shallowness in recent corporate messaging around race. She clear that the real work will come from Africa and, in the next phase of her career, intends to do something about it, setting up the African Futures Institute in Accra. It could be a think tank or perhaps more, a provocation to action, allowing ideas to flourish and make good things happen. Her nominees for the Annie Spink award state Lokko has ‘changed the conversation, globally’. It looks like she will continue to do so. ●



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CORE RANGE NOW AVAILABLE IN THE UK

Collaboration and ownership key to safety

Huge changes are coming to the industry, said Jane Duncan, chairing a virtual round table discussion covering competence, insurance and procurement – the first of four articles places these key themes in context



Three and a half years on from the Grenfell fire and with an inquiry ongoing, questions are still being asked of the industry on the future of fire safety.

ISABELLE PRIEST

‘We have a juggernaut of changes coming towards us,’ says Jane Duncan, chair of the RIBA expert advisory group on fire safety, summing up the policies emerging from the government’s response to the Grenfell Tower fire. The juggernaut must be steered steadily along its route to bring about the significant shift in safety practice and construction industry culture envisaged by Judith Hackitt’s report, Building a Safer Future. As well as reviewing building regulations, the response centres on the new Building Safety Bill, which, asserts housing secretary Robert Jenrick, promises ‘the biggest change in building safety for a generation’. This draft legislation, published in July, picks up all 53 Hackitt recommendations, setting the parameters for construction industry reform. But it is predominantly a framework bill, so much of the fine detail of its safety regime has yet to be fully defined and delivered through secondary legislation. That leaves uncertainty clouding many aspects of the planned regime, as the

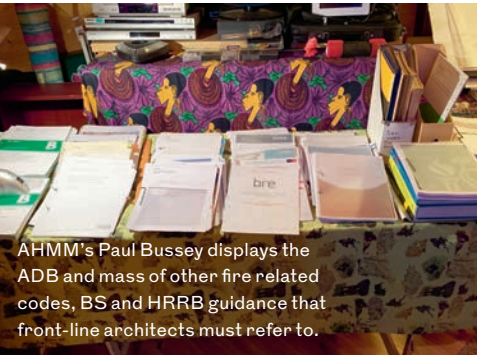
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) select committee recognised in its November report, Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Building Safety Bill. This proposes 40 recommendations plus 12 main changes to the bill, with chair Clive Betts saying, ‘Key definitions remain unclear and responsibilities ill-defined.’ The draft legislation circulated for consultation last year had many positives, Duncan said. ‘It did seem to be responding very closely to [the Hackitt report point] that we need to have responsibilities for those who design, build or manage buildings, a much better, stronger voice for residents and greater oversight by regulators and proper enforcement’.

‘We have a juggernaut of changes coming towards us’

But the RIBA has nonetheless highlighted a number of areas of concern. It has called for the safety regime to apply not only to residential buildings over 18m in height, but also to similarly vulnerable buildings where people sleep, such as care homes and hospitals. Like the MHCLG committee, the RIBA has stressed the need for more detail, with Duncan saying, ‘If you’re going to reduce the risk and keep people safe, the bill has to give clarity on duties for those involved in constructing buildings and I’m not sure we’re anywhere near there yet.’ That need for clarity applies to dutyholders, the individuals and organisations assigned statutory responsibility for the safety of high risk residential buildings through their life cycle. They will have to share information with a new building safety regulator and will provide the ‘golden thread’ of information through the design and construction phases of the building.

‘We have to look seriously at the culture of the industry. We have a dysfunctional industry in many ways.’

‘We need equal emphasis of responsibility on all dutyholders because safety needs to be embedded through the project,’ said Duncan. The proposed regime also has potential to raise some thorny issues on insurance and competence, with Duncan explaining, ‘At the coalface we’re already struggling with getting professional indemnity insurance, and now we’ve got potentially very onerous duties as a dutyholder, so the question is whether the policies are adequate for these exposures. And who is going to be competent to take these new roles, are there enough people who can do it and are they going to obtain insurance to do it?’. Duncan was speaking at a virtual round table discussion in November, hosted by the RIBA and RIBA Journal in association with Hilti, that explored the implications, limitations and opportunities of the bill. While calling on the government to play its part with the draft legislation, participants acknowledged that change must come from all quarters of construction and development. ‘We have to sit here together, as a profession and an industry, and question our assumption that everything is built 100% properly and that everything is working and will continue to be maintained so that it is,’ Duncan said. Professor John Cole, fellow RIBA expert advisory group member and chair of the City of Edinburgh Council-initiated



AHMM’s Paul Bussey displays the ADB and mass of other fire related codes, BS and HRRB guidance that front-line architects must refer to.

PAUL BUSSEY

inquiry into failings in the construction of the city’s schools, was more forceful. ‘We have to seriously look at the culture of the industry. We have a dysfunctional industry in many ways.’ One way of driving change put forward in the bill is tough sanctions for breaching building regulations, which could include prison sentences of up to two years and unlimited fines. Lynsey Seal, principal firefighter with the London Fire Brigade supported the idea, arguing, ‘Punishment may have a place in forcing culture change’. But Neil Farrance, partner at Formation Architects, voiced concerns. ‘Deterrents and punishments alone won’t automatically bring about change. Change will come back to competence and collaboration. Currently there is inherent distrust in the industry, and there are conflicts of interests between some of the key players.’ The need for positive collaboration was echoed by others, Teri Okoro, director of TOCA, arguing, ‘We have to collaborate. We need to be aware of the ways we can get change to come about’. Dylan Roberts, director of health, safety and wellbeing at Skanska, gave one example, saying, ‘If we want to change the culture we also need to look at who is doing things right and what they are doing. We need to put them up as exemplars of best practice.’ The RIBA has already led by example, working in a global collaboration to develop International Fire Safety Standards – launched last month and endorsed by the United Nations. Rebooting Construction in the UK also provides a forum for collaboration, bringing together 19 participants spanning architecture, construction, property development, legal, insurance and the fire services. ‘It’s important to share issues as we see them and don’t become siloed,’ said Will Freeman, design director of Wates Construction and non-executive board member of the Architects Registration Board. Such dialogue could both promote collaboration and influence the course of the policy juggernaut. ‘There is still an opportunity for us to put points to the government if they haven’t got it right – and frankly they didn’t get it quite right in the draft they’ve produced so far,’ said Gillian Birkby, consultant in the real estate department at law firm Fladgate. ‘It is really important that the legislation aligns with what the industry does and how it operates.’



ALEXANDRA BLAYLOCK

- ATTENDEES**
Jane Duncan, chair Jane Duncan Architects and chair of the RIBA Expert Advisory Group
Paul Langford Director of Hilti’s Fire Protection Business Unit, Hilti
Paul Bussey AHMM and a member of RIBA’s Regulation and Standards Group
Neil Farrance Partner, Formation Architects
Will Freeman Non-exec board member, ARB, design director Wates
Jane Simpson Founder & director and adviser at the Design Council
Dr Teri Okoro Chartered architect and director, TOCA and access consultant
Al Beever Head of health & safety, Argent
Professor John Cole RIBA Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, RIBA
Nick Coombe Enforcement lead officer, Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)
Gillian Birkby Consultant, real estate, Fladgate
Mathew Needham-Laing Partner, Construction at Katten
Gary Neal Head of fire, operational efficiency, Skanska
Dylan Roberts Director, health & safety, Skanska
Clive Johnson Head of H&S, CDM & fire, Derwent
Andrew Gausden Fire safety and design officer, East Sussex Fire Brigade
Matthew Greene Senior underwriter, Manchester Underwriting Management
Jenny Carter-Vaughan Managing director, Affinity Select Insurance Services
Lynsey Seal Principal fire engineer at London Fire Brigade, Women in the Fire Service (WFS)

RIBAJ and Hilti thanks the above attendees for their time and input. Their detailed discussions on competence, insurance and procurement from this event will appear in the February, March and April 2021 issues.



Sustainable
ArchitectureDesign, construction
& technology

How can we decarbonise heating?

We have the technology to cut down CO₂ emissions, but without official direction, the cost, convenience, space and aesthetics hamper progress. What do the experts advise?

Below District heating networks can tap into waste energy or work on heat pumps. This Citigen system runs under the City of London, on high efficiency combined heat and power engines connected to the gas grid. Owner E.ON is working with the City of London to implement low carbon heat pump technology for the future.



Stephen Cousins

The road to net zero 2050 is fraught with challenges and the need to decarbonise heating in buildings – the single biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions comprising around 37% of national CO₂ output – is the most pressing of all.

But the move to greener fuel sources for heating remains in its infancy. One scenario, from UK Power Networks, forecasts that 7.6 million electric heat pumps would be needed across Britain by 2050 – from around just 10,000 in operation in 2019.

Swapping out methane for hydrogen in the gas network offers an opportunity to reuse existing infrastructure, but building services experts claim the fledgling state of development means market-ready solutions may not be practical until the 2030s.

‘We need to make an impact on decarbonising heat immediately, and hydrogen is not ready to be rolled out at a large scale,’ explains Jon Greg, associate for sustainability at Buro Happold. ‘It’s definitely part of the mix but we’re not in a position where homes can be easily transferred to the technology. Heat pumps, whether air or ground source, are really the only technology that can be delivered at scale today.’

Regulation can give businesses and consumers a head start on the changes needed to decarbonise heating and encourage investment, but clear and concise guidance has yet to emerge from Whitehall.

Incremental retrofits for existing homes could offer a ‘quick win’ using heat pumps and gradual fabric upgrades

A national Heat and Buildings Strategy, due to be published this autumn, has been pushed back to 2021. Meanwhile a 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution, revealed last month, includes positive initiatives, such as a target to install 600,000 heat pump systems per year by 2028, an extension to the Green Homes Grant and more funding for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. However, it ditches an earlier plan to implement a Future Homes Standard by 2023, which would have required all new-build homes to include low-carbon heating technologies. Compare that to Norway where oil-fired heating systems are already banned in all buildings.

Considering that any heating systems installed today might still be in use in 30 years’ time, when net zero kicks in, designers need to think hard about sustainable options for newbuilds and retrofits and for buildings of different size, use class, heating and cooling loads.

Homes

Transferring the 85% of UK homes currently connected to the gas grid to low carbon alternatives is a Herculean task, not least because burning gas is cheap, delivers high temperatures quickly and the technology is familiar to installers and users.

Heat pumps, both air and ground source, tend to have higher capital costs, are not plug and play and require various modifications to building services. They also run at lower temperatures, which in houses is likely to mean installing larger radiators and/or upgrading the performance of the building fabric to reduce heating demand.

Air-source heat pump units are not compact and must be installed outside, typically at ground level, and can also be noisy. Each unit draws several kW of electrical power so widespread deployments within a community will place greater demands on network capacity.

‘Mass uptake of heat pumps will have a



AGNESE SANWITO

FABRIC PLUS EFFICIENCY

Working with low-energy design specialist Enhabit, Cousins & Cousins has used internal wall insulation, high levels of roof and floor insulation applied with thermal breaks in the structure, and an integrated airtight layer. A high-efficiency ventilation system with heat recovery manages moisture and reduces indoor pollutants. The high-efficiency gas heating system, used in conjunction with solar thermal panels on the roof to heat water, and with internet-enabled smart controls, means no energy is wasted.

So, at Canonbury Park South, the PHPP modelling (calculating the effectiveness of a Passivhaus approach) predicts a 75% reduction in heating demand, a 65% cut in energy demand and a 60% drop in carbon emissions. The space heating demand should be only 50kWh/m² – very low for a building of this age and type. The result is a home that not only has a very low energy demand but is also pleasant and healthy to live in.

big impact on the electrical infrastructure of the grid, so retrofitting houses to reduce peak demand on the coldest days will be really important,’ says Greg. Self-generation via rooftop photovoltaics and solar thermal would help take the strain off the grid, he adds, while providing occupants with hot water at a decent temperature. They could also generate an income through feed-in-tariffs.

An alternative option for hot water is to introduce a storage tank, similar in size to a regular hot water tank.

The transition to net zero might see an initial preference for hybrid heat pumps that combine an air-source heat pump with a tra-

ditional gas condensing boiler. The Daikin Altherma hybrid heat pump automatically determines the most economical and energy efficient combination based on energy prices, outdoor temperatures and indoor heat capacity, cutting energy consumption by up to 35% compared to a regular boiler. Eon offers a system that transforms an oil or liquid petroleum gas heating system into a hybrid.

Incremental retrofit strategies for existing homes could provide a ‘quick win’ reduction in carbon intensity using heat pumps with gradual upgrades to the building fabric, says Gwilym Still, Passivhaus leader at Max Fordham.

‘We’ve worked through strategies on some projects that involve the initial installation of heat pumps for low carbon electric space heating and/or domestic hot water which can then move towards lower system temperatures and more efficient operation as the fabric is improved over time,’ he says. ‘The end goal looks the same, but the pathway to get there is slightly different, depending on the building.’

Offices

Increasingly stringent insulation and air-tightness standards, combined with heat loads from IT and occupancy, make offices increasingly cooling-led, with a limited demand for heating.

Polyvalent, or hybrid, heat pumps that simultaneously deliver heating and cooling and recover and store waste heat from spaces that need to be cooled, are therefore an attractive solution in low carbon office schemes.

A polyvalent heating system plays a vital role in the building services strategy for 80 Charlotte Street in London, an exemplar sustainable office designed by Make for client Derwent. The BREEAM Excellent-rated building has all-electric operation completely independent of fossil fuels.

‘In simultaneous operation the COP (coefficient of performance) of polyvalent heat pumps can reach 50% more than that of cooling mode alone,’ says Rahul Patel, a mechanical engineer and associate director at Arup, which devised the building services strategy for 80 Charlotte Street. ‘Rather than chucking waste heat energy into the atmosphere, you’re putting it back into the building where it’s needed.’ Air source heat pumps are typically larger than office chillers and ‘really need to see sky’ to optimise the extraction of heat from the air outside. Visual impacts need careful consideration because covered roofs or ventilated louvres on the sides can create issues with air flow and over-pressurize the refrigerant circuit, increasing the risk of a complete shut down.

The electric plant is at the ‘top end of the spectrum’ in terms of noise emissions from the main plant, says Patel – a particularly

Polyvalent heat pumps are an attractive solution for offices

important consideration if there are mixed uses at the top of the building, if there are homes nearby, or if the building has a thin roof slab or timber deck that might let noise penetrate to the inside.

'Acoustic packs can be fitted but they erode energy performance and strategically positioned acoustic louvres or plant screens can mask sound, but distance is the best attenuator for sound if possible,' he adds.

Apartments

As buildings become larger, heat distribution losses can become more significant, which in residential buildings can lead to overheating in corridors, communal areas and risers.

Ambient energy loop systems offer an innovative solution by pumping water at low temperatures around a building, with a flow/return temperature of 25°/20° versus 70°/40° for a regular boiler system.

The two-stage approach sees tepid water, generated by central plant using air or ground source heat pumps, circulated through pipework to individual water heat pumps inside each apartment, which take heat out of the loop for domestic hot water and space heating. Architects need to factor in space in each apartment for a small heat pump and a hot water tank.

The results can be impressive: the Zeroth Energy System by GenDimplex is claimed to cut peak heat losses by up to 90% and halve the plant room footprint.

Ambient loops can be applied to other building types or mixed use developments that require a mix of heating and cooling, explains Max Fordham's Still: 'A light industry building that wants year round cooling, or a one with refrigerated display cases or intensely occupied retail spaces, can get useful cooling from a loop of water. It's an effective mechanism to shunt heat around a building.'

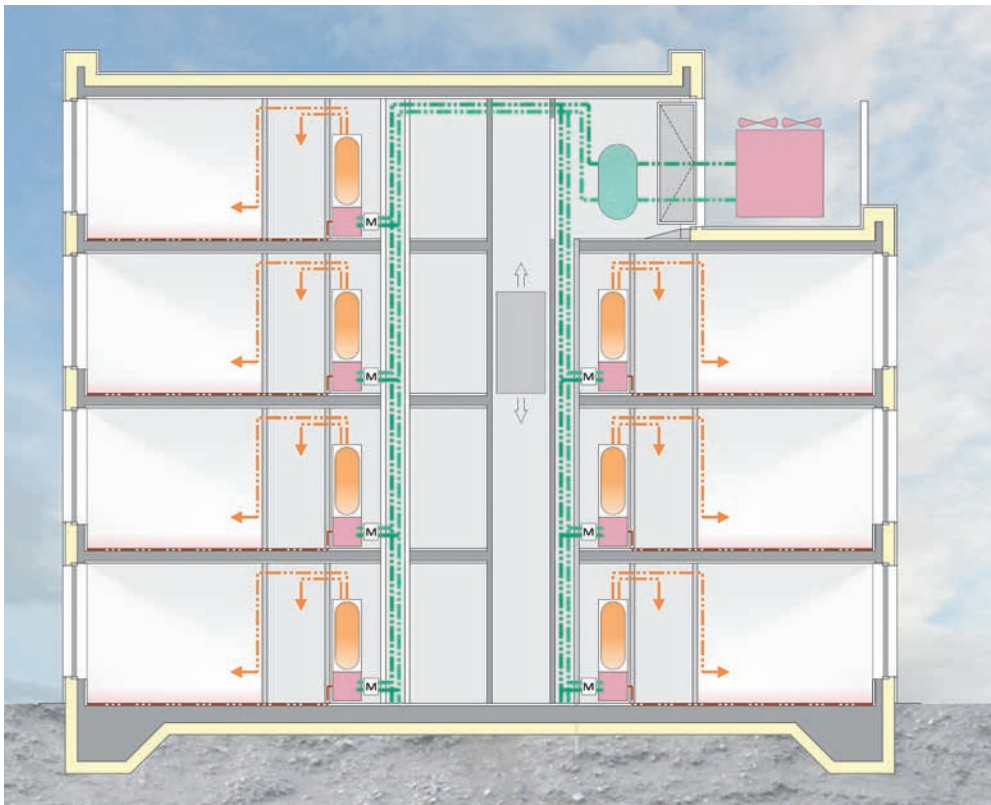
The systems have also been posited as an alternative to district heat networks, which typically operate at higher temperatures, increasing heat loss from pipework.

Reusing waste heat and sharing energy between buildings and sources is going to be key



Above Max Fordham's services design at Baker Place in Manchester city centre with OMI Architects is based around a low temperature community heating network using roof-mounted air source heat pumps as the heat source. Heat is distributed to apartments where it is used to provide space heating and domestic hot water. The air source heat pump in louvred enclosure on the roof is just visible.

Below Diagram of two stage heat pump system for apartment blocks.



But there are potential drawbacks. The requirement for individual heat pumps in every dwelling makes things complicated when parts need replacing, and they could increase the embodied energy of the heating system, reigning in operational CO₂ savings.

Neighbourhoods / developments

Heat networks that distribute energy from a central source to communal buildings, like newbuild apartments or clusters of homes, are an attractive option in urban areas, but currently serve only 500,000 customers across the UK.

The energy saving potential is much greater if they can tap into waste heat from industrial sources, waste incinerators or the London Underground.

Gregg says: 'Reusing waste heat and sharing energy between buildings and sources is going to be key. We don't want to be adding more gas into these systems, this requires strategic thinking at a government and local authority level to prioritise connections into low carbon sources of heat.'

It's an area that needs closer scrutiny: incinerators continue to gain planning permission without any obligation to integrate district heating, potentially locking in CO₂ waste for decades to come. ●

Post-Covid blueprint

How can architects adapt to a socially distanced world? HP DesignJet is integrated into your workflow for a digitally streamlined job



To see the same number of clients and do the same number of jobs, we need to change the way we work

Any architect who has had to negotiate the new one-way systems on construction sites will know site visits often take much longer than they used to. But physically standing in front of an on-site challenge and discussing it with the manager usually gets a solution much faster than a chain of emails, photo attachments and phone calls ever could.

Now though, the interactions required to get the job done are more complicated – and take longer – because of social distancing. Which all means less time in front of your workstation getting on with designing the structures your clients want built.

Digital is only part of the answer

One of the ways in which architects have responded to this challenge is to accelerate the pace of their digital transformation. Many firms, for instance, have given staff the tools they need to work remotely. In the UK, one fifth of architects say all their staff are now working remotely, and 60% say at least some employees are working from home.

At the same time, architects are automating their workflows to reduce or

eliminate manual work through digital transformation. This includes using technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotic process automation, innovations such as wearable tech, geolocation, and the use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices to gather data, and monitor site conditions.

All these innovations can help accelerate work rates and save time. Enabling staff digitally so they can work away from base makes social distancing at the office easier when clients do visit. But alone, technology-based measures are not enough.

Once everything that can be digitised has been, the proportion of time taken up by the remaining physical elements of the job is greater than ever. This leaves two main challenges: how to make these physical processes faster and more efficient and socially distanced and safe. Chief among the physical processes in question, is printing.

Large-format printing for architectural work

Printing schematics, artistic renderings and other large-format print jobs is a standard part of any architect's day, but can be time-consuming. What's needed now is a printer seamlessly integrated into the workflow for a digitally streamlined, post-Covid age.

This is why HP has recently released its new HP DesignJet T200, T600 and Studio Printer series. All have been designed from the ground up to be low-touch, and the easiest and most efficient way to maintain large-format printers, ever. Adaptions include:

- Easy document set-up: print multiple files, at any supported size, in just a single click with no extensive manual configuration.
- Smart multi-size printouts: with an A3 print tray and an integrated A3 workflow, you can print at any size from A4 up to A0, without manual reconfiguration.
- Work anywhere, any time: print from any connected device, whether you're in the office, at home, on site or in transit.

These ranges also include some of the most compact large-format printers ever made. In fact, the HP DesignJet T200 24-in series printers are up to 18% smaller than competing products, making them the world's smallest large-format plotters, perfect for remote working.

Taken together, these features deliver real flexibility — allowing your colleagues to print remotely and collect documents quickly, with minimum configuration and almost no physical contact with the printer. Perfect for the socially distanced office and home-working.

Perhaps even more importantly, the easy-set and print submission combined with the printers' reliability helps accelerate the physical task of printing in the same way other digital processes have accelerated.

'These new large-format printers are specifically designed to help architects and other design-led professions to be as efficient and operate as intelligently as their customers and the market demands,' says Colin Easton, large format printing channel manager at HP UK. 'They are ideal for architects looking for smarter ways to operate in the post-Covid era, and are highly cost effective and environmentally friendly, saving up to 95% on ink costs for routine maintenance compared to the competition and reducing emissions from large-format printing by up to 7.3 tons a year.' ●



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3: Culture

How to take the lead again

Architects should design for society rather than the market



Hugh Pearman Editor

Gordon Graham was the first RIBA president I knew, in office 1977-79, many years before I took this job. Old-school modernist, senior partner in ACP, liked his whisky and ciggies. I remember him sitting in the back of the coach, puffing away, in a 1979 trip to Paris organised by the resourceful Salaried Architects Group. Top of our agenda was of course the Pompidou Centre, then still fresh.

Almost 60 by then, Gordon was a high level architectural fixer. As president he was consulted on who should be the architect for the new Lloyd's of London building, and was instrumental in getting both Richard Rogers and Norman Foster onto the competition roster to design it. Rogers of course won, and now his building is grade I listed. Gordon went on to become CEO of Fosters as it was taking charge of the building of its international breakout building the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank HQ. So this now almost forgotten man was instrumental in a root-and-branch architectural revolution. There have been some good presidents since, but none, I'd argue, with that kind of heft.

Is there the remotest chance of getting back to the state we might fondly imagine existed right up to the time of Gordon Graham?

Then, just under half of all architects in the UK worked in the public sector. Large local council and central government architects' departments, some with their own 'direct labour' building contractors, were simply part of the landscape. RIBA Council was full of fine public architects such as Gordon Wigglesworth of the GLC and Kate Mackintosh of Southwark. Jim Callaghan's spending cuts were starting to hurt, but that was as nothing compared with what was to follow. The year of our study trip to Paris, Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister.

You can argue about her legacy all you like but consider this: last year (2019-20) just 6,566 social-rented homes were built in England, close to a record low. Since Victorian times, the private sector left to its own devices has very seldom managed to make the sums add up on social housing. UK land values are too high. The market does not provide.

The other constant over the years, nearly always featuring in the campaign pitches of would-be RIBA presidents, is the desire to recover the status and influence of architects. Is there the remotest chance of getting back to the state we might fondly imagine existed right up to the time of Gordon Graham?

The bad news is that it didn't. A few years before in 1974, one of my predecessors in this chair, Malcolm MacEwen, wrote 'Crisis in Architecture', a polemic against the complacency of architects commendably published by the RIBA itself. Architects, he wrote, had become 'caught up in a social system that rewarded their most selfish and destructive impulses while repelling their most generous and creative ones'. They were responding to the market, not social demands, he argued.

Happily, some things have improved. In February we'll be showing you the results of our RIBAJ MacEwen Award 2021. As ever, the strapline is 'Architecture for the Common Good'. There are some uncommonly good things there. Let them, I suggest, show a way forward for the profession. ●

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Not part of the plan

Thomas Sharp planned to manage urban traffic in the '40s, but nothing was enough



Will Wiles

When many of my school friends were getting into drugs, I developed an affection for town plans, in particular Oxford Replanned, Thomas Sharp's detailed 1948 proposal for the reconstruction of the city where I spent my formative years. My parents had a copy of Sharp's vision, possibly out of local interest, possibly because it was a very attractive object, a fat Oxford-blue hardcover full of interesting diagrams and pretty fold-out maps. It is a document designed to impress and convince, with proposals presented as delicious watercolours.

And what proposals! Though not bombed, Sharp wanted to demolish a vast area of the inner city to allow for an elaborate new road system. In the open spaces created by this tree-lined motor network would rise a new city of spacious stone-clad civic modernism. He presented this drastic redevelopment as life-saving surgery, essential if the city was to survive in the latter half of the 20th century.

The placidity of the plan's graceful renderings and the ferocity of some of the language made an intriguing contrast. Many Victorian districts were summarily dismissed as beyond saving. A tangle of streets known as St Ebbes was duly swept away to make room for an inner bypass, the only part of Sharp's road layout that was realised. The nearby inner suburb of Jericho was meant to follow – today it is one of the city's most desirable addresses. We lived in a Victorian house on the Iffley Road, near Magdalen Bridge. Sitting in this pleasant and

Coming over Oxford's Magdalen Bridge was 'a trip from the Renaissance to the New Dark Age'



convenient place, I enjoyed the fact that it was the target of Sharp's sharpest barbs. 'Vile beyond hope of redemption,' he called it. Coming over the bridge was 'a trip from the Renaissance to the New Dark Age'.

The insults were funny, but the praise was a delight. Sharp's description of the city, and his analysis of the parts he regarded as beautiful and successful, were unusually insightful. He was obviously earnest in seeing himself as saving a treasure from blight and chaos, and replacing its failing parts with new precincts worthy of the ancient area to be preserved.

I became a Sharp fan. The Oxford plan is the most detailed and ambitious of four produced in the 1940s, all for ancient and beautiful places: Exeter, Durham, Salisbury and Chichester. None was realised. Besides these, he also wrote extensively on towns and planning in general. English Panorama (1936) and Town Planning (1940) are eager, hopeful books that speculate how to combine modernist architecture and convenience without sweeping away the familiar scale and patterns of English places. 'The aerial roads ... topless towers and all the rest of the rather nightmarish properties of Corbusierean [sic] fantasy may yet materialise some day,' he wrote in English Panorama. 'But they are some time distant yet, even for the great metropolitan cities: and we can safely leave them outside our anticipations for the ordinary town of tomorrow.'

By the time of Town and Townscape, published in 1968, the tone was more rueful. The scale of much modern construction was not to his taste, but the fundamental problem was traffic. Sharp imagined his 1940s plans to be future-proofing towns for the motor car. By 1968, it was already obvious that even the most destructive interventions were inadequate.

Sharp's writing on towns, though often dated, is still hugely readable today. And his plans contain a valuable lesson. Here was a brilliant mind trying to accommodate the looming problem of traffic with boldness, but without sacrificing urbanity. The results are sometimes horrible, but less horrible than what many cities actually did. Within a generation, Sharp had realised that traffic simply could not be accommodated, even if urbanity was sacrificed, if the boldness bordered on fanaticism. The only solution was to restrain the car. Astonishingly, more than 50 years later, this is a lesson many still struggle with. ●

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

THIN END OF WEDGES
Oxford was the largest city to get the Sharp treatment, but Town Planning contains his proposal for London: no green belt but green wedges of parkland separating radiating corridors of development built around railway lines. Even Sharp recognised that the level of destruction required was prohibitive, but the outline would later be adapted into the echt-modernist MARS plan for the city.

Lost year is awards' gain

Projects submitted for the 2022 RIBA Awards will need to have been occupied for one year



Alan Jones

A year can make such a difference. By March it is expected the new vaccines will have helped return our worlds closer to how we remember them, and the past year of lockdowns and temporary closures will be consigned to memory, rather than our lived reality. But life and business will be different.

One unexpected outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic is the chance to gain a year on the RIBA Awards timeline. Projects already submitted and shortlisted for 2020 have been taken forward into 2021, which creates the opportunity to require that submissions in 2022 must be for projects that have been occupied for a year. I'm pleased this opportunity is being taken, for so many reasons.

Sometimes when visiting buildings as part of the awards judging process there is the smell of freshly applied paint, the grass grinning through soil, and clients evidently still increasing their knowledge and experience of, and love for, their new project. Designed and constructed specific to client, context and climate, it takes time to fully appreciate how it truly fits one's needs, the different ways it can be used, the way it performs and how to enjoy it – both in the expected ways and sometimes unexpected ones too.

With one year of occupancy as a prerequisite for future submissions to the RIBA Awards, the defects period will be over and the environmental performance monitored,

Right Shifting the awards on a year will allow clients to have spent all four seasons in their building and know when to open it up, as with the House for Theo and Oskar designed by Tigg + Coll Architects.

Adding a year of occupation to the RIBA Awards criteria further aligns them with architects' good practice, and even more so with client, user and performance value



ANDY MATTHEWS

adjusted and confirmed. Squeaks can be resolved and tweaks made, to realise optimum performance and user satisfaction. Instruction manuals will have been consulted and clarifications given. The reflections of clients and users familiar with the project, after experiencing a full year of it, plus post-occupancy evaluation, will inform the project team and the judging process. In the same way that creating architecture takes time, fully using and coming to appreciate a project also takes time.

Over a calendar year, of summer and winter, sun and rain, breeze and gale, an understanding of how best to use a project will develop, of when and how to open up – and batten down. It will be a year of acquiring experience of how to run it effectively and efficiently, keeping energy consumption and bills low, and a year of increasing delight and appreciation of what has been delivered, by a team of many, for them.

My experience is that satisfied and pleased users become evangelists for carefully considered and well delivered projects. In Defining Contemporary Professionalism, Pierre Wassenaar and Fionn Stevenson, along with many others, make a strong case for the strategic thinking and fine detail delivery skills of architects to be applied from inception to occupation – from Stage 0 to Stage 7. The challenge for architects, supported by RIBA, is for their appointments to reflect this whole spectrum value.

The physical visiting of each project already puts the RIBA Awards above those judged purely on image, text and drawing. Adding a year of occupation to the criteria further aligns the awards with architects' good practice and even more so with client, user and performance value. When a project receives an RIBA Award people will know it has been tried and tested. What a difference a year makes. ●

@AlanJonesFRIBA

DISCIPLINARY SANCTION: PUBLIC REPRIMAND
Following a hearing before the Professional Conduct Committee on 15 October 2020, Paul Robinson Partnership (PRP) was found to have breached RIBA Code of Practice (2019), Principle 3, Duty 1.3 in that they failed to appropriately acknowledge the contribution of another party, which was a fully developed planning consent and not merely a 'sketch scheme'; and RIBA Code of Practice (2019), Principle 3, Duty 1.4 in that they sought to pass off another party's work as their own by promoting uncredited images on its website. In accordance with the RIBA disciplinary procedures, the Hearing Panel issued PRP with a public reprimand.

Retiring RIBA editor Hugh Pearman is happier talking about architecture than himself, but you'll find glimpses of his character in this reflection on his 44 years in the business

Words: Isabelle Priest Portrait: Sarah Lee

The way I see it

At the start of our conversation Hugh is at pains to point out that this profile was not his idea. He had hoped to write a final column then slope off quietly into retirement.

After 14 years as editor of RIBA Journal, however, he wasn't getting away with that. Hugh Pearman is the longest-serving post-war editor and has stewarded the magazine through good and turbulent times. At the very least he was going to have to be interviewed for a 'where architecture's at and going' article. This is why he has agreed, it's an excuse to look at architecture over a 44-year career. It's also an opportunity for people who haven't met him to get a flavour of who he is. There's something of the passing down wisdom dynamic too. And what I realise from my first question is that he's never been interviewed about himself before. Call this a RIBA exclusive.

Let's be clear, this is no normal set-up. Hugh believes in the office. Yet in nine months I've seen him once, at the outdoor



ARCHITECTURAL PRESS ARCHIVE / RIBA COLLECTIONS

lunch where he announced his retirement. Although if coronavirus hadn't happened, he'd have left six months earlier. We are speaking on Teams from our homeworking spaces that are geographically only 3km apart – of course he already had the perfect Zoom background. He is in his study, surrounded by floor-to-ceiling Vitsoe shelving, packed silly with architecture books. One shelf somewhere is signed by Dieter Rams himself. If Hugh spins his camera around, the desk is piled with paper, only space for his keyboard and hands to do 'the one thing I was ever good at: write'.

Until recently Hugh attributed his interest in architecture to being a student in Durham in the 1970s, where he studied English language and literature. His college was a 1963 neoclassical Francis Johnson building in the historic centre. Round the corner was the cathedral and Arup's Kingsgate 'the best bridge ever'. Beyond was the tiered brutalist



Hugh Pearman is retiring from RIBA Journal after 14 years as editor.

Opposite Where Hugh began to find an interest in architecture: Architects Co-Partnership's Dunelm House and Ove Arup's Kingsgate Bridge in Durham, completed 1966 and 1963 respectively.

Dunelm House student union and new colleges stepping up the hill with buildings by Basil Spence and Sheppard Robson. ‘It was an exercise in how old and new could coexist, you could see what was going on.’

He now realises his interest took shape earlier. As a teenager, he would get a ride to London from Tunbridge Wells, where he grew up, to walk waterways, scrambling through fences, discovering decaying Georgian infrastructure and the early industrial archaeology of Eric de Mare’s photographs. It wasn’t architecture but ‘lifestyle’, introduced to him by family friends who travelled the canals shooting Super 8 movies in the 1960s. He watched them with fascination and read books like Narrow Boat about living a ‘drop-out’ life on the canals by LTC Rolt, founder of the Inland Waterways Association which Hugh duly joined.

‘Towpaths weren’t open in those days. They were run down, only just about commercial,’ he says. ‘Apart from the odd boat, no one would be there.’ This played into 1960s/70s alternative movements that dovetailed folk rock music, taking to the road in Gypsy caravans and the nobility of manual labour, especially farming. He toyed with becoming a lockkeeper, worked on a farm and even shampooed a Charolais bull.

Visiting Newcastle from Durham, however, he saw there were still tramp steamers and heaps of coal on the wharfs. He learned about snobbery, class, town and gown, private school and army cadet kids (see his state grammar review on page 14). He also learned about getting together with mates and doing stuff, like co-founding an arts fusion magazine called Vent in which high and low culture were treated as equally valuable. They sold it around colleges door-to-door for 10p

CRFOSTER+ PARTNERS, ALAN HOWARD



and it later proved useful in getting his first job – a traineeship on a travel agent magazine at publisher Morgan Grampian in Woolwich, south-east London. When it finished, he could apply for a job on any of its other titles.

‘I was warned not to work for Building Design as it didn’t have any money, which was true, but I was interested in architecture; things were starting to happen and change.’ On the way back from Durham one year he had stopped at UEA to see Lasdun’s ziggurats. At one end was a big shed under construction, linked to Lasdun’s by an umbilical bridge. It looked like a sports hall but turned out to be Norman Foster’s breakout Sainsbury Centre.

‘There was not a direct transition between concrete modernism and high tech,’ Hugh explains. ‘Not many people were writing about architecture outside the trade press. There was Colin Amery in the FT, Nicholas Taylor here and there and Ian Nairn ensconced at the Sunday Times as a travel writer, which was not his best work but by that time he was basically pickled.’

Architecture was in a process of total re-evaluation. It had been rocked by post-war council estate failures, particularly by the partial collapse of Ronan Point.

‘Architects were exploring a number of avenues. Some were looking at historic buildings to see if they could apply those lessons – the Asda tithe barn look which then BD editor Peter Murray splashed “the apotheosis of vernacular fakery” – and could be argued found its way into the British Library,’ Hugh says. ‘Then postmodernism was starting up, although that was more Italian at first. To me the interesting stuff was high tech because it was prefabricated. Foster and Rogers hated wet trades, instead they wanted clipped-together architecture that could be changed, extended, extruded, even if the early buildings became enshrined as temples. By the time Prince Charles came along in 1984 you

Above ‘We just assumed it was a swanky sports hall’ – Norman Foster’s Sainsbury Centre under construction at UEA.

had another strand: straight historicism.’

Changes were afoot in journalism too. At BD they’d been using technology that had hardly changed since 1900 – manual typewriters, typesetters. In 1982, Hugh went to work at BDP where they had early computerised communication. In the middle of his four years there, he began to write for the Guardian and the Observer, mostly about technology and a future where we would work from home/wherever we wanted. By 1986 he was doing freelance shifts at the Sunday Times, following Deyan Sudjic. It was the tail-end of the Wapping Dispute – the stand-off between News International and printworkers after production was shifted to east London and computers were introduced so journalists could input copy directly. After a year, he was offered a contract. He became architecture correspondent for the next 30 years.

‘It’s unfashionable to say, but the Wapping Dispute probably saved the newspaper industry for 25 years. It was an ugly moment, but there had to be a convulsion. Murdoch was simply the man that did it.’

In architecture the news was the National Gallery extension – a key moment for Prince Charles and his courtiers, who didn’t trust British architects. Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi ‘were like innocents coming into a hurricane’. Will Alsop came a bit later. Alsop & Störmer’s ‘Le Grand Bleu’ in Marseille showed other British architecture was possible: ‘It wasn’t high tech or postmodern, it was a layer cake of things, like an exploded diagram in dark blue.’

Hugh wishes this had won the second Stirling Prize – which, incidentally, he helped launch out of the competition he ran at the Sunday Times with the Royal Fine Art Com-

Right ‘The last good Zaha before it all went too parametric:’ the Stirling Prize winning MAXXI (2010) in Rome.



Isolationism is never good for culture. Britain is a net exporter of architecture

IWAN BAAH

mission. The title ‘Stirling’ came to him in the shower after watching the Turner Prize on TV. Jim Stirling had died four years before, but it was a controversial choice because buildings like his Cambridge History Faculty Library had become known for going wrong.

‘It was notable that the projects Stirling built in Germany like the Stuttgart Neue Staatsgalerie didn’t fall apart. It doesn’t tell you about Stirling, but it does tell you about British construction.’

Hugh still thinks that when architects like Mecanoo, OMA or BIG build here the results ‘look a bit disappointing and aren’t quite so good’. That’s why he is not keen on Brexit: ‘Isolationism is never good for culture, let alone for the fact architecture is interconnected. Britain is a net exporter of architecture; freedom of movement has been a driver of the pan-European interchange of ideas.’

Since 2000, Hugh’s ‘best building’ is David Chipperfield and Julian Harrap’s Neues Museum in Berlin that subscribes to the British SPAB method of showing the marks of time, which was new to Germany then (think Dresden Frauenkirche). It took him back to the old/new approach in Durham, everything shoehorned together, talking to each other, ‘although people have perhaps over-zealously applied that glass box to Regency thing.’

There are signs, however, that architects are now alluding more to history in their designs. Caruso St John’s Tate Britain and

Below ‘Other British architecture was possible’: Alsop & Störmer’s Hotel du Département des Bouches-du-Rhone (Le Grand Bleu), Marseille, completed 1994.



EMMANUEL THIRARD / RIBA COLLECTIONS



Above To counter the returning style wars Hugh was pleased to see Mikhail Riches win the Stirling Prize in 2019.

Wetherford Watson Mann's new building dropped into Astley Castle are two examples. He thinks it's time for the next international movement – the last was deconstructivism in the 1990s that led to Zaha and Gehry – but he has no idea which way architecture will go. He argues for stylistic biodiversity, although he sees binary thinking that good stuff is old-looking and bad stuff is new-looking is back, led by people behind Create Streets and Building Beautiful and based on Roger Scruton's ideology that 'beauty', meaning Trad, will overcome Nimbyism.

'It's a fig leaf – part of a deeply conservative movement to get developers who fund Tory Party coffers to build all over everywhere,' Hugh says. 'It's also part of retrenchment and drawing back; that we're OK here with our sausage sandwiches.'

We must build though, and that's why he was pleased to see Mikhail Riches's Goldsmith Street win the Stirling Prize and witness the rise of Peter Barber, who models projects on tight Victorian streets. For a RIBA column, Hugh measured the street he lives on to work out the magic formula himself.

'To say there is one thing called modernism is bonkers,' he says. 'That hasn't been true since the mid-1950s and Team 10. When you look at practices like Squire & Partners and Stanton Williams, they are applying neoclassical ways of looking at buildings to modern perspectives.'

He thinks traditionalist practices like Adam Architecture, the Terrys, Ben Pentreath and Stanhope Gate should issue a joint

statement to counter the terrible stuff on wackier websites and forums where neoclassical architecture is being linked with anti-semitism and white supremacism.

Beyond style, architects must find a way back into leading the process, a lack made bleakly clear by the Grenfell fire, which he believes was part of a culture of D&B contracts and value engineering. These combine with scrimping and regulatory failure into many small acts that are at the root of much bad architecture. You need buildings with budgets of a workable size. The thinking also finds its way into places like Nine Elms in Vauxhall.

'Architecture is not building buy-to-leave apartments for sale on the international market that nobody lives in.' Covid may lead to them – or it could push things further in the same direction. The other issue is about making everything climate change aware – 'It isn't just about zero emissions, but loss of terrestrial biodiversity.'

At RIBA, Hugh made a point of allowing writers their own voice, of launching competitions to create a dialogue with readers and getting around the country to unearth practices and make the magazine representative. Now there are books to write and he is returning to the canals to keep an eye on waterside planning proposals as a volunteer consultant for the Inland Waterways Association which he joined all those years ago.

One final question though. Who would he get to design his Paragraph 79 home in Derbyshire, where he spends a lot of time? 'Evans Vettori, Paul Testa, Gagarin Studio – not a London firm. But make this clear too: I haven't got the money.' ●

To say there is one thing called modernism is bonkers. That hasn't been true since the 1950s



Right Where is Hugh going next?

The world has changed a lot in 2020.
What do you, the architects of the future, think about it?

Write it down – we'll publish the winners

RIBAJ FUTURE ARCHITECTS WRITING COMPETITION

Do you have burning things to say about architecture in the context of Covid, climate change or Black Lives Matter? How do we tackle homelessness, the struggling retail sector, schools under pressure? What makes efficient practice, how do we best serve our clients and users, diversify and expand the profession and its reach? Are there design issues you yearn to celebrate, condemn, change?

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<https://www.ribaj.com/future-writers>

Takeover: Greening needs grassroot power

Ben Holland takes over the pages in a rallying cry to unite with the activism of students and young professionals across the UK and really act on the climate emergency, the latest in our series tackling urgent issues for the profession



‘Calling all architecture students, graduates, professionals. Your education is failing you!’

There’s a clear message in the tagline of the Climate Curriculum Campaign, an initiative led by ACAN (Architects Climate Action Network). There is no time to lose and architects, designing at the centre of an industry that contributes one third of the UK’s waste, are best placed to take the helm. But what are students doing about it?

We know the built environment accounts for roughly 40% of the UK’s carbon footprint, and with more than 1000 signatories to Architects Declare we seem ready to begin addressing the fundamental problems in our industry. The dual crises of climate and ecological breakdown require immediate and radical change and those in positions of power, who have the ability to effect fundamental change, will likely be dead before the worst of the tragic results of a tardy response to the climate crisis is realised.

As a result, students are taking matters into their own hands with university climate action groups popping up across the UK. Often inspired by events organised by ACAN, a range of topics is being tackled including educational reform, dissemination of resources and autonomous sustainability education.

One such group, QCAN (Queen’s Climate Action Network), started this summer by Jessica Scott and Chris Connolly at Queen’s University Belfast, is facilitating a dialogue between students and tutors to work out a response to the climate crisis. QUB declared a climate emergency last year and subsequent studio briefs have started to frame necessary questions, but the duo felt this top-down approach needed to be reciprocated from the bottom up.

Connolly comments that ‘climate action isn’t a specialist subject,’ but with the scientific foundations of its emergence, it sometimes feels like it can be. Scott and Connolly are compiling a research library of podcasts, books, documentaries and films to supply accessible information to fellow students to aid climate action and literacy. The library will soon be launched on their website and Instagram.

Through podcasts and lectures, the pair have been educating themselves and students from other disciplines within the faculty (including engineers, planners and geography students) which is vital for



UWE CAN (2)

future success says Scott: ‘Architects have a lot to answer for and are the primary designers, but once you get into practice, our profession is so interdisciplinary.’

Scott McAulay, co-ordinator of the Anthropocene Architecture School and a RIBA Rising Star, agrees. ‘Architects are perfectly placed in design teams to mediate between disciplines and to lead the conversation,’ he believes. He hopes to show that the built environment industry has huge political potential and says we should be lobbying hard: ‘If the government was met with noise from more than 50 universities, the RIBA and a coalition of architecture practices, it would be pretty hard to ignore and a powerful public statement to encourage other industries to follow suit.’

In Bristol, Nicola Mead, a fourth year student, ACAN member and sustainability officer at the University of the West of England Architecture Society, set up WE CAN, a student activism group liaising with academic staff to adapt the curriculum to address the climate crisis appropriately.

A recent project asked students to send in their ‘climate action in up to 12 words’ to be posted on the WE CAN Instagram page — a recorded manifesto encouraging them to be accountable for their own education in the climate emergency.

At the end of the last academic year,

Climate action pledge from Nicola Mead, WE CAN student co-founder, for WE CAN action installation, November 2020.

Those in positions of power, who have the ability to effect fundamental change, will likely be dead before the worst of the tragic results of a tardy response to the climate crisis are realised

‘SSoA Students for Climate Action’ at the Sheffield School of Architecture conducted a survey gaining feedback from students about the quality of their education in tackling the climate emergency. Their findings were presented to the faculty in a staff reflection day helping the university to consider its strengths and weaknesses, but despite its success, they feel this is something all schools should be doing of their own accord. The co-ordinators of the group note a significant lack of funding for staff to carry out this type of reflection. They hope that by pushing upwards, their school can do the same, twisting the arms of the officials sat in bureaucratic conclave to give them the green light (and green paper) to begin the essential transformation required to start tackling the major shortfalls of an outdated education system.

Looking to the future, the Students for Climate Action team including Eleanor Derbyshire, Claire Wilkinson and Marian Alkali, hope to form relationships with other student action groups across the country. Joining the wider conversation while keeping a local focus expands their agency, and other groups are finding the same. ACAN’s student branch, ACAN Education, is preparing a new campaign to unite student groups across the UK and give an identity to their collective voice.

If the government was met with noise from more than 50 universities, the RIBA and practices, it would be pretty hard to ignore

Head of University of West of England’s department of architecture and built environment, Elena Marco, commits to do her bit.



While promoting the three main tenets of ACAN's agenda: decarbonise now; ecological regeneration and cultural transformation, ACAN Education has set up working groups with focussed research themes, provided educational resources and encouraged the RIBA to listen to the student population. Ben Yeates, SSoA alumnus and co-ordinator at ACAN Education also notes the mental wellbeing benefits of getting involved with initiatives such as these, noting that collective action can help people to feel like they're doing some good in what can otherwise seem like a helpless situation.

The reception across the board has been positive. Tutors have been engaging and open. Students are getting involved wherever they can, and there is sizeable support from adjacent disciplines. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have provided alternative methods of working which might just provide this movement with a longevity that others have not had. According to Yeates, 'the pandemic has generally improved confidence and willingness to communicate via online calls'. Geographic barriers no longer limit activism and, while London is involved, this is not a capital-centric movement whereas previously it might have been. In fact, it's not only national but beginning to spread further afield with people joining the conversation

Time should be provided for all employees to improve their climate literacy and perform their own activism

Student architecture society at UWE and how it promised climate action.



UWE CAN (2)

from the European Architects Student Assembly and even as far off as Nairobi.

Historically, coalitions with a united voice have been effective vehicles for change, and strength here is definitely in numbers. Students and young professionals, eager to see the changes that will save our world, have begun taking ownership of the problem. Now professional practice must follow suit. Time should be provided for all employees to improve their climate literacy and perform their own activism. Resources should be shared and tools developed between practices, not just within them. We cannot wait until the current student cohort climbs the ranks - that lag time is too long. Intervention is required now. Professional reform is needed just as much as educational.

So back to the original question. What are students and young professionals doing about the climate emergency? The answer is taking ownership. Leaving the fate of their future to older members of the profession is just too big a risk. There is a collective responsibility to act now and students across the UK are using their energy and enthusiasm to transform education and add their voice to the growing noise. ●

Benjamin Holland is a student at Central St Martin's and part of one of the winning teams for RIBA Rethink 2025
www.benhollanddesign.com

Student on architecture and technology Ashleigh Msipo makes her pledge on climate action.

Professional reform is needed just as much as educational

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How shows woo visitors

Content aside, what kills or brings to life an exhibit? The frame? The label? The lighting?

Pamela Buxton

Dinah Casson’s *Closed on Mondays – Behind the Scenes at the Museum* is a book about aspects of museums and galleries that most people rarely give a second thought to – the labels, frames, windows, even the coat-check.

And while that might sound rather tedious, thankfully it isn’t. On the contrary, the author uses these seemingly mundane elements to explore issues that are intrinsically linked with our experience of these cultural institutions, ranging from truth and interpretation through to the nature of collections and collectors and the impact of the gallery environment on how visitors respond to what they see.

Much of the book’s success is down to the author’s ability to draw on her extensive exhibition design experience in an accessible way. As co-founder of Casson Mann in 1984, Casson has designed installations at many leading museums and galleries including the Victoria & Albert Museum, Churchill Museum and the Imperial War Museum. But *Closed on Mondays* isn’t really about Casson Mann’s projects, although these are referenced to illustrate some of her points.

Her aim is to question some of the ‘unanswerables’ that lie alongside exhibition design. Why are so many frames ornate and gilt? Why are galleries so often windowless white boxes? What role is there for the facsimile? Do labels tell the absolute truth?

Casson kicks off with windows, and in particular their absence, which has become the orthodoxy in so many venues. While the challenges that natural light presents to the exhibition designer are considerable and well-known, the rewards are less discussed.



Above Installation designed by Carlo Scarpa 1961-3 of Giovanni Bellini’s *Presentation at the Temple* (1460). Collection Palazzo Querini Stampalia, Venice.

What happens when the frames become not an aid to communication but a barrier, by telling a different story to that of the artwork?

Casson however reminds us that most art works were commissioned by patrons to hang in domestic settings, windows and all. While curtains give architects and designers ‘the shivers’, she makes a good case for the importance of visual connections to the outdoors, and how the presence of views out can help cement the memory of the objects within the space, despite the danger of providing distraction. Above all, people are comfortable being able to see daylight and to locate themselves in relation to the ground, and if they are comfortable, they are likely to get more from their visit. While Louisiana Museum in Humlebæk, Denmark, the Fondation Maeght near Nice and others are shown as particularly good examples of harmonious use of windows, Casson gets most ‘window joy’ from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, where any fleetingly negative impacts of the light tracking across

DINAH CASSON (3)

the art works is cancelled out by the benefits. She is particularly good on frames. These present, it turns out, a right hornet’s nest of issues relating to authenticity, convention, and the role of frames in communicating what is framed. But what happens when the frames become not an aid to communication but a barrier, by telling a different story to that of the artwork? We learn that gilt frames were the convention for a very long time – the Royal Academy would only accept paintings in gilt frames as late as 1920 – and that eventually some artists including Degas rebelled, preferring simpler, more appropriate frames. Should frames be thought of more as bookjackets and updated to better suit the times and content? I like her idea of having an exhibition to explore the effects of different frames on the perception of facsimiles of the same artworks.

I found the chapter discussing facsimiles, copies, simulacra and fakes fascinating, particularly as a fan of the Lascaux visitor centre near Montignac in the Dordogne, which is referenced extensively. In this, Palaeolithic cave paintings are recreated a stone’s throw from the closed-off original cave. With the cave off-limits due to visitor-induced deterioration, the Lascaux IV recreation and the wonderful interpretative exhibition (designed by Casson Mann) seem the ideal solution, and are both entertainingly experiential and educational. While it could have been located anywhere, this approach, not surprisingly, works best close to the original hillside site. Casson ponders the role of facsimiles in both conservation and the sharing of access, as well as discussing broader attitudes to authenticity. The advent of digital archaeology and its potential role in reconstruction makes this a very topical subject.

The discussion on the power of museum labels probes the fundamental issue of what is truth and what is interpretation. Casson also cites Alain de Botton and John Armstrong’s suggestion, in their book *Art as Therapy*, for labels that encourage visitors to connect with their feelings instead of just giving the bald, basic information. Surely there’s ample room for both. The challenge for museums is how to find the way to encourage this emotional engagement in just the customary 50 words of label text.

The brief section on coat-check didn’t add much to the juicier topics, but the chapter on



Above The size and weight of the frames, especially Turner’s, are clearly visible in the painting *Turner on Varnishing Day* by William Parrott, 1840. Collection of the Guild of St George, Museums Sheffield.

Closed on Mondays – Behind the Scenes at the Museum by Dinah Casson, Lund Humphries, HB, £29.95

Below The distinctive windows of the National Immigration Museum, Ellis Island, New York, where 12 million arrivals had their first tantalising sight of the streets of Manhattan, 2002.

Below right Detail of windows designed for the Grassi Museum in Leipzig by Josef Albers. Installed in 1929, they were destroyed during the war and remade in 2011.

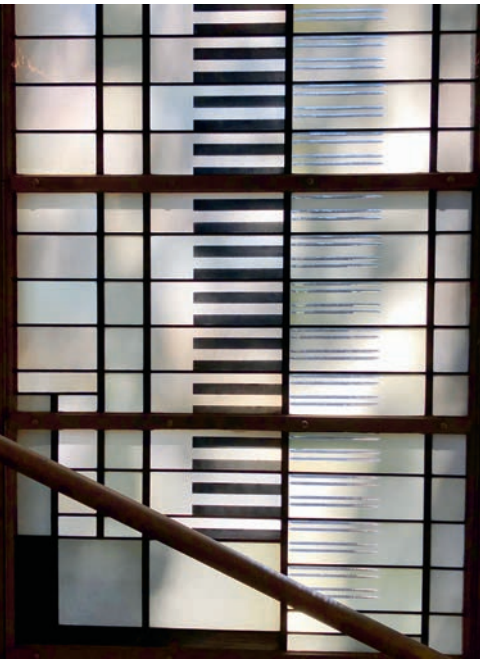


collectors spans interestingly across motivations – some enjoy the challenge, some the prestige and pleasure of being wooed by dealers. For others, it may be a way of forging a new identity.

Now is a good time to consider the role of museums, with the lockdown closures only reinforcing the power of the in-person visitor experience, however good the online alternatives. Rather than castigate visitors taking selfies in front of artwork, or rushing through galleries at a hare’s pace, Casson is particularly good at putting herself in the shoes of the visitor and understanding their anxieties, frustrations and fatigue. Perhaps they’re exhausted, laden with coats and children. Perhaps they have only a few hours to ‘do’ a museum. Perhaps they’re anxious that they’re not ‘getting’ what they’re seeing. This sensitivity has surely helped sustain her work.

‘Exhibitions do not make any sense without visitors, and we know that we forget their needs and feelings at our peril,’ she says.

While *Closed on Mondays* will particularly chime with those already interested in exhibition design, this illuminating and wide-ranging book should appeal more generally to anyone who enjoys going to museums and galleries. Casson hopes it will encourage visitors to take a more quizzical approach. Certainly I’ll never look at a museum label or a gilded frame in quite the same way again. ●



Michael Aukett

1938 – 2020

Leader of two award winning, highly successful multi-disciplinary practices, who reached the Stirling Prize shortlist



Michael Aukett was a highly talented design architect, something happily coupled with strong management ability. This enabled him to create and run a successful practice, twice over. His reputation for modern high quality buildings was such that his firms won a total of 29 design awards: nine RIBA Awards including a Stirling Prize Finalist; 10 Civic Trust Awards: three Financial Times Awards; six Structural Steel Awards; and the MIPIM Office Building of the Year Award in 1996.

Born and raised in Brentford, Middlesex, he trained at London’s Regent Street Polytechnic from 1956 to 1962 on a part time course, so his college work was done in night classes and at weekends, while working in the week.

In 1965 he joined Austin-Smith:Lord, quickly rising to become a partner, then leaving to found his own practice Michael Aukett Associates in 1972. It was based in Covent Garden, and rapidly grew, with a mixed range of work and such clients as IBM and Boots. His interest and skill in interiors and space planning meant that this was always a key part of the practice’s work.

An important early major building was the 1979 factory for Landis and Gyr in North West London, won in competition. A masterpiece in the Miesian tradition, it raised his profile and that of the office within the profession. He believed in working with methodical analysis of the brief, thinking laterally, form following the function. He was an admirer of Norman Foster who famously followed this approach.

As the office became more successful a strong team of talented directors and staff developed. And it became multi-disciplinary, with environmental engineering, landscape, graphics and project management complementing the architecture and interior design teams. The different disciplines often worked together on projects,

but also with other consultants such as structural engineer Tony Hunt who became good friends with Aukett, who was always the first to say that the success of the practice came from the great talent within it.

A good leader, he had a warm, sociable and optimistic personality. Being hands-on he was always highly visible in the studio. Outside work he had a major love of sport, particularly cricket – he was an MCC member – though golf was what he played later in life. Another interest was modern art. He commissioned paintings from such artists as the abstract expressionist Albert Irvin, also a friend.

The studio’s multi-discipline structure was relatively unusual, with strong parallels to YRM. Like them, Auketts floated on the Stock Exchange, in 1987, and became one of the most successful practices of the time. Notable among its many buildings of high quality were the Stirling-short-listed Marks and Spencer’s Management Centre Chester (1989), Procter and Gamble HQ at Weybridge (1995), and the 1984 Lennox Wood Computer Centre.

He played a leading role in developing business parks in the UK, visiting the USA to study them and being involved in several major examples, starting with London’s Stockley Park in 1982. The practice created joint venture offices in Germany with Lutz Heese and in Holland.

The practice undertook important conservation work, notably in 1981 at Voysey’s interior at Garden Corner, Swan House by Norman Shaw (both on Chelsea Embankment) in 1984, and Shrubs’s Wood in 1987, one of only three buildings by Erich Mendelsohn in the UK.

He left Aukett Associates in 1995 to get away from the time-consuming City pressure and founded a new smaller studio, Michael Aukett Architects. This went on to become equally successful with more award winning buildings such as its 1998 Tesco store in Sheffield. He retired in 2009.

He is survived by his wife Allison and their two children Simon and Charlotte, and Pauline his first wife and their two children Jonathan and Claire. A memorial event is to be arranged in the spring. ●

Ken Simms

IN MEMORIAM

Vivian Alexander Liff
ELECTED 1952, ISLE OF MAN

James Jolliffe Read
ELECTED 1954, HEMEL
HEMPSTEAD

Alexander Macgregor
ELECTED 1961, PAISLEY

Antony Glyn Foster
ELECTED 1962, SALISBURY

Raymond Thomas Lewis
ELECTED 1974, POTTERS BAR

George Spiridion Tsiantar
ELECTED 1985, ALTRINCHAM

Peter William George
Powell
ELECTED 1951, HEMEL
HEMPSTEAD

John Nelson Tarn
ELECTED 1962, MATLOCK

John James Scott
ELECTED 1959, MARLOW

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

Exchange

Too kind

Re Hugh Pearman’s impending departure: as a regular subscriber will you please send my thanks and best wishes for his massive contribution to RIBAJ over his time as editor.

I look forward to reading his continued enlightened contributions.

Carl Thompson architect, by email
–Our profile of Hugh is on page 52

Road to somewhere

Colin Davis and P Martin (RIBAJ Exchange Nov 2020) are correct about the inadequacy of the DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) for designing urban streets. When I was chief architect/planner at the Department for Transport/Highways Agency (1992-2001) I carried out extensive research into the benefits of good urban design on self-calming roads, reduced pollution, improved safety and better integration between road users. From this research we wrote a suite of innovative documents on urban design for inclusion in the DMRB, which would have transformed how roads are designed for urban areas.

Unfortunately the bulk of urban roads covered by the Highways Agency were in London, and just as the documents were due to be published the London roads were transferred to Transport for London (TfL), so the Highways Agency thought it was inappropriate for it to publish the advice in the DMRB. TfL refused to publish the advice saying it did not want to do anything to help car users!

This was a terrible loss to good urban design, but at least I ensured that the research was published by The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), so is in the public realm and can be found in its archives. One of the best documents was ‘Advice for Self-Calming Roads’, drafted by Roger Evans Associates in November



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2001. Having just re-read it, the advice is still remarkably sound and innovative. Architects and planning officers would do well to follow the advice, if they can get hold of a copy.

Jon Wallsgrove, Sunbury on Thames

Bleak houses

With regard to your one-off houses issue of November 2020: if our profession wants to become truly inclusive perhaps RIBAJ could think carefully before publishing carefully staged self-conscious photographs of house interiors uncluttered by any signs of human habitation – which most people simply do not recognise as a domestic environment – and stop using fashionable buzzwords like ‘toolkit’ which makes no sense to the average person. The Winship house on page 8 is an excellent representation of a believable interior in a clever building but all the other photos of various interiors look too much like set pieces. Of course we all want our buildings to be seen in the best light but I believe your man was right in saying that a house is a machine for living in.

Until the architectural establishment makes a genuine effort to communicate with the rest of the population the perception will persist that, like other prominent professions, architects still hanker after a mystique that somehow sets them apart from and above ordinary folk.

Malcolm Kemp, Metroland

Levelling up

A great step in the 20th century was the European Convention of Human Rights 1953. This event was a response to the horrors of World Wars One and Two.

A response to the horrors of Covid 19 would be the ending of excess inequality in Britain – to achieve a better place.


Due to these circumstances I propose an international competition in 2030, when Eton College is no longer sustainable: a competition inviting architects to submit an alternative use or uses for the college buildings and also sketch designs for the alterations to three of the prominent buildings of the College.

Peter Foulsham, Brockley

Of course we all want our buildings to be seen in the best light but I believe your man was right in saying that a house is a machine for living in

Malcolm Kemp, Metroland

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Lanteglos
Calenick, Cornwall, 1960s

In the Cornish hamlet of Calenick, ‘Lanteglos’ (now known as Otter Creek) sits on a slope overlooking the Truro river. It was designed in the early 1960s by local architect Giles Blomfield (1925-2012), a partner in John Crowther & Associates, for himself and his family. A grandson of Edwardian architect Sir Reginald Blomfield, he had studied at the Bartlett School in London, where he also worked in the office of Ernö Goldfinger before returning to Cornwall. The house in Calenick, influenced in its design by the work of modernist European architects such as Marcel Breuer, was conceived to max-

imise the links between indoors and out, and features extensive fenestration and a cantilevered balcony. This design won the architect what was then the RIBA Bronze Medal for completed buildings in 1964, and articles in the specialised press. The photograph also shows in the foreground a stone sculpture by Roger Leigh, who had been assistant to Barbara Hepworth. Blomfield himself was a sculptor as well as an architect and, in this role, he contributed various works to Canterbury Cathedral, to which he became architect later in his career. ●
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