MacEwen Award 2022: Architecture for the common good
RCKa’s Nourish Hub serves up a winner
Cullinan creates Dudley careers beacon
Studio BAD helps church find new life
Thamesmead: Jan Kattein’s path to park
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MacEwen Award

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Chester Jones’ photograph of 1920s Californian opulence

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Nourish Hub by RCKa, photographed by Francisco Ibáñez Hantke

Winner: Nourish Hub

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Free-to-access software will pull together a swathe of industry carbon data to make project- and product-level benchmarks

Stephen Cousins on how the Built Environment Carbon Database will introduce consistent assessments of whole-life emissions: ribaj.com/carbon-database

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PIONEERING NEW AIR TECHNOLOGY

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MacEwen longlist

- Bat & Ball Centre
  Sevenoaks, Kent, by Thok + Khan
  Renovation of tired community centre in regeneration area

- Bedford Place
  Southampton, Hampshire, by Studio B.A.D. Architects
  Locally-inspired activation of public space with paint and barriers

- Lighthouse
  bonus Hill, Gravesham, by Atelier Ellis
  Gathering place for church and community, replacing temporary cabin with CLT Hall

- Links Studios
  Canning Town, London, by civic
  Music as a hook for learning in sound recording studio that uses strong walls of converted morgue for acoustic absorption

- Pavilion
  Stratford, London, by Acme for Stratford City Business District
  Eye-catching timber pavilion as new entry point to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

- Peveril Gardens and Studios
  Great Dover St, London, by Sanchez-Benton Architects
  Secret first-floor garden on old podium over artist studio space

- Grange Pavilion
  Cardiff, by IBI Group, Benham Architects, Grange Pavilion CIO and Cardiff University Community Gateway
  Striking park pavilion with a big mission in Cardiff's most ethnically diverse area

- Pavilion
  Great Dover St, London, by Sanchez-Benton Architects
  Secret first-floor garden on old podium over artist studio space
Buildings
MacEwen Award — longlist

- Polka Theatre
  Wimbledon, London, by Foster Wheeler
  Playful remodelling and new building for children’s theatre

- The Chad Gordan Autism Campus, Waltham Forest
  Haringey, London, by Parker & Ramirez Architects with
  Haringey Adult Learning Disability & Autism Team, Haringey
  Corporate Landlord, Centre 104, OCA (Ovarian Cancer Action
  Unit) and Learning Disability Reference Group and HAG
  (Haringey Autism Group)
  Ingenious repair and repurposing with an eye to sensory issues

- Writtle Junior School Pod
  Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex, by Junior Hard Hats (charity set up
  as part of this project)
  Playground structure which closely involved the school children
  from design to location to planning

- WikiHouse Scout Hut
  Whalley Range, Manchester, by Architecture Unknown
  Working with WikiHouse and structural ply enabled volunteers
  to play a large part in this project

- The Archives
  Tottenham, London, by RDAR
  Creative light touch to meaningful reconfigurations of large
  building in path of Crossrail
  showing the value of design

- The Heritage Scheme
  42-46 High Street, Hornsey, London by Malling Architects
  Refurb of high street terraces as charity shop and
  employability hub

- Whittle Junior School Pod
  Whittle, Cheshunt, Essex, by Junior Hard Hats (charity set up
  as part of this project)
  Playground structure which closely involved the school children
  from design to location to planning

- Whittle Big Barn
  Whitley Range, Manchester, by Architecture Unknown
  Working with WikiHouse and structural ply enabled volunteers
  to play a large part in this project

- The Harington Scheme
  42-46 High Street, Hornsey, London by Mulroy Architects
  Refurb of high street terraces as charity shop and
  employability hub

- The Polka Theatre
  Wimbledon, London, by Foster Wheeler
  Playful remodelling and new building for children’s theatre

- The Chad Gordan Autism Campus, Waltham Forest
  Haringey, London, by Parker & Ramirez Architects with
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Here’s the recipe for Nourish Hub. Take one council with some hard-to-let shops in an area of high social deprivation, and one charity that redistributes surplus food from farms and supermarkets, and blend well. Stir in a generous pinch of cash (£850,000) from the mayor of London’s Good Growth Fund. Add a diligent, enterprising architect – RCKa works well – to help develop a business model and then design a suitable environment. While that’s marinating, run architect-led events to whet the appetite of local people. Once the mixture is set – a pay-as-you-feel community café with a second kitchen for skills training and courses on healthy eating, and an affordable workspace on the side – decorate with bold colour and garnish with foodie frescoes. Nourish Hub is now ready to serve. It should feed thousands of people every week and, if all goes to plan, the charity UK Harvest can withdraw in three years’ time, leaving the community to take over.

It is a smart idea, tackling hunger, isolation and the unnecessary waste of food, space and human potential. And with high streets in decline across the country, Nourish Hub offers a model that might be adopted elsewhere – perhaps with some different ingredients – suggests RCKa associate Anthony Staples. That exemplary quality was one factor in the MacEwen Awards jury’s decision to anoint it this year’s winner. ‘What I like is that this is utterly replicable’, noted judge
Denise Bennetts. ‘There are so many spaces which could be put to community use like this’. RCKa’s vibrant venue sits on one of London’s more obvious faultlines. It transforms five retail units – a former post office that had been shuttered for years – in a block on the edge of the Edward Woods Estate. A line of bollards outside marks the boundary between Hammersmith & Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, whose stuccoed streets and squares begin on the other side of the road. Turn right out of the front door and the neighbours are handsome houses that go for £4 million. Turn left and Grenfell Tower comes into view. To be successful, the Nourish Hub has to attract patrons from all parts of the community. That called for an open, welcoming character, and led RCKa to initiate a creative, targeted programme of public engagement ahead of the opening.

As well as building awareness that change was afoot – and allay any suspicions about that – the aim was to test the business case and to generate a visual identity for the Hub that ties it to the neighbourhood. The design team flyered homes and places of worship, advertising two events. First came a community painting day, brightening up the shabby shutters of the vacant units with a mural devised by the project’s graphic designers, Bandiera; the architects were on the street, brushes in hand, to answer questions. Soon after, the colourful mural was the backdrop to a free al-fresco meal, where residents contributed recipe suggestions and gave feedback on the proposed uses. Finally, RCKa and Bandiera ran workshops at a local youth club, where children used produce from Shepherd’s Bush market to make patterns and letterforms which were incorporated into the interior design and branding. The rejuvenated shutters set the tone for the interior taking shape behind, but ditching them was among the architects’ top priorities. ‘Getting wary people through the door is critical’, says Staples. ‘We didn’t want any barriers; the facade should look as open as possible.’ Below a yellow fascia of backlit metal mesh, fully glazed shopfronts reveal an airy room with stylish furniture and a hand-painted ceiling depicting a cornucopia of fruit and veg – imagery derived from efforts at the youth centre. The aluminium frames of the shopfronts are left raw while big sliding doors and opening windows are picked out in bright green. One is the window to the high-spec commercial kitchen, so staff can lean out and chat to passers-by.

The initial thought was that lessons might take place in that space, but after sampling classes elsewhere the architect realised that novice cooks need something less bewildering and more domestic. A separate teaching kitchen is arranged around a giant island within the open-plan dining room, which occupies the three central shop units. Café customers and students enter together, and are greeted at a dedicated counter. Diners browse a short menu of healthy meals (‘prices are a guide, please donate in cash’). A sliding window to the kitchen makes a serving hatch to the street. Above a yellow fascia of backlit metal mesh, fully glazed shopfronts reveal an airy room with stylish furniture and a hand-painted ceiling depicting a cornucopia of fruit and veg – imagery derived from efforts at the youth centre. The aluminium frames of the shopfronts are left raw while big sliding doors and opening windows are picked out in bright green. One is the window to the high-spec commercial kitchen, so staff can lean out and chat to passers-by.

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Below: A community painting day galvanized local support for the planned hub.

IN NUMBERS

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project cost

420m²
building area

£2023
cost/m²

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‘There are so many spaces which could be put to community use like this’
products. ‘You couldn’t wallpaper the facade for that little’, says Staples. Careful co-ordination of services helps too. ‘I’ve never spent so much time on a reflected ceiling plan’, he recalls. ‘We kept ductwork to the sides so the painting could really sing’.

Numerous thoughtful touches help to make the Hub inclusive. Some groups are easily distracted or sensitive about cooking in public, so the teaching kitchen can be enclosed by a curtain. Its central island has a dropped section to accommodate both children and wheelchair-users, so everyone can work together. Security features that protect offices at the back are hidden to avoid giving any impression that customers are not trusted.

With its quirky details and eye-catching palette, the Hub is an uplifting place. ‘It looks like it could feature in a Jay Rayner restaurant review’, said MacEwen judge Denise Bennetts. For RCKa, though, the principal architectural achievement is not the space itself, but the ideas and the processes behind it. ‘Sure, it’s nice to design something nice’, says Staples, ‘but this project is really about partnerships. That’s where architects – as professional generalists – can be really powerful. Positioning ourselves between a local authority with a problem asset, a community in need and a charity willing to help, we can make all the difference’.

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High quality drove Cullinan Studio’s institute of technology in Dudley, the government’s first ‘employer-led’ college

Words: Eleanor Young
Photographs: Hufton and Crow

Buildings
MacEwen Award — commended

The building faces towards the quieter access road to Dudley Zoo, allowing it to be almost entirely naturally ventilated.

The government’s prospectus for Institutes of Technology emphasises that they are ‘employer-led’. For leaders of one of the first to open, the Black Country and Marches Institute of Technology, the job is to put its locals alongside and in front of employers. Managing director Georgina Barnard asserts: ‘We talk about careers not qualifications.’

In an area that has lost many traditional manufacturing jobs and where a lot of young people leave education at 18, this is a powerful message. And such directed education could be a powerful tool to help boost local industries that have been targeted for growth.

The new 4750m² institute of technology building in Dudley is sandwiched between the A4037 and the slopes of Castle Hill and the zoo. It glints even on a dull day, its punched aluminium rainscreen cladding reflecting every bit of light. This is one of the pioneers of Integrated Project Insurance. And at the same time as the inter-disciplinary team, including Cullinan Studio and practice leader Peter Inglis, was working through this new form of collaboration, weighing up difficult decisions as an IPI board, it was also working out a form for the institute of technology; a new building type.

Judge Kathy MacEwen gave the project a resounding thumbs up: ‘This project is important for what it is providing, the approach taken to its design and build, and its scale. It is a big intervention. If all sheds looked like this I would be happy. The process they adopted ensures its quality, they chose to go down a route that did not reduce the quality of the building right to the end— that decision is one of the ideals of what we are trying to achieve with the MacEwen award. The more I look at it the more I like it.’

The institute of technology — or IOT — grew out of Dudley College in partnership with universities and local employers, who together make up its governing body and include steel components manufacturer...
The oversized steps of the central atrium act as an informal social space, leading down from the lobby to the canteen.

Hadley Group (which supplied the SFS sticks that make up the frame), Balfour Beatty Vinci and NHS Estates and Facilities. Those board places hint at the three specialisms of the IOT, advanced engineering and manufacture, modern methods of construction and medical engineering. Teaching these areas to 16-22 year olds introduces them to the software and kit, some in simulated environments such as a hospital ward where they can get used to fixing life critical machines safely. HNCs, T-levels and apprenticeships are brought together with adult CPD, as many of the learners of all ages will also be in jobs. It expects to have 2000 learners by 2025. The building had to set the tone.

Executive director of estates and capital projects at Dudley College, Steve Johnson, and IOT managing director Barnard were keen that the building appeared adult, more adult than a school or even a college. And it had to have flexible teaching spaces, including a drive-in collaboration space for working with industry. The design delivers all that with a sense of openness and confidence. You enter into the centre of the building: in an airy toplit atrium, board room and learning room flank the entrance and a formal reception desk gives the sense of a workspace. Giant steps create a social space. The south-facing canteen spills out on to an attenuation pond and wild flowers. A ‘hangar’ acts as a flexible hall for conferences and exhibitions and is soon to be fitted out with a robot arm, a 3D metal printer and a 5m high BIM cave for students and local industry – and firms can take over one of the three bays fitted out with three and six-phase power as well as water. But it is early days: when I visited, the stripped back steel hangar, light filtering through its translucent polycarbonate, was being used for volunteers putting together food parcels.

Cullinan Studio inherited a feasibility project for two buildings but brought them together on the sunken bed of an old railway siding. It sits significantly below the level of the A-road alongside, and the planted embankment acts as a bund, buffering some of the traffic noise. This and the plan enabled the team to restrict air conditioning to just a few rooms that needed windows on this facade. The T-shaped plan creates quieter spaces for the windows of each wing to open onto, allowing the rest of the building to be naturally ventilated. Sustainability ambitions were set early on, in the strategic brief. This was before the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge or LETI targets but embodied and operational carbon figures show the building four years ahead of target. This is thanks to a mixture of fabric – with air tightness (2.79 m³/hr/m² air loss), good levels of insulation, and ceilings in profiled white steel that act as permanent formwork and radiators – due to low temperature heating pipes and 170mm of concrete giving just enough thermal mass. No doubt the absence of fossil fuel in the form of gas also played its part – the building instead uses air source heat pumps. If all sheds looked like this I would be happy – the more I look at it the more I like it.

The IOT’s hangar gives a drive-in space for big kit and the freedom to invite big potential employers and local businesses to use those facilities.
The building is ‘robust’, as noted by judge Denise Bennetts, and it has no pretensions – though its quality marks it out in this landscape of sheds and out of town leisure. But the sense of airiness and transparency was important even working within Department for Education benchmarks, and glazing between teaching rooms and circulation was an important part of this. Inglis is proud that it still came in at £130/m² below the DfE’s cost benchmark. And it has already proven that its spaces can flex, as the programme for some labs has changed through the project with a lab being replaced by a model operating theatre.

The client, in the form of Dudley College, had already completed one building using Integrated Project Insurance, Advanced II. But for Cullinan Studio it was a first. As he walks around, Cullinan’s Inglis points to some of the improvements that collaborative decision making and risk sharing brought: the decision to pay for more time for structural engineering and specialist ground investigation into foundation options which resulted in remediation and less concrete intensive raft foundations, and an early shift of the building by 5m so the construction lorries avoid having to execute a three-point turn; and (now invisible) the Cullinan-drawn up Covid configuration for the site huts. And the BIM model, including costs, was shared, which immediately made it simpler for the architect to optimise the design. Perhaps most radical was the positive feedback on the reduced pressures on the team’s mental health. That, for Inglis, is priceless.

The IOT plans a strong contribution to the local economy where manufacturing has been in decline as part of the Local Enterprise Partnership (another key player) and to widen participation in STEM subjects for under-represented groups. It is an interesting and energising application of education and Cullinans and the IPI team have given it a head start with this shiny new building. Perhaps a model for the next tranche.

The crematorium benefits from the addition of formal and informal landscaped gardens, which produces a border of serenity to envelop the warm and calming tones of the building itself. The brick colour incorporates an ‘earthy’ palette of natural cream tones, with the addition of timber and bronze framed window panels, to complete a building which perfectly represents the peaceful and neutral memorial space offered.

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Photography by Jonathan Gooch.
Church broadens community reach

A near-abandoned Portsmouth church found a community lifeline by providing space for services that locals really need. Its response upped congregation numbers too.

Words: Hugh Pearman  Photographs: Richard Chivers

Traditional churches have a big problem with dwindling, increasingly elderly congregations based in often uninviting, hard-to-maintain buildings. So what, you might say, especially if like me you’re not one for religion of any kind? Well, this project is a convincing riposte from one diocese of the Church of England, working with a small and growing firm of architects committed to community engagement and enlightened reuse. To use a bad pun, it performs a real service.

St Margaret’s was decaying and all but abandoned a few years ago, unlisted, its tiny remaining congregation dispersed. This slightly strange building – bricky, flying-butressed Edwardian with a 1950s frontage and gallery and a 1980s church hall alongside – appeared to have little to offer and inevitably faced the chop. But the diocese gave it one last chance, bringing in an outreach team to establish what people were lacking, what facilities they could benefit from that a church, with voluntary help, could provide – even on a shoestring budget. Then they set to work. Today it is the same physical building, but an entirely different kind of place: a real mixed-use community asset for everyone, not just those who happen to be people of faith.

Left Snug place for kids’ reading. Like most of the fittings it can be wheeled around.

Right ‘The aisle is full of noises’. With apologies to Shakespeare’s Tempest, here is the children’s multi-level play area.

IN NUMBERS

£350,000 contract cost
475m² GIA
£737 cost per m²
It contains a well-used food bank, a café, a shop specialising in second-hand clothes and housewares, an impressively large two-storey children’s play area and – in a church context perhaps the most unexpected function – a bicycle repair workshop. This is run by the local youth-support charity Motiv8, its purpose being to impart useful, employable skills to youngsters who have slipped through the education/training/care net.

I arrive in Portsmouth at exactly the same time as Storm Barrie. The wind is gusting, the rain is sluicing down, the coast road is closed by crashing waves. Inside St Margaret’s, the nave is wide, as are the arches to the aisles, while there are usefully-sized spaces to either side of the chancel. The arch into one of these arches, lit by a pair of large windows, provides a template showing you don’t have to do much to turn a church back to the community to enliven it.’

**Kathy MacEwen** commended the fact that ‘It is working really hard as a building, offering a lot of different things in terms of its reach and connectivity.’

Percy Weston appreciated the practicality of it all. ‘They started with the basics and continued to add more uses – it can be executed in multiple phases. This move is smarter than it looks, it’s important in getting the building back into use.’

Eleanor Young noted its ‘good feeling’ and how it achieves more than some projects with much more money. ‘It has been done cleanly, neatly, allowing it to do so many more things.’
Green on black
Jan Kattein Architects worked with locals to turn an uninspiring Tarmac cut-through at Thamesmead estate into a valued, interactive green space

Words: Pamela Buxton Photographs: Jan Kattein Architects

Until recently, it didn’t even have a name. It was known as the black path because of the Tarmac.’ So says Gabriel Warshafsky, director of projects at Jan Kattein Architects, of Claridge Way, the site of the practice’s recent community co-design project in Thamesmead, south east London.

Visiting on a bright winter’s morning, the path is now anything but anonymous. Playful floor markings weave along the length of the approximately 500m stretch of public realm, which is also populated by clusters of brightly coloured exercise benches, a woodland play trail, planters and a school gardening club area. At this time of year you have to use your imagination to picture the wildflower meadow in bloom. However I’m assured it was an ‘Instagram moment’ by Kate Batchelor, head of landscape and placemaking of Peabody, which since 2014 has owned the majority of the land in Thamesmead.

Certainly this is a project that is far greater than its sum of fairly modest parts. It reflects Peabody’s placemaking approach to an area that had suffered from long-term under-investment and found it hard to shake off negative perceptions, fuelled in part by its association with A Clockwork Orange, which was filmed there 50 years ago.

Claridge Way is situated in the Moorings, part of the third phase of Thamesmead constructed in the mid-1970s. The stretch of land formed an important thoroughfare linking the Moorings to local schools, a nature reserve and the small retail centre, which includes a soon-to-reopen social club. The challenge was how to turn this rather featureless and unloved space into a place that locals could enjoy and would want to spend time in, rather than just passing through.

Instead of starting out with preconceptions of the outcome, the key to the £400,000 project was forming a creative dialogue with the community, which enabled the architect to ‘tease’ out a brief. This was achieved through a broad range of consultation events – kicked off with a giant street party along the path – that included VR sessions and workshops with residents, schools and youth clubs. These events reached hundreds of residents of all ages.

‘It wasn’t about dropping a shiny masterplan onto the place,’ emphasises Warshafsky. “Our contribution as architects was to work with the community to gain their expertise and input, co-ordinate it and develop it spatially.”

Despite diverse priorities across the community there were some common threads, for example how residents particularly value green space and nature. And while there is plenty of this in Thamesmead, which has an extensive network of lakes and canals, access to it is not always maximised.

Three key ambitions emerged from the
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consultation – that the area should be an interactive play landscape, that it should be an open and liberating place to socialise, and that it should be a place to grow things and linger. These underpin the strategy for the site, known as A Common Plan for Claridge Way.

The plan consists of a series of micro-interventions that encourage a greater sense of involvement from those bordering the site, by (in some cases quite literally) breaking down the barriers. The path is bordered on one side by the garden fences of homes backing onto the path. Willing residents were able to choose attractive new fences from a variety of style and colour options. These incorporated new back gates that gave them direct access to the path in exchange for tending new planters, some integrated into the fences themselves. Similarly the Hawksmoor School now has a new garden and growing club located alongside the footpath and Windrush School has moved its main entrance to open onto Claridge Way.

The introduction of five sets of exercise benches has proved popular as focal points along the path since they double as seating and informal play structures.

“Very rarely do you see people doing exercises but I do see people sitting on them and chatting,” says Batchelor, adding that they’ve become “social spots.” More work may be needed to encourage their use for fitness.

There is also seating integrated into some of the planter structures in the growing club. Larger planters have been created using recyclable concrete manhole rings in order to accommodate new fruit trees including cherry, pear and apple.

The community consultation certainly appears to have been key to shaping the brief and manifestations of the micro-projects. In particular, workshops with school children yielded a key idea for the playscape that runs through the new public realm – ‘snakes and ladders of doom’ proved too good an idea to pass up, says Warshafsky of the suggestion that inspired the playful new floor markings now meandering along Claridge Way. More
The RIBA Journal February 2022 ribaj.com

Buildings
MacEwen Award

Colour has been introduced in a jungle-inspired mural beneath an undercroft along the route. A woodland adventure playwalk, created by thinning a dense thicket, includes a treehouse, plentiful logs and stumps and the inclusion of bird boxes, bug houses and scavenger hunt elements. Bees are also encouraged by the introduction of a wildflower ‘bee road’ along the path.

Warshafsky has been heartened by ‘really positive’ feedback from local residents. ‘The overall tone is that there’s clearly been a step change. People spend a lot more time in the green space. Children love it,’ he says.

The project, which completed in late 2020, has been a very positive experience for the practice: ‘We’ve learnt so much from the conversations we’ve had with people about the ways they connect with public space.’

Judges liked both the extensive collaboration and the end result. Percy Weston felt it ‘ticks all the boxes’ by engaging with communities along the route, and being executed ‘with sensitivity and innovation’.

And Robyn Poulson described the project as ‘nicely thought about – it is re-enlivening the route, doing the job’.

While not every idea that emerged from the consultation was implemented at this stage, all the consultation has been ‘captured’ in the Common Plan document and will help inform future projects in the area.

For example, the suggestion for an off-road cycle track wasn’t considered appropriate on Claridge Way, but may be able to be accommodated elsewhere in Thamesmead. Meanwhile the Claridge Way project as a whole has been valuable in helping Peabody test the co-design process.

The hope is that the improved spaces along Claridge Way will help local people to reconnect with their environment and encourage them to take ownership of the public realm. Already, a Moorings Neighbourhood Forum has been established and is now in the early stages of putting together a neighbourhood plan.

While all involved know that maintenance will be key to the long-term success of the new public realm, the re-energised Claridge Way has certainly got off to a promising start thanks to a large extent by prioritising a co-design approach.

‘It’s an amazing platform to build off,’ says Warshafsky.

People spend a lot more time in the green space.
Children love it

Above: Tree house, part of a new woodland adventure walk.
Below: Repurposing the exercise bench.
Right: Stepping carefully on the new logs in the woodland walk.

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The materials are intended to age naturally with low maintenance, as the old stone bridge had done over the course of centuries. The open spandrels lend a certain transparency to the bridge’s appearance, allowing unhindered views over the river while minimising obstruction to the flow of the river at times of exceptionally high water. Sustainability also influenced the materials choices with the steel containing one fifth of the embodied carbon of the global average and the concrete mix including ground granulated blast-furnace slag (GGBS) cement substitute.

The new crossing, the first stainless-steel road bridge in the UK, gives the appearance of a traditional deck arch bridge but structurally does not transfer horizontal reactions to the low-capacity ground on the river banks, thanks to the side-spans within the abutments.

Judge Kathy MacEwen pointed out: ‘It makes us reflect on the concerns around flooding and it’s giving people access and ease of movement.’ Fellow judge Denise Bennetts agreed. ‘It meets all the criteria perfectly,’ she said. ‘It is a project-appropriate approach and an ingenious structural solution. The social-economic impact is great; replacing an existing bridge for the long term and in a robust way is incredibly important.’

‘An ingenious structural solution with a great social-economic impact’ Denise Bennetts

The history of the charity is expressed within the building through mural artwork. ‘It is so nice to see designers care even when there is a restricted budget’ Percy Weston

In December 2015, severe flooding washed away the structure that gave the Cumbrian town of Pooley Bridge its name: a 250-year-old grade II listed three-span stone arch bridge across the River Eamont. The town forms part of the Lake District’s Unesco World Heritage Site and the bridge was a critical infrastructure link for the town’s inhabitants.

Cumbria County Council began a tender process for a new bridge, with stakeholder involvement, in mid-2017. It had to be both flood resilient and future-proof. Knight Architects was appointed as ‘concept guardian’ of the design, which comprises a slender 40m-span open-spandrel arch with a stainless-steel and high-strength concrete structure. This emerges from reinforced concrete abutments clad in local sandstone.

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The new bridge has been open since 2018 and already supports the town’s critical infrastructure link for the town’s inhabitants.
TONY GILBERT is developing five self-finish zero-carbon homes, made with community participation. It offers employment, self-build training and housing support, and is located in Lockleaze, one of the most deprived neighbourhoods.

The compact homes are designed to be built with hand tools and self-finished. Made, a modular housing factory, combining high-quality ecological housing production with community participation. It offers employment, self-build training and housing support, and is located in Lockleaze, one of the city’s most deprived neighbourhoods.

Ecomotive and SNUG Homes started Home-Made in 2019, when the first ‘SNUG home’ was completed in conjunction with a training programme and community engagement activities. Partnering with Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust (LNT), the group is developing five self-finish zero-carbon

Home-Made: Lockleaze
Lockleaze, Bristol
Alex Doffin: SNUG Homes

‘Our housing market is broken, fuelling social inequality and climate breakdown. The solution is collective action to create housing which serves our needs.’ This is the ethos of Ecomotive, the Bristol-based workers’ cooperative responsible for delivering Home-Made, a modular housing factory, combining high-quality ecological housing production with community participation. It offers employment, self-build training and housing support, and is located in Lockleaze, one of the city’s most deprived neighbourhoods.

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‘They are taking sustainability, prefab and self-build goals to create a pleasant environment’ Denise Bennetts

The judges noted that many such schemes are in areas already considered to be emerging cultural hotspots; this isn’t the case here, meaning the benefits are felt even more.

‘It is a very light touch but a fun way of testing and reinvigorating shop uses’ Robyn Poulson

‘Shopping centres need things to happen in them that are different,’ observed judge Kathy MacEwen, regarding Culture Palace. ‘What is their function? What is their future going to be?’

The project is a 300 m² temporary creative hub, housing a performance space, museum, bookshop, café and screening room in Enfield Palace Gardens shopping centre. It responds to Enfield Council’s strategic focus on how ‘Culture Connects’.

Architect Dallas-Pierce-Quintero (DPQ) was commissioned to develop a cultural strategy for a mixed-use scheme but the pandemic shifted the remit to include interim uses for the shopping centre so as to encourage hesitant shoppers to return. Repurposing the vacant retail space had benefits for the commercial landlords and for the local authority in need of a temporary home for its arts centre and museum, which had been requisitioned as a vaccination centre.

The scheme aims to regenerate areas by bringing backland plots back to use. It is also committed to a number of linked social factors: home provision for existing residents; diversity of housing provision; high-quality design; climate change mitigation; low running costs for occupants; skills training and employment for local trades and individuals. ‘It’s great to have a housing factory coming forward for the award,’ said judge Kathy MacEwen. ‘It’s a big step; maybe they will go on to create more.’

‘To have homes aiming for net zero is pretty exemplary,’ said judge Denise Bennetts. ‘It is tiny, and not necessarily what we want to be living in long term, but as a stepping stone it is appropriate … the fact that they are taking a broad interpretation of sustainability goals, prefab and self-build goals to create a pleasant environment is fantastic.'
The Alder Centre – linked to Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, Liverpool – is a unique service providing support to bereaved individuals after the death of a child. AHMM’s architectural intervention provides sensitive and restful purpose-built spaces.

The concept is that of a house set within a ‘secret garden’ to create a familiar, domestic-seeming environment. At the heart is a large communal area comprising a lounge and kitchen from which seven counselling rooms unfold, each with a private garden and operable skylight. Other rooms within the orthogonal grid include a training room, office and base for a bereavement helpline.

The design team worked directly with volunteers, parents, families and staff. ‘AHMM went to exceptional lengths to understand the project,’ said the client, ‘to deliver an iconic building which ultimately won an award at the European Health Congress 2021.’

To fund the project, the engineers, design team and contractors engaged in fundraising efforts of their own – contributing £100,000 as well as securing donations from suppliers and product manufacturers, including Vitra, Dornbracht, Velux, SCP, RB12 and electrical subcontractor Senate.

These endeavours moved the judges. For Kathy MacEwen, this is ‘a beautiful, well-considered project providing a tranquil, safe space to be … the intricacies and fundraising efforts were admirable’.

The architect’s painstakingly collaborative approach with staff and service users was commended by Denise Bennetts, who noted that, considering its troubled past, ‘if anything needs healing it is Alder Hey itself’ and that AHMM’s process seems to have been sensitive to this, despite not directly voicing it.

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Below the可用空间内remodelling has doubled
the usable space within the building.

On the inside, the interiors were overhauled
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big beneficiary. It is good architecture which
will surely win awards.’

The judges universally admired the
scheme for its accessibility, sustainability
and building conservation as part of an out-
reach and education scheme. ‘The Old Li-
brary is once again a beautiful heritage asset
in the heart of the community,’ said Gaynor
Williams of Lister Steps. ‘Local residents are
thrilled that this much-loved building has
been returned to public use.’

As a piece of transformation, I think it is excellent… the street is a big beneficiary’
Denise Bennett

Grade II Listed Andrew Carnegie Library, in Tuebrook, Liverpool, was in a state of dilap-
ditation, but OMI has now extensively refur-
bished and remodelled it into a multipurpose
scheme for childcare charity Lister Steps.

As well as accommodating the client
and the children who use its services, the
building now also houses community spac-
es, a café, and hot-desking office spaces. The
project, funded by the National Lottery Her-
itage Fund and Liverpool City Council, was
expensive; it required considerable work to
return such a derelict structure back to a us-
able condition.

While some areas were restored, such
as the reading room which is now the main
communal space, others were boldly re-
configured. However, throughout, existing
volumes and spatial characteristics were
respected. New openings in the facade were
designed to improve visibility between inside and out. These look out on to new-
ly landscaped gardens. Within the build-
ing, child-size internal windows peek into
double-height voids, creating playful visual
interest for the children.

‘I was walking down Holloway Road, I saw
it and thought: wow!’ said judge Kathy Mac-
even, of DSDHA’s major redevelopment of
the National Youth Theatre’s (NYT) London
headquarters. The former Mission Hall has
been substantially modified to double its
studio space, radically improving its acces-
sibility and giving visibility from the street
to allow NYT to deliver its ‘open door’ policy.

The theatre now has street presence
thanks to a new pavilion, the Green Room,
which replaces a car park and alleyway and
provides a welcoming front door. It houses
the reception, a members’ hub and a com-
munity studio space. Client Joe Duggan
said: ‘Our new pavilion allows us to welcome
communities of young people who previous-
ly faced barriers accessing our work.’

Architecturally, the NYT now has a much
stronger and attractive presence, with judge
Robyn Poulson commenting: ‘The building
looks great and photographs beautifully.’ On
the inside, the interiors were overhauled
to create versatile, acoustically optimised,
naturally ventilated, well-lit open spaces
for teaching, rehearsal, recording and per-
formance. Within the existing warehouse
building, columns were removed to accom-
modate a 200-seat theatre space.

Maintaining the structure helped min-
imise the development’s environmental
impact; the sustainability credentials of the
build are admirable. The design meets RIBA
2030 Climate Challenge recommendations
and LETI 2030 targets in terms of embodied
carbon, achieved by reusing 90 per cent of
the existing superstructure and foundations.
Funding for drama in state schools has
decreased across the UK; this project seeks
to redress this by accommodating twice as
many students, facilitating their entry to the
creative industries. As the client puts it, the
redesign has ‘provided a significant boost to
our mission to put young people’s voices cen-
tre-stage’. The judges universally admired
the scheme for its accessibility, sustainability
and investment in young people and the arts.
‘As a piece of transformation, I think it is ex-
cellent,’ said Denise Bennett. ‘The street is a
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Below Performance spaces are versatile, acoustically
optimised and well lit and ventilated for performance,
rehearsal and recording.

‘As a piece of transformation, I think it is excellent... the street is a big beneficiary’
Denise Bennett

Below Large double-height spaces have been repurposed into spacious child-
friendly rooms with visual interest.

National Youth Theatre
Holloway Road, London
DSDHA

Old Library, Liverpool
Green Lane, Liverpool
OMI Architects

Below Existing volumes and spatial characteristics were respected throughout
the remodelling.

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On a scenic clifftop in Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve sits Bale House, a new community hub providing educational space focusing on empowerment, training, rehabilitation, healthy living and the arts. It also offers refreshment for park visitors.

It is a public project managed by a charity working with community volunteers. The brief was developed with the client and the community through a series of engagement events resulting in an accessible and flexible space, committed to inclusive principles. The building was constructed by a small group of artisan builders and also involved the work of local artists and craftpeople.

All routes are via wide, level access paths and doorways. Colours, fixtures and fittings provide visual contrast. The signage is tactile, includes braille and is gender neutral.

Sustainability informed the entire process with a focus on whole life cycle processes and the circular economy, as well as the use of natural materials including wood, lime, straw and wool. The building is constructed from loadbearing straw bales and uses natural, recycled and local materials; it is the first straw-bale public building in the south east.

In the words of client Liz Crisp, the architect designed ‘a unique, welcoming, sustainable building that sits lightly on the coastal landscape. They held community workshops and events throughout the construction to ensure community support … It is a real community asset.’

The large Douglas fir roof is anchored down to resist the extreme clifftop wind loads. The plinth blocks are made from recycled concrete and furnace ash. The limecrete slab sits on recycled glass aggregate to act as insulation and damp proof membrane. Astonishingly, nothing was sent to landfill or removed as waste – ‘an exceptional achievement’, according to judge Denise Bennetts. Moreover, the materials can be reused or recycled at the end of life.

Faced with a tight budget, the build is stripped back; its appearance celebrating the materials used. ‘The colonnade was nicely done and the lime finish has a nice feel to it,’ observed Eleanor Young.

Since opening last July, the building has welcomed 12 schools, housed 15 family activities and 60 volunteering activities, hosted two large community events, created 13 jobs and welcomed 25,000 visitors. Its reach is undeniable and tangible.

‘It is an exceptional achievement that nothing went to landfill’ Denise Bennetts

Left The stripped-back approach and the colonnade drew praise from the judges.

Right Sustainability principles dominate the entire build, as befits the nature reserve location.

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Balance in hard times

Identity dominated discussions by the latest cohort of RIBA Rising Stars as they grappled with the tensions between serving society’s most vulnerable, the technical implementation of climate action and the demands of today’s business world. Michèle Woodger reports.

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Joe Synes

The latest RIBA Future Trends survey found that almost a fifth of practices are struggling to recruit. Joe Synes, managing director of recruitment consultant Hunter Dunning, discusses the employment market.

A fifth of practices struggling sounds surprisingly low. Brexit and Covid created uncertainty, but recruitment has picked up since last summer and it’s very much a candidate-driven market; good people are hard to find. Except for a short period after 2008, that has been the case throughout my 20 years in recruitment.

Everywhere is busy but demand for residential experience and knowledge of Revit are far and away the highest. There’s also a shortage of seasoned, mid-level people who can work without much supervision, but don’t want to be the boss. Brexit produced a spike in requests for contract staff; now practices want to fill permanent roles. Salaries have risen recently and, as roles can take a long time to fill, companies often have to consider being flexible about levels of experience.

People who might normally have changed jobs last year didn’t, so there are moves waiting to happen. We’ve surveyed architects and 70% are looking to market themselves this year — that’s huge. An anticipated avalanche of New Year applications was slowed by continuing uncertainty, but we will see a lot of activity before things settle down. The biggest long-term change is hybrid or remote working. Around 50% of candidates want the option to work from home at least part time. For some it’s a red line, and we’ve already seen others require a huge difference in salary to take a fully office-based role. We’ve also had a significant increase in candidates wanting to relocate from cities, which was very rare before Covid. And employers who were once wary about relocations are much more open to the idea.

About half are, and half want a full return to the office as soon as possible. When that happens, CVs will appear in our inbox. In 2022 we foresee the biggest shift coming from candidates exiting businesses that insist on being in the office Monday to Friday, 9 to 5. More than 75% of practices are ‘micro businesses’ that recruit infrequently and aren’t aware of how candidate-driven the market has become, or how quickly they need to act when recruiting. But candidates know what they can ask for as they are approached regularly. Their concern has been job security, but the feeling that you are safer in existing roles is not accurate. Now is as good a time as any to move.

Do you take the time to plan ahead and think intentionally about the best way to interact with a diversity of people? CQ planning requires you to strategize before an interaction experience.

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Building regs start to tackle carbon dioxide

Changes to the building regulations aim to reduce carbon while ensuring healthy levels of ventilation. We summarise the key points of five new Approved Documents.

**Part L: Interim uplifts to standards for non-domestic buildings**

- Non-domestic buildings must achieve an average of 27% reduction in CO\(_2\) relative to 2013 standards. This is the more ambitious of two options put forward by the government in the consultation, the first being for 22%.

- A minimum standard for ventilation in new buildings is designed to operate with a maximum flow temperature of 55°C, considered important for system efficiency.

- All space heating and domestic hot water boiler installations in existing non-domestic buildings must now include controls to improve the effective efficiency of the system. Minimum standards for air distribution, comfort cooling systems and lighting will also apply. Building automation and control systems must have a maximum flow temperature of 55°C.

**Part O: Standards for overheating in new non-domestic buildings**

- New guidance includes standards for overheating in non-domestic buildings. The regulation adopts a ‘simplified’ route to compliance based on minimising solar gain and removing excess heat. It sets standards based on whether the house or residential unit is cross-ventilated, considers orientation and introduces a standard for the maximum amount of glass allowed in a single room.

**Dynamic thermal analysis methods**

- New guidance on overheating in buildings allows more sophisticated analysis of buildings as an alternative route to compliance over the simplified method. This guidance includes acceptable strategies for limiting unwanted solar gain in the summer, such as shading and other means. Interior blinds or trees might not be factored into a dynamic thermal assessment because they can subsequently be removed.

**Part C: Overstays for overheating in new non-domestic buildings**

- New minimum efficiency standards for both new replacement thermal elements, windows and doors, will mostly be set at levels proposed in the consultation.

- A mandatory 30% cut in carbon for all new homes and a 27% cut for other buildings, including offices and shops, are among a raft of changes.

- Amendments introduced by the government in the consultation towards a Future Buildings Standard. The Department for Levelling-Up, Housing & Communities set out the changes, which include interim uplifts to Parts L and F, and the introduction of Part O, in its response to a public consultation on the Future Buildings Standard, concluded in April.

- The Department for Levelling-Up, Housing & Communities published: Approved Document L, volume 1: dwellings and volume 2: buildings other than dwellings; Approved Document F, volume 1: dwellings and volume 2: buildings other than dwellings; and an entirely new Approved Document O covering overheating.

- New minimum efficiency standards for both new and replacement thermal elements, windows and doors, will mostly be set at levels proposed in the consultation. For example, the U-value of new walls is 0.26W/m\(^2\)K, compared to 0.35 W/m\(^2\)K before. Most types of new window, roof window and curtain walling just achieve a U-value of 1.6, against 2.2 previously.

- Turning to building services in new non-domestic buildings, the minimum efficiency of lighting installations in new non-domestic buildings has risen to 95 luminaire lumens per circuit watt for general lighting and 80 luminaire lumens per circuit watt for display lighting. Lower efficiencies in some rooms can be offset by higher efficiencies in others.

- A separate standard for lighting that requires a high level of optical control, including innovative high excitation purity lighting, has been introduced.

- New non-domestic buildings now require a Building Automation and Control System if they include a heating or air-conditioning system of 1800W or over, rather than 2900W as originally proposed.

- A minimum standard has been introduced to ensure wet space heating systems in new buildings are designed to operate with a maximum flow temperature of 55°C, considered important for system efficiency.

- All space heating and domestic hot water boiler installations in existing non-domestic buildings must now include controls to improve the effective efficiency of the system. Minimum standards for air distribution, comfort cooling systems and lighting will also apply. Building automation and control systems must have a maximum flow temperature of 55°C.

- Part L adopts CIBSE’s TM23 as the single approved methodology for testing air tightness for non-domestic buildings to avoid ‘practical difficulties’ of using multiple testing methodologies.

- New guidance includes standards on minimising the ingress of external pollutants and the proper installation of ventilation systems.

- New guidance on performance-based ventilation standards will allow designers to assess ventilation strategies against individual volatile organic compounds, based on data from Public Health England, as an alternative to using a total VOC limit.

- Part F recommends that all replacement windows in non-domestic buildings are fitted with background trickle ventilation, unless it can be shown that replacement windows would not reduce useful ventilation or that a mechanical ventilation system is present. Where outside noise is an issue, attenuating background ventilators should be fitted.

- On transmission of infection via aerosols, there is a new requirement for the installation of CO\(_2\) monitors in offices and specifically in ‘high risk’ rooms where there may be a risk of airborne infection.

- New guidance recommends that mechanically-ventilated common spaces in offices have a minimum air supply rate of 8.3 litre/s/m\(^2\), which is below the 1 litre/s/m\(^2\) outlined in the government’s proposals.

- Amended guidance on recirculating systems states that they should be capable of operating in a mode that prevents recirculation of air within spaces or between different spaces, rooms or zones in offices, unless suitable filtering or cleaning systems are in place.

- Government proposals to increase required ventilation capacity in offices and specify ventilation rates in ‘high risk’ rooms in response to Covid-19 were not adopted in anticipation of more evidence on the impacts.

- New guidance for non-domestic buildings, including homes, care homes, student accommodation and children’s homes, is designed to reduce overheating. It splits England into areas of moderate and high risk of overheating, the latter including urban and some suburban parts of London.

- The regulation adopts a ‘simplified’ route to compliance based on minimising solar gain and removing excess heat. It sets standards based on whether the house or residential unit is cross-ventilated, considers orientation and introduces a standard for the maximum amount of glass allowed in a single room.

- Dynamic thermal analysis methods of overheating in homes allows more sophisticated analysis of buildings as an alternative route to compliance over the simplified method. This guidance includes acceptable strategies for limiting unwanted solar gain in the summer, such as shading and other means. Interior blinds or trees might not be factored into a dynamic thermal assessment because they can subsequently be removed. New methods means to ensure overheating are safe and usable by occupants, taking into account noise and air pollution levels, the accessibility and usability of the windows and security, which may affect occupant behaviour. Information on overheating strategies must be passed to the building owner in the form of a Home User Guide.

- Part L: Standards for domestic buildings

- Minimum fabric efficiency standards are introduced for new and replacement thermal elements, windows and doors in existing homes. For example, the U-value for walls is...
A mandated checklist is intended to make it easier for renovators to understand the impact of historic and potential future work to a building and whether the ventilation provision will be sufficient. Ventilation guidelines will include a recommendation that replacement windows are fitted with a background trickle ventilator, unless it can be proven that the ventilation was not made worse.

To support homeowners, Part F now recommends that all installations of mechanical extract ventilation and installations of new background ventilators come with guidance on why ventilation is important for the health of buildings and their occupants. A commissioning sheet and checklist, including design flow rates and maintenance requirements, should also be provided when ventilation systems are installed.

Looking ahead: Future Buildings Standard

To be implemented in 2025, the Future Buildings Standard will aim to produce non-domestic buildings running on low-carbon heat with the best possible fabric standards. No further energy efficiency retrofit work will be necessary to make buildings zero-carbon as the electricity grid decarbonizes.

A full technical consultation on the Future Buildings Standard is planned to start in 2023, including proposals for the technical detail and associated draft guidance.

Part O takes into account nearby pollution and the safety and usability of windows and security, which may affect occupant behaviour.

Industry concerns

The interim uplifts to Parts L and F of the building regulations and the introduction of Part O received a tepid response from built environment professionals.

Reacting to the news, RIBA president Simon Allford said: ‘These uplifts will bring us one step closer to decarbonisation, and we welcome that. The new minimum standards for fabric efficiency and new Part O signal real progress, but without regulation of actual energy use, the built environment will not decarbonise at the rate required. Regulations must continue to tighten. I look forward to seeing the full document and working with the government to ensure the 2025 Future Homes and Buildings Standard addresses the urgency of the task at hand.’

Speaking on behalf of LETI, Alex Johnstone, architect at Haworth Tompkins, said: ‘The interim uplift to Part L does not tally with what the industry knows is central to enabling significant reduction in carbon emissions in new buildings. Primary Energy has been introduced as a performance metric. This is a confusing metric whose calculation factors will change over time. LETI proposes that Energy Use Intensity is used as the actual at-the-meter energy reading. We need clear and meaningful metrics to prevent constructing new buildings that will require retrofit in order to meet net zero targets.’

He added: ‘Architects’ decisions for form and orientation of buildings will greatly impact a building’s energy use. The regulation is failing to provide a meaningful framework to drive design changes that will lead to necessary reductions in environmental impact.’

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Safety changes leave more questions than answers

A RIBA/Hilti webinar looking at the impact of new safety roles and regulations unearthed some of the implications for architects, and revealed a need for more investigation.

Below: An artist’s impression of the £600 million Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital, in Smethwick, Birmingham by HKS Architects and Edward Williams Architects.

Slowly and steadily a new safety regime with a fresh set of roles, regulations and practices is being put into place for the construction industry. Although triggered by the Grenfell Tower fire, the region’s impact will extend far beyond the high-rise residential buildings considered to pose the greatest fire risk. “The gist of the Building Safety Bill was to make fundamental cultural changes to the built environment sector in relation to fire, structural and public safety,” says Jane Duncan, RIBA past president and chair of the RIBA Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, noting the wide reach of its proposals: “All buildings are in scope of the bill and we need to be aware of this.”

This was one of many messages spelled out in the online seminar, Fire safety in practice – the Building Safety Bill and the role of the principal designer, which was the latest in a series of events about fire safety, organised by the RIBA Journal in collaboration with Hilti. The bill is continuing its progress through parliament and some measures are already being implemented – notably the ‘gateways’ process at three stages of project delivery, which has its first gateway already in place. Changes to the building regulations have also been introduced, although Duncan commented pointedly, “Why did it take the Grenfell disaster to make this change?”.

At the same time, she warned of potential changes on the horizon, with the government notably proposing alterations to the operation of the Defective Premises Act that could see the limitation period for property owners and leaseholders to claim compensation for defective work extended from six to 15 years. “We are very worried this could prompt claims against the design team,” she said.

Professional bodies across industry are having to respond to the bill with action to raise members’ competence. “Competence is one of the biggest issues and affects everybody in the industry,” said Duncan. The RIBA has mapped its direction on education and continuing professional development in its framework, The Way Ahead, and its approach is evident in the recently introduced RIBA Health and Safety Guide and online Health and Safety Test. The ARB will assume a new role, with extra powers to monitor and assess the competence of architects throughout their career, “although everyone is talking about individual professions and roles and the competence required for those. Perhaps we could talk about competence in terms of collaboration,” suggested Duncan.

Architects, however, have a key part to play, she stressed: “People are looking to architects to lead.” Architects look set to assume the new role of principal designers, for which core competence principles are being defined in the British Standards Institution’s emerging PAS 971 framework. For individuals daunted by the prospect of taking on this role, Paul Bossey, senior technical consultant at AHMM and a member of the RIBA Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, sought to put minds at rest. “We’ve been making the analogy with the orchestra, where you have a conductor to lead and facilitate the team, and they need a team to support them, so you’re not going to be on your own.”

He also gave an indication of the culture change that would be required. “Lots of buildings fail from services penetration and, as architects, we generally don’t take much notice of that. In the future, we’re going to have to do that a lot more,” he said, adding: “We’ll be getting specialist passive designers, like Hilti, involved a lot earlier.”

That collaboration is already being explored in projects under construction, like the new Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital, in Smethwick, which is designed by a team led by HKS. Hilti has been involved in the project since its early stages, helping to create a standardised details package for passive fire protection. “Typical design flow leads to engineering judgements for non-standard details and choices that can be incorrect,” explained Luis Ayllon, engineering manager of Hilti Great Britain.

Early engagement moved fire protection up the design agenda, allowing worst-case scenario and limitations to be explored and solutions ultimately identified. Firestopping early also means ensuring that the right supporting system is in place and that it is fire rated when it’s required, to ensure compliance.

“Early engagement will save a lot of engineering adjustments and remedial solutions further down the line,” said Ayllon. There is evidence of that on the hospital project. Typically, around half of passive fire protection applications in a project would require remedial solutions. Early engagement has allowed 95% of applications at the hospital to use standard details, with non-standard situations being dealt with using custom designs.

The seminar ended in a string of questions from the audience, which proved too many for the speakers to answer in the allotted discussion time. The questions were an indication of the concern around the subject and the appetite for answers, and of how much everyone has to learn. •

Why did it take the Grenfell disaster to make this change?

An artist’s impression of the £600 million Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital, in Smethwick, Birmingham by HKS Architects and Edward Williams Architects.
Feeling the heat

The performance gap can be reduced with little risk if you can get the contract wording to fit expectations, reducing inefficiencies and keeping everyone happy

Robert Eadie

A post occupancy evaluation can reduce building operational costs and increase occupant productivity. But what happens when it shows a building is not performing to the expectation of its original design? Building operational failures can be regarded as treading problems, common with setting in, and are defined on poorly drafted contract requirements. The failure of building owners and contractors to understand and contract mechanisms is the leading cause for dispute in the construction industry. Building performance is traditionally measured on completion of the static works, the stage commonly referred to as commissioning. But has innovation, such as the methods and technology used to validate performance, progressed more rapidly than the case law and legal interpretation associated with building performance?

The future operation of a building is more likely to fail as owners grow less familiar with modern methods of construction, and more reliant on the language of the contract where operation and performance are defined. A POE case study by CIBSE found that actual energy usage was 22% more than the original design intent. The major causes were identified as technical issues (such as the operation and performance of equipment) and a minor change in the building’s operation.

Avoiding the actual intention of the building could encourage a merry-go-round of buck-passing

The RIBA Journal February 2022
Building new ways of working

As many architects have learned during the pandemic, a clear strategy that articulates a business’s larger vision can prove vital in its strategy for adopting technology.

In her podcast Architecture Disrupted, US-based architecture business strategist Je’Nen Chastain discusses some uncomfortable truths, which ring true on both sides of the Atlantic: during the pandemic, many firms didn’t have the infrastructure set up to support doing “digital-first”, so there was a correlation to productivity going down.

As was true of all businesses – not only within the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) sector – those that embraced technology were quicker to get back on their feet. Firms that actually thrived, however, already had a robust underpinning to their tech strategy. An obvious approach perhaps, but one that is surprisingly not universal.

“The principle of letting a firm’s values and aspirations drive tech decisions should also apply to larger, established firms, though the challenge may be greater,” says Joseph Joseph, global director of design technology at international firm Gensler, explains how his team evaluates every digital investment in light of the practice’s larger goals, with a particular focus on environmental calculation tools. “There is a general fascination that a tool will solve everything,” he says. “But we always put at the forefront that technology is just a means to an end. The practice develops tech solutions in-house – in collaboration with colleagues in hackathons. ’If you start with a core problem that you’re solving, you’re laser-focused on it, and the tool is informed by the practice area and the practitioners themselves,’ says Joseph. Engaging staff members early increases their adoption of new releases. Tech solutions also become part of the client offering. ‘Our clients don’t just come to us for beautiful and functional architecture; we also help them make business-savvy decisions,’ he stresses.

While strategic technology planning can require a significant investment, the effort pays off. As Lee puts it: “Firms that really embrace a regular process of looking at operations, process, the tools, how they approach projects, how they approach business, how they do business development ... those are the firms that are going to be most successful in the long term.” If architects are responsible for the biggest challenge on the planet – making our built environment sustainable and equitable – they need the tools to get there.

HP large format print gives architects a way to collaborate with colleagues seamlessly, securely and with sustainability in mind. This makes HP’s DesignJet and PageWide XL range an essential tool for the ultimate task ahead: to achieve a just, inclusive and diverse living and working environment. Let’s create a better world, together. ■
Meeting environmental concerns

Environmental concerns are understandably rising to the top of the agenda for many practices, prompted by client requirements, industry standards, peers, competitors and the destiny of employees. This November saw the built environment given a dedicated platform at COP26, with a half day dedicated to discussing the issues affecting the sector, and not least the 56 per cent carbon emissions that can be attributed to the construction industry.

UK architects are already at the forefront of pushing for change. Last year the RIBA launched the 2030 Climate Challenge – a scheme assisting professionals to achieve net zero targets and to design with climate-conscious motivation. Alongside Architects Climate Action Network (ACAN) and advocacy group Part Z, architectural industry bodies are seeking compulsory regulation of embodied carbon emissions, which account for half the overall footprint of the average building. Added to the LEED and BREEAM certification systems, which focus on user wellbeing and operational emissions, such a change would be another stride towards a greener AEC industry.

Yet while the government intervention for rules to change – and the government’s own net-zero strategy of reworking embodied carbon emissions from the construction supply chain in favour of operational heating and electricity – architects can enact change in various ways, be it through designing sustainably (material choices, building methodology and in the way they operate) or through a practice is managed and equipped. New focus on user wellbeing and operational emissions, such a change would be another stride towards a greener AEC industry.

Yet while the government intervention for rules to change – and the government’s own net-zero strategy of reworking embodied carbon emissions from the construction supply chain in favour of operational heating and electricity – architects can enact change in various ways, be it through designing sustainably (material choices, building methodology and in the way they operate) or through a practice is managed and equipped. New opportunities are arising from the convergence of practices’ virtual and physical lives as a result of the pandemic are helping to accomplish this shift.

In terms of designing sustainable buildings, the opportunities are huge. They include sustainable and renewable material choices; specifying environmentally conscious product choosing low-impact construction methods; experimentation with large-scale 3D printing itself an industry that is set to explode from $1 million in 2019 to $1.57 million by 2024 – an annual growth of 24.5 per cent; and technology that HP is also developing, using offsite modular construction and local labour: investigating the possibilities of AI and machine learning and the integration with BIM for carbon analytics and predictions and anticipating buildings’ future use and end of life options. Such considerations are becoming matters of best practice for any designer who takes sustainability seriously.

But like everything else, sustainability begins at home. Practices’ own operational procedures and day-to-day office lives also require scrutiny. Without it, they could easily become subsumed to the larger concerns of the building projects themselves. Ensuring the studio – or, these days, the home office setup – is environmentally friendly, is one small step towards a greener practice.

Companies can contribute to the circular economy through their choice of office equipment – for example using energy-efficient printers that have recycled plastic parts or ink cartridges made from recycled materials. Anticipating the need from the AEC market, the HP DesignJet fulfills all these criteria.

Paper prints remain an integral part of the design office’s tools, and even those are responding to the climate crisis. HP DesignJet large-format printers, which are certified as energy efficient, use up to 30 per cent recycled plastic, which reduces carbon emissions by 5.3 tons per year. In addition, the DesignJet Studio is certified as net carbon neutral with HP offsetting its carbon emissions. Such features enable design teams to maintain productivity and collaboration with tools designed with sustainability in mind. And with the rise in hybrid remote working, technology such as HP Click can contribute to an easier, more collaborative workflow: taking up less real estate; it enables users to print multi-size A3/B, A1/D or A0/E paper sizes without needing to switch the media source manually. Throughout its history HP has dedicated itself to improving its environmental offering and it continues to strive to offer its clients – architects – the tools to design in sustainability.

Left: Box for delivery and collection services.

The first wide-format printer for in-house use continues to be invaluable. HP DesignJet marks 30 years

The HP DesignJet has turned 30. This studio workhorse – the first wide-format printer available for in-house use – continues to enable architects and other professionals within the AEC industry to print large-scale drawings, schematics, renderings, and presentations with quality, precision and ease. And like any career-driven professional hitting their 50s, the DesignJet continues to respond to sector changes, staying relevant to the industry it serves by progressing sustainably.

Unlike its predecessors – the cumbersome and slow-moving flatbed plotters of the 1970s and 1980s, which relied on a movable arm and pen – the compact DesignJet harnessed HP’s innovative thermal inkjet technology to render line drawings and graphics, in mono and colour, with speed and accuracy.

From printing rare photos of the Beatles’ American debut, to digitising Royo’s Visuals book, since its arrival on the scene in 1991, the DesignJet has built an enviable portfolio as the facilitator of countless architectural and design endeavors. The HP DesignJet 15000 Plus, for instance, was the technology of choice for the team working on Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia in 2001. In 2006, Michel Rojkind and BIG used the HP DesignJet 3100 to present their winning design for the Tamayo Museum, Mexico DF. In 2010, the DesignJet T7200 benefitted from a 20 per cent reduction in ink usage, designing being a six-colour printer. In 2017 the T7500 was the first in the range to comprise 50 per cent recycled plastic and has continued to improve since then. In 2020, the HP Planet Partners initiative was the industry’s premier suppliers recycling program, and most recently, the Eco Carton ink cartridge was released into the industry in 2021.

Two printers recently added to the range are the HP DesignJet Z9+ Pro Printer and HP DesignJet T125 Printer / T525 Printer – with HP’s first AutoCAD Plotter.

From recycled materials and producing products destined to be recycled at end of life, HP DesignJet’s sustainability impacts are profound and lasting. In 2018, HP DesignJet was committed to its first Pass Plus printing material with 40% recycled plastic. In 2020, HP DesignJet continued to improve upon this goal, announcing a new range of printers made with 50% recycled plastic. These new printers are part of HP’s ongoing commitment to sustainability, and are designed to help architects and other professionals within the AEC industry to print large-scale drawings, schematics, renderings, and presentations with quality, precision and ease.

In 2021, HP DesignJet introduced the first wide-format printer with a sustainable design, the HP DesignJet Z6600. This printer is made with 50% recycled plastic and is designed to be easily recycled at the end of life. In addition, the printer uses HP’s EcoCart ink cartridges, which are made from 100% recycled plastic and have a significantly lower environmental impact than traditional ink cartridges.

Finally, in 2022, HP DesignJet introduced the HP DesignJet Z2600, the first wide-format printer with a sustainable inkjet printhead. This printhead is made with 50% recycled plastic and is designed to be easily recycled at the end of life. In addition, the printhead uses HP’s EcoCart ink cartridges, which are made from 100% recycled plastic and have a significantly lower environmental impact than traditional ink cartridges.

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Given that Sue Barr is head of photography at the AA School with a PhD specialising in readings of the modern motorway via the romantic lens of the sublime, her decision to leave the German in-laws on New Year’s Day for a solo Ruhr road trip might look like a busman’s holiday. Her book ‘The Architecture of Transit’ had already exposed her to the belly of the beast, with forays to document the shadowy, forgotten spaces beneath Italy’s huge oversailing autostradas – where it all started – and Germany, where the type reaches its continental apotheosis.

Armed with plate camera, digital adaptor, hood and tripod she strode out boldly; a woman alone, into the sublime, ‘barely held terrors’ of those hinterlands. And, like a photographic bell, book and candle, these tools held potential evil at bay in the twilight before the sun rose. Perhaps her determination was a shield, she says, or ‘seeing a woman with a camera at crack of dawn breaks perceived notions of normality’. Either way, her sublime bore her no existential fear.

This shot, in Duisburg’s port area, is really as desolate as it looks. Barr parked up nearby, drawn to the view’s flat inscrutability that she felt was ‘spatially reverberant;’ and out of the depth of the overpass’ darkness and the icy cold, she was gifted a lick of candy-coloured popsicle.
In praise of caprice

Eleanor Young defies the cold reality of winter to enjoy architectural fantasy – and is cheered by today’s young practices’ real brio

Coffee, music and the deep shade of Italian piazzas twist into one in a sunny corner of my brain. They are thrown together by mixed up memories and the pleasure of hard Cs and long Os – mercato, staccato, Livorno, cappuccino. Capriccio belongs there too.

In art we see capricci from masters of architectural fragments, Gandy or Piranesi throwing together walls and arches, draping vegetal fronds across and crumbling stones with a certain whimsy. I came across capriccio in praise of the work of Rob Krier – sometimes labelled as a postmodernist or new urbanist but most easily recognised as an adherent of classicism. He does indeed collage places together in his drawings to show how a square or street might work with a different type of enclosure, with an open facade or a stepped back wall. But capriccio is equally applied to the monumental classical orders punctuated with posing torsos that he sculpted for a Bilbao building in 2011.

Capriccio is also defined as caper or prank, a certain naughty fun. That is what I see on that Bilbao building. And that is what is coming back right now in architecture. It is not postmodern-style in-jokes of architectural fragments but a sense of levity, a humour and a burst of colour. In music, a tiny dot above the note can signal a whole change in pace and fun as a waltz swings into action with staccato notes subverting and enlivening it, turning it into a dance.

The national – primarily city centre – impact of the brick conservatism that has been called the new London vernacular has latterly been subverted by decorative courses, hit and miss brickwork and even arches. These are the bowler-hatted gents breaking for a little jig as they flood over Waterloo Bridge.

But there is a generation of practices who missed even riding the coat tails of the high density housing bubble (which will surely burst following Michael Gove’s statement on developer’s responsibility for post Grenfell cladding reparation, even if it was only dented by the pandemic). That generation includes many you will have seen on these pages – Office S&M, nimtim, CAN, McCloy + Muchemwa. They are working on smaller projects, extensions, the public realm – they have wide frames of reference and have not been diverted by huge contracts and impossible practice growth.

These are the ones dancing architecture into the future. They use cheap tricks and imagination, of necessity. Richard Rogers would have been proud of the way they throw colour at structure, but they demand pattern too. And texture. They work with flat panels and use cutouts rather than trying to model costly three-dimensional forms. Following this exuberant path is not the route most architects have the freedom, or inclination, to take. But inserting fragments of context, delight and decoration – in tiles, shapes, colours… whatever way you see fit – gives back the fun, the capriccio, placing lightness and architecture in that sunny part of our brain.

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In praise of caprice

Eleanor Young defies the cold reality of winter to enjoy architectural fantasy – and is cheered by today’s young practices’ real brio

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Capriccio is also defined as caper or prank, a certain naughty fun. That is what I see on that Bilbao building. And that is what is coming back right now in architecture. It is not postmodern-style in-jokes of architectural fragments but a sense of levity, a humour and a burst of colour. In music, a tiny dot above the note can signal a whole change in pace and fun as a waltz swings into action with staccato notes subverting and enlivening it, turning it into a dance.

The national – primarily city centre – impact of the brick conservatism that has been called the new London vernacular has latterly been subverted by decorative courses, hit and miss brickwork and even arches. These are the bowler-hatted gents breaking for a little jig as they flood over Waterloo Bridge.

But there is a generation of practices who missed even riding the coat tails of the high density housing bubble (which will surely burst following Michael Gove’s statement on developer’s responsibility for post Grenfell cladding reparation, even if it was only dented by the pandemic). That generation includes many you will have seen on these pages – Office S&M, nimtim, CAN, McCloy + Muchemwa. They are working on smaller projects, extensions, the public realm – they have wide frames of reference and have not been diverted by huge contracts and impossible practice growth.

These are the ones dancing architecture into the future. They use cheap tricks and imagination, of necessity. Richard Rogers would have been proud of the way they throw colour at structure, but they demand pattern too. And texture. They work with flat panels and use cutouts rather than trying to model costly three-dimensional forms. Following this exuberant path is not the route most architects have the freedom, or inclination, to take. But inserting fragments of context, delight and decoration – in tiles, shapes, colours… whatever way you see fit – gives back the fun, the capriccio, placing lightness and architecture in that sunny part of our brain.
Innovation alone won’t halt the climate crisis

Only with collective empowerment can architects implement the required solutions, says Charlie Edmonds.

COP26 was a failure. The UN climate summit was hailed as our ‘last best chance’ to address the climate crisis but what transpired was a series of compromises by centralised political power in deference to fossil-fuel capital. A report from Climate Action Tracker found that policies in the wake of COP26 will lead to a global temperature increase of 2.7°C — resulting in more frequent extreme weather events, a devastating loss of biodiversity and exacerbated global poverty.

The built environment is responsible for 40 per cent of carbon emissions, so it has never been more urgent for architects to engage with societal change. Despite this, the climate crisis is often treated as something more than a ‘design challenge’. As part of its Plan for Planet initiative, the Design Council released a video promoting the role of design in addressing the climate crisis. Over a backdrop of swirling strings and drone footage, designers were presented as the group that could ‘start solving some of these big climate challenges’ possessing ‘the power and a responsibility to address the climate crisis’. This video exemplifies a broader trend in the creative industries: presenting a depoliticised role for designers in the climate crisis, as technocratic actors pursuing the silver bullet of climate innovation.

During COP26, architect Enlai Hooi claimed the event organisers but from activist groups and the most significant limiting factor for architects’ work was the role of landscape architects in the climate movement, and Hooi’s Letter to a Young Architect.

DEEPER

This topic is too large to do it justice in a short column. I’d recommend anyone who is eager to read Billy Fleming’s comprehensive essay on the role of landscape architects in the climate movement, and Hooi’s Letter to a Young Architect.

The climate crisis is an existential threat, but one that can be resolved through systems change, they will remain an instrument of capital investment. The climate crisis is an existential threat, but one that can be resolved through systems change, they will remain an instrument of capital investment.

Charlie Edmonds is co-founder of Future Architects Front and a designer at Civic Square.

The passing of some big names in 2021 reminds us of our fleeting impact: working together is key to making a difference, says Simon Allford.

Last year was tough for many, for many different reasons. The world of architecture saw a number of key figures, all of whom had been closely connected with the RIBA during their careers. In October Owen Luder — the brutalist architect and twice RIBA President — passed away. In November Oriol Bohigas of MBB — whose practice was heavily involved in the urban Renaissance of Barcelona, leading to the city’s receipt of the 1999 Royal Gold Medal — died. In December we lost Chris Wilkinson — whose practice won the Stirling Prize twice, and Richard Rogers — whose practice did the same, while he himself won many personal awards including the Royal Gold Medal. As I write this column I also learnt of the passing of Max Fordham, another visionary who will be remembered as a pioneer of sustainable design and engineering.

I am sure this is not statistically unusual but it did feel like a sudden winter flurry of losses of friends and colleagues and architects of great note. But reflecting on their legacies was also a reminder of the importance of pursuing ideas with conviction — not only in the teaching and practice of architecture but in greater engagement in the collaborative design of a better world.

Indeed, the role that architecture and design play in reimagining how we live in our cities, and how we connect in the virtual and real worlds, is ever more a topic of conversation. Covid has forced everyone in rethinking how we live in our cities, and how we connect in the virtual and real worlds, is ever more a topic of conversation. Covid has forced everyone to reconsider how they work, travel and live. This reflection is useful — essential even. And one positive outcome of the pandemic is that we have had some time — as the world slowed — to think of our place in it. In light of COP26 we must think how we might contribute differently to the flight called ‘Spaceship Earth’. Of course not all have the luxury of taking stock and reflecting — the hospitality sector, health and care services have been hit very hard and as all who have started a practice know — just keeping in business is an all-consuming task.

The flurry of losses from our profession is a powerful reminder to make the best of our time. We will each have our own view of what is our best. On an architectural level it remains about trying to focus on what I think I can do to best improve the quality of my life — better time management, less emails (received and sent), more focus on the things that I actually enjoy doing; thinking strategically about design challenges at all scales, spending time with friends and family — and not taking the loss of a football match or The Ashes to heart.

As a profession there is much for us to do. Post-Grenfell, post-Covid, we have all set our own ambitions in one way or another, for yourself, your practice, your life, and I wish you every success in delivering on the best you can. All I will note is that working together we can achieve a great deal more than working apart. Indeed if we are each to fulfil any of our no doubt many ambitions this year, it will be because we worked more collaboratively — and that includes realising that proactive discussions and differing opinions are the first step to establishing common ground. Debate and discourse are key to designing a better future.
INCA – showcasing the best in external wall insulation

The INCA Awards highlight the best projects to make use of external wall insulation, with winners including a Hindu temple, student housing and concession pods at Lord’s.

Above Winner of the INCA New Build Scheme with a Brick Finish in the Anoopam Mission in Uxbridge. The EWI system designer is Dryvit.

Above and below The innovative design of the new concession pods at Lord’s Cricket Ground was awarded an award in the Architectural Design category for a building that will be seen by many part of the new Edrich and Compton stands at Lord’s Cricket Ground. Excom 400 was recommended by Alsecco as a system to address design challenges encountered on this prestigious scheme. The system was applied to the external facades of the concession pods on the new stands at the iconic home of cricket.

INCA, the Insulated Render and Cladding Association, is celebrating its 40th year and is now established as the leading organisation representing the external wall insulation industry. Technical standards and excellent workmanship are core to INCA’s values and the recent INCA Awards showcased the industry’s best projects completed in the previous 12 months. The winning projects demonstrate the tremendous variety of schemes carried out in both the new-build and refurbishment sectors, providing architects with an extensive palette of innovative finishes from which to choose.

External wall insulation (EWI) is a technology employing insulation boards fixed to the sheathing layer of new-build schemes built with steel framing or with a concrete frame with structural steel framing (SFS) infill, or to masonry walls in a refurbishment setting, beyond these common construction types, other less prominent building methods, such as timber frame, insulated concrete formwork (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. Systems are finished in either high-grade decorative coatings or brick slip finishes.

Winner of this year’s New Build Scheme with a Brick Finish in the Anoopam Mission in Uxbridge, west London, completed in 2020. The architect and client specified Dryvit’s insulation system combined with a limestone texture finish, selected for its long-term durability, energy efficiency and adaptability.

An important consideration was the finished aesthetics of the building with the client wishing to match the features of an Indian temple. Careful consideration was necessary to ensure the EWI system achieved the desired visual impact. While emulating the natural stone effect within a traditional place of worship. Using preformed insulation shapes, the approved installer worked to the Dryvit specification, achieving a serene building for members of Anoopam Mission.

Carley Shank of Dryvit called it “a fascinating project to be involved in; adding “It not only discovered what can be achieved with Dryvit Shapes, but also uncovered an understanding of a different culture. The building needed to reflect the internal atmosphere – quality workmanship and tranquillity. Outulation enables existing buildings to meet stringent energy efficiency requirements and, the mission being a charitable organisation, cost efficiencies were an important consideration. Offering a Dryvit speciality finish enabled the architect to replace a limestone finish at a fraction of the cost.”

In the category of New Build Project with a Brick Finish, the award went to Howard Gardens, a brand new £20 million student accommodation development in Cardiff. It offers 390 bedrooms conveniently close to the city centre within four and five-storey apartment blocks and a focal point 11-storey building with courtyard surround. SPSenvirowall was invited to propose an external wall insulation system fixed to a hybrid steel frame and IPS project. The selected system was Wall System 1, expertly installed by Build-Therm Services, an INCA member. 150mm mineral wool insulation was used across a 5,000m² of external façade and completed with SPSenvirowall Speedyslip flexible bricks creating a superior finish with perfect consistency throughout.

Having had experience with previous phases of the build, SPSenvirowall was able to meet the challenge of colour matching the brick slips for the third phase. Flexible brick slips are an excellent alternative to traditional bricks and, as in this case, an ideal solution for developments with limited space. They boast an A+ /4.00 fire rated classification in accordance with BS EN13501-1 for external cladding.

The building’s façade highlights brick slip colours Red Bradgate, Clarinet and Staffordshire Blue, expertly matched by specialists. Multiple brick colours from SPSenvirowall’s extensive brick slip range mean the building is in keeping with the aesthetics of the surrounding area. The winner in the Architectural Design category is a building that will be seen throughout.

Winner of this year’s New Build Scheme with a Brick Finish in the Anoopam Mission in Uxbridge.

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India based Balkrishna Doshi will be awarded the RIBA Royal Gold Medal in April. He gave Eleanor Young a rare insight into how Ahmedabad and his studio there taught him the importance of sound and silence to design, about flexibility and rejoicing, and putting people first.

Portrait: Vinay Panjwani

Balkrishna Doshi at his Sangath Studio, Ahmedabad in December 2021.

Man of the people

Eleanor Young: How has your home city influenced you?
Balkrishna Doshi: I started my office in the old Indian city of Ahmedabad, founded in 1411. It was right in the centre, surrounded by narrow streets, crowded with people and shops. Everything was mixed. On the other hand I was living in a very quiet place almost on the outskirts while working in this very dense area. The only difference to now is that 40-odd years ago there were not many cars. There were camel carts, some elephants, bicycles and people walking. While working at the drawing board I was constantly surrounded by sound. But I was also thinking about something else, of silence. So really the backdrop to my workspace was very good because it had lot of human qualities – social, cultural, emotional. It made me think about people and the surroundings all the time. But then when I went home I was looking at quietness.

Tell me about your studio, Sangath. You have 60 staff there now, it must have been quite different when you set it up in 1981.
Balkrishna Doshi: When I bought the land where my studio is today it was agricultural – about 3000 square yards, with mango trees. So I said perhaps this is where I can create my dream world. Create a non building – a place where people would come and experience the silence. Then they could get lost in their own world. I was also questioning identity of a workplace at that time. Should it look like an office? What is the nature of office? What is the nature of the workplace that you enjoy? While designing Sangath, I was constantly searching for ways to modulate light, create warmth, comfort and moods through manipulation of space, play of scales and movement. I was asking myself some very fundamental questions. How do you feel the natural light? What makes you feel comfortable? How can one sense the rain/heat from inside a space? These questions intrigue me still today. Also at that time I was working on economical housing models. I was possessed by a desire to build with minimum resources, using economical materials and local craft and create a climatically sound building. So I went to various construction sites and factory outlets to get discarded stones and broken tiles, and made the landscape flooring and the china mosaic on the vault. The Vault at Sangath was insulated with ceramic fuses with air trapped inside. This way the spaces became climatically controlled. So for me it was an experiment, but today after over four decades I feel it has worked out well.

Do you think you’ve taken many of those elements into other buildings? Have you been able to?
Balkrishna Doshi: Yes, but they were not so much, just in fragments. Others were perhaps a climate or windows study.

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I remember my first day at 35 Rue de Serves, when I entered Monsieur Corbusier’s office with a suitcase on my head.

I always ask my students to narrate and recollect memories and impressions on the way to the studio – in doing so they begin to describe the road in Ahmedabad, many small lanes and galleries, the traffic jam, the temple and the bells ringing, the street vendors, the cars and cows, and the buildings around. In this recollection they realize that there is diversity, there are choices and configurations of experiences. This leads to such conversations as: What is the nature of space? What is the nature of activity? What should be the nature of space? So I try to demonstrate, not necessarily through a lab, but through a living place.

I remember my first day at 35 Rue de Serves, when I entered Monsieur Corbusier’s office with a suitcase on my head. I had crossed the road without thinking about the traffic light and suddenly there was a huge honking, everybody braked and I was saved. Looking back, my time at the atelier was almost like rebirth from being saved on the road to understanding the true meaning of architecture. So even today every day I try to reinvent myself and look at everything as if for the first time.

By Tell me about the influence of Le Corbusier – you worked with him in Paris and later India. How was the first floor of an old aisle adjoining the chapel. So that was one long studio space, my studio at Sangath is not the same scale, but it is about 100ft long and 12ft wide with natural light. So you feel that you are in an atelier. I took all this from him.

Also, I clearly remember my first day at 35 Rue de Serves, when I entered Monsieur Corbusier’s office with a suitcase on my head. I had crossed the road without thinking about the traffic light and suddenly there was a huge honking, everybody braked and I was saved. Looking back, my time at the atelier was almost like rebirth from being saved on the road to understanding the true meaning of architecture. So even today every day I try to reinvent myself and look at everything as if for the first time.

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KY You've worked on some projects over a long period, 1966 to 2012 on the Centre of for Environmental Planning & Technology in Ahmedabad. Do you bring those life lessons to that?

BD Evolution and growth with time is very important to me and my practice. I founded the School of Architecture in 1966. Today it is the CEPT University. It was built on a brick kiln. I could have chosen a regular plot but I like challenges. The thought that constantly came to mind while designing it was why should an education campus only be about learning and teaching? Why not create something to rejoice in? So I planted many trees and made a forest at the edge of the campus.

BD Aranya Housing was proposed primarily for a section of society that included the so-called Economically Weaker Sections and slum and street dwellers from the city of Indore. It is truly heartwarming to see how they have flourished over the years. Some have built three floors, some have sub-let the place. All their kids have access to sanitation and education. They no longer belong to the economically weaker section. We architects build houses, but never think that they will be used in innumerable ways; unexpectedly. At Aranya one can see and learn how families grow, friends grow, communities grow. That learning is the success of Aranya.

KY What has been the biggest obstacle in your career?

BD The client (laughs). Sometimes it takes time – a couple of months – to convince them.

And also our views as architects, we say ‘I have made a nice verandah but somebody has encroached’ – we think encroaching or deviating is incorrect ethics. But when you are living and celebrating life you forget the original purpose, and that is important. We are teaching schools about function. But we are not teaching them about the flexibility and multiple use of function. The most interesting project I did was mixed income housing. Despite opposition by my client at the Life Insurance Housing Corporation project, the ground floor has 100ft² for the senior officer, the upper floor has 450 for the staff and the top has 70ft² for the support staff and each floor either gets a terrace or a garden. I also left the margin/terrace open for future expansion, so that the residents who are on the first or second floor can add another room on the terrace. And today it is great success even after four decades.

I think this happened because I didn’t look at it as architecture, I didn’t see it as building. For me, it was to provide spaces for people to rejoice in.

The purpose of my learning and teaching and everything is people oriented, society oriented, culture oriented. I think this happened because I didn’t look at it as architecture. I didn’t see it as building. For me, it was to provide spaces for people to rejoice in.

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The RIBA Journal February 2022

Obituary

Richard Rogers 1933 – 2021

Revolutionary, charismatic architect who overcame early dyslexia to design the Pompidou Centre in Paris and Lloyd’s of London and founded Team Four and RSHP, in an extraordinary career spanning seven decades

‘How can we be expected to make an architect out of a man who cannot make two lines meet?’ it demanded one of Richard Rogers’ tutors at the AA in an awkward meeting with his parents, Nina and Dada. Rogers was indeed very bad at drawing, and it was another tutor, James Gowan, who spotted that he got his then girlfriend Georgie Cheseeman to help. She was briefly to be the only fully qualified architect on the letterhead of Team Four (making it five people at first) when the practice set up in 1963 – the other four being Rogers’ first wife Su Brumwell, his friend Norman Foster whom he had met post-AA at Yale, and George’s younger sister Wendy, later to become the Foster’s wife. Emotionally and professionally, Rogers always needed a supportive gang around him, always found one, and always stayed friends with everyone.

He was born in Florence in 1933 to a long-established Anglo-Italian family forced to flee to England as war approached. Enduring the brutal regime of a minor English boarding school, he always struggled with dyslexia. His experiences there, and later in the army during National Service, left him with an abiding loathing of bullies and small-mindedness. But it was helping out in the Milan atelier of his Italian architect cousin Ernesto Rogers of BBPR fame, that first made him want to be an architect, in 1953.

The career that followed was extraordinary by any standards, including the Pompidou Centre in Paris with Renzo Piano, the Lloyd’s of London HQ, Channel 4 HQ, the Millennium Dome, the European Court of Human Rights building in Strasbourg, the Welsh Parliament Building (Senedd), Bordeaux Law Courts, Terminal Five at Heathrow, the Leadenhall Building (‘Cheesegrater’) in the City, the International Towers in Sydney, British Museum Conservation Centre and two Stirling Prize winners, Madrid Barajas airport’s terminal 4, and the Maggie’s Centre in London’s Hammersmith.

Housing ranged from the apartments for the mega-rich at One Hyde Park in London to the Y-Cube modular hostel for the homeless. Theoretical and unbuilt projects include his London As It Could Be plan shown at the Foster Rogers Stirling exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1987, and entries for the Paternoster Square, Royal Opera House and National Gallery extension competitions.

Rogers was indeed very bad at drawing, and it was engineer Peter Rice on Renzo Piano and BBPR fame, that first made him want to be an architect, in 1953.

Below Plans & Rogers’ Pompidou scheme, featuring generous public spaces, won the 1971 competition entry.

Right The Millennium Dome was completed in 1999 for £450m. Its 3D2m diameter roof weighs more than the air contained within.

Left Richard Rogers, Renzo Piano and engineer Peter Rice on the site of the Pompidou Centre.

Rogers was known for his left-leaning politics and ‘stirring the pot’, as the late Brian Sewell famously described it. He was the first architect to sit on the board of the Tate gallery, a position he held for many years, and was a vocal supporter of the arts in all its forms. He was also a champion of the built environment, as can be seen in his work with Art and Architecture Department of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese. Tarnak House, built by Bryan Appleyard. This homed in on the fact that Rogers was, as much as a revolutionary architect, a fascinating and magnetic personality. His huge house in Chelsea, venue for endless networking parties directed by his second wife Ruth, of River Café fame, became an artistic and political salon. In June 2020 he finally officially retired from the practice of Rogers Stirk Harbour Partners – by now based in the Leadenhall Building or ‘Cheesegrater’ which they had designed with Graham Stirk as lead partner.

He is survived by second wife Ruthie, first wife Su Brumwell, their sons Ben, Zad, and Ab, his son Roo with Ruthie (their other son Bo died in 2013), his younger brother Peter, and 13 grandchildren.

KATSUHISA KIDA

GRANT SMITH

1913 - 2021

Richard Rogers in five key buildings: ribaj.com /rogers-five

First to receive official confirmation, broke the news on the phone: ‘Hello old man (‘Ciao, vecchio’). Are you sitting down?’ Rogers was nearly 38, Piano 33.

After all the design, constructional and technical complexities of building the Pompidou Centre (the moving floors concept had to go), it opened in 1977 and was immediately a huge popular success, despite some early inevitable ‘oil refinery’ jibes due to its brightly-coloured exposed external pipework.

Although Rogers admired the US architects whose work he had got to know doing his Masters at Harvard, he was influenced by Cedric Price and Archigram.

Then Renzo Piano, an Anglophile Genoese, and the RA show, but also of a notable biography by Bryan Appleyard. This honed in on the fact that Rogers was, as much as a revolutionary architect, a fascinating and magnetic personality. His huge house in Chelsea, venue for endless networking parties directed by his second wife Ruth, of River Café fame, became an artistic and political salon. In June 2020 he finally officially retired from the practice of Rogers Stirk Harbour Partners – by now based in the Leadenhall Building or ‘Cheesegrater’ which they had designed with Graham Stirk as lead partner.

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Hugh Pearlman

Richard Rogers in five key buildings: ribaj.com /rogers-five
Chris Wilkinson’s belief that architecture bridges art and science provided the fundamental ethos for WilkinsonEyre, the practice he founded, and runs through the extensive catalogue of elegant, thrilling buildings it has produced over almost four decades. Chris studied architecture at Regent Street Polytechnic in the early 1960s, contemporaneous with three of Fink Poyl. The expansive idealism of that time stayed with him, expressed by an interest in the use of new technologies in architecture rather than psychedelic space rock - though he liked that too.


Since his student days, Chris had been interested in long-span structures and the Martian idea of universal space. His 1991 book Supersheds piqued his heart, but it is perhaps the Challenge of Materials Prize-winning Magna Science Adventure Centre in Rotherham, Explore at Bristol (now We the Curious), thepractice’s Stratford Market Depot, completed in 2011, that best sums up his approach to ‘bridging art and science’ – a mantra that expresses. He had an artist’s eye for an elegant line and details of next of kin please email membership@riba.org with services@riba.org with images of the

December 2021

We are deeply saddened to announce the death of Chris Wilkinson, who passed away on 27 November 2021.

Chris was both a visionary architect and an accomplished author, whose work has earned him international acclaim. He was elected to the Royal Academy of Arts in 2006 and has received numerous awards for his contributions to architecture.

Chris’ work was characterized by a strong emphasis on sustainable design and the use of innovative materials. He was a pioneer in the use of glass and steel as a means of creating elegant and dynamic structures. His projects included the Earth Sciences Building in Oxford, the Exeter University Forum and several buildings for Queen Mary, University of London. His most proud achievement was the Maggie’s in Oxford (2015), a cross-laminated timber structure raised on pilotis to make a treehouse in a wood.

The practice’s second Stirling Prize win, Gateshead Bridge (2020), gave it international visibility, and subsequent work reflects a growing expertise in super-high towers: the 104-storey Guangzhou EFC building was followed by more in Toronto and the City of London, and the newly complete One Barangaroo in Sydney, inspired by interweaving curved petals. The cool conservatories at Gardens by the Bay in Singapore is perhaps WilkinsonEyre’s most representative international project – elegant engineering and cross-disciplinary collaboration being the essence of the practice Chris established. That ethos also informed activities outside the practice. Chris took up visiting professorships at Illinois Institute of Technology and Harvard and, elected to the Royal Academy in 2006, he was a champion of hand-drawing as a means of communicating a simple ‘beautiful idea’, clearly expressed. He had an artist’s eye for an elegant line and was exacting in presenting projects with a memorable image. Although he had reduced his time in the office in recent years, he remained closely involved in projects such as a masterplan for the Wellcome Genome Campus at Hinxton and the forthcoming Eton Art Gallery at Dorking.

His genial and personable nature endeared him to clients, collaborators and colleagues alike. Rooted in English high-tech, the practice’s output has evolved into more poetic free expression, guided by Chris’ instinct for clear-thinking and innovative problem-solving, matched by his ambition and quest for adventure. He pushed us all to explore different design challenges and open up new possibilities.

He is survived by his wife Diana, sister Liz, and children Zoe and Dominic. –

Stafford Critchlow is a director at WilkinsonEyre

For more information and images of the winner and shortlist visit ribaj.com

Walking, or venturing outdoors, has become a pastime for many more of us over the past two years. For some, it has meant exploring the open wilderness or rows of squidgy fields, for others trudging the hard pavements of our towns and cities. We launched this design ideas competition with the Galvanizers Association to seek proposals for a building or structure for reuse/recuperation that would enhance a walk, rural or urban. It could fulﬁl any function at all so long as galvanized steel was a primary material and it adopted circular economy principles.

The response has been fantastic. The competition page piqued an interest in thousands of you and many of you entered too. We received an imaginative range of submissions, from an urban book swap groto to a farm regeneration silo; shelters for an overnight stay; ﬂexible-use portable kiosks or proposals to just have a brief sit down. We’ve seen exquisite drawing too, although it was firmly decided during the judging that ideas trumped all. We’ve decided during the judging that ideas trumped all.

Here we celebrate our winner, who receives £1,000, the three commended entrants, who each receive £250, as well as our shortlist and longlist. Thank you to our judges – and congratulations! Isabelle Priest, managing editor, RIBA Journal

IN MEMORIAM

George William Curtiss
ELECTED 1953, KENT

J Brian Lambert
ELECTED 1968, KENT

John William Cocks
ELECTED 1968, STAFFORD

Brian John Marshall
ELECTED 1968, HERTFORD

David Sheepard Cuming
ELECTED 1968, HERTFORD

THE RESULTS

Walking’s back, and it’s here to stay. We are witnessing a growth in interest in the outdoors and the importance of connecting with our environment.

Galvanizers Association is proud to continue its long relationship with the RIBA. The Wanderer’s Wonder competition was born out of a need to celebrate, because of the pandemic, our newfound connection with our local area. Sustainability, fun and playfulness were core requirements of the competition.

Our collaboration with the RIBA began with the launch of the RIBA’s GAGA Awards and has continued through our annual GAGA awards. This competition was our way of offering two criteria to construction professionals to help galvanizing (since 1949), including design, specification and performance. An important element of Wanderer’s Wonder is its link with the production of Galvanized Steel and Sustainable Construction: Solutions for a Circular Economy. The guide makes clear how designing with the Galvanizers Association to seek proposals to just have a brief sit down. We’ve seen exquisite drawing too, although it was firmly decided during the judging that ideas trumped all.

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The standard of entries is hugely impressive and it is heartening to see this time and effort that has gone into the production of the final material. The entries have demonstrated diversity of ideas, enthusiasm and the importance of connecting with our environment.

Igal Vidal, marketing manager, Galvanizers Association

The RIBA Journal February 2022

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

Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly’. Euan Hardie’s winning proposal consists of two objects inspired by the word ‘stravaig’ which roughly translates as ‘to wander aimlessly'.

Wanderer’s Wonder
Competition

The first part of the proposal is The Stravaiger, a place to rest weary legs. Designed as a protective cupped hand, the structure consists of a series of metal planes enclosing a simple stationary bench.

The second is The Bodach – or ‘old man’ – and comprises an architectural hat that can be built over and around abandoned houses to make a shelter for an overnight stay or refuge from the elements. Many of Scotland’s most beautiful places have these ruins, reminders of a different way of life before the Clearances. The Bodach gives them new life in a familiar way, giving them a wrinkly roof with a lightweight structure.

Both proposals are similar in tectonics. Each uses a timber frame, of standard sized timbers, with simple galvanized steel fixings and footings and a skin of corrugated galvanized steel sheets. They touch the landscape lightly and could be completely demountable, reusable or recyclable.

Although there were some concerns among the judges about the balance of timber to galvanized steel, this proposal was a standout winner that was difficult to beat.

‘This entry spoke to a sense of place and an understanding of place,’ said judge Jonathan Hagos. ‘It has a lightness that is appropriate for the context. It reminds me of mnemonic devices – when you are in one place you are reminded of the other, creating a journey architecturally.’

Likewise, Garreth McMahon agreed: ‘I loved all the gestures the entrant is trying to put through. With both parts, the corrugated galvanized material is forming a roof in the landscape that would be visible from about four to five miles away, playing an intrinsic part in the overall idea.’

The judges felt that the proposal provided the balance between opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors, while being sustainable through the use of standardised elements that can re-enter a circular economy, and being culturally sensitive and relevant.

‘The relationship between the timber and the galvanized material is also really clear and purposeful,’ explained Isabelle Priest. Overall, the judges found the dual proposal to be well resolved, experimental in testing different scenarios and they found the idea that the objects could become a family of interventions displaced across the Scottish landscape enjoyable.
This climbable shelter in the Scottish Highlands is a 4.5m structure mimicking the radial symmetrical geometry of a thistle. A galvanized steel spiral staircase leads the wanderer up to a resting area, where woven metal screens provide safety and visual permeability across the countryside.

The screens are supported by galvanized steel rods connecting to the roof and floor. Galvanized steel beams support the timber decking, carrying and transferring the structure’s weight towards the central column. A domed roof, clad in local, long-lasting and aesthetically pleasing Scottish larch shingles, offers shelter.

Above Lightweight and flexible fibre rods on the roof support mini photovoltaic panels. 
Top right The raised resting area offers an alternative view of the surrounding countryside.

The wind feature likened to Heatherwick Studio’s Seed Cathedral at Expo 2010 by judge Jonathan Hagos.

The majority of the thistle – its structure and cladding – is galvanized steel. It is designed to be eventually recycled or reused. Initially reticent about its size (more of a landmark than a chance encounter), structural viability and literalness, the judges arrived at a revised opinion.

‘I enjoyed the boldness of the gesture,’ said Hagos. ‘There is something wonderful about… changing your perspective while on a journey, or changing your view and your vantage point looking over the landscape.’

‘I liked the minimal impact on the ground and the elevated view; you can picture it in tree foliage and hear the noises of the surrounding trees,’ said Garreth McMahon.

The roof of the floorhead is covered in transparent flexible fibre rods with mini photovoltaic panels at the ends, which feed the lighting system. These drop naturally under gravity, and, like a seedhead, rustle in the wind.

Out of the green

COMMENDED
MATEUSZ MUSIAL
architect, WXCA Architecture Office

Recent rises in property prices have led to public spaces in cities becoming more squeezed and deprioritised. However, the pandemic has shown us how important it is, providing refuge particularly for those without much space of their own.

Out of the Green develops a replicable scheme for the urban wanderer on an underdeveloped infill site of low investment value. With relatively small financial outlay, it turns the site into a local meeting place that encourages biodiversity and shelter for animals, while requiring little maintenance.

Above The modular canopy makes use of galvanized steel mesh and polycarbonate. 
Below The steel bars that screen the space also help to create a image of rain.

The project is designed as a light, modular canopy that will enable use in good weather and bad. It aims to reduce material to a minimum and use recycled elements where possible. The roof is a galvanized steel mesh, while a polycarbonate layer ensures sunlight transmission and rain protection.

The awning is supported by pillars that double as downpipes, through which rainwater from the roof can be collected in underground tanks to be used for plant watering. Its envelope of varying-length steel bars also evokes the image of rain.

The judges agreed the proposal provided an ideal urban stopping point, with Garreth McMahon suggesting it could even become a destination rather than just a place to stumble on. Jonathan Hagos felt that the project ‘dealt with socio-economic issues more than other schemes on the longlist’. Anna Liu enjoyed how it ‘channels attention into forgotten spaces and is quite mysterious, like a screened private space between wasteland and public realm’, and the way ‘it could be applicable to many urban corners’.

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The shelter is a quasi-permanent structure made from galvanized steel panels. The curved form of the shelter allows it to be used (and reused) in a variety of contexts. The demountable shelter’s flexibility allows three adults to accommodate three adults and mimics the curved form of the shelter.

This flexible concept could be applied in a variety of situations, including ones which require an anti-vandalism strategy (lightweight anti-theft nuts with a torque wrench) or where protection from the weather is needed. The curved galvanized steel sheeting or rammed earth walls or even concealed piles to make it look like a cairn (which closed on 1 February) – and this is the aspect that really excited the judges. The demountable, quasi-permanent structure intended for regenerative schemes for farmers’ wellbeing.


Below The curved metal sheeting within the shelter is able to accommodate three adults.
English architect Chester Jones spent time in the USA on a Commonwealth Fund Fellowship before his untimely death in 1933 at the age of just 27. Jones documented the architecture he encountered on his travels in a collection of photographs now held by RIBA. One building that caught his eye was this mansion in Beverly Hills built in 1927 for Milton Getz, the director of Los Angeles’ Union Bank, by architect Gordon Kaufmann.

Though Kaufmann was later known for art deco buildings such as the Hoover Dam, his early work was in the Mediterranean Revival style popular in California in the 1920s and 30s. His design here employed classical Spanish and Italian forms including internal patios, loggias, colonnades and a pink stucco exterior, and it had palatial gardens by landscape architect Paul Thiene.

The house was later owned by the actress Marion Davies and her partner, the newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst. They offered it to the young John F Kennedy for his honeymoon in 1953 and it subsequently served as the West Coast headquarters for his presidential campaign.

Justine Sambrook
THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

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