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The RIBA Journal
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Steve Smith's elusive Invisible House

How self-build helped vault injustice

Yasmeen Lari: empowering the people

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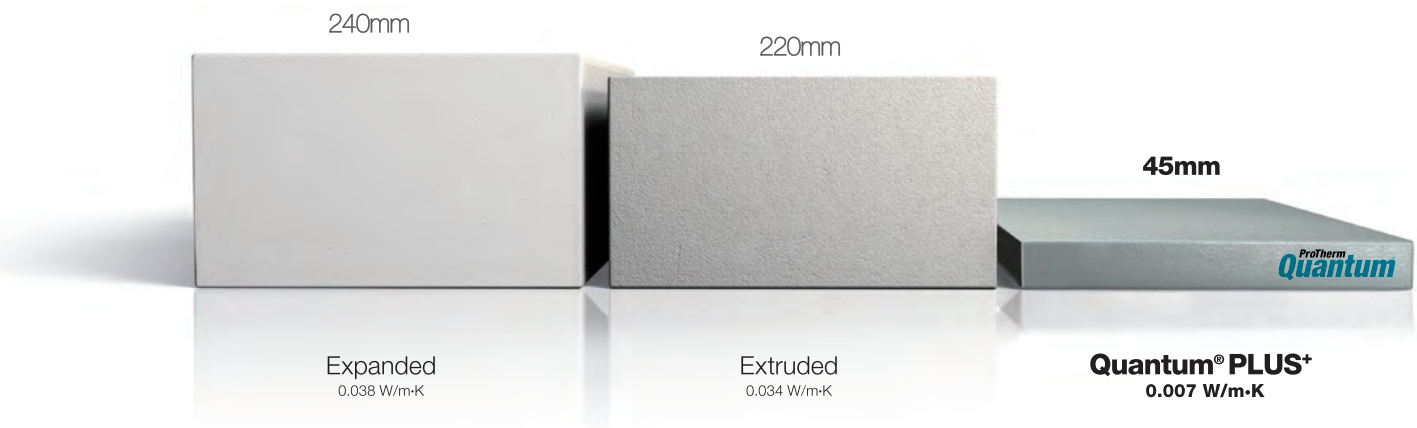

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0.13	70	250	275
0.12	75	270	295
0.11	80	290	320
0.10	100	320	355

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1: Buildings

SHANGHAI LIBRARY EAST
SHANGHAI, CHINA
SCHMIDT HAMMER LASSEN
Read the full story: ribaj.com/shanghai-library

Danish practice Schmidt Hammer Lassen has an impressive resumé in library-making around the world – Copenhagen, Denmark, Christchurch in New Zealand and Halifax, Nova Scotia. It has now added the new Shanghai Library East to the list. With a total area of 115,000m², the building in the Pudong district is China's largest public library.

Set over seven levels in a single volume on top of two pavilions, the library poses as a modern 'scholar's rock' on the edge of the city's Century Park. Last month's opening marks attempts to reinstate the role of public buildings in China. Across the Huangpu river in the west of the city, the old Shanghai Library is considered an archive, with only 20% of both space and collection open to the public – although it is the second largest library in the world. With this project, the municipality sought a remedy that could achieve yin-yang balance by reversing the quotient – opening 80% of the collection and floor space to the public.

The pandemic inevitably halted the project multiple times, only tantalising future users more. Internally, stacking floor plates and atriums carve out spaces for generous circulation, lectures, seminars, performances and events to nurture the social and cultural life of the city. It boasts a wide configuration of reading zones designed for all and a scale befitting to the needs of its population. Already the public swarms in daily, leaving no seat unoccupied in the library set to serve 30,000 visitors a day and an expected 4 million a year. Shanghai Library East brings an array of programmes into crystallisation, breaks the traditional role of a library and configures a series of spaces that delightfully celebrate life, spectatorship and the presence of a little noise too.

SHL/RAWVISION

At peace with its place

Blee Halligan's Derwent Valley Villa is an unashamedly modern home that shapes and is shaped by the landscape it sits in

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Henry Woide

PICTURE CREDIT TBCE

Set behind an existing garden wall, the house is an unobtrusive presence on a quiet street.

Duffield is a large affluent dormitory village, dating back to Norman times with a number of good Georgian houses and later suburban streets, five miles up the Derwent north of Derby. Other than a heritage railway line running to the nearby quarry town of Wirksworth, there is so little evidence of the activity that was so important to the Industrial Revolution that this valley is now a World Heritage Site. If you're looking for the mills, go south to Darley Abbey or further north to Milford, Belper, Cromford and Matlock.

These mills are cited as inspiration by Blee Halligan, architect of Derwent Valley Villa, for their 'functional elegance and strong, unapologetic proportions'. While this house certainly has an aesthetic of strength, it does not however try to stand proudly in contrast with the landscape as they do. On the contrary, the villa is a wholly landscape-derived design and positively self-effacing.

Below A glass collar containing stairs separates the two blocks of the main house.

Above Located on the edge of the village, the house looks out over low hills.

It reveals itself to the outside world only in glimpses of textured and perforated brick and the occasional large window, peering over its pre-existing perimeter wall and hedge. Set at the junction of two quiet streets, its key view is southwest across the town's cemetery to the gentle landscape of south Derbyshire. This site on the edge of the built up area ruled out anything too prominent. That meant in practice that – despite including a two-storey bedroom block where the large 1960s bungalow it has replaced had only one – it rises no higher than that home's pitched-roof apex did. To achieve this and decent floor-to-ceiling heights required both a flat roof and excavation.

The clients, Craig and Lisa Foster, lived in the village already. They rebuilt to get the quality of accommodation – and especially landscape – they wanted. Tumultuously changing family circumstances intervened: Lisa became

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Section BB

1 Bedroom
2 Master bedroom
3 Laundry
4 Main living area
5 Atrium
6 Playroom
7 Guest suite

This is a remarkably self-assured house, clear in its expression and separation of volumes

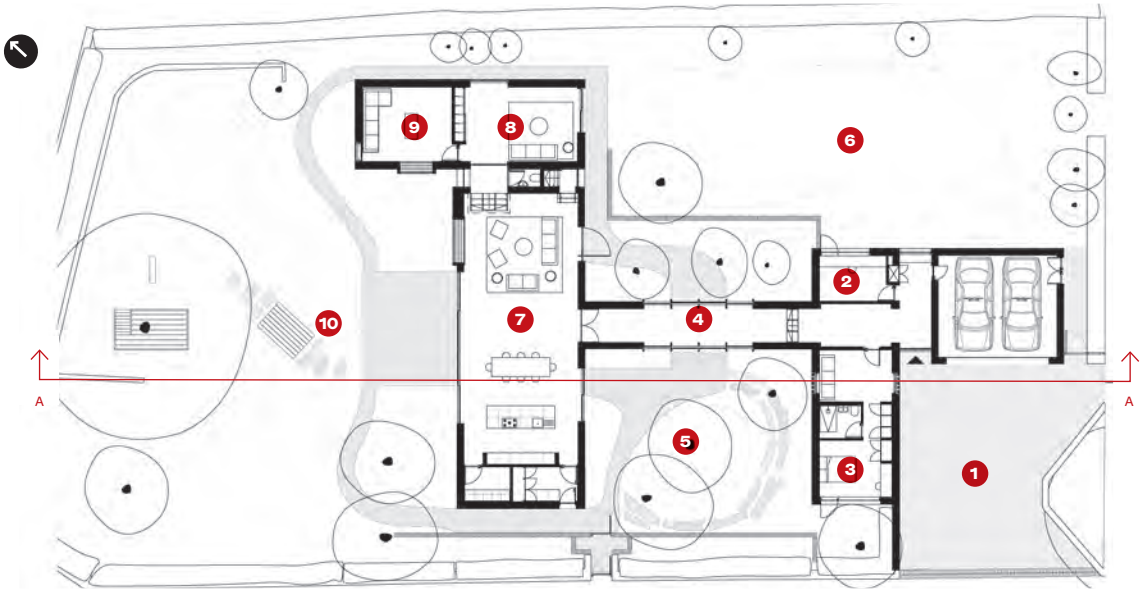
Section AA

seriously ill and died before building began. Craig continued the project, as he describes it, almost as a form of therapy, trusting the architect's design decisions. The house has proved adaptable: designed for a family of five, today it is occupied by what Foster describes as a 'blended family' of seven, with three children from his side and two from his partner's, their ages ranging from 5 to 12. Other than the guest suite becoming one of the children's bedrooms, that's about it: the living spaces and gardens are large enough to absorb everyone.

Liking a house they'd seen elsewhere by ShedKM, the Fosters initially contacted that practice, who, for such a relatively small project, referred them to their former colleagues Greg Blee and Lee Halligan. Friends since Bartlett days, after working for Níall McLaughlin they had set up ShedKM's London studio and then departed to establish their own firm in 2014, soon winning multiple commissions in the Caribbean. Derwent Valley Villa was to be the firm's first, and

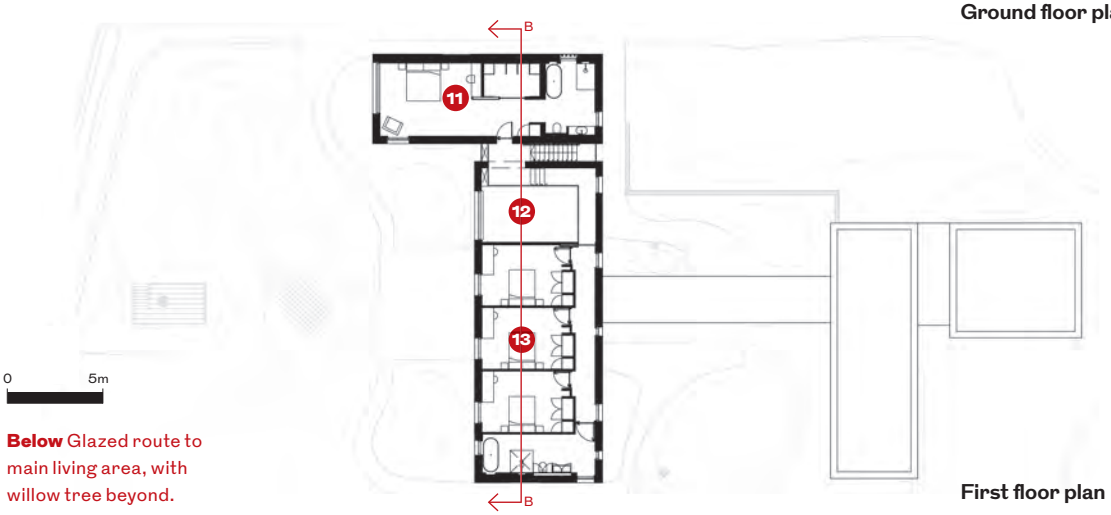
Left The house is configured to frame four distinct outside spaces.

Below The first-floor landing encircles the atrium.



1 Entrance court
2 Study
3 Guest suite
4 Glazed link
5 Courtyard
6 Children's garden
7 Living room
8 Play room
9 Family room
10 Formal garden
11 Master bedroom
12 Void
13 Bedroom

Ground floor plan



First floor plan

Credits
Client Craig and Lisa Foster
Architect Blee Halligan
Structural engineering Heyne Tillett Steel
Landscape architect J&L Gibbons
Quantity surveyor Appleyard and Trew
Contractor Derwent Valley Construction

Below Glazed route to main living area, with willow tree beyond.

so far only, all-new house in the UK.

Externally there is nothing showy about it; indeed the large partly half-timbered Edwardian houses on the other side of its street are considerably more assertive. Unlike them, this house has no principal facade. It is set out as a sequence of four separate but linked blocks disposed along the centre of the site. It is somewhat 1950s-60s in feel with its purplish brindled bricks (slightly bluer on the ground floor, slightly redder above), separated by a band of precast concrete incorporating cills. The same material is used as a cornice. The external concrete belly-band belies the fact that there is no concrete upper level floor slab: the structure is hybrid timber and steel.

A single-storey range contains a garage, entrance hall, bedroom suite and

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study. From this a glazed timber-framed link leads to the main two-storey house – a cluster of two blocks set at right angles to each other, the subsidiary wing set slightly lower. In the main block is the enormous kitchen/living/dining area, stepping down to two more intimate living/play rooms in the sunken wing that can be separated off with sliding oak doors. Stairs to the upper level run in a glazed slot up behind the end wall, passing the master bedroom, emerging into a double-height atrium with circular rooflight and continuing up and across the atrium to the children's bedrooms above the main living space. There a row of three small bedrooms for the children concludes with a family bathroom.

Materials are self-finished, with exposed (superior, glass-flecked) blockwork walls, floors variously of polished concrete, oak and tile, Douglas fir beams, black-painted steelwork. The character of the house is dominated by its relationship to its landscape, designed by Johanna Gibbons who happens to be Blee's older sister. Her plan, using wet woodland species, defines three separate garden areas ranging from an intimate courtyard via a large kick-about part-lawned area to the heavily planted south-western end with pond, culminating in a mature weeping willow. The main living area can open right up to this garden via sliding patio windows: the size of the glazed areas throughout is impressive. Blee cites a number of projects as references including McLaughlin's Alzheimer's Respite Care Centre in Dublin – a building stretched through an enclosed garden to form courtyards – and Dow Jones' Garden Museum extension in London.

This is a remarkably self-assured house, clear in its expression and separation of volumes and in the way it works hand-in-hand with its landscape elements, the one informing the other. The photos of course show it pristine, but it also happily absorbs all the clutter of a large young family. And it shows how a new, intelligently designed, modernist house can actively improve its setting. ●

IN NUMBERS

£1.2m
construction cost

£627,500
site cost (2016)

407m²
gifa

5
bedrooms

3
living areas

3
garden zones

Right A palette of 'industrial' materials was in part inspired by nearby historic mills.

Below Glazed link between the one- and two-storey blocks. Planting is inspired by the location of the house in a river valley.

TAYLOR MAXWELL

Seren Student Accommodation, Swansea

Seren is a Fusion Students university accommodation and commercial development in Swansea, South Wales. Built on a brownfield site, the student accommodation was designed by architects Corstorphine & Wright and managed by main contractors, ISG Construction.

Throughout the design process the aspiration was to create a detailed facade that made reference to the copper mined locally, by using a blend of colours to mimic the natural weathering of this metal to patina.

Taylor Maxwell worked with Corstorphine & Wright to explain how Anvil metal cladding had been used for this purpose previously and how it could meet their project requirements.

After proposing and testing a number of colour variations and panel sizes, 4,420sqm of A1 fire rated Anvil metal cladding and 300,000 cream and black facing bricks were specified and supplied to the 17-storey development.

Due to its high-profile location and it forming a key part of the regeneration of Swansea, the Seren buildings were designed as a vibrant and aesthetically pleasing landmark that successfully merits being one of the first things seen when stepping out of the train station.

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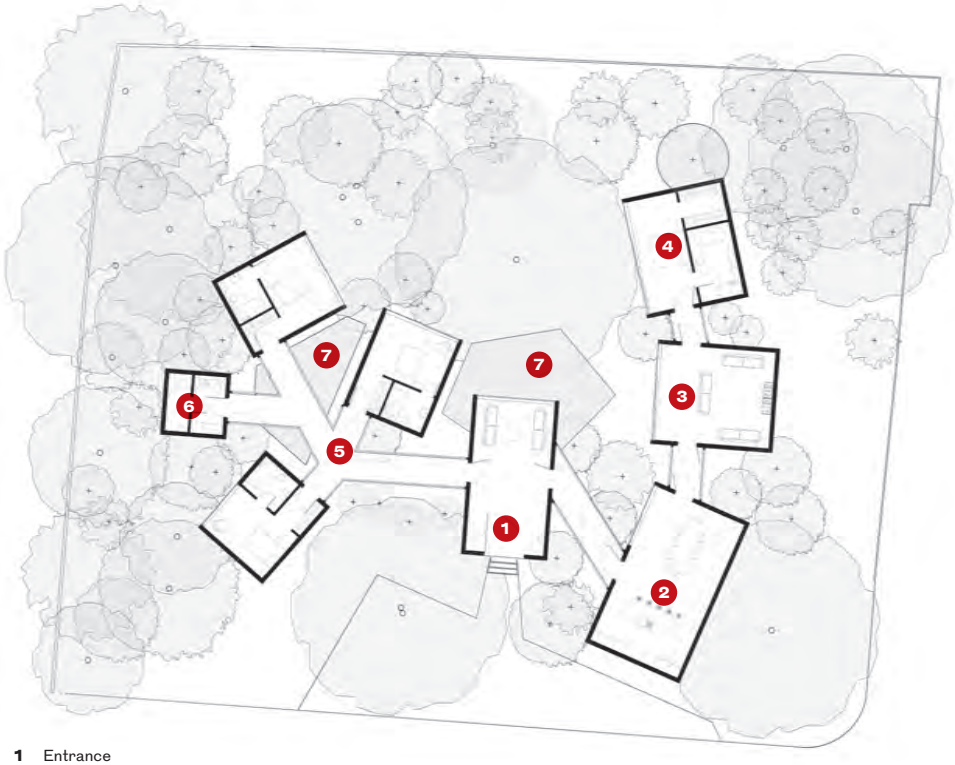
Photography by Alex Upton.

Lost in the woods

Invisible House disappears among the new and existing trees in its private community lane of postwar houses.

HENRY WOIDE



1 Entrance
2 Kitchen dining room
3 Living room
4 Master bedroom suite
5 Additional bedrooms wing
6 Study
7 Pond

Ground floor plan

Making an Invisible House doesn't just need glass and mirrors. For owner/designer Steve Smith with BPN Architects, living trees are all part of the illusion

Words: Dominic McKenzie

In 2003 nightlife entrepreneur Steve Smith bought a property called Cedar House, ten minutes' drive outside Leamington Spa at Moreton Paddox. The house was on land that was formerly part of a stately home which had been sold off as parcels from 1959 and over time became a kind of private village.

The houses on the former estate are of variable quality. Cedar House is a 1980s modern vernacular house of no architectural interest, but it came with a lot of land which was used first to build Ghost House with Birmingham-based BPN (RIBAJ May 2019), and now Invisible House.

Ghost House, shortlisted for the RIBA House of the Year in 2019, is a veritable James Bond villain bunker entirely in exposed concrete, entered through a black reflecting pool. Such radical houses don't come easily; Smith describes the battles with the local planning authorities to get it realised. It was built under Paragraph 55 (now Paragraph 80) regulations which allow newbuild rural houses provided they are of exceptional quality. The endorsement of the 'RIBA House of the Year' shortlist is proof that it qualifies for this.

Invisible House is located in a prominent corner position directly opposite the entrances to Ghost House and Cedar House. Given this location you can see the creative impulse to try to make a new house disappear – to make it 'invisible'.

Smith thought there would be no chance of getting a second 'exceptional' Paragraph 55 house directly opposite Ghost House and the process of getting planning permission was similarly tortuous. With help again from BPN, he won the backing of the local council's

design review panel, only to be refused by a single planning officer. The scheme was eventually won at appeal.

Invisible House is entirely single storey, arranged as a cluster of seven individual pods/rooms scattered seemingly haphazardly across the site. The pods are joined by glazed corridors, creating a sequence of connected rooms. Reminiscent of a Sanaa design, the loose arrangement of elements provides a flexibility of architectural form which allows the house to weave between the mature trees retained on the site. It also breaks down the overall mass, making legibility of the whole more difficult and aiding its invisibility. Additional semi-mature silver birches planted around the house further dissolve its appearance.

The house is raised above the ground on mini-piles which are set back and lost in the shadows, so the house apparently floats above the ground. Above the mini-piles, a raised steel deck with walls or tubular steel columns supports the roof. Site-made SIP panels are used for solid areas of wall behind the cladding.

The quality of the exterior cladding is superb; tight joints and a flat surface create a perfect mirror appearance when seen from outside, but look transparent from inside. Smith cites Tham & Videgård's Swedish 'mirrorcube' hotel as a precedent. The cladding is divided into three zones – a 330mm base hides the floor build-up, the glazing zone is 2700mm high, and a 330mm top band obscures the roof structure.

The house is entered in the middle of the seven pods via a front door that is a seamless mirrored panel indistinguishable from the rest of the cladding except for a small keyhole. Steps up to the raised deck are reminiscent of Mies' Farnsworth House in Illinois. On entry, walls, ceiling and resin floor are black. Thin strip lights set into the ceiling point towards the rear garden which forms the beautiful backdrop for all the rooms in the house.

Walls throughout are clad in timber battens – spray-painted black or white –

In the glazed corridors there is an immediate feeling of disorientation – like a fairground hall of mirrors

IN NUMBERS

£900,000
total build

300m²
GIFA

£3000
cost per m²
(all figures approximate)

Below The scattered plan of rooms is elevated from the ground on mini-piles and cantilevered over shallow ponds.

HENRY WOIDE (3)

rather than plasterboard which gives the interiors a rich tactile quality. Bespoke powder-coated steel door handles match the battens precisely, a sign of the rigorous attention to detail that characterises Smith's projects.

Leaving the black entry hall we head into the right-hand wing of the house towards the kitchen. In the interstitial glazed corridors there is an immediate feeling of disorientation – something like a fairground hall of mirrors. Views of the garden are interrupted by mirrored exterior flank walls; push doors ahead and behind are also mirrored with no handles.

The kitchen/dining room beyond is the biggest pod, its resin floor and wall battens all white to match the kitchen units and counter. Given the size of the pod the window feels a little on the small side and perhaps rooflights or another window could have been introduced – though this might have marred the building's exterior appearance. But this is a minor niggle.

Top right The view through the all-black entrance hall cuts straight through the plot to the rear garden.

Right One of the three all-white guest bedrooms. Each has its own bathroom.

Below The living room, like all the spaces in the house, is its own semi-autonomous building, attached to other areas by corridors.

JAKE BALSTON

Beyond the dining room is the living room, also in white. The final room in the sequence is a bedroom with an integrated ensuite carefully detailed with matching white tiles and sanitaryware. The bathroom door is tiled on the inner face, with a bespoke door handle matching the tile grid precisely.

Returning to the entrance hall, we enter the other wing. Here the glazed corridor unexpectedly splits around a planted exterior courtyard, creating a very successful moment. Beyond are a study and two more bedrooms in the same palette of white timber battens and resin floors.

The rear garden is reached via sliding doors, down suspended steps from each of the key rooms in the house. It is beautiful with the mature trees and new birches. The entrance hall pod hovers over a water feature that disappears under the house.

While in the garden we discuss the perceived problem of birds flying into the mirror cladding. Smith tells me that in the six months since the completion of the mirrored cladding there have been no incidents of birds flying into it. This matches the experience of my client for our 2013 project Eidolon House, who says: 'I can't think of a single occasion when a bird flew into the mirrored front of the house'.

After our tour of Invisible House, Smith shows me around the Cedar House site opposite, which he is starting to think about redesigning. It is an incredible hillside plot and the project will no doubt become the final part of an exciting trilogy of exemplary contemporary houses.

Overall, Invisible House is an extremely impressive work of architecture. It is radically conceived in plan and followed through with a great rigour and attention to detail. Following the success of Ghost House, this surely also deserves to be a contender for the RIBA House of the Year. ●

HENRY WOIDE (2)

Above The main bedroom. Like the house, the bed appears to float above the ground.

Below Each pod has a glazed opening at the end, framed perfectly on all sides by 330mm mirrored cladding.

Below right Attention to detail continues in the all-white matt bathrooms – the ultimate hygienic space.

Credits
Designer Steve Smith
Architect BPN Architects
Setting out RGI Surveys
Structural engineer Momentum Engineering
Contractor Springworth
Landscaping Rosebank Landscaping
Screw piles Quadrabuild
Kitchen Reflections Studio
Glazing In A Glaze
Mirror facade Thermospan

JAKE BALSTON

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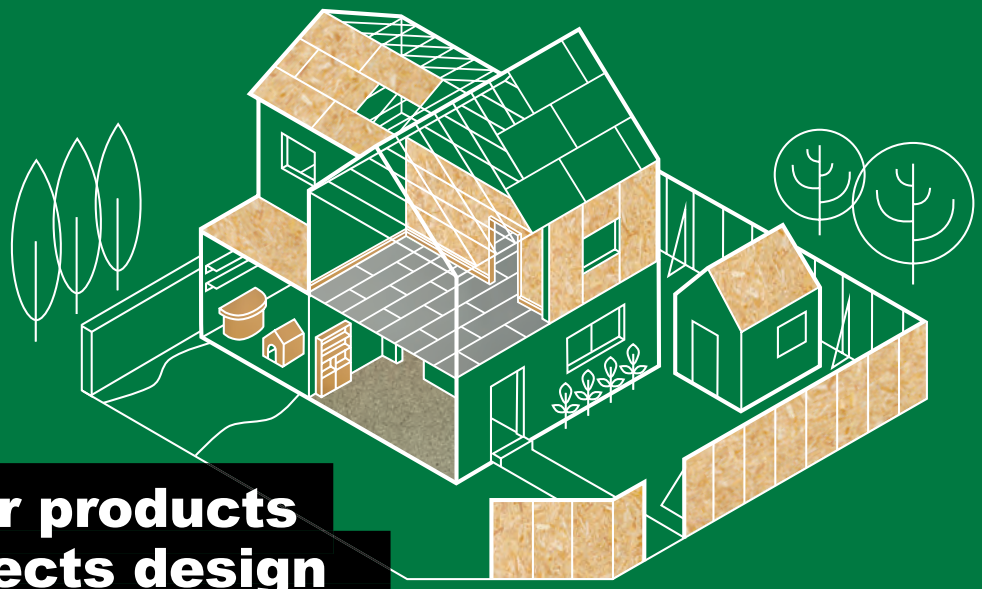

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No messing about by the river

March House on the Thames by Knox Bhavan shows what can be done by working closely and in detail with an interested and receptive client

Words: Michèle Woodger Photographs: Edmund Sumner

'I think the big story about this house,' says Sasha Bhavan – as we sit on a mid-century Danish settee looking out to the Thames at Cookham – 'is that it's all about our client. This house is designed around her and all her beautiful belongings.' Said client is a retired dancer, keen boater, accomplished landscape designer (in evidence here) and appreciator of fine art and film. And when she first commissioned Knox Bhavan (having admired its RIBA National Award-winning house at Crowbrook) she supplied the architect with a catalogue detailing the purchase history of every item of her furniture. Artwork and lighting were equally carefully curated. This is very much a 'shoes off' house.

But an equally big story is that of the client-architect relationship, which is very strong here. 'We learnt a lot from each other,' acknowledges Bhavan. 'She was very exacting, she attended every site meeting, she asked questions, she was interested and willing to understand why certain things should or couldn't be done. And she's a great client because she looks after things so beautifully.'

The one-storey house, which sits on a sizeable plot, is comparatively small (166m² internally). It replaces an ill-performing 1920s house, at imminent risk of flooding, with an elegant, light-footed building that seems to hover – thanks to its system of galvanised steel stilts on concrete piles – in a garden of fruit trees, silver birches and tall, gently rustling grasses.

The building's offsite construction of oriented strand board cassettes was achieved in collaboration with engineer

Flanked by a shed and boathouse, the house sits on the south bank of the Thames.

The client was very exacting, attended every site meeting, asked questions, and was interested

Price & Myers and digital manufacturer BlokBuild. It has already garnered considerable praise for its effective use of modern methods of construction (MMC) and its flood mitigation strategy. During seasons of flood, water passes safely under the house into meadows beyond.

Internally, the plan is 'a little like a tartan quilt', explains Bhavan. The centre is open-plan and cruciform, with the four corners occupied by bedroom suites and kitchen. Along the north-south axis – capped by large glass doors and their terraces – the roof height is

Above Glass doors open onto steps leading down to the river and jetty.

Right Floor plan of the single-storey house. It replaces a two-storey building in which the client had lived for 19 years, establishing a mature garden.

1 Outbuilding
2 Boathouse
3 Entrance steps
4 Kitchen
5 Dining
6 Living room
7 Guest suite
8 Utility
9 Study
10 Fitness room
11 Master bedroom

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raised, creating a contrast of scale and an expanded space. Living and dining areas here are separated by a free-standing wall. The front door is at one end of the east-west axis. 'When you come in, it is slightly tantalising,' says Bhavan. 'We didn't want everything to be revealed at once.' Indeed, one's gaze is drawn to the opposite wall, where a mid-century desk is framed by a window with a fruit tree beyond – a staging that would make the desk-manufacturer weep at its beauty.

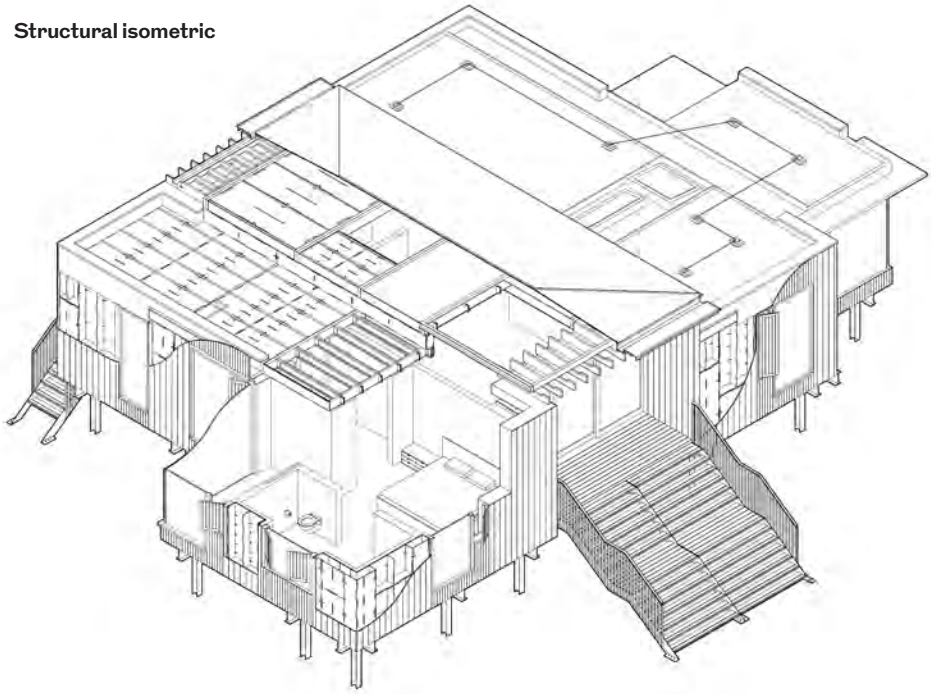
What made Knox Bhavan's project at Crowbrook so successful was its adaptation to the needs of its disabled client. Here, with admirable clear-sightedness, the client has anticipated her own future needs. To the left of the entrance is a sliding partition, leading to a self-contained suite of guest bedroom, anteroom, toilet and shower room. This could accommodate a live-in carer with privacy. A lift could be retrofitted near the porch, if needed. 'I am happy to grow older in this inspiring home', she says, and I can see why.

A circular rooflight illuminates the shower, to somewhat holy effect. The centre of the house is lit by the central rooflight, which is curved on one side for a more diffused light. The projection of raindrops on the curved surface is mesmerising, as is the effect of leaf shadow on the external cladding slats. What the house lacks in frills, it makes up for in quiet moments such as this. 'Part of the thing about making things beautiful is to not overdo it', says Bhavan. 'Don't throw everything at it. Keep it simple.'

That simplicity belies a lot of complexities below the bonnet. Not least was a protracted planning period involving the Environment Agency (resolved in 2018), and Covid delaying construction. Contingency plans were needed in case of flooding, which also risked ruining any materials left on site. Finally, the cassette manufacturer discovered that the access road was too narrow, requiring a re-size.

A book of architectural drawings, gifted from architect to client, demonstrates from the thickness of its spine alone the enormous amount of work that went into creating this house, and says something about Knox Bhavan's conscientiousness. 'It's all detail-detail-detail', says Bhavan. 'Everything has been incredibly well worked out'. She is particularly proud of the electrical drawing: 'Electrics are always really hard to get right but they are all perfect here because we knew exactly what

Structural isometric



'Part of the thing about making things beautiful is to not overdo it', says Bhavan. 'Keep it simple.'

Above The house is constructed from OSB cassettes mounted on a galvanized steel subframe. Cassettes are 290mm deep with 250mm of Rockwool insulation.

Left Stained larch cladding comprises a mix of wide sawn and narrow planed boards.

Credits
Client Private
Architect Knox Bhavan
Design team Sasha Bhavan, Fergus Knox (project architect), Katherine Johnson
Structural engineer Price and Myers
Services engineer Paul Bastick & Company
Quantity surveyor Ian Thompson & Company
Main contractor Philiam Construction
Timber frame subcontractor BlokBuild
Joinery Five Furniture

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Left Living room with river view.

IN NUMBERS

2130m²
site area

166.6m²
GIFA

Below View into study and fitness studio. Raised on slim galvanized steel stilts set on concrete piles, the house is designed in response to predicted flood risk over the next 100 years.

everything was and where it would go', she says. Every item of furniture has been drawn in its correct position; some pieces are even integrated into the fabric, requiring specialist carpentry.

The home's frameless windows do not open, maximising expansive views. However, insulated shutters do, allowing natural ventilation. Concealed mosquito screens – a hazard of riverside living – can be drawn across them. The house is full of such solutions, many of which emerged as the project evolved: greenhouse shutters to avoid a brise soleil, a projector rather than a television, an extra-wide reeded-glass bathroom window (request from client; specification challenge for architect). 'We were wracking our brains for some of these', Bhavan admits.

Despite its difficultly to procure, this reeded glass window now seems an indispensable detail. Although the exterior of the house seems plain, quality materials and finishes compensate for the lack of frippery. The exterior is characterised by a combination of wooden and metallic textures, and again, rather like the tartan quilt, subtly celebrates linear and grid-like patterns.

Banister railings and larch cladding strips echo the vertical corrugations on the adjacent boat house and outbuilding. Around the windows and shutters these larch boards become narrower,

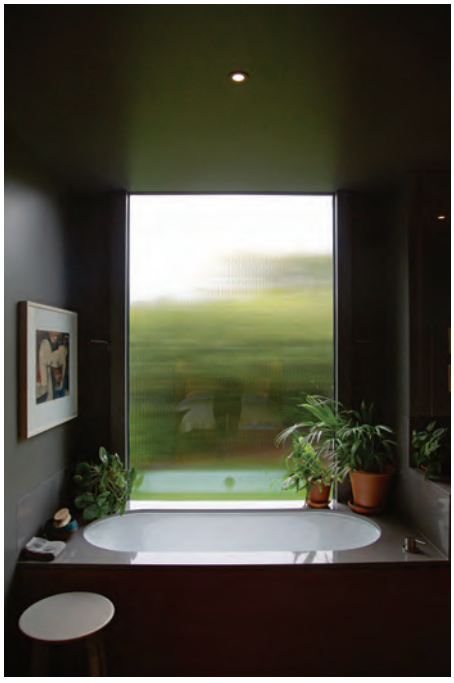
planed rather than sawn, to cope with tolerances more precisely. Horizontal lines on the decking are matched by the open tread staircases leading to the porch and sliding door. The cage structure of the shed – a kind of open greenhouse – contrasts this linearity with its lattice, and somehow even the rodent mesh at the bottom of the boathouse is aesthetically in keeping; along with the stilts, the overall effect is some sort of industrial modernist chic. Catches for the shutters resemble winches for hauling up boats. Old photos of wooden barges and boathouses have provided loose inspiration and context.

The home is energy and resource efficient: 'When the old house was demolished, everything was reused.' Bhavan says. 'The client's children repurposed it in their own self-build projects'. It runs an MVHR system, with a planted roof contributing to insulation. A bog-garden uses water run-off. Existing trees were left in-situ. And thanks to its engineering, the home is protected from a 1 in a 100 year flood, beyond the requirements stipulated by planning. There is one watery eventuality this achingly pristine home could not mitigate for, however: that of its architect spilling a glass of it over the floor, with comedic repercussions. But that is a story for another article.

Above Study niche with eastward view over fruit trees.

Right North-south section.

Below Master bedroom and bathroom with reeded glass window.



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Hoxton fusion

Sam Jacob combines references to high architecture and the local vernacular in a playful hybrid home and community centre in east London

Words: Chris Foges Photographs: Johan Dehlin

Architect Sam Jacob calls his self-built house in east London the 'Hoxton Mule'. It's a gesture to 18th century gardener Thomas Fairchild, whose nursery lay a little further along Ivy Street. There he introduced the pollen of a sweet william to a carnation to create the first deliberate horticultural hybrid, 'Fairchild's mule'. Jacob's house – a bullnosed brick galleon fused with the remnants of a former pub – is also a cross-breed. It co-mingles old and new, and accommodates two distinct uses in one unlikely whole: a play space for preschoolers below with an idiosyncratic, sometimes otherworldly apartment above.

Its bold form and playful character arise from a kind of genetic engineering, splicing together diverse motifs borrowed from the history of architecture, and recombining distinctive features of assorted buildings and spaces that surround the house.

All are typical of London, but collide here to create a place with unusual qualities. The freestanding pub was almost all that was left of a terraced street lost to bombs or regeneration. In the 1980s a little row of beige houses was built next door, running east to Hoxton Street. Over the road, a tall brick-built school stands behind a high wall. To the west are eight-storey slab blocks built in 1960. Set back from the original street line, they left the pub, in its small fenced yard, on a sort of urban promontory.

The crumbling building had been used as a family drop-in centre for decades, but after unsuccessful efforts to raise funds for repair it was put up for sale in 2015. Jacob discovered that the charity would ideally like to remain in

Above the entrance stairs, a porthole window gives access to a projecting concrete plant-holder – one of the elements intended to enliven the facades.

IN NUMBERS

19 months
time on site

223m²
GIFA (family centre)

210m²
GIFA (apartment)

confidential
cost

Section AA

place, and suggested redeveloping the building as a joint venture.

Hammering out the details took a couple of years, but that had advantages. By the time Jacob had to complete the transaction he had secured planning consent – without much difficulty – and even lined up a contractor, although he couldn't actually start on site until 2020.

The essential design came together quickly, he says, with no agonies over competing options. Nevertheless, the process was an opportunity to take stock following the dissolution of his former practice FAT – known for brightly coloured, exuberant buildings influenced by high architecture and low culture. 'This house deals with many of the same concerns – reference, copying and communication in architecture – but handles them in a different way,' he says.

Context was treated as a spur to invention rather than a style guide. 'The aim was to make a distinctive object with a strong, but "embedded" presence', Jacob says. 'Something you wouldn't do anywhere else.' Specifically, the building was shaped by the decision of a traffic engineer to bend the road round the pub when the estate was built. 'Someone's pencil drew a U-shape on the ground', he explains. 'I thought it would be good to manifest that arbitrary act of drawing in a piece of architecture'.

Above Deep recesses in the base contain a back entrance to the Ivy Street Family Centre and its small outside terrace. The interior is being fitted out by Sarah Wigglesworth Architects.

1 54 Ivy Street
2 Arden Estate
3 Primary school
4 Ivy Street Family Centre
5 Entrance hall
6 Living room
7 Mezzanine
8 Bedroom
9 Landing
10 Roof garden

Site plan

A brick wall follows the curvature of the pavement, stepping up as it sweeps round to form a podium – a faint echo of the access decks of the block opposite. Above, the curve repeats as the building rises to four storeys in a series of setbacks determined by neighbours' rights to light. Seen head-on down Ivy Street it looks almost archaic, like a castle or ziggurat. An impression of weight and solidity is enhanced by deep recesses in the base. Small windows increase the apparent scale of plain brick facades with no movement joints. 'The brickwork is non-fancy, like the wall of the school,' says Jacob. 'That means you need a lot of other "incidents" to stop it being boring'.

In part that's achieved through manipulation of form; some 'sticky-out bits' add texture and help offset any suggestion of monumentality. A cylindrical rooftop garden shed makes an eye-catching accent on the street corner, and a curious timber-clad bay bulges from the second floor. Jacob had in mind the paintings of stacked buildings by Joseph Gandy for John Soane, but a more immediate reference was the Georgian terrace backing onto a little carpark behind the house – a Rear Window prospect of ad-hoc infills and extensions.

The geometry of the site is echoed in these add-ons, and also governed the choice of architectural quotations

The building was shaped by a traffic engineer's decision to bend the road round the pub

Left U-shaped cabinet handles continue the geometric theme in the kitchen

Below The study balcony and mezzanine overlook the double-height living room.

Below right View from the kitchen to living room, through the ladder to the study.

Credits
Client Sam Jacob/Ivy Street Family Centre Trust
Architect Sam Jacob Studio
Structural engineer Elliott Wood
M&E consultant Mesh
Quantity surveyor, principal designer Huntley Cartwright
Approved inspector Sweco
Main contractor Uprise Construction

TIMOTHY SOAR

sprinkled throughout the building – a mix of U-shapes, circles and contrasting angular elements taken from the work of architects such as Toyo Ito and John Hejduk. Most obvious is the constellation of diamond-shaped windows that recall Konstantin Melnikov's house in Moscow, built in 1929. 'The references are explicit', says Jacob, 'but the design is also synthetic; it puts them together in quite a tight way within an overall composition'.

Pop culture gets pulled in too. The number 54 worked into the metalwork of the entrance gate is an homage to the 1970s graphics of Studio 54. Much of this building is unashamedly fun, and as we walk around it's clear that Jacob has taken great satisfaction in making something the neighbours will enjoy.

Behind the gate, external stairs curve around the prow to reach the flat – originally intended for Jacob's use but currently rented. It's the beginning of a vertical journey conceived as a Corbusian promenade architecturale.

In the capacious entrance hall sits a freestanding plywood box lined with shelves – a St Jerome-style workspace. Behind, the far wall is lined by alternating panels of plywood and mirror, producing kaleidoscopic reflections. Timber stairs set within a curved enclosure rise to a rooftop pavilion, again U-shaped in plan.

Materially this is about as rich as it gets; the palette is white plaster and black metal, with the odd splash of coloured tile. 'Looking at the building it might sound ridiculous', says Jacob, 'but my aim was to keep it essential. You have to identify the architectural opportunity in every project, and here it was space'.

The heart of the home is an incident-filled living room in the building's prow: double-height with a mezzanine, generously lit from 14 pointy windows. Jutting into it is the balcony of a little study on the floor above, accessible only by ladder – a compact counterpoint to the airy expanse of the main volume. Such enjoyable games abound: the hint of an urban facade here, Soanian niches there. Spaces are generous, with landings large enough to double as habitable rooms.

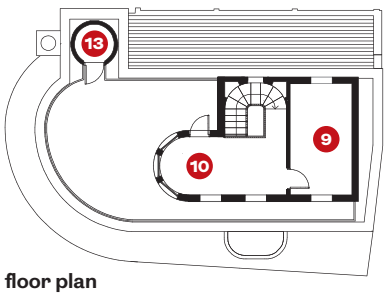
The one on the top floor opens onto a rooftop garden, with views towards Fairchild's long-gone plot, and over all the local features sensitively cross-pollinated in Jacob's mule. Clever, public-spirited and beautifully made, this house fully earns its prominent place in the mix. ●

TIMOTHY SOAR

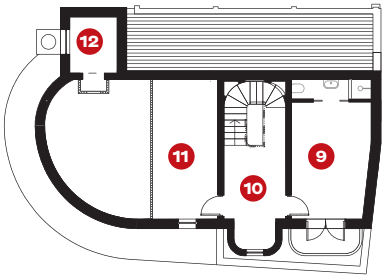
Above The U-shaped stair enclosure emulates the curve of the building's prow.

Below View through timber workspace in the entrance hall, with mirrors beyond reflecting the pointed windows of the living room.

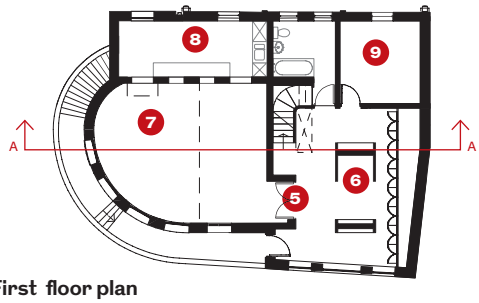
1 ISFC activity room
2 ISFC store
3 ISFC space
4 ISFC office
5 Entrance hall
6 Workspace
7 Living room
8 Kitchen
9 Bedroom
10 Landing
11 Mezzanine
12 Study
13 Shed



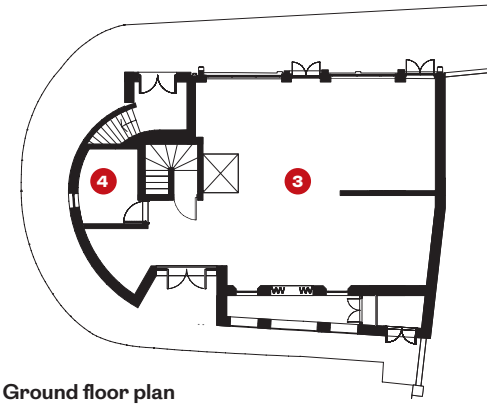
Third floor plan



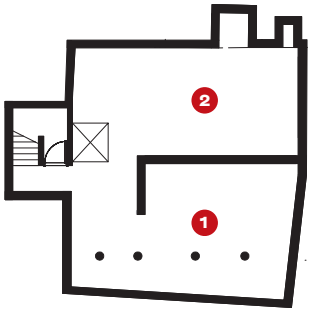
Second floor plan



First floor plan



Ground floor plan



Basement

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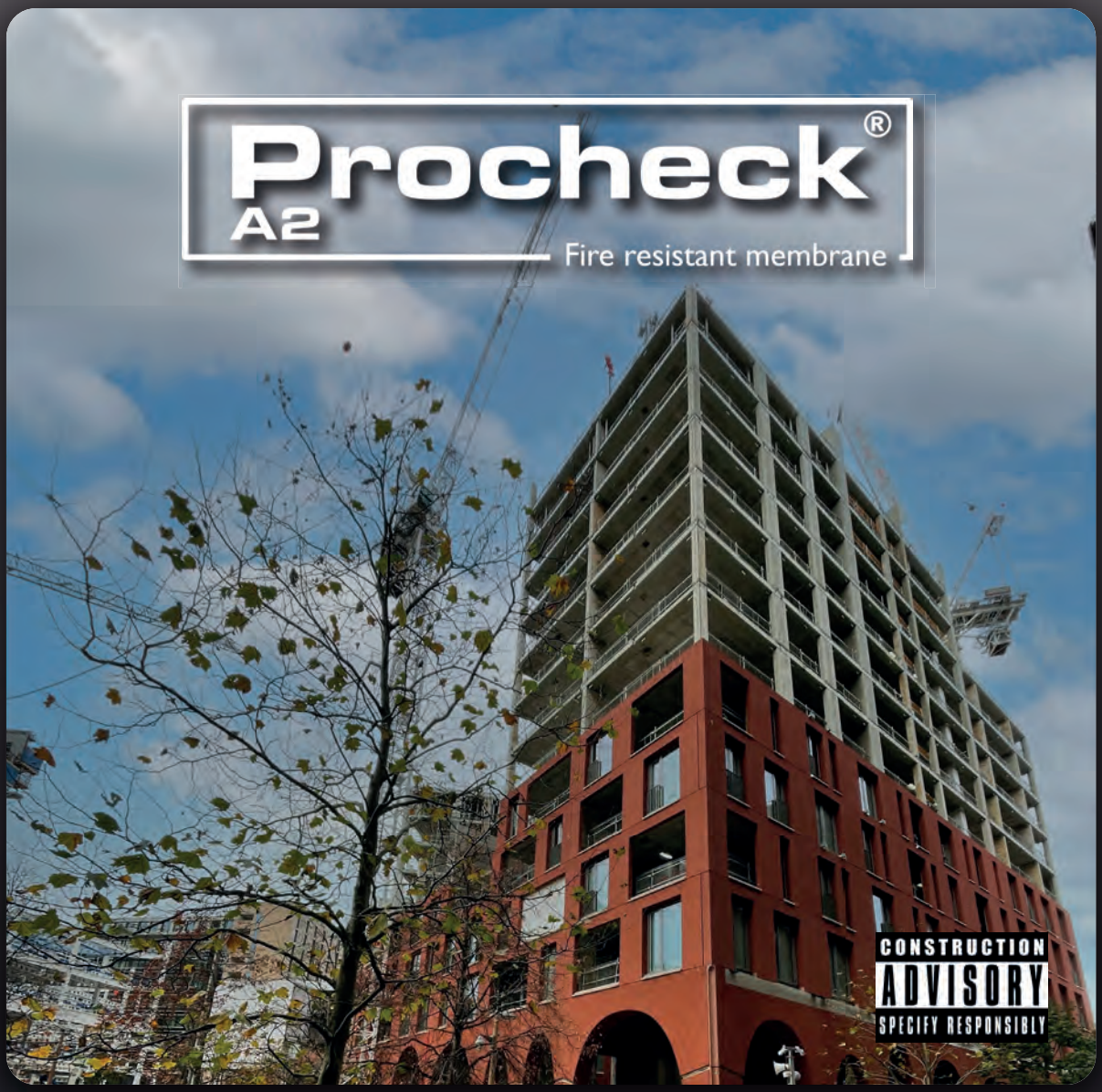

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Cool comfort

Set near a derelict railway line, the house is inspired in part by train carriages.

Low impact, great views and a place to relax: modest ambitions give clients a generous home in Hawkes Architecture's Lake House

Words: Ruth Slavid Photographs: David Norman

Richard Hawkes, founder of Hawkes Architecture, describes Lake House in the High Weald of East Sussex as 'modest' and it is, insofar as one can apply that word to a four-bedroom house with a floor area of 420m². Certainly the aspiration of the clients was not to have a 'statement' house. Instead they wanted somewhere where they could relax and enjoy magnificent views while having as little environmental impact as possible.

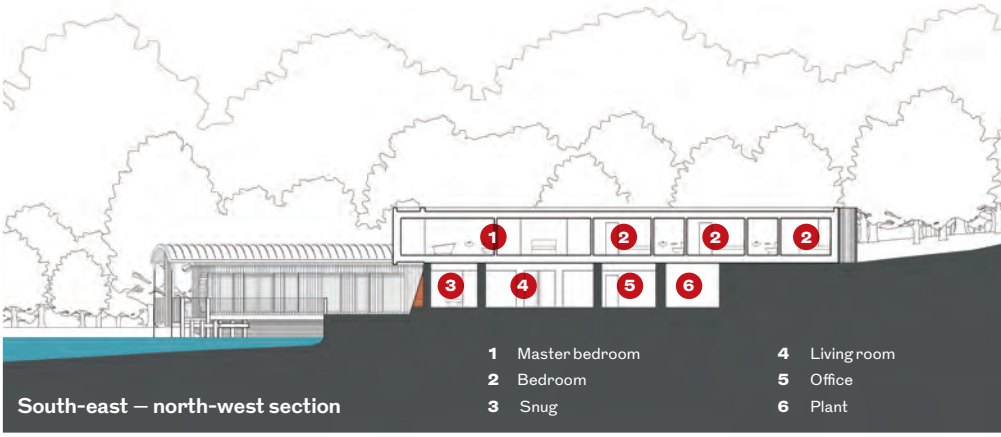
Hawkes has given them this, in a house of two long volumes that slide past each other. One part is single-storey, the other two-storey. Both are buried in a hillside behind, projecting at the front over the eponymous lake. This had been a commercial fishing lake, created by the clients, with just a fishing lodge on it.

Hawkes Architecture has built a reputation for designing 'Paragraph 80' houses. This is the element of national planning policy (previously known as Paragraph 79 and Paragraph 55) that allows the construction of isolated houses in the countryside provided that they are of exceptional quality. Hawkes met the clients when he was involved with a design review of a different scheme for the site. His own design re-positions the building on a different side of the lake, with the front, occupied by the dining room, in the position of the former fishing lodge.

Arriving at the house is magical. You travel down a country lane, with houses set well back, and then turn off on a track that is crossed by a public footpath. Once through the gate, you duck under the arch of an abandoned railway viaduct but still can't see the house. Then the drive sweeps round a curve and there it is, before you, side-on in front of the lake.

This is the single-storey element of the house, which runs as a single space from the hall near the back, through the kitchen to the dining room. A utility room and shelves provide breaks at the start and end of the kitchen. There are two steps down to the dining room, bringing the space, which has windows on two sides, down near the water level. The kitchen and dining room are 4.2m wide, the hall a little wider, allowing the insertion of a window for views of the lake.

In a nod to the railway, this section of the building has a gently arched ceiling, lined with sweet chestnut. The railway references continue on the disused viaduct itself, where the client is building three cabins, all based on the shape of carriages, for overflow guests.



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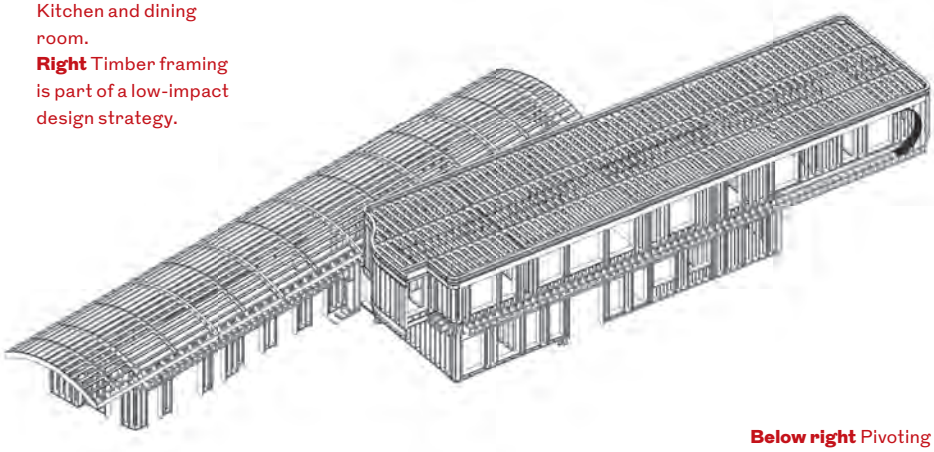
Above and below Kitchen and dining room.
Right Timber framing is part of a low-impact design strategy.



Below right Pivoting entrance door.

There is no missing the front door – a magnificent textured bronze creation, almost as wide as it is high, pivoting around its centre. But at rightangles to it a more modest door leads to a boot room that in turn opens into the hall.

The hall leads to the two-storey element, with a study and sitting rooms on the ground floor. Upstairs, bedrooms and bathrooms are also in a line, culminating at the lake in the master suite which includes a dressing room, bathroom and shower, again protruding over the lake.

The house is timber framed, with its first floor and the single-storey section clad in sweet chestnut. Parts of the cladding have been lightened with a SiOO:X bleach, and others have a dark stain. There are a few curves in the form, in response to the clients' stipulation that they did not want the building to be entirely right-angled. Similarly, there are no fully glazed walls but a series of tall windows that frame views.

The ground floor of the two-storey section is clad in a local handmade red brick, built with lime mortar. Instead of conventional sharp sand, the mortar uses a sand made from crushed glass bottles which is, says Hawkes, cheaper as well as more sustainable. Every now and then you catch a glint of green glass.

The brick is exposed externally and internally, while the house is adorned by canted buttresses inspired by the railway arch. But those on the house are not structural; they are there to provide a visual grounding. The building looked incomplete without them, says Hawkes.

An impressive but concealed array of

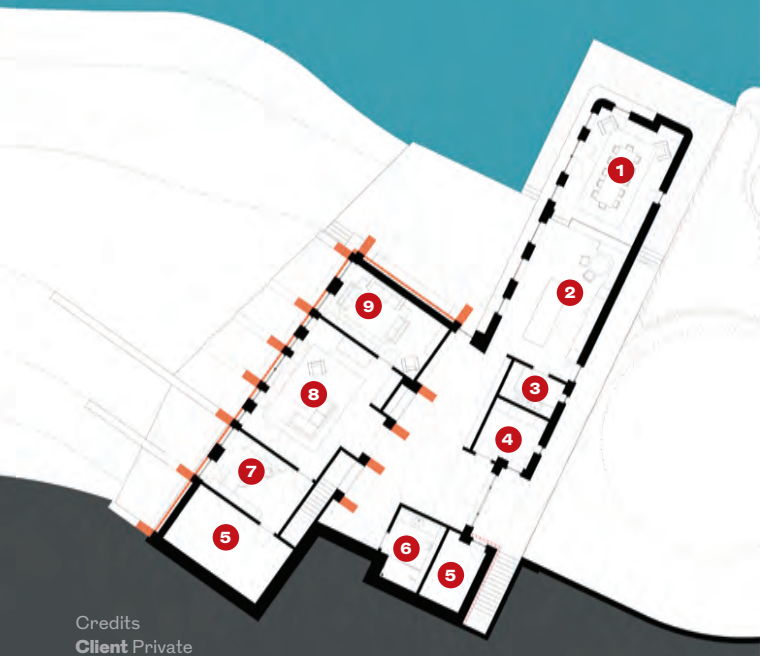
photovoltaic panels on the metal-edged roof has a capacity of 13kW. Hawkes prides himself on the environmental performance of his practice's houses, all of which have an EPC A-rating and are designed to Passivhaus standards, although not put through the certification process. Lake House, which has underfloor heating on the ground floor only, gets most of its heat from a log burner using wood cut and dried on the site. Performance since occupation in August 2021 has been even better than predicted.

It is joy to meet a client who is not only still on excellent terms with their architect but declares they would do nothing differently. This is a generous, comfortable home that makes the very best of its site and its resources. ●

Ruth Slavid is a writer, editor and author of House Goals: Design with architects, transform your home (RIBA Publishing)

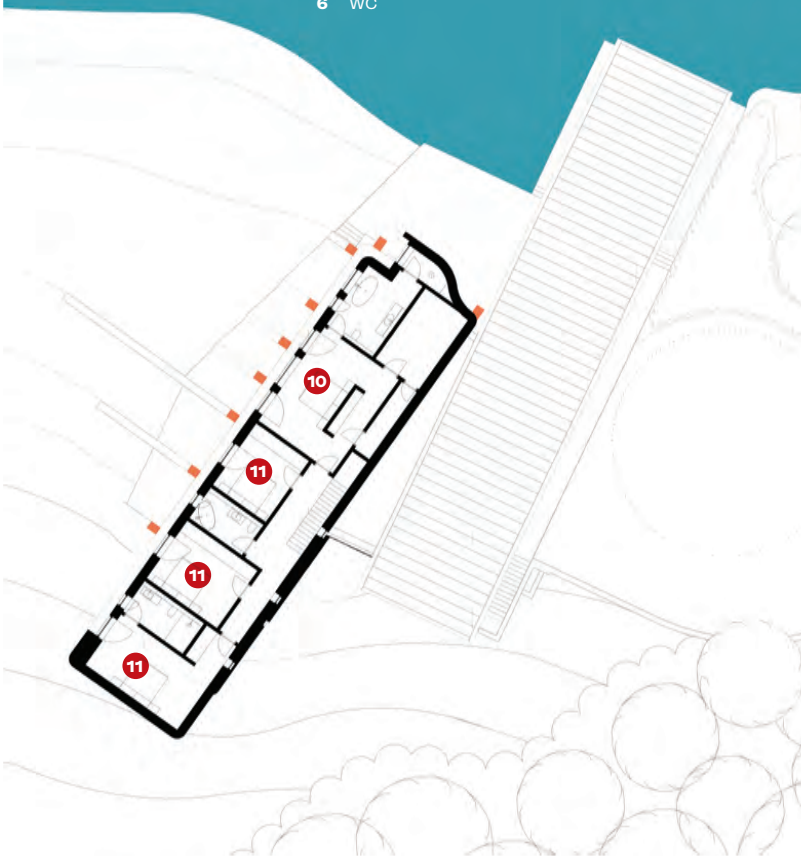
Above The materials palette includes local brick and stained sweet chestnut.

Ground floor plan



First floor plan

1 Dining
2 Kitchen
3 Utility
4 Boot room
5 Plant
6 WC
7 Office
8 Living room
9 Snug
10 Master bedroom
11 Bedroom



Credits
Client Private
Architect Hawkes Architecture
Interior designer Kathryn Levitt Design
Landscape architect Squires Young
Structural engineer Engineers HRW
Consulting engineer Hodel
Main contractor HB Homes
Timber frame designer Cullen Timber Design

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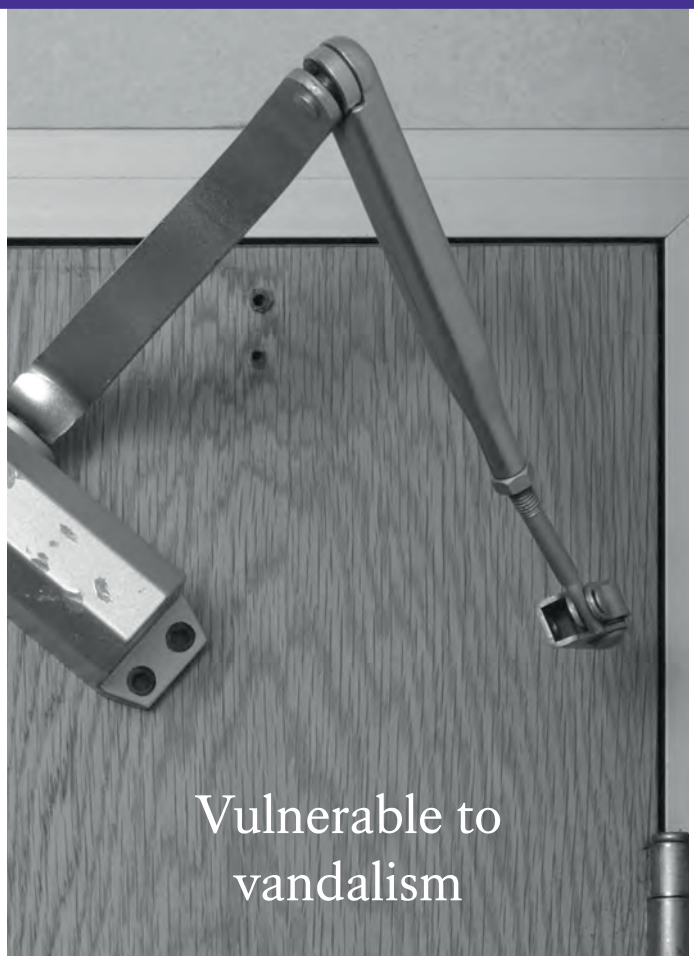

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The central hall, the piece of drama in the house that shows its full height internally and continues the joinery of the kitchen in the stair.

Change of plan

When what was to have been a refurbishment turned into a newbuild, Rural Office for Architecture refined nearby references to make an elegant, natural home

Words: Isabelle Priest Photographs: Jim Stephenson

When Ben and Claire Macland bought a 230m², tired inter-war bungalow on a corner plot in the Great Austin Conservation Area, one mile south of Farnham town centre in Surrey, in 2015, they started with the objective of retaining the existing building. The house was a pebbledash 'Toblerone', as they nicknamed it – four lined up gable-ended segments joined to another pitched volume across the back. They had bought it 'rather recklessly' not knowing what needed to come of it, explains Ben. They had been living in the house and felt that its orientation was well set up. Snapping a few bits off and upgrading its performance should do it. Besides, the couple had renovated properties before but never built from scratch. 'Building a new house, you are quite exposed. We also liked having a starting point as a reference to change this or that,' he adds.

That was how the Maclands first engaged architect Niall Maxwell, who they found by trawling awards lists and magazines. His practice Rural Office for Architecture is Wales-based, and most of the material on its website then were

The half arch window in the living room greets visitors arriving on foot and is a nod to the full arched entrance of the previous house.

Left View from the garden showing the corner kitchen window and cut-out back door area to protect an existing oak tree.

drawings and renders (Caring Wood , RIBA House of the Year 2017, was not finished), but the couple liked its Old Barn project in Norfolk and kept coming back to the firm's work.

As so often happens though, by the time Rural Office had done several feasibility studies, and got a quantity surveyor to cost them, it became evident that to make the existing building high performance they would only be able to save a few walls and it was looking expensive. 'You go through all that work and end up with a still-compromised building in terms of thermal envelope. It didn't make a lot of sense,' says Ben. 'And then there's the VAT situation.' So it was decided to demolish and rebuild. The brief for the new house included that it should be 'contemporary, but not too boxy or modern… aesthetically beautiful and use the materials found in the best houses locally but a bit sharpened up'. It needed some drama too, because 'what's the point otherwise?', although its visual impact should be understated, not impressive.

An architecture practice based in Wales with the word 'rural' in its name and across many of the settings of its work is not perhaps an obvious choice for a built-up area of Surrey where, as Ben points out, 'you need to build big enough because local houses maximise size'.

Looking through the house from the entrance – oak, brick, white walls and glass form the materials palette.

Left Sliding door into the dining space with a view through the glass upper panels of the oak partition to the utility beyond.

Credits
Architect Rural Office for Architecture
Client Ben and Claire Macland
Structural engineer Fold Consulting Engineers
QS Martin Warren Associates
Energy performance assessment Bullocks Consulting
Landscape consultant Transform Landscape Designs
Main contractor Colemans Building Co
Joinery Old Oak Kitchens, and Palmers

IN NUMBERS

285m²
GIFA

1.48 m³/h.m²
airtightness at 50Pa

27.5kWh/m²
annual heating and hot water load

12.6kg CO_2eq/m²
annual CO_2 emissions

However, the site sits at the junction of Swingate Road and Middle Avenue in a small-scale gridded inhomogeneous garden suburb of large superior quality houses that began to be laid out in 1897 and developed gradually. The first house was designed by local architect Harold Falkner in symmetrical Queen Anne revival, with subsequent houses also in more irregular Arts & Crafts styling. Some of the garden suburb ideals have been eroded with a later mix of styles, but the area has a distinctive verdant character with houses mostly set back behind thick laurel hedges. Middle Avenue is bookended by aging brick sentinels, lined additionally with lime trees and traditional style streetlamps. The area fosters the illusion of countryside with a sense of sylvan enclosure and only glimpses of urban and rural distant views.

Ben gave Maxwell his book on

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The steel enamel SUPERPLAN ZERO shower floor combines the strength of steel with the exquisite beauty of glass. Its refined and graceful lines fit perfectly with the overall look of the room.

PHOTOGRAPHER Bryan Adams

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DANCER TATIANA MARTINEZ

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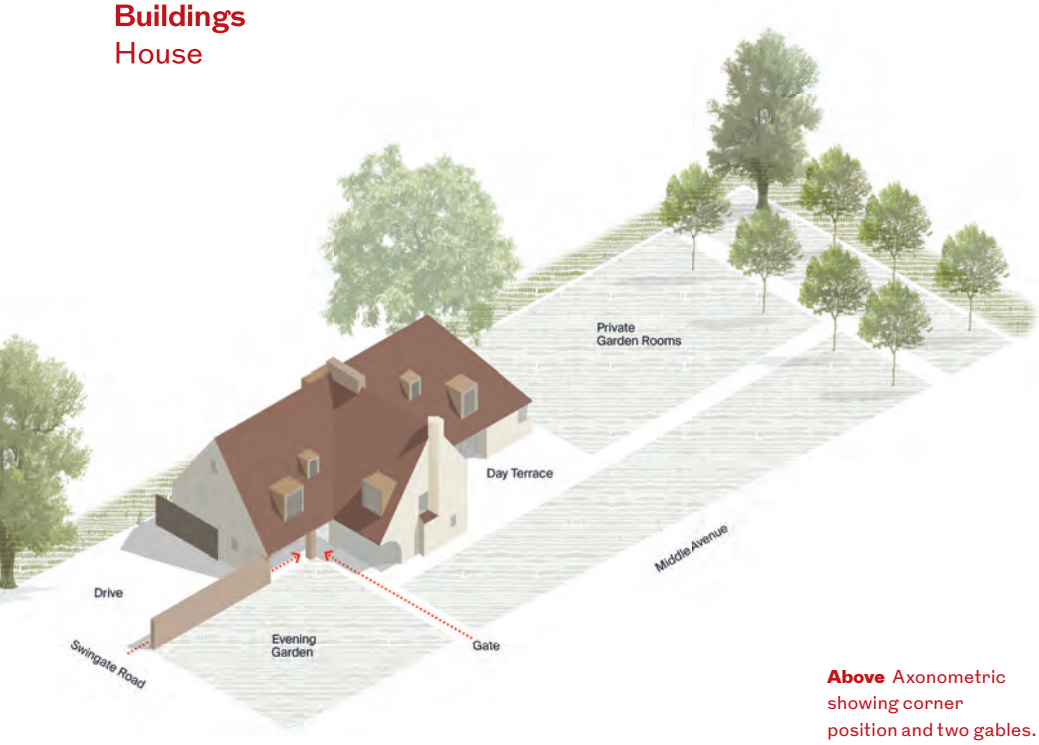


Above Axonometric showing corner position and two gables.

The kitchen, bespoke-made in Wales. Note the weave panelling made from stained oak veneer strips on the island.

Falkner, which Rural Office went away and absorbed, opting for Falkner's Arts & Crafts approach with its focus on vernacular, natural materials and craftsmanship, which chimed well with the practice's work so far – sliding internal barn doors, open shelf kitchens, handmade clay tile roofs and asymmetry.

The main feature of the new house is how it merges with its existing environment. Coming down the street from the station, the house creeps up on you. The laurel bushes encircling the plot make the project all about the 4m-high roof – it's all you can see. Covered in handmade red clay Keymer tiles, the building forms a natural sequence with the others in the conservation area. You need to double-take to realise it is new and slightly out of the ordinary. The pitch is steeper and taller; its dormers are at more jaunty positions (low for bedrooms, high for bathrooms), and made from patinated zinc with more elegant and slender proportions. These give a contemporary aesthetic, enabled by black painted perimeter frameless windows. The two chimneys are lower, rendered like the walls and capped with powder coated lids to match the zinc.

The house also retains the architectural focus on gables, although simplified from the former series of Toblerone pieces to two set out around a shallow T-shaped plan. One addresses Middle Avenue, the other Swingate Road.

Below House as seen from Swingate Road with expanded parking gate.

This helps create garden areas with different relationships to the sun through the day. The entrance is in a deepened soffit of one wing of the plan at the crux between the two gable ends, making it accessible by foot from Middle Avenue and by car from Swingate Road. At the same time, the roof shape and building's footprint contort around existing assets, including a corner nibbled off the rear towards the lawn to protect a mature oak tree, which has been adopted as a back exit. These touches make the house a bit more idiosyncratic and tailored to its site.

The interior, on the other hand, is a series of contingent spaces that mould within this complex roof. The compression from the entranceway externally continues inside briefly, with the garage and WC leading off to the left, and a half length oak partition wall offering privacy to the living room to the right. Then the compression releases into a full building height hall that is more medieval in its usage with the chimney landing on one side and a fireplace opening into the room. There's a single armchair on a rug in front of it, a long rectangular dining table beyond, with the kitchen at the far end. The space is like a great hall in nature, which has Arts & Crafts notions. The crafted-ness of the interior extends to every detail. A mix of ornamentation in the bespoke beading and woven design elements of the oak kitchen cabinets runs through the oak partitions of the living and utility rooms. The craft is also there in the design of the staircase, alongside minimalism in the furniture choices, often Scandinavian origin, of the client – a Børge Mogensen table and Hans Wegner chairs. Natural materials are everywhere, including the brick pavers on the floor and chimney.

Top Upstairs landing showing darker Valchromat datum.

Above The master bathroom. Each bathroom has different coloured, square matt tiles.

Upstairs, bedrooms are tucked into the 4m-tall roofspaces. The master suite comprises the bedroom and bathroom coming off the dressing room. The bedroom has an almost ecclesiastical quality with a rooflight high in the pitch of the roof. Meanwhile the two adult children's bedrooms each have their own bathroom. Everywhere on this level there is a Valchromat datum that draws the focus down from the enormous spaciousness above to provide a cosiness. Within the very top of the roofspace in the Swingate Road gable is an office, where Ben and Claire can work.

In all, the house is amazingly fastidious. The bolder moves are considerate to the setting, placing the house in a garden also designed by Rural Office. Every detail has been thought through, carefully drawn and constructed. The house provides a manifesto in how to live this increasingly common contemporary lifestyle that holds dear craft and design using natural materials, and often extends to clothing, food and art. A certain monastic, ascetic quality underpins it all. The house has been chosen by Waverley Council as an exemplar for how to build in this conservation area. As the clients desired, Farnham House is understated, but also impressive and successful. And for the practice the project adds a weightiness provided by historical references to the rural work it was already doing. ●

1 Covered entrance
2 Hallway
3 Main living area with central hall
4 Living room
5 Kitchen
6 Utility
7 Plant room
8 Bedroom
9 Bathroom
10 Garage
11 Rear exit

Ground floor plan

12 Master bedroom
13 Dressing room
14 Stairway to second floor home office
15 Void

First floor plan

Rugged and stylish: York Handmade bricks bring back Regency style

York Handmade bricks help revive the Regency period in northern England, presenting a robust and substantial presence that will endure for generations

This stunning, new Regency-style house has blended in effortlessly into the northern countryside in which it is situated. The stylish look, authenticity and rugged texture were ideal for this property. The house is a real labour of love, and the owner is delighted with it. As a local company to the area in which it is built, we are especially proud to be associated with this scheme. The architect commented: 'This is a magnificent building of which we are very proud.' There is no doubt that it will stand the test of time and that in 50 to 100 years time, people will be impressed by its quality and elegance. The whole construction team, including York Handmade, have done a wonderful job.

The architect involved has used York Handmade on several occasions, which is testimony to the quality and originality of our product. There were a number of subtle and detailed brickwork aspects to the corners of the building, which blend in well with the style. The appearance and quality of our bricks have played a significant part in its success. The whole scheme vindicates and further establishes York Handmade as a premier supplier for this type of dwelling anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Above left This magnificent period house truly enhances the Cheshire countryside in which it is situated.

Above right and below These pictures illustrate the high quality brickwork which adds to the classic nature of the project.

YORK Handmade

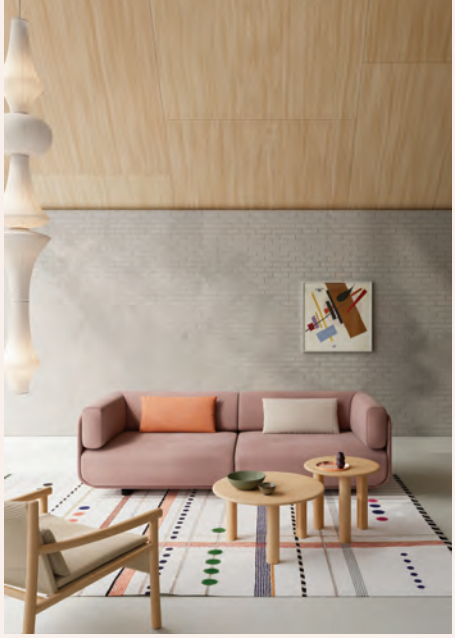
Genesis of a sofa for all seasons

Arper's Meet the Designers was a showroom conversation between designer Jonathan Levien of Doshi Levien and Arper's head of product & design Nicolò Fanzago, moderated by journalist Bethan Ryder. The discussion ranged over the inspirations, design process and sustainable features of the new Shaal sofa collection, and the importance of collaboration between product design and manufacturing to translate a design idea into a product

arper

Below Shaal sofa by Doshi Levien for Arper.

ARPER



BR Arper has been rethinking physical spaces and relationships with its concept of 'The Project of Living'. This looks at how the boundaries between home and work are gone, at how everything we do is in flux, hybrid, fluid. What is interesting about this sofa, Shaal, is how it was born from an urge to address our increasingly hybrid lifestyles. Doshi Levien (DL) was formed in 2000 with a design ethos of creating a hybrid of cultures, technologies and spaces.

Shaal is the Hindi word for Shawl, which encapsulates DL's design intentions. Initially the firm was considering a basket that held the softer seating elements, but Shaal has a more rigid leather-clad plywood enveloping the softer cushions. Jonathan, you have talked about the magical moment when you saw how to make this a light piece that lifts off the floor.

JL I think we all knew we had to create something with a contrast. Shaal is an upholstered sofa that needs to be soft and comfortable, especially when it's a residential piece crossing over with work environments. At the same time we felt it needed a framework as well, a clean defined line which is something you associate with Arper. We were very keen to get that quality into the piece, that's why we decided to have that wraparound of a hard defined surface enclosing these soft cushions. The penny drop moment was developing a lightness and elegance to this piece. There came a point where I darted the wraparound surface at the base and then folded in the lower edges of the form, and that created that very interesting kind of chamfer and lifted the piece from the floor. That's when I realized we had something really special. That's what I live for, it's that moment.

BR Why do you define Shaal as a hybrid product?

NF It's for its softness, its ergonomics, its clean precise light lines as described by Jonathan. This is the magic of this product, when you see the back of its wraparound panel it has a very precise and elegant feel, but when you see the front it shows its comfort and softness.

It changes completely depending on the perspective, but always in a very harmonious way. I think this duality makes it extremely special and suitable for every environment.

BR Most interesting is how the sustainability brief, to design for disassembly, influenced the aesthetics and production of Shaal. Was it a big challenge, to think of disassembly and other sustainable aspects?

JL It was very clear in the brief from Arper from the outset that sustainability was the top priority. I think of it not as a problem but an opportunity for us because when you have a clear, definitive aim of the project you don't think of it as a limitation and I thrive in those conditions. Essentially, we achieved a piece that can be disassembled, which ruled out many methods of production and in a way limited us to this idea of creating a composition of components that come together and can also be taken apart. So that also fed the idea of having a separate wraparound panel, with the cushions zipped into place on the inside. They're integrated in the design, but are separate pieces that come together.

The challenge was how to create a unified aesthetic for separable pieces, so it doesn't look like it can be disassembled. How to create something that has harmony and simplicity, but at the same time could be taken apart at the end of its useful life and the pieces all redeveloped or recycled.

BR Arper has had an environmental department since 2005. What is Arper's approach; is sustainability something that your clients are asking about?

NF Customers are increasingly interested in knowing about sustainable aspects and learning the real story behind products – that needs to be coherent and genuine. Sustainability is an overarching approach for Arper, and of course this applies to products as well. We are very careful in the choice of materials, using recycled, sustainable materials whenever possible. We avoid the use of glues as much as possible, and do our best to create items that can be disassembled and use replaceable components, in order to extend the product's life. ●

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2: Intelligence

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING AN ARCHITECT AND DEVELOPER
TOM LEAHY, CO-DIRECTOR, PARTI

As a practice, Parti has always tried to create its own opportunities, and have broader involvement in projects than is customary. At the Royal College of Art, my Parti co-director Eleanor Hill and I were surrounded by people in creative disciplines for whom self-initiated work is the norm. Questioning our industry was encouraged: do architects have enough control and reward, financial and creative? In some projects we've taken equity stakes in lieu of profit, with mixed results.

Our boldest venture is ARC, an architecturally-focussed hospitality business, which launched last spring. We have holiday homes in the Cotswolds and Cornwall, with more in development. We had worked for five star hotels and learned of the challenges in that business model. After researching UK tourism and identifying an opportunity in event-related travel, we developed a model for houses that accommodate large groups, offering better value and renting year-round.

To protect the practice from risk ARC is a separate company that employs Parti for design work. And as workloads are choppy, we can divert time to ARC when things are quiet. Architectural training is hugely valuable in hospitality, helping us to think about maximising all aspects of the experience, as well as operational efficiency.

Managing ARC houses doesn't take a lot – we use agents – but development is very time-consuming. Eleanor concentrates on the practice while I lead ARC; close collaboration means projects move quickly. I still see myself as an architect though; much of my work is design review and site meetings. Creative freedom is a benefit, but I wouldn't suggest all architects do this. Not everyone wants to deal with spreadsheets and borrowing, but it works for us.

'As workloads are choppy, we can divert time to ARC when things are quiet. Architectural training is hugely valuable in maximising all aspects of the experience'

Parti's London studio. The practice was established in 2015 and current projects include a Thameside restaurant and a mixed-use building in Islington.

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

The fight for a home of one's own

Faced with unwelcoming chauvinism when seeking homes in the 1950s, some Commonwealth arrivals turned to community self-build. Their experiences have lessons for today, says Shukri Sultan

Inclusive environments

Places, planning & community

Now-notorious 'No Coloureds' signs greeted the thousands of Caribbean, African and Asian Commonwealth citizens seeking accommodation in 1950s Britain. Those that tried their luck renting one of the newly built council homes found themselves barred by the informal racism at play in the allocation – some didn't become eligible until the late 1960s. Even then, many local authorities judged them by their housekeeping standards rather than housing need and allocated them lower quality homes until the late 1970s – leaving them to the mercy of racketeering landlords such as the infamous Peter Rachman.

Local authorities continued to implement discriminatory policies. Municipal Dreams, John Boughton's first book on council housing, tells how Tower Hamlet Council's policy of giving priority to sons and daughters was shown to have disproportionately negatively affected Bengali residents. Meanwhile, in 1988 Camden and Hammersmith councils refused to house homeless migrants on the grounds that by leaving their home country they had intentionally made themselves homeless. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's 2021 study What's causing

Right Staggered timber framed houses of Nubia Way.

structural racism in housing? documents how Britain's Britain's housing allocation system has been rigged against its non-white citizens. However, far from being passive victims of racism and squalor and a hostile climate, some of these communities went on to build their own homes in a number of different ways. One notable example was Fusions Jameen, the black-led self-build co-operative.

Fusions Jameen built three clusters of homes during the 1990s in the Grove Park area of Lewisham. The first, Fusions 1, was an early adopter of the housing association Chisel's 'Self Build For Rent' model, which gave self-builders reduced rent in exchange for their time and labour. Built across a split site in Brockley Park and Lowther Hill, with the assistance of architect Martin Hughes, it used the modular timber frame system pioneered by Walter Segal.

The same model was used at a larger scale at Nubia Way to build 13 homes on a narrow site on the 1920s cottage estate, Downham. Completed in 1997 with the help of Colombian architect José Ospina, Nubia Way has only recently regained public attention despite its remarkable story. This is due to the Architecture Foundation film, Nubia Way, directed by Timi Akindele-Ajani and produced by Rosine Gibbins-Stevenson and James Thormod. Thormod, a part 2 architect and self-build enthusiast, explains why he made the film: 'I was keen to understand why so little history was recorded about this project, which was so remarkable for what it managed to achieve despite the adversity the group had faced.'

The first challenge to confront the self-builders was the area itself. Lewisham in the 1990s was in a dire state, with high rates of unemployment, and widespread support for the National Front which meant that some locals didn't respond favourably to the Nubia Way project. 'Rumours were spread that we were African refugees who had come to take local people's housing', explains Tim Oshodi, an original self-builder, resident and chair of Fusions Jameen. This displeasure manifested itself in a racist arson attack, with one of the

ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION

LORRAINE CAMEROON

Top Film still from the Nubia Way Documentary showing the aftermath of the racist arson attack. **Above** Self-builder painting the timber frames. **Below** Nubia Way under construction.

ANITA WAITHIRA ISRAEL (2)

houses being destroyed along with half of the two neighbouring houses. The completion of the project is a testament to the resilience and fortitude of the self-builders. Although the area has improved enormously, residents still occasionally get harassed, with dog muck poured onto their doorsteps.

Another difficulty was managing the group. 'The biggest challenge with group self-build is the group dynamic,' explains Oshodi. 'We need individuals determined to build not only their own house but all 13.' Initially, there was very little support for conflict management which, combined with arsonist attacks, resulted in group numbers fluctuating. Lorraine Cameron, who was doing her A Levels when she took part in the building project, says: 'I enjoyed the building process but sometimes, in the depth of winter, when it gets dark at 3pm, you can lack motivation. Group meetings were held to galvanise and encourage others.'

The success of Nubia Way goes beyond the completion of these well-loved homes and should be viewed in the context of how the self-build model helped people to benefit the wider community. 'Community self-build shows how you can regenerate an area in a way that empowers local people,' says Oshodi. This can be seen best in Fusions Jameen's third scheme, Chinbrook Meadows, where it partnered with Lewisham College and trained 82 NVQ students. 'Because of the relatively slower pace of self-build

Above Portrait of Tim Oshodi.
Below right Children cycling down Nubia Way.

projects, the NVQ students could work, learn and build up their speed while being supervised, something which would not be possible on a conventional commercial site,' he explains. Here the role of architects is not only to design but to teach. 'With self-build an interdisciplinary approach is needed for effective project management,' he continues. 'Therefore the architect's role is to help not only with the building design, but with procurement, cost control and training of the self-build group in construction and budgeting.'

Oshodi, who is also a community-led regeneration consultant, is continuing this legacy – currently on a number of projects in Lewisham. One of these is looking at how to improve health through nature. 'There are 360 acres of green space which are not fully utilised, so we are working with Lewisham Council to develop a Park Trust that can secure money to deliver healthy living centres,' he reports. These centres will be designed to promote a healthy lifestyle in partnership with local GPs.

Community self-build shows how you can regenerate an area in a way that empowers the local community

Oshodi refers to the 2010 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' Marmot Review, which examined health inequalities in England and found that including communities and individuals in design interventions could to improve the effectiveness of regeneration projects.

New battles ahead

Residents of Nubia Way are now faced with another challenge. The housing association Chisel, which owns the homes, is trying to standardise rents across this and its other properties. The self-builders believe this contravenes the original agreement. In the film José Ospina, former director of Chisel Neighbourhood Community Housing Association, says: 'I have no doubt about what the original agreements were – that the share would be in perpetuity with self-builder. That's the agreement that was made with them.' Dr Glyn Robbins, an academic who has worked in housing since the 1990s and managed the Quaker Court Estate in Camden for more than 10 years, says that housing associations 'have essentially become private businesses, which they were always intended to be. There are a few exceptions, but broadly speaking, they are just private developers – especially the big ones.'

But perhaps private developer isn't an accurate enough term. Watching the videos shared by social housing activist Kwajo Tweneboa, it is hard to see much difference between the cockroach-infested flats flooded with human waste that he campaigns to improve, and the units Rachman rented out.

There is a section of society that is particularly affected by this. In spite of what the last year's Sewell report says, racial discrimination continues to reverberate across Britain and is experienced most acutely in housing. It is not long ago that buy-to-let mogul Fergus Wilson stated that he wouldn't rent to Asians because of the 'curry smell'. Not only is racism an issue in accessing accommodation but quality is also a problem. A 2021 JRF report found that a disproportionate number of BME households are living in damp, overcrowded homes that are below the government standard. This inequality was brought to the fore by the Covid-19 pandemic, where high death rates within the BME community were directly affected by housing conditions.

Robbins, who is working with Sheffield University on a report that examines how government policy today responds to racism in the housing sector, describes the action, or rather inaction, of the government as 'crime through omission'. He has identified regional differences but is convinced that the government continues to turn a blind eye in England. However, as he reminds us: 'Nothing is ever granted to the working class, they have to be campaigned for and won.' Nubia Way is proof that change comes not only from policies but through grassroots organising. ●

ANITA WAITHIRA ISRAEL (2)

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How mobile technology can help architects become more productive

Streamlined working courtesy of smart apps on your phone or tablet could tranform your busy professional life. Deltek demonstrates how to make virtual reality real

A large part of many architects' work does not happen at their desk. It happens on project sites, on the road and in meetings with clients and contractors. So if their productivity dips away from the office, inefficiency stacks up quickly.

And that is exactly where mobile technology and apps for architects can help. Your phone can take the pain out of field reports and allow you to view 3D models, share work with clients, make professional sketches, and more.

Gradually, more and more architects are harnessing the power of today's technology to save time, work more productively and impress clients.

Let's look at some examples.

Managing documents

Google Drive, Dropbox, Box, and the like are pretty mainstream, right?

Yet quite a few architects still print out their designs before site visits, or struggle to get access to the right version on-site.

With tools like Sharepoint, ArchiSnapper, those mentioned above and many others, your documents and files are always at your fingertips, whenever and wherever.

GRAPHISOFT

CAD & 3D models

Many industry-standard CAD and 3D modelling solutions offer mobile apps that make it easy to take designs with you.

For example, BIMx is a mobile app extension for Archicad that helps architects review drawings and designs with clients – bridging the gap between design studio and construction site.

With apps like these, you can view, zoom into and query your plans, drawings or models – all without ever needing to print them and carry stacks of drawings to the site.

Apps like ARki helps architects to visualise and experience 3D projects in Augmented Reality.

Virtual Reality software like Enscape provides a full 360 view – so you and your client can get a feeling for space and design and perceive the actual scale of a project. Since everyone gets to experience a model in a life-like simulation, it's easier to discuss details that may be less easy to see and comprehend in another format.

ARKI

Above ARki – Visualization of 3D projects in Augmented Reality.
Below left BIM presentations and on-site design review on mobile devices.
Below Enscape – Virtual Reality software.

ENSCAPE

Deltek + ArchiSnapper

Site inspections, field reports and punch lists

Creating field reports is another time-consuming activity for architects.

First there's writing notes on paper, annotating printed floor plans and taking photos during the site visit. Then back at the office you must transfer the photos to the PC with a cable, decipher and type up the handwritten notes, struggle with the layout in Word and so on.

With ArchiSnapper, you can draft reports while on site with your smartphone or tablet. Documenting all the necessary data then – text, photos, floor plan annotations, and so on – means a professional and branded field report is basically ready when you leave the site.

Or perhaps you want to be able to draft a rough plan during a site inspection. With augmented reality apps like CamToPlan you can use your phone camera to take measurements and generate floor plans instantly.

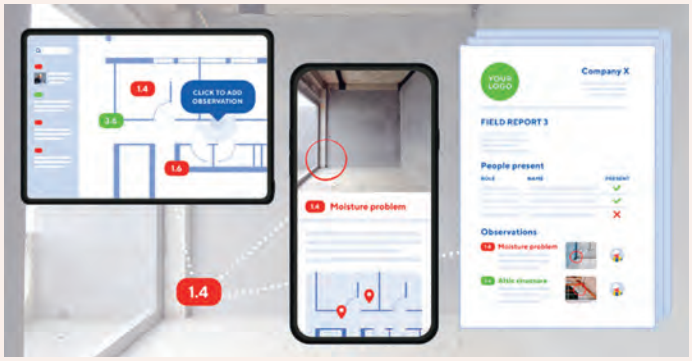
If you're using the latest generation iPhones and iPads you will also have access to LiDAR technology, which makes scanning and measuring faster and even more accurate. Polycam, for example, is an app that takes just seconds to generate an accurate 3D scan that you can import in your CAD software.

And did you know that many architects already use speech-to-text features to 'write' text hands-free? Just think about it. This could transform your snag list meetings and other occasions where you need to take notes quickly.

Sketching and ideation

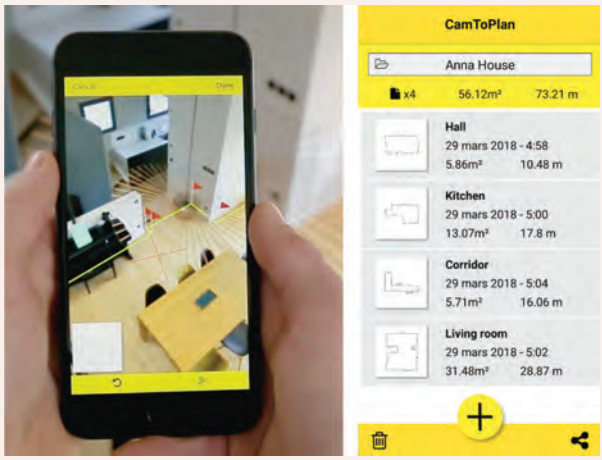
Sketching apps like Morpholio Trace, Procreate or Concepts are extremely flexible, accurate, and responsive, enabling faster, more natural design for architects.

Morpholio Trace is the perfect sketching app. Used with an iPad or iPad Pro and Apple Pencil, it allows you to draw to scale instantly on top of PDF drawing sets, maps, 3D models, images, or background grids.



ARCHISNAPPER

OSHUA GREGG/@CG



TASMANIC

Above left ArchiSnapper – app for site inspections and field reports for architects.
Above right Morpholio Trace Pro Drawing Tool.
Left CamToPlan-App for measuring and creating floor plans with your mobile device's camera.
Below Polycam – A LiDAR based 3D scanning app.

And many, many more

And there are many other places where your mobile device, equipped with the right software, can help you work better – like time tracking, expense management, to do lists and so on.

Now, take your calendar, and block some time to try out some apps and give your productivity a boost. ●

POLYCAM

Any questions? Contact Jeroendepaepe@deltek.com or visit our website www.archisnapper.com/en

Want to learn more about this topic after reading this blog post? Check out our white paper on How Architects can Leverage Mobile Tech to Save Time

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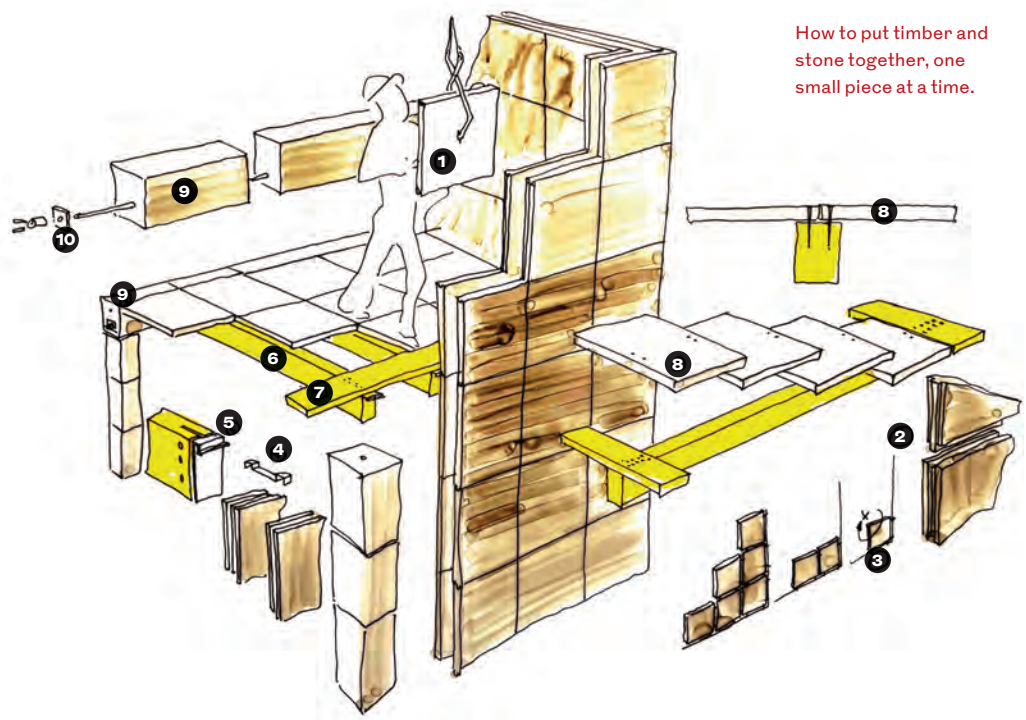
Adapt to survive

Combine timber and stone and you have a low carbon composite building fitted to the UK's natural resources, writes Steve Webb



How to put timber and stone together, one small piece at a time.

STEVE WEBB

Sustainable architecture

Design, construction & technology

Never before has so much energy been used in all areas of life – and certainly in building. A very specific energy blip over the last 200 years, created by the availability of fossil fuels, has allowed us to produce building materials that are used the world over. The problem is that these materials – concrete, steel, aluminium and brick – are very energy hungry and difficult to decarbonise.

On a recent trip to Mallorca I met Carles Oliver Barcelo, who works for local government housing programme IBAVI. Here, 1000 social housing units are being built entirely from local Mares stone, with concrete and steel slowly been banished from the wider building programme.

As well as citing climate change, Barcelo believes localism is important in architecture: 'Just as the world has 7000 languages, there should be 7000 architectural styles reflecting local conditions and history,' he says. In Mallorca this readily available sandstone underlies the entire island, and producing massive stone buildings makes a lot of sense. Architects like Giles Perraudin, continuing in the vein of Fernand Pouillon, use massive, uninsulated stone as well, which reflects the climate and material availability. This is mirrored in northern European countries rich in forests with widespread adoption of massive timber like CLT.

On the flipside, a recent Guardian article questioned the validity of London's local style, which is increasingly composed of concrete frames with brick skins. This isn't new at all! We are baking in style based on historical nostalgia and public perceptions of durability that is extremely damaging to the environment.

If we adopted Barcelo's philosophy, how could we build in Britain? We need to use low energy materials, so timber and stone are the obvious choices. We need to address fire concerns and overheating, durability and public satisfaction. We do not have stone available in sizes and volumes to follow the Mallorca model; nor do we have enough timber to adopt the massive timber model. Massive timber also doesn't help with overheating or durability and has come under considerable pressure from Grenfell-initiated fire concerns. Massive stone does not work in our environment because we need to insulate.

Perhaps there is a way of combining our smaller pieces of timber and stone to form buildings that address these concerns. As an alternative to CLT, the concept of composite timber and concrete has been explored on a number of European projects. Could the concrete – or bricks – be switched for stone?

A building with stone walls formed of 900 square 50mm tiles (1) interlocked with a tongue in groove joint (2) forming a kinetically locked wall structure (3) shows how the corner tile is fixed by the return and the floor, and how subsequent tiles take support from the first to form a reciprocating grid. This is much stronger, lighter and thinner than brickwork and requires no movement joints, wind posts or shelf angles, and is fast to build using small lifting jibs. The walls are held together with wall ties (4) and support the composite timber floor on joist hangers (5). The timber joists (6) can span 5m-7m and support a timber shear block (7) that puts compression into the floor tiles (8) when the beam bends. When a longer span is needed, stone blocks can be post tensioned into beams and columns (9). Low carbon, light, durable and flexible, the structure can be exposed internally and externally and would have enough thermal mass to avoid overheating – and would have good fire performance, not adding too much fuel. ●

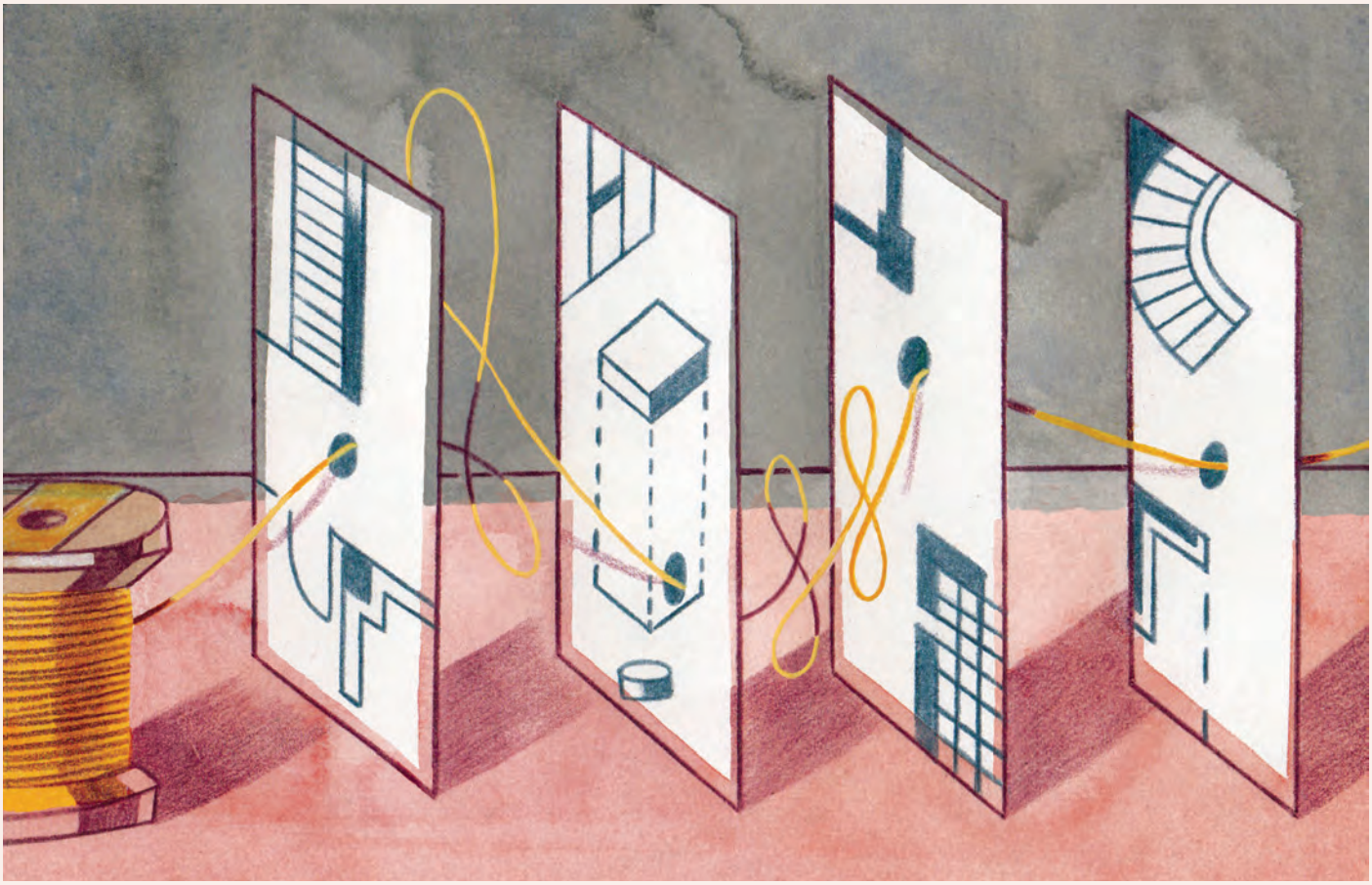
Steve Webb is co-founder of Webb Yates Engineers

Harness BIM for a complete safety package

Now that the post-Grenfell safety regime has got under way, architects have new power – and responsibility. Getting to grips with some levels of detail will be unfamiliar, but Hilti has BIM services to ensure designs comply fully and efficiently with the overhauled regulations

It's happening. The implementation phase of the Building Safety Act has begun, and the full extent of duties and responsibilities associated with high-rise residential buildings, hospitals and care homes is becoming clearer. The first gateway – requiring planning to take fire safety matters into account – is in force and the remaining two are on the way, along with their accompanying digital Golden Thread of project information.

For companies at the sharp end of fire safety, like manufacturer Hilti, some of the concerns for architects around the new regime are all too apparent. As principal designers, architects will gain new power, but with that comes increased accountability in areas like firestopping. 'That presents challenges around competence particularly, because firestopping is not an area where architects usually go into a significant level of detail,' explains Kadije Bah, head of engineering marketing and the Engineering Competence Centre in Europe for Hilti. Colleague and BIM project manager,



TOBY MORISON

Nicolas Midolo, picks up her point. 'Architects don't know exactly what pipe, cable tray or damper they have. The MEP consultant will normally specify a generic item until we get to RIBA stage 4, when everything changes. Then you get to site and the specification is changed again by the installers.'

There has to be a better way to work and that's where building information modelling (BIM) comes in. Rather than provide the project team with a CAD detail or 3D object, Hilti is working within project models to design early and model firestopping, to ensure penetrations are designed and installed as effectively as possible.

How BIM helps deliver certainty

Hilti started considering the potential to move beyond creating catalogues of 3D models to working with project models as long ago as 2017. 'We were looking to understand what we could solve in those models and how we could take away some of the headaches customers face by providing a service,' says Bah.

Its resulting service – which draws on the expertise of its Rotterdam-based BIM Competence Centre for Europe, as well as a dedicated UK team – relies on early engagement and collaboration with the project team, starting at RIBA stage 3. 'If we are involved in the early stages, we can collaborate with all stakeholders to increase productivity and create a compliant design,' says Hilti BIM project manager Ruben Acuna.

At stage 3 the company provides a set of rules as an example with minimum distances for services, 'so the MEP consultant needs to design service runs with firestopping in mind and the architect needs to work with an understanding of the openings required,' points out Midolo. Taking the design team's model as a template, Hilti then designs and models the firestopping, supports and anchors, producing a compliant BIM output at stage 4. Its BIM team needs an Autodesk Navisworks model with the MEP services and fire strategy included to enable it to carry out clash detection and estimate and identify services that need to be firestopped.

'We get to site with a set of drawings with the exact dimensions and product and material requirements and a one-stop specific shop drawing for each penetration,' says Midolo. This is coupled with the support of a Hilti project specialist for installers to ensure penetrations are delivered as designed and specified, and digital records that meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act's gateway process and Golden Thread. Digital records include a unique ID – which can be turned into a QR code – for every penetration and photographs of installations, which can be filed using the company's Documentation Manager software (see ribaj.com/products/firestop-the-press), so they remain transparent and accessible.

The way ahead

The experiences of early adopters have been positive. One trialled the service for the second phase of a project, after the first was dogged by typical firestopping challenges. Installation on its second phase ran like clockwork, prompting the project team to use the service four times since. 'It went so smoothly that it convinced us this is the way forward,' reports Midolo.

But this approach is about more than seamless installation; it is about deploying BIM to ensure that the right products and materials, backed by the right testing, are used in the right application to create a safer building, with an evidence trail throughout. Bah points to the differences between the UK's looser testing regime for penetration seals and Europe's more rigorous EN standard (see ribaj.com/products/playing-with-fire) to emphasise why that matters.

When Hilti first spoke to customers about this service few were sufficiently BIM-prepared to make the most of it. 'They had a strategy to become more digitalised, but were not ready at that point,' Bah recalls. Now things are different, she says: 'The industry is progressing and by partnering together we are able to achieve so much more, and the Building Safety Act is providing a further push'. ●

ADVICE FROM HILTI'S EXPERTS

You can't test a finished building for fire safety – you only know it has gone wrong when a fire happens. So ensure products have the right performance for their application.

Don't be afraid to ask for help – expertise and guidance are available to help meet the Building Safety Act's requirements.

Be prepared to collaborate early – co-ordination and collaboration are essential to BIM.

RIBAJ and Hilti are hosting a half-day conference 'The Building Safety Act 2022, preparing architects for change' on 14 November 2022 at The Building Centre, London.
It's free to attend, register on Eventbrite

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Left The facade of Hopkins Architects' 100 Liverpool Street.

Seven steps to cut carbon in facades

Building facades contribute carbon to your design – and by a surprising amount. Teni Ladipo and David Metcalfe offer some things to consider to cut the CO_2

Sustainable architecture

Design, construction & technology

A facade can contribute up to 31% of the total embodied carbon of a building, according to a 2021 study by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. But when calculating facade-embodied carbon, considerable experience and knowledge is required to avoid underestimation and to support architectural design decisions that might aim to mitigate emissions.

Architects may not always be responsible for calculating the embodied carbon of a facade, as sustainability consultants and facade engineers often take on this role during design development. But architects can have a huge influence on the results. This is why the Centre for Windows and Cladding Technology (CWCT) is advocating for a better understanding of environmental impacts of design decisions on facades, so they can be better informed.

Architects have seven major factors to consider when designing and specifying facades to reduce their embodied carbon and keep them sustainable.

The CWCT has guidance on what the design team can do at each RIBA stage. Adapting to sustainability requires co-ordination and identifying the most helpful tips for each project.

1 Form factor and building massing

The form factor of a building is the ratio of external facade surface area to internal floor area, which is also typically visualised as the complexity or efficiency of the building shape. A building's form factor can have a significant impact on the facade's contribution to the total embodied carbon of a building when measured per square metre of internal floor area. Low form factors (more efficient shapes) will decrease the facades' contributions to the total embodied carbon of the building. When designing the building's massing, architects should be aiming for a low form factor. Input from the rest of the design team will influence the design and performance of the facade, structure and MEP systems, and help the architect identify the project's optimal form factor.

2 Number and materiality of facade system types

Having a high number of different facade systems and material types loses the advantages of repetition and optimisation of components during production and installation. The more facade types and varied materiality a building has, the higher the number of materials and components coming from different sources. This also means more interfaces and trades, which can negatively affect quality, waste and efficiency if not co-ordinated well. More repetition and fewer facade systems, and efficiency in facade materiality, can help reduce embodied carbon in production, transportation and installation.

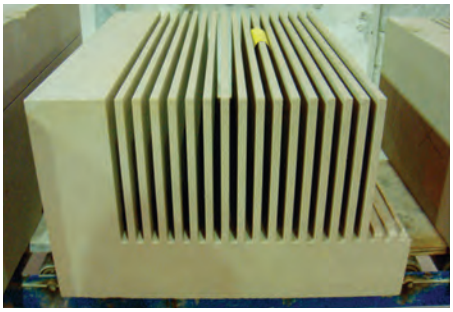
3 Facade detailing

Differently shaped and sized cladding panels typically require multiple processes, which wastes material. Such processes and results are not always apparent, even for more standard shapes such as stone corner quoins. Architects can work with material suppliers and consultants to better understand the effects of detailing decisions and design out waste as early as possible. Dedicated 'design out waste' workshops can be planned to facilitate this, so that facade

detailing and geometry can be optimised to reduce supplier waste. Any remaining waste should be planned for repurposing where possible and specified as such.

4 Finish systems and processes
Even the colours and finishes can create different levels of carbon emission. Caution is advised when specifying finish systems to achieve a desired aesthetic – the particular material quantity, production location, batching limits, processing and fuel source can add or reduce embodied carbon. Advice from suppliers will help reveal the impact of finish choices so that less carbon intensive alternatives can be specified.

5 Mock-ups
Visual mock-ups (VMU) are typically full-scale facade assemblies used to review visual quality, while performance mock-ups are employed to evaluate facade performance. The materials are manufactured specifically for this purpose and usually discarded. VMUs and PMUs involve a significant amount of embodied carbon not only to manufacture, transport and test, but also due to the individuals that may be required to travel large distances to inspect them. Combining a VMU with a PMU where possible would lower emissions, as would reducing travel where alternative methods – such as virtual inspections or using local representatives – were available.



PETER GOFF; BURO HAPPOLD (2)

Above A typical process for stone corner quoins can lead to considerable material wastage. Could this be formed of two flat slabs by introducing a joint to reduce waste?

Further, re-use of mock-up materials on the project building or repurposing them for other needs should be planned for.

6 Visual quality
VMUs and control samples come with acceptance criteria for their visual quality. Over-restrictive acceptance criteria can produce more rejected materials and waste during manufacturing. Glazing distortions also result in material rejection, as well as overdesigned systems to compensate (eg thicker glass to mitigate pillowing).

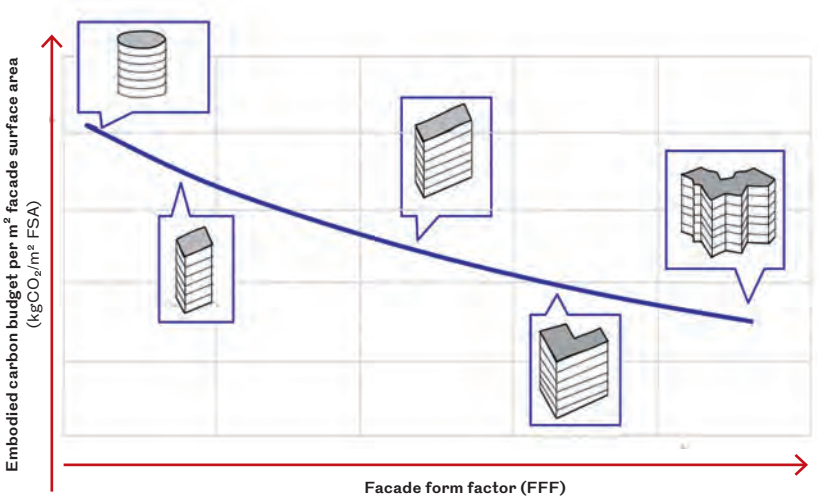
Look for ways to reduce visual standards by allowing for greater tolerances

Additionally, high-clarity glass (low-iron) permits less post-consumer recycled glass to be used. To cut energy and materials waste, architects should look for ways to reduce visual standards by allowing for greater tolerances, but also work with facade consultants to balance this with required performance.

7 Design for disassembly and replacement
The potential for facade system components and materials to be re-purposed or recycled at the end of their design life must be considered early. Facade components that will be replaced during the life of the building must be accessible and easily replaced, with simple parts that do not require complex or bespoke processes or need substantial dismantling of adjacent systems. Thought should be given to the appropriate systems and details to allow for this. This should be co-ordinated with facade consultants during design and specification, including requiring replacement and disassembly method statements, and demonstrations during mock-ups to ensure solutions are viable.

Architectural design decisions have the potential to save facade embodied carbon with carbon assessments to support effective decision-making. ●

Teni Ladipo is an associate facade consultant at Buro Happold and a part-time sustainability engineer at the CWCT. David Metcalfe is the director of the CWCT



Left The influence of facade form factor on the embodied carbon budget per m² facade area.

METHOD FOR FACADE CARBON MADNESS
The CWCT has developed a methodology, 'How to calculate the embodied carbon of facades', for calculating embodied carbon on facades to bring consistency across the industry. It sits among a suite of guides already available for other building elements such as the primary structure IStructE guide: How to calculate embodied carbon, and building services guide, CIBSE TM65. The CWCT methodology was developed with input and collaboration from architects, consultants, contractors and manufacturers in the UK and throughout Europe.

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Three ways a smart meter could help you take control of energy use

In the context of climate emergency and financial squeeze, getting a smart meter makes sense on every level. And from a business point of view it can improve budgeting and efficiency, keeping everyone happy

The architecture industry is committed to becoming more sustainable, and with energy costs rising, many practices are understandably worried about the impact of higher bills.

RIBA have been encouraging chartered practices to join their 2030 climate challenge which sets out a series of stepped targets to reduce operational energy, embodied carbon and potable water. However, there is one further step practices could take both to help control their energy use and be more sustainable. Smart meters aim to make business energy easier, fairer and more transparent.

smart meters
Join the energy revolution

1. Control

Bills based on how much energy you've used

First, having a smart meter means your business gets a bill based on how much energy you've used – not an estimate. That's invaluable if you've taken steps recently to reduce your energy use. It could be good news from a cashflow

SIAN WYNN JONES-UNSPLASH

perspective too, especially if your energy use increases or decreases in line with your sales. Your bills will reflect that.

Insight into how and when you use energy

As in so many aspects of business life, more information is vital to being – and feeling – more in control. If spiralling energy costs are one of the things keeping you awake at night right now, it may be the perfect time to get a smart meter for your practice.

Smart meters offer further benefits for businesses because they track how much energy you use when, providing you with valuable insight into your operations.

While businesses don't typically get the instant information that in-home displays offer to domestic smart meter users, many suppliers are able to provide data about business energy usage. By analysing that, businesses can spot opportunities to reduce their energy use.

That could be something as simple as ensuring computers are switched off outside working hours. Making such small savings every day can then add up to a more substantial benefit over time.

Or it might allow you to calculate the financial benefits of changing to low-energy lighting for your overnight display, or investing in more efficient technology.

2. Accuracy

Budget with more accuracy

Whether for day-to-day cashflow or longer-term decisions about investment, staffing or operations, businesses rely on accurate budgeting. A smart meter can help with that, by giving you extra insight into one key part of your expenditure – your energy costs.

Forecasting based on accurate bills

With a smart meter, your bills are based on how much energy you've used – not an estimate. That means they're more accurate and up-to-date: your energy use data is sent automatically and regularly to your supplier, and there's the added benefit that you don't have to remember to read the meters. But it also means you can use your previous bills as a sound basis for forecasting future costs and for budgeting.

Forecasting based on additional usage data

Many businesses that have smart meters have also been able to get more detailed data from their energy suppliers about exactly how and when they use gas and electricity. That information can make your forecasting more accurate still. Suppose you've made some changes that mean equipment is on for longer, or that headcount has increased? You can get a good sense of what that is likely to mean in terms of your business energy use.

But it's not just basic forecasting and budgeting that this extra information can help with. Considering an investment in new equipment? You can get a realistic idea of the operating costs – meaning you're in a position to make a more informed decision.

Responding to rising prices

For many businesses right now, rising energy prices are a major cashflow concern. To give you reassurance about the impact of higher prices, you can apply the insights you gain to your energy use to calculate an accurate projection for your next bill.

Some businesses have already taken steps to become more energy-efficient, by introducing energy-saving lighting for instance, or improving insulation. If you haven't, you can use the data available from your business's smart meter to make accurate assessments of the likely impact on your overall practice energy use too.

3.Sustainability

Reduce your practice's environmental impact

If you're looking to reduce your environmental impact, getting a smart meter is one of the most effective steps you can take.

Business owners know that energy use is a key part of their environmental footprint. But with IT, heating, lighting and technology all essential to everyday operations, many feel they don't know where to start when it comes to reducing that energy use. Smart meters can help in two fundamental ways.

Play your part in creating a more efficient energy system

Getting a smart meter could help you reduce your business's environmental impact – and help make Britain's energy system more flexible and efficient.

Smart meters help, because they can provide information about how much energy people use at different times of day and of the year. Using that information, energy suppliers can identify the times of day when demand is highest, and offer tariffs that encourage customers to use less energy at those times. That should help reduce the maximum amount of energy needed in the system, which in turn means we should be able to make more use of renewable energy and be less reliant on fossil fuels.

For practices like yours, those smart tariffs could offer a way to reduce your energy costs while helping reduce our nation's carbon footprint.

Joining up the virtuous circle

This is where the virtuous circle joins up. Practices can then explore how to change their operations to take advantage of these preferential tariffs, reducing their costs while helping make Britain's energy system more efficient.

If that's something that matters to your practice and your people, talk to your energy supplier about getting a smart meter for your business. For installations, you can agree a time and date that best suits you, so there's no disruption to your business. Many small businesses can get a smart meter at no extra cost, but it depends on your energy supplier and tariff.

Ask your energy supplier for a smart meter for your business or search 'get a smart meter' today.

Some properties can't get a smart meter yet but will be able to get one before the end of the rollout. Your energy supplier can tell you if you can have one. They can also tell you how soon you can get one installed. ●

How hospital buildings can be a 'third carer'

A cash injection for some 40 hospitals by 2030 means an injection of new thinking is also due. Ab Rogers' RIBA + VitrA talk on his Living Systems concept for built environments looks at how buildings can help alleviate symptoms and improve wellbeing

Health, safety & wellbeing

Design, construction & technology

Ab Rogers has spent a year researching how architecture can be a 'third carer' (the first two being the medical team and the family) and designing through collective intelligence after winning the 2021 Wolfson Economics Prize for his Living Systems concept.

Rogers has been designing hotels, boutiques, festivals and houses for nearly 25 years as Kitchen Rogers Design and then Ab Rogers Design. But it was working on a Maggie's Centre, designing a striking red-clad structure for London's Royal Marsden Hospital, that brought him closer to understanding what architecture could do for a patient.

'It can reduce stress and bring comfort to the patient,' he says, adding that not only can it be a machine to fix broken bodies, but also important in health creation. So he put together a team for the £250,000 Wolfson Economics Prize on health buildings in 2021.

Ab Rogers Design has always used experimental psychology to inform

Left Perspective of Living Systems Health Centre.

design but, for the Wolfson prize, it was also informed by regular meetings of 50 advisors, from doctors to drug addicts to homeless people, all chaired by a urologist. The designs and wider proposals for planning and designing a hospital of the future, Living Systems, have absorbed and reflected those discussions.

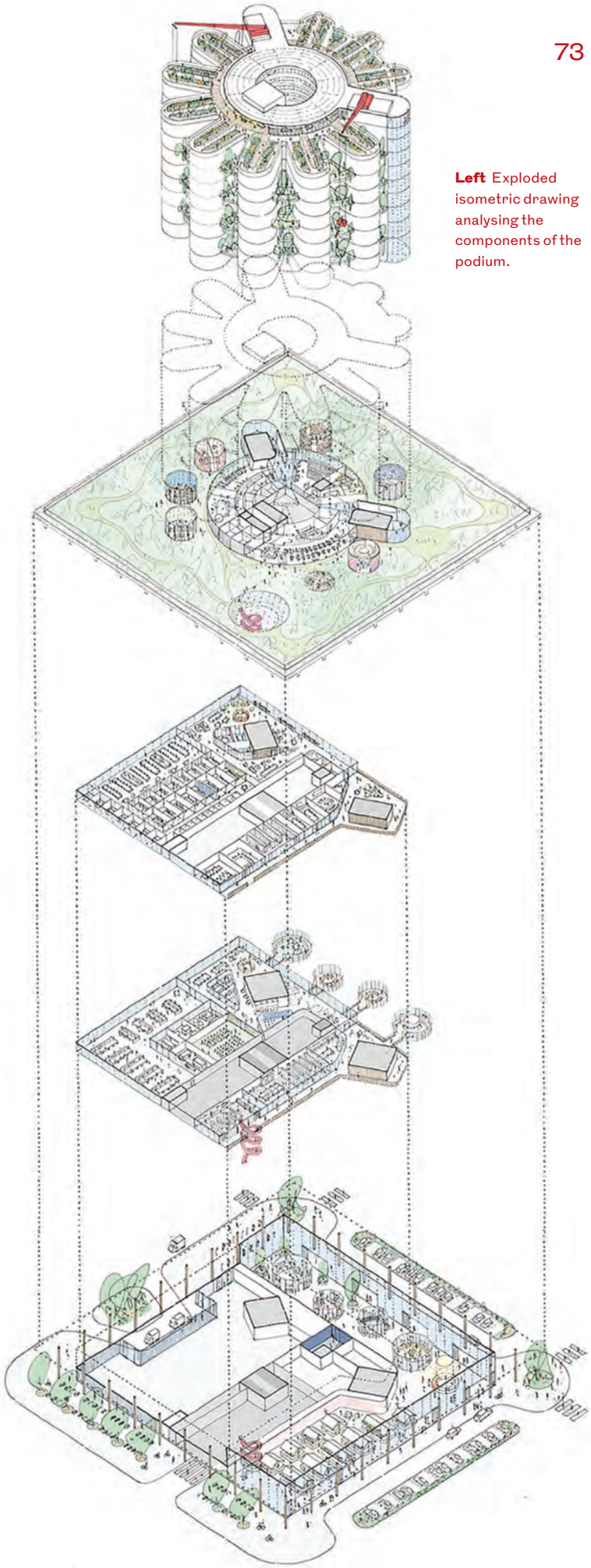
'It has been designing through collective intelligence,' says Rogers. The proposition tackles the hospital's role and position in the community, the infrastructure of the hospital and the micro level of surfaces and sensations.

The proposed diagram for a new hospital has a compelling form: a 'flower tower' that fits the idea of an ecosystem for health, which ranges from hospital food growing on the roof, and chefs for each floor, to community spaces – markets, parks – on the ground level (plant is tucked away on the third floor). There would be no carbon-costly basement. And the cleaners would have a sense of ownership through being local and directly employed rather contract staff.

The proposed petal-plan would also go some way to tackling the sheer volume of corridors in most hospitals and the complexity of wayfinding this generates. 'There are so many signs,' Rogers says. 'It's hard having to navigate a series of corridors when you're stressed.' The proposal emphasises empowering patients, giving them dignity and respect.

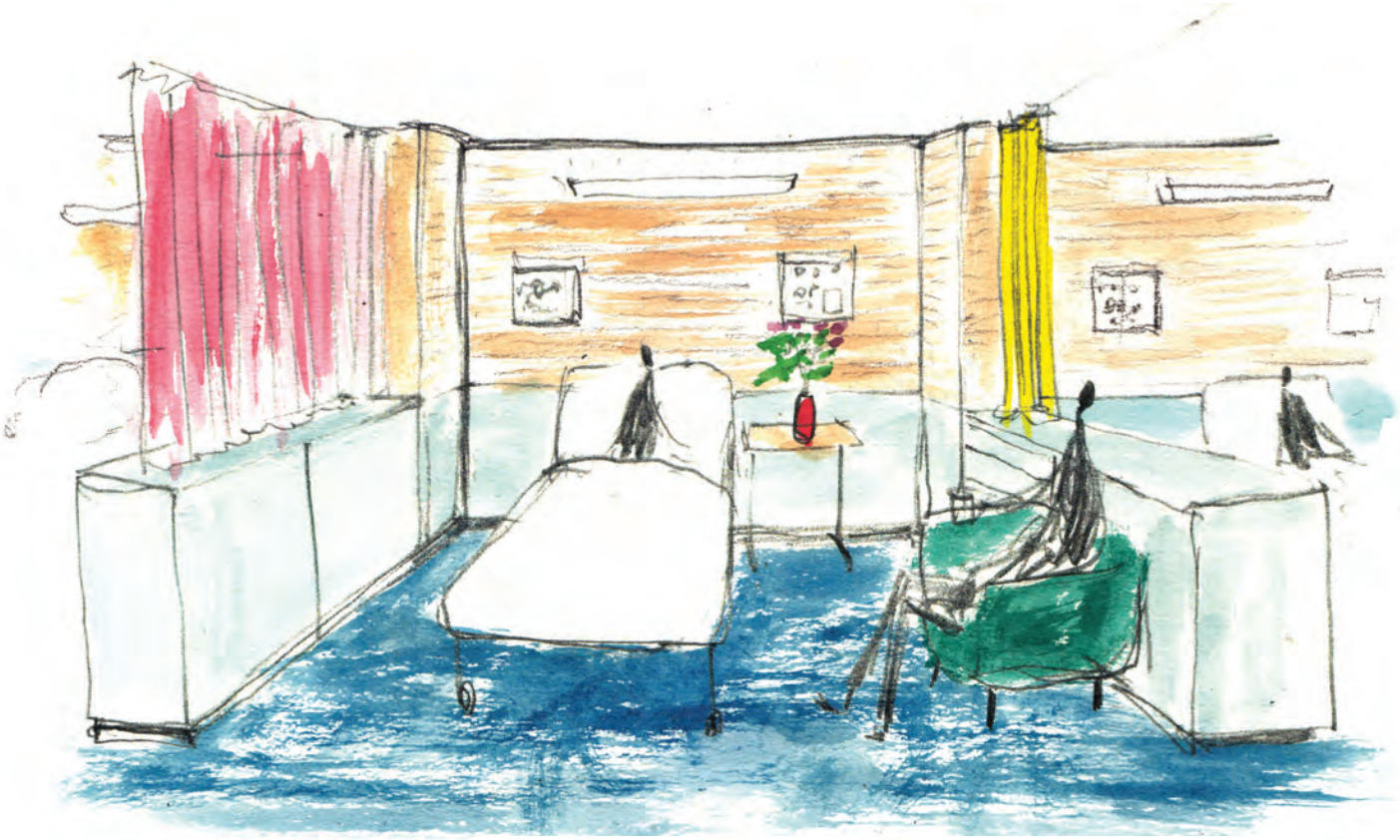
Rogers is particularly compelling when talking about why natural light is so important. He argues that it gives a sense of the circadian rhythm and allows patients to feel alive; for the same reason wards all need a clock. 'You need to disturb the day so it is not relentless,' he

There are so many signs. It's hard having to navigate a series of corridors when you're stressed



Left Exploded isometric drawing analysing the components of the podium.

AB ROGERS DESIGN (2)



says. On the importance of windows, he cites the medical value of ultraviolet light for vitamin E as an anti-bacterial agent.

The final report asks fundamental questions concerning issues such as where you sit, or rather lie – proposing that if patients spend much of the time looking at the ceiling the designer should spend more of their time making a better ceiling and helping soften the acoustics so that people can feel at home.

Would all this cost a lot more? Maybe. But Rogers points out that capital costs are a fraction of what a hospital costs to run. And in return, you get savings from lower energy bills, less waste, happier staff with reduced turnover and better health outcomes.

The work has already generated a huge number of conversations and the occasional request to build out the design – but no contract yet. Rogers is taking it slowly, to ensure things are done properly. 'A medicine never goes on the market without full testing,' he says. 'But space is unsurveyed.' ●

RIBA + VitrA talk: The Third Carer: a vision for a new type of hospital with Ab Rogers will be available shortly on the RIBA YouTube channel

AB ROGERS DESIGN (2)

Top Shared bed ward with visitor.
Above Outpatient waiting room leading to balcony, showing lively colour palette and natural light.

TIME AND THE HOSPITAL

Unstructured time can be disorienting to patients and the design of the hospital must help to differentiate time throughout the day, introducing a hospital clock that nudges and engages in a way that synchronises with users' circadian rhythms. This can be achieved via markers or milestones articulated through changes in light and sound and through activities such as eating, walking, socialising, gardening and spending time outdoors. These activities have the added benefit of normalising the hospital environment, helping users to associate it with enjoyable everyday pursuits rather than with crisis, unpredictability and fear.

Extract from Living Systems Wolfson prize winning submission

SterlingOSB Zero works for café and workshop alike

Uniform yet unique, robust and reusable, the textured warmth of SterlingOSB Zero strikes just the right vibe for VeloLife Café, a cycle workshop and café in Twyford

LEE GOODWIN/VELOLIFE (2)

Left VeloLife Café's Twyford outpost is the third iteration of the brand, all using SterlingOSB Zero as a core part of the fit-out.

Below left Part of an existing cycle shop, the café has its own identity – and its own piece of frontage – showcasing the material's qualities.

Lee Goodwin adores SterlingOSB Zero. 'I love the texture, I love the warmth it brings, I love the fact that no two pieces are the same and yet I can get a uniform appearance out of something that is not uniform,' he enthuses.

Lee Goodwin is the proprietor of VeloLife Café, a growing group of venues that combine a café with a bicycle workshop. He used SterlingOSB Zero in Warren Row, his first venture, close to Henley-Upon-Thames. This was an old pub that he converted into a café and bicycle workshop. It features tables made from SterlingOSB Zero and the café's sign, which now hangs in place of the old pub sign, is also made from the material.

Following the success of Warren Row, Goodwin opened a pop-up café. 'I used SterlingOSB Zero in the pop-up because it is cost effective and – because I was going to be taking the café down at some point in the future – I knew I could use the material again,' he says. 'It's a wonderful product. I've now reused some of it four or five times,' he laughs.

Goodwin's next permanent venture was at Wargrave Marina, a few pedal spins down the road from Warren Row. He describes this café as 'a bit more refined'. And while there is none on show, Goodwin has fed his SterlingOSB Zero addiction by using it for his office floor.

Now Goodwin's latest venture is under construction in nearby Twyford. This is an existing cycle shop and café where Goodwin is bringing his experience and expertise to running the café. 'I've taken over the café part; I'm moving it to a different part of the building with more frontage, which is where I'm building the new café,' he explains.

He says his designs are derived from working with the building itself: 'I'm by no means a designer (or carpenter for that matter), but I've learned it as I've gone along'.

Naturally, SterlingOSB Zero is Goodwin's fit-out material of choice. 'I've clad the walls and ceiling in it and used it along the front of the bar counter as well,' he says. From an interior perspective, he says that although the product is 'quite workshop-like', because it is so uniform it gives the scheme 'a bit of refinement'. Goodwin is complementing the SterlingOSB Zero with plywood counter tops and colourful lampshades.

Goodwin has even managed to use his reclaimed SterlingOSB Zero in the workshop. 'The workshop counter is clad in it and behind the scenes there is a fair amount of it. We've also used it for shelving and displays,' he says. ●

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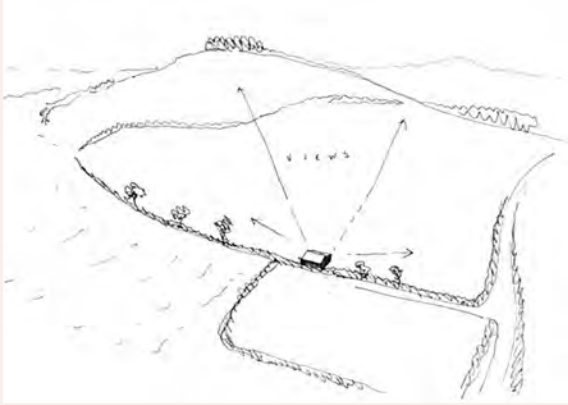
For more information on how SterlingOSB Zero can help your project go to uk.westfraser.com

Flexible fabrication means home is where the cowshed is

Architect Martin Goodfellow is milking SterlingOSB Zero for all it's worth – which is plenty – in his conversion of a farm's disused cowshed into a home for humans

DECENT GOODFELLOW ARCHITECTS (6)



Left Modelling at 1:1 and at 1:25 to inform the spatial arrangement and views.
Above Sketch showing the relationship between the barn and the southern views.

When Martin Goodfellow set out to turn a cowshed on his dad's farm into his new home, he wanted to root the building in the green rolling hills of the Dorset landscape.

Despite its idyllic location near Cerne Abbas, the cowshed that Goodfellow was hoping to transform was not big on pastoral charm. Far from it. This was a boxy, industrial style shed, built in the mid 1980s and based on a steel portal frame. It comprised a basic concrete floor which supported rough, half-height concrete block walls with a timber, Yorkshire-boarded upper. This agricultural ensemble was topped by a grey, crinkly tin roof. 'It wouldn't have been my first choice of building to convert into a home,' laughs Goodfellow.

Goodfellow is director of Decent Goodfellow Architects. 'I come from a farming background; my dad's a farmer but I happen to be an architect,' he says. In addition to being the project's client and architect, Goodfellow is also undertaking most of the build himself.

The conversion of a former cowshed into a dwelling is allowed under Class Q permitted development, without the need for full planning permission. However, Class Q does mean the building's transformation is subject to certain conditions and limitations, including keeping the home within the external dimensions of the original building. 'You have to use what you've got,' Goodfellow says.

Decent Goodfellow Architects' starting point in developing the design was to exploit views from the barn over the surrounding countryside. Goodfellow explains: 'The shape and form of the barn is set because Class Q prevents any permanent add-ons outside the existing structure, so we developed the floor plates to frame the views – for example the Iron Age fort to the north and the view southwest over the rural landscape'.

Goodfellow (the builder) is working on the barn's transformation. Externally, the building is now clad in an envelope of black corrugated metal sheets, which he says references 'historical tin of industrial and agricultural buildings common in the area while helping blend the building into the darker patches of shadow that intersperse the verdant countryside.

Above The first floor deck is formed using West Fraser CaberDek.
Left Timber framing is braced by a skin of SterlingOSB Zero to strengthen the structure and provide a backing for the insulation.
Right The rooflight units sit within the roof build-up to comply with Class Q and Building Regulations.

To support the new ridged and grooved skin, Goodfellow has had to remove the original block and timber walls and infill voids in the existing steel portal frame with a timber framework. This is braced by a skin of SterlingOSB Zero boards to both strengthen the structure and provide a backing on which to attach a layer of rigid insulation and a breather membrane. 'I was told to add the SterlingOSB Zero boarding by the structural engineer because under the permitted development you are required to keep the existing structure without doing any substantial work to it,' explains Goodfellow. 'SterlingOSB Zero was the most cost effective solution and it was readily available,' he adds.

SterlingOSB Zero has also been used to line the underside of the roof beneath the purlins to form what Goodfellow describes as 'a strengthening diaphragm'. Class Q restrictions mean insulation could not be added on top of the roof so instead it had to be placed beneath its supporting structure. 'Usually, you'd put SterlingOSB Zero on top of the purlins, but instead I've had to line the underside of the purlins with SterlingOSB Zero – after which I've still got to fit the rigid insulation and an inner skin of plasterboard,' he says. 'It's an absolute nightmare having to build a cold roof.'

The building's internal volume is high enough – just – to enable a first floor structure to be added. Decent Goodfellow Architects' interior layout is based around two exposed blockwork boxes, a refined reference to the concrete blocks originally used to construct the outer wall. On the ground floor these boxes house the family bathroom and a bedroom. On the first floor, exposed untreated timber joists bridge the concrete boxes below to support the master bedroom and first-floor sitting area. 'It's in keeping with the idea of a barn; where there would have been a hay loft you will look up to see the doors and windows of the lounge and master bedroom,' he explains.

SterlingOSB Zero has also been used to line the underside of the roof beneath the purlins

The exposed joists support a first-floor deck constructed using West Fraser CaberDek, tongue and grove moisture resistant particleboard. 'I used CaberDek because it fits together well, it was cost effective and, as a self-builder working mostly on my own, it is easily manageable because of its smaller sheet size,' he says. 'Installing the CaberDek was one of the quickest and most satisfying jobs I've completed to date,' he adds.

Hopefully, there are many more, equally satisfying, elements of construction still to come. Goodfellow estimates that he still has another 9 to 12 months' work to complete the cowshed's transformation. ●

Architects' imagination realises true potential

Eight years of competitions have turned up an amazing array of practical, useful and impressive proposals using SterlingOSB Zero. Jan-Carlos Kucharek recalls some favourites

As the longstanding chair of the judging panels that have adjudicated the annual RIBAJ competitions run in collaboration with SterlingOSB Zero, I have gained good insights into the possibilities of a building material that many people might view as a prosaic but which is transformed by the rich imaginations of the architect entrants. This was borne out not least by the winner of our 2022 'Retreat' competition – David and Henry Young's 'The Keep', which provided a gripping fictional account of a post-apocalyptic scenario to supplement their evocative SterlingOSB Zero insertions into an ancient Scottish castle, dramatically poised on a cliffside; an approach we felt Giovanni Boccaccio would have approved of.

For the past eight years, the RIBA Journal has been excited and proud to present more than 50 finalists who not only made it past a demanding and critical architect judging panel but also survived the scrutiny of West Fraser, which is naturally keen to see the possibilities of Oriented Strand Board presented in the best light. Luckily, they don't need to encourage take-up from the market as the structural, aesthetic and environmental qualities of SterlingOSB Zero have long appealed to architects; they just needed a forum such as a competition to let it play out. And from such an opportunity came the beautiful 2020 Second Skin winner – Hilder's Yard by Paper Architecture & Bethan Watson, who inserted a crafted SterlingOSB Zero installation into a disused Victorian warehouse. It echoed the simple practicality of Burgess Architects' 'Kit Studio', a response to our 2017 brief on multi-generational living.

West Fraser has been on a learning curve too. I remember our first 'Habitat' competition in 2016, and architect Mawson Kerr's 'Low Rise High Density' entry. Its proposal for an urban self-build rehabilitation centre built by users themselves raised eyebrows at the time for associating SterlingOSB Zero with poverty and deprivation. But the confidence to run with it as the winner would pave the way for Reed Watts' 2019 'Raise the Roof' top spot placing – a rooftop entertainment space on the River Thames at Kingston which doubled in winter as a temporary homeless shelter. One of this year's Commended Retreat competition entries looked at SterlingOSB Zero's end of life 'mulch' state – a philosophical musing on natural cycles of birth and death. This open mindedness makes for quite a journey for a marketing department charged with strict protection of a brand.

Left 2020 Second Skin winner Hilder's Yard by Paper Architecture and Bethan Watson. **Below** 2018 Room within a Room Commended entry Atelier Astula by student group Bakerloos Design Studio. **Bottom** 2017 Multigen winner Kit Studio by Burgess Architects.

In the last eight years we have seen over 50 winners, commended and longlisted entries make it to the RIBAJ October issue winners' supplement, with half of those sharing a total of £20,000 in prize money. The competition format has supported both architects and students, rewarding grasps at blue-sky thinking as well as technical skill or expertise. It is always a pleasure to see students make it through – our 2018 'Room within a Room' challenge, based on a contemporary reading of St Jerome in his study, proved particularly popular, being of a small scale that allowed them to flex learned technical and formal skills.

But briefs enjoyed shifting scope as well as scale; the 2021 Off-Grid competition asked entrants to consider the RIBA's 2030 Climate Challenge, and was won by Kevin Sulca, a young architect from Lima, with a project that not only looked to address low-impact living but also took a polemical stance on the general plight of Peru's poor.

It is that range of issues and ideas that makes the West Fraser competitions such a joy to judge. It may be why Stephen Proctor of Proctor & Matthews Architects returns every year to adjudicate. In interrogating the entries, his – and all the judges' – engagement, critical eye and humour are not only appreciated, but hopefully offer potential for SterlingOSB Zero that West Fraser – and architects themselves – may be yet to realise. ●

You're feeling soothed
— review
91

Safety crusader
— obituary
94

3: Culture

Solace can be found in the strangest situations. For 25-year old Nikita Ghate, who had come to the UK for a photography masters degree after studying architecture at Mumbai University, it arrived through her thesis work. With London study prohibitively expensive, Ghate went to Cheltenham, but small though it was, its alienness to the life she had known still reinforced the sense that she was alone.

As a result she began taking long walks out to the surrounding villages in the early mornings and evenings, identifying her own sense of isolation with those whom she spotted through their windows in the twilight. It became a project. Using paper flyers and social media she sought anyone local who was prepared to be a subject. A few replied, and when she went to visit them for the shoot, it would be the first time she had met them.

The man in this shot, living in a remote house out in the sticks, confessed that had never spoken to anyone Indian in his life and despite Ghate telling me of his 'interesting' views on colonialism, she recalls the encounter warmly: 'It started with me forcing myself to feel comfortable speaking to strangers and then them not being strangers anymore.' They even all attended her end-of-year show. In that final series of 10 portraits, subjects had been directed to act as if she were not present. But not in this shot; here, he is staring straight at her. The comfort of strangers indeed. ● **Jan-Carlos Kucharek**

Nikita Ghate
(Don't) Look Away
Cheltenham, November 2021
Pentax 645Z with 35 mm lens

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'All outputs count, not just the remarkable one-off building but also interventions improving the street, or new ways of finding funding'

That special something

Eleanor Young considers what it is that makes an architect, or their work, inspire and motivate the rest of us

Who are your architectural heroes? In architecture schools you can see that Peter Zumthor's forms still offer a compelling model. On practice shelves monographs give a fascinating quick scan of influences. Sometimes it is a revelatory building visit to one of your hero's works that you hold onto, that defines how you think about design. You can see some of these moments captured in choice seconds in 'core memory' videos on TikTok, complete with inspirational piano sound track.

But it is another app that gives us a clue to a more nuanced understanding of achievements and experiences. The title says it all: BeReal. It demands photos of you and your surroundings at random times each day to share with your friends. There is a mutual everydayness to the results – people's view of screens, ordinary roads, the subject wearing an unflattering top or shot at an uncomfortable angle. It shows the world as ordinary. It is a useful antidote to the life highlights normally buzzing up social media feeds.

We know architecture is about more than the 'wow factor' (thanks one time deputy prime minister John Prescott for this little phrase). At a recent event the RIBA president elect Muyiwa Oki celebrated the roles that architects play in society 'outside aesthetic design'. He talked about social value, civic innovation and management. His experience on HS2 showed him quite how varied the skills that are needed are, and how collegiate projects have to be, with large teams including engineers and other design professionals and the extended decision making. 'You have to take an entire section of north London with you,' he said.

When we at RIBA Journal look for Rising Stars each year we want to see early career designers who can work like this, collaborating, perhaps working behind the scenes. And in our profiles too we want to understand how improving people's lives can be done incrementally, one step at a time, as with Pakistani architect Yasmeen Lari, whose knowledge on bamboo jointing and slaking lime has been shared from one trainee to another to build a body of knowledge that can lift the poor out of the worst of their poverty (see page 86). Or Tim Oshodi who was crucial to the self build project of Nubia Way (page 56).

Could your architectural hero be a man or woman who operates behind the scenes, even more self-effacing than Peter Zumthor? You are as likely to find these people now on a crowd-funding website or taking the platform at a TED talk as on Dezeen. And their model is an encouraging one. All outputs count, not just the remarkable one-off building but also interventions improving the street, or new ways of finding and packaging funding for projects, or the side hustles that turn into crusades that make better places for people to live. From these very real heroes you can learn ways to operate and how your passions, and what you do with them, can make a difference.

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM
Industry shifts sometimes mean you become disconnected from the client
Hindsight with Stephen Hodder: ribaj.com/stephen-hodder

Left Yasmeen Lari's shelters surviving the latest floods in Pakistan.

STEPHANIE WUNDERLICH PHOTO: HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF PAKISTAN

All you need to know about Passivhaus window design

A new paper from REHAU covers Passivhaus windows in comprehensive detail, equipping architects to create environmentally appropriate designs

The principles of Passivhaus are well understood in mainland Europe. However, in the UK such buildings are still rare despite growing interest across the built environment. Proposed changes to legislation could soon standardise many of the features that underpin properties of this kind, with some even calling for all newbuilds to be built according to the standard. What will architects need to know?

There is plenty of information online covering the broader Passivhaus concept. However, there is far less material available on the different products and materials needed to achieve exceptional thermal performance. Among the most important of these are triple-glazed windows, which are essential for sufficient airtightness, insulation and minimised heat losses.

A new paper from REHAU, In The Frame: Passivhaus Windows, addresses that gap in market knowledge by examining Passivhaus windows in far greater detail. It provides architects with all the information they need when working to such exacting standards, covering key performance indicators, suitability of different frame materials and profiles, and more practical advice about installation and maintenance.

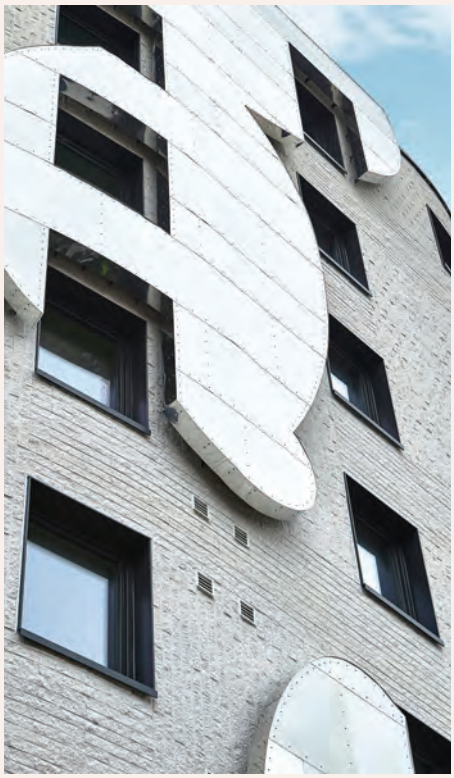
It's simpler and more cost-effective to develop a Passivhaus property from the ground up, which is why the paper mainly focuses on design considerations for newbuilds. That said, the clear need to improve performance across the UK's huge volume of legacy building stock means there is a section on 'EnerPHit' – certification for retrofit projects.

Those who read this report will be better equipped when working to Passivhaus requirements. Windows are often a smaller component in traditional builds, but the same cannot be said for Passivhaus. They are a critical part of the standard and central to the function of any successful project. It's fair to assume the number of Passivhaus developments in the UK will increase significantly over the coming years, making this paper an important resource for forward-thinking architectural firms. ●

Below Isle of Cumbrae development, GENEO

Below right Premier Inn Bromley, GENEO Alu Top.

To download the white paper, visit: www.rehau.uk/passivhaus



Feeling spooked

Where does the horror story start – with the building or the ghost? Will Wiles probes architecture's relationship with the supernatural

Right Gothic style, such as Walpole's Strawberry Hill, bound the ghost to architecture.

When the death of novelist Hilary Mantel was announced in September, people mourned online by sharing favourite lines from her books. She was a consummate writer of both fiction and non-fiction, probably the best in the country, so there were a lot of favourite lines to choose from. But one cropped up quite often, from a 2003 essay, which later became the basis for Mantel's beautiful memoir, Giving up the Ghost (2005): 'When you turn and look back down the years, you glimpse the ghosts of other lives you might have led; all houses are haunted.'

Those are metaphorical ghosts, of course, but it's the value of the ghost as metaphor that makes the paranormal visitor such a persistent one. In The Ghost: A Cultural History (2017), Susan Owens presents Horace Walpole's invention of the Gothic ghost story in The Castle of Otranto as 'a new, highly charged way of looking at the world'. This new Gothic vision was a fusion of architecture, antiquity, horror and the supernatural. As Owens explores, enthusiasm for the Gothic encouraged tourism as well as literature, as enthusiasts sought out appropriately gloomy ruins and hunted haunted houses. Ann Radcliffe, author of The Mysteries of Udolpho, also wrote a travel guide.

The Gothic bound the ghost to architecture. So, could the literature of architecture be used to tell ghost stories? On the basis of an online recommendation, I recently picked up a copy of Municipal Gothic by Ray Newman, a collection of 13 modern ghost stories. Modern ghost stories are nothing new – ghosts are naturally time travellers, equally uneasy in any era. What Newman brings to the table is a dry wit, a sense of 20th-century English drabness nicely captured by that word 'municipal', and some entertaining formal experiments.

The most interesting example of the latter is Modern Buildings in Wessex – a ghost story told in the form of an architectural gazetteer. The format is familiar from Pevsner, Nairn or Hatherley: a series of pocket descriptions of buildings, compiled in the 1960s by an architectural critic. These start out conventional enough, in a chatty Nairn-ish style: 'These are humble buildings made grand only through the ingenious use of modern materials … Try telling that to the lads smoking behind the cricket pavilion, mind you.' But the writer mixes in visits to a series of buildings designed by a neglected Continental modernist, Hälmar Pölzig, and a darker thread is pulled out.

Pölzig had some very curious ideas, not least that his nine buildings in Wessex should be visited sequentially and that 'a narrative is thus revealed'. The writer obliges, starting out interested in Pölzig's originality, but steadily unnerved by what he finds. A rooftop sculpture garden on a housing block resembles looming monastic figures, and creates eerie pockets of silence or deafening sound; a build for the ministry of works has a baffling, deadening layout; an art college creates a permanent vortex of wind and its students create works that are 'all shadow, staring eyes and alien forms'.

To say more would be to say too much, and it's worth enjoying in full. What really works is the way that the writer's increasing disquiet spills over into his descriptions of the more innocent creations of the British Rail and county council architects' departments. Even amid spruce Scandinavian utilitarianism or sunny Festival style, the brooding Hungarian stalks after him.

As a formal gambit, the story works brilliantly – I wish I'd had the idea. It's a reminder of one of the curious pleasures of the gazetteer, when we see the author glimpsed in reflection; a reminder too of the way Ian Nairn's demons sometimes stained the edges of his pages. All houses – all buildings – really are haunted, because we're the ones doing the haunting. We bring our own ghosts with us, just as Mantel wrote. ●

Will Wiles is an author

PECKHAM ORDER

I liked Newman's collection so much I was happy to write an endorsement for the cover – a 'blurb' in the horrible publishing term. Another book it has been my recent privilege to blurb also has an architectural theme: The Peckham Experiment by Guy Ware, which is published on 15 November. It's a vivid stream-of-consciousness romp through 20th century London, centred on dodgy goings-on in a London council housing department and some shoddy system building.

STEPHANIE WUNDERLICH PHOTO: EDWIN SMITH / RIBA COLLECTIONS

Stirling Prize sets the pace

Our most public award celebrates not just architecture, but highlights our responsibilities as architects, says Simon Allford

Last month The Stirling Prize was announced live to the world on BBC TV, online to all our global membership – via a live feed – and in person at 66 Portland Place.

It was a worthy celebration of architecture, practice and our profession. But also a demonstration of our House of Architecture @ RIBA and its ability to engage both the public and the profession not just in a celebration – though it was a delightful inclusive event – but a discussion about architecture's roles and responsibilities.

Our world of architecture and infrastructure must adapt – and fast. The built environment is responsible for 38% of the world's CO_2 emissions. We have tough targets and 2030 is just EIGHT years away so we must all urgently address the great problems we face. Charles Darwin said: 'The species that survives is the one that is best able to adapt to… the changing environment in which it finds itself.'

One of our key responsibilities as an Institute of Ideas is to help our members establish the common ground: the how as well as the why. In our dynamic world, where we are taking actions every day, it is essential that we record, report and share knowledge. And that we continually reassess our measures and standards – in design and in use. We need to establish a fertile ground for technological and cultural review of what we are doing and how it is working. We must accept that will make mistakes so must learn from and share them. This is why we are putting together a 'Practice in a Box' – a home for all the vital professional tool for practice – from contracts to carbon. It will itself be subject to an ongoing critical review by members on our Member Hub. This feedback loop is vital to us all in all we do in the hugely challenging times we live and work in.

I am an architect so I am an optimist and I believe that by working collaboratively we can rise to the challenge. To evolve fast we need to innovate. But innovation has never been about style or shapes or formal derring-do. It is about improvement by iteration to successfully address the great problems we face. These challenges demand great thinking from us all. We must all consider architecture as permanent infrastructure, to be renewed and reused by future generations. A Forever Architecture where nothing need be added and nothing can be taken away. An architecture that delights in accommodating the theatre of everyday life.

For all these reasons I was delighted to announce that the winner of the 2022 Stirling prize was The New Library, Magdalene College – a building that is sophisticated, generous and built to last. A calm sequence of connected spaces where people come together to contemplate and collaborate. The overarching commitment to build something that will stand the test of time can be felt in every material and detail, and from every viewpoint. This is the epitome of how to build for the long term. Well-designed generous environments, whether adaptations of existing structures or considered new construction, must become the rule not the exception.

These are exacting times but they are also exciting times. We are all now designing for longer life, looser fit and lower carbon ●

STEPHANIE WUNDERLICH PHOTO: NICK KANE

This year's Stirling Prize winner The New Library, Magdalene College Cambridge, by Níall McLaughlin Architects.

NOTICE OF DISCIPLINARY SANCTION: Suspension

The RIBA Hearings Panel found Dr Al-Sohaini of Birmingham breached the following provisions of the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct:

- Principle 2.1 (2005(2016)) and Principle 2, 1.1, 1.2 and 1.8 (2019), in that he failed to apply reasonable standards of skill, knowledge and care in the performance of his work; and
- Principle 2, 1.1, 10.1, and 10.2 in that he failed to confirm with the local authority whether planning permission was required and if the design would be accepted under permitted development; and
- Principle 2.3, in that he failed to ensure his terms of appointment, the scope of work and essential project requirements was clear and recorded in writing; and
- Principle 3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 (2019) in that he failed to provide an adequate or appropriate response to the complaint.

Dr Al-Sohaini was issued with a Suspension for 12 months.

Date: 26 September 2022

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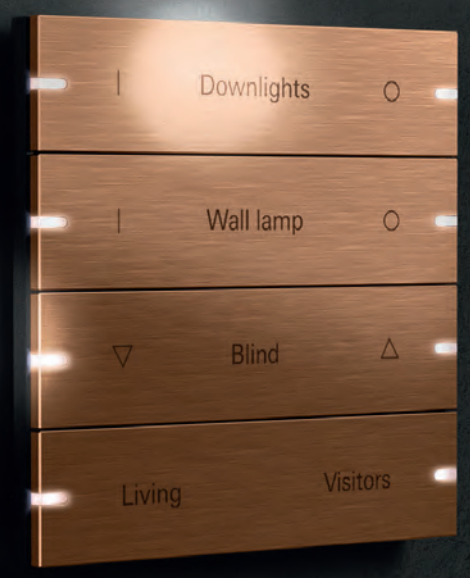

Control.

Gira / Smart Home / Gira pushbutton sensor 4

Yasmeen Lari was Pakistan's first female architect, yet her concern is not the limelight but equipping her compatriots to build their way out of the devastating effects of poverty and climate change

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Heritage Foundation of Pakistan

Instinct for survival

'The floods were a total disaster,' says Pakistani architect and humanitarian heroine Yasmeen Lari. 'It was bad already – 51% of the population were below the poverty line.' The Pakistan floods since June combined flooding from an unusually high-intensity monsoon with the meltwaters of retreating glaciers from the mountains that rise above Pakistan's lower, more populated, regions. Homes were swept away. Crops too. More than 30 million people have been displaced.

Sindh province, where Lari is based, is one of the worst affected by the floods. Near the ancient necropolis of Makli she has her Zero Carbon Cultural Centre. Photographs show how flood waters have inundated the site, but this is not what most concerns Lari. 'What's important now is that whatever is being done in terms of shelter also starts giving people livelihoods,' she says.

Her agency, Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, incorporating her Barefoot Social Architecture work, is scaling up to share what it has already learnt on building basic shelters from natural local materials. Emergency shelters are now top of the agenda. Lari's YouTube channel has more than 5000 subscribers who can watch it for step by step instructions, from the dimensions for marking out a shelter to attaching reed matting to bamboo poles. She sees the shelters being built on the elevated roads that are still often the only dry land in flooded areas. And once flood waters recede the shelters can be moved to a more permanent position, with foundations.

Where she has people on the ground, they can make 100 bamboo shelters in four days, sharing skills in clusters of villages. These may seem flimsy but they are a start and when converted to

more permanent dwellings have performed well. Her community centre on stilts survived the 2012 floods, and this year bamboo structures encased in limecrete at her centre in Makli survived the floods while cement-concrete buildings did not.

Sharing building knowledge has been at the core of Lari's work since she left commercial architecture. It was not clear that this would be her path. Born in Pakistan, she studied architecture at what is now Oxford Brookes University. She was the first female architect in Pakistan and put her energy into proving herself in the construction industry. During that time she built major projects around her home city of Karachi, one of the largest in the world, including the Taj Mahal (now Regent Plaza) Hotel (1981), The Finance and Trade Center (1989) and Pakistan State Oil House (1991). The schemes verge on the brutalist and are, inevitably, for big corporations and those with money. 'The instruments are in the hands of the 1%,' she says. 'Where is the low impact architecture for the other 99%? Those who live on the margins need more, not less, design,' she said at an RIBA talk earlier this year.

Her return to Pakistan as an architect opened her eyes to different ways of building. And alongside her commercial work she developed expertise in the heritage of the country, helping conserve monuments, including at the World Heritage Site of Makli, and acting as a Unesco advisor. This is what she retired from practice to do in 2000. But what has given her a global profile is how she translated that work into accessible, environmentally friendly construction techniques to help her compatriots – particularly women – help themselves.

Empowering the poorest of Pakistan through design and construction has become her mission. She has particularly addressed the mendicant communities which rely on begging for alms – and often with a focus on the women of those communities. Since commercial retirement she has seen the

Building an emergency shelter: constructing the bamboo structure (**top**); completed, with limecrete walls and matting roof (**above**); and the interior (**right**).

Below The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan led on re-landscaping a street in Karachi with terracotta tiles, made by some of those in most need.

Above from top The process of building skills and making shelters starts with marking out the space on the ground; the bamboo frames are made; local women make the matting; finally the matting is attached to the frame.

devastating 2005 earthquake and significant flooding in 2012. While the impact of climate change has been increasing exponentially, as seen in the floods – 'they are absolutely down to climate change' she says – what she's seen of aid brings no comfort. Recent footage of helicopters dropping flour bags which burst as they hit the ground is to her a symbol of all that is wrong. And the focus on immediate aid needs to go further, to long term rebuilding and ensuring those saved from drowning don't succumb to disease. She doesn't talk about 'climate reparations' as has been mooted, but about the basics of clean water, food and shelter.

Focusing on lime, earth and bamboo, which are all readily available in the region, she has set up a pyramid of training. A small group of individuals are taught how to make lime-stabilised earth blocks and erect bamboo structures from prefabricated panels (with Lari's resolved detailing to reduce flood and seismic risk). These artisans then go and train others, working in clusters of villages. And so it goes on. Thus it creates work and value as well as better homes. 'It is for and by the poor… there's no need to treat everybody like a victim.'

A particular success has been chula – stoves built in limecrete by women for themselves and others. Lari's design for these stoves created more flood-proof cooking spaces and a platform instead of the floor to work on, taking the ideas to remote earthquake hit mountain villages with a team of volunteers. She herself was amazed at the results and delighted as the women began not just to make the stoves but also decorate them. She estimates there are now 80,000 of these stoves. Designs for pots and toilets have also been part of Lari's initiatives, going beyond shelter to the critical elements of making a safe home. Recognition of her work extends to King Charles who has one of her shelters at his Highgrove estate.

She is now over 80 and aware of her personal limitations. She is not driving for hours past landslides and floods to train women herself but concentrating on spreading the word. She has taken up a visiting professorship at Cambridge University's school of architecture. She has a dream of setting up incubators there for trainee architects to experiment for the public good, on climate and humanitarian issues. She firmly believes that larger architectural firms should have pro bono wings. And speaking at TEDx Bath in October she proposed a more immediate way for practices to help with the Pakistan floods with an adopt-a-village programme – although her longer term programmes are now self-sustaining.

'Every country now needs this kind of work. You have homelessness everywhere,' she points out. For the future of environmental extremes that human-made climate change has set in train she believes the need for architectural thinking both locally and globally is even more important. 'How does agriculture work? Do we need floating cities? There is change around the world. Architects must understand what the potential of their work is.' ●

Catch up on Yasmeen Lari's 2022 RIBA lecture on the RIBA's YouTube channel

Below A painted bamboo and limecrete shelter.

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Unexpectedly good vibes

Pamela Buxton discovers the enjoyable meaning of ASMR at the Design Museum's Weird Sensation Feels Good exhibition

ED REEVE FOR THE DESIGN MUSEUM (2)

Right 'that feeling__ immeasureable thirst' (2021) with a salivating tongue from Tobias Bradford.

Lolling around in a landscape of continuous pillows resembling squishy giant intestines, visitors to the exhibition Weird Sensation Feels Good: The World of ASMR are engrossed in an online world of whispers, soothing words and all manner of sounds and tactility, all designed to trigger the 'tingle' of a physical sensation of euphoria or the tranquillity of deep calm.

Held at London's Design Museum, the show is the first in the UK to explore the online interest in ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) which for those not in the know has in recent years become, according to the museum, 'one of the internet's largest cultural movements'.

The show explores and celebrates those creating content designed to induce a sensation of wellbeing in their viewers. This agenda goes hand-in-hand with an increased awareness of mental health and the potential for using ASMR to cope with stress and anxiety, albeit with what may sometimes seem the most unlikely of content. Who knew that an ASMR guide to IKEA storage, complete with its fulsome appreciation of mundane plastic hanging shelves and the gentle chinking of hangers, could be so mesmeric?

Below The squidgy brain-like arena for experiencing ASMR in comfort: the sensations of the internet in physical form.

It's certainly unlike any show I've been to at the Design Museum, or indeed anywhere. I'm aware that I'm rather older than the show's naturally youthful demographic, who seem completely at home with both the content and delivery of the exhibition in the viewing 'arena', where we watch screens and listen with headphones (if you've got dodgy knees, the reclining viewing style may not be for you). But this is also a very good place for digital non-natives to find out what the recent ASMR noise has been about.

The show includes 40 works spanning both intentional and non-intentional ASMR. The intentional is the realm of ASMRtists building their online profile through their ASMR content. Each has their own vocal style and personality, using a binaural recording technique to create a more all-round sensation of sound. Many have a calming, whispered delivery, with pleasing, clear diction, and in conjunction with all manner of props. There's a lot of tapping, touching and stroking to accentuate sensory qualities, whether aural or visual. It is often about slowness, and as the museum puts it 'softness, kindness and empathy'.

I'm particularly drawn to the therapeutic Lonely At The Top (featuring Claire Tolan) by Holly Herndon, a supportive monologue delivered to an imagined spa client. It's full of understanding and affirming content: ' You're a

'There's a lot of tapping, touching and stroking to accentuate sensory qualities, whether aural or visual'

Left A prototype of an artificial skin for a mobile device, The Voice of Touch (2022) by Marc Teyssier.

ED REEVE FOR THE DESIGN MUSEUM (2)

great person', 'Not everyone has your charisma', 'You work so hard' and is strangely soothing.

Among the Visual ASMR exhibits is SHU AND TREE's feel-good content of an especially cute dog having its fur cut in a Korean dog-grooming salon, which seems popular with visitors. Content of a patisserie making process – sieving, mixing, piping, decorating – is another long-watch.

The calming pleasure of observing a meticulous, highly-crafted process is a particular feature of some of the non-intentional exhibits, that weren't produced with ASMR in mind but nonetheless chime with it. This includes the London Review of Books' Lost Art of Paste-Up, which recreates the painstaking process of text paste-up in the pre-digital publishing age. It's very much about the lingering visuals and calm voiceover, not just the satisfying sound of the scalpel as it cuts through the paper.

In a similar vein is a V&A film about the repair of a beaded dress worn by Sandie Shaw for the 1967 Eurovision Song Contest, produced as a demonstration of conservation skills using ASMR techniques. Here, viewers are invited to appreciate the steady expertise of repairing a snagged loop of tiny beads, with each swish of the fabric and chink of the beads captured.

Much of the appeal is in the voice – not just whispering. The BBC's Shipping Forecast, long appreciated by radio listeners for its comforting qualities, makes an appearance as well as 1988 footage of a young Björk talking about the insides of a television in a lilting, engaging voice.

The aforementioned 'Oddly IKEA' content comes in the advertising category, where brands use ASMR knowingly for promotion. Its extended descriptions of furniture and furnishings are a masterclass in engaging and soothing narrative. Virgin Atlantic's much shorter ASMR offers sensory highlights of international travel including the click of the overhead locker, the opening of a champagne bottle, the gentle fizz as its content is poured, even the opening of a mini jar of jam.

Weird Sensation Feels Good: The World of ASMR, until 10 April 2023, Design Museum, 224-238 Kensington High Street, London, W8 6AG

Outside the arena, there a few particularly weird installations – a salivating tongue by artist Tobias Bradford and a repellent looking but squidgy artificial skin prototype for a mobile device created by Marc Teyssier, as well as content by further ASMRtists. The show concludes with a studio, where visitors can create their own content with the help of binaural sound and an array of brushes to use on the microphones, as well as other experiments with sound and texture.

Quirky and fun, this makes for a lively visit. I wasn't sure how it would relate to design at first, but by the end I was persuaded. While the ASMR movement is clearly very much of its time, the exhibition content shows that it is also rooted in universal aspects of design – a celebration of aesthetics, tactility, and an appreciation of good craftsmanship. ●

Below A chance to create those senses yourself in the interactive area designed by Meridians Meet.

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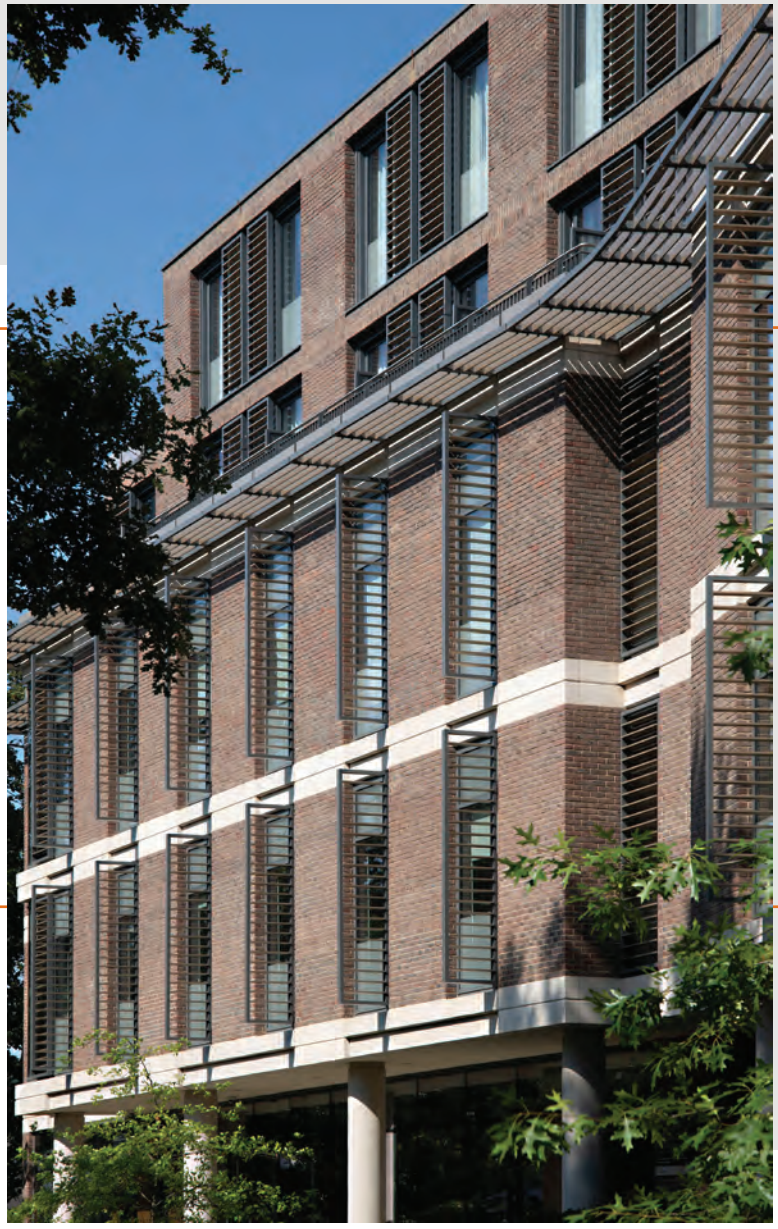

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Architect and activist whose expertise on high-rise safety – from panels to fire – famously began with a tenacious study of Ronan Point and a successful campaign to dismantle it

Sam Webb 1937 – 2022

Sam Webb was an architect, teacher and activist – a champion for justice who will be best remembered for his remarkable, relentless pro bono work as a campaigner for high-rise safety.

Webb graduated from the Polytechnic of North London in 1962, going on to work at Camden Council architects department under Sydney Cook. Six years later the newspapers reported the fatal collapse at Ronan Point, a tower block in Newham, London, which had been completed just two months earlier.

'I was reminded', Webb recalled, 'of those old Hulton Press pictures of paperboys proclaiming the sinking of the Titanic, the Wall Street Crash or the outbreak of war. Each carried banner headlines. "Why? Why? Why?", proclaimed the Evening Standard.' Appalled by what he saw, Webb set out to answer that question through dedicated investigative work that continued after he took a teaching post at Canterbury College of Art (1975-1996), and continued into old age.

After a public inquiry and patchwork repairs to Ronan Point it was judged safe for residents to return, but Webb was unconvinced. Over ensuing years he researched the deficiencies of the factory-made, large-panel-system industrialised designs that had come to dominate building contracts. In the 1980s, he worked with tenants to lobby for Ronan Point to be re-examined. His survey of the block was seismic. He found gaps as wide as a hand where panels were bowing and poorly joined. Wind lifted tenants' carpets, their fish-tanks' waterlines were lopsided, and they could smell food cooking in flats below.

Webb's report refuted the inquiry's insistence that the risk of fire through joint failure was 'remote', leaving Newham Council no choice but to evacuate the block in 1984. Supervising its dismantling, Webb found its joints had been packed with tin cans, old cement bags, newspapers and cigarette packets. One such piece of newspaper was dated 1972: packed during the retrospective 'strengthening'. Sam told me: 'Ronan Point is not just a building, it's a metaphor for the political system we live in.' He was daring, outspoken, and driven by a white-hot sense of justice.

He continued to battle over defects in large-panel-system blocks across Britain into the 1990s. He gave workshops about identifying structural defects at tenant conferences using a large wooden model (held by RIBA) to demonstrate the faulty placement of joints in large-panel systems. 'So', he explained, 'when some pompous engineer or housing officer came and told them their home was as safe as houses, they would innocently ask if he knew how the V3 joint was put together. That took the wind out of his sails.'

Webb was an expert witness advising families of the victims of the Lakanal House fire in 2009, and active in the Grenfell fire investigation in his eighties, as a founder member of the RIBA's Fire Safety Expert Advisory Group and an advisor to the All Party Parliamentary Fire and Rescue Group. In 2018, he co-launched Tower Blocks UK to help high-rise residents lobby over safety concerns.

His critical role in advancing the cause of safety, and long run as a member of the RIBA Council, were acknowledged by an MBE for services to architecture in 2021. He will also be remembered for his enormous warmth and empathy; he took ordinary people's concerns seriously when few others would. He was a gripping storyteller, with a prodigious memory and a terrific sense of humour.

He is survived by three daughters, Rachel, Hannah, and Sarah, and six grandchildren. Sam had been out on his bike to deliver brownies to two of his grandsons the day before he died. ●

Holly Smith is a PhD candidate working on the history of high rise at University College London

IN MEMORIAM

John Bruford Stubbs
ELECTED 1956, LONDON

John Arthur Turner
ELECTED 1972, FRANCE

Mark Girouard
HONORARY FELLOW 1980

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Talent should be recognised

RISING STARS 2022

RISING STARS

RIBA | origin DOORS AND WINDOWS

2022

INCREMENTAL URBANISM

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

This fascinating cohort of 2022 Rising Stars raises the question of what an architect is. The variety of skills and expertise and the energy applied to pursuing the passions and causes, often alongside remarkable project work, puts paid to any quick characterisation of the profession. The annual RIBAJ Rising Stars, in association with Origin Doors and Windows, also gives a chance to explore some new answers. The judges spotted an entrepreneurial spirit that will stand this cohort in good stead in the complex social and economic situation of today.

Local authority architecture has not, of late, been seen as the home for pushing the boundaries of architecture but Betty Owoo at Barking and Dagenham's regeneration company, Be First London, shows how working with planning, local history and local people can be brought together in an exciting mix. There are pairings of like-minded clients and architects, notably Charlie Palmer with community builders in Plymouth. There is Jonathan Naylor at Grimshaw who has dedicated himself to a building material, bamboo, that could bring huge socio-economic benefits to societies in the global south.

Naylor also exemplifies a shift we are seeing from early-career architects away from pushing to embed sustainability in general into their practice processes, and instead delivering it on the ground through retrofit and Passive House projects and with materials like bamboo. We are seeing sustainability missions maturing into technical expertise. Add to this the cohorts' contribution to promoting the inclusion of all voices and you have a compelling testament to this generation.

Eleanor Young, editor, RIBA Journal

As a longstanding supporter of the RIBA, Origin is thrilled to be able to continue championing the Rising Stars competition. Encouraging and celebrating talent of all sorts, it recognises emerging players in the architectural ecosystem.

2022 marks Origin's 20th anniversary, and within this time, we have become one of the most successful British manufacturers in the world, excelling in both product design and manufacture, now offering a full-house solution for maximising glazing both internally and externally.

Given the fresh thinking that this year's entrants have shown, it fills us with optimism that the future of the architectural and building industry will be in very safe hands that will continue to innovate and push boundaries.

We've loved working with the team as they have all demonstrated a strong sense of collaboration, diversity, enthusiasm and passion, so it's been fantastic to witness and be a part of.

Ben Brocklesby, sales and marketing director, Origin

THE 2022 JUDGES

Hiba Alobaydi
Assistant editor, Foster + Partners, Rising Star 2021

Angela Crowther
Associate director, Arup

Fergus Feilden
Co-founder, Feilden Fowles

Selina Mason
Director of masterplanning, Lendlease

Matt Rumble
Strategic head of regeneration & development, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Eleanor Young
Editor, RIBA Journal (chair)

Produced by RIBA Journal
Editor: Eleanor Young
Words: Eleanor Young and Pamela Buxton
Designer: Linda Byrne
Sub-editor: Simon Aldous

JOHN NAYLOR

PASSIONATE ADVOCATE FOR THE USE OF BAMBOO

Architect, Grimshaw Architects

Part 1: 2009 Part 2: 2013

Below Raising a bamboo structure at partner Wynne Farm Ecological Reserve, Haiti. **Bottom right** Bamboo student project from Haiti AA visiting school in 2016.

JOHN NAYLOR

'An exceptional architect,' says Naylor's referee, Jolyon Brewis, a partner at Grimshaw Architects. 'Not least through his ability to lead complex projects and contribute to the design of excellent buildings.' That is particularly high praise when Naylor has spent much of his spare time and his drive on bringing bamboo to the fore as a sustainable and economic solution for the tropics in Haiti, Myanmar and Indonesia.

Bamboo has become Naylor's passion and expertise. He started by trying to address the disastrous man-made impacts of Haiti's deforestation by suggesting a shift to a timber-generating economy for his final year Architectural Association project. But he was soon converted to bamboo. The publicity when he won the RIBA's Norman Foster Travelling Scholarship meant others involved in bamboo reached out to him. 'Enfranchising minimally processed local materials such as bamboo can have a profound impact in providing lightweight buildings and fostering environmental regeneration,' he says.

Using the form of AA visiting schools, subsidising local students with fee-paying international students, he ran workshops in Haiti from 2014 to 2017 with an increasing emphasis on construction. The Haiti students developed their own expertise, returning to teach the programme themselves. One of the students has now founded a bamboo NGO in Haiti and has a bamboo project on site.

Naylor, meanwhile, moved to Singapore where he used bamboo in mainstream practice. Working with the Bandung Institute of Technology he developed a global programme design, combining material knowledge with design methods and software.

'The innovation of students is developing a new design approach for bamboo,' he says. 'Local designers innovating for local materials are critical for long-term change. Over 200 students have completed workshops in Haiti, Myanmar, Indonesia and Panama, going on to use and advocate for bamboo in their own work, finding employment, leading reforestation activities and organising their own workshops.'

This interest has now evolved into a PhD at Newcastle University, focusing on how designers can overcome the sociological barriers to bamboo in construction. At Grimshaw, his work has been on infrastructure projects and Eden Project Qingdao in China. His referee also commends him for his 'contribution to practice culture'. It is clear that his practical, and now academic knowledge, on this regenerative material is feeding into the work of others in practice.

Judge Selina Mason said: 'He's exploring materials we know are part of the future, and the more people like him involved in researching and establishing how they should be used the better. He's carving into a new world of materials.'

What piece of architecture or placemaking do you most admire and why?
I admired Grimshaw's Waterloo Station International Terminal before studying architecture. Today, I believe the lessons from this building and the pioneering use of algorithmic design is a blueprint for how we can recalibrate our design methods for timber and bamboo efficiently and practically. The attention to – and celebration of – connections is also a lesson for how we need to approach building with bamboo. Demonstrating a kit of parts, design for replacement, modularity, offsite construction, ease of joinery inspection are all concepts we need to embed in the 21st century to design with timber and bamboo.

HSU MYAT AUNG, SCHNIGHTDY AZILIEN, JUNIOR EMMANUE

DANIEL INNES

CAMPAIGNER AND ACTIVIST FOR LGBT+ ARCHITECTS

Architectural assistant, Dominic McKenzie Architects

Part 1: 2018 Part 2: 2021

'The profession needs activists like this to bring about change,' said judge Selina Mason about Daniel Innes, a committee member of grassroots campaigning group Architecture LGBT+.

Innes studied at the University of Bath and the Royal College of Art and has just began his Part 3 while working at Dominic McKenzie Architects. He recently set up Architecture LGBT+ Life Drawing, a travelling life drawing programme which aims to foster cross-practice dialogue among LGBT+ architects by providing monthly free life drawing sessions as a space to network and socialise.

His own involvement in Architecture LGBT+ was informed by his feelings of isolation when working at a practice where there were no LGBT+ role models, and by the positive collaborative experience he had entering a competition to design the Architecture LGBT+ float for Pride.

'You ought to be able to bring your whole self to work,' he says. 'At some point I realised how much energy I was expending to mask for fear of outing myself. It was exhausting.'

Innes is passionate about the important role that Architecture LGBT+ plays as a 'safety net' of industry level representation for LGBT+ architects and designers, and sees the drawing initiative as creating a much needed additional LGBT+ space.

His activism has, he says, given his own practice 'a great sense of meaningfulness and community'. As a designer with ADHD, he also participated in the Invisible Tales event at the London Festival of Architecture. Co-organised by Jordan Whitewood-Neal (*see page 104*) this aimed to amplify the voices of disabled architects and designers in the UK. Innes is particularly interested in how architectural education could do more to help support them. He will be furthering this discussion in a RIBA Future Architects in Conversation podcast.

'He's definitely raising issues that have been under cover for too long, and doing so effectively and imaginatively,' said judge and RIBA Journal editor Eleanor Young.

What existing building, place and problem would you most like to tackle? I'd like to see a radical rethinking of discussions around public toilets in the UK. Their scarcity has been compounded by funding cuts and the pandemic, not to mention the expansion of privately owned public space, which further gatekeeps what is in reality a crucial public service.

Above and left
Architecture LGBT+ life drawing event, held at Stanton Williams.

CREDIT

STEVE MCCLOY AND BONGANI MUCHEMWA

ARCHITECTS AND EDUCATORS INVOLVED IN SOME NOTABLE COLLABORATIONS

Directors, McCloy + Muchemwa

Part 1: 2011 Part 2: 2013

What would you most like to tackle? We are driven most by work that engages the public and finds new possibilities for function and aesthetics. We don't really consider ourselves as 'problem solving' architects – we speculate, reimagine, and involve ourselves in longer conversations. We draw nicely. We're really into the conceptualisation and representation of our (sometimes fragile) ideas. We'd like to work internationally too, and our recent projects in Africa are very exciting!

Judge Fergus Feilden was particularly drawn to this joint entry. 'They have a really strong vibe and a clear voice,' he said. 'They clearly work incredibly well together. Their work is fun, playful, and graphically super strong.' Drawing from their joint experiences at leading design practices, they have been working together with 'tentative steps' in practice.

Recent collaborations have almost brought about 'life-changing' commissions too. An invitation from Purcell and Diller Scofidio + Renfro took them to the shortlist for the Barbican Renewal project, and they have also been exploring mass housing with CZWG. Their garden building, the Orangery, in Norwich has brought nascent clients to their door. And next up for completion is a display at the V&A South Kensington.

They are already highly valued for their roles in education, lecturing, mentoring and guiding direction at four universities. Bongani is trustee of the arts charity BEAM while McCloy's Once Upon a China with Bartlett professor CJ Lim was published in 2021.

'There's a real breadth to their careers and they are making their own waves already,' said Feilden.

Below Competition scheme for Castle Park housing in Bristol with CZWG.

HAZE VIZ

MICHELLE MARTIN

ORGANISING INSIGHTFUL ON-SITE TRAINING IN CONSERVATION

Director of Live Site Leaning CIC and Live Site Studio

Part 1: 2011 Part 2: 2013

Michelle Martin knows from experience how hard it can be to gain practical, on-site experience, both while a student and in practice as an architect specialising in conservation. Her response has been to set up Live Site Learning CIC, a not-for-profit organisation providing on-site learning in existing heritage buildings.

'My objective is to provide knowledge and opportunity for people to make better informed decisions when in practice,' she says.

The initiative, aimed at both students and construction industry professionals, seeks to give an insight into the roles involved in conservation, and to help participants read, approach and understand heritage buildings by learning from others in the sector. This may involve hands-on experience, such as masonry repair or lime pointing, encouraging a respect for the many craft skills involved.

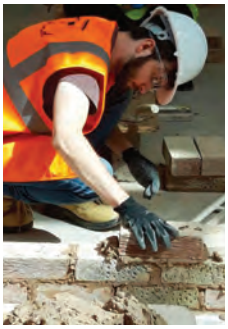
'As a female architect specialising in conservation, I understand the challenges working and studying within the construction industry,' she says. 'The reality of going on site can be quite daunting. I try to encourage students and young professionals to gain such experience and converse with other members of the industry, to try to build confidence and demystify the process.' It is also important to empower people to be part of the rejuvenation of their local heritage, she adds.

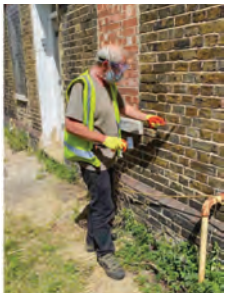
Live Site Learning CIC collaborates with owners of heritage buildings that can be used as learning resources. Venues include the Grade II listed Hope Foundry in Leeds and the Heritage & Arts Centre Bow in east London.

Martin is also a director of the Live Site Learning CIC's sister architectural practice Live Site Studio in Huddersfield.

Live Site Learning impressed the judges as a valuable and highly unusual initiative. 'Students get very little exposure to sites, and they learn so much when they do,' said Fergus Feilden, while Hiba Alobaydi said: 'Michelle is an example of an individual who has made real tangible and sustainable change to the industry.'

What piece of architecture or placemaking do you most admire and why? I admire initiatives such as Arkitrek, which gives architecture students opportunity to design with local communities to provide immediate solutions to communities that do not have the resource to do so.





LSLSCIC

Top left Live Site Learning summer school with participants from Leeds Beckett University.
Middle Students tour the Hope Foundry in Leeds.
Bottom Live Site Learning in action at the Heritage & Arts Centre in Bow, east London.

JOSH FOSTER

BLOG FOUNDER SHOWCASING AND SUPPORTING ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

Founder of The Architecture Student Blog and Foster Architecture & Design

Part 1: 2016 Part 2: 2019

Aged just 27, Josh Foster runs both his own practice in Shropshire and international student platform the Architecture Student Blog.

He set up the blog five years ago as a way for students to showcase their projects at the end of their degrees. This 'passion project' has grown to include YouTube tutorials plus free assets and advice for students, and claims a community of over 115,000 people.

'In the future I hope to author a book as a how-to guide for architecture students, taking them right from their first day of studying through to starting their own practice,' says Foster, who studied at De Montfort University.

Judges commented on the high standard of work showcased on the blog.

'His blog is a really interesting platform,' said Fergus Feilden. 'The standard of work on it was pretty good. I bet people use it for recruiting. All of that is very impressive.'

Foster's recently established practice focuses on bespoke residential design, including adaptation projects for disabled clients. He expects it to turn over more than £100,000 in its first year.

He has a particular interest in the role that architecture can have on health and wellbeing, and was nominated for the RIBA Silver Medal for his thesis on a cancer rehabilitation centre. His goal is to realise this project in his hometown.

Judge Hiba Abolaydi described Foster as representing 'the perfect example of a modern Renaissance architect' through his various activities.

'He serves as a great blueprint for practice,' she added.

JOSH FOSTER

What existing building, place and problem would you most like to tackle? I am passionate about removing the gatekeeping mentality that has plagued the architecture profession for decades. I believe we can change the narrative by providing opportunities for young professionals to have their voices heard and make a difference in their communities. I want to use my platform to provide access to work for young professionals, and an enhanced process for students to become chartered architects.

Above and below The Architectural Placebo, Josh Foster's dissertation for his Part 2 at De Montfort University, which investigated how healing methodologies could be integrated into design.

JOSH FOSTER

JORDAN WHITEWOOD-NEAL

LEADING RESEARCH, CONVERSATION AND ACTION FOR DISABILITY JUSTICE

Architectural researcher, educator, and co-founder of disability research collective Dis/

Part 1: 2017 Part 2: 2020

'The architectural discipline has in the last few years finally begun to address race and gender inequities, but disability always trails behind,' says Jordan Whitewood-Neal, who is doing his best do change this through an impressive array of activities.

He describes himself as an architectural researcher and soft activist who wants to effect change through research. He is also an educator and co-founder of nascent disability research collective Dis/, drawing on his own experiences as a wheelchair user.

By leading research, conversation and action for disability justice in education and practice, he hopes to raise the profile of disabled people within the profession.

'A fundamental issue in architectural practice is a scarcity of disabled architects and designers,' he says. 'There are very few in practice.'

Having recently completed his second master's degree – an MRes at the University of Brighton – he is co-leading a design think tank at the London School of Architecture, exploring the retrofit of cultural infrastructure for disabled and ageing communities. This will tackle the often integral tension between retrofit and ensuring accessibility for both individuals and communities. He combines this and other academic roles with part-time work in practice, and is also an Architecture Foundation Young Trustee.

Dis/ is being formulated with co-founders James Zatka-Haas and Anna Curzon Price. It was shaped by the Invisible Tales event at the London Festival of Architecture, where physically disabled and neuro-diverse creatives shared their experiences of navigating cities – stories that Whitewood-Neal says are usually 'completely untold'.

Dis/ is hoping to pair disabled architectural researchers with disabled people from outside the profession to help them develop their agency to talk critically about the city and their needs. In doing so, it hopes to encourage consideration of disability as a critical part of the design process as well as challenging the perceived homogeneity of disability.

'He has profile,' said judge Eleanor Young. 'We can already see him making a difference to the way disability is talked about in projects and within the profession.'

NANA AMA

Above New Architecture Writers' Language Barriers event, co-organised by Jordan Whitewood-Neal, tackled the barriers and future of architectural discourse.

AA PHOTO LIBRARY, PHOTOGRAPH BY VALERIE BENNETT

Below Jordan Whitewood-Neal's research includes the place disability holds at the Architectural Association. Pictured: AA Diploma School technical studies tutor Andrew Walker shown giving a tutorial to students in 1988.

What existing building, place and problem would you most like to tackle? With my research addressing both the social and spatial barriers to architectural education for disabled students, I would most like to tackle the spaces and pedagogies within architecture schools. My dream project would be addressing the complex spaces that make up the Architectural Association's Bedford Square. As a series of ever-changing spaces that have grown into adjacent buildings over the last century, the building presents a challenge for both designers and the AA's governance, which I believe can only be overcome by collaboration between the school and disabled people.

FARHANA JIWA

PROMOTING SOCIAL VALUE INITIATIVES AND ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO PURSUE AN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Architect, JTP

Part 1: 2016 Part 2: 2019

Judge Hiba Alobaydi applauded Jiwa's 'hand-on approach to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion'. As Jiwa's referee JTP partner Nigel Bidwell says, she brings a 'heightened social awareness' to the projects she works on and is also opening the doors to the industry to others, 'inspiring future generations'.

This is visible in the practice 's internal workings, with Jiwa developing its EDI policy and taking on the role of EDI chair, and beyond in her proactive contribution to setting up the practice's social value initiatives including outreach events with schools and the local community and working with Blueprint for All (previously the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust).

'My involvement as a BAME woman with JTP's ongoing outreach with the Mulberry School for Girls in Shadwell has been particularly valuable,' she says. 'Our ambition is to encourage hundreds of young people, especially girls, to break the barrier and pursue higher education in architecture or the wider profession.'

Jiwa explains how her own background has influenced her path through a master's degree in architecture and town planning. 'Growing up in a less-developed country where the lack of quality infrastructure is an issue, I developed a desire to improve people's quality of life,' she says.

The judges acknowledged this work, with Selina Mason remarking: 'She's using her position in JTP to promote better outcomes for architecture.'

What would you most like to tackle? I want to tackle social isolation and loneliness in the city. I have witnessed the potential for architecture to nurture our collective wellbeing and welfare. My interest therefore lies in creating places that are inclusive and inviting, while fostering a sense of belonging and communal ownership.

Left Community bulb planting at Swedenborg Gardens, Tower Hamlets, London where JTP is one of the partners in improving the gardens.

Below Jiwa leading a JTP studio tour for students of the Mulberry School for Girls.

BETTY OWOO

MAKING THE PUBLIC REALM AND ARCHITECTURE OPEN TO UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Architectural designer, Be First London

Part 1: 2017 Part 2: 2020

Betty Owoo is the one in the room most likely to say 'Let's do it!', ensuring the idea becomes reality. By day she works for Be First London – Barking and Dagenham's regeneration arm – where in the last six months she has led on resident engagement sessions and written a large part of the Ideal Home Charter, based on those sessions. In the same period she has led on a Levelling Up Fund bid for an experiential food hall in Barking town centre, leading design up to RIBA Stage 1. And since May she has been researching the 26,000-house Becontree estate in east London so that a new design code there can be grounded in extensive knowledge of the interwar building stock and how it has been modified by residents.

She was a trustee at the Architecture Foundation Young Trustees for three years, for the last year as a co-chair. Early collaborations included contributions to the foundation's phenomenal 100 Day Studio at the start of the first Covid lockdown with events on climate and the experience of people of colour. She wants to make the public realm and architecture open to underrepresented groups and to hear their stories, which she has done by helping set up walking tours in Brixton and Walworth.

Above A Civic Rituals walking tour in Brixton, curated by Owoo.

BEX LIU

Below Owoo and collaborate Quincy Harper on their Water, water everywhere bench for the Royal Docks, made of resin encapsulating the rubbish found in the Thames.

LUKE DONOVAN

What problem would you most like to tackle? Living in a city during the pandemic brought into sharp relief just how vital access to high-quality urban green space is, and how access to this kind of space is a political as well as an architectural issue. I would love to expand on London's National Park City status to ensure that its most diverse neighbourhoods (which are often those with the least access to nature) have more green spaces for people to participate in nature closer to their homes.

She was part of the 2021 cohort of New Architecture Writers, taking architectural discourse beyond the lecture hall into a dinner party form and then a multimedia experience with When I Get Home. This has morphed into working with the same group as the PATCH collective with the most recent event, Holding Space, on the art of hosting in migrant and ethnic communities.

Be First London associate director Amandeep Singh Kalra, , who also worked with Owoo chairing the Architecture Foundation's Young Trustees, offers high recommendation: 'She's quietly confident and humble in her exceptional work, whether leading design studies that support £25 million funding applications, or balancing the voices of trustees to create a focused approach in platforming underrepresented voices.'

Judge Angela Crowther commented: 'I think she's great. She's championing some really important causes.'

JO SHARPLES

PROTAGONIST FOR SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SHOPFRONT STUDIO

Architect/director, Editional Studio

Part 1: 2011 Part 2: 2014

'Jo was a student of mine 10 years ago,' writes Jo Sharples' referee Peter St John of Caruso St John Architects, 'and she stood out then as a talented designer and good communicator, full of energy and optimism. She has done what an interesting young architect has to do, which is to start from scratch, take a position and make it work. Her beautiful shopfront office and gallery in Manchester is just what a young architect should do to meet and inspire local people.'

Sharples co-founded Editional Studio in 2018. A shopfront office has given the practice a chance to open its doors and talk about making people's homes more sustainable. An RIBA-funded research project Decarbonise Your House Now! resulted in an exhibition and a publication they can share more widely with locals and other practices. It has had over 200 downloads – impressive for a small practice.

These principles are born out in the studio's sole new-build project, Shady Nook, being built to the Passive House standard. Sharples gained Passive House accreditation in 2021 and this project, oak-clad on a steep site in ancient woodland with a roof of recycled aluminium and solar panels, is on course to meet not only those requirements but also the RIBA 2030 Challenge. It aims to be net carbon zero. Her MArch studio at Sheffield University aims to have the same interrogation of business as usual as she herself demonstrates.

Judge Selina Mason commented: 'She's an example of the new activist professional who uses their profession to make a difference. She seems resolute and fearless.'

Left A poster for the exhibition Decarbonise Your House Now!

Below Shady Nook's elevated living room makes the most of the sun where it is. All good sense in a Passive House design.

Left At the launch of Decarbonise Your House Now! in 2021.

What existing building, place and problem would you most like to tackle?
Community Land Trust in Chorlton, Manchester, approached us to help save a local landmark theatre, being used as a funeral parlour by the Co-op, and set for demolition and redevelopment. We made a model and drawings that showed what a centre point for civic life the building could become. We hosted an exhibition about it and were part of a community effort that raised £350,000 to buy the building, which despite everything is still not secured.

GEORGIA COLLARD-WATSON

BREAKING DOWN STIGMA OVER MENTAL HEALTH

Associate and global wellbeing lead, Grimshaw

Part 1: 2011 Part 2: 2014

What piece of architecture or placemaking do you most admire and why? As a Brightonian, being beside water imparts an uplifting, safe feeling to me, and having worked in London for the past eight years, the river path from Bankside to South Bank has become my second spiritual home. Generally, I believe placemaking and public realm is most successful when it's accessible, activated, and alive.

Below Working with students at the National Saturday Club, led by Scale Rule at Tate Exchange.

Below right. HS2 Euston Station concept design. Georgia Collard-Watson has extensive experience leading complex infrastructure and transport-led masterplans.

MAGNUS ANDERSSON.

As global wellbeing lead, Grimshaw associate Georgia Collard-Watson has been instrumental in developing the practice's health and wellbeing agenda across all its studios.

'Her initiatives have been transformative in breaking down stigma and putting health and wellbeing at the heart of our projects and studio culture,' says her referee, Grimshaw partner Neill McClements.

Collard-Watson joined the practice in 2014 and, in addition to her leadership on complex infrastructure and transport-led projects, has established Grimshaw's health and wellbeing team, using her lived experiences of ulcerative colitis and its subsequent mental health impacts to help foster a culture of non-judgmental understanding and support.

Initiatives included Mind Blown, in which she and colleagues talked about their experiences of mental ill-health, driving positive change. She developed a global framework for wellbeing initiatives, and also championed Grimshaw's A Day for Us in which all the practice's studios closed for World Mental Health Day.

During the pandemic, Collard-Watson instigated a month-long initiative, calling each member of staff for one-to-one 'are you OK?' conversations. Beyond the practice, as part of the Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum, she led the development of the AMWF Covid-19 Support Toolkit.

Judges praised her particularly for talking about her own experiences in order to drive changes in attitudes to health and wellbeing. 'Being willing to stand in front of your peers and talk about that to move the situation forward shows leadership and strength,' said Selina Mason.

GRIMSHAW

CHARLIE PALMER

CHAMPIONING PARTICIPATORY, COMMUNITY DESIGN

Director, Incremental Urbanism

Part 1: 2012 Part 2: 2015

'It's really notable Charlie Palmer's reference was from a client,' said judge Angela Crowther. And what a reference. Hannah Sloggett, co-founder of Nudge Community Builders says: 'He has developed original practical and deliverable solutions to challenges we face as a community and pushed us to aspire and prioritise areas we hadn't before.'

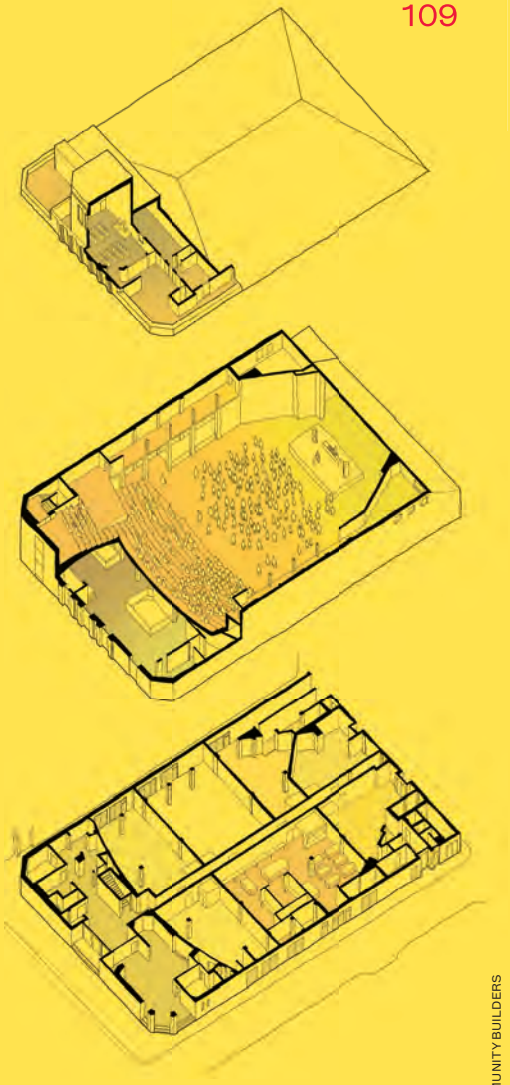
Palmer has a background in humanitarian work, working on a land rights and settlement upgrading project the Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission in India as an architect with the Norman Foster Foundation. He used participatory design to help locals relocate away from destruction by the next cyclone, walking the streets to identify volunteer locals, then working ideas and practical issues with them such as the need to move boundaries and layout infrastructure.

How might these methods - participatory planning, lean development models, early testing and flexible ways of working - apply to the UK? As with his RIBA Foster Travelling Fellowship research into cycling, he found that it was active individuals rather than infrastructure that created positive change.

Back in the UK he set up Incremental Urbanism and took his skills to Oxford Brookes University where he has widened the geographical scope of students' live projects, including to Plymouth where he grew up. One of these projects, with Nudge, turned into a longer-term collaborative relationship for his practice. It is working to bring up buildings in the city's Stonehouse area, taking ownership and developing projects as a community land bank. His 'mistressplan' with them is due to be published shortly.

Other projects include working with a residents association on public space in Oxford, and a recent competition entry for the contentious Mackies site in Belfast for the Take Back the City Coalition. 'It's the first time an architect has taken time to understand us rather than impose a "way things are done",' says client Sloggett.

Judge Fergus Fielden praised Palmer for his 'integrity' while Matt Rumble said: 'He shows strong leadership skills and determination. He's really innovative and entrepreneurial.'



Above Sketch of the Millennium Building, Union Street, Plymouth for Nudge Community Builders.

Below Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission, India.

INCREMENTAL URBANISM AND NUDGE COMMUNITY BUILDERS

What piece of placemaking do you most admire and why?

A great example of people-centered placemaking is the What Walworth Wants report and the changes made on East Street by We Made That. The report identified projects which could improve the street and support the wider community. It is very user-friendly and breaks down the barriers of top-down planning. The projects were subtle yet fun and have enhanced the identity of the place while boosting local pride.

NORMAN FOSTER FOUNDATION AND TATA TRUSTS

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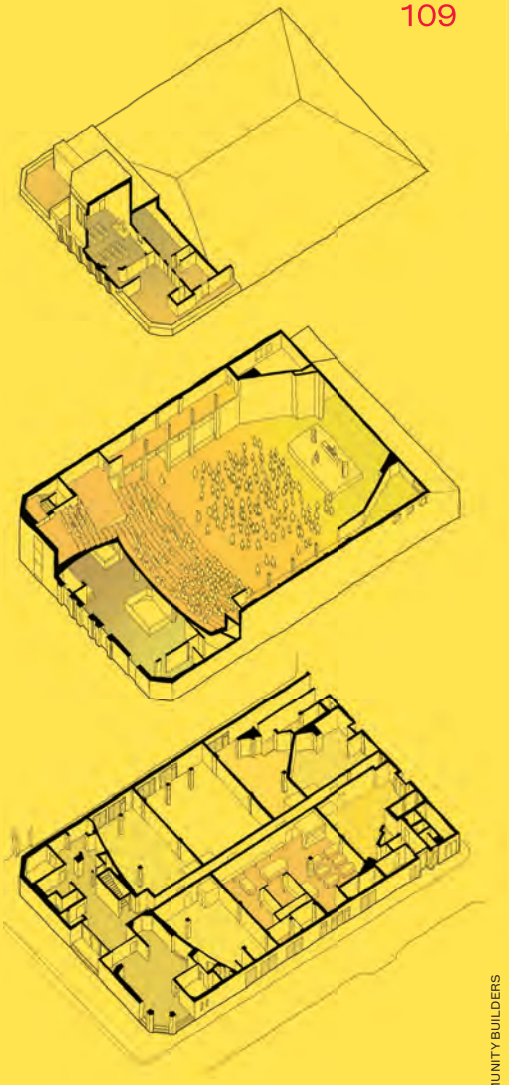

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NORMAN FOSTER FOUNDATION AND TATA TRUSTS

JENNIFER DYNE

LEADING DAVID KOHN'S ONE-OFF HOUSES TEAM AND PROVIDING A ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN AT THE PRACTICE

Jennifer Dyne, associate, David Kohn Architects

Part 1: 2011 Part 2: 2014

When she was young, Jennifer Dyne wanted to be an estate agent so she could spend her time 'noseying around people's houses'. Instead, she went on to study architecture while retaining her childhood fascination with houses – her thesis at the Bartlett explored the idea of bunkers as homes. Now 33, she is an associate at David Kohn Architects (DKA) where she leads the one-off houses team. She has overseen delivery of Red House in Dorset, longlisted for RIBA House of the Year, and has five other projects on the go.

Her role at DKA is clearly integral to its post-lockdown growth – not just in terms of the houses team, but to the practice overall, where she is part of the senior team shaping practice development. This included leading on the introduction of the CMap practice management system in 2019 – 'I was the CMap queen,' she recalls.

David Kohn calls her a 'fantastic role model for driving innovation' in the practice. 'Jen has been instrumental in leading this growth and is shaping the future of the practice,' he says.

Above Drawing of Red House by David Kohn Architects.

What existing building, place and problem would you most like to tackle? I would love to design an innovative village — a collection of houses within a picturesque rural setting that could be composed like a landscape painting.

Dyne took on the role of contract administrator as well as project architect for Red House, developing systems and strategies that are now in use across the practice. She now hopes to empower others in the team with the knowledge she gained during the process.

'Navigating a project of this scale and complexity has also made me a role model for others within the practice,' she says, 'especially for women, who can find construction sites disheartening with outdated attitudes.'

Judges were impressed by her all-round contribution to DKA, where she is the most senior architect in Kohn's team. 'She shows strong leadership and has helped bring about transformation in the practice,' said Fergus Feilden.

THE RISING STARS 2022 SHORTLIST

Richard Keys, ByOthers
Masterbuilder with ambition

Jennifer McLoughlin, Grimshaw
Injecting project management processes

James O'Brien, O'Brien Van der Steen Workshops
Sensitive projects, strong ideas

Yohance Harper, Quadrant Estates
Impactful property entrepreneur

Dan Renoso-Urmston, O-RU
Striking out courageously in practice

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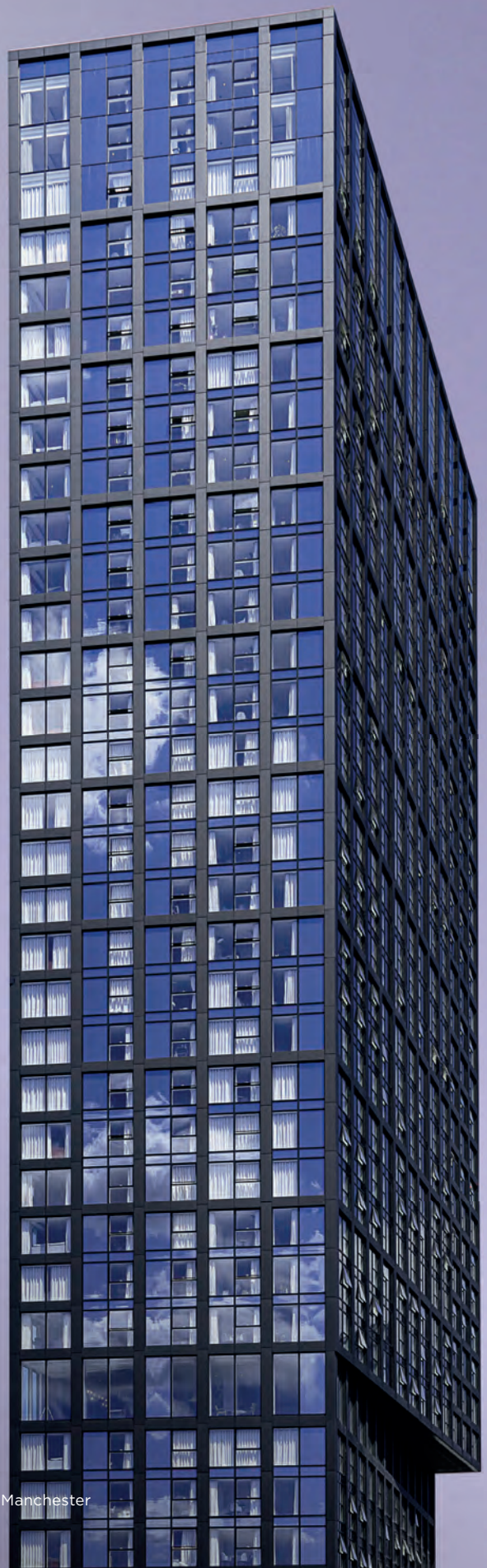

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Exchange

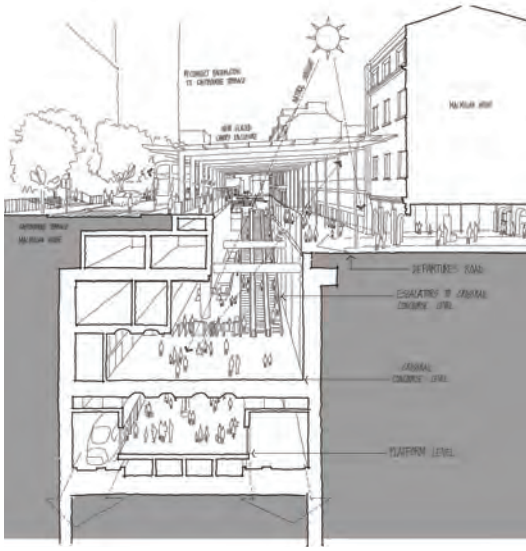
The 'rules' of UK housebuilding

I enjoyed Hana Loftus's plea for a plan-led planning system (RIBAJ October 2022), and I am in general agreement with its sentiment. However, in my experience developments approved at appeal in the absence of a 'five-year land supply' (5YLS) are very similar to those approved by planning committees having passed through the 'proper' local plan process. The lack of a 5YLS may allow an inspector to grant a permission on land outside a development boundary, but only if its location is otherwise 'sustainable', and to maximise their chances of success most housebuilders will comply with all other requirements placed on them by the local plan.

The really depressing fact is that the local plan process allows, even encourages, the ubiquitous 'modern vernacular' of almost all new housing developments. The modern housing estate is a finely tuned response to a fairly limited set of 'rules' – see below. Any architect thinking of diving into the speculative housing sector should be aware of these rules, and should not expect them to be set aside easily by their house-builder client or by the local planning authority. I would venture that any housing development standing out as well-designed has probably benefited from one or more of these rules being set aside. One thing that the best examples seem to have in common (the Great Estates of London, Edinburgh and Bath, the Garden City new-towns, inter-war 'Homes for Heroes', the SPAN estates, Milton Keynes, Derwenthorpe, Eddington) is the vision of a legacy-aware developer whose business model is to stay involved and share in the long-term value-growth of a well-made place. And they are very rare birds indeed!

Matt Wood, Wymondham, Norfolk

→ National PLC housebuilders will seek to maximise sales values and minimise build costs. Most smaller regional housebuilders will too.
→ Most housebuilders take their profit out of each site quickly to help capitalise their next project. Dwellings are sold freehold, the local authority 'adopts' public space. The housebuilder has no long-term interest in the development.
→ Detached houses are generally worth more than semis or end-terrace units, which in turn are worth more than mid-terrace units, particularly for larger units.
→ Suburban minimum parking rates are usually set by local policies (2 or 3 spaces per unit). Until public transport is improved, residents will need parking.
→ Visibility at junctions, speed control and access for municipal vehicles all directly influence road size and geometry, according to local highways rules. And most will adopt only the most basic road surfaces and street-lighting.
→ Most local 'design' guidance emphases 'local distinctiveness' which makes 'neo-traditional' design the path of least resistance. The new emphasis on locally approved Design Codes seem likely to reinforce this preference.
→ Both housebuilders and planners seem to prefer visual variety over visual continuity. For housebuilders and punters it means 'individuality' while planners see it as 'interesting' streetscapes and social inclusion.
→ The default density is 25-30 dwellings per hectare. A minimum density of 35dpha was set out in 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' to make well-serviced, mixed-use, walkable neighbourhoods. But notional targets around 30dpha persist because they make 'good use of land' and can deliver a sort of 'village-y' feel – plus-points for housebuilders and LPAs. Higher densities give a more urban feel – which housebuilders don't like.
→ Almost all housebuilders see trees and green spaces as building costs for the developer, and a long-term maintenance cost for the adopting authority. Any long-term value created for adjacent dwellings accrues to their owners, rather than the housebuilder or local authority's wider tax-payers.



WESTON WILLIAMSON & PARTNERS

Marks on paper

I was delighted to see fine hand drawings illustrating the new Elizabeth line Paddington station (RIBAJ August 2022). Credit to you for including them when there are photos of the real thing and computer drawings. No other station in the magazine is so well illustrated. It neatly complements the Eye Line drawings in the same issue and it proves that making marks on paper is fundamental to architecture.

Hugh Crawford, Ceredigion

Zero hours

Aziz Mirza's article on salaries fails to appreciate the prevailing trend for zero hours contractors on project-based fixed fees. Working from home yields benefits to the employer while limiting the architect's hourly pay to an average of £10-£12.50 for highly skilled BIM technical design. Get real.

UK ARB architect, name withheld

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ARCHITECTURAL PRESS ARCHIVE / RIBA COLLECTIONS

House Nakatenus , Bernhard Pfau
Dusseldorf, Germany, 1945-1955

Although little known in Britain, Bernhard Pfau (1902-1989) is considered a modern master in his native Germany. He began his career in the inter-war period, working for Bruno Paul in Berlin and then for Josef Hoffman and Josef Frank in Vienna, before setting up his own practice in Dusseldorf in 1930. His early work, in collaboration with his wife, the designer Lotte Fink, included primarily shop designs and then, increasingly, residential projects. Two of his houses were included by Raymond McGrath in his book of 1934, 'Twentieth-century Houses'. The most productive phase of Pfau's career belongs to the post-war period, during which he designed his best-known buildings – the House of Glass Industry (1948-51) and the Schauspielhaus (1959-69), both in Dusseldorf. In the same city is the House Nakatenus (1954-55), listed as a historical monument since 2004. On the garden side, 3m by 3m insulating glass panes allowed an almost complete opening to the garden. The steel window frames – unusual at the time in a domestic setting – produced (as remarked in the Architect's Journal) 'an effect of extreme lightness and simplicity'. ● **Valeria Carullo**

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Search Oscar Evo-Blade on YouTube to find out more.

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