

Lighthouse, a beacon for children's homes
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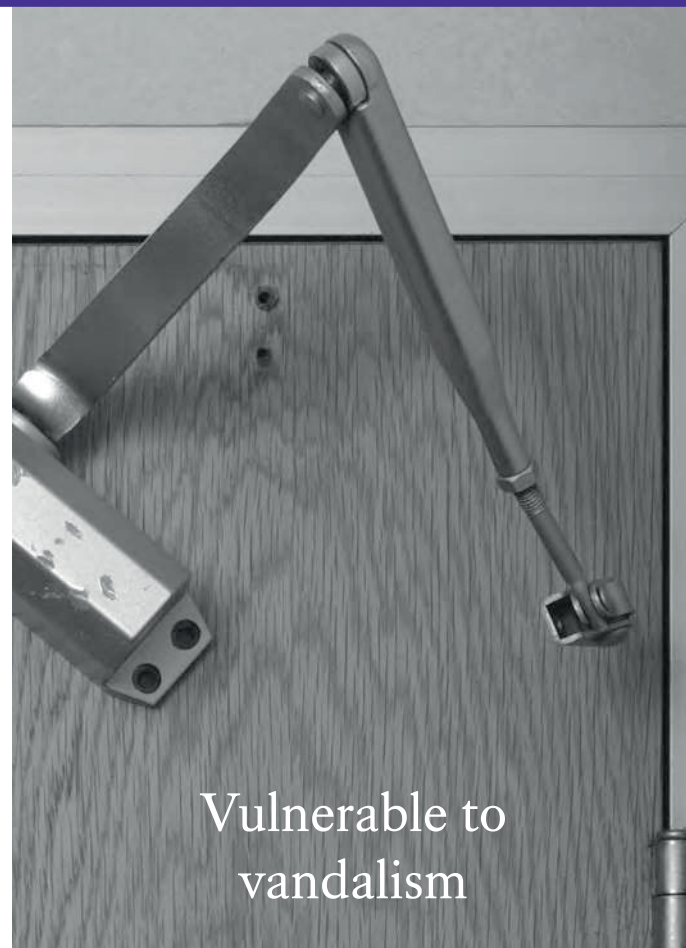
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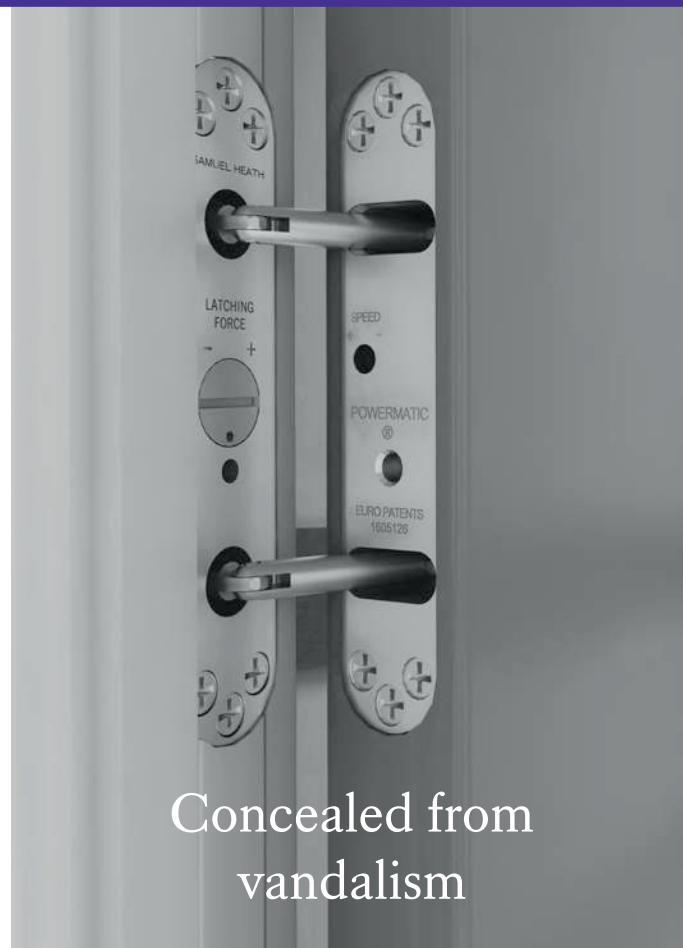
High ambitions for architecture, from students to campaigners;
living examples; lessons from Grenfell: what's your view? ribaj.com

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05

1: Buildings

**STUDY PAVILION, TU
BRAUNSCHWEIG,
GERMANY**

**ARCHITECT: GUSTAV
DÜSING & MAX HACKE**

Read the full story:
ribaj.com/braunschweig

Although many young architects in Germany have offices in Berlin, the most exciting newbuilds tend to be elsewhere – Braunschweig, for example. The city is home to a population of 250,000 people, as well as a renowned and respected university. Via a competition in 2015, the Technical University of Braunschweig (TU Braunschweig) commissioned young Berlin-based architects Gustav Düsing and Max Hacke to design and build an innovative ‘study pavilion’.

This pavilion is not your typical library or educational building, however, with heavy walls and small booths for individual study time. Instead, it responds to the needs of the university’s architecture students and overall student body. The discipline of architecture has frequent need for

large spaces to accommodate big groups of students working together on models. Consequently Düsing and Hacke developed an open structure of steel and glass which expands outdoors, creating a system of platforms and islands.

It is a building which can be read as a living, ever-changing organism due to its highly versatile nature; it has a radically open layout that can change appearance whenever needed. Its core principle is that it is entirely demountable, with the potential to be rebuilt elsewhere with a different layout – challenging the idea that architecture is constructed for one place only. Built with slender steel and lots of glass, the design demonstrates that sustainable buildings do not always require wood. ●

Laura Helena Wurth

GUSTAV DÜSING



A home to call their own

Conrad Koslowsky Architects makes a house a home for children cared for by the Lighthouse Pedagogical Trust – solid, cosy, safe and enduring

Words: Eleanor Young Photographs: Edmund Sumner

Below From the entrance to the home the calm green of the study is visible behind the oak doors and frames.



It was the warmth and thoughtfulness that struck me when I first saw Conrad Koslowsky's briefing diagram for the Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust's first children's home, in Sutton. He had submitted it as part of his RIBA Rising Stars entry; there were niches, gentle soundscapes and deep thresholds for privacy. To some extent it seemed like wishful thinking, rather like the kids' TV programme The Story of Tracy Beaker where a chaotic bunch of children fall in and out of friendship through a series of small and ultimately life affirming adventures in a scruffy children's home. But, with this home's founder and Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust director Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, much of what Koslowsky suggested has clearly been carried through into a spacious yet cosy conversion of an arts and crafts house.

It can now give a home to up to six children from 12-17 years old, including two care leavers of 16+ in more independent flats on the second floor. It opened in February 2022 and currently four children live there, three from nearby local authorities. In London, the lack of children's homes can mean that children are moved sometimes as far away as Wales. The trust is trying to help change this; in not only creating more spaces in London but also aiming for a different model of homes where children and staff feel more valued with shared



rituals and rooms that children can make their own. It has come at a critical juncture as the profits and problems of private companies which run 80% of children's homes are scrutinised and an independent commission has called for the end to profit-making in this sector. The Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust operates under the umbrella of national charity Catch22; starting small, it aims to make a big impact with more homes planned.

The building that the trust acquired was a derelict old people's home which had been chopped up into mean bedroom spaces with mould and rot making their presence strongly felt. Akpan-Inwang and Koslowsky thought they could make it work without knocking it down and starting again, unlike other bidders for the plot. The models show how partitions were removed but also, importantly, how rooms were given a new, nurturing character. Thresholds became part of an almost therapeutic design. Each shared living space has two routes out, so children don't feel trapped in them. And the need for defensible space is served with deep thresholds (acoustic treatment giving extra privacy). This creates opportunities for other uses – such as shelves or cupboards, and next to the living room a habitable cubby hole or nook. Here, on a raised platform, a child can be part of things but separate, in a suspended tent and with the panels behind them open or closed. The confined, defensible threshold device also gives hotel-style bedroom layouts with en suite bathrooms.

Walking into the building the quality of the materials and space really impress.



Above A yellow steel portal frame between kitchen and dining area.

Below right One of three comfortable oak framed benches at the entrance which suggest a sense of welcome.

Below left A view out to the entrance hall from the household hub, the kitchen/dining area.

IN NUMBERS

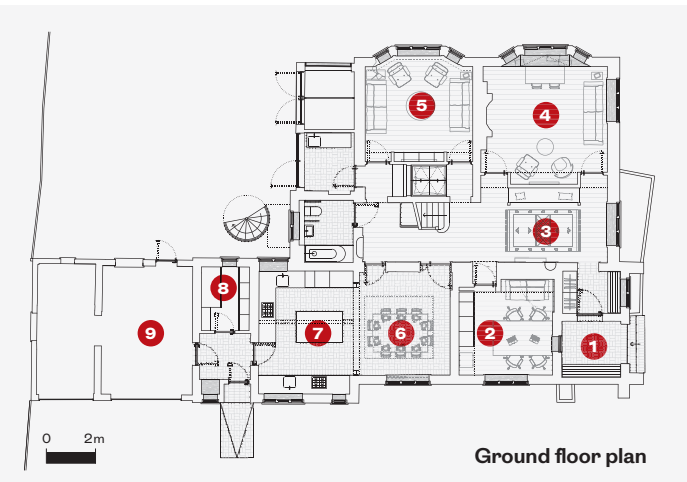
£1m
total contract cost
(2022)

£2158
GIFA cost per m²

466
area in m²

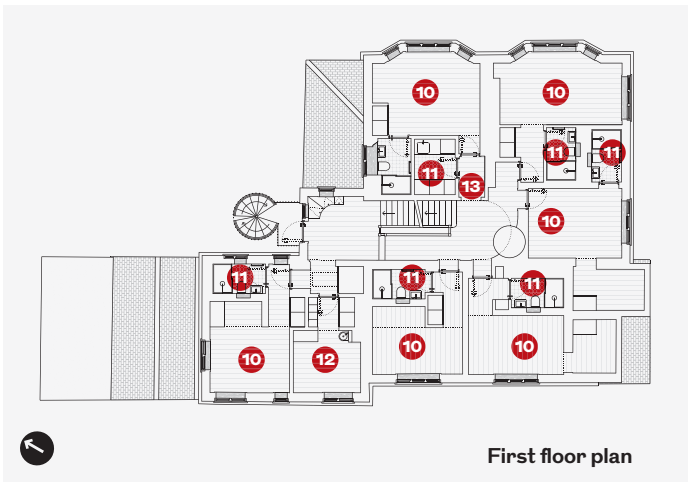
JCT ICD
2016
form of contract





There are no plastic mats or cheap door handles. The doors and their frames are solid oak. When Koslowsky visited other children's homes for research, he found cheap materials ready to be replaced rather than repaired, making their mark on the spaces. The strategy of solid materials was to give sturdy, as well as beautiful, finishes that could take some knocks that a ply flush door could not. This approach might also see a reduction in repair bills, hopes Koslowsky – though experience has already shown that the weight of a fire extinguisher can do a lot of damage. The daybed at the entrance to the house might seem like just a waiting place but it also gives a natural invitation to sit in collaboration rather than stand in confrontation – important outside the office, which is often a place of tension. The kitchen and dining area is an essential heart to this home. There are two cooking stations for when things get busy. But the evening meal is eaten

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Office
- 3 Daybed/bench
- 4 Study
- 5 Living room
- 6 Dining
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Plant
- 9 Garage/storage
- 10 Bedrooms
- 11 Bathroom
- 12 Sleeping-in room for overnight staff
- 13 Utility room



Credits
Architect Conrad Koslowsky Architects
Client Lighthouse Pedagogy Trust
Contractor Romark Project Management
Investor Treebeard Trust
Structural engineer PHI Design
Cost consultant Stockdale UK
Services engineer Atamate

together, with even those who don't want to eat come down to join in. The oak table, designed by Koslowsky, allows children and staff to cluster together at the kitchen end or to spread out and have space. The home is particularly proud of the limestone kitchen worktops, with visible fossils, all planned as part of the pedagogy and engagement with the children. This and quarry tiles give a very different sound landscape to the softer living room and study. And with its yellow steel frame it is an engaging room to gather, snack and chat as well as share more formal meals. One of the stark pictures that Koslowsky took from his visits to other children's homes was of a visitor's chair plonked in the corridor for staff to sit out an overnight watch on (if there is a child who needs extra support). At this home, a landing niche with a circular cushion makes a natural and comfortable space to be and has also proved to be a good place

Thresholds became part of an almost therapeutic design



Model shots of ground floor show demolition in pink (left) and insertions in white (right).



Above The mended banisters create a solidity and generosity while wall niches range from spaces for small objects to places to inhabit.

for children to hang out, sometimes with members of staff. As forward thinking as the pedagogy, is the way the house has been thermally upgraded, with primarily plant-based materials and without the help of gas. Smooth lime plaster sits over wood fibre insulation in the relined envelope. An air source heat pump and an exhaust air heat pump fed by the naturally warm kitchen, bathrooms, laundry and plant rooms do much of the heating, while invisible infrared panels operated by the building management system provide warmth quickly when needed, plus lighting and CO₂ sensors. When the roof was repaired (along with the front of the house), 20 photovoltaic panels were also installed. The quality of the project, compared to the terrible original state of repair, and on a modest budget of just over £2000/m², is a testament to good design, and to the clear thinking and persuasive powers of both architect – Koslowsky also project managed the early stages – and the trust. And hopefully it will give a good number of children a safe, warm and cosy home for a more confident and happy childhood. ●



Above A corner to pause and share on the landing.

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Lime plaster St Astier
Bathroom/kitchen tiles Mosa Tiles
Kitchen quarry tiles Ketley
Timber flooring Atkinson Kirby
Ironmongery Dline
Lighting Astro Lighting
Mandale fossil limestone worktops Natural Stone Sales

Left and below Cubby hole with tent above a raised platform, a place to feel enclosed. Sliding panels to one side can be opened up for partial views or a wriggly route out.



Crafted for art



The fascinating Painting Flanders: Flemish Art 1880-1914 is showing in the new downstairs temporary exhibition gallery.

NICK HUFTON

With a textured newbuild and reconfiguration of the original, ZMMA weaves the Gainsborough Museum into the fabric of Sudbury

Words: Isabelle Priest

The small market town of Sudbury in Suffolk, like so many equivalent towns in the East of England from the late Middle Ages, prospered from textiles – wool, weaving and later silk. This history is variously exhibited by its buildings – narrow streets of timber framed houses, a marketplace surrounded by Georgian townhouses, an 1820 Neoclassical town hall and 20th century factories tucked in between. The town sits in a low-lying valley of the River Stour, half surrounded by water meadows, which you cross when arriving by train.

The Stour, of course, is synonymous with the painter John Constable (1776-1837). However, in Sudbury, Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) is the painter of fame. He was born and raised there, the son of a merchant and lived there briefly between 1746-1752 before moving to Ipswich, then Bath and London where he became the go-to portrait painter.

The landscapes that surround Sudbury inspired some of his most famous works, notably Mr and Mrs Andrews (1750) which Gainsborough painted at the age of 23 and features a double portrait of the newly married couple under a tree in a rolling landscape. Sudbury's All Saints Church is in the middle background. This is the widest landscape in Gainsborough's portraits, but it helped establish a genre for his work, with sitters typically set in rural English scenes. These works were subsequently an inspiration for Constable too.

Today, on paper, Sudbury has all the qualities of an attractive place. Its success has ebbed and flowed, with what was perhaps a lower-key period recently.

But, if things go to plan, that could

IN NUMBERS

£10m
project cost

2065m²
GIA across whole site



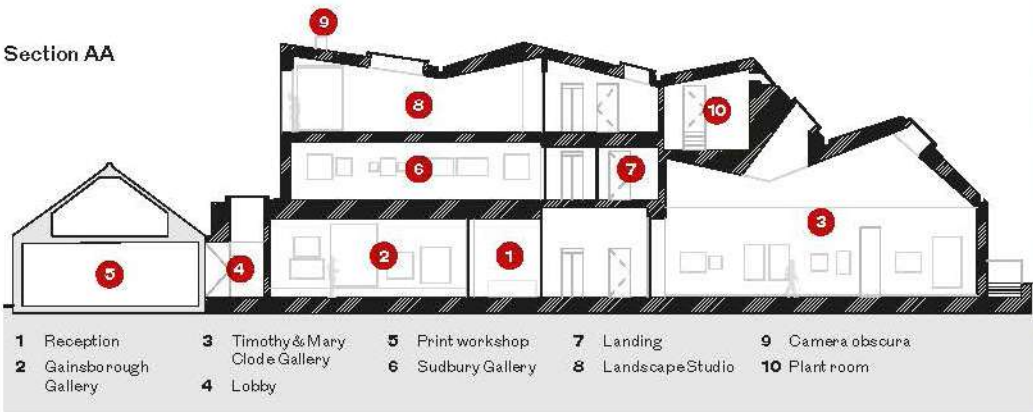
The lower part of Weavers Lane has been taken over on one side by the Gainsborough House museum, concluded by the long new red brick and flint visitor centre.

JACK HOBHOUSE

change. In 1961, the Gainsborough House Society ran a local and national appeal to buy the artist's childhood home and establish it as a museum to him. It had no permanent collection. People were encouraged to donate or lend works of art, furniture and objects to furnish the house. The museum was largely confined to what was left of the house and garden until 2006, when a £1 million programme refurbished the house and acquired several outbuildings along Weavers Lane, which borders the east of the garden. The visitor entrance was moved to an outbuilding and a lift inserted to make more of the house accessible.

What was missing from this project, however, was the capacity and space for the museum to become a centre of significance on Gainsborough and art in general. The museum had collected some of his major works, but these were often painted for clients with more stately homes. It lacked the facilities, room sizes and heights to exhibit them appropriately.

These are the motivations behind ZMMA's £10 million visitor centre and house refurbishment, which has moved the entrance still further up Weavers Lane into a 615m² red brick building. In 2018, the local authority acquired a former 1930s labour exchange at the far north-eastern corner of the museum's garden. The scheme reorients and empowers the museum with new galleries, learning spaces, its first café, a printing workshop and greater accessibility. It is the biggest investment since the museum opened. Five million pounds came from the National Lottery Heritage Fund alone.



Arriving at the museum, you pass the front door of Gainsborough's house sandwiched between buildings on Gainsborough Street, and progress along Weavers Lane. On the corner is a gift and bookshop, located in a former silk factory on lease to the museum. Further along is the café in an outbuilding, then the printing workshop in another. At the end of the row, visitors are greeted by a 30m-long contemporary crinkling building clad using special terracotta bricks designed in a woven effect. This volume sits on top of, and further up the street wraps around, a knapped flint ground level with Corten fins, so the new building appears to incorporate an existing garden wall. The roof peaks at this southern end, jaggging down from three stories to one to the north like the diminishing point in a perspective. This elevation has three windows punched deep into the facade. Floating above on the south elevation, however, a huge flat window reflects the sky like a mirror.

The entrance, a glazed opening, sits between two of the uprights in the flint wall. Inside, a deliberate material richness unfolds. The floor is in-situ terrazzo, the reception joinery is in undulating light oak and the walls are finished using smoked oak panelling. The stair has a balustrade crafted in steel to resemble the zigzag of threads being woven on a loom. To the left of



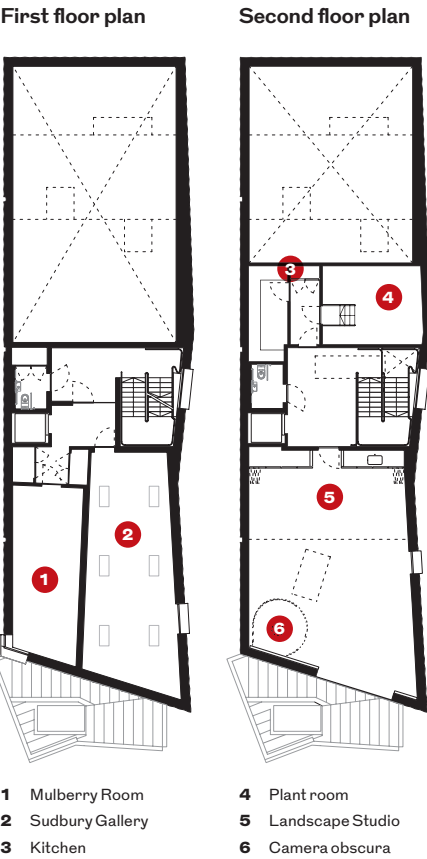
From the south-facing Landscape Studio the yellow-painted rear of Gainsborough's House, and a bird's eye view of the gardens and site, are visible.



the entrance is the new Gainsborough Gallery. At 66m² and 3.8m tall, this is the showpiece, specifically designed to exhibit the large Gainsborough paintings that could not be accommodated before. It is designed to replicate the proportions of the homes where Gainsborough's paintings would once have hanged – the walls are lined in silk damask, tall oak skirting curves to meet the block oak floor. 'The silk gallery,' explains ZMMA's Adam Zombory-Moldovan, 'is not daylight on purpose. It has a different atmosphere. The idea was to make it an arresting space that encourages a total focus on the paintings and is inward looking.'

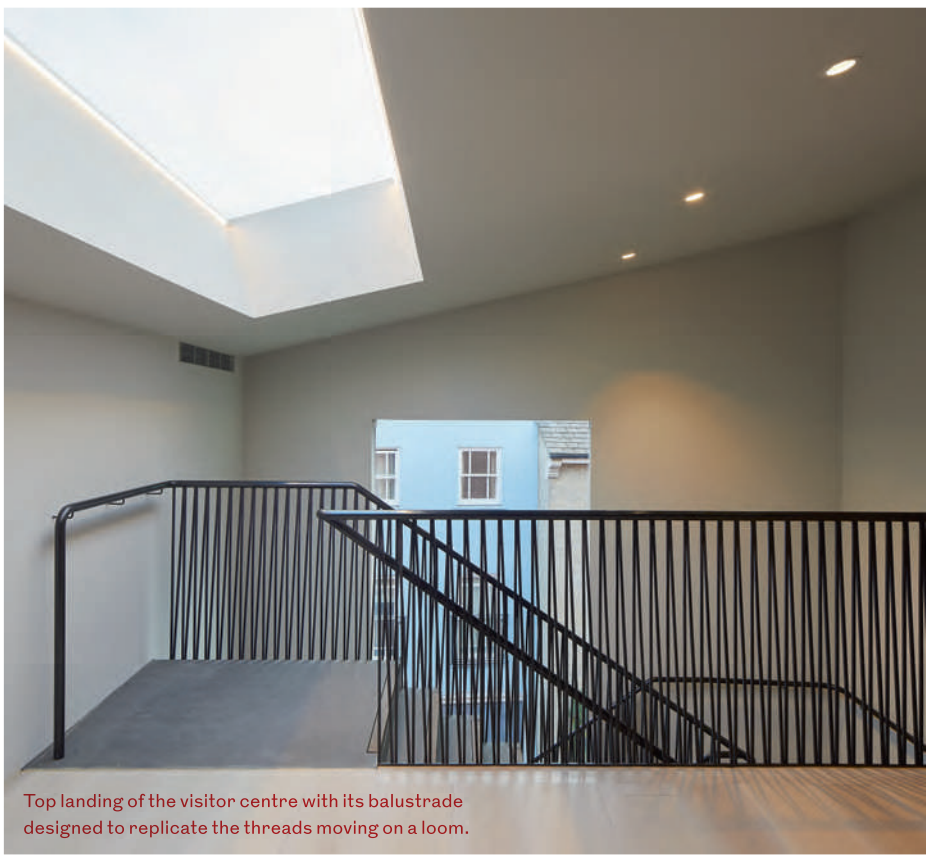
This contrasts with the 120m² Timothy & Mary Clode Gallery temporary exhibition space on the opposite side of the hall. This is a contemporary gallery with white walls. The ceiling reaches to the sawtooth roof and brings in daylight via large skylights on each north face.

Back on the stairs, on the first floor is a further small exhibition room. Up again is the Landscape Studio – a multi-purpose space designed to accommodate lectures, events and learning programmes with its own camera obscura. There, a picture window allows visitors the primary view from the new building towards the original house, garden and the 400-year-old mulberry tree that Gainsborough would have known, at a fantastic 3D aerial



perspective. More importantly, the building's height at this level enables the house to be seen in its landscape – abutted by the town's cottages and terraced houses in the foreground, higher ground countryside beyond – as if recreating one of Gainsborough's paintings with the building as its subject/sitter.

In the main house, which is accessed via a lobby beyond the Gainsborough Gallery and through the garden past the café, the objective has been to tell a curatorial story of Gainsborough and the museum. The bowed room at the rear which would not have been present in Gainsborough's time, has been reappropriated as an artists' studio, including artefacts that Gainsborough would have used, alongside his original painting table. To the front of the house, in what are thought to be 16th century rooms, is a gallery dedicated to the local artist Cedric Morris, and a room showcasing Gainsborough's smaller early works. Likewise, a music room upstairs includes three portraits of musicians by Gainsborough, a room for



The frameless insulated sliding doors by Swiss manufacturer Sky-Frame blend naturally into their surroundings, creating a seamless continuity between indoors and outdoors and blurring the line between where the living space ends and the view begins. [SKY-FRAME.COM](https://www.sky-frame.com)

SKY-FRAME

Constable's works, and there is a gallery about Sudbury's silk weaving history and on the top floor a drawings gallery has a show about abolitionist Ignatius Sancho.

The whole ensemble mixes the genres of house museum and art gallery. Its refurbishment aims to retain as much as possible, including split floorboards, while removing additions like brass picture rails. Wall colours are not historically accurate but selected to create a setting – blush pink in the Cedric Morris gallery, vivid mid green in the Music Room. Another aspect of the project included making the ground floor level-access from the rear, which was achieved by widening the opening to the studio and dropping the floor by a step.

Countless house museums in Britain are reinventing themselves by commissioning new additions like this one in Suffolk. ZMMA had several projects at Watts' Gallery in Guildford (RIBA) February 2016). Others include BDP's extension of Leighton House (ribaj.com 11 October 2022) and Hugh Broughton at the Henry Moore Studios & Garden (2018). There has been a such proliferation that one wonders whether this is becoming a curiously British type of architectural project. Journalists visit from all over Europe. Sometimes this raises a question of whether they can all – certainly those that are more geographically remote – succeed. That



NICK HUFTON

Above View of ZMMA's new visitor centre from the north with the Gainsborough house and garden to the right. **Below** Many artefacts Gainsborough would have used for his work are displayed in the recreated garden-facing painting studio. **Below left** The Cedric Morris Gallery at the front of the original house. It is painted pink for curatorial effect, not historical accuracy.

- Credits
- Architect** ZMMA
 - Structural engineer** Eckersley O'Callaghan
 - Services engineer** QODA
 - Lighting design** Sutton Vane Associates
 - Project manager** Artelia UK
 - Health & safety** Quoin Consultancy
 - Main contractor** Thomas Sindén
 - Brick-maker** Bulmer Brick & Tile Co
 - Silk-weaver** Humphries Weaving Company
 - Bronze metalwork** Bassett & Findley

this project reassures is perhaps down to the fact that it is a recreated home. Gainsborough had not just put down his tools when the museum took over. The large new building does this in a way that is contextual and appropriate – even the bricks and flint are sourced from within five miles. This reincarnation project creates a sequence of buildings and spaces that is a significant and hugely enhanced monument to Gainsborough – one that is world-class and deserves international visitors to both it and Sudbury – which just so happens to be in his former home. ●



HUFTON+CROW (2)



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This image Built between 1929 and 1955, the power station is three times the size of Tate Modern.

Right Traces of original floors and stairs remain in the scarred brickwork of the north atrium.

Start of a new era

Wilkinson Eyre has ended the will-they-won't-they saga at Battersea Power Station with a deeply considered regeneration that hums with life

Words: Chris Foges

Four decades have passed since the turbines last turned at Battersea Power Station, and for most of that time it's been hard to tell if its story was unfolding as comedy or tragedy. There have been enjoyably madcap schemes that might just fly, yet at the same time a sad sense of what was at stake: a totemic piece of prewar industrial architecture, with majestic art deco interiors by J Theo Halliday and jazz-age exterior by Giles Gilbert Scott, seemingly too damaged, too expensive, perhaps too big to rescue.

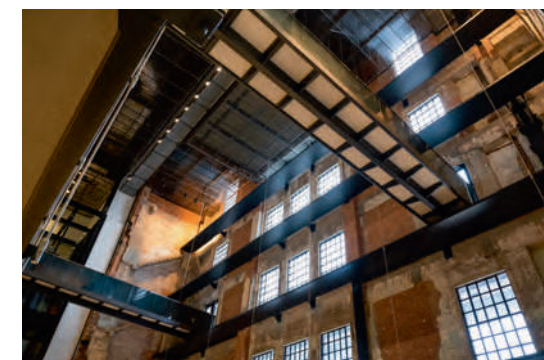
Its first owner removed the roof of the boiler house – the building's colossal centrepiece with 103m-high chimneys atop muscular 'wash towers' – before abandoning plans for a theme park. Hong Kong developer Parkview flirted with schemes for sundry hotels and fun palaces from John Outram, Grimshaw and Ron Arad, but never laid a brick. Ireland's Real Estate Opportunities commissioned a Rafael Viñoly masterplan for the 17ha site but went bust, prompting another flurry of proposals, from a football stadium to Terry Farrell's bid to preserve it as a kind of classical ruin.

In 2012, however, a new Malaysian owner adopted the Viñoly plan, including its straightforward commercial uses for the power station, appointing Wilkinson Eyre as architect. After the many civic and cultural options this was an anti-climax, but the realised scheme is radical in its own way, says project director Sebastien Ricard. 'Everybody likes to say their buildings are mixed use, which means resi with shops below. This is a true mixed-use building, in some ways more like projects in Asia than Europe'.

Its layer-cake arrangement, with some connection between the disparate parts – office staff enter with shoppers – is bold and clever. Six floors of workspace take up the top half of the boiler house, providing as much area as the Gherkin. Sandwiched in the middle are plant (usefully freeing the roofs) and a 1400-capacity events venue. At the bottom, more than 100 shops and restaurants occupy three floors, extending through the adjoining turbine halls and their attendant 'switch houses' on the east and west sides. Flats fill the upper floors of the switch houses and boxy glass additions on the rooftops.

In its original use and as a ruin, the power station's defining quality was its sheer size. For Wilkinson Eyre, says Ricard, as we approach below looming brick cliffs, that was also the project's central preoccupation. How can the scale of a place for people coexist with that of industry, and how do you fill the building while retaining its dramatic power?

In the congested boiler house that job falls to the entrances. To the south a sunken piazza funnels visitors into a full-height atrium behind the facade –



BACKDROP PRODUCTIONS

IN NUMBERS

46,000m²
office floor area

35,000m²
retail space

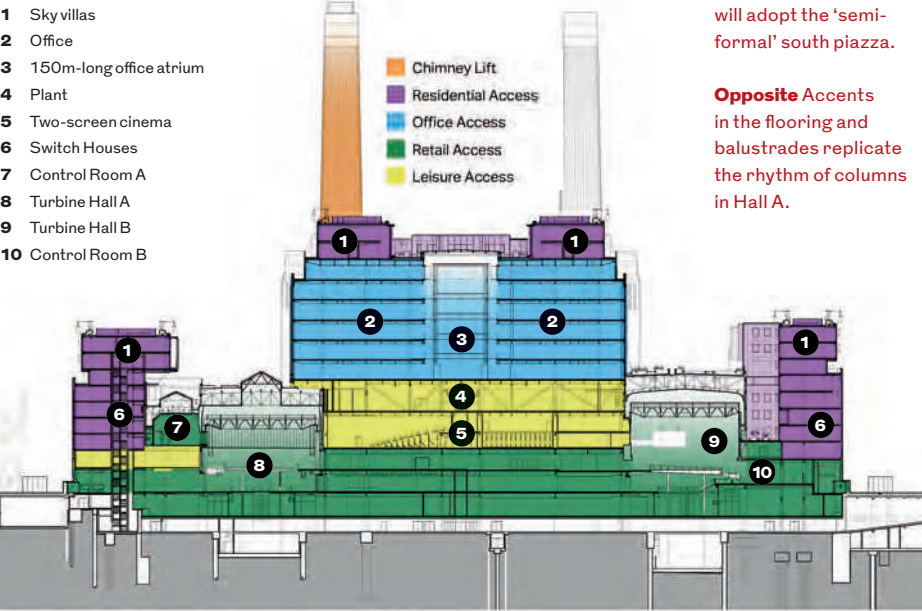
2
resident Peregrine
falcons

Credits
Client Battersea Power
Station Development
Company
Architect WilkinsonEyre
Structural engineer
Buro Happold
M&E engineer
Chapman BDSP
**Conservation
consultant** Purcell
Construction manager
MACE
Lighting designer
Spiers & Major
External landscape
LDA Design
Project manager Turner
& Townsend
Apartment designer
Michaelis Boyd

revealed as a thin screen of bare brick, pinned in place by a spider’s web of steel cable. Ahead, behind a glass wall, lifts ascend through another top-lit void to the offices. Pockmarked brickwork testifies to former decline. ‘It would have been a crime not to respect the nature of the building’, says Ricard. ‘People should see the heritage, not just a shopping centre’.

Black steel bridges and chunky staircases that ring the north atrium reinterpret the building’s butch riveted frame in more polished form – albeit tougher than a typical mall – but it’s only a pair of giant tree-like columns that match its heroic confidence, branching

West-east cross section



Above The architects hope that picnickers will adopt the ‘semi-formal’ south piazza.

Opposite Accents in the flooring and balustrades replicate the rhythm of columns in Hall A.

into two-storey-high crowns to carry the office floors. It’s a thrilling glimpse of the effort required to re-engineer the building, but a rare one. There’s dramatic potential in a 10m-deep chamber that extends from the building to the river to accommodate a district heating system, for instance, but it is wholly hidden.

That reticence is appreciated in the turbine halls – the best preserved interiors, where Wilkinson Eyre has endeavoured to let the building speak for itself. The first, built in the 1930s, offers an unlikely combination of dainty decor and industrial heft. Gantry cranes remain in place under an invisibly strengthened lantern roof, while walls are lined with columns encased in fluted faience, and topped by rusty steel beams.

Very little of the surviving fabric is shown in a distressed state. Tidying up

PETER LANDERS

the halls is no great loss: when I visited 10 years ago their condition was not instructive or romantic, just shabby.

What was most striking then was the impression of tremendous volume, which easily survives the insertion of slender steel structures to make two shop-lined galleries above the basement level concourse. Additions are carefully subservient to existing fabric. Bronze shopfronts are structurally independent of the columns they sit between. Glass collars separate walkways from the columns. Oblique views of the balustrades reveal a Greek key motif picked up from an existing balcony.

Hall B, completed in the austere 1950s, is also faience-tiled but plainer – less precious – and the architect’s



Cofferred glass ceiling and original dials restored with watchmaker's precision in Control Room A.

JAMES PARSONS



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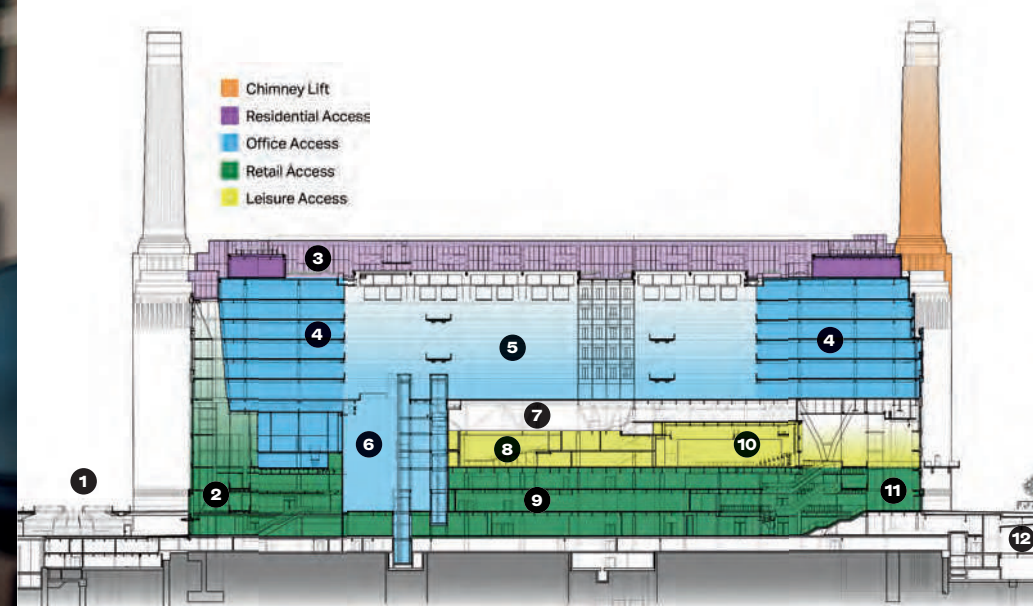
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Buildings Mixed use



language is adjusted to suit the context: glass-sided escalators display their mechanism, and the steelwork is grey, bulkier and more utilitarian. These distinctions – variations on a theme – are well judged: subtle enough to seem consistent, but legible as you move through the building.

Much of the most impressive work, though, is the meticulous and imperceptible restoration of both special features, like the opulent control rooms, and of the building's ordinary fabric. All four chimneys were reconstructed, with contractors using wooden shuttering and hand-poured concrete to replicate markings on the originals (for £20 you can ride up one in a glass lift). Six million bricks went into Gilbert Scott's facades, but much of the surviving masonry was cracked by rusting steel and acidic flue gasses. For the repairs – including replacement of both flank walls of the boiler house – 1.8 million bricks in 12

JOHN STURROCK(2)

South-north section

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Entrance piazza | 7 Plant |
| 2 South atrium | 8 Cinema |
| 3 Sky villas | 9 Retail/food court |
| 4 Office | 10 Events space |
| 5 Office atrium | 11 North atrium |
| 6 Vertical circulation to offices | 12 Energy centre |

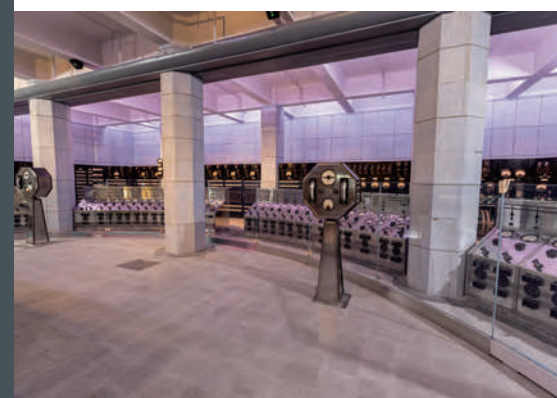
Below left and below Restored switchgear adds a sci-fi quality to a cocktail bar in Hall B, where brick patches in the concrete floor mark the former location of turbines.

blends were sourced from the original makers.

Neither is it obvious how much adjustment has been made to the facades, without losing the impression of mass and solidity. Almost 120 tall slots were cut to provide the numerous steel-framed windows required by homes and offices, but they play well with the ribbed brickwork of the wash towers.

Inside the Switch House flats, however, it's quickly clear that conversion entailed quite a bit of planning agility – among 254 flats there are 109 different types – and some compromise. Windows appear in eccentric positions, or terminate at eye-level, and ceilings are low.

There are compensations, though. Stepping into one residential entrance in the base of a concrete-lined wash tower produced another of the building's catch-your-breath moments: a glass lift ascended through a Piranesian web of riveted steel girders and disappeared into darkness high above. Residents' gardens are another hidden wonder, reached by bridges over plunging canyons in the roofscape, with the £7 million glass-walled 'sky villas' cantilevered overhead. Descending again through Switch





what all this cost, but it'll be another big figure. Its CEO, Simon Murphy, says the investment will be recouped in part through rising values in the wider development – great lumps of high-end housing that already cluster round the building on one side, with more to come on the other. It's a shame that salvation required a Faustian bargain, and that some of what made the power station so charismatic has been lost, even as more has been saved. But for all that, with the building's future assured and its best bits accessible for the first time, this long saga has a happy ending. ●

Left, right Routes to the flats have a strong industrial flavour, with Corten-framed entrances, boardmarked concrete lift cores and original brick and steelwork exposed throughout.



House West, we were into the third hour of the tour, moving at a decent clip, and yet still every stop brought something new: a different way in which some unique feature of the original building has been re-presented, or Wilkinson Eyre's palette of black steel, corten, concrete and wood has been composed in response to innumerable specific conditions. It's this combination of consistency and variety, and the rare luxury of inch-by-inch design attention, that avoids the common consequence of bigness in architecture – that it must either become incoherent or generic.

'It's the most complex thing we've ever done,' says project principal Jim Eyre. 'Projects like Garden by the Bay in Singapore are on a similar scale, but nothing has required a team of this size'. The practice put in 454,000 hours, made 10,000 sketches, issued 15,000 drawings and reviewed many times that number.

The developer won't disclose exactly



This image Residents' roof garden
Left Flat interiors are by Michaelis Boyd, and use two palettes inspired by the 1930s and 1950s.

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The Swiss Life Arena looking east over the railway tracks. The rippled, concrete 'curtain' of the north and south facades is counterpointed by the sharper fluting of the east and west sides.

Sports extra

Caruso St John has stepped out of its comfort zone with the enormous ice hockey arena designed by its Zürich office. Jan-Carlos Kucharek takes in some fearful symmetry

Photographs: Philip Heckhausen

In Caruso St John’s Zürich office, there’s a very large disco ball hanging in the newly-created gym. It’s unlike any gym I’ve ever been to but here – as you’d expect – the bar bells are exactly in size order, a callisthenics scaffold standing against a backdrop of muted yellows, greens and greys. Dividing its bistro from the office proper, the gym is most notable because, although it’s lunchtime, it’s conspicuously empty; staff must either be getting their calorific intake from the day’s hearty, sweet potato soup, or burning the aforesaid more industriously in front of their computer screens.

But whatever they’re doing, it seems to be working. I’m here to see the firm’s new ice hockey stadium, one of the mostly commercial projects that, since the 2011 founding of its Zurich satellite, Caruso St John has been focussing on. Its 2013 Europaallee Baufeld E competition win, an award-winning mixed-use development south of the main station, holds its own alongside work by Chipperfield and Wiel Arets. Comprising two towers of high-end apartments on a triangular podium, at its Loos-ian apex a scalloped, coloured concrete facade offers dignified ornament to the nefarious Langstrasse.

The scallop theme continues at its offices for St Jakob Foundation, a mental health ‘help-to-work’ charity whose trainee bakers flow through palazzo-like walls, and where the foundation’s shell logo has been playfully ‘baked’ onto its concrete cladding panels. Things are more uncompromising at the six-storey Escher-Wyss Platz offices, where hefty side cantilevers reflect the city’s Hardbrücke elevated

IN NUMBERS

SFr169m
construction cost

70,000m²
area

SFr2414
GIFA cost per m²

12,000
seats

400kWp
rooftop pv array

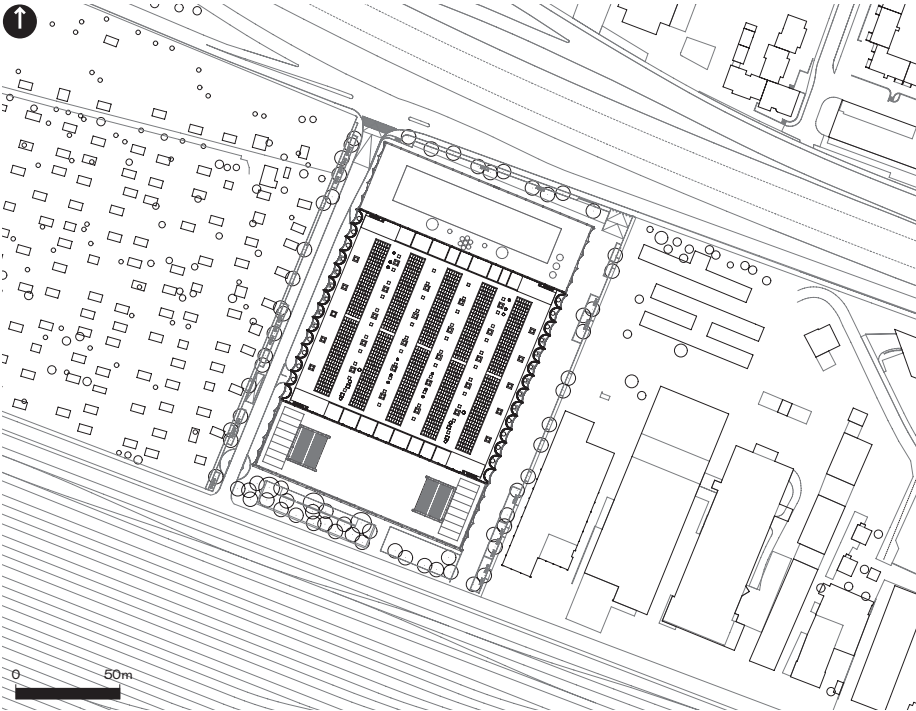
Below left Ascending the staircase from ground level to the 3000m² south terrace allows fans to gather, disperse and even linger to views of the distant mountains.

Below right The arena sits tight to its site, hemmed in by the Vulkan allotments to the west, development to the east and the rail tracks and expressway to south and north.

highway in front. Green-hued concrete may help mitigate the severity, but it takes the cantilevers’ deep planters to supply any softness. CSTJ partner Michael Schneider, who has returned to Zürich from London, admits that such commercial work and the contacts it generates keep this office running, leaving London free to concentrate on the arts projects it made its name with. But whether the gym’s disco ball was the idea of Schneider or his co-partner Florian Zierer, you sense an aspiration to engage in more sportive – even ‘fun’ – projects.

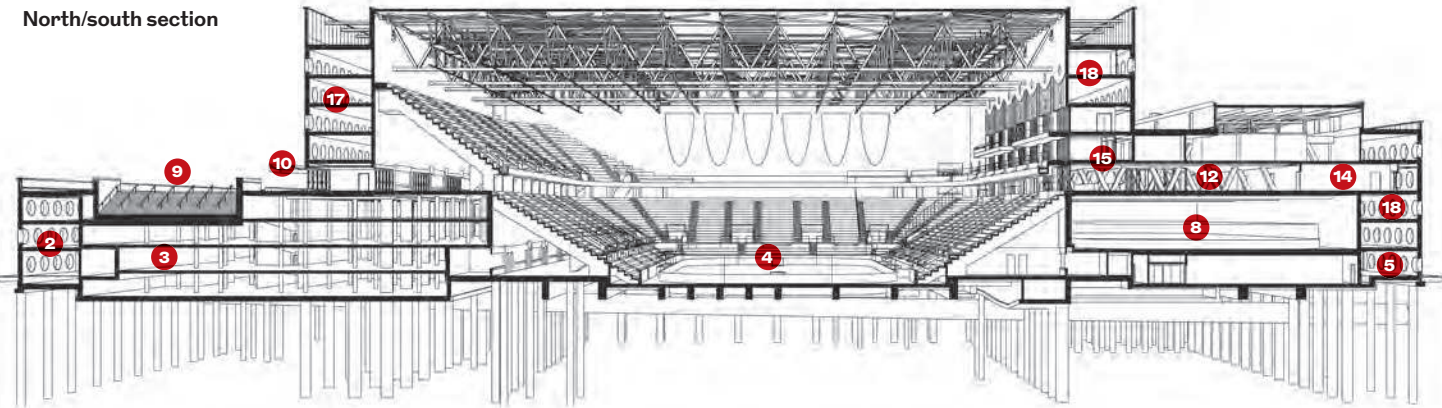
At least one of these aspects has been addressed with the office’s Swiss Life Arena in the Zürich suburb of Altstetten, further down the tracks from the Europaallee project. In terms of distance and size, this scheme pulls up short of the gargantuan 1985 high-tech Swiss Post building by Swiss architect Theo Hotz. A competition-winning ice hockey stadium for home team ZSC Lions, it is, at 70,000m² and 480,000m³, in many ways just as imposing – and is significantly larger – than anything the practice has done before. The 170m by 110m footprint alone reportedly required billionaire club president Walter Frey not only to lobby the Swiss government for both the building and its siting, but also to have the city authority clear almost a third of the Vulkan allotments on the site’s west side to make way for it.

Schneider says the firm coined Bobby Charlton’s adage about Old Trafford – ‘Theatre of Dreams’ – for its entry. Although most modern football stadiums, emphasising revenue and corporate



Although the arena is a huge, black box, the firm has created simple, sculptural statements on a grand scale, allowing daylight to filter into the space.

North/south section



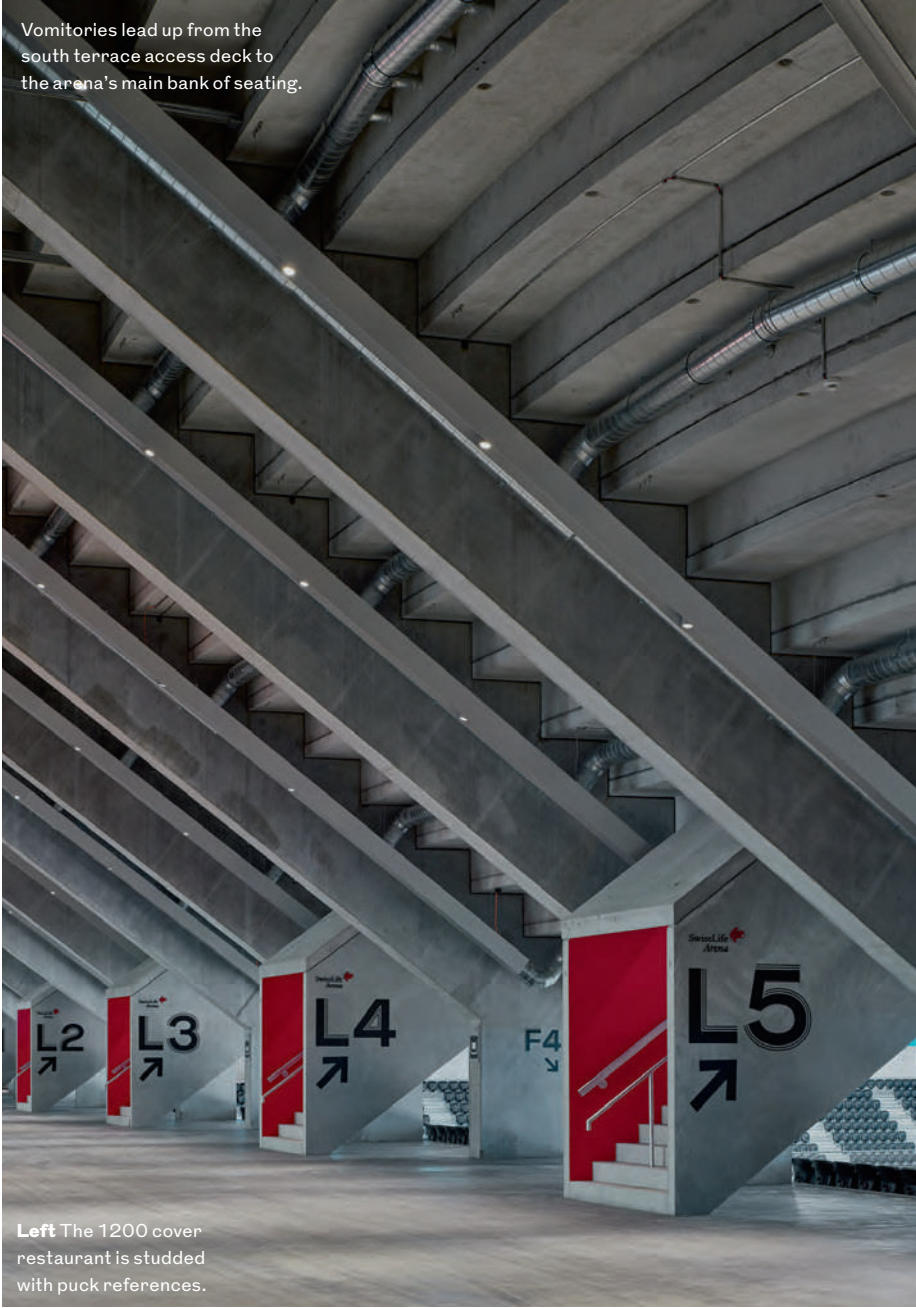
entertainment, tend rather to resemble hotels or conference centres, he explains that the title was about remaining mindful of ‘sports’ sense of illusion and emotion’. This was aided in part by the specific nature of the hockey spectacle – one carried out under lights in a dark, highly insulated box. ‘Our idea was for a simple and archaic typology,’ explains Schneider, ‘but we also had to structure the facade without easy reference to classical motifs.’

Luckily, Adam Caruso spent his youth in Canada playing ice hockey and his architect years playing with classical motifs, so for him the project was a shoo-in. The firm ran with the idea of a ‘cast curtain’ – inspired by the elegant sophistry of 18th century Guards’ Tents at Drottningholm Royal Palace in Sweden, where painted copper structures give the impression of being made of fabric. The scallop form found in many of the firm’s Swiss projects has also returned writ super-large here, as the unifying motif for this complex of a Swiss National League and training rinks, 12,000 spectator seats, restaurants, corporate boxes, club shop and administrative spaces, car park and rental offices – brought together in CSTJ’s huge, insulated concrete, reflective geometry form – the architecture’s equivalent of William Blake’s ‘fearful symmetry.’

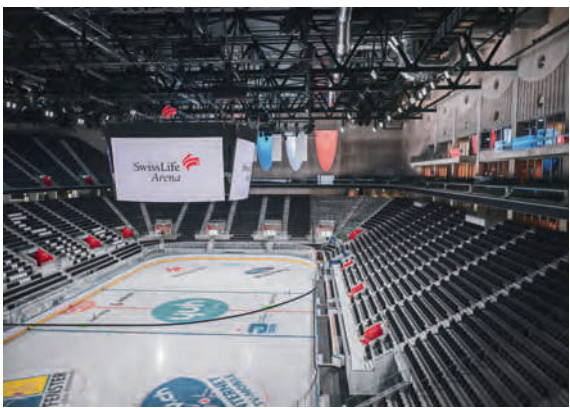
The building, in its simple and archaic way,



Vomitories lead up from the south terrace access deck to the arena’s main bank of seating.



Left The 1200 cover restaurant is studded with puck references.



Left Massive 6m deep beams span the 90m arena from north to south with secondary steel structure running east west.

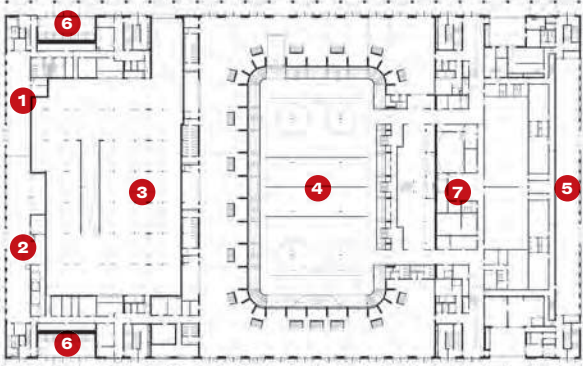
Right ZSC Lions’ elliptical changing room bucks the puck trend.



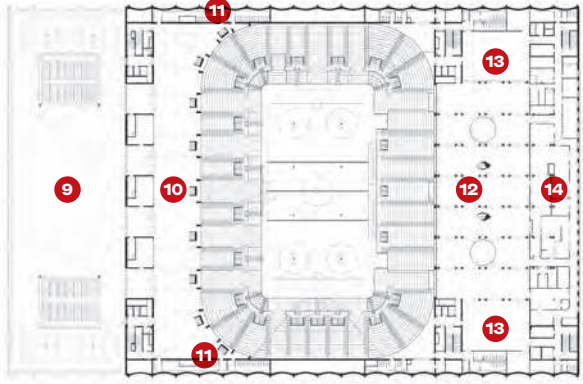
does what it says on the can: massive, inverted, fluted panels of pale concrete rise to 33m height at the stadium’s centre, and run across the east and west sides of the building. These are blank, save for the large, lower arcades, lined with fat columns whose entasis denotes the enormous structural loads of walls and steel roof structure that they carry to ground. At each side of the south end, wide staircases draw fans to a large, sunny 3000m² outdoor gathering space above the car park, with the huge, raked seating area on the rink’s south side reached via a wide access deck of bars, food outlets and toilets.

On the south and north sides this sharp fluting morphs, for reasons unstated, into something more,

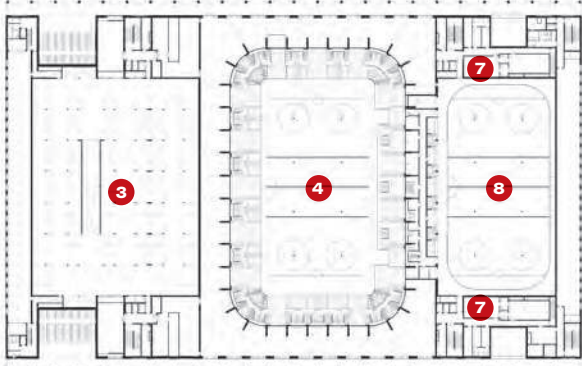
Ground floor plan



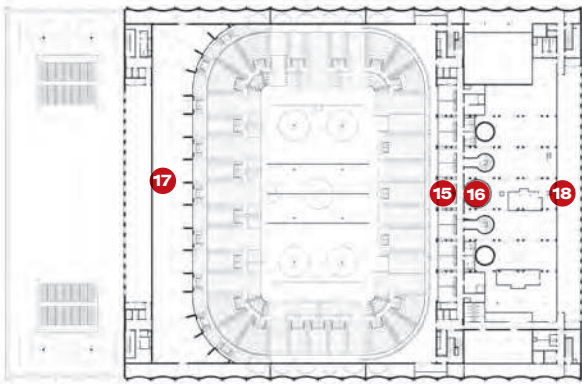
Second floor plan



First floor plan



Third floor plan



- Key**
- 1 Sports bar
 - 2 High-end restaurant
 - 3 Car park
 - 4 Main rink
 - 5 Club shop
 - 6 Stairs to south terrace
 - 7 Home & away changing
 - 8 Training rink
 - 9 South terrace
 - 10 Arena entrance & food/drink
 - 11 Toilets
 - 12 1200 cover restaurant
 - 13 Event/ hire space
 - 14 Restaurant kitchen store/admin
 - 15 Corporate boxes
 - 16 Smoking room
 - 17 Rental workspace
 - 18 Club offices

Why circles anyway? Theo Hotz across the way studded his facade with them like Swiss cheese – but surely that’s not the reason? ‘It’s based on the shape of an ice hockey puck,’ says Schneider dryly; and like the twist at the end of a movie, once you’ve seen it you can’t unsee it. The puck is the plot, and it’s everywhere; not just as exterior windows but those peeping into the stadium from the club’s offices, or the rooflights that puncture the corporate smoking rooms. In the shape of the stairs that lead you down to the 1200 cover dining space on the north side, all across the ceiling of that hospitality area where they’ve even got real pucks as table markers. And, at 76mm diameter, they gather in thousands to help form the cladding panels running along the arcade at ground and up the terrace access stairs, like a form of sportive rustication. Perhaps there’s something to be said for relentless logic after all.

For a firm noted for obsessive detailing, CSTJ’s subtle touches can be hard to see internally. Not in the service stairs or the 14 corporate boxes (where that belonging to the club president would appeal to the late Kirstie Alley of Cheers fame); nor in the strange, anonymous corridor that links them all.

So against this ‘rough simplicity’ it’s as if the practice has had to think spatially of moves at grand scale. The main rink’s huge hall, spanning shorter 90m sides with massive, 6m deep steel beams, is imposing for anyone looking south to the high, raked seating, or looking back over the stalls, hospitality and press suites of the north. And in the blank east and west walls, great, deep niches have been carved out of the concrete; a highly sculptural, reductive act that’s welcome – otherwise there’s 100,000 tonnes of the stuff. It’s an embodied energy quotient the firm hopes to offset via a services strategy of ice being created using electricity from a

Right The concrete’s drape-like corrugations on display at the south terrace.

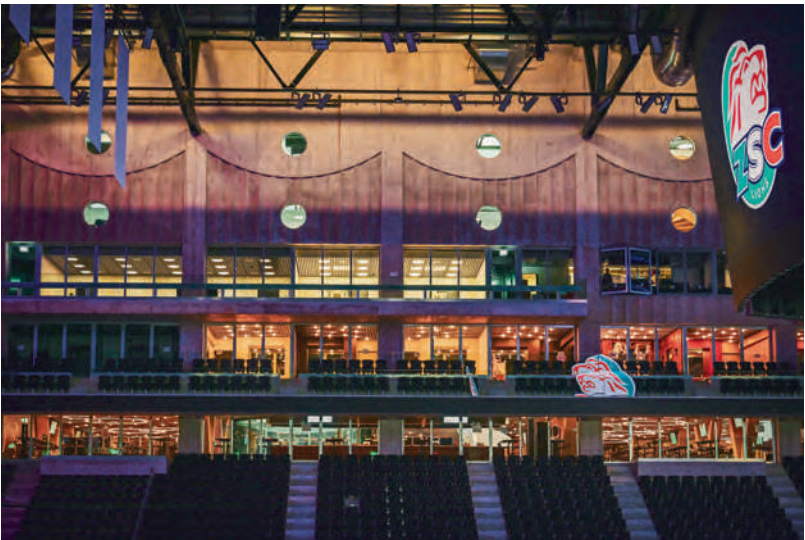
Below The arena’s internal north wall, lit dramatically, with restaurant below and corporate boxes, press and security above. Circular windows look down from club office and physio spaces.

Credits
Client Kanton and city of Zürich/ ZSC Arena
Architect Caruso St John Architects, Zürich
Project manager CCTM Real Estate & Infrastructure AG
Planning consultant Emch+Berger ImmoConsult AG
Landscape architect Antón Landschaft GmbH
Contractor HRS Real Estate AG
Structural engineer Ferrari Gartmann AG
Building physics/ acoustics Bakus Bauphysik & Akustik GmbH
Services engineer Kalt + Halbeisen Ingenieurbüro AG
Electrical engineer enerpeak AG/ Haustechnik Amstein + Walther AG



waste to power energy centre and the heat generated from freezing it used to condition the stadium, and other buildings nearby. Rooflit where the PV array doesn’t get in the way, some of the niches allow daylight to filter down over the concrete, creating that elusive link of black box to the outside world. ‘They are also rigged to light up or flash when either team scores,’ Schneider explains brightly, proving LED to be an effective substitute when you can’t bring your forms together in light.

I’ve enjoyed my visit reconciling Caruso St John conceptually with ice hockey, but Schneider doesn’t think that the practice will be wanting to do another one any time soon – even if, with up to 45 people in the Zürich office during its construction, it might have felt at one point like the tail wagging the dog. For now, the firm seems happier at its current 25, working on much, much smaller commissions while seeking the arts work that has so far eluded it. ‘You don’t get famous with a stadium,’ says Schneider, but it will need time to build the contacts. I ask him how CSTJ faces off against major league Herzog & de Meuron, big hitter Valerio Olgiati or rookie Christ & Gantenbein. ‘We are seen as an English office but, with Florian and I running it, in some ways Swiss as well. But we’re also outside the scene – Paradiesvogel – a bit exotic,’ he adds, with the country’s second largest ice hockey arena behind him. ‘For now, not as serious as the Swiss offices, but serious enough to get the work’ ●



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Brick Awards winner excel on all fronts

Outstanding quality entries to this year’s Brick Awards supply the best demonstration of the material’s sustainability, economy and beauty – displayed to strong effect by winners’ sound grasp of its potential and relationship to its context

Below Radley College Chapel Extension By Purcell.



The standard of entries in this year’s Brick Awards, the Oscars of the brick industry, has been exceptional. Each category has been hotly contested and the judges had to make some tremendously difficult decisions, with a few very close calls. So we’d like to offer our warmest congratulations not only to the winners, but to everyone who was shortlisted and commended. They should all be very proud.

This year’s overall winner, the extension to the chapel at one of the country’s leading private schools, Radley College near Oxford, was exceptional. The judges praised ‘the overall use of brickwork and well-considered complimentary materials, which worked fully within a historic context, yet the building is still very much 21st century, vibrant and exciting.’ Elsewhere, there were some worthy winners, including an affordable housing development in Greenwich, a children’s hospital in Liverpool and an office block in Tehran. All demonstrated a true understanding of the potential of brick and its relationship with its immediate environment, together with the importance of sustainability.

Speaking more generally, the stellar standard of this year’s awards is a magnificent advertisement for the humble British brick. With its solidity, longevity, sustainability, beauty and familiarity – not to mention its startling regional colour variations – brick remains so attractive for developers, architects, self-builders and renovators. Let’s start with a killer fact. Bricks, on average, constitute 70% of the appearance of a building, but only 4% of the cost. They make the soundest economic sense, especially as they are



Top Neptune Wharf at Fish Island Village by Haworth Tompkins.
Below left The Brick Awards, The Royal Lancaster, London.

Above The Gables by DK Architects.

- WINNERS**
- | Project Name | Category |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Chelwood | Individual Housing Development |
| Gardenmore Green | Housing Development: SMALL (up to 25 Units) |
| The Gables | Housing Development: MEDIUM (between 26 and 100 Units) |
| Good Luck Hope | Housing Development: LARGE (101 Units or more) |
| Neptune Wharf at Fish Island Village | Urban Regeneration |
| Croudace Homes | House Builder |
| The Department Store Studios | Commercial |
| The Alder Centre | Public |
| Royal College of Art Battersea Campus | Education |
| Houlton School | Refurbishment |
| Battersea Power Station | Innovation |
| Radley College Chapel Extension | Craftsmanship |
| Lee Marley | Specialist Brickwork Contractor |
| Hitra Office & Commercial Building | Worldwide |
| Woodmore Mews | Architects' Choice |
| Radley College Chapel Extension | Contractors' Choice |
| The Department Store Studios | Sustainability (Commercial) |
| Barratt Zed House | Sustainability (Residential) |
| Radley College Chapel Extension | Supreme |

incredibly easy to maintain. If the economic case for bricks is persuasive, so too is the sustainability and ecological argument. Of all building and housing materials, bricks are one of the most environmentally friendly – as well as one of the safest. And, of course, British bricks are the most environmentally friendly of all because their journey from the ground to the completed building is far shorter than that of their foreign competitors.

At the same time, bricks are remarkably sustainable throughout this life cycle, from the production process, through packaging to building. Meanwhile the porous structure of bricks offers a huge advantage: the ability to accumulate heat. In winter, during sunny days, bricks can store heat from the sun and radiate the energy back when necessary. During the summer they can combat the heat and thus avoid overheating a building. With energy bills going through the roof, this is a priceless asset. All major British brick manufacturers take their sustainability responsibilities extremely seriously, recycling energy and waste wherever possible and supporting the circular economy.

Ever since brick was first used as a building material, way back in southern Turkey in 7200 BC, it has been both popular, long-lasting and effective. Today, many centuries later, the argument for building with brick has never been so strong and so timely. As the cost of living soars, and fears about the effects of climate change grow daily, bricks provide perfect answers to both problems. And, once you factor in its effortless and enduring beauty, the case for British brick is irresistible. ●

Entry to the 2023 Brick Awards will open in March

Find out more: www.brick.org.uk

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— insurance
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2: Intelligence

IMPROVING CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE
RACHEL BELL OF
STRIDE TREGLOWN

Stride Treglown has collected feedback for years, but we felt that there was an opportunity to engage more effectively with clients – including consultants, contractors and building users – to improve how we work and the places we create.

We considered different approaches taken by businesses we know. One operated an in-house team while another used a third party, which we felt elicited more open discussion and honesty. A law firm referred us to Insight 6, a customer experience consultant, which helped us to develop our Engage programme. Eighteen months on from our initial pilot, it is part of everyday life, embedded in the workflow of all projects.

Client listening takes several forms. We send out short questionnaires and schedule check-in calls at key moments, such as six weeks after appointment. One aim is to identify small aggravations early so they don't get worse. Insight 6 conducts more detailed surveys on select projects, including those that are challenging. We want the negative feedback – and have had some – though most is positive. It's revealed useful things we can quickly address, such as pressures within certain teams or inconsistencies between them. A 'secret shopper' exercise investigated whether clients receive a friendly, consistent welcome.

Playing this back internally is so important. Insight 6 helps us run studio reviews and CPDs on the importance of the client relationship and ways of reaching out – including how to have difficult conversations. This helps to embed the ideas in the culture of the business. We are 350 people across nine studios but all practices could learn from looking at the customer focus found in other sectors, from professional services to retail. ●

'Our customer experience consultant conducts detailed surveys on select projects, including those that are challenging. We want the negative feedback – and have had some'



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



Left Stride Treglown's grade II* listed Bristol headquarters, refurbished by the practice in 2018.

Post growth: Pro-planet alternative to expansion

As governments collectively fail to meet UN climate targets, Stephen Cousins asks whether it's time to reject the capitalist conceit of 'progress' and allow ideas of post-growth/degrowth to transform society and the way architects design and do business

Sustainable
architectureBusiness, clients
& services

Warnings from the United Nations that the world has made 'woefully inadequate' progress cutting carbon with 'no credible pathway' in place to limit global warming to 1.5°C are not just another wake up call for governments. They demand what the organisation called the 'rapid transformation of societies' at COP27 last November.

Followers of the philosophy of post-growth, or degrowth, strive to bring about such a radical shift by shrugging off society's ingrained notions of 'progress' predicated on continued economic growth, which have been shown to accelerate damage to the natural world and social wellbeing.

Timothy Jackson is an ecological economist, author of *Post Growth*, *Life after Capitalism* and director of the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity. 'Look at the long term data and there's a high correlation between economic activity, as measured by GDP, and material and energy throughput and environmental impact,' he says. In contrast, a post-growth approach puts human wellbeing and social good at the centre of economic activity with the pursuit of profits and power pushed to the back of the queue.

According to Jackson, post-growth starts by recognising the need to reduce our impact on the planet; it then asks

to what extent economic activity can be decoupled from that impact through different design, improved efficiency and substituting different technologies. Finally, it considers 'what an economy should look like when it is not constantly expanding', he says.

Part of the problem

As key drivers of demand for buildings that consume natural resources and energy, architects are part of the economic growth problem, but they can also help shape the development of a post-growth world. Instead of driving the creation of ever larger city infrastructures, more materialistic lifestyles and humanity's expanding carbon footprint on the planet, they can design in ways that are more sustainable and energy efficient and create spaces that build a different idea of prosperity.

Post-growth architecture isn't primed to drive economic growth or

Post-growth starts by
recognising the need to
reduce our impact on
the planet



LUC SCHUITEN

Left Solarpunk architect Luc Schuiten's concept for how Strasbourg could look in a century's time. His work showing buildings being repurposed and nature reclaiming the city has been influential on the post-growth movement.

by engaging more in refurbishment and reuse, and adhering to national net zero targets, including interim 2030 targets.

Reassess business models

They should also take on projects that emphasise human and social well being over profit-making considerations. The second, arguably tougher, aspect for architects is to reassess their business models, deal flows and the 'footprint of income generation' to realign away from a growth-based model.

The pursuit of economic expansion beyond the sustainable needs of the business and its employees should be avoided, says Jackson: 'You need to ensure your business model isn't like a pyramid scheme where you have to continually expand the portfolio,' he says. This might seem counter-intuitive, but not if the move to post-growth is coming from all stakeholders in construction and across wider society.

'You want that effort to be coming from everywhere, in the procurement procedures of the government, who are enormous procurers of building, from corporate clients,' he says. 'Architects need to have post-growth principles embedded in codes of practice and declarations of intent.'

This could spell the end of the type of grand statement, iconic architecture that perpetuates material and energy growth in favour of more modest buildings with minimal environmental impact, attuned to the needs of a smaller economic system.

Given humanity's continued path of destruction and the planet's limited resources it may become the default approach. If so, 'early adopter' architects will be well placed to help society get there through design. 'It's impossible to keep growth going indefinitely on a finite planet, we have to face this at some point. The question is whether we want to wait for societal collapse, or facilitate a softer landing,' concludes Mordak. ●

encourage people to spend money, instead it encourages engagement in more participatory, creative and meaningful activities such as sports, recreation, study and learning.

Questioning the principle of growth is radical, but some architects and consultants are aligning with its principles. The Architects Declare steering group has said the idea 'that we can carry on growing and just hope technology will eventually save us is a reckless and unscientific delusion'.

'I try to understand principles of degrowth and post-growth and apply them in my work at every opportunity,' says Smith Mordak, director of sustainability and physics at engineering consultancy Buro Happold and one-time RIBA Journal columnist. 'If we want to cultivate a human society that doesn't degenerate the ecosystems that support all life, then we need to apply them.'

An Architecture Degrowth Manifesto, posted anonymously on Twitter last summer, synthesises what its author, a US architectural worker, claims are the frustrations of many architects who feel the profession is intractably complicit in climate degradation.

The manifesto's 25 'acts of refusal' include a rejection of 'the dominant response of the industry to urgent environmental and human rights

injustices, which we see as inadequate, accommodationist, diversionary, and, in some cases, opportunistic.'

It states that governmental regulations and industry standards pertaining to the climate and the exploitation of workers 'are insufficient ethical guidelines for architects'. Further, the manifesto includes a refusal to recommend the use of energy, the contribution of emissions, or the extraction of raw materials by the building industry 'for any reason unless it is absolutely necessary, and demonstrably will benefit the public'.

'I wrote the manifesto in response to what I felt was the industry's inability, or unwillingness, to respond to the climate crisis as a systemic problem, rather than one that can be solved by industry reforms, such as the frenetic adoption of low emissions products and carbon accounting schemes,' the author told RIBA in an email. 'There has been increasing dissatisfaction with the profession for a while, especially among young architects, who less and less share the aspirations of their clients and bosses.'

Embedded in growth

Switching to a post-growth mindset is tough in a sector driven by growth, where clients are often blinkered by capitalist considerations and where

architects can make good money promoting and designing buildings to meet their needs. As Jackson puts it: 'You're sitting on the design side of an equation that's embedded in a growth-based economy.' So how do architects disentangle themselves?

'No individual architect or single practice can extract themselves from this toxic system. Growthism is the water we all swim in and are co-constituted within,' says Mordak, who suggests that a shift towards post-growth may be possible if architects strive to understand their complicity in the growth-based status quo and work together 'to unpick systems that perpetuate harm and creatively imagine alternatives.'

Jackson encourages practices to take a twin-pronged approach – from a projects perspective they should be working to ensure designs have minimal materials impact, for example

No individual architect
or single practice can
extract themselves from
this toxic system

PII exclusions and costs still hitting practices

Where are we now with professional indemnity insurance? RIBA Business Benchmarking shows practices continue to be constrained, says Adrian Malleson



Business, clients
& services



Legal, regulatory &
statutory compliance

Zooming in to the detail of the business of architecture, the RIBA Business Benchmarking report takes a detailed snapshot of architects' practice each year. And it is detailed. The survey covers practice revenue and where it comes from, practice expenditure by item line, salaries, work sectors, business practice, and the value and area of overseas work. Completing it each year is a commitment practices make upon becoming chartered. It's an invaluable, longitudinal dataset of and for the profession.

Practices can use the data to see how their businesses are doing when compared to others that are similar, and the level of detail means business opportunities are there to be uncovered. Also, the data gives a robust overview, so shows the real, measured value chartered practices add to the UK economy. It is an indispensable tool for lobbying. Further, because of the granularity of data, it lays a solid evidence base to support the RIBA's response to emerging issues. Later, this article will look in detail at one example of that, professional indemnity insurance.

First, though, an overview of the findings of the 2022 report. After 2021's Covid-related falls in revenue, workload and staffing, this year's figures show practice and profession stability. There is recovery from the pandemic, but not resurgence.

Revenue has stabilised (up 1%), and

so have profits, which have held steady. Staff numbers have recovered from the pandemic, furlough and lock-down (and that was worryingly uncertain for many months – let's count some blessings). But we still despondently await the touted 'roaring twenties'. Revenue remains below pre-pandemic levels, international work has fallen back slightly, and the strong year-on-year growth of 2015 to 2020 has stalled.

Over the last few months, headwinds have blown harder: planning delays, unpredictable project cost inflation, labour and materials shortages, an unprecedented surge in energy costs, and a rapidly climbing inflation spike. It looks like challenges to the profession are here to stay awhile. With the Bank of England forecasting a long recession (from which the construction sector won't be exempt), the next year or two are unlikely to be plain sailing. Not all practices will feel the pressure, but for many winning new commissions will be harder, and margins will be challenged.

Professional indemnity insurance

Practices face a range of challenges, which are together putting pressure on practices. One of those challenges, Professional Indemnity Insurance, has become increasingly expensive over the last few years, and the number and extent of policy exclusions has risen. With the help of the data Benchmarking provides, supplemented by a one-off member survey in summer 2022, we have the detail. Let's take a look.

In 2022 (or more precisely, the 12 months to May 2022) the average PII premium across all practices of all sizes, was £32,926. To give that average figure a bit of context, the average cost of PII,

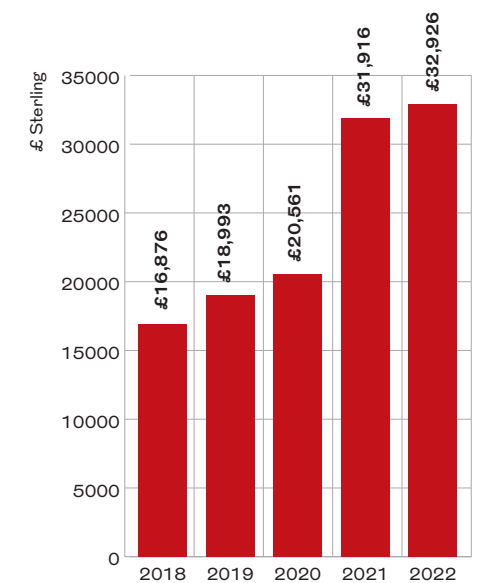
as a percentage of practice revenue, has risen from 1.3% in 2019 to 2.5% in 2022, and for practices with more than 50 staff, that figure is now 3.2%.

Taken together, the approximate total value to insurers of chartered practice PII premiums is £115 million. It's not small potatoes.

Some more top-level figures. The median PII cover provided through PII is £2 million. Across practices, policy excesses remain broadly stable, with a median figure of £1000, although this is significantly higher for medium (£10,000) and large (£50,000) practices.

Looking back at Benchmarking data to 2018, PII costs have increased significantly. Then the average premium was £16,876. The rise to £32,926 in 2022 equates to a 95% increase within five years. That said, the rate of increase has slowed. 2020 to 2021 saw the average value of policies increase by 55%, but in

Average (mean) PII cost. All practices, 2018 to 2022



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Talk and Q&A with

David Kohn | Founding director

Jennifer Dyne | Project architect & RIBA Rising Star

Edward Turner | Client

Yinka Shonibare CBE RA | Artist

Taro Tsuruta | Jury chair

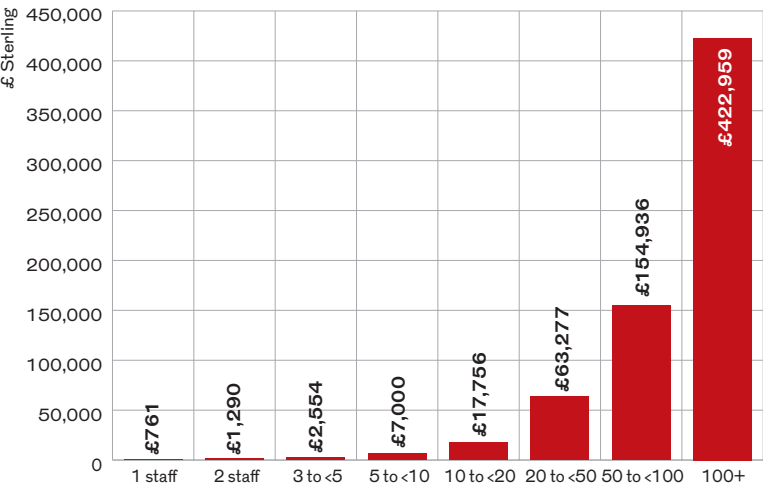
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Median PII cost by practice size -2022



2022 it was a far more modest 3%. Of course, the cost (and level) of PII varies greatly depending on the type of work undertaken and the number of professionals within a practice. Graph 1 illustrates this. For a single person practice the cost of PII averages £761 (and in the context of average revenue of £52,529 that’s not insignificant). For a large practice of 100 or more staff, the average PII bill is heading towards half a million, at £422,959.

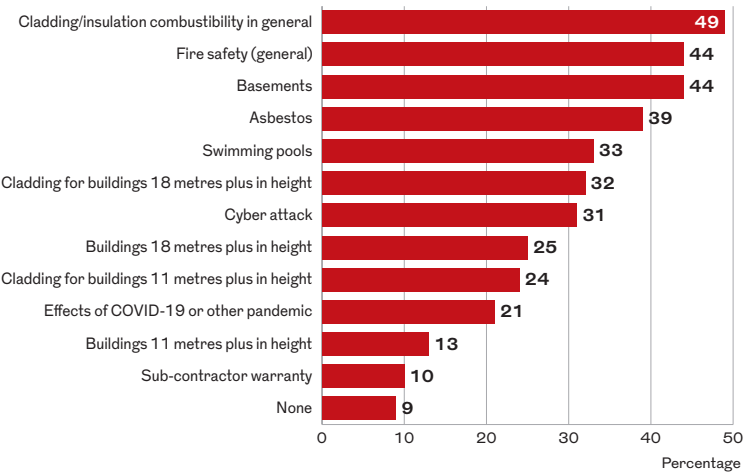
However, it’s not just the cost of PII cover that is challenging, but the exclusions applied, too. The number and type of exclusion is rising. For many practices this is as detrimental as the cost increases. Policy exclusions are a double hit. Reducing the range of work a practice can undertake curtails the business of architecture; at the same time, the professionals most able to reduce risk in risky projects are excluded.

Practices report multiple exclusions on policies, with 49% citing ‘cladding/insulation combustibility in general’, and 44% for both ‘fire safety (general)’ and ‘basements’. Around a third report accepting exclusions for ‘asbestos’, ‘swimming pools’, ‘cladding of buildings 18m plus in height’ and ‘cyber-attack’ (this last one being a less remote possibility than might be thought). For many, these exclusions are being added for the first time at the point of renewal, with, for example, 40% of those accepting fire safety as an exclusion

doing so for the first time. For cladding, that figure is just over a quarter (28%). Feedback from some suggests insurance brokers may have insufficient domain expertise to draft the policies the profession needs; some are poorly drafted and so needlessly ambiguous or restrictive.

What is the RIBA doing? PII is at the centre of the Institute’s activities. The RIBA 2022-2023 Biennial Action Plan, Educating and Supporting Architects, Promoting Architecture and Celebrating Excellence, describes 10 priorities, including PII. The strategic aim is to secure sustainable premium levels and comprehensive cover for architects’ services, to meet the needs

Which exclusions have you accepted in your PII cover this year?



of both the profession and insurance market. To support this, the RIBA has launched a Council-led expert advisory group to help. The group’s work will benefit members and the profession, and help ensure public interest is met. From within the construction sector, the group is taking a lead on PII on behalf of the RIBA, in part by working closely with insurance industry experts.

Work is in progress, but armed with the results above, (giving a detailed, robust picture of the current market, covering levels of premiums, excess and policy exclusions), the RIBA will be able to create and put forward a strongly evidence-based case on behalf of the membership. The data is informing our discussions with the insurance market, which is taking a proactive stance and providing valuable insights.

The Institute is focused on attainable short and medium-term improvements that will help ensure longer-term resilience and protection for architects and their clients, which is particularly important as we again face challenging times. Recommendations emerging from this work are expected in early 2023, and implementation will follow later in the year. ●

Adrian Malleson is head of research and economic analysis at the RIBA
Thanks to chartered practices for completing their benchmarking returns

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President's Medals 2022

This year's medal-winners have profoundly personal inspirations. Annabelle Tan's detailed study of tropicality as a route to a socially and politically appropriate future in her native Singapore nets the Silver and Dissertation awards, while Mary Holmes brings 'gentle architecture' to her Bronze-winning almshouse for queer elders

Interviews: Pamela Buxton



Above Annabelle Tan's project proposes an inhabited eco-corridor in Singapore built from local brick, bamboo and timber.

Right Two housing typologies: Thin Sliver for new families/couples (left) and Tower of Housing for growing families (right).

Annabelle Tan has become the most decorated student in the 186-year history of the RIBA President's Medals after winning both the Silver and Dissertation Medals this year, adding to her Bronze in 2019.

In doing so, she has achieved the full suite of RIBA education awards having also won, in addition to the Medals, the Sustainable Design Prize for both her Bronze and Silver projects, the SOM Foundation Fellowship for her Bronze, and the Donaldson Medal in 2019 for graduating with the highest mark from the Part 1 course at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

It's an impressive achievement for the Bartlett student, who also won the student category of the RIBA Journal's Eye Line competition in 2021.

Born in Singapore, she explored notions of tropicality in her homeland for her Silver and Dissertation entries. Now back in Singapore, she is working for the Urban Redevelopment Authority in an architecture and urban design role.

'I've always been more interested in architecture as part of larger systems and urban landscapes, as opposed to individual buildings. This role certainly has ample opportunities for me to learn about the real politics and technicalities that abstract concepts of city-making often gloss over,' she says.

Back in the UK, we may not have seen the last of her:

'While I do believe in designing locally, London is special to me and I definitely wouldn't rule out going back at some point.'

RIBA SILVER COMMENDATION & SERJEANT AWARD AT PART 2

Nirvana

Nadir Mahmood

Manchester School of Architecture

Tutor: Helen Iball

RIBA SILVER COMMENDATIONS

Spolia Tectonic

Dario Biscaro

Royal College of Art

Tutors: Amin Taha, Peter Rae, Jason Coe

A Campus for Flour: Between Horizontal and Vertical

Oliver Reynolds

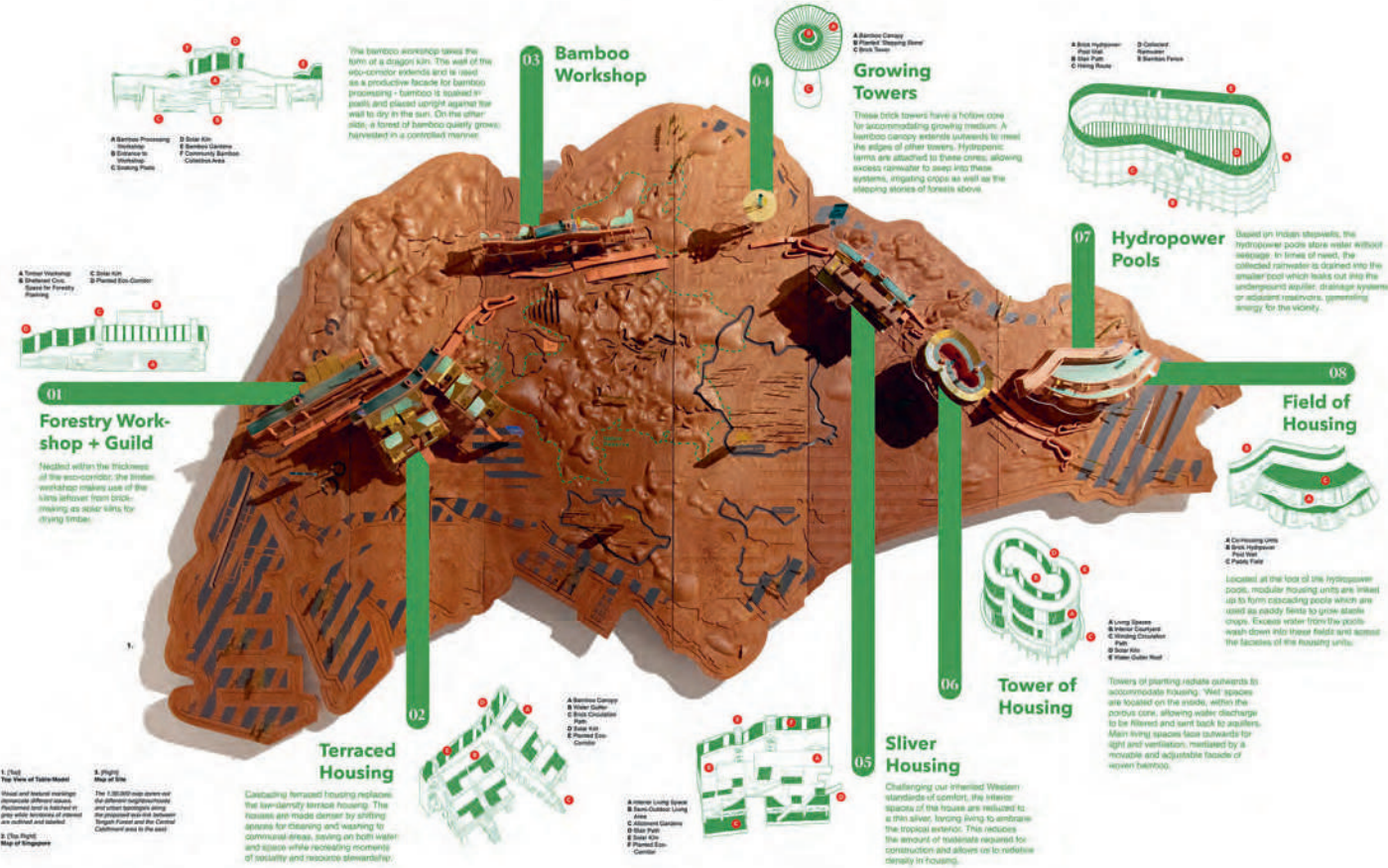
London Metropolitan University

Tutors: Takero Shimazaki, Paolo Pisano, Karabo Turner

2022 RIBA SILVER MEDAL PANEL

Chair: Tracy Meller Senior partner at Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners; honorary professor of architecture at the University of Nottingham, UK
Anupama Kundoo Founding director of Anupama Kundoo Architects; professor of architecture at the Potsdam School of Architecture, Germany; and head of urban design at Auroville, India
Nicholas Lobo Brennan Co-founder of Apparata Architects; associate professor of tectonics at Kingston University, UK
Thandi Loewenson Architectural designer and researcher; tutor of architecture at the Royal College of Art, UK
Ken Okonkwo Associate director at Haworth Tompkins Architects; visiting architecture critic at the University of Sheffield, UK
Sofie Pelsmakers Environmental architect, educator and researcher; associate professor at the Faculty of Built Environment of Tampere University, Finland, and visiting professor of architecture at the University of Sheffield, UK





A Journey through Past, Present and Post-Tropicality
Annabelle Tan
Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
Tutors: Laura Allen, Mark Smout

Annabelle Tan’s winning portfolio builds on the theoretical background of her dissertation exploring Singapore and tropicality (page 48). In her Silver submission, she speculates on radical ways for deconstructing and reconstructing the socio-natural landscape of the country.

She begins by considering eight key areas of scarcity that Singapore has historically framed as problems to be solved in order to achieve national survival – land, water, food, energy, materials, labour, biodiversity and civic space. While the flow of these resources has, she says, controlled planning agendas and shaped the built environment, she seeks to challenge the idea that Singapore is too small or has no hinterland.

Her proposal is an inhabitable eco-corridor connecting Tengah Forest and the Central Catchment’s Nature Reserves, a site that has been chosen by Singapore’s Housing and Development Board to become a model eco-town. Tan explores this site first from the scale of urban infrastructure, rethinking how resource cultivation and harvesting can be integrated into an evolving regeneration. She chooses local materials of brick, bamboo and timber and incorporates their production sites into the emerging development, along with a people’s market, hydropower pools, and various forms of mass housing.

She then focuses on domestic settings, drawing on oral histories and analysis of past ways of living to re-imagine a way of living in the future. These are expressed in various forms, including an intergenerational cascade of terraced housing, a ‘thin sliver’ for new families/couples, and a tower of housing for families. The latter incorporates unenclosed areas that allow for self-build infill.

Above Model showing different housing typologies and sources of raw materials and power

These typologies are heavily informed by past ways of living and current cultural norms, for example the habit of leaving doors wide open to allow cross-ventilation, something that could easily be pigeonholed as climatic response. Instead, she aimed to facilitate the cultural or social aspect of these practices first and foremost, and then naturally weave in sustainability or climate passivity.

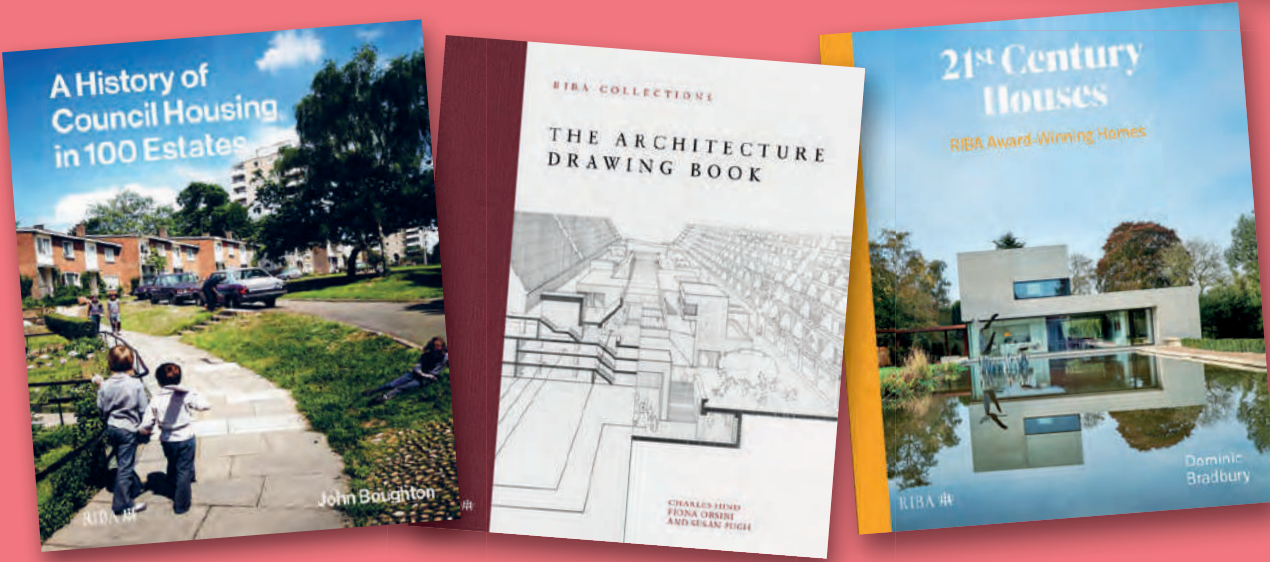
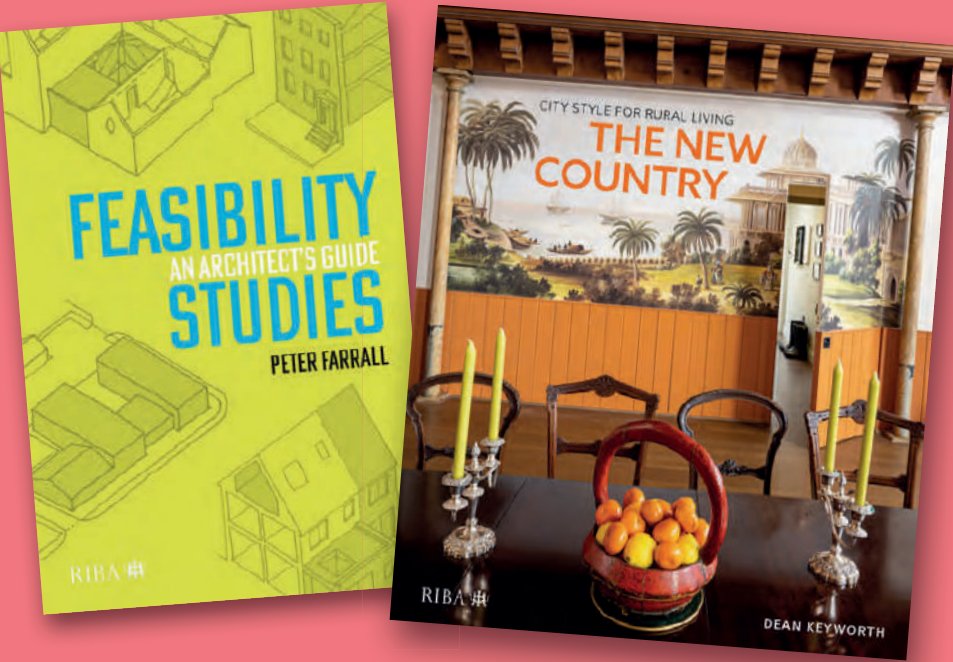
‘I wanted to steer away from a Tropical Modernist approach in which climate was the main design driver behind architecture, creating a misleadingly asocial and apolitical epistemological institution in itself,’ she says.

As well as study models, Tan produced 25m of pencil drawings showing a transect through the proposal, and made a film that panned through the drawings.

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Out of the Closet Into the Garden
An Almshouse for Queer Elders
Mary Holmes
University of Cambridge
Tutors: Elena Palacios Carral, Lola Lozano Lara, Samuel Nelson

In this highly personal project, Mary Holmes repurposes everyday terraced housing to create ‘a site of permeable refuge’ for older queer people. The idea for *Out of the Closet Into the Garden, An Almshouse for Queer Elders* was sparked by the lack of current residential provision specifically for older queer people – more than a third feel they have to go back in the closet when entering care facilities. However, she is clear that rather than dwell on the harsh conditions from which it emerged,

this is first and foremost a ‘hopeful’ project that focuses on the ‘fun, and joy and connection’ that such an almshouse could bring. It is also intended as ‘a protest and a provocation within and against a system of architectural education that continues to exclude queer theory, queer lives, from its teaching’. Holmes took inspiration from a 1970s precedent in Brixton, London, in which a group of gay men removed garden fences and internal walls between two rows of squatted houses to create a shared community. Half a century later, her almshouse takes two terraces and their connected gardens in suburban Harlow, Essex, and reimagines them as an almshouse for elders where residents don’t have to ‘quieten their queerness’. The houses appear little changed

A 1970s precedent in Brixton, London, saw a group of gay men remove garden fences and internal walls between two rows of squatted houses to create a shared community



Main image Two terraces of housing and their gardens are repurposed into a welcoming almshouse for queer elders. **Left** Residents have their own rooms or flats overlooking a central communal garden.

RIBA BRONZE MEDAL HIGH COMMENDATION & RIBA AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AT PART 1
Common Ground | Leith
Inka Eismar
Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Tutors: Kieran Hawkins, Nicky Thomson
RIBA BRONZE MEDAL COMMENDATIONS
Symbiosis
Chon Kei Lam
University of Melbourne
Tutors: Djordje Stojanovic, Mark Ng



A Scarcity of Attention // Plans for 111-115 Constitution Street
Felix Wilson
Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Tutors: Rachael Hallett, Jamie Henry
SERJEANT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING AT PART 1
Leow Keskorra ha Dyski: A Place to Assemble and Learn
Nathan Tipping-Stevenson
Falmouth University
Tutor: Tanya Griffiths

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Victoria Farrow Practising architect; course leader for the BA Architecture at Birmingham City University
Adam Nathaniel Furman Architecturally trained artist and designer
Smith Mordak Director of sustainability and physics at Buro Happold; practising architect, engineer, writer and curator
Stephen Slaughter Practising architect; chair of undergraduate architecture at Pratt Institute in New York, USA
Ramsey Yassa Practising architect; founding director at NOOMA Studio

when seen from the front, with occasional glimpses into the communal garden. Inside, however, the terraces themselves are reconfigured to provide three types of accommodation – assisted care rooms, semi-private flats and private flats. At the rear, garden divisions are removed to create a large, shared central space. A new glazed portico along the back of the housing links the units in an undulating ‘architecture of embrace’, providing circulation with little areas for seating looking onto the garden. A key space is the ‘(un)common room’, positioned in the middle of the garden to separate off a kitchen garden and a more private wildflower meadow. Topped with a roof terrace, this is the social heart of the almshouse. ‘It’s a gentle architecture that doesn’t

sideline anyone. It can be used by all bodies. Hopefully it’s welcoming to everyone,’ says Holmes. A floor of colourful brick tiles created by the residents using earth from the site forms a bespoke ground of queer memory inspired by Aids quilts. Prompting curiosity, each tile has the sometimes-enigmatic imprint of an object important to a resident, such as a flower, or a rosary bead, while the full story is told, unseen, on the underside. Describing the project as ‘a chance to imagine my own queer utopia,’ she hopes it may prompt others to imagine other possibilities: ‘It’s not an ideal solution. It’s just mine.’ Holmes is co-founder of Queer Aided Design, a collaborative design platform that aspires to connect and support queer architecture students and space-makers.



**Past, Present and Post-Tropicality:
Viewing Singapore through an 'Infra(-)
structural' Field**

Annabelle Tan

Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)

Tutor: Tania Sengupta

Annabelle Tan's dissertation researches why the urban landscape of Singapore is how it is today, seeking to understand and learn from what has been lost during the island's colonial and post-colonial eras. In doing so she explores ideas of tropicality, proposing a subaltern perspective as an alternative to colonial and neo-colonial standpoints.

In her thesis, she looks at dominant infrastructures of three modes of tropicality: colonial, post-colonial, and neoliberal in the context of Singapore. This includes the relocation of people from semi-sufficient kampung village compounds to mass housing by both colonial and post-colonial governments, and the development, which emerged in the 1990s, of tropicality as a global commodity, demonstrated by Singapore's quest to be a 'Tropical City of Excellence'.

Tan also explores alternative experiences of tropicality through the everyday realm of 'infra-structures', which she defines as 'a constantly shifting assemblage of people, relations, things and knowledge that is found in the crevices and shadows of dominant

infrastructure'. In infra-structures, people are perceived as active agents rather than having the more passive role they inhabit in infrastructures.

She explores infra-structures by drawing on her own family history through interviews with her mother and grandmother to explore different ways of domestic living over the last 80 years. Such narratives, she says, are often brushed aside in an academic context. These include everyday anecdotal moments, from her grandmother's early life in kampung village settlements to Tan's lockdown experiences living with her family. One theme is the intimate proximity to nature and environmental conditions of village living in contrast with later, more interior-focused city living and its preoccupation with cleanliness.

'I focus on the 'smallness' of everyday tropical living because I feel that the answers to a more sustainable, equitable and even happier future are no longer within "big" solutions...I use my family history because it is also the nation's history – a multi-generational story that almost everyone in Singapore has experienced,' she says.

Although optimistic for Singapore's future prosperity, she feels it can't progress without full acknowledgement of both what it has inherited from its colonial past, and its continuing neo-colonial capitalist systems.

'On a global scale, inherited notions of modernity are at the root of anthropogenic activities that continue to cause climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. We all need to transcend singular ideals of modernity and progress,' she says. ●

One theme is the intimate proximity to nature and environmental conditions



RIBA DISSERTATION COMMENDATIONS

Mapping Migrant Trajectories: A Study of South Asians in Diaspora through the Bradford High Street
Mohsin Ali

Manchester School of Architecture

Tutors: Helen Aston, Leandro Minuchin, Huda Tayob

The Art of Getting By: From Domestic Abuse to Social Housing

Thomas Faulkner

Architectural Association

Tutor: Simon Withers

Beyond Humanitarianism: From States of Violence to Futures of Care in Northern France

Kieran Tam

University of Cambridge

Tutors: Irit Katz, Julika Gittner, Ingrid Schröder

2022 RIBA DISSERTATION MEDAL PANEL

Chair: Lesley Lokko Founder and director of the African Futures Institute, Accra, Ghana

Thomas Aquilina London-based architect and academic
Kuukuwa Manful PhD candidate at SOAS, University of London

Samir Pandya Assistant head of the School of Architecture and Cities, University of Westminster

Tanja Poppelreuter Lecturer in the History and Theory of Architecture and director of postgraduate research studies at the University of Salford

Huda Tayob Lecturer in architectural studies at the University of Manchester

Main image A kampung, one of countless informal settlements where indigenous Malay and migrant Chinese populations lived in Singapore.

Below Drawing depicting how dominant infrastructure can be reworked by small interventions in everyday spaces.

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Which housing crisis?
— opinion
55

Grenfell analysed
— review
62

3: Culture



Amadeus Long
A Stairway
Barbican, London
2016
HTC cameraphone

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Amadeus Long is a born wanderer. Jaded by a job in music for TV and radio ads, he chose to pick up a camera and conduct a career move into the visual realm; but meticulous by nature, he knew any project would need a structure. Having lived all his life in London, he reflected on how little he knew of the city, and decided to visit all of its 272 tube stations to create 'A Year in London', a snapshot in or around each one over 365 days.

He recounts his joy on realising at Epping Forest that it was indeed a forest – 'there were

horses!' – but the rewards and challenges were garnered at the 93 stations making up his 'year'. With images shot and the book ordered by tube line (its edge is colour coded), visual 'journeys' saw interchanges like King's Cross visited multiple times to complete the line and capture the time.

Simple ideas translate. Long is now in New York doing the same with its subway. But why should capturing a mass transit system even take a year? Just as he did in London; ironically, he's walking the lot. ● Jan-Carlos Kucharek

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'The review estimates the cost of poor quality homes at £340 million to the NHS from the private sector alone'



Quality is key to unlock the housing crisis

Michael Gove's U-turn on housing targets is significant in many ways, says Eleanor Young

Where does the housing crisis lie? Is it in the number of homes we build or the quality and ownership of those homes?

When the coroner returned her verdict on the death of two year old Awaab Ishak from sustained exposure to environmental mould in his Rochdale flat she said it should be a 'defining moment' for the social housing sector. Mould from poor ventilation and probable water ingress had been blooming in the kitchen, bathroom and a bedroom cupboard. Awaab Ishak died as a result of a severe respiratory condition caused by the prolonged exposure to this mould in his home.

Speaking at the inquest, housing ombudsman Richard Blakeway referred to the ombudsman's 2021 Spotlight Report on Mould and Damp, which had called for proactive, zero tolerance to mould and a shift away from blaming inhabitants for their lifestyle. From my own experience in a social housing block – when mould shifted from window frames to walls as PVC replaced steel frames – I know the blame is easily apportioned to 'lifestyle factors' of boiling kettles, cooking, showering and drying clothes. The fact that this is normal living explains why it is such a widespread problem. Nearly a quarter (23%) are living with significant damp, mould and condensation found a survey last year for housing charity Shelter.

The review of the Decent Homes Standard has been (slowly) under way for sometime now. The government has promised legislation to extend it from social housing into the private rented sector. And the review is clear on the cost of poor quality homes, estimating it at £340 million to the NHS from those in the private sector alone. A key aspect of the standard is likely to be ventilation.

So we have poor conditions. And renting is pricey and uncertain, the supply of new social housing is patchy and those who might buy are

struggling to afford deposits and mortgages. Our answer for many years has been to build our way out of the housing crisis. But greater supply does not necessarily make homes more affordable and even the rate at which houses have been built (well below national targets) has proved higher than household formation in recent years. Plus we have nearly 800,000 second homes and many available for short let rather than permanent homes.

So perhaps levelling up secretary Michael Gove's surprise move to change mandatory local housing targets to less-than-mandatory ones shouldn't have come as a surprise. Conservative MPs rebelling against provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill forced Gove's rather woolly offer to local authorities of making these targets just a 'starting point' if they could show, among other things, 'genuine constraints'.

It is not only those who have seen, estate by estate, the mushrooming of their towns into the fields who should be marking this moment. It is also those who want to see other answers to the housing crisis, from a more secure rented sector to homes that are healthy, not hazardous, to live in. ●



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The project was about discovering a brief with the client that would win planning approval and be deliverable despite restricted access

Fraser Livingstone's intriguing restaurant: ribaj.com/toilet_conversion

It is not just lack of housing stock but also the condition of homes that affects lives.

STEPHANIE WUNDERLICH PHOTO: ISTOCK



Action hero

Will Wiles revels in the goriest, glorious comic-book skills of artist Kevin O’Neill

It is, I think, something approaching a national disgrace that the death of British artist Kevin O’Neill last year was not mourned more widely. But then, O’Neill was always an outsider. He was recruited by Pat Mills, founder of the British comic 2000AD, to work on the title as it launched. The pair became a creative partnership, producing profound and subversive comic art.

Words feel insufficient to describe O’Neill’s style. Manic detail played a large part, well suited to arcane machinery, gothic interiors, intricate cityscapes thick with graffiti, crowds of freaks. His fondness for exaggerated visual gags, drawn from the more juvenile end of the comics world, paired well with his perverse genius for design. Mostly, though – and I say this with great admiration and fondness – O’Neill’s work was grotesque. His ability to render ugliness was very, very beautiful. His costumes are like a nightmare Thierry Mugler might have after spending 48 hours trapped in a fetish store. He did some of the chunkiest, eyeballiest, goriest gore in the business. His faces were incredible: monsters and villains distorted by rage and bloodlust, and wide-eyed civilians looking on in terror and disgust. The distinctiveness of this work has no greater tribute than the fact that O’Neill’s entire style was condemned by the Comics Code Authority – he was the only artist to receive this honour.

The first Mills/O’Neill co-creation was Metalzoic, a strip about giant robots which gave O’Neill a platform for his magnificent machines. They then created Nemesis the Warlock, which would become one of 2000AD’s iconic stories. In Nemesis, humanity has fallen under the sway of a xenophobic theocracy, led by the dread Torquemada, and is set on purging all alien life from the galaxy; a ragtag band, led by the titular alien Warlock, fights back. O’Neill’s baroque art gave splendid, horrible life to the odious, torturing religious hypocrites who were the series antagonists; and it had the most magnificent architecture and vehicles. It was also – like all Mills/O’Neill creations – very funny.

The anti-heroism explored in Nemesis was brought to an extreme conclusion in Marshal

Law, again created with Mills, but in the freer environment of small indie comics such as Strip and Toxic. This was a prolonged scream of rage in the face of the whole genre. Its title character is an embittered superhero policeman, who specialises in hunting down his caped brethren, with tremendous violence. Marshal Law’s savage lampooning of the whole superhero pantheon was also a ripe opportunity for Mills and O’Neill to express their frustration with the comics industry.

Still, 35 years on, Marshal Law retains the capacity to shock and disgust. It must have been cathartic, as O’Neill followed it with a pure comics masterpiece: The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, co-created with the legendary Moore. This was a rampage across the Victorian era, and 20th century – O’Neill’s fanatical attention to detail and unerring pen, coupled with Moore’s seemingly limitless esoteric knowledge and reading, created work of scarcely believable richness. O’Neill’s fantastical skylines and structures were given their fullest possible airing in this fever-dream world – the astounding architecture of, for instance, the unfinished Channel Causeway, with its immense statuary and simmering steam-cranes, is unforgettable.

Where, but the world of comics, could such astounding draughtsmanship and fetishistic design talent thrive to this extent? But it is a naturally ephemeral world. O’Neill must have gouged his mark in the imaginations of thousands of creative professionals in this country, who would not be writing or drawing without him showing the way. But the danger is that these contributions are not given the recognition they deserve. ●



LARGER THAN LIFE
After O’Neill, Nemesis the Warlock passed through the hands of several hugely talented artists, including Bryan Talbot. Like O’Neill, Talbot would spin off his own world of fabulised Victoriana in his Luther Arkwright series, which he wrote and drew. The actual 19th century begins to look rather pallid against these cumulative visions.

Left O’Neill’s Nemesis the Warlock is the cover star of a 1983 issue of 2000AD.



Achievement and ambition

Simon Allford looks back over the last year and ahead to hopes and plans for 2023

Around this time last year, I set out my presidential priorities. These have underpinned our Biennial Action Plan 2022-23 endorsed by RIBA Council and Board that sets the focus for the organisation during my presidency. These areas include the issues that matter most to our members: Access to Architecture, addressing PII and carbon, increasing membership engagement, and ensuring our institute is in the right shape to deliver what our members and society need.

First I’ll focus on the biggest issue of our time: the climate emergency. RIBA representatives used COP27 last October to discuss architects’ vital role in addressing the climate emergency, emphasising the importance of low energy buildings and the significance of retrofitting existing stock. On the theme of climate change, the RIBA is working with leading industry bodies to develop a UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard that will enable industry to robustly prove that built assets are net zero carbon and in line with our nation’s climate targets.

Elsewhere, we have set up an RIBA Council-led expert advisory group to address professional indemnity insurance. Working with insurance experts, the RIBA is leading on this issue within the construction industry for the benefit of our members and wider architectural profession, but it’s equally important to the public interest. We’ve analysed the findings of the members’ survey



STEPHANIEWUNDERLICH PHOTO: WILL PRYCE

we ran in 2022, along with data from the RIBA Business Benchmarking report (see page 41) to give us a robust picture of the current market – expect to see recommendations emerging from this work early this year.

Next, I must highlight progress on the House of Architecture initiative to undertake vital improvements to 66 Portland Place. We’ve appointed Benedetti Architects to lead a feasibility study, to be complete by the end of January. Portland Place is a stunning building, but doesn’t meet our aspirations for carbon, accessibility or inclusion, so a programme of work is vital and overdue. With the vital input of our new director of collections and programmes, we are starting to establish a feasibility model to bring our collections together in one place, accelerating out digitisation plan to make it more accessible in both the physical and virtual world.

As well as work to improve conditions for architects, I am often told the other thing members value is our profile. One way we achieve this is through our partnerships with major broadcasters. The latest is a four-part TV series on Channel 4 that concluded in December. Kevin McCloud and a team of presenters explored the buildings on the longlist for the 2022 RIBA House of the Year. Congratulations to the winner, The Red House in rural Dorset.

The series reached millions of viewers, educating the public and potential clients about what sets an RIBA chartered architect apart.

Finally, I’d like to acknowledge that amid the accomplishments and successes of the past year, there is always more to be done. I’m ever more emboldened by the passion and dedication of our Council, Board, staff, and you our members, working collaboratively and cohesively to help make our global institute an engaging and accessible 21st century institute of ideas: The House of Architecture @RIBA. To do this, we need leadership at every level so as well as our eight new directors, I welcome our new CEO Valerie Vaughan Dick who starts shortly.

I’m sure she will help all our staff team accelerate our progress. ●

DISCIPLINARY SANCTION: PUBLIC REPRIMAND
Following a hearing before the Professional Conduct Committee on 27 September 2022, Mr Paul Karlsson was deemed to have breached the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct 2005 (July 2016 version).

They failed to ensure that their terms of appointment, the scope of work and/or the essential project requirements were clear and recorded in writing, also failing to have maintained clear records of any changes to those made with the client, in breach of Principle 2.3.

They failed to ensure that they kept clients informed of the progress of the project and/or of the key decisions made on the client’s behalf in breach of Principle 2.4.

They failed to have in place or have access to effective procedures for dealing with disputes or complaints, promptly and appropriately in breach of principle 3.5.

In accordance with the RIBA Disciplinary Procedures, Mr Karlsson has been issued with a Public Reprimand.

Conviction, optimism and enthusiasm keep Jonathan Smales, Greenpeace director turned sustainable developer, going despite setbacks. Will his latest project be the success story?

Words: Eleanor Young Portrait: Justin Sutcliffe

Never say die

Walk away from the historic centre of most towns and villages and you are brought short by the tense negotiation of the edge. Chicken sheds, breweries and fields are being turned into smooth curves of tarmac leading to brick boxes, from starter to executive homes with more or less space for the second car. Could an ex managing director of Greenpeace and founder of Doncaster's Earth Centre be one of those to help edge developments buck the boring and start building community – working with a fascinating selection of interesting architectural practices?

Brick boxes were what was facing the handsome town of Lewes in the South Downs when the old ironworks site went up for redevelopment. A group, Phoenix Rising, got together to resist, asking a new resident with generations of borrowed family history in the town to help: Jonathan Smales. The contested project didn't get off the ground – even though the developer secured planning it couldn't make it stack up. By then Smales was hooked on the opportunity. He set up Human Nature and with the help of investments from local family funds bought the site, now named The Phoenix Project and being submitted for planning this month. 'Human Nature is a movement rather than a developer,' he says.

Since he was managing director of Greenpeace he has been interested in, and doing, development; and making it more sustainable. In 1989 at Greenpeace he brought the strands of the campaign group's expertise together under a new roof in a

former animal testing laboratory working with the young Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.

After Greenpeace he founded the Earth Centre, urged on by a neighbour and a desire to give the green movement 'some glamour'. He looked at but rejected Bankside Power Station, later Tate Modern, wanting buildings and landscape. Instead he went for the beautiful, damaged 'moon landscape' of Doncaster's coalfields. 'I fell in love with it,' he says. The Earth Centre was imbued with optimism and buoyed by a grant from the Millennium Fund. It would be a new national institution. He recruited sustainable designers and out-there architects: Bill

Below Greened, car-free roads link apartments and health hub in a concept for Phoenix Square.



HUMAN NATURE WITH PERISCOPE

COURTESY PHOENIX PROJECT

Jonathan Smales on site at the Phoenix Project, Lewes.

Dunster, Future Systems, Will Alsop.

First there were the old coal mining lands to remediate. Then a whole ecology to build. You maybe remember the ending, into receivership, half finished. It was a huge project; Smales estimated it at £200 million. But in the end he only got £70 million. He found from the newspaper that the Earth Centre had lost out on its next tranche of the Millennium Fund to the Dome in London. Local council support was also a missing factor, he says, one that the Eden Project managed to secure in Cornwall only a few years later. Smales consoles himself, believing it left a better place. There is now a field studies centre, in 80ha of forest with 120,000 trees, and Alsop's Waterworks is still operating.

He is not shy about the Earth Centre, but he

- 1

Pells garden courtyard, Material Cultures
- 2

Spring Lane courtyard and mews, Material Cultures
- 3

Rowe Lane courtyard and mews, Material Cultures
- 4

Pells Lance courtyard and mews, Mae
- 5

Brook Street co-housing, Archio
- 6

North Street
- 7

Foundry apartments, Al-Jawad Pike
- 8

Health hub, Mae
- 9

Phoenix House, Human Nature
- 10

Spring Gardens apartments, Al-Jawad Pike
- 11

Phoenix Square live work and studios, Ash Sakula
- 12

Soap Yard play area, Periscope
- 13

Soap Factory, Human Nature
- 14

Phoenix Neighbourhood Management
- 15

Full Cycle bike shop and courtyard homes, Rabble
- 16

Phoenix cycle lane
- 17

Mobility hub, Periscope
- 18

Causeway Foreshore Park, Periscope
- 19

Foreshore apartments, Adam Richards
- 20

Ouse slipway
- 21

Phoenix Riverside apartments and lofts, Human Nature, Adam Richards, TDO
- 22

Foundry Hotel, Al-Jawad Pike
- 23

Every Hall community centre, Expedition Engineering
- 24

Foundry Yards Gallery, Mae
- 25

Foundry Yard, Periscope
- 26

Thomas Paine Bridge, Expedition Engineering
- 27

Brook Street Galleries, Mole
- 28

River Walk garden and belvedere
- 29

Foundry workshops
- 30

Ouse villa apartments, Mae
- 31

North Street apartments and lofts, Human Nature, Charles Holland, TDO
- 32

Jacob Square townhouses and courtyard houses, Ash Sakula

HUMAN NATURE WITH PERISCOPE



likes to put it in perspective. 'I have 30 years more experience now,' he says. As executive chair of the Beyond Green Group he worked on sustainability strategies and stakeholder consultations for around 100,000 new homes. I ask for a few project names, but he doesn't want to go there. 'I can't because it is depressing. They were the volume housebuilder model.' There was a bid for North West Cambridge with a scheme he and the architects saw as really top notch, but it didn't win. He worked on the London 2012 Olympic project on community engagement and as sustainability advisor on the legacy development. A recent Buckinghamshire project looked like it could produce great housing and place. But once planning permission was obtained partner Aviva sold the site to Taylor Wimpey.

Just as you think you are getting Smales riffing on his success you are brought up short by how he is treating the Phoenix Project in Lewes as a riposte to the many others that went before. His principal critique is about place making, the woeful lack of it, which he hopes to remedy (Jan Gehl and Jane Jacobs are regular references). It is quite unlike most edge of town developments, with sustainability at its core, reflected in structures, energy generation and the way water will be dealt with generously and elegantly. It sets itself the task of making a new locus for Lewes with access to the tidal River Ouse, a café and community hub. And it shunts the car to one side – parking is siphoned off alongside the A road that speeds into the town giving car clubs and electric bikes a privileged position. Even the white vans that tear around many a suburban street will be sidelined and asked to deliver to a hub for a gentler form of last mile distribution.

The mix of homes will be primarily apartments; this and the reduction of affordable housing from 50% to 30% are based on calculations with CBRE. The viability assessment has already been done. Smales reports a question from the local planning authority, the South Downs National Park, about the demountable CLT structures: they wanted to run the viability with different structural options. Smales was gobsmacked: 'It is not a question!' For him timber is the only option for reducing embodied carbon on much-needed homes. And the viability is on a knife edge, as the consultation website spells out baldly (and a little threateningly).

Human Nature already has a small team of architects, including Smales' son Xavier. He expects that to rise to 10. And he has gathered a team of interesting practices: Ash Sakula, Mole Architects on the health hub, Archio on co-housing, and Adam Richards designing a landmark housing building as you enter Lewes on the A2029, plus Mae, Material

Cultures, Al-Jawad Pike and Rabble. It is being masterplanned by Arup and Periscope.

'We need to change so many things, how to clad our buildings, how to get planning permission... why do people make it so hard?' The list of things he is trying to change – from planning to using hemp in timber cassettes, ways of working with a whole band of architectural practices and auditing existing site material for re-use, re-using steel for a new bridge, micro-grids for the houses, a 'raw' housing offer where residents just buy a shell – all seems a little overwhelming. And, frankly, hard to pull off. Some of the rethought methods have been tried before without being a resounding success: using an efficient build system with 'architecture' on top turned into depressing window dressing on dull blocks on the London 2012 Athletes' Village. Is the Phoenix Project taking on too many challenges?

Smales has had many disappointments and perhaps they are more public than those that confront many architects. But he has boundless optimism and alongside the Phoenix is working on piecing together a new settlement of 6000 homes in Norfolk. In Lewes he sees the conditions for success. He already has the land, there is no controlling interest of big banks or pension funds that could sell off the project, he doesn't have to deliver for a house builder and he isn't waiting for government funds that may never come. He believes in the project, its sustainability and its placemaking – and this is, after all, his adopted home town. ●

Below Smales with the model of the Phoenix Project at Human Nature's base in Lewes.



IVAN JONES

Grenfell book is essential read for everyone

Peter Apps intertwines humanity, horror and technical detail in a harrowing but compelling report of the Grenfell fire, the Inquiry and people who suffered, says Tim O’Callaghan

Peter Apps is a journalist and editor for ‘Inside Housing’: a trade magazine that serves the UK’s social housing sector. His coverage of the Grenfell Inquiry on Twitter and through weekly reports on the Inquiry itself has been unmatched and he kept our attention on the astonishing revelations with compassion and persistence.

And the Inquiry has been very, very long: the first hearing was on 14 September 2017 and the final day of testimony was a couple of weeks ago on 7 November 2022. To give context to the length of the Inquiry, Apps recently shared that he missed the very opening hearings as he was on paternity leave for the birth of his son and was late filing his report on the final day because he had to pick him up from primary school.

With the Inquiry finally over (albeit with the outcomes and conclusions yet to be released) Apps’ book brings together all he learnt through his detailed reporting from the trial. It is passionate and precise and admirably concise given the complexity of what he covers.

The book alternates chapters that recount the night of the tragedy with those focusing on the managerial, regulatory and political events that created the conditions for the tragedy to unfold. Chapters following the fire itself are recounted chronologically: starting with smoke seeping from below a fridge-freezer in Flat 16 at 1am and ending with the subsequent mistreatment of victims and their families by the police and the local authority. Each following chapter unpicks the events leading to the fire over decades, and the failure of those involved to prevent it.

This structure brilliantly brings what could have been a very dry and technical analysis constantly back into the context of the harrowing human cost of the decisions.



Grenfell Tower after the fire of 2017.

The Inquiry revealed a construction industry devoid of morality or ethics ... extending to the heart of our state

I followed the inquiry with interest through its long course, but the book still included much that I wasn’t aware of, notably the mistreatment of residents before and, shockingly, after the fire. It also brings into sharp focus the impact of recent political drives to deregulate and ‘cut red tape’.

I was reminded of some of the more abhorrent actions that led to the fire, in particular by the insulation suppliers. Actions that led our own practice to commit not to specify their products. Nothing in the book made us reconsider this position. In fact accounts of the toxic smoke and allegedly carcinogenic soot created by these products in the fire has made us consider whether we can eliminate all fossil-fuel derived insulation from our projects at our practice, nimtim.

The sections of the book that recount the night itself are moving and devastating. They are told through the experiences of the people involved: some of whom survived it and many who didn’t. They put a human context to the tragedy: the lives, loves, challenges, dreams of those who died or whose lives were changed forever by what happened.

This is the most admirable and important aspect of the book: Apps demonstrates deep and genuine empathy with the victims and their devastated families. He brings each and every failure leading to the fire into the context of the people who suffered and/or died. Fundamentally, this was what people in positions of authority/ power had failed to do up to that point: put people at the heart of decisions and policy making.

Almost exactly two years ago, just after the cross examinations with the insulation companies, I wrote about how the Inquiry had revealed a construction industry devoid of morality or ethics. I wrote optimistically about how architects might form part of a solution: custodians of a new set of values that can run through every stage of a project.

What we learned in the cross examinations that followed revealed that the problems extend beyond the construction industry to the heart of our state. How countless opportunities to learn

from other fires here and in other parts of the world were lost and how government inaction led to fire regulations that made us an outlier in Europe, allowing the UK to become a dumping ground for sub-standard insulation.

How years of deregulation driven from the very top of government had stripped back our state’s ability to update, manage and enforce fire regulations. How privatisation of the institutions that ought to have protected us (the BBA, BRE, building regulations) meant they lacked either the agency or the resourcing to intervene.

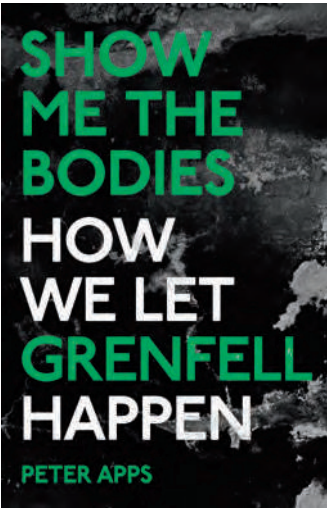
For architects, there is much to reflect upon here. How can we ever again take supplier information at face value? Who can we trust in a project team? How can we regain the agency that means our designs can’t be catastrophically altered before they are built?

Perhaps the most powerful takeaway is the critical importance of what we do to the lives of people who will use our buildings. It would be impossible to read the accounts of the night of the fire without reflecting on what and who we consider when we design.

The Grenfell fire and its Inquiry deserve to be a watershed moment for how we design and deliver buildings. What happened is something all architects should try to make themselves familiar with – not least to give context to some of the legislation already coming our way which will dramatically increase our obligations in terms of competence and liabilities.

It’s difficult to imagine a more informed or passionate summary than this book provides and I encourage everyone to read it. Then, if you teach, add it your students’ reading list, or if you work in an office, lend it to your colleagues. ●

Tim O’Callaghan is co-founder of nimtim architects



Show me the bodies, how we let Grenfell happen by Peter Apps
Published by Oneworld
£10.99, 353pp

Authority on the architecture of Africa, Sri Lanka and Islamic countries who advised and taught at Cambridge, the AA and around the world



Ronald Lewcock 1929 – 2022

Ronald Lewcock was one of the greatest and kindest scholars I have ever met. Though an authority in his chosen fields – notably the architecture of Sri Lanka, Africa and the Islamic world – and holder of many professorships, he had the common touch, and transformed the lives of countless people he met on his extensive travels.

Ronald was born in Brisbane and read architecture at the University of Queensland, completing his degree at the University of Cape Town. He remained in South Africa for 20 years, practising as an architect and historic buildings conservator, teaching and completing his PhD on the country’s 19th century colonial architecture. Fieldwork on that subject took him to Sri Lanka in the late 1960s, where he met his future wife, the textile designer, writer and artist, Barbara Sansoni. In Sri Lanka Ronald saw an affinity with the Arab and colonial buildings of the East African coast and South Africa.

From 1970 he taught at Clare Hall, Cambridge, until the mid-1980s, and at the AA in London, where he ran a design studio on architecture in the developing world. His interest in Islamic and Middle Eastern architecture deepened and in 1972 he was appointed architect of the America Research Center in Egypt’s conservation of Bayt al-Razzaz, the largest Mamluk Palace of the 15th century. Subsequently the World Bank asked him to prepare a proposal for the conservation of the northern half of the old walled city of Cairo.

In Yemen he was arrested seven times, yet single-handedly measured 40 major buildings. Knowledge of the architecture of the capital, Sana’a, led to his appointment as guest curator for the 1976 World of Islam Festival exhibition, Nomad and the City, at London’s Museum of Mankind. Scheduled to last three months, it was extended to two years due to its popularity.

After publishing Kuwait and the Northern Gulf (1976) he became heritage conservation advisor to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. He was a Unesco conservation consultant to many places in the region, and its technical co-ordinator for two international campaigns – Sana’a and Shibam and the Wadi Hadramawt in Yemen.

In 1984 Ronald became the first Aga Khan Professor of Architecture at MIT, introducing students to contemporary Islamic architectural design, appropriate to their countries of origin, without paying lip service to the west. Many went on to join him at the Georgia Institute of Technology when he became professor of its doctoral programme in architecture.

Throughout this time Ronald maintained a close connection with Sri Lanka, making three-month research visits every year during the 1970s. He was assisted by Barbara, whom he married in 1980. Together they produced a coffee-table book, Viharas and Verandas (1978), aiming to make Sri Lankans aware of their disappearing architectural heritage. They also co-authored Architecture of an Island (1998), with Barbara doing most of the perspective drawings. The product of 30 years’ research, it showed the domestic and religious architecture of Sri Lanka’s ethnic groups – Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims – as well as the Portuguese, Dutch and British colonisers. Unfortunately, more than half of the 100 examples of the vernacular buildings featured have since disappeared.

For many years the couple lived in Cambridge during the summer months and across the world the rest of the time, engaged in teaching, research, writing and latterly painting. Ronald was devoted to Barbara, who predeceased him by four months; he is survived by his daughter and two stepsons. ●

C. Anjalendran is an architect based in Sri Lanka

IN MEMORIAM

Muriel Eugenie Kidall
ELECTED 1947, LUDLOW

Brian Bailey
ELECTED 1948, BIRMINGHAM

Victor Barry
Nierop-Reading
ELECTED 1953, NORWICH

Peter Anthony Peretti
ELECTED 1954, STANMORE

Keith Cattell
ELECTED 1957, WOLVERHAMPTON

Colin Emilyn Jones
ELECTED 1958, NEWPORT

John Lung Tat Ho
ELECTED 1961, KUALA LUMPUR

David Peter Ross
ELECTED 1962, CHELTENHAM

Eric Nigel Laws
ELECTED 1962, BOGNOR REGIS

Derrick Hall MacRae
ELECTED 1965, BANGOR

David Edward Summers
ELECTED 1967, NORFOLK

Donald Patch
ELECTED 1971, BETCHWORTH

Cyrus Nanayakkara
ELECTED 1971, LONDON

Brian John Sprake
ELECTED 1974, WATERLOOVILLE

Herman E J Hotze
ELECTED 2000, HORSHAM

Salma Barwani
ELECTED 2006, LYMINGE

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Exchange

Empty pleasure

Weird Sensation Feels Good. Does it though? On the strength of the RIBA J review (RIBA J Nov/ Dec p91) I visited the Design Museum exhibition about the ASMR phenomenon. It was certainly educational: I’d never heard the term. Disappointing though. Unintentional ASMR? Yes, the sensation of finding art, film or whatever somewhat moving is familiar. You might feel the same way sitting quietly in a cathedral while the organist practices at muted volume. Or lying under an oak tree, watching autumn leaves drift down. But deliberately aiming for the same effect without the artistic vision or deeply fascinating subject matter? I was unconvinced, in fact I found most – maybe all – of it laughable. On the bright side, it does make for nice restful video adverts.

Afterwards, I cycled though Kensington Gardens in the twilight. Perhaps I should have posted a video of that on YouTube.

Duncan Holmes, London

Badly planned

I refer to Hana Loftus’ article ‘Planning should be plan led’ (RIBA Journal October p59).

As a member in private practice since 1963, I have always argued that the planning system is not fit for purpose.

As professionals we submit designs for approval; these are submitted to a bunch of butchers, bakers and candlestick makers, influenced by their own interests and who often discard the recommendations of their professional advisers.

It’s rather like radiologists taking an Xray and presenting it to a shopkeeper to interpret!

As the system deteriorates and the blame culture rises, planning officers are often part time and work to the Nuremburg Defence. As a result, architects have been relegated to a minor role, overruled on design by non-qualified officers. In house qualified architects are as rare as hen’s teeth.

Bureaucracy increases, the standard of planning and design is not improved by all the extra legislation and more and more taxpayers’ money is wasted.

In the words of Private Fraser, we’re doomed!

David Barton, Worcestershire



Top marks for Jedburgh

Having seen some well designed post-war schools from the golden age demolished due to poor maintenance and energy concerns, then replaced with unimaginative, ugly boxes based on Education Funding Agency target plans, Jedburgh Grammar Campus in PiP (Nov/Dec, p12) was a revelation. The collaboration, inspiration and vision in this project highlights what can and should be achievable, especially in an environment for flourishing, rather than the dull barracks thrown up elsewhere.

Patrick Hogan, Beaconsfield, Bucks

Transparency on sustainability please

Just a few pages into the November/December RIBA Journal I came across ‘Lost in the woods’ (p16). Interesting, I thought, but what about the environmental credentials of this house? Not a mention!

Then, under Sustainability the first of seven steps (p67), is ‘Form factor and building massing’ to cut embodied carbon and mitigate energy use.

These were considerations when I started my career nearly 60 years ago, so why are you promoting buildings such as this as an ‘exemplary contemporary house’?

The carton footprint of this house isn’t invisible.

John Hart, Bury St Edmunds

It is useful to know from Dominic McKenzie’s ‘Lost in the Woods’ that exceptional quality still has a role to play in the award of planning permissions in rural areas (more’s the pity it not other areas too). But hasn’t McKenzie heard of the climate emergency? Not one mention of a) the extraordinarily high ratio of external envelope to volume enclosed, b) insulation of all those glass walls, c) energy efficient services. We need to know the sustainability credentials, if any, of the Invisible House before it gets to be RIBA House of the Year.

Neil Pollard, Norton St Philip, Somerset

Something to get off your chest?

Write to us: letters.riba@riba.org

RIBA J, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD

We welcome letters but retain the right to edit them



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Divinity School
Oxford, 15th century

Built between 1427 and 1483, the Divinity School in Oxford is the oldest purpose-built university building still in use today. Rectangular in shape, it is attached in the east to the Bodleian Library and connected at the west to the Convocation House, added in the 1630s. This photograph shows the Convocation House’s beautiful original panelling with pedimented arches, and plain stalls with balls on the ends, with a glimpse of the spectacular stone-vaulted roof of the Divinity School, a highlight of late Gothic architecture in

England. The elaborate lierne or stellar vaulting is enriched with more than 400 carved bosses, one of which bears the name of its creator, local master mason William Orchard. Visible through the door are the transverse arches that carry the main weight of the roof and the exquisite pendants with small carved figures. This beautiful composition, leading the eye towards the main space and using the soft light to highlight the texture of the wood panelling, was taken in 1959 by the great British photographer Edwin Smith. ● Valeria Carullo

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oscar evo-blade ceiling trim

Renowned fashion brand uses Evo-Blade knife-edge trim for its latest global store design.

Evo-Blade transforms bulky ceilings into wafer-thin surfaces, providing dramatic shifts in height and sharp recessed lighting features, that recreate the brands distinctive chequered design.

Designed and manufactured in Great Britain, Evo-Blade works with a variety of configurations, from regular plasterboard to acoustic sprays and plasters, such as Oscar Elite & SonaSpray.

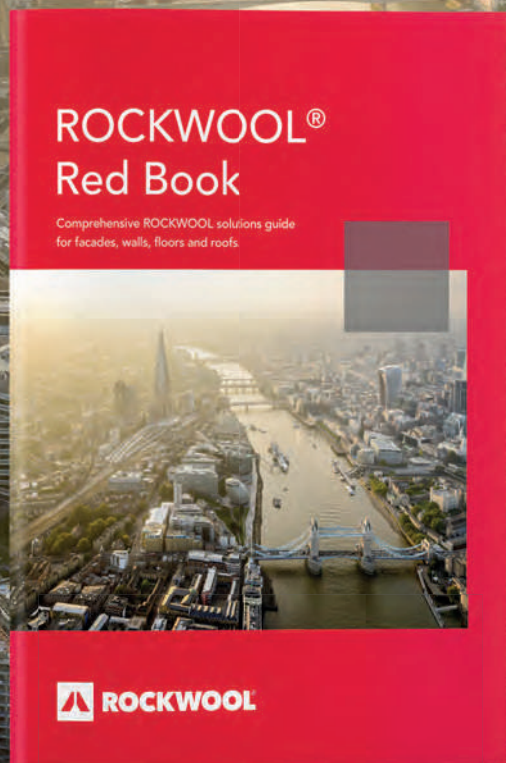
Search Oscar Evo-Blade on YouTube to find out more.



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rockwool.com/uk/redbook