

High stakes: Haworth Tompkins' Industria

Winning streaks: President's Medals

Different strokes: Arthur Timothy profile

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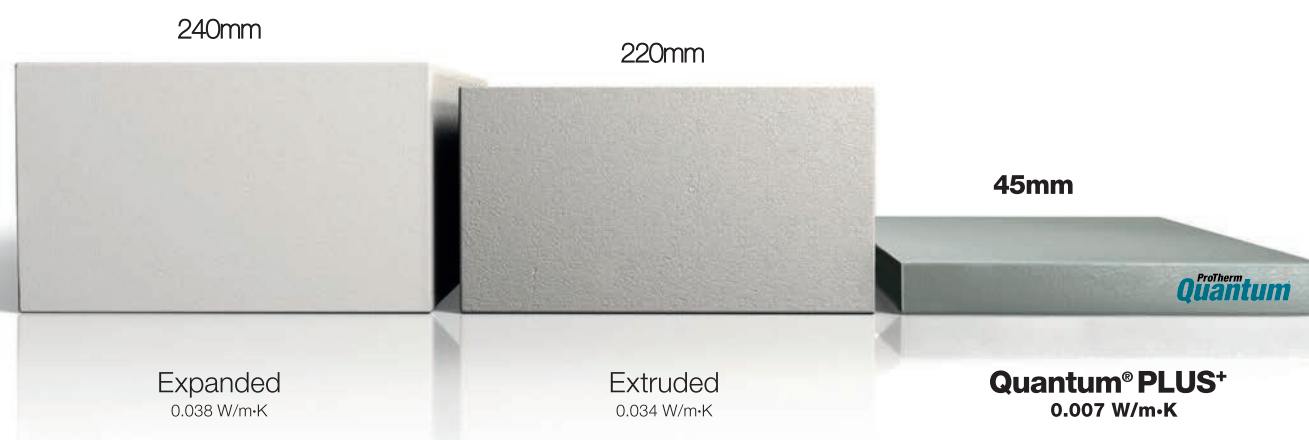
PARTING SHOT 66

New House, Hampstead, was a contemporary 1939 take on traditional materials



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0.12	75	270	295
0.11	80	290	320
0.10	100	320	355

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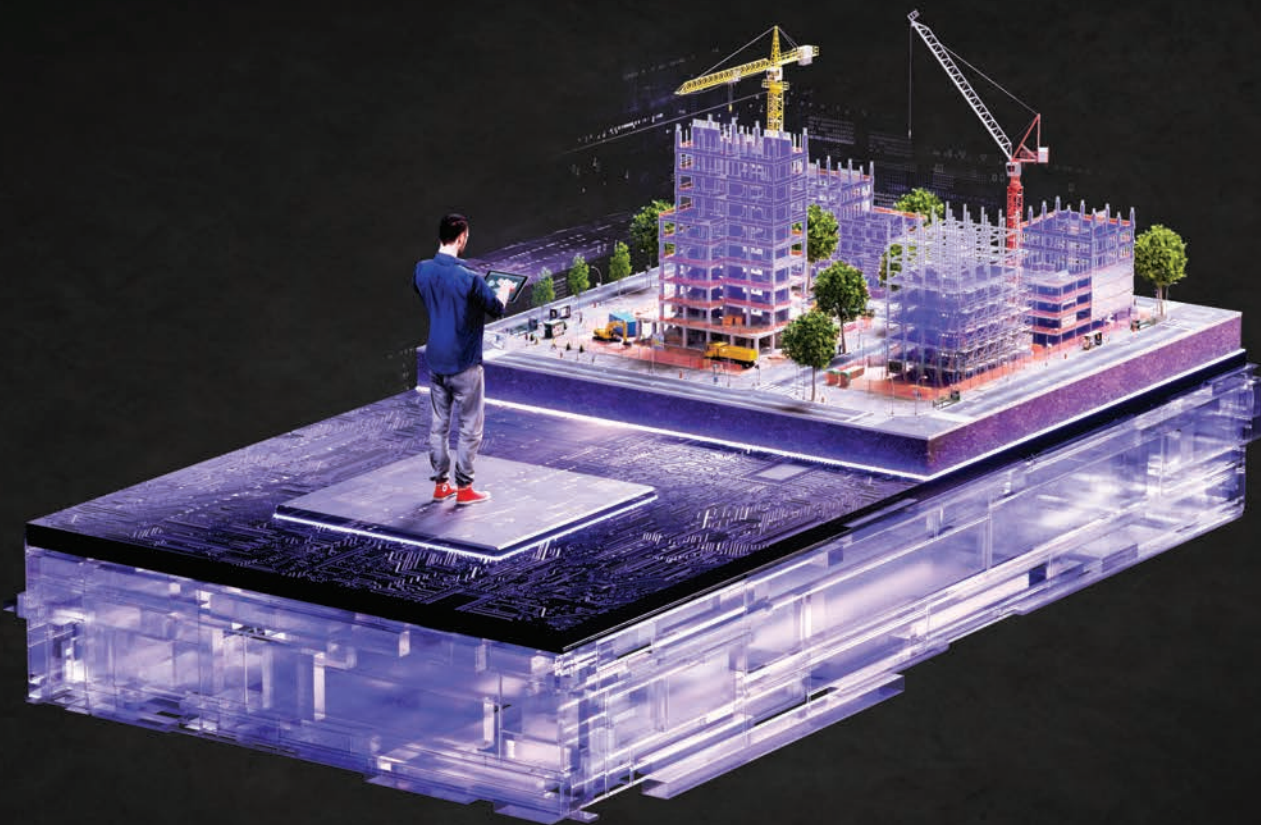
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07

1: Buildings

**PYRAMID OF TIRANA,
ALBANIA**
MVRDV

Read the full story:
ribaj.com/tirana-pyramid

There have been several articles about Albania in recent years, often as a tourist destination. One had a photograph of the capital, Tirana, in 1991 after the fall of Communism. It's the view of Skanderbeg Square, which was re-laid by Belgian practice 51N4E in 2017. Looking at the same view it's hard to believe that the photograph was taken only 33 years ago. The fields beyond the square are long gone, replaced by buildings as far as the foothills of the mountains that surround the plateau the city sits in.

Tirana has more than doubled in population since 1991. Then, Albanians could rarely relocate. When it opened up, expansion was rapid and impromptu. However, since Edi Rama became mayor of Tirana in 2000, efforts to rationalise and plan development – including a radical campaign to bulldoze illegal constructions, restore the Lana River and repaint Soviet buildings – have changed the city's image. The

Tirana City Master Plan was initiated as a strategy to contain sprawl, densify and make a greener city.

From MVRDV's Downtown One, a 140m-tall tower under construction, the broad strokes of that plan are becoming visible – the square, the 10 Tower Project and the redevelopment of the Pyramid of Tirana – one of the country's most iconic but fraught buildings. Establishing a new identity for it has been crucial in how to reimagine and reorient the city.

When I visited, the surrounding streets were closed and the city was stuffed with dignitaries for the Berlin Process Summit taking place in the building, a summit designed to bridge the gap between the Western Balkans and the EU. Mark Rutte, the then Dutch prime minister, and Emmanuel Macron were to have personal tours. The excitement of the transformed Pyramid, as a representation of all Albania's potential, is heating up. • Isabelle Priest



OSSEIP VAN DUIVENBODE

Do it yourself

Surman Weston establishes itself as assured self builder, architect and developer with its creative take on the terraced south London house

Words: Hugh Pearman Photographs: Jim Stephenson



Built on a leftover corner scrap of land, the Surman Weston house achieves street presence with privacy.

Buildings House

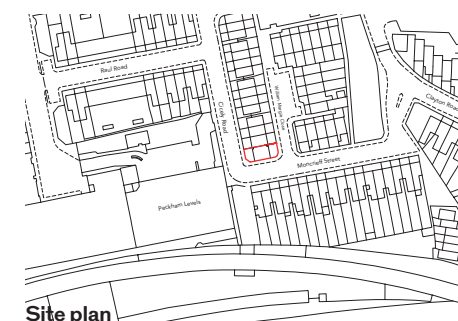
09



Rather fetching pale-green kitchen cabinets are nothing posher than standard green water-resistant mdf, sealed

Left At the top of the stairs a sliding cork-insulated canopy leads to the roof garden via an off-the-peg greenhouse.

Bottom The house acts as a taller corner piece to the street, its mass lightened by perforated brickwork round the roof garden.



There's a lot to be said for the conventional small terraced house, and in layout terms this one – a self-build project in Peckham, south London, by architects Surman Weston for themselves – deliberately learns from domestic tradition. Living room and kitchen/diner downstairs (with toilet under the stairs), three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs, fenced planted yards front and back. But there's rather more to it than this, as you might guess from its appearance.

Knobbly the York Handmade brickwork may be, but it's not your clichéd 'burglar bond'. In fact it is flush brickwork up to shoulder level, the headers then setting back 5mm every five courses and finally disappearing to make a 'hit and miss' perforated brick parapet to the roof garden, through which trailing plants grow. A barely modified off-the-peg greenhouse on top signals the elevated garden's garden-ness and doubles as cover to the top of the stairs: you slide back a cork-clad hood from below to emerge into the greenhouse, and the closed hood then acts as a table. The brickwork also dissolves into perforated screens in front of inwardly-opening frosted-glass ventilation panels set next to the windows. The solid corners to the brickwork, where the lime mortar joints

are more prominent, act as quoins.

This site would once have been very fringe indeed. It is close to the centre of Peckham, but sandwiched between one end of a council terrace and a busy railway embankment. It also faces the full-on Brutalist rear end of what was a Sainsbury's multi-storey car park but has now become hip as the 'Peckham Levels' culture-food-and-bars venue. Not so hip, though, that when this tiny patch of leftover land on the corner of the street, owned by the London Borough of Southwark, came up for auction, there was a rush. In fact there was only one bidder: Percy Weston. He rang Tom Surman in a bit of a panic. They had a month to somehow find the money to complete the purchase. That was in 2018.

Perhaps luckily, there followed a year's delay due to the discovery of an unrecorded gas main running beneath the site which needed diverting. Southwark eventually lowered its sale price to compensate for the work, and after a lot of design pondering as the Covid pandemic hit, the pair started in earnest on site in April 2021, acting as their own contractor, building as much as possible with their own hands. The house was completed in early 2023. Weston's three-strong family moved in, paying a modest rent to Surman who is a 30% owner, and who I met on my visit.



The two of them, both friends since undergraduate days at Nottingham and then at the RCA, set up their practice in 2012 and made a mark with such buildings as their homage-to-suburbia house in Surbiton and the joyful retrofit of the Hackney School for Food, winner of the RIBA’s MacEwen Award in 2021. It was a natural if quixotic progression to work on the house together. This was not only as an investment (London property prices being what they are, the estimated 5,000 hours total of their time they put into it would be handsomely covered if

The singular achievement is spatial: the feeling of generosity on such a very tight plot

Below Instead of a pair of patio doors to the back garden, Surman Weston took the opportunity to make these into an oculus.

Below right Timber stairs are fire-protected with lime-mortar slurry. Steel balustrading was made locally.



they decided to sell) but as a deliberate learning process in both design and construction terms. The practice was quiet during the Covid lockdown, there was time and opportunity to experiment, both stylistically and technically. The aim was a very sustainable and practical small family home, of highly insulated cavity wall construction, with both photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump, involving very little construction waste.

Surman had experience from his youth working on his uncle’s building sites, and Weston turned out to be pretty handy with hammer and saw too. They couldn’t do everything: brickwork, services and specialist joinery, for instance, needed the relevant trades, though they did sometimes find themselves following on to deal with mess and the odd defect. ‘I spent two weeks cleaning the brickwork in the end,’ says Surman. He also kept the studio running, Weston was site architect, and both came together for the construction. The project became all-consuming and did, Surman admits,



take a toll on the studio at the time. ‘We just enjoyed being here, hands on.’

For me the singular achievement is spatial: the way they have managed to make a house with a feeling of generosity on such a very tight plot. The brick cube of the house is cut into by arched porches front and back. The little garden yards, cleverly planted, provide privacy from the street, as does the front-yard bike store which, with its green roof behind a curving fenced perimeter, you are hardly aware of. The house respects the street line and scale of the existing terrace, picking up details of that and other adjacent buildings and structures rather as the practice’s Surbiton house did. It has its own clear aesthetic as a slightly taller corner piece but has the good manners to pull itself slightly apart visually from the existing terrace end via a narrow inset pitched-roof section, incorporating a skylight, over the stairs.

Those surprisingly delicate stairs are fire-protected on the undersides with a lime-mortar slurry. The spindly steel blue-painted balustrading is by local fabricators. From the hallway you step into the living room which is floored in Barbican-style end-grain larch bricks. Larch is much used throughout, sourced from a farm in Devon. Where lengths of visible beams connect, they are scarf-jointed and fixed with wooden pegs. The biggest beam still has its bark on the underside.

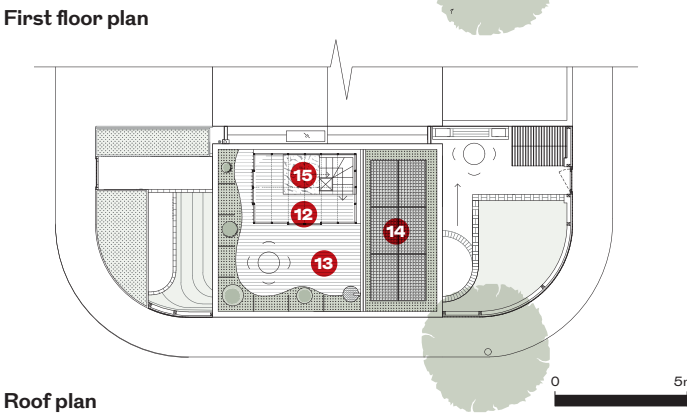
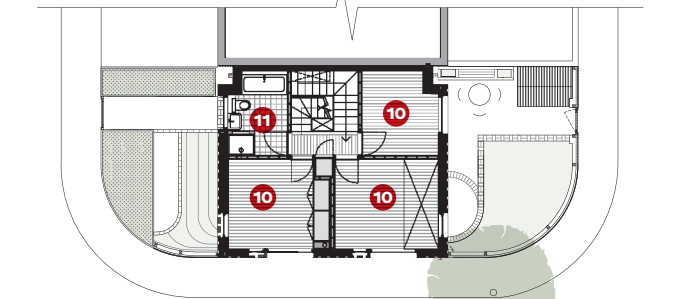
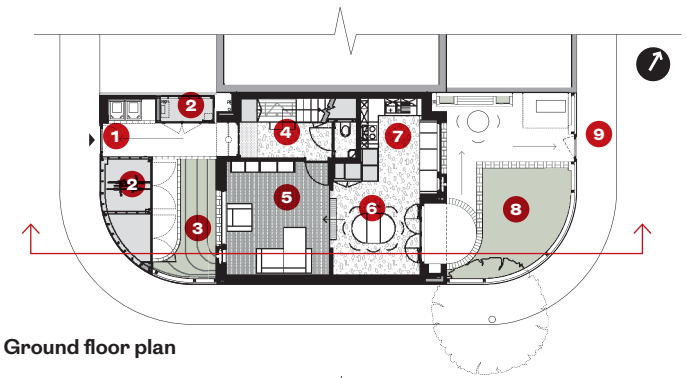
Two steps down (a slight slope in the land allowed greater ceiling height) takes you into the kitchen-diner at the rear which like the hall has terrazzo floor

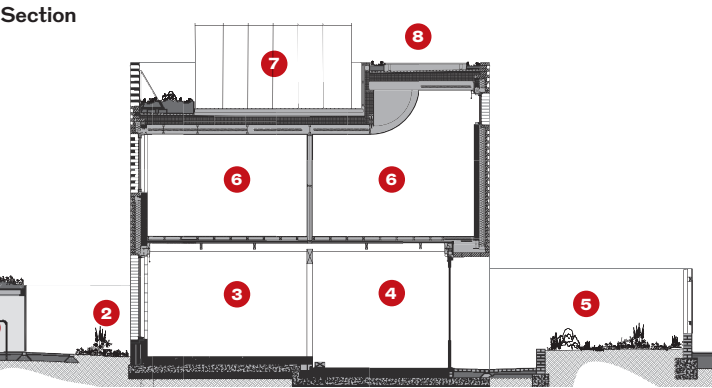


- 1 Front gate
- 2 Store
- 3 Front garden
- 4 Entrance hall
- 5 Living room
- 6 Dining room
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Rear garden
- 9 Public pavement
- 10 Bedroom
- 11 Bathroom
- 12 Greenhouse
- 13 Roofterrace
- 14 Photovoltaic panels
- 15 Sliding cork-clad access hatch

Top Tom Surman (left) and Percy Weston in their roof garden facing the Peckham Levels centre.

Right The living room has an exposed larch ceiling structure and end-grain larch flooring, stepping down to a kitchen/dining area with Terrazzo floor tiles.





tiles. The rather fetching pale-green kitchen cabinets turn out to be nothing posher than standard green water-resistant mdf, sealed. The joinery money here was spent on making a large multi-pane circular window oculus out of what would normally be just a pair of patio doors: spatial generosity again. The front door is also a bespoke number while internal doors are basic off-the-peg blanks, enhanced by Surman Weston-designed brass door furniture.

Upstairs, with the tight plan of three bedrooms and a bathroom, there is less opportunity for special effects – although the second bedroom’s ceiling swoops unexpectedly upwards at one end to bring in light from a high-level window.

- 1 Store
 - 2 Front garden
 - 3 Living room
 - 4 Dining room
 - 5 Rear garden
 - 6 Bedroom
 - 7 Roof terrace
 - 8 Solar panels
- Credits
Client, architect and contractor Surman Weston
Structural engineer Structure Workshop
Services engineer Peter Deer and Associates
Planting design Lidia D’Agostino Garden Design
External works contractor Magic Projects



The roof garden – determinedly a real garden with planted beds running round the corner, not just a terrace with pots – succeeds despite having a third of its potential footprint occupied by an array of PV panels, set flat amid sedum planting on a raised section at the rear. The perforated brick parapet is braced internally by slender tubular-steel angled supports.

It absolutely passes the would-I-like-to-live-there test. So, what next for Surman Weston, self-builders? Perhaps surprisingly after all the work, they don’t rule out a repeat project. ‘But if we ever DID do it again,’ says Surman, ‘we’d probably reverse the roles. I’d be the site architect.’ ●

Left The green kitchen joinery is in standard-colour water-resistant mdf, sealed.

Above In the second bedroom the ceiling swoops up to allow a high-level north-facing window. The big window faces east.

IN NUMBERS

106 m²
gifa

1,650kwh
predicted annual on-site renewable energy generation

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110l
predicted potable water use per person per day

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Hull's urban asset

IN NUMBERS

c£6.5m
total contract cost

Breakdown:
£2.9m
phase 1 Trinity Square
£1.8m
phase 2 internal
reordering and
refurbishment
£1.7m
phase 3 Trinity Room

£1445
GIFA cost per m²
overall phases 2 and 3

Breakdown:
£860/m²
phase 2
£6150/m²
phase 3

5945m²
total area

Breakdown:
3600m²
public realm and
external works
2085m²
internal existing, refurb
and conservation
260m²
new build excluding
external works

**Traditional
JCT SBC /
XQ 2016**
form of contract
phase 3

- 1 Trinity Square
- 2 Reflecting pools
- 3 New narthex and main entrance
- 4 Reordered nave
- 5 Trinity Room
- 6 Prep kitchen and servery
- 7 Vicar's porch and entrance

Right The open nave with its welcoming glass doors can be used for city and community events.



A new visitor centre completes Hull Minster's rehabilitation as a space with a wider community reach in Bauman Lyons' practical and intriguingly detailed project

Words: Eleanor Young

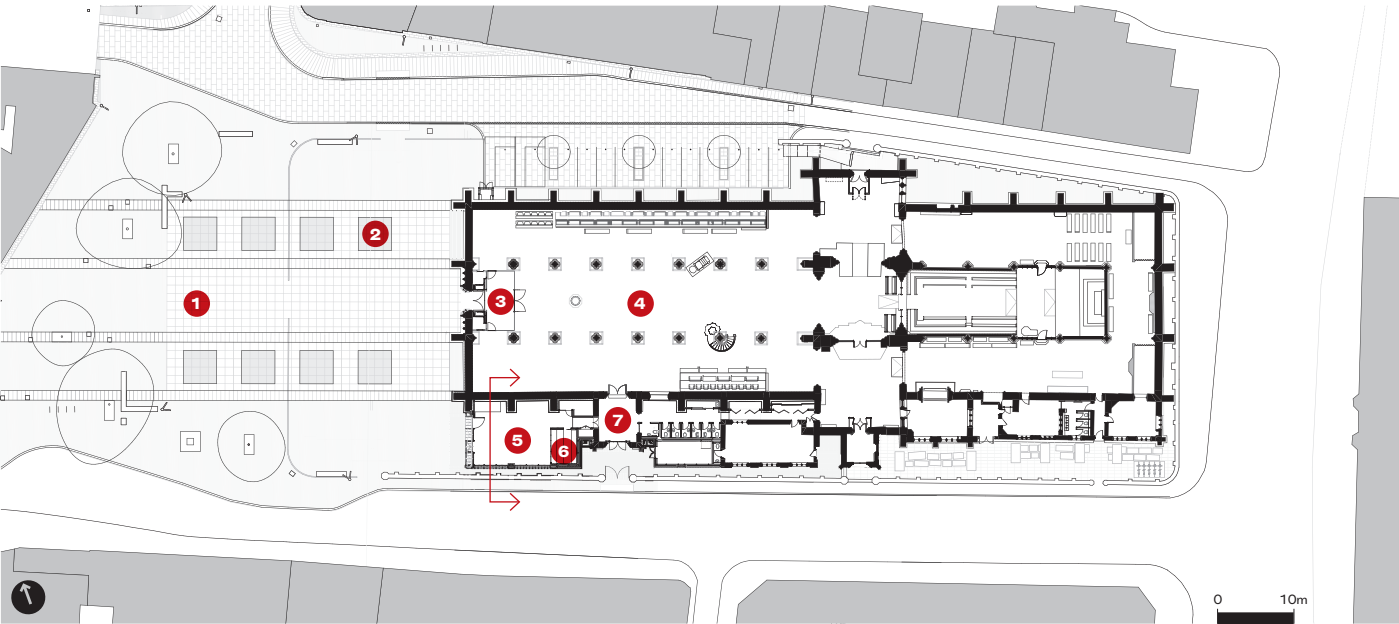
The Bauman Lyons' project at Hull Minster has had three distinct phases over 15 years. They each appear quite different: public realm, the reordering of the interior and an extension to the south. But there was one overarching ambition – to open up what is one of the largest parish churches in the UK to its city. Now complete, it is easier to peer into, easier to enter, easier to enjoy a coffee in, and easier to use for events.

In 2009 the falling congregation, high costs and a vacancy for the parish priest left churchwardens fearing

it would close. Instead the church, upgraded to a minster in 2017, has galvanised Hull, which, through individuals and local trusts, funded the first two phases of work. And the sense of confidence engendered by the project has given the activities a boost, from an unexpected beer festival to the creation of a weekly warm zone where those at care homes, among others, come along for coffee and a praise service. And outreach to six local primary schools has brought back young people and their families to sing at the church.

Director of operations Alistair Hutson and churchwarden Iain Ogilvie have a robust, pragmatic view of the project as a living building, with all the dishwashing and pew shifting (we'll come to that) it entails. Hutson's irreverence is only offset by his obvious love for the place. He relays the glee with which visitors use the space, from unexpected favourite seats in the café to customers waiting to use a particular loo – which has a different view of the church facade (we'll come to that too) and different heritage titbit on the back of the door.

Above The church reads and feels far more part of the city with Trinity Square (as shot in 2017) opening directly onto it.

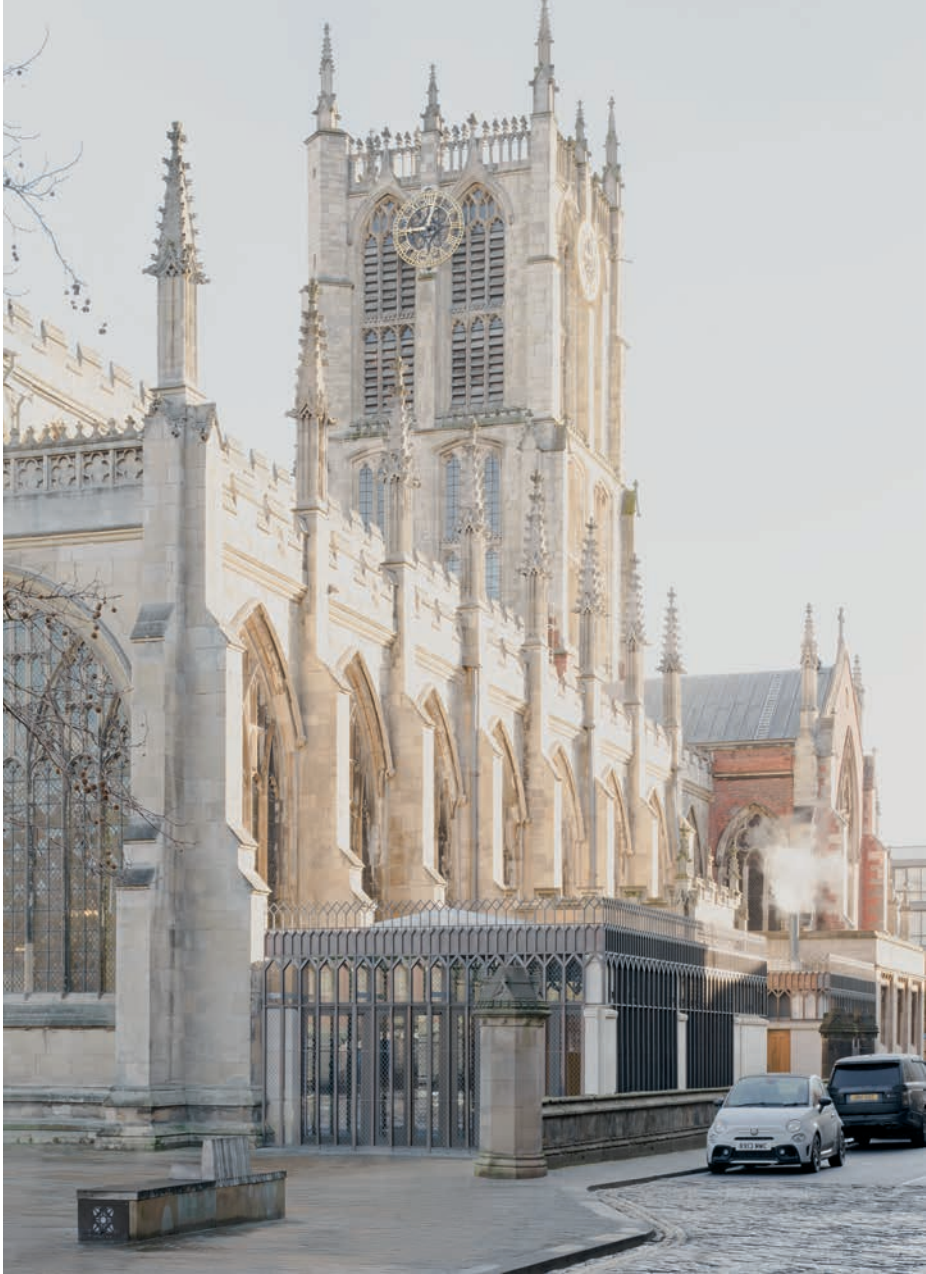


The drama of a grand entry into the church is embedded in the new narthex, or porch

The best place to start on this project is where the city meets the church. That used to be at a Victorian churchyard wall that surrounded the building, topped with railings. This gradually became an ad hoc car park. Now it is a simple square with shallow mirror pools in the paving and concrete benches that float on a delicate tracery as they are underlit in the dark. Reworking of the churchyard extended to the whole square as the council took on the design. Leeds-based Bauman Lyons, which had won the competition for the design, worked with Reform Landscape Architects on it. It was ready for the City of Culture 2017 which opened with an RIBA commissioned installation designed by Chile-based Pezo von Ellrichausen.

I visited on a Monday when the minster is closed. On any other day the solid timbers of the western door would be held back, with new biparting glass doors ready to slide out of sight as visitors approach them. The drama of a grand entry into the church is embedded in the new narthex, or porch, with long burnished bronze handles to grab, whether on the day-to-day side doors or the double doors facing the altar, directly down the aisle, ready for a grand procession. It is simply and clearly detailed, with a step up in the centre to accommodate the existing architecture.

Because the other changes are invisible to those who didn't know the minster before, it is tempting to ignore them, but like many reorderings in recent times phase 2 involved sorting out the floor of ledgerstones commemorating burials, installing underfloor heating and the removal of Victorian pews. This was typically contentious especially given that some were particularly ornate. And so a not

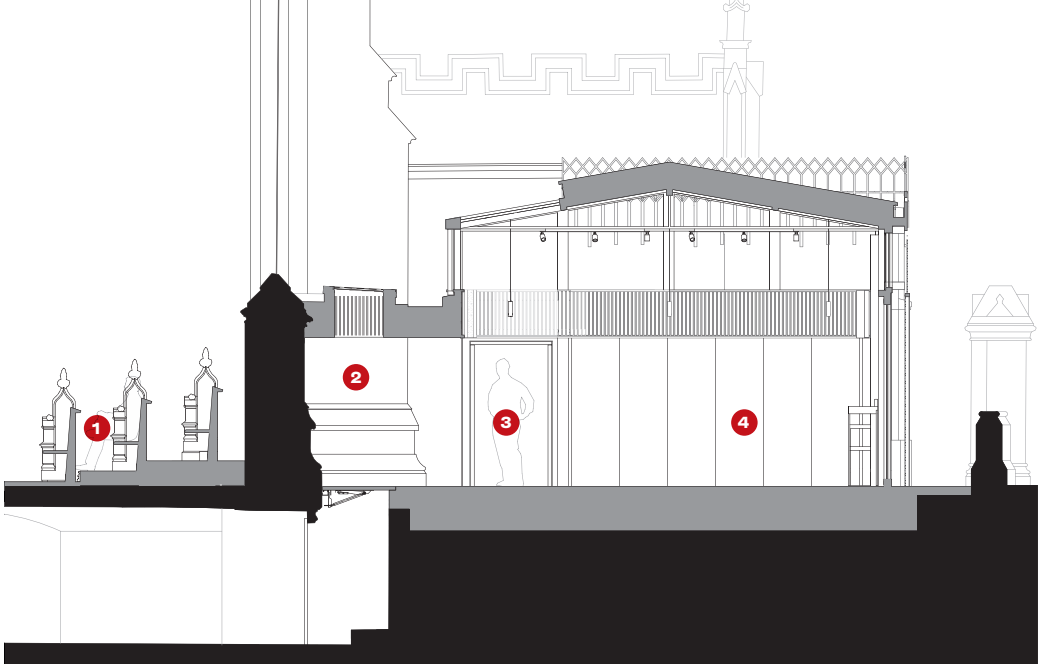


Above The Trinity Room sits humbly beside the church, its stone piers echoing the rhythm of the older building.

Left Elegant doors give the narthex inside the church ceremonial weight.

entirely satisfactory compromise was reached. Special pews are placed along the sides of the church. Some of them sliced up into chairs so that more of the curved ends can be put to use – resulting in a rather cluttered over-decorative look. Other pews are stored out of sight (onsite, as a condition of removal) – ready to be set out for special events, although they haven't been as yet. And the pews that used to look inwards can be disassembled and rolled on wheels into the best formation for the occasion.

Of the project's three parts, the most



- 1 Nave
- 2 Buttress
- 3 Trinity Room entrance from vicar's porch
- 4 Shutters to prep kitchen and servery

Below left The delicate brass screen at the Trinity Room can also be opened onto the square.

Below The screen gives a sense of enclosure while maintaining the openness.



recent to be completed is a visitors' centre, the Trinity Room, which mainly operates as a café. It has a rather striking brass filigree outer layer which speaks to the fine finials and grotesques of the church's stonework, and a sense of depth of materiality. This is the most visible intervention and the screen is one of the most debated parts of the project – although on the upside a condition of getting it through was to make it bronze, rather than anodized aluminium. Over the long project the screen, with patterns derived from the minster's vaulting, has gone through various iterations which have been more or less Moorish.

The screen certainly gives character to the steel and glass box, from both





Credits
Client Holy Trinity Development Trust
Architect Bauman Lyons Architects
Contractor Geo Houlton & Sons
Project manager Alan Wood & Partners
Cost consultant, principal designer and structural and civil engineer Alan Wood & Partners
MEP engineer Sutcliffe Consulting Engineers
Church quinquennial architect Ferrey & Mennim
Archaeologist Humber Field Archaeology
Approved inspector Morgan Wolff
Landscape architect (phase 1) Re-form landscape architecture
Public realm contractor (phase 1) Eurovia

Suppliers
Water feature (phase 1) Fountain Workshop
Pew joinery (phase 2) Houghtons of York
Stone mason (phase 3) Gomersall Partnership
Polished concrete floor (phase 3) Concrete Polishing
Brass tracery grillage (phase 3) Kendrew Architectural Metalwork

Top left Concertina doors open up the servery, which can be quickly hidden away for other activities in the space.

Left The vicar's porch has a real sense of history and materiality – thanks not least to the incised ledgerstones.

Right Newly opened up route alongside the minster buttresses. Loos at to the left, the Trinity Room ahead.

The most unusual part is the framed view of the church through the roof when seated on the loo

inside and out. That left Bauman Lyons to focus on making it work internally with circulation along the edge of the church on either side of the vicar's porch with buttresses creating café niches. The most unusual part of the experience – which must surely soon be enshrined on Trip Advisor – is the framed view of the church through the roof, when seated on the loo, which quite eclipses the modest timber fit out.

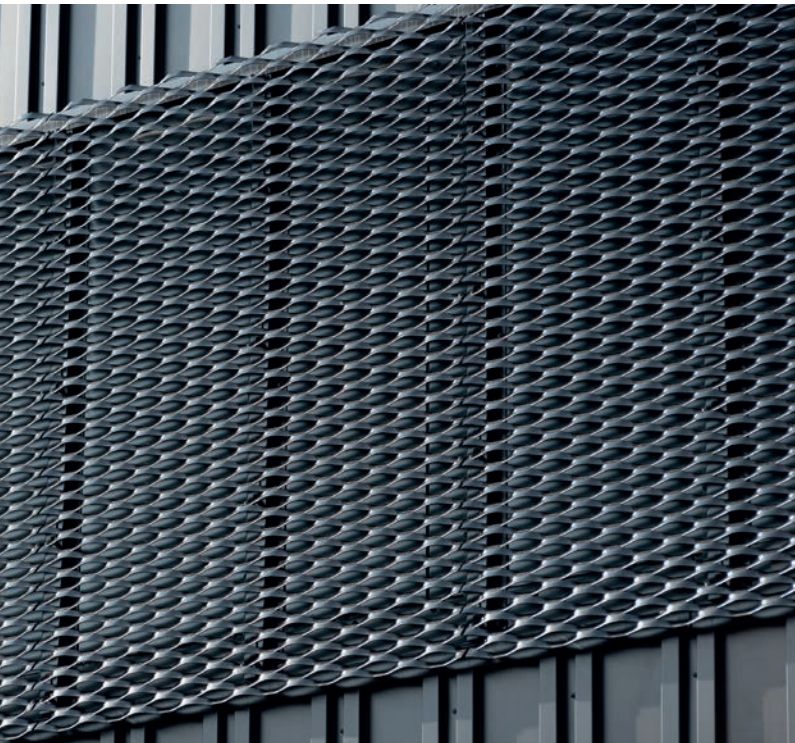
In the context of Hull's current crop of new buildings, from the Old Town to the mouth of the River Hull, this is a special project which allows the church to play a full life as a backdrop to the city and as a venue, rather than slowly falling apart as its parishioner numbers dropped. ●



NICK DEARDEN (3)

TAYLOR MAXWELL

Edmiston House



Edmiston House is a new multi-purpose events hub located next to the Rangers Football Club Ibrox Stadium in Govan, Glasgow. Designed by architects Keppie Design, it was important that the building was welcoming and sensitively branded, whilst in keeping with the local heritage and context.

Taylor Maxwell worked with the architects to specify and supply Anvil expanded mesh cladding to the project, which allowed them to meet their design vision of a neutrally expressed form, inspired by Govan's rich engineering heritage.. The project was managed by main contractors Sharkey, with the cladding installed by subcontractors Curtis Moore.

The black anodised finish chosen for the cladding provides a highly durable and scratch resistant finish, which was an important consideration for the architects when designing a building on a site with a high level of traffic. By pre-oxidising and pre-weathering the cladding, the architects were able to give the project an immediate sense of permanence and create an illusion of the building having been part of the streetscape for a long time.

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Photography by Richard Fraser.

It all stacks up

26m-wide vehicle service yards accommodate two lanes of traffic and 65 parking spaces.

Below right: The café on Long Reach Road is co-located with the building's reception area and adjoins a shared business centre.



Haworth Tompkins' multi-storey, multi-occupancy industrial building offers a practical, stylish vision for the mixed-use city

Words: Chris Foges Photographs: Fred Howarth

Stretching north from the Thames, the River Road Employment Area in Barking is a loose sprawl of scrap dealers, repair shops and warehouses for frozen food and freight. Heavy wagons trundle down grimy arteries lined by low-slung asbestos sheds. Yards are filled with brimming skips and rusting hoppers. Strange smells hang in the air. Though undeniably bleak, places like this have been essential to a diverse urban economy. They're also under threat; between 2001 and 2020 London lost some 1500ha of industrial land, mainly to housing. Sector experts warn of a crisis, but there's cause for optimism in Industria, Haworth Tompkins' new addition to River Road. The ambitious, first-of-its-kind stack of ramp-up factory units shows how London's recent drive to intensify land use could benefit both businesses and the city.

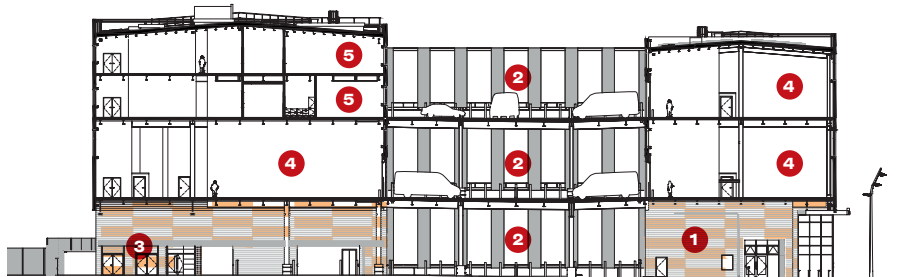
The project has its roots in Haworth Tompkins' 2019 masterplan for the whole district, which proposed the gradual introduction of multi-storey industrial buildings in the centre to release other areas for housing. To catalyse that change, Barking & Dagenham Council commissioned Industria through its dynamic regeneration arm BeFirst, with backing from the Greater London Authority. On paper, booming demand for scarce workspace



means that multi-storey light-industrial buildings should now stack up financially, but cautious investors need proof of concept. ‘This is the way forward,’ says council leader Darren Rodwell, ‘but if we left it to the private sector we’d still be waiting.’

There are many precedents for stacked industrial developments in this country, from mills to modernist flatted factories, and even one with a truck ramp – a 2008 warehouse at Heathrow – but Industria would be the first multi-occupant, multi-storey scheme with vehicle access to the upper levels.

For inspiration, Haworth Tompkins headed to Pantin in Paris to visit the high-tech ‘hôtel industriel’ designed by Paul Chemetov in the 1980s, and looked at examples in Japan where giant stacked warehouses are common. It also recruited Ashton Smith Associates to the team for its experience with vertical logistics hubs in Asia. In large part, though, the building is a pragmatic response to the exigencies of the London market and a tight

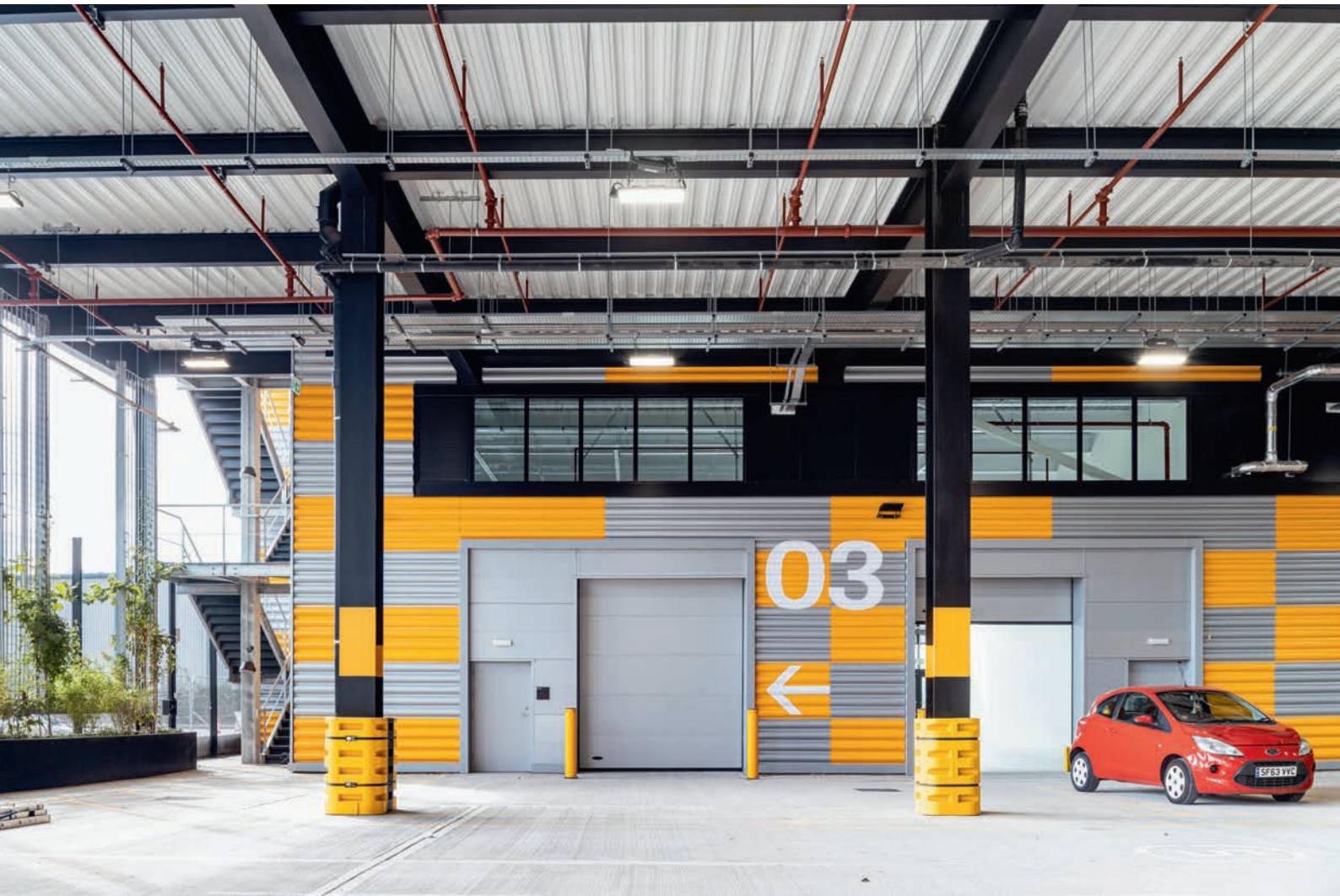


- 1 Vehicle entrance
- 2 Vehicle service yard
- 3 Bin store
- 4 Light-industrial unit
- 5 Flatted factory unit

budget. ‘It is so logical that it almost designed itself,’ says architect Graham Haworth. ‘There wasn’t much scope for navel-gazing, which is refreshing’.

Filling its 0.8ha site, Industria rises to the height of an ordinary eight-storey building. In plan, it resembles a typical suburban trading estate, with two wings flanking a central yard. Here, however, the accommodation is arranged over four levels, with two open-air decks over the yard served by a helical ramp. The bulk of the building comprises large, airy units – up to 464m² and tall enough to allow mezzanines – intended as warehouses or factories, each with roller shutters onto the decks. To enrich the mix, the top of the north block offers smaller maker-spaces over two storeys, double-loaded on broad corridors and served

Below 8m-high decks allow covered loading on two levels.



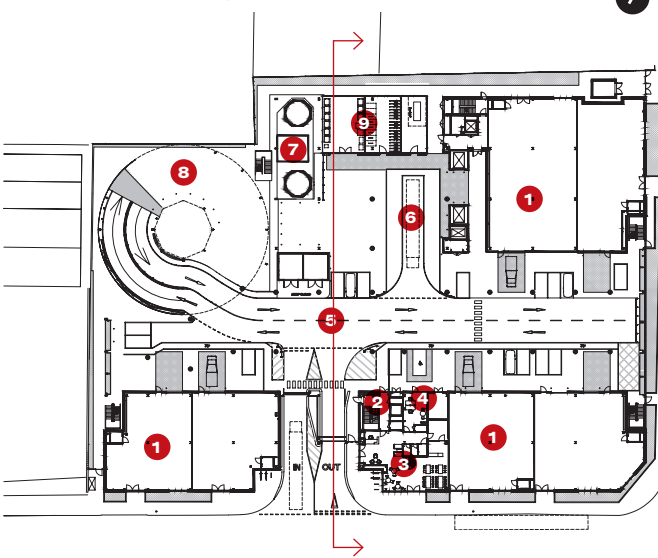
by goods lifts. ‘You’d normally expect a 45% plot development ratio,’ says Haworth. ‘This achieves 135%.’ When the 45 units are fully occupied there might be 300 people working in the building.

HGVs can only enter the ground floor, but the 30m-diameter ramp can carry 7.5-tonne trucks – the workhorses of industry at this scale. Tucked into a corner of the plan, the chunky corkscrew gives the building its distinctive appearance while keeping internal traffic away from existing streets on two sides. That’s a considerate gesture to future neighbours but drivers’ requirements were, inescapably, a central concern; Industria’s target tenants insist on parking next to their premises, for example, even if another set-up might be workable. ‘Most architects today don’t like giving priority to vehicles,’ says Haworth Tompkins associate director Hugo Braddick. ‘If you want to work in this field you have to embrace it.’

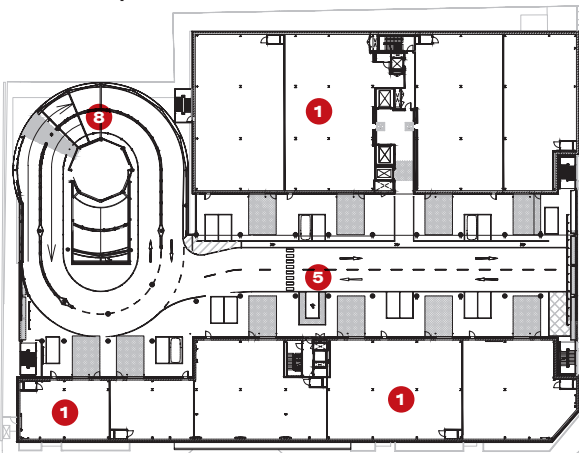
Industria’s design team has certainly leaned into the idea. Branding consultancy DNCO echoed the



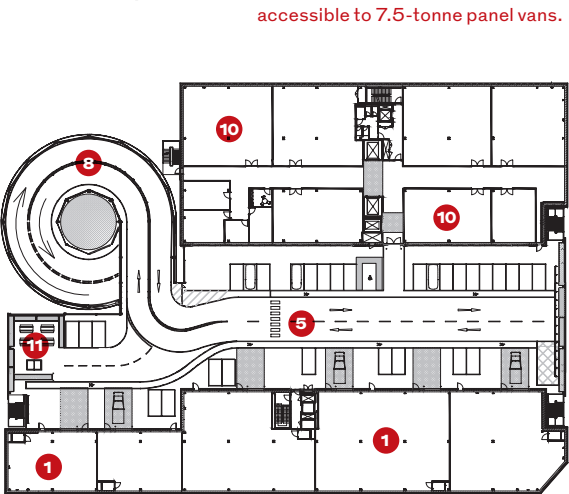
Ground floor plan



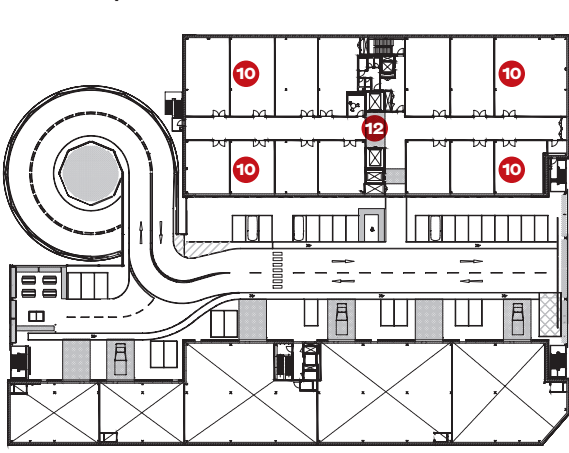
First floor plan



Second floor plan



Third floor plan



- 1 Light-industrial unit
- 2 Security/reception
- 3 Café
- 4 Business centre
- 5 Vehicle service yard
- 6 HGV loading bay
- 7 Sprinkler tanks
- 8 Ramp
- 9 Bike and bin store
- 10 Flatted factory unit
- 11 Outdoor seating
- 12 Goods lifts

Credits
Client BeFirst
Architect Haworth Tompkins
Collaborating architect Ashton Smith Associates
Quantity surveyor Fulkers Bailey Russell
Structural and civil engineer Pinnacle Consulting Engineers
M&E engineer MBA Consulting
Graphics and wayfinding DNCO
Landscape architect Landscape Projects
Transport engineer Steer
Fire consultant Astute Fire
Main contractor McLaren Construction (South)

Above The 30m-diameter ramp is accessible to 7.5-tonne panel vans.



IN NUMBERS

11,400m²
gross internal floor area

24,080m²
gross floor area

18m²
area of smallest unit

15kn/m²
upper floor loading



spiral ramp in the building’s logo, and adopted the colour of road markings as well as industrial settings as the basis of a slick graphic identity. It’s applied at architectural scale on the corrugated cladding of the deck facades, where a chequerboard pattern of silver-grey and sunshine yellow lends a real sense of warmth and energy to what is otherwise a dark and sober palette of steel and concrete.

It might seem unlikely that such a petro-centric building could claim environmental responsibility, but one merit of urban industry is an overall reduction in road miles. Haworth Tompkins has also pursued sustainability in myriad ways, from SuDS to energy-efficient services. Heavy machinery demands a beefy structure, but it’s as lean as can be, says Braddick, and the adaptable

Above left Sober street elevations clad in black metal sandwich panels contrast with a livelier treatment of internal facades.

Above right Corridors in the north block are served by goods lifts and are wide enough for two palette-movers to pass.

Below Biodiversity is supported by climbing plants and a small garden on the top deck.

‘chassis’ has a 100-year design life. A rooftop photovoltaic array could power 100 homes. Units are insulated almost to residential specifications, greatly exceeding requirements for unheated warehouses.

Equal care has been given to the building’s contribution to its setting. At both ends, the decks are screened by steel trellises wreathed in climbing plants. Haworth hopes that it’ll soon look like a ruin being reclaimed by jungle. That organic theme continues in the precast cladding of the ground floor which is pimpled with giant pebbles, like slabs of dry riverbed. Full-height windows are inset with doors, so factories might double as shopfronts. Alongside the cavernous main entrance a café serves both tenants and passers-by, whose

‘This is the way forward, but if we left it to the private sector we’d still be waiting’

number should grow as the district merges with the residential neighbourhood next door. Height, light and a spiral stair picked out in that signature yellow give a flavour of the world within.

You get an exciting sense here of what a new generation of industrial buildings could give to mixed-use 15-minute cities of the future: new visibility for important work that is too often hidden in windowless boxes on edge-of-town estates, and architecture that is both neighbourly and necessarily distinct from the uniformity of flats and offices. An antidote to banal monoculture in both the economy and in townscape.

Inside, Haworth Tompkins drew on its experience designing studios for the Royal College of Art to make no-frills, knockabout workspaces that still have a certain refinement. In the stacked yards, giant sprinkler tanks and galvanized steel escape stairs are neatly integrated like components in a well-engineered machine. Ribbon windows have solid panels aligned with the column grid, so additional partitions won’t collide with glass. Within the units, there’s pleasure to be had in the ordered composition of durable finishes and exposed services. Many office workers would be envious.

Shared facilities range from showers and



Above Industrial-warehouse units have a clear ceiling height of 7.1m.

Below left Studios with 4m ceilings are intended for creative businesses, and arranged as a flattened factory in the north block.

Below Entrance on Long Reach Road.

meeting rooms to a picnic area on the top deck. It’s a much more sociable proposition than those nearby sheds moated by swathes of asphalt behind palisade fences, and could encourage a little ecosystem of businesses within the building. No tenants had moved in at the time of my visit, but leases had been taken by a perfumier, a baker and a lift rope maker. A promising start for the sort of diverse mix needed to bolster developers’ confidence.

Industria doesn’t have all the answers to London’s workspace woes, of course; it’s hard to see how some of the messier activities on River Road could be reconfigured vertically in such tidy and convivial fashion. But its successful completion should bolster the widespread interest in stacked industrial buildings that has grown in recent years, producing a wealth of innovative proposals. Its challenges bring creative opportunities that Haworth Tompkins has clearly relished. ‘This is new territory, with so many ideas floating around and a big push behind them’, says Haworth. ‘As an architect it’s really quite addictive.’ ●



Lead balloon

OMA's Aviva Studios in Manchester is a victim of time: the original lightweight floating design has slumped to earth as a carbon-heavy hulk

Words: Jo Sharples Photographs: Marco Cappelletti

Development work
carries on around
Aviva Studios.

Aviva Studios, the permanent home of the Manchester International Festival (MIF), has opened four years late, over budget at a reported £241 million and with a new name, no longer The Factory. But let's overlook these well documented details. I for one, welcome the last-minute rebrand that will allow us Mancunians momentary reprieve from the incessant referencing of MAD-chester. Furthermore, the sale of the name handily recuperates some of the £241 million of public money spent on this 'landmark cultural venue' which, as 'one of the largest and most ambitious developments of its kind in Europe' knows no bounds.

Given the furore, you'd think you'd find the place easily – but that first step

is surprisingly difficult. The building is approachable only from the rear, as the new pedestrian route along Water Street is not yet open and nor is the path along the River Irwell that links to the new Ordsall Chord footbridge. Instead, we must walk along the road (the pavements are also under construction). Apparently, nigh-on a decade is not long enough for the City of Manchester to prepare for the impending crowds. While making our unglamorous way past the Pineapple Line, the oldest passenger railway station in Europe, we get the first glimpse of a curious corrugated steel abutment on the side of the concrete exhibition hall – the window cleaners must be in for the opening.

Not so – these are the new head

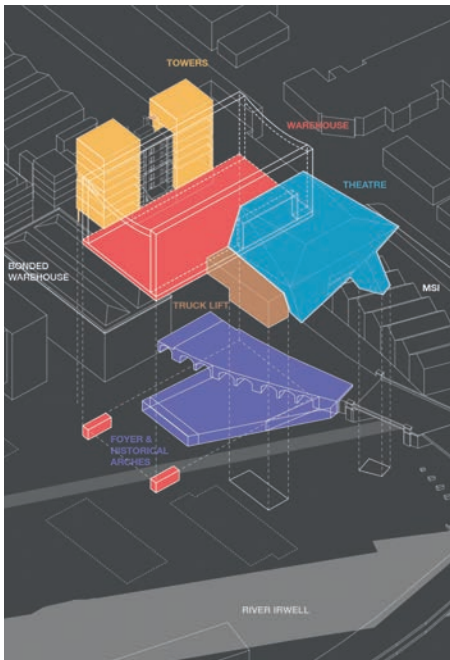
offices of Factory International, and uncannily resemble the scaffolding of the latest under-construction tower block behind. They look somewhat loosely and temporarily attached to the fluted, windowless, concrete block of the main exhibition hall, which has an entirely different, much more solid expression. It's intentional, we were later told by the architect, OMA. It is riffing on the impermanent, direct nature of Manchester's industrial past, although it might be more appropriate to reference the city's chaotic present.

At last we arrive – to a lot of suspense. We have watched this inelegant hulk gradually haul itself up out of the Irwell over the past five years, with progressively more steel as if steel were a sticking plaster to heal the project's main misconception – the raising of

not one, but two, massive event spaces above ground. This gravity defying act is the way OMA lead architect Ellen van Loon likes to stick it to the man these days, inspired by her rebellious youth listening to – you guessed it – Factory Records.

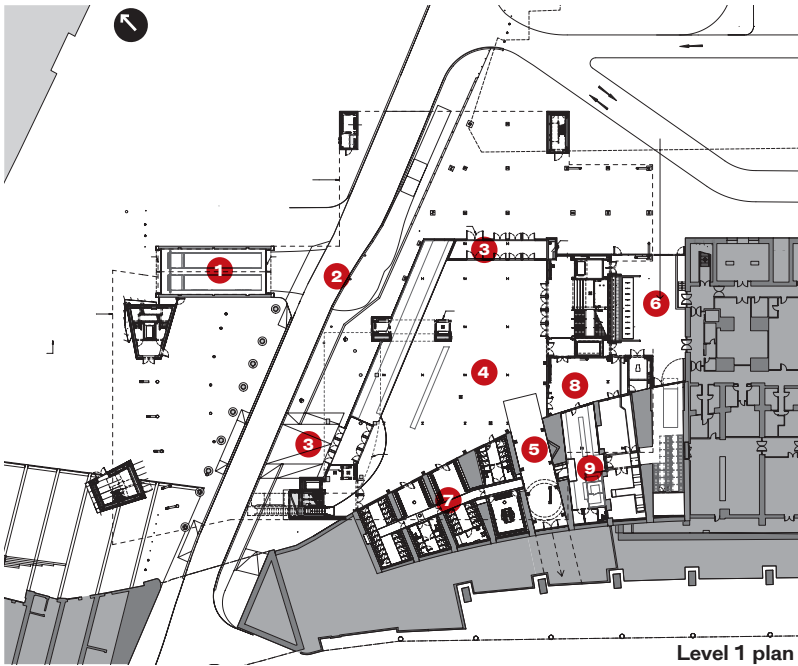
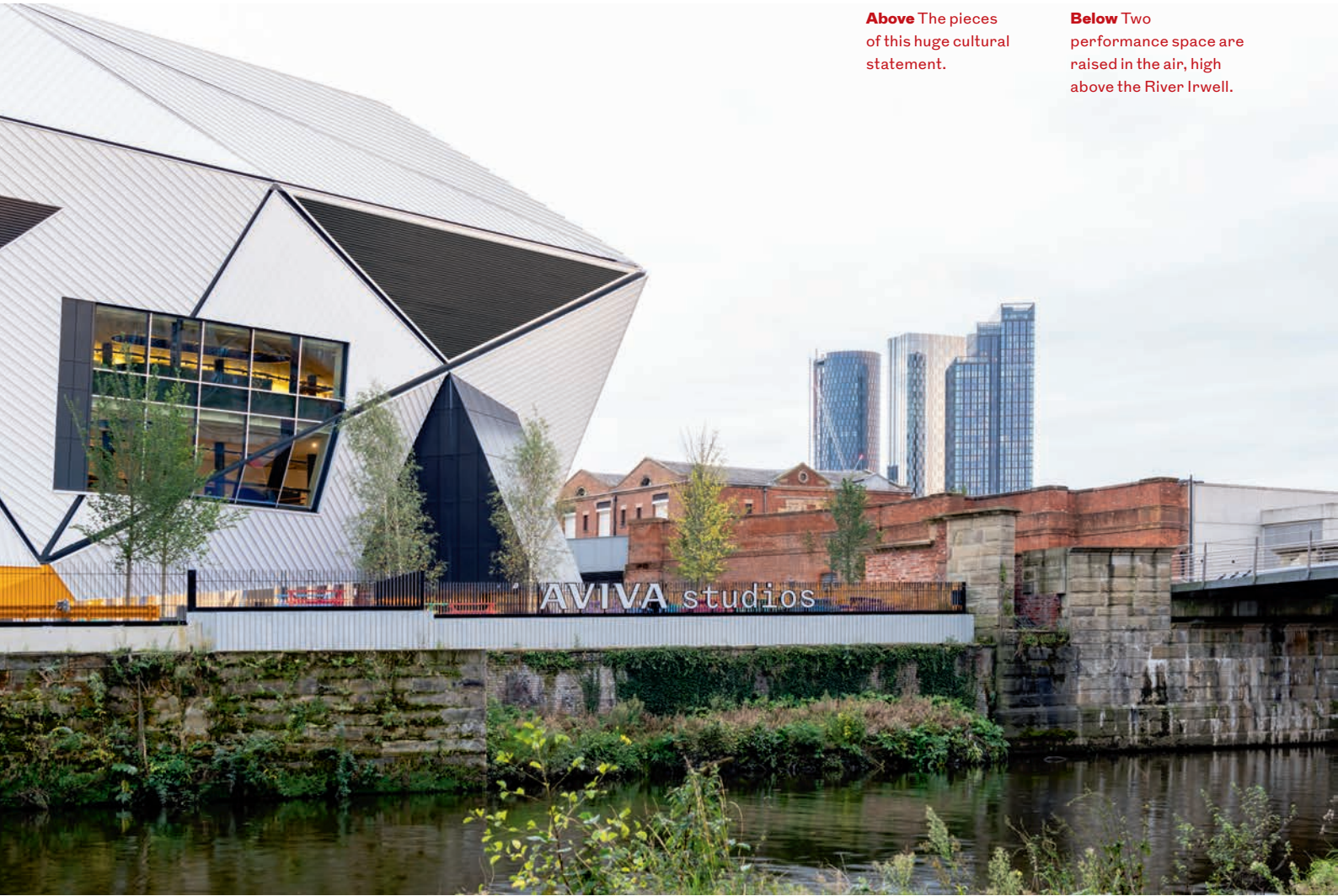
‘But that’s mad! How will you get theatre sets and exhibitions up there?’ I think. No problem, van Loon (not exactly) says, this lift can hoick up two 50 tonne stage trucks at the same time! AND we’ve made the exhibition space big enough and strong enough to hang a passenger plane!

After all, the brief from MIF was to give artists ‘limitless possibilities’ for their site-specific shows. The phrase ‘the building is simple’ is repeated several times by van Loon, which in 2015, when the building was conceived, perhaps it

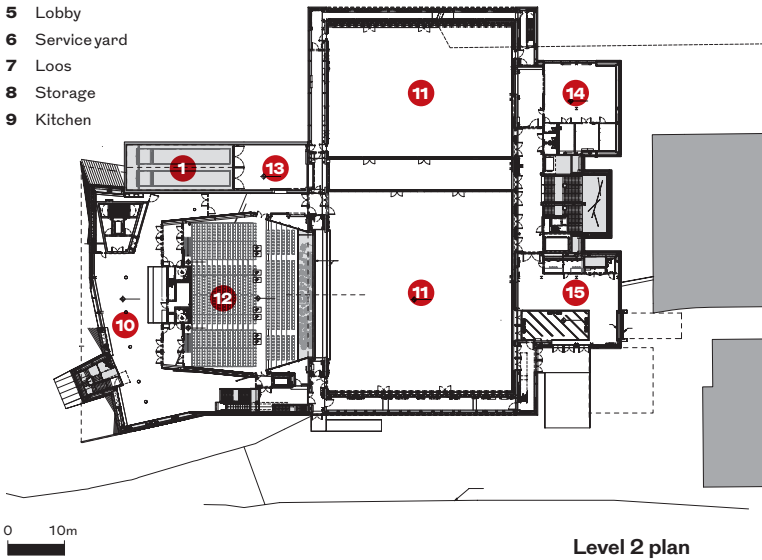


Above The pieces of this huge cultural statement.

Below Two performance space are raised in the air, high above the River Irwell.



- 1 Truck lift
- 2 Access road (Water Street)
- 3 Entrance
- 4 Foyer
- 5 Lobby
- 6 Service yard
- 7 Loos
- 8 Storage
- 9 Kitchen
- 10 Upper foyer
- 11 Warehouse
- 12 Auditorium seating
- 13 Truck loading
- 14 Workshop
- 15 Loading



was. Then, the images were delightful: of lightweight tensile structures, floating on warm air merrily tied back to the massive weight of The Factory from which people spilled out onto a sunny square down to the river below.

But a lot has changed since then. The all-year-round, all-night-long venue had to quieten down due to the encroaching residential tower blocks that the council always approves at the expense of all else (most notably the climate, and secondly any attempt to create an enjoyable or cohesive townscape). But while fighting to contain the noise and never, ever changing the form, OMA proves what happens when you have such brutish dedication to an original sketch idea. The lightweight balloon has morphed into a heavily slumped, scrapyard-bound mess of corrugated steel angles that also contains the new acoustically separated theatre. The sunny square has been

IN NUMBERS

13,350m²
gia

£241m
reported cost

Credits

Technical architects Allies and Morrison, Ryder Architecture

Construction partner Laing O'Rourke

Structure & civil engineers Buro Happold, BDP

Acoustic engineer Level Acoustics

Fire engineer WSP

Stage engineer Charcoal Blue

Vertical transportation Pearson Consult

Landscape design Planit.IE

IT Strata

Transport planning Vectos

Services engineer Buro Happold

FF&E Ben Kelly and Brinkworth

Graphic design Peter Saville and NORTH Design



The offices of Factory International sit on the studios as a separate volume.

Left The approach to Aviva Studios.



Buildings Leisure



eclipsed by a concrete turning circle for stage trucks and the dark, low slung underbelly creates an arrival space with the scale and welcome of an airport.

The building has its roots in a bygone age when 'floating buildings are fun!' still cut the mustard. Floating buildings cost a huge amount of carbon in the concrete and steel required to perform such structural gymnastics. Tellingly, the amount of carbon used in the construction and the predicted operational energy is undisclosed. Or, perhaps it was never modelled – it certainly doesn't appear to have been a priority. Instead, OMA passes the buck to the client, leaving it to resolve the issue when the ship has sailed, stating: 'Using operational data from 2024 as the benchmark, Factory International's ambition is to become a zero-carbon emissions organisation by 2038 in line with Manchester's targets.'

For such a high profile, publicly funded project, in a city aiming for net zero carbon 12 years ahead of the rest of the country, the lack of environmental consideration is absurd. Manchester

Above Giant steels land in the foyer.

Above right The foyer has open services with more smaller spaces divided by coloured curtains.

Below left Undercroft entrance to Aviva Studios with faceted theatre facade above.

Below The Hall performance space has 1600 seats and can be used in tandem with the Warehouse.

council must address the gaping hole in its planning policy quickly to start correcting the fact that in 2022, 64% of the city's direct CO₂ emissions came from buildings. This does not include embodied carbon, which undoubtedly would raise the figure significantly.

While the council fixates on 'cultural capital' and the £1.1 billion that the building is predicted to bring to the local economy, it seems blind to the damage the project is doing to the city. The scheme is likely to need retrofitting in the next decade to meet the council's carbon targets, making the investment not only a false economy, but utterly irrelevant



Section through the performance space.

in terms of progressing sustainable construction. Rather than squander such rare, big budget projects on gimmicky architecture we must use these precious opportunities to push architectural discourse at this vital moment, which requires genuinely imaginative thinking.

The brief for this building should have stipulated the theatre be net zero carbon theatre when in use, made with local, natural materials and easily accessible on foot – as minimum requirements. In fact, net zero carbon should be the brief not only for this but for all new buildings. If the approximately £18,000 that was spent on each square metre of this building was pushing in this direction, what we see today would look and feel entirely different and be far, far more exciting. We might even be keeping pace with trailblazers of France and Sweden in this regard. This is not simple,

While the council fixates on 'cultural capital', it seems blind to the damage the project is doing to the city

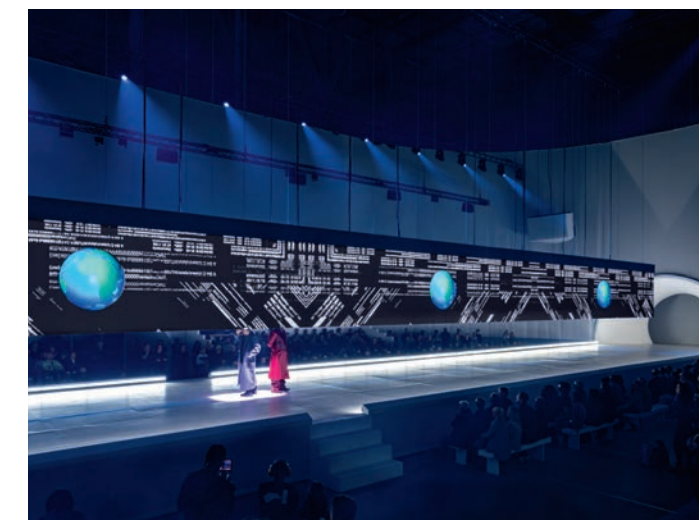
it requires a lot more consideration, collective collaboration and, critically, far more demanding planning policy and ambitious architects from the outset.

The brilliant first performance of Free Your Mind in the theatre pointedly asks: 'Is bigger always better?' To whom this question is posed is unclear, but in relation to Manchester's developmental mentality – bigger, higher, stronger, more – it is certainly the way to impress. There is so much of this project that doesn't feel necessary, making it seem overblown and juvenile in the face of the real challenges our cities must start to tackle. If we are not attempting to get the basics right – building in a well-connected, architecturally cohesive and environmentally conscious way – perhaps it's time to stop and reconsider what we are doing. ●

Jo Sharples is a director of Editorial Studio and an RIBA Journal Rising Star

Below left Spaces are still reconfigurable despite their huge scale, here with sliding acoustic panels.

Below Es Devlin's set for Aviva Studios' opening show Free Your Mind.



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Hidden strength
— making buildings
40

Home comforts
— dementia
52

33

2: Intelligence

**LIFE-LONG LEARNING
MUST BE MORE THAN
MERE BOX-TICKING**
NEAL SHASORE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE/
HEAD OF SCHOOL,
LONDON SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE

The Grenfell tragedy revealed some intrinsic failings in the construction industry; for architects, it showed an immediate need to demonstrate ongoing competence, and provided the stimulus for the RIBA's Way Ahead framework. Architects should welcome this emphasis on accountability: proof of up-to-date competencies could help to secure their precarious professional status.

At the same time, some fundamental challenges have been levelled at the UK architectural education system by the ARB. The question of students' preparedness for practice remains a hardy perennial. Life-long learning is moving up the agenda, driven by a faster pace of technological change, and because knowledge and skills will be repeatedly superseded over longer career spans.

Amid all this flux is the prospect of evidenced innovation in teaching, growing and sustaining diverse routes into practice, and supporting learning needs with imagination and criticality. These are the underlying motives for the London School of Architecture's 'Part 4' – a programme of modular short courses aimed at professional practice. They are design-led, with group tasks and a mix of in-person and online teaching. Architecture has been mildly snobbish about virtual learning, but other professions have been quick to recognise the possibilities of educational technology.

We're attentive to market need and regulatory requirements, so our course on fire safety, for example, will prepare architects for the RIBA's mandatory Health and Life Safety competence test. Our heritage course will open up new business opportunities and support applications to the RIBA Conservation Register. The idea is that professional development should not burden practices with another obligation that offers little reward, or bludgeon students with rote learning; this is a space of imagination with the energy of design studios within an architecture school.

We think the new models we are piloting could inform architectural education more generally, helping to make it more flexible, and thereby more accessible. We believe that such rich learning experiences will make people much more receptive to the discussion about competence, the foundation for something more important – excellence. ●

'Professional development should not burden practices with another obligation that offers little reward, or bludgeon students with rote learning'



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



Left Richer learning experiences will help create open minds, says Neal Shasore, CEO of London School of Architecture.

President’s Medals 2023

Creative answers to some of society’s critical issues characterise this year’s winners. Kacper Sehnke’s building to restore ecosystems by regenerating its site takes the Bronze award, while Silver medallist Ellie Harding offers a residential alternative for those living with Alzheimer’s disease. Chloe Shang’s dissertation proposes more healing types of healthcare building

Interviews: Pamela Buxton



Above A single circulation route through the housing development has recognisable ‘yards’ to aid navigation.
Right Masterplan for the development, located next to Hornsey Town Hall in London’s Crouch End.
Far right The design embraces an egocentric spatial perception with clear views to the bathroom when waking up (top) and out to the communal garden (below).

Ellie Harding
Nobody Wants to Live in a Care Home
London School of Architecture
Tutors: Fabrizio Matillana, Kit Sitby-Harris

‘There has to be a better way to approach it,’ says Ellie Harding of the accommodation options available for people living with Alzheimer’s disease, especially those with early onset-Alzheimer’s.

Her Silver medal-winning project presents an alternative to those either struggling with an ill-suited home, or living in a care home isolated from friends and family. This innovative concept enables people living with Alzheimer’s disease to remain living with their families in a development at the heart of the community, and in doing so, prolong their independence.

‘Alzheimer’s disease cannot be cured by architecture, but the quality of spaces, their layout, forms, materials and locations can have a huge impact on the severity of symptoms and consequent distress. Crucially, spatial perception has been shown to be altered even in the very early stages of the disease,’ she says.

Harding was keen to go further than ‘tick-box’ designing for dementia guides. Instead, her design draws on research into the different way that people living with Alzheimer’s disease experience space. This is by egocentric perception based on what is experienced at a single

moment, resulting in a greater reliance on lines of sight, materiality and colour for spatial navigation. This contrasts with the allocentric perception used by those without Alzheimer’s disease, in which egocentric perception is used to form a bird’s eye cognitive map of the space.

For the project, she used a cloud mapping photogrammetry technique to create egocentric maps of how people living with Alzheimer’s disease experience particular routes, and used these findings to inform the design and ameliorate the effects of the disease.

Her site is in London’s Crouch End next to Hornsey Town Hall in the centre of the community – a sharp contrast to the edge-of-bypass locations common to many care homes. She proposes 29 housing units and two porters’ lodges grouped around a ‘landscape of yards’. In the homes the design is ‘route and visual access-based’ with the bathroom at its heart. The landscape has one clear route with distinctive areas to aid familiarity and navigation. Particular attention is paid to materials and the haptic qualities of elements such as door handles. A safe, porous boundary with passive controls at the porters’ lodges is designed to enable those with sufficient allocentric perception to come and go.

She proposes that egocentric mapping could also be used more widely to ‘test’ designs before construction to ensure they are compatible for people living with Alzheimer’s disease.



RIBA SILVER COMMENDATIONS
Ammara Asdar
The Inbetween
Architectural Association
Tutors: Lawrence Barth, Lucy Styles

Jacob Shaw & Kyle Stone (joint entry)
Tracing Thresholds: Landscape Production
University of Plymouth
Tutor: Robert Brown

Elliott Wang
The Grand Domestic
London School of Architecture
Tutors: Esther Escribano, Matthew Whittaker

RIBA Award for Sustainable Design at Part 2
Shan Wei Chew
The Udaipur Plastic School
University of Bath
Tutor: Alexander Wright

RIBA Serjeant Award for Excellence in Architectural Drawing at Part 2
Chloe Dalby
Earth’s Breath: Wind and Wild
Newcastle University
Tutor: Prudence Chiles

RIBA Serjeant Award for Excellence in Architectural Drawing at Part 2 Commendation
Zibo Zhang
Folgelandschaft
Royal College of Art
Tutors: James Kwang Ho Chung, John Ng, Zsuzsa Péter

2023 RIBA SILVER MEDAL JUDGING PANEL
Mina Hasman (chair) Sustainability director & climate advocacy lead at SOM, UK
Shawn Adams Architect, writer, and lecturer; co-founder of the POor Collective, UK
Nana Biamah-Ofosu Architect, researcher, and writer; director at YAA Projects; lecturer in architecture at Kingston University, UK
David Hills Founding director at DSDHA, UK
Helen Iball Reader and departmental education lead at the Manchester School of Architecture, UK
Albert Williamson-Taylor Co-founder and principal design director of AKT II; engineering tutor at the Architectural Association, UK



The Council for Ecosystem Restoration
Kacper Sehnke
University of Westminster
Tutors: Eric Guibert, Bruce Irwin

Not content with touching the ground lightly, Kacper Sehnke’s Council for Ecosystem Restoration is designed to actively regenerate its site as well as manage its own disassembly.

Located in Epping Forest, the project is conceived as a building to support the real-life UN Decade for Restoration programme. The proposed council chamber, housed in a thatched

tower, hosts political dialogues and the promotion of ecological justice. It is supplemented by six pavilions for uses such as workshops as well as laboratories for research on forest landscapes and the impact of human activity.

The building is inspired by the Half-Earth conservation movement, which aims to conserve half the Earth’s land and marine spaces, and is accompanied by on-site actions to nurture the site – formerly a tennis club – and restore its damaged eco-system. This process starts with the design of the buildings, which are raised off the forest floor using gabion cages and steel screw piles to enable

The building aims to support the real-life UN Decade of Restoration and is inspired by the Half-Earth movement

Main image
Pavilions interlinked by walkways are grouped around a council chamber for environmental debate. Raised structures allow wildlife to cross the site.

Right The thatched council chamber is constructed from glulam and other timbers sourced from end-of-life projects.

Below The site’s pre-existing concrete base is broken up to enable restoration of the soil and gradual regrowth of vegetation.



wildlife to pass across the site, and interconnected by timber walkways.

For the structures Sehnke proposes using a combination of coppiced wood from the forest and locally recycled, already fabricated materials such as CLT and glulam. This provides comfortable accommodation, both for people on the inside and for wildlife on the outside of the buildings. The layered façade and overhanging roof frame provide habitats for a range of birds and bats, as well as supporting vertical plant growth.

Meanwhile the concrete on the ground will be broken up to allow regrowth of native fauna through the

RIBA BRONZE COMMENDATION & RIBA SERJEANT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING AT PART 1
Michael Becker
A Habit of Building: Considering Labour, the Architect and the Construction Site
Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
Tutor: Rachel Hallett

RIBA Bronze Commendations
Stephanie Ng
Life in Common: Re-enchanting the City through Urban Commoning
Central Saint Martins (UAL)
Tutor: Louis Lupien

Gus Richards
Cofio Celyn: Remember Celyn
University of Greenwich
Tutors: Jen Wan, Eric Wong

2023 RIBA BRONZE MEDAL PANEL
Elena Marco (chair) Professor of teaching and learning of architecture and built environment; and pro vice-chancellor and head of the College of Arts, Technology and Environment at the University of the West of England, UK
Oya Atalay Franck Professor of architecture, dean, and managing director of the School of Architecture, Design and Civil Engineering at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Winterthur, Switzerland; president of the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE/AEEA)
Grace Choi Director at Grace Choi Architecture, UK
Oli Cunningham Architect and senior lecturer in architecture at Sheffield Hallam University, UK
Jonathan Hagos Co-director at Freehaus Design, UK
Hamza Shaikh Artist and architect at Gensler, UK

gaps. The result, he hopes, is the creation of ‘a cohesive and symbiotic relationship between the constructed space and the natural environment’.

When the site has been remediated, the pavilion structures can be disassembled and reintegrated into the forest or moved to another location in need of restoration. The thatched tower is left to decay as ‘a monument to the negative impact of human activity on the natural world’.

As a result of the project, Sehnke says regenerative architecture is now a key interest of his. ‘It’s more relevant than ever,’ he says.

Research drawing
by Chloe Shang
of Architecture's
Medical History, from
the Asclepieion at
Epidauros (bottom) to
Guy's Cancer Centre
by Rogers Stirk
Harbour + Partners
(top). After Gandy
(1830).



Poems from the Patient Patient \finding Amor Fati
Chloe Shang
 Royal College of Art
 Tutors: Mark Campbell, Emilio Distretti,
 Polly Gould

Chloe Shang's own experiences in hospital informed her highly personal dissertation on the architecture of healing. In *Poems from the Patient Patient \ finding Amor Fati* [love of one's fate] she first uses poetry as a method of healing in response to stays in a number of London and Kent hospitals during 2020.

'I had a real desire to write creatively about illness as a way to assimilate it and find the agency to move on,' she says.

Armed with fresh insights from her experience, she then progresses from the mindset of the 'powerless patient' to that of the emerging, 'powerful' architect. Her aim is to impel tangible change in the design and construction of healthcare spaces.

'Decades of austerity and stagnation have diluted the hospital into an architectural purgatory and, moreover, a pervasive environmental poison. The architects of health must now realise: we have a singular opportunity to embolden, console and uplift at times when they are most keenly needed, and a duty if not to cure with architecture, then at least to not kill with it,' she says.

Her own time in hospital forms the framework for analysis of different hospital environments and associated

theories on healthcare design, including Roger Ulrich's 1984 study on how nature can induce healing, and the work of Maggie and Charles Jencks. She particularly felt the lack of sufficient natural light following a traumatic stay in an isolation room at Darent Valley Hospital that was 'no better than a prison cell'. In contrast, she found considerable solace in the views of city life from London's Guy's Hospital tower.

Materials are shown to be hugely important to the patient experience – both the avoidance of toxic substances and the multiple benefits of greater use of natural materials such as timber and stone.

'The qualities of these materials help to turn healthcare architecture, usually one of apathy and alienation, into one of empathy and encouragement,' she says.

These feature in two design projects included in the dissertation. An integrative treatment, rehabilitation and Maggie's day centre for Guy's and St Thomas' Trust is conceived for a site in Lambeth Palace Gardens in London. She also proposes a new typology of assisted-living housing combined with physical and psychological treatment spaces for patients with long-term health conditions. The site is an old quarry in Cornwall, giving a parallel theme of healing the scarred landscape as well as the patients.

Shang would like to see more interest in designing healthcare environments from those leading the way in the architectural profession, and hopes one day to work in that sector herself. ●

RIBA DISSERTATION COMMENDATIONS
A Project of Autonomy: Renegotiating the Border as a Condition of Collectivity

Kieran Lindsay
 University of Dundee
 Tutor: Yorgos Berdos

Insidious and Messy Hybridity: Reframing Japanese Identity

Kai McLaughlin
 Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
 Tutor: Murray Fraser

Going Beyond the Layers of the Facade. After Performance, Towards Care

Giulia Rosa
 Architectural Association
 Tutor: Merce Rodrigo Garcia

2023 RIBA DISSERTATION MEDAL PANEL

Samir Pandya (chair) Architect and assistant head of the School of Architecture and Cities at the University of Westminster, UK

Patti Anahory Architect working across building, art, education, and spatial and curatorial practices, Cabo Verde

Richard Anderson Head of the Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh, UK

Katy Beinart Artist and senior lecturer in architecture at the University of Brighton, UK

Luca Molinari Architect, curator and critic; professor of theory of architecture at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli (Italy)

Belgin Turan Özkaya Professor of architectural history in the Department of Architecture at the Middle East Technical University, Türkiye



Far left 'Healing body; healing land', a concept for assisted living housing for the mid to long term care of patients, proposed for a former quarry in Cornwall.
Left Reimagined hospital room designed to mediate the need for privacy, dignity, and a desire for gathering. The room has a stone core, timber screen and glazed walls.

Hidden strength of Cairngorms bridge

Moxon applied its HS2 bridges experience to elegant concept designs that convinced council and locals a second crossing could work in its setting

Words: Andrew Pearson Photographs: Simon Kennedy



Moxon Architects’ new Gairnshiel Bridge in Scotland’s Cairngorms National Park provides a crucial north-south link between Deeside and Speyside and diverts traffic from the original river crossing. The old bridge will continue to be used by non-motorised traffic. How did the practice’s involvement stack up? Ben Addy, managing director at Moxon Architects, explains.

Why was the new bridge needed?
The old 1752 bridge is Category A-listed, and crosses the River Gairn, a tributary to the Dee. It was commissioned by Major William Caulfeild, an officer in the British Army, as part of a military road to link Deeside and Speyside following the second Jacobite uprising. Locally it is a significant structure. It

is quite diminutive, with a spare, elegant humpback arch form. It has beautiful ends that taper off into the landscape making a very fine looking structure. The bridge was never designed for vehicles other than horses but was used by Highland tourist buses that would occasionally get grounded on the top of the arch. Its narrow width and tight approach meant it was constantly hit by vehicles, damaging the parapet and resulting in frequent bridge closures which entailed a 58km detour.

How did Moxon Architects become involved with this project?
Our introduction was unusual. Usually we’ll team up with an engineer to pursue an opportunity, but this time a local councillor approached us. We have an office in Aberdeenshire. Knowing that we’ve been involved in bridge design since the practice was established in 2004, she asked us: ‘What can I do?’. That was in 2014, after which followed seven years of lobbying. She did

Above Moxon’s new Gairnshiel Bridge with the original crossing behind.
Above right The bridge spans the River Gairn, a tributary to the Dee, linking Deeside and Speyside and responding to the landscape of the glen.

the political part. With our background in bridge design, we did a feasibility study pro bono. This proposed bypassing the existing crossing with a new two-lane bridge capable of carrying large goods vehicles. We also provided some approximate ideas of cost based on our bridge design experience. We proposed five or six alternative alignments, some immediately either side of the existing bridge and others further downstream. The downstream alignment with the best fit for the landscape was chosen. Following these initial concept sketches we were commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council to develop the design and make the Planning Application, which was then determined by the Cairngorms National Park Authority.



How did you set about developing the design for a new bridge?
We were obviously thinking about what a bridge would look like here but initial discussions with Aberdeenshire Council, alongside representatives from Transport Scotland, the Cairngorms National Park Authority and other stakeholders, were as much about the highway provision either side of the river as the geometry and construction of the bridge structure.

We were involved in environmental and landscape matters because the project included embankments and tie-ins to the highway which are elevated above the flood plain. One key stakeholder was the bridges department at Aberdeenshire Council. It quickly became involved so we did a pro bono concept design with its team.

Did Moxon Architects have a vision for what the new bridge might look like?
The aesthetic and what it looks like in the wider context of the glen were very important. That is why it is not even remotely typical of equivalent, functional structures of a similar span. The original bridge was built at a constriction where the bedrock is close to the surface. We’re only a few hundred metres downstream, but we’re on the flood plain so the river is wider with a different morphology. The new bridge responds to three key considerations: the river flood levels, which required a single clear span with an aperture no smaller than that of the original; the low alignment of the highway, which required the bridge to have a slender profile in elevation; and the desire to create a sculptural yet

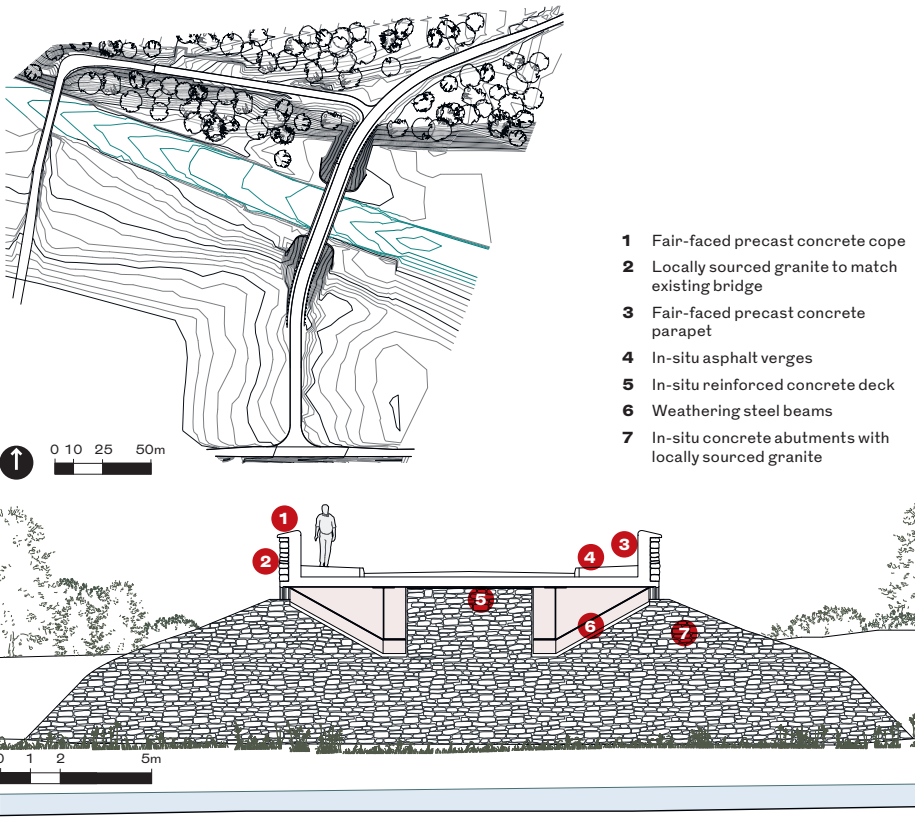
robust form that responds to the natural formation of the glen and complements the adjacent 18th-century structure.

How is the bridge deck supported?
While the bridge is neither humpback nor of structural masonry construction, there are aspects of the original, such as the way it tapers at the ends and its slender arch midspan, that we felt it was important to emulate in the new bridge. Two trapezoidal steel box girders in weathering steel support the new bridge. Over time, these will gradually change colour to a muted, dark brown. The deep part of the beam is underneath the centreline of each carriageway, which is where it really matters, while the outer web of each girder is angled so it appears to be very thin at the outer edge to emulate the slenderness of the original bridge.

How are the parapets attached?
Admittedly, the thin outer edge of the box-girder creates some complex engineering connections with the precast parapet, so that is boot-shaped in section and incorporates starter-bars

to tie it into the deck reinforcement. It is a bit of a tricky detail, but we were doing something very similar on HS2 viaducts. The precast concrete parapets are faced in locally sourced granite, as are the concrete abutment wing walls, which taper to gently merge with the landscape as a companion to the original granite bridge. Huge credit goes to Aberdeenshire Council’s bridges department for seeing the value of these decisions and holding to them.

Did Moxon Architects have much involvement in the final design?
We were a victim of our own success. Everyone bought into the project and the council’s transport committee decided to pursue it based on our concept design. Our concept was tendered for the full structural design. Structural engineer Arcadis won and developed the scheme with us in an oversight role, directly appointed by Aberdeenshire Council. As for procurement, we continued in much the same way with the contractor, Wills Bros Civil Engineering. The bridge opened to the public last October. ●



Brick Awards 2023: The winners

The BDA reveals 16 projects that have made the best and most innovative use of brick in architecture this year – and scooped accolades in 18 award categories in the process



The Brick Development Association’s Brick Awards celebrate the world’s greatest brick architecture and craftsmanship. Every year the competition welcomes hundreds of projects across 18 categories, entered by the world’s leading architects, specialist contractors and developers. Four of the awards are judged and voted for independently: Supreme, Sustainability, Architects’ Choice and Contractors’ Choice. The 2023 winners were announced at the Brick Awards ceremony on 8 November 2023 at London’s Royal Lancaster Hotel.



‘The creation and application of new brickwork is highly executed craftsmanship’

Opposite Brick Awards 2023
Supreme Winner: Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings by Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios.
Right The Red House by David Kohn Architects.

SUPREME WINNER/SUSTAINABILITY/ CRAFTSMANSHIP
SHREWSBURY FLAXMILL MALTINGS, SHROPSHIRE
Putting a 225-year-old grade I listed building ‘back to work’ after 30 years of dereliction required comprehensive repair, retrofitting and bold insertions to safeguard the next 100 years. The pyramidal Malt Kiln is re-purposed as a dramatic new entrance and vertical circulation providing level access to upper floors. The decision not to heat this circulation space is emblematic of its aim for a circular economy.
Daylighting and overheating analysis determined the need to re-open 110 former windows and the use of solar glazing and a free area for natural ventilation. Exposing masonry jack arches and adding ventilators over new internal glazed partitions make a comfortable working space while retaining the historic character.
The project team repaired, reused and retrofitted to long life, loose fit design principles. A fixed budget and high aspirations for sustainability and design quality called for collaboration across the team to achieve this exemplar of adaptive re-use.
The judges said: ‘The creation and application of new brickwork to this existing building is a highly executed example of craftsmanship. The heritage skills programme and light touch conservation approach as a mechanism to repair and convert this internationally important building is an accomplishment.’

COMMENDED IN THE CRAFTSMANSHIP CATEGORY
KENSINGTON PALACE ORANGERY



ARCHITECTS’ CHOICE
YOKO ONO LENNON CENTRE, LIVERPOOL
The Yoko Ono Lennon Centre at the University of Liverpool is a teaching and performance building designed by Liverpool School of Architecture graduates based at UK architecture practice Ellis Williams.
The new facility includes The Tung Auditorium – a world class music performance space – together with two large lecture theatres, seminar rooms, café space, a public facing linear park and a new outdoor space for the university. With a floor area of 6,500m² the building was planned around a careful understanding of the site and an innovative response to a challenging brief and budget.
The lecture theatres were arranged vertically, which allowed for a much smaller building footprint – freeing up the site to deliver a linear public park alongside the main arterial route adjacent to the south elevation (Grove Street). This also allowed for the large volume and height of Tung Auditorium to be placed adjacent to the teaching spaces, separated by the main atrium circulation space.
The judges said: ‘A bold design choice to stack theatres and acoustically separate them, to give back external spaces to the surroundings. A very impressive building on all levels.’

INDIVIDUAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
THE RED HOUSE, DORSET
The Red House, a contemporary home in rural Dorset by David Kohn Architects, was named RIBA House of the Year in 2022. The jury observed how ‘the house’s playful eccentricity, including oversized eaves, patterned red brickwork and contrasting bold green details, jump out – but this is consistently underpinned by outstanding craftsmanship and attention to detail.’
In naming the Red House, the architects sought to tie the house to a story about English domestic architecture that runs to Hermann Muthesius’ 1904 book ‘Das Englische Haus’ and beyond. Muthesius called architect Philip Webb’s 1860 brick masterpiece, Red House, ‘the very first example in the history of the modern house’. It was pre-occupied with vernacular traditions of house building, while unifying the plan and use of the house through ‘material, colour and mass’. Such use of red brick was shocking at that time.
The judges said: ‘A delightful and unexpected take on Philip Webb’s Red House that abounds with fun and unexpected details. Wherever you turn you are met with a joyful and unique view, but the house is also immensely practical and robustly detailed.’



Left Kensington Palace Orangery by Purcell Architects.
Right Yoko Ono Lennon Centre by Ellis Winters.

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Intelligence
Building Safety Act

What is the Principal Designer?

As expectations mount for architects to shoulder the new role, Paul Jolly looks at how it differs from the old regime and considers the pros and cons of taking on this responsibility



Health, safety
& wellbeing



Design, construction
& technology

The Building etc (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 came into force last October, giving further clarity on how the government intends to implement the new regulatory regime introduced under the Building Safety Act 2022. For any project requiring a new Building Regulations application, from domestic house extensions to higher-risk buildings (HRBs), two 'principal duty holders' will now need to be appointed: the Principal Designer and the Principal Contractor.

Architects will be familiar with these duty holder titles which were first introduced under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, But the duties and responsibilities for the Principal Designer under CDM (secondary legislation made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974) are markedly different to those now required of the Principal Designer under the Building Regulations (secondary legislation made under the Building Act 1984 and the Building Safety Act 2022).

What are the key differences?

Under CDM, the primary duty of the Principal Designer is to plan, manage and monitor the pre-construction phase of a project and to co-ordinate matters relating to health and safety. This is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that construction projects are designed and managed without risks to the health or safety of those who build, use and maintain them.

Under the Building Regulations, the Principal Designer is required to 'plan, manage and monitor the design work during the design phase' and to 'co-ordinate matters relating to the design work comprised in the project so that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the design is such that if the building work to which the design relates were built in accordance with that design, the work would be in compliance with all relevant requirements'. These requirements are defined, and include those listed in Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010, from Part A – Structure, through to Part S – Infrastructure for the Charging of Electric Vehicles, as well as Regulation 7, governing materials and workmanship. Materials must be appropriate for the circumstances in which they are used, so as to adequately perform the functions for which they are designed.

In other words, the new Principal Designer duty holder must take 'all reasonable steps' to ensure the design work on a project is co-ordinated to demonstrate compliance with the Building Regulations. This reinforces Dame Judith Hackitt's call for a more 'robust ownership of accountability' under her Building a Safer Future

Above On domestic projects, where the client has not appointed a Principal Designer, that role falls to the designer of the design phase.

review, to regulate what was seen as an increasingly fragmented industry with design responsibilities split across multiple parties. Although individual designers remain responsible for the compliance of their own design work, the new Principal Designer will have overall responsibility for co-ordinating the design and must only accept commissions where they have the 'skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours necessary to fulfil their duties'.

Extra roles and responsibilities

The Building (Higher-Risk Buildings Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023 contain additional requirements, including the need for a 'competence declaration' and a 'Building Regulations compliance statement' to be provided as part of an HRB Building Control approval application. The Principal Designer must also ensure an 'appropriate frequency of inspections' of HRB design work for safety occurrences throughout the construction phase, with a safety occurrence being an aspect of the design relating to the structural integrity or fire safety of a higher-risk building that would, if built, meet the risk condition that use of the building in question without the incident or situation being remedied would be likely to present a risk of a significant number of deaths, or serious injury to a significant number of people.

The RIBA has described this secondary legislation as forming part of arguably the most important regulatory change in the industry since the 1980s.



ENVELOP'S DE BEAUVOIR SQUARE
PHOTOGRAPHED BY HELEN LEECH

While the new Principal Designer role will attract increased liabilities and tougher sanctions, as was the case with CDM in 2015, the amended regime is seen as an opportunity for the profession to ‘step up’ and reassert control over the design phase. The RIBA considers that in the main, architects who are already competent in performing the role of lead designer should be well placed to discharge these new duties and add a further service to their portfolio.

Are architects ready for the role?

But are architects ready to take on these additional roles and responsibilities? A key objective of the CDM 2015 reforms was to replace the previous CDM Co-ordinator role with that of the Principal Designer, with duties to be performed by ‘an active designer’ with control over the pre-construction phase. The Health and Safety Executive’s declared intention was to place matters relating to health and safety at the heart of the design process and away from the preserve of peripheral Health and Safety Consultants. The lead designer, typically the architect, was seen as best placed to perform this role. However, uptake in the profession has been limited.

An HSE research report published in June 2023 found that the CDM Principal Designer role was most often undertaken by health and safety consultants, client advisors and project managers. RIBA members accounted for only 18% of the survey respondents, with the general feedback suggesting that ‘designers and architects did not want to take on the PD role’, seeing health and safety as the contractor’s responsibility. Is it possible similar trends will emerge for the new Building Regulations duty holder?

Aiming to avoid confusion

The government stated, under its Consultation Outcome into the new Building Control Regime, that the parties procuring and undertaking the work in compliance with CDM should be the same as those considering compliance with the Building Regulations. It does not expect ‘duplicate duty holders’, and the intention is for

both Principal Designer roles to be performed by the same entity to avoid confusion. In this scenario, a ‘non-active designer’ such as a health and safety consultant, would not be suitably qualified to plan, manage, monitor and co-ordinate design work to demonstrate compliance with the Building Regulations. As a consequence, there is very likely to be an increased demand in professional appointments for architects, as lead designers, to also act as the Principal Designer.

Architects must ensure that they fully understand their duties and wider obligations before entering into any such agreements. It is also important to understand, as has been the case with CDM, that in instances where a domestic client fails to appoint a Principal Designer, the designer in control of the design phase (most likely an architect) will automatically assume the Principal Designer role. The Principal Designer will not have to declare that the project has been designed and built in accordance with the Building Regulations, as previously published under (now removed) draft regulations from 2021, but they will have to make a declaration at completion (or partial completion) that they fulfilled their duties as a Principal Designer. The duties to plan, manage, monitor and co-ordinate design work will cover all design disciplines and the designs of all elements. On domestic projects, this could include designs for foundations, basement waterproofing, heating systems, drainage, acoustics and fire alarm systems. Larger, more complex developments could see the design extend across multiple designers and specialists.

Larger complex projects and HRBs are more likely to be viable for multi-disciplinary companies, where a broader spread of specialist design knowledge

There is likely to be greater demand for architects, as lead designers, also to act as the Principal Designer

will already be provided in-house. While new technologies and expanding portfolios present opportunities for emerging practices or those looking to expand or diversify into alternative sectors, smaller companies will need to ensure their development plans allow for the requisite growth in competence before accepting new appointments.

Insurance challenges

Obtaining appropriate professional indemnity insurance cover under the current market conditions remains a significant, albeit lessening, challenge. The government has recognised this, and its original intention to impose strict liabilities on designers to ensure compliance have been tempered under the amendments to require ‘all reasonable steps’ to be taken. While insurance remains a concern across the industry, the government has said it does intend to introduce strict liability duties on designers in the future, subject to consultation with the construction and insurance industries. The government is also seeking to shake up the prevailing culture of design and build, in promoting alternative procurement models that use integrated projects insurance (IPI) to encourage collaborative behaviour across project teams.

The RIBA has launched a Principal Designer Register for architects to demonstrate their competence to perform the roles required under both the Building Regulations and CDM, with a separate tier for those parties competent to perform the more demanding roles required for HRB projects. It will be interesting to see over the coming months whether the register promotes a faster uptake for architects becoming Principal Designers than has been experienced to date under CDM. This is a significant opportunity for the profession: if architects remain reluctant to take on these increased responsibilities to lead the design process, no doubt someone else will. ●

Paul Jolly is technical director at HKA

Read the RIBA’s primer on the Building Safety Act and information on the Principal Designer Register at [architecture.com](https://www.architecture.com)

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The challenge is to incorporate a fall protection system that enables safe access, while also addressing other priorities, such as the freedom to design aesthetically pleasing buildings.

Key considerations for fall protection systems include ease of installation, compliance, worker safeguarding, building/ roof protection and meeting standards. Although this may seem a lot to consider, a well-designed fall protection system will do what the architect deems important for the application, while still helping to protect the integrity of the roof.

It is important to note that if a system isn’t practical or easy to use, workers may not use it properly and could put themselves and others at risk. Architects should also consider the walkways and other exterior paths that workers use to access a fall protection system, remembering that operatives may need access in poor weather – when it’s raining, windy or in sub-zero temperatures – all conditions that increase the risk of workers slipping.



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Revenue's up – along with costs

Practice income has risen, but so have pay and expenditure. Architects are in the middle of a profit squeeze, with more of the same predicted for next year

Aziz Mirza

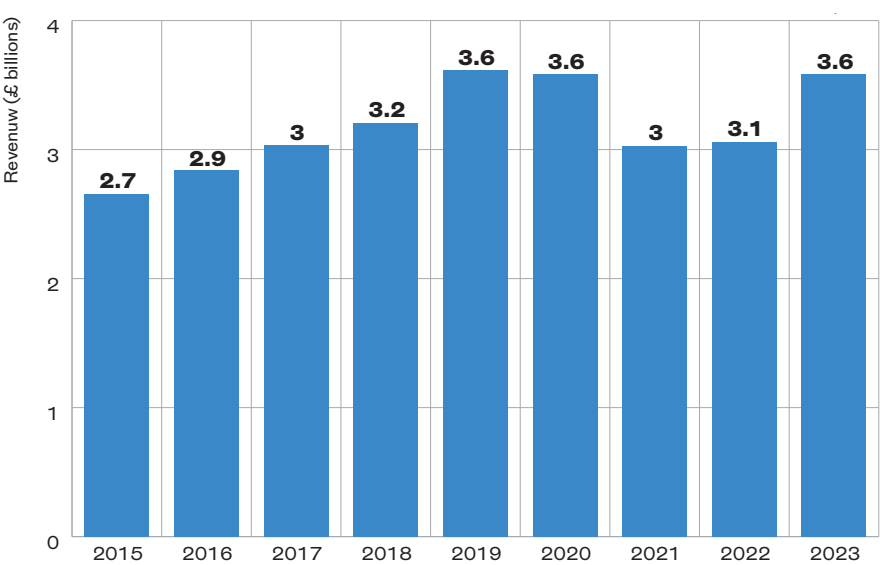


Business, clients & services

Architectural businesses are growing again. For the first time in four years, RIBA chartered practices report higher revenue. And that growth is spectacular; total revenue generated by all RIBA chartered practices is 17% higher than last year's figure. This turbo-boost marks a convincing return to the long-term trajectory of growing revenue. Until 2019, practice revenue had been growing consistently year on year. Since then, the pandemic and its aftershocks saw practice revenue stagnate or fall. Rising building cost inflation, general consumer inflation and higher salary costs have had an impact. Latest figures show just how dramatically the profession has recovered from the pandemic – but also that inflation is proving to be a real negative. This means there had been no growth for four years. Finally, things have changed.

The positive picture is enhanced by the finding that average practice revenue has grown right across the profession, in every practice size group analysed in this survey. Small and medium sized practices have performed particularly

Total revenue from all RIBA chartered practices, trends 2015 to 2023



well in the last 12 months, recording all-time average revenue highs, beating anything pre-pandemic. The average practice revenue in a one-person firm is 6% higher than it was in 2019; for a 10-20 person practice it is 17% higher; while practices with 3-5 people report average revenues that are 14% higher than in 2019. Average practice revenue is also higher compared with 2019 for the larger practices, although is lower than it was in 2021 for 50-100 and 100+ practices.

Much of this year's growth comes from those 100+ practices. The large practices always account for a huge share of the profession's revenue and so are worthy of attention. As a group, the 100+ practices' share of a growing market has risen from 41% last year to 45% this.

And although large practices are growing strongly, they are still posting an average revenue that is lower than before the pandemic. Because so many large practices are in London, the

capital's share has increased to 70% this year. London is dominating the profession even more than usual.

Large practices have generated much of this year's growth from projects based outside the UK. If that was a conscious strategy, it looks like it has succeeded. 100+ practices are responsible for 86% of international revenue and there has been an impressive 43% growth in international work. Much of this year's rise in revenue has come from jobs in the European Union and North America. Unexpectedly, EU work this year has contributed more to practice revenue than projects from Asia or the Middle East. Perhaps international work is normalising after the shock of Brexit.

But expenditure is rising too

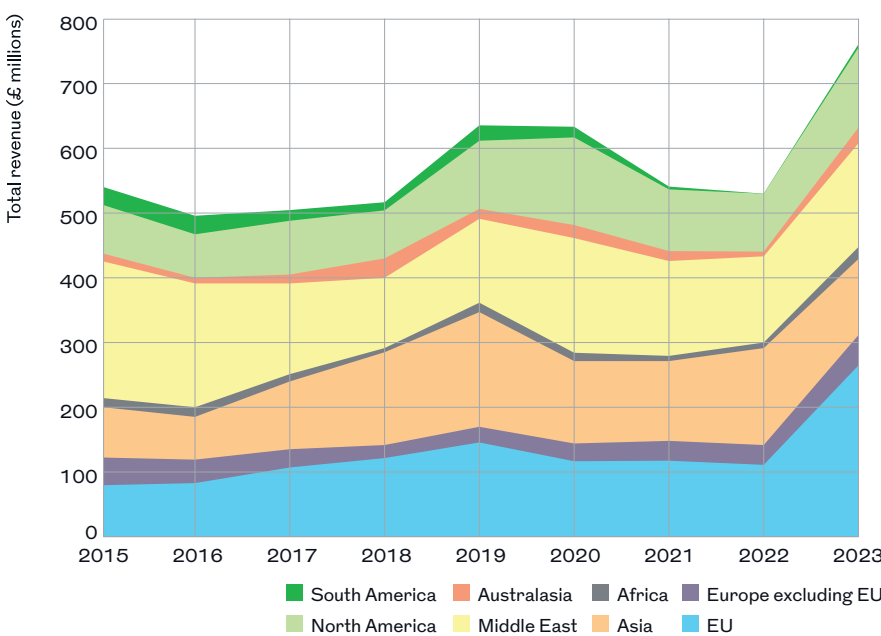
While this year's figures show that practices of all sizes have successfully increased their revenue, the data also reveals that expenditure has increased at an even faster rate. This has inevitably squeezed profit margins. Where fees are linked to construction costs, building cost inflation has pushed up fees. More specifically, practices' average hourly rates have not kept up with inflation.

Throughout the economy, salaries have risen to compensate for a skills shortage. This is borne out by the figures that show the collective sum spent by all practices on payroll and other staff costs

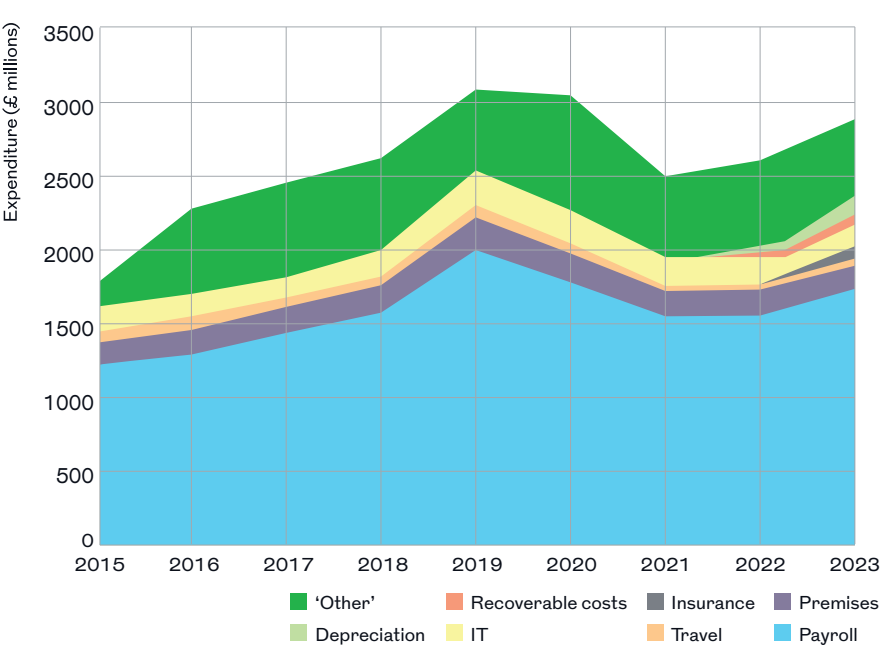
KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS YEAR'S BENCHMARKING SURVEY

- ➔ Total revenue across all chartered practices against last year: +17%
- ➔ Growth in international work: +43%
- ➔ Payroll and staff costs: +14%
- ➔ Predicted rise in revenue next year: +6%
- ➔ Predicted rise in expenditure next year: +7%

Total revenue received by all RIBA chartered practices from outside the UK



Total practice expenditure by cost element for all RIBA chartered practices, trends 2015 to 2023



has increased by 14%. At the same time, inflation has sky-rocketed, affecting a wide range of cost elements. The average (median) spend on PII, for example, has increased by 11% this year.

The squeeze on profits manifests itself in lower average earnings this year for partners/directors/sole principals. Their average earnings are down by 2%. This fall compares with inflation-

Although large practices are growing strongly, average revenue is still lower than before the pandemic

matching rises among more junior salaried staff. Architectural employees, particularly younger or less experienced staff, appear to have secured the largest pay rises this year. Practices report a 6% rise in salaries paid to Part 1 assistants while those at Part 2 record an average pay rise of 7%.

Against this backdrop average pay for architects with five or more years' experience has fallen by 6%. That is an unexpected result. We might speculate that it could indicate senior architects are being promoted to associates – with a consequential pay rise for the individual but a fall in the average for those remaining immediately below associate level. Average pay for associates has increased by 3% during the year.

Allied to salaries is productivity and staff utilisation, and this year a new benchmark in the survey begins to examine this aspect. The new business benchmark measures how much staff time is spent on billable work. Over 70% of the hours of architects, technologists and assistants are spent on billable work. A slightly smaller proportion of associates' time, 64%, is spent on billable work while partners/directors/sole principals spend an average of less than half (46%) their time on work billed to clients. In 100+ practices, the average proportion of billable time is higher, at over 80% for architects, and assistants – but at the same time these practices report a slightly lower proportion of partners/directors' time. As the wider argument about economic productivity continues, against the narrative of poor productivity growth generally in the UK since before the financial crisis, it will be interesting to see how this benchmark changes over time.

Looking ahead

So what about next year? The survey asked RIBA chartered practices how they thought their own practice revenue might change in the next 12 months. Their encouraging prediction is that revenue will grow by 6%. Within that figure, most expect rising revenues and just one in four thinks revenues will fall.

But here's the catch – expenditure

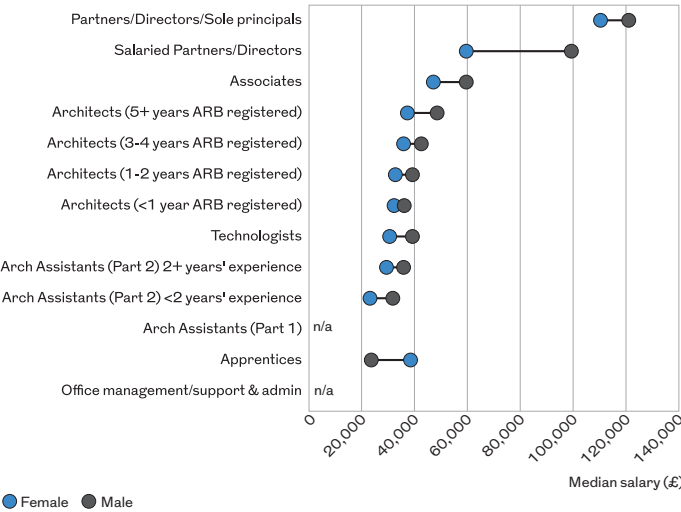
is predicted to rise by even more than revenue, by 7%. This year’s squeeze on profits looks set to continue into next year. The mismatch between rising revenue and rising expenditure is evident in all but the very smallest practice size groups. Payroll costs are the largest factor in practice expenditure. We do not know by how much practices expect salaries to increase but respondents say that staff numbers are expected to rise by 5% so the payroll bill may rise by a similar amount even before any salary increases.

Respondents to the benchmarking survey suggest they expect to raise their hourly rates by 5% in the coming year. Again, that figure seems to be less than the predicted rise in expenditure and is also lower than the average revenue growth – implying greater productivity or larger workloads.

Assuming practices achieve what is predicted, we’ve calculated that if revenue were to rise by the average 6% predicted by practices, the total revenue for all RIBA chartered practices in 2024 would be £3.8 billion. That would be a new record and a testament to architects’ business skills, resilience and adaptability. ●

The full 2023 report, with detailed commentary, data tables and visualisations, is available to RIBA chartered practices from ribabenchmark.com

Pay gap between female and male staff



TOWARDS A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Pay Gap

This year has seen a small narrowing of the pay gap between men and women from last year and a slightly greater reduction in the ethnicity pay gap. While welcome, it follows significant widening over the last few years. We will need to see this improvement increased in scale and pace if we're to be confident that that we're advancing equity in architecture.

From the data we can see two related but distinct areas which feed into the overall pay gap. First, there is a structural imbalance in gender and ethnicity representation between the highest and lowest paid staff. People who are male and white are more likely to be among higher paid staff, and less likely to be found in the lowest paid roles. Secondly, white staff and men are typically paid more than their peers, even when they are working in similar roles. For example, women are less likely to be in senior roles such as partner or director, and even when they are, they are paid less than their male peers, on average.

EDI interventions

Headline pay gaps indicate systemic inequality not only in employment, but also in education and society. Addressing them requires targeted interventions.

The RIBA collects data on a range of staff benefits, some of which are likely to help improve equity and inclusion. While this is the first year we have collected data on 'family leave beyond the statutory minimum', it is already clear it needs work, recognising the disproportionate impact that childcare responsibilities have on women and their careers. And, as has been shown by the Fawcett Society, 'it is Black and

minoritised women and lone parents who are at the sharpest end of restrictive stereotypes' of working mothers.

Encouragingly, we continue to see growth in the uptake of EDI policies showing the willingness of practices to engage with the topic. It is essential this translates into sustained action.

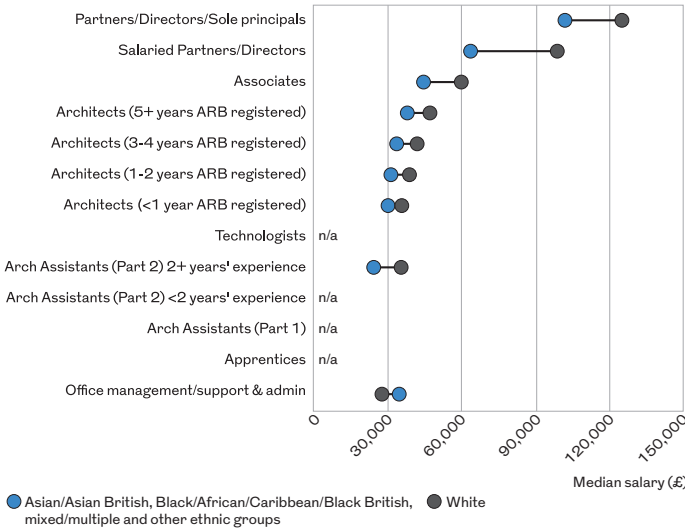
Data

While the data set used to create the RIBA Benchmarking report is large, the representation of people from marginalised or minoritised groups is often small. This presents us with challenges of how we can report the data meaningfully and with confidence. This is particularly apparent in the data we have on ethnicity. In reporting on ethnicity pay gaps we have used two classifications: Asian/Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, mixed/multiple and other ethnic groups; and White. We recognise that there will be huge variations between groups within the classifications we have used and that by using them we are losing an opportunity to identify further areas of inequity. However, this reflects the data we hold. Our approach to collecting and reporting data will improve over time, and we encourage more practices to share their detailed pay data through the Benchmarking Service, but it is important that we publish this data even with its limitations.

Robbie Turner is director of inclusion and diversity at the RIBA

For guidance on addressing equity and pay gaps see the RIBA Close the Gap Toolkit at architecture.com

Pay gap between Asian/Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, mixed/multiple and other ethnic groups, and White staff



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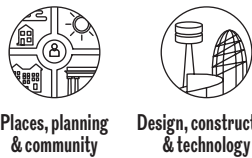
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Help to grow old gracefully

WGP is tackling the dearth of quality care homes for people living with dementia using designs that focus on legibility, stimuli, security and style

Words Isabelle Priest



Below WGP redesigned the proposed scheme at Burgess Park with townhouse proportions, adding terraces at each level and a huge secure rooftop garden.



‘Why can’t care homes look more like this?’ ‘This’ was the high-end gym, designed by WGP Architects, in which the managing director of Country Court Care was working out. It so happened that the person this care home developer was talking to was a partner at WGP Architects. Country Court was mid-way through building a care home in Burgess Park, London, and the MD, impressed by the gym’s style and focus on wellness, invited WGP to look at the designs to make it more attractive and contemporary.

Burgess Park is a mixed care home, incorporating residential care and caring for people with advanced dementia and nursing needs. There are an estimated 944,000 people living with dementia in the UK – a figure expected to surpass 1 million by 2025. Yet families and caregivers often cannot find appropriate types and levels of care, and patients are often rejected because of a lack of suitable accommodation.

‘Later living has more advanced schemes with fine examples and big names,’ explains WGP director James Potter. Progressive examples of care homes for dementia are mostly overseas.

Hogeweyk is a pioneering care home in Weesp, the Netherlands, designed by Molenaar&Bol&VanDillen as a village – complete with a town square, supermarket, hairdresser, theatre, pub, café-restaurant and 25 ‘houses’ that each accommodate six or seven people. Danish practice NORD Architects has just completed a similar village in Dax based on its old town – the first of its kind in France. Woodside in Warwick, designed by Robothams Architects, is one of the only UK examples modelled on this type of village.

WGP believes there is a lot of design opportunity as they are pretty unusual projects, says Potter: ‘They need to be enticing to visitors, and assist residents – those who are relatively well-abled and those living with dementia. Good design can make them easier to manage and use for residents, staff and families.’

Since Burgess Park, WGP has designed two more schemes, which are in planning. However, it is a hard sector in which to find clients, with not enough emphasis on innovation. Here are the lessons learned from the first two. Read the longer article including the Haverhill project ribaj.com/care-homes-dementia.



ANTHONY COLEMAN (2)

BURGESS PARK, SOUTH LONDON

WGP went ‘full throttle’ redesigning the scheme with a contemporary approach. To simplify planning, it retained the proposed massing but reworked the facades and floorplans. On the site of a previous 1960s care home, the scheme references a James Stirling-designed school hall opposite and neighbouring Georgian terraces by breaking down the massing to townhouse proportions.

The building has 100 bedrooms over five floors. WGP removed the chamfered corner, opened up smaller rooms, introduced double-height spaces in the entrance and between wings and floors, particularly in lounges, and added terraces and a large secure rooftop garden with fantastic views. The ground floor is for residential care, the first nursing care for people needing physical support, the second for people with dementia and the third for people

with dementia and nursing needs.

‘The challenge is how to safeguard and care for the more vulnerable people without it feeling like a prison,’ explains Potter. The double-height spaces are carefully controlled, for example, using internal glazing for safety and noise reduction, while the roof garden has 1.8m glass screening.

Dementia-specific features include simple circulation designed as circular routes that are legible and enable wandering, as well as visual stimuli at corners and the end of corridors. The team also worked with an interior designer on space planning, including how to get a hoist into all areas. Some aspects that the practice would have liked to incorporate, however, including exposed services and track lighting, were rejected by the Quality Care Commission on the basis that the dust would cause added maintenance.

Top One of the double-height resident lounges at Burgess Park.



THE OLIVE GROVE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The Olive Grove is a proposal for a 60-bedroom dementia-specific care home 3km outside Oundle, Northamptonshire. Currently in planning, the site is owned by a garden centre that lost footfall during the pandemic. The project proposes to reduce the size of the nursery by adding a care home to the site, which would share some facilities and benefit from the dual use. A proposed café would be open to the public and available for visits with residents, providing a link between the two uses and creating a sense of community in a safe setting.

The care home is designed across two levels with a courtyard in the centre and surrounded by gardens, open fields and by the nursery itself. Bedrooms are organised around operational units

of six-to-eight-bedroom loops, each sharing a communal living space, to create a more relatable domestic scale that can reduce noise and overactivity which can be disorienting and cause anxiety among people living with dementia. Bedrooms look outwards onto rural views, whereas social spaces open onto the courtyards, with terraces and patios for residents to sit in.

For cost-efficiency, the construction is basic loadbearing masonry, beam and block with pigmented blockwork. The exterior is clad using polycarbonate for privacy and timber cladding that will silver and is designed to aid solar shading. Each change in mass has a different colour or tone to help with wayfinding and identification, which happens at several different scales throughout the building, including on bedroom doors and corridors. ●

Top Road-side view of the proposed Olive Grove care home, clad in polycarbonate sheeting.



Below The Olive Grove's design centres on a courtyard, allowing circular routes around the building.

WGP ARCHITECTS (3)





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RIBA 

Father's ruin
 – Will Wiles
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3: Culture



Cairo's ancient City of the Dead has found its graveyards put to new, contingent use by the living, as the local poor appropriate their grounds as home, adding new skin to the bones below. While analysing the site for his MArch project at Sheffield School of Architecture, Hammad Haider discovered nearby Garbage City, whose 'Zabbaleen' (garbage collectors) process the city's waste – stripping back, separating and collating it, then selling it on for profit. These 60,000 residents are mainly Coptic Christians, whose herds of pigs once consumed the organic, lowest level of waste. The Zabbaleen reportedly recycle 80% of city refuse, far in excess of Western norms. Perhaps it was this virtuous circle that French Tunisian artist eL Seed

alluded to in 2017 when he created his massive mural here, taking in several housing blocks.

But see beyond this and your assumptions. Look at the random rubbish that is in fact ordered bales of material ready for onward sale; at the finely decorated timber pigeon towers – symbols of status, says Haider, perhaps built by families who'd sold their herds to the city's hotels catering to Westerners. Look at the rooftop city farms where goats graze, and at the appurtenances of aspirational living – air conditioning units and satellite dishes. Set against a mesmerising urban grid of concrete and brick, lost in plain sight, it proves that where there's muck, there's brass. ● Jan-Carlos Kucharek

Hammad Haider
Manshiyet Nasser
(Garbage City), Cairo.
November 2022
 Samsung S10 phone

Hammad Haider was winner of the RIBA Photo Festival 2023 Photography contest. See this and shortlisted entries at [architecture.com](https://www.architecture.com)

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Culture
Leader

'In seeking shelter, or embarking on a refit, we change the raw nature of the ruin, and smooth those jagged edges'



Rough cut

Eleanor Young on her uncomfortable relationship with ruins and suppressing the urge for inhabitation

Ruins have a jagged edge for me. The pricked fingers from picking aside brambles and barbed wire on the scramble in, pocked concrete expanses, the scrapes of clambering through broken boards, skirting dark slurry puddles and rusty machinery.

I trespassed once or twice to a nearby abandoned farm building as a child, the fear of the scurrying unknown and of a red-faced, shouting farmer far outweighing the more obvious dangers. It was my kind of wild. My imagination and a hundred stories told me that it was also a refuge. Here on a pallet and some straw you could open your back pack and unfold a thin blanket, arrange your torch on a ledge and savour a small square of chocolate. I would map it out. Inhabit it.

I still do.

I squeeze through the protected, low, double entrance of a riverside pillbox – a remnant of the strategic stop lines built in the Second World War across southern England to resist invasion. Its heavy walls are punctured by embrasures. I peer out at the tiny framed landscapes that luckily escaped the fate of ground combat. The low-level whiff of urine and scattered drinks cans spells out what it is used for now. And I think of hiding here with a thermos in a storm, or clearing it out and dragging in old mattresses to make a den. There might even be cushions eventually.

It is a strange tension between domesticising a space and appreciating it for what it is. In seeking shelter, or embarking on a refit, we change the raw nature of the ruin, we inevitably smooth those jagged edges. Thinker, teacher and writer Robert Harbison travelled to folk museums and found the fabric of recovered, rebuilt buildings at odds with an appreciation of age. 'The slippage of its stones was the building's antiquity, that has been taken away,' he wrote in his book *Ruins*

and Fragments. He – and the Tomb Raider game – were more taken with the wilderness crawling over the ancient temple of Ta Prohm in Cambodia than the other more archaeologically tidied up and protected temples of Angkor Wat.

I want to draw in links with a series of houses and buildings that build with the ruins of old dwellings: Witherford Watson Mann's Stirling Prize winning Astley Castle, the Corten planes of Carmody Groarke's Studio in a Ruin and most recently the winner of the RIAS Doolan Prize, and RIBA House of the Year longlisted Cuddymoss in Ayreshire, by Ann Nisbet Studio. Brilliant, characterful spaces. But they are rebuilt reminders at best.

Ruins have to stay ruined, with all their jagged edges and certainly no cushions, to maintain a sense of danger and their wildness. ●

See Will Wiles on fishtank ruins on page 61



Pillbox by the River Frome in Somerset.

ONLY ON RIBAJ.COM

'With her fluid sexuality, her gender and her race, she constituted the essential modern figure'

Review of Amaza Lee Meredith book: ribaj.com/amaza-lee-meredith

Architect Arthur Timothy has filled the blank canvas his son gave him one Christmas, switching career to become a globally-recognised artist within six years

Words: Pamela Buxton Portrait: Isabella Timothy

A change of scene



Below left Arthur Timothy at New York's Art Fair 2023.

'He's aware he's changed my life,' says Arthur Timothy of the time his son Duval, himself an artist and musician, gave him a stretched blank canvas as a Christmas present, hoping he'd use it.

That was in 2017, when Timothy was running a small architecture and design practice in London with his wife Erica, and sketching and painting as a hobby at weekends. Now he is fully focused on art, having completed an 'accidental' transition from architect to artist precipitated by the Christmas canvas. It's been quite a ride – he's had sell-out solo shows in London and Accra in Ghana, and has exhibited in art fairs all over the world. When I met him earlier this month, he had just returned from exhibiting at New York's The Armory Show art fair followed by an ongoing group show in Accra on emerging contemporary artists from across Africa and the diaspora.

'This is a really nice bonus for me at this stage in my life,' he says, adding that a lot of the people he studied architecture with have now retired.

Although clearly delighted with this career change in his sixties, he stresses that it wasn't born out of disillusionment with architecture. 'I don't want to sound down on architecture. It's great when you're doing exciting work,' he says.

Timothy studied architecture at the University of Sheffield and had a positive experience working for big commercial practices including Owen Luder Partnership, Michael Aukett Associates and Michael Twigg Brown & Partner, where he worked on Hay's Galleria at London Bridge, before setting up as Timothy Associates in 1986.

As such, he did experience the frustrations familiar to many small practices of managing cash flow and trying to break into new sectors without previous experience. He built up a track record in residential work as well as some hotel, health centre and mixed use projects, but would also have loved to have designed civic and cultural projects such as art galleries.

Timothy was also the inaugural chair of the Stephen Lawrence Trust, set up following the teenager's racist murder in Eltham, south-east London in 1993. His involvement was deeply personal. Stephen was interested in architecture and had done work experience at Timothy's practice. Also, as a parent of three children himself living in south-east London at the time, Stephen's murder hit home with Timothy particularly hard. He recalls how there was surprise at the time that a black boy would aspire to be an architect, and does wonder what sort of experience Stephen would have gone on to have in the profession. In his own time as an architect, Timothy himself had encountered his share of surprise from developers that a person of colour was an architect, and experienced their awkwardness in dealing with him.

Meeting him at his splendidly-restored Georgian townhouse and studio in Bath, it is clear that Timothy is relishing his career change. Ever modest, he feels 'incredibly lucky' to have had such 'amazing' success so soon in his time as an artist, especially since his career change was unplanned. He also points to the serendipity of his emergence as an artist at a time when art institutions are becoming more interested in representations of black work.



RONCHINI GALLERY



Above Party Frocks, 2019.

Below After the Rains, 2020.

Looking at the vibrant and compelling paintings that adorn his studio and home, it's clear there is a lot more to it than luck. Inspired by a cache of family photos found in a trunk of his late father, his paintings celebrate family and friends from times past, the small black and white images transformed into a feast of pattern and colour. They are also homages to Ghana, where Timothy was born but left as a baby, and to the landscapes of Sierra Leone, where he grew up until being sent to boarding school in England at nine years old.

Such personal work has been cathartic for Timothy, who spent several months walking past that first, daunting blank canvas on its easel before plucking up the courage to tackle it.

'I think probably I doubted myself. It took me a long time to get started,' he says.

He started with Party Frocks, a painting of his seamstress mother Adeline with three friends, each resplendent in a richly patterned dress and high heels against a pink-orange background, clearly enjoying a social occasion. While he could remember the colours of his mother's dress, the other vivid colours are his imagination. The second is of his parents, his father Bankole looking dapper and nonchalant, his mother in a boldly patterned skirt, against a vivid turquoise background. Both oil paintings were accepted into the 2019 Royal Academy Summer Show, kickstarting a cascade of interest in his work that has kept on growing. A debut exhibition in London at The Ronchini Gallery in 2020 was followed by exhibitions at Gallery 1957 in Accra.

ERICA TIMOTHY / GALLERY 1957

All the work was sold in both. Another exhibition for Gallery 1957 in London focused on the landscapes of Sierra Leone, and he has exhibited online with the Pippy Houldsworth Gallery.

Further emboldened by his work being acquired for such permanent collections as the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, he realised that he could ‘have a go’ at pursuing painting as his main career and hasn’t looked back.

Timothy has found the process of painting such personal subject matter enjoyable and ‘kind of comforting’. It’s also been a way of exploring his family background, in particular the experience of his parents in Ghana. His journalist father was deported after being critical in print of Kwame Nkrumah, the first leader of Ghana after independence, leading to the family’s move to Sierra Leone, where his father was from. Working on paintings of his late older brother Desmond, the subject of his recent New York exhibition, helped him come to terms with the pain of his loss. Other family members depicted include Timothy’s grandmother, his aunt, and the artist himself. Having got things ‘out of his system’ through the painting process, he feels able to let the paintings go if they are sold. The only exceptions are the first two, which have pride of place in Timothy and his wife Erica’s home – despite potential buyers at the RA Summer Show, they weren’t for sale.

He has recently begun to leave the trunks of photos behind and started exploring new subjects. He’s interested in how representations of black



Left Lace & Tergal, 2023, a portrait of the artist (right) with his brother Desmond (left).



Above Alle Porte Coi Sassi (At the Doors With Stones), 2023.

people prominent in Renaissance society, such as a Medici duke in Florence, have been marginalised in some Italian galleries. He’s responded to this in two recent paintings depicting African figures in Florentine settings. He’d also like to paint family and friends from life, starting with Erica – though she doubts she’ll be able to sit still long enough.

Timothy is also thinking of experimenting with other painting techniques. So far he has worked in oils on canvas or linen. He cites the work of Velasquez as a particular inspiration, as well as Caravaggio, Freud and Bacon, among many. More contemporary references include British-born West Indian artist Hurvin Anderson, and Claudette Johnson, as well as Ghanaian artists Gideon Appah, Amoako Boafo and Kwesi Botchway, and Derek Fordjour, an American artist of Ghanaian heritage, who is something of a mentor.

He feels more at home in the world of art than architecture, and recalls his uncomfortable memories of the RIBA, which didn’t feel very welcoming. ‘I love the people I meet in the art world. It feels like a real community,’ he says.

Asked what advice he would give to other architects thinking of a similar career shift, he advocates making time to produce a body of work first before trying to generate interest from galleries. ‘It’s definitely worth a try,’ he says.

Does he miss architecture? While Timothy definitely doesn’t rule out working on architectural projects for himself or his family, he is enjoying having less stress, more agency over what he does, and a better living, in his new life as an artist.

‘I think my heart is now in the art because I’m really in control when I’m doing art. I enjoy it more because I don’t have the frustrations I had when I was an architect, of constantly dealing with local authorities and planners and developers,’ he says, adding that he appreciates having time as an artist to create his own vision, without compromise.

‘Architecture is still a part of me. I just feel I have to keep going on with my art.’ ●

Follow Arthur Timothy’s work on Instagram



Pet shop boy

New fishtank owner Will Wiles scours the market for some subsea architectural ruins

It’s a power move to give someone a pet as a surprise. But this is what happened to us last Easter, when my niece sprang two small golden fish on us. Swimmy and Dave, as my daughter named them, came with a 10-litre tank, a bag of gravel, a pot of food and assorted starter equipment. But once they were set up in our dining room, they looked a little adrift in their clean glass box. What they needed was something in there with them, to give their rather bleak environment some interest and a bit of privacy. And it would give us, the looming monsters outside the tank, more to look at. I set off on a minor architectural adventure mission.

Fish tank ornaments fall into a few basic categories. There are a lot of sunken ships, as might be expected. The Titanic features a little heavily, which feels faintly macabre, and casts a bit of a pall over the more generic vessels. Mildly disquieted, I scrolled past those, and the rockeries and grottoes that are another category. I wanted a building: a structure with spaces and apertures and that the fish could inhabit and explore. The term that gets used in the aquarium ornament literature is “swim-through openings”. Their favourite spot in the tank was the only place that had any kind of structure at all, right underneath the filter. This suggested to me that they wanted overhangs and enclosure. And while you could get those features from the resin rock features, why would you? They obviously craved architecture.

What I discovered is that the fish-tank developer has limited architectural options. Film and TV tie-ins are popular, such as AT-ATs from Star Wars and the Tardis from Dr Who – but this is an area dominated by the cartoon Spongebob Squarepants, who lives in a pineapple under the sea, as everyone knows. Beyond those options, there is a Gothic landscape of castles and ruins.

Our idea of what a castle should look like is pretty plastic. There’s an established fantasy aesthetic, which has authentic medieval precedents but mostly comes through the hands of eager 19th-century interpretations such as Eugène Viollet-le-Duc’s Chateau de Pierrefonds, and King Ludwig of Bavaria’s wild folly



Neuschwanstein. It has been refined on film by Disney, Hogwarts and Rivendell. This aesthetic is at the fore, with a lot of East Asian options as well, and some craggy Bamburgh-style strongholds.

You can get your castles ruined and unruined, although the influence of the Gothic gives even the unruined a foretaste of the ruined. Lastly, there is a whole demolition industry of ruins, mostly classical, but with some Angkor Wat: Colosseums, broken stairs, tumbled temples, fragments of colonnade. This was where I made my selection: a tastefully dilapidated two-storey arched tower in an aquatic style we might call Cod Roman.

But why do ruins predominate in the fish tank? In a way it makes sense – these buildings are underwater, obviously they’re disused. Indeed, those that don’t look ruined don’t make sense. One has a resin waterfall running through it, how is that supposed to work? This is not the place to look for realism, of course. Is the whole point of having these living creatures in your home to have a glimpse of the natural world, however artificially contrived? That glimpse implies a drowned world, without us. This is the peace of the seabed. What fish tank ruins brought to mind was the Grand Tour, and privileged 18th-century Englishmen having melancholy reflections on the passing of time and the nature of history while gazing upon the shepherds in the remains of the forum. Except I found the experience rather jolly, and the fish love the tower. ●

Will Wiles is an author. Read him online and here every other month

Left Why are fish tanks full of ruined buildings?

UNDERWATER UPDATE Obviously there’s not a lot of contemporary architecture for the aquarium, at least not in the mass-produced stuff. Some of the more stylised and abstracted natural structures edge in that direction. I wonder if there’s a missed opportunity here. Arches, ‘swim-through openings’, overhangs, perhaps a suggestion of ruin: this is obviously a job for the postmodernists. Where is the aquarium edition of Charles Moore’s Piazza d’Italia?

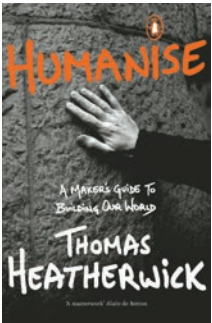
Marketing vs memoir

Hugh Pearman reviews *Humanise* and *First Quarter* – two new publications by very different designers – and plumps for the personal over the polemical

One of these books is by a noted designer who does buildings and one is by a noted architect. The first, ‘*Humanise*’ by Thomas Heatherwick, is nearly 500 pages long and is a hugely successful, massively publicised marketing exercise for himself and his studio. The second, ‘*First Quarter*’ by John Tuomey of RIBA Royal Gold Medallists O’Donnell & Tuomey fame, is 174 pages long and is a reflective autobiography. It ends just at the moment when he and his wife and partner Sheila set up their independent practice in Dublin in 1991. No publicity onslaught for that one.

For all its length the Heatherwick book, presented as a manifesto diatribe against ‘boring’ (meaning mostly though not exclusively glassy corporate-modernist) buildings, is a quick, flick-through read: the fonts are large, the lines widely spaced, and the whole thing is highly graphic. In fact the book is more images (smudgy monochrome ones on absorbent paper, often with text run over them) than words.

Those words are written almost childishly – Heatherwick’s public image has always had a naïve, childlike quality – though towards the end he, or his collaborator and presumed ghost-writer Will Storr, start to use more grown-up language.



‘*Humanise*: a maker’s guide to building our world’
Thomas Heatherwick,
Penguin Books, £16.

Left Thomas Heatherwick holds up Antoni Gaudi’s Casa Milà as an antidote to the ‘blandemic’ of boring architecture, in a spread from ‘*Humanise*’.

Right Heatherwick Studio’s ‘Little Island’ – a public park on piles in the Hudson River complete in 2021 – provides a fantastical refuge from the bustle of Manhattan.

The intent is clear enough. Given its subject matter the book itself cannot be ‘boring’, hence its restless, jumbled-up design. This is very much Heatherwick’s more-is-more aesthetic. He adores complexity and things that bristle and move, abhors smoothness, repetition and consistency.

The Tuomey book is modest in comparison. There are a few of his sketches – tiny spidery line drawings, almost vignettes – dotted through its pages, but it is all about the words, the story. It is beautifully written, in plain English. Not a hint of the ‘archibollocks’ that Heatherwick takes a fully-justified dig at in his considerably less literary book. Short though Tuomey’s is, each lucid and often witty page holds and repays your interest and attention, and you find yourself at moments tracking back just for the pleasure of reading a passage again.

O’Donnell & Tuomey’s buildings would probably also score quite well on Heatherwick’s ‘Boringometer’, a software program developed in his studio to assess building designs. In fact, the Royal Gold Medallists’ buildings might at times seem almost as wilfully complex as Heatherwick’s, for all that they come from wildly different aesthetic and intellectual directions.



DENNIS GILBERT

But Tuomey’s book skips past his buildings. It’s about growing up in rural Ireland with a site engineer father whose work meant that the family was constantly moving house. It’s about coming-of-age, first snogs, student protest and campaigning, breaking free from the grip of the Church, escaping to London, working for Jim Stirling at the time of the Stuttgart gallery win, and then returning home at a time when Ireland – and especially Dublin – was emerging from a long economic sleep, with new young talents on hand to seize opportunities such as the then-threatened Temple Bar district.

Heatherwick talks a bit about his youth too, though nothing very personal as Tuomey does. The young Thomas used to visit the old Design Centre in the Haymarket and laments its passing. As a design student in 1989 he found a book on Gaudi and was instantly captivated. ‘If buildings could look like this,’ he reasoned, ‘what else could they look like?’ Well, how about a forest of concrete planters on stalks stuck in a river?

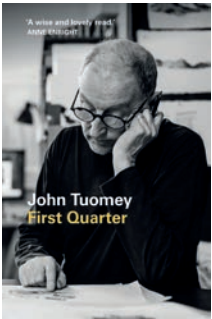
Most of the book is given over to modernism-bashing and as always with such things, there has to be a hate figure. For Heatherwick it is Le Corbusier, who he blames for today’s boring buildings despite the fact that he personally admires, for instance, the very singular Ronchamp. He tries to suggest that the vigorously-modelled, highly sculptural Unité d’habitation in Marseilles is boring. Really?

As to what modernism IS, exactly, a century after Corb’s ‘Vers Une Architecture’, he’s not clear – except that it’s nearly always boring, too

Above right
John Tuomey.

Above left O’Donnell & Tuomey’s Lyric Theatre in Belfast (2011) was built to a tight budget, with its function expressed in the form and materials selected and crafted to weather well with age.

‘*First Quarter*’
John Tuomey,
Lilliput Press, £13



AL HIGGINS

smooth, too flat, too rectilinear (Tom loves curvy, lumpy things). He claims to see no real difference between postmodernism and Brutalism. Again: really? He also has a bit of a go at Mies van der Rohe which is closer to the mark re corporate modernism, but strangely he scarcely mentions Gropius’ Bauhaus (for other modernist-bashers, Gropius is practically the Antichrist). Perhaps this is because the Bauhaus was both craft-based and interesting.

Apropos of which, nobody has so far bashed modernists so well as Tom Wolfe in his 1982 ‘From Bauhaus to Our House’ and everyone so minded since has just gone over the same ground with much less style. Heatherwick brings nothing original here. He does not go so far as the ultra-Trad, who absurdly describe all styles other than theirs as ‘ugly’ and only theirs as ‘beautiful’. Hence Heatherwick’s ‘boring’. His own output is certainly interesting in its attention-seeking way but beauty is not really his thing.

Frank Gehry pre-summarised all this in 2014: ‘Ninety-eight per cent of everything that is built today is pure shit. There’s no sense of design, no respect for humanity or for anything else.’ Though as architecture-related insults go I prefer John Tuomey’s account of a bloke in a late 1970s London Irish bar who tried to get off with his girlfriend (Sheila). According to her, he took one look at long-haired, bespectacled John and said: ‘You’ll never get anywhere with that hypothetical-looking fucker.’ Read the Tuomey book, I’d advise. It’s wise, tender and – human. ●

Buy at the RIBA Bookshop: ribabooks.com

‘Architecture shapes communities and influences lives, so it essential that it is driven by our deepest hopes and values’



Start with why

His mother’s advice directs Muiyiwa Oki to the right starting point to build confidence in your values, and so succeed in your aims

Over the last few months as the RIBA president, representing the profession at formal events, engaging with the media, and meeting politicians and decision makers, I’ve met three key questions: What’s the best advice you’ve ever received? How will you deliver on your priorities? And why did you decide to do this thing, the RIBA presidency?

These questions, though seemingly casual, have prompted me to reflect on how I got here and how I will use this important platform to deliver the meaningful change we need in our profession. I look to those who have inspired me and ask myself: what are the essential ingredients that will ensure our collective progress and success?

Two heads

Among all the valued advice from kind-hearted and experienced people, my mother’s words still echo: ‘Do they have two heads?’, she asked.

For me this contains a powerful message. In moments of self-doubt, it reminds me that those forging meaningful change don’t possess some supernatural advantage. This isn’t about having two heads – it’s about having confidence in ones’ mission and values. If we are to achieve our potential, every architect must operate with this kind of self-assuredness and resilience.

The first question is ‘why’

In his popular Ted Talk, author Simon Sinek shows his audience why they need to ‘Start with Why’ – a concept that goes beyond selling widgets



Left Start with why, says Simon Sinek.

to eager consumers. Although initially sceptical, I’ve found that asking why we are undertaking a project or activity is a crucial step that is often missed before the ‘what’ and the ‘how’. In a world where work often feels routine, taking the time to understand the why of each day, project or programme becomes crucial. This introspection, aligning our actions with a deeper purpose, can be key to unlocking our creativity and satisfaction and, ultimately, producing better work.

Understanding why we do what we do is key to our individual and collective success. If, as architects, we are motivated by a shared purpose, we will be more productive together – and more fulfilled in our personal professional journeys.

From consumers to citizens

A shift in perspective is needed, from a culture that defines individuals as consumers to one that embraces our roles as citizens. In his book ‘Citizens’, former advertising executive Jon Alexander highlights the need to move beyond a narrow focus on consumption and recognise our roles as contributors to a societal framework.

This shift in mindset towards collective action and shared responsibility aligns with my commitment for the RIBA to be a guide for the profession’s development and its social impact.

Finding the why behind our work as architects is not just a philosophical issue, but a practical necessity for success. As architects, what we do extends beyond the built environment; it shapes communities and influences lives, so it essential that it is driven by our deepest hopes and values.

By embracing wisdom, working with purpose and determination, and adopting a citizen-centric mindset, we can collectively propel architecture towards a future defined by impact, purpose, and economic success. ●

YASMEEN LARI RECEIVES THE ROYAL GOLD MEDAL
This month, the RIBA will announce the recipient of the Royal Gold Medal 2024, one of the world's highest honours for architecture. Last year's medal was awarded to Yasmeen Lari, Pakistan's first female architect and a committed conservationist and humanitarian.

Teacher, writer and designer – intriguing thinker who had a profound influence on generations of students



IZABELA WIECZOREK

Jonathan Hill 1958 – 2023

In 1994, shortly before starting at the Bartlett School of Architecture, I picked up a brochure describing the postgraduate architectural studios on offer. The text for Unit 12 was brief and to the point. There were no digressions into chaos theory or bird migration patterns or whatever else was fashionable. But neither were the words reductive or simplistic. They were pithy but playful, clear-eyed but canny, the world of architecture deconstructed momentarily allowing new ideas to emerge.

They were written by Jonathan Hill. I joined the unit that he led – with various co-teachers – for over 30 years. He was a thoughtful, generous and tireless critic. His method was tangential and oblique: he teased out ideas, probed alternatives and made enigmatic, elliptical statements. He wore his learning lightly and never used clichés. Unlike some theoretically inclined tutors, Jonathan really loved architecture, often surprising and unlikely kinds of architecture. His tastes and views were always his own, never normative and always provocative and intriguing.

Jonathan’s unit was a special space; it nursed an interest in the user and the occupation of architecture and the political circumstances in which buildings were made. Later, it embraced the baroque, the decorative and even post modernism, but always with that enquiring, quizzical spirit that was so much a part of Jonathan’s character. ‘Architecture can be made from anything,’ he used to say, and projects in the studio proposed such unlikely materials as hot water bottles, feathers, cotton fields and steam. But he also meant it less literally, as a way to open the subject and the profession to new ways of thinking.

Jonathan was a designer as well as a writer and teacher. He pioneered the idea that design was itself a form of research and he set up and

directed the Bartlett’s Architectural Design MPhil/PhD programme. His books contained research and scholarship – but were speculative and propositional too. The Illegal Architect (1998) included a series of delicate and beautiful drawings describing intriguing spaces and enigmatic forms. Weather Architecture (2012) moved between understandings of buildings in relation to natural forces. Both were also a critique of the profession, the narrowness of its technical discourse and the hidden ideologies in its thinking.

If there was a thread that ran through Jonathan’s work, it was a fascination with what happens to buildings after they have been built. The occupation of architecture, the effects of time and weather, the actions of people and institutions were all fundamental to his understanding. It was a position alert to both the political and poetic aspects of architecture. It rejected narrow ideas of functionality and treated buildings as cultural objects to be used, adapted, read and re-read.

After I left The Bartlett, I would meet Jonathan at exhibitions and talks and social events. He was ageless and ever present: fresh-faced, unchanging, always himself. His preternatural youthfulness was part of his charm. While everything moved on, Jonathan was always Jonathan – interested, intrigued, ready for a chat. Endearingly he liked gossip and he kept up with a lot of people.

He leaves an impressive body of work and generations of graduates whose approach to architecture has been profoundly and positively shaped by his teaching. Jonathan was a gentle soul with a sharp mind whose deceptively simple words revealed great depths of thinking. He is a huge loss and I offer my sincerest condolences to his family and his wife, Izabela Wieczorek. ●

Charles Holland leads Charles Holland Architects and is professor of architecture at UCA Canterbury

IN MEMORIAM

John Lloyd
ELECTED 1951, SUNDERLAND

Ann Elizabeth Stocker
ELECTED 1956, HASTINGS

Anthony Charles Watts
ELECTED 1959, PINNER

Ann Catherine Thomas
ELECTED 1970, WELLS

John Gregory Wilson
ELECTED 1970, WARRINGTON

Juan Widana Dharmasena
ELECTED 1970, BROMLEY

Raghunath Rajkumar
ELECTED 1972, LONDON

Charles Howard Hunt
ELECTED 1972, LISKEARD

John Joseph Seymour Watts FRIBA
ELECTED 1974, BRIGHTON

Frank David Lloyd
ELECTED 1976, ST ALBANS

Gareth John Scourfield
ELECTED 1980, LAUGHARNE

Carolyn Jepps
ELECTED 1981, BOLTON

Alan George Arnold Chapman
ELECTED 1989, MILTON KEYNES

Sheila McCusker
ELECTED 1992, LONDON

Paul James Shepherd
ELECTED 2007, BIRMINGHAM

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



New House
Hampstead, London, 1939

New House in Hampstead, completed in 1939, was one of the last few realised projects of the partnership Samuel & Harding, and one of those that marked a departure from the modernist ‘white box’ to propose a contemporary take on the use of traditional materials such as brickwork. Contrasting with the simplicity of the north elevation, whose main characteristic is the glass brick wall that gives both light and privacy to the living room, the south facade has ample fenestration, opening up the house to the garden which can be reached via a staircase

from the first-floor balcony.
Godfrey Samuel (1904-1982) and Val Harding (1905-1940), both previously members of Tecton, had been in partnership since 1936. When war broke out in September 1939 Samuel was given a job at the War Office while Harding was soon in active service; sent to the front, he was killed in action in May 1940. Samuel, who had by then closed the practice, was deeply affected by the death of his partner. After the war he became Secretary of the Royal Fine Art Commission. ●
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Many thanks for a riveting presentation on acoustics.
It's an area I advise in as an architect,
so completely relevant and of interest.

Best CPD this year!



SonaSpray fcx acoustic ceiling spray in 22 Bishopsgate.
DesignLSM & Andrew Meredith Photography.

detailing of acoustic finishes CPD

This ‘Detailing of acoustic finishes & things to be aware of’ CPD covers:

- Facts & myths – reverberation, frequencies & Class A absorption.
- Introduction to SonaSpray and Oscar Elite - from textured acoustic sprays to the smoothest acoustic plaster available.
- A short demonstration of spaces with and without acoustic treatment.
- Things to be aware of with all acoustic finishes.
- Detailing without pitfalls for a quality & long-lasting finish.

Book your acoustics CPD presentation now for 2024.



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