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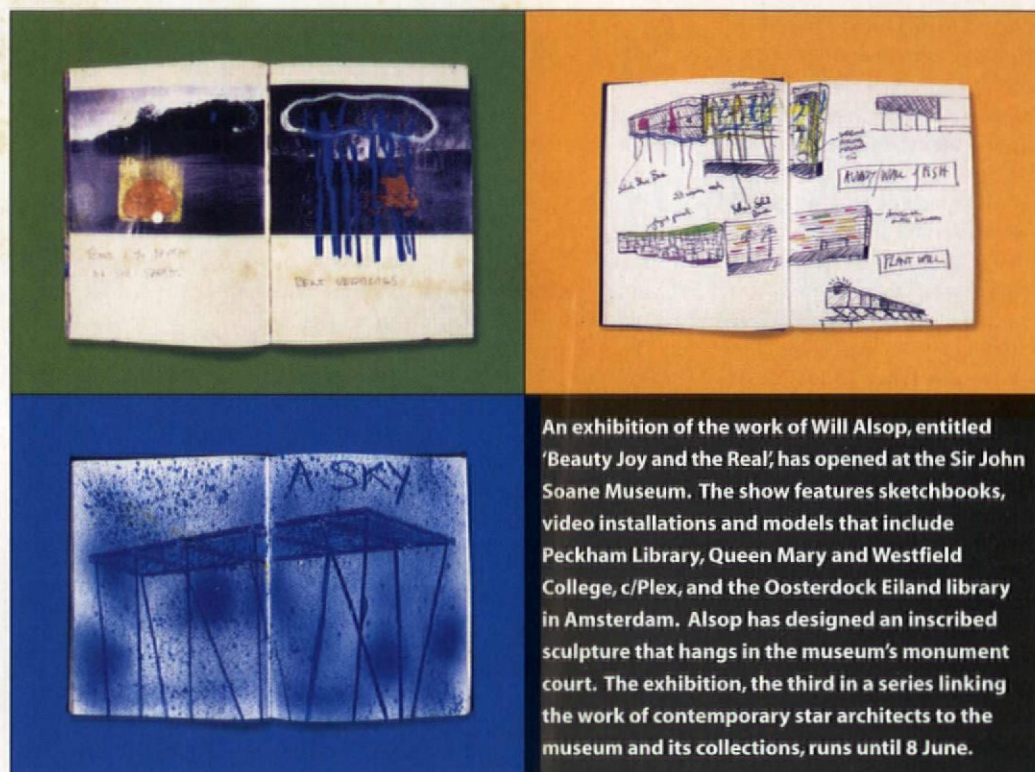
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An exhibition of the work of Will Alsop, entitled 'Beauty Joy and the Real', has opened at the Sir John Soane Museum. The show features sketchbooks, video installations and models that include Peckham Library, Queen Mary and Westfield College, c/Plex, and the Oosterdock Eiland library in Amsterdam. Alsop has designed an inscribed sculpture that hangs in the museum's monument court. The exhibition, the third in a series linking the work of contemporary star architects to the museum and its collections, runs until 8 June.

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Tolbooth Arts Centre in Stirling  
Photograph by Allan Forbes

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**'What we haven't done yet is to communicate the building effectively to people. The computer images are too slick; we build with love and this doesn't show, or not yet.'**

Renzo Piano on his London Bridge Tower.  
*Guardian*, 29.3.02

**'The power of Mammon created a beautiful city like Siena. This power can be put to good civic use, not just to make developers rich.'**

Renzo Piano, *Guardian*, 29.3.02

## aj news

### RIBA FLAGS AT HALF MAST

The RIBA is to invite visitors and staff to its Portland Place HQ next Tuesday to take part in a two-minute silence in honour of the late Queen Mother. The institute will also be flying its Union flag at half mast until the day after the funeral next week. The Georgian Group, meanwhile, joined other charities of which the Queen Mother was patron in expressing 'deep sorrow and sense of loss at her death'.

### NEW CABE COMMISSIONERS

The DCMS has appointed two new CABE commissioners, Irena Bauman, director of Bauman Lyons Architects and Robin Nicholson, senior director of Edward Cullinan Architects.

### PIANO ON THE BLOCK

Renzo Piano is planning a 'groundscraper' for a site behind Centre Point in central London. The 38m high eight- to 10-storey block will replace a Ministry of Defence building on a 7,000m<sup>2</sup> site at the intersection of Neal Street and Shaftesbury Avenue. The mixed-use scheme for developer Stanhope will include offices, housing and a public piazza at the centre.

### HUMANITARIAN DESIGNS

Charity Architecture for Humanity is asking entrants to design a fully equipped mobile medical unit and HIV/AIDS treatment centre for use in Africa in its 2002 international architecture competition. A full brief will be available from 1 May at [www.architectureforhumanity.org](http://www.architectureforhumanity.org)

## Sellar in 'fight to win' tower vow

London Bridge Tower developer Irvine Sellar has put aside cash to fight a public inquiry if secretary of state Stephen Byers decides to call in Renzo Piano's skyscraper scheme.

Sellar told the AJ he was financially prepared for a costly legal battle and would not abandon the £350 million project. 'That's our job as developers, to speculate with a view to winning,' he said.

An inquiry into the 66-storey 'Shard of Glass' was looking likely as the AJ went to press, after Byers said he needed longer to consider the scheme. The secretary of state directed Southwark not to grant planning permission for the 306m tower last Wednesday, by issuing an article 14 holding directive.

If there is a call in, Sellar would need a substantial war chest since he could face legal fees running into millions. During last autumn's inquiry into the KPF-designed Heron Tower the developer Heron is believed to have spent around £4 million defending its scheme. A decision on the KPF scheme is due in the summer. A spokesperson for the DTLR denied that Byers' decision to delay was in any way connected to the Heron Tower inquiry.

Sellar also refuted suggestions that he planned to make a quick profit by selling on the land with a planning permission attached. 'It is totally without foundation,' he said. 'I wouldn't consider doing that. We are committed to build it.'

And he added he had entirely expected Byers to take more time to reach his decision. 'I don't think

he's stalling. The application will need a lot of consideration. There is a lot of information to digest because Southwark was so thorough.' And he added: 'I think he's had a lot to do recently.'

If it is ever built, the London Bridge Tower would be Europe's tallest. Sited above London Bridge Station, the mixed-use scheme will include residential and office space, a hotel and 10 storeys for use by the public. Southwark's planning committee said it was minded to approve the scheme on March 11. But English Heritage has been pushing for a call in on the grounds that the skyscraper will have a 'major detrimental impact' on the Tower of London and would harm protected views of St Paul's Cathedral.

London mayor Ken Livingstone last week reiterated his support for the tower and criticised the government's intervention. Livingstone has previously said that where he and the local authority agree, the government should not intervene. He said the tower encapsulated his vision for development in terms of both design quality and location, and that he would be pushing Southwark for legal guarantees that Piano's scheme will be the one completed.

Broadway Malayan director Peter Crossley, whose practice is working with Renzo Piano on the London Bridge Tower, said he believed Sellar would see the project through. 'This is one man's chance to take his place in history,' he said. +

Zoë Blackler



Thomas Heatherwick Studio has been commissioned by the Buddhist Shingon-Shu sect to design this temple in Kagoshima, southern Japan. The dramatic hillside site has views over Kagoshima and across the sea to the active Sakurajima volcano in the east. The temple is 'reminiscent of the folds in fabric' and will be constructed with a steel frame designed to withstand seismic and typhoon conditions. The external envelope will be covered in laminated ply and finished in a clear ceramic. The project is due for completion in 2005.

**For the best jobs in architecture turn to page 50 or visit [www.careersinconstruction.com](http://www.careersinconstruction.com)**



**'Who wants superstores and bland housing developments when you can have a near-death experience, candy floss and a snog?'**

Iain Aitch on the Grade II listing of Margate's Dreamland rollercoaster. *Guardian*, 26.3.02

**'Concrete is the Shakespeare of building materials, capable of giving form to every aspect of human nature, from the noble to the sordid.'**

Rowan Moore on the RIBA's 'Hardcore!' show. *Evening Standard*, 27.3.02

**'The RIBA is now more interested in selling coffee than celebrating architecture.'**

Rowan Moore. *Evening Standard*, 27.3.02

FOR A DAILY NEWS FEED ON THE LATEST ARCHITECTURAL STORIES GO TO [AJPLUS.CO.UK](http://AJPLUS.CO.UK)

## Essex snubs AHMM over Great Notley extension

Essex County Council has snubbed Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects by ignoring the practice's bid to extend its own government exemplar and multi-award-winning Great Notley School project and giving it to another architect.

AHMM said 'internal machinations' at the council 'that would be Machiavellian if they weren't so dull' are to blame – and it is amazed that the council even commissioned another architect to write a briefing document on its success and the need for a 'sensitive' extension.

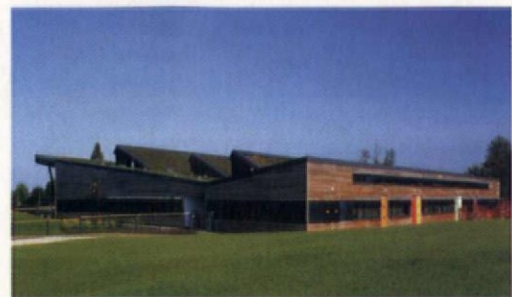
AHMM designed the school, near Braintree, to great acclaim, its low-energy principles and competitive £1.4 million cost leading to eight gongs including RIBA and Civic Trust awards and a spot on the Movement for Innovation's (M4I) list of 170 approved pathfinder schemes. M4I monitors all such projects, which put themselves forward as seeking to innovate or employ best practice in areas including working relationships.

But Essex, which already wants to extend the 1,800-pupil school, would not even shortlist AHMM for the work after interviewing the practice. Enfield-based Bryant Harvey Partnership is to take forward the project instead.

AHMM partner Simon Allford told the AJ: 'The whole thing is an example of local authorities and the crass, stupid nature of things like framework agreements. It's grotesque.'

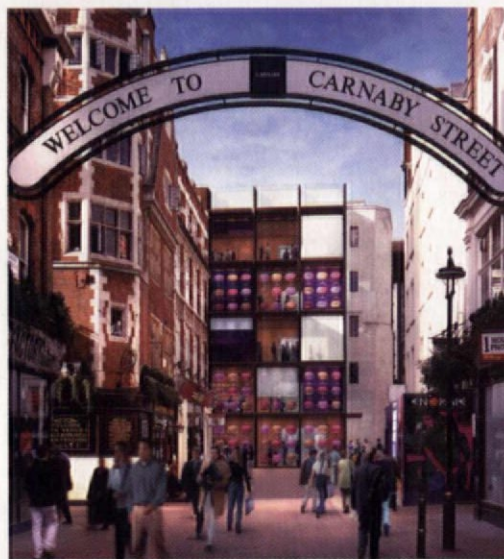
Allford attributes the problem to a change in personalities involved within the council – one team running the build, another running the extension. 'I strongly feel it is a demonstration of bad management of local government finances and procurement systems after what was by any standards a great success.'

The scheme won School Building of the Year for 2000 from the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust; achieved Millennium Product status; was shortlisted in the British Construction Industry Awards in 2000; and was held up by government



AHMM's multi-award-winning Great Notley School

4 April 2002



Lifschutz Davidson has won planning permission for an extension to Liberty's store on Great Marlborough Street in central London. The five-storey 'shop window' will sit adjacent to the original faux Tudor building and provide a new entrance on Carnaby Street. The scheme takes its cues from the existing timber-framed building, but reinterprets them in a modern idiom. The metre-deep, double-skin glass facade will house retail displays, with coloured fabric blinds on the inner and outer skins to provide a backdrop and create solar shading.

to illustrate its *Better Public Buildings* document as one of only six 'proud legacy' buildings featured. And the school figured as a further exemplar in *Schools for the future*, published by the DfEE.

Gordon Powell, who ran the initial competition at Essex but not the extension job, said he could understand AHMM's frustration at not being allowed to add to its own building, especially because of the awards and achievements.

But he said the firm had, unusually, been invited to bid along with the panel of architects the council uses for extension jobs and that CABE had been happy with the process.

'They were given the opportunity, but it just didn't happen,' he said.

Alastair Blyth, design adviser to the Design Council, which sponsored the initial competition for the school, said AHMM had no 'divine right' to win the scheme, but using the same architect 'made sense', especially since AHMM had already worked up, free of charge, two expansion studies for the building when it was built.

David Taylor

### 9 WEEKS TO GO

interbuild

9-13 June 2002,  
NEC, Birmingham, UK

An Interbuild highlight will be 50/50, an exhibition which presents the best buildings and products of the past 50 years and makes predictions for the next 50, based on interviews with a range of experts. This week, on page 8, Buro Happold engineer Ian Little explains why Foster's Willis Faber building in Ipswich gets his vote.



50 50

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### Q&A

43%

... of voters in a poll on the AJ's website said Foster's GLA headquarters is their least favourite UK building, toppling Broadway Malyan's St George's housing in Vauxhall. Respondents: 636

This week's question:  
Should there be a public inquiry over Renzo Piano's London Bridge Tower?

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# 50 50

IAN LIDDLE

Engineer, Burol Happold

## What is the best building of the past 50 years?

Foster's Willis Faber building at Ipswich. It's the landmark in glass-clad buildings. Although there were those Mies sketches, no one had ever actually used glass totally for the skin of a real building.

## What is the most significant innovation of the past 50 years?

Glass is an old material but it's the innovation of the past 50 years because of what people do with it: coatings, fritting, solar control functions. And it's partly to do with the way people think about glass – it's now quite a good material to put on the outside of buildings even if you don't want to see through it, because it tends to stay clean and neat.

## And the best building product?

Ethyl tetra fluoro ethylene foil. When it was still thought of as a greenhouse material, we pioneered its use in 1990 in the atrium roof of RHWL's Chelsea and Westminster hospital. When you use it as a triple layer intelligent pneumatic structure, as at Festo's HQ in Stuttgart, you can print it and develop a high level of control over solar gain. It has a long way to go, not so much a substitute for windows – more an alternative to sky.

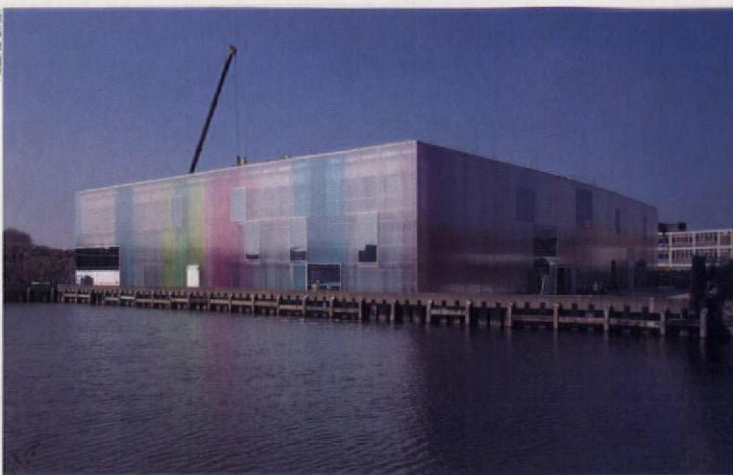
## What innovation do you expect to see in the next 50 years?

High-tech will go higher and low-tech lower and simpler. Already a lot of building processes are getting lower tech – for example recycled, lower strength concrete which means thicker sections and more mass to dampen out temperature cycles. In the other direction, glass and foil and tension structure will continue to develop. What won't change will be the fact that although people say the building and structure are responses to clients and their needs, it's really a competitive sport in which professional participants vie not to do what was done before.

*These interviews by Sutherland Lyall will form the basis of the 50/50 exhibition at Interbuild 2002.*

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HELENE BINET



The coloured facade of the Laban Centre in Deptford, south-east London, designed by Herzog & de Meuron with artist Michael Craig-Martin, is due for completion in the autumn. The appearance of the building will shift according to the time of day, weather conditions and activities inside the building. It will house a 300-seat theatre, dance studios, lecture theatre, educational facilities and a cafe.

## CABE calls for more changes to Foster's Spitalfields...

Foster and Partners latest revisions to its £250 million Spitalfields scheme in London's East End have failed to appease its critics. CABE's design review committee said it was still worried about crucial elements of the design and called for yet more changes.

The committee welcomed the removal of the controversial sloping eastern elevation (AJ 20/27.12.01). But it said the junction between the new building and the existing market was still 'unresolved' and called for further thought into how the scheme will work at ground level.

CABE also called for a further reduction in the overall size of the building in plan in order to resolve its relationship with the neighbouring market. And it added that the ultimate success of the scheme would depend on the quality of the materials and detailing. 'We urge the local authority to ensure that these are strictly controlled by planning conditions,' it said.

Meanwhile, the committee applauded HOK's vision for Masshouse as part of its masterplan for Birmingham's Eastside area. It said the removal of the existing Masshouse roadway provided an opportunity to connect Eastside to the city centre and 'remove the collar around the city centre'.

CABE said: 'We believe that the significance of the site, which sits at a crucial node between the city centre, the shopping area and the evolving Eastside masterplan, cannot be overstated; the design solution will require flair if the results hoped for are to be achieved.'

But it called for the needs of pedestrians to be put before those of vehicles, and urged a greater sensitivity in plans to formalise the landscape of the existing burial grounds. +

Zoë Blackler

## ... as it forges links with the RIBA to build for the future

CABE is to join forces with the RIBA to create Building Futures – a think tank to consider the future challenges for architecture and the built environment. The group, chaired by John Worthington of DEG, will follow a three-year programme of 'over the horizon' research and political lobbying.

The move is one of a number of initiatives and responsibilities to be adopted by CABE following an increase in its funding, effective from this month. The quango will see its annual income rise

from £1.5 million to £4.2 million – mostly from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Building Futures, which will build on the work of the RIBA's future studies group, will use its findings to influence government policy.

Russell Brown, formally a member of the future studies group, said that by forging a link with CABE, the group would benefit from direct links with policy-makers. 'CABE chief executive Jon Rouse meets regularly with government,' he said, 'so that our thinking will be going straight to government and feeding into policy.'

Work will focus on the social, economic and environmental issues, as well as the potential impact of technological advances on architecture and the architectural profession.

Membership, and funding, of the group will be divided equally between CABE and the RIBA.

## First chance to see mayor's new home during Open House

Lord Foster's GLA building is to open its doors to the public for the first time as part of the London Open House weekend this autumn.

Visitors will be able to tour the mayor's new home – due for completion in July – as part of the capital's annual live architecture exhibition on 21 and 22 September. More than 500 historic and contemporary buildings are expected to take part in the weekend event, which last year attracted more than 360,000 visitors.

Open House director Victoria Thornton said people would have the opportunity to explore many of the restricted areas within the GLA building and to vote on the success of Lord Foster's design. Thornton said that this year would see an increase in the number of contemporary buildings opening their doors. 'We have been pushing for this for a long time. We want the public to open its eyes and attitudes to contemporary architecture.'

Open House is inviting architects working in London to put forward their projects for inclusion in the programme. E-mail nspera@londonopenhouse.org or call Nicolette Spera on 020 7267 2070.

● Next month sees the launch of Junior Open House – a pilot project which aims to raise children's awareness of the built environment. A select group of schools across London will be taking part in the event between 21 and 23 May which, if successful, could become a national event.

4 April 2002



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#### RAISING THE ROOF

Acanthus Holden Architects from Pembrokeshire has won the Clay Roof Tile Council award for best refurbishment for its work at Caldey Island Monastery off the coast of Tenby, Pembrokeshire. Peter Gilbert Scott Architects also won a prize, for its work on the roof and spire at Christ Church in Chalford, Gloucestershire.

#### BLACK BOOK WINNERS

A proposal called 'Missing presumed found', involving black books left across Glasgow for residents to fill in, has won The Lighthouse/GLAS student architecture competition, Pigeon Hole City. The project – from backers who wanted to remain anonymous – clinched a £250 prize and support for further development. A further 50 black books are to be created and sent to capital cities across the world. +

#### GRANTS TO THE RESCUE

English Heritage is giving £9 million in grants to rescue and transform 53 decaying rural, seaside and urban areas, in the fourth round of EH's Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes.



Farrell says its Marsham Street project 'represents a victory for integrated urban design and architecture'

## Farrell wins Home Office cost fight

Terry Farrell and Partners' Home Office scheme is finally going ahead – but only after a 'protracted' battle over costs.

The practice has been fighting to protect the quality of its Marsham Street scheme against constant pressures to cut the budget throughout the six years of negotiations towards a PFI deal. In particular, it has struggled to retain contested plans for the public realm around the building in London's Victoria.

Project manager Bouygues last week signed a £311 million PFI deal with the Home Office, which includes £182 million construction costs.

Farrell's project director Mark Shirburne-Davies said it had been a constant battle to deliver the 'exemplary' scheme demanded by the Home Office with the money available.

The wrangles demonstrated the problem with PFI, he said – while it may produce best value, it does not necessarily produce best quality.

But he said that all parties were now happy with

the financial agreement that had been reached. 'We've got to the point where everyone is comfortable with the budgets and the scheme and a building of the appropriate quality can be delivered. It feels like a victory getting to this stage. It has been the most protracted deal-making process you could ever imagine for doing a building,' he said. But he added: 'It is the best scheme possible for the money available.'

The project – which the practice says 'represents a victory for integrated urban design and architecture' – includes an 'ambitious public arts strategy', three 'pocket parks' and a large civic space with trees and water.

Six buildings create 80,000m<sup>2</sup> of space over six storeys, with three pedestrian routes cutting across the 0.8ha site. There will be shops, restaurants, kiosks, a crèche, and 100 apartments, together with offices for the Home Office and the Prison Service.

Shirburne-Davies said it was an example of the

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practice's interest in 'placemaking' and said it would bring a 'huge lift' to the area. And he added that Terry Farrell and Partners' involvement throughout the length of the project was written into the PFI arrangement.

The project, due for completion by 2005, replaces the much-criticised Marsham Street Towers, nicknamed the 'three ugly sisters'. It brings together the entire Home Office and the Prison Service, which is currently divided between six separate sites.

Demolition of the 25-storey towers – designed by Ministry of Works architect Eric Bedford – began last week and will take more than a year to complete. Bouygues said it would be the largest demolition work taking place in London. Sir Terry Farrell has been campaigning for 10 years to have the buildings destroyed.

In 1994, the practice was commissioned by the Department of the Environment, which was housed in the towers, to prepare preliminary plans for a new building.

The Lord Chancellor's Department will take over the current Home Office headquarters building at 50 Queen Anne's Gate. Refurbishment of Sir Basil Spence's 1970s building will cost around £100 million and involve extensive modernisation of the services and interior. Details of the procurement process – which could be a PFI – will be announced in the coming months, and an architect appointed in the summer.

The Lord Chancellor's Department has been leading the way in the promotion of good design for government buildings. It has been exploring a

new model for PFI arrangements with its competition for the Manchester Civil Justice Centre, being battled out by Richard Rogers Partnership, Denton Corker Marshall and Pringle Richards Sharratt.

Zoë Blackler

## Jonathan Dimbleby to deliver RIBA's first annual lecture

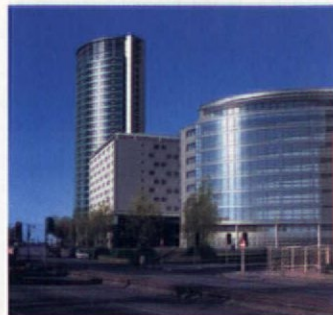
Jonathan Dimbleby is to give the RIBA's first annual lecture to an audience including MPs and others invited to raise the institute's profile.

Dimbleby will deliver the lecture – 'a polemic' – on 1 May at 6.30pm at Portland Place in the new initiative to involve 'movers and shakers' including politicians, journalists, architects and clients. The institute will also use the high-profile event to hand out its latest honorary fellowships to recipients such as Sir Neil Cossons.

RIBA chief executive Richard Hastilow said the annual lecture will be 'to a well-informed general audience with interests and involvement in the future of the built environment. We aim to address a range of key aspects – social, economic and environmental. As a lively commentator on our society, and with particular enthusiasm for design and sustainability issues, Dimbleby is well-placed to stimulate debate.'

The writer and broadcaster has written extensively on Prince Charles and is vice-president of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Some 130 tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis, priced £15 each, from the RIBA Gallery ticket line on 020 7307 3699.



**Aedas:** AHR has unveiled its design for Liverpool's tallest building (above). The 30-storey tower will house 133 one- and two-bedroom apartments with views to the Wirral and north Wales. It sits within the mixed-use Old Hall Street scheme and creates 14,200m<sup>2</sup> of office space, a 200-bed hotel and health club.

### PLANNING TO PREVENT CRIME

Llewelyn-Davies is preparing a practice guide for the use of design in crime prevention for the Home Office and the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions. Llewelyn-Davies is seeking examples of best practice where planning and design have helped in the fight against crime. Send e-mails to [b.castell@llewelyn-davies-ltd.com](mailto:b.castell@llewelyn-davies-ltd.com).

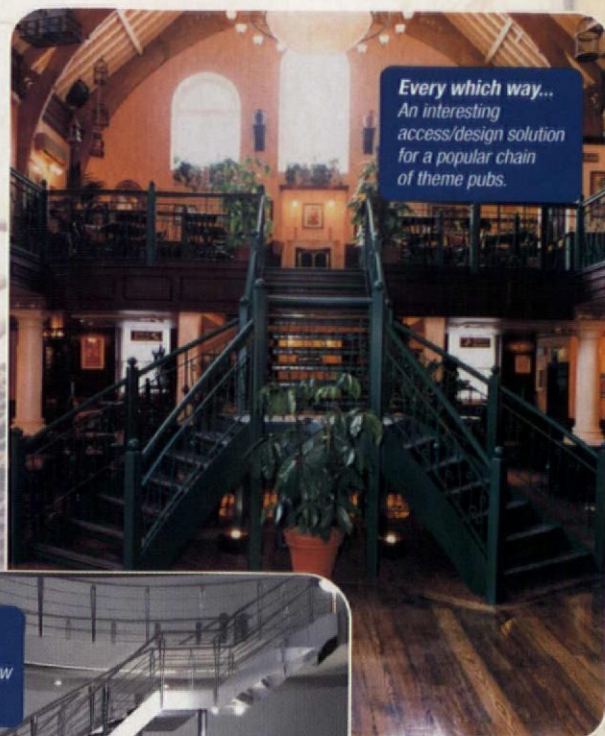


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**Rain doesn't necessarily stop play...**  
The central column of this elegant stair at Wimbledon is also the down pipe which drains the roof of the new stand.



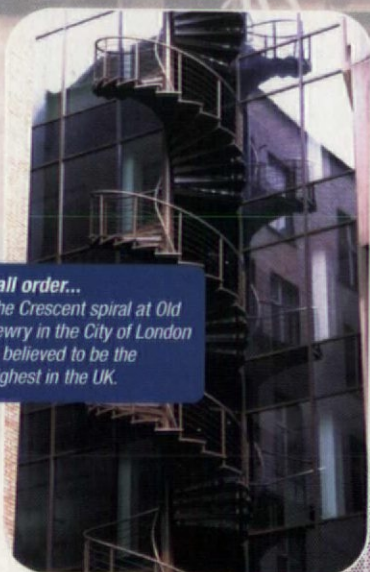
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**Seeing is believing...**  
Computer visual of a new helical stair at Jewson's new central office reception.



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The Crescent spiral at Old Jewry in the City of London is believed to be the highest in the UK.



**Not quite vertical flight!**  
This elegant helical stair at Cardiff heliport echoes Leonardo da Vinci's first drawings and thoughts on how man might ascend!



**Room on top...**  
A spectacular Crescent spiral gives access to the viewing gallery at the London Transport Museum.

## Every picture tells a storey...

So, when is a spiral stair not a spiral stair? Well, as these pictures show, a spiral stair can do many different things, from hiding a down pipe for rainwater,

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## CIC chief calls bank's online bidding process 'disgraceful'

RIAS secretary Sebastian Tombs has met with Construction Industry Council chief executive Graham Watts to discuss the 'thin end of the wedge' problem he fears over the Royal Bank of Scotland's new online bidding process (AJ 28.3.02). And Watts has declared the bank's behaviour 'absolutely disgraceful', with the potential to put client relationships back '10 years at least'.

Last week the AJ revealed how RBS, the seventh largest company in the UK and one which boasts a property portfolio worth more than £2 billion, has begun a new system by which it picks architects for work using what it calls a 'reverse auction' system.

This is when architects will take part in typically half-hour auctions where they can often see the value – though not the identities of the practices – of cheapest bids on screen and can then adapt their own in real time in a race to win the work.

Tombs met Watts last Friday to discuss the dangers of the system if they are applied more widely in the construction industry.

Watts told the AJ: 'It's absolutely disgraceful, no question about that. Obviously RBS are entitled to buy services as they want but customers will expect more. They obviously haven't heard of the clients' charter.'

Watts aims to contact the Confederation of Construction Clients to persuade it to condemn the new system, and will then deal with the Association of Consulting Engineers and the RIBA in a bid to send out a similar message.

Meanwhile, Tombs has written to RBS group chief executive Fred Goodwin to take issue with the bank's use of the method. Tombs wrote not just as a representative of the RIAS considering RBS' Scottish component to the story, but on behalf of the RIBA, whose codes of conduct he feels may be violated in the new arrangement.

'I think the RIBA should be taking up the issue,'

Tombs told the AJ. 'It encourages a process where members are almost obliged to bid in a Dutch auction. We don't think that's a good way of doing business as it appears to put the emphasis on price above quality. It runs against the whole quality agenda and if it encourages people to revise prices it also goes against codes.'

The RIBA's Principle 3.3 in its Code of Conduct says: 'A member undertakes when offering services as an independent consulting architect not to revise a fee quotation to take account of the fee quoted by another architect for the same service.'

But RBS has told Tombs that it was up to members to only bid once so they do not break that code.

Tombs concedes that there are some jobs where the process may be applicable – if there is little 'intellectual content' such as standard, rolled out fit-outs. But he felt it necessary to raise it as a 'classic' issue with Watts.

'We can see this being the thin end of the wedge and surveyors and project managers trimming off all this wasteful stuff that architects still insist on charging so much for!' said Tombs. 'There's a real risk you can see the process providing the absolute rock-bottom price, against everything

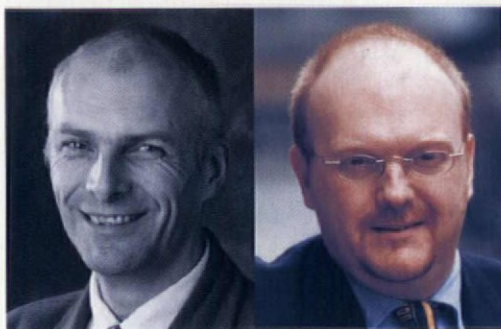
that Latham and Egan stand for.'

Tombs added that he was concerned that people would seize on the system as a new approach to 21st century IT 'when perhaps it has a great potential downside that could be quite significant'. And he is anxious that the system may be open to abuse by other companies taking up the technology, including 'stooge' practices offering bogus bids to force others down.

RBS uses the FreeMarkets software system to run the auctions, and has also used the process to buy in laptops, mobiles and computer stationery. But it used it for architectural jobs including a national contract for the first time last week, and Tombs is worried that architecture as a service is being treated in the same way as products.

David Taylor

### Architecture: like buying stationery



Top: our story last week. Left: Tombs. Right: Watts

## WHITBY CENTRE OPENS

Stanton Williams' new visitor centre for English Heritage at Whitby Abbey officially opened on Saturday. The centre sits within the shell of a 17th century building, Cholmley's House, sited alongside the medieval abbey. The opening, by the Archbishop of York, marks the completion of the £5.7 million Whitby Abbey Headland Project. ➤

## CHILD'S PLAY

Kent Architecture Centre is inviting children from a local primary school to design, make and model architectural costumes as part of Architecture Week in June. The children from Medway Primary School will design their costumes along the theme 'the way we live now', with the help of local artists and architects. The project is being funded by CABE and the Arts Council of England.

## NEW COALFIELDS FOR EP

English Partnerships has acquired two new sites for its national coalfields programme. Silverdale Colliery near Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, and Lambton Cokeworks, near Sunderland, have joined 86 other coalfield sites covered by the £385 million regeneration project.

## £20M FOR SOLAR POWER

The government is making £20 million available for the installation of solar power in homes and offices across the UK. While on a visit to Bill Dunster's BedZed scheme in Sutton, trade and industry secretary Patricia Hewitt said the cash would be available in grants to the private and public sector to install solar systems. Hewitt expects the number of domestic users of solar power to increase tenfold by 2005.

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## vital statistics

- Applicants from ethnic minorities are more likely to be accepted onto architecture courses, a CABE study has found. While white students have a 60% probability of being accepted, those from ethnic minorities have a 75% chance. The study also found a high drop out rate of ethnic minority students during Part 3. While they make up 9% of those entering Parts 1 and 2, they only constitute 4% of those who complete Part 3.
- More than four in five workers in Britain sometimes suffer from stress, while one in 14 say they are always stressed, according to research from Stirling University. Only one in 20 British workers said they were never stressed.
- The UK economy will grow at an annual rate of 1.7% in the second quarter of this year, according to a new survey. The business trends report from advisor BDO found improved export demand was helping manufacturers.

## Clare Melhuish reviews... Thorne and Orr on the state of Britain's streets

In the conference on the LCC early this month (AJ 21.3.02), it was noted that, while ambitious urban strategies such as the County of London Plan were viewed with admiration in Europe, the response was paralleled by a sense of disbelief at the apparent absence of any machinery for implementation, and disappointment at the failure of so much idealism to come to fruition.

At the Urban Design Group's session on 'Reclaiming the Public Realm' last Wednesday, the same issue came to the fore. Robert Thorne and David Orr of Alan Baxter Associates were presenting their research on the quality of British streets, commissioned by CABE and the DTLR, in which one of the key issues emerged as the incapacity of local government structure and system to manage and coordinate an effective decision-making and implementation policy relating to the environment – particularly in terms of design issues.

When it comes to the appearance and operation of our streets, whether in urban or rural situations, there is, by all accounts, a plethora of different guidance documents for local and regional authorities to follow, the application of which also varies dramatically. In addition, the guidance and legislation itself is 'out-of-step with current thinking' on priorities, and departments within authorities are 'unable to work together'. There is 'a huge problem with personnel changes',

'power struggles between engineers and others', and between different tiers of authority, 'too many objectives', and too many unintegrated layers of strategy. These conflicts are compounded many times over by the increasingly publicised problem of 'utilities running amok'.

All this added up to a 'sheer agony of trying to find out about the decision-making process' for Thorne and Orr, which contrasted dramatically with their experience in Copenhagen, Freiburg and Marseilles. Thorne commented on 'the clarity of management structure in a German town'. In Britain, merely gaining access to the right people to talk to was fraught with complications.

The result, as Thorne and Orr's report will clarify, is that our streets are a mess. By all accounts, the DTLR and Tony Blair himself are very concerned about this, but whether it is actually possible to unravel the bureaucratic muddle underlying the problem is another question.

One of the recommendations is that public realm strategy should be built into local development plans, and another is that the status of streets should be clarified as 'shared spaces', in which vehicles should not be dominant, and which should be subject to legislation distinct from that of the Highways Act, governing roads. But it will also suggest the importance of promoting 'design champions', and, as its 'one ace surprise', the institution of a 'new kind of code', setting out the rights of different users of urban streets. The implementation of such measures is another matter.

Robert Thorne and David Orr's report on achieving quality streetscapes is due for publication, subject to approval by CABE and the DTLR



Conference - 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2002  
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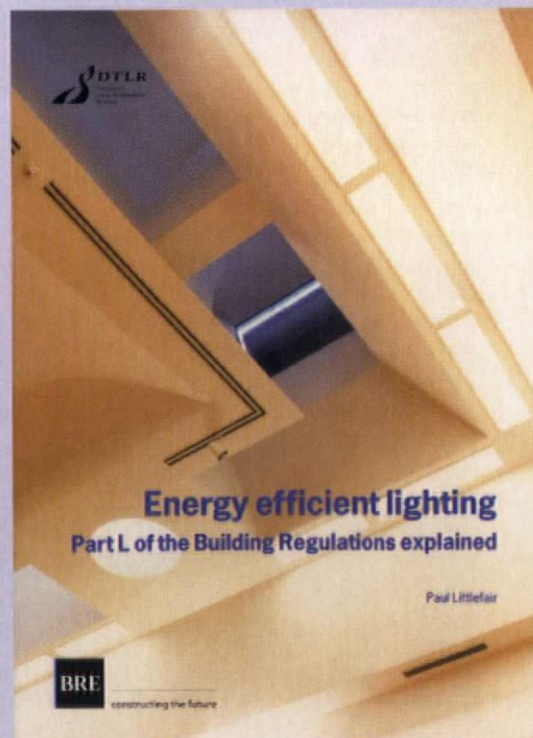
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# Why Foster is fair game for the critics

Is Lord Foster treated with too much reverence by the architectural press?  
Rowan Moore argues that it is time to push the practice off its pedestal.



Foster and Partners' Albion Wharf scheme: a 'cumbersome block of flats' proposed next to the architects' own office in Battersea?

So that's me slapped down: twice reprimanded in a single week's Astragal (AJ 7.3.02), firstly for failing to understand the stresses and strains of running a mighty practice, and then for corrupting the young. My offence? I had dared to suggest, in *Prospect* magazine, that Norman Foster might sometimes do a duff building, and that he was not equally superb in all aspects of the practice of architecture.

I don't think my argument will come as news to most of AJ's readers. *Prospect* is not a bestseller, with a twentieth of the circulation of my main employer, the *London Evening Standard*, but of the million or so words of architectural journalism I have written, very few have prompted such a large and positive response as this article. Many of these reactions came from architects – young, old, famous, obscure, successful, struggling. Each one felt it was high time that the profession's biggest name was subjected to a little measured criticism.

Yet it was all too much for Astragal. It described my article as 'a long series of complaints about almost everything Foster has ever done,' a statement that overlooked my descriptions of his 'heroic life story,' his 'supreme skill in some aspects of architecture,' the 'virtuoso' roof of the British Museum Great Court, the 'clarity and intensity' of some of his early works and the 'grace and precision' of some of his later ones.

So the article was hardly undiluted rage. Astragal quoted me as saying that the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank's structure was upside down: actually that was said by the structural engineer Frank Newby. 'What this critic can never get to grips with,' said Astragal schoolmarmishly, 'is that the running of a great commercial office has consequences. If you have designed 50 office buildings they will not all be masterpieces.' Later the column reported how young architects refer to Foster as the 'F word', which Astragal interpreted as the 'envy and resentment' of the 'less successful and the up and coming.' 'I blame Rowan Moore,' it added.

Well, here's a thought for Astragal. Let's run, for a minute, with the hypothesis that criticism of Foster is not just an aberration of embittered youth, led astray by an obstreperous critic. It's tough, I know, but try it. Let's suppose that these young architects have a point, and that the GLA building truly is an aggressive way of representing local democracy, or that the concept of the Great Court was

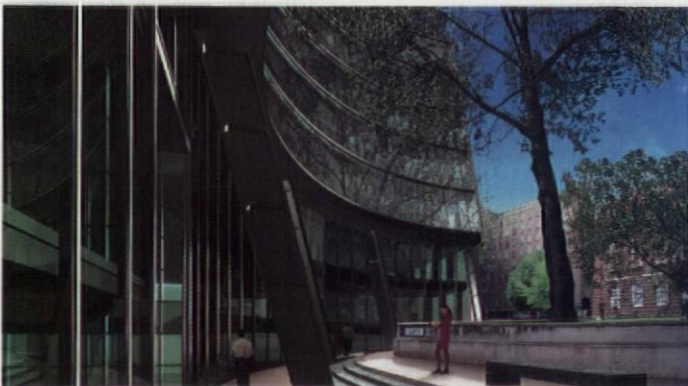
played out more memorably a decade ago by IM Pei's Louvre pyramid. Or that beneath that virtuoso roof, Alvaro Siza, Rafael Moneo or David Chipperfield might have worked better with the project's themes of antiquity and modernity.

You could also imagine that an alarming number of those 50 office buildings are so far from being masterpieces that they are positive blots, including the Spitalfields market development or a dazed and confused office block on Wood Street in the City. You could start to notice other failures of quality control in the Foster machine, like the cumbersome block of flats proposed for Albion Wharf, next to Foster's own office in Battersea.

Finally, Astragal might examine its argument that a few unfortunate 'consequences' are a reasonable price to pay for the achievement of a 'great commercial practice'. If these consequences include great public commissions indifferently realised, or lumpy commercial developments on prominent sites, what compensation is it to the public that these were the work of a 600-strong office on an off-day? And, if the point of Foster and Partners is to be an American-style mega-practice, he should stop presenting his operation as a 'studio' on the creative side of cutting edge.

If there is some truth in these objections to Foster's work, it would then be important to ask whether it was good for British architects and architecture that a single practice should so dominate major public commissions. Why are the 50-something generation of Coates and Hadid still awaiting their major breakthrough here, while those in their 40s and 30s struggle to get anything significant at all? Why, in contrast with other European countries, is there so little room for foreign talent? Why are we so slow to let in Nouvel, Siza, Gehry or OMA? The dominance of Foster is not the only reason, but a major one. If public clients are told that Foster is an unqualified genius, they will never encourage more diverse talents.

These are the questions that architectural critics and architectural magazines should be asking. Other sections of the AJ than Astragal have done so. If critics and magazines do not ask these questions, they encourage complacency inside the profession and cynicism and apathy outside it. Yet Astragal rushes to defend the status quo. All I was saying was that Foster was not God. That seems to be heresy.



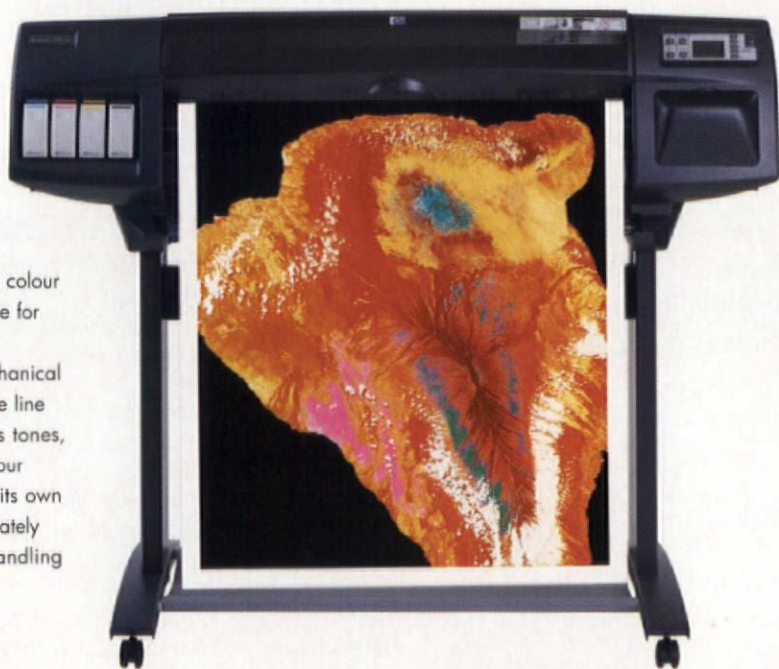
Foster and Partners' Wood Street: 'dazed and confused in the City'?



The latest Spitalfields design – the earlier 'ski slope' scheme was slated



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## Foster's legacy: upping the ante for the run of the mill

### editorial

How do architects gain the respect of their peers? Not, it would appear, by producing buildings which are universally admired. While the Eden Project scored joint first in this year's AJ100 poll of readers' favourite buildings, its architect, Sir Nicholas Grimshaw, only made joint eighth on the list of most admired living architects. Lord Foster, in comparison, shared the accolade of 'most admired living architect' with Renzo Piano – yet feelings about his buildings were decidedly mixed. The British Museum Great Court scraped into the top 10 favourite buildings while the GLA building was the second most disliked building, making Foster and Partners the only practice to appear on both lists.

Lord Foster has come to represent much more than his buildings. To some, including Rowan Moore (page 16), his elevated status represents a barrier to younger talent, and a straitjacket to architectural diversity. To others, including various AJ readers who voice their opinions on this week's letters page, he has become a byword for quality. On both sides, the fact that he has given us some of our finest buildings is taken as read.

But in some respects the showstoppers – the Reichstag, the British Museum – are not the most significant part of Foster's contribution. They may be wonderful, but others could have tackled such commissions with equal aplomb. Foster's detractors are quick to sneer at the drop in quality which is evident in some of the practice's less prestigious projects, but it is at the lower end of the market where Foster's legacy is most significant. In creating an oeuvre which can readily translate into cut-price, fast-track architecture, he has set new standards for run-of-the-mill architecture. Prolific though it is, the output of the Foster office pales into insignificance when compared to the mass of imitations it has spawned. It may be that, without Foster, staff at the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank would have been graced with an equally remarkable workplace from an equally gifted practice. But for the vast majority of those who work in, say, a sub-Foster light-industrial building, the most likely alternative would have been a claustrophobic shed.

Isabel Allen

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### letters

#### Foster's critics should target real villains...

Gavin Stamp lays into Norman Foster (AJ 14.3.02), currently a fashionable activity – read also Rowan Moore. Apparently, one of the crimes of his practice is to put up 50 office buildings, thus denying opportunities to 'less aggressive, and possibly more talented, smaller practices'.

Hang on, Norman Foster is hardly Robert Mugabe, seizing the assets of rivals and terrorising them. He doesn't, as far as I know, force contracts on terrified clients. Why does he get all these jobs? I suspect that he might happen to be rather a good architect. What I am certain of is that he is a better architect than many of those who design (I use the word loosely) office blocks, blocks of flats and executive houses in their thousands across Britain with little regard for aesthetics or much else.

We know them not, but we know their works. They retrace their way along the Thames from Reading to Gravesend, across harmless small towns and city centres. Of this Foster is innocent, as are the other 'ennobled superstar offices' and also the 'possibly more talented smaller practices'. At least they all try to produce decent modern architecture.

Get a life Dr Stamp – and go for the right targets.

Ian Jones, Chadwick Jones Associates, London

#### ... and appreciate how he raises standards

I was appalled by Gavin Stamp's ignorant comments about Foster and Partners. While I have great respect for Gavin's own

field of work, such comments lead me to suggest he should not venture beyond it.

With such a shortage of truly fine modern architecture in the UK, I am all for seeing more of Foster's work. I have collaborated with the practice on many occasions – Swiss Re, Albion Wharf, Selfridges, Sainsbury's. I can vouch for the practice's skill, sensitivity and innovation. They are one of very few firms of such vision and professionalism, which serve the industry and society so prolifically.

Far from denying work for talented but smaller offices, they are party to re-educating the whole populace, all of whom are potential clients, for the smaller practices. The time to complain will be when the principal partners retire and pass their legacy to less skilled successors. I know Lord Foster

and his partners thought about this as thoroughly as they do their designs.

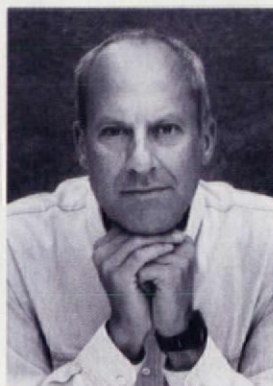
Gavin should not waste his time berating a producer of good architecture, when so many others come nowhere near Foster's standards. These others should move over for the younger practices.

Richard Coleman, The Richard Coleman Consultancy, London

#### Forget your prejudices and rediscover Foster

I've been reading more regular dissatisfaction with the work from Foster and Partners. This is most peculiar since Lord Foster was the architects' architect in the AJ100 poll (21.3.02).

The greatest new buildings to adorn England's capital in the past few years are from the Foster office – Canary Wharf





Catch up on the biggest and best practices in Britain (if you missed the AJ100 feature in the AJ). Click on AJ100 on the home page and access information on the full lists of practices and commentary.

We've added more schemes to [www.ajs specification.com](http://www.ajs specification.com), our inspirational website of proven products in proven buildings. And this week they include schemes from some of our leading practices. First is Michael Hopkins' Schlumberger Cambridge Research, Phase 2 from 1992; then Terry Farrell and Partners' Embankment Place from the year before, while Building Design Partnership's Royal Albert Hall scheme, right, (AJ 21.3.02) brings us bang up to date.



The Architects' Journal welcomes your letters, which should preferably be typed double-spaced. Please address them to the editor at 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, fax them on 020 7505 6701, or e-mail them to [angela.newton@construct.emap.com](mailto:angela.newton@construct.emap.com) to arrive by 10am on the Monday before publication. Letters intended for publication should include a daytime telephone number. The editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

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Underground station, the Great Court at the British Museum and, at last, the Blade of Light. Most of Foster's buildings are competent and contain a fair degree of integrity. It seems that the contempt for Foster buildings is not rooted in their design but more in their publicity.

A glance through the publications from the Foster studios gives an insight into the diversity of the work. It is a successful, large practice and ought not be compared with smaller practices. They are heavyweights, while most other architects are lightweight or featherweight by comparison.

It is worth ignoring the hype and calmly coming across a Foster work. One little delight can be found when one wanders off Marylebone High Street into Aybrook Street. I look forward to the time we find ourselves admiring the elegant and sleek lines from inside an affordable housing market dictated by the Foster elegance.

*Rose Peeters, Bunwell, Norfolk*

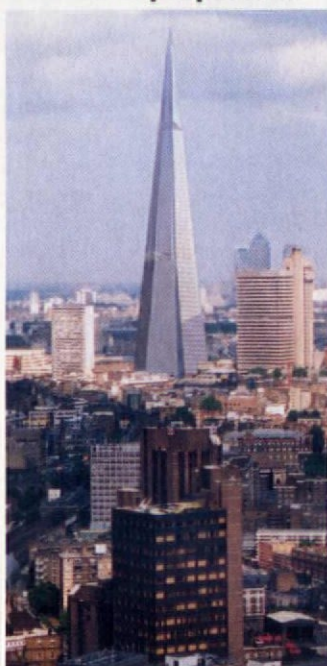
## How does Spitalfields comply with Part L?

Perhaps someone could explain how Foster and Partners' Bishop Square, Spitalfields redevelopment (AJ 14.3.02), with its 100 per cent glazed facades, can comply with the new version of Part L of the Building Regulations? These regulations are framed to stop architects designing-in overheating problems that have to be engineered out by air conditioning.

Perhaps Fosters has some new, super-insulating transparent material that the rest of us don't know about. Or is it just being environmentally irresponsible and simultaneously misleading clients and the local planning authority?

*Peter Rickaby, Rickaby Thompson Associates, Central Milton Keynes*

## New buildings have lost a sense of proportion



The proposal for the Renzo Piano tower at London Bridge, raises many questions. Where is the demand for such large towers in London? Would they not be more appropriately sited in a modern New World city?

Is any research ever done into the attitudes or feelings of people who have to work in such towers, or is the overriding motivation purely financial?

Look at the casual brutality of towers such as Centre Point and the abrupt way they hit the ground. Where is the improvement to the city environment?

The view from Tate Modern towards St Paul's Cathedral is similarly depressing. As has been noted by some, the view is compromised by the Barbican towers and the unattractive Millennium Bridge.

The Swiss Re Tower, and the proposed Heron Tower adjacent to Tower 42, will both be totally different and unrelated to context. The new GLA building ignores Tower Bridge and the Tower of London. The Canary Wharf towers are brash and

belong to New York, not London.

The problem would seem to be a loss of language of proportion, scale and materials. I do not see why such Classical elements could not be applied to modern designs. The Great Court at the British Museum is a success, perhaps, because it is working in a strong context.

We seem to be heading rapidly towards the worst aspects of American society of high crime, private affluence and public squalor.

*JP Ricketts, Walthamstow, London E17*

## Hardcore! is concrete's defining moment

It occurred to me at the RIBA 'Hardcore!' exhibition – aptly described by Piers Gough as 'putting the rebar into RIBA' – that concrete is rubbish. What is it but muck left behind after the best part, the beautiful wooden shuttering, is thrown away?

Is this why the public fell out of love with it? I do not think so. Architects like to have ideas. It must have been this that attracted architects to concrete. For, unlike the beloved 'natural' stone, steel, wood and brick, concrete is a material with no God-given, ethnically pure and racially ineradicable qualities, except those of a mess made with pulverised junk and glue. This encourages architects to believe that it can be 'inscribed'. It can receive the notice of their genius in, as Shakespeare put it, better than I, 'Love's faint impress, trenched in ice'.

'Hardcore!' shows that not only is concrete a 'green' material, in that it can, if required, recycle just about anything, but it is also 'scriptable'. Like high-density polystyrene, its more 'pouffant' cousin, it can be moulded and coloured and patterned all over. Unlike it, though, this scripting can go all the way through. This is not the

faint and feeble 'trace' exhumed by Derrida.

Concrete is the first synthetic building material to abolish the distinction between appearance and reality, surface and structure. With concrete ideas become flesh. This makes concrete something of a problem. Not only must the architect have ideas to 'impress' and 'script' and 'cast', but he must make a public exhibition of them, 'enflesh' them as material beings like Scotty of the *Starship Enterprise*.

In an age in which the textual dimension of architectural culture is increasingly abandoned to non-architects, 'ideas', as such, play a smaller and smaller part of practice. The decay of design theory, as an intellectually discursive medium that links architecture to the rest of culture, has reduced the ability of the practitioner to represent, via a repertoire of symbols and 'conceptions', what ambitions he has for the future, or what understanding he has of the past. Perhaps, at this time, architects are best advised to avoid the use of this cast-in-place-for-ever 'truth drug' material.

Ours is a time 'short on architecture, short on the causes of architecture'. What is left for concrete, with its brilliant ability to absorb ideas like a lithic sponge, fixing them through and through for all eternity?

What can concrete do at this time of the architect rather than the architecture, the singer not the song, but be enslaved to answer the fatuous question posed by Narcissus: 'Mirror, mirror, on the wall...?'

A practice without theory, without ideas to embody and enfold, wastes the conceptual power of concrete. And will the audience be any the less yawnful of an answer better carried, anyway, by the ephemeral media, in short, the mags?

*John Outram, bye-mail*





will also

## A sense of community is not all that it's cracked up to be

The nature of small- and medium-sized villages is often characterised by the word community. By and large it would be accurate to state that the majority of people regard this word with reverence.

We talk of a sense of community as a desirable sensation that will, or could, solve many of the problems we have in our society. Inherent within this desire is an acceptance of nostalgic values, such as the fact that it never rained in the summer when you were young. We call many of our new developments urban villages in the hope that the romantic life is recreated.

If this lifestyle does emerge from these developments, I assume that we will also be pleased with the resultant gossip and bigoted views that emerge. Narrow-mindedness, combined with an absolute confidence in the correctness of one's views and actions, characterise such developments. The whole idea of using the title 'community' as a driver towards new urban form is highly suspect and evidence of a certain lack of imagination.

I am writing this in Valencia, which appears not to be trapped into attempts to reinvent the past. It contains a vibrancy of life which permits anonymity combined with intimacy. They do not try to reinvent the past because they never forget it. This weekend the city sounds like a war zone as the relative peace is broken by explosions. This celebration of the fires is a 24-hour affair and appears to be orchestrated with noise intended to keep the sleepy awake and the wakeful attentive. The festival has its origins from the period when the Arabs were in occupancy of the city. This continuum of tradition has been expanded and adapted over hundreds of years and reflects much of the fabric of the city itself.

The pattern of expansion from the Medieval through the Renaissance, to the dictatorial actions of Franco in the 20th century, builds on a sense of a freedom to escape the idea of fixed values without losing the best of the hopes of the past.

Tradition lives on in the form of the city's festivals but the built fabric responds as an organism to the shift in need, style, preference, fortune or misfortune of this urban melting pot. The size of the city is sufficiently large to avoid any fixed values that become apparently cast in stone, thus creating a climate that is averse to change.

London is often described as a city of connected villages, which is historically accurate. But history is no excuse to maintain this image. If we are to address the issues of capacity building in the interests of density, more mixed uses and a reduction in unnecessary travel distances, we need to move on from this outmoded image and confront the fact that within the M25 the city could house a population of 15-20 million folk. This could result in a better quality of life, assuming that infrastructure is improved and extended, as well as protection of our countryside in the South East, which is rapidly being eaten up.

These new 'estates' are the breeding ground for fixed values and bigotry, and as a result the direct and sensible thinking that makes good social and economic sense is denied by our society. To change, we must consider London, Birmingham, Manchester et al as the raft that will take us into a new era of thinking of ourselves as city dwellers who enjoy all the benefits that come with it. To change our institutions, which have all the attributes of the village, they need to broaden their horizons.

WA, from a hotel in Valencia

## people

Next time you are in an architectural bookshop, try this little test. Watch anyone who looks at Richard Weston's splendid monograph on Jørn Utzon, just published by Edition Bløndal, and they will not simply scan it, as they would most books, but examine it carefully, page by page. Like the work it features, its production is in every way far from the norm; you acknowledge that at once. Its distinction must owe much to the vision and persistence of its publisher, Utzon's compatriot, Torsten Bløndal.

In London briefly for the book's launch at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Bløndal describes his roundabout route into publishing. At first he had wanted to become a pilot in the Danish Air Force but a minor medical defect disqualified him. 'So I decided to study architecture instead,' he says. 'I went to the Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and attended Henning Larsen's class. But you had to study Karl Marx to graduate! I couldn't stand this way of teaching, this approach to reality – so I left.'

After a further course in Paris where the cultural climate, if not the teaching, was congenial – this was the early 1970s – Bløndal returned to Copenhagen and joined a small firm of civil engineers that was trying to get work in the Lebanon. 'I spent two beautiful years there – it was a kind of discovery for me. Not that we ever got a contract!'

Back once more in Denmark, he began doing some freelance writing and found employment with a publisher. 'I became more and more curious about publishing, but I wanted to be independent. I wanted to do what I really had a feeling for, and in my own way.' Already one can sense Bløndal's temperamental affinity with Utzon, though the present monograph was then far in the future.

In fact the very first Edition Bløndal titles were travel books, narratives not translated into Danish before, like Mungo Park's *Travels into the Interior of Africa* and Stendhal's *Promenades dans Rome*. 'I have always liked the idea of travelling,' says Bløndal, 'but first class if possible!' A later undertaking was a 19-volume series on Scandinavian artists, where current practitioners discussed their predecessors; the distinguished Danish painter/sculptor Per Kirkeby, a friend of Bløndal's, wrote several of these. 'I didn't want boring art history, I wanted essays that got under the

4 April 2002

'Narrow-mindedness, combined with an absolute confidence in the correctness of one's views and actions, characterise such developments'



**Publisher Torsten Bløndal has a passion for quality in producing his books. With Richard Weston as author, he has now put together the definitive monograph on one of the great architects of the 20th century, Jørn Utzon**  
by andrew mead. photograph by bent ryberg

## an eye for excellence



artist's skin,' says Bløndal. Some forgotten names were re-evaluated, and received opinions challenged. Bløndal does not like to follow a well-worn path.

But the Utzon project was beginning to take hold. Bløndal was an enthusiast: he loved the courtyard housing schemes (Kingo, Fredensborg); the Espansiva system; Sydney Opera House, of course. 'I knew what had been published, but there was nothing like the book I wanted to do. I knew too that Utzon had never cooperated when people wanted to write about him. Famous authors had tried and failed. The way that

his work was presented was the key factor for him – he didn't want an academic, theoretical text. But nor did I. That system doesn't suit me either.'

Nonetheless, Bløndal's first approach to Utzon, in 1997, was politely rebuffed. He proceeded undeterred, however, contacting Utzon's old employees, discovering long-lost drawings, and – thanks to a recommendation from *Architectural Review* editor Peter Davey – finding a possible author in Richard Weston, whose book on Alvar Aalto had won the Sir Banister Fletcher Prize. 'I wanted a practitioner who

was also a good writer – someone who was inspired by Steen Eiler Rasmussen, and could write with the economy of Hans Christian Andersen,' says Bløndal.

Invited to Copenhagen to lecture to an audience that included former colleagues of Utzon, Weston clearly passed his audition – and, still at a remove, Utzon's confidence in the enterprise must have grown. So much so that, one day in 1999, he telephoned Bløndal to find when the monograph would appear. A few months later the phone calls became daily, and Utzon's involvement in the book's design and content was complete.

'Utzon will speak to us. My quality will win him over,' Bløndal had assured Weston from the start – and that proved to be the case. 'Torsten has a passion for extracting the best from every part of the publishing process,' says Weston. During much of the 1990s, Bløndal was involved in a protracted law case against a Danish printer, because of unacceptable blemishes in one of his books. His search for quality – 'I test paper samples, everything,' he says – eventually led to Germany, where the Utzon monograph has been scanned, printed and bound.

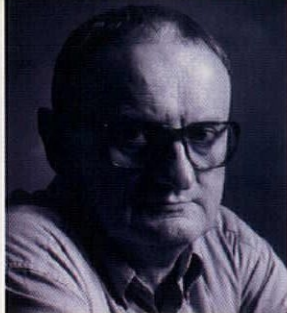
Add to this eye for excellence, Bløndal's charm and huge enthusiasm – he would happily have talked all morning when we met – and you can understand why he succeeds in securing the loyal sponsors that a book of this magnitude demands. No doubt a well-chosen bottle of wine, or plate of pastries, at a strategic moment plays its part; but, as John Pardey, who has made new drawings for the monograph, puts it: 'You just know you can trust him – he has total commitment and belief. He's obdurate.'

The whole undertaking has no doubt been eased by the fact that Bløndal, Weston, Pardey – and Utzon, too – are all fans of John Cleese. I cannot say it had occurred to me before that Utzon might relax in his Majorcan hillside home watching re-runs of *Fawlty Towers* – but the image is endearing.

Utzon, I understand, is thrilled with this new monograph. Certainly it secures his place among the 'greats' of the 20th century, and should attract a new generation of admirers, but it does more – it celebrates something timeless and fundamental in architecture, its capacity to enrich both public and private realms and give greater resonance to life. Bløndal, too, must be delighted, and why not? It is what can happen when you insist on excellence.

● See review, pages 44-45





**martin pawley**

## Crisis in housing means it's time to break the green belt taboo

It's no surprise that some people fear the chancellor might not after all remove VAT from refurbishment contracts in the Budget, and might not even juggle with the percentages – despite the bluster of the urban renaissance lobby.

The reunion of old task force members for a bout of concerted lobbying is not surprising either. What is surprising – in this era of confessional politics – is that nobody has actually admitted that the whole urban renaissance idea, from car-free towns bursting with brownfield towers, to the vision of wildlife wardens cycling to work in the countryside, was wrong-headed from beginning to end. It was always a typical product of architects and professors who were either too young to remember the level of national mobilisation necessary for a real public sector housing programme, or too old to be able to learn any new tricks to take account of changing circumstances. Now it turns out that just about the only thing they were really any good at was silencing rational opposition.

As a result, while for the past few years the public has been led to believe that huge sums of public money were just about to be pumped into city beautification projects all over the country, and every toxic waste dump would be turned into a high density sustainable millennium village, it turns out that none of this has actually happened. Instead, feasibility studies and some preliminary design work have been done (and paid for and published), and a new man from the Prince's Foundation has been put in charge of urban policy – but in the wrong ministry. All that has been achieved on the ground is that the phrase 'brownfield site' has joined the phrase 'sustainable development' in the dictionary of political words of infinitely elastic meaning.

In fact, as the increasingly realistic Joseph Rowntree Foundation has confirmed, we are heading for

a major housing shortage and there is no way it can be averted – except by a building programme that drops the absurd requirement that most houses should be built on used sites. According to the Foundation, there will be a deficit of more than one million homes within 20 years unless the wildlife wardens move over and give developers a chance.

This is, of course, an emotive subject. The moment anyone starts talking about taking green belt land they are forced to listen to countless

passionate speeches about the destruction of the countryside.

Yet it is precisely in the control and design of this rural development that planning could set the scene and architects deliver the goods. As countless chairborn economists have now discovered, agriculture is no longer the force it once was in the countryside. Farmers are no longer capable of herding or cropping profitably and many are presently paid simply to keep the hedges trim and the land tidy.

This means that the amount of land realistically available for development could be much larger than the practice of recent years would suggest. If rural housing densities of occupation were to be kept very low, and site sizes proportionally larger than at present, much of this housing could be inconspicuously sewn

into the landscape, with each development possessed of sufficient planning space to allow for optimised solar orientation or other alternative energy requirements.

With such a tantalising rural alternative to the high-density urban model promoted in the first Blair government, but so woefully low on performance in the second, it might make more sense for the next public-private partnership experiment to consist of a discreet affordable housing project set in the folding hills of the south east. Just for the purpose of comparison, of course.

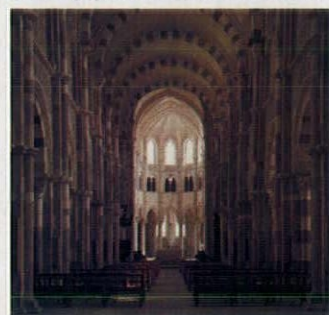
**'There will be a deficit of more than one million homes within 20 years unless the wildlife wardens move over a bit and give developers a chance'**

## a life in architecture

**norman adams**

To the question 'Do you have a favourite building?', Royal Academician Norman Adams has several answers. His first is the Arena Chapel at Padua, as he particularly admires the frescoes by Giotto. His second choice would be the Unter den Linden Museum at Colmar, Alsace – 'because of Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece, and it is a beautiful cloister'.

Then he adds: 'The Royal Festival Hall, because it's full of activity and very welcoming, and also because it is by the Thames.' He also likes the Romanesque abbey church of St Madeleine at Vézelay (pictured), 'because it is so



much a part of its little town, and the town itself has not been modernised much'. But there is more to come. Adams loves Durham Cathedral: 'It is wonderfully sited and looks marvellous from the train.'

Adams' wife Anna, also a painter, adds: 'Norman actually rather likes the Pompidou Centre in Paris. It's a good flexible gallery. There are fine views of Paris from the outside escalator. And marvellous shows inside sometimes.'

What Adams dislikes is St Peter's in Rome. 'It's too large, an overstatement. Details can be good – the bronze door, for instance, and the Bernini colonnade, though not the gigantic Bernini cherubs inside. But the whole thing dwarfs humanity.' Another dislike? He describes the leisure centre at Milton Keynes as 'a chamber of horrors'.

Eleanor Allen

4 April 2002





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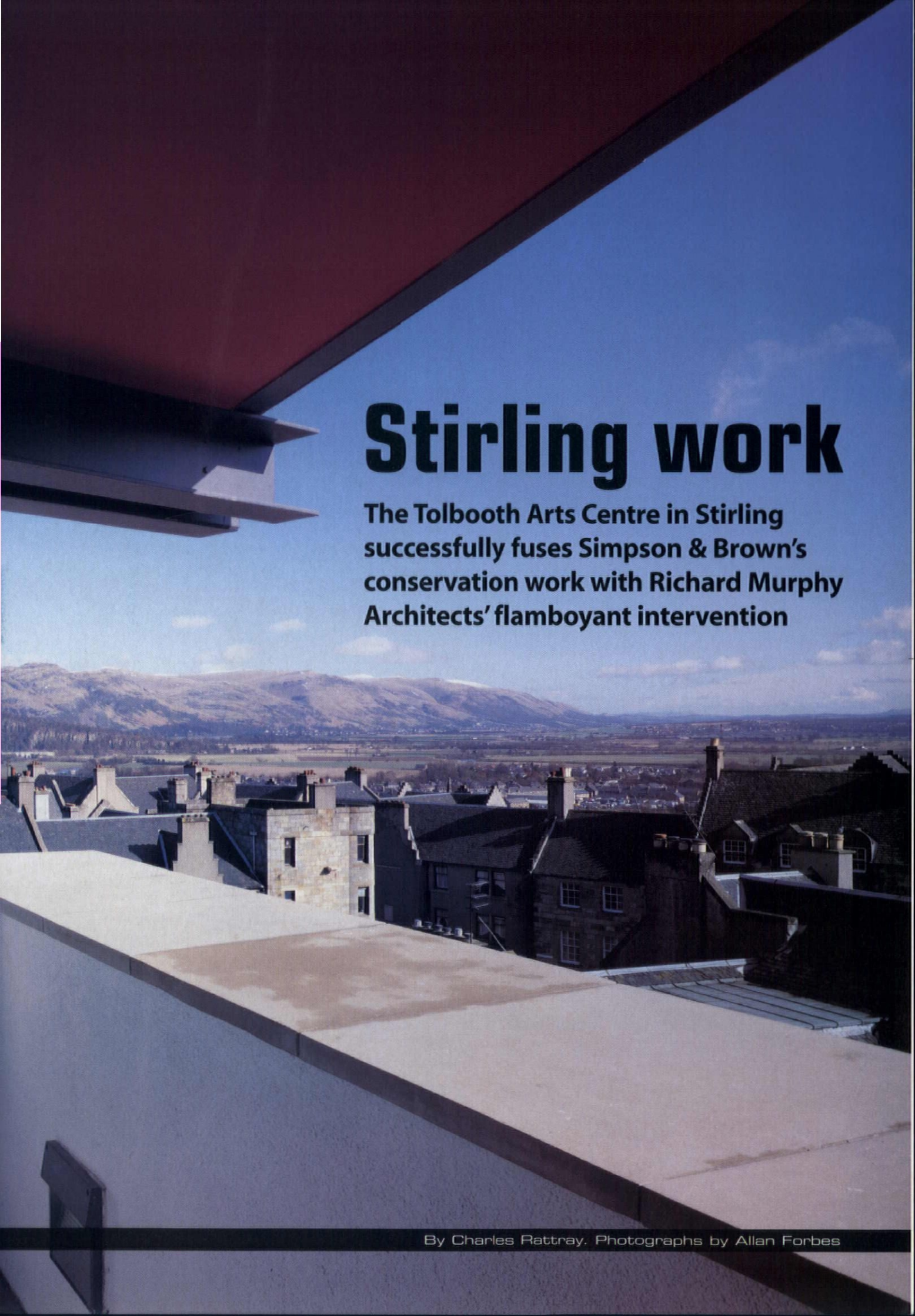
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# Stirling work

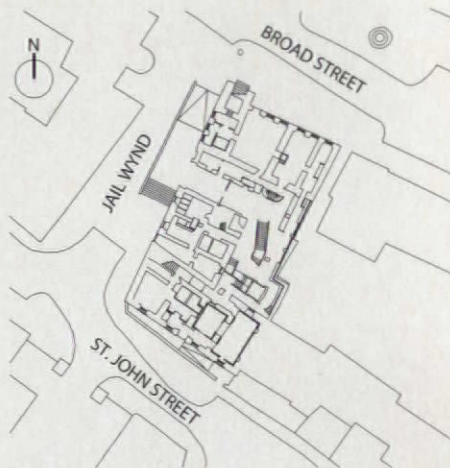
**The Tolbooth Arts Centre in Stirling  
successfully fuses Simpson & Brown's  
conservation work with Richard Murphy  
Architects' flamboyant intervention**

By Charles Rattray. Photographs by Allan Forbes



Among other things, the new Tolbooth Arts Centre is intended to kindle a spark of life on the upper reaches of Stirling Castle's rock. The role of cultural catalyst is an important one, and so the competition held in 1997 to rejuvenate the old community centre was important too. It was won by Richard Murphy Architects in what seemed like a follow-on from its success at Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre (AJ 22.4.99). But the two contexts are very different. Dundee is a vigorous university town, but this part of Stirling's old town is still stuck very much in the past – even the 1930s council houses look as if they have been there for centuries.

The A-listed combined town hall and prison known as the Tolbooth is the work of several architects, of whom Murphy is the most recent. He inherited a rich and complex pattern of three different buildings linked around a tiny backyard. The founder of Scottish Classicism, Sir William Bruce, started things with his corner tower and three-bay house on the north (Broad Street) side in 1705. The house doubled in size in a seamless extension by the local Gideon Gray in 1785. A new courtroom and jail designed by an Adam disciple, Richard Crichton, were added to the west and south (Jail Wynd and



John Street) in 1811. The grand round-headed arch under the tower originally led directly to the fine panelled rooms of the Bruce and Gray building and later to the barrel-vaulted courtroom with its tall windows. The jail presents itself as a rather fine town house, so to find it divided into cells is a surprise. The casual onlooker's expectations are partially honoured by a double-height room carved from four cells in 1876.

Given Murphy's interest in Carlo Scarpa's conversions and his tendency to use (or even make) fragments of (quasi-) existing fabric

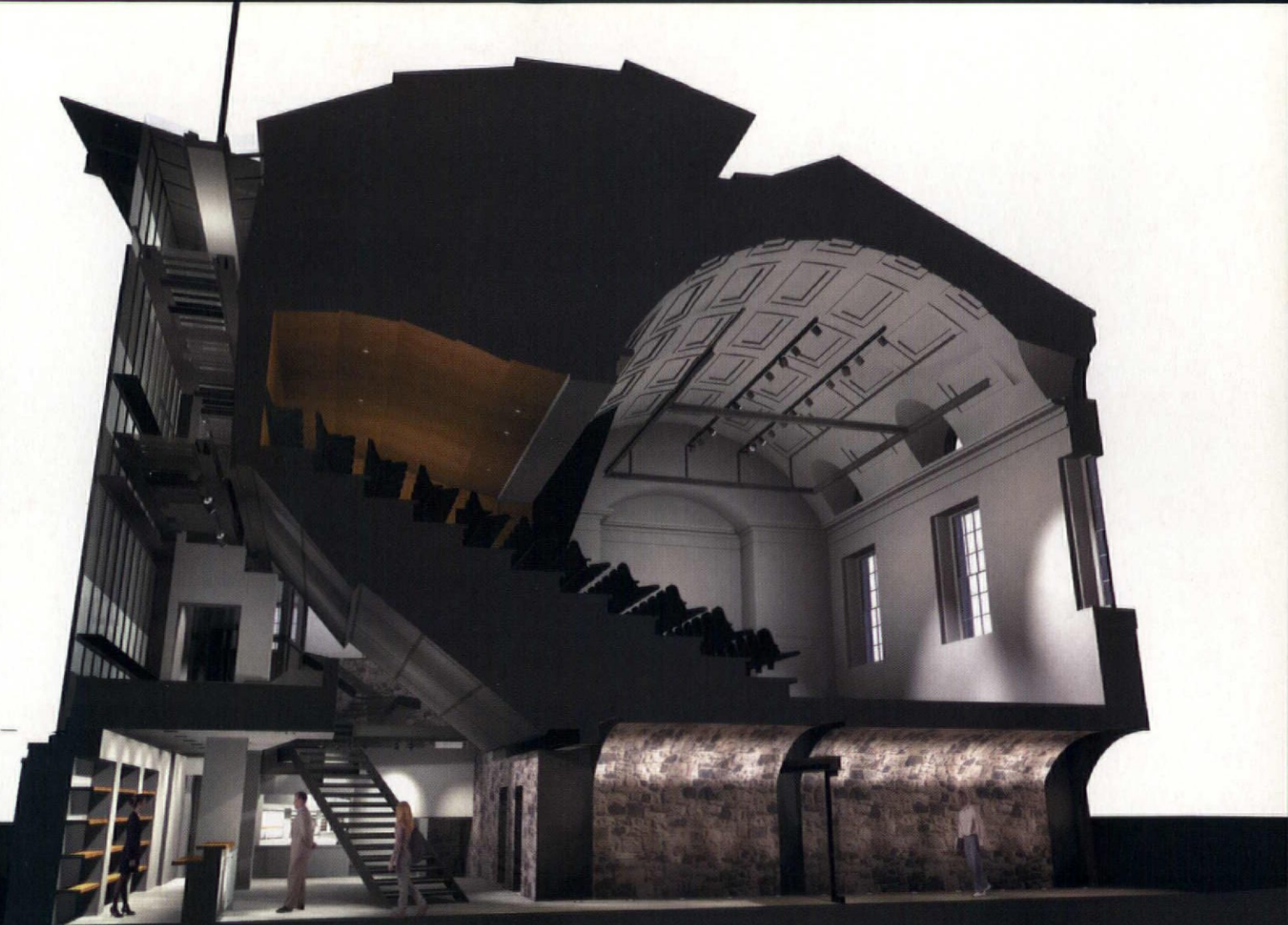
as a starting point for his projects, he is either a logical choice for this sort of job or a worryingly defiant anti-hero. It all depends on how you see the existing: as something to inhabit, or as architecture. There are various conservation possibilities. If one characterises the main choices as respectful retention, gutting and re-inhabiting and vigorous intervention, then this is the last. Murphy sees old buildings as a canvas for his expression of contrasts, as a vehicle. He is fond of Morris' quote: 'It cannot be, it has gone... we are completely changed, and we cannot do the work [our forefathers] did,' and rather less interested in Morris' warning: 'These old buildings... are not in any sense our property to do as we like with them. We are only trustees for those that come after us.'

To retain existing buildings as coherent working systems or to respect their spatial typologies implies that programmatic requirements must be adjusted to fit. Here, architect's preoccupations apart, the size of the existing buildings and the ambitious new programme ensure the opposite. It is not possible to fit a theatre for 200 people and dance studio into this sort of accommodation without something having to give: a



Murphy's interventions slot into a complex pattern of three different buildings linked around a tiny backyard





## Conservation

Simpson & Brown's role was to protect and repair the ancient buildings which make up the Tolbooth complex: embedded medieval walls; Sir William Bruce's 'new' Tolbooth of 1703-5; Gideon Gray's extension on the Broad Street frontage of 1785; and the Court House and jail designed by Richard Crichton, completed in 1811. Richard Murphy's was to add a whole new layer and to effect a complete transformation of the interior without seriously or irreversibly damaging the integrity of the historic buildings. A recipe for conflict, one might think! Not a bit of it. As practices, we know each other well; we can debate the issues, respect each other's skills and establish clear lines of demarcation. We didn't agree about everything, how could we? But we pulled together.

Did we succeed? Well enough, I think. Considering the extent of the transformation, remarkably little of value was lost and, thanks to Tom Addyman of Addyman & Kay, the record and our understanding of the building history and the archaeology of the site have been greatly enhanced. The historic fabric is now sound, and the exterior – particularly the town steeple, such a potent feature of the townscape of old Stirling – looks wonderfully well. I am delighted that people will now be able to drink coffee in the early 18th-century Council Room, the most important historic interior and the only one for which Simpson & Brown was mainly responsible.

Do I have regrets? Yes, my failure to persuade Historic Scotland not to insist on the aerial suspension of the central chimney on the John Street building; the replacement of part of the centre post of the belfry and the careless loss of all the early 18th-century glass in a fanlight facing Broad Street. Other things too, but these are small matters in such a project.

On one matter, however, I failed completely. Stirling's 'upper town' is a dead, desiccated sort of a place, largely rebuilt as self-consciously-designed council houses in the mid-20th century.

Even the real old buildings, with their cement roughcast and scraped rubble walls, look like 'ancient monuments'.

I wanted to bring the sort of vibrant colour one sees in other north European cities by protecting and finishing the tired and patched old walls of Bruce's Tolbooth with limewash, as most buildings were finished before the industrial and antiquarian revolutions of the late 18th and 19th centuries. No one agreed with me. 'Conserve as found,' they said. 'Silly mantra,' I said. Old

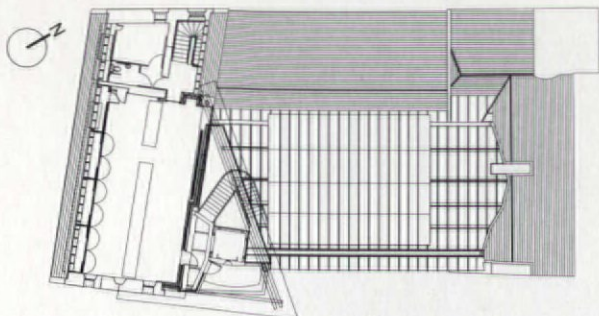
stone rules OK! What an anti-architectural misconception and what a missed opportunity to give brilliant yet appropriate external expression to the transformation which has been wrought within.

**James Simpson, Simpson & Brown Architects**

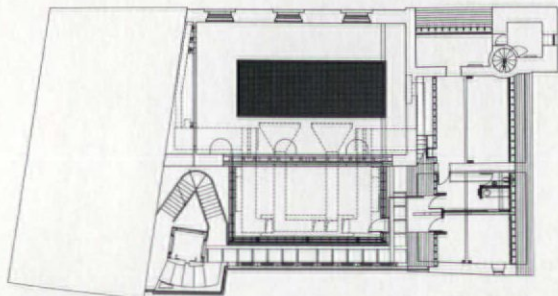


Entry is via a vaulted tunnel from Jail Wynd

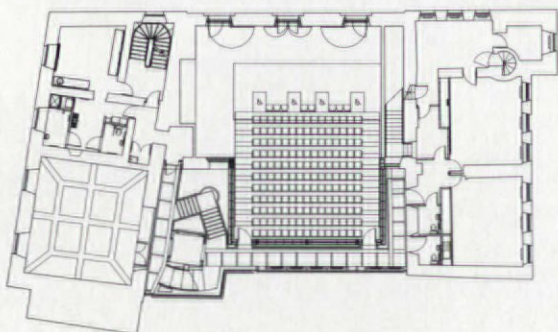




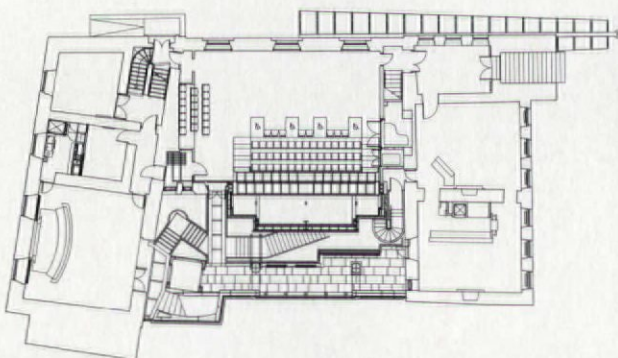
fourth floor plan



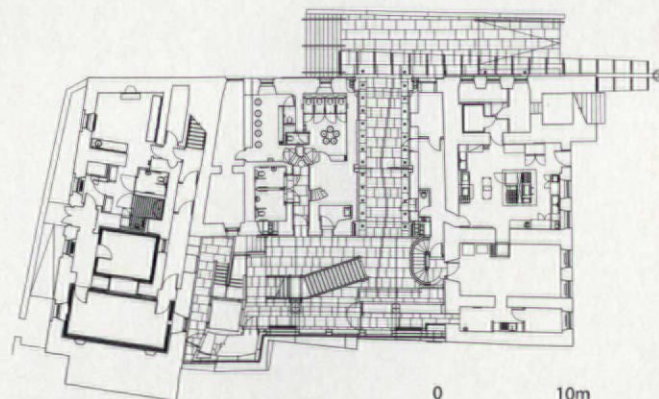
third floor plan



second floor plan



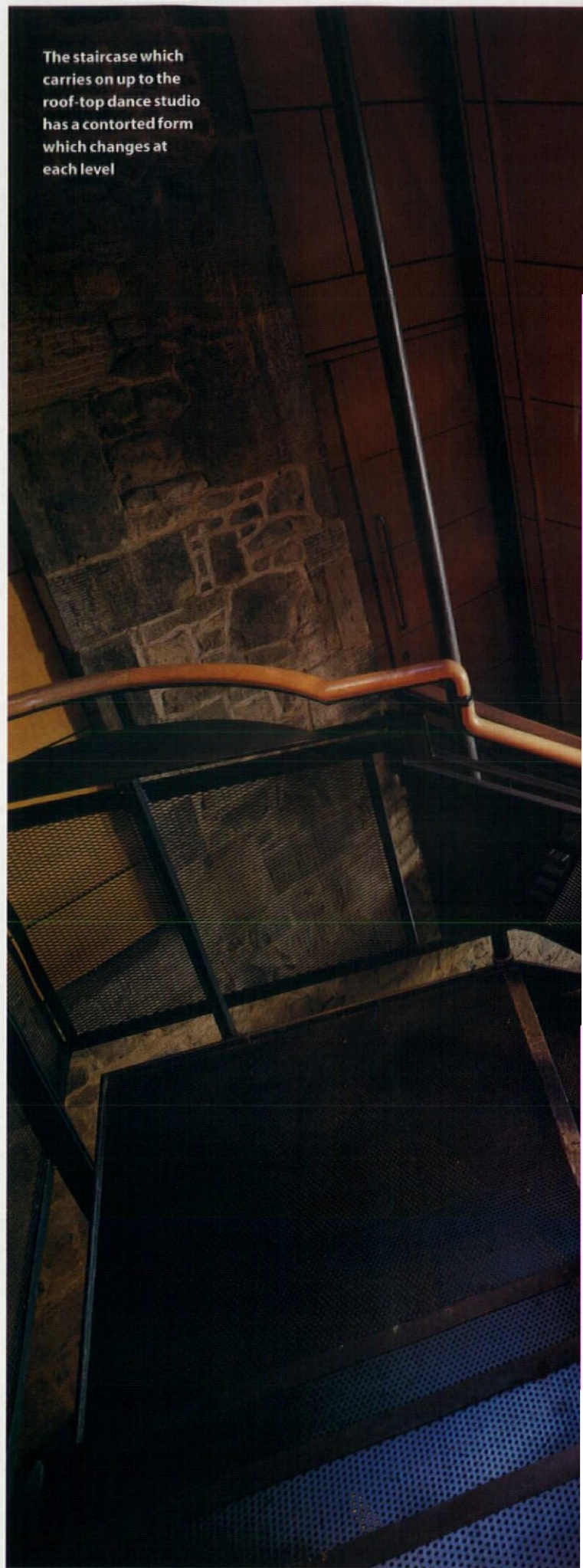
first floor plan



ground floor plan

0 10m

The staircase which carries on up to the roof-top dance studio has a contorted form which changes at each level







quart has been fitted into a pint pot. This might be said to be a major criticism of the building brief itself but, to coin a phrase, one person's problem is another's opportunity.

And Murphy's moves in the circumstances are clever. The courtroom acquires what he calls a 'back-pack' of seating which extends over the backyard, now converted to the foyer; the attic of the jail is broken out to accommodate the dance theatre. The cells form the back-stage spaces and recording studios, the double-height room becomes a bar. The original Bruce and Gray building is left reasonably intact, apart from some minor surgery to the roof to give access to office space.

All this must have been a nerve-wracking prospect for Historic Scotland, charged with protecting the historic fabric. One might go so far as to argue that it is a credit to both sides that this level of intervention has been carried through. But occasionally tensions do surface and, where they do, Murphy characteristically marks the spot of the spat. One such is on the roof of the old jail – now the dance studio – where a schizoid intermediate chimney remains, now without flues, mounted on its own portal frame and clearly visible through glazing in the dance studio roof. It has become the butt of an ironic joke.

The detailed resolution of the new work raises the usual questions relating to the parts and the whole, the new and the old. Despite the unifying programme, this remains an architecture of parts, where the new is clearly defined in juxtaposition to the old. This sort of honesty still has the capacity to surprise, if only because so much contemporary European architecture has left it behind in favour of a concern for the whole. The approach to the building from the street encourages one to ignore the main arch below the tower – a fairly obvious signal – and enter on the flank. The route is marked by a steel and glass canopy which boldly interrupts the arch surround and rests on a column away from the building on the pavement. Internally too, some of the details disappoint. The new dado rail in the double-height bar plunges into the door architraves, the bar is very much over-scaled, and the drinks shelving behind the bar is wider than the space between the windows. In the rather beautiful original Bruce and Gray rooms, the new fittings are intrusive and disruptive.

The east wall of the foyer is entirely glazed above first floor level – it forms a dramatic elevation which, sadly, few see – but the first impression on entering from the vaulted tunnel from Jail Wynd is that the space is relatively dark, even oppressive. There is a lot of black paint on the layered perforated metal of the auditorium soffit, and the narrow space left between the 'backpack' and the glazing is effectively filled by perforated floors to the access galleries. The way upstairs is all the more clear, however; you progress upwards towards the double-height bar, brightly lit from the south and painted a lively red.

The theatre space has full-height sliding screens which can isolate the stepped seating





## Structure

Perhaps one of the most distinctive features of the Stirling Tolbooth project is the blend of traditional restoration and conservation work with highly modern and dramatic structural interventions.

The original three main buildings of the Tolbooth formed three sides of a fully enclosed courtyard to the rear. The new auditorium and plantroom structures were constructed within this courtyard. The substructure was designed adopting bottom-driven steel mini-piles to minimise disturbance to the archaeological remains beneath the building. The steel-framed auditorium is supported on two reinforced concrete portal structures which also provide support to the glazed rear elevation and the circulation deck above the foyer. The rear elevation of the original 'courtroom' was substantially removed to enable the auditorium and courtroom (performance area) to be combined. Within the roof space above the courtroom, new steel frames were installed to provide support to the tension wire lighting rig above the performance area.

Careful consideration was given to the preservation of the decorative coffered plaster ceiling of the courtroom throughout these operations.

Steel walkways and stairs around the main auditorium provide access to the various levels of the three original buildings. The lift shaft is designed in steel with a glass and wire mesh infill. The steel stair adjacent to the lift shaft is suspended by a single rod from a 'salmon belly' plate girder beam at roof level. With a span of approximately 14m, this girder also provides support to the flat roof above the new dance studio.

The construction of the dance studio involved significant alterations to the roof and floor of one of the original buildings. The new floor is designed in steel, supporting a composite concrete and steel slab. The rafters on one side of the original trussed roof were removed and a new timber flat roof constructed. The ridge support is provided by a new triangular steel space truss.

*Andrew W Brown, David Narro Associates*





The structure reflects the fact that this is a complex, inherited situation put in the hands of an architect who relishes complexity



and re-instate the form of the old courtroom. Bleacher seating at lower levels completes a picture of flexibility. Lighting is handled above a simple grid hung from the roof; one can still read the plastered barrel-vault. The staircase which carries on up to the roof-top dance studio has an extraordinarily contorted form which changes on each level. At the very top, the lead roof to the 'back-pack' continues the pattern you recognise from its underside, of overlapping planes of metal.

This time, of course, there is a sound constructional reason. And to the north and east a spectacular view of the city and the Forth River basin is celebrated by a little balcony under an exuberantly floating roof. There is a lot of structure here, hanging, bracing, flying and lifting, if little sense of overall structure, but the unusual perspective of roofscapes and long views begins to make one believe that, just as a bird might perch up here, so you too can enjoy without thinking too hard.

It reminds us that this was a complex problem within a complex inherited situation put in the hands of an architect who relishes complexity. It is not for the faint-hearted, but the sheer self-confidence of Murphy's interventions make it all very likely to work. The Tolbooth, for so long at the centre of Stirling society, will find itself at the heart of the new city's cultural life. 'At the bar' will have taken on a new meaning and a glass of wine before the latest screening will make a nice change from a re-shackling after the latest judgment. Perhaps the ambitious programme was right after all.



The glazed east wall of the foyer forms a dramatic elevation which, sadly, few see



The dance theatre occupies the attic of the jail



The roof hints at the vibrant interventions inside

## Costs

Cost analysis based on tender sum

### ENABLING WORKS £32.33/m<sup>2</sup>

Service diversions, demolitions and strip-out works

### SUBSTRUCTURE

#### FOUNDATIONS/SLABS £49.01/m<sup>2</sup>

Strip foundations, piling and underpinning

### SUPERSTRUCTURE

#### FRAME/STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS £186.77/m<sup>2</sup>

Steel framework to new and alterations to existing internal stonewalls etc

#### UPPER FLOORS £50.43/m<sup>2</sup>

Holrib deck for new floors and strengthening and repairs to existing timber floors

#### ROOF AND ROOFLIGHTS £127.61/m<sup>2</sup>

Repair and renewals to traditional slated roofs, new lead flat roofs and patent glazing to remaining roofs

#### STAIRCASES £62.96/m<sup>2</sup>

Precast stairs to existing areas with stone overcladding and metal stairs, walkways and balustrades to new areas

#### EXTERNAL WALLS £113.50/m<sup>2</sup>

Repairs and renewals to former external stone walls and patent glazing to form new walls

#### WINDOWS £42.28/m<sup>2</sup>

Repairs to existing windows and new redwood sash and case windows with oak sills to match existing

#### DOORS £130.39/m<sup>2</sup>

A mixture of repairs to original doors, plywood flush pass doors, beech-veneered panel-faced doors, aluminium sheet-faced doors, acoustic doors and Douglas fir-boarded doors all with quality stainless steel ironmongery

#### INTERNAL WALLS AND PARTITIONS £38.70/m<sup>2</sup>

Gyproc metal stud partitions with plasterboard both sides in the main and some walls formed with common blockwork

### INTERNAL FINISHES

#### WALL FINISHES £112.67/m<sup>2</sup>

Skim coat plaster and paint finish to plasterboard walls and lime plaster with paint finish to existing walls. Wilhelmi panelling has been used as a decorative finish to many internal areas, as has a Sto Render System

#### FLOOR FINISHES £45.73/m<sup>2</sup>

Isocrete screed to concrete floors, repairs and renovation to existing timber floors, new stone floors, carpet tiling/carpet/linoleum/anti-slip flooring finishes to other floors

#### CEILING FINISHES £27.43/m<sup>2</sup>

Suspended ceiling system used in certain areas with paint finish. Lime plaster with repairs to timber lathing used on existing ceilings. Fibrous plaster has been used to effect repairs to existing cornices etc

#### DECORATION £15.33/m<sup>2</sup>

Paint finish throughout

### FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS

#### FURNITURE £284.96/m<sup>2</sup>

Furniture for use in offices, bars and restaurant areas; bleacher seating for the auditorium; two bars and a servery fitted out; catering equipment for two kitchens; stage lighting, sound and communications package

### SERVICES

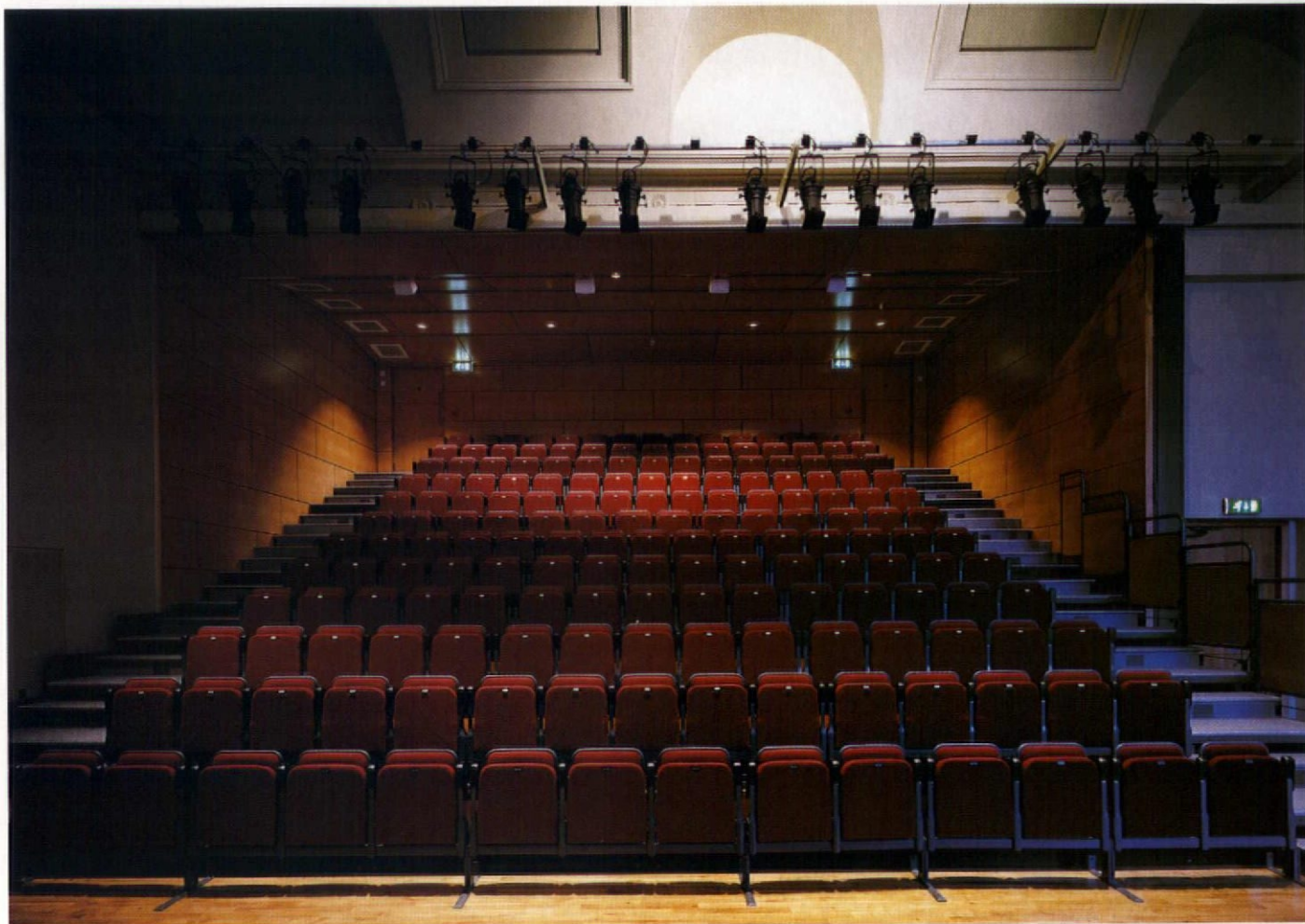
#### MECHANICAL INSTALLATION £210.08/m<sup>2</sup>

Mechanical and plumbing/sanitary installation generally

#### ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION £157.03/m<sup>2</sup>

Power and lighting installation generally





The courtroom has been given a 'back-pack' of stepped seating, which can be concealed by full height screens to reinstate the form of the original room

**LIFT AND CONVEYOR INSTALLATIONS** £70.65/m<sup>2</sup>  
Passenger lift, dumb waiter hoist and stage goods lift

**PROTECTIVE INSTALLATIONS** £30.03/m<sup>2</sup>  
Disabled alarm system, security alarm system, fire alarm system and lightning protection system

**COMMUNICATION INSTALLATIONS** £31.36/m<sup>2</sup>  
Staff paging system, public address system, tv and radio cable distribution system, it data and telecom systems

**BUILDERS' WORK IN CONNECTION** £5.91/m<sup>2</sup>  
All work in connection with services

#### PRELIMINARIES AND INSURANCES

**PRELIMINARIES, DAYWORKS, OVERHEADS AND PROFIT** £332.08m<sup>2</sup>

#### EXTERNAL WORKS

**LANDSCAPING, DRAINAGE, SERVICES** £80,079  
Cobbles, drainage channels, steps and Caithness stone paving to pedestrianised area. Drainage around building and electric, telephone, water, gas, and CCTV services to the building

#### CONTINGENCIES

**CONTINGENCIES** £132.28/m<sup>2</sup>

### Cost summary

	Cost per m <sup>2</sup> (£)	Percentage of total
<b>ENABLING WORKS</b>	<b>32.33</b>	<b>1.38</b>
<b>SUBSTRUCTURE</b>	<b>49.01</b>	<b>2.10</b>
<b>SUPERSTRUCTURE</b>		
Frame and structural alterations	186.77	7.99
Upper floors	50.43	2.16
Roof	127.61	5.46

Staircases	62.96	2.69
External walls	113.50	4.86
Windows	42.28	1.81
Doors	130.39	5.58
Internal walls and partitions	38.70	1.66
<b>Group element total</b>	<b>752.64</b>	<b>32.21</b>

<b>INTERNAL FINISHES</b>		
Wall finishes	112.67	4.82
Floor finishes	45.73	1.96
Ceiling finishes	27.43	1.17
Decoration	15.33	0.66
<b>Group element total</b>	<b>201.16</b>	<b>8.61</b>

<b>FITTINGS AND FURNITURE</b>	<b>284.96</b>	<b>12.19</b>
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<b>SERVICES</b>		
Mechanical Installation	210.08	8.99
Electrical Installation	157.03	6.72
Lift and conveyor installations	70.65	3.02
Protective installations	30.03	1.29
Communication installation	31.36	1.34
Builders' work in connection	5.91	0.25
<b>Group element total</b>	<b>505.06</b>	<b>21.61</b>

<b>PRELIMINARIES AND INSURANCE</b>	<b>332.08</b>	<b>14.21</b>
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<b>EXTERNAL WORKS</b>	<b>47.38</b>	<b>2.03</b>
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<b>CONTINGENCIES</b>	<b>132.28</b>	<b>5.66</b>
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,336.90</b>	<b>100.00</b>
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Costs supplied by Alan Harper, Morham & Brothie Partnership

#### WEBLINKS

Richard Murphy Architects  
[www.richardmurphyarchitects.com](http://www.richardmurphyarchitects.com)  
Simpson & Brown Architects  
[www.simpsonandbrown.co.uk](http://www.simpsonandbrown.co.uk)  
Buro Happold  
[www.burohappold.co.uk](http://www.burohappold.co.uk)

#### CREDITS

##### TENDER DATE

7.12.99

##### START ON SITE DATE

7.2.00

##### CONTRACT DURATION

70 weeks

##### GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA

1,690m<sup>2</sup>

##### FORM OF CONTRACT

JCT 98 LA edition with quantities

##### TOTAL COST

£3,949,380

##### CLIENT

Stirling Council

##### ARCHITECT

Richard Murphy Architects: Bill Black, Edward Hollis, Guido McLellan, Michael Brookman, Aron Coates, Tim Bayman, Peter Besley, Matt Bremner, Joe Carnegie, Ian Strakis, Clare Gaffney, Alan Gray, Gareth Jones, James Mason, Wattle McCallum, Sarah McInerney, Richard Murphy, Gerrard Reinmuth, Chris Rodgers, Stewart Stevenson, Ian Strakis, Ryan Sylvester, Adrian Welch

##### CONSERVATION ARCHITECT

Simpson & Brown Architects

##### STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

David Narro Associates

##### QUANTITY SURVEYOR

Morham & Brothie

##### SERVICES ENGINEER

Buro Happold

##### ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT

Sandy Brown Associates

##### PROJECT MANAGER

Summerfield Robb Clark

##### PLANNING SUPERVISOR

Woolgar Hunter

##### MAIN CONTRACTOR

Hunter & Clark

##### SUBCONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS

facade glazing Vitral UK  
installed by Haran Glass;  
electrical Steill Facilities;  
ironmongery Rynex Engineering; glazed canopy Gray & Dick;  
bleacher seating Audience Systems; lift Oakland Elevators; tension wire grid Slingco; hardware Laidlaw Architectural Hardware;  
doors Leaderflush & Shapland; entrance door Geze UK; internal lighting Erco Lighting; external lighting Louis Poulsen; control lighting Dynalite; theatre fit-out Northern Light; radiators Hudevad Britain; mechanical Rotary; operable wall Kaba Hufcor; structural steel McCulloch Paiman; render Sto; roof anchors Clow Group; ply panelling Wilhelmi UK; leadwork D Blake



## working details

The arts centre has been created from a complex collection of historic buildings, including a courthouse and a town hall, which have been retained and restored.

A new foyer has been inserted into a former courtyard. It is partly enclosed by the original walls and partly glazed on upper floors.

A new staircase and lift in the foyer give access to all parts of the centre. To accommodate the seven varying levels of the original and new parts of the building, the staircase changes in direction – from straight to angled dogleg, to handed angled dogleg – as it rises. Walkways of perforated steel plate supported by steel beams connect the flights to all parts of the building.

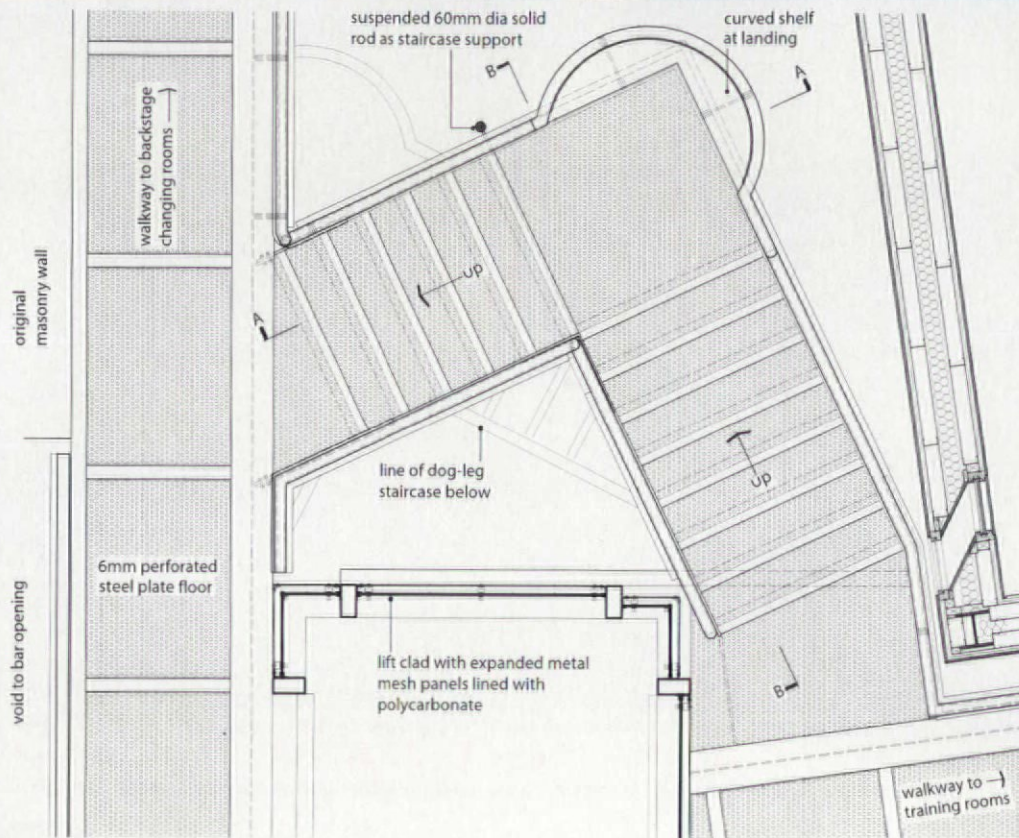
Each staircase consists of a pair of 250 x 12mm steel strings with 50 x 50 x 5mm angle supports at the back and paired 50 x 50 x 5mm angle supports at the front. The strings were welded at their ends to the walkway steelwork.

Upper flights are additionally supported with a 60mm-diameter solid steel rod which is suspended from the roof structure.

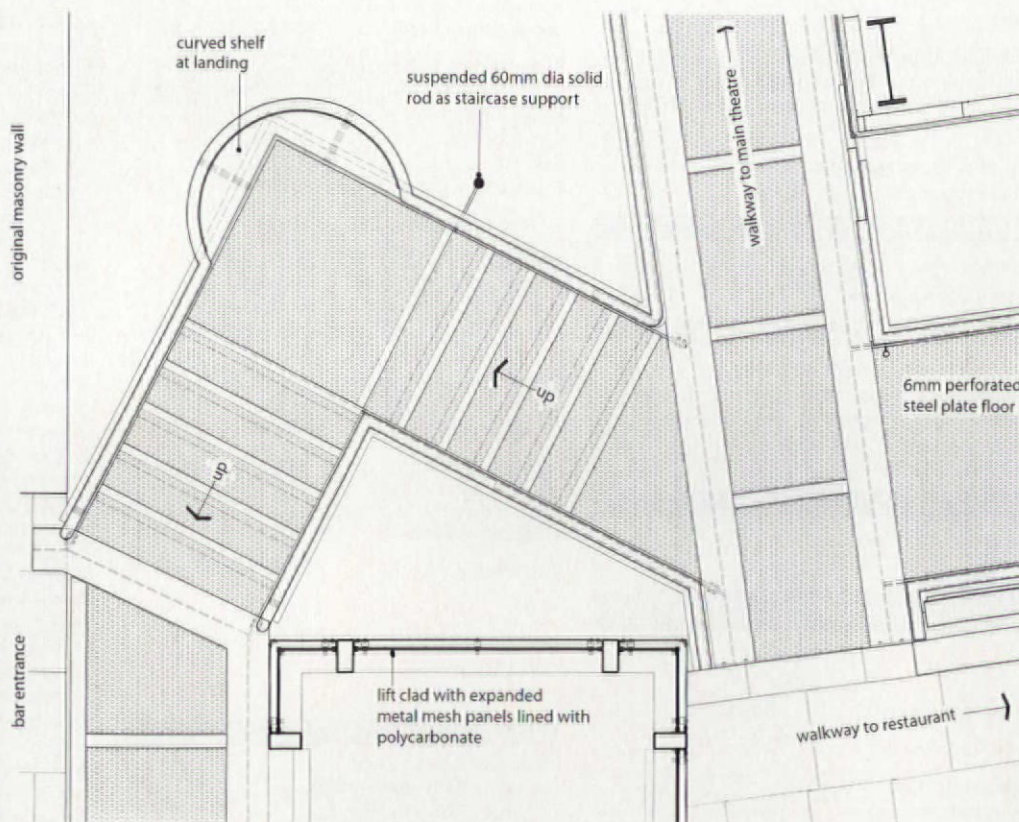
The balustrade is a series of paired 70 x 10mm steel flat balusters bolted to each side of a 10mm-thick steel cleat welded to the string. They are braced by an elliptical beech handrail incorporating a 12 x 50mm steel stiffener and by a 50 x 12mm steel flat running below the handrail. Panels of Expamet-expanded metal mesh – in frames of 40 x 3mm steel angles are fixed to the balusters.

Two half-landings are fitted with curved shelves formed from steel plate welded to the 50 x 12mm flats and supported by struts welded to the balusters.

Susan Dawson

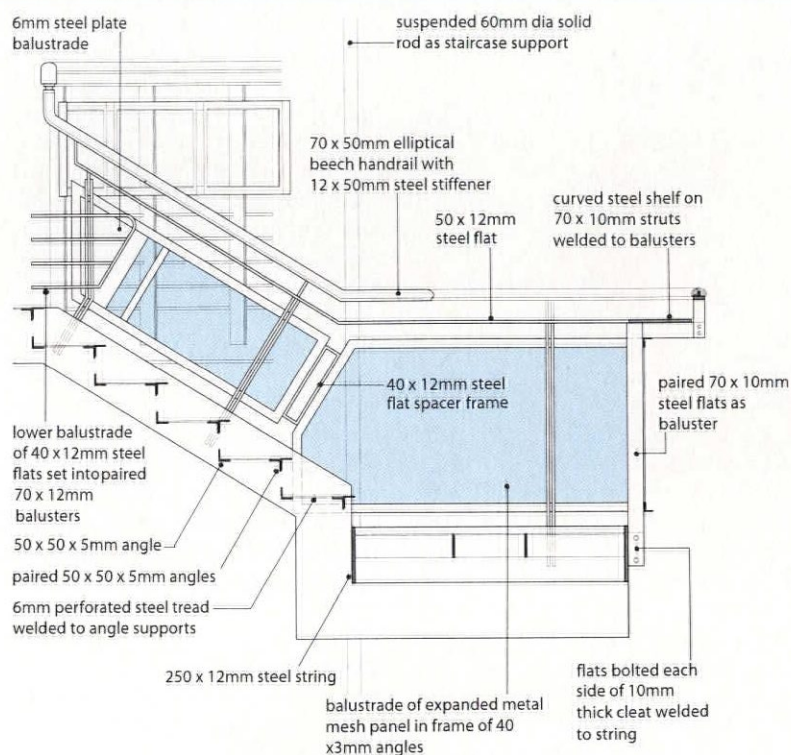


PLAN AT WALKWAY TO CHANGING ROOMS LEVEL

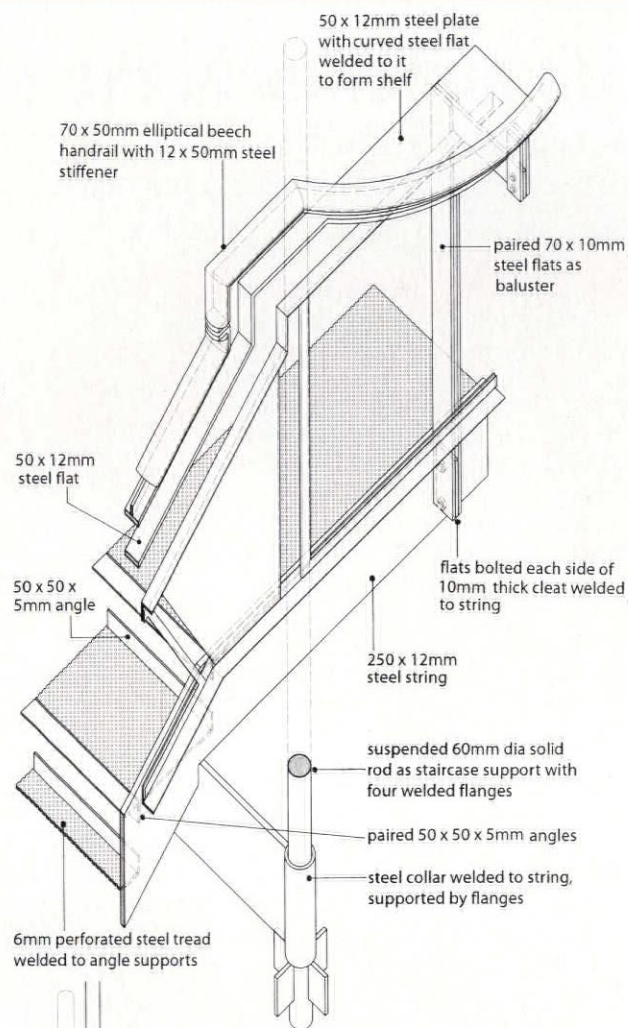


PLAN AT BAR LEVEL

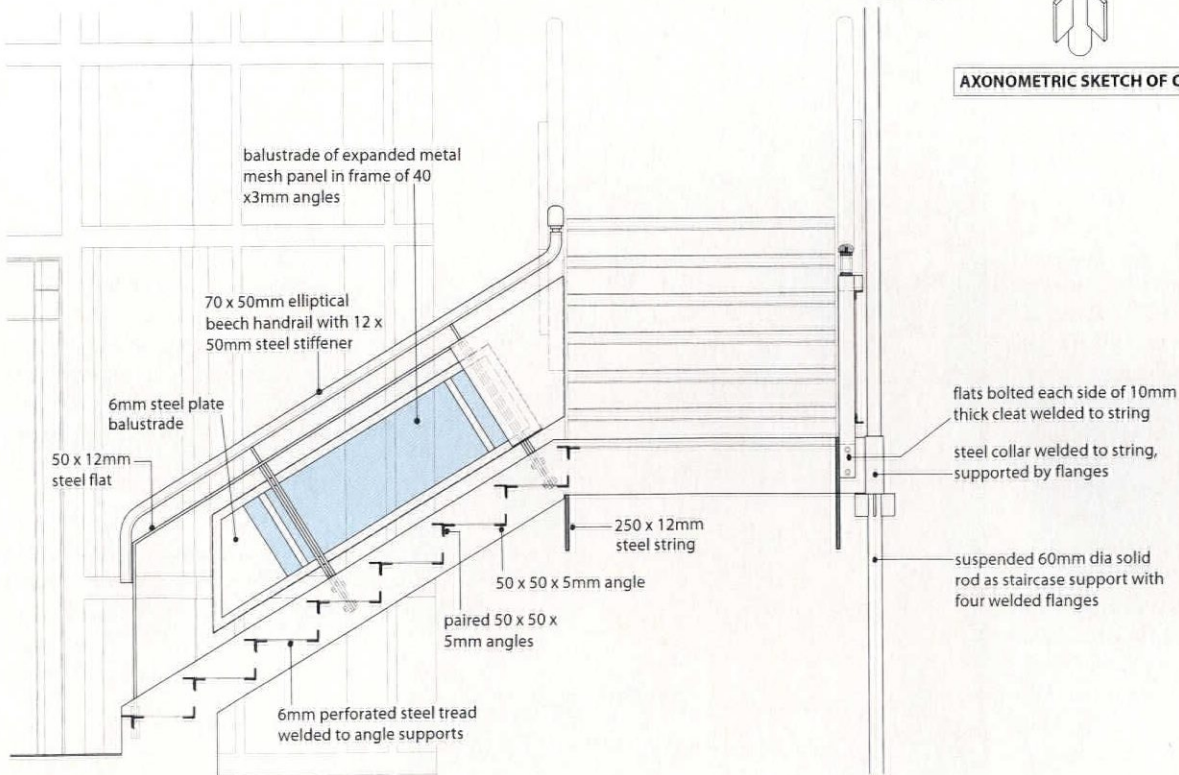




DETAIL SECTION A - A AT CHANGING ROOMS WALKWAY LEVEL



AXONOMETRIC SKETCH OF CURVED SHELF AT LANDING



DETAIL SECTION B - B AT BAR LEVEL



# Illumination in the spotlight

A recent seminar on external lighting was a testing, but rewarding, time for all concerned

BY AUSTIN WILLIAMS

'Darkness is good' may be a curious comment from a lighting company representative but Rob Mitchell, divisional manager for KIM Lighting, is unrepentant. 'We like shadows,' he says, by which he means that, especially in a dimly lit environment, external lighting must contrast the contours of a building rather than simply 'illuminate' it.

I was at a seminar presented by Light Projects in London, an event more geared to educating young lighting engineers about the merits of appreciating architecture than in trying to convince me to brush up my physics. All the same, we had been ushered to our tables, replete with pens and papers, rulers, protractors and calculators. We were in for a long haul; not for the mathematically challenged.

Priming lighting engineers to take account of architectural features and, indeed, educating them to have the awareness to show them up to their best advantage, was an admirable theme to the day. Even though one of the conclusions was the ubiquitous call that lighting engineers should be brought in early in the design process to add practical expertise and make the architect aware of specialist issues, it was none the less relevant for that. By default, it was a useful prompt that architects should also be aware of related specialisms.

All too often, architects have an 'I can do that' mentality and proceed to set out landscaping and external lighting layouts with only a notional appreciation of their consequences.

Spotlighting at right angles, directly onto an elevation, for example, will inevitably flatten out the features of a building and lose a sense of depth. Too high an intensity beam will glare at the point where the beam centre impacts, the concentrated aureole of which will make the rest of the building seem darker than it really is. Maintaining the same scale lighting pole at varying distances from a

'Priming lighting engineers to take account of architectural features was an admirable theme to the day'

building will create uninteresting uniformity.

On this latter point, Mitchell recommends higher poles further away from the building (within a landscaped car park, for example), with narrow cut-off optics to provide a more uniform spread of light with which to improve initial access visibility. The nearer to the building, the lower should be the pole; providing brighter light for higher illumination levels, definition and visual interest.

At close proximity to the building, bollards or floorlamps should be used in preference to poles as they help reduce the scale of the entrance way and do not block the view of the building. Wall lights can be added to enhance and delineate the routes

and highlight particular features.

The issue of light trespass, namely light shining where it doesn't belong (light pollution), is an increasing concern and lighting design needs careful consideration and input from local authority environmental officers if you suspect that there is going to be an issue.

However, even with the most directional beams illuminating a building, nothing is going to stop light migration. Given that there are no standard regulatory texts on the subject, the general conclusion was that an external lighting scheme should try to do the best possible job at illumination while trying to work within whatever particular pollution constraints pertain at the time.

## Colour render

Buildings seen in daytime benefit from a non-static daylight source; that is, the light incident upon it and around it is constantly changing its source point, has varying intensities and hues, and is variously direct or reflected.

When applying spotlighting to the same building, unless vast amounts of money are available, the light source is fixed and unchanging. Therefore, the most basic consideration must be to ascertain your most advantageous principal direction of view.

Did you know that a 16 year old needs 10 lux less light to complete a task than a 60 year old? Try arguing that one with the building control officer when you are designing a college lecture theatre or an old people's home.

Also, did you know that if you have a red brick building and you want to shine a blue light on it – for whatever reason – there is no lamp in existence that will succeed in colouring the brickwork blue?

Several slides were presented of gaudy pink buildings which, one can but hope, were not intended to be that colour, but were simply the result of assuming that paint colour logic would prevail in light.

## Optical allusions

Andy Baker, business development manager of KIM and the hard man of the presentational double act, took the floor for the calculation session.





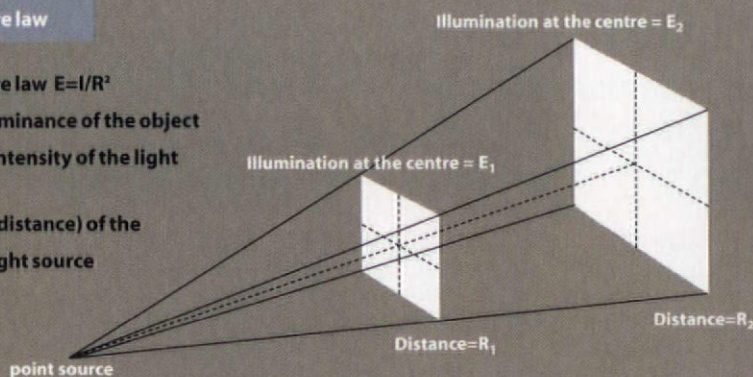
### The inverse square law

The inverse square law  $E=I/R^2$

Where  $E$  = the illuminance of the object

$I$  = the luminous intensity of the light source

$R$  = the radius (or distance) of the object from the light source



### The cosine law

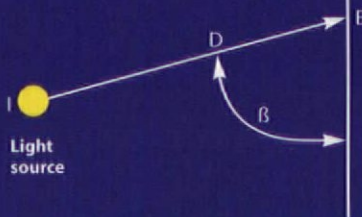
The cosine law  $E=I/D^2 \cos \beta$

Where  $E$  = the illuminance of the object

$I$  = the luminous intensity of the light source

$D$  = the radius (or distance) of the object from the light source

$\beta$  = the angle of incidence of the lighting to the illuminated plane



Even though most lighting schemes are calculated using proprietary computer software packages, this back-to-basics session was intended to refresh our memories of the mathematical principles involved in producing a lighting scheme. Although he stressed that decorative lighting schemes should be about architectural or artistic interpretation, they still need to comply with rigorous 'calculation science'.

### Light and shade

The brightness of an object diminishes relative to the inverse of the square of the distance of the object from the illumination source, one of the methods used by astronomers to gauge the distance of stars. The inverse square law enables designers to accurately assess how bright an object will look when lit.

The cosine law deals with geometric considerations – that the apparent illumination of an object diminishes relative to the cosine of the incidence of the beam angle to the illuminated surface (namely, the steeper the angle of incline of the lighting the less bright the object will be).

Considering the photometric per-

**Top: using the inverse square law it is possible to calculate how bright an object will appear when lit. Bottom: applying the principles of the cosine law, how bright an object appears is dependent on the steepness of the angle of incline of the lighting**

formance of lighting equipment, Baker displayed a wide range of hardware and demonstrated the use of accurate optical systems to achieve desired effects, stating that there was a 'gulf between optical systems available, some tending towards the "Kodak Instamatic" and others more towards the "Hasselblad Medium Format"'. As I left to take a headache tablet, the rest of the audience were preparing themselves for the fieldwork. The sample questions that they'd been labouring over all afternoon were actually modelled on real data from an existing building, and they were about to test their theories.

Even though I was extremely rusty on the maths, I thought that this was a genuinely novel presentation to practitioners, and all the more worthy for its attempt to make the 'students' aware of the bigger issues. Content-led, cross-fertilisation opportunities such as this are few and far between. There should be more. In this way, unlike the passive content of most CPD seminars, we might all actually learn something.

Lighting Projects can be contacted on 020 7231 8282

### SHEDDING LIGHT ON DEFINITIONS

#### Luminance (L)

How bright an object appears to be in comparison with others in a given direction, at a given point of a real or imaginary surface. Quotient of the luminous flux transmitted by an elementary beam passing through the given point and propagating in the solid angle containing the given direction, and the product of the solid angle, the area of a section of that beam containing the given point, and the angle between the normal to that section and the direction of the beam. Unit: candela per square metre ( $\text{cd/m}^2$ )

#### Illuminance (E)

How much measurable light is hitting at a point on a surface. Quotient of luminous flux incident on a element of a surface containing the point, and the area of that element.

Unit: lux (lx)

#### Luminous intensity (Iv, I)

How much light comes out of a fitting and in what direction. Quotient of the luminous flux leaving the source, propagated in an element of solid angle containing the given direction, and the element of solid angle.

Unit: candela (cd)

#### Peak intensity

The beam centre of a light pattern, usually the brightest spot. The luminous intensity of a luminaire in the direction of the beam axis.

#### Beam angle

The beam spread pattern which equates to 50 per cent of the peak intensity. The direction in the centre of the solid angle which is bounded by directions having luminous intensities of 50 per cent of the maximum intensities of a luminaire.

#### Field angle

The beam spread pattern which equates to 10 per cent of the peak intensity. The direction in the centre of the solid angle which is bounded by directions having luminous intensities of 10 per cent of the maximum intensities of a luminaire.

#### Colour temperature

A measure of how 'warm' or 'cold' a light source appears to be. Temperature of a black body that emits radiation of the same chromacity as the radiation considered

Colour Rendering Index (Ra)



# Who needs use classes?

Planners shouldn't have to consider issues other than planning. Why do they need to control changes of use?

BY BRIAN WATERS

No apologies for returning to the subject of the government's Green Paper on planning reform published last December. To quote Malcolm Grant, editor of the *Planning Law Encyclopaedia*: 'The government's proposals have been widely portrayed, not least by the planning minister Lord Falconer, as the most radical reforms of the last 50 years. That description must clearly be right. Indeed, it is remarkable just how far reaching the proposals are.'

'This is not a re-run of the limp planning reform aspirations held by every government of the last 20 years, but something of real substance. It challenges many of the implicit assumptions of the present system. It seeks efficiency and transparency. It does not simply aim its weaponry on local authorities; it drives its tanks unhesitatingly on to the government's own lawns.'

While this is wholly refreshing, it tends more to rhetorical gusto than to intellectual depth; much of the necessary detail is simply absent. 'It would not pass muster as a detailed planning permission,' says Grant. He observes that the government knows roughly where it wants to go, but it has not yet fashioned the route for getting there.

## Useless classes

Unfortunately, this thrust does not apply to its final consultation paper on the Use Classes Order, which was released late in January. Far from suggesting 'a fundamental reform' it barely tinkers at the edges. It comprises a summary of a consultant's report and a series of options for change.

The net effect of all the suggested changes would be a Use Classes Order with maybe 35 classes rather than the current 33 or so. Worse, one of these is a strong suggestion, unsupported by the work of the consultants, to reintroduce the old 'light industrial' use class under a new



'Many things that are argued about under the pretext of being planning matters can be left alone to be dealt with by others'

name so as to distinguish it from office, research and development and suchlike 'clean' employment uses. This would be a retrograde step indeed and serves no demonstrated purpose.

The second reason for disappointment with this document is its failure to recognise the contribution which a radical reappraisal of the use classes Order might make towards the streamlining objectives of the Green Paper itself. Like the Green Paper, there is no attempt to define or redefine its purpose or that of the planning system.

By establishing dozens of use classes so as to establish the need to regulate changes between them, it imposes a high level of control and makes significant demands on the resources of planning authorities. To simply sweep it away would go some way towards achieving the principal objectives of the whole planning reform agenda. It should therefore be incumbent upon government to review and then justify the need for more than one class.

## The final frontier

It is more than 10 years since the profession's favourite estate agent, David Rosen (Hon RIBA), made a cogent case for there being only one use class which he called 'space'.

In truth, the time has come to

press this argument. The ACA planning group, in its response, points out that the government's paper on planning obligations would allow for only three classes:

- private uses including charities;
- commercial uses which are defined as uses for profit; and
- noxious uses.

It argues that there should be far fewer use classes and greater flexibility within the use class system. In particular, it notes that many controls already exist outside of, but relevant to, the planning system. These include, for example, noise and pollution controls through environmental health and licensing regulations and disabled access and safety controls under the Building Regulations.

It has long been established that legislative controls should not overlap. Planning reform would be aided by a greater recognition that many things that are argued about under the pretext of being planning matters can be left well alone, to be dealt with by other means. If there is to be more than one use class, the justification should relate specifically to land use policy issues and not impinge on environmental and such potential conflicts.

## Taxing times

In its consultation response to the paper on reforming planning obligations, the ACA supports the standard tariff-based approach for planning obligations which is proposed, provided that tariffs replace 'Section 106 agreements' which will become unnecessary if the promised certainty and transparency is achieved. They emphasise: 'The planning system should not be forced to take on the function of providing social benefits such as affordable housing.'

Acceptance of these two points would go some way to satisfying the strong objections of the property industry, demonstrated by *Property Week's* 'Byers Beware' campaign, which sees the proposed tariffs as an attempt to reintroduce development land tax.

Brian Waters is principal of the Boisot Waters Cohen Partnership, tel 020 7828 6555, e-mail [brian@bwcp.co.uk](mailto:brian@bwcp.co.uk), [www.bwcp.co.uk](http://www.bwcp.co.uk)



# Emission accomplished

A new car tax coming into force on 6 April will affect those using a car for work purposes

BY LLOYD WILLIAMS

Whether you use your own car for work or have a company car, fundamental tax changes coming into effect in two days will impact on you. Architects, especially site architects and those who are regularly on the road, will undoubtedly be affected by the new legislation.

## Old rules

Many employees use their own cars for business, and in return receive a 'pence per mile' payment from their employers. The Inland Revenue publishes approved mileage rates (AMR), which until now have been based on engine size. If the employer pays below the AMR then you get tax relief on the difference. If you are paid over the AMR, you are liable to tax on the excess. For the year ending 5 April 2002, the approved rates are as below and it should be emphasised

'Many employees use their own cars for business and in return receive a "pence per mile" payment from their employers'

that only business miles qualify for relief (not commuting to work).

So when your tax return thuds onto your doormat sometime in the near future, these are the figures to bear in mind for 2001/2002.

Remember that employers are not infallible. While most will keep you informed of the mileage rates being paid, there are still a few who either do not know or will not tell you, and pay rates that have been plucked out of thin air. This can leave you with a nasty shock at the end of the year when you receive an unexpected bill

Engine size	Up to 4,000 miles	Above 4,000 miles
Up to 1500cc	40p	25p
1501cc-2000cc	45p	25p
2001cc-plus	63p	36p

for that taxable excess. The employer's fault – but the employee's bill!

## New rules

The Finance Act 2001 changes this from 6 April, and introduces a statutory exemption for employees using their own vehicles for work, irrespective of engine size. The exempt amount is again expressed in terms of pence per business mile.

Cars and vans	
Up to 10,000 business miles	40p/mile
Over 10,000 business miles	25p/mile

The rates must be paid in respect of business miles conducted in your own vehicle and the total payment must not exceed the result of business miles multiplied mileage rate.

Again, where the payments are less than the approved rates, the employee gets a deduction for mileage allowance relief. If the payment received exceeds the approved rate, then the excess is taxable.

*Lloyd Williams is an independent tax consultant*

## COMPANY CARS: COUNTING THE COST

From this month, a new system has been introduced for calculating the financial benefit of having a company car. Many architects and professional people enjoy such a benefit and will need to be aware of what is in store.

Until now, the tax charged on company cars was based on a percentage of the list price, the business miles and the age of the car. However, as part of an environmental exercise, the tax charge from April 2002 is graduated in accordance with the car's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The list price is multiplied by a variable percentage figure, which ranges from 15 per cent for cleaner, fuel-efficient cars, to a maximum of 35 per cent for those with the highest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Some useful guidance is given below:

### LIST PRICE

This includes the list price of the car with standard accessories, plus the list price of optional accessories when the car was first made available to the employee. It also includes the cost of any other later accessory more than £100.

### SLIDING SCALE

CO<sub>2</sub> levels are measured in grams per kilometre (g/km). The 'entry' level for 2002/03 is 165g/km, which will result in a taxable benefit of the car's list price multiplied by 15 per cent. The sliding scale increases from 15 per cent, in 1 per cent steps for every 5g/km over the entry level, so an emission figure of 178g/km will attract a taxable benefit of 17 per cent of the list price. The intention is to reduce the entry level as cars become more environmentally friendly.

### APPROVED CO<sub>2</sub> FIGURE

All new cars registered in the UK from March 2001 carry an approved CO<sub>2</sub> emission figure shown on the vehicle registration document (a figure that is set for the life of the car).

### NO APPROVED CO<sub>2</sub> FIGURE

All cars first registered in the UK pre-1998 will not have an approved emissions figure. The tax charged on these cars will be based on the engine capacity.

### 1 JAN 1998-28 FEB 2001

Cars first registered in the UK between these dates may not have an emissions figure readily available. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) is providing a free online CO<sub>2</sub> enquiry service. Visit [www.smmt.co.uk](http://www.smmt.co.uk) and follow the prompts to obtain the CO<sub>2</sub> figure for your car.

### DIESEL CARS

The percentage limit of the price based on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be increased by three per cent. So if the percentage based on CO<sub>2</sub> is 15 per cent, then a figure of 18 per cent will apply to diesel vehicles. But this addition cannot take the maximum charge to more than 35 per cent of the list price.

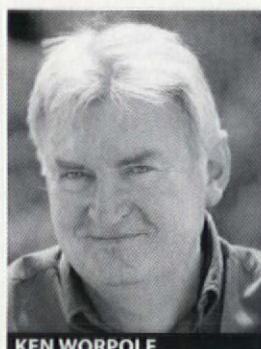
Most company cars will fall within the above categories but if, for example, you have a car first registered in another country, or one propelled by alternative fuel, etc, you should phone your tax office and ask for the relevant information.





# CABE Design Review assessed

We gave some key commentators preview copies of the new CABE Design Review – a guide on how to evaluate quality in architecture and urban design (AJ 28.3.02). Here are their considered opinions and constructive criticism to take the debate forward



**KEN WORPOLE**

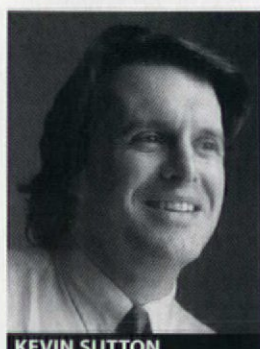
This is a lively and sharply focused set of guidelines. However, there are three important omissions.

First, it takes the identity of 'the client' as given. Many recent Lottery projects have been bedevilled by a complete ambiguity as to who the real client is: the professionals who develop the scheme; the Lottery boards which hand over the money; or the end users, whose Lottery tickets and taxes paid for the whole caboodle.

Second, there seems to be no mention of 'post-occupancy evaluation': how else are people to assess whether 'commodity, firmness and delight' have been achieved?

Third, though reference is made to whole-life costs, surely in addition we ought to be requiring a coherent and costed maintenance regime built in to the contract – especially for public buildings.

*Ken Worpole's new book on landscape, memory and death will be published next year by Reaktion Books*



**KEVIN SUTTON**

This is yet another document that preaches good design – but to the converted. As such it will be as effectual as HRH's *A Vision of Britain*, John Gummer's *Quality in Town & Country* and the DoE's *Power of Place: The future of the historic environment*.

Taxpayers' money would be far better spent at the quayside, enforcing quality through the planning system, the only legal avenue available.

Consideration of elements outside the site must be a legal requirement for consent, ensuring architects and clients look beyond the limits of individual sites.

How many speculative developers/housebuilders will commit to 'excellence on the part of the client'? Profit is the commitment – quite understandably driven by market forces.

It also seems concerned solely with the urban environment with no reference made to the specifics of rural development.

*Kevin Sutton is a partner in Davies Sutton Architecture*



**JOSIE APPLETON**

It is refreshing that CABE's Paul Finch insists that 'it is possible to distinguish good design from bad design'.

However, good design cannot be praised in the abstract. CABE says a good client should have 'commitment to excellence'; but what does that mean? Nor can good design be over-prescribed; it is possible to imagine good design that wouldn't comply with CABE's criteria.

Some criteria would apply only to some buildings – should all design be 'flexible and adaptable'? Other criteria seem to be driven more by political imperatives than design concerns (such as 'use natural resources responsibly'). Vitruvius' guidelines seem more sensible: buildings should be fit for their purpose, be soundly built, and they should please the eye. Beyond that, good design is probably better worked out in practice.

*Josie Appleton is author of Museums for the People, Institute of Ideas, 2002*

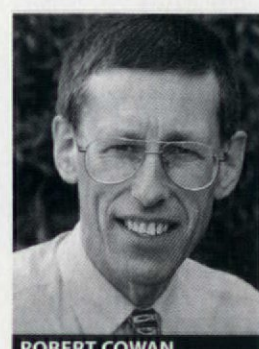


**PETER CROSSLEY**

Much in this document is good and we support the aspirations behind it. It would be helpful if it was backed by guidance on the management of the design review process – which projects are included, who should be involved, when, and under what rules of engagement, for example.

There remains the danger that the section on the role of the client as a patron could be misunderstood as implying that the client's job is to prepare a brief and then let the architect get on with it. Most architects don't have patrons, but have clients who are active partners in the process of design. The Egan philosophy of long-term partnership between design teams and clients, leading to continual improvement, is at the heart of the government's agenda and I am sure that CABE supports that principle.

*Peter Crossley is managing director of Broadway Malyan*



**ROBERT COWAN**

It will be useful, particularly its list of warnings against problems such as the old trick of carrying out a context analysis but ignoring its conclusions during the design stage.

The guidance could be clearer. It explains the importance of urban design and tries to describe the qualities of a well-designed building. It also provides a further set of principles, some of which, such as 'integrity and honesty', are hard to define, and this is probably not the place to try. Most of it, though, is a re-wording of the DTLR/CABE guide, 'By Design'.

The next edition should explain that there is one set of principles of design which works at every scale, from the general to the specific; from the externals to the interior spaces of buildings. It would be useful to have guidance on how developers can produce design statements that illustrate how their project builds on these principles on every level.

*Robert Cowan is director of Urban Design Group*



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## Maintain a consistent position or risk the wrath of the law

People involved in disputes need to be consistent. An expert who has previously expressed a contrary view on a similar subject may have that put to them. A party that shifts its case can be asked about its changed stance. But, on a larger scale, when construction contracts go wrong, there are often more than two parties trying to sort out their difficulties. It is no good saying one thing to one and something else to another and hoping no-one will notice the difference.

Consider, then, the position of Jarvis, which carried out building work on 36 flats in London Docklands for Galliard. Jarvis subcontracted the flooring to Durabella. Galliard and Jarvis fell out, and Galliard terminated Jarvis' employment. Jarvis started proceedings to claim sums it said it was entitled to, the 'Jarvis/Galliard claim'. Those sums included amounts claimed for Durabella's floors, which Jarvis said were fine. The case settled, and a sum was paid by Galliard to Jarvis. So far, so good. But there was a separate claim brought by Durabella against Jarvis, the 'Durabella/Jarvis claim'.

Jarvis defended that claim on the basis that Durabella's work was not acceptable. This gave Jarvis a problem of inconsistency. It found itself receiving a settlement payment from Galliard for a claim that had included flooring works, while declining to hand over payment to Durabella.

The Jarvis/Galliard claim had been settled by an agreement that spelt out that no part of the settlement sum paid by Galliard related to Durabella's work. It went further, stating that in calculating the settlement sum, Galliard had deducted its £162,460 counterclaim relating to Durabella's work. The judgment given in the Durabella/Jarvis claim last September was limited to certain issues. It did not deal with whether or not the floor was defective, but did explore Jarvis' right to withhold payment from Durabella on the basis of the agreement between it and the Jarvis/Galliard settlement.

Jarvis argued that it had a valid 'pay when paid' clause in its agreement with Durabella. Pay when paid clauses generally say that a main contractor will only pay its subcontractor when the main contractor is paid by the employer. The

Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act (HGCRA) outlawed such clauses in various instances. However, the Durabella/Jarvis agreement predated the Act. If Jarvis could show that the clause worked, in the absence of payment by Galliard for the flooring work (as apparently evidenced by the Jarvis/Galliard settlement agreement), Jarvis would not have to pay Durabella for the floor, defective or not.

His Honour Judge Humphrey Lloyd QC agreed that a pay when paid clause was incorporated into the Durabella/Jarvis contract. He concluded, however, that Jarvis could not rely on it. It was Jarvis' conduct that had brought to an end its arrangement with, and payment by, Galliard. Jarvis then failed to pursue its remedies against Galliard promptly. Jarvis could not take advantage of its own default to defeat Durabella's claim.

During the hearing it emerged that the terms of the Jarvis/Galliard settlement – which recorded that the sum did not include any amounts for Durabella's work, and that placed a figure on it – had been inserted solely at the request of Jarvis' solicitor. The judge took a very dim view of this. He found that, as a result, the

Jarvis/Galliard settlement agreement had no evidential value whatsoever in showing whether or not Jarvis had been paid for Durabella's work. On the contrary, he concluded, it appeared that the terms inserted in the settlement agreement at Jarvis' request had been intended to mislead both Durabella and the court. It followed that even if Jarvis had been able to rely on its pay when paid clause, there was no acceptable evidence presented to the court as to what Jarvis had or had not been paid for Durabella's work.

The other party to a dispute will try to go behind the documents presented to it to ferret out the facts, and the court may not hesitate to listen. It is a slippery slope from including what may appear to be commercially sensible terms at one contractual interface to being told that to do so constitutes an attempt to mislead the court at a second. That is a serious finding that consistency and candour might have avoided.

Sue Lindsey

'It is no good saying one thing to one and something else to another and hoping no-one will notice'

## 'Scientific' web research is no laughing matter

You may despair at architectural education's failure to extrude just-in-time office fodder, and you probably fall about at the need for its wimpish teachers to scrape together 'research' brownie points in order to survive in the new Academe. But it could be a lot worse. In some departments (not architecture) over at the University of Hertfordshire there is this bloke, Dick Wiseman, who has persuaded the British Association for the Advancement of Science to stump up research funding for what is called a Laugh Lab.

The curious might try [www.laughlab.co.uk](http://www.laughlab.co.uk) but if you are under the impression that you can crib jokes for an after dinner speech, think again. The site asks you to rate half-a-dozen sub-Christmas cracker 'jokes'. Give me a dimly illuminated tutorial room and the topological meta-modalities of ongoing intraspatial intervention any day.

You might, however, get a laugh from [www.portrait.com](http://www.portrait.com), the site of Portrait Displays. It sells serious, useful and inexpensive software and a couple of supporting arms for LCD screens which enable you to view your screen sideways. All right, you turn your screen on its side and view it in portrait, rather than conventional landscape, fashion. Or even, it beats me why, upside down. Maybe you do not need this. But think. Download the free 30-day, 180°-only sample version of Pivot Pro. Install it on the big 21-inch VDU your new partner from hell has commandeered but is really yours. When he has gone to his important afternoon meeting, install and hide the software in some innocuous folder. Press the Pivot Pro button which rotates all his images and text 180°.

Next morning draw the senior partner's attention to the worrying fact that the fool has come in, stood on his head, turned his VDU upside down and is now working at it quite happily. The sound of white flapping coats wafts ominously through the office.

[sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com](mailto:sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com)



# PROJECT EXTRANETS

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This conference, organised by Construction Plus, the Internet division of Emap, who publish The Architects' Journal, New Civil Engineer, and Construction News, will help you learn about project collaboration, listen to clients, designers and contractors with real experience, and evaluate the different offerings.

### Project collaboration: how to manage projects online 15th May 2002, Hilton, Leeds City

**09:00 Registration and coffee**

**09:30 Opening Address** Ross Sturley, Construction Plus

**09:45 Keynote Address** Stuart Cowperthwaite, Arup  
What UK construction stands to gain from online project collaboration, the action that is needed to ensure its effective adoption and why so many firms are competing to be the leading service provider.

**10:15 What is Project Collaboration?** Mark Bew, Costain  
An introduction to the features and functions of project extranets, and the impact they have on the way teams work together.

**11:00 Coffee**

**11:30 Case study 1** Don Williams, Woolf\*  
A construction consultant's experience in using project extranets in design and construction of a £60m office project.

**12:0 The designer's perspective** David Peel, Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson, Martin Pettinger, MWH  
How project collaboration can be used to smooth the design process, making it easier and more efficient for team members to share information.

**12:45 Case study 2** Marek Suchocki, WS Atkins  
Learn how WS Atkins developed and rolled out Programme and Facilities Management systems, to some of their major clients in Petroleum and Banking.

**13:15 Lunch**

**14:30 The Client's Perspective** Steve Smith, Sainsbury's  
As an early adopter of Project Collaboration on major projects, Steve Smith will discuss the steps that must be taken to ensure the full benefits are realised by all.

**15:15 Case study 3**  
A construction company will share real experiences of using project extranets.

**15:45 Coffee**

**16:15 Legal implications of using project extranets**  
Mark Harris, Masons  
Does using project extranets change the legal framework? What sensible precautions need to be taken by users to protect them in the event of a dispute?

**16:45 Q & A panel** Steve Smith, Sainsbury's, Mark Bew, Costain, Stuart Cowperthwaite, Arup  
The panel will answer your questions about the aspects of project collaboration that affect you.

**17:15 Closing remarks** a summary from Ross Sturley

**17:30 Drinks reception**

\*invited

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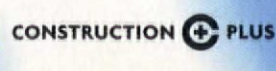
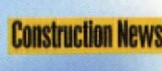
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Steps up to the Sydney Opera House.  
Above right: housing at Fredensborg.  
Right: dining table at Can Lis, Majorca

## Majestic conceptions

ALAN POWERS

### Utzon

By Richard Weston. Edition Bløndal, 2002. 432pp. £99.95. Available from Triangle Bookshop (020 7631 1381) and the RIBA Bookshop (020 7251 0791)

On 26 April 1966, shortly after his 48th birthday, Jørn Utzon and his family left Sydney. They travelled under false names and boarded the plane at the last minute to avoid the press. Back in his native Denmark, Utzon was warned that, because he had resigned from the job, he would never be given government work, and this turned out to be true.

This resignation episode, in which Utzon was manipulated by opportunist politicians, was a tragedy for the building, since the interiors were completed without reference to Utzon's vision, but as Richard Weston admits in his magnificent monograph (the first that Utzon has sanctioned), it is less amazing that he was caught on a trip wire than that he had been able to have such a clear run until then.

Weston tells the story in a single long chapter, and his combination of narrative and interpretation, backed up by photo essays on the 330mm square pages, is exemplary. The balance between Sydney and the rest of Utzon's career seems correct, and, lest the reader should fear bathos, the next chapter engages with equal intensity in describing an unbuilt scheme for a museum in Denmark, for the painter Asger Jørn, which, despite its relatively small scale, is

scarcely less fascinating in its implications.

Luckily, although Utzon cannot fail to have been bruised by the Sydney debacle (he has never returned there), his career was far from over. If at least half his projects were unbuilt, that was not an unusual experience for an international architect of quality in the 1970s and '80s. He now lives in retirement on Majorca in the second of two houses he has built out of simple local materials, whose austere sunlit spaces are generously illustrated at the end of the book.

Weston has the knowledge and understanding necessary for situating Utzon historically, which also means situating him in the contemporary field, for a building like the Guggenheim Bilbao has given the Opera House a renewed relevance. Dismissing the analogies with expressionism that clustered around Sydney's white sails, he finds plenty of grounding in the Scandinavian lineage of Modernism. Utzon spent most of the war years in Sweden, where Asplund's combination of playfulness and integrity was important. Aalto was scarcely less so, but Utzon, the son of a boat designer, had a tougher and more adventurous attitude to structure, and learnt from his teacher Kay Fisker a principle of 'constructive logic'.

Utzon's visits in 1949 to the Mayan

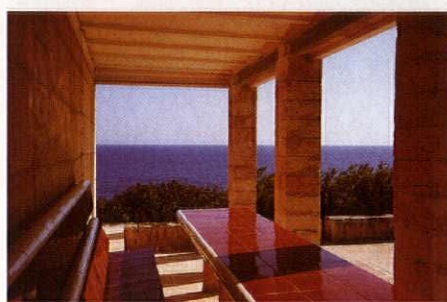
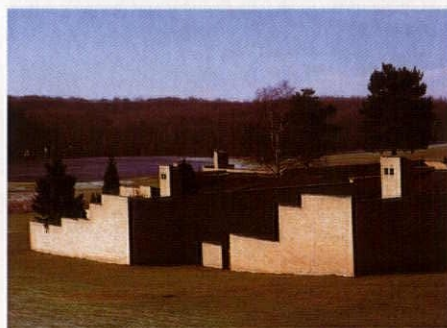
temples made him aware of primordial qualities in architecture that find expression in the work of Louis Kahn but, as Weston comments, the results in Utzon have none of the taint of the drawing board and the T-square. The vast plinth and the ascending steps are seen without compromise at Sydney, but equally in very simple houses. While there is much about Utzon's sensitivity and care that is typically Danish, he has a grandeur of conception that is transnational.

There is one work more or less by Utzon in the British Isles, understandably not mentioned in a book that does not claim completeness, that bears out the claim as well as any other. This is the house for Povl Ahm, an engineer with Arup, at Harpenden, for which Utzon provided a sketch, involving concrete beams spanning longitudinally where common sense would have dictated simple transverse spans. Although the house is not large, the effect is monumental, in contrast to the littleness that tended to afflict most post-war private houses in Britain.

Utzon's strongly intuitive method of designing was based on a genuine appreciation and understanding of nature – reverent, but not sentimental. He avoided the trap of literal transcription, but found generative ideas in plant, wave and cloud forms. Sharing with Frank Lloyd Wright a knowledge of Goethe's scientific works, Utzon states that 'the inevitability of nature's principle of growth ought to be a fundamental concept in architecture'.

Utzon was struck by a saying of Aalto's, that on a branch of cherry blossom, each





flower has the same form but is subtly different, and tried to exemplify this in a number of low-rise housing projects. Weston gives these issues due consideration, and also explores Utzon's related interest in prefabrication and the design of components; seen in this context, not as a denial of the organic, but as an affirmation of nature's mode of operation with standardised parts.

The other major theme to emerge from the book is the influence of Islamic architecture and urban design. This was manifested in Utzon's Parliament Building in Kuwait, his last major work, on a scale to rival Sydney, but almost unknown in the canon of Modern architecture. It is far from the superficial embellishment of standard building types with Islamic motifs that many Arab clients found acceptable. Instead, it has a magnificent portico roofed with channelled concrete like draped fabric, while the interior is organised on the cellular principle of an Islamic city.

Utzon's flights from Denmark to Australia gave him opportunities to stop off at Isfahan and elsewhere en route, and he put the knowledge to good use. The profound influence of Islam and other non-Western cultures (China and Japan in particular) on Utzon's work forms a theme running through the book, that relates broadly to the movement away from rationalisation in post-war Modern architecture. With Weston's book in our laps (it is almost too heavy to hold in hands alone), we can reconsider the whole history of the past 50 years as never before.

*Alan Powers is an architectural historian*

# Rural romanticism

DEAN HAWKES

## Spirit and Place

By Christopher Day. Architectural Press (Butterworth-Heinemann), 2002. £24.99

Christopher Day's commitment to the creation of a sustainable environment is well known and, in many respects, beyond criticism. His concern for the discovery of better ways to build is widely shared: the impact of buildings upon the global environment and on individual well-being are issues that few would exclude from the agenda of theory, education and practice.

Day's new book rehearses the wide-ranging arguments of his earlier texts, *Places of the Soul* and *Building with Heart*, and adds to these new, and in some cases not so new, material drawn from the fields of environmental science and design. In that respect the book might be seen, quite straightforwardly, as a primer for sustainable design.

The relevance of the vernacular in informing new design is a theme that has been explored critically and fruitfully by many others. The case for the use of renewable energy in place of fossil fuels, the adoption of strategies for energy conservation and the reduction of embodied energy in building materials, are all shared by many others, as are the arguments for preferring the 'natural' in favour of the 'artificial'. Equally, Day's social and cultural concerns find close parallels elsewhere.

But this work is not just another contribution to the open debate about 'sustainable' architecture. (Isn't this already an overused, ill-defined and, thus, unhelpful term?) What we have in fact is a kind of hermetic tract driven by undoubted conviction, but which, by virtue of this, as conviction becomes ideology, is partial, closed and ultimately limited.

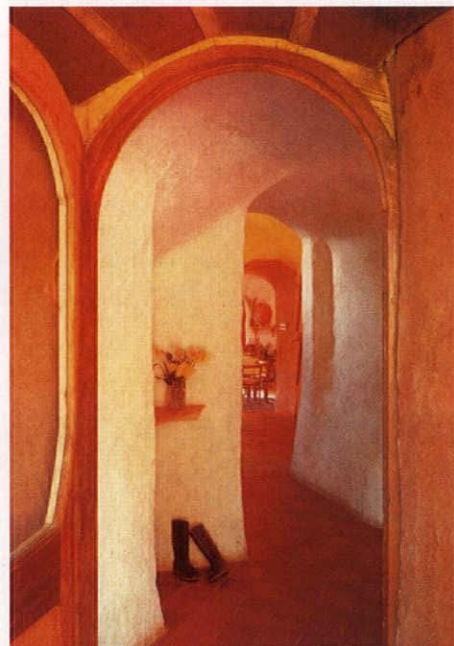
Looking from an open and, perhaps, more pragmatic perspective, it is those matters that Day chooses to omit, or in some cases to misrepresent, that need to be noted. There is an undoubted appeal in the pervasive and gentle ruralism of much of the text. Who could oppose such sweet reason? But this is juxtaposed with a representation of the city that, more by implication than by demonstration, is false, impractical and probably irresponsible. To characterise all cities as noisy, polluted, stressful and alienating, while failing to acknowledge the rich physical, social and cultural opportunities that they offer, implies a kind of moralistic rejection of the city, leaving it without hope.

The other significant omission from Day's 'hidden agenda' is his reluctance to acknowledge that 'conventional' architecture might be an effective agent for environmentally and socially responsible building. It is surprising that there is no acknowledgement of the work of the many committed designers who, since the so-called 'energy crisis' of the 1970s, have embraced these concerns.

The work of, for example, Feilden Clegg, Alan Short and Bill Dunster in Britain, and Ken Yeang, Thomas Herzog and Alexandros Tombazis around the world, is convincing proof of this. In their differing ways these architects and many others build upon the paradigm of architecture as a culturally grounded, socially responsible, practical art, that has demonstrably served humankind well, and bring it to the service of the complex contemporary world.

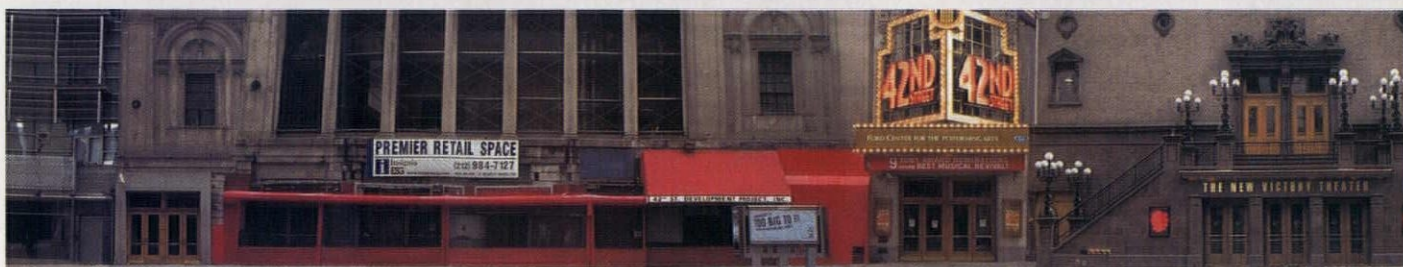
It is more likely that a sustainable future, in all the meanings of that term, will be secured through the continuity of the logical, material and cultural ground of conventional practice, than by resort to the small scale, anti-urban and ultimately sentimental prescriptions offered by Day in this book.

*Dean Hawkes is professor of architectural design at the Welsh School of Architecture*



Day's Nant-y-cwm kindergarten (AJ 15.5.91)





# Sign of the times

WILLIAM MENKING

## Times Square Roulette: Remaking the City Icon

By Lynne B Sagalyn. MIT Press, 2001. 638pp. £41.50

I went for a walk in Times Square last month to see how it had changed in the year since I moved from New York City. There are now three enormous skyscrapers at the corner of 42nd Street and Broadway, where last January there were two holes in the ground and the partly completed Reuters building; and all three seem to take their slanted details straight from Philip Johnson's 'Deconstructive' scheme for Times Square in 1992.

The architecture is hardly thrilling, but what saves these buildings – and all the new construction on Times Square – are the spectacular signs that front their lower floors, updating the square's reputation as a compelling outdoor multimedia space. Across from Fox and Fowle's Reuters, for example, an eight-story NASDAQ 'techno turret' sign projects constantly changing, colourful images on a 27 x 36m screen. It fronts the best piece of new architecture on the square – Frank Gehry's corporate dining room for Condé Nast – and sits above one of four new broadcast studios that open onto Broadway sidewalks.

Times Square seems to have been totally transformed since January 2001, but its redevelopment is a 20-year saga of ill-fated schemes, fractious opposition, continuous litigation, market fragility, collapsed property deals and postponed public benefit. This is the story of *Times Square Roulette* – a typical Manhattan narrative of real estate shenanigans, fraud, greed and corruption, which could read like a thriller.

Unfortunately, Lynne Sagalyn gives us sentences such as: 'They argued persuasively that the complexity of political action among the many competing constituent interests and the broad functional scope of services in cities made the achievement of development goals intensely problematic for city governments compared to their suburban counterparts.' If you appreciate the language of planning and 'cost benefit' analysis, then this is the book for you.

It is, however, insightful on the politics and economies of urban projects in New York. It describes in minute detail how the nation's largest redevelopment scheme sought to make West 42nd Street safe for corporate investment by eliminating 'the deviant subculture of Times Square'. In the process it created a corridor for the city's newest engines of economic growth – headquarters for the global media industry, entertainment, and tourism.

Sagalyn is careful to present a balanced view of the battles that raged for so long. Her main protagonists are, on the one hand, those who feel the square's new development is taking the authentic urban grittiness from the city (see the two pictures); and, on the other, those who favour safe 'middle-class' values of Disney family entertainment, suburban shopping and more commercial office space.

Her view is so balanced that one wishes she would say something controversial, or put some passion into her story. This is a subject which screams out for insight and

conviction, but the author seems unable to connect the dots between culture, society aesthetics, and politics. Is it too much to expect a director of the Real Estate programme at Columbia University to be familiar with the Frankfurt School?

But if you can make it through the book's 638 pages, you will understand why New York has so few architectural masterpieces, yet remains a compelling urban stage-set all the same. It describes how and why New Yorkers fight to retain buildings that are not masterpieces, but are integral to making the city a powerful urban experience. Here is a place where every land-use decision and building proposal is fought over by myriad actors – one real estate contract between the city and a property developer ran to 7000 pages.

The section 'No Press from the Press' reveals the true power of the city's aesthetic police, particularly those critics who write for the *New York Times*. It details how Ada Louise Huxtable, Paul Goldberger and Herbert Muschamp operate on the level of aesthetics, and thus have little real effect on the outcome on the city's urban design, which is largely determined on hard-headed economic grounds. In fact, while these critics rail against the aesthetics of new Times Square architecture, the newspaper (itself a major landowner in the square), through its editorial pages, fights its own, more successful battle to see the area developed as it wishes.

I have spent a good portion of my life involved in urban issues in New York, and know many of the protagonists in the story, so I enjoyed reading Sagalyn's text. But I cannot imagine who else MIT Press thinks will want to read *Roulette*.

*William Menking is an architectural historian*





## London

**Component Design** *Until 6 April.* An exhibition at the Building Centre, Store St, WC1 (020 7692 6209).  
**Barbican: This was Tomorrow** *Until 14 April.* An exhibition at the Barbican Centre, Silk St, EC2. Details 020 7638 4141.  
**William Beckford 1760-1844** *Until 14 April.* An exhibition at Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Rd, SE21. Details 020 8693 5254.  
**BRE Annual Conference** *Wednesday 17 April.* At the British Museum, WC2. Details 01923 664000.  
**Art and Architecture: The Next Generation** *Wednesday 17 April, 18.00.* A discussion at Tate Britain with Richard MacCormac, Pierre d'Avoine etc. Tickets 020 7887 8888.  
**Partners in Urban Renaissance: The 24 Towns Initiative** *Wednesday 17 April, 18.30.* A talk by Nicholas Falk at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross St, EC1. Details 020 7250 0892.  
**Securing a Proper Fee** *Wednesday 24 April.* A Colander course at the Building Centre, WC1. Details 020 8771 6445.  
**Modern Data Management: Gain without Pain** *Wednesday 1 May.* A Colander course at the Building Centre, WC1. Details 020 8771 6445.  
**Marketing and Brand Imaging** *Thursday 9 May.* A Colander course at the Building Centre, WC1. Details 020 8771 6445.  
**Hardcore: Concrete's Rise from Utility to Luxury** *Until 25 May.* An exhibition at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place, W1. Details 0906 302 0400.  
**Will Alsop: Beauty, Joy and the Real** *Until 8 June.* An exhibition at Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2. Details 020 7405 2107.

## Eastern

**Housing in the 21st Century** *Wednesday 17 April.* A seminar at the John Innes Centre, Norwich. Details 01603 629571.  
**A Measure of Reality** *Until 28 April.* An exhibition at Kettle's Yard, Castle St, Cambridge. Details 01223 352124.  
**Landmarks** *Until 28 April.* Photographs by Fay Godwin at the Sainsbury Centre, UEA, Norwich. Details 01603 593199.

## East Midlands

**RIBA CPD Event: BS8300 Code of Practice** *Friday 26 April.* A seminar at Leicester. Details 0121 233 2321.

## North West

**Climate Change and the Built Environment** *8-9 April.* A conference



## ART OF REDEVELOPMENT

The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art opens this summer in a former mill in Gateshead. Dominic Williams of Ellis Williams Architects will discuss it in an Art & Architecture event at The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1 on Thursday 11 April, 19.00. Pictured above is Anish Kapoor's installation in the building's shell during 1999. Details a&a@tsib.demon.co.uk

at UMIST, Manchester. Details 0161 200 3700.  
**Will Alsop** *Thursday 25 April, 19.30.* A lecture at the Foster Building, University of Central Lancashire, Preston. Details Peter Trebilcock 0161 973 1505.

## South Eastern

**Cultural Centre, Sittingbourne** *Wednesday 10 April.* An open day to see competition entries for the centre. At Phoenix House, Central Ave, Sittingbourne. Details Ruth Gage 01634 401166.  
**Second Annual Sustainability Symposium** *Thursday 11 April.* At Canterbury School of Architecture. Details 01227 817532.  
**Conservation and Repair of Plasters and Renders** *23-26 April.* A course at West Dean College, near Chichester. Details 01243 811301.  
**RIBA CPD Event: Building Regulations Update** *Thursday 25 April, 16.00.* At Le Meridien Hotel, Gatwick. Details 01892 515878.  
**Ian Breakwell** *Until 28 April.* An installation at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea. Details 01424 787900.  
**Building the Homes of Tomorrow** *Tuesday 28 May.* A CIEF conference at the County Hall, Maidstone, Kent. Details fax 020 7222 0445.

## Southern

**Kathryn Findlay** *Thursday 11 April, 18.00.* A lecture at the Portland Building, Portsmouth School of Architecture. Details 02392 842086.  
**Architecture 3 Ways** *Until 14 April.* An exhibition with work by 10 practices at the Robert Phillips Gallery, Riverhouse, Manor Rd, Walton-on-Thames (01932 254198).  
**Daiziel + Scullion: Home** *Until 28 April.* Landscape-based work at Milton Keynes Gallery, 900 Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes. Details 01908 676900.

## South West

**Art and the Environment: Collaborative Solutions** *Thursday 18 April.* A half-day seminar at Kingswood, Gloucs. Details 01392 218188.  
**Urban Plymouth: Regeneration with Inspiration** *Thursday 2 May.* A conference at Plymouth with speakers including Richard Rogers. Details 01752 233304.

## Wessex

**Peter Frie/Gary Breeze** *Until 12 May.* At the New Art Centre, Roche Court, East Winterslow, near Salisbury. Details 01980 862244.  
**Regeneration Through Conservation: Reviving Our Urban Communities** *Friday 24 May.* A conference at The

Watershed, Bristol. Details Charlie Bisnar 01732 220151.

## West Midlands

**RIBA CPD Event: How to Attract New Clients and Win Their Business** *Wednesday 24 April, 14.30.* A seminar at Birmingham (0121 233 2321).

## Yorkshire

**Tania Kovats/Richard Devereux/Anthony Caro** *Until 12 May.* At the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton. Details 01924 830302.

## Scotland

**RIAS Convention 2002** *Friday 3 May.* At Inverness. Speakers include Alvaro Siza and Nicholas Grimshaw. Details RIAS Events 0131 229 7545.  
**Ruth Vollmer** *Until 5 May.* Sculpture and drawings at Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Details 0131 248 2983.  
**Improving Construction Site Communication** *Thursday 9 May.* A BRE workshop at Glasgow. Details Alastair Stupart 01355 576244.  
**India of Inchinnan** *Until 26 May.* An exhibition at The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow. Details 0141 225 8414.  
**Anatomy of the House** *Until 26 May.* An exhibition on Scottish domestic development at The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow. Details 0141 225 8414.

## Wales

**Wendy James (Studio Libeskind)** *Thursday 25 April, 19.30.* A lecture at Faenol Fawr Hotel, Bodelwyddan, St Asaph. Details 01745 815600.  
**RSAW Design Forum: The Design Culture of Wales** *Monday 22 April, 18.30.* At the WSA, Cardiff. Details 029 2087 4753.  
**RSAW Access Auditing and Inclusive Design** *25 & 26 April.* At St David's Hotel & Spa, Cardiff Bay. Details 029 2087 4753.  
**RSAW Spring School: Design-Led Regeneration** *Friday 17 May.* At Portmeirion. Details 029 2087 4753.

## Northern Ireland

**2001: An Architectural Odyssey** *Until 13 April.* An exhibition at Belfast Central Library. Details Gavin Robinson 028 9024 8922.

## International

**The Big Projects: Dutch Architecture Policy in Perspective** *Until 5 May.* Ten current Dutch projects in an exhibition at the NAI, Rotterdam. Details 0031 10 4401200.



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The annual industry-wide awards scheme which was created in 1988 to recognise excellence in the overall design, construction and delivery of buildings and civil engineering projects. The Awards, which feature The Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award, will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the London Hilton on Wednesday 23 October 2002.

*Entries will compete for the following seven Award categories*

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- The British Construction Industry Civil Engineering Award 2002  
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- The British Construction Industry Major Project Award 2002
- The British Construction Industry International Award 2002
- The British Construction Industry Best Practice Award 2002  
*sponsored by Construction Best Practice Programme*
- The Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award  
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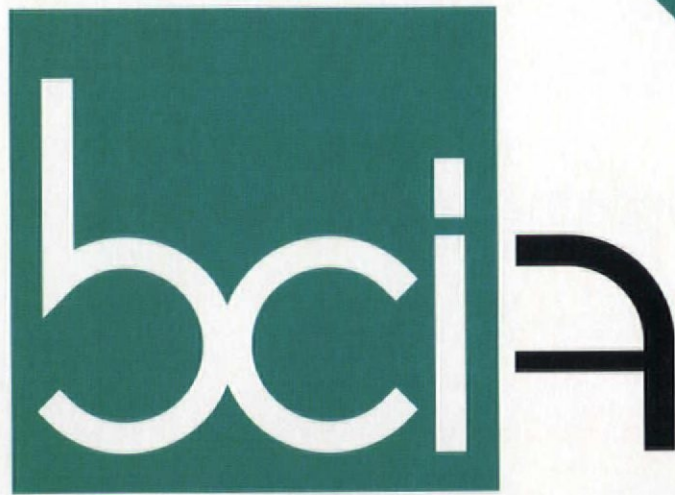
**Entry forms, which must be submitted by 1 May 2002, are available from:**

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**One Great George Street, London SW1P 3AA**  
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**or downloaded from: [www.bciawards.org.uk](http://www.bciawards.org.uk)**

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## people & practices

**Brisac Gonzalez Architecture** has closed its Gothenburg office and relocated its London office to new premises at 7 Bermondsey Exchange, 179-181 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3UW, tel 020 7378 7787.

Cardiff and London-based practice **Gaunt Francis Associates** has appointed **Andrew Sutton, Kate Palmer, Eamon O'Sullivan** and **Richard Oaten** as associates.

**Deerns Consulting Engineers BV** from the Netherlands and **Robert & Partners plc** have merged to form one of Europe's leading technical consultancy firms, **Deerns Roberts**.

**PMP Consultancy** has appointed **Neil Allen** as principal consultant.

Construction law firm **Fenwick Elliott** has appointed **Simon Tolson** as its new senior partner. **Chris Whittington** has joined the practice, while **Jeremy Glover** and **Matthew Needham-Laing** become full partners and **John Denis-Smith** and **Karen Gidwani** become associates.

**KBE Window Systems** has added to its sales force by appointing **Mark Fletcher**.

**Andrew Ogg**, managing partner of architect **Leslie Jones**, has been appointed junior vice-president of **BCSC**, the retail property group.

**McDowell + Benedetti** has moved to 3rd Floor, 68 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RR, tel 020 7278 8810 fax 020 7278 8844.

● Send details of changes and appointments to Victoria Huttler, *The Architects' Journal*, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, or e-mail victoria.huttler@construct.emap.com



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### LEARNING PROVISION SCHEME

Open ideas competition to explore the provision of learning space within the home in the 'Becontree type cottages' in the Fanshawe ward of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. Deadline 16.4.02; information from the RIBA Competitions Office.

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● Richard Haut operates the weekly 'competitions' e-mail service – telling architects about projects they can apply for across Britain, Ireland and Europe. Tel 0033 6 73 75 02 76, e-mail hautrichard@hotmail.com. Web: communities.msn.com/RichardHautcompetitions



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### Invitation to bid for Great Yarmouth Community Resource Centre Development

The Cobholm & Lichfield local management committee overseeing the Centre initiative in partnership with the Cobholm & Lichfield Community Partnership Group and other statutory, voluntary, private and community agencies and partners, are looking for a medium to large Architectural Project Management team to support the development of a new community Resource Centre based in Cobholm & Lichfield, Great Yarmouth.

The Centre is a new and exciting initiative, recognised as the flagship project within the Single Regeneration Budget 5 for Cobholm & Lichfield.

The purpose of the Centre is to strengthen community regeneration and meet the needs and aspirations of the community by delivering a range of flexible and adaptable services under one central roof.

The core micro projects include a health clinic, childcare provision, information provision, multi-purpose room for training, business development and community use as well as office accommodation.

The project is being funded by the Single Regeneration Budget Programme 5 and other government sources, subject to approval.

This partnership seeks the interest of an experienced and qualified Architectural Project Management team that can take this project into design and production and tender works for construction.

The client of the project is being advised by Peter Eley M., Arch AA Dip (Hons) RIBA

Letters of interest are requested from Architectural teams that can demonstrate interest and experience of working in community regeneration related fields, particularly in the areas of health and childcare provision, as well as the ability to work to tight deadlines. The letter of interest should describe the firm's suitability for this project, experience in community regeneration related assignments and brief information about who would be involved in developing the Centre project. In addition, please provide two sets of firm brochures describing the firms' experience and that the time the firm was established.

Letters of interest should be submitted by April 18th to:-

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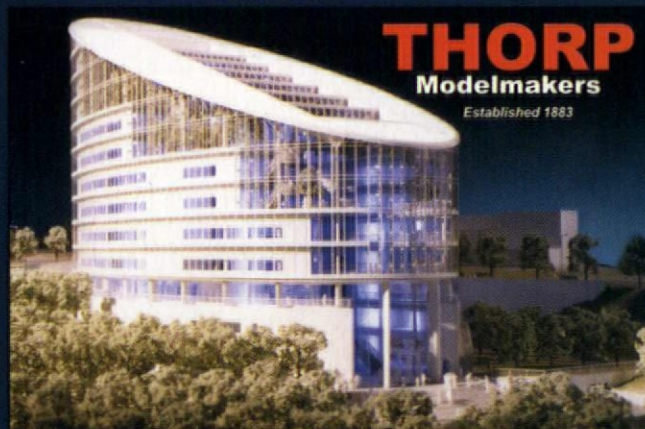
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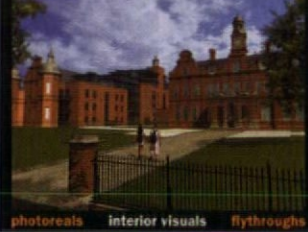
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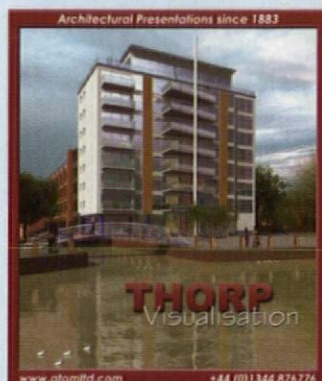


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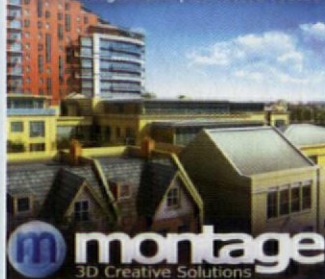


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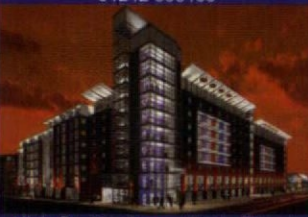


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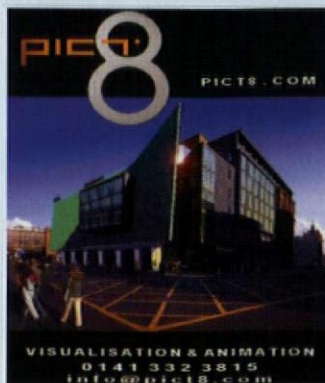
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## archicharades



Champagne goes to Douglas Read of Dignan Read Dewar Architects in Edinburgh who correctly identified Norman Shaw from the clues in our 'archicharades' competition last week. Can you identify the famous architect from this week's clues? Send your answers on a postcard please, by first thing Monday morning, to: AJ Astragal, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, or fax your entry on 020 7505 6701. The first correct entry pulled out of the hat wins a bottle of bubbly.

### Tall stories

I hear news of a prospective new club which could set the cat among the planning pigeons. Dreamt up at the latest MIPIM extravaganza, its working name is the Tower Club. Membership will be open to anyone who has funded, developed, designed or otherwise promoted a tall building. The definition of tall is anything over 12 storeys. The inaugural meeting is being planned for the champagne bar in Tower 42, once the organising committee can persuade **Chris Strickland** of developer Greycoat, the tower's owner, to host the occasion. Apart from the fun of meeting in high structures across London, there is a serious side to the organisation: the examination of significant schemes that could clearly be taller, but have been suppressed in contravention of the mayor's planning policies. Demands for inquiries into tall buildings, hitherto the province of English Heritage, could now come from the Tower Club because it is alarmed about low-rise. Watch out for more news, including invitations to become founder patrons going to **Harry Hyams**, **Irvine Sellar** and **Gerald Ronson**.

### Up, up and away

The new series of **Big Brother**, the Channel 4 reality game in which a group of young people become progressively more irritating but fewer in number, is to include a key architectural feature for the first time: a staircase. The house for the new series is now

complete, according to the scurrilous website **Popbitch**. 'It's pretty similar to before, except there is a big staircase under which is the diary room,' says a contributor to the gossip site. 'When the evictee is announced, it's up the staircase and out. It still has the chickens (the original creator insists on this). Oh, and it's in Elstree, next to the George Lucas Building.' Can't wait.

### Good bet

Brighton's West Pier is not the only old structure about to undergo substantial renovation. I hear plans are afoot for a major upgrade of Brighton Marina, the project by Louis de Soissons Partnership on which **Eva Jiricna** and **Jan Kaplicky** worked after they came to England in 1968 following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Now landscape architect Derek Lovejoy Partnership is masterplanning the rethink, and following interviews with a host of architects it looks as though **Piers Gough** and **Michael Hopkins** have got the gig. No doubt the newly relaxed gambling laws will play a part in funding the project.

### Critical moments

My old sparring partner **Rowan Moore** (whom God preserve) does not seem very happy about my modest criticism of his hatchet job on **Lord Foster** in a recent issue of *Prospect*. His article in this issue of AJ is a robust response, as one would expect. But Astragal thinks he protests too much. Foster's commercial buildings are

better than most other people's, generally a lot better. A more interesting analysis of the practice's commercial work might focus on the way in which, faced with the uncertainties and vagaries of the planning system, the initial propositions appear to be made knowing that changes will be demanded by the myriad groups involved these days. Thus you know that the first proposition will not be defended to the death. A rational response to an irrational world is always a talking point.

### AA revisited

Book launches can be gloomy or jolly. **ABK's**, held at the AA last week, was jolly, with plenty of familiar faces. I chatted to **Richard Paxton** and **Heidi Locher**, **John Worthington**, **Rab Bennetts** and many others too numerous to mention. Ahrends, Burton and Koralek were on cheery form and food and drink flowed lavishly. The book marks the 50th anniversary of their time at the AA – and they are still talking to each other. Best comment in the book is by **Jeremy Melvin**, who notes that their buildings represent the portal, not the terminal. Contributor Paul Finch, who with Mohsen Mostafavi spoke at the event, tells me he is baffled by a review of the book by Tom Muirhead, which, while very favourable, suggests Finch thinks unpredictability is a problem for ABK, and that commercialism is more important than creativity. In fact, his text says the work is unpredictable 'in its most constructive and positive sense', and he applauds the survival of

the practice's values over 40 years. I hope these two old muckers are not about to fall out.

### Tit for tat

**Will Alsop** was on good form at the opening of his Soane Museum exhibition. Describing the Soane as the best architectural museum in the world, he said he had enjoyed removing some of Soane's collected items to 'make way for some of my tat'. In fact, the models and drawings on display are delightful. As Alsop put it: 'Actually I think my Peckham Library looks better than the Parthenon.' His toast was 'from one naughty architect to another'.

### Life celebrated

**David Pearce**, author, critic and stalwart of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, will be remembered at a celebration of his life, taking place at the Soane Museum on 16 April. Anyone who has not yet been invited but would like to attend should contact Peter Murray at Wordsearch, 5-23 Old Street, London EC1V 9HL.

### Unmanaged

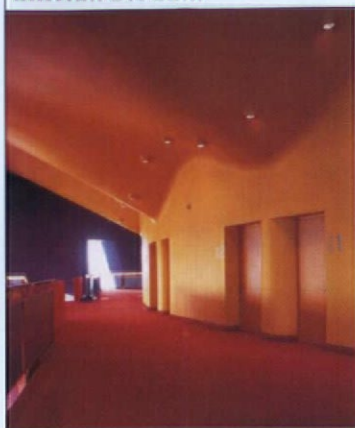
One for the diary: 'This house believes that interior designers and architects should not manage their own projects.' I am shocked to see this motion being proposed by my old editor **Stephen Greenberg**, at a debate hosted by the National Association of Shopfitters (Design Events, tel 020 7247 6116). On second thoughts, I realise Stephen is just having a laugh!

astragal ●



## BRITISH GYPSUM

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 201**



Creating eye-catching curved ceilings has never been easier, with the new Gypframe MF7C Curved Support Channel from British Gypsum. A major development in curved ceilings, the MF7C design enables radii as low as 70mm to be created, and has been achieved by turning the traditional 'C' profile channel through 90° prior to bending, so that it is curved in the 'U' plane.

## HANSENGROUP PRESTIGE CONTRACT 13 AJ ENQUIRY NO: 202



HansenGlass ThermoSpan structural bolted-glass assemblies have been installed at the new Trafficmaster HQ in Cranfield to create a stunning glazed entrance facade. The three-storey building feature more than 300m<sup>2</sup> of faceted ThermoSpan, incorporating 15mm clear FortPlus toughened glass with stainless-steel brackets, installed by William Verry Glazing Systems.

## KEIM

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 203**



Keim Glassweave is a highly durable woven internal wall covering with a textured finish in 14 patterns. It provides long-term protection in areas of heavy usage – eg schools, hospitals, hotels. Designed for use with Keim mineral-silicate paint systems, it provides a washable, anti-condensation, class 'O' fire-resistant surface which does not support the growth of micro-organisms.

## STOAKES: PROJECT OF THE WEEK

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 204**



This fascinating Kalwall elevation, spanning more than two floors in height, throws natural diffused daylight into the exquisite HQ of TFL International at Preston, designed by Studio BAAD. Highly insulating Kalwall provides the benefits of glass without hot spots, shadows and glare. For information on Kalwall tel 020 8660 7667 or visit [www.stoakes.co.uk](http://www.stoakes.co.uk)

## SMALTODESIGN

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 205**

Recently introduced to the UK, Porcelain-enamelled steel by Smaltdesign is used extensively for interior architecture in Europe. Thanks to its aesthetic qualities and wide range of colours, it goes way beyond its recognised protective function and resilience, and brings a vibrant and decorative element as seen in this project for Telecom Italia S.p.A Milan. Tel 020 7407 1157, fax 020 7407 5364, [www.smaltdesign.com](http://www.smaltdesign.com)



## MENDIGER BASALT

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 206**

Mendiger Basalt Lava was used to build Ortner & Ortner's Ludwig Museum of Modern Art in Vienna, for the facade, the curved roof and the inside walls. The outer wall is 500mm thick, with a 10mm air gap behind the shell of Basalt slabs. It is a homage to this volcanic material, chosen for its beauty and resilience. For Basalt Products, tel 020 7407 1157, fax 020 7407 5364 or e-mail [info@lavastonedesigns.co.uk](mailto:info@lavastonedesigns.co.uk)



## ICB

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 207**

A single-ply system, so all-embracing it had to include everything from the membrane through to standing-seam details and high-quality edge trims was specified for luxury apartments in Manchester. Only Alwitra had a fully integrated system to fit the bill. The stunning brick and glass project for Bellway Urban Renewal, part of the Bellway Holmes group, was designed with pitched, flat and inverted roof specifications together with an attractive TA edge profile, standing seams and promenade tiled areas for services and foot traffic.



## JOHN NEWTON

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 208**

A disused basement below an office complex was in desperate need of renovation to prevent water penetration through both the stone wall and the concrete floor slab. The amount of water ingress was so great that System 500 membrane from John Newton & Co was used over the entire floor area of the basement and Newlath 2000 applied to the walls. System 500 is a specially manufactured membrane produced from selected polypropylene polymers and designed with a distinctive pre-formed profile.





aj the architects' journal

# Cities Fight Back!

Retail Spring Conference. A one day conference at the RIBA London W1

in association with

**BCSC**  
REPRESENTING THE RETAIL  
PROPERTY INDUSTRY

sponsored by

**LandSecurities**

**16th May 2002**

'Cities Fight Back!' is a one-day conference brought to you by the BCSC and The Architects' Journal and takes place at RIBA, London W1 on Thursday 16th May 2002. This conference is specifically aimed at all those involved in the procurement of retail space.

As well as key note addresses from Nicky Gavron of the GLA and Jenefer Greenwood, BCSC President; 'Cities Fight Back' will give you the opportunity to hear the experts illustrate the changes underway in this key area of economic activity - and how these changes will affect you and your business.

#### Conference sessions include:

- **Mixed use in the city.** Do planners always successfully interpret the needs of the community? How do their decisions impact on investment values?
- **Chester: Size versus Soul.** How well do the development proposals for Chester benchmark against the BCSC Urban Design for Retail Environments Guide?
- **W1 - A New Renaissance?** How the New West End Company is playing a significant part in the rejuvenation of what was the premier UK retail experience

#### Conference Fee

£250+VAT

£225+VAT (AJ Subscribers/BCSC Members)

Places are limited, so return the booking form today to guarantee your place.

Or for further information contact  
Clare Fitzelle on 020 7505 6850,  
email [clare.fitzelle@construct.emap.com](mailto:clare.fitzelle@construct.emap.com) or  
visit [www.ajplus.co.uk/promotions/cities](http://www.ajplus.co.uk/promotions/cities)

## Booking form

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE BOOKING FORM PER DELEGATE (photocopy if necessary).

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I enclose my cheque for £ ..... (made payable to Emap Construct Ltd.)

Please debit £ ..... from my

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Return to Martin Davies on 020 7505 6650 or post to: Martin Davies, EMAP Construct Ltd, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB

Booking Conditions: The programme is correct at time of going to press, however we reserve the right to alter or cancel the programme due to circumstances beyond our control. Payment is required in full prior to the Event. All cancellations must be made in writing to the above address and made no later than 21 days prior to the conference date. Cancellations are subject to a handling and administration charge of 25% of the booking fee. Cancellations within 20 days of the conference will not be accepted, though substitute delegates can be nominated.

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