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aj the architects' journal



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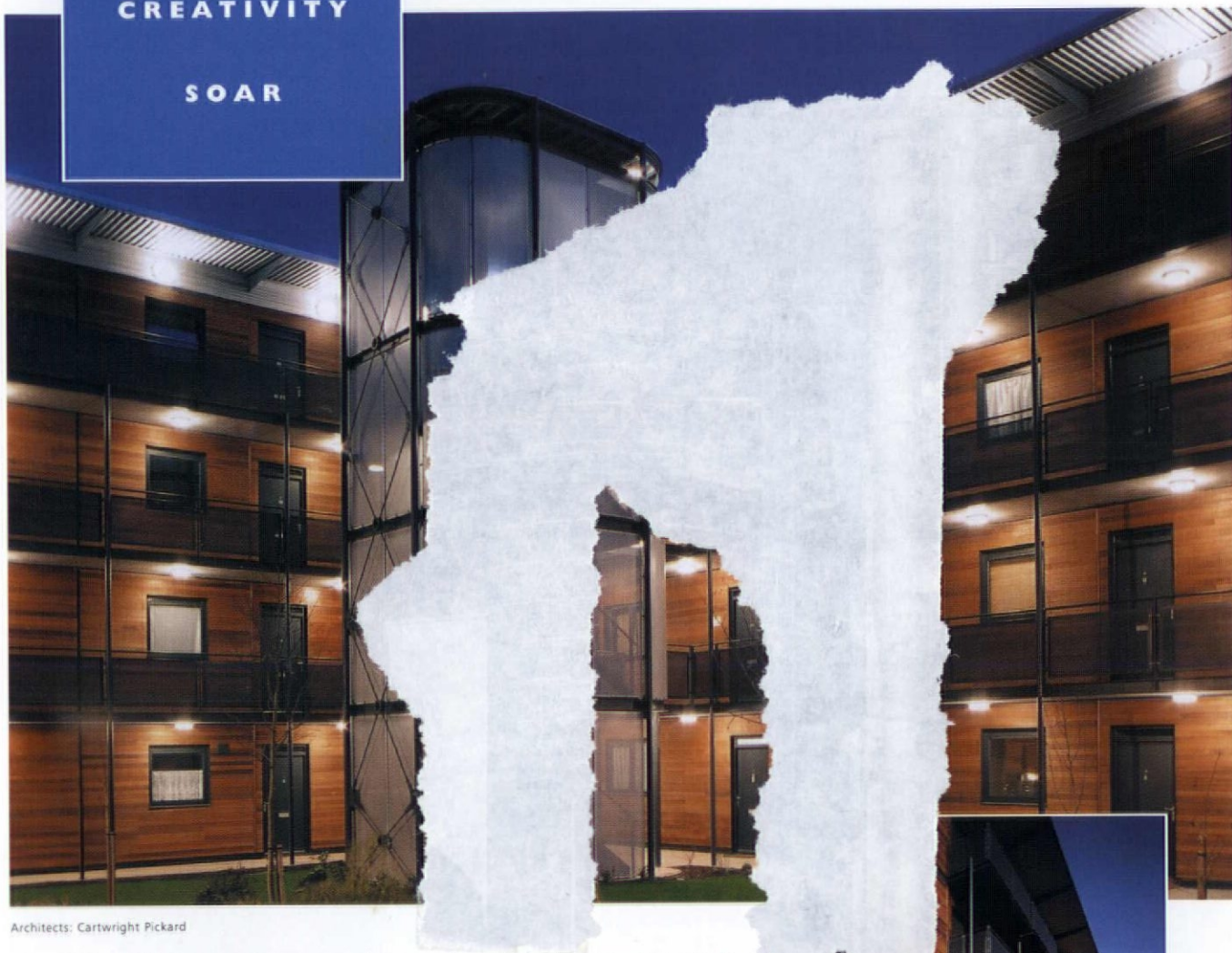
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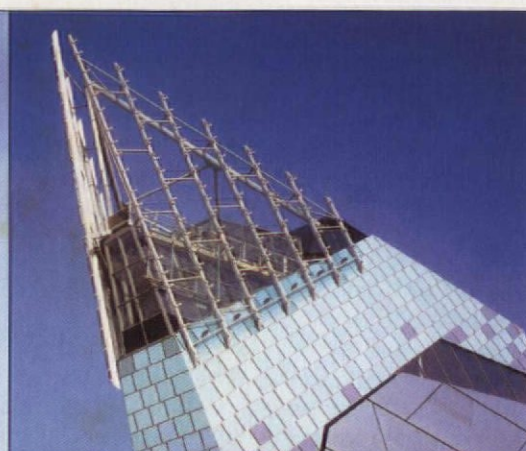
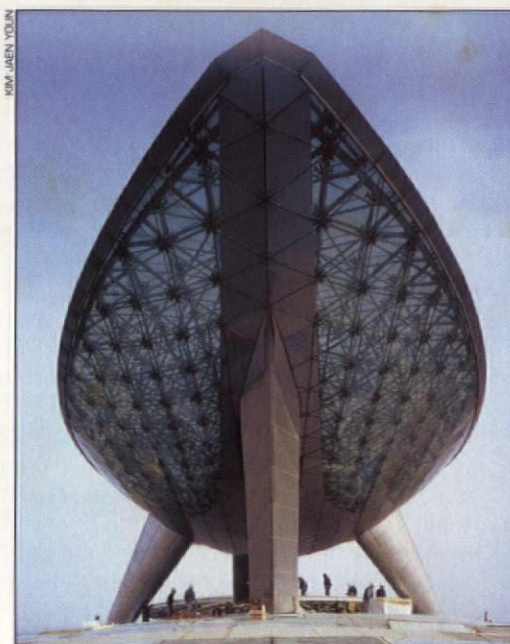
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An exhibition of Sir Terry Farrell's work opens this Saturday at Newcastle University's Hatton Gallery. It features the £250 million Inchon transportation centre in Seoul (left), and the £28 million Hull aquarium, The Deep (above). Call 0191 222 6059.

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COVER

Foster and Partners' Swiss Re headquarters
Photograph by Nigel Young

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'It promises to be the best new tower in London for well over 30 years. The computer power that ran amok on City Hall has been harnessed in the cause of beauty.'
Hugh Pearman on Foster's Swiss Re (see this week's construction study on page 26).
Sunday Times, 22.9.02

'A notable and shameful exception to the spirit of this event is the Royal Family. While government departments and private individuals throw their doors open for free, the palaces still charge hefty entrance fees.'
John Tehan on last weekend's London Open House. *Independent*, 19.9.02

aj news

BRIEF RECOVERY

NHS Estates has published a new guide for health trusts on the main components of the design brief for new healthcare buildings. The document, 'Advice', has been put together by Richard Burton with help from others, including Sunand Prasad and Rory Coonan, and is intended to help the integration of good design at all levels of the building process – strategic, project and operational. The document was published this week and is available by contacting Jane Crossley at NHS Estates on 0113 254 7101 or e-mail jane.crossley@doh.gsi.gov.uk. See editorial, page 20.

CZECH ARCHIVE APPEAL

The Czech Republic's Architectural Archive is appealing for help to save its priceless collection of drawings and designs, following the widespread destruction in this summer's floods (AJ 29.8.02). Before the disaster, the archive housed 200 collections of drawings, plans and documents amounting to half a million items. For details of how to contribute – both financial and technical help is welcome – contact Tomas Zykan at the Czech Centre in London on 020 7291 9921.

EP APPOINTS RICK MATHER

English Partnerships has appointed Rick Mather Architects to design a new residential quarter in Milton Keynes. The 12.5ha site is the only remaining undeveloped site in the town centre and will accommodate 1,900 homes and 4,000 residents.

For the best jobs in architecture turn to page 49 or visit www.careersinconstruction.com

City set to 'invade' Tower Hamlets

London's Tower Hamlets is readying itself for the widespread 'invasion' of the City of London through its eastern border. With as many as four skyscrapers already in the pipeline, the council's planners are set to publish a new tall buildings policy that will open the floodgates for developers.

Several developers are already eyeing up land in Tower Hamlets close to the City's eastern border, known as the City Fringe. The council's planning department is dealing with the second highest number of applications for any local authority in the UK.

The AJ has learnt that Broadway Malyan is developing a scheme for the Royal Bank of Scotland on Goodman's Field in Whitechapel, likely to include a substantial tower development in its second phase. Council insiders have also seen a secret 70-storey skyscraper planned for the area that has already won support from the mayor's office.

Other schemes include a huge four-phase project by the Millbank Tower developer Tishman Speyer, which has two major new skyscrapers proposed for later stages. And another major developer is also believed to be considering a record-breaking tower for Aldgate High Street.

The City of London has long seen the land east of its borders as potential for development, especially on the controversial Spitalfields site, which it owns.

But the need to find new space for the City to

colonise has gained renewed urgency due to the publication of Ken Livingstone's draft London Plan. The plan urges developers to invest in the distant Thames Gateway area, a policy that threatens the City's future development.

And Tower Hamlets planners are determined to use the City's expansion into areas adjacent to the Square Mile as a tool to trigger local regeneration.

Tower Hamlets' head planning officer Keith Simmons stressed that the borough is prime for development because of its proximity to the City. 'Make no mistake, this is a massive opportunity for the local area and the council will be in the driving seat encouraging economic growth. As a result, we will ensure that we gain as many new jobs and new homes through planning gains and the use of section 106 agreements,' he said.

However, Jemima Broadbridge, a campaigner against the development of Spitalfields Market, dismissed the benefits, saying City spread would have a 'horrific effect' on locals. 'It seems that the government and local authorities will only listen to the interests of business, not the general population.'

'The trouble is that Tower Hamlets is so poor that it has to agree to give planning permission and take the planning gain as a way of improving its social housing,' Broadbridge added.

Ed Dorrell



The Derek Lovejoy Partnership has produced this £20 million proposal for Tjuvholmen in Oslo. The landscape masterplan, prepared in collaboration with Niels Torp, creates three new urban waterfront parks, a museum island, sculpture park and the Extreme North visitor attraction and exhibition gallery, which commemorates Norway's history of exploration and discovery. The practice said the proposals 'celebrate the exceptional waterfront location and environmental qualities of the site'.

'The thinking behind the proposed Rugby International Airport is brilliant. It will require the extinction of two villages, burying the main railway line, culverting two miles of the River Avon – and, yes, the area is a flood plain.'
'Piloti', Private Eye, 20.9.02

'The Thunderbirds image is unavoidable but not necessarily pejorative... If the plan is approved, there is no doubt that the City would gain another iconic building.'
 Jay Merrick on Richard Rogers' proposed 122 Leadenhall Street tower. *Independent, 17.9.02*

'There are only a very few buildings I have seen that are comparable to the aesthetic experience of music – Bramante's Tempietto and Fallingwater.'
 Rafael Viñoly. *Atlantica, September 2002*

FOR A DAILY NEWS FEED ON THE LATEST ARCHITECTURAL STORIES GO TO AJPLUS.CO.UK

There is still time to reserve your tickets for the Stirling Prize Awards presentation dinner at the Baltic in Gateshead on 12 October. The event will include the presentation of the Stirling Prize, the seven-strong shortlist for which was revealed a fortnight ago; as well as the AJ First Building Award; Stephen Lawrence Prize; RIBA Client of the Year; RIBA Journal Sustainability Award; and ADAPT Trust Access Award. Tickets cost £100 per person plus VAT and are available from Nancy Mills at the RIBA on 0121 233 2531, e-mail nancy.mills@member.riba.org. The dinner is supported by Corus Calzip, Corus Colors, American Hardwood Export Council, Montagu Evans, SIV Recruitment and the Newcastle and Gateshead Initiative.



Elite lining up to redesign World Trade Center site

The cream of the world's architectural community – including Daniel Libeskind, Tadao Ando, Massimiliano Fuksas, Mario Botta and Brits Lord Foster, Sir Nicholas Grimshaw and Zaha Hadid – have entered the competition to redesign the site of the World Trade Center towers in New York.

They are included in a list, obtained by the AJ, of 404 firms that have replied to the request for qualification in what is becoming the most talked about design competition on the planet. Eighteen practices from the UK have put their names forward, including BA London Eye designer Marks Barfield Architects, John McAslan & Partners and Future Systems. And Alsop Architects and Ian Simpson are other UK firms which want to be a part of the Manhattan rebuilding plans to commemorate 11 September, which include a memorial, tall structure to restore the spirit of the city, a new street grid, commercial space, housing and cultural elements.

International names on the list include the giant Woods Bagot from Malaysia and T R Hamzah & Yeang, famous for building its own range of 'bioclimatic towers'. Other famous practices include Bernard Tschumi Architects from New York, Philip Johnson – Alan Ritchie Architects, SOM, Arquitectonica, Diller and Scofidio, Richard Meier, plus an unusual joint effort from Shigeru Ban, Frederic Schwartz, Ken Smith and Rafael Viñoly.

Not surprisingly many of the applications come from New York – a total of 112 – with more than 250 from the US as a whole. Some 37 per cent of the applications are from outside the US – from as far afield as Brazil, China, Israel and Lesotho.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which is running the competition, expects to shortlist five teams next week, all of whom will receive an honorarium of more than £26,000 to work up their plans. A final decision will be made next year.

David Taylor



American-based Pei Cobb Freed & Partners has won a competition to design the 220m 'Torre Espacio' tower, set to become Madrid's tallest skyscraper. The practice saw off competition from the Richard Rogers Partnership, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates and Murphy Jahn Architects. The practice will work on the 56,250m² project – located on Real Madrid FC's old training ground – with the Spanish office of UK architect Geoffrey Reid Associates, known locally as Reid Fenwick Architecture.

ARCHIGRAM DUO WIN SPINK

Two members of the Royal Gold Medal winning team Archigram have won the RIBA's second Annie Spink Award for excellence in architectural education. Professors Peter Cook and David Greene have been jointly awarded £10,000. They will receive the award at the RIBA on Tuesday 3 December.

CITY OF CULTURE WINDFALL

Research carried out by the Cardiff Business School has found that the winner of the competition to find the European City of Culture 2008 could benefit to the tune of £1 billion. The findings also concluded that up to 5,000 jobs would be created.

Q&A

30%

... of voters in a poll on the AJ's website think Edward Cullinan Architects' Downland Gridshell should win the 2002 Stirling Prize. The vote in full is:

Gateshead Millennium Bridge
 5%

Downland Gridshell
 30%

Lloyd's Register of Shipping
 2%

Hampden Gurney School
 5%

Dance Base
 26%

Ernsting Service Centre
 4%

Millennium Wing, National Gallery of Ireland
 28%

Respondents: 2,860


We are continuing to run the poll this week.

Register your view at www.ajplus.co.uk

CULLINAN BIRMINGHAM OK

Edward Cullinan Architects has won permission from Birmingham City Council for its masterplans of Masshouse sites 3 and 7. The Masshouse scheme is a phased regeneration, aiming to develop the land between the town centre and the Eastside quarter of the city.

STREATHAM'S STREET SHAME

Britain's worst street is Streatham High Road in London, according to a poll carried out by CABE and BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme. Listeners to the programme and voters on the online 'Streets of Shame' poll hit out at Streatham's main traffic junction, run-down shop fronts, broken lighting and 'an ever growing number of police signs advertising the occurrence of violent crime'. Other streets shortlisted were Cornmarket Street in Oxford, Drake Circus in Plymouth, Maid Marion Way in Nottingham and Leatherhead High Street in Surrey. Newcastle's Grey Street was voted the UK's best street. 

LIVERPOOL PIER HEAD VISION

EDAW's masterplan for the regeneration of Liverpool's Pier Head area has been sent to the city's Executive Board for consideration. The plan - commissioned by local development agency Liverpool Vision - includes major infrastructure work and the site of the much-anticipated forth Grace (AJ 15.8.02).

CRYSTAL PALACE GETS SET

A redeveloped Crystal Palace athletics track could form the centrepiece for a London bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. Sport England has undertaken a feasibility study into the future of the famous arena and is in discussions with Bromley council.

WEST 8 WINS GREEN PRIZE

The Harvard Design School has awarded the seventh Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design to Adriaan Geuze's West 8 Landscape Architects for its Borneo-Sporenburg housing scheme in Amsterdam.

WOMEN'S LAUNCH PARTY

The National Association of Women in Construction is to host a party on 1 October at Centrepont in London. The organisation - started in July - has attracted 100 members and is preparing a mentoring programme for newcomers. Visit www.nawic.co.uk

Lipton sides with unions in blast at PFI design standards

CABE chairman Sir Stuart Lipton has attacked design standards on Private Finance Initiative schemes, allying himself with the public sector union campaign for major reform to the procurement method.

While the commission has spoken out before about PFI, this is the first time Lipton has found common cause with its strongest critics, the trade unions. And with the forthcoming publication of its report on procurement - Design and the Economic Appraisal of New Developments (AJ 1.8.02) - now expected in mid-October, the speech represents a more outspoken attitude from the government agency.

Opposition to PFI is also growing stronger throughout the construction industry. Last week, Amec announced a one-year moratorium on the scheme, saying it was proving almost impossible to make PFI profitable.

Lipton hit out at the effects of PFI at the Unison policy conference entitled 'PFI: Failing our Future?' He said it 'is largely failing to deliver the quality of public buildings that staff, users, visitors and the wider public deserve'. And he stressed that it is often public sector workers who are made to suffer. 'These workers are asked to meet ever-increasing demands for greater productivity and efficiency. To do so, they must be allowed to deliver services in buildings that are well designed and fit for that purpose,' Lipton said.

He called on public sector trade unions to focus on the interests of a building's staff, as well as the cost of construction and maintenance. 'All too often, PFI contractors seek to maximise financial return rather than the quality of public service,' Lipton said. 'It is up to you and your members to challenge government and the private sector and demand the highest quality of working environments. It is only then that we will get the functional, beautiful and sustainable buildings that we all deserve.'

However, Lipton also said that trade unions should not fail to engage with PFI altogether: 'I understand your antipathy to the process, but do not hide behind it.'

RIBA council member and procurement expert Simon Foxell, who also spoke at the conference, agreed that design standards achieved so far on PFI projects are 'pretty dire'. And he called on

the government to make serious changes to the way it is carried out. Foxell said the PFI debate could be reaching a crucial stage, with a turning point on public procurement imminent. 'I understand that the government is about to instigate a policy shift on this,' he added.

Foxell will present a proposed position paper on the PFI scheme for consideration by RIBA Council next week. It hits out at the 'damaging emphasis' on reducing the design stage of PFI projects to a matter of a few weeks. However, it also calls on the RIBA to do more to force reform of the scheme, saying it should campaign for adequate time to be given to the design stages.

Ed Dorrell

Fulham's £70 million stadium plans on the 'brink of collapse'

Fulham Football Club has admitted the Miller Partnership's plans for a £70 million redevelopment of its Craven Cottage stadium may be shelved.

Fulham chairman Mohamed Al Fayed has warned that the club is increasingly frustrated at legal objections brought by local activist group the Fulham Alliance (AJ 15.8.02). Al Fayed admitted that if the objections do not end soon, the whole scheme could collapse.

And he said that the club's forward planners are already looking for alternative sites for a new stadium which, Al Fayed added, might be shared with another club.

Two months ago, Fulham was forced to put back the completion date for the new 30,000-capacity Craven Cottage from 2003 to 2004, due to two new challenges by local groups. The Fulham Alliance is appealing to the House of Lords regarding John Prescott's decision not to call in the scheme. And it is also taking the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to the High Court over its original decision not to block the development.

Locals object to the redeveloped ground, saying it will be damaging to the area. They also argue that the 22m-high structure will be completely out of place with its Thames towpath setting and other residential areas.

According to one Fulham insider, the scheme's situation is already very perilous. 'The longer this legal wrangling goes on, the more likely we are to drop the project. It is already balancing on a knife-edge,' he said.



Alsop Architects has released the first images of its mixed-use refurbishment of the Grade II-listed Victoria House in London's Bloomsbury Square. These 'space age pods' provide additional floor space and rental value to the property. Southampton boat builder Blondecell was commissioned to construct the pods because their shape and fibreglass structure mimic the hull of a boat. The pods will be suspended from the ceilings of two glass atria, with the larger pods providing two levels of office space each and the smaller ones utilised as meeting rooms. The overall renovation has produced nearly 20,000m² of office space on the top seven floors of the building, 1,600m² of retail space on the ground floor and space for a restaurant and a health club in the basement.

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AF PLANS VISIONARY DEBATE

The Architecture Foundation is planning two new major events. 'Architects as Visionaries' – a debate on the influence of design on normal lives – will be held this Saturday at the Whitehall Room in Earls Court 2, London. A seminar, 'Teaching by Design', on how to achieve high standards in educational buildings, will be held on 3 October at Steelcase Europe in north-west London. For details call 020 7253 3334.

SHELTER BENEFITS FROM AW

Some 948 RIBA registered practices took part in 'Architect in the House' and 'Architect in the Workplace' for Architecture Week in June. Some 8,093 people called the Architect in the House telephone hotline, and 5,402 people were matched to an architect – raising a total of £108,040 in pledges for Shelter.



Stephenson/Bell has released the first images of its 31-storey Q uayside Tower planned for the riverside in Newcastle (pictured). The primarily residential skyscraper last week won the support of CABE's design review committee. Planned for developer George Wimpey City as a landmark tower to attract local regeneration, the tower includes 12,600m² of residential space, 680m² for bars and restaurants at the base, and a viewing platform at the top.



London-based architecture practice Fusion has designed the interior for Genevieve, a new bar in the capital's Notting Hill area. The bar, on Lonsdale Road, opens later this autumn with a capacity of 280. Fusion, which designed both the ground and first floor bars, drew its inspiration from the work of Michael Czyst, designer of Lenny Kravitz's Miami home.

RICS set to press Labour on housebuilding programme

The RICS will be pressing ministers for more details of the government's housebuilding programme at a seminar at the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool next week.

The institute, which is running seminars at the conference, will question the government on its commitment to affordable housing. And it will warn government to be realistic about the role housing can play in the regeneration of communities.

Housing minister Tony McNulty MP will be speaking, along with London deputy mayor Nicky Gavron, with other MPs expected to attend.

Central to the RICS agenda will be the role that good design, along with planning and political will, can play in the revitalisation of communities. It will also be pressing home the message that the answer to the housing crisis lies in high-density housing developments on brownfield sites.

Policy officer at the RICS Stuart Poore said the event provided the ideal opportunity for those in the housing sector to air their views to government.

'The most important context behind any housing event is how government is going to spread funding. Where is the £1.4 billion increase going to go? What are the government's priorities to ensure all housing reaches a decent standard by 2010?

'We will also be tackling Nicky Gavron on her plans for housing within the London Plan,' he added. The RICS will argue that the 50 per cent affordable housing target is 'prohibitively high'.

Last year's RICS seminar featured a presentation from Lord Falconer, who used the

opportunity to give an early indication of what would be featured in this year's comprehensive spending review.

Zoë Blackler

Open House weekend draws crowds despite march clash

This year's London Open House weekend attracted the usual crowds, despite the event clashing with the Countryside Alliance march.

Crowd-puller Portcullis House, which stayed open last year despite 11 September, pulled out of Sunday's event to avoid protestors. Nonetheless, 7,000 managed to see inside Michael Hopkins and Partners' controversial building throughout the Saturday.

Director of Open House Victoria Thornton said she had appealed to the Countryside Alliance to pick an alternative weekend, but the group 'was not amenable'. And although the march deterred some from braving it into the centre of town, the other buildings around the city took the overflow.

Some 10,000 visitors took the chance to visit Foster and Partners' City Hall, with queues holding fast until the doors shut on Sunday evening. And Richard Rogers Partnership's Lloyd's Register of Shipping was also popular. Knott Architects' Lambton Mews received more than 500 visitors and Richard Burton's house in Kentish Town more than 400.

Organisers are now turning their attention to fundraising to ensure the event continues – London's *Evening Standard* and BBC London have already pledged funding for next year.



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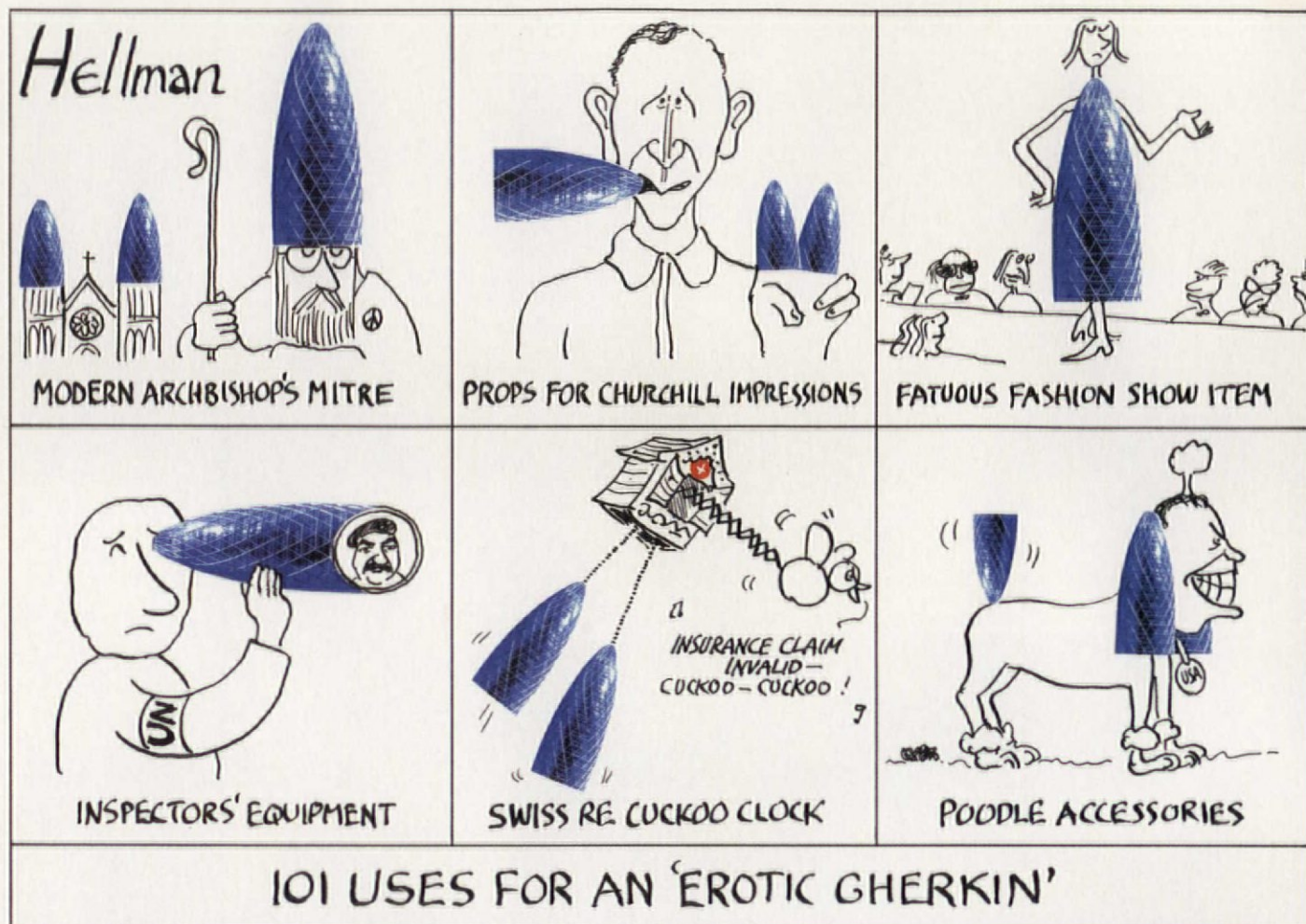
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vital statistics

- In the UK, 22 per cent of the male working population works more than 48 hours each week, compared with the European Union average of 11 per cent, the DTI has reported.
- Almost 50 per cent of householders with homes at risk from flooding completely ignore the hazard, the government's Environment Agency has revealed. While 95 per cent of those facing the danger admit it is a serious issue, only 45 per cent believe that it relates to them and five per cent do anything about it.
- This year 2,600 properties in Britain are likely to be sold for more than £1 million, research for the Halifax has found. This figure is double that of 1999, when the number stood at 1,305.
- Nearly 76 per cent of the UK's top 100 architectural practices have seen their financial performance slip in the past three years, according to analyst Plimsoll Publishing.

Clare Melhuish reviews...

Gehl's thinking on the quality of life in the city

Jan Gehl's lecture for the Urban Design Alliance provided an appropriate prelude to London's 'No-Car Day', showing how the city of Copenhagen has, since 1962, been successfully pushing back the car, so that by now 'the city is totally dominated by people having a good time'. The planners' policy of removing two per cent of parking each year was based on the premise that 'if you do it slowly, no-one will notice'. Today there is 'seven times more space for people than in the early '60s'.

Gehl believes that 'being on your feet is the key to quality in the city', and 'whether people are sitting or walking is the sign of the quality of a city'. His 'laboratory' at the school of architecture of Copenhagen University has been engaged in surveying and documenting the public life of the city for many years, and feeding back that data to the city's planners.

According to Gehl, very few cities have that kind of data, and Copenhagen's planners have said that without it they 'would never have had the courage to go on'. Gehl points out that with an architectural project or traffic proposal the starting point would always be a thorough survey, and argues that that should also be the case in developing strategies for public space management.

However, Gehl's evocation of public life in the city seems to be a slightly uncritical endorsement of 'cappuccino culture'. It is all about cafe chairs

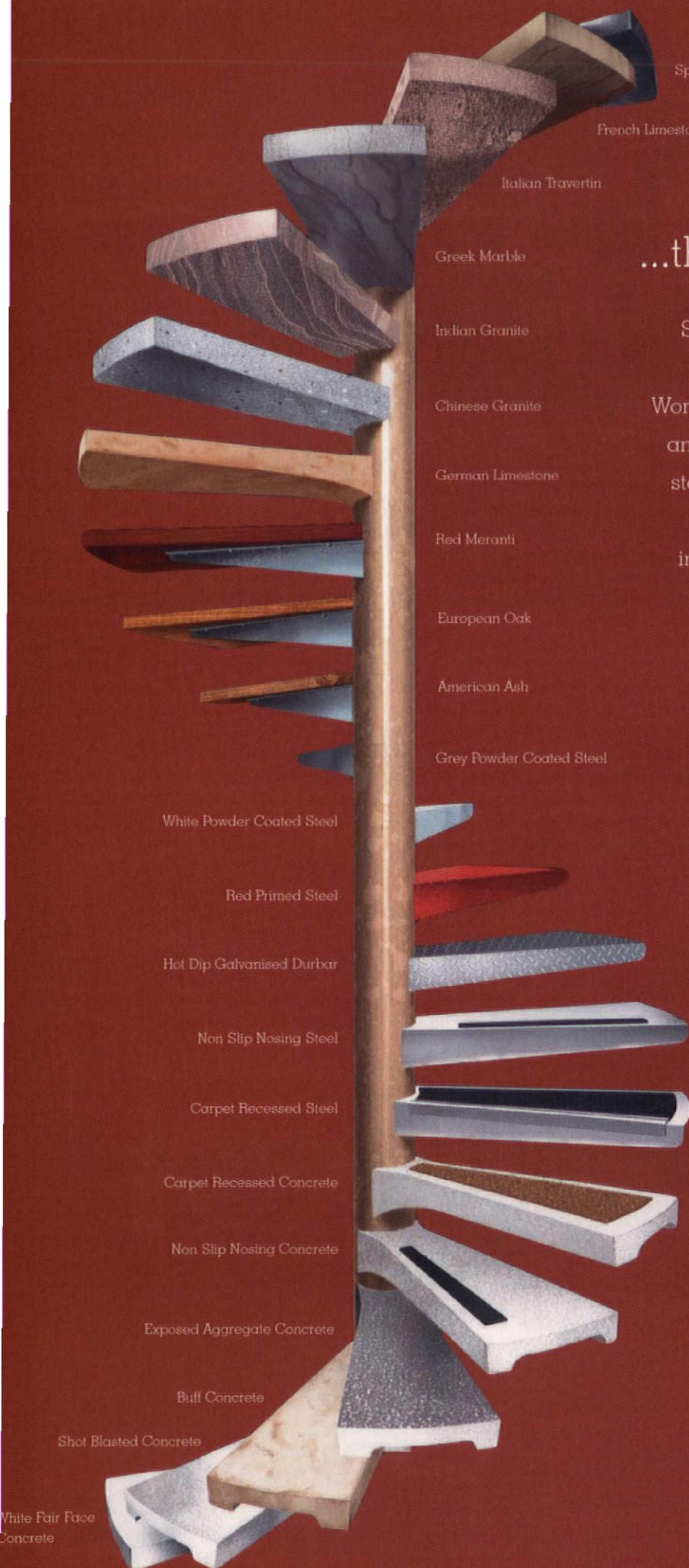
out on the street, creating opportunities for informal meetings and people-watching – 'seeing and being seen' – which become all the more important as the number of single-person households continue to rise.

By all accounts, this kind of lifestyle was not so easily acquired by the citizens of Copenhagen, but had to be learnt 'in small installments', so that only today have they at last become 'more Italian than the Italians', wrapping themselves in blankets to keep themselves warm on their cafe chairs as winter approaches.

The other key aspect is walking – and, as Gehl points out, 'there is more to walking than walking': it is a social process. Apparently walking has become such a hot subject in Copenhagen that whole conferences are dedicated to it, where once they would have been dedicated to traffic.

It is certainly very hard to imagine this happening in London, with its deeply ingrained car culture and inability to take any steps at all to resist the car's domination of public life – bar the bitterly controversial congestion charge. But it seems that Gehl has his eye on London too, with his remark that it 'would be very interesting to do something in the city centre'.

Gehl says 'usual practice is to make the buildings first', but 'best practice is to consider life, spaces and buildings simultaneously'. Maybe, as another 'No-Car Day' goes by without any significant reduction of traffic, that is a message London's boroughs might give some thought to. Jan Gehl delivered the Urban Design Alliance lecture at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in London last Tuesday to mark Urban Design Week



Spanish Slate

French Limestone

Italian Travertin

Greek Marble

Indian Granite

Chinese Granite

German Limestone

Red Meranti

European Oak

American Ash

Grey Powder Coated Steel

White Powder Coated Steel

Red Primed Steel

Hot Dip Galvanised Durbar

Non Slip Nosing Steel

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WELSH AWARDS CALL

The Royal Society of Architects in Wales is calling for entries to its Welsh Housing Design Awards. The deadline for the Welsh Assembly-backed scheme is 30 September. Call 029 2087 4753 for details.

DID THE EARTH MOVE FOR YOU?

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors has urged anyone worried their property was damaged in Monday's earthquake to contact a chartered surveyor. The organisation is also advising that building insurance policies should be checked to ensure they cover damage by earth tremors.



Imke Woelk, formerly at Alsop Architects, and her partner Martin Cors have completed the refurbishment of the foyer of Le Corbusier's Unité in Berlin (pictured). The pair, who live in the building, have also converted their duplex apartment into a live/work unit. +

De Stefano's Birmingham skyscraper 'gets the chop'



Chicago-based De Stefano + Partners' £400 million plans to build Europe's tallest skyscraper in Birmingham have been drastically cut back by the developer. The original landmark scheme at Arena Central was designed to reach 50 storeys, overtaking Cesar Pelli's One Canada Square. But new plans are likely to go no higher than 25 floors.

Developer the Miller Group believes that interest in 'landmark' buildings has waned since 11 September, with fewer companies wanting to take space in skyscrapers. And it has decided that business circumstances have changed in the city since the first proposal, and is no longer prepared to take the risk of a major tower.

The group's director, Andrew Sutherland, said that realism has taken over the property market. 'The original designs were aspirational. We are

just determined now that we should get something built,' he said.

The Miller Group is also expected to drop De Stefano + Partners from the scheme and to replace it with a UK architect. The developer has become frustrated with the US practice and British construction and planning regulations. And it is also preparing to dump its local joint venture partner, Hampton Court, and take sole control of the scheme. 'We have been seriously frustrated about the speed of progress so far and want to do something about it,' Sutherland said.

The original design for the UK's first mixed-use tower won planning permission in February 2000, but delays with the project's finances have hindered its construction. HOK International drew up the original masterplan for the site.

Ed Dorrell

Finns to launch competition for major timber housing

Finland is to launch an international competition to design low-rise, high-density timber housing in Helsinki. The competition, for between 50,000 and 70,000m² of housing on a 15ha site, will be launched formally at the end of the year.

It is organised by the Wood in Culture Association, sponsor of the Spirit of Nature Wood Architecture Award, which recognises the achievements of the best architects working in timber. This award was presented to Japanese architect Kengo Kuma at a ceremony at the Sibelius Hall in Lahti on Saturday. Visit www.spiritofnature.net for details.

Part L

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A one-day conference on how architects, engineers and manufacturers are meeting the challenges of the Part L regulations, and how tougher standards now in the pipeline will affect the way they design.

Part L - Getting it right

The conference will be chaired by Paul Finch, Editorial Director of The Architects' Journal and Deputy Chairman of CABE. Contributors will include architects, engineers and manufacturers. A simple guide to Alpha calculations will be given by Brian Watson of CA Roofing and a question time session at the end of the day will include Austin Williams, Architect and Technical Editor of the AJ and Rab Bennetts of Bennetts Associates.

Places are limited so book now to guarantee your place. For more information and a booking form contact Clare Bendon on 020 7505 6850 or email clare.bendon@emap.com.

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BRIDGING THE THAMES

Lifschutz Davidson's second Hungerford pedestrian footbridge over the Thames opened to the public last Friday. The bridge – expected to carry seven million pedestrians a year – is designed to contribute to the regeneration of the South Bank. +

DONS SET FOR CONVERSION

Wimbledon Football Club has won planning permission to convert Milton Keynes' National Bowl into a temporary stadium. The scheme – following the Football Association's decision to allow the club's move to the Buckinghamshire town – is scheduled for completion by the end of this year. +

TALKING RESPECT

A Rethinking Construction conference – 'Respect for People' – will be held at London's Cafe Royal on 9 October. Construction minister Brian Wilson will speak, while ARB board member Alan Crane will chair a public debate.

COMING UP ROSES

Warrington-based Austin-Smith: Lord has been shortlisted in the Best Regeneration Scheme category of the Roses Design Awards, the initiative designed to reward design professionals from outside the M25.

LONDON'S WATER CALL

The London Rivers Association has launched its book – *River Calling* – to mark the new planning designation of the capital's waterways. Ken Livingstone's draft London Plan recommends that all rivers, streams, canals and brooks be central to every major planning decision. For further information call 020 7934 9644.

KENT PROJECTS IN SPOTLIGHT

The first meeting of CABE's regional representatives committee took place yesterday, visiting several new projects in Kent. The committee focused on three main themes: transport, housing and retail.

SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE

The RIBA's Higher Education Design Quality Forum is to host a conference on the future of school and university buildings. 'New Learning Environments – Designing for New Delivery Mechanisms and IT Flexibility' will be held on 24 October in London's Tavistock Square. For further details, call David Noel on 020 7307 3612.

Scottish five to fight it out for £25,000 RIAS accolade

Five buildings are in the running for the title of best building in Scotland. The winner of the RIAS award for architecture, to be announced on Friday, will walk away with £25,000 – the largest sum for any UK architecture prize.

Arts buildings dominate the shortlist, making up four of the five, including the Stirling shortlisted Dance Base by Malcolm Fraser Architects. Only one non-Scottish practice entered, Munkenbeck + Marshall, which made it to the shortlist with its Mount Stuart Visitor Centre.

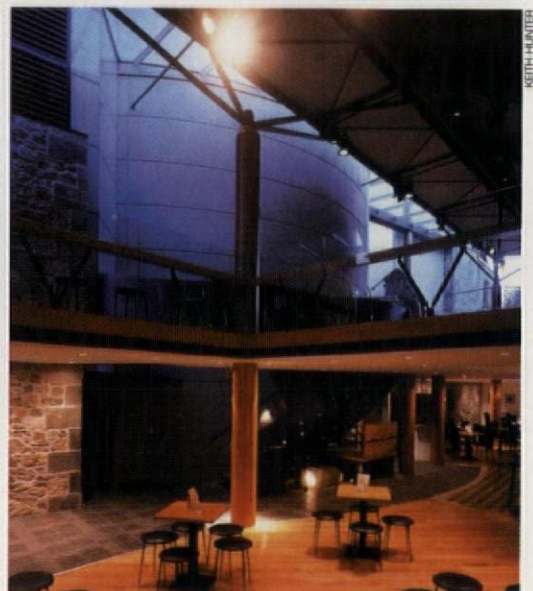
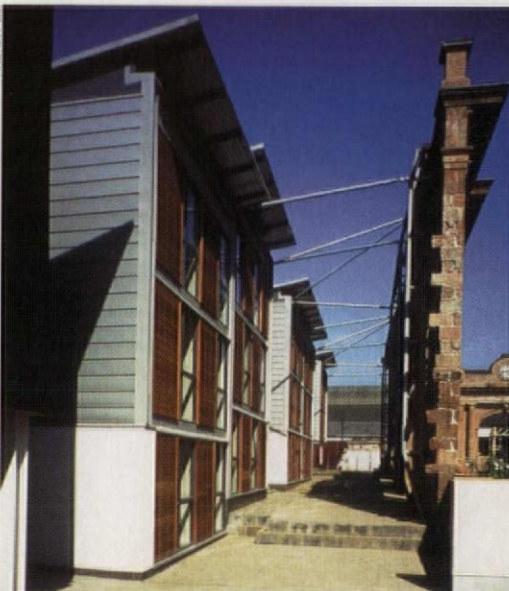
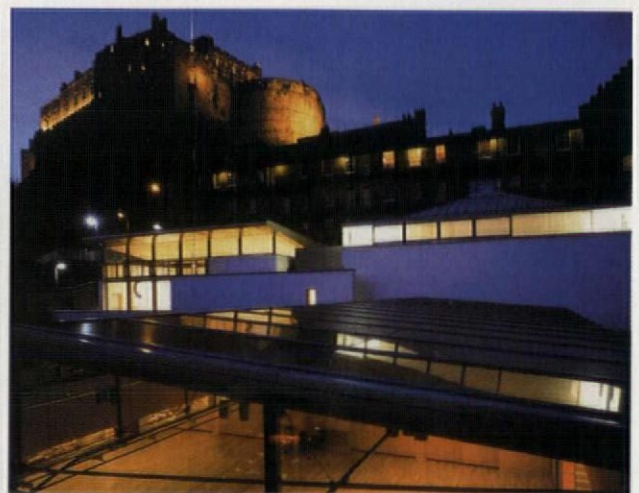
RIAS president Gordon Davies said the shortlist showed the great improvements made in Scottish design during the past 10 years. 'Scottish Architecture is in very good health,' he said. 'There's a lot of talent around producing excellent work and a lot more opportunities.'

The shortlisted buildings are:

- Stirling Tolbooth, Stirling, by Richard Murphy Architects;
- Dance Base, Edinburgh, by Malcolm Fraser Architects;
- Mount Stuart Visitor Centre, Isle of Bute, by Munkenbeck + Marshall;
- Graham Square, New Build 3, Glasgow, by McKeown Alexander; and
- The New Byre Theatre, St Andrews by Nicoll Russell Studios.

The judges will include Gordon Davies, Professor Andy MacMillan, sponsor Andrew Doolan and Barcelona-based architect Benedetta Tagliabue. They will be looking for projects that show 'innovation, design excellence and competence irrespective of size or type'. The decision will be announced tomorrow at a ceremony in Edinburgh. Visit www.ajplus.co.uk to find out the winner. +

Zoë Blackler



From top left: Stirling Tolbooth, Stirling; Dance Base, Edinburgh; Mount Stuart Visitor Centre, Isle of Bute; Graham Square, New Build 3, Glasgow; McKeown Alexander and The New Byre Theatre, St Andrews



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editorial

Richard Burton of ABK, the chairman of the Vision 2020 document on the future shape of the UK's hospitals, made a telling point at an AJ seminar held in London last week. Hospitals, he said, must strive toward more 'humanised' environments, where, for instance, deep plan allows more natural light, so they become nicer places for staff and patients alike. You wouldn't allow the kinds of dispiriting environmental conditions hospitals very often exhibit in prisons, so why do so in places specifically designed for people to get (physically) better in?

Burton, like fellow speaker Rosemary Glanville of South Bank University's Medical Architecture Research Unit, is right. Health buildings must be fit for purpose, efficient and adaptable, but they must also offer up delight and make a contribution, physically, culturally, and socially – not least because people get better quicker in brighter, more 'humane' settings. But with a building boom in health, it is crucial that the commissioning bodies for these new breeds of hospitals, healthcare centres and one-stop shops embrace this need quickly. And steer away from the belief that projects should be austere-looking to show they've been thrifty with public money.

However, with the onset of the Private Finance Initiative, a lack of commissioning skills has put health design on a scalpel-edge. Few architecture schools are equipped to deal with the issue, clients and the construction professionals with the task of building are 'disengaged' from each other, and yet the NHS is currently procuring more than 70 new conventional PFI hospitals.

So it is a relief this week to see a new document aimed directly at the NHS Estates, again from chairman Richard Burton, with recommendations gleaned from architects, medics and consultants. Called simply 'Advice', it is just that, on how to expertly commission as a client and transform a situation where briefing well is only 'sporadic' and lacks 'rigour', to one where skills lost to the medical profession can be resuscitated. And where common-sense needs like daylight, as well as nebulous ones like delight, are in the brief, lest they be forgotten among bed counts and commercial spin-offs for PFI private partners. The prognosis, already, looks better.

David Taylor

letters



CABE: be clearer on the outline – and the detail

Your report (AJ 19.9.02) on CABE's views of the Hungate masterplan proposals in York (above) quotes author John Thompson as saying that CABE had misunderstood the intentions of the scheme, which is at outline stage. I don't think we did misunderstand them.

We review many projects at the outline stage and welcome the opportunity to do so – this is when the most important decisions are being made – and we do understand the difference between outline and detailed design. We have criticised some projects for trying to pin down too much at outline stage as well as others for showing too little.

What really matters is being clear about what you are trying to pin down and what you are leaving open – and why. If a scheme is being promoted with seductive visual imagery, what relation does this bear to what is actually intended, or defined? A particular difficulty with outline applications, in our experience, is that by agreeing the principles of development at this stage, a local authority is in a weaker position when it comes to negotiate the detail later.

Peter Stewart, director, Design Review, CABE

Linking development and the environment

It is a great pity when Ceri Dingle

of WORLDwrite, who is rightly passionate about achieving development, seeks to show that those promoting environmental sustainability are 'anti-development' in the article 'Summit for Nothing' (AJ 5.9.02).

She is right to criticise the lavish expenditure at the Johannesburg summit, but most of the development and environmental NGOs attending had little control over the cost of their accommodation. As for the outcome of the summit, which was a lot less than might have been hoped for, the failures were more due to obstruction by countries such as the US, which refused to back specific programmes – for example, on energy – rather than being caused by environmental organisations.

In many ways, development and looking after the environment are complementary – Ms Dingle emphasises the damage done in developing countries due to floods, but climate change is likely to make flooding (as well as droughts, deforestation and desertification) worse, particularly in developing countries. The suggestion that major river control projects and large dams is the answer contrasts with the view of the World Commission on Dams, whose report was promoted by Nelson Mandela, hardly an opponent of development.

Each project needs to be appraised on its merits, but

Ask Austin. If you have a technical query, look out the discussion forum to debate the latest issues, or discover the answers to problems from your peers – or from AJ technical editor Austin Williams.

Check out the latest news stories, including Mediawatch – Astragal's wry look at the architecture stories covered by the weekend newspapers. Mediawatch goes up every Monday. Or look up stories on project news – this week's offering includes Scott Brownrigg + Turner's submission of Chelsea Bridge Wharf, phase two, for planning. The scheme (right) comprises more than 70 apartments within the mixed-use development, regenerating a brownfield site near Battersea Park.



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 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.

+ YOU CAN ALSO AIR YOUR VIEWS ON OUR ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM AT: WWW.AJPLUS.CO.UK

there are many schemes which have failed to deliver the promised benefits – indeed in Europe and the US, many flood defence schemes are being dismantled because it is clear that total control of river systems is not possible. The largest protests against the Narmada River dams in India are not from whingeing Western environmentalists but from people in India.

Ceri Dingle's view seems to be that Western technology is the best for the developing world, and that promoting 'intermediate' technology is patronising. In fact, there are many technologies which contrast with the Western mode of development which are more appropriate for developing countries. In rural areas, the electrification which she calls for – and most people would support – decentralised generation, including from renewables, is likely to be the most suitable and economic solution. Unfortunately, a proposal at the summit for a firm target for the proportion of energy to come from renewables was stymied by the US government – no doubt influenced by the powerful oil lobby. Energy is a clear case where environmental issues and development overlap – people in poverty often over-exploit forests and wood sources for fuel, while sustainable development could provide energy which does not degrade the environment.

Regarding clean water, again, rightly another of Ms Dingle's concerns, the summit did agree an ambitious target for provision of this in developing countries. It is up to development and environmental lobbies to see that this commitment is fulfilled.

Architects, engineers and scientists should be in the forefront of promoting recognition that development and the environ-

ment are interlinked. Attempts to put them in opposition are counterproductive.

Martin Quick, via e-mail

Think sustainable and remember Orwell

Sustainability is now government policy – Michael Meacher argues that 'we do not have any serious option. If we do not act quickly we run the risk of making our planet, our home, uninhabitable'. 'What's the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?' (to quote Henry Thoreau).

We may choose to embrace the arguments of low consumption from narrow professional self-interest (they helped my practice win a recent Planning Appeal). Some may work from more altruistic motives – we have architect members helping people build their own homes in poor areas of Lima, providing solar energy to isolated communities in Cuba, or encouraging the profession in Japan to adopt 100-year design life for their buildings.

Ceri Dingle's article makes some interesting points – but they are the same line we have heard enough of. Try telling Kurdish families forced from their villages by the Turkish army into the slums of Istanbul to make way for Western oil pipelines, monstrous dams and military rule they are 'escaping poverty'.

George Orwell wrote: 'I think that by retaining one's childhood love of such things as trees, fish and butterflies, one makes a peaceful and decent future a little more probable, and that by preaching the doctrine that nothing is to be admired except steel and concrete, one merely makes it a little surer that human beings will have no outlet for their surplus energy except in hatred and leader worship'. He also described

'doublethink' and the 'smelly little orthodoxies' of certain 'left-wing' groups.

Martin Valatin, ARC, Peace, Wiltshire

Tetrarch rating is not just about top marks

Sutherland Lyall is only partially correct in his recent column (AJ 19.9.02) when he states that adrianjames.com would get a low Tetrarch rating. On the basis of our criteria, adrianjames.com would score around 47 per cent, putting it in the average bracket. However, he is incorrect to say that failure to obtain a high score is because of a lack of hypertext. Hypertext only accounts for a possible five per cent of the total score. Research and experience tells us most construction industry Internet users want a site to contain comprehensive information and want to be able to find that information quickly.

The Tetrarch website appraisal has proven to be a valuable tool in assessing the suitability of websites within the construction and specifier markets.

However, the results are not meant to be read as absolutes but used in conjunction with each company's marketing strategy, market position, budget and specific audience need. The true value in the appraisal is not held in the total value or whether you got zero or maximum points for any section, but in how understanding that result can help you improve your site and by doing so attract more clients.

Michael Townshend, Tetrarch Associates, Wallingford

A bizarre substitution that needs specifics

Common vulnerability from the sky is clear, but unless Martin Pawley (AJ 19.9.02) draws a specific parallel between the twin towers and the doomed HMS

Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales to point analogy between the PAX Americana and the longer-lived, but now defunct, PAX Britannica, (reminding us that 'A (world) Policeman's lot is Not A Happy One' – *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*) the 'substitution' is a shade bizarre, not to say mad.

MP West, London SE1

Can lightning strike the same site twice?



Clare Melhuish's review of the recent 'Making Space for Art' symposium at the National Portrait Gallery fills me with a sense of foreboding (AJ 19.9.02). The idea mooted by Jeremy Dixon that the entrance to the National Gallery may need a modification to 'enhance its natural vantage point' reminds me of the 1993 work (Dixon Jones Architects) when the entrance of the National Portrait Gallery was replaced by an all-glass assembly befitting a modernised tube station.

Surely, lightning cannot strike the same site twice?

Alan Beardmore, Reading

A grateful, soon-to-be owner of four new chairs

May I thank the generous friends who contributed to the 'Chair Fund' on the occasion of my recent birthday. With the help of a very dear architect friend, I will shortly be the proud owner of four Eames wire dining chairs for my Fenland studio.

Mary Banham, London WC1



will alsop

The experience of a view is etched into your mind and soul

I have written two previous columns on the subject of a single view and I make no apology for visiting this theme a third time.

Views are a part of our culture and their reproduction in photographs and paintings have, over hundreds of years, gathered in a collective consciousness, which allows us to instantly recognise in our daily visual experience places that evoke something in our soul that we do not always understand. Of course, the unconscious reference to received images is not the only force behind these emotions. Our own experience of visiting places and using the landscape also shows our response.

My parents were very interested in picnics and always spent some time choosing the right spot. Their choice, often involving water, was perhaps also influenced by images in books, magazines and galleries.

Driving along the river valley into Halifax, there is a distinct hint of Italy. I drove the route on a warm but grey day in early August. In the valley hung a low mist, which softened the edge of everything and homogenised the range of green. You could almost feel the past mill owners going off on the grand tour and returning to a place suddenly transformed by their travels into an Italian ideal.

No wonder the buildings they commissioned were so heavily referential to the Italian Renaissance. They saw in their home a place transformed; a place that could exude an idea of cultural credibility, even if it was only a veneer.

The relationship between civic pride and cultural experience is important. It is possibly inevitable that people will try to recreate what they love (or sometimes what they are told they should love) at home.

Imagine a person who has lived their whole life in one valley, without ever leaving

it, trying to change or improve the landscape. It would be impossible because they would only have their own limited experience and nothing to compare that with.

I have been very impressed with Dutch local councillors, who regularly travel to other places with their officers to look around. They are consciously expanding their frame of reference in order to help their decision-making. Admittedly, they are usually looking at buildings and townscape, but I like the idea of 20-odd people travelling hundreds of miles to simply look at a view.

In Wakefield there was a marvellous view from the banks of the Calder past the original bridge, with attendant medieval chapel, towards the centre of town. A number of artists have painted from this spot in the past, including Turner, because it was beautiful. You would not choose to paint it for that reason today. The good burghers of Wakefield have allowed this scene to become ugly. They seem to have allowed exceptionally ugly buildings to intrude, so much so that the river itself does not live in the minds of the locals. This view needs desperately to be recomposed.

To me, the image of the cliffs looking west from Sheringham towards Weybourne is beautiful. I include the hut in my assessment of beauty and the time of day – 8.56am.

The deep shadows cast by the relatively low morning sun, create, in my mind, a series of forms that have been constantly eroded by long-shore drift. The sand from this place has created Blakenay Point. This place and moment are etched into my person and, no doubt, will influence some decision I will make in the future.

I offer this image to you in the hope that you might find it useful.

WA, from my kitchen table

people

Selby needs some good news, and it is about to come from Alan Simpson. Shortly after the town was told coal mining would be phased out along with 5,000 jobs, the director of urban renaissance at Yorkshire Forward regional development agency included it in his renaissance programme.

The much-publicised initiative has just added six more towns to the original six that started last year's scheme, which included plans for a Tuscan-style makeover for Barnsley by Will Alsop (AJ 14.4.02). Selby enters the fray with Scunthorpe and Halifax, among others, and Simpson's goal is simply stated.

He aims to create 'world-class towns and cities in a world-class region'. This is easier said than done, he admits, and not just in Selby. 'The kind of urban skills that combine visionary architecture with a social sense and an eye for economics are hard to find throughout Britain.

'Sure, we have planning departments but they don't make plans, and we've lost that ability. We already have some fantastic countryside and towns but the economic and social agenda has to be raised a lot more.'

So he is looking to Europe and the US to bring inspiration to the likes of Castleford and Bridlington. 'There are so few people in the regions driving forward urban issues, which partly explains why we have to go so far around the world. And when we've got these skills, we'll make sure they never leave Yorkshire.'

Expertise will be drawn down to the region and taught to schools, universities and the private sector. 'So abilities won't leave the region when the urban panel leaves. If a problem crops up you won't have to go back to West 8, Koetter Kim and Associates or EDAW for help. Experts must be here to ensure quality can be delivered, sustained and maintained. Education is such an important part of this process.'

Simpson, a '50-something' architect trained at Portsmouth and Newcastle University, has a healthy contacts book amassed during 10 years of teaching in the US. He did work on new towns for Northumberland council in the 1970s and also had teaching stints at the Bartlett, Newcastle and Liverpool universities, and with Ricky Burdett at the London School of Economics.

He has already enticed UDA Architects from Pittsburgh, and more recently wood

'Imagine a person who has lived their whole life in one valley, without ever leaving it, trying to improve the landscape. It would be impossible'

Only the best will do for Scunthorpe, says Alan Simpson, director of urban renaissance at Yorkshire Forward, who is travelling the world to recruit the finest urban designers to tackle some of Yorkshire's most troubled towns

by jez abbutt

the renaissance man



Michael Sorkin from New York. Sorkin, who teaches at Columbia, is noted for creating 'unsolicited masterplans' to challenge statutory ways of thinking, says Simpson. Such 'pioneers of exploratory processes' are crucial for turning Yorkshire's mean streets into clean streets, he insists.

What the region does not need is big architecture without social input, or dreaded Lottery projects. 'There are far too many of those damn things and they have done nothing.' What Simpson and other urban leaders are crying out for are visionary experts in procurement and delivery as much as design.

'We have terrific architects on our panel but there's a small gap between moving from the vision to the delivery, and we are trying to encourage statutory bodies to think upside down. We need a lot of help to persuade new thinking, so city engineers, for example, make streets instead of traffic canyons.

'We want to turn around all the old thinking, and this could be harder than creating showpiece design. We don't need networks of underground and overground passes to make streets work, but the city engineer's budget and remit is to stop people getting killed by cars. We want him to think

more loosely, though no less safely, of streets as places for people and cars, culture and commerce.'

Simpson's long-term goal is to help create a 'cities renaissance programme' in the north of England, which could draw on support from businesses, RDAs, politicians and maybe the Rowntree Foundation. This would create several centres of excellence rather than one urban design nerve centre.

'The centres won't just show off projects but will share skills and train undergraduates and mid-career people in economic and social areas as well as design.' Recent government papers have given an almost unstoppable momentum for 21st-century urbanism, he feels.

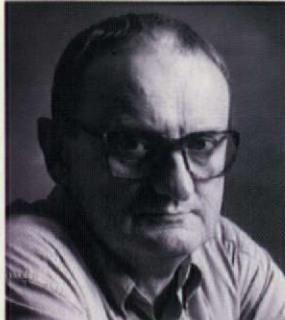
'Yorkshire Forward has been very smart in picking up on the urban and rural white papers and proposals by the Urban Task Force. These have not told us how to do things, but they have sent out very important messages and we must seize the moment.'

Simpson was recruited by Yorkshire Forward just over a year ago and has been given £1.4 million to finance the initial stages of the 25-year renaissance initiative. This money has been used to build up the teams, develop proposals and firm them up through public consultations.

But finding hundreds of millions of pounds to build the wacky proposals is going to be a difficult job, and Simpson reckons it will be at least two or three years before major buildings come off the drawing boards. In the meantime, smaller community projects and landscaping will be pushed through. Barnsley, for example, is lining up a tree-planting swoop of one million.

He is guarded on which new British designers he would like to bring on to the renaissance programme but already counts Lord Rogers as a contributor through discussions and commentary. Some very big UK names could still become part of his big idea, he hints.

Next week, Simpson is going to Toronto, then Europe, and then on a well-earned holiday with his wife, Marion, a teacher. 'I describe myself as crazy about streets,' says the dad of two when it comes to his hobbies of photography, film and theatre. 'The way the city translates into art fascinates me, or should that be the way art translates into the city?'



martin pawley

The architectural wonders that are apparently 'Streets of Shame'

Many years ago, when I was a first-year student at what was then the Oxford School of Architecture, the staff used to teach us architectural history by taking us on walking tours of the City.

But because those were Imperial times, long before globalisation, we were fed a chauvinistic line in architectural criticism. The single tree in the High Street, for example, was described as the most important tree in Europe. The great avenue of St Giles was extolled as a luscious sprawling urban space that would never be improved upon. In the same way, Beaumont Street was a perfect example of Georgian street architecture, as good as anything in Bath, and Broad Street was a magnificent counterpoint of this and that or something or other and – wait for it – the roof of the covered market was the finest timber roof since the Middle Ages.

All this was very gratifying, as you can imagine. These leisurely tours from time to time gave us the impression that, although we were admittedly some distance from the metropolis of London, we were sitting on a veritable gold mine of historic architecture that could stand up to comparison with Athens or ancient Rome any day.

There was no need for any of us to go further afield than New College Lane for historical inspiration – indeed, the only student in my first year who did make a grand European tour, returned somewhat sheepishly with a door handle nicked from the Villa Savoye (which was derelict at the time), to show for his pains. It seemed scarcely worth the trouble.

I mention this little vignette from the past because it serves as an excellent introduction to a diatribe on the way that changing fashions in architecture – read the dumbing down and consumerisation of architectural taste – are industriously overturning all the judgments of earlier times even as they profess a belief in eternal art historical values.

How do I know this? Because to my amazement, in the wake of those pioneer 'walking bus' tours of the city of dreaming spires with all its treasures, comes the news that these self-same priceless streets have won an accolade of a different kind: against all probability the architectural wonders of the city of Oxford have become 'Streets of Shame'.

In the Radio 4 *Today/CABE* contest to find the worst streets in Britain, the elite intelligentsia of the radio-listening public has spoken, and it has shown that, however little it might know, or might not know, about the mysteries of architecture, it certainly knows what it does not like.

'The radio-listening public has spoken, and however little it might know, or might not know, it certainly knows what it does not like'

Out of the top six 'Streets of Shame' nominations, four came from Oxford. Historic Broad Street, glorious St Giles, dubious Queen Street and other less famous treasures of Oxford architecture have been voted by listeners to be as bad as the worst slums in Leeds and Glasgow.

Last week, the *Oxford Times* reported that CABE commissioners had been shocked at the number of Oxford nominations, and even more by the famous streets chosen for excoriation. City councillors too have been tight-lipped.

Not only are they still mired in the consequences of a disastrous repaving of Cornmarket Street, but now they can look forward to 12 months of free advice from CABE on 'how to reverse the mistakes of the past'.

These counselling sessions will require extreme sensitivity. Otherwise, the council might begin to feel that its own efforts at beautifying the city's road network with such 'modernising' touches as paint on the road cycle and bus lanes, speed bumps, bollards, and so on, have been unfairly criticised. After all, they must appeal to the kind of people who think that Broad Street and St Giles are 'Streets of Shame'.

a life in architecture

george melly

Jazz singer, art connoisseur, author, fisherman – George Melly is an all-round showman who has very clear views on architecture. He remembers an afternoon spent in Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art (pictured) 'going all over it with the director and exchanging many bawdy recollections'. Melly says: 'I love the way that Mackintosh finds a balance between Art Nouveau and the austerity of Japan.'



Melly's second choice is the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona by Antoni Gaudí. 'I love Gaudí, who seems to me to have been totally out of control, and anyway had the Dadaistic misfortune to be run over by a tram,' says Melly.

The building was begun in 1882, but when Gaudí took over the following year he completely altered the original design in favour of his own ideas. 'The traditional Gothic scheme is a dead system,' said Gaudí. 'It might be compared to a human being whose skeleton is crushed by the weight of flesh that it has to support, and needs crutches in every direction.'

But progress on the cathedral was slow, and it was far from finished when, on 7 June 1926, the tram intervened. Since then there have been attempts to complete it, but which many – Melly among them – think misguided.

Architectural dislikes? Melly comments: 'Any old 1960s tower block, preferably neglected and scrawled with graffiti and full of smack dealers.'

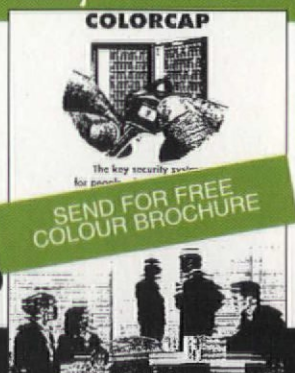
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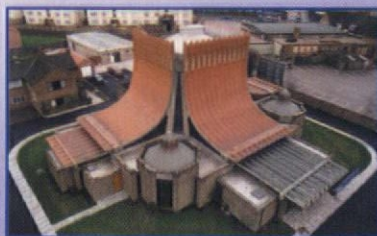
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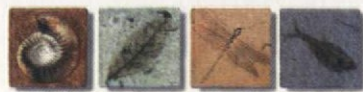
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Round peg in a square hole



aj construction study

Swiss Re's emerging 40-storey headquarters in the heart of the City of London – designed by Foster and Partners – plans to radically transform London's skyline with its cigar-shaped structure, and is a clear argument in favour of tall buildings

By Austin Williams. Photographs by Nigel Young

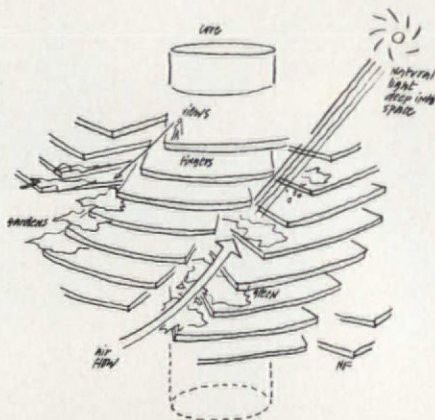


INSET IMAGE: DAVID COWLARD

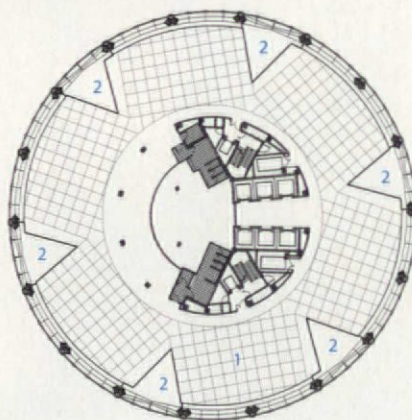
Re-insurance company Swiss Re is currently located at 71-77 Leadenhall Street in Aldgate, on the site of one of the first great religious buildings to be dissolved by Henry VIII. The Augustinian Holy Trinity Priory, built in 1108, was once home to the all-powerful medieval kings until it was seized and its wealth incorporated. Swiss Re's new offices are now being built on the site of the dissolution of the Baltic Exchange building; a triumph of insurance over global trading. Maybe the symbolism is intended to be apposite.

St Mary Axe, a small side street off Leadenhall Street, is to be home to Swiss Re's new 40-storey headquarters. Located in the heart of the city of London's commercial district, it shows the importance of this area to the client's identity – resisting the temptation to relocate to Docklands, and opting for the coherence of a historic financial area.

After the 1992 bombing of the Baltic Exchange, and its subsequent demolition, scheme proposals for office space on the site included the maximisation of the ground floor area – building right up to the boundary, keeping the height down and providing a central atrium. However, the developer found lettings difficult, for a variety of reasons, and with the backing of the Corporation of London, Foster and Partners was drafted in to reassess the potential of the site – the dialectical relationship between commercial need and architectural form – opting for the practical utilisation of only a portion of the site.



The staggered floor plans allow daylight to penetrate deep into the building



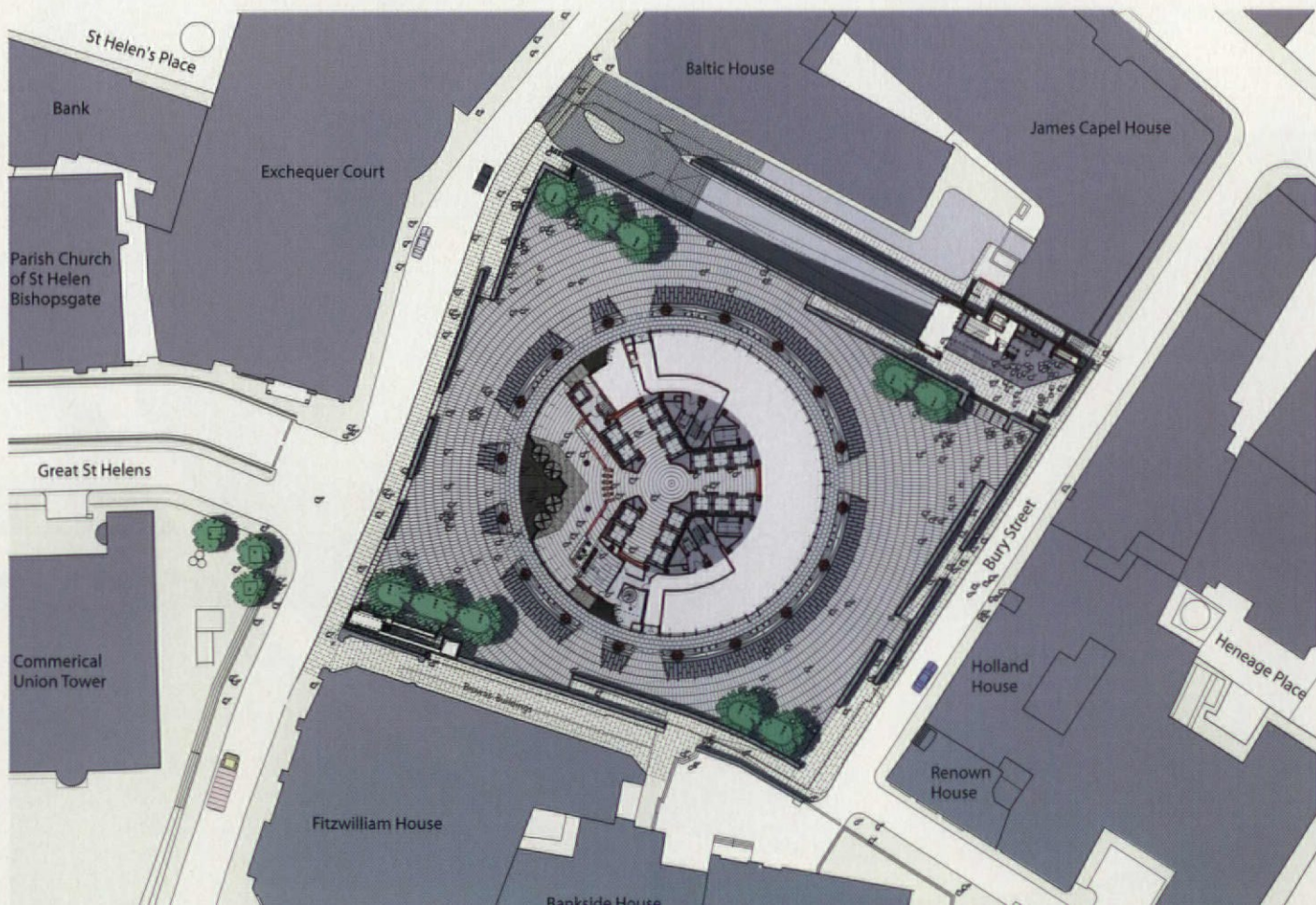
KEY
1 1.5m seating grid
2 cutaway floor

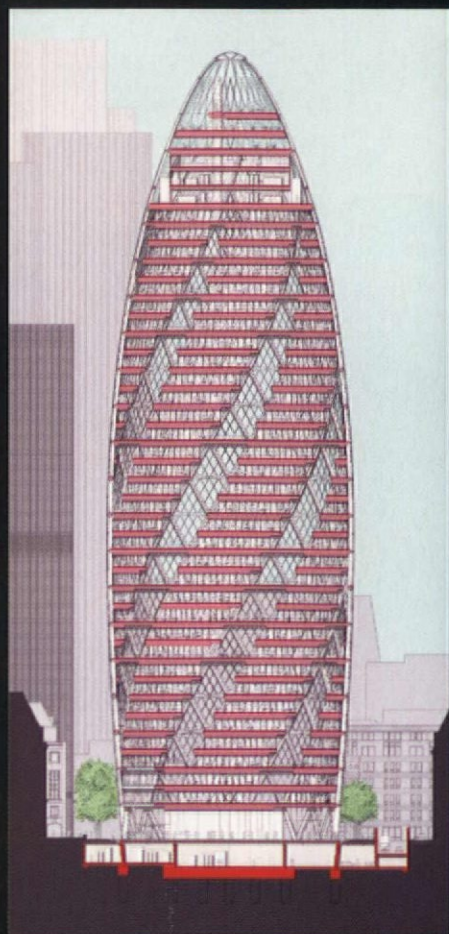
level 26 plan

Building a round building on a square site has resulted in 'unintentional' public spaces, which will be landscaped and form 'organic' areas of respite from the street. Pedestrian flows, especially in this area of London, says architect Paul Scott, follow alleyways rather than roads. The building shape will encourage people to lose themselves walking around the base of the structure, 'revelling in its aerodynamic form'. Halfway through the construction phase and all of the space has been let.

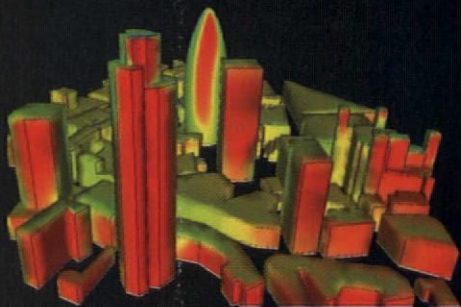
The shape has been arrived at after months of exploration into the most 'efficient' structure for the site. It is an appropriate form; determined by wind tests (tested in model form and using computational flow dynamics), approved by the local authority (which even requested that it be taller to improve the proportions), and aiding light penetration at ground level. The architect says that 'conceptually the project develops ideas first explored in the Clima-troffice design with Buckminster Fuller in the early 1970s, but only with advanced computer technologies has it become realisable. Through parametric modelling, the curved surfaces have been rationalised into segmented flat panes.

Effectively, the building has been broken down into a kit of parts which repeat throughout the scheme, thus rendering a fantastically complex idea into its simplest components. Conversely, the appearance of rigidity – of a pattern-book of repeating





section



Above: airflows around the building assist the internal ventilation and are predicted to benefit the local micro-climate

Key model of the storey arrangement, showing bioclimatic terraces and cutaway voids





Top: steel A-frames are hoisted into place and bolted to radial beams and perimeter ties. **Above:** currently two structural storeys are being completed every two weeks. **Below:** the view across the radial beams fixed at mid-points to the A-frames



elements – belies the non-standardised nature of much of the structure and fabric.

The floor plate comprises 'fingers', which radiate from the central access core and provide parallel edged floor spaces based on a 1.5m seating grid. The resulting triangular 'dead' areas have been cut away to improve air flows and natural lighting. Successive floors have been set back to provide notional balconies (floors with no soffit above) and which create, as the floor plates rotate, the spiral of triangulated ventilation voids. These are demarcated with tinted glass and have openable lights (operated by a central BMS for ventilation and for smoke release) so that the 'twisting' air flow taps in to the building's pressure differential rather than just relying on the stack effect.

Around the perimeter of each floor is an air plenum, opening to external air through a louvre blade at the horizontal glazing joints. This plenum is over-designed

by 50 per cent in case future uses for the building (additional conference room partitioning, for example), demand additional ventilation.

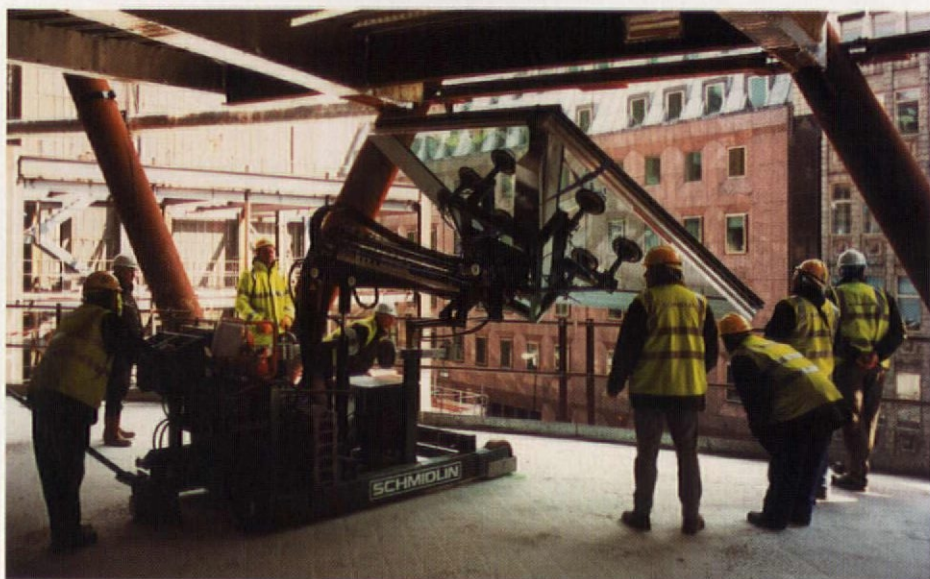
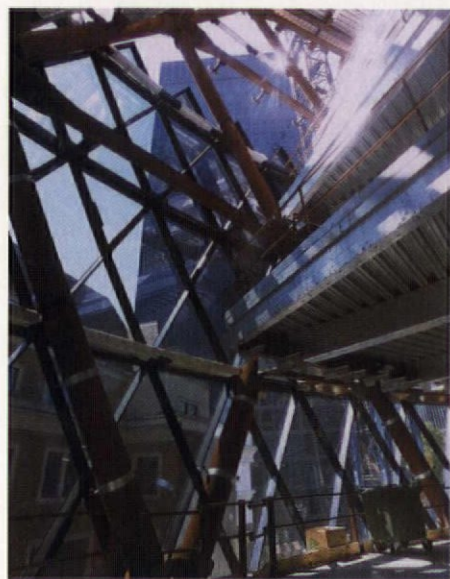
Open floor areas comply with fire separation and compartmentation requirements and are generally divided into six storey groupings – full floor to full soffit – with connecting ventilation voids. Standing on the mid-floor of these six-storey compartments affords fantastic views out through a vast area of glazing. At the ground floor entrance, the visitor passes through an unglazed, four-storey portion of the grid and, looking up, the triangulated cut away floor has been glazed to provide views directly into the heart of the building.

The structure is based on an external structural A-frame; the core is the loadbearing element and the frame provides stiffness. The plan is based on a 10 degree radial grid, a 20 degree superstructure grid and a 5

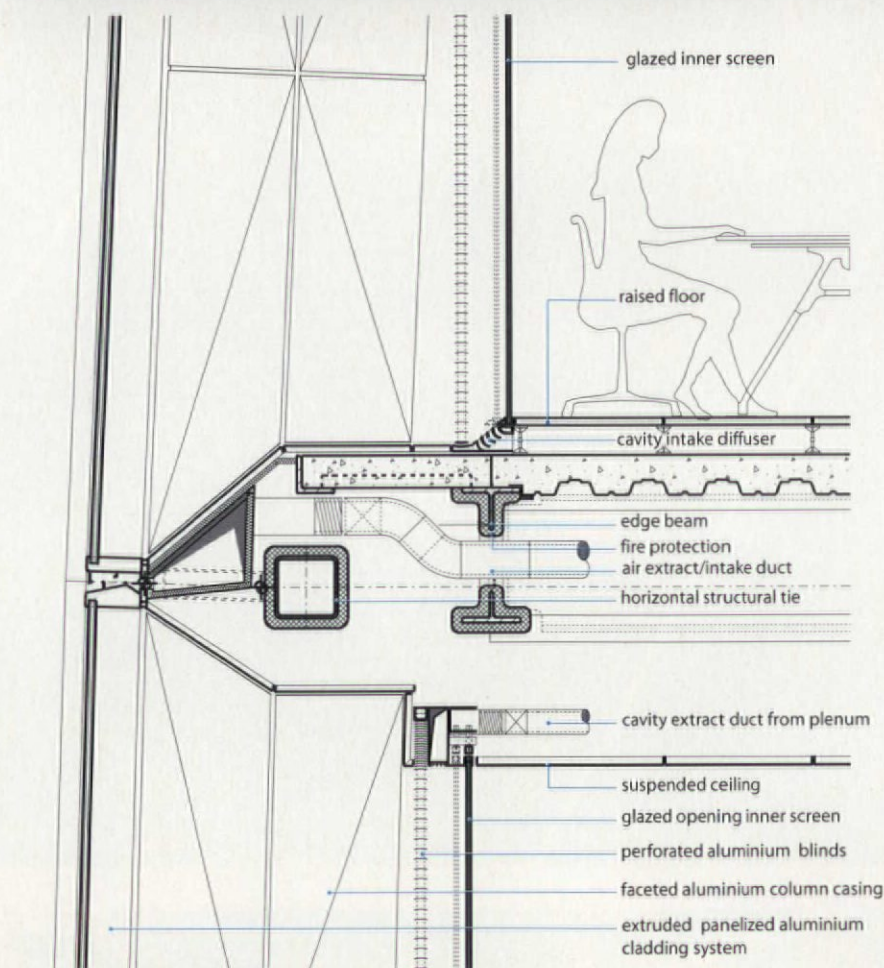
degree cladding module. Scott says that each tubular steel member of the A-frame has been designed with zero tolerances, to connect to radial beams 'like spokes on a bike'. As all joints have bolted connections, the structural accuracy relies on the node points and uses the bolts as locating pins – tightening up to 'pull the building into line'.

Because of the confined nature of the site, and the high profile of neighbouring buildings, the works is confined to two steel deliveries per day. Steel arriving from the Low Countries is stockpiled in Dartford ('to avoid strikes or ferry problems') and is delivered to site just in time. At the time of going to press, construction was progressing at two storeys per fortnight, including one week to get the external A-frame in place.

Windows are offered up from inside (alternating storey-height diamond shaped and half-storey triangular ones). These are attached to cladding rails – hooked on the



Top: cladding comprises storey-height diamonds and half-height triangles. Left: the set back balconies give rise to a vast area of glazing. Right: the need to minimise external scaffolding means that the glazing units have to be offered up from the inside using specialised equipment



section through typical floor/wall junction

top and bottom. Even though they have been designed to accommodate fluctuations of 75mm, they have, on average, been laid to tolerances of 5mm throughout. The simplicity of the design belies the need for the geometry of these windows to alter from floor to floor; as the building bows outwards, so the facets have to alter.

Unfortunately, the slender tubular frame which emphasises the feat of engineering efficiency has had to be clad in fire-resistant insulation, which then requires the additional disguise of aluminium panels. It is a shame that this has bulked out the frame, eating into the clear areas of glazing and thus reducing light and views. The other shame is that, to encourage the natural air

flows, a secondary glazing wall has been constructed around the perimeter, and the vertical lines of this glazed partitioning clash with the careful geometry of the diamond external cladding beyond.

The steel frame has been taken down to the pile cap, 6m below ground, determined by the size of service equipment and loading bay requirements. 'Fortunately,' says Scott, 'the floor level came just above the water table, otherwise the costs would have been prohibitive.' A 100mm-diameter hole, cut through the ventilation duct in the basement, actually extends through the whole building, to allow a theodolite laser to pass up through the building for accurate setting out for the day.

Currently the site – a stone's throw from



Top: the view towards the central core. Above: the view from the core with full floor soffit above. Below: fire protection bulks out the slender columns which are then clad in aluminium panels



Lord Rogers' Lloyd's Building – is dominated by Tower 42 (formerly the NatWest Tower) at 183m, and the Commercial Union building at 120m. Foster's proposal, at 180m, will complete the triumvirate but effectively this one building will do most to radically alter the London skyline; refusing to conform to the orthogonal orthodoxies of modern commercial structures. Viewed up close, with the straight lines of the adjoining buildings catching the eye, it had sometimes simply looked cylindrical. But as it has progressed and begun to attract the eye in its own right, the cigar-shape has become more apparent. Now its elevational distinctiveness is striking, and a worthy argument in favour of tall buildings done well.

This picture: tiled glazing demonstrates the spiral of floor plate cut-outs and the flow of air. Right: on completion, Swiss Re will be slightly lower than Tower 42 (the former NatWest Tower) but with a higher occupied top floor



CHRISTOPHER GAVIN

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working details

The 40-storey building is a prolate spheroid in shape. It has a central steel core from which floor beams radiate to a perimeter superstructure, creating column-free interiors.

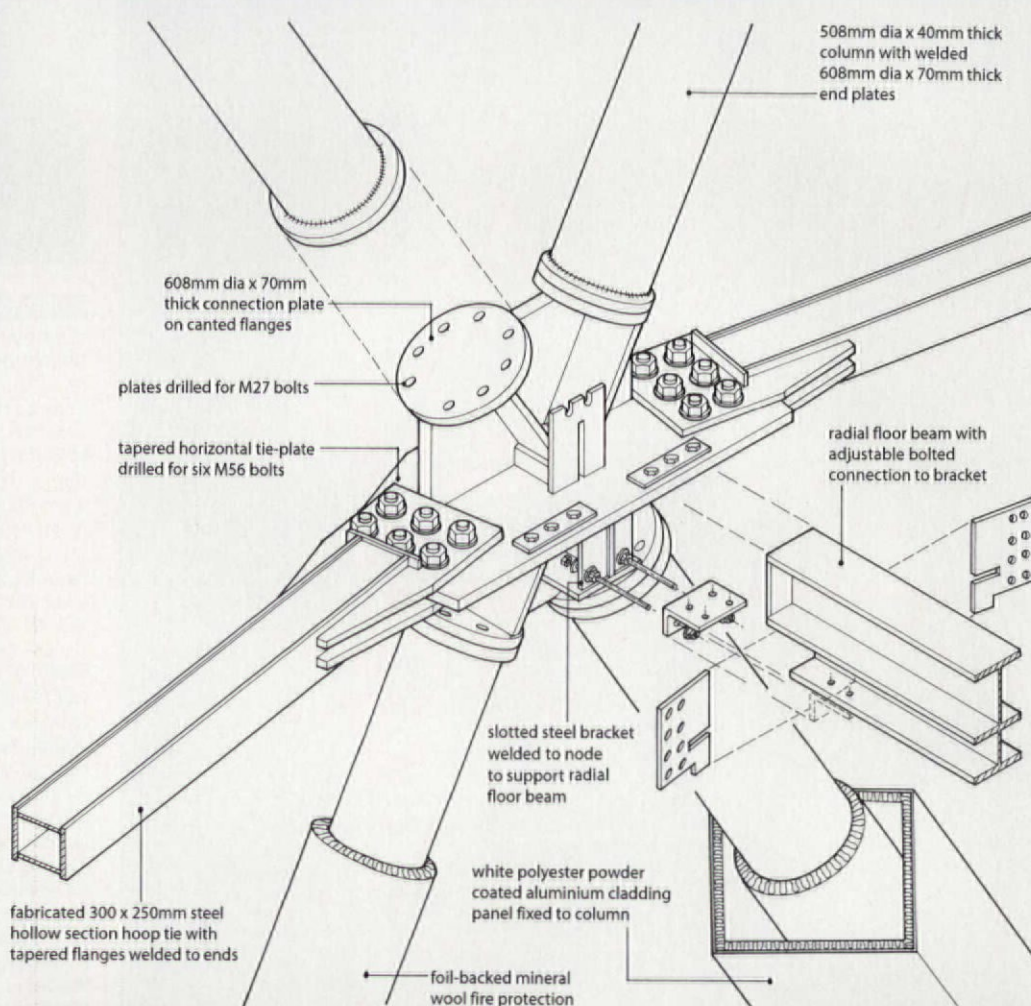
The superstructure is a diagrid, formed from a series of two-storey A-shaped frames bolted together. Each frame consists of a pair of columns bolted to a fabricated steel node. The columns have circular end plates which are bolted to matching circular connection plates, welded to the nodes at the precise angle needed to create the diagrid. Both sets of plates are machined smooth and flat in the factory and drilled to achieve an accuracy of within 1mm when bolted face-to-face. By prefabricating components to precise dimensions before assembly, the complex angular relationships between components are resolved before erection.

The sequence of construction is as follows: as soon as two floors of core structure are erected, a perimeter row of A-shaped frames is craned into position. Tie plates at both sides of each node are bolted to hoop-ties by means of tapered flanges, connecting the nodes horizontally. A series of floor beams, radiating from the core, are bolted to the backs of the nodes. They support a composite concrete structural slab, the metal deck of which is laid in trapezoidal sections.

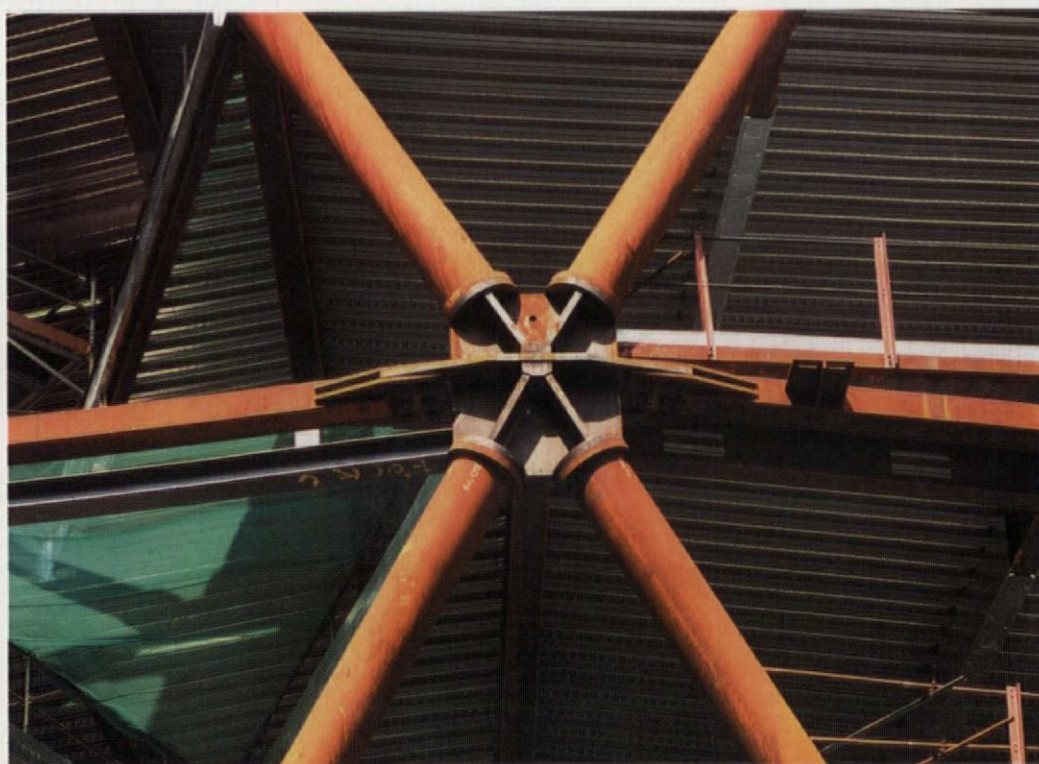
The diagrid steelwork is fire-protected with foil-backed mineral wool blanket and clad with V-shaped panels of white polyester powder-coated aluminium.

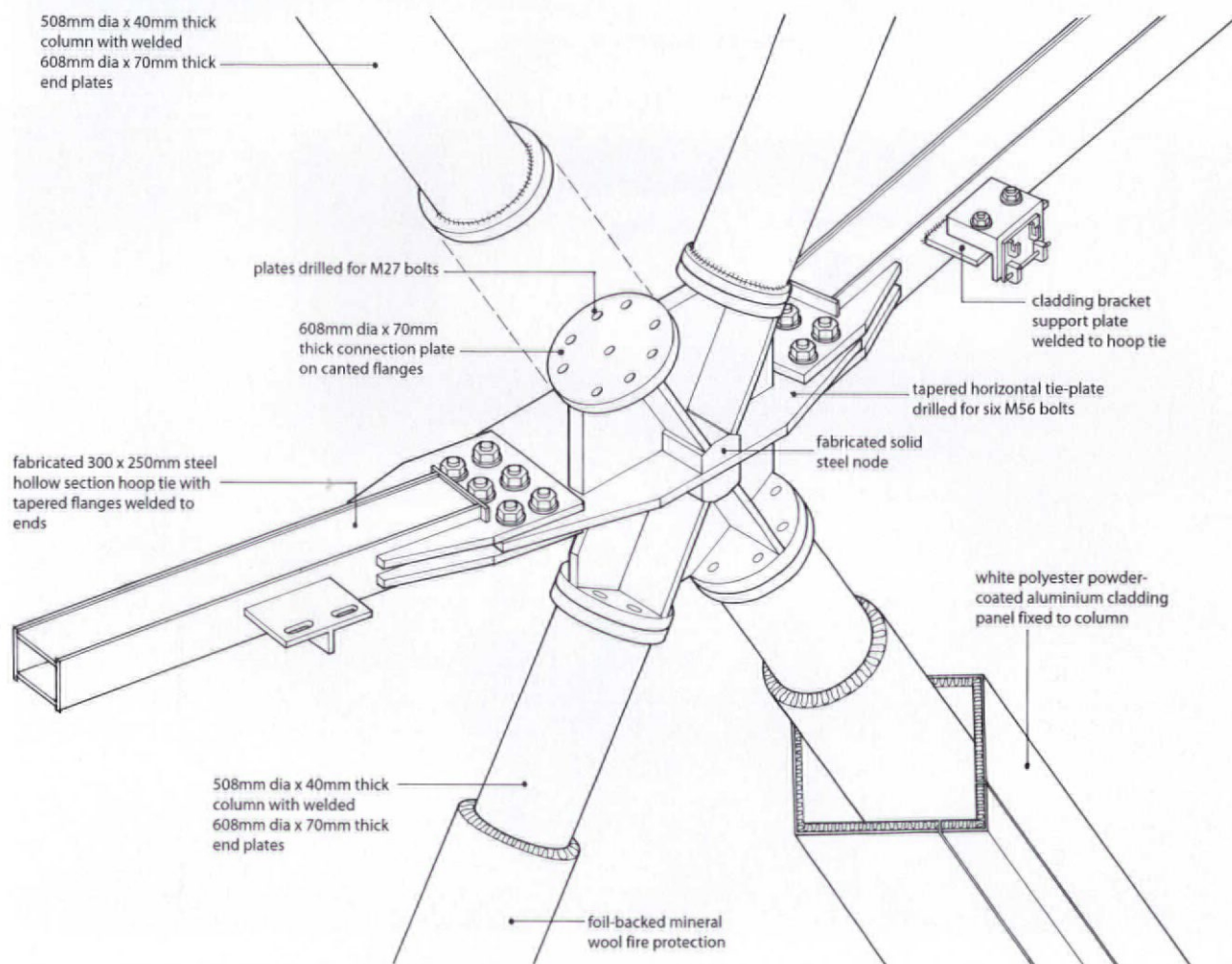
Cladding brackets bolted to the node and to the hoop-ties support a curtain wall of diamond-shaped panels which are faceted at their edges in both plan and section.

Susan Dawson

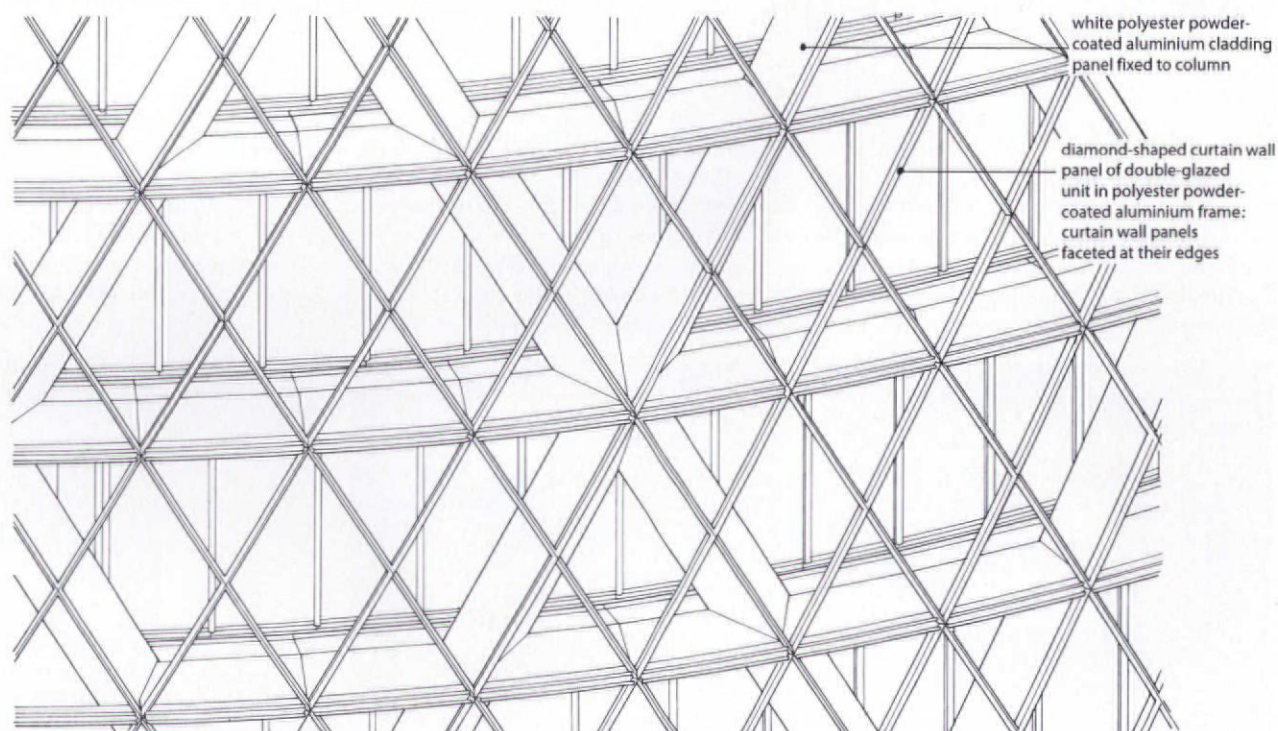


STEEL NODE; ISOMETRIC FROM INSIDE





STEEL NODE; ISOMETRIC FROM OUTSIDE



ELEVATION OF CURTAIN WALL AND COLUMN CLADDING



News storeys

By Barrie Evans. Photographs by Dennis Gilbert/View

Many UK newspapers have a long history. *The Guardian* (Manchester) dates from 1821, *The Observer* from 1791. Their owner, the Scott Trust, is making this past available through the new Newsroom on London's Farringdon Road, combining archives, exhibition space, a lecture theatre, and spaces for

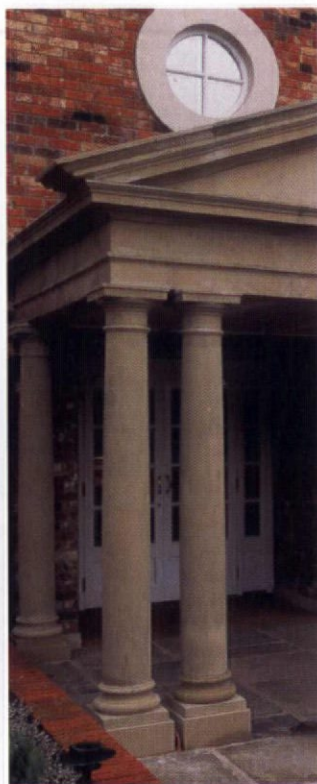
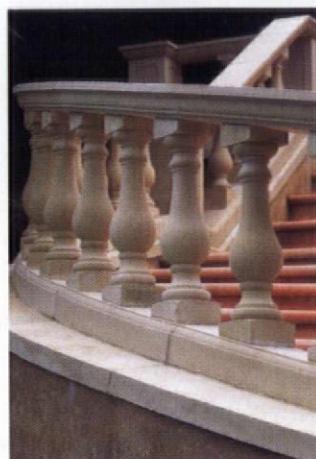
education, meetings and research. Newsroom director Luke Dodd aims to continue the papers' radical traditions in its choice of exhibitions and events.

Current *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger had the idea for the project. Visible across the road from his *Guardian* office was

the 1870s bonded warehouse that has become the Newsroom, converted and extended by Allies and Morrison. Its spaces broadly follow the original plan. A sense of openness begins at the entrance where, at ground level, a sequence of former openings – shopfront, delivery gates, a door and a window – have been largely removed to create a colonnade, though traces remain. Set back from the building line is a continuous glazed wall, now providing an entrance to upstairs offices (for *The Guardian* itself), the main public entrance and the window-wall

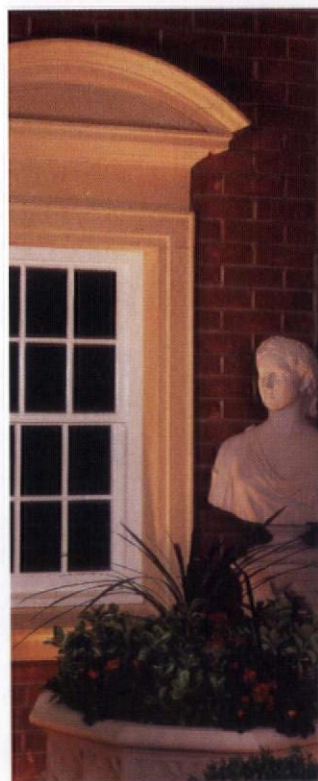


Top: the exhibition space. Above left: clarified frontage. Middle: metalwork helps define the entrance. Right: cafe with viewing slot in the glass



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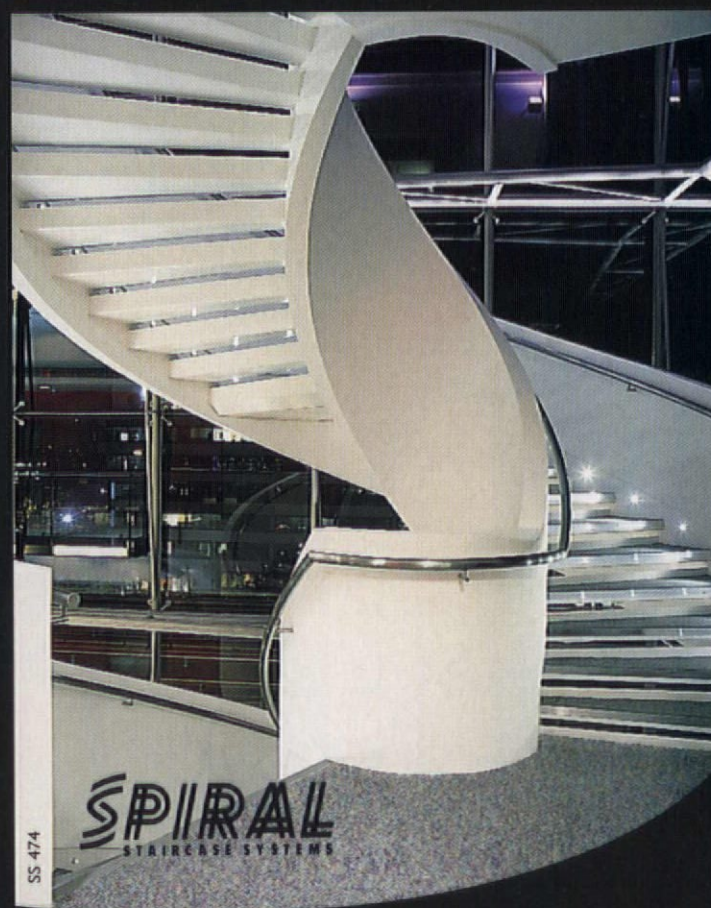


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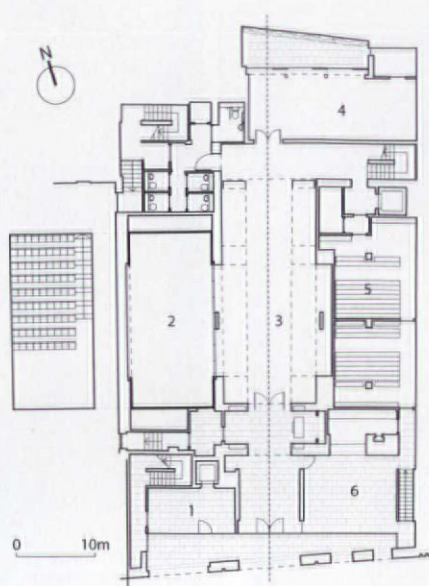
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of the public cafe. Disposition of the glazing and the blue-grey cut metal signage draw visitors to the central public entrance.

For visitors, the building comes as a sequence of three spaces with transitions between. First the entrance hall, with a walnut-clad wall which continues into the cafe on the right. Ahead is the first transition, where the ceiling drops, with a reception desk and an entrance to the lecture theatre so that it can be open while other areas deeper into the building are closed. Then the main exhibition space opens up, its sense of height enhanced by light from two strips of laylights along its length, shaded by louvres above. This occupies the space of the original courtyard.

This long exhibition space is flanked by a space on either side. One, inaccessible from here, is the large archive store, temperature- and humidity-controlled, fitted with rolling shelving for images, diaries, bound volumes, notebooks, etc. On the other side is the lecture theatre. This can either be closed off as a separate space, using a high-performance mobile screen, or opened to extend the exhibition space. In exhibition mode, the screen, with leaves mounted on ceiling tracks, can either be parked in line on the opposite wall or the individual leaves can be located through the space as display panels. In contrast to white plaster elsewhere, the theatre walls are lined with horizontal timber ribs on aluminium sheet. One end wall opens to reveal bleacher seating for 60, which can be supplemented by 30 chairs.



- KEY**
- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 offices entrance | 4 education |
| 2 lecture theatre | 5 archive |
| 3 exhibitions | 6 cafe |

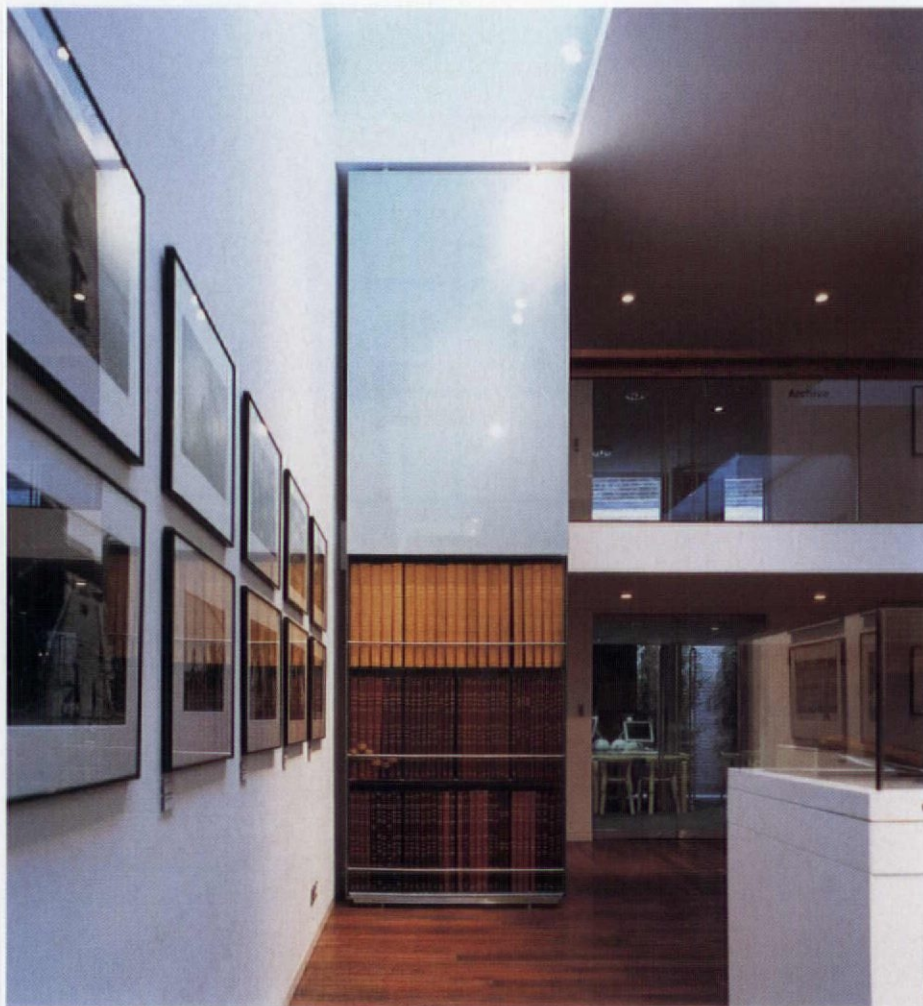
In the main exhibition space are display 'monoliths', which hold the permanent displays, some interactive. These monoliths have facing panels in storage which can be fixed over the permanent displays to create flat white surfaces for temporary exhibitions. Very neatly done. The end of the display space is marked by glass 'gateposts' – 5m-high glass boxes that hold some of the bound volumes of newspapers. Then the ceiling drops down into a cross-corridor transition before the

new work. A slender concrete-framed three-storey structure has replaced the existing one. The ground floor is the education centre, where school parties will create their own front pages.

What is most noticeable on entering these new three storeys of spaces is the lightness. A full-height, steel-framed back wall has been created 2-3m in from the building behind. This arrangement provides a full-width light shaft that brings a remarkable amount of light to the ground floor on a sunny day. The building's back wall is fully glazed apart from three sliding timber doors per floor; the masonry boundary wall is painted white, fronted by black-stemmed bamboos.

Materials, as well as lit space, are evident concerns of the architect. Materials come from a restricted palette and are often expressed separately as changes of surface, semi-detached from their neighbours, almost floating. While most interventions are contemporary, there are also traces in the interior of the former building – repointed panels of original brickwork and roof trusses in *The Guardian* offices.

The Newsroom is a new idea, one the client is only beginning to explore. In the variety and flexibility of spaces, the architect has provided a framework for this exploration. Talking to Luke Dodd, there is a sense, too, in which the building as it now exists – as distinct from the concepts of the brief – is helping to suggest new possibilities for what the Newsroom may become.



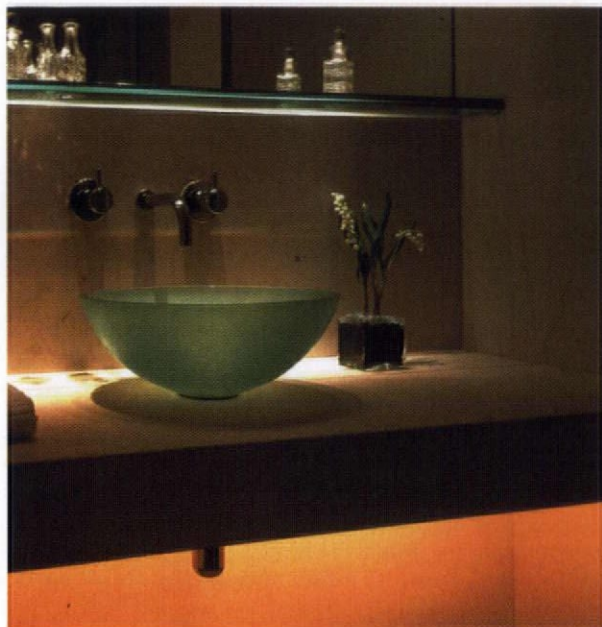
Left: from exhibition to education centre, with research office above. Above: bleacher seating

CREDITS

CLIENT The Guardian	QUANTITY SURVEYOR Davis Langdon & Everest
ARCHITECT Allies and Morrison: Paul Appleton, Rebecca Huggins	CONTRACTOR Killby & Gayford
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Price and Myers	GLASS BOOKSHELF ENGINEER Fluid Engineers: David Brookes
SERVICES ENGINEER Max Fordham and Partners	DISPLAY MONOLITHS Orna Hanly Architect: Doris Portmann



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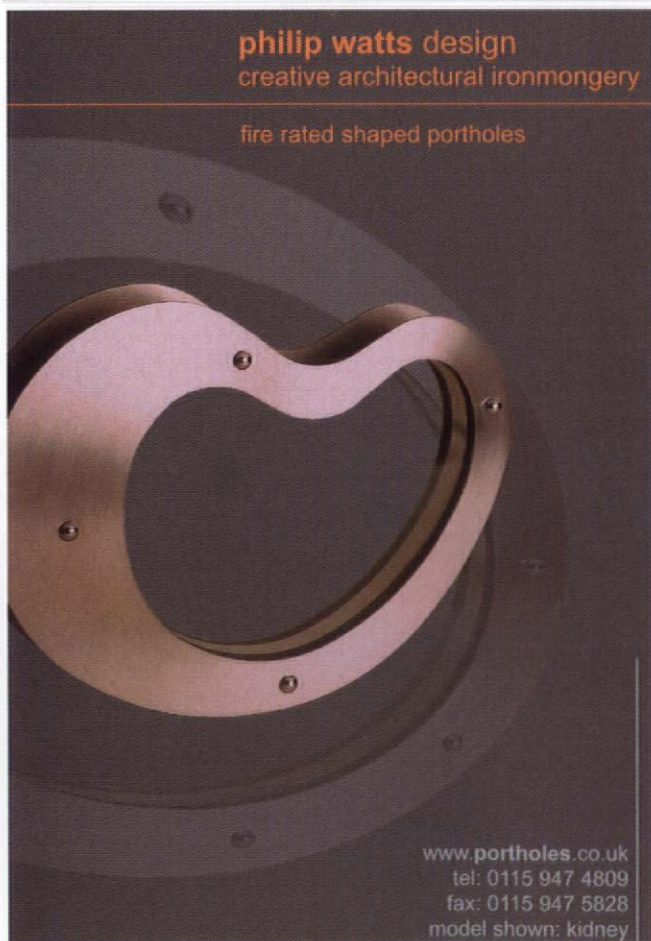


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Construction futures

In our regular overview of construction economics, E C Harris examines the potential for future growth in the industry

BY PAUL MOORE

Continued falls in the value of equities, the possibility of a double dip in the UK economy and the threat of war with Iraq have all continued to make private-sector construction clients nervous. Labour shortages are the cause of local difficulties and material prices have started to rise again after a long period of restraint.

Buoyed by continued spending in the infrastructure sector, and by further planned investment in health and education, the forecast is that tender prices will rise by 3.5 per cent in the year to third quarter 2003, with a further 3.2 per cent increase the following year.

In London, continued high labour costs and increased levels of activity should see building tender prices rise by 4.8 per cent during the next year and by a further 4.2 per cent in the year to third quarter 2004.

Input costs

The rate of increase of contractors' input costs increased substantially during the third quarter of the year, with materials costs up by 3.2 per cent in the quarter. Labour rates are 4.2 per cent higher than three months ago, with London bricklayers on £143 per day compared with daily rates of £95 in South Wales, for instance.

Problems in the supply of reinforcement from within the UK have seen rebar prices increase by 16 per cent during the past three months, although prices may be forced higher still by the imposition of a tariff on imported steel. Despite difficulties in recruiting skilled labour, DTI figures show that the number of employees in construction during April was 8 per cent higher than in April 2001.

Civil engineering

Tender prices are forecast to rise by at least 5 per cent during the next year and a further 3.8 per cent during the following year, on the back of an increasing workload for infrastructure across all sectors. The value of

'Labour and materials availability is already starting to suffer and shortages of resources will be the key driver in determining future tender price levels'

new orders for 2002 is forecast to rise by 10 per cent compared with 2001.

New orders for roads were worth £1,100 million in the first half of this year, compared with £1,500 million for the whole of 2001, and the Highways Agency has announced new road targets for this year and next. The water sector is now in the third-year boom period of its five-year periodic cycles and there are reports of skill and resource shortages. The need for intense activity in the road and rail maintenance sectors heightens on a daily basis.

With the peaks of the different sub-sectors coinciding, labour and materials availability is already starting to suffer and, notwithstanding the long-term deals that have been established, shortages of resources will be

the key driver in determining future tender price levels.

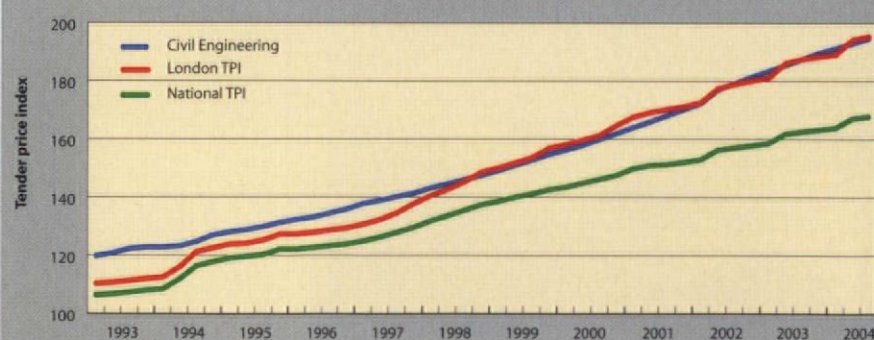
Construction activity

Output figures in the second quarter were 1 per cent higher than the first quarter and 7 per cent higher than the second quarter 2001, with new work up by 9 per cent, year on year, and refurbishment and maintenance work up by 5 per cent.

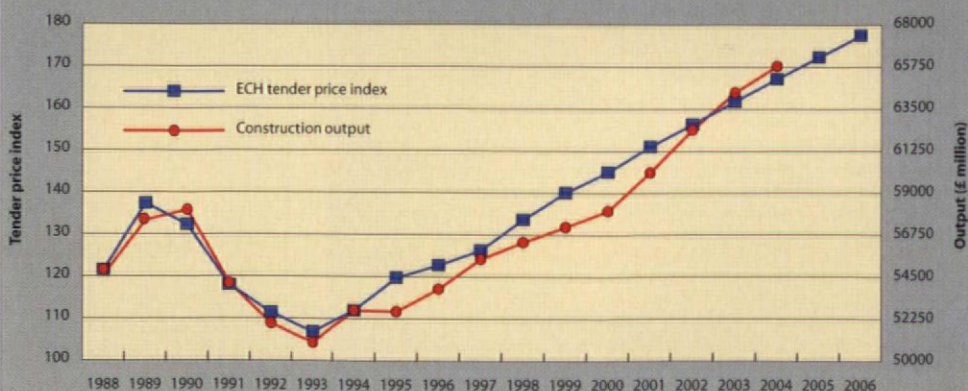
New construction orders in the first half of this year were 2.4 per cent higher than in 2001. Rises were seen across most sectors, although private industrial and private commercial both fell – by 24 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. While the 1 per cent fall in private commercial orders can be interpreted relatively optimistically – given the poor prevailing economic climate – the fall in private industrial was to its lowest level since 1993.

The continued rise in house prices shows no signs of abating, with the latest Halifax price index up by 18.8 per cent on the August 2002 figures; the Nationwide figures show an even higher year-on-year increase, of 23

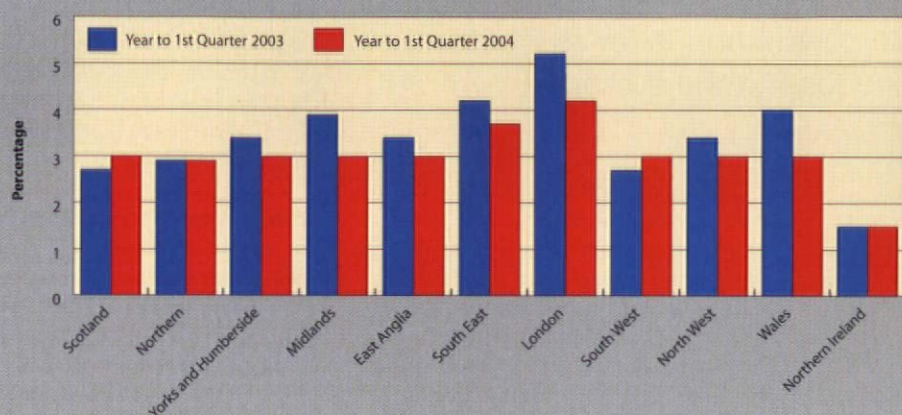
TENDER PRICE INDEX



CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT V TENDER PRICE INDEX



REGIONAL TENDER PRICE FORECAST



per cent. Despite some slowdown, construction output in the private housing sector is expected to rise by 6 per cent this year, slowing to 1 per cent in 2003, before falling by 2 per cent in 2004.

The main forecasters of construction activity are predicting continued rises in output during the next two years. Construction Forecasting and Research (CFR), in its summer 2002 forecast, is predicting that output will rise by 3.8 per cent in 2002, 3.2 per cent in 2003 and a further 2.2 per cent in 2004. The Construction Products Association forecasts output growth to average 3.5 per cent per annum through to 2004.

The repair and maintenance sector continues to benefit from higher spending on schools and health, and the shift of ownership of former local authority housing into the ownership of Registered Social Landlords that are undertaking major refurbishment programmes.

According to CFR, there should be a steady rise in the public non-residential sector of 8 per cent this year, followed by 6 per cent in 2003 and 2004 as spending on health and education rises. The main threat to the sector is the possibility of the government not delivering on its commitments if an economic downturn curtails the availability of cash.

The private commercial sector, which accounts for approximately one third of all new work, is expected to show a flat performance. Offices are expected to perform poorly, although spending on retail schemes should rise.

'The start of any military action in the Gulf would have a detrimental effect on the UK and world economies'

Tender prices

Continued high levels of construction activity mean that input costs are increasing, specialised subcontractors are able to pick and choose and tender prices continue to rise. Contractors remain optimistic and, with order books remaining full, negotiation of prices remains difficult. Looking further ahead, increasing numbers of contractors are securing long-term relationships with chosen clients.

Long-term workload for London includes further phases of Canary Wharf, the continued development of Paddington Basin, Terminal Five, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and, surely at some time in the next couple of

years, the redevelopment of Wembley Stadium. The speculative London office market has very much contracted, with developers only going ahead after securing pre-lets. Unlike the last office boom, however, the 'spec' office market is now a much smaller percentage of the whole and the downturn has not had such a deleterious effect.

Macro economic factor

A survey in August of independent analysts indicates growth in the UK economy of 1.7 per cent this year, rising to 2.7 per cent in 2003. Underlying rates of inflation are expected to remain within government targets, with year-on-year increases of 2.2 per cent this year and 2.4 per cent in 2003. Interest rates are unlikely to change this year. However, any military action in the Gulf would have a detrimental effect on the UK and world economies, as oil prices would be driven up and any economic recovery in the US – which is already facing the possibility of a 'double dip' – would be hit.

Notwithstanding the latest depressing news from the London Stock Exchange, the UK economy remains basically sound and is better able to cope than those of the US and many European countries.

Paul Moore is an associate and head of the cost research department at EC Harris. E-mail paul.moore@echarris.com

Main points

- Construction output in the second quarter of this year was 1 per cent higher than the previous quarter and 7 per cent higher than the second quarter 2001.
- Construction output is forecast to increase by 3.8 per cent this year, by 3.2 per cent in 2003 and by 2.2 per cent in 2004.
- Skilled labour rates are up by 8.6 per cent nationally during the year to September 2002.
- Materials prices rose by 6.2 per cent for the year, although difficulties in procuring reinforcement forced rebar up by 13-16 per cent in the same period.
- Commercial and industrial sectors face a slowdown. Infrastructure output is forecast to rise by 25 per cent between 2001 and 2004.
- Refurbishment and maintenance output is forecast to rise by 3.5 to 4 per cent for each of the next three years.
- Tender prices are forecast to rise nationally by 3.5 per cent during the next year and by 3.2 per cent during the year to third quarter 2004.
- Tender prices in London are forecast to rise by 4.8 per cent during the next year and by 4.2 per cent the year after.
- Civils tender prices are forecast to rise by almost 5 per cent during the next year with a further 3.8 per cent rise forecast the year to third quarter 2004.
- The underlying rate of retail price inflation is expected to run at 2.1 to 2.4 per cent for the next five years.
- Economic growth in the UK is forecast to rise by 1.7 per cent in 2002, 2.7 per cent in 2003 and 2.3 to 2.7 per cent for the following three years.

Making plans for the future

The government's response to consultations on its Planning Green Paper hints at major changes to the system

BY BRIAN WATERS

The government wants to promote a culture change in planning: 'Too often the culture of planning is reactive and defensive. We want a culture which promotes planning as a positive tool.'

We are promised a comprehensive programme of change – a major programme of action which is prioritised and scheduled; early legislation and new regulations and a programme for revising and updating national policy guidance.

Architects will have to stay on top of the changes, at least at the procedural level and in advising clients of their implications. A statutory purpose for planning is to be introduced, 'subject to ensuring that this is done in a way that does not create additional complications for the way the system operates'.

Headlined in the press as a 'retreat', the Green Paper's suggested approval of major projects by Parliament has been replaced by an intention to replace planning policy guidance (PPGs) with national policy statements (PPSs), which will be 'more concise and better focused on implementation of policy objectives'. These clear statements of national policy about the need for specific investment 'will help reduce decision times', so national policy will remain to be determined at high level.

Targets for decision times are to be introduced for the secretary of state's own called-in and recovered appeal decisions. More refined targets for the planning inspectorate have already been announced.

User-friendly planning

At regional and local level, clearer strategic and detailed planning is promised. Regional planning guidance is to be replaced by a statutory regional spatial strategy, which will be given the same weight as the local development plan. This will provide the strategic framework within which new local development frameworks

(LDFs) and local transport plans can be prepared and to which they will be obliged to conform. Structure Plans remain to be abolished but counties retain a role in the preparation of strategic plans. There will be a single tier of LDFs which will replace the present plans. Districts will be allowed to work together to produce joint frameworks which will comprise:

- a core strategy – to include a statement of community involvement;
- a proposals section with a map showing site-specific policies; and
- area action plans for key areas of change or conservation.

Local authorities will be obliged to provide a three-year project plan for their preparation.

The process for consideration and adoption of plans is to be improved by abolishing the two-stage deposit process; promoting mediation over objections; timetabling the inquiry process; giving inspectors more control over procedures so allowing written, round-table and hearing examinations with no right of formal advocacy or cross-examination; and to make the inspector's recommendations binding on the authority. The right of objectors to be heard is to remain, though presumed to be on an informal basis.

Inspectors will be looking at the soundness of the plan and will no longer be restricted to considering matters objected to.

Other issues include the introduction of a certified statement of development principles (which might eventually replace outline planning permission if they prove to work) and the validity of permissions is to reduce from five to three years, but subject to LPA discretion. Local authorities will also be allowed to refuse repeat appli-

cations (where they have already refused a similar application) and duplicate applications.

Controversial proposals to introduce tariffs in place of planning obligations have been dropped and new guidance is to be produced for a more streamlined system.

Performance indicators

The immediate thrust of action remains to do something to improve development control performance. Key decisions include targeting 90 per cent of delegated decisions to officers; adding a checklist of issues to application forms; and introducing delivery contracts to match expectations of service delivery by authorities and applicants for large schemes once an application has been made.

To make the appeal process more efficient, the authority and the inspectorate will, for a short period (two or three weeks), be given dual jurisdiction for non-determination cases. This should focus the authority on the case with the incentive of avoiding the work of fighting an appeal. Applicants will also find they have only three months during which to appeal.

Statutory consultees will face a statutory 21-day period in which to respond or lose the right and they will be encouraged to produce standing advice. They will not be given the right to charge applicants for their advice.

For the consumer, planning aid is to be given financial assistance, permissions are to be required to have reasons attached, and authorities will be obliged to give stakeholders the right to address planning committees. Since 1 July, planning obligations and

'Statutory consultees will face a 21-day period in which to respond or lose the right to appeal'

similar agreements have had to be published on the planning register.

Finally, a review of enforcement is promised. It might make planning applications faster, fairer and more predictable – but it certainly will not be any simpler.

● ODPM: Sustainable Communities – delivering through planning – visit www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/consult/greenpap/scdtp/index.htm

Brian Waters is principal of the Boisot Waters Cohen Partnership, tel 020 7828 6555

N° 3256

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Will there be a flood of claims after a claim on floods?

The Human Rights Act 1998 was heralded as marking a significant change in our legal system. To date, its impact has been muted. However, in February of this year in *Marcic v Thames Water*, the Court of Appeal left the door on human rights ajar for people adversely affected by works, or the lack of them, carried out by public authorities.

Mr Marcic lived in Stanmore, Middlesex. His house stood at the lowest point of Old Church Lane, under which ran a foul sewer and a surface water sewer. His house was regularly and seriously flooded by overflow from both sewers. A mere 15 minutes of heavy rain was sufficient to cause flooding. Mr Marcic claimed against Thames Water – which was responsible for the sewers – in nuisance, and under the Human Rights Act 1998.

His claim was that the failure to provide a proper drainage system infringed his right to respect for his home. *Marcic* was a test case, fought by Thames because of its potential liability to numerous households similarly at risk.

By the time of the trial, Mr Marcic had been waiting nine years for his flooding problem to be addressed. Almost nothing had been done by Thames during that time, although Mr Marcic had taken steps himself to try to protect his home. Experts agreed that major engineering works would be needed to stop the flooding.

The problem Mr Marcic faced with pursuing his nuisance claim was that Thames' obligations were defined by the statutory framework under which it operates. Essentially, Mr Marcic's case was that Thames should have carried out works to the sewers; Thames said that it could not be obliged to do so. The judge at first instance decided, after lengthy consideration of the statutory provisions, that Thames was right.

But rather than leaving Mr Marcic without a remedy against Thames, the judge went on to decide that the human rights claim succeeded. Thames' failure to carry out works to bring to an end the repeated flooding of Mr Marcic's house interfered with his human rights.

Both parties appealed. Mr Marcic appealed against the finding that his nuisance claim failed. Thames appealed against the finding that Mr

Marcic's human rights had been infringed. The Court of Appeal allowed Mr Marcic's appeal and rejected Thames'.

In finding that Thames was liable in nuisance, the Court of Appeal's judgment focused on the common law and statutory provisions in that area. It did not dwell long on the human rights aspect, it being unnecessary having found for Mr Marcic on the other grounds. However, what was said about the claim suggests there is potential for human rights to be brought into play in similar circumstances.

The Court of Appeal went further than the judge at first instance who, in considering the claim, had accepted that there had to be a balancing act between Mr Marcic's rights and the

competing interests of Thames' other customers. The judge had agreed that Thames had a wide margin of discretion in deciding how best to allocate its available funds, and how to plan and prioritise its works. However, having taken those matters into account, he concluded that, on the facts, Mr Marcic's rights had been infringed.

The Court of Appeal hypothesised that Thames' system of priorities might have been entirely fair, and that system might have resulted in no works being planned to assist Mr Marcic in the foreseeable future. Following the reasoning of the judge at first instance, that would have left Mr Marcic with no remedy. The court doubted whether such a result would accord with Mr Marcic's human rights. That suggests that a public authority may have to pay compensation to individuals adversely affected by its carrying out of its tasks, even if those tasks are properly carried out for the benefit for the community as a whole.

This potentially calls into question the liability of public authorities carrying out discretionary statutory functions in numerous areas, even if their discretion is exercised reasonably. It may not be long before another sewerage claim, or a tree root claim, or pest control claim, or pollution abatement claim, appears that tries to push the door open further.

Sue Lindsey

'Marcic was a test case, fought by Thames because of its potential liability to numerous households at risk'

African e-mail scam takes white farmer twist

You may remember the 419 e-mail racket which urges you to engage in ripping off an African country for lots of dosh – using your bank account (AJ 23.5.02). Incidentally, don't. It's a scam. When you get your latest e-mail from Lagos or wherever you should, apparently, forward a copy of it to 419@spring39.demon.co.uk before deleting it.

The scam has taken an imaginative twist, reports *The Register* at www.theregister.co.uk. Now the invitation comes from a Zimbabwean white farmer who is trying to get his association's funds out of the country. Your proposed take is a cool million. Incidentally, *The Register* is selling 419 T-shirts for £12 with the text of a typical e-mail on the back, and on the front: 'My money went to Nigeria and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.' Look at the bottom of *The Register* homepage for the cash and carry shop.

The Greek ban on all electronic computer games reported here a few weeks ago has been halted by a Greek court which ruled this bit of idiocy unconstitutional (AJ 12.9.02). Naturally the fuzz brought a case which had nothing to do with illegal gambling, the original reason for Greece's Whitehall laying down the ban on all computer games. It was about two Internet cafe owners who allowed their customers to play Counter-Strike and online chess, reports the BBC at www.bbc.com

This column does not run to a credible speed testing kit but I reckon broadband downloading via Telewest cable modem is considerably faster than via BT Internet. Long-suffering readers will recall the tediums of installing and maintaining BT broadband – and trying to talk to the call centre, 50 miles north of Inverness – ever since BT introduced its DIY broadband. But nothing is perfect and recently Telewest circulated its subscribers with the information that it had lost everyone's e-mails. Happily, I had kept my old ISP – largely because I like to maintain e-mail files on my computer. sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

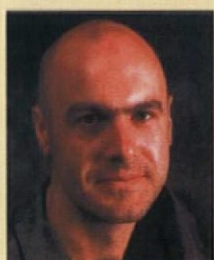
Autumn 2002



MetalWorks

Little gems





The first time I got on an aeroplane, I made sure I sat next to the window. We took off from a wet Gatwick. But this did not prevent me seeing a rooftop, onto which someone had painted the word 'Teas'. As if, upon landing, one might seek out the place or even defenestrate in mid-flight for the allure of tea. The point was that somebody had constructed the following (flawed) syllogism; aircraft fly over our roof, therefore you can see the roof from the aircraft, therefore the roof makes a good place for an advertisement. Or what if someone had calculated that the teas would be arriving at that moment on board the aircraft? Imagine my horror when, recently mid-North Sea, I saw a boat with the words 'dodgy meat sandwich' emblazoned upon the deck.

All of which brings me to the conclusion that objects in the landscape make good place to advertise. McDonald's wants to project the 'Golden Arches' onto the moon. This must be the ultimate in corporate philistinism, but smaller lacerations of the soul occur daily. So it comes as some relief that most of the inclusions in this issue of *MetalWorks* are too bijou to support overt advertising of any sort – except, of course, the best kind, which is the material expression of the client's requirements in the care and detail evident in the finished 'product'.

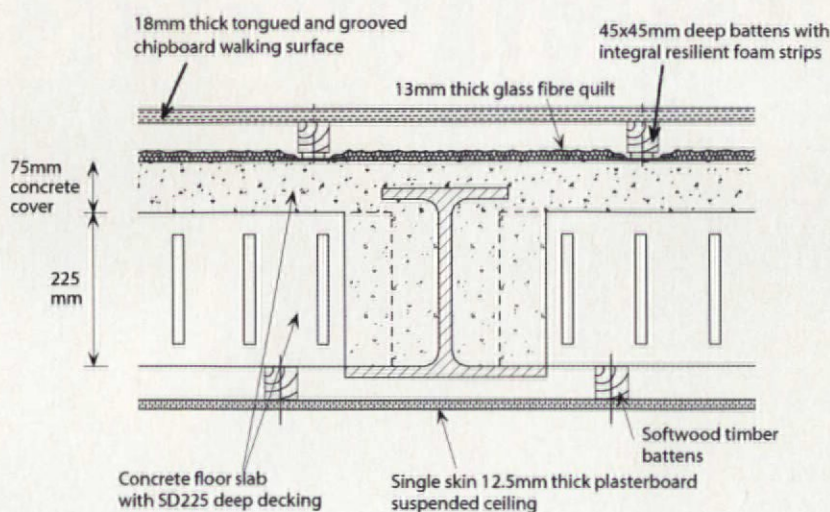
Smallness brings its own problems. Compact solutions need a more inventive approach to 'putting things away'. The maxim, 'a place for everything and everything in its place' becomes both more relevant, but somehow also obsolete in a culture where worth is measured by possessions. Where to store the material validators of our existence becomes not only problematic, but also emblematic. The words 'storage solution' have never seemed more alluring.

Good architecture can provide a useful antidote to the need to surround oneself with consumer durables. There is an idea borrowed from the Japanese in buildings but used for centuries in boats and caravans. It derives from what Vitruvius expressed as 'firmness, commodity and delight' and Frank Pick, somewhat less eloquently, as 'fitness for use'. It is that objects should actually be useful and that utility is beautiful, and that this can be expressed in a small building, because everything is there on its merits. I suppose we could paint 'Architecture' on the roof just to make sure.

Matthew Teague

Cover shows Southport pier-head
Photograph by Chris Brink

MetalWorks Acoustics



Floored genius

Tests on the acoustic performance of composite deck floors show many easily outperform current standards

BY MARK GORGOLEVSKI

Acoustic performance is increasing in importance in residential specifications as developers and occupants demand higher standards. The Building Regulations for residential buildings include minimum standards of acoustic performance for walls and floors between dwellings (separating walls and floors), and these are due to be upgraded in 2002/03. The government recently announced that it intends to introduce mandatory testing of a sample of all dwellings at each site, although Robust Standard Details may be allowed as an alternative way of showing compliance.

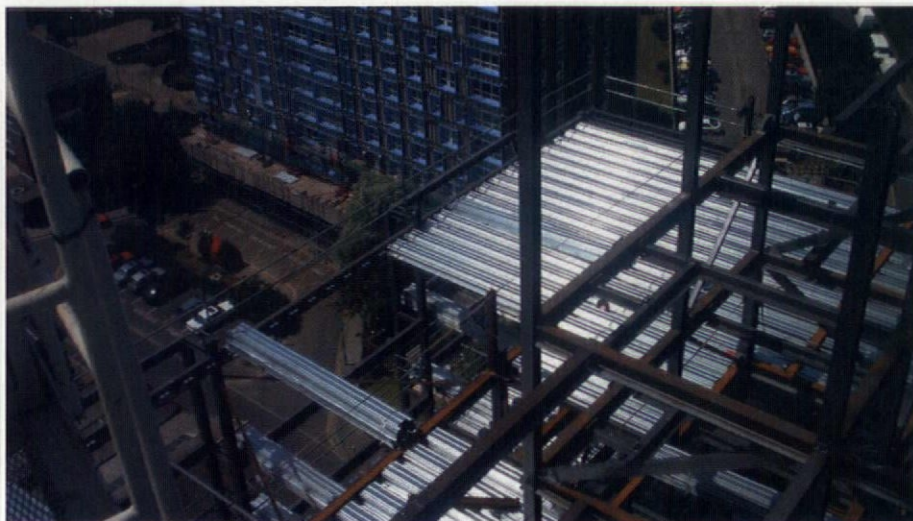
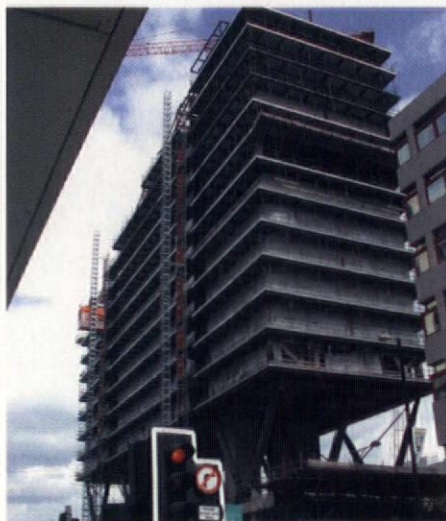
Hot-rolled steel framing with composite floors is increasingly being used in residential apartment buildings and mixed-use developments where the benefits, which include speed, quality and off-site prefabrication, are important. In order to demonstrate the acoustic performance of steel frames with composite floors, the Steel Construction Institute has been collecting acoustic test data from steel-framed residential developments in the UK.

Tests have been carried out on two buildings using Slimdek construction with ASB beams and deep-profiled decking, and in two buildings using shallow-deck composite floors with downstand beams. These are generally in city-centre locations and are either mixed-use developments of retail and commercial space with residential above, or free-standing medium-height residential blocks.

One example of a Slimdek residential building is an eight-storey development in Glasgow that consists of 49 high-quality apartments, including a penthouse and eight duplex (two-storey) apartments. The composite floor consists of 280mm asymmetric Slimflor Beams using 225mm deep decking to give a 300mm deep composite slab with a resilient floor and suspended ceiling.

For a high-profile 19-storey steel frame residential development in Manchester, consisting of 84 apartments and four penthouses, the developer specified acoustic standards considerably better than Building Regulations. The chosen construction was of the type used in many multi-storey steel-framed commercial buildings. It consists of a hot-rolled steel frame with downstand beams supporting a composite steel deck floor. This has a floating screed and plasterboard ceiling.

The acoustic test results (as summarised in the table opposite) show that such floors can easily achieve acoustic insulation standards considerably better than those required by current and proposed future regulations. In the Glasgow building, the average airborne sound insulation ($D_{nT,w}$) was found to be 62dB. This compares very well with the minimum acceptable in the Building Regulations – 52dB. The average impact sound transmission ($L_{nT,w}$) was found to be 48dB, which also outperforms the Building Regulations



In addition to the acoustic performance, speed, quality and the benefits of off-site fabrication are some of the advantages of

hot-rolled steel framing with composite floors in apartment buildings and mixed-used developments

requirement of less than 61dB by a considerable margin. The building in Manchester also performed impressively. The D_{nTw} was found to be 65dB and the L'_{nTw} was found to be only 45dB.

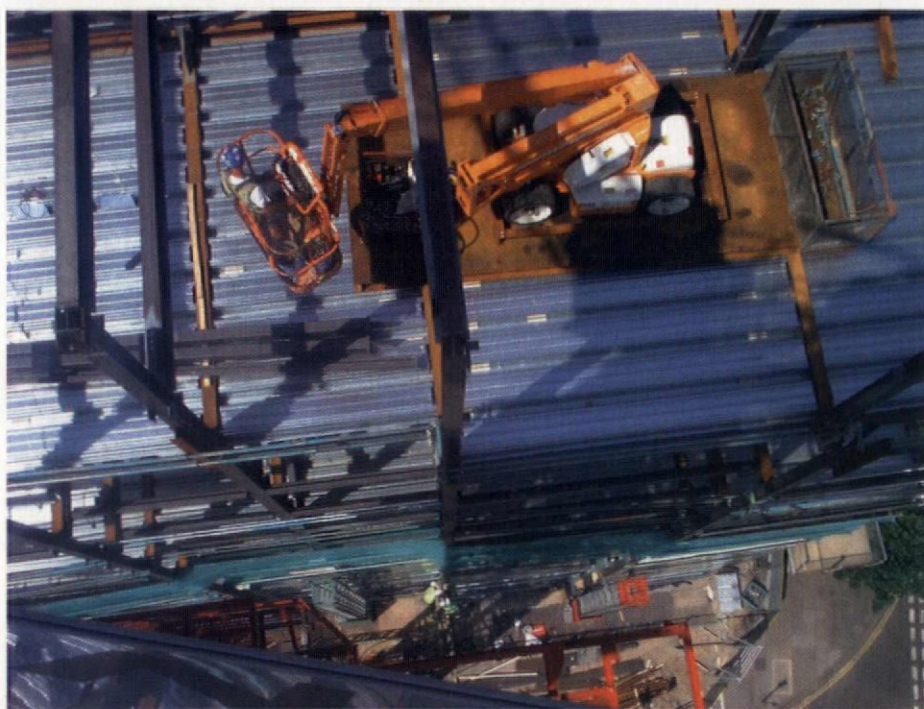
These test results are also considerably better than the requirements of the optional 'Enhanced Acoustic Standards' set out in a recent BRE publication¹ for developers who wish to specify a standard higher than that imposed by the regulations. They also considerably outperform the proposed standards for the revised Building Regulations.

With any type of construction, good acoustic performance is dependent on good detailing and effective site practices. SCI and Corus plan to carry out further acoustic testing of steel-frame buildings with composite floor slabs and to publish guidance on detail design for achieving good acoustic performance. More information is available in SCI case studies on Slimdek².

Mark Gorgolevski is an architect and environmental consultant

References

- 1 Specifying dwellings with enhanced sound insulation – a guide, BRE, 2000
- 2 Case Study 4, Data sheet 1, Case Studies on Slimdek, Steel Construction Institute, 2002, Publication P309
- The Building Regulations 2000: Proposals for amending Part E – Resistance to the passage of sound, DETR 2001

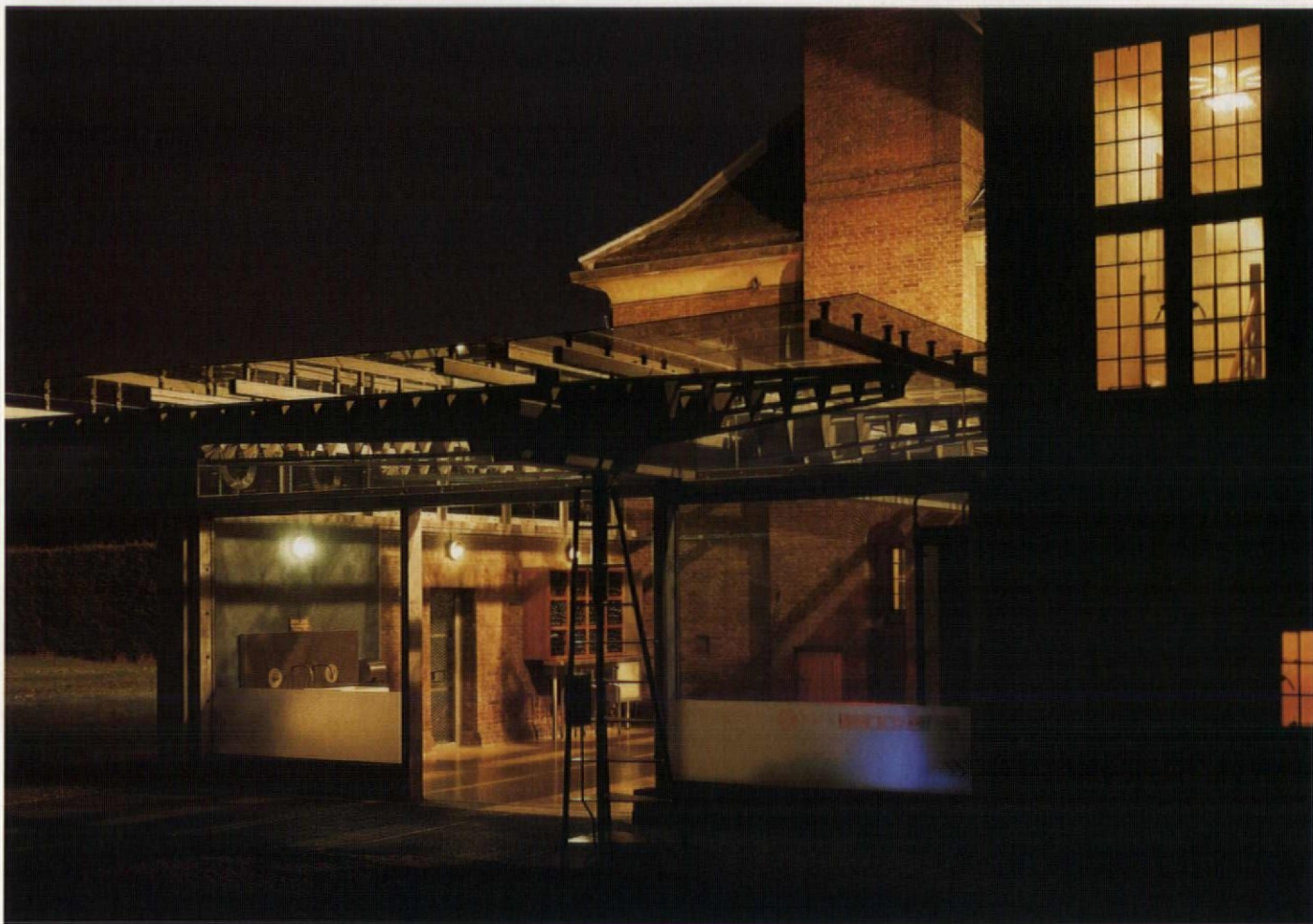


Acoustic test results from four buildings with composite slab separating floors

	Airborne sound		Impact sound	
	D_{nTw}	$D_{nTw}+C_{tr}$	L'_{nTw}	$L'_{nTw}+C_i$
Current Building Regulations (mean)	52dB		61dB	
Proposed new regulations		45dB	62dB	
Enhanced (Quiet Homes) standard		50dB	57dB	
Average test results from buildings				
Glasgow – Slimdek	62dB	54dB	48dB	49dB
Cardiff – Slimdek*	62dB	56dB	23dB*	19dB*
Manchester – composite deck with downstand beams	68dB		44dB	
Cardiff – composite deck with downstand beams*	63dB		25dB*	

* Impact tests carried out with carpet in place

MetalWorks Little gems



Master and servant

Gareth Wilkins' glass and steel entrance is an eye-catching addition to this rock star-owned, 1930s mansion in Sussex

BY SUSAN DAWSON. PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCK ROBERT

For better or worse, many country houses that once belonged to the gentry have now passed into the hands of the new elite, with new requirements. One such is Storries, a two-storey, detached brick mansion on an 18ha estate in Sussex, bought by an ex-member of the rock band Depeche Mode, to become his studio, home and office.

Built in 1934, it lies just below the summit of a rolling hill – the principal rooms face south with dramatic views over the South Downs. To the north, the servants' wing forms two sides of a courtyard. The architect, Gareth Wilkins of CCCP, has enclosed this courtyard to form a giant porte-cochère in steel and glass, a much-needed new access to the house for cars, large vans and people, while resolving several other issues.

Like many grand houses, Storries has a

stately drive which sweeps into a formal gravelled entrance court, where an imposing front door forms the centrepiece of the north facade, leading into a grand hall. Unfortunately, it was exposed to strong winds; every time the door was opened fierce gusts blasted through the house. The client also needed a place to load and unload large and expensive pieces of musical and audio equipment under cover. Finally, Storries had a problem below the kitchen and servants' wing – the basement flooded when it rained, partly due to a failed land-drainage system but also from flash floods running down the hillside.

The problems are resolved in the enclosure, which is a tour-de-force of steel and glass – a wild triangular steel truss zigzags under the glass roof and breaks out freely at one side to create an overhanging canopy. It is

the opposite of minimalism: wild, Gothic and exactly what every rock musician needs. When the client's vehicle drives up to it, a pair of motorised glass doors slides open; instruments can be unloaded and taken into the studio through another glazed sliding door set in the wall of the house.

The new enclosure also acts as an entrance for the family. Walking boots can be washed in two Belfast sinks while the floor is a polished coloured concrete, resilient to mud and easy to wipe down.

Although the design makes no reference to the classical qualities of the original house, its strength and robustness are complementary. The oversized chimneys, stone roofs and 'punctured' windows are similarly dramatic.

Wilkins explains the concept: 'We conceived the glass roof and its steel structure as an oversized piece of furniture, a large kitchen table placed against the house. This approach encouraged us to design the elements under the roof as individual pieces of furniture, rather than as a series of enclosing architectural elements such as hallway, store and cupboard. In this way, the modernity of our additions stands in isolation to the



The new enclosure at Storries is a tour de force of steel and glass and one that solves a number of practical problems and provides an attractive space for relaxation

house, but the diversity of their arrangement provides a new "cornerstone" within its volume. It results in a minor modern masterplan within the larger classical grand plan of the house and its grounds.'

In practical terms, the new entrance has created additional usable space. With the original front door redundant, the hall is now an ideal space for the client to practice on his grand piano.

The field drainage has been repaired and, to deal with flash floods running down the hillside, a reservoir has been created in the basement, set below a metal mesh deck.

Even before the new enclosure was complete, the client decided he liked the space too much to use it just as an unloading bay. The addition of a wine rack on the wall, a couple of bar stools and a counter turned one corner into a place to relax. The chance to sit and look through glass walls at one's classic car collection is a real 'value-added' component of the new enclosure



CREDITS

ARCHITECT

Gareth Wilkins, CCCP

PROJECT TEAM

Chris Matthews, Jess Paul, Sebastian Messener

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Techniker: Franck Robert, Stuart Hutchinson

MAIN CONTRACTOR

Chisholm & Winch Contracts

SUPPLIERS

Steel structure and glazing Littlehampton Welding; steel mesh deck Steelway Fensecure; lights Flos, iGuzzini; ironmongery Vieler, Higrade

MetalWorks Little gems

A steel tri-girder truss supporting a glass roof

The new enclosure is flanked on two sides by the L-shaped walls of the house and on one side by an original freestanding brick wall. A new glass wall incorporates a pair of motorised glass entrance doors that slides open against it.

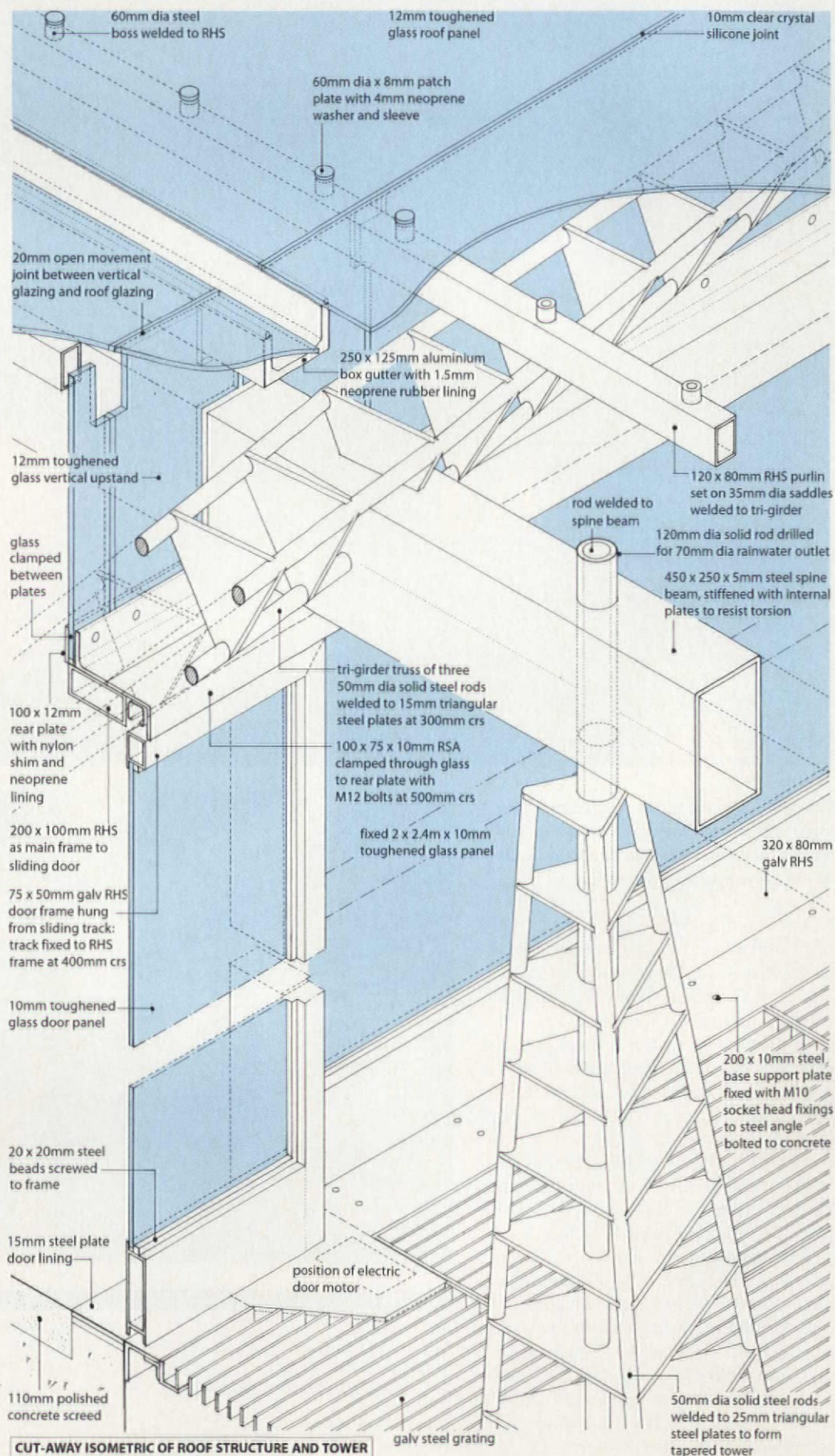
The glass roof and its steel structure are independent of the walls. The structure consists of a single 450 x 250mm spine beam, stiffened to resist torsion. It is supported at one end by a steel column against the house wall; at the other end it extends beyond the glass doors and rests on a skeletal steel 'tower'.

The tower is a three-sided, tri-girder truss structure of 50mm-diameter solid steel rods welded to the ends of 25mm-thick triangular steel plates, which tapers to the top.

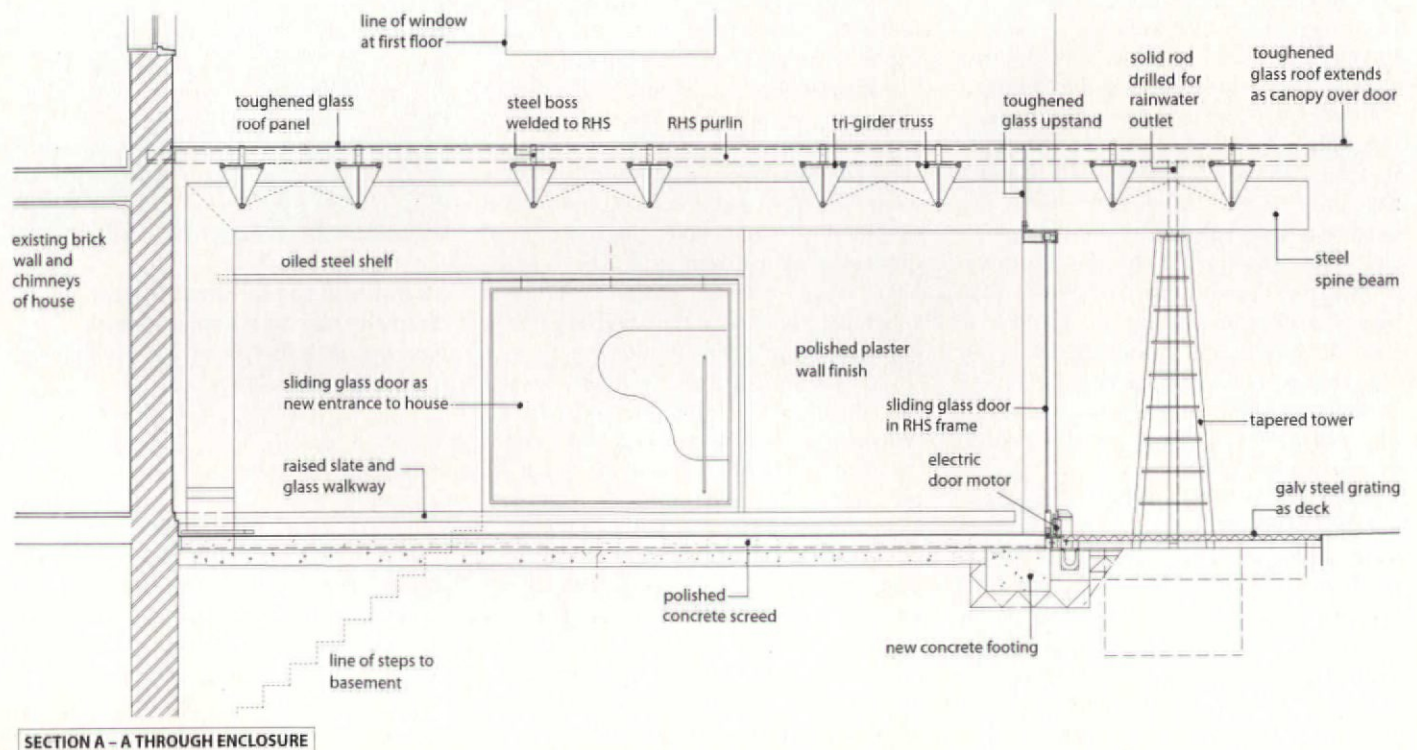
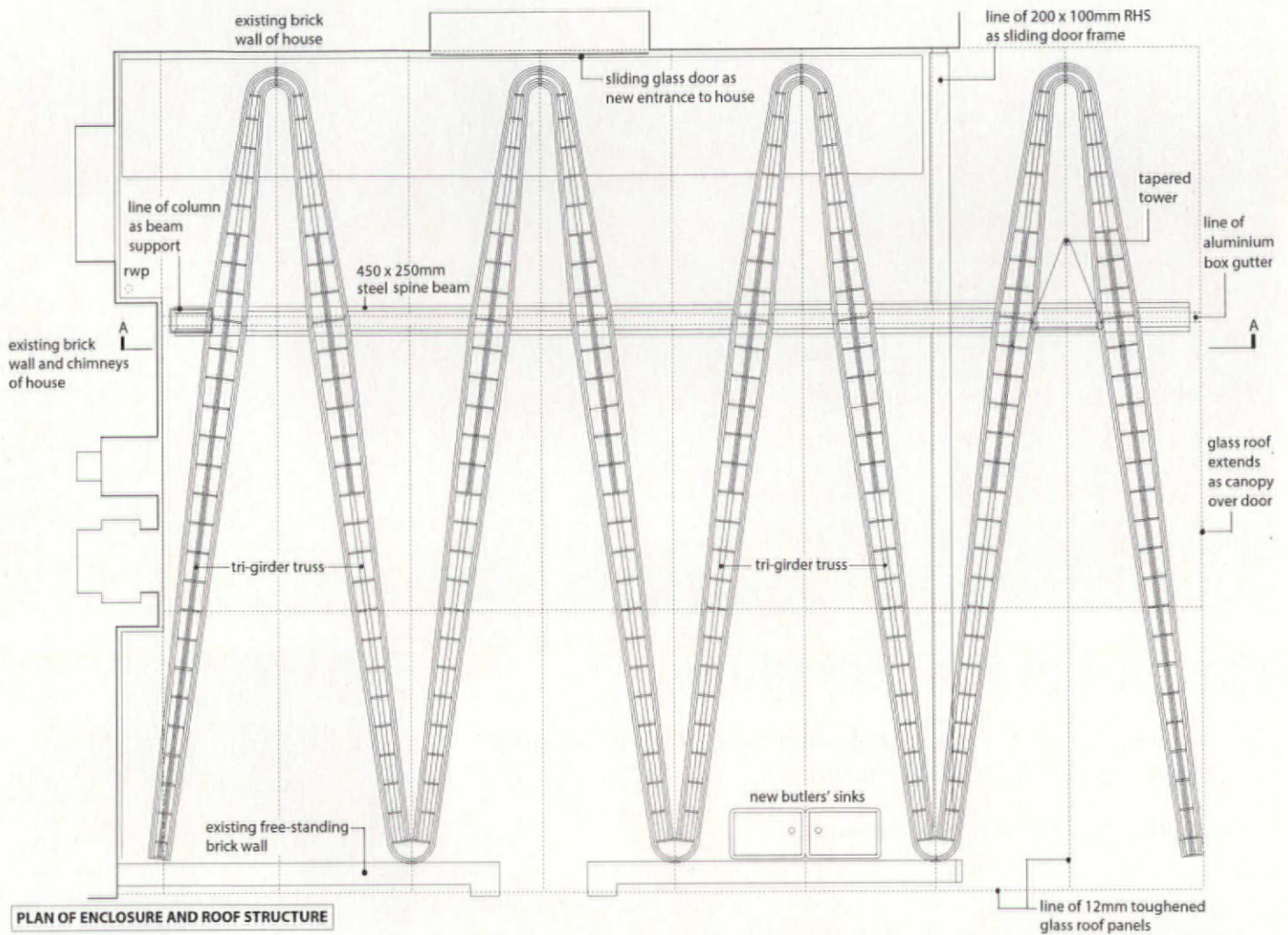
The spine beam supports a tri-girder truss that zigzags over the courtyard, tapering towards the courtyard walls to reflect structural forces. It is formed of three 50mm-diameter solid steel rods welded to a series of triangular plates which act as stiffeners. Above the spine beam, it is stiffened with additional steel plates welded along its length to resist deflection. The truss extends beyond the glass doors to support the glass roof as a canopy.

A series of 120 x 80mm RHS purlins, each with a row of 60mm-diameter steel bosses welded to it, runs over the trusses. The 12mm-thick frameless glass roof panels are bolted to the bosses with 60mm-diameter patch plates.

The glass roof slopes towards the centre and runs into an aluminium gutter running above the spine beam. It discharges into the central support of the tower, a 120mm-diameter solid rod drilled with a 70mm-diameter rainwater outlet.



CUT-AWAY ISOMETRIC OF ROOF STRUCTURE AND TOWER



MetalWorks Little gems



The end of the pier show

Shed KM's new glass and steel pavilion at the pier-head in Southport has brought some seaside magic back to the area

BY SUSAN DAWSON. PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS BRINK

For Victorian holidaymakers at the seaside, a walk along the pier was a favourite summer pastime. Their need for exercise was certainly satisfied at Southport, north Lancashire; the pier stretched out to sea for more than 1,100m, the second longest in the country.

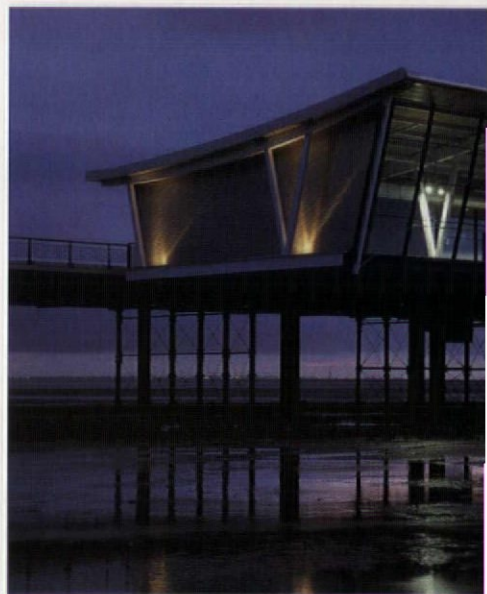
It was built by engineer James Brunlees using his 'pile jetting' system and completed in 1860. Although often referred to as the first purpose-built 'pleasure pier', its pier head was also an embarkation point for steamers – in those days the Southport channel had not silted up as it has today. The pier was a great success; in response to steamer passengers' complaints about the long way to carry luggage and the lack of shelter, a refreshment room was built at the pier head and a steam-driven tramway installed to ride out to it.

Like other Victorian piers, Southport pier declined. The channel silted up and boats were unable to reach the pier-head. The pavilion was demolished and the pier-head buildings were destroyed by fire. In the 1990s, now Grade II-listed, it was saved from demolition by a group of enthusiasts who subsequently raised funds to restore it. The architect Shed KM, together with McAllister

Co, won a limited competition to design a new pavilion at the pier-head.

'We wanted to create an exciting destination at the seaward end of the pier, a building which would act as a counterpoint to this historic piece of engineering,' explains Dave King of Shed KM. The new pavilion does just that. It is a delicate structure of exposed steelwork and glass which offers warmth, shelter and a magnificent view of the Mersey estuary and the Welsh hills through a 45m glazed wall. The original hammerhead-shaped pier head gives encompassing views of the bay. The pavilion is set on independent foundations to one side of it to avoid obstructing these views. It will contain a cafe, exhibition and WCs – a welcome relief for those who have walked the best part of a mile to get to the end of the pier. A new three-car tram, planned to run along the pier, has not yet materialised.

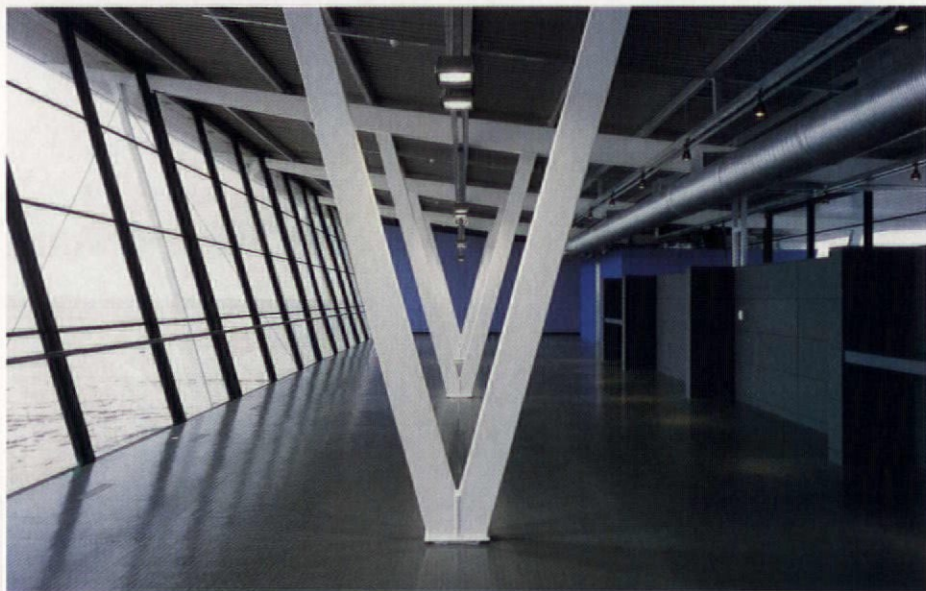
In plan the pavilion is extremely simple, a single-storey 45 x 18m space with canted fully glazed walls on the south-west side – the great view – and the north-east side – the main entrance. Two solid service cores house an office, kitchen and WCs; clad with bright blue panels, they create a buffer zone



Visitors to the pavilion at the end of Southport pier are rewarded for their long walk with enjoyment of a magic and memorable destination

at the glazed northeast wall, which flanks the original pier, and frame the main entrance. The roof extends over the main entrance to shelter it and gently rises to oversail the glazed facade on the south-west. The two glazed walls are flanked by solid gable walls on the north-west and south-east sides, clad with trapezoidal aluminium sheet.

The pavilion has an exposed steel structure and aluminium roof covering and



cladding – a logical choice for lightness and strength, and suggestive of the image of a ship moored alongside the pier. The roof rests on six exposed steel beams that gently curve and taper towards the south-west wall. They are supported and braced by six V-shaped 250 x 150mm RHS columns which run along the exhibition space, and by six canted 250 x 150mm RHS columns running outside the entrance wall, braced by exposed steel A-frames. On the south-west facade the glazing is supported by structural steel mullions (see working detail overleaf). The tapered ends of the roof beams extend beyond the glazing, propped with slender steel struts braced with diagonal rods, which

rest on extended and tapered floor beams. At the gable ends both sets of columns are set outside the walls so that the structure is clearly visible.

The space is heated by means of heat pumps that provide warm or cool air to a raised access floor plenum; an exposed aluminium duct runs along the ceiling to extract waste air.

Since it was built, Southport sands have silted up to the extent that the pier now passes over reclaimed land – surprisingly an ornamental lake, a miniature-golf course and a road run below it before you even reach the beach. It is a long walk but with a special magic and a memorable destination.

CREDITS

ARCHITECT

Shed KM
Dave King, Mark Sidebotham

STRUCTURAL AND SERVICES ENGINEER

Posford Haskoning

QUANTITY SURVEYOR

Posford Haskoning

MAIN CONTRACTOR

Harbour & General

SUPPLIERS

Standing-seam aluminium roof Kalzip; trapezoidal sheet cladding Welltec; structural glazing O J Taffinder; plenum raised floor Quilligotti; carpentry Specialist Joinery Services; entrance door Dorma; internal doors Accent Hansen; escape doors MAG Hansen; lighting iGuzzini, Kreon

MetalWorks Little gems

Single-storey structure with aluminium roof covering

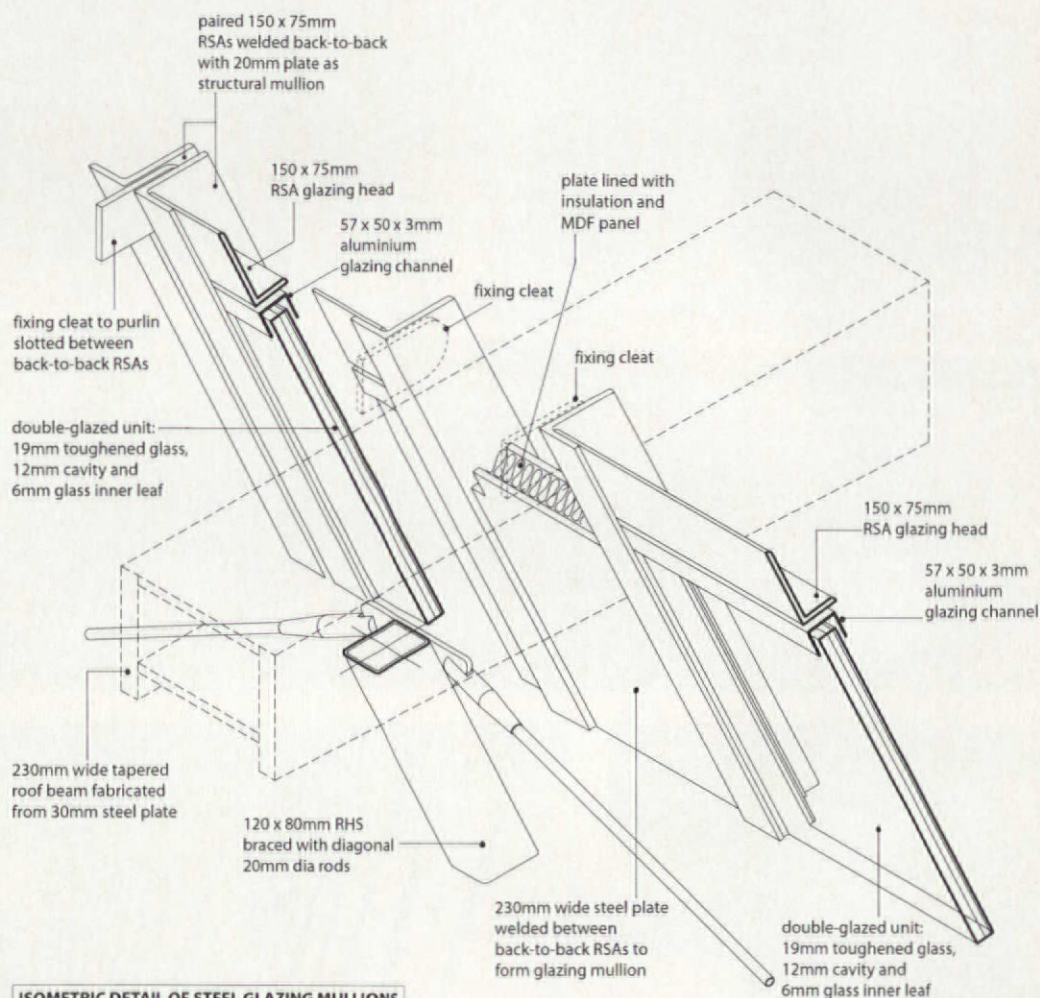
The structural grid is spaced at 7.5m to relate to the structural grid of the pier. Each section of the grid consists of a pair of piles on which rest a tapered 457 x 191mm universal beam and crossbeams, supporting permanent formwork and a cast in-situ slab floor. The canted 250 x 150mm RHS columns and V-shaped 250 x 150mm RHS columns rest on the tapered floor beams.

The two upper ends of the V-shaped columns slot into the undersides of the tapered roof beams. They are fabricated from 30mm-thick steel plate and support a series of 160 x 80mm RHS purlins and a standing-seam aluminium roof covering.

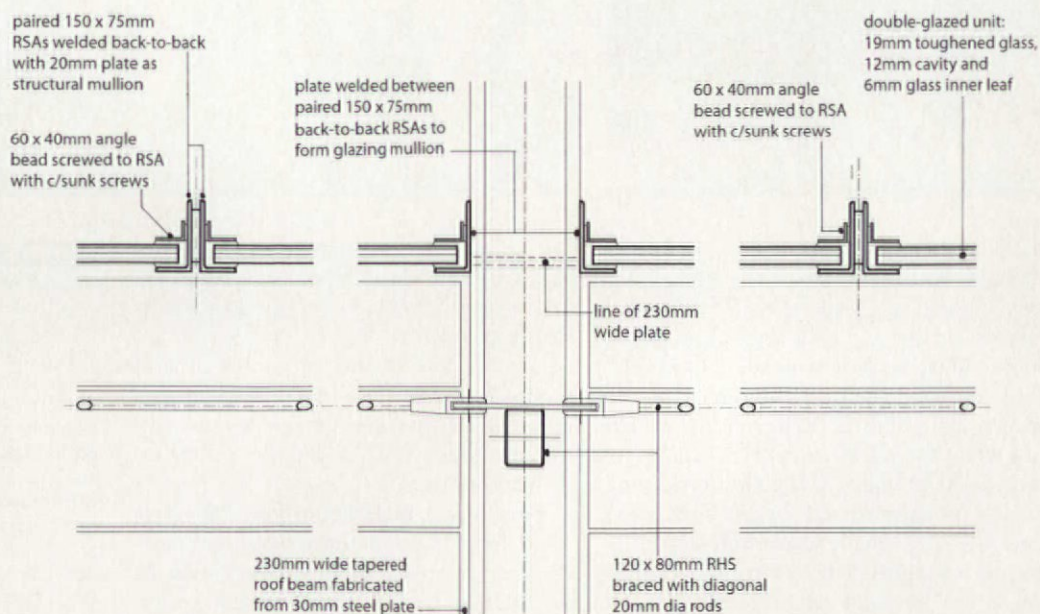
The southwest facade is glazed with double-glazed units (19mm toughened glass, 12mm cavity and 6mm glass inner leaf), which are supported by canted structural steel mullions. The mullions are formed of paired back-to-back 75 x 150mm steel angles welded together with 20mm plates. The glass units rest on steel angles bolted to the mullions and are secured with 60 x 40mm steel angle beads screwed to the main angles with countersunk screws.

Where the roof beams project beyond the glazed facade, the paired back-to-back angles are welded together with a 230mm-wide plate, allowing the beam to slot between the angles. The mullions rise above the line of the beams and are bolted to the purlins. At their bases, they are bolted to projecting steel plates welded to the floor beam.

A steel handrail runs along the glazed wall. It is formed of continuously welded 100 x 50mm RHS members with tapered brackets that slot between the back-to-back angles of the mullions and are bolted to them.

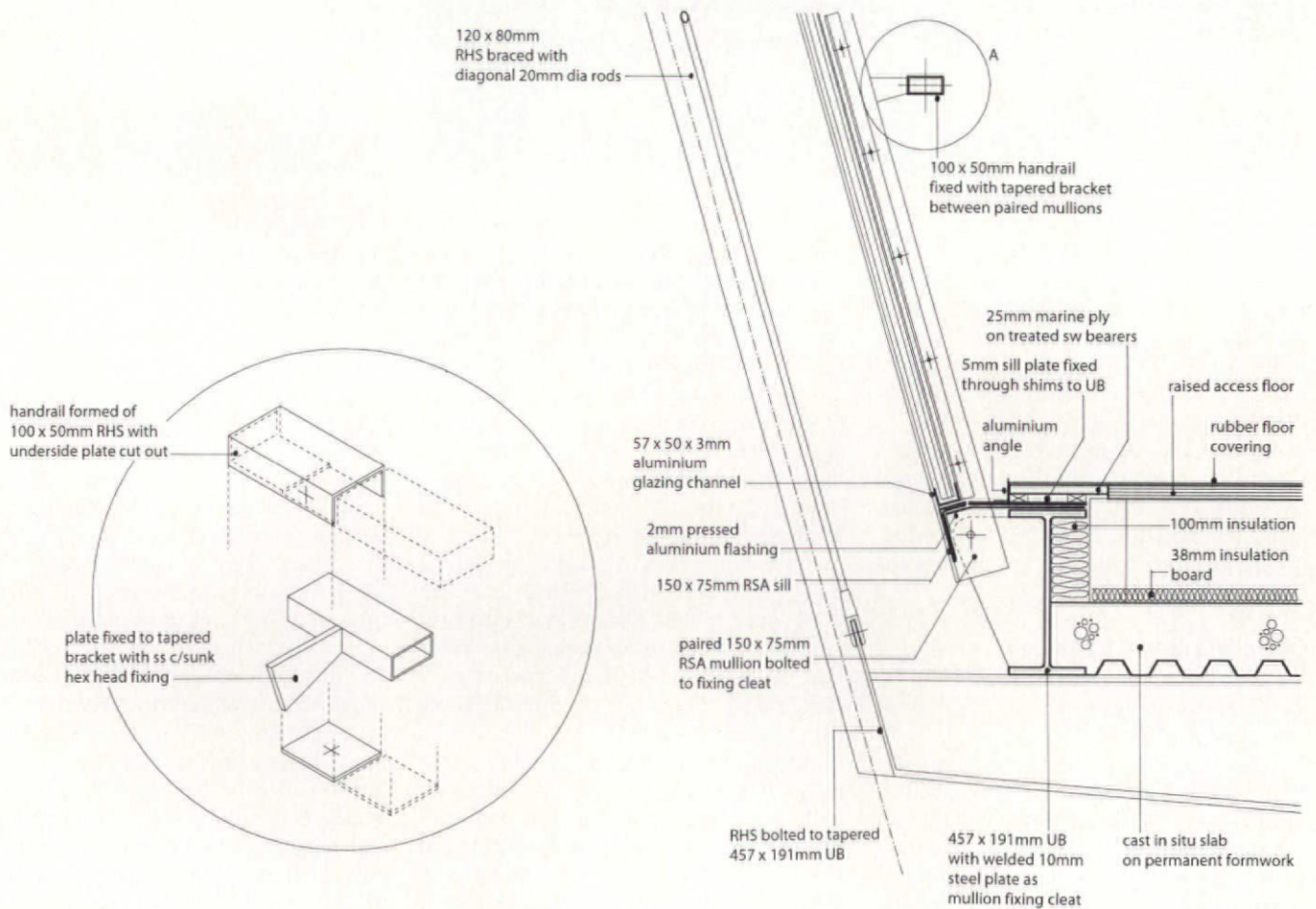
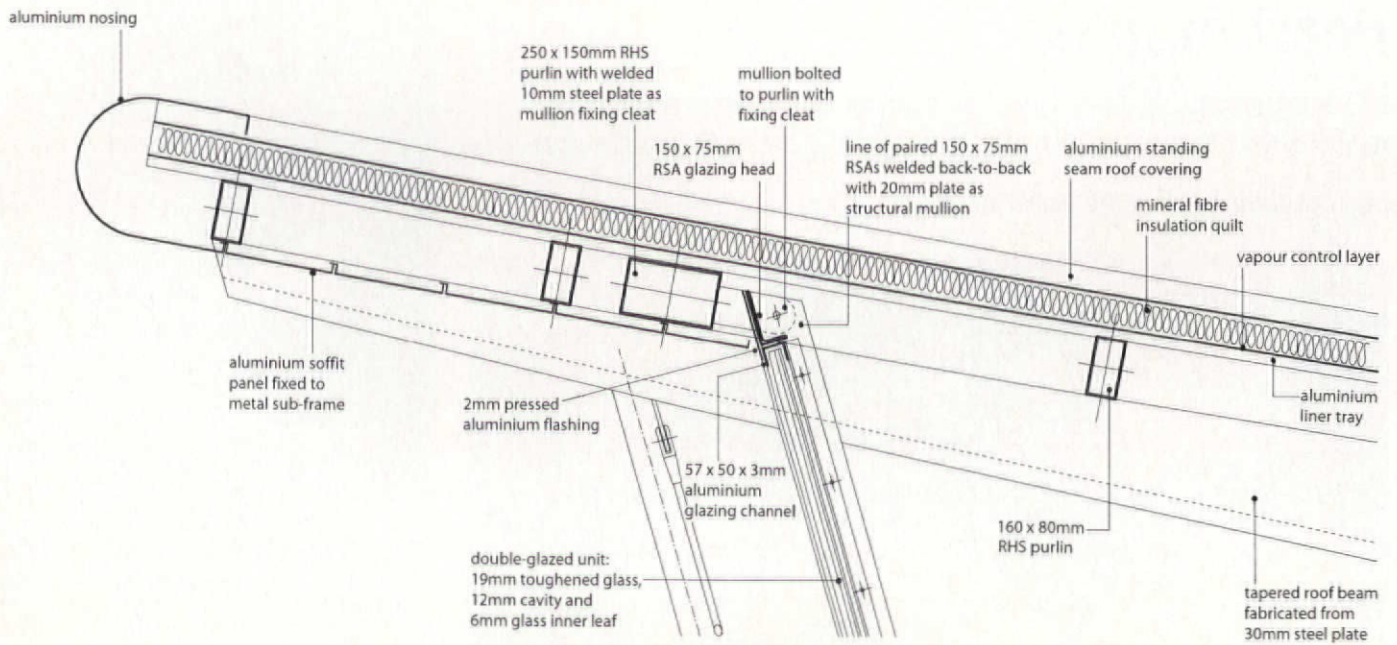


ISOMETRIC DETAIL OF STEEL GLAZING MULLIONS



DETAIL PLAN OF GLAZED WALL

Working details



DETAIL A AT HANDRAIL

DETAIL SECTION THROUGH GLAZED SOUTH WALL

MetalWorks Little gems

Heart of glass

BB Partnership's sensitive extension of Highgate Pavilion maintained the integrity of the original Lorenz/Arup design

BY SUTHERLAND LYALL. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANGLE



There is a house in Fitzroy Park in London's Highgate that has an architectural history. Designed in 1958 by Erhard Lorenz with the help of his friend Ove Arup, it is a brick, concrete and glass pavilion with a shallow butterfly roof. It was reckoned good enough to be featured in both *The Architectural Review* and *Architectural Design*.

In 1995, the AR focused on Eva Jiricna's internal remodelling and her lightweight steel and (mostly) glass leisure facilities. Three years later the owner made an unsuccessful planning application to enlarge the house, then sold it.

Balancing recent traditions

In 1999, the new owner asked BB Partnership to reinvestigate the possibility of extending the house.

In looking through the previous application and adjudication, BB Partnership's Henry Busiakiewicz discovered that the earlier application was for an extension in front of the house and that the inspector had actually reckoned that the number of bedrooms was disproportionately small for the size of the house and its plot. The architect cautiously explored several possibilities with the planners and they finally agreed to the current scheme at the back of the house.

Says Busiakiewicz: 'We were looking to create a balance between the theme of the Jiricna glazing and transparency and the original brick and concrete and glass house – bearing in mind that for guests there was a need for privacy.' Because the new structure is a guest suite, there is an all-glass link back to the main entrance hall. It is all glass because it encloses big windows to the existing study and living room.

Simple arrangement

The pavilion's plan is simple enough: a central bathroom with a kitchen recess, an open bed area at the back and a living area at the front, where two big sliding glass doors lead out to a small terrace covered by a cantilevered extension of the single-ply Sarna roof.

Structurally it is a concrete slab on stub pillars with internal load-bearing bathroom walls and a steel roof structure. Although there are several panels of brickwork around the perimeter, they are just that: panels. With the exception of one short section at the back, all have clerestory windows above them so that the roof appears to float. Except for the two sliding doors at the front, the glazing under the roof edges is frameless; in fact, they are standard double-glazed units.



Busiakiewicz says: 'Solglas helped with the specification for the glass and our engineer, Alf Campion, did definitive work on structural glass.'

There is no structural support from the external walls – not that this would have been particularly effective because the brickwork is all stack bond, which acts as a series of connected columns rather than spreading the load like conventional brickwork. There are two 114mm diameter steel columns set back inside behind the line of the glazing. They support the front section of the roof. At the back a single column lines up in the corner of the bed space to carry one of the two main longitudinal beams. The longitudinal beam on the other side is supported at the back by a bracket off the existing house wall. The roof structure is more complicated than that because it also involves diagonal bracing and deploys the loadbearing bathroom walls for some lateral and longitudinal support. The outer 300-400mm of roof is supported on welded jack beams. You do not see this because the internal walls and ceiling have a hard plaster surface.

One of the complicated structural issues was the conflict between the need for an adequate steel depth for the root of the



Two inconspicuous steel columns support the front section of the roof on the latest extension at the rear of the Lorenz/Arup-designed brick, concrete and glass

Highgate Pavilion. The roof structure is supported on concealed welded jack beams and appears to float



cantilever, the need to maintain a 225mm roof-edge depth and the fact that there was a 150mm deep slot in the ceiling where the roller blinds were hidden directly behind the glazing – including the glazing under the cantilever. In addition, there was a smaller slot for the sliding mechanism of the doors at the front, which further weakens the can-

tilever beam and adds to the load. Solving this problem involved some ingenuity and the use of welded stiffening plates.

The main factor in this problem was that, externally, the architect was anxious to maintain as narrow a roof edge as possible. They had created a kind of second roof on top, set well back behind the visible edge.

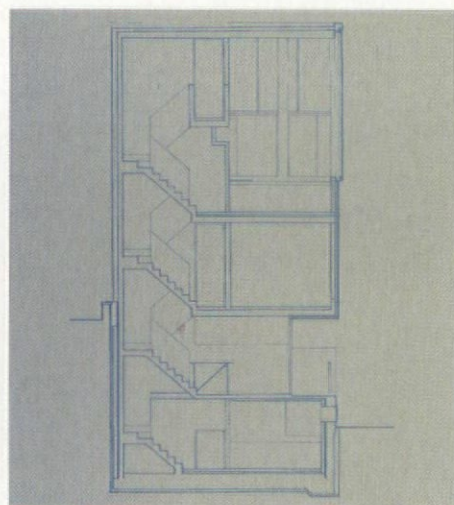
This rather thicker roof build-up accommodates insulation, water pipes, electric conduits, air-conditioning ducts and the like.

So, close-up at least, the edge of the roof appears to be a 225mm by 75mm stainless steel U section on its side. In fact it is decorative. Somewhat in the tradition of the Seagram Building, it is a steel facing to a steel structure – without, here, the need for intervening fire protection. Busiakiewicz says: 'It was a difficult thing for the fabricators to achieve on site. There couldn't be any face fixings or welded attachments on the back. Eventually, the engineer devised a complex arrangement of fixings and the channel came on site in relatively short long sections. Each of them had to be aligned vertically and horizontally with very fine joints.'

Campion engineer John Paul says: 'The architect didn't want a painted or anodised finish, so we couldn't weld anything because you can't rely on polishing to remove weld bloom – although, in the end, we did have the corners welded and buffed. The fabricators reckoned we could get away with polishing out the discoloration in this special circumstance. To fix the stainless steel channel, we used a 3M adhesive to fix a smaller channel to its back and bolted that on to the edge of the main steel roof structure.'



MetalWorks Little gems



Back to basics

William Russell's house in London's East End makes the first domestic use of Cryoform's off-the-shelf steel covering

BY EDWIN HEATHCOTE. PHOTOGRAPHS © RED COVER/ED REEVE

The grey sky was draped low over east London's Brick Lane the day I went to see William Russell's house. The area's scraggy mix of dirty Victorian brickwork, shuttered backstreet lock-ups, overstuffed wholesalers' displays stocked with spangly gewgaws has been shaken up by Russell's tough but crisp block of steel and glass. But there is, refreshingly, nothing precious about this architect's new house. Russell has avoided the prissy minimalism or self-conscious billboarding of many architects' houses.

The hard surface and occasional glint of the galvanised steel cladding, coupled with the basic, raw concrete and the skeletal structure and fittings, make the building a very London shade of grey. It seems to reflect the dense cloud and suck up the monotone of the pavements, wire fences and steel shutters that characterise the area.

The architect has achieved this palette with an innovative and cheap surface solution. The street elevation is clad in galvanised steel. The covering is based on an off-the-shelf system from Cryoform but it is a product that had hitherto only been used in big shed buildings, industrial structures and offshore platforms. This use, which sees 50mm of insulation sandwiched between two layers of steel sheeting, is the first in this kind of domestic, street-front setting.

As the house rises, steel gives way to glass, climaxing in a huge sliding window (weighing, Russell tells me, 750kg) which makes the

lofty double-height space at the heart of the interior feel almost like a terrace.

Living, cooking and dining all happen in this expansive, deceptively simple volume within which areas are defined by varying ceiling heights. Even on the grimmest of London days, the space is no less visibly light than the outside. The top floor also encompasses a roof terrace framed by exposed steel beams where the skeleton seems finally to make itself visible. The light and airy internal volumes are knitted together by a dark, profoundly solid stair core in which the stairs, walls and solid balustrade are all of coarsely finished concrete.

The articulation of the facades is simple, the rhythm being built up through the layering of the fenestration and the repetitive units of the steel cladding. The entrance is announced through a cutaway from the main volume, creating a kind of porch so that the bulky volume of the corner is suspended over what becomes the visual focus. The door looks as tough as the lock-up workshops in the railway arches which sit astride so many of the roads around the area and clad, like the solid surfaces elsewhere, in galvanised steel.

Off this, a continuous window illuminating the double-height basement (conceived as an independent unit to be let out but easily worked back into the main volume later) gives the illusion of a house floating on no structure at all. The bedrooms on the first floor are lit by twin full-height windows (one

Inexpensive galvanised steel cladding gives this uncompromising house a tough but crisp appearance, with nothing precious about it

half-height steel panel in each room is also hinged to open for ventilation) and, above these, translucent sheets of glass replace the steel walls. From twilight onwards, these translucent sheets reveal the shadows of the concrete structure and the delicate and changing pattern of illumination within.

The surfaces within are relentlessly concrete. From the floor to the walls through the built in work surface and ceilings, there is little that is delicate about the finishes. This is an interior built less for the architectural photographer's lens and more for the life of Russell's family. The robust, semi-industrial window frames are also constructed in galvanised steel, with joins and welds left exposed rather than being ground smooth. The sill for the huge sliding window doubles as a handrail which sets up a kind of dado datum in what would otherwise appear an inordinately tall domestic space.

Russell's achievement is commendable. He has created a block on a severely restrictive site and carved from it a varied and fascinating series of spaces. Furthermore, his use of basic materials in an innovative and thoughtful fashion allows the house to mingle effortlessly with its urban neighbours. He has also, almost certainly, elevated Cryoform and Corus' mass-produced galvanised products into a highly desirable, and almost painfully hip external finish which straddles the awkward gulf between the fashionable and the gritty urban.

MetalWorks Round-up



Swiss Re hedges its bets in Munich

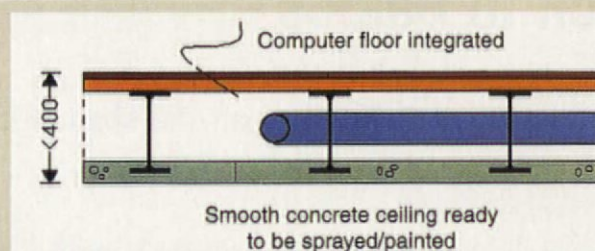
A 'floating hedge' is one of the features of Swiss Re Germany's new office building in Munich. The building itself, designed by BRT Architekten Bothe, Richter, Teherani, consists of a two-storey central building surrounding an atrium. From this radiates four two-storey office blocks, higher than the central building because they are raised on stilts. These, in turn, support the steel 'hedge' structure that surrounds the buildings at a height of 10m. Cantilevering by up to 50m, it includes two staircase-linked walking levels and a third level for servicing. The whole structure is wrapped in X-Tend stainless-steel netting by Carl Stahl which supports the vegetation – Virginia creeper and wisteria are starting to grow up it. The mesh has a width of 200mm with cables 3mm in diameter plus a UV-resistant polyamide layer that increases the dimension to approximately 4mm.

To look good, the net has to maintain a constant tension along its 150m length. This has been done by drawing the nets on the outer meshes onto tubes 5m long that were subsequently fitted into one another. Stirrup clamps connect these tubes with the square section tubes of the net framework. The engineer for the project is Büro Dr Ing W Binnewies.



Putting the zip into stainless

One thing we all know about Kalzip is that it is an aluminium roofing system, but this information is now wrong, or at least not entirely right. Kalzip is now also available in stainless steel, supplied either with a standard finish or with a matt or textured surface. All flashings and accessories can be folded and TIG welded from the same material. It is easy, says Kalzip, to achieve the most discreet of finished welds.



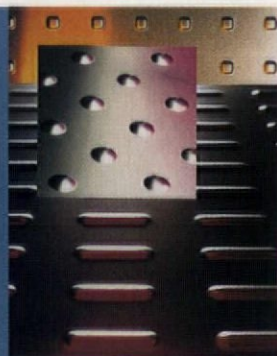
Floors slim down

Dutch company PreFab Limburg has developed a system that drastically reduces the depth of floors and, it claims, can cut construction costs by 10 per cent. Called Infra+, it inverts the usual structure of a floor, putting the concrete slab below the steel beams rather than above them. The lower flanges of the beams are set into 2.4m-wide planks and supplied to site as a single prefabricated unit. The floor itself consists either of a standard floor deck supported on a framework or a floor finish with a cement or anhydrite base on a profiled steel plate. Services run within the zone defined by the steel beams, which have holes within them to allow transverse floor runs.

The underside of the concrete floor forms a finished ceiling, and there is no need for a raised computer floor. In this way, claims the company, the total floor depth can be reduced from a 'typical' 800-1,200mm to only 400mm. This involves several assumptions. On the one hand, it presupposes that there was no interest in putting the services in the structural steel zone of the 'typical' floor through the use of castellated beams. On the other, there is the supposition that the client will accept the exposed concrete soffit and the compromises that will have to be made in terms of lighting and ventilation. PreFab Limburg is looking for a distributor in the UK. E-mail aplus@plex.nl

Dot, spot and blob

These are just some of the patterns available in Good Aluminium's range of Impressional decorative cladding panels, outlined in the latest edition of *The Really Useful GA Handbook*. Panels are available from stock in a satin anodised aluminium or they can also be provided with mill finish. As well as the large standard range, specials are available.



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Technical editor Susan Dawson

Production editor Paul Lindsell

Sub-editor Elizabeth Chamberlain

Art editor Terry Howe

Corus coordinator Matthew Teague



diary

London

Ernö Goldfinger: The Measure of Man Saturday 28 September. A conference at the AA, 36 Bedford Sq, WC1. Details 01223 366977.

The Goldfinger Series Until 5 October. Photographs by Etienne Clement at the AA, 36 Bedford Sq, WC1. Details 020 7887 4000.

Gio Ponti Until 6 October. An exhibition at the Design Museum, Shad Thames, SE1 (020 7940 8790).

Berthold Lubetkin Thursday 10 October, 18.30. A lecture by John Allan at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross St, EC1. First in a series organised by the 20th Century Society. Details 020 7250 3857.

Coming Homes: The Idea of Home Tuesday 15 October, 18.30. A panel discussion at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place, W1. Details 0906 302 0400.

Brownfield Sites – A Client's Guide Thursday 17 October, 16.00. A CIRIA event at the CIEH, SE1. Details 020 7222 0445.

Part I: Getting it Right Thursday 17 October. An AJ conference at the RIBA. Details Clare Bendon 020 7505 6850 (clare.bendon@emap.com)

The Real Cost of Building: Whole Life Costing in Construction Thursday 24 October. A conference at the RIBA. Details Clare Bendon 020 7505 6850 (clare.bendon@emap.com)

Tony Smith Until 25 October. Sculptures at the Timothy Taylor Gallery, 1 Bruton Place, W1. Details 020 7409 3344.

Richard Wentworth: An Area of Outstanding Unnatural Beauty Until 17 November. An Artangel project at 66 York Way, N1. Details www.artangel.org.uk

Eastern

Claude Heath From 28 September. An exhibition exploring different modes of drawing. At Kettle's Yard, Cambridge. Details 01223 352124.

21st Century Living: Meeting Lifestyle Aspirations at Minimum Cost to the Environment Wednesday 23 October. A seminar at New Hall, Cambridge. Details maria@carltd.co.uk

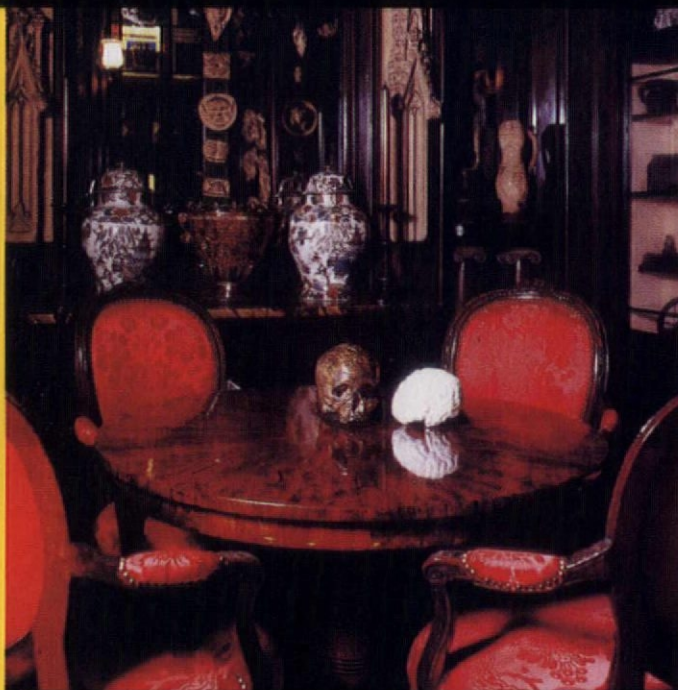
East Midlands

RIBA CPD Event: VAT – The Latest Changes Thursday 7 November, 14.00. A seminar at Edward King House, Lincoln. Details 0121 233 2321.

Northern

Sir Terry Farrell: Designs for Life 28 September–9 November. An exhibition at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle University. Details www.ncl.ac.uk/hatton/

26 September 2002



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

The plaster skull on the table was acquired by Sir John Soane; the replica of a brain beside it, also in plaster, is by Katharina Fritsch, and is one of several loans from the nvisible Museum (sic) which will be placed among the permanent objects at Sir John Soane's Museum from 3 October until 21 December. At 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2 (020 7405 2107).

North West

Niall McLaughlin's Bexhill Bandstand Until 25 October. An exhibition in the RIBA Competitions Gallery at CUBE, 113 Portland St, Manchester. Details 0113 234 1335.

Fabrications: New Art & Urban Memory in Manchester Until 2 November. An exhibition that reflects the changing face of Manchester. At CUBE, 113 Portland St, Manchester (0161 237 5525).

South Eastern

Langlands & Bell at Petworth Until 29 September. An exhibition in Turner's studio at Petworth House, Petworth, West Sussex. Details 01798 342207.

Construction and Repair of Timber Frame Buildings Thursday 10 October. A CPD course at the Weald & Downland Museum, Singleton, Chichester. Details 01243 811464.

RIBA CPD Event: Be An Expert Witness Thursday 24 October, 16.00. A seminar at Le Meridien Hotel, Gatwick. Details 01892 515878.

Southern

Douglas Allsop: Seven Sequential Spaces Until 6 October. A series of installations at Southampton City Art Gallery, Civic Centre, Southampton (0123 8083 2769).

South West

RIBA CPD Event: CDM Update Tuesday 15 October, 09.00. A one-day seminar at China Fleet Country Club. Details 01752 265921.

Wessex

John Hubbard: Between Sea and Sky 28 September–1 December. An exhibition of paintings at the New Art Centre, Roche Court, East Winterslow, Salisbury. Details 01980 862447.

Workers' Playtime 5 October–12 January. Public parks and gardens in an exhibition at the National Monuments Record, Swindon. Details 01793 414797.

Living Room Saturday 12 October, 10.00. A symposium on housing development in the South West. At the University of Bath. Details 0117 922 1540.

Lean Thinking Applied to Construction Wednesday 16 October. A CPN seminar in Bristol. Details from CIRIA 020 7222 8891.

West Midlands

RIBA CPD Event: VAT – The Latest Changes Wednesday 2 October, 14.00. A seminar at the Windmill Village Hotel, Coventry. Details 0121 233 2321.

Information for inclusion should be sent to Andrew Mead at The Architects' Journal at least two weeks before publication.

Maintaining Safe and Secure Housing Thursday 10 October. A one-day BRE seminar in Birmingham. Details 01923 664766.

RIBA CPD Event: Access Consultancy – Training for Architects 22 & 23 October. At Coventry. Details 0121 233 2321.

Yorkshire

RIBA CPD Event: BS8300, DDA and Designing Tuesday 1 October. At the Hilton Hotel, Garforth, Leeds. Details Cathy Poole 0113 245 6250.

The Falkirk Wheel Thursday 10 October, 18.30. A lecture by Tony Kettle at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds. Details Dorothy Carr 0113 343 2263.

Scotland

Rethinking the Royal Mile Friday 11 October. An RIAS conference at The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh. Details 0131 229 7545.

Timber and the Built Environment 17–18 October. A conference at The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh. Details 0131 229 7545.

Eric Parry Architects: An Eye for the Whole Until 18 October. An exhibition at the Matthew Gallery, 20 Chambers St, Edinburgh. Details 0131 650 8017.

Changing Buildings, Changing Times Until 25 October. An exhibition at the RIAS, 15 Rutland Sq, Edinburgh. Details 0131 662 1456.

Fieldwork: Art & Architecture & Urban Regeneration Until 17 November. An exhibition at The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow. Details 0141 225 8414.

Wales

RSAPW CPD Event: A Planning Update Wednesday 9 October, 12.00–15.00. At Faenol Fawr, Bodelwyddan. Details 029 2087 4753.

Institute of Wood Science Annual Convention 10–11 October. With speakers from Arup, Hopkins and Buro Happold. At the Cardiff Hilton. Details 01494 565374.

Northern Ireland

Look Up Belfast: A New Perspective on the City 1–3 October. Belfast's first international built heritage conference. Details 028 9048 7395 or www.lookupbelfast.com

International

Arne Jacobsen Until 12 January 2003. A major retrospective at the Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, nr Copenhagen (www.louisiana.dk).

Ringing the changes

MICHAEL COPEMAN

An Area of Outstanding Unnatural Beauty: Richard Wentworth
At General Plumbing Supplies, 66 York Way, London N1 until 17 November

The former King's Cross railway yards are famously 'Europe's biggest urban development site'. For Artangel's latest project, Richard Wentworth, who has lived near here for 25 years, has taken over the disused General Plumbing Supplies for 10 weeks, remodelled it, and opened it to the public. It will function as an information centre for *An Area of Outstanding Unnatural Beauty*, hosting walks, talks, films, a ping-pong tournament and more. It looks and feels like a scruffy youth club, but it is a deft, subtle, witty work of art.

Wentworth has rummaged through the plumbers' detritus; snipped, rearranged, and added bits and pieces. Old maps of London are pinned to the walls, on which you cannot help but look for your own street, track its history and place yourself in the city. Shop mirrors placed here and there capture unexpected views. The table tennis tables are painted with local street plans. Videos show map-making and street-marking. A-Z jigsaws, guides, and tips for passing 'The Knowledge' are for sale at the counter.

Up a slightly wobbly tower, you can peer through a periscope into neighbouring windows or across the old goods yards. Old signs make new words and new connections: the neon 'Plumbing' sign now reads 'ping', and unafraid of the obvious, a big roughly painted 'LOOK' points away down the street.

Wentworth makes sculpture, photographs, and collections that adapt and reform what he sees and finds, making new conjunctions. They do not fit the familiar order of things, but they are emphatically not accidental or contrived. At some time or other, everything has been designed, or made, or placed.

Along with 'urban explorers' such as Patrick Keiller (who will show his 1993 film *London* here on 30 October), Peter Ackroyd and Iain Sinclair, Wentworth is preoccupied with place, things, and memory, but the city is both his subject and medium. As a result, *Unnatural Beauty* has an immediacy and accessibility the others sometimes lack. Applied to the General Plumbing Supplies, his method invites the viewer simply to look and ask.

There were anxious opening night enquiries about what was art and what was not, but the answer mattered less than the question. Wentworth did not need to touch some of the best things, like the big sign for 'Plumbing Supplies' listing the basic ingredients of the city: 'manhole covers, cement, waste disposal, electrical goods, copper pipe', etc. His approach is apparently casual, but if the job of an artist is to persuade people to



King's Cross and its environs - Wentworth's stamping ground. General Plumbing Supplies is circled
26 September 2002

look for themselves, and see things afresh, he is remarkably successful.

The project's title subverts the dreary legislation of preservation, and raises the question: should we, or can we, preserve what is wonderful about this place? The past is at the centre of *Unnatural Beauty*, but if it merely indulged in picturesque decay it would be no more than National Trust nostalgia. In fact Wentworth has achieved the opposite: a joyous riposte to those who think change means loss, and for whom character and identity (particularly Englishness) exist only in the past.

Wentworth seeks out the odd, the abandoned and the ephemeral and finds unexpected beauty and meaning. He explores the gaps and cracks of the city, and King's Cross is the biggest gap of all. He does not make monuments, and he is fundamentally optimistic. Contrast his response to the post-industrial landscape with *Train*, David Mach's 1997 tombstone for the railway age in Darlington.

Located on the brink of the King's Cross site, the project cannot avoid confronting the fear of soullessness and exclusion inescapably linked with modern urban development, but Wentworth does what planning consultation can never do – he gives individuals the means to understand the place for themselves.

Artangel has promoted some of the most ambitious urban art of the past 10 years. Compared with the best known, such as Rachel Whiteread's *House* (1993) or Michael Landy's *Breakdown* (2001), Wentworth's intervention may seem modest (it is only the stage on which the rest of the project will play), but what it says about the city is more complex and important. He challenges the office blocks and CCTV that threaten King's Cross, not by standing in front of bulldozers but by delighting in the vital, common experience of the city, recognising that only individual engagement can maintain and enrich that experience.

Wentworth's conceptual recycling is profoundly democratic: he celebrates change and continuity – the life, not the death, of the city. You leave General Plumbing Supplies not with an idea or an image but seeing your surroundings in a different way.

Michael Copeman is an architectural historian and writer. There are associated events every Wednesday evening at 18.30 until 13 November (Tickets £5). A leaflet with a self-guided walking tour of the area will be available at General Plumbing Supplies from 25 September. Further details from www.artangel.org.uk

Media studies

JEREMY MELVIN

This Is Not Architecture

Edited by Kester Rattenbury. Spon Press, 2002. £24.99

Architecture's relationship to the media is one of those subjects where many have prejudices, though few have real knowledge, and even fewer genuine insight. This is partly because those who know about the media's modalities are mainly journalists, whose capacity for insight is curtailed precisely by those modalities and the structural beliefs they engender. Meanwhile, architects see media coverage of their subject as a travesty, but lack insight into the weirdly distorting mirror of that world.

Brave in tackling a subject where myths abound, and in its range across the issues, *This Is Not Architecture* is a welcome book. But that spread is also a weakness; it is as if the editor, Kester Rattenbury, felt obliged to put something in for every constituency.

This is a shame because the contribution which best combines insight with relevance is her own, 'Naturally Biased: Architecture in the UK National Press'. Based on 15-year-old PhD research which methodically examined coverage of architecture in various national papers, it should still be required reading for every architect who has ambitions to appear in the media. It is also one of very few serious studies into how national papers cover a specialist subject, imposing distortions which all too often lie unexamined beneath the surface of what is written or said.

'It is still common to hear that the media represent the voice of the people,' writes Rattenbury. 'It is worth saying at once that this view has almost no support in any serious research.' Architecture, she shows, demonstrates almost the exact opposite of this view: what the media can and does extensively cover are aesthetic issues rather than architecture's contribution, say, to public services. The media's taxonomy of subjects, still largely based on ministerial curtilages which themselves derive from 19th-century political priorities, simply cannot deal with architecture's hydra-headedness.

With an empirical research base and a grasp of both the theoretical and practical operation of the media, Rattenbury is well capable of developing this into a serious methodological hypothesis. Instead, the book is filled up with other contributions that either follow trends or derive from serious academic work, though virtually none actually turn the academic insight onto the

media. Perhaps, in the specific sense of electronic media, the closest is MIT's Bill Mitchell on the 'Revenge of the Place', which makes a cogent case for the necessity of real architecture in the digital age.

Others in this vein are Alan Powers on architectural books, Harvard professor emeritus James Ackerman on photography, Alberto Perez-Gomez on perspective, and Beatriz Colomina on 'architectureproduction' (sic). Each is perceptive in itself, but too many are extracted from different contexts. The last, for example, comes from a publication to whose other essays Colomina makes frequent reference. But this does not undermine her insight that architecture exists in a vortex of production and reproduction, where processes which conventionally 'reproduce' (ie the 'media') are sometimes the most active agents of production.

Representing another tendency is Neil Leach's empty-headed attempt to define a *Wallpaper** person. Its selection of subject is itself a product of media construction and the apparent analogue between *Wallpaper*-esque lifestyle and Georg Simmel's concepts of modernity. Leach may know 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' backwards and Benjamin sideways, but if he wants to comment on the interaction between capitalism and the consumerism the magazine represents, it would help if he could also read its balance sheet and business plan.

Media organisations are rather good at matching such ideas to money-making opportunities, almost as good as advertising agents, and certainly better than architects who all too often give away their most lucrative ideas. Without such grounding Leach inevitably dematerialises into the virtuality he so superficially despises.

But just in bringing this motley collection together, Rattenbury has performed an invaluable service. In true 'media studies' style, she combines the high and low; paying more than lip service to Post-Modernity, she accepts many points of view. But, above all, she gives a glimmer of hope that, with patience and effort, real methodological progress might be made in understanding the skein of relationships which bring architecture into public consciousness.

Jeremy Melvin is a writer and teacher at South Bank University

Star material

EDWIN HEATHCOTE

Celluloid Skyline

By James Sanders. Bloomsbury, 2002. 498pp. £30



New York in the days of silent films – a scene from *The Shock Punch*, 1925

No city has been as romanticised and mythologised in such a short span of time as New York. Its image as a mythical and magical place is almost entirely to do with the success of film – the only truly popular artistic medium. James Sanders' book is an exploration of the city's role in the movies, sometimes as star, sometimes as bit-player, and it is compulsive.

Before plots were invented, cinema was based on short bursts of actuality. New

York's bustle, the eruption of skyscrapers and the landmarks, which would become familiar around the world, proved the perfect subject – busy, constantly changing, and visually exciting. But, as plots and sets developed, the film industry migrated east to Los Angeles, where the sun always shone (early film lighting technology was poor), and huge lots could be purchased for peanuts.

When the talkies arrived, the studios found they had a problem. They now needed

dialogue and, in the cultural desert that LA still was, there was no one to write it. So they advertised lucrative jobs back east. This led to a rush of bohemian intellectuals fleeing the depression, eager to make the three-day trip across the continent for wads of money, but devastated when they found themselves isolated in a landscape of palm trees and studio lots, with little sign of the clubs, publishing houses and cafes that were their second home in New York.

These writers developed a hazy nostalgia for the big city, their homesickness expressed in a hopelessly romantic vision of New York as the epitome of elegance, wit and nightlife. This rose-tinted image has never really gone away and, furthermore, has equally affected those who never left – Woody Allen for one.

The focus moved back to New York at the end of the Second World War, partly because of the ennui caused seeing the same sets in every film, partly through improved technology, and partly as a reaction to the neo-realist cinema coming out of Italy.

On the Waterfront showed a very different New York to that of Astaire and Rogers, but this too was to disappear shortly as containerisation destroyed the docks. It was replaced by the dark, damaged city of *Taxi Driver*, *The French Connection* and *Midnight Cowboy*, which itself gave way to the intense but humorous versions of Woody Allen, Spike Lee, Neil Simon, and Travolta's matchless Saturday strut.

Then there is the disaster movie. New York has the genre almost to itself: a city threatened twice by King Kong, by aliens in *Independence Day*, by all kinds of master criminals in *Batman* – even by apes. But the author missed the most extraordinary filmic and televisual event in the city's history. His book was completed just before 11 September (and deliberately left unchanged).

Sanders' account is extremely readable and generally fascinating. It only occasionally slows down in lengthy explanations of films you have not seen – but that, you feel, is your fault for not having seen them. There could be more about the independents – Jarmusch, Rockwell, Di Cillo, Wang and others who have used the streets virtually as characters in their own right. But the book is free of jargon and film-speak, accessible to architects, and to anyone who likes film.

Perhaps the monument to the Twin Towers should be the film of their destruction, not a bland memorial garden and a mall. New York is, after all, a city which exists as much in film as in reality.

Edwin Heathcote is architecture correspondent for the Financial Times

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people & practices

White Young Green has appointed **David Rollason** as regional director at the new central London office in the Strand.

Jan Pietrzak has joined **HOK International** as vice-president and head of office design.

Avanti Architects has moved to Top Floor, 361-373 City Road, London EC1V 1AS, tel 020 7278 3060, fax 020 7278 3366.

Magyar Marsoni Architects has moved to 146-148 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4EF, tel 020 7373 8005, fax 020 7373 8006.

US Designers has appointed **Yvonne Kirk** as head of marketing and business development.

3D Architects has moved to Whitsundoles, Broughton Road, Salford, Milton Keynes MK17 8BU, tel 01908 325230, fax 01908 325231.

Steve Irving, director of research at **FaberMaunsell**, has been appointed a fellow of the **Royal Academy of Engineering**.

The West End offices of **Dunlop Heywood Lorenz** have moved to 10 Queen Anne Street, London, W1G 9LH.

The **Institute of Planning Supervisors** has appointed **Hugh Henderson** as its new chairman. He replaces **Sir Mark Russell**, who held the post for five years before his retirement.

Hoare Lea Consulting Engineers has appointed **Eduardo Urinovsky** as a senior partner.

● 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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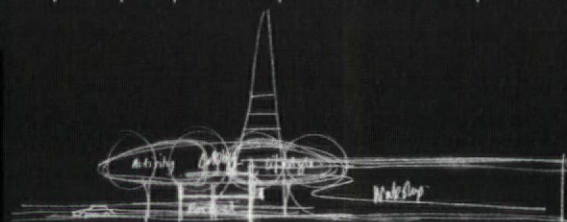
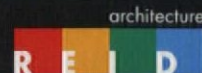
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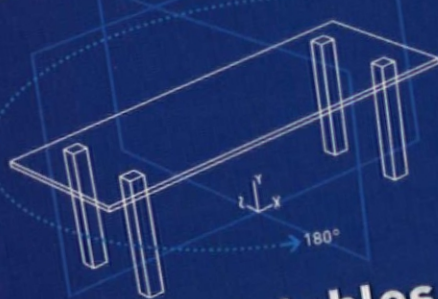
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the architects' journal | 51

competitions

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Details are available from the RIBA Competitions Office, 6 Melbourne Street, Leeds LS2 7PS, tel 0113 234 1335, fax 0113 246 0744, e-mail riba.competitions@mail.riba.org

HERITAGE RESOURCE CENTRE

Expressions of interest are invited for a competition to design a heritage resource (visitor) centre for Hardwick Hall Park, Sedgfield, County Durham, at a budget of £600,000. Hardwick Park is a Grade II*-listed landscape included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of National Importance. The promoter, Durham County Council, seeks a high-quality contemporary building, which takes full account of sustainable principles. Deadline 9.10.02.

OTHERS

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The Centre for Creative Change, Eastside Learning Zone, Digbeth, Birmingham. Creating and integrating with technology-embracing design, networking, media, computing, gaming and visual representations. Mr G Rhodes, Franchise Street, Perry Barr, Birmingham B42 2SU, tel 0121 331 5355, fax 0121 331 6309, www.uce.ac.uk Application by 1.11.02.

UPLAND AND PEATLAND SITES

Field assessments of notified habitat features on upland and peatland sites in Scotland. The work must be completed by the end of summer 2004. Scottish Natural Heritage, Procurement Section, 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 2AS, tel 0131 447 4784, fax 0131 446 2277, e-mail procurement@snh.gov.uk www.snh.gov.uk Ref IH020346T. Application by 31.10.02.

● Richard Haut operates the weekly 'competitions' e-mail service – telling architects about projects that they can apply for across Britain, Ireland and Europe. Tel 00353 6 72 31 83 86, e-mail hautrichard@hotmail.com web <http://communities.msn.com/RichardHautcompetitions>

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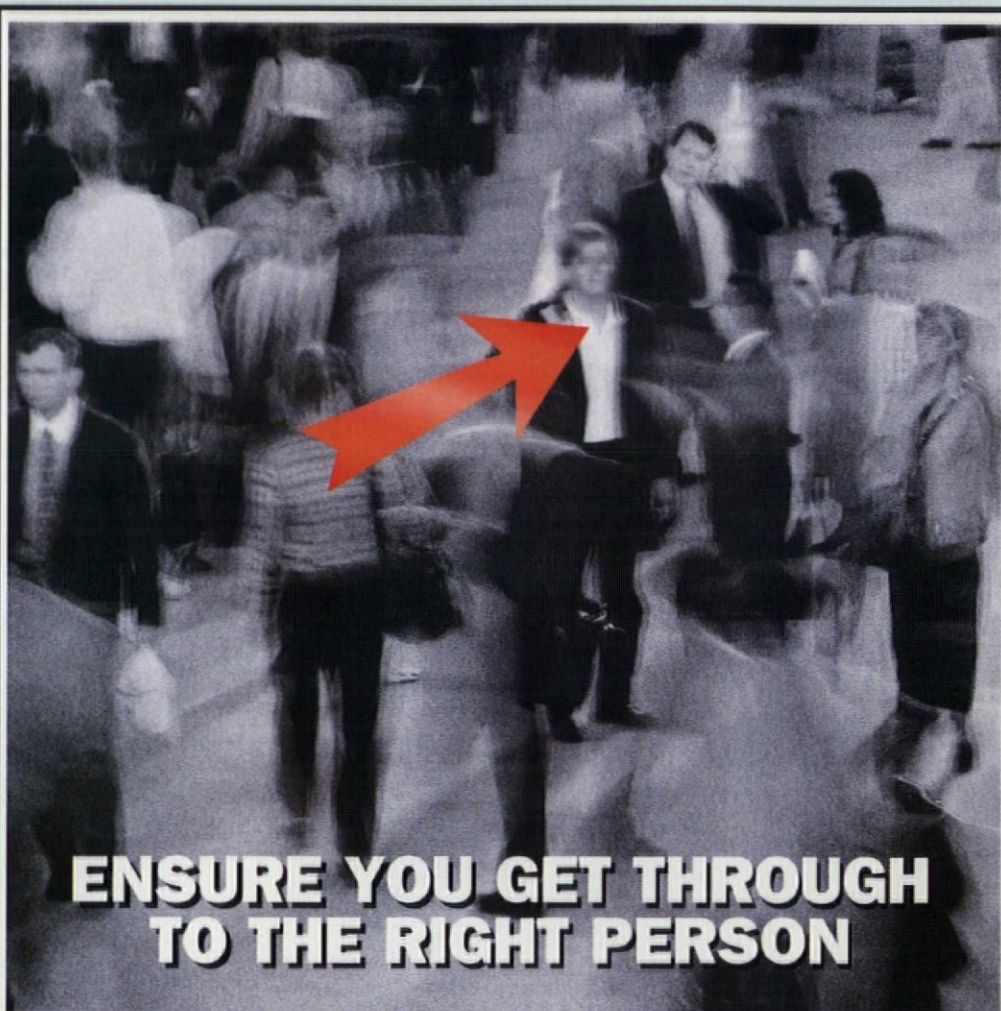
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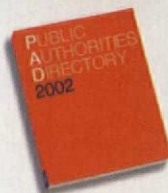
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artwork: 12 noon tuesday
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Landscape Feature

Thursday 3rd October 2002

The Architects' Journal is running a 10 page feature focusing on urban landscapes, in particular 2 projects in Liverpool. Including developments by Brodie McAllister Landscape Architects and Shed Km.

The spotlight will be on minimal urban landscape as the work undertaken is of a discreet character, concentrating on geometry, materials and precision.

Other ventures/schemes featuring in the October 3rd AJ are 2 gardens in Paris.

This quality and relevant editorial provides an excellent backdrop for landscape practices to place a cost effective recruitment advertisement in front of the right candidate to fill your vacancies.

To book or for further information please call:

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EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**Architect Wanted**

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority wishes to appoint an Architectural Practice to design and supervise the construction of a new office at its headquarters site in Enfield, Middlesex. The estimated cost of the building is £600,000.

For further details of the project and information on how to apply for inclusion on the tender list, please contact Julia Poste, before 14 October 2002, at Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Myddelton House, Bulls Cross, Enfield EN2 9HG.

Email: jposte@leevalleypark.org.uk
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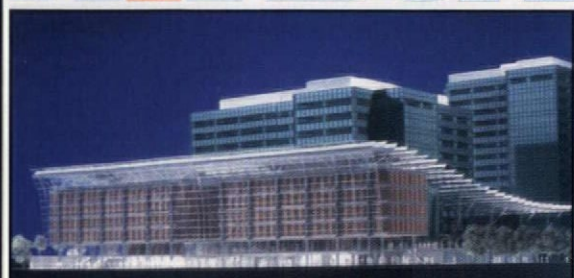
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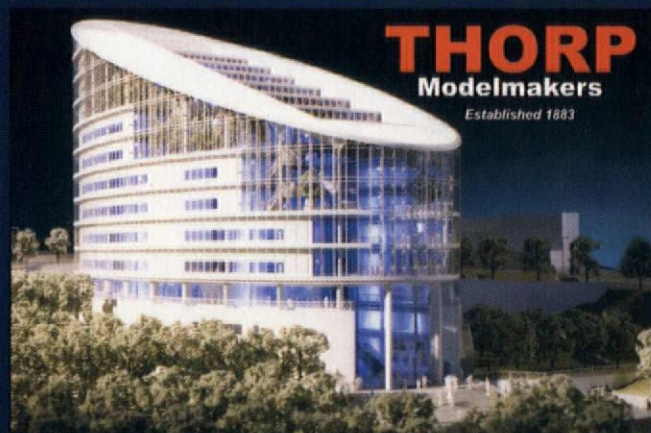
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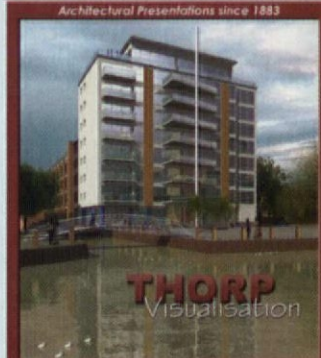
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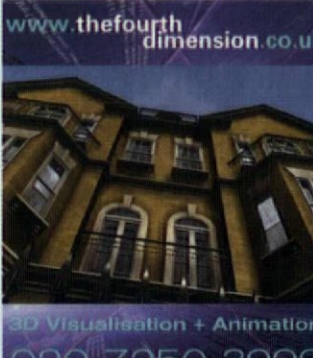
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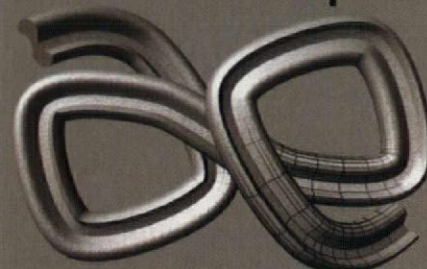
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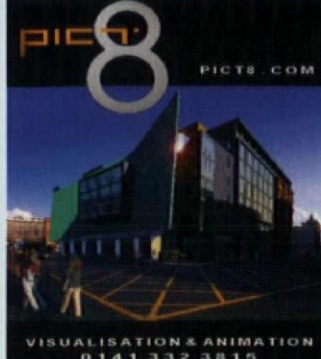
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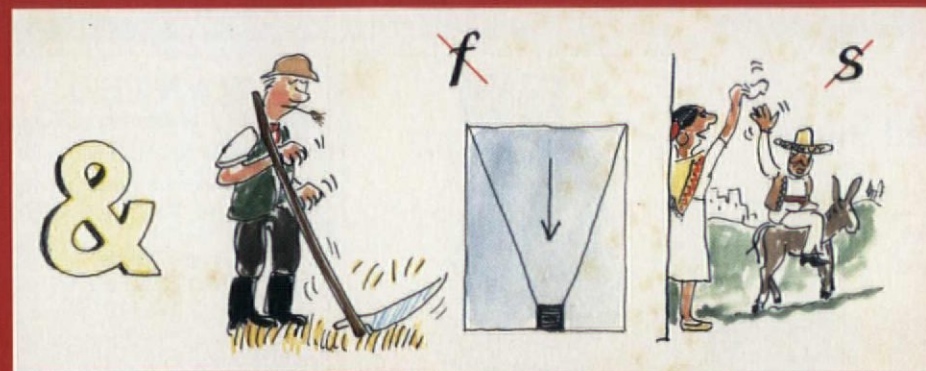
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archicharades



Champagne goes to James Lambert of 50 Kingsway Place, London EC1 who correctly identified Minoru Takeyama 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.

Stage setting

Appreciative obituaries of **Joan Littlewood**, who has died at the splendid age of 87, naturally concentrated on her theatrical achievements. But her contribution to the world of architecture should certainly be noted. For it was she, along with her architect **Cedric Price**, who inspired the idea of a 'Fun Palace' at Stratford in east London, home of many of Littlewood's triumphs. The building, which uncannily pre-figures notable High-Tech projects such as the Pompidou Centre, was envisaged as a flexible mixed-use space capable of adaptation for almost any purpose. The project was in deadly earnest, and inspired critical acclaim even though in the end it was not built. **Reyner Banham** put it as well as anyone: 'Seven nights of the week it will probably look like nothing on earth from the outside: the kit of service towers, lifting gantries and building components exist solely to produce the kind of interior environments that are necessary and fitting to whatever is going on.' Joan remained a lifelong friend of Price, and was a regular attendee at his office parties, accompanied by her genial assistant Peter Rankin. She was one of the few people capable of giving Price a thorough telling-off – out of affection.

Wembley worries

Fees for bankers and lawyers involved with the Wembley Stadium deal have 'soared to £82 million', as the *Sunday Telegraph* put it. You could build a stadium for that. Even more worrying is the intelligence,

conveyed by the *Sunday Express*, that the deal to get the show on the road owes much to the activities of one **Paul 'Boom-Boom' Bloomfield**, a formerly disgraced finance and property man with an uncanny knack of bouncing back. He once sold the Paternoster Square site to unsuspecting Venezuelans with a sniffy reputation (if you know what I mean) by waving £50 notes featuring St Paul's in front of them, as evidence of the site's importance. They didn't notice they were buying leases, not freeholds, until it was too late.

Opened house

Off to London's City Hall, for the celebration party to mark last weekend's successful Open House event. Guests – mainly local authority people, owners of houses opening up for the weekend, plus eminent architects, were first ushered all the way up Foster and Partners' tight ramp inside the building to the drinks do on the top floor. Balcony-goers noted that only the very tip of St Paul's is visible from the top, behind Foster's massive commercial offices next to City Hall at More London Bridge. One drink later, guests were ushered back down again, getting hotter all the time, to take a seat in the viewing gallery which looks onto where the mayor usually does his business. But before the speeches could start, **Max Hutchinson** delivered a gushing piece to camera, which received a round of applause. **Ken Livingstone** heaped praise on the building in front of job architect **Sean Affleck**, noting how brave of **Nick Raynsford** it was to have

gone with the project. He also pointed to other successful riverside schemes like Hungerford Bridge ('there's nothing wrong with it, so you've heard nothing about it!') and urged guests to take a walk over the car-free Tower Bridge at the weekend and peer over at new 'beaches' created on the Thames. **Jane Priestman** heaped praise on Open House, and finally Open House director **Victoria Thornton** thanked all those who had made it possible. Then it was back up that ramp again, with some observers noting that there was just a slight, but definitely perceptible, wobble. Must have been all those people walking in step.

With the grain

Iflew to Finland, where Japanese architect **Kengo Kuma** was keen to express his enthusiasm for timber when receiving the Spirit of Nature Wood Architecture Award in Lahti last week. 'Wood sits at the centre of Japanese culture,' Kuma said. 'I use chopsticks every day.' He says: 'My body feels uncomfortable in a concrete structure. I don't like the smell, I don't like the feeling of concrete.' He went on to cite the sensuality of wood as an important factor in his enthusiasm. Kuma described his desire 'to blend Japanese tradition with the Modern Movement'. He is keen to use Japanese cedar which is usually overlooked in favour of cheaper, imported materials. But without the use of the native materials, the forests, which cover 60 per cent of Japan, will not go through their cycle of regeneration. Until now most of Kuma's work has been in the countryside, but now he is working for retail giant LVMH

in the heart of Tokyo, on a building with a timber-supported glazed curtain wall. In order to satisfy Japan's building regulations, he has had to design a system of external sprinklers for fire protection.

Hot stuff

The award was presented at the Sibelius Hall, Finland's showpiece of contemporary timber construction, with a near-perfect acoustic. However, remedial work to the three-year-old building was needed over the summer, not to the timber but to the glass screens that enclose the building. The culprit was the weather. In a normal year, Finland has a wide range of temperatures, from cold winters to very pleasant summers. The glazing, described as 'hanging like a shower curtain', has an 8cm space at its base to allow for expansion. But this year the summer was exceptionally hot and, between January and June, an expansion of 7.3cm was noted. This rang alarm bells, and the expansion space was increased.

No logo

Rebranding the RIBA a while ago – including those new skinny lions – has clearly been a trial for many. And that includes the originators of the material themselves, The Fourth Room. The design consultancy founded by **Michael Wolff** (who also created the Labour Party's red rose) has gone bust in less than happy circumstances. Wolff stands accused of keeping fees from clients and earning more than three times his partners by so doing. No wonder the lions got thinner.

astragal ●

COEXISTENCE

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 201

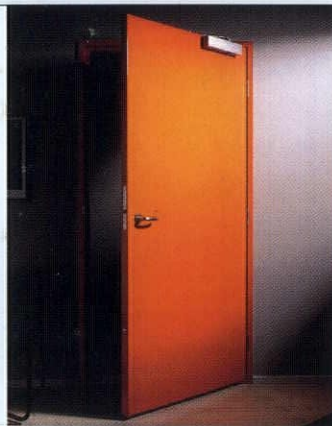
The Foster 500 range was devised by Foster and Partners within the context of the innovative architecture of the Arag Tower, Düsseldorf. The collection includes two single seats and a sofa option, benches and glass coffee tables. Coexistence will be featuring the Foster 500 and other items from Walter Knoll's collection at this year's 100% Design show (26-29 September, Earls Court 2, London) on Stand F122. Tel 020 7354 8817, or e-mail enquiries@coexistence.co.uk



ACCENTHANSEN

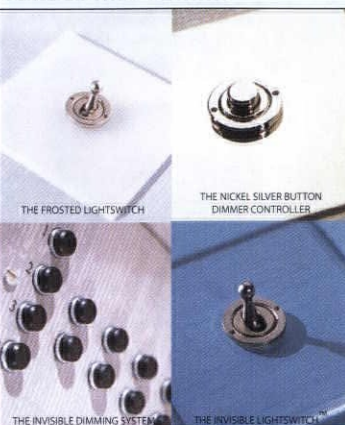
AJ ENQUIRY NO: 202

Steel door specialist AccentHansen was requested to supply acoustic performance solutions in the form of its elegant SoundShield doorsets to the Education Centre at Blackburn's Queens Park Hospital. The outward opening doors with touchbars also act as emergency exits. AccentHansen, a UK leader in the design of steel doors, is part of the £100 million Anglo-Scandinavian HansenGroup.



FORBES AND LOMAX

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 203



Invisible switches have flush-to-the-wall acrylic plates, allowing the wall colour to show through. Other plate finishes include frosted acrylic, stainless steel, nickel silver and unlacquered brass. The invisible dimming system is a remote-controlled, scene-setting dimmer. Tel 020 7738 0202 or visit www.forbesandlomax.co.uk. See us at 100% Design - stand H50.

ETERNIT

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 204



When housebuilder Crest Nicholas and architect and planner BBA decided on a Voysey style of architecture for Phase 2 of the 900-unit Port Marine development in Bristol, they specified Eternit clay plain tiles for their visual appeal. A total of 150,000 Eternit double-cambered Acme tiles in Dark Brindle colour were used on the roofs of Phase 2 - Pier Row and Pier Place.

STOAKES: PART I MESSAGE

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 205

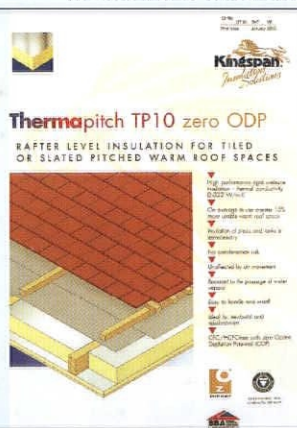
Stoakes Systems announces a new software programme to provide architects and designers with project-specific calculations for the overall U-value of complete facades of their curtain walling systems. Astrawall, for example, is highly thermally efficient with greater air tightness, no external aluminium, acceptable solid/clear percentages and easily attached brise-soleil. Contact Martin Day on 020 8660 7667 or visit www.stoakes.co.uk



KINGSPAN

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 206

New literature for Kingspan Thermapitch TP10 zero ODP is now available. It includes detailed data on a complete portfolio of insulation solutions for pitched roofs with warm roof spaces. It gives guidance as to the suitability of each potential solution, some of which feature Kingspan's new breathable membrane, Kingspan Nilvent. It has been fully updated to accommodate the changes to the Building Regulations introduced this year.



REDLAND ROOFING SYSTEMS

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 207



For the authentic character of traditional double pantiles with the highest modern manufacturing and performance standards, choose from three classic colours in the Landmark range by Redland Roofing Systems - Rich Terracotta, Terracotta Brindle and Brown Brindle. The subtle colour variations produce a roof with rich character which ages naturally over time, maintaining its colour integrity for decades.

SENIOR ALUMINIUM SYSTEMS

AJ ENQUIRY NO: 208

More than 170 of Senior Aluminium Systems' SW 400 series windows have been installed to convert the Lumiere Building in London's East End into 86 luxury domestic flats. Across four elevations, the fully double-glazed system was used to cover window spans of more than 3m and incorporated multi-point locking mechanisms.



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