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Restoring the Robie

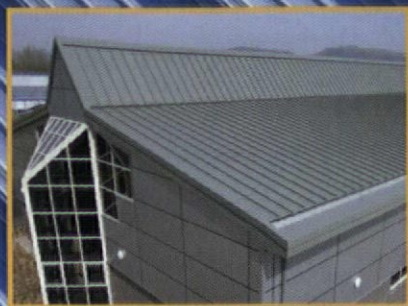
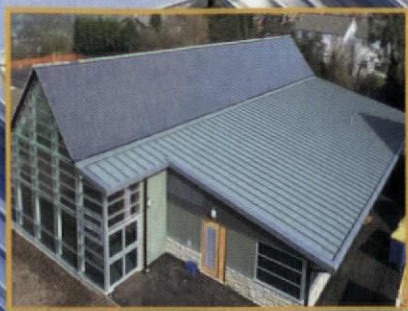
Conserving brickwork

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Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House in Chicago is seen here before its current restoration began. Although the building looks to be in reasonable condition, appearances are deceptive. 'It was on the brink of having real problems,' says restoration architect Karen Sweeney of the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust. This week's building study examines what has been done so far and what is still to do. See pp24-31.

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**“The trouble with these new icons is discriminating between those that are worthy and those that are not”**

Graham Morrison gives an iconoclastic speech » pages 6-7



Amanda Levete  
views the Royal  
Academy summer  
exhibition  
» page 8

**aj** news

# Pringle crowned RIBA president

Jack Pringle has won the race to become the next president of the RIBA.

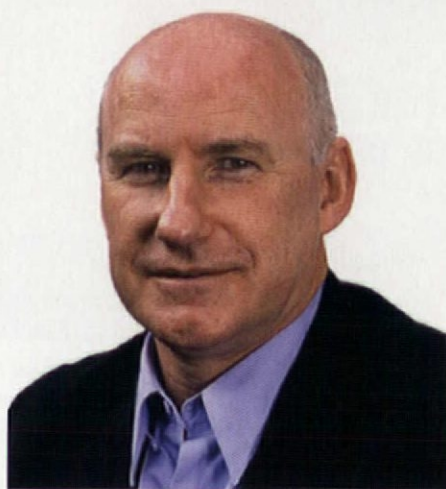
The founding director of Pringle Brandon Architects and current vice-president for education only just edged out Valerie Owen, the chief executive of inward investment agency London First.

After transferable votes were taken into account, Pringle received 2,998 votes and Owen picked up 2,518. Brian Godfrey came in third, Richard Saxon fourth, Ian Salisbury fifth and Simon Foxell sixth.

However, there will be concern over the reduced voter turnout of 22 per cent, a drop on the 25 per cent who voted in 2002.

Speaking in the aftermath of the announcement, Pringle said he was excited to be taking over from George Ferguson.

‘I am delighted and flattered to have won in such a strong field. I am not at all surprised that Valerie came in second as she is extremely capable and fought a very strong campaign,’ he said. ‘My immediate priorities will be to support George Ferguson for his remaining year in office, and to prepare for some hard work.’



**Pringle: edged Valerie Owen into second place**

Fellow presidential candidate Ian Salisbury – who was also the first architect to sign Pringle’s nomination form – said the result was justified.

‘He has all the right ideas and there is no doubt of the justice of seeing someone

elected who has devoted a great deal of his professional time to the service of the institute,’ he said.

‘I wish him and the institute the very best of good fortune during his period of office,’ he added.

Jack Pringle, who first served on the RIBA Council in 1981, is currently chair of the Professional Services Board and sits on the Holdings Board. He also chairs the Education and Validation Committees.

Pringle Brandon Architects specialises in office and hotel projects, including commissions such as data centres for Merrill Lynch and Morgan Grenfell, London Underground offices at Canary Wharf and Customs and Excise offices nationwide.

Pringle has also led the fit-out for Barclays’ new headquarters and is currently working with MacCormac Jamieson Prichard on the new BBC headquarters at Broadcasting House in London.

Pringle will become president elect immediately and will take up the presidency on 1 September 2005.

Ed Dorrell

## Council lashes out as estate upgrade sparks controversy



Camden council has attacked the Twentieth Century Society for attempting to block urgent renovation to one of its post-war housing estates without properly inspecting the site.

The upgrade to the Chalcots Estate (pictured) in Swiss Cottage, north London, includes re-cladding four tower blocks in aluminium, replacing metal-frame windows with UPVC and extensive landscaping.

The Twentieth Century Society has branded the renovation ‘crude and bastardising’ and has urged the council to award the estate conservation area status. But Camden has dismissed the criticism as unfounded and accused the pressure group of ‘basing its case on photographs rather than visiting the estate’.

‘The society has admitted it does not even know where the estate is,’ said Camden council planning officer Deidre Traynor. ‘The criteria for conservation of post-war public housing are very tight. Estates considered to be of greatest architectural interest have already been declared conservation areas by Camden.’

However, David Davidson, casework committee member for the Twentieth Century Society, fiercely rejected suggestions that it had failed to conduct research into the estate.

‘The estate can be seen from a distance and we have members who live in Camden and know it, and I believe caseworker Cordula Zeidler has since visited the estate,’ he said. ‘Nevertheless, the council’s decision to finance this atrocious renovation shows its lack of understanding and appreciation of post-war architecture.’



**“I haven't seen it before and it wasn't a source of inspiration”**

Ken Shuttleworth on the similarities of his Vortex to the Kobe Tower in Japan » page 11



EDAW's Jason Prior explains why he thinks London should win the 2012 Olympic Games bid » pages 14-17

## Alsop dismayed as council opts for 'overly commercial' developers



Alsop fears developers' focus on profits will lead them to cut corners on his Barnsley masterplan

Will Alsop has warned that Barnsley council is risking the future of his practice's masterplan, which proposes the transformation of the town into a Yorkshire version of Lucca in Tuscany.

The Stirling Prize-winning architect has criticised the short-list of development consortia on the Market Site – the first to be developed under his framework – claiming they are 'probably too commercial for the project'.

Alsop told the AJ that the council was mistaken if it thought developers Amec, 12/49 or AM would produce the kind of buildings required for the town.

'There is not a problem with knocking down the existing buildings because they are no good and this seems to make sense. But the developers are a

strange choice to produce the replacement,' he said.

'I will reserve judgement until I see the schemes they come up with, but at the moment there seems to be a major question mark.'

Alsop was commissioned by the local council and Yorkshire Forward in 2001 to draw up a masterplan that would completely 'remake' the town. The architect's resulting proposals, which were unveiled a year later to widespread astonishment, recommended transforming Barnsley on the model of a Tuscan hill town.

But Alsop's attention has now turned to the implementation of his proposals. 'There seems to be a problem with the transition of masterplans and we are worried

this has just been carried out as a box-ticking exercise,' he said.

'The problem is that in Barnsley the profits for developers will always be so tight that they have to cut corners.'

Barnsley council expressed 'surprise' at Alsop's comments. 'We have enjoyed working with Will and he has come up with a fantastic masterplan,' said director of development David Kennedy.

'He has been very supportive of the market redevelopment and the project as a whole. We hope there will be opportunities for him to work in the town again.'

'We feel that we have three very good developers and that they will come up with some very good projects,' he added.

Ed Dorrell

### FOSTER QUILTS RESNICK TOWER

Foster and Partners has confirmed that it is no longer working on the 35-storey Resnick Tower in New York, a controversial residential development three blocks north of the Ground Zero site. The practice decided to resign from the scheme after it became embroiled in discussions with the city council and local authorities.

### FINCH TAKES CABE CHAIR

CABE has appointed the AJ's Paul Finch as interim chairman while it hunts for a permanent successor to Stuart Lipton, who formally stepped down this week. The full-time position is expected to be advertised by the end of July.

### SOUTHWARK INQUIRY DUE

An inquiry into Southwark council's planning procedures by its Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following the suspension of two senior planners earlier this year (AJ 10.6.04), is due to put its recommendations before the full council this week. It is expected to accept the recommendations of April's District Auditors' report.

### JARVIS CRISIS TO AFFECT PFI

The continuing financial problems of construction firm Jarvis are likely to damage the workloads of architects specialising in education. The government and the Local Government Association have both expressed concern that many PFI and LIFT schemes may face collapse if Jarvis goes under.

## Rogers MD Marco Goldschmied declares retirement rumours true

Marco Goldschmied has confirmed that he has left the Richard Rogers Partnership (RRP). The firm's former managing director has told the AJ that he retired from the practice on 30 June.

Goldschmied, 60, also insisted that there is 'absolutely no chance' that he would consider setting up his own practice, independently of RRP.

Instead, he said he would be pursuing other interests outside architecture, including charity work with Amnesty International and the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust.

However, the past president of the RIBA refused to rule out joining CABE as a chairman. 'I am certainly considering the role, but the

advert for the position has not even come out yet, so I don't want to be seen to be jumping the gun,' he said.

'CABE has an extremely important role at the moment and it would be an exciting opportunity to take it on.'

Goldschmied admitted he had been pondering his role within RRP for 'quite some time'. 'This has obviously been on the cards,' he said. 'What with reaching 60, I have been thinking quite a lot about my position.'

'I did much of my most interesting work when I was a lot younger and since then I have been involved with many other things, such as the RIBA,' he added.



# Taming those troublesome icons

In his opening speech at the AJ/Bovis Awards, **Graham Morrison** criticised the public's relentless appetite for iconic architecture and offered a new definition of the 'bad icon'

'I want to start by taking a position. I am suspicious of architecture that makes pompous claims for itself. I think a design that sets out with the conscious intention of being iconic is unworthy. And I think a prerequisite of a good design is that it contributes to its context.'

'Designers have been falling over themselves to apply the iconic treatment to every imaginable building type. The trouble with these new icons is discriminating between those that are worthy and those that are not. We must be clear that their impact will be both lasting and beneficial. If they are going to be visible, they have to be good.'

'These icons are becoming our new landmarks. Obvious examples are the Sydney Opera House, the Pompidou Centre and even the new Scottish Parliament building.'

'There is, however, a second group, which try very hard to be like the first but suffer from the fact their public importance is less obvious. They are the less significant building

'A competition had developed. Each new design had to be more shocking to eclipse the last. It was, and is, a fatuous game'

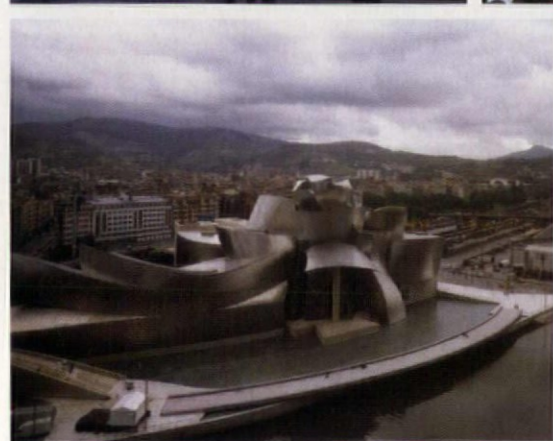
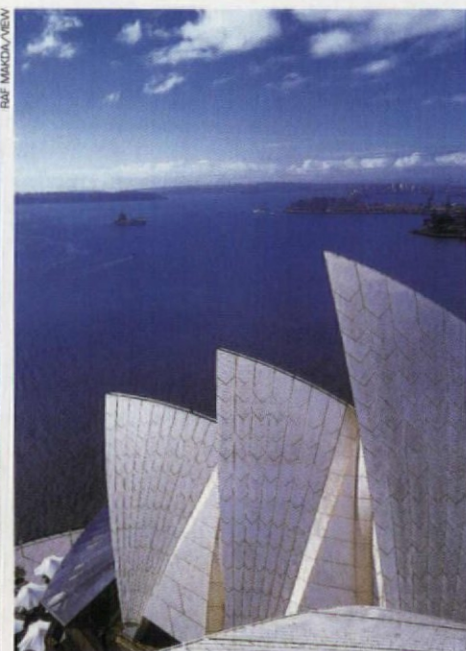
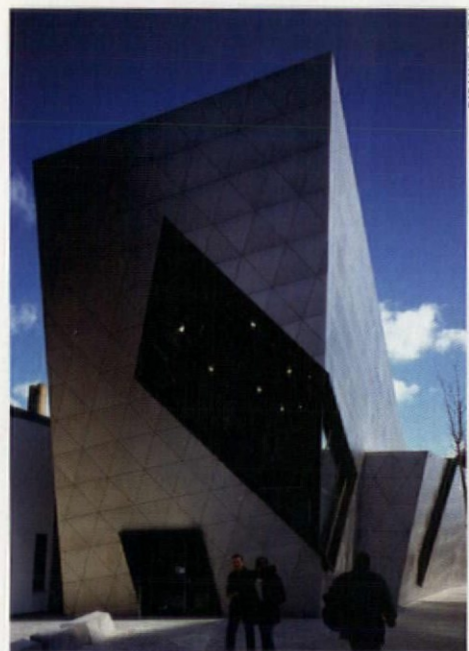
types and may not always deserve the profile their sponsors demand. This is the group I wish to focus on. This is where, in my view, the trouble with icons lies.

'Here I have to mention the very significant effect of the Guggenheim in Bilbao. Though I am not convinced that it is a great work of architecture, it is firmly in the first category as

its public credentials are clear. With Bilbao, "celebrity architecture" in all its low-cut and high-rise disguises had come of age. It was certain to be followed by a torrent of imitators.'

'As it happened, the launch of the Guggenheim coincided with a new public appetite for the "bling-bling" architectural image. A competition had developed for this attention and, as this increased, each image had to be more extraordinary and shocking in order to eclipse the last. Each new design had to be instantly memorable; more iconic. It was, and is, a fatuous and self-indulgent game.'

'Our cities are made of a tradition of normative buildings that form our streets and lanes, our squares and avenues. These familiar spaces, the public realm, are more valuable to us than any individual building. It is the quiet strength of their normality that allows the icon to be special. We need to look at the city as a whole, and no icon should leave it worse off.'



Good icons or bad icons? (clockwise from top left): Libeskind's London Metropolitan University in north London; Utzon's Sydney Opera House; Rogers' Leadenhall building in the City of London; Alsop's Cloud in Liverpool; and Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao



'Everyone talks about the Bilbao effect; about how one remarkable building can change the perception and boost the economy of a city. But we are short of evidence for the claim that architecture in the form of a single gesture, however theatrical, can have such restorative powers. Without easyJet, it is far from certain that the small economic gains in Bilbao would be measurable at all. But now every failing town or institution has thoughts about some kind of architectural icon that they hope will be their salvation. They are seeking an elixir.

'It is as if they were the gullible recipients of those "medicines" dispensed by the Victorian quack doctors whose drugs were spiked with alcohol and gave only temporary and illusory comfort to the afflicted.

'At the London Metropolitan University on Holloway Road in north London, the elixir has been dispensed by Daniel Libeskind. The new graduate centre is a further development of the crumpled thinking seen earlier at the V&A. Despite the far-fetched claims of his website for the origin of his concept, the design is little more than a cultural placebo, a distraction, which quite possibly, in failing to deal with the real organisational issues of the university, inherited from decades of poor estate man-



Graham Morrison: icons must be worthy

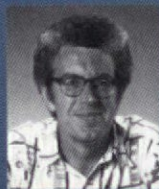
agement, may do more long-term damage than good.

'Another example is a proposal for a new office building. The office building is the true chameleon of our time. We have seen it mutate from a Miesian 'ideal' into a Post-Modern palace, into a High-Tech machine, into organic forms, and now into blobs dressed up as art. Strangely, for a building type so concerned with efficiency, these changes in its skin are rarely market or customer-led. They are, more often than not, driven simply by the need to get planning approval.

'The latest example of this mutation is the chiselled object of angular art. We saw this at London Bridge, where the planning inspector applauded Renzo Piano's assembly of glass shards and hailed it as an artistic success. It has now been followed, with almost Darwinian predictability, by the proposal for Elizabeth House at Waterloo.

'If the confused assembly of "doughnuts on sticks" in Liverpool, known inexplicably as The Cloud, is regarded as its "Fourth Grace", then the proposal at Waterloo must be Cinderella's ugly sister. This domineering, elephantine project of 100,000m<sup>2</sup> is made entirely of glass and is claimed to reflect light in a way that is varied and beautiful. Enormous it is, beautiful it is not.

'So, in my view, there are good icons and bad icons, and for the latter I offer a new definition for our architectural lexicon. A bad icon is "the built representation of an unsupported claim, a meaningless or pompous gesture, which exceeds the reasonable representation of its content, initiated either by vanity or expedience, in which the efficient working of its accommodation is compromised and the context in which it is built is left worse off". That is the trouble with icons.' *This is an edited version of the speech. For the full transcript, visit [www.ajplus.co.uk](http://www.ajplus.co.uk)* +



#### PIERS GOUGH RESPONDS

'If there is a trouble with icons it is that we can't produce enough of them to reflect our age and energise our cities. Iconic status is not ours to give; it comes from a public that recognises such resonance in buildings. However, a prerequisite is that architects attempt to put up buildings that may resonate.

'Graham Morrison would have us return to a time when buildings knew their place in the pecking order. Housing and offices were to be the dull bits in between more important public buildings. But the world of hierarchies has gone. Home, work and shopping are now as, or possibly more, important in people's lives. Architecture should be truthful to this condition. Anyway, our cities are already at full capacity for dull infill.

'We actually build much less now. We should take any opportunity to redress the balance with buildings that celebrate architecturally every use that goes into making the modern city.

'The most breathtakingly ingenuous of Morrison's claims is that architects are trying to produce exciting buildings to make it easier to tempt clients and get planning permission. However, his practice proves

the opposite proposition of producing vast anodyne GM Modernism – genetically modified to remove any ideology (looks like Modernism but tastes of nothing) – which is wholly successful with safety-first planners and big anodyne developers.

'To sit on a table at the Royal Academy with such brilliantly inventive architectural talents as Peter Cook, Will Alsop and Amanda Levete, whose entire built works in Britain could fit easily into Morrison's latest overscaled planning permission, and listen to his reactionary justification for such mediocrity, was truly sickening.

'He also gratuitously denigrated Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao, suggesting that any success brought to the city was only provided by easyJet. But then it is hard to imagine anyone getting on any type of plane to anywhere to visit any building by his practice.

'The last time this ideology of mediocrity was rampant we got Thamesmead, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Happily, many architects are now driven beyond what is comfortable to achieve to try to celebrate and adorn our inherited cities with additions that speak of the modern world and its possibilities. If some of these efforts appeal enough to become icons, so much the better. Not to at least try is literally hopeless.'

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# ACADEMY AWARDS

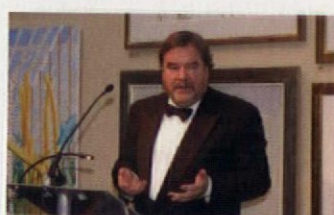
Last week's dinner to celebrate the AJ/Bovis Awards for the best architecture at the Royal Academy took place in the galleries



Piers Gough considers Jenny Saville's portrait



Left: Amanda Levete of Future Systems admires the show. Right: Parkview president Victor Hwang in conversation



Paul Finch chaired the evening



Left: Foster's Spencer de Grey. Right: Louis Hellman with Ian Ritchie



Left: AR editor Peter Davey chats to Leonard Manasseh. Right: Bovis Lendlease's John Spanswick (centre) with winners Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth



Highly commended: Jolyon Brewis of Grimshaw (left) and Peter Barber with colleague Phil Hamilton



Winner Cécile Brisac of Brisac Gonzalez



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# New CABE chief's past under fire

A shadow has been cast over the appointment of CABE's new chief executive Richard Simmons following government criticism of his high-profile Hoxton regeneration push.

A consultation paper published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) claims his gentrification of Hoxton Square in Hackney, east London – one of the most deprived areas in the UK – has pushed up property prices and forced out locals.

The DCMS report blemishes Simmons' track record as chief executive of Dalston City Challenge, when he personally took charge of the Hoxton initiative during the '90s.

The department concedes that 1,000 jobs a year have been created as a direct result of the regeneration but stresses that local unemployment levels remain the same.

'The impoverished artists credited with leading Hoxton's regeneration have moved on, as squats and low-cost accommodation have been replaced by expensive loft-style living,' said the DCMS. 'In this climate, questions are being asked as to whether Hoxton can sustain its reputation as London's "art hot spot".'

Simmons, currently director of development and the environment at Medway council



Simmons' Hoxton push has been criticised

in Kent, takes the helm of CABE in September. He denies the report has any bearing on his appointment but says there are lessons to be learned from Hoxton.

'It highlights the importance of engaging the local community in the processes of regeneration,' he said.

Simmons blames Hoxton's failings on geographical and time constraints imposed before he took charge of the project.

He says: 'The City Challenge project was very focused on a targeted geographical area. By the time I arrived, the geographical boundary was defined. Furthermore, five years was not long enough to create a sustainable programme. We felt that a more holistic approach would have been desirable.'

The DCMS has rallied to the defence of Simmons by insisting the report does not bring into question his suitability as CABE head.

'There are particular things that will make a project unsustainable but not necessarily because of the involvement of Richard Simmons,' said a DCMS spokesman. 'This is not a reproach of Simmons nor is the DCMS having second thoughts about his appointment.'

Clive Walker

## Bumper shortlist for PM's Better Public Building Award



Judges have announced a shortlist from a record level of entries to the coveted Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award, sponsored by CABE.

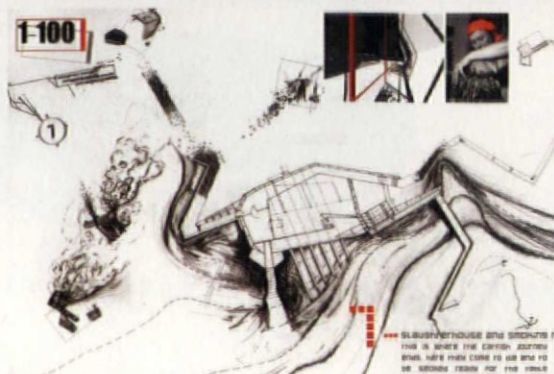
Gensler's doughnut-shaped GCHQ building has been chosen for cutting both construction and energy costs, while Rick Mather's University of Lincoln Architecture Building was picked for exploiting natural light and ventilation. Whitbybird's Whittle Arch and Glass Bridge in Coventry (pictured) and Reich and Hall's design for the Wolfson Medical School at the University of Glasgow also earned places.

Smaller-scale projects include John Pardey's public conveniences for the New Forest District Council, which were cited as an 'attractive addition to the landscape'.

The award is part of the British Construction Industry Awards, sponsored by the AJ. The winner will be announced on 28 October.

Other projects shortlisted include: Wilkinson Eyre Architects' City and Islington College Lifelong Learning Centre; Allford Hall Monaghan Morris' Raines Court, London N16; Foster and Partners' World Squares for All, Phase 1: Trafalgar Square and environs; DSDHA's Hoyle Early Years Centre, Bury; Wildern Basic Needs Secondary School; and Lewin Fryer & Partners' Newton's Cove coast protection scheme, Weymouth.

### STUDENT SHOWCASE



James Curtis designed the Lea Fishery as a third-year project at Oxford Brookes University, under the supervision of Simon Herron and Susanne Isa. Described as 'a move towards an almost forgotten future', it addresses the fact that, as the human population of the Lea Valley increases, the fish population depletes, its disappearance being barely visible. Mundane modellings of suburban structures are put in place for humans, while fishermen observe shoal locations.

Student Showcase is sponsored by Students' Union, a website set up by Union in association with The Architects' Journal at [www.students-union.net](http://www.students-union.net). To submit work for publication in Student Showcase, email a publication quality image to [ajstudentshowcase@emap.com](mailto:ajstudentshowcase@emap.com)





# Shuttleworth stunned by Vortex's 'clear similarity' to Kobe Tower

MAKE boss Ken Shuttleworth has expressed surprise at the striking similarity between his proposed Vortex Tower in the City of London and the distinctive Port of Kobe Tower in Japan.

Developed in partnership with Arup, Shuttleworth's 70-storey pink and blue structure will boast a roof-top garden and public restaurant offering panoramic views across London, as well as residential and commercial space.

The 300m Vortex is so-called because of its hyperboloid profile resembling extreme weather storms. The structure is twisted into a spiral shape with a tapering centre and wide base and top – the rationale being that the base and top of the building are its key commercial features.

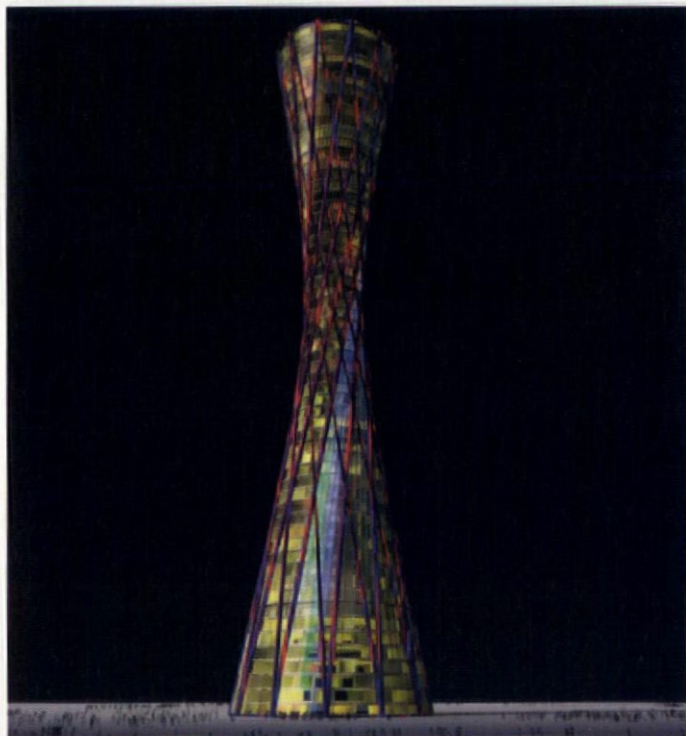
The 108m Kobe Tower, built in 1987 to commemorate the city's 120-year anniversary, also offers a restaurant and public viewing galleries across Osaka Bay and the Rokko Mountains.

But the former Foster and Partners director has refuted suggestions that MAKE drew inspiration from the Kobe Tower.

'It's certainly a similar shape, isn't it? I haven't seen it before and it was not a source of inspiration for the Vortex,' said Shuttleworth.

'It's interesting that the Kobe Tower designers did not use the full envelope of the building. Instead accommodation has been limited to a central cone. Also the Kobe building is red all over, while the Vortex is blue at base and pink on top,' he added.

Clive Walker



The proposed Vortex (above) shares its shape with the Kobe Tower (top)

## Council pledges to win Bath Spa costs

The local councillor responsible for Grimshaw's controversial Bath Spa project has vowed to win back the overspend through the courts.

Grimshaw could face a legal tussle with Bath and North East Somerset Council over who must pay for the spa's spiralling costs.

An independent audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers shows costs on the scheme have soared to £26 million – well in excess of the original £19 million estimate – and further expenses could be incurred before it is finished.

Furious councillors are looking to claw back the overspend and may take legal action against Grimshaw and the project's contractor, Mowlem, if they are shown to be culpable.

'We are talking about a lot of public money coming back to us,' said Nicola O'Flaherty, the council's executive member for tourism, leisure and culture.

'We might file a claim but not until the project is finished. Mowlem has made a number of claims against the council. We have agreed to some but we do not recognise a large amount of them.'

Mowlem has promised that the centre will open this autumn, but O'Flaherty says she is not 100 per cent confident the contractor will meet its pledge.

Although Grimshaw has refused to comment, it has told O'Flaherty that the problems are 'within the norm for a restricted site of archaeological significance involving spring water'.

Earlier this year an investigation into peeling paint on the Bath Spa scheme appeared to criticise Grimshaw, Mowlem and product RIW Toughseal (AJ 5.2.04).

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### who said what

**'A bore of a building that wants you to think it's having fun. This is architecture as novelty prize marrow'**

Adrian Searle on Foster's Albion Riverside development. *Guardian*, 1.7.04

**'The simplicity of the new memorial does seem pretty remote from her personal aesthetic. Evidence from Andrew Morton's latest work suggests that if the fountain were truly to reflect her taste it should be cheered up with splashes of blue and yellow, and perhaps a line of china rabbits hopping gaily around a gilded rim'**

Catherine Bennett on the Diana memorial fountain. *Guardian*, 1.7.04

**'Net result? High-quality public space. Step back a few yards and the silver-grey pavilions all but dematerialise. This is selfless architecture'**

Hugh Pearman applauds Stanton Williams' Tower of London Environs Scheme. *Sunday Times*, 4.7.04

**'There is nothing like an architectural competition to cheer up a board of museum trustees. Rather than worry about fund-raising, exhibition programmes and audiences, it can bask in the flattering attentions of a world-wide collection of architects attempting to charm themselves into a job. The fact that there is usually no money to build seems not to worry either party'**

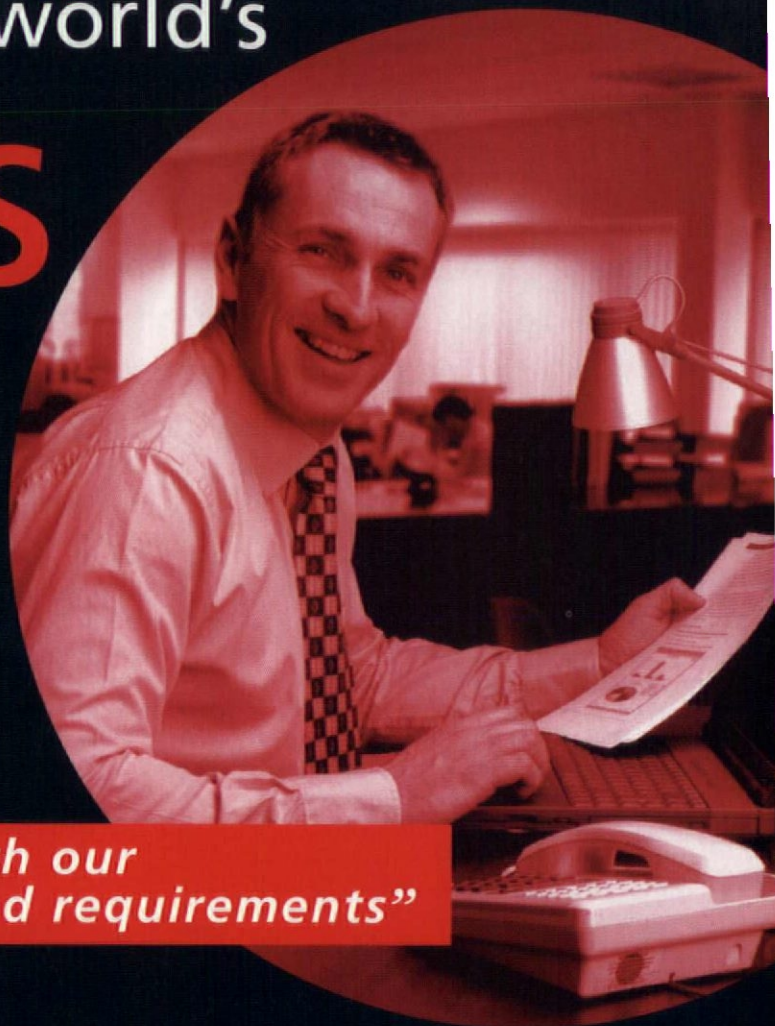
Deyan Sudjic. *The Art Newspaper*, July 2004

### vital statistics

- Nearly 12 per cent of all new homes under construction in Scotland are self-built schemes, amounting to more than 20,000 individually designed homes every year. One in four detached houses is now the result of a self-build project.
- Theme tune composers are raking in the royalties following the boom in downloading ringtones. Among the top 10 downloads were themes from *The Muppet Show*, *Roobarb* and *Custard* and *The Pink Panther*. The growing business was worth £90 million last year.
- Staff, patients and visitors in the 2,060 hospitals across England and Wales eat almost 5,000 tonnes of sweets every year. But fruit is less popular. According to recent NHS figures they only got through 252 tonnes.
- The McDonald's restaurant in Pushkin Square, Moscow, is one of the busiest in the world and has 43,000 customers every day. However, if you want a coffee from Starbucks in Shibuya, Tokyo, you can expect to queue for up to 45 minutes.

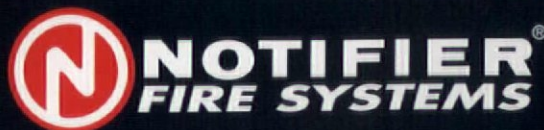


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# Victory in our sites

As we enter the latest phase of public consultation over London's Olympic Games bid for 2012, **Ed Dorrell** meets Jason Prior, regional vice-principal of EDAW, the project's lead consultant, to find out whether the capital should brace itself for a fate worse than Athens or regeneration heaven

Is this the man who will win the Olympics for London? Can he really do it? What a weight of pressure it must be to have so many ordinary people's hopes and dreams resting on your shoulders.

You would expect EDAW boss Jason Prior to look like a man under a lot of pressure: working nights; talking to important decision-makers in the worlds of both business and politics; managing a design team made up of an eclectic group of architects and consultants; and, at the same time, continuing to co-run one of the most important offices of one of the world's biggest commercial landscape firms.

Add to this the fact that Prior admits his head is banging because of an 'unusually' heavy night the evening before and you really would assume he would be looking a little jaded.

But no, Jason Prior looks well. Very well indeed. He has the bouncy aura of a man who is really enjoying life. If this is how Prior behaves when he is suffering from a 'banging head' and an unpleasant hangover, we can only imagine how cheerful he'd be after a quiet night in.

Dressed in a loud but acceptable shirt, Prior sports his shaggy mane as if it is the most normal haircut in the world. As our interview unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that if there is one thing that really makes this man tick, it is the idea that London must host the Olympic Games – and there seems little doubt that he is convinced he is the man to masterplan it.

Who in their right mind would do such a thing to themselves? Why would you take on a project that is, by Prior's own admission, 'second only to going to war in terms of organisation'?

Prior does not look like your average sports buff. In fact, he does nothing in the 40-minute slot to suggest that he is a sport-

ing fiend. When asked whether he would be watching 'tonight's game' (it was the morning before England's calamitous penalty shoot-out with Portugal), he said he would be but did not look exactly animated.

So why get involved? One thing that Prior clearly believes is that a successful bid is what London *should* be doing. 'We are a world city and it is important that we do things like holding the Olympics. We need to be seen to be involved,' he says with a rather determined glint in his eyes.



## Team games

Prior's firm EDAW is the lead consultant in this project and is being ably assisted by an unlikely collaboration of that most understated of London firms, Allies and Morrison, and the Rem Koolhaas acolytes Foreign Office Architects (FOA).

'We have an extraordinary team working on this,' he says. 'They are very different

in their outlook, but we would not have got together if we didn't all know that we could work as a team – we have worked on projects jointly before now.'

The make-up of the design team could in itself be used as a marketing tool when the powers that be decide between the remaining cities left in the race to host the 2012 games (New York, Paris, Madrid, Moscow and, of course, London). You have in the offices: an Italian and Iranian from FOA who have both worked in Holland; EDAW, an American-owned firm working out of Chicago with offices all around the world; and, in the form of Allies and Morrison, a quintessentially British Modernist firm.

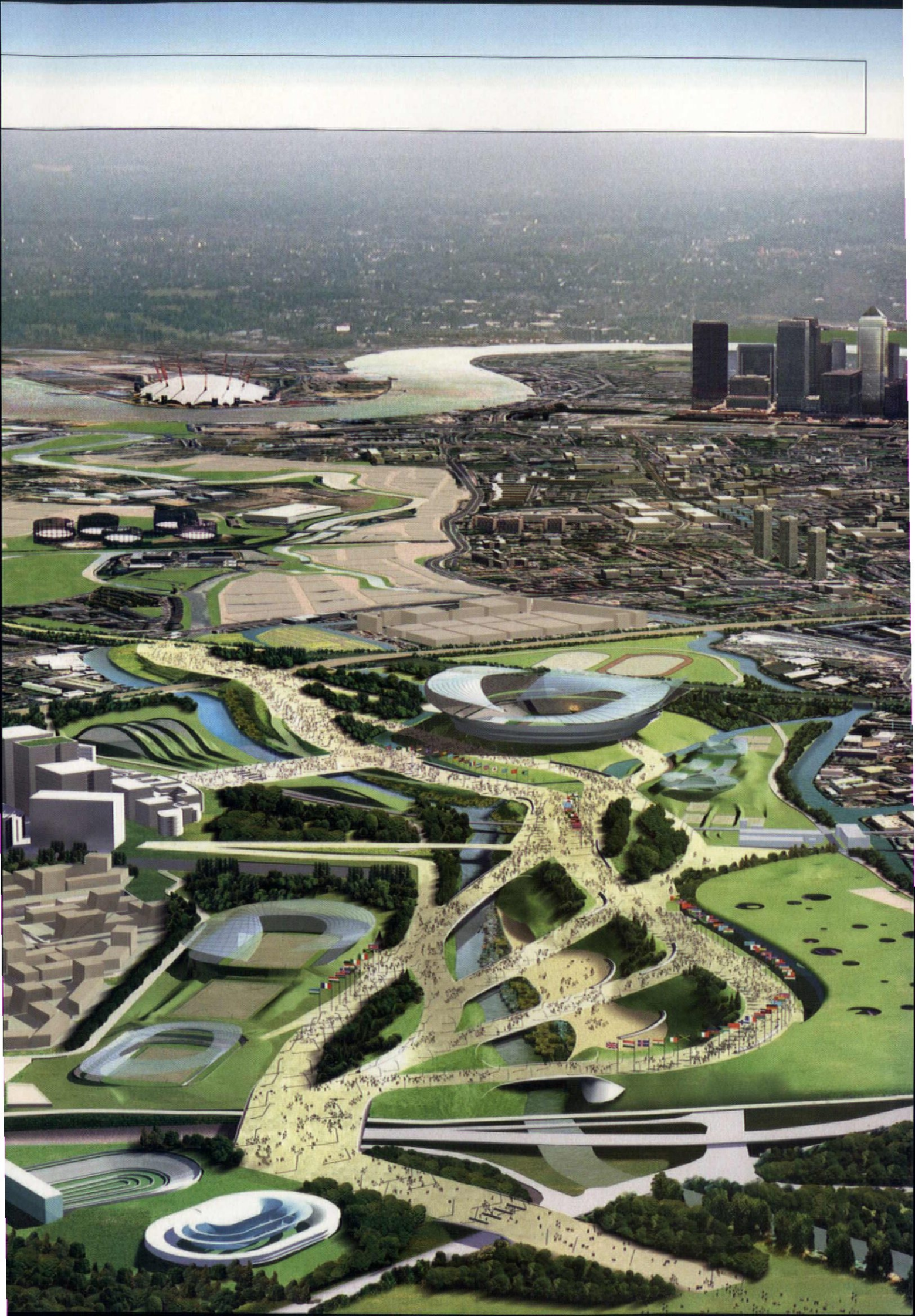
The idea of Alejandro Zaero-Polo of FOA sitting down to a design strategy meeting with Prior himself and Graham Morrison of Allies and Morrison is certainly a strange one.

Prior explains that the three firms had gathered together a 40-strong team under one roof when they decided last year to enter the competition to design London's bid. 'It was simply fantastic that within a couple of weeks they were working together so well – it was almost impossible to tell who was from what company, who was supposed to be working on what part of the scheme, and what equipment belonged to who.'

'We have a great team that will produce what can only be described as an extremely important regeneration scheme,' he adds, looking genuinely excited.

But what is it that they are producing? This is surely the key to whether Britain wins the Olympics for the first time since 1948. The key to the scheme is the use of the massive brownfield site that is the Lea Valley in east London. Interestingly, the proposals focus on the idea of rediscovering many of the waterways in the area that have been hidden for so long. The project aims to create an Olympic park that uses these streams, riv-







ers and canals as a tool for regenerating the area and providing landmarks for locals, visitors and spectators alike.

Dotted around this new water park will be many of the sporting venues that are key to the Olympics' success, including an FOA-designed athletics stadium and the massive Olympic village, to house both the thousands of athletes and the surrounding media frenzy.

Interestingly Prior insists that he originally looked at the scheme back-to-front. 'We decided that the best way to develop the project was to regenerate the area first and then decide how you would fit an Olympic bid into it,' he says. 'The priority is the area's regeneration.'

Although Prior never actually says it, this is one of the major advantages that London has over the current front runner, Paris. Although the French bid is all glitz and organisational prowess – nobody really doubts that it could deliver a competent games – it fails to take advantage of the full regenerative possibilities. For example, the French have no interest in building a new centrepiece stadium and plan instead to use the existing Stade Français.

The Lea Valley is not a small site. Situated between the famous Hackney Marshes and the Thames, this is one of the biggest brown-field sites in Europe.

And this comes with one serious undertaking, of a kind that would not make any architect envious: lodging a single planning application with four separate local authorities. Look at Terry Farrell's proposals for the Lots Road Power Station site in west London, which straddles the border of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea. Some three years after the original application, Farrell is still no nearer to planning success than he was in 2001. And this is with just two sets of planners telling him what to do.

### Sleepless nights

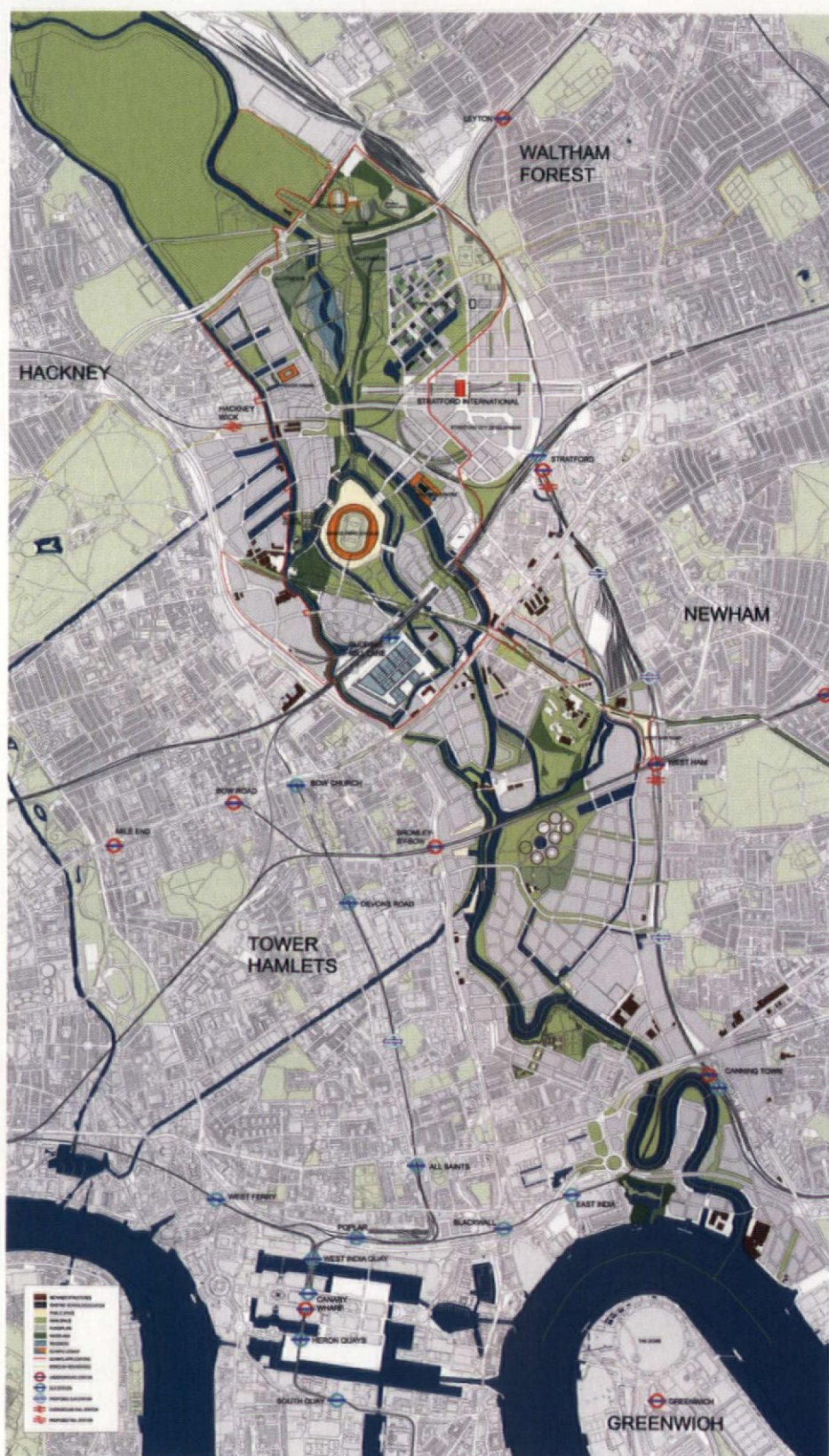
To be fair, the local planners have attempted to make life a bit easier for Prior and his team – it is after all very much in the interests of local people to see a successful Olympics – by setting up a joint team made up of planning officers from the four different boroughs.

But this is far from the end of the story. As Prior points out, the four authorities have different political agendas and very differing ideas on what local people should get from the bid and the associated regeneration. Everyone knows what a nightmare planning



This masterplan illustrates the water park and sport venues that will make up the Olympic site





The Olympic site is subject to four different local authorities

applications can be – this seems to be the stuff of a lifetime of sleepless nights.

If persuading planners to give the go-ahead to a project is bad, there is surely only one thing that could be worse: try putting yourself and your colleagues through a month of public consultation with east London's finest. Almost the first thing Prior says, as the photographer is snapping away, is that he is preparing himself to be 'out every evening in the next fortnight at public meetings'. These can apparently vary from meetings with 'one man and his dog' to huge gatherings.

Many of these meetings are about quashing rumours. The rumour mill surrounding the Olympics is an example of Chinese whispers at its very best. There is, for example, a pub in north Bethnal Green where the locals are convinced that the nearby London Fields park will be transformed into a car park if the EDAW masterplan gets the go-ahead. There is not even a nugget of truth in this, but almost nothing one says can persuade them otherwise. 'It can take just five minutes to start a rumour on a project of this scale and over a month to quash it,' Prior says, for the first time looking a little worn out. Or perhaps it is the hangover finally kicking in.

Masterplanning London's Olympic future might be a massive honour but who would seriously envy this?

One of Prior's most impressive facets is how successfully he manages to pull off looking relaxed and personable while remaining totally on-message. This is best exemplified when the issue of transport comes up. Many commentators have warned that the entire Olympic bid will collapse if the long-awaited Crossrail and East London Line Tube extension are not up and running by 2012. Currently the Tube proposal is gathering dust, due to a completely predictable financial shortfall, and Crossrail is expected to be complete two years too late for the Olympics.

Prior seems completely unphased by these concerns. 'This is one of the best-served areas in London for transport and it is very important to realise that we do not need these infrastructure projects for the games to be a success. We have carried out all the transport studies that we need to and we are fine as we are,' he emphasises with a slightly evangelical look.

There is clearly absolutely no room for doubt if you are masterplanning an Olympic bid. However, there would be little point in taking on such a massive venture if there were.





## Icons are sold, not made, so should we buy into building more?

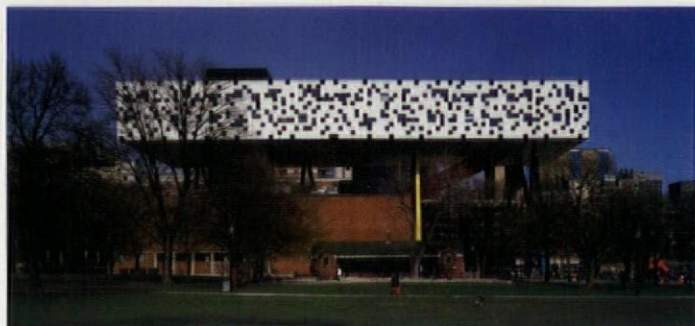
How much should architecture be about marketing? That is the heart of what Graham Morrison was asking at the Royal Academy last week. Setting out to create an icon is always a selling proposition. The measure of success should be, in part, whether the selling succeeds. This knowingness is relatively new and makes us uncomfortable. The Sydney Opera House and the Pompidou Centre, both quoted approvingly by Morrison, were never expected to have the importance they finally achieved.

It was with Gehry and the Guggenheim in Bilbao that this self-conscious making of icons took off. Marks Barfield managed it with the London Eye and so did Ian Ritchie with his Dublin Spire. One reason these two projects are so successful is that they have a very simple agenda, rather than the complexities and compromises involved in trying to combine iconic status with a proper functioning building.

We have also come to expect our iconic buildings to be arts-related but, with the end of the Lottery boom, icon-makers have to turn to another building type. For health and education buildings to be subservient to statement-making seems immoral. Housing is not usually suited to the creation of icons, although there are exceptions such as Goldfinger's Trellick Tower in London or some of Ricardo Bofill's arrogant Paris housing. Which leaves the office: a straightforwardly commercial building type, which is part of what distresses Morrison.

Again, there is a history of offices becoming iconic. In London we have the initially reviled Centre Point; in the US, Johnson Wax and the Seagram building. Foster's Swiss Re and planned projects like Piano's London Bridge Tower are well-considered buildings by architects who are not just rolling out variations on a theme. But the trouble with towers is that their iconic status is closely related to their height; build above them and they will be supplanted. So Morrison is right in two senses when he says we can't have too many icons: we don't want them and most won't achieve that status. Which should reconcile plenty of clients to settling for the 'normative buildings' that he is so keen to continue designing.

Ruth Slavid



RICHARD JOHNSON/INTERIOR IMAGES

### 'Wacky' Alsop is perfect for progressive Toronto

I write in response to a letter published under the title 'When Will there be an end to Alsop's jokes' (AJ 1.7.04) written by Roy Mittins. I wonder, has Mr Mittins visited Alsop's addition to the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD)? His comments would suggest otherwise.

The new OCAD extension is, among many other things, a well-considered piece of urban design that not only lifts the previously dull collection of spaces and buildings of the college, but generates new open areas linking the dwellings adjacent to the college through to the park beyond.

The 'wacky sticky-out legs' elevate the bulk of the building above the eyeline of the residents, affording them clear views across the new spaces into the park beyond, and the hovering slab prevents views into the private accommodation from the new facilities. The design pays tribute to the progressive attitude adopted at OCAD and gives them a notable building to attract new students and demonstrate the imagination of the institution. It also embraces the greater attitude prevalent in Toronto that, among many other projects, is working towards the completion of the new Royal Ontario Museum extension by Daniel Libeskind and is developing an exciting Gehry scheme for the Art Gallery of Ontario.

I, for one, would be very disappointed if the censorship that Mr Mittins suggested prevented you from publishing anything that he finds unacceptable, as it is clear that he has thoroughly misread Alsop's work. I would suggest that, firstly, Mr Mittins takes some time to examine the scheme further rather than knee-jerking solely to the aesthetic; and secondly, relax – there's nothing wrong with a little humour in architecture. Alsop works on many levels and it is a shame that he is often judged on the most obvious elements of his work.

Matt Harding, Leicester

### 'We shows results where possible,' says the RIBA

I reply to Andrew Good's letter, 'We should see all the results of competition' (AJ 24.6.04). The exhibition to which Mr Good refers was organised by the client as part of a public consultation exercise to gauge local response to shortlisted schemes. It was carried out as an exercise to help inform the assessment process and not as an opportunity for competitors to view the work of other contenders. The schemes on display were not annotated with practice names so its purpose as an event to inform fellow competitors would have had limited value.

Whenever possible, the RIBA Competitions Office actively encourages clients to hold an exhibition of, if not all, at least shortlisted schemes and those



awarded prizes. Such an exhibition would be held at the end of the competitive process so that the names of authors could be attached to schemes and those selected for prizes and commendations identified.

A copy of the assessor's report is soon due to be issued to all competitors taking part in the Bedford project and this will contain images of the winning and shortlisted schemes.

**Louise Harrison,**  
*RIBA Competitions Manager*

### GreenSpec not keen on Lyall's grumpy old man

We confess that we haven't read Sutherland Lyall's column for many a year so maybe we shouldn't have been surprised, on reading his review of the National Green Specification (NGS) website – [www.greenspec.co.uk](http://www.greenspec.co.uk) (AJ 24.6.04) – by his metamorphosis into a grumpy old man. Grumpy old men suffer from a number of ailments as they approach their twilight years. One such ailment is the 'Unmovable Certainties Syndrome'. This condition is characterised by views originating in youth that pass unreformed into the foundations of the sufferer's worldview in later life. In his critique of the GreenSpec site, Lyall betrays more than just one of these views (not untypical of the 'me' generation) which need challenging:

● 'Green = 'alternative'.'

Despite the evidence of the Green ethos now embedded in mainstream government policy, Lyall wants to continue believing that the Green movement remains the province of sanctimonious, sandal-wearing, yogurt-knitting hippies living in tepee estates in North Wales. All very funny 30 years ago, but maybe a bit tired and inappropriate now.

● 'We must never be bored.'

There can't be many of us who've experienced an adrena-

lin rush while writing a specification. We recognise that people might have something more 'fun' to do with their lives and so we've designed GreenSpec for users to get in and out of as quickly as possible – hence the simplicity. We could, of course, provide links to the more exciting areas of the Internet, but I think most of us know where they are anyway, don't we?

● 'Every problem can be solved by technology and experts.'

Try as we might to make GreenSpec easily accessible and useful, we still haven't managed to persuade a search engine to distinguish between an 'idea' and a 'thing', and somehow I don't think even a 'rocket scientist' would be useful in this respect. Maybe sometimes we have to understand that computers and humans aren't the same. Nonetheless, we have included a familiar Google-type search that produces Google-type results if the content is on the site; which brings us on to:

● 'I want everything and I want it now.'

In the grown-ups' world, economics invariably get in the way of instant wish fulfillment. Like most large projects, this is also true of GreenSpec. Despite the founders pouring huge amounts of their own funds and time into the project, it isn't going to be finished anytime now.

Maybe if grumpy old men can stop throwing their toys out of their prams, pluck their heads from the sand, wake up to the importance of driving the construction industry towards sustainability and lend a hand, (or even an article on bamboo) we might – just might – be able to leave the world in a livable state. That surely is a belief worth hanging on to.

**Sandy Patience and Brian Murphy,** *NGS*

### Our friends, neighbours and cat-sitters alike



Unlike Martin Pawley (AJ 1.7.04), my cat was never looked after by Jeffrey Archer's wife. But when I lived in St Anne's Close, Highgate – two bedrooms, garden and off-road parking at £3 a week – one of my next door neighbours was Walter Segal (pictured) and the guy in the flat upstairs, who was the lighting designer at the Royal Court, later ran off with Glenda Jackson. By then – nine years later – the rent had gone up to £8.

When I lived there, one of the people at the next drawing board to me in Enthoven & Mock's in Gray's Inn was a certain Martin Pawley. If only I had known he lived next door to Jeffrey. Maybe I could have asked if he would have come round to my place and put my cat out too.

**Sam Webb,** *Canterbury, Kent*

### Profession needs a wake-up call over PFI problems

It was with qualified amusement that I read two items face to face on news pages 4 and 5 (AJ 24.6.04).

On the left-hand side, the design director of Percy Thomas Architects stated that the policy of packaging up projects to make PFI work was 'putting such projects out of the reach of many offices'. Small to medium-sized practitioners have been saying this for years. It is rather sad that a large practice has to go to the wall to realise this – if it had helped in the RIBA's efforts to make the government change its methods to redress this imbalance, perhaps it would not have been swallowed

up by Crapita (copyright *Private Eye* magazine).

On the right-hand side was an article concerning the conviction of an architect by the HSE, because the contractor had chosen to use blocks that were too heavy for the bricklayers to handle on one of his projects. The contractor was apparently not open to prosecution.

Put the two together and we will find that architects (in the mega practices that survive) will now be blamed for all the faults occurring in PFI jobs – over which they, in fact, have very little control as it is the contractor/investor who takes the decisions.

Some of us will remember how architects were blamed for all the faults and failures – both physical and social – of buildings in the '60s. We are about to see this repeated. In 30 years' time, when our grandchildren finish paying for the PFI projects now being constructed at inflated prices, it will long have been forgotten that we as a profession had virtually no control over what was built.

It's about time the profession woke up and looked after itself.

**Tim Drewitt,** *via email*

### Corrections

● In *Metalworks* (AJ 24.6.04), it was incorrect to state that Flint & Neill used Oasys software for checking the Swansea Sail Bridge. Oasys was used on the other Wilkinson Eyre project, the Gatwick footbridge, for which Arup is the engineer.

● 'Selfridges' skirt fails to lift the spirits' (Letters, AJ 1.7.04) should have been attributed to John Jubb.

*Please address letters to the editor at The Architects' Journal, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, fax 020 7505 6701, or email [angela.newton@emap.com](mailto:angela.newton@emap.com) to arrive by 10am on the Monday before publication.*





simon allford

people

**Architectural archaeologist Jonathan Foyle this week begins a series on historic building materials for the AJ. Austin Williams finds out how his interest began**

## The RIBA must wage war on glaring procurement flaws

'Good clients = good architecture', the RIBA's Dublin conference title, is a safe statement of the obvious. The title also over-simplifies: good clients help make good architecture, but you also need good planners, good constructors and, of course, good architects.

Good clients follow intuition; expert or not, they have an interest in, and a commitment to, architecture and will pay fees for its provision. Some work is done to encourage more good clients, by attempting to quantify the value of good design and by giving it awards, but ultimately it is still about the individual client's belief that design has a value. Good planners are professional, inquisitive, responsive and offer a vision of the situation that confronts them. They are, however, rare: the system of development control is one of control not design, so there is no real encouragement for good.

Good constructors are encouraged by a myriad of bodies, slogans and new-fangled contracts that promote engagement in, even leadership of, the process of making buildings. Progress is made, but at the mucky end: on site; when things go wrong, old entrenched attitudes to the management of time and money swiftly and expensively reappear. As with all the above, good architects are encouraged with plenty of awards; their problem is finding good clients, planners and contractors to help them discover how good or bad they are or could be.

As excellence is rare and mediocrity common, it is worth considering an alternative and indisputable title for the conference: 'Bad clients make bad architecture – regardless of planners, constructors and architects.' A dark event that recognises the full horror of so much of what is produced and identifies the culprits, including many bad architects producing shocking buildings.

The 'stars' of this alternative event would be the government, the inventors of the PFI and LIFT processes, and an independent professional

institution, the RIBA, that has to date failed to condemn this nonsense properly. Despite supposedly possible good intentions, PFI and LIFT encourage the bastardisation of projects. There is no opportunity for consortia to advise clients that they are building the wrong building on the wrong site, or that their brief is too large or small. Or, on a more detailed level in hospitals, that 'clinical adjacencies', saving doctors' shoe leather, are not a design idea; in schools, that corridor and canteen do not a building make.

In short, that buildings without intelligent, powerful clients will be driven by monolithic cash-starved bidders who, at the key early stages, are desperate only to win the cash opportunity. The procurement route is fundamentally flawed; the cash is inserted too late in the process and the vast majority of emerging buildings look to be hitting the lowest possible common denominator; where the only evidence of an idea is in the financial design of the winning bid.

Why are so many architects embarking upon this route? Because it is the only way they can get involved in these key buildings. This is despite the fact that the fee payment structure in these projects is so appalling that the only thing that 'cascades through the supply chain' is a set of cash-flow problems; bankruptcy should be on the risk register. The whole basis of this non-idea needs to be attacked and the RIBA should do so. What better way is there to demonstrate that the RIBA is about architecture and not just architects? Yes, it will upset government, but it needs to be said by the profession and not by isolated individuals.

The last time we hit lowest-possible standards in architecture and construction was in the '60s and '70s in the mass housing market. The aftermath was that professionals got blamed, not the politicians. It may not make for quite such a jolly conference but it would show real vision and courage. And it would be a lot more interesting in the bar afterwards...

It not unusual for a child to know what they want to be when they grow up – a train driver maybe, an architect, perhaps, or even a pilot – but Jonathan Foyle is unusual in that he has always known that he wanted to be an architectural historian. What sort of annoyingly precocious child could he have been?

Well, as a young teenager he read Pevsner and learned to love the connection that the past had with his imagination. As a child he says he felt a 'real emotional contact with buildings and by trying to find out about them; how they were built, who lived there, I found I could let history take my imagination for a walk.'

Foyle is now a historian of architecture and archaeology, working as a freelance writer and presenter. Just prior to going freelance, he was the face of BBC4's *Restoration* series, advisor to Channel 4's *Time Team* and for several years had been the architectural historian to the Historic Royal Palaces. Based at Hampton Court, he prioritised his research around that palace and Kew. His childhood dream career had become reality.

Brought up in Stanford, the bicycle was his 'ticket to freedom', a chance to roam to countryside churches. As an aspiring presenter, not for him the smell of the greaspaint and the roar of the crowd; rather, he says, he enjoyed 'the smell of building lime and the feel of polished oak'.

These very personal experiences helped develop his sense of wonder, allowing him to imagine the community that had used these buildings over the course of many centuries. What today might sound like the weird exploits of a lonely youth enabled him to develop his enthusiasm about architecture, his love of the past and the belief in the relevance of history today.

From these early wanderings, he moved to Canterbury to do a degree and diploma in architecture. He describes himself as a conservative (with a small 'c') radical with a 'bit of Luddism' thrown in. 'When friends were designing with CAD, I was working in water-colour,' he says. During his architectural training, he admits he never once visited a building site and came out of the degree not knowing what a services engineer or a quantity surveyor did or what the professional boundaries were. I reassure him that his experiences are not, in fact, that extraordinary. But his first stint in an architect's office, even historic-building architect Purcell

'Buildings without intelligent, powerful clients will be driven by monolithic cash-starved bidders who are desperate only to win the cash opportunity'





DAVID COWLAND

## The history man

Miller Tritton, convinced him that he didn't want to be an architect. 'I'm just not into modern.' He adds: 'I was simply born in the wrong century.'

Instead of doing his year out in an office, he learned about art history, subsequently studying art at Lincoln to nurture his love of painting, which Foyle says is the activity that feeds his creativity. Apart from a reasonable reputation as a published watercolourist (the Duke of Northumberland has recently sold a Raphael for £22 million and bought a Foyle), he has acquired a PhD in Archaeology, fluency in Italian, expertise in a range of architectural theory (from the Renaissance to Tudor ecclesiastical architecture) and a career on television and the speaking circuit.

In 1996, he was given a nine-month tenure as architectural historian and archaeologist

for the Royal Palaces – from an advert he spotted in the *Guardian* – a post that seemed made to measure for his interests and talents. He stayed for seven years, living through the political turmoil of the transformation from a government agency to a trust, witnessing management shake-ups and finally seeing it lose momentum with reduced funding.

His job was 'basically to research the history of Hampton Court and manage its archaeological investigation; to act as conservation officer; to write the history in official publications; and to present papers. Every day was different. Whether digging trenches and uncovering human remains or revealing Cardinal Wolsey's original palace walls, each event helped to piece together the story of Hampton Court's design development.' Foyle's PhD, to be published next year,

is based on his discovery of a humanist geometric schema on which Hampton Court had been planned.

Coincidentally, the BBC's revival of interest in history and archaeology seemed to coincide with his post. He appeared on Sue Cook's 1998 afternoon programme about the life of Hampton Court; followed by the BBC2 special *Meet the Ancestors* shown in 2002 and then helped Channel 4's *Time Team*, which landed the following year, to explore the White House site in Kew where Foyle was doing his researches. Foyle has become a regular guest and advisor to many series feeding the current fad for history.

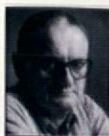
Unsurprisingly, Foyle also lectures. He enjoys developing his students' genuine interest in architecture by stimulating their historical imaginations. It is a technique of exploration, discovery and wonder that is quite infectious. For instance, his favourite era, the period with which he is most comfortable, is the early Renaissance, primarily 'because it confounds historians. The first printed books were appearing and yet within one year, the written word was having an impact on architecture across Europe.' Why? he asks. Even though there is something of the experiential school of history teaching about this questioning, Foyle refuses to let it rest with the students' emotional connection. History without factual intellectual backup is of no use, he says.

While the dreaded word 'relevance' crops up in our conversation, to him it does not undermine the need for rigour. Foyle's teacherly enthusiasm for his subject, together with his view of how and why history is important, is quite refreshing. Self-confessed Luddite he may be, but he does not pander to the institutional rejection of standards. In architecture, he says, 'there have to be rules for a rational approach to design. Once the rules are grasped, they can then be applied and also appreciated.' He firmly supports the idea that there needs to be a good grounding in method – only then, really, is it permissible, legitimate, inevitable and maybe even desirable that they be broken.

Essentially he is an advocate for humanistic design, keen to use as many educational avenues as possible to get the message across. With something of a Reithian preference for television, 'where you can get your message across to thousands of people at a time rather than just hundreds in a lecture theatre', a disarmingly photogenic appearance and a fascination for the subject, Foyle is someone to watch. Armed with these media-friendly qualities, all he needs to do is to continue to develop his research expertise and the rest will be history.

*Jonathan Foyle's new series in the AJ starts with an exploration of the historic use of bricks and mortar on page 36*





## Census snapshot leads the way to the population revolving door

A few years back the infatuation with all things urban was raging like a forest fire. Competition to be the first to agree with everybody else about it was causing sleep deprivation on a massive scale. Of course, there was nowhere for this obsession to go but into the slush pile of disappointment, but that never stopped anybody from riding a trend to the bitter end. So done and dusted was the obsession with having everybody live in *Friends*-type, New York-style loft apartments that many urbanites came to confuse reality with illusion, coming to believe that the countryside had already been cleared of landowners and farmers, in a lightning reversal of the great land enclosures of the 19th century, and was now under the control of wildlife.

Undoubtedly the most prominent leader of this messianic wing of the neo-urbanites was Richard Rogers, architectural adviser to the mayor of London and chairman of his own government-backed Urban Task Force. It was he who had first hit upon the theory that everybody lived in a city already so there was really nothing to argue about.

Unfortunately he was wrong. In an article in *The Times* published in 1997, he claimed that 'nine out of 10 Britons now live in cities, most of them communities of more than 100,000 people – this startling statistic reveals us to be predominantly urbanised'. Unhappily, it soon appeared that even if they were 'predominantly urbanised', the nine out of 10 Britons did not seem to like it very much for, in a later item in *The Times* published in 1999, Rogers confessed that his Urban Task Force 'had no easy answers on how to solve the urban exodus which is leaving towns and neighbourhoods desolate'.

Like the charge of the Light Brigade, Rogers

never allowed sober calculations to interfere with a good myth, but others did. In 1999 the statisticians Martin Mogridge and John Hollis calculated that an average of 90,000 persons per year were leaving Greater London, while up to 100,000 incomers were taking their places. Five years later the outgoing figure has climbed by more than 20 per cent, to an estimated 115,000 persons per year, according to the Countryside Agency.

Now the only way all these figures can be reconciled is not by massage but by the use of a different paradigm. Suppose, for instance, instead of a permanent input/output model – which assumes a finality of decisions so that all those who leave the city never return to it, while all those who arrive in the city never depart – we assume a pattern more like a huge revolving door. This door permits the evolution of a two-speed population statistic. During daytime and evening the rotation of the door allows an 'Oxford Street-size' population to take over; during the night the absolute limit on bed spaces brings the numbers down.

This process of 'double-entry book keeping' is at once the key to the fluctuating density of population in towns and villages as well as in whole urban areas. It is a tool but it is also a

lubricant, the reason why the Decennial Census lays such emphasis on including lodgers and visitors, and why airlines and theatres can deliberately overbook with impunity. It is also the reason why what was recorded as an 8 per cent increase in Greater London's population might, in fact, be no more than a 'snapshot' that cannot reflect the more generous swings of the rotating door. These swings give credence to the horrifyingly overcrowded images of Oxford Street that are otherwise apparently ignored for fear of political consequences.

'During daytime and evening the door allows an "Oxford Street-size" population to take over; during the night the absolute limit on beds brings the numbers down'

### Larry Oltmanns

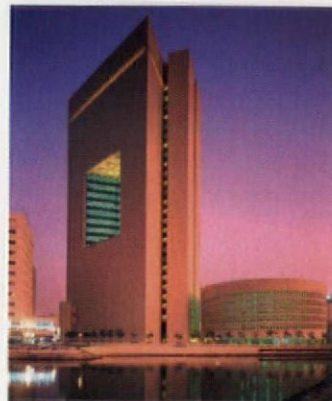
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

**When and where were you born?**

1951, Chicago.

**What is your favourite building?**

National Commercial Bank in Jeddah, by Gordon Bunshaft.



**What is your favourite restaurant/meal?**

Chez Colbert, Paris: Fruits de Mer.

**What vehicle(s) do you own?**

None.

**What is your favourite film?**

*The Godfather*.

**What is your favourite book?**

Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.

**What is your favourite 'design classic'?**

Citroën DS.

**What is the worst building you have ever seen and why?**

Many 1960s buildings in London compete for this distinction.

Thankfully we are now demolishing most of them!

**Who or what is your biggest architectural influence and why?**

Travel – it reminds us of how important it is to highlight the unique qualities in each place.

**Who is the most talented architect you've worked with?**

Charles Moore (1925-1993) of Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, Whitaker.

**If you hadn't been an architect, what would you have been?**

An artist, with an all-consuming architectural hobby.

**What would your advice be to architectural students?**

Travel, sketch, explore and keep asking questions.

**What would your motto be?**

To thine own self be true.





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# Completely Frank

**For many years the Robie House in Chicago stood altered and neglected but now the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust is restoring it, to present it to the public as it was when built**

By Andrew Mead. Photographs courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust







TIM LONG

Opposite page: the Robie House seen from the south-west after the external restoration. Left: detail of the west end of the south facade. Note the repaired brickwork and cleaned cornice

There are photographs from the 1950s that show Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye looking almost like a ruin. Saplings have colonised the terraces as nature moves in for the kill. You wonder how a building so securely in the history books, so canonical, could ever get that way.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House was never in quite that state, yet in 1941 and again in 1957 faced the threat of demolition, and for a long while suffered so badly that a historian writing in 1984 could conclude: 'In the years since World War II, the house has been violated in every way, so that almost nothing about it is right (or Wright).'<sup>1</sup>

Designed in 1908, the Robie House was completed in 1910, but Wright's young client Fred C Robie did not live there long; in debt and with his marriage disintegrating, he sold it the following year. It remained a family home only until 1926, when the nearby

Chicago Theological Seminary bought it to serve as a dormitory. The seminary disposed of some of the house's original furnishings, remodelled the interior and proposed its demolition in 1957 to build a new hall of residence. Wright, then almost 90, successfully rallied preservationists to the cause.

Later, the new owner of the Robie House, the University of Chicago, further altered it for use as offices, but in 1997 agreed to lease it – via the National Trust for Historic Preservation – to the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust (FLWPT), which began an \$8 million restoration of the building. Supported by \$1 million from Save America's Treasures, but otherwise dependent on FLWPT fundraising, that restoration is now at the half-way stage. The Robie House exterior is in much improved condition and work on the interior starts soon. In charge of the process is the trust's own architect, Karen

Sweeney, who as a volunteer was earlier involved in the restoration of Wright's Oak Park home and studio.

The FLWPT wants to present the house to the public essentially as it was on completion, in the manner of such European examples as Adolf Loos' Villa Muller, Brinkman & van der Vlugt's Sonneveld House, and the rescued-from-ruin Villa Savoye.

### On the brink

Standing on a 180 x 60 ft lot at the corner of Woodlawn Avenue and 58th Street in Hyde Park, south Chicago, the Robie House is often seen as the quintessential 'Prairie House', whose permutations Wright explored during the first decade of the 20th century.

'I loved the prairie by instinct as a great simplicity,' said Wright, who sought a domestic architecture that would harmonise with it – one that relates the building to the earth by





**Cantilever failure at the Tomek House**

stressing the horizontal planes; where broad eaves emphasise a sense of shelter; where proportions are 'more liberally human'; where box-like rooms give way to fluid space as walls become screens; and where the fire-place – the family hearth – is the core<sup>2</sup>.

For the long south-facing balcony of the Robie House and its famed cantilevers – the oversailing blade-like roofs that make it both sleekly horizontal and a little histrionic – Wright naturally had to use steel, in a structure that otherwise comprises load-bearing brick walls, reinforced concrete floors, and a brick-veneered timber frame for the light-weight top storey.

As later at Fallingwater, the audacious looks potentially precarious. Indeed, at the Robie's close relative, the slightly earlier Tomek House in the Chicago suburb of Riverside, structural precariousness was once very evident, with a pillar inserted at a ground-floor corner to support the sagging



**Robie House brickwork before restoration**

overhang above. Such measures were never called for at the Robie House. 'Overall, the property was stable,' says Sweeney. 'But there was a massive amount of water leaking into it, damaging the wooden members and the brickwork. It was on the brink of running into real problems.'

The only steel to be replaced was a beam supporting the guest bedroom and upper entry hall, to handle the extra loads that come with the building's change of use. In the process, though, the trust discovered termite damage to the north wall of the play-



**Not quite the pointing that Wright had in mind**

room – the house's central bearing wall – and had to completely rebuild it. Fortunately the termites were not active anymore, but they had also been eating the joists and oak floor.

Otherwise, one can take the restoration from the top down. When built, the Robie House was roofed with thin clay tiles, but thicker ones were substituted during piecemeal renovation in the 1960s, with nibs at the back that raised them slightly and trapped windblown rain or snow. On the basis of a few original tiles found in the wine cellar, the FLWPT has now replicated Wright's 1910 roof – it may be only a matter of millimetres, but once more the roof planes have their intended profile. Sweeney says that inspection of the roof decking and rafters in the course of this work revealed 'unexpected levels of decay', and the structure was either reinforced or renewed, with added insulation, and an ice and water shield throughout.

Defective gutters were a major cause of the



**Clockwise from above: removing bricks and mortar; applying a finish coat to the soffit of the west cantilever; constructing the wall around the courtyard and garage; cleaning the brickwork**







Clockwise from far left: new clay tiles on the garage roof; cleaning the cornice; installing the new copper lining to the gutter; rafter repairs and roof retiling



water penetration. In his *Details of Modern Architecture*, Edward Ford suggests that the gutters are the most variable of all the Prairie House elements and give many of the buildings their character. 'The Robie House gutter is a flat gull-wing of copper with ornament stamped on its underside. While still functioning as a gutter, it gives a paper-thin edge to the roof. Its slight "lift" gives the roof a visually weightless character so that it seems to have floated down onto the brick piers.'<sup>3</sup>

Which all sounds suitably poetic – except the gutter didn't function quite as Ford presumes. 'The original copper lining wasn't angled to drain properly,' says Sweeney; so water was penetrating the soffits, rusting their metal laths and damaging their plaster, and then finding a way into the house. In a wintertime photograph taken before the restoration began, you see these problems vividly, for one soffit is so saturated that icicles hang from it.

In renewing the copper lining on the upper sections of all the gutters, Sweeney has slightly increased the pitch, and added some more tiny downspouts, which should improve drainage without detriment to the 'weightless' effect. The trust decided to remove the verdigris patina on the gutter cornices, which are brown again as they were at first. It remade all the soffits with new laths and plaster and finished them in their former golden ochre colour; you best see the effect of this when you move inside.

The west porch, too, was leaking, as it had

done for years. Previous owners had tackled the problem by adding new coats of concrete on top of the deck, so by 1997 it was 4in higher than when built. The trust removed the old concrete, which had proved to be very absorptive, and poured a new structural deck with a waterproof membrane and topping slab, returning the porch to its 1910 level.

Perhaps the most striking difference so far has come with the restoration of the brickwork and mortar of the Robie House exterior, which was essential to recover the original aesthetic. In themselves the long, thin Roman bricks of the building contribute to the overall horizontality, but for them to really function in this way the pointing has to be as Wright intended – the horizontal joints concave and putty-coloured, the vertical ones flush and close in colour to the brick. Like the limestone plinth and copings, they then read as uninterrupted bands. With crude localised repointing over the years, this effect was totally lost when work began.

The trust first cleaned the bricks and ground out the old mortar. It removed bricks too damaged to repair, and replaced them either with originals from less prominent parts of the house or with reproductions. Wright's mortar was a soft lime putty that let moisture evaporate gently, but a later hard-cement substitute trapped it, leading to cracks in both bricks and mortar during the harsh Chicago winter. The mortar now replicates Wright's in colour, composition and application, based on analysis of original samples.

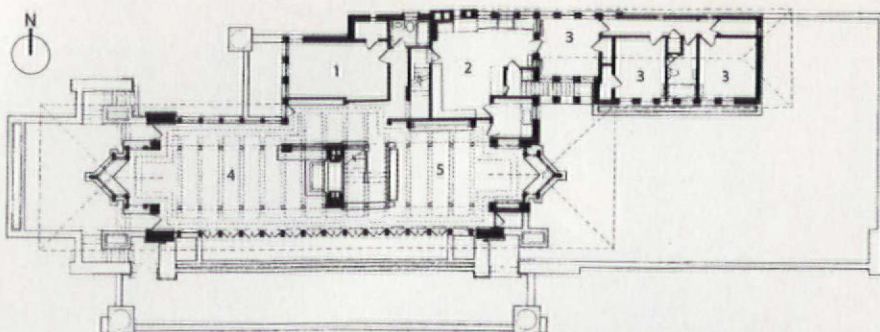
As well as rebuilding the south-front garden wall (which was askew) on improved foundations, the trust wanted to re-establish the initial relationship of the Robie House to the street, which meant reconstructing the 8ft-high wall surrounding the courtyard and three-car garage – lowered some time between 1929 and 1941.

Some bricks from the dismantled wall survived, such as the roof tiles, in the wine cellar but too few to reconstitute it, so the question of reproductions arose. The original bricks were distinctive not just in size but in their ironspot-flecked texture, and while gas kilns are now the norm, they were fired by coal. Sweeney eventually found a manufacturer in Ohio prepared to re-activate its beehive kilns, like those in which the Robie's bricks were made, and she was happy with the colour match it managed to create.

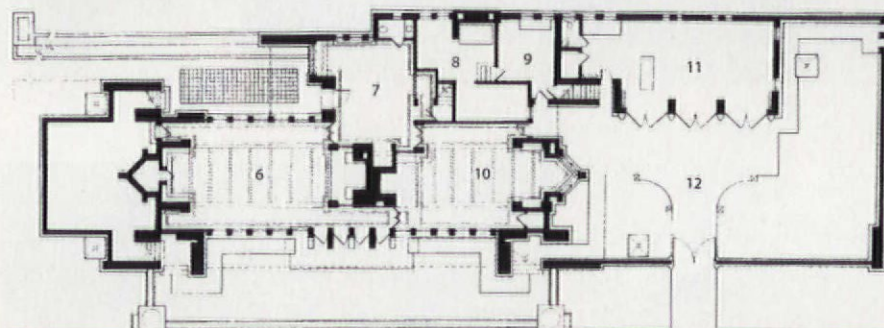
Although this company couldn't supply the bricks in Roman size, it could do so in twice-as-thick Norman, so they were all halved lengthwise. The front of the rebuilt wall uses original bricks, with reproduction ones on the back. The latter look a shade too salmon, perhaps, but are otherwise identical.

Work in the garage itself, which is now the Robie House Bookshop, included installation of new underfloor services (during which a period feature, a mechanics' pit, was uncovered) and restoration of the art glass windows. Extending the long band of art glass that runs beneath the living and dining rooms, they certainly help to unify the south facade.





first floor plan



ground floor plan

#### KEY

- 1 guest room
- 2 kitchen
- 3 servant's room
- 4 living room
- 5 dining room
- 6 billiard room
- 7 entrance hall
- 8 boiler room
- 9 laundry
- 10 children's playroom
- 11 garage
- 12 courtyard

## Lost and found

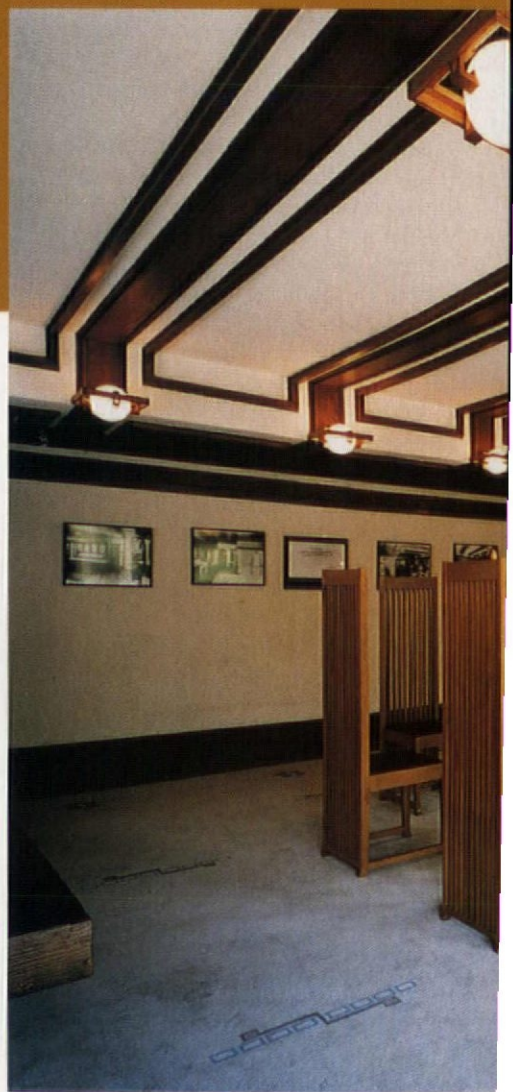
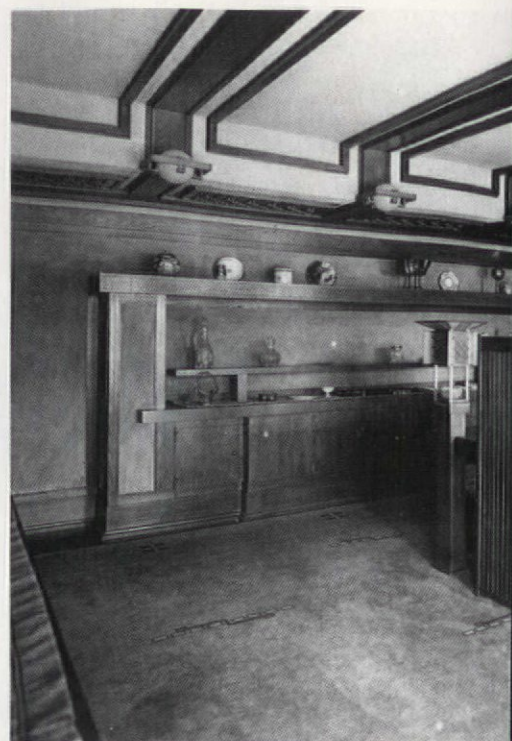
Inside the Robie House, the FLWPT's priority was to meet requirements for opening to the public, with the installation of a fire detection and suppression system, and emergency lighting and exit signs, along with total rewiring. These additions are mostly unobtrusive: the dry-pipe sprinkler system combining fixed and drop-down heads, the latter concealed in the ceiling behind brass plates; and emergency lighting that makes use of existing historic fixtures, which stay lit by a back-up battery system if power fails. Happily the trust persuaded the City of Chicago to settle for eight emergency exit signs rather than the requested 20, all placed quite close to the ground.

With the move inside, though, and the tasks now remaining, the emphasis shifts from restoration of the existing to recreation of the lost – which of course raises questions.

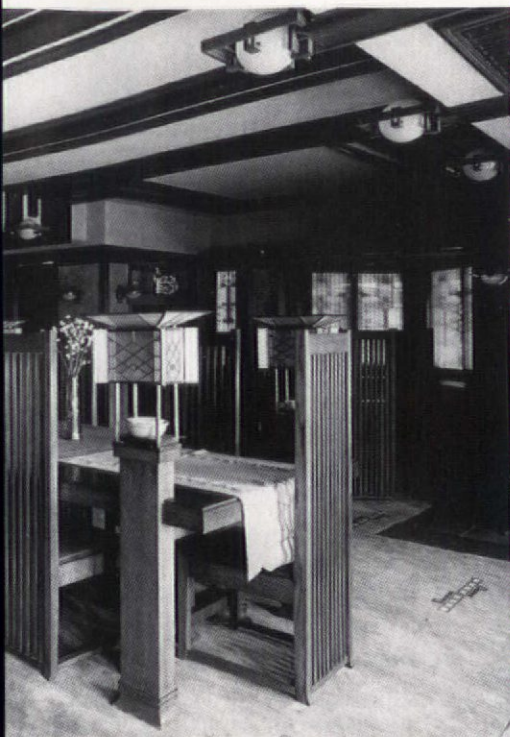
But first you have to get inside, which is seldom straightforward in a house by Wright, and here as convoluted as could be. From the south the entry is invisible, and you

must take two 90° turns around the west end of the Robie House before being channelled progressively towards the door, which is in shadow beneath an overhang. The entrance hall only punctuates your arrival. On the ground floor are the billiards room and children's room. The main rooms are above, so another right-angled change of direction takes you up the stairs, which dog-leg at a half-landing and climb to the first floor hall, where you face one last 90° turn – the living room through the zone to your left, the dining room immediately to your right.

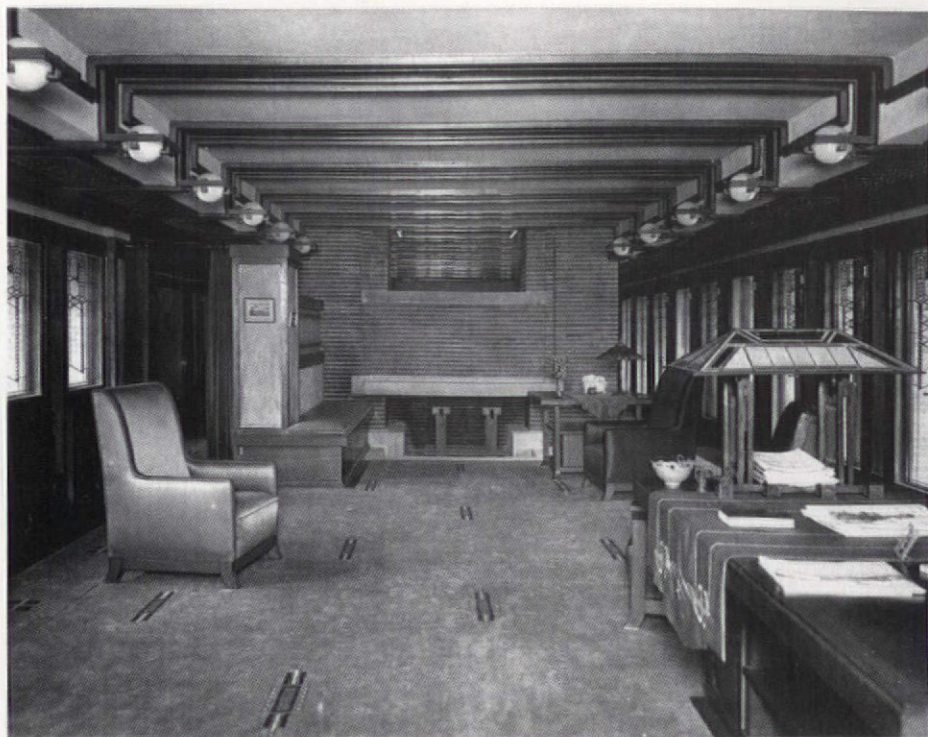
So ends this protracted entry sequence (on which Wright brought Mies one day in 1937). It both exaggerates the privacy of the house, whose defensiveness has already been announced by the perimeter wall, and creates high expectation in the visitor. At present, though, there is something of an anti-climax, because of first-floor alterations over the years. The most significant is the loss of the inglenook beside the fireplace in the living room, but built-in bookshelves in the hall and a buffet by the north wall of the dining room have also gone. Moreover,







HENRY FUEHRMANN/ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR



HENRY FUEHRMANN/ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR

Above left: the dining room with its furnishings intact, including the built-in buffet. Above right: the living room before removal of the inglenook. Below: recent photographs of these two denuded rooms

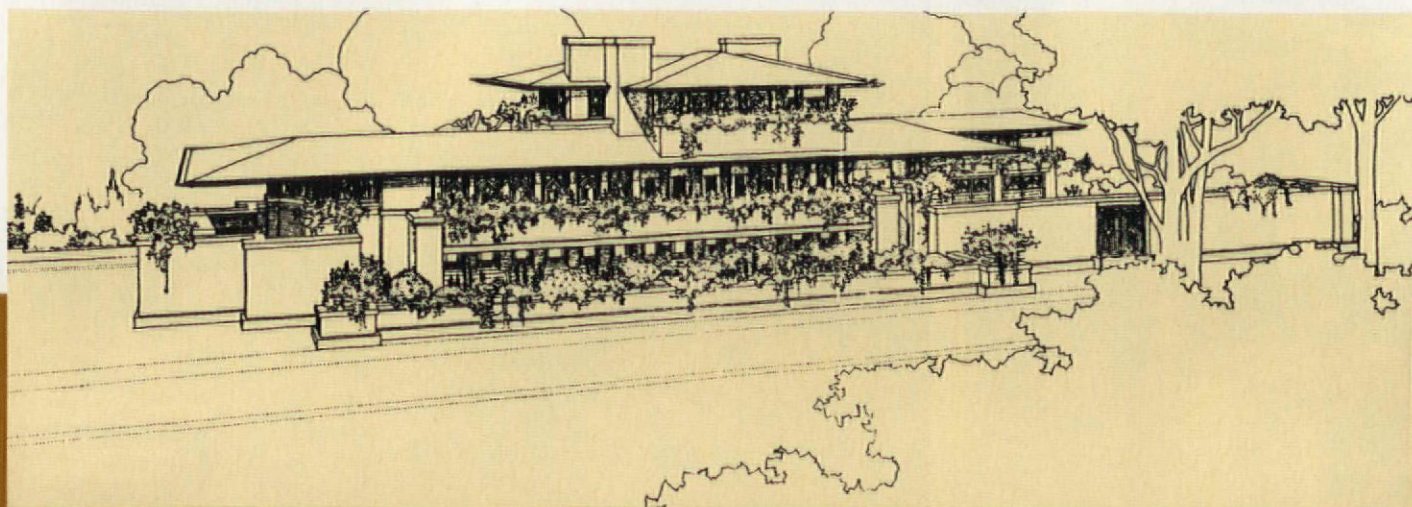


TIM LUKS



HEDRICH BLISSING





the screen between the top of the staircase and the dining room has been reduced in height, and Wright's furniture is either missing or elsewhere. This particularly affects the dining area, where table and chairs together formed a 'room' within a room.

The FLWPT plans to reconstruct all the once built-in elements, and retrieve or replicate the furniture, to recreate both the original spatial conditions and the overall ambience of the house. 'We had a lot of discussion about this,' says Sweeney, 'but we decided that what really mattered with the Robie House was its *architectural* significance – not the people who lived in it or its history since it was built. To properly convey that to visitors, we have to have the main architectural elements as Wright intended them to be.' The trust will also reinstate a 1910 kitchen: 'It helps school groups in particular to appreciate the modernity of the rest of the building when they see those old-fashioned appliances – an ice box instead of a refrigerator.'

At the Sonneveld House in Rotterdam you see the clock turned back in a similar way, and pristine re-creation there far outweighs any patina of use (AJ 7.6.01). Outside, though, the clock continues to tick and the Sonneveld's context has changed dramatically, with the modish Netherlands Architecture Institute now directly opposite. So, too, at the Robie House, where a new building for the University of Chicago looms on once open land immediately to the south. Perhaps in Oak Park you can find a quiet corner and think that little has happened for a century, but not here; and when the passage of time is so evident, a restoration that pretends other-

wise is at greater risk than usual of seeming idealised or inauthentic. What the restorers have replicated at the Sonneveld House is as much an image as a reality.

To support the argument for recreation at the Robie House, there is no doubt that the first floor is denuded at present. True, the light through the yellow art glass, enhanced now by the repainted soffits, is beautiful, especially in autumn when it harmonises with the colours outside. The flow of space is exhilarating, with the direct connection between living and dining rooms, not just down the whole south side of the house but through the oblong cut in the wall above the fireplace; a flow accentuated by the prow-like projections at each end of the house and the elongated motifs on the carpet. To balance this, the dropped ceiling around the edge of the whole first floor, and the overhanging eaves beyond, give a degree of enclosure.

But the inglenook must have increased the sense of shelter in the Robie House, enriching the living room not just through its connection to the hearth – symbolic centre of the building – but also in the spatial definition it supplied. With the dining room's anchoring furniture gone, it too is space without a focus. So the house seems more simplistic than it was, and the case for recreating the missing items is strong.

Imagining them reinstalled, however, one might still ask whether the plan of the Robie House, logical though it is for the constricted site, would have made everyday life there as rewarding as in some other Prairie Houses. Wright's favourite was the Coonley House, which, like the Tomek, is in the Olmsted-planned suburb of Riverside. It is now

split in two but when built was a place of continually unfolding vistas, with long corridors linking its various pavilions, all set in Wright-landscaped grounds.

Perhaps its opulence makes this a special case. One could look instead, though, at the cruciform pinwheel plan which Wright often used during this period, as in the early Willits House in Highland Park. This creates diagonal connections between adjacent rooms in an intriguing way. Spaces are only part-revealed and, as at the Coonley, there is a sense of discovery; by contrast, after the protracted entry sequence, the Robie House delivers in a rush. The cruciform schemes are user-friendly too: for instance, it would be easy to find a place to yourself if you wished, while still feeling connected to life in the house.

### Looking forward

Historians make much of the proto-Modern nature of the Robie House: the first-floor flow of space and its implied extension; the long bands of glass that, anticipating Le Corbusier's strip windows, form a band of light around the building and make the roof appear to float; devices that, in Wright's words, 'break the box'. Analogies recur to Cubist painting of precisely the same time, with its indefinite boundaries, permeable forms and semi-abstractness<sup>4</sup>.

This argument flourishes partly because the Robie House is such a gift to photographers, with its incisive geometry, streamlined horizontals, and dramatic projecting planes. But did Wright really intend such a stripped and clean-cut form? The key document here is the drawing that appears in the celebrated





Opposite page: drawing from the Wasmuth folio, with the planting envisaged by Wright. Above: the Robie House before restoration, with its clean lines unobscured

Wasmuth folio of 1910-11 – the edition that brought Wright to European notice. It shows the Robie House with plants draped over its balcony walls and flourishing at every level – as if taking root on a rockface. These irregular screens of foliage soften the building considerably and obscure its clean lines; they make it seem less radical, less Modern. Because of its confined site, the Robie House lacks the integrated landscape that often enhances Wright's projects; this planting would have been some compensation.

In his introduction to the Wasmuth publication, Wright refers to the 'severity' of his forms but says: 'Their chief office is a background or frame for the life within them and about them. They are considered as foils for the foliage and bloom which they are arranged to carry.'<sup>5</sup>

Early photographs of the Coonley House show just this burgeoning vegetation, but it seems that the planting at the Robie House never resembled Wright's drawing. Yet its omission helped to give the building its Modernist credentials.

So the FLWPT must opt either for Wright's Wasmuth vision or the sleekly-groomed Robie House of countless photographs. 'We're still considering this carefully,' says Sweeney, 'but we will probably put at least some of the planting in, to relate the Robie to the Wasmuth drawing and the other Prairie Houses. Because it is Modern to a point but it's not all the way there.'

The clean-cut look probably also helped to foster the many smiles and metaphors that crop up in accounts of the Robie House, by giving the building and all its component parts such an intense presence – a hyper-

clarity. While Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim provoked a string of maybe feasible comparisons – beached tanker, flower, fish, etc – and Le Corbusier's Ronchamp did likewise, their gestural forms were an invitation to free-associate. Though more restrained and orthodox, the Robie House has been just as resonant, with critics referring to steamships, geological strata, Japanese temples, American Colonial dwellings – and much else.

The writing can get a little purple, as in an essay by Vincent Scully: 'The Robie House is at once an airplane and another of Jung's archetypes, a sacred mountain: heavy, hollowed, massive, and rising on wings. One must go on an ancient labyrinthine journey, seeking the secret entrance...'<sup>6</sup>

Resisting the lure of aeroplane or mountain, Sweeney and her colleagues are staying down to earth. For them, the restoration of the Robie House is very much 'in progress', with \$4 million yet to find. They're keen that visitors notice the water-stains, cracks and peeling plaster that disfigure the interior at present – the signs that there is still work to do. 'It will be wonderful to get the house looking as Wright envisioned it. When the browns and golden ochres are back on the walls, people will appreciate how *unified* his design was,' says Sweeney. 'But the first half of the project has gone very well. At least the house won't be deteriorating now while we raise the rest of the funds.'

Sweeney hopes the Robie House will be fully restored by 2007. Already, though, the FLWPT has retrieved it from neglect and dispelled those old spectres of demolition. It could be 1910 again when you look at the Robie's south front – just don't turn around.

Perhaps when the original design is fully reinstated, the house won't be a comfortable piece of 'heritage' that simply fêtes Wright's achievements, but a place of continuing critical enquiry. Few 20th-century works are so embedded in architectural discourse as the Robie House, but much of the writing about it is partly hypothetical, being based on early photographs and the plan. So have scholars like Scully really said the last word? When the building is shown anew, there might be some reassessments. Wright isn't history yet.

## References

- 1 Donald Hoffmann, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House*. Norton, 1984, p94
- 2 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Collected Writings, Vol 2, 1930-32*. Rizzoli, 1992, p198
- 3 Edward Ford, *The Details of Modern Architecture, Vol 1* MIT Press, 1990, p191
- 4 See, for instance, Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. Princeton University Press, 1996, p57
- 5 *Studies and Executed Buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright* (reprint of the Wasmuth folio). Rizzoli, 1998, p16
- 6 Vincent Scully, 'Frank Lloyd Wright and Twentieth Century Style' in *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*. Princeton University Press, 2003, p112

## CREDITS

### RESTORATION ARCHITECT

Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust: Karen A Sweeney, AIA

### STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Tylik Gustafson and Associates, Chicago, IL

### MECHANICAL ENGINEER

Architectural Consulting Engineers, Oak Park, IL

### GENERAL CONTRACTOR

The Meyne Company Division of Bulley and Andrews, LLC





Ground floor, with tiles following the Turkish version of backgammon, live olive trees and a grid of sockets for clothes line poles. Opposite: shelves modelled on aircraft wing flaps





## Flight of fantasy

In Tokyo, designer Hussein Chalayan's first shop, by Block Architecture, gives a narrative edge to a cool interior

By Barrie Evans. Photographs by DWGS

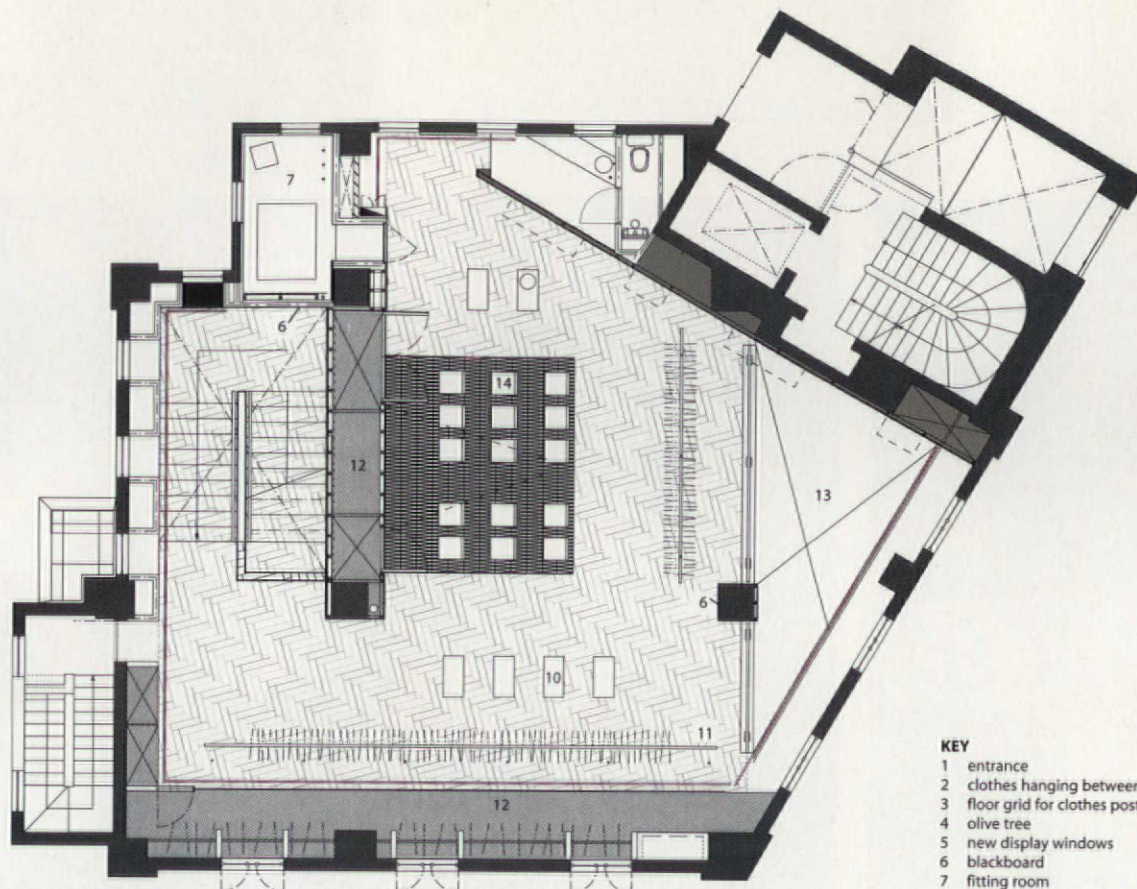
In a surprisingly European-feeling Neo-Classical building in the Daikanyama area of Tokyo, Block Architecture has gutted the existing shop to create two open retail floors. Client Hussein Chalayan has been very much a part of this process, not just a brief-giver; someone with a strong feel for building design from his own varied design experience, which includes fashion, cars (for Honda) and film. And his wish to draw on narrative elements in developing a user experience is a meeting of minds; this is an approach Block also likes to take in its architecture generally.

The building's exterior is largely ignored in creating a new inner world. One of the three adjacent former entrances remains; the other two have become display windows. Other windows are backed with blinds – inside there are complete 'walls' of backlit blinds, the fenestration pattern behind invisible. And the entrance ramp in coloured triangular ceramic tiles is a hint of the strangeness to come with-

in, rather than an attempt to create an outdoor-indoor architectural transition.

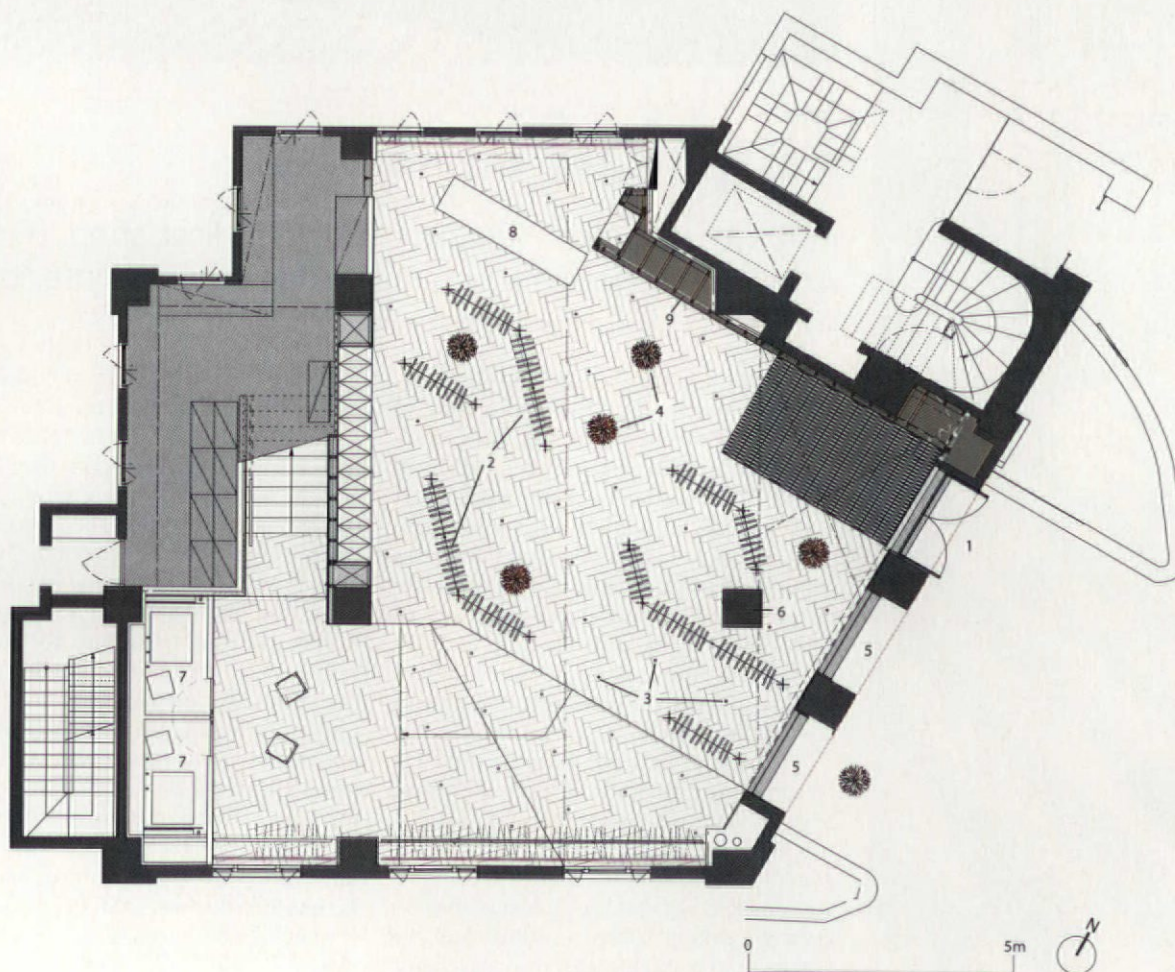
Cypriot outdoor life in shaded squares and courtyards is taken as one theme; another is the widespread playing of backgammon there (Block assures us). The shop's entrance ramp takes up the marking of the backgammon board in its triangular red, black and white tiles. Then, passing through a double-height entrance transition, you enter the womenswear area on the ground floor – a domestic olive garden with five live olive trees on a rectangular grid. The other grid nodes are sockets where clothes posts can be planted with the clothes displayed on washing lines between. A bit of fun, though this aspect might be lost in Cyprus where gender differences can leave women working at home while the men sit in the square, which is what happens upstairs. In the heart of the menswear sales floor a central square is finished in the same triangular backgammon





first floor plan

- KEY**
- 1 entrance
  - 2 clothes hanging between posts
  - 3 floor grid for clothes posts
  - 4 olive tree
  - 5 new display windows
  - 6 blackboard
  - 7 fitting room
  - 8 cash desk
  - 9 shelving wall
  - 10 mobile display cabinet
  - 11 display rail on webbing
  - 12 storage
  - 13 void over entrance
  - 14 cinema with seating



ground floor plan



tiles, and in it rows of Cypriot chairs face a screen showing some of Chalayan's films – it is a Cypriot 'outdoor' cinema. Around this, and on the ground floor, ply floorboarding is laid like oversized parquet.

Away from the Cypriot ethnicity, aircraft references take over, offering the cool of modern materials. Some of the walls are panelled like aircraft bodies; here, some hinge down like wing-flaps as display shelves. On the menswear floor the hanging rails are suspended with seatbelt webbing. Display shelves are provided on open-sided airline trolleys.

Chalayan's wares include airmail T-shirts, ready to be packed for airmailing to a friend. The packaging instructions are engraved on a nearby wall, one of the contributions from Chalayan's New York-based graphic designer Work-in-Progress. Another is engraving instructions for folding and wrapping – a

big Japanese retail ritual – in the sales counter-top. The well-mannered graphics are bilingual. With clothes displays changing frequently, flexibility to say what is now available is provided by an elegant version of the blackboard.

Block is a small practice, introduced to Chalayan by a mutual friend. Engaged in October for its first Japanese project, Block worked up designs for two months without seeing the site except through photographs. The architect took a model as well as drawings to Japan to explain the scheme. Block employed a Japanese-speaking architect in its office. The project was carried through by a Japanese contractor, which, typically in Japan, has its own architects' department, though Block did more of its own detailing than is the Japanese norm. Block was very impressed both by the Japanese architects'

response and the 'phenomenal' build quality provided by the contractor. (Block did source the backgammon floor tiles and the oversized parquet from the UK.)

As narrative – in which globalisation through high-energy, high-tech air travel meets the naturalistic eco-local – without resolution, you wonder what the Japanese reading will be. Perhaps nothing more specific than foreign/exotic, as with other architectures that have been parachuted into Tokyo, such as Herzog & de Meuron's Prada. There is deliberately no Japanese reference in this design.

As a piece of design execution, this is stylish and well-made with witty touches. Block demonstrates again that a non-adversarial construction culture like Japan's, even when working at a distance, can buy into an adventurous design and deliver the original vision.



Top: the first floor, centred on village square showing films 'outdoors'. Ceiling lights are like aircraft porthole windows. Above: display bars are held on seatbelt webbing; aircraft trolley display shelves

#### COST SUMMARY

Data based on final account, for gross internal area

	Cost (£)	Percentage of total
Site preparation	6,000	2.0
Floor finishes	46,000	15.1
Plasterboard walls and ceilings	15,800	5.2
Joinery	19,500	6.4
Steelwork	66,220	21.8
Paint finishes	9,200	3.0
Glass, mirrors	11,000	3.6
Vertical strip curtain	15,000	4.9
Furniture	16,000	5.3
External doors and windows	25,000	8.2
Signage	2,600	0.9
Alterations to air-conditioning system	7,800	2.6
Electrical, lighting	28,500	9.4
Audiovisual	7,800	2.6
Olive trees	1,000	0.3
Other	26,000	8.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>303,420</b>	<b>100</b>

#### CREDITS

##### START ON SITE DATE

January 2004

##### CONTRACT DURATION

Eight weeks

##### GROSS INTERNAL AREA

275m<sup>2</sup>

##### FORM OF CONTRACT

Local Japanese contract form

##### TOTAL COST

£325,000

##### MAIN CLIENT

Hussein Chalayan

##### TOKYO CLIENT (PREMISES OWNER)

Bus Stop Co

##### ARCHITECT

Block Architecture: Zoe Smith, Graeme Williamson, Max Beckenbauer, Kayoko Ohtsuki

##### LIGHTING CONSULTANT

Campbell Design Lighting Consultants

##### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Work-in-Progress

##### TOKYO CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Onward Creative Centre Co

##### UK SUPPLIERS

Engineered plywood flooring Arden Hodges; triangular (backgammon) floor tiles Happell

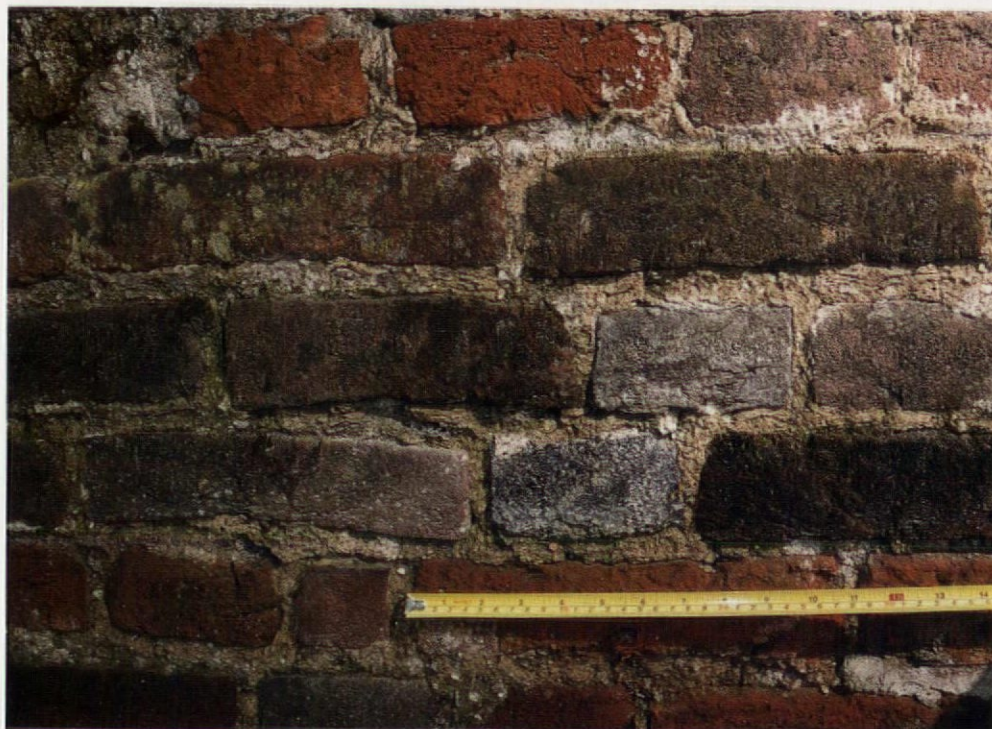
#### WEBLINKS

Block Architecture  
[www.blockarchitecture.com](http://www.blockarchitecture.com)



## Material benefits

As the new series of the BBC's *Restoration* begins on TV, Dr Jonathan Foyle, former assistant curator at Historic Royal Palaces, starts a new series of articles looking at the history and conservation of building materials. Part one: brick



Irregular glazed headers of clamp-fired bricks from La Certosa, Pavia

Brick is probably the most misunderstood building material. Brick – the word sounds masculine in its solidity: 'You're a brick', 'Built like a brick s\*\*thouse'. It is the permanent stuff of ancient Roman baths, of canals and warehouses, Victorian stations, vast chimneys. But it is also the fabric of Sussex farmhouses and the turreted silhouettes of Tudor mansions, and often requires careful conservation.

Brick in England started life as Roman 'tegulae', or wall tiles, of a shallow, long profile recognisable across Europe. Sufficient were produced to quarry for a thousand years, until native brick making recommenced in East Anglia, apparently during the 12th century (see Polstead Church, Suffolk). From the 1200s, durable yellow Flemish bricks, called 'klinkers', were imported, often for flooring. (Their high quality has been subverted by the modern homonym of 'clinkers' – overfired, poor-quality bricks.) The 15th century was the first great age of

### Case study: Kew Palace



Kew Palace presides over the northern lawns of Kew Gardens, close to the Thames. It was built about 1630 by a merchant and his wife – Samuel and Catherine Fortrey – and became a palace only after it was leased to Queen Caroline in 1728. Under Historic Royal Palaces, its brickwork underwent conservation in 1996-98. The basic philosophy was to retain as much of the original fabric as possible. Contriving the impression that nothing has changed can be expensive: the external repairs have cost £1.2 million.

The designer and builders of Kew Palace are not recorded but it is nevertheless an important building. It is the earliest known native example of a consistent 'Flemish bond' composed of alternate headers and stretchers. (The name is confusing: Flemings usually built in English bond, of alternating courses of all stretchers and all headers, but the Italians sometimes used Flemish bond; for instance, Palazzo Venezia, Rome, c1456).

It is often called the 'Dutch House' for its ogival brick gables but again confusingly: Dutch gables are normally stepped and are universally capped



English brick production, when the material was promoted by bishops for their palaces, and Britain never looked back. Henry VIII's palaces absorbed bricks in batches of three million.

Early bricks are difficult to date by colour and size due to the localisation of manufacture, the variant shrinkages in turning out to dry, and their colouration and further shrinkage in early clamp kilns (like a flat pyramid of stacked air-dried bricks, interspersed with fuel, vented by integral air channels). The first legislation to standardise bricks came in 1571 in London, which had little apparent effect, and many rural houses were simply built from local brick-earth pits. In the later 17th century, as the Flemish 'cut and rubbed' tradition was matched technically in England, mortar courses often became thinner and bricks were more evenly manufactured and kiln-fired.

The 18th-century penchant for limestone led to the production of yellow stock bricks which characterise much of Georgian and Regency brickwork (for instance, Holkham Hall, Norfolk; Gloucester Terrace, London). At the same time, 'mathematical tiles' disguised the archaic timber-framing of Sussex and Kent with the semblance of brick masonry. Technical innova-

'Brick's universality means it is often taken for granted as a practical material'



Black ash pointing removed to reveal ruddle

tions of the industrial age include the impressed 'frog' for greater stability in bonding, and Accrington bricks which are durable enough to be bound by hard cement. Italian immigrants produced rough and plentiful Flettons in factories near Peterborough.

It is its diversity and ubiquity which means that brick is not a single entity – its history has evolved, even on a local basis, to suit the economic circumstances and aesthetic tastes of those who paid for the buildings; the technology of those who dug the clay, shaped and fired the bricks; the skills of those whose hands laid and decorated them.

This universality means brick is

often taken for granted as a practical material, especially so as the characteristic of brick which sets it apart from reinforced concrete or plastered timber-framing or stone is its repetitiveness as equal units from the bottom to the top of the building. This character is, of course, represented in the bonds by which the bricks' laying pattern is manifested on the external facade. Brick bonds express the honesty of their load-bearing function far more than Corbusian reinforced concrete, and create an aesthetic so robust that the construction itself is the decoration. Or so you might think...

(Continued on page 38)

in stone. Kew's facades have classical overtones, with pilasters and rusticated and pedimented architraves, and the second storey features columns uniquely made of brick laid on end with no reinforcement.

The first task was to make an assessment of the building's phasing. The job was made easier because every generation of repairs had a significantly different character, and seven main types of bricks were discernible, spanning three centuries of work. Each sought to replicate what had gone before, and so much of the original material had remained in situ. The original lime mortar was easily identifiable (less so where the gables had been rebuilt at an early date).

With an understanding of the building's phases of construction and repair, and of the potentially weak junctions between them, an assessment could be made of its structural problems. Cracks either side of the south-east corner showed it was separating from the adjacent walls so that the angle had become a pier.

This was explained by the fact that the adjacent walls had been rebuilt in the 1840s while leaving the original corner intact,



Evidence of blooming ruddle

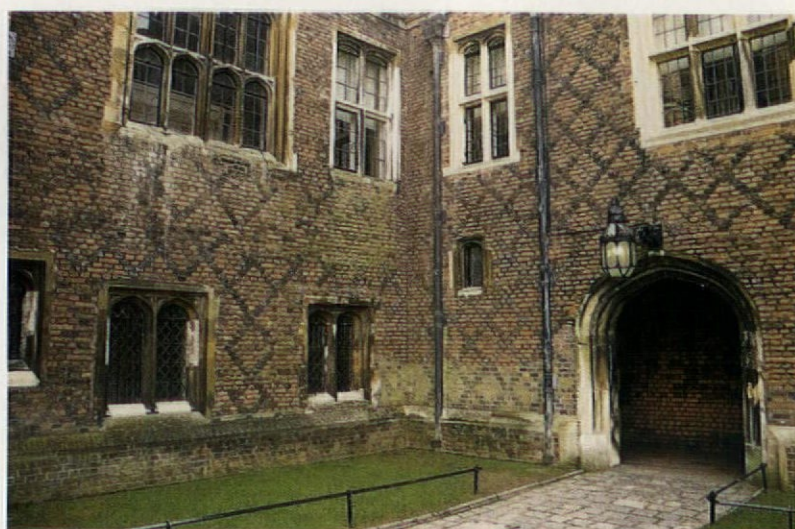
presumably to hold the floor decks in place. The rebuilt walls had since settled. The two elements were stitched together by a series of stainless steel dowels within nylon 'socks', which were inserted into cavities drilled into mortar courses spanning the cracks and then syringe-filled with lime grout to fit the cavity precisely. The cracks were similarly filled, whereupon the whole then acted as a single structural mass.

The north wall had been relatively sheltered from the weather and retained the original pointing and colouring. The removal of a lead downpipe bracket revealed an area of original penny-ruled pointing. Its grooves still appeared fresh, and what's more, they still featured the primary colourwash of orangey ruddle. Above the south door, once protected by a 19th-century porch, was a later thick layer of dark red ruddle that had presumably been tinted to match the polluted wall. In all, four generations of colourwash were present.

Several of the gables were in a sorry state, a typical result of their exposed situation which makes it unusual that these survived.

(Continued on page 38)





### Lime colourwashes

Perhaps the most important fact to remember with historic brickwork is that it was seldom meant to be seen, but for most of its history was covered with colourwash. Colourwash is basically limewash – that is, burned lime powder (calcium hydroxide) slaked with water and occasionally augmented by casein (milk protein), coloured with ochre, usually red ochre. The gloop is called 'ruddle', and was also used for marking sheep. Ochre is a virtually ubiquitous earth mineral, and once extracted can be

**Hampton Court.**

**Above left:**  
pencilling from  
1529 on the  
chapel east wall.  
**Above right:**  
irregular diaper  
work

roasted from a deep yellow through terracotta to red and plum colours: think of the rich, warm colours of the streets of Rome.

In the Tudor period, we hear of 'pencilling' (from the Latin *penicillus*: brush) which required three stages: first, a coat of ruddle; then fine soot from burned hay was mixed with lime and water into a black paste, and painted on the wall to resemble burned bricks in diamond patterns or 'diaper work'. The third stage was the replication of white mortar courses, using pure lime and water.

If human beauty is only skin deep, the same can't be said for brickwork as our concept of beauty in historic buildings changed permanently in the 19th century with an epidemic of wall scraping to reveal the bare bones of the noble structural materials. In this phase, the 'skin' became dispensable. But if a building was ever colourwashed, if you look closely beneath sills, cornices, and pediments, behind drainpipes, more often than not some fragments will have survived weather and redecorations.

Contemporary hand-made bricks were produced by Lamb's in Sussex to match the originals' typical size and depth of firing. Where necessary, the original brickwork was dismantled and bricks labelled for reincorporation, while trial gable pediments were built in the works yard. Much skill was involved in contriving the right level of wonkiness consistent with the survivors' 360 years of ageing.

Repointing was a cause of debate. Cement mortar damages bricks by its imperviousness to water, while lime mortar and bricks are vapour permeable. When moisture collects between bricks and cement pointing, it creates stress, particularly on south-facing elevations vulnerable to freeze-thaw action. These molecular forces can delaminate the faces of bricks (try tapping with your knuckles on south and north facades of cement-pointed old brickwork). In raking out the 19th-century black-ash pointing, which could be removed without damaging the bricks it adhered to, the original soft white lime mortar bedding with characteristic chalk lumps was revealed. The conservation work would use lime mortar

because of its homogeneous qualities, but a decision had to be made on whether to match the colour of the original mortar or tint it to match the black ash cement that unavoidably remained. Samples were made of lime mortars using various sands, and Chertsey sharp was chosen at a ratio of one part lime to two parts sand. It was decided to leave the mortar creamy white.

Upon completion of the repointing, the predictably piebald effect was akin to a moth-eaten lace curtain draped over the building. It had already been mooted by the project team that the discovery that ruddle had been used for about two-thirds of the building's life might justify its reinstatement, which was supported by English Heritage.

Trials then began by Richard Roberts, conservation surveyor, on the ratio of lime to water, on the usefulness of adding milk for its casein and the colouration of the ochre pigments supplied by St Blaise. After regular hosing to simulate weathering, it was clear that using two coats of casein-bound ruddle matching the earlier layers was the best solution. As the first layer dried, a white bloom and uneven

colouration spread across the facades. There was no going back but fortunately the bloom was brushed off and the unevenness settled. Armed with the solecism that any problems were likely to be historically authentic, the work was completed in January 1998. Love or hate the result (but seldom between), it must be admitted that the new vogue for old ruddling has yet to catch on.

### BRICKWORK CONSERVATION 1996-98

#### CLIENT

Historic Royal Palaces

#### PROJECT MANAGERS

Philip Hartley and David Farrington

#### CURATOR

Jonathan Foyle

#### CONSERVATION SURVEYOR

Richard Roberts

#### ARCHITECT

Donald Insall Associates: Tony Dyson and Francis Maude

#### CONTRACTOR

Higgs and Hill: Mike Warrington

#### STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Alan Baxter: Stuart Tappin

#### RUDDLE SUPPLIERS

Rose of Jericho

#### RUDDLERS

Chichester Cathedral Works



## Diaper work

The familiar diamond-patterns to be found in brick buildings from the 15th and 16th centuries are generically called 'diaper work'. The patterns are made using overfired bricks which feature an incidental ash glaze caused by the vaporisation of wood ash at about 1,200°C that fused to the faces of bricks nearest the burning fuel of a clamp. Though restorations have frequently replaced glazed bricks, the genuine articles are discernable by an aerosol-sprayed effect at the edge of the bottle-green glaze. Fakes are either brushed or dipped in thick, even glazes.

As laid, the patterns of glazed bricks seem to have little regularity, but feature different sizes of diamonds, sometimes motifs such as crosses, and are often stratified as if bricklayers put down their tools at the end of one season and started a completely different pattern the next. William Waynflete's entrance tower at Farnham Castle, Surrey (circa 1475) is unusually consistent. Many diaper-patterned walls were also colourwashed or even pencilled, which would suggest that diaper work was not meant to be seen. The obvious response is 'why bother?', and all suggestions would be most welcome.

Right: cut brickwork with secondary penny-ruled pointing



## Pointing to a certain age

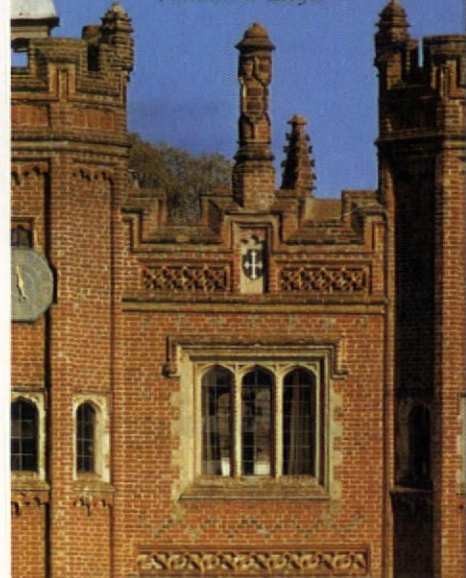
Pointing can be a good indicator of the date of a brick building, but the chances of finding original pointing are slim. Roughly speaking, late medieval and Tudor work is characterised by 'double-struck' pointing, that is, a convex angled profile which casts a shadow on its underside. It emphasises each brick so that facades have a complex, almost pixellated, texture. By the mid 17th century, this technique had been replaced by 'penny-ruled' pointing in which the mortar was flush with the brick face,

except for a groove of perhaps 2mm to 3mm in width and depth impressed along its centre. When colourwashed, this technique gave facades the appearance of tightly laid bricks which contributed to a smooth, monolithic effect.

Though the term 'cement' is medieval in origin, Portland cement-based mortars enter the scene from the early 19th century, and on historic buildings are often of the 'black ash' type, tinted with domestic fuel ash to match the sulphuric pollution of this industrialised age.

## A History of English Brickwork

Nathaniel Lloyd



### Further reading:

- James W P Campbell and Andrew Saint, 'A Bibliography of Works on Brick published in England before 1750', *Construction History* Vol. 17, 2001, pp17-30.
- Nathaniel Lloyd's 1925 *A History of English Brickwork*. This classic has just been republished (2003) by The Antique Collectors' Club and retails for just £35. Subtitled 'with examples and notes of the architectural use and manipulation of brick from mediaeval times to the end of the Georgian period', this is a masterly work, written with intelligence and rigour. It covers practically everything and it is replicated in its original interwar font and layout. This can lead to it being thought of as increasingly archaic, and to be replaced by the (unfortunately unreferenced) *Brick Building in England* by J A Wight (1972) and Ronald Brunskill's more recent and straightforward *Brick Building in Britain* (1990).
- Many scholarly articles exist on early brick by T P Smith, eg 'Rye House, Hertfordshire and Aspects of Early Brickwork in England', *Archaeological Journal* Vol. 132, (1975) with useful bibliography.
- James Campbell and Will Price have recently produced the fine *Brick: A World History in Architecture* (2003) while Gerard Lynch has produced practical and technical guides to building in *Brickwork: History, Technology and Practice* or *Gauged Brickwork: A Technical Handbook*.
- For a major international exploration, read N S Baer, S Fitz and R A Livingston's *The Conservation of Historic Brick Structures*.
- Serious enthusiasts may like to join the Brick Section of the British Archaeological Association ([www.britishbricksoc.free-online.co.uk](http://www.britishbricksoc.free-online.co.uk)).
- Enquires on brick, its history, conservation and supply are also welcomed at the Brick Development Association ([www.brick.org.uk](http://www.brick.org.uk)).
- The current edition (Volume 25, Number 2) of *Cornerstone*, the renamed magazine of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (formerly *SPAB News*) carries a special edition on brickwork ([www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)).





## Winners and losers in the adjudicators' generation game

When parliament extended an invitation to the adjudication party by enacting the 1996 Construction Act, it did so with reference to a very specific guest list. S.105(1) of the act gives six closely worded definitions of the types of contract that include the statutory dispute resolution process. S.105(2), however, went on to list five types of contract that were expressly to be denied access to an adjudicator. Thus, for example, contracts for the 'construction of buildings forming part of the land (whether permanent or not)' are in, while 'contracts for drilling for oil or natural gas' are out.

Construction works being what they are, however, it is perfectly possible to find your contract on both lists. Thus the erection of steelwork for the purposes of supporting machinery (an excluded category) could also be described as 'the construction of any works including dock, harbours and railways' (an included category). One leading construction QC considered these provisions to be so replete with seemingly irrational distinctions that they should be put on a par with the Misrepresentation Act 1967, another much criticised piece of legislation, and condemned as being 'little short of scandalous' in the way that parliament had introduced these exclusions without giving any indication of how they should operate.

In the absence of such guidance, it has fallen to the courts to make sense of the provisions and decide who is entitled to hop on to the adjudication-go-round and who must find their dispute resolution fun elsewhere. The excluded category that has occupied more court time than most is S.105(2)(c), which includes (and I paraphrase) 'the installation of plant on a site where the primary activity is power generation'.

The key words that have troubled the courts are 'plant', 'site' and, believe it or not, 'is'. Early on the Scottish courts held that 'plant' should be given its ordinary meaning and that, for example, pipework that served a plant without which it would not operate should be included within the definition. 'Site' proved more troublesome. Large construction sites can be subdivided into smaller areas where specialist

works are carried out. But should they be distinguished simply because they have a fence around them? Again the courts favoured a broad interpretation and an inquiry into the primary purpose of the site as a whole. The meaning of 'is' gave rise to 'the temporal point', the thrust of which was this: the act does not apply to contracts for the construction of, for example, a new power plant on a site where the primary activity will be power generation. It can only apply to work on sites where the power plant has already been built and is carrying out the excluded activity. The temporal point was wholeheartedly rejected as being 'an absurdity', especially as the act is applied by adjudicators who are, in the main, not lawyers.

These points were considered afresh in the recent case of *Conor Engineering v CNIM SA* (2.4.04). CNIM was engaged by Hampshire Waste Services to design and build a plant for the incineration of waste and the generation of electricity. Conor was its boiler and pipework subcontractor. Conor referred payment disputes to adjudication and the adjudicator found in its favour. CNIM argued that the adjudicator's decision was unenforceable because the contracts were for work carried out on a site where the primary activity was power generation and were excluded under the act.

They agreed that the site included the whole of the site, and not just the areas where Conor was working. The site had previously been used for waste disposal only, but the court agreed that the act applied equally to new projects and the activities that 'will be' carried out.

The central question was, therefore, whether the primary activity of the site was incineration of waste (which was 'in') or the production of electricity (which was 'out'). The court was impressed by just how much waste was incinerated compared with the small amount of electricity generated and concluded that the primary purpose of the plant was the incineration of waste. Conor's subcontractors, therefore, included a statutory invitation to adjudication and the adjudicator's decision was enforceable.

Kim Franklin

## Looking for Mr Wright and the summer of scam

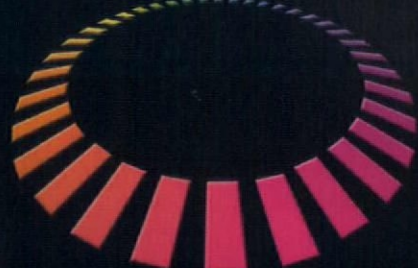
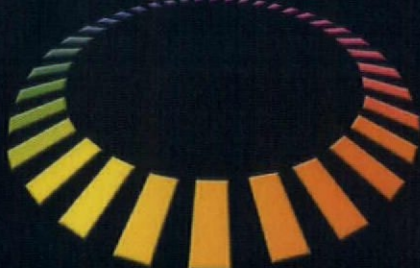
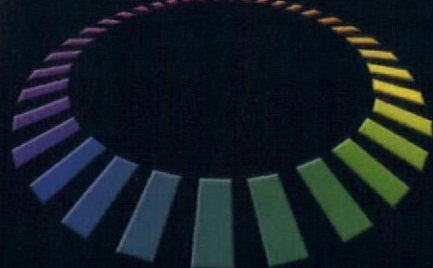
I hope this works. It is a feature in the *New York Times* Home & House section about a hitherto unknown village of 49 Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired houses: Rush Creek, Ohio ([www.nytimes.com/2004/06/24/garden/24RUSH.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/24/garden/24RUSH.html)). By now you may have to go to [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) and subscribe (it is free) and search the Homes & House section on the left-hand side.

The layout of Rush Creek was designed by Theodore van Fossen, who had worked as a builder on two Wright projects in 1939 and 1940 and who had studied at Chicago's New Bauhaus School. Applying rigorous rules about architectural design, van Fossen and his clients – the owners, a Mr and Mrs Wakefield – vetted the building proposals of new owners for Wright-ness before releasing title to the properties. A design review committee still sits in judgment on current owners' attempts to change the exteriors of their houses. There is a charming little video of a selection of the houses.

Despite recent bad weather it is now summer, just the time when con-persons start sending out bogus invoices in the hope that the bosses are away and junior personnel will just pay out on anything that looks urgent or threatening enough. Quite a lot of them come from the Czech Republic, Switzerland and Austria, reports *The Register* ([www.theregister.co.uk/2004/06/22/bogus\\_invoices](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/06/22/bogus_invoices)). The trick used to be invoices for typewriter carbon paper, but now it is for computer-related items and sometimes involves you accidentally signing up to legally binding contracts. Don't say it can't happen to you. Small and medium enterprises are precisely the targets the scammers aim for.

Meantime the same e-organ reports how the 419 scammers – you know: 'Esteemed (your name) ... 10 million dollars in the Bank of Terra del Fuego ... 10 per cent ... details of your account ... Dr Mahgrib (President), Lagos' – have dreamed up yet another variation. This one is to do with a 'mix-up' about winning numbers in the sweepstake over who won the 2010 soccer world cup and you could 'accidentally' benefit. Don't. [sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com](mailto:sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com)





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# Worlds apart

JOHN MCKEAN

## American Architecture

By David P Handlin. Thames & Hudson, 2004. 304pp. £9.95

## Scottish Architecture

By Miles Glendinning and Aonghus MacKechnie. Thames & Hudson, 2004. 224pp. £9.95

These two volumes in the famous 'World of Art' series, *American Architecture* (a new edition) and *Scottish Architecture* (brand new), make an interesting pair, reflecting two very different cultures.

*American* starts with colonisation and without apology. It makes no excuse for centuries of derivative and often crudely provincial colonial architecture, but debates its worth and tries to understand its sanctification by later generations. *Scottish* starts in prehistoric mists with 'monuments of earth, stone and sky' (to its north and west) and presumed vanished work in 'more ephemeral timber and wood' – whatever that tautology means (to its south and east).

*American* starts from scratch (forget native plainsmen). *Scottish* is desperate to sense primordial continuity (we have the oldest stone houses in north-west Europe, it opens). From the outset, *American* gets on with it, enjoys its European influences, is self-critical and positive. From the outset, *Scottish* gets into special pleading – it even has a Roman fort with a full-scale bathhouse, plastered walls and glazed windows.

'Scotland's aspiration to special status was a constant concern' of the 19th century, we are told. But this inferiority complex of parochial nationalism cannot be easily shaken off. Even the jacket blurb tells us that 'Scotland is almost unique among smaller European nations in the distinctiveness and richness of its architectural heritage' and that Scottish identity is the book's central theme.

So we see Scots designing the 17th-century Spassky tower in the Kremlin; we meet the works of William Chambers and James ('Athenian') Stuart because they are 'second generation Scots' (surely the authors mean the opposite: second-generation Englishmen?); there are pages and pages on 18th-century London, from Robert Adam to ('Aberdonian') James Gibbs, and then to the Palladians led by Colen Campbell; next back in Russia there is Catherine the

Great's architect Charles Cameron.

A century later, English images fill the book again: from 'Burn-trained R N Shaw', 'Dunblane-born' J M Brydon and Glaswegian J J Stevenson designing Queen Anne London. A further generation and Glaswegian J J Burnet leads the British Empire's architecture, his partner Thomas Tait's imprimatur being his apprenticeship to 'Greek' Thomson's assistant. But again, almost all images are of London and Silver End, Essex.

Now there are important tales, of course, in Anglo-Scots cultural exchange in architecture in the late-18th and late-19th centuries (and more recently) – but they are not teased out or debated here.

James Adam's vastly grandiose scheme for parliament and law courts – in London, of course – from 1763 is illustrated and, we learn, 'helped shape the US Capitol'; a building designed by Thornton, 'a Scottish-educated architect'. Thus is Scottish architectural identity set out.

Rather than enlist all comers in a tartan army, a more subtle American identity arises very clearly through Handlin's very differ-

ent text, with his close focus on, rather than flaunting of, the architecture. *American*, written as a series of coherent essays, makes its subject matter alive and current, its scholarship handled with a light touch. It is a pleasure to read. *Scottish* never seems to get under the skin of the architecture, its viewpoint remaining antiquarian. Moreover (despite the cover blurb) it is not incorporated into the wider culture – when Ossian, Poussin and Claude appear on page 113, it is virtually the first cultural reference beyond architecture.

At least by the 18th century, Glendinning and MacKechnie see the work more through personalities, and the writing becomes more engaging. A central hinge of their text is 'improvement', and to typify that they illustrate the Scottish rational farms published by J C Loudon of Cambuslang (though for once the authors remarkably forget to note the man's Scottish origins!).

How the last half-century is treated tells us much about each book under discussion. Handlin, first published nearly 20 years ago, deserved reissuing. His earlier chapters on the 20th century are very well balanced and thoughtful, particularly as he interweaves the long career of Wright and then comes up via Kahn to Venturi. But the new one focusing on 1975-2000, perhaps inevitably, showed the original to be too good an act to follow. His opinions are as strong as ever, but somehow they don't all have the same rightness to them. The ending, in multitudes of unpublicised little honest, regionalist designers of 2002 and finally the fascinating Rural Studio, coming after the focus on megastars Meier and Gehry, sounds too like a whimper. Handlin should have addressed the questions raised by that final juxtaposition.

Glendinning and MacKechnie, clearly unenthused by the past century – which they describe as 'the planned social reconstructions of the years of retrenchment' – offer most of their space to Basil Spence and Robert Matthew; and indeed by page 202 their whole authorial tone is quite changed with inappropriate descriptions of Matthew's role as international architectural ambassador. Their only adjective for Glasgow's Red Road flats, symbolic of the worst architecture of the 20th century, is 'boldest', while the Burrell gallery, one of the tiny handful of genuinely first-rate buildings in 20th-century Scotland, is just 'self-effacing in the extreme'.

I had the highest hopes for *Scot-*



American Modern: Howe & Lescaze's PSFS Building





Scots abroad: the Spassky Tower, Moscow

*tish Architecture*. It has many fine period photographs and good new aerial ones; unlike *American Architecture*, many are in colour. It has also introduced me to some fine buildings – like St Columba's, Burntisland, a wonderful 16th-century centralised Presbyterian preaching hall (older than anything in the *American* book).

I would recommend Handlin to architects and students as worth reading – because they would enjoy it; it argues and offers explanations, it engages and elucidates. I would recommend Glendinning and MacKechnie to anyone needing a handy encyclopaedic reference; it seems light on prejudice (before the 20th century), it contains neither mistakes nor enthusiasm for what architecture is about. Yet sometimes its parochialism is pathetic: Robert Matthew, we learn, 'was shocked to discover that Alvar Aalto had never heard of Lorimer'. Well, in case anyone else is as ignorant as Aalto, here's your book – with its 'wha's like us?' tone.

John McKean is a professor at Brighton School of Architecture

## Lines of enquiry

THOMAS MUIRHEAD

### Beyond the Drawing: New Dimensions in Architectural Representation

A conference at the University of Nottingham on 24 June

Nick Temple began this stimulating conference by suggesting that instead of regarding perspective as mere image-making, we should investigate its profounder significance. James McQuillan then explored Dalibor Vesely's proposition that our intellectual space is threatened by 'instrumental thinking'; this, he said, is paralleled by our flight from the centre, as in the deformed, directionless landscapes of Robert Smithson or Daniel Libeskind. Yet the human mind continues to insist on art as perfection, enabling us to participate in the eternal.

Raymond Quek discussed how Kandinsky's paintings no longer have a centre either, 400 years after Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for suggesting that space was infinite. Representation, said Quek, is more powerful than reality; Libeskind's early drawings always seem more powerful than his buildings. Representation enables us to depict impossible spaces, as in Choisy's worm's-eye architectural drawings, or M C Escher's hallucinatory scenes.

Benachir Medjoub then screened a series of short videos that blended straight film with artificial effects, intentionally confusing the real with the false. Regrettably, his explanation focused more on technical practicalities than philosophical speculations. Engineer Chris Williams showed a slide of his early IBM 1130 mainframe, saying he had had to programme it himself. Today's software packages, he said, give us no control; much better to write our own. So he rejected the suggestion that we're losing skills; actually, we continually replace old abilities with new ones.

Williams ran a small C++ programme he had written, and we watched it draw a spiral of 150,000 lines. This led him into a comprehensive lecture on grid-shell structures, culminating with his Great Court design for the British Museum. Although this held us all spellbound, he showed no inclination to speculate philosophically about why he does what he does.

Nic Clear then delivered a blast against all professional architectural practice. Denouncing orthographic projection for leaving out too much information

– apparently unaware that plans, sections, and elevations actually represent three-dimensional space – he presented four Bartlett student videos. One seemed to be a quasi-sci-fi metanarrative, in which red streaks darted across monochrome images, against a soundtrack suggesting paranoia, disgust, and claustrophobia. In another, a sub-Archigram walking machine lurched along, crippled by the weight of its own mechanical redundancy. A third video depicted an enigmatic, hallucinatory Gaudiesque voyage through beautifully coloured, abstract spaces.

Striking though it may be at first impact, after 10 years of this kind of work from the Bartlett, by Neil Spiller and his followers, isn't it becoming a bit predictable? Disappointingly, Clear didn't theorise at all, and concentrated on explaining technical details.

Then Plasma Studio, 2002 Young Architect of the Year, showed some of its work. Very much in the current mainstream of translucencies, conceptual mats, topographical matrices, and deformed meshes, Plasma admitted its drawings are often incomprehensible to others; it was interesting to see how client pressure often forced the architecture to improve.

In a delightful lecture, rich in erudite references and hilarious parables, Marco Frascari discussed how communication is participatory, not confrontational. Computers produce no materiality, no bodily contact with paper, and no loveable object, whereas a physical drawing is three-dimensional. Any representation draws us into a complicitous relationship with what is represented; like an icon, it looks at us as we look at it.

Discussion descended from these heights into questions and answers concerning particular technical problems. But Edward Cullinan rose to the sublime again with a presentation of some of his own projects, which he re-drew on the spot using an overhead projector: a true master of all building technologies, with his head among the gods.

Thomas Muirhead is an architect in London. For details of a further conference in October, visit [www.nottingham.ac.uk/sbe/research/ahgt/home.htm](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sbe/research/ahgt/home.htm)



# Understanding Ernő

NEIL CAMERON

**Ernő Goldfinger: The Life of an Architect**

By Nigel Warburton. Routledge, 2004. £30



As one of the best-known 20th-century architects working in Britain, Ernő Goldfinger hardly needs an introduction. Naturally his fame depends in large part on the notoriety and subsequent rehabilitation of Trellick Tower, and on the National Trust's venture into Modern realms with its acquisition of Goldfinger's own house in Willow Road.

Yet a large part of Goldfinger's iconic status rests on his name itself, with all its bizarrely descriptive resonance and its filmic associations with evil desires for world dominance. As Warburton's book shows, however, Goldfinger was also famous simply for being Goldfinger.

Having the support of his wife Ursula,

a member of the Crosse & Blackwell food dynasty, Goldfinger had less need than many architects to toady for commissions. And he took full advantage of his financial security by marching prospective clients out of his office by the scruff of their necks when they appeared not to appreciate his genius as fully as he did himself. Warburton occasionally seems to take Goldfinger's generous self-assessment at face value, but the more you read his well-researched biography the more you can understand Ian Fleming's temptation to rename him 'Goldprick' when the great man threatened to sue over the appropriation of his name as a villainous James Bond character.

Not only does he appear in these pages as a control obsessive and a bully, he seems to have lived in a kind of bubble that allowed him to place himself at the centre of the Modernist creative universe. He may have mingled with avant-garde circles when studying under Auguste Perret in Paris, but manages to turn that into the self-regarding statement: 'Everyone always seems to have known me'. This apparent lack of normal human awareness even extended to the risible 'sacking' of someone who had merely dropped by to meet one of Goldfinger's assistants for lunch, apparently because he was smiling. Is this really the kind of person you would put in charge of large housing projects to elevate the urban poor to a brave new world in the sky?

On the basis of Trellick Tower, yes. Like so many tower blocks in Britain, many of its notorious social problems stemmed from bad management and council disinterest. Although it has some serious flaws as a practical design, such as the provision of lift access at only every third floor, it remains one of the purest and most highly wrought visions of how to address the post-war housing problem in London.

Goldfinger's obsession with detail gave its interiors a strong sense of resolution, and the splitting of the domestic and service blocks is a logical and direct formal response to particular functional requirements. Despite its appropriation as a punk-era symbol of anti-individualism and urban decay, its future is now enhanced by its English Heritage listing and it stands as one of the most powerfully sculptural buildings of its period in Britain.

In this fascinating study, which while being principally a work of biography also has much to interest architectural historians, the full spectrum of Goldfinger's difficult and domineering personality is laid bare. Yet for all his apparent faults, his status as one of the most extraordinary characters of British Modernism is enhanced by this book.

In the last analysis, however, the relatively small number of major commissions will always make it difficult to assess Goldfinger as an architect. Ventures into allied fields such as furniture design, and involvement in some proselytising publications, show his breadth, but his explosiveness evidently came with a cost. It is tempting to wonder what might have been possible had his creativity been allied to a more compliant personality, but one suspects he rather enjoyed his self-allotted role. As Warburton suggests, Goldfinger's assessment of himself is vastly revealing: 'There are good and bad architects. I am a good architect.'

*Neil Cameron writes on architecture and art*



## London

**AA Projects Review** 12-30 July. At the Architectural Association, 36 Bedford Sq, WC1. Details 020 7887 4000

**Dennis Gilbert and Jon May** 16 July-11 September. Architectural photographs at Photofusion, 17a Electric Lane, SW9 (020 7738 5774).

**New Sculptures by Anthony Caro** Until 25 July. At Kenwood House, Hampstead. Details 020 8348 1286.

**A13: A Multi-Disciplinary Exhibition on an Urban Archetype** Until 25 July. At the Wapping Project, Wapping Wall, E1. Details [www.architecturefoundation.org.uk](http://www.architecturefoundation.org.uk)

**UEL Architecture Show** Until 30 July. At the Docklands Campus, University Way, E16. Details 020 8223 3223.

**Framed Space: Adam Kossoff** Until 7 August, Thurs-Sat 10.00-17.00. Goldfinger-inspired video works and photography at 2 Willow Rd, NW3. Details 020 7435 6166.

**Perrault's New Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg** Until 28 August. An exhibition at the Building Centre, 26 Store St, WC1. Details 020 7692 6209.

**Dusan Dzamonja: From Sculpture to Architecture** Until 28 August. An exhibition at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place, W1. Details 020 7580 5533.

**Housing Design Awards 2004** Until 3 September. An exhibition at RIBA, 66 Portland Place, W1. Details 020 7580 5533.

**True Colours: Exploring the Potential of Colour in the Built Environment**

Friday 17 September. An AJ conference at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place, W1. Speakers include John Outram and Spencer de Grey. Details 020 7505 6044. Website: [www.ajtruecolours.co.uk](http://www.ajtruecolours.co.uk)

**Fratelli Alinari: The Changing Face of Italy 1855-1935** Until 19 September. A photographic exhibition at the Estorick Collection, 39a Canonbury Sq, N1. Details 020 7704 9522.

**Saving Wotton: The Remarkable Story of a Soane Country House** Until 25 September. An exhibition at the Soane Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2. Details 020 7440 4246.

**Part E: Designing for Compliance** Thursday 30 September. An AJ conference at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place, W1. Details 020 7505 6044.

## East

**The Pier Arts Collection / Douglas Allsop** 10 July-12 September. Two exhibitions at Kettle's Yard, Castle St, Cambridge. Details 01223 352124.

**Brick in Eastern England** Saturday 10 July. A one-day conference at Cressing Temple, Essex. Details



## CURTAIN CALL

This year's 8th International Docomomo Conference takes place in New York from 26-29 September, under the title 'Import/Export: Post-War Modernism in an Expanding World'. It will be followed by a number of technology seminars on 30 September-2 October, on such themes as colour, concrete restoration, and the metal and glass curtain wall. Delegates will be well-placed to inspect the famous curtain wall of Lever House, seen here before its recent restoration. Details [www.docomomo2004.org](http://www.docomomo2004.org)

Pauline Hudspeth 01245 437672.  
**Coast** 31 July-4 September. Site-specific projects on the Essex coastline – an exhibition at Firstsite, 74 High St, Colchester. Details 01206 577067.

**Landscape and Historic Buildings** Thursday 19 August. A one-day conservation seminar at Cressing Temple, Essex. Details Pauline Hudspeth 01245 437672.

## East Midlands

**RIBA CPD Event: Urban Design Primer** Wednesday 21 July, 14.00. At the National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham. Details 0115 941 3650.  
**Hooked on Books: The Library of Sir John Soane** Until 30 August. An exhibition at the Lakeside Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham. Details 0115 846 7777.

## North

**RIBA CPD Event: Town Planning Update** Thursday 15 July, 10.00-13.00. At the County Cricket Club, Durham. Details 0191 232 4436.  
**Archigram** 31 July-31 October. An exhibition curated by the Design Museum and designed by Archigram. At BALTIC, Gateshead. Details 0191 478 1810.

## North West

**RIBA CPD Event: Conservation and Repair of Timber** Wednesday 14 July,

10.00-13.00. At the Civic Centre, Knutsford. Details 0151 703 0107.  
**Charlie Hussey** Thursday 15 July, 19.30. A lecture at the Grosvenor Museum, Grosvenor St, Chester. Details Mark Kyffin 0161 236 5667.  
**Blasting the Future: Vorticism in Britain 1910-1920** Until 25 July. An exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Oxford Rd, Manchester. Details 0161 275 7450.  
**Rhineland: Art from Cologne** Until 22 August. An exhibition at Tate Liverpool, Albert Dock, Liverpool. Details 0151 702 7400.  
**CUBE Retrospective 1998-2004** Until 26 August. An exhibition at CUBE, 113 Portland St, Manchester. Details 0161 237 5525.

## Wessex

**Westonbirt Festival of the Garden 2004** Throughout the summer. A series of special gardens at the National Arboretum, Tetbury. Details [www.festivalofthegarden.com](http://www.festivalofthegarden.com)  
**William Pye/Edmund de Waal** Until 5 September. Exhibitions at the New Art Centre, Roche Court, East Winterslow, Salisbury. Details 01980 862244.

## West Midlands

**RIBA CPD Event: Boundary Issues** Thursday 22 July, 14.00. At the Apollo Hotel, Edgbaston, Birmingham. Details 0121 233 2321.

## Yorkshire

**RIBA CPD Event: The New Production Information Code** Tuesday 20 July. At Wakefield Town Hall. Details 0113 245 6250.

**With Hidden Noise** Until 8 August. An exhibition at the Henry Moore Institute, 74 the Headrow, Leeds. Details 0113 234 3158.

**RIBA CPD Event: Structured Project Visit** Thursday 19 August. A tour of Urbis, Manchester, and the Imperial War Museum North. Details 0113 245 6520.

**Lime Week** 4-7 October. A conservation studies course at the University of York. Details [www.york.ac.uk/dpts/arch/](http://www.york.ac.uk/dpts/arch/)  
**Wolfgang Winter + Berthold Hörbelt** Until 31 October. 'Crate houses' etc at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Bretton Hall, nr Wakefield. Details 01924 832631.

## Scotland

**Terra Nova** 12 July-27 August. Degree show work at Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew St, Glasgow. Details 0141 353 4500.  
**City as Loft** 12 July-12 September. An exhibition at The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow. Details 0141 221 6362.  
**Strathclyde Architecture Show** Until 15 July. At 131 Rottenrow, Glasgow. Details 0141 548 3023.  
**SIX** Until 1 August. An exhibition of student projects at The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow. Details 0141 221 6362.  
**Langlands & Bell at Mount Stuart** Until 26 September. An installation in William Burges' chapel. Details [www.mountstuartart.com](http://www.mountstuartart.com)

## Wales

**RSAA Small Practice Surgery: Keeping out of Trouble** Monday 12 July, 16.00. With Owen Luder at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. Details 029 2087 4753.

## International

**Content: Rem Koolhaas – OMA – AMO** Until 29 August. An exhibition at the Kunsthall, Rotterdam. Details [www.kunsthall.nl](http://www.kunsthall.nl)  
**Jørn Utzon** Until 29 August. An exhibition at the Louisiana Museum, Humelbaek, near Copenhagen. Details [www.louisiana.dk](http://www.louisiana.dk)  
**Lausanne Jardins 2004** Until 17 October. Various temporary gardens in and around Lausanne. Details [www.lausannejardins.ch](http://www.lausannejardins.ch)

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



## people & practices

DPDS Consulting Group has promoted architect **Martyn Howland** to associate director of its Swindon office.

Inviron Building Systems – part of Inviron, formerly ABB Building Systems UK – has promoted **Scott Dunning** to the position of financial controller.

Workplace fit-out expert **Morgan Lovell**, with offices in London and Wokingham, has appointed **Paul Downing** as managing director of its newly relocated central office at Knight's Court, Birmingham.

Two of the consulting engineering profession's rising international stars – **Philip Wilson** and **Gennady Vasilchenko-Malishev** – have formed their own consultancy, **Malishev Wilson Engineers**, to specialise in the design of glass and artistic structures. Its new London office is 493 Hornsey Road, London N19 3QL. Tel 020 7272 7604.

Consulting building services engineer **Cameron Taylor Brady** has appointed two new directors, **Marc Draper** and **Kevin Bray**.

Conservatory roofing specialist **K2** has promoted **Tim O'Brien** to the newly created position of technical sales executive for its recently launched division, **K2 Architectural Systems**.

**Suzi Armstrong** has been appointed associate of **Martindales'** Huntingdon office.

● Send details of changes and appointments to Anna Robertson, *The Architects' Journal*, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, or email [anna.robertson@emap.com](mailto:anna.robertson@emap.com)

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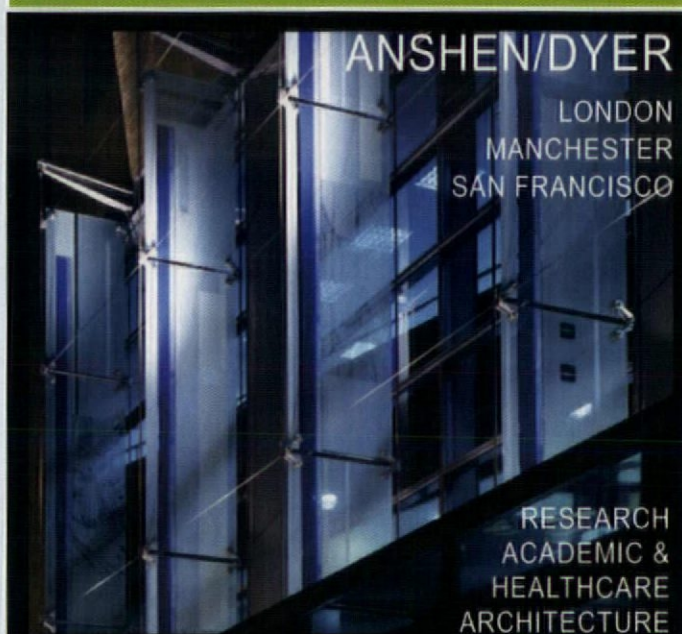
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**Recruitment enquiries**

Charlie Connor  
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Email: charlie.connor@emap.com

Laurie Shenoda  
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Email: laurie.shenoda@emap.com

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Snr Cad Technician	Central London	£to 35K
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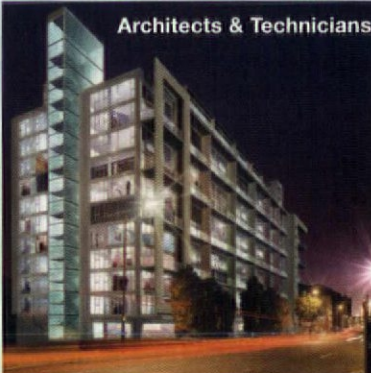
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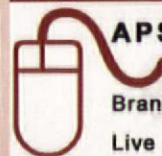
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**Architect & Technician - Newmarket - Contract - £20-25 per hour**

This private practice is currently seeking additional staff due to continued success in the local market. Due to holidays and the success of current projects contract staff is needed to support the practice until November of this year. You will be an all rounder and be able to work on multiple projects at the same time. AutoCAD and detailing skill is essential.

**Architectural Technician - Leamington Spa - Contract - £20 per hour**

This Midlands branch office is seeking contract staff to work on a number of projects which have to be completed during the summer months. You will be an all rounder with an interest in residentially orientated work, skilled in AutoCAD and be confident detailing drawings to UK construction regulations.

**Architectural Technician - London - Perm - £ up to £30K + Benefits**

A leading housing developer is seeking a Technician / Technologist to complement their existing team. To be considered you will need good design and technical skills and be able to demonstrate good communication skills as your main role will be the alteration of detailed / construction drawings to client requirements. If you are keen to make a mark within a large organisation this is the job for you.

**Technologists & Architects - South Manchester - Perm - £25-35K**

To be considered you will be: A Senior Technologist or Architect looking to work on a number of projects in varying sectors. You will have experience in either PFI Leisure Centre projects, Retail or residential mill conversions, Retail/ Business / Leisure Parks, large urban regeneration projects, office refurbishment projects. Micro station literacy is preferred although the client will cross train suitable applicants. This is a fantastic opportunity within a busy and vibrant office.

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Central London

Ref:AJW040628B

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Deadline for applicants 30th July 2004

The Centre for Carnival arts is supported by the National Lottery, through Arts Council England, Luton Borough Council, Luton Dunstable Partnership and Go - East

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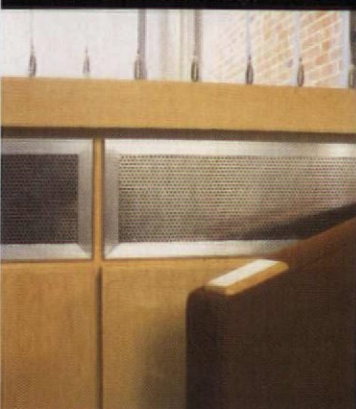
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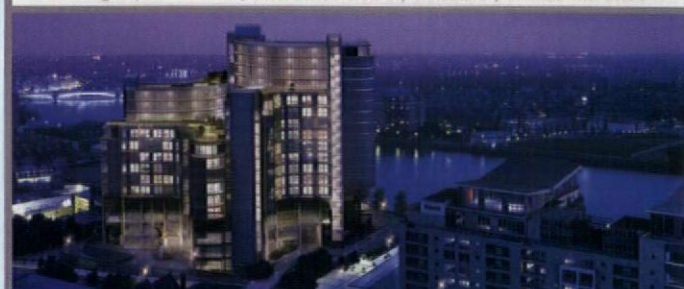
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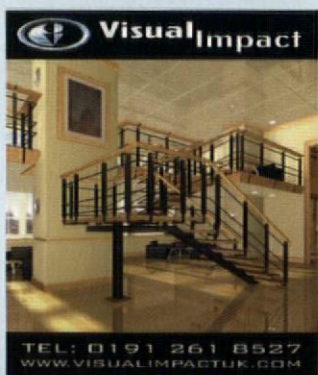
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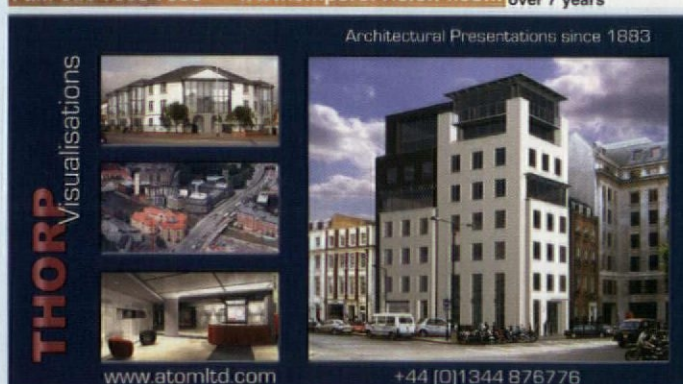
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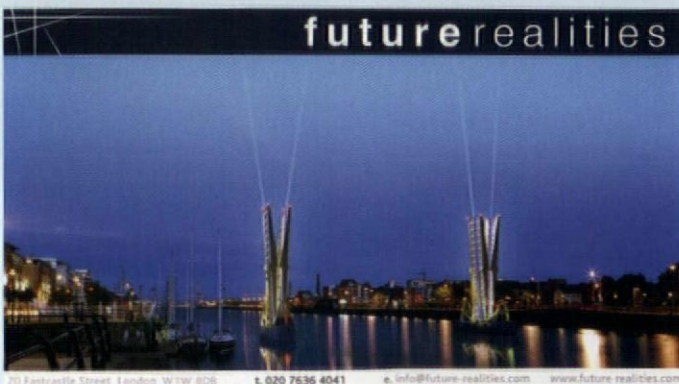
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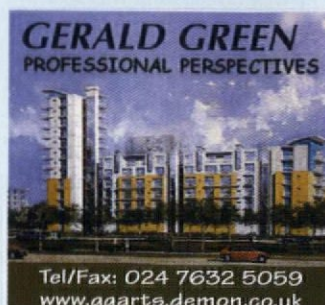
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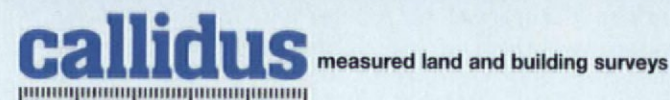
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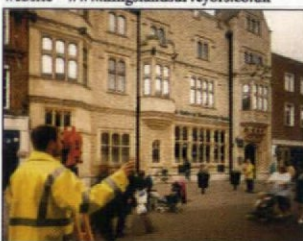
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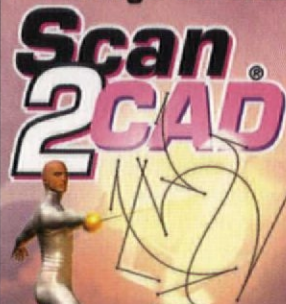
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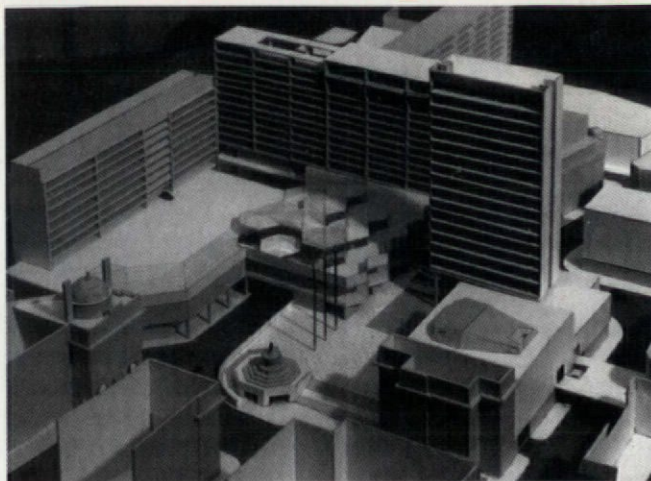
## RIP RRP?

**P**ast and present Architecture Foundation trustees and staff gathered at the home of **Richard and Ruthie Rogers** this week, at a party to mark the end of **Ricky Burdett's** long period as a trustee (he was also the foundation's first director). Of course there was conversation about the future of the foundation but just as much gossip about the future of the Richard Rogers Partnership, subject of some lurid speculation in the press. Here is the classic example of how difficult it can be to carry out successful succession planning. Richard himself is now 70, and has a significant public role in the governance of London and as a Labour peer in the House of Lords, quite apart from spearheading the practice. **Mike Davies** seems content to see out his career on various key projects, including Terminal 5, while **John Young's** long-threatened retirement to the Arizona desert looks as though it has actually happened at last. Which leaves **Marco Goldschmied** looking slightly out of place – suddenly at the age of 60 he is neither old enough to retire (or want to) but not young enough to be part of the new design kids on the Rogers block, ie **Graham Stirk** and **Ivan Harbour**.

## Present company

**M**arco's future has been the subject of much discussion and legal advice in recent weeks. Because of the complicated nature of the RRP structure, which involves a charitable trust and copyright interests in the name of the firm, not to mention ownership of the practice's palatial premises, making fundamental changes is not that easy, at least without plenty of financial analysis. The easiest thing would probably be for Marco to stay at the firm part-time, while pursuing other interests, if that was agreeable to everyone else. At the time of writing, no-one at the practice was saying anything, which suggests either that a deal has not been concluded (amicably), or that the architectural home of Peace and Love can't get its mind round an announcement involving

## the ones that got away



Astragal's 'The Ones That Got Away' competition features schemes that, for better or worse, stayed on the drawing board. Can you identify this project and its architect? Post your entry, to arrive by first thing Monday morning, to AJ Astragal, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, or fax 020 7505 6701. The first correct entry out of the hat wins a bottle of champagne. Last week's winner (AJ 1.7.04) was **Adrian Tofts of Chester**. The never-built scheme was the redevelopment of the **Financial Times building, Bracken House, by John Outram**.

internal conflict and divided loyalties. Either way, it looks like the end of an era. Richard must be thinking about his old mate **Norman Foster**, and how much easier things are when partners leave of their own volition.

## Home crowd

**W**hile the public battle over Marks & Spencer continues apace, the company's flagship 'Lifestyle' in Gateshead will be the centre of attention on Thursday next week. It is the launch venue for CABA's latest initiative to improve standards of housing design, a publication which could make the public more discriminating purchasers. Produced by the Building for Life organisation chaired by designer **Wayne Hemingway**, the publication is called *The Home Buyer's Guide: what to look and ask for when buying a new home* (£7.99). CABA is also launching a new website, [www.thehomebuyersguide.org](http://www.thehomebuyersguide.org), which will provide internet back-up and an ongoing source of information about the benefits of good design and where to find it. Apart from CABA, Building for Life is also supported by the Civic Trust and,

importantly, the House Builders Federation.

## Iconoclastic

**Q**uestioning the status and purpose of architectural 'icons' must be healthy, especially for an architectural media which sometimes seems obsessed by image and little else. **Graham Morrison's** thoughtful analysis at the AJ/Bovis Royal Academy dinner is reported on our news pages this week; there was a piquant moment looking round the room to realise that many of the architect guests present have been responsible for icons up and down the land. It must be said that the Morrison thesis is not that iconic buildings are necessarily bad, but that there must be some distinct valid purpose in the programme to generate what may be an icon. His objection was to the production of an icon as an end in itself. Among those present, **Will Alsop, Peter Cook, Ian Ritchie, Amanda Levete, David Marks and Julia Barfield** and **Farshid Moussavi** have all been responsible for the sort of buildings and structure GM was describing. 'His attitude is one I have been fighting for 40 years,' muttered Cook. 'I always suspected that was

what he [GM] thought and now I know,' said Alsop as he headed for a cigarette break. He probably didn't know that Morrison likes Alsop's icon building for Goldsmith's College. The discussion deserves to run.

## Over the moon

**H**ot on the heels of the London Architecture Biennale (25,000 people attended) and its display of live cows, Manchester has turned to the same theme in an art context for its 'CowParade' event. This features no less than 150 cows appearing on streets, squares and buildings during the next three months, and continues a public art event which has become a worldwide phenomenon, having already taken place in New York, Zurich and Sydney. Architects who have 'designed' cows include **Will Alsop** (it's that man again), **Norman Foster** (his 'Urban Cow' comprises elements that make up urban living today), and **Glen Howells**. The latter has produced a cow with a mosaic pattern from circular tiles, 'thus allowing the architect to follow the contours of the cow resulting in a surface with a constantly shifting plane'. The cow's name is quite a good joke, taken as it is from the shopping centre destroyed by enemy (IRA) action not so long ago: 'Arndale'.

## Gamma blockers

**J**ust as retail design has re-connected with urban design principle, we have the new horror of the urban hospital megastructure, impermeable, alienating and over-scaled. Were some of these (often PFI) proposals anything other than medical facilities, there is no way they would get planning permission. It does not have to be like that, as BDP's **Richard Saxon** points out in a report by the firm on how they do hospitals in France (BDP part-owns a French practice which specialises in hospital design). The report concludes that more generous space standards, use of single rooms and emphasis on daylighting and ventilation make French hospitals better value, costing about the same as here per bedspace but much less per square metre. Government take note.

astragal



## POLYPIPE BUILDING PRODUCTS

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 201**

Polypipe Building Products of Doncaster has launched a new 450mm-diameter manhole cover and frame. Manufactured in polypropylene, this extremely strong and robust yet lightweight cover complies with Approved Document H of the Building Regulations, which stipulates that inspection chambers should have removable non-ventilating covers. Polypipe's manhole cover can also be secured with three screws to deter unauthorised access and is suitable for driveways where up to 35kN loading is permitted.



## HANSENGROUP

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 202**

Fenestration and curtain walling to meet fire-rated and non-fire-rated specifications have been provided by FendorHansen on a contract in Bletchley for main contractor Bluestone. The building features the FendorHansen



FineLine system, which forms entrance screens and the ribbon windows running around first-floor level. For a new FendorHansen technical guide to fire and security glazing systems call 0191 438 3222 or email [sales@fendorhansen.co.uk](mailto:sales@fendorhansen.co.uk)

## HANSON BUILDING PRODUCTS

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 203**

Hanson Building Products has launched a new brochure illustrating its outstanding range of traditional quality stock-facing bricks suitable for a wide range of applications, from new housing and renovation to commercial projects.



Of the three main brick types manufactured by Hanson – wirecuts, stocks and flettons – the fashionable brick for homes of distinction remains the traditional stock.

## SIKA

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 204**

The Trocal and VW Golf brands share a common bond: Trocal roofing systems are being installed on VW dealerships in the UK. The latest is a roof refurbishment for the dealership



in Avondale Road in Bromley, Kent. Trocal S 1.5mm single-ply roofing membranes from market leader Sika were specified to waterproof a 200m<sup>2</sup> flat-roofed extension at the dealership.

## BRITISH GYPSUM-ISOVER

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 205**

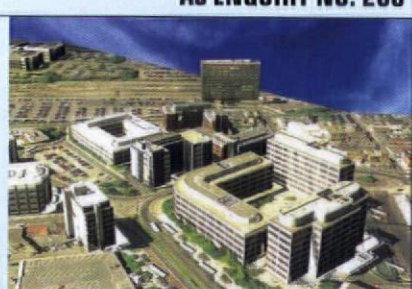
High-performance HVAC glass mineral-wool insulation produced by British Gypsum-Isover has been specified and installed in the City of London's 'Erotic Gherkin'. Isowool pipe insulation was used extensively throughout the 42-storey building and will provide thermal and acoustic insulation of the heating and ventilation pipework. Isowool pipe insulation consists of strong yet lightweight 'snap-on' sections manufactured from non-combustible mineral wool.



## BLUESKY

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 206**

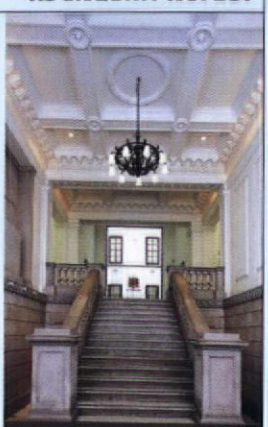
An innovative service for creating highly realistic three-dimensional visualisations of proposed developments has been launched by BlueSky. Using space-age computer imaging technology and the latest high-resolution aerial photography, different designs can be viewed from any angle and direction as part of a real-world visualisation. Specially developed three-dimensional Skyline software also provides interactive fly-throughs that can be viewed on the Web.



## BRITISH GYPSUM

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 207**

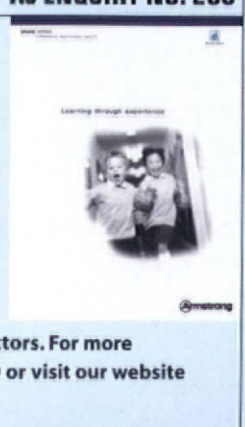
The multimillion-pound phase one refurbishment of the landmark Treasury building in London's Whitehall has won first place in an international competition to find the best plastering project in the world during the past two years. The work, which was carried out using massive quantities of Thistle plasters and associated products from British Gypsum, is thought to be the largest re-plastering project ever undertaken in the UK, and has taken plastering contractor BDL Group two years to complete.



## ARMSTRONG CEILINGS

**AJ ENQUIRY NO: 208**

Effective acoustic solutions for education are increasingly under the spotlight, where poor acoustics impair the learning process and interfere with the ability of teachers and pupils alike to communicate. With its direct experience of the UK's largest PFI education project, Armstrong Ceilings, the world's leading manufacturer of ceiling systems, has produced two new binders for acoustic solutions in education, one of which is designed specifically for PFI contractors. For more information, call on freephone 0800 371 849 or visit our website at [www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk](http://www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk)





# new ideas new visions

November 17-19 2004, Cannes

The first annual Retail Future Project Awards at MAPIC has been launched to recognise innovative and visionary retail projects that are yet to be completed, and still at the design and/or build stage.

We are looking for inspiring entries that cover a broad spectrum of retail projects and developments that respond to the issues the retail industry is facing today. The focus of the awards is to recognise the future projects that on completion will be ground-breaking, and illustrate ideas and concepts that will energise and drive the procurement of the retail development of the future.

**Deadline for entries: Friday October 1 2004**

For sponsorship information, call  
Helen Kwiecinska on +44 (0)20 7505 3523

## Categories

### **Best Retail Development Scheme – Small**

Shops, small developments, small schemes  
or a supermarket up to 8,000 sq m

### **Best Retail Development Scheme – Medium**

Stores, medium-sized developments,  
supermarkets – 8,000 to 20,000 sq m

### **Best Retail Development Scheme – Large**

Major stores, large developments, hypermarkets  
and superstore developments over 20,000 sq m

### **Best Use of Lighting in a Retail Environment**

Supported by: **ZUMTOBEL STAFF**

### **Most Innovative Interior Design for a Retail Development**

### **Best Application of IT in a Retail Development**

### **Best of Show Future Project Award**

**For full entry details and criteria, visit [www.retailfutureprojects.com](http://www.retailfutureprojects.com)**  
or call Tina Covill on +44 (0)7792 714434 email: [tina@battle-associates.co.uk](mailto:tina@battle-associates.co.uk)

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