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I ALWAYS THINK I KNOW THE STIRLING BUILDINGS WELL. I AM INVARIABLY WRONG

By Isabel Allen

One of the odder corollaries of being a member of the Stirling jury is that you spend all year studiously trying *not* to visit any building which you think might end up on the shortlist. Wrongly or rightly, the perceived wisdom is that the judging process itself is more equitable and fun if all of the judges are visiting each of the buildings for the very first time. Since most of the buildings have been published in the AJ, I am always quietly confident that I know them pretty well. I am invariably proved wrong.

I first became aware of this discrepancy between promise and reality on a student trip to Mendelsohn's Einstein Tower. We arrived expecting the brutal outside curves suggested by the thick black lines of the architect's iconic sketches. Where the drawings depict a powerful essay in expressionism towering over the landscape, the reality nestles, rather cosily, in a circle of trees. The staircase which rises through that monumental tower is actually

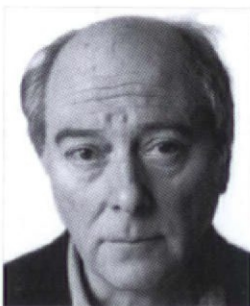
rather cramped. It is curvy, granted, but in a homely sort of way; more girl-next-door than Amazon princess.

The proliferation of photography has done little to combat architecture's stout refusal to be captured within the confines of the page. I have yet to come across a photographer who can capture, say, the ever-unfolding vistas of a walk through a Carlo Scarpa building or the constantly changing natural light which dances through Alvar Aalto's work. And it has done little to combat the tendency to convey architecture as uninhabited sculpture. The energy of Mendelsohn's lines would not have carried such force had he not chosen to depict his building devoid of people – or any other 'clutter' which might convey a sense of scale.

The fact that the shortlisted buildings consistently confound expectations is symptomatic of the gulf between architectural publishing and architecture itself.



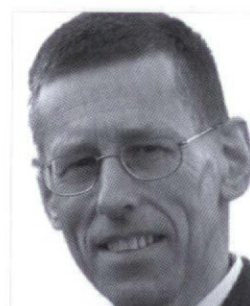
CONTRIBUTORS



Mel Gooding, who writes about Jože Plečnik on pages 28-31, is the author of a number of books on 20th-century art



Edward Jones, who also writes about Plečnik's design work in Ljubljana on page 39, is a partner in Dixon Jones

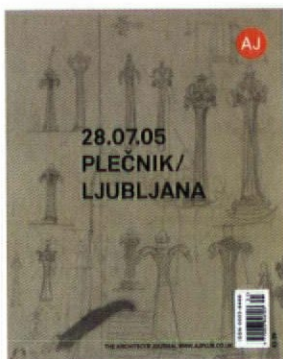


Robert Cowan, who reviews Deyan Sudjic's new book, *The Edifice Complex*, on pages 60-61, is director of the Urban Design Group

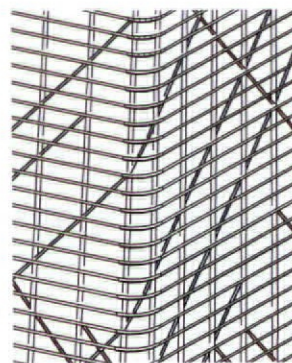
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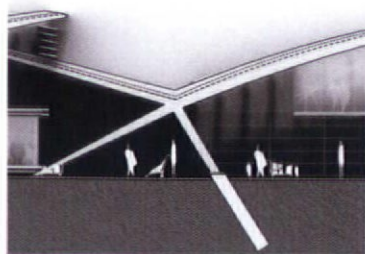
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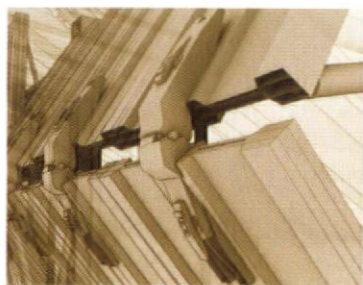
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This week:

- See the six projects shortlisted for the Stirling Prize at www.ajplus.co.uk/riba2005
- Debate EH's attitude to development at www.ajplus.co.uk/forum
- Six breaking news stories a day at www.ajplus.co.uk/news
- Competition details at www.ajplus.co.uk/awardscomps
- Events diary at www.ajplus.co.uk/diary
- Latest jobs at www.ajplus.co.uk/jobs

Next week, the AJ takes a break. The next issue is out on 11 August. Our daily online news service will continue

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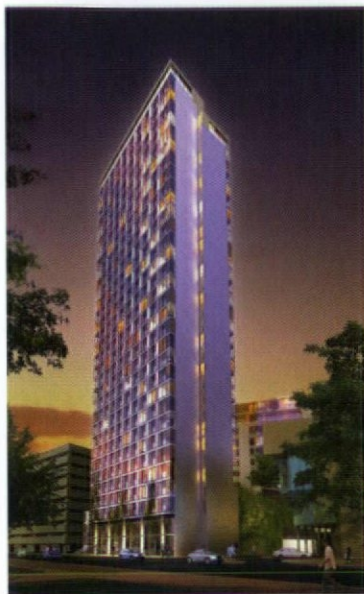
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CONRAN SKYSCRAPER REJECTED

Sheffield's planners have turned down Conran and Partners' proposed 33-storey city centre skyscraper. The 322-apartment tower on Arundel Gate was to become the tallest building in South Yorkshire but the city's planning committee rejected the scheme because it was too high and 'of insufficient quality and distinction'.

GOVERNMENT PLANS LISTING RULES SHAKE-UP

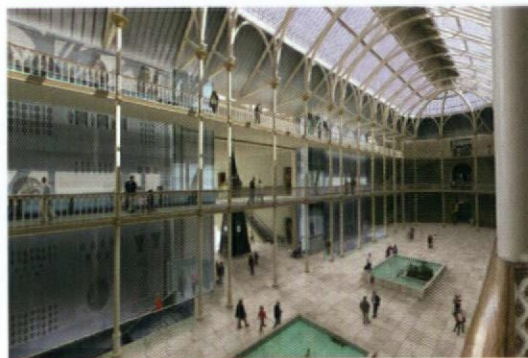
The government has revealed plans which would radically transform the criteria used to decide whether or not a building should be listed. On Monday culture minister David Lammy and ODPM minister Baroness Andrews unveiled the proposals, which they argue will clarify the methods used by English Heritage to decide listing cases. Both politicians insisted that the reforms – which are now open for public consultation – would neither increase nor decrease the number of buildings that find themselves on the list.

BATTLE OVER BIRMINGHAM LIBRARY

The row over the plans for a new library in Birmingham has developed further this week. Firstly, the new Conservative city council unveiled plans for a split facility over two sites in the city, a move that finally officially scuppered Richard Rogers' proposals, and secondly, the opposition Labour group vowed to resuscitate Rogers' controversial scheme if it won back power.

C20 FIRES OFF A SALVO IN COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE LISTING WAR

The Twentieth Century Society has hit back in a strongly worded war being waged over the Grade II*-listed Commonwealth Institute. After culture secretary Tessa Jowell informed the Commonwealth Secretariat of her decision not to delist the building, in London's Holland Park, Commonwealth Institute directors were rumoured to be considering a judicial review to contest the issue. Twentieth Century Society caseworker Cordula Zeidler said that they were 'over-reacting'.



ROME HOBBOLED BY COBBLES

Officials in Rome have admitted that they are being forced to dig up the city's historic cobbled streets in an effort to protect its monuments and buildings. Civil servants in the Culture Ministry have become increasingly concerned about the damage being inflicted on the city's heritage by vibrations caused by trucks and buses as they rattle over the cobblestones.

HOSKINS SCOOPS £16.8M LOTTO GRANT

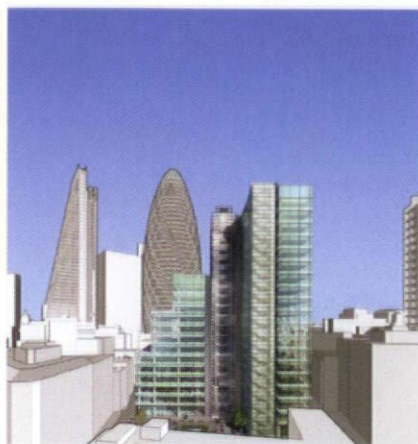
Gareth Hoskins Architects has won Scotland's biggest ever grant from the National Lottery. The practice has picked up £16.8 million to put towards the £44 million Royal Museum scheme, which will completely revamp the Grade A-listed Edinburgh museum.

HOUSING AID FOR GRENADA

International charity Architecture for Humanity has launched a rescue bid for some of the thousands of inhabitants of the island of Grenada, in the Caribbean, after they were left homeless by Hurricane Emily. The organisation – set up by British architect Cameron Sinclair – is attempting to send a batch of prefabricated emergency housing to help the community, which was devastated by the hurricane last week.

TOWER TO GO UP IN CITY OF LONDON

This 19-storey office development by Sheppard Robson has got planning permission from the Corporation of London. The 32,070m² building in the City features three types of glazing and comprises a single element cascading into three lower sections.



OFT PROBES REGISTER

The Office of Fair Trading has been asked to investigate the Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC) register for potentially anti-competitive practices. According to a document seen by the AJ, there are growing concerns about whether architects will continue receiving grant-aid handouts from English Heritage if they are not on the AABC list.

PLANNING LESSONS LEARNED IN YORK

Lessons learned from Chapman Taylor's doomed Coppergate scheme in York (AJ 18.09.03) have been incorporated into new planning guidelines for the city's historic Castle Piccadilly area. Following discussions with CABE and English Heritage, York council has drawn up a draft document 'to guide prospective developers' on proposed schemes near the famous Clifford's Tower.

NLA MODEL EXHIBITION OPENS

The opening of the New London Architecture exhibition, postponed three weeks ago because of the first wave of terrorist attacks on London, finally went ahead on Tuesday evening. The permanent exhibition, which is on show at the Building Centre in Store Street, features a giant architectural model showing all the major projects proposed for the capital.

REVOLUTIONARY TARIFF ON HOUSES

Developer Gallagher Estates has been awarded planning consent for 1,400 homes at Broughton Gate on the east of Milton Keynes, an agreement that sees the birth of a new form of planning gain dubbed 'roof tax'. The Milton Keynes Partnership gave the go-ahead on the basis the developer would 'trailblaze' the revolutionary infrastructure tariff.

NEW ADVICE CENTRE BUILT

Recently renamed practice Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands has just completed this 'portable' advice centre in Bermondsey. The 875m² single-storey building for Southwark council will house the authority's One Stop Shop customer services for up to five years while permanent facilities are developed. The £1.55 million building's lightweight roof is supported on trusses spanning 22.5m.



MP SLAMS CROSSRAIL

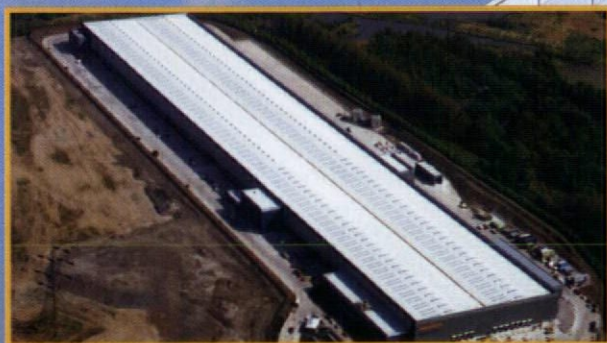
Controversial Respect MP George Galloway has slated London's Crossrail project, claiming work on the rail link could have the same effect on London's East End as 'a major bombing raid'. Speaking at the second reading of the Crossrail Bill, the MP for Bethnal Green and Bow said his constituency had been chosen to host the cross-London rail project because it is a 'political pushover'.

THE NEW AJ NEWS SERVICE

All AJ subscribers are now able to view a special news service accessed online. All the biggest architectural news stories will be delivered to your inbox in the form of a daily email newsletter and can also be seen at www.ajplus.co.uk. And every week in the pages of the AJ the news team analyses the biggest stories and the most important events. If you have forgotten the details you need to activate your online subscription, call 01858 438847 and ask for your password to access the new website.

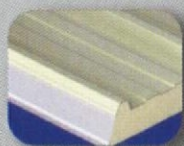
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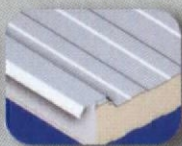


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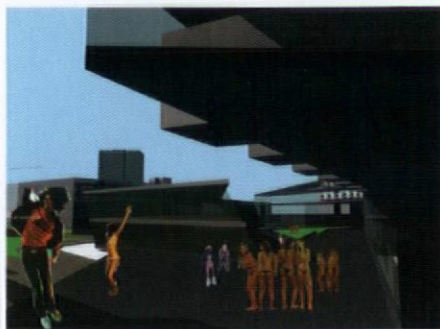
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Andy Hassell is a part-time student at the University of Central England in Birmingham in his second undergraduate year. The title of his project is 'Caravan Paradise'. The idea is to create a fashionable urban space in the developing area of Paradise Circus in Birmingham city centre with the addition of student accommodation. He has chosen to use refurbished caravans as his accommodation, as they are cheap, environmentally friendly and mobile. It also allows for a tourist site in the centre of Birmingham, especially in the summer when students have broken up.



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AP ARCHIVE/RIBA

ROW OVER BATTERSEA STACKS

By Rob Sharp

Conservationists have claimed that Battersea Power Station's iconic chimneys could have been saved from demolition if those charged with protecting them had acted earlier.

The Battersea Power Station Community Group (BPSCG), with the Twentieth Century Society, claims not enough has been done to protect Giles Gilbert Scott's iconic stacks.

The BPSCG also questioned a report by engineer Buro Happold, whose advice was used to justify a planning application by developer Parkview International to demolish the chimneys.

English Heritage (EH) is only now studying the stacks since joining a steering group in 2004 to assess and fix them.

EH London region director Philip Davies tried to reassure

the BPSCG of the building's safety in a letter last year. He wrote that EH was visiting the site regularly to 'ensure that there is not rapid deterioration that may put at risk the viability of the future restoration proposals'.

BPSCG member and conservation architect Keith Garner slammed this pledge. He told the AJ: 'Davies has failed in his aim. EH could have laid down the law a lot earlier. They've not been diligent in making Parkview look after the building. If Parkview had started a phased series of repairs since taking charge of the building in 1993 there would have been a much better chance of saving the chimneys. The results of this report are questionable.'

The author of the report, structural engineer and Buro

Happold associate Jim Solomon, denies anything more could have been done to save the stacks. He claims a high level of chloride in the concrete has been there from the beginning. This could be because the water used was Thames saltwater, he said.

Parkview International lodged a planning application with Wandsworth council on 11 July to redevelop the building, including permission to rebuild the chimneys. The developer's director of design development, Steve Kennard, has claimed commercial issues prevented a full survey until recently.

He said: 'We have always known that the building's fabric generally was in a poor state and that there were problems with the chimneys.'

'We have reached the conclusion that we need to

demolish the chimneys after a two-year examination of the whole building. Annex B was leased to the London Electricity Board until spring 2003. Once we had the whole building back we had the opportunity to survey it, including the chimneys. That process cost a great deal of money and was related to the commercial certainty of the project.'

EH issued a statement saying: 'We have been working with developer Parkview International and Wandsworth council over the last two years to develop proposals for the reuse of the power station. We have also been closely involved in carrying out detailed investigations into its structural condition. The findings of these studies have been used to inform proposals for the repair and restoration of the building.'

STIRLING PRIZE SHORTLIST

STIRLING SIX EYE TOP PRIZE

Six schemes, ranging from a PFI library in Brighton by Bennetts Associates to the highly contentious Scottish Parliament by RMJM and Enric Miralles, have made it onto the Stirling Shortlist 2005.

The list, which is revealed for the first time this week by the AJ, also features the BMW Central Building in Leipzig – Zaha Hadid's first Stirling-shortlisted scheme – and the McLaren Technology Centre, by Foster and Partners.

The remaining schemes chasing the biggest prize in British architecture – to be announced in Edinburgh on 15 October – are O'Donnell + Tuomey's Lewis Glucksman Gallery in Cork and Alsop Design's Fawood Children's Centre.

Perhaps the rank outsider for the award will be the Brighton Library, the first PFI scheme to make it this far in the competition since Michael Wilford's British Embassy in Berlin in 2001.

Also unlikely to be a favourite with the bookies is Alsop's Fawood Children's Centre in north-west London which, although considered successful, has probably not made the impact of most previous winners.

The two favourites in this year's batch are Zaha's almost universally praised BMW scheme and the infinitely more controversial Scottish Parliament.

There can be no denying that the enormous project has attracted almost as many bad reviews as good since it finally opened at the end of last year but cynics will point to the fact that the Stirling awards evening is being held in the Scottish capital.

This leaves O'Donnell + Tuomey's Cork gallery and the McLaren centre by Foster. Both would certainly be accepted as winners, with the Irish scheme celebrated for its classy design and Foster's building playing to the office specialists.

One of the most discussed aspects of the Stirling shortlist is the omissions. This year is unlikely to be an exception, with Foster's Millau Viaduct failing to make the list. Why it has been omitted is not clear but the extent of the contribution to the design process by engineer Michel Virlogeux could well be the answer.

Only one thing is certain and that is that nothing is certain. It will all come down to the judging panel – made up of AJ editor Isabel Allen, environmental engineer Max Fordham, architect Piers Gough, RIBA president Jack Pringle and journalist Joan Bakewell – when they decide on the night.

By Ed Dorrell

THE SHORTLIST

Brighton Library
Bennetts Associates

McLaren Technology Centre
Foster and Partners

BMW Central Building
Zaha Hadid Architects

Lewis Glucksman Gallery
O'Donnell + Tuomey

Fawood Children's Centre
Alsop Design

Scottish Parliament
RMJM and EMBT

THE BEST OF THE REST

The following schemes made it to the Stirling Prize longlist:

Norwich Cathedral Refectory
Hopkins Architects

Abode, Newhall, Parcel 1B
Proctor and Matthews

Millau Viaduct
Foster and Partners, with engineer Michel Virlogeux

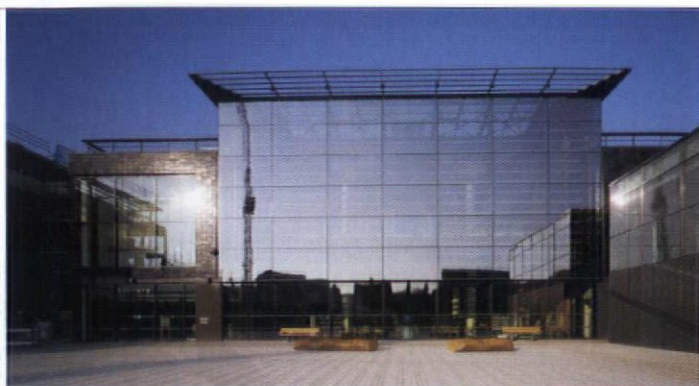
The Sage
Foster and Partners

Mossbourne Community Academy
Richard Rogers Partnership

House at Clonaikilty
Niall McLaughlin Architects

The Orangery
Spacelabuk

PETER COOK/VIEW

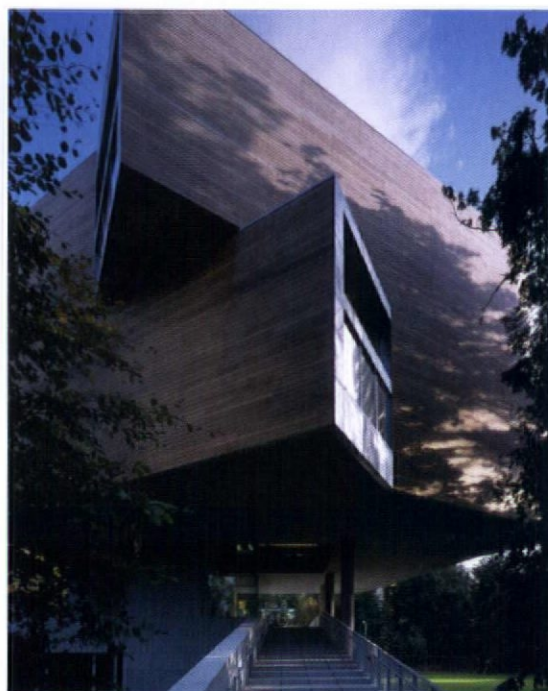


Brighton Library, Bennetts Associates

KEITH HUNTER



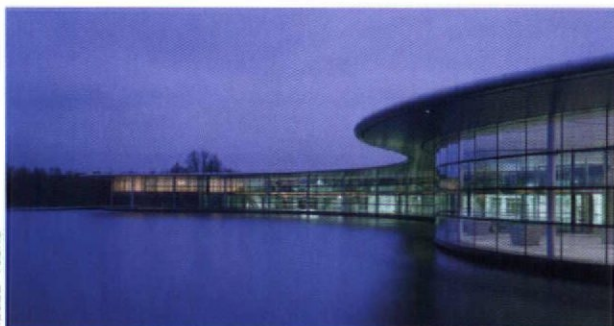
Scottish Parliament, RMJM and EMBT



DENNIS GILBERT/VIEW

Lewis Glucksman Gallery, O'Donnell + Tuomey

NIGEL YOUNG

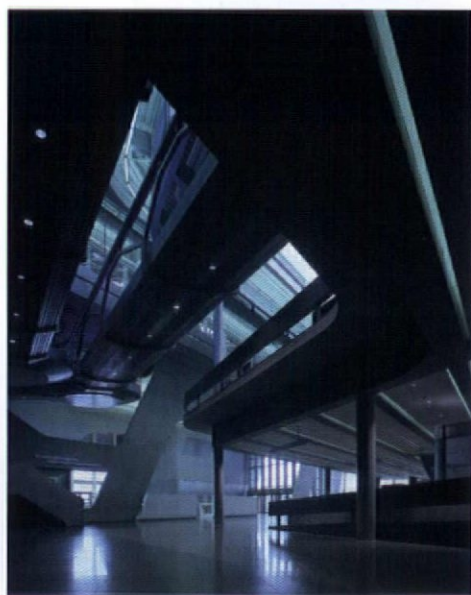


McLaren Technology Centre, Foster and Partners

RODERICK COYNE



Fawood Children's Centre, Alsop Design



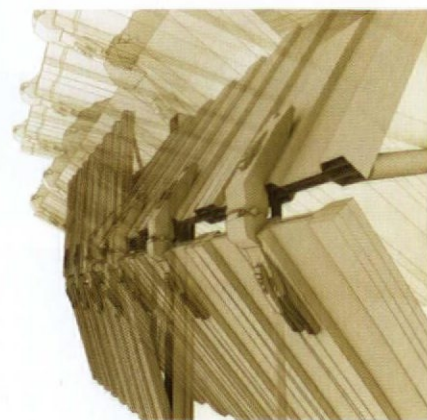
HÉLÈNE BINET

BMW Central Building,
Zaha Hadid Architects

FACILITY MAKES RECYCLING TRACKS IN SOUTHWARK

Up-and-coming practice The Facility has joined the embryonic container construction industry with this attempt to improve a community cycle track in Southwark, south London. The focus of the scheme is a series of recycled shipping containers. These will be converted into a new two-storey building housing a café, workshops, WCs, secure storage and viewing spaces. The building can be 'opened up' and will feature roofs and shutters which pivot on hydraulic gaskets, as well as moveable walls. The project will also incorporate photovoltaic cells and a reed-bed system to process waste water. Fresh from winning the 'Light at the End of The Tunnel' competition to transform neglected railway arches, the firm has teamed up with designers Part Four and the Burgess Park Cycle Track to deliver the not-for-profit Freedom Cycle and Skate Project. Architect Steve Fitzwilliam said: 'An important aspect of the project will be to encourage local schools, colleges and community groups to become part of the design team. Six workshops will seek to encourage young people to be involved in making changes to their own environments.' The team is currently making applications to the Arts Council and the Big Lottery Fund to help finance the project.

By Richard Waite



1.

- 1. A hinge detail
- 2. Recycled containers
- 3. The present site



3.



2.

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1. KPF's tower at pedestrian level
2. View of Bishopsgate Tower from St Paul's

1.

TOWERING POINTS OF VIEW

By Rob Sharp

Many powerful eyes will be focused on a significant building consultation that starts this week at the Corporation of London. KPF's Bishopsgate Tower – of which the AJ published the first images after a planning application was made on 22 June (AJ 23.06.05) – is to face widespread scrutiny.

A plethora of issues colour any consultation – and this process becomes more critical when the building in question is several hundred metres tall. The new proposals would dwarf the 183m-high Tower 42, currently the City's tallest building. It would also eclipse the nearby Swiss Re building (180m), and would be only two metres shorter than Renzo Piano's proposed London Bridge Tower, or 'Shard of Glass', which has already been granted planning permission.

Sight lines, whether the structure fits into a cluster and how it meshes with pedestrian environments are all important considerations. They all have to be acceptable if the statutory consultees are to be brought onside. Given the changing shape of the variegated blanket that now swathes London, what are some of the current crucial visual impact issues which need to be debated when seeing such a mammoth building project safely home?

Peter Stewart, design consultant and former director of design review with CABE, splits these questions into 'top and bottom' issues. Bottom issues comprise ground-level design; the question of pedestrian environments around the building's base. Tall and thin buildings don't have as much room for the provision of

services or make such an agreeable pedestrian experience – but land is at a premium.

All eyes will also be on the top of the building – the head and shoulders of a landmark, poking its nose above the masses and which can be seen for miles around. The KPF landmark in question, also known as 'DIFA tower', will be 307m high and comprise 88,000m² of offices, shops and public space if it goes up. So no one is going to miss it. 'A building with a similar amount of space but that is 12 storeys is not going to make the same impact. The interesting thing is what views it will affect, and that needs to be illustrated thoroughly,' says Stewart.

Photorealistic visualisations will help determine whether the new structure will detract attention from London's



2.

surrounding historical buildings, especially from a distance. Stewart continues: 'The main sites which [such a building would] affect will be those of St Paul's and the Palace of Westminster. These views are considered not just in terms of potential obstruction but also in terms of the effect these new skyscrapers might have on the visual impact of historical buildings.' He highlights the view from Waterloo Bridge along the river as one of particular significance.

Richard Coleman, tall building consultant and self-professed pro-development conservationist, is more concerned about the new tower's relationship with William Tite's Royal Exchange – once the lynchpin of bustling City commerce, the clunking rattle of merchants' money now

translated into the screams of the Stock Exchange when the FTSE crashes.

Coleman says: 'It seems that the new building is on the axis in line with the Royal Exchange's portico and eastern end – [where rounded corners sandwich two attached and two detached giant columns] – a line which corresponds to the location on which the new building would be constructed.' Presumably by total chance, one of the most historically important buildings in the City is in line with what could become the tallest.

Coleman refers to an ongoing cluster of buildings being approved by the Corporation of London in EC3 – a host of tower permissions still to be built such as KPF's 183m-tall Heron Tower (on another part of Bishopsgate)

Nicholas Grimshaw's 217m-tall Minerva Tower, and Richard Rogers' 225m-tall Leadenhall Building. This cluster would be topped off by an apex formed by the 307m-tall KPF tower at its centre. The construction of the Bishopsgate tower would bring form to this cluster of buildings, says Coleman.

The consultant is keen to hark back to the work of the capital's skyscraper pioneer, Richard Seifert, the father of Tower 42. He sums up KPF's inheritance of Seifert's 'crown' – in terms of the design of tall towers – with optimism: 'I'm rather pleased about [these new designs]. The new building looks like it has the level of generosity of spirit that such a central building should have. It will give form to something that would appear disparate without it.'

It seems that KPF is winning plaudits, although it needs to please political heavyweights in the mayor of London's office, as well as the likes of English Heritage.

The fact that this sculpted glazed tower nestles neatly in its context in London's eastern cluster, and will stay out of key views such as that of St Paul's dome from Ludgate Hill, has caused it to fare well so far.

Coleman already has the certainty of this permission clear in his mind. 'The only building it could potentially impact on is the Royal Exchange, but it's probably going to go through the planning system quite easily,' he predicts. KPF better hope that, like Coleman, the rest of the consultees are seeing this mammoth tower with such a positive agenda.



The Mersey Crossing could be scrapped as government funding is pumped into Olympic projects in London

REGIONS FACE GAMES CASH DRAIN

By Richard Waite

London lands the 2012 Olympics and a building boom engulfs the Lower Lea Valley. Sue Barker and Steve Cram are delighted at not having to go to Paris. Happy days.

Hang on a minute, though. I can hear worried rumblings from the regions. Seb Coe and co be warned. Now the euphoria has died down, concern is growing among business leaders that the Olympics will drain cash from much-needed projects around the country.

Despite government assurances, there are increasing fears that schemes reliant on public funding could be in danger of losing out as cash is pumped into the capital.

One of the schemes which has already been highlighted as 'under threat' is the new – but stalling – Mersey Crossing

between Runcorn and Widnes. Jack Stopforth, chief executive of Liverpool's chamber of commerce, said: 'We simply cannot afford for that to be sacrificed for the Olympics.'

'In terms of the government's capital programme, we are not just talking about Olympic villages. We are talking about the whole infrastructure, including transport projects like Crossrail.'

He added: 'We cannot do all that at the expense of everything else that's going on in the rest of England.'

The chief executive of the Greater Manchester chamber of commerce, Angie Robinson, is also being pragmatic about the knock-on effects. She said: '[It] is always possible that more money will be ploughed into the South East now because of the Olympics and several

members have expressed concerns, particularly regarding the Manchester Metrolink expansion plan. It would be a shame if regeneration plans were delayed or halted by the Games.'

The message is that architects, authorities and developers must get cracking to avoid missing out on government funding – money which, up until now, has been sitting waiting to be grabbed.

Robinson continued: 'We should be doing this anyway to secure the future of the North West.'

'But the Olympics may cause people to work harder and more cooperatively to be certain not to lose funding.'

For Manchester, Robinson believes the future is to become less dependent on funding from sources such as the North West Development Agency and veer towards self-sufficiency.

However, even this may not stop the inevitable siphoning of skills into the better-paid capital. Robinson added: '[A] drain of construction skills to London could be a serious problem for the region.'

'If a massive earnings differential appears, this could have a huge slowing down effect on construction in the whole of the North West.'

Not everyone is convinced the Olympics is a bad thing. A spokesman for the Birmingham Chamber said: 'Anyone who whines or whinges about it is just being ridiculous.'

'The Games will be absolutely brilliant for everyone in the country.'

Clearly the regions need to get out of the blocks pretty quickly. Any dawdling now and the race for the government's 'gold' could already be lost.

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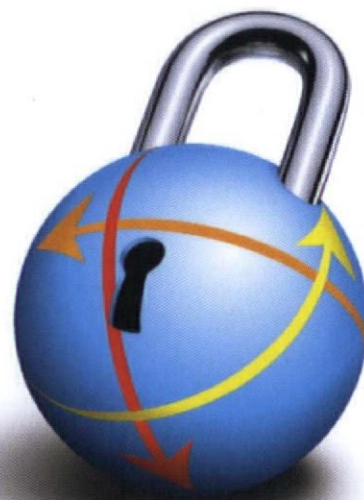
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'Gehry's buildings bloom like flowers – and maybe they will fade. I don't think anyone thinks Renzo's buildings are coming down so fast'

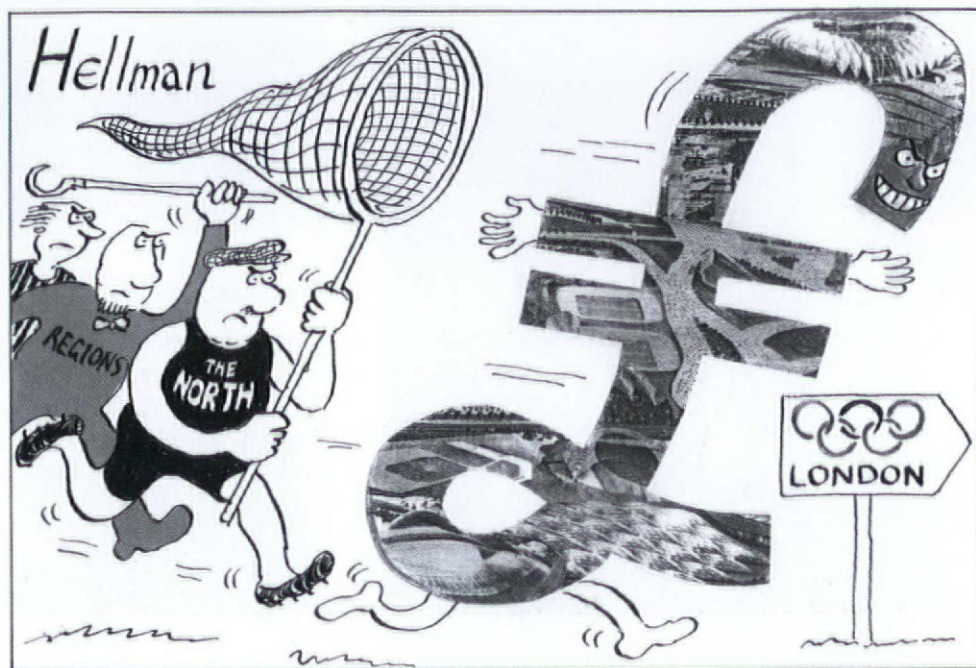
AIA executive director
Rick Bell, *Observer*,
24.07.05

'A decision so epically dumb it will leave future generations goggling in disbelief'

Rowan Moore on John Prescott's approval of the Vauxhall Tower, *London Evening Standard*, 20.07.05

'I have often wondered whether Price's reputation far outstripped his talent. This exhibition has done nothing to change my views'

Edwin Heathcote on the Design Museum's Cedric Price show. *Financial Times*, 22.07.05



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BETWEEN THE LINES

Punters swilled Belgian beer at the opening of the **Office for Subversive Architecture's** (OSA's) temporary installation at Broadgate Circle last week. **Karsten Huneck** and **Bernd Trümpler** – two of the founders of OSA – were there, as was a group from **Fosters**. The installation, called 'urban oasis', was turf with the white lines of the plan of a pub painted on it. The full effect of the work could not be seen by those at the party, just those who stood for tipples in the surrounding drinking dens. Ooh, the irony.

ASKED FOR A TASK

Workers at **London Open House** were knocked off their feet last week when they received a call from the programme makers putting together the next series of *The Apprentice*, the show

hosted by entrepreneur **Alan Sugar**. Apparently the production team wants the charity to put on a task for the keen contestants taking part. Constructing a house of cards on the edge of a cliff, perhaps?

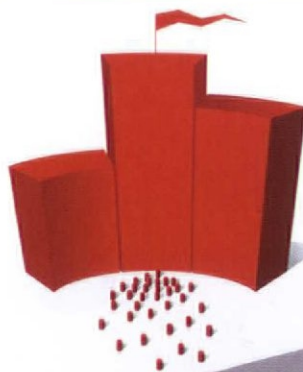
IT'S HALL GOING WRONG

A bad few months for **Lord Hollick**, the boss of the South Bank Centre (SBC). Problems started earlier this year with a spat triggered by accusations Hollick wanted to increase rent for the site of **Marks Barfield's** London Eye by some astronomical rate. This led to **Ken Livingstone** calling the SBC chairman a 'prat'. Now rumours abound that **Allies and Morrison's** overhaul of the Royal Festival Hall has hit a series of problems, including asbestos, that have set the project back six months. The

national papers are bringing Hollick's name into this fresh controversy. Considering **Tony Blair** appointed Hollick because he was media-savvy, it all seems odd that it is going so wrong.

CIVIC PRIDE

The eyes of the world are on Castleford. The regeneration of the Yorkshire town has attracted Channel 4, which is making a show about the project. According to its website, the channel 'chose to work [on the scheme] because of the... unusual pride people in Cas have.' Did it notice vandals had defaced the centrepiece of **Martha Schwartz's** village green before it was unveiled? Pictures taken prior to the opening of the park clearly show graffiti down the side of the scheme's main sculpture. That certainly is 'unusual' pride.



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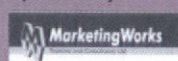
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WE HAVE AT LEAST 40 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS HATE THAT WILL EVENTUALLY END UP IN A REVOLUTION

While visiting Nottingham Trent University recently I was shown the building that was originally built as an art school. It's a magnificent Victorian structure that has proved to be a convincing place in which to make art.

Adjacent to this temple to creativity is a 1950s extension that my guide confessed he used to hate but was now beginning to appreciate. The building is a good example of '50s style in brick, with metal windows and thin slightly projecting hints of concrete. I would guess that it was built when my friend the guide was aged about 10, and is therefore in a style synonymous with his early youth.

I remember my father, who was born in 1885, hating late Victorian architecture with a passion. He always associated it with an age of depression. He never did come round to changing his view.

I wonder what work today will become hated by our current 10-12-year-olds. Is there a style that is synonymous with the early 21st century? In architecture proper I suspect there is not. We seem to be building edifices that are quite distinct from each other, which, at their best, reflect an enlarged

sense of enquiry, range of materials and new technologies. Our young people will be able to hate the singular, as opposed to a style. If, however, we consider the house as an example we do find there is a current style which can be found in great numbers littering the edges of our towns and cities.

The volume house builders are constantly creating the norm that our young will hate with alacrity. Sadly, the norm of the 'noughties' is much the same as the '90s, '80s and '70s, which means we have at least 40 years of continuous hate that will eventually end up in a revolution. This 'market led' vernacular is ironically not loved by the market, it is just that the market does not have any choice.

In the context of the Thames Gateway, there is a very real danger that throughout the 'noughties' and the 'teenies' thousands of these lumps of hatred will be deposited in an indiscriminate manner all along the Thames and into Essex. The driving force to build at all would be the apparent need for homes in the South East, as opposed to homes, jobs and the creation of a proper place. The government would rather

deliver its numbers than be seen to frustrate that goal by embarking on a proper debate about the opportunity and the nature of the place and urbanism today.

In 2025 our disgruntled, ill-educated 12-year-olds will wonder what on earth we thought we were doing along the Thames when we knew so much, harboured such talent and had an economy that could deliver something better, more exciting and more engaging than we did.

If we are so good, why don't we do something better?

From seat 14k, flight number BA678 to Istanbul.

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EH IN DEVELOPMENT SECTOR COMMITMENT

Let no one who reads your piece 'The Conservation Compromise' (AJ 07.05.05) be in any doubt. English Heritage is absolutely committed to working positively with the development sector, not in order to appease government but because we are a constructive organisation and this is the very best way of ensuring that the best of England's past has a place in the future.

The 'constructive conservation' I am calling for is not a compromise with developers – we will still say 'no' when we have to – but the latest part of a programme of modernisation that has already made our response time for planning consent applications 25 per cent faster than last year and brought about a surge in pre-application discussions. It is about relying much more on partnership and strategic engagement, focusing on speed and flexibility, guaranteeing clarity and consistency of advice and developing better commercial awareness and customer service.

Our heritage sector partners are with us on this. What we all want is a code of conservation based on respect, understanding and dialogue which does not lessen or change current levels of protection. As I said in my speech at the launch of our five-year strategy, our aim is to improve the way people understand, value, care for and enjoy their heritage. This is not political correctness. This is why we exist.

Dr Simon Thurley, chief executive, English Heritage, London W1

For a full version of this letter, and to respond online, go to www.ajplus.co.uk/forum

RAISING THE GREEN ROOF ISSUE IS SIMPLE

I was amused to find myself branded as a 'green-roof zealot' by Austin Williams in his report on the AJ green roofs conference (AJ 07.07.05). However, Williams' cynicism seems to have led him to misunderstand what I said. My main message was that over-complex systems of layers and fancy irrigation systems are

unnecessary. Unless, that is, one is seeking to create the classic English striped bowling green, which is generally not particularly useful on a roof.

I argued that it is much better to keep things simple and allow a natural ecosystem to develop on a green roof with plants that can adapt to the conditions there. A meadow changes through the seasons and never dies. A bowling green will die if not watered.

I don't promote, as Williams claims, 'the aesthetic merits of letting nature kill off plants', but rather prefer to work with nature to create beautiful self-sustaining green roofs which do not need to be constantly irrigated with precious water, as one part of a wider strategy to create sustainable buildings.

Williams is correct in reporting that I am keen to raise the public's consciousness of green roofs, but until I read his article I didn't realise quite how far there is to go to persuade some people to take green roofs seriously.

Jonathan Hines, director, Architype, Cinderford, Gloucestershire

ICE WORK IS AN INSPIRATION FOR OTHERS

I was delighted to learn of Hugh Broughton Architects/Faber Maunsell's victory in the Antarctic Research Station competition (AJ 21.07.05).

It was not only a tremendous effort, given the quality of the opposition, but potentially a significant turning point for Hugh Broughton. This is a smaller, high-quality design practice which has (with Faber Maunsell) won on merit.

To see it achieve a success like this is an inspiration for other practitioners with similar scale operations. Hugh has demonstrated how well an intelligent alliance and collaboration (with the use of first-class engineers) can work, and how best to bring to bear the unique skills and expertise of the architect.

We look forward to seeing the Antarctic designs evolving over the coming year and hope to see a lot more victories like this one.

David Magyar, Magyar Marsoni Architects, London SW7

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ARCHAIC THEORY: ADAPTING THE PLANNING PROCESS

I have just read Tom Bloxham's column (AJ 07.07.07) and agree that better-resourced planning offices and better-paid planners are required; most of the decent planners I have dealt with in Leeds have jumped ship and gone into private practice due to these issues.

However, I think this needs to be taken one step further as even the most pro-active planners (and just occasionally you do find one) struggle against the archaic ward members and councillors of the planning committee.

Any thoughts on how the committee process can be adapted to help planners?

Paul Smith, Ramsden Barrett Architects, via email

ALSOP'S 'VISION' LOOKS RATHER FAMILIAR

It is all very odd indeed. Maybe it's the nicotine or perhaps the lack of sleep but is Will (Alsop) really going gaga, or does he never actually read this journal?

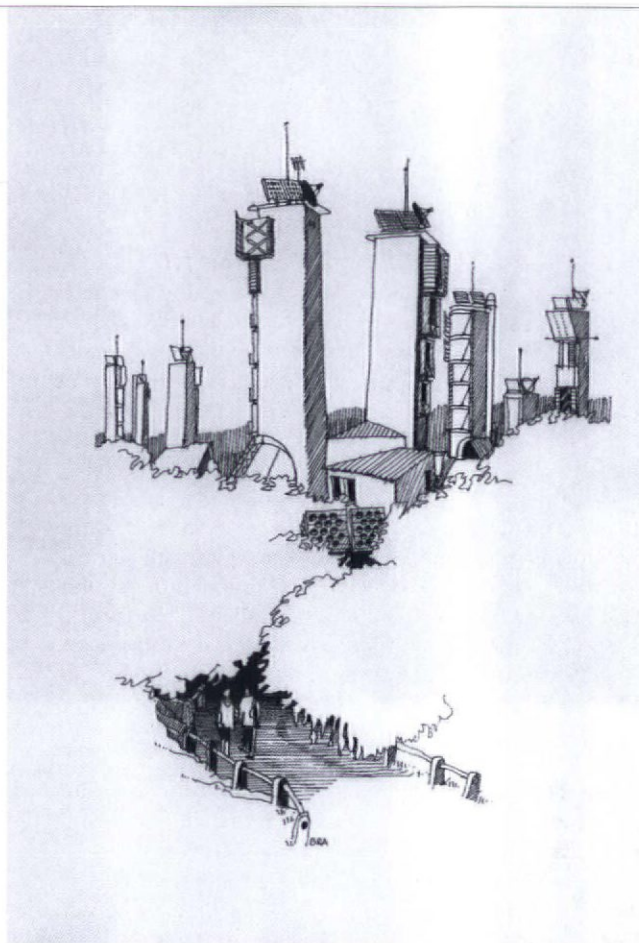
Surely he has noticed some strangely familiar pieces to what he claims in his column is his 'vision of a new English landscape with remote spots of high density (the new village) which would exist in a context of a new wilderness' (AJ 30.06.05). This is almost exactly the same wilderness city vision that was featured in this very journal only 12 months ago (AJ 17.06.04) – and has also appeared in numerous other publications and in a number of different versions, including even the original high-density 'Tuscan Hill Town' design which I originally drew in 1985 (*see picture*).

I trust it IS just absent-mindedness?

Bryan Avery, Avery Associates, via email

CORRECTION

The photograph of David Adjaye's Thyssen-Bornemisza Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (AJ 07.07.05) was by Matteo de Fina Fotografo/T-BA21.



A new vision? Tuscan Hill Town, by Bryan Avery

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PLEČNIK CREATED HUMANE AND GRACEFUL CIVIC SETTINGS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE DEMOCRATIC IMAGINATION

By Mel Gooding. Photography by Damjan Prelovšek

The time has come to take closer account of the extraordinary work of the great and unjustly neglected Slovenian architect and town planner Jože Plečnik. His practice in Slovenia and at Prague Castle, in the inter-war years of the last century, constitutes a brilliant demonstration of the possibilities of an architecture and art of urban space, and its principles are perfectly adaptable to the civic, political and spiritual needs of the city centre today.

In his home town of Ljubljana, and in Prague during the early years of the first free Czechoslovak republic, Plečnik created humane and graceful civic settings for the exercise of the democratic imagination. Buildings, spaces and objects were arranged and configured in sequences that drew upon a profoundly progressive understanding of both Classical architecture and Baroque urban design, comprehended within an idiosyncratic – but essentially Modernist – vision of the modern city.

In both locations he was primarily concerned with creating the conditions for what might be described as perambulatory subjective narratives – and with inscribing those necessarily personal passages within a broader, historical, public story.

'Subjective' here should be taken to describe individual experience that goes beyond purely personal thought and feeling to include the consciousness of political reality and public events. Those aspects of the greater histories within which we live our everyday lives are, at different times, more or less central or peripheral to our imaginative life.

No writer has explored this aspect of our common experience more deeply than WG Sebald, in whose 'novels' the recurrent narrative framework consists of a walk through historically charged topographies; the personal and historical are fused. For there can be no meaningful subjective experience of democratic politics without an awareness of history and a sense of both local and national identity, developed within a broader consciousness of others who may not share those histories or identifications, but with whom we share a responsibility for the world.

Plečnik accepted the professorship of the new faculty of architecture at Ljubljana in 1921. That year, the new state of Slovenia had freely elected to join the Yugoslav confederation, formed after the final collapse of Austro-Hungarian hegemony. Thereafter, for 20 years – with the support of the dynamic director of municipal construction, Matko Prelovšek, and the influential architectural historian France Stele – Plečnik was effectively both the city architect and principal urban designer of Ljubljana, and could realise at least some components of a visionary programme intended to transform an undistinguished provincial town into a distinctive capital city.

After an earthquake in 1895, two major architect-planners, Camillo Sitte and Max Fabiano, had proposed separate detailed plans for the broader development of the city, and Plečnik's own masterplan of 1928 was based on a creative synthesis of these, with an expansion northwards that took account of industrial growth.



1. The Triple Bridge, 1930-31

His governing concept was of a radial city of tree-lined avenues, complicated and humanised by neighbourhoods of small streets, whose basic grid layout between the radial axes was modified and softened by curves and crescents (*image 2*). A peripheral road would run through a green belt of trees and fields, market gardens, small-holdings and allotments ('at least half a thousand vegetable gardens providing the greenery which is always needed in a modern city').

This larger vision of humanely spacious suburban environs – with its special emphasis on sustainability and green breathing spaces, oxygenizing the atmosphere of a developing industrial city while providing its inhabitants with fresh vegetables – would remain largely unrealised. But at the city centre, mainly through a programme of tree planting and the maintenance of green spaces, Plečnik was able to maintain this visionary eco-architectural theme as an element in an integrated programme of interventions that create a brilliantly imaginative, exemplary urban ensemble.

His scheme for the central city is articulated in a subtle axial relationship with the river, the Ljubljanica, organised in relation to the bend of the river around the steeply rising hill with its summit castle that dominates the east bank – the site for which Plečnik proposed a new Slovene parliament building in 1947.

To the west, between the busy characterless main thoroughfare and the river, before it curves sharply eastwards, Plečnik created a configuration of roads, buildings, monuments and walkways that links the green inner village-suburb of Trnovo,

situated at the southern limit of the original Roman city, to Congress Square, the modern central civic space, and thence across the river at the heart of the Baroque city.

Its central trajectory follows a broad quiet street, which, after beginning at a tree-lined bridge (*image 4*), progresses through a belt of inner-city market gardens (still in use), passes by a number of historical monuments designed or modified by Plečnik (*images 6 & 7*) and is then faced by the raised terrace and monumental west facade of his greatest masterpiece, the National and University Library – a building of particular significance to a nation defined essentially by its linguistic culture (*image 8*).

Thereafter you walk past the College of Music, the main university buildings, and into Congress Square. Here, at its north-east corner, Plečnik projected a propylaeum monument to Alexander, King of Yugoslavia (assassinated in 1934), to be the gateway to a small square and colonnade that would link down to the historic open piazza facing the river in front of the Baroque town church of St Mary's.

In front of you, Plečnik's spectacular Triple Bridge (*image 1*) crosses the river to connect in one direction with his Neo-Classical colonnaded riverside market (*image 18*) close by the Baroque Cathedral and in the other to the Old Town Hall and the untouched, essentially Medieval old town, whose narrow single main street, lined with fine old Baroque town houses, winds back round the base of the steeply rising castle promontory, remaining in line with the river's east embankment.



2.



- KEY
1. BRIDGE BEFORE TRNOVO CHURCH
 2. ILLYRIAN MONUMENT
 3. NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
 4. CONGRESS SQUARE
 5. SHOEMAKER'S BRIDGE
 6. TRIPLE BRIDGE
 7. MARKET
 8. LOCK GATES

Roughly parallel to this highly charged itinerary is what has been called 'the river sequence', which also begins in Trnovo but follows a small tree-lined and countrified tributary down to the Ljubljanica and proceeds along the west bank to where, between St James' Bridge and the Triple Bridge, Plečnik has narrowly enclosed the river between concrete embankments, with upper and lower walkways and landing places (*images 11 & 12*). This stretch affords a glimpse of the National and University Library and passes by the back of the Opera House to finally meet the upper itinerary at Preseren Square in front of St Mary's.

As the river swings eastward under the Triple Bridge, the west bank continues as a little linear park, fronted by a street of cafés and shops, which faces, on the opposite bank, the rear screen-wall of the market colonnade (*image 20*). Plečnik intended this to be divided at its centre by an entrance on to the unrealised Butcher's Bridge, a continuation over water of the colonnaded market. The sequence concludes with the Egyptian-style lock gates on the Ljubljanica to the east of the city centre (*image 21*).

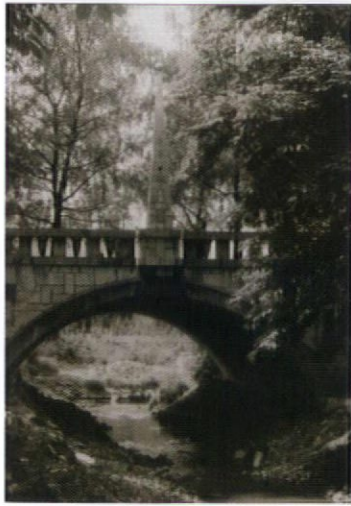
In their respective perambulations, these parallel south-north sequences symbolically emphasise civic, political and cultural life on the one hand, and the pleasures of playful recreation on the other. At two points this scheme is met by transverse trajectories which reflect its experiential duality. The first crosses St James' Bridge to a small square and thence proceeds through the southern streets of the old town and a serpentine pathway up to the castle. The second (only partially completed)

would have begun at the Triple Bridge and proceeded westward by a broad promenade to Tivoli Park and its mansion museum.

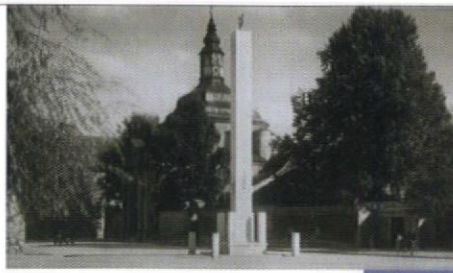
Three characteristic motifs continuously accentuate Plečnik's 'sculpture of space': steps and stairways, bridges and columns. At every opportunity these are deployed as key elements in spatial structures that presuppose the significance of personal narrative in the experience of the city.

Steps and stairways have deep significance in this respect for Plečnik, enacting, as they do, the passage upwards and downwards with many symbolic possibilities. At their simplest and most functional, as in the narrow stepped corridors down from Congress Square to the river embankment, they exploit the natural pleasure of emergence from urban enclosure into open riverine space (*image 26*). At their most symbolically charged, as in the National and University Library, they ascend from the quotidian street in a ceremonial passage through a dark marble stairwell to the hypostyle landing and the sanctuary of the Reading Room, a place set aside for study and contemplation.

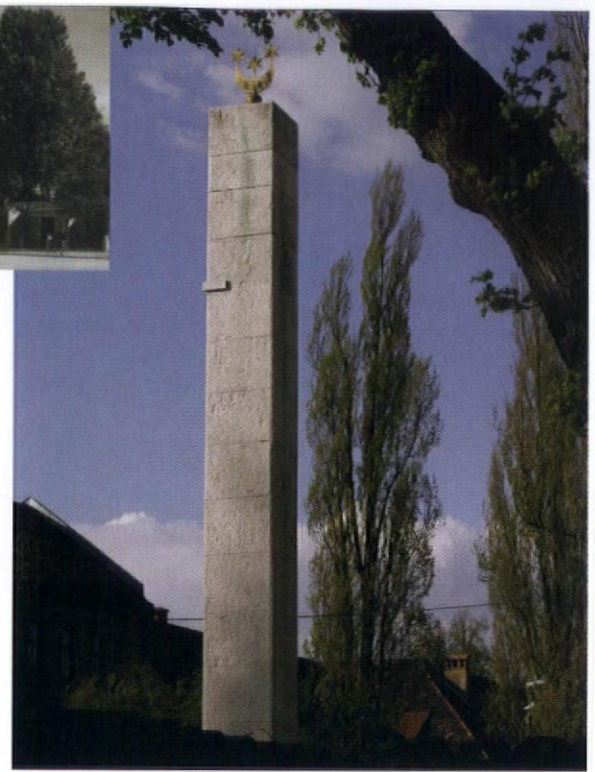
Bridges are points of crossing. For Plečnik they perform other civilising functions. His Ljubljana bridges are variations on the theme of the bridge as building, the bridge as a place. The floor plan of the Shoemaker's Bridge (a pedestrian crossing between St James' and the Triple Bridges) is that of the double cube, the Classically perfect space of an urbane saloon. The bridge is a charming piazzetta – a colonnaded room whose ceiling is the sky, a graceful conversation-place above the water (*image 13*).



4.



5.



6.

2. Plečnik's 1928 masterplan
3. Centre of the city with the routes that Plečnik articulates
4. Bridge just to the north of Trnovo parish church, 1931
- 5 & 6. Illyrian monument, 1929

The Triple Bridge is a uniquely elegant urban centrepiece, a place to stop and look at the river and at the different townscapes on either side. Separating pedestrian from wheeled traffic, it safely and ceremonially facilitates the walker's progress from new town to old, from shops to open market, from the bridge itself to the lower embankment galleries. Butcher's Bridge, just upstream, was to have been the bridge as covered market.

Plečnik is the playful virtuoso of the column and capital, his innumerable variations and inventions being ironic subversions of those aspects of the Classical and its orders that signify imperium. Columns abound in Plečnik's work: they represent above all his allegiance to the values and aesthetics of the Classical Mediterranean world, as opposed to those of the Germanic imperial and military civilisation of the centuries-long Hapsburg domination.

At any point along the pedestrian itineraries I have described, it is columns that provide a compositional unity to the view, dignify the context of ordinary activities, solemnise a progress on the business of the day, or create a theatrical setting for the pleasurable promenade.

The experience of perambulation is central to Plečnik's thinking on urban space and public architecture. He recognised the passage from one situation to another, from one condition to another, through space and time, as the ontological reality of human experience. His architecture and urban design take account of this phenomenological reality to a greater extent than that of

any other Modernist architect. And his imagination is essentially dramatic: his Ljubljana city sequences have the aspect of an open-air architectural theatre, within which the pedestrian 'passenger' enacts his own perpetually unfolding unique personal drama.

As his forms, sometimes playfully, sometimes gravely, modernise the Classical (and the antique), so do his spatial dispositions of buildings and monuments modernise Baroque conceptions of urban space. History lives on in the present of his architecture.

In thus projecting the democratic possession of public space, and proposing the means by which the urban environment may be enhanced for the citizen as experiencing subject, Jože Plečnik – the pragmatically democratic visionary of Prague and Ljubljana – may be of greater relevance to our present needs than his much vaunted contemporary, the mechanistic utopian, Le Corbusier.

Mel Gooding is the author of National and University Library, Ljubljana: Jože Plečnik (Phaidon, 1997)



7.



8.



11.



12.



9.



10.

MARK FIENNES

- 7. Monument to Simon Gregorčič, 1937, just south of the National and University Library
- 8. The National and University Library, 1936-41, in its context
- 9. The library's east face
- 10. Plečnik's terrace on west side of the library
- 11 & 12. Terracing and embankment of the River Ljubljana
- 13. Shoemaker's Bridge, 1931-32
- 14. Candelabrum on Shoemaker's Bridge

14.



13.



15.

- 15. The Triple Bridge, 1930-31
- 16. Tobacconist's kiosk, 1934
- 17. Flower shop, 1941-42
- 18. Market, 1940-44
- 19. Detail of the flower shop



16.



17.



18.



19.



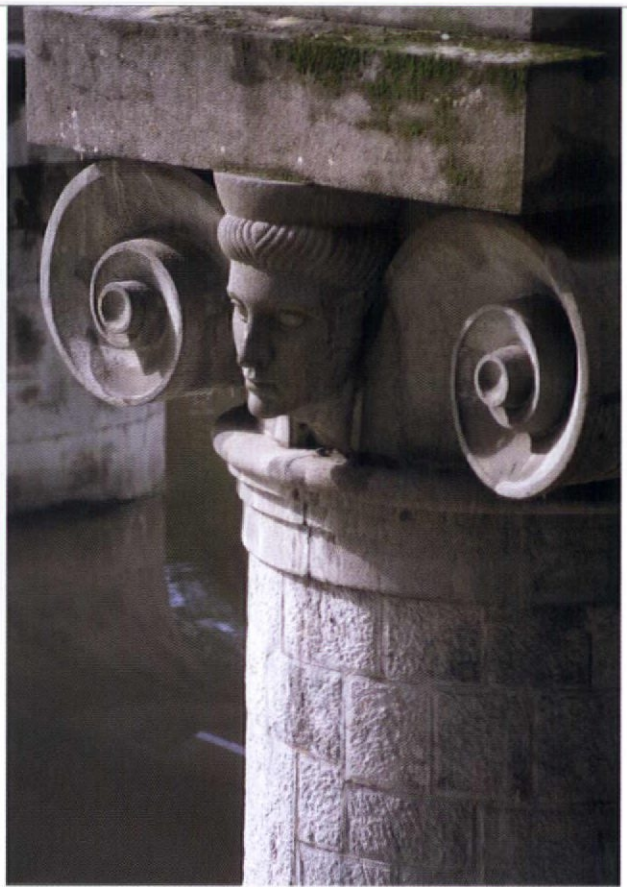
20.

21.





22.



23.

- 20. The market runs beside the river
- 21. The lock gates to the east of
the city centre, 1940-44
- 22. Capital on the lock gates
- 23. Capital on the lock gate columns,
with head by B. Pengou

A BRIDGE BECOMES A PLACE

Shoemaker's Bridge (*see page 33*) across the river Ljubljana is a part of Plečnik's sequence of riparian events – bridges, embankments, promenades, market and monuments, *writes Joe Holyoak*. Viewed from up or downriver, the bridge appears insubstantial: merely a flat platform dropped across the water, its span bisected by a twin-arched central support. But its appearance from afar is less significant than its shaping of space.

Forming a double square on plan, about 24 x 12m, Shoemaker's Bridge makes a place in the city for inhabitation. Some people browse at bookstalls, others linger in conversation.

In this respect, it exemplifies Heidegger's thoughts on the idea of a bridge. He writes that a bridge does not merely link the two banks of a river. It *gathers* the two sides and makes them into a *thing*, in the old Germanic sense of the word: a gathering, therefore a place. 'The bridge does not first come to a location to stand in it; rather, a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge.'

The bridge-place extends on either side of the river into spaces enclosed by buildings: on the western side the little square of Jurčičev Trg, the same width as the bridge, and on the eastern side the narrower street of Pod Tranco, 6.5m-wide and slightly angled to frame a steep view up to the hilltop castle. These spaces of course predate Plečnik's bridge, and previously related to the old timber bridge that preceded it. But Plečnik's transformation of a route to a place is a brilliant response to context.

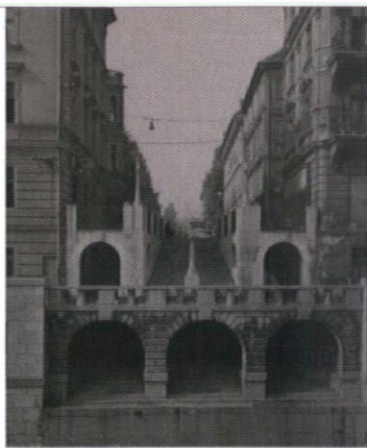
On each side, six slim columns with stylised Corinthian capitals punctuate the edges of the space, dividing the balustrades into five bays. The balustrades each return along the riverbank for one bay, tying the bridge into the riverside promenades. On each projecting end of the central support stands a column with exaggerated Ionic volutes, bearing a triple lamp. Everything is executed in beautifully precise cast terrazzo with white marble aggregate. Minimal elements, slightly eccentric in form, and fine craftsmanship – this is understated architecture, and wonderful placemaking.

Joe Holyoak is an architect, urban designer and teacher



24.

24, 25 & 26. The Gerber steps, 1932-33
connecting Congress Square to the river



25.



26.

AN URBAN ARMATURE

It was Leon Krier who introduced me to the work of Josef Plečnik in the early 1980s, writes *Edward Jones* – appropriately, for Krier and Plečnik share a common pedigree. Both are Mannerists and both share an enthusiasm for the city as it might have been; a city anticipated by Plečnik's interventions in Ljubljana and a city imagined by Krier in his drawings.

Once remote, Ljubljana is now as accessible as anywhere else in Europe, courtesy of easyJet. On the way into the city, the taxi driver, with great enthusiasm, named all Plečnik's works there – a reminder that, in a city of this size, it is possible for an architect to have a lasting place in the memories and affections of its people (von Klenze in Munich, Schattner in Eichstätt, Gaudí in Barcelona, Plečnik in Ljubljana).

A first and lasting impression of Ljubljana is the gentle formality of the river Ljubljanica. This must be the narrowest river in any capital city, but one of the most architecturally considered. As has been pointed out, this is Plečnik's Canale Grande, formed by his steps, bridges, walls, obelisks, banks of willow trees and open colonnades, all concluding with the monumental sluice gates announcing the river's exit from the city. It is therefore a surprise to find that Plečnik's first impulse was to bury the river in a culvert and to reclaim the land for the city, as had been the case in Vienna with the River Wien.

Although crowned by the castle and the promontory above, the bend of the river acts as a space of reference to the city. Plečnik understood this, and with a series of discontinuous but complete architectural pieces he achieved an urban armature of great distinction.

This is not a homogenising project but a fragmentary one, which allows other voices from the past to be heard while anticipating future contributions. There are very few cities that made lasting improvements to their fabric in the middle of the 20th century. When most of Europe was making plans for the destruction of cities, either by war or by the reconstruction afterwards, Ljubljana – through the combined energies of Plečnik and his circle – stands almost alone as a place that was enriched during this dark period.

Edward Jones is a partner in Dixon Jones

LITTLE HARMONIES

Maybe there's a continuum from Plečnik the designer of furniture and monumental staircases, to Plečnik the renovator of Prague Castle, to Plečnik making interventions in the streets and squares of Ljubljana, writes *Robert Harbison*. These are usually small-scale and subtle adjustments, which work best for pedestrians. They may be markers at the end of vistas, rows of busts on simple stalks making a kind of avenue, or small memorials like a sketch of a domed interior.

The form is that of Mannerist adaptations of an old Classical vocabulary but the feeling is different from that of any imperial Roman predecessor. Plečnik's monuments, if we can call them that, establish a formal decorum, but they are never grand, never bombastic. Their fondest wish appears to be to make the outside into the inside, to civilise the outdoors by turning it into a room. So he particularly favours pavilions, giving the idea, more than the reality, of enclosure.

At Prague Castle he appears to have a lavish budget; in Ljubljana forms are refined but materials are spartan, setting an example that could be taken up by others. It is hard to tell whether this has happened, but I often wonder if a bit of discreet ordering of the cityscape was a Plečnik detail or something later. Or whether it was there at all – has he just made you more alert to little harmonies in the environment which arose who knows how? *Robert Harbison is a professor at London Metropolitan University*

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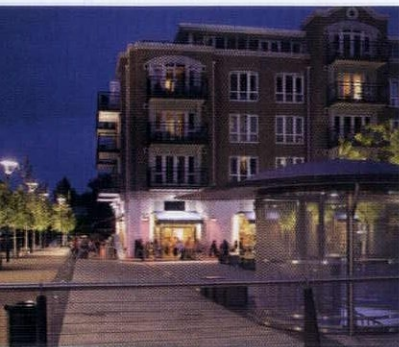
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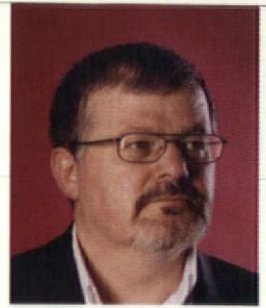
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AGE-OLD CONCERNS

By Austin Williams

We have, we are told, an ageing population. You don't have to tell me. Just look at the picture above – you wouldn't believe that I'm only 23.

Recently, the issue of age has come to the fore in political debate. Televised pictures of mobs of angry pensioners demanding a couple of extra quid a week helped kick-start the Pensions Commission report a few years ago. This report, which is intended to resolve the dilemma of long-term savings in the UK, will be published in the autumn.

Then there was Age Concern's lengthy campaign for a Commission for Equality and Human Rights (effectively a national body to tackle age discrimination). The campaign fell at the last legislative hurdle in April of this year, because of the timing of the General Election. However, as Jonathan Exten-Wright makes clear overleaf, European legislation means age discrimination will be outlawed in 2006.

So what are we to make of this concentration on the elderly? After all, it is not usual for serious politicians to pander to the wrinklies. As author and demographics expert Phil Mullen has said: 'New Labour's worshipping at the temple of youth has encouraged a dismissive and intolerant view of older people.' Indeed, the parsimonious pensions record – by governments of all colours – doesn't bear testament to a genuine commitment to the members of the third age.

Well, one of the clues as to what is going on is the constant muttering that pensions are a drain on resources – and that 'something must be done'.

Let's be clear. Even if state pensions were increased by 35 per cent they would only represent an additional 0.5 per cent of GDP. Unfortunately though, most commentators seem to have bought into the hype that society cannot afford pensioners – that as they get healthier and live longer, so

more money is required to service them. But this type of thinking, prevalent in government agencies, treats pensioners as objects of our largesse, rather than as valued members of society.

Even lobbyists such as Age Concern have been put on the defensive, joining with the government to insist that we all should be 'encouraged' to save more in our youth. The worrying consequence of this line of enquiry is that it is people – not their pensions – who are considered to be a drain on resources. Effectively, this argument says it is personal irresponsibility, rather than government under-funding, that is the problem.

Penny-pinching thrift will doubtless soon become an integral part of the national citizenship curriculum.

But the consensus against 'ageism' is an even bigger problem. Age Concern insists that the retirement age be held at 65 because to raise it to 70

would increase the number of people on Incapacity Benefit. In other words, at an arbitrary age of 65 it seems we start to fall apart and Age Concern would prefer that to happen in the privacy of our own homes rather than be a further burden on our employers and the Exchequer. Very noble, I am sure, but many pensioners who actually want to stay in gainful employment have to take the gold watch instead.

Finally, the campaign against ageism will place even more onerous constraints on people's social interactions. So, for example, under the directive, against 'harassment' needs only to be defined in terms of the individual's perception.

If someone feels 'humiliated' because of their age (or simply 'intimidated' by being in the company of younger people), then they can bring a case. If there was ever a policy so designed to introduce tensions between the generations, this is it. Read on.

DECISIONS AT WORK SHOULD GENERALLY NOT BE BASED ON AGE IN ANY WAY

By Jonathan Exten-Wright

At present, there is no UK legislation that specifically outlaws age discrimination but further to the adoption by the UK of the Framework Equal Treatment In Employment Directive 2000/78/EC, new age discrimination legislation will be introduced on 1 October 2006.

The government finished its consultation on 'age-specific issues' in October 2003 and published implementing regulations in December 2004. Draft regulations will be published this summer covering the full rights against age discrimination, the provisions on retirement age and proposals for addressing issues of vocational training. These regulations will be subject to further consultation and Parliament's approval before coming into force.

Under the new guidelines, employers will only be able to treat people differently on grounds of age where this can be justified by reference to specific issues set out in legislation; and only if this is appropriate and necessary in the circumstances.

These issues include:

- jobs that need high levels of health, fitness and concentration and the need to undergo arduous training;
- rewarding long service and loyalty; and
- the need for a reasonable period of employment before retirement – where the employee is close to retirement age and the period of training needed for the job would not make the employment period worthwhile.

People who are working – either directly employed or working under another type of contract – will be protected under

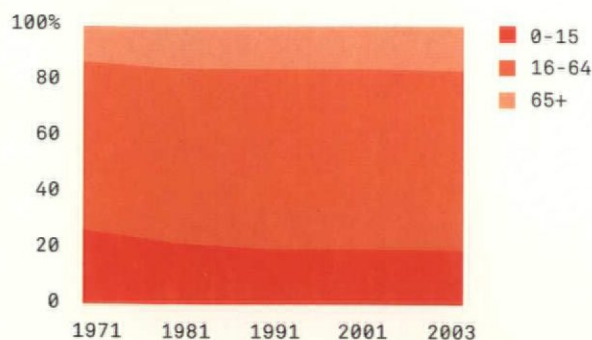
this legislation, as well as:

- those who simply apply for work;
- office holders appointed by the Crown and some other paid office holders (these can include company directors and the members of some independent public bodies);
- people who are undertaking or applying for employment-related training; and
- in some circumstances, people who have left work.

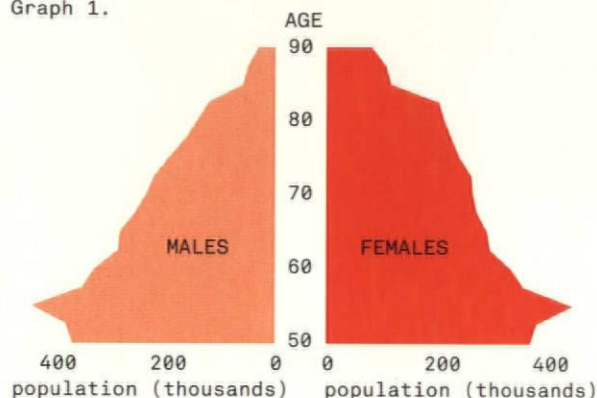
DIRECT AND INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of their actual age. The law will also apply to decisions which are made on the basis of a person's perceived age. Indirect discrimination arises when an employer applies an apparently neutral provision equally to employees or prospective employees, but in fact puts people of a particular age at a particular disadvantage. This applies when an individual can show that he or she suffered that disadvantage.

Indirect discrimination will always be deemed to be unlawful except in certain circumstances where it can be justified objectively. In contrast to direct discrimination, the legislation is not obliged to identify specific issues that employers can use to challenge any charges of indirect discrimination that may arise. Instead, employers must show that the provision, criterion or practice was a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.



Graph 1.



Graph 2.

Harassment will be defined as a circumstance where an individual can show that his or her dignity has been violated or that he or she has been subject to an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. The perception of the claimant, as well as all other circumstances surrounding the case, will be taken into account by the tribunal to decide whether it is 'reasonable' to conclude that the relevant behaviour amounted to harassment.

Victimisation will be deemed to occur when a person is treated unfairly because they have been involved in making a complaint about age discrimination. Examples of this include situations where an employee is treated less favourably than his or her colleagues because he or she has made an allegation of discrimination, or has supported a colleague's discrimination case. Protection will not be extended to people who knowingly make false allegations or statements, or who knowingly give false information.

In rare cases, employers will be able to specify that age is a 'genuine occupational requirement' for a certain position and will be able to recruit on this basis without breaching age discrimination legislation.

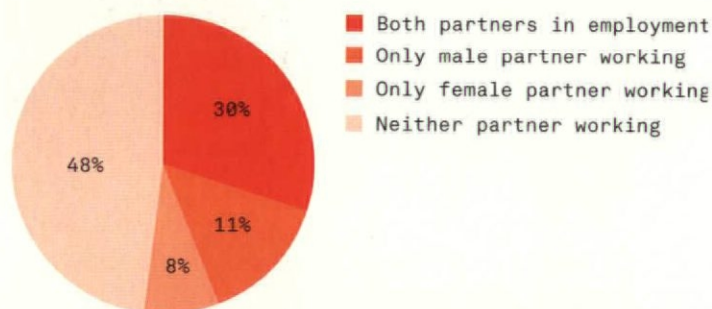
In light of evidence that certain age groups are at a disadvantage in the workplace, the legislation allows employers to encourage workers from these disadvantaged groups to apply for certain posts or to take up training. However, the employer must not discriminate on grounds of age at interview and selection.

Graph 1. UK population by age (National Statistics)

Graph 2. UK population by gender and age (National Statistics)

Graph 3. Labour market status of older couples*; United Kingdom; spring 2004 (Labour Market Trends, *ibid*)

*Couples where both partners are aged 50 and over



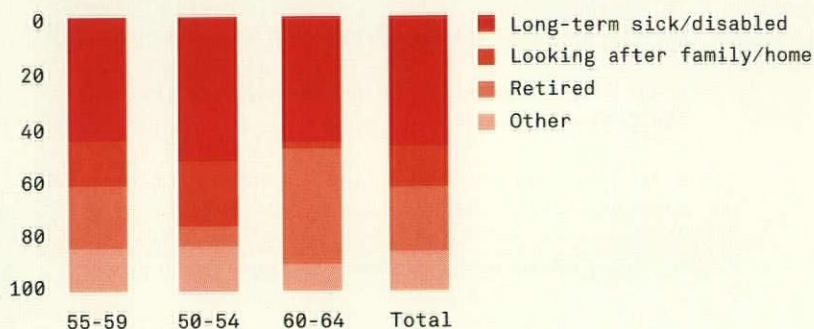
Graph 3.

It will be unlawful for a former employee to be placed at a disadvantage after leaving employment due to the employer committing an act of discrimination or harassment while the person was employed. This will be limited to cases where the discrimination or harassment in question arises out of, and is closely connected to, the previous relationship.

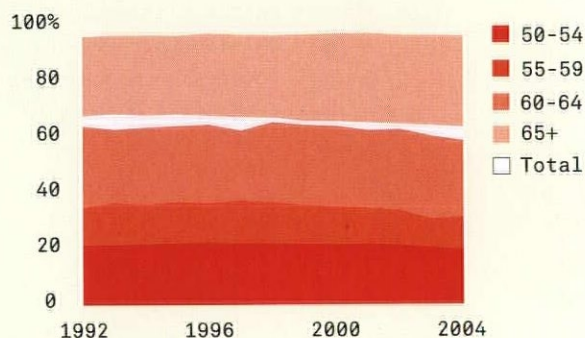
The national default retirement age will be set at 65; this will be the age at which employers may require their employees to retire without justifying their decision. This age limit will be reviewed in October 2011. Retirement ages set by employers for employees aged under 65 will be unlawful under the legislation if this cannot be objectively justified. Employers will need to show that one of the specific aims (*see above*) has been referred to and that it is appropriate and necessary in the employer's particular circumstances. Employees will have the right to request to work beyond the set retirement age and employers can continue to employ workers above the age of 65.

Decisions about recruitment, selection and promotion should not normally be based on age in any way. It is proposed under the legislation that employers should be able to apply an age limit to recruitment but only if they can justify doing so according to the previously mentioned issues.

The legislation also provides that employers may continue to provide pay and non-pay benefits based on length of service and experience under certain specific conditions, which are outlined on page 42.



Graph 4.



Graph 5.

Graph 4. Main reasons for inactivity by age; United Kingdom; spring 2004 (Labour Market Trends, July 2005)

Graph 5. Inactivity rates of older people* by age; United Kingdom; spring 1992 to 2004, not seasonally adjusted (Labour Market Trends, ibid)

*People aged 50 and over

LIABILITY AND DAMAGES

Employers will be liable for acts of discrimination committed by any person in their employ during the course of employment whether or not the employer knew of those acts. An employer will be able to defend a claim and escape liability by arguing that reasonably practicable steps were taken to prevent discrimination.

A person who feels that he or she has suffered discrimination or harassment will be able to serve a questionnaire to obtain further information. The employer must respond within eight weeks. If the employer fails to respond within the required time period or the replies are evasive or unclear, a tribunal will be able to draw an inference that discrimination has occurred.

A complaint that discrimination or harassment has occurred may be presented to an employment tribunal. There is no minimum length of service necessary to bring a claim. A complaint must be presented within three months of the date of the alleged act of discrimination occurring; a continuing act of discrimination over a period of time will be treated as having been committed at the end of that period or the end of employment. A tribunal may extend the time limit where it considers it just and equitable.

Where a person proves facts from which a tribunal could conclude that an act of discrimination or harassment has occurred, the tribunal will uphold the claim unless the employer produces evidence to prove that he did not commit that discriminatory act.

If a tribunal upholds a complaint of discrimination it will be able to do any of the following which it finds just and equitable:

- make a declaration order confirming that there has been unlawful discrimination;
- award compensation; and
- recommend that an employer take steps to avoid the particular form of discrimination recurring.

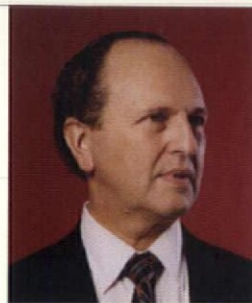
With regard to compensation, there will be no limit on the amount that can be awarded. The award may include damages for injury to one's feelings and interest may also be awarded as part of the package.

The provisions relating to unfair dismissal will be changed so that workers of any age can claim that they have been unfairly dismissed. However, retirement at the employer's justified mandatory retirement age or the default retirement age prescribed by Parliament will be a fair reason for dismissal. Financial compensation will continue to be calculated in accordance with length of service, but will not be based on age.

The provisions relating to calculation of redundancy payments will be altered and age will no longer be a factor when calculating any payments due. Workers under the age of 18 will now be able to claim redundancy as well as their adult colleagues. There will be no upper age limit for entitlement to a statutory redundancy payment, instead entitlement will end either at the employer's normal retirement age or the default retirement age.

Jonathan Exten-Wright is a partner in the employment department of DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary.

Email: jonathan.exten-wright@dlapiper.com



AFFORDABLE COMMUNITIES

By Brian Waters

Speaking earlier this month Yvette Cooper, the new housing and planning minister, added a new dimension to how the government sees the concept of sustainability. On a platform shared with Liz Peace, director of the British Property Federation, she said: 'I think we have to be clear that the most unsustainable thing of all would be to fail to build the homes that the next generation need.'

Cooper said that to achieve sustainable communities we need:

- housing which meets demand;
- a strong and expanding economic base;
- a transport and physical infrastructure which supports economic development;
- good public services;
- proper community facilities;
- good community safety; and
- good quality design.

And she added: 'We need strong civic and community leadership to carry it through.'

Cooper sees these principles as being central to the government's approach to the development of areas such as the Thames Gateway and that, above all, sustainable communities need economic strategies as well as housing development.

They 'need to be truly mixed communities', she said, 'and this is why... in the gateway we expect affordable housing to be around 35 per cent of the new development, rather than the higher London target of 50 per cent.'

The importance of good design and the involvement of CABE got a mention but the essential theme was the need for more houses to meet the varying local demand. 'In

normal competitive markets, if demand and prices rise, supply increases. But in the housing market over the past 30 years demand has increased due to demographic changes and rising incomes. Average house prices have increased... yet new housing supply has dropped by 30 per cent.

'Our own analysis of affordability for 30-year-old couples shows that at the peak of the last housing cycle (in the late 1980s), 57 per cent could afford their own home. Last year, that figure was just 50 per cent. If we continue to build at the rates we have seen in recent years, we will be denying the next generation the opportunities we have taken for granted. Just as aspirations are rising, opportunities will fall.'

Oddly the minister attributes the problem

of affordability to 'market failure'. 'Just as aspirations for home ownership are rising, the housing market is failing to respond,' she concludes.

If ever there was a market working as predicted, surely it is the housing market. Planning, as I have said before, is a rationing system – it 'rationalises' the rights over the use and development of land. If you impose an ever slower and more regulated rationing regime on a free market, you get high prices and shortages.

Calls for more homes, better design and higher densities should all be good for the market in architects, but it must be extremely tough being minister jointly of housing and planning. Brian Waters is principal of the Boisot Waters Cohen Partnership www.bwcp.co.uk

DO'S AND DON'TS OF SITE DESIGN

'Just because you can doesn't mean you have to', is the first axiom of website design. Now a second axiom: 'You can't be bothered? Then don't.' Take, for example, the Pentan Partnership site at www.enablis.co.uk/pentan. A colleague recently pronounced this the 'worst website in the universe. Ever.' It didn't even offer the mitigating (only if you are really naïve and trusting) circumstance of being 'under construction'.

OK, so you type in the URL and up comes the logo, which looks vaguely Masonic, plus the name and address of the practice in titchy text which, happily, you can enlarge. But the only thing which is usefully susceptible to a mouse click is at the bottom – the underlined 'Lewistown Project'. Clicking produces an odd page in a typeface which is probably intended to replicate worn 18th-century type. And two logos are, for some reason, both repeated.

Hoping for better, you click on 'Next Page' and there is a very scarily coloured illustration of what is probably the Lewistown housing and hall. Bemused, you click 'Next' and there is our old pal: 'The page cannot be found'. And that is it. That is the practice's whole site. I think the second axiom of design applies here.

sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

EXCLUSION ZONE

For many years contracting parties, including construction professionals, have faced the problem that exclusion clauses in their contracts might be unenforceable under the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977, writes *Sarah McNally*.

More recently, the additional problem has emerged that a term may be held to be unenforceable under the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations. These regulations might apply to a wide variety of terms.

That the problem is a live one is demonstrated by *Munkenbeck & Marshall v Harold* (17.03.05), in which the court was asked to consider the enforceability of two terms of SFA/99.

Firstly Clause 9.6, dealing with the recovery of indemnity costs and expenses for time spent in connection with the action where an architect obtains a court judgment or arbitrator's award for the recovery of fees or expenses (or where the client fails in any claim). Indemnity costs constitute a more favourable assessment of costs. Secondly Clause 5.13, dealing with the provision of an interest rate of 8 per cent above the Bank of England base rate.

Essentially the architect, *Munkenbeck & Marshall*, claimed unpaid fees and the client counterclaimed for damages. The principal issues

were settled on the basis that the claims succeeded in relation to the whole of the fees claimed, and the counterclaim was dismissed. The issues relating to time spent on the project, costs and interest remained.

The judge could not make a finding as to the time spent, and so that part failed on the facts. As to the rest, it was common ground that the client was a consumer, so the regulations applied. It was also clear that the client had not been given a copy of SFA/99.

It was argued by the client that the relevant clauses caused a significant imbalance in the parties' rights and obligations, and so the regulations meant that they were unfair. The architect argued that SFA/99 was issued by the RIBA in consultation with client bodies and was an industry standard, and that the clauses were both reasonable and necessary.

If the clauses were not upheld, it was argued, a client could withhold payment and put the architect at risk of being left out of pocket if proceedings were brought, thereby negotiating a discount.

The court decided that the clauses were unusual and onerous, and that they had not been specifically drawn to the attention of the client. There was an imbalance and this imbalance was not required in order to protect the position of the architect. The terms

therefore fell foul of the regulations, and were unfair and unenforceable.

While it may well be thought that it is usual and acceptable for an architect to adopt industry standard terms, in dealings with consumers it appears that this may not suffice. It may well be necessary to specifically draw attention to any unusual or onerous term, even if it is printed in a standard form. Even then, there is no guarantee that the court will find that it is enforceable.

Sarah McNally is a barrister at Crown Office Chambers. Visit www.crownofficechambers.com





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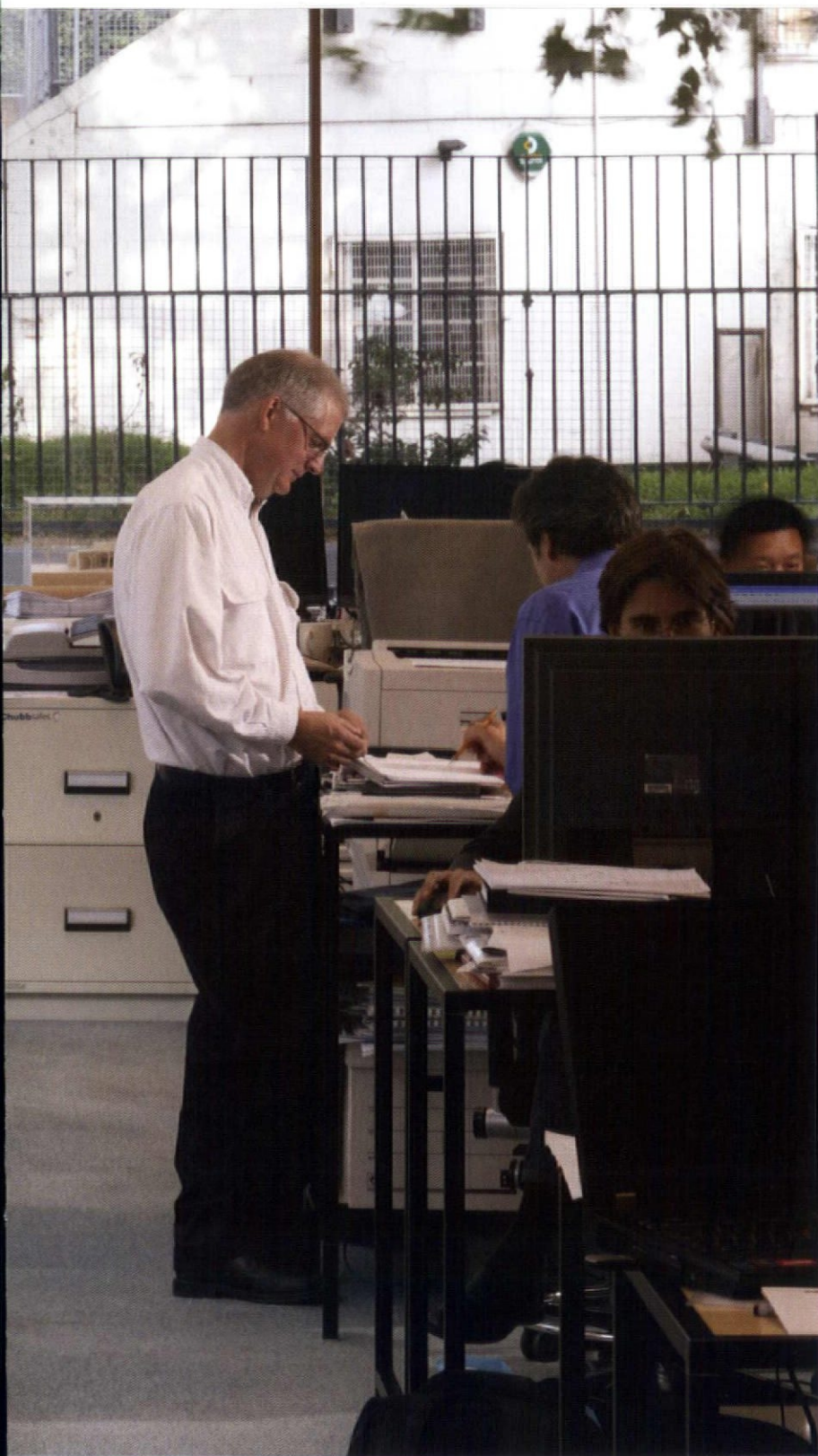
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Make is a completely open studio with no cellular offices. It is very democratic and everyone uses the same model of bench and high chair. The benches are 90cm high and allow a more active way of working, so people can stand and work, make models and operate computers and do not need to stand up if someone comes to discuss an issue. Two walls are glass with views onto the street and full of models on a continuous shelf. The other two walls provide pin-up space and are constantly full of images and sketches. At the time we had just had a breakthrough on the Elephant and Castle scheme.

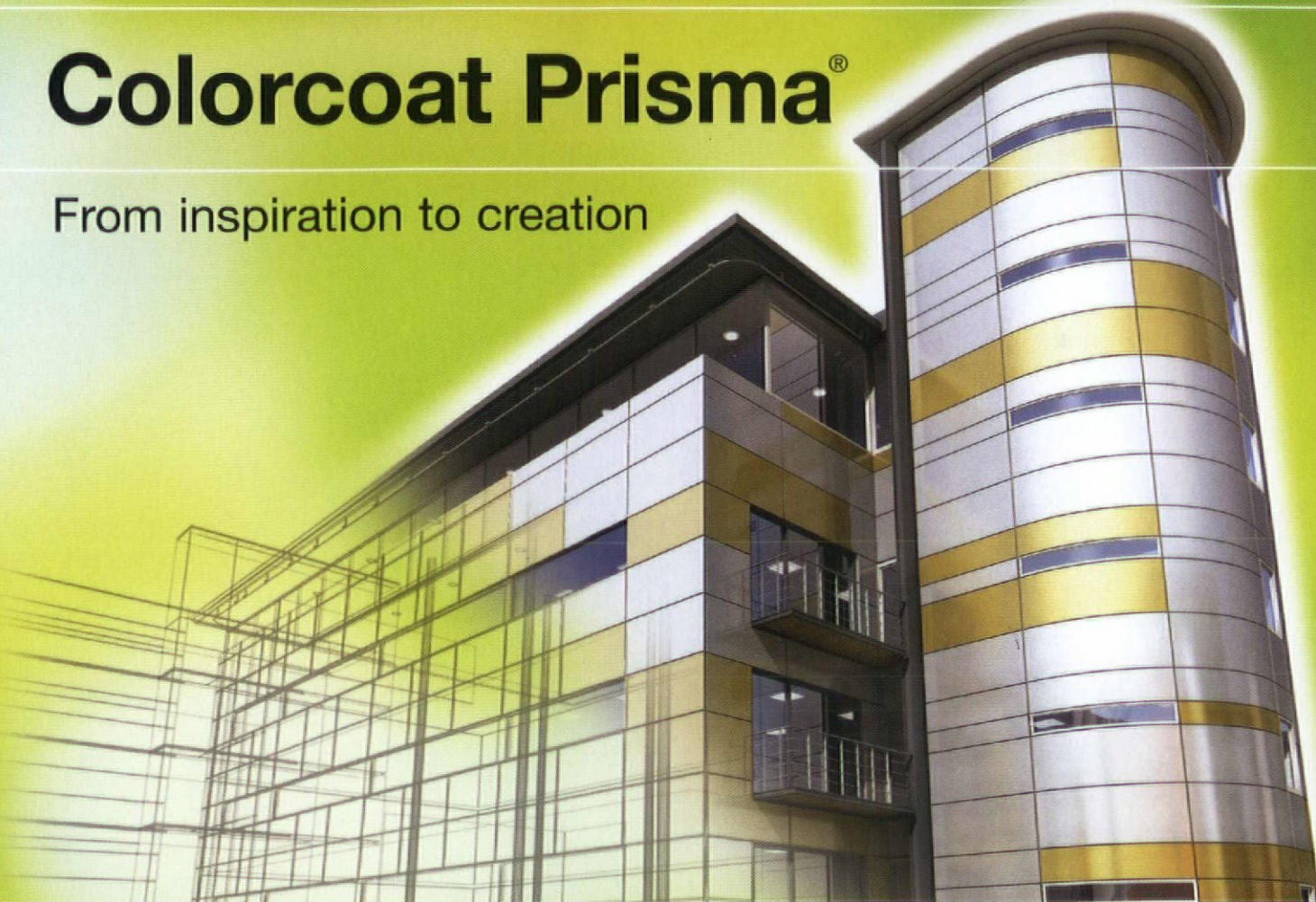
Make was photographed by Tim Soar in Whitfield Street, north London, at 3.28pm on 7 September 2004

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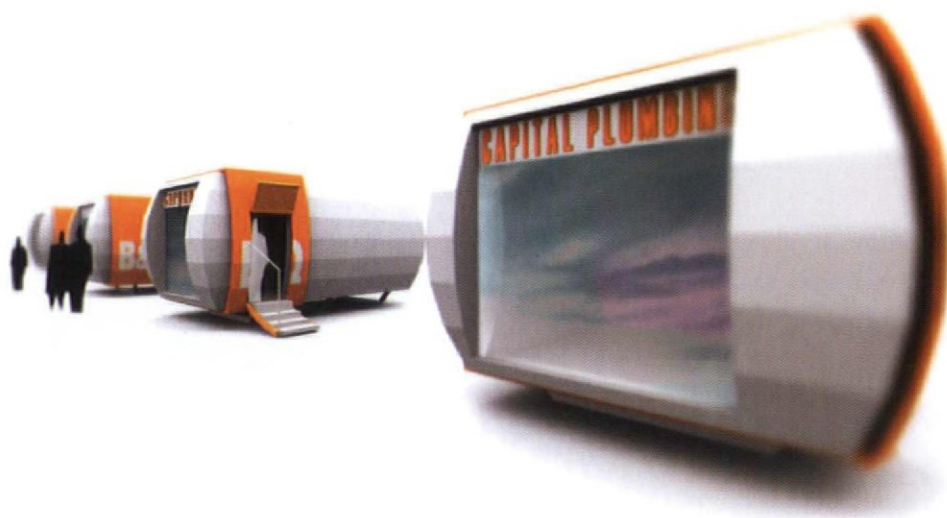
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THE BIG B&Q CHALLENGE



BIG SHEDS

Retail warehouse developments have played an increasingly important part in the consumer market over the past two decades, but their significance has not resulted in a commensurate amount of architectural attention. A competition, organised in association with the AJ and sponsored by four key industrial players, challenged students to redress the balance, which they did with gusto. Here, we present the best of their ideas.

Students at RIBA-validated UK schools of architecture were invited to enter the competition, to design a large retail-led mixed-use development for a specified brownfield site with a former industrial use. The site is on the edge of a town centre, and is readily accessed by a motorway and dual carriageway. It is also close to a railway station and next to the town's park-and-ride car park. Entrants were asked to consider changing customer demographics, environmental strategies, orientation and mixed uses. They were given minimum requirements for the varying elements of accommodation and quite specific requirements for the roof. The brief also made it clear that the judges were looking for innovative thinking – something that they certainly received.

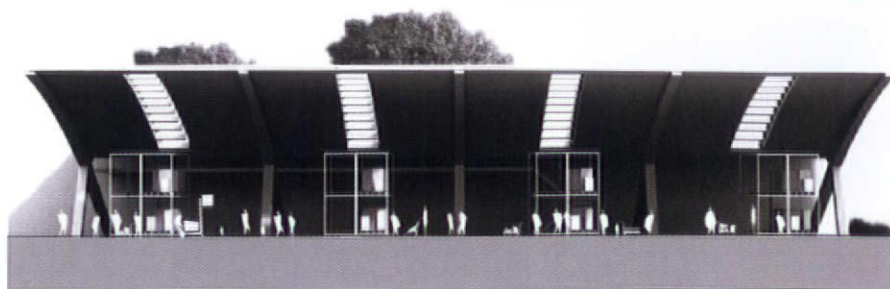


1.

2.



1. A place for learning
2. Light, bright feel
3. Roofs are high throughout



3.

WINNERS

ROBERT LUCK, ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION, FIRST YEAR OF DIPLOMA. TUTORS: DAVID GREENE AND SHIN EGASHERA
JAMES CURTIS, BARTLETT SCHOOL, FIRST YEAR OF DIPLOMA. TUTORS: NEIL SPILLER AND PHIL WATSON

The winning pair came up with an entirely new concept: the B&Q Academy Store, a state-of-the-art shop that will offer a new, relevant and exciting experience for both homeowners and professionals.

With a public theatre, mezzanine restaurant, ideas store and enterprise centre, the B&Q Academy will become the building block for a new generation of plumbers, electricians, roofers, homeowners and DIY enthusiasts.

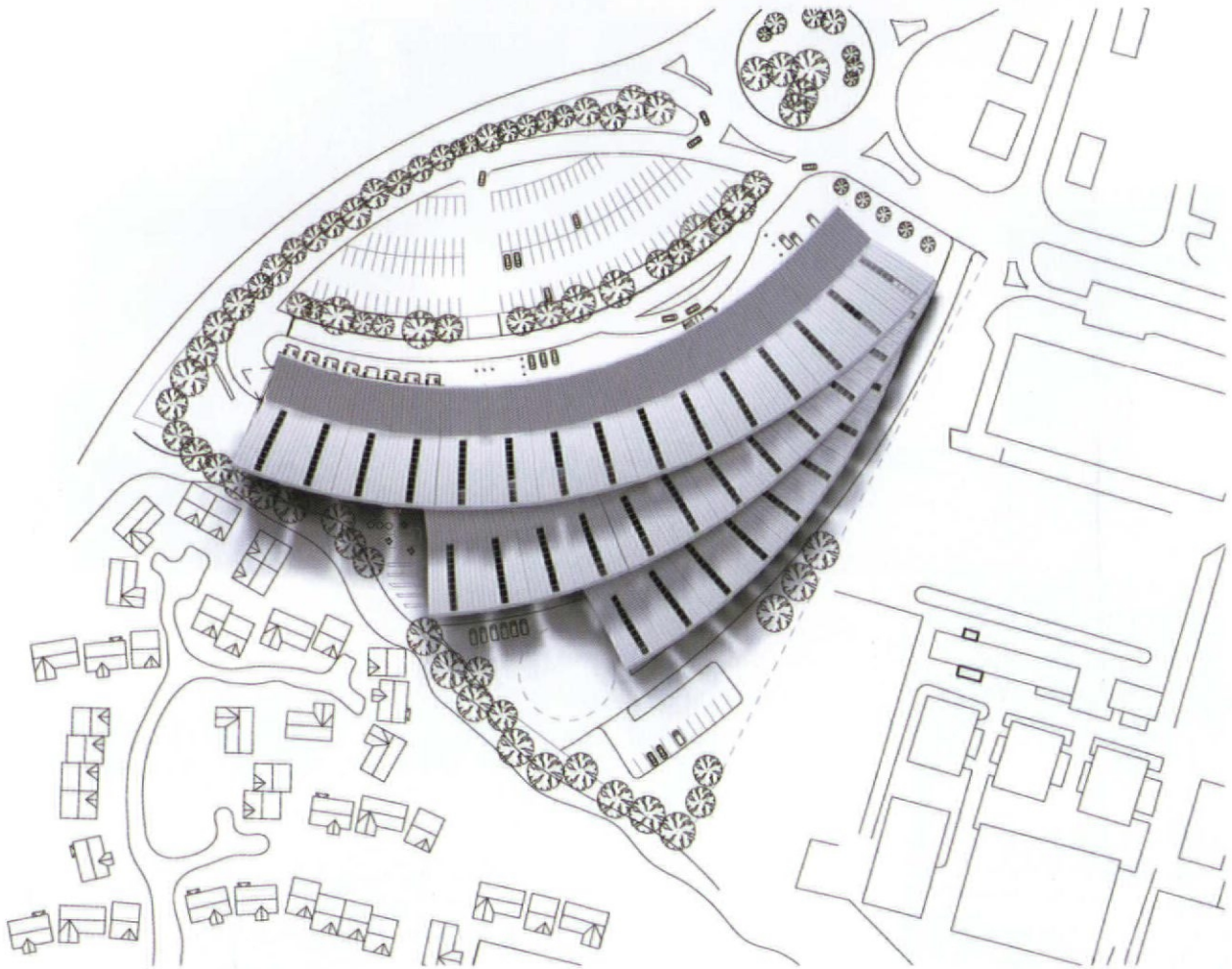
At the entrance to the store are the enterprise 'units', designed for start-up 'graduates' of the academy. They will offer an affordable office base for emerging businesses and give them all the advantages of having the world's largest DIY store on their doorstep.

The enterprise centre at the heart of the store will enable aspiring trade professionals to get the feel of what the cut and thrust of trade is all about. B&Q certification will become a benchmark for trade quality, value and trust.

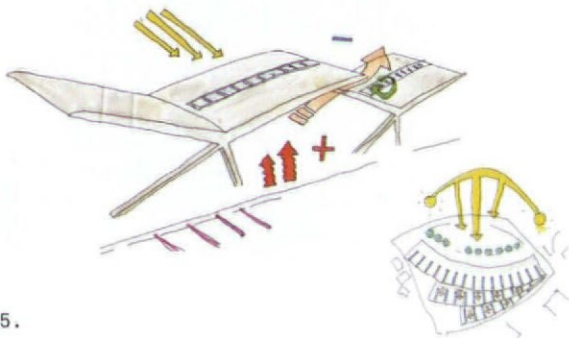
Customers will be free to participate in the daily professional demonstrations or take advice from the resident trainees, who may in turn be rewarded with a job.

Standardised pallet-racking systems are easily accommodated in the retail area. At no point does the roof go below 6.5m, providing vast stock-storage facilities above the retail-level shelving. Each bay is designed to accommodate three 2.5m-wide racks or two 4.5m-wide racks, including trolley clearance.

The judges praised the highly creative idea, the customer focus and good graphics, and the fact that the dramatic roof form was achievable. Chair Paul Finch said: 'This is the B&Q I'd like to visit.'

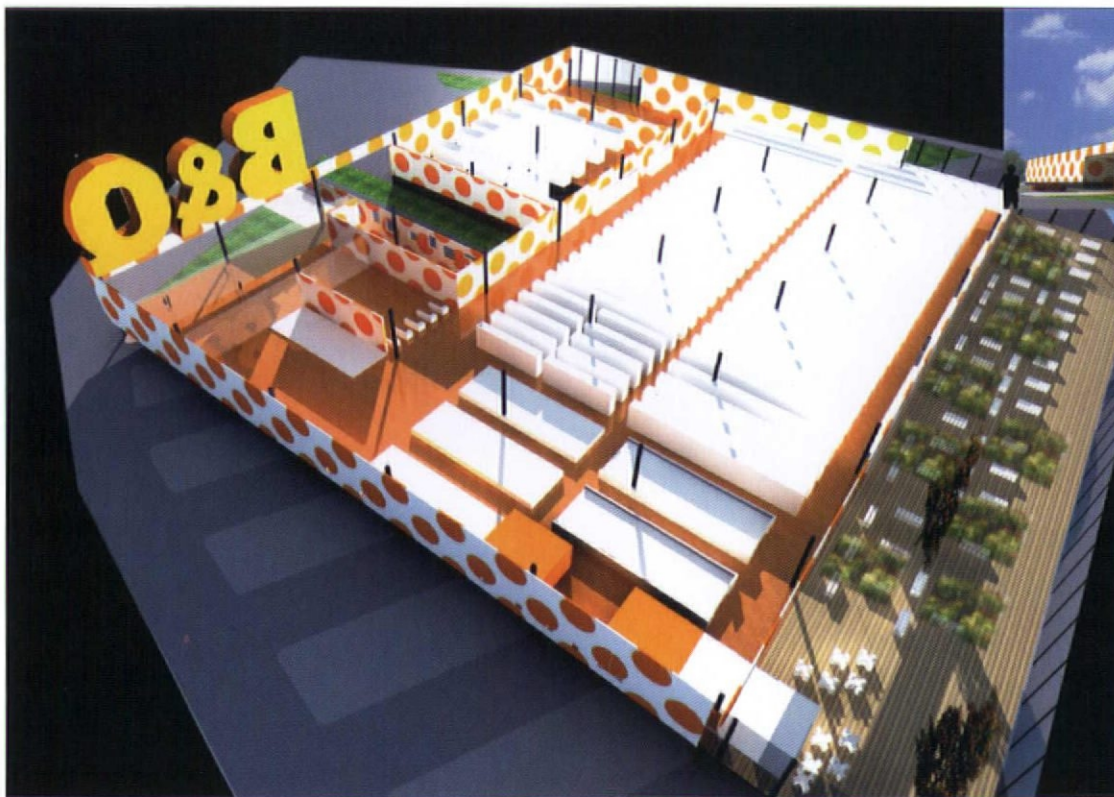


4.



5.

- 4. The academy in the community
- 5. Use of daylight



1.



2.

1. A box with parking underneath
2. Bold branding
3. Coffee shop

SECOND PLACE

ANA PAULA RIAL DELOITTI, MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, YEAR FIVE.
TUTORS: DOMINIC WILKINSON,
TOM JEFFERIES AND NEIL SWANSON

This was the project that most took into account the sloping site specified in the brief, placing the car park under the warehouse instead of around it. It also put the builders' yard and storage at the top of the site, allowing space for turning vehicles at the top of the hill.

The building's bright appearance is part of a policy to link the signage on the building to website icons. Other touches include a coffee shop that opens on to a garden centre, so that chairs spill out, enlivening the space.

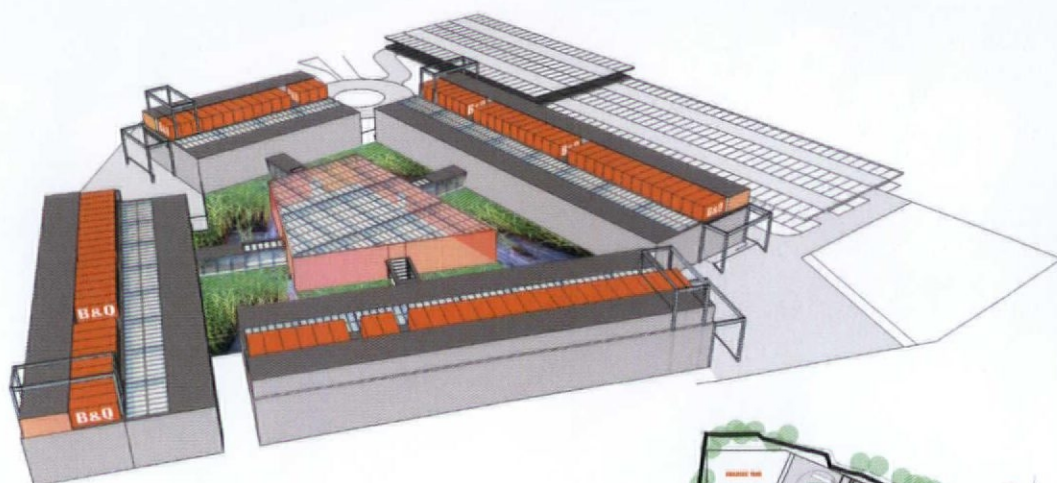
The judges saw the scheme as simple, coherent and practical, adapting B&Q's current strategy of building with boxes by floating these boxes above the car park. They believed that it would work operationally, and that it made great use of the site.



3.

JOINT THIRD PLACE
WILLIAM L BATES,
MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE,
YEAR FIVE.
TUTOR: TOM JEFFERIES

This project took an intelligent approach to containerisation, using shipping containers for storage. It differentiated clearly between a central core and a cluster of activities surrounding it, and used a rolling gantry for access to the racking. The judges felt it was very practical operationally, and that it would work well on a very urban site.



1.

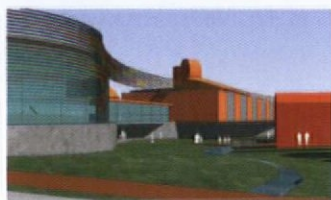


2.



3.

1. Core and cluster
2. Good for an urban site
3. Pedestrians rule
4. Full of ideas



4.

JOINT THIRD PLACE
ROB HYDE AND DAN VEADER, MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE, YEAR FIVE.
TUTORS: TOM JEFFERIES AND DOMINIC WILKINSON

This design inverted the usual concept of a building surrounded by car parking, by placing the parking at the centre, surrounding it with the public realm. The underlying principle is that, although the building should be fully car accessible, the pedestrian should rule. On less busy weekdays, the parking space could also host community activities. The judges said the scheme was full of ideas, and praised the relationship with adjacent houses.

JUDGES

Paul Finch, *editor, The Architectural Review (chair)*

Terry Hartwell, *group property director, Kingfisher*

Simon Borthwick, *B&Q*

Paul Mitchell, *director, The Harris Partnership*

Tom Ogilvie, *managing director, Brett Martin Daylight Systems*

Simon Allford, *partner, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris*

Richard Saxon, *director, BDP*

Paul Hodgkinson, *chairman and chief executive, Simons Group*

Peter Wilks, *commercial director, Corus Colours*

Brian Watson, *commercial director, CA Building Products*

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B&Q

B&Q is the UK's leading DIY and garden centre retailer, offering more than 45,000 home improvement and garden products for the homemaker, DIY enthusiast and professional.

B&Q is the number one DIY retailer in Europe and the third largest in the world, with more than 100 stores internationally, including B&Q Beijing, which is the largest B&Q store in the world.

B&Q was founded by Richard Block and David Quayle in 1969 and opened its first store in Portswood, Southampton. It is now part of the Kingfisher Group, which operates 599 stores in Europe and Asia.

Since 1990 B&Q has taken a positive approach to the challenges that social responsibility presents and has developed solutions that not only address its environmental and social impacts but also add value to its business and reputation.

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Brett Martin has worked in partnership with CA Roofing and B&Q for a number of years to provide a bright, naturally lit shopping environment.

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BOOK

By Richard Weston

Emilio Ambasz: A
Technological Arcadia
By Fulvio Irace.
Thames & Hudson, 2005.
288pp. £39.95

Architecture has few prodigies, but when Rizzoli published the first monograph on his work in 1988, Emilio Ambasz looked like one. Born in Argentina in 1943, Ambasz completed both the BA and MA courses in architecture at Princeton in two years and soon after was appointed director of design for New York's MoMA, for which he curated the acclaimed Luis Barragán show.

Most of the work in that first book was still on paper but, as this new volume reminds us, what had migrated into materials was also promising, driven by the now fashionable trope of narrative – as in the 'Casa de Retiro Espiritual' near Seville, a fusion of the traditional Andalusian house with the formalist procedures of Minimalism, Land Art and John Hejduk.

In the largest, and arguably still most persuasive, of Ambasz's built works, the Lucille Halsell Conservatory near San Antonio, Texas (1982), the organisational strategy is the same – spaces freely arranged around an arcaded, sunken patio that straddles a central axis. But whereas the house was presented as an outpost of civilisation in a seemingly pristine landscape, here the vision is of a virtual Arcadia in which the architecture has succumbed to a literal and metaphorical greening.

Ambasz is a magic realist of ecological design, his images and models, with their model railway greens, are intended to render his visions slightly surreal – a feeling that here carries over into the photographs of the finished work. 'I opted to be a fabulist rather than an

ideologist,' he says, 'because fables retain the ring of immutability long after ideologies have wilted.'

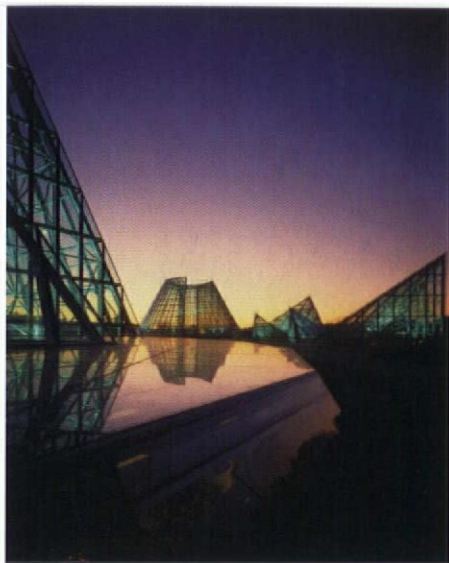
This new monograph is handsomely presented, with a shiny cover that feels slightly squishy and 288 pages dominated by high-gloss colour illustrations. The introductory text by Fulvio Irace is in that polysyllabic Latin style that can annoy Anglophone readers. It is less readable than the afterword by Paolo Portoghesi.

The projects are grouped thematically – The Green Mountain, The Earth as Garden, etc – and are elaborations of the ecological themes established in the 1980s. Both Irace and Portoghesi praise Ambasz's constancy amid bewildering flux but I cannot help feeling his early promise is unfulfilled. Clarity

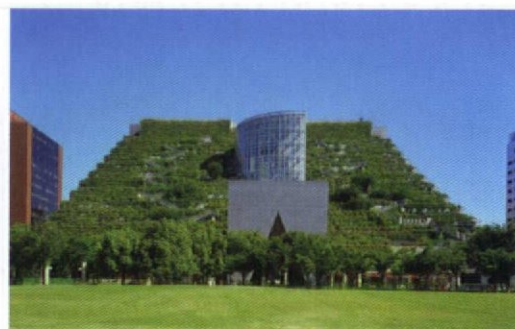
and delicacy have given way to overstatement, even outright bombast. Where axiality and asymmetry were once held in subtle tension, as in a garden by William Kent, in projects such as the Prefectural International Hall in Fukuoka, a one-sided ziggurat of a 'Green Mountain', the formality is overbearing.

And finally there is the parody of Egyptian temple architecture that is the 'Barbie Knoll', a garden dedicated 'to the memory of the eternally feminine'. Goodness knows why this piece of silliness was included, because it points to a weakness that threatens to undermine Ambasz's entire enterprise: a pervasive feeling of unreality, not of a magically sustainable alternative to quotidian realities.

Richard Weston is professor of architecture at Cardiff University.

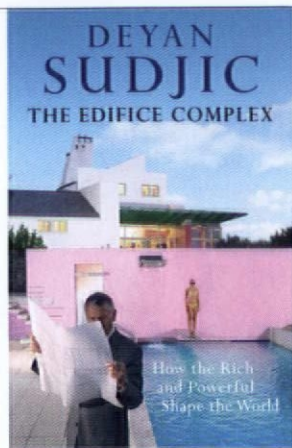


1.



2.

1. The Lucille Halsell Conservatory, Texas
2. Fukuoka Prefectural International Hall



BOOK

By Robert Cowan

The Edifice Complex:
How the Rich and Powerful
Shape the World
By Deyan Sudjic.
Penguin/Allen Lane,
2005. 346pp. £25

It is alarming to see so respected a commentator as Deyan Sudjic writing what amounts to a suicide note for the architectural profession.

Sudjic claims: 'Despite a certain amount of pious rhetoric in recent years about architecture's duty to serve the community, to work at all in any culture the architect has to establish a relationship with the rich and powerful.'

In the terms in which his book defines the rich and powerful – almost exclusively power-crazed or egocentric dictators, presidents and billionaires – Sudjic is surely wrong. Most architects make a living designing for the likes of health service trusts, educational authorities and housing associations; for housebuilders and development companies driven by nothing more exotic

than their shareholders' appetite for dividends; or for householders wanting a bit more space.

Where Sudjic sees 'a certain amount of pious rhetoric in recent years', others might see a century of debate about the social role of architecture. Consciously or not, architects make decisions every day about how to serve their often conflicting allegiances. They have allegiances to their own integrity as designers; to the client; to those who will use the development, see it or be shaded or obstructed by it; to those whose space will be defined by it, or who will suffer the traffic, pollution or noise it creates; to those whose opportunities it may reduce and to those whose resources it will consume.

Architects make their choices by deciding what sort



'There are two utterly different Libeskinds – one intellectual, the other opportunist,' says Sudjic

of practices to work for; what sort of clients to serve and how to design their buildings. The best of them work miracles in producing social and environmental benefits from unpromising briefs.

Sudjic does not see it like that. 'It is the genetically predetermined destiny of the architect to do anything he can to build,' he writes. 'The architectural profession can be seen, then, not as well-meaning but ready to enter a Faustian bargain. They have no alternative but to trim and compromise with whatever regime is in power.'

Wrong again. Architects, like Faust, do have choices, and those who sell their souls to the devil must be condemned. Those who provide socially responsible design stand as proof that the alternatives are real.

Sudjic considers architects such as Le Corbusier, who was as ready to work for Stalin as for Mussolini, and Mies, who worked for both Hitler and the Spartacists. He comments: 'The legal profession has managed to carve out the space for itself to operate with apparent integrity independently of the merits, or lack of them, of its clients. To suggest that architects cannot do the same... is to imply that architecture is somehow more important to a society even than the legal system.'

It does nothing of the sort. It is in the interests of justice for wrongdoers to have legal representation, whereas an architect helping to fulfil the dreams of a despot is likely to be undermining justice.

Readers who can forgive Sudjic his blinkered view of the profession will enjoy *The Edifice*



MAURO GIACOMELLI

BOOK

Otto Wagner
By August Sarnitz.
Taschen, 2005. 96pp. £4.95

Complex as a series of well-told, colourful tales of how architects built banal and bombastic monuments for some of the most terrifying monsters of the past century.

But the glare of celebrity should not blind us to the fact that most of those who shape the world are bureaucrats, local politicians and bean-counters of anonymous corporations. It is in their offices that the battle for architecture's soul is being fought.

Robert Cowan is director of the Urban Design Group and author of the *Dictionary of Urbanism*

Maybe the erotica in Taschen's catalogue sells so well that it supports the architecture books. This series of monographs at just £4.95 is especially good value, with volumes on Wright, Loos, Aalto, Scharoun and Schinkel (among others) joined now by one on Otto Wagner. It is all the more useful because no other book on him is readily available at present. The key works are here – the Steinhof Church, the Postal Savings Bank, the canal and railway buildings – with brief but serviceable texts from architectural historian August Sarnitz, and many well-reproduced images: photos old and new, (tiny) plans, and a generous selection of Wagner's drawings, including this maid with her state-of-the-art vacuum cleaner in an unbuilt hotel scheme from 1913.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

By Andrew Mead

This stark landscape with isolated buildings beneath a threatening sky features in *Italy in Black and White* – a show of mostly post-war photographs at London's Estorick Collection until 4 September (www.estorickcollection.com). The subjects are diverse: Italian hill-towns as densely packed with houses as, in another photo, the catacombs of Naples are with skulls; the 1950s Bar Giamai, Milan, with its smoke-wreathed customers; Fontana stabbing one of his canvases. Some shots could be stills from films by Fellini or De Sica, or might be found in the Italian equivalent of *Picture Post*. Each of the eight photographers has a distinct approach, using black and white expressively, and all the works are well-reproduced in a catalogue published by Skira (£24). Meanwhile, the Estorick's previous show, *Avant-Garde Graphics 1918-1934*, much admired by David Wild (AJ 07.04.05), is at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, from 30 July–25 September.

It's no surprise that the young Leipzig-based artist *Christiane Baumgartner* uses video, even though a few minutes of Fellini or De Sica (not to mention Godard or Antonioni) offer much more than the average artist's video today. But Baumgartner also employs that most traditional of mediums, the woodcut, making large-scale pieces based on the built environment – airports, motorways, wind farms. There's a survey of her work at Levitt Bernstein's Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, until 18 September (www.ikon-gallery.co.uk). Also at the Ikon is a show by *Jacques Nimki*, which takes the proposed regeneration of Birmingham's Eastside as its starting-point, specifically the urban plant life that has sprung up among its buildings.

Also in Birmingham during August is a 'sound work' by Peter Liversidge, who 'will drive round the streets at sunrise, broadcasting the sound of howling wolves from the back of a van'. You've been warned. Perhaps Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley's exhibition at the Architecture Centre, Bristol, will have more substance. The house they built for themselves in Redcliffe, Bristol, was featured in AJ 31.10.02, announcing rather too self-consciously that 'artists live here'. Their new show, *Model City*, runs until 4 September. For forthcoming events visit www.ajplus.co.uk/diary

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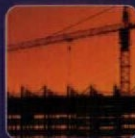
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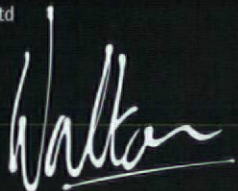
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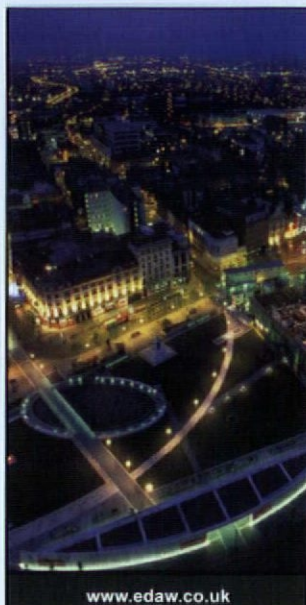
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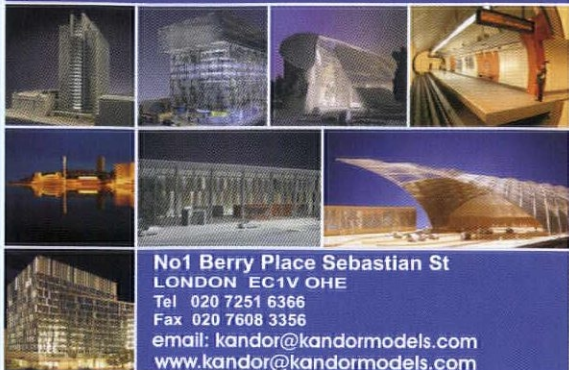
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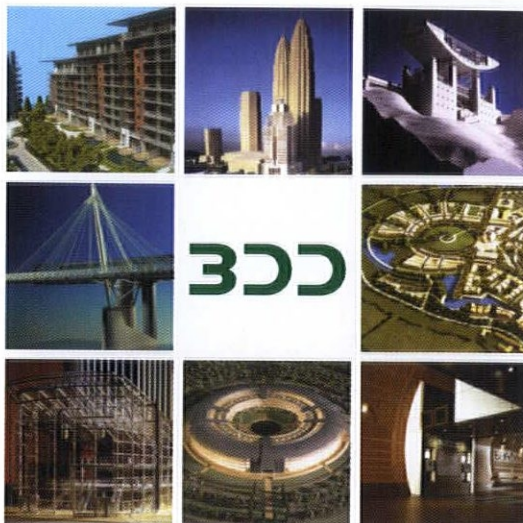
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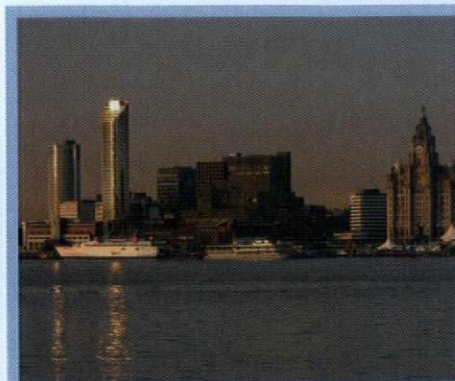
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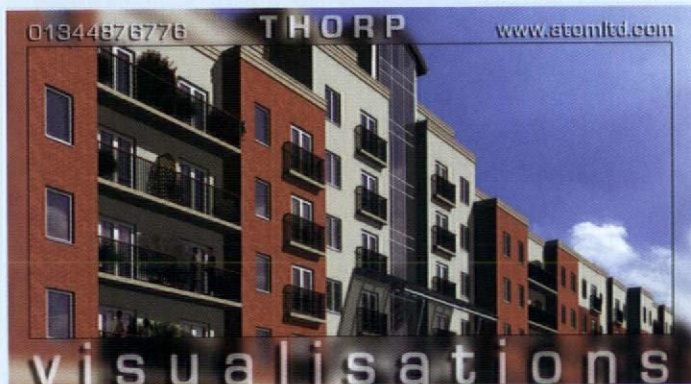
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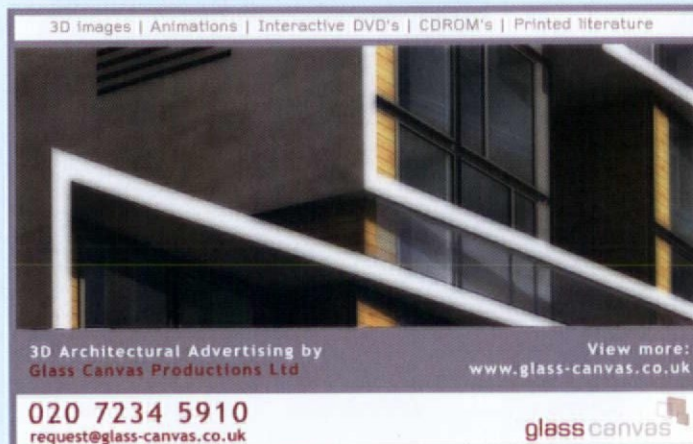


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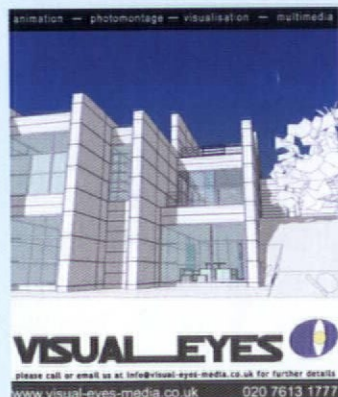
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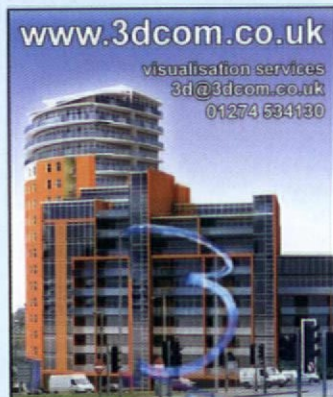
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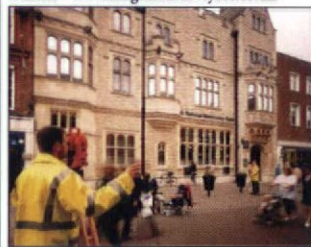
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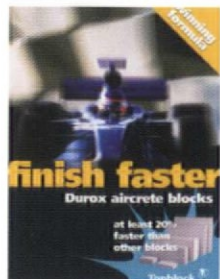


A street in Céret, south-east France. By John McKean

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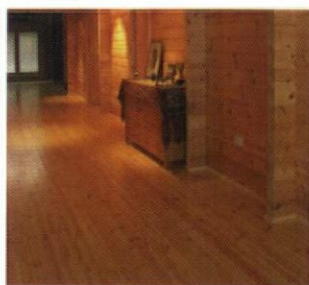
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This is Neath Civic Centre, designed by Neath Port Talbot BC. Crisp detailing of Stoakes Systems' Astrawall structural silicone glazing system creates slim sightlines for the entrance. Astrawall has a very high thermal efficiency. Brise-soleil, maintenance walkways and other accessories are easily attached.

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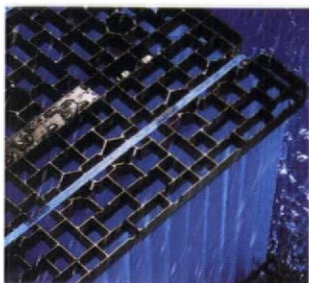
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The world's largest Audi Centre, a £15 million development in Braehead, Glasgow, incorporates Ashfab powder-coated bullnose and standard flashings supplied by Ash & Lacy Building Systems. The three-storey, 6,000m² development was designed by SDA Jackson Calvert, part of the International SDA Group.

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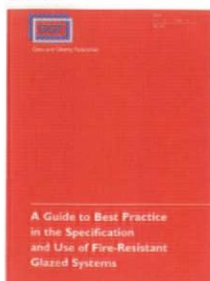
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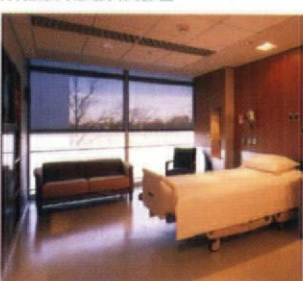
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