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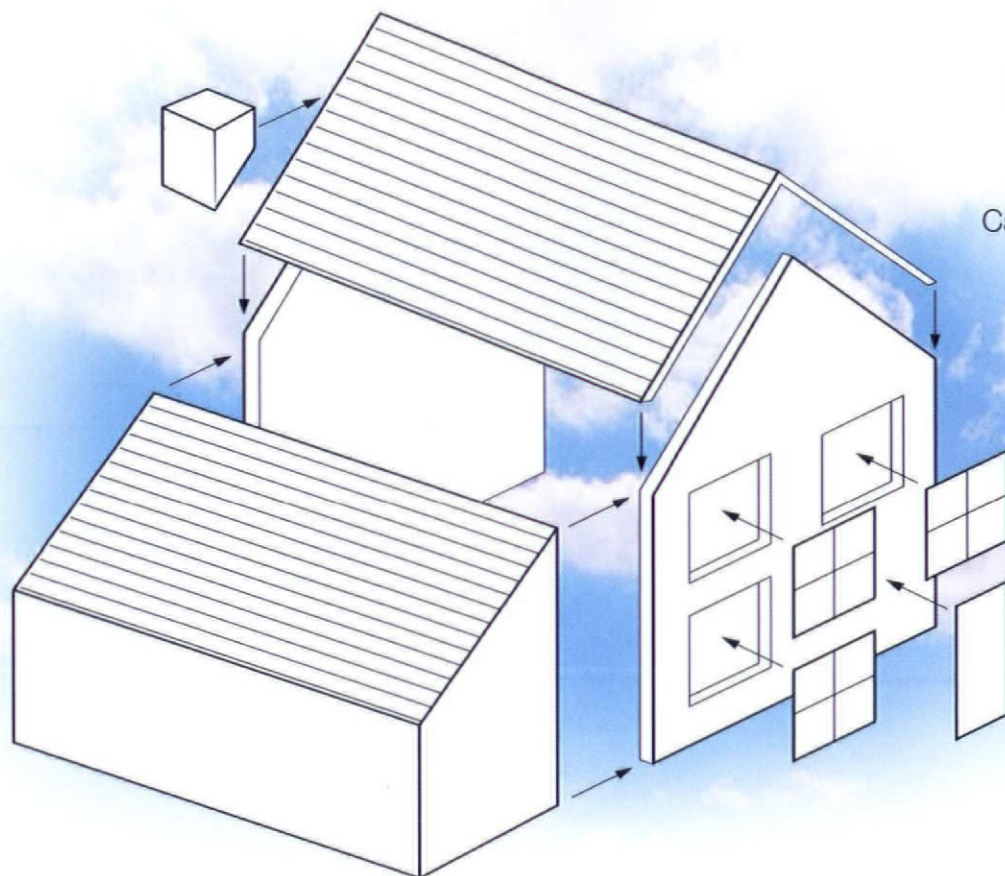
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- **Martin Wood**, Bryden Wood
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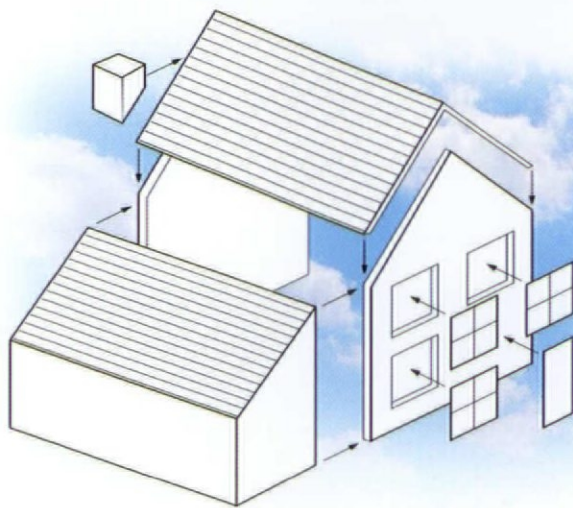
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(E Teague, Gallions Housing Association)

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(N Johnston, Alpheus Environmental)

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(I Burgess, Balfour Beatty Construction Ltd)

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programme

Tuesday 27th June 2006

Cavendish Conference Centre, London, W1

- 08.40 Registration
- 09.20 **Chair's introduction**
Ruth Slavid, Editor, **AJ Specification**
 and Special Projects Editor, **The Architects' Journal**
- 09.30 **Evaluating where MMC is at and its potential going forward**
 ■ Examining the raison d'être of using MMC and where it can be applied
 ■ Looking at the pros and cons of modern methods of construction
 ■ Confronting the myths behind cost, speed and quality
 ■ Overcoming the barriers to success in adopting MMC
James Pickard, Director, **Cartwright Pickard**
- 10.00 **Moving offsite construction into the mainstream**
 ■ What is buildoffsite and what are their objectives?
 ■ Understanding the role of the architect in the offsite process
 ■ Unified thinking: uniting "pockets of excellence" in the offsite sector
 ■ The impact on the client of making design decisions at an earlier stage
Richard Ogden, Chairman, **buildoffsite**
- 10.20 **Making it work: understanding what it takes to implement a successful and effective MMC project**
 ■ Assessing the importance of the manufacturing process to successful MMC design
 ■ Examining the role of the architect in the MMC process
 ■ Understanding why MMC works abroad and what lessons can be transferred to the UK
Tim Venables, Tanaka Business Group, **Imperial College**
- 10.50 Question and answer session
- 11.00 Morning refreshments and networking
- 11.25 **The impact of building regulations on the development of modern methods of construction**
 ■ Analysing how legislation and planning policy affect MMC and architects
 ■ Looking at the impact on the design and orientation of buildings
 ■ Strategic guidelines for meeting high energy performance standards
 ■ Incentivising the industry: assessing what is available in terms of grants and funding
Canda Smith, Head of Sustainable Urban Design, **ODPM**
- 11.50 **Lending and MMC: the pitfalls to be aware of when embarking on MMC**
 ■ Understanding the mortgage lender's perspective on MMC and the key areas of concern
 ■ How to approach the financing issue when dealing with MMC
 ■ Working through the acceptability and certification issues
 ■ Learning from the past
Andrew Heywood, Deputy Head of Policy
Council of Mortgage Lenders
- 12.15 Question and answer session
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 **Evaluating MMC across different structures**
 ■ Assessing the pros and cons of various techniques including steel, concrete, timber and more
 ■ Analysing the procurement route for newcomers
 ■ Looking at the sustainability impact of each method
Andrew Orriss, Business Development Director, **Mtech**
- 14.00 **Designing outside the box: understanding the issues surrounding design freedom and value management in a standardised environment**
 ■ Evaluating the whole life value of MMC
 ■ Providing a holistic analysis of incorporating MMC into the design process
 ■ Convincing clients and contractors of the merits of MMC
 ■ Overcoming the issue of value engineering
 ■ Why MMC is not simply a house building phenomenon
Martin Wood, Partner, **Bryden Wood**
- 14.30 **CASE STUDY: SmartLIFE Project**
Sustainability & MMC
 ■ Addressing the skills shortage
 ■ Speed and cost of delivery vs. quality and sustainability
 ■ Tackling construction waste
 ■ Europe and beyond
Kevin Scobell, CEO – SmartLIFE, **BRE**
- 15.00 Question and answer session
- 15.10 Afternoon refreshments and networking
- 15.35 **CASE STUDY: Challenge II Fund**
Constructing the team: effective supply chain integration
 ■ Understanding the ambitions and needs of the client
 ■ Incorporating MMC at each level of the project
 ■ Delivering exemplar efficiency gains
 ■ Getting it to site: effectively integrating offsite processes with onsite work
Finlay Currie, Head of Operations for Wave Homes, **Avebury**
- 16.05 **PANEL DEBATE: Can MMC produce good buildings today?**
 ■ Does MMC make better homes?
 ■ Use of innovative and non-conventional solutions
 ■ Working towards a standard answer
 Chair: **Ruth Slavid**, Editor, **AJ Specification**
 Panel: **James Pickard**, **Cartwright Pickard**
Professor Colin Davies, London Metropolitan University
Darren Richards, **Mtech**
English Partnerships (speaker to be confirmed)
- 16.40 Closing remarks from the chair
- 16.45 End of conference



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TO STAKE A PATRIOTIC CLAIM ON ARCHITECTURAL MODESTY IS HIGHLY PRESUMPTUOUS

By Isabel Allen

In this month's *Architectural Review*, the AR's diarist Peter Cook writes: 'I watch amused as our sister magazine, *The Architects' Journal*, nails its colours to the mast of the English "contemplative-whisper-modesty-brick" school.' Right on cue, this week's AJ focuses on Studio Downie's building for the Cass Foundation: a thoughtful, unassuming work which, while not actually made from brick, in spirit at least, clearly comes under the category of 'contemplative-whisper-modesty-brick'.

Andrew Mead, in his review of the building, explicitly locates it within the English landscape tradition; not the ostentatious drive to command the landscape favoured by the more bombastic of our ancestors, but its more subtle counterpart, the search for an architecture that takes its cues from the specifics of the surrounding landscape. It is an argument that supports Cook's characterisation of this particular genre as 'English' but casts doubt on his dismissive assertion that it may

serve a purpose, but only 'in the great tradition of minor European regionalist pockets'.

The quest for quiet elegance, for an understated symbiosis with nature, is rooted in English history. It harks back to a period when English architecture was at its least parochial: when it was pioneering an approach that was to have a profound influence not only in Europe but throughout the world. The same sensibility is evident in, say, Gunnar Asplund's woodland cemetery in Stockholm, or Alvar Aalto's careful reading of the Finnish landscape, or Álvaro Siza's Matosinhos swimming pool. If each of these can be described as belonging to a 'regionalist pocket', together they form part of a distinct approach which has proved to be universal in its appeal and has stood the test of time. To stake a patriotic claim on this particular brand of architectural modesty is presumptuous in the extreme; it owes as much to Asplund or Aalto or Siza as it does to Uvedale Price.

CONTRIBUTORS



Anthony Coleman, whose photographs feature in the *Building Study* on pages 31-43, trained in architecture and is working on a book of generic British landscapes



Robert Cowan, who reviews the book *Recombinant Urbanism* on page 53, is the director of the Urban Design Group and author of *The Dictionary of Urbanism*



Karen Liddell, who writes about taxation and financial issues on pages 51-52, is a member of BDO Stoy Hayward's specialist professional practices team

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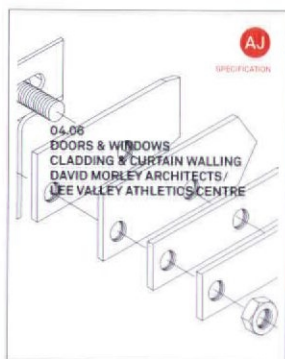
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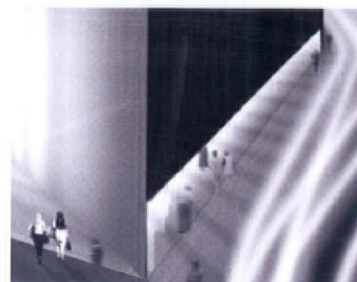
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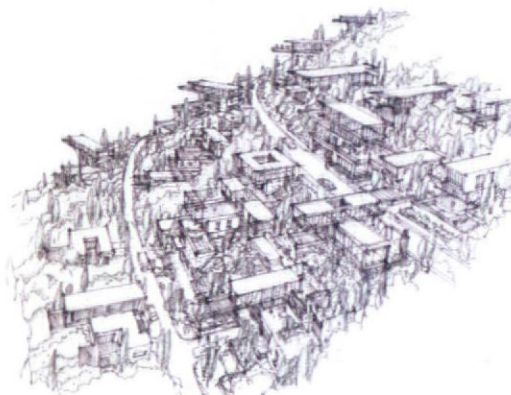
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THURSDAY 13 APRIL

- Surprise announcement by housing minister Yvette Cooper confirms 'design statements'
- Woods Bagot takes inspiration from Frank Lloyd Wright on astonishing scheme in the Himalayas (left)
- London 2012 Olympics minister Tessa Jowell reveals new Olympic Delivery Agency board members
- A quartet of Britain's hottest architects is shortlisted for this year's £100,000 Gulbenkian Prize – the most valuable prize in museum design

TUESDAY 18 APRIL

- Classicists pan Foster's plans in St Petersburg as 'international trophy Modernism'
- Right-wing think-tank calls for increase in green-belt houses while rural campaigners demand even more control
- Will Alsop unveils new prison proposals in a bid to spark debate about jail design
- Husband and Carpenter Architects reveal scheme to revitalise Rochester riverside (right)



WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL

- Hopkins' Hastings revamp sent back to the drawing board after winning planning (left)
- Liverpool businesses win victory over heritage lobby (see page 18)
- Foster chosen to design first buildings on Madrid's new justice campus
- Holyrood falling beam debacle – work starts on repairing Scottish Parliament chamber roof





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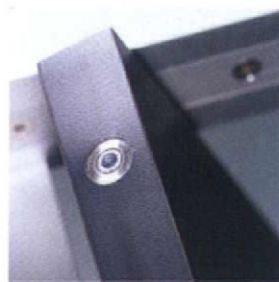
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18th May 2006 Hotel Russell, London WC1



CONFERENCES

THE ARCHITECTURAL
REVIEW

designing tall buildings

Designing, planning and engineering tomorrow's towers

“Skyscrapers are back in fashion and every city in the UK is planning one.” *New Civil Engineer, 26th January 2006*

But local authorities think carefully about the impact of tall buildings before they grant planning permissions. Planners demand designs that harmonise with their context on the ground, even where they have a dramatic effect on the skyline. Building Regulations have forced designers to think hard about energy use. And of course, clients need to know that the resulting buildings will be viable.

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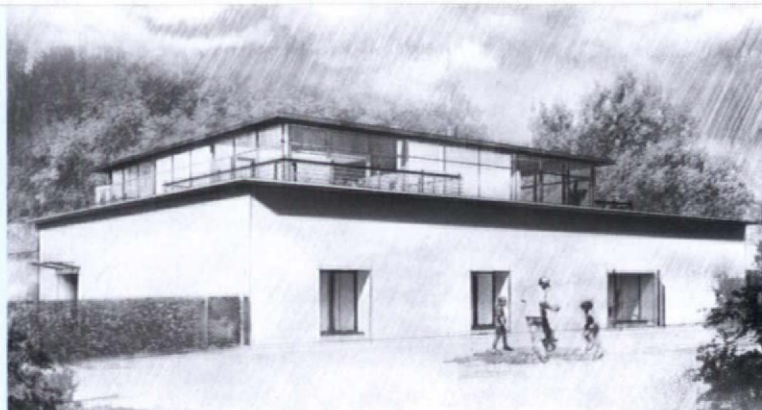


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A HOME FOR A NUCLEAR FAMILY?

Work has started on SLLB Architects' controversial scheme to convert a 1950s nuclear bunker in north London into a luxury home. The practice struggled for almost three years to get the redevelopment of the Grade II-listed concrete structure off the ground, eventually winning a planning inquiry in November. The project had come in for heavy criticism from the Mill Hill Preservation Society, a local campaign group, which objected to the Cold War relic becoming a 750m² house.



BID TO BAN 'BUNGALOW BLIGHT'

By Ed Dorrell

A bitter fight is under way in Northern Ireland over a proposed planning regulation that would ban almost all construction in the province's countryside.

Planning Policy Statement 14 (PPS14) – peculiar to Northern Ireland – was unveiled at the end of last month to dismay from many members of the architectural community on the other side of the Irish Channel.

The document, produced by Northern Ireland environment minister Jeff Rooker, introduces a blanket ban on rural construction in a bid to bring to an end what is known as 'bungalow blight'.

The minister, based in London, stated when unveiling the scheme that he was determined to kill off the widespread development on

land that is traditionally designated either rural or agricultural.

The move has been greeted with wildly differing opinions from the province's profession.

While some Northern Irish architects have started a campaign to get PPS14 reversed, others, such as the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA), are keen to see the planning policy enacted.

One of the architects leading the campaign to see it overturned is Alan Jones, founding partner of Alan Jones Architects.

Jones argues, with support from other practitioners, that the history of rural development in Northern Ireland has more in common with Switzerland than England.

In a letter to Rooker that he and others are signing, he

says the scattered nature of these homes should be respected.

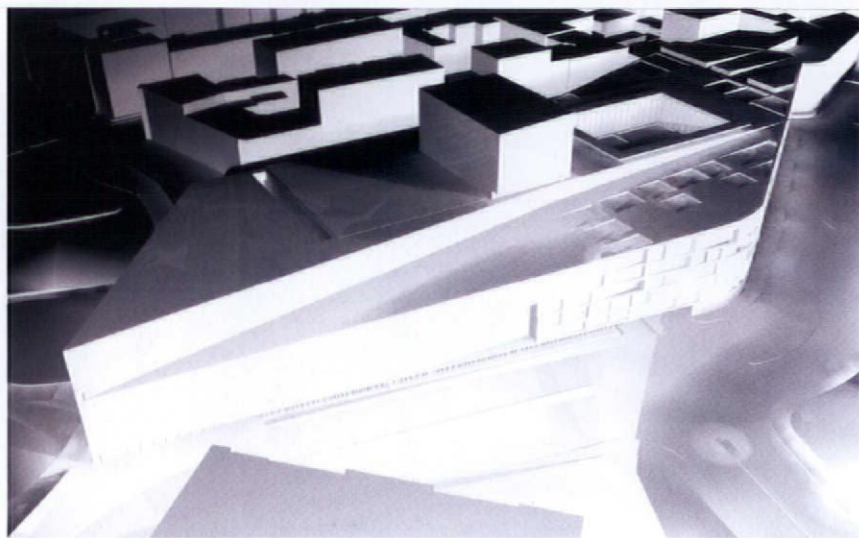
'I believe that... PPS14 will damage the very environment that it sets out to protect,' the letter says.

'The current proposals are too sweeping, too restrictive and take no account of their impact on the rural economy, on house prices generally, or on the history and social life of rural dwellers,' he added.

But it has emerged that the RSUA is set to back the plans. Practice committee convenor Clyde Markwell said he was largely in favour.

'We cannot just go on building everywhere – there has definitely been too much sprawl,' he said. 'Something had to be done about it.'

'The policy should help control this development,' he added.

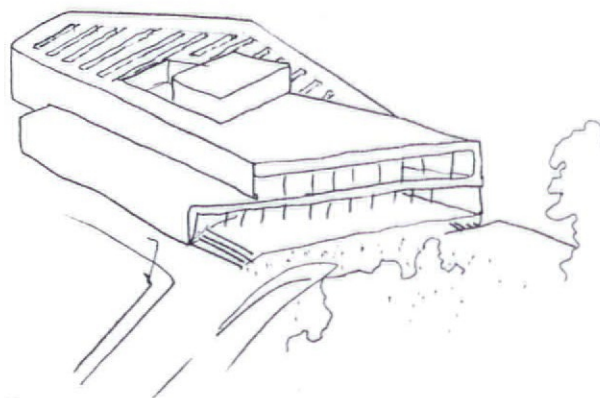


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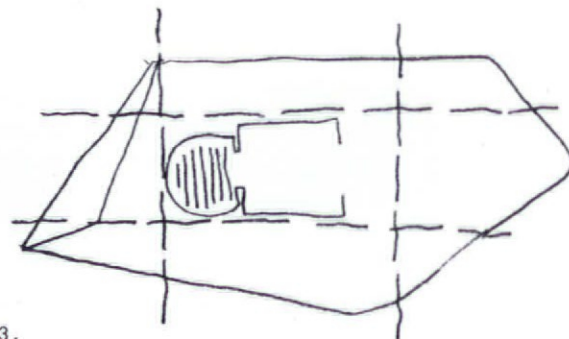
TERRY PAWSON HITS THE RIGHT NOTES

Terry Pawson Architects has finally struck gold in Europe with this design for a new opera house and music theatre in Linz, Austria. The competition-winning project will become the practice's first scheme outside the UK and follows a number of near misses for Pawson, who has been named as a runner-up in a string of high-profile contests across the continent. Occupying a former hospital site south of the Danube, the €143 million (£99 million) development will house a 900-seat theatre auditorium, a box office, cafés, and a number of workshops. The 27,700m² building, which boasts a two-storey glazed entrance overlooking the city's People's Park, will also become the new home of the renowned Bruckner Orchestra. Chosen from more than 200 entries, the Musiktheater scheme is the practice's largest project to date.

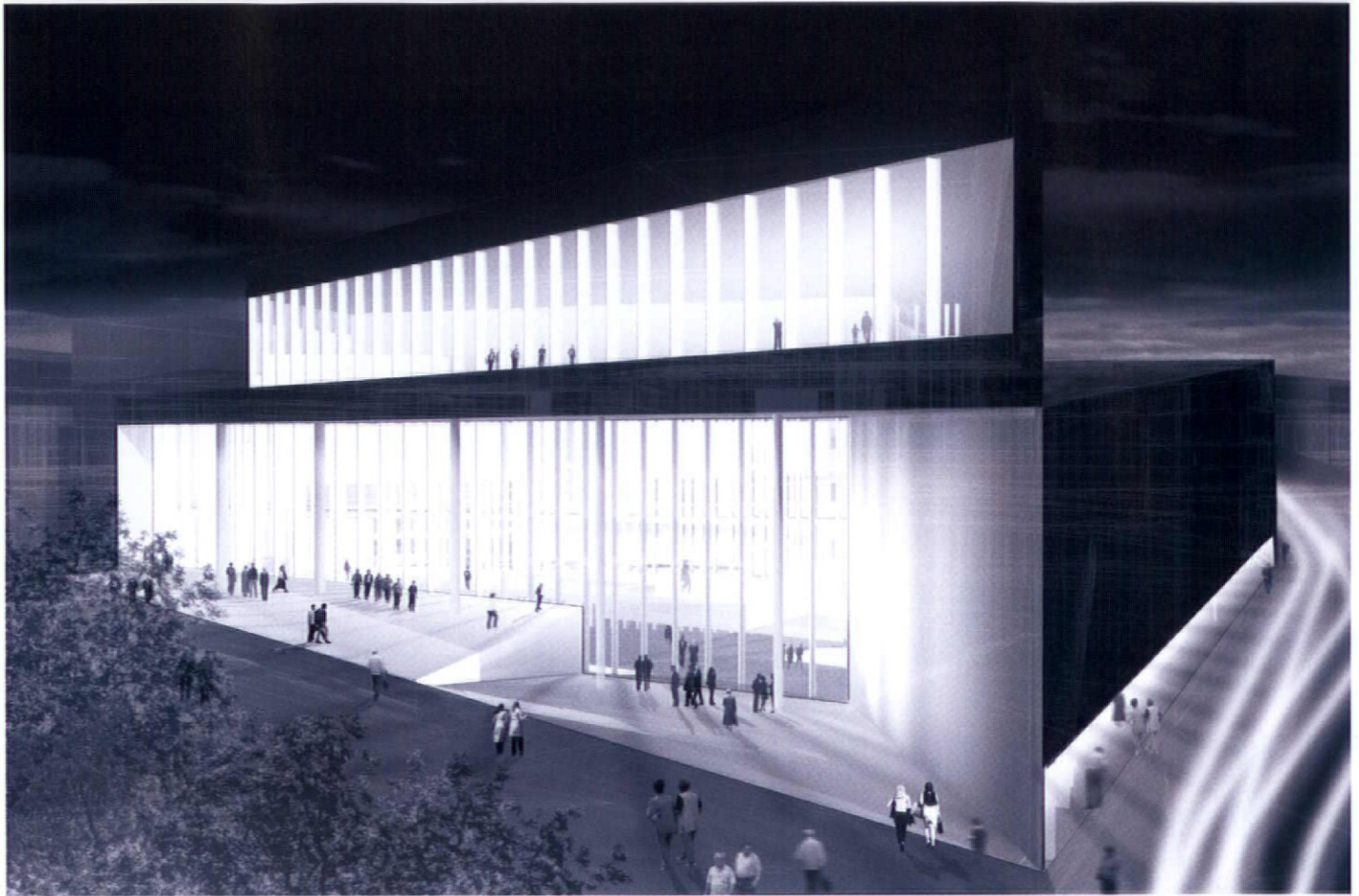
By Richard Waite



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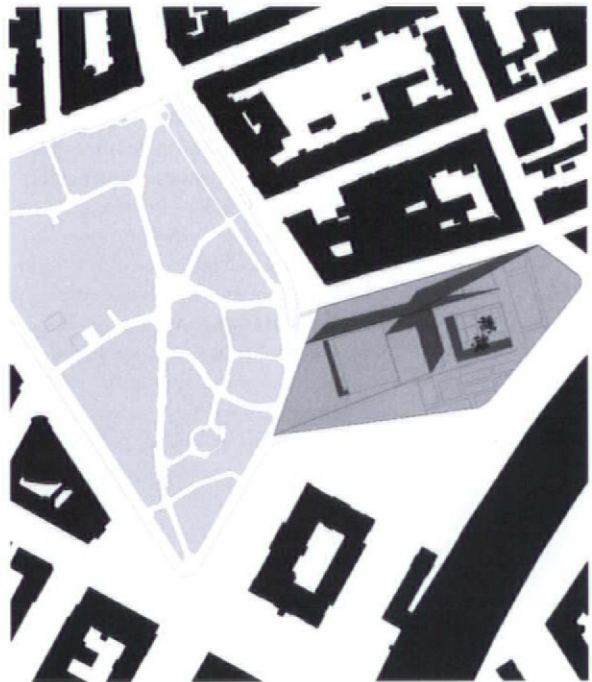


3.



4.

1. The scheme, which will house the Bruckner Orchestra, is on a former hospital site south of the River Danube
2. & 3. Concept sketches
4. The Musiktheater's two-storey glazed entrance
5. Site plan



5.



1.



2.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

By Ed Dorrell

Poor old Cumbernauld. Once the darling of '50s and '60s Modernists; now the nemesis of almost every lay planner and wannabe architectural expert in Scotland.

Poor old Cumbernauld. Its town-centre shopping precinct overwhelmingly voted to the top of the poll in Channel Four's *Demolition* series last year.

Poor old Cumbernauld. Now on the receiving end of a depressingly average Keppie-designed retail box that seems likely to suck out what's left of the town's life.

And yet it could have been so different. Just five months ago there was heady talk of transforming the town, of taking advantage of the publicity that surrounded the *Demolition* programme.

'Bring in a design team', people said. 'Masterplan the

whole thing. Use Scotland's architectural talent.' Gordon Murray would be involved. So would Gareth Hoskins. It all looked so promising.

Programme-makers had facilitated a meeting between residents, the council, and the design team. Possibility was the name of the game.

In the intervening period – just five short months later – oh how different it all seems. Not only is the Keppie scheme, called the Antonine Centre, coming out of the ground, it is rather amazingly being hailed as the future of the town.

Last week this town's dignitaries, including leaders of North Lanarkshire Council, gathered at the site to celebrate the erection of the shopping centre's steel frame. What then followed was a scattergun publicity campaign that

told anyone who'd listen that this was the new dawn – this was the future of Cumbernauld.

That's not exactly the impression that one gets talking to Scotland's architectural talent, both those involved closely with the *Demolition* meeting and those who are mere seasoned watchers.

One such observer is journalist Penny Lewis. Her experience watching developments – especially Keppie's scheme – at Cumbernauld makes for extremely depressing listening.

'It seems like this is a just a retail box. They say that it will create places within it – but from what I understand this will be in the second phase, and who knows how long that will take to come about.

'Planners at South Lanarkshire have always



3.

4.

1 & 2. Cumbernauld's shopping centre was voted Britain's most-hated building in Channel Four's *Demolition* series

3 & 4. Keppie Design's retail scheme will be adjacent to the original shopping centre

said that they do not care what the design experts say.

'Their point is that they are not bothered about the idea of a masterplan. Their attitude has always been that it was the design experts that got them into this mess in the first place in the '50s.

'The council said after the *Demolition* programme that they would be more strategic, but it seems that all they are interested in is getting more good shops.'

And Lewis warns that there is also a problem with land-ownership in the town. 'The place has no centre and it is a dormitory town. It needs a new centre. They have no public money at all to fund this work.

'Also, the middle area of the town – which is the existing shopping centre – is owned by private companies; it is always

going to be very difficult,' she adds.

One of the members of the design team brought in by *Demolition* was Gordon Murray of Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects. He is clearly devastated by the direction the town is taking.

'There is a difficulty here – every time anyone tries to talk to them [the planners] about design they clam up.

'They seem to be hypersensitive whenever anyone wants to talk to them about design. For example, North Lanarkshire [council] was very dismissive of the idea of a masterplan.'

Differing slightly from Lewis, Murray optimistically believes that there are some positives to take from recent council comments. 'They now seem to be trying to understand

place-making, but it seems a bit of a case of too little far too late.

'But with the private-land-ownership issues it is difficult to see where they can take it.

'If you're going to replace the centre of the town with a massive great box, where are you going to go from there?'

Good question. Over to the council. The fine burghers of Cumbernauld surely deserve more than they are currently getting.

CUMBERNAULD – A BRIEF HISTORY

1956 A small existing village on a windy hill outside Glasgow is designated a New Town, possibly the most significant of Scotland's overflow settlements.

1959 The massive megastructure in the town centre begins on site under the watchful eye of Modernist Geoffrey Copcutt. It will become Europe's first covered retail-led town centre.

1967 The centre's first phase completes to architectural acclaim. Unfortunately the following phases that will 'make it complete' never really get off the ground.



The previous Chapman Taylor plan, lodged in 2003, for the York site

FRESH CLASH OVER COPPERGATE

By Ed Dorrell

The never-ending battle over the future of one of the most sensitive sites in England is set to reignite.

The row over the development of the hugely contentious Coppergate site in York, which has already been the cause of two planning inquiries, seems ready to restart following the publication of yet another planning brief.

In addition, the AJ has also learned that the architect of the two failed attempts to build a shopping centre on the central York site – Chapman Taylor – is set to restart meetings with the landowner and developer Land Securities.

The pair are planning to draw up fresh plans ready for yet another planning application.

The site, which sits within the Castle and Piccadilly areas of historic central York, is close

to many listed buildings and in the shadow of the famous Grade I-listed Clifford's Tower.

Chapman Taylor's last shopping-centre design triggered nationwide controversy when it was lodged. It culminated with a planning inquiry which unusually featured CABE arguing against the project and English Heritage in favour.

Importantly, the powerful conservation lobby in York was militantly opposed to the £60 million development and campaigned to see it rejected.

Early signs suggest the new planning application is unlikely to have any easier passage through the planning process.

The planning brief, which refers to the site as being for 'retail-led mixed use', has had a lukewarm reception from the local groups.

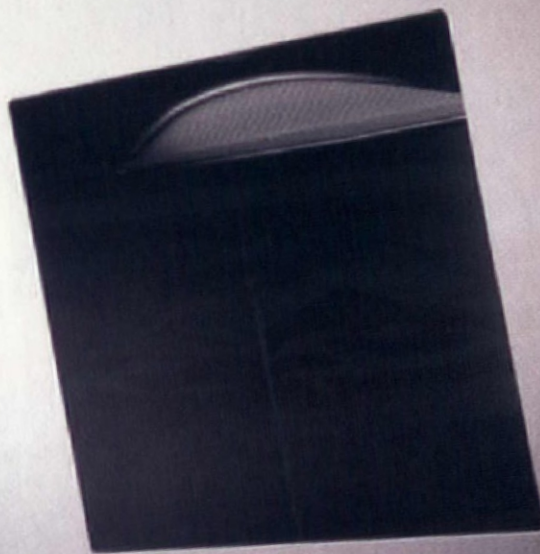
One source at the York Civic Trust, a long-term opponent of developments on the site, told the AJ that the organisation was uncertain about recent developments.

'We have had a look at the new planning brief and we're not sure. We are very wary of what will emerge this time. It seems likely we'll have another battle on our hands,' they said.

Prior to the last planning inquiry, Land Securities appointed John Pardey and Colin Stansfield Smith to work with Chapman Taylor on revisions to the scheme. However, inexplicably, these changes were suddenly dropped on the eve of the hearing.

It is understood that neither Stansfield Smith nor Pardey have been approached to work on the new development.

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Falconer Chester's planned Elysian Fields development

LIVERPOOL LOSES HERITAGE BATTLE

By Rob Sharp

Liverpool Council is set to be lumbered with a five-figure legal bill after losing a high-profile battle to prove a key development in the city would affect its World Heritage status.

The local authority has lost a tense public inquiry over the future of Falconer Chester's Elysian Fields development, in a ruling that will send shock waves through the city's conservation community.

The inquiry found that the architect's plans for a pavilion on top of a seven- to eight-storey building on Colquitt Street – located in the heart of Liverpool's historic centre – would not adversely affect views of the city's historic buildings.

This ruling comes despite the protestations of English Heritage (EH) and the city's World Heritage officer over a number of proposals.

A spokesperson for the project's developer, Iliad, said: 'EH sent the World Heritage officer to the public hearing. Our barrister picked numerous holes in his argument.'

However, EH denied it had objected to Iliad's current proposals, as was claimed by a statement released by local business lobbyists Downtown Liverpool in Business (DLIB).

The heritage body insisted it had only raised concerns about an earlier planning application for the site, also by Iliad and Falconer Chester.

An EH spokesperson said: 'We are surprised and disappointed by the remarks attributed to DLIB, which are inaccurate and misleading.'

'EH was not involved in any way with the recent public inquiry which dealt with the penthouse applications.'

Iliad submitted its first application for the site in 2002. This was recommended for approval, but rejected by councillors after an objection by EH over its scale.

The developer reduced the scale of the scheme and it was approved. But two fresh application attempts by Iliad – to add penthouse accommodation – were not welcomed by the council. Both were rejected, and after appeals by Iliad, both went to public inquiry.

Now, Iliad is looking to recoup the substantial amount of money it has spent fighting its key legal battle.

The most recent ruling represents more than just a victory for one business. The decision is being trumpeted as a landmark case for enterprise across the city.

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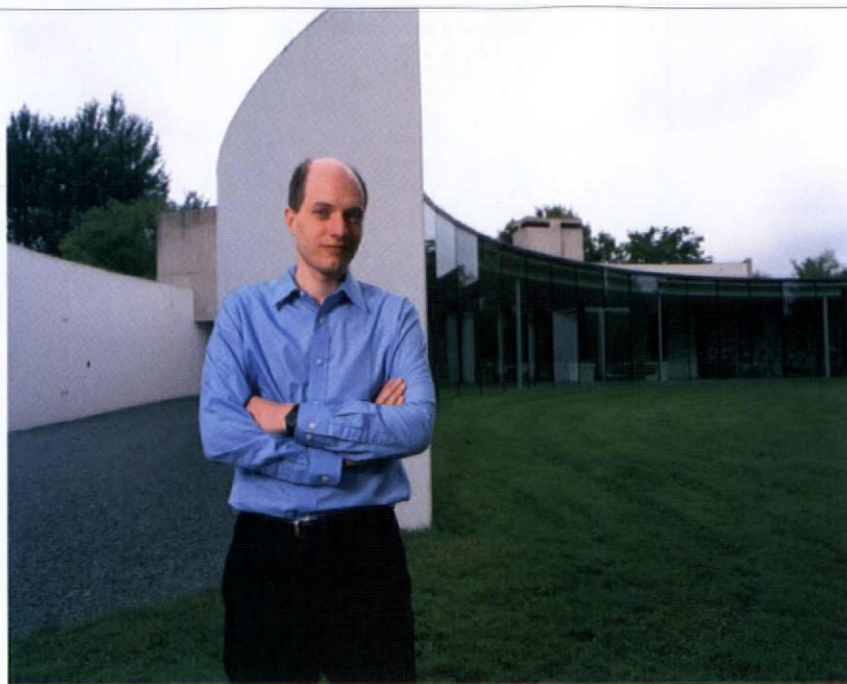
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Alain de Botton at Ken Shuttleworth's Crescent House

DE BOTTON ATTACKS ARCHITECTS

By Rob Sharp

The man awarded the honour of delivering this year's RIBA Trust annual lecture, Alain de Botton, has made the bizarre move of panning the profession just days before the event.

The author is likely to incur the wrath of practitioners attending the speech after voicing views against architects' 'inability' to manage projects and control finances.

In an interview with the *AJ* last week, De Botton said that many architects were suffering from a kind of 'status anxiety' because of their 'position in the building chain'.

He continued his diatribe by taking sides in a 'war' over costs between architects and developers.

De Botton said: 'Architects aren't holding on to enough of their work, so most developers don't need architects.'

'One of the key things that has landed architects in difficulties is their inability to master the costs involved.'

He continued: 'You go to an architect and they can't tell you what your house will cost. Their inability to properly manage a project in a capitalist world that cares for nothing more than efficiency, cost management and time management is extraordinary.'

'A lot of it has to do with the training they receive.'

De Botton also claimed that ordinary people could not afford good architecture, because they were priced out of the market. This is a result of poor project management, he claimed.

He added that his new book, *The Architecture of Happiness*, is 'about the idea of beauty in architecture – which architects don't really talk about now.'

He denied that his book was just for non-architects. 'It's to get architects to think deeply about what an attractive building is,' he added.

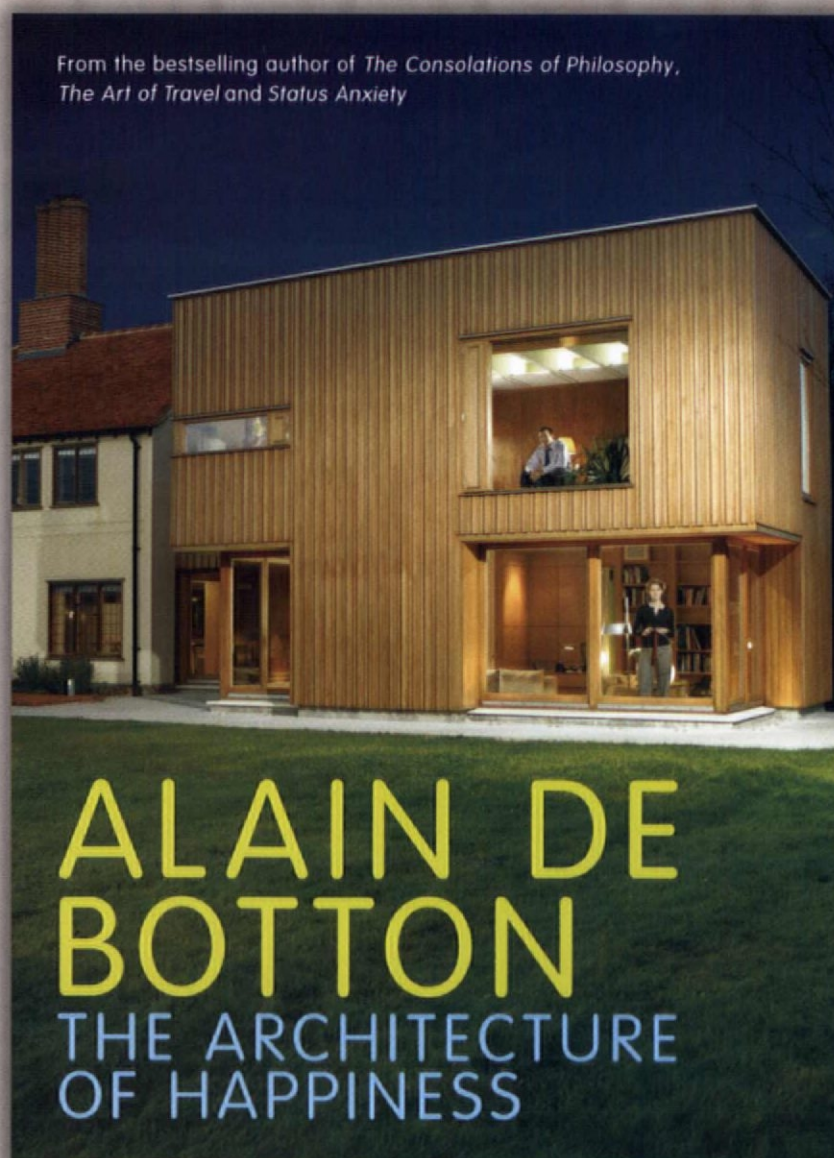
Prince Charles also came in for a pasting. De Botton added: 'I think he feels to be quite embattled. He's too threatened by too many things. He'd be threatened by Michael Hopkins' Queen's Building, Cambridge.'

Speaking ahead of De Botton's lecture, RIBA Trust Director Charles Knevitt said: 'Beauty is a word rarely used in relation to contemporary architecture, especially in Britain.'

'As Hugh Casson once remarked, we think of it as "unmanly" and something that should be left to "foreigners and women"'. In his lecture, Alain de Botton will put that right.'

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GLAS TO BREAK INTO SOUTHWARK

Glas Architects has won planning permission for this 164-unit residential scheme on Southwark Bridge Road in south London. Located on a triangular industrial site, it includes 62 affordable housing units, with eight four-bedroom social rented houses and 2,000m² of commercial space. According to the architect, the design adds 'coherence' to the characteristics of the surrounding urban landscape. Three key elements inform the scheme: terraced social housing; a landscaped 'sunken' garden; and the 'folded form' of residential units above. Glas director Nazar Sayigh added that the transparent facades of ground-floor commercial space 'will bring life, vitality and a much-needed boost to local services, offering interaction at street level'.

By Rob Sharp



1.



2.



3.

1. & 2. The scheme, on a triangular site, adds 'coherence' to the surrounding urban landscape
3. Terraced housing overlooks the landscaped 'sunken' garden



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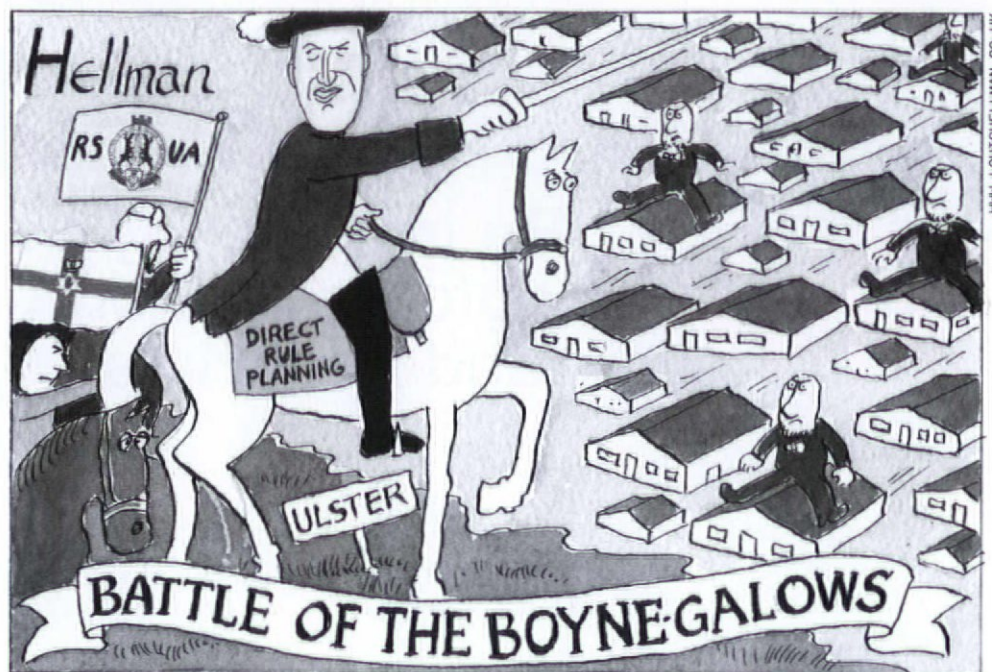
Roger Scruton. *Spectator*, 08.04.06

'Our greatest living architect'

Roger Scruton on Quinlan Terry. *Spectator*, 08.04.06

'Decrying Modernism is a bit like asking what the Romans ever did for us'

Adrian Searle. *Guardian*, 11.04.06



KEEPING UP WITH JONES

Readers of a religious persuasion will be disappointed to hear that Astragal's old friend **Max Hutchinson** is unlikely to be making any more appearances on *Songs of Praise*. Even bastions of godliness react to the harsh realities of the marketplace – Max simply doesn't constitute a bargain. He charges the same fee as **Aled Jones**, but with Aled, they get two free songs.

NUCLEAR SILENCE

What's happened to **Jack Pringle**, president *extraordinaire* at Portland Place? While his presidency to date has been really rather successful – look at the major victory in the PFI debate, for example – he seems to have been brought to an abrupt halt in his one-man crusade to stop the seemingly inevitable rebirth of nuclear

power. Pringle made it clear when he was campaigning 18 months ago that he was a passionate opponent of the energy source. So what happened when the perfect opportunity – the request for a consultation document on government energy policy – arises to have a good rant on the issue? A wall of silence. Plenty of worthy advice on renewable power, but not even a mention that he hates nuclear power as much as **Michael Foot**. Why so quiet, Jack? What we need is a bit of a diatribe.

FAMOUS FOULKES

All the celebrity stops are being pulled out in preparation for **Alain de Botton's** RIBA Trust Annual Lecture next Tuesday. The guest list includes *Private Eye* editor **Ian Hislop**, model and actress **Jerry Hall**, author **James**

Delingpole and Penguin managing director **Tom Weldon**. Joining this stellar cast is **Tom Foulkes**, director of the Institute of Civil Engineers. What company to find yourself in, Tom. What was it you did again before the ICE? Hollywood heart-throb?

WOODEN PERFORMANCE

Contrary to what you might assume, the Architecture Pavilion at Interbuild (pages 47-48) is not **Will Alsop's** first excursion into timber building. Indeed, his first built project was wooden, a swimming pool in his home town of Sheringham. Until recently, he was a regular visitor, but is now boycotting it and forced to take his morning dips in the sea. The reason? The client decided to brighten it up with some garish blue and yellow stripes. How Alsopian.



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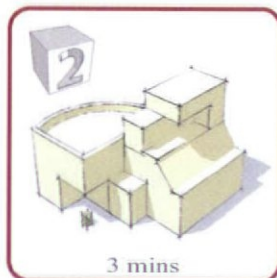
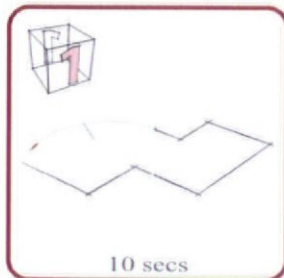
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OLD CRYSTAL PALACE SHOULD NOT BE DISCARDED

The public was encouraged to vote for a modern 'state of the art' all-inclusive sports building at Crystal Palace. Exhibitions and local meetings, that I attended, encouraged thoughts of a 'perfect' new building, which would be low maintenance and would feature ideal facilities.

The public vote in favour of the new building is not surprising, but your report on the existing grade II-listed building, (AJ 13.04.05), feeds on the negative propaganda.

The reality is that the existing high diving pool, the only one in London, will not be replaced. This fact was not made clear at the public exhibitions, but was specifically referred to in a separate London Development Agency report on the project (*Crystal Palace Planning Framework*, October 2005). Both the report and a meeting selected a 1967 issue of the AJ to quote from – using the negative bits only.

The new pool is to be tucked away under the raked seating of the new sports stadium. It is therefore very unlikely to be light and airy. The new building will not be maintenance free, and will be a capital outlay greatly exceeding the upgrading, and making good of missing years of maintenance to the existing buildings. It may also be in competition with the East London Olympic Pool.

The old building could have an alternative use as a museum and international restaurant, if not as a national swimming and high-diving pool.

Peter Somers, Sydenham

THE FRUIT OF ALSOP'S ORANGERY LABOURS IS SHUNNED

Whatever happened to context? Have the planners gone completely mad? They spend their time quibbling about minor additions to indifferent old buildings, and then let SMC Alsop's desecration of poor old Wakefield's poor old Orangery go through (AJ 13.04.06).

Is it just because Will Alsop is not affecting the listed building's fabric? In theory, there may be no interference, but

COMPETITION SEEKS SCHOOL SCHEMES

Entries are being sought for the Changing London Schools competition, which will feature educational projects from inner-London boroughs. The contest, supported by the AJ, is open to international architects, designers and design students with school projects either completed, in design or under construction. It is hoped that entries will range from inspiring classroom extensions to larger-scale transformations of existing school buildings and new schools and academies. The competition will culminate in a show at BDP's Hub space during June's London Architecture Biennale. The exhibition will be accompanied by workshops with pupils, and a debate on the role of architects in the changing face of education will also take place. For information visit www.architecturefoundation.org.uk or email changinglondonschools@architecturefoundation.org.uk. The deadline for competition entries is 8 May.

one can scarcely expect to enjoy the symmetry and calm beauty of the building with that giant alien glazed waffle casting a shadow from above.

Rowena Backhouse, London N1

CORRECTION

Regarding the story of the legal dispute over the refit of a London office block (ajplus 22.02.06), we would like to clarify that the claim brought about by Winterdome Ltd was against Harper Mackay/MAK Architects Ltd and not Stephen Archer personally.

Please address letters to: The Editor, The Architects' Journal, 151 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4GB, fax 020 7505 6701, or email angela.newton@emap.com to arrive by 10am on the Monday before publication. The Architects' Journal reserves the right to edit letters.

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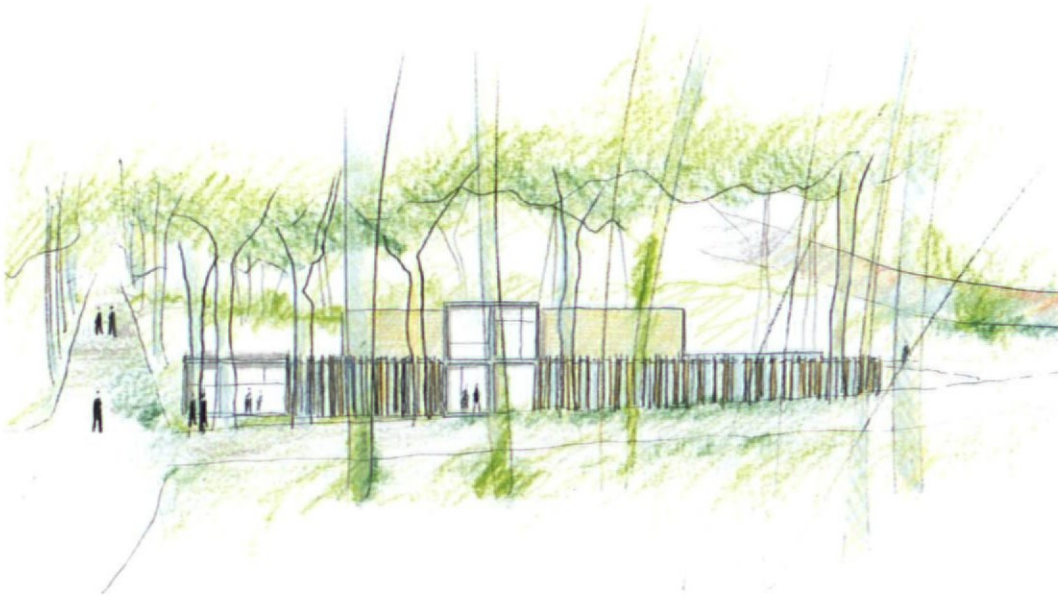
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STUDIO DOWNIE/ CASS FOUNDATION



1. Sketch of east elevation, by Craig Downie

WE DIDN'T WANT A BUILDING WITH A CAPITAL B. FROM HERE, YOU SHOULDN'T SEE IT

By Andrew Mead. Photography by Anthony Coleman

Studio Downie won attention with its first completed building, a Visitor Gallery for the Cass Sculpture Foundation in 1994. Since then, its projects have included the award-winning Royal Geographical Society Exhibition and Study Centre in Kensington, London and the refurbishment of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, also in London. Current schemes include an extension to Lyme Regis Museum, in Dorset and proposals for the new King's Cross development, in central London.

When you reach the entrance to the Cass Sculpture Foundation at Goodwood on the South Downs in Sussex, you find a track leading into some woods. Established by Wilfred and Jeanette Cass in 1992 to promote current British sculpture by commissioning, displaying and selling it, the foundation makes full use of this woodland setting for its exhibitions – especially the concealment it provides. Though some sculptures are visible from a distance, at the end of axial paths, or placed at intervals on lawns, most are quite hidden, revealed in clearings on a winding route through the trees.

Much the same could be said of Studio Downie's first building for the foundation, completed in 1994 – a steel, timber and glass pavilion that serves to greet and orient visitors. Placed in the woods to one side of the entrance track, it's distinct enough for its function but hardly obtrusive. So it's no surprise that Studio Downie's new 535m² building for the Casses, the Foundation Centre, makes a virtue of concealment too.

'We didn't want a building with a capital B. The plan was that, when you stood here, you wouldn't see it. The woodland

is the prime thing for us,' says Wilfred Cass. We're at a junction of tracks a few metres inside the grounds – one leading south past the 1994 pavilion, the other dropping east into a valley, where the Foundation Centre sits.

Rather than take this track directly, most visitors will wander down the lawn, looking at the diverse sculptures, and what they will see below them first is just a cedar-clad oblong box, glazed on both sides at the centre to frame the trees and ivy on the facing slope. Only from quite close is it clear that this box projects from a lower trapezoidal storey, linked to the cut chalk banks by a pair of concrete beams at either end – what Craig Downie refers to as 'fingers'.

The chalk is rich in flints, and Downie produces a broken nodule from his pocket to explain a concept behind the building: its white concrete and grey render are meant to echo the white skin and dark interior of the flint. In fact, the render is in two shades of grey: light towards the chalk banks and dark on the south and east walls, which are partly screened by a series of vertical timber fins, placed singly and in clusters at irregular intervals. One intention, says Downie, is 'to give a certain depth to the facade and pick up shadows'.

The fins' irregular rhythm at once recalls the *ondulatoires* at La Tourette, orchestrated by Le Corbusier's then assistant, the composer Xenakis. Downie's source is musical too and suitably sylvan – the flute part of Debussy's *Prelude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune*. Of course, you wouldn't know that unless you were told, but what



2. The building seen from the lawn to the west

you do see immediately is how the fins rhyme with the slender tree trunks in the vicinity, like an abstraction of them.

This is particularly the case when you approach from the east side of the Foundation Centre, from where the fins seem to merge with the trees – bringing to mind the walk through the woods to the Villa Mairea in Finland, where Aalto uses timber to create similar rhymes and articulate the transition from nature to culture. As it happens, Downie has visited Villa Mairea and is ‘a huge Aalto fan’, but no deliberate reference was intended.

This merging of building and site will steadily increase as the new planting on the banks begins to flourish and the sedum roof on the lower storey sprouts. Already there are greenish algae stains on the concrete ‘fingers’, while the three rooflights on the top storey capture reflections of the trees – this melding with the landscape is well under way.

The theme of concealment continues, because only on the east side does the building finally reveal itself. Here, you discover that the cedar-clad projection is actually the top half of a 7m-high space, the extent of which can be glimpsed through the full-height glazing at its centre, and the structure too becomes clear: the big space created by what Downie calls ‘a concrete table’, with a ribbed ceiling and eight long ‘legs’; the frame of the encompassing lower storey infilled with concrete blocks. From here too there is a satisfying play of horizontals and verticals in the overall composition: the fins and big glazed opening in balance with the long east wall and slim cedar strips above.

The brief for the Foundation Centre evolved over time and there is still some openness about the role it will play. The main purpose, says Cass, was to create a home for the foundation’s ever-expanding archive and library, and it’s the library that you find beyond the glazed entrance at the south-east corner of the building. Though the trapezoidal form of the centre makes sense as a response to the existing topography, it could have resulted in some awkward internal spaces, but this hasn’t happened. The most potentially problematic one, a thin wedge to the north, houses plant; the library funnels gently towards the chalk banks on the west, its lines continued by the concrete ‘fingers’ outside.

The library shelves are of the same dark wood as the fins, here domesticated. Dun-coloured blockwork is exposed, which Downie says he’s come to appreciate since studying the Smithsons’ work at the University of Bath. ‘There’s nothing precious about this building and we couldn’t afford any gymnastics,’ he adds. A brighter note of colour comes with the yellow spine wall that runs the length of the building, linking the library to the archive at the north.

This concrete archive chamber is, says Cass, ‘what the place is actually all about’. Housing sketches, final drawings, maquettes and other materials generated by the foundation’s commissions, it’s a treasure trove for researchers: every name in contemporary British sculpture seems to be represented along with many less well known.



3.

But the memorable space in this new building is the big multi-purpose room at its centre. It will be used for lectures and symposiums, can be let out for fundraisers (the kitchen can cope with 100 or more guests), and may also house exhibitions, which I hope it does – it has real potential for this. With its unexpected volume, its materiality (smooth concrete counterpointing the blockwork), and generous natural light, it isn't neutral, while the full-height window looking out onto the woods, quartered by a cross, could evoke the famous student chapel at Espoo by Heikki and Kaija Siren – another building Downie saw on his architectural tour of Finland.

So the room has discernible character, unlike some much-publicised museum spaces of late. One of the sharpest comments made about New York's expanded MoMA was by Robert Campbell in *Architectural Record* (January 2005) who picked up on Taniguchi's promise that, given enough money, he could make the architecture vanish, to complain that in fact there was not enough architecture – that spaces were almost identical, monotonous. You could say the same thing about Tate Modern.

Downie shows here that you can provide a little more architecture without turning into Frank Gehry – and for just £760,000, which has to be a bargain. This big room at the Foundation Centre offers something other than white-walled uniformity, from which sculpture, placed carefully, could profit. The two lower glass panels slide apart to let in birdsong, the

breeze and large-scale pieces if required. 'This is day one, we've got to learn how to use it,' says Cass.

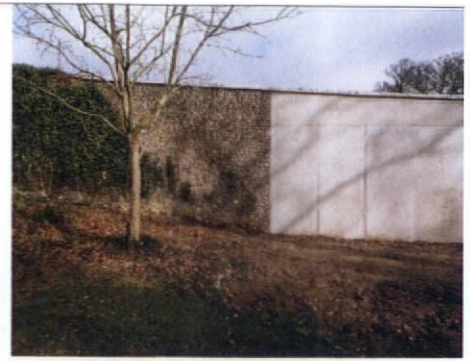
With the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) at Bretton Park near Wakefield, the New Art Centre (NAC) at Roche Court in Wiltshire, and the Cass Sculpture Foundation, the UK has three loosely comparable organisations which have each fostered a relationship with a particular practice – the YSP with Feilden Clegg Bradley, the NAC with Munkenbeck + Marshall, and Cass with Downie.

While in their funding, sites and programmes, all three are distinct, they offer a comparable experience: a meandering walk in a designed landscape punctuated by architecture and art. Though they could be discussed in the context of, say, the Louisiana Museum near Copenhagen, and other post-war European examples in which art, architecture and landscape are integrated, they could also be seen as continuing – and rejuvenating – the great tradition of the 18th-century English landscape garden.

But whereas at Stourhead the initiated visitor would find the landscape full of references to Virgil's *Aeneid*, or at Stowe a political agenda – in each case a landscape dense with 'meaning' – these 21st-century versions are much more open ended. Their garden buildings are no longer a Temple of Flora or a Temple of Apollo; the sculptures are no longer Stowe's carved busts of British Worthies or Lord Cobham in Roman dress, but abstract steel assemblages by Anthony Caro, totemic figures by



4.



5.

William Turnbull, and sleek biomorphs by Tony Cragg – works that are open to all sorts of interpretations and responses, not the 18th-century consensus.

Moreover, while the Georgian garden buildings were often eyecatchers, confident objects in the landscape, their successors today tend to be much less obtrusive – the elegant low-key link between house and orangery at Roche Court, the 'underground gallery' slotted into the Bothy Garden at the YSP, and now Studio Downie's serene, discreet insertion in these Sussex woods. Not that discreet means dull, for there is plenty to reward attention, whether the fluctuating shadow patterns of the fins on the textured render, the varied colours of the cedar, the shifting geometry as you walk around the building, or the subtleties of its attunement to its landscape setting – the sense that it has arrived by stealth.

Wilfred Cass believes that his sculpture foundation has come of age and wants the new centre to give it 'international visibility'. There must be every chance that this will happen – some a hievement for a building that's barely visible itself.

The sculpture estate of the Cass Foundation at Goodwood near Chichester is open daily, except Mondays, until 4 November (www.sculpture.org.uk). Studio Downie's new Foundation Centre will be open to researchers, or interested architects, by appointment (tel: 01243 538499).

3. The lower storey gradually emerges. New planting will soon spring up in the foreground

4. Concrete 'fingers' connect with the cut-chalk banks

5. The perimeter wall near the Foundation Centre has been rebuilt



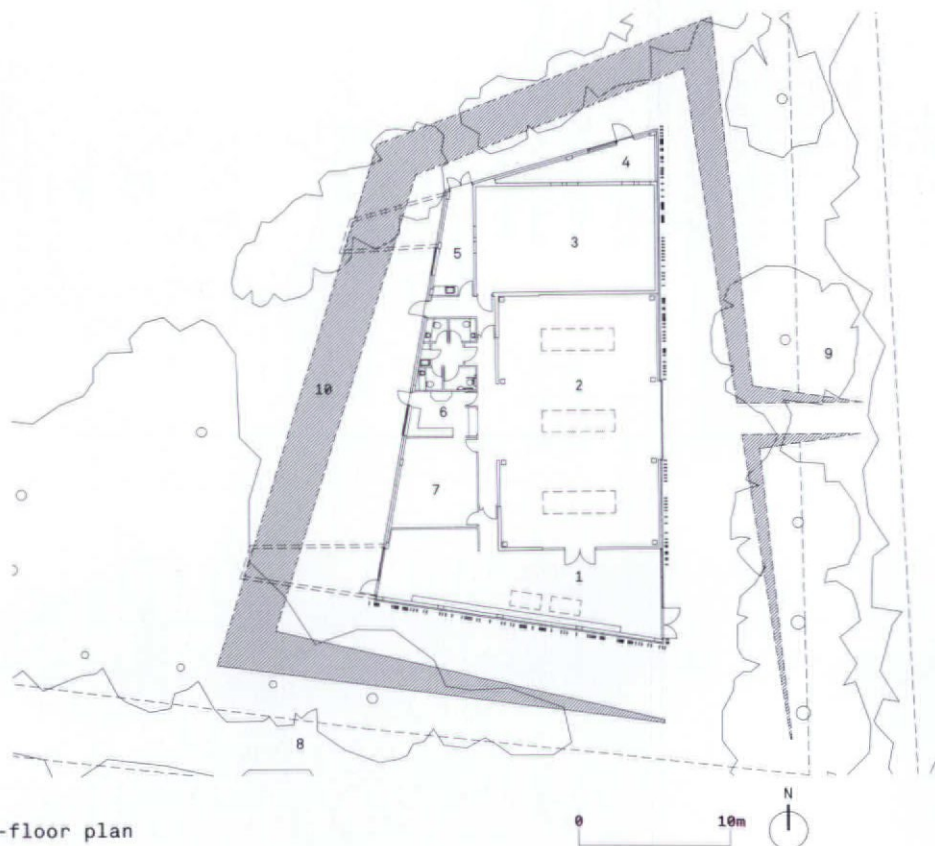
6. Shadow patterns of the timber fins





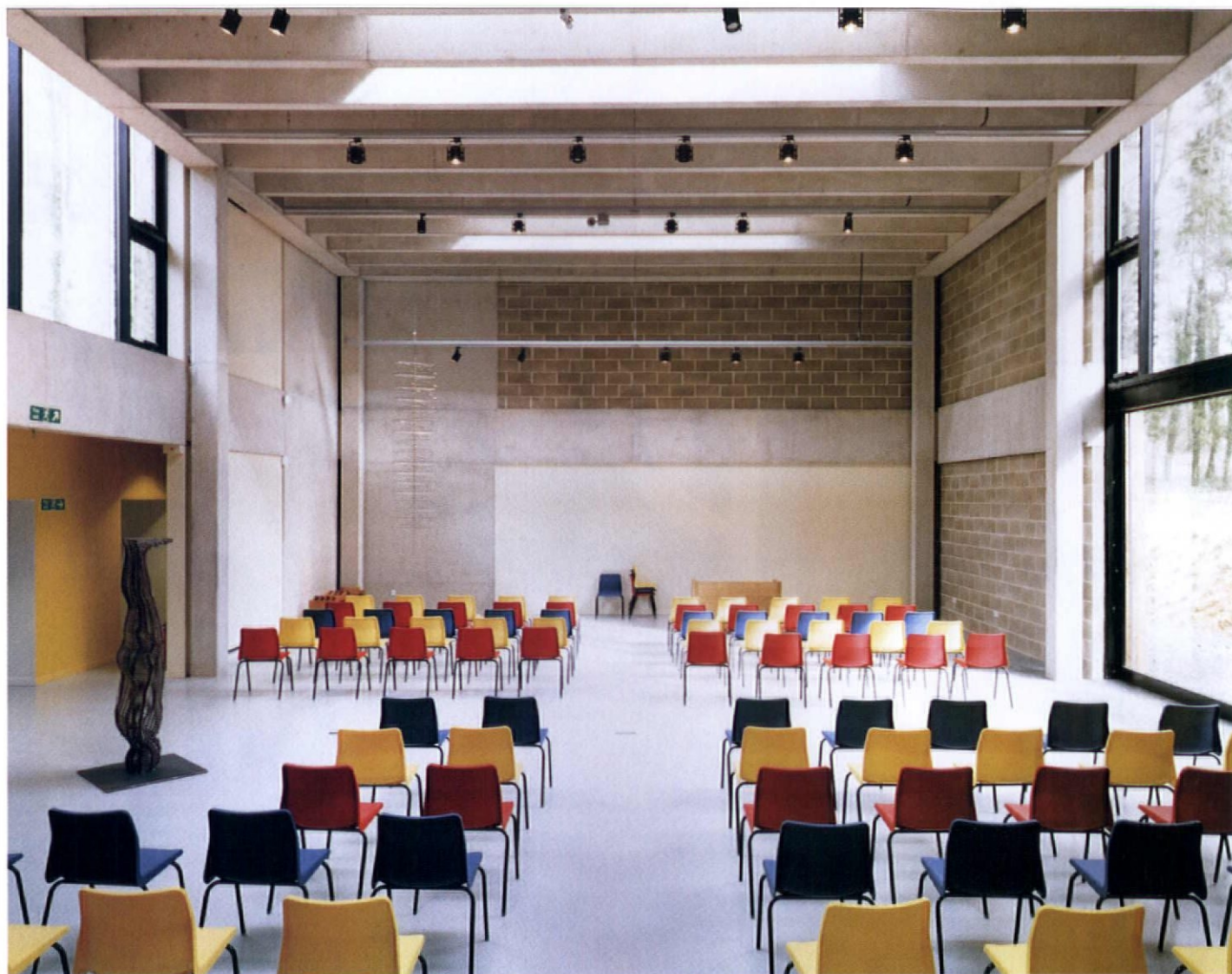
- KEY
- 1 ENTRANCE TO FOUNDATION
 - 2 HAT HILL HOUSE
 - 3 VISITOR PAVILION AND GALLERY
 - 4 FLINT WALL
 - 5 NEW BUILDING ENTRANCE
 - 6 FOUNDATION CENTRE
 - 7 TRACK
 - 8 RIDE

7. Site plan



- KEY
- 1 LIBRARY AND OFFICE
 - 2 DISPLAY SPACE
 - 3 ARCHIVE
 - 4 PLANT
 - 5 WORKSHOP
 - 6 KITCHEN
 - 7 STORE AND PREPARATION
 - 8 TRACK
 - 9 RIDE
 - 10 CHALK CUTTING

8. Ground-floor plan



9.

9 & 10. The big multi-purpose space
at the heart of the new building



10.



11.



12.

11 & 12. The archive chamber
13. Looking west in the library



13.

Costs

Costs refer to gross external area. Cost analysis based on final account.

FOUNDATIONS/SLABS £168.25/m²

Mass concrete strip foundations in excavated chalk, screed blinding; Grace Serviced Prepruf 160R membrane; reinforced concrete slab with edge thickening

SUPERSTRUCTURE

Frame £289.72/m²

RC concrete with flat and ribbed slabs

Roof £112.15/m²

Sarna single-ply membrane on sloped rigid insulation (upper roof); Sarnavert green roof system for lower roof; profiled aluminium gutters

Rooflights £17.76/m²

Vitral fixed low-e double-glazed units with argon-filled cavities

External walls £133.93/m²

Low-level walls: Envirowall acrylic render system on phenolic insulation with Thermowood fins hung off steel rail. High-level walls: cedar cladding

Windows £65.42/m²

Technal MC curtain walling system with electric actuators and low-e double glazed units with argon-filled cavities; Technal FXi46 opening units

External doors £7.48/m²

Prima steel security doors

Internal walls and partitions £31.78/m²

Lightweight Lignacite blockwork; plasterboard partitions

Internal doors £15.88/m²

Solid core with Formica laminate finish

INTERNAL FINISHES

Wall finishes £7.48/m²

Exposed concrete; fair-faced blockwork; painted plasterboard

Floor finishes £18.69/m²

Powerfloated concrete topping with reinforcing mesh; Watco paint finish

Ceiling finishes £3.74/m²

Exposed concrete soffits; plasterboard lowered ceilings to WC zone

FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS

Furniture £14.95/m²

Client supply

SERVICES

Sanitary appliances £11.21/m²

Ceramic appliances

Services equipment £11.21/m²

Mechanical extract to WCs

Disposal installations £9.35/m²

New foul drainage and septic tank; storm water drainage and rainwater system piped to soakaway

Water installations £11.21/m²

Hot- and cold-water installations

Space heating/air treatment £41.12/m²

Condensing oil burner; standard wall-mounted radiators set in floor trenches with grilles over; siphon duct mechanical circulation system to display space

Electrical services £74.77/m²

Power and lighting installations

Protective installations £16.82/m²

Latchways restraint system with constant force posts

Communication installations £11.21/m²

Data, telephone services

Builders' work in connection £66.07/m²

EXTERNAL WORKS

Landscaping, ancillary buildings N/A

Client supply

PRELIMINARIES AND INSURANCES

Preliminaries, overheads and profits £280.37/m²

Credits

Tender date

31.08.04

Start on site date

03.01.05

Contract Duration

12 months

Gross external floor area

535m²

Form of contract

Standard JCT 98 with Amendments 1-5

Total Cost

£760,000 + VAT

Architect

Studio Downie Architects: Craig Downie,
David Hanna

Structural Engineer

Jane Wernick and Associates

M&E Engineer

Peter Deer and Associates

Main Contractor

Ceeecom

Subcontractors and suppliers:

Waterproofing Grace; *concrete contractors* O'Keefe
Construction; *Sarna roofing* Elliotts Premier Roofing;
rooflights Vitral; *Technal glazing* Solaglas; *Envirowall*
render Sebastian Slomkowski; *Timber supplier* Vincent
Timber; *steelwork* Goddard Engineering; *electrics and*
data Derek Lane; *heating* Squires Plumbing; *fire and*
security alarm CIA; *lighting* PR Lighting, Erco; *light*
lowering R&L Systems; *sanitaryware* Armitage Shanks;
steel doors Prima; *fall arrest* Latchways; *ironmongery*
Dorplan; *siphon duct* Ductwork by Design; *shelving*
Neil Burke Joinery



14. Looking south-east towards the Foundation Centre in its wooded grounds



A WALL CLAD WITH VERTICAL TIMBER FINS

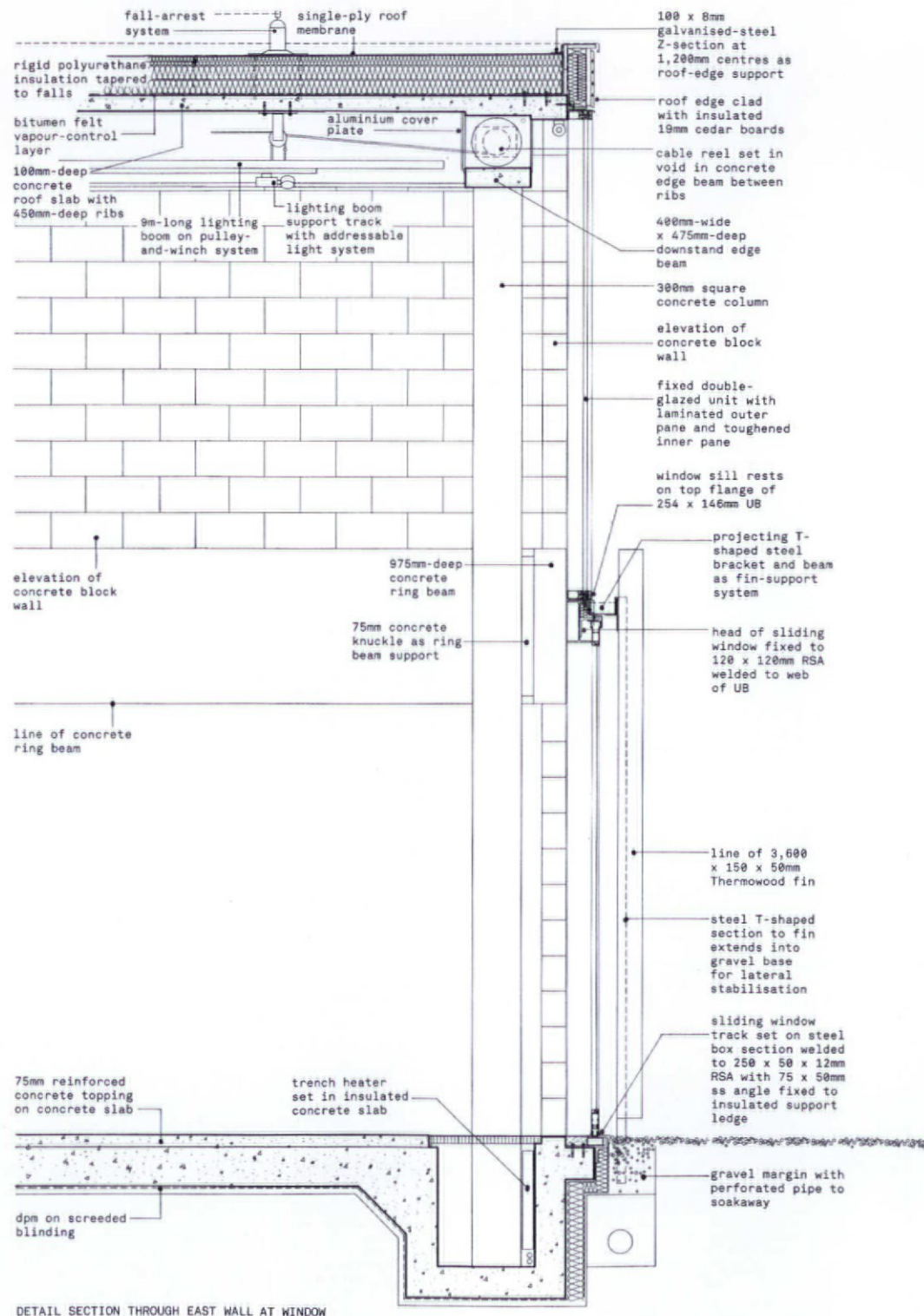
The main element of the new building is a 17 x 11 x 7m display space, flanked on three sides by lower, ancillary spaces and lit by three rooflights and a full-height window on the south wall. The display space has a 'table' structure – two rows of four 300 x 300mm cast-in situ concrete columns supporting a concrete roof with a ribbed soffit – enclosed within block walls clad with cedar boarding and insulated acrylic render. The structure is braced with a 200mm-thick x 975mm-deep concrete ring beam.

Apart from the window and the glazed main entrance on the south wall, the south and east walls are additionally clad with a series of vertical 150 x 50mm timber fins set at random spacing to respond to the woodland setting. The fins are made of Thermowood, a timber product which is heat-treated to improve durability.

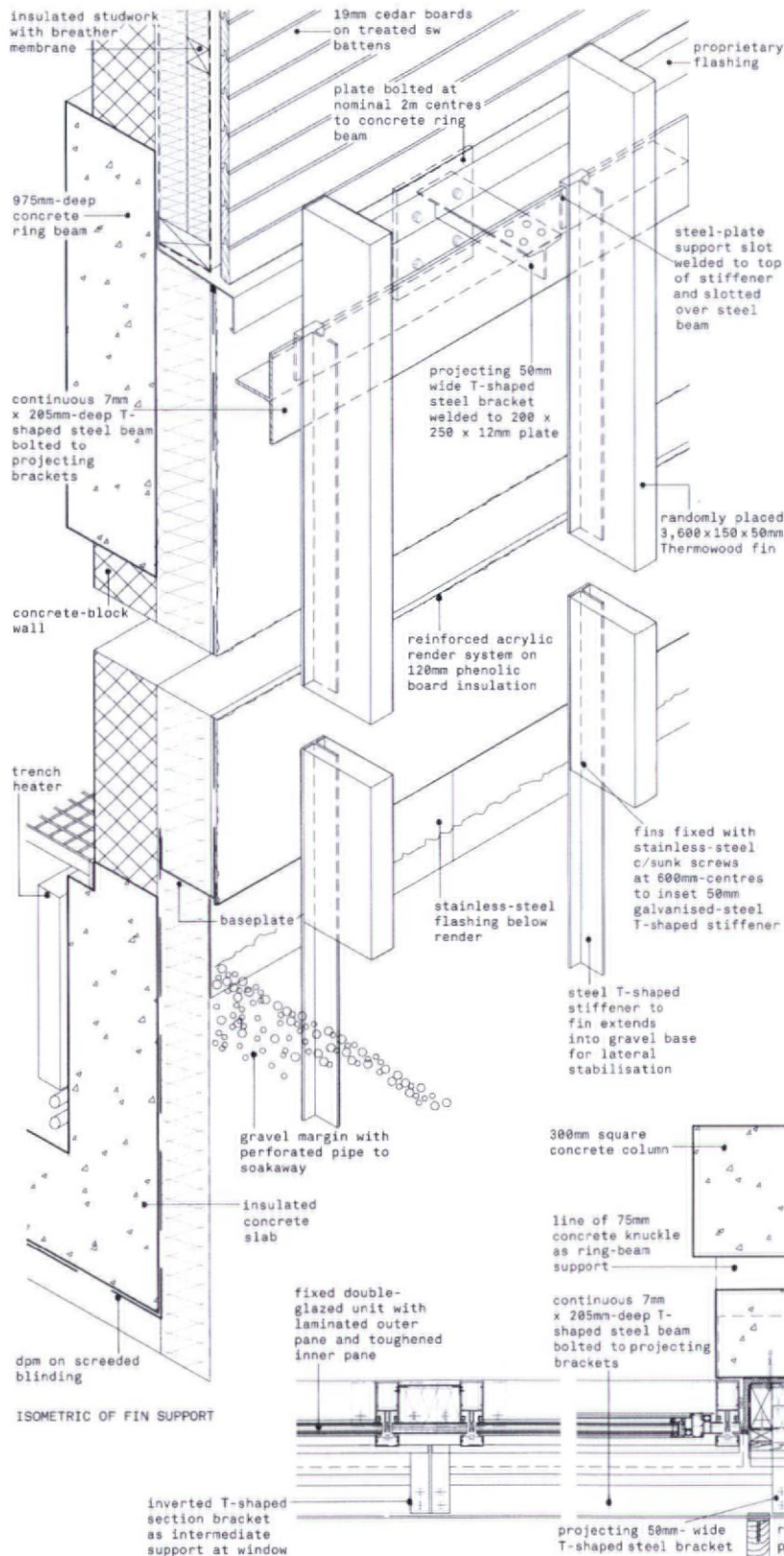
The fin-support system is a series of 200 x 250mm steel plates with projecting T-shaped steel brackets welded to them and bolted to the concrete ring beam. The brackets support a continuous 205mm-deep T-shaped steel beam.

Each fin is 3,600mm high with a 50mm steel T-shaped stiffener set into the rear edge. At the base, the stiffener extends beyond the fin into the gravel base to stabilise it laterally. At the top, a slotted steel plate is welded to the stiffener, so the fins can be slotted over the T-shaped beam at random.

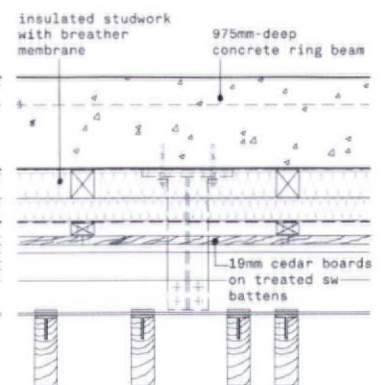
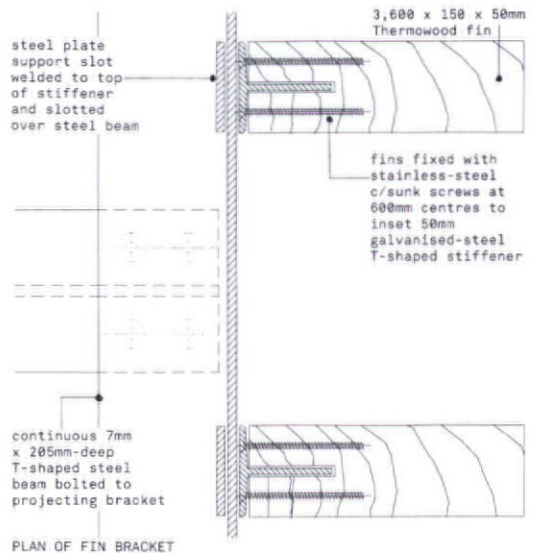
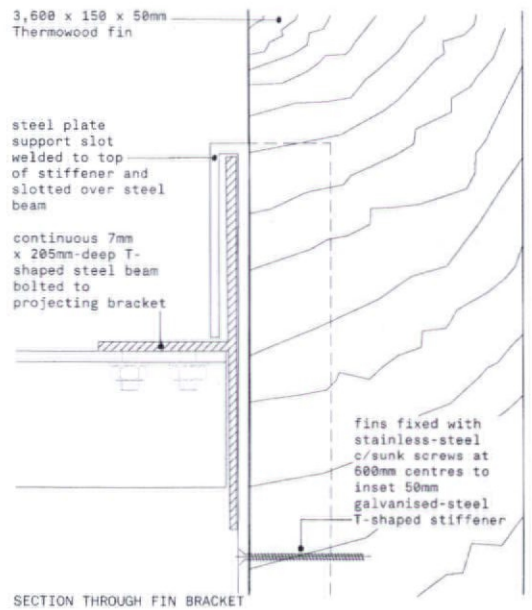
By Susan Dawson

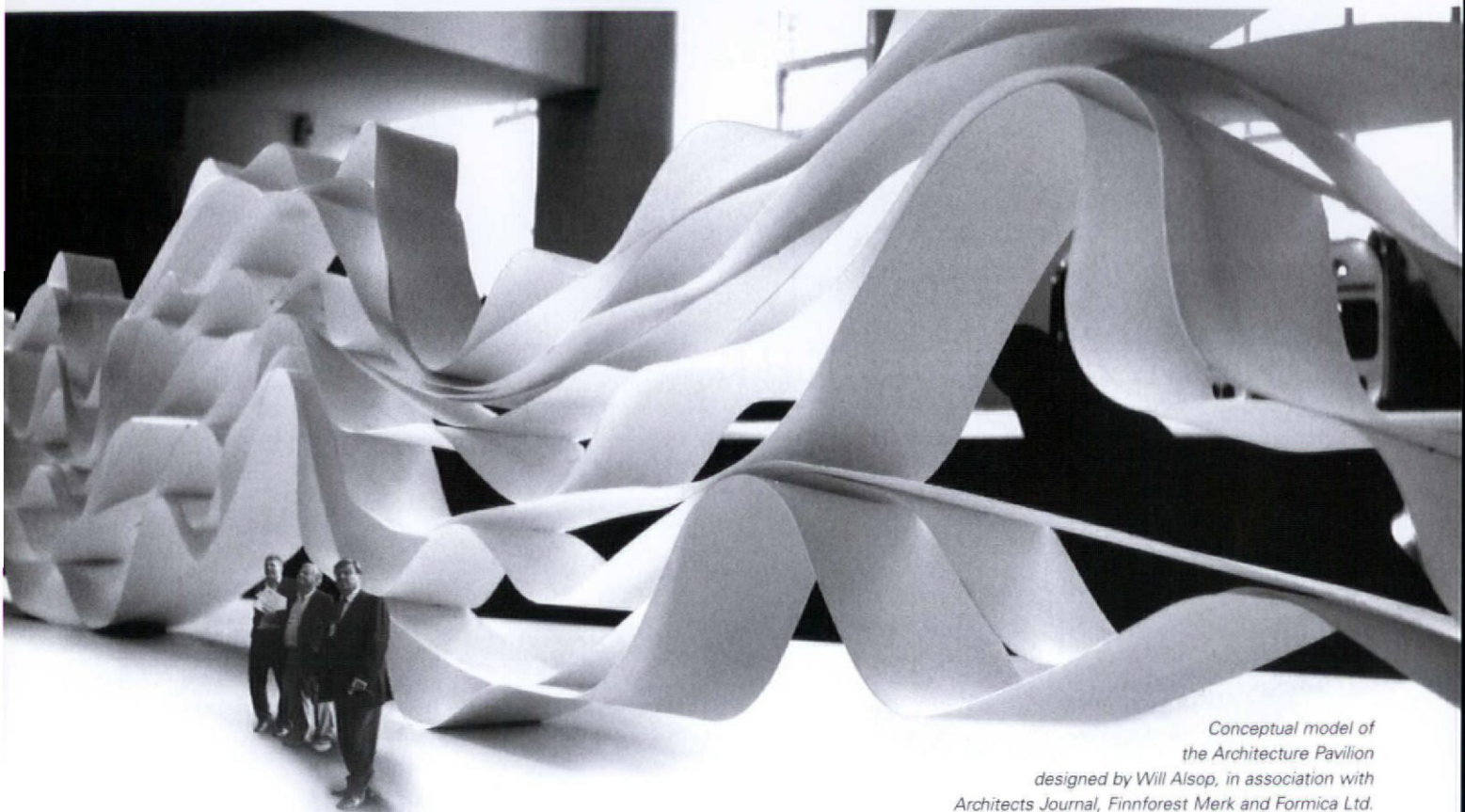


DETAIL SECTION THROUGH EAST WALL AT WINDOW



DETAIL PLAN OF FIN AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE





*Conceptual model of
the Architecture Pavilion
designed by Will Alsop, in association with
Architects Journal, Finnforest Merk and Formica Ltd.*

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ALTHOUGH IT LOOKS PLEASINGLY RANDOM, IT USES ONLY FIVE DIFFERENT CURVES

By Ruth Slavid



1. Alsop's original model

In the fraught run-up to the opening of Interbuild on 23 April, one can guarantee that tension will be high among the people assembling the architecture pavilion. Designed for the second time by Will Alsop, this centrepiece for architect visitors deliberately pushes materials from timber company Finnforest Merk and surfacing company Formica to their limits. There is a feature wall in Finnforest's Kerto laminated veneer lumber (LVL), which Alsop cheerily refers to as 'plywood'. Made up from 122 pieces, with the largest 8m long, it will have been meticulously well planned and trial assembled beforehand. Nevertheless, putting this together in the tight timescale and pressurised environment of an international exhibition hall will not be a picnic.

Not surprisingly, Alsop's original concept was even more challenging, and has been refined through a mixture of pragmatism and budget restraints. 'Finnforest said to me that they wanted me to do something different, to challenge the material,' he explained. 'Imagine a whole pile of sheets of plywood. You cut holes in them and attach them, and they become quite rigid.' Alsop started with a model made in paper and then had to translate it into wood. As Jonathan Stone, UK construction products manager for Finnforest Merk, said to Alsop: 'We asked you to make us uncomfortable and you did.'

Alsop was excited by the fact that, because LVL is a manufactured product, it can theoretically be of any length you want, in contrast to 'natural timber', which is limited by the dimensions of the tree. But he realised that there would be

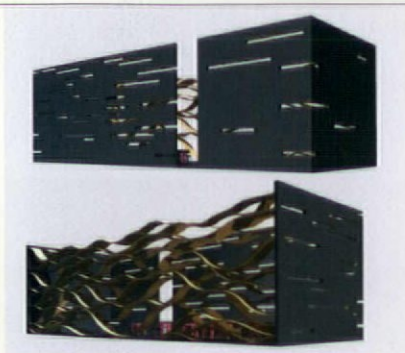
restrictions. 'We started with the principles to see what we could do that would be affordable. We went to Germany [where Finnforest Merk has its main manufacturing facility] to see what we could do. We were given limitations – two different radii for the bending of the wood.'

The final solution that was adopted, although it still looks pleasingly random, in fact uses only five different curves in total. Initially, the idea was that the Kerto might be steam-bent, but this proved not to be feasible. Instead, each layer was made up from three layers of 15mm Kerto, each of which had been made in a curved mould. This was a novelty in itself for Finnforest, since its standard thickness is 21mm.

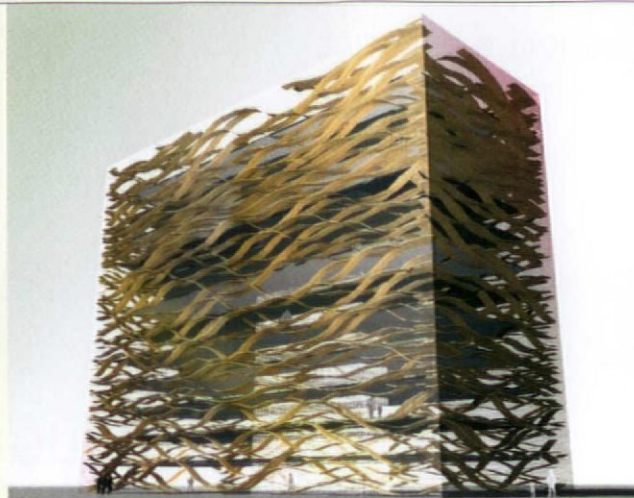
The elements will arrive on site in a kind of 'flat pack' to be assembled to form the wall that will be 28m long and 10m wide in total. Initially, the three other walls would be of timber panels, but cost restrictions have resulted in something more ephemeral. But there will still be some structural posts at either end of the feature wall, since it will not be entirely self-supporting.

The bar will also be of wood, and the floor as well will be a Finnforest product, a phenolic plywood that is more commonly used for truck fit-outs. Extremely hard wearing, it also has 'wonderful patterns', says Alsop.

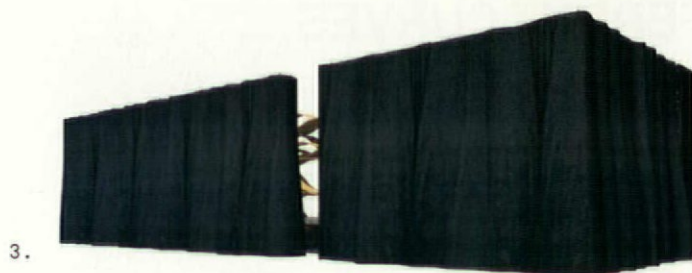
Formica will be used for the surface of the bar and also for the surfaces of the table. There will be a combination of a polished gold laminate and ebony wood finish – Alsop likes the idea of mixing real timber and imitation.



2.



4.



3.

- 2. The original design for the Architecture Pavilion
- 3. Later refinement of the design
- 4. Alsop's design for the Ghost building in Toronto uses ideas from the pavilion

It is always disappointing, when so much effort goes into an exhibition stand, that it has such a short life, but in this case the pavilion's use should be extended by a second application. Alsop hopes that it can serve as an additional bar area in the public square outside his building The Public in West Bromwich when it has its formal opening later in the summer. It may need some weather-proofing, although Alsop is hoping for good weather.

But projects like this can also have a more intangible afterlife. Having discovered Kerto, Alsop is now hoping to use it on the 'Ghost' building that he is designing in Toronto. In that case, it would be used externally to provide sun-shading.

This will not be the first time that Finnforest has increased the range and knowledge of its own products through their use on innovative schemes. Several ideas, said Stone, also grew out of last summer's Serpentine pavilion, designed by Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura.

And for Formica, as well, the pavilion should provide inspiration in the way that at least a tiny part of its vast portfolio of materials can be used.

Exhibitions are all about stimulating the visitors to think in new ways and consider new ideas, so it seems appropriate that a similar process is affecting those involved in the design and manufacture of the architecture pavilion.

Interbuild runs from Sunday 23 April to Thursday 27 April. For more information and registration go to www.interbuild.com

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Photo: North West Wales NHS Trust, Adrian Williamson MCIAT, WM Design Partnership LLP Photo by Chris Gregory

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WITH FORETHOUGHT, IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE NEW TAX YEAR

By Karen Liddell

Spring is a good time to look at your tax and financial affairs. The new tax year that started on 6 April was an opportunity to set some financial goals for your firm and your own finances.

Many firms that are financially sound nevertheless struggle with cash-flow problems. Taking a little time to plan ahead for major expenditure and consider the knock-on effect on partners' tax liabilities can have a significant impact.

Consider an architectural practice with a 30 April year end which is planning some major repairs to the office roof. The repairs are estimated to cost £20,000. If the repairs are carried out in May 2006, the partners will be in a position to reduce their tax bill on 31 January 2009 by £8,000. However, by bringing the work forward by just a few weeks to the end of April, the tax relief is advanced by a whole year to January 2008 (and there may even be the possibility of bringing the relief forward to the interim tax payments due in January and July 2007).

Too often, major expenditure is pushed into the beginning of a new accounting year so that it 'comes out of next year's budget'. However, as the example above shows, sometimes it makes sense to bring the cost forward.

The revenue recognition rules have changed as a result of accounting guidance FRS5 and UITF 40. In basic terms, this change of emphasis means that for many firms the payment of tax will be advanced on recurring work. In view of this, it is more important than ever that firms tighten their financial controls.

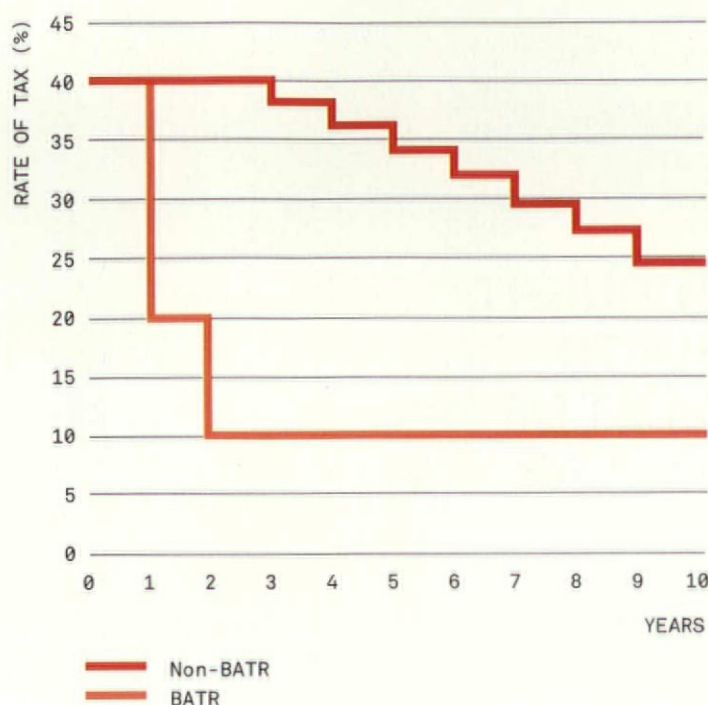
The start of the new year can act as a catalyst for change. Simple measures that should be reviewed include:

- strengthening debt-collection procedures (the tax still needs to be paid even if you have not received payments from your customers). Ensure that debts are chased regularly and, if possible, pass responsibility to a credit controller rather than asking partners to chase outstanding bills;
- ensure that work in progress (WIP) is billed at the earliest opportunity. Ensure that projects are billed on a regular basis, at least quarterly if not monthly; and
- review procedures for providing for bad debts and WIP.

As frustrating as it is not to receive payment of fees, many firms delay providing against bad debts in the ever-optimistic hope that the fee will be paid. If there really is little chance of recovering the debt, a provision should be made. If you don't do this, you will be in the worst position of all – not having been paid for your services and yet still paying tax on the debt.

Providing in advance for certain expenditure can also reduce your tax bill now. There are conditions which need to be met but if, for example, the office lease requires the firm to pay for dilapidations, making a properly quantified provision for the sum that will be payable at the end of the lease should reduce your tax bill now. However, you should remember that this is only a timing adjustment to bring the relief forward.

The disposal of assets, either by the firm or by individuals, needs particular care around the beginning of the tax year.



Disposing of an asset after 6 April 2006 will push back the payment of tax on any gain from 31 January 2007 until 31 January 2008. However, in some circumstances this may not be beneficial. If the asset is standing at a loss and you have other gains (either personal or realised through the firm) in the tax year, then crystallising the loss before the end of the tax year will enable you to reduce the tax on those gains. Care should also be taken to maximise taper relief. Taper relief reduces the gain so that a higher rate taxpayer pays a rate of just 10 per cent on business assets held for a minimum period of two years. However, if assets are sold just one day before the two-year anniversary, a tax rate of 20 per cent applies.

The graph shows how the rate of business asset taper relief (BATR) varies according to the length of time an asset is held for both business and non-business assets.

The start of the tax year is also a time to look into your own financial position. This year in particular a new pension regime begins on 6 April 2006 (known as 'A day'). This will be of particular relevance to the self-employed or those in partnership and for many will open up a more flexible system than at present. Those individuals with pre-1988-style retirement annuity policies should review their policies to ensure that they are invested in the most appropriate funds. They will no longer be tied into retaining the old-style policies to maximise tax relief.

Many higher-rate taxpayers forget to claim the higher-rate tax relief on gift aid payments made to charity. For example,

TOP THREE TAX TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. Make use of your (and your spouse's) tax allowances
2. Review pension arrangements post-A day
3. Claim back tax on gift-aid donations to charity

TOP THREE TAX TIPS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

1. Review timing of expenditure to advance tax relief
2. Tighten financial controls so you don't pay tax unnecessarily
3. Consider making tax-allowable provisions to advance tax relief

if you make a payment of £100 to charity under gift aid, the charity will receive £128 and you can then claim back a further £23 on your tax return. Make a note of any payments you make under gift aid from 6 April and ensure that next year you claim back this tax. If you make the payments before submitting your return for the year to 5 April 2006, you can carry them back and claim them against the earlier year. Don't forget all those sponsorship forms where you tick the gift aid box – it all adds up.

The new tax year also brings with it a fresh set of tax-free allowances. If your circumstances allow it, take advantage of these. Allowances include:

- individual savings account – up to £7,000 a year;
- tax-free income – £4,465 a year;
- capital gains tax annual exemption – £8,500 a year; and
- inheritance tax annual exemption – £3,000 a year.

Finally, while it is not possible for income to be taxed on any person other than the owner of the asset from which it arises, it is the case that spouses, and now those in civil partnerships, can transfer assets between them tax free. Therefore, if your partner does not fully utilise their exemptions or lower-rate bands, you should consider transferring assets to them to save higher-rate tax.

With a little forethought, it is possible to make the most of the new tax year and maximise the tax allowances available.

Karen Liddell is a member of BDO Stoy Hayward's specialist professional practices team

BOOK

By Robert Cowan

Recombinant Urbanism: Conceptual Modelling in Architecture, Urban Design, and City Theory
By David Grahame Shane.
Wiley-Academy
2005. 344pp. £26.99



At a time when every second architect is adding 'and urban designer' to his or her letterhead, it is good to be reminded of how rich a body of urban design theory exists. It is sad to reflect, though, that very little of it has much of an impact on urban design practice, and probably little of it is studied on most urban design (let alone planning or architecture) courses.

David Grahame Shane's book has its origins in his many years lecturing on urban design in the UK and USA, and it is none the worse for that. But its subject is the complexity of cities, and that is difficult to theorise about. Shane knows the futility of designing as if the future were predictable and as if any city authorities were in a position, by themselves, to build their vision.

Shane focuses on three recurrent urban structures or organisational patterns: the armature, the enclave and the heterotopia. The armature is something like a traditional European street and the enclave a traditional public square. The heterotopia is a special form of enclave that contains exceptions to the dominant urban form. Shane identifies three types (heterotopias of crisis, of deviance, and of change) and describes how they can change from one to another through the unstable processes of urbanisation.

His theorising – inspired by Kevin Lynch, among others – is sometimes exhilarating, though relating it to the real world is seldom easy. For example, Shane describes 'heterotopias of crisis' as 'sacred or forbidden places reserved to

individuals who are in a state of crisis in relation to the society in which they live'. Yet surprisingly the example he cites as 'the ultimate crisis heterotopia' is the British pub. If that is his experience, he should look for a more relaxing place to drink on his visits here.

Recombinant Urbanism, as the title's reference to genetics suggests, is an attempt to splice together many strands of urban design to strengthen the emerging field of enquiry. Shane hopes to provide 'useful strategies' to designers and other participants in urban processes ('urban actors', in the jargon) in 21st-century network city. That city is, he notes, 'a wired and mediated environment that comprises sparsely populated landscapes as well as hyperdense, global city nodes... a hybrid

patchwork of past environmental traditions and cybernetic, informational environments'.

Much of what passes for urban design today fails to respond to that new world. Too many practitioners just go through the motions, applying standard solutions without any real understanding, analysis or design. They are unlikely to read Shane's excellent book. But we might hope that the academics and students who do, will help develop theories that can shape for the better the 21st-century urban world.

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

EXHIBITION

By Kenneth Powell

Modernism: Designing a New World, 1914-1939
At the Victoria & Albert Museum, London SW7,
until 23 July



1.



2.



3.

1. The Frankfurt fitted kitchen, 1926
2. Mies' Friedrichstrasse project, 1921
3. Eva Jiricna has designed the show

Seventy years ago, Nikolaus Pevsner insisted that 'the new style, the genuine and legitimate style of our century, was achieved by 1914'. In a book, originally titled *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, that was to have a huge influence on British ideas about Modernism in architecture and design for many decades to come, this recent German émigré promulgated a view of the Modern Movement that placed its roots back in the mid-19th century, in the Gothic rationalism of Pugin and then the crusading social ideals of Ruskin and Morris.

For progressive British thinkers in the 1930s it was reassuring to know that Modernism actually kicked off in this country. This large and totally captivating exhibition acts as a healthy corrective to

such notions. Its curator, Christopher Wilk, begins his account in the aftermath of the First World War, in the ferment of radical ideas that followed the collapse of the old order across much of Europe and most notably in Russia. It's obvious from the beginning that this exhibition (accompanied by a monumental catalogue) is about ideas as much as objects. Modernism, writes Wilk, 'was not conceived as a style, but was a loose collection of ideas.'

A year ago, the galleries housing this exhibition were filled by a show ('International Arts and Crafts') that failed on almost every level. Carefully stripping out the social and political idealism – clearly identified by Pevsner all those years ago – that was a key theme of the Arts and Crafts movement, that exhibition

ended up as a parade of (often very unappealing) artefacts.

'Modernism', in contrast, offers a coherent argument about the evolution of Modernism from a quest for social utopia into a 'new spirit' (Le Corbusier's term) in architecture and design; from an early obsession with the infinite potential of the machine to a dialogue with nature and the organic; from early socialist ideals to a compromise with totalitarianism and mass-market capitalism. As early as 1932, Johnson and Hitchcock offered Americans a sanitised version of the movement, in MoMA's 'International Style' exhibition, that prepared the USA for the arrival of Mies, Gropius and Breuer. A movement had become a style.

Emphasising the functionalist aspects of

Modernism at the expense of its diversity, Pevsner, Giedion and other critics prepared the way for the anti-Modernist reaction of the later 20th century. Expressionism, Suprematism and Italian Futurism were seen as disturbingly irrational. But Modernism was not just about suppressing ornament and rejecting tradition, it was a humanistic celebration of the joy of life and an optimistic vision of the creative potential of human beings.

This emerges in the extraordinary collection of objects in the exhibition, ranging from a multi-coloured Futurist suit, wonderful stage costumes, Mies' staggering drawing (or was it the work of a gifted assistant?) of the 1921 Friedrichstrasse skyscraper project, a complete 1920s fitted kitchen, furniture and



photographs, film clips and posters to radios, cameras and the lovely 1937 Tatra car made in Czechoslovakia (a star exhibit) on the eve of the German invasion that signalled the end of an era of optimism. Architecture, as ever, cannot be easily accommodated in a gallery, but period photographs, blown up to large size, are used to supplement drawings and models, among them the exquisite reconstruction of Bruno Taut's 1914 model of his Glass Pavilion designed for the Cologne *Werkbund* exhibition of that year.

By drawing on so many sources for these objects, including largely unexplored Russian collections, Wilk and his team underline the internationalism of the Modern Movement. Britain enters the story late in the day, with the

arrival of a series of émigré architects – some from the Europe of the dictators, others from British dominions overseas – the key catalyst. By 1937 Berthold Lubetkin could declare that Britain, for all its ingrained conservatism, was 'almost the only country in which Modern architecture can flourish with comparative freedom'.

The way in which Modern architecture took centre stage in the post-war period in Britain, with consequences sometimes triumphant, sometimes tragic, will form part of the subject matter of a future V&A exhibition on Modernism after the Second World War. For the moment, this exhibition, superbly designed by Eva Jiricna, should not be missed.

Kenneth Powell is an architectural journalist based in London



CRITIC'S CHOICE

By Andrew Mead

Much of *Pierre d'Avoine's* practice over the last 15 years has been devoted to housing, with schemes such as his Invisible House, quietly infiltrating a west London suburb, and his Big House near the Thames at Mortlake. With Clare Melhuish he drew together these projects to make *Housey Housey: A Pattern Book of Ideal Homes* – 'measured, pragmatic Modernism' said Elaine Harwood in her review of it (AJ 19.05.05). The book accompanies an idiosyncratic touring exhibition of d'Avoine's work, with 'doll's house' models made by students from London Metropolitan University (above). This show is now at the Globe City Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where it continues until 13 May (www.myhomeourplace.com).

Just across the River Tyne in Gateshead, the Baltic is hosting a beautiful exhibition seen earlier at the De La Warr Pavilion. It features two very subtle abstract painters – *James Hugonin* and the late *Ian Stephenson*. The latter's work, a kind of updated pointillism which suggests phenomena that astronomical telescopes or microscopes reveal, was reviewed in AJ 13.10.05. Hugonin lives at the edge of the Cheviots and often acknowledges the effect of the Northumbrian landscape – and especially the quality of light – on his work, with its intricate grids of pale colour, methodically applied on a surface of gesso. From a distance these paintings are almost monochrome, like parchment; the flickering, pulsing colour emerges closer to (www.balticmill.com).

Light and colour are very much the focus for *James Turrell*. In his current installations at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, it's as if the pigments of a Rothko have wafted off the wall to surround you (AJ 19.1.06). On 27 April the YSP inaugurates a permanent piece by Turrell – a conversion of a 19th-century deer shelter into a Skyspace. Unlike the installations, these Skyspaces don't depend on artifice – instead they frame what's there, a square of the sky. They're most compelling at times when the light is changing; the one at New York's PS1 opens just before dusk. And it's not just sight but hearing that's affected when you're in these spaces – sounds outside, their sources unseen, are also more distinct.

For forthcoming events visit www.ajplus.co.uk/diary



WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Like the Pythagoreans when they discovered irrational numbers and tried to suppress the knowledge, it is too late for the Mac-ists' inner praesidium. For a month now, everyone has known that, with difficulty, it is possible to run Windows on Intel-powered Macs. Now Apple has made it super-easy, using its newly downloadable application, Boot Camp. (<http://www.apple.com/macosx/bootcamp/>)

It's a bit like the Vatican suddenly giving its approval to The Da Vinci Code. Apple's shares jumped by nearly 7 per cent on the announcement of Boot Camp.

Two days later, Parallels (at <http://www.parallels.com/en/download/>) brought out a beta of its Workstation, which runs Windows inside Mac OS X. Expect to hear, through the wailing and gnashing of teeth, Mac people repeating Apple's assertion about 'superior hardware'. But please be kind.

As for my endorsement of the question of who on earth would want to run the Evil Empire's Windows on a Mac, apparently Apple marketing people think lots of people want to dual boot. For a while, I dual booted Windows and Linux. Not for long. In the red haze of early morning, having to make a rational choice of operating systems became intolerable. sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

CALL IN THE EXPERTS

The Administrative Court recently found in favour of Sir Roy Meadow, who appealed at his striking off by the General Medical Council (GMC) as a result of expert evidence he had given in Sally Clark's trial, writes *Sue Lindsey*. The judge, Mr Justice Collins, found the GMC's decision was not justified by the evidence. But he also considered the question of whether expert immunity from claims should extend to disciplinary proceedings. The question was a novel one, raised by the judge himself.

He may have raised it because it seems that, since the GMC's decision, there have been difficulties in the family courts finding paediatricians to give expert evidence.

One explanation is that paediatricians are sensitive souls. Feelings run high in the child-protection work they become involved with, and some have been subjected to press campaigns and unacceptable behaviour directed at themselves and their families. Add to that the prospect of their being reported to the GMC, and it is perhaps not surprising that expert paediatricians have run for cover.

The public policy underlying the immunity of all witnesses is to encourage them to speak freely by removing the worry that

they might be sued for something they say. The judge held that expert immunity should extend to disciplinary proceedings where complaints are made about an expert's evidence. However, he said it should still be open to a judge who considers that an expert's conduct has fallen far below what is reasonably expected to then report them to their professional body.

What is the scope of the expert immunity that Mr Justice Collins has extended? It comes from several cases that deal with different points, and the result is arguably a bit of a muddle. There are some fine lines drawn in the judgments. In *Darker v Chief Constable of the West Midlands*, the example was given of a policeman who falsely stated in evidence that a defendant made a confession, which statement would attract immunity, and a policeman who, at an earlier stage, fabricated a note containing a confession, for which there would not be immunity. Although about dishonest acts, the principle similarly applies to negligent acts.

The present position, on the basis of these cases, seems to be that whether or not an expert has immunity can depend on the stage at which he makes a mess of things. Something that is not properly part of the judicial process, for example an early report, does

not attract immunity. But an expert who goes to an expert meeting and changes his mind is immune from a negligence claim. There is protection in respect of answers given in court. Some say that sits uncomfortably with there being no immunity for the questioner. But an expert can be susceptible to an order to pay costs if he has caused them to be incurred in disregard of his duties to the court.

The appeal of Mr Justice Collins' decision is to be heard after Easter. It is to be hoped it will sort out not only whether it is right that there be immunity in respect of complaints made to disciplinary bodies, but also explain the present inconsistencies in the expert immunity regime.

Sue Lindsey is a barrister at Crown Office Chambers in London. Visit www.crownofficechambers.com

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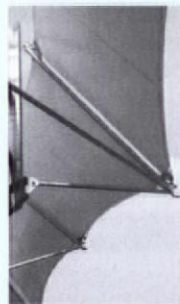
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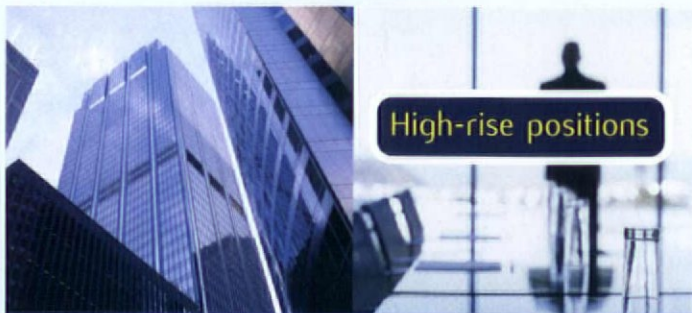
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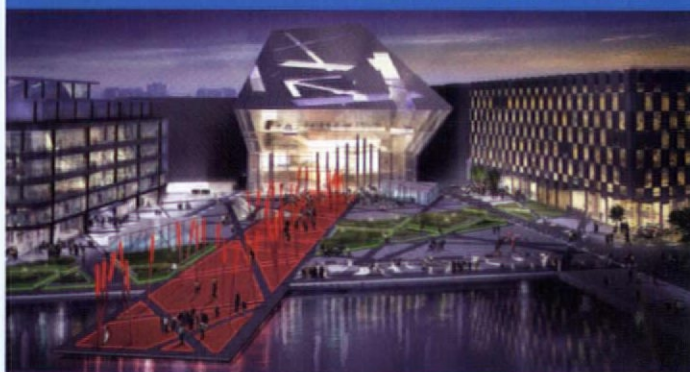
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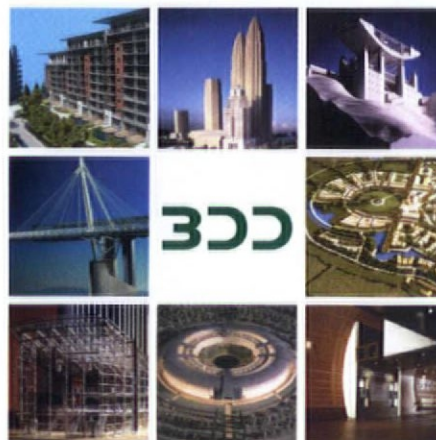
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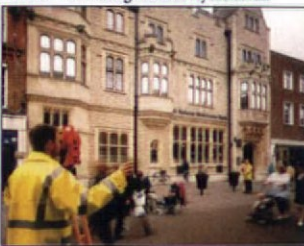
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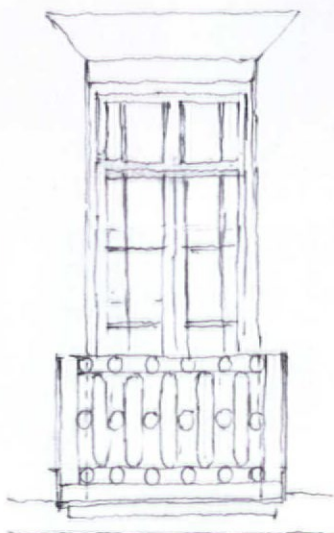
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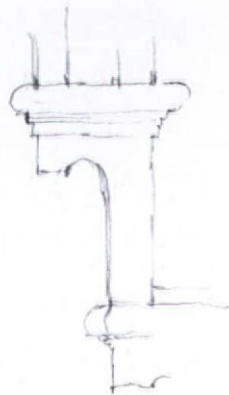
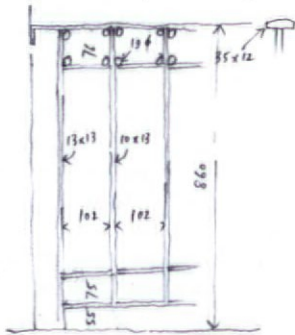
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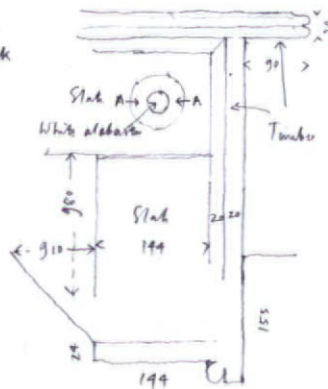
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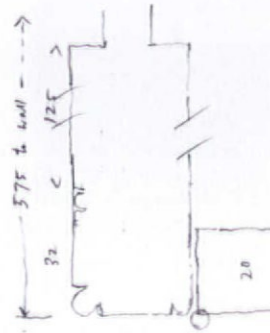
First floor balcony, 2 Aubrey Walk



Staircase windows



Typical frequency to principal rooms



F.S. Typical bedroom
any board.

First floor doors.

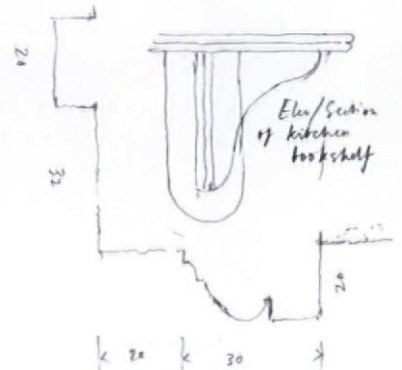
Drawing room : 920 x 2125

Bedroom : 855 x 2090

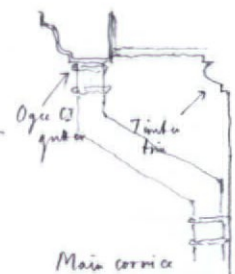
Bakery : 740 x 1960



Second floor windows



F.S. Typical bedroom door jamb
(2nd rate bedrooms)



Moia cor

Details of 17 Aubrey Walk, London. By George Saumarez Smith of Robert Adam Architects

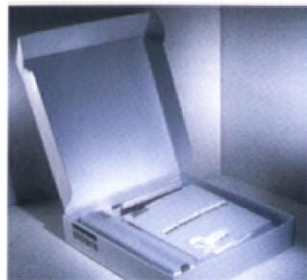
CORUS GROUP



AJ ENQUIRY 201

Corus Colorcoat HPS200 in Wedgwood Blue and white provides a striking visual effect to the new Ricoh Arena, home of Coventry City FC. The walls of the vast new stadium and adjacent arena building are clad with Corus Colorcoat HPS200 prefinished steel in Wedgwood Blue and white.

SIKKENS



AJ ENQUIRY 202

Surface coatings specialist Sikkens has recently launched the international 4041 Colour Concept in the UK, providing architects and interior designers with a choice of up to 1,624 colours. Sikkens is offering specifiers and interior designers a free taster of one set of 10 of the new colour collections.

AQUILA DESIGN



AJ ENQUIRY 203

Aquila Design supplied bespoke lighting pillars, made of stainless steel and acrylic, as part of the redevelopment of Lyric Square, at the entrance of the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. After dark the Lyric columns mimic the illuminated plumes of water emanating from the newly installed fountains.

HADDENSTONE



AJ ENQUIRY 204

Haddenstone, the UK's leading manufacturer of cast stone architectural features and ornaments, has launched a new 200-page catalogue. This is the first time the entire group, which includes Haddenstone, Haddenstone Forge and Glass Houses, has been brought together in the same place.

ACRYPOL



AJ ENQUIRY 205

Springfield Nuclear Fuels' new facility at Salwick, near Preston, is the first-ever project to use System 15, from Acrypol Products, the only solution-based system that's guaranteed for 15 years. System 15 was specified for the roof-repair work at the facility, which was done in harsh winter conditions.

CARTWRIGHT



AJ ENQUIRY 206

Cartwright Hardware, an architectural ironmongery specialist based in Leeds, has received the prestigious Investors in People standard, proving that the key to its success hinges on its staff. The firm's customer base includes architects, contractors and construction firms.

AGGREGATE



AJ ENQUIRY 207

This year's must-have for architects and local authority specifiers, Charcon's all-new product portfolio is a user-friendly and comprehensive guide to specifying hard-landscaping products. The high-quality 206-page guide brings together the entire Charcon product range for the first time.

ROCKFON



AJ ENQUIRY 208

A combination of two ceiling systems from Rockfon has been specified to meet the dual requirements of acoustic and hygiene performance in the corridors and food-technology classrooms of Mountfitchet High School. Rockfon Sonar and Rockfon Hygienic were used on the project.

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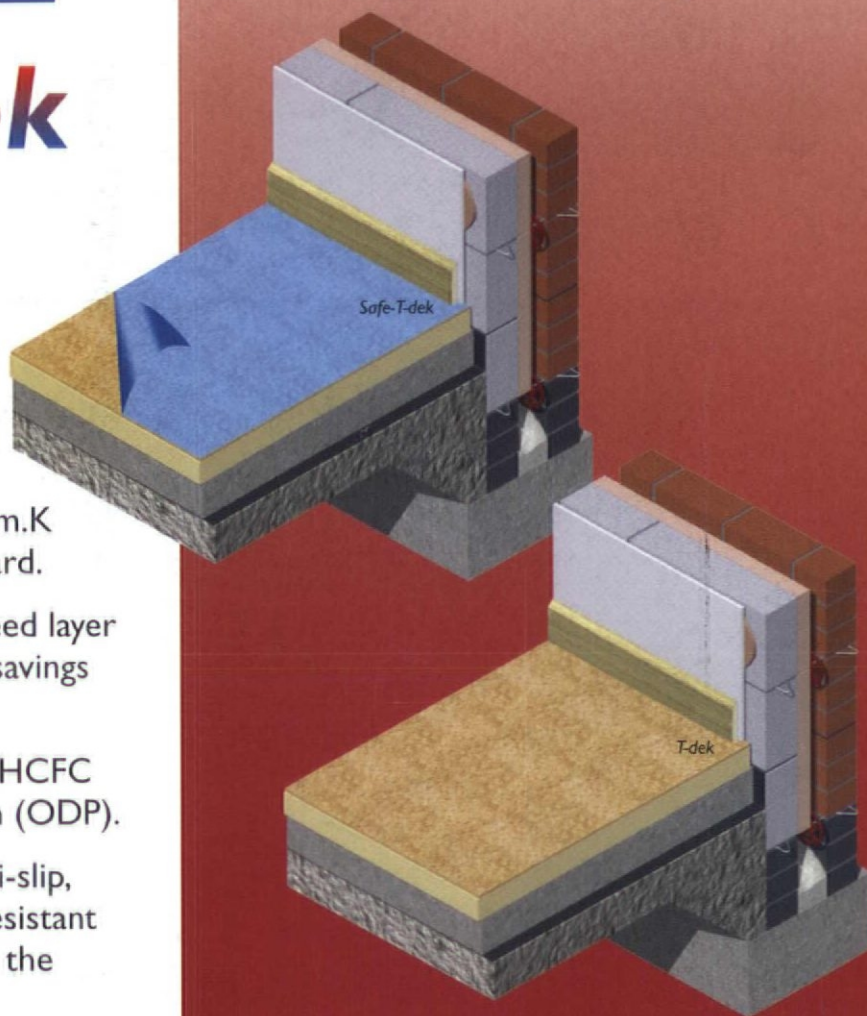
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