

The background of the cover is a large architectural drawing, likely a site plan or master plan, showing various building footprints, roads, and landscaping. It is spread out on a table, and two men are looking at it. One man, with grey hair and wearing a light blue shirt, is pointing at a specific area on the drawing with a pen. The other man, with blonde hair, is seen from the side, looking at the same drawing. The drawing is detailed, with many lines and labels, though the text on the drawing is too small to read.

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WE MAY HAVE TO SET OUR ZERO-CARBON SIGHTS BELOW THE GOVERNMENT'S TARGET

By Kieran Long

At last, someone has spoken out about the fiction that is the government's sustainable housebuilding targets. A prominent expert has told the AJ that achieving the environmental savings set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes is impossible in the timescales aspired to (*see News on pages 9-11*).

This comes as something of a relief – because the hysterical rhetoric around zero-carbon homes can now be tamed into an honest conversation about delivery. There are three holes in the supply chain, the first being skills. The only people who can build airtight buildings and fit biomass boilers are contractors, and they will also have to measure and test them. Even the National House-Building Council, which is staunchly (if unconvincingly) backing the industry's capacity to deliver Gordon Brown's numbers to housing minister Yvette Cooper's standards, admits this is a big problem.

The second issue is the availability and inefficiency of existing technologies. Wind

turbines and solar panels in urban areas are relatively inefficient, and the consensus of sustainability experts is that passive measures are more important than on-site power generators.

Finally there is a problem with cost. The massive investment that the housebuilding industry must make to achieve zero-carbon will mean that Brown's desire to increase supply ('How to solve the housing riddle', AJ 19.07.07) will threaten housebuilders' profitability.

But there are reasons to be cheerful. Our expert thinks that building to Code Level 4 standards (rather than the government's target of Code Level 6) could be possible, equalling a 44 per cent saving on carbon emissions over current Building Regulations. Unless the solar panel, CHP plant and triple-glazing industries are nationalised, we may have to make do with this. But if this partial success is hidden behind recriminations, or statistical smoke and mirrors, it will let down the environment and the profession.

CONTRIBUTORS



Dominik Gigler, who photographed the King's Cross Charrette on pages 35-81, is a photographer whose clients include Vogue and The Wire magazine



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Kaye Alexander, who reviews the book Blue Monday on page 94, is the AJ's editorial administrator and previously studied architecture at Sheffield University

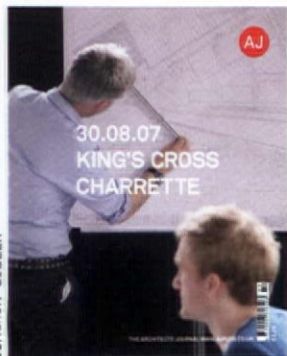
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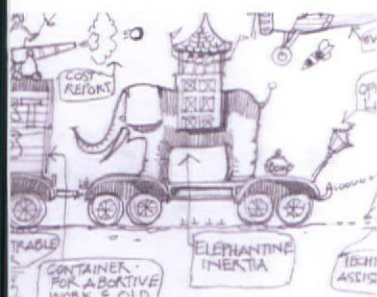
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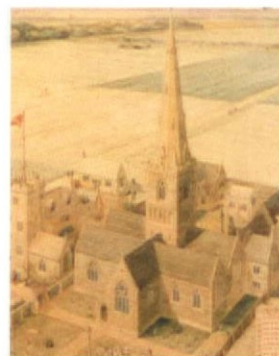
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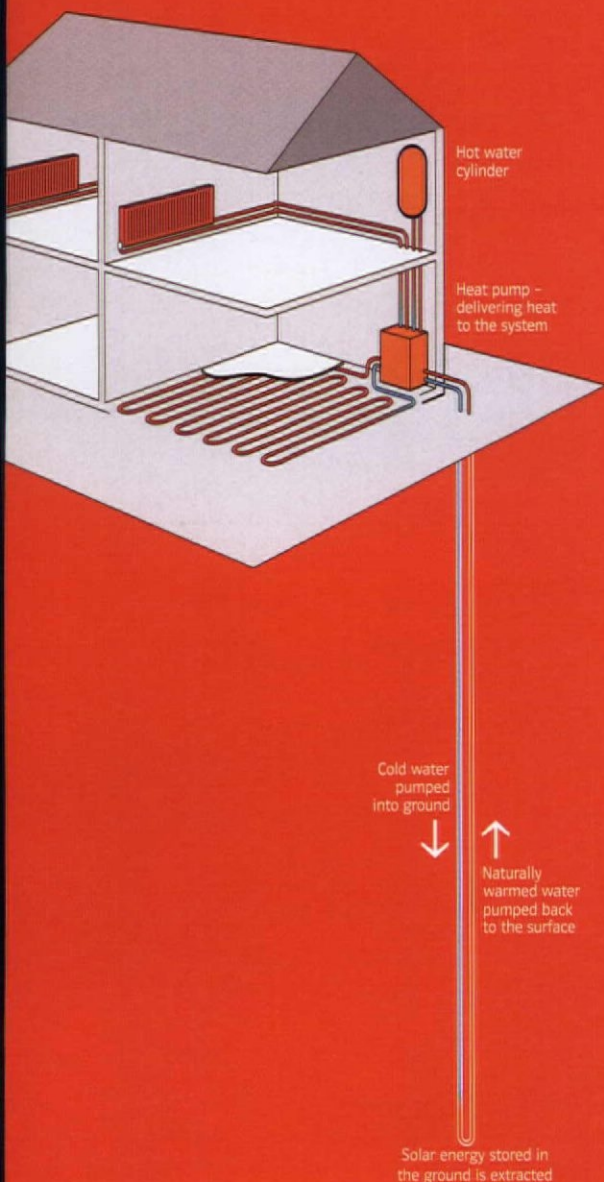
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• *ID Architects* – senior architectural designer
• *Leeds Metropolitan University* – professor of sustainable architecture
• *Centurion* – architectural design manager
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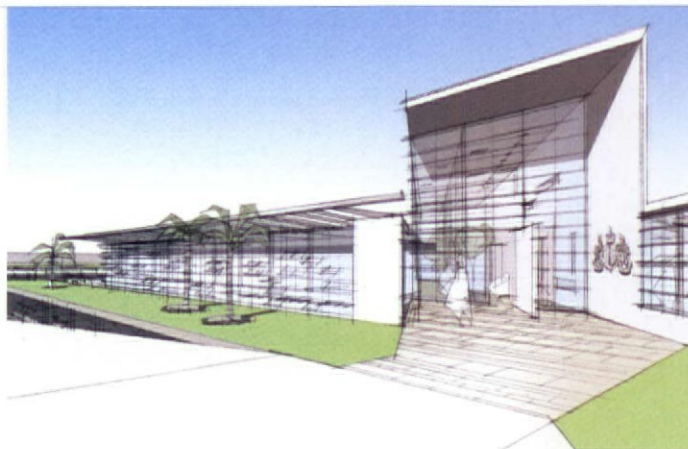
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THURSDAY 23 AUGUST

- Wilkinson Eyre's profits rocket by 400 per cent...
- ...but the firm's Liverpool convention centre runs six weeks late
- Barnet Council rejects Carey Jones' mixed-use Cricklewood Gate development (below)
- McDowell + Benedetti's footbridge across the River Hull approved



FRIDAY 24 AUGUST

- Shortlisted designs show what might have been at Olympic velopark
- Council guilty of maladministration over blocked sight-lines to Durham Cathedral
- RTKL reveals plans for British High Commission office in Nigerian capital Abuja (above)
- Local firm DKS unveils images for marketing suite for Middlesbrough Gateway

TUESDAY 28 AUGUST

- Manchester and Birmingham's Beetham Towers used endangered wood, claims watchdog
- Backers deny delays to Renzo's Shard of Glass
- Migrant architects may not need ARB registration in new EU directive
- YRM revealed as architect behind Heathrow Terminal 6 Masterplan

WEDNESDAY 29 AUGUST

- Levitt Bernstein's head of landscape architecture dies suddenly aged 46
- Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands' Lambeth tower expected to win go-ahead (right)
- Urbed sees off big field to win Leicester masterplanning project
- First cracks appear in Chinese eco-town programme



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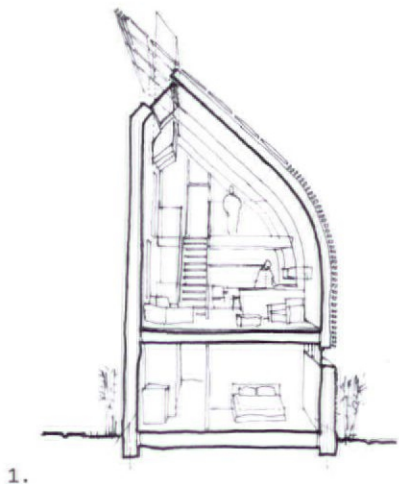
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1 & 2. Sheppard Robson's Lighthouse scheme is the UK's first Code Level 6 (zero-carbon) house. A source has told the AJ that zero-carbon homes could cost up to £100,000 extra per unit



ZERO-CARBON TARGET 'TOO COSTLY'

By Richard Vaughan

The cost of building zero-carbon homes makes the government's ambitious housing targets impossible to achieve, a top sustainability expert has claimed.

The source, who is among the European Commission's chief advisors on sustainability, said that building zero-carbon houses could cost up to £100,000 extra per unit, casting into doubt the possibility of delivering Prime Minister Gordon Brown's target of three million new homes by 2020.

The whistleblower also labelled housing minister Yvette Cooper's target for all new houses in the UK to be zero carbon by 2016 as 'complete science fiction'.

The source said: 'By the time you've added up your shopping list of items to build

a zero-carbon house, referred to as Code Level 6 in the Department of Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Code for Sustainable Homes, you're looking at anything up to £60,000 to £100,000 extra on top of the regular building costs.'

These allegations have been substantiated by several major practices, such as Hunter & Partners, which is currently looking into building its first Code Level 6 zero-carbon homes.

The firm's head of sustainability, Tim Ashton, said: 'We are looking at a small, pilot Code Level 6 scheme at present, and this is currently being priced at around £60,000 per unit over standard comparable housing costs.'

The insider added that even if costs came down enough

to make building Code Level 6 houses feasible, the building skills involved are way beyond the current level within the construction industry.

He said: 'We are not even building houses, in bulk at least, to German PassivHaus standards – which is only comparable to Code Level 4 in this country – particularly when it comes to airtightness.'

'If we get to German PassivHaus standards by 2016 that would be phenomenal, but to think we can build zero-carbon houses by 2016 is complete science fiction.'

Sheppard Robson's head of sustainability, Alan Shingler, who helped design the UK's first Code Level 6 house – the Lighthouse, at certification group BRE's research site in Watford – agrees that the lack of skills is a major issue.

'There needs to be a complete shift in the construction of houses – a behavioural change. It is meeting the air-tightness parameter that will be the biggest challenge,' said Shingler.

The UK's three largest housebuilders – Persimmon, Barratt and Taylor Wimpey – declined to comment on the 2016 target, but the National House-Building Council (NHBC) was optimistic.

Robert Lockey, service training manager for the NHBC, said: 'Yes, it will be hellishly challenging, and there is a lot of work to do. But I have to say it's possible. First, we need the designers to figure out what works best. When that is decided, we can get on with training people up.'

See Agenda overleaf.

AGENDA

1. A demonstration house showing how photovoltaic panels can be incorporated into design. Some 30m² is needed to meet zero-carbon targets



COMPLYING WITH THE CARBON CODE

By Richard Vaughan

The UK's housing stock currently contributes 41 million tonnes of carbon emissions each year, and the government is calling for the private sector to provide an additional three million homes by 2020.

In trying not to add further to this carbon output, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has called for all new houses built from 2016 to be net-zero carbon, meaning each house will have no net carbon output even when fully operational with all modern electrical appliances.

Now a leading sustainability expert has put an additional price of up to £100,000 to build a Code Level 6 net-zero carbon house, as set out in the DCLG's Code for Sustainable Homes (The Code), which was introduced in April.

The 'shopping list' to build a single zero-carbon house includes at least 30m² of photovoltaic cells. However, few homes have enough roof space to accommodate this, so wind turbines will also be needed, although their performance in urban environments has been discredited.

The house will then need a biomass boiler, which currently only work on small district-heating schemes, and are not yet small enough to be fitted into single dwellings.

A Code Level 6 home also needs 'ultra-high' insulation for the walls and roof to achieve 0.1 U value, but even more expensive is the triple glazing, currently is only available from Scandinavia or Germany.

The house will then need a mechanical ventilation and heat-recovery unit, which

according to the source, could cost £3,000 to £5,000.

Hunter & Partners' Tim Ashton, currently working on a proposed Code Level 6 development, says: 'At the moment, there is no incentive for the private sector to build zero-carbon homes because of the extra cost, and the public isn't engaged enough to want it – and they are the ones likely to be getting hit by the extra costs.'

But of greater concern is the ability of the housing industry to build Code Level 6 zero-carbon houses. The skill required to do so, the source says, is like 'comparing a plumber with an engineer working on jet engines'.

'There are several issues over air-tightness, and whether the UK housebuilders will be able to achieve the necessary standards,' the source says.

'Code Level 6 requires the air-tightness level to be 1m³/hour/m² at a test pressure of 50 Pa. The UK currently struggles to meet 10m³ – ten times the amount.

'The UK's buildings are among the leakiest in Europe. There are many people who believe this, but few are willing to stand up and say it because they do not want to be seen as not supporting the government,' the source adds.

Sheppard Robson was lead architect on the UK's only Code Level 6 zero-carbon development, the Lighthouse at BRE's innovation park in Watford, and the practice realises the task ahead.

The firm's head of sustainability, Alan Shingler, says: '2016 is still nine years away, and a lot can happen both in terms of consulting

2007	2008	2010	2013	2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOMES INTRODUCED • FIRST ZERO-CARBON HOUSE COMPLETED • GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES TARGET OF 3 MILLION HOMES BY 2020 	LEVEL 3 (25% IMPROVEMENT OVER TARGET EMISSION RATE)		LEVEL 4 (44% IMPROVEMENT OVER TARGET EMISSION RATE)	LEVEL 6 (ZERO-CARBON)

WHEN CODE LEVELS BECOME MANDATORY

advice and in manufacturing and supply, and I think it is very pessimistic to say it cannot be achieved.

‘We managed to build a house that got down to near the 1m³ required, but that was using Modern Methods of Construction, and it took a huge amount of time. It would be even more difficult using traditional methods,’ he adds.

One issue, Shingler says, is that most volume housebuilders will employ an architect to build from stage D. This architect will then employ one person to fit the windows, another to plaster the house, and another to fit the doors. On a 500-plus-unit housing development this could cause problems.

‘No one will be taking responsibility for air-tightness,’ he says. ‘To be able to achieve it

you will have to maintain the design team beyond stage D, and there will have to be people on hand to give expert advice.’

According to the National House-Building Council (NHBC), this responsibility can be held by the site managers, but first decisions have to be made as to what products and methods will be used, so people can then be trained.

NHBC’s training services manager Robert Lockey says: ‘There is no point training someone to install a ground-source heat pump if these products are never going to be used. The designers have to make the decisions on what will be used, so that they get a successful level of code compliance.

‘The second stage is then the training. The site manager will be the one who will be

trained most, as he will be overseeing everything. Most housebuilding work is subcontracted labour, so the site manager will have to have a handle on everything. He will have to be supply-chain manager as well.’

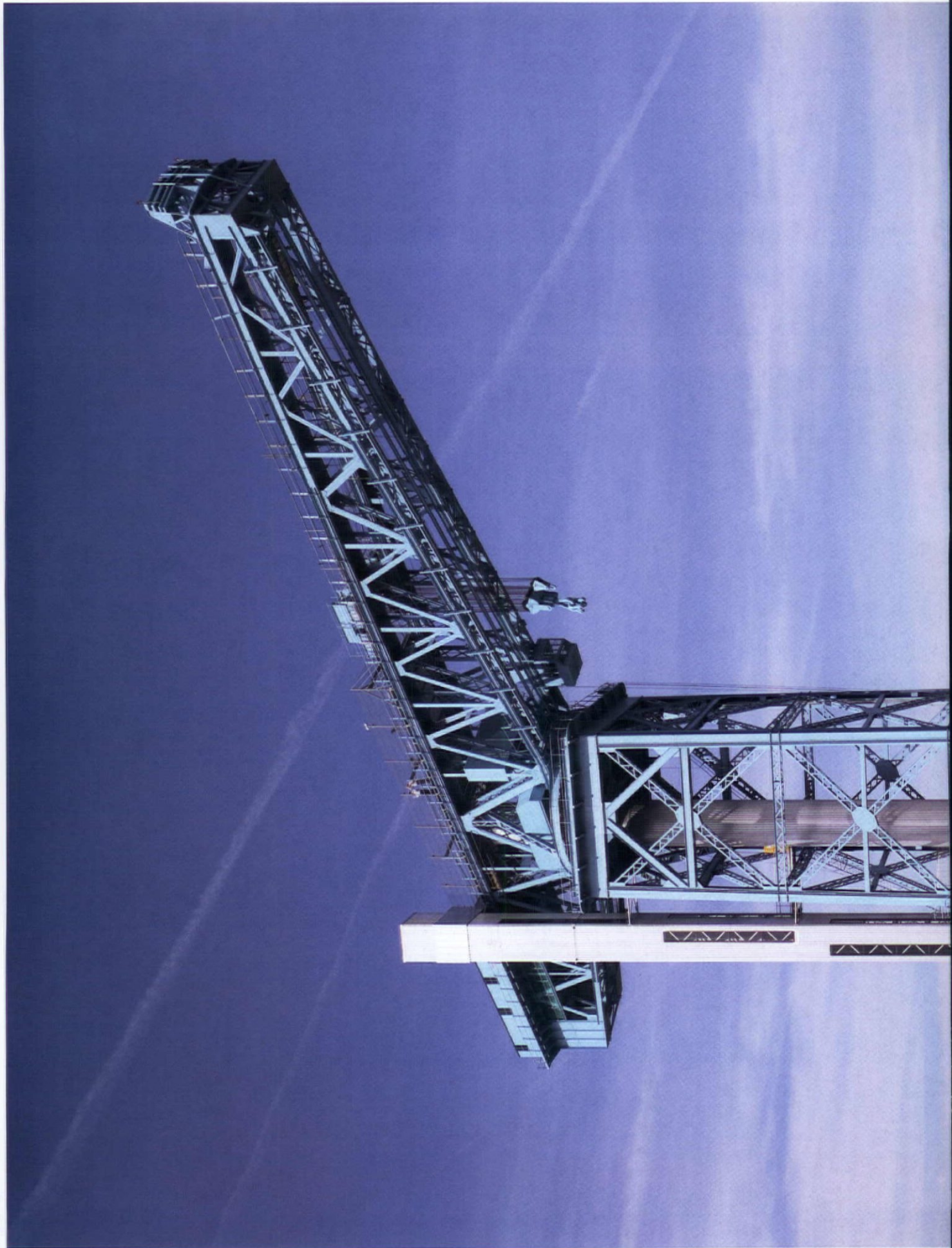
Kingspan Off-Site, the firm that supplied the materials for the Lighthouse project, is in no doubt that the 2016 target can be met. Its sustainability and building performance manager Jonathan Jennings says: ‘It’s nine years. Look at the advances made in the IT or automobile industry in nine years – there has been a huge step change.

‘When energy ratings on white goods came into force, it made a huge change. Siemens don’t build ‘C-rated’ fridges any more. By 2016 housebuilders won’t build Code Level 3 houses.’

For some, however, zero carbon is already happening. Architect Bill Dunster is currently building a Code Level 6 site in Northampton, and has just completed a Level 5 development in Andover, Hampshire.

‘Of course the biggest excuse is the cost of it but the only reason it’s expensive is because nobody’s doing it,’ says Dunster, the principal of ZedFactory. ‘Meeting air-tightness is quite straightforward, and it can be achieved by using existing skills.

‘We’re quietly removing all of the excuses and have been for the last 10 years. Every year it gets that little bit easier. The best hope is for everyone to work together and just get on with the job in hand,’ he says.





LISTED CRANE TO LIFT CLYDEBANK

Members of the public can now go up a completely refurbished 100-year-old Grade A-listed crane on the River Clyde in Scotland for the first time. The 46m-tall Titan crane in Clydebank, built in 1907, has been overhauled by Collective Architecture for urban-regeneration company Clydebank Re-built. It now serves as a viewing platform, looking out over the surrounding countryside and the nearby city of Glasgow. The crane, which survived the 1941 Clydebank Blitz unscathed, could handle loads of up to 200 tonnes and was used in the building of the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth 2 ocean liners. Collective Architecture's £3 million project involved cleaning up the rust, adding a new stair and lift shaft punctured with windows, and installing a cable-net fence to allow visitors to walk on the jib. Eleanor McAllister, managing director of Clydebank Re-built, said: 'The Titan is a Clydebank icon. It signals the town's renaissance in a new century.'

By Angus Montgomery

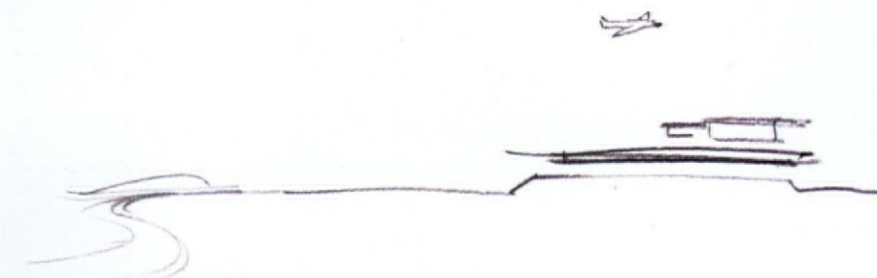
BUSCHOW HENLEY TAKES OFF WITH AIRFIELD HOTEL

London-based practice Buschow Henley has won the competition to design a new hotel, complete with its own control tower, at a private airfield in North Yorkshire. The practice saw off a trio of local practices in the invited RIBA-organised contest, which will see the construction of 14-bedroom luxury hotel near the village of Bagby in the Vale of York. The other competing firms were Salt Architects from Beverley, York's DWA Architects, and Bareham Architects of Leeds. As well as guest bedrooms, the hotel will sport lecture rooms, meeting rooms and a swimming pool, organised around a U-shaped central courtyard, featuring a reflecting pool. A rooftop restaurant with views of the private airstrip will sit on a rectangular concrete 'table' supported by rammed-earth walls. The scheme, for an unknown private client, is expected to cost £3 million.

By Richard Waite

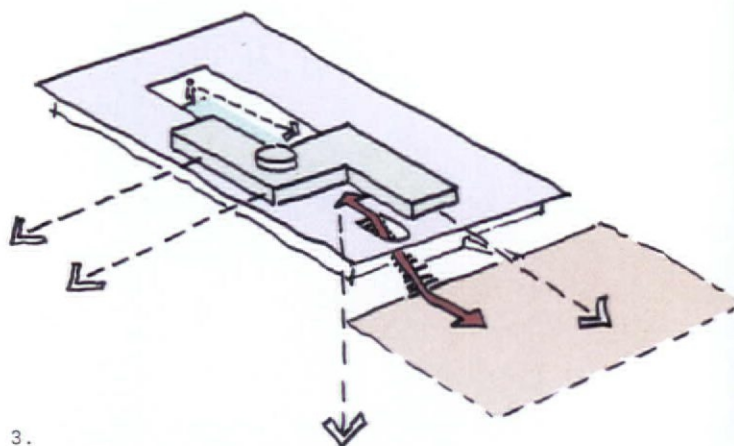


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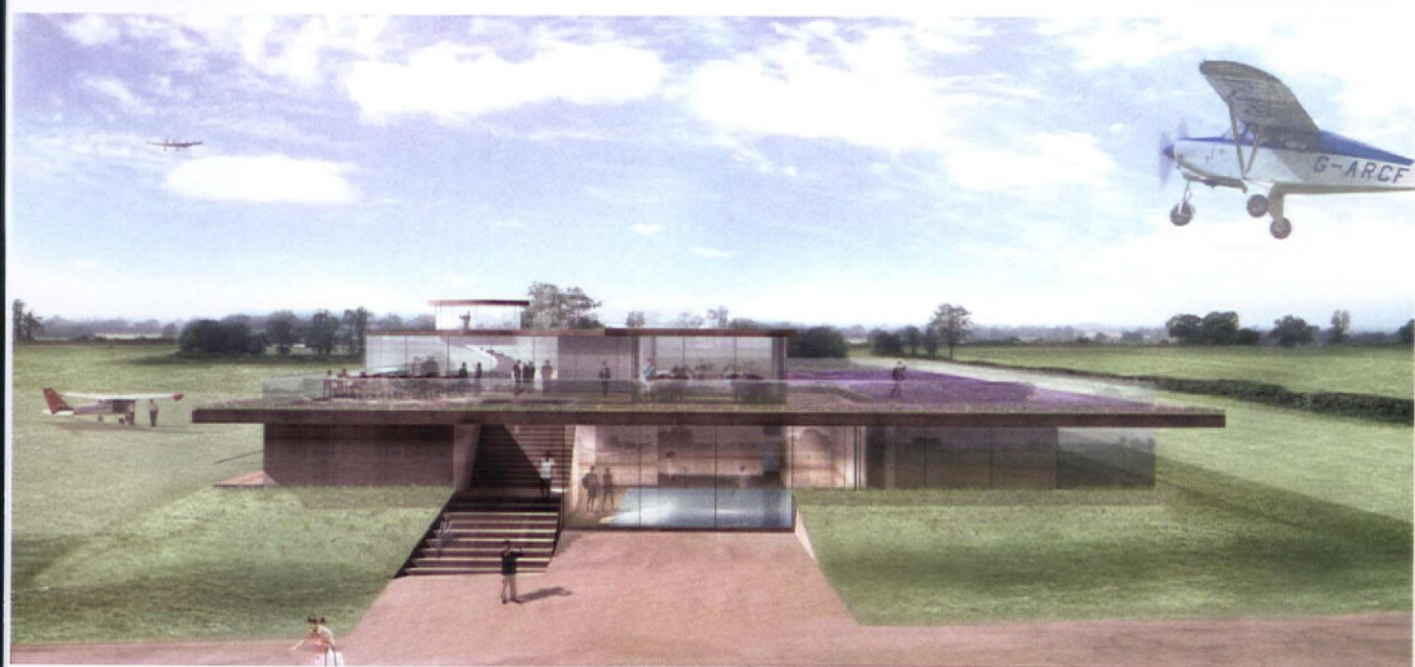


1.

1. Concept sketch
2. Buschow Henley's luxury hotel, at a private airfield in North Yorkshire, will feature a reflecting pool in a central courtyard
3. Sketch showing circulation and views
4. A rooftop restaurant, sitting on a concrete 'table', will look out over the private airfield



3.



4.

GETTING PERSONAL WITH PRASAD

By Richard Waite

Sunand Prasad, the soon-to-be president of the RIBA, seems to make a point of praising you on your interviewing technique.

'That's another very good question,' he says after a pause, and waits again to contemplate his answer. It is very disarming.

In a few days' time the charming, diminutive 57 year old will take over the reins from Jack Pringle and become the first non-white president in the institution's 173-year history.

Prasad, who was brought up in the foothills of the Himalayas in India, now stands on top of the UK's institutional, architectural pile.

'I don't think people know whether I'm an establishment person or not, and where to position me,' he admits.

Prasad, the founder of east London-based Penoyre & Prasad, has been waiting to step

up since winning the election to become the institute's figurehead back in last July.

The fact he is the first Asian leader does not worry him. 'It makes me very proud,' he says. 'I've also seen what it means to other people and how they view it. Just getting there means more than I could have imagined.'

Yet as a young architect he was vehemently opposed to the institution he now heads.

'I was anti the RIBA for a long time. I thought that the institution was a self-promoting entity. A closed shop,' he says.

'I was nearly 30 before I joined, having seen more of the world and realising the institute was essentially acting to create the right condition for practising.'

Prasad is a persuasive talker. Think a less populist,

pre-1997 Tony Blair, before the former prime minister became overly media-conscious. Perhaps with a hint of Bill Clinton – Prasad certainly has a slight devilish twinkle in the eye, not unnoticed by the AJ photographer.

He says: 'The job requires that I be a pluralist. For example, I don't get so personally excited about some traditional architecture, but there are some terrific practices, such as Robert Adam and Demetri Porphyrios.'

'You don't want to be doctrinaire of any particular style.'

Because of this politically astute all-embracing approach, outgoing president Jack Pringle confidently predicts that members, the press and those in government will love his successor.

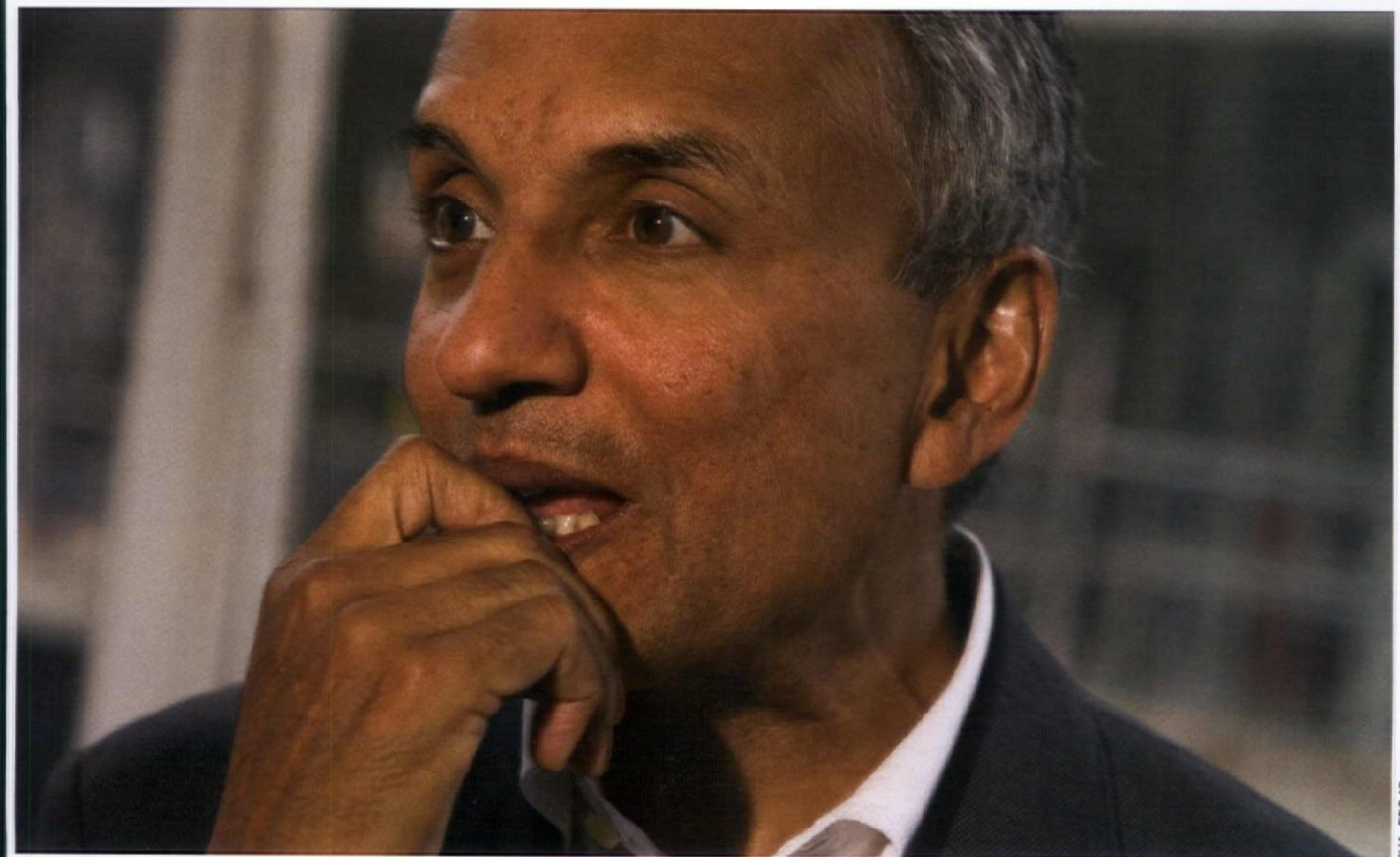
Pringle, a friend and self-proclaimed 'biggest fan of Prasad' says: 'What I find surprising about Sunand is his bandwidth.'

'He may come across as someone from a particular niche, but his skills range from the intently practical, through to what is right for the profession, to speaking about "what is beauty?"'

But to compare Prasad merely with spotlight-hungry politicians is to overlook what really drives him – the everyday practice of architecture.

'I love designing buildings above all else,' he tells me.

In this he differs from recent predecessors George Ferguson, who sought to lift the RIBA into the public eye with the help of his red trousers, and no-nonsense Pringle, who was more commercially focused.



EVA EDSJO

Prasad readily confesses he will miss sorting out the fine details of designing a building as he swaps studio life for the processional, professional and public duties of the presidency.

But he is pragmatic. He says: 'I think the compensations of the position – the excitement, the feeling that the job will bring and the scale on which I will operate – will make up, in part, for the reduced role in the architectural practice.'

His practice, Penoyre & Prasad, has spent around three years preparing for what Prasad calls an 'enormous sacrifice'.

It feels like this last step up the ladder marks the long-expected and inevitable crescendo for a man who has been hovering within the establishment, and around the edges of power, for years.

Prasad made his debut on the scene back in 1985, when he was named on the original 40 Under 40 list as an emerging architectural talent.

Three years later he had founded his current practice and bagged a doctorate from the Royal College of Art for his research into north-Indian courtyard houses.

He subsequently went on to have essays about Le Corbusier published and to chair a number of awards and competition panels – including jury work for both the Royal Gold Medal and the RIBA Stirling Prize – and in 1999 was appointed as one of the first seven CABE commissioners, helping to launch the commission's enabling programme.

Despite this rise to the top, it emerges that Prasad had

no overwhelming interest in architecture when he was growing up in Dehradun, India. As a youngster, studying at the Sevagram Ashram, founded by Gandhi, he was obsessed with astronomy and astrophysics.

When he was 12, his family moved to north London, where his father taught art. Looking back, Prasad realises he thought he had to make a choice between art and science so – as he also had 'an idealist notion of building dams and bridges in the developing world' – he opted to study engineering.

However, he tells me candidly, that did not work out: 'Then at nearly 20 I suddenly had a thought I had never even considered [about the possibility of becoming an architect].' He went on to study, then teach, at Cambridge University's school of architecture.

It was an incredibly important, defining moment for Prasad – a 'big bang' which has since shaped his attitude to education and diversity. 'Everyone,' he says 'should be [allowed the chance] to have a moment like that.'

However, now he has climbed to the pinnacle, he insists he is not interested in simply puffing up his peacock plumes and looking important.

He says: 'With my good establishment knowledge, my intent is to use it to question the establishment. What I'm interested in is change.'

Exactly what that change will be is not really spelt out. Later in the interview he mentions that he'd like to shake up council meetings and give them more regional emphasis.

This is not particularly groundbreaking stuff. Neither is

AGENDA



1.

TIM CROCKER

1, 2 & 3. Sunand Prasad's favourite Penoyre & Prasad buildings: Portsmouth Library (left), Eastbrookend Country Park Millennium Centre (below) and Olney School (right)



2.



3.

he keen to give himself many other tangible targets he can be held to after his presidency.

In his manifesto he speaks about creating a younger, diverse RIBA and expanding the international membership, but gives away little of the processes he could use to back up this rhetoric.

And when he does speak about his aims as president there are no real, super 'Kapow!' headline-grabbers.

This is partly because Prasad has been chair of the RIBA policy and strategy task group throughout Pringle's presidency and intends to carry on in much the same vein.

Intriguingly, it is expected Pringle will take over at the head of the same strategy task group once he steps down as president, effectively giving the RIBA a four-year period of

sustained direction and policy continuity.

In words that could have come out of Pringle's mouth, Prasad says he 'wants to see significant improvements in both public and private procurement'.

Again, repeating what Pringle has previously been quoted as saying, he states that 'the battle for the value of the architect has yet to be won' and warns that the profession 'could miss seizing that opportunity if we don't grasp it'.

He adds that he wants to address issues such as 'collaborative working, the role of IT tools, and what the architect's position is in the team'.

He says: 'At the end of my two years, it's not inconceivable that every RIBA member could have a sound grasp of [these]

issues and have the confidence and knowledge about what to do.

And, without explaining how specifically it can be done, Prasad slips in that he hopes the ARB issue – the RIBA's concerns about the board's role, primarily in education – can be resolved as well.

In addition – and on a more personal note – he vows not to balloon in weight as a result of all the presidential dinners, a glimpse of an unashamedly vain streak which emerges again when he worries over his nose looking too big during the photo shoot.

After a generous time with the photographer, he apologises and says he has to shoot off. 'Sorry, I've got an interview with Norman Blogster now.'

The media circus for the new president has just begun.

PRESIDENTIAL Q&A

Favourite film?

The Music Room, by Satyajit Ray

What book are you currently reading?

Freakonomics, by Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt, and Enduring Love, by Ian McEwan

Frank Lloyd Wright or Le Corbusier?

Corb

Audi TT or Lexus Hybrid?

You must be joking! I want my Citroen DS Pallas back – the only car I really loved

What do you sing in the bath?

The Freedom Come All Ye, by Hamish Henderson

Greatest achievement?

Bringing up my family, but I can only claim half, at most, of the credit for that



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'I like Rotterdam. We work here in a cheap office, out of the way, with no distractions. We think for ourselves. We do not follow fashion'

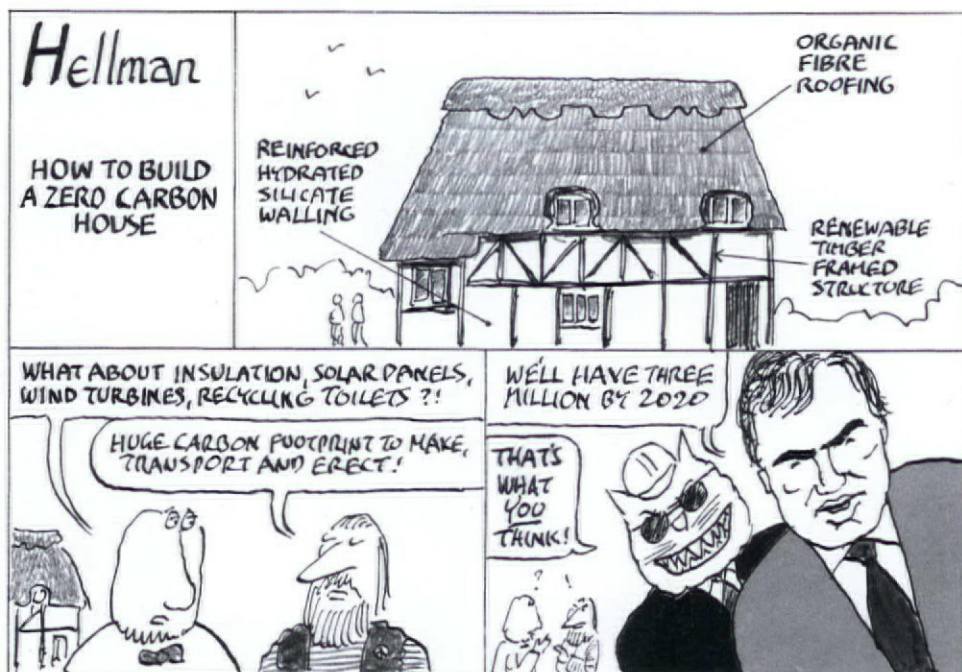
Rem Koolhaas. *Guardian*, 27.08.07

'He could happily sit down one day with God to design refined public buildings, and the next day with the devil to design the wayward architecture demanded by ultra-capitalism'

Jonathan Glancey on Rem Koolhaas. *Guardian*, 27.08.07

'It's hard for architects to be messy – though Frank Gehry has tried very hard'

American artist Frank Stella. *www.archrecord.construction.com*, 22.08.07



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HARD TO STOMACH

Having been holed up in Clerkenwell for some time, the AJ has now been picked up and dumped at new monolithic HQ Greater London House in Mornington Crescent. While the AJ's new home, an Art Deco former cigarette factory, does have several features of architectural note – the large black cats outside are particularly distinctive – the lack of nearby quality restaurants is a very real downside. Astragal is unsure the local fried chicken joints will be able to sate his need for roast quail and a cheeky Shiraz. Any suggestions from local readers would be gratefully received.

DIRTY PROTEST

Astragal has discovered a new hobby: watching the flies hovering around the

burgeoning mound of rubbish – sorry, recyclables – on his desk. The powers-that-be have seen fit to remove all trace of waste bins in the AJ move, sacrificed in the name of 'good waste management'. The consequence has been a redeployment of detritus to a festering plot next to the typewriter. Astragal has also been spending time away from his 'work station' and has found a hidden, but ferocious, treasure in the lavatorium: the super-powerful Xlerator hand dryer. Apparently it was a cast-off from a **Frank Whittle** jet engine experiment and can dry a man, post-bath, head to toe, in under a second. Presumably all the recyclables go into the four boilers needed to power it...

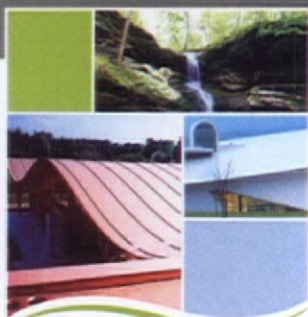
FERTILISATION MISHAP

In the spirit of 'cross-fertilisation', a buzzword

of the AJ's publishing overlords Emap at present, Astragal took a quick morale-boosting tour of his new lair, which also houses such other quality titles as *Drapers* and *Nursing Times*. Eager to meet and mingle with the (predominantly young and female) staff on these fine magazines, Astragal took what he thought would be a short turn around the building. Unfortunately, having misjudged the size of the massive former factory, Astragal was away from his desk for over an hour while he negotiated the floor plan. Trudging through identikit office after identikit office, sweating and out of breath, he was left feeling rather like **Wile E. Coyote** in the *Roadrunner* cartoons, constantly running on the spot while a spooling backdrop looped behind him.



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DRAWINGS STILL HAVE EDGE OVER PLANNING PORTAL

I share Martin Taylor's concerns at councils' inability to plot drawings submitted via the Planning Portal at A1 (AJ 16.08.07).

I recently submitted a full planning and listed building application online for the first time and have encountered one problem after another. It took eight weeks just for the applications to be validated, despite them being fully in order from the outset. Eventually we had to send the planning department 10 sets of all the A1 drawings as it seemed they were not geared up to using the Planning Portal, despite their protestations to the contrary.

We are still awaiting a decision nearly six months after making the application, despite having worked closely with the local planning and conservation officer throughout to ensure all of their concerns were addressed. This has caused considerable delay to the project which, through no fault of her own, will be very costly to our client. Perhaps Local Area Design Statements could be introduced into the planning system. I suspect that might improve its efficiency.

Every planning department should have an A1 plotter at its disposal or not be allowed to accept applications through the Planning Portal. Why in this country can we never implement new technologies effectively? I can certainly say that if the experience I have had is representative of all local authorities, and Mr Taylor's letter suggests it is, I will be submitting future applications the traditional way for some time yet.

Andrew Paulson, Lees Associates LLP Architecture and Design

ENGLISH HERITAGE WAS TRIED AND TESTED AT DROGO

I enjoyed the description of Inskip + Jenkins' work at the National Trust's Castle Drogo (AJ 21.06.07) – too bad there were no action pictures of all the non-destructive testing surveys and material testing that went on over an extended period of time.

Had there been, we might have seen the not insignificant public-sector technical and scientific contribution to this project from my former colleagues in English Heritage – notably from Rebecca Child and Chris Wood.

John Fidler, staff consultant preservation technology, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger, former conservation director, English Heritage

BOARD 'HAS NO ISSUE WITH USE OF ARB AFFIX'

Maurice McCarthy claims a registered architect using the acronym ARB as an affix is harming the credibility of the ARB (AJ 08.02.07) and committing a criminal offence (AJ 05.07.07).

I have sought the ARB's views on the matter and it has responded as follows: 'The board has no issue with registered architects using the acronym ARB after his or her name. The only concern is that the letters ARB may not immediately be recognisable to a member of the public, which is why the board would recommend that the words "Registered Architect" may hold more resonance. There is nothing in the Architects Act 1997 that provides the board with the power to authorise the acronym. However, for a non-registered person to use it would be a breach of Section 20(1) of the Act.'

I challenged McCarthy on his position (AJ 01.03.07) and he has responded by making a number of inaccurate personal statements about me. He refers to me (AJ 26.04.07) as an 'expat'; in fact I am a US citizen. He claims (AJ 05.07.07) that I have no qualifications; however, I have been a registered architect for 38 years. He claims I have elected not to be a RIBA overseas member; in fact I have retained continuous membership since my original election. He says that I should stay in America lest in future I be recognised in Britain as a criminal. This allegation in particular is an extremely serious matter as I run businesses in both the UK and the US.

While he makes these unsustainable accusations, McCarthy allows himself to appear on the RIBA's membership database of 28,000 architects, although he himself is not an architect. To quote the ARB, he is 'holding (himself) out to be an architect in business or in practice'.

Peter Arnold, Boulder, Colorado, USA

This correspondence is now closed – Ed.

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

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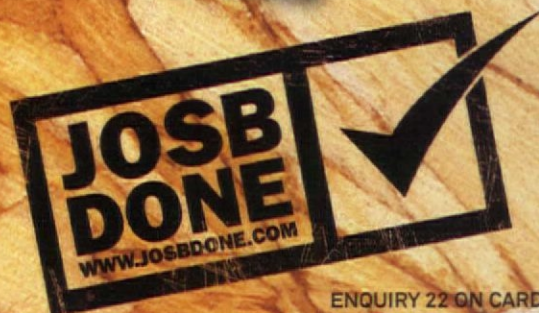
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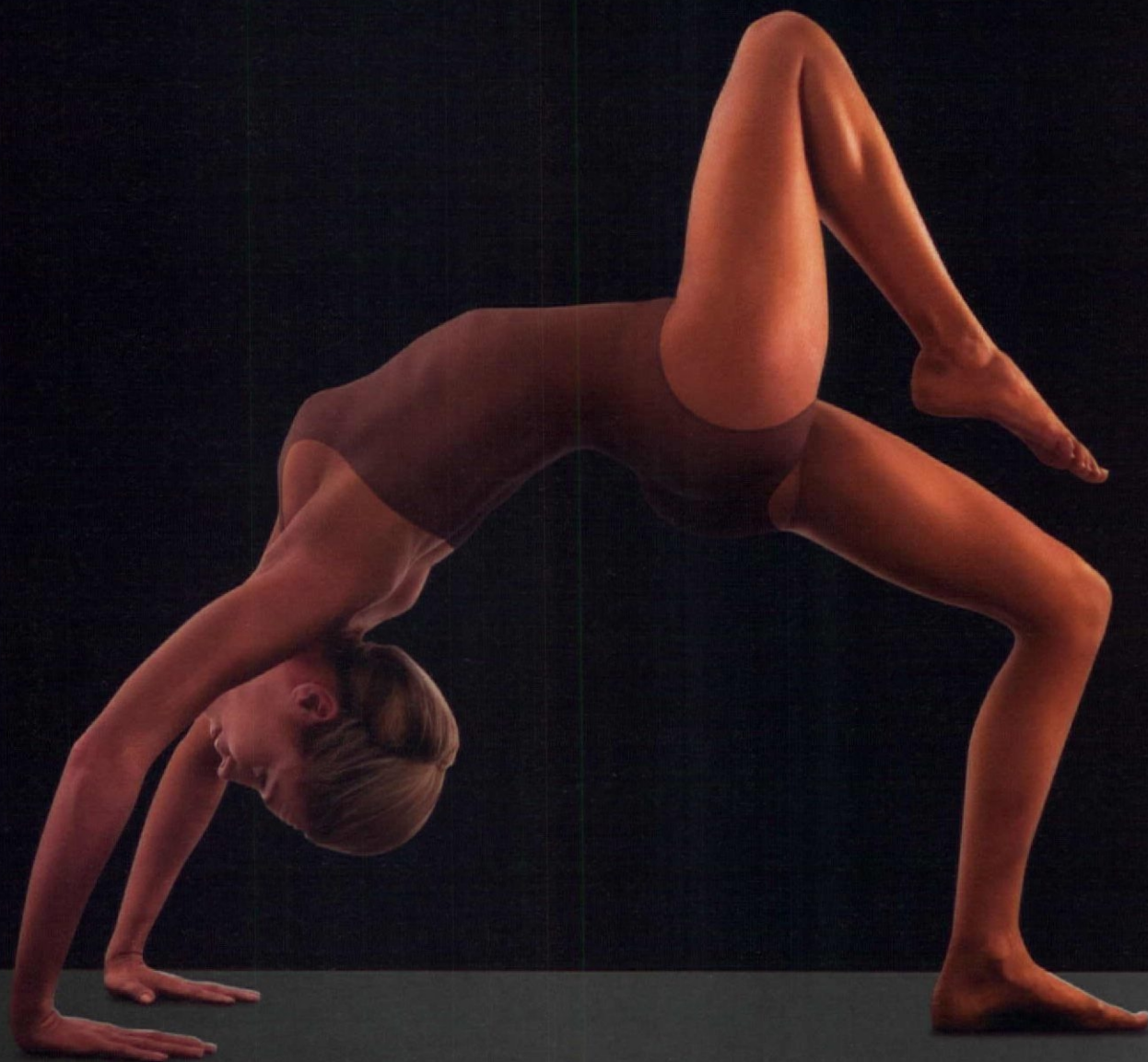
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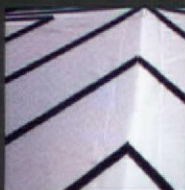


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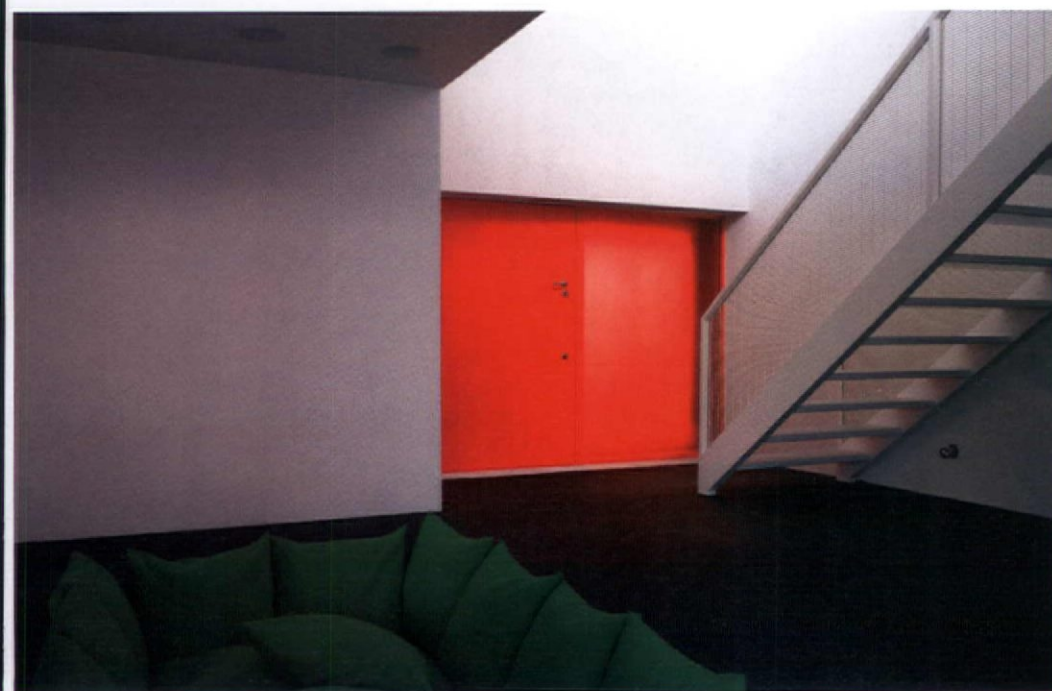
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TONKIN LIU/ ROOFTOP APARTMENT



THE APARTMENT HAS A SUPRISING AMOUNT OF WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS 'COSINESS'

By Ruth Slavid. Photography by Richard Bryant/Arcaid

Approaching the rooftop apartment by Tonkin Liu in Shoreditch, east London, gives you little indication of the surprise in store. You enter a slick but soulless apartment building, take the lift to the top floor, and go through an anonymous wood-faced door.

And then everything changes. You find yourself on a short bridge crossing into another building. The white mesh sides and floor covering of 3M nylon matting provide a change in mood from sleek and commercial to tough and intriguing. At the end you come to a huge, bright, dark-pink glowing door. This takes you into the apartment, a six-bedroom family home, sitting on top of a converted Victorian warehouse.

Largely glazed, the apartment has wonderful views of the rapidly changing skyline of the City of London. But it also offers vegetation, room to play inside and out, and a surprising degree of what can only be described as 'cosiness'. It took determined clients and dedicated professionals to achieve this.

The clients, a couple with four children (the sixth bedroom is for visiting friends) had always lived in the area and wanted to continue to do so, but were concerned by the lack of green space. They had friends in a live/work unit in the converted warehouse, and started to explore the possibility of building on top of it. Richard Rogers (the man, not the practice), worked with Tonkin Liu, helping with the process of persuading the London Borough of Hackney that this project was a good idea. Surprisingly, Hackney was not all that keen initially on encouraging families into the area.

After planning, a few hurdles remained. These included negotiating a web of permissions, finding an acceptable technical solution, and pushing a whole range of building materials to their maximum limit to achieve as much height as possible on the upper level. Mike Tonkin, of Tonkin Liu, sees the height as compensating for restricted floor area. 'It gives you a sense of space,' he says.

Initially, the architect thought that it might be possible to access the rooftop through the building below, but that would have involved reopening an old lift and too much disruption to the residents. The solution adopted involved: buying the building's Roof Right; getting two lots of Rights of Light – one for the building and one for the link bridge; purchasing part of the freehold; and negotiating use of the lift in the adjoining building.

Structural engineer Expedition Engineering also had a demanding task. The existing roof could not take any additional load, so the new steel structure transfers all the load through the existing brick piers. The apartment is suspended from the structure, giving it entirely column-free spaces.

The upper floor is open plan, arranged around a central bathroom pod that has translucent walls and a skylight with a metal-halide light above it that can project shadows of raindrops. The master bedroom can be shut off from the living space by pulling out sliding walls, faced with grey carpet for acoustic modulation, from the bathroom pod.

Dimensions are determined by maximum manufacturing sizes. The floor-to-ceiling height is 3.9m – the tallest double-glazed



1. The two-storey apartment is on top of a Victorian building in east London, and accessed from its neighbour



2.

2. The original building, before the addition

3. On one side there is a gable wall from an earlier neighbour. The back of the apartment is clad in reflective aluminium veiled with white mesh, and the access bridge and bright entrance door are just visible below it

4. A robust stair leads from the lower terrace to the upper floor, with a spiral stair going up to the roof



3.

K-glass argon-filled units available are 4m high, and the units are also pushed to their maximum width of 2.4m.

The lower level is set back, and also down below the existing parapet. Its five bedrooms open directly on to decking, enclosed by metal mesh up which wisteria and clematis cirrhosa are trained. Tonkin Liu, having looked at more exotic alternatives, chose a simple mesh often specified for prisons – and therefore unclimbable by children. This planted mesh will become a green enclosure, and a veil for the building. Coupled with double layers of blinds on the upper floor it provides adequate privacy for such an isolated space.

The rest of the ground floor centres on a 'conversation pit', filled with bright-green cushions and where the children spend most of their time.

Although the main reason for the setback was to create a usable amount of outdoor space outside the children's bedrooms, it also helps with the ventilation of the upper floors. Anna Liu describes a grille in the underside of the overhang as a 'nostril'. It will open automatically in hot weather, pulling in cool air which will travel up through the tall upper floor and vent at the top, providing a degree of stack-effect ventilation.

A metal stair leads from the deck to the roof, which is also partly decked and partly planted, with lavender and recumbent rosemary, and which has some solar panels.

The clients extended their budget to the limit, so that economies had to be made. Ipe decking on the lower level was

superseded by standard ridged decking on the roof. The kitchen is made up from standard Ikea units, albeit with new handles.

These compromises help reinforce the fact that this is a family home. Proof of the success lies in the fact that the decking houses a tepee, skateboards and a plethora of toys. Furniture includes many of the classics, but they are comfortably scruffy and even torn.

There are practical disadvantages to living this way. You need to climb a ladder to change a light, and new furniture has to come in by cherry picker. Any servicing of the garden – and there is already some inevitable dieback – has to be done the same way. But this elegant building provides a family home in the heart of the city, coupling privacy and security with wonderful views, and featuring outside space in an area where it is in short supply.

The building is both surprising and delightful. Spend a little time there and you begin to see other flat-roofed blocks as somehow unfinished. Homes in the sky have never looked so appealing.



4.

5. The same secure inexpensive mesh is used on the internal stair as externally. The luminous entrance door can be seen underneath

6. Children's bedrooms open directly onto the terrace - and magnificent views

7. Lower-floor plan

8. Upper-floor plan

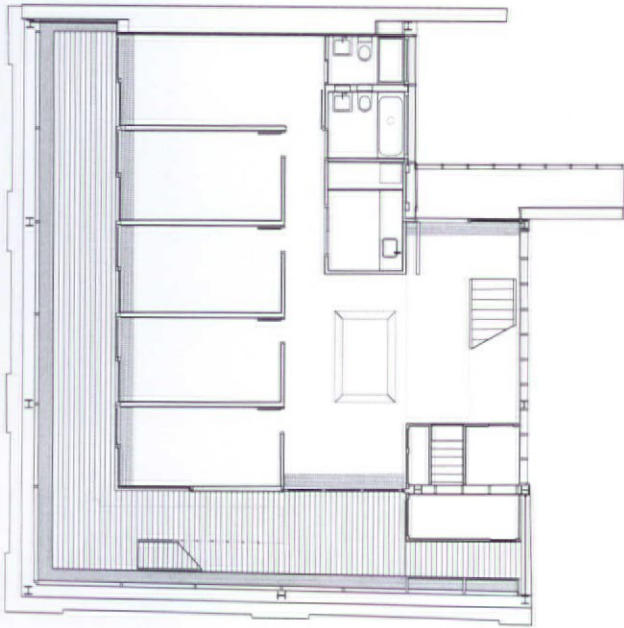
9. Section through the apartment

5.

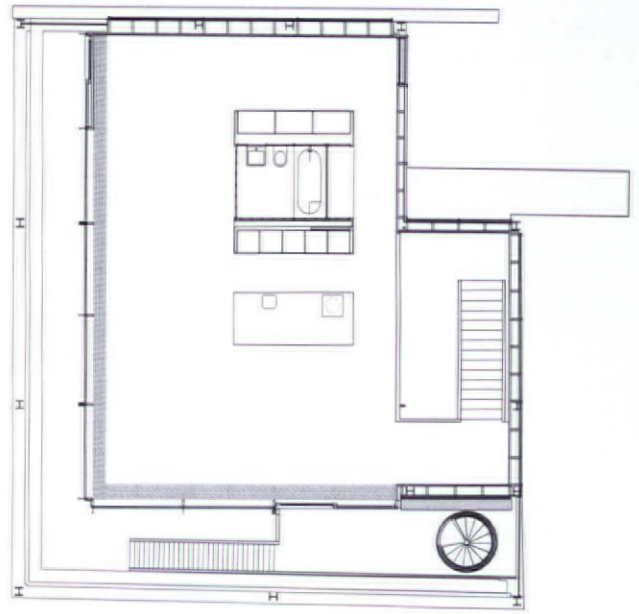


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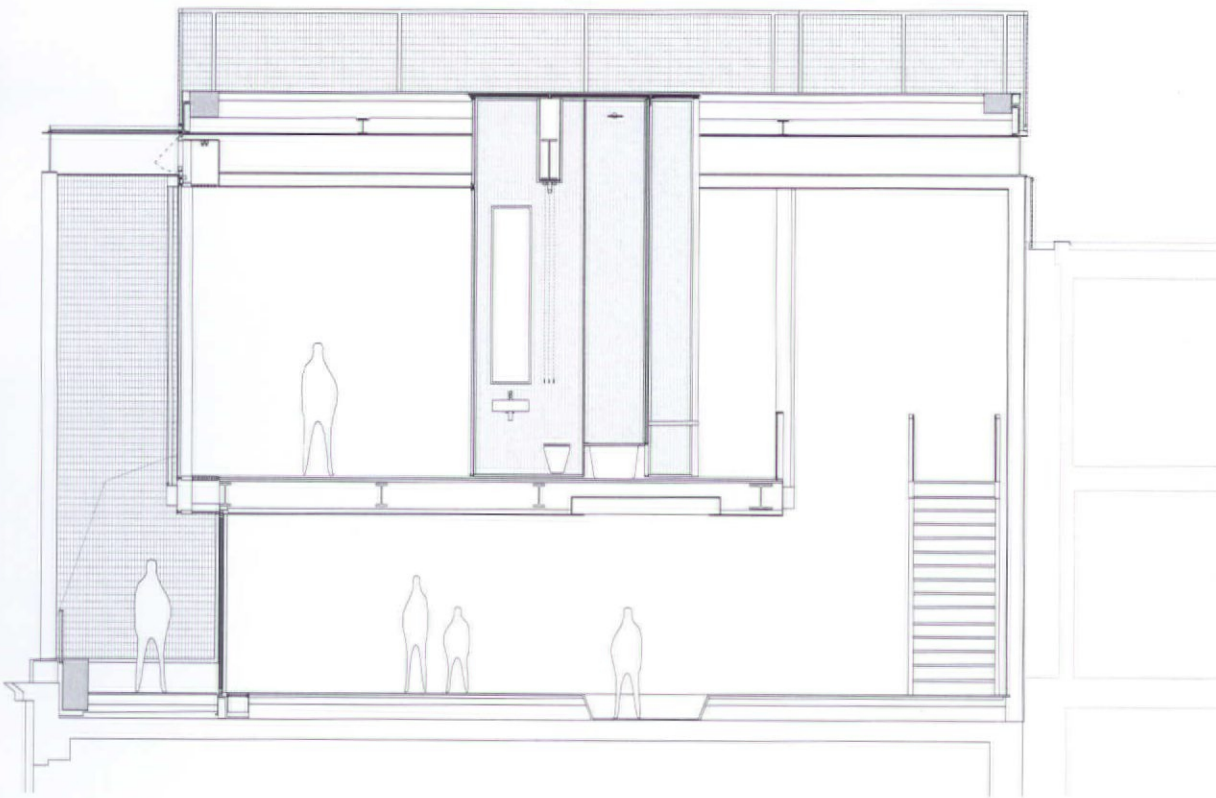




7.



8.



9.

Credits

Commission date

April 2001

Design phase

April 2001 – June 2006

Construction

August 2005 – August 2006

Cost

Confidential

Total internal floor area

260m²

Client

Private

Architect

Tonkin Liu with Richard Rogers: Mike
Tonkin, Robert Urbanek-Zeller, Anna Liu,
Jochen Kälber, Anne-Charlotte Wiklander,
Christian Junge, Emu Masuyama, Myung
Min Son

Structural engineer

Expedition Engineering

Services engineer

BDSP

SAP consultant

ECD Projects Services

Quantity surveyor and project
management

KHK Group

Fire-safety consultant

Warrington Fire

Landscape architect

Tonkin Liu with Tendercare Nursery

Lighting designer

Tonkin Liu and BDSP

Party wall surveyor

RVM Partnership

Legal consultant

Campbell Hooper

Property valuation

Frank Harris & Co

Main contractor

MJH

Subcontractors and suppliers

Planting Tendercare; *steelwork* City Steel;
glazing Schüco International; *electrical* R. J
Mechanical; *insulation* Knauf; *mesh* Bekaert
Fencing; *aluminium cladding panels* Argonaut;
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10. The open-plan upper floor is
arranged around the pod containing
the bathroom and services





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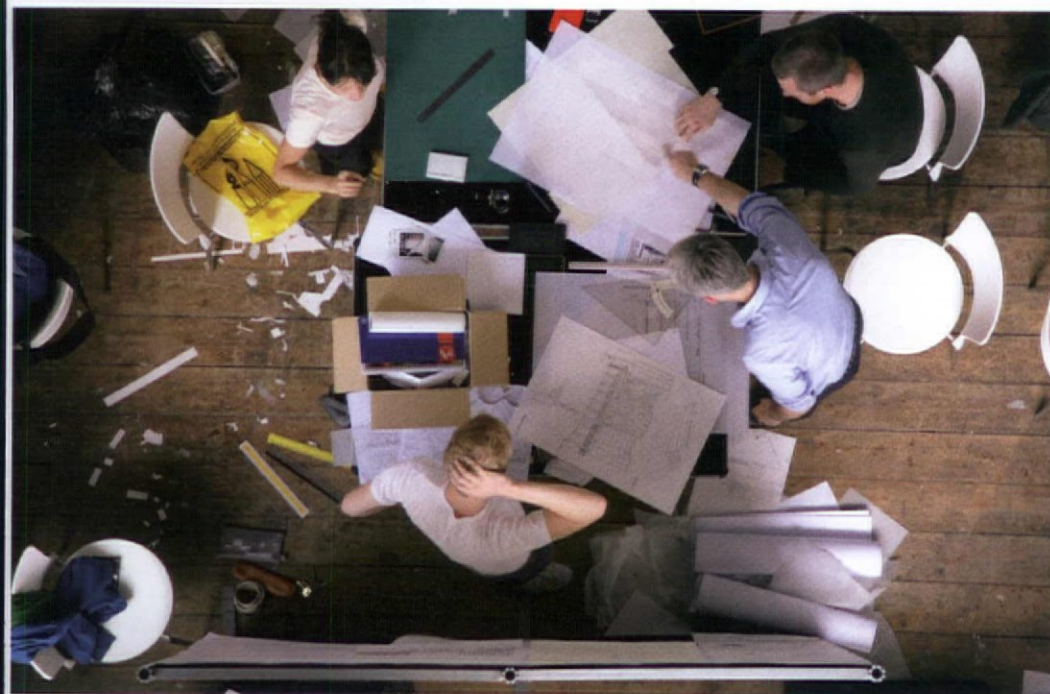
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KING'S CROSS CHARRETTE 2007



KING'S CROSS CHARRETTE / INTRODUCTION



Earlier this summer, we crammed 20 young practices into the German Gymnasium in King's Cross, central London, to sweat them for ideas. They arrived early one Thursday in June to find that the Victorian building they were in looked out over a 280m-long building site. They had seven hours to design something for it.

This was the second Argent/AJ Charrette and the focus had shifted. The first charrette's brief was for housing in the north of the huge site, taking up two parcels of Allies and Morrison and Demetri Porphyrios' masterplan. This year's challenge was the greater: design a masterplan for a long thin site, right next

to King's Cross station's new concourse (by John McAslan). It's one of the trickiest sites in the plan but also one of the richest, fronting a new boulevard, the Regent's Canal and the railway tracks leading into the King's Cross terminus to the east.

Over the page you can see in more detail what the practices were asked to do, and following that is an array of drawings and models that shows the diversity of emerging British architecture. No-one used computers, and this proved a great leveller. Some of the UK's best young offices made drawings and rough models for the first time in a while



(one even appealed to an AJ reporter: 'Give us our computers back!'). 'It's like an intellectual *Scrapheap Challenge*,' said Ben Knight of de Metz Forbes Knight, one of the participating offices. 'It was pretty stressful but we learned an awful lot.' It was certainly tough, but most enjoyed the opportunity to test their skills in front of the UK's best clients.

We had a distinguished jury. Argent's joint chief executives Roger Madelin and David Partridge (interviewed on pages 40-41), Bob Allies of Allies and Morrison (responsible for the masterplan of the site), Paul Finch (editor of the AR) and myself did a whistle-

stop crit of 20 projects in a couple of hours. We are very grateful to Argent, to the jurors themselves, but most of all to the practices, who entered into the spirit of the charrette with incredible generosity and good humour.

An exhibition of the schemes printed in these pages is at the New London Architecture Gallery, Store Street, London, from 31 August to 29 September.

Kieran Long, editor, *The Architects' Journal*

All photography by Dominik Gigler.

KING'S CROSS CHARRETTE / THE BRIEF

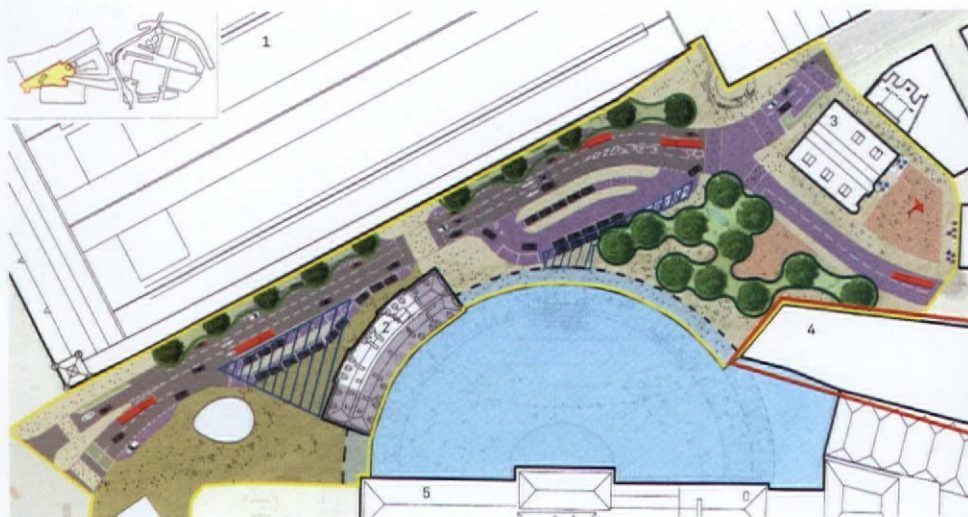
The brief this year was on an urban scale, and demanded that the participants look at the whole of Development Zone A – a 280m-long and 40m-deep (at its widest point) wedge of land next to the railway and abutting to the south the semicircular King's Cross station concourse that will be built to designs by John McAslan.

The practices were asked to consider urban-design questions raised by the site, including: 'front versus back; end grain versus length; individual character versus the nature of the terrace; object background; and the form and massing of the block in relation to the spaces around it.' All the proposals had to take into account parameters of height, depth and usage established in the outline planning permission. The brief asked for no detailed work on interiors.

David Partridge of Argent said: 'Development Zone A is unique as an urban form in contemporary architecture, being a terrace in the grand tradition of Regent Street, as opposed to the recent convention of treating buildings in cities as a series of individual palaces.'

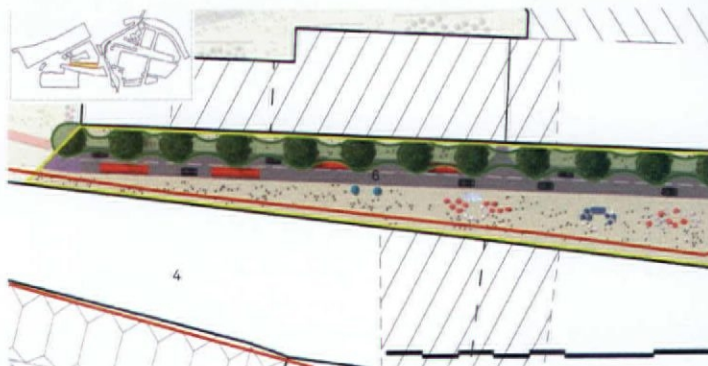


1.



3.

- KEY
- 1 ST PANCRAS STATION
 - 2 GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL
 - 3 GERMAN GYMNASIUM
 - 4 DEVELOPMENT ZONE A
 - 5 KING'S CROSS STATION
 - 6 BOULEVARD (NOW TRAM LINE)



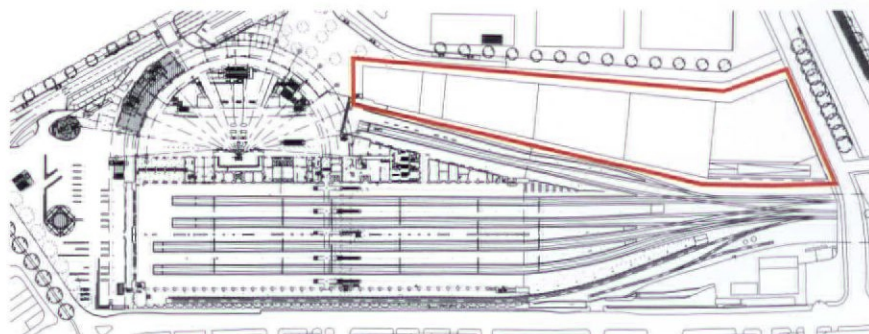
4.



5.



1. The overall King's Cross masterplan, by Allies & Morrison and Porphyrios Associates. Development zone A is outlined in red
2. Detailed drawing of the charrette site
3. Detailed landscape plan of the south end of the site
4. Landscape plan of new boulevard, planned to the west of the site. This has since changed to accommodate a planned tram line
5. Aerial photograph of King's Cross



2.



MICHAEL WALTER/TROIKA PHOTOS

YOU WILL HEAR SOME OF THESE NAMES AGAIN – WE WILL HAVE THEM ON A SHORTLIST

– David Partridge, Argent

James Pallister meets David Partridge, joint chief executive of King's Cross developer Argent, and discusses how the Argent/AJ charrette helps him develop key relationships with promising practices.

'I don't think people fully realise just how exciting it is going to be.' David Partridge is in shirtsleeves and genial mood. He is describing with relish his teams' preparation for King's Cross – a massive piece of redevelopment at the centre of Europe's most populous city. 'We are opening up huge tracts of land,' says Partridge, 'doing what we are interested in: delivering pieces of city'.

Argent is located in suitably auspicious surroundings. The journey there takes me past the tailors and cigar shops of Jermyn Street, looping back past the Carlton Club, up Piccadilly and into Albany Court. In this cobbled courtyard, spitting distance from the RA and home to the Palladian flats famous for housing the capital's fashionable bachelors, the only deviation from ordered propriety comes from the brace of bicycles chained to the cast-iron railings. It's here, in the former stomping ground of Lord Byron, Alan Clark and Isaiah Berlin, that some 40 architects, surveyors, engineers and lawyers make up Argent's expanding London Office.

'We don't want to go to the massive faceless firms where yours is just one of 40 jobs chugging its way through the office,' Partridge says, as he enthuses about his preference for the little guy. 'Smaller practices are willing to work harder because it is a big scheme for their profile so they will pay a lot of attention to it.'

Partridge and fellow chief exec Roger Madelin have a reputation as the good guys of development. They take pride in commissioning small practices; they crack jokes; they're approachable. Roger likes mountain biking. David likes cricket. But they are also accountable to their shareholders. Argent was acquired in 1997 for £234 million by BT Pension Services and manages a net asset value of £164 million. Bicycles and balls aside, there is serious mettle behind this outfit. And Partridge – himself an architect who came to Argent in 1990 after seven years of practice – didn't get to be joint chief exec by indulging his profession. If he is to be a patron, he will be an exacting one, informed more by balance sheets than by a warm heart.

So does Partridge really consider himself to be the 'architects' developer'? 'We've become known for that,' he says, 'but we never set out to do that. It's about working with planning, deals with landowners... It goes far beyond how we work with architects. Obviously we are interested in people who can design, and here the charrette is hugely useful to us.' With a self-awareness that recognises that his words may be interpreted as marketing-speak, but conviction nevertheless, Partridge continues: 'It's a general approach which is about delivering the ultimate product; a piece of city.' Be you architect, contractor or lawyer, Partridge seems a demanding – if rewarding – man to work for.

And architects do seem to enjoy working with Argent. 'They've got to be up there at the top, not least because of the type of architecture they promote' says Marcus Lee of FLACQ. Tim



Partridge (centre) assesses the work of one of this year's King's Cross charrette hopefuls

Makower, of Allies and Morrison, agrees. 'When you work with them there's lots of laughing,' he says. 'They have a good sense of humour, they are very good for creativity; theirs is a well-deserved reputation as a friendly developer.' Makower – currently project architect for the King's Cross masterplan – worked with Argent on its Brindleyplace development in Birmingham. Partridge says: 'We were very lucky in getting access to [Allies and Morrison] early. Now they are a household name, a top-tier practice – but back in 1994 they weren't.'

Some practices have already gained work following the 2006 King's Cross charrette. Piercy Conner is designing an office scheme in Phase 2 of Argent's Stephenson Square in Manchester's Northern Quarter. Witherford Watson Mann may also become involved with Argent in Manchester through one of its clients, the Arts Council. FLACQ, meanwhile, was invited in May 2007 to take part in a competition for a mixed-use building in the King's Cross development area. 'That must have had something to do with how we came across in last year's charrette' says the practice's Marcus Lee.

Partridge's partner Madelin has said: 'I've often been asked to sum up King's Cross in a single soundbite. Opportunity'. Madelin and Partridge spent the spring of 2006 putting forward the case for their £2 billion King's Cross regeneration project, initially handed over to them in 1990. Eighteen months on, having swayed the councillors of Camden, won detailed planning approval in November 2006, and successfully fought off a judicial review in

March 2007, Argent is now hoping to start on site in late 2008. The first phase, says Partridge, will deliver 'a lot of the infrastructure to get things going, together with some residential and commercial property'.

The site is massive. Walking from the entrance to the station to the most northern point of the platform, then referring to the masterplan, you get a sense of the huge scale involved. The 27ha scheme will provide 800,000m² of mixed-use development: 100,000m² residential, 400,000m² commercial and 46,000m² retail.

Given the drawn-out genesis of the scheme it's unsurprising that so few practices have so far become involved with the development. Partridge, though, is unequivocal that more architects will be involved once the site starts to progress. He says: 'The practices we are impressed with [from the 2006 and 2007 charrettes] will have a crack at a proper building. Once we bring forward individual plots, we will approach them for a series of mini design competitions. Different types of people will work in different areas; some architects may work better in a bread-and-butter context, while some may work better in an iconic context.'

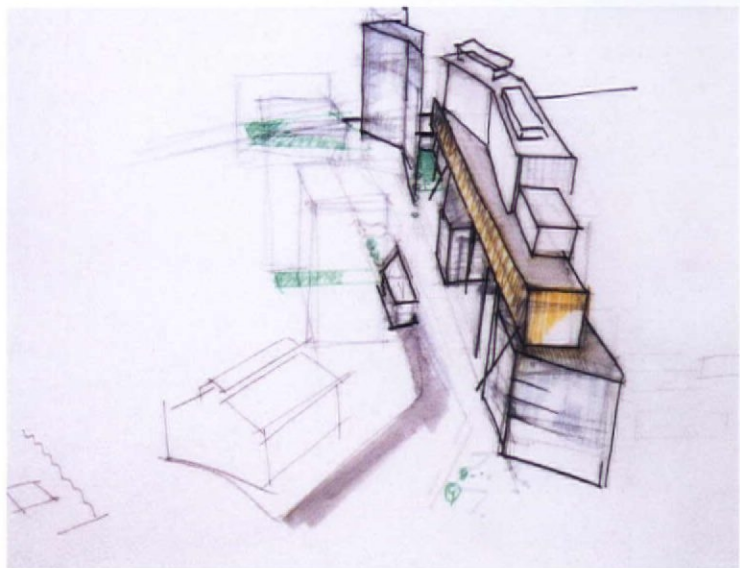
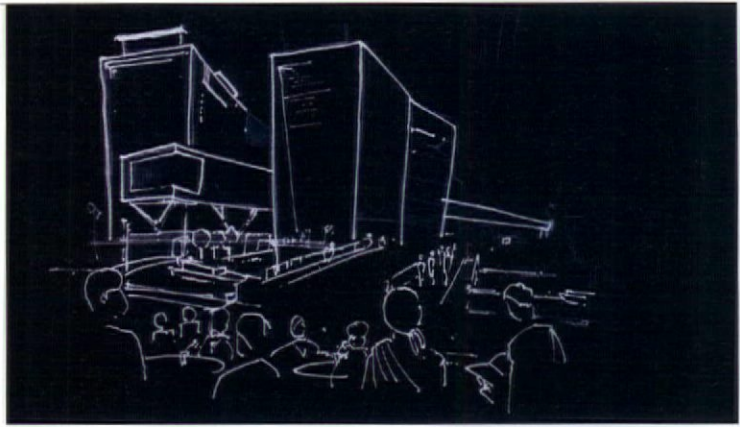
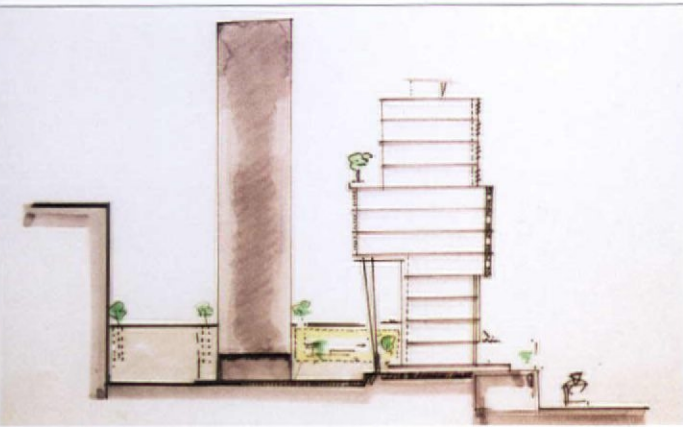
Partridge seems delighted with the outcomes of both the 2006 and 2007 charrettes. He says: 'In the next six to nine months you will hear about some of these names, because we will have them on a shortlist or will have chosen them for a plot in King's Cross or indeed elsewhere...' For architects and client alike, the potential opportunities of the charrette go far beyond the confines of the King's Cross plan.

A-CUBE ARCHITECTS

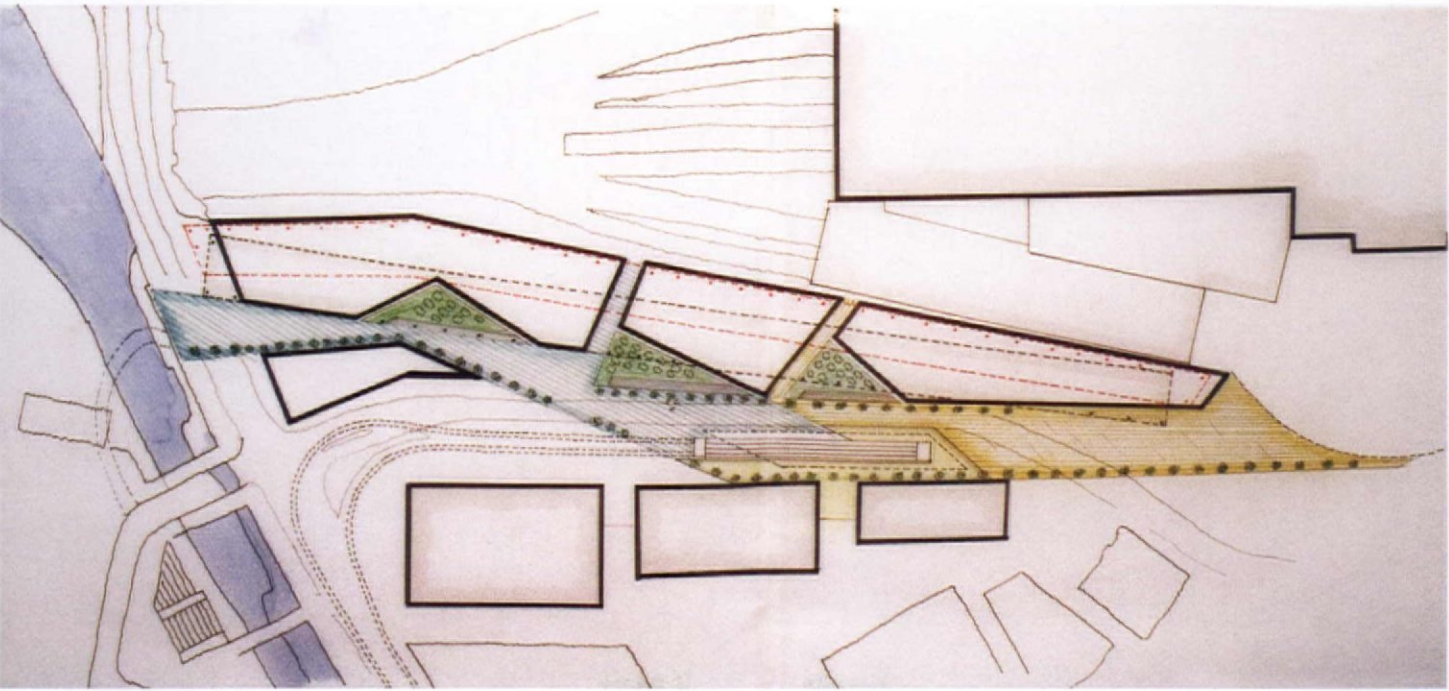
Embracing the ideas central to the creation of the boulevard, we wanted to prevent this major commercial/retail thoroughfare from becoming a 'shopping canyon'. Our assessment highlighted the need for forms, routes and narratives that would be catalysts for pedestrian flow, enhancing the journey through a series of event-based nodes. We sought to develop an urban-landscaping scheme which unified the new tram station and existing transport links and was itself a destination.

The dense commercial/retail peninsula is affirmed by a series of independent buildings that could be developed as individual projects. A secondary semi-private walkway above the public realm unifies the individual developments and emphasises the boulevard. The change in levels to the north of the site presented another set of problems. Our solution was to develop additional links, increasing permeability through the site. The upper sections of the scheme are deliberately devoid of detail, emphasising the key relationships between plan, form and commercial viability.
Faheem Aftab, Damion Burrows, Laura Sanderson

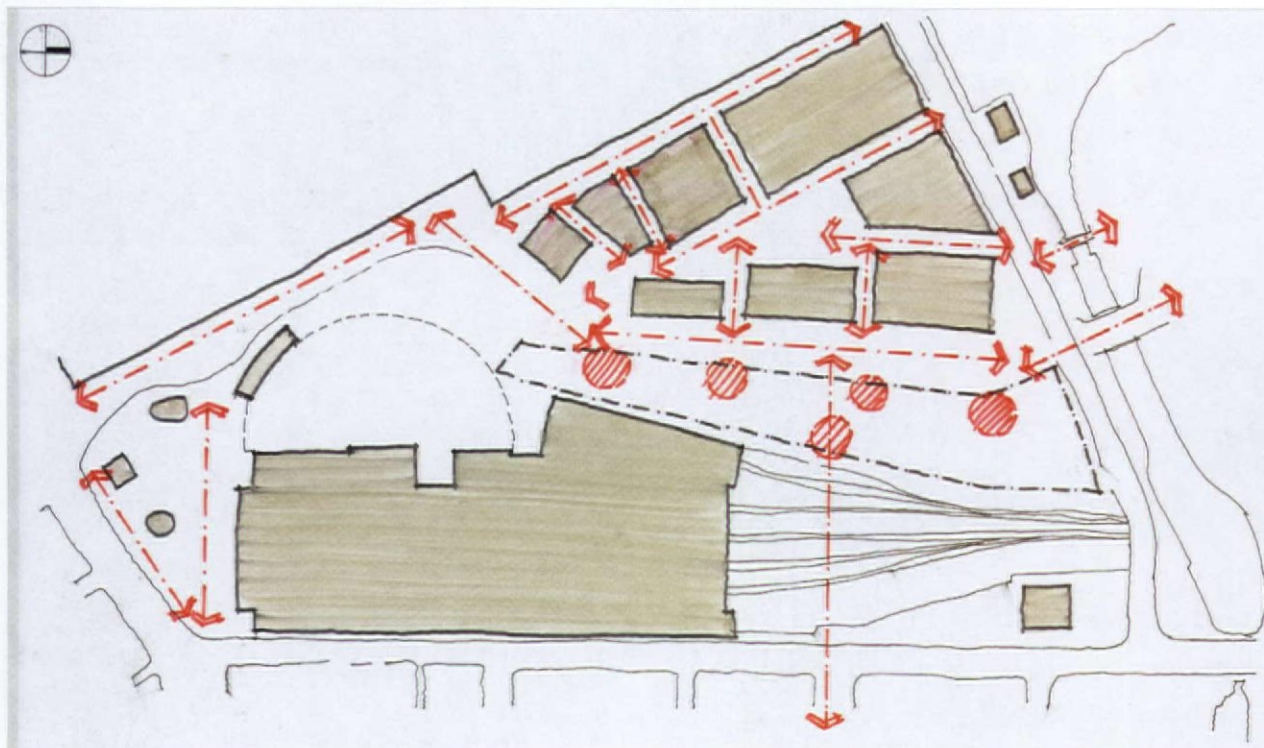




'The dense commercial/retail peninsula is affirmed by a series of independent buildings that could be developed as individual projects and which are unified by a semi-private walkway above the public realm.'



AMIN TAHA ARCHITECTS

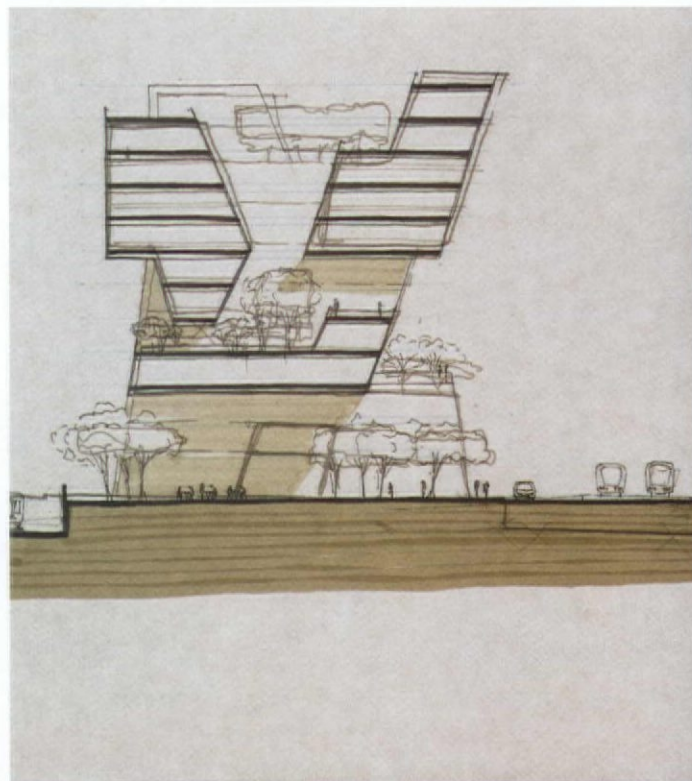


Would modulating the 230m-long 'super-facade' of the study area be enough to enrich a potentially singular urban journey?

We felt a fuller experience would be created by removing the implied 'mega-building', allowing a cleared site to be dissected by desire lines drawn from the existing Allies and Morrison masterplan and wider neighbourhood. Creating a further layer to the urban web with a hierarchy of public spaces and interconnections, that break off the masterplan's boulevard with suitably formal squares from which paths bleed to informal gritty spaces, would feed the potential for multiple identities and opportunities, which we viewed as a necessary part in making the city.

The question of how the front, back, middle and top of the 'mega-building' are treated is in this way answered by introducing an urban sub-grain with its multiple relationships. The models show this investigation, beginning with separate blocks that define hierarchy in plan and coalesce in section to set open space against gateways and passages, sculpted by ascending changing visual links and distant relationships, until all the space is filled and the super-block with its super-facade is reached. They do not represent a completed proposal but a line of urban development from which positions/information can be drawn.

Jerome Buckwell, Richard Cheeseman, Dominic Kacinskan, Amin Taha



'By removing the implied "mega-building" we created a cleared site which could be dissected by desire lines drawn from the existing masterplan.'



ARCHITECTURE 2B

Given the scale of the block, we looked to define the whole eastern edge of the 'boulevard', with the opportunity to create the identity of this new street. Located between the two great stations, 'street' in this context for us was all about simple engineered facades, strategic entrance points and the promise of excitement and activity beyond; a 'latent energy' contained within.

Our response was to create two unifying facades running north-south, that give the block its identity and form a great space within. This 'super-charged' volume is then traversed by dynamic forms – the office floorplates – that hover over an internal street. The internal street contains conference facilities, meeting rooms and coffee bars, and links the commercial world above to the retail below; the retail element being a continual thread. We also used the internal street as a way of dealing with the level changes across the site.

The language of the two facades is determined by the forms and spaces within, and at street level by the life and activity of the retail and the larger apertures that signify the entrance to the office floors. This creates a hierarchical and irregular rhythm.

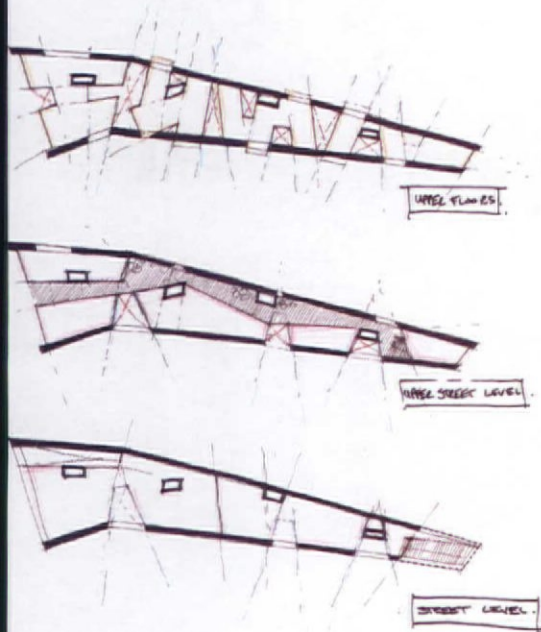
Nick Brown, Matt McColl, Kate Scholes



PUBLIC FACE

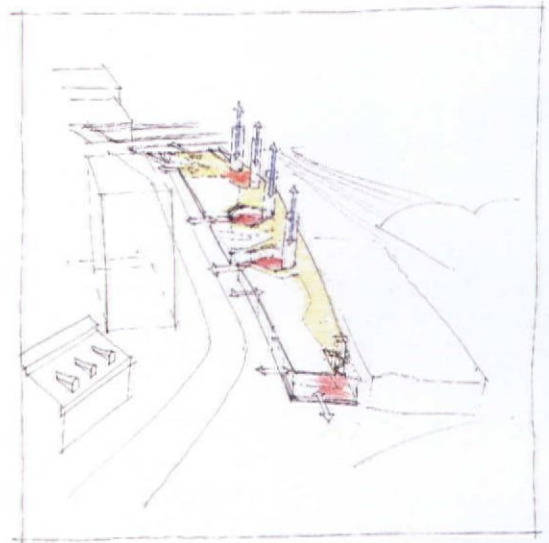
- LARGE SCALE TO REFLECT CONTEXT
- 'CONTAIN' DYNAMIC OFFICE ELEMENTS.

'We created two unifying facades running north-south to give the block its identity and form a space within. This volume is then traversed by office floorplates that hover over an internal street.'



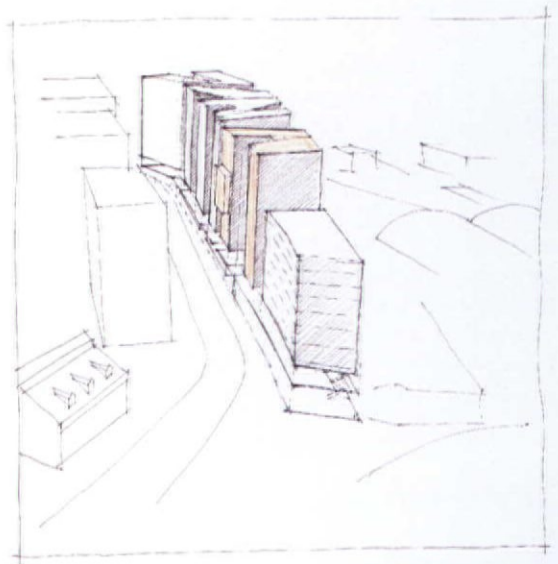
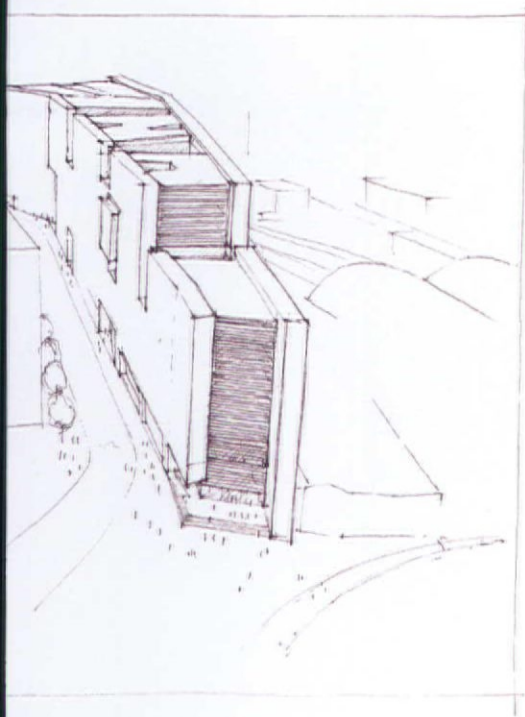
UPPER STREET LEVEL

- LEVEL ACCESS NE CANAL
- LINES 'COURTYARDS'
- COURTYARDS ARE LOCATION OF OFFICE GUESTS.



OFFICE LEVELS

- ACCESSED FROM 'COURTYARDS'
- FOCUSED ONTO LIGHTWELLS / ATRIA



BLOCK ARCHITECTURE



As a student of architecture in the 1860s, Thomas Hardy was given the unenviable task of overseeing the removal of bodies and tombs from the land in St Pancras Churchyard during the construction of the railway. The headstones were stacked around an ash tree, the roots of which have grown and woven around the stones, embedding them in the tree's structure.

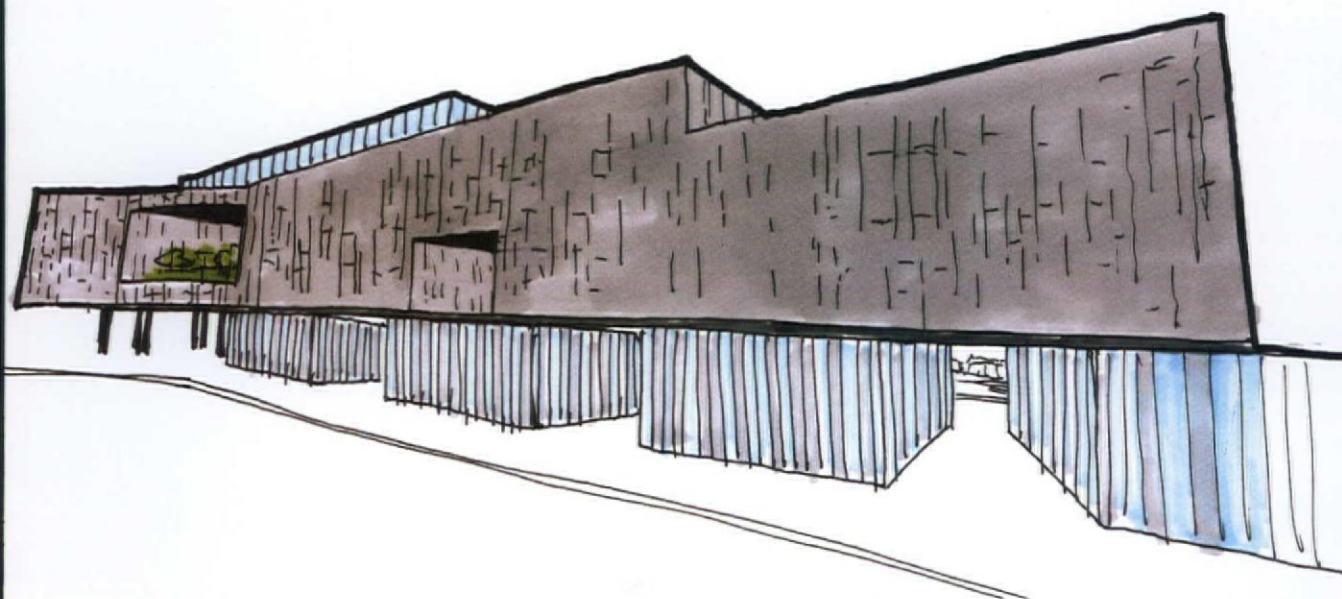
As architects in 2007, we were interested in how to engender such a large-scale building with the same embedded quality as the Hardy Tree. This suggested a number of moves that aim to stitch the building into its context. A mirrored skirt reflects the surrounding streetscape, with views through to the railway. The skirt allows a sculpted five-storey block cut with asymmetrical 'view-finders' to float above, giving glimpses of the sky and surrounding area through the mass of the building.

Rupert Scott, Matthew Shaw, Graeme Williamson

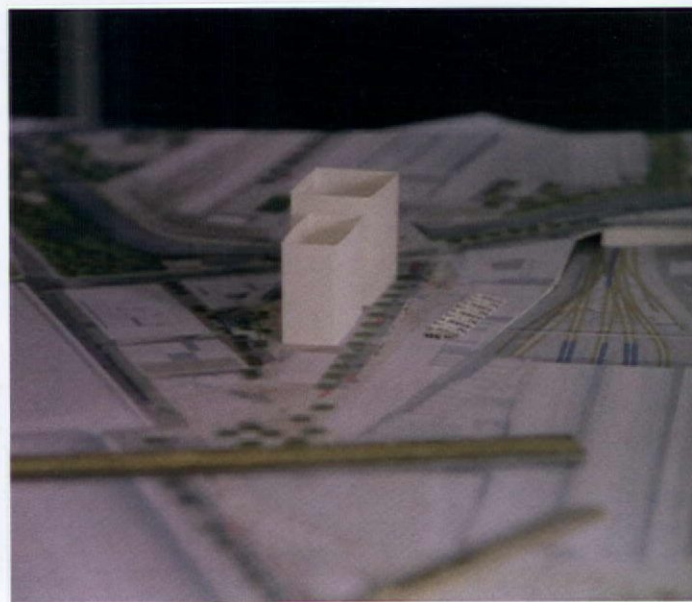




'We wanted to engender a large-scale building with the same quality as the "Hardy Tree" in St Pancras Churchyard.'



BRISAC GONZALEZ

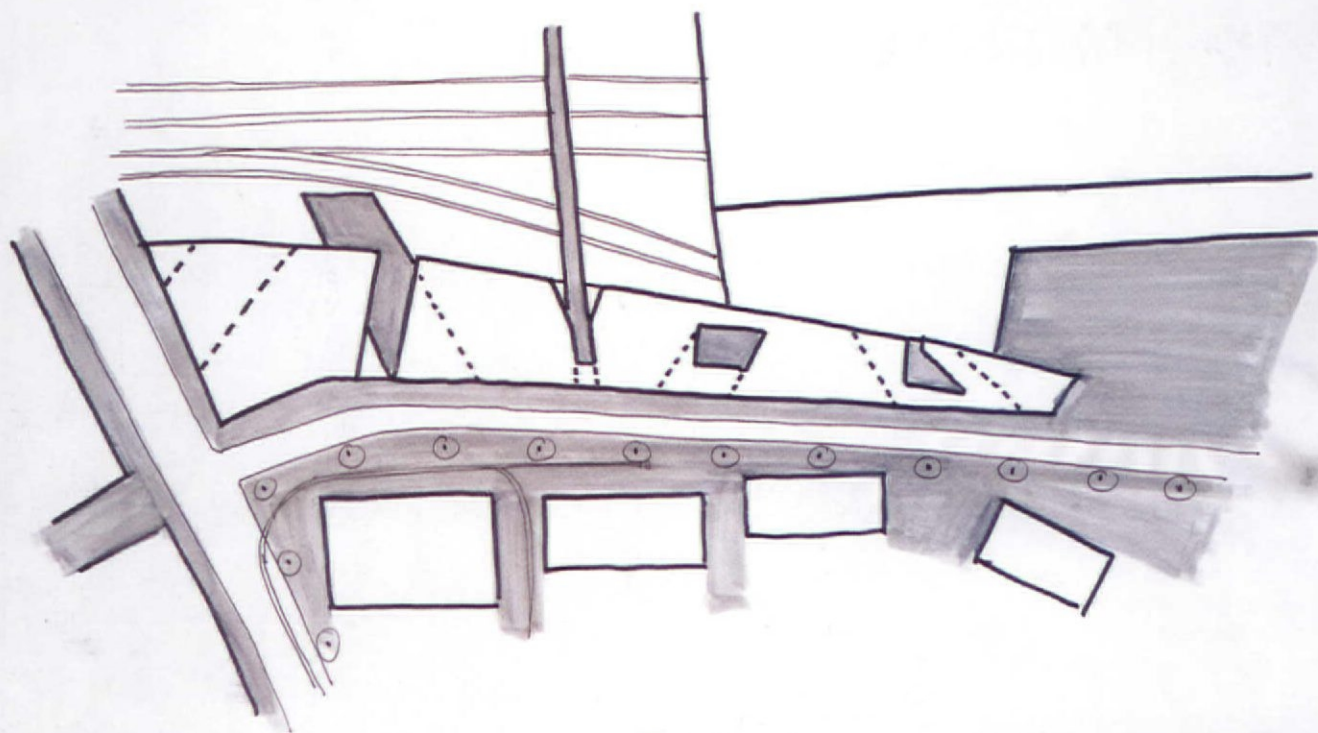


The planned boulevard linking King's Cross station to Regent's Canal is somewhat weakened by the inclusion of the tramway. Those qualities that define a boulevard – mainly ample pedestrian space – are at risk of being lost. So we attempted to find the public space that has been lost at street level.

A series of open, covered and enclosed alcoves opening to the west is proposed. The alcoves literally expand the pavement, creating an interesting spatial experience and greatly increased shop frontages. On the upper floors the same strategy is employed, with the alcoves opening towards the east. The two systems overlap, creating visual links between the street level and office levels. The alcoves give glimpses to the railyards and King's Cross station.

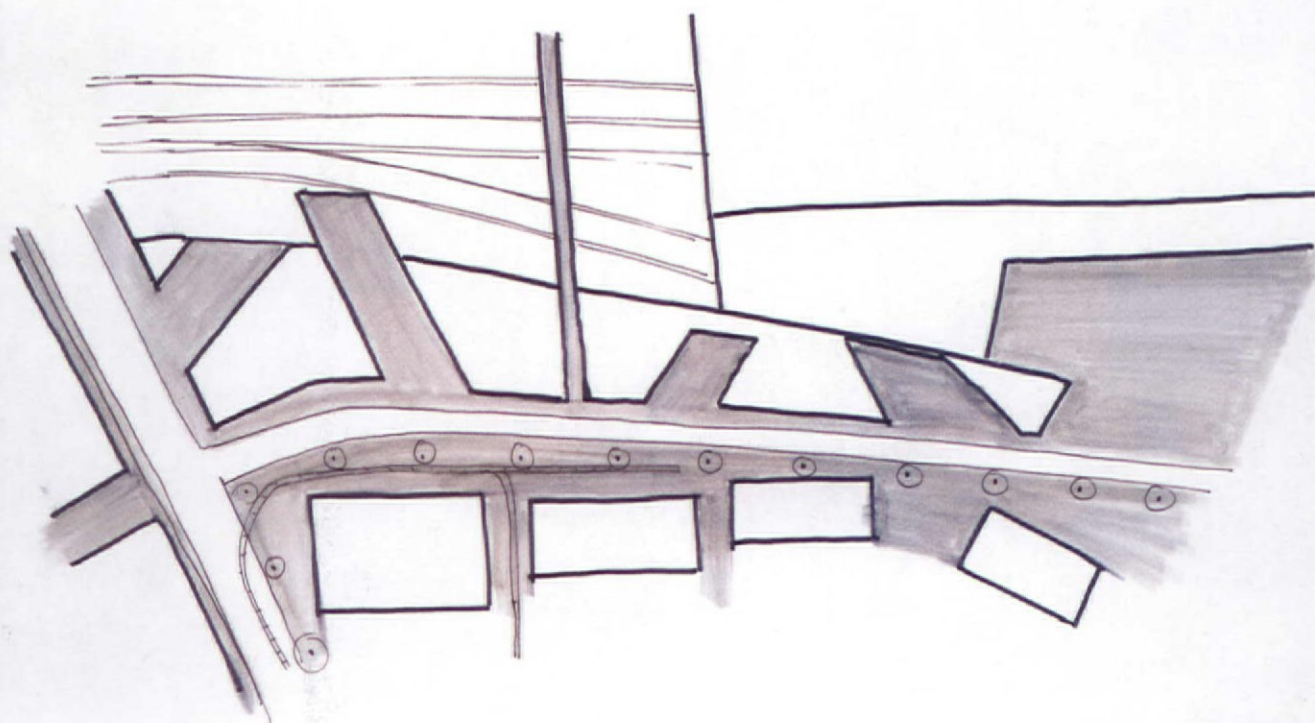
João Baptista, Cécile Brisac, Edgar Gonzalez, Rune Madsen

'We proposed a series of open, covered and enclosed alcoves to literally expand the pavement and attempt to find the public space that has been lost at street level.'



1/1250

OFFICE LEVEL PLAN



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STREET LEVEL PLAN

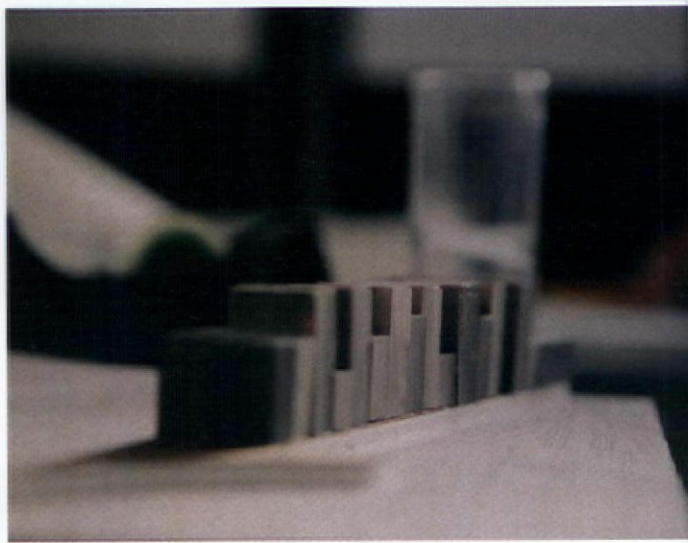
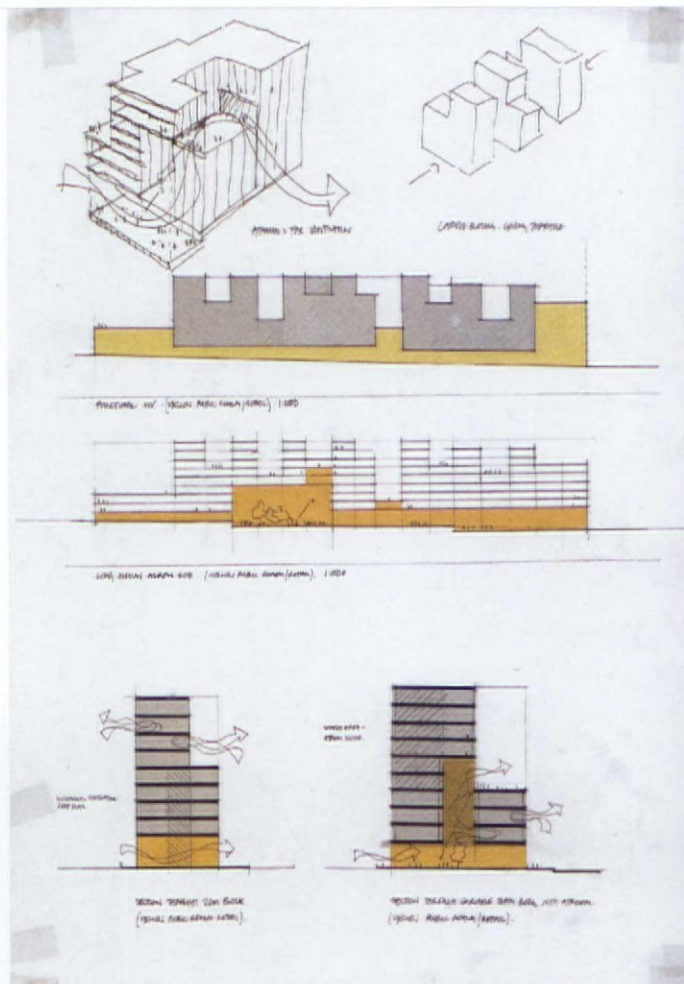
CARMODY GROARKE

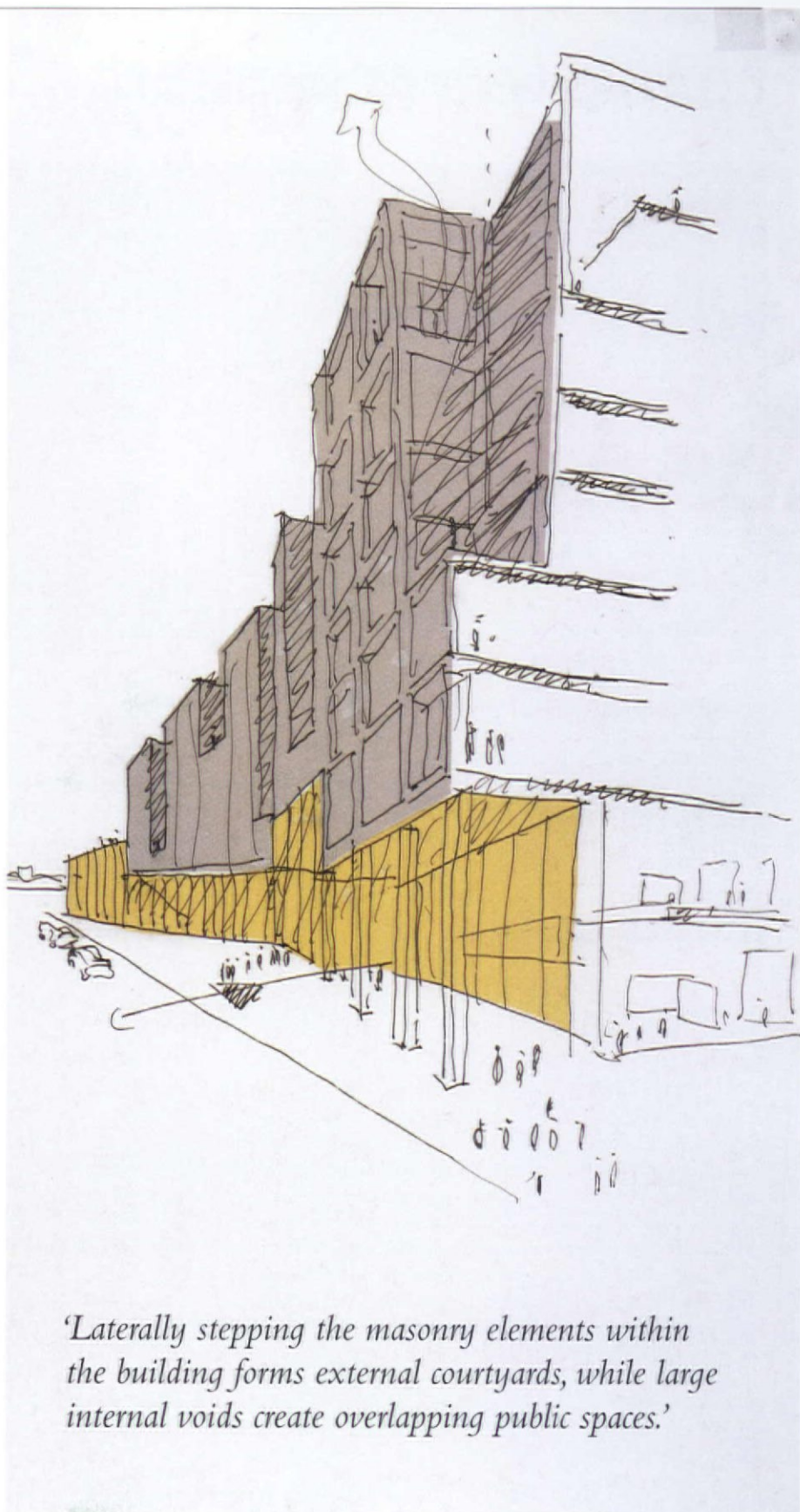
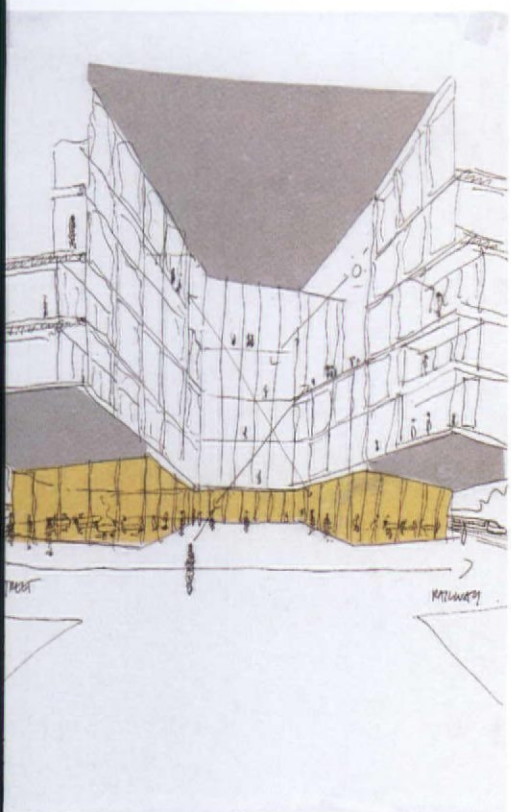
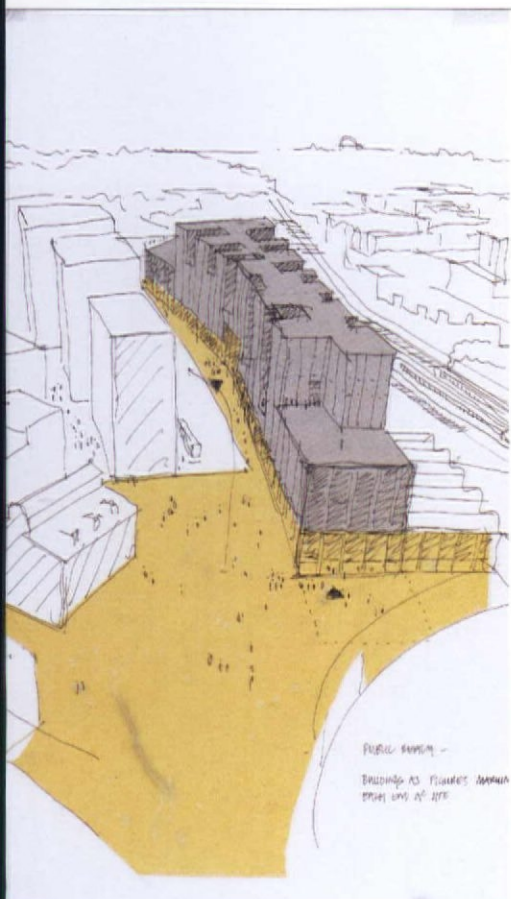
This project examines the architectural grain and scale of a singular urban terrace. Our design proposes a single building whose form and identity is aggregated from a series of smaller masonry structures stacked tightly against each other along the site.

By laterally stepping these elements between the boulevard and railway, the building forms high-level external courtyards that make incisions into the plan, creating a continually alternating profile. Carving large voids internally creates public spaces which overlap sectionally with the external courtyards, allowing daylight into the heart of the building at every level.

The straightforward, almost industrial, architectural language characterises the building. It acknowledges the urban condition and gives a high-quality working environment on both sides of the building. Generous public spaces define the building at ground-floor level, connecting views and activity through some of the large sectional, open voids between street and railway.

Kevin Carmody, Andy Groarke





COX BULLEID ARCHITECTS

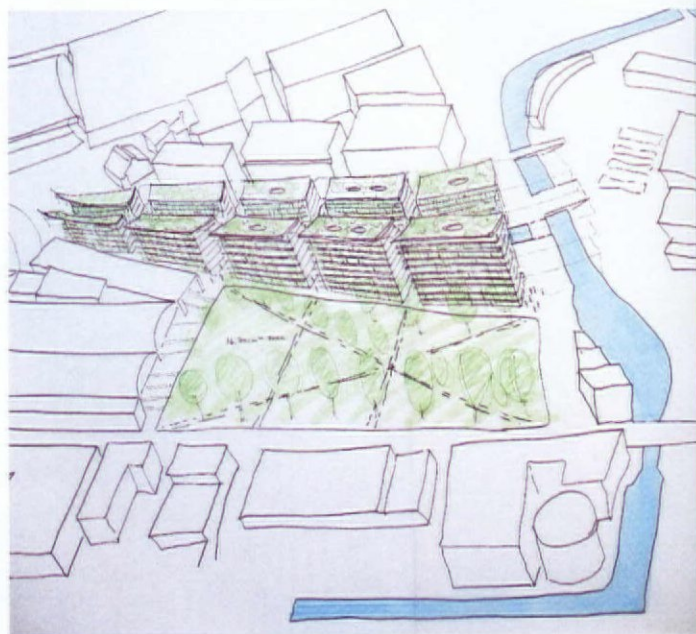


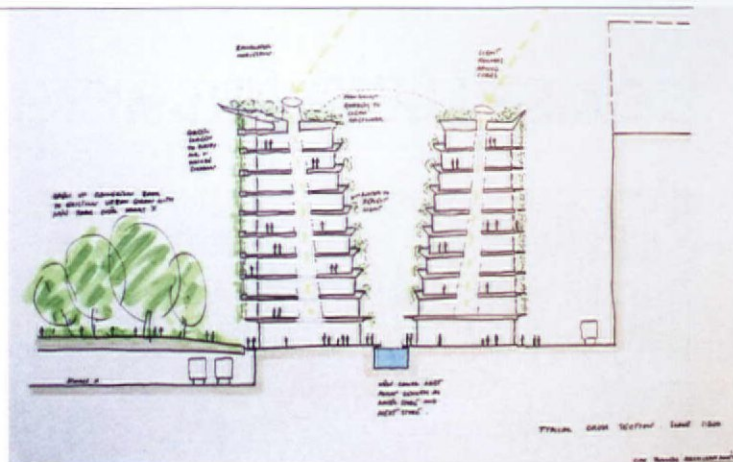
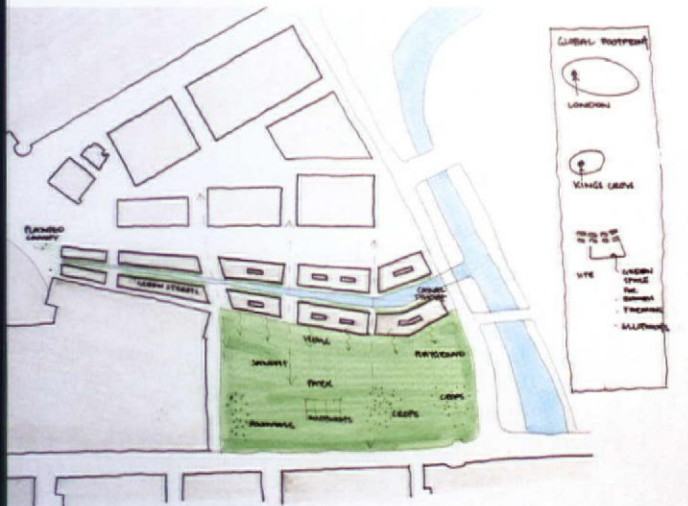
What should new urban projects contribute to 21st-century London? At the very least, they should create places that are a joy to occupy and visit, have a beneficial impact on the city, and be carbon neutral.

We propose to open up and integrate the site with its surroundings by covering the adjoining rail tracks with a new 2ha green park. This relatively simple engineering project reclaims wasted space for public use to form an oasis in the heart of King's Cross. A series of stepped buildings with planted facades is set along a new inlet from Regent's Canal, creating a green waterside promenade along the north-south axis. East-west routes between the buildings connect the promenade to the new park and the rest of the development, re-establishing links across the site that have been severed by the railway for 150 years.

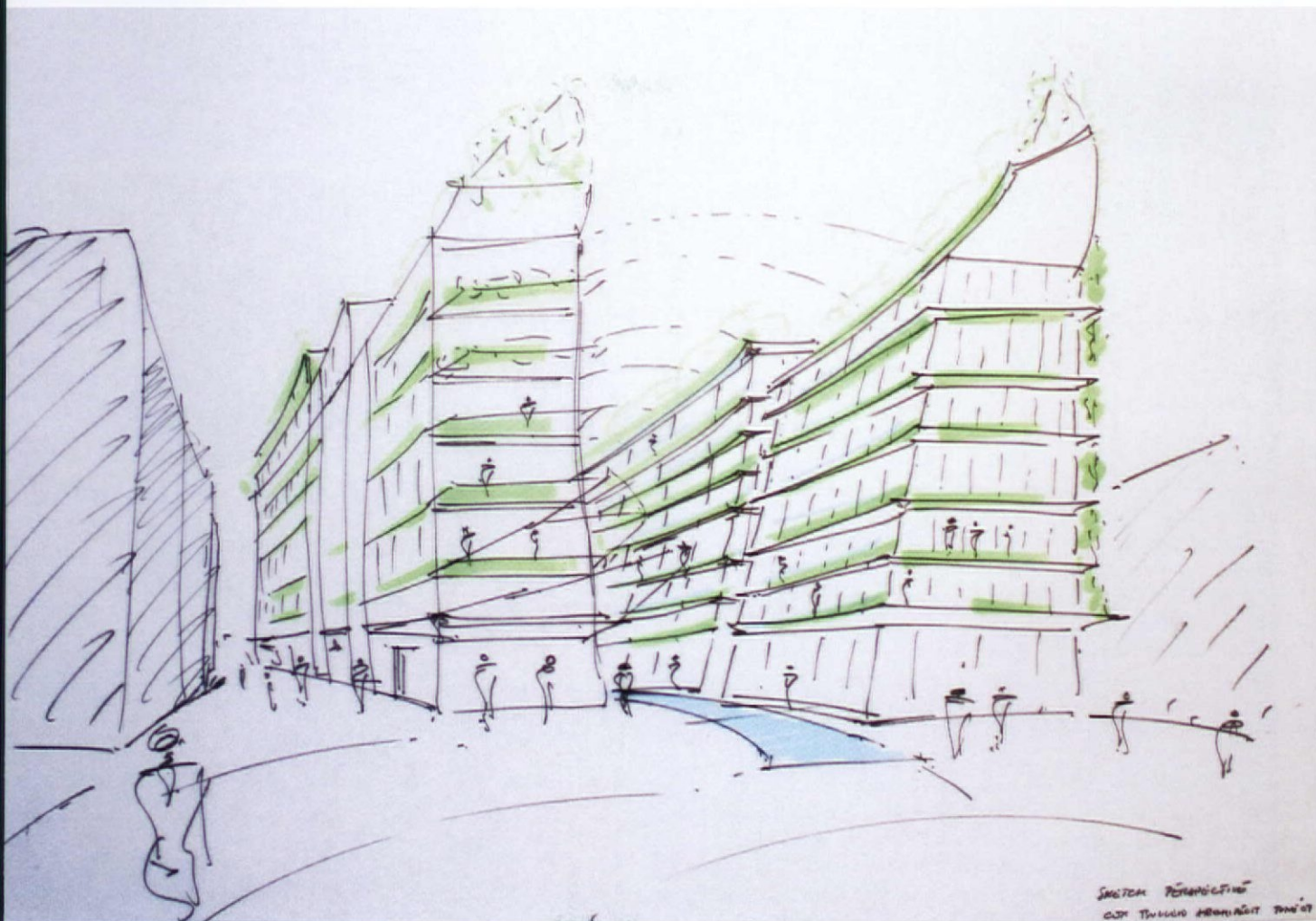
The new canal inlet serves as a heat sink for cooling in summer and heating in winter. External planted screens give shade, oxygen and greenery, as well as filtering grey water returned to the canal. Lightweight ETFE roofs cover the promenade, creating a winter garden, reducing the external envelope of the buildings by 50 per cent, and eliminating the need for space heating.

Oliver Bulleid, Tessa Cox



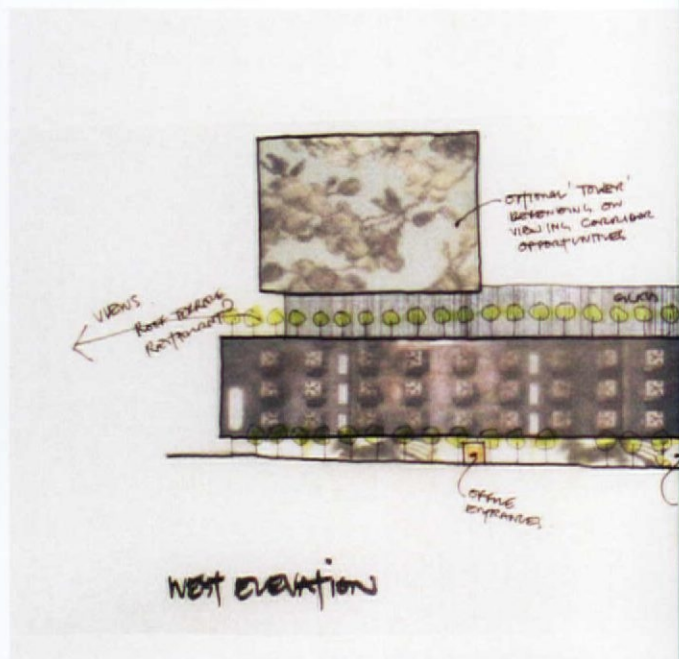


'The adjoining railway tracks will be covered with a green park, which will reclaim wasted space for public use and form an oasis at the heart of King's Cross.'



SKETCH PERSPECTIVE
OF THE BUILDING FROM THE RIVER

DE METZ FORBES KNIGHT

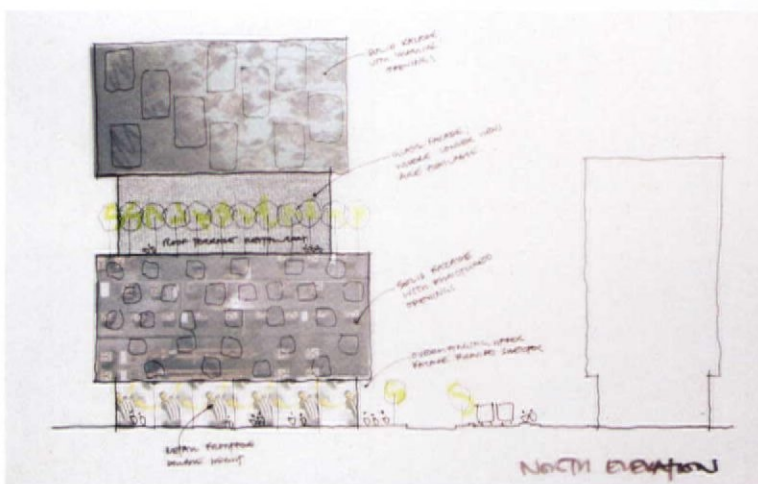
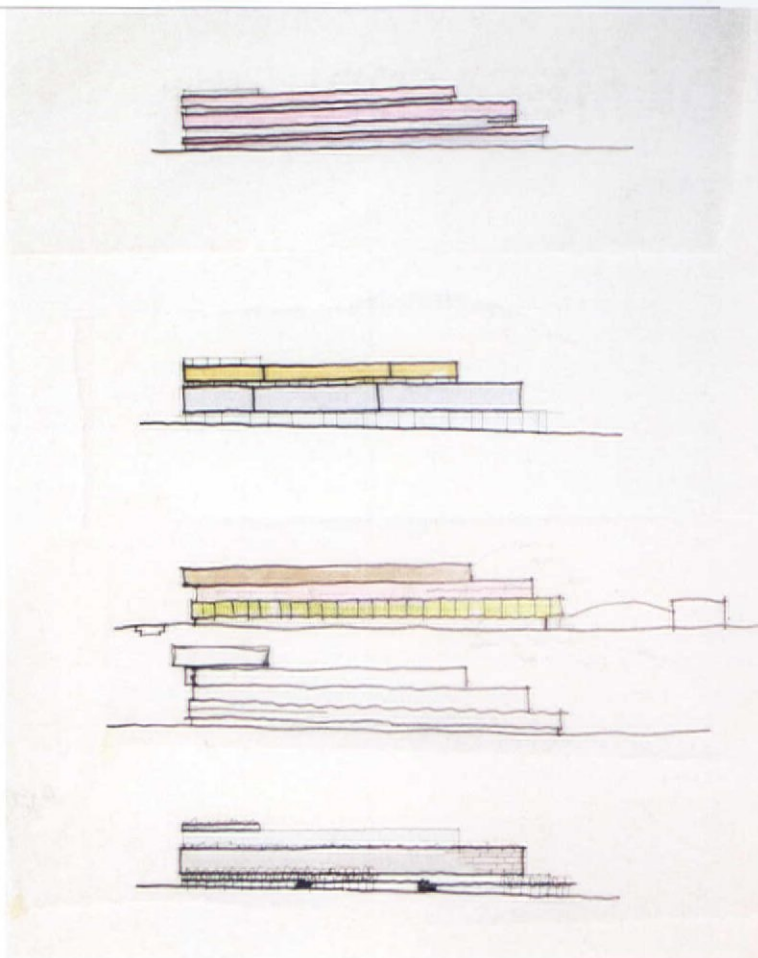
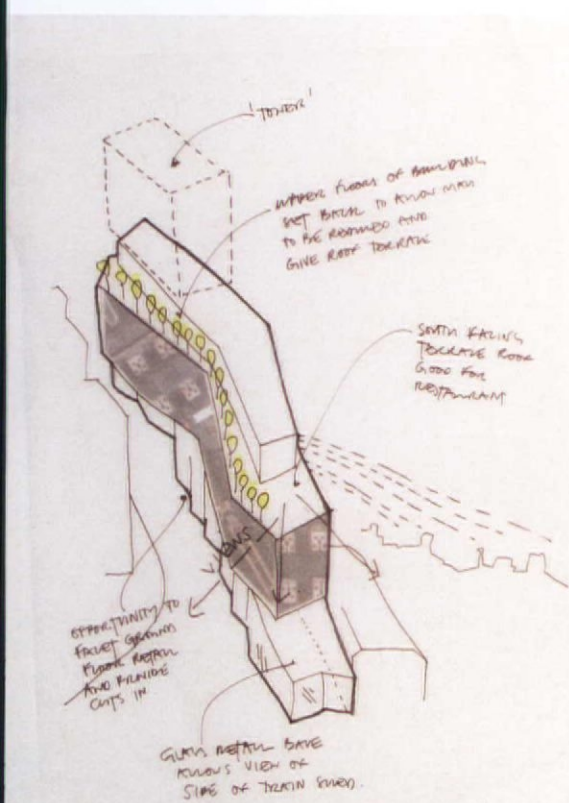
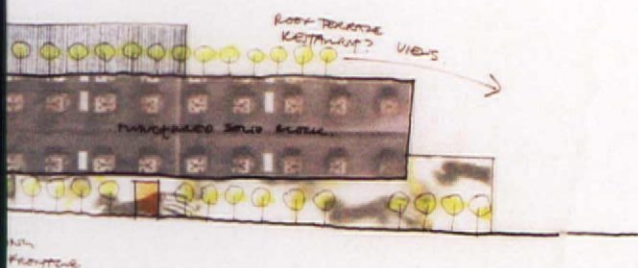


Instead of suggesting individual buildings, we chose to look at the unique opportunity of creating a single monumental building appropriate to the scale and vision of the masterplan. The building is proposed as a grand sweep of stepped horizontal bands, each with its own defined character, rising to a tower at the northern end.

Each step provides generous external terracing, going beyond a green roof to provide a fully planted park at high level, giving panoramic views of the city. Floors one to three are jagged and glazed, stepping in and out to address oblique views and enliven the street scene. The floors above are more solid, overhanging the lower ones to give them some definition, while avoiding the questionable move of creating an enclosed arcade. These upper floors appear as a series of defined bands, which are then fragmented to present a strong, short elevation to the north.

Julian de Metz, Paul Forbes, Ben Knight, Deborah Sher





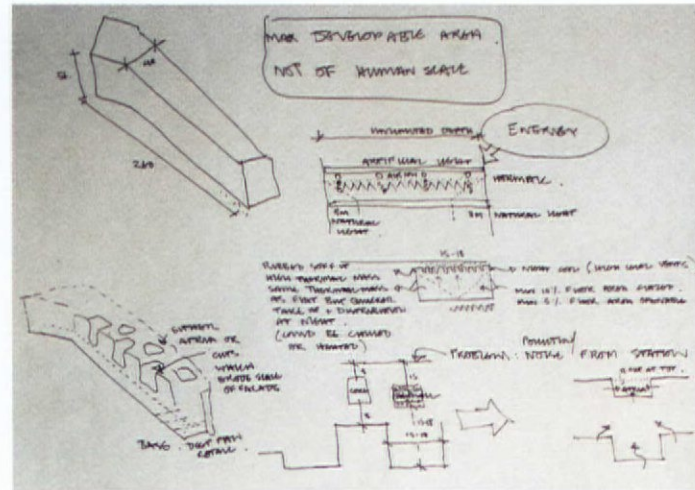
'We chose to take the unique opportunity of creating a single monumental building appropriate to the masterplan's vision.'

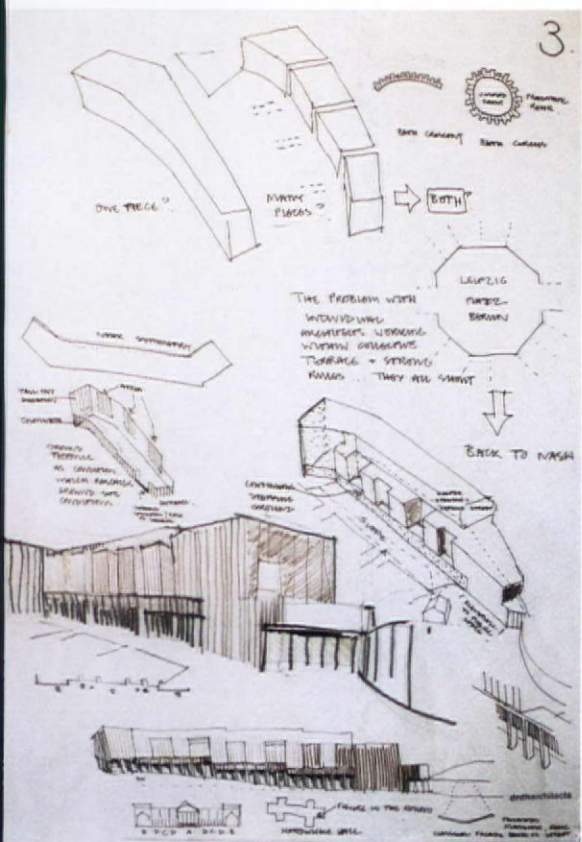
DRDH ARCHITECTS

The scale of the proposed building defines it as a city figure, resonating with the scales of Victorian train sheds and the British Library. The project exhibits a face to the city but expresses length through elemental repetition. Rhythms and scales are introduced through a series of bays, which erode the deep floorplate and allow in natural light and ventilation. Their facades are expressed through finely proportioned aluminium framing. But due to the scale of adjacent spaces, the primary visual experience of the building is in the oblique, at which point it becomes folded and fabric-like. The inflected plan of the street emphasises this.

Our project questions the desire for heterogeneity. We seek to express an ambivalence in the relationship between the individual element and a holistic singular expression. The form of the facade refers to H P Berlage's Holland House, while the framing of our bays expresses the idea that extreme length becomes atmospheric – shifting from black bronze to a champagne colour.

David Howarth, Richard Marks, Daniel Rosbottom, Angela Tsang





GLOWACKA RENNIE ARCHITECTS

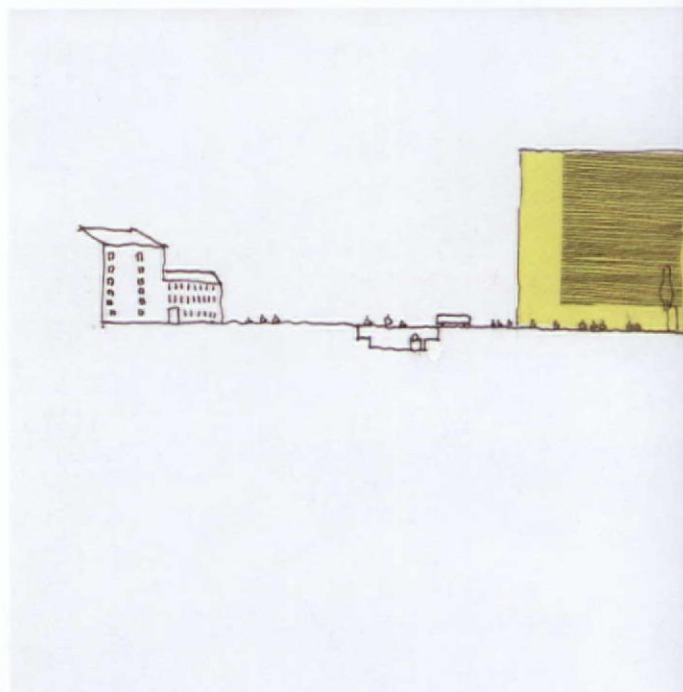


We were inspired to create a majestic new London terrace, with the option for individual buildings to be designed by different architects. To maximise the site's value and lettable area, given its excellent location in the masterplan, we envisaged a series of five simple rectilinear 'blocks', sitting above a continuous 'skirt' of retail, to include a distinctive mix of independent shops and cafés.

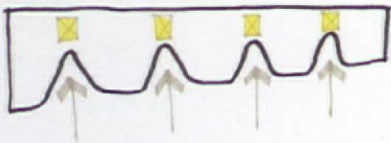
The new arcaded streetscape folds under office accommodation, creating sheltered public space. Above the 'skirt' the offices are understood as individual buildings separated by vertical open-air courtyards, carved out of adjacent blocks. A hotel at the street's 'prow' – the entrance to the new quarter – is animated at night by a rooftop restaurant. At the 'stern', a number of artisan units provide an active frontage facing Granary Square and the canal.

The blocks are wrapped in a skin of floor-to-ceiling glass, while deep louvres mitigate solar gain due to the difficult predominantly east/west-facing facades. Inspired by London's Regent Street, each building in the terrace shares a unifying top and bottom datum and material palette, while each architect will determine the detail of the undulating solar louvres, giving a three-dimensional richness of light, shadow and depth to create visual distinction along the terrace.

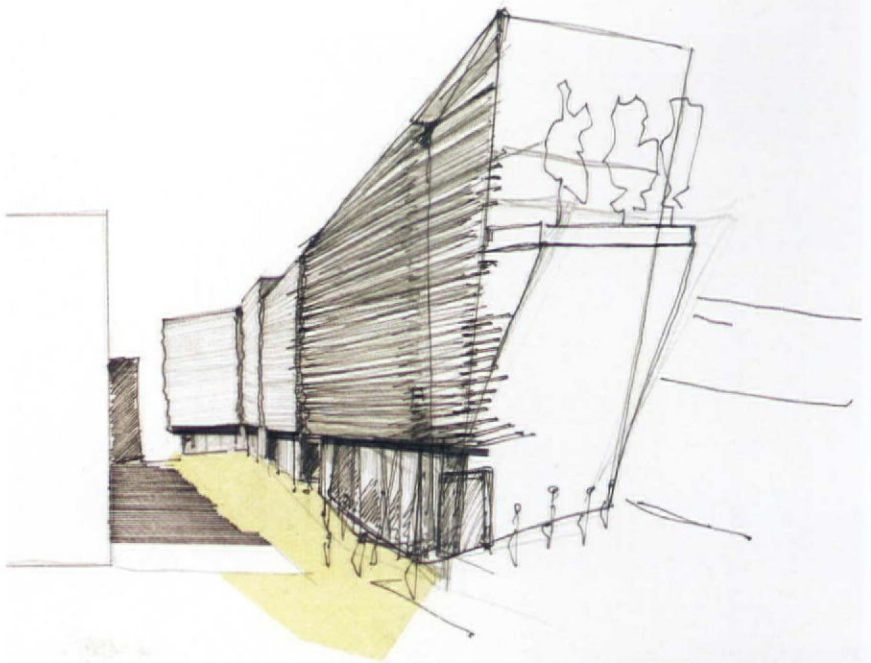
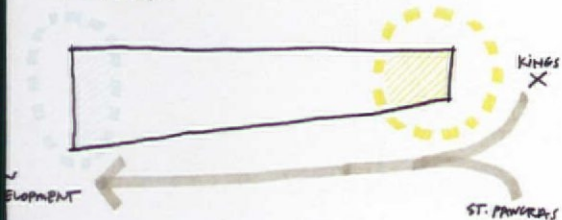
Andrew Friend, Agnieszka Glowacka, Eleanor Rennie



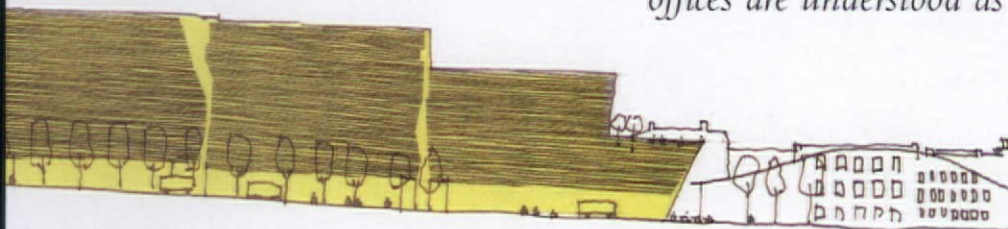
THE CORES



THE PROW + STEERN



'We envisaged a series of five rectilinear "blocks", sitting above a "skirt" of retail. Above the skirt the offices are understood as individual buildings.'



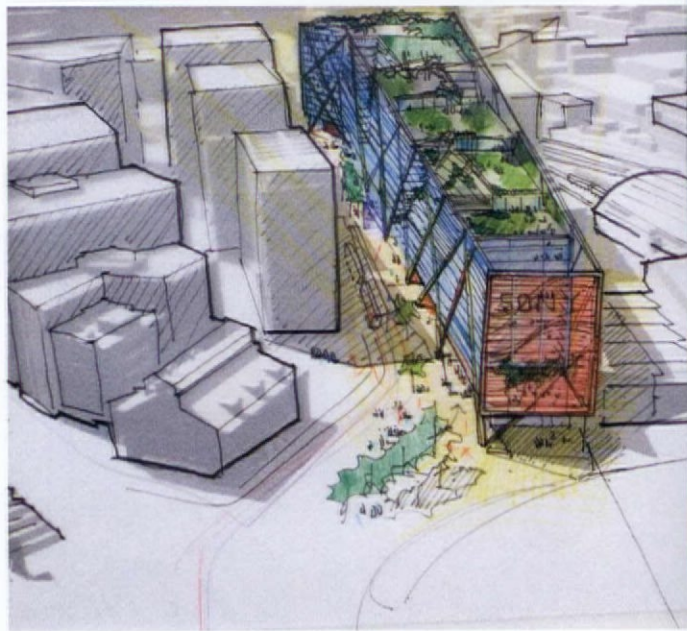
HAKES ASSOCIATES

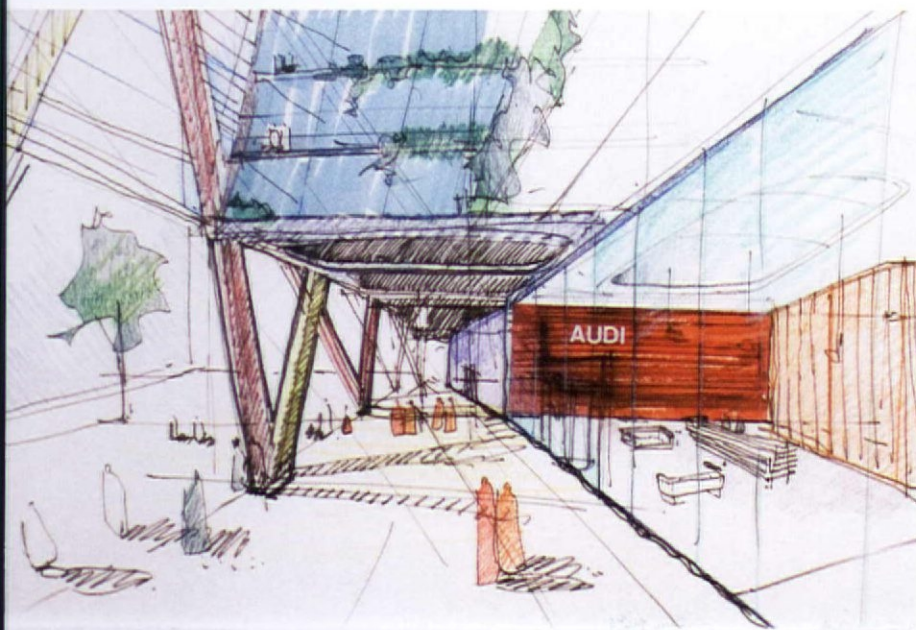
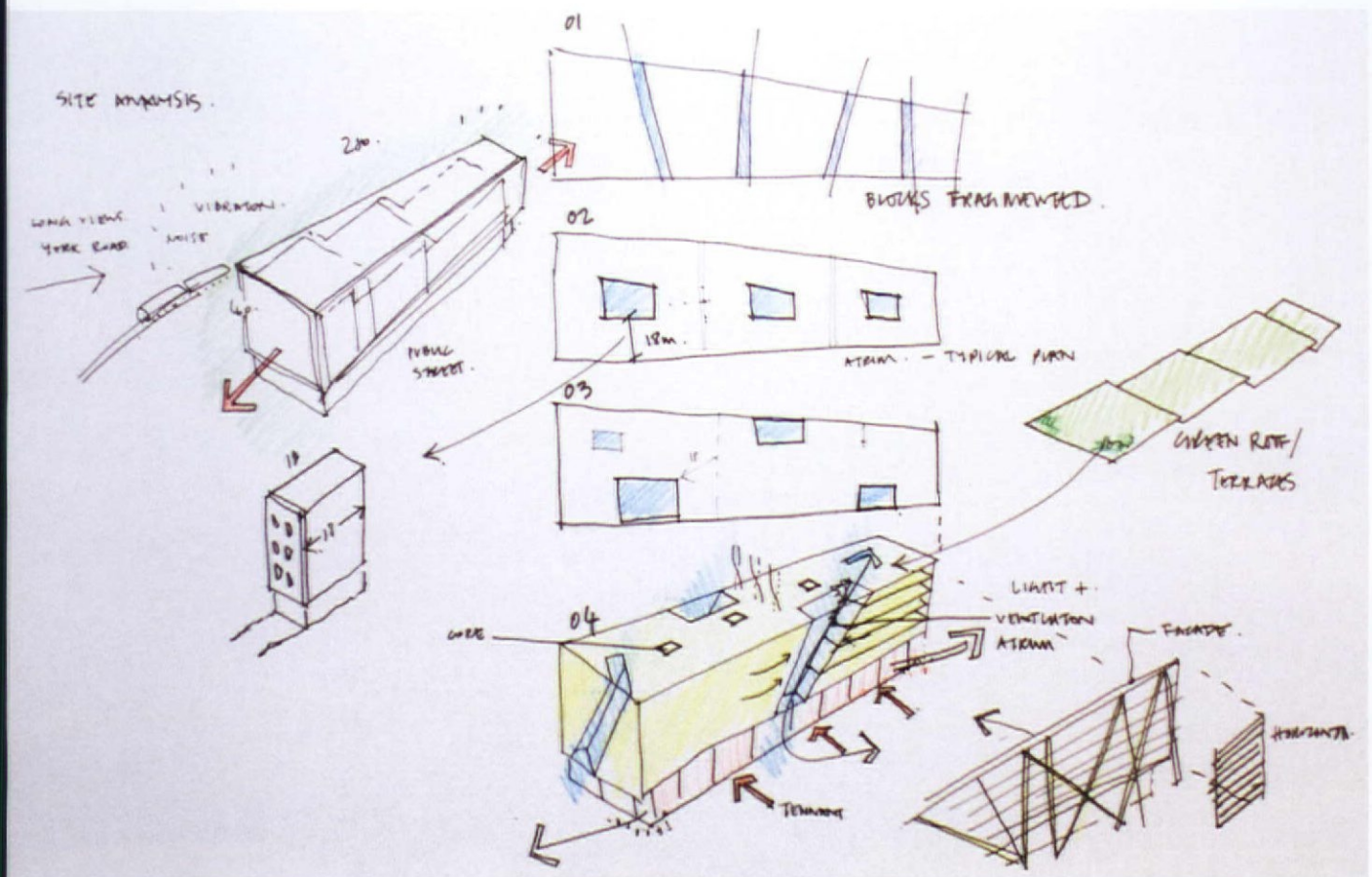


The building is conceived as a single entity. Its mass is a barrier to the noise and vibration from King's Cross and the use of the diagrid draws the eye both vertically and diagonally, breaking up the long narrow street towards the square and canal. The large diagrid provides a 'thick skin', with louvres to enhance daylight distribution and reduce heat gain to the offices. Warmed by sunlight, the louvres encourage a passive stack effect within the facade, ventilating the offices. The facade is 'slashed' with a number of diagonal full-height naturally ventilated atria, bringing light and air deep into the building.

The integration of natural/passive strategies early in the design allows for the reduction in mechanical plant, which in turn allows the roofs to become green terraces and social space. These roofs also enhance biodiversity and provide useful primary filtration for rainwater harvesting. As the diagrid structure reaches the ground floor it creates a colonnade which provides shading to large glazed double-height retail facades. The end elevation facing the new King's Cross entrance is clad with a GKD digital media screen, becoming Europe's largest digital art wall, with a rolling programme of installations.

Cari-Jane Hakes, Julian Hakes, Cora Waller





'The integration of natural/ passive strategies early in the design allows for the reduction in mechanical plant, which in turn allows the roof to become green terraces and social space.'

HAMPSON WILLIAMS

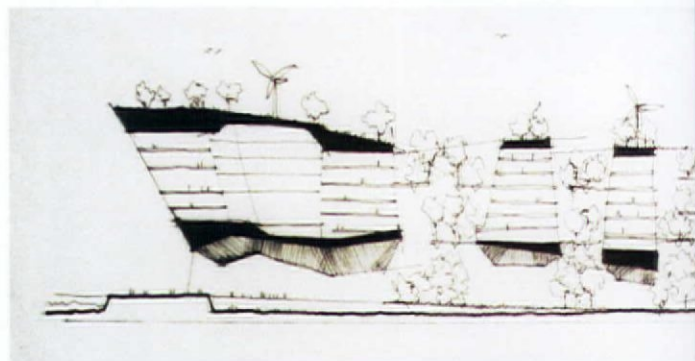
It was clear from the start that the proposed building could generate floor space for 50,000 people or more. Combined with pedestrian traffic to and from King's Cross, this would result in a considerable number of people moving around the area at peak times, through a disproportionately narrow street which is further pressurised by the addition of a tram stop. This single issue generated the overall design approach.

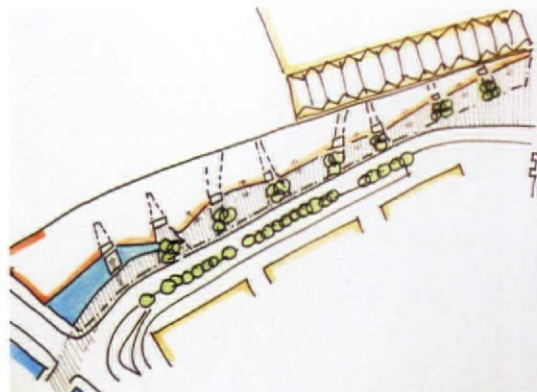
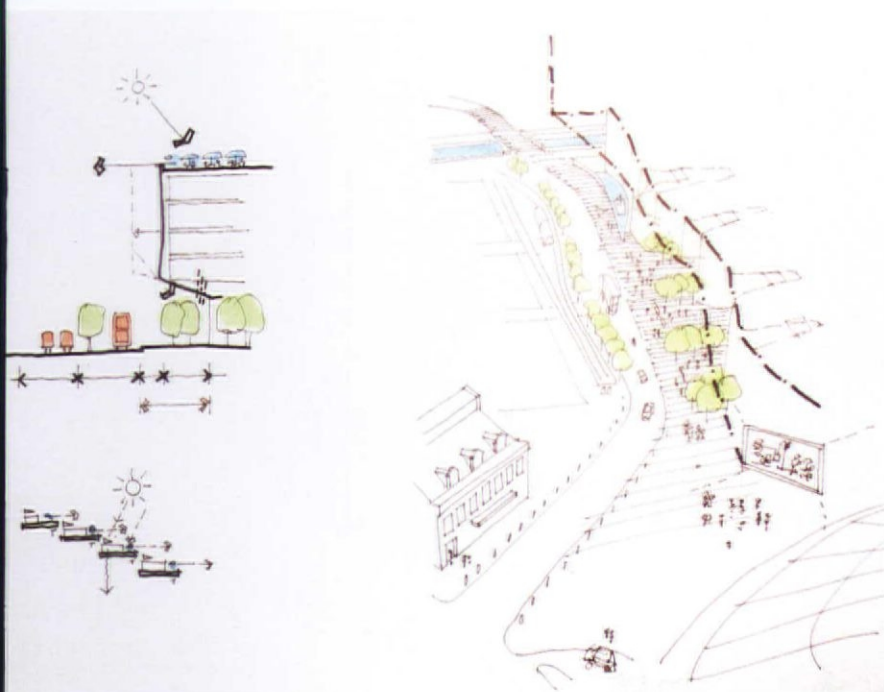
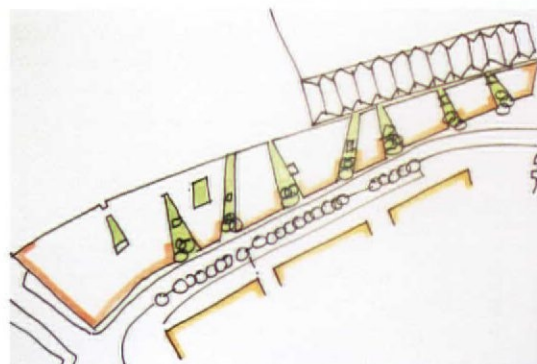
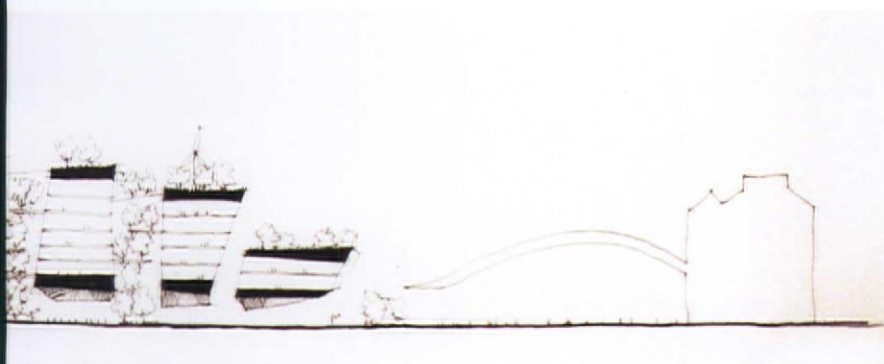
The solution was to widen the public realm by creating a vast undulating undercroft, carved from the belly of the new building, and rising and falling from King's Cross to the canal, with a ribbon of mature trees drawing people towards the further development beyond. The increased space provides focal, gathering and access points to the building blocks above. Boulevard planting continues to create winter gardens, which run both vertically through the building and linearly, defining each block and allowing light to filter through from the east. At roof level, the winter gardens become cascading south-facing landscaped café and restaurant terraces with views over London.

The vertical block-form subdivision allows for an economic approach to both floorplate and building procurement, which can be implemented by a number of vendors and architects within a single masterplan approach.

Chris Hampson, Mark Taylor, Martin Williams, Andrew Wood

'We proposed widening the public realm by creating a vast undulating undercroft carved from the belly of the new building.'



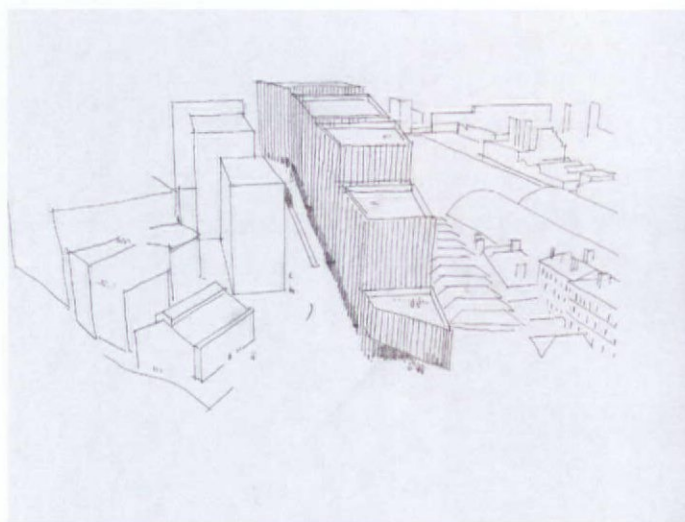


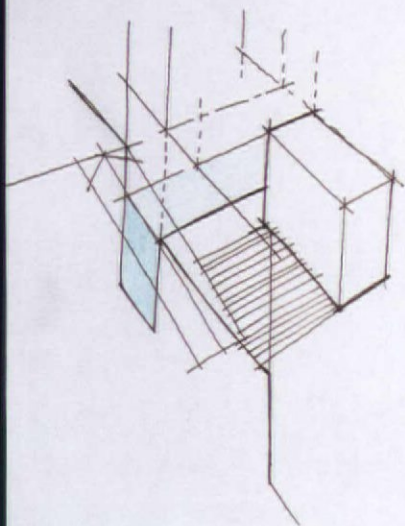
HOUGHTON BUDD ARCHITECTS

Our overriding aim was to produce a design which, in its scale and form, would respond to its immediate setting, but in doing so would present a counterpoint to the material presence of the adjacent station buildings and the broader context of King's Cross. The mass and footprint established by the masterplan were exploited to create a series of large-scale volumes. These were manipulated to provide the required office space; a continuous public boulevard at ground floor; and full-height slots between each block to create views and establish a relationship with the immediate urban grain.

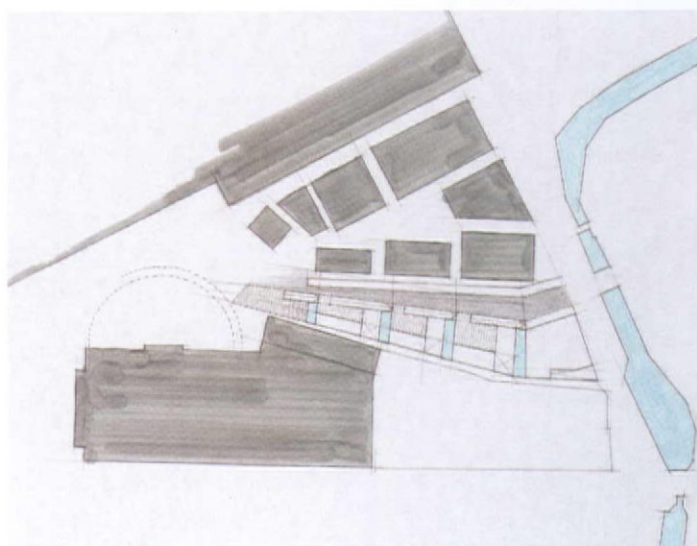
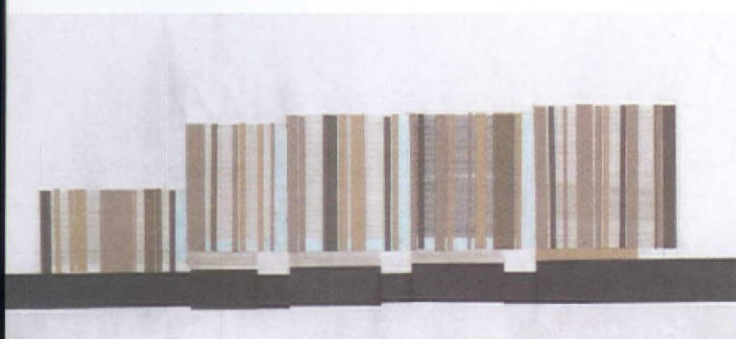
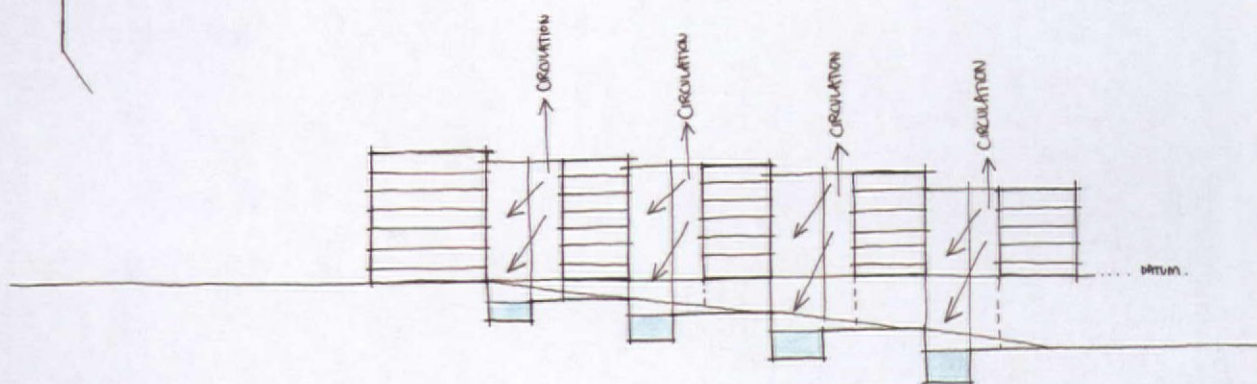
The provision of public space is integral to our proposal and is intended to provide both a degree of activity at the base of the building and the subversion of a typical corporate presence – the volumes appear to 'hover' over the boulevard, thus reinforcing the latent sculptural aspects of our scheme. Vertical wooden fins on the elevations soften the mass and scale of each block, and suggest that a different elevational approach to the typology could be investigated.

Andrew Budd, Jane Houghton, Will Jefferies





'The mass and footprint established by the masterplan were exploited to create a series of large-scale volumes, which appear to "hover" over the boulevard, thus reinforcing the latent sculptural aspects of our scheme.'



LEVITATE ARCHITECTURE

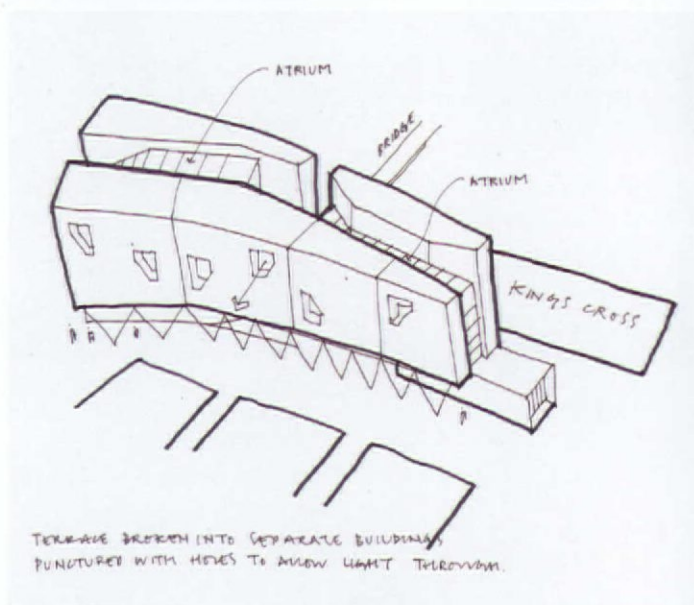


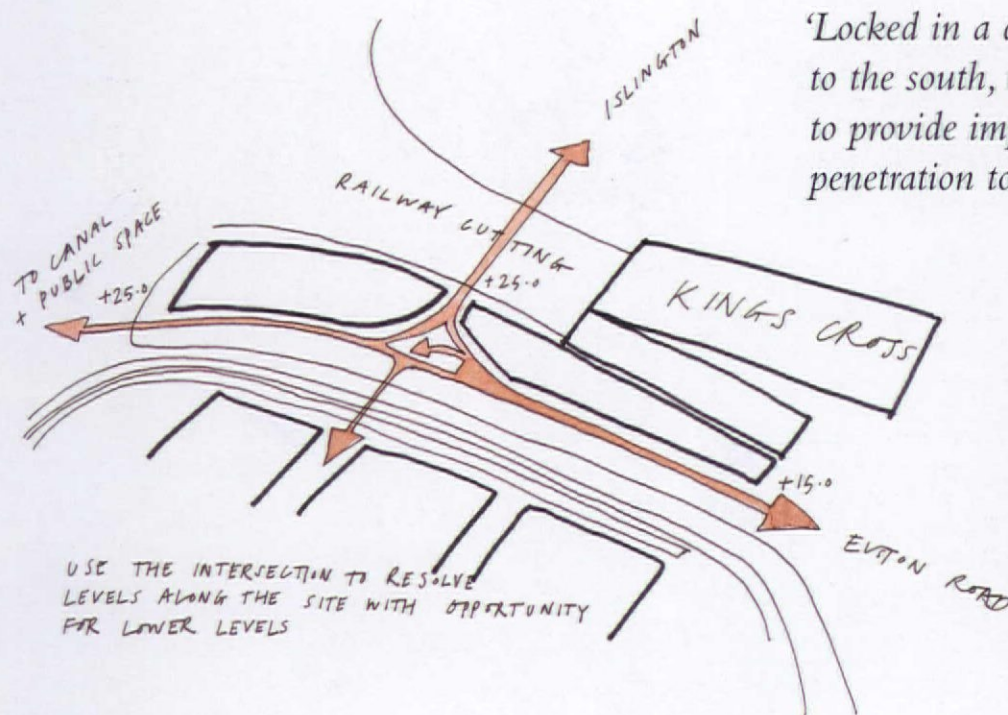
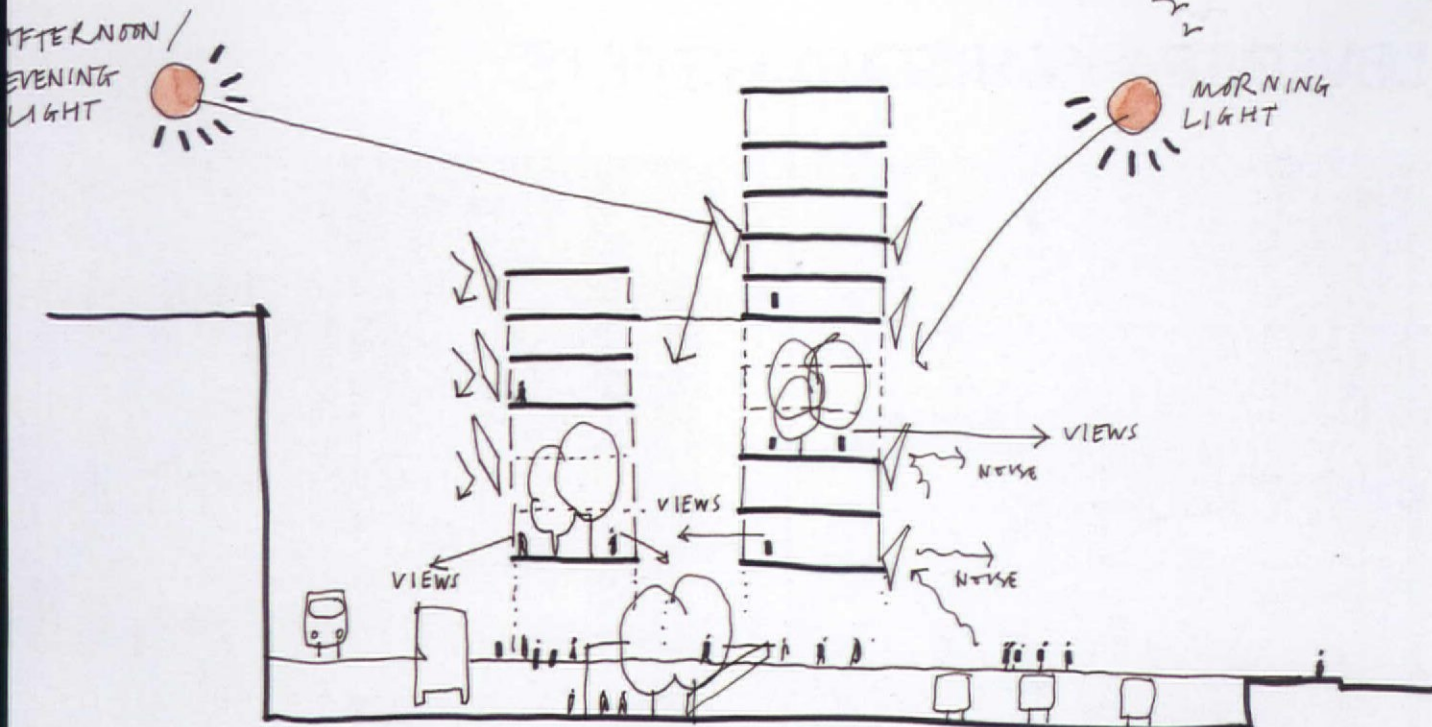
Our response focused on light, and on the duality between the vast horizontal space of the railway to the east and the vertical canyon of the new street and tram route to the west. The masterplan shows a massive building that we divided along its length rather than across its width. Locked in a dense configuration to the south, the building unzips to provide improved daylight penetration to the north. With atria and interlocked sky courts, both 'strip' terraces benefit from sun all day. This creates efficient floorplates that can be naturally lit while also preserving the sweep of the terraces.

The facades exploit the long east-west aspects, using folded three-storey panels and sky courts to capture and reflect low-angle light. In this way, they draw light into the buildings while reflecting it downwards to improve the pedestrian environment of the street.

In section, the ground plane rises and sweeps around the new tram stop, creating a four-storey daylight and sheltered plaza that links to a new pedestrian bridge across the railway. The low-lying building to the south resolves complicated street-level relations, addressing all directions with a human-scale prow.

Spencer Guy, Tim Sloan, Liam Wales





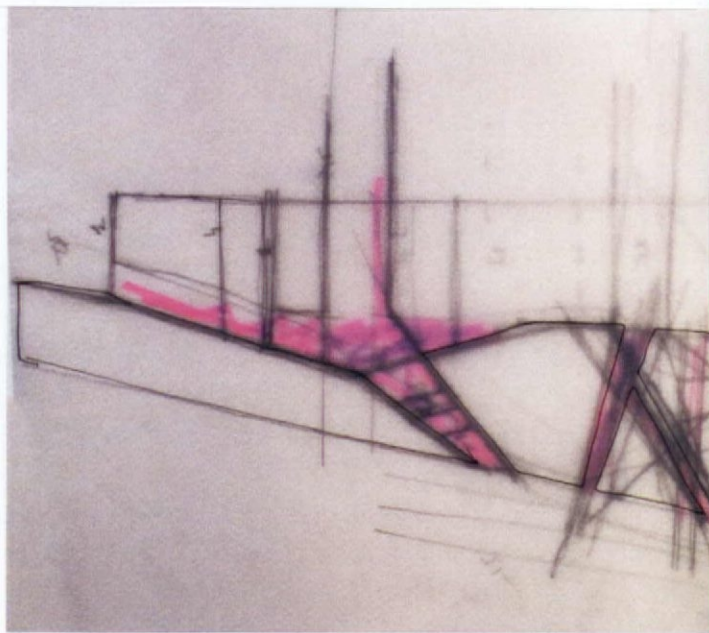
'Locked in a dense configuration to the south, the building unzips to provide improved daylight penetration to the north.'

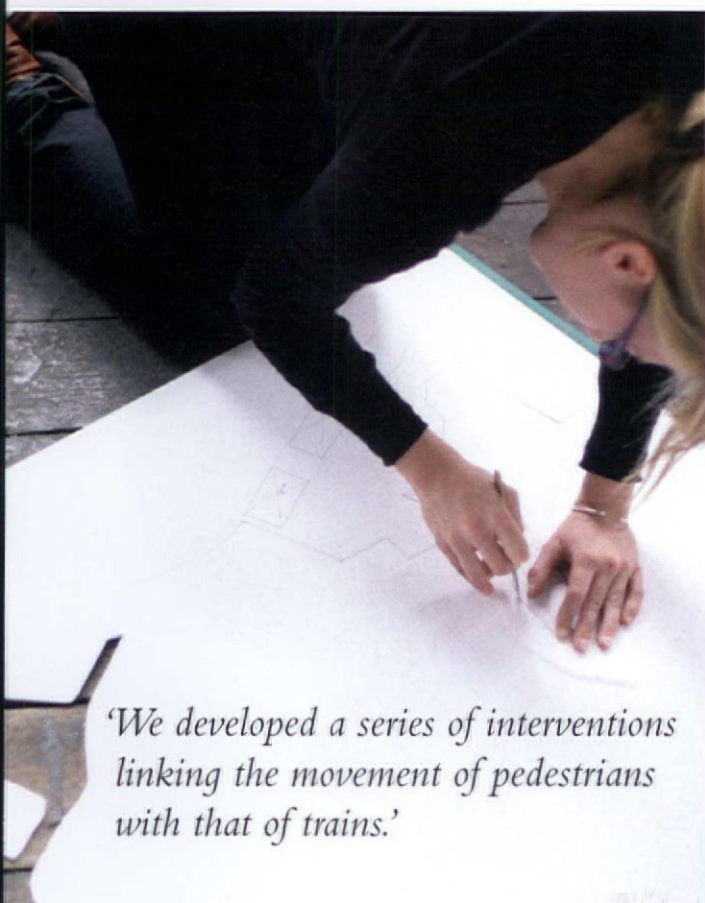
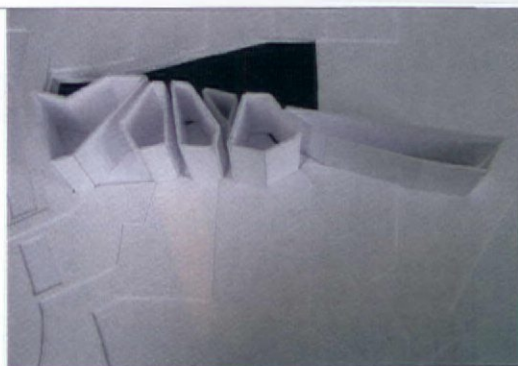
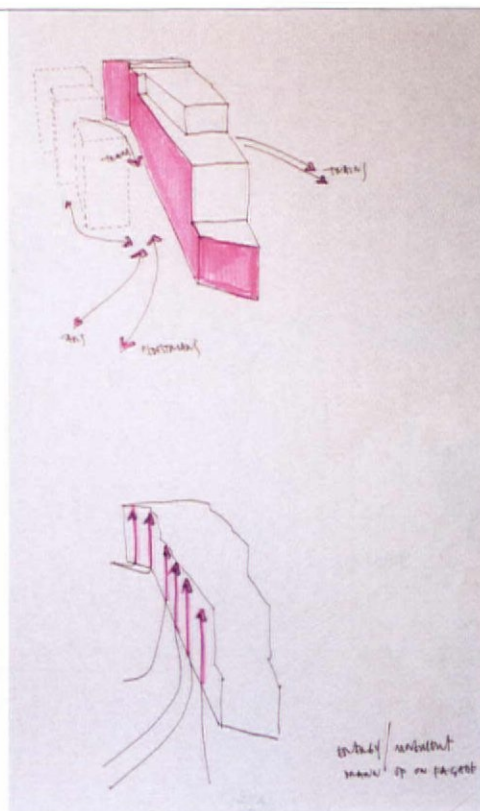
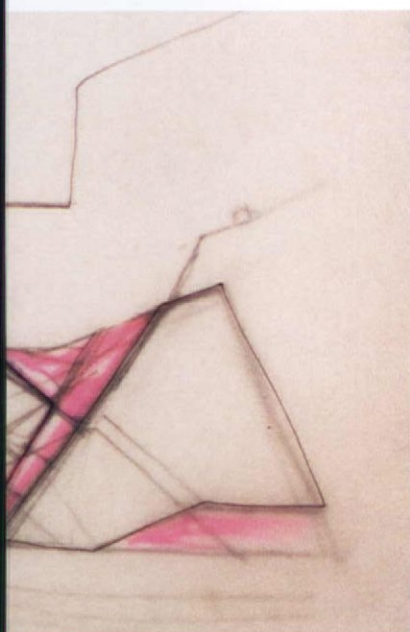
MANGERA YVARS ARCHITECTS

King's Cross is a place in constant motion. In our proposal we took velocity and movement as starting points and developed a series of interventions that tried to link the movement of pedestrians with that of the arriving and departing trains. Resembling the frames of a movie, our approach used framed views through the building blocks, offering glimpses of the cityscape and a visual link between the street and the railway yard – the two main areas of movement.

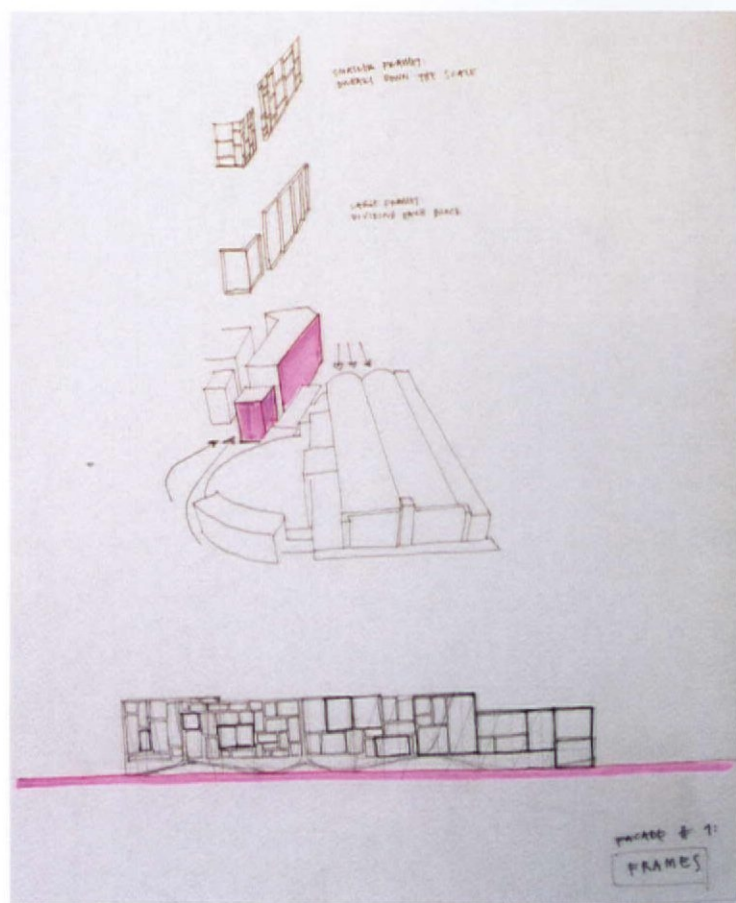
We were also interested in the ground condition, seeing it as a thin layer separating the complex underground networks of tunnels from the city above. We decided to peel off strips of the ground surface and bring them up into the building, acting as a mediating zone between earth and sky. The result is a porous and flowing public space that blurs the currently hard and sharp relationship between the buildings and the street.

Johan Berglund, Ali Mangera, Ada Yvars Bravo





'We developed a series of interventions linking the movement of pedestrians with that of trains.'



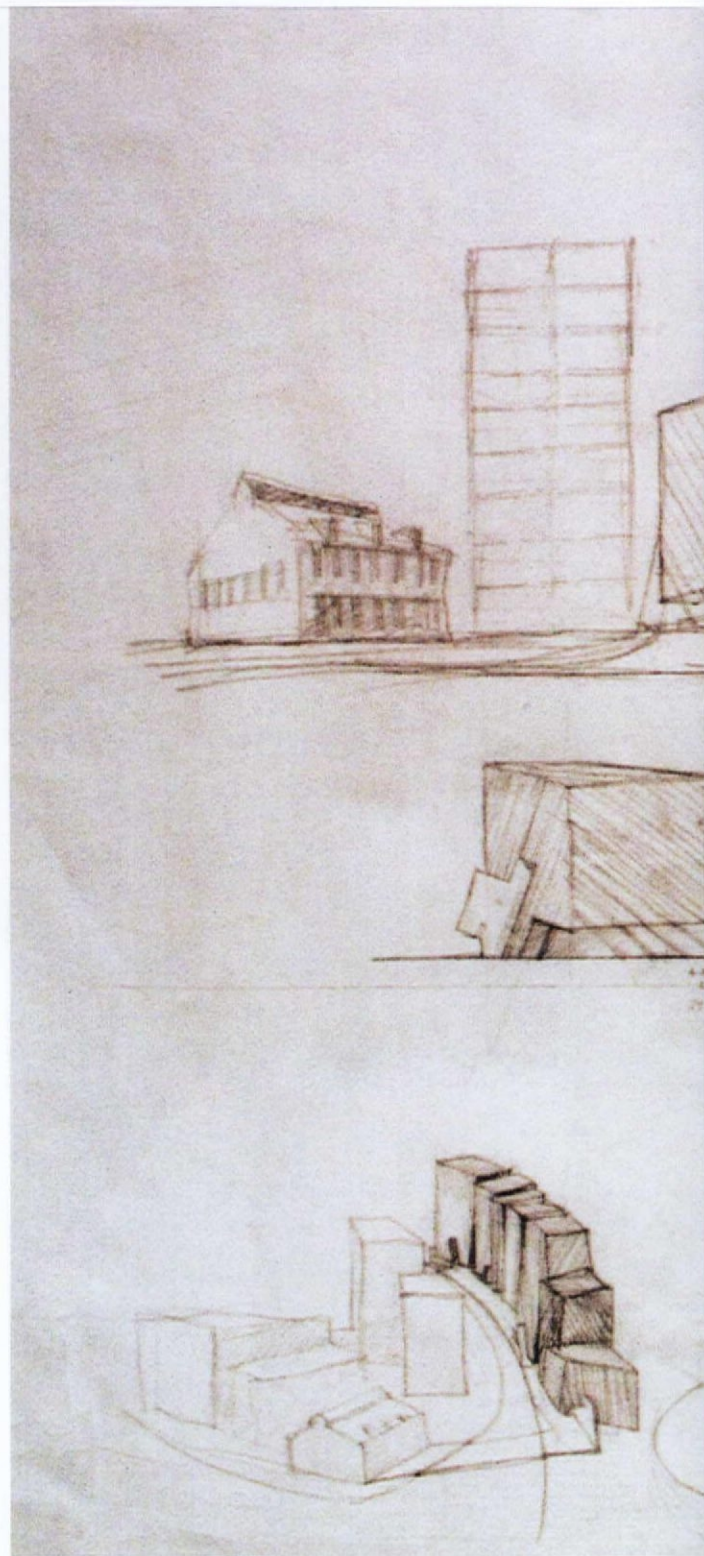
MAURICE SHAPERO

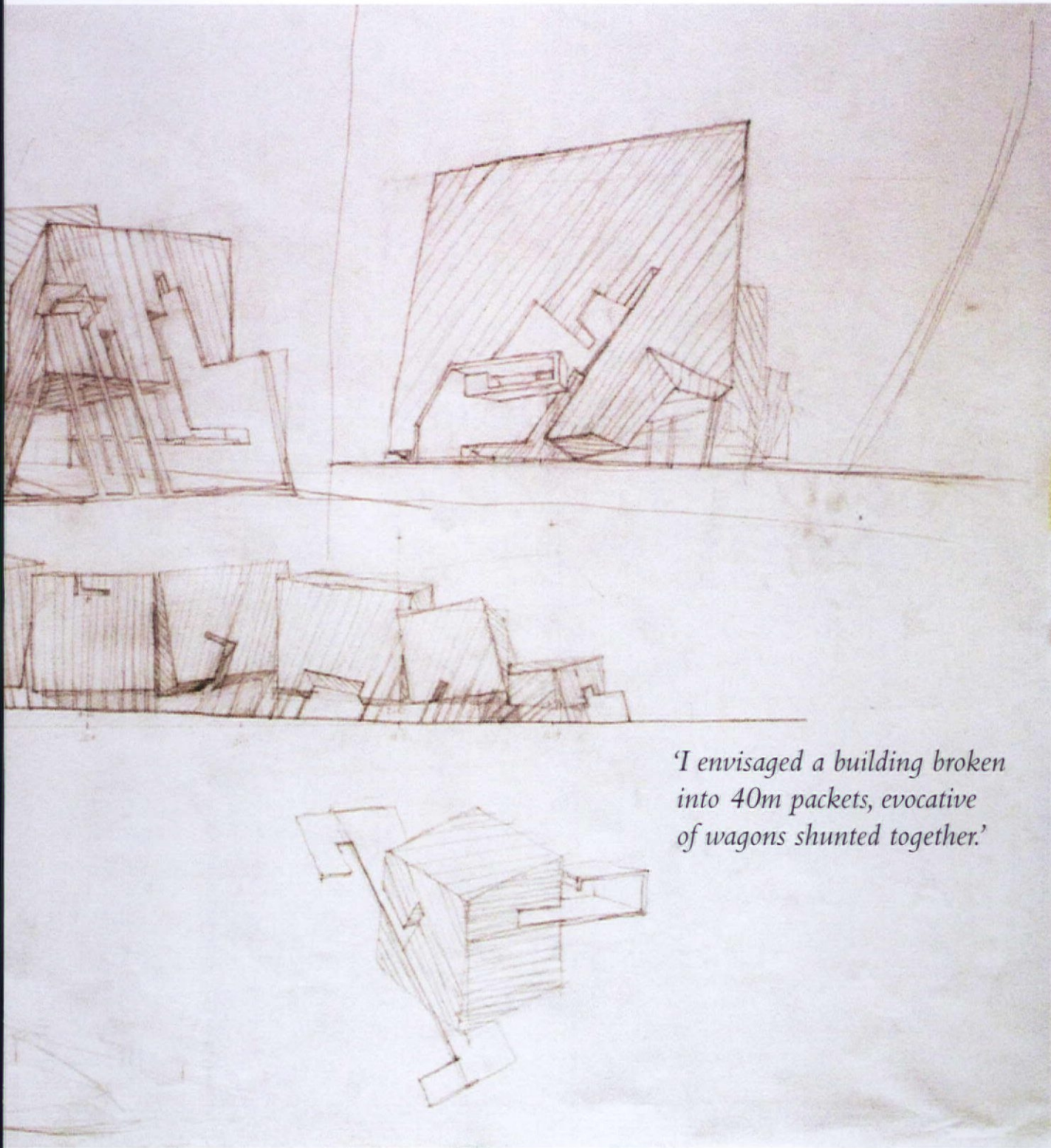


The long linear nature of the site appropriately reflects the context of sweeping railway architecture. Blending with this notion, I envisaged a single building broken into 40m packets, evocative of wagons shunted together. The programme is a given – retail and restaurants on the ground, office and commercial accommodation above. Essentially, this forces two types of space, open and enclosed. The enclosed space floats, allowing the open ground plane to slide underneath. This lifting of the enclosed space allows the problematic tramline to slip under in places where it needs to.

The architecture is within the skin, accepting that commercial space wants to be pathologically efficient. But equally I wanted to subvert this two-dimensionality. A planed block of wood is interesting because it's orthogonal; restraining surfaces live in harmony with a less contained natural grain or structure. The skin of a commercial development restrains space and people in a similar way to the carpenter's plane. Within the skin, I expressed another subversive geometry: duality, opposing forces existing within the same dimension, different but the same.

Maurice Shapero





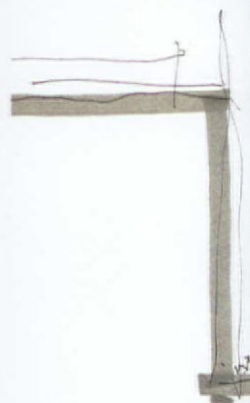
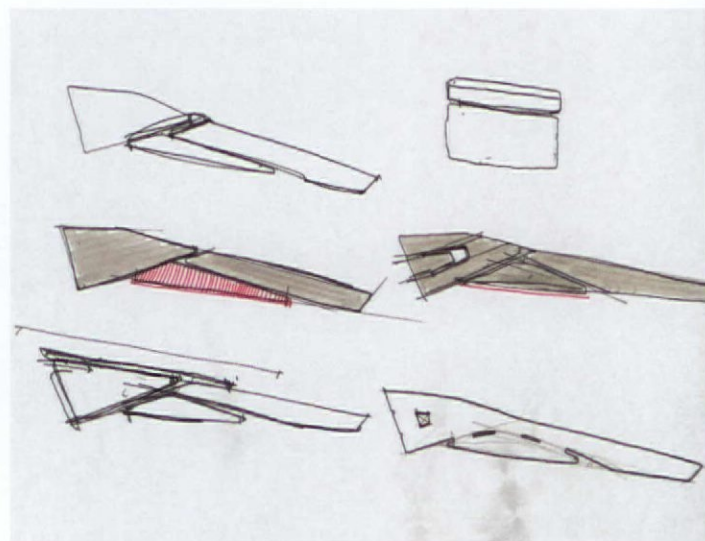
*'I envisaged a building broken
into 40m packets, evocative
of wagons shunted together.'*

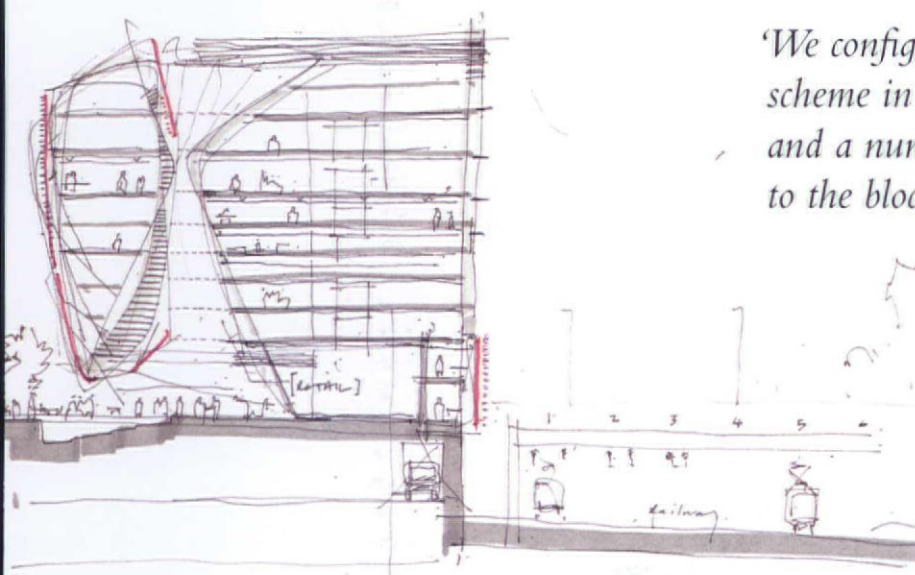
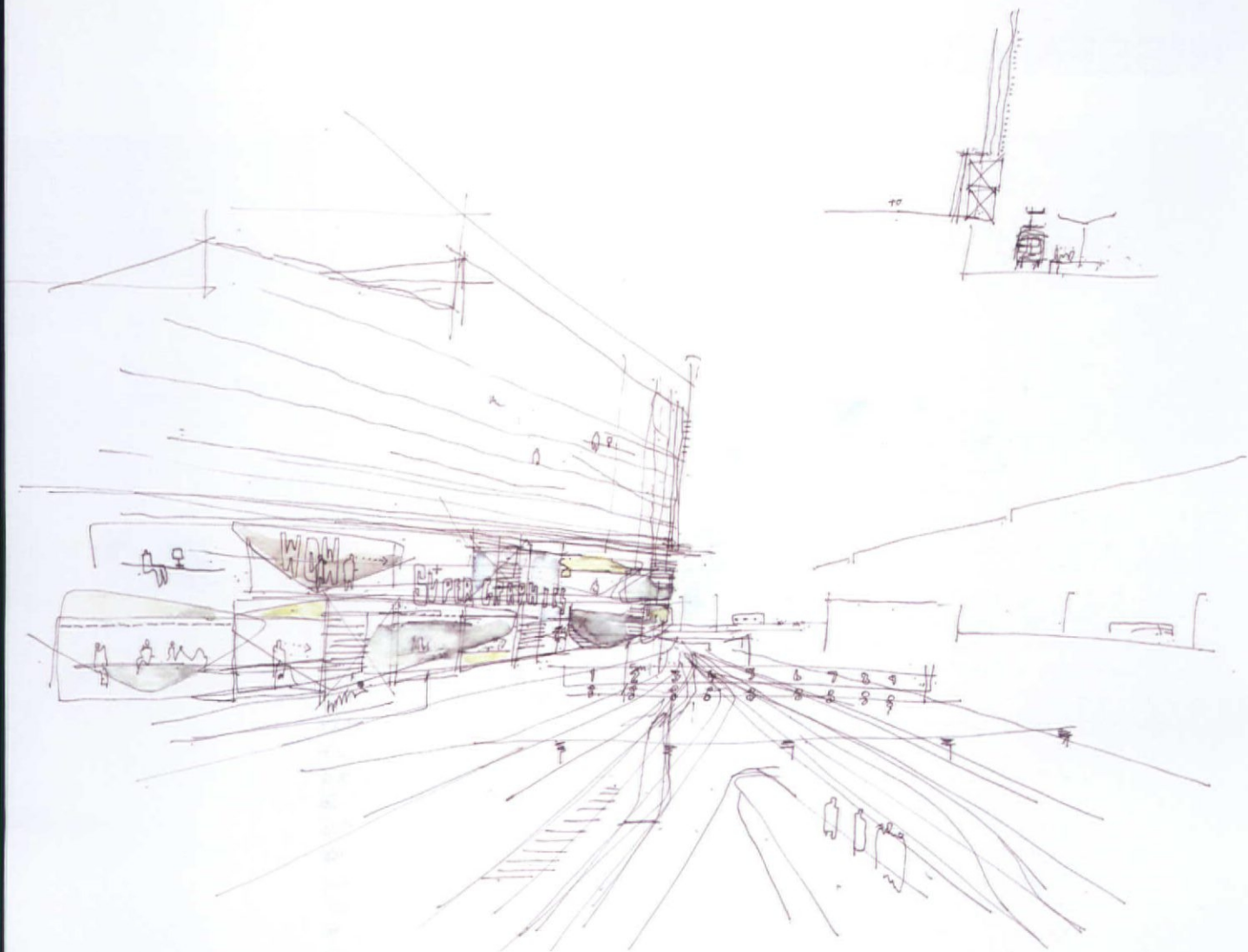
MOXON ARCHITECTS

The approach implied in the masterplan for the 280m-long building – treated as a series of complementary parts rather than a monolith – is appropriate for the site, so we sought to work with the proposed block by configuring two discrete elements of the scheme in more detail. The first is a totemic building set against the ‘background’ of the rest of the block; the proposal is for a legible object to provide articulation to the street in much the same way as porticos were employed in Georgian terraces. The object is raised to relieve pressure from the proposed tram route and to bring the public realm into the depth of the block at the lower levels.

In addition, we suggested pinning a number of micro commercial lets to the rail-side elevation of the block. These highly visible but compact units are suitable for enterprises that require a degree of physical presence in the capital but whose main premises are in the north or on the continent. The units are equivalent to less than 1 per cent of the floorplate but provide interest and intrigue to the ‘back’ elevation of the block.

Ben Addy, Bethany Wells





'We configured two discrete elements of the scheme in great detail: a totemic building and a number of micro commercial lets to the block's rail-side elevation.'

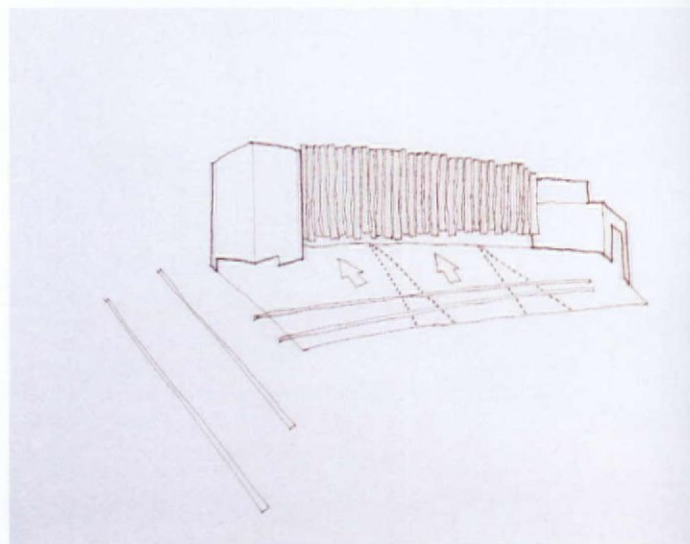
NISSEN ADAMS

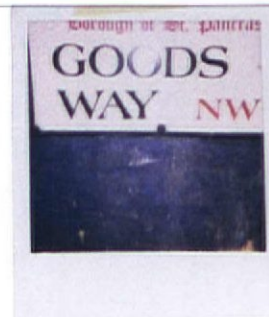
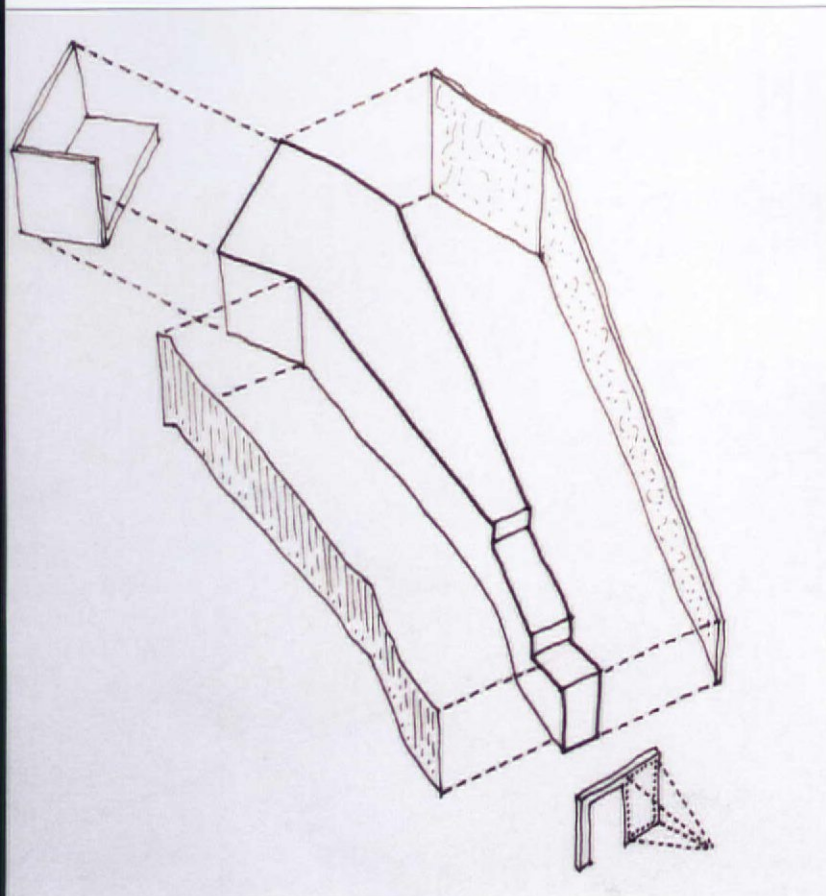


Consideration of public space is key to this project. The scale of the masterplan means that the success of the scheme depends on how it creates a new centre at an appropriate scale. Part of this is whether buildings become active facades engaging with the street or backgrounds to the street life of the public. Our first question was: five buildings by five architects, or a single building with four elevations? The answer is both, and the project is phased to allow different architects to design buildings within a set of constraints.

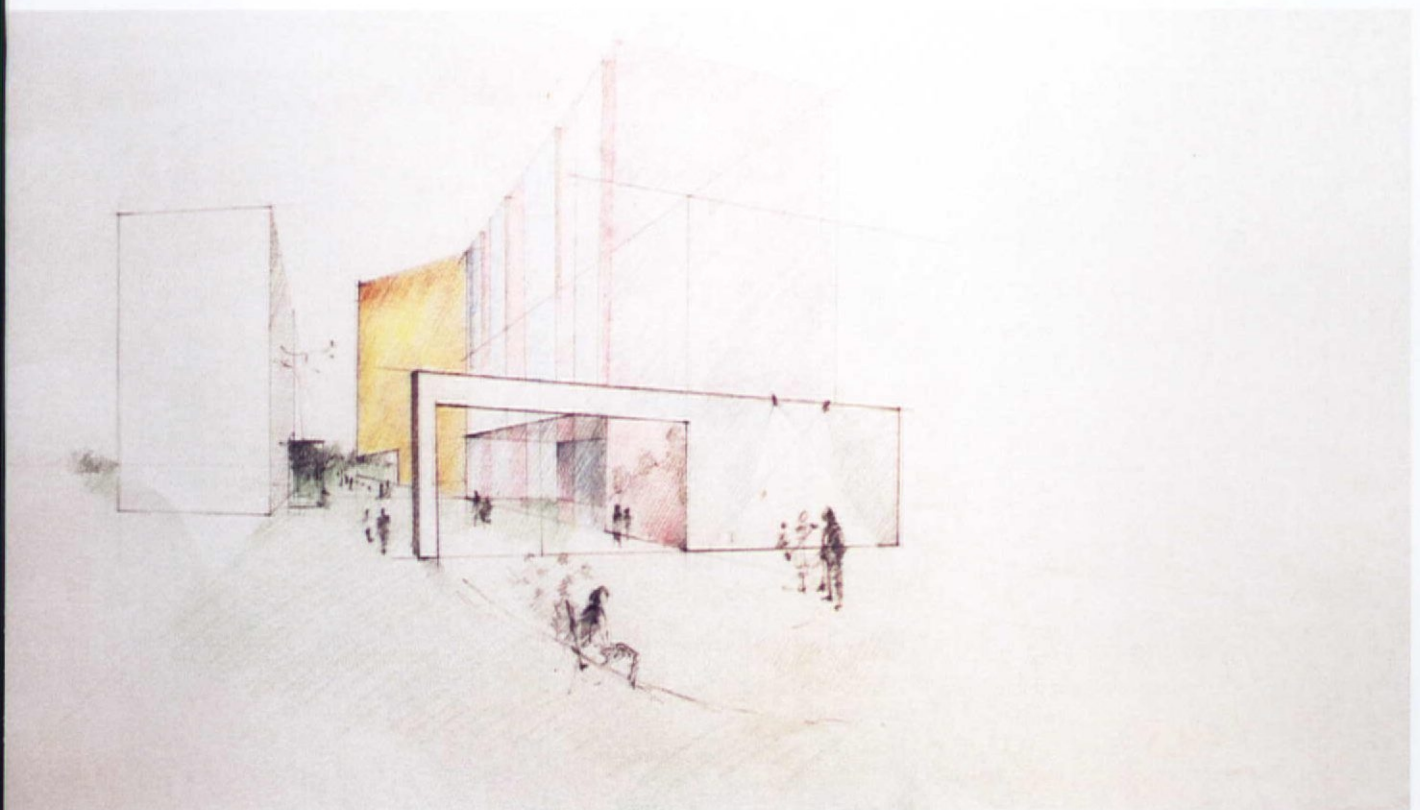
The four elevations of the block offer distinct urban conditions, which led to the following design ideas or constraints. On the station side, a multimedia surface forms a proscenium arch to the promenade. The canal side has a 'natural wall' which weathers and responds to the elements. A restaurant is cut into the wall and overlooks the canalside 'beach'. The railway side is a continuous wall of faceted glass that shimmers with light. Behind this is a conventional grid of windows. The street side has a layered curtain relating to different landscapes on the street.

Ben Adams, Tetsuro Nagata, Pippa Nissen





'The four elevations of the block offer distinct urban conditions.'

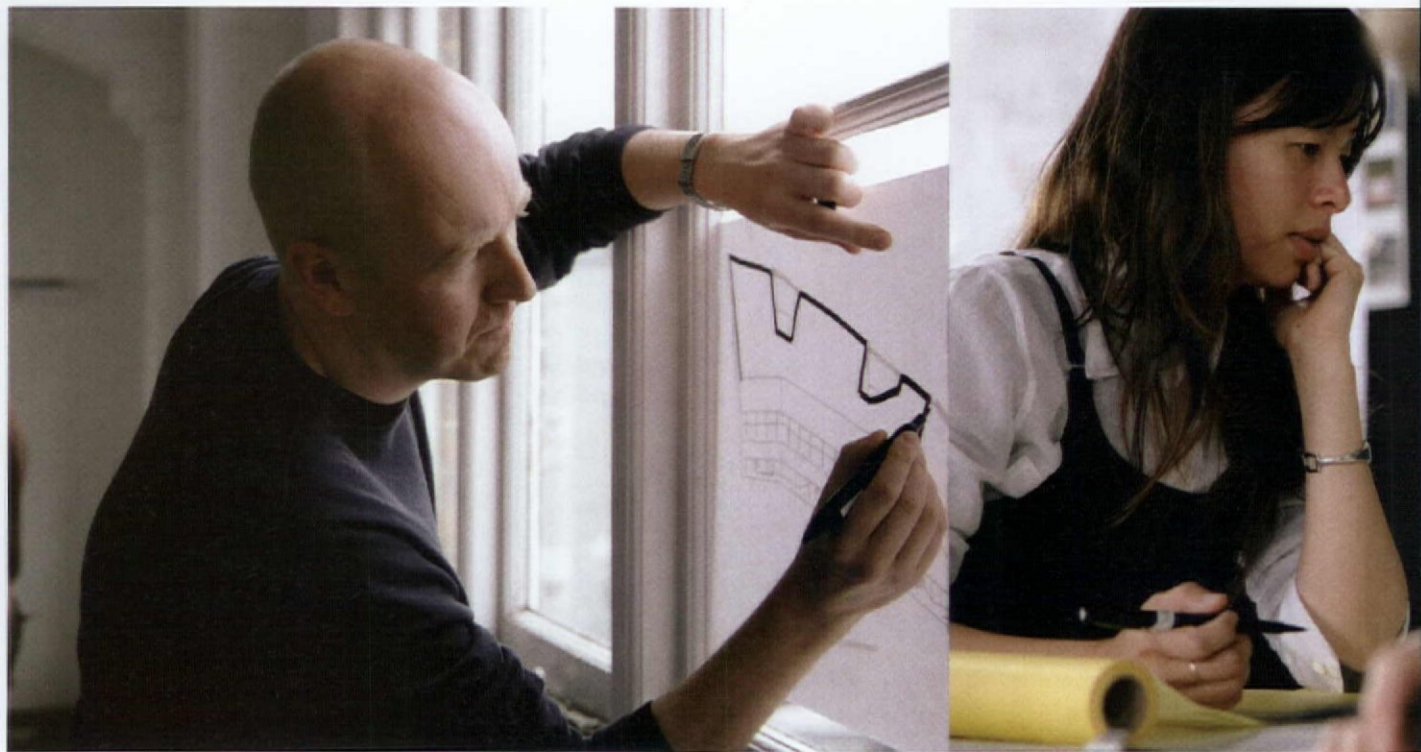
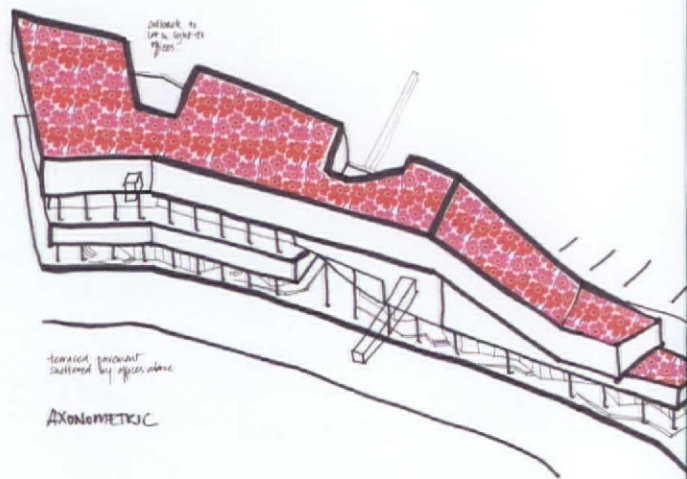


PAUL ARCHER DESIGN

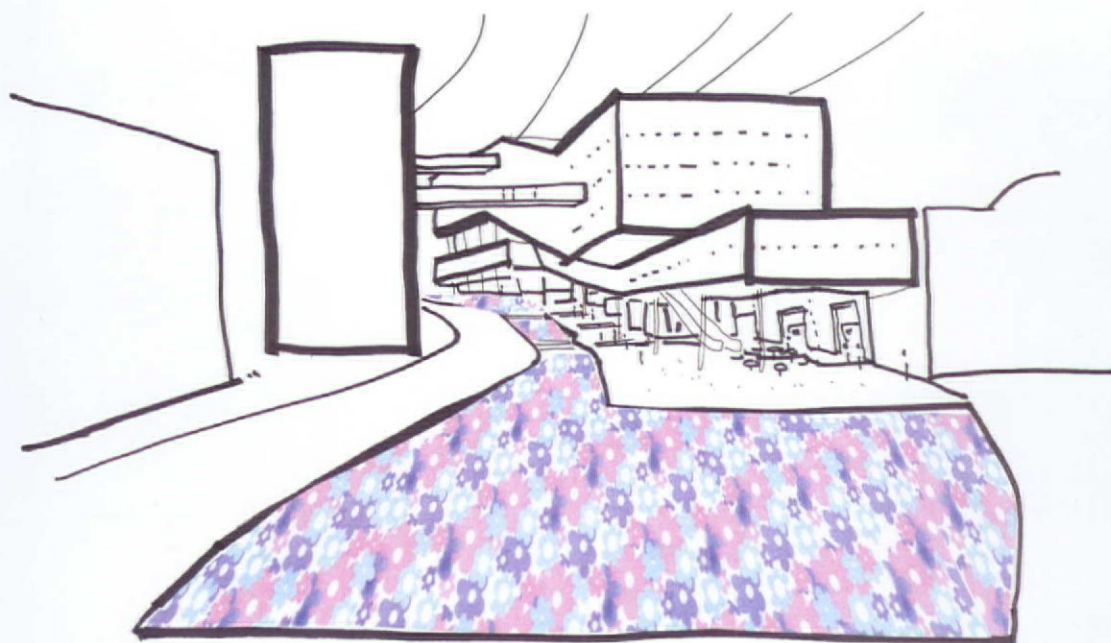
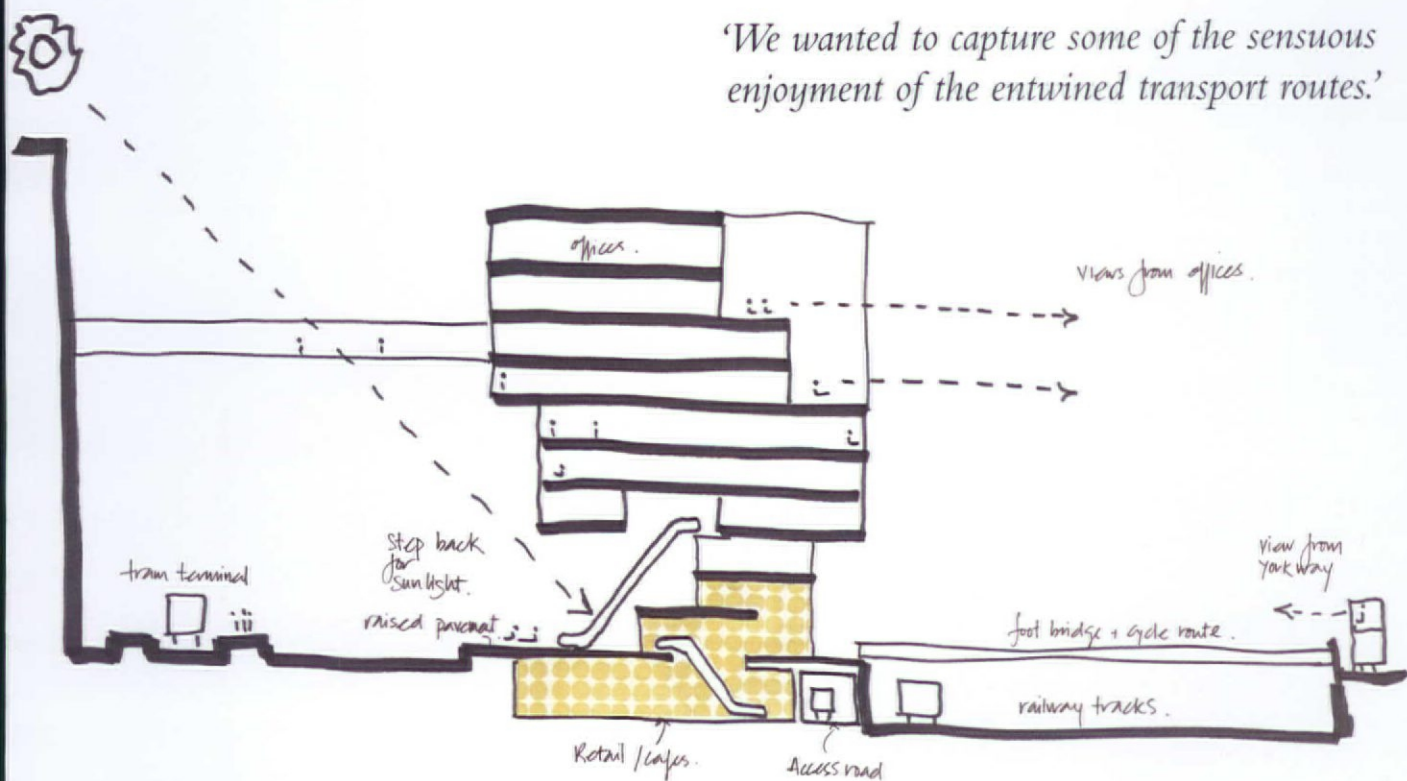
We started with a breakdown of the different people likely to use the new spaces. This led us to consider the interlocking of the circulation of the upper-floor office entrances with the ground-floor shops and cafés. Mixed with these is the course of the cycle-path crossing the site and that of the people going to and from King's Cross station. The basic profile of the site suggests its own cut cross-section to allow daylight to penetrate the lower floors. But these are issues to be solved by any mixed-use development on a long site, so we tried to identify what was specific to this one.

Two key factors then drove the design. This site creates a 'gateway' to the whole of the new development area to the north. We focused on the thin southern end of the site and tried to create a public sheltered area that forms an edge to the new public square. Secondly, one of the most exciting experiences in this part of London is the convergence of many types of transport, at different levels and different speeds. We wanted to capture some of the sensuous enjoyment of these entwined routes, so our proposal suggests a number of routes at differing levels across the site, and the creation of many cut-through views.

Paul Archer, Jenni Dang, Rob Sterry



'We wanted to capture some of the sensuous enjoyment of the entwined transport routes.'



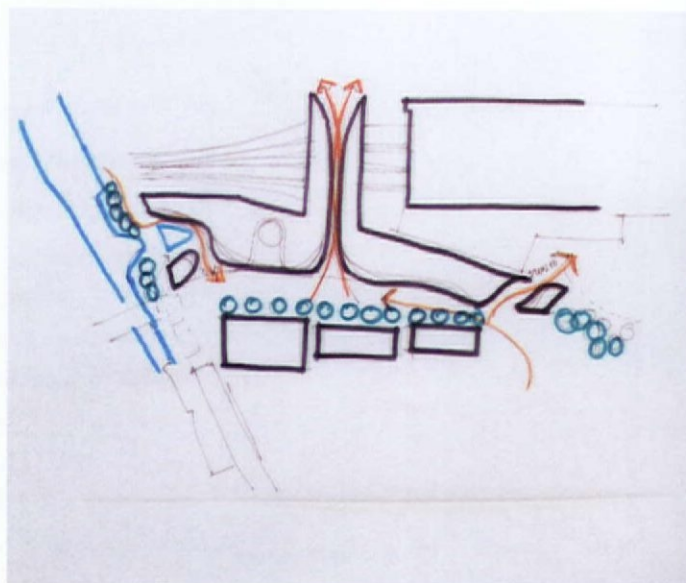
PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SOUTH

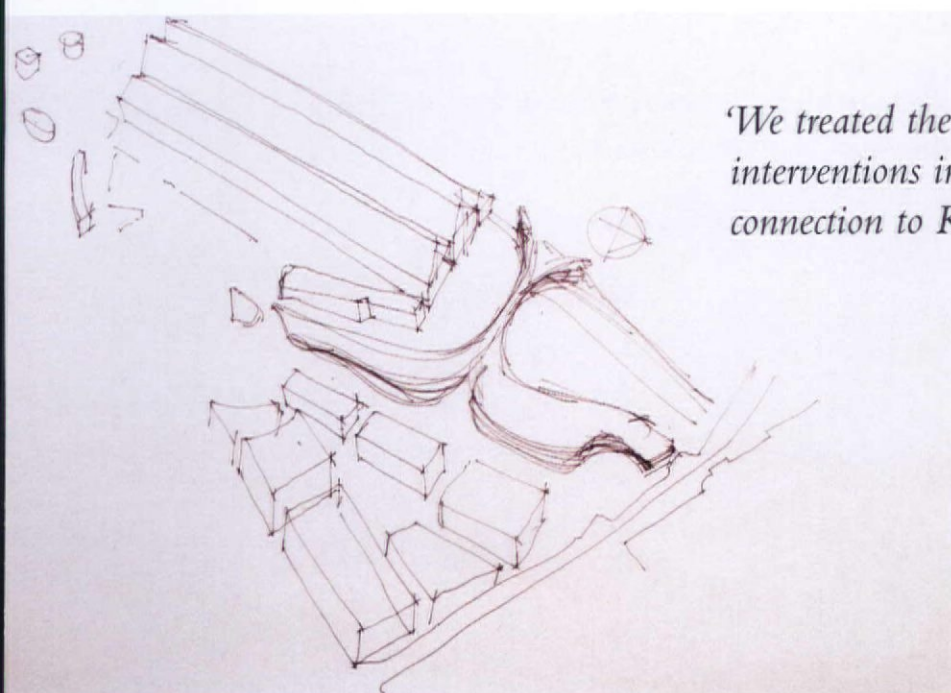
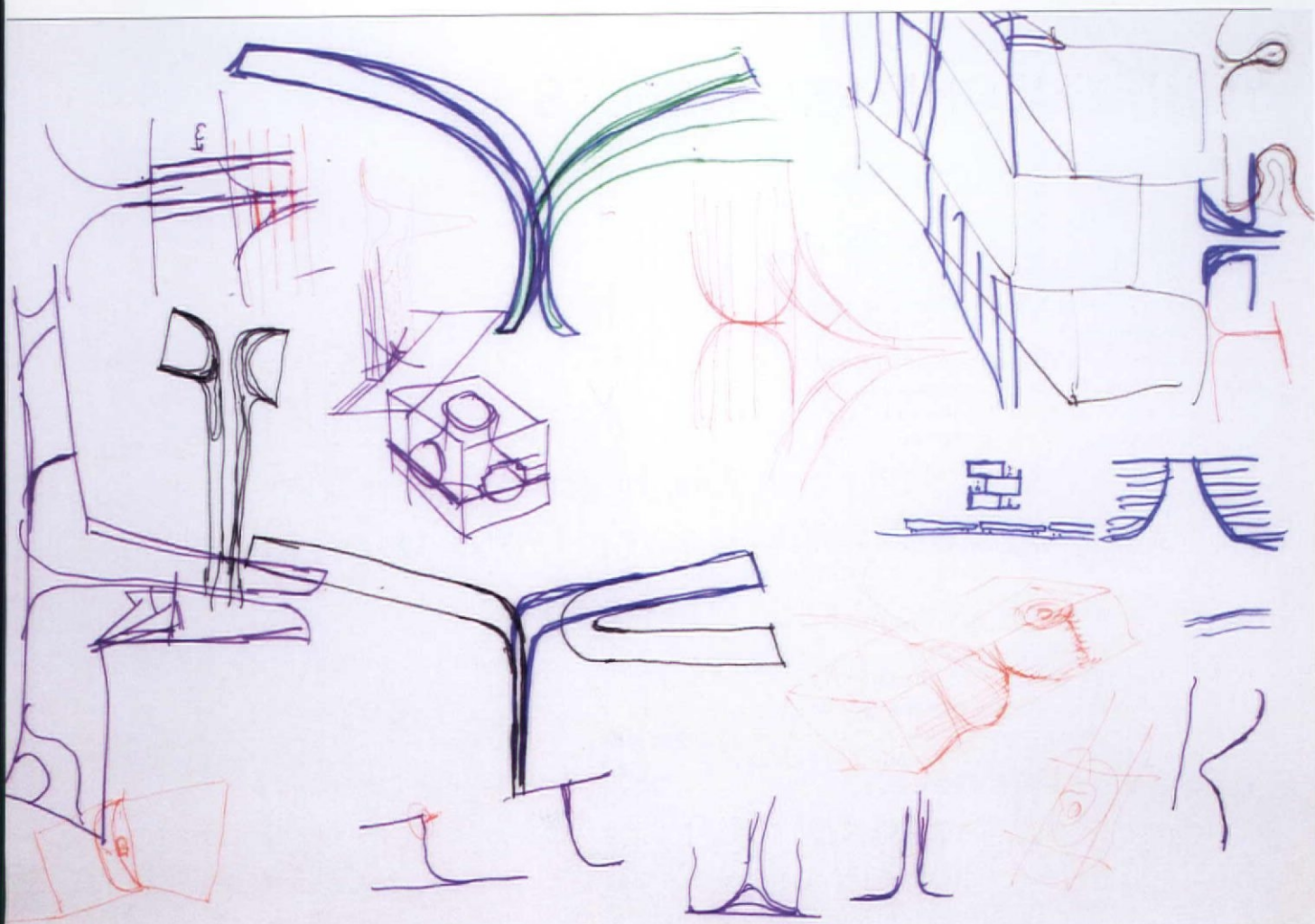
YOUMEHESHE ARCHITECTS

We approached this project as a dynamic architecture, which can be manipulated by the surroundings and environmental considerations. We treated the site as a solid block, layered to form each storey. The front facade was considered as a soft surface, shifting and altering in its symbiotic relationship with neighbouring buildings. It forms paths and places within the urban landscape, and is pushed through the building and across the rail tracks behind to form a shopping arcade, a retail link across the railway line.

Further interventions to the facade create a direct connection to King's Cross station, with a private and a public courtyard forming a direct pedestrian link to the footpath along Regent's Canal. The architectural form embraces passive technologies; facades are orientated to maximise positive solar heat gain to the south, and balanced with super-insulated timber facades to the north. A natural ventilation strategy can be achieved by drawing fresh air from the canalside into the building. Each floor layer keeps a vertical facade to allow for the use of timber sunscreens; passive energy devices are installed on the roofs.

Simon Beames, Simon Dickens, Alastair Townsend





'We treated the site as a solid block, with interventions in the facade creating a direct connection to King's Cross station.'

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1.



2.



3.

1 & 2 Hands-on experience is integral at the Centre for Alternative Technology

3 Copenhagen's IT University is part of the BCSE's September study tour (Events)

CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY OFFERS NEW COURSES

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Powys, mid Wales, is launching two new courses following the success of its MSc Architecture: Advanced Environmental and Energy Studies. Enrolment has increased from around 30 students in 2000 to a current total close to 400.

Both new courses – an MSc in Renewable Energy and an ARB-approved Part 2 Diploma course – are offered by CAT's new Graduate School of the Environment, established this year, and are accredited/validated by the University of East London.

The MSc course will start next month with an initial group of 20 to 30 students, including engineers, architects, system specifiers and planners, and a target enrolment of 50 once the course is fully up and running. The syllabus will have a practical focus, with visiting lecturers from practices who will cover the process of designing, installing, monitoring and evaluating renewable

technologies, with many opportunities for hands-on experience. 'The theory of renewables is relatively simple,' explains course tutor Mike Taylor, 'it is in practice that the problems arise'. He adds: 'We are not training installers. We are training people to make strategic decisions, such as if you're building a £50 million office building in the City of London, what are the opportunities for renewables?'

The course offers students the option of specialising in one renewable technology: solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, hydro, wind or biomass.

The Part 2 Diploma, set to start next year, will offer a significant break with traditional architectural education because of its more vocational focus. Course tutor Alison Pooley notes that 'although the course will be distinguished by its environmental specialism, its focus will be the design studio.' Students will select one of three sites across the UK (Wales, the

Midlands, and the South East) reflecting the geographical distribution of CAT students. Applications are currently being accepted for September 2008.

The course will be headed by Tom Woolley, professor of architecture at Queen's University, Belfast, and visiting tutors will include Grimshaw's Michael Pawlyn and David Lea – architect of the Wales Institute for Sustainable Education (WISE), an education and conference venue on site at CAT, which will complete next summer.

Both courses will follow the popular structure of the existing MSc, where students spend one week a month at CAT and complete the rest of the work remotely.

EVENTS

Energy Performance Certificates
7 September, 9:30am – 5pm
London Metropolitan University,
40-44 Holloway Road, London
miranda@islingtonenterprise.co.uk

RIBA Research Symposium 2007 – Reflections on Practice: Capturing Innovation and Creativity
19 September, 9:30am – 5pm
RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London.
Tel: 020 7580 5533

British Council for School Environments – Study Tour to Copenhagen
27-28 September
Beth Gladstone.
Tel: 020 7785 6286

Introducing Zero-Carbon Construction
26 September
Genesis Centre, Somerset College of Technology, Taunton
admin@sustainablehousing.org.uk, tel: 01458 259400



ONLINE GUIDE HELPS SCHEMES GO GREEN

By Cathy Strongman

1. Wilkinson Eyre's Bristol Brunel Academy achieved 24.8 per cent recycled content at no additional cost, using WRAP's toolkit

Building Schools for the Future (BSF), the government's £45 billion investment programme, aims to rebuild or renew every secondary school in the country by 2020. It is the biggest capital investment in schools for 50 years, and despite the daunting bureaucracy, the opportunities that it offers architects are unprecedented. 'The architectural profession have to get their heads around the scale of the project,' says Jonathan Ibikunle, design manager at Partnerships for Schools (PfS), the agency overseeing the programme. 'On average five schools will be rebuilt or refurbished every week for the next 13 years.'

Given that existing schools emit 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, or 15 per cent of public-sector carbon emissions, PfS has placed sustainability high on its agenda and offers certain incentives to ensure participation. In order to procure a Local Education Partnership (LEP) and meet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – checks that ensure they remain exclusive private partner for educational projects in that local authority over a 25-year period – contractors must significantly limit the environmental impact of their projects.

Certain performance criteria have been established by PfS' standard-output specification, which provides guidance for all BSF's projects. Every school must meet BREEAM's 'Very Good' index and specify 10 per cent recycled content. 'What we're finding is that Local Authorities are pushing the bar even higher in terms of sustainability,' says Ibikunle. 'They're asking for BREEAM 'Excellent' and greater than 10 per cent recycled content as well

as additional requirements such as grey-water collection and reduced energy consumption.'

Additionally, with the Education Select Committee poised to report on its inquiry into Sustainability in Schools and this autumn's release of the government's *Guide to Renewable Energy in Schools*, there is a real commitment from central government to make our schools more sustainable. 'Carbon neutrality is the new benchmark,' says Ibikunle.

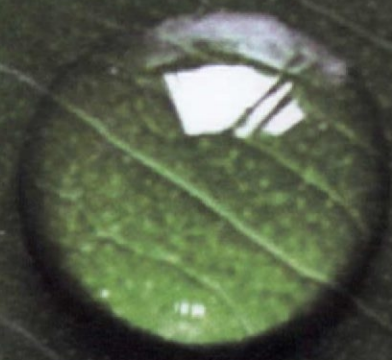
THE WRAP

The rigour of these guidelines results from a Waste & Resource Action Programme (WRAP) campaign to improve resource efficiency in schools. WRAP, a private company, has created a programme that offers free assistance to clients, consortia and architects to be more sustainable in their approach. 'The success of the programme lies in the fact that increasing the recycled content of a project is an easy way to deliver greater sustainability at no extra cost,' says Jim Wiltshire, construction project manager at WRAP. 'Unlike some sustainable initiatives you can do it using mainstream construction materials – there's no up-front capital cost and no payback period. We're not interested in driving design, it's more a case of looking at what the architects have created and then making it more sustainable.'

WRAP has created numerous online resources to help architects meet these targets. Its website contains information about a wide range of mainstream products with higher recycled

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TECHNICAL & PRACTICE



3.

the potential Quick Wins and select those that you wish to apply to your project. On moving to the next screen you will be able to see the implications of these selections on the total recycled content of the project.

Top opportunities to increase recycled content by moving to 'good' practice products

Component	Standard Recycled Content (%)	Good Recycled Content (%)	Potential improvement in recycled content of project (%)	Select	Target level of recycled content (%) *
carpet tiles, to screed as specified (classrooms); inclusive of dust proof sealer	0	50	01.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	50
Reinforced in-situ concrete 350mm, C30 or higher	24	30	00.49	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30
12.5mm plasterboard, paint finish	36	84	00.39	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	84
Expanded polystyrene (EPS) zero ODP 75mm	0	25	00.27	<input type="checkbox"/>	25
Upper floors, Concrete Pre Cast, Beam and Block Flooring	4	44	00.27	<input type="checkbox"/>	44
Expanded polystyrene (EPS) zero ODP 60mm	0	25	00.11	<input type="checkbox"/>	25
Two hour fire door inc frame & basic ironmongery	22	60	00.07	<input type="checkbox"/>	60
Concrete Strip, Strength C30 or higher, 400 deep (up to and inc. DPC) with reinforcing	24	30	00.03	<input type="checkbox"/>	30
Tiles - Concrete interlocking	0	5	00.03	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
One hour f.r. acoustic doors, laminate both sides with hardwood toppings, to music, practice, drama assembly (x) incl hardwood frame, vision panel	10	46	00.02	<input type="checkbox"/>	46

Total for selected components = 1.88%

* default level is that represented by good practice. Please overwrite if the product you intend to use has a different recycled content level. Where local suppliers are available, RC levels above 'good' can be achieved.

Generate Graph of Quick Wins
Draw graph in colour ☒

Print All Quick Wins to PDF

User Options
Ten largest contributors to the baseline recycled content of the project at standard practice

Date: _____ Internet 100%

2.



4.

2. WRAP's Recycled Content Toolkit can help find ways of increasing recycled content

3. Use of recycled aggregate is one of WRAP's 'Quick Wins'

4. Glass wool insulation can have a recycled content of upto 80 per cent

content, as well as case studies and detailed reports that analyse the potential for recycled content in designs of secondary schools. Two schools from the Department for Education and Skills' (now the Department for Children, Schools and Families) exemplar designs, for example, have been analysed. WRAP finds that the existing baseline of 16-17 per cent recycled content can easily reach 18-21 per cent at no additional cost.

The most useful online resource for architects and contractors is the Recycled Content Toolkit. This nifty device allows designers to enter details into a free-to-use web-based system which will not only calculate the project's baseline recycled material, but also provide a series of 'Quick Wins' to increase the recycled content at no extra cost. 'Anyone can use it and you can edit your exact details at anytime,' says Wiltshire. 'When you have implemented your changes, you can print out a report to demonstrate to the client the improvement in recycled content.' The second version of the toolkit is about to launch, with a module providing advice on demolition as well as modules on housing, retail and refurbishment, expanding the Toolkit's usefulness beyond the BSF programme.

RECYCLED CONTENT IN PRACTICE

When contractor Skanska won the bid for four new schools to be built in Bristol, it put the Toolkit to good use. 'The client, Bristol City Council, was extremely proactive when it came to sustainability,' says James Macmillan, environment manager for Skanska Bristol Schools. 'It wanted the schools to be the first

in the UK to be built to WRAP's minimum recycled-material content of 10 per cent, and 32 out of the 50 KPIs focused on the environment, sustainability and community.'

In fact Wilkinson Eyre's Bristol Brunel Academy, the first school, to be completed in September, has achieved 24.81 per cent recycled content mainly through steel, concrete and blockwork. 'The WRAP Toolkit is easy to use,' says Macmillan. 'I attended a seminar, registered the project and updated every six months as the specification got more precise. The Toolkit did the calculations and we reached this percentage with not much extra effort.'

'We've been really impressed and are thinking of using WRAP's programme on future projects,' says Anna Woodeson, project architect on the scheme. 'The Toolkit can be utilised at various stages of any project,' says Wiltshire. 'Many architects find it most useful when they are preparing a concept design, especially when they have a specific recycled content to meet.' The Toolkit has 850 registered users so far and, for those interested in finding out more, there is a free online demo with step-by-step guidance.

As for the BSF programme, a further 11 local authorities are working with WRAP to include increased recycled-content requirements in their projects and the number is set to increase this year. 'We're getting a really enthusiastic response from both clients and contractors,' says Wiltshire. 'All it needs is a bit of extra effort to get yourself up to speed.' A small price to pay for a multimillion-pound contract and schools that tread more lightly on our planet. Visit www.wrap.org.uk



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Designing Community

Charrettes, Masterplans and Form-based Codes



THE CHARRETTE AS A FIRST STEP TO GOOD URBAN DESIGN

By Fred London

Designing Community: Charrettes, Masterplans and Form-Based Codes
David Walters, Elsevier, 2007, £29.99

Masterplanning has put urban design back into the core of planning practice; or so argues David Walters in his informative book, which should be required reading for architects concerned with the public realm. As strong in its theoretical grasp as it is in enumerating the practical aspects of design codes and charrettes, *Designing Community* guides us through the strategies we need to adopt to create better communal spaces.

The book is organised in five parts, each comprising multiple chapters. One of the highlights is the history section, in which Walters includes chapters on political theory and citizen power in planning and urban design. He elucidates the complex interplay between national, regional and local politics and economics in the context of planning laws and traditions, while exploring the effects of these sometimes remote forces on our lives.

One of the book's primary concerns, and woven throughout the text, is a comparative assessment of urban design and planning practice in the UK, where David Walters grew up, and the US, where he now lives, works and teaches at the University of North Carolina. Analysing each country's differing levels of state intervention and its power over private capital, Walters arrives at pragmatic approaches to 'place making' rather than 'place marketing', and develops a process where the public 'buys in', rather than 'gives in', to development projects.

The chapters under the practice section – which are the heart of the book – present the charrette as the essential first step for good masterplans. The book includes the theoretical basis, methodology, practical organisation and likely costs of a charrette, as well as the potential role of new technology in the process.

Walters is committed to a 'bottom-up' approach as a means of delivering liveable neighbourhoods, although he acknowledges that this is fundamentally at odds with the more popular 'starchitect' approach. In the section on theory, he provides a thorough introduction to form-based design coding and New Urbanism for anyone not familiar with recent developments.

New Urbanism represents a dilemma for him, because although it shares many of his principles, it frequently delivers architecture which refers to historical vernacular forms.

These results, Walters justifiably fears, may undermine the rightness of his principles because of what today's stylistic opinion-formers see as the wrongness of the product. He comes to terms with this by conceding that 'in the long run, good urbanism always trumps bad architecture'. This statement could launch a dissertation all on its own, since 'bad architecture' is open to any number of interpretations. 'Good urbanism' may be easier to agree upon, but is much more difficult to deliver.

Design professionals should take the core messages of this book to heart and use its tools to improve our public realm.

Fred London is a partner at John Thompson & Partners

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TOUCHSCREEN ETIQUETTE GETS THE FINGER

I am in the process of transmogrifying one of my monitors into a touch screen. Don't ask, I'm not entirely sure either. But this may take some time. There are two flies in the ointment.

One is the Microsoft Surface hardware I need – where you 'grab' two corners of a photograph and pull it out to a bigger size. Will this actually work in practice? The other factor is two blokes from the University of Wollongong, Australia.

They have developed a system of gestural control. Never mind touch – just wave your arms about.

The early gestures they have trained their computer to recognise are a clenched fist for 'start', a hand with closed fingers extended forward meaning 'power on', a thumbs-up meaning 'up'. The possibilities of cultural misunderstanding are huge.

The two may be taking the mickey because in Oz, the thumbs up used to be a rude sign equivalent to our V sign, that Italian slap in the crook of the elbow, and the US single erect middle finger.

The thing about rude signs is that they have to be simple and recognisable. Awkwardly (or not) for our Wollongong duo that also applies to computer control gestures. I predict global war. sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

TIME TO TAKE NOTICE

Recent court cases have clarified ways in which clients can withhold payment from contractors if they are unhappy with their work, writes *Sue Lindsey*.

The issue was raised first by the House of Lords in Melville Dundas and now by the Technology and Construction Court in *Pierce Design International v Mark Johnston*.

These cases centred around Clause 27.6.5.1 of the JCT 98 Standard Building Contract form, and deal with the effect of a client determining a building contract if no withholding notice has been served.

Section 111 of the Housing Grants Act states that building contracts must provide that an employer cannot withhold a sum due under the contract unless a withholding notice has been served. This of course is, or should be, familiar stuff to architects.

The Court of Appeal has told us that: 'No doubt a good architect would inform a lay client about the possibility of serving such a notice' (*Rupert Morgan v Jervis*, 2003). But if no notice has been served and the sum is due, Clause 27.6.5.1 says that where the building contract is determined, such sums are not payable.

But there is then a proviso; sums remain payable if the right to payment was given

more than 28 days before determination and the employer has unreasonably not paid.

The issue in Melville Dundas was whether Clause 27.6.5.1 fell foul of the Housing Grants Act because it permitted payment to be withheld despite there being no notice issued.

The facts in this particular case were such that it was impossible to serve a notice in time and there were difficulties created by the contractor's insolvency. These factors appear to have prompted the House of Lords to find that the clause complied with the Act by way of a solution described by Lord Hoffmann as not 'particularly elegant'.

In *Pierce Design*, despite a brave attempt by the employer to persuade him otherwise, judge Peter Coulson QC found he was bound by Melville Dundas to conclude that Clause 27.6.5.1 complied with the Act. That left him to deal with arguments about how to apply the proviso, which had not been an issue in Melville Dundas.

The first two questions that arise are 'were there sums due under the contract?', and 'was the contractor entitled to them 28 days before determination?' These will depend on the facts in each case. But what does the phrase 'which the employer has unreasonably not paid' mean?

In *Pierce Design*, the employer argued that what was reasonable should be measured against the circumstances as they stood at the hearing, which would open the door for them to ask for their cross claims to be taken into account. The judge disagreed, and looking at the payment provisions in the round, concluded that it is reasonable for an employer not to pay where a withholding notice has been served, and unreasonable not to pay where there has been no notice.

He went on to note that this interpretation met many of the concerns raised after Melville Dundas that the House of Lords had opened the door for unscrupulous employers to avoid liability for interim payments by determining the building contract.

Due sums that are not the subject of a notice remain payable upon determination, provided they were due 28 days beforehand.

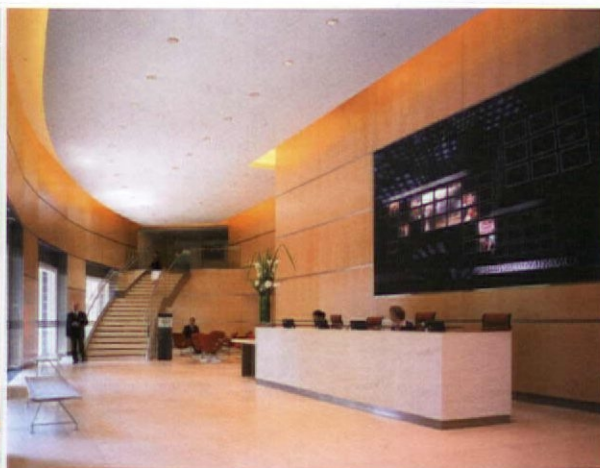
Sue Lindsey is a barrister at Crown Office Chambers in London. Visit www.crownofficechambers.com

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SERPENTINE PAVILION 2007

By Jaffer Kolb

At Kensington Gardens, London W2, until 5 November



1.

Kjetil Thorsen and Ólafur Eliasson each call their respective firms 'offices of spatial experimentation' – a pretentious, vague description that is done surprising justice in their new Serpentine Pavilion. While last year, Serpentine director Julia Peyton-Jones commissioned photographer Thomas Demand to design the pavilion's wallpaper, this year the artist/architect collaboration was taken a step further with the design of the entire pavilion. The combination of Eliasson, best known for his 2003 Weather Project in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, and Kjetil Thorsen, founding partner of Norwegian practice Snøhetta, has produced far more dynamic results.

At its best, the pavilion strikes a fantastic balance between the natural and the

artificial. There are obvious organic elements woven into the design. The dark-stained wood panels are the colour of ageing trees, the shape of the pavilion is hill-like, and both Eliasson and Thorsen have described the interior as a 'grotto' – which, given the warm colours and natural light from the off-centre oculus above, is apt.

Yet signs of artificiality lurk beneath all these naturalistic features. Exposed screws have bitten deeply into the panels, exposing the new, unstained wood beneath. The panels are arranged into tessellated triangular patterns, increasing in size from the top of the interior space to the bottom. Echoing the spiralling of the adjacent ramp, the seating system extrudes from the walls as jutting, angular and irregular boxes that are all the same

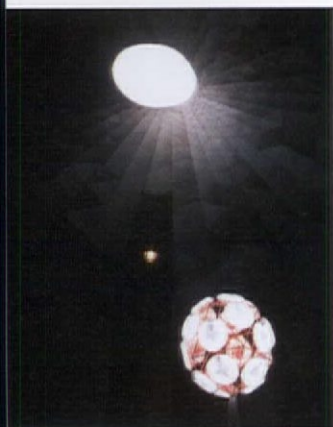
shape. These features temper the naturalness of the pavilion, making it appear not so much an extension of the park but the designers' interpretation of its surroundings.

Ultimately, the effect of translating the natural world into a mechanically generated product leaves the space resembling a film set. The dramatic interior volume, with its soaring ceiling and sharp angularity, is an aesthetic descendent of German Expressionist films, most obviously the cavernous halls of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Furthering the comparison, this year's pavilion marks a departure by hiding, rather than boasting, its structure. From the first pavilion in 2000 by Zaha Hadid – a tent-roof spanning numerous exposed columnar supports – to Koolhaas' design last year, the pavilions have

all contained either exposed or overt structural systems as their central element. This emphasis has been constantly stressed by the Serpentine, which is careful each year to include – alongside the architect's name – that of Arup and its celebrity engineer Cecil Balmond.

This time no structural engineer is headlined alongside the designers, and the omission is obvious on seeing the space. Like most film sets – particularly before the rise of computer-generated imagery – the structure is a simple steel frame overlaid with wooden panels affixed with screws. This skin functions to make the structure of the building as invisible as edits are meant to be in a good movie.

Thorsen and Eliasson's cinematic space extends beyond the interior Expressionist volume and continues through



1, 2 & 3. This year's Serpentine Pavilion, with its spiralling ramp, pulpit, and oculus-lit interior

2.



3.

their development of a narrative-like promenade spiralling up to the top of the building, and even to the pulpit-like extrusion back into the upper part of the interior dome at the end of the ramp. The designers were obviously interested in framing particular views and creating a sequential experience: the entrance leads past the interior space, ascending to the pulpit/climax, followed by a descent. At each step along the ramp, the viewer is surrounded by the constantly changing view on one side and the shifting diagonal wall of the roof on the other.

There are problems. A perfect frame (think 1950s widescreen) presents a view not of Kensington Gardens, but instead an awkward section of the Serpentine Gallery and its surroundings. This is a missed opportunity: had the space been

reorientated slightly it could have faced the park, excluding the immediate vicinity and framing the landscape beyond. The seats are fairly awkward (I can't imagine sitting for the Serpentine's proposed 24-hour marathon of 'artistic experiments') and the building itself is no prize to look at.

Where it succeeds is not in being pretty or particularly useful, but instead by providing a dynamic experience for visitors. There are the obvious advantages to bringing viewers above the landscape to see the park and city beyond, but reaching that goal is a process that relates the viewer to the landscape in ways that past pavilions here haven't managed to do.

A 24-hour Experiment Marathon will begin at the pavilion on Friday 12 October at 12 noon



CRITIC'S CHOICE

By Andrew Mead

Tucked away on the campus of Middlesex University, a few minutes' walk from Cockfosters Tube station in north London, is the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA). It has a permanent display called 'Exploring Interiors: Decoration of the Home 1900-1960', which brings together material samples, archive photos and other items redolent of the period, but it also puts on temporary exhibitions – the latest of which is *The Suburban Landscape*.

While the focus is partly on homeowners' individual gardens, attached front and back to the ubiquitous 'semi', the show is equally concerned with suburbs as a whole. It treats them as a realm of 'gardened spaces' where – at least in the early days of suburban development – the walk from your front door to the station took you through a carefully manicured green world. Examples in the show include London County Council's Watling Estate in Barnet, which, dating from the mid-1920s, was a key local authority attempt to bring garden suburb principles to the masses. And along with evocative ephemera – developers' brochures and the like – there's a sting in the tail, as the show returns to the individual garden and says: 'Once it was perceived as a miniature villa estate. Now, with its new "brown field" designation, it has the same status as industrial wasteland.'

So the show puts the future of 'the suburban landscape' in question. It's a shame, then, that another temporary MoDA exhibition, *Sculpting the Suburban Landscape*, doesn't come up with better answers. Ten artists have each been given a plot outside the museum to 'challenge the notion of the traditional garden', but the results are mostly whimsical, impractical or absurd – though torrential rain during my visit meant they weren't at their best.

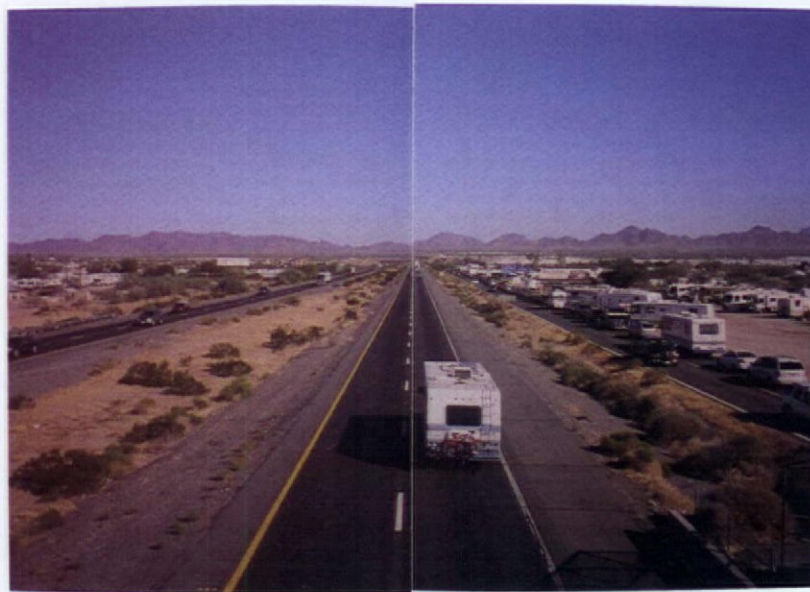
But MoDA remains an unsung resource, not least for its publications, which include surveys of interiors by decade (*Thirties Style*, *Sixties Style*, etc.) and excellent pamphlet guides to the architecture in the area. This is suburbia par excellence – not just for its avenues of semis but also for Charles Holden's Piccadilly Line tube stations – and MoDA supplies the key (www.moda.mdx.ac.uk).

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

BOOK

By Kaye Alexander

Blue Monday: Stories of Absurd Realities and Natural Philosophies.
By Robert Sumrell & Kazys Varnelis. Actar, 2007.
176pp. €22



1.

1. Quartzsite, Arizona

2. A W N Pugin's complex of buildings in Ramsgate, Kent

Blue Monday is the first book by Robert Sumrell and Kazys Varnelis, who together form the New York-based Architecture Urban Design Collaborative (AUDC) – a practice that ‘undertakes speculative research to reveal the contemporary condition’. They call the book their ‘gift to architecture, a challenge to a field that urgently needs to refresh itself’; and indeed it is just the irritant to get under any designer’s skin.

The book is a series of short stories with seemingly disparate themes, but linked by a narrative logic that becomes evident as you read. The first deals with SOM’s One Wilshire, a 39-storey building in downtown Los Angeles, whose history shows how architecture and real life can grow out of sync. In being reappropriated from office block to communications hub

all the initial intentions of the architecture – its form and programme – have been hijacked. Today One Wilshire hosts a mass of IT systems and hardware, the overlooked by-product of a networked society. It’s a humbling demonstration of how the context of architecture has changed while architects were looking the other way.

A study of the ambient mass music system Muzak develops this notion of the ‘unobserved’, in exploring the conditioning of workers through sound from 1934 onwards. ‘Muzak made Modernism palatable sonically,’ say the authors. Masking the background noise that comes with large floorplates, it’s ‘the hidden element in every Ezra Stoller photograph of a Modernist office interior’. In the 1980s Muzak evolved into

what its programmers call ‘audio architecture’, clearly indicating their ambition to construct and control environments.

For its finale, the book examines Quartzsite – a fluctuating but permanent community created by temporary motorhome residents in the Arizona desert, which at certain times of the year becomes the 15th-largest city in the USA. It’s the culmination of population mobility, transience and very little planning.

Taking a term from social scientists, Sumrell and Varnelis speak of ‘swarm intelligence’ – a human version of the behaviour often seen in ant colonies and the like. What began as a mineral show for devotees is now a phenomenon: ‘Quartzsite is like the Bilbao effect, except there are no buildings.’

Ostensibly, as the authors admit, these three stories don’t ‘add up’ – but what makes them cohere is that, in different ways, they all deal with something that is not usually acknowledged. As Columbia University professor of architecture Reinhold Martin puts it in his foreword: ‘They will not tell you how to design a building or lay out a city. But they will help you understand what cities and buildings are.’

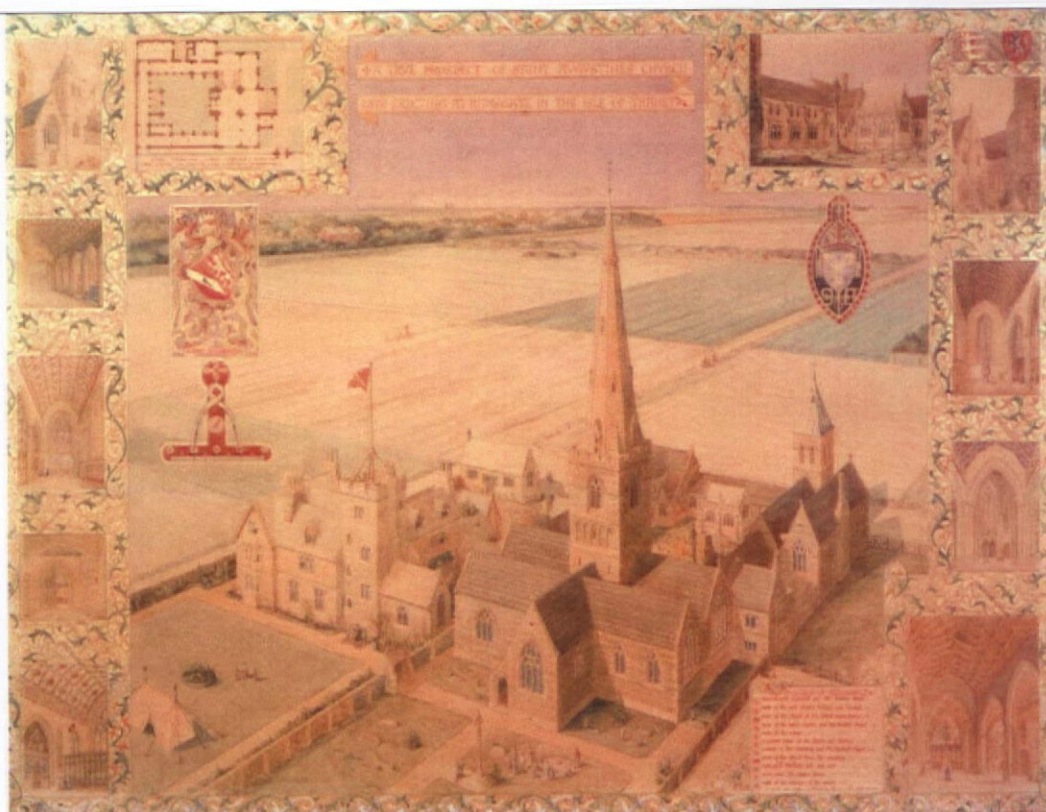
Throughout the book, Sumrell and Varnelis keep your mind prised open with their engaging mixture of anecdote, anthropology and investigative journalism. It’s only on reflection that you grasp the stories’ implications – that their ‘absurd realities’ are in fact quite normal.

BOOK

By Julian Holder

God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain.

By Rosemary Hill. Penguin, 2007. £30



2.

A W N Pugin, John Ruskin, and William Morris still form the holy trinity for the rise of Modernism. For this we have to thank the progressive theory expounded by Nikolaus Pevsner in his *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*. Without Pugin we'd have no Ruskin, without Ruskin no Morris and without the three of them none of the social critique of architecture which led to Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier. Or so the theory went.

In recent years Ruskin and Morris have been the subject of major biographies – now it is Pugin's turn. In a short working life of 25 years, as well as writing his powerful polemics, he not only designed such famous monuments of the early Gothic Revival as St Giles, Cheadle, the Grange at Ramsgate (AJ 13.07.06), and (with Sir Charles Barry) the

Houses of Parliament – but also 18 churches, two cathedrals, three convents, two monasteries and a number of schools.

So central does he appear to Victorian architecture that it comes as a shock to be reminded that he died in 1852. But it comes as still more of a shock to read that Pugin – so pious, committed, and evangelical for the cause of Gothic – probably died from syphilis caught during his early years spent working in London's theatreland.

Hill's magnificent biography not only paints this fuller and franker picture of the saviour of Sir Charles Barry – standing over him while he completed the design of the Houses of Parliament clock tower – but reclaims him from what historian Sir John Summerson derided as the 'pioneer hunters': those who

only valued him for planting the seeds of Modernism.

Pugin is revealed here to be what he truly was. Not one of Pevsner's 'pioneers', nor a progressive architect of the Victorian age (whose committees and institutions he disdained), but an artist of the Romantic period. If his closest 20th-century equivalent is Le Corbusier – whose reputation is also as much that of a polemicist as an architect – his nearest significant contemporary is Wordsworth. Though politically poles apart, both men marked crucial turning points in the development of their own art forms, placing emotion and fantasy over reason and rationality.

Pugin was born in to the medieval fantasy world of Walter Scott's novels and never quite escaped. Nor did he want

to. Hill suggests that his immersion in this world was as much the result of ignorance as it was of choice.

An obsessive father who took him on sketching tours of medieval churches, together with a poor education, ensured he never read the next chapter in the standard histories of architecture – the Renaissance. Is he also a case of magnificent arrested development? Little wonder his rediscovery in the 1880s gave the Arts and Crafts Movement so much more to think about.

Julian Holder is an architectural historian in Manchester

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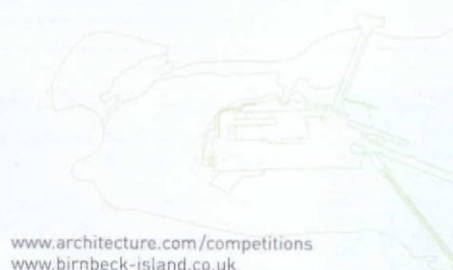
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Ref: L445 (Hannah)

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Ref: L438 (Hannah / Philip)

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Ref: L423 (Hannah)

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Bristol

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Ref: 3637 (Philip)

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To ensure the continued design quality a Design Review Panel has been established with representatives from the project stakeholders to review design information produced for reserved matters applications.

We are now looking to appoint an independent Chair to the Silvertown Quays Design Review Panel.

An acknowledged high-calibre candidate is sought with proven expertise in design and master planning and demonstrable experience in building consensus between stakeholder interests to deliver complex regeneration projects.

Further details regarding the position can be obtained from:

Dominic Lawson, Montagu Evans LLP, Clarges House, 6-12 Clarges Street, London W1J 8HB;
Tel: 020 7312 7403; email: dominic.lawson@montagu-evans.co.uk

To apply, please send a covering letter and detailed CV to Dominic Lawson (as above) by 7 September 2007.

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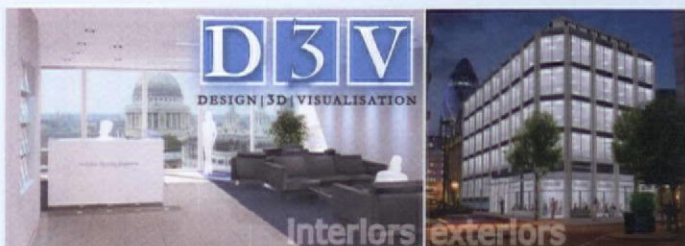
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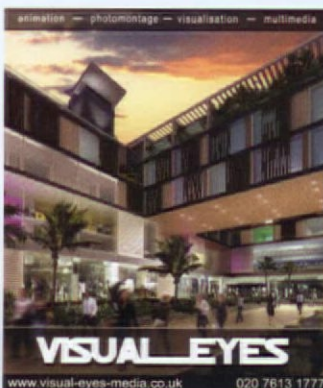
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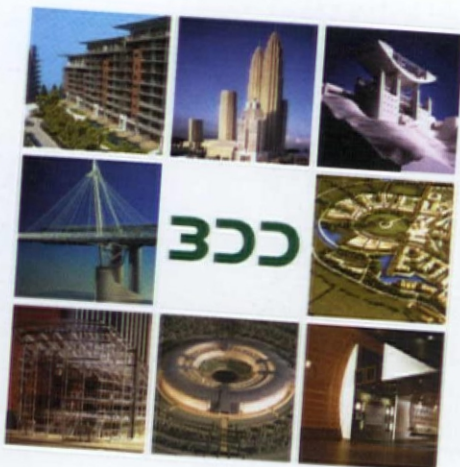
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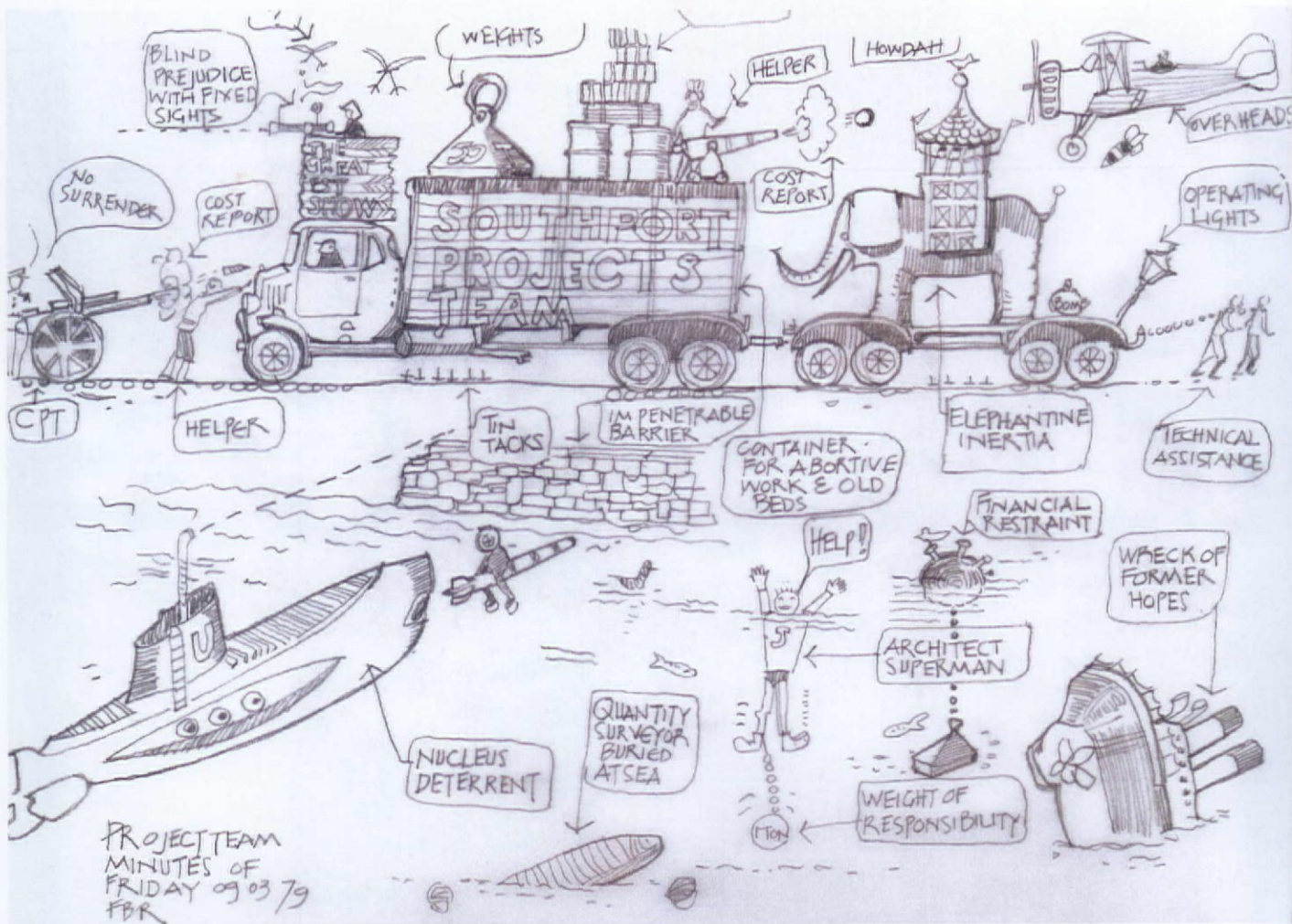
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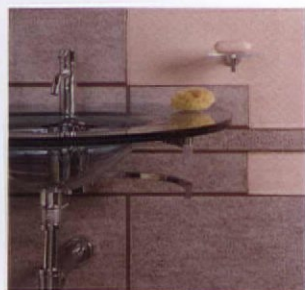
A sketch illustrating an architect's frustrations with the 'nucleus' system of hospital design, popular in the 1970s. Drawn in 1979 by Francis Roberts of Francis Roberts Architects

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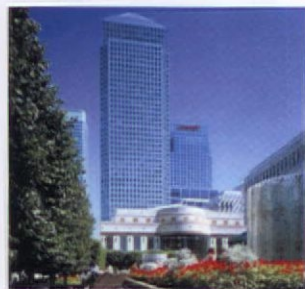
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