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## ALMOST NO-ONE COULD ANSWER THE QUESTION 'WHAT DO YOU WANT BARKING TO BE?'

By Kieran Long

You can still walk around the Lintons, a forbidding cliff face of concrete along Barking's Northern Relief Road. The now-decanted housing estate has a burgundy pattern on the facade like a port-wine stain spreading across a face, melancholy as it awaits demolition.

Barking in East London has hosted an array of visions for the future. The Lintons came at the tail-end of Modernism, and while many told me it was once an aspirational symbol of modernity, it is now part of the least popular era of Barking's many-faceted physical fabric.

Modernism was so wrong about so many things, and led to an identity crisis in Barking – a place often identified as 'just a stop on the District line'. Modernists wanted to make architecture a problem-solving exercise, dividing formal character from a building's function and ignoring the city itself as a generator of form.

However, it is right that local people ask whether the contemporary vision of regeneration

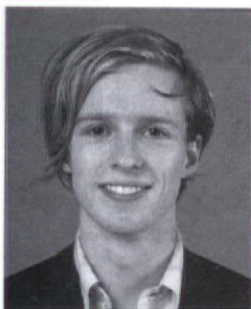
is any more valuable than those from the past. Our conviction about mixed-use, active street frontages and high density matches the Modernists' certainty about point blocks and ground-level open space a generation ago.

Having studied Barking, I'm not sure we can be so confident we will not repeat mistakes of the mid-20th century. Regeneration today is a matrix of measurable factors – it is about profitability, density, diversity of tenure and time, high-quality streetscape in high-quality materials. But no-one I asked could answer the question: 'What kind of town do you want Barking to be?'

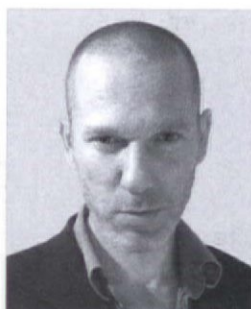
In Barking, the architects who have had the most to offer the conversation about the character of the town found it the most difficult to establish a foothold in the process. While hopeful, Barking's story leaves a big question: Whose job is it to understand character? Or to establish, as Joseph Rykwert might have it, 'some place in all the space' of the Thames Gateway?



### CONTRIBUTORS



Will Hunter, who organised and helped to judge the second annual AJ/Modus Something to Sit On competition on pages 14-15, is the editor of AJ Specification



David Grandorge, who photographed Barking for our feature on pages 23-35, is a photographer and lecturer at London Metropolitan University



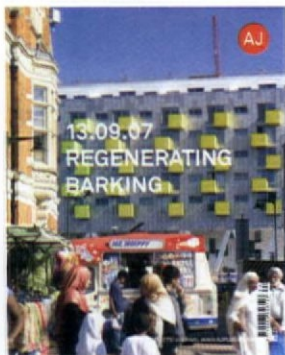
Isabel Allen, who reviews John Pardey's study of Wilhelm Wohlert's work on page 44, is design director of Hab Housing and former editor of the AJ



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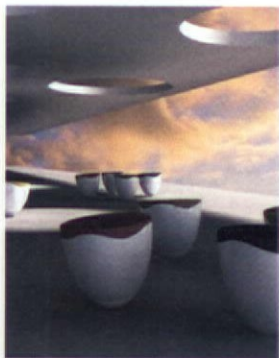
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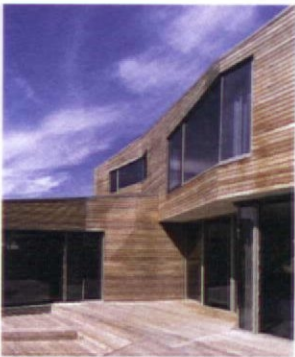
## P. 10 ZERO-CARBON LIBYA



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## P. 16 MANSER MEDAL FINALISTS

REVIEW	REGULARS	JOBS & CLASSIFIED	AJPLUS.CO.UK
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Top five jobs:
- *Bespoke* – landscape architect
  - *Centurion* – architect/associate
  - *RIBA* – architects
  - *Glenn Howells* – project architect
  - *BBT* – architects/architectural assistants
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Classified advertising

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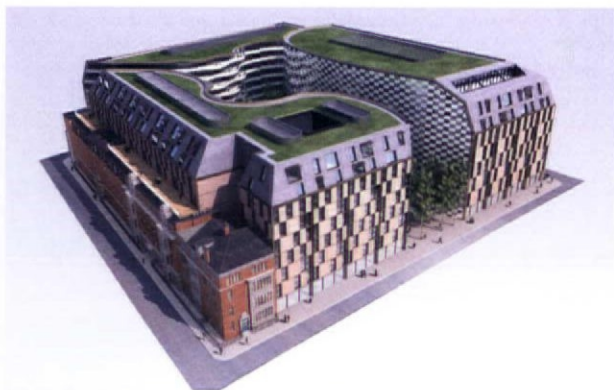
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#### THURSDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

- Jestico + Whiles to design zero-carbon hotel in Tees Valley
- Richard Murphy hotel aims to give Edinburgh a 'shot in the arm'
- CABI praises Make's Southall Gasworks scheme
- McAslan's Roundhouse makes RIBA Special Awards shortlist



#### MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

- Glenn Howells' Liverpool Lime Street tower dropped due to spiralling costs
- Formation to build on Slough site featured in 'The Office'
- Make is quick to win approval for central London's Middlesex Hospital (above)
- Lawray to build subterranean sports hall for Foxtons tycoon



#### FRIDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

- Chipperfield's Iowa library starts to crack up (below)
- Major retrospective on Basil Spence to open in Edinburgh
- Hetreed Ross' Bath eco-house finally wins planning
- Birmingham Pathfinder scheme slammed for the second time by CABI



#### TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

- Foster to create gigantic carbon-neutral regeneration zone in Libya (see pages 10-11)
- Tories take RIBA advice on planning reform to combat climate change
- Woods Bagot updates Lutyens' Grosvenor House Apartments
- Artlab Architects wins planning for limeworks conversion

#### WEDNESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

- Future of Home Office design review panel questioned
- BBLB Architects gets green light for £45 million Stratford-upon-Avon scheme
- Conran replaces Cooper Cromar on Scotland's tallest tower
- Dunster to build country's largest eco-complex in Wolverhampton (left)





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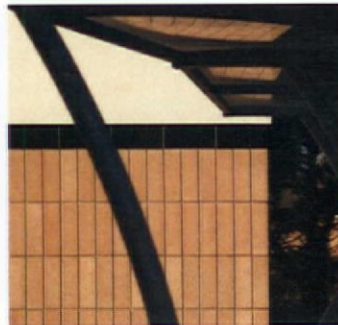
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1.



2.

1 & 2. Heneghan Peng's Giant's Causeway visitors' centre scheme has been dumped after Northern Irish government funding was pulled

# GIANT'S CAUSEWAY HITS THE ROCKS

By Richard Waite

Heneghan Peng's much-anticipated Giant's Causeway visitor centre has been unexpectedly shelved after the Northern Irish government pulled its funding.

The bombshell has rocked the Dublin-based practice, which beat 800 entrants to win the international contest to design the £21 million scheme two years ago (AJ 13.10.05).

The shock move by the province's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI) followed news that the environment minister, Arlene Foster, had thrown her weight behind a cheaper, privately funded visitor facility on a neighbouring site.

Tourism minister Nigel Dodds confirmed that the DETI – the original competition organiser – and fellow financier the Northern

Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), would no longer be bankrolling the project.

'It would not be a prudent use of taxpayers' money to proceed further, given Minister Foster's position on the private-sector planning application,' he said.

'I and the department were concerned [this] money should not be used to develop a design for a visitor centre if there was a material possibility that the centre could be built and operated by the private sector.'

It is understood the U-turn will mean around £1 million will have to be written off in wasted costs on the competition and architectural fees, and that the landowner, the National Trust, has been left angered by the decision.

The charity has publicly championed the Heneghan

Peng scheme as a replacement for its original visitor centre, at the heart of Northern Ireland's only World Heritage Site, which burned down in 2000.

Trust chiefs said they had hoped the alternative proposals, filed by Seaport Investment in 2002 for a separate facility on a greenfield plot, had been forgotten about.

In a statement released to the AJ, National Trust director Hilary McGrady said she feared the privately backed scheme could have a seriously damaging impact on the world-famous coastline.

She said: 'Any development so close to the Giant's Causeway – and particularly on previously undeveloped land – would fly in the face of planning policies for the area.'

'Such a decision by the minister could immediately

put the World Heritage Site status at risk.'

Speaking to the AJ, Heneghan Peng founding partner Roisin Heneghan sounded shell-shocked and admitted the announcement had come out of the blue.

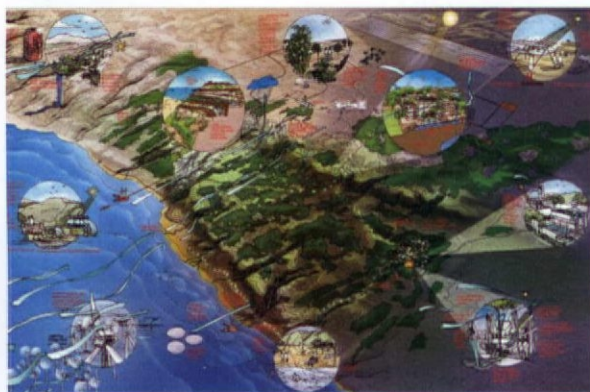
She said: 'We knew there was another application which has been around for years.'

'But I did not know [the withdrawal of funding] would be the result of all of this.'

'We were just getting all of the issues of access and traffic sorted. We have done an awful lot of work... I have no idea what happens now.'

As the AJ went to press, it was understood Minister Foster was 'minded to approve' the Seaport Investment scheme and would be holding further meetings before making a formal decision.





1.



2.

NIGEL YOUNG

# GADDAFI'S GREENER REVOLUTION

By Richard Vaughan

Standing in an ancient Greek gymnasium built in the 7th Century BC on the edge of the Libyan desert, trying to get a question in to Colonel Gaddafi's youngest son, it dawns on me that this isn't an average day for an AJ reporter.

The reason for this unusual architectural sojourn is that Foster + Partners is working with the Libyan president's son, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, to develop the Green Mountain development plan, a zero-carbon eco-tourism region in northern Libya the size of Wales, dubbed by the architect the 'world's largest and most complete sustainable regional development'.

To show its new-found hospitality, the government, and Libyan oil magnate and director of Gulf Tourism Investments International

Hassan Tatanaki, have spent £1 million flying hundreds of journalists and VIPs in to the country to unveil the new Foster-led initiative.

As the private jet touches down in Labraq Airport, the former-Soviet Mig jet-fighters that dot the runway act as an *aide memoire* of the country's turbulent past.

But the oil-rich pariah state is slowly coming in from the wilderness in world politics, and is now looking to diversify its economy by tapping into tourism. Libya has 2,000km of untouched Mediterranean coastline, which it hopes will act as a catalyst to stimulate growth across the country.

Once off the plane, our party is herded into a 20-strong convoy of Mercedes people-carriers (with police escort). We turn on to a road – freshly laid

for the event – that leads to a tented village next to an ancient Greek Temple of Zeus. This is our accommodation for the night. The site's perimeter is patrolled by more than 200 soldiers.

Among the guests I see fellow Brits Peter Murray and Robert Adam. Both are chatting to members of giant consultancy Atkins, which is hoping to get a piece of the Libyan pie.

'I've been coming here nearly every year since the 1980s,' one Atkins worker says. 'And there have been many projects talked about, but nothing came of them. Although I have seen a change in the Libyan government, I wouldn't be surprised if nothing came of this.'

The cynicism is abundant. As Murray says over dinner,

'Flying us all out here for just 24 hours isn't particularly sustainable.'

The following day begins with the 5am call to prayer. Stumbling bleary-eyed into the baking desert sun, I'm greeted by the sight of dozens of guests and journalists wandering around in matching luxury dressing gowns, like a desert-bound *Carry on Camping*.

After breakfast, the party is shepherded into the convoy; we then drive 20 yards to be told we've arrived. The project's sustainability credentials continue their nosedive.

Our destination is an ancient ruin with an exhibition of Foster's masterplan within. A 9m-long model shows a vision of sustainable settlements throughout the Cyrene region, with compact, pedestrian-focused communities.





3.

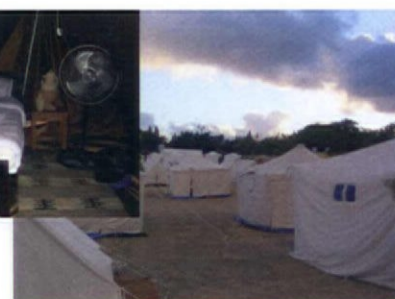
4.

5.

1. The Foster masterplan to create a zero-carbon area the size of Wales in the Libyan desert
2. Foster's Stefan Behling with Saif Gaddafi, youngest son of Libyan president Colonel Gaddafi
- 3 & 4. Libyan entertainment - dancing men with luxuriant fake beards and traditional horseriders
5. The ancient city of Cyrene
- 6 & 7. Your correspondent's accommodation in the desert



6.



7.

The exhibition concentrates on three pilot schemes from the Foster masterplan. One is a luxury hotel located a stone's throw from the vast archaeological sites. Hotel accommodation is set into the mountains, reducing the development's impact on the scenery. The two others include more tourist destinations, the Spa Resort and Canyon Resort.

'During the 1960s and 1970s these unsustainable developments were dropped on the coast, sucking energy away from the surrounding area,' says Foster's head of design Spencer de Grey.

'Libya has the potential to leapfrog other countries and jump into the lead by supporting tourism in an intelligent, sustainable way,' he adds.

Finally, after a couple of hours of waiting, Saif Gaddafi arrives; the surprisingly geeky but baritone-voiced son of a dictator. Gaddafi has gathered the world media to witness him signing the 'Cyrene Declaration', which lays out the guiding principles of the Green Mountain Conservation and Development Authority. The declaration is long and idealistic, and includes a commitment to using locally sourced labour, food and energy; curbing 'unsustainable human activities'; and never making illegal payments.

'I love this area,' Gaddafi says, addressing the international press. 'I come here every year for two months, and it is also where my mother is from.'

'We know the effects that mass tourism can have on local

people, and on the environment. We believe this declaration will minimise these effects.'

If he is to be believed, the project will make the Green Mountain a zero-carbon region. The masterplan shows pictures of solar farms and wind turbines, with hardy *Jatropha* plantations that will provide biofuel in arid conditions.

But they are just pictures, and there is no real substance or figures to prove how it will work. Even the cost of the scheme is unclear - Joseph Stanislaw, a leading US economist and energy consultant to the project, can only give ballpark figures.

'We don't have exact numbers, but we're talking multi-billions of dollars. But if it is done properly, it can become a truly sustainable, self-sufficient area that can

absorb the costs that are products of growth' he says.

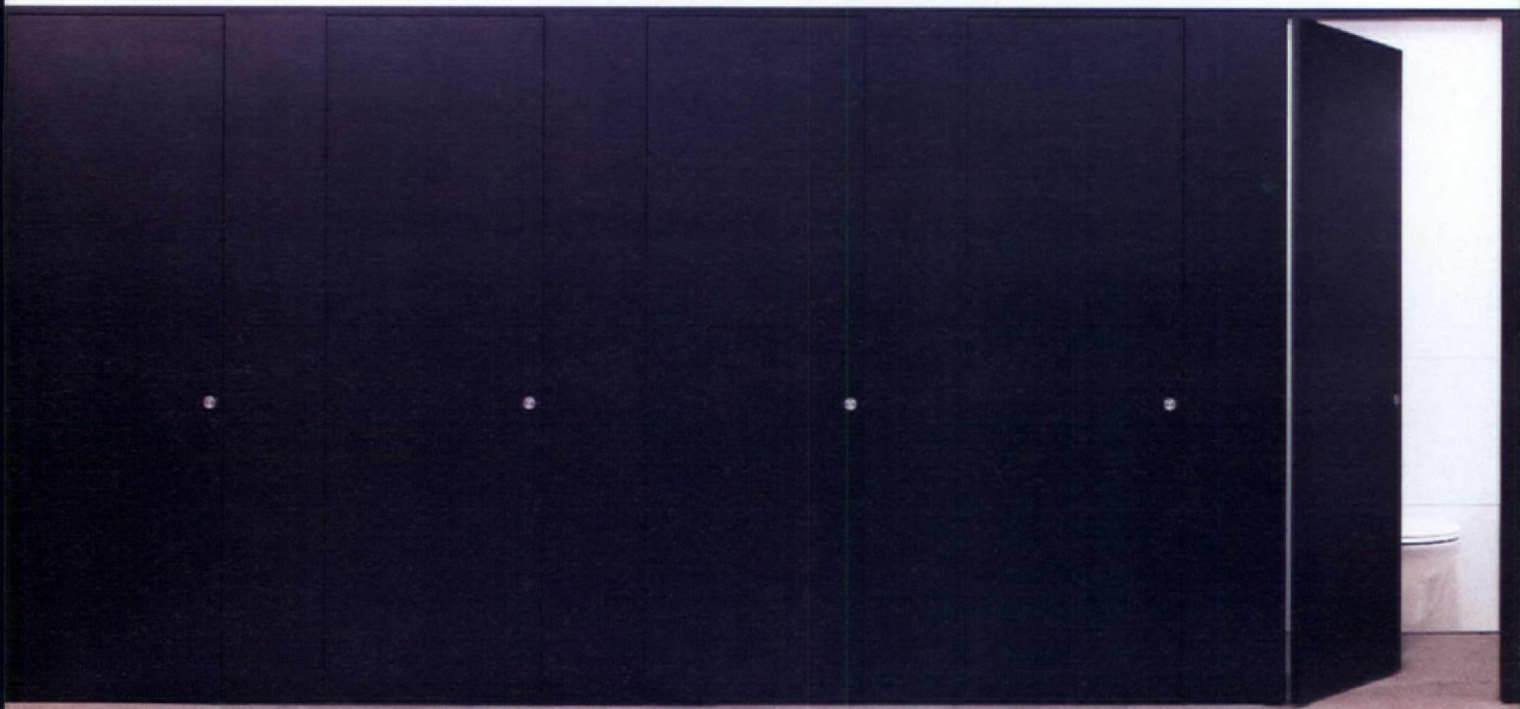
'By reducing its carbon footprint, Libya can then sell its carbon credits to other nations. It's about making profit, but not being greedy it.'

We are treated to a final banquet, where traditional Libyan horsemen parade in front of the guests, while men in fake beards dance to a Libyan beat. Robert Adam tells me that the success of the development will depend on more than a glossy brochure.

'It's an excellent masterplan, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating,' he says. 'There seems to be serious intent on Libya's side, but often ideologies can get in the way of these things.'

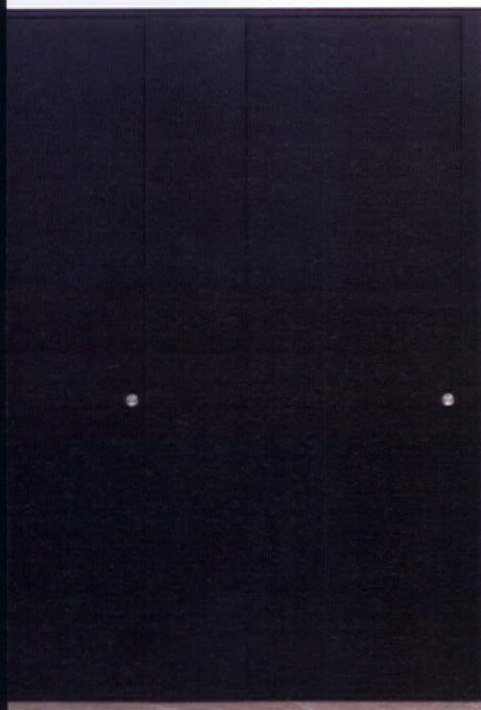
See more images of Libya at [www.ajplus.co.uk](http://www.ajplus.co.uk)



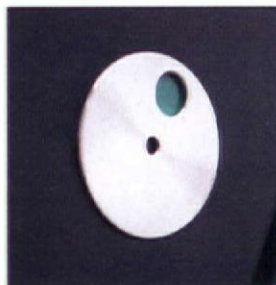


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### THE SOMETHING TO SIT ON SHORTLIST

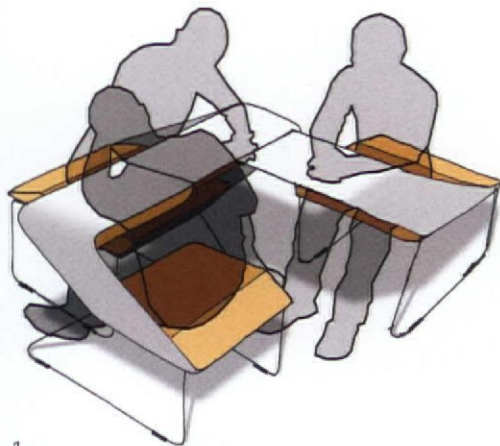
Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to work up a rendering with your laptop balanced on your knees? The AJ challenged the best minds in architecture – our readers – to come up with a seating solution for informal working. We had 50 inventive entries: chairs shaped like pappardelle, stools that looked like horses, walls that morphed into cushions – and not one that looked like Eames had designed it. The six pictured here made the shortlist, and can be seen at the AJ's stand at 100% Design in Earls Court from 20-23 September. The winner, a prototype of which will be made by our competition partner Modus, will be announced at a reception at the stand on Thursday 20 September, 6.30pm – please join us for a drink.

*By Will Hunter*

#### THE JUDGES

**Jon Powell and Ed Richardson**, directors, *Modus Furniture*  
**Ben Addy**, last year's winner and director, *Moxon Architects*  
**Patrik Fredrikson and Ian Stallard**, founders, *Fredrikson Stallard*  
**Mårten Claesson**, co-founder, *Claesson Koivisto Rune*  
**Simon Pengelly**, director, *Pengelly Design*  
**Will Hunter**, editor, *AJ Specification*

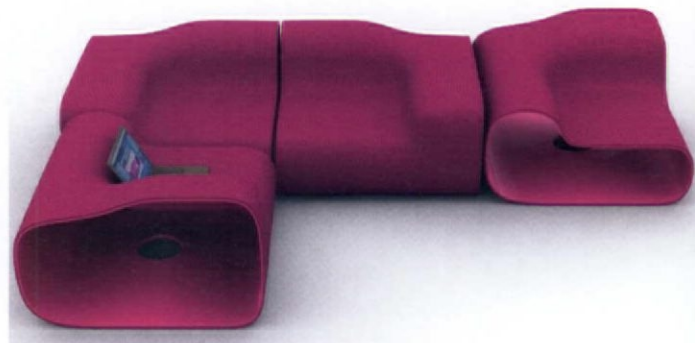
1. Base 01, by Richard Bassett, LSI Architects
2. Lab, by Camilla Bendix and Charlotte Budtz
3. Quads, by Barnaby Gunning, Gunning Groothuizen Architects
4. Flyby, by Simon Beames and Alastair Townsend, Youmeheshe Architects



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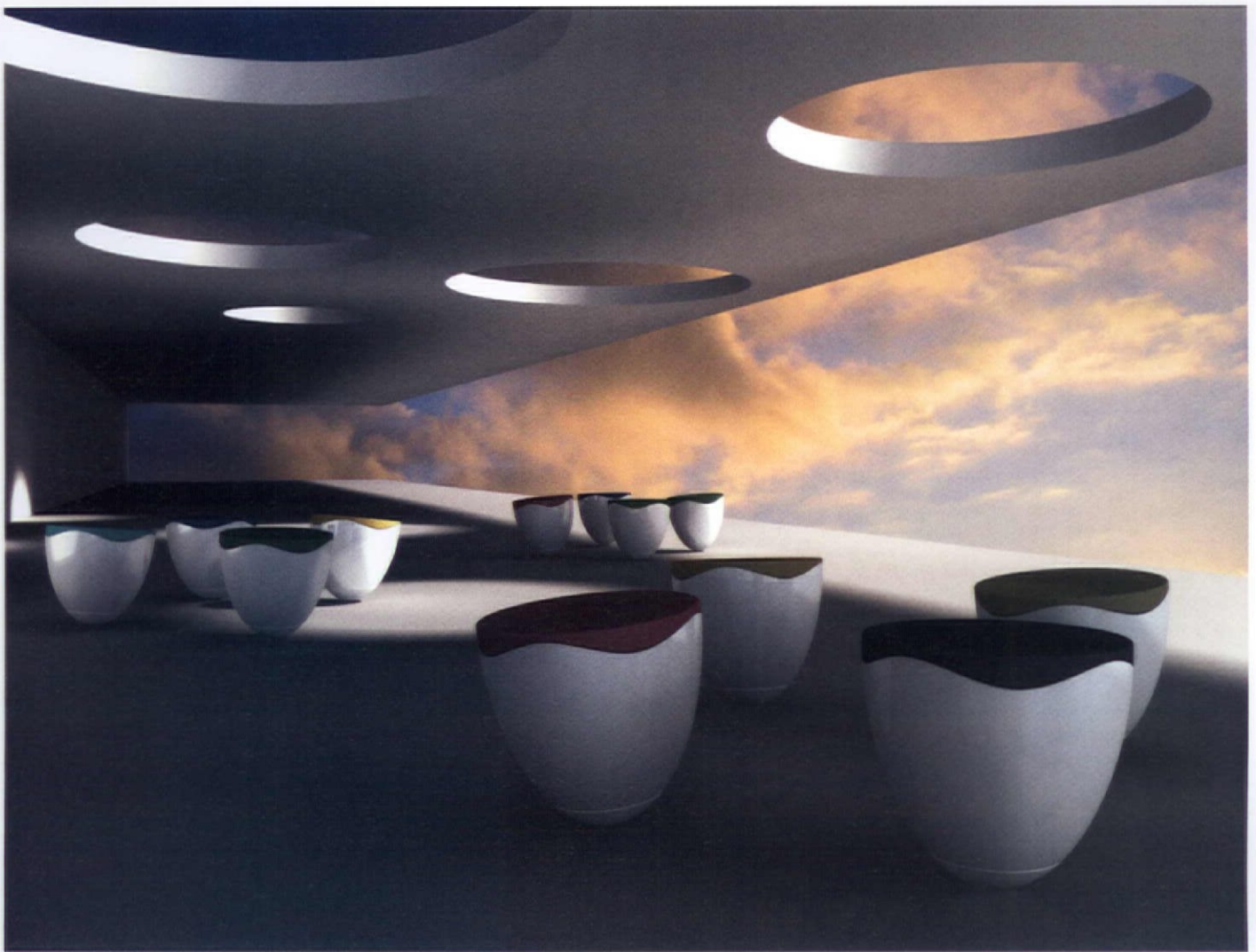


3.



4.





5.

5. Acorn, by Stephen Tierney,  
Tierney Haines Architects  
6. .Doc chair, by Christian  
Drinkwater, DLA Architecture



6.



### MANSER MEDAL FINALISTS REVEALED

The shortlist is revealed today for the Manser Medal, the annual award for the best one-off house in the UK. This year, four projects have been shortlisted for the prize, which was founded by former RIBA president Michael Manser. It will be a battle between two high-profile London-based architects of Canadian origin, Alison Brooks and Jamie Fobert, and two lesser-known practices with houses in Northern Ireland, Alan Jones and Hackett + Hall. Fobert is a previous winner of the Manser Medal, for his Anderson House in 2002. Brooks was shortlisted for the award in 2006, for her Wrap House, which won the Stephen Lawrence Prize for projects with a value of less than £1 million. But despite their form, neither Brooks nor Fobert is a dead cert for the prize, with all four projects strong contenders. The winner will be announced at the Stirling Prize dinner on Saturday 6 October. The award is sponsored by The Rooflight Company. See more on the projects at [www.ajplus.co.uk/stirling](http://www.ajplus.co.uk/stirling)

#### 1. Kander House, London NW3, by Jamie Fobert Architects

A Victorian townhouse has been reconfigured to provide contemporary family accommodation. The focus throughout is on volume, materials and light.

#### 2. The Salt House, St Lawrence Bay, Essex, by Alison Brooks Architects

A contemporary seaside house in the Modernist tradition, featuring a timber facade with undulating facets.

#### 3. Jones House, Randalstown, Antrim, by Alan Jones Architects

The context for this house is a graveyard and chapel. The response is deliberately ambiguous. From the front, tall narrow windows and a lack of detail hardly suggest a dwelling.

#### 4. Dowling House, Cultra, Down, Belfast, by Hackett + Hall

This three-storey building acts as a deep wall between forecourt and garden, and features framed views to the sea.



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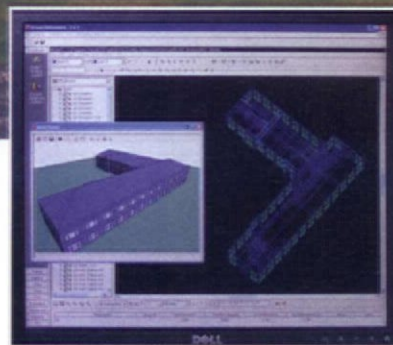
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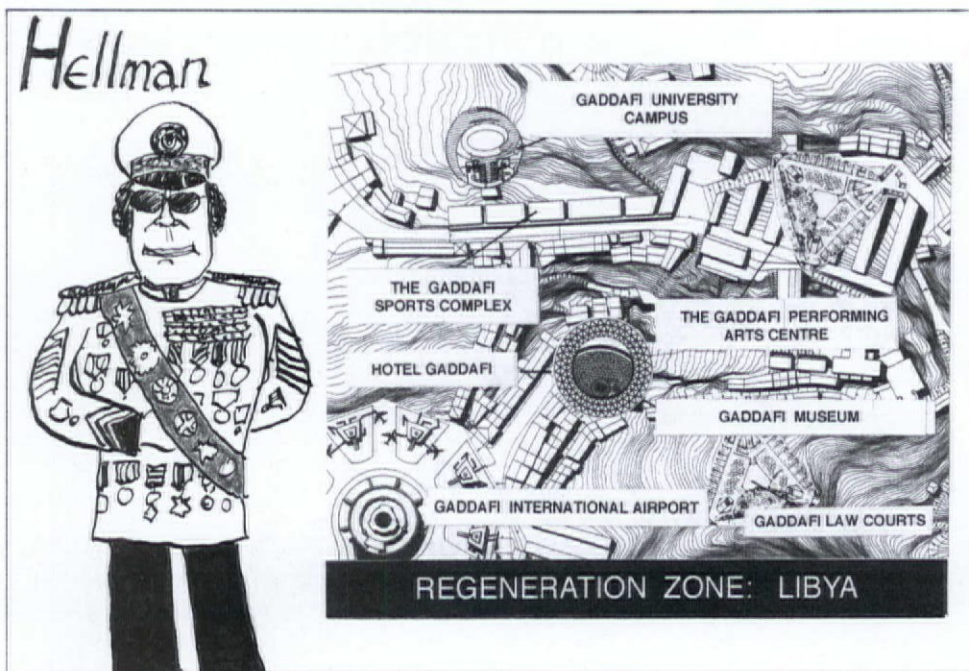
LSE's Tony Travers.  
*Observer*, 09.09.07

*'I have to give [developer] Larry Silverstein credit. They're doing something special there'*

Daniel Libeskind on the redevelopment of Ground Zero. *Financial Times*, 08.09.07

*'He's the Michelangelo of the Machine Age'*

Stephen Bayley on veteran designer Dieter Rams.  
*Observer*, 09.09.07



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#### FACE TO FACE

Astragal was a little surprised to receive a friendship request on social-networking website Facebook from that celebrated architectural blogger, **Norman Blogster**. It seems to go against the ethos of Facebook – revealing slightly more about yourself than is prudent – since Norman is resolutely anonymous. However, he is a member of the pithily named 'I don't need sex, the school of architecture fucks me all the time' group. Astragal was particularly taken by a discussion strand in this group about the most devastating comments people had received in a crit. Highlights include, 'If it was a cool shark, I would have a lot more respect for it, but it's like a retarded fish' and 'Mine is still the classic "it's quite a masculine building,

isn't it?" This perhaps wouldn't have been so bad if the brief had not been for a breast-cancer-caring centre.'

#### FINAL CHECK-IN

New RIBA president **Sunand Prasad** must have left his house in a hurry as he rushed to meet his fellow Stirling Prize judges at Gatwick last week. Shortly after arriving at check-in, Sunand became one of those poor souls that you see doing the repeated self pat-down – each more desperate than the last as it dawns that their passport is not in their pocket, but on the kitchen table. Still, despite missing that flight, Sunand did manage to arrive in Frankfurt in one piece after catching a later plane from Heathrow. The things some people will do for a little peace and quiet.

#### GARDEN SUBURB

Astragal's mutterings about his new home at former cigarette factory Greater London House have attracted the attentions of AJ cartoonist **Louis Hellman**, who grew up in its shadow in Mornington Crescent. In reminiscences sent to Astragal, the doodler describes how in 1926 the gargantuan structure was unceremoniously plonked on top of community gardens. 'The effect was that my family's house, which had looked on to greenery and mature trees, now faced the utilitarian backside of the factory,' Hellman goes on to describe Modernist architect **Maxwell Fry**'s outrage at the 'sham historical style' of the building, in a contemporary review for the AJ. For more of Louis' (criminally) unpublished *Who the Hellman Am I?* visit [www.ajplus.co.uk/blackcat](http://www.ajplus.co.uk/blackcat)





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## LETTERS

### PLYMOUTH LISTING RAISES FUNDAMENTAL DEBATE

Your excellent and timely article on Plymouth's Civic Centre ('Listing "holds Plymouth back"', AJ 16.08.07) strikes at the heart of three fundamental debates that should be central to current architectural reflection and criticism.

These are: reconsidering the merits of the architecture of the 1960s; the relation of buildings, especially those used by the public, to the public space and the city, town or village, so well defended by Kenneth Frampton (Opinion, AJ 02.08.07); and the hot political question of returning the proper finance and powers to elected municipal councils so they can avoid the miserable dependence of begging private developers for PFI. This would also allow councils to set up architectural departments to collaborate with planners.

Please continue to encourage the important debate of these questions.

*David Mackay, MBM Arquitectes*

### PLANNING PORTAL REQUIRES PERSEVERANCE

With regard to Martin Taylor's letter ('Planners have a major problem to scale', AJ 16.08.07), I have used the planning portal for all of my planning applications since February 2007, with 93 applications submitted to seven different local authorities, and have never had a request for paper copies to be submitted.

Personally, I wish that I had been introduced to the planning portal's merits a lot sooner. It is true that like any new product it can be frustrating at first, but after two or three applications it is far easier than paper copies.

Being able to submit PDF files electronically has not only reduced my stationery bill and postage costs considerably, but has also saved an immense amount of time in packaging up the applications. I use AutoCAD for drawing production – perhaps different software is creating problems?

I hope that Taylor will persevere. I am sure that he will soon change his opinion and will share my only regret that the portal was not available years ago.

*Stuart Pinches, Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees*

### MILTON KEYNES' DIFFERENCES ARE ITS STRENGTH

Perhaps it's an infection of some kind, but casual visitors to Milton Keynes seem compelled to write about the place with a negative twist. Andrew Mead (Critic's Choice, AJ 16.08.07) says: 'what still seems to be missing in Milton Keynes' centre is any animated public space; the shopping mall and boulevards dominate.'

They *are* the major animated public spaces. The 'mall', as Mead calls it, is a grid of covered streets with two major squares (one open to the sky) and is treated by English Heritage as Grade II\* and one of the great public buildings (alas now privatised) of the second Elizabethan age.

The boulevards are wide, generous and beautiful, and full of people coming and going in cars, buses and by slow modes.

The boulevards too need listing; they are being systematically damaged, but that is another story.

Milton Keynes is unlike anywhere else in the UK, and this is its strength. Who wants to be like everywhere else?

*David Lock, managing director, David Lock Associates*

### DOMES ARCHITECTURE SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED

I enjoyed the piece by Sam Jacob of FAT on the Millennium Dome, which has become the O2 Arena (AJ 06.09.07), and take his points about the changing roles of architecture and the architect that come out of working for clients like AEG. But when he asks rhetorically 'where's the architecture?' in the conventional sense, let's not rewrite history too far. Yes, the millennium exhibition, costing several hundred million, was a disappointment perhaps best forgotten, but let's not ignore the dome itself as architecture.

It was designed as a functional enclosure as well as a Greenwich landmark. Given the muddle in organising the exhibition, it is perhaps not surprising that Mike Davies from the Richard Rogers Partnership described the dome at the time as 'a monument to indecision'. But it did and can continue to work as a building. If the architectural community is ready to tar the building with the same brush as the millennium exhibition, the engineering community was more discerning. The dome won, for Buro Happold, the annual MacRobert Award for Britain's best piece of engineering in any field – medical, bio, IT, structural, etc.

It is not a tent in the conventional sense – the canvas is not structural but clipped on in segments. Rather it is a masted cable net, a system that could be used for much larger enclosures by introducing other, concentric circles of masts. At the time there was some interest from mineral-prospecting companies for building temporary settlements in inhospitable climates such as Alaska. It is a more buildable system for this than Bucky Fuller's domes.

And though I never saw the final figures, the estimate that the AJ itself published during construction was £40 million for the building, around £500/m<sup>2</sup> – the sort of money being spent on retail sheds at the time. Value-for-money architecture.

*Andrew Green, Cranbrook, Kent*

### LIMEWORKS CONVERSION DESERVES WITTY OWNER

As a connoisseur of the 'building type x turned into building type y' school of architecture, I was delighted to see one of the wackiest, Artlab Architects' proposal (ajplus 11.09.07) to turn a lime-kiln into a private house. What fun, what ambition. And I do hope that the eventual owner has the wit to give their house that Agatha Christie-ish title, 'The Limes'.

*Joanna Fletcher, Basingstoke*

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](mailto: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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# REGENERATING BARKING





# BARKING RISING

Barking, in the east London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD), is redeveloping at a fantastic rate. As you can see from this map, projects from a range of practices are at various stages of implementation. On pages 26–29 Kieran Long tells the story of how regeneration came to Barking, and on pages 30–35 he looks at the area's first high-profile new project: Allford Hall Monaghan Morris' Barking Learning Centre and housing.

*An exhibition 'Barking: A Model Town Centre', curated by muf with AJ editor Kieran Long, is running at Barking Learning Centre until 27 September.*

## LBBD'S STRATEGIC SITES IN BARKING TOWN CENTRE

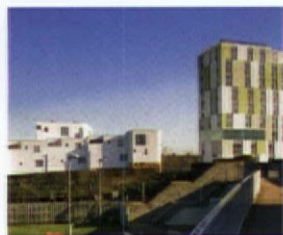
- AXE STREET
- GASCOIGNE ESTATE
- FRESHWHARF ESTATE
- LONDON RD & NORTH ST
- THE LINTONS
- TOWN SQUARE
- TANNER ST GATEWAY
- RODNEY CORRIDOR
- RIVER RODING



Waking Road Foyer. Jestico + Whiles for the East Thames Housing Association. Estimated completion 2008, 6,500m<sup>2</sup>. For young people in need of housing.



Barking Central. Allford Hall Monaghan Morris with muf for Redrow Regeneration. The first phase, a learning centre and two blocks of housing, is complete.



Tanner Street. Jestico + Whiles and Peter Barber for the East Thames Housing Association. Completed 2007, 11,700 m<sup>2</sup>. The scheme won a 2007 RIBA regional award.

The Lintons. Home to a slab block, to be demolished and replaced with a mixed-use area over the next four years. The council is out to tender for a developer and architect.



Station Quarter. London Thames Gateway Development Corporation. An indicative plan by Rick Mather Architects shows ambitions for the site.



LEGI Building. Karakusevic Carson for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Estimated completion 2009, 9,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Planned enterprise centre.





**Barking Learning Centre.** Allford Hall Monaghan Morris for Redrow. The first completed element in Barking Central. Covered in detail on pages 30-35.



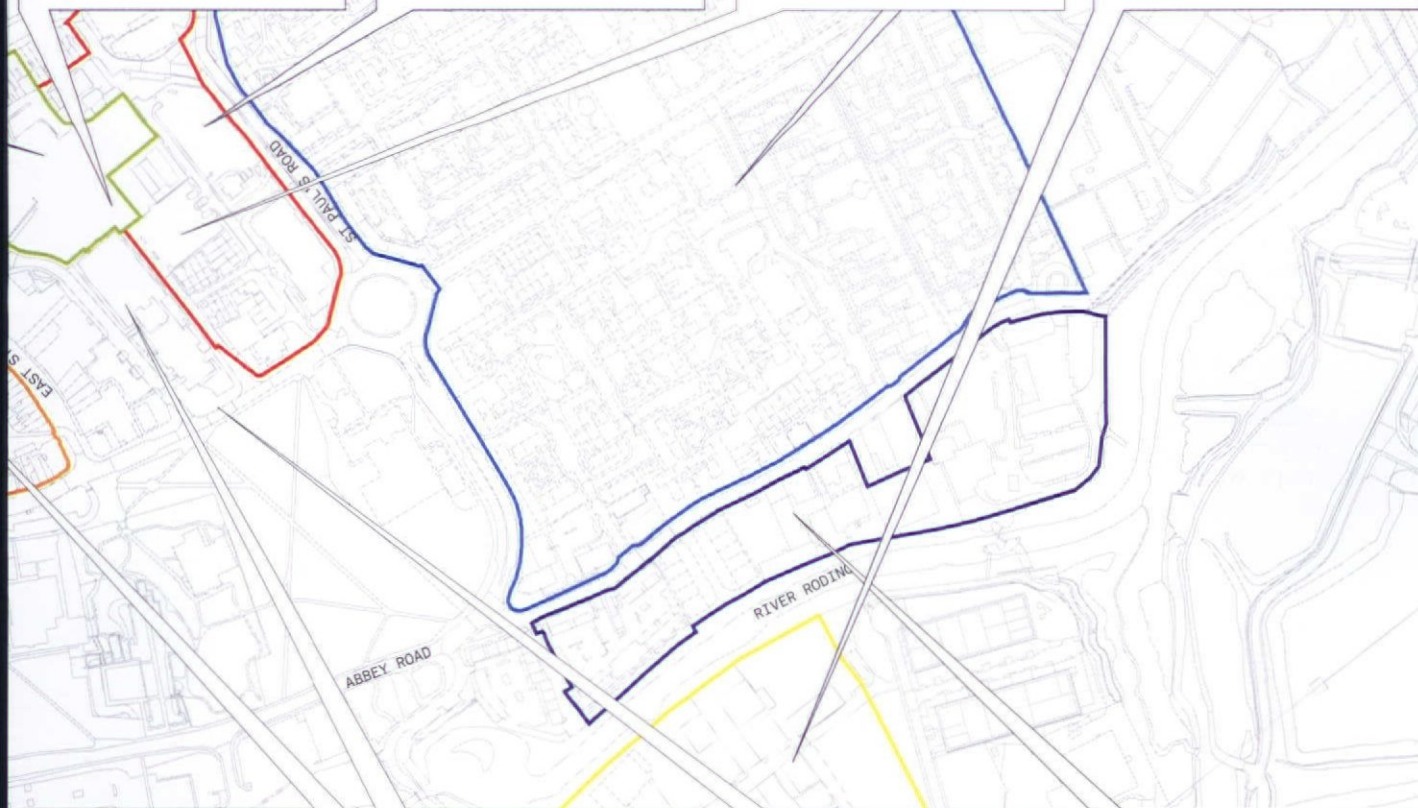
**Axe Street.** Jestico + Whiles for East Thames Housing Association. Estimated completion 2008, 9,000 m<sup>2</sup>. A 93-home development now under construction.



**Barking Town Centre Health Centre.** Group Dyer for Barking and Havering LIFT, estimated completion 2008. To include a GP practice and dentistry services.

**Gascoigne Estate.** Barking Council will go out to tender for a design framework for the regeneration of this estate, using OJEU notices for individual projects.

**Freshwharf Estate.** Stock Woolstencroft for Freshwharf Estates and Countryside Properties. Some 1,200 new homes and industrial buildings are planned.



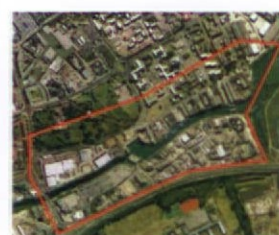
**London Road Site.** Rick Mather Architects. This English Partnerships-backed scheme proposes a new commercial heart for Barking, with a large public square.



**Town Hall.** Hawkins\Brown for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Completed 2004. A £1.9 million restoration of the 1930s-designed hall.



**Broadway Theatre Square.** Burns + Nice for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, completed 2005. The first project in a broader public-realm strategy.



**River Roding Corridor.** Rick Mather Architects for the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation. A design strategy is in place for a cultural quarter here.



## THE FUTURE OF PLACES LIKE THIS WILL BE DELIVERED BY COMPROMISE

*By Kieran Long. Photography by David Grandorge*

'Barking is a place that's neither London nor Essex,' says the man known as the Bard of Barking. 'And if you go to the north-east and there's countryside, to the south it is heavily industrialised, with the gasworks.'

The singer Billy Bragg goes on to tell me about his mother's house on the Becontree Estate in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The largest council estate in the world, Becontree consists of 25,000 houses, and was built between 1921 and 1932 on the eastern side of Barking town centre, housing 100,000 people. Many, like Bragg's mother, moved from east London slums to jobs in the Ford car plant in Dagenham.

Today, Bragg tells me, his mum feels things are moving too quickly. Barking is in the throes of a transformation that will add 8,000 new homes to the town and radically reshape it. But this story is about more than just one town. It is a story of urban design and planning in the private-sector-led regeneration industry, and of how the future of places like this will be defined by compromises; and of overlapping public and private interests.

Barking is the doorstep of the Thames Gateway, and a place that is being regenerated according to every orthodoxy in the book. There will be dense residential development near a transport node; there is demolition of '60s slab blocks; there is a public-realm strategy and an Urban Design Framework. There will be piazzas; there will be a cultural-industries quarter, which seems *de rigueur* these days; and there are surgical interventions in the existing fabric. There are even going to be tall buildings.

But this is all the new Barking. Rewind 10 years, and Jeremy Grint recalls the time when he began his tenure as Barking's head of regeneration. 'When I arrived here in the mid-'90s they didn't really have a plan. There were bits and pieces, but no coherent strategy for the town centre.'

This was a time when Barking was not on the map: pre-Thames Gateway and pre-Olympics, it was a place of post-industrial blight. The town centre was scarred by inhumane Modernist housing, with its characteristically unfathomable naming strategy – the Lintons, the Gascoigne, the Bloomfield, Cleveland and Wakering.

Grint remembers: 'In 1990 Barking got a new shopping centre (Vicarage Fields, developed by Countryside) but didn't get anything else until 2003. While there were ambitions, nothing happened.' Despite having fantastic public transport – Barking is near the A13, on the District Line and connected by mainline rail to Fenchurch Street and Tower Hill in just 15 minutes – and cheap land, the area was ignored by the private sector.

To create greater cohesion in the area and make it more attractive to development, Grint's office drafted a Unitary Development Plan and an 'action plan' by regeneration consultant URBED. The plan accomplished little; investors were still hesitant.

But in 1998 there was a paradigm shift in the borough. First came the A13 Artscape project, an £11 million public-arts programme along a stretch of the A13, co-ordinated by Dublin architect Tom de Paor and comprising small-scale projects by





1. A view from the top of a tower on the massive Gascoigne Estate, which dominates south Barking

numerous designers. This was effective PR, but also became a catalyst for other things to happen. More importantly, 1998 saw a change of leadership in the local Labour council after Tony Blair's election the previous year. Grint says: 'Interestingly, [the Labour councillors] aligned themselves with the new government's agenda. Before that they had a bit of an island mentality.'

This agenda included the recently started New Deal for Communities, which the borough tapped for funding, and a commitment to orchestrated regeneration across London led by the individual boroughs. Barking was instrumental in setting up the Thames Gateway London Partnership, which gained profile and power after Tim Williams became head in 1999. Mark Brearley of Design for London (DfL) (then the Architecture and Urbanism Unit (AUU)) says: 'The panic was on. There was a realisation of the importance of town centres, unlocking resources for the London Development Agency to focus on places like Lewisham or Barking.'

As part of A13 Artscape (which was funded by Transport for London and the Arts Council), the borough commissioned a study to propose a new Town Hall Square. This led directly to the appointment, in 1999, of developer Urban Catalyst to develop it, with housing and a library around it. They brought in Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM), but failed to secure funding. After Urban Catalyst left the project, Redrow Regeneration rode to the rescue, keeping AHMM's designs, albeit with higher densities. This project is now under construction (see pages 30-35).

In the background, Barking was trying to commission a design-led urban vision. It appointed young practices East and Sergison Bates to undertake an Urban Design Framework.

Grint says that the result of the practices' work was a combination of common sense, and three headline proposals: '4,000 net new homes in Barking town centre; better quality in the public realm; and increasing prosperity of local businesses and local people. This changed how people viewed Barking. "Oh there is an opportunity here, and we should start to look at it."'

The practices' other success was to define areas that could be considered as distinct neighbourhoods. The council then commissioned Allies and Morrison (A&M) to undertake a masterplan that could be more specific about streetscape and massing. By that time, the younger practices had effectively been sidelined. A&M's work was a study on the most characterful streets in the town – East Street and Ripple Road. The practice proposed an east/west emphasis that could create an axis stretching from the station in the east to the River Roding in the west. It also proposed that Ripple Road should remain low-rise, and higher buildings be built on the site of the Lintons Estate.

Meanwhile, the first demolitions had begun. Barking Council was in the fortunate position of owning a high proportion of the properties in the town centre. It decanted three seven-storey slabs to the north of the Northern Relief Road and replaced them with housing by Jestico + Whiles and Peter Barber for the East Thames Housing Association (ETHA). This was a step change in





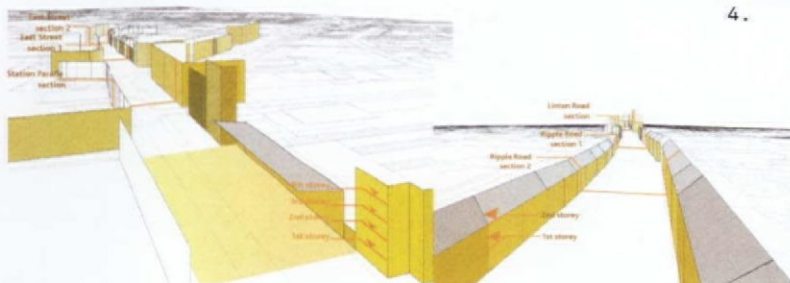
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2. East Street, Barking's main shopping street, to be transformed by Rick Mather  
3. LBBB's offices in the town centre  
4. The River Roding  
5 & 6. Allies and Morrison's studies of East Street (left) and Ripple Road (right) demonstrate the latter's low-scale character

design quality, with Barber's Siza-inflected terraces lining quiet roads, and Jestico + Whiles' tower giving the district a skyline.

Furlong Homes began a residential development by the River Roding, and Countryside Properties planned a 1,200-home development on the Freshwharf Estate. ETHA planned more housing by Jestico + Whiles. Public agencies were now joining in too: AUU was involved, and English Partnerships (EP) was taking a keen interest because of the town centre's relationship with Barking Riverside, the massive development area to the south.

The risk of having so many projects was incoherence. Former Southwark regeneration supremo Fred Manson, while working for the Greater London Authority, was part of the panel that selected East Architects. 'I ran a session in 2004 where we invited 15 different design teams working in Barking,' he says. 'Six or seven did presentations. It was the first time they had talked to each other, and each of them had decided that their scheme was the heart of Barking.'

This view seems to be borne out by looking at the urban moves of many of the projects. AHMM's development is called 'Barking Central', asserting its primacy in the town because of its adjacency to the town hall. Just to the north, Rick Mather's plan for the block between East Street and London Road creates another square in front of the magistrates' court.

Instead of reinforcing the east-west axis, Mather's project creates a circulatory route around the shopping centre, which would seem to contradict some of the principles in A&M's

masterplan. Both Barking Central and Mather's scheme seem to shift Barking from a town characterised by two intersecting shopping streets into one of two neighbouring squares.

Today, the pressure on Barking is tremendous. Grint says: 'There's a huge imperative to get it done quickly, tied up with meeting government agendas about housing targets.'

As a result, the council has often plumped for the quickest routes to delivery. One of these is EP's framework of architects. DfL is reportedly concerned about Barking's over-use of designers on this list, but it avoids the hassle of going through OJEU processes. This has happened at the Lintons, at the River Roding, and with Mather's London Road scheme. The regeneration of the massive Gascoigne Estate will try a new method, using an EP-sponsored architect to design an initial framework, and individual tenders for smaller parcels of the huge estate.

There is a sense that the EP-sponsored projects in the town centre are, if not beyond the control of the council, on a slightly different track. One such scheme, Mather's cultural quarter on the River Roding, is described in some alarmingly pragmatic terms by the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC). Peter Elliott is the development manager for Barking Town Centre, and he is clear about LTGDC's role as one of 'coercing and encouraging' market forces to effect change. The cultural quarter will provide studio accommodation around an arts centre and cinema in two of the historic buildings left by the Roding: the Malthouse and the Icehouse.





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7. Peter Barber Architects' Tanner Street housing  
 8. A view of the Lintons Estate between projects by Jestico + Whiles on the left and Barber on the right  
 9. A drawing by East from its Urban Design Framework of 2003, defining some neighbourhoods that correspond to the borough's current development zones

When asked about the dangers of gentrification, Elliott says: 'This [artistic] community is migrating eastwards as it is priced out of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. All of a sudden new areas become quite bohemian and trendy.' The cultural regeneration versus gentrification debate is about to hit Barking. Fred Manson says in retort: 'That orthodoxy was heresy 20 years ago. It was only Hackney's lack of a policy that allowed [the creation of a community of artists] to happen there.'

According to Di Haigh, A&M director and now director of architecture at CABE, part of A&M's task was to recommend characteristics of the town worthy of preservation. Her harshest criticism is of AHMM's scheme. 'We felt on Ripple Road there was a frontage that was of interest, which upset AHMM. They had a tower planned that we felt would blast apart the frontage of the road.' AHMM's Redrow Regeneration-backed scheme won out. While many agencies would like to describe what happens in these regeneration projects as a series of happy compromises, there have been hard and fast choices made.

But it can seem as though the very people aiming to preserve Barking's character are the ones sidelined. When I spoke to A&M, they told me that they had no idea of the status of the work they had carried out (the council told me that it has been 'embodied' into a borough-wide strategic document). Mark Brearley says: 'The struggle is that there is no culture of planning in this country. You do all these processes of masterplans and frameworks, and some even get official status, but it is very unusual

that they get through to have some kind of planning status. The reality is that it is an ongoing process'

A process like this can drive a wedge between the reality of people's lives and the developers' PR. In 2006, 11 members of the British National Party were elected to Barking Council. For all of Redrow's rhetoric ('Talking 'bout regeneration', reads the site hoarding outside AHMM's new library) the people occupying the flats it has built are unlikely to be those campaigning against far-right politics in the borough.

Manson says: 'The people of Barking don't see how [regeneration] is going to benefit them. The estates are low-cost and the people are poor. All of a sudden you have people saying "I'd like to live here", and if you're a council tenant you don't like these people. It's what happened in Canada Water and it split the community down the middle.' Bragg traces the genesis of Barking's current problems to the last socially seismic event affecting the borough – the closure of the Dagenham Ford factory in 2000. 'The borough is still in shock from that loss. It undermined the social glue,' he says. Whether the social rifts in Barking are mended or hidden by the town's reinvention remains to be seen.

Creekmouth, a small place near Barking, has a preservation society. A bunch of campaigners is lobbying the Thames Gateway Development Corporation to recognise its very presence on the map. Bragg says: 'They are saying, if everything going to disappear here, we want the streets to be named after local families and people. That way, local people feel that it's theirs.'



## THIS AESTHETIC IS NOT OF BARKING. IT IS ALL ABOUT MAKING OBVIOUS WHAT IS COMING IN THE FUTURE

*By Kieran Long*

The green and yellow balconies of regeneration have arrived in Barking. Allford Hall Monaghan Morris' (AHMM's) latest building – 246 apartments above a two-storey library – is the first built flowering of the reinvention that this east London town will undergo by 2020: 8,000 new homes in the town centre, and another 10,800 at Barking Riverside to the south. This first phase of developer Redrow Regeneration's Barking Central project is a detailed example of the regeneration vernacular of the early 21st century; our first sign of what the Thames Gateway could become.

Barking Central will consist of five buildings, all of them housing with mixed-use ground floors, and all designed by London-based AHMM. These will be grouped around new public spaces designed by art/architecture practice muf.

AHMM's urban strategy has created a square for the first time in front of the 1950s town hall. Although some councillors feel that Barking Central hides away their beloved workplace, I think AHMM has dealt well with a tough decision. Rather than a singular formal square dominated by the front of the town hall, the public realm is broken down into two smaller spaces. The first of these, designed by muf, is complete, hard-landscaped in a pinkish granite, with purple park benches. The second space will be the more intriguing, conceived as an urban arboretum with a dense area of trees outside the long colonnade at ground level.

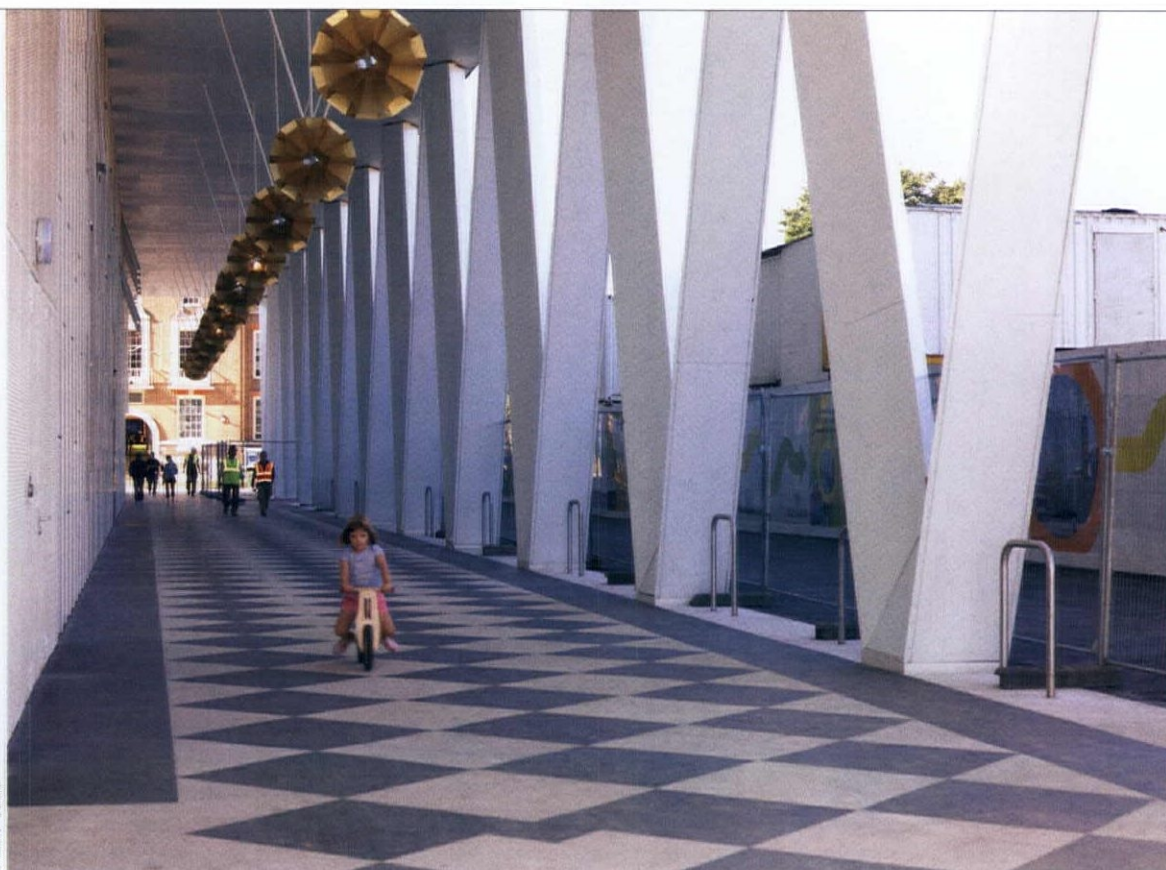
Absolutely the best thing about AHMM's building is this colonnade. It is a double-height walkway, which will form a genuine public route from the Ripple Road shops to the town hall.











10. Muf's colonnade, adjacent to the library, has terrazzo floors and chandeliers by Tom Dixon

The scale is fantastic, and the diagonal columns give enclosure but always views out. Muf has embellished it with chandeliers designed by Tom Dixon and a beautiful terrazzo floor, which extends into the lobby of the housing. Squint hard and you could be in Venice.

The building itself is a signature of Barking's new future, but its 'landmarkness' lies more in its scale and colour than in its form. The completed building consists of three big rectangular blocks: the library acting as a two-storey plinth, with two slim stacks of flats on top. A small, low protuberance to the west contains a small gallery and classrooms, and also encloses the town hall square, screening an electricity substation that sits behind it.

The new library retains the original's structure which, project architect Ross Hutchinson says, 'adds a character that is quite unusual'. But that's only true if you're aware of its genesis. It is, to all intents and purposes, a new library, just with an outdated structural frame.

Above is flats, flats, flats. All one- and two-bedroom and 100 per cent for private sale. Double-loaded corridors, 75m-long, lead to skinny units with minimal lobby space and one bedroom leading directly onto the kitchen/lounge room, a layout AHMM is proud of. The flats are efficient enough and the balconies give spectacular views at the higher levels.

What this building proves is that this time round, regeneration will be built by the private sector, and what it knows about is branding. AHMM's work is perfect for this new atmosphere – it looks new, it's not threatening, and it deals in

efficient space planning with attractive surfaces. On its exterior, this project relies on patterns, whether in the repeating balconies on all four residential facades or the less regular but equally arbitrary hit-and-miss glazing of the gallery and library.

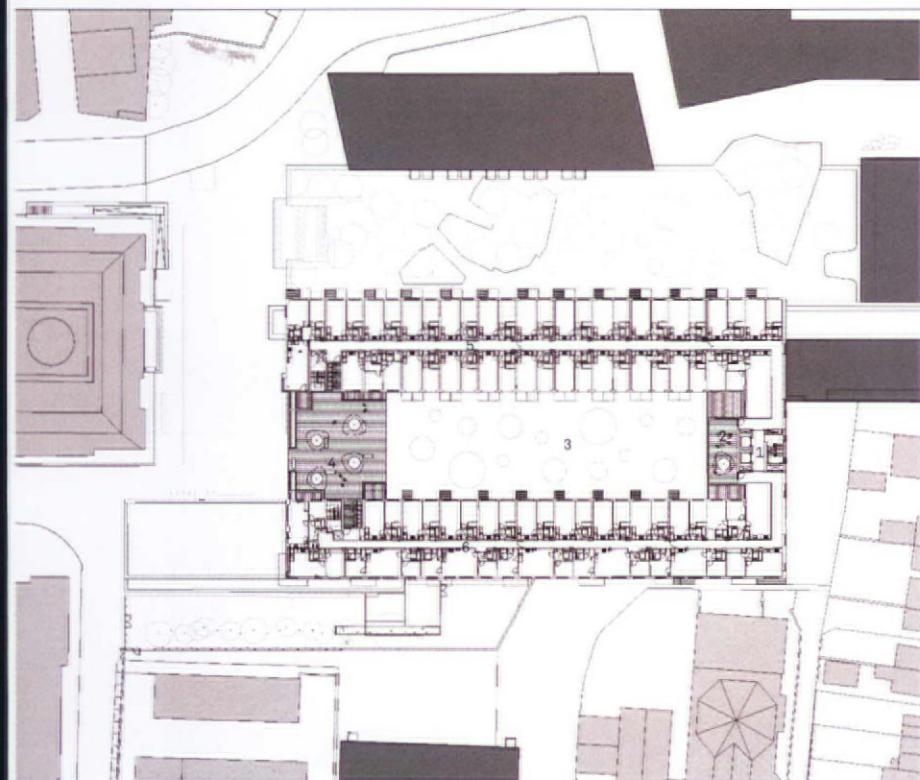
AHMM's Unity Building in Liverpool (AJ 01.03.07) is similar in that sense. Both projects look like foam block models that have been skinned with a natty fabric. These patterns suggest that above a certain scale AHMM becomes less interested in typology and more and more in scale and massing.

I think these patterns amplify the scale of already quite huge buildings. In Barking they always have an eye on the view from the A13. AHMM talks a lot about their character, but my view is that they don't really have one. This aesthetic self-consciously is not of Barking, but is all about making obvious what will happen in the future. It is the architectural version of Blairite optimism – brightly coloured, serviced and saleable.

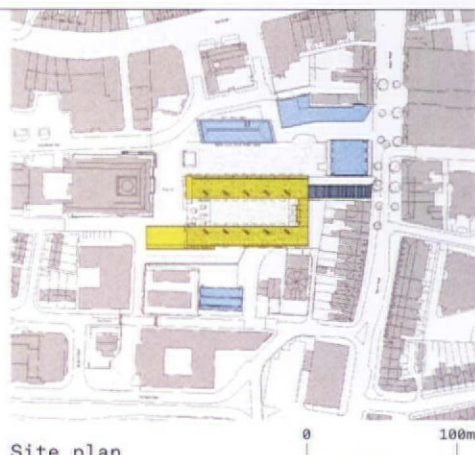
The credit that the architects deserve is in delivering this extraordinarily fraught project at all. More than one person I have spoken to in Barking credited Paul Monaghan and his team with driving the project through when others were losing faith. This is architecture partly as creative entrepreneurship, making decisions and effecting compromises that allow other things to happen.

It is impossible, walking around the area and seeing how desperately it needs an injection of energy, to be negative about Barking Central. While this is Regeneration with a capital R, AHMM has set an effective benchmark for Barking's development.

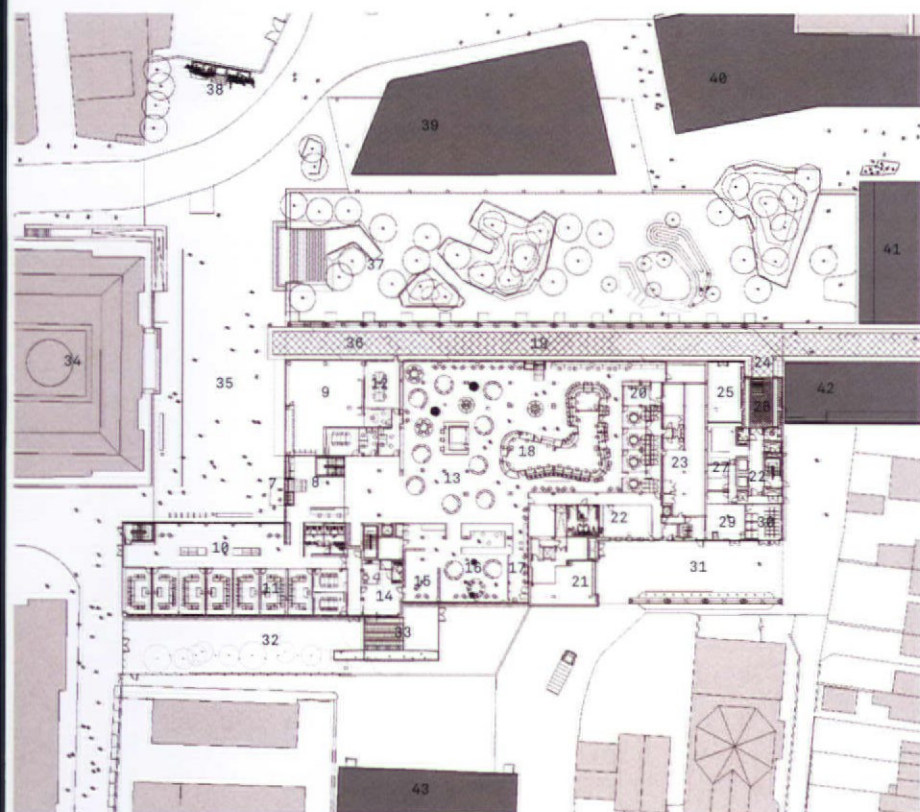




Second-floor plan



Site plan



Ground-floor plan

#### KEY

- 1 RESIDENTIAL CORE
- 2 COMMUNAL DECKED TERRACE (GRANT ASSOCIATES)
- 3 PLANTING CIRCLES (GRANT ASSOCIATES)
- 4 COMMUNAL DECKED TERRACE (GRANT ASSOCIATES)
- 5 CUTMORE (NORTH BLOCK ONE- AND TWO-BED APARTMENTS)
- 6 SCHRIER (SOUTH BLOCK ONE- AND TWO-BED APARTMENTS)
- 7 BARKING LEARNING CENTRE ENTRANCE
- 8 MARKETPLACE
- 9 CAFÉ
- 10 GALLERY AND BREAKOUT SPACE
- 11 CLASSROOMS
- 12 ADMINISTRATION
- 13 LIBRARY EXPRESS
- 14 CRÊCHE
- 15 'MY FIRST LIBRARY'
- 16 CHILDREN'S LIBRARY
- 17 TEEN LIBRARY
- 18 ONE-STOP SHOP
- 19 ONE-STOP-SHOP ENTRANCE
- 20 ONE-STOP-SHOP CASHIER AND MEETING ROOMS
- 21 DELIVERY BAY
- 22 STAFFROOM
- 23 BOOK STORE
- 24 RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE
- 25 RESIDENTIAL CYCLE STORE
- 26 RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE HALL
- 26 PLANT
- 28 RESIDENTIAL CORE
- 29 SUBSTATION
- 30 RESIDENTIAL REFUSE STORE
- 31 SERVICE ROAD
- 32 LEARNING CENTRE GARDEN
- 33 CRÊCHE GARDEN
- 34 BARKING TOWN HALL
- 35 TOWN HALL SQUARE BY MUF
- 36 COLONNADE BY MUF
- 37 ARBORETUM BY MUF
- 38 SECRET GARDEN BY MUF
- 39 PHASE 2 BUILDING 2
- 40 PHASE 2 BUILDING 1
- 41 PHASE 2 BUILDING 3
- 42 PHASE 2 BUILDING 5
- 43 PHASE 2 BUILDING 4





11.



12.



13.





13.

10. A protuberance from the library  
encloses the Town Hall Square  
11. Balconies overlook an elevated  
open space  
12 & 13. Inside the library

## Credits

Original Wates start on site date  
December 2004  
Wates stop works on site date  
August 2005  
Ardmore recommencement of works on site  
December 2005  
Contract duration  
46 months  
Barking Learning Centre completion/opening  
June 2007  
Residential sectional completion (north block)  
June 2007  
Residential sectional completion (south block)  
November 2007  
Gross external area  
Barking Learning Centre: 5,800m<sup>2</sup>  
Residential: 14,000m<sup>2</sup>  
Phase 1 contract form  
Design & Build (JCT 98 CD with Quantities)  
Phase 1 contract value  
£35 million  
Client  
Redrow Regeneration  
Barking Learning Centre stakeholders  
London Borough of Barking & Dagenham; Barking College;  
University of East London  
Architect  
Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects  
Project manager  
Gill Associates  
Quantity surveyor  
Nigel Rose

Structural/civil engineer  
Buro Happold  
Services engineer  
Faber Maunsell/ CPC/ Kier  
Landscape architect  
Grant Associates  
Public-realm architect  
MUF  
Fire consultant  
Buro Happold  
Accessibility consultant  
Buro Happold  
Highways consultant  
Buro Happold  
Acoustic consultant  
Bickerdike Allen  
Planning consultant  
Hepher Dixon (246 scheme) and Robson Planning  
Consultancy (up to 206 scheme)  
Planning supervisor  
Tweeds Project Services  
Approved inspector  
NHBC  
Main contractor  
Ardmore Construction  
Selected subcontractors and suppliers  
*Learning Centre cladding and glazing* M-Price; *residential cladding*  
Cladding UK; *residential windows* Leiab; *Learning Centre cladding*  
Shuco; *Learning Centre flooring* Freudenberg; *residential cladding*  
Trespa; *Learning Centre furniture* Quinze & Milan/SCP, Vitra



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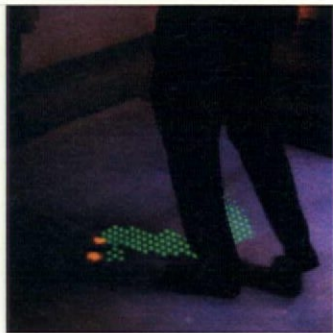
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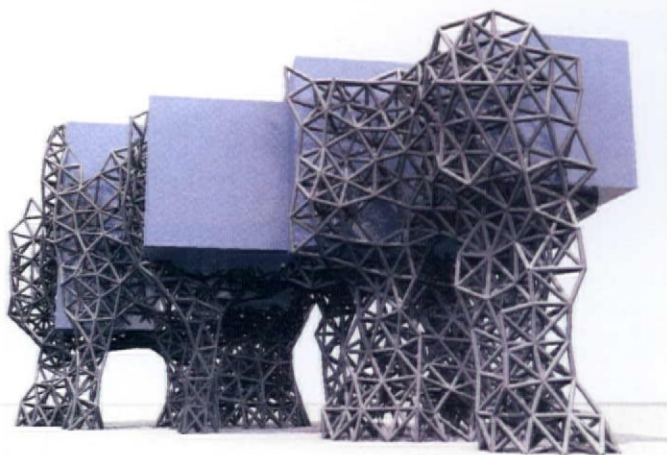




1 & 2. Examples of work by students on the Bartlett's architecture and computation MSc course



1.



2.

BARTLETT COMPUTATION COURSE BALANCES EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

*Embedded, Embodied, Adaptive: Architecture and Computation. An exhibition of the work of the Bartlett's architecture and computation MSc students at the ICA, 5 September.*

'Education is dragging practitioners around because it is creating new possibilities' said Fosters partner Hugh Whitehead at the conclusion of a seminar last week at the ICA, which marked the start of the second year of the Bartlett's new MSc in architecture and computation. *Embedded, Embodied, Adaptive: Architecture and Computation*, an informative small catalogue published simultaneously with the one-night show of student work at the ICA, explains that the course 'aims to give students a solid theoretical and technical foundation for the use of computation as a means to realise their designs, understand the built environment, and create architecture'. Judging from the work on show, the course is doing just that.

Student work on the course covers the spectrum from detailed parametric investigations of curved surfaces to human interaction with the urban environment. Examples include an investigation of a light-sensitive cladding system which could self-regulate according to external environmental conditions and internal occupant behaviour; simulation of growth patterns from nature to generate building form; an interactive stage for street performers; and a study of pedestrian movements in Bath to determine future urban interventions. The course sits naturally alongside the Bartlett's Space Syntax research, and there is a certain synergy between some of the work.

But it is not just architecture students who have turned to the Bartlett for digital expertise. At the ICA seminar, sculptor Antony Gormley explained how his work has benefited from the virtual world in two fundamental ways. First,

he said, in 'the transformation of art from a unique object embalmed in an institution to the production of fields where the viewer becomes the viewed,' and secondly in that this 'adaptation' assumes we are all part of the design process. For Gormley, extreme computing involves a crafts-based implicit knowledge of softwares and algorithms which enables algorithmically derived patterns. 'We can now be inside the processes of nature,' says Gormley, 'before you could only observe them'.

Judging from the job placement of last year's graduates (Zaha, Foster, YRM, and Kohn Pederson Fox, among others) and the invited list of speakers who lecture on the course, there appears to be a healthy interface between education and practice. Which is leading which need not be the issue; but rather the focus should be on the continued development of a mutually supportive and collaborative relationship.

EVENTS

*Marcel Breuer's Concrete*  
**18 Sept, 7pm**  
Docomomo, The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1  
dsharp@sharparchitects.co.uk

*RIBA Research Symposium 2007 – Reflections on Practice: Capturing Innovation and Creativity*  
**19 Sept, 9:30am-5pm**  
RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London  
Research@inst.riba.org  
www.architecture.com

*CDM 2007: Making a Difference*  
**20 Sept, 2-5pm**  
RIBA North East, Newcastle  
Caroline.albin@inst.riba.org

*Bioenergy 2007 – Sustainability, Innovation and Integration: Latest Thinking on Biomass and Biofuels*  
**20-21 Sept**  
SAD Business School, Oxford  
www.r-p-a.org.uk





## TUNING UP THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

By Hattie Hartman

1. An adjustable fabric canopy has replaced the timber baffle over the hall's stage

The jury is still out regarding the success of the acoustic overhaul of the Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank, which reopened three months ago. Tests just released to the AJ show that reverberation problems have been resolved, but other issues affecting the overall quality of sound still need to be addressed.

The acoustics at the RFH have long been criticised. A survey of musicians undertaken in 1995, when refurbishments were first planned, is telling. One violinist called the RFH 'an embarrassment, probably the worst hall in the UK'; a horn player moaned, 'The hall makes you want to give up altogether'.

Allies and Morrison's £91 million refurbishment completed earlier this year addressed these failings – about half the budget was spent on the auditorium – and the project's scope is documented in an exhibition at the V&A until 14 October. The show touches on the acoustic work but, as noted by Andrew Mead in AJ 02.08.07, technical content is thin. The South Bank will hold a study day on 7 October, which will include a presentation by the hall's acoustician, Chicago-based Larry Kirkegaard.

I toured the auditorium with Kirkegaard, who is known for his work on both the Barbican and New York's Carnegie Hall. He first examined the RFH 'half a career ago' in 1987. 'The hall itself is an instrument,' he says, 'which must protect the sound and offer it up.' One of the biggest challenges is the RFH's Grade I-listed status, which restricted the scope of any refurbishment.

After a lengthy process, which involved numerous musicians' surveys, 1:20 physical models, computer models

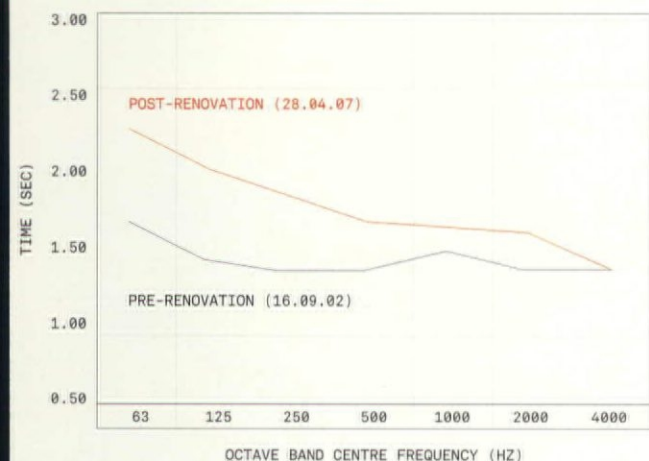
and testing of existing and proposed materials, Kirkegaard pinpointed two main design flaws: the stage configuration projected sound to the back of the auditorium and away from the ears of the musicians; and the hall deadened reverberation with its many absorbent surfaces, affecting lower frequencies in particular.

Redesign of the stage was relatively straightforward, though it involved the most controversial aspect of the project: replacement of the memorable timber baffle with an adjustable fabric canopy of Nomax, a flameproof synthetic fibre used by the military in Iraq. The canopy's height and tilt can be regulated to optimise the balance between reflected and transmitted sound depending on the type of music performed.

The second problem, increasing reverberation time, was far more complex, and involved reconsidering every surface of the auditorium. Addressing this, however, was key to improving the 'warmth and bloom' of the music. Almost every visible surface has been replaced with enhanced acoustic material behind renewed finishes, so the hall looks much the same. Only now are we beginning to see hard evidence of the effects of the overhaul.

The natural acoustics of the hall prior to refurbishment had a reverberation time (RT) of 1.7 seconds compared to the newly released figure of 2.25 seconds (based on measurements taken during test concerts in April before the hall was completely finished), not far off the approximately 2.5 seconds RT of Vienna's Grosser Musikvereinsaal and Boston's Symphony Hall – both auditoria revered by musicians.





28.04.07 POST-RENOVATION

2.25	2.01	1.85	1.67	1.65	1.61	1.39
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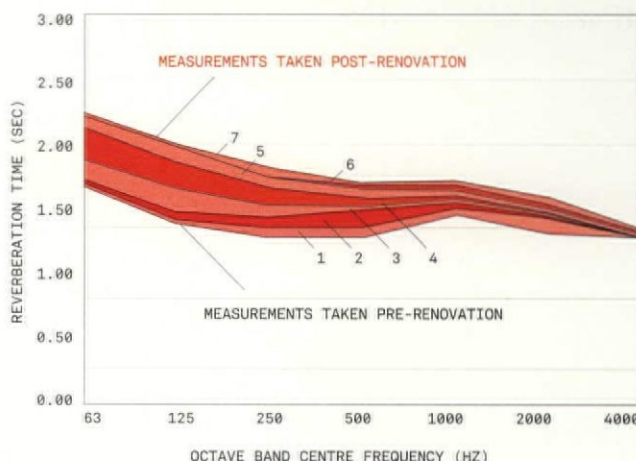
16.09.02 PRE-RENOVATION

1.66	1.42	1.36	1.36	1.48	1.37	1.36
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#### NOTES:

RED CURVE IS AVERAGE OF THREE MEASUREMENTS DURING THE TUNING CONCERT

Graph showing the increase in reverberation time in the hall after renovation



#### KEY

- 1 TIMBER PROFILE ADDED TO COPENHAGEN PANELLING
- 2 RED LEATHER PANELS STIFFENED
- 3 ELM PANELLING STIFFENED
- 4 NEW FIBROUS PLASTER CEILING PANELS WITH INCREASED MASS
- 5 TAPESTRIES MADE RETRACTABLE
- 6 CARPET REPLACED BY TIMBER FLOOR
- 7 INCREASED CEILING VOLUME OVER STAGE

Graph showing how the use of different materials has led to a cumulative improvement in the Royal Festival Hall's reverberation time

## REVERBERATION TIME

Reverberation is the persistence of sound in a space after the original sound has been discontinued. Different types of music sound best with reverberation times appropriate to their characteristics. The South Bank's brief called for an acoustic environment which could be programmed for both amplified and unamplified performances, so the auditorium has been designed to be flexible. Reverberation time is critical for unamplified orchestral music, and the auditorium's acoustic failings have long been attributed to its low reverberation time. The graph above left plots the change in reverberation time before and after renovation. The graph above right shows how each physical change in the auditorium contributed to an improvement in reverberation time.

#### Approximate reverberation times of major concert halls (Sec)

Royal Festival Hall (pre-refurbishment)	1.7
Royal Festival Hall (post-refurbishment)	2.25
Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles	1.5
Carnegie Hall, New York	1.65
Boston Symphony Hall	2.5
Vienna Grosser Musikvereinsaal	2.5

(Source: Kirkegaard Associates)

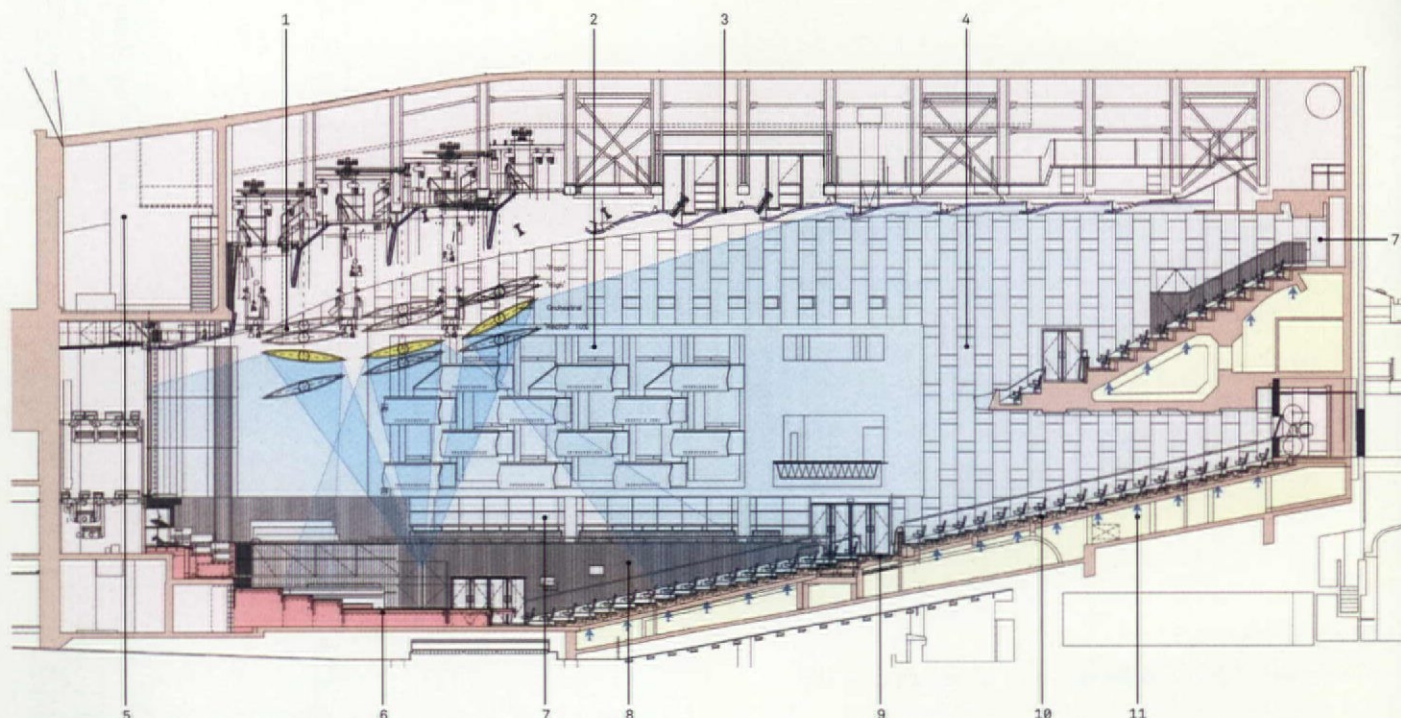
However, improved reverberation time is not enough to judge the hall, says Kirkegaard. Reverberation may measure how long a sound is sustained, but it does not address its clarity or richness. He says: 'It's like knowing the height and weight of a person, but tells nothing about their personality, intelligence, or sense of humour.'

The refurbished hall has a new problem of 'excess brightness', according to some critics, particularly in sound produced above mezzo forte. London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) chief executive and artistic director Timothy Walker says: 'The desired warmth and bloom have not quite been achieved, and sound can become a bit shrill at higher volumes.' To counteract this, Kirkegaard has suggested lining the undersides of the boxes and parts of the side walls with felt, which may be trialled during the upcoming LPO season, beginning at the end of the month.

Walker estimates that the quality of sound is currently about 60 per cent of what it will be after fine-tuning, which will be accomplished partly through adjustments in use and partly through tweaking the hall itself. That tweaking, given the heritage aspects of the hall, will be a very tricky business indeed.

The study day is being held at the Royal Festival Hall Auditorium on 7 October, 2:30-5:30pm. Speakers include Larry Kirkegaard and Graham Morrison and Di Haigh of Allies and Morrison. The programme will cover all aspects of the refurbishment: design, colour, lighting, production and acoustics. Visit [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk) or tel 0871 663 2509.



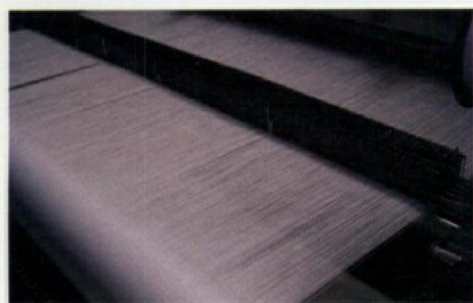


# SECTION SHOWING MAJOR ACOUSTIC DESIGN CHANGES DURING THE REFURBISHMENT

1. Adjustable over-stage fabric reflector (Nomax) designed to optimise the balance of sound on stage and transmit sound to the hall for maximum resonance
2. Existing tapestries made retractable to offer increased or reduced absorption capacity, as required
3. Fibrous plaster ceiling panels replaced with thicker panels, with greater mass to retain sound
4. Elm-veneered plywood panelling refurbished, and voids infilled, to reduce absorbency
5. New air-handling units, acoustic attenuation fitted
6. Stage and organ reconfigured with new platform and choir surround walls. Reflected sound enhanced by timber-lined dense blockwork flanking walls
7. New red leather panels stiffened with solid padding, replacing original horse-hair padding
8. New timber profiles to infill gaps in Copenhagen panelling, reducing absorbency
9. Carpet replaced with timber flooring to sustain mid- and high-frequency sound
10. Original auditorium seats rebuilt with stiffer backs and seat panels with new cushioning techniques
11. Mechanical ventilation reversed to supply displacement air from below and reduce background noise



Panelling removed and refitted



Bespoke Nomax for sound reflector





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## 'BORING' SURVEYORS BOUNCE BACK

I've had a sneaking regard for surveyors ever since that long-ago week in the blazing Antipodean sun holding a black umbrella over a theodolite and the old Wermacht officer operating it. Real surveyors, that is, not pumped-up estate agents. So I was up for it when a reader suggested taking a look at the website of Stevenage-based CLS Surveys, at [www.cls-surveys.co.uk](http://www.cls-surveys.co.uk), on account of its bounciness.

Clearly a DIY job, the site was probably designed by one of the company's three partners, young Nathan Spencer, who suggests his prospects with the firm are good, 'providing nepotism is not frowned upon'.

The site starts off with a philosophy section, although happily, it's not called that, rather: 'Find out where we are, what we believe in, and how we do it.'

The alternative is to take a look at examples of their work – for which you will need the latest Autodesk WHIP driver. So all I could see were three coloured map-like images flipping over and back while, overhead, small balls roll in, are christened by the CSL logo and roll out again. It's not so much bouncy as mildly demented. But hey, boring surveyors? Certainly not.

[sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com](mailto:sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com)

# A LONELY TASK

Assessing extensions of time can be one of the lonelier jobs of a certifier. The contractor presents its claim for more time, and an assessment of it has to be made with the material available. When matters go further, a judge or arbitrator will make their own assessment, usually on the basis of far more comprehensive information and analysis. It can be unnerving for the certifier to see their own attempt scrutinised and overruled.

There has been much interest in construction-law circles in recent years about how to analyse and prove delay. That interest has been fuelled and the debate driven forward by the Society of Construction Law's 2002 Delay and Disruption Protocol, the object of which is to provide useful guidance on common extension of time issues. As well as advice on record-keeping and procedure, the protocol explains four methods of delay-analysis in accessible terms. Its favoured method is 'time-impact analysis' and the others include 'as-planned versus as-built'.

A recent survey into project delay analysis has repeated research carried out in 1994. Those surveyed included contractors and consultants, and the data gives some clues about the impact of the protocol and what the industry is doing about proving delay.

One of the aims of the protocol was that, in time, most contracts would adopt its guidance as the best way to deal with delay and disruption issues. However, the new survey revealed that only 50 per cent of contractors were even aware of it, and a mere 13 per cent had encountered projects where it had been referred to in the contract. Despite the protocol's championing of 'time-impact analysis', the survey showed that 97 per cent continue to use 'as-planned versus as-built'.

On one view, all this may add up to a dose of reality. 'Time-impact analysis' is identified by the protocol as the most time-consuming and expensive technique, and 'as-planned versus as-built' as the cheapest and simplest. Perhaps many construction projects, particularly buildings rather than engineering projects, are simply not sufficiently resourced to maintain the records needed for comprehensive delay analysis. Also of some comfort to those at the nitty-gritty end of certifying delays should be the fact that the courts tend to take a fairly pragmatic approach, treating delay as a question of fact rather than expert opinion, and, on occasion, questioning the need for delay experts.

While the lawyers' approach to proving delay claims should be of interest to certifiers, it may be that the

high standards we tend to look for are just not always achievable. Despite this, the protocol remains useful reading for certifiers. Among the wealth of other guidance, the description of different types of delay analysis should help a certifier understand what it is they are being presented with by a contractor, and what the particular analysis proffered may and (perhaps more interestingly) may not be able to show. Assessing an extension of time is a difficult job, but having the protocol to hand may make it a little less of a lonely one.

*Sue Lindsey is a barrister at Crown Office Chambers in London. Visit [www.crownofficechambers.com](http://www.crownofficechambers.com)*





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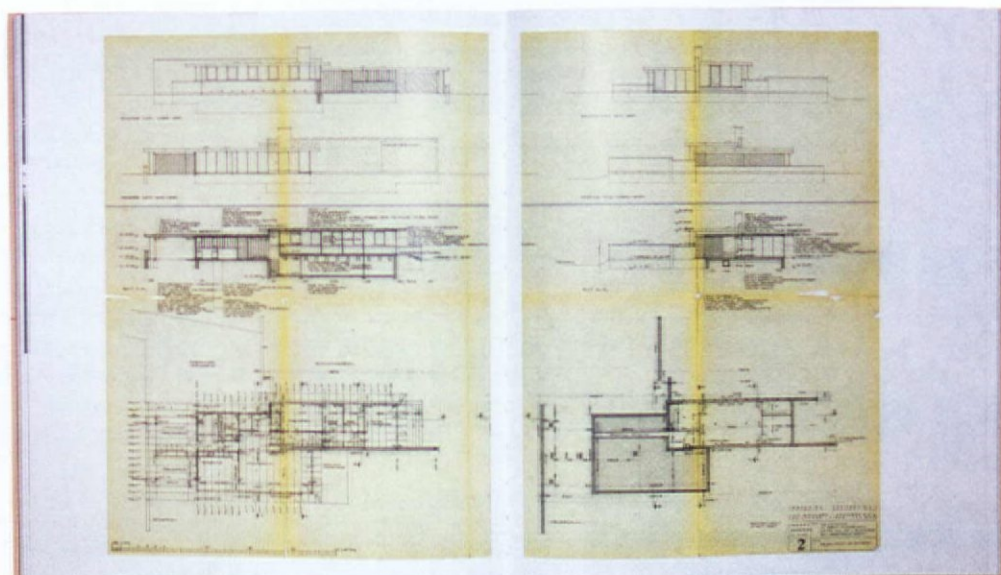
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## BOOK

By Isabel Allen

*Louisiana and Beyond: The Work of Vilhelm Wohlert.*  
By John Pardey.  
Edition Blondal, 2007.  
216pp. £35



In 1958 Vilhelm Wohlert and his partner Jorgen Bo built a demonstration house for an exhibition on the outskirts of Copenhagen, designed to show new trends in housing to the Danish public. With a high unbroken wall separating the house's public and private faces, it invites comparison with Mies' Barcelona Pavilion (1929) or his House with Three Courts project (1931). But it's not a comparison the architects choose to explore. Wohlert says, simply: 'Jorgen and I never talked much about Mies, he was not very much on our minds.'

It is a testament to John Pardey's skill as a narrator that he chooses to repeat the comment verbatim. It brings Wohlert's character off the page, both with its gentle insouciance and its use of

the first person plural, which suggests an aptitude for partnership. *Louisiana and Beyond* portrays an architect who thrived on collaboration with colleagues, but also with clients. It is telling that Wohlert and Bo referred to Knud W Jensen, the client for the Louisiana Museum, as the project's 'third architect'.

But the Mies comment also encapsulates the book's contention that Wohlert's work should be understood not in terms of mainstream Modernism, but as part of an alternative approach. Pardey characterises this tradition as: 'Scandinavian Modern. Founded on the legacy of the British Arts and Craft movement, infused with Japanese traditional architecture, and influenced by the work of Frank Lloyd

Wright and the Californian Bay Architects'.

It is a description which could equally apply to Pardey's own work. His love of carpentry and craftsmanship finds an obvious precedent in Wohlert's output, perhaps most eloquently in the working drawings of chair designs which are both complex – superimposing section, elevation and plan – and engagingly direct. But a close study of Wohlert's series of private house schemes also suggests parallels with Pardey's quest to design 'the perfect courtyard house'.

Pardey is too modest, or too smart, to draw these comparisons himself, or to reference his own work. This is a scholarly account of an architectural career. Completed shortly before Wohlert's death in May this year, it constitutes

a comprehensive assessment of a lifetime's work, but benefits from the fact that the subject was on hand to supply the necessary information, verification and explanation – and to give a seal of approval to the end result.

But it is also an intensely personal work. The emphasis on working drawings conveys the author's delight in Wohlert's draughtsmanship and approach to design. The commentary has the easy warmth of someone entirely at ease with their subject – a rarity in architectural critique. Wohlert was clearly an outstanding architect, but it is the affinity between author and subject which makes *Louisiana and Beyond* an outstanding book.

*Isabel Allen is design director of Hab Housing*



## CRITIC'S CHOICE

By Andrew Mead

Now in its fifth year, the London Design Festival takes place from 15–25 September (see right). But a rewarding architecture exhibition that comes under its aegis – Arni Haraldsson's *The Goldfinger Project* – is already up-and-running, split between Ernö Goldfinger's house at 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, and Space Studios at 129–131 Mare Street, Hackney.

It was seeing a picture of North Kensington's Trellick Tower that first alerted Vancouver-based photographer and teacher Haraldsson to Goldfinger's architecture; no surprise, given that this one building seems now to represent Goldfinger's achievement at the expense of his other work (not least the low-rise elements that surround Trellick and its east London sister, Balfron Tower). Well into the second decade of what he calls 'an obsessive quest' to document Modernist architecture, Haraldsson secured a six-month residency in London and began to look beyond that initial Trellick image.

As the Space Studios display makes clear, the project developed in ways he'd not quite foreseen, as he explored other architecture of the time with a comparable aesthetic or purpose – specifically the Barbican and Thamesmead – and learned about such key chapters in the history of high-rise as the part-collapse of Newham's Ronan Point in 1968. These developments all figure in the show, but the photos stay suitably open-ended, with no text prompting us to read in a certain way the ample evidence they bear of habitation and the passage of time.

And Trellick appears as I can't remember seeing it before: not as a stark sculptural monument but 'softened' and veiled by branches and foliage, particularly in one scene shot from beside the nearby Grand Union Canal. 'I wasn't trying to rehabilitate Goldfinger as a great humanist,' said Haraldsson, when I raised this with him; at the back of his mind were Edward Steichen's famous photos of the Flatiron Building in New York. But this viewpoint subverts our preconceptions and gives pause for thought, as Haraldsson's twin shows do as a whole ([www.spacestudios.org.uk](http://www.spacestudios.org.uk)).

For forthcoming events visit [www.ajplus.co.uk/diary](http://www.ajplus.co.uk/diary)



## LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

*This year's London Design Festival gets under way this Saturday, 15 September. Here is a small selection from its packed programme.*

### SOUTHBANK CENTRE

One of the hubs of the festival is the Southbank Centre. Events here include the Size & Matter Project, in which architects join up with manufacturers to create 'landmark installations'. Zaha Hadid will be working with concrete and Future Systems' Amanda Levete with Corian. Both will create one-off pieces for display outside the Royal Festival Hall and will give talks on Friday 21 September at 6pm. Other speakers at the Southbank include Peter Cook on Tuesday 18 September and Spencer de Grey of Foster + Partners on Thursday 20 September. On Monday 17 September there's a one-day conference in the Purcell Room on designing for children, which features collaborations between architects and educators in Italy.

### TENT LONDON

*20–23 September at the Truman Brewery, E1*

The old Truman Brewery in Brick Lane is the festival's east London centre, with displays of 'cutting-edge' materials, furniture, lighting and products alongside vintage design items for anyone with money to burn. 'The Talent Zone' presents work by 150 recent graduates, while Alex Haw – winner of the £10,000 Urbantime Project – will be realising his scheme on-site.

### 100% DESIGN

*20–23 September at Earl's Court*

As well as displays of the latest in design, there is a programme of seminars throughout the four days, with speakers including AJ editor Kieran Long, AR editor Paul Finch, Design for London director Peter Bishop and Design Museum director Deyan Sudjic. The winner of the AJ's *Something to Sit On* competition will be announced on 'architects' evening', on Thursday 20 September.

### BUILDING CULTURES: CAN ARTISTS MAKE GREAT PLACES?

*Thursday 20 September at Birkbeck, University of London*

This one-day conference looks at the role of art and culture in regeneration projects, with particular attention on the current redevelopment of King's Cross.

### ICONOCLASM: IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

*20–25 September at Bodli, 214 Brick Lane, E1*

Multi-disciplinary work from five Japanese and five international designers on the theme of lightness and darkness.

### WILL ALSOP 'STUDIO'

*15 September–20 October at Chelsea College of Art and Design, SW1*  
Members of the SMC Alsop team, and sometimes the man himself, will develop new projects and discuss the practice's work.

*For a full list of events visit [www.londondesignfestival.com](http://www.londondesignfestival.com)*





1.

## BOOKS

By Kenneth Powell

*Moscow Heritage at Crisis Point.*

MAPS/SAVE Europe's Heritage, 2007. 128pp. (Available from SAVE for a minimum donation of £5)

*The Lost Vanguard: Russian Modernist Architecture 1922-1932.*

By Richard Pare. Monacelli Press, 2007. 348pp. £45

'Under the Communists, if you pushed hard enough you could make a difference, but there's no battle now. People either ignore you or buy you.' This was the dispiriting conclusion of scholar and conservationist Alexei Komech, one of the founders of the Moscow Architectural Preservation Society (MAPS), on the current planning regime in the Russian capital.

Komech, who died earlier this year, was regularly vilified by the new Russian establishment and its media stooges. But according to MAPS and SAVE in their *Moscow Heritage at Crisis Point*, Moscow's mayor, Yury Luzhov – charitably described as 'a wild card' and married to the head of one of Russia's largest construction companies – has presided over nothing less than a 'carnage' of the city's heritage

comparable to that of Stalin's. It's a chilling catalogue of loss.

Not so long ago, the collapse of Soviet Communism was seen as the beginning of a new age in Russia. For most Russians little has changed, while the new rich, allowed to asset-strip the country, have shifted much of their wealth abroad. Conserving Moscow's rich patrimony is not a priority.

There have been some creditable restoration projects, notably of churches, though the most famous of them, St Basil's on Red Square, remains in need of major repairs. Elsewhere the picture is deeply depressing: historic buildings of all periods flattened, gutted or replaced by feeble replicas. Buildings disappear behind hoardings, with restoration promised. Eventually a totally new structure emerges on the site.



2.

1. Ginzburg and Milnis' Narkomfin housing
2. Interior of the Melnikov House

Photographer Richard Pare's book, the outcome of more than a decade of travelling and research, makes for equally depressing reading. While there is something of a vogue in Russia for the architecture of the Stalinist era, the legacy of Modernism has been treated with contempt. Pare has uncovered many buildings previously virtually unknown, but most of those illustrated here are neglected and under-maintained, while many are derelict and ripe for demolition.

The decrepitude of Moisei Ginzburg and Ignati Milnis' Narkomfin housing, an experimental project completed in 1930 and comparable to Welles Coates' Isokon flats in London, exemplifies the shattered visions of socialism. The plight of the renowned

Melnikov House in Moscow shames a supposedly civilised country. What has become of Erich Mendelsohn's Red Banner textile factory in St Petersburg, largely disused when Pare photographed it a few years ago?

It's ironic that, with travel in Russia now possible as not before, so many of these buildings are vanishing before people have the chance to study them, but it's a new generation of Russians who will feel their loss most keenly, given the history they embody.

On a hugely sensitive site close to the Kremlin is a hole in the ground where D Chichulin's massive 1960s Hotel Rossiya once stood – but there's no sign that a new masterpiece will replace it. There seems to be no vision in Russia beyond private profit.



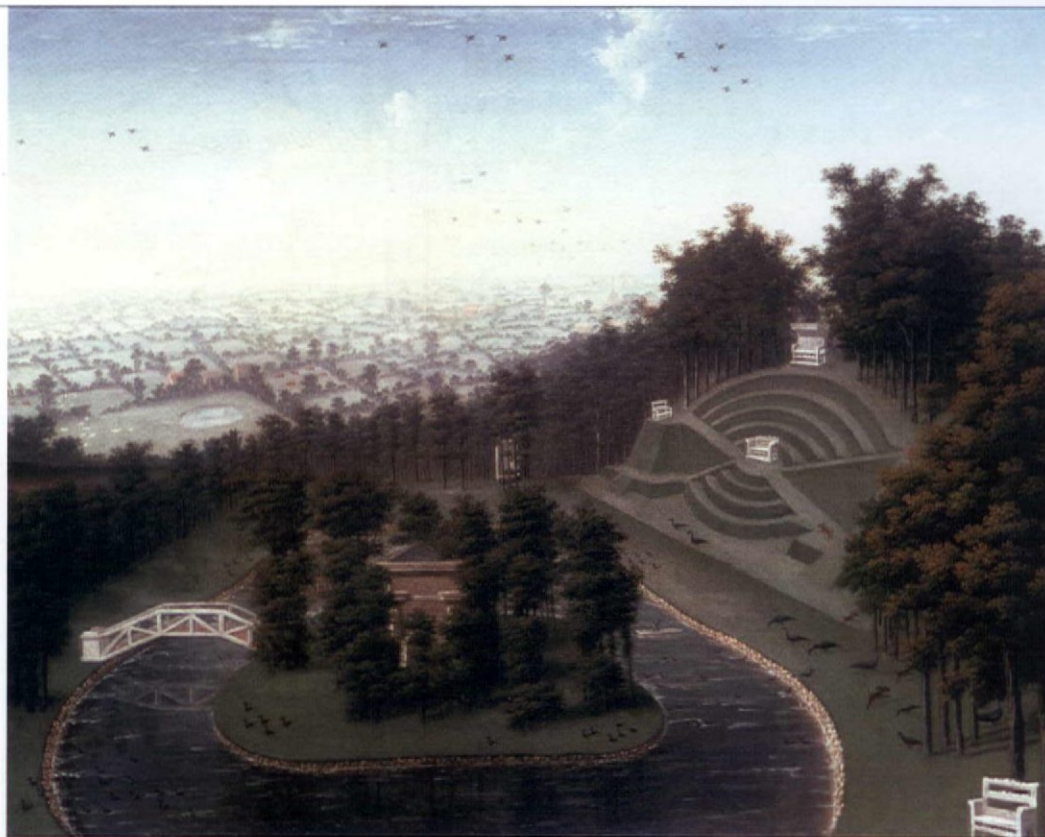
## BOOK

By Sutherland Lyall

The Arcadian Friends:  
Inventing the English  
Landscape Garden.

By Tim Richardson.

Bantam Press, 2007. £25



3. One of the first English landscape gardens: Claremont, near Esher in Surrey

Tim Richardson used to be *Country Life's* gardens editor, so you know what you're getting with *The Arcadian Friends*. It's primarily about the intricate social and political connections of those who commissioned and sometimes helped design English landscape gardens from the Glorious Revolution of 1689 up to the mid-18th century. That cut-off point marks the rise of Capability Brown and English landscape's subsequent descent into the 'dangerous excitements of the Picturesque [which] soon faded. Their gardens were meaningless – at least compared with what had gone before.'

So if you are seeking a scholarly exposition of the development of English landscape design, forget it. Instead of treating his material even-handedly, Richardson is

cheerfully and fugeyishly partisan. As one example, he says of *sharawadgi* (a term author and diplomat Sir William Temple used in 1692 to describe, roughly, irregularity in Chinese landscape): 'I do not propose to spend much time on the concept of *sharawadgi*. It is very hard to pronounce.' Later he says of Horace Walpole's 1771 history of English garden design: 'I have quoted Walpole only sparingly in this book, because his Whiggish agenda has badly skewed our understanding.' You mentally substitute this with: 'because it doesn't fit my general thesis'.

This thesis includes the proposition that the semi-informal landscape of 1750 ultimately evolved from the wiggly paths to be found in the *bosquets* of Baroque formal landscapes. That's a popular

though far too simplistic idea, but it fits with Richardson's preference for a formal/informal version of the English garden – neither one thing nor the other. A second proposition is that, as with English Palladian architecture, early English garden design was essentially Anglo-Dutch – being based on a sensible desire among English landowners to appear to support the new Dutch (and later German) regimes in England. Fine, except that a corollary of this is that the gardens of subsequent Hanoverian England can be classified as either Whig or Tory – the difference is not clear-cut.

Or at least not in this book, because half the illustrations are of men in big wigs, leaving Richardson little room to present coherent visual

evidence. And this is a fundamental problem, because unless landscapes of the time can be clearly distinguished as either Whig or Tory, his rationale for chronicling the intricate social and political connections of their owners and devisers collapses.

But who needs boring old evidence-based stuff about landscape when it's just a peg for a jolly ramble through the aristocracy of late-17th and early-18th century England?

A word, though, to Richardson's editor. You should have cut out all those ghastly, coy word-plays, such as, 'it marks a watershed of sorts. There was certainly a lot of water there,' and, 'They were Eurocrats, as in aristocrat not bureaucrat.' These and much worse pepper the text and make you want to cry.



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To view a comprehensive list of vacancies & to register with us please visit [www.bespokecareers.com](http://www.bespokecareers.com) or call us on 0207 24 24 909.



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Havant Borough boasts 48 kilometres of coastline (including Hayling Island), fourteen conservation areas, a Major Development Area (MDA) of 3,000 houses involving joint working arrangements, and significant urban improvement opportunities including the town centres of Havant and Waterlooville. Working with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) the Council is committed to an exciting programme of regeneration with significant further investment and growth planned in the borough up to 2026 under the South East Plan – and this is your chance to be part of it.

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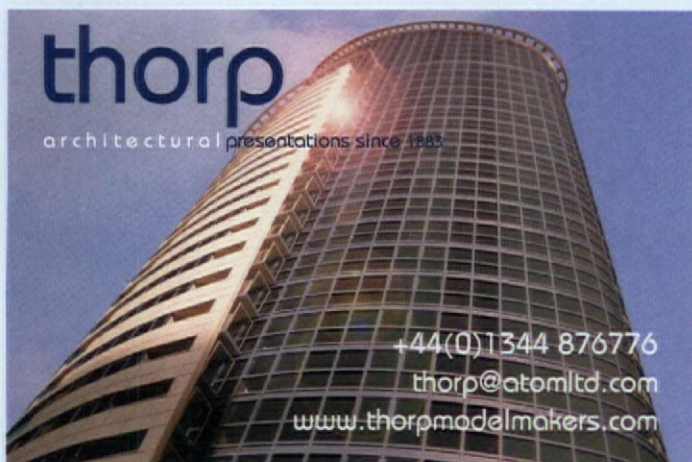
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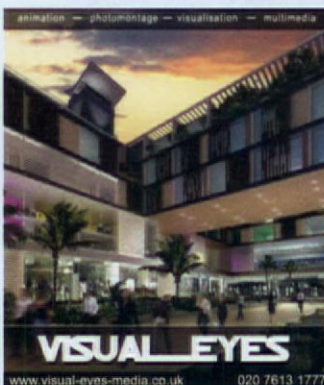
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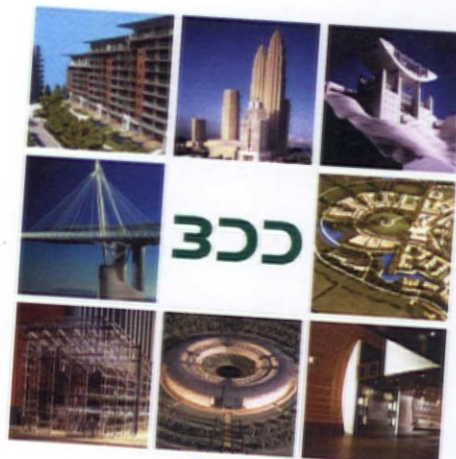
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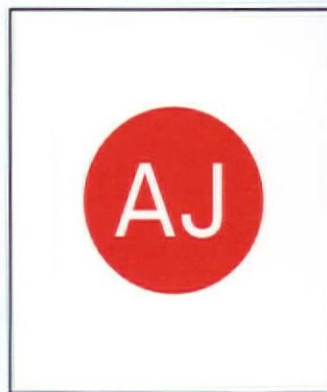
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'Reption', an entry for the AJ/Modus Something to Sit On Competition (see pages 14-15). By Christopher Morris and Julian Hopper, who are both awaiting their Part 1 results from the University of Strathclyde



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### KINGSPAN OFFSITE



### AJ ENQUIRY 201

The Kingframe Architectural Facade system was integral to rapid weather-proofing of the new science building at the University of Manchester. Unitised through-wall panels feature hot-rolled box sections to support ribbon windows, which complement the zinc-ingot rainscreen finish.

### STOAKES SYSTEMS



### AJ ENQUIRY 202

'Kalwall for Roofing' is the new publication from Stoakes Systems, which shows how architects have handled the diffused daylighting system to create stunning roof and cladding solutions, such as at the Jock Stein Centre in Scotland. For more information see [www.stoakes.co.uk](http://www.stoakes.co.uk)

### CLAXTON BLINDS



### AJ ENQUIRY 203

Claxton Blinds is one of the leading commercial window-blind companies in the UK, specialising in interior window projects for any requirement. Notable projects include Tower 42, the Canary Wharf Tower and the Citigroup Tower. For more information visit [www.claxton-blinds.com](http://www.claxton-blinds.com)

### CORUS



### AJ ENQUIRY 204

Colorcoat Prisma prefinished steel from Corus has been used on this distribution centre in Wednesbury, West Midlands. The building has been clad using a Corus Panels and Profile system in a contemporary Silver Metallic colour. Colorcoat Prisma is backed by the Confidex Guarantee for up to 25 years.

### SCHIEDEL RITE-VENT



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### CABOT



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Rooflights made from multi-wall polycarbonate sheet insulated with Nanogel translucent aerogel have improved working conditions and reduced energy usage at the Ruf Maschinenbau factory, Germany. Filling the voids with Nanogel provides diffused natural light and comfortable temperatures.

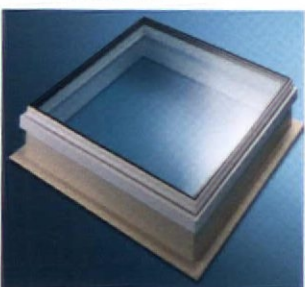
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For above-ground cast-iron drainage systems where high acoustic performance is needed, Saint-Gobain Pipelines has introduced a new acoustic dampener fitted to its standard bracket, which potentially eliminates the need for lagging. The bracket offers exceptional sound-deadening performance.

### BRETT MARTIN



### AJ ENQUIRY 208

Mardome Glass is an attractive and easily installed modular rooflight ideal for providing high-specification commercial and residential buildings with extra natural light. Manufactured using highly durable toughened glass, the rooflight's completely flat double glazing gives a clear, undistorted view of the sky.



# Alcove Sofa

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