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THE PROFESSION IS AFRAID OF MAKING JUDGEMENTS IN ANY DEFINITIVE SENSE

By Kieran Long

The most obstructive thing in city-making is to ask someone how they feel. Once they tell you, there is no way of engaging them in a progressive conversation. You are, from that point onwards, their *de facto* therapist.

This thought occurred to me as I was reading the Tories' 'Quality of Life' policy group report, launched last week at the RIBA. In the small print there's a lot of talk about whether one person's 'very happy' is in fact equivalent to somebody else's 'happy', and musings on new kinds of psychological problems like 'affluenza' and 'status anxiety'. The Tories have tied themselves up in knots. You can't argue with people's feelings, you can only give them new names and create the illusion that they're curable.

The draft Mayor's Housing Strategy for London, published this week, is reassuringly free of such psychologising, but is in thrall to a different kind of subjectivity. To safeguard quality, both housing minister Yvette Cooper and Mayor

Ken Livingstone say that it is up to local planning committees and council members to turn down poor-quality schemes. They trust the planning system to deliver great buildings.

This is a scary thought. I recently visited a London borough where a 16-storey tower was turned down at committee stage because it blocked a member's view from his nearby home. That member certainly knew how he felt.

In both reports there is a subtle distinction implied between bad-quality design and bad design. The former is what the reports talk about. If you make a poor-quality design, it could be the fault of the budget or numerous other factors. If you make poor design, you are a poor designer.

The profession has become afraid of making judgements in any definitive sense, and we have all ended up therapists as a result. It is time we became more self-critical, more confident in our judgements. With a rise in subjectivity, never has it been more important to decide what's good.

CONTRIBUTORS



Enrique Gualberto Ramirez, who reviews *New Practices* London at New York's Center for Architecture on pages 44-45, runs the blog *Aggregat* 4/5/6

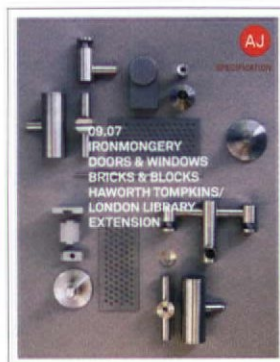


Steven Holl, whose work is featured on the *Sketchbook* on page 58, is the founder of New York- and Beijing-based Steven Holl Architects and teaches at Columbia University



Morley von Sternberg, whose photographs of *Bourbon Lane* feature in the *Building Study* on pages 23-29, is a London-based architectural photographer

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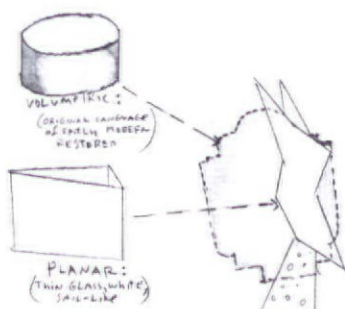
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- *University of Glamorgan – architectural technologist*
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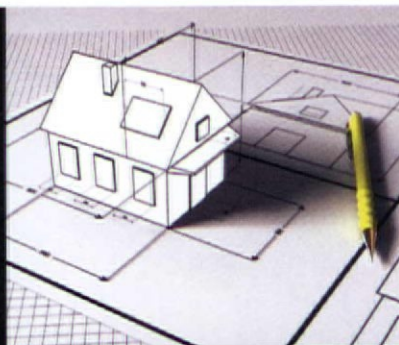


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THURSDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

- PRP's Jericho scheme in Oxfordshire comes up against CABE's wall of opposition
- Pringle Richards Sharratt secures cash for Hull History Centre (below)
- Self-build pioneer Brian Richardson dies aged 80
- EU Commission pledges to liven up Brussels with global architecture comp



FRIDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

- Yvette Cooper promises cash incentive for councils who speed up housebuilding
- UNESCO orders Liverpool to show how it will keep its World Heritage status
- Hazel Blears steps in to approve Holder Mathias' Center Parcs scheme
- Austin-Smith:Lord wins thumbs-up for redesigned Manchester tower (above)

MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

- Skills shortage threatens sustainable development, says report
- Relaxation of ARB registration rules could lead to high premiums, claim insurers
- Foster + Partners bags huge Singapore eco-quarter scheme
- Cartwright Pickard continues British success in global Living Steel competition

TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

- Sarkozy looks to Foster, Rogers and Hadid in bid to reignite France's architectural scene
- Stock market woes bring further delays to Renzo Piano's Shard
- BACA reveals plans for extreme-sports complex in Silvertown Quays
- Nuclear power an option says Sunand Prasad, as Lib Dems unveil zero-carbon targets




WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

- McAslan on shortlist for Rudolph's Riverview School comp
- Masterplanner Edaw moves into architecture after snapping up Arup designers
- Chipperfield wins international competition to redevelop University Hospital in Pisa (left)
- Adjaye and Foster among big hitters for Kuala Lumpur 'suburban city'

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1.

1. Foster + Partners is launching a High Court battle against the development team behind the Serrenia project in Egypt

2. The site as it is today



2.

FOSTER SUES OVER EGYPT SCHEME

By Sarah Limbrick and Richard Waite

Foster + Partners is heading for a High Court showdown in a row over unpaid fees on a £1 billion development in Egypt.

The practice is suing for a staggering £2.3 million after the development team behind the Serrenia resort scheme on the Red Sea failed to cough up.

The news comes just over a week after Foster unveiled even more ambitious plans in neighbouring Libya to transform an area the size of Wales into the world's largest carbon-neutral regeneration zone (AJ 13.09.07).

The writ, which was filed at the High Court this week, says that in December 2005, Foster agreed fees of £9.5 million to design the 263ha Serrenia project.

The firm had also asked for expenses of 10 per cent, and a pre-work fee of £500,000.

When completed, the development will boast 736 holiday homes – including palaces, villas and apartments – as well as a 200-room seven-star luxury hotel, a spa, an 18-hole golf course, restaurants, retail areas and a marina.

However, Foster + Partners has not received a penny from either project manager Bruges Tozer International or partner Shaheen Business and Investment Group, which provided financial guarantees.

The practice has repeatedly billed Bruges Tozer for its services and expenses, sending seven invoices between December 2006 and June 2007.

The only attempt made at settling up was by contract signatory Khaled Shaheen, chairman of the Shaheen Business and Investment Group, who, after receiving the first

invoice, wrote a cheque for \$980,000 (£490,000) dated 21 January 2007.

Shaheen also signed a cheque for £185,000 on 22 January 2007, but it is alleged that both cheques bounced when presented for payment.

Now Foster is suing the two companies for a total of £2,385,282 plus interest amounting to £58,453, which is increasing by £464 a day.

The court case is the latest upset for Foster + Partners in the Middle East. The practice had hoped to land the prize project of a new canal linking the Red Sea and the Dead Sea. Unfortunately for Foster, which had drawn up early feasibility studies for the waterway, the practice was not shortlisted.

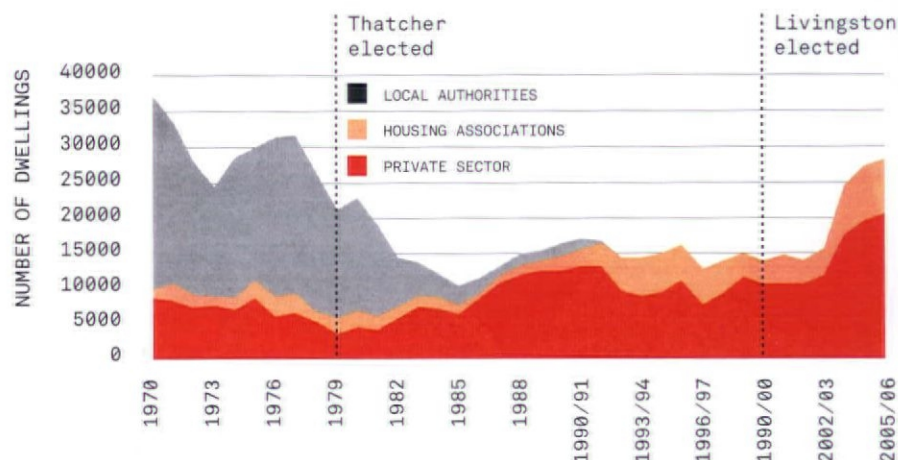
A hearing date has not yet been set. Foster + Partners has declined to comment.

ZAHA IN STELLAR FORM ON SOUTH BANK

Zaha Hadid has unveiled this precast-concrete sculpture to celebrate this year's London Design Festival, which runs until 25 September. Dubbed the Urban Nebula, the 30-tonne structure, which is outside the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank, is made from 150 blocks of black, polished concrete bolted together with stainless-steel anchors to create a 'perforated wall'. The sculpture's fluid form is inspired by nebula gas clouds, and was designed using 3D-imaging software and standard steel moulds into which computer-cut polystyrene 'end pieces' were inserted. Hadid said: 'It is reminiscent of the rough improvisational characteristics of dry-stone walling, yet adopts the smooth polished surface of stone pebbles in a riverbed.'

By Richard Waite





HOUSING SUPPLY IN LONDON BY TENURE SINCE 1970

DFL TO OVERSEE LONDON'S HOUSING

By Richard Vaughan

Design for London (DfL) is to have unparalleled influence over London's new housing when it publishes its *Housing Design Guide* in January 2008, Mayor Ken Livingstone revealed on Tuesday (18 September).

It is understood the guide, which will accompany the Mayor's statutory Housing Strategy when it is published in the New Year, will help to inform planners, developers and architects on housing design.

Although it has no statutory powers, the *Housing Design Guide* aims to promote planning reform and to act as a best-practice guide for housing design in the capital.

DfL director Peter Bishop said: 'The purpose of the guide is to get a positive debate going on housing. It will try and answer the questions on how

you can produce high-quality housing designs at high density that will endure.

'It will look at space standards, floor-to-ceiling height and the quality of internal layout.'

But, speaking on Tuesday, Housing Minister Yvette Cooper said responsibility for quality of design remains in the hands of councils, as set out in the Housing Green Paper.

She said: 'Through the green paper we put greater emphasis on the new planning rules that came out in April, on local councils being able to set higher standards on design.

'They should be giving more developments the go-ahead, but they should also be demanding higher standards in terms of the quality.'

Whether the planning system can cope with demands,

depends on the local authority in question, according to RIBA planning group chair Peter Stewart.

He said: 'The system does allow for planning authorities to ensure good design, but it is up to them to demand good quality for design.

'Where you are seeing poor design being passed through the system is where the council is not using the planning system as it should.'

The news of DfL's *Housing Design Guide* came to light following the launch of Ken Livingstone's draft Housing Strategy for London, also launched on Tuesday, which is currently out for consultation.

The strategy looks at how the capital will meet its 'acute housing needs' by providing more affordable housing, as well as more family-sized

homes, while 'driving up the quality of housing design'.

The document outlines new housing and planning powers granted to Livingstone by Parliament, to aid Prime Minister Gordon Brown's target of three million new homes across the country by 2020.

The strategy will give Livingstone direct control over a £1 billion a year pot, helping London to deliver 50,000 more affordable homes over the next three years.



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BELGIAN STARS TO LIGHT UP LONDON

By Andrew Mead

The Whitechapel Gallery is covered in scaffolding: one of London's foremost arts venues is expanding. Housed since 1901 in vaguely Art Nouveau premises by Charles Harrison Townsend, the gallery is annexing the former Passmore Edwards Library next door – a late-Victorian building by Potts, Son & Hennings. This will give the Whitechapel almost 80 per cent more exhibition space and transform its other facilities.

The architect for the £10 million project (with Witherford Watson Mann) is the Belgian practice Robbrecht en Daem Architecten, which saw off a classy shortlist that included Foreign Office Architects and Caruso St John. When Herzog & de Meuron won the Tate Modern competition in 1995, it was hardly a household name in the UK, but its work was

well-known to architects. That's not really the case with Robbrecht en Daem, despite its long track record and impressive string of buildings in the Low Countries. So what have we been missing?

Both in their mid-50s, Paul Robbrecht and Hilde Daem have worked together since the mid-1970s and currently have a 20-strong office in the city of Ghent. As we drove through Belgium together last week, Robbrecht told me that, for him, it was a close call between being an architect and an artist: 'When I was young I was interested in both, but my father steered me towards architecture. Then I went on a trip to see buildings by Le Corbusier, and that made up my mind.'

This explains why one theme is so prominent in the practice's work: its engagement

with art and artists, whether creating temporary pavilions for the international art exhibition Documenta, designing premises for the prestigious Swiss gallery Hauser & Wirth, or extending a Dutch institution like the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam. When Robbrecht talks about colour, he speaks of 'a van Eyck blue' or 'a Veronese green'; such references are second nature to him. No wonder then that – according to Whitechapel director Iwona Blazwick – the two artists on the selection panel, Rachel Whiteread and Cornelia Parker, said: 'We must have Robbrecht en Daem. They understand art.'

But a second theme is equally apparent – Robbrecht en Daem's readiness to work with existing buildings without trying to upstage them; and a

trip to the Katoen Natie complex in Antwerp brings both these themes into focus.

In a project that began in 1992, Robbrecht en Daem has linked and reordered two 19th-century brick warehouses, adapting them for a variety of purposes (including offices and a Coptic art museum), and creating a new entrance – recessed behind a concrete frame which maintains the street's building line.

Inside, there's a concrete staircase and steel columns, which the architect clearly values for their materiality and presence – as if they're almost consciously on display. Some elements of the old building are not just retained but made more noticeable by the new insertions: the concrete beams in what's now the Coptic museum, for instance.



2.



3.

1. Section showing the new extension to the Whitechapel Gallery (the former Passmore Edwards Library)
2. Triple-height foyer at Bruges Concert Hall
3. The roof at Katoen Natie, Antwerp, which helped clinch the Whitechapel job

But calculated deference to existing work combines with some memorable new interventions – particularly the slanting skylights in blue glass and alabaster which Spanish artist Cristina Iglesias has designed, and Robbrecht's roof to one of the large upper rooms. This somewhat resembles an upturned boat, but with horizontal bands of glazing that partly dematerialise it, giving the room a beguiling light.

'This interior was a great selling point for Robbrecht en Daem,' says Blazwick. 'With so much listed fabric to retain at the Whitechapel, we thought the real fireworks would happen inside – and, sure enough, Paul has designed a wonderful ceiling for it.'

The important commission for the Boijmans van

Beuningen Museum recapitulates some of the moves at Katoen Natie: new work that's distinct in character and takes time to read, plus intelligent reordering of a complex that had grown confused. But Robbrecht en Daem can also build from scratch ambitiously, as its Bruges Concert Hall (1999–2003) makes plain.

Rearing up abruptly at the edge of Bruges – described by Robbrecht as 'the holy city of Flanders' though in large part a 19th-century reconstruction – the hall has two prominent towers: one housing the main auditorium, the other a chamber-music venue.

'The square it stands on has always been a place of transition between land and city,' says Robbrecht, 'and this gave us an idea about the

appearance of the building – that it could be like a big shed in the countryside.'

Although the concert hall's bulk can't be dissembled, Robbrecht en Daem has given each elevation its own pronounced character, and the faceted roofs and terracotta tile cladding are certainly in harmony with the city.

But the building's interior is exceptional. There's the carefully modulated architectural promenade (shaped perhaps by that teenage Corb trip); the triple-height foyer and framed glimpses of the city; the subtle accents of colour that offset the exposed concrete (beautiful itself); and the great sense of intimacy and concentration which the chamber-music hall engenders. Add to this the acoustic success of both halls,

and the surprisingly low budget (35 million euros (£24 million)), and it's clear that Bruges has a new cultural landmark.

What Robbrecht en Daem is doing at the Whitechapel, though, is more in the spirit of Katoen Natie and the Boijmans. It promises a rich amalgam, in which the history of the two conjoined buildings can still be discerned but the new isn't bland. In this it bears some resemblance to one of the schemes on this year's Stirling Prize shortlist, Haworth Tompkins' Young Vic Theatre, and reflects an attitude to architecture (and urbanism) that should be admired. The expanded Whitechapel Gallery is one of the most promising projects in the capital. When it completes in spring 2009, Robbrecht en Daem won't be a Low Countries secret any more.



1.

1 & 2. Brisac Gonzalez's Peacock Visual Arts Centre, in Aberdeen's Union Terrace Gardens, will sit across three terraced levels and house offices and a dance space

3. Cross section

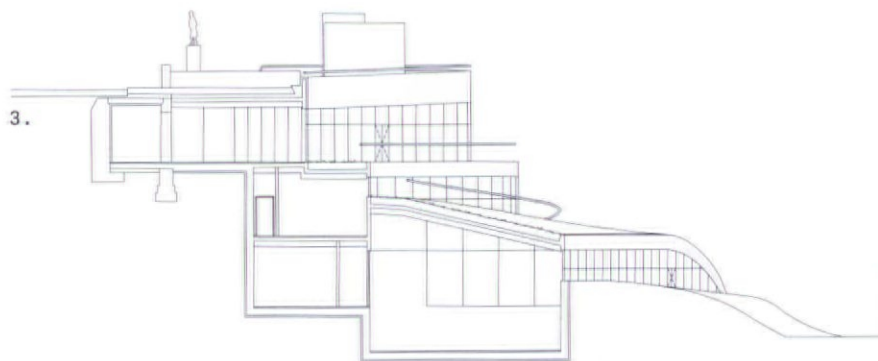
GARDEN ARTS FOR GRANITE CITY

London-based Brisac Gonzalez Architects has submitted this £10 million arts centre scheme in Aberdeen for planning. The Peacock Visual Arts Centre, which Brisac Gonzalez won through competition, will exhibit contemporary art and host public events. It will also house Aberdeen Council's arts development and education offices and the Citymoves Dance Space. Located in the Union Terrace Gardens in the heart of the 'Granite City', the scheme will be on three terraced levels, with each one defined by existing pedestrian paths in the gardens. 'One of the project's goals,' said practice director Edgar Gonzalez, 'is to stimulate the regeneration of the gardens by establishing a vibrant creative hub for the cultural life of Aberdeen and the north-east of Scotland.'

By Max Thompson



2.



3.



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NORTHERN IRELAND CANNOT AFFORD A MISTAKE ON THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

The 2005 call for entries to the International Union of Architects' (UIA) competition for a new visitors' centre at Northern Ireland's Giant's Causeway attracted more than 600 registrations and 201 actual entries. Over two thirds of the applications for the UNESCO World Heritage Site were from outside the UK. The jury eventually selected Dublin-based Heneghan Peng, which had previously won an international competition for the Grand Museum of Egypt in Cairo.

But how many architects would have entered the contest if they had known a planning application for a visitors' centre on an adjacent site was under consideration at the time of the competition (AJ 13.09.07)? Submitted in 2002, three years before the international competition, this cheaper, privately funded proposal has now surfaced as having 'considerable merit', according to Northern Irish environment minister Arlene Foster.

There appears to have been no mention of this proposal when Angela Smith (then minister of the environment) and Ian Pearson (then minister for enterprise, trade and investment) launched their joint ministerial initiative

for the Giant's Causeway back in 2003, part of which included an international competition for the new visitors' facilities. There also appears to be no mention at the launch; in the advertising, documentation or judging of the competition; nor in October 2005, when Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain announced Heneghan Peng as winner. He also named the many organisations that had worked together in partnership during the competition process – Moyle District Council, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the National Trust, and the government.

It has been suggested that the Heneghan Peng proposal and internal exhibition has run well over budget, not through the fault of the architect, but through additional requirements made on the project since the competition brief. Hence, presumably, the attractiveness, to government, of a project already in the planning process and one which would be privately funded.

External perception and long-term view is key. As a country and as a region we announced and ran an appropriately high-profile competition for a site of such global significance. The

competition placed us momentarily on the international architectural map, and the actual construction and realisation of the Heneghan Peng proposal would have given us a permanent position on the architectural scene. A world-class jury on a world-class competition chose a world-class solution that all seemed to want. The O'Neill and Hanley (Dublin) c/o Michael Rogers & Co Architects proposal which the Northern Irish government is now backing cannot claim the same pedigree or rigour of selection.

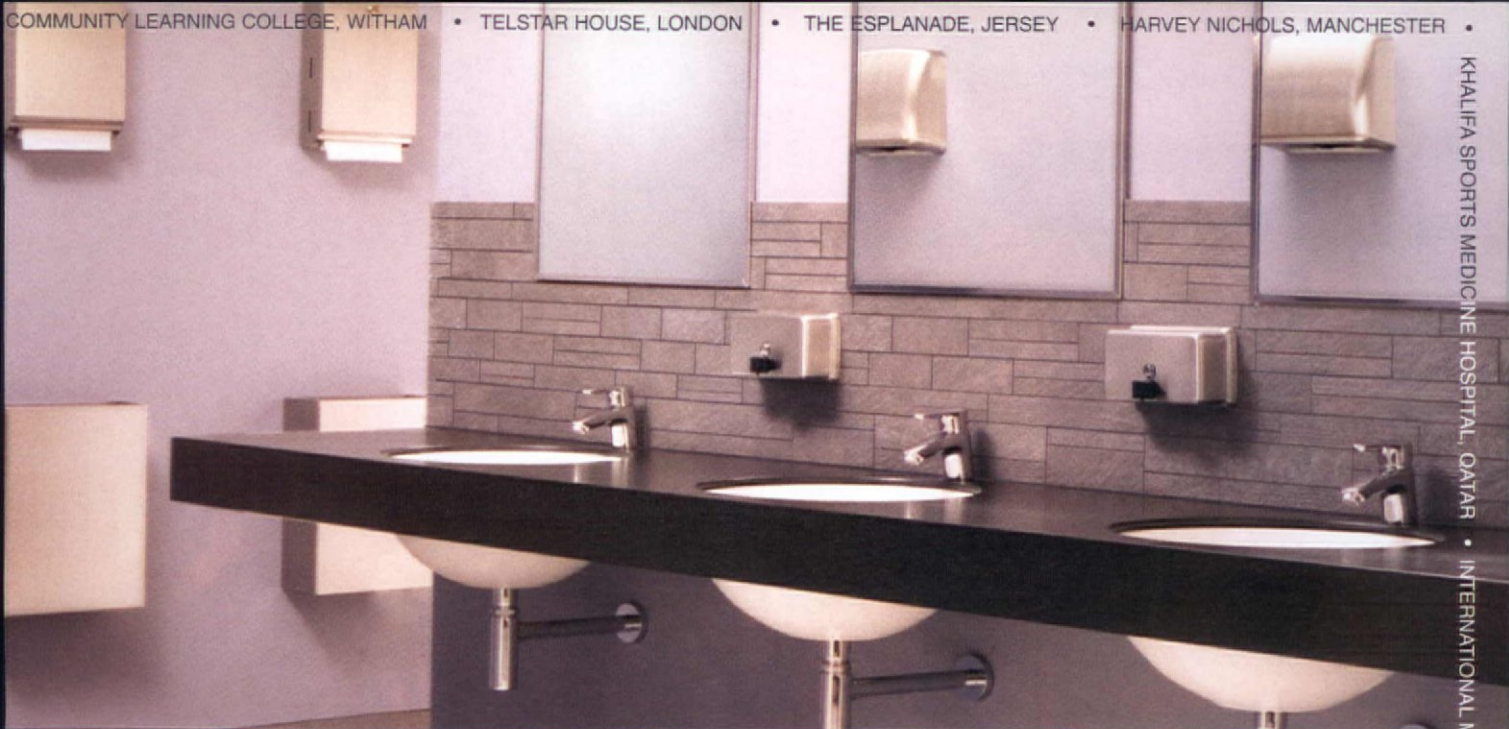
Local architects appreciate the importance of the outcome of this project. Barry Todd, chair of the Northern Irish Architecture and the Built Environment Ministerial Advisory Group, has indicated that once he has all the facts he will be making representations to the culture Minister Edwin Poots, and last week the president of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects issued an open letter to the local newspapers and relevant government ministers about the dropped scheme.

The constantly changing political scene here in Northern Ireland explains why the project lost its original political

champions and why attention was elsewhere during the critical period of design development. Now our new decision-makers need to consider how the international-competition selection can be reclaimed. Perhaps the threat of pursuing the privately funded visitors' centre will bring the publicly funded proposal into sharper focus.

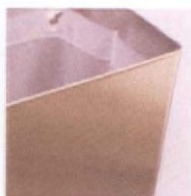
I am reminded of the privately funded visitors' centre at Land's End, the one that guidebooks supposedly tell tourists to avoid. Northern Ireland cannot afford a mistake on the Giant's Causeway. It is our God-given resource, our site of global importance, and we have one opportunity to make it right. We cannot afford to look back in disappointment.

Alan Jones is a senior teaching fellow at Queen's University Belfast and a director of Alan Jones Architects. His Jones House project has been shortlisted for the 2007 Manser Medal (AJ 13.09.07)



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'Interiors are still a mish-mash and I can't see how we get out of that. Perhaps people will stop buying into so many different aesthetics and search for something a bit more pure'

Tom Dixon, creative director of 100% Design, which opens today (20 September). *Independent*, 12.09.07

'I'm still choosing the tiles for the bathroom, still working on the door handles. That's how I was brought up'

Daniel Libeskind. *www.fastcompany.com*, 11.09.07

'Making polite, inoffensive buildings is, in my opinion, offensive'

Will Alsop. *www.telegraph.co.uk*, 13.09.07



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WAITING TO EXHALE

John Gummer's 'Quality of Life' report, aimed at combating climate change, has Britain's movers and shakers hot under the collar, what with its recommendations to abolish the ARB, beef up CABE, relax planning regulations and cut council tax on green homes. The government – ever mindful of its carbon footprint – has thoughtfully resisted releasing more hot air into the atmosphere by remaining silent on the matter. Despite the AJ contacting numerous ministers, secretaries of state and undersecretaries, not one was prepared to comment. One-nil to the Tories...

IS IT WORTH THE WRIST?

Always a fan of the seemingly boundless pretentiousness that is thrown up during London

Design Week, Astragal revelled with particular glee in this year's addition, Tent London. There's nothing quite like Shoreditch's finest to bubble up the bile and vitriol in this old hack, and the invitation that arrived at AJ Towers didn't disappoint. It came complete with a 'Lance Armstrong-esque' rubber wristband, worn by telesales managers and team-bonding gurus up and down the country. Astragal had his own when charity 'Make Poverty History' issued one. It read: 'Make "Make Poverty History" History'. Perhaps Astragal should create a new one for Tent London...

SEEN AND HEARD

It is very hard in Clerkenwell, the AJ's former home, not to encounter architects. Astragal recalls lengthy sessions in

Exmouth Market pubs, regaling the gathered crowd with scurrilous tales of Zaha, only to turn round and be greeted by members of her office or, worse, the woman herself. So it was with some relief that the loose-lipped Astragal found himself in his new Camden home, reasoning that the confused Italian teenagers and Special Brew aficionados who comprise his new neighbours would have little or no interest in his libellous architectural banter. It was somewhat unfortunate then, for Astragal to find himself in a Japanese restaurant on Parkway one Friday lunchtime, getting stuck into some particularly candid tales from the architectural underbelly, only to turn round and see half of the Sheppard Robson office, whose HQ is next door, hanging on to his every word.

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ENQUIRY 17 ON CARD
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NEW CIRCULATION SUCKS THE LIFE FROM LIBRARY

I write as one bereaved. The privilege of pursuing scholarly activities in the John Rylands Library used to be one of the delights of being a citizen of Manchester. Lloyd Evans Pritchard's refurbishment of the original building has revived the fabric, but the latest ill-advised extension by Austin-Smith:Lord (AJ 06.09.07) sucks the life out of Champneys' building. New visitors are robbed of the original entry sequence and the full drama of the ascent to the splendid reading room. Champneys' purpose-designed furniture stands idle, mourners at the new visitor-centre experience to which their home has been reduced.

While many may mistake the building's Deansgate frontage for a church, they all recognise that it is a building of significance and quality. The new entrance suggests nothing more than yet another banal retail space, perhaps a failing department store. The formica-effect panelling which clads the archive perhaps indicates a kitchen showroom. The ground floor of the library is, indeed, a retail space, with souvenir shop and café, the latter animated by its cheek-by-jowl juxtaposition with the entrance to the new magistrates' court.

Retreating from the goldfish-bowl exposure of this space, the visitor reaches the atrium for the new vertical circulation, which at least has some generosity about it, although the decision to cover the rear of the original building with a white wall with deep reveals seems a lost opportunity to explore the construction. Now serving as internal windows, no direct sunlight will play across the windows in this surface: blank eyes behind a hollow mask.

The dire situation has two consolations. The first is that the construction of a neighbouring commercial development (offcuts from Libeskind's aborted 'Spiral' extension at the V&A?) will do much to obscure the extension, although, rather perversely, it will perhaps also make the new entrance to the library even harder to identify. Secondly, as is evidenced by the impending demise of Stephenson Bell's Quay Bar (AJ 06.09.07), one can be fairly confident that, given the short lifespan of the previous addition, the new extension to the library will soon meet the same fate. Manchester's genius loci can be alarmingly unsentimental! *Eamonn Canniffe, Manchester University*

CALL FOR SMALL PROJECTS ENTRIES

Entries are sought for the AJ Small Projects Awards. Submissions must be projects completed between 1 November 2006 and 1 November 2007 with a total project value of less than £250,000. All projects must be unpublished. Send a 150-word description with images and credits to: AJ Small Projects, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7EJ, or email james.pallister@emap.com by Friday 26 October 2007.

PHOTOGRAPHY NEEDS A POPULATION EXPLOSION

It was fantastic to see such a lively front cover with so many people on it for your Barking issue (AJ 13.09.07). But why not show some more people in the buildings?

I know they mess up the photos, obscure some tasty details and can't really be controlled, but there's not much point in making buildings if they can't be used so surely we should celebrate this in the photography (providing they are wearing the right colour clothes of course!).

Mark Parsons, Sheffield

IT'S TIME FOR LIME, AS ARCHITECTURE GOES GREEN

Regarding Joanna Fletcher's correspondence on the Limeworks conversion (Letters, AJ 13.09.07), the mention of 'The Limes' sparked my discovery of the sudden vogue for lime green in architecture and elsewhere.

It takes over the pages of AJ 13.09.07 in Allford Hall Monaghan Morris' latest apartment building in Barking, as well as in Denton Corker Marshall's Civil Justice Centre in Manchester and Agrob Buchtal latest tile range. And today I proudly wear my latest Fat Face lime-green T-shirt.

Ivan Margolius, Silsoe, Bedfordshire

Please address letters to: The Editor, The Architects' Journal, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7EJ, fax 020 7391 3435, or email kaye.alexander@emap.com to arrive by 10am on the Monday before publication. The AJ reserves the right to edit letters.

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CARTWRIGHT PICKARD B+C ARCHITECTES/ BOURBON LANE



1. A view along one of Bourbon Lane's mews to the development's hulking neighbour

THE WALL CREATES A COMMUNITY THAT HAS BEEN EXILED – ALBEIT SYMBOLICALLY

By Jaffer Kolb. Photography by Morley von Sternberg

It seems odd that James Pickard of Cartwright Pickard and Dino Coursaris of French firm B+C Architectes should describe their affordable housing scheme in west London's Shepherd's Bush as a set of fingers. Given its context – abutting a huge shopping centre currently under construction by mega-developer Westfield – the analogy brings to mind the remnants of the hand of a giant whose body has been crushed and buried under its apocalyptic and grey neighbour.

Perhaps neighbour is a misleading term, as the housing is on the same site as the White City retail development. Previous site owner Chelsfield transferred the housing element to London-based developer Octavia Housing in early 2003, through a Section 106 agreement and after a bidding process. The developer of the larger 18ha site is now Westfield, though Octavia has remained in control of its portion. Chelsfield had commissioned a masterplan for the site by Ian Ritchie Architects, which determined some of the programme for the affordable-housing component (see page 29).

At the same time as Ritchie was involved in White City's development, he was also helping to establish a programme through CABE which would pair French and English architectural firms to work together to design affordable housing. Known as the *Initiative Unité*, the scheme is co-sponsored by the French government's *Direction de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine* (DAPA). Ritchie encouraged Octavia to take part in the international exchange, which led to an invited competition for the site narrowed down to seven shortlisted firms and eventually to

the selection of Cartwright Pickard and B+C Architectes. The White City site was the first project launched by the initiative and the first and only completed since it began in 2001.

Given the location and restrictions of the site, it is an auspicious beginning for the Anglo-French exchange. By arranging the project into eight discrete buildings – the 'fingers' – the architects were able to maximise light and ventilation

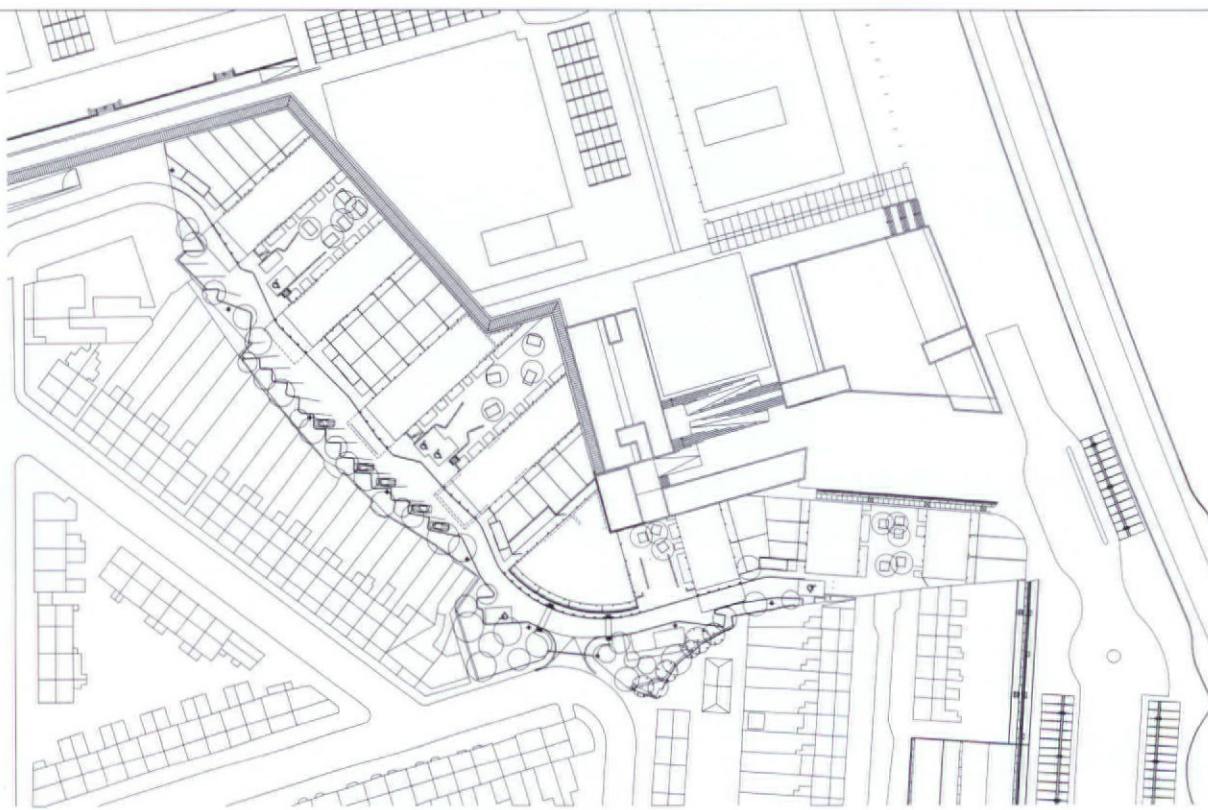
'We were going for a quiet, mews-like feel,' says Pickard. 'Right now there's a shortage of new family accommodation in London – this design creates a model of mixed dwellings within a generic building form.'

The 78 units include maisonettes, flats and family houses, and almost all have some form of access to outdoor space. The designers, by creating large roof terraces both between units and on top of the large cantilevered extrusions at the front of each building, were able to accommodate generous exterior areas throughout. Additionally, ground-level units have access to private gardens at the back and open on to publicly accessible and vehicle-restricted driveways in front. To benefit users and free up more money for landscaping and design features, the architects opted for prefabricated, easily installed steel panelling for the walls and, except in one of the buildings, chose not to install lifts – saving on both maintenance and electricity costs.

Part of the goal of the architects, by incorporating measures like the mews and balconies overlooking common spaces (see *Working Detail*, pages 30-31), was to foster a sense of community.



2. A 4m cantilever projects over a porte-cochere. Private gardens landscape the cantilevers' roofs



3. The housing site is a thin, awkward sliver on White City's southern border

'It's unfortunate and distinctly British that we had to make the rear gardens private,' says Pickard. 'In Holland these would all be common spaces.' Both Pickard and Coursaris adopt a glassy eyed optimism in describing picturesque scenes of children playing in the common places while parents look on from their houses. They're channelling, of course, the type of natural surveillance that arises through urban density and found its greatest champion in Jane Jacobs – all of which is well and good until you consider the psychological detriment of living at the foot of the concrete wall of White City towering several stories overhead.

Fortunately Bourbon Lane faces south, and so its light is not blocked by Westfield's building. Instead the wall rises like a Los Angeles scene – an expanse of concrete bleached by the sun. One might be tempted to chalk this placement up as an advantage – the architects and Octavia chief executive Grahame Hindes both note that the wall keeps disruptive shoppers out of Bourbon Lane as much as it keeps the residents in – but for the fact that the retail site's scale is so much greater. Bourbon Lane is no walled citadel, but rather a community that has been, albeit symbolically, exiled.

A similar condition persists along the project's southern border too – though this is due to the adjacent community's preferences. Row upon row of terraced houses surround White City. These buildings are typically two storeys. 'This project is surrounded by low-scale housing on one side and the shopping centre on the other; it was our job to mediate between these two vastly different scales', says Coursaris. Bourbon Street succeeds

admirably in bridging this gap; however, according to Pickard the surrounding residents didn't want the new development to integrate into their neighbourhood, given that it was billed as social housing. So another wall was erected, sandwiching Bourbon Lane and separating new residents from the old.

This is a particular shame given the designers' sensitivity to the area's context. Not only do the buildings mitigate the jarring contrast of the new shopping centre and existing neighbourhood, but the designers also worked with the existing scale of the terraced houses to maintain widths between buildings that face each other. Both Pickard and Coursaris note that the Anglo-French exchange was hugely beneficial in terms of arranging the buildings at higher densities. The team – including Octavia and both firms – toured Paris in an attempt to glean relevant lessons in designing affordable housing. 'The biggest single shock in comparing Paris and London is the change in densities; in Paris buildings tend to be 15m apart, whereas here 20m is standard', says Pickard.

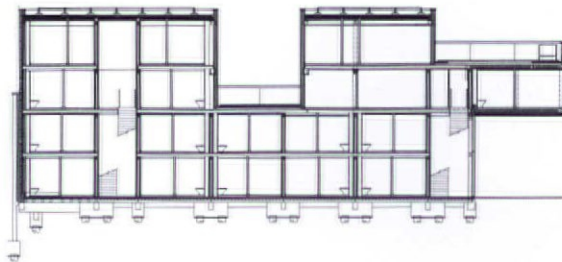
The architects imported the Paris standard to their scheme, and in so doing found that the adjacent neighbourhood was similarly scaled; a coincidence given the rarity of that arrangement in London. Given this irregular arrangement, planners had to accept the narrow width, allowing more intimacy in the development. Yet the wall which separates it from Shepherd's Bush reminds us that no matter how human its scale and how uplifting its designs, the scheme is ultimately victim of its politicised and rather brutal location.



4.



5.



6.

4. The housing mediates the scale of the terraced houses and Westfield's development
 5. Mews with overlooking balconies generate safe public spaces
 6. A section shows the cantilever and roof-garden for upper-level units

Credits

Start on site date
 8 April 2005
 Contract duration
 82 weeks
 Gross internal floor area
 6,861 m²
 Form of contract
 The NEC Engineering and Construction Contract Second Edition Option A
 Total cost
 £11,714,146
 Client
 Octavia Housing and Care
 Architect
 Cartwright Pickard Architects; B+C Architectes
 Structural engineer
 Campbell Reith
 Quantity surveyor/planning supervisor
 MDA Consulting
 Main contractor
 Como Homes
 Selected subcontractors and suppliers
 Cladding, windows, roofing Prater; mechanical and electrical services Scamac Services; partitions, ceilings, dry lining R&S
 Dri-wall; structural steelwork Billington Structures; CHP installation Vital Energi Utilities; joinery Capita Construction

Cost summary

	Cost per m ² (£)	Percentage of total
SUBSTRUCTURE	136.69	8.01
SUPERSTRUCTURE		
Frame	139.24	8.15
Upper floors	65.77	3.85
Roof	47.58	2.79
Rooflights	0.98	0.06
Staircases	26.44	1.55
External walls	250.11	14.65
Windows	28.18	1.65
External doors	20.47	1.20
Internal walls and partitions	89.62	5.25
Internal doors	32.88	1.92
GROUP ELEMENT TOTAL	701.27	41.07
INTERNAL FINISHES		
Wall finishes	31.39	1.84
Floor finishes	40.56	2.38
Ceiling finishes	31.11	1.82
GROUP ELEMENT TOTAL	103.06	6.04
FITTINGS AND FURNITURE	25.74	1.51
SERVICES		
Sanitary appliances	9.52	0.56
Disposal installations	60.61	3.55
Water installations	41.98	2.46
Space heating and air treatment	123.67	7.24
Electrical services	75.04	4.39
Lift and conveyor installations	13.22	0.77
Protective installations	17.68	1.04
Communication installations	8.30	0.49
Builders' work in connection	25.63	1.50
GROUP ELEMENT TOTAL	375.65	22.00
EXTERNAL WORKS	91.18	5.34
PRELIMINARIES AND INSURANCE	273.75	16.03
TOTAL	1,707.34	100



7. Public interior stairwells carry through the exterior colour scheme of each building

DEVELOPING WHITE CITY PIECE BY PIECE

Recent development in White City is a complicated business, involving a large cast of actors working simultaneously to isolate specific areas in need of redevelopment. White City was named a Greater London Authority Development Opportunity Area in 2004, and includes the 18ha site currently under construction by Westfield and Octavia; another 4ha Westfield site just to the north; adjacent transportation facilities – including proposed tube stations on the north-west and south-west borders of the Westfield development and a transport hub at the south-east corner; the extensive property owned by the BBC, including the BBC Television Centre; and the 24ha site to the north masterplanned by OMA in 2005. The only part that has been realised is Bourbon Lane. Westfield's £1.6 billion site, which includes £170 million in transport and infrastructure improvements, should complete by the end of 2008. A particularly high-profile shuffle ensued when Chelsfield sold its stake to Westfield in 2005. Caught up in the middle was Ian Ritchie Architects, which was commissioned by Chelsfield at the end of 1997 to masterplan its 18ha site. The plan included awarding Octavia Housing a development contract to complete the Section 106-mandated affordable-housing component of the site. After Westfield bought out the development, Ritchie's plans were altered and the firm was disassociated from the retail portion of the site. Westfield maintains that some of the design features of the building have roots in Ritchie's original plans, and that the practice is still involved with the new transportation hubs and infrastructure.



9.



10.

8. The 'fingers' of the development are ranged along a road, providing circulation around the scheme

9. White City is divided into at least four development segments. OMA has masterplanned the largest section, to the north, while Westfield develops the south

10. A detail of OMA's proposal



8.

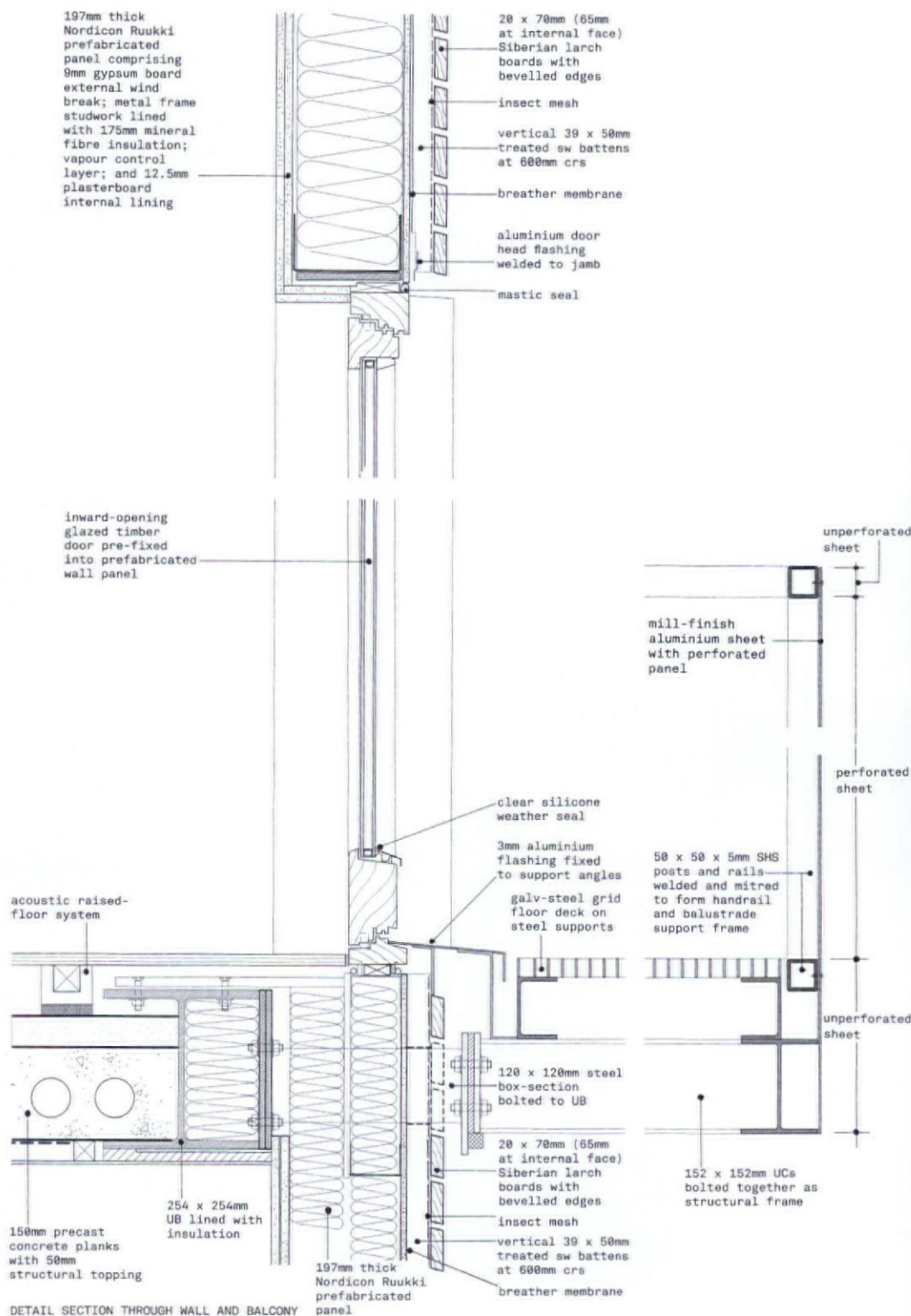
A TIMBER-CLAD PREFABRICATED WALL WITH STEEL BALCONIES

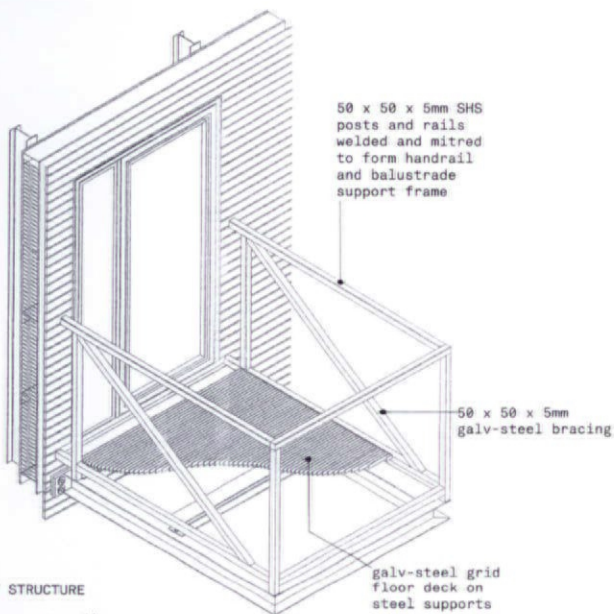
The three/four-storey housing has a steel-frame structure with floors of precast planks and structural screed topping with an acoustic floor system. The steel frame supports external walls of lightweight prefabricated panels. They were bespoke-designed to suit the project and consist of 197mm-thick insulated metal studwork, sheathed with 9mm gypsum board on the outside and vapour-control layer and plasterboard on the inside.

Windows and doors were fitted into the panels and glazed in the factory. On site the panels were craned into position and lined on the outside with breather membrane, battens and counter-battens, insect mesh and 20 x 70mm Siberian larch boards with bevelled edges, laid horizontally.

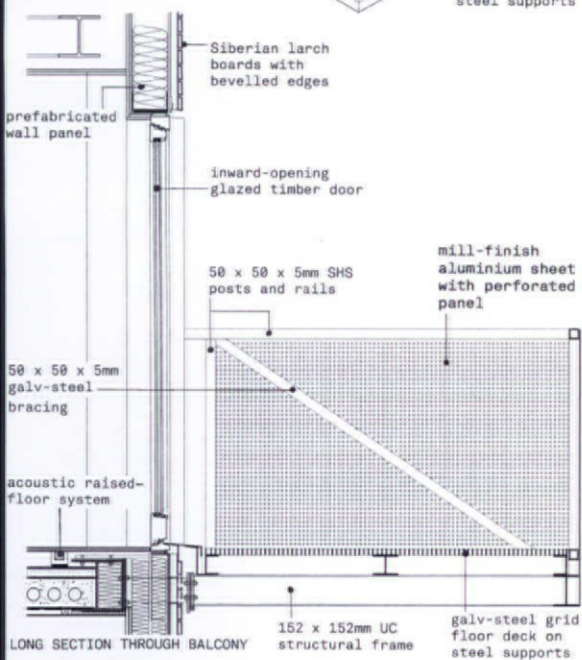
In contrast to the mellow timber cladding, the balconies that project from the walls are of crisp perforated metal. Each balcony has a structural frame of 152 x 152mm UCs, bolted back to the main steel structure and supporting a floor deck of galvanised-steel grid on steel supports. A series of welded and mitred 50 x 50 x 5mm SHS posts and rails forms the balustrade support frame, diagonal bracing and handrail. They are clad with aluminium sheet, fixed to the posts and rails with round-headed bolts. The sheet is perforated, except for a continuous perimeter border to conceal posts and rails.

By Susan Dawson

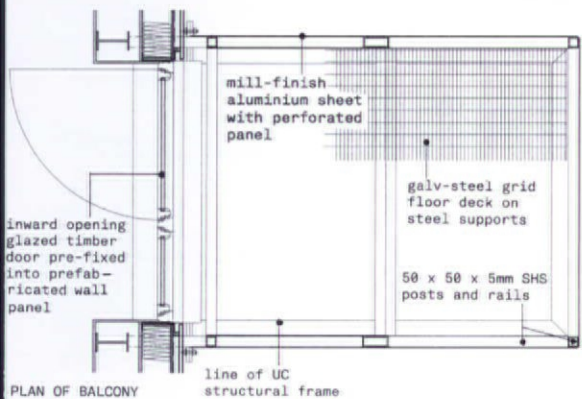




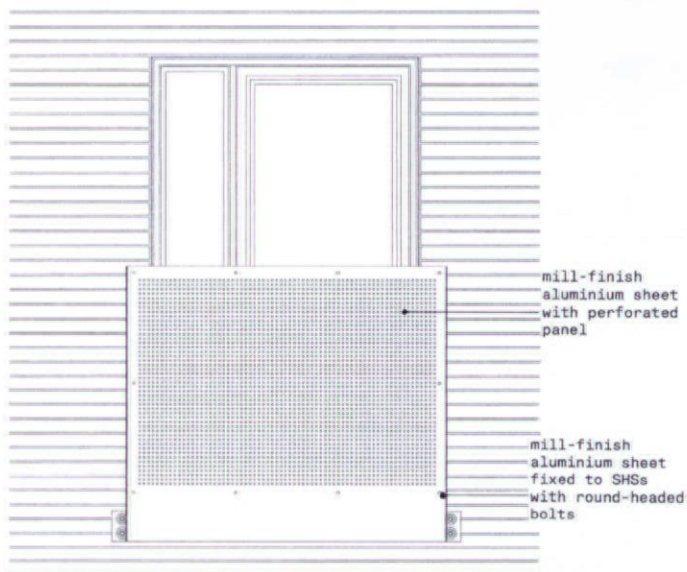
SKETCH OF STRUCTURE



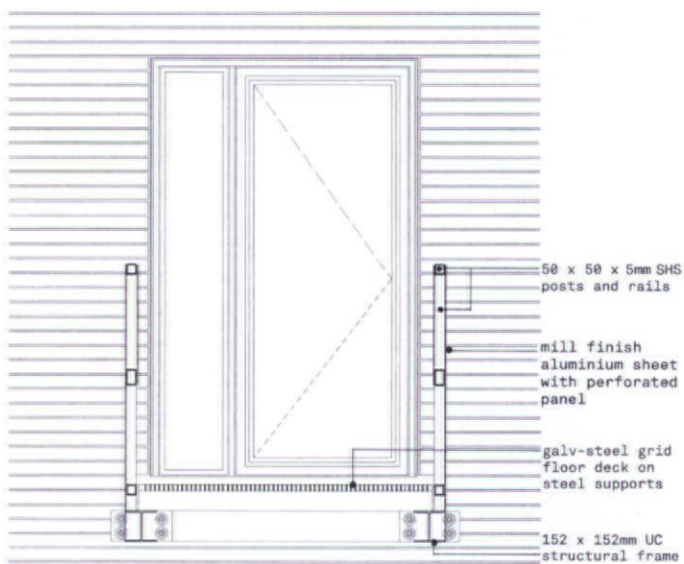
LONG SECTION THROUGH BALCONY



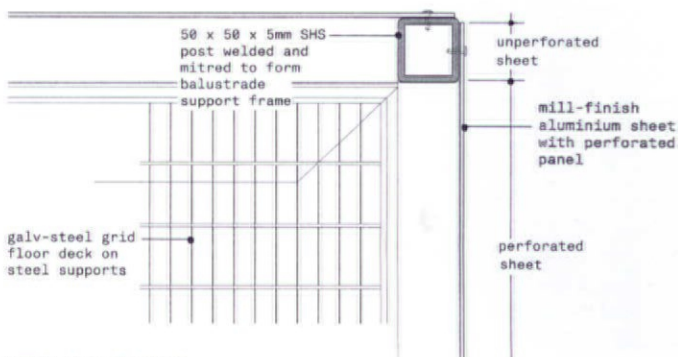
PLAN OF BALCONY



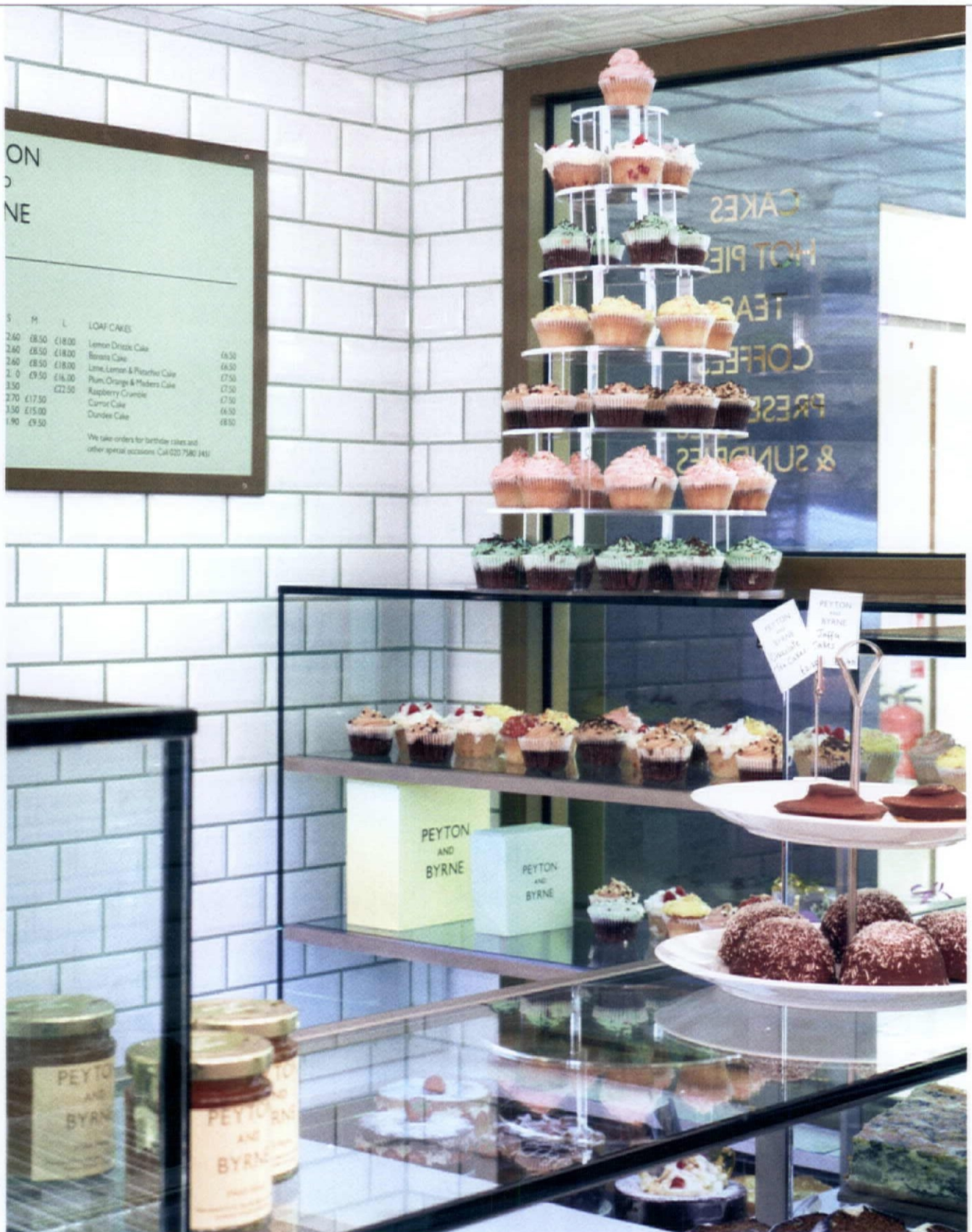
ELEVATION OF BALCONY



CROSS SECTION THROUGH BALCONY



DETAIL PLAN AT CORNER



1. The cakes are the real decoration of the Peyton and Byrne bakery, FAT says

BUT THIS IS FAT AFTER ALL, AND CHEERY WIT UNDERLIES THE DETAILS

By Jaffer Kolb. Photography by Timothy Soar

'It's like someone came in with a penknife and carved their initials on the walls,' FAT principal Charles Holland is referring to the faux-graffiti in the firm's Meals restaurant at Heal's department store on central London's Tottenham Court Road, but he may as well be describing his two projects in the department store itself.

The schemes – Meals on the first floor and the Peyton and Byrne bakery on the ground, both of which opened last autumn – feature different design strategies and aesthetics, but share FAT's inimitable stamp. Recently, with the completion of its Blue House in east London (2004) and Sint Lucas Art Academy in the Netherlands (2006) the firm has firmly established a bright Pop sensibility in its built work.

Peyton and Byrne is in Heal's lobby, past the listed Art Deco entrance. The bakery's black exterior wall and bronze window frame and signage all pick up elements of the lobby, and provide a tonal contrast to the almost institutionally white interior.

According to Holland, restaurateur Oliver Peyton – who commissioned FAT both for Meals and for Peyton and Byrne – wanted to revisit the traditional English tea shop 'in the face of the massive growth of coffee shops in the last decade'. While those venues have a living-room vibe to attract loitering shoppers, at Peyton and Byrne the design is all about displaying the cakes, which the architect describes as the real decoration and embellishment of the space.

The display system hides refrigeration and heating units under the countertops and window frame, to allow the bakery to

function almost invisibly. The lighting and walls reflect this pared-down design – naked mirror-bottomed light bulbs group together like little chandeliers, while white 75 x 150mm tiles cover the walls.

But this is FAT, after all, and the practice's cheery wit – with carefully considered space and context told through cartoonish imagery and colours – underlies details in the bakery. Green grouting outlines the white bricks, mitigating the sterility of the environment. The mosaic floor pattern picks up that green and adds black and pink swatches in alternating, irregularly sized parallelograms. FAT describes the floor as a Victorian feature in Pop Art style. 'This project was not as obviously referential as some of our stuff – it's a bit more abstracted', says Holland. And compared to its upstairs counterpart, Meals, this description certainly rings true.

The Meals restaurant is hidden among Heal's rows of rolled-up carpets, and shining fixtures. It has its own staircase which seems to suspend visitors between the ground and first floors in a purgatory made more surreal by FAT's designs.

Unlike the shimmering domes and cavernous spaces of Paris' Printemps or Galeries Lafayette department stores, Heal's provided the architect with a more modest space, characterised by low ceilings and minimal natural light. The room is between two courtyard shafts, so windows on two sides do little to help. While the room is not small – it seats 60 people in 520m² – it feels it.

Within this inauspicious context, FAT has created a characteristically over-the-top landscape. Along the restaurant's



2.

perimeter, an oak-veneered, pink-lined composite plywood frame gives the interior the feel of a stage set. The frame is cut into shapes that evoke trees and clouds. Within 75mm-thick screens, outlines of hearts and stars have been punched through, further hitting home the fairy-tale reference. Words like 'love' are somewhat brutally carved through the screens. These shapes were generated by digitally operated water jets, which allowed more precise and clean lines than laser-cutting.

The style and screens refer to a tradition of British art and design, specifically Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts, says Holland. Meals is both mannered and country-home; as rustic as it is dreamlike. But the references are so explicit they cannot be described as evocative or allusive. The design is as straightforward and saccharine as the Peyton and Byrne cakes on display. It elevates a mood into a physical Pop vocabulary of cartoonish imagery and bright colours, which is picked up by the pink of the screen's lining and leather seat upholstery; white tables have been cut to look as if they have tablecloths on them.

The design is a strange balance of two- and three-dimensional. The graphic quality of the screens and tables is altered by the fact that they wrap around corners and form bookshelves and alcoves despite their superficial flatness. This is where FAT makes its mark, carving its name into Heal's with good nature. Somehow within this tense environment food happens – comforting, given that I half expected to be fed growth-inducing mushrooms by a mad hatter.

2. A black exterior wall and bronze window provide contrast with the bakery's clinical white interior

3. Formica table tops were carved to look like cartoonish table cloths

4. White leather couches and European Oak floors give Meals a rustic, country feel

5. Digitally controlled water jets were used to cut the plywood screens, which feature small alcoves and shelving units

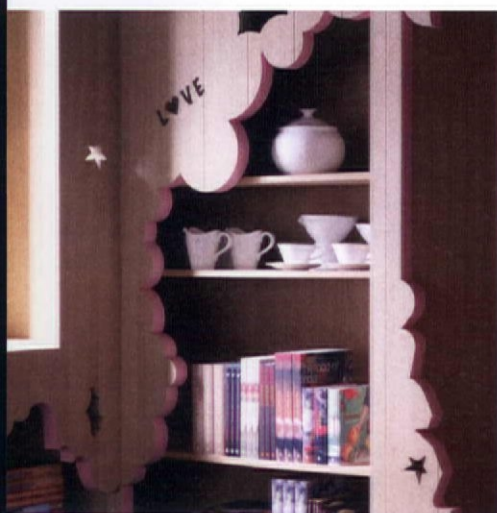
6. Hanging incandescent lamps were etched with small patterns and hung with pink-plastic-sheathed electrical cords



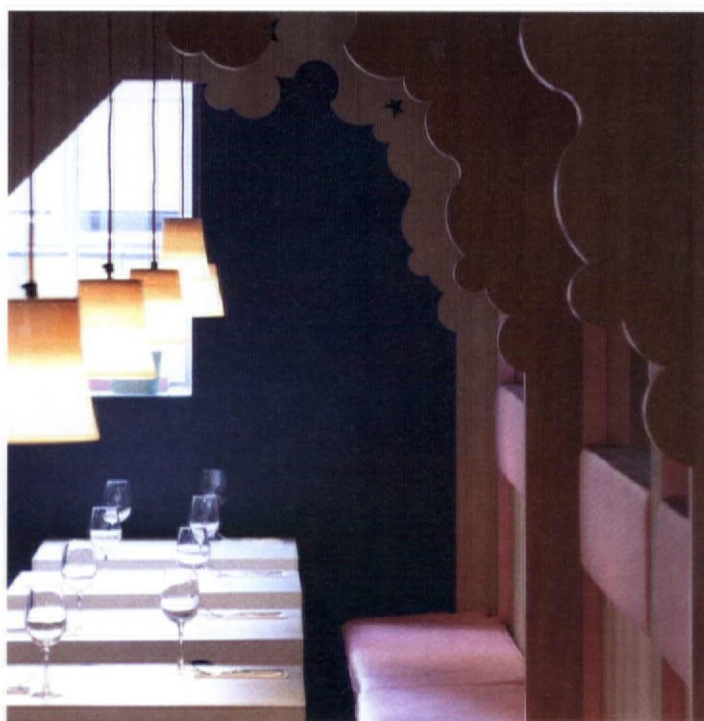
3.



4.



5.



6.

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ENQUIRY 19 ON CARD WWW.AJPLUS.CO.UK/AJDIRECT



1.

1. Roof tiles from www.whatdoidowiththis.com, a new website for surplus building materials
2. AKT's Andrew Murray, UKGBC's Julian Saunderson and InterfaceFLOR's Edmund Blamey speed dating



2.

SPEED DATING GOES GREEN

Have you ever tried professional speed dating? It's networking in fast forward. No more making up awkward excuses to go and talk to someone at a drinks reception; you get five minutes with each person and then you move on.

Last week SPONGE, the eight-year-old network of young professionals dedicated to sustainability in the built environment (www.spongenet.org), invited new-kid-on-the-block the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) to a get-to-know-you speed-dating session at the London office of UKGBC founding member Lend Lease. Over 80 people turned up, including property developers, architects, engineers, and people from organisations of all shades of green.

After a quick drink, we were split between two large seminar rooms, where long rows of empty chairs sat facing each other. Everyone grabbed a seat and started chatting. Business cards were barely exchanged before time was up.

Two half-hour sessions and a drinks break later, I had met, among others: Hammerson's head of sustainability; a staff member from recruitment agency Bright Green; an Adams Kara Taylor director; UKGBC's technical director Julian Saunderson (seconded from Fulcrum); one of HOK's sustainability 'champions'; and a representative from Swedish lighting manufacturer Fagerhult. My last date was Georgina Smithers, director of www.whatdoidowiththis.com, an eBay-like website for buying and selling surplus building materials.

UKGBC's mission is to push sustainability across the full range of the construction sector, and this was a very promising start. Bravo to SPONGE for inviting all these like-minded suitors out for the evening.

UKGBC will be hosting a debate on the Merton rule in October. Details will be announced shortly at www.ukgbc.org

G4C AWARDS

G4C, part of Constructing Excellence, has announced its awards programme, which recognises outstanding young achievers in the built environment. Unlike most built-environment awards, the G4C awards are interesting because they are not project-based, yet all 11 categories concern the way architects work.

The categories are: innovation; collaboration; leadership; entrepreneurship; sustainability; diversity; ambassador; inspiration; employer of the year; newcomer of the year; and the G4C champion award.

You can nominate yourself or be nominated by a colleague. A list of finalists will be published in AJ 18.10.07, and finalists will be invited to the awards ceremony, held at the London Science Museum on 30 November.

For details and to download an entry form visit www.g4cawards.com. The deadline for entries is 6 October.

EVENTS

External Timber Cladding in Wales

25 September, 10am-3pm
Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff
www.bre.co.uk/events
info@woodsourcewales.co.uk

Green Roofs: Basic Principles and Design

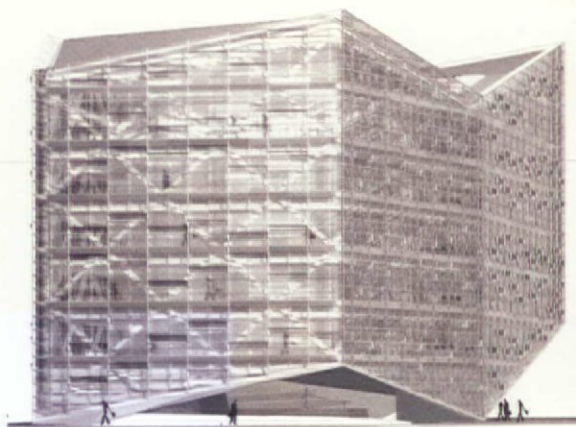
26-27 September, repeated 5-6 November
CIRIA, Classic House, 174-180 Old Street, London EC1
www.ciria.org.uk/events.htm

JCT Design and Build Contract 2005

27 September, 1.15-5pm
RIBA East, Cambridge
jayne.ransome@inst.riba.org
www.architecture.com

Design Excellence/Design-Build

27-29 September
RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London W1
Speakers include Zaha Hadid, Chris Wilkinson and Sunand Prasad
www.architecture.com



FLEXIBLE FACADE IMPROVES ENERGY EFFICIENCY

By Hattie Hartman

With urgent demand for optimal environmental performance and a continued corporate commitment to glittering headquarters, curtain walls must incorporate energy-efficiency with crystalline designs – a particularly challenging task as those energy demands become increasingly rigorous. A recent project – the Nykredit Building in Copenhagen, by Århus-based architect Schmidt Hammer Lassen with Buro Happold – exemplifies the engineering creativity produced in response to this challenge.

Nykredit, a Danish investment bank, gave a standard brief, asking for a glazed building featuring extensive natural lighting to act as a symbolic head office. The bank included, however, the rather strict caveat that the envelope should have a U-value of less than $1\text{W}/\text{m}^2\text{K}$, a stretch for an all-glass facade.

A bit of context: statutory requirements in the UK (Part L Building Regulations 2006) call for an average facade U-value of $2.2\text{W}/\text{m}^2\text{K}$. Best practice for a standard single double-glazed unit is in the 1.6 to 1.7 range, while double facades with natural ventilation typically average 1.2 to 1.3.

These low figures can be misleading. 'It's exponentially more difficult to reach 1,' says Buro Happold facade engineer Ian Maddocks. But on the Nykredit scheme intensive collaboration between architect and engineer early in the design process resulted in a complex polyvalent envelope to meet this brief.

In Denmark, says Maddocks, 'consultants are cheap and contractors are expensive,' so this project was 'indulgent in the design phase.' Danish clients are happy to spend more on design to

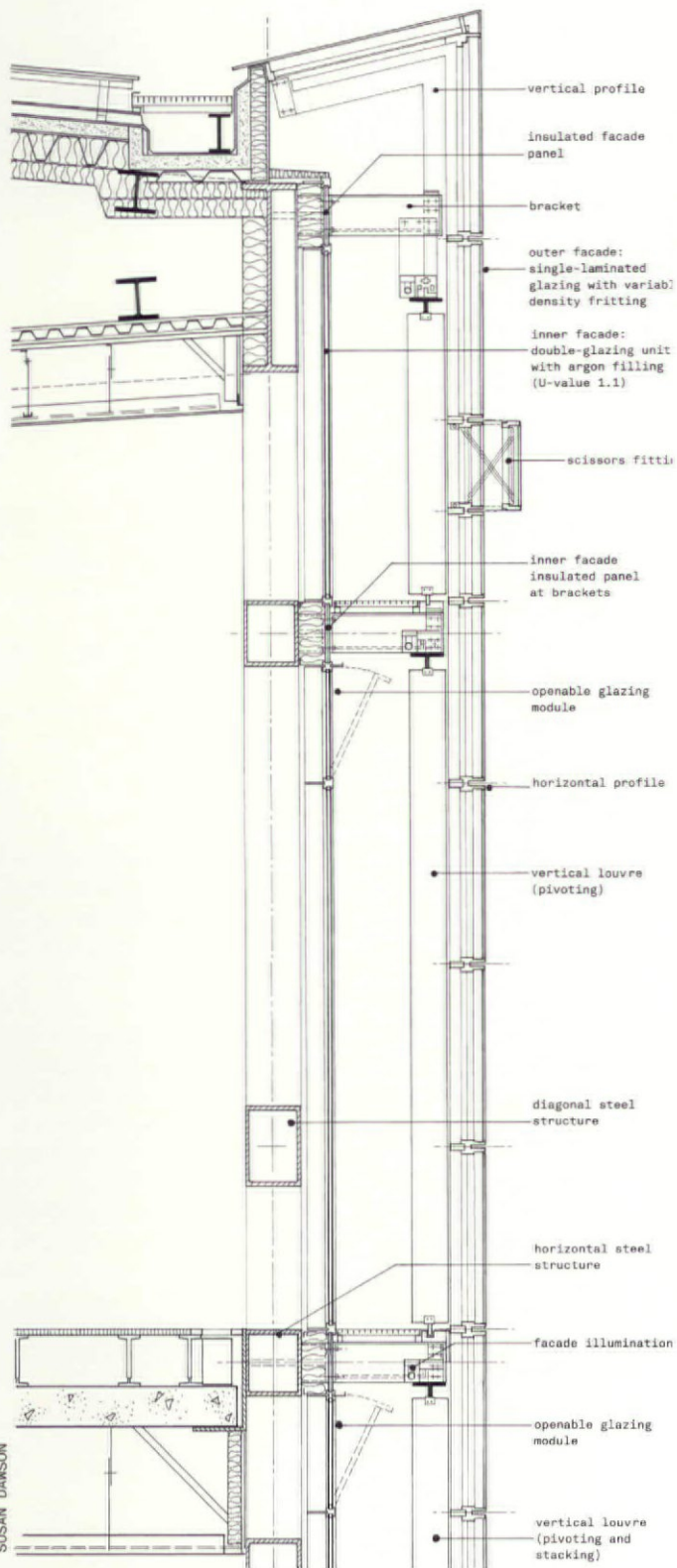
save money later, which enabled Buro Happold, commissioned only up to Stage D, to study a range of options. Projects such as Foster + Partners' Commerzbank in Frankfurt, the RWE Building by Christopher Ingenhoven in Essen, and Ian Simpson's Deansgate Building in Manchester suggested the way forward: a double-skin facade with a double-glazed unit (DGU) as the inner facade; a deep naturally ventilated cavity; and a single-glazed outer layer.

These facades rely on wind pressure and the stack effect within the cavity for natural ventilation, and the inner facade acts as the building's weather line. Wind pressure fluctuates, so conditions within the cavity vary and the building must respond in order to optimise performance.

For the Nykredit Building, which will go on site in December, Buro Happold crafted a sophisticated combination of materials, technology and detailing that is both flexible and responsive to seasonal and climatic changes. The outer facade can be sealed in the winter, creating a warm buffer and reducing internal transmission, and opened in the warmer months to create a stack effect in the cavity and avoid overheating. During the summer, a shading system within the cavity can control solar gain. This system necessitated an unconventionally deep 800mm cavity, but because it is protected from the weather it could be less robust (and expensive) than external shading.

According to Buro Happold senior facade engineer Francesca Maddeo, while the governing European code contains

Continued overleaf



2.



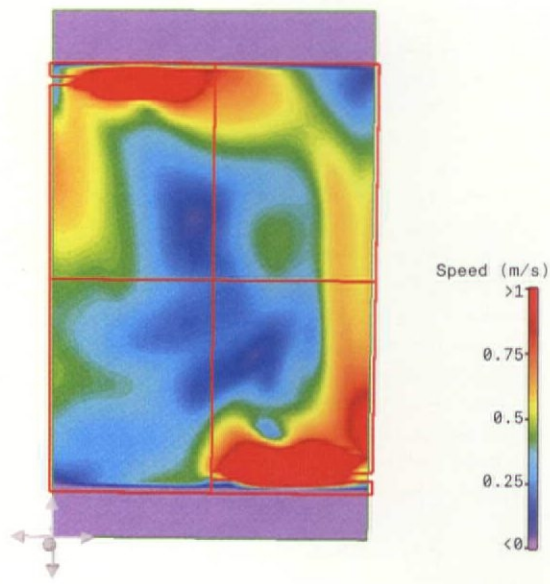
3.

1. Early visualisation for the Copenhagen Nykredit Building, showing diamond lattice structure behind double-skin glazed facade

2. Wall section through double skin with ventilated cavity




3. Early mock-up of motorised shading system in cavity

4. Buro Happold and Arup's model for a south-facing, two-storey high and 6m-wide facade module to measure air circulation in the cavity



4.

5. Table illustrating the performance characteristics of three double-glazed unit (DGU) options. Designers eventually chose the DGU with argon filling

GLAZING TYPE	Vacuum glazing DGU	Heat mirror DGU	DGU with argon filling
			
THICKNESS (MM)	21	36	42
SOUND REDUCTION (DB)	30	39-43	49
U-VALUE (WINTER) (W/M ² K)	7-9	0.6/0.7	1.1-2
MAXIMUM SIZE (MM)	2,400 x 1,350	2,400 x 1,240	3,500 x 2,440
COMMENTS	Vacuum glazing, a thin high-performance Japanese product, was not used due to cost, lack of precedent in the European market and limited available warranties	A double-glazed unit with a low-emissivity heat-mirror film suspended in the cavity gave high thermal performance but was unavailable in large panels	A double-glazed unit, with both leaves of laminated glass with an argon filling, achieved the required low U-value and balanced performance, cost and reliability

guidelines for a sealed cavity width of 300mm, there were no reference calculations for Nykredit's deeper 800mm. This led to an unusual collaboration between Buro Happold and Arup on the development of a new computational program which could calculate the thermal transmission of the proposed envelope. This program was then validated by Buro Happold's thermal Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) analysis. CFD modelling was also used to predict air flows in the cavity to achieve the required ventilation in the office interiors.

Extensive research went into the glazing specification, comparing the performance of alternative combinations to find the most efficient products for the inner facade (see figure 5, above), with the argon-filled double-glazed unit eventually selected. A bespoke system of pivoting and stacking vertical glass louvres – operated by the building-management system with the option of manual override by occupants – will control solar gain in summer and glare when the sun is low in the sky.

Equally critical was the detailing of the frame, the 'weakest' thermal element of the facade module. The challenge was to design as slim a frame as possible, with no thermal break, to maximise thermal performance while still providing the necessary structural support for the floor-height glazing.

The location of the building's lattice grid structure in relationship to the double facade was carefully analysed to see how it impacted U-values. Aligning the outer facade and structure in the same plane meant less glazing but more joints, and therefore

more air leakage than offsetting structure and facade. Calculations proved that offsetting the grid was the most thermally efficient solution. An external support system of vertical fins made of GRP (Glass Reinforced Polycarbonate – thinner and lighter than glass with U-value close to 0.2W/m²K) is bonded to the glass of the outer skin to strengthen the facade.

After the initial design work, a U-value measurement revealed that the engineers had exceeded the 1.0W/m²K target, and the design was reassessed to see where savings could be achieved. This was accomplished by slightly increasing the size of the solid spandrel panel on the inner facade, and disguising it visually through the use of fritting on the glazed panels of the outer facade. Additional thermal computer models were used to establish ventilation requirements, which were met by locating operable units in the outer facade.

'Engineering has always tended to be reactive,' says Maddocks, but it's changing as the value of integrated design becomes more widely acknowledged. Maddocks views the Nykredit Building as the start of a journey towards more intelligent facades, and this means the involvement of engineering 'higher up the food chain.'



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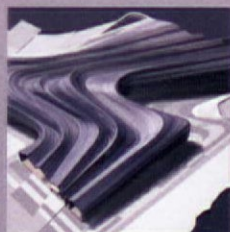
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Achieving long term value through sustainable design



Elmswell Affordable Housing
Suffolk
Architect:
Riches Hawley Mikhail Architects

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Developing new and innovative technology solutions



Nykredit
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Architect:
Schmidt Hammer Lassen

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QUALITY IN THE WORLD OF QUANTITIES

I must clarify that last week I was referring approvingly to land surveyors – the ones who use theodolites, dumpy levels and plane tables. Several people thought I was praising quantity surveyors and rang up to ascertain which institution I had been committed to.

Actually, I am an admirer of QS maestro Bernard Williams. Williams ditched bills of quantities on the grounds that they were meaningless window dressing, incapable of saying anything accurate about the cost of a building. Not popular with the QS establishment. Yet he has long had a coterie of architect admirers who like the way he suggests ways of building what they want, rather than sucking his teeth.

Williams does not appear to have a website, but then who needs one when word of mouth does the trick? He has just produced an EU report (<http://tinyurl.com/2bspgs>) which reveals that the UK is at the bottom of the construction league in terms of efficiency; UK costs are top. Coincidence or not, he points out in the AJ's sister mag, QS Week (<http://tinyurl.com/28x3u3>), that the UK is the only European country where quantity surveying is a separate discipline. sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

MAN DOWN

Construction adjudication has been with us for so long now that it is hard to remember what things were like before the 1996 Construction Act, or to imagine a dispute-resolution landscape without the behemoth that is adjudication, writes *Kim Franklin*.

It was startling to learn, therefore, that until recently there existed a pocket of the British Isles – the Isle of Man – where the writ of adjudication did not run. With the advent of the Construction Contracts Act of 2004, however, the Isle of Man's Tynwald parliament voted through payment and dispute-resolution provisions similar to those that have dominated the UK construction industry for nearly a decade. So what has the Isle of Man's construction industry been missing out on for all those years?

Construction adjudication was first introduced in 1994 as part of Sir Michael Latham's report on construction procurement. Within the welter of stuff about improving communications between client, consultant and contractor lurked two inconspicuous paragraphs which proposed a short-order 28-day procedure for resolving disputes quickly, on site, and as and when they arose.

Everyone agreed that, generally, this was a good idea. But the legislation which

introduced this nascent procedure in 1998 contained a few surprises for contractor and consultant alike. For a start, a dispute could be referred to adjudication 'at any time'. Thus, the decision-makers would not necessarily be called to site to give a view on the brickwork, the contractor's entitlement to an extension of time, or whether the cladders should be paid. An adjudicator could be invoked long after the project was completed, snagged and let.

The other nasty surprise of particular relevance to architects was that they were now in the frame. The original idea was that adjudication would only be used for contractors' payment disputes. By including 'agreements to do architectural, design or surveying work' within the statutory definition, parliament at a stroke enabled discontented clients to claim professional negligence against their designers in adjudication. This was, and remains, particularly alarming for a number of reasons:

- there was no saying who would be appointed to resolve a dispute. It could be a fellow architect, but equally, and statistically more likely, it could be a quantity surveyor;
- however detailed and complex the claim, the designer usually has less than 28 days in which to defend it; and

• good, bad or indifferent, you are stuck with the adjudicator's decision unless you want to revisit the whole dispute in court or arbitration.

While many of the early adjudication wrinkles have been ironed out by the construction courts – at first tentatively and latterly with a sledgehammer – it remains the case that any dispute which has been rumbling away in the background could suddenly be referred to adjudication. The first the unsuspecting designer will know about it is when the adjudication notice lands on the mat – even now, it seems, on the Isle of Man.

Kim Franklin is a barrister and chartered arbitrator at Crown Office Chambers in London. Visit www.crownofficechambers.com

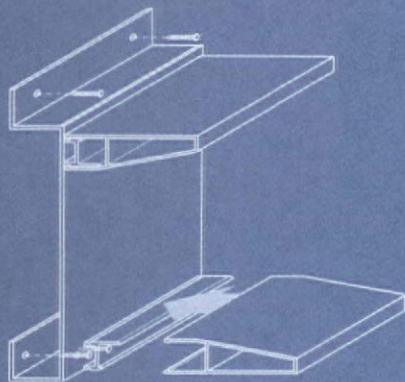
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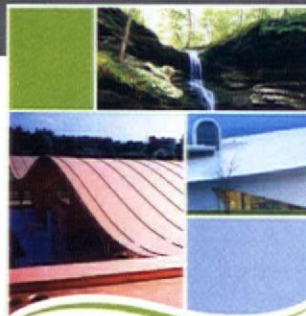
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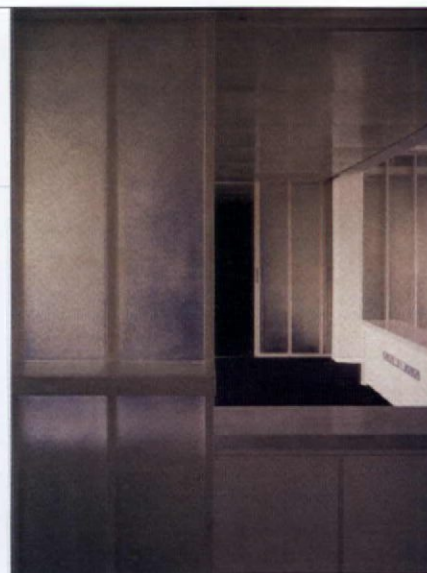
EXHIBITION

By Enrique Gualberto Ramirez

New Practices London.
At the AIA Center for
Architecture, 536
LaGuardia Place, New
York, until 27 October



1.



2.

The American Institute of Architects' Center for Architecture in New York may be small, yet the scope of its current exhibition, 'New Practices London', is anything but. Tucked into the centre's double-height mezzanine gallery, it features the work of six London practices 'whose work shows invention and promise'. The projects range from installations and residential schemes to larger-scale urban investigations and fantasies.

At the smallish end of this spectrum is 6a Architects' Hairywood tower – a periscope of a building complete with laser-cut facades and a seating area that provides an unusual vantage point for its users. Made of plywood, and of limited purpose, Hairywood reads as an interesting folly, but

one can understand 6a's comment that – with this and other projects – they surprise themselves.

And indeed, much of the work featured in the exhibition continues this trend, defying expectations and assumptions. Take Carmody Groarke's Coney Island Parachute Pavilion, winner of the Van Alen Institute's 2005 Open Design Competition. Although the brief called for a future vision for Coney Island, the practice's project is fascinating for its ability to summon the past in thoughtful ways.

The Parachute Pavilion is shaped like an amusement-park attraction. From generic pink programme volumes, a slender element reaches skyward and blossoms into a polygonal canopy. The metal scaffolding and impressive geometries recall

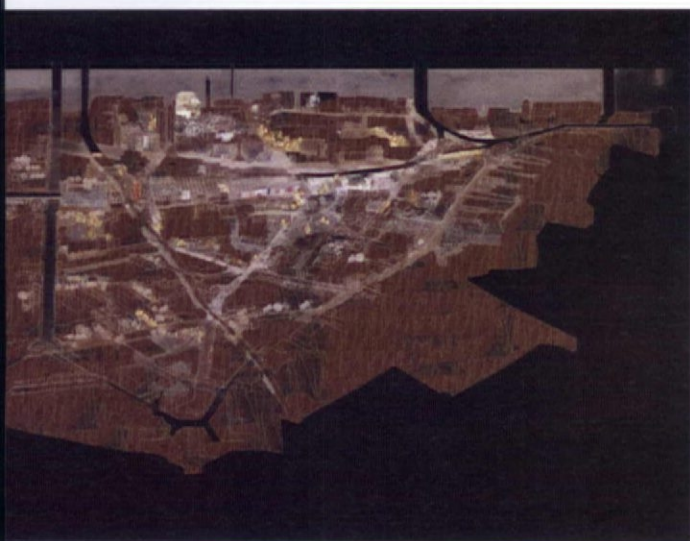
Konrad Wachsmann's post-war space frames, as well as 1920s Russian Constructivism. In this sense, it is a wayback machine, but – like Rem Koolhaas' musings on Coney Island in *Delirious New York* – also an example of how a nod to architectural history can be transformed into a vital statement.

AOC's work also touches upon historical precedent, but in subtle ways. 'New Practices London' features three of its projects, all firmly rooted in giddy 1960s London. The Lift, AOC's 'New Parliament', namechecks Archigram's pneumatic projects and uses bright, vivid isometrics to show the project's flexible programme. The firm's most vividly realised project, however, is Polyopoly, which takes the idea of ludic urbanism to the extreme. Here,

in a format resembling Monopoly, a board game interrogates globalisation's strangest manipulation of urban form: the Special Economic Zone.

In its other inclusions, 'New Practices London' never ceases to surprise. DRDH Architects may describe its work as 'strangely ordinary', yet its skilful manipulation and exploration of space at different scales can be downright thrilling. This deftness is visible in the material nuances of its Kahn House, as well as the exploration of building setbacks in its Limerston Street housing in London's Chelsea. Such nuance is also a feature of Witherford Watson Mann's Neo-Brutalist fantasies and Ullmayer Sylvester's sparkling curtain walls and beautifully quiet interiors.

1, 2 & 3. Gage/Clemenceau's design of the exhibition tends to overpower the contents, which include DRDH Architects' Rich Mix Cultural Foundation (left) and Witherford Watson Mann's Bankside Urban Park (below)



3.

But there's a problem. The exhibition design, by form-obsessed Gage/Clemenceau Architects, overpowers the content – for instance, in the way that models are placed atop Gage/Clemenceau's sweeping, ribbed, purple glowing boxes. But each firm does have the chance to present its own views and methodologies in a little book called 'process' that sits next to its models, while, flanking one side of the glowing boxes, cards with low-density images and tiny fonts give more insight into each practice's work.

In its exhibition materials, Witherford Watson Mann points out that 'British architects used to be very plugged into the United States – think of Norman Foster being taught by Paul Rudolph and Serge Chermayeff'. It's a

statement that evokes a golden era at the Yale School of Architecture.

Yet 'New Practices London' hints at something rather unsettling. It happens that Mark Foster Gage is currently in charge of the M.Arch course at Yale, so in a sense his firm's design of this show undoes the equal exchange of ideas that Witherford Watson Mann adores. The emerging London architect is not plugged in as much as it is overpowered by the audacious formalism of American academia.

All in all, the work of these six emerging practices is beguiling. But actually seeing and appreciating it is hard work indeed.

Enrique Gualberto Ramirez is a PhD student at Princeton University's School of Architecture



CRITIC'S CHOICE

By Andrew Mead

One of photographer *Mark Power's* past projects was to record the interior of the Treasury in London's Whitehall during Foster + Partners' remodelling of it. Now Brighton-based publisher and commissioner Photoworks has issued *Power's 26 Different Endings* (£40), which is based on a simple but productive idea. Power has taken a copy of the *A-Z London Street Atlas*, tagged all the pages that show the outermost reaches of the city, and then visited them systematically to document these 'endings' – the fluctuating fringe of London, where any semblance of urbanism finally expires.

The images are simply titled by the A-Z page number and grid reference – V 12 North, R 93 East – but whichever compass point Power heads to, what he finds is pretty bleak. Some partly boarded-up garages overflow with junk; a rain-washed scrapyard gleams under a grey sky; burned-out cars disintegrate in a nondescript field; an artificial ski-slope, seemingly abandoned, is shown for the crude contrivance it is. Pictured above is Z 22 West.

Housing here ranges from downmarket 1960s semis to more recent middle-class developments such as Cherry Croft ('Resident Permit Holders Only'), with eccentric interlopers on the way – a pebble-dashed house with bizarrely steep roofs, as if snow was a continual menace in south London. Meanwhile, nature does strange things on these margins: trees are weirdly pruned and contorted or, covered in creepers, seem to loom malignly. Almost everywhere looks like a crime scene – banal but rather sinister.

All of the images are specific (the map reference) but they're generic too – this could be the edge of any UK city. But it's worth remembering that what they represent is not an absolute fact but a point of view – what Power has chosen to see. Threading its way past Power's sites is a long-distance path, the London Loop, which stitches fields and downland together with what its promoters rightly describe as 'secret ribbons of greenery'. You could make a book of photographs here which looked like a rural idyll; these fringes are multi-dimensional. But that doesn't diminish the strength of Power's collection (www.photoworksuk.org).

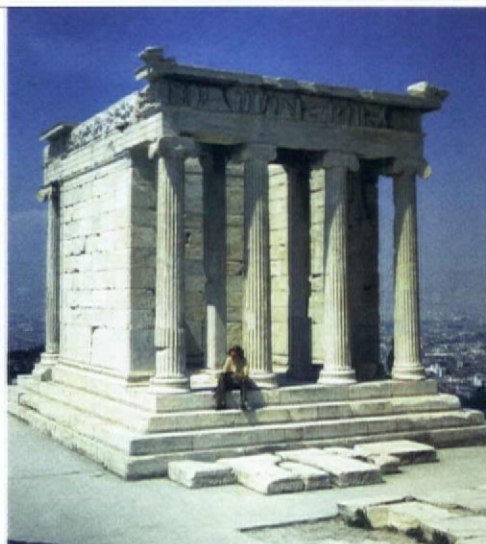
For forthcoming events visit www.ajplus.co.uk/diary

BOOK

By John McKean

Antiquity: Origins,
Classicism and the
New Rome.

By Christopher Tadgell.
Phaidon, 2007. 840pp. £65



1.



2.

1 & 2. Tadgell's 'necklace of great buildings' includes the Temple of Athena Nike in Athens and Machu Picchu, as his narrative jumps from Europe to South America and back

I must admit to an interest in the idea of an architectural history of everything. As I struggle with completely rewriting Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture*, two other valiant attempts have already appeared this year.

First up was *A Global History of Architecture*, from Francis Ching, Mark Jarzombek and Vikramaditya Prakash, which brilliantly reworks Banister Fletcher's formula. On to Ching's well-known draughtsmanship are hung myriad short tales in a 700-page, non-Eurocentric, chronological gallery of key buildings. Imperial tombs of Qin China and Rome rub shoulders with the holy mountains of Sanchi in India and Teuchitlán in Mexico, and original, clear texts inform these juxtapositions.

Now Christopher Tadgell presents his more ambitious scheme. He plans to divide the cake into five: the Ancients (this volume, up to Byzantium), Moderns (since the Enlightenment) and between them East, West and Islam. And academic publisher Routledge – whose fare is usually 250 pages with 50 grey images and a £75 price tag – has discovered design. With bright colour on all its many pages, the book is great value.

Of well over 1,000 images, only 19 are credited. Are the rest the author's own, often very fine, shots – a reminder of Banister Fletcher's claim that he visited every building he included? Here they add a real vitality, while the many snaps of models in museums are great.

The tale follows a traditional route (Fertile

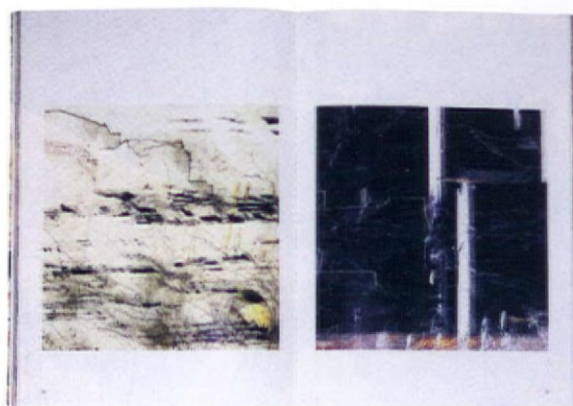
Crescent – Aegean – Assyria) until, at the death of the Persian king Darius, we jump the Atlantic to the Olmecs. Mesoamerica develops to Columbus, then back three millennia to Peru and on again to Machu Picchu before we're whisked back to Classical Greece and set on the home straight to Byzantium (with a detour to Ethiopia).

Tadgell has his necklace of great buildings (in one typeface), stringing them together with a narrative enlarging their social/political context (in another). But this jumps between entries on the pantheons of gods and chronology of kings as well as on the architecture itself, where most of the sentences in his series of tiny books for Ellipsis (1998) reappear. Add another thread (and third

typeface) of often long, valuable captions, and the overlaps can confuse.

One could grumble about many little things: the few, sparsely annotated maps are quite inadequate to locate the myriad places discussed; every drawing has a scale (great) but far too many are clearly out by an order of 10 at least (a pity). Yet no book of this size will get all of this right in its first edition. And here is a treasure chest of material, the enticing images complemented by a lengthy text.

Yet this text itself doesn't have an easy charm. One paragraph, randomly chosen, begins: 'If Olmec culture developed from a San Lorentian synthesis of forms and ideas derived from disparate sources, after the millennium of its evolution and dissemination



BOOK

By *Barrie Evans*

Formations: Images From Rocks.

By *Richard Weston.*

Deukalion Press, 2007,

112pp. £16.94 from

www.amazon.co.uk

throughout Mesoamerica the differentiation of regional development produced the array of disparate cultures from which the great classic traditions of the Mexican basin were to emerge dominant in the early centuries CE.' Then a much longer sentence concludes the 18-line paragraph.

If there is a sense of the pre-Hispanic material not being entirely digested, that from Classical Greece and Rome has had perhaps too much rumination, and a rather traditional art-history tale echoes in its vocabulary.

Tadgell relaxes as 'Athens entered the Classical age of the fifth century' – almost as if civilisation's gates were opened to a flourish of trumpets. Here 'the stupendous chryselephantine statue' is deep behind the 'prostyle hexastyle',

and soon the Roman house has its peristyle round the compluvium over the impluvium. Half these words are never explained while the others are unnecessary – in English, the Roman house had a colonnaded court with a central pond.

So the contrast in tone of voice with, say, John Onians or Joseph Rykwert on the Classical orders is marked; but equally so is the content. Onians' 1988 book was called *The Bearers of Meaning*. Tadgell, like many predecessors with less attractive books, can detail the development of the orders, but leaves us with little idea of what that language might actually have meant to the designers and their clients.

John McKean is a professor at the University of Brighton

This is an odd but engaging book, a collection of visual pleasures brought together for no more profound reason than that. But it's no mean feat that, when 80 per cent of the book is images, nearly all are surprising.

Architectural critic and teacher Richard Weston has spent some three years exploring the micro-world of rock formation, examining minute slices of our slowly evolved planet under a high-powered scanner. After the initial amazement at the intricacy and clarity of detail comes our natural instinct to read 'schools' and narratives into these essentially scale-less images. Turner, Paul Klee, Jackson Pollock, Neil Spiller's computer graphics, ice fields, underwater landscapes, the earth seen from space, and worlds not yet imagined are all

here. That these often swirling 'organic' forms are in fact all inorganic takes time to register.

In a brief essay Weston touches on a more profound justification for his obsession. Contrasting the early Modernist embrace of the machine with the nature-rooted designs of second-generation Modernists like Alvar Aalto, he goes on to consider today's increasing interest in decoration. In tune with that, he sees the images as 'a quarry' for all sorts of digitally manufactured items, such as fabrics and rugs.

It's a tribute to Weston's polymathic curiosity that he undertook this enterprise. He invites us to stop and wonder at the world.

Richard Weston's images are on show at the National Botanic Garden of Wales until 14 October

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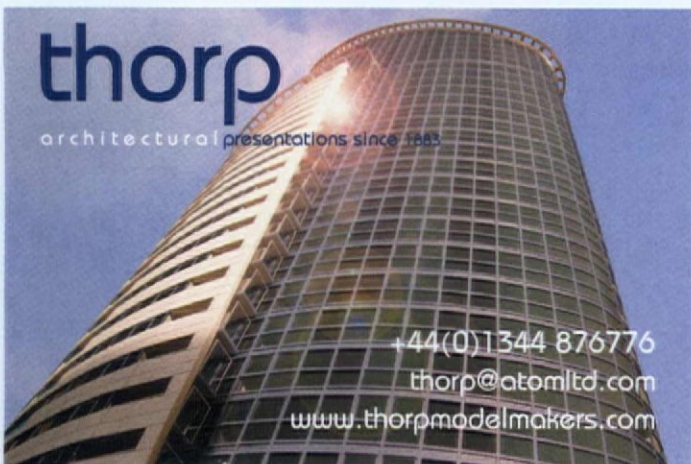
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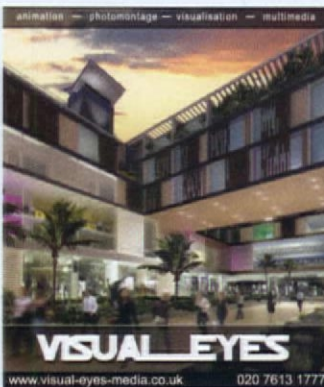
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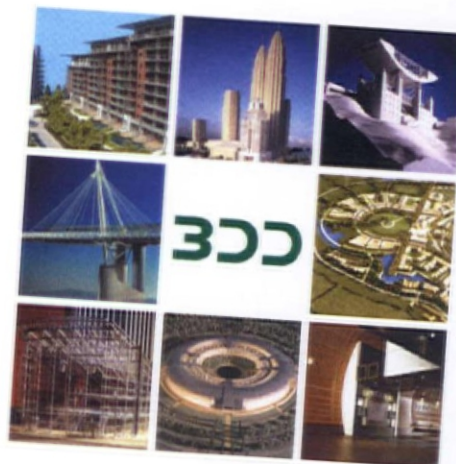


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- ✶ Bill Dunster, Director, **Bill Dunster Architects**
- ✶ Claudine Blamey, Corporate Social Responsibility Director, **British Land**
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For full details of the updated programme and speaker line-up please visit the website.

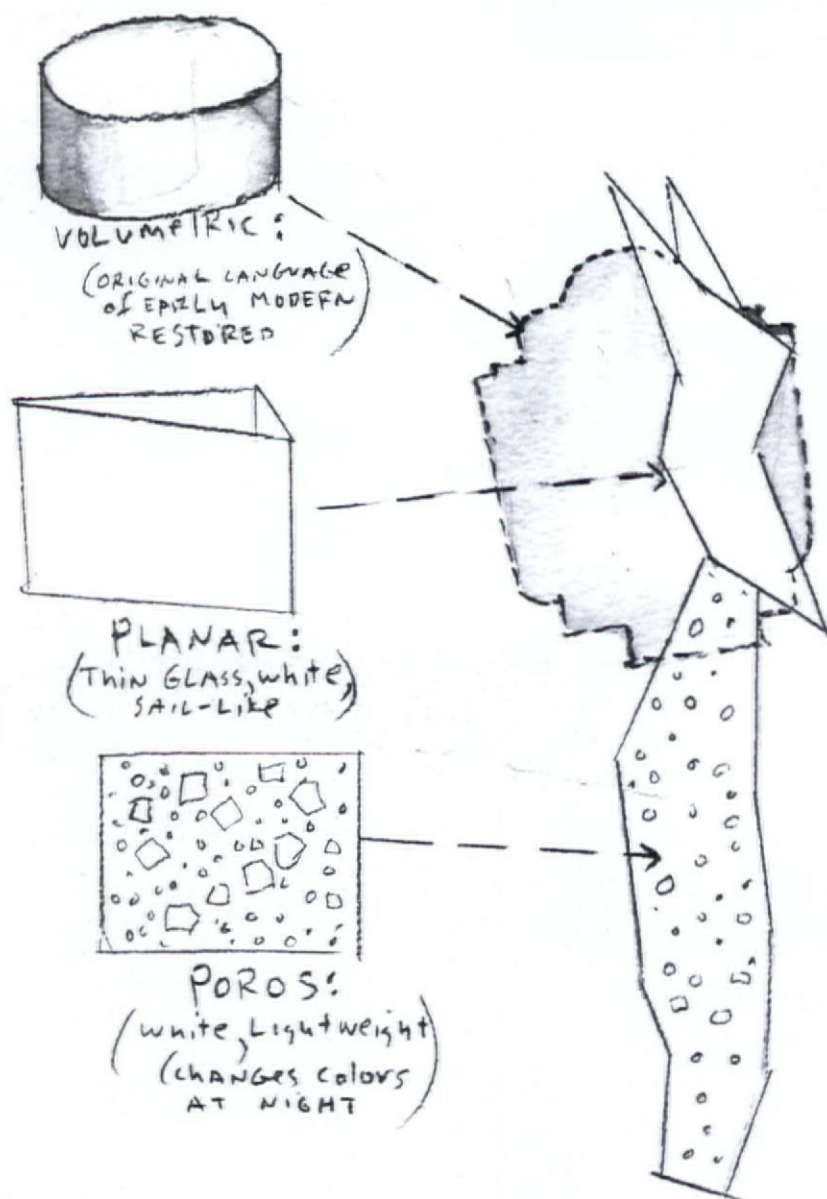
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CONCEPT = COMPLEMENTARY CONTRAST OF 3 LANGUAGES:



Concept sketch for the Sail Hybrid casino in Knokke-Heist, Belgium. By Steven Holl of Steven Holl Architects. See how the practice used mock-ups to test ideas for its Herning Centre of the Arts, Denmark, in 'Making it work' in this month's AJ Specification

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Oslo laminated-timber windows from Scandinavian Window Systems (SWS) have been specified for a school for children with sensory impairments in Glasgow. SWS' Oslo range was chosen for Hazelwood School because of its environmental credentials and high performance.

KINGSPAN



AJ ENQUIRY 202

A total of 3,000m² of Kingspan Kooltherm K12 Framing Board was installed throughout the new PFI Whitecross High School and Specialist Sports College, Hereford, to reflect the demanding design requirements of sustainability and the building envelope, which is designed for high levels of insulation.

INTEGRATED DESIGN



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The Fastlane Entrance Control Range is designed to balance the aesthetic and security requirements demanded by today's architects and modern building design. The range includes optical turnstiles, tripods, entrance gates, speedgates, passgates and tailgate detection systems.

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Over 77,000 Ashfix fasteners supplied by Ash & Lacy Building Systems were used to secure the insulated composite panels on an Asda import facility in Teesport, Middlesbrough. The Ashfix 304-grade, stainless steel, self-drilling and tapping fasteners represent high-quality and excellent value.

VELFAC



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Velfac now provides a service for domestic or small commercial projects. Each window is made bespoke to specifications for design, colour and size, allowing you freedom of imagination. The display is at the Kettering showroom. Telephone 01223 897100 or visit www.velfac.co.uk

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Gooding Aluminium's new 172-page 'Let There be Aluminium' handbook is packed with new-generation aluminium products, fixing solutions and materials, as well as photographic examples of built projects. Specifiers can apply now for their free copy at www.goodingalum.com

HÄFELE



AJ ENQUIRY 207

A new CPD seminar presentation from Häfele entitled 'Frameless Glass Fittings for Doors, Screens and Canopies' has now been approved by the RIBA. The presentation covers the suitability of individual hardware systems and glass combinations for use across the building spectrum.

MAPEI



AJ ENQUIRY 208

Design consultancy HMKM won Best Use of Tile by an Architect or Designer at the The Tile Association Awards 2007. Domus Carrara Marble tiles were installed at Selfridges, London, with Mapei's Mapecem screed, Grenirapid two-part adhesive for natural stones, and Ultracolor Plus cement-based grout.



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*The Michigan Department of
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