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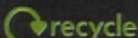
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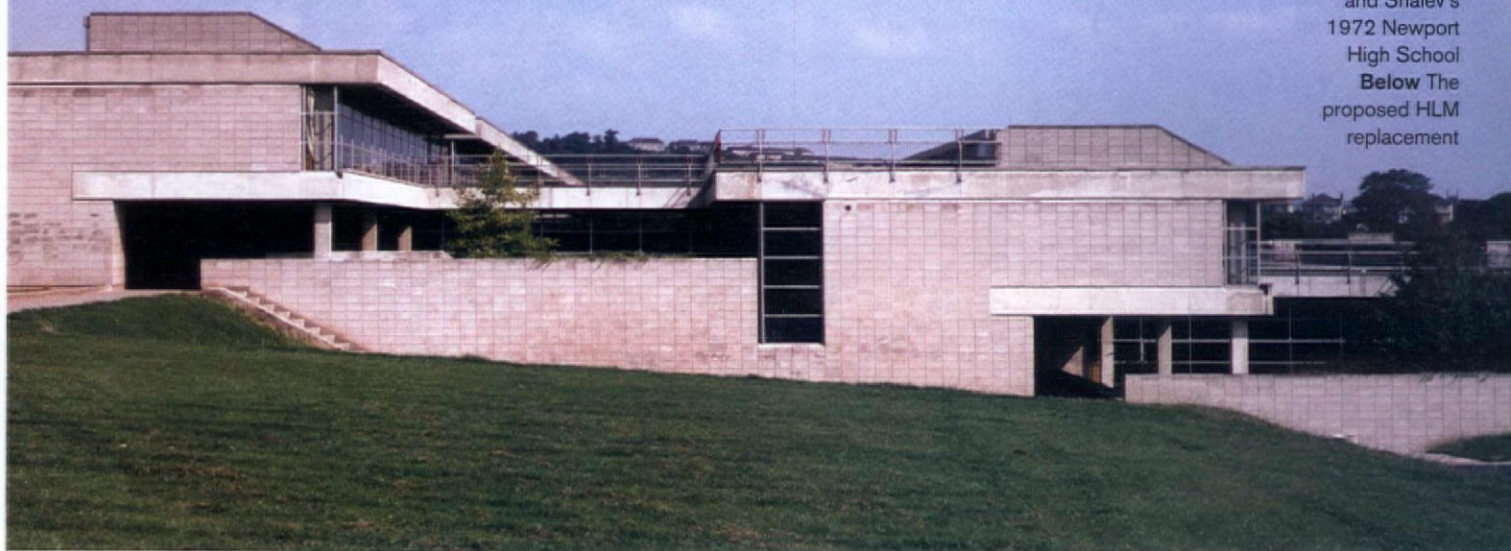
Zaha Hadid unveils the latest version of her Z-car – with an extra wheel p.10

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News

This image Evans and Shalev's 1972 Newport High School. Below: The proposed HLM replacement.



WRECKING BALL LOOMS OVER 'WELSH PIMLICO'

C20 calls for 'prestigious architects' to help save Brutalist Newport High School

The Twentieth Century Society (C20) has made a last-gasp attempt to save Wales' answer to Pimlico School, the Evans and Shalev Architects-designed Newport High School.

The 1972 Brutalist building is scheduled to be demolished and replaced by a HLM Architects scheme as part of the Welsh government's drive to improve failing secondary schools.

C20 is now trying to find 'prestigious' architects to say why the school should be saved.

C20 director Catherine Croft said: 'This is a very important building, and we hope to have enough time to gain support.'

The founding partner of Evans and Shalev Architects – Eldred Evans – said C20 was only made aware of the proposals in late

November when HLM associate, Jonathan Jones, wrote to Evans to inform her of the demolition plan.

According to Jones, the original school has fallen into disrepair. He adds that chances of stopping the replacement are low, as work is set to begin on site at the end of the month.

Jones said: 'It is a bit like Pimlico, only it isn't located in Westminster. If it was located in Westminster, it would be a lot better known.'

'It is a very Brutalist building, and it isn't something the community has been very fond of.'

Unlike the Newport School, John Bancroft's 1970 Pimlico School, which Westminster Council plans to bulldoze and replace with an Architecture PLB

scheme, has the public-backing of Richard Rogers and RIBA president Sunand Prasad.

Evans says she hasn't had enough time to drum up support for her building.

'There aren't as many interested parties in Wales as there in London,' she said. 'We have spoken to Cadw [the Welsh equivalent of English Heritage],

but they won't do anything.'

'I went to visit the building, and it has been vandalised by the state. They have left it to deteriorate.'

'The replacement is an absolute shocker of a building. It is surrounded by tarmac, and the buildings are absorbed under this giant roof.'

Richard Vaughan





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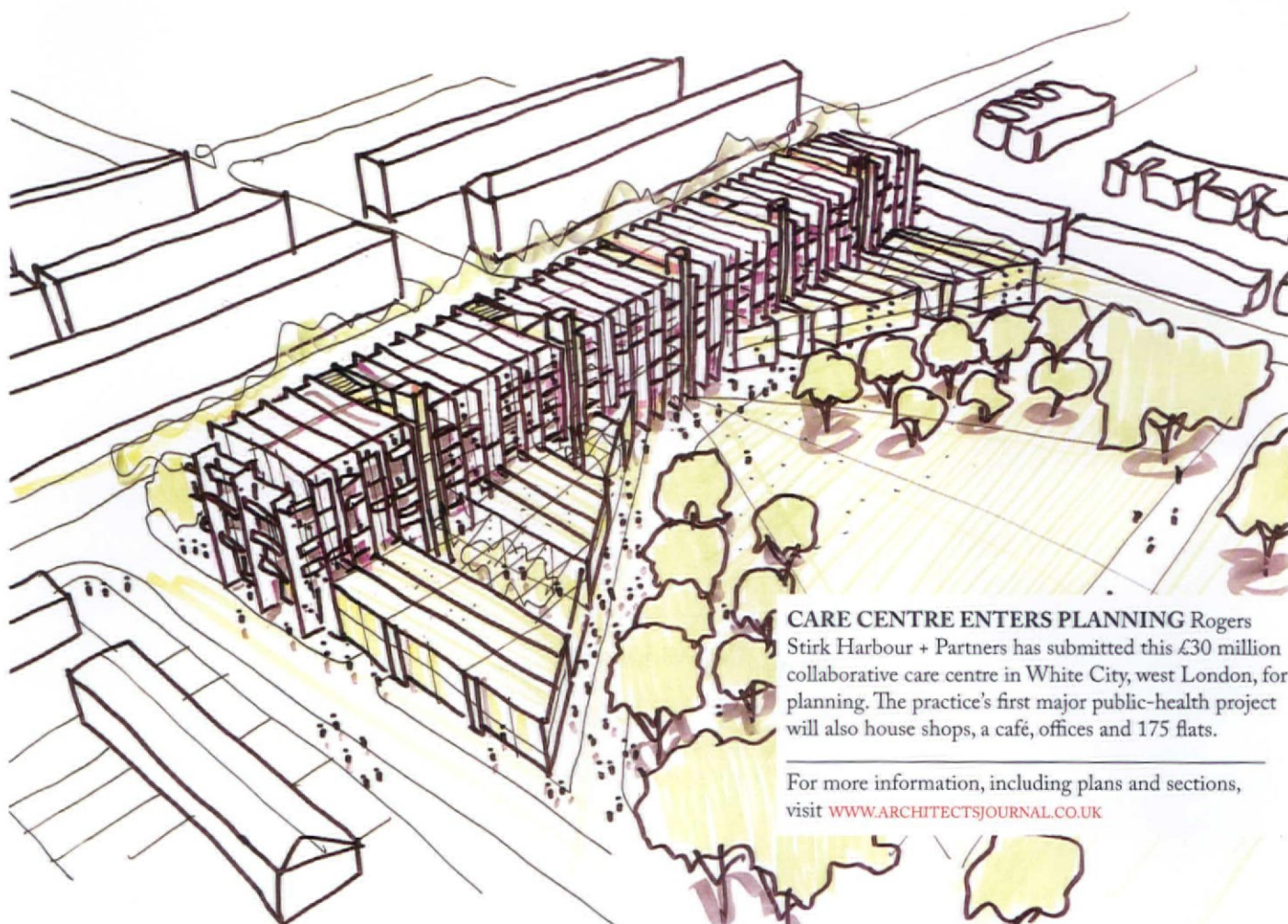


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CARE CENTRE ENTERS PLANNING Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners has submitted this £30 million collaborative care centre in White City, west London, for planning. The practice's first major public-health project will also house shops, a café, offices and 175 flats.

For more information, including plans and sections, visit WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK

EDAW TO BRING EUROPEAN-STYLE LIVING TO MANCHESTER

A £1 billion plan to transform the east end of Manchester from 'Coronation Street to Copenhagen' has been approved by Manchester City Council.

The 4,300 home Holt Town Waterfront development is being billed as Manchester's largest ever regeneration scheme, and according to EDAW, the masterplanner behind the 38ha project, will create 'high-density family living'.

The project, for developer Cibitas, will see the regeneration

of a run-down, wedge-shaped plot next to the 2002 Commonwealth Games-driven Sportcity development, less than 1km from the city centre.

Project director Andy Spracklen believes the proposals will 'radically shift urban family living in Manchester towards a European model' with a mix of dense houses, family apartments and duplexes around the perimeter, and internal courtyards 'on a domestic scale' within.

It will also include a new

Metrolink tram stop, a primary school, offices, shops and bars.

The go-ahead could open up a potential goldmine of work for architects as sites are gradually released over the next 10 to 15 years – most, the AJ understands, to developer/architect competitions.

David Shelton, managing director at Cibitas, said that maintaining design quality was 'absolutely fundamental' to the success of the plan, and that winning developers would have

to work within the EDAW 'design vision'.

However, Shelton believes that the constraints of the project, especially the high density, will need highly innovative responses. 'I genuinely don't know another scheme treading the same ground as Holt Town,' he said.

'Developers will not be able to turn up with "One we made earlier".' *Richard Waite*

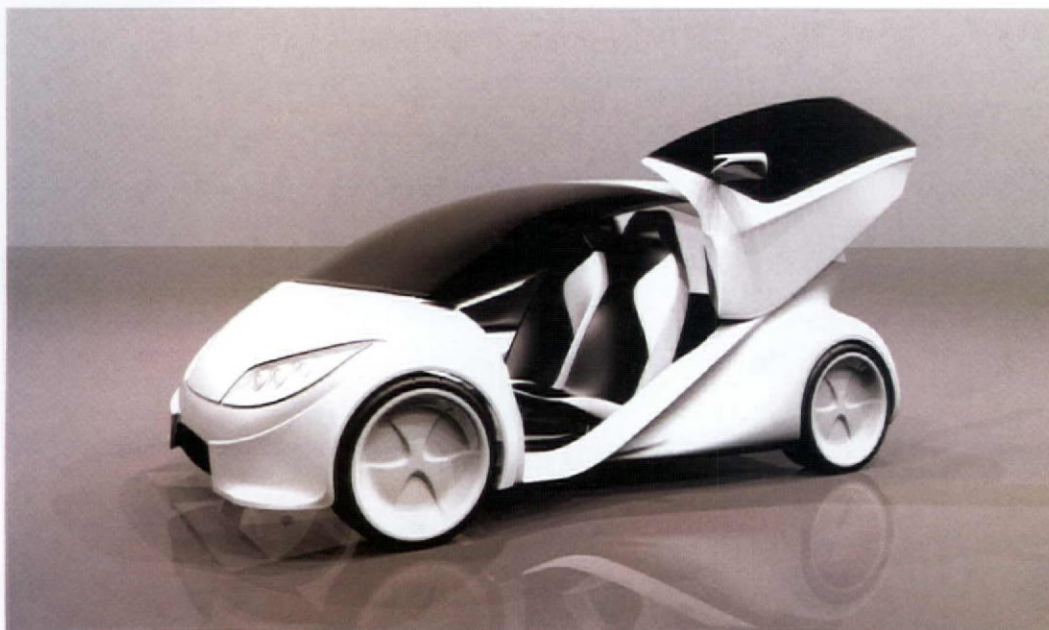
See images of the proposed plan at WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK



RONALDS FINISHES MUSIC CENTRE

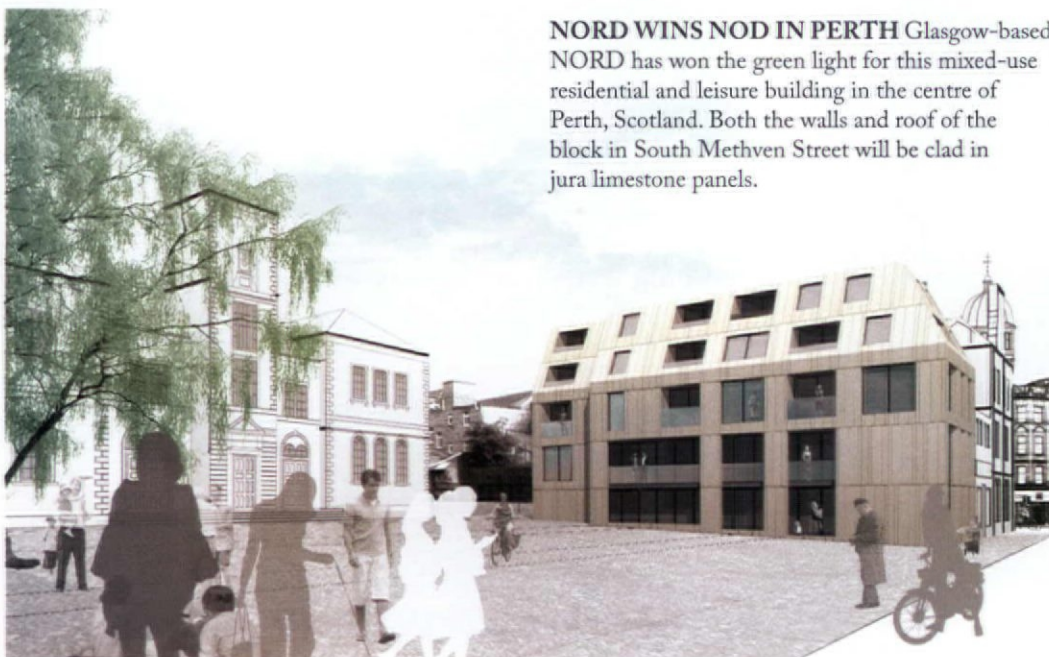
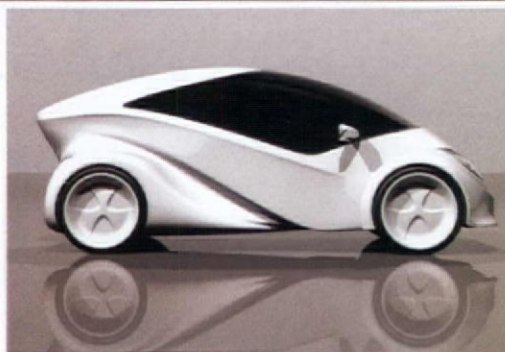
This is London-based Tim Ronalds Architects' Watford Music Centre, set to formally open in March. The £4.4 million scheme, for Watford Grammar School for Boys and the Watford School of Music, boasts a triple-height 200-seat orchestral recital hall and 25 rooms for teaching and rehearsal. Sited in the grounds of the grammar school – the only listed building in Watford – the building features a cast-glass exterior and anodised-aluminium detailing. *James Pallister*





FOUR WHEELS GOOD, SAYS ZAHA

Zaha Hadid has completely redesigned her battery-powered car – by adding another wheel. According to American art dealer, friend and project-funder Kenny Schachter, the Z-car Mark II is 'more realistic' than the original three-wheeled design unveiled back in 2005 (AJ 03.11.05). The prototype, with its Aquatics Centre-style rear, is expected to make its premiere at the British International Motor Show in July.



NORD WINS NOD IN PERTH Glasgow-based NORD has won the green light for this mixed-use residential and leisure building in the centre of Perth, Scotland. Both the walls and roof of the block in South Methven Street will be clad in jura limestone panels.

THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

COUNCIL U-TURN OVER BIRMINGHAM LIBRARY

The long-running Birmingham Library saga has taken yet another twist, with news that Birmingham City Council is now to press ahead with an international design competition. Following last week's appointment of Capita Symonds as project manager, the council has confirmed that it will require an 'architect of international renown'.

CHALLENGE TO KEPPIE'S GARAGE PLANS

Keppie Design is facing an even bigger battle in its bid to overhaul the 'nationally important' Arnold Clark garage in Glasgow after Historic Scotland (HS) upgraded its listing status from Grade B to Grade A, 'in recognition of its national importance'. Keppie originally wanted to replace the 1911 building with 35 flats, mews cottages and shops.

LUTYENS' NEW DELHI UNDER THREAT

Conservation groups in India, are fighting to preserve Edwin Lutyens' New Delhi after the city released its draft for a new urban plan. Despite the masterplan setting aside a 36km² conservation area to protect Lutyens' work, many campaigners believe it is not enough and that the Edwardian architect's work is seriously under threat.

KOOLHAAS TO DESIGN NEW MAGGIE'S CENTRE

Rem Koolhaas will be the latest architect to design a Maggie's Centre, joining the likes of Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid and Richard Rogers. The new Gartnavel Centre will be in Glasgow, close to the Beatson – the city's new oncology department which will help thousands of people.

Read all these stories and more at
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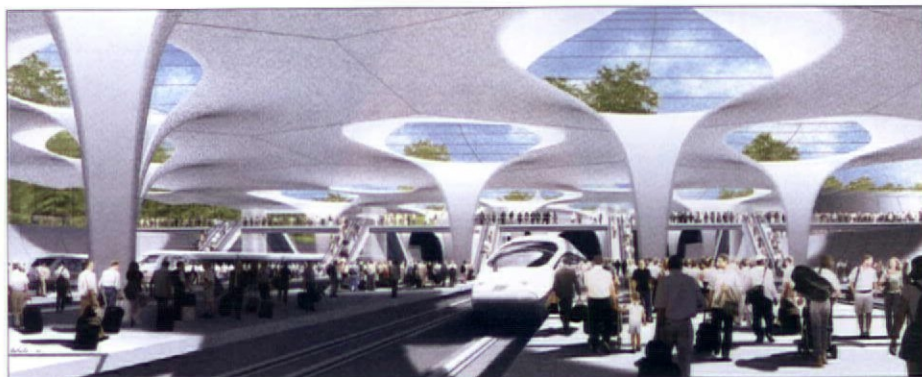
Building new perspectives for our future

The second Holcim Awards competition to promote sustainable construction worldwide is now open. With a total prize fund of \$2 million, the competition, will showcase sustainable responses to technological, environmental, socioeconomic and cultural issues affecting contemporary building and construction, and is open for entries until 29th February 2008. The Awards, which are open to anyone involved in a sustainable construction project, are the initiative of the Swiss-based Holcim Foundation to encourage and inspire a built environment that goes beyond convention to address the challenges of sustainability.

Measuring up to target issues for sustainable construction.

Submissions in the Awards competition are evaluated by independent juries in five regions of the world using a five-point definition of sustainable construction. These 'target issues' serve as a yardstick to measure the degree to which a building contributes to sustainable development.

Of the five target issues, three align with the primary goals of the Rio Agenda: balanced environmental, social and economic performance. One target issue applies specifically to building: the creation of good buildings, neighbourhoods, towns and cities. A further target issue recognises the need for significant advancements that can be applied on a broad scale: Ecological quality and energy conservation; economic performance and compatibility; ethical standards and social equity; contextual and aesthetic impact; and quantum



change and transferability.

Any sustainable construction project may be submitted for the Awards, providing that construction did not begin before 1st June 2007. In addition to construction projects at an advanced stage of design, the Awards competition also seeks visions and ideas at a conceptual level. This special "Next Generation" category is open for professionals less than 35 years of age at February 29th 2008.

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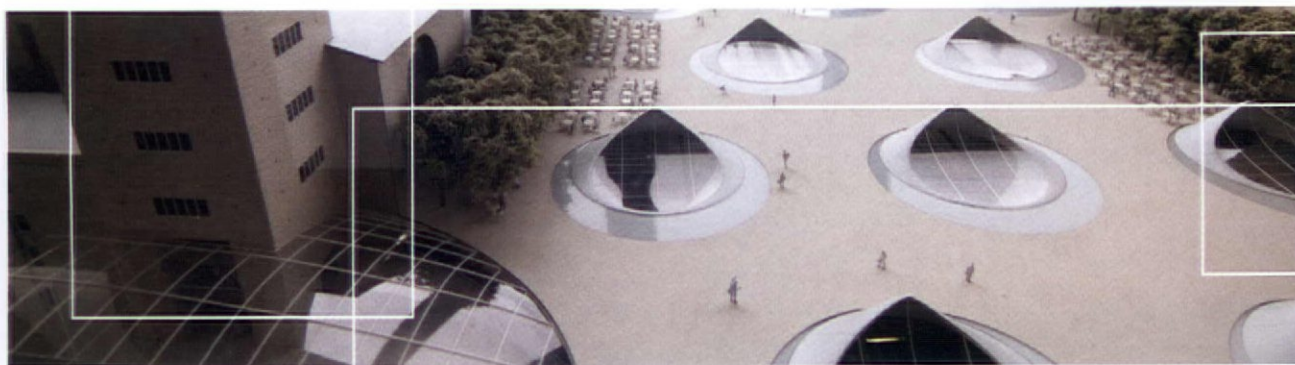
The Holcim Foundation works very closely with leading technical universities, and it is these universities

that lead the independent juries in their regions. The juries will be headed by internationally-renowned architects and academics, and a full list of all members of each jury, and the universities involved, are available on www.holcimawards.org

The Awards are being supported in the UK by Aggregate Industries through its Charcon, Bardon Aggregates, Bardon Contracting, Bardon Concrete, London Concrete, Masterblock and Fyfestone businesses.

Entries must be submitted on-line by 29th February 2008. Detailed information on the competition and how to enter is available at www.holcimawards.org

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The global Holcim Awards competition offers a total prize fund of \$US 2 million and is open to anyone involved in sustainable construction projects - architects, planners, engineers, or project owners. Construction projects of any scale are eligible for the competition if work had not started before 1 June 2007. Entries must be submitted by 29 February 2008. For further details visit www.holcimawards.org



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THE RISE AND RISE OF THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

The success of your project is more likely than ever to lie in the hands of an unelected committee of your peers. *Max Thompson* investigates

'There is,' says Kathy MacEwen, CABE's head of design review programme, 'a growing trend for design review panels (DRPs) across the country.'

The explosion of DRPs – sometimes called Architectural Appraisal Panels (AAPs) – in London backs her statement up. In the last three years, eight of London's 33 boroughs – Merton, Kingston, Southwark, Lewisham, Newham, Kensington and Chelsea, Haringey and Richmond – have formed DRPs or are in the process of doing so.

And nationally, MacEwen's assertion is borne out by the stream of architects turning up to review the work of their peers in cities like Leeds, Barnsley, Sheffield, Bristol, Manchester,

Chester, Liverpool, Hull, Walsall, Coventry, Plymouth and Birmingham.

It is all a far cry from the days when the Royal Fine Art Commission – formed in 1924 – acted as the arbiter of architectural taste. That changed in 1999 when CABE was established.

A key CABE remit was the design review of 'significant' English schemes (*see box on page 13 for definition of significant schemes*). CABE chief executive Richard Simmons says that of 2,000 schemes reviewed, 'eight out of 10' practices say that the process has resulted in improved schemes.

Further down the chain, CABE advises – but does not fund – six of the UK's regions'

own design review panels (*see chart, above right*). But it is beneath this tier that the revolution is gathering pace.

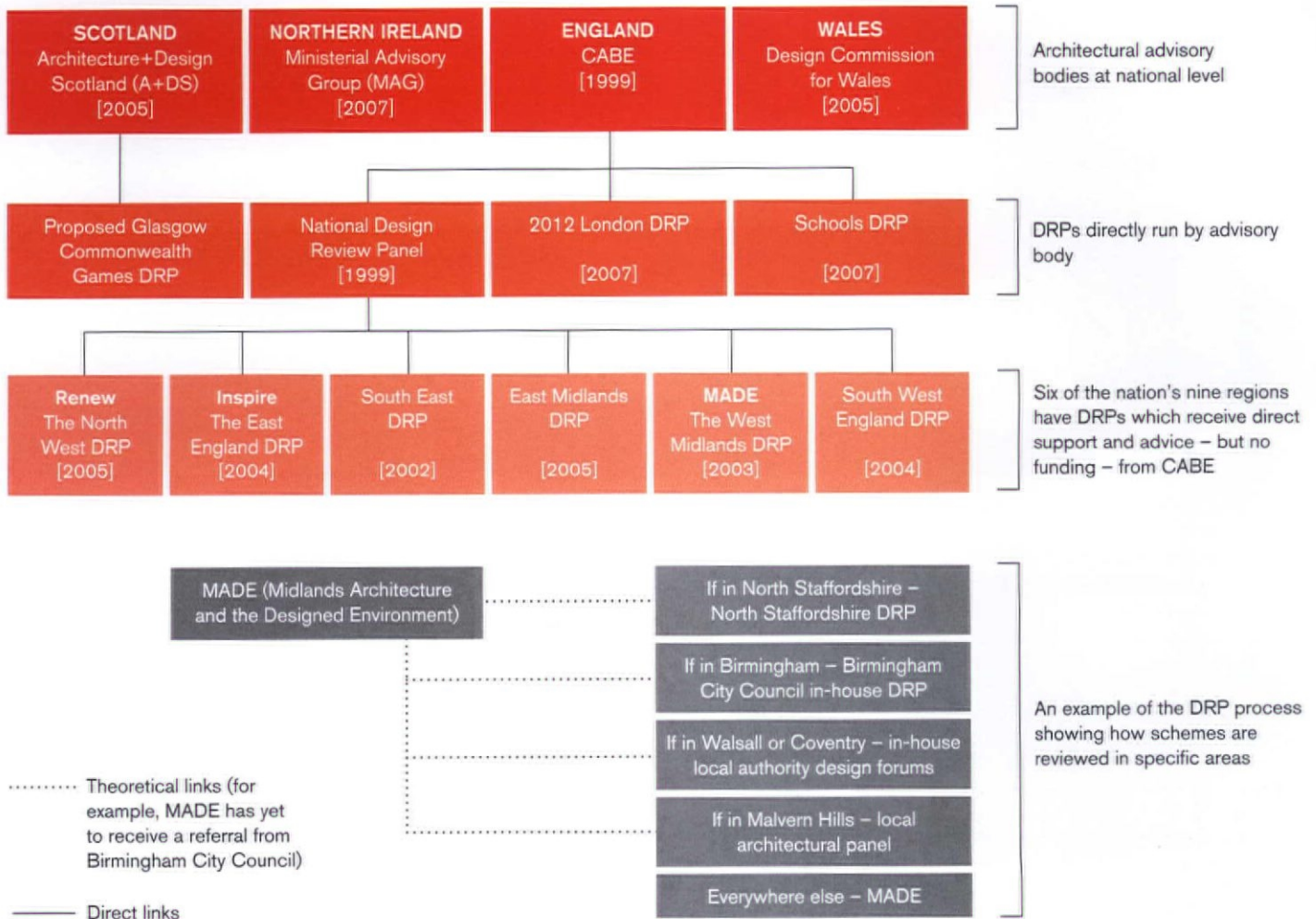
The Southwark DRP was formed three years ago. Its leader, Steve Riches, says that in the last 12 months it has received

CABE claims eight out of 10 firms say design review leads to better schemes

delegates from a number of other boroughs and local authorities keen on setting up DRPs – most recently Newham, Kensington and Chelsea, and Sheffield.

Riches says that his overriding goal as head of the DRP – which last year reviewed around 70 applications – is that 'people

TABLE SHOWING THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL HIERARCHY IN THE UK
(WITH DATES FORMED IN BRACKETS)



should understand what best practice is at a local level.'

He says: 'Although we have some very exciting schemes, there are lots of areas where that level of design attention is not there.'

'We want to use the panel to raise the bar, not just along the river but also in areas like Peckham and the Aylesbury Estate in Elephant and Castle.'

But that bar can only be raised against a backdrop of understanding and respect between planning committees and the DRP panels; a situation that is not always apparent.

Terry Pawson, of Terry Pawson Architects, sits on the London Borough of Merton's DRP, and is unsurprisingly supportive of the DRP process. However, he had a

run-in with Kingston planning committee after his Twin House scheme (*see page 14*) was rejected despite a glowing design review, which concluded: 'We feel the buildings have a coherence and elegance that draw deeply from the landscape and enhance the character of the [Coombe Hill] Conservation Area.'

But the planners rejected the scheme, saying the houses 'would, by their design, mass and bulk, have an incongruous appearance to the detriment of the character of the conservation area'.

The project is now going through the appeal process, but whatever the final outcome, Pawson says the DRP had been compromised by the committee ruling.

He says: 'I feel very sorry for those people that put their time and energy [into the DRP] because it does devalue their efforts and undermines what they are trying to do.'

'If the local authority goes against a significant recommen-

Even at a local level, which panel reviews you depends on where you are

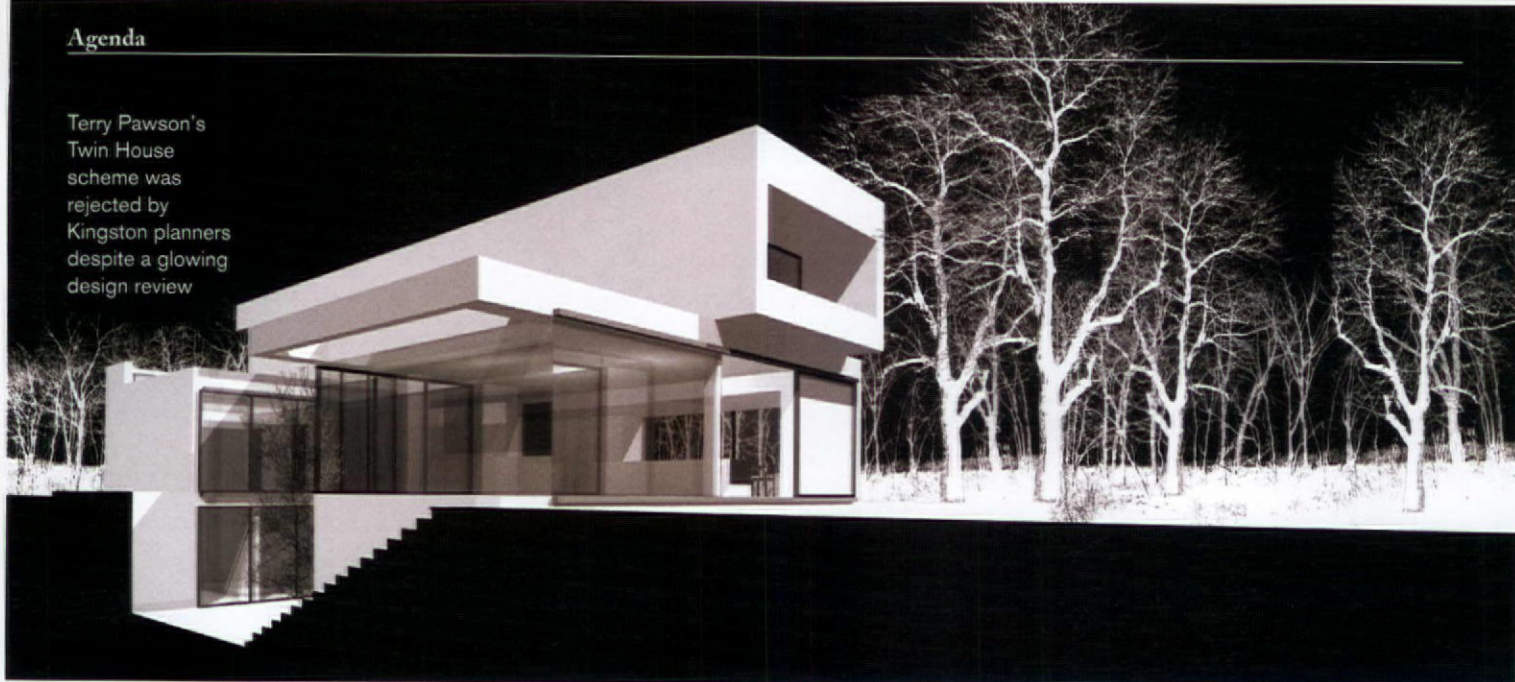
dation, it seems to me that it should probably justify very strongly why it has gone against that advice, otherwise it completely emasculates the DRP.

Paul Finch, former deputy chair of CABE, and the body's first head of design review, wonders if DRPs should even >>

CABE SAYS SCHEMES ARE 'SIGNIFICANT' ENOUGH TO REVIEW:

- if they are 'large' or contain multiple uses;
- if the scheme's site may have 'exceptional effects on its locality'; and
- if they have an importance greater than their size would suggest, and may therefore 'establish planning form or architectural quality for future schemes'

Terry Pawson's Twin House scheme was rejected by Kingston planners despite a glowing design review



Paul Finch: 'Would DRPs be necessary in an ideal world? No they wouldn't'



More serious than damaged egos is, says Finch, the spectre of 'endless competing DRPs'.

He says: 'People setting up DRPs must avoid replication. There are enough planning applications to go round.'

The proliferation of DRPs is not uncommon. In the West Midlands, despite the existence of the CABE-endorsed regional DRP – Midlands Architecture + the Designed Environment (MADE) – it seems that which panel reviews your scheme depends on whereabouts you are (see chart on page 13).

MADE design review manager Julie Morgan says: 'Where we are aware of local DRPs, a representative of this group may be invited to attend to feed into the design review process. We advocate a joined-up approach.'

But this 'joined-up approach' does not include a working relationship with the region's most important conurbation – Birmingham. 'To date,' says Morgan, 'MADE has not had a scheme from Birmingham City Council (BCC).'

Despite such problems, the overriding feeling among architects is that too much peer-led design review is preferable to too little. 'Would DRPs be necessary in an ideal world?' asks

Finch. 'No, not if we had fabulous planning departments full of eminently qualified people with great judgement – but that just isn't the way the system works.'

David Howarth, director of DRDH Architects and member of Sheffield's Urban Design Review Panel, agrees, but says large schemes can come with complicated planning stories.

'It is very easy to criticise planners but it is also easy to say if we like something then we should build it. The conversation [at the DRP] may purely have been about facades or how responds to the city, where actually there may be other concerns about amenity, residential design, sustainability.'

'Design reviews are part of the planning process. They are one cog in the mechanism,' he adds.

While they may only be a 'cog' Howarth says DRPs are a very powerful tool for architects. 'You find that a lot of architects are powerless,' he says, 'The DRP process frees them to have debates in public.'

As to whether DRPs should rise above their current non-statutory status, Howarth is clear: 'Sometimes architects can get a little arrogant, so, no, I certainly don't agree that it [the DRP] should have the last say.' ■

Terry Pawson: 'Local authorities can emasculate DRPs by opposing them'



waste their time calling in schemes by architects that have a trusted pedigree. 'The big problem,' he says, 'is the mediocre stuff that gets permission. Why is Terry Pawson, a really good architect, getting called in?'

Lubetkin Prize-winning practice Glenn Howells suffered a similar fate to Pawson when he faced the Southwark DRP. An architect on the panel says: 'I found myself talking about too much glass here etc., and I thought: "hang on a minute, why don't you just trust him?"'

HOW DRPS WORK:

- They typically have no statutory powers;
- schemes are recommended for review by planning case officers;
- they have 20-40 panel members;
- the 'significant majority' of panellists are architects – but they may also be artists, engineers and planners;
- 8-10 members sit on each review; and
- Each member is expected to dedicate one afternoon a month



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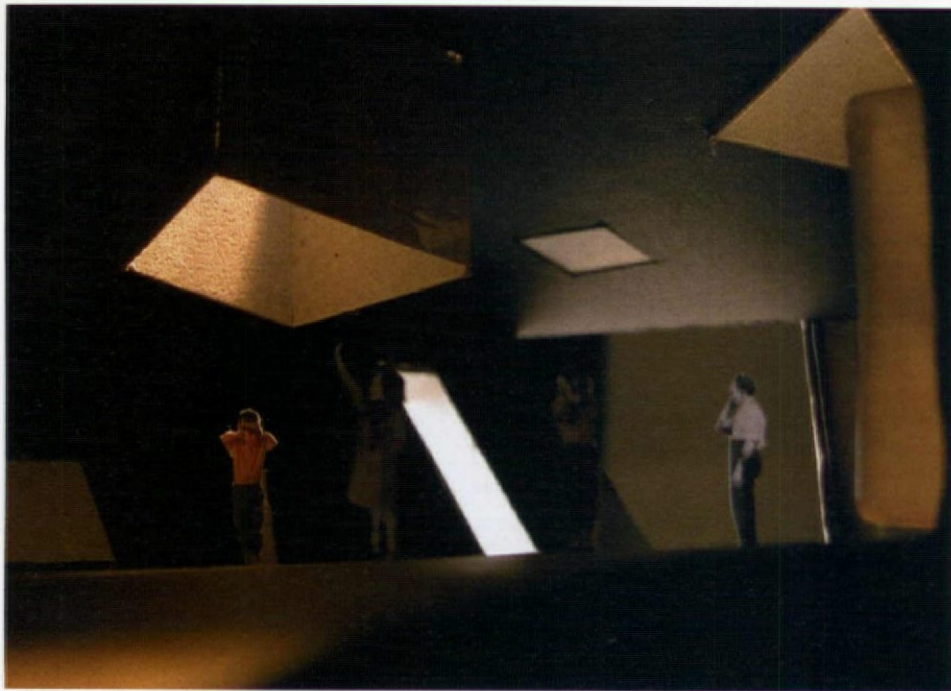
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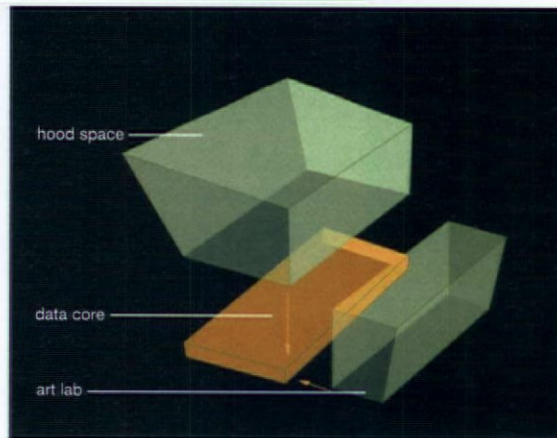
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Above and right Ashley Seaborne's third-placed 'Hoodies' entry
Below and bottom David Kohn's 'Heterotopia' won second prize

Far right Manuel Shvartzberg, Yiannis Kanakakis and Fabian Faltin's winning entry 'Arts Spaces Lead Global Ecology of Ideas'



The creative space race

FT architecture critic Sharon Miller listens in on a so-called debate at MOMA Heathrow

The late composer Morton Feldman reportedly said that the best thing about the 20th century was "that for one brief moment - maybe, say, its works in the 1970s - nobody understood art." At the dawn of the 21st century, it's the spaces we use for producing and performing, displaying and storing art that are increasingly being called into question. With books, film and music digitised and consumed on the web, spectators demanding to be recognised as active participants and private collectors unwilling to see another day, there's a sense of crisis. What does anybody still want to do with our museums, concert halls and libraries are fast.

In response to the uncertain future of today's prime art spaces, MOMA Heathrow, the newly opened London branch of what many still consider to be the world's leading modern art museum, raised three days of long-range speculation with an interdisciplinary video-debate "Art Spaces for Tomorrow". Chaired by the director of the British Art Council, the event was held in the museum's new 10,000-sq-metre gallery. It was a rare opportunity for the museum's leadership to address the public. The event was moderated by the architect and curator, and featured a panel of four speakers: the director, the architect, the curator, and the architect's partner. The event was a success, with a large audience and a lively discussion. The event was a rare opportunity for the museum's leadership to address the public. The event was moderated by the architect and curator, and featured a panel of four speakers: the director, the architect, the curator, and the architect's partner. The event was a success, with a large audience and a lively discussion.

Sticky business

As UK arts spaces struggle to meet the needs of fuzzy communities, the outsiders may be closer to the inside, finds Fiona Hicks

In an eccentric outline to Britain's unique arts scene, the last decade has seen a number of new arts spaces opening. Some are in the heart of the city, some are in the suburbs, and some are in the countryside. The new spaces are a mix of old and new, and they are all trying to do different things. Some are trying to be more like traditional museums, while others are trying to be more like community centres. The new spaces are a mix of old and new, and they are all trying to do different things. Some are trying to be more like traditional museums, while others are trying to be more like community centres.

Grey arts centres have been criticised for employing immigrant labourers to service British welfare clients

British welfare clients initiatives to improve operational efficiency in the arts and more active support for the elderly and the disabled. Ms. Liz Jenkins told this correspondent: "Yet in practice, welfare agencies have been sending in support workers to assist people in their homes. In response to this kind of superficial consultation, we've taken it on ourselves to engage with and become part of the actual ground-level situation."

The major cultural controversy comes at a difficult moment for Gordon Brown, the prime minister, who has been heavily criticised for his handling of the economy. The arts are seen as a way to stimulate the economy and create jobs. The arts are seen as a way to stimulate the economy and create jobs. The arts are seen as a way to stimulate the economy and create jobs. The arts are seen as a way to stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Leader & Comment



Leader You will almost certainly face a design review panel soon, writes *Kieran Long*. This is a good thing, as long as their panellists are diverse and the scope is specific

In the not-too-distant future, a good proportion of you will find yourself up in front of a design review panel, explaining your project and facing architectural criticism of the kind you may not have dealt with since college. As Max Thompson explains on pages 12-14, a multitude of committees are being created up and down the country in an attempt to make up for the chronic lack of trained architectural judgement exercised in most planning departments.

These panels are on the rise – we counted at least 40 that we know exist today across the UK, at national, regional or local level – and the obvious question is: who is going to

populate the council chambers and committee rooms around the country that will host them?

The vital thing, beyond having a majority of design professionals and a sprinkling of historians, is that the panels are at least partially composed of individuals with a broader purview than the area that they are judging projects in. That has to be the point of these panels. If the judge can't draw on examples from elsewhere of exemplary best practice, your town will get what it has always had. If you only know about how it's done in Stoke-on-Trent, you're unlikely to find a way forward for it.

That's why it may be single-issue design review panels that have the most success. CABE's schools panel, for instance, or John Callcutt's proposed network of housing design review panels, which he proposes in the Callcutt Review of Housebuilding Delivery. These will be able to compare like-for-like across the country, not broaching any local excuses for lack of ambition.

The great thing about architects is that they are used to a borderline abusive level of criticism about their projects (remember those aggressive critics at your final jury). Design review panels should therefore hold little to fear. kieran.long@emap.com



Opinion
Liverpool's museum will prove the city is holding its nerve and thinking big, says *David Fleming*

One of the inevitable consequences of regeneration is the argument about the balance needed between quality, value for money and... oh yes, profit.

Since the 1980s I have lived in York, Hull, Newcastle and Birkenhead, and my work during that period has taken in Leeds, Sunderland, Gateshead, Wallsend and South Shields. In all of these places and cities I have seen architects, developers, planners and others strive to create projects which will in turn create jobs, facilities and infrastructure, value, image and profit.

This process is particularly intense in Liverpool, which is currently undergoing dramatic regeneration, and where there is added complexity as much of the city centre is

a World Heritage Site. This classification, which recognises the relatively intact nature of the city's Victorian and Edwardian built heritage, has been interpreted by some as a license to oppose any new build. Others fear the award's potential to restrict their ability to attract investment – or to make money – in a city ripe for development. There have been virulent (though fairly brainless) debates in the Liverpool press about building quality, as the city strives to catch up economically with the likes of Manchester and Leeds, and as attention on Liverpool as European Capital of Culture 2008 raises the temperature.

Anyone wanting to build on the totemic Liverpool Pierhead has found themselves, quite rightly, under intense scrutiny. This includes my own organisation, which is currently building a new Museum of Liverpool. This will be the biggest new national museum in this country for 100 years and will be a stunning addition to the city's remarkable collection of museums and art galleries. AJ readers will remember that the Mann Island site we propose to build on was the site of Will Alsop's now-dropped Cloud complex, part of which was originally to house the new museum.

Personally I loved the Cloud, even though many hated it. But, contrary to much ill-informed speculation, it was not aesthetics, nor Liverpool's loss of nerve, nor architectural conservatism, which brought about the demise of Alsop's scheme – it was simple economics. I know because I was in the room when the scheme was chosen from a shortlist including Foster and Rogers proposals, and I was also in the room when the plug was pulled.

I know the Cloud was not dropped due to aesthetics – I was in the room

There is an understanding in Liverpool that we have a lot to live up to in terms of the city's historical riches. The Cloud would have proved that it is possible to build quality architecture within an urban World Heritage Site. The quality of the Museum of Liverpool will do so definitively. As the structure takes shape during 2008 we shall see whether or not Liverpool has lost its nerve.

David Fleming is the director of National Museums Liverpool

Email comment@architectsjournal.co.uk



Obituary

Discussions of Dylan and eating cats are among *Deyan Sudjic's* memories of Ettore Sottsass

Ettore Sottsass, who died on 31 December 2007, never saw the exhibition that London's Design Museum staged last year to celebrate his 90th birthday. His back was playing up, so he couldn't fly.

He did design it though, on the table in his living room in Milan. And an effortlessly brilliant job he made of it too. The first idea was to do something simple; just one object chosen carefully from each of the seven decades of his working life.

A plain aluminium lampshade from the 1940s; Italy's first mainframe computer from the 1950s; the famous lipstick red plastic Valentine portable typewriter from the 1960s. But of course as soon as we got started on the exhibition, it obviously wasn't going to work. How could you possibly treat the career of the greatest Italian designer of the last half century like that?

Before I knew it, the show had taken over the whole top floor of the museum, and we were tearing out glass cases to make more room. We talked about how Adriano Olivetti had come to hire him for that computer; about his days in Mussolini's army in Yugoslavia; and about the Dylan track that kept playing in the background the night in the 1980s when he came up with Memphis as the name for his onslaught on conventional good taste with a wave of baby colours and eccentric patterned laminates.

He didn't turn a hair when I told him about my grandmother's memories of the mysterious disappearance of every cat in her Montenegrin village when the Italian soldiers billeted on her got hungry. But he didn't take too kindly to my rash attempt to wield a pencil on his exhibition layout. I'd seen him on and off over the years ever since the Memphis launch party in 1981, where for some reason he was wearing two ties. We once spent a memorable weekend with



This image Ettore Sottsass at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2006

Below Valentine Typewriter, for Olivetti (1969)

J EMILIO FLORES/CORBIS

Helmut Newton in an extraordinary house that he had built around a vast aviary that Newton was photographing.

But the trips to Milan to organise the show were different. He really wanted to talk,

Before I knew it, we were tearing out cases to make room for the show

and I had the chance to spend an afternoon in his filing cabinet, picking out a succession of photographs that charted the passage of time on his face, from a schoolboy in a sailor suit in the 1920s, to a Riviera playboy in a sharp suit in the 1950s, to a hippy in the 1960s.

At 90 he was still a gravely elegant figure in his carefully knotted pigtail. He was a gifted draughtsman, a constantly inventive designer and architect, and beyond that, he was a rare designer who understood something about life.

Deyan Sudjic is director of the Design Museum





Patrick Lynch goes starchitect spotting, to single out those who rate self-promotion over good design

Recently, I've been thinking a lot about star architecture, or 'starchitecture' as Norman Blogster has it on his website (www.partiv.com). Norman's 'Student's Guide to Starchitecture' offers many hilarious and depressing insights into the cultic world of unit indoctrination and the workaholic culture of big-name practices. This distinction between architecture and starchitecture seems to me to explain quite a lot of the confusion within our profession.

Put simply, architects are moderated by their professional institutes and their consciences. They tend to eschew the starchitect's belief in self-promotion and mute acceptance of air conditioning, Design and Build contracts and the reduction of architecture to branding, architainment, and the millimetre-thick veneer of 'design' that they are responsible for before the project is handed over to someone qualified to bodge it together on site. Starchitecture is a symptom of, and one of the causes of, the weakening of the architect's role, since starchitects often aren't qualified and aren't interested in tectonics and contract administration.

As a consequence, starchitecture schools don't teach these subjects, or if they do, it is only grudgingly done in order to keep the ARB/RIBA at bay.

However, the myth that you can somehow become a star by the process of indoctrination that is the unit system, and thus become an individual genius by studying at a particular school, is merely a money-making fantasy, designed to keep certain schools in business. I think each architect has the potential to be

You find this alternative universe is particularly vivid in certain parts of west London and Manhattan. When I spoke at Cooper Union in New York last year – about our built work and about London – half the audience left. Yeah, I know, I can be a bit much, and they did have crits the next day, but maybe I made the mistake of talking about architecture, not realising that in that sort of place, what they really wanted to hear about was starchitecture?

Starchitecture is a symptom and cause of the weakening of the architect's role

a good architect, and also to become a starchitect should they desire, but that some want to become stars before being any good. Because of the way in which the architectural press and stars are complicit – star projects bring in student readers – it is possible to be very famous as a starchitect, and in fact find that no-one outside of the starchitectural system thinks that your work is any good at all.

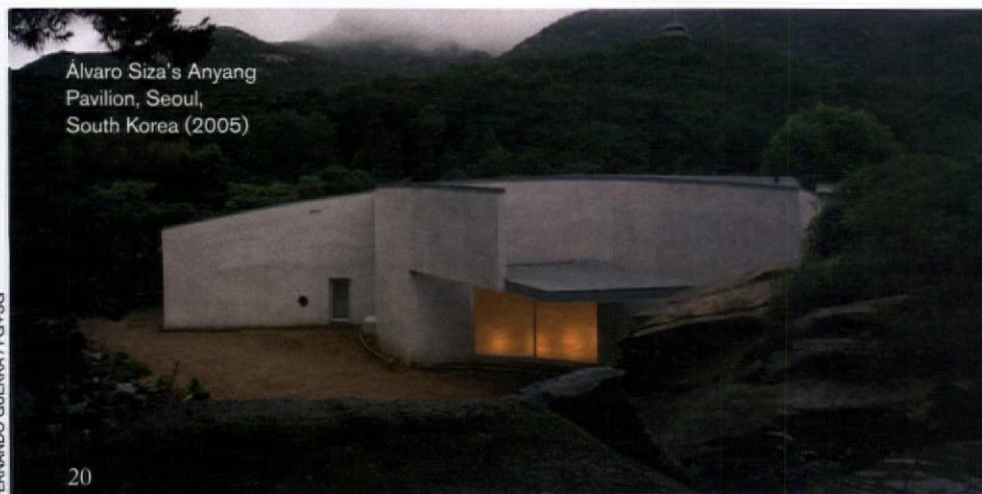
Here is a rough taxonomy of starchitecture:

- Architects who became stars by being really good: Zumthor, Chipperfield, Siza, Moneo, Ito, Herzog & de Meuron, Enric Miralles, Carme Pinós, Kahn, Palladio;
- Stars who critics try to convince us are also good architects: Koolhaas, Adjaye, Holl;
- Stars who don't give a damn what we think (honest): Hadid, Gehry, Alsop;
- Stars who want to convince us that they care: Libeskind, Foster, Eisenman.

The same logic applies to British schools of architecture:

- Architecture schools that still teach architecture: Bath, Mackintosh, Queens, Kingston, London Met (amongst others);
- Architecture schools that traditionally taught it but think that they should teach starchitecture instead: UCL and, unfortunately, pretty much everybody else.

Apologies if I've left you or your school out – you could be sat there fuming 'I'm a real architect' or 'We teach architecture!' when it dawns on you what you really believe in...



Alvaro Siza's Anyang Pavilion, Seoul, South Korea (2005)

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FOSTER + PARTNERS

ON BEAUTY

In preparing to review *Norman Foster Works 3* in another journal, I discovered the recent appraisal by Patrick Lynch in the Critics section of AJ 15.11.07. Having studied the previous volumes, I had begun to form the view that not only was this perhaps the best of the *Foster Works* series published so far, but the one which contained both the most assertive and innovative projects, such as the Millennium Tower in Tokyo (pictured left) or the nautical architecture of the yachts *Dark Shadow* and *Izanami*.

In addition, *Works 3* brings a fresh and revealing glimpse into Foster's self-constructed context, his riverside studios and the family life of the London office. In itself, this beautiful book offers a rare and special insight into the internal workings of a major global design practice – one in which we should surely have great confidence, and hold in respect for demonstrating architectural practice at its highest level. Equally, the quality of the authorship among the distinguished list of contributors cannot go without mention; nor the quality prevalent in the books' richly varied texts and graphics.

Indeed, when I reflect on some 21 years of academic life and my personal association with a number of global architectural practices – including those of Richard Meier in New York, Ken Yeang in Kuala Lumpur, and Enrique Norten in Mexico City among others – I can think of no greater experience than that of Foster's studios here in London.

However, the tone of the AJ review of *Works 3* is largely one of derisive and abusive denigration,

which is completely intolerable when we should have some sense of moderation and respect for such a body of work. Crass, disparaging journalism of the kind found in that review surely falls below the standards readers have come to expect from the AJ – a publication with a tradition of great architectural criticism.

In a world of shifting values, the AJ has a duty to provide editorial leadership of distinction. 'Self-serving twaddle, at best' – I do not think so. Rather: masterwork from a studio that has hosted such figures as Richard Buckminster Fuller, Otl Aicher and Anthony Caro, undervalued and misrepresented to the world at large.

Ivor Richards, Cambridge

PATRICK LYNCH

RESPONDS: Ivor Richards' response to my review of *Norman Foster Works 3* lacks substance. He fails to properly counter any significant points that I raised, which may indicate his low opinion of the AJ readership's interest in debate.

In referring, relatively lavishly, to his pleasurable experiences in the offices of Meier, Yeang, Foster *et al*, I can only assume that he regards gravitas by proxy as a critical tool. A dialectical response from him might have added something more useful to further debate about a book that he describes as 'beautiful'.

Incidentally, if Richards wishes to encounter an architectural monograph of genuine beauty and depth – in every respect – may I commend him to the new Glenn Murcutt publication (reviewed by Lynch in next week's AJ). The contrast between the Murcutt and Foster books is salutary.

BEST LAID PLANS

I wonder whether Johnny Rodger was familiar with Eden Court Theatre in Inverness prior to its latest extension, which he reviews in AJ 20.12.07. It was very much 'of its time' and not without its problems, but it was nonetheless a strong, characterful and clearly organised piece of architecture. My impression, on a recent visit following its reopening, was that Page\Park has failed to live up to or respect this in its alterations, particularly in its treatment of the ground floor and entrance areas.

The original plan revolved around a leisurely procession from entrance and ticket desk, past the cloakrooms via the 'internal street' mentioned, and on to the main staircase which spiralled upwards, revealing views of the river and gardens outside as it rose. This staircase remains but now lands awkwardly right

next to a clumsy blob-shaped column, spitting audiences out facing a messy shop-cum-storage area beside the ticket desk. What was once a pivotal element now feels lost and impotent.

Yes, the entrance now faces the city, which is in itself to be welcomed, but it opens into an ill-defined and unfocused space which largely ignores the intriguing hexagonal geometry of the shell it inhabits, and seems not to invite the sociable milling-around which accompanies most visits to the theatre. Although your review hints at these problems, I fear it lets Page\Park off rather too lightly by glossing over such fundamental failures in the organisation of the plan.

It is good to see Eden Court Theatre reinvigorated with new facilities, but I feel rather sad that the inventive spirit of the original design seems to have been washed away in such a disappointing fashion.

Colin MacInnes, Brixton, London



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WORKSPACE

Greenland Street, Liverpool
Architect: Union North
Cost: £220,000

In the up-and-coming Baltic Triangle warehouse district, just south of Liverpool's city centre, sits the A Foundation's new gallery. The visual-arts charity commissioned Union North to transform three former industrial buildings into a gallery with semi-permanent access, circulation, and service facilities. A trapezoidal portal, lined with felt, telescopes the industrial-sized entrance down to a door on a more human scale. The tactile and sound-absorbent felt creates space between the industrial and cultural uses represented by the two doorways. Inside, white partitions and brightly coloured plastic furniture contrast with the rough brickwork of the existing building. *James Pallister*



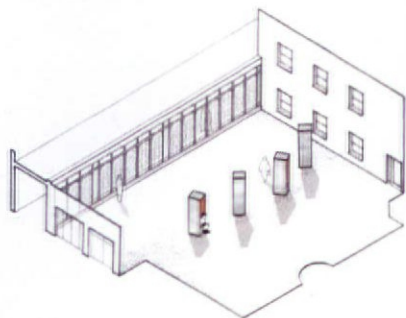


SMALL PROJECTS PART 1

From the restoration of a '60s council flat to a gelateria part paid for in ice cream, this is the first part of the AJ's 2008 selection of Small Projects, built for under £250,000. The second part will be published next week and the projects will be exhibited at New London Architecture, London WC1, from 6 March

RAMBOLL

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Jabberwocky, Leeds
 Architect: Amenity Space
 Cost: £1,000

Amenity Space's Jabberwocky was a short-lived artwork for 2007's 'Light Night' – an evening of installations in Leeds on 12 October. In a courtyard at Leeds Metropolitan University, Amenity Space installed four 600m², 2.4m-tall plywood boxes, mirrored on two sides, each reflecting a wall of 12 stained-glass panels commissioned by and documenting the work of engineer S Pearson & Son between 1844 and 1927. Accompanying text could only be read from the building's interior, so mirrors were used to reflect the words into the courtyard. *Jaffer Kolb*

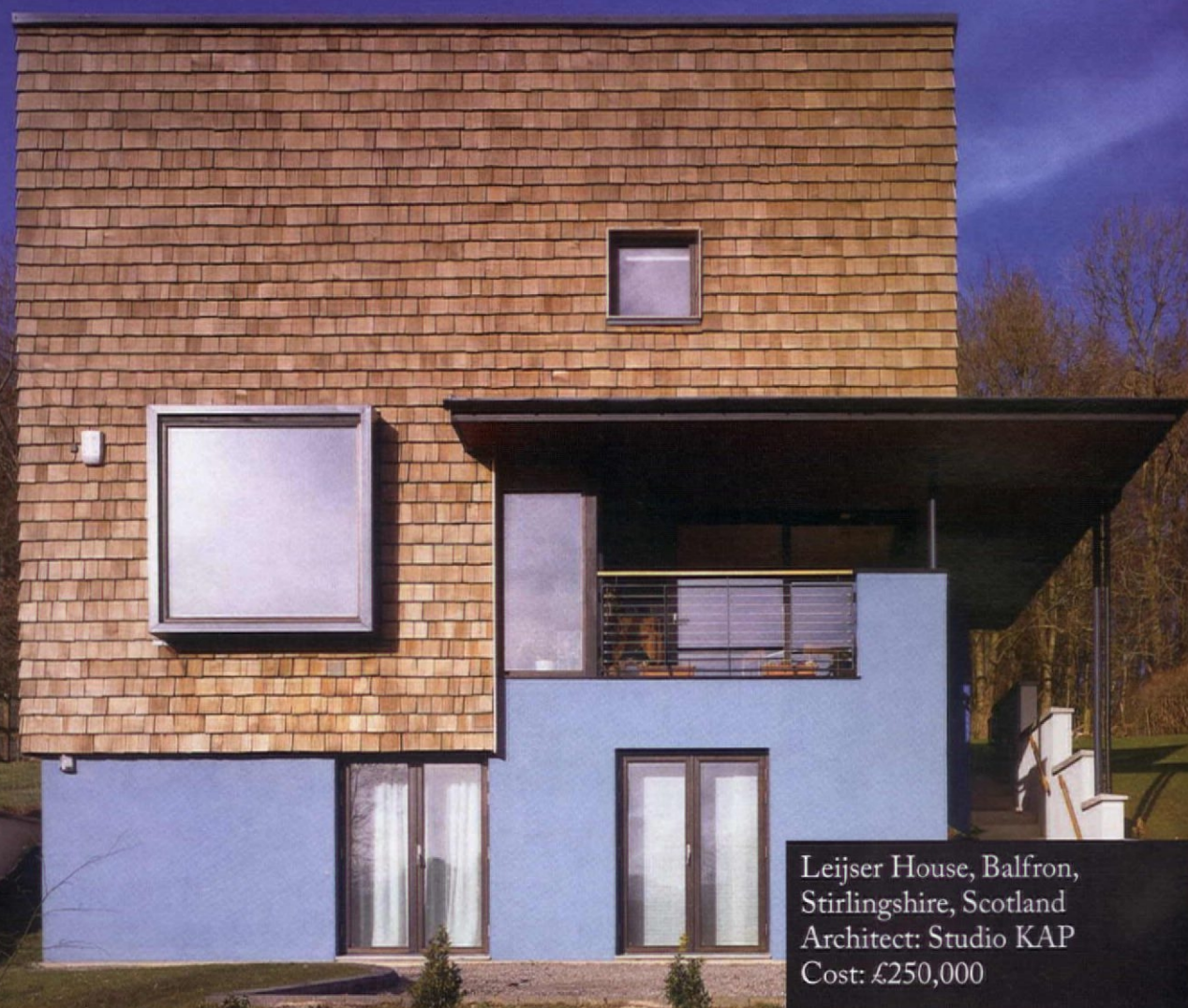


AMIR SANEI



Mobile Eco Second Home (MESH), Snape, Suffolk
 Architect: Sanei Hopkins
 Cost: £850

Having created a series of follies/play spaces in a Suffolk garden (see *previous years' Small Projects*) Sanei Hopkins made this Mobile Eco Second Home using leftover materials. Stacking seven people vertically, this simple construction uses the space beneath the double bunk at the top for horizontal circulation, with the ends of the beds doubling as a ladder for vertical access. Detachable wheels make the sleeping space mobile – it is turned on its side to attach/detach the wheels. It can be towed by a car for longer-distance travel and can also be pushed along by two people. *Ruth Slavid*



Leijser House, Balfour,
Stirlingshire, Scotland
Architect: Studio KAP
Cost: £250,000

This strange box of western red cedar shingles and blue render, on a south-facing slope, might look out of kilter with the pitched-roof cottages around it, but is highly tuned to long views to the south of the Campsie Fells and its tree-lined hill to the north. While the exterior was not universally loved by the selectors, the building's clever section (dug into the hill, with three storeys to the south and two to the north) is sympathetic to the topography. Views range from the spectacular – large picture windows off the living spaces – to the intriguing – views of the sky from smaller high-level windows. *Kieran Long*



Renfrew Road, London SE11
Architect: Inglis Badrashi
Loddo Architects
Cost: £80,000

Restoration projects are all well and good in post-industrial warehouses and derelict Victorian terraced houses, but updating a 1960s council house is a different kettle of fish. Jamal Badrashi and Kim Loddo of Inglis Badrashi Loddo undertook such a mission for their Renfrew Road home, creating a rear extension, adding a rooftop skylight, and opening up the central stairwell. The building nestles in a row of ex-council townhouses and, despite new aluminium windows on the its exterior, the alterations only carry the existing structure so far, and much of the interest is in the interior. *Jaffer Kolb*

Allt an Duin, Lochgilphead,
Argyll and Bute
Architect: Andrew Brown
and Claire White-Sharman
Cost: £225,000

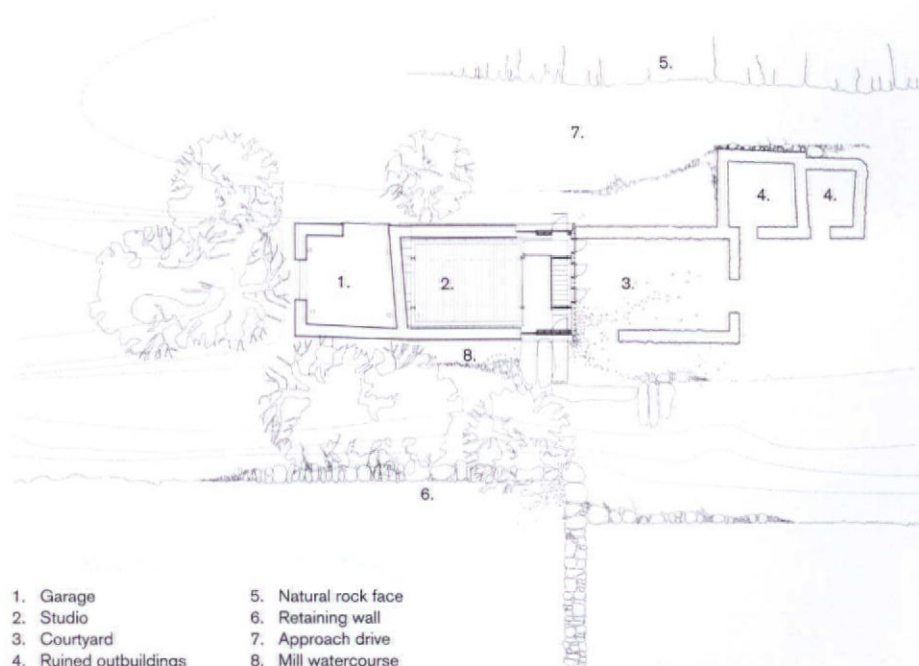
This holiday home – informed in proportions by nearby crofting cottages – is on a remote peninsula on the west coast of Scotland. The accommodation is split between two parallel buildings, linked by a single-storey entry area. Four solid dry-stone walls flank the buildings, broken by full-height windows. Locally sourced stone, reclaimed Scottish slate, lead and oak and larch are used to achieve a mix of grey tones, helping the buildings blend with their surroundings. *James Pallister*





Hillside Guesthouse,
Languedoc, France
Architect: Greg Blee
Cost: £65,000

Set in a tiny village in the south of France, this tough little extension mixes well with the surrounding romantically derelict buildings. Housing a studio and guest bedroom, it is clad in zinc and timber and built on the ruins of an existing structure. In a conscious echo of local seams of iron, the architect has used Cor-ten for an elegant slender stair, a bridge, and window sills. More extravagant is the sill to the south-facing window, shaded in summer by an ash tree. In winter, the low sun should bounce off a sill clad in gold leaf, to reflect on the birch plywood soffit of the studio. *Ruth Slavid*



- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Garage | 5. Natural rock face |
| 2. Studio | 6. Retaining wall |
| 3. Courtyard | 7. Approach drive |
| 4. Ruined outbuildings | 8. Mill watercourse |



DAVID BUTLER



Ramblers, Pulborough,
West Sussex
Architect: Mole Architects
Cost: £60,000

A 1960s extension has been replaced with this green-oak-clad double-height addition, which opens the back of the house up to the garden. Housing an artist's studio, a utility room and an en-suite bathroom, requirements in the extension range from total privacy to near-complete openness. This is articulated in the irregularly disposed frameless glazing, which gives liveliness to the facade, accentuated by the use of outward-opening insulated timber shutters. Reclaimed roof tiles echo the pitched roof of the original house, from which the extension is differentiated by a separating frameless glass slot. *Ruth Slavid*



Stradella Road, London SE22
Architect: Stephen Turvil
Architects
Cost: £55,000

This abstract kitchen extension at the back of a Victorian family home provided a moment of unanimity for the Small Projects selection panel. The black line of the extension's frame creates a simple pitched roof, and the expanse of glazing adds a certain otherworldly quality, with the roof appearing to bear on the single column at the corner in a gravity-defying manner. The end 'gable' elevation is a full-height double-glazed unit, and folding doors to the side allow access to a timber deck. Recessed gutter details add to the dramatic starkness. *Kieran Long*

K-pod, Pinner, Middlesex
Architect: Briffa Phillips
Architects
Cost: £100,000

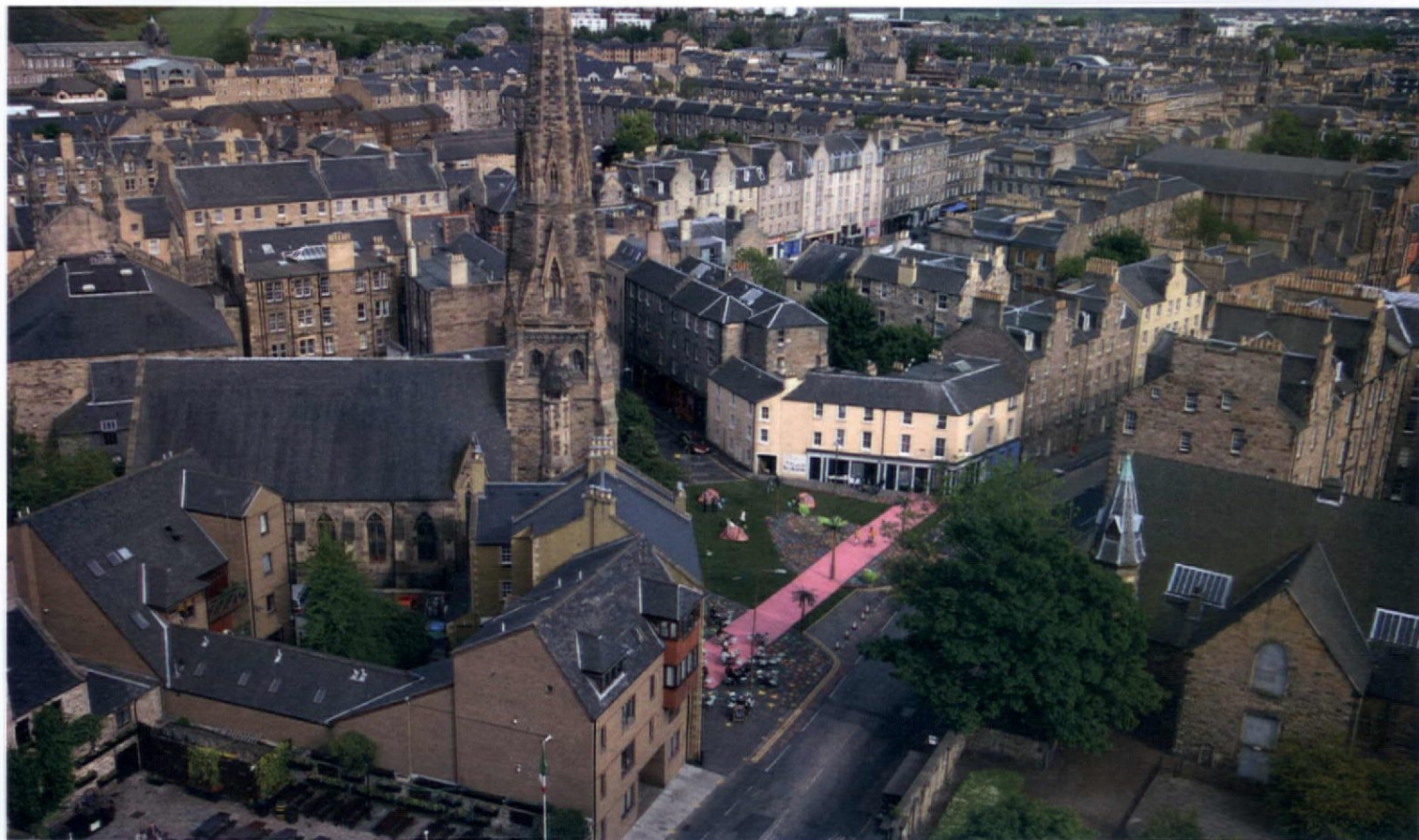
When a client brought Matt Briffa a sketch of a standard lean-to conservatory as an extension to his mock-Tudor house, the architect immediately began sketching alternatives, arguing that the design could be far more imaginative. The outcome: a timber-framed pod clad in bronze and translucent resin panels, connected to the house by a glazed passageway. The pod contains the kitchen, though the existing kitchen was the one element of the original house the owner was happy with. 'It was a less obvious solution to open up the interior of the house and create a less conventional layout,' says Briffa. *Jaffer Kolb*





The Causey, Edinburgh
 Architect: Arcade Architects
 Cost: £16,000

A joyful project anarchically different to the responsible Modernism of Arcade Architects' regular work, The Causey was a temporary public space which turned a traffic island into a place for a weekend festival in May 2007. The project was part of the Six Cities festival, promoting design and creativity in six Scottish cities. The space itself was exuberant – road signs were converted into palm trees, and a garish pink carpet joined the two sides of the square. But this shouldn't distract from the simple but literate urbanism on display, creating an authentic church square and bringing its more commercial buildings into play. *Kieran Long*



DOUGLAS CORRANCE

No. 11 Burns Green,
Hertfordshire
Architect: Jeremy King
Architects
Cost: £139,000

An extension to a late-15th-century cottage, this project avoided any planning trauma through its simple form and materials. 'We decided to go in strong – I knew the conservation officer and what he liked, so we didn't have to change much,' says Jeremy King. The 20m² extension includes a dining area and utility room. The oak cladding is the same material that is used in the detailing of the original timber-framed cottage, and the new roof echoes the cottage's gable. *Jaffer Kolb*

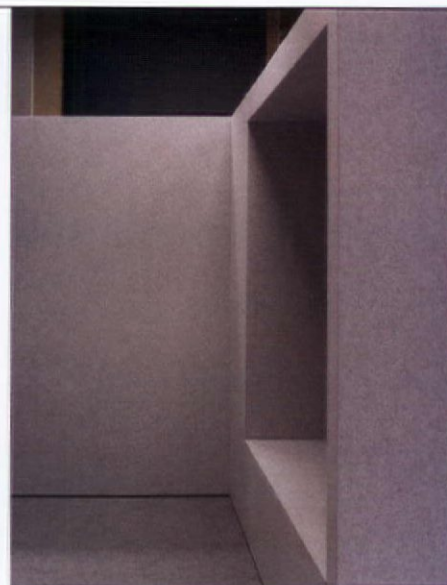
CHARLOTTE WOOD



Space of Waste, Sheffield
 Architect: University of
 Sheffield School of Architecture
 Cost: £900



In late September 2007, Part 2 students at Sheffield School of Architecture began to erect a temporary shed in the city centre. Sourcing all materials from www.whywaste.org.uk, a website offering excess materials from current building projects, the students created an (almost) entirely recycled and cost-free building in under six weeks. The decoration, featuring shapes cut out of plywood panels, came from a local toy manufacturing company, while the roof is made of carpet tiles and the interior features 3m-high bales of packaging waste from Ikea. *Jaffer Kolb*



London Metropolitan
University School of
Architecture gallery
Architect: DRDH Architects
Cost: £3,500

This gallery was no doubt a fraught project for DRDH Architects. With only 27 days of construction time and £3,500 to spend, the practice also had to impress the tutors at London Metropolitan University's architecture school. It's a project of studied modesty – a felt-lined piece of furniture divides the room into an entrance lobby, two galleries and a chair store. Display boards are clad in felt or birch-faced plywood, and steel shelves at low level conceal existing heating installations and form a seat or display area. The project is a modest and warm place for exhibitions, lectures and talks. *Kieran Long*

Thomas Grestorex & Sons,
Matlock, Derbyshire
Architect: Evans Vettori
Cost: £127,548

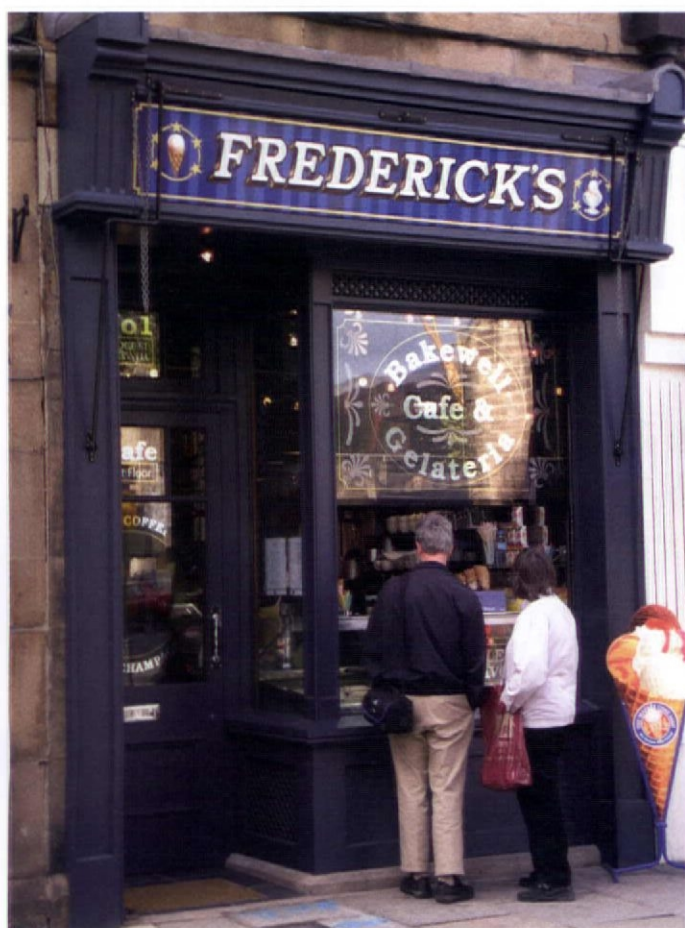
Evans Vettori's neat addition to this funeral director's premises provided the expanding business with a hearse garage, workshop space and more offices. The design is conceived as a 'boat-house', with workshop below and offices above. Stone is used up to first-storey level – helping it meet local conservation area guidelines – with larch cladding above. Extruded box windows interrupt the cladding at the gable end. The building is deliberately discreet, though the comings and goings of hearses hint at its actual use. *James Pallister*





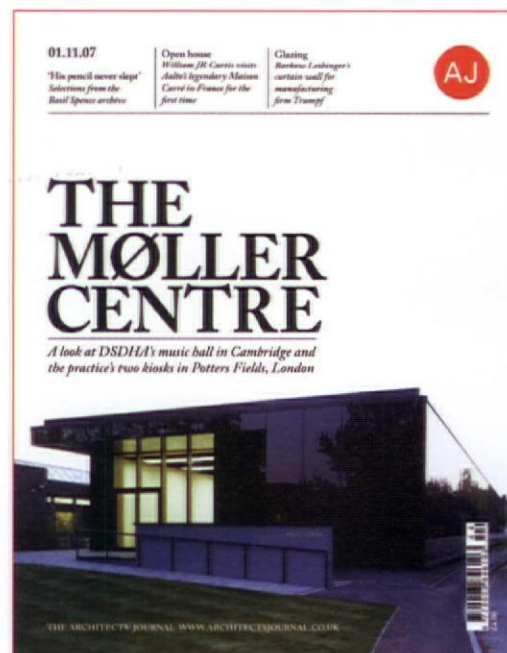
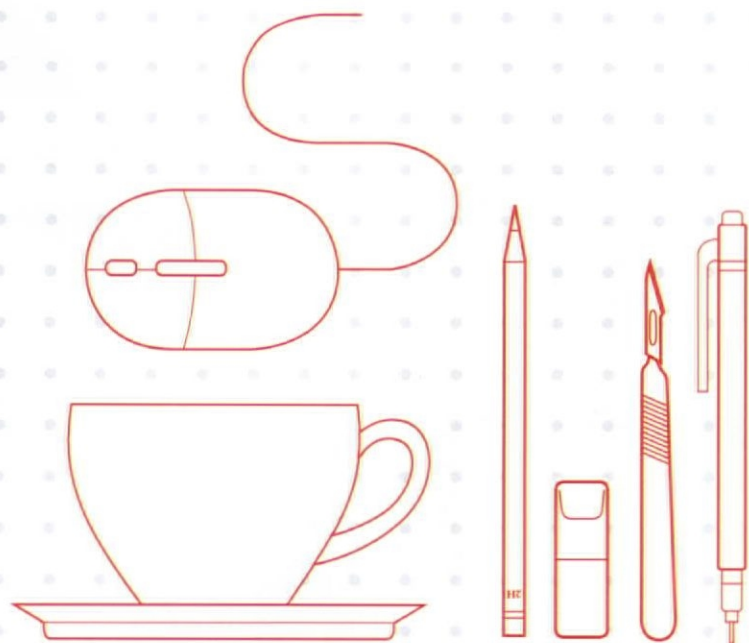
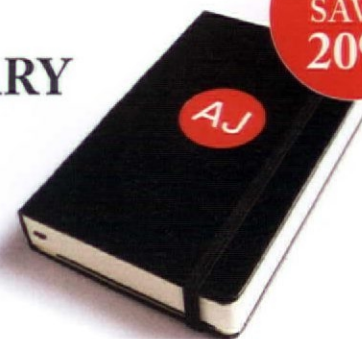
Frederick's, Bakewell,
Derbyshire
Architect: Adam Bench
Architects
Cost: £125,000

After gutting the former sweet shop and rearranging the internal structure of the three-storey building, the 100-year-old Frederick's of Bakewell is now a modern Italian gelateria in a town renowned for its almond-based tarts. The contemporary feel of the bare steel, lightboxes and exposed brick is countered by the sobriety of the cleaned-up fascia, with frosted glass lettering looking out on to the high street. Bench said that one of the benefits of the job – aside from the satisfaction of completing a complex project on a tight site – was receiving part-payment in ice cream. *James Pallister*



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Big Fish Little Fish

*John Preve of Make Architects
is fired up by the thought of
collaborating in a foreign city*

We have projects in Europe, the Far and Middle East and even the Caribbean. But one of the cities that I am most excited about is just a 45-minute flight away – Dublin.

It's the similarities between Dublin and the UK that make the city so approachable, but it's the differences that make it such a great place to work. I have been told by Dubliners that as objective outsiders we have an advantage over local architects. While I buy the argument that too much knowledge can hold back invention, I also believe success is achieved through collaboration with local practices.

Our most productive collaboration in Dublin has been with HKR Architects, and in particular with Nicholas Sutton and his team. Nick has a fantastic knowledge of the physical and emotional qualities of Dublin and it is always a delight to wander around the city with him. This type of knowledge is key to understanding – and building in – a city. Architecture is born out of people and place and this is what so excites me when working abroad.

Designing for different cultures requires a responsibility beyond the individual architect; collaboration is a way in which we can all work to our own strengths to produce better architecture.

Next issue: Jonathan Hendry of
Jonathan Hendry Architects

WANT TO RUN A PRACTICE LIKE JOHN ASSAEL?

'I'm not a guru' says John Assael of his upcoming talk at the AJ Successful Practice Management Conference, 'I'm just saying: "I've done it – here is my approach".' The success Assael has had with his practice, Assael Architecture, which won the *Sunday Times* UK Best Training and Development Prize in 2006, qualifies him to speak authoritatively.

Assael will use his own practice as a case study to show how training can be integrated into the business strategy and the working day.

Assael's staff are all trained on the relevant CAD and design packages and attend weekly lectures that comply with professional targets. Training

needs for the employee are identified on entry and regularly reviewed.

This internal training is complemented by an annual budget for each member of staff to attend seminars elsewhere and also embark on training schemes of personal interest. Staff satisfaction is an important factor in performance and, according to Assael, 'makes business sense'.

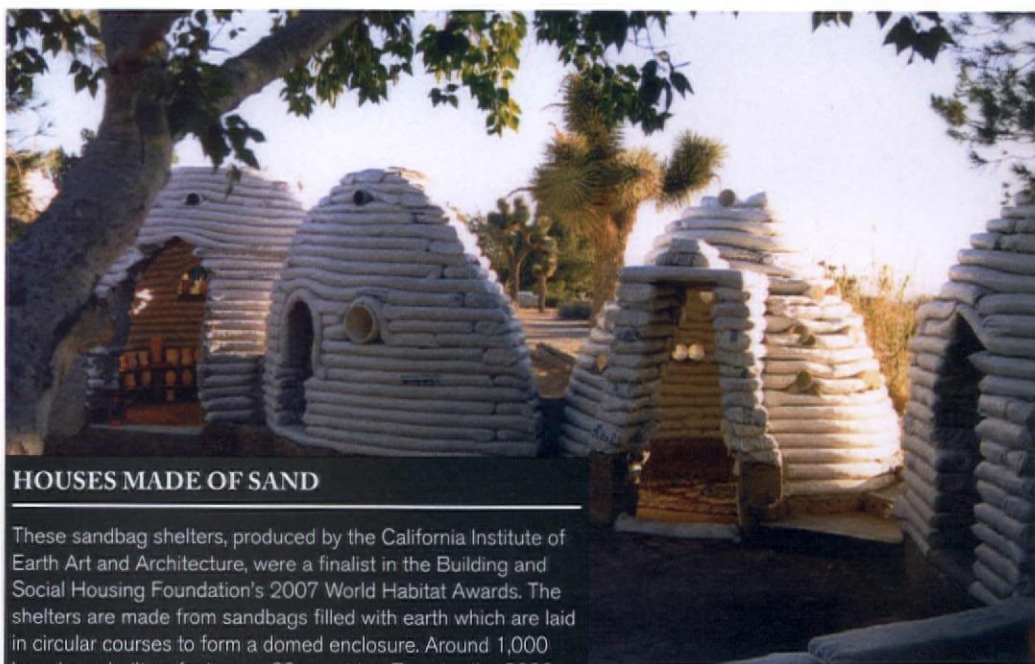
Assael says comprehensive training schemes are often seen as a luxury rather than an essential and that architects are lagging behind their professional counterparts in law and other sectors that offer week-long inductions as a matter of course. Assael says architects often regard

this sort of training as 'too corporate', and adds that training in basic skills makes employees more confident in all aspects of their work and ultimately engenders loyalty and efficiency.

The conference will include presentations by Michael Cottam of Chapman Taylor, Jonathan Hines of Architype, Wordsearch's Peter Murray, and Grimshaw partner Christopher Nash.

Kaye Alexander

The AJ Successful Practice Management Conference is to be held on 22 January 2008 at the Royal Society of Medicine London, W1. Visit www.ajpracticesuccess.co.uk for registration



HOUSES MADE OF SAND

These sandbag shelters, produced by the California Institute of Earth Art and Architecture, were a finalist in the Building and Social Housing Foundation's 2007 World Habitat Awards. The shelters are made from sandbags filled with earth which are laid in circular courses to form a domed enclosure. Around 1,000 have been built so far in over 20 countries. To enter the 2008 World Habitat Awards visit www.worldhabitatawards.org. The deadline for entries is 1 June 2008.



MADRID MEMORIAL

Massive blocks of borosilicate glass, normally used for camera lenses, form a shimmering monument to the 2004 train bombings, writes *Hattie Hartman*

'Light was the material which built the structure,' says Pedro Colón of FAM, the Madrid practice which designed the city's 11 March Memorial, a glass cylinder located amid a swirl of traffic on a roundabout in front of Atocha station. Inaugurated last March, three years to the day after the 11 March 2004 attacks on four suburban trains left 191 dead, the 11m-high memorial comprises over 15,000 bespoke glass blocks laid with transparent adhesive cured by UV lamps.

The 11 March memorial is the result of a competition, by the city council and the Ministry of Public Works and Economy, which attracted over 300 entries. FAM, which won the competition in November 2004 sought to provide a place of quiet contemplation and it was the only entry to feature underground space below the roundabout accessed

from the station through a tunnel. FAM saw manipulation of light as key to the scheme, and envisaged a glass structure which would illuminate the 500m² subterranean memorial by day and serve as a beacon by night.

Turning this vision into reality within the time-frame required by the client proved challenging. Initially FAM did not even have a source for the massive glass blocks needed for the igloo-like construction. 'The most complicated bit was finding the glass,' says Colón. 'We looked at plastics and resins, but they were not durable enough. We wanted an eternal material.' The practice wanted a glass which would not need any visible structure, and explored the possibility of using liquid glass before settling on a borosilicate glass, traditionally used for making lenses, which could be used to make the blocks.



The glazed memorial in front of Madrid's Atocha station



Left and below
left View up
into the ETFE
membrane
printed with
condolence
messages



1. 200 x 300 x 70mm borosilicate glass moulded blocks, adhesive jointed with transparent UV-cured acrylic
2. EPDM bearing pad
3. Steel plate
4. Concrete slab
5. Light fitting
6. Printed ETFE membrane – 150 µm, 97 per cent transparency
7. Air outlet
8. Steel grating
9. Steel beam
10. 60mm steel tube
11. Airtight seal: PVC sheeting
12. Air duct
13. Suspended plasterboard ceiling to memorial chamber below

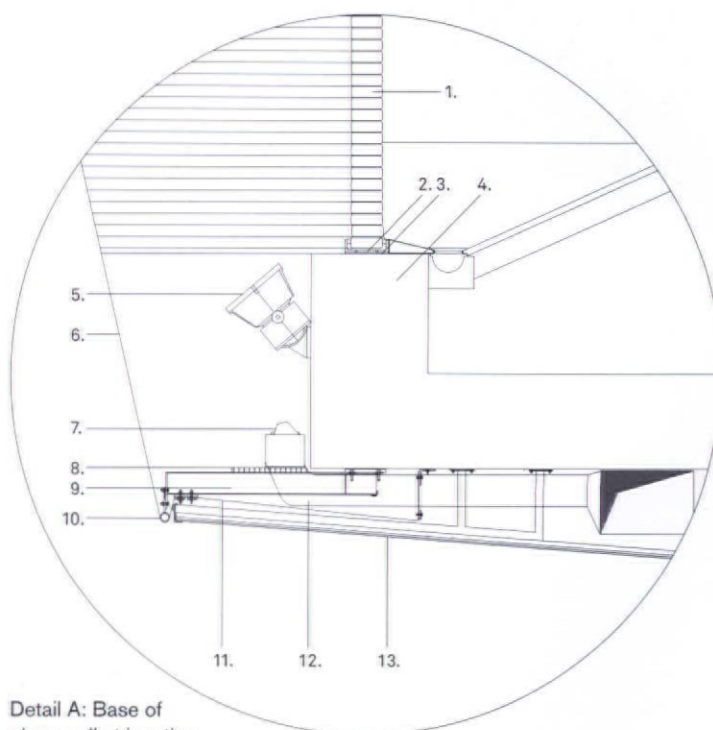
To accommodate differential movement between the glass tower and the reinforced concrete slab below, the entire structure sits on approximately 200 shock-absorbing elastomer pads. A crew of 24 worked around the clock to lay approximately 400 glass blocks a day, with an architect continuously on site for quality

The ETFE membrane is held in place by a difference in pressure

control. The delicate glass blocks had to be individually checked for fractures and over 10 per cent were rejected. The blocks also needed a transparent acrylic adhesive to resist rain and wind, and because the adhesive shrinks as it cures, particular care had to be taken to avoid fracturing the glass. A glazed roof enclosure at the top of the cylinder with a

minimal visible structure is made from five glass beams connected with steel bolts which support sheets of laminated safety glass.

FAM wanted to feature text on the memorial, and as etching the glass blocks proved prohibitively expensive, the alternative of printing text on an ETFE sheet inflated within the glass structure was adopted and lends an ephemeral quality to the interior, which changes throughout the day as light moves across the surface. A 3D model in Rhino was used to develop the freeform shape of the ETFE lining, which floats within the space and is held in place by a 60mm steel tube which follows the base of the wall (see detail A, right). The ETFE membrane is held in position by the difference in pressure between the memorial space inside the membrane and the space between the ETFE and the glass cylinder. >>



Detail A: Base of glass wall at junction with memorial ceiling

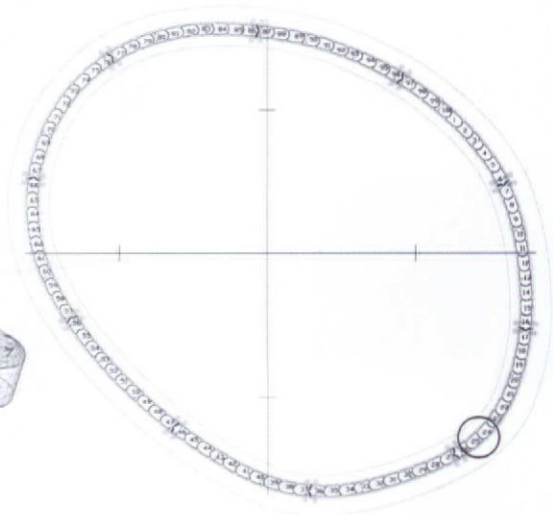
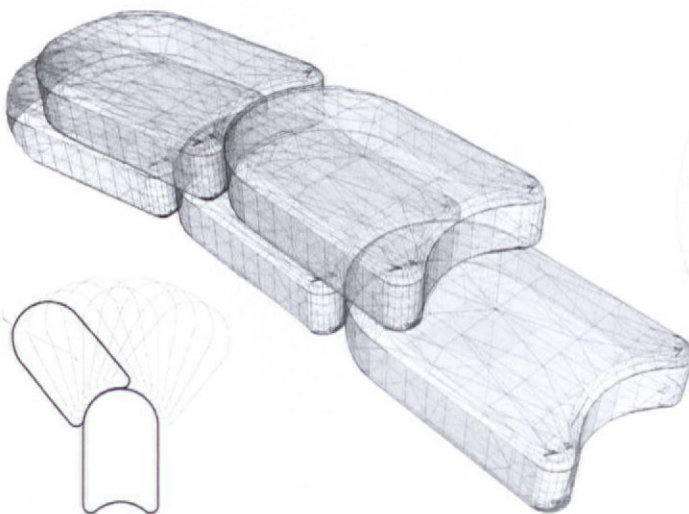


Bespoke blocks of moulded borosilicate measure 200 x 300mm and are 70mm thick



Blocks were numbered to record how many were laid daily

Right and far right Detail of glass blocks, with a convex and concave face, which fit together to accommodate varying radii of perimeter wall

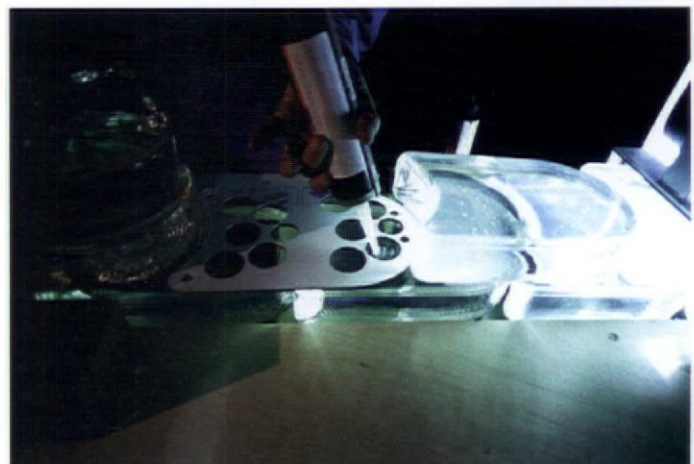


The memorial features messages left at the station following the bombings

The victims' families objected to the original concept of printing names on the memorial interior and in the final scheme the names of the victims are printed on the walls of the entrance foyer between the station and the main memorial space, while the ETFE fabric is overlaid with a selection of over 20,000 messages in different languages which were left at the station after the bombing. The architects themselves undertook the momentous task of sorting and selecting the messages to be used.

Because controlled environmental conditions are needed to apply acrylic adhesives, the memorial was constructed within a sealed enclosure, which lent an air of mystery and suspense to the project before its opening. Colón says: 'It became the mysterious place everyone wanted to see – like a magician's hat.' The number of visitors, 1,000 a day in the week and up to 2,000 a day at the weekend during the initial months is a testament to the magician's success. ■

FAM will present this project at 6.30pm on 31 January at the RIBA, London W1, as part of the Emerging Architecture Series. Tickets are available from www.architecture.com/programmes

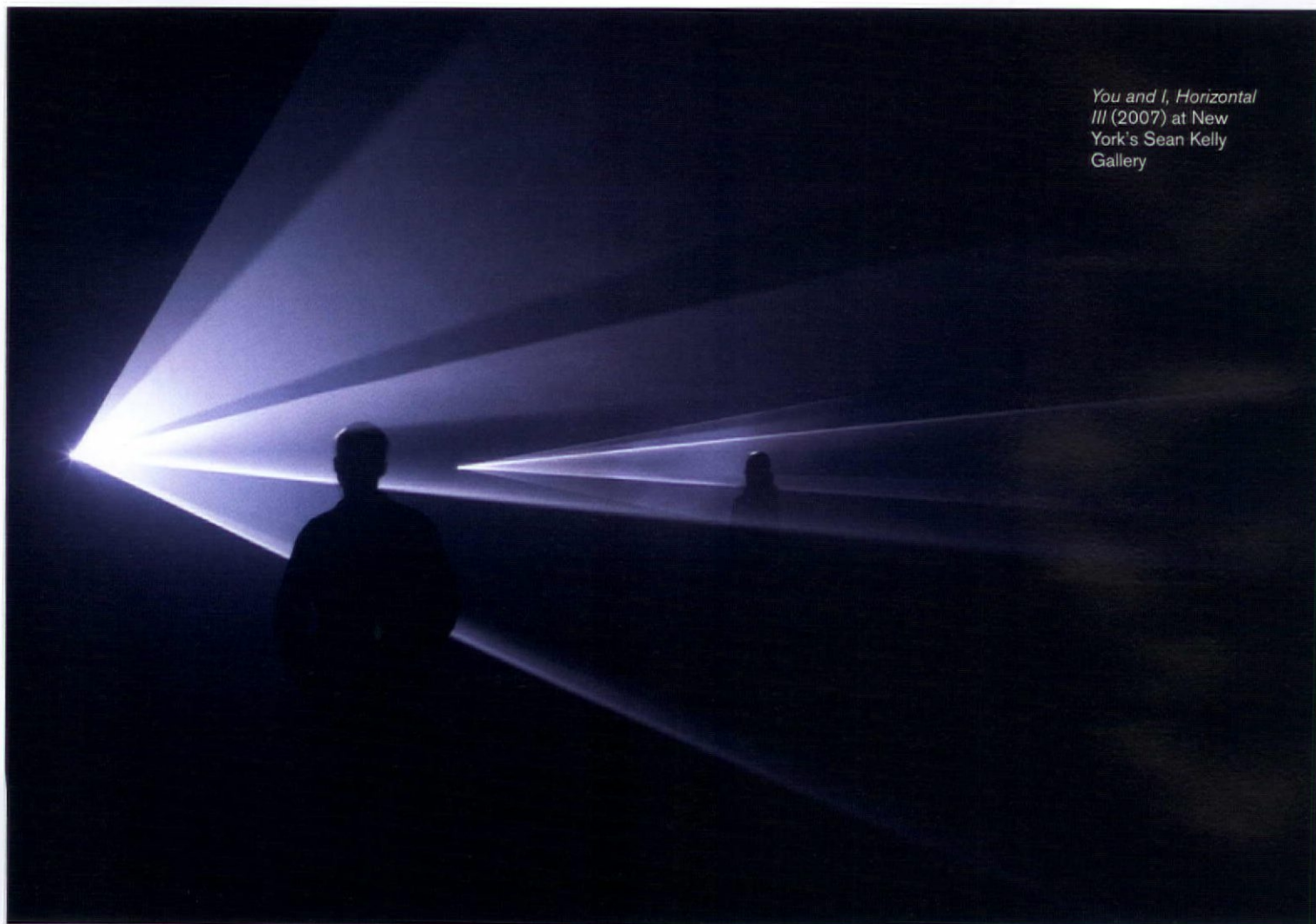


Above The glass blocks were bonded with acrylic adhesive which needed curing with UV light. A template was developed to precisely control the application of adhesive – about 100g per block

In this section Anthony McCall // Sergison Bates' thoughts on architecture // Julien Gracq's study of a city // International extensions // Carol Rhodes // Diary

The Critics

You and I, Horizontal III (2007) at New York's Sean Kelly Gallery



SYLVAIN DELEU

EXHIBITION

In a sensitive light

Jaffer Kolb takes a look at the Serpentine Gallery's retrospective of the work of Anthony McCall

Until 3 February, at the Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2. www.serpentinegallery.org

As you walk into British artist Anthony McCall's show at the Serpentine, the first thing you see is a translucent white perspex screen, smaller than a piece of A4 paper, showing a rotating series of 81 slides of abstract light patterns and shapes. It's a bit

Peter Kubelka, a bit Stan Brakhage, and an unrepresentatively humble first impression of the exhibition.

But that's much of the charm of the artist's eponymous show: it's brilliantly curated, leading you into fantastically dramatic

blacked-out spaces by way of comparatively low-key process drawings and crude examples of McCall's work.

Numerous schematic diagrams and studies hanging around the slide plinth in the front room show the sculptor at his most >>

BOOK

I think therefore I am

*Sergison Bates is a rare breed in architectural practice, says **Daniel Rosbottom**. For one thing, the practice actually thinks, as well as acts*

Papers 2 by Jonathan Sergison and Stephen Bates. Distributed by GG. 163pp. £23.99

Sergison Bates Architects is something of a curiosity within British architectural culture – albeit a welcome one. For in contrast to our European counterparts, architects in Britain generally appear to regard ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ as mutually exclusive activities.

There are, of course, notable exceptions to this generalisation. Nonetheless, Jonathan Sergison and Stephen Bates place themselves among select company in seeking to posit ideas, as well as buildings, within our collective architectural consciousness. Moreover, with the publication of *Papers 2*, they continue to do so, despite having evolved into an established office with a substantial workload since the preceding volume, *Papers*, was published in 2002.

Often the public articulation of an architect’s relationship with the subject recedes as ‘real’ work arrives. For both Sergison and Bates, however, an obvious enjoyment of the potential of language is shaped by the understanding that words can offer a legitimate contribution to thinking about, and subsequently making, architecture – as part of practice rather than as a counterpoint to it.

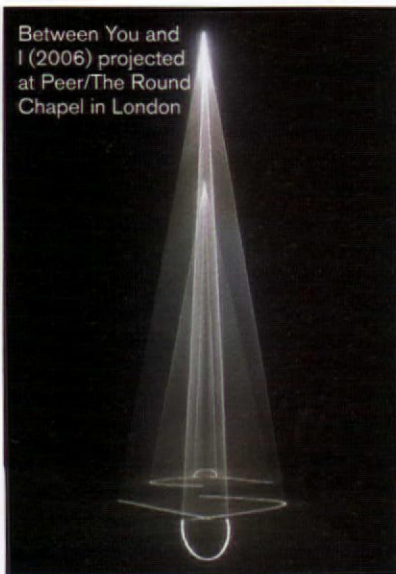
Words are certainly critical here. Indeed, those potential purchasers hoping to see extensive pictures of the practice’s latest built output will need to look elsewhere, for this book, a collection of writings from 2002 to 2007, eschews the rather abused format of the ‘monograph’. While projects are discussed, they are often not the primary focus of

concern and many of them will, in any case, be already familiar from *Papers* and other publications. Instead, work takes its place within a larger frame of reference – drawn from precedent and history, art as well as architecture practice, through which the authors define collective terms of reference for their ongoing engagement with the discipline.

The resultant pieces are not lengthy, overly academic or intended to be conclusive. They introduce deeper strands of thinking and intention to be played out through building. In this regard, the absence of ‘work in progress’ – a discussion often central to arguments set forth in previous publications – limits your understanding of how these collected thoughts are being developed and translated in relation to the practice’s current thinking.

In *Papers*, the concerns of the practice were described as ‘being somewhere between ideas and places’. Mediation, between idea and artefact, continues to be a central theme of *Papers 2*. The opening essay, ‘On Teaching’, begins: ‘As architects we find ourselves consistently drawing upon our own experience as the basis for any building proposition.’ The experiential nature of architecture, and the recognition and elaboration of this experience through actions of observation, become the precursor to many of the studies that individual texts articulate. Collectively, the pieces tend towards critique rather than polemic. In some, things are simply brought into relation, leaving

Between You and I (2006) projected at Peer/The Round Chapel in London



Anthony McCall continued from p.45

architectural. The drawings are precisely done; volumetric light diagrams are suspended in simply ruled boxes; matrices of dots determine the locations for his *Fire Cycle* series of the early 1970s (where he lit fires in various patterns in the Scottish countryside).

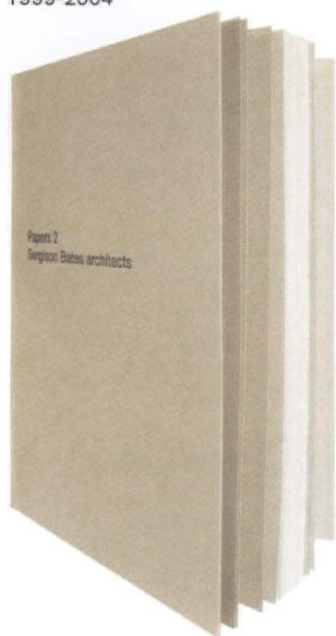
It’s a pleasant reminder that process work can be both beautiful and informative – these drawings don’t have that nasty feeling of affectation. They look considered; they evolve and demonstrate a trajectory of thought that is at times pleasantly illogical. Covering the room’s walls, the drawings span McCall’s work from the early 1970s to the present.

As a continuation of this process work, two smaller rooms house projections of McCall’s

early films, one of which features a series of figures walking through a windy field, holding large squares of white fabric. In another, a man digs a square of earth and buries a box of dirt. These pieces are uneven, but mark a step towards the fascination with time and projection so important to McCall’s later work.

The back three galleries, the Serpentine’s largest, are dedicated to McCall’s light sculptures – his masterworks. And these are no James Turrells. They cannot stand quietly in a corner; they do not inspire thought or wonder. They are centrepieces which demand attention and almost violent interaction. His *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) was the first example of experimentation with what has become his instantly recognisable style. Shot (and projected at the Serpentine) on 16mm

Right Interior of mixed-use development, Wandsworth, London 1999-2004



STEPHEN BATES

open questions for the reader to explore with reference to their own understanding.

This consistent grounding of potentially abstract ideas, through engagement with the directly perceived and understood, is, in many ways, the strength of Sergison Bates' conceptual position. The precision inherent in the practices observations of familiar, overlooked, or disregarded conditions underscores the clarity, rigour and potential of its architecture, and asks pertinent questions of a profession seemingly mesmerised by the surface sheen of architectural imagery.

However, Sergison Bates' insistence upon the value of such intimate exploration ultimately reveals another, larger question, which it also chooses to leave open. In the essay 'Outlooks', Sergison remarks tantalisingly: 'Nearly all that we had built was no more than a two hour journey away [from London], although this situation has begun to change with the recent invitation to build outside our native England.' Frustratingly the resulting, fundamental question of how distance and unfamiliarity might adjust, develop, or transform the concerns and

nuanced observations so eloquently expressed in *Papers 2* is left unanswered. One suspects this is something with which the practice is currently grappling. Perhaps *Papers 3* might offer some conclusions...

Daniel Rosbottom is a director of DRDH Architects and postgraduate academic director in the department of architecture at London Metropolitan University

Resume: We've only built projects within two hours of London, says Sergison. But what the heck, have architecture, will travel – and we'll tell you all about it in *Papers 3*...

film, the piece comprises a white curved line against a black background. Fog machines create an atmospheric density which gives the projection a solid quality, creating the illusion of a half-cone shaped wall – and that's it.

Only that's not it, really. No photographs, of which I've seen so much of this artist's work, do the sculptures justice. McCall is fascinated by film and projection, and here, instead of passive observation, the film unfolds as you walk around and move through the static projection of light, reversing the process of audience participation. Depending on your angle, the projection has varying levels of solidity and opacity. From certain angles, people moving through the light look like they're walking through a wall. The fog machines add another element when they

turn on, making the light move like solid and shifting smoke. It's a spectacular effect, and one that could keep me entranced for endless amounts of time.

The other two light sculptures, *You and I*, *Horizontal III* (2007) and *Turning Under* (2004), take the simple design of the first piece one step further, and immediately recall the process drawings from the first gallery, which saw McCall experimenting with shapes and intersecting lines. Here he creates unexpected spaces within the light-walls, which are curiously labyrinthine given their simplicity. Shown on digital, these pieces unfortunately lose something of the original 16mm format; that frenetic but microscopic jumpiness in the line; a trembling energy that's almost imperceptible.

This change is symptomatic of the one big failing in the retrospective: you don't get the sense that McCall has evolved very convincingly throughout his career. His work functions better when unpolished – in its recent iterations it's almost over-slick, like something from a science museum instead of an artist's studio. It's a problem solved when looking at his drawings, however, as the two sets of media feed off each other. The great thing about McCall's work is his dedication to systematic research, into which his drawings give great insight. Exhibiting them doesn't detract from the work's effect, but enlivens it. ■

Resume: 'McCall, you light up my life,' says Kolb. 'By the way, the Science Museum called and they want their exhibit back.'



Critic's Choice

Julien Gracq's study of Nantes evokes memories of home for Andrew Mead

The French writer Julien Gracq died just before Christmas at the age of 97. A novelist and poet who fell under the spell of the Surrealists, he's the author of *The Shape of a City*, published in France in 1985 but now available in an English edition (Turtle Point Press, £9.95). The place in question is Nantes, where Gracq attended boarding school, but his subject is universal – how a city captures and feeds your imagination. 'I don't pretend to paint the true portrait of Nantes – only an account of its presence inside me,' he says.

So the Nantes he recalls is not one of guidebook itineraries and postcard images. The Passage Pommeraye (pictured below) – one of those split-level, 19th-century arcades that the Surrealists loved, crammed with quirky little shops – takes precedence for Gracq over Nantes' cathedral, while a ruinous observatory on the city's outskirts becomes for him the perfect setting for one of Edgar Allan Poe's disturbing stories.

Alert to the atmosphere of places, what Gracq is especially drawn to are those blurred zones which are not quite city or suburb or countryside, and one of the most evocative passages in the book deals with a building that is equally ambiguous in character. 'Though far from being a ruin, it never lost the feeling of twilight settling in during long, uninhabited winters.'

This book is more than autobiography, for few will read it without thinking of their own equivalent of Nantes – the place that shaped them as that city did Gracq.

BOOK

Not exactly an innovative book, says Barrie Evans, but it still contains a few surprises

Extensions by Adam Mornement. Laurence King, 2007. 256pp. £25

This is formula publishing: an introduction plus international case studies on a loose theme; the whole less than the sum of its parts, albeit well produced. The 'parts' of Adam Mornement's *Extensions*, however, can be interesting. All but the most pathological student of architectural magazines and websites will find some surprises in this collection of 39 upmarket case studies.

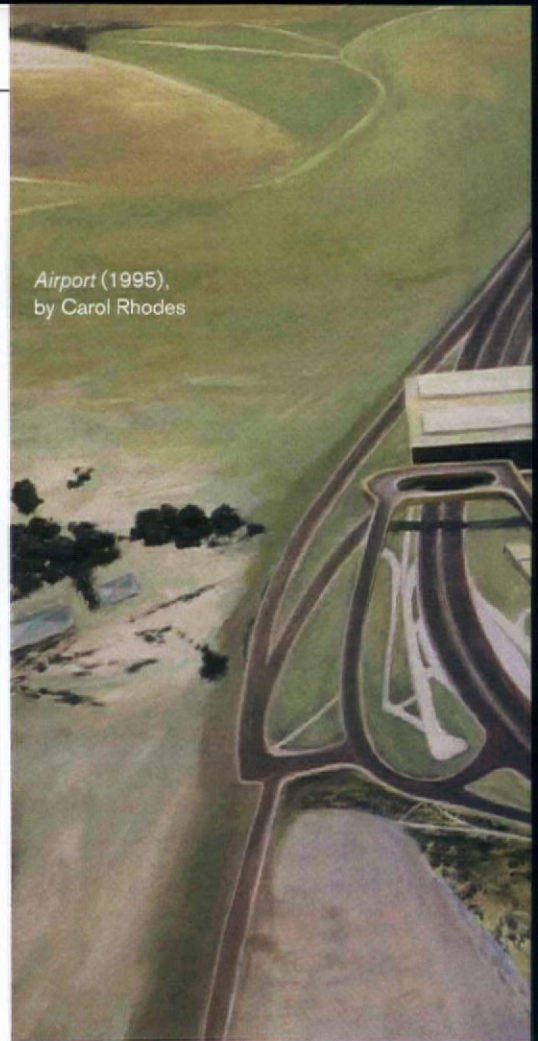
What gives the book some coherence is Mornement's selectoral bias. He's a glass-and-steel hardliner (though timber occasionally creeps into recent projects as cladding), and not into decoration. While these projects are described as extensions, they are almost always larger than the original building; often ignoring it, and the context of the site too. The shock of the new is the aim – indeed there's bound to be a 'how did they get away with that?' reaction to some of the projects, often said to be constrained by 'strict planning regulations' that we can only dream of enjoying in the UK.

The book's brief introduction sets its sights primarily on the client, aiming to 'outline the client requirements and the architect's solution as well as major hurdles and challenges encountered during the design and build process' – an ambition way beyond texts of 500 words. But there are floor plans and the photography is good. This book is worth a look.

Resume: The extensions are larger than the original buildings, says Evans. How's that for over-extending yourself?



Airport (1995),
by Carol Rhodes



EXHIBITION

Neil Manson Cameron reviews a show by Carol Rhodes, a painter with a bird's-eye view

Carol Rhodes at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, until 24 February

You can be drawn into Carol Rhodes' paintings by a sense of familiarity. At first glance, their effect is similar to when you look out of an aircraft as it comes into land in an unfamiliar city, and the scene is just another kaleidoscope-shake of what you left behind.

This Glasgow-based artist, whose work is currently on show at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, is often described as a painter of imaginary landscapes, but that identifies only a superficial layer. Her imagery is composite: some of it observed, some of it concocted, but if you get too caught up in the minutiae of her surface forms you miss the deeper strata. Rhodes uses





landscape as a mechanism as much as a subject.

Her compositions are typically arrayed as out-takes as seen from the air, and this introduces an abstract dimension while still appearing to be observational. In effect, while she appears to be representing something reduced to its core elements by virtue of an aerial viewpoint, she has determined what those elements are, whether they are unpopulated coastal fringes, post-industrial marginalia or the serrated junctions of the man-made and the natural.

Rhodes is painstaking in her approach to the physical act of painting, completing just a handful of works a year, and what really impresses me is the resolution of her compositions. Painted in oil on board, none of the works in this survey exhibition is more than 81cm in its longest dimension. There is a sense of weighting and balance amid line, mass, tone and colour for which 'beautiful' is probably the best adjective. Rhodes' use of paint is often diagnostic, her brushstrokes subtly concealing or revealing, whether drifted as dissolved pigment across the surface to parody the sea, or scumbled into blocks to notate the shadowed walls of a building.

In representing what we might seem to know while simultaneously undermining it, Rhodes frees herself from the strictures of naturalism while appropriating its idiom. Highlighting ambiguities in Rhodes' depiction of identifiable landscape forms is tangential. These are allusional more than descriptive works of art, some of which suggest, in their scabby, carbuncular and pustular forms, so many corporeal imperfections and deformities. It's as if they were symptoms illustrated in a medical textbook as much as descriptions of topography.

There is a sense of dislocation in Rhodes' work, but it would be too easy to ascribe this to her own divided upbringing between India and Britain. It is more a depersonalised sense of estrangement of the kind conveyed in a J G Ballard novel or the music of Joy Division. The overall timbre is one of melancholy, which comes not only from tone and palette but also from embedded themes of randomness, mutability and interchangeability. Rhodes' paintings transmute these elusive themes into a kind of geology.

Resume: Her paintings evoke the estrangement of a song by Joy Division, says Cameron. Rhodes, Rhodes will tear us apart, again

5 THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

1 Edward Burtynsky: *Quarries*

Marvel at the Canadian photographer's 'manufactured landscapes' at this exhibition of works from his international quarry series
Until 2 February at Flowers Central, London W1S
www.flowerseast.com

2 Liverpool '08: European Capital of Culture

Kick off Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture with a free open-air concert
11 January at 8pm, St George's Plateau, Liverpool

3 Girl Rider: Cullinan + Richards

Ponder this installation, described as 'a dysfunctional furniture showroom cum studio', which explores the relationship between sculpture, painting and performance
12 January-15 March at Mead Gallery, Coventry CV4. www.warwickartscentre.co.uk

4 Kader Attia: *Square Dreams*

Revel in the dystopian city-vision of Kader Attia and his models of office towers questioning identity, consumerism and globalisation
Until 13 January at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. www.balticmill.com

5 Double Take: The Space Between Architecture and Film

Listen to production designer Joseph Bennett discuss film and architecture with Ron Arad
15 January at 7pm in Lecture Theatre 1, Royal College of Art, London SW7. www.rca.ac.uk



Iberia Quarries
#3, Bencatel,
Portugal (2006),
by Edward
Burtynsky

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Beautiful scenic riverside studio, specialising in Architecture, Interior Design & Project Management to the Hospitality, Entertainment & Leisure sectors. A unique office, offering a unique role coupled with a fantastic salary & career progression, set in idyllic surroundings! Ref: L489 (Hannah)

Architects / Technologists

Hastings / Uckfield

£35k-£45k

This friendly practice located in a historic town is looking to recruit talented individuals with UK job running experience. This opportunity offers real involvement on projects from inception to completion with projects ranging from leisure to commercial sectors. In return they offer a healthy work / life balance, the opportunity to grow in confidence, progress your career within the practice & earn an above industry salary. Ref: 3683 (Philip)

Part 2's and 3's

Covent Garden / Bermondsey

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In recent years this practice has consistently been rated in the top 20 of the UK's top 100 practices & has worked on some of the UK's largest projects. Transportation projects, varying in size, scale & value now require those looking to become part of a winning team & who would like to progress their talents & knowledge base to the next level. AutoCAD, Vectorworks, Microstation. Ref: L487 (Han)

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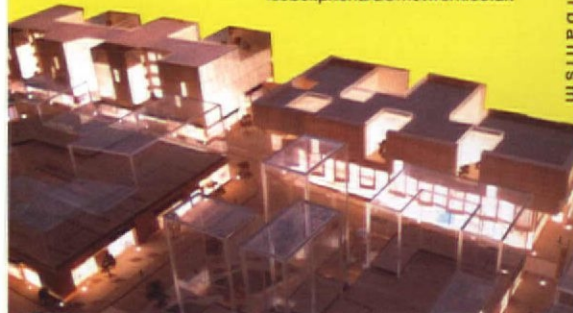
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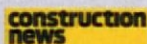
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Be innovative in EC1! £28,000-£40,000 p.a. + benefits

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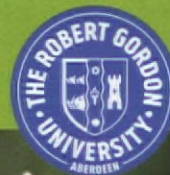


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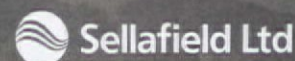
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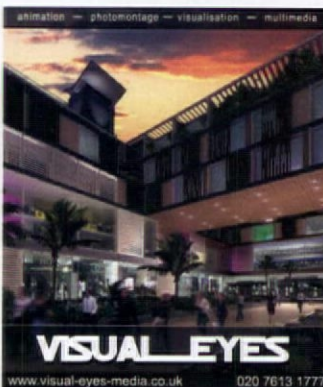
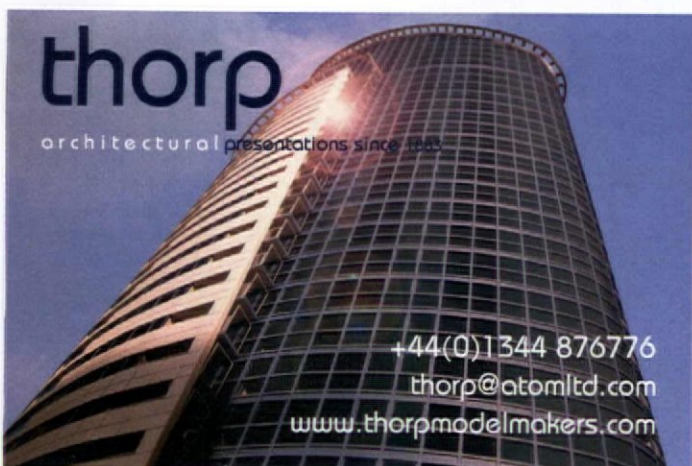


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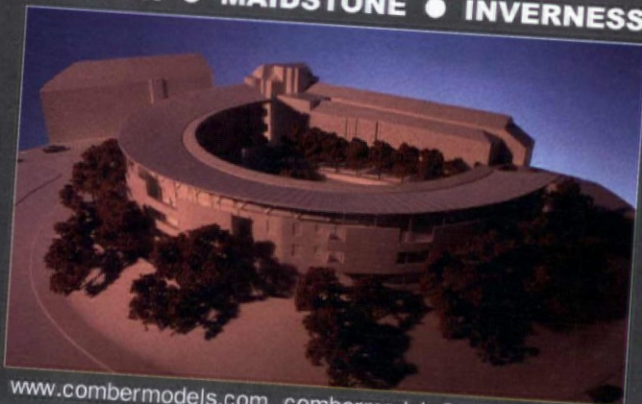


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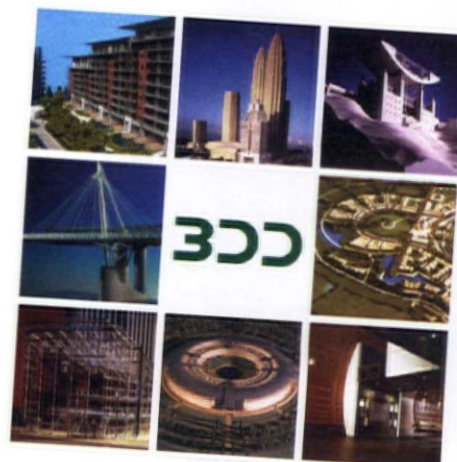
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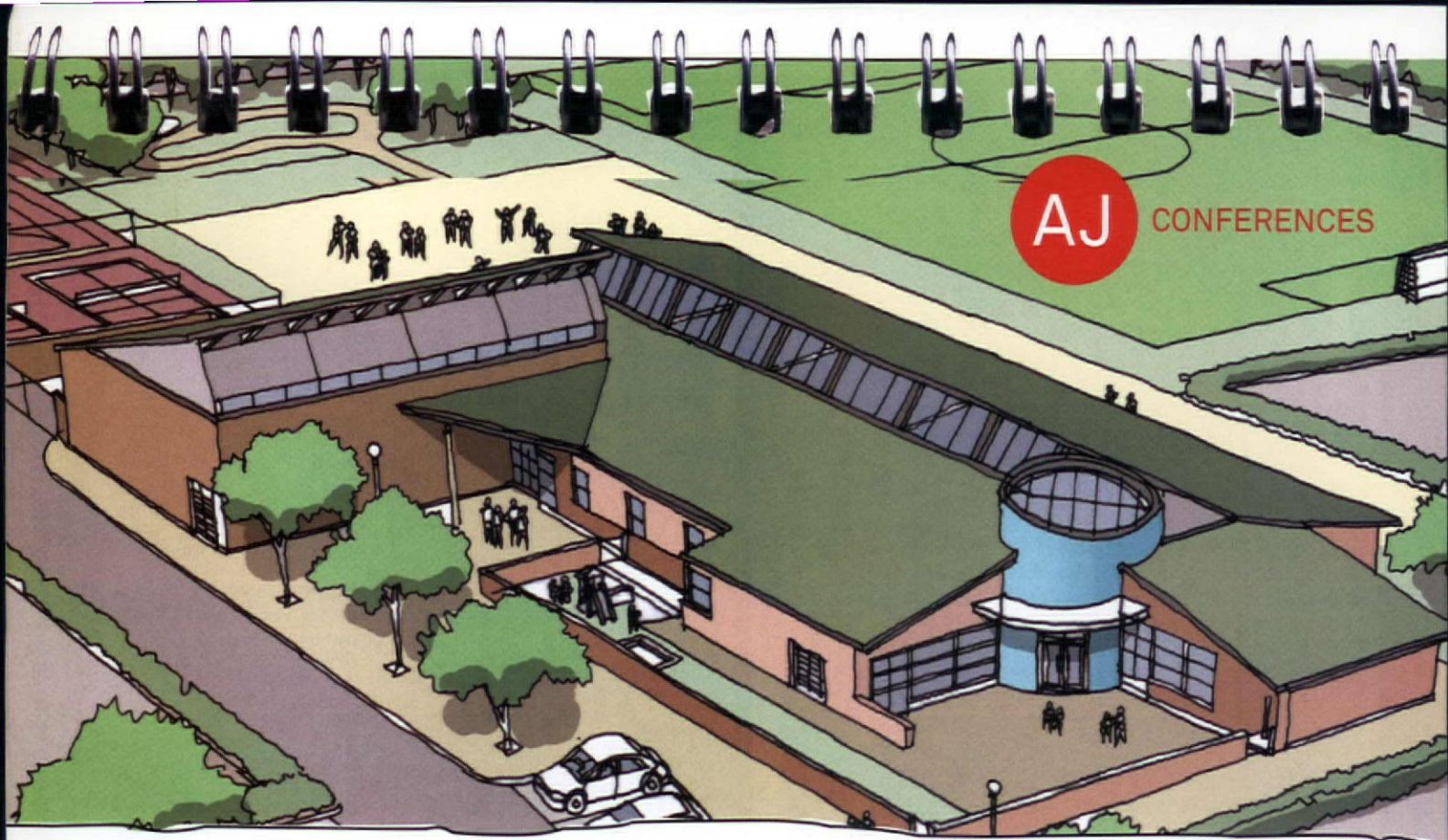
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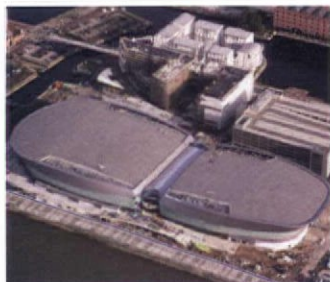
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MERSON SIGN DESIGN



AJ ENQUIRY 203

Merson Sign Design turns concepts into effective, practical signs, offering: production readiness and value engineering; signage scheme concepts; technical and aesthetic design; sustainable signage consultancy; signage audit and report; and wayfinding audit and strategy. For more information visit www.mersonsigndesign.com

FORTICRETE



AJ ENQUIRY 205

Forticrete's Minislate interlocking slate has been specified for two roofs in the new Buckshaw Retirement Village near Chorley, Lancashire. Some 185,000 Slate Grey Minislates will be laid. Minislate has the appearance of natural slate when fitted but is as easy to lay as a conventional interlocking tile. www.forticrete.co.uk

INTEGRATED DESIGN



AJ ENQUIRY 207

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, barrier-arm optical turnstiles, speedgates, passgates and tailgate detection systems. www.fastlane-turnstiles.com

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AJ ENQUIRY 202

Highly insulating Kalwall has helped create this stunning Audi car showroom in Macclesfield, Cheshire, designed by Fletcher Smith. It is interesting to see the difference between sunlight through glass and diffused daylight through Kalwall, which eliminates shadows, glare and solar gain. For more information visit www.stoakes.co.uk

CLAXTON BLINDS



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Marley Eternit has added another innovation to its product range with the launch of Domino and Symphony, its new clay interlocking tiles. The new tiles combine the natural clay look with the benefits of an interlocking tile, reflecting the increasing demand for clay in all areas of the market. Visit www.marleyeternit.co.uk

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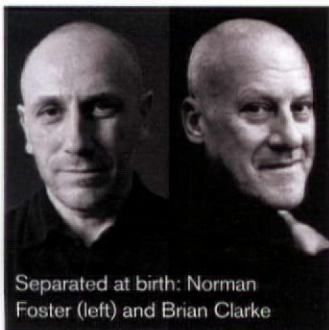
AJ ENQUIRY 208

Leaderflush Shapland, the UK's leading doorset manufacturer, has supplied its designer range of internal doorsets to a demonstration house being built at Nottingham University, part of the Creative Energy Homes Project. The range uses the innovative PermaSkin finish, which provides improved quality and durability.



PEAS IN A POD

Brian Clarke, dome-headed glass artist and chairman of the Architecture Foundation, was relaxing on holiday with Zaha Hadid (as you do), swimming around in the pool without a care in the world, when an autograph hunter advanced. 'You've been spotted,' he told Zaha, and the Iraqi diva prepared herself for another adoring member of her public. Except the fan in question was a little confused. 'Are you by any chance Norman Foster?' he asked Clarke. Astragal hopes ardently for the real Norman to be found in a swimming pool with Zaha very soon.



Separated at birth: Norman Foster (left) and Brian Clarke

ICONOCLASM

The *Guardian* has waded into the icon debate in the latest edition of its style guide. This features a list of things which have been described by the organ as 'iconic' over a period of a few months as a warning about overuse of the term. The list features Bernard Manning's World Famous Embassy Club in Manchester, Capital FM, the cut above the eye David Beckham sustained in 2003 after being hit by a flying boot kicked in anger by Alex Ferguson, and Debbie Does Dallas.

BLOOD ON OUR HANDS

Oh dear, it really doesn't do to upset a living national treasure. Alan Bennett reproduces extracts from his diary for 2007 in the latest issue of the *London Review of Books*. On 24 October he went to Bath for a reading and decided that he hates what has happened to the town, where streets of

19th-century housing have been demolished for 'acres of indifferent modern buildings all carefully constructed in Bath stone as if that were enough to hold the city together'. And then he weighs into the debate over Eric Parry's proposed extension to the Holburne Museum – 'now badly compromised because even fans of decent Modern architecture are nervous of championing it in Bath where fingers have been burned so often.' But hold your horses. Before you start to think that Bennett may be a friend of the architect after all, read his conclusion: 'Before they are artists, before they are craftsmen, be they genius or mediocrity, architects are butchers.' Ouch.

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IN THE DARK

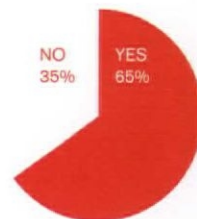
Norman Foster's archive – the collection of all his drawings, plans, early models and salmon-coloured suits – must be worth an absolute fortune. So where exactly is it kept? Well, according to the countless rumourmongers who persist in bending Astragal's ear, it is being kept in either: a subterranean Fort Knox-esque safe house; a former Cold War nuclear bunker; or a damp cellar. Wherever it is, it's likely to stay there – at least for the time being. Spies tell the AJ that the RIBA has no intention of trying to buy it due to the extortionate cost. Where's a pink-suited sugar daddy when you need one?

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Will 2008 be a good year for architecture in Britain? (see right for result).

Next week's question is does the UK have too many design review panels? WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK

NO 35% YES 65%



Wednesday 20th February 2008
Royal College of Physicians, London, NW1

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