

21.02.08

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# WHAT PLANET ARE THEY ON?

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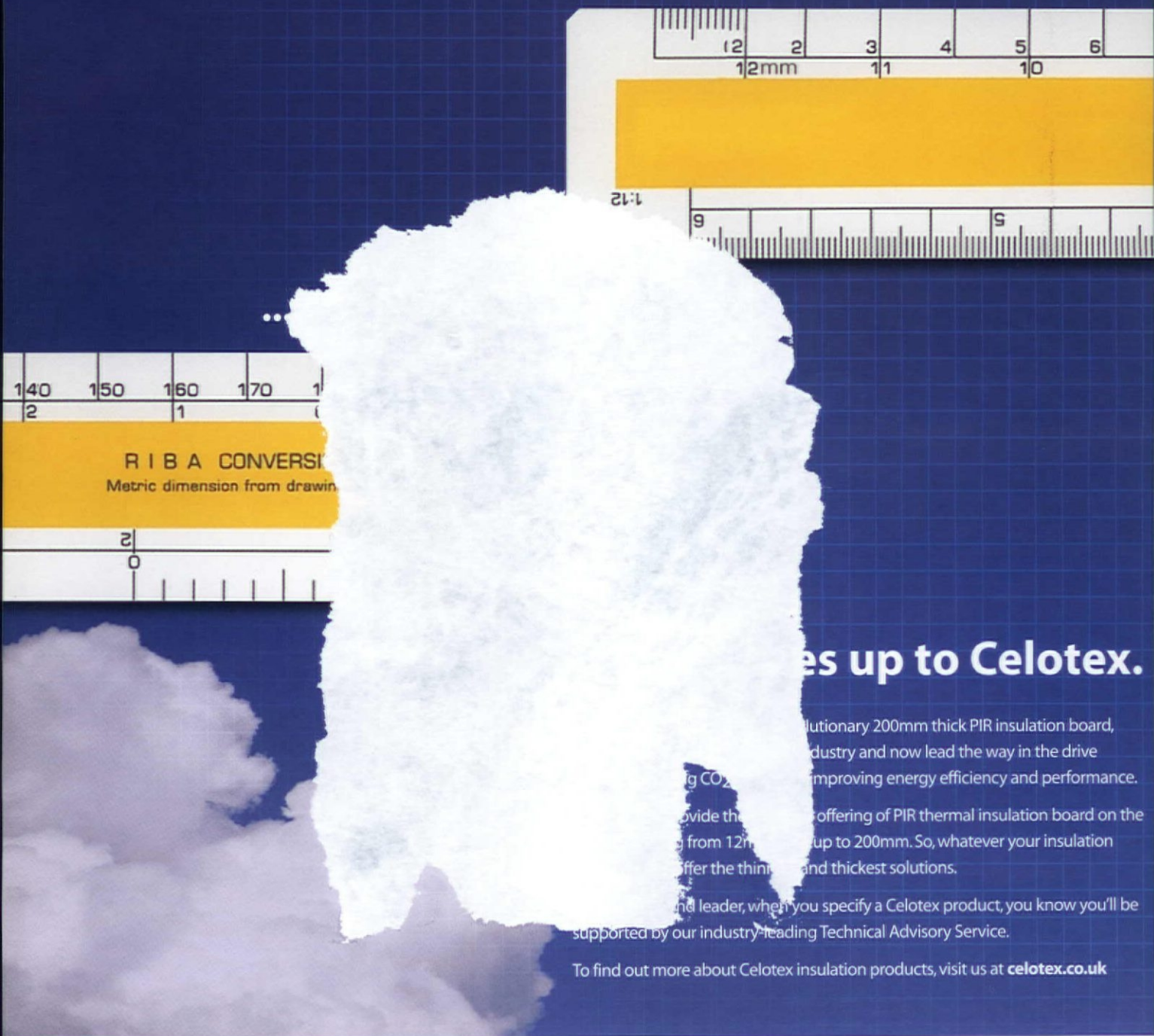


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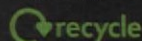
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# News



## KEN YEANG MAKES HIS MARK WITH LDY

Llewelyn Davies Yeang (LDY) has finally won planning permission for its £300 million extension to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in central London. The 30,000m<sup>2</sup> scheme is being hailed by the firm as 'the first on-the-ground evidence in the UK of a Ken Yeang-influenced project' since the eco-architect joined LDY in 2005.

# LLEWELYN DAVIES YEANG SELLS MASTERPLANNING UNIT

Llewelyn Davies Yeang (LDY) has sold off its entire masterplanning team so that the practice can focus on its so-called 'deep green' eco-design strategies.

The firm has offloaded its 40-strong 'strategic and policy planning arm' for an undisclosed fee to consulting giant Tribal Group.

It will join the group's housing and regeneration unit and will be renamed Urban Studio. Tribal already owns architect Nightingale Associates.

According to LDY, the move follows months of discussions and is part of a 'strategic' streamlining exercise.

Steve Featherstone, managing director of LDY, said he hoped the move would be 'viewed as progressive'.

He added: '[The] major growth and income for us is overwhelmingly architectural commissions in the UK and overseas. [Although] the heritage of the planning practice was recognised, it largely played a support role in the company.'

Following the sale, LDY will be left with a core staff of around 100. Featherstone admits the practice will need a 'significant new injection of staff' in the coming months to deal with its increased workload, after winning

more work in the last 12 months 'than in any previous year for the last 10 years'.

Among LDY's largest ongoing commissions are the Plaza of Nations development in Vancouver, Canada, and the restarted Broomfield Hospital PFI in Essex.

The future of some other projects previously belonging to the masterplanning unit, including the firm's work around Belfast and in Najaf, Iraq (AJ 02.02.06), has yet to be fully decided. It is understood that LDY and Tribal are in discussions with their clients about the 'transition'.

LDY partner and eco-architect Ken Yeang – who still has a separate office, TR Hamzah & Yeang, in his home country of Malaysia – joined forces with architectural stalwart Llewelyn Davies, then the 13th largest practice in the UK, in June 2005.

However, since officially teaming up with the firm, few schemes have emerged bearing the unmistakable Yeang trademark (*see caption above*). One insider told the AJ that the sale would mean LDY 'could start delivering the kind of projects' expected following Yeang's arrival at the firm.

*Richard Waite*



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# ARCHITECTS COME OUT FOR DOON STREET

A host of leading architects has come out in support of Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands' (LDS') Doon Street tower for London's South Bank.

Richard Rogers, Terry Farrell, Michael Manser, Marks Barfield, Rafael Viñoly, Marco Goldschmeid and Paul Hyett have all written letters to the planning inspectorate backing the scheme, which is currently the subject of a planning inquiry.

Lambeth Council gave the tower the thumbs-up last August, but objections from English Heritage (EH) and Westminster Council, particularly over its impact on views from Somerset House, led to it being called in by Communities Secretary Hazel Blears.

Rogers said: 'The design seems to me very appropriate both to the site and the wider context... The most serious objection seems to concern the effect of the proposal on the entrance of Somerset House from the Strand, which I cannot agree with.'

Manser said: 'As a creative and intelligent response to a clear brief and an unprepossessing location, this development proposal is hard to fault'.

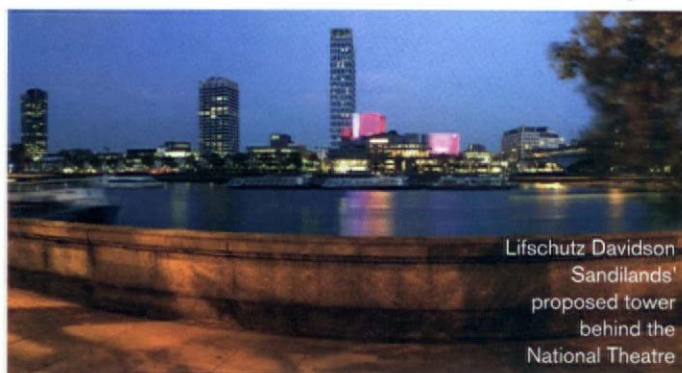
Goldschmeid dismissed EH's concerns, claiming that picking it out over the rooftop of Somerset House 'involves deliberately, almost perversely, ignoring the inner court and searching skywards for a distraction'.

LDS partner Alex Lifschutz said the most important thing is that the inquiry is the first test of the Mayor of London's new View Management Framework.

He said: 'It throws up major issues of how places like Lambeth can progress in the light of the framework, and objections from other London boroughs.'

EH said: 'It is notable that CABE also objected because of the tower's impact on Somerset House. The architects Gordon Forbes, Anthony Collins and Brian Perry, who worked on the National Theatre, also objected.'

The inquiry, which is being held at Lambeth Town Hall, concludes on 7 March. Blears is expected to make her decision in the summer. *Richard Vaughan*



Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands' proposed tower behind the National Theatre

## THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

### FINAL REJECTION FOR SHEPPARD ROBSON MEGA-CHURCH

Sheppard Robson's proposals for a £70 million 'mega-church' in East London are lying in tatters after it was refused planning at a final planning committee last week (14 February). The scheme would have provided space for 9,500 worshippers.

### BERMAN GUEDES STRETTON WINS CHELTENHAM CONTEST

Oxford-based Berman Guedes Stretton has won the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum design competition. The judges were unanimous in their decision, describing the victorious design as '[possessing] clarity of vision and an uncomplicated consistency which gave it a simple elegance and logic'.

### CABE SCUPPERS KKA'S FLOATING HOMES PLAN

CABE has blasted any plans by KKA Architects to build floating homes in Liverpool's Princes Dock basin. The government's design watchdog would not even be drawn into commenting on the architecture of the scheme due to it 'objecting to the principal of building in the basin'. CABE added that the proposals, backed by Peel Holdings, would diminish the value of the dockside to an unacceptable degree.

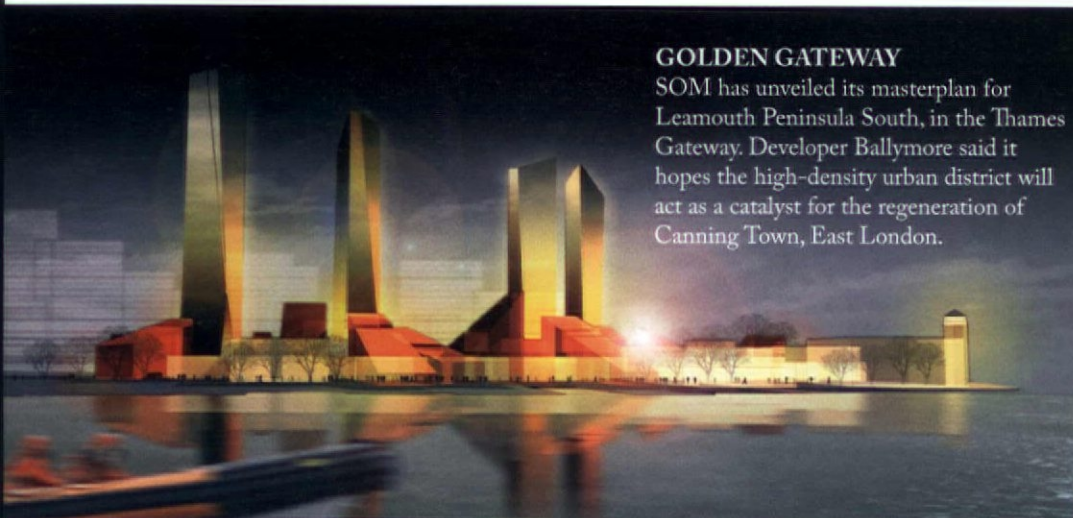
### GRAEME MASSIE GOES TO ICELAND AGAIN

Graeme Massie Architects has scooped another competition in Iceland – this time for a mixed-use masterplan for a 150ha waterfront site in Reykjavík. The firm is already working on a regeneration project in the Icelandic town of Akureyri, which was won in 2005.

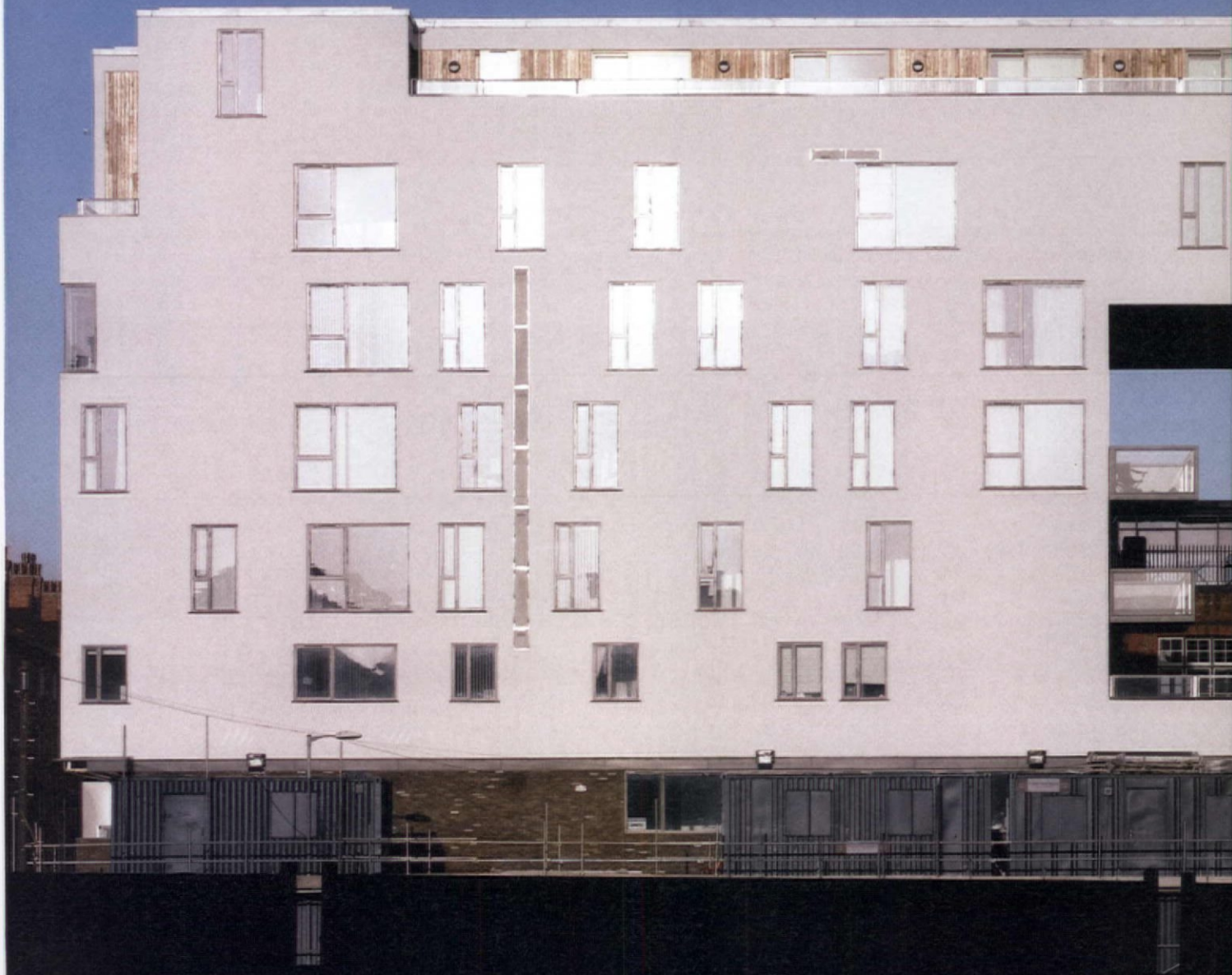
Read all these stories and more at [WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK)

### GOLDEN GATEWAY

SOM has unveiled its masterplan for Leamouth Peninsula South, in the Thames Gateway. Developer Ballymore said it hopes the high-density urban district will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of Canning Town, East London.







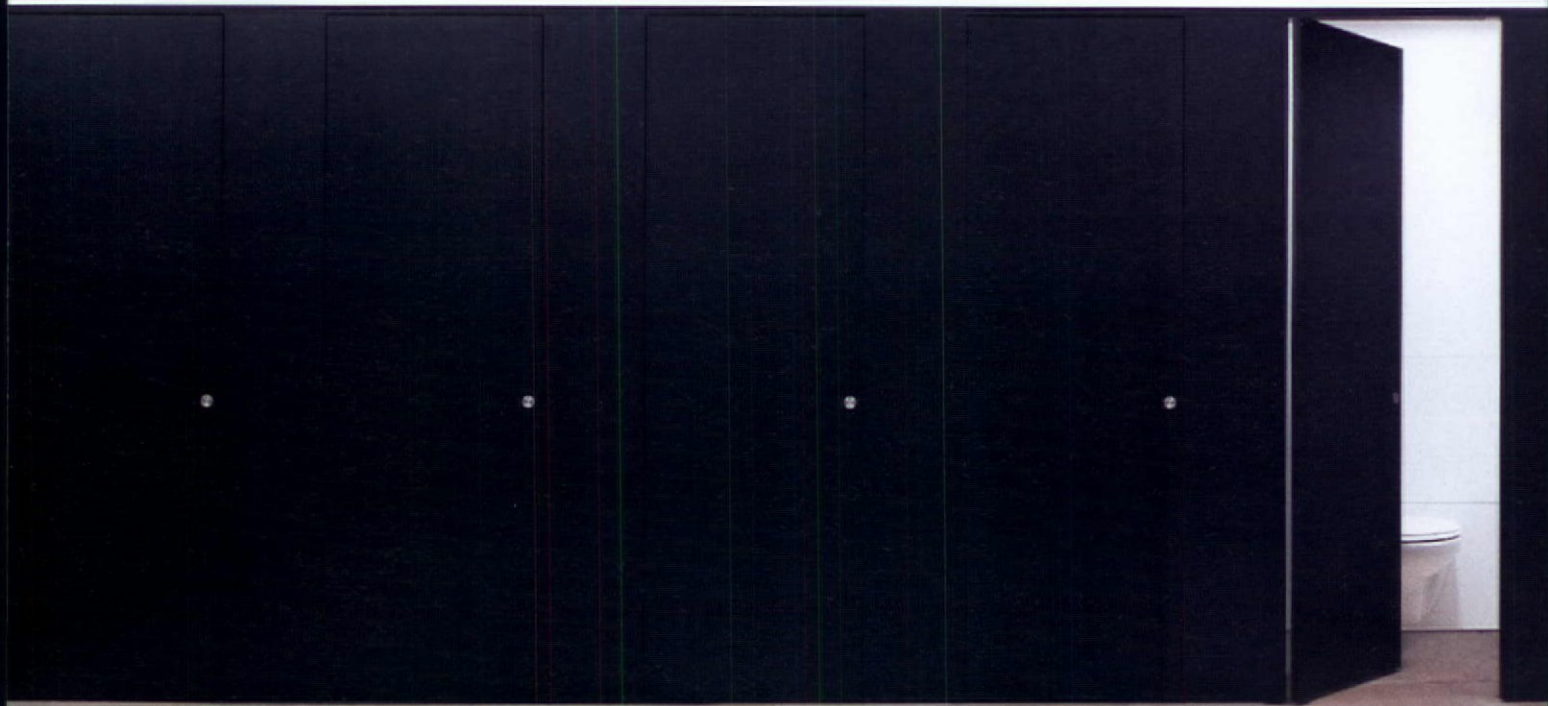




## 'HOLEY' HOME FOR MBLA

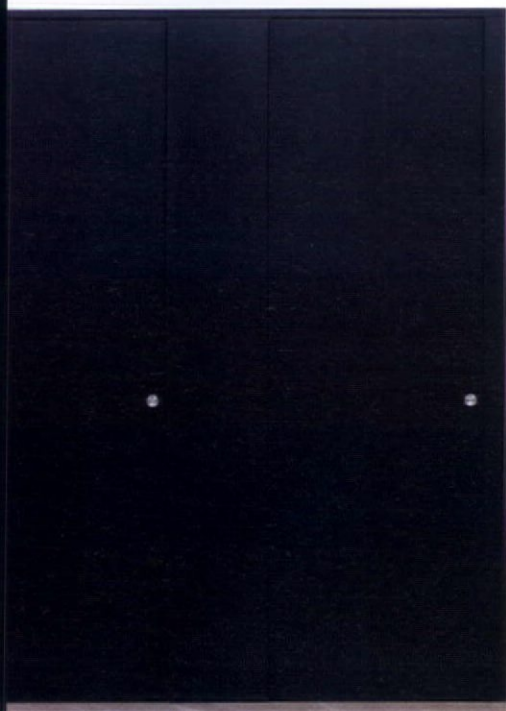
This is MBLA's self-designed new home in Bengal Street, Ancoats, Manchester. Officially opening later today (21 February), the building houses the practice's offices below 48 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. Six flats have balconies opening on to a three-storey void punched through the centre of the block. The building has been rendered in white to contrast with its red-brick neighbours. *Richard Waite*





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This image Max Thompson (left) grills ODA head of design Jerome Frost

## ODA SHUNS ATHLETES' VILLAGE DESIGN PANEL PRECEDENT

The Olympic Delivery Authority's head of design, Jerome Frost, has pledged that the forthcoming Olympic Design Panel (ODP) will not be run in the same way as Lend Lease's Athletes' Village design panel.

Lend Lease has taken flak over the running of its now 45 practice-strong panel after Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios and Haworth Tompkins both turned down the chance to work on the scheme, saying they were 'too busy', amid fears that much of the project had already been designed (AJ 06.12.07).

Frost said members of the ODP, the tender for which will be released in the spring, will design a 'whole series of small

buildings including benches and kiosks, that will contribute to the memorable character of the park'.

However, although the ODP is likely to be formed from the country's best-known architects, Frost said he 'would not like to draw an analogy' with the Athletes' Village design panel.

Frost said: 'The issue is always about getting the balance between opportunity and realism – you want plenty of people to be part of that process, but I don't want to say we have more work than we can actually realise.

'In other words we want to avoid having people sitting round waiting for something that never arises.' *Max Thompson*





## 'WE NEED TO SHOW HOW TO DO A SUCCESSFUL, AFFORDABLE GAMES'

*Jerome Frost, 37, is head of design for the Olympic Delivery Agency (ODA), here he tells Max Thompson that there is plenty of design work left in the Games and reveals a penchant for wading around in sewers.*

### What is your mission statement for the 2012 Olympics?

What we are planning for now should have a 100-year lifetime. It is about legacy coming first.

### Was it hard to see Zaha Hadid's Aquatics Centre cut back?

It wasn't hard at all. If you are designing for legacy it is not a difficult decision to cut. How many swimming pools are there across the UK that are struggling viability wise? You have to be very, very rigorous to make sure that you are not building something you can't afford.

I don't believe we cut it back; it was part of the design process. It wasn't even a brave decision to make, it was the obvious decision.

### HOK Sport's main stadium has come in for criticism. In terms of design, how will the London Games compare with Beijing 2008?

Drawing comparison with the [Herzog & de Meuron's] Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing is like drawing a comparison with the Chinese and British economies – we have very different focuses.

One of the issues for us is driving sustainable thought into design, and that is where our design philosophy is going.

In a country like ours it would be inappropriate to build something like the Bird's Nest.

### 'We are trying to combine what Sydney, Barcelona and Munich achieved'

Our bid was about replicability – no-one will be able to build the Bird's Nest again. London needs to show how to do a successful Games at an affordable price.

### Have you made a decision on the fencing arena and other temporary venues?

No we haven't. It's still early days.

### Do you think the public appreciates the enormity of the project?

I went to the Open House event last year where members of the public were bussed around the site, and sat quietly at the back listening to what people were saying. They would start off with the critical chatter you might expect, but that slowly drifted away, and by the end of it there were rounds of applause for the people who had taken them round.



This image John McAslan + Partners' design for the Olympic Park Energy Centre

### Is there anything left to design?

We have interviews today [15 February] for the Eton Manor and the Media Centre is down to two developer consortia. In terms of smaller things we are putting together the last bones of the brief for what we are calling an Olympic Design Panel, which will cover a whole series of smaller buildings (*see left*).

### Will designs drawn up by students for the gabions (ajplus 19.02.08) be realised?

There is every chance. We are determined to keep doing those sorts of thing and to make sure that the day-to-day management doesn't step in front of bringing fresh creative thought into the process.

### Have any schemes acted as role models?

We are trying to do a combination of what Sydney (2000), Barcelona (1992) and Munich (1972) managed to achieve. In terms of legacy, the Argent scheme at King's Cross is a clear precedent.

### How much say does the ODA have in the design of Lend Lease's Athletes' Village?

To a very large extent we let them get on with it. Although it is not our role to deliver the Athletes' Village, we are heavily

involved. For example, Ricky Burdett, who works in my team, was on the jury that selected the [47-strong] design panel.

### Which architects do you admire?

I enjoy working with Allies and Morrison, they bring a very pragmatic, but clever response to issues. I'm also a fan of Modernism. For my birthday I got a set of Modernist housing plates showing Highpoint, the Barbican Centre and Isokon. They are too beautiful to eat off. I've got some Hayward Gallery coffee mugs as well.

### You have held design competitions for two power plants (won by NORD and John McAslan (pictured above) and a little bird tells me you are a fan of sewers...

I love Joseph Bazalgette [who created the London sewer network]. One of the first things I did when I started this job was to go down Greenway Sewer [which bisects the Olympic Park].

It horrifies me how people don't believe that there is a role in investing in the architecture of utility buildings. I hope our primary sub-energy centre (designed by NORD) will trigger a renaissance in the pride we invest in these buildings. They are the beacons of our aim to reduce our carbon output and we should be proud of them.

This image Lend Lease's concept design for the Athletes' Village

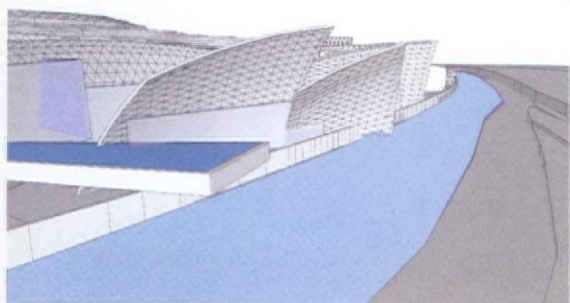
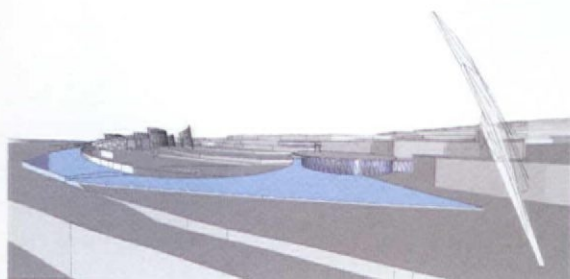
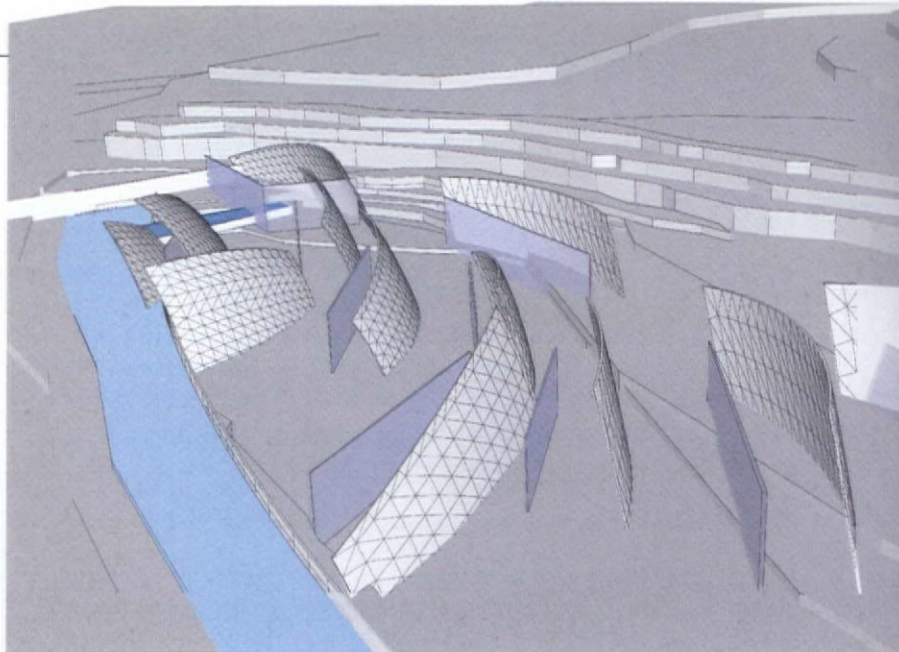




**Right and below** Conceptual 'shells' – which have been designed to mimic the millions of ammonites that litter the chalk faces – will be a theme throughout the development

**Below right map** showing the quarry

**Bottom The** Southerham Grey Pit as it is today

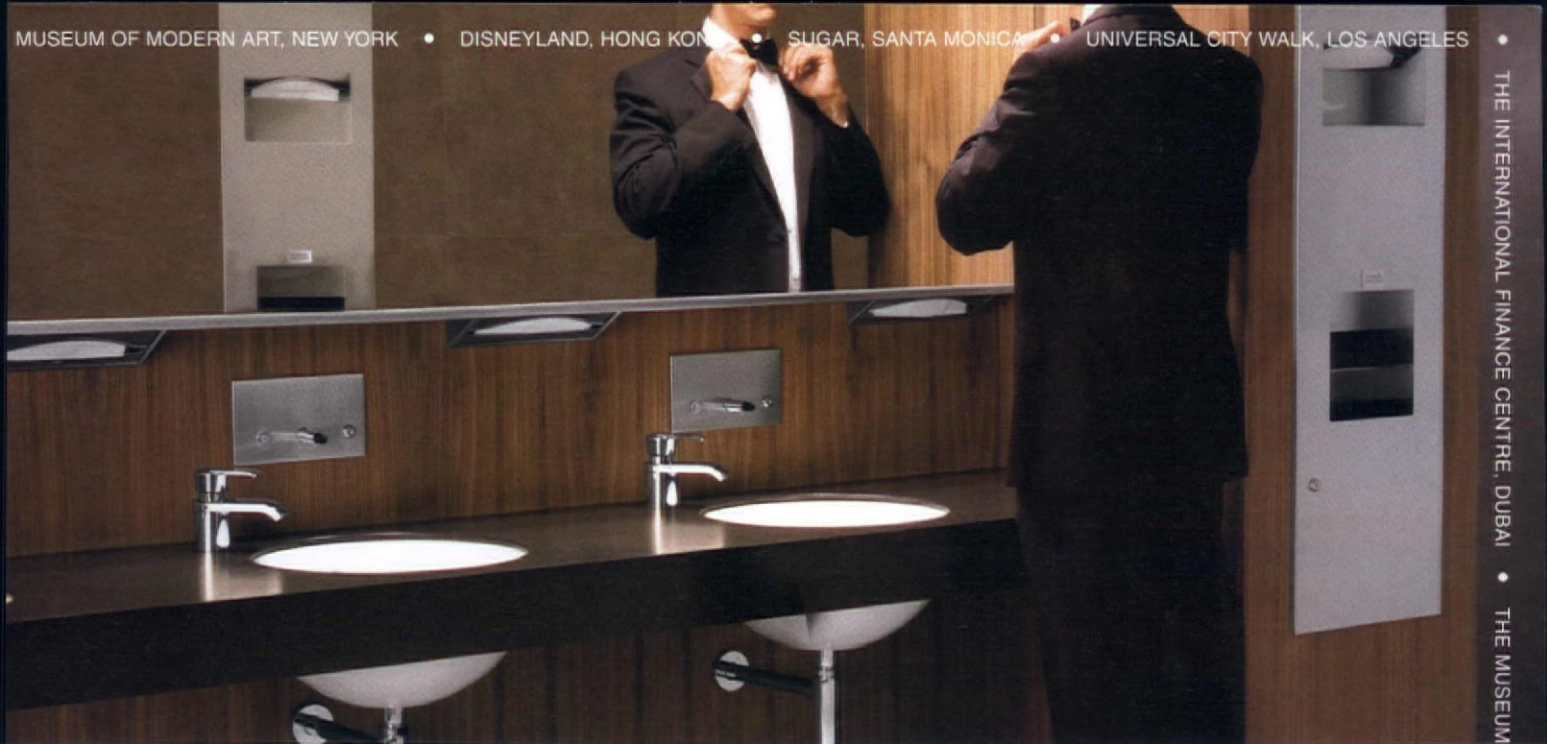


## GREENFIELD IN A QUARRY

Guy Greenfield Architects has drawn up this proposal for the development of a chalk quarry in the Sussex Downs. The Southerham Grey Pit – a Site of Special Scientific Interest – will feature a business park and a hotel. Greenfield that said although the scheme was in 'the earliest of stages', Lewes Council's Unitary Development Plan was being rewritten to include it. *Max Thompson*







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## NORTHERN BALLET LIFTS THE CURTAIN ON ITS FOURTH ACT

The Northern Ballet has unveiled the latest in a long line of designs for its new £12 million home in Leeds (*pictured left*).

Designed by the Strategic Design Alliance (SDA) – a partnership between engineering giant Jacobs and Leeds City Council's in-house architects – the scheme is the fourth to be considered by the Northern Ballet Theatre (NBT).

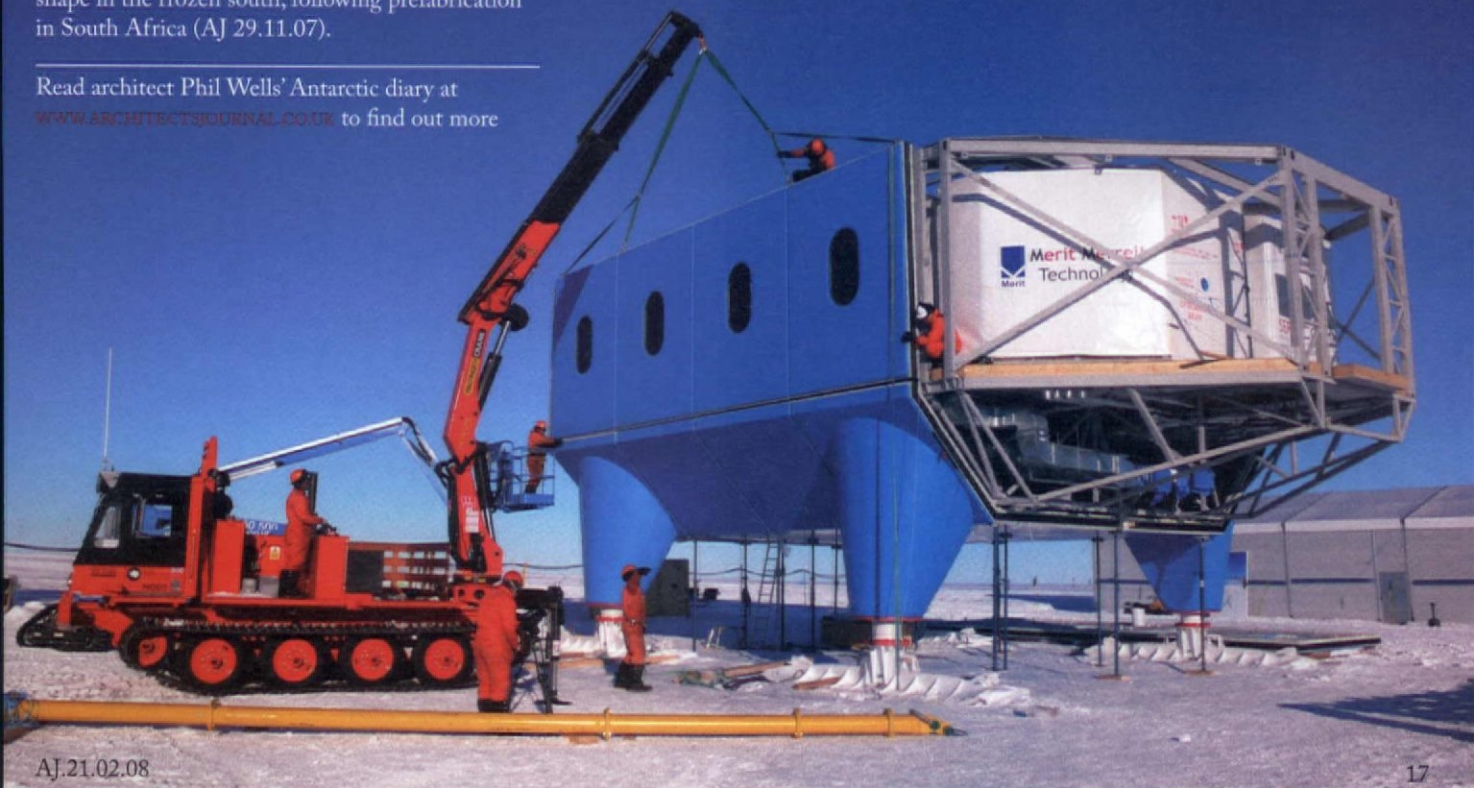
Over the last decade, the NBT has commissioned David Chipperfield, Carey Jones and DLA Architecture to draw up plans for a new flagship facility.

Last October, NBT decided to ditch developer Rushbond, which was working with DLA, and instead turned to the city council to help deliver the scheme in the Quarry Hill area (AJ 25.10.07). Rushbond had been brought on board in 2006 after the budget on the Carey Jones proposal had ballooned.

However, the SDA has earmarked another part of Quarry Hill for the new scheme. The NBT is to launch a fundraising campaign for the proposed dance centre tonight (21 February). *Richard Waite*

**POLAR PROGRESS** Hugh Broughton Architects' Halley VI Antarctic Research Station is now taking shape in the frozen south, following prefabrication in South Africa (AJ 29.11.07).

Read architect Phil Wells' Antarctic diary at [WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK) to find out more





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## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN (STREET)

### IN CHAINS

Astragal is delighted to see that the debate sparked by the Kent University torture module story (AJ 31.02.08) is showing no sign of abating. Indeed, it seems that a certain type of debater is particularly keen on whipping up the storm. The folk in question are found hanging around bondage forum [www.collarchat.com](http://www.collarchat.com), and have names such as Toys and Ties, Fluffy Switch and Kinky Kelly. Unsurprisingly, the consensus is that torture modules are great. And, proving that one swallow does not a summer make, Astragal is also delighted to see that [www.sexisfunny.com](http://www.sexisfunny.com) has also picked up the story. It is the one just below an entry called 'My Friend's Penis'.

### HIPS TROUBLE

Continuing this rather smutty instalment of Astragal is a story on Home Information Packs (HIPs). This week Astragal received a press release that not

only drew comparisons between the new government documentation and the beast with two backs, but even suggested that the recent spate of cheap, invalid HIPs cropping up on the market are akin to Vietnamese prostitutes selling cut-price 'happy time' during the Vietnam War. Entitled 'Love you long time... 15 dollars', The Partnership Limited issued its release to promote its superior HIPs.

### IN THE CLINK

Astragal was visiting London Metropolitan University when he noticed a small party gathered outside the lift. It seems the two partners of DRDH, **Daniel Rosbottom** and **David Howarth**, were trapped in the elevator. News of the captive twosome reached **Florian Beigel**, who nimbly nipped into his office, emerging with a bottle of wine. Prying open the doors a crack, Florian kept the pair suitably entertained until they were rescued, pleasantly pickled, two hours later.

### BIRDBRAINS

In case you were wondering how Radio 4's *Today* programme would cover National Nest Box Week, Astragal can put your mind at rest. Two of architecture's finest, **Sunand Prasad** and **Will Alsop**, were wheeled out to design a birdbox and invited on air last week to discuss the construction thereof (see *Alsop's proposal right; Prasad's above*). Astragal was alarmed to hear the president of the RIBA say 'my boxes are quite large' and that he 'would like to see lots of birds going in and out of them'. Happily, Prasad wasn't referring to his choice of underwear.



### THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

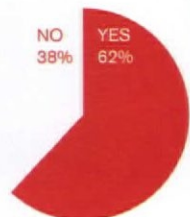
Were the trustees of the Architecture Foundation right to pull the plug on Zaha Hadid's building? (see *right for result*).

**Next week's question:**  
Would the UK benefit from a guerilla restoration movement?

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# Leader & Comment



**Leader** If architects really want to address the sustainability agenda, they need to turn their attentions to masterplanning, not avoid the issue, writes *Jaffer Kolb*

Odd that at a time when good urbanism is understood as an integration between architecture and planning, Llewelyn Davies Yeang (LDY) would sell off its masterplanning unit. Odder still that the reason given is to 'streamline' the firm to allow it to pursue an agenda of sustainability. Sustainability unencumbered by urban design? This seems counterintuitive given the recent discourse on the topic – that in order to reduce energy use, strategies need to be undertaken on a greater scale than building-by-building.

Last week, I wrote about Adamstown, a New Town just in the ground outside Dublin (AJ 14.02.08). For it, the planners and developer devised an eco-friendly energy

system relying on a CHP plant to serve more than 1,000 residences and reduce carbon emissions by upwards of 1,800kg of CO<sub>2</sub> a year. Surely this is more in keeping with the 'Deep Green' agenda (as LDY calls it), than can be achieved through one-off projects.

In the UK, we have eco towns, which Prime Minister Gordon Brown has committed to further by doubling the proposed number from five to 10. According to the government's Eco-Towns Prospectus, building sustainable communities on the large scale may be effective in reducing carbon emissions through coordinated transport systems. This, of course, extends to infrastructure, which also may be instrumental in realising sustainability.

Given this, practices should be amalgamating masterplanning and architecture rather than disaggregating them. The recent proliferation of urban-design projects given to emerging firms – Adamstown's masterplan went to Metropolitan Workshop; East has proposed frameworks for Barking, Woolwich and Waterloo; Witherford Watson Mann is working on an 'urban forest' masterplan in Southwark – is a sign that across the industry there is a greater acceptance of the benefits of cross-fertilisation. As urban-design projects are increasingly realised, architects must think more practically, particularly firms with a declared interest in sustainability. **jaffer.kolb@emap.com**



**Opinion** The landscape is changing around us – and it's time we did something about it, says *Antony Gormley*

What do we feel when we see the marching lines of pylons, the rising telecommunications masts, the rotors of wind generators on the skyline, and the huge, windowless distribution megasheds that are redescribing our chosen homeland? Are these presences alien or deeply ours? How much do we participate in the changing face of our landscape?

Ours is the most densely populated land in the European Union and our landscape is made, not found. And perhaps the least populated parts – those most vulnerable to cultural projection and that resist the signs of change – are the ones with which we most fervently identify. It is important that we are

participants in the evolution of our chosen dwelling place rather than being inheritors of the fact and fiction of a place of birth.

The new landscape is formed by the dominance of information and distribution taking over from production. The megashed, the mobile-phone masts, the high-rise office tower, the out-of-town shopping centres – this is the era of convenience, of service industries that ensure a comfort which separates us from

## Motorways have become a memorial to the age of mobility

time served in industry.

The spiral-approach stacks that hang over Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, John Lennon and Manchester airports are our endless columns, so different from the monuments of the past. They are indications in vertical airspace of the same mobility that finds expression in spaghetti junctions. We must engage with the facts of change: a landscape that grows out of social and economic decisions, a landscape that lives. The large

holding structures like the DIRFT (Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal) in Northamptonshire, the Ocado or Amazon distribution networks, and the great spread of motorways have become the most permanent unconscious memorial to the age of mobility.

The English national psyche has been a victim of the past, binding us to a reverence for the old things. But this acceptance of an imagined world also commits us to the role of victims; victims of choices made on our behalf by planners, architects and the government. It is important for us to trace the lifelines of our territory – to see the somewhat hidden networks of power. We, as participatory democratic citizens, should exert this power positively in shaping our world. We can no longer be passive consumers: we have to take responsibility for the world we are making.

*Taken from Antony Gormley's foreword to Images of Change, by Sefryn Penrose of Atkins. The book was commissioned by English Heritage*

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## Opinion

### Frameworks are supposed to help architects, says *Simon Allford*, but in reality they stifle creativity and ambition

In much the same way that the Latham Report streamlined the procurement process in construction, so in architecture framework agreements are seen as the means by which client/supplier relationships are formalised and workload is guaranteed (see AJ 31.01.08). With this security in place, so the thinking goes, architects are able to diversify, widen our offer and expand our market sector. Then we can seize the day; supplying customers with design focused on delivery.

This is a dangerous line of thinking; absurd, even. In the reality of practice, our office has many repeat clients and we enjoy the benefits these relationships bring. Over a series of projects, with an ever-refreshed pool of consultants, contractors and subcontractors, collaboration brings forward new ideas. None of us, however, feel the need to form official partnerships or frameworks. Framework agreements were invented for exhausted or,

far worse, lazy clients by consultants who fail to recognise the benefits of advice over service. Sadly they are less about relationships and more about discounted fees.

A question I am often asked by potential clients is: why did we not apply for their framework? A year or two ago our frequent response was that we had, but that we had not made their list. In one case (a leading Registered Social Landlord) this was despite our engagement with them on three current and successful projects; in another case (the government) this was despite their using two of our projects as exemplars in their call for expressions of interest (*see images below*). Indeed analysis of one year and 60 OJEU's reveals that only one led to a commission; and that was when we had already won their design competition and then had to apply retrospectively to join their framework. The process in that particular case only led to fee bartering facilitated by the discounts offered by eager 'service providers'.

Such was our concern at our failure to make the grade through various frameworks that we pursued both ISO 9001 and Investors in People accreditation. We learned much of benefit from both processes – not least that the tick-box bonuses they bring are outweighed by the percentage importance of the fee multiplier: the arithmetic of this

particular equation being so much more transparently logical than the design quality indices.

So now our answer to the framework question is simple: we don't work for clients who live only by frameworks. We are happy to sign a contract and well understand that if we don't deliver according to its terms it will be terminated and no other will be forthcoming. That for us, and our clients, is a very clear framework.

Increasingly, on hearing our position, other clients trapped in frameworks nod in understanding. They talk of receiving poor

### Our answer to the framework question is simple: we don't work for clients who live only by frameworks

service and endlessly renegotiating fees. They too are beginning to realise that formal frameworks are not for the ambitious or committed but exist primarily to enable bureaucracies to take easy decisions. Frameworks suit neither us nor the clients we choose to work with, because we share greater expectations.

Simon Allford is a partner at Allford Hall Monaghan Morris

Email [comment@architectsjournal.co.uk](mailto:comment@architectsjournal.co.uk)

This image Notley Green Primary School, Essex



This image Jubilee Primary School, south London. Both these Allford Hall Monaghan Morris schemes were used to illustrate government competitions literature







# The health of cities relies on us viewing them as bodies with organs and skeletons, writes Patrick Lynch

Aldo Rossi developed a theory of typology in *The Architecture of the City* that enabled him to go beyond what he called 'the naïve functionalism' of the Modern period to see how 'the dialectical structure' of places reveals the underlying structure of political relations in the public sphere. This distinguishes between 'projective typologies', the use of which can change over time, and 'pathological typologies' that become redundant and die. The health of cities depends on both, and yet Modern architecture placed too much emphasis upon the 'function' of individual buildings – hence the fetishism of *machines à habiter* – and not enough attention was paid to the spaces between them. Rossi's 'dialectical materialism' led to a reading of the city that considered the skeleton of the political processes that underlies civic life – the structure of power analogous to a body, with the organs of power represented in the buildings that house governance, education and the domestic realm. For Rossi, city structures are organised

in a dialectical manner: the courthouse and the town hall are often sit opposite each other, across a square from a church, for example. Thus diverse cities share common structures, while their individual characters reveal the responses over time of architects to climate, topography, and the wealth of citizens. This is why we can orient ourselves in strange cities quite quickly, and even anticipate where the courthouse or the university will be if we stand in the cathedral square.

ing that we accept that 'for every authentic artist this means to remake, not in order to effect some change (which is the mark of superficial people) but out of a strange profundity of feeling for things.' Observing that 'in Venice', where he was a professor, 'although one may be interested in whether a building is by Palladio or Longhena, it is first and always the stones of Venice'.

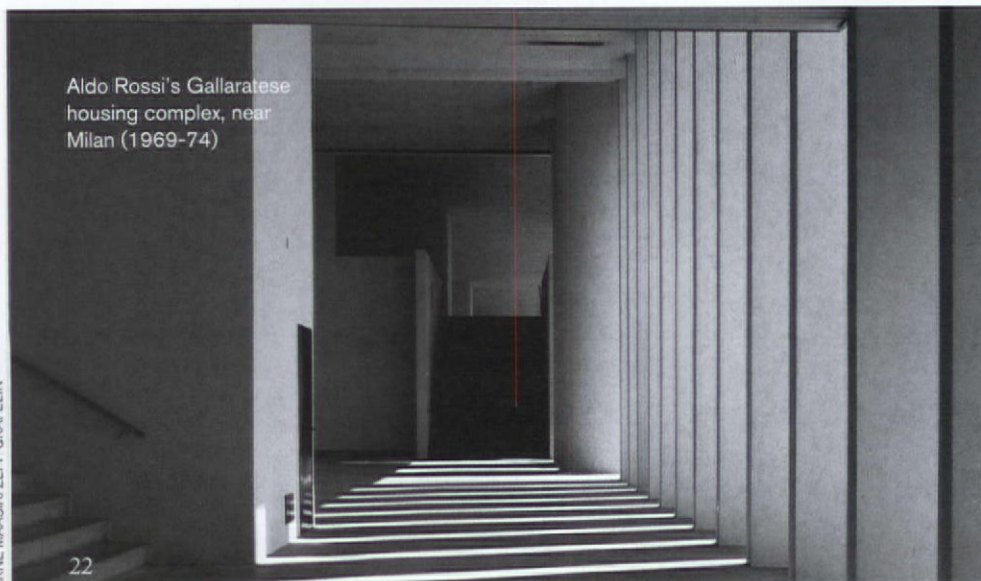
Rossi's attitudes might seem anachronistic and conservative to British eyes, used as we

## Modern architecture placed too much emphasis on individual buildings

Rossi taught us to value the contribution architects make to the urban setting over the autistic characteristics of an individual built object, teaching us to see that technical prowess means nothing if a building vandalises its context. His edicts are harsh, demand-

are here to wholesale rebuilding of our cities every generation. Two Italian students of ours returned to Rome last year with drawings of Whitechapel High Street, showing the massive revisions undertaken twice last century, and their professor at first didn't believe them, and then couldn't understand how this urban vandalism was possible. We are currently engaged in the revision of large parts of British cities, undoing the traffic engineering that passed for urbanism after the war, and our task can be seen as an attempt to recover the legibility of places and the continuity between pedestrians and objects, between the people and the city. The young Rossi may have been overly rational. His own work suffers from a certain academic rigidity – despite his attempts to create background buildings, their repetitive character tends towards emphatics – yet his analysis makes difficult reading for many architects who have been co-opted by corporations eager to associate their 'brand' with a building design that can be reduced to a logo.

Aldo Rossi's Gallarate housing complex, near Milan (1969–74)







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# Letters

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## LONG LIVE THE AF

It is sad news that Zaha Hadid's HQ building for the Architecture Foundation (AF) (*pictured below*) is unlikely to be built (AJ 14.02.08). The AF has been a decisive force in promoting architecture and architects since Ricky Burdett formed it in 1991, and I hope it will continue.

However, in one respect the coverage of the lost HQ in last week's AJ was disappointing. The article failed to mention the role Lucy Musgrave played as director of the AF from 1997 to 2002. During this period, the AF did much to provide a younger generation of architects with a clear route into designing social housing, schools and healthcare. Good buildings such as de Rijke

Marsh Morgan Architects' Kingsdale School in Dulwich, south-east London, came from Musgrave's determination to reconnect architects and architecture with the public sector.

The AF is a generous and positive organisation and it would have been right to hear more about Musgrave's contribution.

*Robert Mull, department of architecture and spatial design, London Metropolitan University*

## NO DISCOURSE

I thought Kieran Long's recent leader and Patrick Lynch's column on foreign schools of architecture (AJ 31.02.08) addressed an issue which I know has bothered myself and others involved both in practice and teaching for some time.

It is true and unfortunate that probably the best practitioners this country has to offer are extensively involved in teaching in Europe and further afield. This is an issue that British schools of architecture (barring some exceptions) seem to be unconcerned about.

However, what must also be said is that there seems to be a woeful lack of discourse on the making of architecture in education in the UK at all. There is a growing tendency in schools of architecture to employ studio tutors who may have had some experience of practice, but who now have little or no enthusiasm for discourse that revolves around the act of construction and its cultural impact, unless it is in the service of a stated public agenda.

Theories about alternative modes of practice and academic

research programmes abound but these seem not to be tempered or informed by making. Many tutors seem unwilling to discuss either current themes or historical precedent without reverting to critical theory and a critique of the profession.

Perhaps the reason that the likes of Sergison Bates, Caruso St John and Tony Fretton teach abroad is that they already know this – and also know that many European schools effectively combine theory and a discourse on construction in a way that most British schools are currently ill-equipped to do.

This is evidenced by the increasingly ill-informed, self-referential and form-driven work being produced by most students. *Andrew Budd, Houghton Budd Architects, Sheffield*

## PHONE LEGACY

It was interesting to read that Giles Gilbert Scott's K2 and K6 phone boxes are listed as individual buildings ('Finding Bruce Martin', AJ 31.01.08). The payphone network is much greater than the sum of its parts.

In 2005, *The Times* carried comments by Christoffer Johansen of the Danish Cancer Society on the risk of brain tumours from mobile phones. Johansen felt it was too early to make any conclusions, but if in years to come we find that mobile phones cause brain tumours, then their use is likely to cease.

It would take a great deal of time and money to reinstate a payphone network, so it is fortunate that we will still have a kind of legacy in the listed K2 and K6 phone boxes.

*Marjorie Kay, Manchester*



Zaha Hadid's  
cancelled  
Architecture  
Foundation  
building



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# DIGITAL GENERATION

As the AA's Design Research Laboratory reaches its 10th birthday, *Jaffer Kolb* looks at how such a young programme has become one of the most influential in architectural education



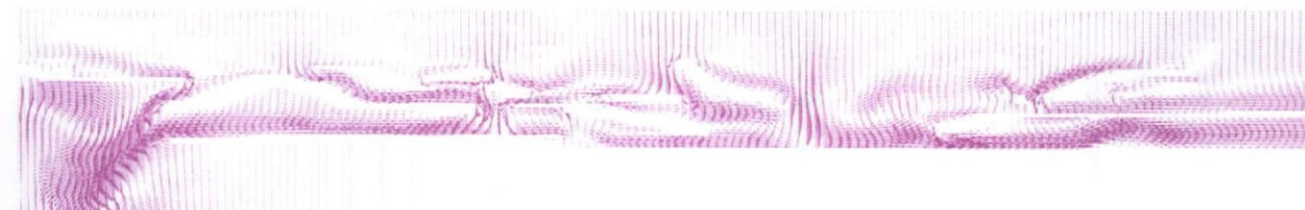
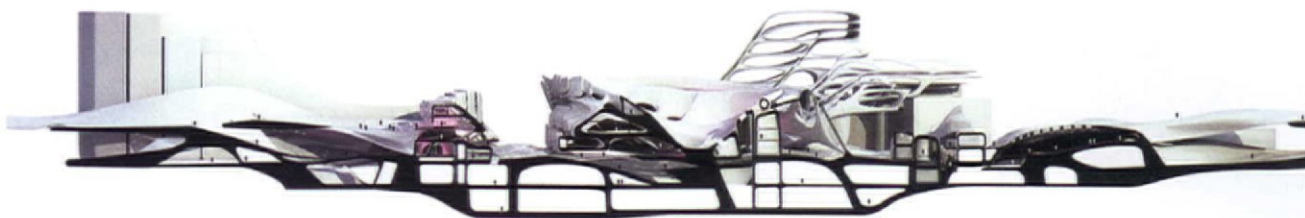
### P\_Fax, 2005-2007

For the first year of the Parametric Urbanism agenda, Paulo E Flores, Feng Xu, Arturo Revilla and Xiao Wei Tong researched fluid dynamics to generate vector fields mapping various urban activities in Stratford, East London. This led to a series of proposed buildings that took advantage of relative location to maximise efficiency of use.

The Design Research Laboratory (DRL) at the Architectural Association (AA) hits double digits this year. For those who remember its early days, this anniversary is an ugly reminder of time's passing. For those who immediately think of the Sheffield School of Architecture turning 100 (AJ 14.02.08), it's a reminder of how young the programme is. And for those familiar with the work coming out of the programme – and wowed by its list of graduates, tutors and visiting critics – it's a reminder of the impact the DRL has had on architectural discourse.

The DRL was founded 10 years ago by Brett Steele, now director of the AA, and Patrik Schumacher, director at Zaha Hadid Architects. It is, in its own words, dedicated to 'exploring the possibilities of today's highly distributed digital design networks and tools' – an experimental approach to digital-based work and manufacturing. For its 10th anniversary, the DRL is publishing *AADRLTEN*, a book of past student projects, and associated faculty and alumni work; launching a concurrent exhibition showing many of these projects; and building a pavilion across from the school on Bedford Square in central London (see pages 32-33).

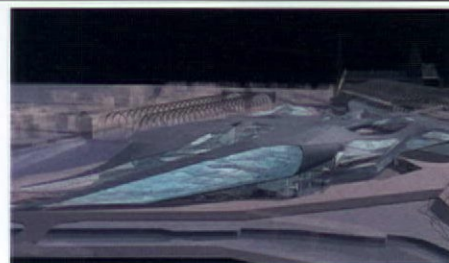
In 1996, Steele and Schumacher were asked by then AA head Mohsen Mostafavi to reconfigure the Graduate Design Programme, which until 1995 was run by Jeff Kipnis, >>





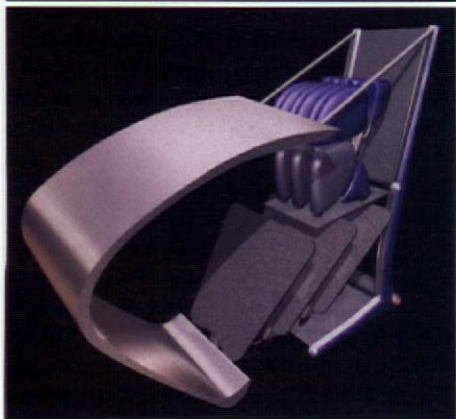
## Local Alliances, 1998-2000

For their Microsoft UK headquarters, Emanuel Bringer, Freyer Frostason and David Gerber offered a design which catered to Microsoft's complex business partnerships. It included a direct connection to local transportation – easy as it's in King's Cross – and floors designed around accommodating visitors instead of establishing a spatial hierarchy.



## Archi.Species, 1998-2000

The Archi.Species team of Marcel Ortmans, Markus Ruuskanen, Ivan Subanovic and I Yu designed a new headquarters for media company Razorfish. The proposal included easy reconfiguration of the space through retractable work surfaces, 'roaming' meeting tables and robotic furniture (pictured left) that would be integrated into the building's structure.



*'Design-led research into digital technologies started at the DRL and filtered through'*

now professor of architecture at Ohio State University. 'At the time, the AA was hermetic, but it was just starting to change and liven up,' says Steele. 'The course was originally an informal graduate diploma, but we wanted a proper masters in architecture,' he continues.

'It was compared to masters programmes in the US and to schools like the Berlage in the Netherlands,' says Diana Periton, head of architectural history and theory at the Mackintosh School of Architecture and a past tutor at the AA. 'Design-led research into digital technologies started there and I think filtered through – first to the AA, then beyond.' One need only look at the practice of architecture when the DRL began to see that it emerged during a time of dramatic change, as computer modelling began its rise. 'There was a generational shift for those teaching, a kind of evolution in technique,' says Tom Verebes, now one of the programme's four directors.

Early on, the directors decided students would do one project over the course's 16 months rather than several, and that they would work in groups. 'It's more like the profession – it can be hard to have conversations in a collaboration, but it forces you to work out problems,' says Steele. DRL graduate Alan Dempsey, who now works at Foreign Office Architects and won the Bedford Square pavilion (see pages 32-33), describes this as one of reasons he chose the course. 'Like most students, my undergrad was about working independently, so this was a model that I couldn't really comprehend, but it interested me,' he says. More importantly, Dempsey adds,

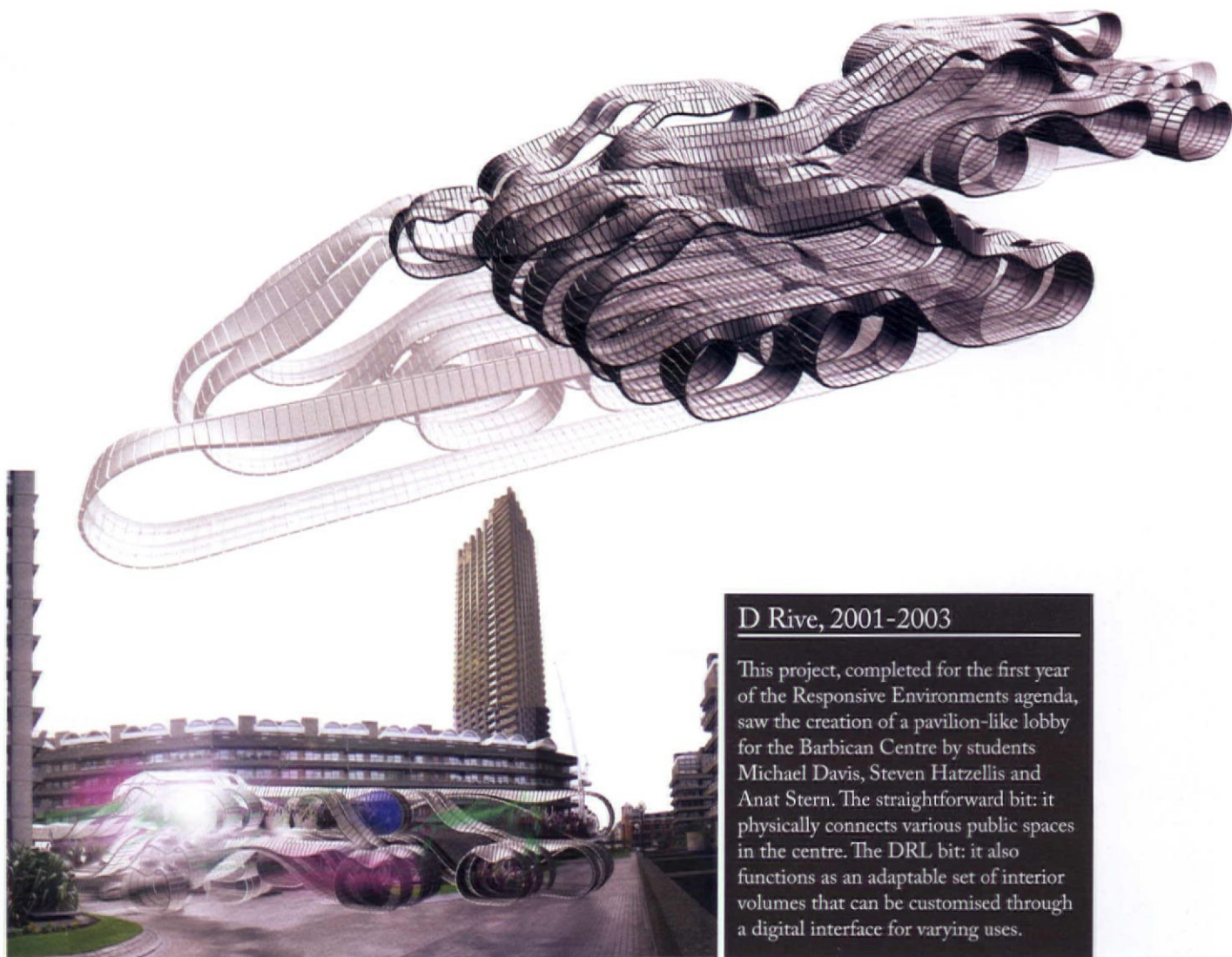
it was the DRL's focus on emerging technology that captured him. 'I didn't really see computing explored in most schools then,' he says.

According to Schumacher, the first group comprised 21 students with a view to gaining proper RIBA accreditation within two years. While accreditation wasn't difficult, it required some effort. Steele says: 'It made us explain the course in relation to other processes – it made me look at the cultural collaborative model, things like the Survival Research Labs [a California-based punk-era arts group].'

Pedagogy aside, the programme was initially all about zeitgeist. 'This was during the beginnings of a new language in architecture, a new style,' Schumacher says. 'But there was a sense that we needed to go beyond playing with forms and techniques with these tools and to give design research a new side, which was a programmatic approach to contemporary challenges in architecture'. It's easy to focus on the type of slick computer graphics for which the DRL is best known but, as Periton points out, that's reductive. 'The programme's influence is about a way of thinking about innovation through process – I still see that as something the DRL has, over and above, remained involved with,' she says.

This ethos pervades each of the DRL's 'agendas' – course themes that change approximately every three years, the first of which was titled Corporate Fields. 'We were looking at areas where new societal complexity was the most prevalent – it was the complex systems of networked organisations,' says Schumacher. 'This programme was about





#### D Rive, 2001-2003

This project, completed for the first year of the Responsive Environments agenda, saw the creation of a pavilion-like lobby for the Barbican Centre by students Michael Davis, Steven Hatzellis and Anat Stern. The straightforward bit: it physically connects various public spaces in the centre. The DRL bit: it also functions as an adaptable set of interior volumes that can be customised through a digital interface for varying uses.

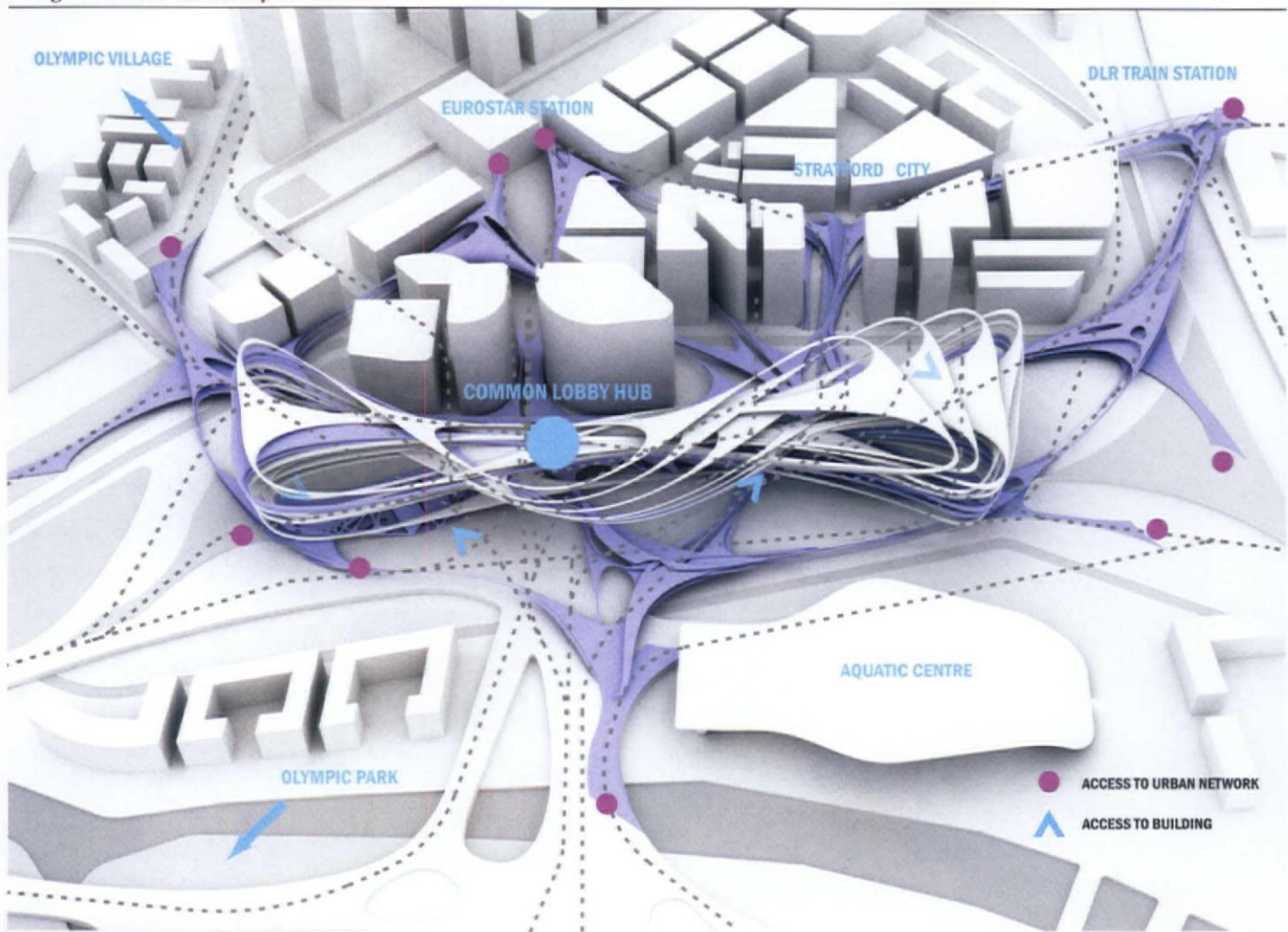
the spatial ramifications of management theories combined with spatial logics,' adds Verebes. Projects ranged from a set of robotic furniture (*see opposite*) to an underground office building connecting to transport and technological infrastructure.

'The second course [called Responsive Environments] was about translating digital into physical components and it was much more interdisciplinary: we called in programmers and industrial designers,' says Steele. 'The tools had evolved – robotics was a big topic and the modelling had evolved towards sophisticated animations. We brought both these elements into architecture,' says Schumacher. Projects under this agenda included the design of a flexible urban lobby in the courtyard of the Barbican Centre in London (*see above*), reprogramming the circulation and infrastructure of Heathrow's Terminal 4 (*see right*), and designing a series of outdoor pavilions for sites across London. >>



The Responsive Environments agenda saw an increase in model-making – Playtm (2003) is a proposal for circulation strategies at Heathrow





### Flotsam, 2005–2007

Like P\_Fax (see page 27), this project, by Öznur Erboga, Lillie Liu, Theodora Ntatsopoulou and Victor Orive, was for Stratford in east London. It is a proposal for an International Broadcasting Centre/Media Press Centre for the 2012 Olympic Games. The 100,000m<sup>2</sup> project is meant to connect Stratford to the Olympics site over a structure that interweaves itself into the existing buildings. In both plan and section the project proposes a complex system of overlapping spaces for public and private use.

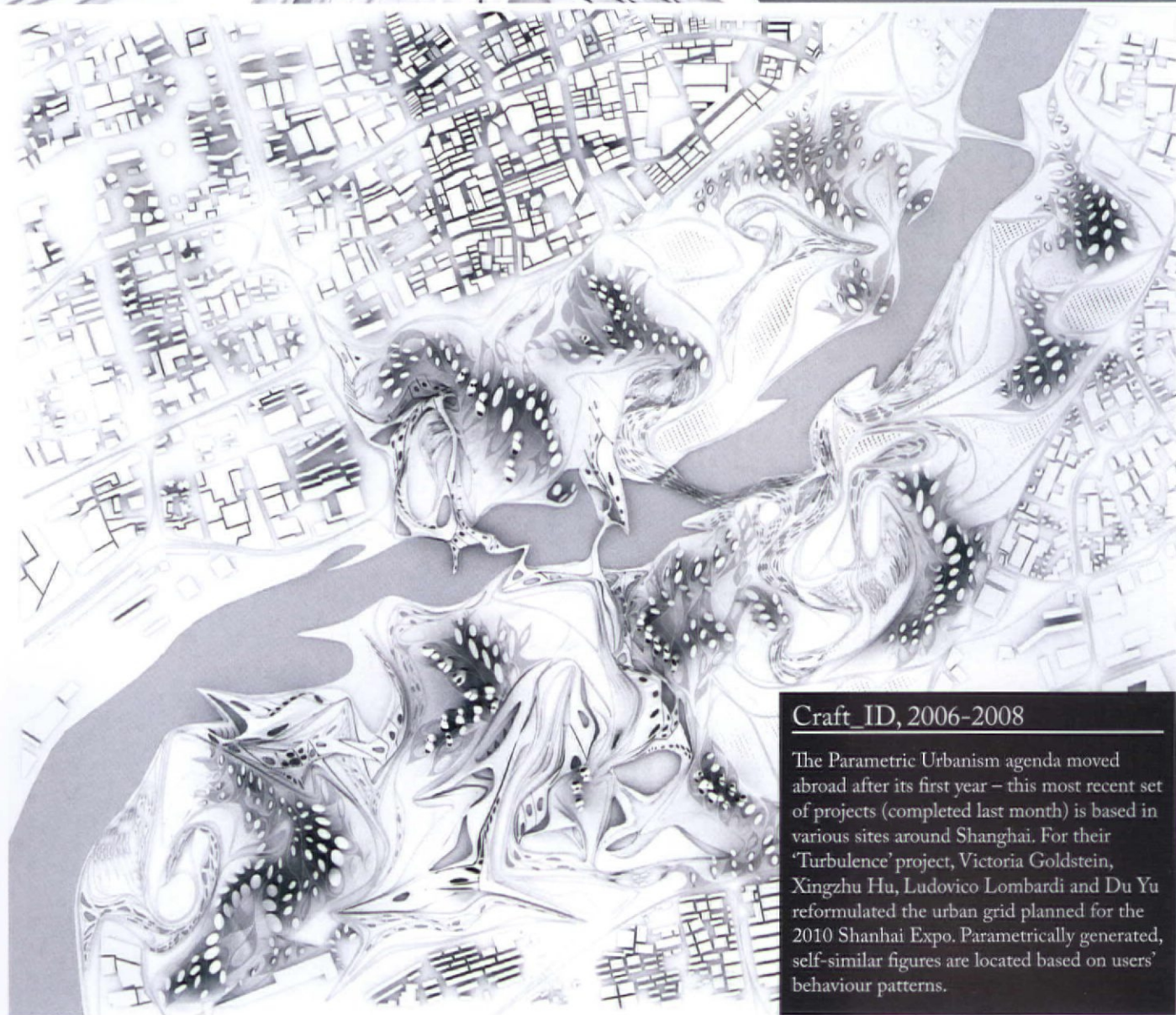
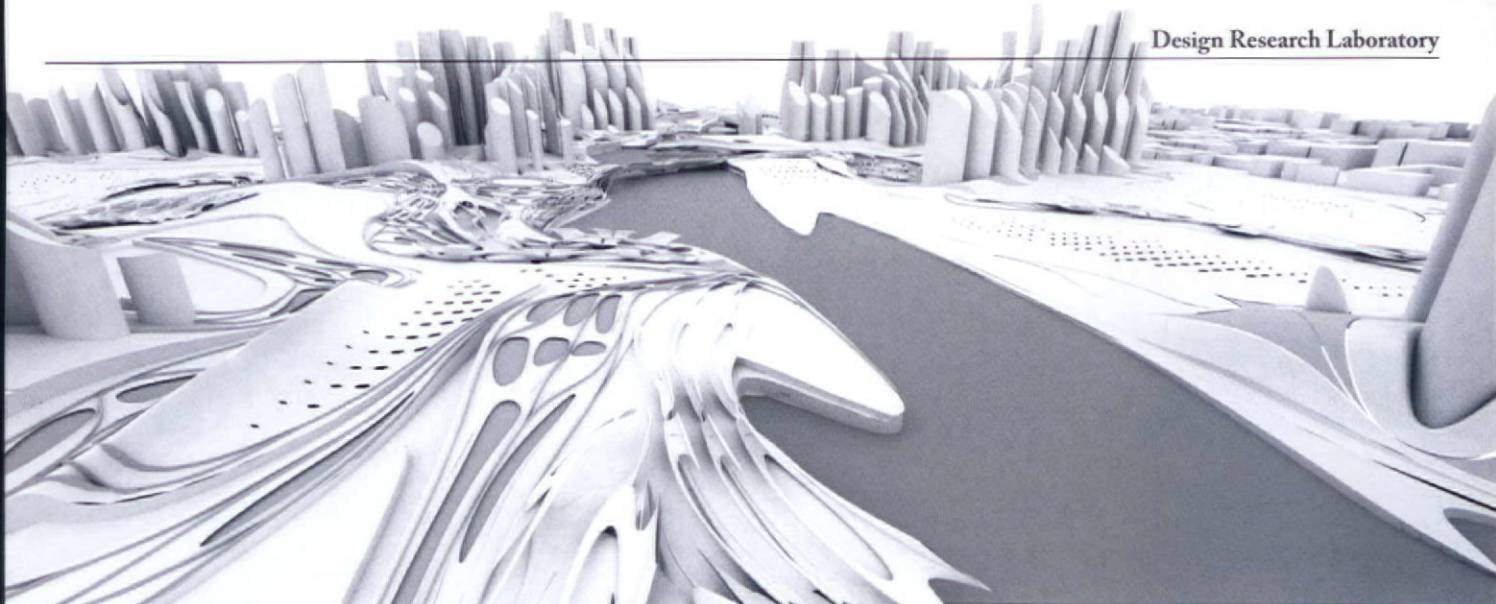
The most recent course is titled Parametric Urbanism. 'We tell students to set up buildings as components in a larger urban landscape – the tools have changed and there is now more potential for scripting and associative logics,' says Schumacher. Projects began locally – the first year took in Stratford (see page 27 and this page) and the Thames – but have moved around internationally, with the most recent taking on a mixed-use development in Shanghai (see opposite).

If the maxim that you can always judge someone by their friends is true, then a testament to the DRL's success is the people who have been involved since its inception. Past tutors include engineer Hanif Kara of Adams Kara Taylor, Arup associate director Bob Lang, and architect Alex de Rijke. Visiting critics have been particularly high profile. The list – and it's a list of hundreds – includes Caroline Bos and Ben van Berkel of UNStudio, Charles Jencks, and Zaha Hadid.

The latter is only too appropriate for a programme which has sent dozens of graduates to work in her office, takes tutors from her staff, and was founded and remains under continued direction from her main partner. The DRL starts to look more like a Zaha boot camp than school.

This fact alone begs the issue of whether the DRL is too of the moment. Hadid, parametric modelling and interdisciplinary collaborations – it's a snapshot of a certain kind of architecture today, and one I'm tempted to say we'll all look back on one day as a moment past. But the development of the agendas indicates that the programme is flexible enough to take what comes its way. According to Periton, this flexibility and a focus on the international are the DRL's greatest strengths and will ensure it remains relevant. 'Schools like the AA don't assume architecture is fixed – they offer educations that question its possibilities,' she concludes. ■



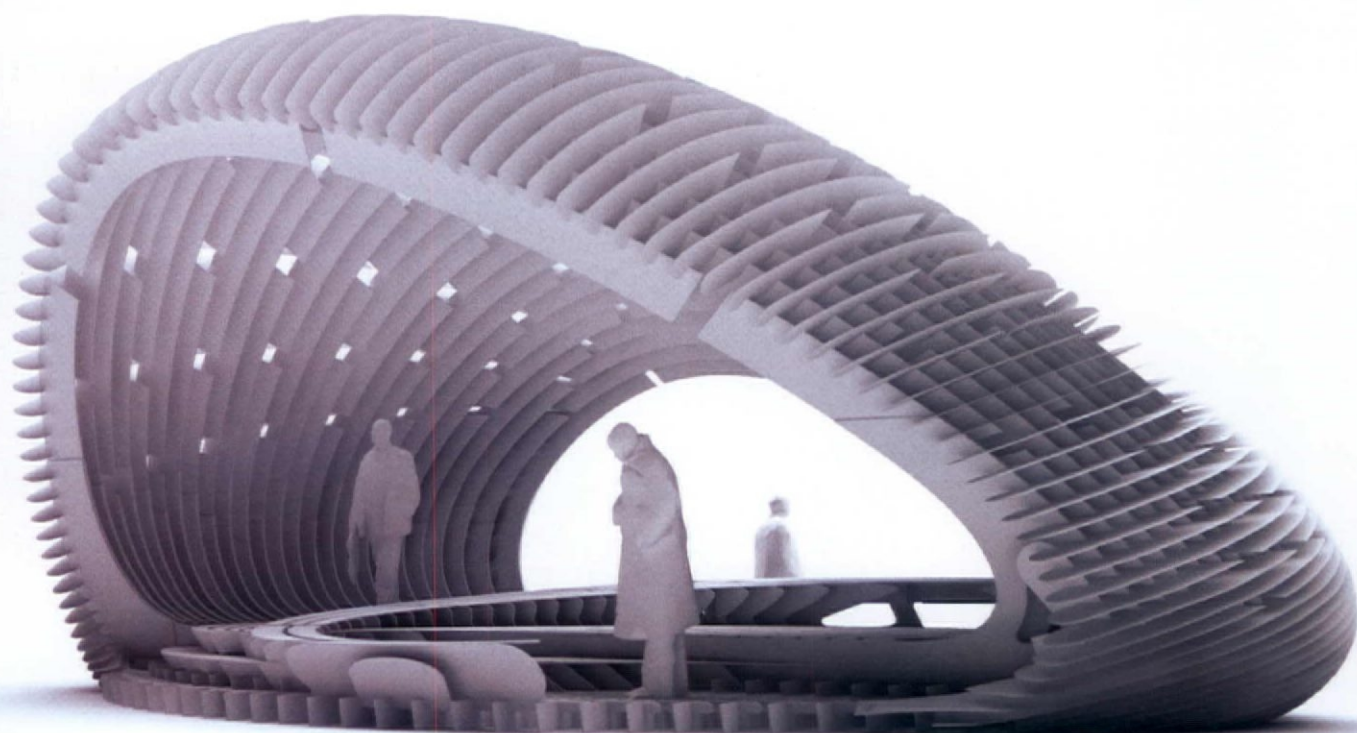


### Craft\_ID, 2006-2008

The Parametric Urbanism agenda moved abroad after its first year – this most recent set of projects (completed last month) is based in various sites around Shanghai. For their ‘Turbulence’ project, Victoria Goldstein, Xingzhu Hu, Ludovico Lombardi and Du Yu reformulated the urban grid planned for the 2010 Shanghai Expo. Parametrically generated, self-similar figures are located based on users’ behaviour patterns.

Read about the DRL pavilion overleaf





# PIECING IT TOGETHER

Made of 850 concrete panels, the DRLTEN pavilion is a fittingly complex first foray into built work for the programme, says *Hattie Hartman*

Best known for its fluid computer-generated designs and models, the Architectural Association's Design Research Laboratory (DRL) is breaking from paper architecture to build the DRLTEN pavilion in Bedford Square, central London. The pavilion, which began with a competition last September open to DRL alumni and students, was awarded the following month to Alan Dempsey (DRL class of 2002) and Alvin Huang (2004), both of whom are now at Foreign Office Architects.

The competition brief centred around the use of glass-fibre-reinforced concrete by

Austrian manufacturer Rieder, which is sponsoring the pavilion alongside Zaha Hadid Architects. The office has used Rieder's cladding in its under-construction Zaragoza Bridge Pavilion in Spain. Entrants were encouraged to explore the structural potential of the material, which is typically used for cladding panels.

A total of 27 teams submitted projects, and a jury of DRL directors – Patrik Schumacher, Yusuke Obuchi, Theodore Spyropoulos and Tom Verebes – and external tutors, including Hanif Kara of engineer Adams Kara Taylor and Lawrence Friesen of Buro Happold, shortlisted five schemes for technical review and design feedback. The competition brief set minimal requirements for the pavilion itself, calling only for a pavilion offering 'spatial experiences' of no larger than 10 x 10 x 5m.

Obuchi explains that the winning scheme demonstrated a challenging use of the material. Kara says: 'We picked what we thought was good architecture.'

During a series of meetings, the project team – Dempsey and Huang, Obuchi, Kara and representatives from Rieder – produced

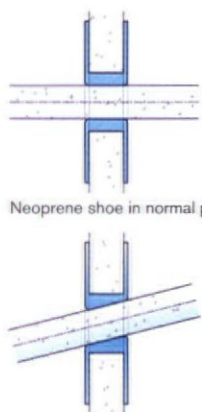




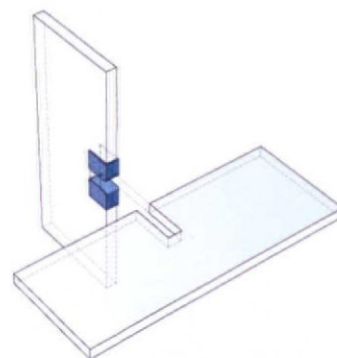
**Left and above** The ribbed panels of the pavilion form both structure and enclosure – the effect is like a moiré pattern of opacity and transparency

**Right** Comprising 850 panels and 2,000 joints, the interlocking pavilion is built on a bed of sand for stability

**Below right** EPDM rubber gaskets were designed to reduce the stress at the joints between panels



Neoprene shoe in flexed position



17 schemes over the course of a month to refine the structural design of the pavilion and the detail of the joints between panels. 'Everyone was very committed, but no one was getting paid; it was difficult to establish any hierarchy within the team,' says Obuchi. Kara notes that the time frame was extremely compressed, and was only feasible because of the use of three-dimensional design tools. 'If we had to work the way we did five years ago – unfolding everything and drawing it – it would have taken six months to do what we can now do in a week,' he adds.

Winner Alan Dempsey says: 'It has been amazing to work with manufacturers open to exploring what computers can do.' He adds that the structural analysis has been the most complex aspect of the project – the refinements resulted in a slight variation in the spacing and angle of cross elements to more efficiently distribute the loads. The pavilion will comprise 850 400 x 200 x 13mm panels, with over 2,000 joints. No two panels or joints are identical. The goal was to make the panels as thin as possible while maintaining rigidity.

Several prototype connections were assembled and submitted to a series of

destructive tests at Aachen University in Germany, with whom Adams Kara Taylor had worked previously. Kara says that it was essential to feed the results of the physical tests back into the computer model to set the standard for the structural analysis. For the final design, six types of EPDM rubber gaskets were developed as joints to accommodate the multitude of angles.

A 1:10 scale MDF model has just been completed to ensure all the parts fit together as anticipated and to serve as a visual reference on site during the construction.

*'The spirit of the pavilion has been to test something we don't know'*

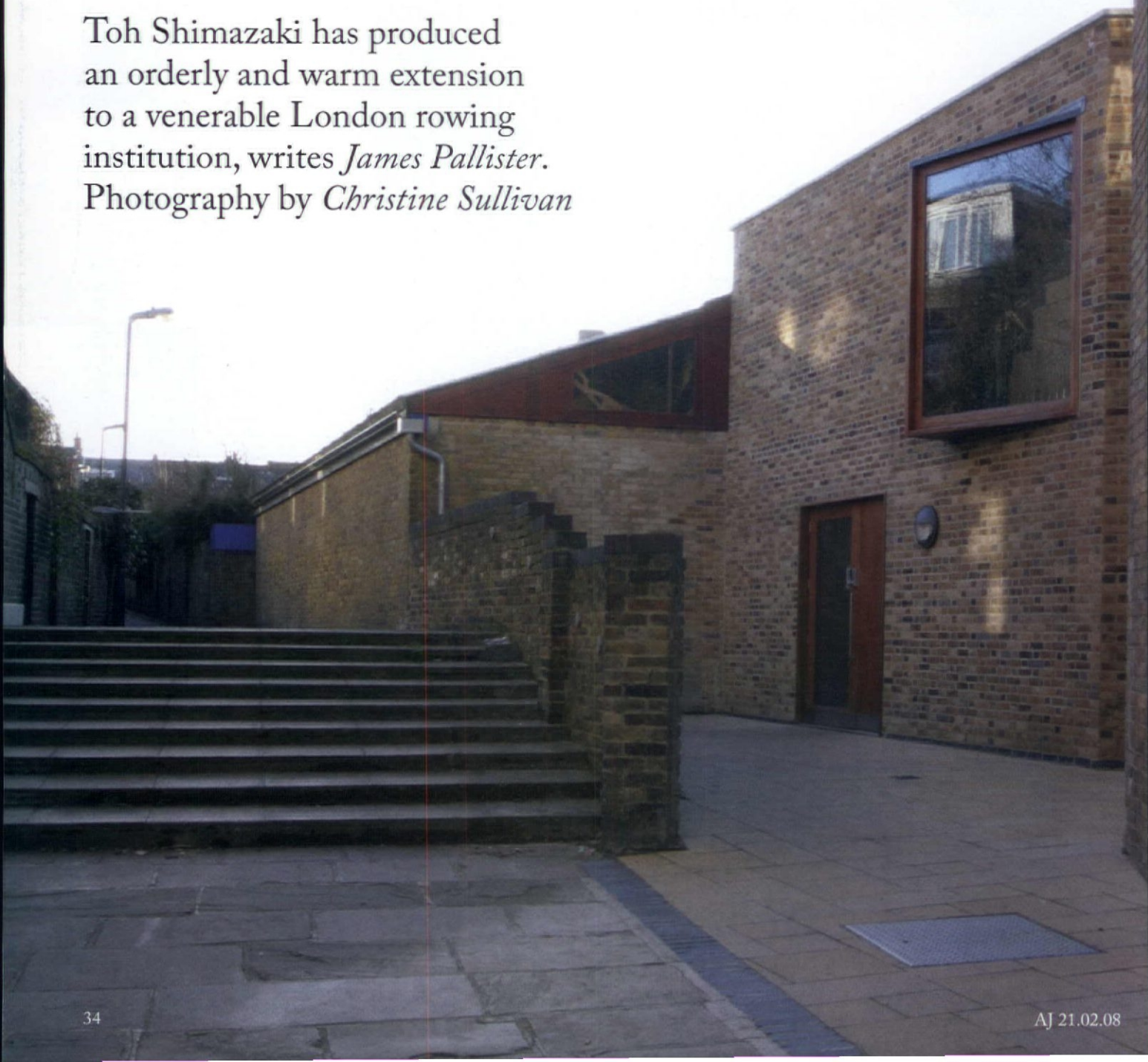
Each individual piece is numbered. Because the temporary pavilion will be built in the public domain, on land not owned by the AA, it cannot be anchored to the ground. The ground is not perfectly level, which poses a further challenge, and the pavilion will be constructed on a bed of sand to create a level surface.

'The spirit of the pavilion has been to test something we don't know, not just to show what we can do,' says Obuchi.

The pavilion will open on 13 March in Bedford Square, London WC1

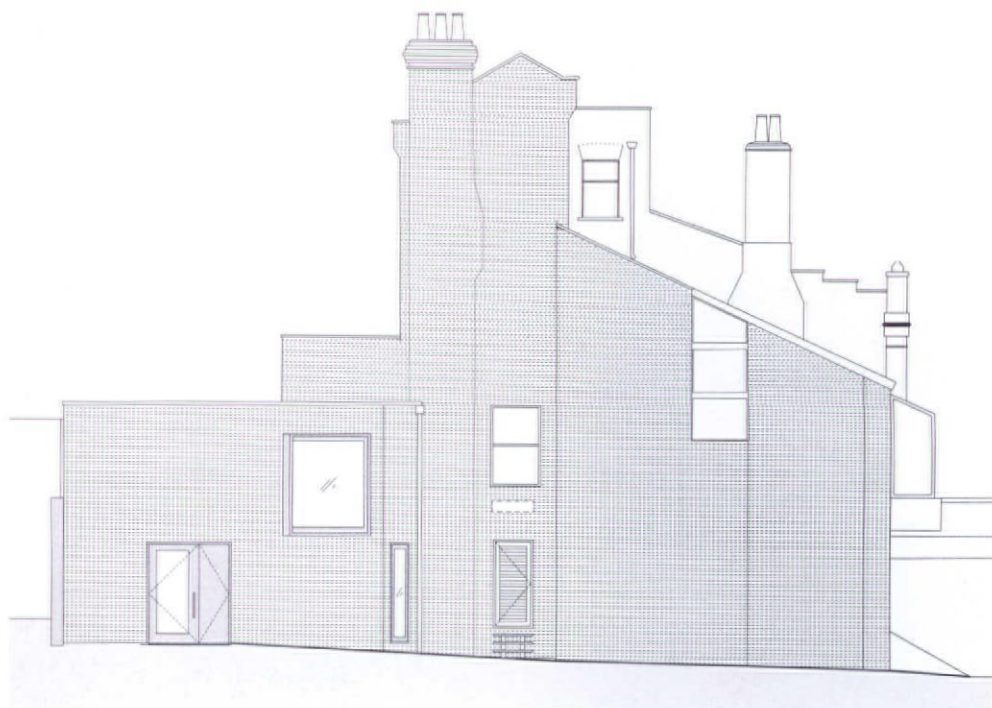


Toh Shimazaki has produced an orderly and warm extension to a venerable London rowing institution, writes *James Pallister*. Photography by *Christine Sullivan*





Below East elevation



# CLEAN FINISHES

Putney Embankment on a Sunday morning is a busy place. While the rest of London is lolling in bed, the south bank of the Thames is bustling with lycra-clad rowers.

A third of the way along the stretch of the river between Putney bridge and Fulham Football club's Craven Cottage ground, one group of about 30 rowers is flitting between the water and Toh Shimazaki's reworking of and extension to London Rowing Club (LRC).

Toh Shimazaki was founded in 1995 by Yuli Toh after eight years working at the Richard Rogers Partnership (RRP), where she met her partner Takero Shimazaki. The 14-strong practice has completed several residential projects, including the Open and Shut House in Surrey (AJ 12.04.07). It has now completed stage two of a six-stage masterplan for the rowing club, a centre for athletes training for national and Olympic competitions.

Yuli Toh was initially approached by Stuart Forbes, a former colleague of hers from RRP (now Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners) and member of LRC, to take on the future construction programme of the club.

The club was eager to retain its independent status, which ruled out Lottery or Sport England funding. The client opted instead for a staged programme of building works to be paid for by its membership.

The archetypal boathouse is a long, low building set at 90° to the river. The uncomplicated requirement is that it stores boats, blades and assorted equipment. A pitched roof and sliding or hinged doors give it a look similar to an agricultural building.

London Rowing Club's building however, though built in the early 1870s, is more Georgian townhouse than riverside pig shed. Its fair-faced brickwork and four-storey height give it confidence and permanence. The club is the oldest on Putney embankment, >>





*The London Rowing Club is more Georgian townhouse than riverside pig shed*

**Top** The original boathouse was built in the 1870s and features six boat bays  
**Above** Storage space sits between the gym, the back entrance to the boatshed, and the new-build elements

**Right** A new entrance at the rear means the front entrance can be used for formal purposes  
**Above right** Toh Shimazaki's extension is signalled principally by an extruded picture window







established in 1856, with additions made throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The last major works were completed in 1972.

Toh had told me prior to my visit that the building was 'not a one-liner'. Looking at it in plan this is evident – the additions and change in circulation need pointing out – but upon visiting this becomes more apparent; the London stock brick used throughout masks any juncture between old and new. On closer inspection, the large plate-glass window that juts out from the back of club gives the clue to where the architect has added a new volume that houses the interior back stair. This window is the project's only moment of ostentation. It addresses the gable end of a terrace and the alleyway that runs from the towpath to Putney High Street. Beneath it is a hardwood door that provides access to the new stairs that lead to the upstairs of the boathouse.

'One of our aims was to provide a distinction between the rowing and the social functions of the club' says Toh. To this end a

new access point was added to the back of the club. In theory this means that the front entrance and stairs to the first floor are used for formal – or non-mucky – purposes and the back is used for rowers accessing the changing rooms. This should spare the carpet of the Fairbairn Room – a social space between the Club Room and the stairs.

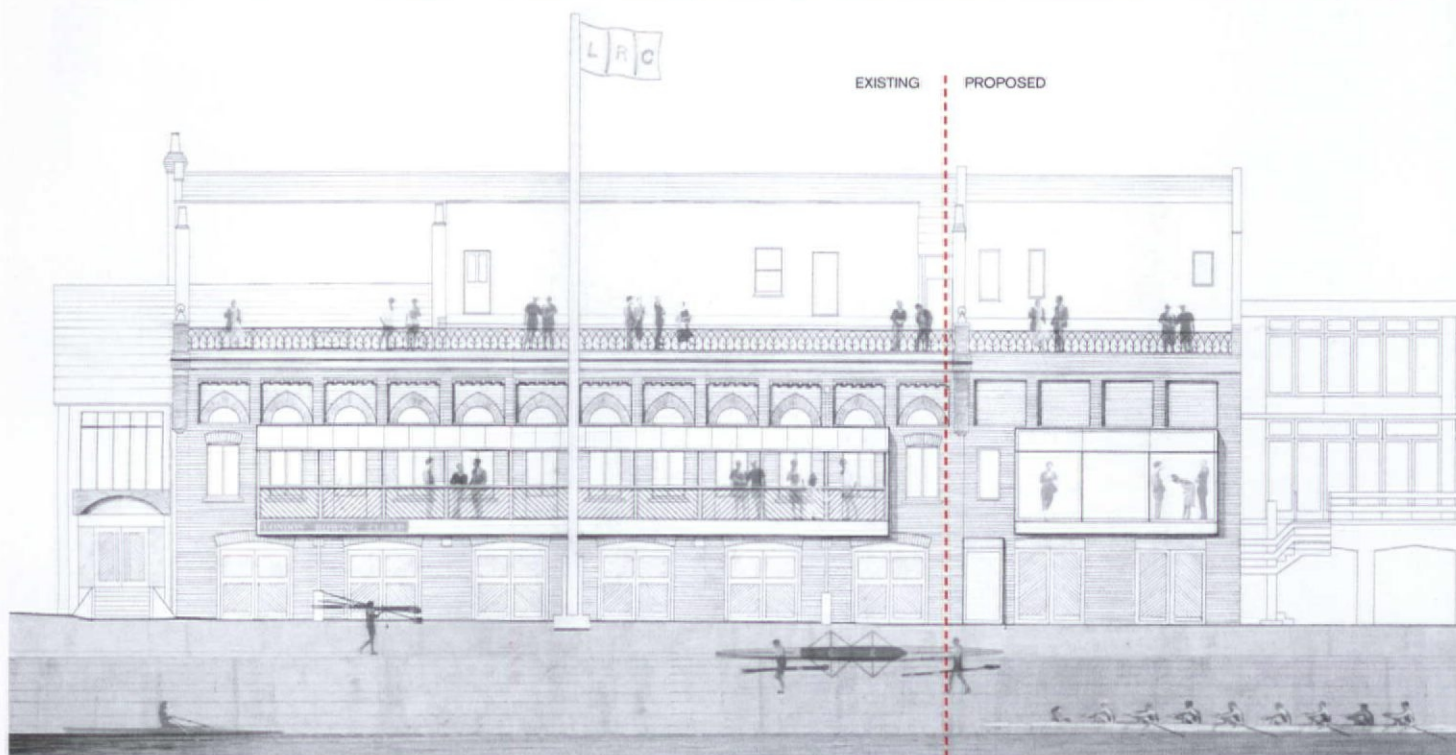
A galvanised-steel staircase gives access to a first-floor landing between Fairbairn Room and back stairs. 'We used a very robust materials palette' says Toh. The inside of this volume is faced with exposed engineering blocks and had a resin floor and a heavy-duty steel staircase. 'In this project everything has to be orientated toward the rowing; if it doesn't work it is out' says Toh. The area is well-lit by the picture window and the materials make the interior, which is still quite clean, neatly Spartan. Rowers tend to be a tall breed, and to prevent unnecessary banged heads the staircase is top hung, dispensing with the need for a pillar between the landing and floor. This is one of the many areas of the

building where special attention has been given to levels, making sure they chime with future development. This is due to the proposed extension between LRC and its neighbour, King's School Rowing Club, with whom it will share a party wall. This proposed development has not received planning permission, but it is part of the phased development outlined by Toh Shimazaki after undertaking an initial condition survey in 1996 in what it refers to as the masterplan.

While the new staircase is obviously Toh Shimazaki's addition, the additions at the back of the boathouse are more ambiguous. Two pillars supporting the wooden ceiling mark the boundary of what used to be an outside area before the 1972 development added a storey on top of the flat-tiled roof. In turn, Toh Shimazaki's extension was built on to what used to be a flat asbestos roof to create the Crew Room.

This room is entirely new-build, using a glulam frame to support a slate roof. It has extended the back of the boat club, but its >>



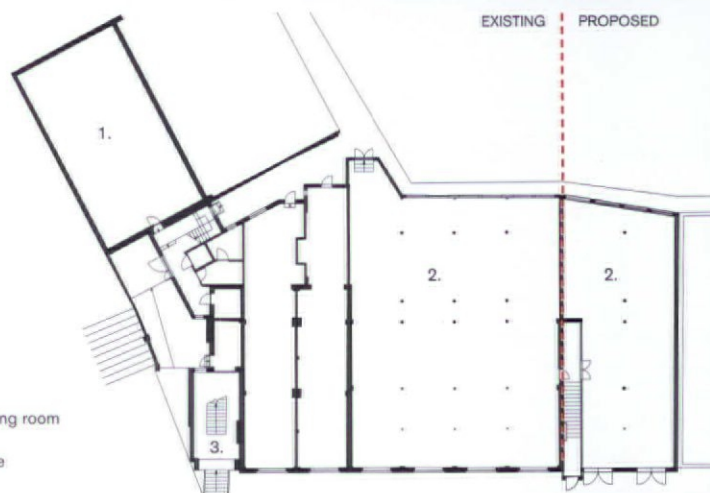


**Above** Elevation from the river showing proposed new extensions

**Right** Ground-floor plan

**Below** The Crew Room is well-lit by skylights and clerestory windows

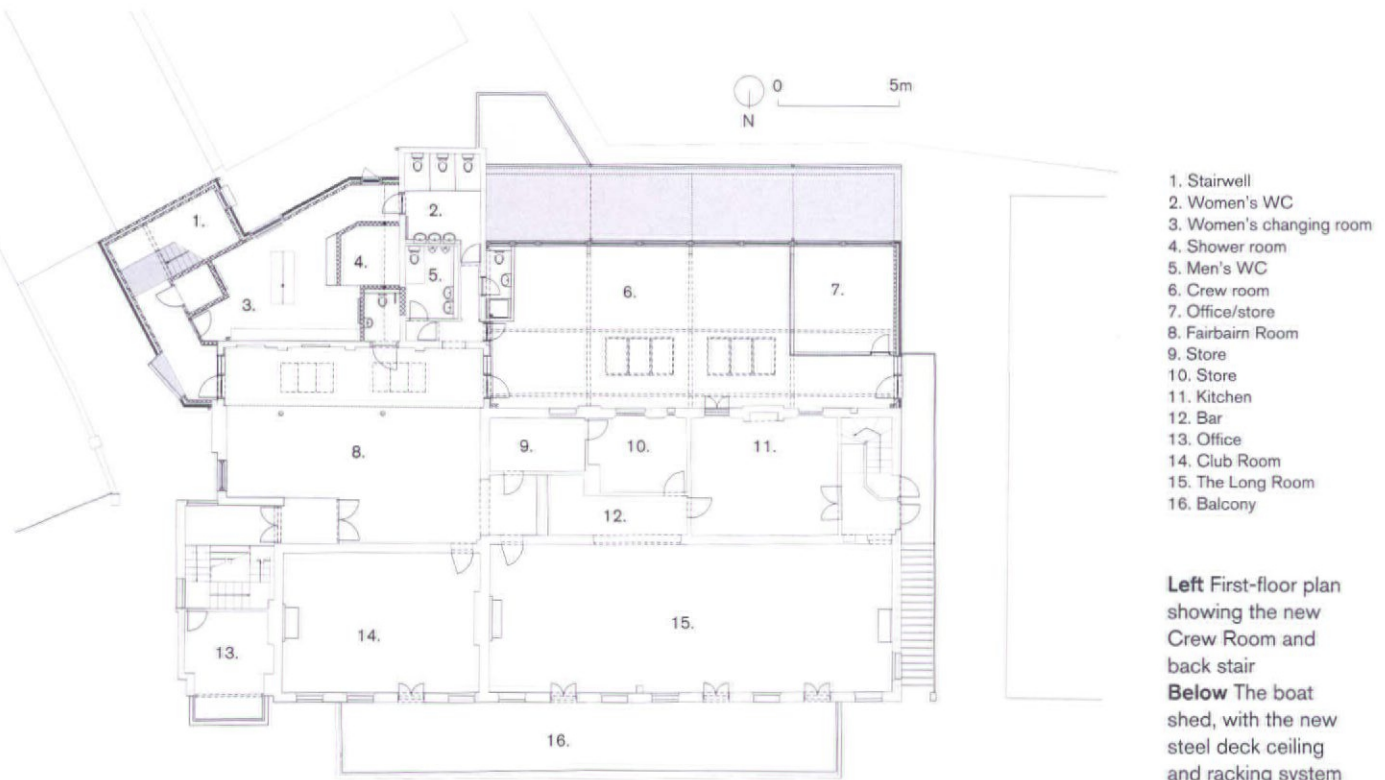
**Below right** The Fairbairn Room, looking towards the back-stair lobby



- 1. Men's changing room
- 2. Boat store
- 3. Main entrance







slate roof and brickwork mean that it does not offend the view of the houses whose garden overlook the rear of the club. It is well-lit by skylights which have been punched through the river side of its pitched roof, and a row of clerestory windows that runs along the back of the room.

On ground level, six sets of hardwood double doors give access to the boathouse proper. The six bays house a selection of eights, fours, pairs and single sculls. The

architect replaced a cumbersome scaffolding storage system with a modern racking system. Towards the back of the boathouse, a new roof was added.

Between the boathouse and King's School Rowing Club is a corrugated iron shed that houses sculling boats. This is the proposed infill site which, according to the masterplan, will be replaced with another bay for boats and extended upwards to continue the line of the front elevation of the boathouse.

Asked whether he is happy with project, club captain David Finn says: 'It's fantastic. The great thing was that the boathouse was fully operational at all times.'

Toh Shimazaki has created a utilitarian solution that reflects the club's warmth and sense of history. The hardy simplicity of the materials underlines the practice's measured approach. Perhaps most importantly, the architecture does not get in the way of the most important thing: the rowing. ■



**Start on site date** 24 July 2006

**Contract duration** 12 months

**Gross external floor area** 466m<sup>2</sup>

**Form of contract**

JCT IFC 2005

**Cost** Private

**Client** The London Rowing Club

**Architect** Toh Shimazaki

**Structural engineer** Fothergill

**Quantity surveyor** CN Associates

**Planning supervisor** Stace Health and Safety

**Main contractor** Mansell Construction Services

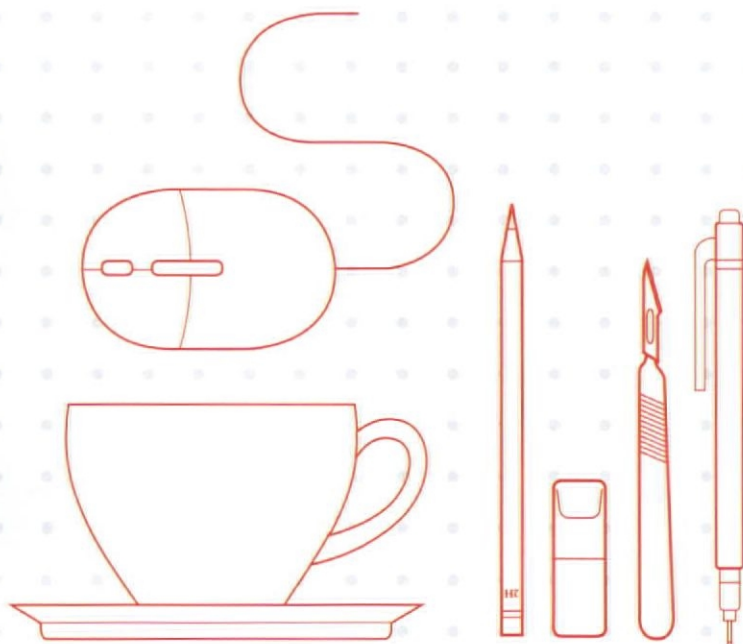
**Services engineer** En Masse

**Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** According to the services engineer, no measurements were required or undertaken



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## Big Fish Little Fish

*Jonathan Hendry of Jonathan  
Hendry Architects can't stop  
meddlesome clients from changing  
his designs*

Back at work after a holiday, I'm briefed by the project architect for a residential scheme nearing completion. The client has decided to change elements of the building on site. The boarding to the loggia ceiling has been omitted, and we are now painting softwood joists on galvanised hangers. The kitchen island unit has been moved and is being painted green, not off-white, and the end cladding to the porch has been changed from larch painted with black sadolin to oiled oak. This despite us explaining that the oak will weather black.

The project is 80 per cent complete in terms of what we anticipated when drawing and modelling the building with the client at the start of the project. The remaining 20 per cent has been revised by the client.

I also discover that the client has moved an internal flue to the outside of the building, breaking up 23m of glass. I'm told that building the existing chimney breast out to conceal the flue would encroach on the room.

Why do clients trust our judgement for so long but then, once the fruits of our labour become evident, decide to turn their hand to the project?

With these thoughts, I prepare for a meeting to battle it out with planners over proposals for a community hall.

Next issue: *John Prevc*, partner at Make Architects



BioTecture's vertical green facades have made the shortlist for Ecobuild's Green Dragons' Den event

## INTO THE GREEN DRAGONS' DEN

Three small companies are about to enter the dragons' den with their innovative green building products. The challenge is to convince a panel of green experts – including Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project; Pam Alexander, chief executive of the South East England Development Agency; and Jeremy Burden, chief executive of Burdens Environmental – that their brainchild should win the Award for Innovation in Sustainable Design and Construction, plus a £10,000 business support package, at Ecobuild's Green Dragons' Den event.

As the BBC's *Dragons' Den* show proves, the spirit of the

entrepreneurial designer is thriving, and the move towards considered environmental design has produced a plethora of small-scale products in this sector. Just over 200 entries have been whittled down to a shortlist of 10 products, two of which have already featured in the AJ: BioTecture's vertical green facades (pictured above) (Landscape design products, AJ Specification 02.08) and Magmatech's TeploTie thermally insulating composite wall ties (Sustainability in Practice, AJ 29.11.07). From this shortlist, Ecobuild delegates can vote for the three they want to enter the dragon's den.

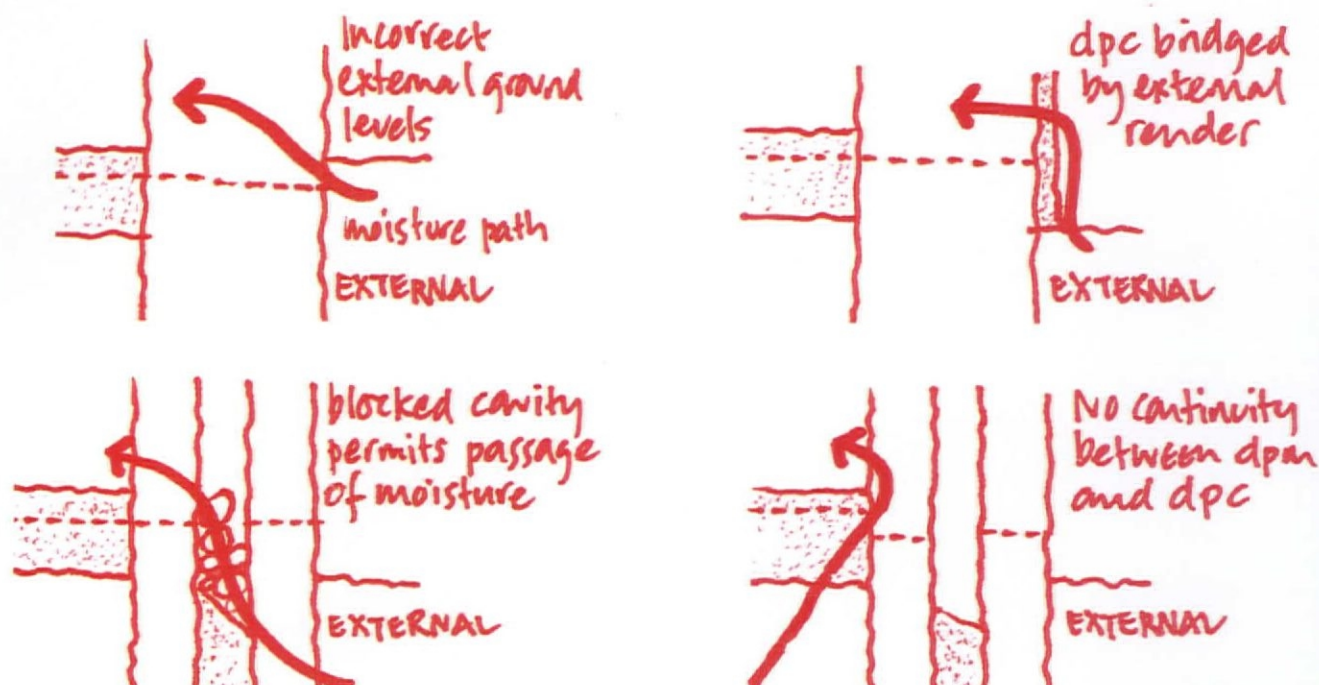
Also on the shortlist is SolarVenti, which produces solar-powered dehumidifiers, air heaters and ventilators. Dave Goodwin, SolarVenti UK manager, says: 'It's all about getting our name known – for people to understand what we offer and to think of us at the design stage.'

The live Green Dragons' Den final will take place on 26 February in the UK Green Building Council arena at Ecobuild, which runs from 26–28 February at Earls Court, London.

Visit [www.ecobuild.co.uk/arena](http://www.ecobuild.co.uk/arena) to cast your vote.  
*Kaye Alexander*



## SOME MECHANISMS OF MOISTURE INGRESS :-



Above How water can enter a building

# KEEPING THE DAMP OUT

In his latest NBS Shortcut, Austin Williams looks at the most effective ways to damp-proof a building

The National Statistics Office claims that one in every 10 people over the age of 50 complains of damp rising in floors and walls. But records of people's perceptions and complaints may be misleading, given that damp appears to have been all but eliminated in modern properties. This Shortcut looks at good damp-proof detailing in traditional construction.

The discovery of rising damp in a property inevitably results in hefty quotes from specialist contractors, panic from the homeowners, and then months of inconvenience as remedial work is carried out to address the problem. However, rising damp is

one of those catch-all phrases that needs some clarification.

The victims of the recent floods in the UK, for example, undoubtedly returned home to find the floodwater soaking into the walls and rising. However, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) says that this sort of damage usually cannot be classified as rising damp. Rising damp occurs when relatively porous walls are built in saturated soil, causing moisture to rise by capillary action. Where the soil is not saturated, the capillary action is countered by the suction of the soil. Where the soil suction is greater than capillary pressure, no rising damp will occur. A

correctly specified and installed damp-proof course (DPC) can intervene to prevent capillary action and stop the rise of moisture up the wall. But obviously the best DPC in the world will not avert flood damage.

In many instances, DPCs are also installed to prevent downward moisture, rainwater, etc. from entering the building and spreading on to the internal surfaces. This Shortcut only explores the means of protection against rising damp.

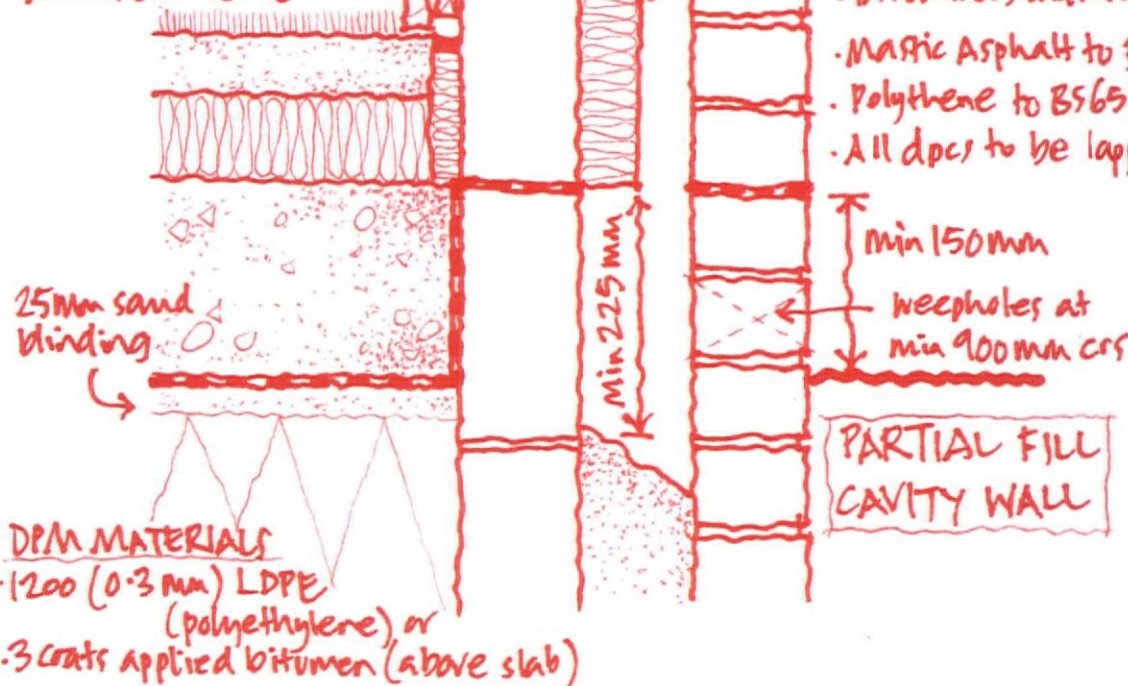
The most obvious tell-tale sign of rising damp is consistent darkening of plaster or wall coverings, indicating the

existence of excessive moisture. This will be accompanied by a tide-mark at approximately 1–1.2m height, which is often demarcated by a line of salt crystals deposited as the moisture evaporates – these tend to be deposits of nitrates and chlorides from the soil. Dampness arising from external hard surfaces (a blocked gully causing ponding in an adjoining concrete yard, for example) does not generally contain soil salts but might also give rise to a crystalline appearance on inner or outer surfaces, due to the leaching out of the natural sulphates contained within the bricks themselves. In many circumstances, sending



In partial fill cavities, ensure 50mm gap min

BS5628:1:2005 requires that wall ties have sufficient length to be embedded by 'at least' 62.5mm but that they achieve an 'actual' embedment of 'at least' 50mm each side



If both leaves >90mm, BRE and NHBC recommend that wall ties be located at the following centres (mm):

HORIZONTAL: 900 (for <76mm cavities)  
:750 (for 75-100+ cavities)

VERTICAL: 450

#### DPC MATERIALS

- LDPE polyethylene to BS6515
- Lead to BS12588
- Bituminous material to BS6398
- Mastic Asphalt to BS6925
- Polythene to BS6515
- All dpc's to be lapped by 100mm at joints

min 150mm

weepholes at min 900mm c/c

PARTIAL FILL CAVITY WALL

Above Damp-proofing a partial-fill cavity wall

samples for analysis is the only way to determine whether or not the problem is rising damp.

It is important then, that those inspecting for evidence of damp should also use a common-sense approach. Always make diagnostic observations – look for leaking pipes, blocked external gullies, spilled dog bowls, etc. – before declaring the area as suffering from rising damp. Also, when testing for damp in a property, remember that commonly available damp meters don't actually measure levels of moisture, they measure electrical conductance. So high readings taken from a wall do not necessarily indicate the presence

of dampness. It could be that there is insufficient plaster coverage over a metal pipe, for example; or maybe the foil backing to plasterboard has been badly laid and exposed. A misleading diagnosis may also

#### Rising damp in a property inevitably results in panic from the homeowners

arise from the presence of hygroscopic salts within the wall. Hygroscopic salts absorb moisture from the atmosphere, and the greater the prevalence of these salts, regardless of the amount of actual moisture in the wall, the greater the electrical

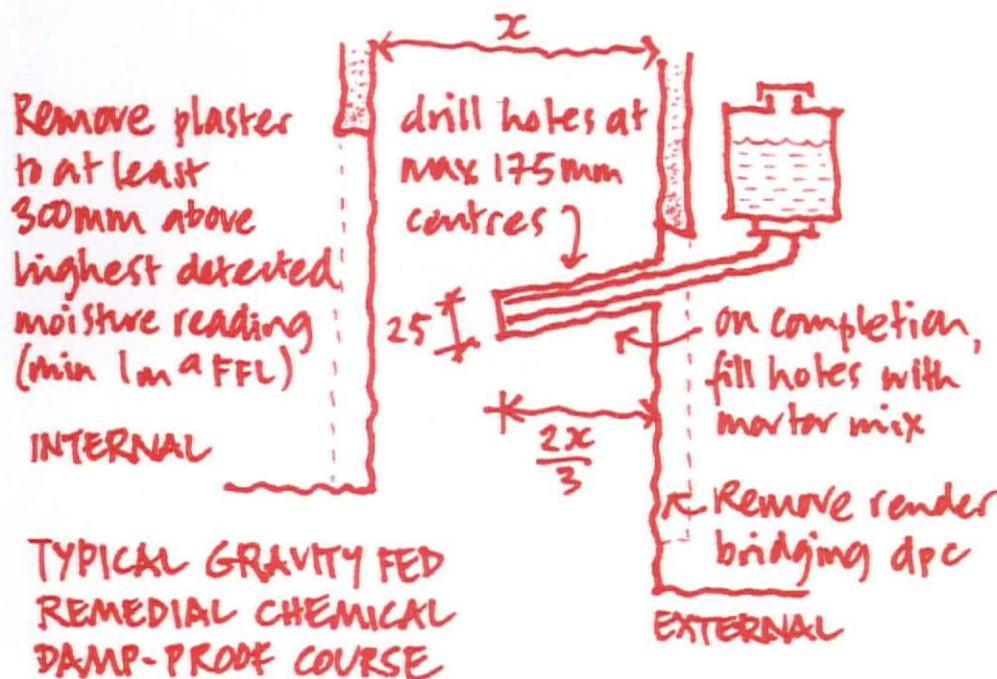
conductance. It is easy to misconstrue meter readings.

BRE Report 466 *Understanding Dampness*, contains a very useful tip for working out whether evidence of moisture on a given surface is caused by condensation or rising damp. It advises that you 'place a piece of (kitchen) foil about 0.5m<sup>2</sup> on the floor under any carpet/underlay and seal it firmly round the edges with adhesive tape. Inspect it the next day: if moisture has collected on the underside of the foil, there is dampness in the slab. If the moisture is on the upper surface, it is condensation'.

Rising damp occurs predominantly in older buildings

(especially those with solid external walls) and those with solid floors installed without damp-proof membranes (which was common practice in the 1950s and '60s). Staged remedial work to these properties in the '70s and '80s frequently resulted in the wall's DPC being bridged by new concrete floors. Ironically, this often encouraged the passage of more ground moisture into the walls than before. Other common unintended consequences of remedial damp-proofing include the accidental blockage of underfloor vents, preventing through-ventilation from adjoining suspended timber floors. >>





Left An illustration of damp-proof coursing

## EFFECTIVE BARRIERS

Simply put, the DPC's role is to prevent moisture migration. The DPC should form an impermeable barrier to the passage of moisture. *Scottish Technical Handbook 3*, clause 3.4 refers to the dated Code of Practice CP 102 (1973). Its central requirements match those of Building Regulations Approved Document C. This describes four requirements which, notwithstanding minor variations, can be encapsulated as follows:

- The DPC should be impervious and continuous.
- In external walls, DPCs should be at least 150mm above adjoining ground.
- In external cavity walls, the cavity should extend 225mm below the level of the DPC, and weepholes should be provided at 900mm horizontal centres.
- Cavity trays that do not extend the full length of a wall (e.g. over a meter box opening at low level, for example) should have stop-ends and weepholes to prevent run-off within the cavity from

being joined by any rainwater ingress from above. BS 8215:1991 adds that 'trays that bridge a cavity should be stepped by not less than 150mm from the outer to the inner leaf'.

There are circumstances in which certain materials, which otherwise comply with the above requirements, are inappropriate. For example:

- Polyethylene sheet is not suitable if only lightly loaded, i.e. under copings, etc., where slippage of the element above the DPC may occur.
- Lead will corrode in contact with mortar and must be painted on both sides with bituminous paint.
- Slate DPCs are discontinuous and should be formed in two half-lapped courses.
- Existing walls insulated with polystyrene insulation should not be remedially treated with chemically injected solvent-based products.

Before you reach for your insurer's telephone number to cover yourself for possible actions, it is worth remembering that in

1996, the National Statistics Office's English House Condition Survey – a survey of around 45,000 dwelling houses (with the results extrapolated to cover all of England) – confirmed that rising damp affected just 3.9

## The tell-tale sign of rising damp is the darkening of plaster or wall coverings

per cent of dwellings, and penetrating damp 6 per cent. By late 2006, rising damp had been further restricted to 2 per cent of the housing stock, and penetrating damp to 5 per cent. In the Scottish House Condition Survey 2004/ 05, 'rising or penetrating damp' was located in just 5 per cent of properties. As the older stock gets replaced by better-quality new construction, it's not hard to imagine a time when rising damp can effectively be eliminated from your insurer's portfolio. ■

Austin Williams is the author and illustrator of NBS Shortcuts

Visit [www.thenbs.com](http://www.thenbs.com)

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The Architects' Journal and Urban Splash have teamed up to give an emerging UK architect a £500,000 building to design in Liverpool. The Tribeca Infobox design competition is open to anyone from students to newly established practices. A top jury will choose a winner, but all submitted schemes will have the chance to be part of a major exhibition in Liverpool this summer. Don't miss your chance to make your mark in the Capital of Culture 2008!

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*In this section* The secret restorers of Paris  
// Rodchenko's photography // An aggressive  
study of architectural restoration // Diary

# The Critics



## INVESTIGATION

# *The case of the Panthéon clock*

*Christine Murray speaks to the clandestine members of the Untergunther, the invisible and unsung guardians of underground Paris*

I'm in Paris, standing in the dark south-east corner of the Panthéon, entranced by the 1850 Wagner clock that presides over a mausoleum, adjacent to the stairs to the crypt. Seized in time, its thin black hands are stopped at ten minutes to twelve.

I'm not a clock enthusiast, but this is no ordinary timepiece. The centre of a media flurry this winter, the *Guardian* and *The Times*

dedicated full-page coverage to this clock when they discovered it had been secretly restored by the Untergunther – the 'cultural guerrillas' I've come to Paris to meet.

Infiltrating the dome, the Untergunther inhabited the Panthéon for a year in an improvised clubhouse-atelier that included built-on-site chairs, a library, heating, an internet connection and a hotplate. Under

the direction of professional clockmaker Jean-Baptiste Viot, they painstakingly restored the rusted monumental clock, cleaning the components and making new parts. On 24 December 2006, to the shock and awe of the administration, the clock began to chime.

'It rang all through 25 December, while the Panthéon was closed,' says the pseudonymous Lazar Kunstmann, spokesperson for >>



Untergunther continued from page 47

the Untergunther. 'On the 26th, the Panthéon opened, and the deputy administrator Pascal Monet wanted it stopped, so he asked a clockmaker to come and sabotage it.'

We're in the darkest corner of a student hangout, round the corner from the Panthéon. I was instructed to ask for the Untergunther at the bar, and directed to Kunstmann and 'Lanso', both in their mid-to-late 30s and dressed entirely in black. Kunstmann is surprisingly affable for a secret restoration agent, while Lanso, head of the Untergunther, is silent and severe under her shorn head of

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*When police returned, the theatre had been completely emptied, apart from a note which read: 'Do not try to find us'*

---

dark red hair. In the above-ground world, Kunstmann is a video editor; Lanso a photographer.

I've come to Paris to discuss the Panthéon clock, but mostly to learn about the vast organisation behind this caper, barely hinted at in the international media furore that followed its exposure. Sworn to preserve France's ignored, invisible or abandoned cultural heritage sites, the nonsensically named Untergunther comprises just a fraction – the restoration wing – of an expansive umbrella group known as the UX, who've been acting as the *de facto* guardians of subterranean Paris for over 25 years.

Kunstmann, who describes himself as 'first-generation UX', was just 12 years old when he began exploring the city's urban fabric with his friends. 'In Paris in the 1980s, anything underground was very fashionable, especially raves,' he says, espresso in hand. 'We were at college in the Latin Quarter, and at the time you could enter the network directly from the basement of your school.'

'We were too young for the parties,' he adds, 'and in any case, we weren't that keen on music. But we were very interested in these abandoned spaces, and by extension became interested in urbanity and architecture. We wanted to seek out these abandoned sites, to clean them and the to find non-festive uses for them. Most importantly, we wanted to connect them – to dig passages and tunnels between them.'

Kunstmann says the UX now counts



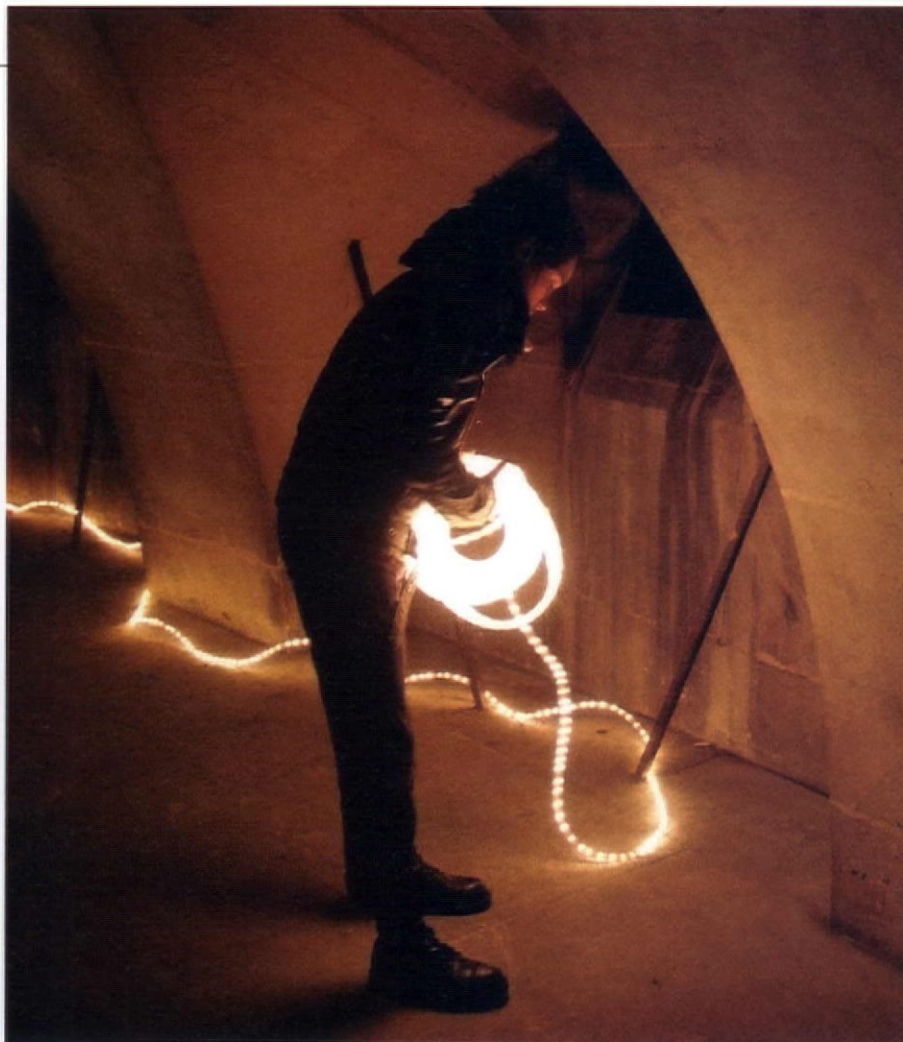
approximately 120 members, who range in age from 11 to 56. They are divided into a number of subgroups, each specialising in a particular activity, such as cartography, tunnel-drilling, restoration (Untergunther); infiltration (The Mouse House) and events (La Mexicaine de Perforation). Memberships are not fixed, however, and members move fluidly between activities.

The relationship between UX sects is symbiotic. The collective aim is to maintain and expand their underground world. To this end, The Mouse House has a vast collection of keys and alarm-system know-how, while the cartography wing boasts the only comprehensive map of Paris in existence, unifying all disparate underground networks, from the sewers to the metro, underground parking lots to electricity grids. Another group, which counts a rock-driller among its members, uses these maps to dig connecting tunnels, taking care to camouflage the newly made entry points.

UX's rules of secrecy dictate that Kunstmann can only discuss what has already been discovered, which includes one of the







**Far left** The Untergunther's secret clubhouse in the Panthéon. Chairs can be quickly disguised as shipping crates and stacked

**Left** A member of The Mouse House illuminates a passageway

**Below left** The badly rusted clock was almost too far gone to restore, according to professional clockmaker Jean-Baptiste Viot, pictured here working on it

camouflaged entrances. 'It connects two tunnels, one above the other, and was accidentally uncovered by the telecom' says Kunstmann. 'They did not take the discovery very well at all – they were like: "This stuff really exists?"'

'It was in a school tunnel, where we teach basic techniques to new members of UX,' he adds. 'One of their practical tasks was to make a double-sided camouflaged entrance.' The students installed a sewer grate on the floor of the tunnel, fitting a basin of water to the underside, so that it appeared to be fully functional. Removing the grate, at the push of a button the basin slid out of the way, and the passage was automatically illuminated.

The world first caught wind of UX in 2004 (although we didn't know it then), when policemen stumbled upon a 400m<sup>2</sup> cinema, bar and couscous restaurant in a disused quarry. Located near the Eiffel Tower, 18m below ground, the theatre was kitted out with electricity, security cameras, phone lines and a terrace of seats carved out of rock. When police returned three days later, it had been completely emptied, apart from a note which

read: 'Do not try to find us.'

It's the stuff of fantasy, and the product of a lifelong obsession. Kunstmann admits that for members of UX, their clandestine life isn't a hobby, but a commitment of all free time and significant finances. Their budget is funded by each member of the UX (most have day jobs), and Kunstmann and Lanso say their evenings and weekends are currently consumed by a large site undergoing restoration (what and where, they won't say).

A negative response to their work by the establishment is not uncommon. 'In the minds of the Panthéon administration, fixing the clock was a personal attack,' says Kunstmann, 'because it lifted the rug on their inability to preserve cultural heritage, not to mention a major security problem.'

In the end, the government body in charge of the Panthéon, *Centre des Monuments Nationaux* (CMN), pressed charges against the Untergunther in a Paris court for 48,300 euros (£36,000) in damages. The charge was described as 'absolutely incomprehensible' by president of the tribunal Eric Meunier, and the case was

thrown out on 23 November 2007, sparking UK media coverage.

It's been over a year since the clock last chimed, but Kunstmann reveals, for the first time in this interview, fresh hope. In the face of the deputy administrator's call that it be sabotaged, the clockmaker refused ('I fix clocks, I don't break them'), but removed a component to disable it. 'Oddly enough, he selected the part that was broken 40 years before: the escapement,' says Kunstmann.

The deputy administrator put the part in a cupboard, which The Mouse House located two days later. 'The escapement is safe with us,' Kunstmann says. 'The clock is simply waiting for its chance to run again.'

As darkness falls, Lanso and Kunstmann grow impatient. 'We have things to do,' says Kunstmann. 'Would you be so kind?'

As I go out into the street, the sewer grates have become portals, every alcove a secret door. I'm aware of a city beyond this city, no longer out of reach, impossible to ignore. ■

**Resume:** Secret agents infesting French monuments, restoring sights for free – where can we get some of those?





## Critic's Choice

Rodchenko's days of photographic experimentation were brief, says **Andrew Mead**

'I set myself a task: to show objects from all sides, and primarily from a point from which no one was accustomed to seeing them,' said the Russian artist Alexander Rodchenko of the photographs he started taking in the mid-1920s – 200 of which are at London's Hayward Gallery until 27 April ([www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)).

Rodchenko had already established his avant-garde credentials with his paintings. Exploring the potential of his new medium, he made a speciality of worm's-eye and bird's-eye view: standing close to the wall of David Kogan's Mosselprom department store, he points his camera upwards and picks out a rhythmic sequence of balconies receding into the sky. László Moholy-Nagy and his Bauhaus colleagues were doing much the same thing at the time, though strangely the exhibition booklet doesn't mention them.

By the late 1920s, Rodchenko was being accused of formalism – and his detractors had a point. A shot such as Sukharevski Boulevard (*below*), where the camera turns everything on to a diagonal, may be superficially dynamic but is little more than pattern-making. When this approach to photography filtered through to the UK in the 1930s, primarily with Dell and Wainwright's work for *The Architectural Review*, such ploys (or mannerisms) came too. Meanwhile Rodchenko was photographing the construction (by prisoners) of the White Sea-Baltic Canal and having to submit his images to Gulag censors. His days of experimenting were over.



## BOOK

*Scott picks a fight with architects over restoration work*, says **Ed Frith**

On *Altering Architecture*, by Fred Scott.  
Routledge, £80

Fred Scott's *On Altering Architecture* is part of a rich seam of architectural imagination and criticism. Scott examines the philosophies of intervention, stripping back the parody, preservation and restoration that embody a theoretical approach to existing buildings. The text weaves back and forth in criticism and


comment, revealing seminal moves in the remaking of architecture.

Full of fantastic examples and stories, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and John Ruskin provide a launching pad for some of Scott's ideas, which pass through Le Corbusier's worker housing in Pessac and land richly on Norman Foster's refurbishment of the Berlin Reichstag. We travel from the Adam Brothers at Audley End to Gordon Matta-Clark's shape-cutting in Paris. Christchurch, Spitalfields becomes a touchstone of the restoration-versus-alteration debate, as Morris's SPAB approach is encouraged over the dead hand of restoration.

Throughout the book there are little anecdotal gems. One of my favourite

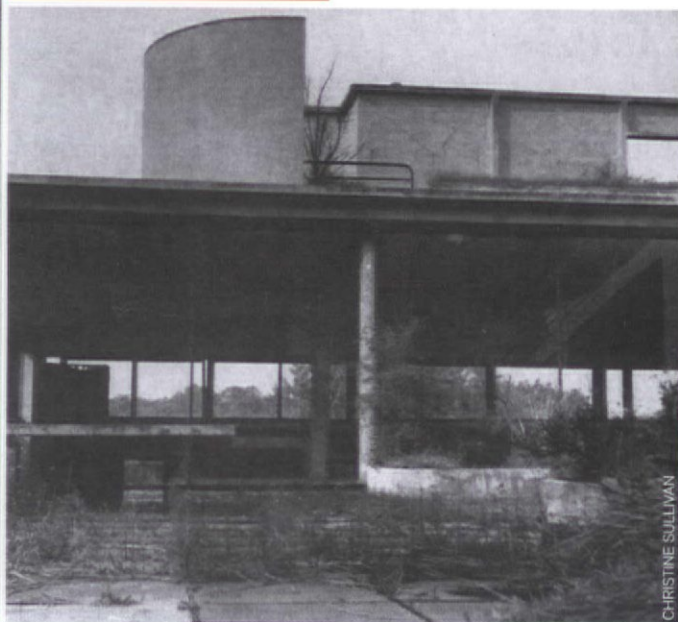






## FRED SCOTT ON ALTERING ARCHITECTURE

Far left The Michigan Theatre, Detroit, by Rapp & Rapp (1926), featured in Scott's book, was transformed into a car park in the 1970s  
Below Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in ruin in the late '50s



CHRISTINE SULLIVAN

CHRISTINE SULLIVAN

discoveries was that Ruskin refused the RIBA Gold Medal in 1874 because of 'the destruction under the name of restoration brought about by architects'. There are missing exemplars that one may have expected – the Soane Museum and the work of Jože Plečnik come to mind – indeed, I was concerned for the great interventionist, Carlo Scarpa, but he arrives on his white Castelveccchio charger, in the last chapter, 'Unfinished'.

There is much to argue with in Scott's book, but then the author's occasional raving is, as he suggests, like a drunk (designer) picking a fight with an 'architect'. He wishes to provoke and debate. Sometimes you appear to be veering down a dark alley, but then a shaft of light will illuminate a nugget, such as

Giancarlo de Carlo's quote 'if a building is changed too much it becomes as limp as a sack'. The overall tenor is welcomed – that the design and alteration of existing buildings needs to be accentuated and theoretically reviewed.

The book is a manifestation of Scott's thirty years of discussing, guiding and criticising, and the book sits comfortably in the creative company of the architecture and theory he references and acknowledges, which includes the work of many of his friends and colleagues, such as Robert Harbison's *Thirteen Ways* and the late Robin Evans' *The Projective Cast*.

**Resume:** A whirlwind journey and a rant, this is seminal architectural reading

## 5 THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

### 1 *101 Things I Learned in Architecture School*

Go back to school in this sweet, if simplistic flip-book by Matthew Frederick, which revisits architecture life lessons, such as 'how to draw a line'. (Pictured below.)

MIT Press, 128 pp, 101 illus, £8.95

### 2 *Back to the Future: Sir Basil Spence*

Visit the newly opened Basil Spence exhibition, featuring never-before-seen drawings, designs and models, as well as period films.

Opens 22 February at Gallery 1, RIBA, London  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

### 3 *Take Away*

Explore the technology of the takeaway, from the tiffin box to stacking cups.

Opens 25 February at the Lighthouse, Glasgow  
[www.thelighthouse.co.uk](http://www.thelighthouse.co.uk)

### 4 *Ben Johnson*

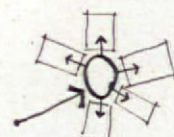
Watch artist Ben Johnson painting live as he adds the finishing touches to his architecturally detailed panorama of Liverpool

Until 7 March at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool  
[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

### 5 *DesignArt: commerce or culture?*

Debate design as a new commodity, and questions of celebrity, high prices, manufacture and integrity, at this discussion chaired by design critic and curator Max Fraser

7:30-9pm, 26 February at Rabih Hage Gallery, London. [www.rabih-hage.com](http://www.rabih-hage.com)



## 101 Things I Learned in Architecture School

Matthew Frederick



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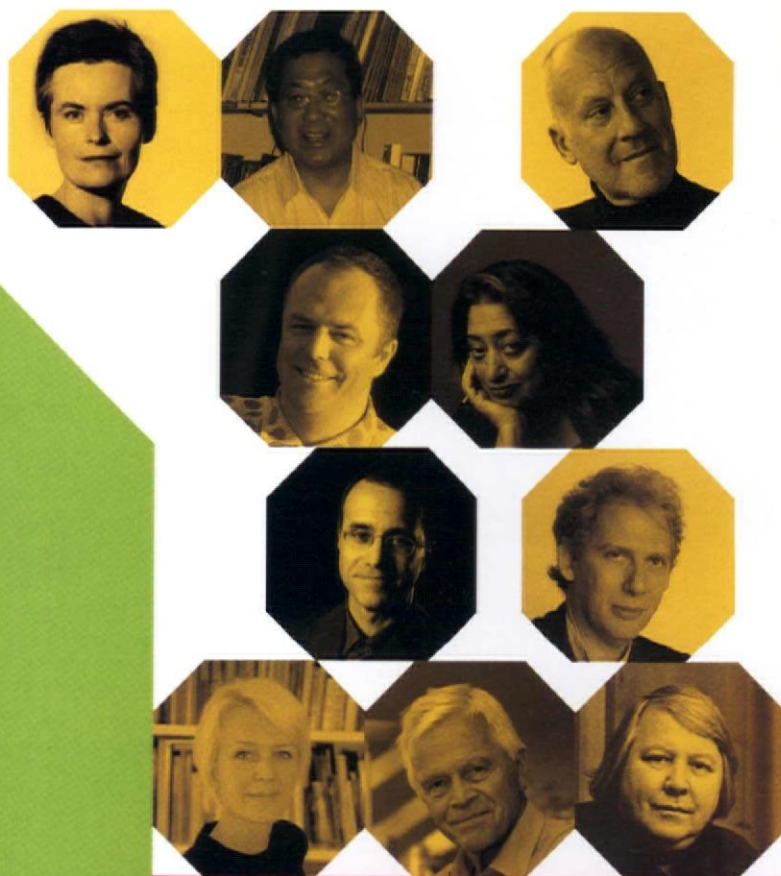
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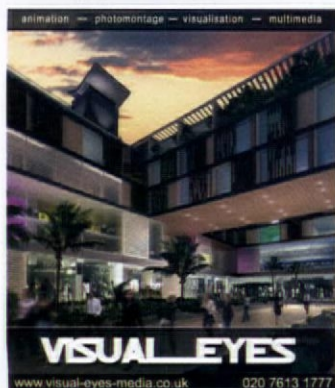
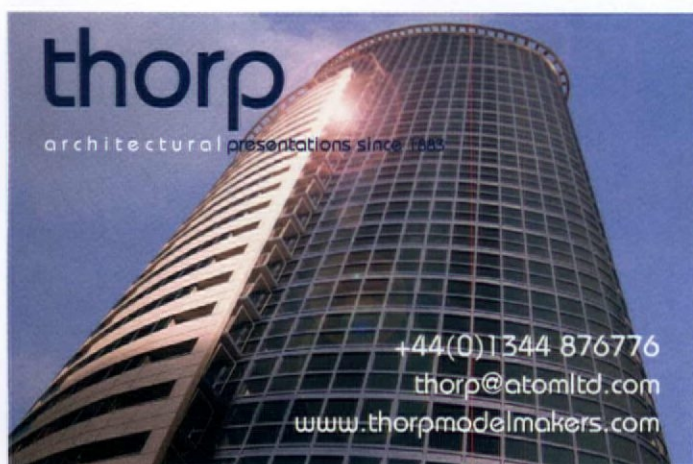


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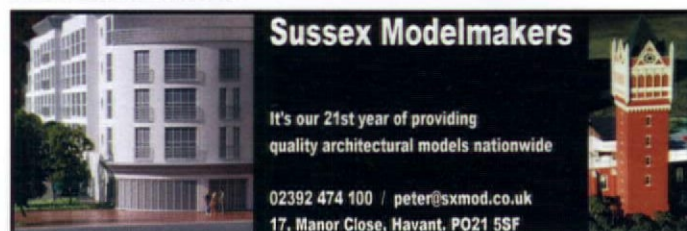
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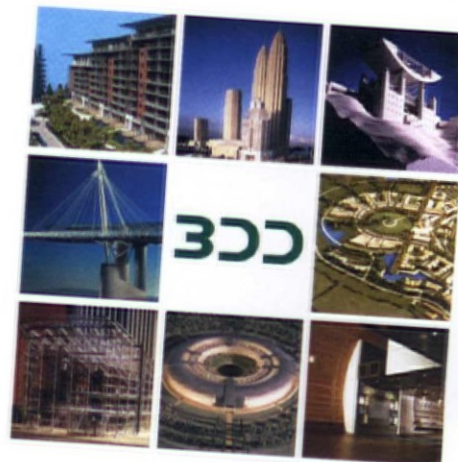
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# Products

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### AJ ENQUIRY 201

Corus Colorcoat Prisma pre-finished steel has been used for the wall cladding of the new 18,500m<sup>2</sup> GTG training centre in Glasgow, Scotland, designed by Opfer Logan Architects. Corus Colorcoat Prisma is highly durable and has the benefit of being backed for up to 25 years by the comprehensive Confidex Guarantee, exclusive to Corus.

## SAS



### AJ ENQUIRY 203

SAS International's acoustic baffles and wall panels have been installed at a new secondary school in Popley, North Basingstoke. Installed in all classrooms throughout the school – including the first-floor classrooms with pitched ceilings and clerestory windows – the vertically mounted acoustic panels at high level maximise usable space.

## RUUKKI



### AJ ENQUIRY 205

Ruukki, leading manufacturer of metal-based components and integrated systems for the construction industry, has introduced a new naming scheme to make it easier to select products for specific applications. Each product is given a name that describes what it does, followed by a code representing its precise technical characteristics.

## STANNAH



### AJ ENQUIRY 207

The Stannah Midilift SL platform lift has been installed at the extended indoor sports centre at Sherborne Girls School, Dorset, to transport wheelchair users to a range of first-floor facilities designed especially for disabled people. The lift nestles beside the general-access stairway and complements the welcoming interior design of the centre.

## STOAKES SYSTEMS



### AJ ENQUIRY 202

Translucent Kalwall + Nanogel, seen here at Highcrest School in Buckinghamshire, has a U-value of 0.28 – better than a solid wall. The new Nanogel brochure from Stokaes Systems explains all about this invisible energy-saving ingredient. For more information and to download the brochure visit [www.stokaes.co.uk](http://www.stokaes.co.uk)

## CLAXTON BLINDS



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## FREEFOAM PLASTICS



### AJ ENQUIRY 206

Roplas, leading stockist and supplier of PVC-U building plastics in the UK, has announced Freefoam Plastics as the new supplier of its white, coloured and woodgrain fascia and soffit products to the five Roplas branches. Roplas is part of the SIG Group, whose roofline and building plastics division is the largest distributor of roofline products in the UK.

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# Ian Martin. Architecture is highly addictive. Never look at it before lunch

**MONDAY.** Attend a seminar on Tackling Obesogenic Environments. Ideas aired include: more cycle lanes and footpaths, food rationing, **the reintroduction of wolves**, a chair ban, narrower doorways, replace lifts with wall bars, annual fat permits.

**TUESDAY.** Finish my 21st-century sustainable nuclear power station prototype. It's built entirely from recycled materials, including **an innovative depleted-uranium cladding**. And a giant feng shui air freshener on the roof.

**WEDNESDAY.** To LIVERPOOL, the compulsory cultural city of capital letters 08. I'm having lunch with the new Secretary of State for Entertainment, Azzy Bifter. He's got a lot on his plate at the moment, and none of it's salad.

This is a dream job for Azzy. Here he is, a proper Scouser, in charge not just of Merseyside's glorious pageant of the arts, but the whole of Britain's entertainment. 'And dhat...' he says, 'covers all dhe arts, yeah. Everything from bewks to Russell Watson to wharrever's on yer telly, eh, I've said bewks haven't a...?'

Azzy's suddenly in the spotlight. The government wants schoolchildren to consume five hours of compulsory 'top-quality culture' a week, along with their 35 pieces of fruit. It's a logistical nightmare. Culture must be identified, sourced, delivered, experienced, benchmarked and audited. There are only so many regional productions of *Cats*. And a finite number of rap workshops.

That's why the Department of Entertainment has convened a 'policy

workforce' of young civil servants for whom school is a fresh and vivid memory. They've compiled a list of The Top 100 Culturetainments... Ever. 'It's just a birra fun, like' says Azzy. Which we both know is public-sector code for prioritised cultural targeting.

He passes me the printout. Curry sauce on it already. **Architecture is 97th in the Culturetainment countdown, between 'Morris dancing' and 'flower arranging'**. I tell him this is an error. Architecture may be static, dull even. But it is 'free to air'. You could make children stare at a church for an hour, have an informal discussion about churches and what they mean, then get them to express their feelings through creative writing and harvesting pictures from the internet. Spin that out over several weeks and you're halfway to an A-Level.

Azzy brightens at this positive, optimistic rethinking of architecture as cheap course-work material. By the fourth Armagnac we're on a roll and have brainstormed a solution for two big entertainment problems. One: The BBC is now really boring, and must become more 'interactive and digital' if it is to retain the current licence fee arrangement. Two: Architecture is much more interesting on TV than when you actually see it. I convince Azzy that reality architecture could be the solution. Scrap the planning system and get the BBC to regulate design via phone-ins and an online vote. Use the website and local radio stations for run-of-the-mill applications, BBC2 for the big knobby stuff. Maybe have a shouty elimination show hosted by Graham Norton. With the word People's in it. Watch this epic space.

**THURSDAY.** Debate at the RIPBA: is architecture being feminised? Verdict: sort of. **Many contemporary landmarks appear to have a 'female pulse'.** Indeed, many of them look like they could be ovulating. On the other hand, still not enough ladies' toilets.

**FRIDAY.** Meet my friend Darcy the architecture critic for a drink. He looks terrible. Gaunt, pale, trembling. And he's wearing a ridiculous 'ironic' Alpine hat with a souvenir model of the Gherkin where the feather should be. 'I've been through the mill, darling' he says. 'Get me a large one...'

God. Just what I need, an hour of melodrama with Darcy. **I surreptitiously play online Boggle under the table, occasionally glancing up and making sympathetic noises.** He's been depressed lately... his latest boyfriend is as shallow as all the others... going to the AA a lot, no surprise there, the place is stuffed with kindred souls... Yes! 220 points, including the word 'Byzantine'!

He gets up to leave and is oddly diffident. 'Look, I don't know if you'd be interested. But the longest journey starts with a single step.' A few minutes later I look at the pamphlet he's left on the table. AA. It stands for Archiholics Anonymous. What a hoot. Hmm, there's a meeting next week...

**SATURDAY.** Binge-view architecture all day until **I throw up.**

**SUNDAY.** Self-fenestrate in the recliner by 'glazing over'.

This Week's Top 10: Designer Toilets

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Masterplan inserted into Zmapping context model



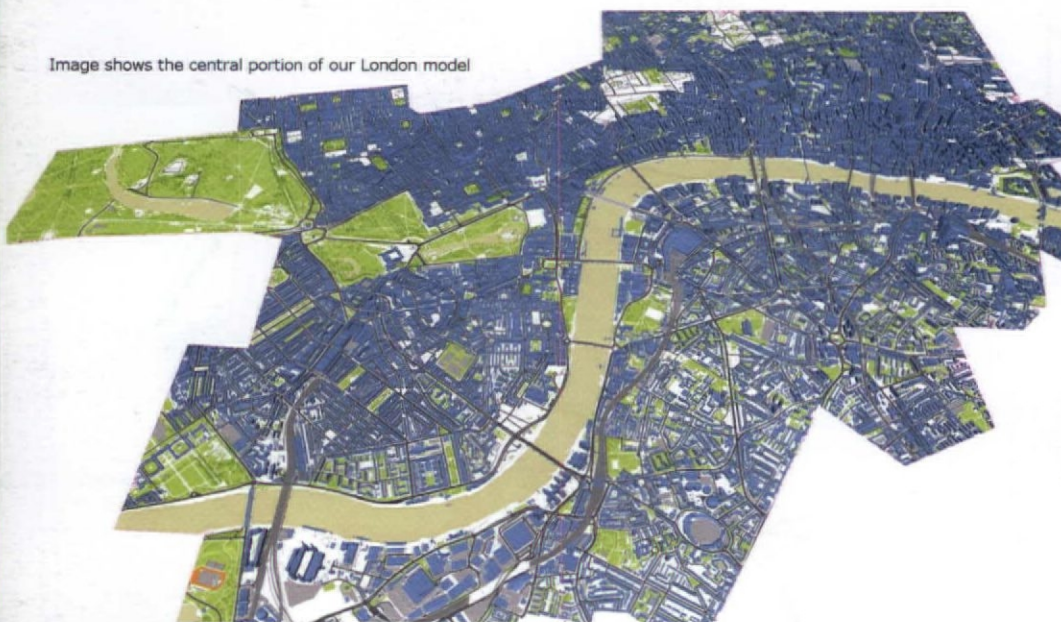
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