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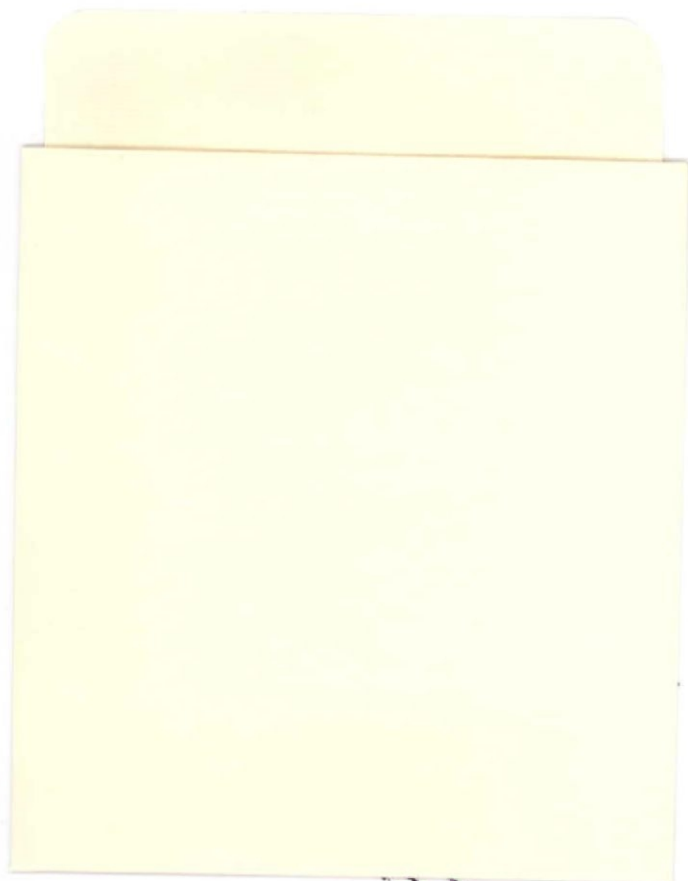
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CONTEMPORARY APARTMENT TYPES

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Cover A town by AOC director Geoff Shearcroft, drawn at 1:1,000 scale using apartment types from this issue, with all buildings set the equivalent of 21m apart

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Team selected for Terry Farrell's Leeds Eastgate masterplan p.7

Atkin's Newcastle sports centre is in good shape p.8

The Tropicana development in Weston-super-Mare meets with local opposition p.12

News

SKYLON TO RISE AGAIN

The first steps towards resurrecting Skylon, the symbol of the 1951 Festival of Britain, have been revealed to the AJ.

In June, as part of this year's London Festival of Architecture, a temporary structure – potentially an inflatable model – will be built on top of the foundations of the Powell & Moya-designed

'We want support for a new structure. Skylon is one of London's lost icons'

tower on the South Bank. This could pave the way for a 90m-high permanent replica.

Former RIBA president Jack Pringle, who is masterminding the project, said: 'Skylon is one of London's lost icons. We hope to stimulate people's imagination to get support for a new structure.'

Previous attempts to recreate the mast, including a bid backed by Ian Ritchie in 2004, have all failed. And late last year Rick Mather Architects told the AJ there were no plans to incorporate Skylon into its masterplan for the area. *Richard Waite*

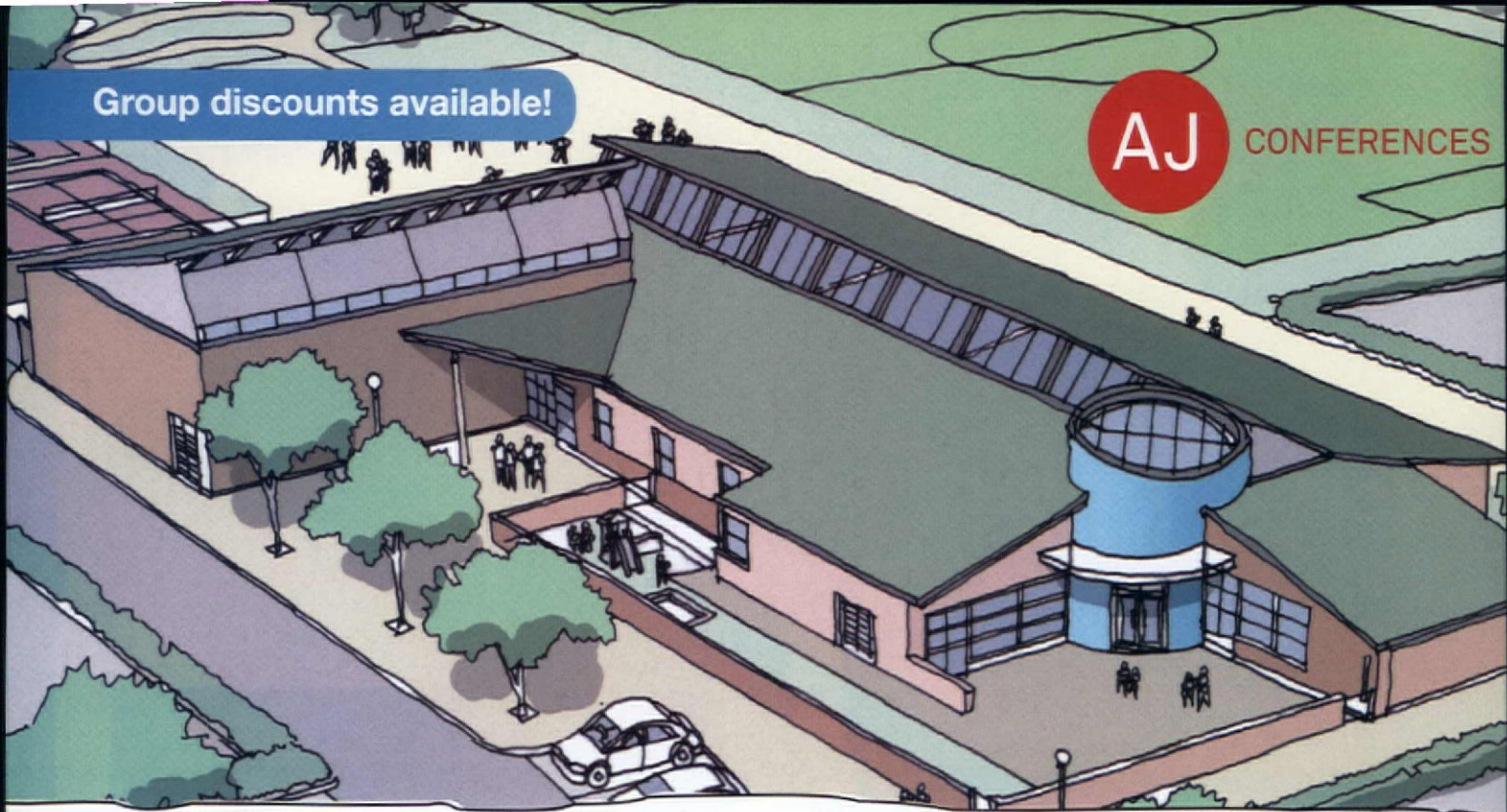
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The flagship John Lewis store in Leeds, to be built by Acme Space

TEAM CHOSEN FOR FARRELL MASTERPLAN

An eclectic mix of architects has been chosen to deliver Terry Farrell's £800 million retail-led Eastgate masterplan in Leeds city centre.

Developers Hammerson and Town Centre Securities have picked Heatherwick Studio, John McAslan + Partners, Benoy, Los Angeles-based Jerde Partnership and landscape architect Gross. Max to work on the 140,000m² regeneration scheme.

The practices will work alongside Acme Space, a practice formed last year by two former Foreign Office Architects, which saw off Carmody Groarke and Kengo Kuma to land the flagship 26,000m² John Lewis store at the

heart of the development (pictured above).

More than 70 practices were originally considered by the developers, following an 'international search' which kicked-off at the global property trade show MIPIM last year (AJ online 09.03.07).

Last March, Hammerson took the unusual step of openly inviting architects from around the globe to enter into talks with its development team at the fair in Cannes and vie for some of the prize plots.

Once complete, the project will create 100 shops, 600 homes and a restaurant district. The Jerde Partnership and Benoy are to

design around 84,000m² of retail space along a revitalised Templar Street, while Heatherwick Studio will mastermind the Harewood Courts boutique quarter.

McAslan will restore the listed buildings, which fall under the larger masterplan, including a terrace designed by Reginald Blomfield, who also remodelled London's Regent Street.

Leeds City Council's civic architect John Thorp, who helped to select the six winners, said: 'A competitive process has led to the selection of a group of practices, who I believe will bring individuality to the design of this city-centre project.' *Richard Waite*

THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

CHIPPERFIELD WINS GREEN LIGHT FOR MARGATE GALLERY

David Chipperfield's £17.4 million replacement for the doomed Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate, Kent has been given the green light by Thanet District Council. Chipperfield was brought in after Snøhetta and Spence's pebble-like scheme ballooned over budget.

ODA UNVEILS WINNERS IN 'JUNIOR VELODROME' COMPETITION

A secondary school in Tyne and Wear and a primary school in East London have both won the Olympic Delivery Authority's competition to design the 'Olympic cycling venues of the future'. St Roberts of Newminster School in Washington and Curwen Primary School in Newham were crowned as victors in the London 2012 VeloDream contest.

SALFORD UNIVERSITY MERRY-GO-ROUND CONTINUES

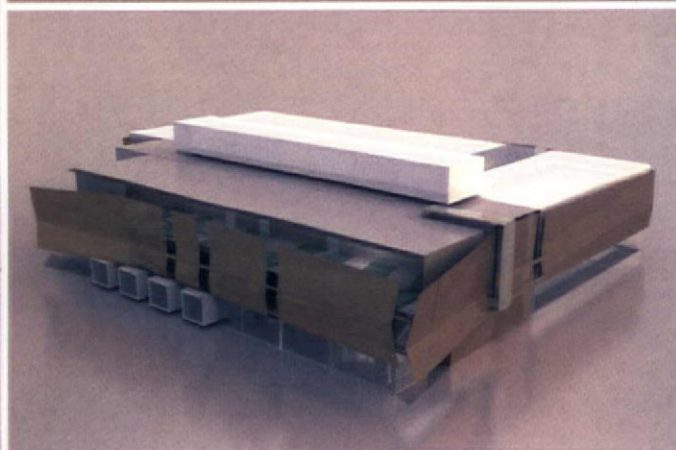
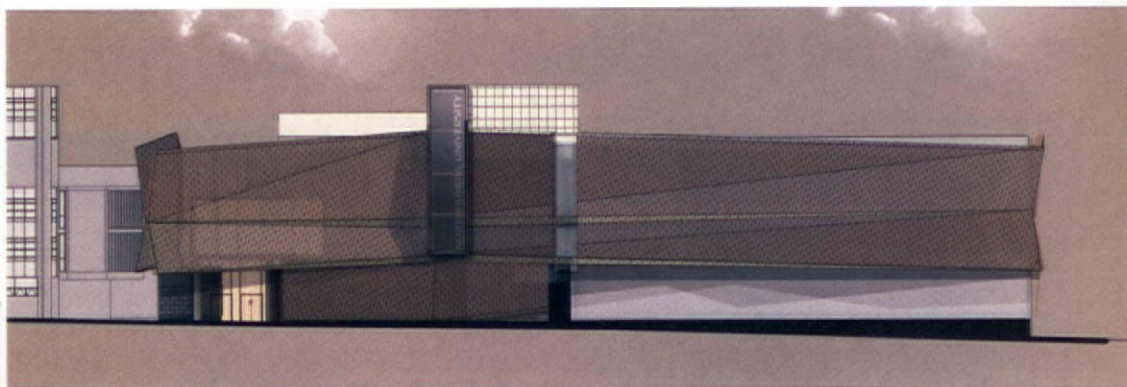
Sheppard Robson has followed Danish practice 3XN out the door after the Faculty of Arts, Media and Social Sciences at the University of Salford decided to ditch its replacement plans for a new home. The university has instead launched a search for an architect to fit out a 'base building' at Salford Quays.

DUGGAN MORRIS OUSTED AT CHELSEA HARBOUR

Aukett Fitzroy Robinson Architects (AFR) has replaced Duggan Morris Architects on a scheme in Chelsea Harbour. AFR has been brought in as executive architect for the design centre, even though planning had been secured by Duggan Morris

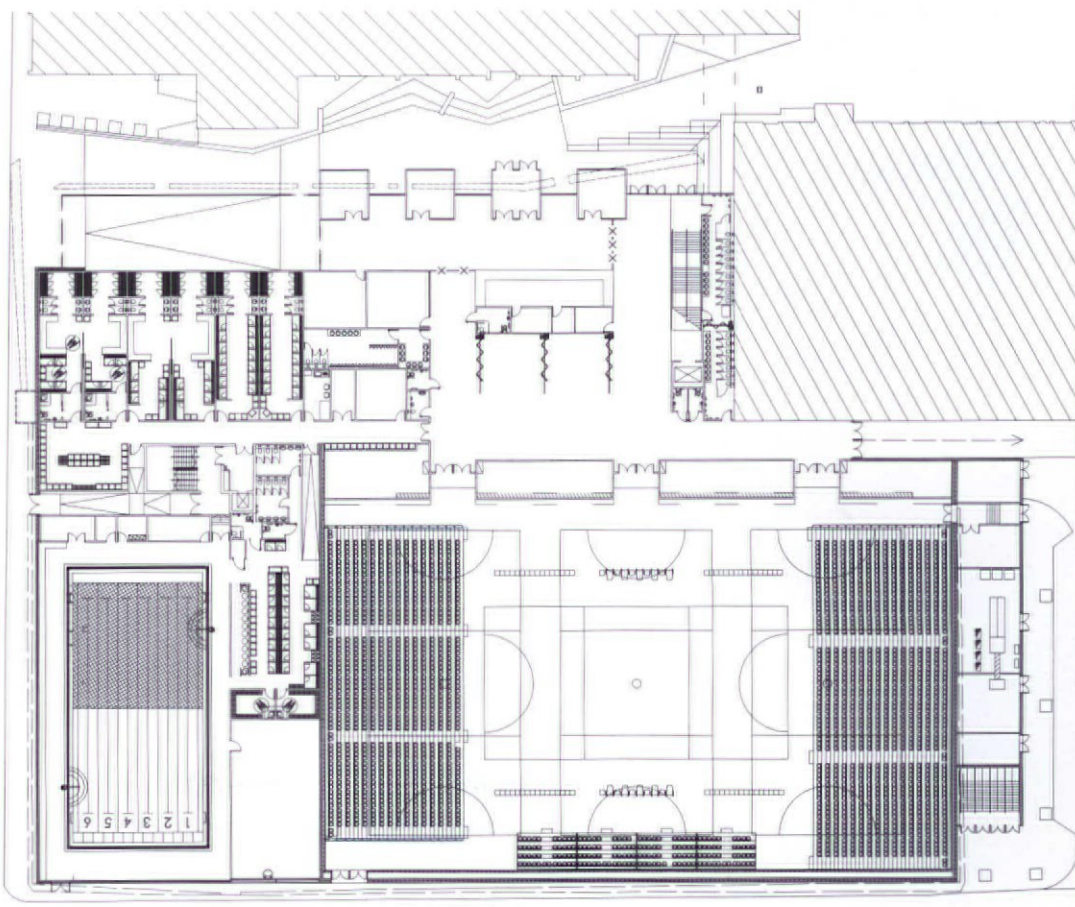
Read all these stories and more at WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK





ATKINS UNVEILS SPORTS CENTRE

This is Atkins' recently approved £20 million sports facility for Northumbria University, Newcastle. The building will house three squash courts, a 10m-high climbing wall, a 2,600-seat sports arena, and a 25m swimming pool underneath a first-floor running track. Clad in angular anodised-aluminium sheets, the scheme is due to complete in spring 2010. *Richard Waite*



VAIZEY CALLS FOR OVERHAUL OF DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

The Conservative Party's architecture minister, Ed Vaizey, has revealed that he is considering a drastic shake up of the design review process.

Plans mooted by Vaizey include a move to ensure that design is a 'consideration from the beginning and throughout

government procurement, rather than a factor at the end of the process'.

Speaking at a RIBA-organised summit this month, Vaizey said: 'The Department of Culture Media and Sport, through CABE, should act as design champion across government, giving

approval to all major government projects.'

Vaizey also said that he would consider introducing a new tier of design review by appointing a raft of county architects.

He said: 'We explored the role of architecture in planning, and it was suggested that architecture

should have a clearer role. One way of realising that might be through county architects.'

Although Vaizey was quick to quash his ideas as potential Tory policy, he added that they were 'worth investigating'.

CABE refused to comment on the proposals. *Richard Vaughan*

SCOTTISH HOMES JM Architects has just completed this 24-home scheme on a brownfield site in Glasgow. A mix of three-storey townhouses, a villa and apartments, the blocks all use timber-kit construction and faced in grey/brown brick.



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MIAMI BEACH OR SEASIDE MALL?

Its supporters say Tropicana brings Art Deco to Weston-super-Mare, others say it will devastate it. *Richard Vaughan* investigates



Weston-super-Mare is on the up. The North Somerset seaside town is now attracting the likes of Urban Splash and even Foster + Partners to help with its regeneration. But, according to locals, one development has crashed the party.

Last week, developer Henry Boot submitted its plans to build a £30 million leisure centre on the site of a 1938 Art Deco lido called the Tropicana, and it hasn't been welcomed with open arms.

The proposals, designed by London-based Mountford Piggott Architects, include a water park on four levels, a six-lane 25m pool, a 96-bedroom hotel, a multiplex cinema and a 20-lane bowling alley.

The Lifestation at Tropicana project is a stone's throw from Birnbeck Pier (*see map, far right*), a development that is currently the subject of an Urban Splash competition and which has attracted a host of young architects, such as FLACQ, AOC, and Levitate Architecture.

Former RIBA president George Ferguson is chairing the judging panel for the Urban

Splash competition, and his practice, Acanthus Ferguson Mann Architects, is currently working on Knightstone Island, equidistant from Birnbeck Pier and the Tropicana development. He believes the scheme is wrong for the area.

'It looks like an attempt at the De La Warr Pavilion meeting the Arndale shopping centre, with an uncomfortable result,' he says.

'Weston-Super-Mare has a great opportunity to lift itself from its post-war ordinariness

'It looks like the De La Warr Pavilion meeting the Arndale Centre'

with really good architecture – this is not it.'

Mountford Piggott partner David Shore hit back at Ferguson and claimed that the scheme brought a touch of Miami to the town. He said: 'The design is influenced by the De La Warr Pavilion and the Art Deco movement, but also by Miami Beach.

'The design has been reworked in recognition of the last design

review [held in November 2007], but you obviously can't achieve everything; the project has to remain commercially viable,' he added.

The review referred to by Shore was the scheme's third; but it is not just design-review panels who have trained their fire on the scheme. The new Tropicana has also attracted opposition from two campaign groups, Tropicana Regeneration and Development Association (TRADA) and Friends of Our Tropicana (FOOT), both of whom would prefer to see the building refurbished.

FOOT secretary Sonia Russé says: 'The lido has been abused and pillaged over the years, architecturally it has been ruined. We would love to see it refurbished but this may not be possible. We would at least rather have a smaller scheme with a large pool.

'Our major concerns are with the mass and size of the proposed scheme, as it is right on the beach. It will devastate the character of the seafront, as well as the north and south vistas. The

site is a major asset to the town, and the council has given it away in return for a free swimming pool.'

While Shore conceded that the project has 'had a mixed reception', he claims that 'many people see it as the life line that will kick start Weston-super-Mare and bring it back to the 21st century'.

A spokesman for Henry Boot goes a step further and claims that the scheme is vital for the redevelopment of Weston.

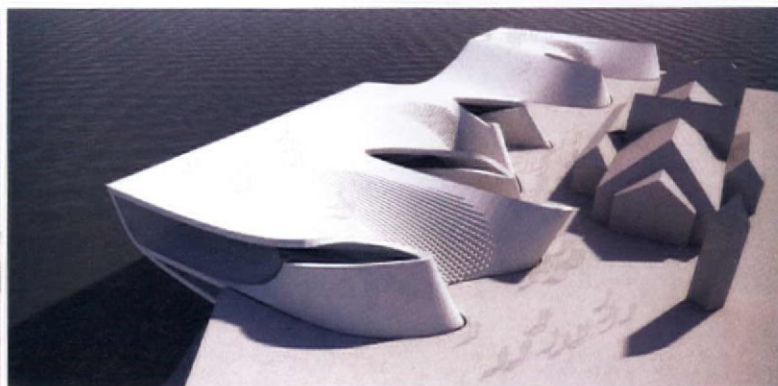
'The Tropicana lido has been abused over the years'

'Knightstone Island, Birnbeck Pier and the Tropicana site have always been the barometers of Weston's health,' he says. 'Now all three are on the cusp of delivering to help the ever-growing Weston-super-Mare. These three schemes will ensure there is more time spent by families on Weston's seafront.'

More time, and more money. Britain's seaside towns are, according to the British Resorts and Destinations Association,



This image
Mountford Piggott's
proposed Lifestation
at Tropicana scheme



growing rapidly. In 2006, 21 million Britons holidayed at the seaside, spending more than £14 billion, compared to 19 million who holidayed in 2003.

And CABE Space director Sarah Gaventa says more people are moving to the coast, giving councils all the more reason to get the redevelopment right.

'A focus on culture is the best way to regenerate the seaside town,' she says. 'The town needs to look at its assets. The last thing it needs is an out-of-town shopping centre.'

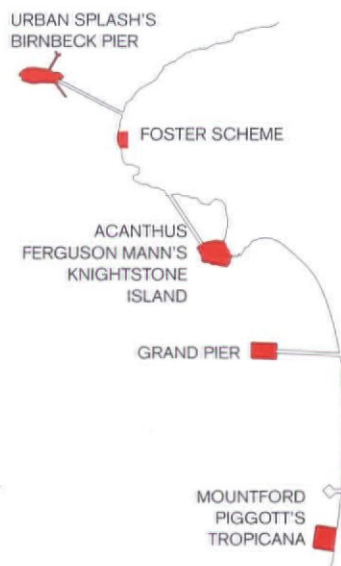
'Towns have to accept the very best, and not be too grateful for

handouts. It depends on how much "oomph" a local authority has, but more people are being drawn to coast to live, so towns need to design and plan with more sophistication.

'Britain invented the seaside town, and we can reinvent it,' Gaventa adds.

North Somerset Council will determine the scheme's fate this summer. If it gets the green light, Henry Boot hopes to have the Tropicana development completed by 2010.

Read Kieran Long's leader on page 18

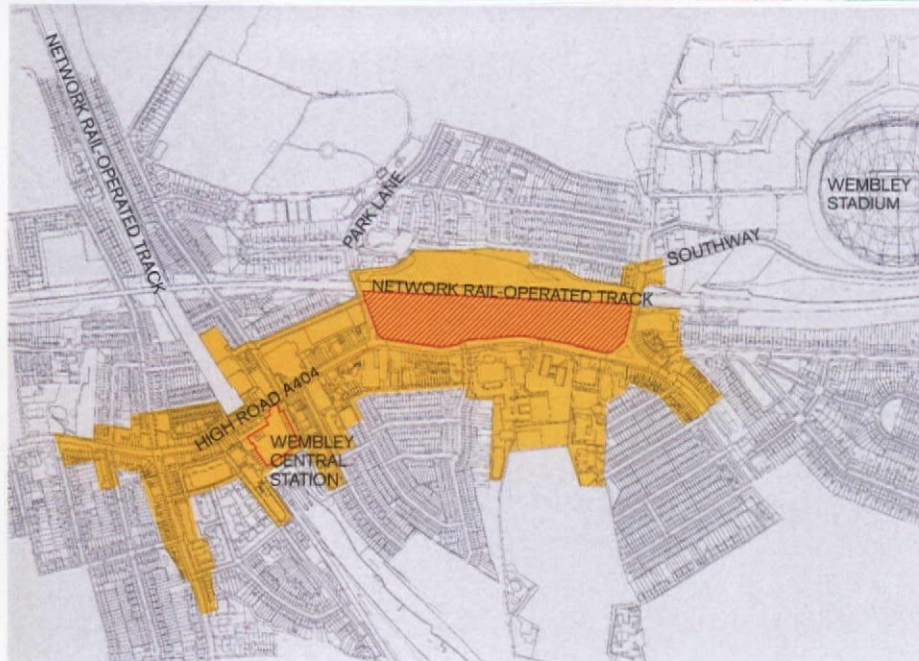


Left Map
showing current
developments in
Weston-super-
Mare

Above left
Acanthus
Ferguson Mann
Architects'
Knightstone

Island project,
for Redrow
Homes

Above Austrian
firm MOH
Architects' entry
for Urban
Splash's
Birnbeck Pier
competition



METAPHORM HIRED TO TRANSFORM WEMBLEY

London-based architectural firm Metaphorm has been appointed by Brent Council to deliver a strategy for the development of Wembley town centre.

The vision takes in a swathe of central Wembley to the west of the stadium but is concentrated on a site sandwiched between the Network Rail-operated Chiltern Line to the north and Wembley High Road to the south (the area shown in the red hatching in the map above).

In addition to an urban park, the scheme includes 'cultural, leisure and retail free-form pavilions' and a mix of residential and commercial developments, as well as a pedestrian bridge.

Brent Council urban planner Luke Joyce said that the council was in discussion with several key landowners, including the London & Quadrant Housing Trust and Fairgate Group, which own commercial blocks within the site boundary.

Joyce added that a number of compulsory purchase orders of private houses would have to be issued to achieve the masterplan. 'To the eastern end of the High Road near the stadium there is a lot of private ownership. We are looking at how it can be delivered in smaller chunks,' he said.

He added that Metaphorm has been contracted to come up with the concept design only, and Brent Council would work up the detail 'in house'. *Max Thompson*

Above left
The mixed-use scheme is to the west of Wembley stadium

Above The urban park has both residential and commercial blocks, near the stadium arch

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THIS IS ANFISON

Liverpool-based architect and lifelong Everton FC fan **Trevor Skempton** has drawn up some innovative plans which he believes could help perennial Merseyside footballing rivals Liverpool and Everton share a stadium in Liverpool's Stanley Park. With both clubs currently planning to build expensive new stadiums, Skempton has proposed the 'Anfison/Goodfield' scheme (pictured right and below), to feature the Everton FC Pavilion – a conical tower housing the '1878 Hotel' – on the north corner, and the Liverpool FC Pavilion, complete with 'Kop

Hotel' and Liver Bird, on the south corner. Skempton says: 'The time may have come for a world-class shared stadium.' Astragal is inclined to agree, but can't help but concur with one anonymous commentator on www.architectsjournal.co.uk, who says of the plan: 'I think this is proper mental.'



WIND-ASSISTED

Wind power may normally be clean and safe, but when it goes wrong, the results can be catastrophic, as a video clip recently discovered by Astragal proves. To see the footage, visit www.architectsjournal.co.uk and look for the story 'Wind Turbine Goes Berserk'. The title says it all...

LIFT ME UP

After Astragal reported on DRDH directors **Daniel Rosbottom** and **David Howarth** getting trapped in the London

Metropolitan University lift before LMU Architecture Research Unit leader **Florian Beigel** came to their rescue (www.architectsjournal.co.uk), others have come out of the woodwork to say that they too have been imprisoned in the faulty elevator. Not only did one AJ staffer have to clamber out of it in death-defying fashion last year, but Southwark-based architect **Andrew Houlton** also spent an hour stuck there recently. 'I quite enjoyed it,' he told Astragal, bizarrely. Have you too been stuck in the London Metropolitan University lift? If so, send your story to comment@architectsjournal.co.uk

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Would the UK benefit from a guerilla restoration movement? (see right for result).

Next week's question:
Should Skylon be recreated?

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NO
26%

YES
74%





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Leader & Comment



Leader Just look at the proposals for the seafront at Weston-super-Mare to see how far the UK has come from location-specific architecture, says **Kieran Long**

I was having lunch with a partner of a large, design-led practice this week. 'I think we're stuck in a bit of a rut,' he told me. 'I think everyone is.'

He was referring to design quality on an urban scale, arguing that despite high aspirations and decent architects, no one is really making new towns and developments that are authentically rooted in their locations. He was lamenting the kind of deployable, non-specific architecture that exists all over the country, from Kent to the Borders, from South Wales to Belfast (as also noted by Alan Jones and David Brett in their provocative book *Toward an Architecture: Ulster*, published

this month and to be reviewed in the AJ next week).

Our news about the future of the seafront in Weston-super-Mare (see pages 12-13) is instructive. The runners and riders are as follows: a selection of blobs and mounds on the Urban Splash competition shortlist for Birnbeck Pier; a hotel that will, I'm willing to bet, be one of Foster + Partners' less-published schemes; Acanthus Ferguson Mann's proposal, which looks like a Connecticut boathouse, with its inexplicable symmetry and jolly flag poles; and Mountford Piggott's leisure-ecture confection, which comes on like a steroidal De La Warr Pavilion and hoves into view

bringing old-school values of a leisure destination under one roof, surrounded by car parking.

What will future generations think of a town that has four such contrasting visions of its future? Will they celebrate our open-minded pluralism, astounded at the breadth of imagination of planning authorities able to judge these schemes alongside one another? Or will they just demolish the crap and make the considered judgements about quality that we seem unable to make?

I think we're stuck in a rut, too. A new conversation about a regional UK architecture needs to begin. kieran.long@emap.com



Opinion Too much architecture is *tamasic*, says **Satish Kumar**. If you don't know what that means, read on...

The call for a more people- and planet-friendly architecture has been sounding since I first began editing environmental magazine *Resurgence* over 35 years ago. Sustainability is not a trend, it is a necessity. It is more than loft insulation, a few solar panels and long-life lightbulbs. Authentic sustainability requires a paradigm shift in our mindset. To bring about sustainable architecture, we need humility, we need simplicity and we need moderation in our use of natural resources. These principles have their roots in ancient Indian wisdom dating back thousands of years.

There are three Indian words that apply to every aspect of our lives; from the food we eat and the clothes we wear to the thoughts we think and the words we speak. They also apply

to architecture. These words are *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*.

A *sattvic* house is a home, comfortable, pleasing, sufficient and serene. It makes frugal use of local, natural materials. Tepees, yurts, igloos, huts, tents, cottages, farmhouses, barns and bungalows are all *sattvic* forms. *Sattvic* architecture embraces connectivity, community and conviviality.

Rajasic buildings make a statement of importance. Palaces, pyramids, castles,

We need humility and simplicity to bring about sustainable architecture

cathedrals and stadiums are *rajasic* buildings. They project power, authority, splendour and status. They are walled in, protected, fortified and guarded to keep the elite safe and the multitudes out.

Tamasic buildings are built with utility in mind. High-rise, energy-intensive city towers and housing estates where people are boxed together in a soulless environment with no space to breathe, no trees to shelter, no grass, no earth, no water and no flowers are *tamasic*.

Tamasic buildings make no use of the free gifts of nature like natural sunlight or fresh

air. They are heated artificially, cooled artificially, lit artificially and ventilated artificially, using unnecessary amounts of fossil fuel. These systems are controlled by computers and people using these buildings have little power to reduce or increase cooling, heating, light or ventilation. Architecture which imposes, dictates and controls human behaviour is purely *tamasic* because it lacks tranquility, sincerity, authenticity and sustainability.

It has been said that in order for architects to consider future occupants, they should live in their own creations. I also propose that architects should think about what the human spirit needs and what their buildings mean for the people who exist in them.

I want to see architecture that empowers people, not suppresses them. One based on sustainability, community and enriching the human spirit. One that supports creativity, aids healthy lifestyles, and improves morale. An architecture that frees people, relates to the future and lets in the light.

Satish Kumar is the editor of environmental magazine *Resurgence*

Email comment@architectsjournal.co.uk

Opinion Will the future see us travelling into huge city-centre business districts, or will we be working where we live?

Richard Saxon wonders

Are business districts a sustainable concept? As office work becomes the main type of employment, the conventional wisdom of having an area of the city devoted to office work needs to be questioned. My thoughts were stimulated by the World Business Districts Summit for Sustainable Development, held on 14-15 February and organised by the *Etablissement Public d'Aménagement de La Défense*, the French public company that manages Paris' La Défense business district.

Central business districts, often very dense and at the hub of public transport networks, are relatively resource-efficient compared to distributed, car-based business parks. Hong Kong uses a 10th of the energy of Houston due to its ability to rely on a metro system.

We should live where we work, like the turtle, said Jaime Lerner, architect-mayor of Curitiba, Brazil

But 'downtown' is often a soulless place, deserted and unsafe after hours. And need anyone travel to town when broadband allows them to work from home or the beach?

People do like to work and play together. Organisations need to be experienced physically to foster team spirit. Businesses like their peers, suppliers and customers nearby. People also like to get outside their base office and mix, before, during and after work, shunning sterile business parks. The most successful business districts are highly mixed in their use, with office buildings underpinned by good shopping, leisure and hotels, and increasingly topped with apartment living. The edited Athens Charter of 1942, coined by Le Corbusier and others in the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), proposed an urbanism based on separate func-



Paris' La Défense business district

tional zones for working, culture, education, health and living, linked by arterial transport in a matrix of green space. This approach, driven partly by the undesirability of industrial zones as a neighbour, became embedded in town-planning practice worldwide.

One model for the future is that dense business districts will become ever stronger, with critical mass for business success, civilised streets and squares with the full range of urban amenities, green spaces, shared energy, water and waste strategies, and dense housing inside the district and close by. Pedestrian and cycle movement, backed by good public transport from greater distances, will animate the district round the clock. La Défense wants to go this way; the City of London also wants some of this, minus the pesky residents who can stop the City and its businesses maintaining things during the night.

Another, less frenetic model proposes a medium-density, continuous urbanism, with all uses on ever city block and the full range of facilities and amenities within a cycle ride. The '22@ Barcelona' project for a new business district in the Poblenou area of the city illustrates this concept within the historic grid. Under this scheme, new, sustainable

utilities concepts will underlie each street in accessible galleries (no more road works), allowing buildings to trade information, energy, water and waste. 22@Barcelona expects to accommodate an economy where firms are smaller, and often home-based, where education is common and institutions are mixed into the grid, not given campuses. The idea of a business district fades away.

I believe we shall see both approaches. The world cities will have energy-intensive financial districts with the process heat of their technologies used for heating themselves and neighbouring housing. The secondary cities could be much lower-, or smarter-tech. I expect low-carbon cars to be common within a decade, allowing the suburban lifestyle to continue, but sprawl, and single-use zoning are clearly on their way out. 'The Athens Charter is dead', said French Politician Patrick Devedjian to the representatives of the 22 cities at the La Défense summit. We should live where we work, like the turtle, said Jaime Lerner, architect-mayor of Curitiba, Brazil. Cities are the new states and are learning from each other increasingly. There is hope for a sustainable future in this. Richard Saxon is vice president of the RIBA and past president of the British Council for Offices.

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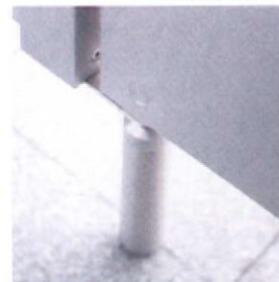
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Aldo Rossi knew all about the symbolic power of a kitchen table, writes Patrick Lynch

If Aldo Rossi's early work is an attempt to describe the value of each of the parts of a city in objective terms, his ironically titled *Scientific Autobiography* tempers his youthful rationalism with a series of extremely evocative photographs of spaces that he loved. A Roman aqueduct held up by a prosthetic brace; a Connecticut lighthouse shaped like a mast; a Wintergarten at the University of Zurich; a Cortile at Seville; and my favourite, an Italian farmhouse kitchen. Dark ceiling beams recede from view above a stone floor, a staircase rises and disappears in the distance, light from one corner of the room illuminates the wall surface and picks out a table set for family life that, I imagine, has also seen a birth and a corpse. An image of preservation and endurance, hard work and decay is presented. The architecture is made to last and to accept life. This room is not just fit for its purpose, the image suggests, it also modestly represents the dignity of its inhabitants' lives. You can imagine the conversations held there

and the emotion and suffering it has seen. Rossi saw human life as inevitably theatrical. The places in which we live testify to our enduring love of display and ritual, which he described as 'an analogy for architecture, what I have called "the fixed scene of human events"'. The theatricality of human affairs, our processional movement and daily habits, led him to conclude: 'It is clear that the theatre must be stationary, stable and irreversible – but this seems true of all architecture.'

(which is the mark of superficial people) but out of a strange profundity of feeling for things'. In his *Scientific Autobiography*, Rossi muses that 'Forgetting Architecture comes to mind as a more appropriate title... since while I may talk about a school, a cemetery, a theatre, it is more correct to say that I talk about life, death, imagination.' Types for Rossi are symbolic of ideals – the law court as a site of justice; a university cloister alluding to the sanctity of education; the hushed atmosphere

The places in which we live testify to our enduring love of display and ritual

What mattered for Rossi was the idea of the city as something continuous that represents the symbolic life of its inhabitants. Rossi demanded that we accept that 'for every authentic artist', architectural creativity 'means to remake, not in order to effect some change

of a library reminding us of the sacred qualities of literature and knowledge. The sheltering quality of uniform housing and the individualistic qualities of other structures allude to the psychological differences that we recognise between the various public and private aspects of our lives and the masks that we wear. These ideals have emotional characteristics also, and buildings possess personae, Rossi suggested. He believed that architects too should adapt themselves to differing circumstances and to different occasions. Rossi said: 'I have always known that architecture was determined by the hour and the event'. He reminds us that our task as architects is remaining open to 'the idea of place, and hence light and time and imagination', suggesting that lightness in architecture might come less from our attempts to make heavy machines appear to float than in the contingency of our buildings; the adjustment of our language to time and place; and the light-heartedness and appropriateness of wit.



The farmhouse kitchen in Italy that inspired Aldo Rossi

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Letters

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

LDY STAYS GREEN

Jaffer Kolb's leader (AJ 21.02.08) is rightly concerned that the dialogue between architecture and masterplanning is fundamental in the context of sustainability. The sale of Llewelyn Davies Yeang's (LDY's) strategic policy and planning group represents the disposal of a business unit, not our relinquishing of key urbanist principles that impact on the design of buildings or places.

LDY's focus on signature deep-green design, together with our heritage of understanding the 'bigger picture', enables the development of eco-masterplanning, underpinned by a good understanding of utilities and urban infrastructure.

LDY is already undertaking an immense volume of this type of work, which is well illustrated by

our current work for the Plaza of Nations site in Vancouver, Canada (*below left*), a 280,000m² development where the urban design typology espouses the objectives of eco-density – the intensification of land use being justified by an ecological rationale and sustainability agenda which aims to go beyond the US LEED Platinum standard.

While we are confident that our former colleagues will continue to be a significant voice in the UK, LDY is focusing upon investment into eco-design research that enhances the design of better places to live and work. *Steve Featherstone, managing director, Llewelyn Davies Yeang*

IRISH TOWNS

I read the leader on New Town developments in the Republic of Ireland (AJ 24.01.08) with great interest. I'm an Irish architect currently working in Galway in the west of Ireland. Metropolitan Workshop's Adamstown (AJ 14.02.08) is indeed a great example of sustainable development and a much better alternative to the many low-density, car-dependant schemes that blighted the Irish landscape

during the Celtic Tiger boom years.

There are several other such schemes currently being built or in the planning process in Ireland which may also be of interest, such as Pelletstown, about 10km north of Dublin, and the Ballymun redevelopment, between Dublin City Centre and the airport and close to Adamstown. There is also the Ardaun scheme here in Galway, Cork's Docklands Directorate and a sustainable eco village in Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary.

The Irish government has published an Urban Design Manual (www.environ.ie/en/publicationsdocuments/filedownload,16692,en.pdf) as a best-practice guideline for local authorities and designers, which calls for higher densities, more integrated public transport and developments that cater for the needs of everyone.

Unfortunately, a lot of damage has been done over the last decade through *laissez-faire* attitudes to planning, and we can only hope that these guidelines and good examples will become a binding regulation for Irish local planners.

Colm Cantillon, Simon J Kelly + Partners Architects

TWEED SUITS

I read with interest the letter about Adam Wilkinson of SAVE whom you described as 'tweed' before his time. The message being that he has stuffy establishment views which are from an older generation.

I feel that this is really the wrong way round, because while most architects and developers are very happy with the establishment dogma of building bigger and higher structures while sacrificing the heritage of our cities, Adam is a lone voice expressing a revolutionary spirit whereby the beauty of the historic fabric of London could be preserved.

I only wish more people had his attitude.

Francis Terry, Quinlan & Francis Terry Architects

CORRECTION

Alan Dempsey and Alvin Huang work at Future Systems, not at Foreign Office Architects, as was stated in the article on the Design Research Laboratory (AJ 21.02.08).



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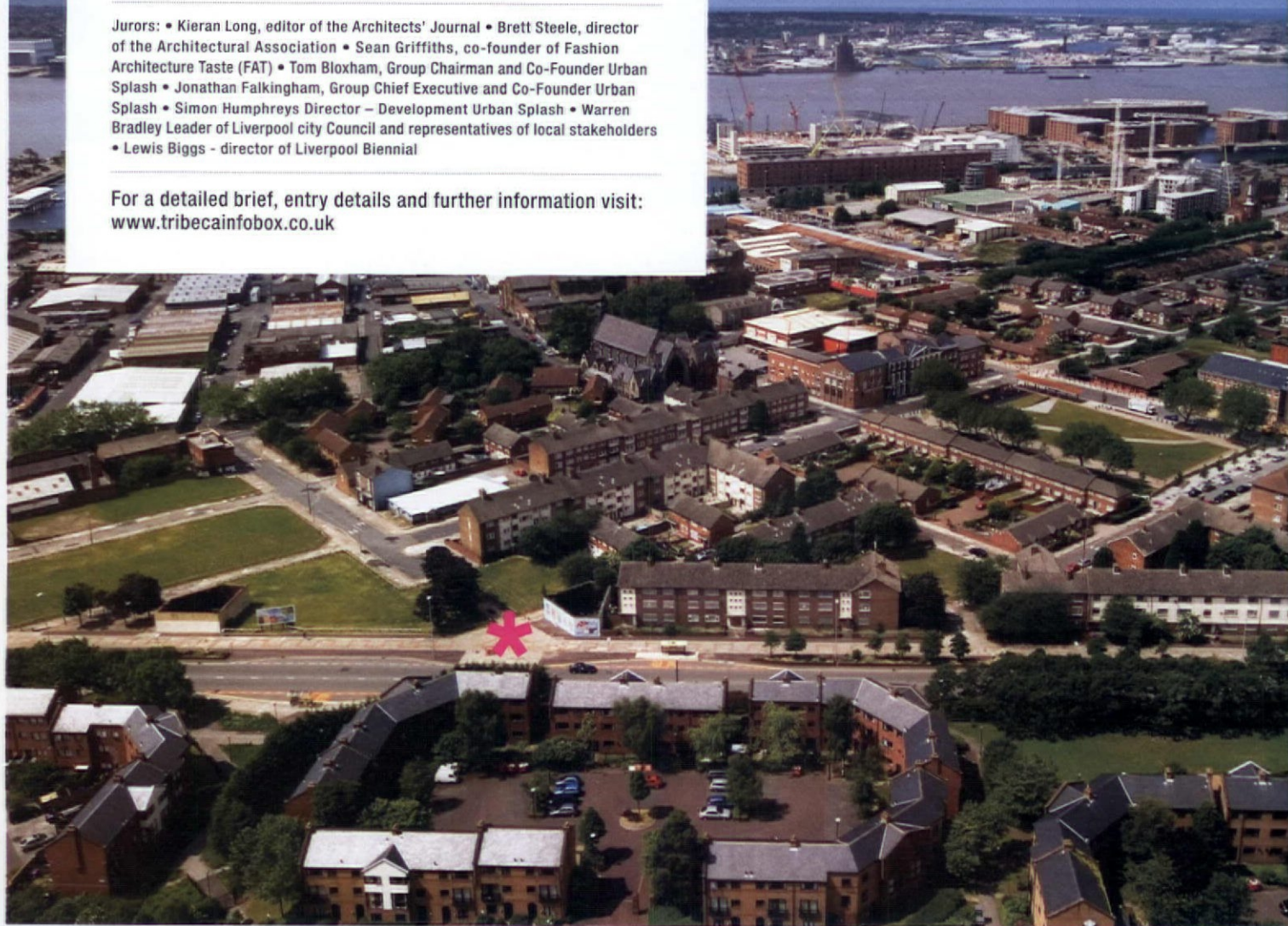
AN URBAN SPLASH / AJ COMPETITION

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!

Deadline for entries: 9th May 2008

Jurors: • Kieran Long, editor of the Architects' Journal • Brett Steele, director of the Architectural Association • Sean Griffiths, co-founder of Fashion Architecture Taste (FAT) • Tom Bloxham, Group Chairman and Co-Founder Urban Splash • Jonathan Falkingham, Group Chief Executive and Co-Founder Urban Splash • Simon Humphreys Director – Development Urban Splash • Warren Bradley Leader of Liverpool city Council and representatives of local stakeholders • Lewis Biggs - director of Liverpool Biennial

For a detailed brief, entry details and further information visit:
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URBAN SPLASH





HOUSING

The UK seems to have fallen in love with apartment living at last. A combination of increased tolerance of high density, urban in-migration, buy-to-let investors and life-style changes has led to an astronomical rise in the level of apartment building.

In response, we follow our Contemporary Terraced Housing Types feature (AJ 18.10.07) with a pattern book of one- and two-bedroom apartments, with floor plans to the same scale (p32-49).

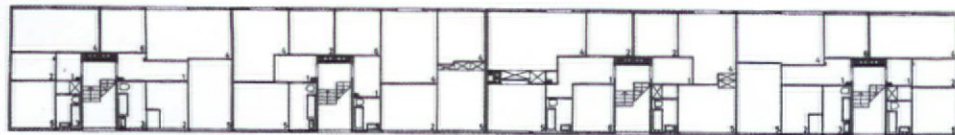
Housing and regeneration expert *Anna Minton* introduces this with a polemic on the rise of apartment building, criticising 'buy-to-leave', which she

says is creating a void at the heart of British cities (p28-31).

Cathy Strongman and PRP chairman *Andy von Bradsky* outline house-building legislation (p51-52).

James Pallister writes about an online housing pattern book that its creator hopes will give buyers an alternative to the narrow choice offered by housebuilders (p54-57).

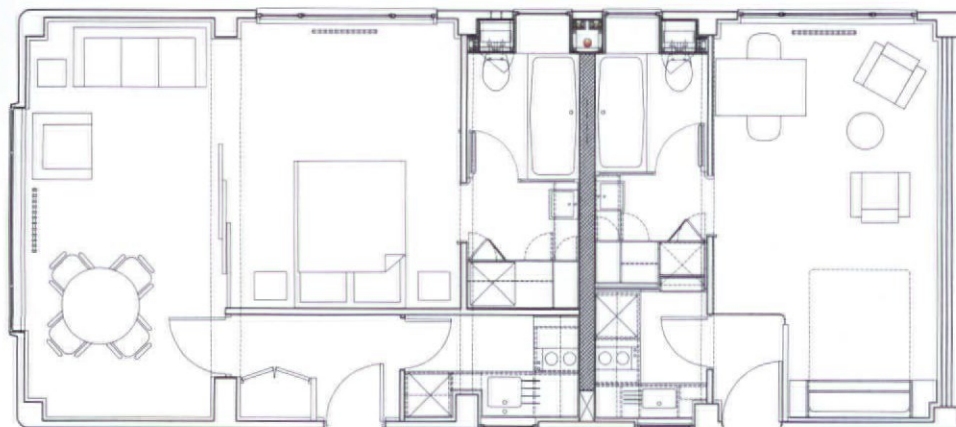
Hattie Hartman travels to Germany to see how the PassivHaus sustainability standard could be applied in the UK (p58-61). And to help with the stringent insulation demands of Passivhaus, we've chosen some of the best insulation products around (p62-63).



TAKEN FROM *MODERN ARCHITECTURE THROUGH CASE STUDIES*,
BY PETER BLUNDELL JONES, ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, OXFORD (2002)

MIES VAN DER ROHE, 1927

Block of flats, The Weissenhofsiedlung,
Stuttgart, Germany,



WELLS COATES, 1934

The Isokon Building, Lawn Road,
Hampstead, London

THE FLAT TRAP

Alongside some of the most iconic modern apartment plans, *Anna Minton* considers how in British cities, one- and two-bedroom flats are repeating mistakes of the past

In Patrick Keiller's film, *The Dilapidated Dwelling* (2000), his narrator Tilda Swinton posits the idea that English housing is the result of a society that never had a bourgeois revolution, unlike its European counterparts. Instead, rather than creating an urban housing ideal based on the 19th-century apartment blocks favoured by continental cities, the model English bourgeois home emerged from the Arts and Crafts movement and was anti-industrial, looking to a rural idyll in place of the city.

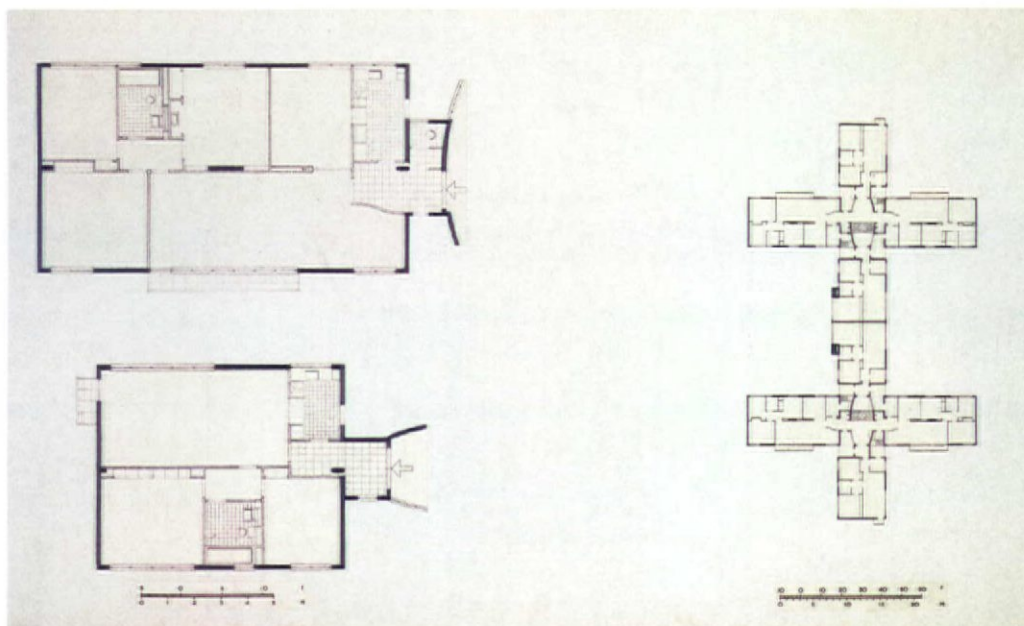
As far back as the 17th century Sir Edward Coke, the English jurist, was quoted

as saying 'a man's house is his castle', a phrase which been used to justify the cultural stereotype that the English prefer living in houses ever since, in contrast to life on the continent, which favours elegant apartment living alongside a café lifestyle and the tradition of the *passaggiata*.

Even within the city, the Georgian home can be seen as representing a version of the country house ideal, with Georgian squares built around a garden in contrast to country estates set within large grounds. Combined with a class system which long looked down on trade and favoured the country and the

landed gentry, all the historical ingredients for a type of housing which brings to mind the country – anything but an apartment in other words – are in place. The Garden City movement, which similarly grew out of a desire to escape the horrors of industrialisation and the slums of the city, paved the way for the suburban house and garden.

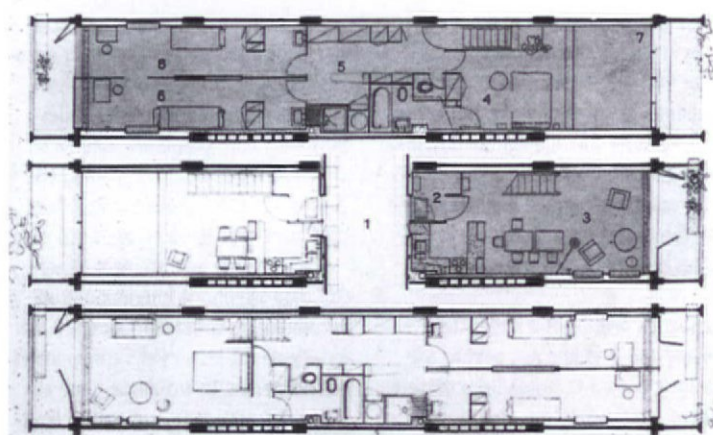
With the post-war construction boom and the arrival of centralised planning, inner-city slums were cleared once again, this time to make way for Modernist tower blocks – new light, bright 'flats in the sky' with hot running water and fitted kitchens. Unfortunately, the



RIBA LIBRARY DRAWINGS COLLECTION

BERTHOLD LUBETKIN, 1935

Highpoint I, Hampstead, London



FONDATION LE CORBUSIER

LE CORBUSIER, 1947-52

Unité d'Habitation, Marseille, France

reality in too many cases turned out to be poor-quality accommodation provided by industrial building systems, which led to the 1968 collapse of the Ronan Point tower block in East London and necessitated widespread demolition.

But by the time Labour came to power in 1997, trumpeting the arrival of an 'urban renaissance' led by Richard Rogers, the aim appeared to be to emulate continental city living, building new apartments and converting warehouses into lofts, bringing people back into city centres while also finding new uses for the swathes of former industrial land around dockside and waterfront areas.

The surge of apartment building, which resulted from changes in planning policy prioritising brownfield sites, has seen a 300 per cent rise in the number of flats built between 1997 and 2007 – according to the

National House Building Council – a figure exceeded only by the fall in the number of houses built, which decreased by more than 300 per cent. In 2007, semi-detached houses accounted for 14 per cent of new housing starts, compared with apartments, which accounted for 48 per cent of all stock.

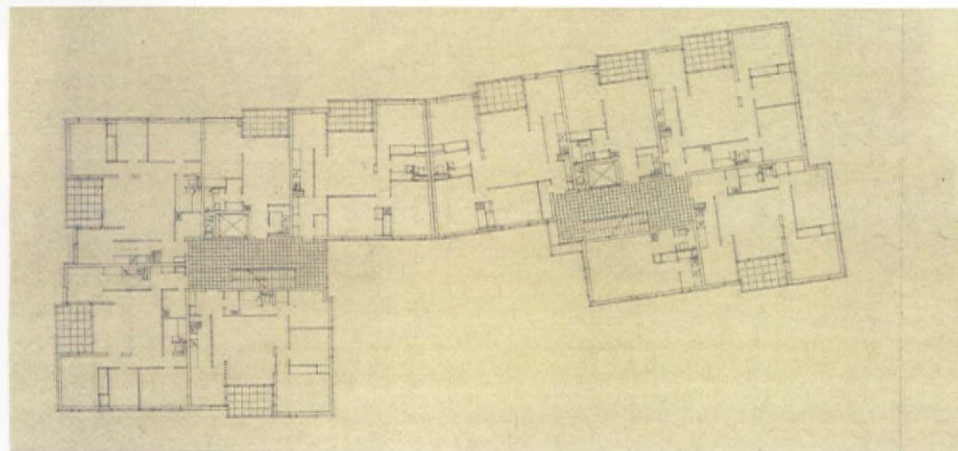
In every British city centre, new and half-built apartment blocks dominate the skyline, alongside cleared sites and cranes surrounded by hoardings promising 'More Luxury Apartments Soon'. It's the same in London and all across the North, in Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham, with the sheer amount of construction comparable only to the building boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

But if vacant properties are anything to go by, then something has gone wrong with this 'renaissance', with large numbers of the flats lying empty. In Liverpool, 35 per cent of the

new city centre apartments are empty (as reported in the *Liverpool Echo*), in Manchester the figure is 24 per cent and in Nottingham it's 15 per cent (from a survey undertaken by magazine *Inside Housing*).

The question is: could this be a cultural issue – are flats simply not that popular – or is it down to policy and market failures?

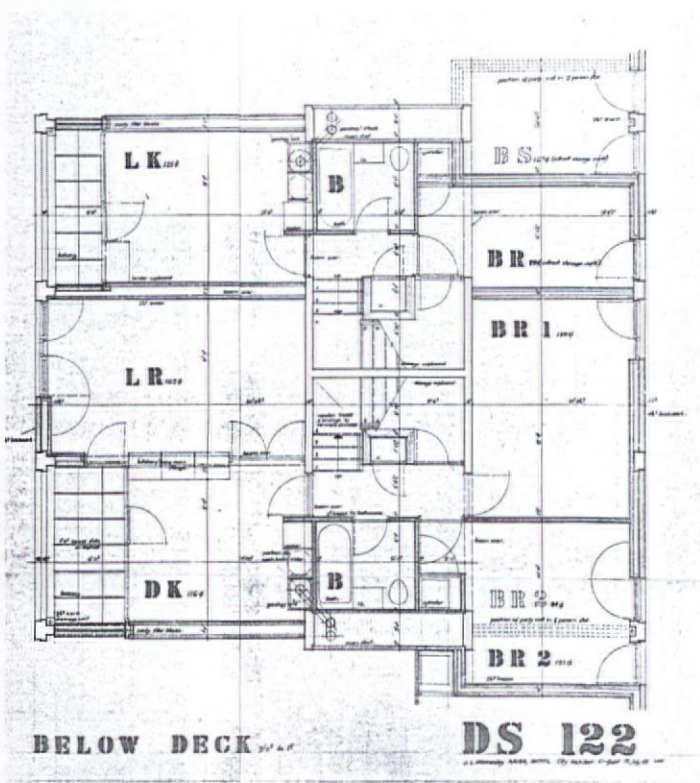
It is easy to provide a cultural explanation for why the English like houses with gardens, but it's the type of apartments being built by developers – overwhelmingly one- and two-bedroom flats – which are the problem, highlighting the fact that the 'urban renaissance' did not aim to attract everybody back into the city – the young and old and families. Instead it has been targeted squarely at transient, mostly single, professionals working in the new financial and media industries also sprouting around the docks and waterfronts. >>



COURTESY OF THE ALVAR AALTO FOUNDATION

ALVAR AALTO, 1957

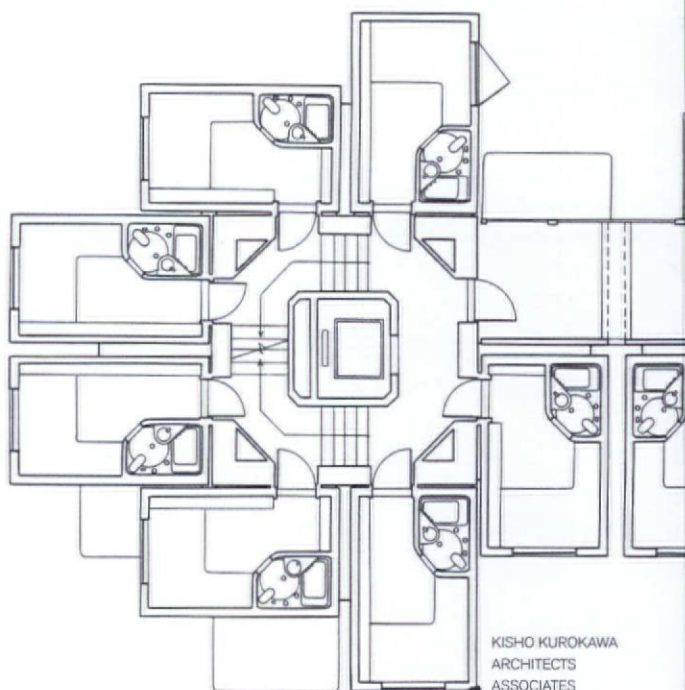
Interbau Exhibition, Hansaviertel, Berlin, Germany



RIBA LIBRARY DRAWINGS COLLECTION

JACK LYNN AND IVOR SMITH, 1961

Park Hill, Sheffield



KISHO KUROKAWA
ARCHITECTS
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In every British city centre, cranes and new and half-built apartment blocks dominate the skyline

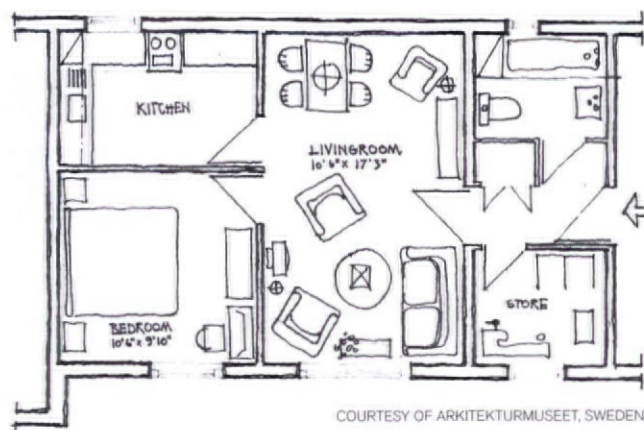
The real continental experience, on the other hand, shows that it is possible to build apartments that provide family housing and cater to all generations.

Emphasising the level of demand for family housing, a 2005 report from the London Housing Federation, *Thinking Big: the Need for Larger Affordable Homes*, revealed that the result of the focus on one- and two-bedroom apartments is leading to severe levels of overcrowding in the capital. At the same time recent research from Sam Street of Communities and Local Government's Housing Market and Planning Analysis department found that predictions about the growth of single person households conflicts with statistics showing that people prefer to

live in bigger properties, with the average number of rooms per person increasing among those who can afford to buy.

The report suggested that talking about numbers of units is unhelpful, giving the misleading impression that all is well because government targets on housing numbers are being met even if people are not living in the new homes. Instead the best approach would be to look at floor area and habitable rooms. The authors added that high density can work but there is a need to look at lettings policy.

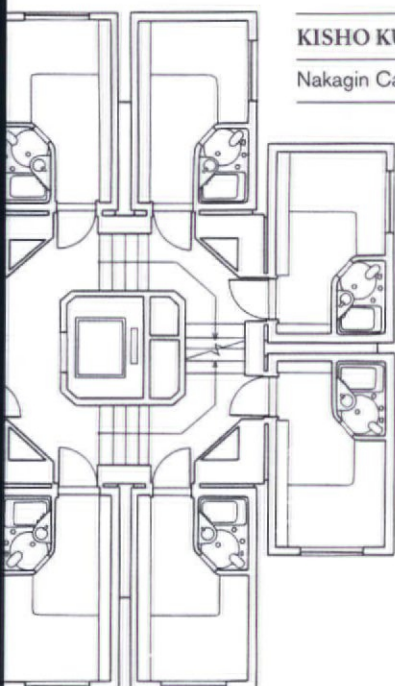
It is policy towards lettings that is at the crux of the matter, because of the fact that anecdotal evidence suggests a huge number of new apartments are bought by investors for 'buy-to-let' or the newer phenomenon of



RALPH ERSKINE, 1969-1982

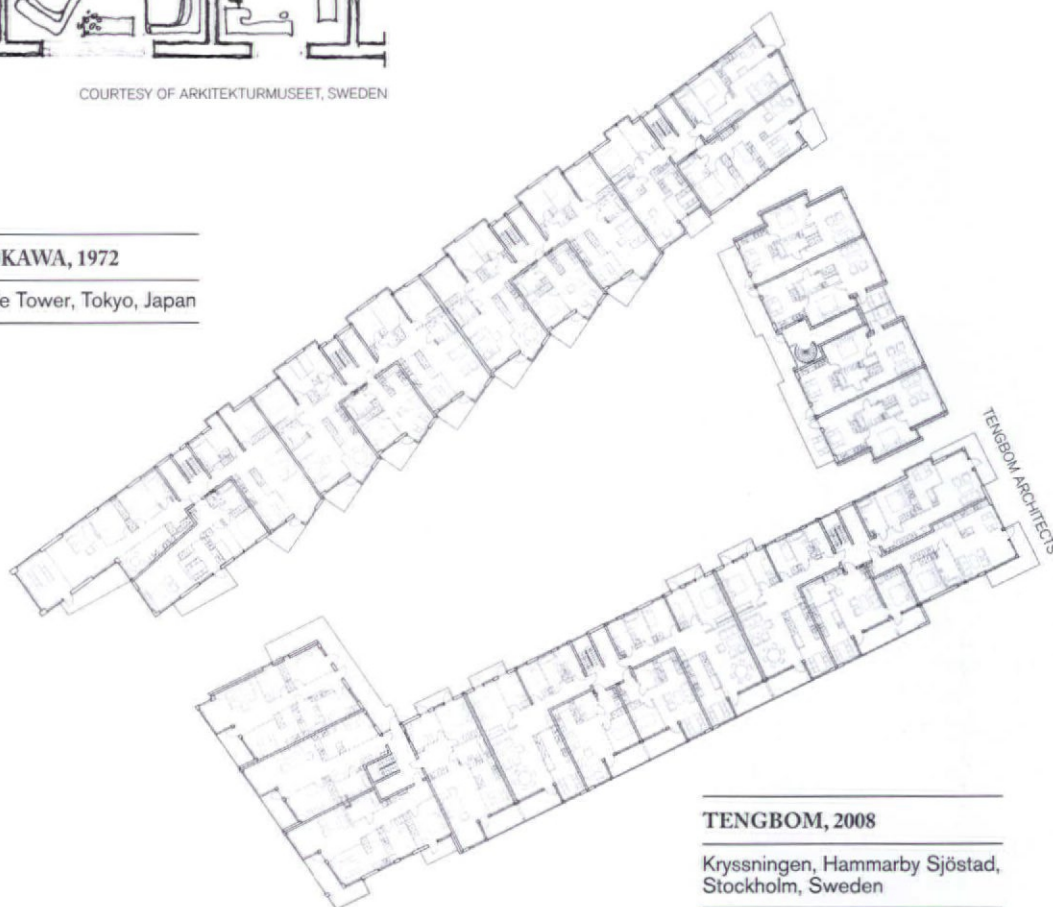
Byker Wall, Newcastle upon Tyne

COURTESY OF ARKITEKTURMUSEET, SWEDEN



KISHO KUROKAWA, 1972

Nakagin Capsule Tower, Tokyo, Japan



TENGBOM, 2008

Kryssningen, Hammarby Sjöstad,
Stockholm, Sweden

'buy-to-leave', which is behind the large numbers of empty flats littering city centres. This process occurs as investors buy properties purely for speculation, without any intention of letting them, waiting instead for land prices to rise to sell them on.

If 'buy-to-leave' is undermining new communities by leaving large numbers of homes empty, 'buy-to-let' is also having bizarre and unexpected consequences as investors let homes to local authorities who use them to provide housing for homeless families. This cycle is starting to occur with increasing regularity as investors find there is insufficient demand from the target market of single professionals, in contrast to councils who are desperate to provide accommodation

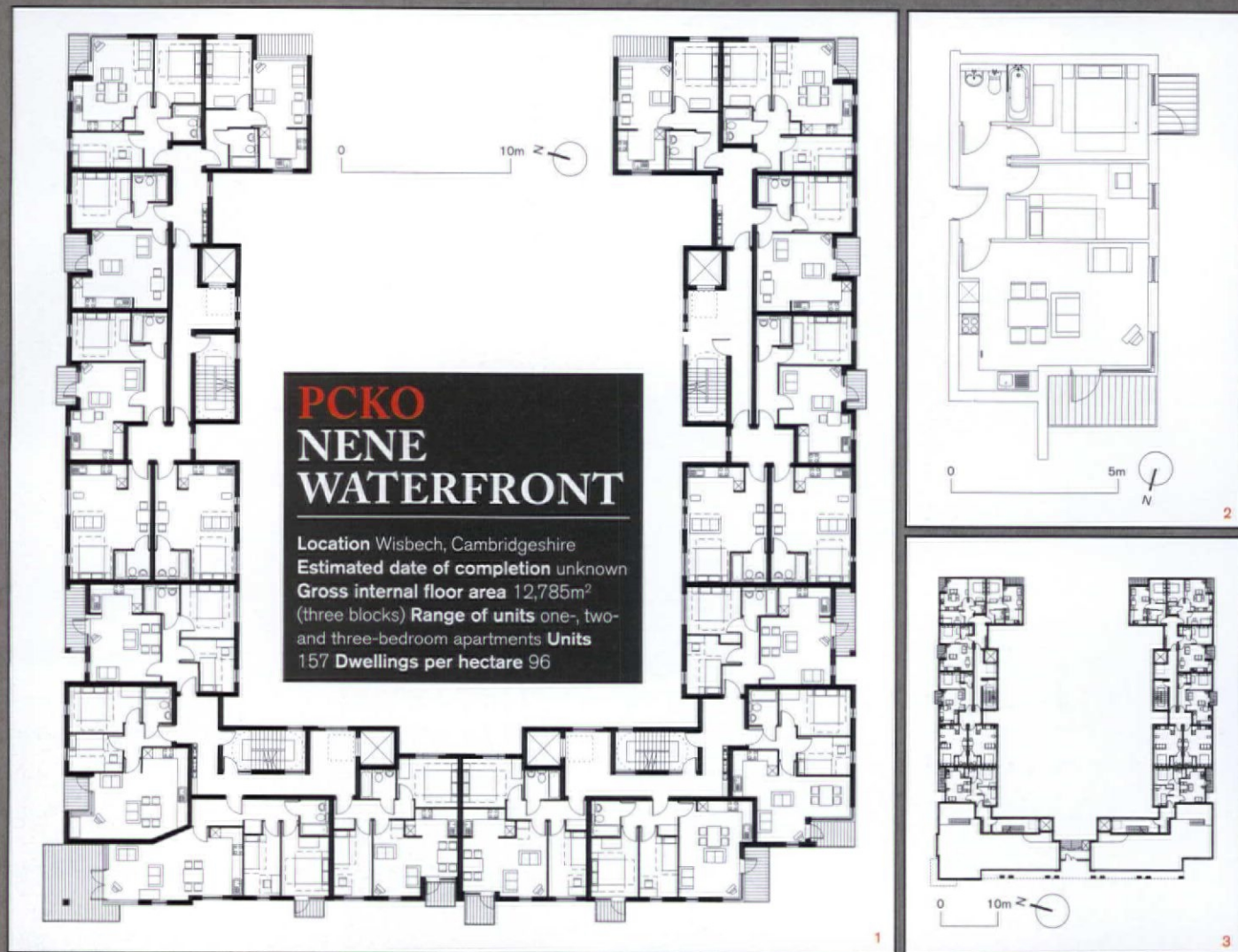
as a result of the severe shortage of social housing.

Now, more and more 'luxury apartments', particularly in London, are being used to house homeless families in temporary accommodation. In many parts of Docklands, such as Virginia Quay, Canary Central and New Providence Wharf, the result is that many new schemes are home to an uncomfortable mixture of transient professionals with no stake in the area, and homeless families who are also new to the area and there on a temporary basis, and who are squeezed into flats too small for them.

When I spoke to the Home Builders Federation about this, suggesting that housebuilders are failing to build the types

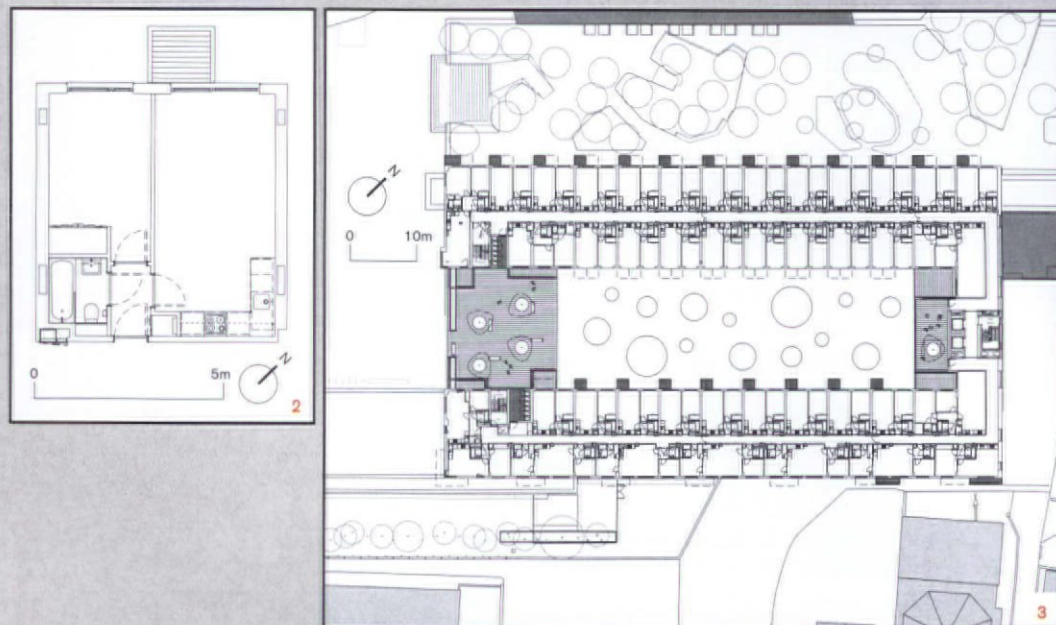
of homes people need and helping to create unstable places rather than the sustainable communities promised, I was told that high land values mean that only schemes with a large amount of development – one- and two-bedroom flats in other words – are viable.

By building so many small apartments the market is not providing what consumers of housing want or need, but with developers claiming they have no option and the market for investors buoyed by drivers such as homelessness it is hard to see how the process will be reversed. Consequently the fear is that today's building boom will be no less problematic than the post-war wave of construction which swept British cities in the 1950s and '60s. ■

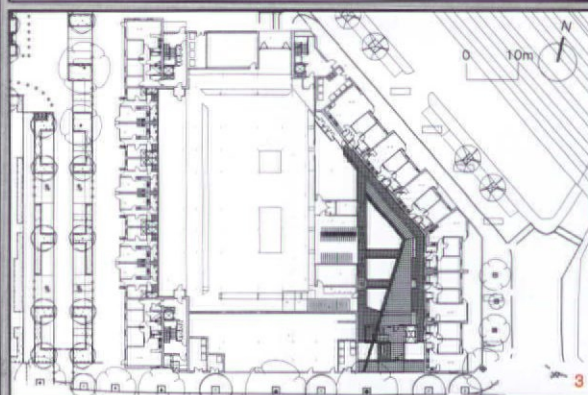
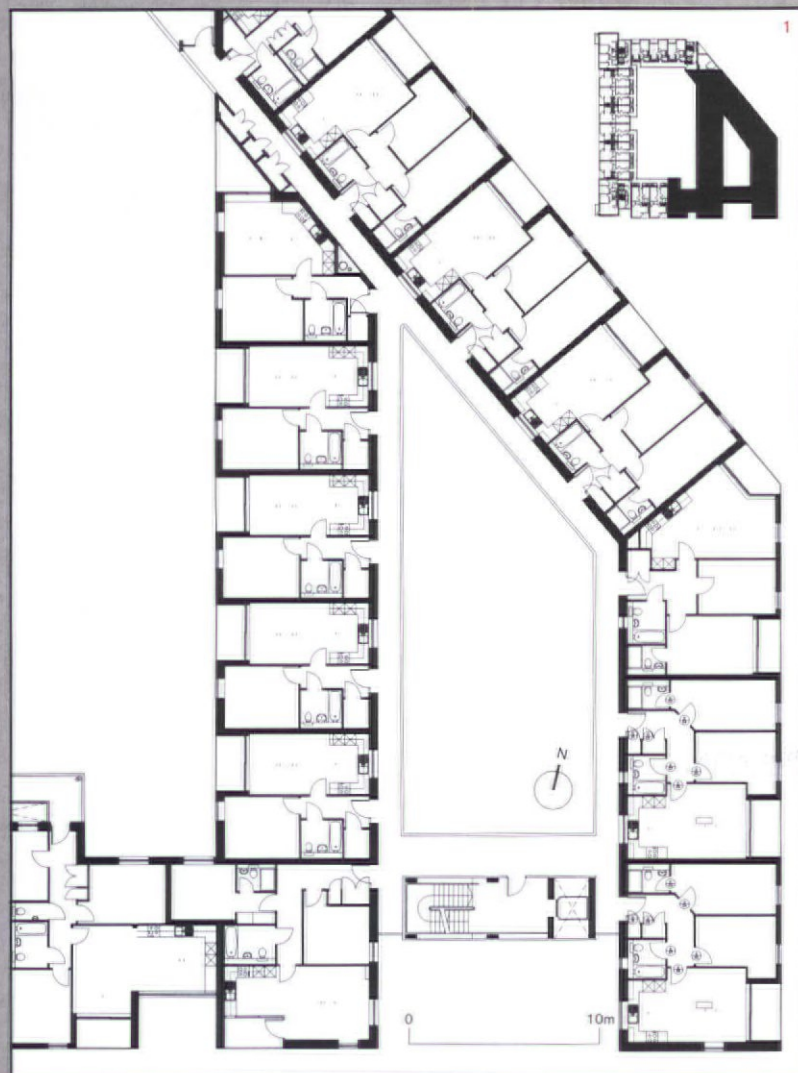


ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS BARKING CENTRAL 1

Location Barking, London **Date of completion** September 2009 **Gross internal floor area** 14,303m² **Range of units** one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 246 (phases 1 and 2) **Dwellings per hectare** 324 (phases 1 and 2)

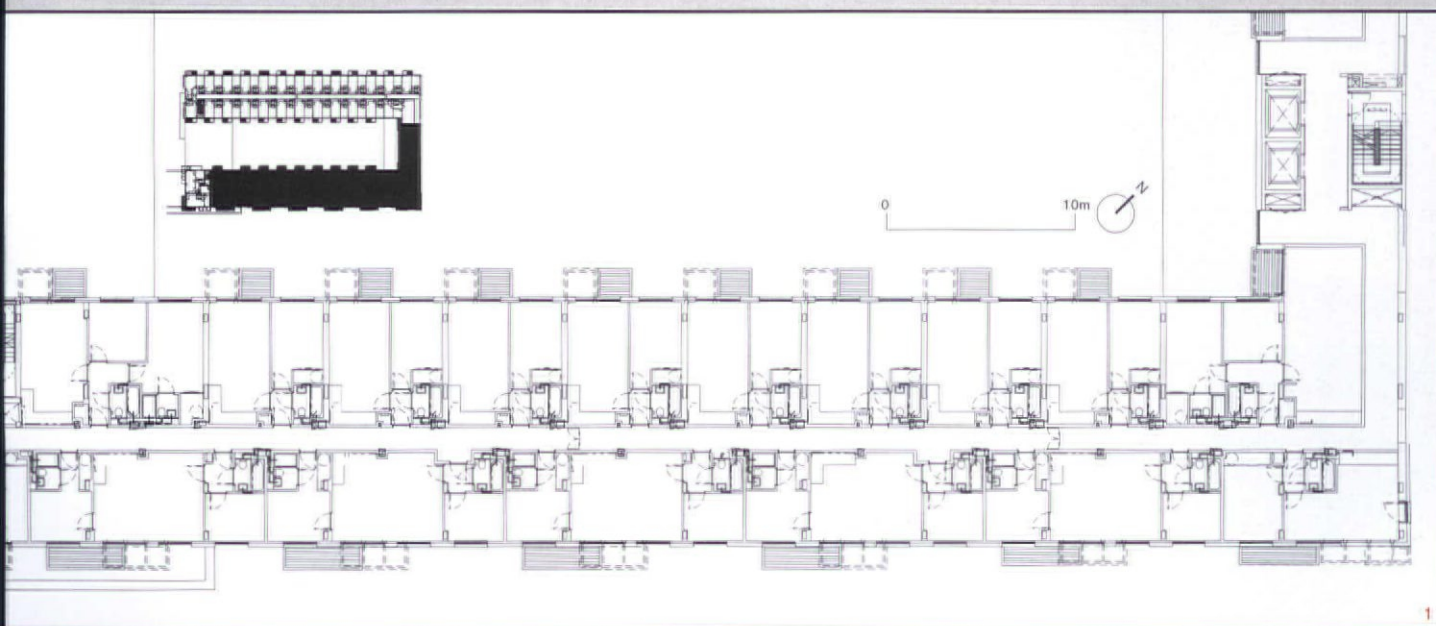


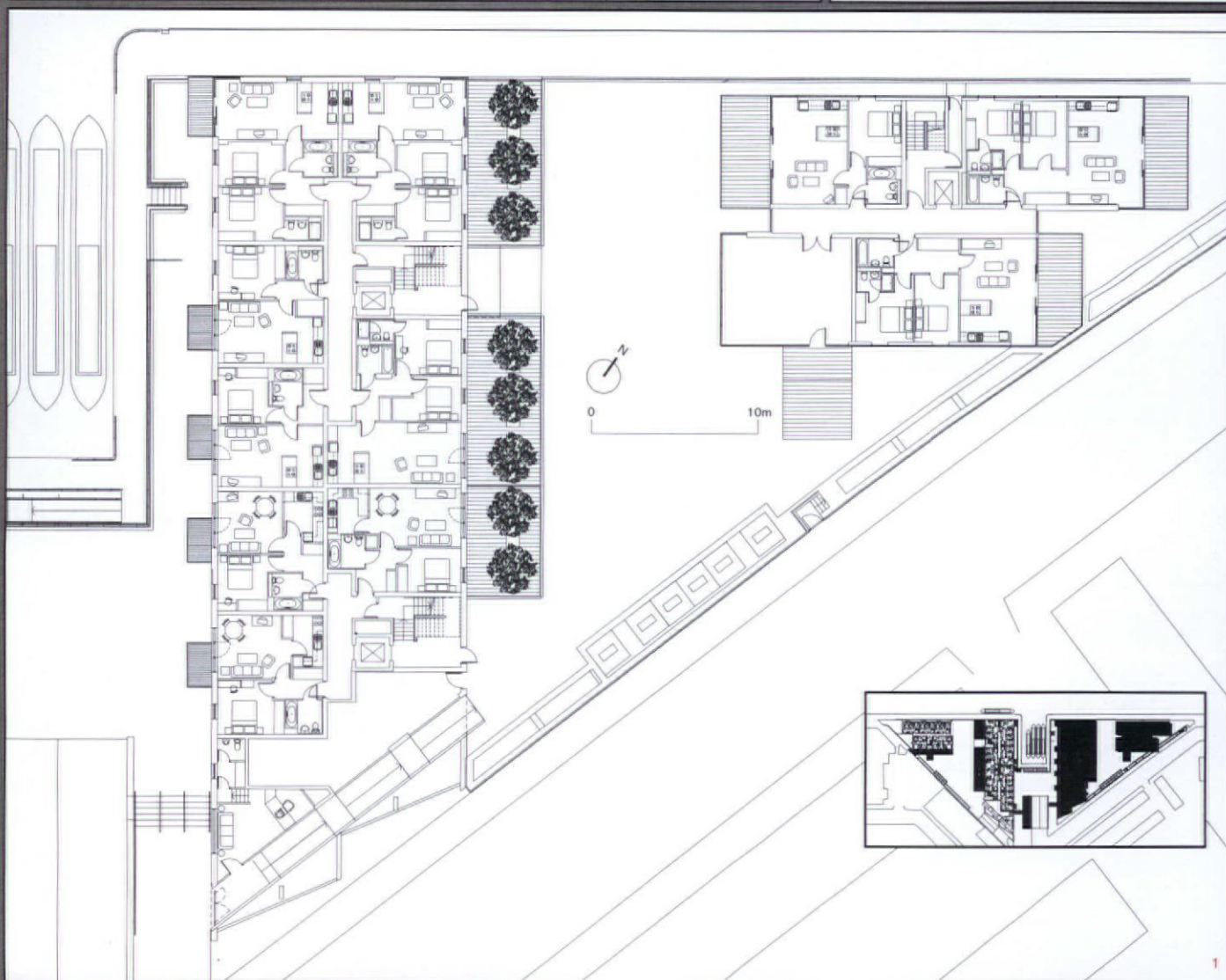
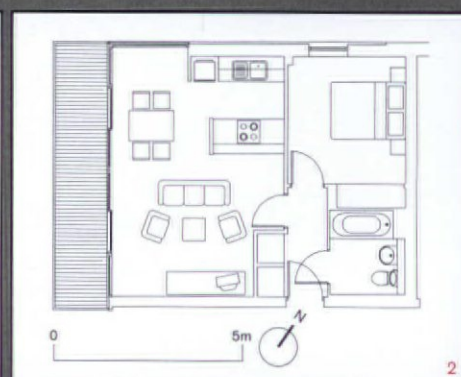
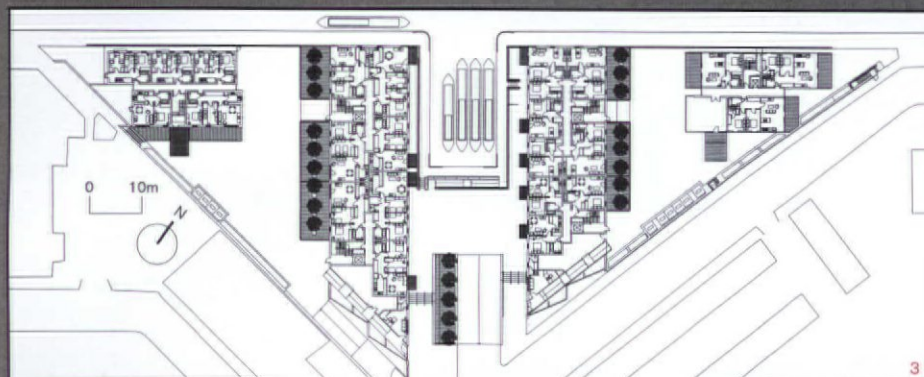
- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)



LEVITT BERNSTEIN BERMONDSEY SPA

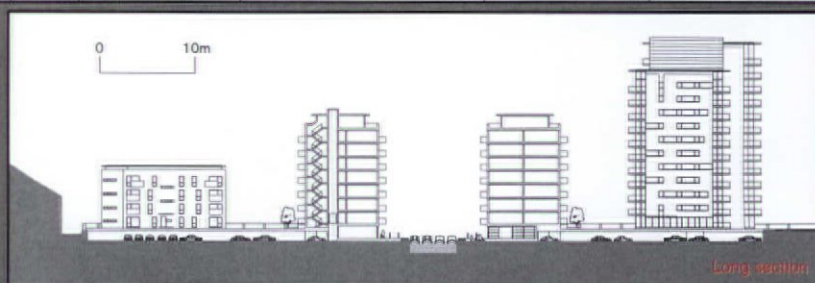
Location Southwark, London **Estimated date of completion** August 2009 **Gross internal floor area** 10,756m² **Range of units** one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments **Units** 139 **Dwellings per hectare** 239





JESTICO + WHILES ABBOTTS WHARF

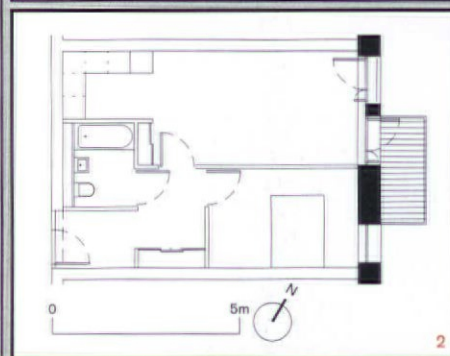
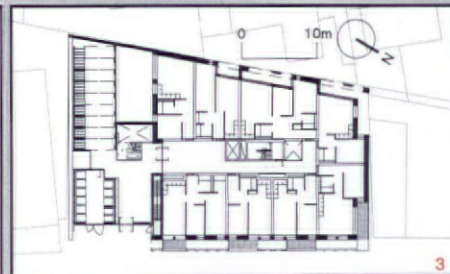
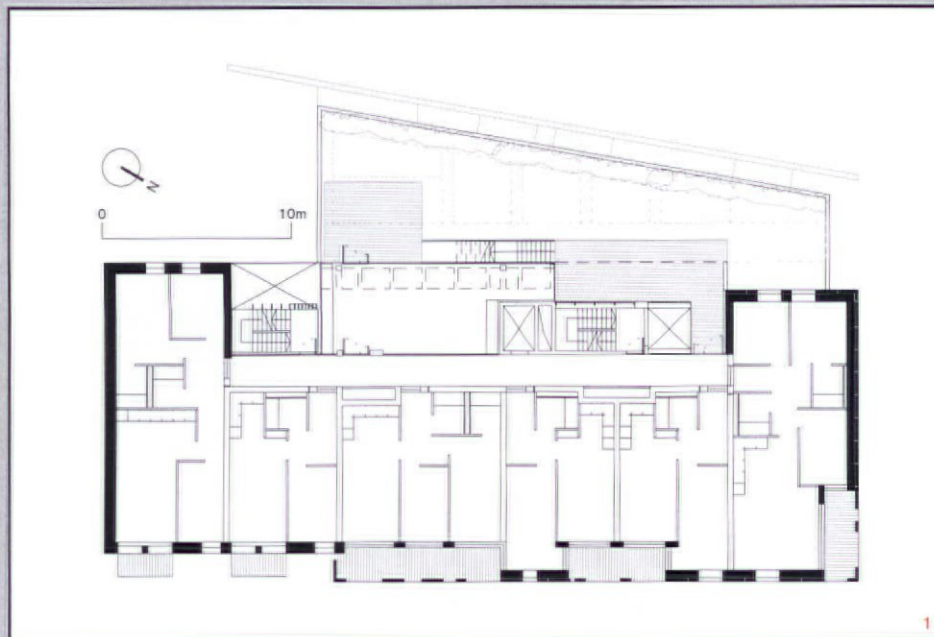
Location Tower Hamlets, London **Date of completion**
September 2005 **Gross internal floor area** 19,980m²
Range of units studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom
apartments **Units** 201 **Dwellings per hectare** 329



5TH STUDIO FAIRFIELD ROAD

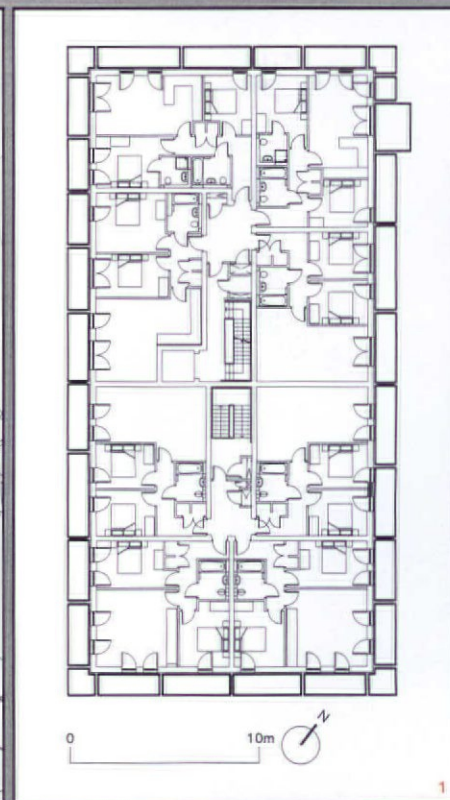
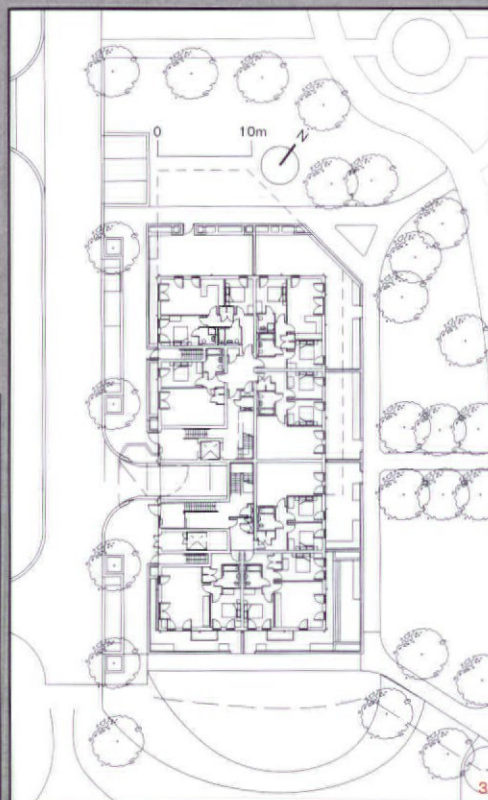
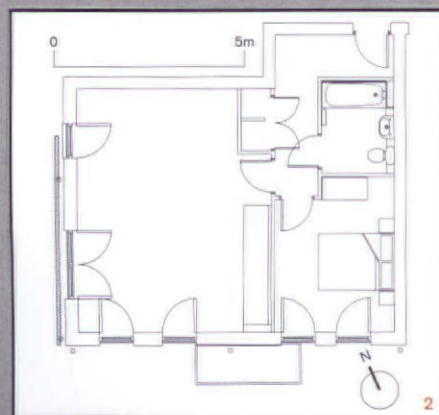
Location Tower Hamlets, London **Estimated date of completion** unknown **Gross internal floor area** 5,080m² **Range of units** one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments **Units** 60 **Dwellings per hectare** 600

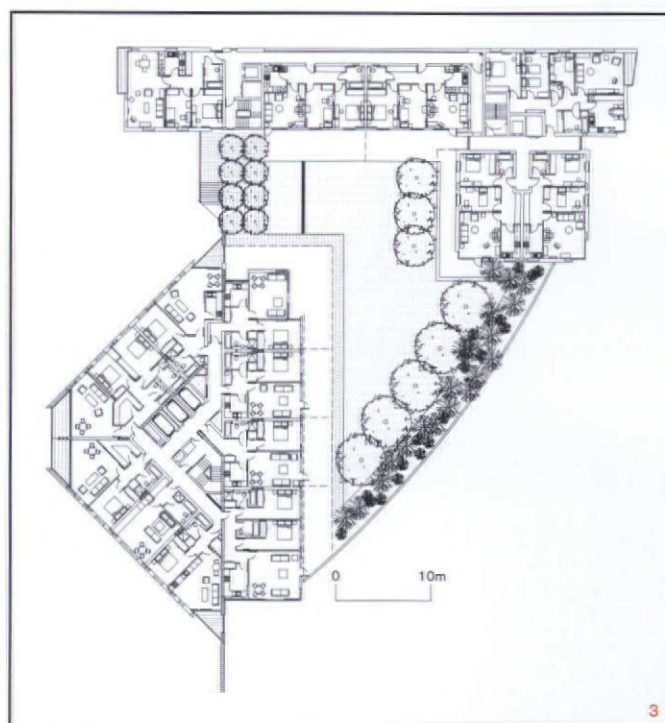
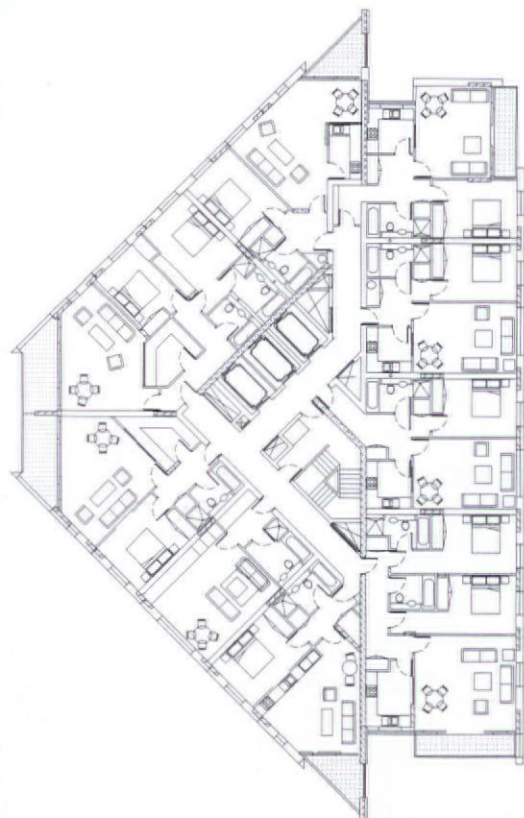
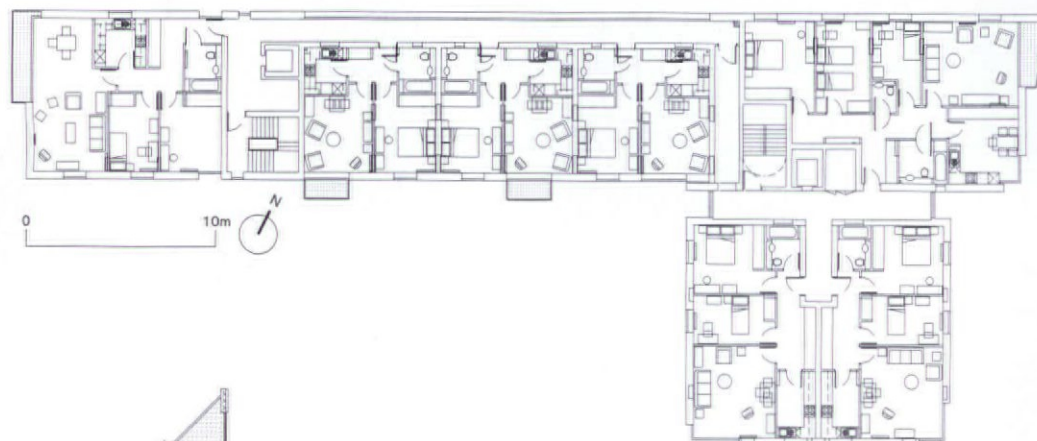
- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)



HTA CAMPBELL PARK PHASE 1

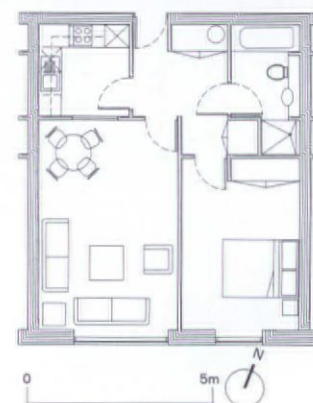
Location Milton Keynes **Estimated date of completion** summer 2008 **Gross internal floor area** 19,000m² **Range of units** studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments plus 55 houses **Units** 280 **Dwellings per hectare** 112





BENNETTS ASSOCIATES 259 CITY ROAD

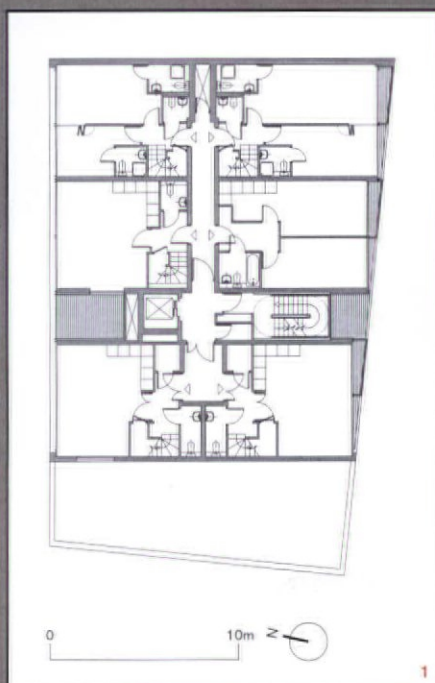
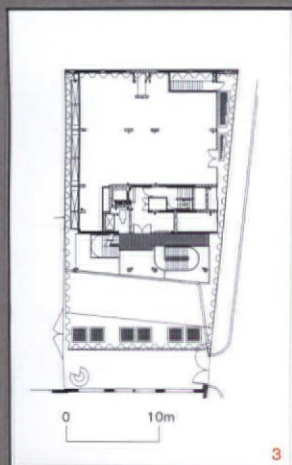
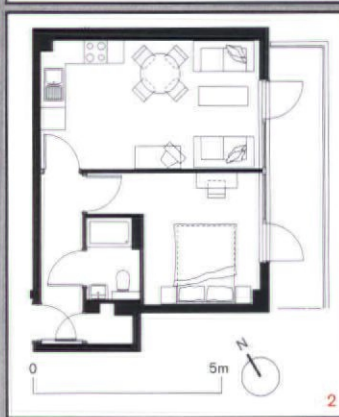
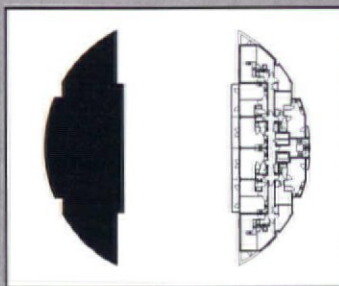
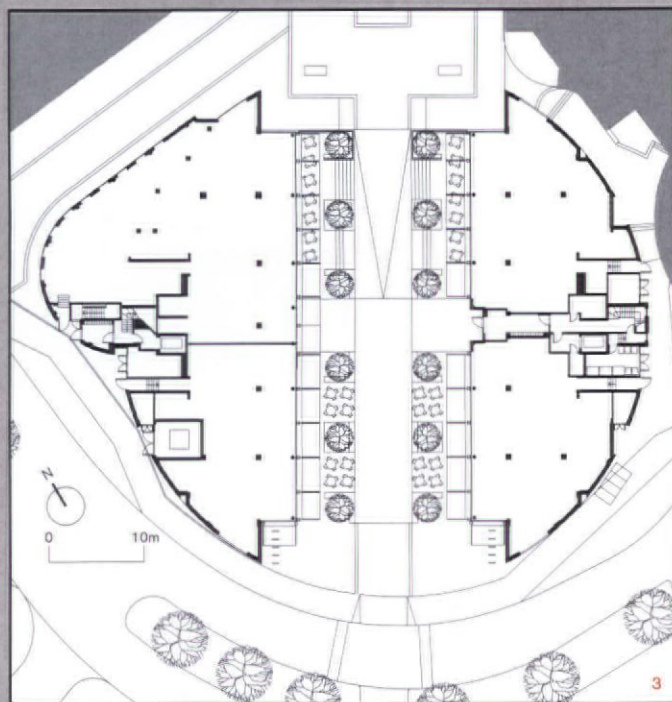
Location Islington, London Estimated date of completion 2011 Gross internal floor area 20,439m² Range of units studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments Units 298 Dwellings per hectare 546



- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)

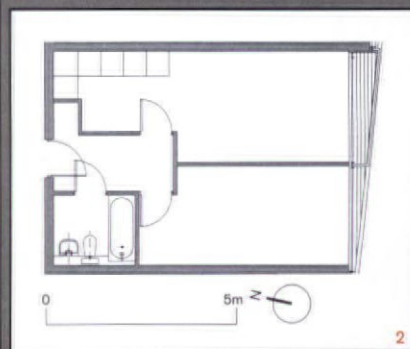
EDWARD CULLINAN ARCHITECTS BRISTOL HARBOURSIDE

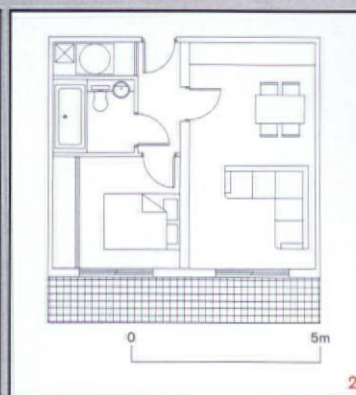
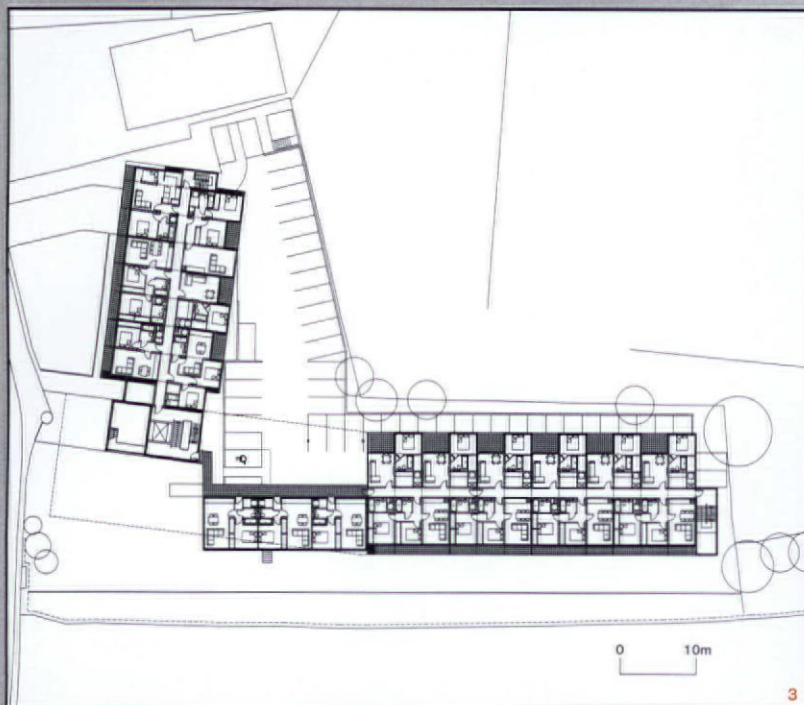
Location Bristol **Date of completion** April 2006 **Gross internal floor area** 6,992.5m² **Range of units** studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 104 **Dwellings per hectare** 348



STEPHEN DAVY PETER SMITH ARCHITECTS MICAUBER STREET

Location Hackney, London **Date of completion** September 2007 **Gross internal floor area** 1,767.59m² **Range of units** one- and two-bedroom apartments, live/work units **Units** 18 **Dwellings per hectare** 318

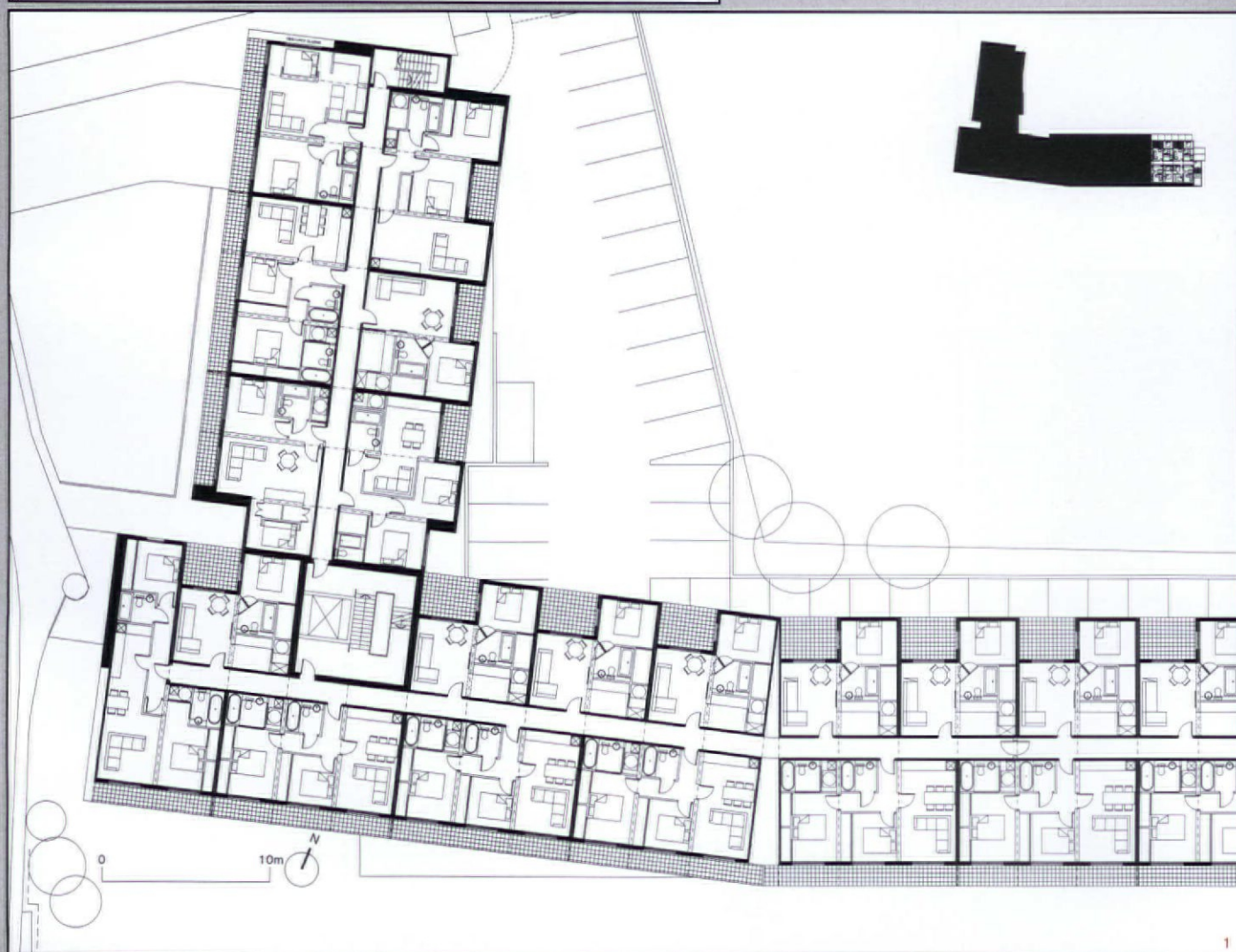




- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)

ARCHITECTURE 2B BREEZE

Location Castleford, West Yorkshire **Estimated date of completion** winter 2009 **Gross internal floor area** 6,900m² **Range of units** studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 141 **Dwellings per hectare** 381

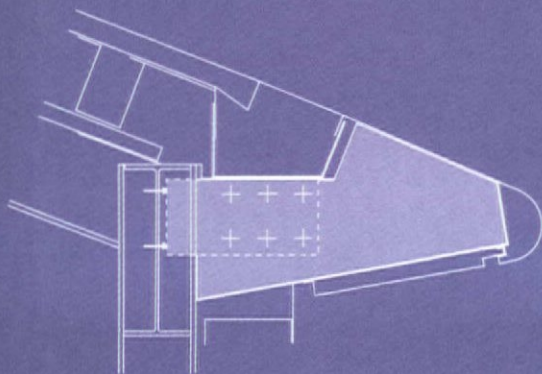




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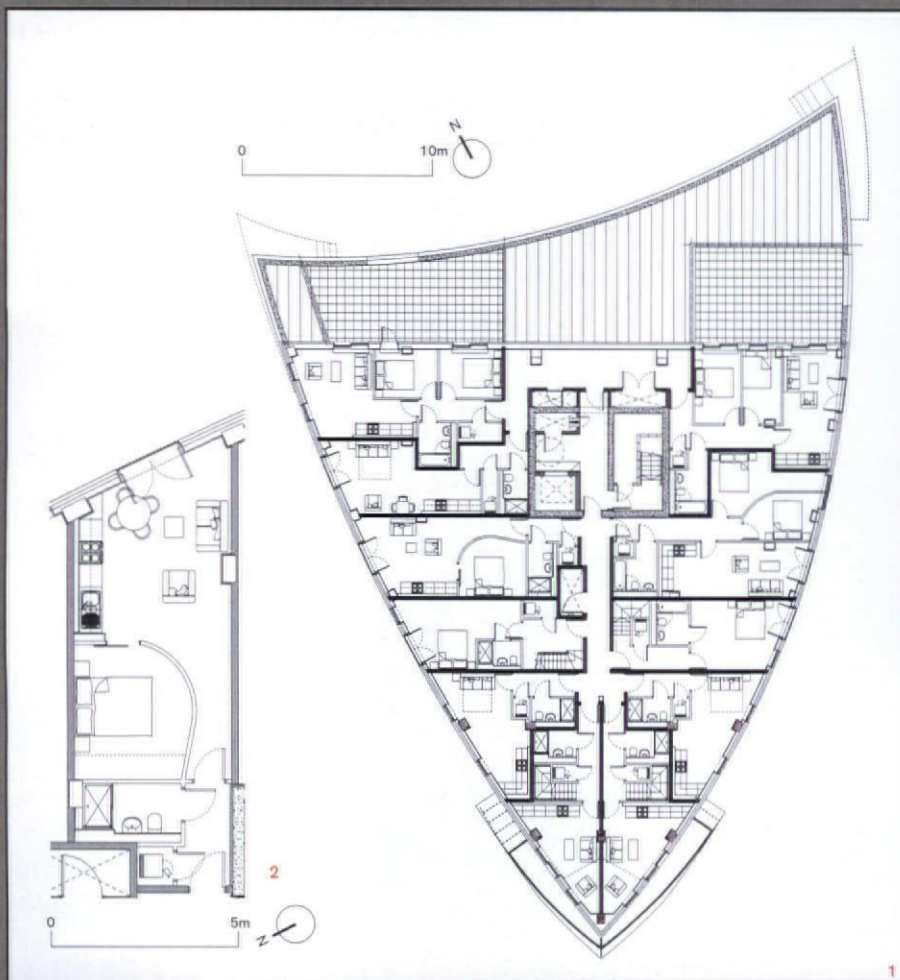
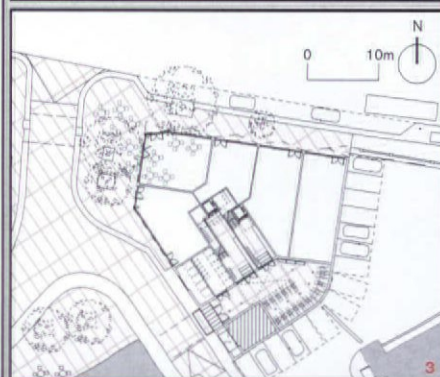
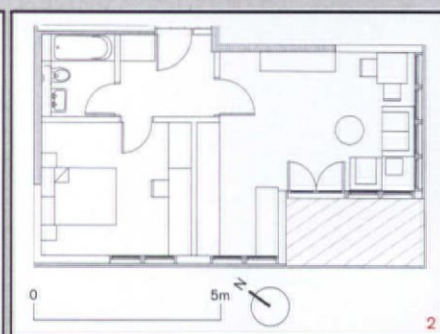


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email: replica@therooflightcompany.co.uk
Tel: 01993 833108

AOC RODNEY ROAD

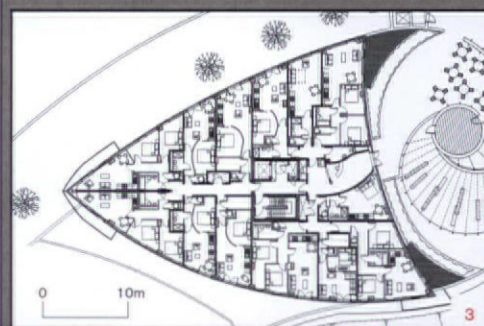
Location Southwark, London **Estimated date of completion** 2009 **Gross internal floor area** 2,694m²
Range of units one- and two-bedroom apartments
Units 5 retail, 32 residential
Dwellings per hectare 400

- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
 2 Typical flat (1:100)
 3 Site plan (scale varies)



DLA ARCHITECTURE ECHO

Location Leeds **Estimated date of completion** January 2009 **Gross internal floor area** 6,703m² **Range of units** one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 122 **Dwellings per hectare** 540



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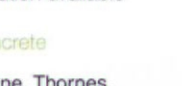
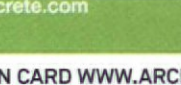
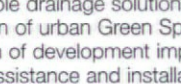
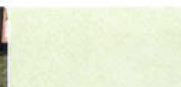
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The winner will have coverage in the Awards issue of CONCRETE magazine and the Concrete

Quarterly supplement as well as other industry and trade publications as part of the PR surrounding the Award. The Concrete Centre aims to enable everyone involved in the design and use of concrete to realise the full potential of the material. As well as providing advice and guidance on concrete, the Centre is also a hub for concrete innovation and a champion of the sustainability credentials of concrete.

Enter The Concrete Centre Sustainability Awards

Recognition within the Award will ensure that peers and clients alike appreciate the sustainable credentials of your project, product or initiative.

Closing date for entries is 15 April 2008.

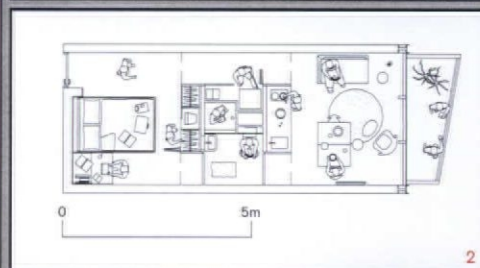
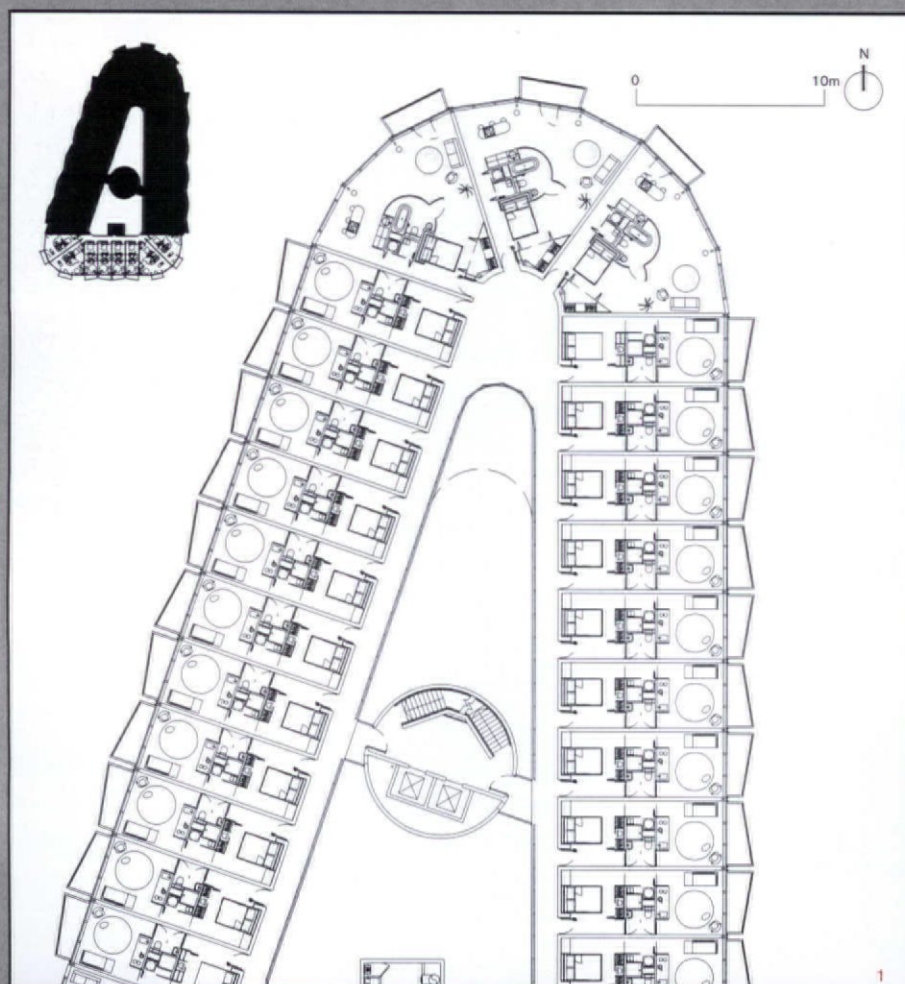
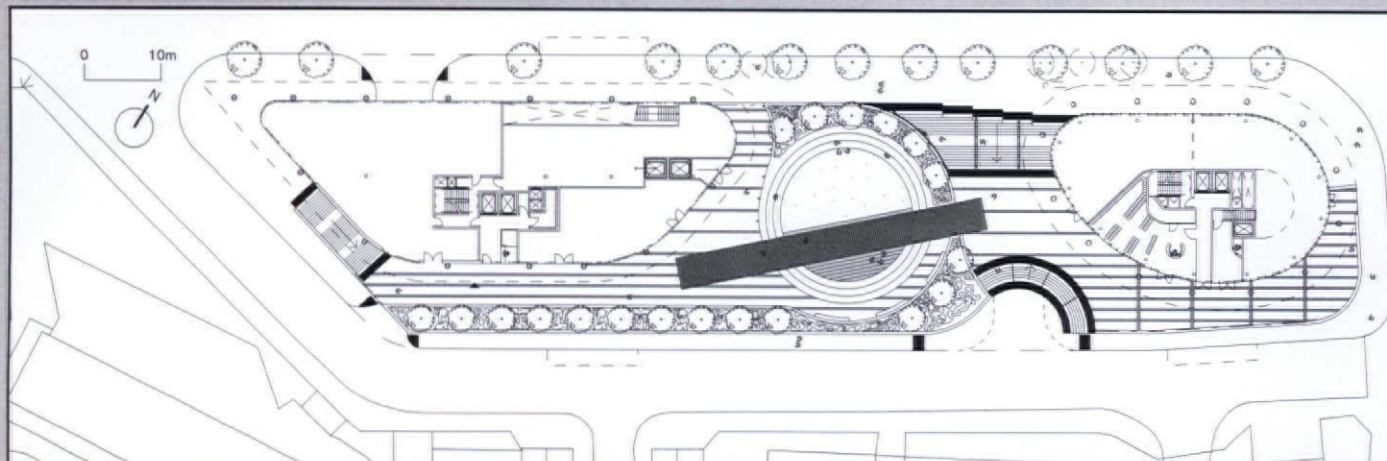
Visit www.concretecentre.com/awards for more information and to download an Entry Form.

ENQUIRY 18 ON CARD WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK/AJDIRECT

AUSTIN-SMITH: LORD GRAVITY

Location Manchester **Estimated date of completion** 2010 **Gross internal floor area** 29,000m² **Range of units** one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments **Units** 370 **Dwellings per hectare** 1,233

- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)



BDP ABITO

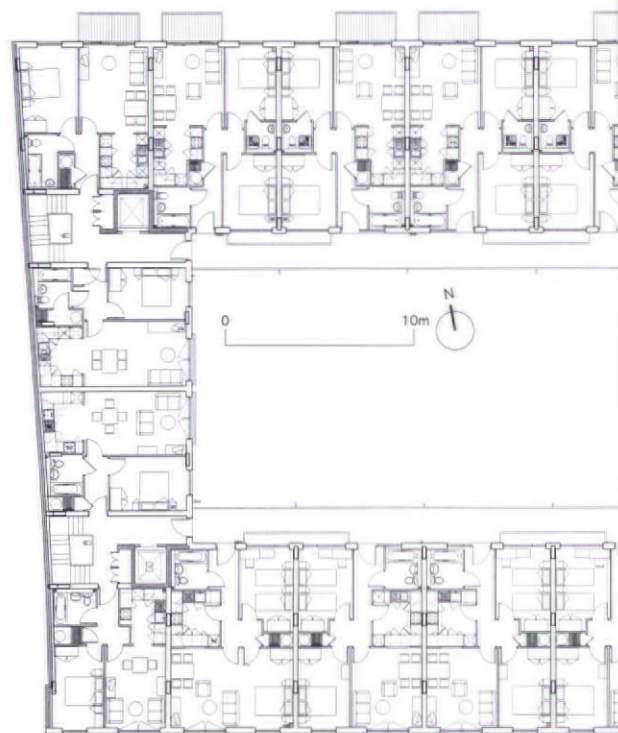
Location Salford **Date of completion** 2007 **Gross internal floor area** 12,603m² **Range of units** 1 bedroom apartments **Units** 256 **Dwellings per hectare** 1,422



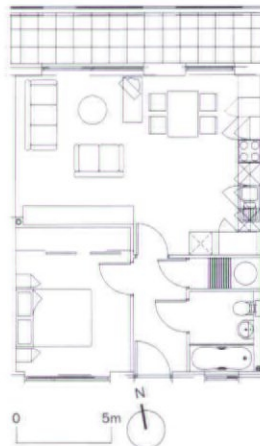
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POLLARD THOMAS EDWARDS KLEINE WHARF

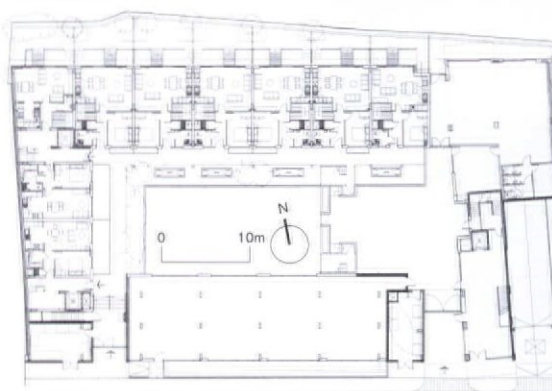
Location Hackney, London **Date of completion** July 2006 **Gross internal floor area** 4,860m² **Range of units** studio, two- and three-bedroom apartments, start-up business space, police office and café
Units 71 **Dwellings per hectare** 313



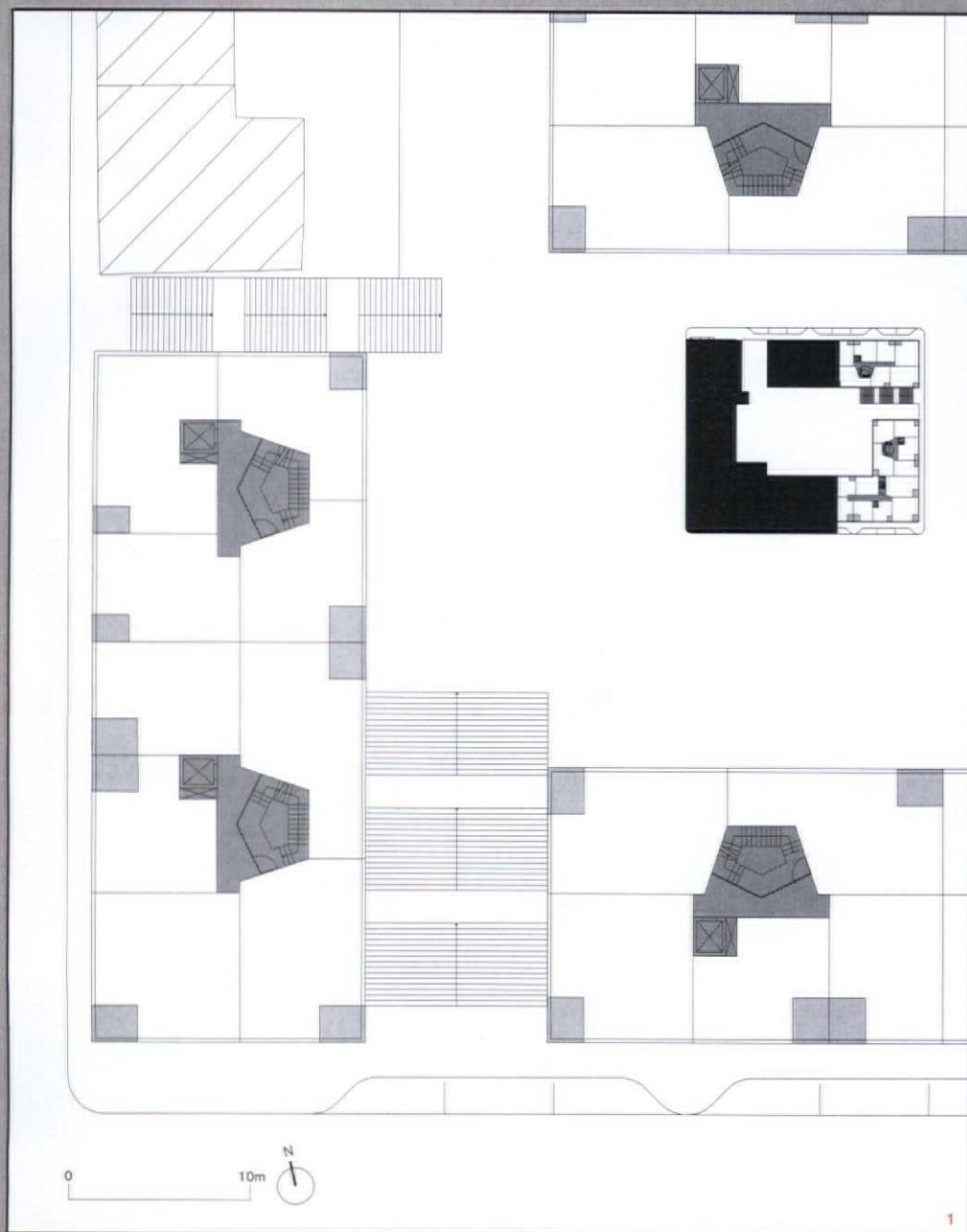
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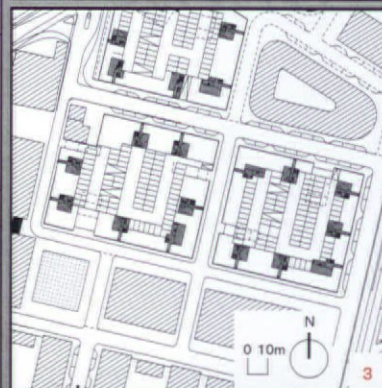
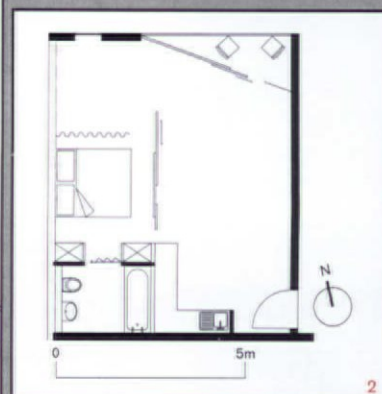


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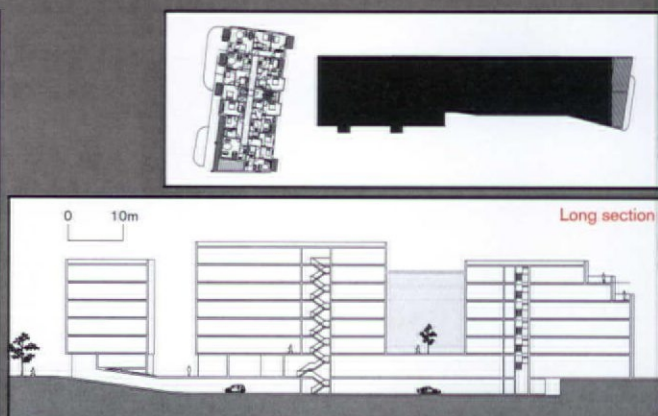
FEILDEN CLEGG BRADLEY STUDIOS GREENGATE

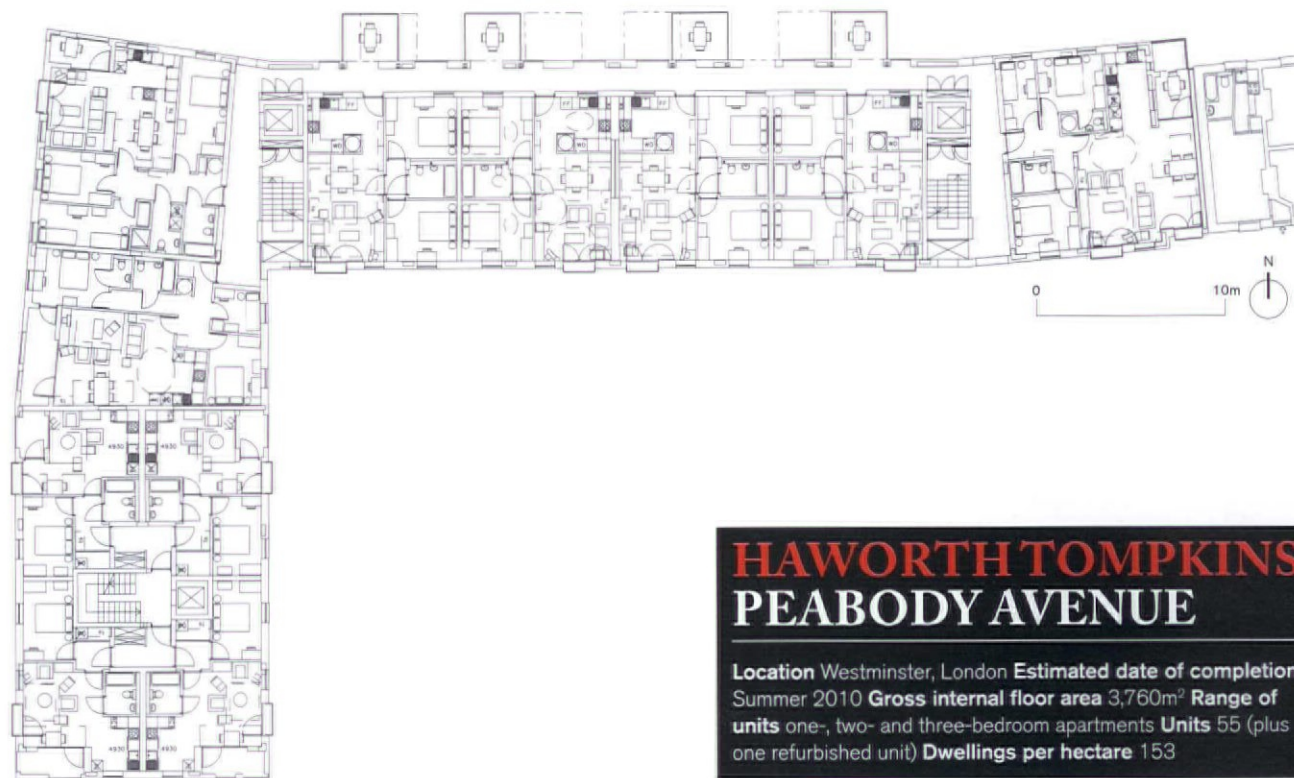
Location Manchester **Estimated date of completion** unknown
Gross internal floor area 3,300m² (residential) **Range of units** one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 539 **Dwellings per hectare** 580



HAWKINS\ BROWN LARNACA WORKS

Location Southwark, London **Estimated date of completion** 2009 **Gross internal floor area** 9,576m² **Range of units** one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments **Units** 87 **Dwellings per hectare** 249

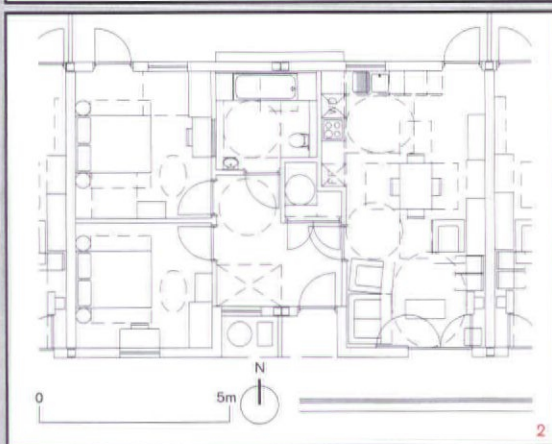




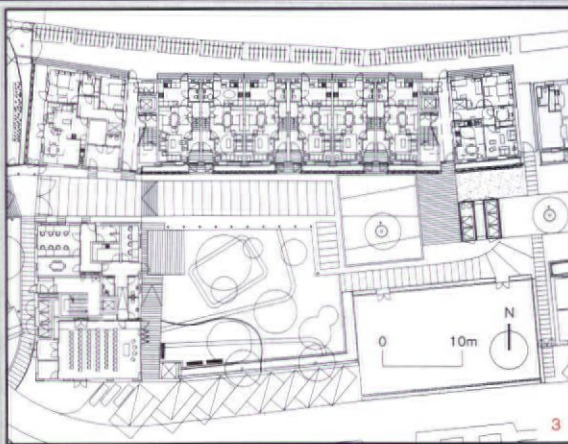
HAWORTH TOMPKINS PEABODY AVENUE

Location Westminster, London **Estimated date of completion** Summer 2010 **Gross internal floor area** 3,760m² **Range of units** one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments **Units** 55 (plus one refurbished unit) **Dwellings per hectare** 153

1

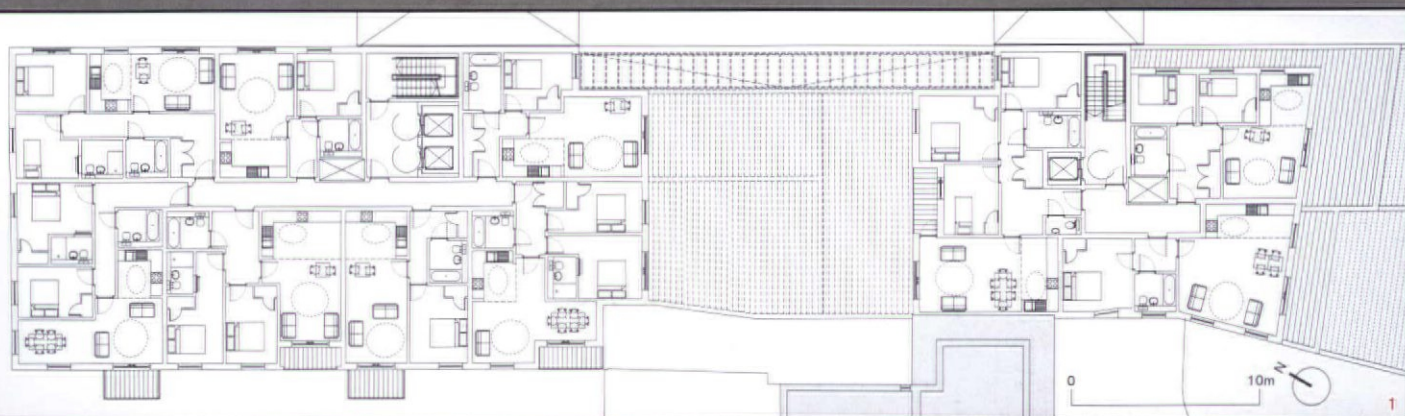


2



3

- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)

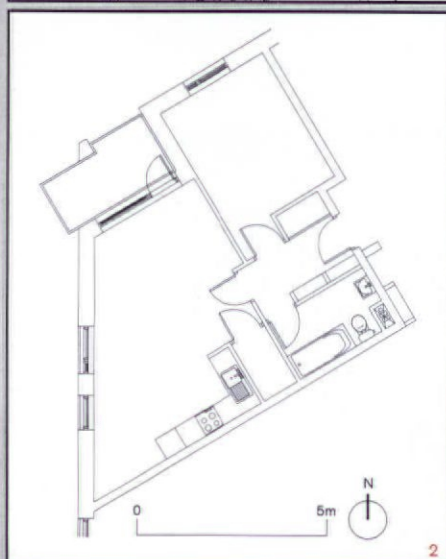


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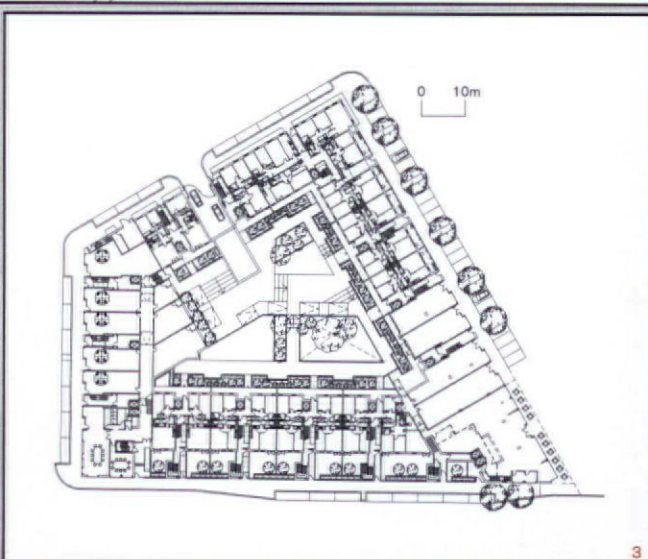
METROPOLITAN WORKSHOP P18 BLOCK

Location Dublin **Estimated date of completion** 2009-10 **Gross internal floor area** 17,115m²
Range of units one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments **Units** 157 **Dwellings per hectare** 96

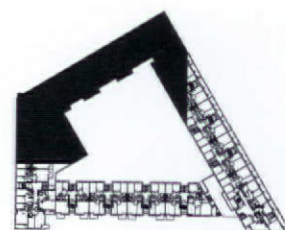
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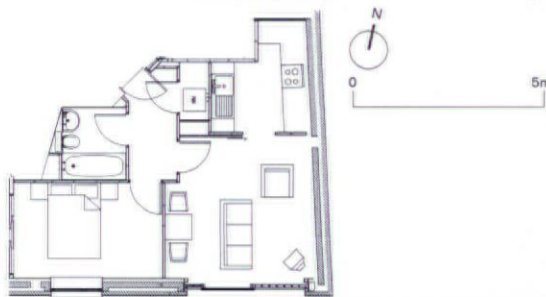
- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)

RICHARD MURPHY ARCHITECTS BELFORD ROAD

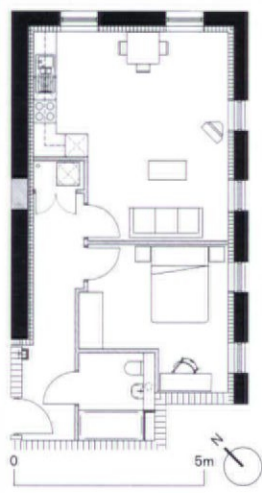
Location Edinburgh Date of completion 2001 Gross internal floor area 1,509m² Range of units one- to four-bedroom apartments Units 27 Dwellings per hectare 179



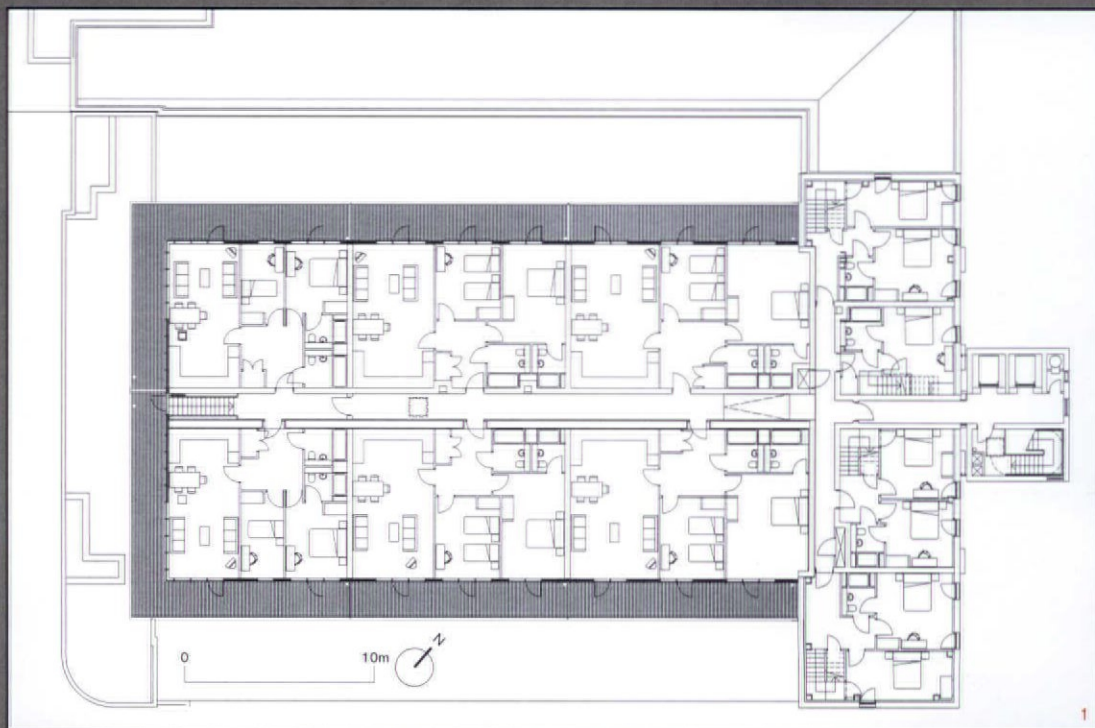
West elevation



2



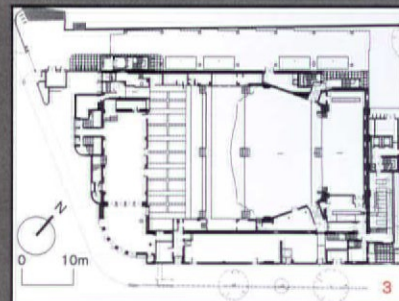
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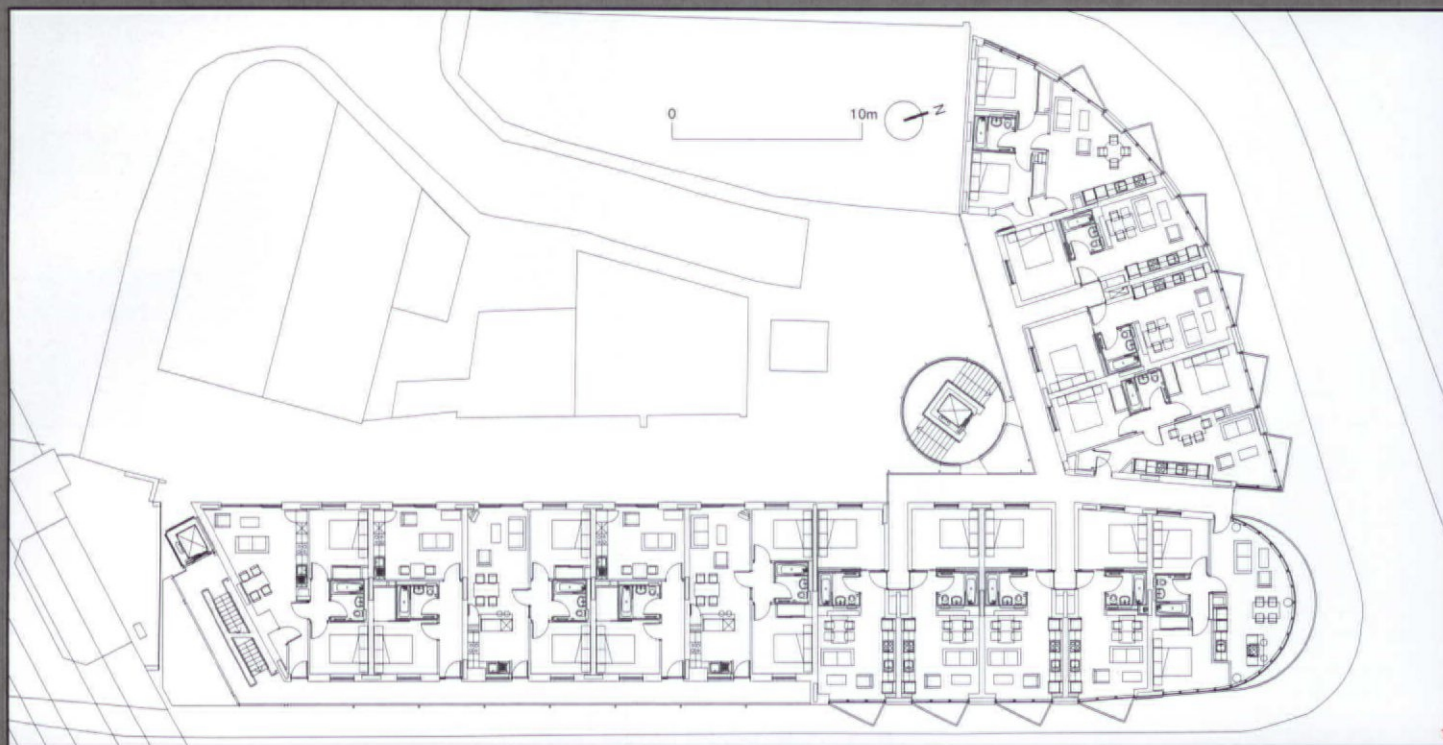
1

ASSAEL ARCHITECTURE 58 ST JOHN'S HILL

Location Clapham, London Estimated date of completion March 2009 Gross internal floor area 3,500m² Range of units one- and two-bedroom apartments Units 59 Dwellings per hectare 186



3



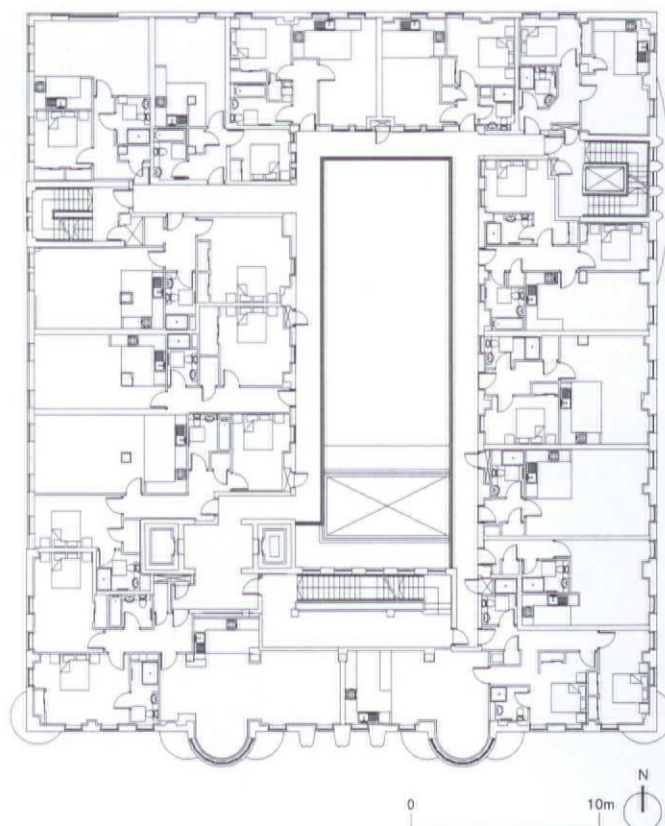
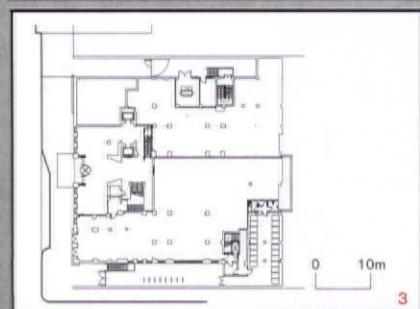
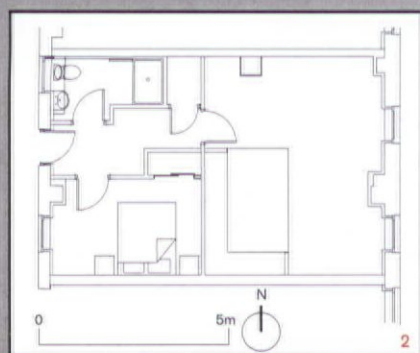
3DREID THE BERESFORD

Location Glasgow **Date of completion** December 2006

Gross internal floor area 6,500m² (plus 1,200m² retail)

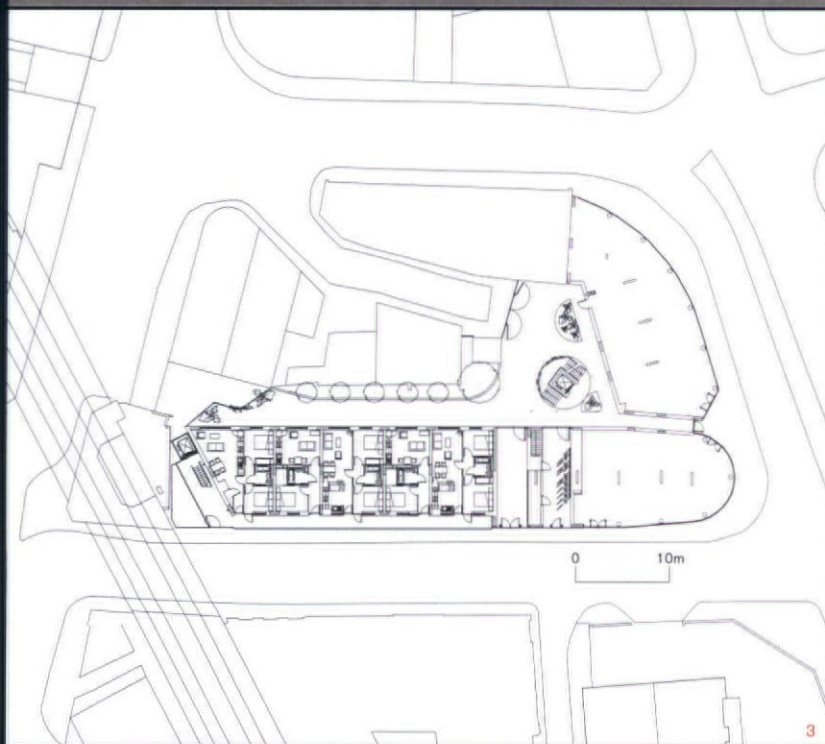
Range of units studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments

Units 112 **Dwellings per hectare** 861



CARTWRIGHT PICKARD ARCHITECTS ICEWORKS

Location Leeds **Date of completion** spring 2008 **Gross internal floor area** 3,000m² **Range of units** one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 79 **Dwellings per hectare** 658



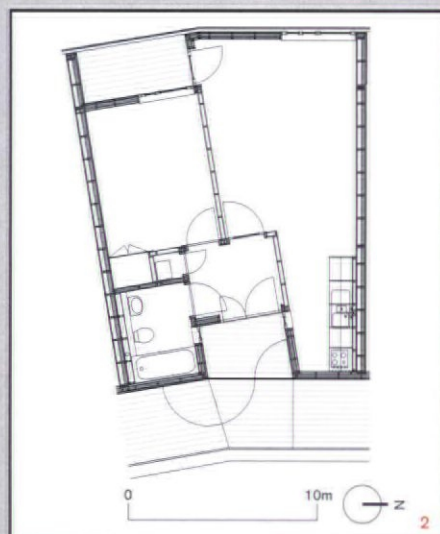
3



2

SERGISON BATES WANDSWORTH

Location Wandsworth, London **Date of completion** 2004 **Gross internal floor area** 4,200m² **Range of units** studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments **Units** 27 **Dwellings per hectare** 161



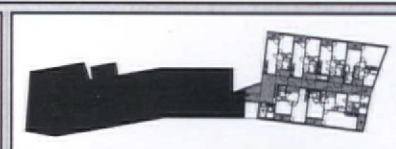
2



Elevation



1



- 1 Typical floor (1:200)
- 2 Typical flat (1:100)
- 3 Site plan (scale varies)



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THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOUSING POLICY

Polymakers John Callcutt, Yvette Cooper, Bob Kerslake and Ruth Kelly are all influencing housing legislation. Here, *Cathy Strongman* sifts through the latest regulations

In December 2006, the government's Communities and Local Government (CLG) department published Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3), which set out the national planning policy framework for delivering the government's housing objectives in response to recommendations in the 2004 Barker Review – which included improving affordability and investing more money in social housing. Since then, a myriad of reports, papers and policies have followed.

THE HOUSING GREEN PAPER

Published on 23 July 2007, under then housing minister Yvette Cooper, the Housing Green Paper outlines plans to deliver three million new homes by 2020. It sets the target for 2 million of these homes to be built by 2016, after which 240,000 homes should be built per annum – a scale unseen in the house building since the early 1960s. A total of £8 billion has been pledged for affordable housing from 2008-11, with 50,000 new social rented homes a year to be built in that period, and over 25,000 shared-ownership and shared-equity homes a year to be constructed by 2011. The paper also stresses the need for well-designed and more environmentally friendly homes linked to good schools, transport and healthcare. www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homesforfuture

THE CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOMES

Launched by CLG on 13 December 2006, the Code for Sustainable Homes provides a new national standard for the sustainable

design and construction of new housing, replacing the BRE EcoHomes scheme in England. Since April 2007, appliance to the code has been voluntary, except for Housing Corporation or English Partnerships developments, but the government is likely to make it a mandatory rating in April 2008. The Code is based on a star rating at six levels, with level one requiring thermal efficiency just above Part L 2006; level three being just above EcoHomes Very Good; and level six being 'zero carbon'. Each level has minimum standards for thermal and water efficiency, as well as minimum requirements for materials, surface-water run-off and waste. The government has stated that all new homes should meet code level six by 2016. www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/code_for_sust_homes.pdf

THE CARBON CHALLENGE

The Carbon Challenge, launched on 7 February 2007 under Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly and spearheaded by English Partnerships, is an initiative to challenge housebuilders to design and build zero-carbon and low-carbon communities. Last December it was announced that Barratt Developments will create the first new community at the site of the former Hanham Hall Hospital near Bristol. www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/carbonchallenge.htm

THE CALLCUTT REVIEW OF HOUSEBUILDING DELIVERY

Published on 22 November 2007, the review was compiled by John Callcutt, previously chief executive of English Partnerships. The

Clockwise from top left John Callcutt; Yvette Cooper; Ruth Kelly; Bob Kerslake



KIERAN DOHERTY / REUTERS

report concludes that the housebuilding industry is able to meet the government's target of building 240,000 homes per year by 2016 to zero-carbon standards. Suggestions to enable this include the establishment of a new body within the government to lead the delivery of zero-carbon developments. The review also suggests that funding penalties should be introduced for housebuilders who fail to meet new standards of customer satisfaction and that a design-review process for housebuilding should be introduced, run by a statutory consultee which could not be overruled on quality by planning committees. A formal government response is due later this year. www.callcuttreview.co.uk

THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION BILL

The Housing and Regeneration Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 15 November 2007 and gave effect to the government's proposals to create the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Agency, which is expected to start work in April 2009, will combine English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation, and the operational delivery side of the Department of Communities and Local Government and will be headed by Bob Kerslake. The HCA will have a key role in delivering the government's target of 3 million new homes by 2020 and will oversee the delivery of major housing and regeneration projects including the Thames Gateway. www.communities.gov.uk/housing/strategiesandreviews/homesandcommunities

Continued on page 52

Continued from page 51

HOW TO BUILD DENSE

As part of the AJ's study of apartment types, *Andy von Bradsky*, chairman of housing specialist PRP, looks at the regulations associated with building big

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 3

Planning Policy Statement 3 adopts a site-specific approach to housing densities and offers no distinction in density thresholds between urban and suburban sites. Paragraph 46 outlines the site-specific criteria to be applied by local planning authorities in developing housing density policies as follows:

- Spatial vision and strategy for housing development, including the level of housing demand and need and the availability of suitable land in the area.
- Current/future level and capacity of infrastructure, services and facilities.
- Desirability of using land efficiently and reducing the impacts of climate change.
- Current/future levels of accessibility, particularly public transport accessibility.
- Desirability of achieving high-quality, well-designed housing.

SECURED BY DESIGN

If Secured by Design certification is being sought, generally a maximum of eight to 10 apartments only will be permitted in one secure corridor.

DESIGN AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Issued by the Housing Corporation. Limitations on amenity space provision will need to be balanced against higher internal space standards to achieve good quality scores, which are based on the Housing Corporation's *Design and Quality Strategy and Standards* document of April 2007.

BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVED DOCUMENT B (ADB) – FIRE SAFETY

The 2006 updates to ADB have adjusted some of the key fire-safety-related design criteria to high-density schemes, including:

- Moves towards design solutions for smoke control for common areas. This may allow more units and improved core efficiencies.
- The need for design teams to consider the specialist technical input which will be necessary to justify non-standard arrangements, including at pre-planning design.
- Changes to improve fire-fighting access including adjustments to the provision of dry and wet riser services.
- The more complete inclusion of residential sprinkler design within fire-engineered design solutions to improve flexibility in internal layout planning.

BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVED DOCUMENT E (ADE) – SOUND REGULATION

The 2004 updates to ADE include enhanced standards for the acoustic performance of party walls and floors.

BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVED DOCUMENT H (ADH) – DRAINAGE AND WASTE DISPOSAL

ADH remains relatively limited in comparison to the design standards commonly enforced through other means e.g. local authority policy requirements. High-density design can throw up conflicts between these regulations and the baseline Building Regulations. In particular the practical use of chutes and/or managed refuse and recycling stores at upper levels is a significant challenge, with design solutions increasingly relying on estate management and with Building Control increasingly requesting up-front guarantees from clients on implementation.

CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOMES

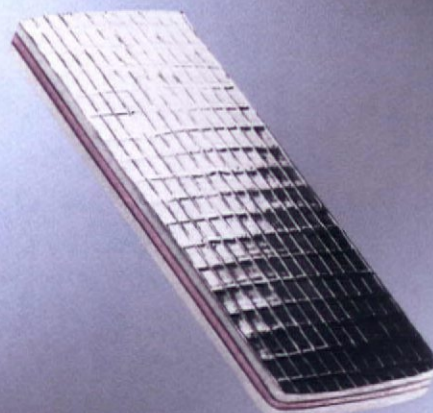
Achieving high ratings on a dense development may be problematic, but may also offer efficiency opportunities. An efficient

communal heating and hot water system can, with energy-efficiency measures, provide enough CO₂ offset to achieve level four credits. When seeking to achieve level five and six, electricity generation will be required using renewable technologies. To achieve the internal water credits, water recycling will be needed for levels five and six and might be considered for three and four if low-flow brassware is not acceptable. The available roof area may not collect enough rainwater to serve all dwellings so greywater recycling may be required. The system could be individual in each dwelling or communal. Basements need to accommodate bicycles (one per bedroom for maximum credits).

LIFETIME HOMES

Lifetime Homes was set up in 1991 by a group of housing experts concerned about the quality of housing for large sectors of the population, such as the elderly and families with young children. Interpreting the implications of Lifetime Homes for all homes has been beset with problems because the standards are based on housing and low-rise flats, and some of the standards are not sufficiently quantified. This problem is being addressed in the publication of the British Standards Institute's draft Code of Practice BS: DD 266:2007. Loosely based on the Lifetime Homes concept, it includes some easily achievable aspects of wheelchair housing, and also considers hearing and sight loss. Specifically, it extends to flats, high-density developments and townhouses, providing clarity and dimensions. While clarification of the Lifetime Homes standards is welcomed, the impact of full application of the new DD 266:2007 would be to increase the space standards. Some requirements are onerous, for example heights of basement car parks are prescribed as a minimum 2.6m clear and there must be lift provision for all four-storey flat blocks.

Technological progress enables smaller,
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Why should this be different for insulation?



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Pat & Frank

We respect yet reinterpret generic street typologies. Standardisation then allows for individual expression through extensions, terraces and customised facades. Personalised homes for people with personalities, just like *EastEnders*' Pat & Frank.

Submitted by Thomas Smith and Jemma Horwood



MULTIPLE CHOICE

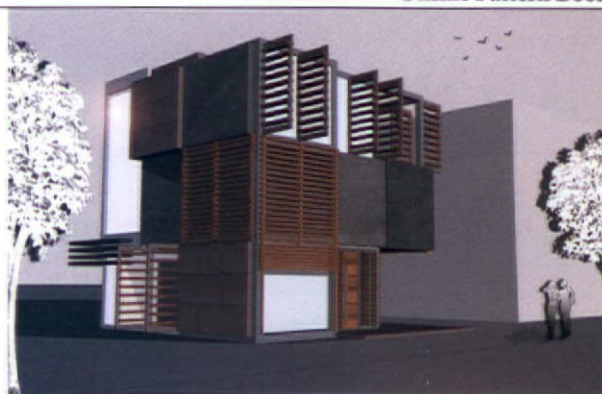
The Youcanplan project aims to improve design quality in volume house building by allowing buyers to choose their designs online. *James Pallister* investigates

'Ever since I have studied architecture the debate's been the same: architects say that what housebuilders produce is rubbish, while the housebuilders counter by saying they're providing what people want', architect and computational designer Michael Kohn of Slider Studio tells me. This conflict is now reaching a crescendo, with increasing pressure to build more housing to realise the govern-

ment's target of providing three million new homes by 2020. This is a hefty number that will require a serious commitment to volume house building.

Kohn, who founded Slider Studio in June 2006 to offer computational design services to architects, and now has clients including Mæ, Ian Ritchie and Make, has devised a strategy to address the issue of housing design quality.

On the evening of 26 November 2007, a group of architects, academics and software boffins met in a basement room of University College London (UCL), where Kohn launched Youcanplan, an online competition to design adaptable housing types for volume housebuilding (AJ 20.12.07). The project is funded by Urban Buzz, an umbrella funding body championing 30 projects with the remit



Atrea

Atrea is a flat-pack plug-in sustainable home. We looked at the idea of a house being a consumable durable that consumers can buy.

Submitted by Greg Keffe on behalf of Greg Keffe, Tom Jefferies, Chris Johnstone, Sarah Bolsover, and Gareth Llanwarne of Citylab, Manchester School of Architecture



Modular House

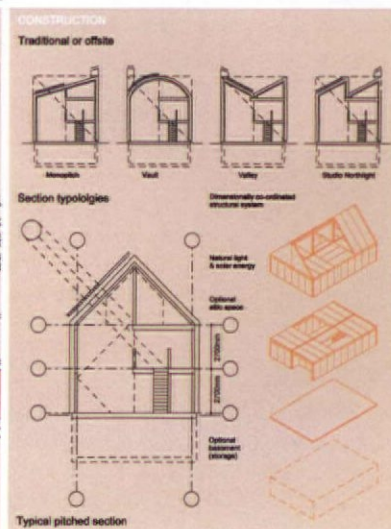
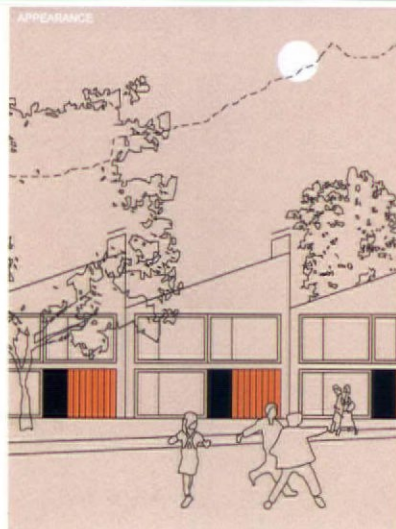
The proposal is based on a 3.6m structural module (approximately equivalent to the imperial dimension of 12 feet). It was chosen because it offers good room sizes for living rooms, kitchens, dining areas and bedrooms.

Submitted by Clive Gray

to 'develop new ways of delivering sustainable communities', ranging from attempts to slash carbon emissions in Victorian houses to a project collating all existing research on 'gender issues in the built environment'.

Kohn's proposed model, which he has dubbed Enabled Self-Procurement (ESP) recommends that potential house-buyers purchase plots on a site owned by a developer that provides and maintains basic infrastructure. They can then buy houses tailored to their specification from a pattern book featuring 10 designs.

Kohn's online competition, or 'co-opetition' as he dubs it, was to select these 10 designs. He developed software to host the project, >>





Urban Vessel

We looked at Georgian terraces; where the plan creates a strong urban strategy. The scale feels quite grand – you read the individual home but you also read it as a palace block.

Submitted by David Kohn on behalf of David Kohn Architects



with UCL and the University of East London bringing technical expertise and hardware to the project, while Urban Buzz provided a hosting site and a tranche of registered users who were a ready demographic for online voting.

In total, 38 practices – including Edward Cullinan Architects, Featherstone Associates and Ash Sakula – submitted entries. Voters could cast their ballot for five projects. If they entered the competition, they could vote for themselves but also had to vote for four others. 'We tried to simulate a method for identifying popular housing', says Kohn, 'Ultimately the idea is for real members of the public to pick from available types.'

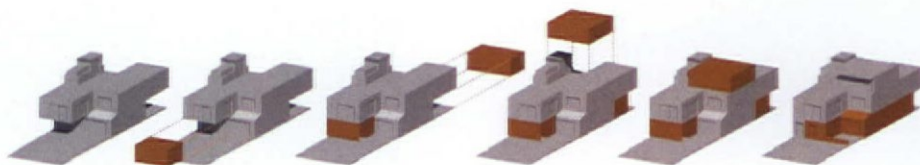
The online gallery was visited by 722 users, of whom 539 voted, over seven days from 7-14 February. Voters were able to view explanatory text and standard information such as proposed method of construction; build cost; price; dimensions; and a projected rating on the Code for Sustainable Homes' scale of 1-6. Kohn says: 'We wanted to replicate the way consumers make decisions in the marketplace.' Ten winners were selected according to the number of votes.

Slider Studio's next task is to start building the winning housing types into its software. This should enable the adaptation of housing types without going through lengthy manual design modifications. It is hoped that the models can be quickly built and rendered within the Youcanplan console to the requirements of the user. The labour-intensive work of turning PDF outlines into 3D adaptable models will be completed by a mixture of students from UEL and modelling specialists from Slider Studio in conjunction

Lifecycle House

By creating a large house on a small footprint the house can grow up with the family; the idea is to extend the occupancy and by consequence the investment in the property and its local environment.

Submitted by Geraghty Taylor Architects



with the winning architects. Winning entries will be added to a 3D virtual site, and Kohn hopes to unveil this during the London Festival of Architecture (20 June-20 July), with a live demonstration. Having selected a design, buyers will be able to choose their requirements – number of bedrooms, garaging etc. – from a list of predefined options and see their house take shape on a virtual plot.

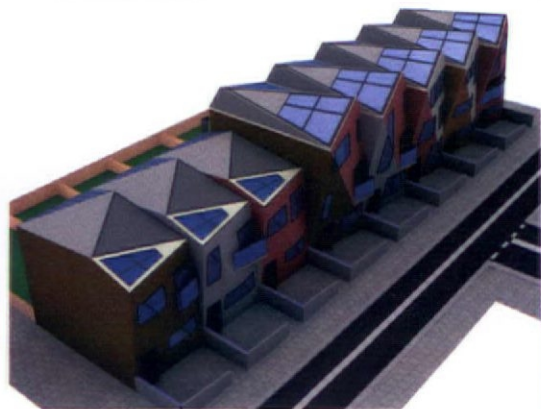
If the project lives up to Kohn's hopes, this virtual interface will make the leap to a new model for land procurement. 'At the moment there is no alternative to the volume house-builders' product' he says. 'The problem is that house building is tied up with land deals and there is no real alternative to procurement other than speculative development.' As David Kohn of Youcanbuild winner David Kohn Architects (no relation) puts it:

'[Enabled Self Procurement] makes sense, and you wonder why no one has done it before.'

Whether the 10 winning designs can develop into something which will be played out on an actual plot depends on whether or not Kohn is successful in finding a partnering developer. He has two months to do so; after that the funding from UrbanBuzz will cease.

'We have had interest from English Partnerships', Kohn says. 'As our project develops we have more collateral to convince people. We are doing quite a hard thing – turning procurement on its head.' And how well is it going? Kohn won't be drawn. 'I don't think we can make conclusions at the moment', he says. ■

Find out more about Enabled Self Procurement at <http://esp-sim.org>



Perception House

The house design is rooted in the idea of perception. When you look at one house, your eye is drawn to two, which expands to three and so on. We wanted to blur the boundaries between units – we've looked at this at school [University of East London].
Submitted by Hassan Ali and Amanda Costa Thompson

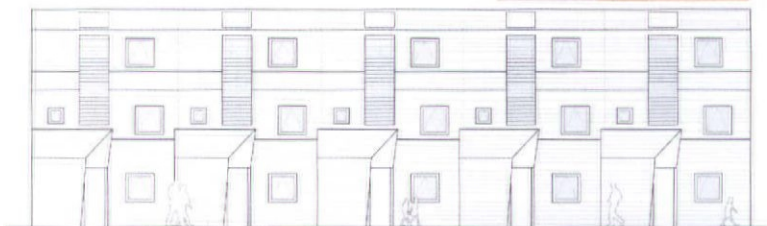
Front-Row House

We spent a lot of time looking at solar orientations, we wanted to create something that's flexible but not too wacky and, importantly, that we could envisage actually being built.
Submitted by Dan Rigamonti and Ben Hopkins on behalf of Edward Cullinan Architects



Mixed-Cost Terrace House

This is an alternative way of living where the housing plots are arranged to create a meeting space condition. Differentiation of housing types and cost is developed through size.
Submitted by Monique Suksmaningsih

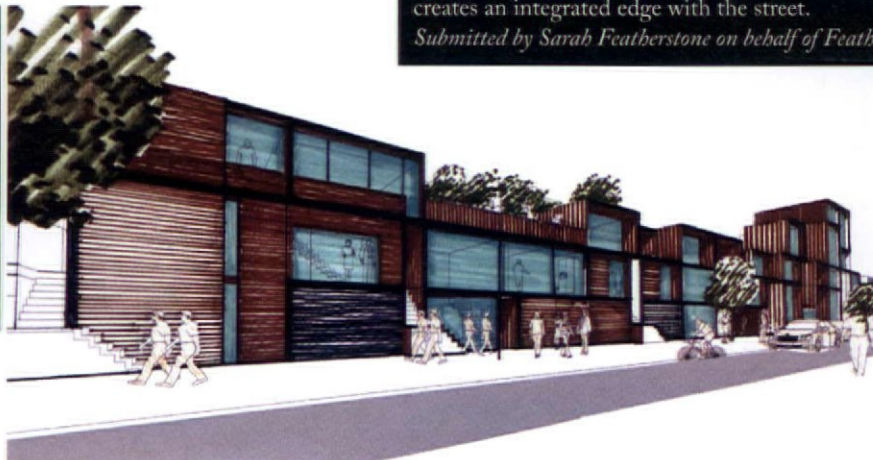


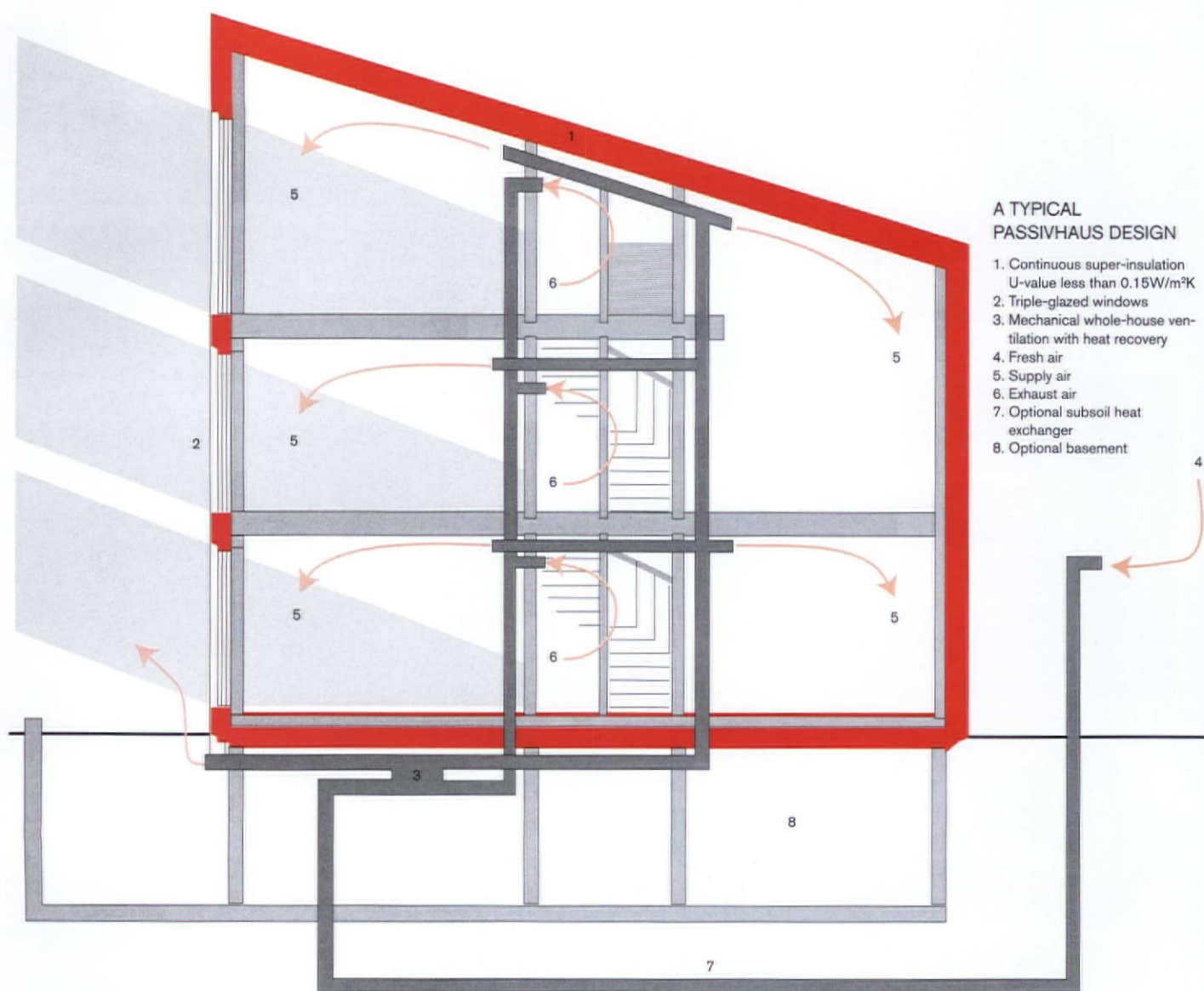
Mansard House

A modern-day interpretation of the traditional terraced house, the building form is enclosed by a folding pitched roof, which creates an integrated edge with the street.
Submitted by Sarah Featherstone on behalf of Featherstone Associates

Party-Wall House

This scheme frees the party wall from the vertical constraint, allowing for a more flexible way of living. Families, first-time buyers and older people can all share the same street space.
Submitted by Lucy Anning on behalf of Howling Monkeys





LESSONS FROM ABROAD

Developed in Germany, PassivHaus methodology uses efficient building envelopes to reduce carbon emissions. *Hattie Hartman* asks whether it can be successfully imported to the UK

Justin Bere of London-based Bere Architects believes that energy-saving German design methodology PassivHaus offers 'the best route to achieving the UK's zero-carbon housing goals'. This is a particularly pressing issue due to the government's aim for all new housing to be zero-carbon by 2016. Bere is working on his practice's first full PassivHaus, Smoothfield Farm near Ascot, Berkshire, scheduled to complete this year. It's one of a number of projects being developed under PassivHaus guidelines in the UK (see page 61) as more and more architects and clients push to dramatically cut carbon emissions.

PassivHaus is based on enhancing building envelopes to reduce heating loads to the point that a conventional heating system can be eliminated. Developed from a German-Swedish academic collaboration in 1988, the first PassivHaus buildings were completed in 1991 in Darmstadt, Germany, the same city in which the PassivHaus Institute was founded five years later. Today, over 9,500 PassivHaus buildings have been realised in Germany, over 2,500 in Austria, and approximately 12,500 worldwide. Gavin Hodgson of the BRE estimates that the number of PassivHaus schemes in the UK is in the low hundreds. No exact figures are available because no UK building has attained PassivHaus designation yet, perhaps partly due to the £2,000 price tag for certification.

This low take-up comes despite the BRE's commitment to PassivHaus – it participated in research shared between eight countries between 1998 and 2001, and developed a UK website (www.passivhaus.org.uk) and English translation of the PassivHaus computer modelling simulations (PHPP).

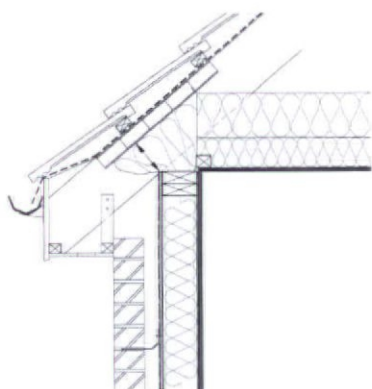
PassivHaus standards are roughly equivalent to Code for Sustainable Homes level four, two levels below the zero-carbon level six. The design heat load of a PassivHaus must be less than 15kWh/m²/year – which equals the heat that can be transported by the minimum required mechanical ventilation. Joints between materials and components and all service penetrations must be sealed.

Several UK practices are developing projects to PassivHaus standard. Youmeheshe director Simon Beames, whose firm looked to the method for its OKO House (see page 61), says he first encountered PassivHaus through a competition win in 2006 which enabled him to tour several Austrian PassivHaus projects. 'I was amazed by the similarity between the internal air quality of the houses and the mountain air', he says.

Beames notes that the biggest difference with the Austrian context is that while ground-source heating and solar panels can be relied upon to top up energy requirements in Austria's colder climate, the UK market must rely on biomass wood pellet boilers. >>

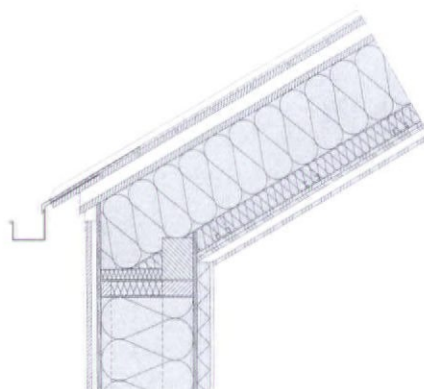
Achieving the PassivHaus standard

- The PassivHaus standard is applicable to residential and non-residential buildings, new builds, and refurbishments
- The heating demand of schemes must be less than 15kWh/m²/year
- Insulation of roofs, walls and floors must achieve a U-value of 0.15W/m²K
- There must be continuous insulation and no thermal breaks
- Triple-glazed windows with a U-value below 0.8W/m²K and thermally insulated frames must be specified
- Airtightness must be 1m³/hour/m² at a pressure difference of 50 pascals
- A mechanical whole-house ventilation system, which recovers at least 75 per cent of exhaust heat, must be specified



Eave which fails to meet PassivHaus

standard Accredited by Communities and Local Government, this eave complies with Building Regulations but does not have enough insulation to achieve PassivHaus standard



Eave to PassivHaus standard Features

continuous high-performance insulation



PassivHaus in Dornbirn, Austria, 1997 Austria has approximately 2,500 exemplar projects

THE HOME OF PASSIVHAUS

Hattie Hartman travels to Germany to see PassivHaus in action

The 45+ delegates were a great turnout for the UK Green Building Council's (UK-GBC's) first study trip to Hanover, Germany, to learn about the PassivHaus standard. Curiously, the only architects were from PRP and Penoyre & Prasad, a surprise given that over 10 per cent of UK-GBC member organisations are architects. But this would be an advantage on day two, when we visited some architecturally dire projects.

The day-one morning seminars were introduced by UK-GBC chief executive Paul King (1) and focused on the technical aspects of PassivHaus. The message was insulation, insulation, insulation – and air tightness. Case studies included Hanover's municipal sustainable energy strategy and Gaunt Francis' Green House, which is



on site at the BRE Innovation Park in Watford.

Afternoon sessions (2) focused on commercial PassivHaus, because a major concern of the UK-GBC is cutting carbon emissions in non-domestic buildings. An overview by Arup's Chris Twinn was

On day two we visited a series of architecturally dire projects

followed by three German case studies.

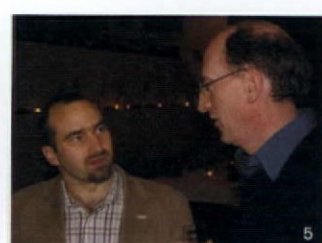
At night we walked across central Hanover – all post-war construction – to the grand City Hall (3), with its map of Hanover (4). Over dinner, delegates including Miles Watkins of Aggregate Industries (left of image) and Andy Ford of Fulcrum Consulting discussed the potential application of



PassivHaus to the UK (5). Penoyre & Prasad's Alan Holloway said: 'The German speakers don't seem particularly interested in headline-grabbing "zero-carbon" targets, but are satisfied with very low carbon emissions.' He expressed scepticism about whether the UK can transform from being a 'laggard' in energy performance to being a world leader by 2016.

Day two was rainy for our tour of PassivHaus sites. Each of the three projects we visited – an apartment block, a house and a shopping centre (6) – was more

disappointing architecturally than the last. There is not much to see in a PassivHaus building beyond a few ceiling vents and the basement plant rooms. We wondered where these would go given that many UK houses don't have basements.



On the plane home, my overriding feeling was disappointment at the design quality of projects we had visited. The UK-GBC must make good design central. Paul King has acknowledged this need. Let's make it happen.

'There is a PassivHaus rush on, but we need to ask how it will work'

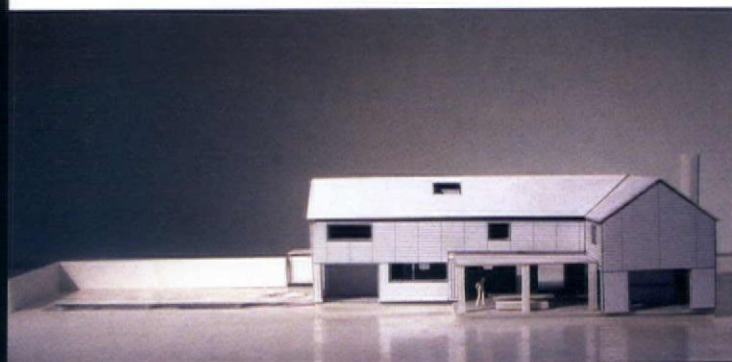
Construction quality and the high price of imported components are frequently mentioned barriers to the implementation of PassivHaus in the UK. Stephen Cartwright of Cardiff-based Passive Solutions, which distributes PassivHaus components such as triple-glazed windows and vacuum insulation (see pages 62–63), promotes UK manufacturing of these components. He adds: 'Training, such as the courses offered at [training centre] Pines Calyx in Kent, is critical to the achieving the necessary construction quality.'

Some architects remain sceptical of PassivHaus. Bill Dunster of ZEDFactory and Craig White of White Design are unsure if PassivHaus will work in the UK's mild climate, which makes mitigating electricity loads of mechanical ventilation harder to justify. White Design has developed the Bale House (see opposite) to PassivHaus standard with maximum reliance on passive ventilation. 'There is a bit of a PassivHaus rush on in the UK,' White says. 'But we need to ask how it will really work here.' ■

OKO House

Architect Youmeheshe

Youmeheshe's proposed OKO House is a modular prefabricated approach to PassivHaus, with CO₂ emissions estimated at 4kg/m²/year – exceeding Code for Sustainable Homes level six. The roof form can be varied to optimise solar orientation. Renewable technologies include building-integrated photovoltaics, solar thermal technology, and a wood-pellet biomass boiler. www.okohouse.com



Smoothfield Farm, Ascot

Architect Bere Architects

Currently on site for a private client, Smoothfield Farm's entire envelope is sealed in a membrane to achieve required airtightness levels. No conventional boiler is specified, and extra heating for cold winter days will be provided by a ground-source heat pump. www.bere.co.uk

BaleHaus

Architect White Design

BaleHaus is carbon 'negative' because it is made of prefabricated straw-bale cladding panels (ModCell, with U-value of 1.3) whose materials absorb CO₂ when they grow. White Design estimates that 130 tonnes of CO₂ are 'banked' in each house, which more than offsets the approximately 70 tonnes required for manufacture, supply and installation. Solar thermal technologies and a biomass boiler are also included, as is smart metering, to reduce electrical consumption. www.white-design.co.uk



Insulation is key to achieving PassivHaus standard. See overleaf for the AJ's pick of the insulation products on the market

BUILDING YOUR PASSIVHAUS

Kaye Alexander presents a round-up of the best insulation products on the market, to help projects achieve PassivHaus standard

Structural insulated panel

Product Kingspan TEK (manufactured by Kingspan Off-Site)

UK Supplier Kingspan Off-Site Limited, PO BOX 7454, Kiln Farm, Milton Keynes, MK11 3AB; 01908 266 200; marketing@kingspanoffsite.com; www.kingspanoffsite.com

Material Two OSB 3 orientated strand boards with a zero ozone-depletion potential. Rigid urethane insulation core

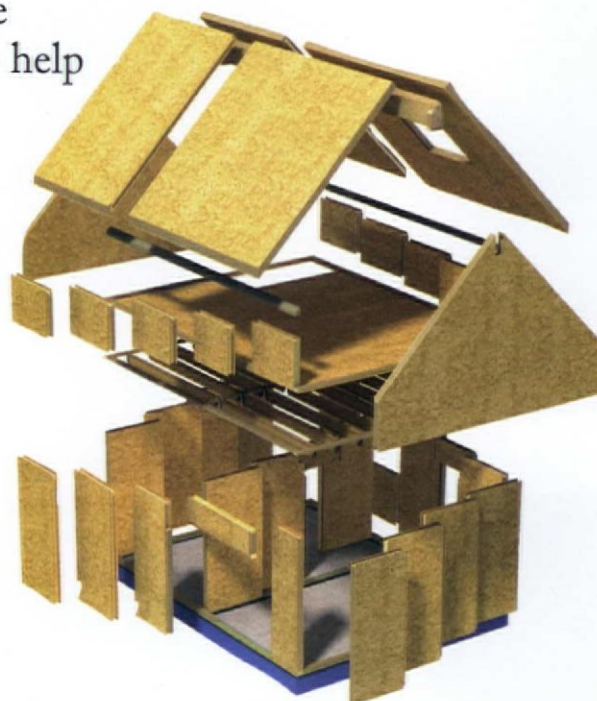
Special Properties The system can be used to create the walls, roofs and floors of a complete building, or elements of it can be used with other components

Format Panels are cut to individual construction plans

Application New-builds, extensions, adding new floors to buildings

U value No worse than $0.23 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$ and can be as low as $0.1 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$

Thermal Conductivity OSB 3 = $0.13 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$; rigid urethane insulation core = $0.023 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$



Translucent material

Product Kalwall + Nanogel (Nanogel produced by Cabot Corporation)

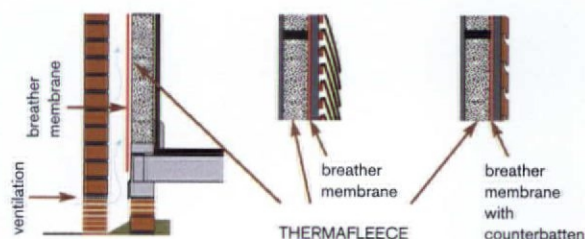
UK Supplier Stoakes Systems Ltd, 1 Banstead Road, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3EB; 020 8660 7667; mailbox@stoakes.co.uk; www.stoakes.co.uk

Material Translucent structural composite sandwich panels are formed by permanently bonding specially formulated fibreglass-reinforced translucent faces to a grid core made from interlocked structural aluminium composite I-beams. The panels are filled with insulating Nanogel aerogel

Special Properties Translucent wall cladding and roofing system which achieves insulation values equivalent to solid walls

Format Project-specific customised prefabricated wall/roof cladding systems. Maximum panel sizes: $1.2 \text{ m} \times 3.6 \text{ m} \times 70 \text{ mm}$ / $1.5 \text{ m} \times 3.0 \text{ m} \times 70 \text{ mm}$

U Value $0.28 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$



Natural material

Product Thermafleece (manufactured by Second Nature UK)

UK Supplier Green Building Store, Heath House Mill, Heath House Lane, Bolster Moor, West Yorkshire HD7 4JW 01484 461705 info@greenbuildingstore.co.uk www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk

Material Sheep's wool

Special Properties The natural crimp of sheep's wool allows it to retain its structure and overall thickness. Its capacity to absorb moisture with no loss to its thermal efficiency makes it ideal for roofs and timber-framed walls

Format Batts of 50/75/100mm thicknesses and 400/600mm width

Application Roof, wall and floor constructions

U Value Estimate – walls 125mm thickness: $0.3 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$; attic 225mm

Thickness $0.16 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$; roof 200mm thickness: $0.2 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$

Thermal Conductivity $0.039 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$



Insulating formwork

Product Durisol D365/120

UK Supplier Durisol UK, Parkway, Pen-y-Fan Industrial Estate, Crumlin, Gwent NP11 1 3EL. 0800 434 6458 sales@durisol.net www.durisol.net

Material Proprietary cement-bonded, specially graded recycled waste wood woodcrete product (100 per cent clean natural softwood)

Special Properties Fully recyclable, and lightweight with integral Rockwool fire-safe insulation-enhancing thermal and acoustic properties

Format 500 x 365 x 250mm; 14 kg; structural core thickness 120mm

Application For below- and above-ground building construction – external walls (up to 26 storeys)

U Value < 0.23 W/m²K

Thermal Conductivity 0.13 W/m²K

Cost Built cost including labour and concrete fill approx. £60 per m²



Vacuum-insulated panel

Product Va-Q-vip B (manufactured by Va-Q-Tec AG)

UK Supplier PassiveHouse Solutions Ltd, Ty Kama, Clos Yr Avon, Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, SA17 4TJ; 0560 1122330; info@passivehouse.co.uk; www.passivehouse.co.uk

Material The core is an amorphous silicon dioxide powder and an inorganic opacifier. It is sealed under vacuum into a metalised barrier foil which is covered on the exterior with a black protection fleece

Special Properties Thin profile allows for use in tight spaces. Thermal conductivity is about 10 times lower than in conventional, non-evacuated insulation materials

Format Rectangular panels. Other shapes available on demand

Application Facades, roofs, floors, balconies and conservatories

U Value 0.240W/m²K for 20mm thickness (initial I 0.005W/mK)/0.375W/m²K (lifetime I 0.008W/m²K, DiBT certified)



Spray foam insulation

Product BioBased 501 and BioBased 1701 (manufactured by BioBased Insulation)

UK Supplier Econstruction Products Ltd, +353 (1) 298 7155 www.econstructionproducts.ie

Material Soy-based polyurethane

Special Properties Spray-applied as a liquid and quickly expands to fill all cracks, crevices and voids to create an effective airtight seal

Format Spray-in-place open-cell semi-rigid and closed-cell rigid foam

Application Spray under floors, into walls, on to roof decks.

U Value Depends on thickness of the product and other products used in combination

Thermal Conductivity 0.036W/m²K (501)/0.026W/m²K (1701)

Cost £13 per m² x 100mm approx. (501 supplied and fitted)/£15 per m² x 50mm approx (1701 supplied and fitted)



Loose fill

Product Crown Supafil Cavity Wall Insulation (manufactured by Knauf Insulation)

UK Supplier Knauf Insulation Ltd, PO Box 10, Stafford Road, St. Helens, Merseyside WA10 3NS. 0844 800 0135 info@knaufinsulation.co.uk www.knaufinsulation.co.uk

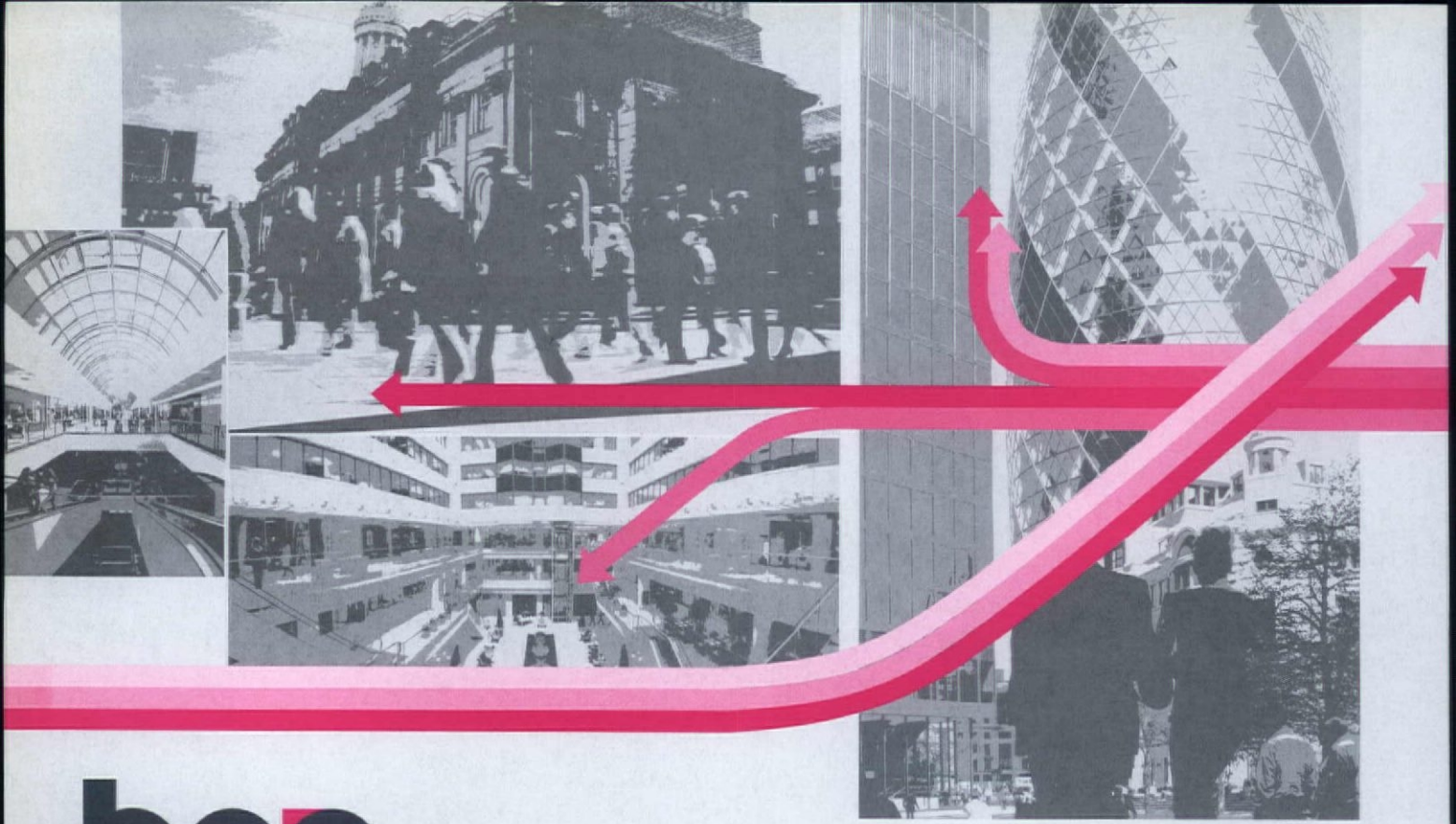
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In this section *The River Mersey* // The masterworks of Geoffrey Barwa // Back Issues // Sandy Wilson's art // The legacy of Grand Designs // Diary

The Critics



Antony Gormley's
Another Place,
with bicycle and
the River Mersey

COLIN MCPHERSON

BOOK

Did the Mersey change the world?

Ian Wray's book on the River Mersey casts its net beyond Liverpool, writes Phil Griffin

Mersey: The River That Changed the World, edited by Ian Wray, The Bluecoat Press. Hardcover. 208pp, £17.99

Mersey: The River That Changed the World is dedicated to 'Anthony H Wilson 1950–2007', and his contribution here is his last published work. The legendary manager of Factory Records, Dry Bar and the Hacienda, Wilson is described on the contributors' page, in the shortest of shorthand, as a 'broadcast journalist and regeneration consultant'. Immortalised in the films *24 Hour Party People* (2002) and *Control* (2007), for most of his mouthy career, on and off screen, in and out of Factory Records, Wilson didn't know what he was doing. He didn't know, until the last year or two, that he was a regeneration consultant. Actually, Wilson, like the Mersey

in flood, was an entire regenerative force of nature. 'Why should the Thames have all the glory?' I hear Wilson say. His essay in this portmanteau book is titled 'Westward Ho'.

Unsurprisingly, like any book about a river, such as Jonathan Raban's *Old Glory* or photographer Ragubhir Singh's *Ganga, Mersey* is really quite moving. Rivers exert a powerful pull on our emotions. Even meagre, badly polluted rivers. Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture is the likely stimulus for this book, which is published by Liverpool's Bluecoat Press with funding from United Utilities and Mersey Basin Campaign. Hence it is astonishingly good

value at £17.99. It is also positively lyrical, if not entirely hagiographic. With that cover price and more than 200 pages, it does not matter much that the book carries typos or the reproduction of Colin McPherson's photographs is perhaps a little flat.

Mersey is not a book about Liverpool. The river comes into being under a road junction beside a Sainsbury's supermarket in Stockport. This side of Mersey's personality is rewarded with some fine images of one of western Europe's largest brick structures, Stockport Viaduct. One of the viaduct's 27 arches forms a second roof to a pub called the Crown, which has been photographed >>

BOOK

To Bawa and Beyond

Wendy de Silva reviews David Robson's latest look at Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa

Beyond Bawa: Modern Masterworks of Monsoon Asia by David Robson, photographs by Richard Powers, Thames & Hudson. Hardcover. 264pp, 600 illustrations, £39.95

With his specialist knowledge of Geoffrey Bawa (1919–2003), David Robson would be an unbeatable Mastermind contestant. The most important Sri Lankan architect of his generation, Bawa's influence spread well beyond the confines of the island. Robson's *Beyond Bawa* looks, quite literally, beyond Bawa and, like the man himself, is at times thought-provoking, full of anecdote and, occasionally, entertainingly rude.

In the first section of the book, Robson paddles down a number of intriguing rivers, creeks and lagoons, many of them beautifully illustrated, exploring the territory in which

Bawa worked, the people and places that inspired him, and his immense influence on modern Asian architecture. The second part showcases the work of his collaborators and contemporaries and goes on to chart the work of younger Sri Lankan architects, emerging from 'under the umbrella' of Bawa. The third section looks at Bawa's influence further afield, from South India across the Indian Ocean to Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Like Bawa's projects, which Robson chronicled in his earlier book, *Geoffrey Bawa: The Complete Works* (Thames & Hudson, 2002), the chapters of this book take the

If you seek creative and historical context – the gossip on what made the master tick – this book delivers

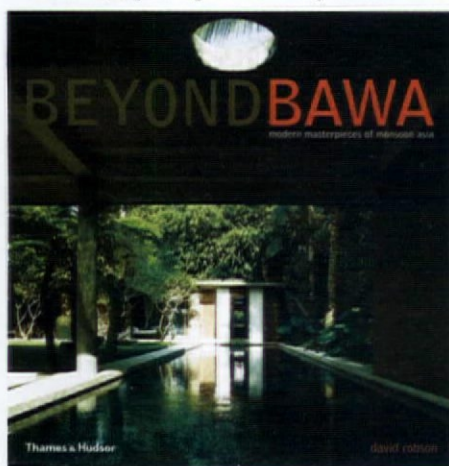
reader on an unpredictable journey. The story twists and turns in a finely crafted landscape of image and word. It starts with a photo essay in luxuriant tropical colours, moves on to an acid yellow introduction, followed by a documentary section of black and white images of Bawa's work. Another chapter is dedicated to facsimiles of drawings and sketches printed on detail paper. These evocative drawings took me straight back to Bawa's office, where I worked in 1983, and



the damp, mildewy smell that emanated from the plan chests – incidentally explaining why many of them had to be redrawn.

The book's sheer size allows Robson to be generous in its coverage of the roles of Bawa's clients, partners and collaborators. It includes a fascinating account of how Jim Richards introduced Jean Chamberlin and Christoph Bon to Bawa in India, and how they went on to champion Bawa's work in the West. Robson does not over-protect his hero, who is seen, warts and all, most entertainingly in the diaries of Australian artist, Donald Friend.

A section on architectural writing and publishing looks at Columbia professor of architecture Kenneth Frampton's Eurocentric view of Modernism and, later, his essay 'Towards a Critical Regionalism' (1983), although this doesn't mention Bawa. An insight is given into the importance of the *White Book* (1986), the first book on Bawa, in spreading the word about his work and kick-starting an architectural publishing era in



River Mersey, continued from page 65

almost as many times as Paul McCartney and is ageing rather better, handsomely portrayed here.

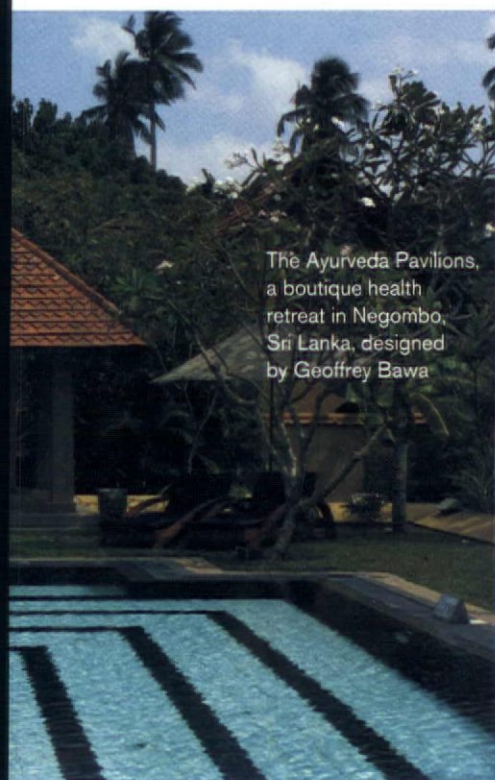
I guide groups of visiting architects around Liverpool, mainly from Scandinavia. They book Beatles tours and lunch at the Cavern and, invariably, they are hugely disappointed. Liverpool and The Beatles are like Sheffield

and steel; the city is hobbled by mono-culture. Liverpool 08 will put this right, encouraging the city to handle its huge cultural heritage with a bit more care and perspective. Hence, and emphatically, Wilson's 'Westward Ho': his essay is a musical memoir that begins in Salford, not far from the Ship Canal, and continues by the River Goyt. Wilson writes a biography of the music that took over his life, stretching from West Africa to the southern

United States and back, via the great mouth of the River Mersey.

Did, as the title suggests, the River Mersey change the world? The slave trade did. The globalisation of the cotton industry did. Mass migration did. The Beatles were the biggest single element in a musical revolution that certainly did. Wilson invites us to ponder that question. His last words in print read: 'How strange that my story begins in the hills

The Ayurveda Pavilions, a boutique health retreat in Negombo, Sri Lanka, designed by Geoffrey Bawa



Singapore. Ken Yeang famously christened Bawa the world's first 'green architect', and architects in the West can learn a lot about climate control from their Asian counterparts.

The rest is devoted to vignettes of contemporary Asian architects and artists, a rare opportunity to see work in Sri Lanka. Robson's enthusiasms shine through, including accounts of Amila de Mel and Chelvadurai Anjalendran's work. A sprinkling of that sought-after commission, the resort hotel, gives this section a coffee-table gloss.

If you are looking for an introduction to Bawa's work alone, then seek out the earlier books. But if you seek creative, historical and political context – the gossip on what made the master tick, along with an introduction to the work of about 20 contemporary Asian and Sri Lankan architects – this book delivers. *Wendy de Silva is principal in both Chance de Silva and Dransfield Owens de Silva*

Resume: Bawa is the daddy of Sri Lankan architects and green building

below the moors, on the banks of the Goyt, with my first taste of an Industrial Revolution, and takes me downstream to the Irish Sea and to the two great progenitors of the Industry of Revolution that has shaped my life and, thank God, continues to do so, to his last breath. ■ *Phil Griffin is a Mancunian writer and broadcaster*

Resume: Oh, Mersey, Mersey me. Oh, things ain't what they used to be

Back Issues Prince Charles once expressed his affection for Ted Cullinan, the most recent winner of the RIBA Gold Medal, writes Steve Parnell

It's hard to find somebody today who doesn't have a good word to say about the latest RIBA Gold Medal winner, Ted Cullinan. So I thought I would see how he appeared in the journals – the cutting edge of architectural historiography. His first new build was his Uncle Horder's house (1958–60), published in *House & Garden* in May 1963. There were small appearances in the 1970s, particularly with the Highgrove housing, but he really started attracting media attention around 1983 – halfway between starting out and receiving his Gold medal.

In September 1983, the *Architectural Review* focused on Romantic Pragmatism, 'a pragmatic approach to building organisation and construction, and a romantic sensibility'. Cullinan and MacCormac were put forward as the main protagonists, the former being described as 'the father of a generation of Romantic Pragmatists' in Brendan Woods' article. Both were called 'The English Wet Brigade' by Peter Cook.

However, Cullinan's real media moment occurred in May 1984, the year of RIBA's sesquicentenary. The *Architectural Review* featured the rebuilding of Barnes Church and Cullinan had requested that Cook write the criticism (pictured right). Later in the issue, when asked the question 'Is there a British tradition?' Cook responds with 'screw the English tradition' and Cullinan with 'I think tradition is an active thing'. T S Eliot could have almost based his 1919 essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' on the pair.

But the real question is whether Prince Charles had read this issue of *Architectural Review* when writing his famous 'monstrous carbuncle' speech for the RIBA later that month, claiming Cullinan to be 'a man after my own heart' and not-so-subtly suggesting that Romantic Pragmatism could provide the alternative. Perhaps this is the reason that British architecture in the 1980s is now remembered for the High Tech movement.





Critic's Choice

Sandy Wilson's art collection finds an ideal home at the Pallant House Gallery, says *Andrew Mead*

Sandy Wilson's Pallant House Gallery at Chichester, designed with Long & Kentish, deservedly won the Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year in 2007. While the suspended ceilings for the ductwork and lighting are a little overbearing, it proves a sympathetic setting for the new exhibition 'Colin St John Wilson: Collector and Architect', which runs until 8 June. This mini retrospective interweaves a resumé of Wilson's career (drawings, models, photographs) with fruits of his off-duty hours in pursuit of art.

It may come as a surprise to learn that, unlike his close associate Leslie Martin, who collected Ben Nicholson reliefs, Wilson had little interest in abstraction. In the works in the show the figure dominates, although there is a highly atmospheric painting of the Thames Estuary by Michael Andrews, which achieves its effects through the liberal use of turpentine and ashes. But within these parameters there's great variety, from the graphic simplicity and bold colours of Patrick Caulfield's *View of the Chimneys* to the clotted paint of Frank Auerbach's portraits and townscapes.

A clue to Wilson's collecting comes when you spot the figures inhabiting his architectural drawings and recall his writings in *The Other Tradition*: form-making was not his priority. Whatever reservations there may be about the British Library, it dignifies its users – from the design of the entrance door handles to the lighting of desks. This human dimension is palpable at Pallant House (*pictured below*).



TV

Love it or loathe it, Grand Designs has changed how we look at architecture, says *Steve Parnell*

Grand Designs, Wednesdays at 9pm on Channel 4

Architects on Wednesday evenings can no doubt be found sucking teeth, biting thumbs and turning up their noses while shouting free advice at the screen. *Grand Designs*, the highly successful programme that architects love to hate, is in the middle of its eighth series and, unlike the housing market that fuels interest

in such shows, Kevin McCloud's brand shows no signs of slowing down.

At the time of writing, this series so far has included a decagonal house hidden behind a listed wall in Oxford, a Modernist white commercial cube, an ordinary home with a retrofitted gothic theme, a huge Scottish barn and a slick German prefabrication in Bath.

McCloud was recently voted the public figure with the biggest influence on architecture and it's not difficult to understand why. While architects market their portfolios to other architects, McCloud is demonstrating the potential of good design to the public at large every week, giving them something to aspire to and a language to discuss it with.

A large proportion of these grand designers don't employ professional help (or jettison their architect to cut costs).



Left Tim and Zoe Bawtree jettisoned their architect to build The Underground House

Below A £950,000 Decagon House in Oxford
Bottom The Lime Kiln House, Midlothian



When the grand designers choose to go it alone, McCloud smiles knowingly like a crocodile at the Masai Mara, anticipating that there's a good TV meal to be had. The best programmes are where the grand designers with buckets of money arrogantly try to design and build everything, and get into a royal mess; or those with little money inspire us with their determination to pull it off.

Successful commercial architect Martin Pease, of Atkins, was neither of these and the programme featuring his perfect 'Bristol Sugar Cube' was the most disappointing – not because of the architecture, but because of his team's sheer competence. The concrete pad was cast to within a millimetre, the prefabricated units slotted precisely into place and the house came in on time and on budget, denying us McCloud's trademark 'it was a

million-to-one shot, but they just about pulled it off' moment at the end of the show.

The houses on *Grand Designs* are often like a Belgian exchange student who has learned her English from Britney Spears songs: plenty of well-known mispronounced clichés, but no real comprehension of an underlying meaning. There's a pernicious vocabulary that masquerades as design – the 'injected' colour, the 'inside-outside' lifestyle, the 'hovering' stairs and 'floating' roof. Images of these buildings often end up in McCloud's *Grand Designs* magazine, influencing future generations of grand designers. This is not an architect's architecture, but who can deny anyone building their dream?

Resume: What hurts more – the cringe-worthy architecture, or the fact that the public is still loving every minute of it?

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www.buildingcentre.co.uk

2 *Strangely Familiar*

Leeds photographer Peter Mitchell and Swiss photographer Eric Jaquier have documented their cities from 1960 to the present.

Opens March 1 at the PSL, Leeds
www.projects-spaceleeds.org.uk

3 *The Shell Guides: Surrealism, Modernism, Tourism*

Discover the history of these iconic guides to Britain, from the 1930s-1980s.

Opens 4 March at the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, Barnet
www.moda.mdx.ac.uk

4 *Artful Practice*

Glimpse the architectural drawings of Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912).

23 February-25 May in the Tennant Room, Royal Academy of Arts, London
www.royalacademy.org.uk

5 *Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba*

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23 February-1 June at Manchester Art Gallery
www.manchestergalleries.org



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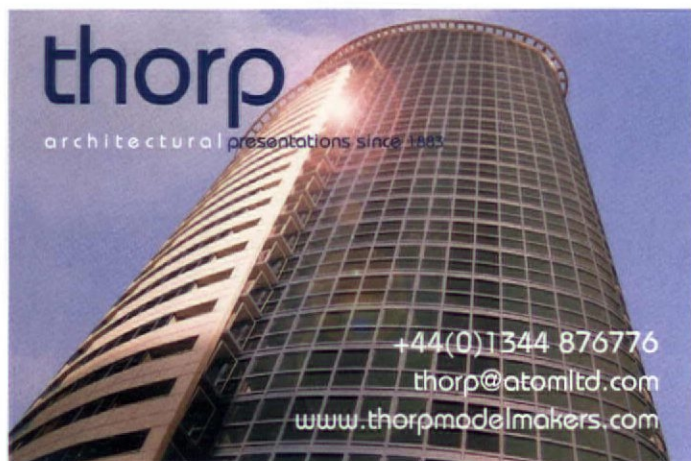
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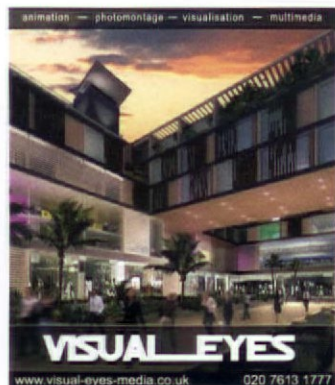
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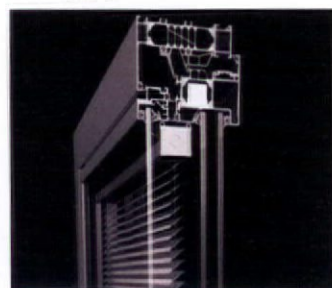
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Geze, the UK's leading manufacturer of door and window control systems, is launching two stainless-steel, space-saving glass door systems. The Geolan is a floor-mounted system that allows architects to specify sliding doors and the Aerolan is a minimalist version that supports suspended glass doors. Visit www.geze-uk.com

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Schüco is expanding its aluminium window range with the AWS 105 CC.HI, a specialist window designed for schools for the hard of hearing and buildings affected by noise pollution. It delivers high levels of sound reduction (up to 48 dB) and thermal insulation ('U' value 1.6 W/m² K for a 1.2m² window). Visit www.schueco.co.uk

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Hörmann timber Nordic pine sectional doors have been used to seal off the flamingo shelter at Chester Zoo. The doors are made of timber from sustainable sources and pre-treated at factory stage to protect them against insect and fungal attacks, and adverse weather conditions. For more information, telephone 0800 083 7216.

ASH AND LACY



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The new roof of Celtic FC's training academy in Lennoxtown has 4,000m² of Ash & Lacy Ashzip standing seam, with Ashfab fabrications for the perimeter detail. The Ashzip sheets are rolled out in long, continuous lengths, leading to fewer junctions, and so improving weather resistance. Visit www.ashandlacy.com

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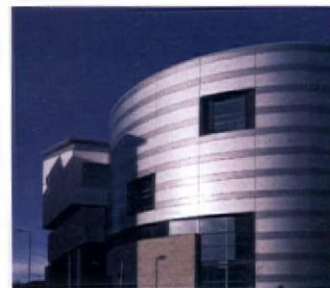
FREEFOAM PLASTICS



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Freefoam Plastics has launched a website to provide comprehensive information on its new product Edenex, a wood plastic composite that is available as a decking system. It combines the natural look of wood with the flexibility of PVC to create a low-maintenance and durable system, ideal for a busy lifestyle. Visit www.edenex.net

EUROCLAD



AJ ENQUIRY 206

Euroclad's Linear rainscreen cladding has added a striking finish to Dundee University's Institute of Sport and Exercise. The system is easy to install, with a series of cassette panels fixed to vertical support rails. Once in place, it has a rigid and flat appearance as a result of its metal composite materials. Visit www.euroclad-facades.co.uk

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Ultracrete Envirobond HA104 is a new cement-based alternative to resin-based bedding mortars, and has full BBA/HAPAS approval as part of Instarmac's Ironwork Reinstatement System. The environmentally friendly product is bagged, removing the cost of hazardous waste disposal. Email envirobond@instarmac.co.uk



Ian Martin. An odyssey of epic space, from Los Gherkinos to Turdiña Plaza

MONDAY. Email from Raul Castro's office. Any thoughts on how to re-environmentalise Cuba? Later, today, I'm turning low-grade peripheral land into a cash machine by creating a PFI hospital car park.

TUESDAY. Right. Cuba. Summary: now Fidel's spending more time with his imaginary friends at a private nursing home in Cienfuegos, the New Urbanistas want the usual Fairtrade, low-carbon, eco-freako makeover, with tourism.

I email back some suggestions. Promote Havana as a premier smoking destination by commissioning a series of cigar-shaped icons (Los Gherkinos). Get Oscar Niemeyer to masterplan a new city with cultural and sexual quarters, and loads of concrete. **Slap a Compulsory Purchase Order on Guantánamo Bay and convert it into an upmarket gated holiday camp.** Nurture diverse communities by building 'Titan' prisons for domestic political prisoners. Revolutionary nightclubs with socialist chillout areas.

WEDNESDAY. My modular Tamworth Supercasino has been shelved for now. No matter. The 35 constituent 'minicasini' will be distributed throughout Mercia, to wait for the inevitable call to glory.

THURSDAY. Enter EU competition to design an affirmative public artwork for Turdiña Plaza in Brussels.

FRIDAY. 'My name's Sarah and I'm an archiholic...' We're in a squatted Wesleyan chapel just off the Balls Pond Road. There are

about 20 of us on chairs, in a perfect circle. To my left is Sarah. To my right is the idiot Darcy Farquear'say, my so-called friend and 'sponsor'.

Everyone here at Archiholics Anonymous (Hoxton and Digital Media Branch) is keen to share their pain, for hours, including a break for 'veggie dips' and celery. The pain is teased out in detailed accounts of addiction, often with sketches to be passed round. All addicts are tragically boring, and this lot are particularly tragic. You'd be better off popping some jaunty hats on the dry-rot-fruited bodies upstairs and having a conversation with THEM.

'I wasn't even interested in architecture as a teenager' mewls Sarah. 'All my friends would be out on the lash, lurching from one historic pub to another, knocking back glimpse after glimpse of sash windows and Arts and Crafts corbelling. I was happy to stay in my bedroom with my solitary drinking and the crack pipe. Then one night there was a programme on Channel 4 about landmark buildings. Richard Rogers was being interviewed going up the escalators at the Pompidou. He was facing backwards, so he'd start glancing nervously over his shoulder as he got nearer the top. It was really exciting...'

'I started to hit the urban landscape pretty hard after that. Initially it was just social gazing – guided walks, local-historical-society slideshows, a bus tour of Exeter's Archipops – but soon I was guzzling buildings one after another. It got to the point where I didn't care what I absorbed as long as it was architecture. A Brutalist school, a Tudor hall, a Post-Modern financial services headquarters...'

I pretend I'm going to the improvised bathroom downstairs then let myself out, smoke my way to the nearest pub, have a stiffener and smoke my way back again. Sarah's still going. 'I lost my job, my friends, even my cat who starved to death while I was on an Alvar Aalto mini-break. It got so bad I couldn't start the day without a DVD of Dan Cruickshank whispering inside Durham Cathedral...'

Memo to Self: Kill Darcy. It's bad enough having to listen to him and his fellow neurotics. But when, as asked, I stand up and speak from the heart and tell them that I'm not an archiholic, that I'm only here because this big fucking baby in the cambric jumpsuit and sequinned beret sitting next to me needed moral support, and that I will punch him later, they all look at me with sympathy and understanding. They're convinced I'm coming back next week.

After the meeting, try to hit Darcy. He manages to hail a cab before I can get to him. I stand there fuming, then notice some exquisite stucco pilasters across the road...

SATURDAY. Meet Darcy in pub for ploughman's punch.

SUNDAY. In the real world, spend morning in the recliner. In Ninth Life – the immersive virtual environment 'for modern cats on borrowed time' – I am the fearsome avatar Gropius, armed with Modernist zeal and a 9mm.

This week's Top 10: Pencils

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The Awards lunch will be held on the 27th June 2008 at The Brewery, London.
Entries are now open for the following sector categories:

- Future Star
- Outstanding Achiever
- Inspirational Leader

Awards for the above categories will be made to each of the following sectors:

- Architecture
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- Construction
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The Inspire Woman of the Year Award is a non-entry category nominated by the industry and decided upon by the judging panel. For more information and full entry criteria, please visit www.ajplus.co.uk/inspire

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