

06.03.08

Sheppard Robson  
*Manchester University's  
maths faculty – p30*

International  
Building Regulations  
*We find out which  
country's architects need  
the most shelf space – p44*

'A Medieval Modernist'  
*Elain Harwood on  
Charles Holden,  
Tube station architect  
extraordinaire – p49*

AJ

# KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE IN AFGHANISTAN

*Architect Grant Elliott's diary of three months in Kabul – page 24*



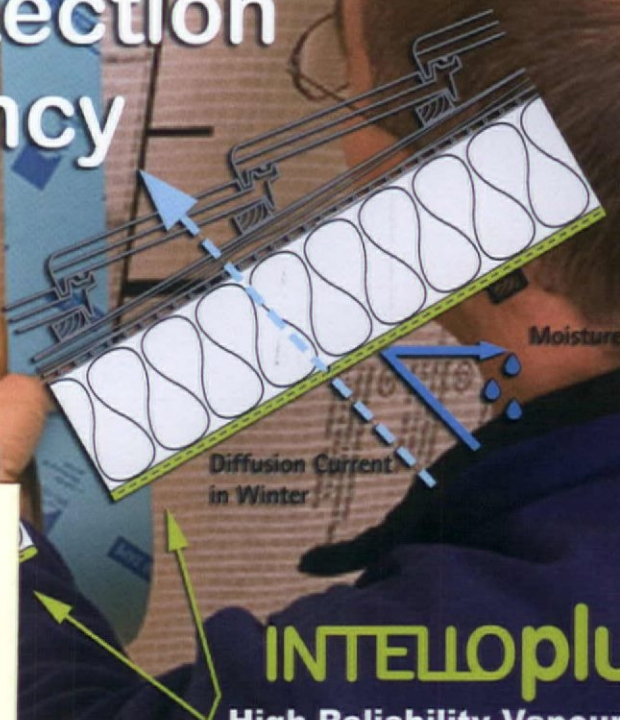


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# Contents

p49

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## News

- 05 Zero-carbon homes target branded 'unrealistic'
- 07 Fears grow of 'slowed-down' planning process
- 12 'We will all be living in eco-towns in the long run' – English Partnerships' Steve Carr on house-building

## Comment

- 18 Afghanistan has more to offer than just desert, says Kieran Long
- 20 Patrick Lynch on the art of seduction in buildings
- 66 Ian Martin decides against wankerfication

## Features

- 24 – 29 Architect Grant Elliott's diary of three months in Kabul
- 30 – 37 Sheppard Robson's Manchester University 'boffin box'
- 41 – 46 Technical & Practice International building regulations – which country has the most code?
- 49 – 53 The Critics Tube station architect Charles Holden. Was he a Modernist or a follower of Arts and Crafts?

## Jobs & Classified

- 56 Top five jobs: BBT; Bespoke; Centurion; Haworth Tompkins; Judd Farris
- 61 Classified advertising

## This week online

See all this year's Small Projects winners at  
[WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK)

p30





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# ZERO-CARBON HOMES 2016 TARGET 'TOO UNREALISTIC'

Good Homes Alliance proposes alternative carbon-reduction targets, citing 'gap between aspirations and reality'

Architects, housing developers and engineers have branded the government's aim for all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016 as 'high risk' and 'unrealistic'.

The Good Homes Alliance (GHA), a group which includes Edward Cullinan Architects, the Bartlett School of Architecture, and developer Bioregional Quintain, has called on the government to rethink its commitment to level six of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

GHA chairman Neil May (*right*) said: 'We don't want to be seen as resisting the need to build sustainable buildings, but the gap between aspirations and reality is too great.'

May believes the industry should aim to build to Code Level 3++ (*see box, right*), which calls for a more conservative target of a 70 per cent reduction in carbon emissions, as opposed to zero carbon.

He added: '[The Code] has been pushed through far too quickly. If we don't get the building tightness or the ventilation systems right, we run the risk of building sick houses.'

John Callcutt, author of the Callcutt Review of Housebuilding Delivery, believes May could 'be proved right, unless radical changes are made'.

He said: 'There needs to be a massive investment in the industry, but as the targets are so ambitious even a modest failure would set the UK as one of the leading housebuilders in Europe.'

Carol Costello, of Edward Cullinan Architects, backed the GHA code and also warned that the UK doesn't have the skill base to achieve the code levels.

She said: 'The code prescribes the standards you need to reach whatever level, but it doesn't tell you how you get there in terms of the details of construction.'

Getting the government to sign up to the 2016 target was hailed by the UK Green Building Council as one of its major successes, and its chief executive, Paul King, stood by the move.

He said: 'I still believe placing the 2016 target is the right thing to do. We were stuck in a rut about lowering carbon – the code has galvanised the industry.'

Sheppard Robson's head of sustainability Alan Shingler –

who designed the Lighthouse, the UK's first code level six house – said that attaining level six is a 'huge task', but added that 'high targets have to be set to make the industry work harder'.

A DCLG spokesperson said: 'We recognise the challenges of achieving the 2016 zero-carbon standard. The government is working closely with industry to address those issues'.

*Richard Vaughan*

## THE GHA'S ALTERNATIVE CODE

- All homes built to Code for Sustainable Homes level three;
- Plus a reduction in carbon emissions by at least 70 per cent from 'average use in building stock, according to building type, in 2003';
- Plus two-year minimum post-occupation monitoring.





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# LEAK INTENSIFIES PLANNING FEARS

Leaked details about the workings of the new 'standard' 1App planning application form have fuelled fears that the transition could slow down, rather than speed up, the submission process.

In correspondence seen by the AJ, a top source in the Department of Communities and Local Government confirmed that the mandatory 24-hour period for local authorities to validate applications is to be ditched.

Instead, when the new process comes in to force on 6 April,

councils will be given up to 10 days to validate major applications, with smaller projects allotted between three and five days.

London Planning and Development Forum chair Brian Waters said that with only a month until its launch, major concerns remained about the new system.

'Validation used to be relatively simple for a clerk to carry out. Now [with all the extra material that is being asked for on submission] only the head of a planning department will be able

to judge whether an application is valid or not.

'It adds up to more complication – complication that we were meant to be moving away from.'

In January the AJ reported that the proposed 'streamlining' of the current system was causing concern among architects, and was branded by an RIBA spokesman as 'the opposite of standardisation' (AJ 24.01.08).

Meanwhile, the government source confirmed that, despite trying to regulate the paperwork, there will be '26 variations' of the 1App form. *Richard Waite*

## THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

### ALLIES AND MORRISON SCOOPS OLYMPIC MEDIA CENTRE WIN

Allies and Morrison has won the contest to design the new media centre for London's 2012 Olympic Games. The architect was chosen as part of the consortium headed by Carillion and Igloo to design the 12,000m<sup>2</sup> scheme – officially named the International Broadcast Centre and Main Press Centre – which will be converted to offices after the Games. The team was picked ahead of a bid from Bouygues and Development Securities, which included Hopkins Architects.

### KAPLICKY THREATENS TO WALK FROM OVERDUE PRAGUE LIBRARY

Jan Kaplicky has threatened to walk away from his competition-winning National Library in Prague after becoming exasperated with the slow progress of the scheme. The Future Systems partner also claimed he would sue Prague officials after they once again put off a decision on his high-profile sea creature-shaped design. Speaking to Prague daily *Lidové noviny*, Kaplicky said: 'If a decision is not made in a month, I will withdraw from the project.'

### MAKE SUBMITS CROYDON TOWERS FOR PLANNING

Make Architects is about to submit a planning application for its latest project, a 150,000m<sup>2</sup> regeneration scheme in Croydon, south London. The practice, backed by developer Menta, has designed four towers providing 1,300 new homes, an office building, and retail space. The tallest of the four towers is a 46-storey residential building. Work should start in mid-2009 subject to planning.

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

**RMJM LANDS IN INDIA** RMJM has won a competition to design the first phase for the new Kolkata Airport in India. The practice saw off competition from a shortlist including Aéroports de Paris and HOK. Work on the 40,000m<sup>2</sup> domestic terminal is expected to start this summer.





## A BRIDGE IS BORN

---

This is Wilkinson Eyre's recently opened Living Bridge, which spans the River Shannon in Limerick, the Republic of Ireland. Commissioned by the University of Limerick, the 320m-long bridge – the longest pedestrian bridge in Ireland – will link the university's library and concert hall on the Limerick side to its North Bank campus in County Clare.

*Richard Vaughan*











Richard Gilbert  
Scott's St Mark's  
Church, Biggin  
Hill (1957-59)

## 'RECYCLED' CHURCH WINS LISTED STATUS

A post-war church at Biggin Hill, Kent, built from the ruins of a bomb-damaged building in south London, has been given Grade II-listed status.

Designed by Richard Gilbert Scott, the son of Battersea Power Station architect Giles, St Mark's (1957-59) was constructed with 125,000 bricks and 200 tonnes of stonework from the ruined All Saints church, off the Old Kent Road in Peckham, south London.

Architecture minister Margaret Hodge, who recently kicked up a storm after admitting she wanted to make it more difficult for post-war buildings to be listed (AJ 20.12.07), said: 'The decision to list a 20th-century church is a complex one that needs careful consideration, but this church

tells such an amazing and inspiring story that it is right to protect it for future generations.'

Described by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as 'humanised Gothic', the 'recycled' building replaced a corrugated iron church close to the famous Second World War Biggin Hill Airfield.

The project was masterminded by Father Vivian Symons, an ex-serviceman, who wanted to build a new church with virtually no money – in total the scheme cost just £5,300. Not only did Symons help move the bricks, stone and roof timbers from the bombed Victorian church, he also etched the 51 windows in the new building with a dentist's drill.

*Richard Waite*

### CAN YOU HANDLE THIS LEVER COMPETITION?

Walter Gropius, Alvar Aalto and Norman Foster have all designed door handles, and now the AJ, in association with architectural ironmonger Allgood, is offering you the chance to do the same. The AJ and Allgood are launching a competition to design a lever door handle, and Allgood will prototype the designs of shortlisted entrants. Following the prototyping, a winner will be selected and announced at the 100% Design event in September. If the winning design proves suitable for production, the designer will receive royalties from Allgood.

The judges will be looking for a beautiful, ergonomic and technically feasible design.

The closing date for entries is Friday 9 May, and details of the competition can be found at [www.allgood.co.uk](http://www.allgood.co.uk)

### DFL LAUNCHES PUBLIC SPACE EXHIBITION

Design for London is launching an exhibition at Somerset House today (6 March) as a precursor to its public space strategy, to be unveiled this summer.

DfL director Peter Bishop (below) and chairman Richard Rogers said the London Open City exhibition will provide 'different perspectives to unlock the potential of London's public realm'. Read Bishop and Rogers' comment piece on page 18.





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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Foreign Office Architects    | 6 Hawkins\ Brown     |
| 2 BDP                          | 7 Pick Everard       |
| 3 BDP                          | 8 O'Donnell + Tuomey |
| 4 Acme Space                   | 9 Stiff + Trevillion |
| 5 Allford Hall Monaghan Morris |                      |

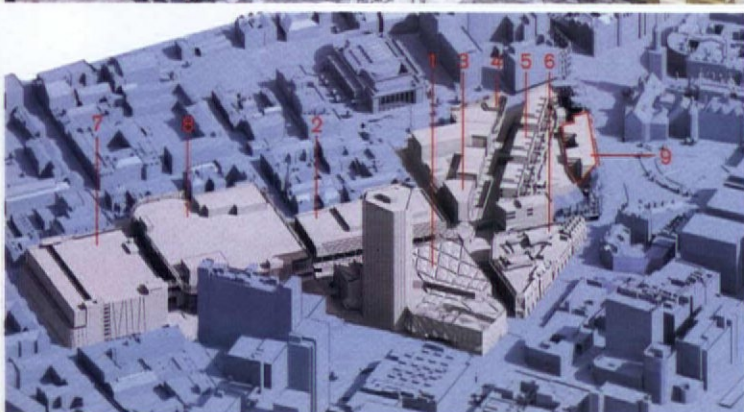
## SHEFFIELD'S SEVENSTONE QUARTER REVEALED

These are the first images of the 80,000m<sup>2</sup> retail-led Sevenstone quarter for Sheffield city centre.

Developer Hammerson has assembled an assortment of practices to deliver the 8ha development, including Foreign Office Architects, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, Hawkins\ Brown, BDP, Pick Everard, Stiff + Trevillion and landscape architect Gillespies.

The scheme will also include a gold-coloured building by Foreign Office offshoot Acme Space, and a flagship 26,000m<sup>2</sup> John Lewis department store designed by Dublin-based practice O'Donnell + Tuomey.

Five years in the making, the two-phase project will create more than 100 shops and 250 flats. The first shops are expected to open in 2011. *Richard Waite*







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# 'WE STILL HAVE GOOD ARCHITECTS'

Steve Carr, English Partnerships' head of policy and economics, talks to *Max Thompson* about eco-towns and his organisation's house-building record

**Can you define English Partnerships' (EP's) mission statement for me?**

To support the government's housing-regeneration agendas.

**And how many homes did EP build last year?**

We had 4,248 completions.

**That doesn't sound like a lot when you consider the government's target of three million new homes by 2020...**

The speed of building is an issue, but we are modest in our claims. There may only be 4,000 completions attributable to EP, but in terms of facilitation there are thousands more.

Our outputs trajectory massively rises in the next four years, when we will be absorbed into the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) [the new government agency for housing and regeneration].

We are involved in many long-term land-assembly projects. Take Middlehaven in Middlesbrough, where we are building 1,000 homes. De-silting and decontamination took three years, building new roads took three years, and getting the Will Alsop design through planning took another year.

**Grimshaw pulled out of the EP framework agreement as it was not prepared to sign a perform-**

**ance guarantee (AJ 07.02.08). Are you concerned that good architects will be deterred from working with you?**

It has not been a big issue – we still have good architects working for us.

Architects need to take responsibility to make sure what they specify is durable and mortgageable. They need to learn that they are not just designing something that is then delivered by somebody else. So having some sort of performance bond in the contract is good practice.

**Do you think EP currently uses enough good architects?**

I think we do. We have been encouraging housebuilders to use good architects for a while. The Millennium Communities programme [seven exemplar sustainable communities across the UK] is an example, and what Richard Rogers has done with Taylor Wimpey in Milton Keynes is another. Those homes have replaced the concrete cows as the symbol of Milton Keynes.

And in New Islington, Manchester we have Will Alsop's scheme coming out of the ground and FAT's award-winning Islington Square scheme.

**What is EP's role at Robin Hood Gardens [the Smithsons' East London housing estate threatened with demolition?]**

We were brought in by the local council (Tower Hamlets). EP is associated with new build, but we are also involved with regenerating failed communities. The name English Partnerships means something, we often partner public bodies and are brought to unlock schemes that they can't.

**EP has a huge land bank, but does it need to be more strategic in its acquisitions?**

We will go where the sites are, where they are declared surplus. Our strategic approach is that we will buy what our budget enables us to in a particular year – we are cash-limited by government.

Seventy per cent of our programme is self-funded from our own land, so EP has been fairly cheap for the government at around £300 million a year. The Housing Corporation gets £2 billion a year.

**The HCA comes into existence this year. What will it achieve that EP and the Housing Corporation could not?**

It will broaden and deepen the existing things that EP does already. There will be more state regeneration and retro-fitting and the tenure mix on housing estates will be improved.

There will be better efficiencies, as we are putting land together with subsidies and making sure funding is available

**What is EP's take on the government's eco-town programme?**

Eco-towns are not necessarily as distinct and unique as the debate has been making them out to be. We see them as an area of work we are already engaged with through initiatives such as the Carbon Challenge initiative (*see box, right*).

We will all be living in eco-towns in the long run. The distinctiveness sounds novel, but they will share exactly the same things as other place that are trying to accommodate new homes.

I would see these places as fitting into the context of where we build the homes and what quality the homes should be rather than, a new movement.

By the time the homes are built it will be past 2016, when Code for Sustainable Homes level six will be mandatory for everybody.

**Your space standards have been designed to banish 'lonely households'. Does this mean the death of small, well-designed microflats?**

There have been brilliant solutions to small spaces, but we are saying that one-person living will not necessarily survive into the next housing market and we will not build anything below 51m<sup>2</sup>, and nothing designed only for one person.



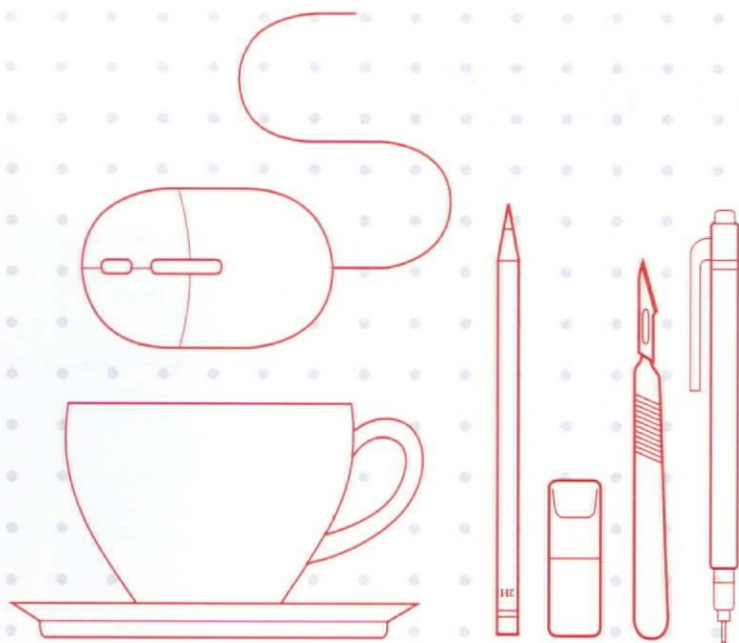
# **LOW PAY AND FLAMENCO—STEVE CARR'S CAREER SO FAR**

- Education: BA Philosophy and Politics, Hull University, 1981; MA Industrial Relations, Warwick University, 1982.
- Headed-up Manchester City Council's area-regeneration programmes in the late '80s.
- Director of campaign group the Low Pay Unit, which successfully lobbied for the introduction of the national minimum wage.
- Joined EP at its inception in 1995 as advisor to the Treasury on projects including the Millennium Dome and coalfield regeneration.
- Headed up Design for Manufacture (£60k home) competition.
- Currently running EP's Carbon Challenge, which aims to deliver the UK's first mass-produced zero-carbon homes to level six of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The first is Barratt's Hanham Hall scheme in Bristol.
- Interests: Live music at the Wigmore Hall, growing vegetables, editing *Flamenco News* magazine.
- Lives: Highgate, North London with his partner, Helen, and six-year-old son, Oscar.
- Design inspirations: Landscape architect Martha Schwartz, the bridges of Santiago Calatrava, and the writing of Mike Davis, American urban theorist.





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## FAT OF THE LAND

Architect-botherer, heir to the British throne and creator of the fine Duchy Original Pork Sausages, **HRH Prince Charles'** attention has been attracted to a different type of porker to those found in his Highgrove Estate. The monarch-to-be is backing a development on land near Cumnock in Ayrshire, designed to keep weight off its inhabitants. *Scotland on Sunday* reports that it will be the first development specifically designed with the health of its future residents in mind. Every home will be within five minutes walk of local shops

and amenities, and streets will be designed to favour pedestrians over cars. Professor Philip James, who heads up the rather severe-sounding International Obesity Task Force, is quoted as saying: 'Rather than designing places where it is unpleasant to move around, while pouring billions into car-filled town centres and expensive motorway networks, we must focus on improving public transport and curtailing the use of motor cars.'

## MONKEY WORK

On a trawl through the Downing Street website, Astragal was tempted to sign the 'let the monkeys of Britain roam as long as they don't harm a human being' e-petition (petitions.pm.gov.uk/monkeysoamfree). However, he thought his much-coveted signature would carry more weight in relation to the issues affecting the built environment. But he found little of worth to put his name to. Admittedly, the petition to save **Owen Luder's 'Get Carter'** car

park in Gateshead almost enticed him to join the masses pitched against the anti-Brutalist bastards. But with only 15 signatories to date, Astragal thought it was a waste of a left-click. Even less popular campaigns include the petition to scrap the current London Olympic stadium design by HOK Sport (six signatories) and a bid to list all remaining football stands by **Archibald Leitch** (three signatories). But one petition is ticking along nicely – the independent bid to save the 'landmark Tinsley cooling towers' in Sheffield (petitiononline.com/tct2/petition.html). Nearly 4,500 supporters have signed up so far. Unfortunately it's likely to end in

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tears. Landowner E.ON is expected to demolish them in the spring. Perhaps Astragal will have better luck with those monkeys...

## OUT OF SIGHT

This week's Cutting Through The Crap cup goes to Reading FC boss – and **Cilla Black's** pal – **John Madejski**. Responding to criticism from CABE about the 'scale' of his huge Station Hill scheme in Reading he fired back: 'Putting it bluntly, you cannot have landmark buildings without seeing them.' How do you like them apples Cabey baby?

## THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Should Skylon be recreated? (see right for result).

### Next week's question:

Is the government's target for all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016 achievable?

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# Leader & Comment



## Leader Afghanistan is more than the anonymous war-torn dustbowl we are shown on TV, says *Kieran Long*

At the British Construction Industry Awards last year, I rose with the entire tuxedoed room to applaud the winner of the Judges' Special Award – the Royal Engineers of the British Army for the construction of the immense Camp Bastion in Afghanistan.

The barracks was completed 'under budget and under fire' according to the citation, and the patriotic denizens of the construction industry lined up to shake the hands of the soldiers who picked up the award. The context of this piece of architecture? 'An inhospitable and barren environment'.

And this week we learned of the conspiracy of silence that enabled Prince Harry to

participate in the war. The pictures of the ginger royal in his wraparound shades had as a backdrop anonymous, dust-bowl landscapes; an unrelenting palette of yellow. They confirmed a media portrayal of Afghanistan as without distinguishing features.

So it seems appropriate to reflect on the country that was there before the war. We are immensely grateful to architect Grant Elliott and the Turquoise Mountain Foundation for going to Kabul to bring us pictures and drawings of some extraordinary and perilously endangered houses there (*see pages 24–29*). It's an architecture in tune with local materials and climates, with fine workmanship, and

expressive of a way of life one hopes the country can return to one day.

What strikes me about Grant's work is the meticulous drawings he has made of every crack and flaw in these ruins. He writes: 'It was quite hard to explain the importance of these drawings,' and it made me think how much the profession still has to offer as a recorder of history. Do the drawings you're working on today have the same importance?

Turquoise Mountain Foundation is looking for conservation architects to work in Kabul. If you feel inspired by Grant's story, see details at [www.turquoisemountain.org](http://www.turquoisemountain.org). [kieran.long@emap.com](mailto:kieran.long@emap.com)

## Opinion A city-wide public-space strategy will help London remain an open city, *Richard Rogers* and *Peter Bishop* say

Public space has always been central to the political and social life of a city. Streets and squares are places for discussion and demonstrations, for formal and informal meetings. Public spaces by their essence are democratic places, where citizens have rights defined only by national laws. They are places to congregate and places for cities to define their character; to be generous and to show off. Erosion of public space, whether through loss of ownership or poor quality of design or maintenance, erodes the very fabric of society.

Public space should not be seen just as an amenity for urban areas, but as an essential element of urban infrastructure – part of the transport system, part of the ecosystem, part of the health service and – most importantly – part of the daily life of every citizen. And its importance has never been greater than in London today, as we hope to prove in Design

for London's (DfL's) London Open City exhibition, which opens today (6 March) at Somerset House and will be followed in the summer by a public-realm strategy document.

It is possible to bring together landscape and movement strategies, and a current example of this is the East London Green Grid, promoted by DfL (AJ 13.12.07). In this project, green spaces are linked together to facilitate better connectivity and movement; to provide a robust design framework for the population growth in the Thames Gateway; and to connect the city with its green spaces and countryside.

London's urban development has not been a planned process. Relative peace and prosperity allowed London to grow outwards and dismantle its city defences earlier than most

### London's urban development has not been a planned process

other European cities. It was able to absorb outlying villages and was selective about where it built, often leaving spaces untouched to create a low-density mosaic of buildings and green spaces. Royal patronage was superseded by the estates of the aristocracy and by the enlightened planning of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which invested in

London's infrastructure and parks to create the framework we have inherited today.

One of the defining features of this process is that power has rarely been concentrated on a city-wide scale. Decisions to build and shape the city have been largely taken by individuals, privately funded, and negotiated and brokered with others. This negotiated urbanism gives London a pragmatism and dynamism and is alien to more formal approaches to planning.

This history of piecemeal development and absorption lends London's public spaces their almost infinite variety. London resists all attempts to define a single style of street, park or neighbourhood. The cityscape does, however, include some common features: terraced housing, small squares, and local centres. Uniformity and blandness of design are not options to be pursued in London. Great and lasting design solutions can often be very subtle and have a deep understanding of context and a sensitive use of materials. There are only so many icons a city can have before it becomes a theme park.

London's diversity has also been due to its citizens. As new populations have arrived, they have left their mark on London's public spaces – from Chinatown in the West End to the melas and cultural festivals that enliven many East London parks. The public spaces



of an open city are continually adapting with their population. Their design needs to make space for their continuing evolution, not to hamper it by seeking to rigidly prescribe the uses that people will put places to.

The Mayor of London and the boroughs increasingly share a focus on the public realm and on the importance of creating and maintaining great public spaces at all levels, from amazing new parks – such as the Olympic Park in East London and Crystal Palace Park, for which German firm Latz + Partner is developing a masterplan – through to new landscapes in the Green Grid, new public squares, and better streets. The opening up of the South Bank, with projects such as Marks Barfield's London Eye, can be seen as one of the great successes of urban design of the last 10 years. The redesign of Trafalgar Square, completed by Foster + Partners in

### **An open city is curious, willing to learn, and welcomes ideas and individuals who can contribute**

2003 as part of the Mayor's World Squares for All programme, has shown that London can match the very best public spaces in Europe. Ambitious designs are under way for the redesign of Parliament Square, led by Hawkins\Brown; and Exhibition Road, by Dixon Jones, and developments such as Westfield's Stratford City and Argent's King's Cross will open up further opportunities for new public spaces.

London Open City was chosen as a title to reflect not only the importance of open space, but the very essence of London. An open city looks outwards to the world rather than inwards on itself. It is curious, willing to learn and welcomes new ideas and individuals who can contribute. The characteristic of an open city is the ability of people to settle there, become citizens and be rewarded for their contributions. In return, an open city takes on the character of its citizens and is never static.

In the exhibition, DfL will set out a series of interlinked proposals for London to become a more liveable city through improving the design of its streets, squares, parks and other open spaces. We will highlight some of the projects and programmes that will



**Above** The East London Green Grid aims to bring together transport and landscape strategies  
**Below** Trafalgar Square, which was redesigned in 2003 by Foster + Partners

promote this vision, and discuss how public agencies, private companies and voluntary groups can work together to make these a reality. The ideas set out in the exhibition will be brought together in our public space strategy, which will be launched in the summer to coincide with the London Festival of Architecture.

London Open City will not be a blueprint for London; rather it should be seen as the beginning of a wider debate. We hope you will be joining us.

Richard Rogers is chairman and Peter Bishop is director of Design for London

*The London Open City exhibition runs from 6 March to 27 April at Somerset House, London WC2*







# Like Peter Zumthor, we all try to create 'architecturally amorous' buildings, says Patrick Lynch

Even a rather naff building near to where I live glows like a rose-coloured ice lolly at dusk. Despite its clunky geometry and dumb cladding, despite itself, it is briefly beautiful. Most buildings that ache to seduce only seem strenuous and fail to impress. I don't know why – a natural human inclination to refuse to be embraced by rowdy strangers? The hydra-surge of architecture lunging for a

## A lot of contemporary design seems the equivalent of throwing yourself at someone

snog mostly repels us.

In contrast, the enormous creative egos and appetites of Mies van der Rohe and Alvar Aalto belied devout professionalism and sincere attention to both the craft of architecture and their responsibilities to the broader context of places. Superficially seen as stylistic opposites, both architects understood the common task of architecture as the embellishment of the public realm with noble buildings and the celebration of the domestic realm as a haven. Modern architects seem to have differed in their deployment of typology and precedents. While Aalto may seem to have developed an idiomatic language, the character of his buildings is at once homely

and archetypal, Classical and mimetic of both high and low cultural artifacts. The temple and the barn are entwined in a new lexicon, like modern speech and poetry. While the Classical model is often aloof and analogical, it is also a modest foil to the abundance of natural forms, setting us among the natural world, but held and suspended, part but apart.

We all recognise this tension between the presence of a building and a setting, between 'the hand' of an architect and their skill at disguising it. And, yes, I know this is a contradiction, or even an esoteric paradox, but you either know what I mean or you don't.

Peter Zumthor is perhaps the best inheritor of Mies' faith in the revelation of the construction of things, and also Aalto's successor in relishing surfaces and woven things. He touches on the capacity of a building to shore up our sense of the world as permanent background, and as remarkable foreground for our memories. In his book *Atmospheres* (Birkhäuser, 2006), Zumthor describes his modest ambitions as architecturally amorous. 'There are plenty of buildings like that, not done by me, but which have touched me, moved me, given me a sense of relief, or helped me in some way. It increases the pleasure of my work when I imagine a certain building being remembered by someone in 25 years' time. Perhaps because that was where he kissed his first girlfriend or whatever.'

Cutting to the heart of what motivates him – and a lot of us, I suspect – Zumthor confesses a wish to project our desire to be loved on to our buildings, a primary narcissism of delight in energy and desire. 'I love architecture; I love surrounding buildings, and I suppose I love it when other people love

them too. I have to admit it: it would make me very happy to have made things which other people love.' I think that we all aspire to this when we attempt to make good work, but a lot of contemporary design seems the equivalent of throwing yourself at someone or ignoring him or her completely. Perhaps making work that can be loved is almost as difficult as allowing yourself to be loved.



Inside Peter Zumthor's Bruder Klaus Field Chapel in Mechernich, Germany



TRIBECA

# INFOBOX\*

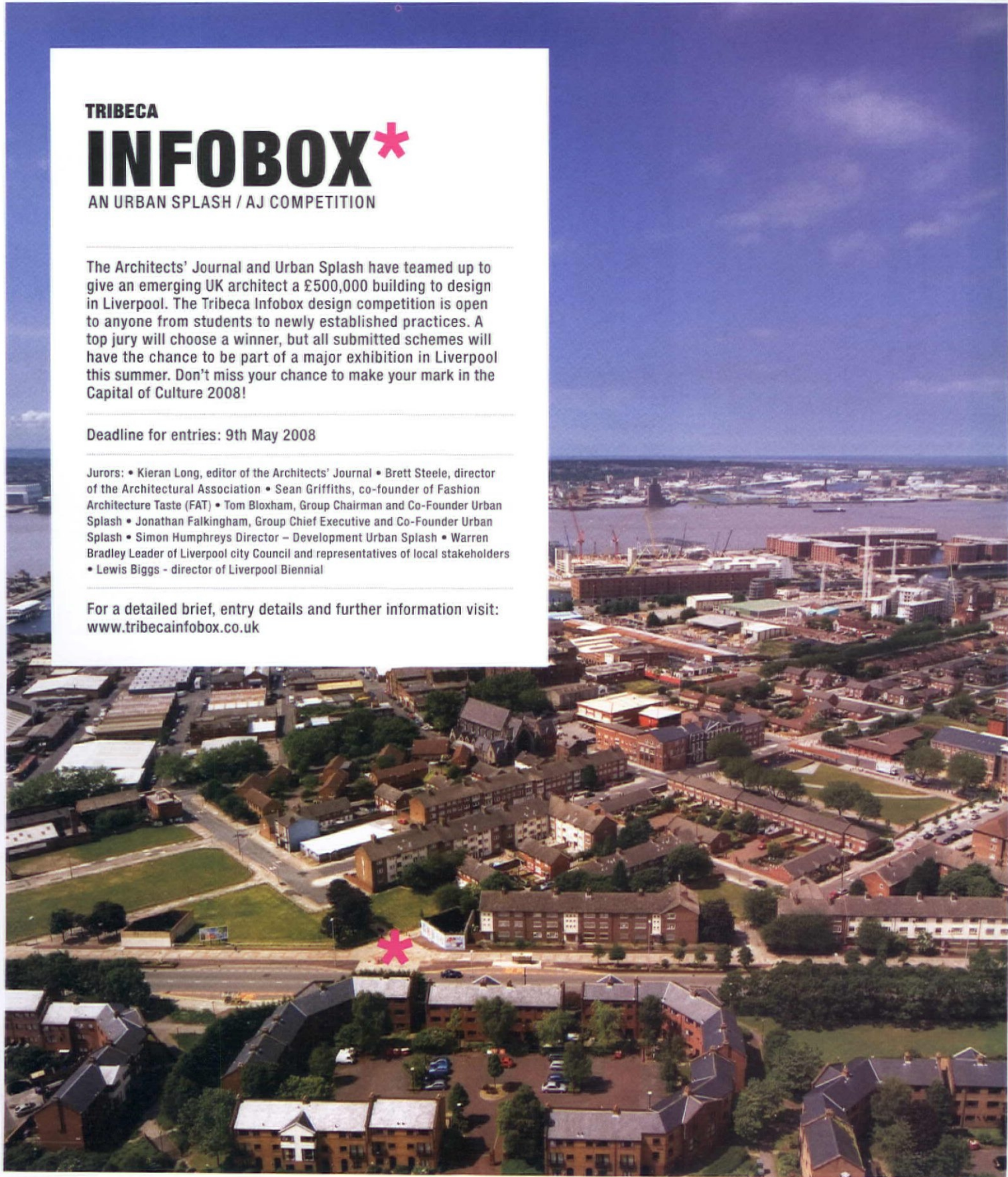
AN URBAN SPLASH / AJ COMPETITION

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:  
[www.tribecainfobox.co.uk](http://www.tribecainfobox.co.uk)



URBAN SPLASH

AJ

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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](mailto:shumi.bose@emap.com) to arrive by 10am on the Monday before publication. The AJ reserves the right to edit letters.

## NO DEMAND

The Ecobuild exhibition is an exciting display of ideas and technologies. This year I attended several lectures delivered by British and foreign speakers on various subjects, including PassivHaus (AJ 28.02.08), and it was often concluded that Britain is not ready yet for such visionary technologies, and also that there is no capability to deliver such buildings here.

I was surprised to hear the reaction of some of the architects present. Some people believe that British architects need special training in order to design buildings to European standards. It is also believed that the British construction industry does not have the expertise needed for delivering good eco-buildings.

I beg to differ. Most of the professionals working within the construction industry are perfectly competent, and able to design and deliver any type of building to the highest of eco-standards. The problem lies in the lack of market demand for passive buildings, caused by the endemic ignorance of comfort as an important factor in achieving good quality of life.

As long as the public continues to be content with eating beans on toast in a draughty Victorian/Georgian flat, while speculating on the ups and downs of the housing market for their next sale, there will be no change.

*Vasile Toch, director, Norrie Toch Studios, Edinburgh*

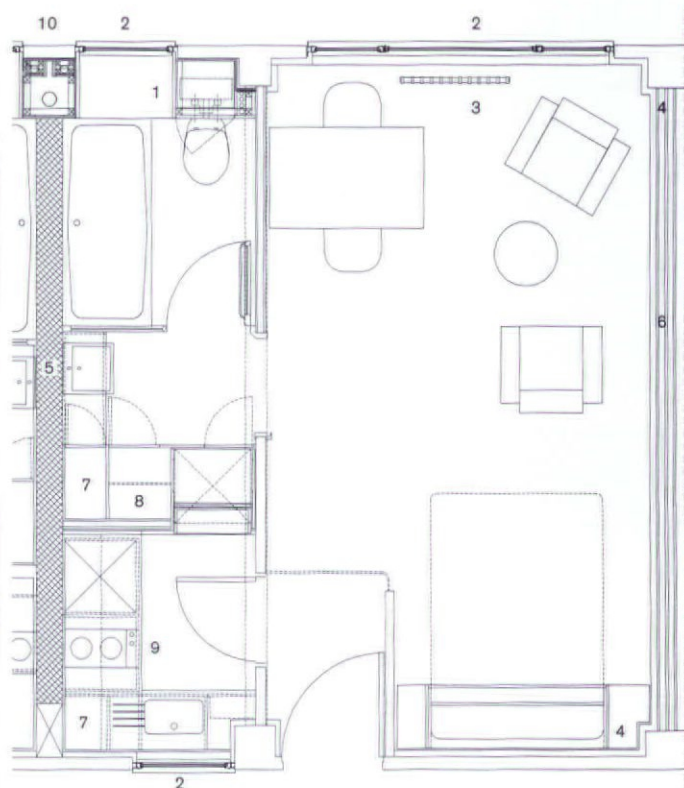
## CHANGING ICON

I couldn't help noticing that of all the plans illustrated in 'The Flat Trap' (Housing, AJ 28.02.08) only the Isokon plan went uncredited.

The drawing shown was by Avanti, not Wells Coates – the point being that in our recent restoration project at this Grade I-listed building, crucial adjustments were necessary to make the flats suitable for today's residents (*see right for drawing of the proposed minimum unit*).

Having also worked at Highpoint (another of your examples), I can confirm that the same applies there. Even 'iconic modern apartments' must change to remain viable, especially those of *Existenzminimum* design, where every millimetre counts.

*John Allan, director, Avanti Architects*



- 1 Window reveal reconfigured to accommodate new gas boiler installation
- 2 New double-glazed argon-filled low-E W40 windows
- 3 New M & E services and finishes throughout
- 4 New thermal insulation to internal face of all external walls to meet Part L
- 5 Party wall rebuilt to achieve fire and acoustic compliance
- 6 Original party wall upgraded to achieve fire and acoustic compliance
- 7 Overhead cupboards conceal new mechanical vent requirement from bathroom
- 8 Position of dressing-room wall adjusted, increasing kitchen to accommodate washing machine and kitchen appliances
- 9 Kitchen fit-out reconfigured to provide modern hob, more storage and refrigerator
- 10 New vertical service ducts



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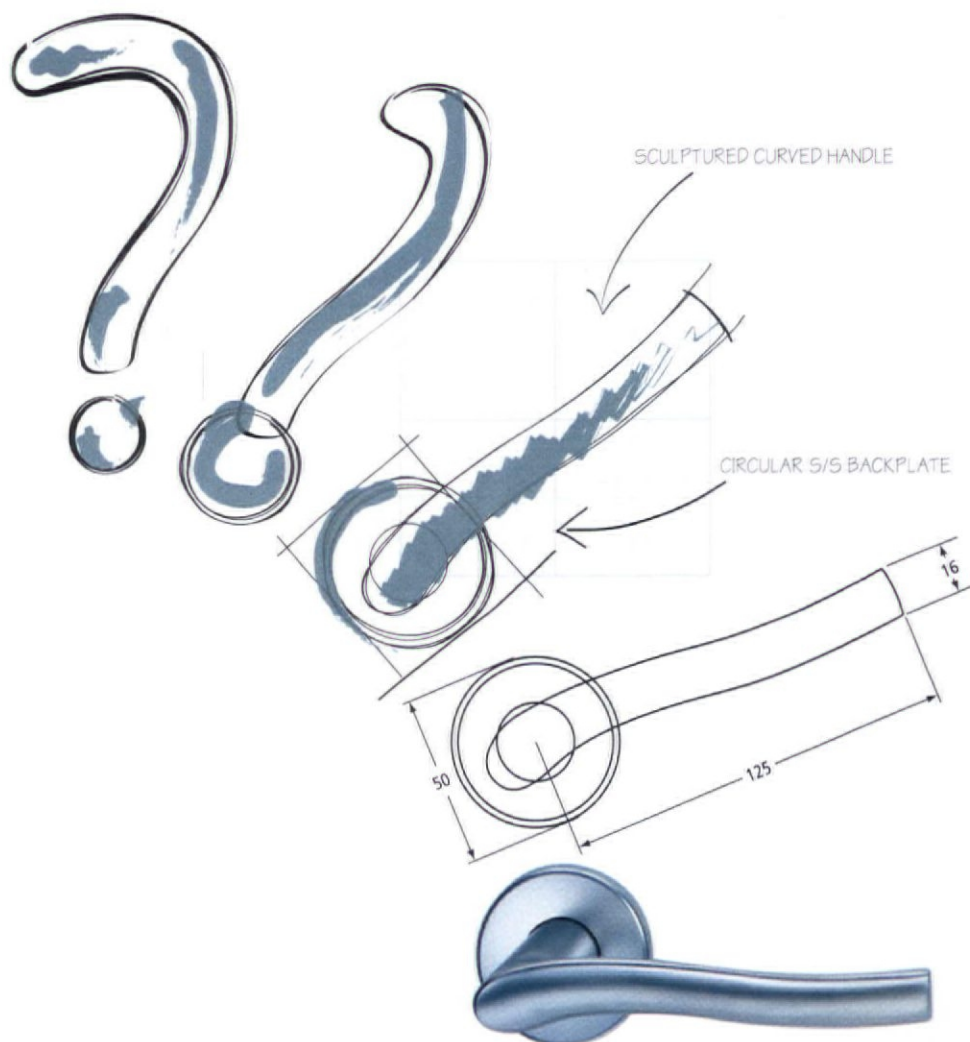
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LEVER HANDLE DESIGN COMPETITION

# can you handle it?

Door handles... There are so many varied forms and contrasting models. Some are practical, some are minimalist, some scream for your attention. Now is your chance to design the perfect lever handle. Enter the 'Can you handle it?' competition for a chance to win the prize of having your design manufactured and marketed by Allgood.

The aim of the competition is to stimulate creative ideas, which must be technically feasible and designed to be mass produced. Original, innovative submissions are invited, which identify the use and function of the handle, giving due consideration to ergonomics, materials and aesthetics.

Submissions will be judged by our panel, consisting of Gavin Harris (designer of Allgood's White Collection), Kieran Long (Editor - AJ), Ruth Slavid (Editor - AJ Online and Special Projects) and Neil Holmes (Sales Director - Allgood). Highly commended entries will be displayed on the Allgood stand at the 100% Design exhibition in September, where the winner will also be announced.

Deadline for entry is Friday 9th May 2008. For competition details and how to enter, please visit [www.allgood.co.uk](http://www.allgood.co.uk)

In collaboration with



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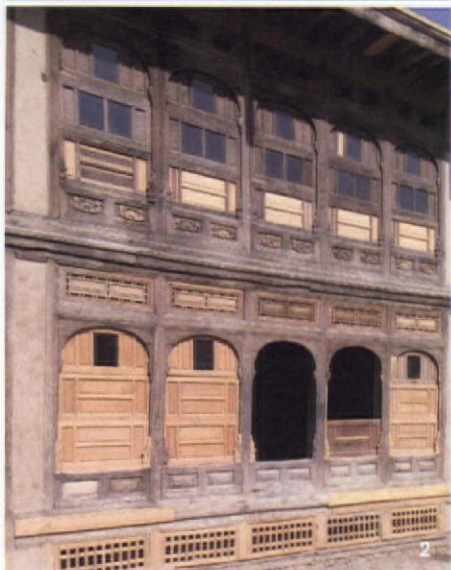
# RESTORATION AFGHANISTAN



## WEDNESDAY 15 AUGUST 2007

From the air, Afghanistan looks like a vast mountainous desert of never-ending shades of orange and brown peaks. As my flight approaches Kabul, the landscape opens into a huge dusty bowl. This will be my home for the next three months – a city of mud-brick buildings smothering the plain and crawling up the surrounding mountainside.

In 1978, the year that civil war began its devastation of Afghanistan, the population of Kabul was less than one million. Today it is estimated at almost three million, growing as people came to the city for refuge. Lacey Hickie Caley has given me three months leave to work for the Turquoise Mountain Foundation (TMF), a UK charity conserving and developing the historic quarter of Kabul. I find myself staying in an old restored British fort on the outskirts of town.



## THURSDAY 16 AUGUST

Woken up at 4.00am by the imam calling everyone to prayer from the adjacent mosque. After breakfast, I take the minibus to the historic Murad Khane area of Kabul. Zabi, an architect working for the TMF, shows me around the building projects that are under way. These include the stunning Peacock House and two fortified warehouses, the Double Column Serai and the Sayeed Hashim Serai, all of which date from the early 19th century. My role is to provide detailed surveys and drawings of these buildings, alongside six architecture students from Kabul University.

## TUESDAY 21 AUGUST

First full day on site. I share the minibus with Nisima, the project's community liaison

officer. Spend the morning with Mohammed Asif touring the Sayeed Hashim Serai – a series of three courtyards used by merchants to store their wares, and an overnight resting house with its own *hamman* (bathhouse) and stables. Although the serai is in a state of disrepair, the remaining carved *patayi* cedar screens look stunning, and many of the rooms still have their original delicate mud-plaster friezes. Rubbish is everywhere. In some places the ground level has been raised by over 2m from compacted rubbish. Part of our work is to clear the site – by hand.

The rooftops of the serai give fantastic panoramic views of Murad Khane. I can see all the hustle and bustle of the bazaar, goats grazing on the riverbed of the Kabul River, and hundreds of tyres stacked on the rooftops of the shops below, where the stallholders make rubber buckets.

## THURSDAY 23 AUGUST

Have a meeting with students from the local architecture school, housed in the same building I'm staying in. I've scheduled out the drawings that need to be made for us to produce a record of the serais. It was quite hard to explain the importance of these drawings, as they remain a novel concept – the oral tradition in building is still very strong here.

## SATURDAY 25 AUGUST

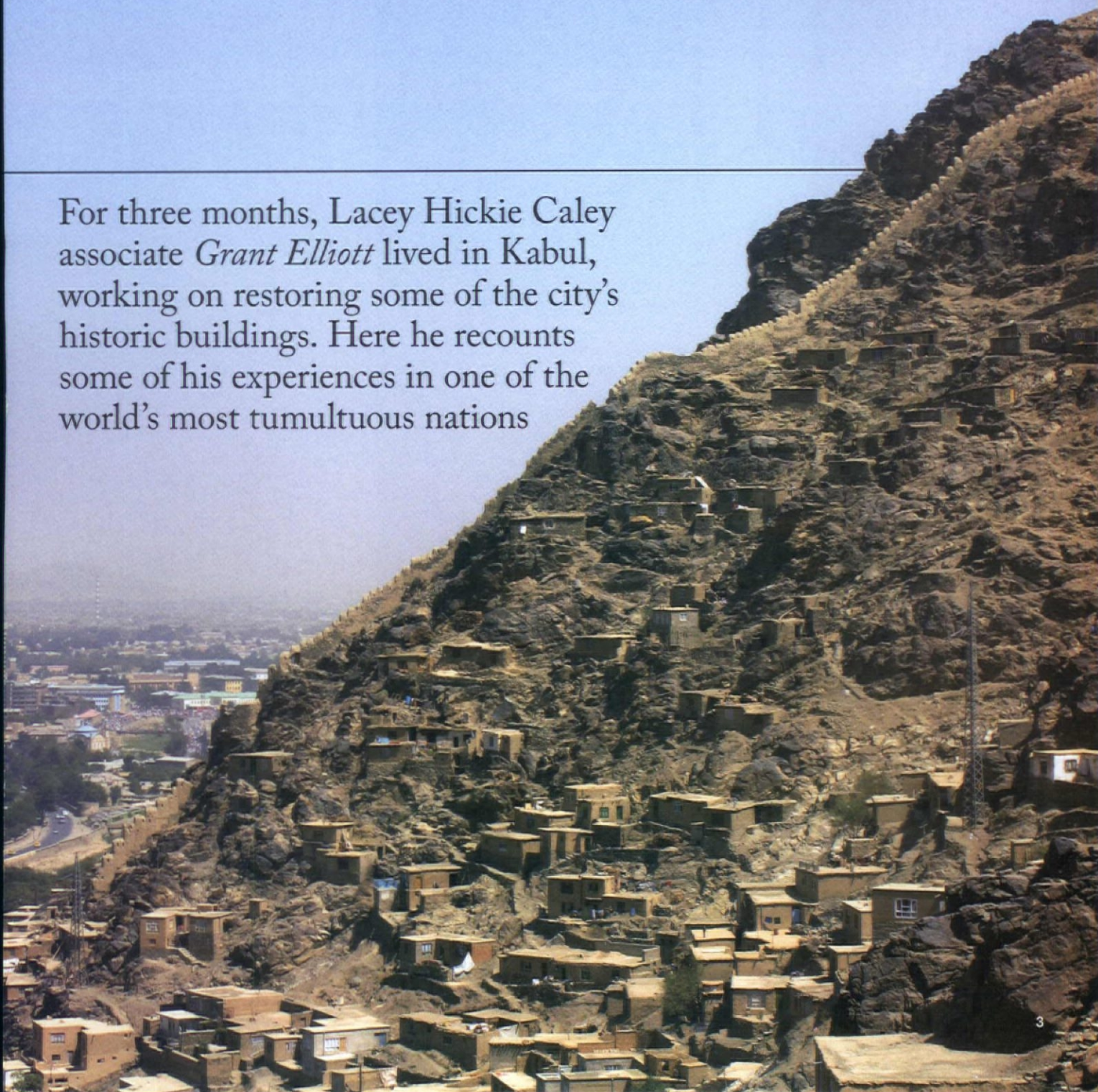
Out on site today to look around the Double Column Serai. Stop off to look at the new windows installed at the embroidery school. They are intricately carved lattice screens which look absolutely stunning, and the craftsmanship is superb. The carpenters, >>



1 Restoration workers had to clear rubbish stacked up to 2m-high  
2 The recently refurbished Peacock House

3 Kabul has slowly spread up the hills and mountains surrounding the city centre

For three months, Lacey Hickie Caley associate *Grant Elliott* lived in Kabul, working on restoring some of the city's historic buildings. Here he recounts some of his experiences in one of the world's most tumultuous nations





the oldest site workers by far, have an incredible ability to produce the most delicate pieces of work with only a few tools and no drawings.

## MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

Off to the pottery village of Istalif for the day, with two conservation architects who are helping the TMF with the masterplanning at Murad Khane. From afar it all looks very arcadian, rather like a Mediterranean hillside town, with a river running through the picturesque valley floor and mulberry trees everywhere. But half of the buildings lie in a state of ruin.

Istalif has been razed to the ground three times: first by the British in the Afghan Wars of the 19th and early 20th centuries; then by the Russians when they invaded in the late 1970s; and finally by the Taliban in the civil war that followed. The village is now once again a thriving centre for ceramics production, known for its vibrant turquoise glaze.

## FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

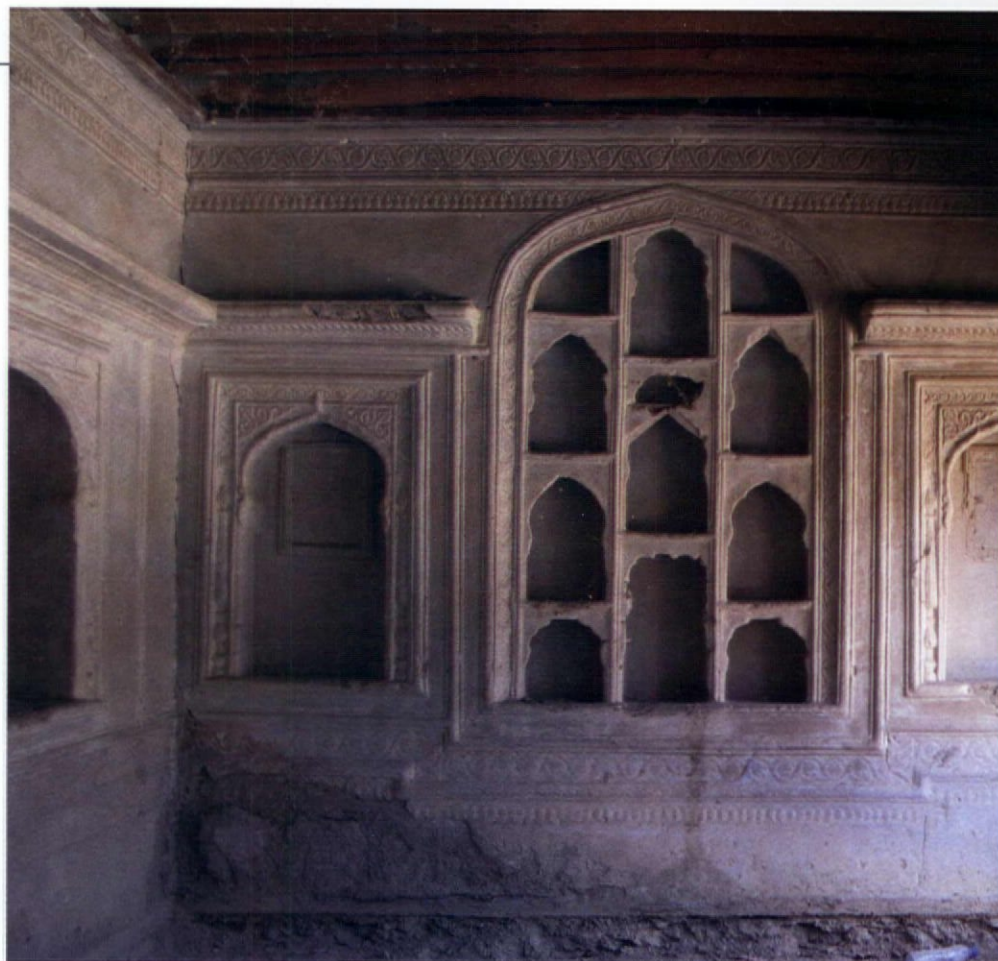
We are well into the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which is making it rather challenging on site. We now have a 5.30am start, so people can leave earlier for prayers, and there is no eating or drinking. Having no water is hardest, particularly for the labourers, with temperatures over 35°C. In the evening, we have a Qur'an recital in the fort's central courtyard. The Qur'ani sit on a raised dais and sing out their recitals. Quite beautiful.

## MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

As well as preparing measured drawings of the buildings that are being restored, I am also compiling a building inventory of the area. This is to help identify future project work and to assist with planning infrastructure works, primarily water and sanitation.

I am constantly surprised at the conditions families live in. Today I visit a house with 25

*Drawings are a novel concept – the oral tradition is strong here*



people living in five rooms. All of the houses I've seen have damp and leaks, and are often in a state of partial or complete collapse. Most people rely on public wells for water. Still, I am always shown great hospitality and offered tea by the men – I am never allowed any contact with the women.

There is no comprehensive postal address system in Kabul, so most houses just have a descriptive name, such as 'House of the Solitary Tree' and 'House of Screens'. This also leads to people leaving messages on their doors for expected visitors, so they know where to find them. Lots of the houses have messages for the health worker to come and vaccinate children for polio.

## MONDAY 1 OCTOBER

I am well settled at the site office and everyone is working together as a team. I spend the afternoon walking around the building sites. All of the restoration work is being carried out faithfully and sympathetically.

Traditional Afghan architecture is all about courtyard buildings – where the perimeter walls form a fortified enclosure for the building. The perimeter walls are either *paksa* (rammed earth) or mud bricks finished in *cargil* (mud plaster). The roofs and upper >>







4 An interior of the Sayeed Hashim Serai  
5 Grant Elliott at the lakes of Band-e Amir  
6 Restoring the Sayeed Hashim Serai  
7 A house exterior  
8 Rooftop views  
9 Carpenters at work  
10 The House of Screens



with a grass mat and then finished with a mud screed. The walls facing into the courtyard are all open, usually with delicate carved *patayi* screens.

### SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER

Something big is going down today – the Canadians are coming to visit. The TMF has managed to get some money from Canada's overseas aid budget and two of its ministers are coming to site to publicly announce the donation.

The stage is set with TV and Press for the presentation in the main courtyard of Sayeed Hashim Serai. In the afternoon, the ministers give their speech, with their own security guards and armed national police covering all the angles. As a show of thanks, the ministers are presented with a piece of exquisite calligraphy from the ancient city of Herat, which they were happy to be photographed with – while unwittingly holding the calligraphy upside down.

### THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER

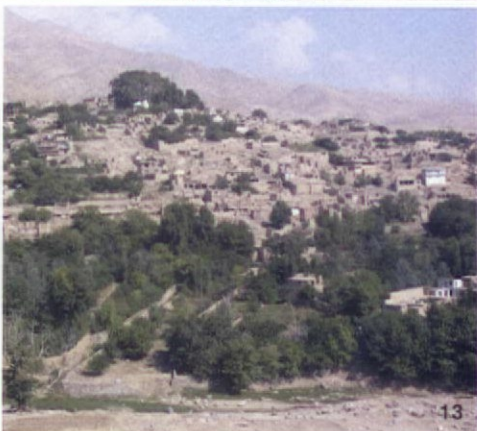
Head off to the Bamiyan Valley, north-west of Kabul, with some friends for a break. The road meanders along a wide valley heading west, with enormous mountains stretching up to the sky on the horizon. The only reminder of the war is the occasional burnt-out Russian tank and spent munitions on the roadside.



11



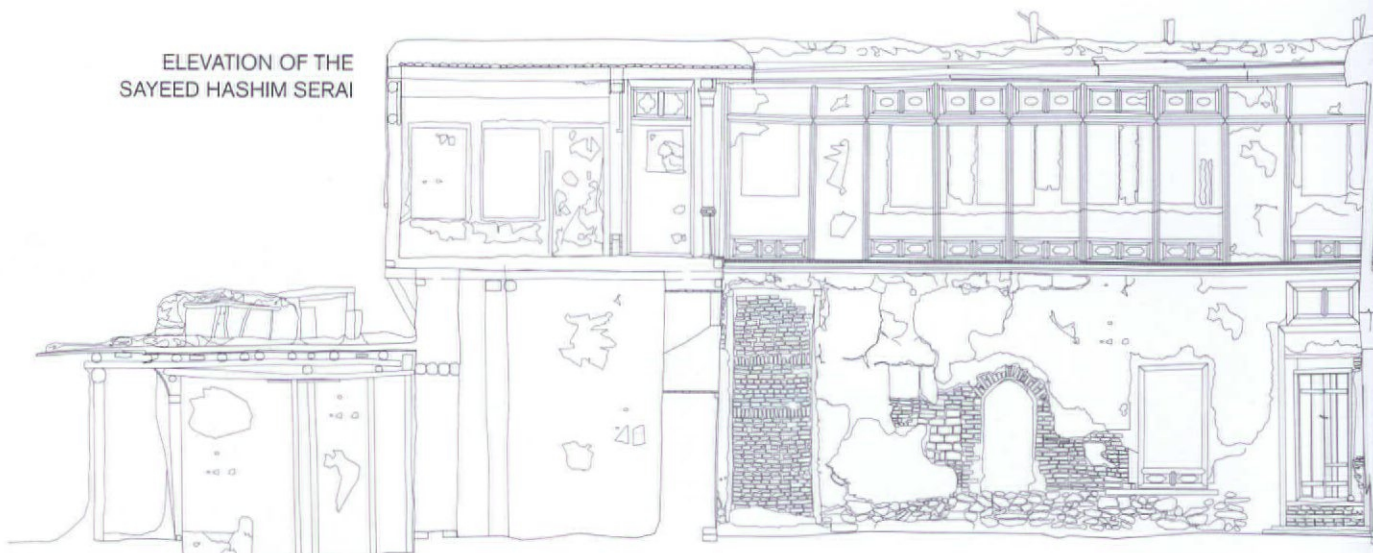
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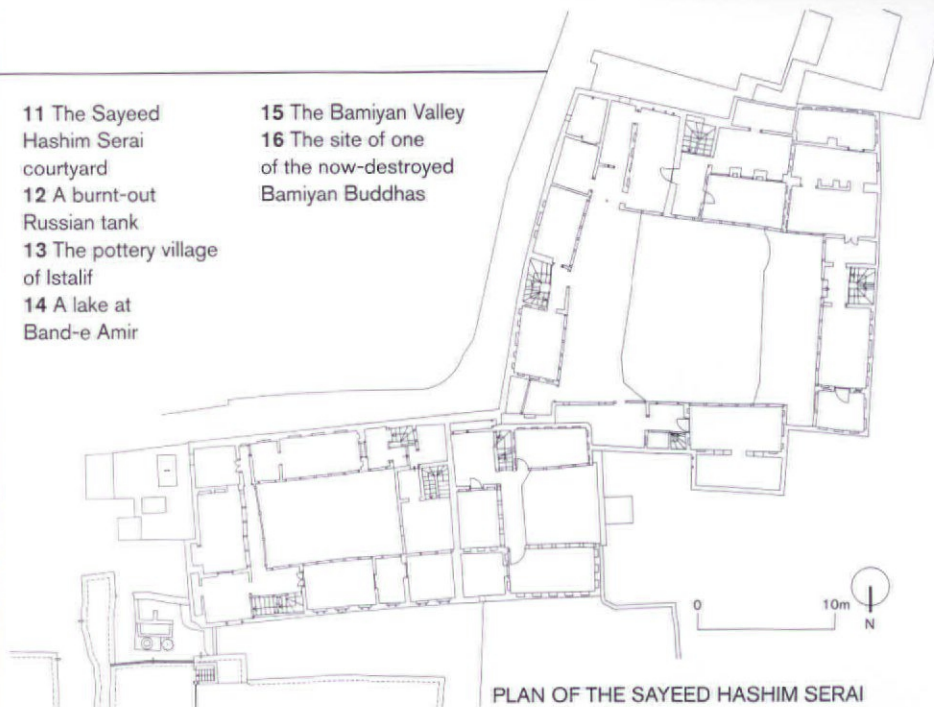
ELEVATION OF THE  
SAYEED HASHIM SERAI







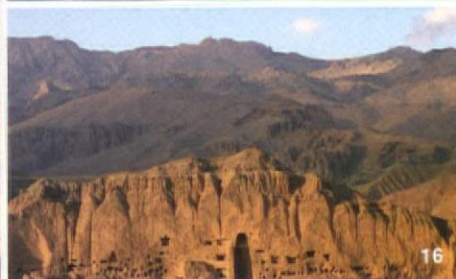
- 11 The Sayeed Hashim Serai courtyard
- 12 A burnt-out Russian tank
- 13 The pottery village of Istalif
- 14 A lake at Band-e Amir



PLAN OF THE SAYEED HASHIM SERAI



15



16

tank and spent munitions on the roadside.

We are near to the site of the now-destroyed Bamiyan Buddhas, which dated from the 7th century and were blown up by the Taliban despite international condemnation in early 2001. Fragments of the statues remain, and are being collected and conserved on site. The tallest Buddha was 55m high, and originally you would have been able to climb up and look out through its eyes.

We climb the rock staircase, passing through several chambers decorated with Buddhist frescoes. At the top we reach a platform, where the Buddha's head once was. The view over the valley to the snowcapped mountains in the distance is absolutely breathtaking.

Further west from Bamiyan are the lakes at Band-e Amir. We make a day trip there, passing through the most barren landscape to arrive at a plateau overlooking the lakes, which are spring fed and a deep electric blue. They have an almost hypnotic calming effect.

#### WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER

My last day on site. I put the finishing touches to my final drawing and go for a walk. It all feels quite nostalgic, knowing that this is possibly the last time I will see the people and buildings I have been working with for the last three months.

#### FRIDAY 9 NOVEMBER

Finally arrive home in Devon. When anyone asks me how the trip was, I say *besir khub* (very good). ■

For further information on the TMF see [www.turquoisemountain.org](http://www.turquoisemountain.org)









# THE BOFFIN BOX

The Alan Turing Building is a welcome home for mathematicians and astrophysicists at Manchester University, writes *Phil Griffin*

Having loved their previous home, a slim 16-storey tower by Scherrer and Hicks opened in 1968 but since deemed 'unfit for purpose' by the university, the mathematicians and astrophysicists who moved into Sheppard Robson's Alan Turing Building at the University of Manchester won a counter-

revolutionary victory. Dotting the walls of the new mathematics department in the structure hang the black and green, back-painted plate-glass chalk boards salvaged from the original building.

This outcome backs up Sheppard Robson project architect James Jones' assertion that mathematicians are hard to please. The new building is the best on the University of Manchester campus, a rapidly growing set of buildings based on the John McAslan + Partners-designed masterplan.

The University of Manchester came into being on 1 October 2004, when Victoria >>







HUFTON + CROW

## *The Alan Turing Building forms a key space in McAslan's university masterplan*

University merged with the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), forming the largest university in the UK, with more than 40,000 students. The campus is 2km south of the city centre, straddling Oxford Road in an area called Chorlton-on-Medlock.

The Alan Turing Building, named after the mathematician who broke the German Enigma code in the Second World War is on the campus perimeter, between a 1960s laboratory block and a multi-storey car park. The building backs on to Upper Brook Street, a main north-south commuting artery, along one side of which is millions upon millions of pounds worth of new development by both

the university and Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI). On the other side of Upper Brook Street is a shamefully abandoned Grade II\*-listed Welsh Baptist chapel by Charles Barry, a brace of very high-end car showrooms, and mid-century council housing. To the west, the Alan Turing Building forms an edge to McAslan's as-yet incomplete University Place, a key space defining the campus's east-west grid. Across University Place is a mundane new residential tower for nursing staff at MRI. It is one element within the new SCAN complex, a signally disappointing scheme, also by John McAslan, which also features an auditorium and two blocks of teaching space.





HUFTON + CROW

**Left** Although there is little street life around the building, glazed ground-floor teaching rooms provide an interior/exterior link  
**Above** The cantilevered upper

stories create a rhythmic pattern  
**Below** External streets divide the building into three fingers, each housing a different teaching department

There is precious little street life here, and the University Place masterplan does little to encourage it. At least the Alan Turing Building has a couple of fully glazed teaching rooms at ground level and clear views into the full-height atrium, which allows a passing acquaintance between gown and town.

The building is in three parts, divided by two streets – one exterior and one interior. It has a louvred canopy incorporating photo-voltaic panels and the envelope is largely zinc. Each of the three boxes is sliced horizontally and upper stories push and pull, creating a pleasing rhythm. What with Denton Corker Marshall's sliding drawers at its high-profile Civil Justice Centre down the road, >>



HUFTON + CROW





**Left** The 'heroically mystifying photon research labs  
**Below** Classrooms feature salvaged blackboards from the

previous maths building  
**Right** The four-storey atrium is surrounded by classrooms and offices

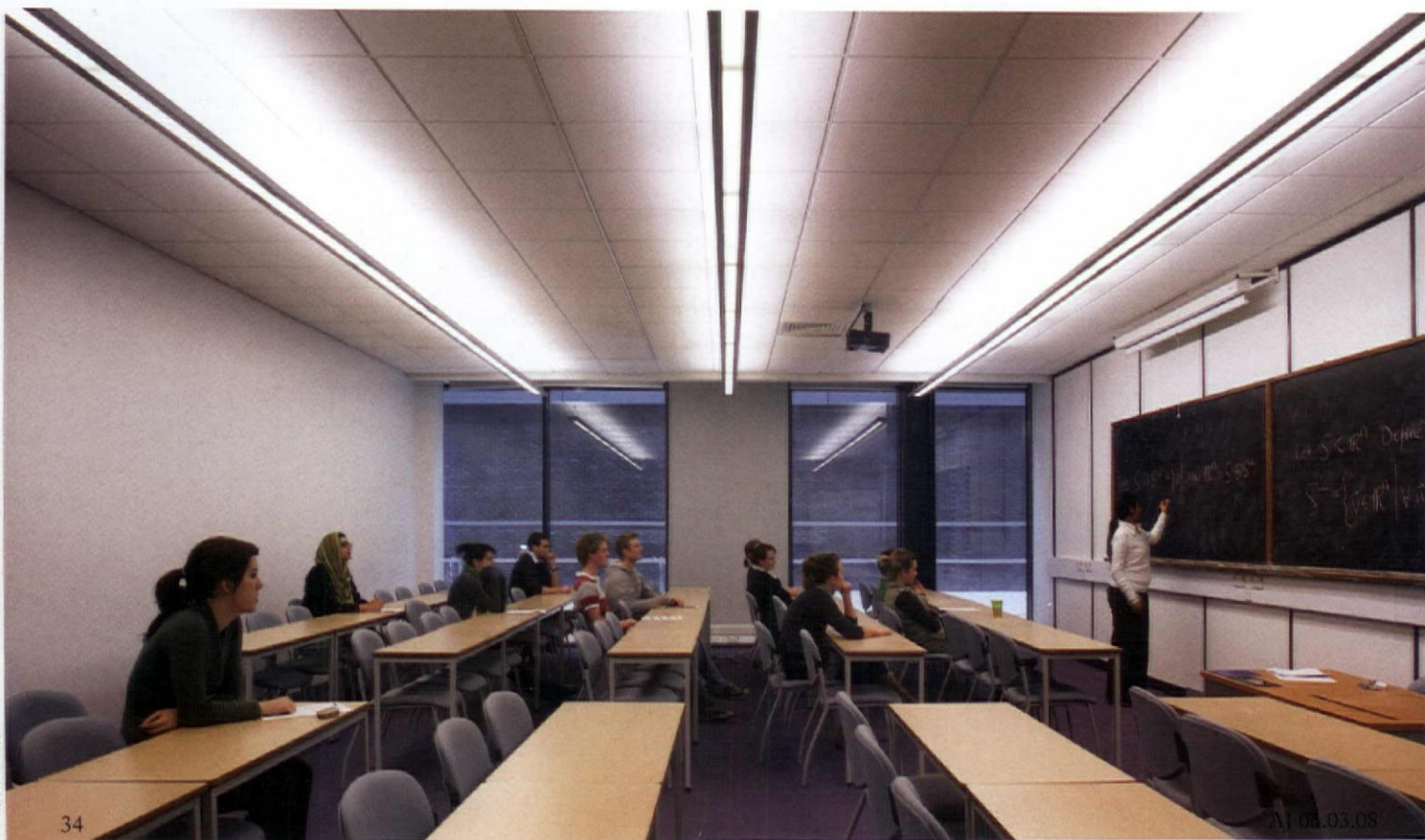
*The photon labs are notably inert given that the spaces are so close to a main road*

cantilevered structures seem to be the architectural fashion revival of the moment in Manchester.

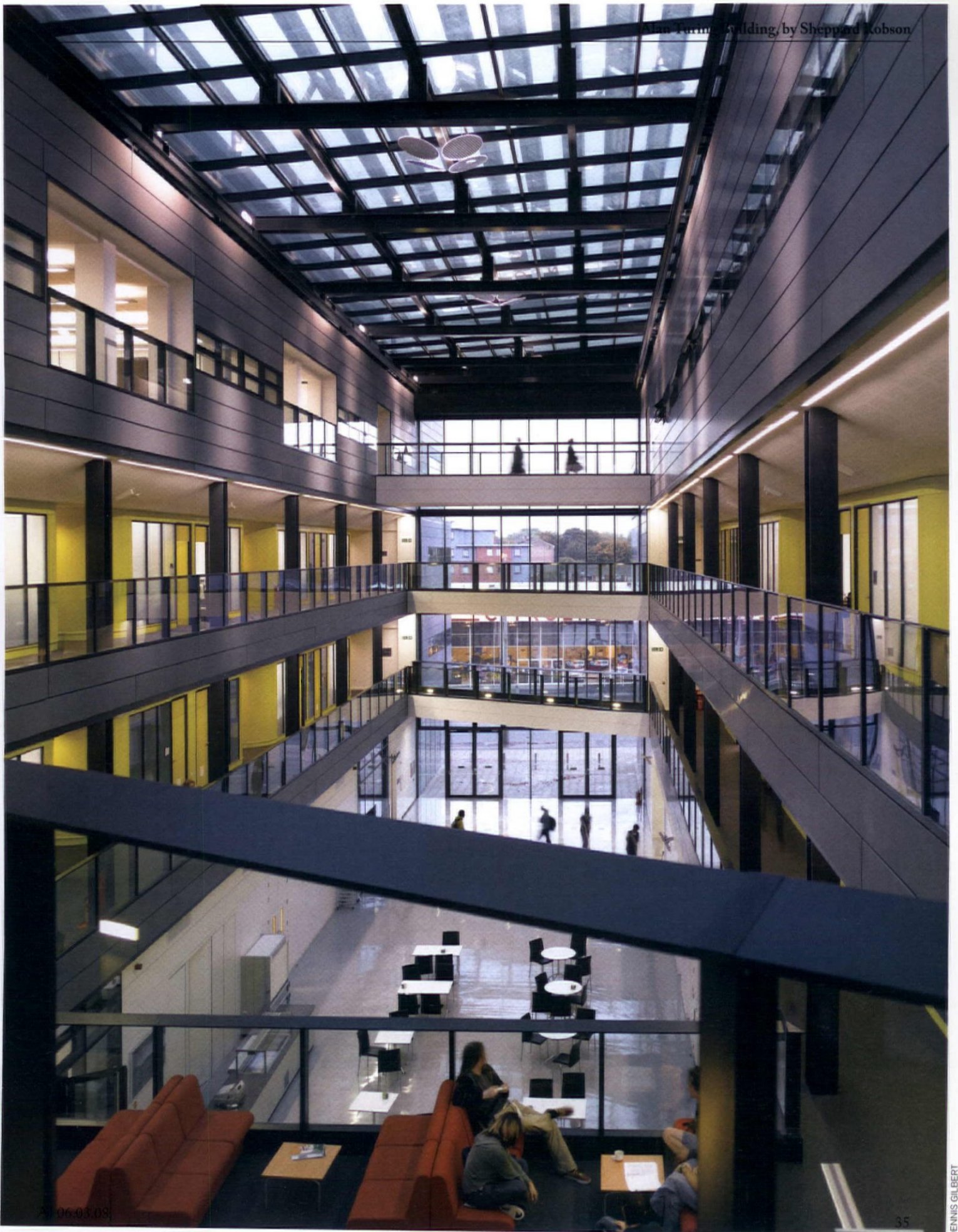
Sheppard Robson's complex brings together three schools that have never shared a building before: The School of Mathematics, the Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics and the Photon Science Institute. This is not quite an academic stand-off, but the astronomers went for clear glass offices running off corridors, while the mathematicians opted for opaque glazed pods. They each have two floors surrounding the atrium. There's a nice alien touch on the astronomer's bridge at the top of the building, a 1970s dralon sofa in petrol green partnered by a coffee table of almost

studious non-design. This is a little like Patrick Moore crashing London Fashion Week and it does have a certain eccentric appeal.

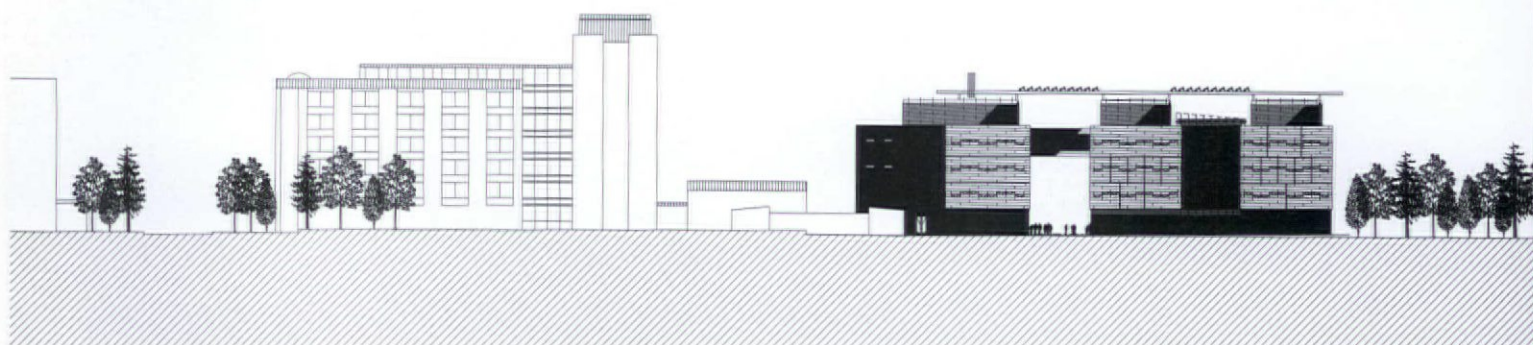
The mathematics and astronomy boxes straddle the four-storey atrium. A partition across this ground-floor area incorporates seating and is painted the same shade of yellow carried throughout the building and into the mathematician's pods. Teaching rooms open on to the atrium; it is nicely animated during change over. The two fingers are also bridged at the west end of the second floor by the mathematicians' senior common room, which is carpeted and furnished in red. These splashes of colour and the light floor >>



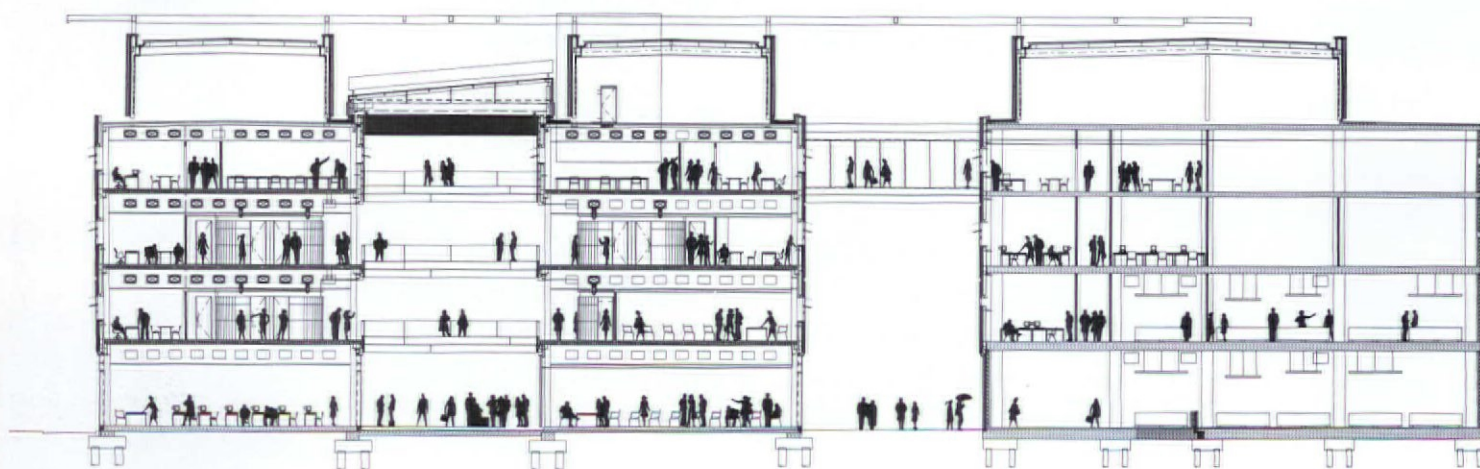








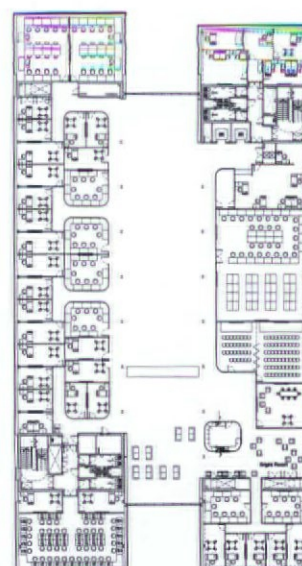
WEST ELEVATION



SECTION



SITE PLAN



FIRST-FLOOR PLAN







**Right** A glazed bridge connects the departments of mathematics and photon sciences



DENNIS GILBERT

relieve the interior of any sense of weight or dullness. The louvred canopy that flies over the roof and the glazed atrium slot really does frame the space. Outside it successfully frames the building. Inside it contains the space and maintains the horizontality that is the rhythm of the building.

The third finger houses the photon science research labs, which are huge, heroically mystifying, and notably still and inert given that the spaces are so close to a main road. Unlike the other two fingers, this one is brick-clad and almost windowless on the ground floor. At this level it is not so much a building as a research instrument. The mathematics block is connected to photon sciences by a glazed bridge. This spans the street that runs from Upper Brook Street west to University Place.

The Alan Turing Building is a gateway. It takes up its site with comfortable scale. Zinc panels and running window slots present a consistent horizontality modulated by the projecting cantilevers, which make the building feel remarkably light on its feet.

Clearly – for reasons that I'm sure are to do with security – the building sees the street more as enclosure than circulation. Sheppard Robson has handled this condition rather better than might have been expected. The ground-floor teaching spaces and the fully glazed atrium are a blessed relief to the otherwise unanimated street.

On its inauguration, the University of Manchester had a buildings budget of around £350 million. There was not an architectural competition in sight and no discernible commitment to architectural excellence. In the case of the £43 million Alan Turing Building, Sheppard Robson has delivered a fine faculty, particularly given that teachers at the School of Mathematics were proactive and particular about plans for their new building. They were attached to their original home and wanted to make sure they were getting like-for-like. In most respects, I'm sure they have. The refreshed and evolving design ethos at Sheppard Robson has produced a rather fine building for the University of Manchester. ■

**Tender date** July 2005

**Start on site date** November 2005

**Contract duration** 20 months

**Gross external floor area** 16,577m<sup>2</sup>

**Form of procurement** Two-stage selected tender

**Total cost** £43.4 million

**Client** The University of Manchester

**Architect** Sheppard Robson

**Structural engineer** Faber Maunsell

**Services engineer** Jacobs Engineering

**Quantity surveyor** MDA Consulting

**Planning supervisor** Faber Maunsell

**Main contractor** HBG Construction

**Project manager** Capita Symonds

**Selected subcontractors and suppliers**

*Photovoltaics* Solar Technologies; *curtain walling* Dane; *steel* Elland Steel; *concrete* John Dole; *EMI shielding* EEP; *masonry* Walton; *joinery* R&R Construction; *internal partitions* Komfort; *ceilings* Sound Ceilings

**Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** Energy life-cycle calculations were never implemented. However, a solar-gain/photovoltaic analysis was undertaken





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14th May 2008 - Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London, EC2Y



CONFERENCES

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## Big Fish Little Fish

*John Preve, partner at Make Architects, gets ready for MIPIM*

Only days to go until MIPIM, the world's biggest property circus, which takes place in Cannes in the south of France (11-14 March). It's fair to say that Make takes the event pretty seriously, unlike some, who see it as a kind of posh piss-up. I'm not averse to a drink, but for me it's a chance to broaden relationships.

I'm travelling by Eurostar to Paris, then by TGV to Cannes. This route has become increasingly popular over the last few years – it seems the event now starts at St Pancras.

From the moment I registered I've been bombarded with invitations – most of which have come from organisations I've never heard of, and which have clearly never heard of me. Others were rather more welcome, including one eye-catching invitation from Skanska in the form of a bucket, spade and the Union Jack flag. Quite how much time I'll have to build sandcastles on the beach is uncertain, but this illustrates MIPIM's generally good-humoured atmosphere.

As a practice, we choose not to take a stand, but we do design a small handout. This year's offering is an envelope, from which four pop-up cubes leap out when opened, which can be folded to create mock-buildings.

I'm looking forward to a busy week of long days and short nights. I'll report back in a couple of weeks on how it all went.

Next issue: Jonathan Hendry  
of Jonathan Hendry Architects



Concrete cloth  
used to create a  
semi-permanent  
shelter

## NEW USES FOR ROCK-HARD CLOTH

Concrete cloth, a material invented by Royal College of Art graduates Peter Brewin and William Crawford in 2005, was initially used in rapidly deployable semi-permanent 'concrete canvas' shelters for refugees. The form and material were developed at the same time for an 'innovative use of concrete' competition entry, but the duo are now realising the potential applications of concrete cloth itself. 'We are moving from the prototype to volume production,' says Brewin. 'But scaling up and maintaining accuracy is tricky.'

The 13mm-thick material consists of a 3D fibre matrix combined with a formulated concrete mix. When soaked in or sprayed with water, the fibres wick up the moisture to hydrate the concrete. Before it hardens, the material can be applied to forms and take up complex double curvatures – rather like

modrock, the material used for casting broken limbs.

'In our old factory we used concrete cloth to fix the leaking roof,' says Brewin. 'We've also been approached by developers who want to use it as a surface for play parks – it's durable, anti-slip and takes paint well.'

The Ministry of Defence has come to the designers with a proposal for using concrete cloth in helicopter landing pads – the material can be rolled out in sheets and stapled in place to create a strong platform. The idea of using concrete cloth to reinforce sandbag defences in Afghanistan is also being investigated. Brewin says: 'Sandbags become scorched by gunfire and begin to degrade. Concrete cloth forms a fire-proof structural shell – bullets puncture it, but leave a neat hole which can be easily sealed.' *Kaye Alexander*

Visit [www.concretcanvas.co.uk](http://www.concretcanvas.co.uk)

## CONFERENCES

**AJ Low Carbon Office Design**  
Wednesday 26 March, 08.30am-  
5.00pm, at ICO, London W1

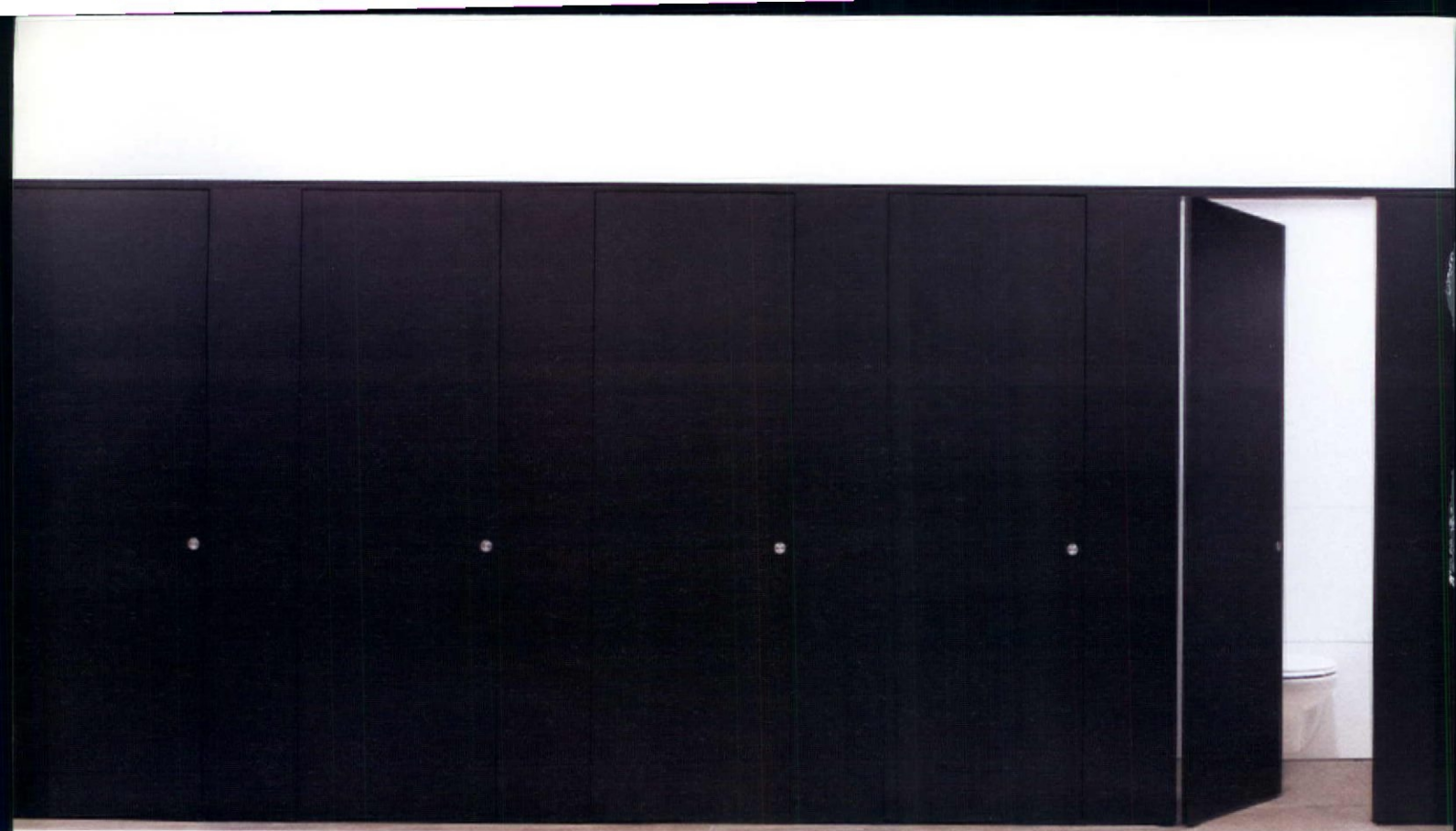
Offices are extremely carbon intensive – in construction, fabric and output – and increasing their sustainability through design is an important challenge.

This AJ conference investigates how current and future policy impacts on the work of architects in the commercial sector and how this influences low-carbon design.

Neil Pennell, engineering director of Land Securities, will introduce the event. Discussions and case studies will include a panel of representatives from the UK Green Building Council, Arup, Broadway Malyan and Bennetts Associates trying to define the term 'zero carbon'; Duncan Baker-Brown of BBM Sustainable Design looking at low-carbon materials; and Roger Burton of JM Architects tackling the issue of sustainable refurbishment.

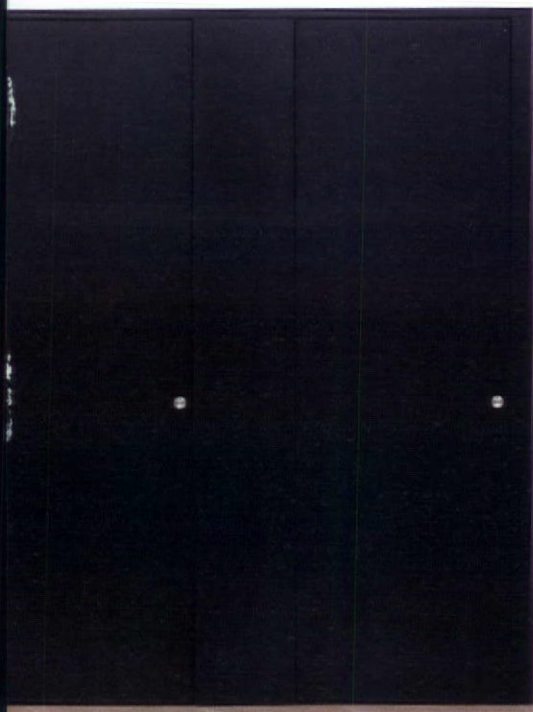
For more information see  
[www.ajlowcarbonoffice.co.uk](http://www.ajlowcarbonoffice.co.uk)



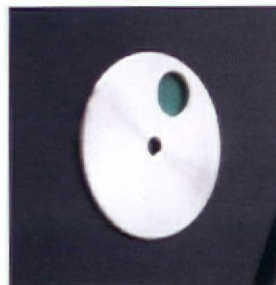


**flow.** Walk through walls.





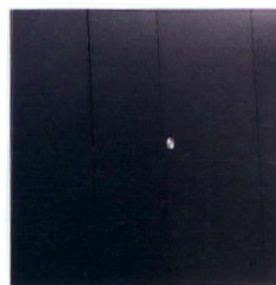
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# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

UK architects working abroad find that building regulations vary wildly between countries *Hattie Hartman* investigates

Those who think the British Building Regulations are complex should take a look abroad, where codes range from the Communist legacies of the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation to Cypriot forays into seismic design. And with more and more British architects working on overseas projects, international building regulations are having

an increasing impact on UK practitioners. Here, the AJ surveys nine countries British architects commonly work in, to find out what quirks designers might come up against when working abroad. We've also measured the thickness of each country's regulations, to see who has the most (and no, it's not England and Wales).

## SCOTLAND



**Published by** Scottish Building Standards Agency  
**Thickness** 19 cm  
**Website** [www.sbsa.gov.uk](http://www.sbsa.gov.uk)  
**Last Update** 2007

Gary Clark of Bennetts Associates' Edinburgh office notes that although the Scottish regulations are increasingly aligned with the English, 'there are a lot of small differences which can amplify through the design process if you don't catch them'. Scottish regulations are, however, more clearly written and revisions can be much more easily downloaded, Clark says. He adds: 'The biggest debate is over Energy Performance Certificates. The bands here are related to kg CO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup>/year, unlike the English bands, which are based on percentages and are less easy to understand.'

## ENGLAND AND WALES



**Published by** Communities and Local Government  
**Thickness** 23cm  
**Website** [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)  
**Last Update** 2007

Scott Brownrigg director Peter Caplehorn, head of the RIBA's Technical Committee on Building Regulations, says: 'Not everywhere are regulations as complex as they are in the UK. Part L alone has over 40 cross-referenced documents.'

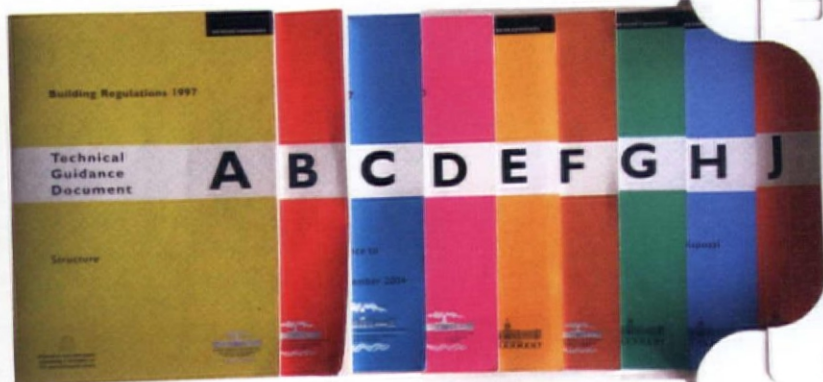


## IRELAND

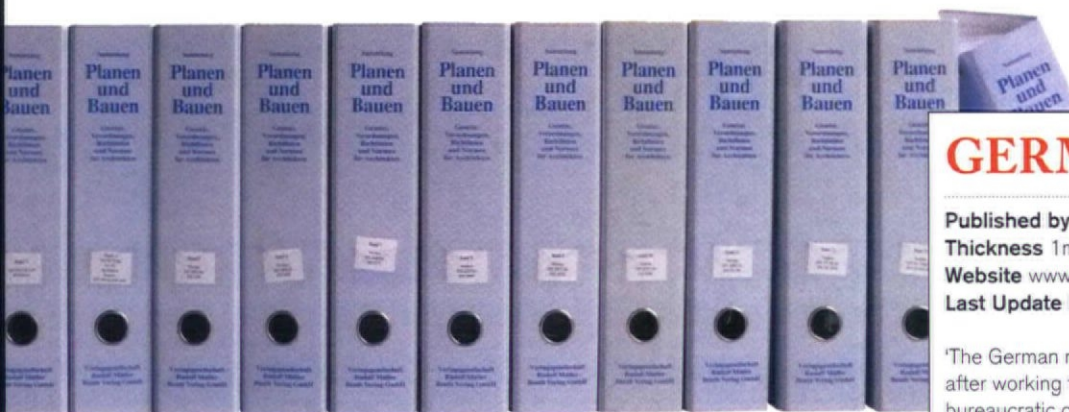


**Published by** Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government  
**Thickness** 6cm  
**Website** [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)  
**Last Update** 2007

According to Neil Deely of Metropolitan Workshop, the only difference between Irish and English regs is the cover. James Howley, of Howley Hayes Architects in Dublin, adds: 'The only difference is that in Ireland, no one really enforces the regulations, so the onus is on the architect and builder to comply.'







## GERMANY



**Published by** Verlagsgruppe Rudolf Müller

**Thickness** 1m

**Website** [www.rudolf-mueller.de/245.html](http://www.rudolf-mueller.de/245.html)

**Last Update** Loose-leaf collection, continually updated

'The German regs always struck me as rather feudal after working for years in the States with its hyper-bureaucratic codes,' says Frank Barkow of Berlin-based Barkow Leibinger. 'Here we typically face off with the local fire brigade until we find a mutual solution. In general, the German sensibility, at least architecturally, favours technological solutions over conceptual ones, and I'm always amazed by how it varies from place to place.' He adds: 'You will remember Le Corbusier's refusal to publish his Berlin Unité after the Berlin codes caused its section to get irreversibly mucked up.'

## USA



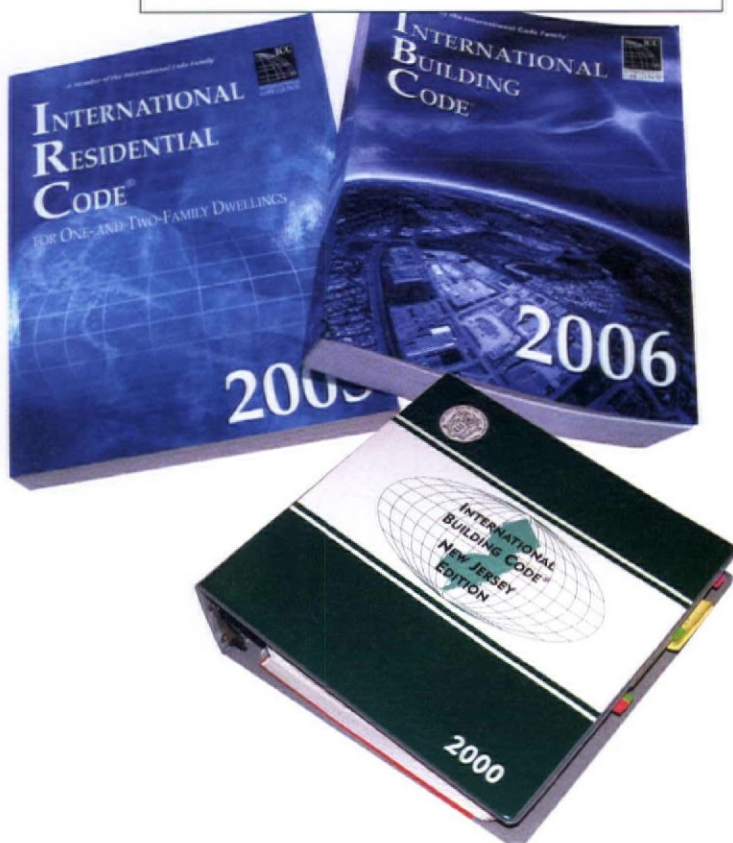
**Published by** International Code Council and individual states

**Thickness** 5cm each

**Website** [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org)

**Last Update** 2006

The International Building Code, first published in 1997, applies to most US states in conjunction with state building codes. Peter Culley of Rick Mather Architects, whose Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is on site in Richmond, notes that American regulations are typically organised – like the US construction industry – to deal with off-the-shelf proprietary systems. 'Any custom work can get quite tricky, and as a result, you see many more generic solutions,' says Culley.



## NETHERLANDS



**Published by** VROM (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment)

**Thickness** 1.1m

**Website** [www.bouwbesluit-online.nl](http://www.bouwbesluit-online.nl)

**Last Update** 2003

Amsterdam- and London-based S333 Architecture + Urbanism's Abigail Batchellor says: 'The Dutch regulations are much more in-depth and there are lots more of them than the UK – they cover areas such as public realm and parking. The Dutch are tighter on specific things like daylight, which is strictly controlled and requires an in-depth daylight report. Also in the UK the regulations are much more friendly, and feature useful diagrams and pictures, while the Dutch regulations are full of legal-speak.'







## CZECH REPUBLIC



Published by Ministry of Development

Thickness 11 cm

Website <http://old.mmr.cz/index.php?lang=3>

Last Update 2007

Czech regulations are much more stringent than the UK, according to David Perera of Jestico + Whiles' Prague office. 'This is probably a relic of the Communist era,' says Perera. 'There are about 25 different authorities you have to deal with when building in the Czech Republic, such as fire, hygiene, low-voltage electric, high-voltage electric, and transport. There is a whole profession – "engineering" – which deals purely with the permits process.'

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION



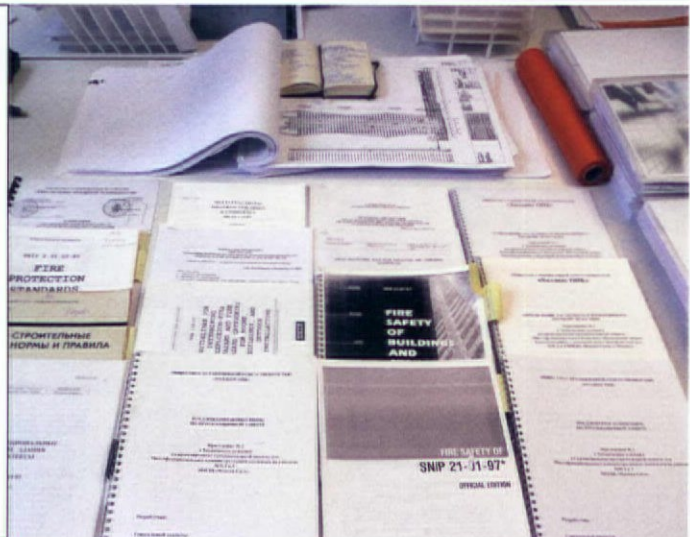
Published by No central agency

Thickness Miscellaneous documents – see right

Website No website – many subscribe to specialist update services

Last Update Unknown

RMJM's Scott Cahill, who is working on Moscow's City Palace tower, says regulations vary between jurisdictions and even within Moscow, where the International Building Centre is developing codes for tall buildings. Cahill says this means even Russians are confused by their codes, particularly the fire code. Cahill notes: 'Stairs are deeper: 300mm deep in Russia compared to 280mm in the UK. Also, Russian cores are thicker to meet a four-hour fire rating.' RMJM has reverted to British standards on things like WC provision, deeming the Russian regulations inadequate.



## CYPRUS



Published by Ministry of Interior

Thickness 0.7 cm

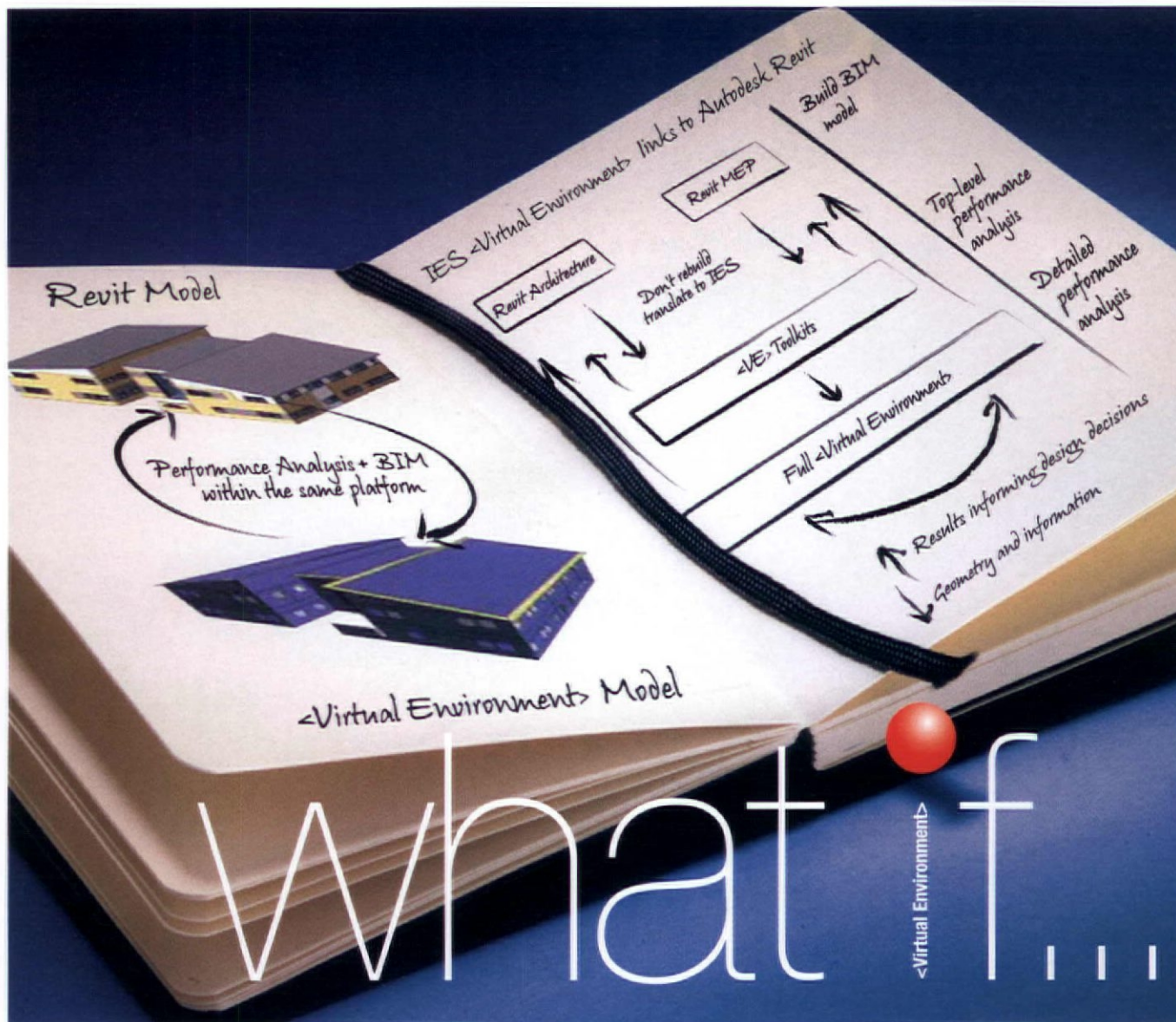
Website <http://moi.gov.cy/>

Last Update 2002

'In Cyprus,' says Akis Stephanides of Hopkins Architects, whose Nicosia Cultural Centre will complete in 2012, 'you have to navigate through various ministries to find all the relevant regulations.' The most recent approved document – which deals primarily with seismic design, is in the process of being updated to include sections on fire and disabled access, currently in draft form. A document was recently published which specifies minimum U-values for the building fabric for the first time.







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In this section Charles Holden // Willie  
Doherty // The photography of Friederike von  
Rauch // The Leeds Accumulator // Diary

# The Critics

London Transport  
Headquarters (1929),  
55 Broadway, London,  
in a drawing by David  
Muirhead Bone  
(1876-1953)

BOOK

## *The work of a Modernist?*

*The life of Charles Holden (1875-1960) bridged Arts and Crafts and Modernism, says **Elain Harwood** of English Heritage. But in which camp does he truly belong?*

Charles Holden, Architect. By Eitan Karol, Shaun Tyas Publishing. Hardcover, 510pp. £49.50



**Charles Holden, continued from page 49**

Was Charles Holden a Modernist? He belongs – with Edwin Lutyens and Giles Gilbert Scott – to that generation brought up in the Arts and Crafts Movement and who died amid Modernism's post-war domination. But unlike Lutyens' many country houses or Scott's churches, Holden had no mainstay. He accepted a remarkable range of challenges that each demanded their own style. His early Belgrave Hospital and Law Society, both in London, and Bristol Central Library, are richly decorated in the Arts and Crafts tradition, combining classical details with a deeper earthiness. After 1918, work for the

Imperial War Graves Commission, with London University's Senate House, searched for the severely monumental. Yet it is his airy stations for London Underground, famed internationally, which have been fashionable with both Modernists and traditionalists since their construction in the early 1930s. Holden's later reputation suffered, with Senate House seeming outdated before its completion, and exercises in town planning that promised us the Grand Vista south of St Paul's ending up lined with dull exercises in brick and stone.

In his book, *Charles Holden, Architect*, Eitan Karol argues that Holden remained at heart an Arts and Crafts man, a 'medieval

modernist'. He worked for Charles Robert Ashbee before finding his own voice as the design partner in a larger firm, Adams, Holden and Pearson. Holden carefully considered his materials and the effect of weathering, and sought a fitness for purpose for every element of a building. His ambition was to create a *gesamtkunstwerk* of architecture, crafts and sculpture, encouraging the young sculptors Henry Moore and Jacob Epstein, whose controversial nudes on the British Medical Association Building (1906–08) were hacked down 30 years later. Holden's own lifestyle was that of the Arts and Crafts aesthete, aroused from his modest Bolton upbringing by the discovery of Walt

EXHIBITION

# *All eyes on Northern Ireland*

*Willie Doherty captures the psychology of political conflict on film, says Maria Fusco*

Willie Doherty: Replays. Selected video work 1994–2007. Until 16 March at Matt's Gallery, London E3





## CHARLES HOLDEN



EITAN KAROL

Whitman's philosophies. It led to an austere lifestyle in Hertfordshire and to Quakerism. But Holden had one modern sensibility that unites his best work regardless of style, which Karol underplays: his mobile sense of planning. There is no immediate grand gesture in his Bristol Central Library. Instead we are made to explore, turning through low spaces and up stairs before arriving in the imposingly tall reference library. Similarly Holden's Underground stations, and his masterpiece, the London Transport Headquarters at 55 Broadway, make routes through awkward sites with subtle shifts and turns. Senate House, richly appointed though its main interiors are, is ultimately less exciting because it is static.

Karol's book has been meticulously researched since the 1980s. It is one of those chunky old-fashioned biographies, in the manner of Andrew Saint on Richard Norman Shaw or Alan Crawford on Charles Robert Ashbee. It cracks along at a good pace – though like all Shaun Tyas books, the text cries out for better editing. And how it would have benefited from a good designer! But don't be put off by the dull format and the worthy portrait on the cover – inside is much more exciting.

**Resume:** Never judge a book by its cover or an architect by his necktie, says Elaine Harwood. This book is much better than it looks

Northern Irish artist Willie Doherty, nominated for the Turner Prize in 1994 and 2003, has a sober eye for detail and an overwhelming compassion for his subject matter. A timely retrospective of Doherty's work from the last 13 years – currently on show at Matt's Gallery in London – gathers a significant collection of single-channel video installations, which meditate on the physical and psychological implications of Northern

Ireland's changing social-political environment. Doherty's work challenges traditional concepts of who is friend and who foe by inviting viewers to slow down and look very closely at tiny detail.

*Empty* (2006) is a moving eight-minute video work shot in a single day with director of photography Conor Hammond, which explores the exterior of a disused office block in Belfast. The piece chronicles the abandoned

### *Doherty's work attempts to comprehend the strangeness and dislocation of political conflict*

1960s building as dawn breaks to illuminate a disintegrating surface that directly signifies the office's current lack of purpose. No one wants to work in this place, and we can see why: blue paint peels away as dirty windows sadly reflect the murky sky; ineffective railings and rusty window grilles look more like they were designed to keep employees in rather than keep prowlers out; and the soundtrack breathes steadily with traffic noise and the faraway whirr of a distant helicopter. This work functions effectively both as a record of the changing tastes and logistical requirements of business (this type of building would be very unattractive to the new investors who have flocked to Northern Ireland since the success of the recent peace process), and as a reflection on what such 'progress' really leaves behind (decaying carcasses of once-busy buildings that can't even be given away).

*Ghost Story* (2007) is perhaps the exhibition's most accomplished work. Sited in a range of rural landscapes, it plots the psycho-geography of post-conflict Northern Ireland by leading us along a lonely country path, from which it seems we will never escape – while we glimpse other locations, we always return to the same spot. Shot by cinematographer Seamus McGarvey of *Atonement* (2007), the piece is narrated by actor Stephen Rea of *Control* (2004) and *V for Vendetta* (2005), who recounts memories of violent acts and unnerving experiences in an even, unemotional tone. 'His body was discovered on an overcast Sunday morning. I recognised him from the small black-and-white photograph that had accompanied the story of his murder,' says Rea, leading us to question why we are walking down this path. Are we the victim or the perpetrator? Close-up shots of male and female eyes looking at something that we as viewers never quite see have an unnerving effect, in that they seem to be looking past us. This is a powerfully emotive work, projected directly on to the wall of the gallery space to draw the viewer directly into the dark space that seems to lie somewhere beyond the actual surface of the screen.

Doherty's work is a significant contribution to the attempt to comprehend the strangeness and dislocation of political conflict. Its poetic empathy, combined with an eye for detailed observation immerses its viewers into some kind of understanding.

**Resume:** Furtive glances and crumbling blocks evoke the politics of Northern Ireland

Left and this image  
Video still from Willie  
Doherty's *Ghost  
Story* (2007)  
Above Still from  
*Empty* (2006)



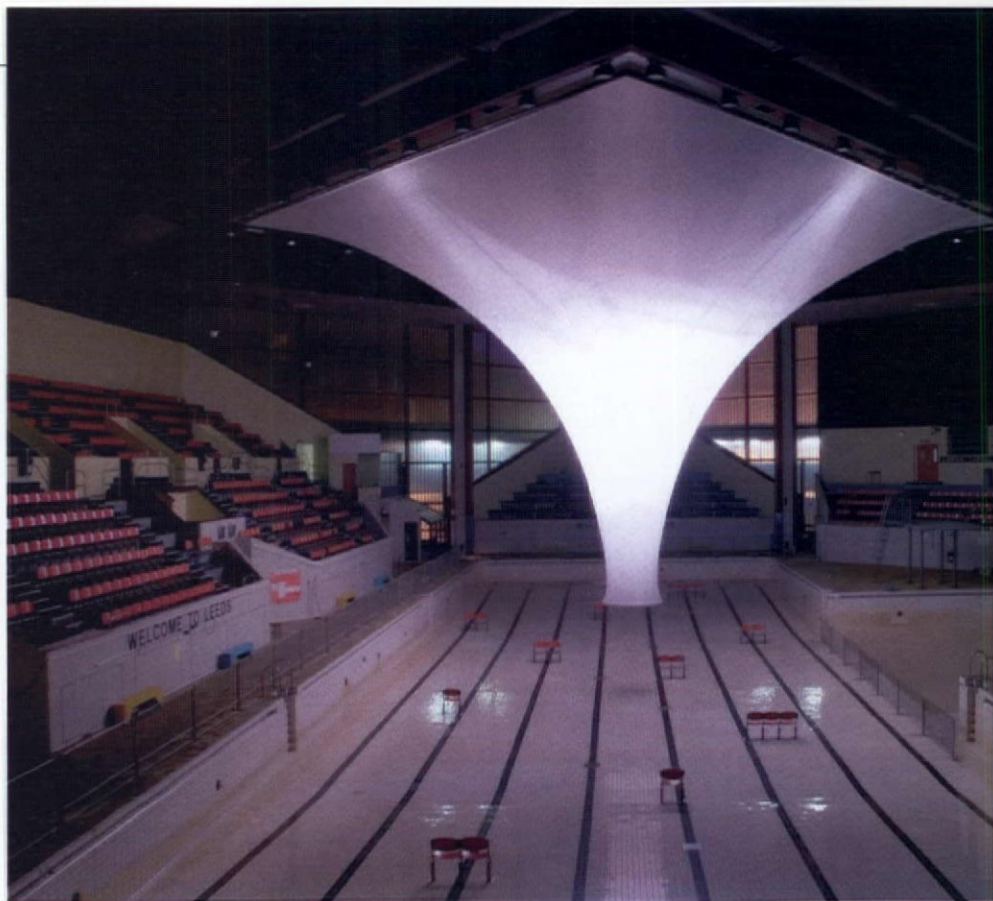
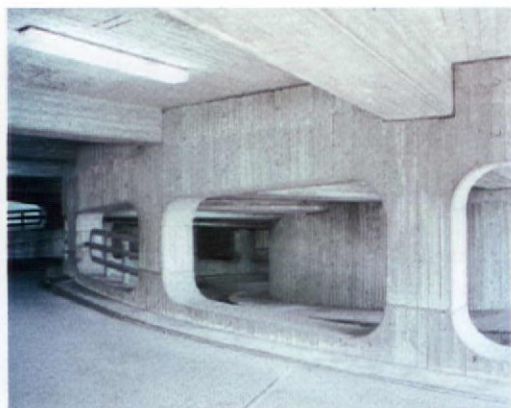


## Critic's Choice

Friederike von Rauch's photographs are strange and mysterious, says **Andrew Mead**

Architectural photographers are often accused of eliminating people from their pictures as they pursue the perfect image of a building. As long ago as 1979, the AJ published a two-part feature (Tom Picton's 'The Craven Image', AJ 25.07.79) on this very topic. But the emptiness in Friederike von Rauch's photographs, collected in a new book called *Sites* (Hatje Cantz, 39.80 euros/£30), is of a different kind. What also strikes you is the quality of light in these images – an overall paleness that recalls Walter Niedermayr's shots of SANAA's projects, where buildings seem less substantial than they are. Yet while colour and materiality retreat in von Rauch's photographs, she doesn't idealise her subjects. Coping stones are missing, stairs chipped, walls stained. Weeds sprout in the gaps between pavements and board-marked concrete retains its texture.

The images are of Brussels, Rotterdam and Berlin (pictured below), but they seldom signal their location – they're interchangeable, even generic. They are of nondescript places that von Rauch makes strange: the curving ramp of a multi-storey car park, a lobby enclosed by a blank travertine wall, a pool of water rippling beneath an expressionless sky. 'Everything is still intact – but what has happened?' asks one of the essayists in *Sites*. To find a distinctive way of visualising the world is no mean feat, given the multitude of images that surround us today, and von Rauch has done just that.



### INSTALLATION

## *What is the point of this?* **Richard Waite** visits *The Accumulator* in Leeds

The Accumulator: The Leeds International Pool Project. Until 22 March, Leeds International Pool

'What is the point of spending thousands of pounds on something that is only going to be on show for a few weeks in a building that is about to be bulldozed?' asks my wife. I have to admit that, before seeing the Office for Subversive Architecture's (OSA's) huge fabric funnel hung from the roof of Leeds' late-1960s International Pool, part of me agreed with her.

But the German practice – whose work has included temporary outdoor interventions such as the Hoegaarden Urban Oasis in London and Manchester (2005), a roof structure for Liverpool's A Foundation (2006), and the illegal refurbishment of a Shoreditch signal house (2004–2006) – has pulled off something that is visually impressive and strangely touching; a perfect farewell to both a building and a time in history.

In April, the pool on the edge of the city centre is (allegedly) due for demolition and

will be replaced by a (don't get your hopes up) skyscraper-scheme designed by Carey Jones and Make. Today the dark John Poulson building, with its drained pools, murky windows and banks of empty seating, calmly awaits its fate. A sanitary-green hospital screen pulled around the reception desk tells you the patient is at death's door. In truth, the dramatic building was always doomed to die young. Back in 1967 it was discovered, after workmen added the tiles, that the pool was inches too short to host international events.

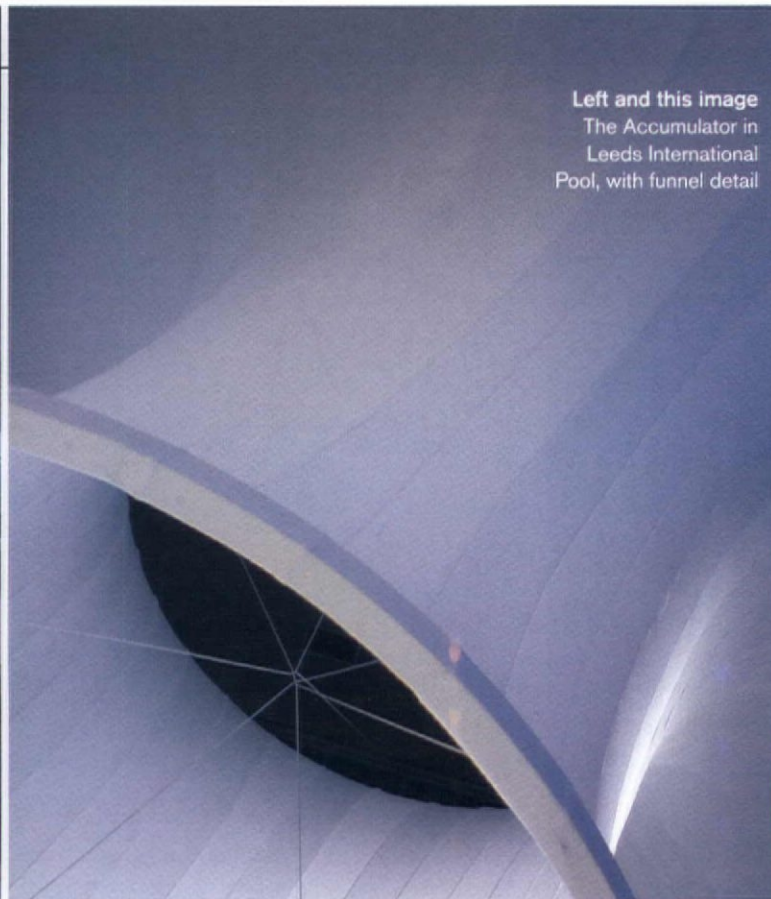
OSA's 12m-tall installation, dubbed *The Accumulator*, was designed to turn the dying pool into a 'virtual water collector'. The firm even worked out how long it would take for the baths to fill with rain water if the top was opened to the elements: just two months. However, the ethereal white sculpture, with clouds of dry ice floating around the top, can also be observed from the bottom up – a stairway to heaven for the tired, mortuary-like pool tiles, worn-out seats and the still-fantastic three-tiered concrete diving board.

OSA has created something that fits in so well with the original building the installation almost seamlessly completes it – a fitting tribute to great piece of flawed Modernism and a gateway to the next world.

**Resume:** OSA really pools it off with *The Accumulator*



Left and this image  
The Accumulator in  
Leeds International  
Pool, with funnel detail



## LECTURE

## Maybury and Tschumi's talk was hardly illuminating, says Marko Jobst

The Space between Architecture and Film: John Maybury and Bernard Tschumi. 12 February at the Royal College of Art, London SW7

Architects are often keen to point out that architecture and film have a lot in common, yet most of the time no one is quite sure why. Commonly, architecture is 'real' and film is 'representational', and for the most part these were the lines followed in the fourth talk of the Royal College of Art's (RCA's) Double Take film series, featuring New York-based architect Bernard Tschumi and British film director and screenwriter John Maybury.

Maybury's career developed alongside that of Derek Jarman, the *enfant terrible* of 1980s British cinema, and his works range from the classic video for Sinéad O'Connor's *Nothing Compares 2 U* and the acclaimed Francis Bacon biopic *Love is the Devil* (1989), to his intriguing Hollywood outing *The Jacket* (2005). He has two new films slated for release this year, *Come Like Shadows* and *The Edge of Love*.

It was apparent throughout the talk that Tschumi's knowledge of film was broader than perhaps displayed. The architect's interest has informed both his experiments in drawing techniques, discussed in his book *Manhattan Transcripts* (1981), and projects such as Parc de la Villette, which contains a cinematic garden. Tschumi made a couple of clear points: that there is a dynamic link between the two practices (movement in space) and there are particular optical regimes involved (linearity of vision). But the format of the talk did not offer space for expanding on these ideas.

The clips provided included some of Maybury and Tschumi's own work, as well as films they found influential in architectural terms – Brian de Palma's *Body Double* (1984) and Sergei Eisenstein's *The General* (1929) for Tschumi, and the work of D W Griffith and Jean Genet's *Un Chant D'Amour* (1950) for Maybury. It's a shame Maybury didn't discuss the spatial and architectural challenges a film director might face. He did propose an intriguing link between the facial close-up and landscapes/territories, but the idea wasn't picked up by either Tschumi or moderator Nigel Coates. Enjoyable overall, but hardly illuminating.

**Resume:** Architecture and film must be related, but Tschumi and Maybury fail to reveal why

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### 3 Sir Edwin Lutyens

Hear Margaret Richardson, honorary curator of architecture at the Royal Academy, on Lutyens' use of traditional architectural styles.

6.30-8.00pm, 10 March, £10, at the Geological Society Lecture Theatre, London W1

[www.royalacademy.org.uk/architecture](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/architecture)

### 4 The Endless City

A discussion on the world's urban future with Ricky Burdett, Deyan Sudjic, Richard Rogers and Enrique Peñalosa.

6.45-9.00pm, 12 March in the Starr Auditorium, Tate Modern, London SE1. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

### 5 John Latham

Visit the new Delaye Saltoun gallery, designed by architect Leszek Dobrovolsky, and take in John Latham's spray paintings (*pictured below*).

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**Below** *Untitled 1954* by John Latham.

Oil on unprimed canvas, 77 x 63cm



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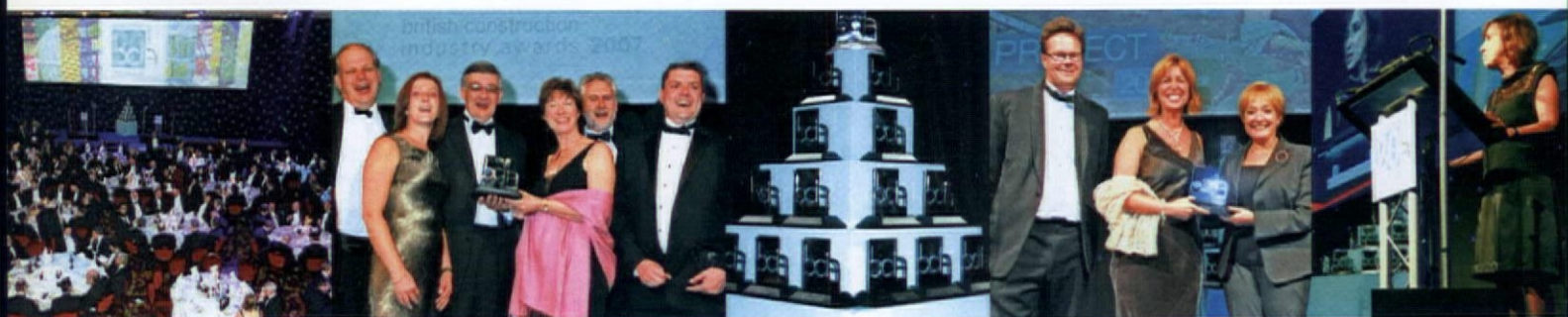
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It is anticipated that the council's tender documents, including the specification for the commission will be issued April 2008.

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Further information can be obtained on the Official Journal of the European Union www.ted.europe.eu or by contacting Mr Richard Rollison on 020 8891 7465 or via email on r.rollison@richmond.gov.uk.

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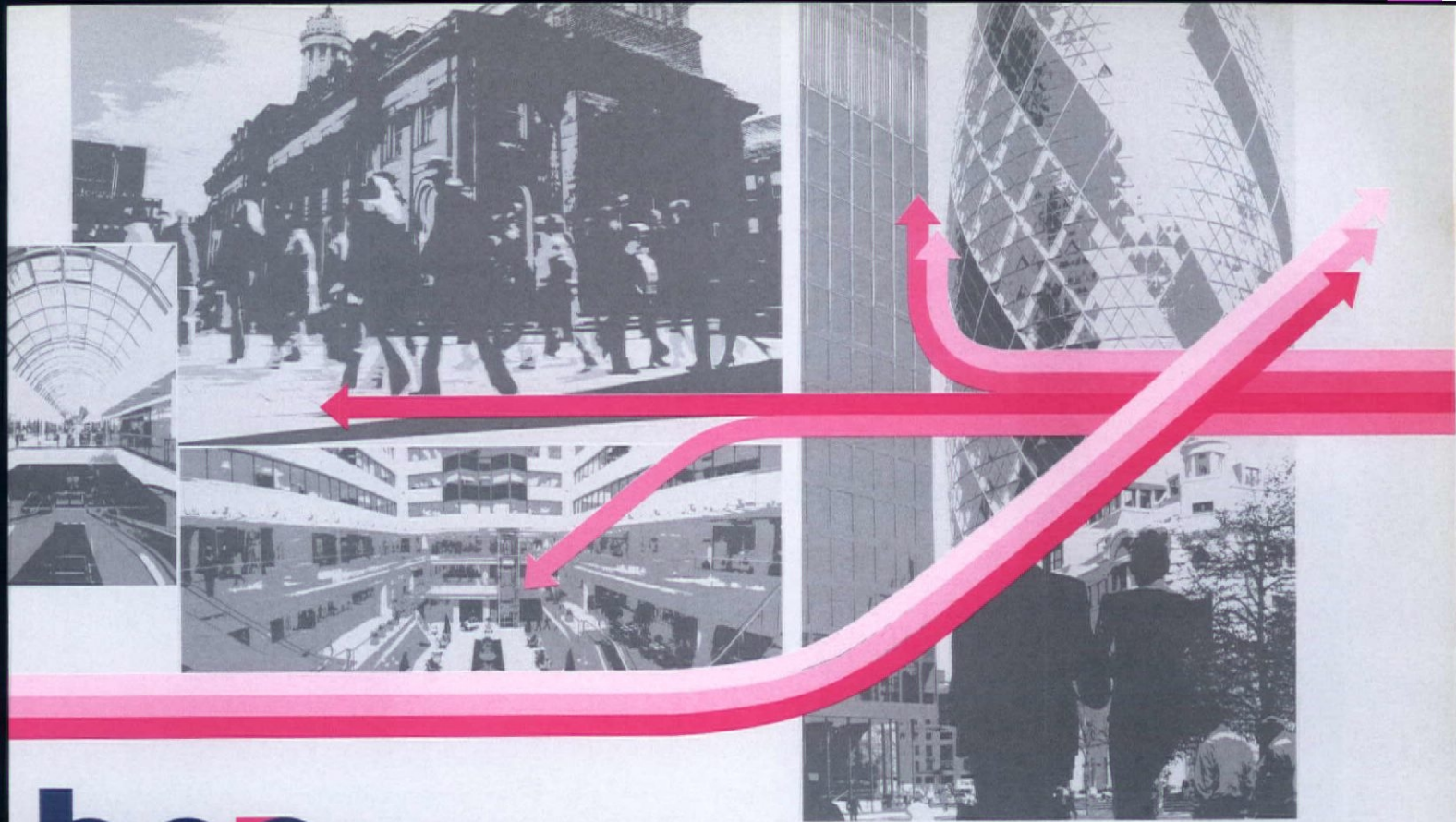
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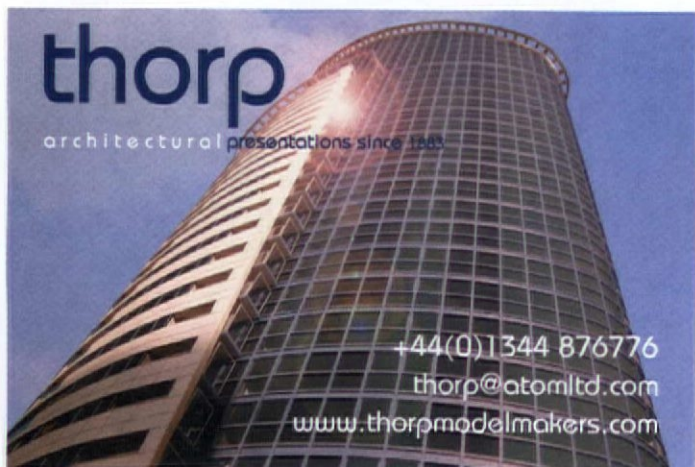
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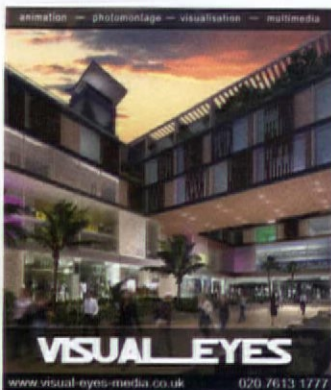
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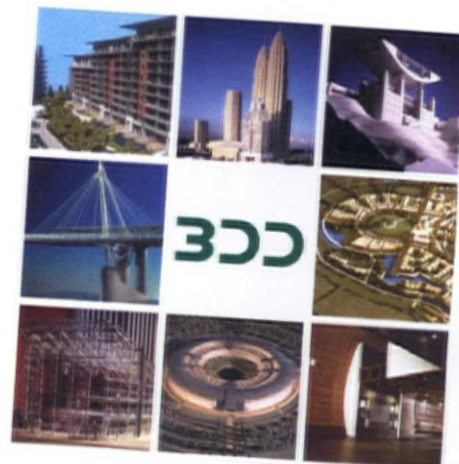
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This is a Kalwall detail at Silverstone Technology Park in Northamptonshire, designed by architect Cube Design. The building provides crisp and clean detailing with interiors that are flooded with diffused daylight, without shadows or glare, thanks to Kalwall. To download Kalwall publications visit [www.stoakes.co.uk](http://www.stoakes.co.uk)

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An active chilled-beam system from SAS International has been used on Scott Brownrigg's new office building in Bournemouth to provide room cooling and fresh air. SAS undertook the design, manufacture and co-ordination of both the suspended metal ceiling and the active chilled-beam system to meet the strict fit-out requirements.

## STANNAH



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A 1,000kg Stannah Goodsmaster lift has been installed for Dairy Crest in its Frome cheese-products packaging centre. The goods-only lift carries packaging materials from a newly extended first-floor storage area to the production floor below, without the need for manual handling or carrying goods via a stairway.

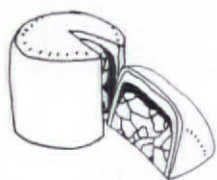
## VELFAC



### AJ ENQUIRY 208

Velfac glazing has been used at the University of Hertfordshire's groundbreaking Centre for Health Related Research, designed by AD Architects. The glazing, which offers clean uninterrupted sightlines, was used extensively in windows and screens to help achieve a minimalist Scandinavian-style design for the project.





# Ian Martin. How to save Britain's urban heritage: Do it up, call it 'urbane'

**MONDAY.** Meet architecture minister Dorothy Bingham at a creative industries seminar. She tells me *her favourite architecture is 'the sort that secures more equal life chances'*. I say that's completely meaningless. She calls me elitist. 'What about castles? Everyone likes them. More local castles, that's the way forward...' She marches off, the wrong way, banging into an automatic door that fails to open.

**TUESDAY.** A very old friend of mine, Bill Dingdy, has organised a petition to save the Simpsons' seminal (therefore threatened) Ivanhoe Gardens housing estate. *'Intelligent conversation could make this place desirable again,'* it says in his email. I assume he means if you turf out the riff-raff and fill it with chattering wankers who work at Canary Wharf everything will be OK.

**WEDNESDAY.** Bill emails back. He meant to type 'conservation'. But essentially, yes, *wankerfication is the answer.*

**THURSDAY.** Vegan pub lunch with Amy Blackwater, the extreme green activist. She's been like this for several months now, following a thoughtful sabbatical in unoccupied Denmark.

Before that she was an archivist for *Landscape Waterly Quarterly*. She's decided that 'green activist' is better than 'green archivist' as it reduces her lexicon footprint by one letter. That may seem modest but, as she points out, if everyone did it the letters would soon become paragraphs, and paragraphs can change the world.

There's a huge amount of one-upmanship in the world of extreme greenness. Someone sprays MEAT IS CARBON on a boutique butcher's window, someone else is out the next night writing WOOD IS MURDER by B&Q's trolley park, in their own arterial blood. Nobody outgreens Amy, though. She was first up on the House of Commons roof last week for the Heathrow protest, holding up the (admittedly unreadable) banner slagging off Terminal 5 and its architect. Poor Richard. It was a vicious limerick. Though for the record, I tell her, 'todgers' was misspelled.

She shrugs. And pouts, I think. It's difficult to read her mood as she's wearing a ski mask. She's not the only one. The Overthrow is a favourite activist pub, with its Levellers-only jukebox and its saucy interpretation of the smoking ban: roll-ups only. She should really take it off, I say, she looks ridiculous. I indicate the other masked drinkers. Like Amy, they're all talking earnestly about grim stuff, but wearing clownish smiles where pints of beer have entered their faces.

Amy removes her mask. She's got a look of triumph, and a new green haircut. No huge surprise, there's been a green hair diaspora since Camden Lock burned down the other week. 'Grrr. Look closer, you dim capitalist tool...' *'My God. She's got GRASS growing out of her head. Bloody painful it was too. Grrr. I'm having a lifestyle step-change. Reparations to Nature start not just in your head, but on it...'*

The procedure is simple enough. Hair is removed follicle by follicle and micrografts of fine fescue-type grass implanted. 'As an organism, I'm now at least 15 per cent more

efficient,' she says, a little loudly. 'Basically, a bipedal urban heat island. I'm retaining 75 per cent of rainwater, I've got this whole living ecosystem thing going on, and best of all I'm the first to do it. Grrr. Oh yeah, eat your heart out, bitch!' A young woman at the next table who's been gaping at Amy from behind her ski mask looks away quickly.

I eschew the rest of my sprouting bean salad and order a large Scotch.

**FRIDAY.** Archiholics Anonymous. Everyone very pleased at my progress. I'm at Stage Two, Denial. Big discussion about whether the government's relaxation of listing has encouraged binge architecture. Obviously 24-hour telly has pushed it into the small hours, but in town centres it's still only a *small minority of historic buildings causing all the anti-social disturbances.* Pubs, mostly.

**SATURDAY.** Catch up with Amy. She looks awful. Her headgrass is turning brown at the ends. *Her doctor's advice is to stop wearing a head-mounted glass terrarium at night.* 'An entire micro-community – homeless. Grrr!' I sympathise. This is the sort of thing that happens in Tower Hamlets, not Crouch End.

**SUNDAY.** Re-imagine myself in terms of an iconic landmark. Not for me the slender, nervous verticality of the skyscraper. *No, I allow my bulbous, fluid mass to spread horizontally in the recliner.*

This Week's Top 10: Gay Spaces

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