

3.03.08

Zaha Hadid  
The 165-tonne Chanel  
andbag – p47

Rules of Thumb  
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tells you what he wishes  
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facades – p41

Technical & Practice  
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room – residential space  
standards compared – p42



# MCCULLOUGH MULVIN

*The AJ visits three buildings by the Dublin practice – page 26*



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## REGENT'S VIEW

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# RIBA BACKS DOWN OVER AA VALIDATION

Architectural Association forces U-turn on RIBA visiting board decision to award only 'conditional' Part 2 validation

The RIBA has overruled its own validation panel after it recommended the Architectural Association's (AA) Part 2 course should only be given a 'conditional' endorsement.

The AJ has learned that the RIBA's education top brass dismissed the panel's findings – made following a visit to the London school in February 2007 – following pressure from AA director Brett Steele.

David Gloster, head of education at RIBA, said: 'The director of the AA [Steele] requested the findings of the board on Part 2 be reconsidered, and the recommendation that the AA final examination be conditional reduced to a recommendation'.

The AJ understands that the six-strong validation panel – which carries out a validation on every architectural school once every four years – unanimously backed the decision of its chair Robert Hutson, to recommend that the AA receive 'continued validation, with conditions'.

However, more than a year after the panel's visit, a report on the state of the school is yet to be published, a situation that Gloster said was 'unusual' but was unavoidable due to 'pre-arranged committee dates'.

Gloster also revealed that after further consultation, the original members of the review panel decided, this time by a majority vote, to accept 'that the condition be amended to a recommendation'. He added that a report would be released in May or June.

But one head of an architectural school, who wished to remain anonymous, said it was 'irregular that the report was not out' and another source involved in the validation process added: 'Still no report. You're telling me there isn't a problem?'

But AA head Steele denied that there had been any issues with the visit, claiming: 'They [the panel] made it clear they enjoyed their time with us'.

It has also emerged that two other schools, Huddersfield and

Oxford Brookes, have become entrenched in long-running validation procedures. Both have taken over a year to determine.

Under the RIBA review programme, institutions can be judged as deserving 'continued validation', 'continued validation with conditions' or in a worst-case scenario 'withdrawn' – effectively closing the school.

*Max Thompson and Richard Waite*

Read Kieran Long's leader on page 20



Left RIBA education head David Gloster  
This image The AA





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# KAPLICKY THROWS DOWN THE GAUNTLET IN PRAGUE BATTLE

Jan Kaplicky has claimed that his fight to build Future Systems' Prague Library in the Czech Republic is a 'battle for modern architecture and culture'.

His comments come barely a week after the exasperated architect claimed that he would sue the Mayor of Prague, Pavel Bém, after a decision was again put off on the £90 million scheme (AJ online 04.03.08).

Speaking to the AJ, Kaplicky said Bém's opposition to the scheme was 'purely political' and

warned that a failure to realise the 'blob'-like library would be a threat to the integrity of all future international competitions.

'Architects should be proud of me,' said Kaplicky. 'I'm in this battle for all of them.'

Kaplicky warned the Mayor that his political career would be finished if he continued to oppose the scheme, which he claims has huge popular support among the public.

'Twelve thousand people have signed an email petition in

support of [the library]. There are stickers and they have even made cakes in the shape of it. When I get on a tram, at every stop three people from age five to age 80 stop to wish me good luck.'

'[Bém] will lose. He will lose heavily,' added Kaplicky.

A decision on the library, which has an automated book-storage system and is described by Kaplicky as 'the most modern in the world,' will be made in the next few weeks.

*Max Thompson*

## THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

### FAT MAKES LIGHT WORK OF BENTLEY COMP

FAT has scooped the contest to design the new community library in the Bentley area of Walsall, West Midlands. The London-based Post-Modernist saw off the likes of Featherstone Associates and Panter Hudspith Architects to land its first public building in the UK (pictured below).



### ZAHA PROFITS PLUMMET

Zaha Hadid Architects' profits fell by 16 per cent last year, despite landing a host of high-profile projects. The architect, who recently saw her proposals for the Architecture Foundation's new HQ in London ditched, blamed outlay on new IT equipment and infrastructure for the drop. Hadid is currently working on the Aquatics Centre for the London 2012 Olympics.

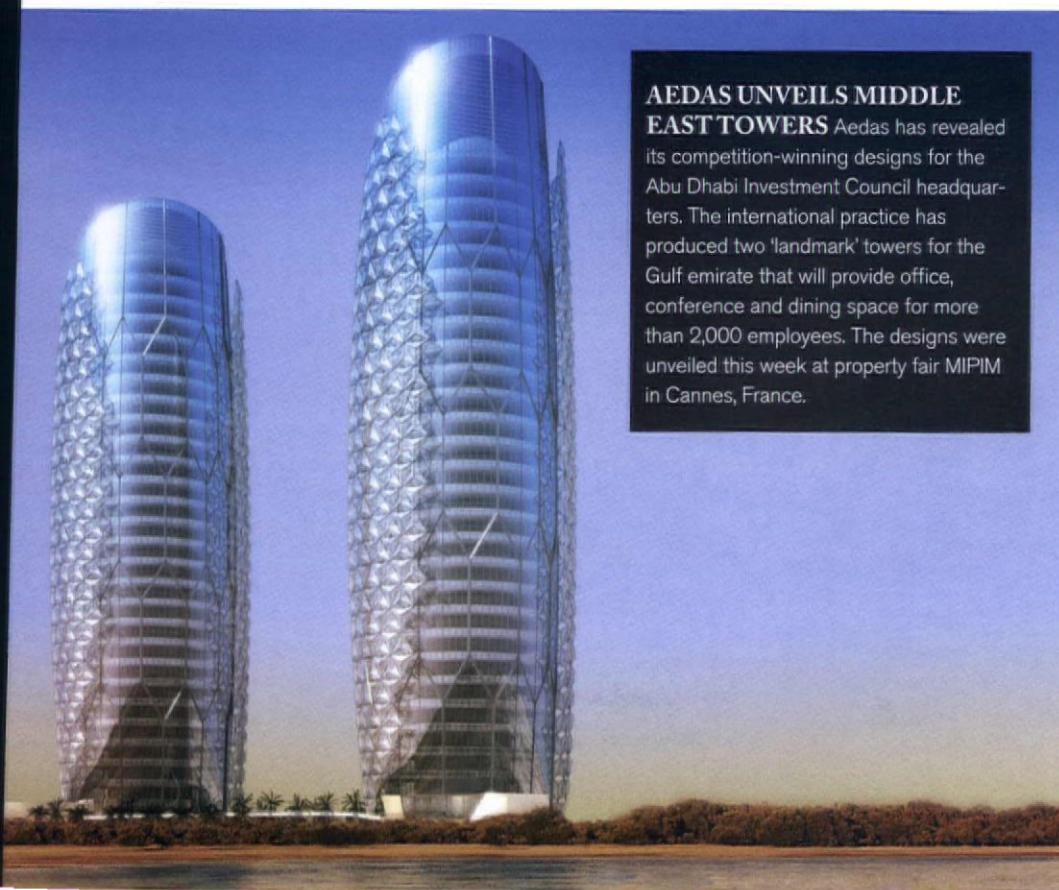
### PANTER HUDSPITH IS THE STAR IN KENT

Panter Hudspith Architects has won the competition to revamp the derelict former cinema site in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. As well as beating Avanti Architects, CTM Architects, local firm Hazle McCormack Young and Stanton Williams, the practice also pipped FAT – reversing the result in the Bentley Library competition (see top story).

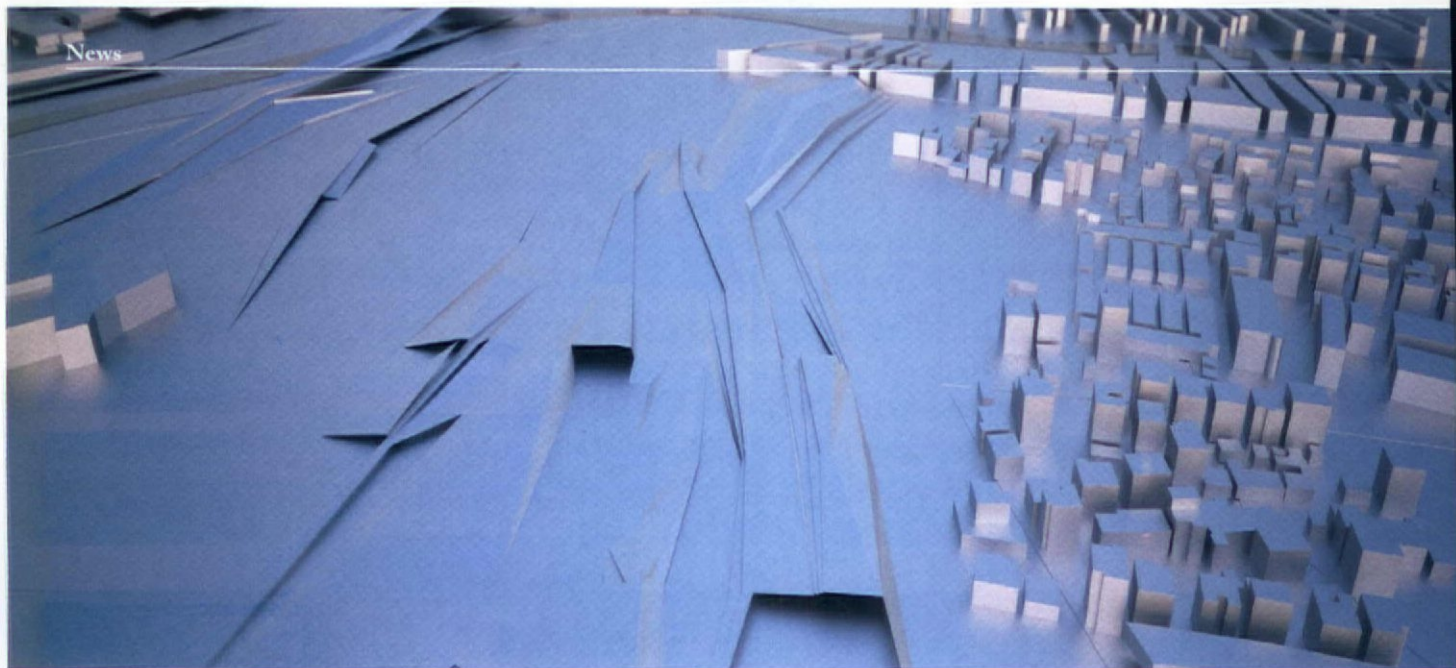
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### AEDAS UNVEILS MIDDLE EAST TOWERS

Aedas has revealed its competition-winning designs for the Abu Dhabi Investment Council headquarters. The international practice has produced two 'landmark' towers for the Gulf emirate that will provide office, conference and dining space for more than 2,000 employees. The designs were unveiled this week at property fair MIPIM in Cannes, France.







# 'DEEP GROUND' CONCEPT WILL REBUILD CHINESE CITY

GroundLab, a collective formed last year 'to win large-scale competitions', has bagged the international competition to redesign the Chinese city of Longgang.

The London-based group – formed by Plasma Studio partners and AA tutors Eva Castro and Holger Kehne – beat practices from Singapore,

Australia and the USA with its Deep Ground concept.

Under the scheme the Chinese government will pull down 95 per cent of the existing city – which lies north-east of Shenzhen in the Pearl River Delta, southern China – allowing GroundLab to regenerate the city's central 'urban fabric' and provide homes for an estimated 350,000 people.

The topography of Longgang is 'karst' – a landscape characterised by 'bubbles' of rock that form caves, pits and troughs, making it unstable for excavation. The Deep Ground approach will 'thicken' the land by building vertical layers, with little or no excavation.

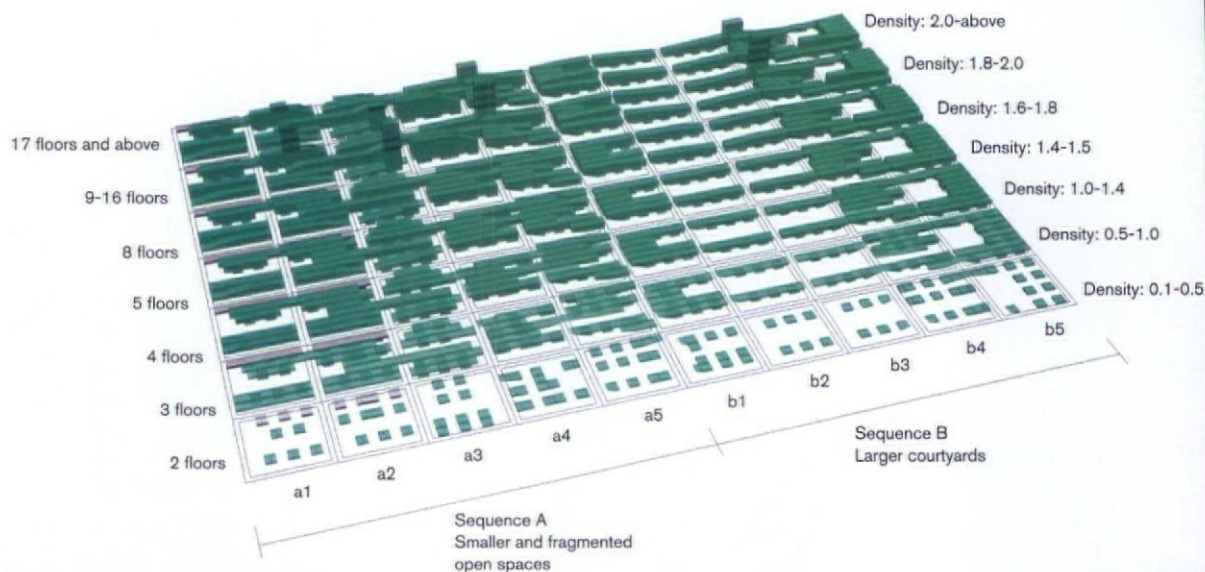
Castro, who teaches the landscape urbanism MA unit at the AA, said: 'We will keep the

oldest bits of Longgang and form little, close communities with high densities. They are an important part of Longgang and will give the new city an identity.'

The design – which will include 9,000,000m<sup>2</sup> of new development – would, said Castro, turn the theories of the landscape urbanism unit 'into realities'. *Max Thompson*

**Above and opposite page**  
95 per cent of the existing city of Longgang will be razed and rebuilt to provide homes for 350,000 people

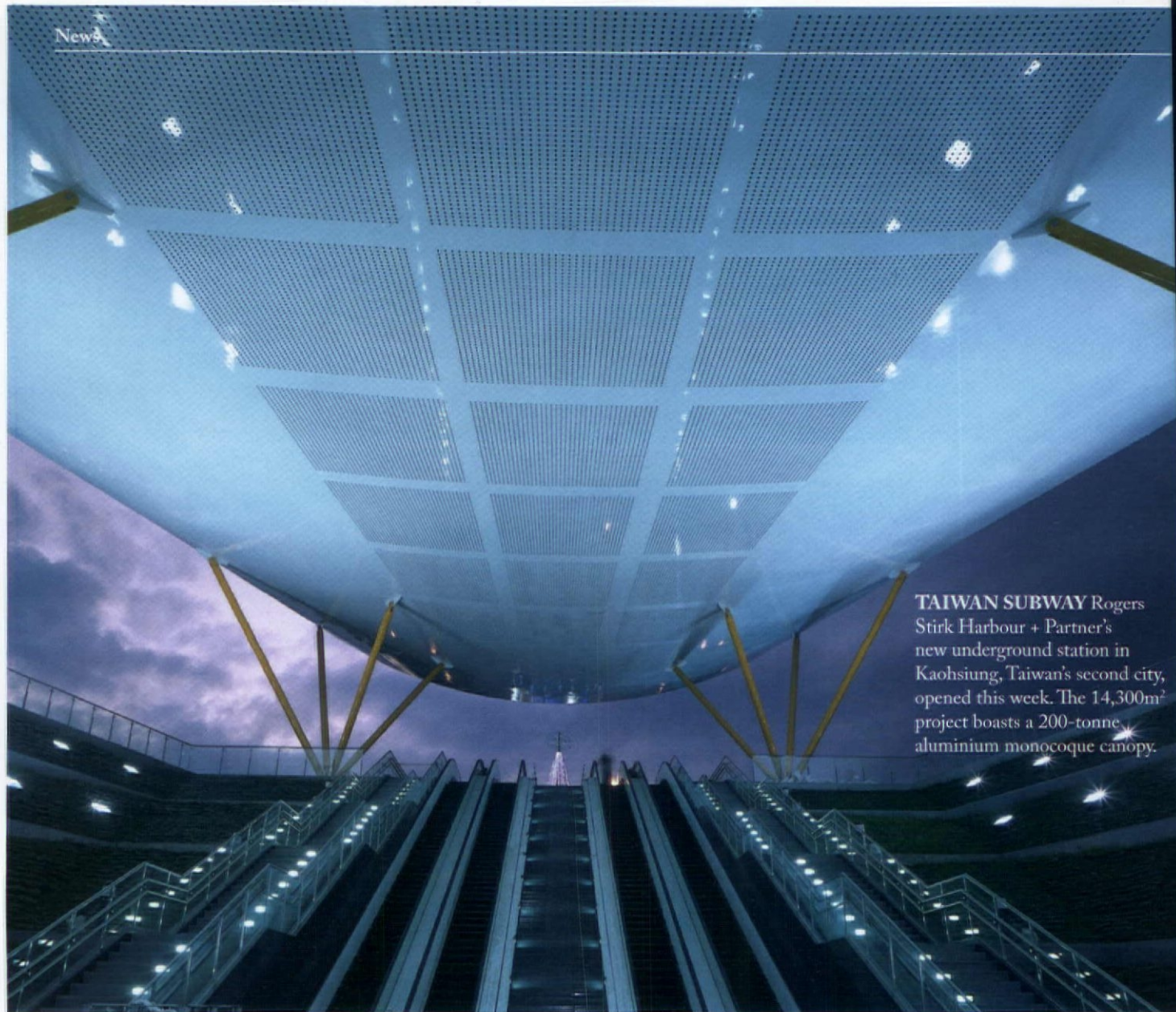
**Right A** 'density palette'











**TAIWAN SUBWAY** Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partner's new underground station in Kaohsiung, Taiwan's second city, opened this week. The 14,300m<sup>2</sup> project boasts a 200-tonne, aluminium monocoque canopy.

## THAMES GATEWAY HOMES TO USE BARKING'S WASTE HEAT

The London Development Agency (LDA) has unveiled plans for a district heating system in the Thames Gateway using waste heat from Barking Power Station in East London.

The scheme, which was unveiled yesterday (12 March) at the MIPIM property fair in Cannes, France, is first of its kind

in the UK and aims to supply heating and hot water to up to 150,000 homes in the Thames Gateway region

According to the LDA, Barking Power Station wastes 40 per cent – or 400MW – of the energy it produces in generating electricity, and this proposal will save 96,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

emissions a year. The district heating scheme will mirror similar systems already in operation on the Continent.

LDA chief executive Manny Lewis said: 'Barking Power Station is in the heart of an area that is a key target for growth in the Thames Gateway. Currently the station dumps excess heat:

this project will harness the potential from that waste.'

A feasibility study proposed that by 2011, 37,000 new homes in new developments in Barking Riverside, the Royal Docks, Havering Riverside and Barking town centre would use the heating system. *Richard Vaughan, reporting from MIPIM*



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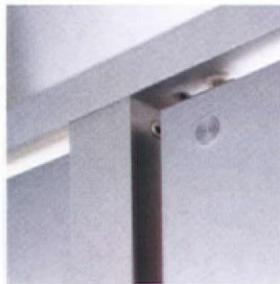
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Mole Architects' Wabi Tea House scooped first prize in the AJ's Small Projects awards

## TEA HOUSE WINS TOP SMALL PROJECTS PRIZE

A Japanese tea house by Mole Architects that cost just £7,000 to build (AJ 17.01.08) has won the top prize at the AJ's 2008 Small Projects awards, sponsored by Rambøll Whitbybird.

More than 300 revellers attended the Small Projects awards party at New London Architecture in London last week to see the practice's Wabi Tea House bag the £1,500 first prize.

The scheme in Prickwillow, Cambridgeshire, which is built

entirely from reclaimed materials and is used for hosting Japanese tea ceremonies, beat 23 others to scoop the award.

The judges – AJ editor Kieran Long, John Boxall of quantity surveyor Jackson Coles, Peter Murray of New London Architecture and Simon Smith of Rambøll Whitbybird – praised the project as a 'celebration of the ordinary'.

The second prize of £750 went to Arcade Architects for The

Causey in Edinburgh, a £16,000 project for a temporary public space, and a commendation went to students from Sheffield School of Architecture for their Space of Waste project, built from recycled materials. *Ruth Slavid*

The Small Projects exhibition will run at New London Architecture, The Building Centre, Store Street, London WC1, until 29 March. See all the projects at

[WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK)

## DRDH TO DESIGN VILLA FOR INNER MONGOLIA

London-based DRDH Architects has been invited to join fellow UK-based designers Simon Conder Associates and Eyal Weizman on the Ordos 100 scheme in Mongolia.

The surprise announcement came last week in an email from Herzog & de Meuron partner Jacques Herzog, who has been tasked by client Jiang Yuan Water Engineering to select 100 up-and-coming architects from around the world to design 100 villas in 100 days.

DRDH director Daniel Rosbottom said the news of the firm's appointment 'came like a bolt out of the blue'.

He added: 'There are various ways I can think of that they heard of us, but what is the point of speculating? We are on it and are very excited to be asked by people of this calibre.'

DRDH's selection means there are now four UK-based firms – German practice Thiele-Geisler Architekten has an office in London – working on the scheme, which is being masterplanned by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei.

Although the Ordos region – which has a population of 1.4 million – is in Chinese Inner Mongolia, no Chinese architects have made it to the list.

The houses are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year. *Max Thompson*

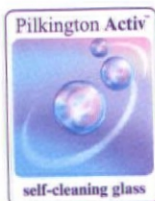
Plan showing the Ordos plots







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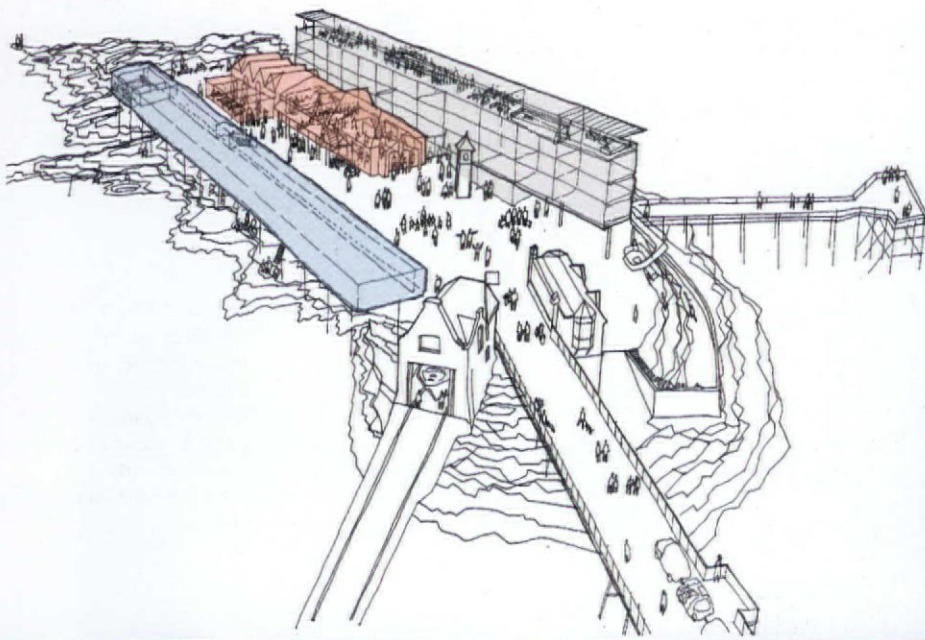
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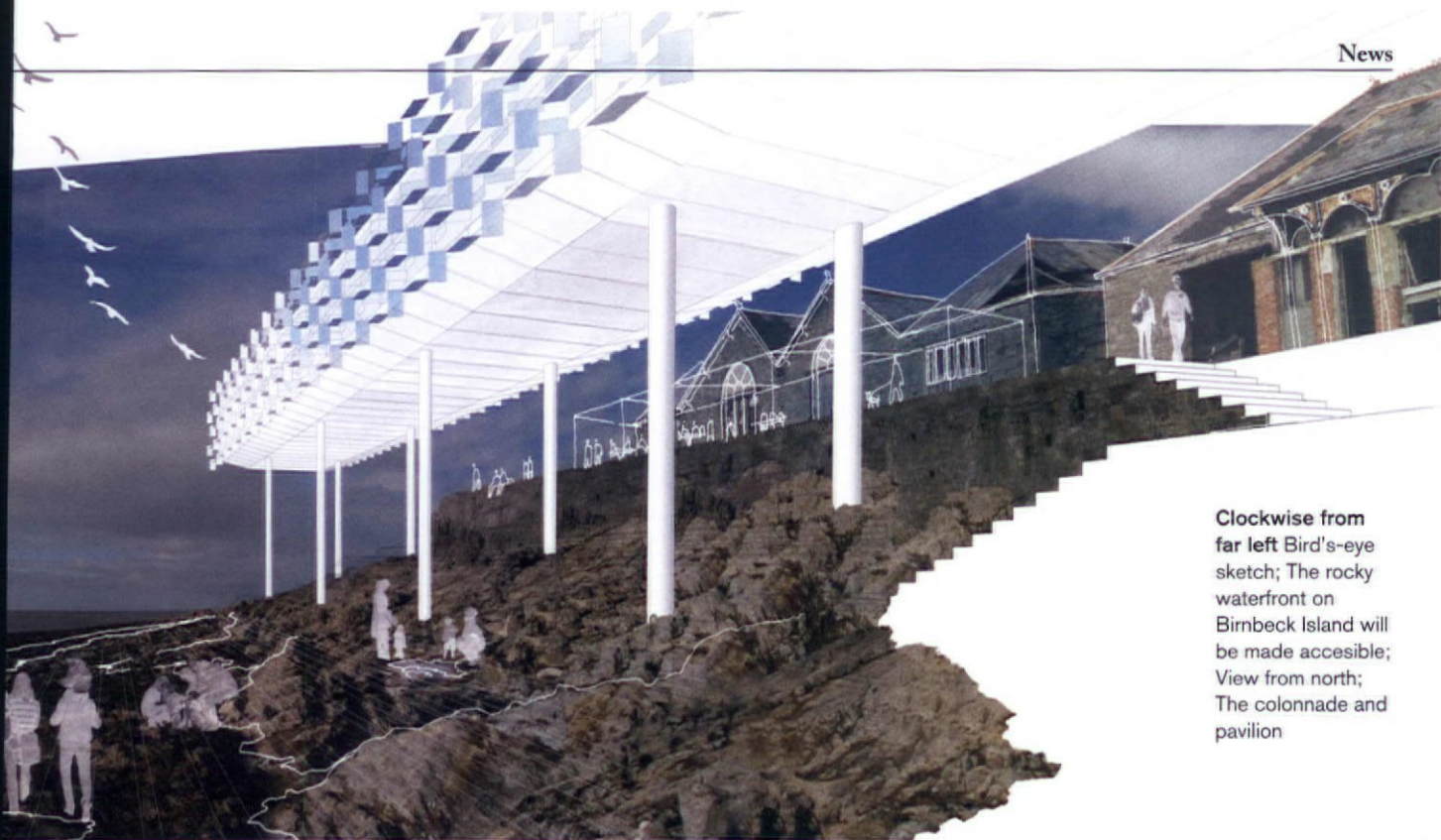


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Clockwise from far left Bird's-eye sketch; The rocky waterfront on Birnbeck Island will be made accessible; View from north; The colonnade and pavilion



## LEVITATE BAGS BIRNBECK COMP

London- and Bristol-based Levitate Architecture has won Urban Splash's Birnbeck Pier competition with this scheme for the island off Weston-super-Mare, Somerset. The practice saw off AOC, FLACQ, Pierre d'Avoine/White Young Green, Richards Partington Architects and Austrian firm MOH Architects. The judges praised the design, which features a hotel and flats, for 'revealing the island's natural beauty'. *Richard Waite*





Image courtesy of Walsall Regeneration Company  
© Terry Calvert

# lex, walsall, international architecture competition

Urban Splash has big plans at Walsall Waterfront and is already on site with Phase One. We are now holding a RIBA competition to find the most exciting practice with the best ideas for our new site, Lex.

Lex is 2.26 acres (0.91ha) located at the gateway to Walsall Waterfront and is bounded on two sides by canals - we think it's a bit special.

Urban Splash is already working with SMC Alsop, shedkm, Feix and Merlin and Grant Associates and we want the successful designer to deliver more world class architecture in Walsall.

For more information and a copy of the brief, contact the RIBA competitions office or visit [www.lexwalsall.co.uk](http://www.lexwalsall.co.uk)

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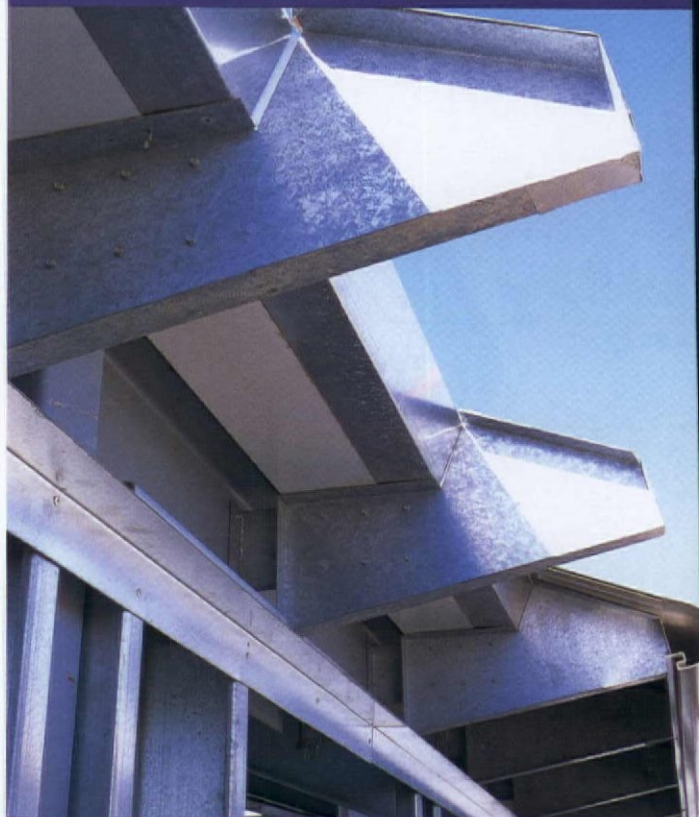
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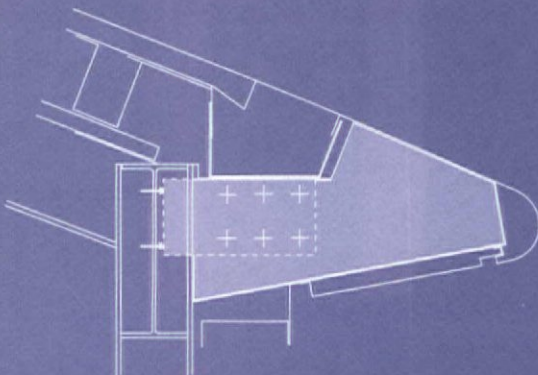
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## BRIT PACK

Unrest is growing over the Britishness of this year's British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The regions aren't happy. Nor is Scotland. Pavilion curator **Ellis Woodman** has – how shall we say this? – kept things rather close to home. Of the five practices so far unveiled to help Woodman deliver his vision of British housing today, all are within a 4km radius of his home at *Building Design* near Blackfriars bridge in London, where he is buildings editor. They are Sergison Bates (headquartered in London W1), Tony Fretton (EC2), de Rijke Marsh Morgan (SE1), Witherford Watson Mann (E2) and Maccreanor Lavington (EC1). Well, at least Ellis is keeping his carbon footprint down.

## SO LONELY

**Lyn Barber**, one of the world's most acerbic interviewers, shows her sentimental side in an

interview for the *Observer* on Sunday (9 March) with **Zaha Hadid**. Deeply disturbed by the lack of domestic clutter in Zaha's flat (would you leave your knickers lying around if you were inviting every journalist in?), Barber says: 'I would far rather live in her car than her flat, because the car at least has comfy seats.' Barber goes on to accuse Zaha of not being a good role-model for women because she has sacrificed her private life to her career, and concludes: 'Despite her extraordinary achievements, I came away feeling obscurely sorry for her and thinking how sad for her to have to go home alone to that awful bare comfortless flat.' Not a dry eye in the house.

## SUPER POWERS

There is much to admire in **Alan Powers** – architectural historian, writer, academic and saviour of Pollock's Toy Museum in London. But Astragal was still a little surprised to stumble across The Alan Powers Appreciation Society on social-networking site

Facebook. Evidently set up by his students at the University of Greenwich, it is described as being 'in adoration of the most amazing lecturer in existence (sic)'. Discussions include where the genially fogeyish lecturer buys his clothes (Gap apparently), and whether he could beat Superman in a fight.

## FROM LITTLE ACORNS

Guess who this fresh-faced young cherub is... Look closely now... No joy? Well, there's a rather large clue at the foot of the page, but if you're still struggling, here's two more: *Time for Students* is

published in the Czech Republic; and, even at age eight, the little fella looks like the world is against him.



## THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Is the government's target for all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016 achievable? (see right for result).

### Next week's question:

Does an AA education prepare its graduates for practice?

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YES  
33%

NO  
67%





# Leader & Comment



## **Leader** The RIBA's approach to education has proven to be cowardly and evasive, says **Kieran Long**

The state of British architectural education will be under the microscope in the coming months, as we approach degree show season. RIBA president Sunand Prasad has said, admirably, that the brains trust of architecture schools in the UK should be harnessed for good, and the gap between education and practice closed up.

But our story about the Architectural Association's experience with the RIBA visiting board (*see page 5*) raises questions about whether the RIBA is independent enough to assess the performance of schools.

Trust in the RIBA is very low because it does not trust the people delegated to do the jobs that need doing. This was exemplified in recent years by the overturning of the

decisions of local juries for the RIBA Awards by committees at Portland Place. Now the institute has altered the recommendations of its own visiting board about the country's most famous architecture school.

Just a note to readers. Everyone we spoke to denied there was any story at all when we first spoke to them. The RIBA initially wouldn't even tell us who was on the visiting board (we found out anyway). Some commentators even denied that there had been any issue at all with validation. Eventually, David Gloster, RIBA education director, released a statement confirming our story.

This willingness of the boys' club to protect its own astonished our reporters, but shouldn't surprise us really. The RIBA does itself no

favours with this untrustworthy process going on behind closed doors, and the response to our enquiries smacks of the kind of clubbability I'm sure the new president would like to dispel. The glamour of the AA seems to have cowed the powers that be at the RIBA, and they in turn have silenced the man they appointed to chair the board that judges the school against its own criteria.

One wonders what the government's Quality Assurance Assessment (QAA) for education would make of this process. QAA reports in the past have commented on the split between the ARB and the RIBA on their interpretation of quality in education, and I wonder if this story gives them confidence in the institute. [kieran.long@emap.com](mailto:kieran.long@emap.com)



## **Opinion** Despite Prince Charles' comments, the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall is no dustbin, says its designer **Andrew Taylor**

At a lecture last month in our Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall at Essex University, Prince Charles described the venue as a 'dustbin'. Despite this, we welcome the intervention by the Prince to stimulate architectural debate; this is particularly necessary for educational buildings, where there is a nationwide struggle to deliver humane and uplifting buildings through the tangle of contorted procurement routes.

In the public arena, buildings are often judged by aesthetic quips as though they were in a beauty parade. These simplistic judgments often belie the complexity of matching their brief to site and budget. There needs to be a greater public awareness of the correla-

tion between the method of procurement and the quality of building. The Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall was delivered through a Design and Build contract with its budget and time constraints. The following notes on our project are designed not to stifle, but to open up debate in the light that it has fulfilled its primary function of creating a statement for the university.

The £4.75 million building lies at the main entrance to the uncompleted 1960s campus, overlooking a landscaped setting. We

### **In the public arena, buildings are often judged by aesthetic quips**

identified an opportunity to humanise the gateway to the University. The brief was for a 1,000-seat lecture theatre divisible into two 500-seat auditoria. Like our Theatre and Film Studies Department for Aberystwyth University, the architectural challenge was to create a building with no windows.

Our starting reference was some of the world's great theatres, including the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus; but our strategy was to reverse the sequence of the arrival of this great Grecian masterpiece. At Essex a

bridge invites entrance from the University Plaza and repairs the truncated podium; the circulation is gathered to create some foyer space overlooking the great landscape. The internal auditoria are accessed from the top, creating a focus and drama on to the stage. This route sets up a dialogue between the existing campus buildings, the landscape and the internal drama of the building.

We gathered the foyer, the only glazed area, into one 'eye' overlooking the lake, with two smaller 'eyebrows' relating the internal auditoria circulation to the outside.

The building is clad in a stainless-steel skin – hence Prince Charles' 'dustbin' reference – which changes throughout the day. This shimmering quality reflects the landscape and dematerialises the scale of the building. This adds to the sense of occasion, with the drama unfolding as one circulates from outside to inside. The sense of arrival is heightened on entry into the classically shaped auditorium.

Regardless of Prince Charles' personal views, we believe we have achieved a considered relationship of brief, site, aspiration and cost and we would like the building to be judged against these aims.

Andrew Taylor is a partner at Patel Taylor



## Obituary With the death of Martin Pawley, one of the most mischievous voices in architecture has been silenced, says former colleague *Ian Martin*

Typical. Just days before an evening at the Architectural Association to celebrate the life of our most admired architectural commentator, he dies. How rude. Yet for those who knew Martin Pawley, worked with him, or read with astonishment the ruthless prose he seemed so effortlessly to produce over four decades, it seems appropriate somehow.

He once boasted that he'd never resigned from a job in his life. He'd always been sacked. Now, with an orderly exit strategy in place, architecture's best-loved heretic has had his contract terminated by Upstairs. Not that Pawley believed in deities. His voice would occasionally take on a reverential tone when talking dreamily about Buckminster Fuller, say, or Marie Helvin. But he was drawn to the supercilious rather than the supernatural.

### He even invented an inventor, who used to pop up when there was a space to fill in the AJ news section

Explaining once that cathedrals were high-tech buildings – stained glass is essentially 'information technology' – he assigned to all religions the role of mere content management. He was agnostic about nothing. Conservationists, the Prince of Wales, the RIBA, anyone he labelled a 'windbag' – all got it in the neck.

His journalistic career began on the AJ in the '60s and ended here three years ago. In between he wrote for every major design magazine. He was architecture correspondent for the *Guardian* and the *Observer*. His parallel careers as academic and consultant took him to the United States and to Chile in the 1970s, advising on low-cost housing. Decades before the reuse of materials became stylish he published *Garbage Housing*, which described the construction of housing from



Martin Pawley,  
1938–2008

scrapped car parts. *Private Future*, written during the oil crisis of the early '70s, is both a fascinating snapshot of a now-antique world in panic and a prescient discourse on the inexorable drift towards societal atomisation.

His many subsequent publications, from *Theory and Design in the Second Machine Age* to *Terminal Architecture*, reveal the passion of a futurist. A proper one, with neither the soppy utopianism of an optimist, nor the Luddite miserabilism we now associate with the bad-weather brigade. Pawley was coolly detached and oppositional, writing scathingly about a neurotic architectural profession paralysed by its own cognitive dissonance. In 2002, writing on cars and cities, he pointed out the discrepancy between what architects 'knew' (cars are good) and what they were obliged to confess (they're bad). 'This will be a war to the death that will only end when – in the case of London – the M25 becomes a neo-medieval city wall within which cars are no longer allowed.' Writing in 2000: 'There are no more examples of "sustainable development" in our solar system than there is a mandate for it... Nothing in the universe goes on for ever, so how can human society be organised to

enable it to go on for ever? The RIBA is promoting sustainability as "a duty for architects"... Before long, "sustainability" will no longer be a meaningless word, but a matter of regulation that will constrain designers.'

David Jenkins, who has put together a definitive anthology of Pawley's writings, said: 'Martin living in the sticks seemed like a First World War general – remote from the front. He always wanted to hear the latest news and gossip... We devised ever more cunning plans for shooting the rooks that were nesting in the tree outside his window and crapping everywhere. Silly stuff like that. He was always full of mischief.'

Exactly. Mischief. He was by some distance the most unscrupulous journalist I ever worked with. He wrote headlines first, then retrofitted the story. He made things up. He even invented an inventor, who used to pop up now and then with some new building material when there was an awkward space to fill in the AJ news section. I can still hear Pawley chuckling now, at all of us.

Send your tributes to Martin Pawley to  
[comment@architectsjournal.co.uk](mailto:comment@architectsjournal.co.uk)





## Gillespie, Kidd & Coia's 'cultural rationale' has been usurped by the Avant Garde, says Patrick Lynch

In Gordon Benson's illuminating catalogue essay for the recent Gillespie, Kidd & Coia exhibition at the Lighthouse in Glasgow (AJ 25.10.07), he places the practice into the context of post-war Modernism and discusses its role in the British scene. He notes James Stirling's comment that 'there was Corbusier, then Aalto, and then a long way behind... the rest,' but describes the practice's Andy MacMillan and Isi Metzstein as being 'ideologically more catholic' in their tastes.

Sandy Wilson notes in his 'Appreciation' that the two Scots were uniquely able to yoke together influences from Modern masters such as Sigurd Lewerentz and obscure German and Dutch architects, perhaps noticing in their work – as well as that of Leslie Martin, himself and Patrick Hodgkinson – a shared struggle to reconcile a vernacular Northern craft tradition with technology and Classicism. Certainly, it seems that the architects' overlapping influences were mirrored by the friendships between

them, and Benson describes a group whose members 'were the dominant, innovative and progressive' and the 'socially and intellectually motivated body of the profession' at the time. All of them were professors, and arguably they kept the flame of contextual and proto-ecological Modern architecture alive, while the 'commercial rationale' of Hi-Tech overtook their 'cultural rationale' in influence.

This usurping was compounded by the emergence of the Avant Garde at the AA,

contemporary art, computer programming... Anything in fact which had not been tarnished by the architectural mainstream'.

The Avant Garde holds sway in British schools of architecture today. Benson's conclusion is that Zaha Hadid's mining of the painter Malevich's archive is less important than her talent. Unlike the 'cultural rationale' of earnest existentialists, theory today is productive knowledge. And the product, almost without fail, is a brand offering of

### As if Ronchamp and Säynätsalo Town Hall mated and sired a rustic spire

which, Benson tells us, 'was dissatisfied with the hegemony of all of the above groupings within the profession', and intent upon reconstructing architecture by importing 'progressively more exotic analogies drawn from linguistics, cinema, choreography,

'talent' in lieu of a creative engagement with social context. Give or take shifts from decon spikeyness to bio-morphic voluptuousness, you know what you're getting from the 'commercial irrationality'. Despite the pseudo-critical justifications that spew forth in defence of stylistic quirks, Avant Garde architects know next to nothing about architectural history or philosophy. What you are getting is idiot savant 'genius' – a 'brand'.

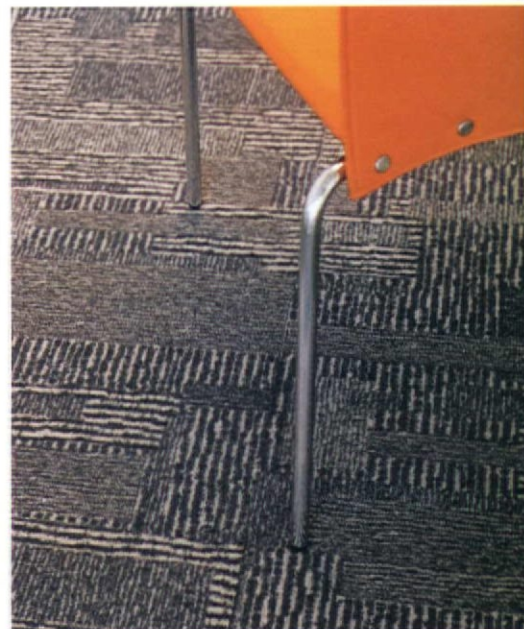
Macmillan's and Metzstein's St Bride's at East Kilbride adorned the New Town with a brick cave. A campanile marshalled the land, sending out an ancient signal of settlement and of ritualistic time. As if Ronchamp and Säynätsalo Town Hall mated and sired a rustic spire, San Gimignano is reborn in Motherwell. Tectonic and symbolic, interpretative and phenomenal, the plan reveals a radiant 'piazza' and a complex programme articulated as an urban form that hovers between recognition and surprise. This reminds us that talent alone doesn't produce mature work, and neither does theory.



Gillespie, Kidd & Coia's  
St Bride's Church, East  
Kilbride (1963)



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## FLATSPOTTERS

What a delight your Contemporary Apartment Types issue (AJ 28.02.08) was for all those housing architects out there with trainspotting tendencies.

It does, however, highlight a worrying trend. All the recent English schemes using a row or terrace type suffer from the dreadful single-aspect rash that condemns future residents to a solitary view, often with little sun and certainly no cross ventilation.

A further symptom is the internal corridor. This is perhaps OK for the transitory world of hotels but doesn't seem to be a place that encourages 'homecoming' in Aldo Van Eyck's terms – more like the 'buy to leave' highlighted by Anna Minton in her essay, 'The Flat Trap'.

While deck-access schemes work in providing cross ventilation, they are compromised in terms of aspect and privacy unless they are transformed into a virtue by the likes of Sergison Bates in its Wandsworth flats (*pictured below*). However, this typology

keeps replicating the horizontal circulation and associated social life, which, in my view, should be happening on the street.

The revelation is in the two schemes you published from abroad, Tengbom in Stockholm ('The Flat Trap') and Metropolitan Workshop in Dublin, which have a simple truth – they both embrace double-aspect flats served by stairs that have windows in them. This reveals natural light as soon as you walk out of your front door, while, reciprocally, the users become overseers and 'residents' to the street that they can immediately see below.

In the meantime, you may even make lifelong friends on your staircase, as is often said to be a virtue of the collegiate staircase/courtyard type in Oxford or Cambridge. While there is always the discussion about lifts with this typology, service charges etc., the counter-argument could be to just do four storeys and no lifts.

This might not only help the obesity crisis but could make better streets with a little more dignity. It is not only our

European cousins who have found that this more holistic pattern works, it is also our cities north of the border and the best parts of London – from dRMM's Wansey Street scheme in South London to our own Fairmule House in East London (AJ 06.10.05).

*Ken Taylor, director, Quay 2c*

## POKY HOMES

I found your feature on Contemporary Apartment Types (AJ 28.02.08) excellent – at least as far as the plans went. It is rare to find such a range of schemes presented with such clarity, and the fact that most of the plans were to scale makes this a fantastically useful resource.

However, you seemed to miss the elephant in the room: some of these flats are insanely small. I'm not surprised that plenty of them are empty: who would want to live in a 40m<sup>2</sup> one-bed or even a 50m<sup>2</sup> two-bed? (*See pages 42–44 for a Technical & Practice feature on mandatory space standards.*)

The tendency to squeeze flats down to their smallest possible size is a product of the English habit of defining a flat by how many bedrooms it has, rather than by its floor area. In Europe everyone, including the public, thinks in terms of floor area, but here, developers have taken advantage of buyers' ignorance of this basic measure of value, and have reduced the sizes of flats to the extremes we see today.

In order for apartment living to maintain popularity in the long term, flats need to be seen as a viable long-term investments. For this, they must be flexible to changing needs, as houses have always been. If a block has been designed with this in mind, the

number of bedrooms a flat has when sold is almost irrelevant, as it may be altered any number of times in its lifetime. The important factors instead become floor area, minimising internal structure, a way of fenestrating that accommodates different layouts, and location of services.

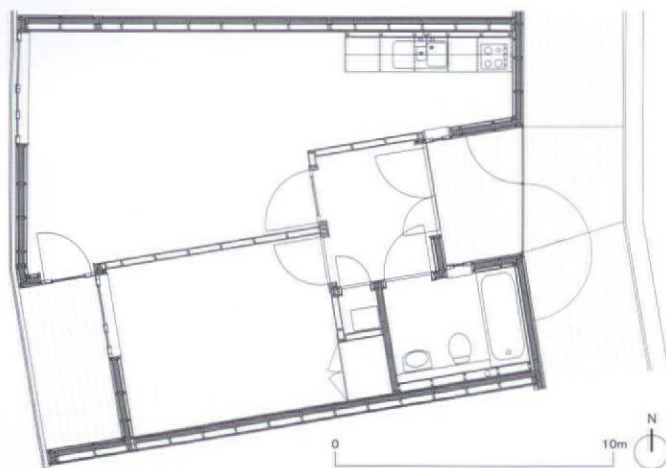
It seems at the moment that developers do not believe buyers are imaginative enough to pay for such an approach. Yet in London, at least, the relatively high price of 'fixer-upper' properties shows that the market does appreciate that value lies in the fundamentals of size and location when applied to traditional housing. Is it really such an leap to apply this long-term approach to apartments?

*Mark Waghorn, Waghorn Gwynne Architects*

## SADLY MISSED

I was sad to hear of Martin Pawley's death (AJ online 10.03.08). I first met Martin in 1972 when he was a visiting professor at Cornell University in the USA, where I was in graduate school. The fifth-year class was working on garbage housing for Chile. As I was going to be in Cologne the following summer, Martin asked if I'd be interested in translating the report to the Chilean Housing Ministry into Spanish. We left it at that.

While I was travelling in the Netherlands, the military coup occurred in Chile. No more project. We stayed in touch over the years, and I invited Martin to lecture at Oklahoma University when I was teaching there. I will miss his wit and criticism (*see page 21 for an obituary by Ian Martin*). *Gerardo Brown-Manrique, by email*



Typical flat, Sergison Bates, Wandsworth



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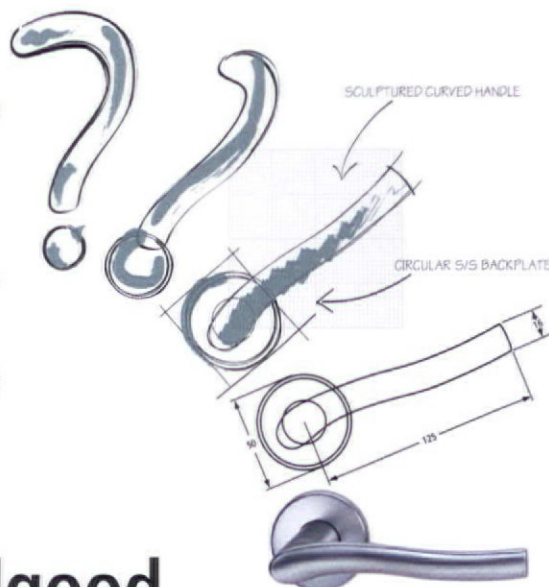
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Deadline for entry is Friday 9th May 2008. For competition details and how to enter, please visit

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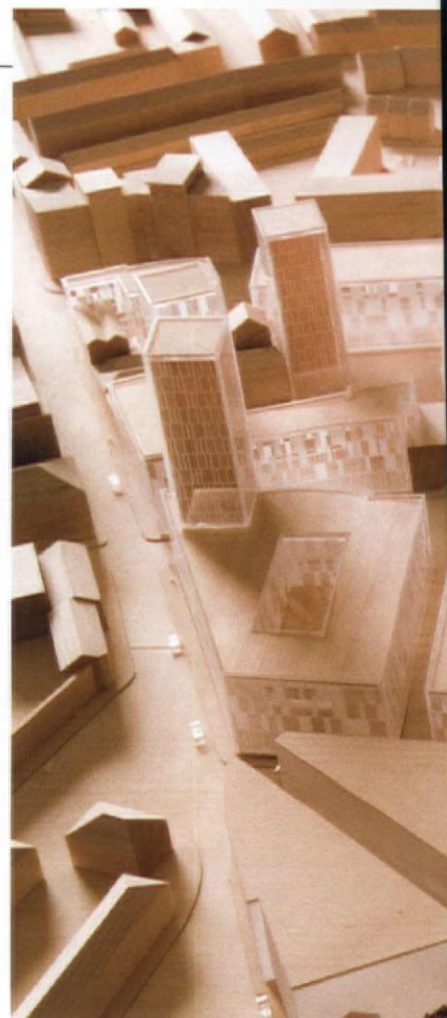
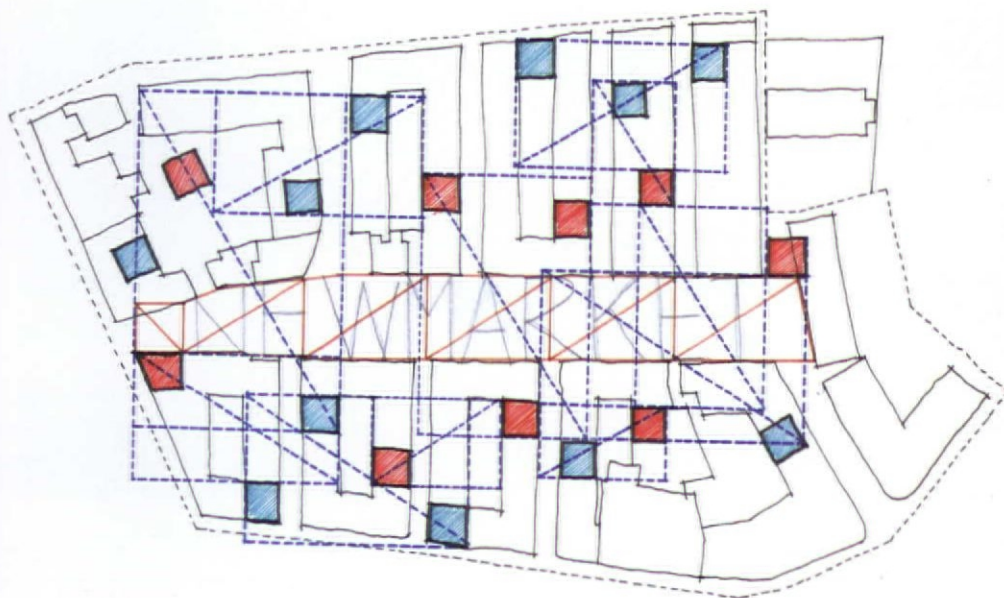
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**Below** Concept drawing showing the golden section foundations of the layout of towers in McCullough Mulvin's urban plan for the

Newmarket area of Dublin  
**Right** Model of the Newmarket proposal  
**Far right** Sections of the mixed-use buildings



# URBANE DESIGNERS

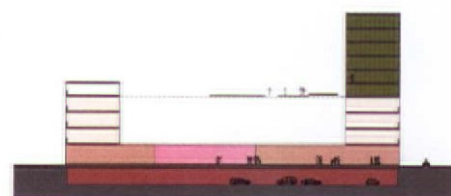
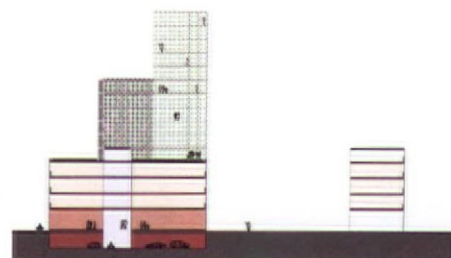
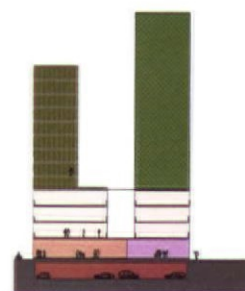
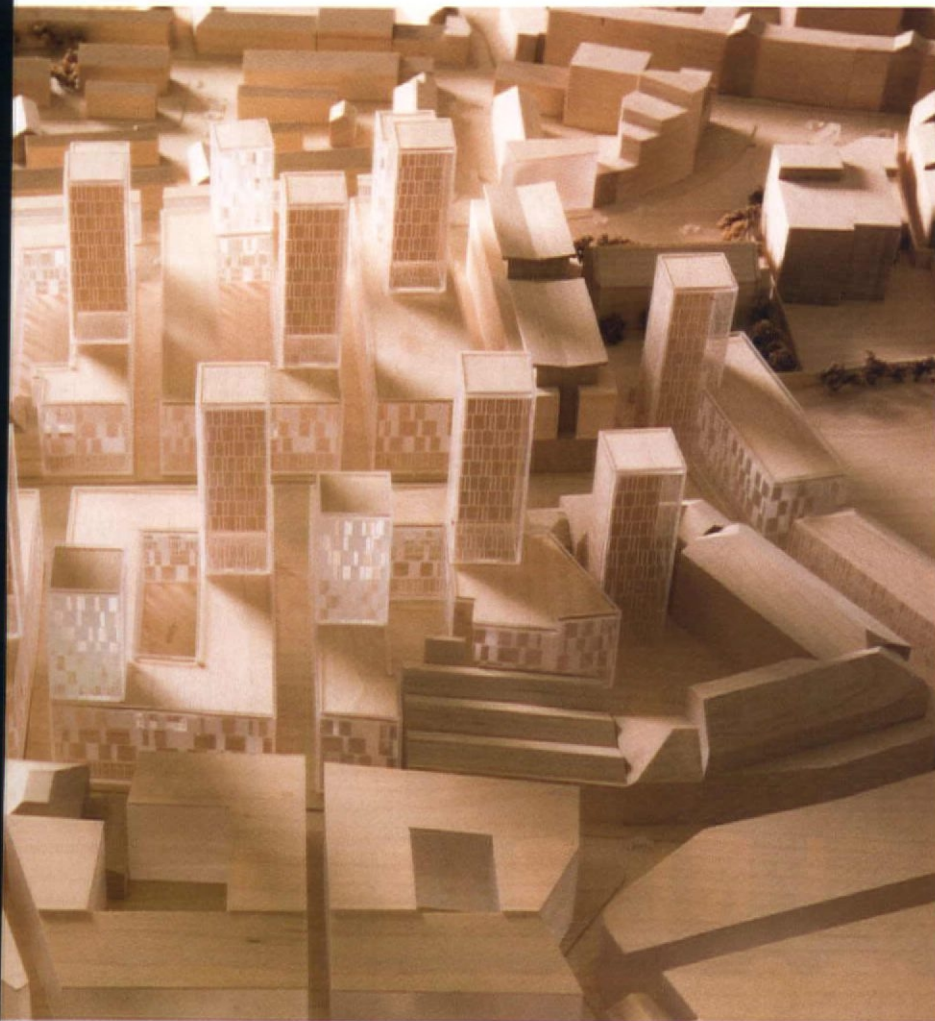
Unlike some of its Irish contemporaries, McCullough Mulvin finds inspiration in the city rather than the countryside. *Kieran Long* looks at three recently completed projects

Niall McCullough and Valerie Mulvin are Irish architects whose work, while never quite as celebrated as that of fellow Dublin practices O'Donnell + Tuomey or de Blacam and Meagher, is a vital part of contemporary Irish architecture. McCullough Mulvin Architects first came to attention as part of Group 91 (which included O'Donnell + Tuomey and Grafton Architects among others), the team that won the competition to redevelop the Temple Bar area of Dublin in 1991. The success of this patchwork of public spaces and cultural buildings (as well as the bars and restaurants for which the area is best known) launched the careers of the architects who now dominate the Irish scene.

McCullough Mulvin could be seen as a counterpoint to O'Donnell + Tuomey. If the latter are the poets in search of an authentic Irish regional Modernism (and often finding answers in the countryside), McCullough Mulvin is the more pragmatic and urbane cousin, more comfortable in the city, and as adept with background as foreground.

Perhaps the practice's comfort in urban scenarios, particularly in Dublin, derives from the partners being real students of the city.





Niall McCullough's book *Dublin: An Urban History* (Anne Street Press, 2007) is a study of the city in its overlapping plans, meticulously illustrated with historic photography and maps. Driving around the Irish capital with him is to witness a historian who can sense the forces acting on every intersection. It is a city-dweller's understanding – what the motivations of the Georgian builders were, how the Georgian grid peters out as it meets the industrial scale of the docks, why peripheral areas like Ballymun, with its undervalued Modernist housing stock, are being regenerated in pretty generic fashion.

The practice has recently designed two masterplans that aim to add another layer to the Georgian city the partners have studied. They appear to use urban strategies more familiar from Northern Europe and Spain – no pastiche here. In the Newmarket Area Framework Plan, McCullough Mulvin proposes a series of perimeter blocks with a family of slim glass- and stone-clad towers. It would provide a distinctive identity for the hilltop site, even if there is little in its DNA to identify it as Irish. The Digital Hub urban plan (2006–) is another very contemporary

approach to the densification of a site near the Guinness brewery in St James' Gate, Dublin. Conceived as office space for digital businesses, the proposal knits finger-like buildings into the existing patchwork of the district, filling backland sites with dense office development, but retaining the Georgian character of the existing street.

The last time I wrote about McCullough Mulvin's work was in 2002, when I went to see its Model Arts and Niland Gallery in Sligo, in the north of the Republic of Ireland. My memory of that visit is the building's desire to choreograph your movements, arranging galleries around a top-lit central space and taking every opportunity to deny and reveal views and to animate the visitor's journey. The container for this activity was a hermetic timber box with a sawtooth, industrial-looking roof that allowed north light down into the internal courtyard.

The practice's work seemed to shift gear shortly after that, most significantly with its victory (with KMD Architecture) in the 1997 competition for an extension to the most important Modernist building in Ireland – ABK Architects' Berkeley Library at Trinity

College in Dublin. There, the external expression became stronger and less geometrically regular. The James Ussher Library, as it is called, has a fort-like facade rising behind the perimeter wall of the college along Nassau Street, picking up on ABK's city wall-like neighbouring building. Inside, the library is pulled apart in the middle of the plan, with a light-filled, full-height atrium separating reading rooms and bookstacks.

Whereas Sligo made a courtyard, a formal central space, Trinity made a fissure, a timber-lined chasm between two large buildings, impressive and expressive of something beyond the typological. It is somewhere between geological faultline and office atrium. The library has been very well received, and is clearly a touchstone for the practice.

I travelled to Ireland to visit three recent McCullough Mulvin projects of a relatively small scale. The first is a new office building at a research centre in Carlow, a couple of hours' drive south-west of Dublin. The second is the reworking of a grand Dublin Victorian house that hosts Engineers Ireland – the institute of engineering in Ireland, and the third is an office building for a law firm in Dublin. >>





## OAK PARK RESEARCH FACILITY CARLOW

McCullough Mulvin has completed a number of laboratories and research buildings, and the Oak Park Research Facility in Carlow is the latest, an office wing for a facility for research into 'sustainable food and energy alternatives'. The facility is housed in a designed landscape filled with ancient-looking trees (which, Niall McCullough says: 'reminds me of something from a Dostoevsky novel'), arranged picturesquely around an 18th-century country house converted into offices and labs. The house is granite, with the severe Ionic capitals as sharp-edged as the day they were finished.

McCullough Mulvin's building is an extension to an undistinguished 1990s block

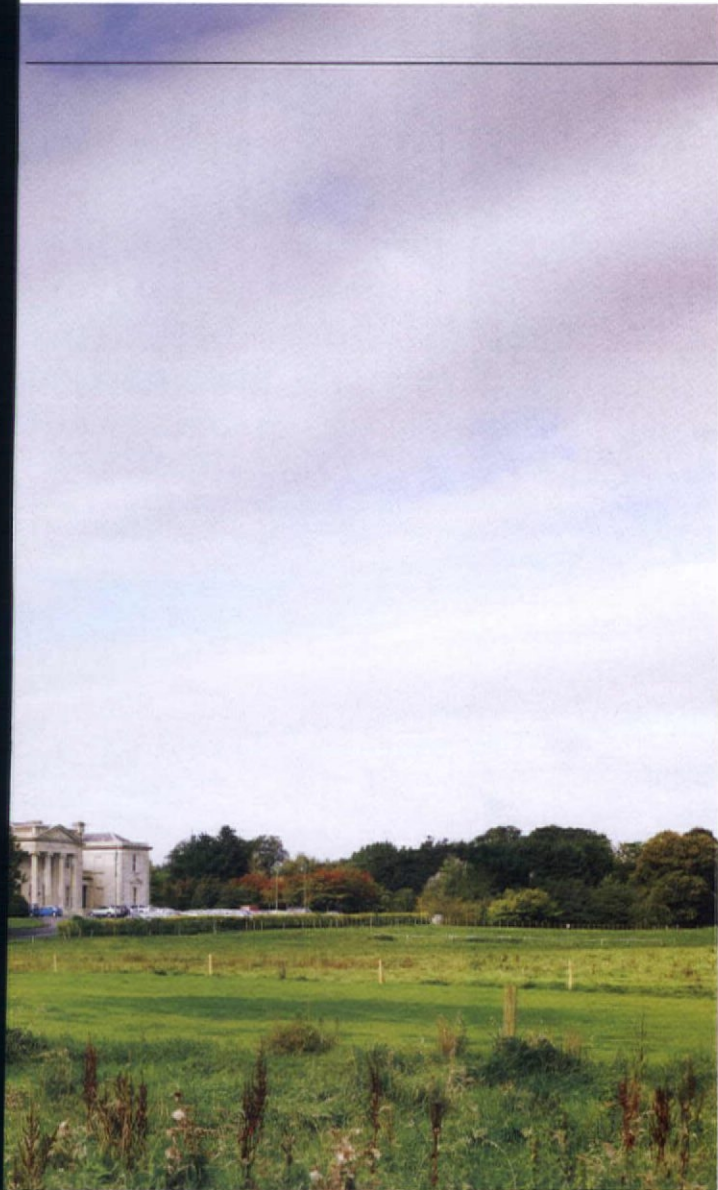
that stands an apologetic 200m from the main house. The small project attempts to make sense of the relationships between the house, the landscape, and the need to develop the site into a campus. McCullough says that the building implies a masterplan – 'I argued that they should take away the line of trees masking the house' – adding that a path and landscaping linking the house and the new buildings would reinforce the garden pavilion atmosphere of the new building.

The building's plan is lozenge-shaped and consists of cellular offices off a central hall, with the rhythm of windows externally expressing this arrangement. The facade is

more intriguing than perhaps it looks in photographs. Using expansion joints as a decorative feature might not sound a particularly thrilling prospect, but the facade has a rough materiality that is somehow suited to the countryside. The building was completed on a tight budget and has used pragmatic means to make something quietly beautiful. It is blockwork and plaster render given a certain sophistication.

Inside, McCullough Mulvin's tactic of pulling apart the plan to create a central, top-lit circulation space is deployed. The atrium is wrapped in timber, which is warm in colour, and the light is pretty indirect. The deep >>





**Left** The new research building sits across the park from an imposing neo-Classical house  
**Below** The glazed corner provides a spectacular office for

the director and a fine view for the ground-floor meeting room  
**Bottom** The exterior treatment is render and expressed expansion joints



ROS KAVANAGH

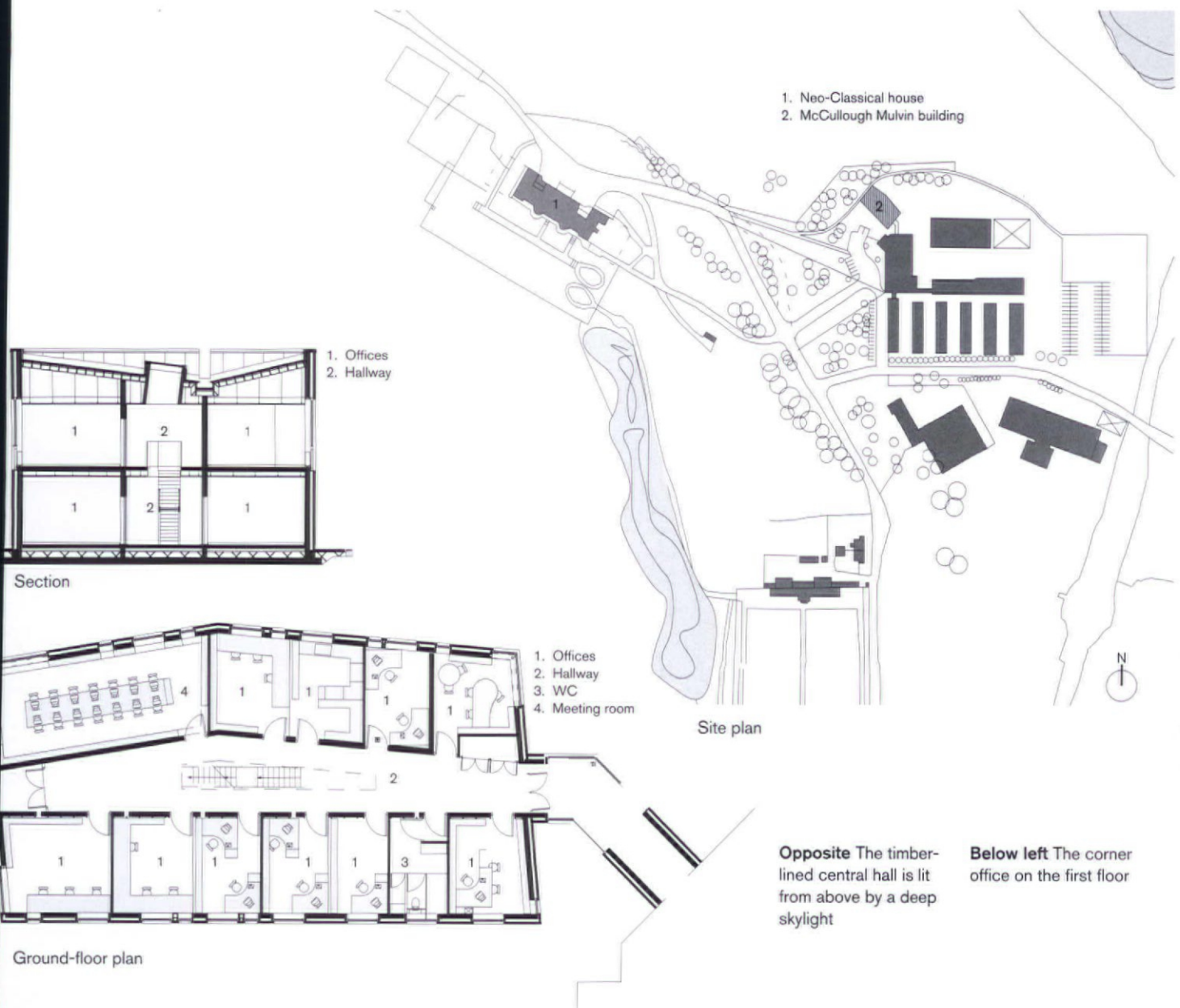


ROS KAVANAGH









**Opposite** The timber-lined central hall is lit from above by a deep skylight

**Below left** The corner office on the first floor

soffit (another characteristic move) means the light washes down the walls softly.

The building's relationship to its site makes sense on the plan, where the building peeps around the corner of a line of trees across the beautiful landscape and towards the country house. However, when you actually visit the site, there is a feeling that the building sits on the landscape rather than being in any way anchored in it – a shadow gap around the base of the exterior makes the building feel impermanent. But this lightness is also a virtue, not taking too seriously the solid and self-regarding Classicism of its surroundings. The two more spectacular rooms are the glazed corner offices – one is reserved for the director's office, and I can absolutely understand why. >>

**Start on site date** June 2005

**Gross internal floor area** 620m<sup>2</sup>

**Form of contract** RIAI

**Cost** 1.4 million euros (£1 million)

**Client** Teagasc Agricultural Research Centre

**Architect** McCullough Mulvin

**Structural engineer** Hayes Higgins

**Quantity surveyor** Macminn O'Reilly Mahon Partnership

**M&E consultant** PH McCarthy

**Contractor** Clancy Construction

**Electrical contractor** Lachen Engineering

**Mechanical contractor** Murphy and Kelly

**Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** No figures were calculated for any of the three projects as this is not currently required under Irish legislation





**Above** This facade of the surgical infill carried out by McCullough Mulvin faces the mews and is relatively anonymous

**Right** But inside, the roofscape of the lecture hall (which will eventually be covered in foliage) provides a sculptural moment

## ENGINEERS IRELAND DUBLIN

The most complex project of this set of three is also the least visible. McCullough Mulvin was commissioned to design a new lecture theatre at the back of headquarters of Engineers Ireland, the professional institute of engineering in Dublin.

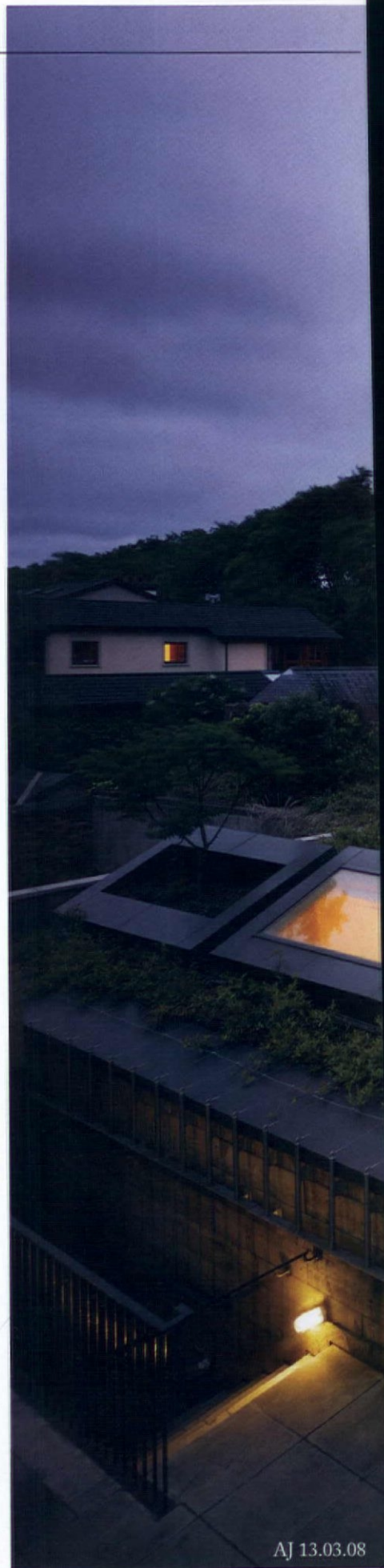
The building is a heritage-protected Victorian house on a grand scale, but inside is a warren of offices, committee rooms, a bar and other facilities. In the back garden, facing a mews, McCullough Mulvin had carried out an earlier extension to accommodate office space, but the institution had grown and needed to expand while remaining in its suburban location.

The principal intervention is the new lecture theatre, which effectively has no facades at all, hemmed in on all sides by existing fabric. The expressive roofplane is a fantastic surprise to find in the back garden of the red-brick house. Valerie Mulvin says: 'The original idea was to use railway sleepers, but we couldn't because of the creosote on them,

so we used sawn spruce.' The timber is thick and untreated, and criss-crossed by a network of tensioned yachting stays. These allow a picturesque evergreen jasmine plant to creep up the wall – it will eventually all but conceal the roof beneath. The roof plane is defined by a section that dips to become the roof of the semi-basement level of the lecture hall, then deflects skywards to meet the two-storey office building behind. The roof's windows are opaque, but allow light into the lecture theatre from above and into the upstairs offices.

The lecture theatre interior is a nice, birch ply-clad chamber with decent sounding acoustics, helped by the acoustic panning and its semi-underground situation. A cream limestone ramp leads down to the entrance door to the theatre.

The gesture of the planted roofplane rising from a terrace is absolutely the best thing about this project, a strange and wild-looking moment behind the composed and fussy Victoriana of the Clyde Road facade. >>

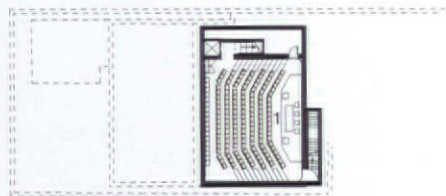








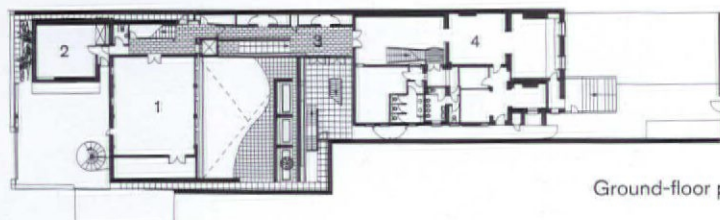
- 1. Lecture room
- 2. Offices
- 3. Hallway
- 4. Existing building



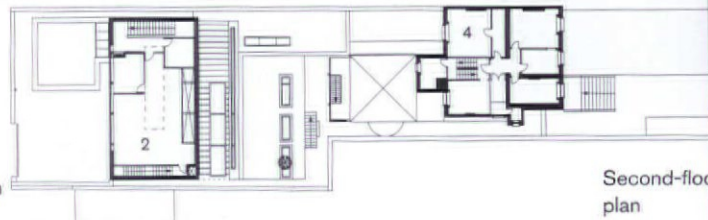
Basement plan



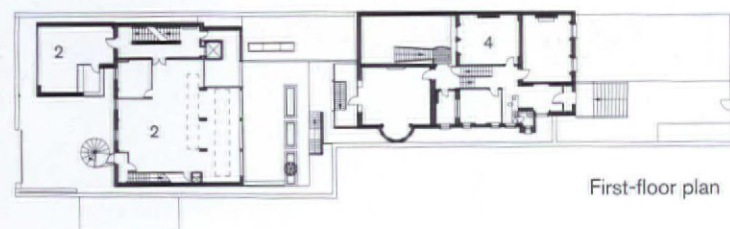
Site plan



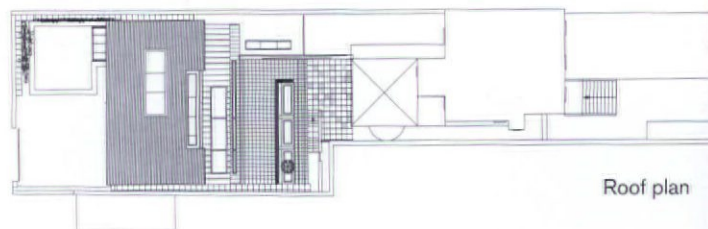
Ground-floor plan



Second-floor plan

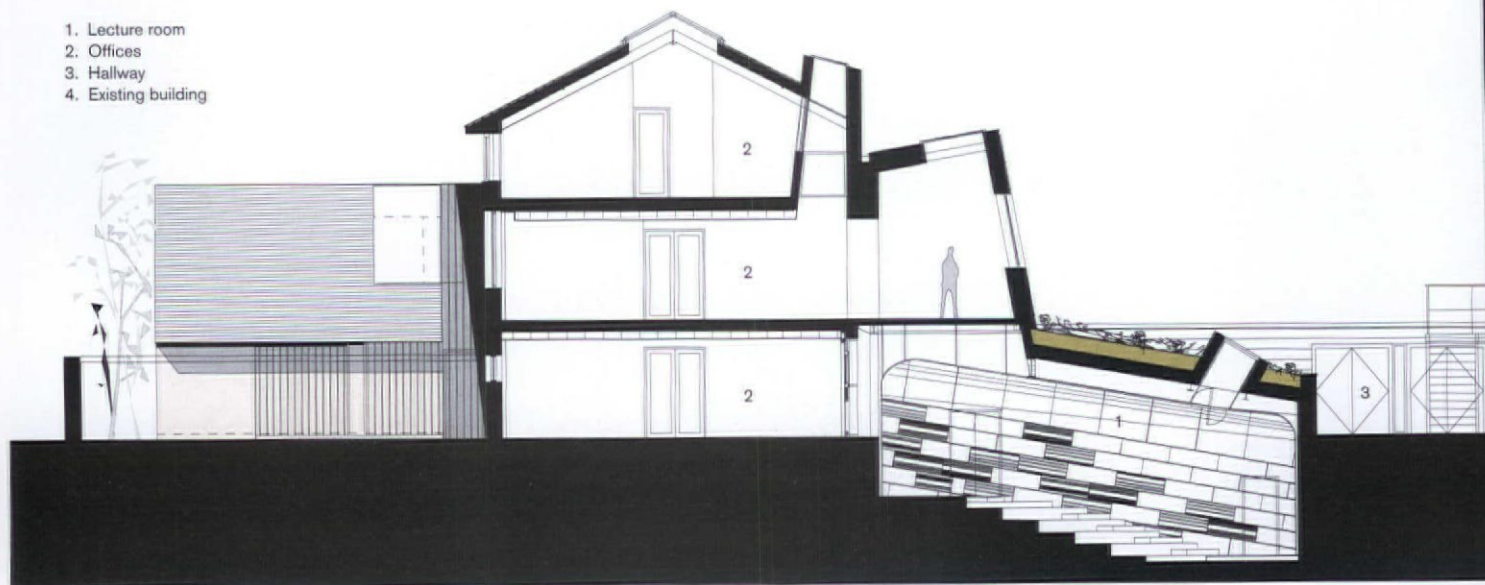


First-floor plan

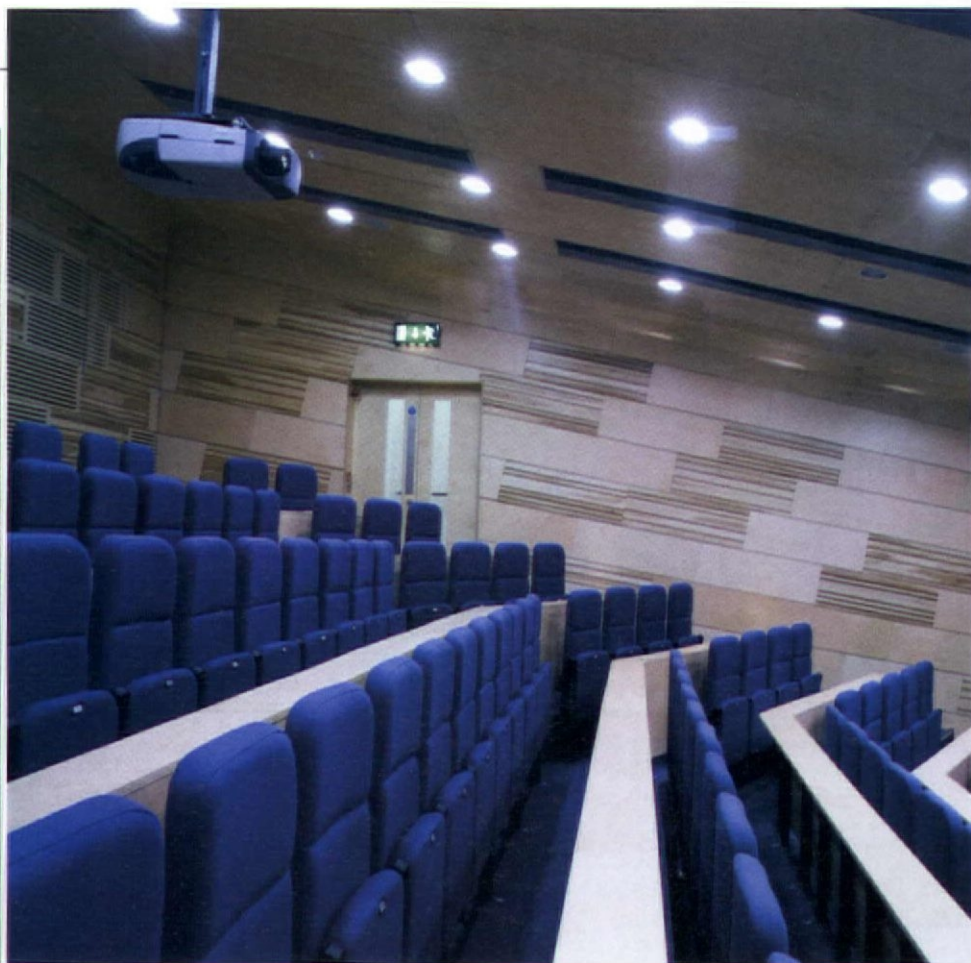


Roof plan

- 1. Lecture room
- 2. Offices
- 3. Hallway
- 4. Existing building







PAUL TIERNEY

**Below left**  
McCullough Mulvin's ingenious section enabled Engineers Ireland to stay in its suburban home rather than depart for an out-of-town location

**Above left** A glimpse from the street of the new auditorium roof  
**Above** The auditorium interior




---

**Start on site date** September 2004  
**Contract duration** 15 months  
**Gross internal floor area** 700m<sup>2</sup>  
**Form of contract** RIAI  
**Cost** 3.5 million euros (£2.8 million)  
**Client** Engineers Ireland  
**Architect** McCullough Mulvin  
**M&E contractor** Mercury Engineering  
**Landscape consultant** Mitchell Associates  
**M&E consultant** Homan O'Brien Associates  
**Quantity surveyor** John D Skelly and Associates  
**Contractor** PJ Hegarty and Co  
**Glazing subcontractors** Gunn Lennon Fabrications/William Cox Ireland

---





**Above** The building's facade is richly coloured, with alternating red mortar, bricks and panels

**Above right** The extension joins to a red-brick terrace previously refurbished by McCullough Mulvin





PAUL TIERNEY

## LINCOLN PLACE DUBLIN

This small office building on Lincoln Place in Dublin is an extension to a lawyer's office. It sits on a tiny triangle of a site at a traffic intersection at the south-east corner of Trinity College in the south of the city.

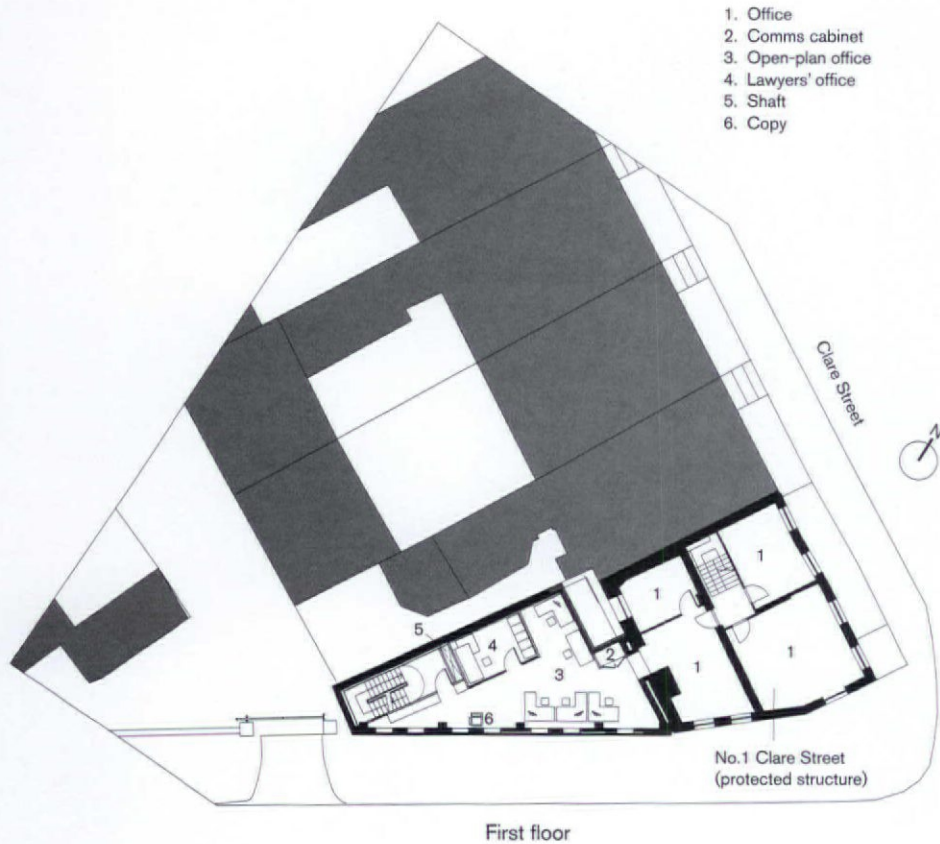
The building's most important aspect is its red-brick facade, with a subtly irregular alternating rhythm of glazing and brick. There are perhaps just a couple of interesting things to say about it.

The first is its brickwork. My experience of Dublin in recent years is of a beautiful, wealthy city with an appalling lack of skills in pointing. Georgian buildings are repointed in such a careless way that it changes their character completely. Just across the road from Lincoln Place is a red-brick building that has been repointed with mortar so white that the whole thing looks like a pink candy

castle. McCullough Mulvin's care in using a red, brick-like mortar is to be applauded and gives this building a quietly crafted quality.

This glaring, perhaps defiant, modesty is telling. The office building is across the road from Benson + Forsyth's National Gallery of Ireland Millennium Wing, whose strange cuts, chamfers and bridges are intended to describe the journey of James Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus in the novel *Ulysses*. This hokey theatricality is thrown into relief by the background architecture of this small office building and its understated class. But there's a touch of richness to it, too, with burgundy panels also on the facade. One reservation – where it meets the existing (rather banal) building there is an unfortunate metal panel with flashing that must conceal a light well – this detail is not an asset to the street. ■





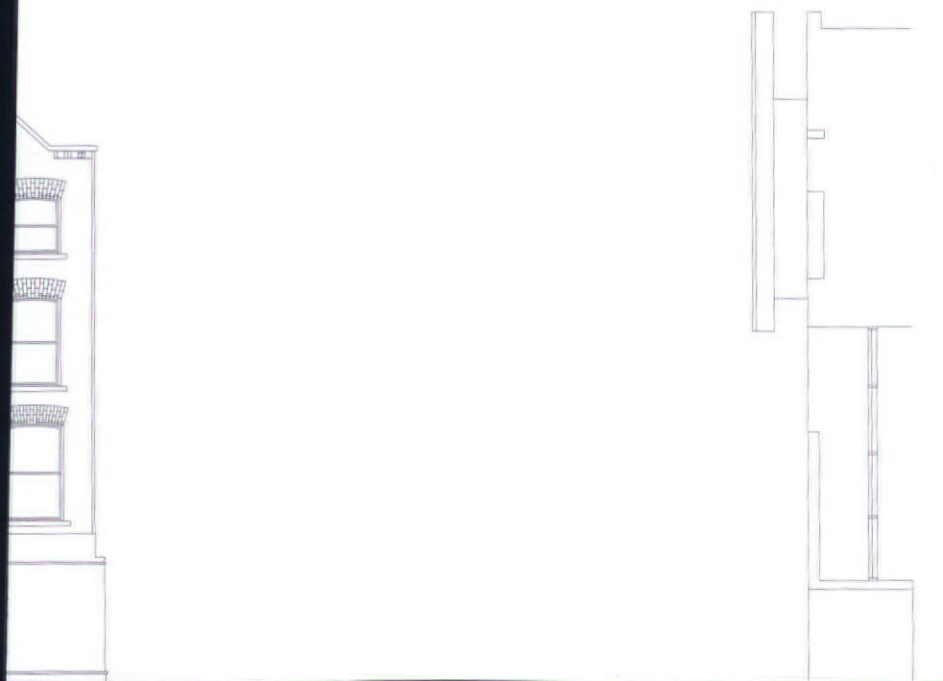




PAUL TIERNEY

**Above left** An office interior

**Above** The stairwell



**Start on site date** May 2007

**Contract duration** eight months

**Gross internal floor area** 280m<sup>2</sup>

**Form of contract** RIAI Blue Form

**Cost** 950,000 euros (£727,000)

**Client** Sheehan + Company

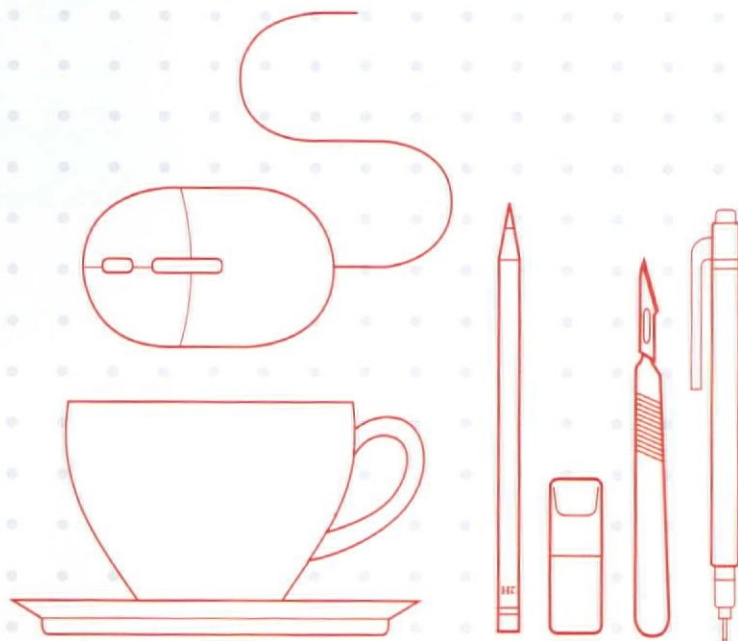
**Architect** McCullough Mulvin

**Structural engineer** Kavanagh Mansfield

**Contractor/M&E engineer** Hassett Construction



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## Rules of Thumb #1

PATRICK BELLEW

DIRECTOR, ARKUK TEU

HOW MUCH OF A FACADE SHOULD BE GLASS?"



*Rules of Thumb is a new monthly column where the AJ asks experts which one fact they wish architects knew.*

I did a straw poll of my colleagues in the UK and US which revealed that the number one thing that they wished architects knew more about was glazed facades. Modelling shows that 20-30 per cent glazing is the optimum for residential buildings, balancing heat gain and loss with natural daylighting. For commercial buildings it is 35-40 per cent, and it must be combined with quality glass and shading. Oh, and another thing: glazing below the 1m tide line on a facade does nothing for daylighting.

Nowadays, tricky fully glazed facades are all the rage, but even a high-performance window loses heat energy 10 times as quickly as a solid wall – which is not a good start for 'green' building. The demand for high transparency often originates from the client. This creates a strong tension and I

spend a lot of my time unpicking the problem.

How do you square 80 per cent glass against all the environmental implications? The answer is: with a lot of add-ons – high-performance glazing, heat recovery, ground source heat pumps etc. If designers adhered to the glazing proportions and included all these components we would easily save half the energy. In Germany they solve the problem with expensive double skins, but we don't like spending that much money on a facade in this country so they are touted as a solution at the beginning and designed out again at a later stage.

Architects are making progress and starting to use sections of panelling with glazing while maintaining a contemporary skin. One good example is Hopkins' School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale (*below*). This progress has emerged from the pressure of the Part L targets, but also from the likes of me!



Yale School of Forestry  
and Environmental Studies,  
by Hopkins Architects.  
Estimated completion  
summer 2008

## Big Fish Little Fish

Jonathan Hendry of Jonathan Hendry Architects spends some quality time with Peter Zumthor

I sit in front of a log fire as the wind and rain lashes on the windows outside. The aroma of burning pine and beeswax candles sends my mind adrift.

I quench my thirst with a glass of red wine and indulge myself in *Atmospheres* by Peter Zumthor, one of the great living architects. I often talk to clients and in the studio about creating buildings which have an atmosphere. This to me is the difference between creating a great piece of architecture or not.

Whenever I visit one of Zumthor's buildings, the memory stays with me for a long time. A feeling of calmness, a certain smell or texture, moving from dark spaces to light spaces.

I feel that the atmosphere of a building is often overlooked. When I visited the Cistercian Abbey Sénanque in Provence I was overwhelmed by creating a building from a single material; the light filtering through a single high level window; the smell of burning incense and the chant of the monks as they entered the chapel. The majority of the congregation had tears in their eyes. My visit was three years ago and I still hold this memory. This is what creates a great piece of timeless architecture.

As a young practice this renews our desire to strive and create timeless buildings with 'Atmosphere'.

Next issue: John Preve of Make Architects



# HOW TO MAKE ROOM FOR HOUSING

Ireland's experience suggests mandatory space standards needn't lead to fewer new homes, says Metropolitan Workshop's *Tom Mitchell*

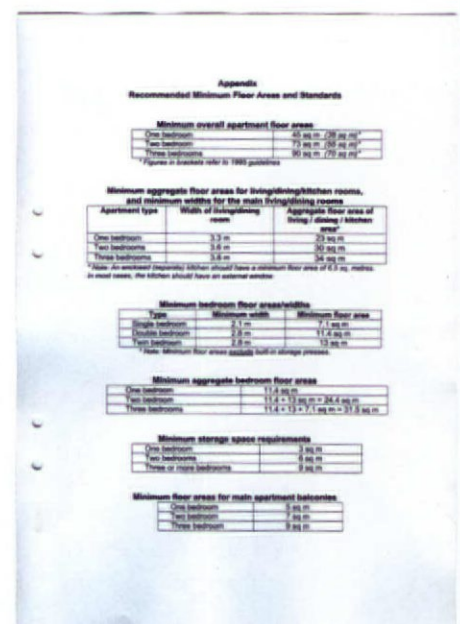
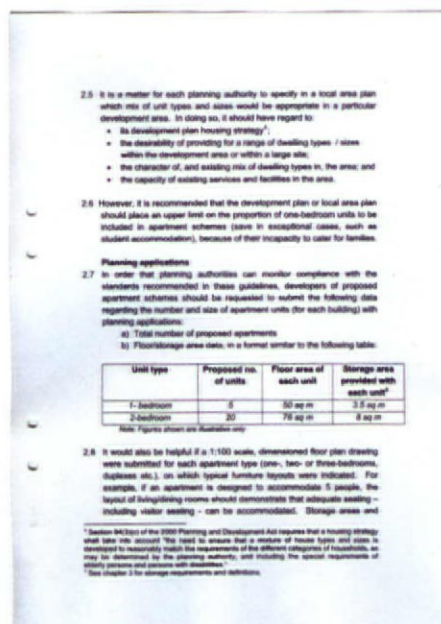
What do we want from a home? In 2005, CABE put this question to 900 people when researching customer expectations for housing. The conclusions of the final report *What Home Buyers Want* showed that while people generally prefer generous room sizes, good private amenity space and plenty of storage, developers are predominantly delivering the opposite. New homes are perceived as being smaller all round, with smaller bedrooms, less garden space, and very little storage area when compared with older properties. This situation is

perhaps exacerbated by estate agents, who define properties solely by numbers of bedrooms, rather than including floor-area details. In many instances, new homes are sold at a premium relative to their older equivalents in the same location, despite often providing significantly less space internally and externally.

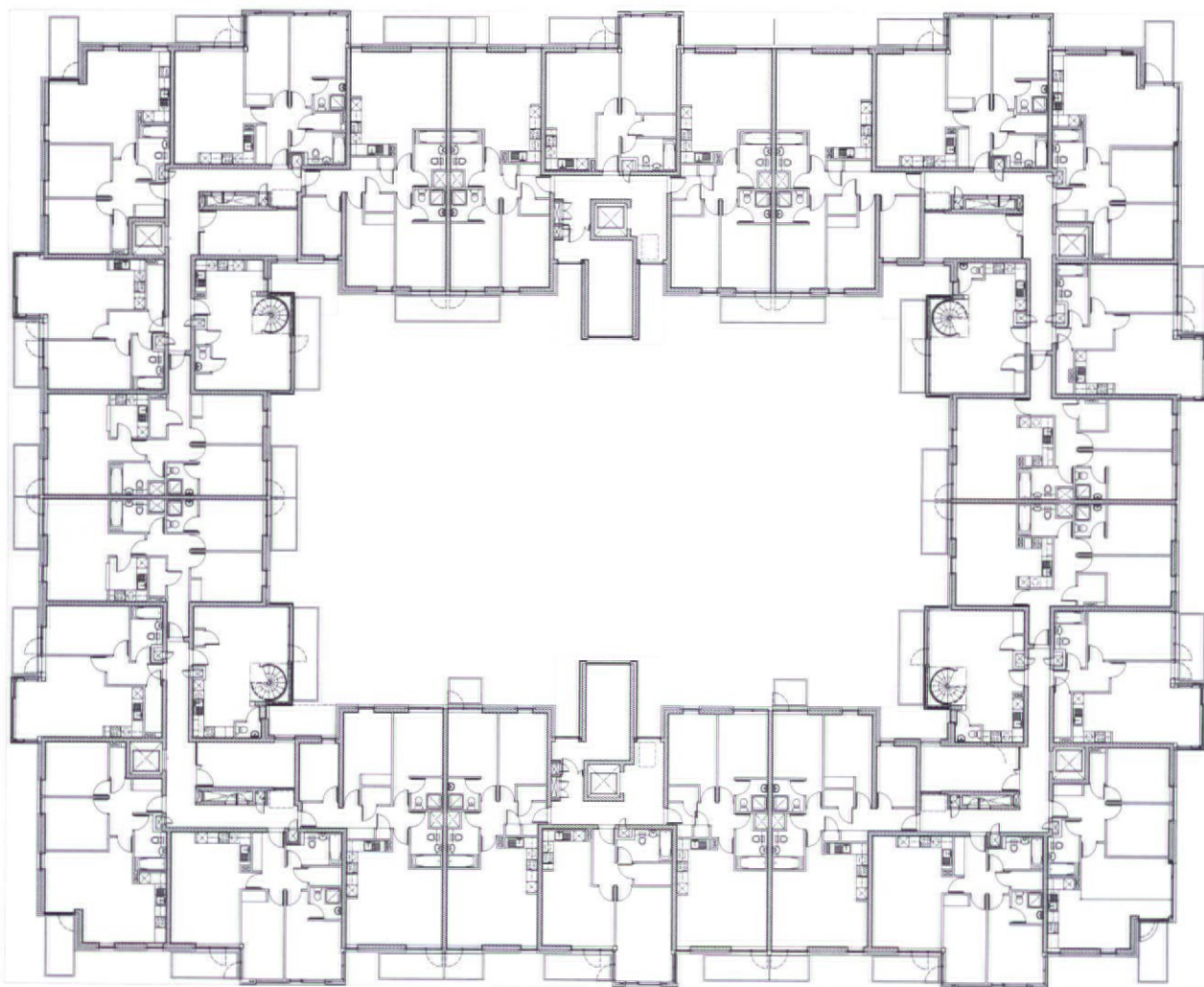
In 2006, the Greater London Authority commissioned the *Housing Space Standards* report, which also indicated that developers were generally over-providing smaller apartments, again conflicting with the

preferences of the consumer and failing to encourage family-living in denser developments.

This situation has emerged as the result of a continued absence of mandatory national space standards – but of course this was not always the case. In 1961, the Parker Morris report *Homes for Today and Tomorrow* led to housing space standards for the design of public housing, set out in *Design Bulletin 6 – Space in the Home* (see table on page 44). These were introduced to set minimum space criteria for new public housing. Although these







**Above** Metropolitan Workshop's Herberton Regeneration Project, Dublin, Block B. Estimated completion date summer 2008

standards only became law for all New Town housing in 1967, they were also widely adopted for private developments as 'good practice' and included in the National House Building Council standards the same year. However, in an effort to reduce the cost of public housing, the government abolished Parker Morris standards in 1980, leading to a subsequent steady decline in space provision in private developments.

There are still no overarching national space standards for housing at all – instead it is left to individual local authorities to decide whether or not to include them in their Unitary Development Plans or Local

Development Frameworks. In London, 24 out of the 32 boroughs have space standards in their planning guidance documents, but they vary between boroughs (*see table on page 44*). Beyond London, standards are hard to pin down. Calls to planning departments in

### **The provision of smaller apartments goes against consumer wishes**

Liverpool, Sheffield and West Sussex were all met with the response that local authorities abided by national standards.

In an effort to address the space issue for government-sponsored projects, English

Partnerships revised its *Quality Standards* publication to include minimum space standards. These figures roughly equate to Parker Morris standards plus 10 per cent, although any suggestion that these could be made mandatory for all developments were met with robust defences from the UK construction industry. Whenever the notion of a framework of mandatory standards is mooted, developers argue that the burden would reduce housing output, profits, and affordability. However, evidence from the Republic of Ireland suggests that this would not necessarily be the case.

In Ireland, housing output has increased from 41,000 in 1998 >>



**Right Table**  
showing existing  
space standard  
guidelines in  
Britain, local  
authority standards  
in London, and  
those newly  
adopted in Ireland

STANDARD	UNIT AREA (m <sup>2</sup> )				DUAL ASPECT REQUIREMENT
	2 person 1 bedroom	3 person 2 bedroom	4 person 2 bedroom	5 person 3 bedroom	
Parker Morris	44.6	56.7	69.7	79.0	No
Tower Hamlets	44.5	57	70	79	No
Redbridge	43	53	70	85	No
Wandsworth	45	57	60	79	No
Barnet Affordable Housing	45	57	67	75	Part
English Partnerships 2007 (Govt Sponsored Schemes Only)	51	66	77	93	Part
Irish DoE 1995 (National from 1999)	38	55	-	70	Part
Irish DoE 2007 (National)	45	-	73	90	Yes
Dublin City Council 2007 (Dublin Only)	55	-	80	100	Yes

to 94,000 in 2006, during which time development standards have increased considerably. Today, as well as minimum room and apartment sizes, the Irish Department of the Environment (DoE) and Dublin City Council (DCC) require new developments to observe minimum room dimensions and rules on orientation. Single-aspect dwellings must be avoided where possible and no northern or eastern single-aspect dwellings are allowed, thereby requiring new apartments to be dual aspect and eliminating corridor developments at a stroke. Since the guidelines are being rigorously enforced by An Bord Pleanála (the Irish planning authority), both the public and the private sector have had to build compliant schemes, raising the standard for all.

Designing apartment schemes to satisfy the DoE and DCC requirements on orientation alone has meant that all dwellings must be accessed from single cores.

This has the benefit of creating more intimate and secure landings, and increasing activity on the street rather than in corridors. In our experience, this constraint has led to some intriguing solutions, particularly for corner situations, which still retain a good degree of efficiency. An example of this is illustrated in part of our design for the Herberton Regeneration Project (*see page 43*), a courtyard residential scheme in Dublin (2004). Here, six dwellings are accessed from a single core, laid out so that no entrances are beyond 7.5m from the escape stair, without recourse to a corridor. Five of these units are dual aspect, with the remaining area occupied by a single-aspect duplex apartment.

In another case, adhering to the masterplan footprint for a new community in Belmayne, Dublin, the accommodation brief and the orientation requirements led to two dual-aspect apartments off single cores. This, together

with Dublin City Council's high space standards for private open space, has resulted in long linear balconies which create a freer outer wall not constrained by conventional fenestration – a design truly emerging as a response to the higher standards.

Since joining the EU in 1973, Ireland has changed from a primarily agricultural economy to a modern economy with a thriving construction industry. It will be interesting to see how this construction industry responds to the demands of increasing design standards and the climate of restricted credit and falling property values. In a falling market, the best chance of a sale often comes from an increase in quality. Perhaps the UK construction industry could take note.

Today, new housing in the UK provides some of the poorest internal space standards in Europe. Reports such as the Policy Exchange's *Bigger Better Faster More* document from 1995

indicate that poor space provision may also have wider consequences for social cohesion; children without sufficient indoor space resort to 'hanging around' in communal areas.

Perhaps it is time for the UK to adopt a single set of nationwide standards in one document, which could combine other guidance such as Building for Life, Secured by Design and Lifetime Homes. In the interim, new and existing

### Irish apartments are dual aspect, eliminating corridor developments

housing could be rated for space, in the same way that it is for sustainability – then home-buyers could make comparisons at a glance. As public-sector housing-delivery continues to diminish in favour of the private-sector supply, the urgency for a set of national standards has never been greater. ■

Tom Mitchell is an associate at Metropolitan Workshop



**FINALISTS  
ANNOUNCED**



# **FUTURE LEADERS: THE FINALISTS**

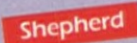
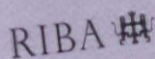
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In this section Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion //  
London Open City // Ulster architecture //  
The Systems Group // Back Issues // Diary

# The Critics

CHANEL MOBILE ART PAVILION

## *'A handbag?'*

*The Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion by Zaha Hadid was unveiled in Hong Kong on 27 February. Set to arrive in London in 2009, Joshua Bolchover tells us what to expect*

Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion, Hong Kong. Until April 2008

It was the Peak building competition in Hong Kong that first brought Zaha Hadid fame and notoriety for her design of gravity-defying interwoven spaces. Twenty years later, the city is still enamoured with Hadid's work. In December of last year, it was announced that

Hadid had won the competition for Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Innovation Tower. And on 27 February, Hadid's Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion was unveiled, like a curled-up cat on a car-park roof, nestled between the sea and Foster's HSBC building.

Chanel, under the auspices of Karl Lagerfeld, had the idea to send a pavilion on a worldwide tour of Hong Kong, Tokyo, Paris, New York, Moscow and London, inviting a global show of renowned artists to react and respond to its classic quilted handbag. >>





## EXHIBITION

# Life in the Open City

*Jaffer Kolb takes a whirlwind tour of Design for London's exhibition now showing at Somerset House*

London Open City. Until 27 April, Somerset House, London WC2

My visit to the London Open City exhibition was filtered through the rather phenomenal lens of the show's curator, ex-AJ editor Isabel Allen, communications director at Design for London (DfL). I was swept through the show's three rooms in Somerset House at lightning speed, shown how each component and element of the exhibition worked, alongside a stream of details about the designers and ideas involved. Levers were pulled, books skimmed, things poked. I was breathless by the end and emerged dazed, like I had just been run through a dryer. Allen, who delivered me safely outside, vanished before I could thank her.

The exhibition is very much a public relations campaign for DfL, the Mayor's agency dedicated to supporting the delivery of good design in the city. And it's a campaign well-timed, what with elections around the corner and DfL coming under increased

criticism over its role, most recently from Liberal Democrat mayoral candidate Brian Paddick. To this end, the show is full of projects branded by DfL under the Open City banner, a just-launched public realm strategy outlined in a document by Richard Rogers and Peter Bishop (see Comment, AJ 06.03.08) which argues for the interconnection of public spaces throughout London.

The content is thin, and emerges more from a kind of self-justifying rhetoric than from any real substantive information, but like a show by Apple, what it lacks in depth it makes up for in usability and design.

The first room contains four wooden booths, made from simple untreated plywood. The first contains a large replica of a View-Master slide wheel and features a lever to cycle through transparencies of several maps. The next hut contains a series of photographs

by artist Nils Norman; the third a video installation curated by planning consultancy General Public Agency; and the fourth an illustration by Icelandic artist Soggi Eggertsson showing life around the river with increased pedestrian connections.

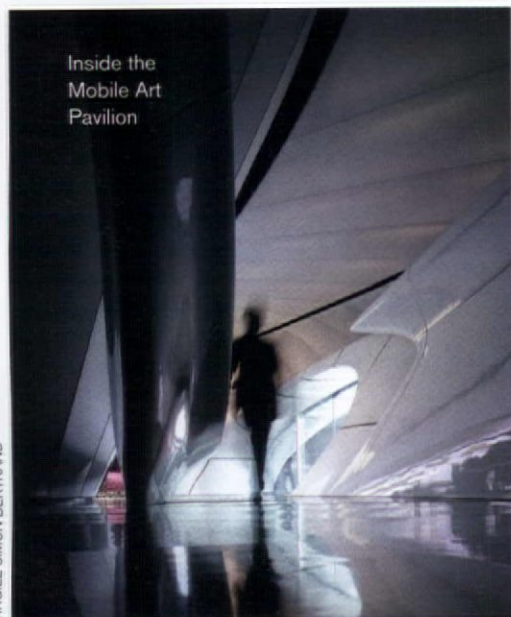
by artist Nils Norman

by artist Nils Norman; the third a video installation curated by planning consultancy General Public Agency; and the fourth an illustration by Icelandic artist Soggi Eggertsson showing life around the river with increased pedestrian connections.

The second room is the most disappointing, but like any middle child, it's easily ignored. It focuses on the Mayor's 100 Public Spaces programme, highlighting four case studies through films projected on to circular tables, and mini-catalogues. The projects are Victoria

organised through a series of 'pebbles' that enclose and wrap specific art zones, acting as both exhibition devices and air-handling units. Each one is carved and moulded to emphasise the dynamic flow of the spiral. Sometimes the volumes are pinched and extended to form tables or benches. It should feel supple and cave-like, as if constructed from play dough, yet the surfaces are hard, plastic and white.

The whole 29 x 45m building, a total of 700m<sup>2</sup>, has been constructed as a direct output from the computer. The building unashamedly displays its origins. The divisions between panels are the exact wireframe lines of the 3D model. The panel shape and number has been allocated through



Inside the  
Mobile Art  
Pavilion

## Zaha Hadid, continued from page 47

French curator Fabrice Bousteau selected the artists, which include photographer and installation artist Sophie Calle, rope fetishist Nobuyoshi Araki, and pig tattooist Wim Delvoye. Lagerfeld personally chose Hadid to design the pavilion. She is, he says, the 'first architect to part with the all-dominating post-Bauhaus aesthetic'.

The pavilion's concept is all about movement and the fluidity of space. The project architects, Thomas Vietzke and Jens Borstelmann, define it as a deformed torus, which spirals from an exterior terrace through a darkened tube, culminating in a central light courtyard. The loop and spatial experience is





**Left** One of the booths, with illustration by Siggi Eggertsson

**This image** The third room, featuring photos of Epping Forest

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLES GLOVER

Embankment by MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard; Bankside Urban Forest by Witherford Watson Mann; Barking Town Centre by muf; and Gross.Max's Potters Fields. The public spaces themselves are quite successful and come closest to demonstrating DfL's value in orchestrating projects.

This is particularly evident in the third room, which focuses on the East London Green Grid (AJ 13.12.08). Wallpapered with pictures of Epping Forest by photographer Belinda Enthoven, the room strikes a verdant

atmosphere. In the centre stands a mirror-clad timber box holding hundreds of postcards of Green Grid projects (pictured

*The exhibition's second room is the most disappointing, but like any middle child, it's easily ignored*

above), with information printed on the back. The postcards show the post industrial-cum-pastoral side of London anyone familiar with the East End will know well. On the floor is a

stack of posters with the Green Grid map and a list of projects. A highlight of DfL's project, the maps are beautiful and legible.

In terms of the content shown, I can't quite think of how the exhibition could have been done better. But I left without having really learned anything, nor were any of my perceptions changed. It was neither insipid nor illuminating, but a bit low-calorie.

**Resume:** This show is high on hype, if low on bite, just like the DfL's Open City document

computer scripting to limit the size to 2.25m, to fit in a shipping container and ensure that the panels stack efficiently. Nonetheless, there are over 700 pieces weighing over 180 tonnes and requiring 50 containers.

The panels themselves are made through directly exporting the digital model to a CNC contractor to construct moulds for the fibre-reinforced plastic shell. These are then treated with a highly reflective pearlescent paint that distorts the cityscape along its curvilinear surface.

For me, the evidencing of the wireframe contradicts the desire for smoothness and emphasises the pavilion as a full-scale model. It's a strange experience: like walking in a

full-size rendering or experiencing a non-virtual virtual reality. This is even more confusing when the experience itself is accompanied by an audio guide in the form of a Soundwalk, narrated by a husky Jeanne Moreau making pseudo-philosophical comments such as 'life is defined by forms'.

It is at the juncture between experiencing the space and experiencing the art that, for me, is the least successful part of the event. The space, somehow, is content enough already. To compensate in some places, the architecture tries too hard to make the art sit within a specified context, cossetting the work like an over-helpful friend.

All-in-all though, it's a fantastic and ambitious project for Chanel, Lagerfeld,

Hadid and the consortium of assembled talent. And it compacts into a neatly packaged event-product. Though what it has to do with a quilted handbag, I've no idea. ■

**Resume:** Hadid's 'mobile' 700-piece handbag weighs 180 tonnes and packs neatly into just 50 shipping containers

#### Coming soon: Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion

Hong Kong	February-April 2008
Tokyo	May-July 2008
New York	September 2008
London	June 2009
Moscow	September 2009
Paris	January 2010





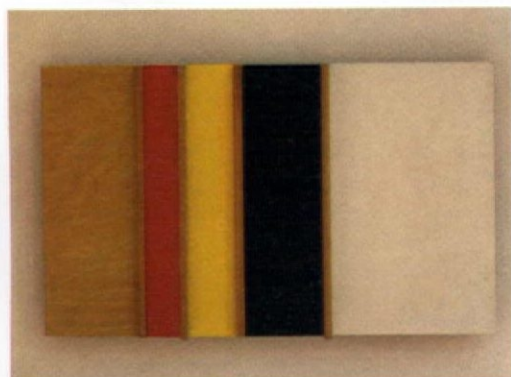
## Critic's Choice

This show may finally help the Systems Group capture the heart of the UK, says **Andrew Mead**

*A Rational Aesthetic* (Southampton City Art Gallery until 30 March) is an eye-opening show. It presents the work of a dozen or so artists who for a time in the 1970s called themselves the Systems Group. Their art is of a kind that has never gone down well in the UK. Avoiding any allusion to the figure or landscape, and harking back to Russian Constructivism of the 1920s, it's resolutely abstract – a matter of geometry, order, proportion and the systematic elaboration of a generating idea. If that sounds rather austere, the 60 works on display in Southampton prove otherwise. Almost all are worth a second look, and some are exceptional.

Gillian Wise's *Opening Movement* and *Winged Net* create subtle spatial effects while remaining in two dimensions, but other pieces take the logical next step and move into three dimensions, becoming shallow reliefs. 'I want to make combinations of simple elementary qualities: colours, shapes, the distances between things, the way a surface reflects light,' says John Ernest, who combines wood, formica, stainless steel and similar mundane materials (pictured below).

Meanwhile, Jean Spencer and David Saunders (in his *Two Part Eight Colour Painting* of 1992) explore colour relationships in a refined but surprising way. The implications for architecture hardly need spelling out. In these works, the whole and the part are inseparable: there is a governing logic to them, their forms are not wilful. These aren't just period pieces, their language is alive. There's a lot to be said for being rational.



## BOOK

*Its intent is admirable, but  
Toward an Architecture:  
Ulster misses the mark,  
says Kieran Long*

*Toward an Architecture: Ulster.* By Alan Jones and David Brett. Black Square Books, hardcover, 64pp, 27 full colour plates, £18.50

The title of this book plays an architect's game with punctuation. What does *Toward an Architecture: Ulster* really mean? It riffs on Le Corbusier, but this essay-length text is nothing like a Northern Irish version of *Vers Une Architecture*. The colon seems to stand coyly for the word 'of', but avoids the definitive gesture of a complete sentence. The all-lower case typeface used on the cover is self-consciously modest, in order that it might not look like some kind of government report, I suppose.

Reading the book through, which will take no more than an hour and a half, the ambiguity leads to far too many unanswered questions. Who is this book addressed at? What is its intended result?

Its remit is bravely set out and admirable. Alan Jones and David Brett, lecturing colleagues from Queen's University Belfast, say in their introduction that the book is intended to look at what it means 'to create an architecture with a particular region in mind; the region in this instance being Ulster.' In doing so, they have made the closest thing to a regional manifesto that we have seen on these islands in recent memory, beginning with a description of climatic and geological conditions, through a portrayal of the post-Reformation creative imagination and ending with the well-aimed skewering of some crimes perpetrated on Ulster's cities and the Northern Irish landscape.

The early pages of the book are the most engaging, looking to the stuff the ground is made from and the weather as fundamental generators of architectural form. Jones and Brett even suggest that Ulster's desire to build has been made in concert with nature. They write at one point: 'The succession of huge quarries along the Antrim coast (now overgrown and the habitation of peregrines) supplied Clydeside not only with mortar but with limestone for its blast furnaces.' Here is a picture painted by phenomenological nostalgia as much as a spirit of enquiry.



toward an architecture : ulster

alan jones and

david brett

black square books

## toward an architecture : ulster

building our own authenticity

an enquiry

by alan jones

and david brett

It is in the middle of the essay that things get confusing. The centre of the book denies the idea of an identifiably Catholic or Protestant architecture, but also seems to suggest that there are two types of imagination that correspond to these two persuasions. It is an adaptation of Brett's argument – made at greater length and more clearly in *The Plain Style: Protestant Theology in the History of Design* (Lutterworth, 2005) – about the non-pictorial nature of the post-Reformation imagination.

Where the book is great, though, is in its attempt to pour some foundations for a discourse about architecture in a region not known for such discussion. Brett and Jones are at their best when criticising the misunderstanding of the landscape that leads to housing which is technologically and aesthetically better suited to markets and climates in the south of England. Also, in one of the most affecting parts of the essay, the neutrality of one Belfast housing scheme (the kind of brick-and-render, mixed-use scheme visible all over the British Isles and often called 'regeneration') is put under the microscope.

The developer of Belfast's Whitehall Square has tried to make a neutral architecture to counter the 'frankly sectarian perception of

the... estates grouped around it,' the writers argue. Then, the crux: 'At the time of writing, the ground floor retail spaces have not been let, as if the developers were waiting for better times and "better" tenants; locals have taken to draping this back side and its lampposts with Orange flags and bunting.' The universal language of regeneration is insufficient and unable to subsume the fractures in Belfast's civic life.

Brett, who is Reader Emeritus of the University of Ulster (and co-director of this

*The notion of a national heritage is so politically loaded that even architectural historians can be targets*

book's publishing house), reports not-so-veiled threats made on his person after pieces of writing he has undertaken before. The notion of a national heritage for this troubled country is so politically loaded that even architectural historians can be targets. Jones, director of Alan Jones Architects, who's worked for Hopkins and David Morley in London, is a sincere critic and an architect who builds what he preaches – his house in Randalstown is testament to his attempt to make a 'placed' architecture.

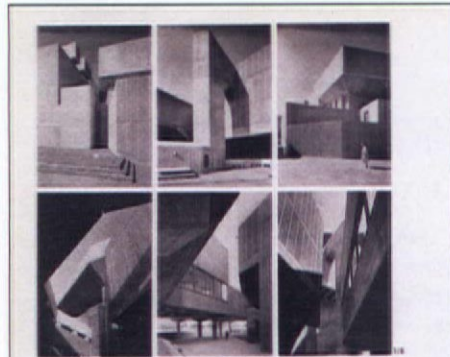
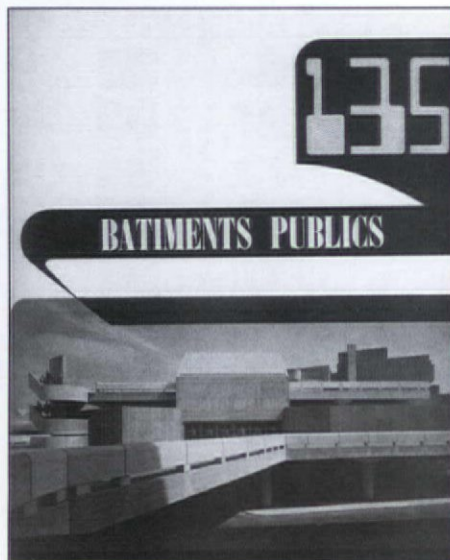
But to have entitled this an 'enquiry' rather than framing it as a proposal, critique or report seems just a little tentative. In the end, this story is abstract, shuttling between judicious criticism of the good, bad and ugly of Northern Ireland, interspersed with disclaimers that the country is merely facing the same questions as other regions across Europe.

Brett and Jones suggest that this is a working paper towards a regional manifesto – maybe they should have just written one.

**Resume:** Not acerbic enough to give you an Ulster, *Towards an Architecture* isn't the manifesto it should be







THE SOUTH BANK ARTS CENTRE



## Back Issues As the Hayward Gallery turns 40, **Steve Parnell** digs up its original 'universally poor' reviews

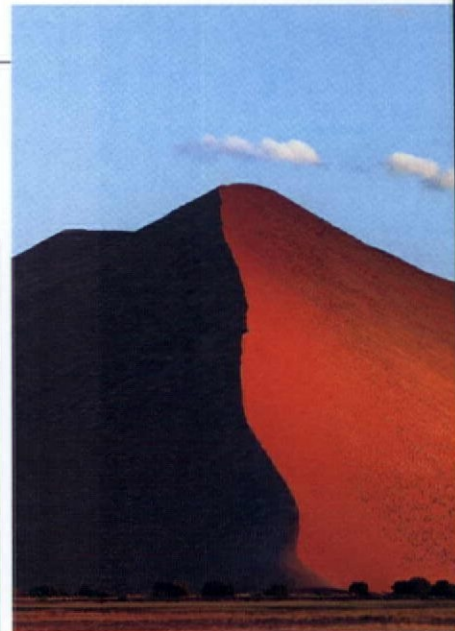
Forty years ago, the Hayward Gallery opened and completed the trilogy that is the Southbank Centre. The reception was almost universally poor. The *Guardian* of 17 July 1968 stated that 'architecturally it is an expression neither of use nor site, that it is made of a material that was, years ago, proved odious in our climate.' The *AJ* (10.07.68) reported that 'it has that secretive and repelling character that one associates with top security research establishments' – and the review goes downhill from there.

In order to look good, Brutalism needs deeply contrasting, sun-drenched, hard-shadowed, well-composed, preferably black-and-white photography that depicts the concrete's precise textural image of the formwork negative. The Hayward Gallery is a particularly striking example of this. It has few windows and is designed to control the internal light artificially to mimic an overcast sky. In other words, it demands sunshine on the outside and clouds on the inside.

The *AJ*'s photographs are as flat as the review, and the follow-up piece on 3 February 1971 reiterates that not only did the Hayward look terrible, but it didn't work either. These photographs are even less complimentary, featuring litter, graffiti, rain-soaked concrete and everyday people doing everyday things.

Infinitely more stylish, however, is the coverage of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* in issue 135 (which, incidentally, also featured the ill-fated Gateshead and Cumbernauld shopping centres). The comment is short and descriptive, but the photographs appear emphatic, dramatic and cinematic (*pictured left*). The architecture becomes the backdrop to an episode of *The Avengers*, where well-tailored silhouettes with sunglasses and attaché briefcases drag their long shadows reluctantly across the warm summer plaza to an evening rendezvous.

The English may have invented the 'ism', but we should look to the French for the *béton brut*.



## 5 THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

### 1 *Other Modernisms*

Adam Caruso will trace the influences of Caruso St John in this lecture titled 'Ancestors, Continuities and Contemporary Practice'.

13 March at 6.30pm, at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1

### 2 *Element*

Peruse Arup star engineer Cecil Balmond's inspirational book *Element*, a combination of photography, abstract sketches, patterns and landscapes (*pictured above*).

Prestel Publishing, hardcover, 288pp with 374 illustrations, £15.99

### 3 *Art Sheffield 08: Yes, No & Other Options*

Catch the city-wide contemporary art events in Sheffield, featuring the work of local and international artists at participating venues throughout the city.

Until 30 March at various venues in Sheffield. [www.artsheffield.org](http://www.artsheffield.org)

### 4 *Nigel Hall*

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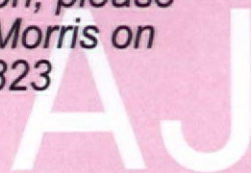
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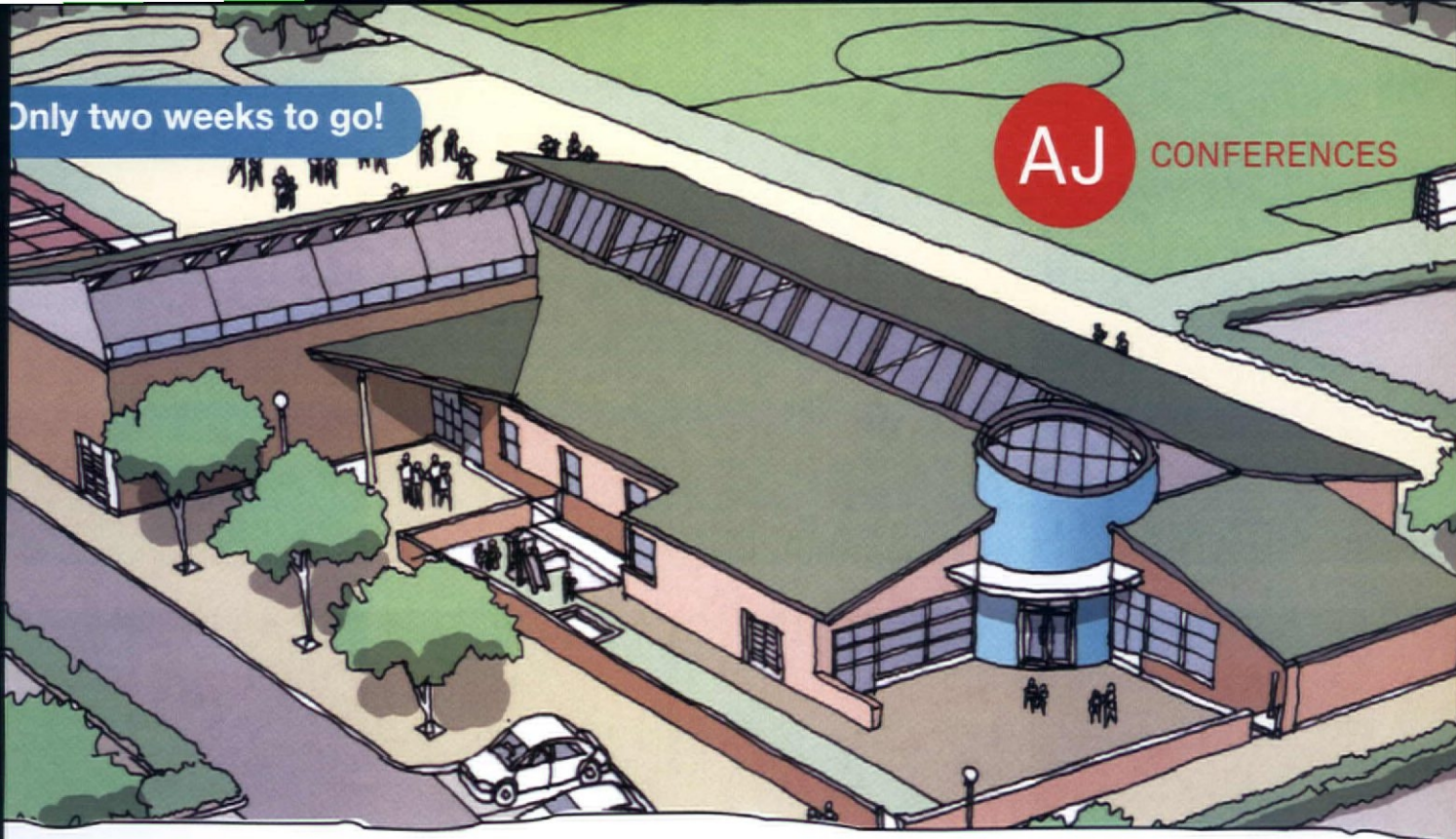
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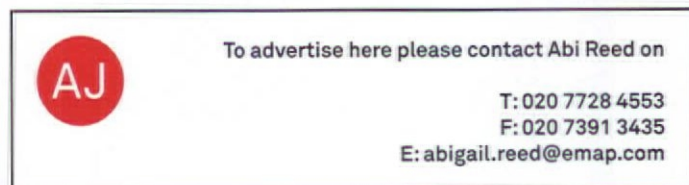
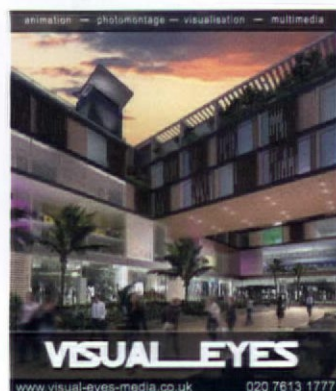
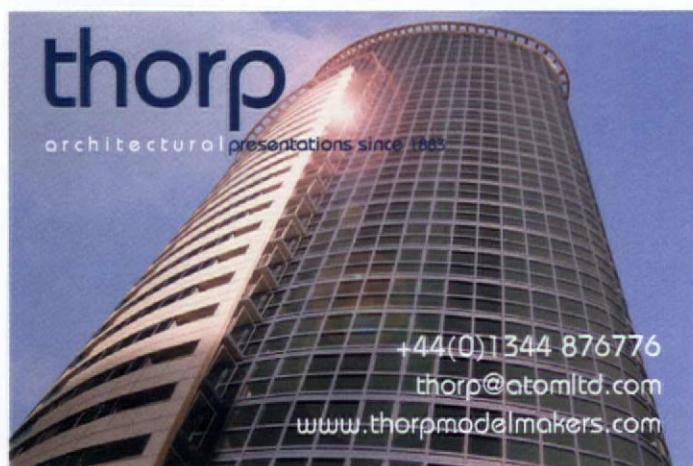


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# Products

## METAL TECHNOLOGY



### AJ ENQUIRY 201

Metal Technology's System 17 provided architectural glazing to the new Technology Incubation and Resource Centre in Omagh, Northern Ireland. The Omagh Enterprise Company invested £1.2 million to help draw innovative businesses to the area. The architect for the project was ADP, with contractor McCann Bros.

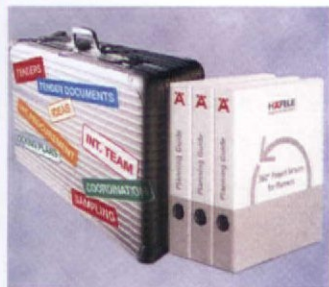
## CLAXTON BLINDS



### AJ ENQUIRY 203

Claxton Blinds is one of the leading commercial window-blind companies in the UK, specialising in interior window projects for any requirement. Some notable projects from Claxton Blinds include Tower 42, the Canary Wharf Tower and the Citigroup Tower. For more information visit [www.claxton-blinds.com](http://www.claxton-blinds.com)

## HÄFELE



### AJ ENQUIRY 205

Architectural ironmongery, hardware and fittings specialist Häfele has launched a new suite of services for architects, specifiers, installers and project managers called Project 360°. Häfele has packaged a range of support services extending from design for furniture and interior décor to hardware supply and full project management where needed.

## FULLFLOW



### AJ ENQUIRY 207

Fullflow has completed the design, manufacture and installation of a syphonic drainage system for a mixed-use town-centre development in Athlone, Ireland. Fullflow syphonically drained a total roof area of 24,000m<sup>2</sup> for the project. The system is designed to deal with a rainfall intensity of 75mm/hr and required just eight downpipes.

## STOAKES SYSTEMS



### AJ ENQUIRY 202

Kalwall + Nanogel has a U-value of 0.28 – better than a solid wall. The latest brochure from Stoakes Systems explains how this invisible energy-saving ingredient has been used on recent translucent Kalwall cladding and roofing projects to achieve insulating values equivalent to a solid wall. For more information see [www.stoakes.co.uk](http://www.stoakes.co.uk)

## CORUS



### AJ ENQUIRY 204

South Dublin County Architects specified Corus' Colorcoat Prisma prefinished steel as part of the wall cladding for a new leisure complex just outside Dublin. The product was used in the Aquarius colour in a Tegral Shadowline 47 cladding system. Colorcoat Prisma is covered for up to 25 years with the market-leading Confidex Guarantee.

## TECHNOCOVER



### AJ ENQUIRY 206

Security-access specialist Technocover has launched a new range of high-security, easy-lift bunker covers for woodchip and other biomass material stores and silos. Technocover's SOLO-LIFT woodchip bunker cover is a deep-sided, multiple-leaf upstand cover-and-frame system with fall-protection grids and assisted easy-lift handling.

## LEADERFLUSH SHAPLAND



### AJ ENQUIRY 208

Doorsets from Leaderflush Shapland have been specified for the redevelopment of Durham Town Hall, County Durham. Longden Chippendale Sussex doors in American white oak were supplied and an architect-designed Sheraton door in English oak (pictured) created to simulate the meeting stiles of a pair of arched doors.





# Ian Martin. Tesco versus Unesco. Who will win the battle to take Stonehenge?

**MONDAY.** Gales, floods, power cuts, widespread building damage. Yet still no sign of a **Weather Czar**.

**TUESDAY.** Quarterly meeting of the Stonehenge Think Tank. We were going to hold it on site, in a big fancy marquee with Thai catering and patio heaters. But you can't hear yourself think there these days with the traffic, so we're in some Tudor banqueting hall off the M5 instead.

After 20-odd years we're a bit thought-out, to be honest. We've suggested all sorts of solutions to conserve Britain's favourite Giant Jenga set. Bury the A303 in a tunnel. Enclose Stonehenge in a massive artificial hill, with the A303 running over it. Move it – preferably by mysterious, ancient means – to Dubai, where it could be re-erected as an architectural feature on a golf course.

Every scheme has run into the sand. Now the government says there's no money to do anything anyway. Bullshit. **Even the most expensive of our civil-engineering projects would be a fraction of what the Fat Controller spent baling out a Geordie building society.** But then Northern Rock's located in England's only remaining Soviet republic; Labour voters are at a pretty low density in the Salisbury Plain area.

As usual, Peggy from the National Trust and 'English Heritage Dave' sit sulkily at opposite ends of the think-tank tabletop. I'm in the middle, with the Druids and the civil servants and the wildlife campaigners and Dick from Tourism with his corrosive optimism. 'You never know. As the Olympics get nearer, we might be able to siphon off

some of that enthusiasm for a Great British Bronze Age...' Idiot. Wonky Sean brings apologies for absence from his boss, Architecture Minister Dorothy Bingham. She wants to remind us that these days it is possible to 'digitise anything you like, so not to worry too much as everyone with a laptop can enjoy Stonehenge if it does disappear'.

After a gloomy session, we reach unanimity at last. Surrender. Let's accept the offer from Tesco to succeed Unesco as protector of Stonehenge. They can part-sponsor a new, bigger road running next to the site. In return, they can have a huge supermarket there too. At least this way more people get to see it; it creates local regeneration; enables sustainability; saves the yellow wagtail; and traps carbon, probably. Whatever the planners want.

And there'll be scope for a Ralph Erskine-style circular wall of mixed-tenure housing surrounding the henge. Defensible space. A national monument cared for by a local community. Everyone's knackered. Only Sean and I stay on for happy hour at the Bawdy Wench carvery.

**WEDNESDAY.** Azzy Bifter, the Secretary of State for Entertainment, rings. What's this Fourth Grace everyone keeps banging on about? He can't ask his advisers because he's actually from LIVERPOOL, so ought to know everything about the Culture of Capital. Oh, and while he's on, what are the other Three Graces? I wait until he's found a pen, then 'tell' him.

• The Cavern Club, on the corner of Penny Lane and Carla Lane. Designed in 1962 by Epstein Associates.

• The Royal Scouser Building, Beerhead. 1903, by Albert Dock and Partners.

• Museum of Observational Humour (formerly the Slave Exchange), Port Tarby. 1744, by Sir Matthew Busby RA.

Liverpool's Fourth Grace, of course, is the M62 Eastbound.

**THURSDAY.** Morning: finish interim design for a **floating indoor North Pole**, just south of the real one. Afternoon: sketch out proposed polar bear sanctuary in Surrey.

**FRIDAY.** Good session at AA. I've brought along some architectural porn. **I show everyone my copies of *Green and Hot*, *Uninhibited Minimalist*, *Asian Big Ones*, *Penthouse*, etc.,** unopened in their plastic mail sheaths. Lots of hugs from fellow archiholics.

**SATURDAY.** Conference. '21st Century architecture: demotic, democratic?' Summary: if 300 families are living there, it's demotic. **If one architect and his family are living in it, it's democratic.**

**SUNDAY.** Ecumenical Mass with Lenten offset. **The sermon is on the Seven Social Sins recently ratified by the Vatican.** Oh dear. Environmental pollution, excessive wealth and widening the gap between rich and poor are aspects of almost every client brief. Luckily, architects channel nearly all their mortal souls into their work, so should only be marginally affected.

This Week's Top 10: YouTube Clips

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