01.05.08

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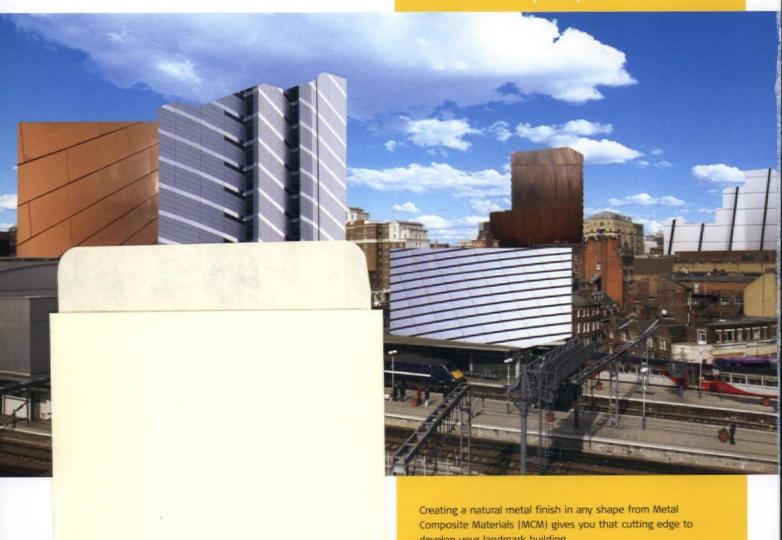


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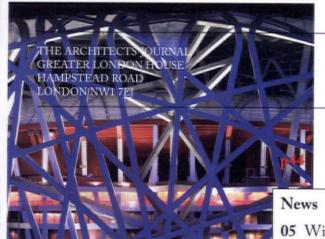
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Sutherland Lyall discovers a new crop of tiny laptops at WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK

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INFOBOX*

AN URBAN SPLASH / AJ COMPETITION

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

Deadline for entries: 9th May 2008

Jurors: • Kieran Long, editor of the Architects' Journal • Brett Steele, director of the Architectural Association • Sean Griffiths, co-founder of Fashion Architecture Taste (FAT) • Tom Bloxham, group chairman and co-founder Urban Splash • Jonathan Falkingham, group chief executive and co-founder Urban Splash • Simon Humphreys, director development Urban Splash • Warren Bradley, leader of Liverpool city Council • Lewis Biggs, director of Liverpool Biennial • representatives of local stakeholders

For a detailed brief, entry details and further information visit: www.tribecainfobox.co.uk

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Warning over planning system staffing levels p6 Architecture's key figures advise London's next mayor p8 Enter the AJ/RPS Urban Design Scholarships programme p14

News



MILLWALL SIGN ALSOP

Architect to masterplan 'complete regeneration' of south London football club

SMC Alsop has been appointed to masterplan the 'complete regeneration' of Millwall Football Club's ground and its 'immediate surroundings' in South Bermondsey, south London.

Will Alsop described the proposed scheme as 'a huge mixed-use development' that would be based round the 'rejigging' of the League One club's 20,000-seat ground – The New Den – and 'a little bit beyond'.

The architect, who last week revealed his plans for the redevelopment of Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds (AJ 24.04.08), claimed the Millwall scheme would 'put football at the heart of the community, along with arts and eating, drinking, living and a bit of working'.

Although Alsop's designs are yet to be submitted to Lewisham Council, a 'scoping opinion' – in effect an outline of Millwall FC's proposal – has been lodged.

Millwall chief executive and deputy chairman Heather Rabbatts confirmed that the club was working with Alsop but declined to divulge details of the scheme. She did however promise: 'Whatever we do at Millwall, the stadium and the club's fans will be at its heart.'

George Lampey, the secretary of Millwall Supporters Club, welcomed the news, saying that the ground's current surroundings were 'uninviting', but warned: 'That little word "re-jig" will send shock waves through our supporters. But as long as it helps the football club, we're happy.

The proposed scheme will tie in with the completion of the nearby Surrey Canal Road
Station – part of phase two of the East London Railway line – for which Alsop originally submitted designs in 1998, and which will complete in 2010.

Alsop said: 'Having two stations [Millwall is also served by South Bermondsey] means you can have home fans arrive at one and away at the other.

'But if we get it right, you will not need that segregation, because the whole place will calm people down – they will just be out for a good game of football.'

The New Den has been identified as a 'mixed-use employment location' in Lewisham Council's 2007 Local Development Framework document. In it, the ground is described as having the potential 'to form the core of a new location in north Lewisham in an area largely devoid of identifiable features such as local centres, and community and leisure facilities'. Max Thompson

AJ 01.05.08

STAFF SHORTAGE THREAT TO PLANNING

The 'creaking' planning system is facing a staffing timebomb, a damning report by the New Local Government Network (NLGN) has warned.

According to the survey, local authorities will struggle 'to employ enough staff to run its services', with almost a third of council employees set to retire over the next decade.

The report, 'Leading Lights: Recruiting the Next Generation in Local Government', blames the crisis on a combination of 'baby-boomers' pensioning themselves off and a lack of interest from graduates.

A spokesman for the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) said: 'There is definitely an ageing population in planning expertise and a problem with attracting new staff... If you start losing a certain amount of this "brain trust" it doesn't just affect the timescales, it also impacts on the decisions being made.'

The RTPI's fears were echoed by Peter Stewart, the RIBA's spokesman on planning. 'Staffing is [already] a real problem and it ought to be sorted out. Everyone in practice thinks it is getting worse,' he said.

'You get the impression that morale is low and there is already a lack of certainty and attention due to a high staff turnover.'

Report author Nigel Keohane admitted the research gave a 'depressingly negative impression of working in local government'.

The report said more than two thirds of council staff are over 40 years old, while the number of workers under 25 is half that of the private sector. *Richard Waite*

THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

HUNT FOR CHARITABLE ARCHITECTS KICKS OFF

The RIBA and homelessness charity Shelter are calling for architects to apply to join the 12th annual Architect in the House scheme. The project offers homeowners professional design advice from chartered architects in return for a £40 donation to Shelter. The initiative has raised more than £700,000 for the charity over the years. Registration opens today (1 May). Visit www.architectinthehouse.org.uk

LAVERNE MAKES STIRLING JUDGES LIST

Lauren Laverne, face of the BBC's Culture Show, will be one of this year's five Stirling Prize judges.

Laverne will join Ben van Berkel of Dutch firm UNStudio, Gordon Murray of Glasgow-based Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop, Yvonne Farrell from Dublin practice Grafton Architects, and AJ editor Kieran Long.

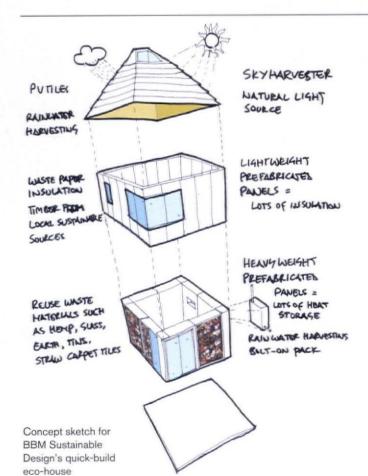
STANTON WILLIAMS WINS LAST OLYMPIC VENUE CONTRACT

Stanton Williams Architects has bagged the contract to design the Eton Manor site to the north of the Olympic Park. The project will include designing a key cluster of venues including a temporary training facility, Paralympic archery and tennis venues, and a hockey centre for legacy mode.

'FAST' TENT LONDON DESIGNERS WANTED

This year's Tent London event – part of the London Design Festival – is seeking as-yet 'unrecognised architects' to enter its 'fast architecture' competition. The Workspace Group Urbantine Project is calling for designs for a 6 x 5 x 4m structure that can be built in 48 hours and disassembled in 24.

Read all these stories and more at www.architectsjournal.co.uk



THE RACE IS ON FOR BBM

East Sussex-based practice BBM Sustainable Design is to build an eco-house from scratch in just six days as part of a television experiment.

The gauntlet has been thrown down by *Grand Designs* supremo Kevin McCloud, who will host a series of daily Channel 4 shows following the progress of the project, starting on Sunday night (4 May) and finishing the following Friday (9 May).

Working with London-based digital designer and fabricator Facit, the practice has devised a prefabricated kit made 'completely from environmentally friendly materials'. As well as using rammed earth, straw bales, hemp and lime plaster, the architects have also specified materials from 'other people's waste' such as woodchip, mobile phones, car tyres and newspapers. Richard Waite



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'DEAR MAYOR OF LONDON,'

Today (1 May) Londoners choose their mayor for the next four years. Here, some of architecture's key players pen an open letter setting out their wishes for the city – from urban branding and public space strategies to air conditioning on the Tube.



Ivan Harbour – 'Where is the 21stcentury equivalent of the Routemaster bus?'

Ivan Harbour is a director at Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners

Td like you to take a really good look at how an effective city-wide strategy for street design can be implemented. Where are the 21st-century equivalents of the iconic postboxes, telephone boxes and Routemaster buses, all of which gave such a strong visual identity to London in the 20th century? Please can you address the randomness of everything from signage and lampposts to kerbstones and bus stops, which only helps to reinforce the idea of a city

trapped in more than 30 separate design vacuums?

Also, how about considering an ingenious way of penalising car-bourne commuters who blight the inner city at rush hour, and give the funds to those areas which are suffering? You could also consider redesigning the entire London road network to give cyclists priority. I'm confident that two wheels could become the preferred mode of transport for commuters.'



Will Alsop –
'All our public spaces
should be worked up
by artists'

Will Alsop is founder of SMC Alsop

I believe in the policy of increasing the built density of central London; but as an addendum to that you, as the new Mayor, must continue a programme of improving the public spaces across the capital and making them more interesting.

I would also like to suggest the following proposal: in order to improve our public spaces they should all be worked up by artists. No landscape architects should ever get hold of any of these commissions, because they have completely institutionalised the idea of public space.

Ken Livingstone has spent a lot of money on improving Trafalgar Square and I'm not sure it's any better than it was before.

Landscape architects should learn what lives and what diesyou walk around the city and ask them to identify a tree and they can't tell you. Green is good.'



Diane Haigh —
'People in Barking,
Ealing and Acton
deserve architectural
excellence too'

Diane Haigh is director of design review and architecture at CABE

London has enjoyed an architectural renaissance over recent years and hopefully you will continue this aspiration for a dynamic contemporary city. For people who enjoy looking upwards, it should continue to be an ever-more exciting place. Rafael Viñoly's 20 Fenchurch Street, for example, will combine striking offices with a potentially extraordinary public space at the top.

But people in Barking,
Ealing and Acton deserve
to enjoy the products of a
commitment to architectural
excellence, just as they do in
Fenchurch Street. And this
doesn't just mean a new library
– it means real neighbourhoods and housing planned
for long-term community
growth.

London's housing need has never been more pronounced and developers need to raise their game radically. They need to start delivering more wonderful places to live. This needs the people with the power to decide – planners and councillors – to promote design quality.'



John Callcutt –

'The challenge is
to create value in
rundown inner-city
areas'

John Callcutt is author of the Callcutt Review of Housebuilding Delivery

'My hope is for a miracle; that you, as the new or re-elected mayor, will understand that social justice, infrastructure investment and municipal services, if properly coordinated and consistently applied, can bring about prime market-led regeneration in the capital.

The challenge is to create value in rundown inner-city areas through eradicating the root causes of low demand. The objective should be to make living in inner London an attractive prospect for a much wider social spectrum. If you succeed with this, you might be pleasantly surprised to discover just how much land values increase to help pay for it all.

We need a Mayor who will use his powers to bring together all the threads of local and central government; thrash out new partnership agreements with developers; construct long-term financing agreements and tear up the planning rule book.

This will need leadership, ability, courage and, above all, a top team.'



Andrew Hanson –
'Encourage planning committees to avoid their natural prejudices'

Andrew Hanson is chairman of RIBA London and a candidate for the RIBA presidency

Here are a few pointers to provide enough civilised homes in the right places for our changing population; to reduce the energy consumption of our citizens; and to enable them to get around the city efficiently.

Get planners' fingers out of energy use and appropriate technology – this is dealt with under building control.

- Encourage planners and planning committees to avoid their natural prejudices and seek intelligent advice from design review panels.
- Stop planners micromanaging uses, forcing 'mixed use' on tiny projects, this should only be relevant for substantial schemes.
- Be more flexible over affordable housing ratios.
- Encourage a sensible approach to sustainability, with less legislation and more tax incentives to reward good performance.
- Oh, and finally, let me and my fellow motorcyclists use all bus lanes, park in all resident bays and get rid of speed bumps – and get rid of all those bleedin' bendy buses.'



Rowan Moore – Make sure boring but important things happen – like putting dug-up roads back'

Rowan Moore is director of the Architecture Foundation

'Please deliver a socially and environmentally beautiful city as set out in the London Plan, which was promised by Ken Livingstone but which still hasn't happened.

Trying to achieve 100 new public spaces may not be the best way of doing that. We need overall quality of the public realm in London. Make sure boring but important things happen – like putting a road back properly when utility companies dig it up. This is more important than a handful of funky public spaces.

A hell of a lot of housing is really bad and there hasn't been much debate about it. Of course there's a need for housing, but this stuff is going to be around forever – and the planning system should be used more effectively to get better quality.

There also needs to be a more considered approach to tall buildings. The CABE and English Heritage guidance hasn't been enforced and neither has the view management framework. Little consideration is given to the effect of these buildings.'>>



Dan Ringelstein – Private and public sectors should be pushed to deliver world-class designs'

Dan Ringelstein is director of urban design and planning at SOM

'You should take inspiration from other international examples, like Chicago and Paris, where urban environments have improved tremendously over recent years.

In Chicago, Mayor Richard M Daley took over the school system, city streets and public spaces and made the city a more appealing place for people to live as well as work. It is his personal involvement that is leading directly to the creation of a better city environment for families and businesses alike.

In Paris, Mayor Bertrand Delanoë has taken over the Seine riverfront on weekends to create 'Paris Plage', which has successfully re-engaged people with the waterfront. His introduction of the Velib public bike-hire system has promoted a more healthy lifestyle and more sustainable means of getting around.

In London, the Mayor's approach should continue to push both the private and public sectors to deliver world-class development with high-quality designs.'



Chris Wilkinson –
'We could plan a series
of landscaped walking
routes to connect areas
of the city'

Chris Wilkinson is director of Wilkinson Eyre

'The remit for the Mayor should be to improve the quality of the living and working environment.

London offers so much opportunity but still feels chaotic, fractious and tough to live in – more like a combat survival course than my Arcadian dream. We are the design capital of the world but this is not evident in the general standard of architecture, street furniture and landscaping.

We have to invest in the infrastructure to make the systems work. Perhaps we could plan a system of landscaped walking routes which could connect important areas of the city away from the traffic? These could be shared with personal mobility aids such as Segways and electric scooters.

May I also make a plea for more bridges across the river to address the north/south divide? Apart from the fine Millennium Bridge and the Hungerford footbridges, we haven't built any new bridges for centuries despite massive developments on both banks.'



Elliot Lipton –
'Quality, consistent
design across mixedtenure communities
must be key'

Elliot Lipton is managing director of developer First Base

'No matter who is named the next Mayor of London in this week's election, there needs to be a long-term partnership approach with the private sector. Quality design with consistent standards across genuinely mixed-tenure communities should be at the heart of your vision for London. Affordability will inevitably continue to be a dominant factor, and any new strategy should encourage the creation of ways to unlock public-sector land to increase the supply of housing in the capital.

And of course sustainability must remain at the top of the agenda, but not just in the form of environmental initiatives. As well as delivering more environmentally friendly developments, the Mayor of London should also focus on enabling sustainable communities through such initiatives as the provision of affordable workspace for local businesses, creating employment opportunities, and promoting the availability of purposeful amenity space.'



Ken Shuttleworth – 'I'd like to see more, smaller, buses, and proper cycle lanes'

Ken Shuttleworth is founder of Make Architects

'We need action, not just vague political gestures – London can't afford a Mayor who can't deliver. The capital can preserve its status as a global financial centre and stay competitive by creating and maintaining the widest possible variety of jobs, and also by encouraging an integrated and genuinely multicultural society.

London has to be a city of innovation and ideas – and a pleasant and enjoyable place to live and work. Public transport has a critical role to play in this: I'd like to see air conditioning on the tube, more, smaller, buses on the streets, and an increase in congestion charging.

I'd like to see a renewed emphasis on creating highdensity, affordable urban developments that draw people back to living in the city.

The creation of proper cycle lanes across the capital is a must. We also need to instigate a properly integrated, comprehensive recycling and waste-collection system across the city.'

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GLA BLOCKS STRATFORD PLANS

The Mayor of London's office has blocked three buildings in Stratford, East London, designed by Stock Woolstencroft.

The London-based firm had hoped to build seven-, 11- and 24-storey buildings on High Street, Stratford as part of a mixed-use development on a former industrial site for FOS Properties.

However, the Greater London Authority (GLA) sent the firm back to the drawing board due to concerns over orientation and lack of infrastructure.

Stock Woolstencroft partner Gavin Redfern said: 'The GLA has questioned our approach to some of the constraints of this site, for example, the use of north-facing windows to avoid the south-facing aspect, which unfortunately overlooks a busy flyover.

'This interaction with the GLA is a usual and important part of

the design development process, and we are confident that by the time we reach Stage 2 we will have resolved all issues and have the full support of the GLA and Design for London (DfL).'

The practice has withdrawn its proposals and is currently reworking the scheme. Richard Vaughan



LDY'S UZBEK SCHEME

Llewellyn Davies Yeang will design this 108,000m² mixed-use sustainable development in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The proposal includes leisure, sport and retail facilities, and residential accommodation close to president Islom Karimov's palace.







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LONDON CALLING

Enter the AJ/RPS Urban Design Scholarship competition for your chance to work alongside Design for London and create a new piece of London's urban landscape

Design for London (DfL) has urged AJ readers to 'get stuck in, get their shoes dirty' and apply for an Urban Design Scholarship.

Created in partnership with the AJ and multi-disciplinary consultancy RPS Group, the scholarships with DfL – which could last up to six months – will offer three people the chance to originate their own piece of urban design for London or work with the Mayor's design agency to develop an existing one.

Mark Brearley, assistant director at DfL, said the competition was a chance for architects to 'learn by doing'.

He said: 'Our cities will get better and better if good designers get stuck in to the messy and wonderful world of steering change and making plans, so seize this opportunity.'

Each winner will receive up to £6,000, and will pen a monthly blog on the AJ's website, www. architectsjournal.co.uk. They will also join an expert panel of speakers for the AJ/RPS Urban Design Symposium at the RIBA on 9 July. At the end of the scholarship, their projects will be published in the AJ and exhibited in a London gallery.

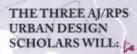
AJ editor Kieran Long said:
'This is an amazing opportunity
for you to develop your career by
improving your understanding of
how cities get made; having your
work published in the AJ;
attending DfL briefings with
Richard Rogers and other key
figures; and making an impres-

sion on influential decisionmakers. We think this scheme goes some way to addressing a key problem in British cities – the lack of really inspired design on an urban scale.'

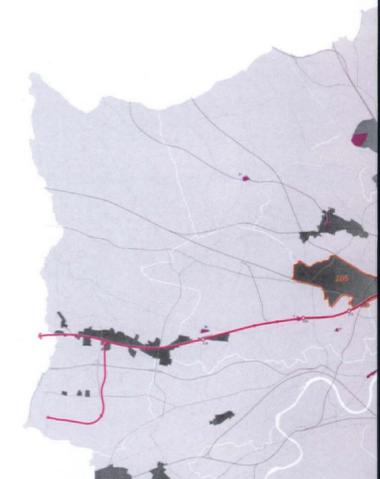
The jury will include DfL's Mark Brearley; AJ editor Kieran Long; Colin Bloch, a director of RPS Group; Peter Davidson, a director of Lab Architecture; and Robert Tavernor, director of the Cities programme at the London School of Economics.

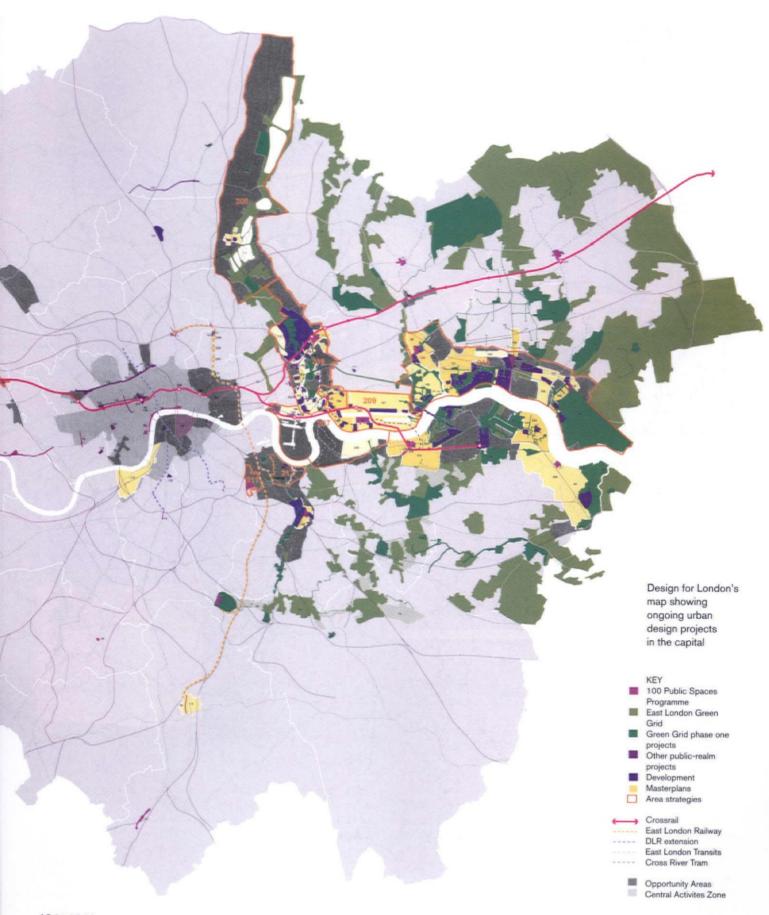
To register your interest and download the entry requirements visit www.ajrpsurbandesign.co.uk. The deadline for entries is 4 June.

Read Kieran Long's leader and Colin Bloch's comment piece on page 18



- Create a new piece of urban design for London, or work to develop an exisiting one;
- receive a scholarship of up to £6,000 to work alongside
 Design for London (DfL) for up to six months:
- see their completed scheme published in the AJ and exhibited in a London gallery;
- write their own blog on the AJ website;
- participate in an urban design symposium; and
- attend DfL design briefings with Richard Rogers





Astragal



POPULARITY CONTEST

As the first names to be linked with the RIBA presidency race bubbled to the surface of architecture's inky depths (AJ 17.04.08), Astragal was told a story of Simon Foxell's campaign a few years ago. Apparently a hopeful must gather 60 names from RIBA members to make their intentions official. Foxell gathered his support and set about his campaign. When the votes were finally counted he picked up a measly 43 - 17 fewer than when he first started out. His policies must have been worse than Brian Paddick's.

SUBURBAN CONVENTION

Pastoral wonderlands, tasty canapés and fine art: these are some of Astragal's favourite things. With some delight he ventured from his metropolitan bolthole last week to suburbia in, erm, Kew Gardens. The occasion: the opening of Walters and Cohen's Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art (see feature on pages 26–33). The demographic was decidedly leafy-terrace rather than converted warehouse – more chunky red corduroy, tweed and red noses than you could shake an inheritance tax form at. Baffled by seeing nature unadorned by crisp packets and dog turds, it was almost too much for Astragal. And what's this? A robin you say? Delightful. I must get one stuffed.

HOT PROPERTY

Astragal is always pleased to see members of the construction fraternity publicly recognised, so he was pleased to see Channel 4's Location, Location, Location presenter Kirstie Allsopp appear in that august publication, FHM's 100 Sexiest Women 2008. The charming Allsopp ranked at number 91 in the gentleman's magazine's annual countdown. According to this rubric, the appearance makes her officially sexier than Kate Moss, who failed to make this year's line-up

at all. So now you know. A more detailed breakdown, should you require one, is available on the *Daily Mail's* website.

DRINK TO THE NLA'S SUCCESS

Astragal found himself listening to architecture's knight in shining armour Kevin McCloud (pictured right) at the New London Architecture (NLA) gallery this week. The bronzed design Adonis was laying the gauntlet down to architects across the land to 'build better houses'. McCloud was joined by more than 700 fellow archi-people at the Des Res launch party, one of

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- AJ Specification on the third Thursday of every month;
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which was chippy Lancastrian Wayne Hemingway – architecture's pocket rocket. The NLA heralded the night as a major success, its biggest event ever, although Astragal never likes to compete for drink quite as much as he had to that night. So if that waiter is reading this, sorry about the rugby tackle.



THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Are you expecting redundancies to hit your practice in the next six months? (see right for result)

Next week's question: Do you believe the looming shortage of planners will impact on the quality of architecture we can build? WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK





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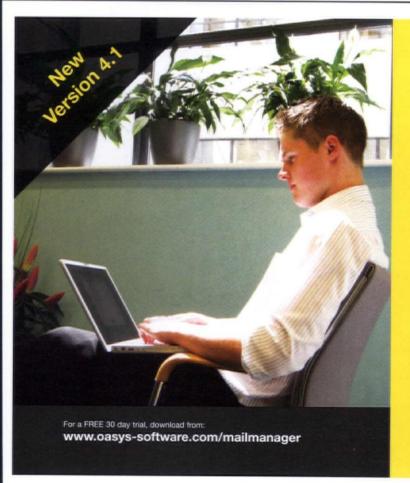
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Leader & Comment

Leader Urban design can be one of the most satisfying and visual areas of practice, says *Kieran Long*

I once worked for another architecture magazine where I often suggested publishing articles about urban design projects. My then editor used to reply: 'The problem with urban design is that it's just arrows on maps.' And that was that. It was impossible to illustrate, and therefore not interesting.

Urban design as a discipline in the UK has suffered from this perceived lack of glamour, and from the difficulty of making compelling imagery such as might appeal to magazines or look good in a portfolio. Much of the strategic design work in British cities has been swallowed up by large, multi-disciplinary consultancies who are technically extremely competent, but not always the most inspired in terms of design. We at the AJ think there is an opportunity for the whole profession to do much more at the scale of the city.

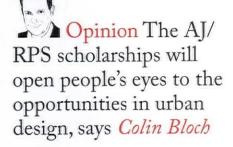
With the launch of our Urban Design Scholarships, conceived with Design for London (DfL) and sponsored by the RPS Group (see pages 14-15), the AJ is trying to do something about this. The winners of the scholarships will get coaching and mentoring from DfL, the most important city design office in Britain, and their experiences will be comprehensively covered in this magazine. Our scholars will have a chance to prove that designing the scale of the city can be more than just making vague diagrams. The process of observation, negotiation, research and proposition that happens when doing urban design could and should be one of the most satisfying areas of design practice there is.

I would appeal to all of you, whether recently qualified, experienced project architect, or partner in a small to mediumsized firm, to apply for the scheme, and become part of the most high-profile debate about urban design that the profession has known for some time. The deadline is 5 June. Visit www.ajrpsurbandesign.co.uk

SAM JACOB JOINS THE AJ

I'd like to welcome a new columnist to the AJ. Sam Jacob of London-based FAT is a prolific writer in an extremely broad range of art, design and architecture press, and we are very privileged to have him join us. He will write a fortnightly column about his observations of the city (see page 20). Sam's joining us confirms that the AJ now has the best lineup of writers about architecture in the UK on its pages every week. Look out for more high-profile additions very soon.

kieran.long@emap.com



The RPS board didn't miss a beat in agreeing to sponsor the AJ/RPS Urban Design Scholarships. At RPS, urban design is increasingly a lead discipline and a platform for our best creative talents. More and more it is urban designers who deliver the 'big idea' – what we used to call the 'concept' – that can alter policy, expand the brief, broaden expectations, and raise the qualitative and quantitative stakes. Urban designers now often also influence a project's profitability long before an architect is appointed.

As urban designers become directors in RPS and other major practices, they find themselves at the top of the project food chain, where the responsibility of urban design practice is counterpoised with the fun, colourful, and sexy nature of the work.

RPS's urban design output is focused on the private- and social-housing sectors and regeneration, where we typically design complex urban and peri-urban projects. The demand for urban design allows us to select the most exciting opportunities. Urban design is nudging aside architecture in pursuing the lofty agendas of regeneration, sustainability,

Urban designers find themselves at the top of the project food chain

social healing, safety, and the making of place and space, and even climate change.

But how will the relative positioning of architects and urban designers resolve itself? RPS's good fortune is that our architectural teams have become – by vocational osmosis – if not urban designers, then at least 'urbandesign-aware'. It still sometimes surprises us, how dreamily unaware some architects can be of the design territory beyond the mere building. Notably, within RPS, we find

architects and planners moving into urban design, but no-one seeking to move out of it.

We have sponsored the Urban Design Scholarships because we want to see a full professional identity for urban designers, who currently fall between the established professional stools.

We are also eager to learn from our AJ/RPS Scholars, liberated from the normal constraints of practice or academia, in their response to the particular challenges of the scholarship programme.

We also hope through our sponsorship to influence universities to train all architectural graduates equally in architecture and in urban design, to the point that one can barely be thought of apart from the other.

Will RPS's sponsorship be worth it? Yes, if in 2058, the recipient of the RIBUD Royal Gold Medal acknowledges the kick-start given to their career when they were in of the 2008 AJ/RPS Urban Design Scholarship programme, by then in its 50th year.

Colin Bloch is a director of the RPS Group

Visit www.ajrpsurbandesign.co.uk



Gateshead car park is much more than just a backdrop to Michael Caine's acting, says Catherine Croft

Owen Luder's Trinity Centre Car Park, Gateshead (1965-9), due to be demolished to make way for a Tesco store, is far more than a singularly functioning structure. It's not just that its an iconic building at the heart of Gateshead. The car park is actually only the most prominent part of a town-centre megastructure – it rises above 80 shops, three larger stores, a market hall and a public square – all with carefully separated vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

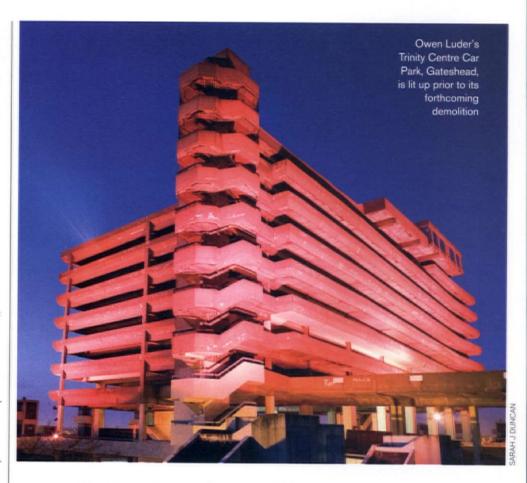
As with Owen Luder's late, lamented Tricorn Centre in Portsmouth (which opened in 1966 and was demolished in 2004), the

English Heritage says it 'lacks exuberance and finesse' – the same could be said of Michael Caine

design input came from his flamboyant partner Rodney Gordon. It was Gordon who knew film director Mike Hodges, and this friendship led to the rooftop restaurant space being used for the infamous scene in *Get Carter* (1971) where Michael Caine shoves Bryan Mosley over the parapet.

Tricorn failed because it was in a terrible location for shopping, but the car park could not be more central. It was meant to serve as a beacon and to broadcast the message that here you could drive straight into the heart of things. Car owners were seen as the 'life blood' of the place – this was not the age of park and ride. And of course, ideally, this is what we still want to do. Gateshead offers the possibility of unrivalled convenience and a sense of exhilaration, plus space to sit outside and for children to play safely – an achievable scenario far from its Brutalist image.

It's sad that the restaurant never opened – it would have been spectacular. A proposal to



use the space for architects' offices floundered in 1979, and a year later a would-be nightclub operator was refused a licence. It's sad that the original build quality was not better – Rodney Gordon was so disappointed that he refuses to visit. But most of all it's sad that what was once a symbol of pride and progress has been allowed to get so run-down. It's amazing that a building where so much concrete reinforcement has been chipped back and left exposed has any supporters – it looks as if the whole building has been gnawed.

Three attempts at getting it listed have failed. Although it was nominated for inclusion on a local list after a public consultation exercise it was turned down by an 'expert panel'. It has inspired artists—it features in Jane and Louise Wilson's multiscreen film installation A Free and Anonymous Monument, and it was celebrated on Radio 3, where Between the Ears was an amazing aural

record of a journey through the building. It has been in countless style magazines, including cult magazine *Nude* which 'aims to celebrate the spirit of wayward creativity'. We need more of that.

English Heritage has said that it 'lacks exuberance and finesse' – the same could be said of Michael Caine. Gateshead car park will become one of those mythical buildings that future generations won't be able to believe we let go – a Euston Arch of the future. Yes it needed investment, yes its repair would have been challenging, but we need robust, vigorous architecture, and like Michael Caine, Gateshead car park is sexy and unique. A quick wake, a bit of fancy lighting and another Tesco? What are we thinking of? Catherine Croft is director of the 20th-Century Society

Email comment@architectsjournal.co.uk

Sam Jacob. If only Heathrow's design was as impressive as the sounds it makes

Simon Jeffes, founder of the Penguin Cafe Orchestra, used to take his dates on romantic latenight visits to Heathrow. He'd make them shut their eves and listen to all kinds of noises going on in the airport: the rattle and hum of air-conditioning units and conveyor belts, the quiet fizz of fluorescent lights, the hiss of automatic doors - the sounds of a huge mechanical apparatus. Jeffes was imagining Heathrow as a gigantic musical instrument, an accidental symphony. Whether this was a successful seduction technique is unrecorded.

Of course, Heathrow isn't a musical instrument – unless you are an avant garde musician warping your understanding of common sense in the name of iconoclasm. But it is a sound.

Heathrow has been panned by public, press and critics under accusations that it doesn't work and looks ugly. The verdict: guilty as charged. But its terrible-ness makes it a fascinating architectural phenomenon. If you asked someone to draw Heathrow, they'd be hard pushed. Even Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners' new Terminal 5 building (pictured below) is unmemorable. Heathrow isn't an image - it was never conceived as a piece or a thing. Rather it is unplanned infrastructural sprawl: a mechanism, an atmosphere, a means to an end. It's somewhere you come up in the middle of.

But for something so big, Heathrow is almost invisible. Its scale and complete lack of logic mean its visual presence has no capacity to express itself. It is unlike other architecture of large scale; unlike the horizontal expressions which merge landscape and architecture like Versailles near Paris; unlike vertical buildings like the Buri Dubai tower. It is also unlike airports designed with a deliberate aesthetic - those that conjure sensations of light-as-air or swoop-in-flight-ness such as Eero Saarinen's TWA Flight Center in New York, or those that resolve the plan with aesthetic elegance such as Foster + Partners' new Beijing Airport.

At Heathrow, all the signatures of traditional architecture have vanished. It has no discernible elevation, section or plan, no motif, no structural approach. Heathrow is formless: a shapeless agglomeration. The closest transport-interchange model is a back-street minicab office.

Heathrow's presence is too small and too big for normal architectural qualities. Its micro scale is its distribution of furniture, kiosks, displays of perfume bottles, and array of expensive pens all in constant flux. Heathrow's macro scale is its giant roar, its acoustic cloud that hangs over West London. Jeffes was right: you shouldn't look at Heathrow, you should listen to it instead.

Perhaps plans for the airport's expansion shouldn't engage architects, but people who work with sound, specifically noise experts. Maybe decisions over a third runway should include Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore or My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields. Perhaps Brian Eno could revisit his Music for Airports as Airports as Music.

Then again, maybe I'm simply a posturing avant garde wannabe, warping common sense in the name of iconoclasm. Maybe Heathrow is simply terrible.



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The aspiration for excellence has been lost in a mire of pluralism, writes Patrick Lynch

It's the time of year when we start to think about who we'd like to win awards, and I hope this year's RIBA Gold Medal jury is thinking about some of the people mentioned in this magazine recently (Peter Zumthor, Álvaro Siza, Sverre Fehn, Carme Pinós, et al). This parlour game differs from recent ones in that rather than having a poseur, a worthy or an academic to consider, each of those mentioned is a respected and talented teacher, professional and artist.

What Vittorio Gregotti, in *Inside*Architecture (MIT, 1996) calls 'vulgar
pluralism' seems to have characterised the
recent history of the RIBA Gold Medal, and
perhaps British attitudes towards architecture
generally. As my old sociology teacher used to
say: 'Pluralism is what the Americans have
instead of politics – the semblance of choice
between equally pointless options.' Pluralism
is the opposite of eclecticism. The latter

implies having catholic tastes and acknowledges the development of one's references. The former is premised on uncompromising difference and results in a pointless standoff between various brands of egomania.

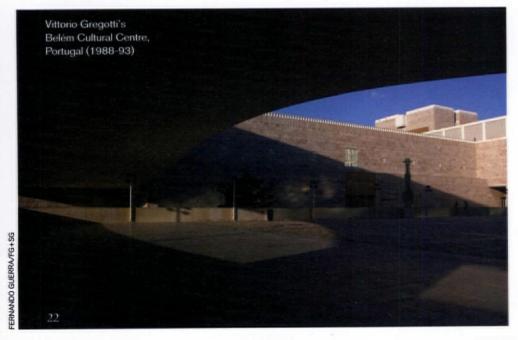
Gregotti is railing against relativism of course, against the vulgarity of pluralism as an ideology that doesn't fit the facts. In 'encourdifferent versions of excellence. Sadly, in my experience of London schools of architecture, there just aren't enough good teachers to go round, and heads of department are desperate not to appear too far off the 'cutting edge'. So what you usually get are a few good teachers, some promising but inexperienced youngsters and some entrenched and slightly defensive

The English usually like artistic heroes stupid, uncommunicative and wild

aging diversity' rather than insisting upon excellence, the RIBA seems to have missed the point of being an institute, which is to promote the idea that excellence is obvious to all, even if not all of us can claim to do it. Diversity is only interesting when it offers

full-timers struggling to keep up with the kids. Either way, pluralism is the unspoken credo of the generation currently in charge of British architecture.

There is something undemocratic about excellence of course, and perhaps this is what annoys some people? Declaring that excellence is the result of skill, intelligence, imaginative empathy, a grasp of history and a gift for interpretation is usually seen as dogmatic. The English usually like artistic heroes stupid, uncommunicative and wild, not urbane, witty and professional. Hence the lamentable absence of the above architects from the ranks of gold medallists. I would add to this list Mario Botta and Gregotti. Gregotti's Belém Cultural Centre in Portugal (1988-93) is what a friend calls 'Post-Modernism at its best'. Stone, symmetry, repetition, windows, order, proportion, scale. I know, it's a bit too much 'lessness,' for some tastes, but undeniably Mediterranean architects do this sort of thing well. Unless of course you believe that, like rugby, architecture was invented at a public school for quite technical but not very academic boys to do...



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before publication. The AJ reserves the right to edit letters.

IRENA BAUMAN: OPINION

Apology: The AJ sincerely apologises for misidentifying the Plazza building which was criticised in Irena Bauman's comment piece on Leeds (AJ 24.04.08) as Feilden Clegg Bradley's Broadcasting Place scheme (pictured below), and for misrepresenting Irena Bauman's views, which are clarified below.

If an opinion expressed does not provoke a reaction then it need not have been expressed.

I have made some uncompromising observations in my opinion piece last week (AJ 24.04.08), but some of the editorial amendments meant that the opinions as published are no longer quite my own.

I am, therefore, taking up AJ's kind offer to correct some of the editorial changes of emphasis, cuts and additions so that I can take the full responsibility for what I actually said.

The thrust of my argument is that the recent boom in Leeds city centre is a reflection of the limited aspirations of the estate agents and I posed the question of whether the city needs to find its own voice.

Editorial inserted on the lack of leadership in the city compared to Manchester and Sheffield will encourage defensive response. I was hoping, instead, to initiate constructive debate.

Some important details were cut from my text, most notably the reference to the limitations of estate agents' thinking, that have given us a glut of tiny flats with two bathrooms but no storage on sites with illegible addresses such as Velocity 1, 2 and 3 and scraps of leftover landscape decorated with meaningless public art.
Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure of public services

and ancillary retail adds to the disconnections in the city.

Most importantly, I also noted that it is the estate agents that have consistently maintained the view that there is no commercial value in sustainable development, thus holding back the city from using the recent boom to prepare for climate change.

I also said in my original text that the overdevelopment and the poor quality of design is getting progressively worse – what is coming out of the ground now is truly awful.

I exchanged emails with AJ, on their request, confirming a couple of examples of such schemes, but did not expect either the schemes or the architects to be named. This is because, in my view, the key responsibility for all buildings lies with the clients, and that there are so many bad developments in the city that it is pointless to pick on a couple – we all have collective responsibility to address the issues underpinning this problem.

The most unfortunate addition was the editorial inclusion of incorrect illustration of the Plazza scheme as Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios' Broadcasting Place (pictured left). These are two different schemes and it is truly unfortunate that one of the most respected practices working in the city should have been embroiled in this controversy.

Irena Bauman, director, Bauman Lyons Architects, Leeds

Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios' Broadcasting Place, Leeds

PANELS ARE PROBLEMATIC

Although I fully understand that space is limited in your news pages, the issue regarding design review panels is far more complex than your article suggests ('Borough recruits stars and dismisses "cronyism" fears', AJ 24.04.08). Although impartiality is one factor, I was at pains in my comments to make clear that there are other factors too, which didn't quite make it into print.

Although the use of design review panels may work in some areas, logistically the sheer number of weekly committees would make organising a panel highly problematic. That's on top of the time and effort we'd expect those sitting on it to invest.

We already employ many qualified and highly talented architects, designers and conservationists who fully understand our planning policies. We are also fortunate to have 17 recognised amenity societies on which sit people from many walks of life, including architects. They have a vested interest in their local area and understand the impact of design on their community.

Our planning committees give serious attention to their views and comments, which are grounded in a long-term commitment to improving our environment.

Rosemarie MacQueen, director of planning and city development,

Westminster City Council

CORRECTION

Astragal was mistaken in suggesting that UAD Architects was responsible for the scheme which will replace the historic Josephine Butler House in Liverpool (Astragal, AJ 24.04.08). The practice is working with developer Maghull elsewhere in central Liverpool, but not on this project.



AJ/RPS URBAN DESIGN SCHOLARSHIPS WITH DESIGN FOR LONDON Do your the city if more

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Apply by June 4





RUSSIAN DOLL MODERNISM

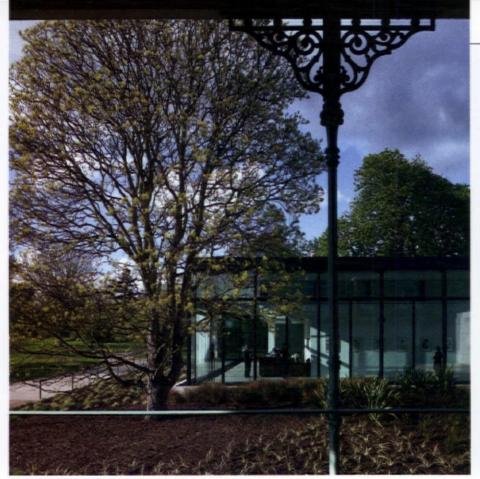
Walters and Cohen has designed a Miesian box-within-a-box for Kew Gardens, finds *Ruth Slavid*. Photography by *Dennis Gilbert*

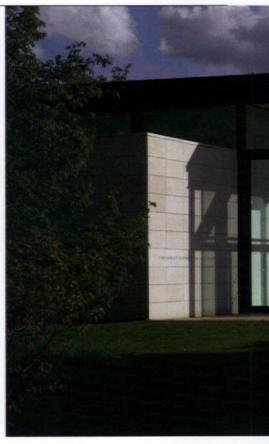
The art gallery that Walters and Cohen has designed in south-west London is chiefly remarkable for what it does not contain. There is no cloakroom, no ticketing, no security, no shop worth speaking of.

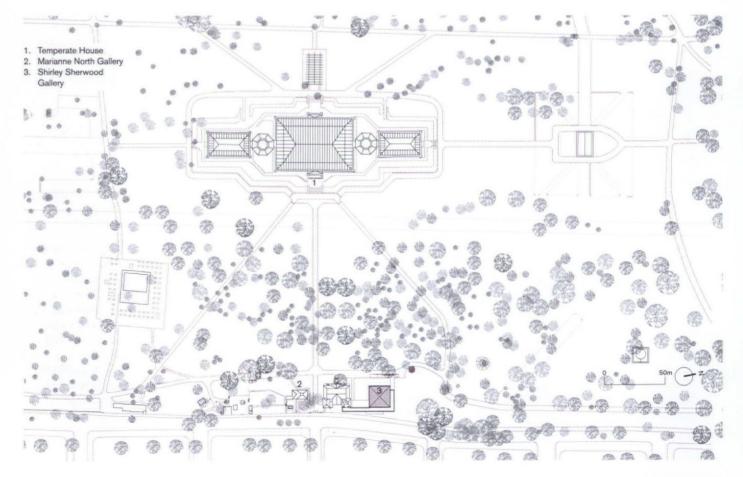
The reason for this extraordinary purity – a gallery designed simply to display works of art – is its very particular setting. The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art is within Kew Gardens, so all the ticketing and security takes place at the entrance. There are plenty of

other places to shop or have a cup of tea, and visitors know they are at an outdoor destination and expect to keep their coats with them.

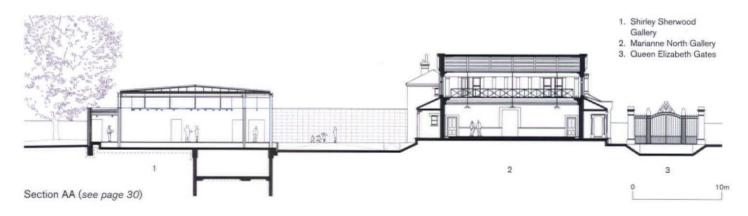
Not that this simplicity made it an entirely easy project. The architect had to design the building in a restricted space, next to a much-loved and idiosyncratic building – the Marianne North Gallery. It had to create a solution that could accommodate a collection of delicate botanical art and at the same time not turn its back on a magnificent setting. >>











The building breaks some of the golden rules of gallery design

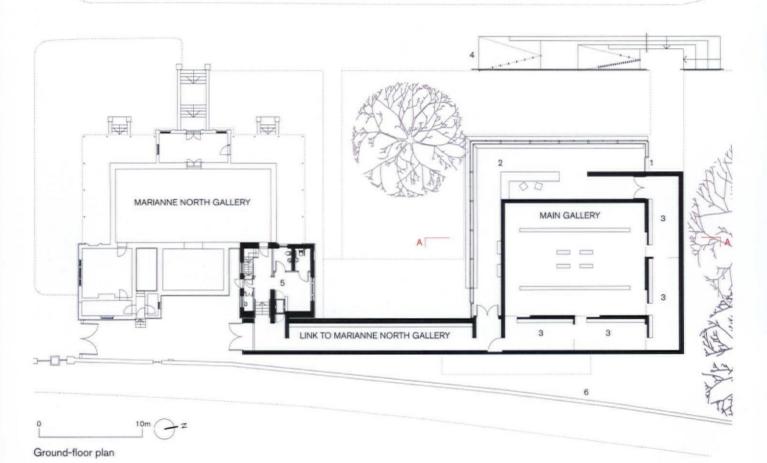
The result is a building that is simple, elegant, confident but not strident, and one that appears ready to fulfil its purpose admirably, despite breaking some of the golden rules of gallery design.

Although Kew is a gloriously sprawling estate, the site of the new building was predetermined. It sits within a masterplan drawn up for the garden by Wilkinson Eyre (see page 32), which creates an arc of interest starting at the Marianne North Gallery near the eastern external wall, and moving past the Temperate House to other gems, including the Sackler Crossing by John Pawson, which opened in 2006, and the soon-to-be-completed treetop walk by Marks Barfield, due to open this year.

Marianne North was an intrepid Victorian who travelled the world painting flora and views. In 1879 she donated the collection of her work to Kew, commissioning a building in which to display it. The charming colonial-influenced brick villa with a metal veranda contains North's work as arranged by her, with not a square inch of bare wall showing.

When Dr Shirley Sherwood, a collector and authority on botanical art, decided to donate the money to build a gallery at Kew and lend her own collection, putting it next to the Marianne North Gallery seemed obvious. Kew has its own extensive collection of botanical art, including 200,000 >>

- Entrance
- 2. Reception
- Peripheral gallery
- 4. Disabled access
- 5. Back of house Boundary wall



People who had designed galleries told us: "You are making your job much harder" paintings, but has had nowhere to display it until now. And the Marianne North Gallery, although relatively close to one of Kew's entrances at Victoria Gate, has been overlooked by many visitors.

Putting the two galleries side by side, and joining them with a new path to the Temperate House, would increase their prominence and also help to overcome the less-than-adequate disabled access to the Marianne North Gallery. Walters and Cohen was appointed in 2006 as one of Kew's five framework architects. Project director Elaine Henderson explains: 'It was an early decision to have a glazed building - a box within a box. People who had designed galleries told us "You are making your job much harder," but we couldn't reconcile ourselves to having a black box within Kew Gardens. It took a lot of persuading. You are dealing with a client for whom it is a first gallery.'

This is a single-aspect building, with its rear butted up against the enclosing eastern wall of Kew. The main, west-facing facade sits on a Portland stone plinth, accessed by shallow stairs or a ramp. It is entirely glazed, set within black-painted galvanised-steel frames. Through the glass, you can see a monolithic timber desk (in fact veneered with European flowery walnut) in front of the box that contains the exhibition space. The building appears rather shallow, although it is nearly perfectly square.

There is no embarrassing fiddly link between the new and old galleries. Instead, a rainscreen of Portland stone, providing a backdrop to a similarly paved area and ordered planting, links the two, with a corridor-cumgallery behind it. At the end is a wheelchair lift and a set of stairs, leading to a panelled door that takes you into the very different world of the Marianne North Gallery.

The only other element is a basement, accessed from the rear of the building, which contains plant - some of it linked to boreholes that help with temperature moderation. >>

Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Kew Gardens, by Walters and Cohen





Above The main gallery. Blackout blinds usually cover the high-level glazing to protect the artworks

Left The smaller galleries around the edge of the main gallery are designed for flexibility

Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Kew Gardens, by Walters and Cohen



Above A passage on the south side of reception leads to the link to the Marianne North Gallery

Right Wilkinson Eyre's masterplan shows the 'arc of interest' for Kew Gardens, with the new gallery (circled) at the rear end of the arc

Far right Marks
Barfield's nearcomplete treetop walk
(top) is another point
on the arc, as is John
Pawson's Sackler
Crossing (bottom)



At evening receptions those inside the gallery can star gaze

The new gallery is cleverly arranged, with one central space, and four smaller ones lining its north and east sides, all of which can be divided off. The idea is that when an exhibition is being changed, one part may be used for storage, and other parts kept open so that the gallery is never entirely shut.

Flexibility was the key, not only in terms of the arrangement of space, but also of the servicing. Technically the conditions are demanding, since most botanical art is on paper, with a small proportion on vellum (parchment made from calf skin). (Vellum) is about the hardest thing you can display,' explains Chris Mills, head of library art at Kew. It reacts much more quickly than paper.' Temperatures have to be as near constant as possible, and humidity kept at a sticky 55 per cent. Lighting levels also need to be low. Two service trenches, which blow up cool air from the basement, run in parallel across the main space, allowing it to be subdivided if necessary.

Walls are simply plasterboard painted white, as this is easiest for the gallery to maintain. But the tops of the walls are glazed, although normally this glazing is concealed by very discreet white blackout blinds. Henderson explains that this was done so there will be an option to allow views of the treetops if non-sensitive exhibits are ever displayed. Or at evening receptions those inside can stargaze while the building acts as a glowing beacon. Similarly, acoustic panels on the ceiling of the main space not only soften it for everyday visits but also allow easy conversation at receptions and private views. Gallery floors are of oiled oak, in contrast to the reception area, which is paved with Portland stone.

Henderson relishes the framed views the gallery offers of the landscape, an enhancement, she feels, of the normal experience. The facade is ventilated, with vents at the top that open automatically, triggered by temperature. The outer, single-glazed panels open like doors for maintenance. When I visited on a showery April day, the space felt sticky, but Henderson reckoned the thermostat just needed resetting. Perhaps the only disappointing aspect of the building is that the blinds on the south facade were down, and likely to need to stay down almost permanently, obstructing the view of the Marianne North Gallery.

Otherwise, the Shirley Sherwood Gallery is an ideal neighbour, set a little lower so as not to detract from the older building. In contrast to the Marianne North Gallery, this is not an experiential building, but one that provides a neutral, carefully tempered space in which to display changing exhibitions from a treasure house of botanical art.

Start on site date December 2006 Contract duration 52 weeks Total build area 550m²

Form of contract Standard form of building contract 1998, private with quantities, with integrated provisions for contractor's designed portion

Cost £2,426,852

Client Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Architect Walters and Cohen: Cindy Walters, Elaine Henderson, Leigh Baxter, Anton van Aswegen, Catherine Sunter, Karen Rogers Structural engineer Michael Barclay Partnership

Services engineer Atelier Ten Quantity surveyor Fanshawe Lighting consultant Speirs and Major Main contractor Total Construction Planning supervisor PFB Construction Management Services Annual CO, emissions 61kgCO,/m2









WORKHOUSE

Arcus Architects' house and office has a sense of calm that belies the hard work and meticulous care that went into its creation, writes *Patrick Lynch*. Photography by *Paul Tierney*











Left The crushed shells in the upperfloor bathroom's black-concrete-clad walls evoke the nearby sea Below Books line one wall of the studio

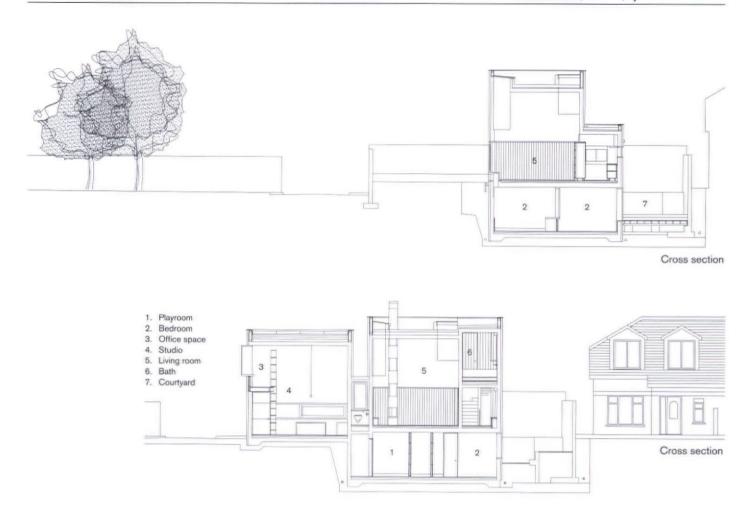


A Kilkenny limestone fireplace hangs from the ceiling like a polished stalactite

Since Donal Hickey and Fionuala Lennon bought their site north of Dublin, in the Republic of Ireland, Nun's Lane has grown up around it, and number one ended up being the final house to be built there. Implicit in Hickey's design for a family home, which doubles as the office of Arcus Architects, the practice Hickey runs with Gavin Buggy, is the idea of a terrace that transplants a part of the Georgian decorum of central Dublin to the coastal suburb of Killester. Arriving from town by train or car, you approach the house from the south west. Nun's Lane is announced by a creamy white gable and a square steel window frame that concludes the terrace in a solidly urban manner. Passing the office studio block, a tall double-height space is revealed behind timber-framed sliding doors. Beyond this, the entrance to the house steps further back and rises up, the rendered box framing four double-height glass panels that reflect and distort the trees and sky. Black terrazzo steps sit like polished rocks in the white-gravel driveway. Their slick surface sparkles with quartz and seashells, echoing the glossy glass walls that appear as huge mirrors in front of you, refracting the world behind you. As you pass, your shadow on the glass creates points

through which you can glimpse the interior of the house. The entrance door is inflected perpendicular to the steps, acknowledging a diagonal approach that began 100m away. In contrast to the south facing walls and their shadow play of trees, you now are drawn into a dark pocket of shadow. This pocket reveals itself to be a timber-lined, low-ceilinged hall from which steps sink down to a level even lower than the garden courtyard glimpsed on your right. Open treads rise around a concrete shaft that is lit from above. To your left the door opens and reveals an oblique diagonal view to a tall black fireplace and a green space beyond.

This grand room has a polished Iroko floor, and the boards wrap up the walls to a height of 2m. Concrete construction is revealed above the picture rail. Raw and scarified, it is lit from above by two glass incisions in the ceiling. You feel contained and embraced. Turning to your left, you see the two-storey glass wall now offers a view out to the Wicklow Mountains. A table sits piled up with books and children's games. To the right the galley kitchen reveals itself behind a part of the Iroko wall lining that simply steps out nonchalantly into the >>



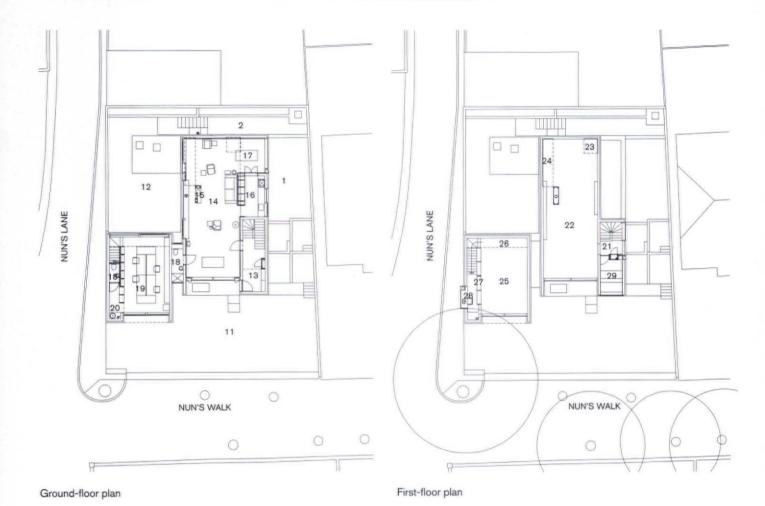
Fossilised mussel and oyster shells sit beneath the surface as if under water

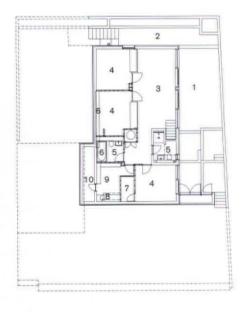
living room. Beyond, the wall lining slides out of view, indicating a niche for the dining table, which reveals then a view down to the sunken courtyard again. To the left opposite, a large glass door opens on to a small lawn bounded by a concrete wall and completed by the rear facade of the studio block. You feel as if you have burrowed out the spaces with your presence, and in my memory doors seem to have swung open and views naturally come into focus just as the various spaces you look for in a house stepped forward to invite me and receded from view when no longer needed. They are at hand for use and pass into memory when not. You immediately feel at home.

The centre of the house is the polished Kilkenny limestone fireplace that seems to hang from the ceiling like a highly polished stalactite, dripping with light and reflections, it casts both on to the floor. A shadow gap at the base lifts it, and yet the extreme slenderness of the form seems to ground it. An odd centre then, one that both denies and accepts

the ambivalence of this position in a house. Close-up, fossilised mussel and oyster shells sit beneath the liquid surface as if under black water or sat in black sand. Looking up, the rooflights continue to excavate the ceiling. Reflected in the marble, light seems to fall like a solid plane.

What Hickey calls the 'timber landscape' steps up to form a bench along the garden window wall, and on descending we find that this enables light to fall down to the bedroom below. Downstairs is about 1m lower than the water table, which is quite high here, so close to the sea. A panoply of pumps, sitting beneath the courtyard deck, work silently to keep the house afloat. Down in the hull the children's bedrooms open on to the hallway 'like shops', according to the occupants. Lit obliquely, they feel secreted and still. Reflected in the glassy walls, the craggy concrete courtyard appears like a grotto. You cannot see the sky from the east-facing bedrooms, but in the morning you look out on to an illuminated space: the perfect alarm call. >>





Basement plan

- 1. Courtyard
- 2. Passage
- Playroom
 Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Scoop light slot
- Wardrobe
- 8. Pavement light
- 9. Utility room

14. Living room 15. Fireplace

- 10. Machine room store
- 11. Entry courtyard 12. Living courtyard 13. Stair hallway
- 25. Void over work space
 - 26. Linear rooflight

21. Stair landing

22. Void over living room 23. Square rooflight 24. Strip rooflight

27. Bookshelf wall

16. Kitchen

17. Dining

18. WC 19. Work space 20. Coffee station

28. Study 29. Bathing room



The house's upper floor is a small platform that contains a terrazzo-lined room for bathing. Like the threshold below, this is also made of polished black concrete and crushed shells. When empty, this room is where the children play at 'mermaids'; when it is full they swim out into the view of the distant sea. This arrangement is mirrored in the studio, where the upper floor is a small cell for work.

The studio is half the depth of the house, and yet also a double-height volume. Tall bookshelves give it a scholarly character. Central tables are strewn with architectural models and files. A simple aluminium light hangs above head height, reinforcing the grand scale of a human figure; an echo of the picture rail that lines the house next door. Planning law dictated that the house and studio must be disconnected and so a WC sits in the gap between them, although you can imagine that in time someone will knock them through.

In his 2001 book *The Good Life: A Guided Visit to the Houses of Modernity*, Spanish architect Iñaki Ábalos describes the 'phenomenological house' as being 'in search for an intensification of perception, transforming

this search into a specific design method.' Abalos says: 'Architecture is phenomenological in itself... All houses are phenomenological houses, since the discipline mainly studies those relationships and provides certain data in order to justify one's experiences of these objects.' However he is critical of the tendency towards 'excessively literal nostalgia'; 'perpetual self-absorption'; 'the self-confidence of a rebellious and fanciful child' and critical amnesia towards the collective realm. In contrast, he suggests that such a house should 'recapture the complexity of experience... salvage the topological mazes of big country houses in dwellings that are scarcely 100m2 in size' to introduce some of the pleasures of a holiday villa to 'all those depressing and featureless outskirts of the city'.

Arcus Architects' 1 Nun's Lane is a worldly house, an economic unit for family life that could set the model for other design professionals and cottage industries. Donal Hickie says: 'Building a house is a public act', and this house must remind him of this statement each day.

While it should be obvious from my description that like any really good work of

architecture you must visit this house to fully appreciate it, I think that the strategy that it embodies is far from unique or precious. Rather, the difficulty of creating generous spaces is well achieved and the most is made of scant resources; money is well and appropriately spent. The house exhibits swanlike calm, but you are aware that hard work is going on to maintain this poise. Everything from the deep window reveals to the placement of walls is evidence of care and circumspection and the result is a mediated sense of virtuous wellbeing: 'The architect's house', as the locals know it.

Contract duration 30 months Size of project 2,478m²

Contract value 845,000 euros (£675,000)

Architect Arcus Architects

Engineer White Young Green

Quantity surveyor Flynn McNally McKell

Partnership

Services engineer Miller Consulting

Quantity surveyor Simon Fenton Partnership

Annual CO₂ emissions Estimated at

18.4kgCO₂/m²

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Big Fish Little Fish

John Preve of Make braves a community consultation meeting

It was with some trepidation that attend the latest consultation meeting with a group of community leaders from a Nottingham housing estate. We are designing a large mixed-use development which borders the estate. On my previous visit, a young resident was shot dead metres from our venue just five hours before the meeting started.

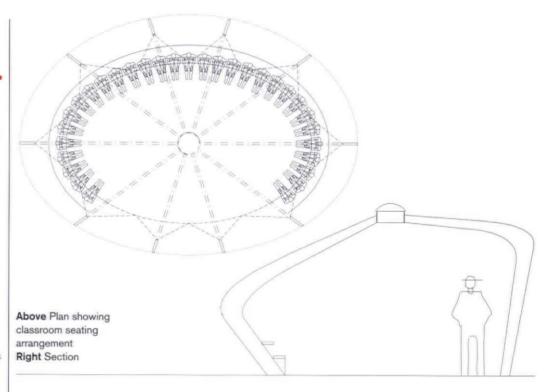
I arrive with my client and walk into the deserted community centre. We set up and wait for people to arrive. Soon the room is full. The local newspaper's photographer is trying to get an early photo so he can go home. He asks me to pose with a local resident, who reluctantly agrees.

I begin my presentation by explaining what we have changed in order to integrate the community's views. Everyone listens quietly until I finish and the floor opens up to questions. Height, as ever, is an issue. Our undulating design peaks in a 12-storey office building. Some people believe this is too high, and everything from two to 10 storeys is considered to be the right height.

The local councillor remains impartial but clearly likes the scheme. As always there is a heckler, who doesn't really understand why we are there and decides to confront the councillor on issues unrelated to the scheme.

I draw things to an close, happy that we have, in the main, brought people with us.

Next issue: Jonathan Hendry of Jonathan Hendry Architects



BURD HAWARD DESIGNS BESPOKE CLASSROOM KIT

Burd Haward Architects has been commissioned to design an outdoor classroom for 30 pupils in a south London school with the intention of creating a model that can be ordered and assembled 'like a kit of parts'.

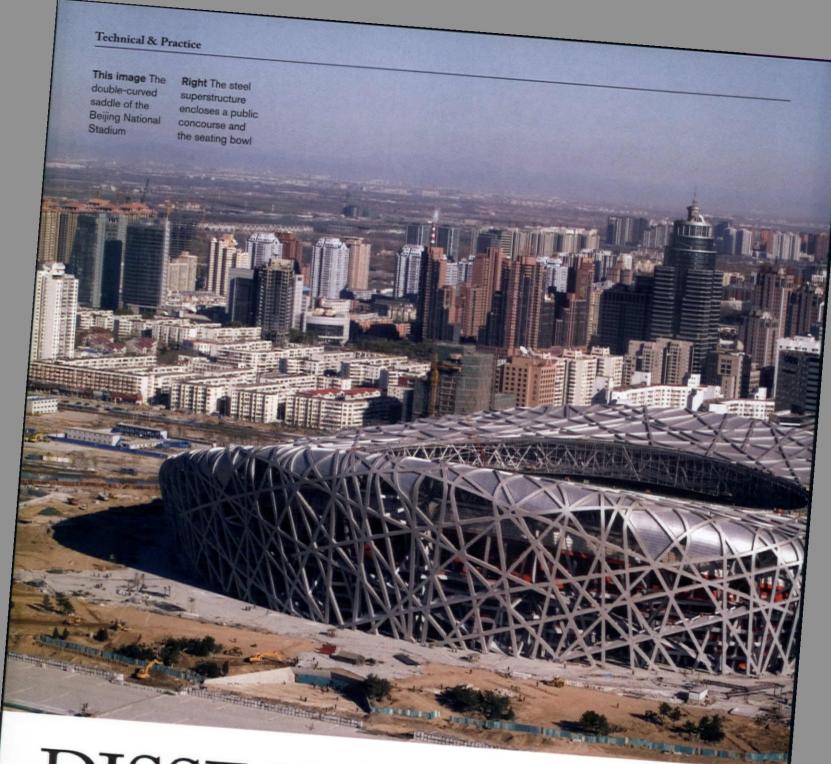
The practice's Catherine Burd says: 'It will go up in front of the children in a couple of days, and the school [Heronsgate Primary School, Greenwich] is going to use it for all sorts of things – their disco club, storytelling – as well as maths and science.' The project is scheduled to complete this summer and the next stage for the practice is to team up with a manufacturer to go into production on a larger scale.

'It all started with the RIBA Architects in Residence project [which establishes partnerships between architects and schools] when we were paired with Heronsgate,' says Burd. 'We were given the brief of designing an outdoor space for teaching and we went through the whole design process with the children – right through to building a full-scale model.'

The resultant model inspired the school to commission the practice to build a permanent structure. 'We had already set aside part of our budget to purchase an off-the-peg version' says headteacher Nick Proctor, 'but when we investigated it further most of the products were just expensive wooden pavilions – we wanted a real learning environment.' Burd Haward has donated its time for free and the budget for the classroom is

£20,000 – only £5,000 more than the 'rather naff' products that the school was contemplating.

Heronsgate gave the practice a tight brief: the classroom had to be useable in all weather, provide seating off the ground and provision for a board to teach from. The design generated in the workshop with the children could not accommodate these requirements. The new design consists of 90mm-thick laminated timber ribs clamped and pin-jointed at the crown, which will sit on a concrete base or individual pads. Elliptical in plan, the skeleton is skewed in section to give greater headroom for the entrance, where the teacher will also stand. A cover of tensioned PVC-coated polyester shelters occupants from sun and rain. Kaye Alexander



DISSECTING THE BIRD'S NEST

Fiona Cobb gets behind the Beijing National Stadium's distinctive steel web to uncover the arena's technical details





The tangle of steel on the exterior of Herzog & de Meuron's (HdM's) Beijing National Stadium which gives it its distinctive appearance – and the nickname Bird's Nest – is in fact three interconnected structural systems: a primary structure of supporting columns; a secondary 'cladding' structure, which stiffens the columns; and the tertiary stair structures. 'The facade is not a facade, it's a structural grid,' says HdM's Jacques Herzog; 'it is

structure, ornament, space and surface. This steel superstructure, with its 332m-long roof making it one of the longest-span stadia in the world, encloses a concrete seating bowl. Between the two lies a Piranesian public concourse. The facade is open, permitting natural ventilation throughout the building, and the roof is enclosed by ETFE cushions which span between the steel members. Spectators can literally walk through the facade into the

open-air concourses below the concrete seating tiers to reach the restaurants, shops and services.

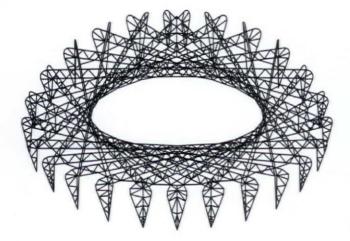
The stadium, which will host the Olympics' opening ceremony

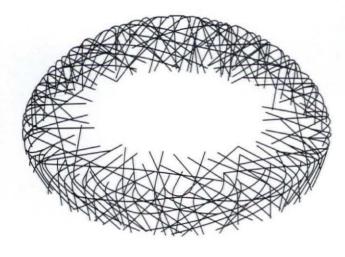
Between the seating and the superstructure lies a Piranesian concourse

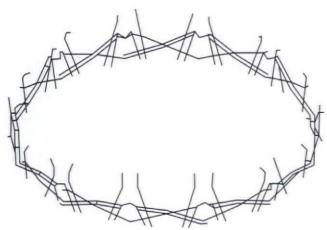
on 8 August, as well as the track and field events throughout the Games, is the result of a collaboration between HdM, Arup Sport and China Architecture Design & Research Group (CADG), with input from Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. The stadium will accommodate 91,000 spectators – which will reduce to 80,000 after the games.

Arup Sport architectural director J Parrish says: 'The curved form of the stadium evolved from the form of the seating bowl.' Creating a good stadium atmosphere was key, and that meant keeping people as >>

AJ 01.05.08









Left The hierachy or layers within the exoskeleton: Primary nodes and beams (top); secondary beams supporting the roof enclosure (middle); tertiary structure of stair towers and stringers (bottom)

Above Upper section of a butterfly column: chord sections were fabricated in pieces and welded together on site close to the action as possible. The Beijing stadium is arranged with overlapping tiers which sweep up along the stadium length, and giant video screens at the short ends. Parrish developed bespoke parametric software in MicroStation to model viewing distances and sightlines, which enabled comparison of different seating options in days, rather than the weeks it might have previously taken to draw the necessary sections by hand. Some 33 subtly different versions were considered.

With the seating bowl defined, the double-curved shape of the roof developed fairly quickly, with the team using physical models to explore design possibilities. The double-curved saddle that sweeps from 68.5m at its highest to 40.1m is an ellipse cut from the

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Left Concrete seating bowl with ETFE enclosure

Below The seating bowl design went through 33 iterations



inner ring of a torus (doughnut). Herzog describes the stadium design as 'a vase for people to come together with a clear ornamental position from a distance', yet with a 'chaotic abstract quality' at close range. Parrish likens it to 'the cracked glaze on a porcelain vase' – a contemporary take on traditional China.

In engineering terms, a vase on this scale was quite a challenge, but the busy facade belies a rigorous structural grid, with a hierarchy of layers within the steel exoskeleton. The primary structure consists of pairs of trusses which spring from each of 24 butterfly-shaped truss columns (each column weighs nearly 500 tonnes) and span diagonally across the stadium, tangential to the central roof opening. With

box section chords of up to 1.2 x 1.2m, the trusses and columns were fabricated in pieces, before being welded together on site to create the warped and twisted surfaces of the curved roof edge. Secondary steel box sections span 38m between main frames, and these are interspersed with the tertiary stair structures, whose

Arup's J Parrish likens the design to 'the cracked glaze on a porcelain vase'

stringers are indistinguishable from the primary or secondary members.

Drawing package CATIA was used by the architects and engineers to model the complex geometry, before the engineers imported the models into Arup's specially adapted, iterative

structural-analysis package. All the box sections had to be analysed and CADG's engineers carried out scaled tests, with much of the engineering design aiming to reduce steel tonnage at the expense of increased fabrication. This was possible as construction workers' wages on the project are reported to have been only £3 to £4.40 per day. However the structure's shape and complexity limited the extent of engineering efficiency. About twice the amount of steel is used in the Beijing stadium walls and roof as is used in the whole of Wembley Stadium (which has steel framing to its concourses and seating tiers as well as its walls and roof).

As is the case with many Design and Build contracts, the HdM-led team faced tremendous

uncertainty as to whether the stadium would be built quite as they had designed it. The project was built by a design, build and operate consortium, the China International Trust and Investment Corporation. But in the end, the building was built exactly to its design, and the result has been so popular that it has featured in adverts and even been reborn as cyclists' helmets and bouncy castles (see AJ 17.04.08). Guang Zhaoye, chairman of the competition evaluation panel, said: 'The design is a perfect combination of elegance and simplicity. Every part of the conceptual stadium is functional.'

Fiona Cobb is a structural engineer and associate at Price & Myers



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The Critics



Designing for outer space

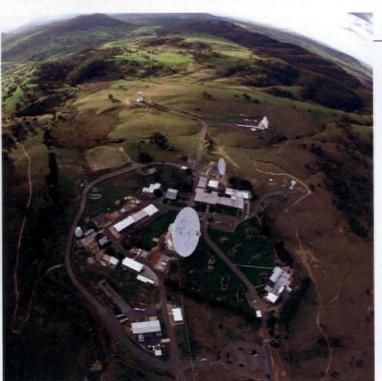
The UK is missing out on a major opportunity through a lack of investment, argues architect David Nixon. Sound familiar? Maybe, but in this case the opportunity is to design for space, a field to which he has dedicated his career. Ruth Slavid investigates

'Britain has turned its back on human space flight,' says California-based architect David Nixon, who visited the UK on 15 April to give this year's Milo lecture, 'Extreme Architecture II: A Space Odyssey'. 'It was Mrs Thatcher's decision in 1986, a policy continued by Blair and Brown.

Europe is about to embark on a major new plan for Mars exploration, which will be manned,' continues Nixon. 'If Britain does not change its mind and engage now, the door will probably close forever. There will be no skills left in this country to get involved.'

Nixon, a British expat who has lived in California since 1982, has the highest regard for British architects, and feels space design could greatly benefit from their prowess. 'From my perspective British architecture has never been better,' he says. 'Those architects could be contributing a lot to this field, but they are shut out from any of this work because of the government policy.'

He estimates there are just 20 architects worldwide involved with space design, about half are in California – and he is one of them. Space architecture was a field that Nixon fell into. In the UK he worked with >>





David Nixon, continued from page 49

Hugh Casson, Norman Foster and Nicholas Grimshaw, and in Chicago with SOM. In 1979, he set up Future Systems with Jan Kaplicky in his spare time while still employed by Richard Rogers. When a key Rogers project for a microchip factory was cancelled in 1982, Nixon left for California. As this was before the advent of the internet, there was no chance of maintaining the partnership with Kaplicky at a distance.

Instead, Nixon taught architecture at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). Then, 'out of the blue', NASA approached him to design habitation modules for the International Space Station (ISS), and he set up a team of architectural students to develop designs at full scale. In the end, the module designs were abandoned because of cost cuts, and according to Nixon, astronauts on the ISS still live in cramped and squalid conditions: 'It was like designing a five-star hotel without any private bathrooms.' But Nixon had caught the space bug and set up his own space-design consultancy, Altus Associates, in the 1990s.

A series of projects followed, both for space stations and terrestrial bases. The only one to be realised was a prototype rocket-launch facility at Mojave Airport in California, and the firm developing it subsequently went bust. But this, says Nixon, is par for the course. One of the problems with the space field is that it involves a lot

of feasibility studies, a lot of technical studies, and a lot of engineering studies far ahead of the actual application. If the company is not successful, then nothing gets done.'

Nixon also set up a separate, nonarchitectural company called Astrocourier to fly small experiments into space on existing vehicles. This was intended mainly as an educational tool, to engage young people with science, and physics in particular. After 9/11 in 2001 and the loss of the second *Columbia* space shuttle in 2003, Nixon transferred the company to Ireland, where he had support from the Irish government and the European Space Agency (ESA). His first experiment a pocket-calculator-sized piece of kit that allows schools to measure gravitational forces

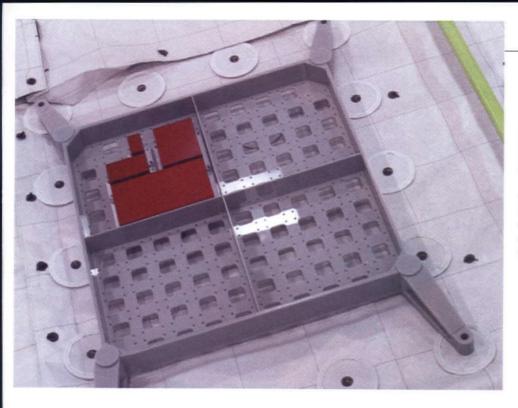
In 1979, Nixon helped set up Future Systems with Jan Kaplicky, but left for California in 1982

and so calculate a spacecraft's trajectory – has already taken flight. More construction-related is his proposal to the ESA to test materials attached to a space module for their radiation-shielding ability, by embedding tiny radiation sensors. Protection from radiation will be one of the major challenges for stays on the Moon or Mars.

Currently Nixon is based in Paris for a few months, working for ESA with Arup and Architecture + Vision on the prototype for a Planetary and Lunar Surface Simulation Laboratory (pictured right). This will be a dome that simulates the ground and lighting conditions of planetary surfaces, to be constructed in 2009 at ESTEC, the European Space Research and Technology Centre at Noordwijk in the Netherlands.

Having worked mainly with engineers, Nixon is passionate about the importance of architects in these projects. 'When architects and designers are brought in they make a difference, at a broad conceptual level and at a highly detailed level,' he says. He cites an instance in the 1970s, when American industrial designer Raymond Loewy became involved with the design of the Skylab, and





Far left Deep Space Network tracking station masterplan (1992-93)

Centre left Space station habitation module. Design research for NASA (1985-88) Left Nixon's miniature payload carrier system for the space shuttle, by Astrocourier in Ireland (2002-04)

Below The laboratory for the European Space Agency in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, to be constructed in 2009

had to argue with the engineers to give the astronauts a window.

As space travel becomes more ambitious, missions will become longer. For instance, a Mars mission will last about two years, including a year on the surface, and the basic cramped conditions of earlier missions will no longer be supportable. As the specification is driven from what Nixon describes as 'minimum conditions to habitability', architects are becoming involved with the design of lunar bases and Mars bases, and with the planning of space stations, robotic

vehicles for remote exploration of moons and planets of the solar system, and launch facilities on the ground.

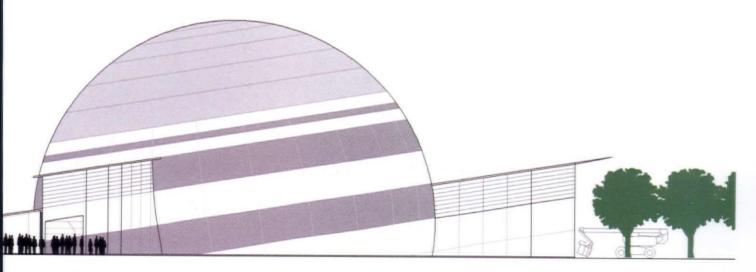
Europe now has the ability to build and launch its own space station. I believe it should do that and learn from all the mistakes of the ISS, 'Nixon says. I would like to do that.'

Does he regret not sticking with terrestrial architecture, in which he might have won the plaudits enjoyed by his former colleagues? I have regrets all the time, he says. But you can't do everything. Architects have become so specialised now. I think space is a future

field for architects and designers. On the one hand I regret that I'm not doing projects that get into the glossies, but on the other hand I'm working in a field that I find absolutely fascinating.'

This year, Nixon will board ESA's parabolic flight. The modified A-300 aircraft will repeatedly climb at a 45° angle, then freefall in a ballistic trajectory, inducing weightlessness. On that day at least, he will be one of British architecture's highest fliers.

Resume: With space building, the term 'star-chitect' takes on a whole new meaning



Critic's Choice
This book poses
a flimsy challenge to the
aesthetics of sustainability,
says Andrew Mead

'Only if there is a real idea of beauty hidden among all this rhetoric, will it be possible for sustainability to mean anything. Architecture should introduce an aesthetic aspect into the debate,' says Iñaki Ábalos of Spanish practice Ábalos and Herreros in Natural Metaphor: Essays on Architecture and Nature (Actar, £18.50). As with Construction Site (Lars Müller Publishers, £29.90, see AJ 10.04.08), ETH Zürich university is behind the book, and it's similarly unfocused in its selection of material. There's a conversation with Peter St John, for instance, which, though illuminating, has only a tenuous connection with the theme. But the publication is more rewarding than Construction Site, whether in a technical piece on heat-insulating concrete or an essay on the structural procedures of minimalist music to explore ideas of space-making.

Apart from Ábalos' contribution, the outstanding item is 'Change of Nature', written by ETH's chair of landscape architecture, Christophe Girot. It's a terse, precise critique of the landscape profession's usual offering ('Science has replaced poetry and determinism has replaced the mystery of the meadows') and a rebuttal of New Urbanism, with its false nostalgic attitude to nature. And there are some fine illustrations: I was intrigued by the Cemetery of the Unknown at Hiroshima by Hideki Yoshimatsu and Archipro (pictured below), and would have liked to read more about it, while Catherine Dumont d'Ayot's photos of 1960s architecture in Zürich, softened by mature planting, can truly be called poetic.





INTERVIEW

Christine Murray interviews Elena Ochoa Foster at the opening of V&A's Blood on Paper

Blood on Paper: The Art of the Book, Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7, until 29 June

Elena Ochoa Foster is engaging company, passionate about art and ideas. The founder of publisher Ivory Press and co-curator of newly-opened exhibition Blood on Paper: The Art of the Book at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Foster is perhaps best known in architectural circles as the former TV sex-therapist (known as 'La Doctora del Sexo' in her native Spain) who married Norman Foster in 1996.

It's a reductive profile for a former professor of psychopathology, the author of studies on schizophrenia and Alzheimer's, and a former visiting scholar at Cambridge – a career in research that she gave up shortly after her marriage to Norman.

Foster has since reinvented herself as a publisher – Ivory Press publishes *C Photo* magazine, a biannual of international photography, as well as limited-edition artist books, many of which are on display in Blood on Paper. 'The artist books are a very personal project,' says Foster. 'The team at Ivory Press are devoted to other products, such as *C Photo*, but the area of artist books is one that I handle myself.'

A stunning, if small, exhibition in the V&A's Porter Gallery, Ivory Press books by artists such as Anthony Caro, Anish Kapoor and Richard Tuttle are exhibited next to a selection of works from the National Art Library's 3,000-strong collection of artist books, selected by its senior curator,







Rowan Watson.

For an exhibition of books, most of which are in glass cases revealing only a single spread, Blood on Paper is surprisingly titillating. The concept of a 'book' is stretched to include pieces such as a suitcase of private detritus that belonged to artist Francis Bacon, and *Danger Book: Suicide Fireworks* by Cai Guo-Qiang (Ivory Press, 2008) – an exploding collection of drawings made in gunpowder and paste that can be ignited with matches sewn to its pages.

The laborious process involved in creating an artist book is revealed by *Open Secrets*, a series of twisted sculptures produced by Anthony Caro, also on display. Produced in brown card (three editions), stainless steel (three editions), bronze (10 editions), and brass (15 editions), Foster travelled throughout Europe to source materials and expertise for Caro. She hired an automotive engineer to design the mechanism that holds the book open at any angle, and enables it to close

slowly to prevent it crushing a reader's fingers.

'It's a process without any kind of a structure,' says Foster of her work with the artists. 'I devote all that an artist wishes – all my time, all the materials – with no limitations. The only thing that I want is for Caro, Kapoor, Cai Guo-Qiang or Tuttle to produce the book of their dreams.'

'Of course there are financial limits,' says Foster. 'But until now, the works have supported themselves.' This explains why Ivory Press books are so prohibitively expensive, and makes Blood on Paper a welcome opportunity to view these limited-edition masterworks. As for the books on display from the National Art Library, the entire collection is public and available for use during gallery hours; a resource you'll want to exploit once you've glimpsed them under glass.

Resume: Lady Foster's life is an open book, currently on show at the V&A

LECTURE

Renzo Piano turned on the charm at the Tate Modern, says Shumi Bose

Renzo Piano, the Architecture Foundation's Real Architecture Spring Talks, 15 April at the Starr Auditorium, Tate Modern, London

At the third in the Architecture Foundation's series of Real Architecture talks, Renzo Piano spoke with candour, charm and paternal pride about his *New York Times* building, which opened late last year.

According to Piano, it's the second-highest building on the Manhattan skyline, and caused great debate regarding post-9/11 security. But in his talk, Piano argued persuasively that, apart from the technical security requirements (hidden in the building's fabric), openness is the best response to the terrorism threat. 'The tendency is to make buildings like bunkers,' he said. 'But we came to the conclusion that transparency is safer than opacity.'

Equally interesting was the discussion of the New York Times building as a response to another clear and present danger - the threat of virtual media on print journalism. Perhaps this is why the New York Times drafted in one of Europe's best-known architects - reaffirming the all-but-doomed medium with a 52storey totem. As Piano pointed out, the newspaper is intrinsically associated with New York's identity - 'The paper gave its name to Times Square, not vice versa' - and needs to be tangibly connected to city life to ensure its continued supremacy. The crystalline box, scantily clad in white ceramic tubes, is situated in the core of the Big Apple. By day, the editors overlook the city they serve, while at night the facade is a warm beacon on the skyline. As Piano said, 'The building becomes the speaking instrument of the newspaper to the town.'

Piano's talk was peppered with anecdotes and tangential visuals. His enthusiasm was contagious – as the event closed, he grabbed and hugged audience-member Richard Rogers, greeting him as his fellow 'Beaubourg bad-boy'.

Resume: The Architecture Foundation played the Piano forte at the Tate Modern

TELEVISION

It's refreshing to see a city so brilliantly used as it is in The Wire, says Chris Hall

The Wire: The Complete Fourth Season, HBO Video, is out now on DVD, £39.99

Baltimore is known for its redbrick rowhouses, with their flat roofs and marble stoops, which radiate in all directions in neat rows and lend the city a certain autumnal solidity, as if it's hunkering down for winter. We're so conditioned to seeing the singular buildings of Chicago, New York, LA and Miami on film or television that it's refreshing to see the vernacular architecture of a fairly unmediated city so brilliantly used as it is in *The Wire*, an award-winning 'cop show' originally broadcast on American network HBO (the fourth season is newly released on DVD).

The Wire is not built around character, it's built around Baltimore. The show's opening credits jam the cheek of the City Hall rotunda up against the jowl of poverty-stricken rowhouses. The city aids and abets – the storm drains carry away the guns used in shootings, the warren of back alleys is used to escape, the poor lighting, the vacant houses... As the bodies pile up, an overhead shot picks out the centre circle of a basketball court-cummorgue, so that it evokes a cross hair. The city is a fortress, the streets are its ramparts, and a row of cars are its battlements.

Major characters come and go, miniempires rise and fall, but the city remains. The fourth series focuses on the drug gangs of West Baltimore, set against a backdrop of a mayoral election. The police are increasingly baffled as to the apparently bloodless coup that allows young Marlo Stanfield (Jamie Hector) to take over the drug trade from Avon Barksdale (Wood Harris), currently languishing in prison. Where are the bodies, they keep asking?

In one of the audio commentaries, film director John Waters talks about his fascination with the districts of Baltimore, one of the most segregated cities in the US: 'They're like little islands,' says Waters. As one of the cops says: 'If any terrorists did fuck up the Western [West Baltimore], would anyone be able to tell the difference?' On his city-wide tour from the



comfort of his car, mayoral candidate Tommy Carcetti says of a Baltimore district, 'Middle East? That's about right. Fuckin' Fallujah.' Even street names for drugs evoke a war zone: 'Pandemie', 'WMD', the corner touts shout.

'Don't like to speak in no rooms,' says character Stanfield, his base being an abandoned skateboard park, with red plastic and leatherette chairs for meetings where no surveillance can pick up their conversations—the drug dealer's open—plan office. A meeting of 'the co-op', a collection of rival drug gangs,

is made to echo the war-room scene in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove* (1964), with them sat around a circular table with a grand light hovering over them.

The Wire strips bare the socio-economic and political layers of US consumer capitalism to reveal its rotting underbelly. In refusing to place a moral frame around the screen, or spoonfeed us with patronising exposition, The Wire demands our attention.

Resume: The rowhouses of Baltimore are the unsung heroes of *The Wire*

5 things to do this week

1 Des Res

This conference and exhibition series examines the planning, development and design issues affecting London's housing market.

Until 14 June at New London Architecture,
The Building Centre, Store Street, London WC1.

www.newlondonarchitecture.org/desres

20 G S Crawford

A never-before-seen archive of photographs, featuring buildings, fields and burial sites, collected by British field archaeologist Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford (1886-1957). Until 14 June at John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton. www.hansardgallery.org.uk

 $\it 3$ Dan Dare and the Birth of Hi-Tech Britain

Learn how rockets and radar inspired the birth of hi-tech Britain.

Until 25 October at the Science Museum, London SW7. www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

4 Tatton Park Biennial 2008

Experience the inaugural Tatton Park Biennial, a new contemporary art event featuring new work inspired by Tatton Park.

3 May-28 September, Tatton Park, Knutsford,

3 May-28 September, Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire. www.tattonparkbiennial.org

${\it 5}$ London Festival of Architecture

Snap up tickets for the David Chipperfield lecture (3 July), the OMA symposium (5 July) and the Peter Ackroyd lecture (6 July).

Tickets on sale from 5 May at www.lfa2008.org

Products

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AJ ENQUIRY 201

Kalzip has launched an upgraded, fully integrated website. The new site boasts superior product and technical content, design enhancement and ease of navigation. Key section headings and one-touch picture icons make the site easy to use, while the comprehensive technical package includes drawings and details. www.kalzip.com

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The B-Line/2by2 strip light (pictured here at 30 St Mary Axe in London) is available in lengths from 700mm to 1,600mm and at up to 80W. The lights may be joined in series and cut to special lengths. Integralballast, ceiling- and wall-mounted, bookshelf, workstation and reading-desk versions are available in a wide range of finishes.

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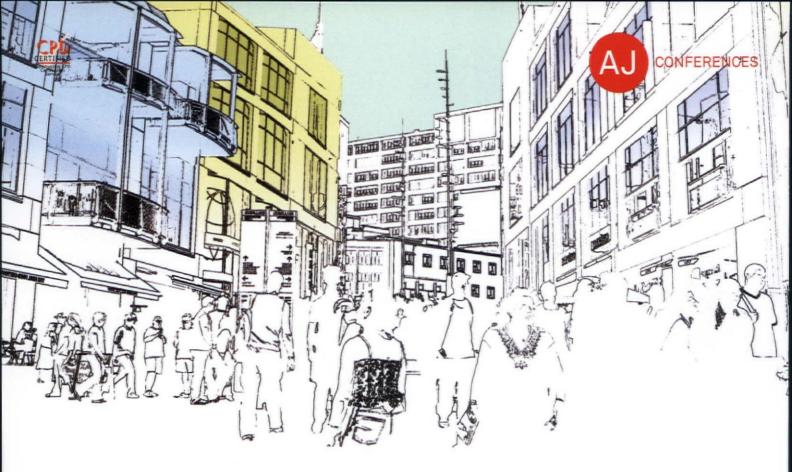
www.protectacycle.co.uk

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Wire-mesh safety fencing supplied by Troax UK has been used to secure potentially hazardous electrical equipment at a new data centre, recently set up by a leading financial institution. The fencing prevents unauthorised access to electrical-control systems, which are located within a busy walkway in the new building.



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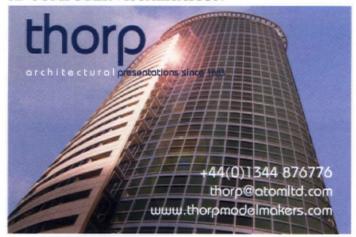
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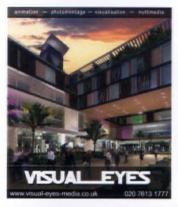
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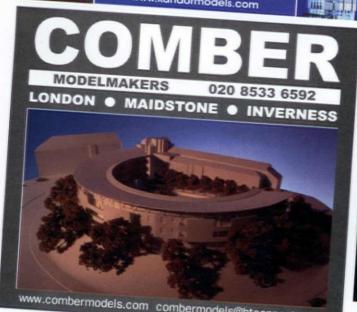
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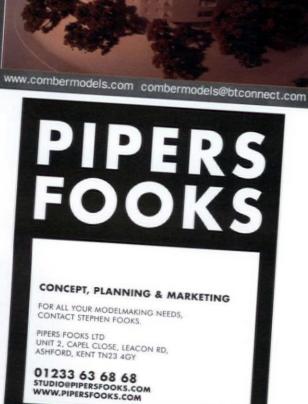
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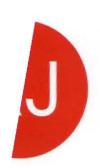
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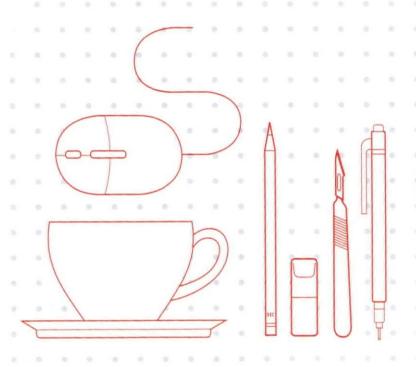




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TENDERS



Expressions of interest are sought from Architectural Practices Manchester City Centre – Large Scale Grade 'A' office development

Expressions of interest are sought from suitably experienced architectural practices who wish to be considered for selection on an initial long list of 6-10 practices for the role of concept architect for the re-development of Elisabeth House on St Peter's Square.

The criteria for selection will be based on a review of the following:

- A track record of the design of commercial projects that have demonstrated flair, imagination and creativity
- Practice experience of designing Grade 'A' BREEAM Excellent office space
- · Notable awards received for commercial office projects
- · Practice size, including number of staff and last three year's turnover
- · Brief case studies and key contact references for the above projects
- · Ability to work as part of a tightly knit project team
- Ability to demonstrate accessibility to Manchester City Centre
- Knowledge of local planning policy
- Ability to attend briefing/presentation days on specified dates

Please forward this information to the address below by Friday 16 May 2008.

Submissions will be reviewed during w/c 19 May, followed by the selection of an initial 'longlist' of 6-10 practices. A briefing document will then be sent to the chosen practices on 27 May and each will be asked to respond to this within 10 days, providing initial thoughts on the form of re-development on the site. A short list of 3 or 4 practices will then be chosen and each practice given a further 3 weeks to develop the proposal further.

The successful practice will be selected following presentations in early July and will be taken on to develop the scheme through to RIBA stage D/E.

Please submit your expression of interest and supporting documentation - in hard copy and PDF format - to:

James Nicholson

Argent Estates Limited (acting on behalf of NEWCO GP - Public/Private JV Company)

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Email - james.nicholson@argentgroup.plc.uk







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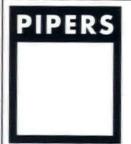
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Ref: L565 (Hannah)

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Ref: 3721 (Philip)

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Architects/Technologists Brighton/Worthing/Chichester c£28k-£42k+Flexitime
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Ref: 3690 (Philip)

Architects Farringdon/Old Street circa £48k - £52k
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Ref: L563 (Hannah)

Architects & Technologists

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Software used is AutoCAD.

Ref: 3632 (Philip)

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ATKINS



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ILLUSTRATION BY HANNA MELIN

Ian Martin. Nobody is immune from Dusty's virulent blueplaque virus

MONDAY. That's four of my assortable housing schemes 'put on pause' today. Fat Boy Prescott's greedy target of three million new homes by Christmas will never be achieved at this rate. Perhaps local authorities, instead of simply controlling residential development, should just build low-cost homes to rent. No, it's crazy.

TUESDAY. I'm locked in a childish game of dare with Andiamo Messalini, the haughty young Italian designer so full of himself he's had to move up a bra size.

We're the last two left from a private competition shortlist to design a world-class landmark icon. The client is a member of a royal dynasty in the Middle East. He's bored, pointless, fabulously wealthy and keen to name the world's most prestigious building after himself. The brief is vague on location ('though must be visible from further away than anything else') and purpose ('could be hotel or offices, but no ladies above the 10th floor and client's name to be permanently illuminated in the sky above the building...').

Messalini and I survive because we proposed the two tallest towers. Since then, of course, the world of design has moved on. Now a landmark building must be a net contributor to the environment. I bluffed, proposing a tower that was not only carbon-minus but generated 10 times as much power as it used. The Italian Galleon came back with a revolving tower that can regulate the weather within a 15km radius and produce enough 'kind electricity' to heat Sweden.

Fine. I'm suggesting a Turbine Tower that takes occupants on a spectacular journey to the centre of the earth, scooping up precious hyperenergy from the earth's molten core before emerging on the other side of the world like Stephenson's Rocket, but much greener.

WEDNESDAY. Brilliant. Messalini's got the job. A relief, as I'm not 100 per cent convinced the whole molten core thing would have been sustainable.

THURSDAY. Redesign London for the London Festival of Architecture, making it more effete and 'interim' looking.

FRIDAY. Lunch with Dusty Penhaligon, the conservactionist. He's getting worse. He won't start a course until he has photographed and documented each plate of food for posterity.

He's got this ambitious campaign to preserve every single 20th-century building, on the grounds that anything less would be 'giving in to the terrorists, and futurists'. The buildings have all been collected in one vast totalitarian database. Now Dusty and his mates are trying to get a blue plaque on every one.

'OK, say the Beatles stayed overnight in Preston once. Blue plaque, yeah? One of them pops out to the pub, or maybe to get a paper, that's another two. Plus, who saw that Beatles gig? Thousands. Where did they live? Let's find out and get some blue plaques up. Unless the fascists who run the system are saying that seeing the Beatles isn't as important as being the Beatles...'

Memo to self: stop having lunch with Dusty. He's deranged AND tedious. That combination can push a person to a fourth Bloody Mary before the starters have even been photographed.

I do that thing where you screen someone's conversation out by nodding and thinking of something else. I choose a fantasy in which I am the manager of a superstar architects progrock band called Unfrozen. Herzog & de Meuron's duelling guitars. Frank Gehry on stick bass. Daniel Libeskind on clavinet. Rem Koolhaas on theremin. Lord Rogers on pishpish-widdly-fiddly-bap-bap-de-pish-pish drums with his mouth hanging open, looking confused.

"...plus, you'd only need one flat in a 1970s block to be listed. If it's on the fourth floor yeah, what are they gonna do? Demolish the rest and leave it propped up on a big pile of bricks with an extendable ladder to get in and out? That's completely ridiculous!"

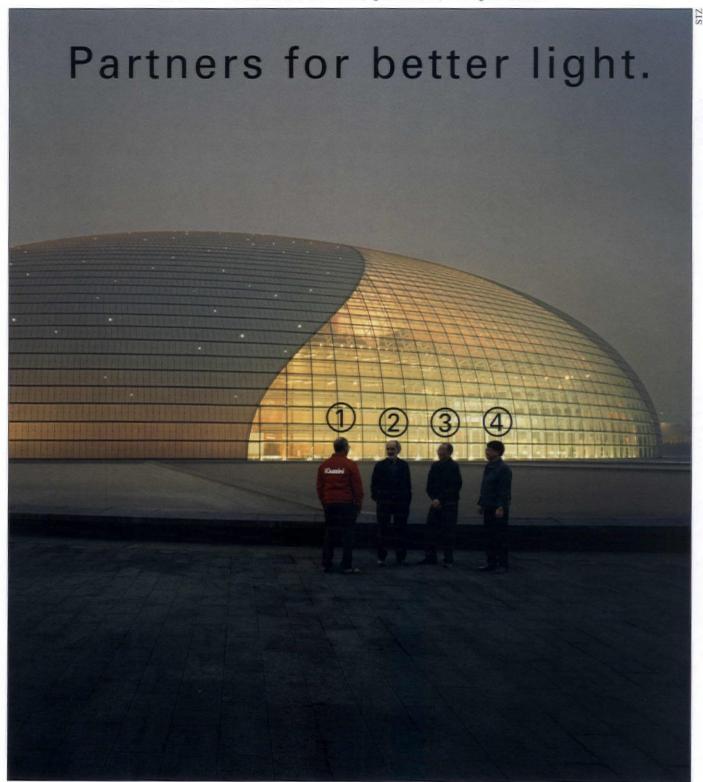
Inside my nodding head, Unfrozen are playing a gig in a new concert hall commended by the *Observer*. Shit, look out guys! The roof's collapsing, right in the middle of a drum solo! Waddly-piddly-widdly-thump-thump-dethump-bump-crash!

Oh good, here's my pudding.

SATURDAY. Morning: Reverse Functional Dualism. Afternoon: Inverse Proportionalism.

SUNDAY. Earn a blue plaque for the house by staying in the recliner all day inventing things. Why not fashion cheap housing from specially-processed 'hard air'?

This Week's Top 10: Client Complaints. WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK/IANMARTIN



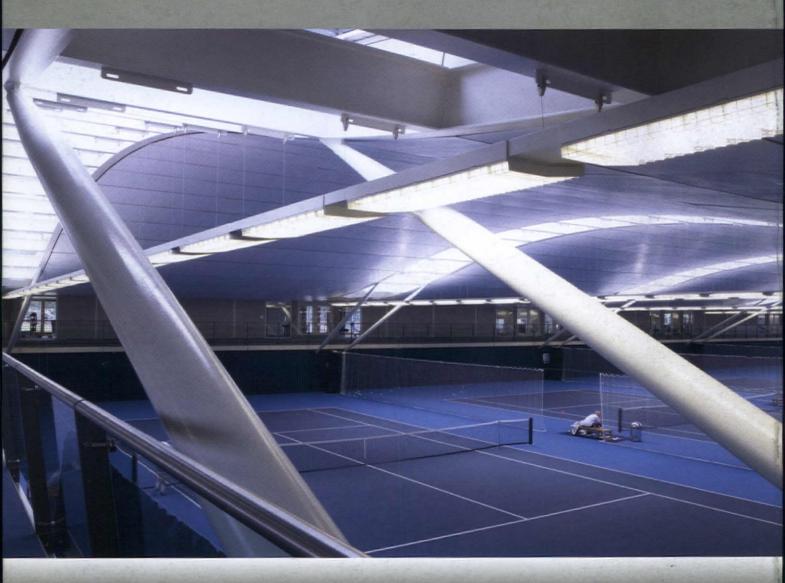
Beijing, National Centre for the Performing Arts. Natural daylight gradually fills the interior spaces as morning breaks, seeping in through the huge glass dome. Later it blends harmoniously with artificial light, engineered to take over discreetly as night falls over the city. For over 30 years, iGuzzini has been working alongside great designers, architects and lighting designers (as well, of course, as clients sensitive to this issue) to give the world better light.

Architectural design: Paul Andreu ② associated with ADPi and BIAD. Concept & Schematic lighting design for Dome Interior: Lighting Planners Associates Inc. ④. Client: The Grand National Theatre Committee, Wan Siquan ③. iGuzzini Partner Assistance: ①. Product design: Le Perroquet, by Piano Design; Light Up, by Jean Michel Wilmotte; Zoom, by Bruno Gecchelin. iguzzini.com, iGuzzini illuminazione spa, Italy.

Better Light for a Better Life. iQuzzini







Steel. The sustainable facts

WHOLE LIFE. Steel construction has sustainability benefits throughout its lifecycle, from responsible sourcing of raw materials, manufacture, construction, efficient building operation, flexibility for change of use and end of life product reuse or multicycling.

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