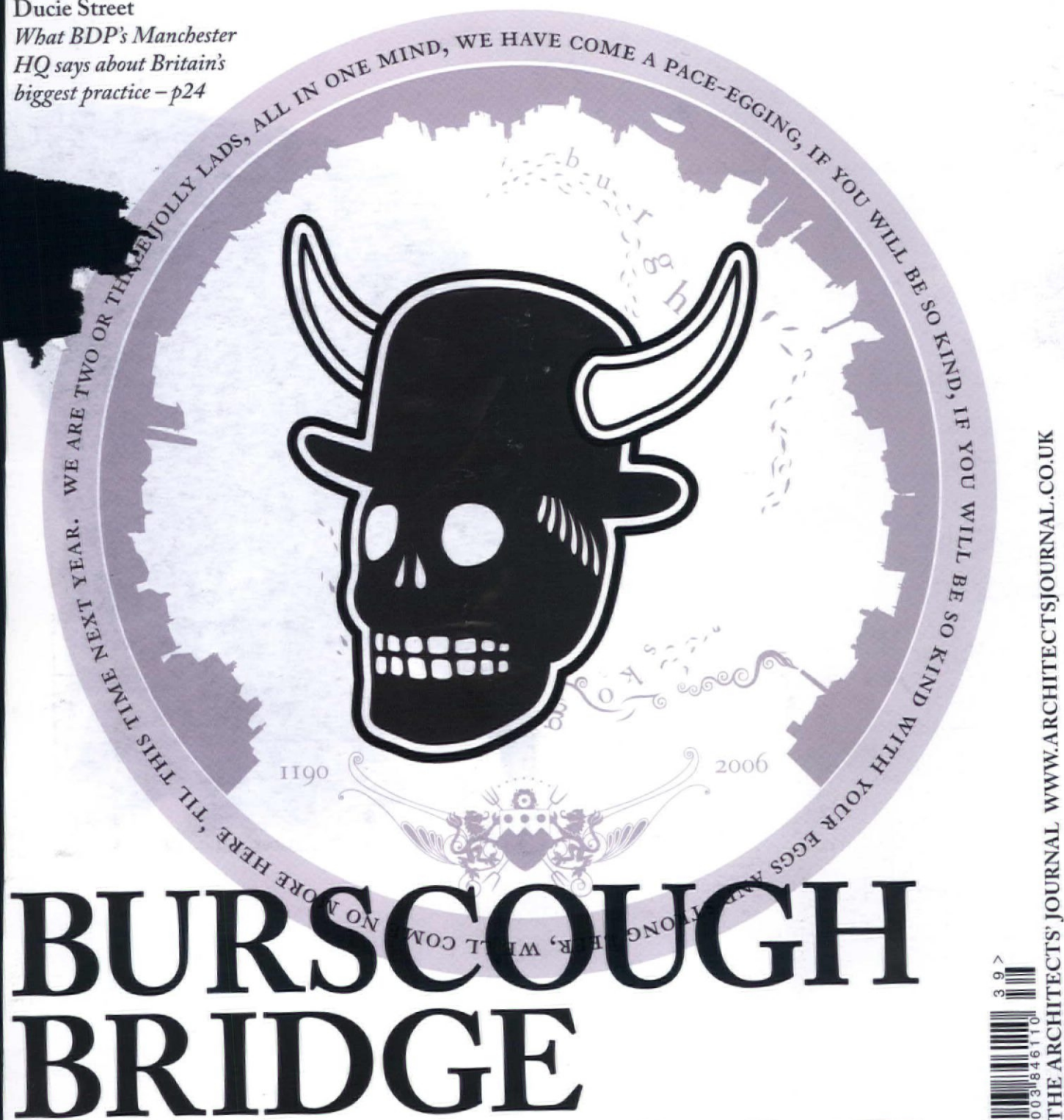


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BURSCOUGH BRIDGE

How 'fairytale' landscape design changed a Lancashire village – page 20



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Back issues and subscriptions Tel: 0844 848 8858,

website: www.architectsjournal.co.uk/subscription

Cover Smiling Wolf

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The Architects' Journal is registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ©2008. Published by Emap Inform, a part of Emap Ltd. Printed in the UK by Headley Brothers Ltd.

AJ (ISSN 0003 8466) is published 47 issues, weekly except Christmas and August.

Subscription price is \$420. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT RAHWAY, NJ and additional mailing offices. Postmaster send address corrections to: AJ, c/o Mercury International Ltd, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, New Jersey 07001. Distributed in the US by Mercury International Ltd, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001.



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ARB'S FEE HIKE 'OUTRAGEOUS'

Above-inflation retention fee increase slammed by Reform Group members

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) has pushed through an above-inflation rise in its annual retention fee.

Last week, the ARB board rubberstamped an increase in next year's fee from £78 to £86, a rise of over 10 per cent – almost double the current rate of inflation.

The hike was voted through by the board despite opposition from the ARB Reform Group. The latest rise means the annual

retention fee has ballooned by 36 per cent since 2002.

ARB Reform Group member Nick Tweddell called the move 'outrageous', while fellow member George Oldham said: 'The fee has been put up unnecessarily at a time when people are being made redundant and others tightening their belts and forgoing wage increases.'

'But the board is getting its increase – even though it has

£1.4 million sloshing around in reserves. It's time to draw a line in the sand,' added Oldham.

ARB chief executive Alison Carr said: 'The 10.2 per cent [rise] must be seen in the light of the fact that there have been two years where the board decided that the retention fee should not be increased to cover rises in operating costs.'

Other revelations to emerge from the board meeting include

an increase in the prescription exam fee from £1,210 to £1,390 (a 13 per cent hike), the establishment of a new CPD competency panel, and a proposed change to the election system. According to sources, the board wants to stagger elections of architect members to the board, potentially removing them altogether, leaving the choice of architects to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. *Richard Waite*



CHIPPERFIELD SHORTLISTED AT NATIONAL THEATRE

David Chipperfield is among the finalists vying to masterplan the future development of the National Theatre on London's South Bank.

The five-strong shortlist also includes Dixon Jones, Levitt Bernstein, Allies and Morrison, and Haworth Tompkins, which has recently completed the revamp of the theatre's studio block.

The firms will be asked to come up with ideas for creating greater permeability in Denys Lasdun's 1967 Brutalist masterpiece and improving access to the theatre's education facilities.

Any development will have to tie in with a new conservation management plan, to be unveiled next month. *Richard Waite*

PRUE CHILES HEADS UP SHEFFIELD SCHOOL

The University of Sheffield has appointed Prue Chiles as its new director of architecture.

Chiles replaces previous incumbent Jeremy Till, who left the position after nine years to become dean for architecture and the built environment at the University of Westminster.

Chiles was appointed as a senior lecturer in architecture at Sheffield in 1999, and ran the

MARCH course until 2002, when she became director of Sheffield University's Bureau of Design – an architectural design research unit.

Speaking to the AJ about her appointment, Chiles said: 'One important factor that I hope to achieve is to build on the intellectual agenda we have developed in Sheffield over the past five years or so, as a socially

motivated and politically aware school.'

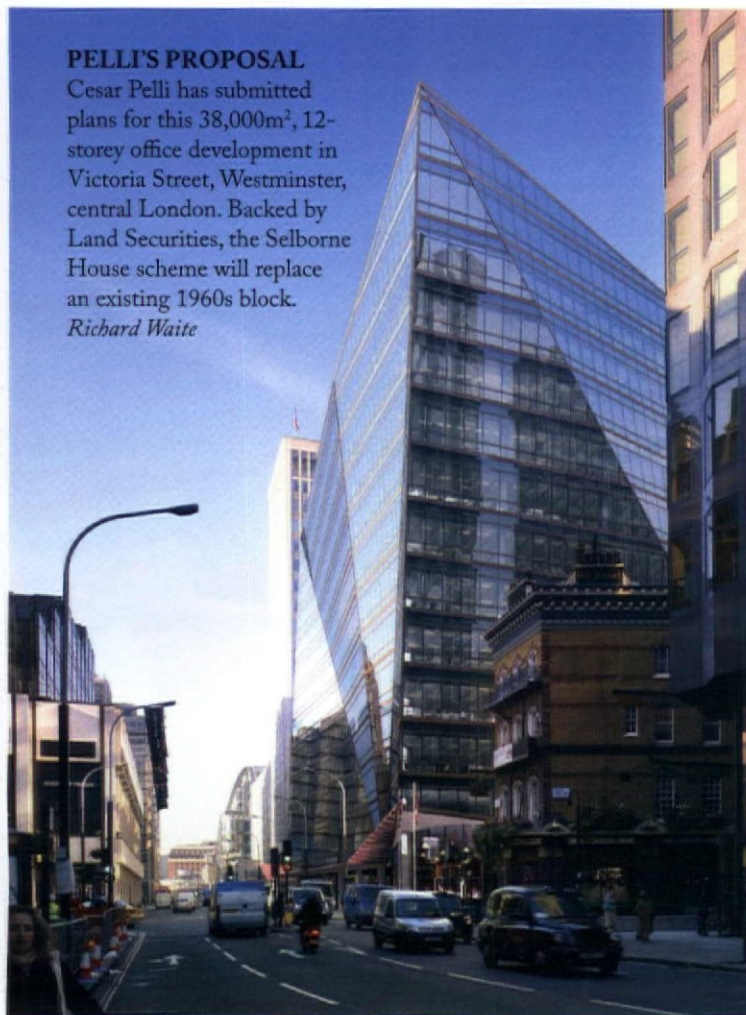
Chiles added that Sheffield needed to increase its profile not only in the UK but internationally.

'We are very keen to be seen as a regional school with an international reputation,' she said. 'In the past we have been terrible at publicising ourselves and what we do. I need to make this a priority.' *Richard Vaughan*

PELLI'S PROPOSAL

Cesar Pelli has submitted plans for this 38,000m², 12-storey office development in Victoria Street, Westminster, central London. Backed by Land Securities, the Selborne House scheme will replace an existing 1960s block.

Richard Waite



HANDLE WINNER ANNOUNCED

Stuart Martin of London-based Walker and Martin has won the AJ/Allgood competition to design a door handle.

Called 'Can you Handle It?' the competition received entries from 85 architects, of whom six were shortlisted.

The others were Alex Llusia, Dimitri Warner, Andrew Weston, Stuart Hatcher and Sebastian Berne.

Martin's design (*below*) is a brass casting that can have a range of metallic and coloured finishes.

Allgood will now look at producing the design. *Ruth Slavid*

Read about the development of Martin's design in September's AJ Specification.



THIS WEEK ON THE WEB

BDP UNVEILS CRICKET GROUND OVERHAUL

BDP has unveiled its new designs for the 'radical' redevelopment of Lancashire County Cricket Club's home at Old Trafford, Manchester. Part of a larger 20ha regeneration strategy around the ground, the scheme includes plans for two new grandstands. A planning application is expected to be submitted 'imminently' and work could start on site early next year.

THREE MILLION HOMES TARGET 'NOT ENOUGH'

The government's target to build three million new homes by 2020 will not be enough to meet demand, a new report claims. The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) document has warned that at least a further 500,000 new homes will be required in the next 12 years.

FOA'S BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET UNVEILED

The first images of Foreign Office Architects' £600 million overhaul of Birmingham's New Street Station were unveiled last week (18 September). The station will be covered in reflective sheets of carefully crafted metal, with three digital displays marking the station's entrances.

ENTER THE AJ'S SMALL PROJECTS AWARDS

The AJ is looking for entries to the 2009 Small Projects Awards, sponsored by Rambøll Whitbybird. Each entry must have been built between 1 January 2007 and 30 October 2008 for under £250,000 and be previously unpublished. Shortlisted schemes will be published in the AJ in January. The deadline for entries is 31 October 2008.

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CREDIT CRUNCH STALLS REGENERATION

With banks failing and developers running out of cash, *Richard Vaughan* and *Richard Waite* look at how the financial crisis affects three UK urban centres

MILTON KEYNES *'None of the financial models made any sense'*

Milton Keynes was earmarked as a 'target growth area' by the government back in 2003, but since the beginning of this year, the proposals to swell the town's population by 160,000 have been hamstrung. Milton Keynes Partnerships had hoped to deliver 1,700 new homes this year, but that number is closer to 800.

All the big housebuilders sought projects in Milton Keynes, with the likes of Taylor Wimpey, Barratt and Crest Nicholson putting forward proposals. However, as the financial downturn has accelerated, a host of projects have been put on hold.

'We're not immune,' says Milton Keynes Partnership's chief operating officer John Lewis.

'We've seen the immediate effect the financial situation has had. New business has quietened down, with the large housebuilders no longer bidding for sites. But where they're already on site they are committed to completing.'

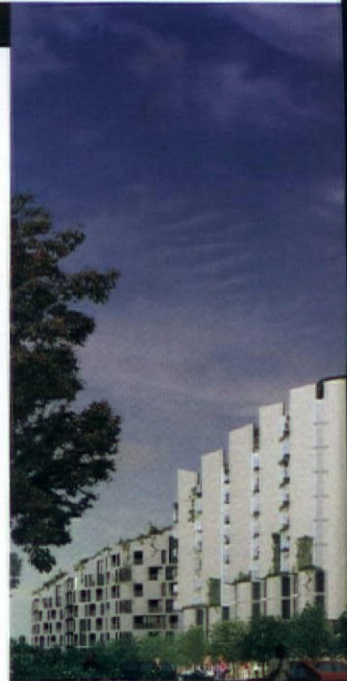
Mike De'ath, director of HTA Architects, which has designed elements of the West End One housing development in Milton Keynes (now on ice), says: 'It would be very wrong to say the regeneration of Milton Keynes is dead, but three of our projects are on hold.'

'The problem was people mistook buy-to-let as regeneration. We became carried away, letting investors buy whole blocks

of flats. Regeneration is about the lives of people and communities.'

Alison Brooks, principal of Alison Brooks Architects, which was also working on West End One, says: 'The problem is that none of the financial models that these developments were based on made any sense. We have to come up with a new way of valuing housing. Rather than the speculative, get-rich-quick approach it needs to be a longer-term vision of society.'

Brooks does suggest that the downturn could offer hope for the town; lower land values could mean higher-quality housing developments in the future. 'Places,' Brooks adds, 'people won't want to move from.'



Benoy's Westfield shopping centre in Bradford is still just a hole in the ground



Below West End One, Milton Keynes, by Rick Mather, Alison Brooks and HTA Architects
Right Campbell Park Phase One, Milton Keynes by HTA Architects and Maccleanor Lavington



BRADFORD *'It will be two years before things get going again – and we will again be at the back of the queue'*

The credit crunch could not have come at a worse time for Bradford, a city that has been slowly working up Will Alsop's ambitious lake-based masterplan since 2004.

Over the last weeks the true toll of the financial slow-down has become ever more apparent. Earlier this month the developers behind Glenn Howells' £150 million Citygate tower, Asquith Properties, went under (AJ online 17.09.08).

Other key projects such as the £320 million Westfield shopping centre, designed by Benoy, have

stalled. The only evidence of the scheme is a huge 'scar-like' hole in the city centre (*left*).

Elsewhere, the £350 million Channel development, which was first unveiled by the Robinson

The only evidence of the scheme is a 'scar-like' hole

Design Group three years ago has yet to start on site.

'The city's regeneration had only just got going,' says Adam Clark, founder of local practice Halliday Clark.

'It will now be two years before things get going again – and Bradford will again be at the back of the queue behind the other regional towns,' he adds.

John Pennington, a local entrepreneur who has ambitions on the city's Odeon site, says: '[I was recently told] by the commercial banking arm of the Yorkshire Bank in Bradford that "lending of any nature was out of the question".'

'They are so frightened... they are only putting monies into their own pockets for their own survival'.

Maud Marshall, the head of Bradford Centre Regeneration, is realistic about the financial pressures, but has vowed to press on. She says: 'There's no doubt the current economic climate is having an impact.'

'But what's important for Bradford is to give off the signal that we are still open for business – even if business is quiet.'

She adds: 'Where there are projects with really strong public support and where we [as the public sector] lead we have to be seen to be carrying on.' >>>

The soon-to-be-completed Meridian Quay in Swansea by Latitude Architects



SWANSEA *It tends to be the sites on the fringes that are bearing the brunt*

The regeneration of Swansea came at the height of the UK's financial boom. Cash pumped into the city's docklands by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) five years ago resulted in a rash of high-density residential developments.

The redevelopment plans for Swansea's docklands – called SA1 – put the Welsh city on developers' radars, but since then the credit crunch has put many of these residential schemes on hold.

It is thought the financial turmoil has added up to two years to the development programme of Swansea's docklands.

WAG development manager Steve Piper, who oversees the SA1 development, says: 'Anybody who says the recent market conditions haven't had an impact is not telling the truth.'

Demand for office space has never been higher

'Residential has gone through the floor, but on the commercial side things are still doing OK.'

Piper even says the demand for office space in Swansea has never been higher. He says: 'The market has been stagnant, and we're now offering a new product, which people want a piece of,' he says.

WAG's investment in SA1 also spurred the local council to instigate its own 'vision' for the city centre. A framework was developed in March 2007, and by January this year Hammerson and Urban Splash had been appointed to develop the £1 billion project.

According to Swansea Council's Huw Mowbray, the fallout of the housing market collapse will have little impact on Hammerson's project, but it has readdressed value of sites.

'Before the credit crunch there wasn't such a big differentiation between the prime city-centre sites and the secondary sites,' he

says. 'What the current market conditions have done is brought that balance back into focus. It tends to be the secondary sites – the sites on the fringes – that are bearing the brunt.'

Projects in the city that are still to be completed are also having problems, with some residential developments struggling to meet their projected sales.

Graham Davis of Swansea-based Powell Dobson Architects, says: 'There are projects in the city that are two-thirds completed that are not selling anywhere near what they hoped they would be, but at least they will be completed.' ■

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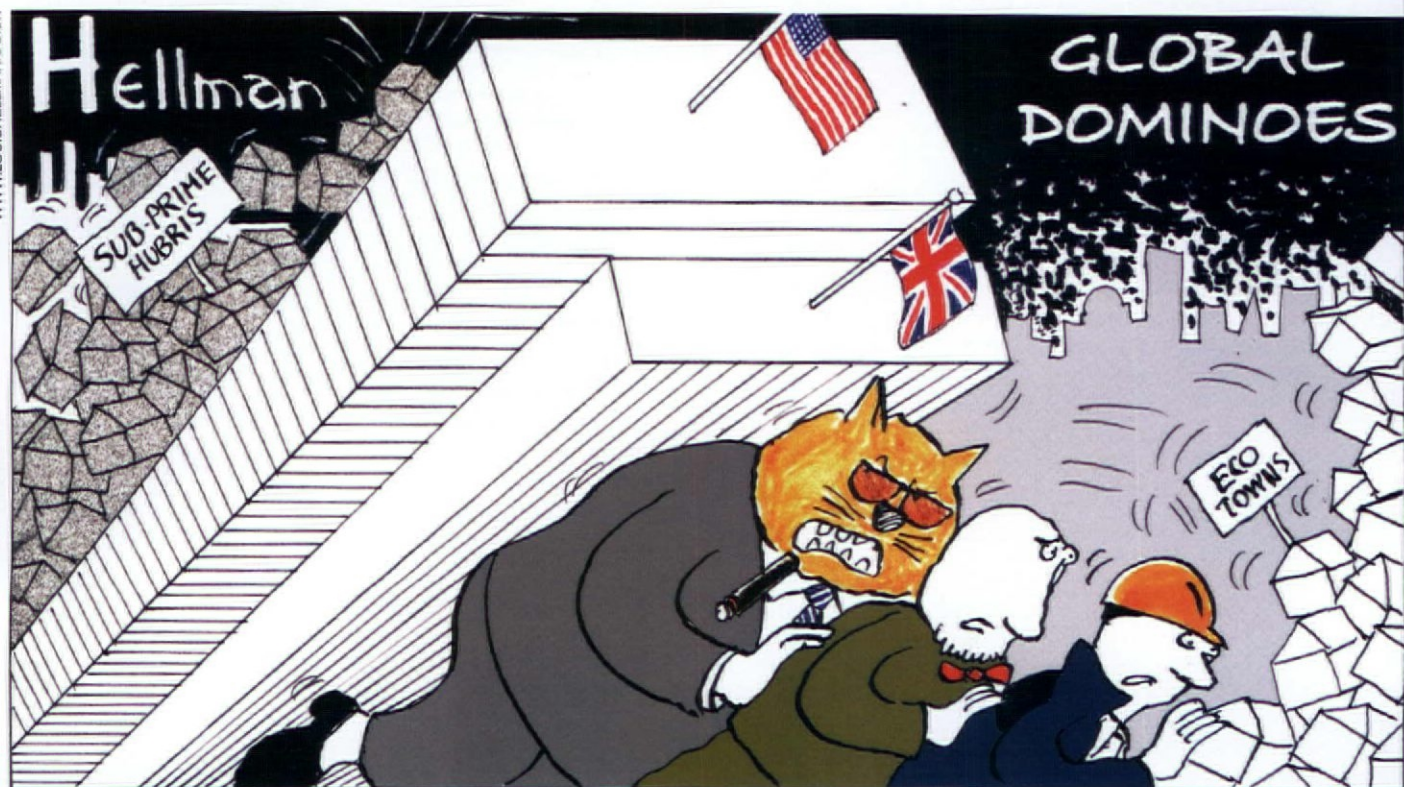
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FRONT DOOR

While enjoying a stroll in south London's Telegraph Hill, Astragal was shocked to see the legend SMC scrawled on this scruffy doorway (below). Astragal has heard rumours of cutbacks; could this be new premises for a Peckham branch of the listed architectural company?



STEPPING OUT

A glut of architects have been designing shoes lately, and

pictured below is an attempt at a light, modern flip-flop by **Julian Hakes** of Hakes Associates. Hakes, who told Astragal he was disappointed with **Zaha Hadid's** 'just so normal' mid-height heels, has designed his 'Mojito' shoe from a single piece of composite material (carbon fibre and leather). The sandal wraps around the foot and has been hailed as 'the Holy Grail' of shoe design because it fits all shapes and sizes. Hakes admits the prototyping stage was dangerous – his trial run involved wrapping his foot in tracing paper and masking tape and cutting it off with a scalpel.



TOP OF THE TREE

Astragal tuned into Channel 4's new home show, *The Price of Property*, which this week focused on Manchester, and imagine his surprise when **Ian Simpson**, the architect of the city's rebirth as a buy-to-let paradise, appeared. Simpson was interviewed in his Beetham Tower penthouse as he wandered around his interior 'garden' – an olive grove on the 47th floor – and confirmed that at £8 million, his was the most expensive pad in Manchester's city centre.

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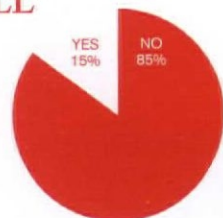
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THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Are RIBA competitions worth entering?

Next week's question: Do you feel that your job is under threat as a result of the credit crunch?

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VOLUME 228, ISSUE 11
GREATER LONDON HOUSE
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Leader We can't let the credit crunch scupper the regeneration of our towns and cities, says *Kieran Long*

This week, our news team has looked at three regeneration projects at different states of stasis (see pages 8-10). We found that most stakeholders are still bullish, but pragmatic and are refocusing their objectives.

What effect will the financial crisis have on our cities? I spoke recently to a senior regeneration director in the Thames Gateway who was optimistic that the cooling of land values could lead to positive outcomes. Some residential-led, high-rise proposals are looking shaky there, and the credit crunch might have the positive outcome of preventing the architectural disasters that have been inflicted around the fringes of the Olympic site and on Stratford High Street. Now is the time for more sober proposals.

But London is its own situation. We focus this week on places more vulnerable to the chronic lack of liquidity in property. In Milton Keynes, just an hour's drive from the capital, work continues, but starts have stopped. The problems are in the post for places like this. And if places like MK are suffering, the government's housing targets are ridiculous and will never be fulfilled according to published timescales. Housing Minister Caroline Flint admitted as much this week.

It looks like Bradford has got on the retail regeneration gravy train just too late. Although developer Westfield had signed tenants including Debenhams and Marks & Spencer for its £320 million shopping centre, there is no

sign of any building. Margins are low for developers in places like Bradford. The city's plans to build out Will Alsop's lake-based masterplan should be encouraged. A high-quality public realm can't hurt value.

And for Swansea this is an opportunity to focus on priorities. It seems there are now two tiers of development there, and if you're designing one of the low-priority schemes, you've probably downed tools already.

The lessons for government? Find a way of releasing funds so banks will lend money. For the first time in more than a generation, places like these have plans and aspirations. If we miss this chance then it'll be back to square one for too many towns. kieran.long@emap.com

Opinion Buildings Schools for the Future reforms didn't go far enough to deliver great schools, says *Ty Goddard*

The government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme is a multi-billion pound commitment to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England over the next 15 years. So how are we doing, five years on from the launch of BSF?

We're pleased that the government – and Partnership for Schools (PfS), which administers BSF – acknowledge that there have been difficulties in the early stages. Targets have been missed and that's disappointing.

Effective school investment doesn't happen without a working partnership. To design and build great schools, lots of disparate groups need to learn to talk to each other: children, teachers, local authorities, architects, construction firms and suppliers.

We're pleased that PfS took the time and energy to review and streamline the procurement process for BSF. The recommendations,

which include reducing the overall procurement time and selecting lead bidders earlier in the process, are welcome, but didn't go as far as we and our members would have liked; we now have to see whether they make a significant difference and really allow for new innovations by teachers, architects, construction companies and local authorities.

We need minimum standards and guidance on consultation of teachers and pupils, yet the mechanisms to get designs up and running under BSF are too unwieldy, and don't even allow the schools to represent themselves at the

We don't want good schools, nor mediocre schools

design review panels. Why do they have to do this through a third party – CABE?

We can't afford for BSF to have its own reality, divorced from the needs and aspirations of communities. The meaningful engagement of teachers and learners in the design process is not yet at the heart of that process.

If school design is poor, we need solutions to improve it. A new design threshold can't be a diversion and surely must have the transformation of teaching and learning at its heart. If we want great schools, the bar must be set high.

Few people would argue that independent voices and transparent procedures mean more efficiency when it comes to spending public money.

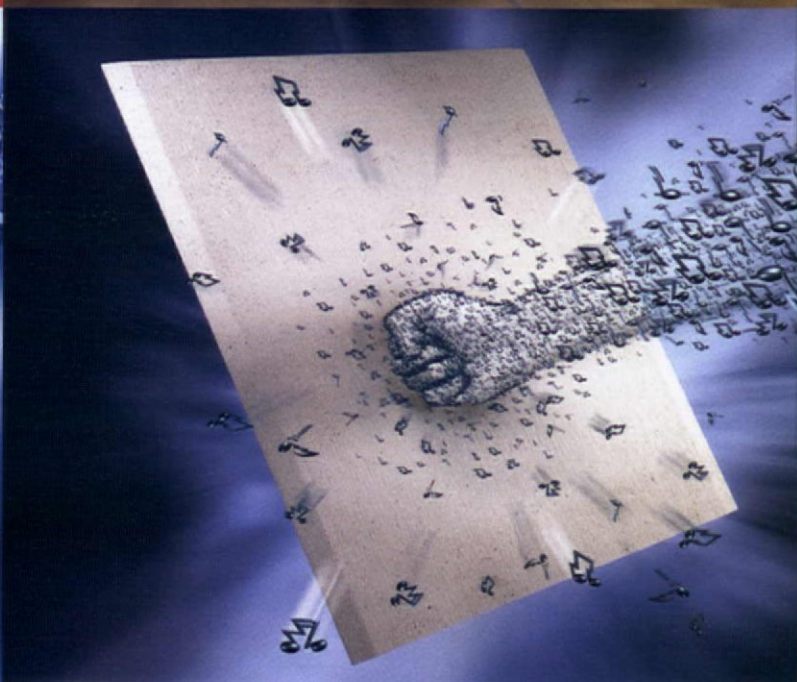
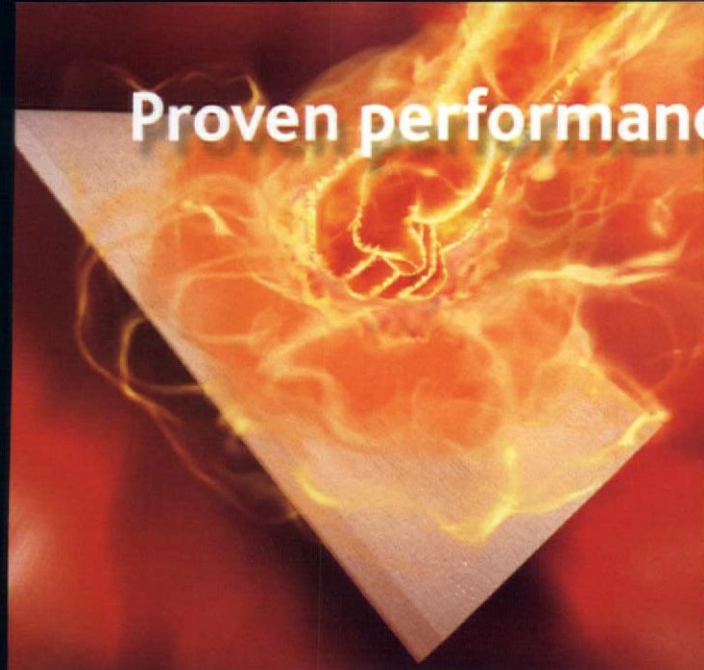
Leadership is crucial at every level and should be driven from the ground – schools and local authorities – but led and motivated from the top. I'm sure Education Secretary Ed Balls has an aspiration for the kind of learning environments he wants his children to be educated in; I know I have such aspirations for my own children.

We don't want good schools, nor mediocre schools. We want schools that our children and their teachers want and need, not just when they open, but for five and 10 years after that. Schools that we're proud of, that do the job they should, that become a focal point for the local community. Schools that make us say: 'Proud to learn,' when we look at them.

Schools to celebrate. Schools that truly become the 'third teacher'. Great schools. This is an edited version of the speech given by Ty Goddard, director of the British Council for School Environments, to the Labour Party Conference fringe meeting in Manchester on 22 September

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Information & Expertise

In Partnership



Patrick Lynch enjoys fine wine, good company, and Palladio's San Francesco della Vigna in Venice

On my first night in Venice, just before the biennale opened, I bumped into some friends who were drinking with Bill Menking and Teddy Cruz, curator of and exhibitor in the American pavilion, in a bar in a scruffy bit of town. The rest of the week pretty much carried on from there. The Americans surprised even themselves, I think, by showing Cruz's projects for Mexican barrios and Rural Studio's work on community projects in Alabama, eschewing the formalist endgame of the Ivy League. It felt a long way from the baby-boomer psychodrama of Peter Eisenman, Jeff Kipnis, Mark Wigley et al, echoing Barack Obama's critique of the Clintons' generation in an exhibition based on hope instead of hype.

being in Venice talking about what we love created a proper party atmosphere. It reminded me of an old-fashioned 'winter school'. We cavorted quite happily in the knowledge that the overbearing power of the star architects and their awful work and their hateful egoism had finally shown itself for what it is – selfish, brain-dead and deadening.

Some urgent new jokes emerged. You've probably heard that the Estonians erected a yellow pipeline between the German and the Russian pavilions (Astragal, AJ 18.09.08). But even better were the inflated balloon and army backpacks dumped nonchalantly next to the pipeline by the Ukrainians, so that you had to step over them to enter the Russian exhibition. From afar, the balloon looked like a tongue of

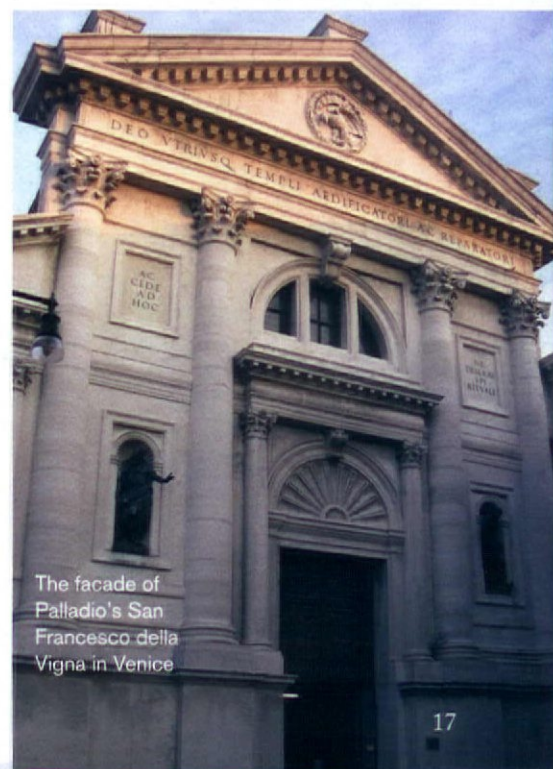
Before this, I stumbled across two lost colleagues and we took a quick look at Palladio's San Francesco della Vigna, which sits in a tiny *campello* beside the gasworks. The stone ground laps up the facade, marking a high-tide mark just above a human head – Corinthian columns sit on this plinth. The 'house of god' and the 'house of man' are split by your head as you enter the church. Later, the heavens opened, obliterating the outside rooms which are open to the sky, throwing us closer to others huddling beneath brollies. Buildings receded from visual stimuli to deep backgrounds, spaces in which to escape the deluge, offering warmth and conversation, food and wine – the support, and not the point, of life.

The work of the star architects had shown itself as selfish and brain-dead

Everyone from Menking's colleagues at *The Architects' Newspaper* to Christopher Hawthorne of the *LA Times* recognised that Aaron Betsky's curation of the Venice Biennale this year 'seems nearly a decade out of date'. Far from Asymptote's 'Stormtroopers' cod pieces', as a friend put it, and dreadful dinners where another friend claimed that 'the only intelligent person present was the hairdresser Vidal Sassoon', the rest of the biennale was enjoyed by perfectly ordinary people, whose only identifying characteristics seemed to be a willingness to drink all night and talk to anyone. Students from our office mingled quite happily with well-known architects, and everyone bought rounds. Just

flame; an explosion waiting to happen.

Right beside this cartoon tomfoolery was Sverre Fehn's 1952 Nordic pavilion, effortlessly sucking all the sighs from passers-by like the seriously sexy temple she is. Trees bend through the thin narrow beams, emphasising the artifice and intelligence of the building, reminding us that architecture is not 'flow' or 'second nature' or 'biomorphism', or any of the ghastly phrases blurted out in lieu of elegance and poise. The second best thing I saw was Corb's project for the Venice Hospital, presented by Joseph Rykwert and Tim Benton in the ancient Ospedale. Four hours' sleep did not prepare me for the wonder of this floating garden on sticks.



The facade of Palladio's San Francesco della Vigna in Venice



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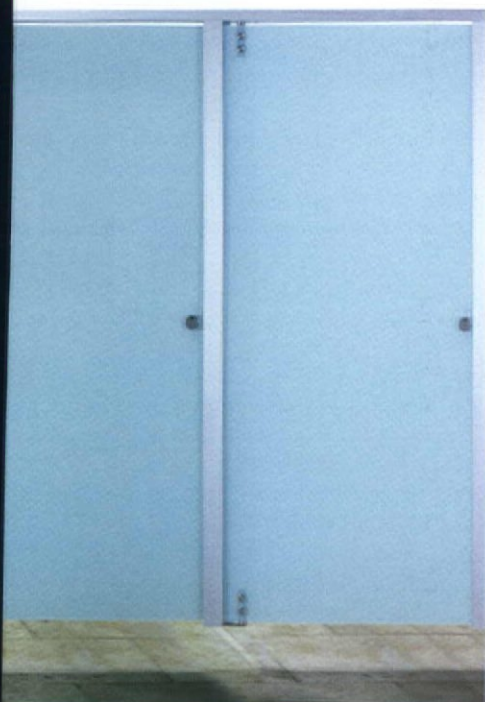
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PUBLIC REALM BUILT ON MYTH

BCA Landscape's environmental regeneration has brought the pre-industrial folk tales of a Lancashire village vividly to life. *Rory Olcayto* reports

In one of the most inventive townscape regeneration projects in recent years, this spring Liverpool-based BCA Landscape completed a £1 million environmental improvement project for the Lancashire village of Burscough Bridge.

The firm – working with design consultancy Smiling Wolf – planned to reaffirm the village's identity with a series of squares and pedestrian routes inspired by local myths.

New furniture, paving and lighting, as well as a village sign and clock, enliven a public realm which had, says BCA director Andy Thompson, been 'dominated by traffic' from the busy A59 road which cuts through the village.

Rather than rely solely on the recent past and the Victorian heritage of Burscough Bridge, which was an important staging post

along the Liverpool-Leeds Canal, Thompson and local residents reached back further in time, to a weirder, stranger England rendered almost invisible by the Industrial Revolution. Much of the iconography in BCA's scheme is inspired by the Pace Eggers, local performers with bowler hats and black-painted faces, who would re-enact scenes from the Crusades during Easter festivities.

The work shown here forms part of an exhibition – conceived for Liverpool's year as Capital of Culture – which ends today (25 September). BCA is seeking a suitable venue for a London show.

Watch a video made for the exhibition by Smiling Wolf at WWW.ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK

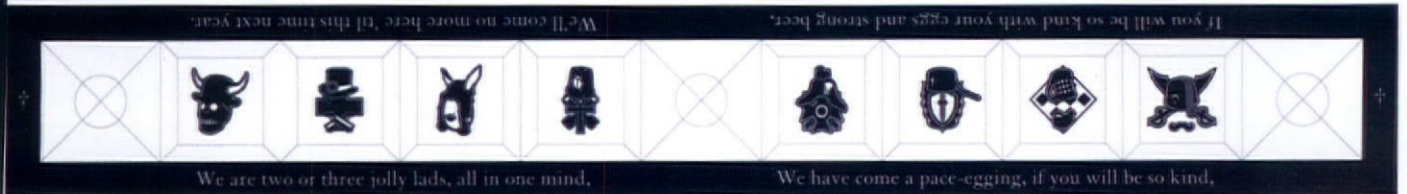
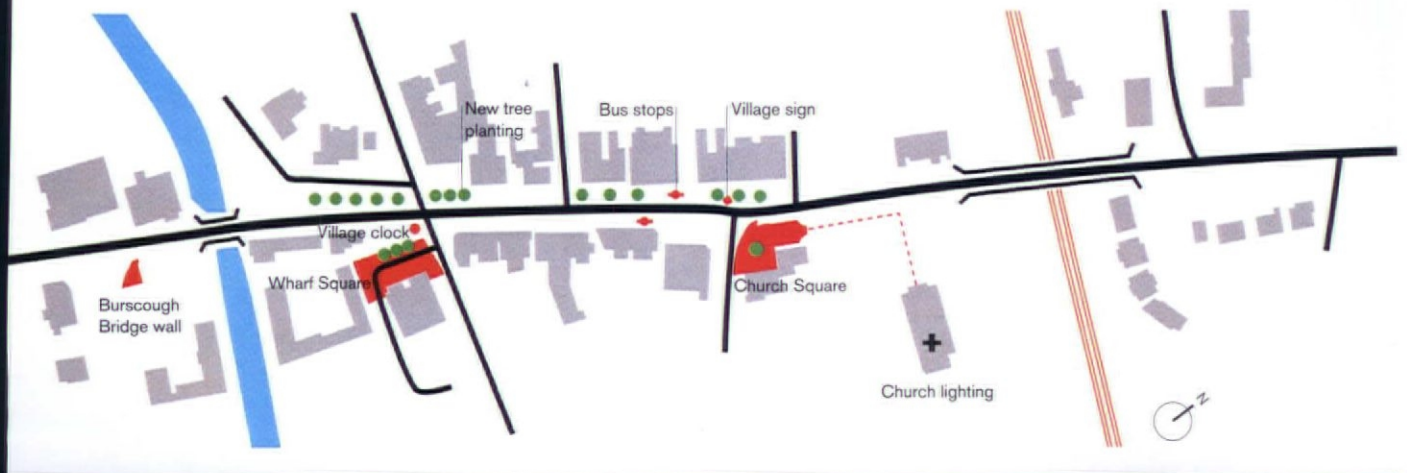
Right The Pace Eggers re-enact scenes from the Crusades in Burscough Bridge's Church Square

Opposite Graphics by Smiling Wolf depict a permanent 'Christmas Tree' for Church Square, a new public space in the heart of Burscough (**bottom left**); a circular 'map'

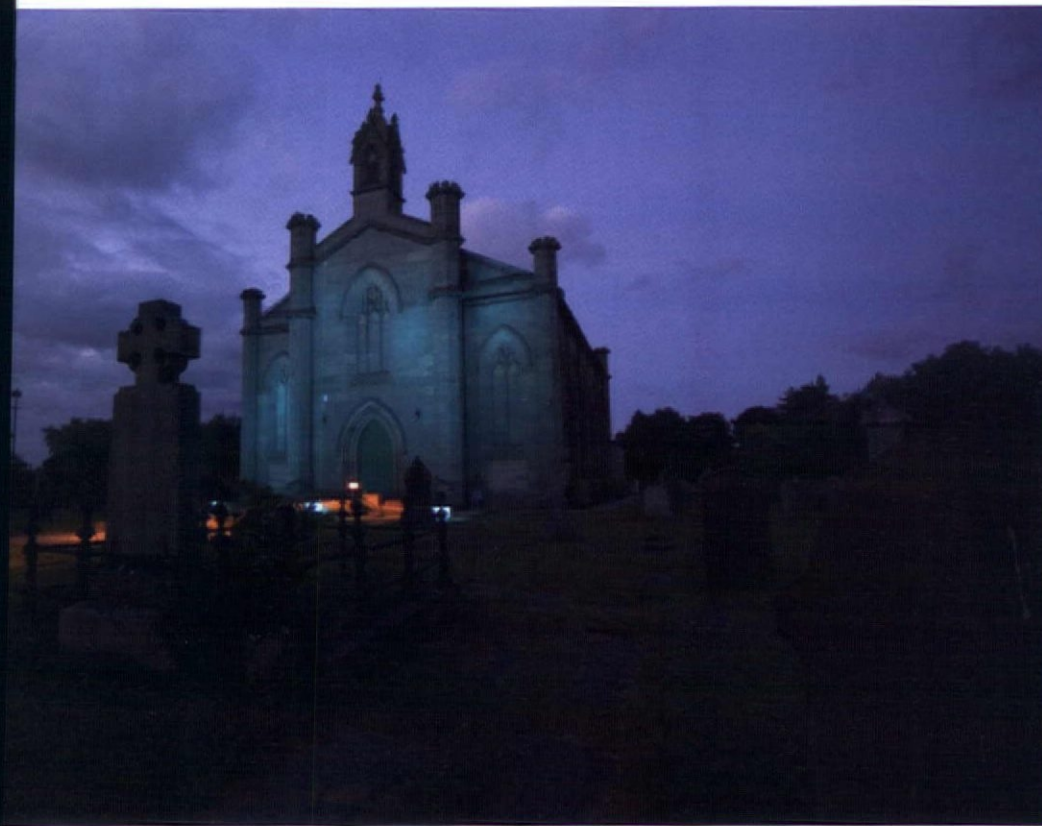
of the village's history, depicting stories of the village (**bottom right**), and character designs for the Pace Eggers (**centre**) are used as flagstone inlays for another new public space called Wharf Square; a map shows BCA Landscape's interventions (**top**)



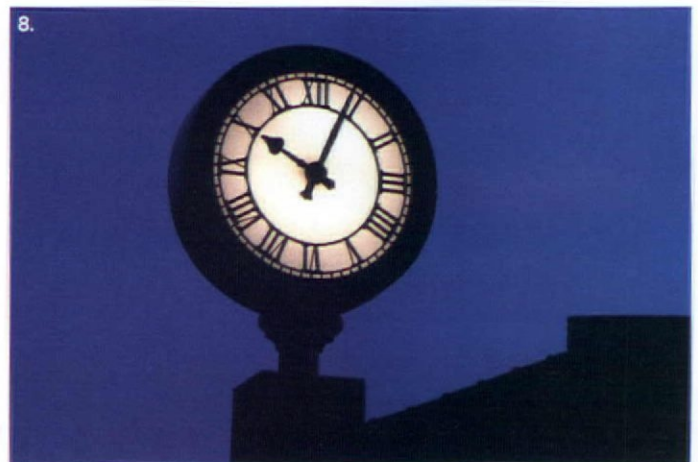
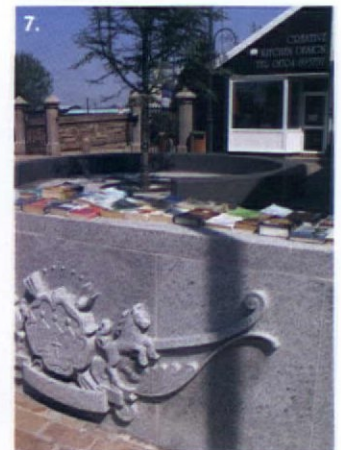
Burscough Bridge landscaping, Lancashire, by BCA Landscape







1. Bollards throughout the town depict scenes from the town's past. This one in Wharf Square shows Ainscough Mill, which is due to be converted into flats by Persimmon Homes
2. The local church is illuminated with three colours – green, blue and pink – which change over the course of an hour. Other colours are used to coincide with the religious calendar
3. Modern-day Pace Eggers perform for the locals
4. The circular map of Burscough's past in Church Square, as built
5. Graphics of the Pace Eggers enliven the flagstones of Wharf Square. Beelzebub, The Doctor and Molly are the characters shown
- 6 & 7. The new village sign and a new village crest, carved in Chinese granite
8. A new town clock was considered essential by the villagers



WHAT DOES BDP STAND FOR?

Britain's biggest practice has an image problem.

Rory Olcayto visits BDP's Manchester HQ to try to understand the firm's design and culture. Photography by Martine Hamilton Knight

Despite commercial success and a growing number of awards, BDP has an identity crisis – in that it believes it doesn't have one. There's a nagging feeling among senior management that its output is considered bland by its peers. Gavin Elliot, BDP Manchester's new chairman, says it most clearly: 'Everyone thinks we're faceless and corporate.'

'People think we're not arrogant enough,' says BDP chairman Tony McGuirk when talking about the practice's design culture. 'We're not confrontational, but we have strong feelings. We have a culture of advocacy, but it's not "we know better than you do".'

With the completion of Ducie Street studio, its new-build office for BDP Manchester, the firm has a project that McGuirk says is 'the essence of BDP design'. Peter Drummond, the practice's chief executive, agrees. 'Every single element', he says of the six-storey canalside building in Manchester's Piccadilly Basin regeneration zone 'is BDP'. Elliot claims that Ducie Street 'exemplifies what we are all about'. As the firm believes Ducie Street can alchemically transform its base-metal brand into gold, I decided to visit the building and try to understand the practice's DNA.

The apparent insecurity of the UK's biggest

architecture practice is fascinating. BDP's buildings do have identity. They are defined by elements used by the practice time and again: timber boarding; reflective metal; glazed screens to what it calls 'people edges'; acoustic-boarded ceilings; fabric roof coverings; circular rooflights; columns at jaunty angles. When all are used together the effect can be overwhelming, like at Aintree Racecourse in Liverpool (2007). BDP's better buildings use the toolkit sparingly: Hampden Gurney school in Marylebone, London, for example, shortlisted for the Stirling Prize in 2002, or the Abito housing block in Manchester (2006).

It's just a short walk to Ducie Street from Manchester Piccadilly station. BDP Manchester has relocated from Sunlight house in Deansgate where its 250-plus team of architects, engineers and consultants, surrounded by immovable plan chests, occupied three inflexible floors.

I catch my first glimpse of the new building from the bottom of the street. It has a trademark BDP facade – a bulging metal wall which curves into a roof. BDP uses that trick everywhere. Aintree has one. The Armada housing project in The Netherlands (2004) has one. Cambridge University's >>



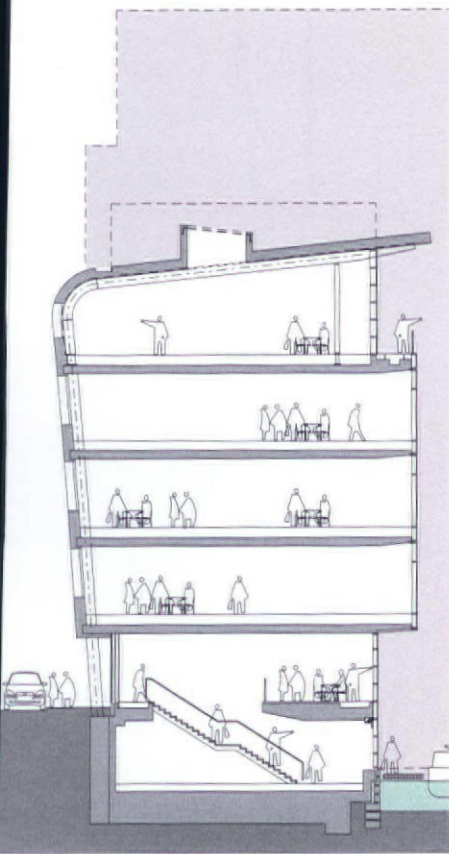
The canalside elevation



Left The Ducie Street elevation has a 'cyberpunk aesthetic and fortress-like toughness'

Right Section

Below right The columns are too close to the wall to be spatially meaningful



Faculty of Education (2005) has one. Now Manchester does too.

Despite this repetition, on Ducie Street the curved facade seems strangely appropriate. Its cyberpunk aesthetic and fortress-like toughness – it's almost like armour – seem perfect for this scuzzy part of Manchester. A makeover of the area may be under way, but it's still a busy red-light district by night.

The rest of the elevation is less successful. As I get closer, I notice that the steel wall stops 3m short of the pavement, exposing seven chunky, circular concrete columns. This gesture feels forced because the columns are too close to the brick-glass facade behind to be spatially meaningful. It's overcomplicated: perhaps another BDP hallmark. 'We tend to

start with the complex rather than the simple, and then begin to refine it. It's like editing,' says McGuirk.

Two stairwells are located at either end of the building. The first is a fire escape set back from the steel facade and clad with timber battens. It joins on to an anonymous 10-storey residential scheme by Manchester-based DS One Architects. At the other end, a stairwell, cantilevered off the concrete frame, rises over five floors and floats above the canal.

The arrangement stems from McGuirk's design approach: 'express forms within the building, rather than express the building as a form'. It's best exemplified at Aintree and Armada, or the rather nutty Napier University Business School in Edinburgh (2004), where contrasting forms and elements are fused in the hope that they will cohere. 'We don't do trendy architecture, the architecture of the box,' says McGuirk. 'We celebrate activities and break the scale down.' The floating stairwell is dramatic, but its angular form clashes awkwardly with the curved roof facade. It's visually noisy and interferes with the roofline which rises gently towards the canal.

The canal-side elevation is a BDP 'people edge' facade defined by a glazed screen broken up with a confusing pattern of timber panels. The top floor is set back to create a balcony and stretched taller than those below, further disrupting what should have been a simple elevation. It's another case of over-complication.

I enter at the western end of Ducie Street through a neatly defined porch which crosses over a small strip of canal. The reception is bright and uncluttered, with an end-grain ash floor. Cylindrical concrete columns supporting a smooth concrete soffit run down the length of the ground-floor café. Adjacent, a boardroom has folding doors allowing the two spaces to merge as a function suite.

McGuirk drives the group's design culture. Ducie Street project architect Chris Wilde tells me he joined straight from university after seeing McGuirk's University of Sunderland campus. 'I sent off my CV straight away,' he says. Wilde's colleague Stephen Redfern, the in-house client BDP Manchester's director, also joined straight after university. He calls McGuirk 'BDP's best designer'. However, at Ducie Street the design team was Manchester-based and focussed – Redfern and Wilde were the leaders. Redfern says: 'We didn't want >>



DAVID BARBOUR



BDP has used a bulging metal wall curving into a roof before – for its Aintree building (top) and its Armada Housing in The Netherlands (above)



BDP believes Ducie Street can alchemically transform its base-metal brand into gold

This image Ducie Street incorporates classic BDP elements: a curving metal wall-roof; timber boarding; jaunty columns; and circular rooflights with stairwells expressed

as distinct elements
Far right The acoustically attenuated steel wall has an actuated ventilation system to improve airflow in the studios and help the building

achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating
Below far right A typical studio floor plan – this is the second floor



Ducie Street designed by committee. We didn't have Tony McGuirk coming and asking what we were doing. We wanted a piece thought through by a tight group of individuals.'

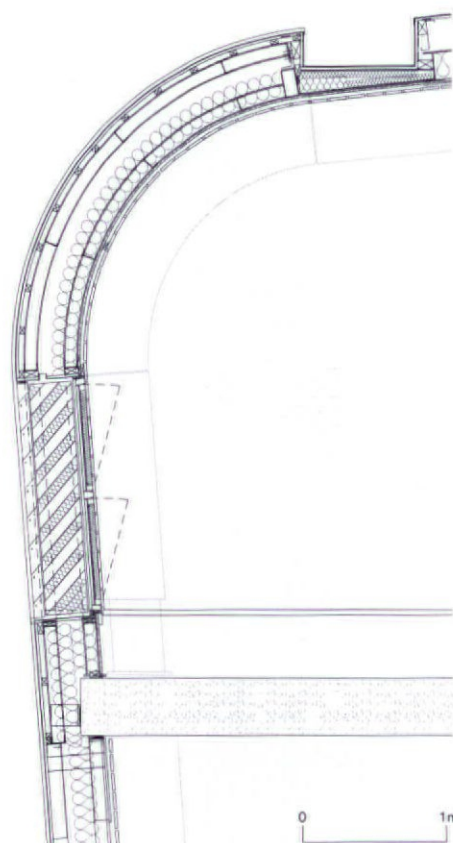
Redfern and Wilde have squeezed 3,000m² of office space into the development – 1,000m² less than at Sunlight House, but with room for the same number of staff. This is quite an achievement, although in doing so floor-to-floor communication has been compromised.

The firm usually tackles circulation successfully. At Hampden Gurney glass-walled classrooms gather around a central atrium that divides them from open-air play decks. As well as improving airflow, this also allows teachers to see their pupils at play. It's a genuine communal environment, as is the Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate, Kent, (2007) where circulation routes are set along curving balconies overlooking a hall in an attempt to combat bullying.

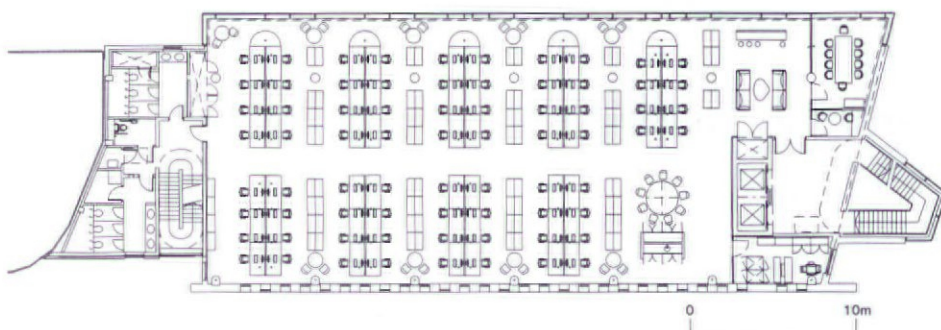
The cantilevered stair here has lovely wooden steps and overlooks a busy canal, but it's pushed off the plan and exists as a separate entity. It's far away from the studio buzz and this makes the interconnectedness of each floor mundane.

At Ducie Street architects are scattered across the second, third and fourth floors, and mingle with other disciplines: structural engineers and interior designers on the second; M&E, lighting and acoustic designers on the third; urban designers and town planners on the fourth. The first, second and third floors are identical: open-plan studio spaces with five banks of CAD-station desks set under concrete soffits. Two meeting rooms occupy the space immediately above the >>

'We start with the complex and refine it'



Ducie Street's stairwell (left) does not provide the same level of interconnectedness between floors as BDP's design for Marlowe Academy (far left) or the practice's Hampden Gurney School, Marylebone (centre left)



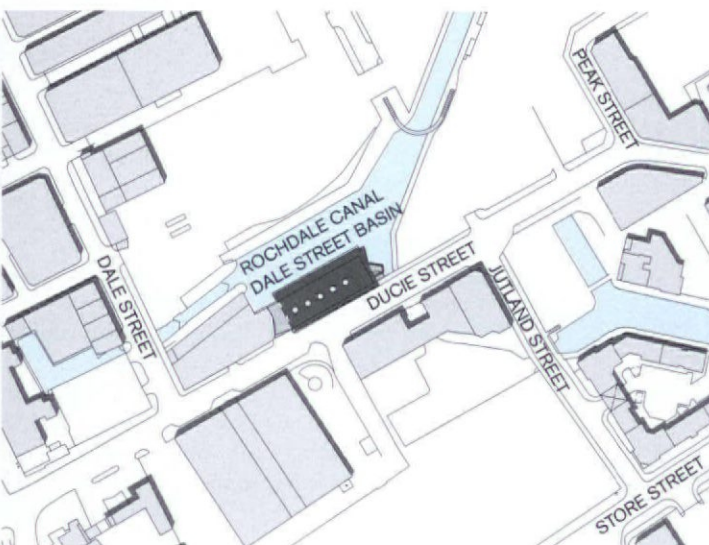
The curved metal facade used by BDP at its Cambridge University Faculty of Education (*below*) is used at Ducie Street to create a similar top-floor space (*right*)



Right The timber-lined top floor studio is the best workspace in the building and accesses a rooftop balcony

Below BDP's new studio is within the Picadilly Basin regeneration zone, masterplanned by Ian Simpson Architects

Below left The rawness of the shuttered concrete wall is at odds with Ducie Street's corporate environment



It is the kind of environment cost-consultants work in

ground-floor reception. Each floor also has 'touchdown spaces': sofas, a coffee table and bar stools ranged along a high table.

The open-plan studios are well planned – though perhaps a bit deep for those along the south wall to really benefit from the canal views – but they don't feel creative. The touchdown spaces feel incongruous and are an idea borrowed from media firms or ad agencies – but there's nowhere to sit and make models, for example. Despite their pleasing legibility, the open-plan studios are the kind of environment cost consultants work in.

Other corporate touches include using the pattern of the windows in the steel facade as a kind of logo. The abstracted pattern is used in

the fritting of internal glass screens and on a cut-out pattern for the timber cupboards. This is a trick made easy by digital tools. BDP calls it a modern take on Arts and Crafts – but it's a straight lift from an AutoCAD file. There's no particular joy in the graphics, and no sense of the time spent making it. All it says is: 'You are here.'

On the fourth floor, the wall becomes the roof, mimicking the top floor in BDP's Cambridge Faculty of Education. Curving hockey-stick steel beams rise towards the north elevation and support a Douglas fir timber-lined soffit. Between each beam, circular rooflights provide natural light. It's almost as large as the other floors. The timber



finish and rolling surface make it snug, and it has a balcony – it's humane. Redfern agrees and tells me that the retail architects are based up here. 'Compensation,' he says, smiling. 'They're lucky. It's the best space in the building.'

I'm nearing the end of my visit and I've seen nothing that suggests that Ducie Street is the building that will redefine BDP. The practice's search for identity and peer respect is tied to how hard it works to please the client. BDP calls the style that comes out of that 'human Modernism'. But I think BDP needs to be more arrogant. Its user-centred, client-focused approach, and its obsession with 'lifestyle', is directly linked to the

cacophonous composition and play-it-safe interiors of its buildings.

As my tour ends, Elliot – another design guru rapidly climbing the corporate tree – joins us. We descend to the basement. When I call it that, Redfern quickly corrects me. 'Lower ground floor,' he says. 'We don't use the word basement.' We're standing around the concrete shuttered wall, admiring its texture, its solidity, its pure architectural quality. I'm distracted by how odd it feels. It's raw, primal – a standing stone lodged in the heart of the UK's biggest practice. I imagine what Ducie Street studio would have looked like had it been built around this totem. 'Beautiful, isn't it,' says Elliot, not really expecting an answer. ■

Start on site date July 2006

Contract duration 20 months

Gross external floor area 3,700m²

Form of contract Shell and core: Design and Build; fitout: Traditional

Total cost £10 million

Client Town Centre Securities and BDP

Architect BDP

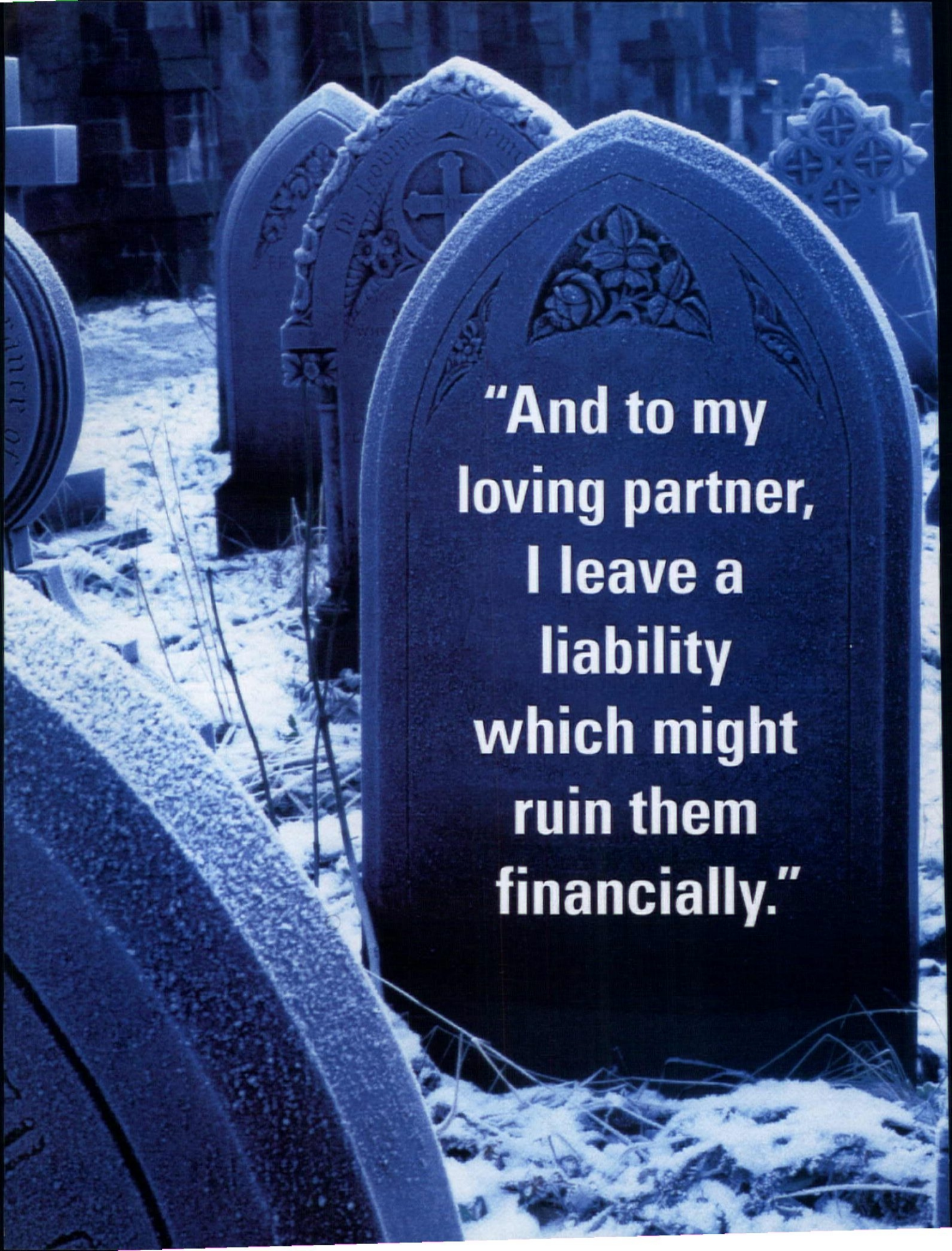
Structural and services engineer BDP

Quantity surveyor Arcadis AYH


Planning supervisor PCM

Main contractor Kier North West (Shell and core); Styles & Wood (fitout)

Annual CO₂ emissions 46kg/m²



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BETWS-Y-COED

LANDMARK PUBLIC CONVENIENCE BUILDING DESIGN

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Conwy County Borough Council invites expressions of interest from Architect led Design Teams for the Betws-y-Coed Public Convenience Project. Situated in a picturesque area of North Wales, this project involves the design of a landmark, truly sustainable, public building to serve the residents of Betws-y-Coed and cater for the extensive numbers visiting the area each year.

The successful Consultant Team shall demonstrate a vision of a landmark building providing a high quality, fully sustainable and carbon neutral asset for the local community. The design will include – but not be limited to:

- The form of the building and its optimal usage considering all potential end user groups.
- The appearance of the building's facades to offer an attractive facility which marries in to the picturesque surroundings.
- Internal and external layouts complying with the latest guidelines and best practice maximising use of the available space.
- Materials and finishes which offer the requisite quality and robustness and align with the schemes environmental credentials.
- Systems for installation to ensure the building's status as being fully sustainable and carbon neutral.
- An end product, including its features, finishes and systems, which is both easy to clean and maintainable.

In addition to the requirements above, consultants should also consider the use of public art, lighting, signage, access, street furniture and landscaping to optimise the design of the building.

Expressions of interest must include:

- A brief introduction to the Team with a designated point of contact for the Architect.
- Summary CVs of the personnel who would be working on the project.
- A one page Design Statement summarising your approach to the project and understanding of the site and locality.
- Details, with client contacts, of three completed or ongoing projects, one of which must have a significant sustainable component.

A shortlist of three Consultant Teams will be selected based on technical competence, relevant experience and project understanding. Procurement will then take the form of an Invited Design Competition with separate fee tender. A copy of the Design Brief Information Pack may be obtained from environmental.services@conwy.gov.uk.

Expressions of interest should be sent to the following address to arrive no later than Monday 6th October 2008:

Betws-y-Coed Public Convenience Design, Environmental Services, Conwy County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Abergelge Road, Colwyn Bay LL29 8AR.

www.conwy.gov.uk

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Rules of Thumb #6

Kate Sclater - Designer / Director, Hyperkit
Consider what your graphic design
says about you



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

As design professionals, architects generally have a graphic eye for presentation. But with visual material such as a practice profile document, which is ultimately about representing the ethos of the firm to potential clients, successful communication relies on more than appropriate image selection.

Every design decision you make says something about you. Try to reflect your approach to architecture through the layout. If you work with simple, minimal forms, use a rigid grid to separate blocks of text and images from each other. If your work is more elaborate, then interspersing text, images and

captions may be more appropriate.

Typefaces go in and out of fashion, and understanding their meaning in contemporary culture is important. When selecting a typeface think about what it says, visually, and whether it reflects your brand. When was it designed? Where else has it been used?

Paper choice can also reinforce your message. Bright white, super-smooth paper such as Mellotex says something different to Cyclus Offset, a paper that you can see is 100 per cent recycled.

Think about how you will bind the document. Is it something that will have a limited life, or will you add to it over time?

At every stage, think about how the design of the document can aid the understanding of your work, while not overpowering it.

Serif
Sans serif
Slab serif
Round
Monospaced

What does
your font say
about you?

Big Fish Little Fish

John Prevett of Make considers the virtues of modelling

At the heart of Make's London studio sits the model shop. This vital working area comprises work benches and layout spaces, and two small rooms nearby contain a spray booth, a foam cutter, and a laser cutter – one of the best investments we've ever made.

It's no exaggeration to say that this machine has transformed our working practice, allowing us to produce clean, accurate models quickly and cheaply. Perhaps more importantly, it has been a catalyst for encouraging a wider use of models at the very start of the design process.

Recently, we've found that models have been particularly beneficial in communicating our work during the Building Schools for the Future bid process. Printouts of plans, sections and elevations can seem like confusing wallpaper to school teachers and governors, but models translate three-dimensional spaces into something approaching reality.

They are never precious, of course, but are designed to be pulled apart and radically reconfigured during the consultation. This creative destruction and reconstruction can appear rather theatrical, but it is critical in encouraging ownership of the design process. And crucially, it illustrates that the architect is listening.

In my view, no drawing is as powerfully effective and as proactive as a model.

Next issue: Jonathan Hendry of Jonathan Hendry Architects

LIFE AFTER THE OLYMPICS

RMJM Hillier's Beijing 2008 Olympic media centre was designed with legacy in mind. *Kaye Alexander reports*

Beijing's 2008 Paralympic Games (which followed August's Olympics) closed last week, which means RMJM Hillier's Beijing International Broadcast Centre and Main Press Centre (IBC/MPC) is now entering legacy mode. However, as RMJM Hillier project director Ross Milne explains, post-occupancy is what this building was designed for. 'We thought of the project

backwards,' he says. 'As the convention centre being temporarily altered to accommodate the media and sports facilities, rather than the other way round.'

The Beijing IBC/MPC, which during the Olympics accommodated 21,600 accredited journalists as well as hosting the fencing and pentathlon pistol shooting events, is to be reinvented as

China's National Convention Centre (CNCC). The CNCC will be open for business by July 2009, by which time London's IBC/MPC should be just starting on site.

Allies and Morrison won the contract for the £400 million London 2012 Olympic IBC/MPC partially on the strength of its plans to convert the venue into office space and create 8,000 new

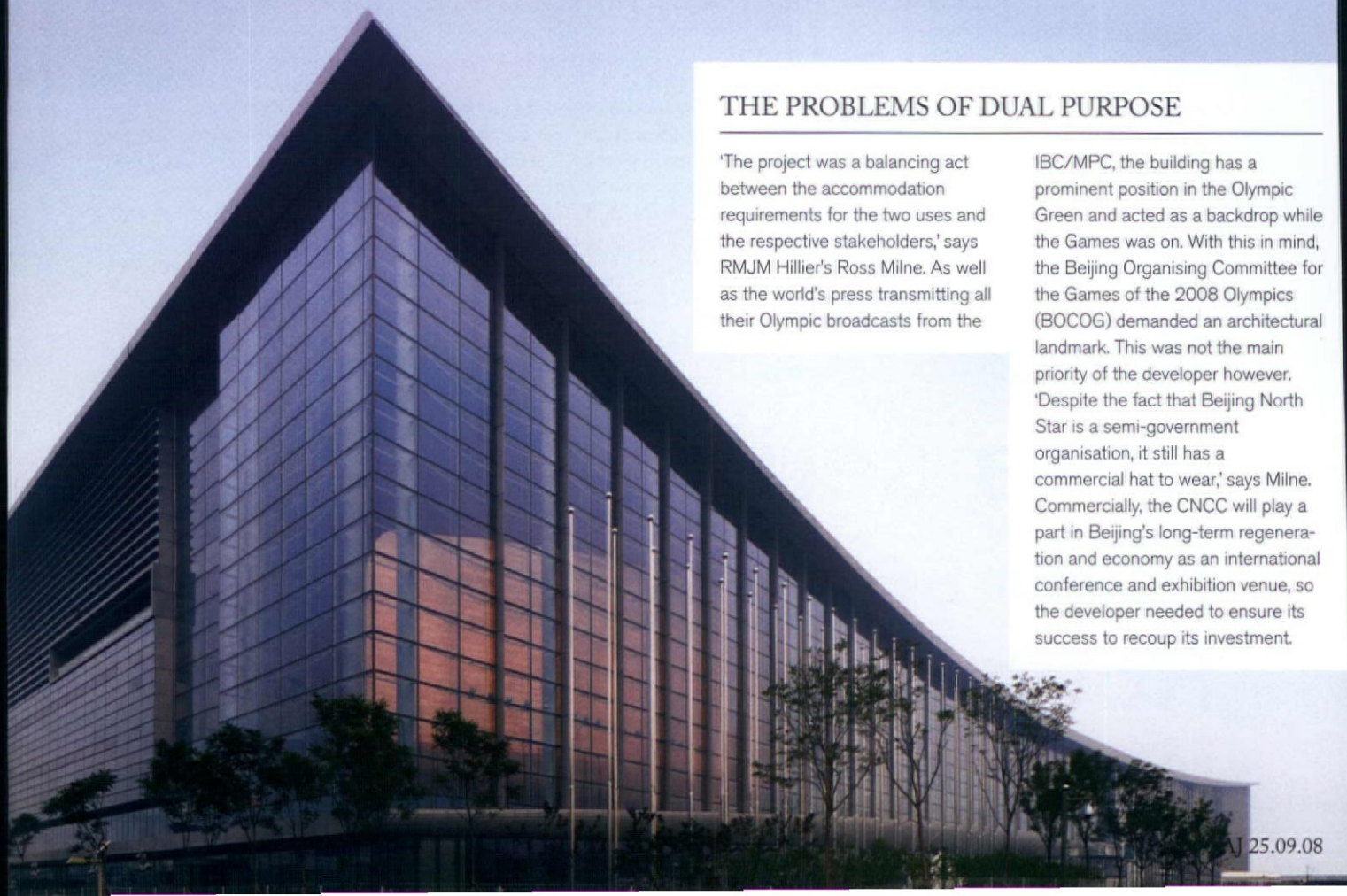
jobs after the Games. Developers Carillion and Igloo will lease the space during the Olympics with an eye on housing digital and creative companies there post-Games.

Planning for post-occupancy means juggling two briefs for the building design. This week, we look at how RMJM Hillier designed for the Beijing IBC/MPC's legacy.

THE PROBLEMS OF DUAL PURPOSE

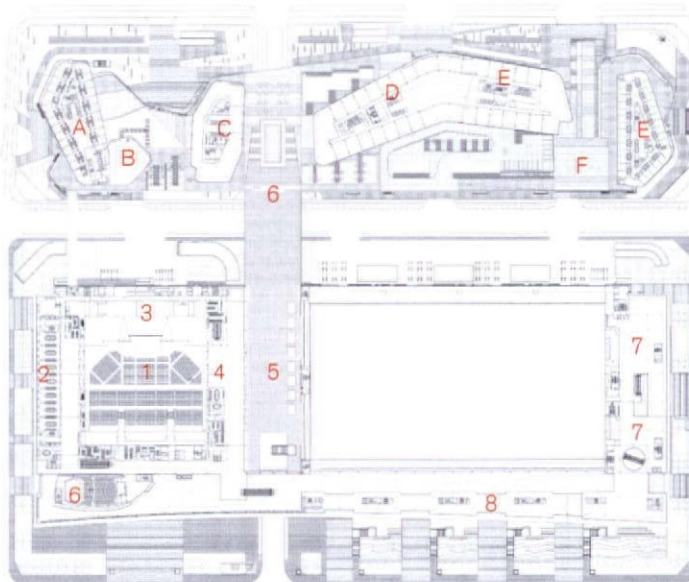
'The project was a balancing act between the accommodation requirements for the two uses and the respective stakeholders,' says RMJM Hillier's Ross Milne. As well as the world's press transmitting all their Olympic broadcasts from the

IBC/MPC, the building has a prominent position in the Olympic Green and acted as a backdrop while the Games was on. With this in mind, the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the 2008 Olympics (BOCOG) demanded an architectural landmark. This was not the main priority of the developer however. 'Despite the fact that Beijing North Star is a semi-government organisation, it still has a commercial hat to wear,' says Milne. Commercially, the CNCC will play a part in Beijing's long-term regeneration and economy as an international conference and exhibition venue, so the developer needed to ensure its success to recoup its investment.



BUSINESS PLAN

The IBC/MPC is part of a larger, 122,000m² site, which will accommodate a total gross floor area of 530,000m². 'It is common to see convention centres struggling without supporting facilities,' says Milne. A development of hotels, offices and retail (also by RMJM Hillier and already constructed) will feed in to the CNCC, with connections above and below ground. Underneath the CNCC will be two floors of car parking, and an underground road network will run under the entire Olympic Green to alleviate surface traffic. A bus interchange will be located on the north face of the CNCC on the road perpendicular to the green, and a new subway will be built straight up the middle. 'This holistic forward-planning was only possible because the government owned the Olympic site and distributed pockets to semi-governmental development companies,' says Milne.

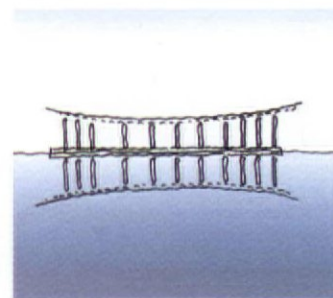


Commercial development

- A. Five-star hotel
- B. Swimming pool
- C. Grade-A office
- D. Standard office
- E. Business hotel
- F. Landscape deck

Convention centre

- 1. Plenary hall
- 2. Meeting rooms
- 3. Kitchen
- 4. Foyer
- 5. Elevated garden plaza
- 6. Auditorium
- 7. Comprehensive service area
- 8. Exhibition space



Top Fourth-floor layouts of the commercial development and convention centre

Above The commercial development

Above right Drawing showing how a traditional Chinese pagoda inspired the convention centre's roof

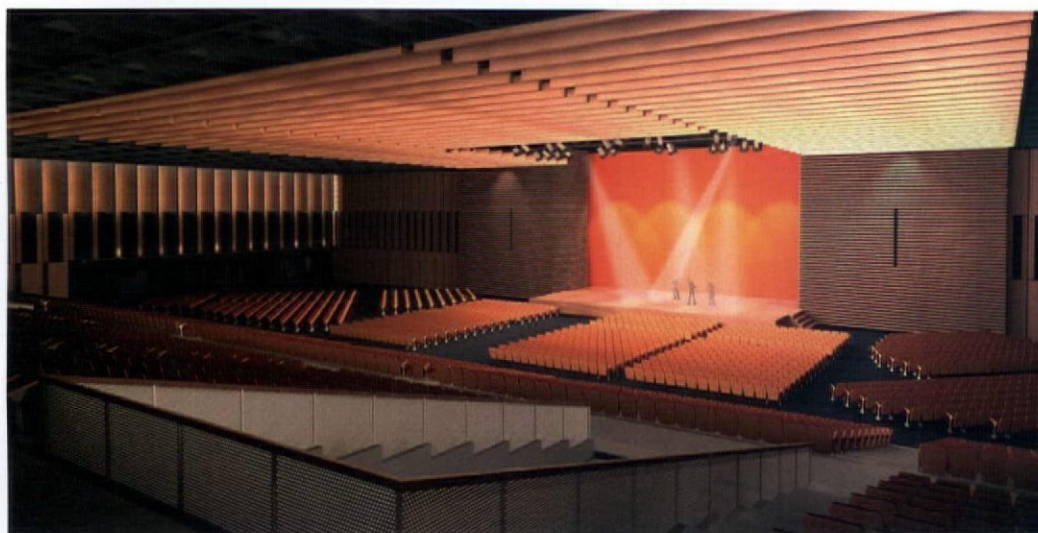
Left RMJM Hillier's Beijing International Broadcast Centre and Main Press Centre, which becomes

China's National Convention Centre now that the Olympics is over

Above The building's circulation spine

DESIGN

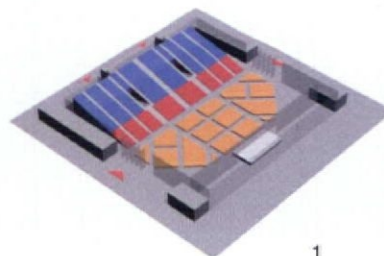
In plan the IBC/MPC is a rectangular building with two large halls making up the main accommodation. The exhibition hall was temporarily subdivided during the Olympics to accommodate broadcasting studios (one for almost every participating country) and the plenary hall was used as an indoor sporting venue, hosting fencing and pentathlon pistol shooting events. 'We had to make a singular statement for such a large building – we couldn't afford to be fussy,' says Milne. The double-lip roof, which sits over the glazed orthogonal facade, is reminiscent of a Chinese pagoda. A street running the length of the 400m-long building provides both circulation and exhibition space. Clear 3 x 2m glass panels supported by bow trusses provide views out onto the Olympic Green, as seen on TV (some broadcasters had studios in this space). >>>



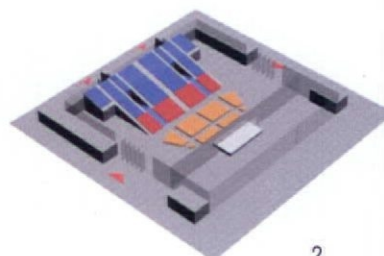
SUSTAINABILITY

While reusing a building is inherently more sustainable than demolishing and rebuilding, ultimately it is the fabric and performance of a building in use that determines how environmentally friendly it is. However, in the case of the IBC/MPC, this was limited by the budget. 'The project was commercially driven,' says Milne. 'Elements with a limited investment value were dismissed. For example, originally we had a green roof that helped recycle rainwater and provided sound and heat insulation. Due to cost this was taken out, but the idea was taken on board and the insulation to the roof increased, providing a U value of 0.2 W/m²K.' Low-E fritted glass was also omitted because this proved too reflective for broadcasters using it as a backdrop. 'To bring costs down all the glazing was manufactured in China – in fact 90 per cent of all materials were, excluding the interior fit-out,' says Milne. Rainwater from the standing-seam roof is collected and used for flushing toilets and for irrigating the surrounding landscape. An ice storage cooling system works as a negative thermal store by creating ice at night. As it melts this is used for the air-conditioning coolant.

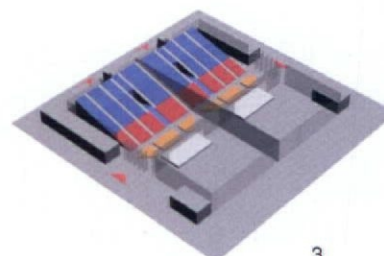
Above The plenary hall interior
Right Different seating arrangements for the plenary hall: 6,000 seating arrangement (1); 3,000 seating arrangement (2); 2,000 seating arrangement (3); and single room arrangement (4)



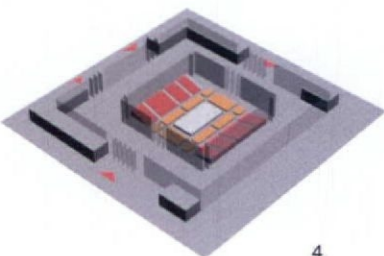
1



2



3



4

PHYSICAL RECONFIGURATION

'We saw the Olympic broadcasters as the first tenants for the building,' says Milne. An additional power and cooling plant plus a satellite dish farm were required for the international news teams operating from the facility. Soundproof studios were created using 12m-high metal-stud walls (above which was the 5m structural zone) with a double layer of plasterboard to be ripped out to reinstate the 200 x 100m exhibition hall – a single flexible space which is also divisible into four 50 x 100m halls. Seating in the plenary hall will be reconfigured using both permanent and pull-out bleachers to accommodate varying audience sizes of up to 600. Adjacent are a number of meeting rooms and break-out spaces used as warm-up and changing rooms during the Games, and on the ground floor is a grand banqueting hall which can seat up to 3,500 people that can also be subdivided. ■

Biejing design / development team

RMJM Hillier
Beijing North Star

Olympic brief

08.08.08 – 17.09.08

International Broadcast Centre (IBC) and Main Press Centre (MPC) of 152,000m² to house 21,600 accredited journalists. Two sports halls to host the fencing and pentathlon pistol shooting events

Post olympic brief

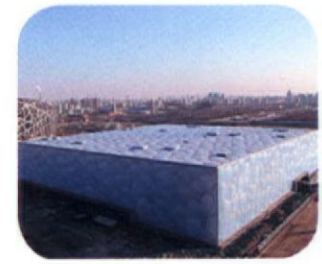
China's National Convention Centre (CNCC) of 270,000 m² with adjoining commercial development of a five-star hotel (40,000m²), a three-star hotel (50,000m²), retail (33,000m²) and office space (75,000m²)

Budget

£298.7 million



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BACK TO BASICS

How to make sure you have full construction contract insurance

In this instalment of the AJ's legal column, construction and insurance specialist Antony Edwards-Stuart QC looks at the different forms of construction contract insurances.

There are four main types of insurance policy that may cover the activities of the contractors and professionals involved in a construction contract: all risks, specified perils, public liability and professional indemnity insurance. Sometimes one or more of these can be included in a single policy.

ALL RISKS

This is a form of property insurance that covers loss of or damage to the property insured, whether existing buildings, the works or materials. Although known as all risks cover, it does not cover every loss – some may be excluded, such as damage from ionising radiation. Most importantly, the loss must be fortuitous from the insured's point of view, even though it may be the result of someone else's deliberate conduct (eg. theft). But a loss is not fortuitous if it is caused by the insured – for example, if the

employer does not pay the contractor who as a result removes materials delivered to site, that is not a fortuitous loss and there will be no claim. The contract may provide for either the contractor or the employer to take out this insurance in the joint names of both (and subcontractors).

SPECIFIED PERILS

This is also a form of property insurance, but it only covers loss of or damage to the property insured from certain named perils. These are usually losses caused by events such as fire, explosion, storm, flood and bursting or overflowing of water tanks, pipes and other apparatus, earthquake, lightning, riot and civil commotion. Such a policy would not cover, for example, damage caused by a falling tower crane or the collapse of an under-designed beam. Many of the standard forms of building contract require the existing structures to be insured against specified perils and not against all risks, whereas the works are often required to be insured against all risks. Again, the contract may provide for either the contractor or the employer to take out the insurance in joint names.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

This is a form of insurance, usually taken out by the contractor,

which covers the liability of the contractor and subcontractors, and sometimes of the employer also, against claims by third parties for injury or damage arising out of the carrying out of the works. The liability has to be established before the insurer has to pay, usually by a judgment of the court (but it can be by a *bona fide* settlement). However, most public liability policies provide that the insurer has the right to take over the conduct of the defence to the claim and the policy will cover the costs of doing so. Generally, the insurers will settle the claim if they can, unless it is clearly unfounded. The policy almost invariably covers the claimant's legal costs.

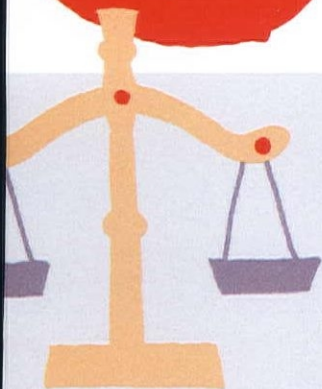
PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

This is a form of insurance which typically covers professionals, such as architects, engineers and surveyors, against liability for professional negligence. However, large contractors also carry professional indemnity insurance to cover those of their activities which are of a professional nature. The policy will usually contain a comprehensive definition of what constitutes professional activities. Professional indemnity insurance and public liability insurance are written by different markets in the insurance industry, and so historically the two types of



All risks insurance covers loss or damage to property insured – as long as the loss is fortuitous from the insured's point of view

Specified perils insurance only covers loss or damage caused by certain named perils, such as fire or flood



insurance have always been quite distinct (a public liability policy will nearly always exclude liability for professional negligence). Professional indemnity policies contain different levels of exclusion in respect of the cost of rectifying items of work that are defective in design or specification – for example, the policy will often exclude the costs of repairing the defective item itself and, sometimes, the additional cost of damage to other property that is unavoidably caused in order to rectify the defective item.

CLAIMS MADE, OCCURRENCE BASIS, NOTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND LIMITS

Property insurance is always covered by reference to the date of the loss, which must be within the period of insurance. Liability policies, by contrast, are generally written on a 'claims made' basis,

so that the policy will respond to a claim that is first made against the insured during the period of insurance. Liability policies invariably contain a provision by which circumstances likely to give rise to a claim must be reported and, if reported within the period of insurance, will be covered by that policy irrespective of when the claim is finally made.

All policies of insurance require prompt notice to be given of a loss, claim or circumstance likely to give rise to a claim. Notice clauses come in a wide variety of forms and many are expressed to be a condition of liability, so that if notice is not given in accordance with the policy terms there is no cover. Although the courts tend to be as generous as they can in interpreting such clauses, very often their wording leaves the court with very little room for manoeuvre. If you take away nothing else from this article, please note the crucial importance of always ensuring that losses or claims are promptly reported.

Almost all property and liability policies have a self-insured retention (or deductible) and limits (which, in a property policy, may be different for each type of property covered). The policy limit is the amount that the policy will pay, but it may be a limit that is applied to each and every claim or it may be an aggregate limit – so that once the total of all claims under the policy in a



Professional indemnity insurance covers professionals, such as architects and engineers, against liability for professional negligence. The policy will usually contain a comprehensive definition of what constitutes professional activities

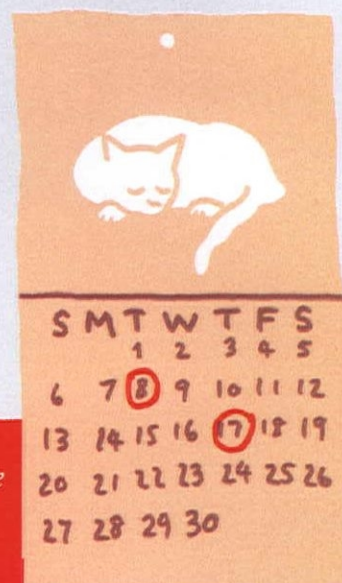
given year reaches the limit the policy is effectively exhausted, even if the period of insurance has not expired.

THE EFFECT OF JOINT NAMES INSURANCE ON LIABILITY

Where parties to a construction contract are jointly insured against the same risk, claims between them in respect of a loss caused by that risk are usually excluded. However, whether or not this is the case will depend on whether the terms of the contract demonstrate an intention that in respect of certain events the parties are to look only to the

insurance to recoup their losses. This is where the lawyers come in.

Antony Edwards-Stuart QC is a barrister and arbitrator practising from Crown Office Chambers.
www.crownofficechambers.com



Public liability insurance provides cover against claims by third parties for injuries or damage arising out of the works



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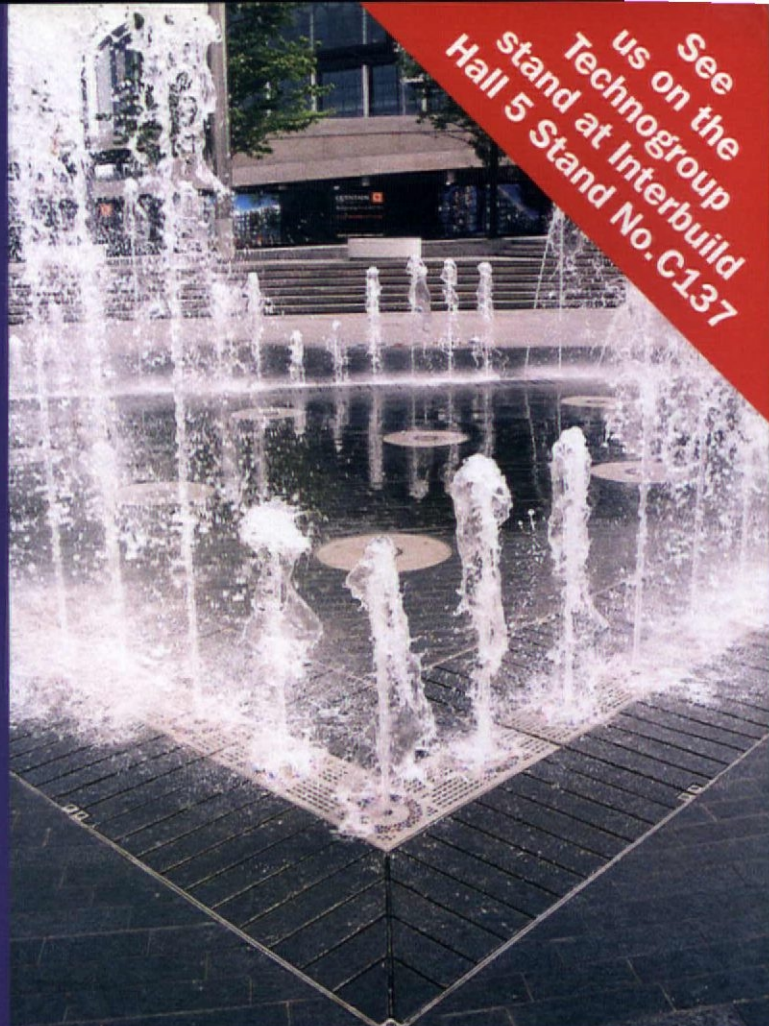
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In this section // *Google Chrome* //
Naomi Klein's Shock Doctrine //
Critic's Choice // *5 Things To Do*

The Critics



INTERNET

The expanding 'geek-o-vision'

Sam Jacob test drives *Google Chrome*, the search engine giant's shiny new venture into internet browsers

Google Chrome browser, available for download at www.google.com/chrome (currently only available for Windows)

Google's logo might well be the world's most-viewed piece of design – which is odd, because those jolly, serif-ish, multicoloured letters look more typed in than designed. Its graphic tropes are from a desktop publishing pattern book: gratuitous use of colour; drop-shadowed and awkwardly-sized. They are often embellished with a clip-art drawing, celebrating the significance of a date, such as Hallowe'en. The result looks like something a primary school teacher might print and laminate, rather than the moniker of one of the most innovative technology and media corporations.

But that might be why it works, a triumph of geekish blindness to the niceties of design. It's at odds with both Apple's hyper-refined aesthetics and Microsoft's over-cooked concoctions of compromise. Google's search and results pages seem un-spun, somehow more honest than those worked over by branding experts and designers.

Google's geek-o-vision of the world has been augmented by the release of its browser,

Chrome (beta), launched on 3 September. Google describes Chrome as 'minimal design with sophisticated technology'. The browser opens a window with very little on it, in it, or around it, leaving users with the same



liberating feeling of 'where did all that stuff go?' as Google's search page induced back when it debuted. Comparatively, Internet Explorer seems laden with menu bars, icons, search boxes and drop down menus. Even Apple's Safari with its faux brushed-aluminium frame

seems unnecessarily fussy. With Chrome, there is almost nothing there. Chrome's aim is to get out of your way – and it does exactly that.

What is unique to Chrome is the way it handles data. Little tweaks, such as how it thumbnails your most visited websites, show that the browser is more interested in integrating with the internet (or at least Google's databanks) than your operating system. Chrome is revealed as a Google offspring by handling data in such a way that it starts organising your own behaviour.

Browsers have evolved from what was essentially a text and image viewer to a tool which engages with almost every area of life: work, finances, entertainment... In its early years, the promise of data space seemed to suggest 3D worlds with infinite depth. The reality, as Chrome seems designed to see it, is that the internet is infinitely flat, rearranging itself into equally infinite patterns as we use it.

Resume: Chrome offers cleaner windows to internet explorers



BOOK

Is there a doctrine in the house?

Naomi Klein seeks out political machinations masked by disasters, says **Kaye Alexander**

The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism, by Naomi Klein. Allen Lane, 576pp, £8.99

I approached *The Shock Doctrine* as I would a Michael Moore film: prepared to be outraged by Naomi Klein's revelations but equipped with a large pinch of salt to temper the drama.

Activist and author Klein's previous book *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* was an international best-seller and downright manifesto against capitalism and corporate culture. Follow-up *The Shock Doctrine*'s stark title, weighty dimensions and red and black colour scheme are the only perceivable nods towards theatrics; inside it's fact after devastating fact. What I really needed was a spoonful

of sugar to help the bitter medicine go down.

Klein reframes the major world events of the past 35 years in terms of 'disaster capitalism' – her name for Milton Friedman-inspired economic policies that exploit human trauma to spread the free trade mantra.

Friedman, professor of economics at the University of Chicago until his death in 2006, believed that in an open, competitive global market, the sole role of the state was to enforce national and international freedom.

Free education, nationalised amenities and subsidised living essentials were top of

Friedman's hit list but, according to Klein, 'privatisation, deregulation and cuts to social spending – the free market trinity' are not vote winners. Like all utopian visions, from Adolf Hitler's New Berlin to the development of Milton Keynes, you can't build it without absolute power or a clean slate. And if you can't achieve this politically, then a disaster, natural or artificial, is the next best thing.

'Some people stockpile canned goods and water in preparation for major disasters; Friedmanites stockpile free market ideas,' quips Klein. Her inaugural blow, the example of the

immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, is not the most horrifying in terms of physical, political or economic brutality in a list of case studies which includes Pinochet's dictatorship of Chile and the Iraq war. Its gravity derives from the freshness of the news bulletin images, its occurrence in one of the most developed countries in the world, and the sheer opportunism of the politicians at play.

Buckminster Fuller championed the notion of an 'alternative' – the creation of a new system that makes the old one obsolete. Similarly, Friedman urged economists 'to develop alternatives to existing policies' and 'to keep them alive and available until the

The politicians continued where Katrina had left off, erasing the city's government-funded education system

politically impossible becomes politically inevitable'. And so, says Klein, while the inhabitants of New Orleans remained displaced, the electricity offline and the flood defences unrepaired, the politicians continued where Katrina had left off, erasing the city's government-funded education system and replacing it with private charter schools.

The method of their madness, honed over a series of manufactured and chance events, was shock. Shock number one is the disaster that leaves communities and entire countries reeling. Shock number two is the economic 'reforms' which must be implemented and made permanent as quickly as possible after the initial strike to take full advantage of the democratic blind spot created by panic.

I consider myself to be a member of the politically savvy generation, and felt well equipped to avoid the trap of taking everything as read. The problem is and remains – that in the wake of shock, there is nothing to read. As the media covers the unfolding disaster, bills are pushed through silently, under the cover of the screams of the masses.

Architects, as they rebuild disaster-struck zones, have a responsibility to understand the context of the ground in front of them, before they lay the foundations for a new world order. But if evidence of economic tampering only surfaces when the disaster has cooled, how can architects guarantee they are truly rebuilding after a crisis, not simply dismantling progress?

The core lesson of *The Shock Doctrine* is not to separate. Not to separate cause and effect, as in the example of Chile, where the aftershocks

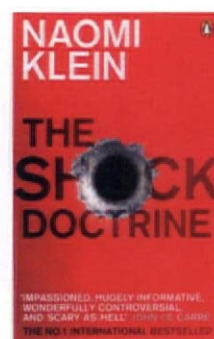
of torture and persecution were globally deplored, but the regime they protected were not. Not to separate different elements of progress such as in South Africa, which Klein declares 'stands as a living testament to what happens when economic reform is severed from political transformation'.

As we follow scare stories of hurricanes, credit crunches and terrorist strikes, *The Shock Doctrine* is a primer for everyone, a pattern book of every recent manifestation of the same mutation. If we cannot employ Klein's book to prevent disaster capitalism, we can certainly use it to brace ourselves.

Resume: Klein looks at the calm after the storm



Left and bottom The after-effects of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans in 2005. In the wake of the disaster state education in the city was eradicated, says Naomi Klein in *The Shock Doctrine*
Below left The author, Naomi Klein





Critic's Choice

Poor presentation lets down a book about an inspirational 'gardener', says **Andrew Mead**

Gilles Clément, who describes himself as 'a gardener and writer', made his name as one of the design team for Parc André Citroën on the outskirts of Paris in the early 1990s. Subsequent projects in his native France include two more gardens in the capital: one in the vicinity of Johann Otto von Spreckelsen's Grande Arche at La Défense, which colonises wasteland created by aborted construction schemes (see below), and the other for Jean Nouvel's Quai Branly Museum. A monograph in English on his work is overdue and *Planetary Gardens: The Landscape Architecture of Gilles Clément* (Birkhäuser, £46.90) fills the gap – though not quite as convincingly as it should.

What Clément seeks is the antithesis of the bland formalism that seems to be the corporate norm when it comes to landscape design – solutions plucked from a catalogue with little reference to site. A key concept for him is 'the garden in movement', which exploits the way that plants self-seed and shift around a site in ever-changing configurations, but unlike the late Ian McHarg (influential teacher and author of *Design with Nature* (1969)) Clément doesn't think that landscape is just a question of ecological correctness. 'You cannot comprehend the apparent chaotic lushness of nature if this chaos is not staged,' he says. *Planetary Gardens* records nine of Clément's schemes in detail and includes an extended interview with him. The design is mannered and some of the photos are poor but it's still an important book.



Study of a Dog,
by Francis Bacon
(1952)

5 THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

1 *Francis Bacon at Tate Britain*

See screaming popes and visceral landscapes at this massive retrospective of one of the 20th century's greatest painters (above). Until 4 January 2009, Tate Britain, London SW1P. www.tate.org.uk/britain

2 *In Bed with the Girls*

See photography and performance by Andrea Blood and Zoe Sinclair. Until 1 November, Beverley Knowles Fine Art, London W10. www.beverleyknowles.com

3 *Dan Graham lecture*

Hear US artist Dan Graham talk about artist-designed pavilions.

6pm, 28 September, ICA, London SW1Y. Tickets £10. www.ica.org.uk

4 *Beat Streuli*

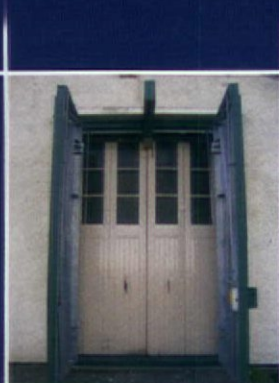
See photographer and film-maker Beat Streuli depictions of urban life, focusing on the 2007 BUPA Great North Run. Until 26 October, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. www.balticmill.com

5 *Bad Science*

Read *Guardian* columnist Ben Goldacre's new book, which cuts through pseudo-scientific flim-flam. *Bad Science*, by Ben Goldacre. Fourth Estate, 352pp. £12.99

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*Sean Griffiths, FAT, London
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*Read Sean's full interview online
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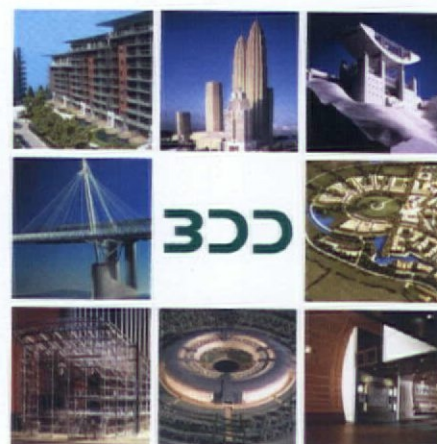


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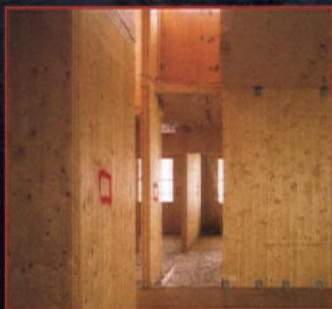
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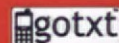


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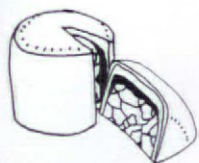
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Ian Martin. Manchester's sinking gasbags, London's floating island aerodrome

MONDAY. To Manchester, and the Labour Party conference. For a few days MPs can forget they're barristers or journalists or PR consultants or whatever and walk around like tribunes of the people, without ties on.

My friend Azzy Bifter, the idiot secretary of state for entertainment, is nervous when I meet him and his Mam for lunch. **He has to give a keynote address on the challenges of High Definition Britain and keeps forgetting his lines.** Mrs Bifter coaches him throughout the meal, ignoring me and wiping food off his face from time to time.

I'm not sure I like the sound of Azzy's 'HD Britain'. The home entertainment revolution ('broadband, plasma TV screens, er I said broadband didn't I?') has given us a new depth and quality of content, apparently. So Azzy and his army of civil servants now plan to 'roll out' high definition culture for everything, including architecture.

He explains that by improving our cultural connectivity we will be able to 'keep up with Asia'. How will this work? 'OK. Take architecture. At the moment when it comes onstream it looks sort of fuzzy like round the edges and the people inside look a bit squashed and short, yeah? Well with high definition architecture all the details are really sharp and... Mam, can I have some wine yet? I've eaten me vegetables...'

So. With HD architecture, when you're walking round a new Zaha Hadid building do you always see their logo in the top left hand corner? 'Oh yeah,' says Azzy, uncertainly. And how will our new high definition cultural connectivity be achieved, exactly? He freezes,

unable to think. Mrs Bifter pauses with her napkin and stares daggers at me. 'Dhey'll do it dhe way dhey always do it, soft lad!' she barks. 'By digging up dhe bloody roads...'

TUESDAY. This is the gloomiest Labour conference since the one where John Smith died in the bath. The party machine's puffing out clouds of chaff about economic recovery in an attempt to confuse the media's radar, but we all know what's going on.

The government's planning its slash and burn exit strategy. By the time the Conservatives get in they'll find a smouldering cultural wasteland. A green housing initiative gone brown and mouldy. Blasted heaths where eco-towns were supposed to have been built. **A dazed, partially-regenerated Yorkshire unsure of which way to go along the M1.**

I hear Holly Boxwood – the communities, bins and forward thinking secretary – try to reassure conference with news of an amendment to the Planning Act, requiring all new homes to be fitted with equity meters and mortgage alarms. Nobody cares any more, and you sense she's already got one eye on her future career as a clinical psychologist.

Later, she announces that 'bin cam cams' are to be trialled in Birmingham to deter householders from removing bin cams.

WEDNESDAY. To sleepy old London town. The mayor, my old friend Loaf, has organised a floating lunch in the Thames Estuary.

It's actually more of a site visit. A few of us have been invited to see the proposed location

of the new London airport. It will be created on some kind of fantasy island off the Kent coast.

I suppose it'll be like that whopping big one Norman did for Hong Kong, but much smaller. The irritating GLA press monkeys keep trying to persuade us to nickname it 'Check Loaf Cock Nub' but nobody's having it. You're never sure with Loaf if he's being ingeniously disingenuous. For all I know the airport idea is an elaborate distraction to stop people thinking about the Olympics.

THURSDAY. More details emerge of Loaf's 'intermodal transportation hub'. **It will be at the centre of a series of concentric planning rings.** The sequence is as follows: airport, floodplain, contaminated air, congestion zone, residents' parking only, M25.

FRIDAY. My friend Amy Blackwater has started a campaign to block Loaf's airport on the grounds that it would destroy the natural habitat of giant rats, the Darwinian consequence of undisturbed human detritus in the Thames. **Already a Banksy has appeared on a wall at Tower Bridge: a giant rat in swimming goggles brandishing a Mac-10 with the slogan 'My Eco System Now Ha Ha'.**

SATURDAY. Mayhem at the **Annual Deconstructivist Disco** as 'space rage' escalates into a fistfight. Luckily, parametrics are quickly on the scene.

SUNDAY. Cultural connectivity in the recliner, **with the telly on.**



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