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THE END OF AN ERA

From boom to crunch: a guide to Dubai as its development scene grows up – page 21





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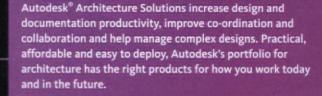
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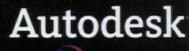


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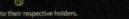












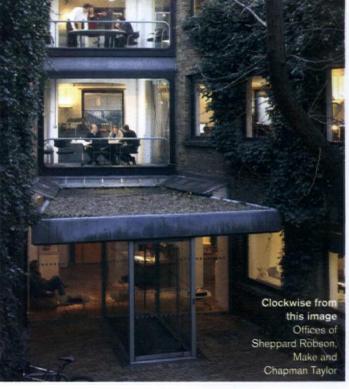
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Make unveils Southall masterplan p11

News







THREE-DAY WEEK RETURNS AS RECESSION LOOMS

The spectre of the 1970s beckons as practices try to avoid further redundancies

A growing number of practices are resorting to three-day weeks and staff pay cuts to keep themselves afloat and avoid mass redundancies.

International practice Chapman Taylor, which has lost 5 per cent of its 115 UK-based staff, is attempting to stave off further redundancies by introducing a three-day week for some employees.

Speaking on behalf of the firm, ranked 15th in the AJ100, communications officer Irina Townsend said the practice was trying 'to avoid mistakes made in the last recession' in the early 1990s, which saw the firm shrink from 600 staff to 70.

Essex-based CHBC Architects has also trimmed the working hours of its staff.

'Most of [our people] are now working a four-day week. Some are down to three,' said practice director David Crawley. 'But at least they are still working.'

The firm has already lost around half of its 70-strong workforce over the last year.

Crawley added: 'I don't want to lose good people. But it is really dog-eat-dog out there, and a lot of firms won't survive."

Christian Gilham, director of Manchester-based Leach Rhodes Walker, admitted that some staff had agreed to 10 per cent pay cuts, and a raft of other practices

are understood to be taking similar measures.

High-profile firms such as Make have not escaped. Earlier this week the practice confirmed the closure of its Edinburgh office, and its headcount has dropped by around 30 staff since the summer.

Other practices making cutbacks include Llewellyn Davies Yeang, Bradford-based Robinson Architects, Conran & Partners, and Gardner Stewart, which has closed its Birmingham office.

The AJ also understands that Sheppard Robson is currently in consultation, and redundancies are a 'definite possibility'. The firm has not ruled out the possibility of a

shorter working week.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday (2 December) visualisation company Smoothe confirmed it had gone into liquidation.

Commenting on the news, Owen Luder, who has lived through 'every boom and gloom' since the Second World War, said: 'People are comparing things to the recession of the early 1990s, but it is worse than that.

'It is as bad as the 1970s, but even then we didn't have a threeday week.'

The grim outlook has prompted the RIBA to launch a recession survival kit for its members, available from tomorrow (5 December). James McLachlan

PRINCE CHARLES: IT'S A DRAWING CRUNCH

Prince Charles has taken another swipe at Modern architectural practice, saying he would never trust an architect who couldn't draw.

Speaking at the Georgian Group's Architectural Drawing Prize, held in honour of his birthday last week, the Prince accused architects of not learning the 'grammar of architecture'.

The prize aims to promote and reward excellence in measured architectural drawing, and to encourage the study and understanding of Georgian buildings. I don't trust any architect who can't draw,' said the Prince, 'and who doesn't submit a drawing, or a measured drawing from which I can judge what the building is going to be like.'

No stranger to criticising modern methods of practice, Prince Charles added that he believed the basics of architecture had been lost, 'with disastrous consequences'.

He condemned what he saw as a reliance on technology, saying: 'However useful computers are, and they are very useful, they should be the servant, the slave, not the master.

'We've reached not only a credit crunch, but also a drawing crunch, as well as a climate crunch, as well as several other crunches, for that matter,' he concluded.

The winner of this year's drawing prize was Fergus Devlin-Connolly, who drew John Soane's Bank of England in London. James McLachlan and Christine Murray

To see the drawings visit www.architectsjournal.co.uk

MOST POPULAR STORIES ON ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.U THIS WEEK

» ZAHA'S HOXTON PLANS SET TO WIN GREEN LIGHT

Zaha Hadid looks set to win approval for this 3,000m² scheme in Hoxton Square, East London. The scheme, which was heavily criticised by English Heritage, could become Hadid's first permanent building to be completed in the UK.



» WORK HALTED ON DUBAI'S TRUMP TOWER

Construction work has ground to a halt on Atkins' Trump International Hotel and Tower in Dubai. At 62 storeys, the £520 million tower was intended to be the centrepiece of Nakheel's Palm Jumeirah project.

» FARRELL JOINS AJ/GEZE COMPETITION JURY

Terry Farrell will join cartoonist
Ralph Steadman on the jury for
the AJ/Geze Entrance to London
competition. Farrell was recently
appointed design leader for future
development in the Thames Gateway.

» SHEFFIELD APPROVES CONRAN SKYSCRAPER

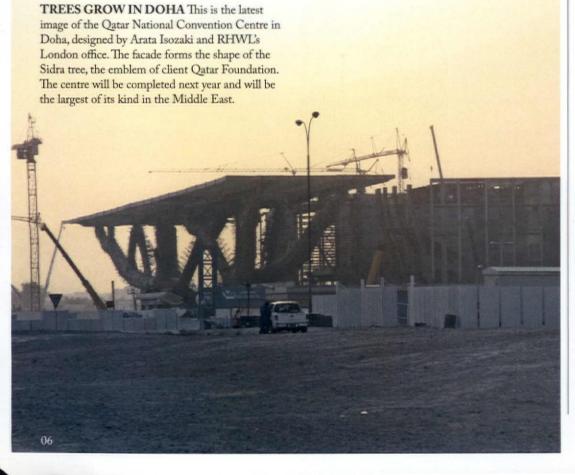
Work will continue on Conran & Partners' half-built St Paul's tower in Sheffield after plans were reworked. It was feared the building would stay five storeys short of the intended 32.

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THAMES GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT STALLS

After five years of planning, numerous schemes are on hold for at least the next four years. Kaye Alexander reports from the Thames Gateway Forum

Numerous schemes in the Thames Gateway – the vast region east of London earmarked for an extensive regeneration programme – are on hold for the foreseeable future. Construction has been stalled for some projects on site, and those on the drawing board are likely to stay there for the next four years. Developers, who based the financial viability of these projects on the property values of 2007, are expected to wait until 2011 for house prices to recover.

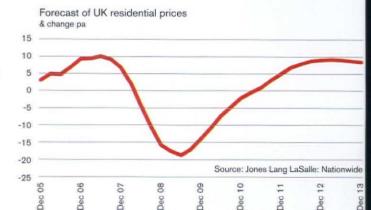
Speaking at the Thames
Gateway Forum in London's
Excel Centre last Thursday
(27 November), Andrew Storey,
joint chief executive for the
Greenwich Peninsula, admitted
none of the projects on the
drawing board for Greenwich
Peninsula, the massive regeneration scheme around the O2
(formerly the Millennium
Dome), would begin on site until
values begin to climb back up.

'House prices are now 20 per cent below where they were [when permission was granted in 2007], so we need to wait until they return to what they were before we can go ahead,' says Storey of the project, which is backed by Quintain and Lend Lease.

According to UK house price growth predictions by property agent Jones Lang LaSalle, a return to 2007 levels will take five years. 'And that,' warns Storey, 'assumes a recovery will start this time next year.'

As a result, the Terry Farrell-masterplanned Greenwich
Peninsula could see nearly half
a decade of inactivity. Numerous
projects could be stalled,
including a 305-home development by Flacq at Peninsula
Central; a residential scheme by
CF Møller; another by Patel
Taylor Architects at Peninsula
Quays; and a 207-home project
with 40 per cent sustainable
homes by Jestico + Whiles at
Peninsula Parkside.

Jestico + Whiles director
Heinz Richardson says the delays
are 'not a surprise in the context
of the current climate'. Even
schemes already under construction, it has emerged, are not
immune. Storey admits that work
on Stock Woolstencroft's 229apartment scheme for Bellway
Homes next to the River Thames
'has paused due to market
conditions'.



involved, working to a masterplan by Barton Willmore.

Space Craft managing director Cody Gaynor says the scheme 'is on ice, not put off', but confirms that work was halted even before reaching detailed planning stage.

The housing crash also impacts linked schemes, where privately backed houses are expected to fund other facilities. Havering Council recently had to 'reaffirm

mixed-use development along 2km of Thames waterfront, project director Clive Wilding and Elliot Lipton, managing director of developer First Base, are trying to remain upbeat. Wilding insists progress is 'dependent on individual circumstances and land values'. He adds that much of the lowrise family housing development in Barking is backed by English Partnerships (now the Homes and Communities Agency), 'which may be prepared to take less profit in order to stimulate growth'.

This joint venture between Barking Riverside, Bellway Homes and the Homes and Communities Agency will, maintains Wilding, 'have a reserved matter application in by Christmas' for 4,000 new homes, 44 per cent of which are three-bedroom houses, rather than flats.

Developers banking on the property values of 2007 are expected to wait until 2011 for prices to recover

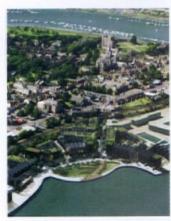
The Greenwich Peninsula is not the only project to hit the buffers. During the forum, Steve McGuckin, head of Ebbsfleet Valley Land Securities, announced that the next planned phase of residential development Castle Hill in the Kent region has been mothballed. Architects S333, Proctor Matthews and London-based practice Space Craft are all

its commitment' to a leisure development in Romford. It said: 'The worldwide credit crunch has resulted in dropping property prices, which means the proposed new homes will not sufficiently fund the redevelopment of the leisure complex. The council has since suspended the development until property prices rise.'

On Barking Riverside, a







According to Jeremy Grint, head of spatial development at Barking and Dagenham, things will keep 'moving in the area'. But he adds that 'if the Docklands Light Railway extension does not go ahead it may mean that Barking Riverside will only be able to take 1,500 homes'.

The London borough has recently submitted two planning applications for a development on the edge of Barking town centre – a joint venture between Barking and Dagenham Local Housing Company, the council and First Base – which has 470 housing units in total and 96 in the first phase.

Chris Tapp, partner at RMA Architects, says the firm's Lanrick Road housing project in London's Tower Hamlets, which has just received planning permission, is still going ahead. 'We have an agreement with the client for working drawings,' says Tapp. But, he adds, 'we have yet to be instructed to proceed until there is a greater certainty in the market; either through completing a certain level of market sales or agreeing contracts with a housing association.'

Elsewhere, delays are being used to improve designs already on the drawing board.

Brian Weddell, head of Medway Renaissance, the regeneration arm of Medway Council, said its 600-unit Rochester Riverside project by HTA Architects and Burd Haward was a year away from detailed planning but the timescale 'was being tweaked'.

HTA project director Simon Bayliss speaks for many when he says that while there are opportunities in the Thames Gateway, '[there] are still a lot of challenges to get the economic conditions right to continue developing it'.



Top left Terry Farrell's masterplan for Greenwich Peninsula Top right Larnick Road by RMA Architects Centre right
The planned
Rochester
Riverside
development,
by HTA
Architects and
Burd Haward

Above Model of planned regeneration on display at the Thames Gateway Forum



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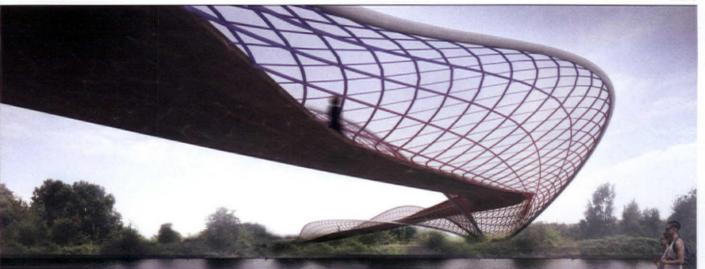
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Clockwise from top Hakes Associates' and Marks Barfield's footbridges; The former gas works lies between the canal to the north and the Great Western Railway to the south: The new retail street

MAKE REVEALS SOUTHALL PLANS

Ken Shuttleworth's practice Make has unveiled its masterplan for the huge, 36ha mixed-use redevelopment of the former Southall Gas Works site in west London.

The 15 to 20-year plan will see up to 3,750 homes built on the plot next to the Grand Union Canal, and has been submitted for outline planning on behalf of landowner National Grid Property.

Detailed plans for two new footbridges by Hakes Associates and Marks Barfield Architects, which will link the development with Minet Country Park, have also been submitted.

Make joined the scheme as a replacement for Urbed last year. According to the practice, the masterplan 'has been designed to fully integrate Southall's core' with its surroundings. Richard Waite















THE CHOICE OF PROFESSIONALS

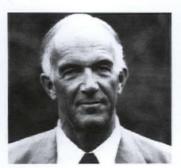
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Obituary Jørn Utzon was one of the truly great architects of the 20th century, says *John Pardey*

over Hawaii into the vaults above his Bagsværd church



Jørn Utzon's name is synonymous with the Sydney Opera House, and after the furore over his departure from the project, so is the inference that the architect is a mayerick - a dreamer who allows the programme and budget to run away with him. Despite the countless words that have been written on the Sydney Opera House affair, the truth is still debated. But one thing is clear: just as the Pyramids define Egypt and the Eiffel Tower defines Paris, Australia owes much of its national identity to the Opera House, possibly the greatest single building of the 20th century.

Talking to Utzon, who died on 29 November, about the Opera

12

House and the events that led to him leaving the project in 1966, I expected him to be bitter and to place the blame on the politicians who undermined his position. But Utzon, I discovered, never spoke ill of anyone, preferring to see challenges as part of life's education. A sadness remained that he had not been able to

construction of the shells of the Opera House. He had a genius that could translate billowing clouds over the beach in Hawaii into the vaults above his sublime Bagsværd Community Church in Denmark, or could create a house, as with Can Lis (pictured below), from the pattern of birds settling on a

He had a genius that could translate billowing clouds

finish his building, however, and recent overtures from Australia asking him to oversee various changes to the building were designed with, and overseen by, his architect son. When asked if he would welcome his interiors finally being built, he simply said too much time had passed and he would approach the problem differently now.

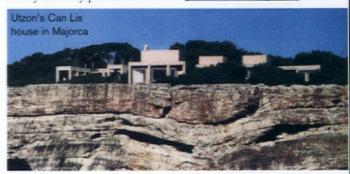
Far from being a dreamer, Utzon was an architect with an incisive understanding of the practicalities of building and engineering. After all it was he, not the engineers, who had the crucial insight that allowed the cliff-top in Majorca.

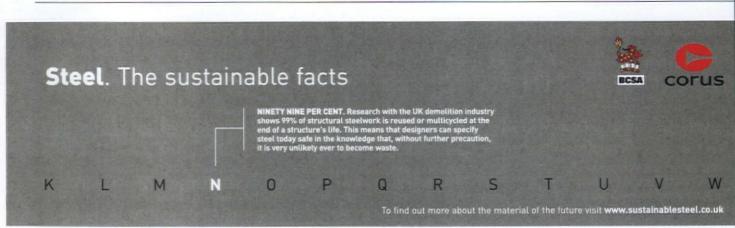
Even in his 90s, Utzon was an elegant man with a 'marvellous' (his favourite word) sense of humour. He was not reclusive or shy as is often reported, merely intensely private. He was

inseparable from his wife Lis, whom he met on his birthday back in April 1940 – the day Germany invaded Denmark. They married two years later and spent the next 66 years together.

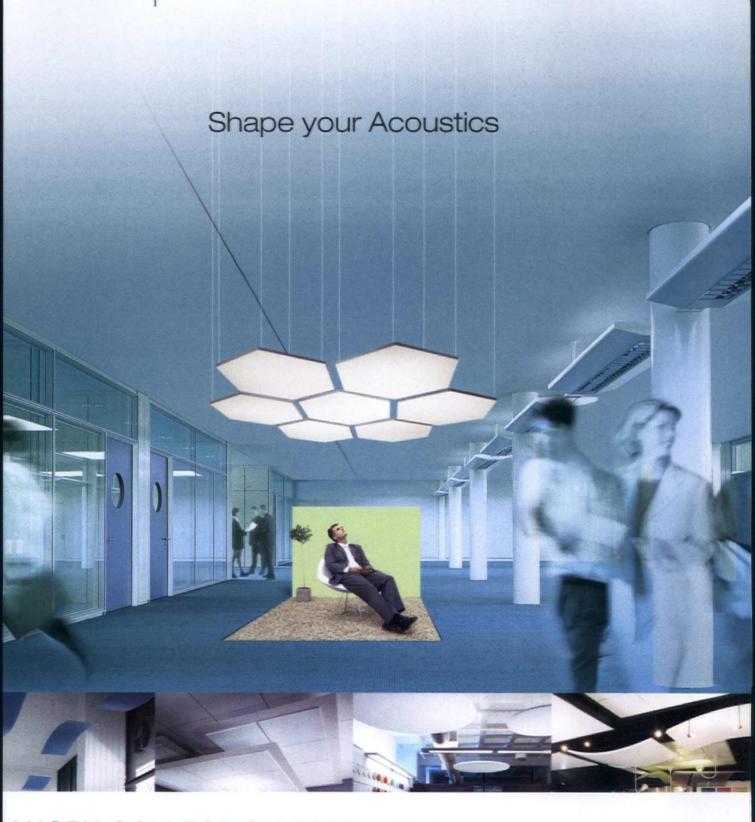
As with the loss of all great people, I find it hard to imagine a world without Utzon. Perhaps his architecture can be best described in the words of Alvar Aalto: 'Architecture still has untapped resources and methods that draw directly on nature and the reactions of the human psyche, which cannot be explained in words.'

John Pardey is director of John Pardey Architects and author of Utzon: Two Houses on Majorca (Edition Bløndal, 2004)





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Astragal



last one and promptly putting it on. Sorry kids.

THAMES-ALAYAS

Escapism is the perfect antidote to the credit crunch, that's why Nick Allen, of Yorkshire-based practice Allen Tod, booked a trip to walk the foothills of the Himalayas. Halfway up a mountain, Allen found pristine tranquility, beautiful isolation, unspoilt quietness... and a conservation officer from Scarborough Borough Council. Allen should have gone to the Thames Gateway – there are no design-related people there.

KEVIN MCGUFFIN

There's nothing like an old episode of Poirot to sweep away your recession worries - but Astragal was struck by the similarities between Captain Hastings (pictured right), the Belgian detective's sidekick, and Kevin McCloud of Grand Designs fame. Not only are their voices identical, but there is more than a passing physical resemblance. Did McCloud learn his trade while traipsing around Art Deco apartments and stately homes with David Suchet? One to test the little grey cells, mon ami.

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SERPENTINE SLIP

Last week's spurious attempt to pinpoint the architect of this year's Serpentine Pavilion prompted a little bird to tell Astragal about a conversation overheard among Serpentine employees about New York Citybased practice Diller Scofidio + Renfro. Idle architectural chitchat, or another clue?



ON YOUR WATCH

Astragal is rather a magpie when it comes to freebies from conventions and trade shows.

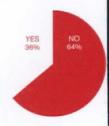
Last week, at the Thames
Gateway forum, Astragal's beady eye was caught by Transport for London bags on the shoulders of

a few attendees. Hot-footing it to the stand, Astragal discovered a veritable smorgasbord of treats: pens, Oyster card-holders, badges and, best of all, a Docklands Light Railway watch (pictured above). While others snaffled handfuls of timepieces saying, 'Tve got five kids', Astragal made no such pretence, grabbing the

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Will the measures set out in the pre-Budget report help small practices?

Next week's question: Would you look for another job if your practice reduced your pay? www.architectsjournal.co.uk



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ESTABLISHED 1895 VOLUME 228, ISSUE 21 GREATER LONDON HOUSE HAMPSTEAD ROAD LONDON NW1 7EJ

Leader Will Foster and Hadid create international icons or Arabic architecture at Mecca? asks *Kieran Long*

The AJ broke possibly the biggest architecture story of the year last week (AJ 27.11.08), with the news that Foster + Partners and Zaha Hadid Architects are to work on one of the greatest logistical, symbolic and scalar challenges on earth – the redevelopment of Islam's most important site of pilgrimage, Mecca.

The story has been picked up around the world, as well as being borrowed by national newspapers, countless blogs and other news outlets. It is rare in trade journalism that a story has this kind of impact, and it is a credit to our reporter, Richard Waite, that people have had to get their information from us – no one else has this kind of access.

The media interest in the story also speaks

of the massively increased attention paid to the Middle East by Western news outlets. Our literacy about that part of the world has increased, perhaps from seeing maps on the evening news describing another conflict or tragedy. But there is also a recognition that while the world depends on fossil fuels, much of its near future will also depend on the Middle East.

The selection of UK-based architects for the most high-profile of Islamic sites is recognition of the UK's historical links in the region. It also confirms something that is clear whenever you travel in the Middle East: there is a perception that British consultants bring quality, flair and reliability to construction projects.

Last week I travelled to Doha in Qatar to

see one of the more successful examples of a Western architect attempting to create an authentic Arabic architecture. I M Pei is Chinese, but was educated and has practiced in America. His Museum of Islamic Art in Doha is a finely wrought building, generated from six months dedicated to the study of Islamic architectural history.

One wonders how these two giants of the London scene will adjust their architectural languages for this culturally loaded situation. Will Saudi Arabia get two pieces of international architecture? Or are Foster and Hadid capable of making buildings that can take their place alongside the Taj Mahal and the Alhambra?

kieran.long@emap.com

Opinion A masterplan for the Thames Gateway is essential, but it must be considered and decisive, says *Hilary Reid Evans*

Thinking of the Thames Gateway reminds me that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. While that is one piece of infrastructure that nobody wants, it seems to be making extraordinary progress. After years of effort and dozens of attempts at regeneration, we are left with a region synonymous with failure. It is easy to list the issues: the horrendously complex existing delivery mechanism; the out-of-date targets; the lack of co-ordination; and the all too prevalent silo mentality.

There is huge expectation regarding what the new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), launched on Monday (1 December), can deliver and the planned review of delivery bodies is a fantastic start. But how can anyone know what sort of delivery body will be effective if they don't know what they are trying to achieve? I always thought structure followed strategy.

The strategy for the Gateway includes the promise of creating an eco-region. Great, but I wonder how this will be implemented and how long it will take. The eco-towns debacle has inevitably debased the currency of what should be the keystone of a truly economically, environmentally and ecologically sustainable plan for the area.

Terry Farrell's Parklands spatial framework brilliantly positions the Gateway as a coherent

A masterplan will not wave a magic wand over issues like climate change

whole for the first time. I understand that Bob Kerslake, chief executive of the HCA, is now considering asking Farrell and his team to look at the area's economic, social and environmental potential. If this takes place, it is a welcome move. But again I think of timeframes and the need for co-ordination. Will the work be considered alongside the review of delivery bodies? And even if it is, where will that lead us? The most successful schemes have been based around a unifying, co-ordinated vision and action plan, with a

simplified decision-making and planning structure focused on delivery.

Most of the information we need to inform a masterplanning process is already in place. The Sustainable Environment Foundation's Green Paper work, for example, has pulled together more than 20 of the UK's leading experts from across the development and construction sectors. They have shared data and expertise and are considering the issues that will inform a masterplan, such as the nature and location of development that optimises existing resources and stimulates economic regeneration; the current and likely future nature of housing need; and the type of transport and energy infrastructures that can support these developments.

We know the need is urgent. A masterplan will not wave a magic wand over issues like climate change, carbon-reduction targets, our economic prosperity and London's future as a global leader in green technology. But a well-considered plan could certainly provide us with a route map, as well as a way of coordinating all those good intentions.

Hilary Reid Evans is head of sustainability initiatives at Quintain

comment@architectsjournal.co.uk

Joseph Rykwert

I never quite loved the Sydney Opera House
Jørn Utzon, with architect Richard Johnson, has
restored the auditoria to an honourable state
The building has towered above its misfortunes

It was a long way to go for a party, but I was bidden to Sydney to celebrate the contribution of architect-scholar Lawrence Nield to his highly successful office, Bligh Voller Nield, from which he has partially withdrawn to continue his work on a smaller scale. The party was in the best location Sydney has to offer: the retro-foyer of the Opera House (1973), with a panoramic window over the harbour, which obliged with a firework display during the speeches.

One party guest was Sydney-based architect Richard Johnson of Johnson Pilton Walker, who was chosen in 1998 to work on the revamp of this very building, and was lucky to gain architect Jørn Utzon's trust and even enthusiasm. Some of the minor auditoria have already been returned to an honourable state. Their equipment and finishes have been renewed - Utzon himself designed a colourful, Arp-like tapestry for the chamber concert hall, which has been restored - and so have the acoustics. The concert hall and the opera auditorium were neglected during the building's troubled early years. Utzon left the project in 1966 due to quarrels with the client and 1,000 per cent cost overruns, and much of the building's interior was not completed to his plans. Musicians had to get on as best they could. Now they are receiving proper attention. The opera house interior is to be encased in a carefully calibrated timber shell that will be partly visible from outside - a fan of timber box-ribs that will give the building the resonance it has always needed. The processional character of the public spaces is also to be restored.

Like almost everybody, I reluctantly admired the Sydney Opera House when I first saw the competition results back in 1956, with its earth-bound podium growing out of the soil of Bennelong Point and jutting out into the bay, the vaults hovering over the layered platforms in counterpoint to the arch of the Harbour Bridge. It may all have been very thrilling, but I never quite loved it. Perhaps I was uneasy, or even feared those vaults as foreboding the iconic buildings 50 years hence. Or perhaps I could not buy into the analogy between the vaults and the sails in

Some of the white vaults, seen from the land side, take on a gracelessly bowlegged, Gothic look

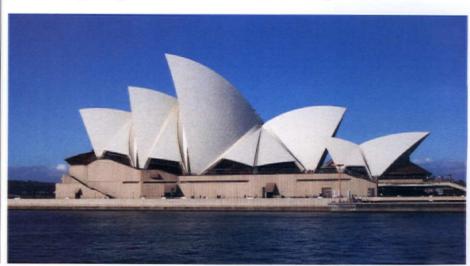
the bay. Just think how that analogy has now been debased by the curved side of the Burj Al Arab in Dubai.

As the building took shape, there were details that made me uneasy. The junctions between those gleaming white vaults and the concrete-granite podium seemed to me (formally) the weakest point of the building. Some of them, seen from the land side, still take on a gracelessly bowlegged, Gothic look. In time, such details were overlooked, and the billowing vaults have become the trademark of Sydney.

The gnawing collective sense of guilt that the city fathers rightly felt about their treatment of Utzon was partly assuaged by gongs, doctorates and the gift of keys to the city, and finally led to overtures to return some of the lost splendour to his masterpiece. Utzon agreed to review the interiors with Johnson, who was able to show me an opulent collection of Utzon's drawings as well as a series of study models for the new interior. I saw a few of them in the extended exhibition of Utzon's collected work by the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, shown at this year's Venice Biennale. As far as I am concerned, it was about the most entrancing and satisfying show at the biennale, even if it was off the usual visitors' route.

It is all, as they say in publishers' handouts, 'the stuff of romance', although the hero is a building, rather than its architect. Though struggling and wounded, it has towered above misfortunes, stifling some of our doubts, comforting old admirers and even awaking the love of this old curmudgeon.

Jørn Utzon died on 29 November. See page 12 for an obituary



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Letters

IØRN UTZON

orn Utzon (see News, page 12) created a Danish tradition, in which a building's shapes and functions are interconnected. His works are lucid without any superfluous elements. The constructions in general are apparent and easy to read – when you walk beneath the shells of the Sydney Opera House you can see how they are attached. Nothing is concealed or difficult to interpret.

Contrary to other architects, Utzon had his own personal architectural perspectives and visions which were inspired by his many journeys and passion for ancient cultures. While others were inspired by contemporary architects, Utzon explored old buildings in China and Latin America. By incorporating nature and the terrain in his work, his starting point was always the elements. This is why he is unique.

Kim Nielsen, founder and principal architect, 3XN, Denmark

MOORE STREET

In Andrew Lee's photographs of the Moore Street development in Glasgow (AJ 27.11.08), the three individuals walking along Gallowgate past the blank, hostile brick boundary walls, and the complete absence of any residents in the 11 other pictures, express all that needs to be said about this misguided masterplan by Richard Murphy Architects.

I am sad to write this, as I admire Murphy's architecture greatly. Miles Glendinning tries hard to give the masterplan an intellectual respectability, locating it between Modernism and the new urbanism, and calling it 'spatially innovative', but I am afraid it looks like a dead end, in more ways than one.

There really is no substitute for a joined-up network of public streets with front doors on them. This may sound conservative, but in fact it is a recipe capable of infinite variety and reinvention. Moreover, when a new development is set in a damaged neighbourhood like Glasgow's east end, surely it has a social responsibility to try to add life to the streets, however cautiously, and not to barricade itself behind

defensive walls.

Joe Holyoak, Birmingham

CORRECTIONS

In AJ 27.11.08, the AJ listed an incorrect energy consumption figure of 27kgCO₂/m² for Bere Architects' office in Newington Green, London. The actual energy consumption figure is 9kgCO₂/m², which will be further reduced once photovoltaics are installed.

In AJ Specification 11.08, the completed project shown on the final page of Factory Visit is the Pine Trees Estate, Staines, by TP Bennett Architects, not the Bohle UK distribution centre in Telford, as stated.

ADVANCED IDEAS

According to architects, computers are a strong contender for the greatest advance in construction, says *Ruby Kitching*

Computer technology has made it easy to share information, calculate complex geometry and quickly produce and edit drawings. It also allows the structural efficiency of complex designs to be accurately mapped, influencing



the types of materials selected by architects.

It would have been impossible to design the new Terminal 5 building at Heathrow Airport (pictured) without a completely integrated 3D-modelling approach,' says Mike Davies, senior director at Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners.

Julia Barfield, director of Marks Barfield, nominated computers for their impact on architectural modelling. With modelling software, if you need to make changes to dimensions, you can make them in relation to others. In the virtual workshop, Barfield says designs can be 'tested to their limit'.

But not everyone agrees with this nomination. To read the list of nominations in full, visit www.architectsjournal.co.uk/advance



We would like to hear your thoughts and ideas to help compile the 10 theories, methods, materials and machines that have had the greatest impact in moving the construction industry forward.

Send your nominations to Corus Greatest Advance, New Civil Engineer, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7EJ, or email advance@emap.com.

Coming up Charles Walker, associate director at Zaha Hadid Architects, and Keith Clarke, chief executive of Atkins, reveal their thoughts on the greatest advance in construction. tuesday 03 — thursday 05 3 days march 2009 800 exhibitors ecobuild + futurebuil 500 speakers 100 seminars 30,000 visitors earls court, london register for your free invitation www.ecobuild.co.uk from old bricks sustainable refurbishment at ecobuild the world's biggest event for sustainable design, construction and the built environment RIBA 琳 ROCKWOOL

DUBAI

In the second instalment in the AJ Emerging Markets Series, Christine Murray looks at how the credit crunch is affecting architects and development in Dubai

Dubai isn't a newly-emerging market – if you haven't worked there, you probably know someone who's packed up and gone east to take advantage of its higher salaries and superlative architectural opportunities.

In this, the second instalment of the AJ Emerging Markets Series, we look at how the credit crunch has affected Dubai. The downturn in the property market has caused development to slow, not stop; and as a result of the crunch, clients have begun asking for high-quality, sustainable buildings, not just iconic, world record-breaking structures.

In this guide, we've also included information about moving to Dubai. If this summer's sex-on-the-beach scandal has taught us anything, it's that moving to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) means giving up many freedoms we enjoy in the UK. On my visit, a 20-something PR representative told me about Dubai's inherent class system, which means an Emirati employee will be promoted

ahead of a British, Australian or American expat, regardless of their credentials. Dubai also has a widely-accepted servant culture. Most offices I visited had 'tea boys' – fullygrown men employed to fetch refreshments.

Allegations of human trafficking in the construction industry are also widespread, with claims that migrant workers, forced to live and work in devastating conditions, often have their pay withheld and passports confiscated. The UAE government has launched initiatives to address these problems.

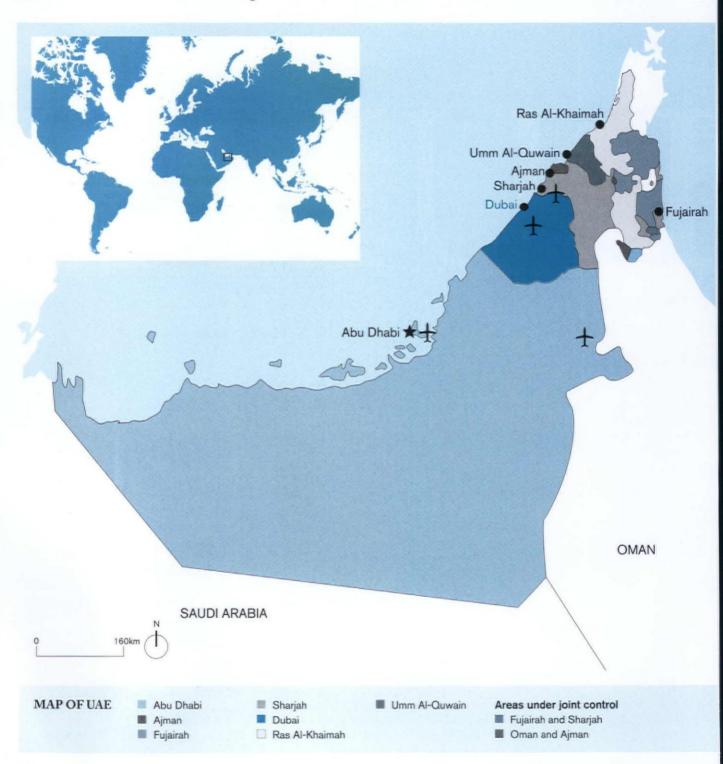
As with many emerging markets, Dubai is still a work-in-progress. Architects who choose to work there will influence, and be part of, what the emirate becomes.

Christine Murray is the AJ's deputy editor and editor of the Emerging Markets Series

The next instalment in the Emerging Markets Series, published in AJ 05.02.09, will look at Qatar

THE INDEX

Bite-sized economic and socio-political data on Dubai and the United Arab Emirates

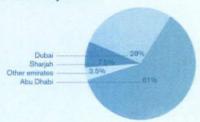


What is the UAE?

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is an independent sovereign state founded in 1971. Located in the Persian Gulf, the federation comprises seven emirates – Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, Ras Al-Khaimah and Fujairah – each with its own ruling family of sheikhs. The ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is also the de facto president of the UAE

Population of the UAE 4.5 million, of which just 20 percent are Emirati nationals

UAE GDP by emirate



About Dubai

Situated northeast of Abu Dhabi, along the coast of the Persian Gulf, Dubai is the second largest emirate by GDP and area, after Abu Dhabi. It is also expected to be the most densely populated of the emirates by 2009. The capital of Dubai is Dubai City

Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

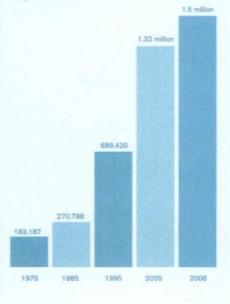
Area 3,885km², with 72km of coastline Population of Dubai 1.5 million GDP 198 billion in 2007 GDP growth 11 per cent

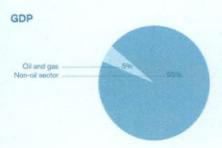
Dubai City

The small settlement of Dubai, situated along Dubai Creek, a narrow 15km sea inlet, was taken over by the Bani Yas tribe in 1833, who left the nearby town of Abu Dhabi under the leadership of the still-ruling Maktoum family. Dubai's central location in the gulf allowed it to develop as a thriving port and centre for pearls, fishing and trade. A limited supply of oil was discovered in 1966, which Sheikh Rashid Bin

Saeed Al Maktoum, father of the current ruler, invested in dredging the creek to enable greater ship traffic, increasing Dubai's trade by 20 per cent. Later, Sheikh Rashid built the world's largest man-made harbour at Jebel Ali, an economic free zone. Current ruler Sheikh Mohammed has further developed Dubai as a tourism and business destination for the Middle East

Population of Dubai

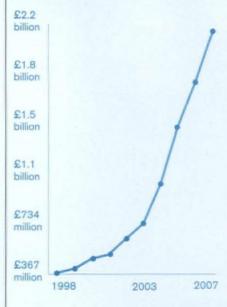




Economy

With knowledge of Dubai's dwindling oil reserves, a strategic decision was made to diversify Dubai's economy, focusing on tourism dollars, property development, financial services and the re-export market. The total value of property development projects planned and underway in Dubai currently totals £8.44 billion

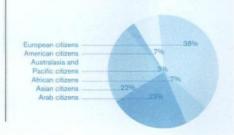
Dubai annual hotel revenues, 1998-2007



Tourism

Dubai's location, roughly a seven-hour flight from London and from Hong Kong, has made it an ideal business, tourist and re-export hub. It is currently served by over 120 shipping lines, and linked by 120 airlines to 205 destinations. The city plans to further increase import/export and tourism traffic by adding a £3 billion third terminal to Dubai International Airport and constructing the new £6.5 billion Al Maktoum International Airport. The two airports will have a joint annual capacity of 230 million passengers. Dubai's tourism drive has paid off so far. In 2007, seven million people stayed in its hotels. Tourism now comprises 30 per cent of Dubai's GDP and visitors to the emirate outnumber residents by 5 to 1

Dubai hotel guests by region



DUBAI GROWS UP

The credit crunch has finally struck Dubai, but the emirate continues to grow – in size and in maturity, writes *Christine Murray*

'We are building history,' says Marwan Al Qamzi, managing director at developer Nakheel, steering his white Lexus over a vast expanse of limestone-coloured sand.

It's 11 November, the day before Dubai's property-market crash, but if Al Qamzi knows what's about to happen, it doesn't show. By 30 November, Nakheel had announced 500 job cuts, 15 per cent of its workforce.

He's giving me a tour of the construction site of Palm Jebel Ali, the second palm-tree-shaped island to be grafted on to Dubai's shoreline. There isn't much to see out here yet, just a dead seabird or two and a dredging boat in the distance spitting a rainbow of sand from the seabed into the air.

As we drive around the palm tree's outer crescent, Al Qamzi points out the thin fronds in the distance, 18 curved fingers of land that will house 250,000 people in hotels, apartments, villas and 500 water homes set on stilts. When the palm is finished, a poem in Arabic by Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, will be spelled out in floating islands, illuminated at night and legible from space.

The scale is epochal, but Palm Jebel Ali is typical of the kind of outrageous, tacky über-developments that have become synonymous with Dubai over the last 10 years – all of them conceived and executed by Sheikh Mohammed, named crown prince

'Developers would say, here's the plot, here's the brief – I want something fantastic'

of Dubai in 1995 and ruler in 2006.

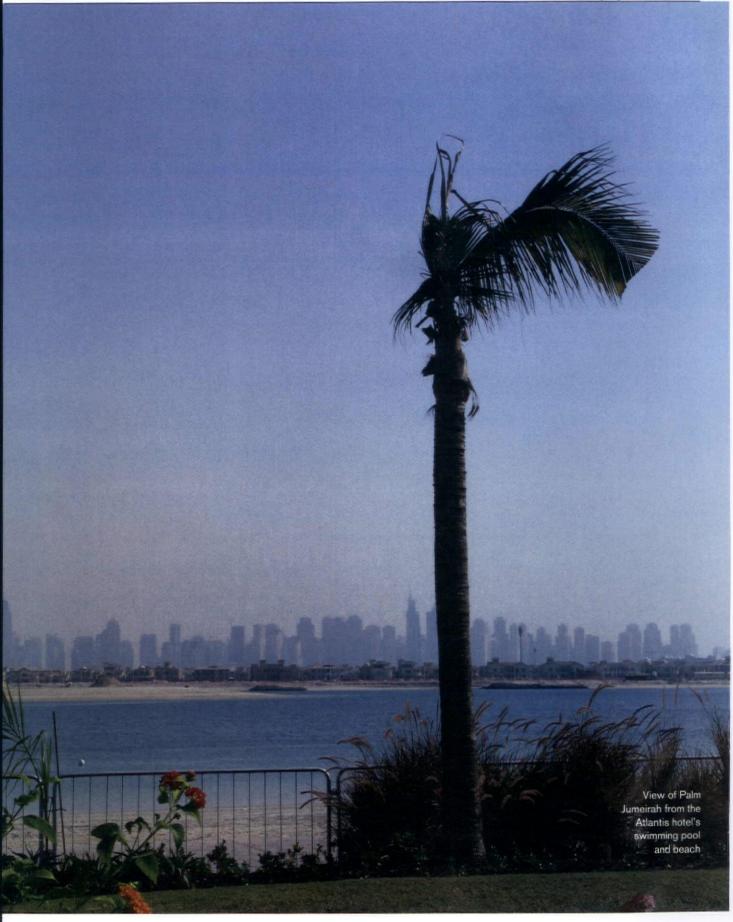
'Everything changed with Sheikh Mohammed,' says Peyman Mohajer, director at Ramboll Whitbybird, who founded the engineering firm's Dubai office three years ago. 'He had a vision from the beginning.' This vision has been certainly been good for UK firms such as Ramboll Whitbybird, RMJM and Atkins, with hundreds of employees working on flagship projects.

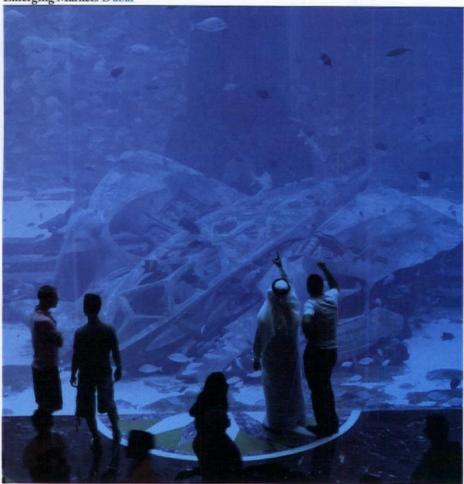
'They were like kids in a candy store,' says Lee Morris, an architect at Atkins in Dubai who designed the Trump International Hotel and Tower (see case study, page 31) for Palm Jumeirah. 'Developers would say, here's the plot, here's the development brief – I want something fantastic.' It was a dream scenario for architects that lasted until the credit crunch hit last month, with a market correction that many believe long overdue.

HISTORY OF DUBAI

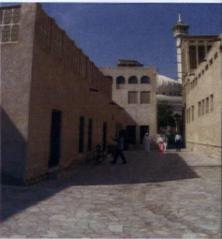
Sheikh Mohammed is a direct descendent of the founders of Dubai, who led 800 members of the Bani Yas tribe out of Abu Dhabi in the 1830s to bloodlessly take over a settlement >>











of pearl divers, date palm growers and fishers on the banks of Dubai Creek. By 1930, the 20,000-strong port town's strategic location had made it a bustling centre for trade and export. But it was the discovery of oil in 1966 that caused Dubai's first growth spurt. Dubai gained independence from Britain and joined the United Arab Emirates (UAE) when the federation was founded in 1971.

Dubai as the gateway between East and West trade routes. Free zones were also created around the ports to encourage businesses to relocate there.

When Sheikh Rashid died, his son, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, became ruler and appointed Sheikh Mohammed crown prince. Four years later, with oil reserves dwindling, Sheikh Mohammed

Port Jebel Ali established Dubai as the gateway between the East and West

By the time the oil drilling began, Sheikh Mohammed's father, Sheikh Rashid, knew the limited reserves would run dry in 30 years, so prudently tunnelled Dubai's windfall into strengthening its port and trade industry. Port Rashid, the world's largest deep-water harbour, was built in the 1960s and Port Jebel Ali, the world's largest man-made harbour and the largest port in the Middle East, was built in the 1980s. These two ports established

hatched his Vision 2010 plan to diversify the emirate's economy, reduce the percentage of the emirate's GDP from oil, and kickstart the city's transformation into a cosmopolitan metropolis.

DUBAI 2020

Published in 2000, Sheikh Mohammed's Vision 2010 and subsequent Strategic Plan 2015 (2007) are not masterplans so much as mission statements that set out targets for infrastructure, industry and tourism, which are then promptly executed by the government's strategists and major developers – behemoths such as Emaar and Nakheel.

The crux of Sheikh Mohammed's plan was to capitalise on Dubai's location by making it a hub for tourism and trade, and a relatively tolerant, liberal base for international companies working in the Middle East.

'It's bigger than a vision – it's geography,' says Morris, his finger stabbing a map of Dubai. 'It's seven hours from London, seven hours from Hong Kong, and 14 hours from New York. That's called business sense.' Atkins, which has been working in Dubai for almost 30 years, is currently working on stations and infrastructure for the new Dubai monorail, as well as Foster + Partners' Masdar City in Abu Dhabi (AJ 30.10.08).

Sheikh Mohammed conceived the first palm island as the solution to another problem – Dubai's limited 72km coastline. When complete, the palm islands will add 520km of beach-front property, bolstering tourism and providing valuable real-estate. >>

Emerging Markets Dubai



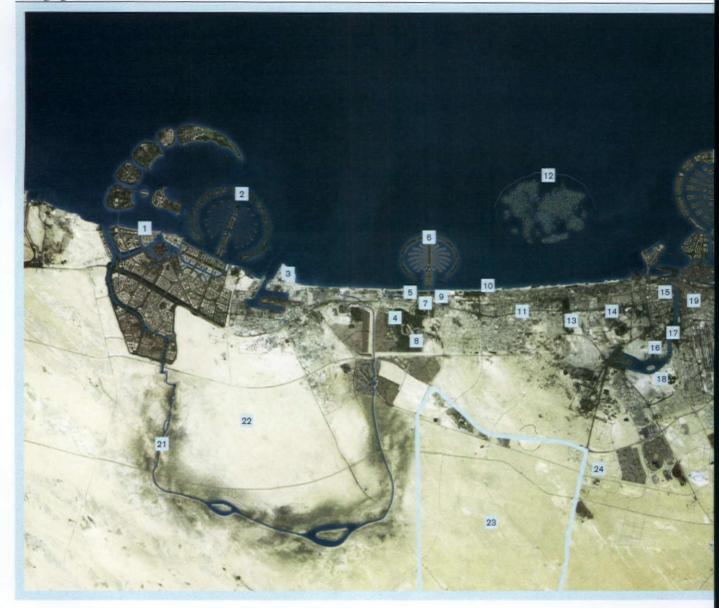
Clockwise from far left Aquarium in the estimated £900 million Atlantis hotel; The towers of Sheikh Zayed Road, with the Burj Dubai to the left; View from RMJM's offices; Sheikh Zayed Road; Marwan Al Qamzi of developer Nakheel; Dubai Creek and Deira; Bastikiya, Dubai's turn-of-thecentury courtyard neighbourhood











'The whole idea is that pockets of development will join together and become one big city'

More free zones, such as Dubai Media City, Internet City and Knowledge Village, were created where businesses could set up without the usual restrictions, such as the required 51 per cent ownership by an Emirati partner. I think it was forced more than proposed, 'says Jon Corish of Dubai's development. 'Dubai was very much a supply-led society: build it and they will come.' Corish, a Gensler associate, worked on Dubai International Financial Centre (see case study, page 30).

Between 2000 and 2005, over 100 towers were erected in 'New Dubai' – the stretch of desert between the old city (traditionally laid out around the creek) and Port Jebel Ali. Sheikh Zayed Road, a highway lined with skyscrapers and two-hour traffic jams, links old and new. Developments such as Jumeirah and the world's tallest hotel, the Burj Al Arab sprang up in pockets, with stretches of empty desert in between. Driving between Dubai's isolated urban areas can take hours in the city's traffic, and one wrong turn can land you back in the desert.

'I call it a patchwork quilt,' says Morris, whose office is a pineapple-shaped building in the middle of nowhere, overlooking the halfbuilt towers and cranes of Dubai Silicon Oasis. 'The whole idea is that it will finally join together and become one big city.'

In 2002, Sheikh Mohammed issued a decree allowing non-Emirati citizens to purchase freehold property for the first time. Almost overnight, Dubai was transformed into a giant property showroom and sales office. Architects were hired to create fancy renderings of iconic towers, which developers sold off-plan to queues of buyers desperate for a piece of Dubai. When the second phase of Emaar's The Meadows' villas went on sale, 1,000 people fought to enter the Emirates Towers ballroom, and 700 villas sold in a handful of hours. Many queued for hours, only to sell the property back to the developer for 15 per cent more at the end of the day.

MASTERPLAN KEY *Estimated date of completion

- Waterfront City (on site)
- Palm Jebel Ali (on site)
- Jebel Ali Port (1979)
- Jumeirah Islands (2006)
- Dubai Marina (2005)
- 6. Palm Jumeirah

- (2011)*
 7. Dubai Media City
 (2001)
- 8. The Meadows (2003)
- Dubai Internet City (2000)
- 10. Burj Al Arab Hotel (1999)
- 11. Sheikh Zayed Road
- 12. The World (on site)

- 13. Burj Dubai tower (2009)*
- 14. Dubai International Financial Centre (2008)
- 15. Bur Dubai district
- 16. Dubai Healthcare City (2010)*
- 17. Dubai Creek
- 18. The Lagoons (2011)*

- Deira district
 Palm Deira
- (on hold) 21. Arabian Canal
- (2012)*
 22. Al Maktoum
 International Airport
 (2015)*
- 23. Dubailand (2012)*
- 24. Dubai Silicon Oasis (on site)

DUBAI MASTERPLAN

According to Gensler associate Jon Corish, who masterplanned Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) (see case study, page 30), Dubai has evolved at a breakneck speed, without a definitive masterplan. 'Dubai was just expanding, without thinking that far ahead. They did have their Vision 2010, but it was more goals defined than sitting down with a team of consultants and urban planners and figuring out what needs to be done.'

The original city of Dubai was located around Dubai Creek, with the districts of Bur Dubai on the west side and Deira to the east. Major development in these areas occurred from the 1960s through to the 1990s. New Dubai, located west of the original city, comprises developments packaged in disjointed parcels of land, which were designated as business free

zones or residential areas and distributed by the Sheikh among developers.

Corish describes the way Dubai has consequently evolved as 'similar to other polynuclear cities such as Los Angeles, where you have to rely on the car to get around. It's multifaceted and not the traditional CBD [Central Business District] model.' Districts and free zones are often named for their use, such as Healthcare City and Dubai Silicon Oasis.

Water is key to Dubai's future as a major tourist destination, and flagship developments often try to create as much additional coastline or waterfront property as possible. Pictured in this artists' impression (*left*) are the projects currently being undertaken by developer Nakheel, such as the £3 billion Palm Trilogy, which includes Palm Jumeirah and Palm Jebel

Ali, both on site, Palm Deira, which is now on hold, and £1.3 billion island complex The World, also on site.

The palm shape was selected because each frond can be developed with private beaches on either side. Also visible on this rendering is the 75km Arabian Canal, an £7 billion waterway by developer Limitless that is being cut out of Dubai's desert landscape. The canal will bring seawater inland as part of a 125km², £36 billion property development along its circuit. More than one billion cubic metres of excavated land will be used to create manmade hills up to 250m high around the canal. Although the canal is already under construction, with a completion date of 2012, there is currently no plan for how it will traverse Sheikh Zayed Road, the city's main thoroughfare.

Properties changed hands several times before works began on site.

DO! BUY!

The speed of the city's construction, egged on by the speculative boom, revealed a severe lack of joined-up thinking. Towers were completed without an electricity grid to feed them; developments shot up without roads or pedestrian access. There's a lot of horrible architecture too, with even worse quality issues. 'They are going to start tearing these buildings down,' says Carsten Hyldebrandt, international commercial manager at Danish practice Schmidt Hammer Lassen, currently shortlisted for work at Masdar. 'Things have been built too fast, and not to last.'

Rumours of quality issues began when Palm Jumeirah – which recently launched its 1,056-room Atlantis hotel with a £20 million opening party – was reported as suffering from land subsidence (*Gulf News*, 04.11.06). Al Qamzi says one of the lessons Nakheel learned from Palm Jumeirah was to expect 'a natural settlement of an average of 8cm'. 'We had to truck hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of sand to compensate for the settlement,' he adds.

Quality issues may prove a way into what is now a crowded market for architects. This is what we've been waiting for,' says Hyldebrandt. 'The problems have caused an interest in quality among developers in Dubai. Three years ago, when we started talking to them about our experience in sustainability and quality, they were saying, just make it amazing and cheap why do you need triple-layered glass?'

Architects with sustainable-building

experience are also benefitting from a recent decree by Sheikh Mohammed encouraging the greening of Dubai's built environment. As a result, LEED certification has become fashionable among developers. 'LEED is the thing clients want,' says Morris, 'but they just want the badge on the building. They don't actually know what it means.'

CREDIT CRUNCH

The credit crunch has finally called an official end to the heady days of Dubai's development boom. According to HSBC Holdings, overall prices fell by 4 per cent between September and October, with villas falling 19 per cent. Property prices on Palm Jumeirah have fallen by as much as 40 per cent since September.

With no income from taxes or oil revenue to draw upon, the crunch has crippled the >>



BURJ DUBAI, SOM ARCHITECTS; NAKHEEL HARBOUR AND TOWER, WOODS BAGOT

Designed by SOM Architects, Burj Dubai (pictured above left) is the tallest building in the world at over 160 storeys and more than 707m. The tower is due to complete in 2009. True to Dubai's penchant for one-upmanship, the building wasn't even topped out when its successor as tallest building was announced in October. Not much is known about Nakheel Harbour and Tower (pictured above right), except that the Wood Bagot-designed structure will be 1km high and sit within a 270ha masterplan, also by Woods Bagot.



DUBAI INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE, GENSLER

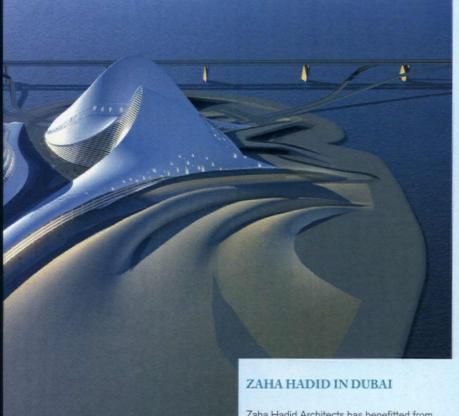
When Gensler won the contract to masterplan the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), its task was to build a one-stop district for international business to rival New York, London and Hong Kong. Hotels, the Dubai stock exchange, shops and restaurants will be linked by pedestrianised walkways. This 50ha site, which includes buildings by Foster + Partners, Gensler, RMJM, Hopkins and Atkins (pictured), is still under construction. With over two million square metres of accommodation, the DIFC will accommodate a residential population of approximately 20,000 people.





WATERFRONT CITY, OMA

Waterfront City is a central island located at the foot of Palm Jebel Ali, on the western shores of Dubai. With the palm, Waterfront City will host a population of 1.5 million people on a 100,000ha parcel of land and sea - twice the size of Hong Kong Island. Rem Koolhaas, founder of Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), which masterplanned Waterfront City with developer Nakheel, describes Waterfront as 'the largest and most ambitious urban development project to be masterplanned from scratch'. RMJM is designing the neighbouring 100ha Madinat al Soor district - a sustainable, pedestrianised city for 22,000 residents inspired by traditional Arabic architecture (see foreground, left).





TRUMP INTERNATIONAL HOTEL AND TOWER, ATKINS

News broke on Monday (1 December) that construction has been suspended on Trump International Hotel and Tower, two 50 and 61- storey towers for Palm Jumeirah due to complete in 2011. The towers are 26m apart at the furthest point and meet at the 40th floor.

Zaha Hadid Architects has benefitted from Dubai's insatiable desire for iconic projects, and the practice has several buildings in the works. The firm has two major projects in Dubai Business Bay: the £235 million Opus flagship office and retail space for developer Omniyat;

and the three Signature Towers for Dubai
Properties, which comprise office, hotel and retail
space, as well as a bridge, waterfront park and
promenade. Hadid is also working on the Dubai
Opera House and Cultural Centre in the new
Seven Pearls district.

neavily indebted government and its developers, which have borrowed trillions of dirhams (AED) to fund infrastructure and expansion projects. The fallout has begun, with Nakheel scaling back work on Palm Deira and other major developments. Staff cuts across the industry began on 12 November, with 200 redundancies at developer Damac, followed by job cuts at developer Omniyat and the aforementioned 500 redundancies at Nakheel.

The week of my visit, as I toured architects' offices developers were ringing up to postpone works, lengthen payment schedules or delay design programmes. Despite this, the mood

was anything but grim.

'I welcome it,' says Mohajer, with an exuberant grin. 'It means the market is maturing. We all want to get rid of the speculators. They were pushing property prices higher and higher and inflation was really hitting us hard – the staff were coming to me every two months and asking for pay rises.'

Gordon Affleck, design principal of RMJM Middle East, which is working on a 40ha masterplan for Palm Jebel Ali, also welcomes Dubai's change of pace, despite having to make a small number of redundancies (AJ 20.11.08). I wouldn't say it's been great, but it

will pick up again,' he says. 'I don't think it will be quite as mad as it was, which is good.'

'Building to sell off paper doesn't make a good city,' he adds. 'A lot of developers are building for end-use now. In five years, the urban grain will be far more sophisticated.'

As long as Sheikh Mohammed is ruler, Dubai will keep building. It's definitely to our advantage to have a forward-thinking ruler who likes quality architecture,' says Corish.

The risks make it a difficult time to enter the market, but architects with well-established contacts in the region say Dubai is still growing – £848 billion worth of projects are planned and underway, with projects totalling £106 billion announced in October alone.

'Dubai isn't finished yet,' says Morris.

'We've seen a lot of their vision, and not all of it is great, but some of it is brilliant. It's just whether it can be realised or not.'

'We all want to get rid of the speculators – they were pushing prices higher and higher'

WORKING IN DUBAI

What's life like for architects in Dubai?

MOVING TO DUBAI

CURRENCY

£1 = 5.45 dirhams (AED)



***&**!

CLIMATE

The lowest winter temperatures are in January, with an average of 23°C. Summer months are extremely hot with an average of 40°C between June and September. It rarely rains, except occasionally between December and March.

LANGUAGE

The language of Dubai is
Arabic, but according to Afzal
Suman, associate director at Ramboll Whitbybird
in Dubai, English is 'the unofficial first language'.
Contractors will have a translator to speak to
workers on site, mostly from outside the UAE.

GETTING A VISA

Tourist visa As a British citizen, you'll get a free tourist visa in your passport upon arrival. Valid for 60 days, it can be extended by 30 days for 500 AED (£91).

Working visa For a work permit, you'll need to present your degree certificate to the UAE



Embassy in your country of origin. You'll also need a valid passport, no criminal record and a medical examination. An offer of employment is necessary. Employers usually pay the £1,000-1,500 fees.

SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Based on £1 = 5.45 AED (tax free) Junior architect £39,391.45

Architect £43,784.29

Project architect £75,586.03

Head of architecture £120,353.48

Source: HAYS Construction & Property, Guide to Salaries in Dubai 2007/8

BENEFITS

Medical insurance, one annual flight per annum and 25 days holiday are the standard benefits, according to Kelly Wallace of recruitment agency ARM Group. Suman adds that only 20 days holiday per year are a requirement of law.

In addition to their salaries, contract workers are awarded an 'indemnity' at the end of the contract period. The indemnity is usually based on the basic salary, excluding any bonuses. It is an end-of-contract bonus required by law to be paid to expatriate workers as a sort of 'thank you' for being of service to the state. Indemnity scales usually amount to 15 days basic pay per year of employment for the first three years, and then a month's salary per year of employment.

State holidays 2009

New Year 1 January

Al Hijra (Islamic New Year) 20 January Mouloud* (Birth of the Prophet) 9 March Leilat Al Meiraj* (Ascension of the Prophet) 20 July

Eid Al Fitr (end of Ramadan) 21 September Eid Al Adha* (Feast of the Sacrifice)

28 November

National Day 02 Dec

*Holiday follows Islamic calendar

WORKING LIFE

Sunday-Thursday, 8.30am-5.30pm. Some government companies work 10am-2pm, but otherwise the standard is 9am-5pm.

PRACTICES WORKING IN DUBAI

Atkins; Dexter Moren; Foster + Partners; Gensler; Glenn Howells Architects; HOK; Hopkins; KPF Architects; PRP; RMJM; SOM; Woods Bagot; Zaha Hadid Architects

LIFESTYLE FOR WOMEN

Dubai is the most tolerant society in the Middle East. Women can work, drive, and don't have to

cover up. It is still quite sexist, and some laws will affect your lifestyle (see Legal Issues).

LIFESTYLE FOR MEN

While you are free to practice any religion in Dubai, it is important to be sensitive to the local religion and customs. Many freedoms we take for granted in the UK are illegal in Dubai (see Legal Issues).

MALE: FEMALE RATIO

3:1 in 2007

LEGAL ISSUES

- Public displays of affection, such as holding hands, are frowned upon. You may only live with members of the opposite sex if you are married or they are immediate family.
- If you are unmarried and becomes pregnant, you will be deported. Homosexuality is illegal.
- Zero tolerance for drink driving. Public drunkenness and drinking are illegal, as is serving alcohol to Muslims.
- Zero tolerance for possession of illegal drugs, including some prescription medication.
- No public eating, drinking or smoking during Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting.



SETTING UP A PRACTICE

DO INEED A LOCAL OFFICE?

With the construction slowdown, setting up a speculative local office before winning a project is unwise. Working remotely is another possibility:



Glenn Howells Architects works in Dubai from its Birmingham office and uses a local executive architect to take projects to detailed design stage. If you do set up an office, those run by foreign nationals must be 51 per cent owned by an Emirati partner, but Daniel Hajjar of HOK says: 'If you can prove your office is a branch of an international company these rules do not apply, although you cannot work on "unique structures".' Personal relationships are key in Dubai and can take years to build; the downturn may be a good time to liaise with future clients.

WHO EMPLOYS THE ARCHITECT?

Dav Bansal of Glenn Howells Architects says: 'Our experience is that clients usually employ a project manager, who will then put the design and construction team together and be the single point of contact. It is possible for us never to meet the client.' This is especially common for non-Dubai-based clients. However, Hajjar says: 'Some clients do not use managers architects do it or clients self-manage.' Bansal adds: 'It seems to be the norm for the client to demand a few design options - we just explain that this is not how we work. Also, because we only go up to design stage and a local executive practice takes responsibility for the detailing, we transfer copyright to the client after our fees have been paid in full.'

PROCUREMENT

Bansal says: 'Planning is very strict, with guidelines on height, massing and setbacks.' The planning approval process is much quicker and has two stages. The first is the equivalent of stage C and takes a couple of days; the second is equivalent to stage D and takes four to six weeks.

WHAT IS THE MOST STANDARD CONTRACT USED?

The most standard contract is based on the FIDIC (International Federation of Consulting Engineers) Client-Consultant Model Services Agreement, www.fidic.org



HOW INVOLVED IS THE GOVERNMENT?

Government approval is needed for all projects. Each free zone has its own authority and its own rules.

SIX RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

Adrem and Cereba www.armgroup.ae
Alan and Partners www.alanandpartners.com
Clarendon Parker www.clarendonparker.com
Hays UAE www.hays.ae
Hill McGlynn www.hillmcglynn.com
Monster Gulf www.monstergulf.com

MAJOR DEVELOPERS IN DUBAI

Bonyan Emirates

www.bonyanholding.com

Damac Properties

www.damacproperties.com

Diamond Investments

www.diamond-investments.ae

Dubai Properties

www.dubai-properties.ae

Emaar Properties

www.emaar.com

ETA Star

www.etastar.com

Limitless

www.limitless.ae

Nakheel

www.nakheel.com

Oryx

www.oryxapartments.com

Saba Properties JLT

www.saba-re.com



COST OF LIVING

Based on £1 = 5.45 AED



Coffee £2

Hotel room £100-150 per night



One month's rent for two-bed flat on Sheikh Zayed Road £3,300

10-minute taxi ride £0.75





Dinner for two
£33 without alcohol

Cinema ticket £4



Tank of petrol £6 for 1.3 litre car; £10 for 3.7 litre car; £15 for 5.7 litre car





Pint of beer £4

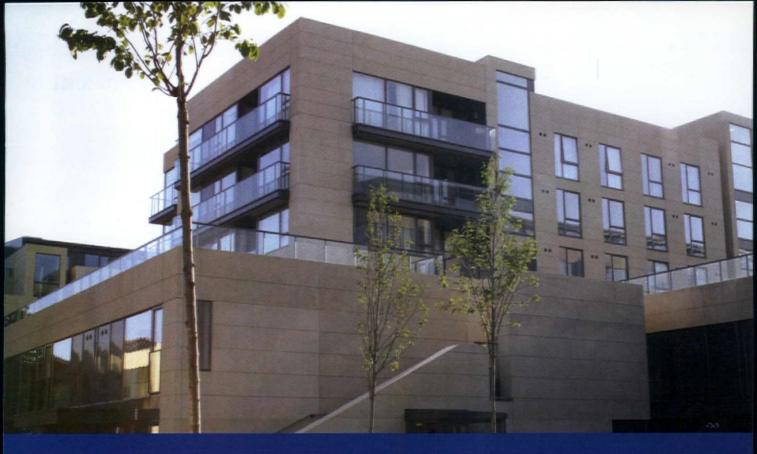
Doctor's visit £18-73. Medical insurance costs are about £310 per person annually

School rates (per year) Nursery £500-2,000 Primary £1,600-3,500 Secondary £2,500-8,000



TAX

There is no income tax, but there are taxes on accommodation, cars and driving. A haraam (forbidden tax) of 30 per cent is added to alcohol and pork products.



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Technical & Practice



RAMPED WAREHOUSES

The X2 warehouse at Heathrow is the first two-storey facility of its kind in the UK. *Kaye Alexander* reports

In the UK, warehouses are usually sprawling sites beside motorways, rarely occupying more than one evel and never accessible by more than one ramp. This is not the case in Asia, which has many multi-storey urban warehouses—the Kerry Cargo Centre in Hong Kong is 20 storeys high. Such buildings inspired X2, a two-storey warehouse served by two access ramps at Hatton Cross,

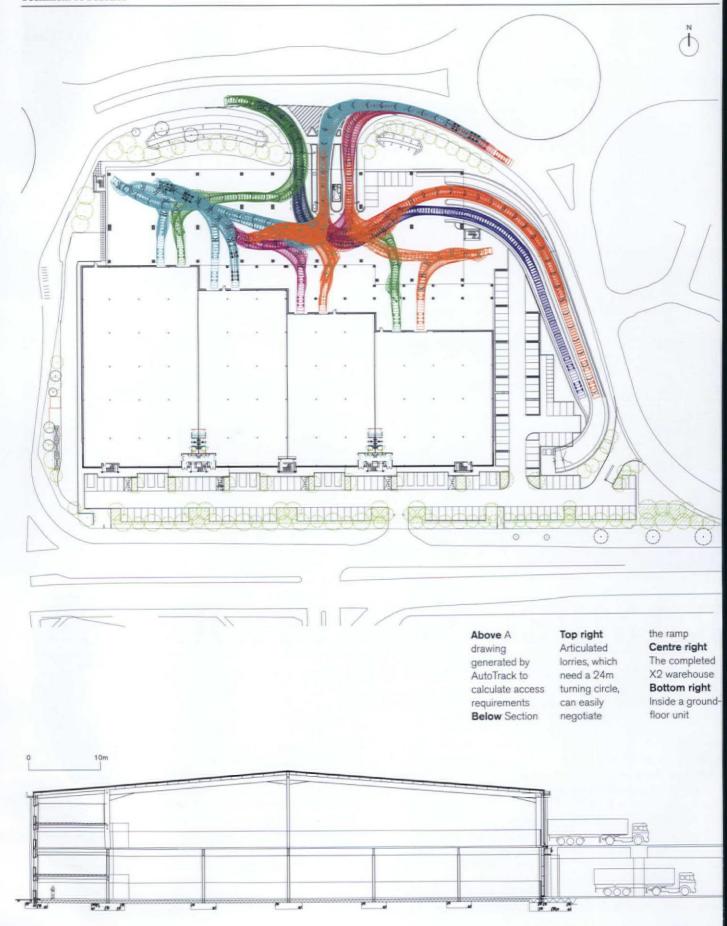
Heathrow, designed by EPR Architects and taken through the construction process by Cornish Architects.

X2 contains eight discrete 6mhigh units, with four at ground level and four on the first floor, and two floors of office accommodation at the front. Six units are heated and cooled by a ground-source heat pump. Each level has access to a service yard, where heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) can dock and be loaded and unloaded. This is made possible at the upper deck by a pair of massive concrete ramps.

The project was initiated and is owned by Brixton, a specialist warehousing firm. Before X2 went ahead, Brixton, EPR Architects and Cornish Architects visited Asia, primarily to analyse different ramp-to-

accommodation configurations.

'Prior to development, we consulted many occupiers and letting agents. They saw the logic of the approach, but were cautious about the ramp access,' says Peter Dawson, investment director at Brixton. 'In theory, a single ramp can serve as both the up and down route, which is cheaper, but there were concerns about it getting blocked. At >>









Heathrow, we made things a bit more generous to reassure people.'

'The calculations and construction methods involved in the ramp make it more of a civil engineering project than anything else,' adds Matthew Archer, associate director at Cornish Architects.

Two intertwining, steeply curved ramps divide up-traffic from down-traffic, but in the event of a blockage, a traffic management system enables the other ramp to be used for movement both up and down. Consulting engineer Waterman Civils used path-mapping software AutoTrack to calculate the curves and clearance heights - 5,400mm under the ramp and 5,110mm under the podium deck - required by the lorries, tangibly expressed in the plans. Vehiclemovement modelling was based on the UK's largest permissible HGV (16.5m-long with a 4.7m-high trailer).

'The bends do look tight,'

says Archer, 'but the drivers will experience much tighter ones on their journey here.' To further convince prospective tenants, Brixton has made a video showing huge articulated lorries, which require a 24m turning circle, manoeuvring the ramps with ease.

'There is a clear distinction between the steel frame of the warehouse and the concrete of the ramps and service-yard podium. Designing the junction between them to remain watertight was the biggest challenge,' says Archer.

The ramps and podium are the defining elements of the project. The ramps comprise reinforced concrete retaining walls that support a reinforced concrete road-deck, which rises to a series of reinforced concrete columns and beams that in turn support the higher level road deck. The floor-loading capabilities are 30kN/m² and 15N/m² (the British standard for >>

warehousing) for the ground and first-floor warehouses respectively.

The high cost of land this near Heathrow Airport was the reason for designing a two-storey warehouse, and this proximity also caused design and construction problems. The project was limited to two storeys because flight paths are just metres away from the building (X2 is just 70mm below the maximum building height in places) and the Piccadilly Underground line runs in a shallow concrete box-tunnel along the southern boundary of the site.

X2 was only 50 per cent more expensive to build than a single-storey building per square metre. 'A conventional warehouse of this size [22,541m² gross lettable area] would require 5ha at 45 per cent site coverage,' says Dawson. 'This project uses 2.6ha at nearly 86 per cent coverage, which is a massive saving.'

The project has yet to be leased but Brixton is considering a second two-storey warehouse. This HGV-friendly, multi-storey typology could be the future of warehousing in the UK, with this innovation marking the halfway point between our current singlestorey stock and fully-automated storage towers.





Top Lorries in the loading area Above 3 Prologis Park, a seven-storey warehouse in Tokyo

Project

X2 Hatton Cross, Heathrow

Start on site date

January 2007

Completion date April 2008 Gross external floor area

22,541m²

Gross internal floor area

21.886m²

Form of contract and/or

procurement JCT standard building contract with contractors design, incorporating amend-

ments

Total cost Undisclosed

Client Brixton

Planning architect EPR

Contract architect

Cornish Architects

Structural engineer

Waterman Structures

Services engineer

Waterman Services/Civils

Quantity surveyor

WT Partnership/Wates

Project management and

planning supervisor

Rider Levett Bucknall

Main contractor Wates

Construction

Annual CO₂ emissions Not calculated



East elevation



North elevation



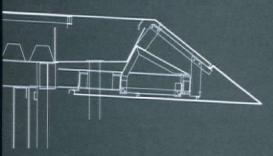
South elevation

BAILEY INNOVATION No.9

AVESTHAT ARE SOOD TO LOOK AT

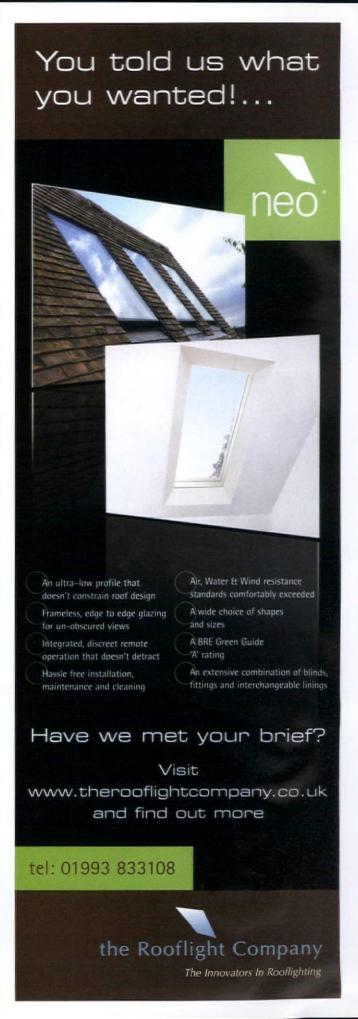
ailey Cassette Eaves system allows designers to ing distinctiveness and individuality to a wide nge of modern retail and commercial buildings.

ailey's Cassette system can be used at low eights because each panel remains truly flat ithout the ripples and fixing dimples that result om using plain sheet metal systems. This nables you to create impressive, eye catching esigns that work at every viewpoint.



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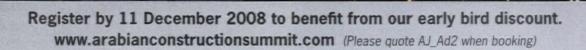






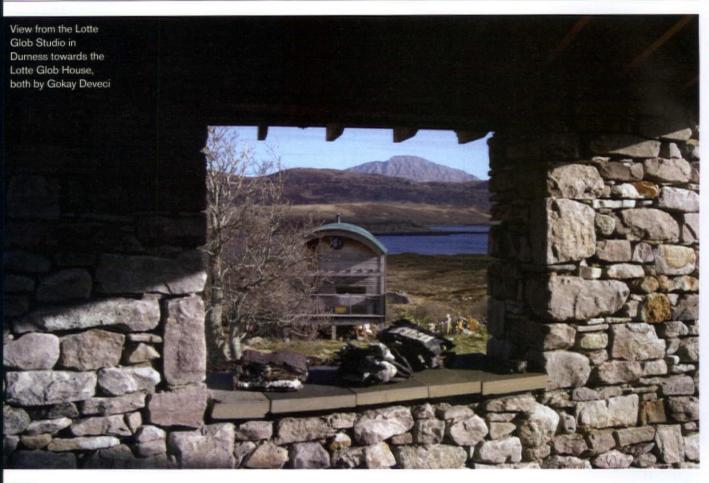


Sorouh Tay-



In this section // Architecture in Scotland 2006–2008 // City in the Desert // Critic's Choice // Demanding Attention // 5 Things To Do

The Critics



BOOK

Och aye! Oh no...

A biannual review of Scottish architecture sells modern Scotland short, says Rory Olcayto

Architecture in Scotland 2006-2008: Building Biographies. The Lighthouse, 2008. £12. 208pp

Building Biographies is the Scottish government's fourth biannual study of contemporary Scottish architecture. It's very, very Scottish – to the point of kitsch. The book's heavy-stock, matt-finished pages are richly illustrated with beautiful photography and present a land of honest toil, quiet glens and windswept, heather-speckled moors (with geese flying overhead). It's a land defined by low-rise handcrafted structures, built by locals, for locals, with local 'sustainable' materials, but its relevance to Scottish architecture is slight,

and its narrowly defined nationalism – and pushy green agenda – has Holyrood's sticky fingers all over it.

Published by Scotland's centre for architecture and design, The Lighthouse (alongside an exhibition), the book covers a sporrans-worth of 'rural' buildings completed since 2006. The exhibition's co-curator, Oliver Lowenstein, says the eight Scottish schemes featured offer 'evidence of an emerging Highlands and Islands regional architectural culture and

community', although, in truth, most of the buildings were designed by metropolitan architects with little in common. The buildings signify a genuinely Scottish architecture untouched by modernity, says Lowenstein, primarily because they are built in a wilderness.

Building Biographies also features six projects from the mountainous regions of Norway, Austria and Switzerland. We are expected to believe that architects there practice a prelapsarian craft that is >>



This image Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre by Glasgow firm Gareth Hoskins Architects Below Telford
Drive, an inner-city
Edinburgh project by
Gordon Murray + Alan
Dunlop Architects







somehow more honest and pure than architecture resulting from the 'standardising forces of globalisation' (mere 'eye candy' according to Lowenstein, although the postcard presentation of buildings here – there are no plans or sections – mean they come across as exactly that). The very inclusion of European work reveals a facet of the globalisation, one where architects draw upon emergent practice in far-flung places and apply it at home.

Some Scottish architects believe they are part of a nascent 'Scottish school' that eschews iconism for an architecture that is 'deeply in tune with its local context', as Lighthouse director Nick Barley says in his foreword. An association with small countries that have a more developed sense of their architectural worth will likely be warmly received by this 'school'. The strategy also plays well with project backer Holyrood, and First Minister Alex Salmond's desire to align Scotland with successful small countries across Europe.

The 'emerging regionalism' thesis is delivered a fatal blow by the inclusion of two 'southern' Scottish housing schemes. The unfortunate – but accurate – implication is that good buildings in the Highlands are harder to find than a newborn haggis. So alongside Dualchas Building Design's Isle of Lewis house (not the firm's best) and Locate Architects' museum in North Uist (wholly

Every building is introduced as sustainable, though this assertion seems based on little more than use of timber

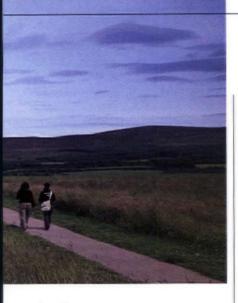
unremarkable) there is Gordon Murray + Alan Dunlop Architects' Telford Road project in a run-down Edinburgh estate, and an Oliver Chapman Architects project in Berwickshire, on the English border. The lumping together of these projects under the banner 'rural Highland vernacular' takes away from the complexity and dynamism of the Scottish experience of architecture, and plays up to the romantic idea of Scotland as a country defined only by its Highlands. Finally, in a desperate attempt to shore up the thesis, Reiach and Hall's Pier Arts Centre in Orkney (AJ 05.07.07) is roped in,

also featured in the last biannual.

Geography is not a strong point.

Bizarrely, Lowenstein describes Inverness, rather than Aberdeen, as 'oil city' and begins his introductory essay about Highland architecture with a description of geese flying over a 'lowland' landscape. Irritatingly, every building is introduced as sustainable, though this assertion seems based on little more than the use of timber (strange in itself – stone is rural Scotland's 'traditional' material).

The Scots are not a rural people – at least not for the last few hundred years. Why perpetuate a contrary image? The central belt between Edinburgh and Glasgow is one of the most densely populated zones in Europe. Glasgow has the highest concentration of asylum seekers outside of London and an urban scale more American in form than any other British city. Edinburgh is the sixth largest financial centre in Europe and has one of the most precious townscapes in the world. Both cities have billions of pounds of regeneration planned. It is here The Lighthouse should look for a new



regional architecture.

Despite featuring some interesting buildings – Gareth Hoskins' Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre (AJ 29.05.08) in particular – grouping them together as emblems of a fundamentally Scottish emergent architecture is pointless. RMJM's work for Russian energy giant Gazprom and Sutherland Hussey's earthquake memorial park for the Chinese government spin a more relevant, national narrative.

Global forces can be positive, as the inclusion of the Lotte Glob Studio shows. It was designed by Aberdeen-based Turkish architect Gokay Deveci for Glob, a Danish ceramic artist, and is located on Scotland's most northerly coast. The studio resembles an Anatolian farm building rather than anything especially Scottish – material evidence of a rich global confluence that reflects the diversity of modern Scotland.

Building Biographies is an Access to Architecture project, which aims to 'encourage collaboration between the profession and the public at all levels'. The Lighthouse has been accused of being too Glasgow-focused and its public worth is currently being investigated. Building Biographies seems designed to address these points. And by branding this mythical emergent regionalism 'sustainable', it ticks a government box (whose First Minister's powerbase, incidentally, is rural).

Towards the v end of the volume, a caption for an Austrian ski bar pictured describes it as a 'sophisticated interference of cliches and authentic craftsmanship amidst a highly touristical environment'. Given the pressure The Lighthouse is under to attract visitors (and the soft-focus vision of Scotland it offers here), it's an apt description of the book itself.

Resume This review of Scottish architecture is best read with a Jimmy hat on your heid

LECTURE

Want to keep busy over the recession? Try reinventing democracy, says Kester Rattenbury

City in the Desert by Reinier de Graaf. 20 November at the Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, London NW1 4LE

In the world's urbanisation stakes, democracies are doing badly, said Reinier de Graaf in City in the Desert, his Architecture Foundation lecture held last month. We Westerners haven't even come up with any major urban theories to pass on to the oil states, which are busy spawning cities based on golf courses, theme parks and marinas.

If you've missed the boat on the Emirates boom, de Graaf is the person to fill you in. He's one of Rem Koolhaas' partners in Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), and head of AMO, the 'conceptual branch' of OMA. His talk was both an account of a Gulf masterplanning project that hit the dust this year (the City in the Desert of the title), and an urban critique of the new Gulf cities. It was informative, funny – and very, very grim.

Dubai is generating cities with a carbon footprint beyond imagination, made by an international population paid marginally more than they would be at home, and backed by three firms – all at least half-owned by one royal family. Its original masterplan has been

taken over by theme-park archipelagos.

Iconic buildings are architectural one-liners, and as outstanding as they look on their own, together they blend into a 'monotony of the exceptional'. To stand out in Dubai, OMA designed the most boring building it could. This vast slab, called Dubai Renaissance (2006), was proposed for the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary, but ultimately never went ahead.

Instead, OMA won its City in the Desert. Designed for Ras Al-Khaimah, one of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this super-low-density city featured extensive functionless grass for which water had to be desalinated from the Gulf. The firm's Barcelona-density alternative was walkable and, like its beautiful Yemeni models, square. Laid over the topography of the desert, parks were cut out in valleys where grass grows naturally.

For quite a long time it 'looked like it was going to land', until the project's 'horrible' successor took over, a creation designed by the client itself. 'Our colleagues in a neighbouring Emirate seem to be carrying the square city forward,' said de Graaf. 'I hope they will do justice to their inspiration.' What happened to OMA's own line of 'horribleness' asked FAT's Sam Jacob. De Graaf conceded that in Dubai, 'it would be impossible to out-perverse the context'. The UAE is only a lens of what we do everywhere, he explained.

The trouble is that the West, by using wealth as the argument for democracy, now has nothing to fall back on. We need to reinvent democracy as an ideology. Now there's something to do during recession.

Resume OMA's low-density emirate adventure leaves de Graaf deserted

OMA's City in the Desert masterplan



Critic's Choice Stefan Boness' photography reveals the impermanence of tragedy's scars, says Andrew Mead

In his superb book In Europe: Travels Through the Twentieth Century (Vintage, £9.99), the Dutch historian Geert Mak criss-crosses the continent, visiting sites of momentous events, creating a subtle dialogue between past and present. His travels take him to places of tragedy or horror that today look unexceptional, perhaps even benign, as evidence of the past dissolves or becomes indecipherable. 'The cars race by, the birds sing songs of spring. This is how oblivion works,' says Mak.

I was reminded of Mak's book by a sensitive new volume of photographs, Flanders Fields (Bildschöne Bücher, £28), by Berlin-based photojournalist Stefan Boness. His subject is the Ypres region in Belgium, where so many Allied and German soldiers died in the First World War, Like Mak, Boness scrutinises the landscape for signs of the past. Alongside conscious reminders in the form of cemeteries with their serried graves, or marble slabs with their roster of names, are ominous structures like the concrete bunker at Langemark (pictured below), which now serve as surrogate memorials. While you soon realise that a pool of water in a patch of woodland was once a shell crater, some scenes seem to be simply agricultural - until the caption explains their significance. Perhaps the farmer still finds evidence of past conflict in them, but not the passerby. Fields are ploughed, crops flourish, and a golf course springs up by a graveyard. As Mak says, 'This is how oblivion works.'





EXHIBITION

Emulating great artists can be more than homage, writes Christine Murray

Demanding Attention. By Diploma Unit 1, Kingston University School of Architecture. Closed 14 November. The Viewing Room, top floor, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon

As a prelude to their major design project for the year, students from Kingston University's school of architecture have created work in the manner of artist and photographer Thomas Demand. Developed under the tutorship of Daniel Rosbottom, David Howarth and Mike Lee, the unit's work was exhibited in Demanding Attention, a week-long exhibition which took place in the disused Viewing Room of Taberner House, Croydon.

The students were asked to photograph spaces within their architecture school, and then reconstruct those images by photographing paper models of the original spaces. The original images, inspired by photographers like Candida Hoffer and Isidro Ramirez, are compelling pieces of observation in themselves, and find a bleak beauty in the banality of the institution.

However, it is the intense analysis which has allowed the re-making of these spaces that is extraordinary. The students have gone to great lengths to induce the atmosphere of the school, combing squares of paper to express the alternating grain of carpet tiles; delicately folding tracing paper to make five-litre soap bottles; spattering sugar paper with paint to imitate terrazzo flooring.

It is common for architecture students to examine the work of artists to inform their work – it is rarer for them to make works of art themselves, and rarer still for those works to rival those of the original artist. These pieces are not only excellent examples of model-making and photography. In forcing themselves to look so closely and lovingly at these commonplace environments, the students have gained a deeper understanding of their spatial and material qualities. Their uncanny recreations force the viewer to look closely too, bringing to light the inherent beauty of these background spaces.

Resume Watch out Thomas! These model

Resume Watch out Thomas! These model students are snapping at your heels





5 THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK

1 Eamonn McCabe: Writers' Rooms

Peer into writers' lives through this series of photographs popularised by the *Guardian*. Until 17 January 2009. Madison Contemporary Art, 5 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 8UT. www.madisonlondon.com

2 The Cover of a Book is the Beginning of a Journey

Arts organisation Arnolfini's exhibition of several hundred artists' books includes work by Angela Bulloch and Ed Ruscha.
Until 18 January 2009. Arnolfini, 16 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA. www.arnolfini.org.uk

3 Retromorphosis

Dip in to the Modernist legacy of the German Democratic Republic with artists including Toby Paterson, Oliver Elser and Lotte Lyon. Until 20 December. CUBE, 113-115 Portland Street, Manchester M1 6DW. www.cube.org.uk

4 Gomorral

Brace yourself for this Italian mafioso film, set in a decaying Neapolitan housing estate.

On general release

5 TTurned it into a Palace'

Fitzwilliam Museum celebrates the directorship of Sydney Cockerell from 1908 to 1937.
Until 17 March 2009. Fitzwilliam Museum,
Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB.
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

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AJ ENQUIRY 201

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

CORUS



AJ ENQUIRY 202

The new Niekee Centre in the Netherlands makes extensive use of Corus Colorcoat HPS200 Ultra prefinished steel. With a colour palette developed with architects, it's no surpise that all 40 colours available were used on the exterior facade to bring the building to life. The product is backed for up to 40 years by the market-leading Confidex Guarantee.

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Velfac now provides a service for domestic or small commercial projects. Each window is made bespoke to design, colour and size specifications, allowing more freedom of imagination. The display is at the Kettering showroom in Northamptonshire. Telephone 01223 897100 or visit www.velfac.co.uk

STOAKES SYSTEMS



AJ ENQUIRY 204

Young Angela was so impressed with new Normanton Primary School in Derbyshire, designed by Derby City Council, that she told everyone she no longer wished to be a barrister. Instead, she wanted to be an architect so she could always specify the Kalwall diffused daylighting system. www.stoakes.co.uk is her new textbook.

KALZIP



AJ ENQUIRY 205

The 2008 Teamkal Awards were announced at the recent Teamkal conference where RCi editor Kathy Manson presented Grainger Building Services' Alex Owens (pictured right) with the Contractor of the Year Award. The conference was hosted by Kalzip UK managing director Jonathan Clemens (also pictured). www.kalzip.com

POWDERTECH



AJ ENQUIRY 206

Powdertech coated over 15 miles of external louvres and two miles of internal balustrade for the Westfield shopping centre's recent opening in London. Operations director Giles Ashmead said: 'We are very proud to be involved with such a prestigious development as this.' We would be delighted to discuss powdercoating with you – call 01536 400890.

LEVOLUX



AJ ENQUIRY 207

Shoppers and staff will remain cool and comfortable at a development in Kidderminster thanks to solar shading supplied and installed by Levolux. Architect Garnett Netherwood specified the Levolux custom-made timber brises-soleil to provide ultra-effective protection from solar gain at the Piano Buildings, Kidderminster.

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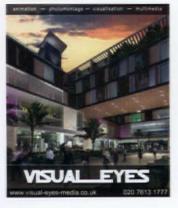
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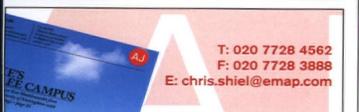


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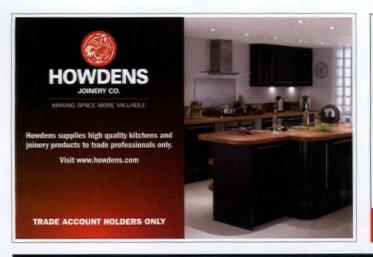
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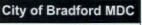
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Tender for: Town Planning Architects Framework Contract Ref: BMDC/8677

Bradford Metropolitan District Council is seeking expressions of interest in the form of a completed Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) from suitably experienced and qualified Architects AND/OR Town Planning Consultants to undertake the service of obtaining planning consents for land.

Further information and the PQQ documents for completion are to be downloaded from http://scms.alito.co.uk. Please ensure you have registered for Bradford MDC to enable access to documentation. If you require any assistance downloading the documents, contact SCMS help desk on 0113 247 4001.

After downloading the tender documents, any queries arising should be directed to: Emma Petre, tel: 01274 433810, email: emma.petre@bradford.gov.uk.

The closing date for the receipt of Pre Qualification Questionnaire is Monday 12th January 2009 at 5.00pm.

A contract notice relating to this procurement was sent to the Official Journal of the European Union on 2nd December 2008.



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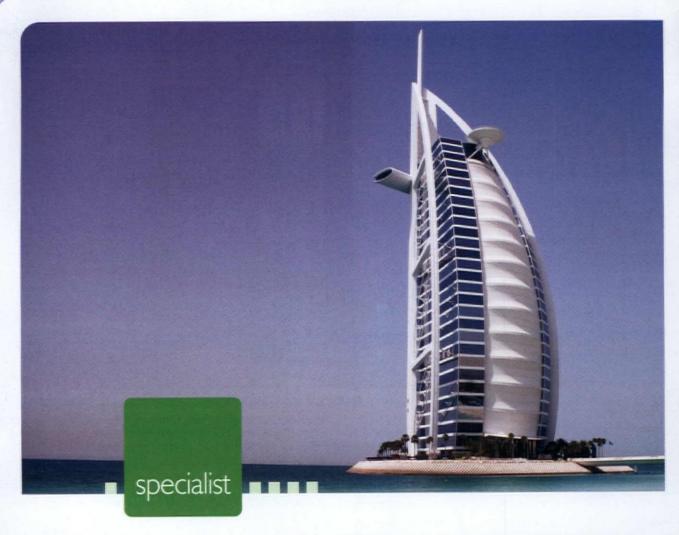




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Jan Martin. It's simpler to imagine new people instead of new buildings

MONDAY. Email from a PhD student, seeking my help. Very enigmatic. She's carrying out research into Fictional Space In The Context of Shared Geo-Political Narratives, but doesn't know where to put an apostrophe. She's particularly interested in secession movements, and could I tell her anything about the Tamworth League.

Certainly. The Tamworth League is a global, 'post-Obama' campaign to restore Tamworth to its original status as Capital of England. For nearly 1,300 years the proud peoples of ancient Mercia have been under London's colonialist yoke. I add 'and things have gone well beyond a yoke now!', then on second thoughts delete it. Best not to rush things, we need all the friends we can get. I email her a summary of the League's outreach work and invite her to the monthly meeting.

TUESDAY. Sketch out my Basra Museum of Reconciliation. The scheme will help to restore faith in democracy and tourism in that troubled part of the world, and is unaffected by the UK recession.

Designing the museum is straightforward enough. As always, it's a blend of old and new. Mud-brick reception area, Mesopotamian arches and columns here and there, a weirdlyshaped 'smart polymer' roof that changes colour to indicate modernity. The real problem is acquiring exhibits. Much of Iraq's archaeological heritage was privatised during the Blair Years and then recycled via the free market. I leave a margin of ambiguity in the drawings so the museum can become a police station if necessary.

WEDNESDAY. Meeting of the

Olympic Rebadging Task Force. Our priority today is to dispel rumours that the Games will be managed on the cheap. Accordingly, we go through the interim financial report replacing all references to 'cost-cutting' with 'decarbonisation'. By making the Olympics part of Decarbonised Britain, we'll save money through sanctimony, which is morally superior to parsimony.

After lunch there's a row about carbon capture. As a member of the liberal elite, I am against it. Locking carbon up with older, hardened types of carbon for long periods simply criminalises it. What's the purpose of carbon capture anyway, rehabilitation or punishment? It would make much more sense to put reformed carbon to work in the community.

In the end we decide to leave the big moral questions to the scientists. We amend the phrase 'architects will be highly valued throughout the Olympic process', replacing 'highly valued' with 'heavily audited'.

THURSDAY. Monthly meeting of the Tamworth League with Hyun-Joo, the PhD student, in attendance. Blank looks all round when I introduce her.

We all express huge disappointment over Tamworth's failure to become one of the government's new Healthy Towns. The bid cost a fortune and our multi-agency consortium had to cash in a cottage hospital. Then about 24 hours before the deadline we were Skyped by some dickhead in a haircut at Change4Life, the organising body. Summary: we can't accept your bid, Access To Free Sports Facilities in Tamworth, as its title is not one long nonsensical compound word

with a number in the middle.

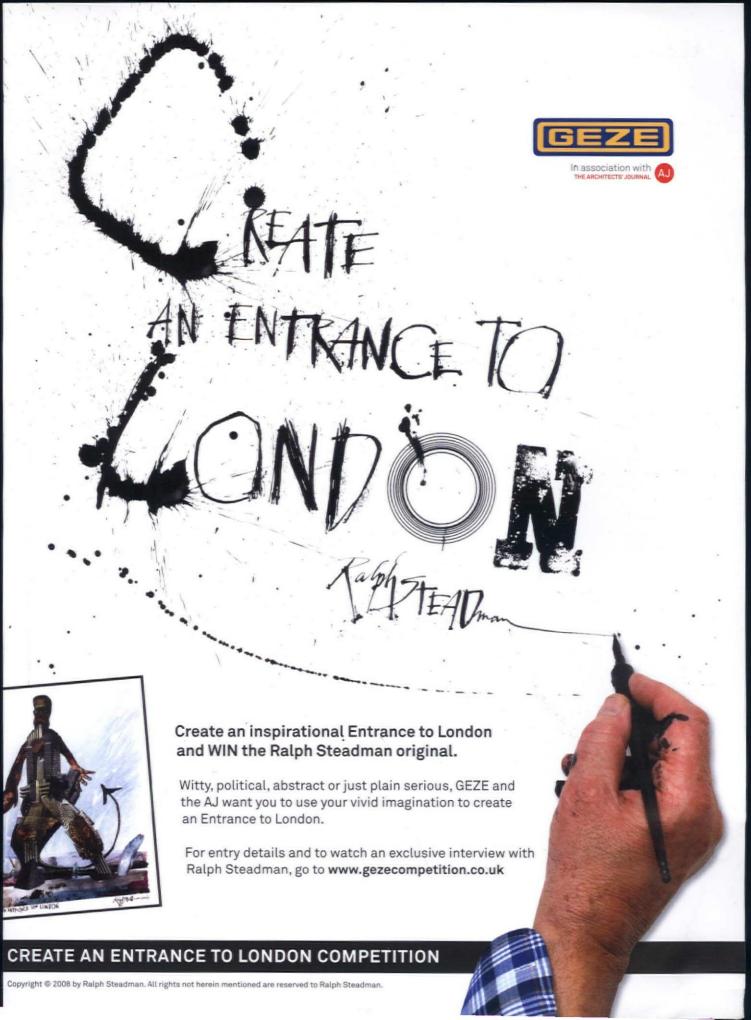
In the end we managed to scramble together a mini-bid for something called @swim2birds, a project to get Tamworth fit for the 22nd century via a highly aerobic fusion of water sports and surrealism. The grant is negligible.

Under Any Other Business we resolve to ask Mr Obama to help us retrieve traditional rights to pasture our livestock in public parks, and to govern England. Bit of a falling-out with other League members, who insist that Hyun-Joo is entirely fictional. I'm afraid their understanding of the academic world is slight.

FRIDAY. Email from Hyun-Joo, who apologises for her absence but promises to put something about Tamworth in her 'fantasy thesis'. Something tells me I am being, as they say on reality TV, manipulised.

SATURDAY, Five-a-side theoretical football. Electropop Revivalism 2, Transitive Parametricism 0 or possibly 5, it depends on your interpretation. Match suspended indefinitely in a computer-generated think bubble.

SUNDAY. Conceptualise some 'slow architecture' in the recliner. Specifically, I imagine what Tamworth's buildings might look like today if the Mercian style had prevailed from the 9th century. I am sure the cathedral would not have been as fat and ungainly as Winchester's. And would there now be a Tamworth Eye, or Gherkin? I email Hyun-Joo for an opinion, but there's a DNS Hard Error and it bounces back. ian@martian.fm





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