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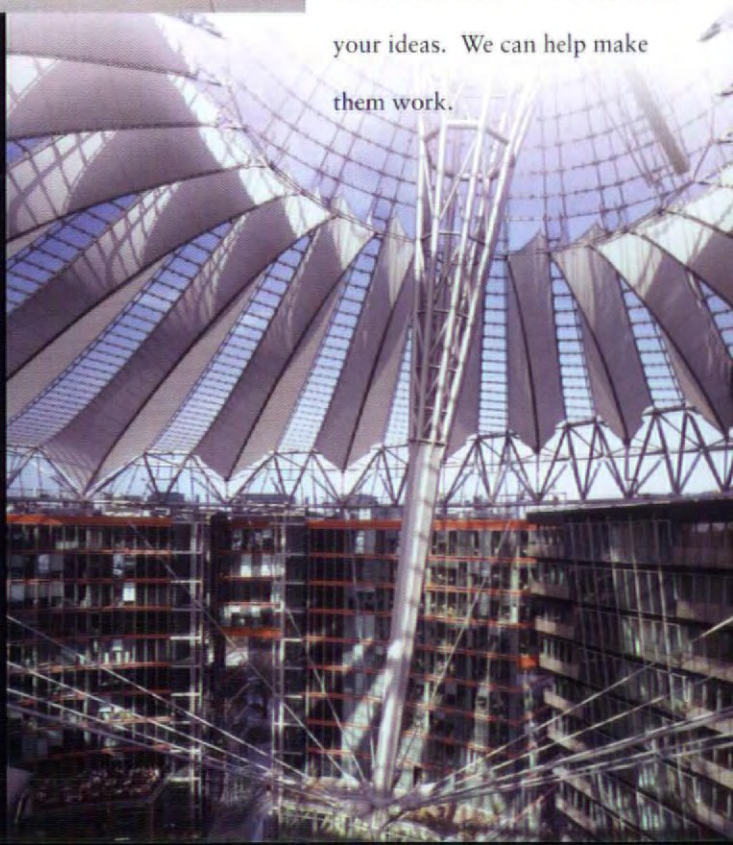

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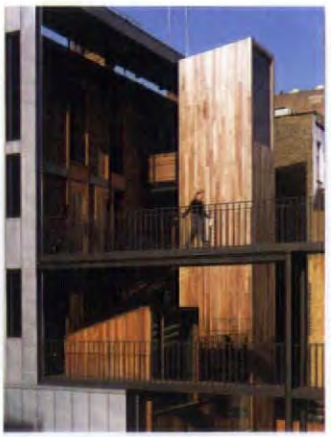
Hampstead house (p58)


Fitzrovia offices (p44)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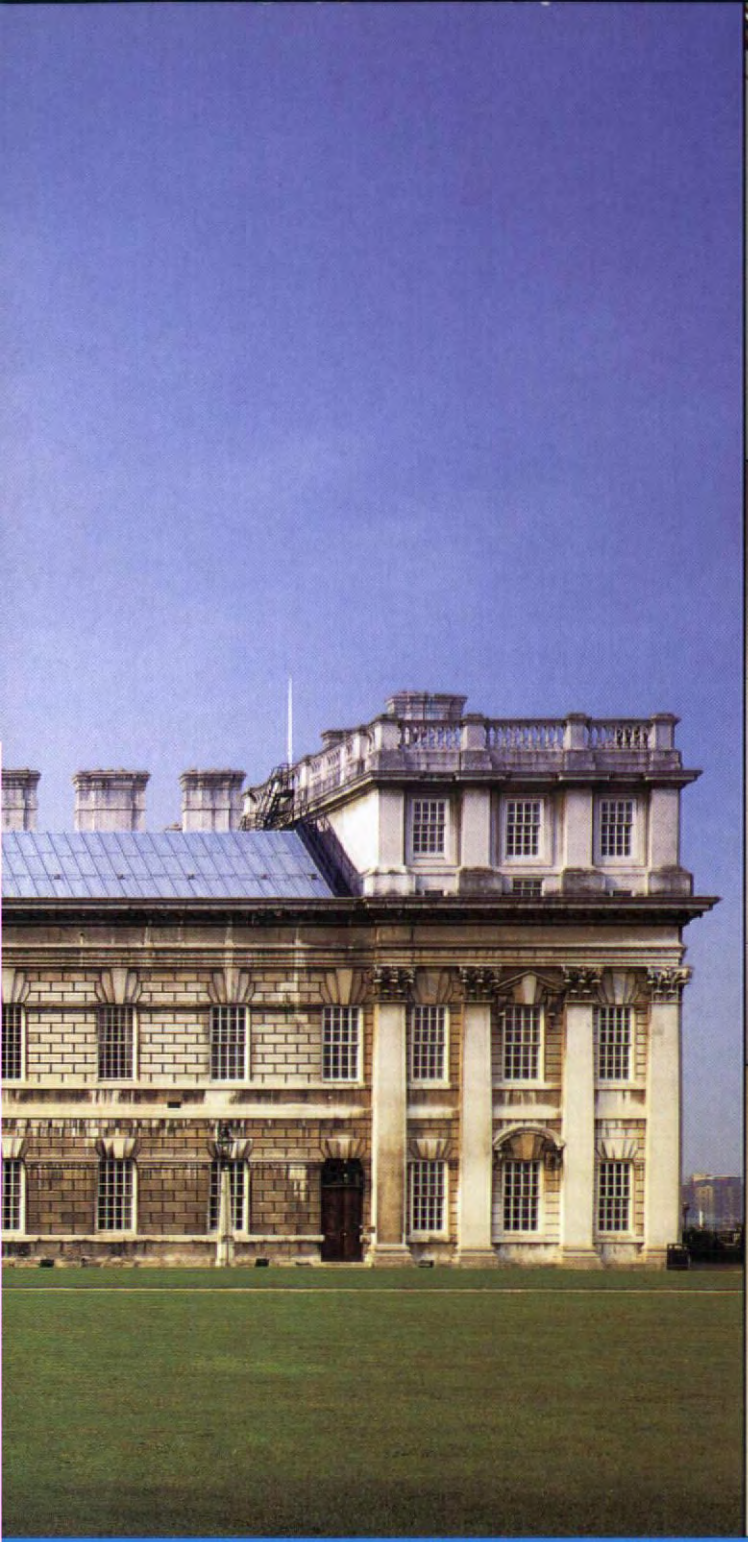

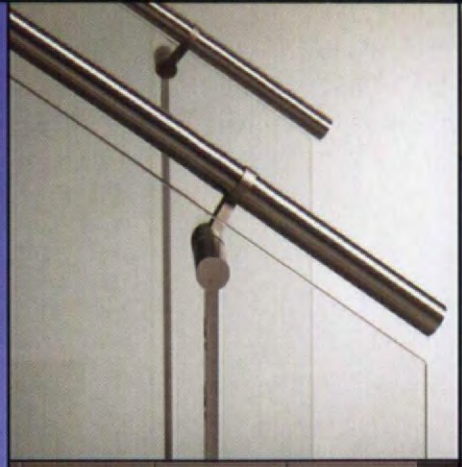

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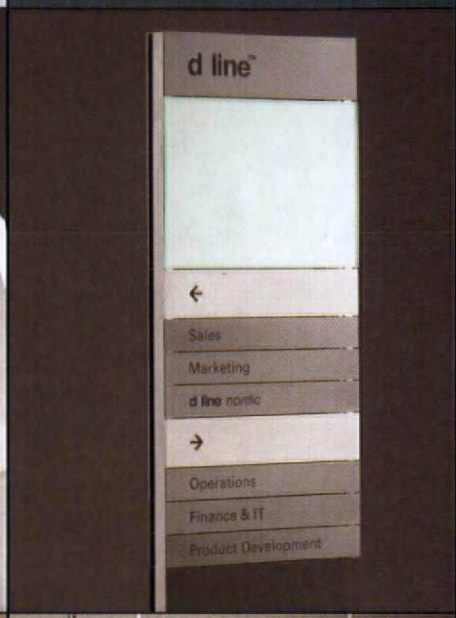

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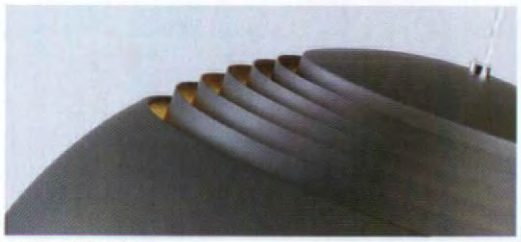

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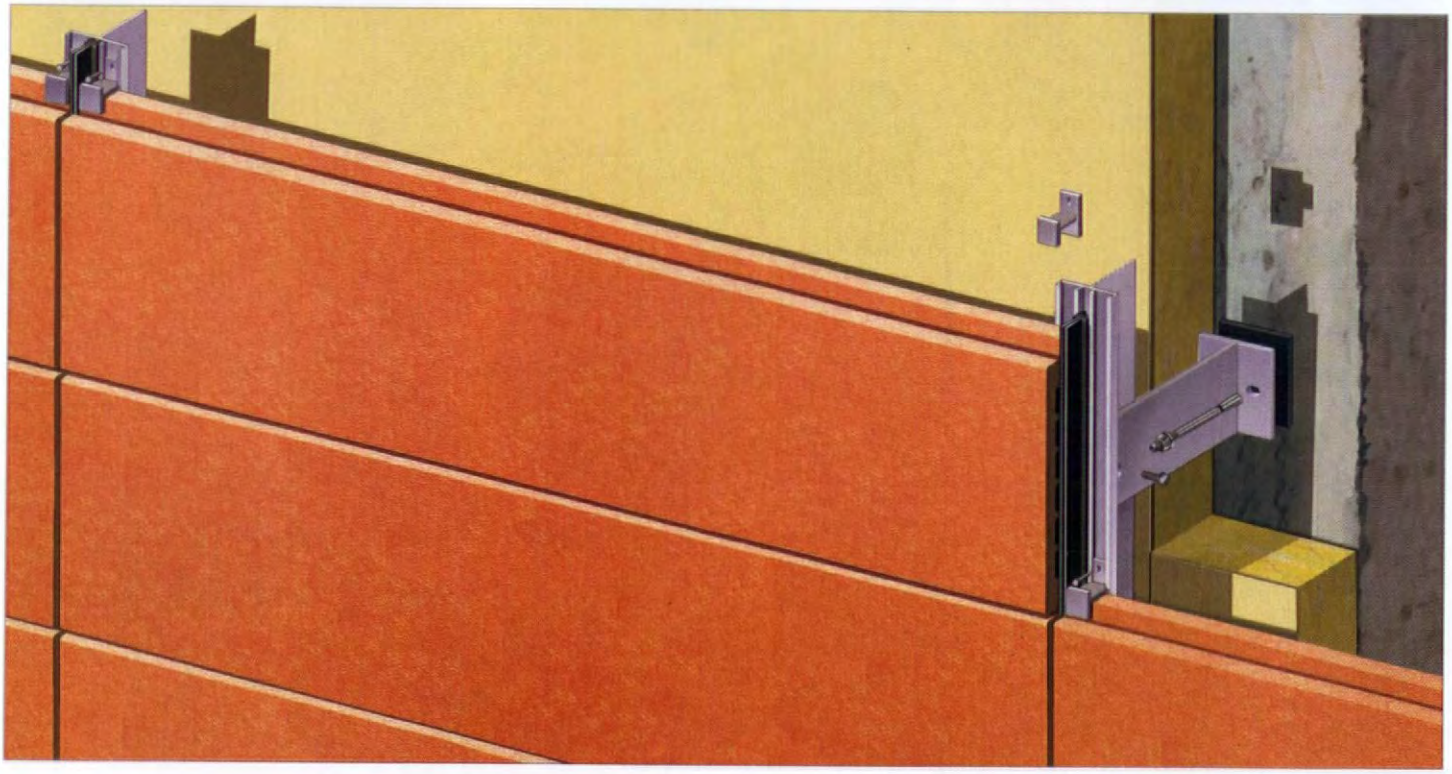

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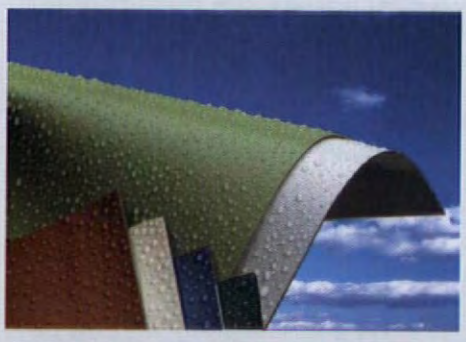

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Pure interiors: **Restaurant „El Japonés"**, Barcelona

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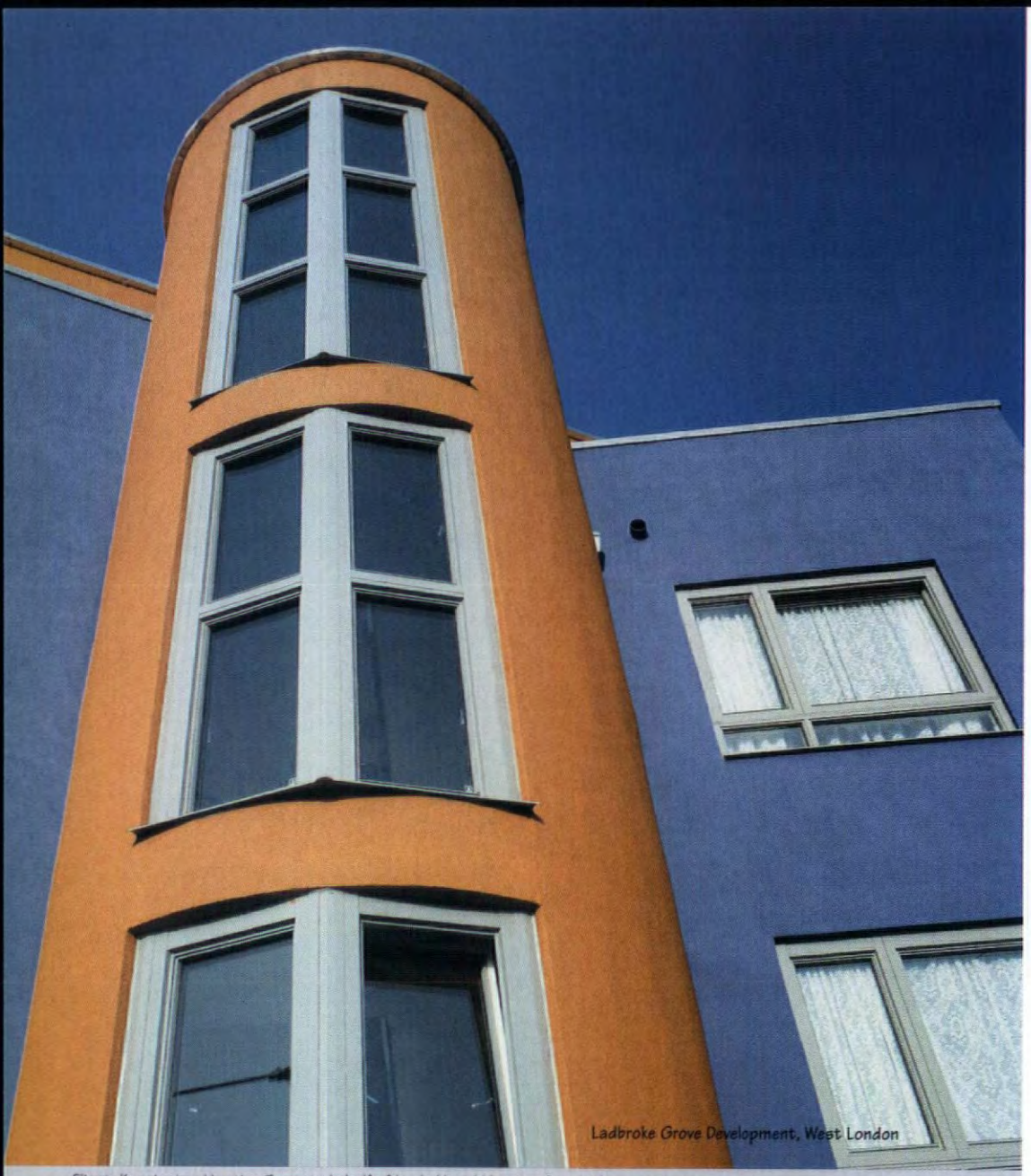

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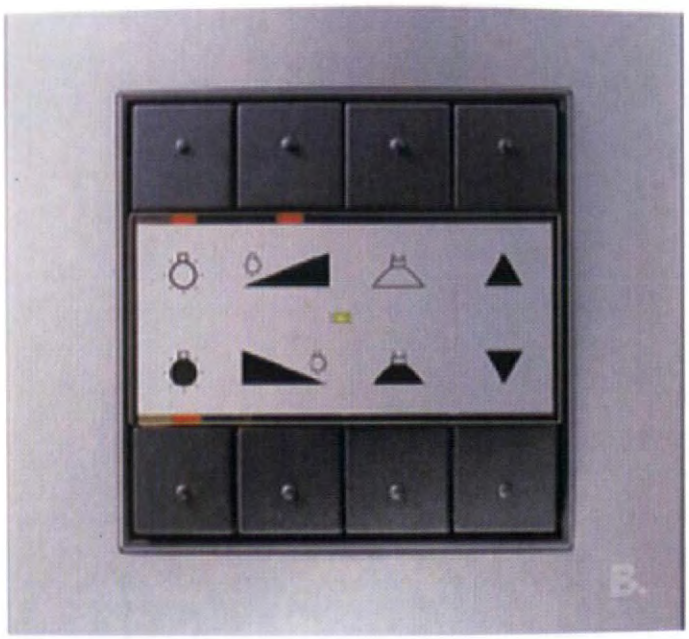

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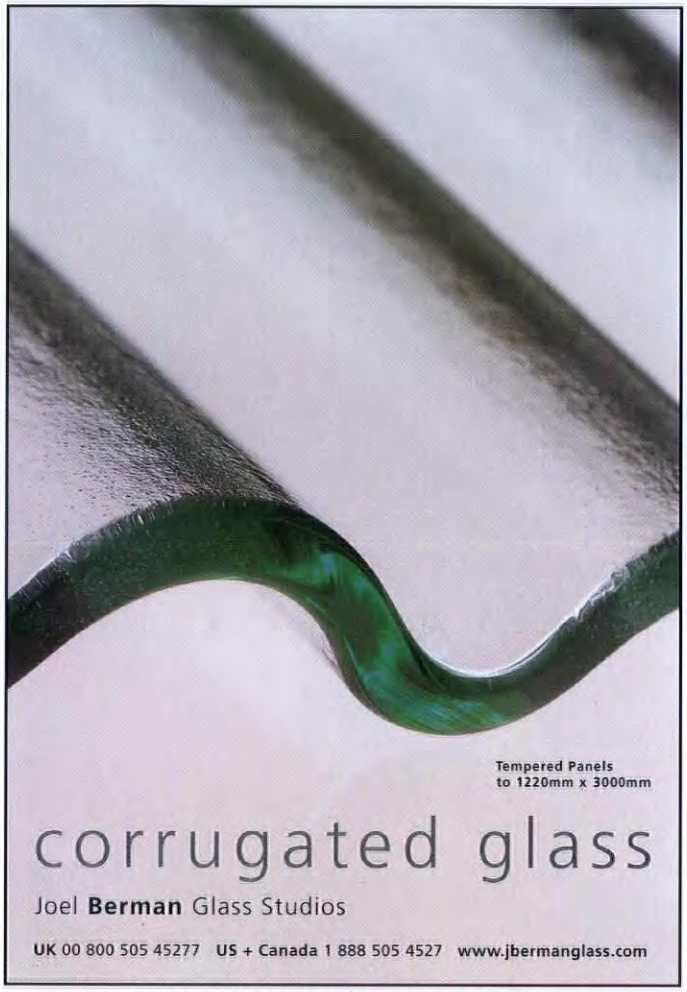

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The London Consortium PhD programme is joining forces with Tate Modern to present a summer school for 2002. A programme spanning three weeks in July will offer participants the opportunity to learn about cutting edge contemporary culture in London. Participants will attend classes featuring leading figures from the disciplines of art, architecture, film, history, literature and fashion. Seminars will be complemented by site visits to key cultural institutions in London, as well as evening events, exhibition openings and film screenings. Guest speakers include: Peter Ackroyd, Marina Warner, Harland Miller, Isaac Julien, Hadrian Pigott, James Putnam, Mark Gisbourne, and Andrew Jefferson-Miles, and faculty from the Consortium.

Topics: Imaging Contemporary London, Down and Dirty in London, Behind Closed Doors

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view

London joins European challenge for greatest erection with Piano style. Foster to convert Kowloon, Hong Kong. Commonwealth Assocation of Architects challenges students world-wide with a new competition. Are Wigglesworth and Till decadent and land rich? Nile dying at Luxor?

London's highest building? Piano's proposed controversial 'glass shard'. Top 50m are cooling tower.

LONDON SHARD

Southwark Council has given detailed planning approval for Renzo Piano's London Bridge Tower, which promises to be (for the moment) the tallest building in Europe (305m, 1000ft) high – more than 60m higher than London's present tallest, Canary Wharf by Cesar Pelli (244m). The tower will be mostly occupied by offices over a retail base. Above the offices will be a 15-storey hotel, a health club and 14 flats. At the top is a 50m high radiant heat exchanger to cope with cooling loads.

Piano has chosen the etiolated pyramid shape and the white glass cladding because he thinks that they will minimize the impact of the building against the cityscape and the sky. Piano says that 'The challenge is to create a gentle presence. The glass is angled to be less obtrusive and to reflect the sky for a white look rather than the menacing dark of many tall buildings. If you're building an iconic building, it must be bloody good'. Certainly Southwark is looking forward to a landmark. Stephanie Elsy, Leader of the Borough Council, said that the 'plans are of world class quality and will positively contribute to London's World City image and the London skyline. We are honoured that Renzo Piano has chosen Southwark for this exciting scheme'.

But there is still much disagreement. English Heritage (EH), the national watchdog of the past, is adamantly opposed to the proposal, believing that it will mar traditional views of St Paul's Cathedral and be visible within the curtain wall of the Tower of London. Perhaps the Government will call in the design for further consideration because the project is so important. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the taste watchdog, supports the proposal in principle, though it has reservations about the way in which it will affect the city at ground level. Paul Finch, Deputy Chairman of CABE, says that planning permission should be accompanied by stringent conditions to 'prevent the dumbing down of the design'; for instance, there should be absolute insistence on the kind of glass proposed by Piano. EH, says Finch, is solely concerned with picturesque overview, whereas CABE looks at the way in which a tall building relates to the street and urban life, the way its

Foster and Partners have won the competition for a masterplan for the reclaimed waterfront of West Kowloon, Hong Kong; 161 entries were received from all over the world for an arts, cultural and entertainment district. The Foster proposal includes a range of theatres and concert halls (including a major performance space), leisure facilities, shops, cinemas and a modern art gallery. At least 70 per cent of the development will be parkland and public space: much needed in teeming downtown Kowloon. A sinuous canopy unites the disparate elements of the complex. The architects say that it is based on the landscape, Chinese art forms and calligraphy, and, apart from modifying the microclimate it shelters, it is expected to be a regional landmark. The first phase is due for completion in 2008. Town planning consultant for the competition was Richard L. K. Yu, and the urban planning advice was from the Bartlett School of Planning, University of London.

top greets the sky, and its physical impact using wind and shadow studies. It believes that the building will 'inevitably assume iconic status'.

Finch hopes that, if the design is called in, the Secretary of State will seize the opportunity to look at a policy for all tall buildings in the capital – a desperately needed move. London Mayor Ken Livingstone says that it will deliver architecture of world-class quality, which will positively contribute to London's world-city image and the London skyline'.

Livingstone is keen to encourage tall buildings almost anywhere in a most ill judged attempt to make the city seem up-to-date – London may have influenced Dallas and Houston but the mother of the modern city must remember its European origins and resist Texification by generating a proper, compact, high rise CBD like those of Sydney or Manhattan to the east of St Paul's. P. D.

COMMONWEALTH STUDENT COMP

The subject of the sixth international student competition to be held by the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) is a dwelling for a famous writer. Entrants must be studying architecture in any Commonwealth country at the time of submission. Site (and indeed writer) can be chosen by individual entrants. Among jury criteria will be response to local culture, site and resources, appropriate materiality and sustainability.

Prizes will be £1200 (first), £500 (second) and £200 (third) with a bonus of £200 for the best multi-disciplinary group prizewinner. There is a further £200 for the best scheme entered by students in first or second years. The winners and a selection of other schemes will be published in the AR, which is supporting the competition.

The international jury (which will include CAA president Philip Kungu of Kenya and Peter Davey, the Editor of the AR) will meet in early 2003 and prizes will be announced at the CAA General Assembly on 18 April in Namibia.

Further details will be published shortly in the AR, and on our website www.arplus.com. In the meantime, individuals and schools can obtain registration forms from:
Sue Linning, CEO
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SPECTRUM 2002

Spectrum 2002, the annual furniture fair, will be taking place 14-17 May in the Commonwealth Institute on Kensington High Street, London. As in previous years, the AR will give an Award for Excellence to the product new to Spectrum and judged the most worthy by an eminent panel of judges (at the time of writing, Penny McGuire, AR senior editor and chairwoman, Lorenzo Apicella of Pentagram, Sally Mackereth of Wells Mackereth). This year Spectrum will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in what is now its new home, the Commonwealth Galleries in Kensington. This year, as last year, there are 15 new companies exhibiting alongside firms such as Vitra, Thonet, Herman Miller, Wittmann, Forza, Kvadrat, Fantoni and Wilkhahn, displaying work by internationally known designers including Simon Pengelly, Jorge Pensi, Peter Christian and Michael Sodeau. Material Connexion, the American library for new materials and processes, will once again be present after its success last year. It will be showing 128 new materials and 10 new three-dimensional product samples.

The exhibition will be open from Tuesday 14 to Thursday 16 May, 11am-9pm, and on Friday 17 May, 11am-5pm. Pre-registration can be arranged from now onwards. Tel: 0870 429 4420: or www.spectrumexhibition.co.uk

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The latest ar+d Awards for Emerging Architects (AR December 2001) were exhibited last month at a party in the RIBA, London, that also celebrated Peter Davey's 20th anniversary as editor. Richard MacCormac, past president of the RIBA (bottom right), led animated discussion. Top, Charles Jencks (right) feels out Davey's problems.

browser

Sutherland Lyall perspicaciously trawls the architectural cyberwaves.

Ah, research in its time

Australian architects have the built environment division of the CSIRO and Britain its BRE, the Building Research Establishment. Once an independent government body, BRE is now owned by the Foundation for the Built Environment, a not for profit company limited by guarantee which involves 500 firms and bodies to do with construction and building. BRE has been the primary source of serious building research for 80 years in the UK and although it has gone a bit commercial (and has an associated pay-for testing organization, BRE Certification) it is still the best in Britain. It's at www.bre.co.uk. CSIRO is Australia's once, and perhaps still, wonderful Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and it's at www.csiro.au. It was wonderful because it used to research really arcane stuff and publish it blithely. Its site has plainly been designed by a scientist with nationalistic yellow and green headline strips. And it's pretty clunky and unhelpful: you are advised to click on Current Research when you want to know more about Our Capabilities, there's just one customer story which is about 82 per cent customer satisfaction – really up-to-date December 2000. Recent Achievements are represented by five little reports to do with transport and Barry Little BA, MBA is the entire contents of the People page. Er that's enough please. Mind you, I tried a search for 'effect of daylight on unpainted timber' a topic on which I know BRE has done work – and drew a blank. So too CSIRO.

Whingeing but not Poms

Lingering in the far antipodes there is the site In The Mind of The Architect (www.abc.net.au/architecture/default.htm) which is not just an exposition of the creeping Teutonic capitalization of non-proper nouns but seems to be a web version of an Australian Broadcasting Commission programme called In The Mind of The Architect. I can't make out whether this was a programme about a bunch of people letting off self-important steam around the peripheries of the idea of architecture or not. It's largely text, with a few perfectly relevant pix and some rather amateur animation fronting inarticulate professions of both faith in the sacred art and deep distrust (even before it was finished) of that amazing close-uppable timber slat beach house by Sean Godsell (AR December 2000). You get the early impression that OzArchs feel really beleaguered: I always thought it was the Poms who were the whingers and took themselves far too seriously. Odd then that there are so many terrific buildings to be seen, almost incidentally, on this site otherwise maxed out on words. From the mug shots it's clear that the really en-vogue hair style for antipodean architects is a number one razor cut. You still see them in trendy London eateries. But not as often as before.

A Holmes in every house

There's that British architect-artist society over whose exhibitions the London architectural press has an annual snigger. The mild ridicule is the outcome of a sweet little illusion among many architects that if they really put their minds to it they would inevitably emerge as not half competent artists. You, I and the press know better. Happily there are some exceptions and one of the stupendously obvious ones is the gentle SuperRealist, Andrew Holmes, who doubles as visiting prof at Berlin and legendary unit tutor at leading UK school, the Bartlett. Holmes paints those extraordinary trucks which snort across the great highways of the US: bright shiny paint, gleaming chrome, intricately perforated radiators and hard reflections. And he does it all with Derwent coloured pencils and the odd bit of airbrush for the flat skies. Obsessive-compulsive, you might say. Even perverse. But the final images are of incredible power. Take a look for yourself at www.realisticpictures.co.uk. Holmes is also a brilliant photographer and a bunch of his photos are for sale along with prints, drawings and several videos. But download for your own use free.

Plug In, Walk that City

With the announcement that seminal British group, Archigram, is to get this year's British Royal Gold Medal there has been a small torrent of harrumphs and snorts of indignation from retired colonel architects resident in Tunbridge Wells plus of course the architectural Creationists. There has been an exhibition touring the world for some years, most recently in Rotterdam, but although there's quite a lot (3000 plus entries) on the web it's mostly fairly bitsy. There is a Rice University site, www.owlnet.rice.edu/%7Emdbader/arch346/archigram/archigram4.html which is a bit patched together and partly lifted from Peter Cook's 1974 book. But in its rough old way, this site is quite good. It has some links to excellent recent articles but not, I think, Eleanora Louis and Tony Stooss's introduction to the travelling exhibition catalogue (at www.ati.ufg.ac.at/%7Eworkcult/e315ar.htm). There are also some Archigram images at www.arcspace.com/

architects/archigram/ – and there's a very useful review of the Rotterdam show at www.archined.nl/endex.html at the excellent Dutch architecture site Archined about which we have earlier delivered enthusiastic encomiums. Under construction is another Archigram site at www.archigram.net and there's an extremely sad Japanese architectural firm which has appropriated the name. Mind you nobody looking at its architecture would mistake it for the real thing.

Last resort

I'm sure this has tremendous prospects in the office of the future. It's the £3000 Cye, a floor crawling two wheeled robot which you can link up with a trailer to form a four wheel coffee or mail wagon – providing you like coffee and post delivered at ankle level. You can link up with a vacuum cleaner to robotically cleanse the office or use it as a spy camera platform from which to observe intruders. Pranksters will equip it with spikes and drive it into the lower shins of office rivals. For all that it actually looks quite innocent, if a little wacky and all the details are at www.personalrobots.com. Mind you, for another five grand you could buy a Segway (www.segway.com) which has a similar two wheel configuration but, unlike the Cye, has big proper rubber wheels and is kept upright by gyroscope magic and will take you and your attaché case down the long office corridor and off home along the pavement at a respectable 14 mph. Should you want that.

The high price of digital words

One interesting oddity on the UIA site may represent a trend. It is probably based on information providers realizing that it's much, much easier to illegally replicate multiple copies of a slab of electronic text than a ditto of printed text – or images for that matter. UIA has a price of 55 euros post paid for its printed list of world-wide architecture schools. The price of a Word file of the same on diskette (shows how long it is) or as an email attachment is, yes really, 230 euros. Join the rush at http://www.uia-architectes.org/ texte/summary/p2b1.html. Don't forget the biro.

Some of these urls [web addresses] are long and complicated. With your browser activated, go to www.arplus.com, click on the title and look in Directory and then the alphabetical list in General Architecture Sites. Click on the relevant url underlined in blue and you will be transported to the site.

letters

LIMITS OF ARCHITECTS

SIR: Fabian Faltin (AR Letters, March p33) is being a little sweeping when he talks about your 'wish to reverse the development the leisure industry and contemporary life has taken' and 'your responsibility to think through the alternatives, and persuade us that, all things considered, they are more desirable'.

Doubtless, the Editor of the AR should think harder (so perhaps should most of us). Doubtless, a language that we want to share should be sought. And 'hopeful foundations' should be established. But to suggest that you can 'reverse' general cultural developments is surely expecting a very great deal from what is, after all, a magazine with a comparatively small circulation, going out to a specialized sector of the community. If you were to write with the combined skills of Milton, Marx and Marshall Macluhan, you would scarcely expect to have such an impact.

One of the problems architects have faced ever since they were constituted into a profession has been the assumption that they have an affinity with the Zeitgeist, which they are uniquely qualified to interpret for the benefit of the rest of society. The decay (literal and metaphorical) of Modernism has shown how arrogant such a proposition is. It is scarcely for you, Sir, to attempt to establish the foundations of culture. Understandably, your efforts (like those of the profession in general) are more modest, and more confused. But that is not to say that you, or we, should give up because you cannot lay foundations that will support the whole edifice.

Yours etc
JAMES MARTIN
Glasgow, Scotland

WRITING ON THE WALL?

SIR: Your hospitals issue (March) showed how it is possible to produce decent health buildings which have a proper regard for both patients and staff, and are a real extension of the public realm. The Styrian government is clearly a great deal more enlightened than those of much of the rest of Europe, where various systems of public and private finance partnership (like the dreaded British PFI) are imposed in which the temptation to corruption is systematically inbuilt, and which have about as much hope of producing decent architecture as most of us do of skiing down Everest.

But is the writing on the wall, even in Graz? Apparently the politicians have turned against

Barcelona graffiti. Photograph: Duccio Malagamba.

the excellent housing produced by the Grazerschule architects in favour of banal pseudo-vernacular rubbish from the volume house developers. How soon will the hospital programme suffer the same fate?
Yours etc
WILFRED BOSANQUET
Birmingham, England

BARCELONA GRAFFITI

SIR: One thing your Catalan correspondent got right regarding the Parque de los Colores in Mollet del Vallés, Barcelona, by Miralles y Tagliabue was the analogy of this work to graffiti (AR January, p84).

Like graffiti, these marching monsters of concrete and metal hit you between the psychic horns; scream at you that your little world is no damn good and by the way don't try to climb on them, and don't expect useful shade from them in this hot Mediterranean climate. But unlike graffiti they give no brief catharsis from the poverty and frustration of the common working man's life – just a sneering elitist comment.

These grating, alien objects clash with the existing mature trees and totally dominate the pathetic newly planted saplings. The new trees. Anyone who has actually worked with trees in a public urban environment knows that these scrawny 1½ to 2in calliper specimens unprotected and unloved will not last. Budget cuts indeed! Odd to include this project in an issue of the AR dedicated to 'Ecological Propriety' as it squanders quantities of environmentally expensive building materials. Sculptural this 'landscape' surely is, but costly and irrelevant to a fault. In (we are told) this neglected, deprived, featureless suburb of Barcelona, nature and humanity have been shoved aside and the architect's ego has triumphed.
Yours etc
MONA HEPPNER
Vancouver, Canada

STRAW POLL

SIR: I want to take exception to Shona Mordak's attack on the Wigglesworth and Till house in your January issue. The house is indeed a show, and is intended to be so – and be an inspiration to other architects and the general public. For instance, both the straw bales and the sacks of cement have been used to provide insulation, thermal and acoustic, cheaply and simply.

I quite agree about jokes in architecture (don't build 'em), but the house is clearly enjoyable to build and live in. And it shows that British architecture is more than tight-arsed High Tech, Will Alsop's splurges and prissy Cambridge Moderne.
Yours etc
HENRY BRANDLYS
Sydney, Australia

DECADENT WASTAGE

SIR: Although I'm unconvinced of its place in January's 'Ecological Propriety' issue (p64), I find Wigglesworth's Stock Orchard Street house quite at home in your magazine. Like many of the residences you feature, it uses decadent wastage to articulate the possession of money and property – albeit more covertly than we are used to. Consider the walls. Metre-thick walls of anything will only ever be an option for the land-rich. And the gabions. With their structural *raison d'être* negated by concrete columns, they become mere cosmetic veneers – a waste of wire and perfectly good building rubble. In any case, putting a building on pilotis (of anything) is an expensive way of sheltering a garden path. This house uses lowly materials on a less-than-perfect site to articulate the traditional subtext of upmarket residential architecture. If your correspondent insists that only buildings flaunting expensive materials and value-adding processes can qualify as architecture, then she risks living in her very own house of straw.
Yours etc
GRAHAM MCKAY
London, England
grahammckay@mac.com

Wigglesworth: decadent? Photograph: Paul Smoothy.

STYLE OFFENSIVE

SIR: I'm sorry Lucien Style is offended (AR March). Actually I'm not particularly.

What concerned me in a world riven by religion-related hatred was that his site seemed to claim some kind of divine/clerical authority for the architecture of the extreme and reactionary. Now that Style has given me a new name I can come out of hiding.
Yours etc
SUTHERLAND LYALL
London, England

AR 1966-1972

SIR: Were these years the nadir of architecture? Certainly there are schemes and buildings we would regard with horror and amusement today. I've got 70 back issues covering the period – anyone interested, I'd hate to chuck them?
Yours etc
MARTIN CULLINGFORD
Hastings, England
martin@mcpvision.tv

addenda

PLASHET SCHOOL FOOTBRIDGE

Credits for Plashet School Footbridge (AR Feb, p26) should have included structural engineer Teckniker and cost consultant Gardiner & Theobald.

ELECTRONIC IMAGES

The AR can accept electronic images only in the most exceptional circumstances. Technology is not yet sufficiently integrated.

erratum

Frank Duffy points out that the 'introduction to the exhibition' he referred to in his article on the exhibition on Ground Zero, held at the Max Protetch Gallery, New York (AR March pp28-29) was in fact an inter-organizational document which was produced by the Institute of Urban Design following a seminar there. It is not generally available. The Max Protetch Gallery is to be found at www.maxprotetch.com.

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™

Luxor temple: astonishing and unusual deflected axes reveal Amenophis III behind colossi of Rameses II.

Gardens of Winter Palace: a small piece of sub-tropical English heaven brought down to upper Egypt.

View from Luxor

Three and a half thousand years ago, the Egyptians invented Western architecture. A pilgrimage is essential for all of us.

On a first visit to Luxor, it is impossible to disagree with Herodotus, the earliest tourist to record his journey two and a half millennia ago. He believed that Egypt 'possesses more wonders than any other country, and exhibits works greater than can be described'. The origins of the art of architecture are there. Even now, when the monuments are filled with turgid polyglot swarms of vulgarly clad and sunroasted Westerners, the great temples remain awesome; the statues, however shattered, still convey the might of the Pharaohs; the tombs of the aristocrats touchingly speak of daily life millennia ago. The town grows around the temple on the river, still vestigially connected to another amazing collection of ruins at Karnak, the centre of the Theban Amun-Ra religion.

Nowadays, life for most of the inhabitants of Luxor is a continuous high-pressure campaign to persuade visitors to part with their money. In the 1870s, Amelia Edwards was greeted by 'a rush of donkeys and donkey-boys, beggars, guides and antiquity dealers ... the children screaming for backshîsh; the dealers exhibiting strings of imitation scarabs; the donkey-boys vociferating the names and praises of their beasts; all alike regarding us as their lawful prey'. Nothing has changed, except that there are fewer donkeys. Their role is taken by rusting blue and white taxis and elegant calèches: carriages drawn by horses that sometimes look as if they could win the Derby, more often like candidates for the glue pot.

The continuous batter of cringing, whining and over-familiar wheedling is very disagreeable, but it must be much more so for the people who have to grasp their living from the tourists. After 11 September, there are far fewer visitors than usual, and the clamour is presumably louder and more desperate. In this atmosphere of humiliation made aggressive by need, it is not difficult to see how the young can be attracted by fundamentalism, and why there are three policemen with automatic rifles dozing outside McDonald's.

We escaped the row in the calm gardens of the Winter Palace, the 1886 grand hotel, still more or less kept in the condition enjoyed by King Farouk (the country's last monarch) on his January holidays. The gardens are a small piece of English heaven brought down to upper Egypt. Immaculately maintained, they have smooth perfect lawns with proper British grass under palms and exotic tropical species like red silk cotton trees (bombax) with their flaming flowers, huge fiddle-leaf ficus, temple trees (plomenia) and golden balled acacia. Honeysuckle, bougainvillaea and jasmine ramble round the lower trunks over phlox, nasturtium and hollyhocks, all in full bloom in February. Much of the Picturesque structure of the original design has survived into ravishing maturity. But go as soon as possible. The hotel is owned by an international group, which has made some unfortunate changes, and pressure for development of such a large piece of real estate in the middle of town must be very great.

On the other side of the hotel is the terrace, from which you look west over the Nile to sunset on the Theban mountains, into the crumbling parched slopes of which the Pharaohs tunnelled their secret but almost always ravished tombs. Between desert and river is the flood plain. The multi-textured green vigour of the western side with its sugar cane, barley, wheat and cotton defines the meaning of 'lush'. A felucca (traditional broad-bottomed sailing boat) quietly and slowly takes you over to the silence of that shore where pied kingfishers hover like large humming birds over the shallows, elegant white ibis scuttle through the reeds, and camels and buffalo are driven to their immemorial tasks.

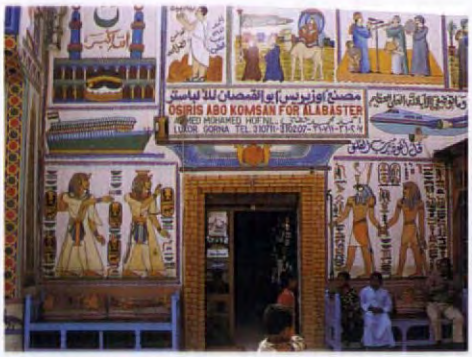
Turn round, and you see some of the most hideous hotels in the world on the east bank. The yowling of their musak is revealed in three dimensions. Clearly Egyptian planning works. All the really vile built manifestations of the modern international tourist industry have been clustered together in southern Luxor. But huge river steamers are moored along almost the whole length of the east bank, and because of lack of trade, many never seem to move. Almost all try to evoke the ancient world with regurgitation of ill-digested Pharaonic motifs.

On the whole, curators of the monuments have commendably refrained from the temptation of over-Pharaonization. A sad exception

Dreadful new hotels in south Luxor: Egyptian planning has coralled their three-dimensional yowling musak.

Hatshepsut's temple – simple and noble composition Hollywoodized in seeming processed cheese.

Qurna: village on top of the tombs of the nobles, inhabited by families continuing Egypt's oldest trades ...



... tomb robbery and extracting money from tourists, often with great panache, contrasts with ...

... New Gourna, Hassan Fathy's sadly failed idealistic attempt at replacement, now decaying on the plain.

is Hatshepsut's temple on the west side, a simple and noble composition at the foot of the mountain – essentially terraces connected by ramps. Century-old photographs show the dignified ruin of the memorial to one of ancient Egypt's few female rulers, a building then recently excavated from the sands. Now, the reconstructed temple looks as though it has been sculpted out of cheese processed in Hollywood.

To the south is the Valley of the Nobles, on top of which is the village of Qurna, a haphazard collection of Arab houses clustered over the tombs of some of the most powerful people in the ancient empire. The buildings are owned by families who used to pursue Egypt's oldest continuous profession: tomb robbery. Today, there are few graves left to rob – or even find – and the children are forced to mob visitors. They offer pathetic and ugly little home-made dolls. Elders make an income by taxi driving and baksheesh from tomb guardianship.

In the '40s there was an attempt to remove the villagers to a new settlement on the green plain. Hassan Fathy's idealistic village New Gourna (as it was then called, AR February 1970) seems to have been a failure from the start. The villagers naturally did not want to move from their potentially extremely valuable properties on top of the tombs. And Fathy used mud-building techniques common further up the river in Nubia, but they were strange to the intended inhabitants. His buildings (apart from the well-cared-for mosque) are falling to bits, or have been radically altered. No one seems to have had repair skills and, even in a place where it only rains for half an hour in four years, maintenance should have been thought about. The newest part of the settlement, built with concrete frames and fired brick infill – the true contemporary vernacular – seems much more successful and durable.

Another idealistic project from the same era was the High Dam at Aswan. Undoubtedly, the barrage has allowed much more land to be irrigated, and many more fed. (No one actually starves in Egypt, but for all the new agricultural land, the country's 68 million people, increasing against all government efforts at well over two per cent a year, still have to rely on massive grain aid from the US.)

The dam has prevented the annual inundation of the Nile valley, which made the ancient civilization possible by spreading fertile mud over the fields. Now there is no more mud, so fecundity has to be achieved with artificial fertilizers, and the land which Herodotus thought was the easiest in the world to cultivate (because the river did most of the work) has become less rich. Nitrate poisoning threatens. Can the Nile become, like the Oxus, a polluted valley with the river dying because it is so exploited? Unlikely, when you see its pewter-shining width at sunset. But a new, ecologically aware programme for the Nile valley is desperately needed – and not one based on folkloric idealism like Hassan Fathy's heroic but sadly mistaken mirage, nor on the dam's 50 year old macho-technology.

PETER DAVEY AND CAROLYN PULFORD

May

Designing for educational organizations almost always involves making suggestions about ideal societies for the young, whether the building be a nursery school or a university campus. In May, the AR looks at a wide range of educational buildings from many countries and tries to examine social programme as well as formal and constructional expression.

Few programmes could be more different than the Aula Magna building for Stockholm University by Erskine Tovatt Arkitektkontor (the latest in a series of brilliantly thoughtful buildings for an otherwise rather dowdy campus) and the school at Ladak, built under the Himalayas for poor villagers by Arup Associates. The extension to the University of Odense, Denmark by CUBO Architects shows how careful spatial handling can allow a big institution to grow without becoming anonymous. In Córdoba, Argentina, Miguel Angel Roca uses form and colour to give sense of place to new faculties while, at the Colegio San Pedro in Lima, Peru, Frederick Cooper-Llosa works to the same end with the arid coastal landscape.

In Pasadena, California, the Art Center College of Design has decided to break out of Craig Ellwood's black box and grow into its idyllic site. Hodgetts + Fung's interactive new student building is an attempt to build a greater sense of community. Kister Scheithauer Gross have attempted the same in the very much more mean surroundings of Halle University in eastern Germany.

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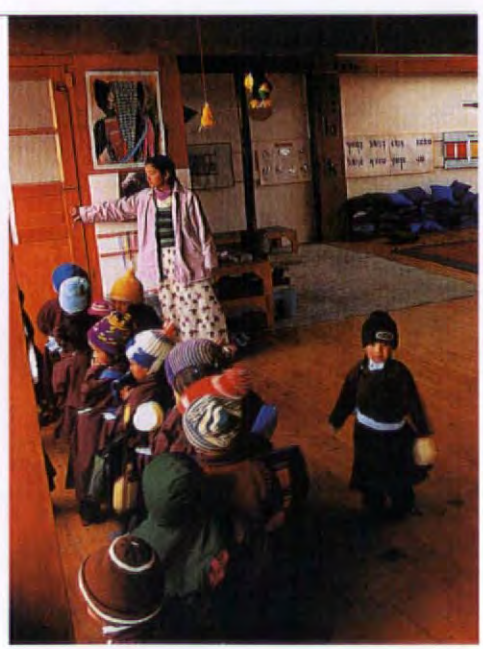
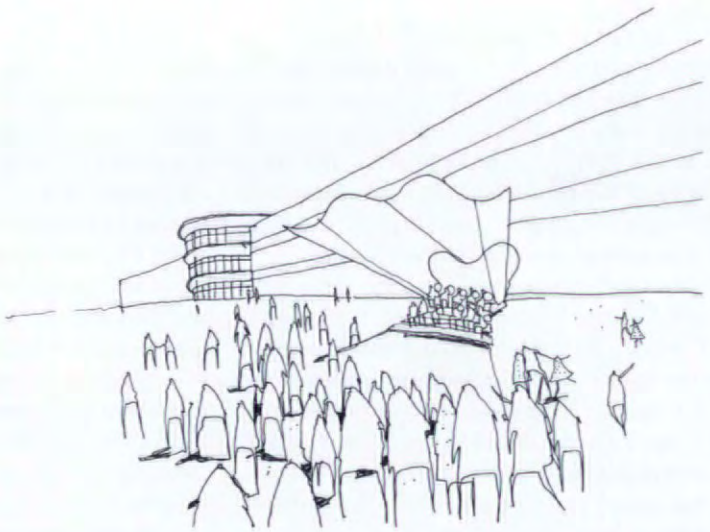


Bandstand, Bexhill-on-Sea, England
Architect
Niall McLaughlin Architects

Winged heroics

A winged bandstand at the De La Warr Pavilion responds to natural forces and the exuberance of its neighbour.



The De La Warr Pavilion, by Mendelsohn and Chermayeff, is one of the outstanding Modernist icons, which makes it all the more surprising to find it in the genteel English backwater of Bexhill-on-Sea. Saved from ruin by the efforts of local campaigners (who formed The Pavilion Trust), the local council, Mendelsohn's daughter, Esther, and various funding bodies, this gem is undergoing a phased programme of restoration by John McAslan & Partners and has been reborn as a regional arts centre.

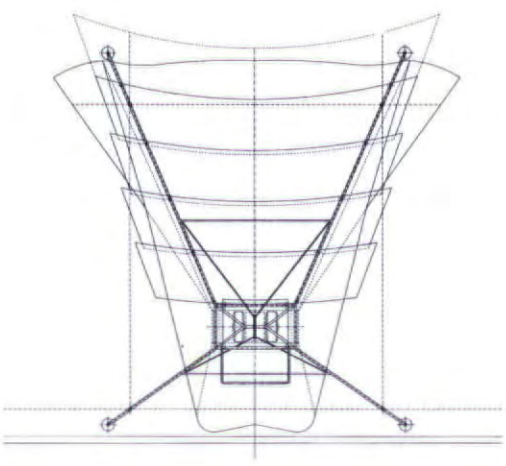
As part of the effort to integrate the Pavilion into local life and Bexhill's summer panoply of brass bands, deckchairs and tea dances, the Trust (which is an exceptional body), and local council, commissioned a bandstand for the south terrace from Niall McLaughlin Architects.

Shaped by wind, and the imperatives of sound and light, the bandstand's giant winged canopy echoes the taut exuberance of the Pavilion. Remarkably, its design was the result of McLaughlins' widespread collaboration – with local primary children, whose ideas for bandstands were incorporated, and with structural and acoustic engineers to find a form that would project sound without distortion and resist the huge winds which buffet the site. The builder, Michael McHugh of Westside Design Workshops, was an early member of the team which looked at many materials and methods of construction.

The final form, erected to applause from a great crowd of local people, consists of the canopy held on a metal base supporting a musicians' deck. Designed to project sound forward, the undulating canopy (shaped rather like a nun's winged head-dress) was made by laying thin plywood veneer onto a skeleton of thicker plywood ribs. The structure was then covered with fibreglass and sprayed white. To withstand wind loads of up to six times its weight, it is anchored discreetly on the listed terrace by a steel frame with bracing legs which prevent rocking. E. M.

Architect
Niall McLaughlin Architects, London
Project architects
Niall McLaughlin, Sandra Coppin,Gus Lewis
Structural engineers
Price & Myers
Acoustic engineers
Paul Gilleron
Builder
Westside Design Workshop, Bath
Photographs
Nicholas Kane

1
Winged canopy of bandstand on south terrace in front of the sea.
2
Canopy and De La Warr Pavilion, with Bexhill behind.



plan (scale approx 1:100)

2

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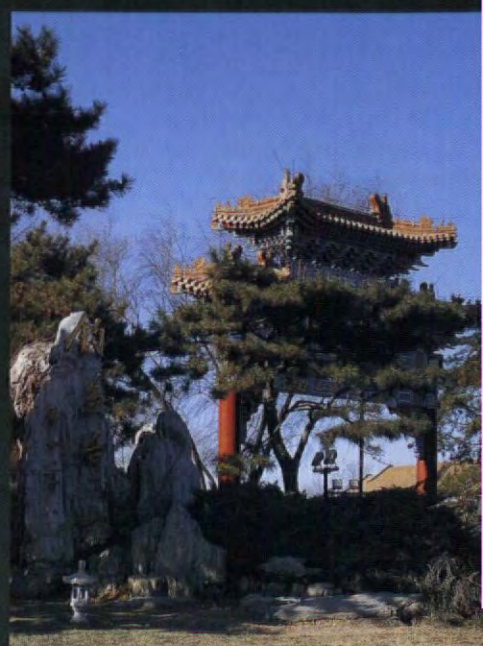
Changes for the Better



VIP Quality

"Mitsubishi's confidence in their products convinced us."

The Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China, welcomes dignitaries from around the world, so naturally Mr. Xu Wenhai wanted the very best elevators for its new villa. "When we checked the elevators in the majority of deluxe hotels in China, we found that most were Mitsubishi Electric. But we weren't convinced - until we saw the high-speed elevators in the Jin Mao Tower in Shanghai!" Even though Mitsubishi has supplied Diaoyutai since 1986, Mr. Xu was impressed by the way the company approached the new brief. "When it came to negotiating the price, the Mitsubishi side had so much confidence in their products, and very honestly told us what was possible and what was not, we became convinced that we could trust them." Since many of the villas in the compound are low buildings, elevators were deemed unnecessary. However, since installing two ELENESSA machine-room-less units, Diaoyutai is now considering installing more. To Mr. Xu, "Mitsubishi elevators values are: high quality, smooth ride, safety, and excellent after sales service. Because the guesthouse is used by international VIPs, only exceptional products can be used there. When Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi visited China for just five hours, he spent three hours at Diaoyutai." While the guesthouse is not considering any more orders right now, Mr. Xu said, "We will see how things go. We are expecting great things of Mitsubishi Electric."

Mr. Xu Wenh
Division Chief, Administrati
Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Beijin

The Imperial Elegance of Diaoyutai State Guesthouse

The lake at Diaoyutai was a favorite imperial fishing spot

The new Villa 17 includes an ELENESSA elevator

Dating from the Jin Dynasty over 800 years ago, the Diaoyutai, or "Angling Terrace," was an imperial vacation residence for centuries. In 1959, the exclusive compound of lakes and gardens was transformed into the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse for visiting foreign dignitaries. The compound boasts 18 separate villas, multipurpose convention halls, and a range of luxurious facilities such as a swimming pool, indoor tennis courts, fitness rooms, saunas, etc. The Diaoyutai is also famous for its banqueting rooms and the gourmet cuisine prepared by its chefs. In addition to five GPS-III elevators and two dumbwaiters, Mitsubishi has supplied Villa 17 with the new ELENESSA machine-room-less elevators.

Visit Our Booth at China World Elevator 2002

The China World Elevator 2002 exhibition runs from April 17 to 20 at the Beijing Exhibition Center. The exposition offers a great chance for customers to see Mitsubishi's advanced technology in action.

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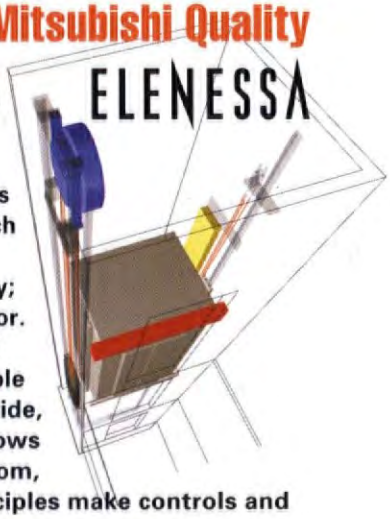
The Mitsubishi booth at China World Elevator 2002

The Evolution of Mitsubishi Quality



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EFFICIENCY
- Saving energy and space
- High-efficiency transport mechanism
- Environment-conscious industrial waste treatment

COMFORT
- Comfortable, quiet ride
- Smooth door operation
- Welfare-awareness / Universal design

SAFETY
- Riding and boarding safety
- Safety in emergencies
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ELEVATORS AND ESCALATORS

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Buschow Henley's office cloister in London. Photograph: Nicholas Kane.

Nearly 13 years ago, in May 1989, the AR devoted an issue to architecture in England. Subtitled *Hope After Horror* it examined the wider political, economic and social conditions that governed the production of buildings (Horror) and focused on an emerging group of younger architects (Hope) that were beginning to make their mark on the British scene. All had served apprenticeships in the ateliers of Foster, Rogers, and Hopkins and represented what might be described as the second stream High-Tech generation. In its way, the issue was prescient – architects such as Chris Wilkinson, David Marks and Julia Barfield, Ian Ritchie, Future Systems, Lifschutz Davidson and John McAslan went on to make the often problematic transition from working on a small scale (both architecturally and professionally), to developing bodies of work that consolidated their respective approaches and philosophies.

In the late '80s, architecture in Britain was in a fairly parlous state, dominated by a culture of greed and rapaciousness. The neglect of the public realm was presided over and encouraged by an ossifying Conservative administration, while the Prince of Wales made gnomic pronouncements on the sidelines. Assaulted by American patterns of development and management practices, architecture seemed in danger of becoming little more than a project management backwater and reduced to the status of a marginalized freemasonry. Thirteen years on, in a changing political climate, as a new generation of British architects begins to emerge, it seems an appropriate moment to take stock and consider their prospects.

The state of architecture

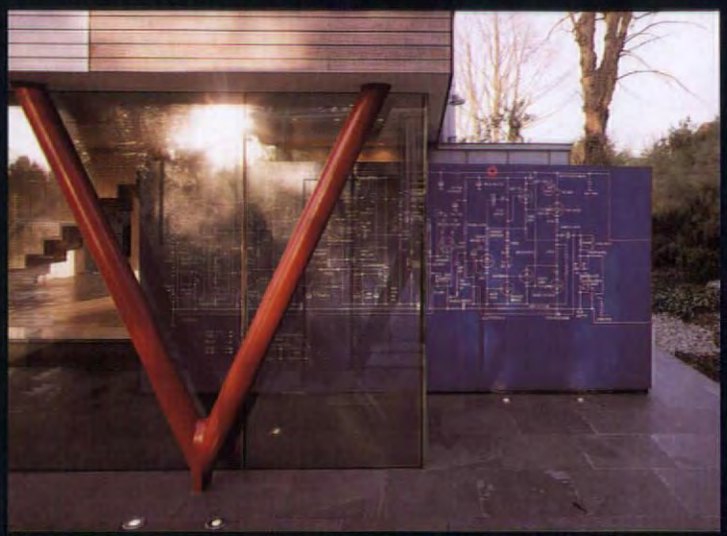
Now in its second term, Britain's New Labour government inherited a relatively stable economy (despite the recession of the early 1990s), but set against this is a depressing litany of imploding public services, compounded by a sense of anomie and growing public indifference to politics (the 2001 election was characterized by the lowest turnout in 80 years). The warm glow that accompanied Labour's initial accession has understandably worn off, and early nebulous promises to improve the standard of public architecture as part of a wider ideological commitment to the nation's 'creative industries' have failed to make much difference to how most people experience the built environment, through housing, hospitals, schools, and transport buildings. Prospects for a cohesive national strategy of urban design and planning through the much trumpeted Urban Taskforce have been quietly sidelined and the dread hand of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) hovers balefully over the procurement process for public buildings. In contrast to the powerful mayors who have led the renaissance of so many European cities, local political leadership in Britain has reached a historical nadir (although an emasculated Ken Livingstone has spiritedly donned the mantle of London mayor). The irresistible urge to do public things on the cheap still permeates most aspects of British life.

Paradoxically, within this national climate of inertia and bean counting, architecture actually has a higher profile, discussed and disseminated more widely beyond conventional specialist media (though perhaps not to the intense and involving extent of say, the Netherlands). Beyond the lure of lifestyle this has a moderately serious consequence as it heightens awareness, raises the level of debate and even encourages patronage. (The role of the enlightened patron is often overlooked, but without good clients there would be no good buildings.) The recent establishment of CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) as a heavyweight taste watchdog to succeed the Royal Fine Art Commission has also served to bring public discussions concerning the quality of design into sharper focus. Other bodies such as the Architecture Foundation have striven to encourage young talent through exhibitions and pub-

BUDDING BRITS

In this issue devoted to recent work by an emerging generation of British architects we examine the wider conditions that shape and affect the practice of architecture in the UK and consider the future prospects for the latest fledgling designers.

Radical use of cardboard by Cottrell Vermeulen. Photograph: Peter Grant.



House extension by Alison Brooks. Photograph: Chris Gascoigne/VIEW.

lications – the Foundation's directory of New Architects,* now in its second edition, provides a lively snapshot of current activity, as well as being a primer for potential clients. The revival of parts of inner cities in London, Manchester and Liverpool has created a demand for urban homes, bars and shops, and these small projects often constitute the crucial first step for younger designers.

Transforming the landscape

Another surprising and largely positive development has been the ubiquitous National Lottery and its provision of substantial funds for new building. Launched at the end of 1994, the Lottery was seen by Conservative government mandarins as an elementary means of channelling resources to areas of traditional underfunding, such as the arts and sport. Lottery generated finance is slowly transforming the British cultural landscape, and it might be reasonably hoped that a new generation of architects is now getting the chance to design major projects. In this regard, opportunities for younger practices have, historically, been limited. Unlike France or Germany, Britain has no established formal competition system, so it can be difficult for less well-known practices to break through.

This issue surveys recent work by British architects under the age of 45. (It might seem like an optimistically elastic definition of young, but it still takes time to build.) Unlike the projects shown 13 years ago, a greater plurality of approach can be distinguished, as might be expected from a generation distanced from the once prevailing dogma of High-Tech. That is not to say that tectonic preoccupations have diminished, but there is less apparent obsession with yachting technologies and highly crafted planar glazing details. The potential of materials is still explored and celebrated but in a more eclectic way, in projects such as Cottrell Vermeulen's after school club made from cardboard (p56) and Thomas Heatherwick's urban square swathed in custom-designed blue glass tiles (p77). Issues of sustainability are also a more pressing concern of this generation, but unlike Germany and Scandinavia, Britain still lacks a structured political and social framework for the pursuit of such ideals, so that ecological concerns are rarely a prime generator of architectural form; instead they are present in more subtle ways. Many of the projects shown here deal with existing buildings (in itself a more sustainable proposition than new build) and remodellings such as Allford Hall Monaghan Morris's transformation of a former motorway maintenance depot into offices for a fashion company (p72) and Alison Brooks' additions to a house in Hampstead (p58) respond to the nuances of contemporary life, but also sensitively reconnect with the past. Our selection is not intended to be exhaustive, nor for those who relish such things, deliberately provocative. Rather it attempts to give some sense of wider context and change, and how these affect the current practice of architecture. We see much cause for hope in the following pages but only time will tell if our budding Brits have the skill, good fortune and single-mindedness to stay a difficult course. THE EDITORS

**New Architects 2 – A guide to Britain's best young architectural practices*, Merrell, London, 2001.

West Street Hotel by Wells Mackereth. Photograph: Chris Gascoigne/VIEW.

Thomas Heatherwick's magic carpet in Newcastle. Photograph: Mark Pinder.

URBAN CLOISTER

Through thoughtful spatial organization, these remodelled offices for a television production company are intended to nurture a spirit of creativity.

Television production companies occupy that curious middle ground between research, creativity and business. Writers, producers and researchers develop ideas that are brought into being by technical and production staff. Talkback make a wide range of familiar British television programmes and the firm's new offices in central London reflect a conscious spirit of corporate informality intended to encourage creative thinking and interaction. Architects Buschow Henley describe it as 'a building for a society'.

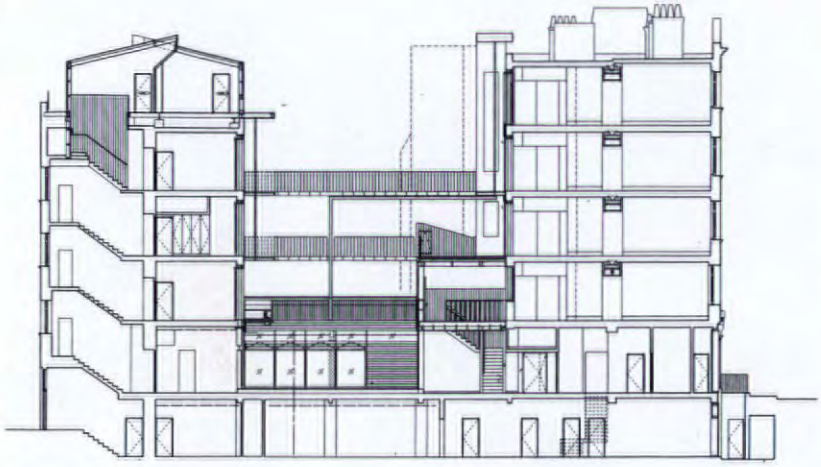
The site consists of two adjoining Edwardian buildings in Newman Street, just north of the bustle of Oxford Street. Each is 9m wide and 34m deep and originally, each had a 10m deep block adjoining the main street, with a similar five-storey structure facing the mews to the rear. The disparate parts were connected by a two-storey block, yet circulation was complex and inefficient, as each building had an independent staircase. Buschow Henley's elegantly rational solution simplifies spatial and social organization by linking the two main buildings and reinventing the central space as a multi-storey cloister for perambulating, meeting and thinking. Existing link blocks were demolished and replaced by a new two-storey structure. The remodelled buildings contain work spaces for around 250 staff, together with a television studio, two editing suites and meeting rooms. Rediscovered and revitalized, the central space is the fulcrum of the scheme, its character changing with the various levels. On the ground floor it is an open courtyard; at first floor a garden. Terraces and decks on the upper floors form a network of circulation routes which are also places to meet, relax and work outside. Each deck or cloister is wide enough for people to circulate while others work or chat. Decks are sheltered by a steel-framed, zinc-clad cowl on the west side that extends above roof level. On the east side, a roof extension cantilevers over the decks below. The crisp, cuboid geometry of the new parts forms a stage set for the daily dramas and intimacies of workplace life.

Within this stage set are two gardens, green refuges in the heart of the city. One takes its cue from the northern European medieval tradition of the herb garden, the other is a plain lawn laid (like the herb garden) on the roof of one of the new connecting blocks. A minimal palette of iroko, Douglas fir, brick and zinc, treated and finished in a variety of ways to accentuate subtle differences between materials, reinforces the scheme's workmanlike spirit.

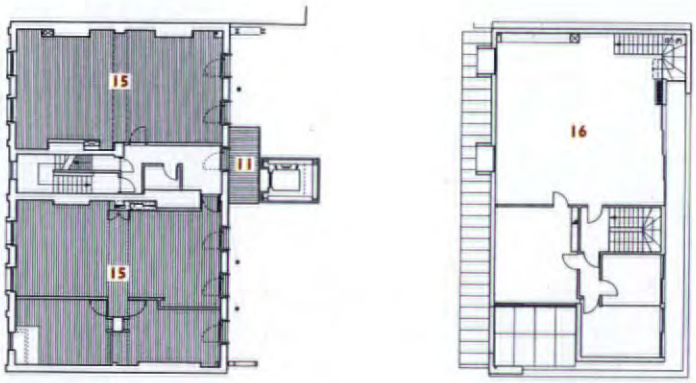
location plan

Offices, Fitzrovia, London
Architect
Buschow Henley

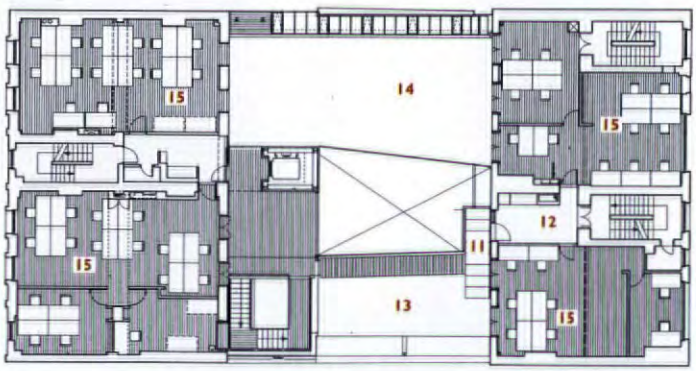
1
Linked by a network of decks and walkways, the two remodelled buildings enclose a central court.
2
Decks form a multi-storey cloister for circulation and interaction.



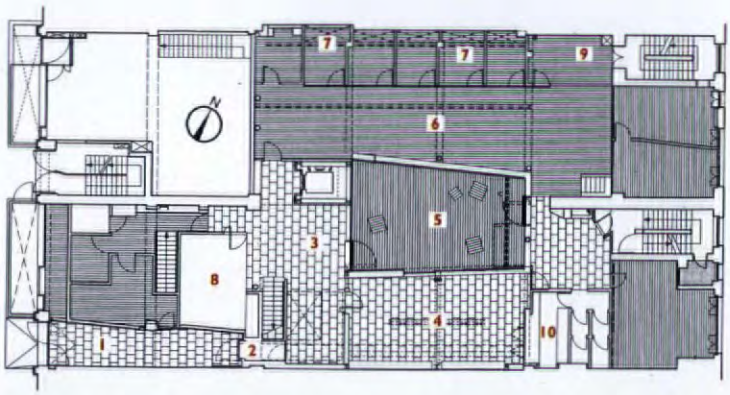
long section looking south



fourth floor plan



first floor plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:500)

1 entrance alleyway from Newman Street
2 entrance lobby
3 reception hall
4 common room
5 court
6 open plan offices
7 cellular offices
8 meeting room
9 library
10 kitchen
11 balcony
12 coffee point
13 herb garden
14 lawn
15 production offices
16 rooftop extension to mews block

Rejecting corporate convention, the sequence of entry is discreet. A narrow alleyway on the south side brings visitors into the heart of the building with views out into the womb-like court and its sensuous, timber-lined walls. The ground floor also contains a common room, servery, kitchen, meeting rooms and offices. Blind box spaces, such as the television studio, editing suites, green room and plant, are logically confined to the basement. A rehearsal room originally planned for the top floor is now used as a production office. Intermediate floors house self-contained office units designed to accommodate individual production teams.

Underpinning the project's strong social and communal dimension is a measure of environmentally aware design. Decks and cowls provide solar shading and doors are designed with integral high level hopper vents for secure night-time cooling. Water collected from the roof is stored in the basement and used to irrigate the gardens in dry spells. Far removed from the familiar bland prairies of speculative offices, Buschow Henley's scheme is an invigorating and humane response to the challenge of making places for work. C. S.

Architect
Buschow Henley, London
Project team
Ralph Buschow, Kim Fichter, Gavin Hale-Brown, Richard Harral, Simon Henley, Craig Linnel, Ken Rorrison, Naomi Rushmer
Structural engineer
Dewhurst MacFarlane
Services engineer
Fulcrum Consulting
Cost consultant
BPTW
Photographs
Nicholas Kane

3
Toplit staircase leads up from entrance and reception to production offices on first floor.
4
Decks in use on the rear mews block.
5
Entrance alleyway, its discreet presence a riposte to the more usual corporate exhibitionism.
6
Reception with views through to the court beyond.
7
Timber lined court on ground floor.
8
Office space overlooking court.

3

4

5

6

7

8

cross section through courtyard looking east

cross section through courtyard looking west

RESTAURANT, BAR AND HOTEL, LONDON
ARCHITECT
WELLS MACKERETH ARCHITECTS

West Street, a restaurant with a bar and tiny hotel by Wells Mackereth Architects, for Mirror Image Restaurants, is in a small narrow street of the same name on the edge of Covent Garden. Surrounded by theatres, offices, housing and shops, it has made itself a new part of West End life.

It has been inserted into two terraced buildings, six storeys high and dating from the turn of the twentieth century. The buildings were combined and rebuilt from the third floor down and the original mansards reshaped into a single half barrel-vaulted roof. The new configuration forms on plan a rough rectangle sliced diagonally along its eastern front by the street line. Looked at from the street, the two buildings are united by a full-height window across their width.

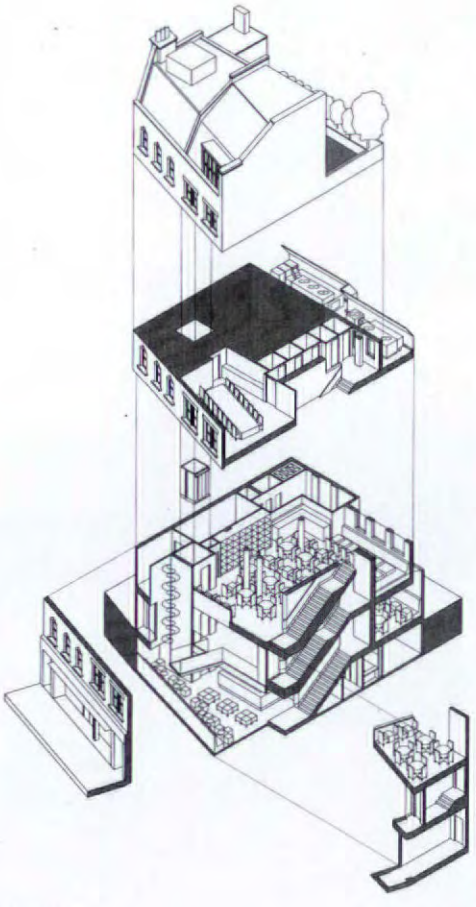
There are six levels: a basement bar, a lively canteen with wood burning oven on the ground floor, a more formal intimate restaurant on the first, and on the second floor a private dining room and offices. The upper two levels are devoted to what must be the smallest exclusive hotel in London, with two rooms on the third floor (one of which gives onto a broad terrace at the back) and another under the curve of the barrel-vaulted roof. The architects have made a virtue of awkward volumes and each room, furnished with austere luxury, has its own character.

Downstairs, the sombre treatment of the restaurant and bar interiors goes against prevailing passions for transparency and dematerialization. Planes of tiger-striped Macassar

1
Entrance on West Street.
2
Bar and entrance bridge suspended in triple void. Walter Knoll chairs, Mobles stools, John Coleman Design tables. Kinetic sculpture by Alex MacGregor and Richard Clark.

WESTSIDE STORY

Design of a restaurant and bar in London draws inspiration from the lively theatricality that surrounds it and from old-fashioned glamour.



isometric

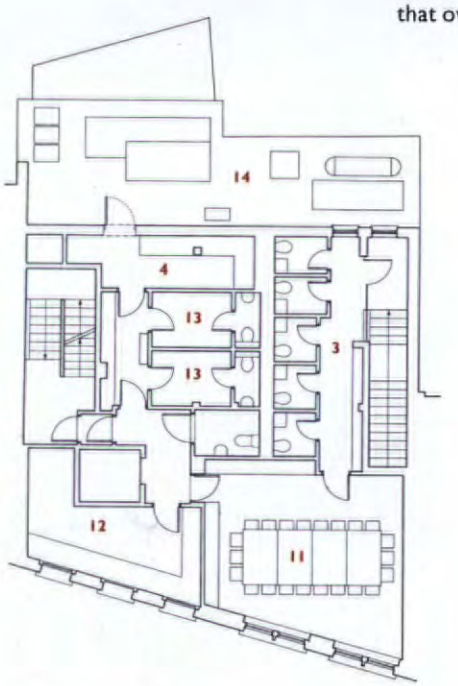
RESTAURANT, BAR AND HOTEL, LONDON
ARCHITECT
WELLS MACKERETH ARCHITECTS

ebony, dark stone, and rich colours provide sumptuous backgrounds for pristine tablecloths and create a nocturnal impression even during the day. Such solid sensuality is balanced by the drama of floors cut away to create double- and triple-height voids at the front of the building, spanned at ground floor level by an entrance bridge. If the shop window is reminiscent of a cinema screen, the interior arrangement echoes the anatomy of theatre so that overlooked from ground and first floor levels, the basement bar becomes an orchestra pit.

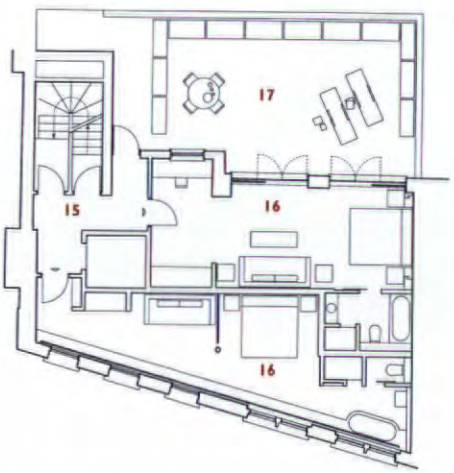
The feeling of old-fashioned glamour, when the place is more or less empty and before the arrival of a modern clientele, is heightened on descending the ebony-lined stairs to the bar; and scenes drawn from evenings in Harry's Bar in Venice in the 1950s come to mind. (Partner James Wells thinks of old-fashioned gambling and geisha houses in Japan.)

The scheme is a thoughtful and original response to what must be the increasingly exigent demands of the London restaurateur who has to contend with the changing fashions of a capricious clientele. Wells Mackereth seem to have reconciled potentially conflicting elements – liveliness that attracts custom, and intimacy.

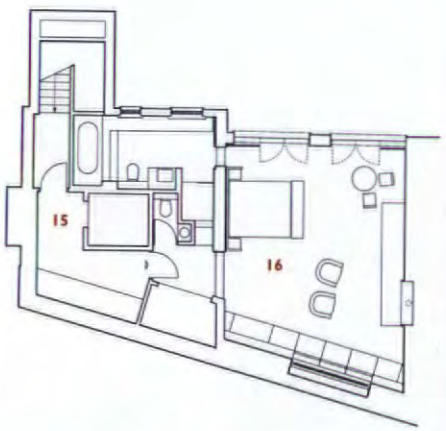
Underpinning the glamour is a carefully thought-out plan that provides increasing privacy as you move up the building. The sociability of the bar and ground floor gives way to the quiet black and cream formality of the first



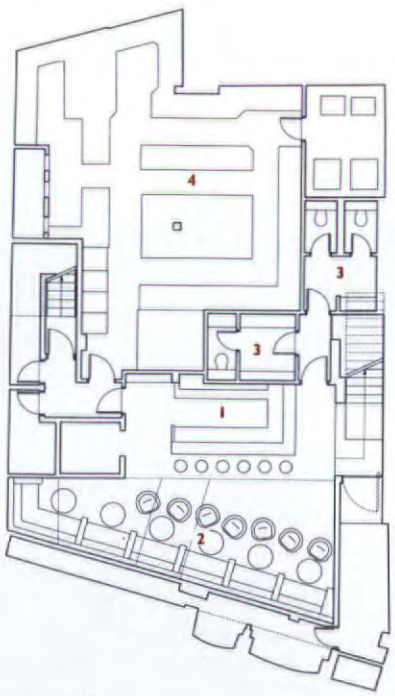
second floor plan



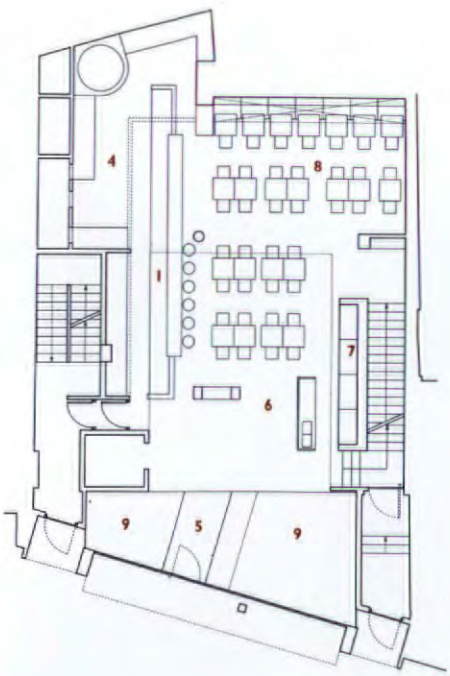
third floor plan



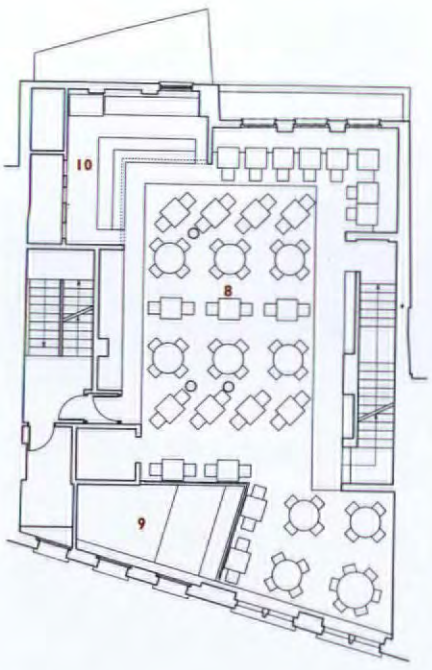
fourth floor plan



basement plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:240)



first floor plan

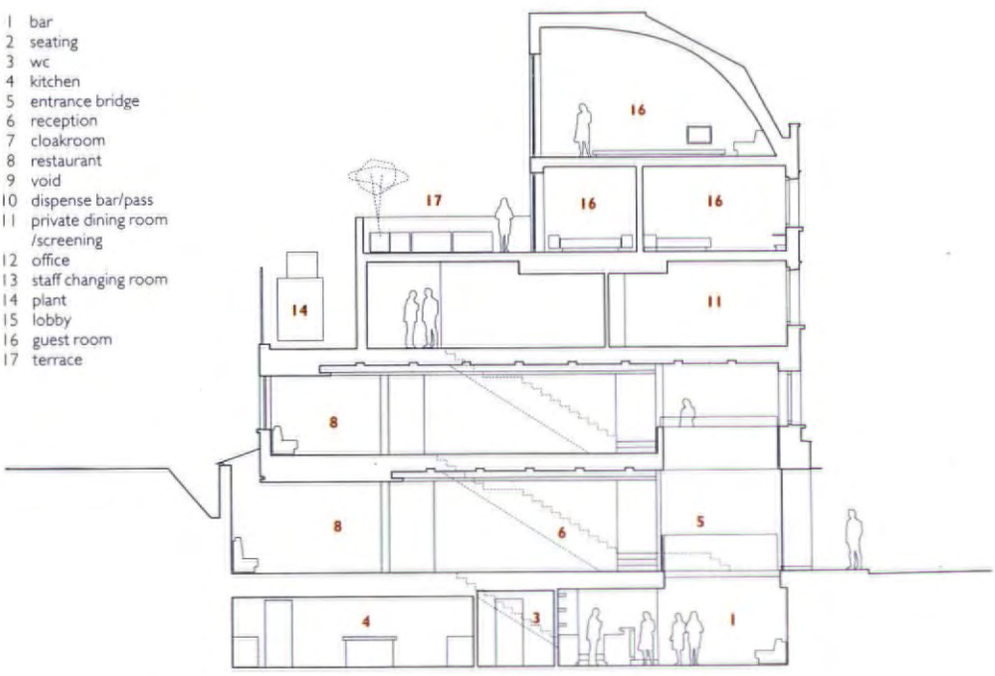
floor and private sophistication of the Blue Room above. Painted an intense royal blue, this room is equipped with screening facilities. Noise in these upper rooms did not seem to be a problem.

Detailing throughout is a pleasure; from Alan Fletcher's elegant signage at the entrance – cast aluminium against stainless steel – and entrance paving, to subtle illumination that enhances colour and picks up texture, and makes descent to the bar, past the tiger-striped wall, an event. P. M.

3

4

1 bar
2 seating
3 wc
4 kitchen
5 entrance bridge
6 reception
7 cloakroom
8 restaurant
9 void
10 dispense bar/pass
11 private dining room /screening
12 office
13 staff changing room
14 plant
15 lobby
16 guest room
17 terrace



west-east long section

3
Ground floor canteen. Granite floor, Vitra stacking chairs, orange wall by Richard Clark.
4
First floor restaurant with red wine wall. Davison Highley leather seating, Zanotta chairs.
5
The Loft bedroom under half barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling. Green slate wall, oak floor. B+B Italia chairs, built-in Spinneybeck leather sofa.

Architect
Wells Mackereth Architects, London
Project architects
Sally Mackereth, James Wells, Mike Barrie, Kerstin Bedau, Jonathan Clark, Steffi Webbs, Lian Wilson
Structural engineer
Whitby Bird & Partners
Graphic designer
Alan Fletcher
Furniture supplier
Coexistence, John Coleman Design
Photographs
Chris Gascoigne, VIEW

1

2

1
The school's original Tudor Gothic facade is retained, forming a carapace around the substantial yet sensitively executed new interventions.
2
New parts are clearly expressed on the rear elevation.
3
New balconies and slatted timber screens articulate the building's mass. A bridge links through to a garden created within the shell of the original octagonal lecture hall.

COLLEGE REMODELLING

This transformation of a former Victorian school into a modern apartment block preserves a local landmark and adapts the building's historic fabric to a bold new use.

Liverpool has a plentiful stock of robust but now largely redundant Victorian buildings that formed the backbone of the city's prosperity. The conversion of these into shops, bars, restaurants and flats continues to provide opportunities for young practices, such as Shed KM, to develop and expand their repertoires. Founded by Jonathan Falkingham, Shed KM has trod a familiar path from whackily energetic bar and club makeovers in Liverpool's decaying nineteenth-century mercantile quarter, to bigger and more serious projects. (Falkingham is also a partner in development company Urban Splash, which has proved a consistently imaginative patron of new architecture.) The practice's remodelling of the former Collegiate High School is a typical case in point; in both scope and scale it is more ambitious than the usual piecemeal conversions and handled with a confident maturity.

Opened in 1843, the Collegiate High School is a sturdy, provincial Tudor Gothic confection built to the competition-winning design of Harvey Lonsdale Eames. It lies in the suburb of Everton, on the north-eastern edge of the city centre. The main building boasts an impressive 13-bay frontage constructed of local pink sandstone, with an octagonal lecture hall adjoining the rear. By the mid 1980s it had fallen into disuse and subsequently suffered extensive fire damage. Numerous proposals for refurbishment went unrealized, as all proved incapable of reconciling the substantial cost of regeneration with a viable new use.

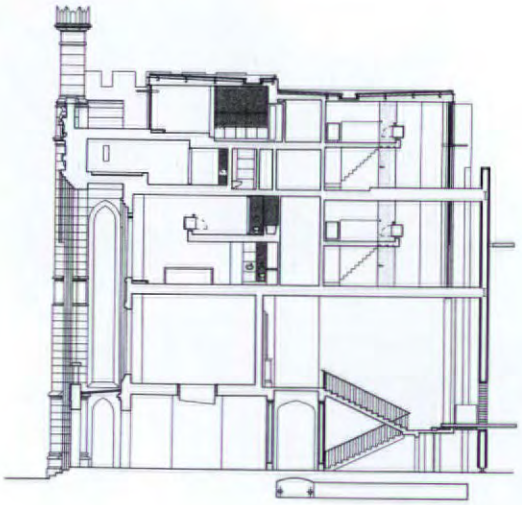
Shed KM has transformed the school into 95 apartments in an approach that preserves the key elements of the original building and combines these with a lucid, contemporary architectural language. The unsafe rear elevation was removed, along with internal walls and floors, so the new building sits partially enclosed by the massive stone carapace of the remaining principal facade which has been cleaned of accumulated grime and restored.

location plan

Apartment block,
Liverpool, England
ARCHITECT
Shed KM

4

5



cross section

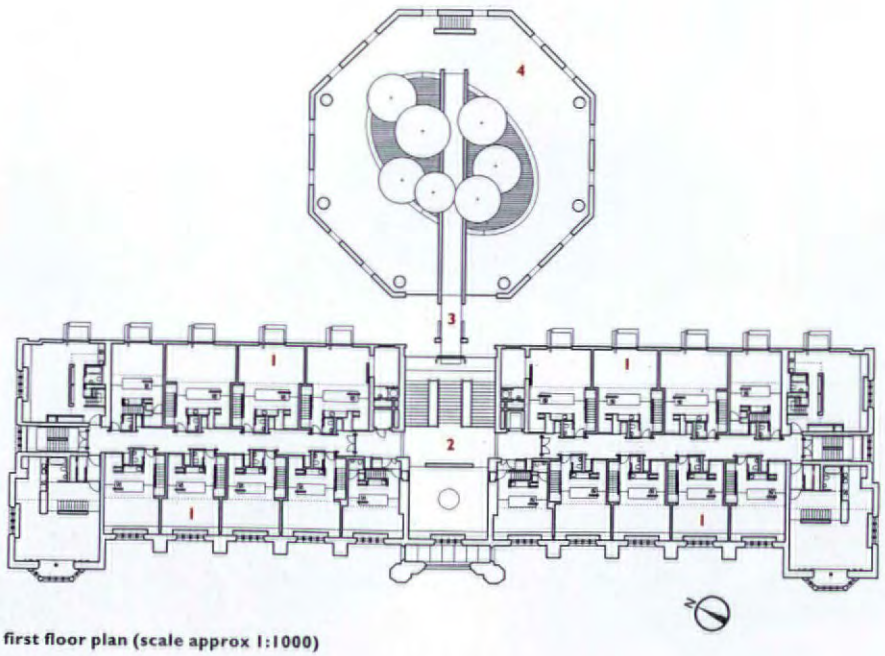
6

APARTMENT BLOCK, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

ARCHITECT

SHED KM

1 lower floor of typical two-storey apartment
2 hallway
3 bridge link
4 communal garden



first floor plan (scale approx 1:1000)

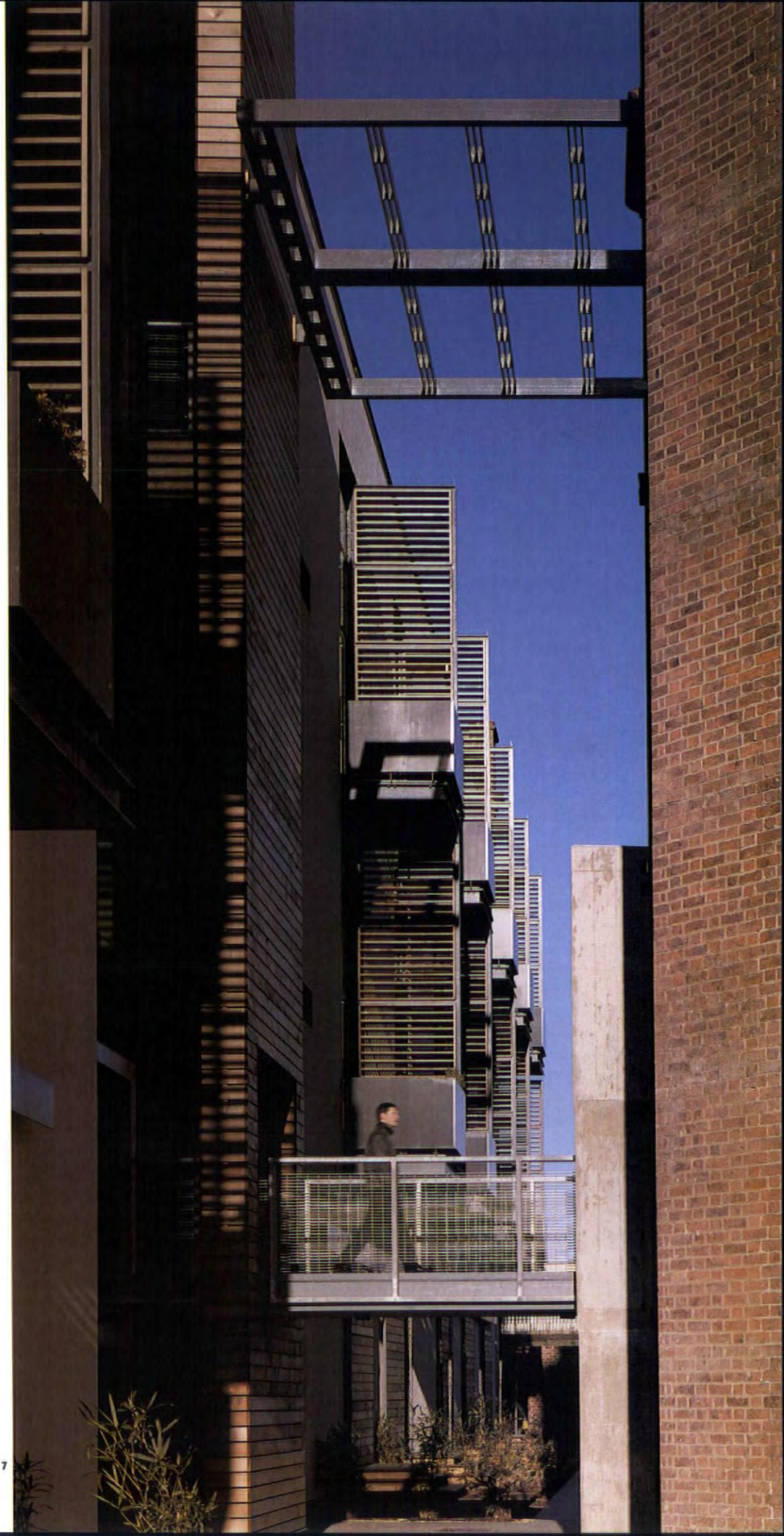
4
Top floor apartments are single storey with expansive views. Most flats are double height with mezzanine sleeping galleries.
5
Brick shell of the octagonal lecture hall encloses a tranquil communal garden.
6
Detail of garden.
7
Bridge between flats and garden.

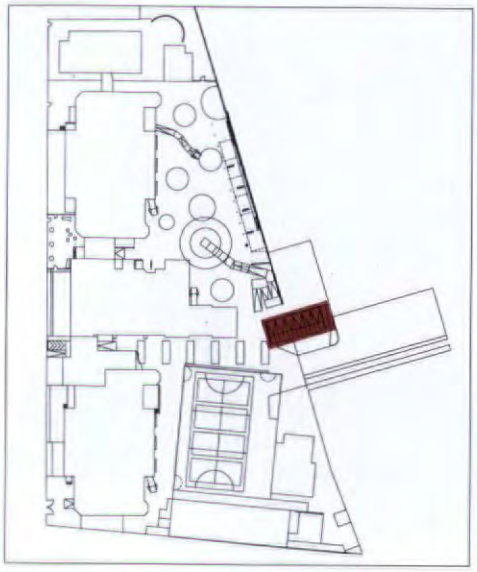
New apartments are arranged in four double-height storeys. On the preserved main elevation, these relate to the existing geometry of the windows. To the rear, new openings and balconies articulate a smooth white wall plane. New parts have a crisply robust elegance, with metal balconies and sliding timber screens at ground level. Balconies are partially enclosed by slatted timber panels set at right angles to the wall plane, that cast delicately striated shadows over the white facade.

Flats on the first three floors are compactly and logically arranged around double-height living spaces, in the well-rehearsed tradition of the loft apartment. Kitchen and bathrooms are tightly planned around vertical service cores and push out into the spinal circulation corridor giving a potentially institutional space a degree of rhythm and animation. Bedrooms are elevated on mezzanine gallery levels for privacy. Top floor flats are single-storey penthouses, with fully glazed walls opening on to terraces that offer views across Liverpool, the Mersey estuary and the distant Welsh mountains.

Behind the main building, the octagonal theatre has also been remodelled to create a tranquil, communal garden. Only the external walls remain, structurally stabilized by a steel plate that runs around the rim of the brick shell. A new deck has been introduced at first floor level, penetrated by a ramp rising from a bridge that connects back to the main building. Mature Himalayan birch trees and Virginia creeper soften the austerity of the brick walls. Executed with sensitivity to the nuances of history but also with a pragmatic eye on the future, Shed KM's scheme brings life back to a Liverpool landmark that was so nearly lost. C. S.

Architect
Shed KM, Liverpool
Structural engineer
Curtins
Services engineer
Steven Hunt & Associates
Cost consultant
Simon Fenton Partnership
Landscape architect
McAllister
Photographs
Nick Hufton/VIEW





site plan

FOLDING PLANES

The potential of cardboard as a green and economical building material finds ingenious expression in this after-school activities club.

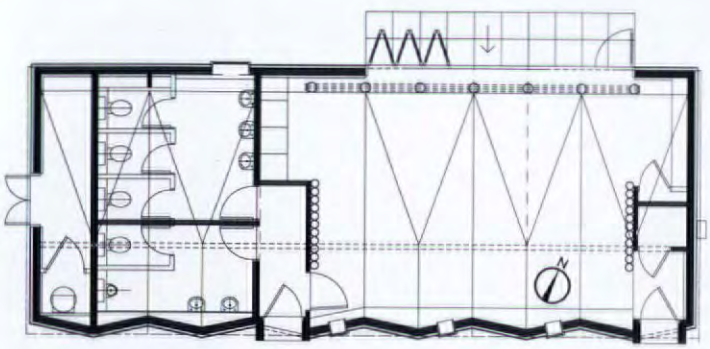
The notion of using cardboard as a building material might seem ridiculously improbable, but it has been making regular appearances in temporary structures by architects such as Shigeru Ban, who developed a series of refugee shelters in Japan, Rwanda and Turkey using cardboard tubes. Working with engineers Buro Happold, Ban also designed a dramatic tubular cardboard gridshell structure for the Japanese Pavilion at Hanover Expo (AR September 2000). Buro Happold's research and expertise in cardboard technology led them to become involved with a more recent project which lays claim to be Europe's first permanent cardboard building. Designed by the young London-based practice of Cottrell & Vermeulen, this after-school club in Westcliffe-on-Sea incorporates cardboard components to both support and clad the building. Westborough primary school is the largest in Essex and its 750 pupils were eager and active participants in the project, collecting the waste paper that formed the basic raw material for the building's cardboard panels and tubes.

Despite lacking obvious structural, waterproofing and fire resistance properties, cardboard is essentially a very green material (being easily recyclable as well as being made from recycled matter such as paper waste). It is also very economical. Although the composite cardboard panels used here ultimately cost around the same as a brick and block structure (£30-£40 per sq m), speed of erection is much quicker – a mere week from slab to watertight structure.

Cottrell & Vermeulen's building is designed to last 20 years and to be 90 per cent recyclable. A simple single-storey pavilion is enclosed by folded concertina walls and roof, prompting irresistible comparisons with origami. (Instructive origami diagrams by artist Simon Patterson playfully embellish the walls.) The large main club room, which can be used for a variety of activities by both schoolchildren and the local community, is adjoined by a store, kitchen and WCs.

Cardboard is used for both structure and cladding. At either end of the building, two lines of 11 cardboard tubes, 183mm in diameter, support a timber roof truss. Arranging tubes in lines or clusters helps to distribute applied loads and prevent the material's tendency to creep, or deform over time. Single tubes also support lintels above window openings. A layer of varnish protects the cardboard from sticky hands and a squiggle motif provides a simple means of graphic ornament.

Cladding panels are formed from a cardboard honeycomb edged with timber strips. The timber frame improves structural performance and also means that the panels can be fixed using conventional joinery techniques. An external layer of fibre cement board and an internal layer of pin boards made from recycled newspaper provide fire resistance. Panels also contain a vapour barrier layer and the cardboard pulp was chemically treated to counteract its hydroscopic (sponge-like) properties. Buro Happold estimate that the material's insulative properties, even without the composite



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:200)

AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB,
WESTCLIFFE-ON-SEA, ENGLAND
ARCHITECT
COTTRELL & VERMEULEN

2

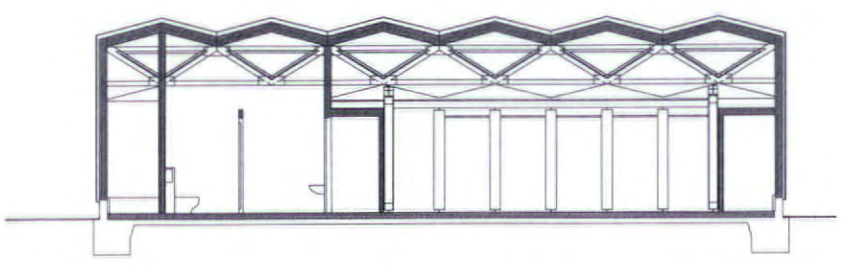
3

layers, should exceed statutory requirements by 25 per cent.

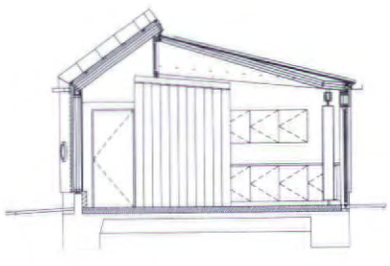
As a prototypical application of cardboard technology, this ingenious little building shows that a commonplace material has tantalizing potential for an economical and environmentally responsive architecture that need not literally cost the earth. Further developments are keenly awaited. C. S.

Architect
Cottrell & Vermeulen, London
Structural engineer
Buro Happold
Photographs
All photographs by Peter Grant except no.1 which is courtesy of the architects

1
Concertina wall planes playfully adorned with origami diagrams.
2
The little building resembles a folded paper structure. Cardboard is used for structure and cladding.
3
Cardboard tubes form lintels over openings and support roof truss.



long section



cross section

RED LETTER HOUSE

The inventive conversion and extension of a house in north London is one of an inventive trio of structures in a leafy garden.

HOUSE CONVERSION, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON
ARCHITECT
ALISON BROOKS ARCHITECTS

The VXO house in north London, by Alison Brooks Architects, is the conversion and extension of one built in the 1960s with '70s additions. Inhabited by the clients for 15 years, it was a squarish block stepped around the periphery with a front door on the south and was set at the back of wooded sloping gardens off a steep lane.

As well as opening up the house and constructing a new bedroom and entrance, the practice was asked to replace an adjacent garage with a guest pavilion/gymnasium and to rebuild the car port at the entrance. Since the site is in a conservation area, the planners were keen that the stepped character of the house's exterior and its dialogue with the street be preserved.

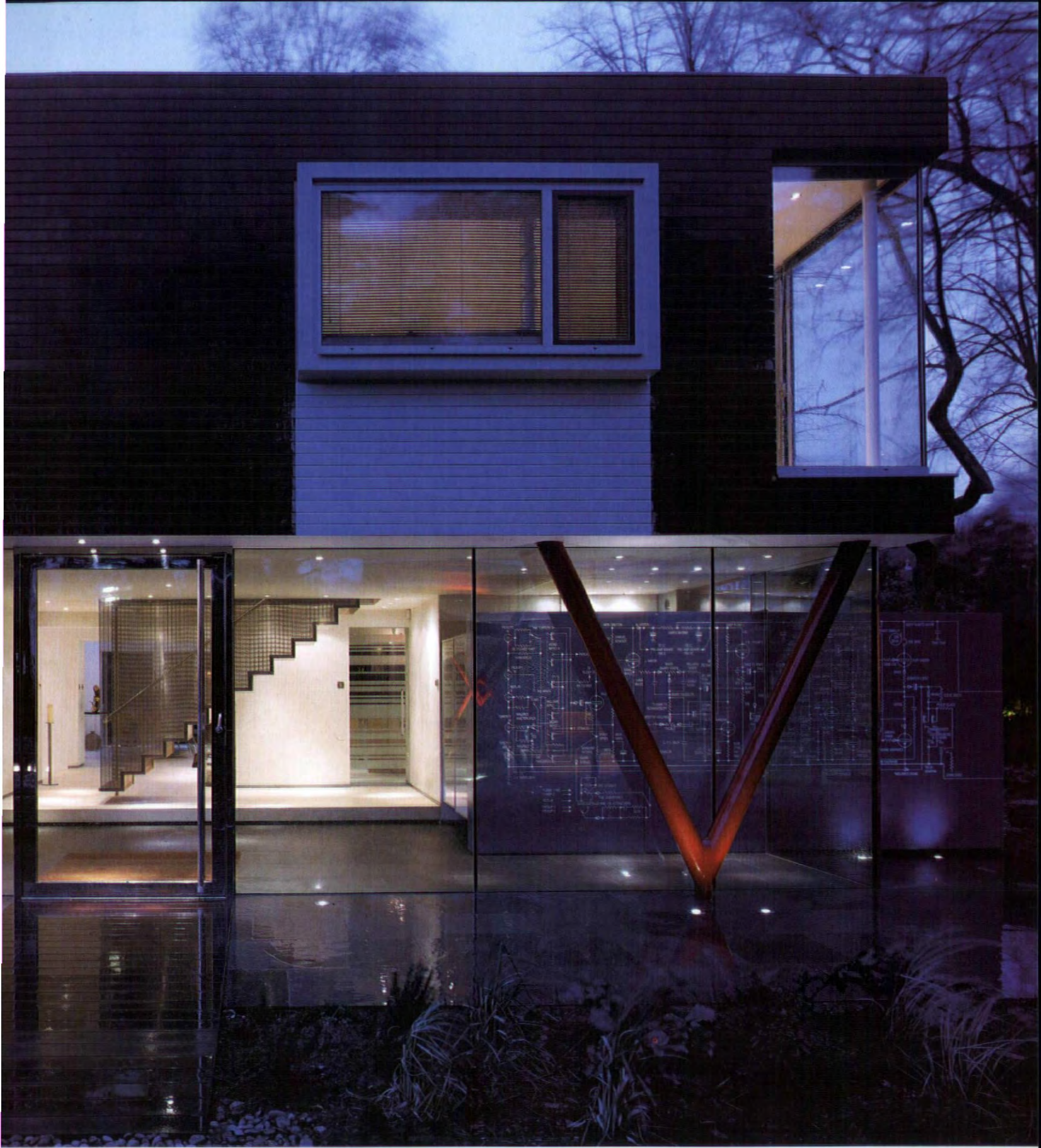
The three elements, each one part of a unified composition, constitute a progression from open car port (the O Port) to transparent guest house (the X Pavilion) to transparent/solid house. Each structural essay employs playful supports in the form of giant scarlet steel letters.

The O Port at the entrance is closest to a piece of sculpture: an upside-down wooden deck (reversing convention is a recurring theme) is covered with pebbles and braced to the south by a stainless-steel picture frame through which cars pass. On the opposite corner, it is supported by the letter O which frames the garden and from which the eye travels to the brilliant X and V of pavilion and house.

As the intervening element, the pavilion faces both ways – towards house and entrance – with a transparent wall. A development of the simple car port, it has four solid planes conceived as a pair of folded plates, like cupped hands. The lower one of in-situ concrete studded with grey pebbles forms a wonderfully textured retaining wall and plinth; the upper one placed

1

2



1
From the O Port to main house (left) and X Pavilion (right).
2
Front extension: opaque box on transparent base. Exterior paving flows inside; wall inscribed with 1960s amplifier diagram, upside-down stair screening interior.

over the plinth is of wood. It provides a raised floor, hiding services and window frames, and screens a sunken shower and store. A sedum roof – a displaced piece of garden – is lifted clear of the walls by X columns and is overlooked by the new bedroom of the main house.

To maintain perception of the house as a series of receding volumes, the front extension is a solid, wood-clad box projecting over a transparent entrance, supported on one massive V column and pinned back to the existing building. As a composition, the structure has considerable dynamic force because as the scarlet V thrusts upwards, the movement of the wooden cladding appears to be sideways, and the window, wrapping around, dissolves the south corner. An impression of lateral thrust is reinforced inside the entrance by Simon Patterson's inscribed blue wall, that shoots through glass at the side to screen a kitchen terrace outside and wc inside.

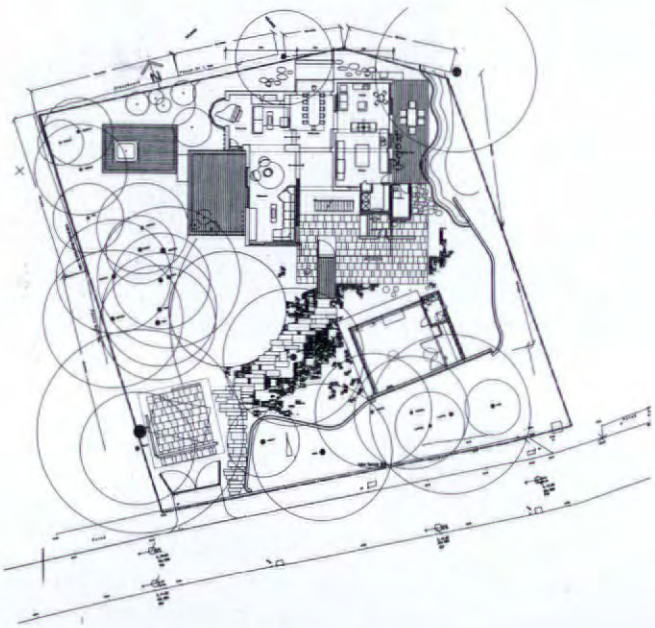
To most urban dwellers, the entrance would be daunting for it is a lens into the depths of the house. The interior is largely obscured, however, by an upside-down stair, magically suspended from the first floor and contained by a diaphanous veil of fine steel grating. (In the living room, a chainmail curtain hung from a metal rod is a fireguard for the aluminium clad fireplace).

Alison Brooks' originality, her continually intriguing detailing, have been seen before, most recently in design of the Atoll Hotel in Heligoland (AR March 2000). If the playful organicism that has permeated previous works is not so evident here, her preoccupation

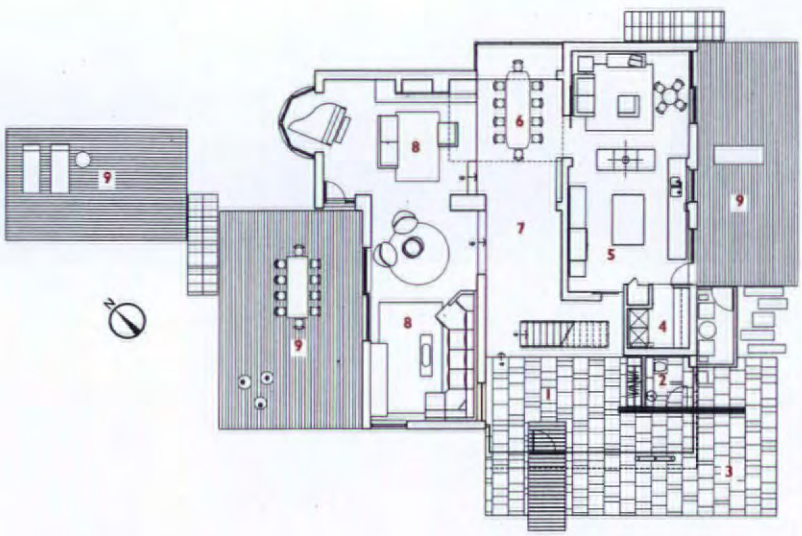
3

1 new entrance
2 wc
3 slate paving
4 utility
5 kitchen
6 double-height dining
7 hall
8 living
9 terrace
10 bedroom
11 dressing
12 study
13 void
14 bathroom

first floor plan



proposed site plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:400)

3
From hall to entrance through diaphanous stair with beech treads contained by fine steel grating.
4
Through corner window of bedroom to X Pavilion and sedum roof.
5
Living room and aluminium clad fireplace with chain-mail curtain as fireguard.
6
Dining room's double-height volume, with upper gallery to study, to original bay onto garden.

House conversion, Hampstead, London
Architect
Alison Brooks Architects

4

5

6

with layering space and making it flow is. To dispel the rigidity of the existing plan, cross walls were removed or cut open and a double-height lightwell, created on the north, brings light down and through the house. On the upper landing, large occuli punched into the roof admit more daylight; and luminance washes over polished plaster walls in Tiepolo blue and pale pearly colours.

Architect
Alison Brooks Architects, London
Landscape design
ABA with Sabina Amiga
Lighting designer
John McEwan, London
Photographs
Chris Gascoigne/VIEW

The site of the house, by Niall McLaughlin Architects, in the west of England is spread across crest and western slope of a high ridge densely covered in beech woods. You approach the house from the east, passing down a long drive bordered by trees and newly planted snowdrops. Arriving at the western brow, you see the house below you, a light and partly transparent two-storeyed structure of steel, glass and Douglas fir backed into the steep slope. Through and beyond the building, through a clearing in the surrounding wood, you can see a vast and misty spread of English countryside.

Sheltered by the hillside, the structure seems to have just alighted. In this setting it is exotic – a Californian Case Study house, reinterpreted, moved on in time and transported to the soft light and subdued colours of pastoral England. But in organizing the building, Niall McLaughlin began with the Tugendhat villa built by Mies van der Rohe overlooking the city of Brno in Czechoslovakia. Like the villa, this house has a strong visual relationship with the landscape, distinct areas of accommodation linked by the flat roof, and a curving wall of translucent glass that wraps around an inner stair. The curved form breaks the building's predominantly orthogonal organization; and, as in Mies' villa, entrance to the voluminous double-height living room is made all the more striking by passage from the enclosed stair.

McLaughlin's design was prompted by the clients' desire for a new relationship with their dwelling. They had previously occupied a Georgian rectory which, they felt, dictated the manner in which daily life was conducted. They wanted a 'more open building with rooms that could be inhabited even when empty' and constant connection to the surroundings. The architects' response was a series of visually intersecting volumes and a route devised so that extraordinary views to the west are framed by the building, taken away, and given back. And through windows on all sides, are frames of the forest. Like a previous work by McLaughlin – the winged shack for a wildlife photographer in Northamptonshire (AR September 1998) – this house is of, rather than in, the landscape, a building of light and shadow, and reflection.

There was an existing building on the site – a dilapidated house constructed in the 1950s (by the Dean of Windsor for his family). Once demolished, it provided the footprint for the new building, which was turned very slightly on its axis to face due west. On plan, the house is a simple rectangle running north-south, with a single-storey wing. This shoots out west at right angles to the main body of

HOUSE, ENGLAND
ARCHITECT
NIALL MCLAUGHLIN ARCHITECTS

FRAMES OF THE FOREST

A house drawn from early Modernist essays stands in woodland in the West Country, an integral part of the English landscape.

2

3

4

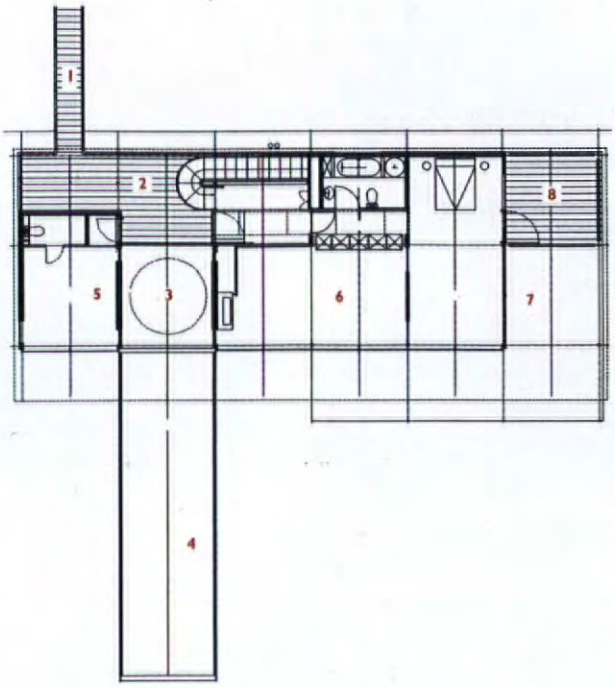
1
Entrance to first floor level from the east.
2
South-west corner with terraces over a newly planted garden; pool house to the left.
3
Entrance deck and glass enclosed stair.
4
Stair interior.

the house, and contains a glass-walled swimming pool with a flooded roof. Entering at first floor level over a bridge, you are delivered to a covered wooden deck inset with a square pool of water under an open porthole. From here, your eye travels the length of the watery roof to the distant horizon and sky.

The wing signals a division between two parts of the house. To the north is a first floor office with guest rooms below; on the larger south side are the living quarters, at the core is the great double-height sitting room which is overlooked by the main bedroom above kitchen and dining room. West and south walls here are almost entirely glazed and give onto broad terraces over a newly planted wild garden of grasses, bulbs and iris siberica. At first floor level, all volumes along the west are visually interconnected by internal windows and slots, so that from the office you can see through the length of the building.

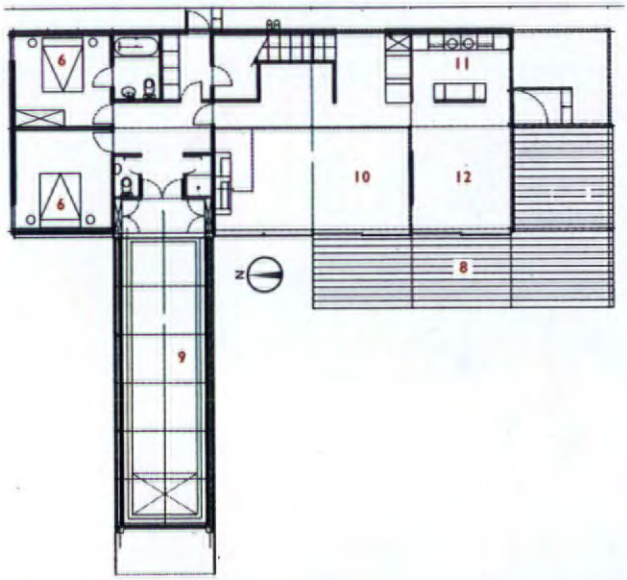
Within the expressed structure of the building, materials and finishes are few and austere. Beech from trees felled around the house has been used for floors, honed granite for kitchen fittings and pale stone at either end of the swimming pool which itself is lined with black tiles. The pool house, heated and filled with water to the brimming edges and up to the base of the glazing, projects into the middle distance. In diving into it, you dive into the view. P.M

Architect
Niall McLaughlin Architects, London
Project architects
Niall McLaughlin, Silke Vosskoetter, Sandra Coppin
Photographs
David Grey



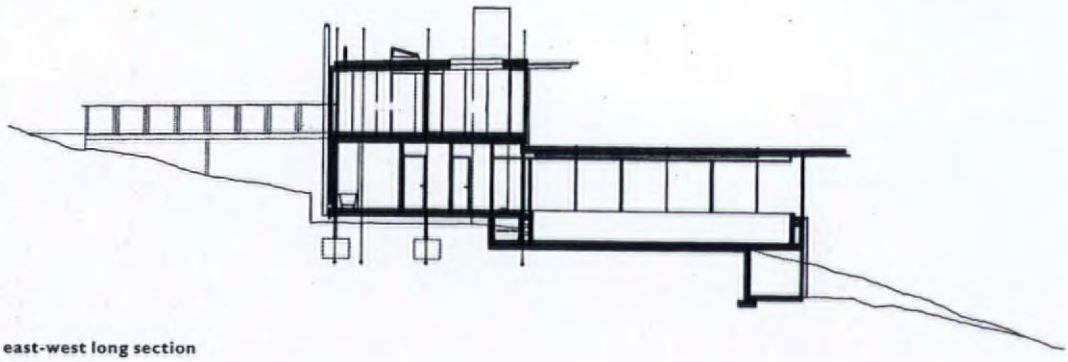
first floor plan (scale approx 1:340)

5



1 bridge
2 entrance deck
3 pool
4 flooded roof
5 study
6 void
7 bedroom
8 terrace
9 swimming pool
10 living
11 kitchen
12 dining

ground floor plan



east-west long section

5
Double-height living room.
6
From entrance deck, internal pool and flooded roof to west.
7
Swimming pool and water to base of glazing brimming into peripheral slot.

6
7

DAY HOUSE, NEAR SKIBBEREEN, COUNTY CORK, IRELAND
ARCHITECT
GUMUCHDJIAN ASSOCIATES

The small building, christened the Think Tank by its owner, is a day house for reading and contemplation and was designed by Philip Gumuchdjian for a film-maker. Isolated from the main house further inland, it stands on a stone plinth set into the tidal waters of the River Ilen, near Skibbereen in County Cork. At first glance it looks like a regular box of wood and glass with a wooden roof folded over the frame, but it is more complex. Gumuchdjian's sensitivity to context and purpose, his feeling for materials and attention to detail has transformed what could have been a modest riverside retreat into an architectural essay, exquisitely worked in miniature. Its absorption into the shallow rolling countryside has been quietly achieved through scale, form and material which together evoke memories of familiar boathouses and pastoral structures like wooden barns and cow-sheds. Its refinement however, and the shifting play of the opaque and transparent, suggests descent from the traditional Japanese house.

With cedar decking forming terraces on west and south and a long pontoon into the river, the building faces west across the river under the canopy of its oversailing roof. Red cedar, here too, has been used as a covering. Requiring no artificial preservative, the wood weathers naturally and turning silver with age will merge into water and sky.

Apart from the west gabled wall which is fully glazed with sheets of glass butt-jointed with translucent mastic, walls are of glass panels framed with stainless steel, their transparency modified

1

2

1
Fully glazed west face and main house.
2
North-east corner and path from main house.
3
Entrance on east.
4
South face and freshwater pool.
5
Interior and south terrace onto freshwater pool.

PASTORAL IDYLL

A carefully crafted retreat on a river estuary on the west coast of Ireland provides contemplative calm.

in places by cedar louvres. Gumuchdjian plays subtle games with the screens, directing perceptions of the building and its relationship with the exterior. The screening arrangement is asymmetrical so that the opaque/transparent patterns of north and south walls are different and degrees of privacy and transparency shift as you move about the building. On the sunnier south side, sheltered from the gales that sweep in from the Atlantic, the central panels are sliding glass doors onto the terrace and a newly made

3

4

5

freshwater pond. On the north, the most easterly panel is clear and frames the river's curve. As you enter the house from this end your eye quickly registers this glimpse before being drawn down to the gable end and grander prospect.

Considering the refinement of structure and detailing, it is interesting to learn that the house was put together by local builders. The roof is supported by a frame composed of iroko beams and rafters on steel columns in iroko casing so that the structural confines of the interior – a single volume – are strongly articulated.

At the back eastern end of the room, a free-standing structure provides a kitchen from which an elegant stainless-steel chimney rises through the roof. Painted with a pale wash and exposed on all sides to the elements, the interior suggests both the solidity and vulnerability of boats. P.M.

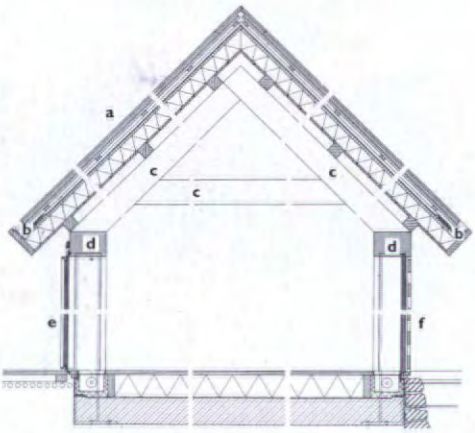
Architect
Gumuchdjian Associates, London
Engineering
Buro Happold
Construction
Bill Wolf (Ireland)
Calnans (Ireland)
Photographs
Werner Huthmacher

DAY HOUSE, NEAR SKIBBEREEN, COUNTY CORK, IRELAND

ARCHITECT
GUMUCHDJIAN ASSOCIATES

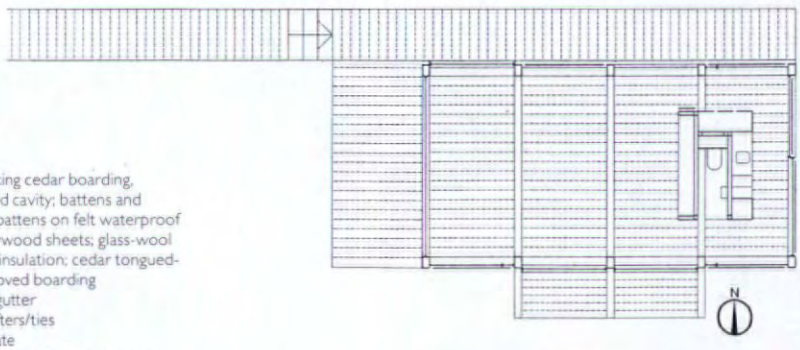
6

6
West wall of glass panels butt-jointed with translucent mastic.

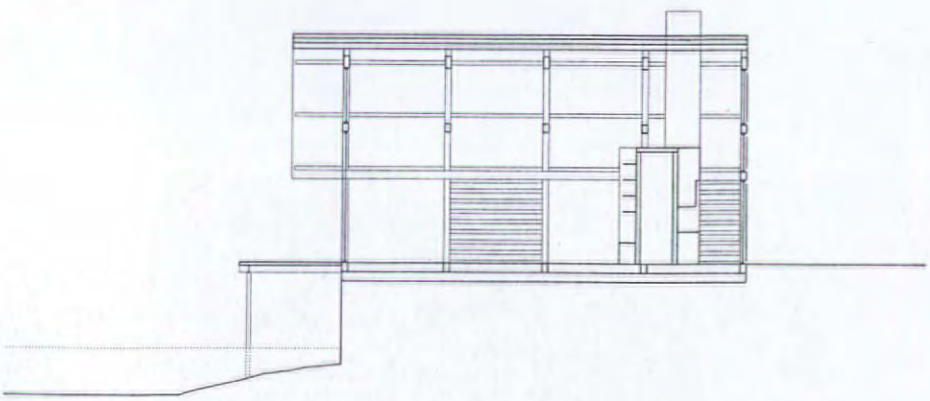


detailed section (from *Detail*)

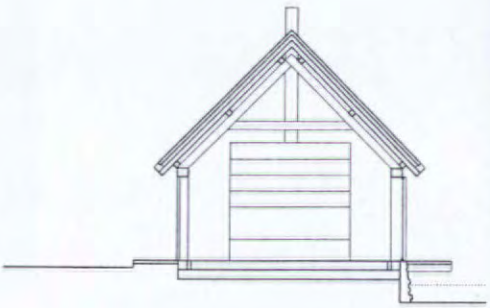
a interlocking cedar boarding, ventilated cavity; battens and counterbattens on felt waterproof layer; plywood sheets; glass-wool thermal insulation; cedar tongued-and-grooved boarding
b copper gutter
c iroko rafters/ties
d iroko plate
e sliding door with double glazing
f cedar louvres



plan (scale approx 1: 200)



west-east long section



north-south cross section

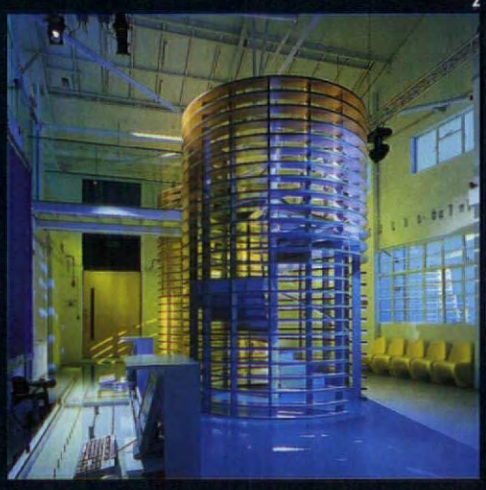
Many young architects set up in practice after a period of apprenticeship working for larger firms. In the UK, a discernible generation of emerging designers have cut their teeth with the English High-Tech establishment. Nick Eldridge and Piers Smerin both spent time in Norman Foster's office before forming a partnership in 1998. Their first project, an elegant remodelling of a house in Highgate, showed a poise and maturity that led to it being shortlisted for last year's Stirling Prize.

This project, research and development offices for BTcellnet, was the outcome of a competition and gave the young partnership their first corporate commission. BTcellnet needed a suitable base for its expanding mobile communications R & D operation and decided to adapt an existing building on the site of London's Ealing Studios. This was conceived as a flexible, responsive, short-term (two year) solution while a new

1

OFFICES, EALING, LONDON
ARCHITECT
ELDRIDGE SMERIN

2 3



4

SET DRESSING

Transformed through a series of dramatic yet demountable new elements, this 1930s film studio is now a lively temporary workplace.

1
Taut fabric screen encloses the original 1930s studio building.
2, 3
Reception space is dominated by monumental slatted stair drums made of prefabricated plywood.
4
Open plan offices and studios nestle underneath the roof.

OFFICES, EALING, LONDON
ARCHITECT
ELDRIDGE SMERIN

5
Main development studio with glass enclosed rooms stacked up like fish tanks.

6
Fabric screens can be dismantled and moved to the new building when this is finally complete.

building was constructed elsewhere on the site.

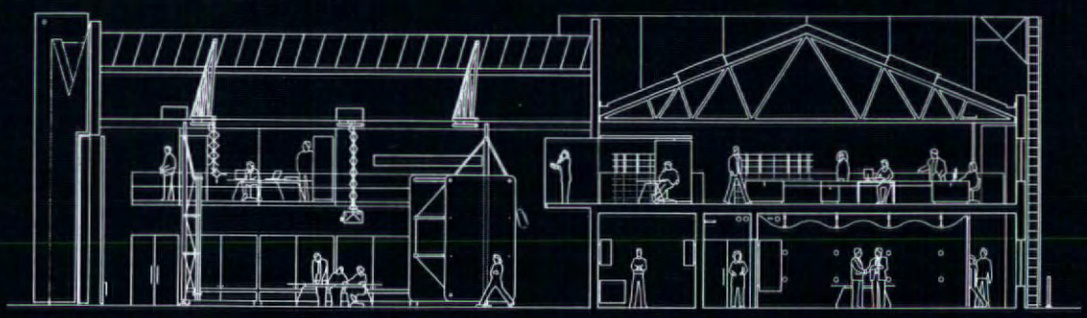
Famous for its popular comedies and wartime dramas, Ealing Film Studios was first set up in the early 1900s, on a four acre site in west London. Between 1931 and 1935, the studio complex was rebuilt by theatre architect Robert Atkinson. Buildings are unassuming and robust – mainly simple steel-framed sheds with brick external walls – but they originally incorporated state of the art techniques for film production. In 1955, the BBC bought the studios and although the complex remains a lively enclave, its buildings are increasingly unsuited to the technical demands of modern film and television production. The studio owners are currently embarking on an ambitious redevelopment programme to provide space for film production and media-related companies in a series of new buildings planned around the existing main sound stages, which will be retained and upgraded.

Until these new additions are complete, BTcellnet's R & D department occupies part of the existing Centre Block which has been inventively transformed by Eldridge Smerin. Although the buildings exude an air of genteel decay, their basic fabric was fundamentally sound and the internal organization of steel-framed studio spaces proved eminently suitable for adaptation as flexible, open-plan workspaces and studios.

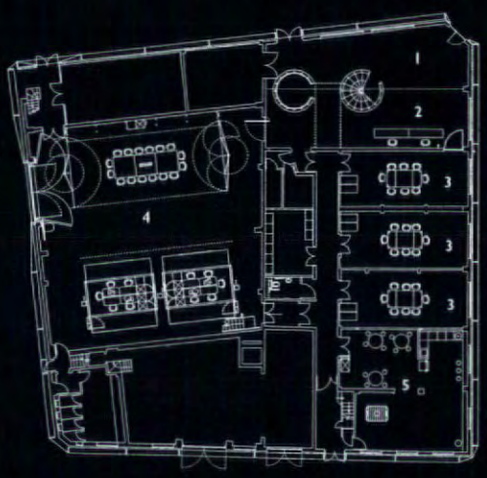
The brief called for a main development studio and presentation suite, together with meeting rooms, offices and support spaces. Underpinning the technical and organizational aspects was the need to encourage creative interaction between mainly young employees engaged in researching new software programs. As this was a temporary solution, it also had to be economical, with any new insertions capable of being transferred to the department's eventual new home.

Externally, Eldridge Smerin's main move is to enclose the two-storey building in a taut fabric screen, supported by a steel frame, which instantly transforms the structure's appearance and also provides an environmental buffer from neighbouring construction work. Light diffuses through the fabric so that after dark, the building has an ethereal, mesmeric quality. A pivotal corner entrance leads to a double-height reception area fitted out with a pair of cylindrical towers made from horizontal bands of prefabricated plywood. These sentinel cylinders contain spiral staircases linked to staff offices that nestle under the roof structure like an artist's atelier.

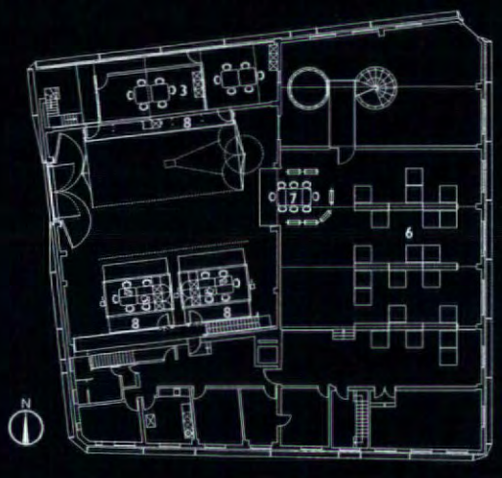
At the heart of the plan is a former studio space, now recast as the main development studio. Within this volume is a quartet of transparent rooms stacked up like fish tanks and enclosed by laminated glass walls and floors held in steel frames. Smaller cellular offices are deployed around this main space, threaded together on a spinal corridor.



cross section



ground floor plan (scale approx 1: 500)



first floor plan

1 entrance
2 reception
3 meeting rooms
4 development studio
5 canteen
6 open plan workspace
7 think-tank
8 gallery

5

6

Throughout the building, a series of incisions in the internal and external walls frame and define spaces and views. Most of the existing interior has simply been sprayed white to act as a neutral foil to the new elements.

Distinguished by a concern for enlightened corporate placemaking, this modest scheme also has a strong tectonic quality, intelligently exploring how things are made and fit together, as might be expected from acolytes of Foster. Like film sets, all the new parts are fully demountable and can be easily relocated. Given the site's rich cinematic history, this celebration of the temporary seems an especially appropriate and successful architectural response. C. S.

Architect
Eldridge Smerin, London
Project team
Nick Eldridge, Piers Smerin, Alison Poole, Richard Glover, Sophie Ungerer, Sandra Robinson
Structural engineer
Parsons Brinkerhoff
Glass engineer
MBOK
Photographs
Richard Davies

1
Muscular and monumental, the now revived Paddington Maintenance Depot is a familiar sight to motorists on London's Westway.
2
Originally built to serve the motorway, the building comes within touching distance of its massive superstructure.
3
Externally, the building has been simply cleaned and restored. New zinc roof of the refurbished adjacent Rotunda Building (a former vehicle depot) is just visible.

OFFICES, LONDON
ARCHITECT
ALLFORD HALL
MONAGHAN MORRIS

2

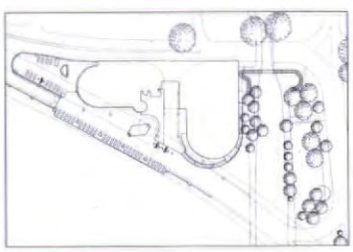

3

FASHION VICTOR

Nestling beside London's Westway, a former motorway maintenance building has been stylishly recast as a fashion company headquarters.

Motorists barrelling along London's Westway, the iconic elevated motorway that snakes westward out of the metropolis, are probably familiar with the equally iconic Paddington Maintenance Depot, a Heroic Modernist confection of nautical curves and streamlining that docks within a hair's breadth of whizzing streams of cars. Designed in 1968 by Bicknell and Hamilton, it was a something of a showpiece, intended to complement the newly constructed Westway as a statement of engineering power and prowess. The muscular, interlocking volumes (a low tower straddling a three-storey office block) have a certain period drama when seen at speed from the motorway. Emphasizing the nautical analogy, the lowest floor extends into a curved prow.

The Paddington Maintenance Depot has had an intriguingly chequered career. When it outlived its original use as a maintenance and repair centre for the Westway, it fell into a state of languishing neglect. Demolition was seriously contemplated, but it was saved and listed Grade II* in the early 1990s, following campaigns by activists. Being such a site and function-specific building, however, there was little commercial or architectural enthusiasm for its recolonization and the brooding, derelict hulk became a familiar backdrop to illegal parties and gatherings.


site plan

Now it has been reincarnated, slightly improbably, as the headquarters of Monsoon, a British-based fashion company known for its distinctive, ethnically inspired clothing. The company wanted to bring its various management offices and design studios under one roof and were astute enough to recognize the potential of Bicknell and Hamilton's building, despite its recent history. The wider urban context is also changing: on the opposite (south) side of the Westway, the Paddington Basin development is currently transforming an industrial wasteland into a gargantuan complex of offices, shops and swanky apartments.

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris were commissioned to revive, remodel and recast the building. With projects such as the new Walsall bus station (AR June 2000) and housing for the Peabody Trust in Dalston (AR November 1999), AHMM are acquiring a reputation for diligent and inventive architecture that has its ideological roots in British Modernism. This most recent scheme consolidates and refines their thoughtful approach.

Externally, the building has simply been tactfully tidied up. The glistening veneer of cream mosaic tiles (originally from Japan) has been restored and the concrete frame cleaned. The strong, visor-like bands of glazing are also retained, but replaced with double-glazed units and a secondary line of glazing to improve acoustic conditions. The effect is miraculous; even in the offices and design studios overlooking the motorway, you can hear a pin drop, while cars glide soundlessly past, like supercharged fish in a giant

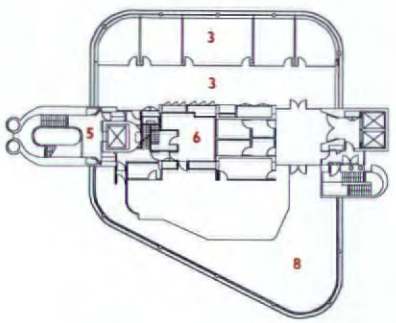
4

OFFICES, LONDON

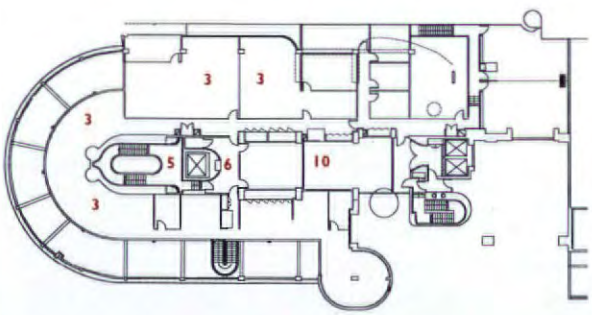
ARCHITECT

ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS

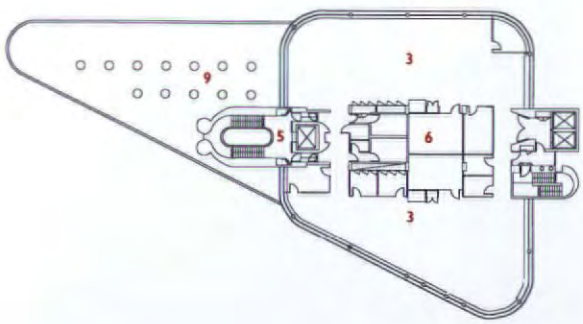
1 main entrance
2 reception space
3 offices
4 design studios
5 main staircase
6 services spine
7 showroom
8 canteen
9 roof
10 void



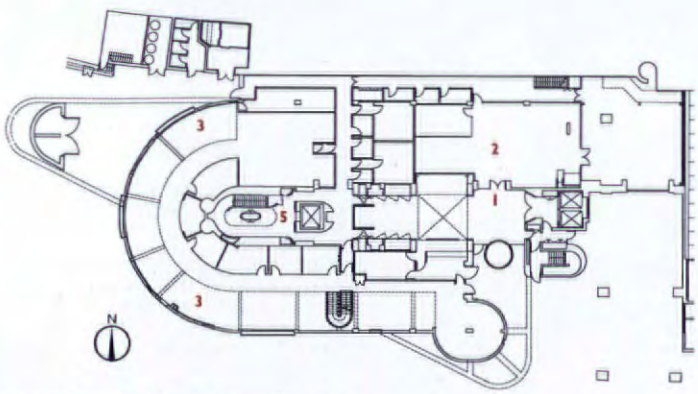
fourth floor plan



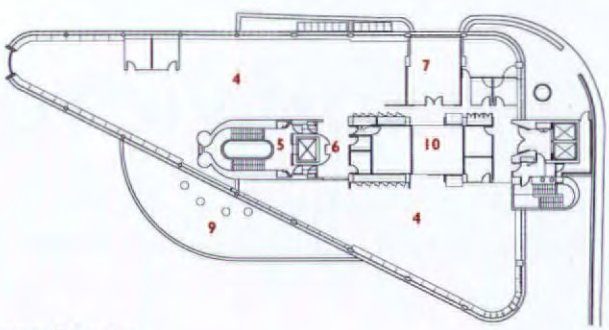
first floor plan



third floor plan



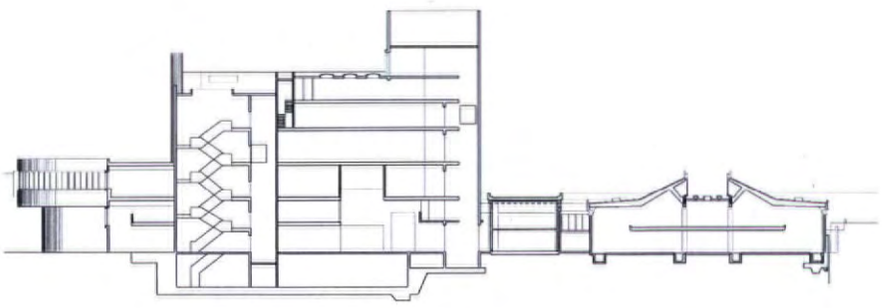
ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1000)



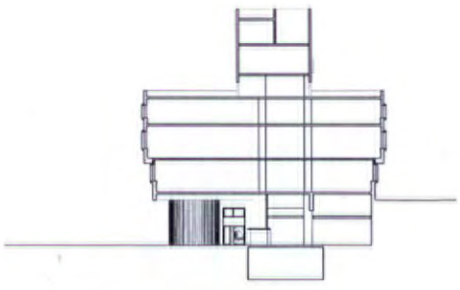
second floor plan

5

6



long section



cross section

7

4
Main stairwell, with its sensuous, mosaic clad staircase.
5
Triple-height entrance space is gouged through heart of building, opening up through views.
6
Double-height offices on ground floor, an inviting space despite the presence of the motorway.
7
Typical design studio.

OFFICES, LONDON
ARCHITECT
ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS

aquarium. Internally, former cellular spaces have been opened up to great effect. A spinal core of circulation and ancillary spaces runs lengthways across the floorplates, serving open-plan wings of offices, studios and showrooms on each side. The spine is terminated by the building's original main staircase, contained in a toplit well lined with pale turquoise mosaic tiles, a curiously delicate moment amid the robust Modernism.

The original spaces have proved surprisingly adaptable. Even the plant rooms on the lower levels have been transformed into double-height office spaces with mezzanine galleries running along the inner edge. Here the physical presence of the motorway is unavoidable as its superstructure looms over the building, but sail-like uplighters bounce and diffuse light up through the tall volume. The other main move is a new triple-height void gouged through the centre of the spine. This unifies spaces on the lower floors, creating through views, and revealing glimpses of the working environment to visitors. Naturally, the topmost floor is reserved for the upper echelons of management, with the grandest office and its roof terrace resembling the bridge on a ship.

The neighbouring Rotunda Building (the former vehicle depot) has also been refurbished to provide separate lettable office space. The refurbished zinc roof forms an arresting contrast with the cream tiled and rendered walls of the main building. Pedestrian access and routes have also been improved; this was an important consideration, given the site's impermeability (enmeshed by motorways and slip roads) and that many staff will arrive on foot. New bridges over the Regent's Canal will link the building with the emerging swathes of Paddington Basin to the south and Little Venice to the north. From splendid destitute isolation to a new use and reconnection with the urban realm, this '60s icon has been skilfully and stylishly reborn. C.S.

Architect
Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, London
Structural engineer
Price and Myers
Services engineer
Atelier Ten
Photographs
All photographs by Timothy Soar except no. 2 which is by Peter Cook/VIEW

8

8
Former cellular spaces are transformed into open-plan studios and offices to great effect. New double-glazed windows screen the omnipresent blare of the traffic. A chilled beam system provides environmental regulation.
9
Typical office.

9

URBAN SQUARE, NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND
ARCHITECT
THOMAS HEATHERWICK

1
The sensuous, blue-tiled surface envelops the square. Surroundings are deliberately austere to emphasize its exotic presence.
2
Benches appear to peel up from the ground plane, revealing coloured lights below.

SURFACE TENSION

Thomas Heatherwick's characteristically inventive, seductive and radical approach to materials finds vibrant expression in this project for a city square.

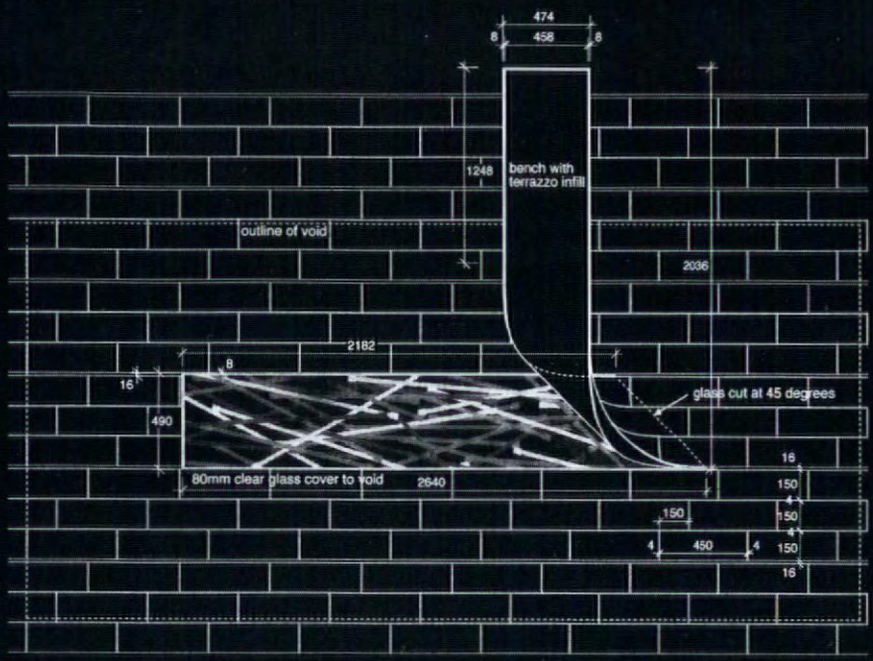
Known for his energetically experimental treatment of materials (ARs January 1998, July 1999 and November 1999), Thomas Heatherwick's latest project brings a magic carpet to the centre of Newcastle, enlivening and animating a desolate public realm. In 1996 Heatherwick won an international competition staged by the local council to design the city's first new square for over a century. The long narrow site, next to the Edwardian pile of the Laing Art Gallery, was particularly challenging – more disused road than square – surrounded by an undistinguished assortment of buildings. At one end, a utilitarian steel staircase brought people into the space.

As the potential for intervention was limited, Heatherwick's response was to concentrate on the surface of the square. Existing paving materials also seemed limited, so Heatherwick, in collaboration with a team at Sheffield Hallam University, undertook to develop an entirely new substance. Heatherwick wanted a strong, sensuous colour to unite and invigorate the urban space. The outcome is a swathe of gleaming blue tiles that swish and crash around the square like

1

site plan

URBAN SQUARE,
NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND
ARCHITECT
THOMAS HEATHERWICK



plan of typical bench

4

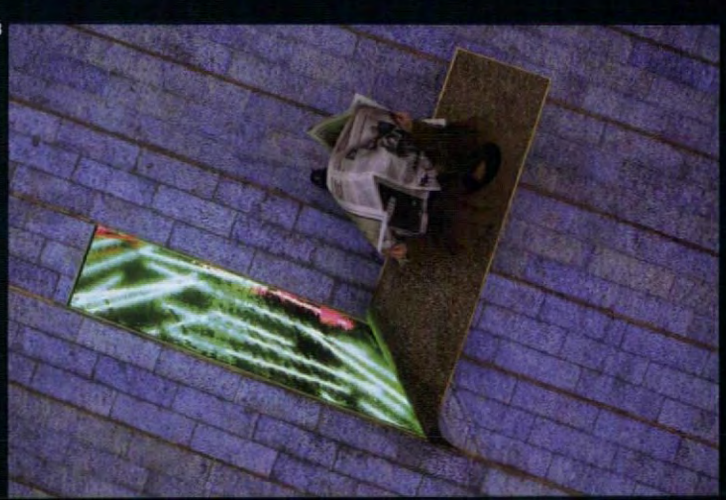
a spilt pot of paint. Made of crushed blue glass from discarded sherry bottles set in a white resin, the tiles were developed following exhaustive research into safety, aesthetics and durability. Now in full commercial production, the resin-glass composite is extremely hard wearing and can incorporate different types of waste glass to achieve a variety of visual effects.

Tiles are laid in long lines picked out by inlaid strips of brass. The cerulean surface appears almost animate, pulling back around trees and leaning up against the gallery walls. In places it is punctured by bollards and peeled back to form benches, revealing glazed voids packed with multi-coloured fluorescent tubes that scintillate seductively with kaleidoscopic light. The perimeter of the blueness is edged with trees (an oak, two chestnuts and four London planes), all mature specimens with the necessary robustness to survive the exuberant ravages of pedestrian throngs. Benches are polished precast concrete with armatures of hand-crafted brass.

A new helical staircase delivers people into the square at its eastern end. Made of laminated timber by local Tyneside boat builders, the spiral form resembles an outsize snail's shell or giant woodshaving. Elsewhere, the space is treated with deliberate municipal rigour and plainness. Regulation paving surrounds the azure carpet emphasizing its exotic other-worldliness. Bollards and light fittings are catalogue standard. Nothing distracts from the swell and shimmer of the sleek blue surface that slinks enticingly through the gloom and dourness of the city. C. S.

Architect
Thomas Heatherwick, London
Photographs
Mark Pinder

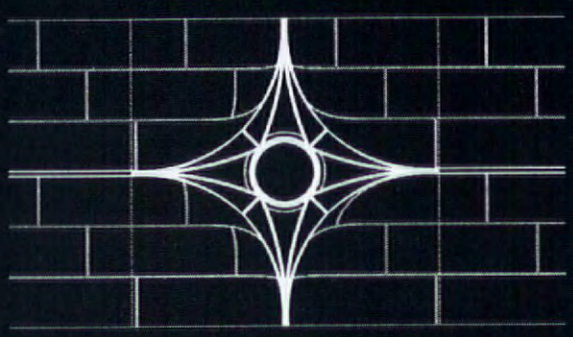
3



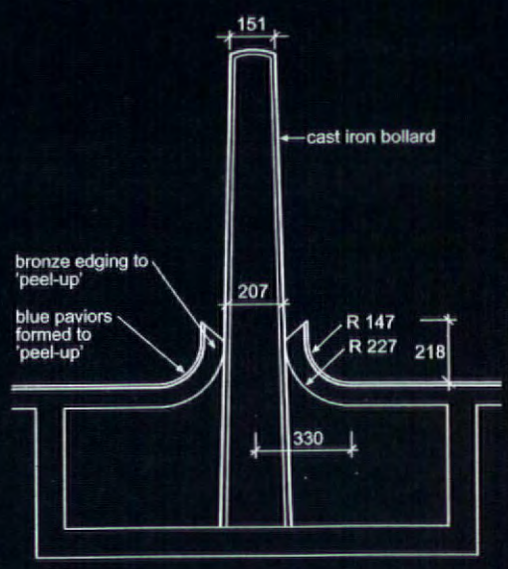
5

6

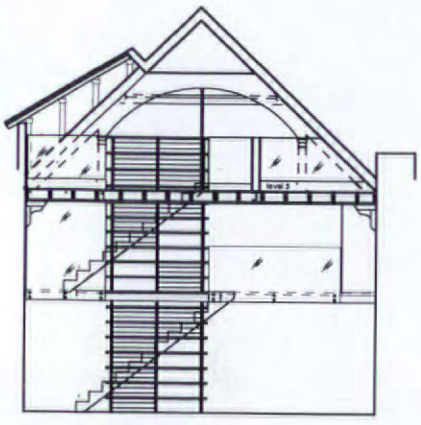
3
Detail of bench, made from polished precast concrete.
4
New spiral staircase was fabricated by local boatbuilders.
5
Bollards puncture the surface. Tiles are inlaid with strips of brass.
6
The blue carpet laps up against existing walls.



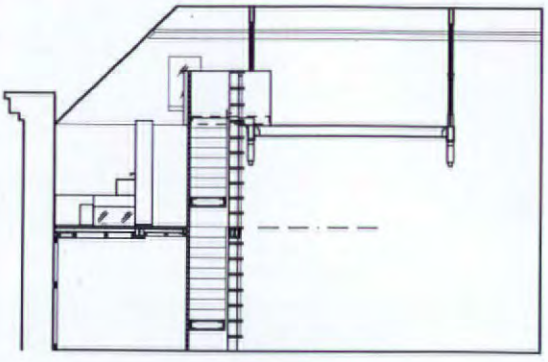
plan of bollard



diagonal section through bollard



west-east cross section



north-south long section

FLAT, LONDON
ARCHITECT
AZMAN OWENS ARCHITECT

LOFT STORY

Design of a luminous loft under a Victorian roof revolves around a new staircase and skilfully manipulates available sources of light.

Azman Owen's tough industrially inspired architecture is infused by a quirky imagination; and their schemes contain details that challenge social conventions of privacy. In this, the practice has no doubt been encouraged by the clients' eccentricities. A house for fashion luminary Isabella Blow has a glass bathroom and bath, open to the sky and almost to neighbouring scrutiny; and the linear showroom, full of heavy metal, for British fashion designer Alexander McQueen (AR February 2000), has a diaphanous changing cubicle of electrotropic glass that, to the timid, feels dangerously public.

Much the same epithet can be used to describe the glass bottomed bath suspended over the kitchen in a new scheme for a loft flat in north London – though the official explanation, which is visibly true, is that the device allows light into an obscure part of the space.

The flat occupies a single volume at the top of a Victorian school and under original roof trusses. It measures 9x7m and houses two mezzanine floors once connected by a spiral staircase. Apart from rooflights across the west side of the roof, there was only one other window

The spiral staircase and mezzanines were originally supported by randomly placed steel columns. To liberate space, the architects removed the columns and transferred loads to existing masonry walls and roof trusses. The central core of this scheme, constituting a strong vertical element, then became a new staircase with straight flights which links the three levels in elegant fashion. With steps and risers of mild steel, the stair is contained by a great vertical curtain of steel uprights and rods on one side, and wooden shelving on the other.

The upper mezzanine was made into a sleeping gallery and a glass panel inserted into the west side of the floor to allow daylight to filter down. On the mezzanine below, which takes advantage of the one window, the architects created the luminous bathroom with the two glass floor panels, one of which became the base of the bath. The curious arrangement should not distract attention from the ingenuity of this scheme.

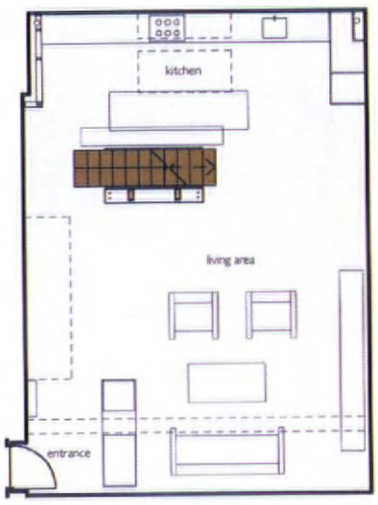
Architect
Azman Owens Architect, London
Project team
Rod Allan, Ferhan Azman, Joyce Owens
Photographs
Keith Collie

1
Living room and kitchen beyond staircase.
2
Detail: steel steps and risers, vertical open steel curtain, and shelving.
3
Glass bath and panel diffusing luminance into kitchen.
4
Lower mezzanine bathroom with glass bath.
5
Upper mezzanine sleeping gallery with rooflights to west.

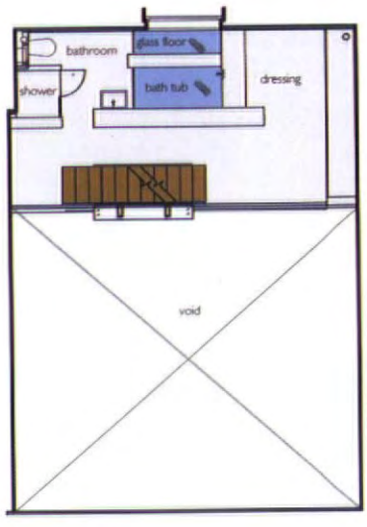
1 2

3

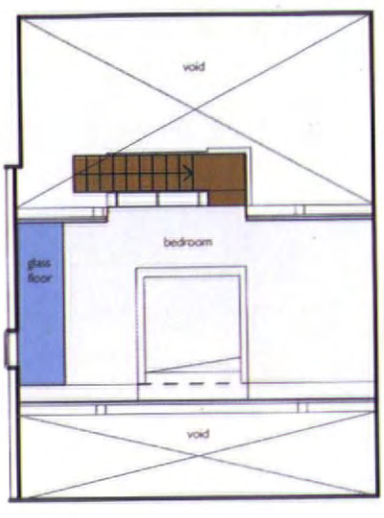
4 5



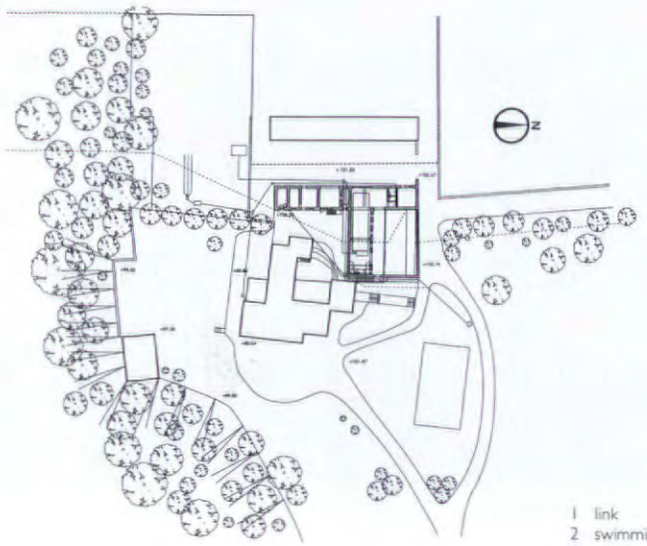
level 1 plan (scale approx 1:250)



lower mezzanine plan

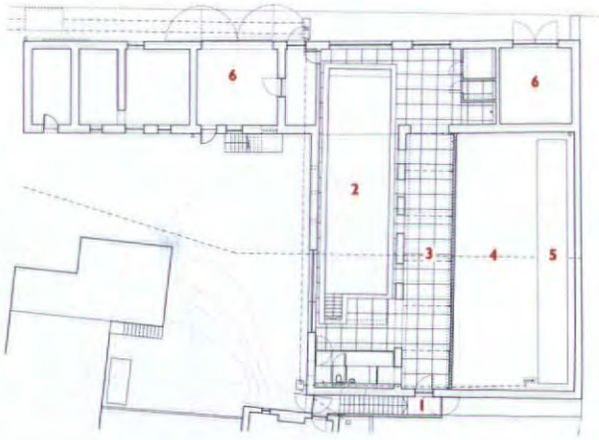


upper mezzanine plan



1 link
2 swimming pool
3 gallery
4 pebbled court
5 garden pool
6 garage

site plan



pool level (scale approx 1:500)

The new swimming pool in the outbuildings of a large farm house at Carrigacunna in County Cork, Ireland has been made with great simplicity. The Victorian stables were gutted down to their random rubble walls, an intermediate floor was inserted and the roof was reslated at the original pitch. The resulting volume, with its original openings preserved and reglazed, and complemented by a new horizontal slit in the north wall, has become a luminous and slightly awe-inspiring space. By using the in-situ concrete pool tank to tie the original structure together, water could be brought to the base of the existing walls, so the whole volume has a sensuous integrity rarely encountered in such conversions. A new enclosed stair rises from the house to pool level, which because of the slope of site is some 2m above living rooms of the house – in fact at first floor level of the old stables. The staircase link is clad in glass and large grey ceramic tiles, chosen to relate to the austerity and colour of the original stone walls and slate roofs.

Light spills into the pool from a new glazed gallery, 3m wide, which runs along the whole south side of the old stable block in an original court, which has again been stripped to essentials – the random rubble walls and their enclosed space. The floor has been reduced to a strip of austere pebbled garden with stepping stones and a parallel garden pool. The three strips, glazed gallery, pebbles and outdoor pool work together to reflect continuously changing light into the enclosed swimming pool hall through the glass wall of the gallery.

In the pool hall, the random stone is masked with external quality render, and the ceiling is in a slightly polished variant of the same. The gallery is paved with Irish blue limestone and, here, the rubble walls are exposed. The combination of light and water, their reflections and sounds, their languorous sensuality inevitably recalls, on a much smaller scale, Peter Zumthor's marvellous baths at Vals in Switzerland (AR August 1997). Zumthor too was working with an existing building, but you never see it in the photographs because its routine 1960s towers are so incongruous compared with Zumthor's caverns. At Carrigacunna the new work, while providing a splendid new space, is entirely at home in the informal country house.

Architect
Springett Mackay Architecture, London

POOLED RESOURCES

A moving and powerful space has been created within the outbuildings of an Irish country house.

1
Luminous pool hall receives light through original openings in stone wall.
2
Link (centre) connects house (left) and pool hall (right).
3
Glazed gallery on south side of old building. Steel and glass mullions alternate.

SWIMMING POOL,
CARRIGACUNNA, IRELAND
ARCHITECT
SPRINGETT MACKAY
ARCHITECTURE

cross section

1

2

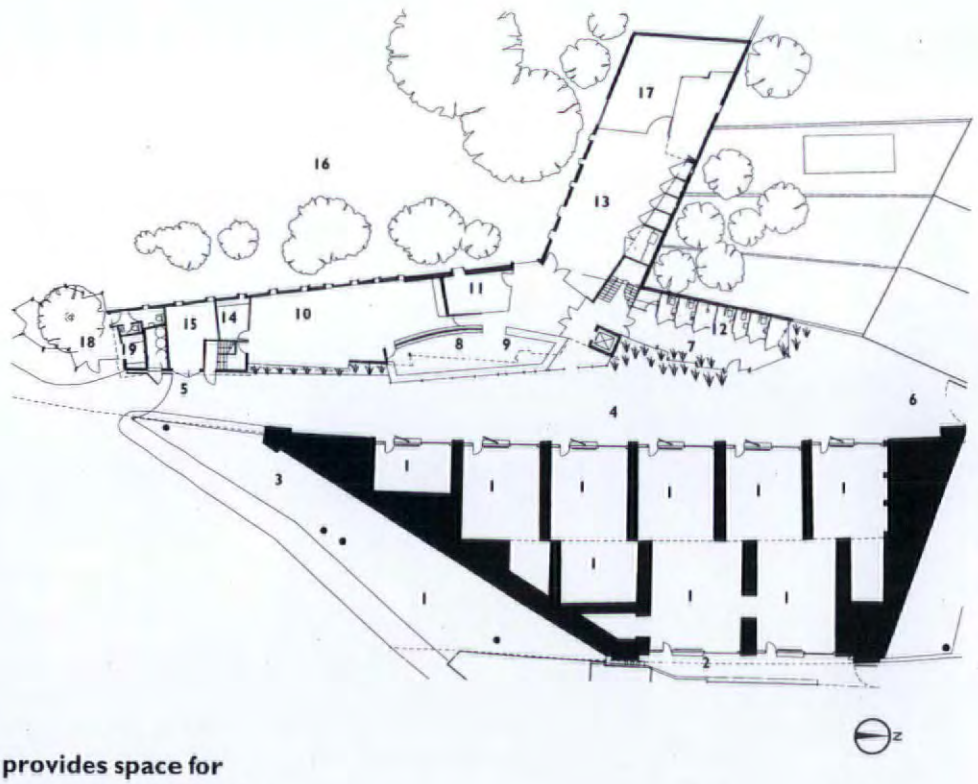
3

Despite its reputation as one of the capital's most deprived boroughs, Hackney in east London remains fertile territory for artists attracted by cheap studio space and a spirit of communal creativity. Most occupy an assortment of cannibalized and converted existing buildings, but a new mixed development by Ash Sakula Architects aims to provide much needed new live/work spaces. Known as the Hothouse, the project also incorporates offices, training and conference spaces for the Free Form Arts Trust, a charitable body concerned with the promotion of urban regeneration through the combined skills of artists, architects and local people. The original Hothouse was the eighteenth-century Loddiges Nursery which occupied a nearby site and housed the then largest botanical hothouse in the world. Revival of the name evokes suggestive parallels between pioneer botanical experimentation and the current vogue for exploratory cross fertilization between urban regeneration and public art.

Crammed in between the urban park of London Fields and the main railway line that scythes northwards through Hackney from Liverpool Street, the site is a narrow, neglected brownfield lot. Ash Sakula's three-storey boomerang-shaped building protectively hugs the edge of the park boundary, turning its back on the trains rumbling along the adjacent Victorian viaduct. Training and library spaces are placed on the ground floor, with open plan design studios above and live/work studios colonizing the upper floor, like modern versions of the traditional artist's garret. These different layers are clearly expressed in the treatment of the elevations. On the park side, a sleek glass wall encloses the piano nobile first floor, supported by a heavy rusticated base randomly punched with amoeba-like openings. The irregular geometry of the live/work spaces animates the roof line. On the

1
Model showing the curved, layered facade overlooking London Fields.
2
The building occupies a tight site beside a railway viaduct.

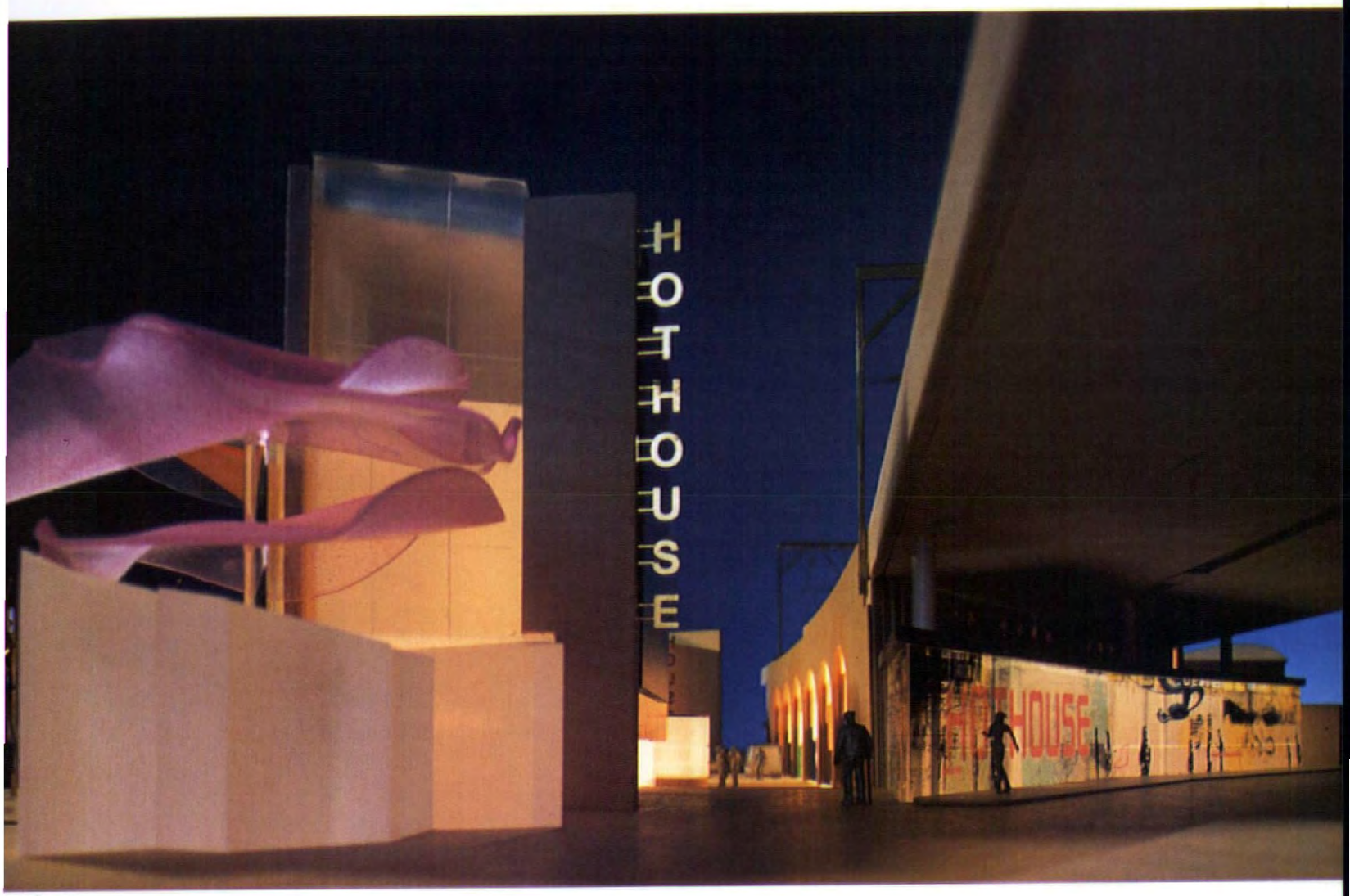
1 studio
2 service yard
3 arts-based trading
4 courtyard
5 vehicle entrance
6 pedestrian entrance
7 winter garden
8 library/reading room
9 reception
10 training
11 repro
12 wc
13 multi-use space
14 offices
15 storage
16 playground
17 garden
18 café
19 kitchen
20 design studio
21 archive
22 meeting space
23 lobby
24 living
25 bedroom
26 terrace



HOTHOUSE FLOWER

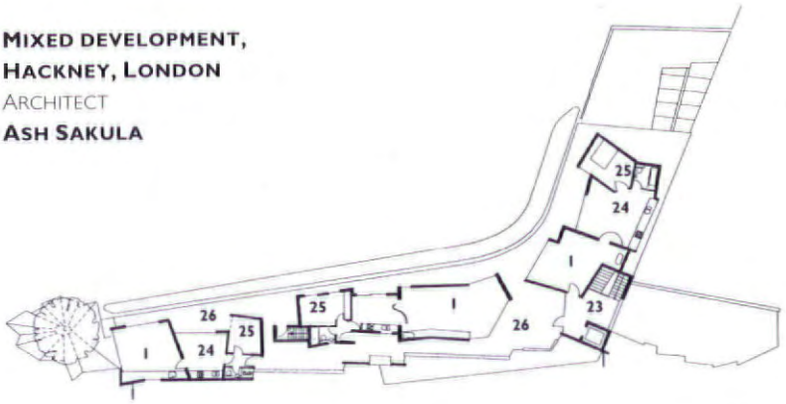
This project for an inner-city London site provides space for artists and an arts organization in a cultural catalyst aimed at regenerating and invigorating the urban realm.

ground floor plan (scale approx 1:750)

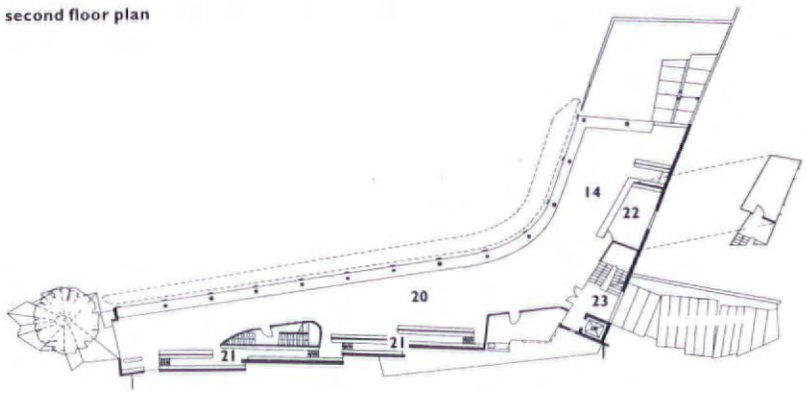


2

MIXED DEVELOPMENT, HACKNEY, LONDON
ARCHITECT
ASH SAKULA



second floor plan

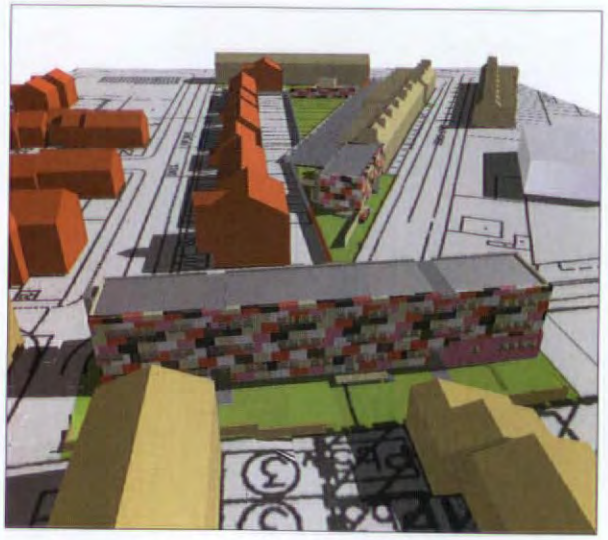


first floor plan

railway side, staggered brick panels with gridded projections screen the building from the viaduct. Functions such as archives and storage spaces are placed along the railway wall, adding another protective layer.

Due for completion later this year, the Hothouse is a key constituent of Ash Sakula's wider masterplan for the surrounding area, which has been developed following a period of intensive public consultation. (The arches underneath the railway viaduct, for instance, will be converted to house studios and workshops.) Both masterplan and Hothouse aim to consolidate and strengthen physical and social links between Hackney's evolving Cultural Quarter and the green open space of London Fields. C. S.

Architect
Ash Sakula Architects, London
Photographs
Andrew Putler



aerial view of all three sites from the north

Since the British state's retreat from the provision of public sector dwellings, the task of building and managing social housing has latterly fallen to independent associations such as the Peabody Trust. Established during the nineteenth century by George Peabody, an American financier and philanthropist, the eponymous trust is a non profit-making body originally charged with building decent housing for working men in inner London. Its stolid residential blocks are a familiar feature of the capital's townscape, but more recently, the Trust has emerged as a notable patron of inventively designed housing by a younger generation of architects, including Allford Hall Monaghan Morris in Dalston (AR November 1999) and Bill Dunster in Sutton (AR June 2001). Such schemes are all the more remarkable for being achieved in the teeth of invariably parsimonious budgets.

At the end of last year, the Trust initiated a competition to seek ideas for economical family housing aimed at people aspiring to home ownership. The brief asked for proposals for three

REINVENTING THE EVERYDAY

This proposal for low-cost housing in London draws on contemporary urban models to create a striking set of buildings that embody passive solar design, flexibility and generous communal spaces.

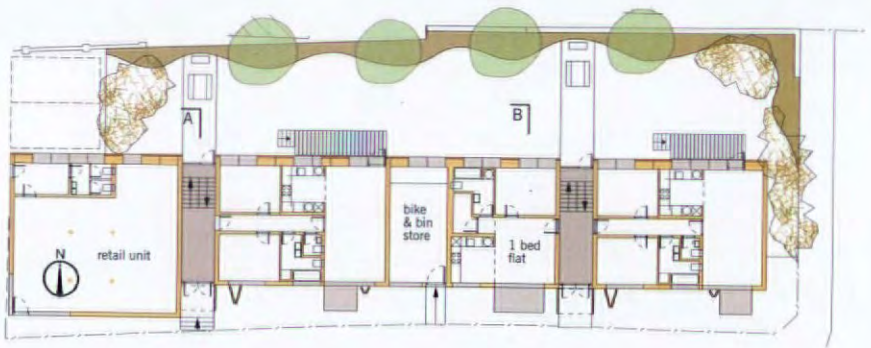
north elevation site A

east elevation

west elevation

south elevation site A

LOW COST HOUSING PROJECT, WOOLWICH, LONDON
ARCHITECT
SARAH WIGGLESWORTH ARCHITECTS



ground floor plan site A (10 x 4 person 2-bed flats; 1 x 1 person flat) scale approx 1:250

different but neighbouring sites in north Woolwich, between the Royal Docks and River Thames. As part of its policy of working with less well-known practices, Peabody restricted entry to firms with fewer than seven members. Sarah Wigglesworth was one of the shortlisted architects. Her scheme proposes a family of buildings based on an economical, repeated apartment plan deployed to create different forms. The three sites are united as a sequence of spaces that move from urban block through terrace to suburban villa in its own grounds. Despite their apparent simplicity, the dwellings form a recognizable series of insertions in the existing streetscape.

Wigglesworth draws on contemporary urban models to create formally striking architecture that becomes a visual marker for the general neighbourhood. Passive solar design is also fundamental to the organization and appearance of the blocks. Each elevation is a considered response to its solar orientation, with winter gardens and shutters on south-facing walls contrasting with heavily insulated north facades made of straw bales clad in vividly coloured corrugated sheeting generating an arresting kaleidoscopic chequerboard. The use of straw bales follows on from Wigglesworth's own house (AR January 2002) which acted as a prototype for many of the ideas developed here.

Internally, the flats are distinguished by qualities more usually associated with private sector dwellings, such as open planning, flexibility and the potential for informal living, so that different families can occupy the same spaces in different ways. Communal areas such as gardens, entrances, staircases and landings are all generously proportioned. Decent, engaging and with a touch of wit, Wigglesworth's proposal, like most of the shortlisted schemes, dignifies a currently marginalized area of architectural activity. It is easy enough to build object houses for rich clients; what is really needed are more sane, humane and inventive solutions to the problems of the everyday.

CATHERINE SLESSOR

Architect
Sarah Wigglesworth Architects, London

north-east elevation

north-west elevation site B

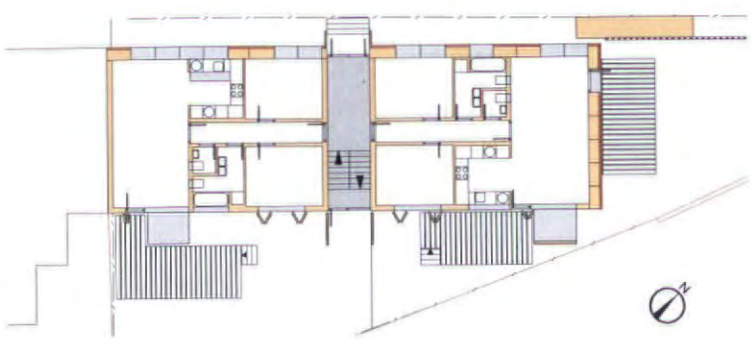
south-east elevation site B

cross section

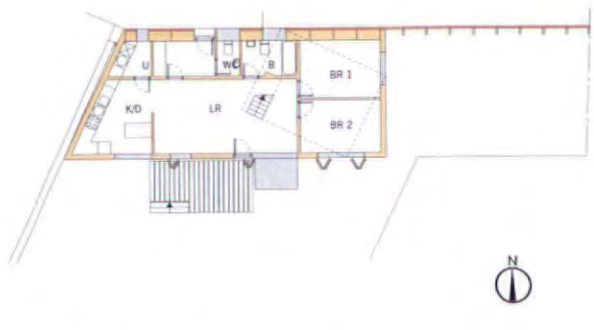
north elevation site C

east elevation

south elevation site C



ground floor plan site B (4 x 2 person 2-bed flats) scale approx 1:250



ground floor plan site C (3-bed house) scale approx 1:250

Susan Dawson reviews Arne Jacobsen designs updated by Carl F and, in the following pages, the latest developments in the exterior envelope.

501 CARL F

The 100th birthday of the Danish architect and designer, Arne Jacobsen, will be celebrated in 2002 with the re-launch of one of his less well known products, the AJ door handle which was designed in 1955/56 for the Royal Hotel of Copenhagen.

With soft, natural lines, this classic lever handle shares the same design concept as Jacobsen's well-known armchairs, the Swan and the Egg, which were also designed for the Royal Hotel (AR February 2002, pp16-17). The specification has been updated by Danish architectural ironmongery supplier, Carl F, to meet current requirements without changing the original design. The AJ handle is produced in 97mm and a larger 111mm version, suitable for external doors, in both polished brass and satin nickel finishes.

Enquiry 501 www.arplus.com/enq.html

502

502 GKD
The Expomedia Light Cube is a new six-storey building in Saarbrücken, Germany, clad with a stainless-steel mesh facade. During the day the mesh has a reflecting metallic shine; at night it acts as a projection surface for light shows.
A system of light rods, set behind the mesh panels, is computer-controlled to assume various colours.
The screen, designed by Kramm & Strigl, comprises panels of GKD Omega mesh tensioned with rods at top and bottom.

Enquiry 502 www.arplus.com/enq.html

503

503 HANSENGLASS
A Thermospan structural glass facade forms part of the new headquarters of HMT Hojgaard and Schultz, Denmark's largest building contractor, in Copenhagen. The assembly consists of 19mm single-glazed units structurally bolted to a delicate steel frame.

Enquiry 503 www.arplus.com/enq.html

504

504 TRESPA
The Magna Experience is a former steelworks in Rotherham, England, which has been revitalized into a visitor/education centre by Wilkinson Eyre. The walkway leading to the entrance hall has been clad on one side with Virtuon sheet, an aluminium grey metallic sheet which appears to change colour as visitors walk past. The sheet, which is easy to clean and has unmatched scratch and wear resistance, is held in place by a concealed fixing system.

Enquiry 504 www.arplus.com/enq.html

505

505 OKALUX

A new technology centre has been constructed at the headquarters of Festo, a multi-national manufacturer of pneumatic equipment, in Esslingen, Germany. The building, designed by Architekturbüro Jaschek, has three V-shaped atria roofed with pneumatic pillow structures and enclosed on their south sides by glass facades held in place by delicate wire-rope cable structures. The atria act as meeting places for the company's employees, and serve as buffer zones to provide passive solar energy gains.

The glass facades were manufactured by Okalux in Marktheidenfeld, Germany. They comprise a series of glass panels, 2.4m x 2m in size, each of which is fastened with four clamps to a cable net structure. This in turn is rigidly connected with compression and tension rods to a secondary, curved cable net which takes up lateral wind loads. Inward flexing due to wind-generated stresses is taken up by horizontal wire ropes; outward flexing due to wind-generated suction is transmitted to the building's ground-floor slab or conducted to points beneath the roof girders by vertical wire ropes.

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506 OTEFAL

MirawallTM is a polyester powder-coated aluminium sheet laminate. It can be used on facades, window and door frames, and for interiors. The use of special polyester powders guarantees maximum resistance to atmospheric agents and to mechanical deformation. Total resistance to fire and an infinite range of finishes make it ideal for internal coating use.

DwallTM is a new product from Otefal, produced by means of a liquid coil coating painting system, an advanced technological solution which achieves an even, high-performance coating.

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506

507

507 BIRDAIR

The Scientific Centre, designed by Cambridge Seven Associates, is an educational and cultural complex in Kuwait City, Kuwait, which includes a science museum, theatre, aquarium and harbour. It is roofed with a tensile structure of PTFE-coated glass-fibre membrane, incorporating three banana-shaped rooflights. Tensile membranes were also used as shades above the rooflights and as canopies to the entrances and arcades. They were used to evoke images of Bedouin tents and the sails of traders' dhows.

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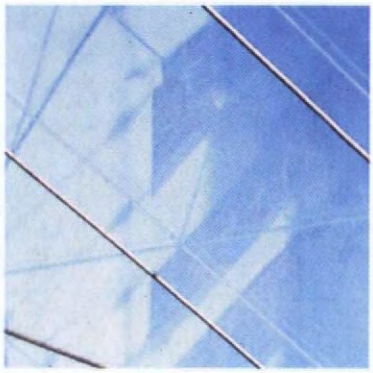
Glass that supports

Seele's new pure glass shell design sets previously unattainable standards in transparency and lightness. Large spans without monolithic support systems are feasible. A tunnel vault or dome construction approach can be achieved to overbuild irregular or extremely sensitive locations.



Using the glass structure as a support system is a novelty and applications can include thermal or double glazing, smoked glass, heat absorbing glass, sound and antiglare protection.

Seele's innovative technology in developing glass roofs and glass facades opens up new architectural dimensions.

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508

508 CRICURSA
The Kursaal Auditorium and Congress Centre in San Sebastian, northern Spain, designed by Rafael Moneo, won last year's Mies Van der Rohe prize. The building is in the form of two translucent glass cubes – two 'stranded rocks which perpetuate the geography and underline the harmony between the natural and the artificial'. The cubes have curved laminated glass walls which protect them from salt-laden sea winds. The outer skin, of 19mm extra-clear, sandblasted glass and 5mm printed glass, transmits light to the interior by day; at night the exterior is transformed into a mysterious light source.

Enquiry 508 www.arplus.com/enq.html

509 FOCCHI
A new office building in Devonshire Square, London, designed by Bennetts Associates, has a glazed facade with an exposed structural steel frame. The curtain wall glazing, a polyester powder-coated frame with silicone-glazed double-glazed units, spans between the exposed beams of the structural frame. It is designed to accommodate structural movement and is supported by means of thermally isolated brackets.

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509

Specifier's Information

North 4 Design

Vision panel specialist North 4 Design has added a 30-minute fire integrity to its expanding range of vision panels for doors and walls. Finished in brushed stainless steel with a choice of glass and fixings, they provide an attractive solution to functional vision requirements. All vision panels are designed for simple installation and are supplied as complete kits. A custom etching/signage service is also available.

900 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Louis Poulsen

Until now PH Artichoke, the classic lighting fixture, was in three sizes with diameters of 840mm, 720mm and 600mm. It is now available with a diameter of 480mm, suitable for domestic interiors; it can be suspended, for instance, over dining and coffee tables. The PH Artichoke fixture has 72 metal scales arranged in offset rows so that the inner light source is invisible from the outside. The scales are made of lacquered, brushed copper, lacquered, brushed stainless steel or spray-lacquered white.

901 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Concord:marlin

The new lecture theatre is part of an upgrading of facilities at Cardiff University by architect Powell Dobson. The architect wanted to integrate the lighting into the design. In consultation with the Cardiff office of Ove Arup, the Marlinea was chosen to provide general illumination operated by a fully dimmable system. The sleek suspended bi-directional luminaire has highly efficient T5 lamps which give optimum energy saving.

902 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Pilkington Architectural

Ebbisham Centre is a millennium project in Epsom, Surrey, that combines housing, library, leisure facilities and retail space. At the heart is a glazed concourse, 60m long with a facade of Pilkington PlanarTM glass. The architect RMJM wished to ventilate the concourse naturally; this has been done with a double skin of glass. The inner skin is double-glazed; the outer skin is 12mm toughened glass. A 700mm cavity between them acts as a flue for natural ventilation and cooling. Air, introduced through a grille at the cavity bottom, is drawn up by convection and released by louvres.

903 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Levolux

A new building at Bristol University, the Synthetic Chemistry Laboratory, has a Levolux brise-soleil system set within recessed bays with extensive glazing on the south elevation. The brise-soleil system projects 2m from the face of the building and also acts as a walkway to allow the glass to be cleaned and maintained. Levolux Z louvre Matrix is used on the top level and the 'T' tread walk-on system on the four lower levels. The leading edge of each brise-soleil is a 7m steel tube with adjustable ends which accommodate variations in brickwork dimensions.

904 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Alcan

The new Scottish Enterprise building in Glasgow, Scotland, has a facade and curtain wall incorporating a total of 2800m² of Alcan aluminium sheet. The 3mm sheets were anodized in two different finishes, natural silver and Analok II dark blue-grey; they carry a warranty of reproducible and uniform colour. The building was designed by BDP (Glasgow) and the sub-contractor was Henshaw & Sons.

905 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Luxcrete

A nine-storey cylindrical staircase enclosure, constructed in-situ from Luxcrete glass blocks, stands at the corner of the new national stadium at the Millennium Plaza, Cardiff, Wales. The enclosure was made in panels of 190 x 190 x 80mm Flemish pattern blocks, designed to withstand a wind load of 1kN/m² and a balustrade loading of 1kN.m².

906 www.arplus.com/enq.html

Kalzip

Kalzip aluminium standing seam roof has been specified for the new terminal buildings at Barajas Airport, Madrid, Spain. The terminal, designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership, has a roof formed of complex double arches, rising at the eaves like the wings of a bird. The stucco-embossed Kalzip sheets, some tapered, will be laid lengthways and curved into the convex roof shape. The roof soffit will be formed of pre-curved perforated aluminium lined with special sound-absorbing panels and a double layer of compressible mineral wool.

907 www.arplus.com/enq.html

VANITY, VANITY

FAME + ARCHITECTURE

Edited by Julia Chance & Torsten Schmiedeknecht. London: Wiley Academy. 2002. £19.99

Fame + Architecture purports to investigate the relationships between fame and architecture in a series of articles that include interviews with the famous and not so famous (but given the publicity of this volume probably soon to be more famous), and various apparently critical discourses on aspects of fame. We are told that fame is about marketing and media, about celebrity, identity and branding – and possibly about architectural quality.

Although supposedly a discussion about fame, you will not find much in the way of analysis about the mechanics or politics of fame. Nor is there a discussion about how one becomes an arbiter of fame, and how such arbiters determine who is 'in' and who is 'out'. We are left in the dark about the foundation upon which fame is determined. There is also little about what the fame game actually brings to an architect or to architecture in general. Does, for example, fame actually bring commissions as it is imputed to do? From the discussion in this volume we would not know, except for one brief remark, that many important and successful practices neither play the fame game nor are they media darlings. The discussion is also silent about why so many architects achieve celebrity although they have neither contributed much to the larger intellectual discourse, nor produced much that has been built.

In essence, *Fame + Architecture* demonstrates what it purports to investigate: fame is about the condition of being talked or written about and the self-reinforcing relationship between media and architect. Between the few superficial critiques of fame that ironically reinforce the importance of the famous, we get self-congratulation, name dropping, and the very celebration of the famous that is criticized. All of this is in the name of deconstructing fame. For those interested in playing the game, *Fame + Architecture* might be of interest. For those trying to understand its rules and results, it will just be another example of depressing shallowness. EDWARD ROBBINS

VERS UNE ARCHITECTURE VERTE

THE NEW ECO-ARCHITECTURE ALTERNATIVES FROM THE MODERN MOVEMENT

By Colin Porteous. London: Spon Press. 2001. £27.50

New Eco-Architecture is an intriguing book and it prompted me to re-read Reyner Banham's *The Architecture of the Well-tempered Environment* of 1969 to see how times have changed over more than three decades. Both books have much in common, including many of the same built exemplars, but the arguments of each author are of course the result of very different global situations. Nowhere in Banham's book can I detect a hint of the concerns that began to be raised from the early 1970s. And yet, with a great deal of hindsight, it is Colin Porteous's contention that the seeds of the 'green' movement were sown well before this, in the early days of the Modern Movement.

Porteous takes us on a swift tour of early green landmarks, using 1927 as his base date, then moving to 1963, then on to today. He compares at length the mono-material approach of Frank Lloyd Wright versus the multi-layer approach of the International Style protagonists, showing how buildings from each approach performed environmentally, sometimes well (often by mistake), more usually badly. Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier share the limelight (Banham was tempted to rate Corb as 'the most signally delinquent of his generation in matters of environmental management'), but many more are covered: Gropius, Aalto, Schindler, Neutra, Mies van der Rohe et al. So too are the ingredients which later became the hallmarks of sustainable architecture: glass, green roofs, sun-facing aspect, shades and blinds, brise-soleil, the double-skin neutralizing wall, the use of local materials and so on.

But did these early heroes really understand environmental control in the terms that we must today? Porteous argues they did, but I find this unconvincing. Climate-sensitive design is as far as they got (on their better days). The fact that this approach might consume huge amounts of energy and in so doing harm our globe simply did not occur to them (Buckminster Fuller was surely one of the first to recognize this dilemma, and that was not till the early 1960s). Sustainably responsible design is surely far more than this, to the extent of making spurious any academic search for 'green' roots in the Modern Movement.

Porteous's book is full of interesting snippets of information as well as drawn details from some of the early buildings, but it lacks a convincing thesis. There is an abundance of examples by which he attempts to justify his argument, but his tedious dialectic gets the better of him. There is a limp conclusion followed by an even limper 'personal post-script'. Above all, it lacks the poetry of Reyner Banham, confirming my growing belief that too many mediocre books are being published nowadays, presumably to gain brownie points for funding their authors' university departments.

ADAM VOELCKER

Sintra is one of the most entrancing places in the world. On a massive rock in the hills behind Lisbon, it was the country seat of the kings of Portugal, and their palace, which dominates the village, is memorable not only for its fantastic conical kitchen chimneys, but for the intricacy of its Mudéjar architecture: a subtle blend of Classical and Arab themes. The building is admirably and clearly explained by José Custódio Vieira da Silva in *The National Palace, Sintra* (Scala, London, £12.95), a beautifully illustrated exemplar of its type. With excellent drawings and beautiful photographs, the strange atmosphere of the place leaps from the pages. This image of the place sums up its marvellous organic higgledy-piggledy quality, which is simultaneously formal and informal, urban and rural. The book works for both architects and laymen (judging by my instant straw poll). Buy it.

HERE TO INFINITY

INFINITY AND PERSPECTIVE

By Karsten Harries. London: MIT Press. 2001. £25.95

Freedom has been a defining theme of the modern era and, guided by a new objectivity and rationality stimulated by the scientific enlightenment, humanity has been liberated from subjectivity, mysticism, and – as Nietzsche argued in the nineteenth century – even God. But as Karsten Harries argues convincingly in *Infinity and Perspective*, science and technology have only partly filled the vacuum left by the 'death of God', and the gains need to be weighed against what humanity has lost in the process of liberation, including a sense of stability and self-worth.

Harries traces a journey through the evolution of modernity commencing with Copernicus and his revelation of an infinite modern cosmos of which the earth and humans are just a tiny part. Out goes the house-like image of the medieval cosmos, and Harries highlights the influential philosophical realignments framed by the Renaissance scholar Nicholas of Cusa, alongside the exploration of perspective by his contemporary Leon Battista Alberti, a philosophical and practical construct that located man at the centre of the universe. The principal dilemma of the modern edifice is outlined in relation to Enlightenment thinking, and especially Newton, who could find no scientific evidence of a physical God in the universe. If God is incorporeal, Newton determined that God must be everywhere, pervading the infinite.

Karsten Harries explains shifting intellectual perspectives with great clarity, both historically and philosophically. And although this is not a book that focuses on architecture directly, architects will find his account illuminating and highly readable. He concludes with America's journey into outerspace and questions the point of delving ever deeper into the infinity of the universe when the real challenges for humanity are at home. Harries proposes that we leave space to science and refocus our attention on making a success of dwelling on earth. Certainly, as place-makers will concur, it is better. ROBERT TAVERNOR

Thomas Herzog imparts magic to even the most mundane building types. This detail of the ventilation system of his Landsberg petrol station shows his imaginative commitment to the green agenda. *Thomas Herzog, Architektur + Technologie* (Prestel, London, £39.95), in English and German, thoroughly covers the main works. Ingeborg Flagge's editing is a model, and Peter Buchanan's introduction locates Herzog as a most profound architect.

THIN SKIN

IN DETAIL: BUILDING SKINS – CONCEPTS, LAYERS, MATERIALS

Edited by Christian Schittich. Basel: Birkhäuser. 2001. €58

Although beautifully presented, this book falls somewhat between a text-book on light-weight cladding and a good architectural magazine with some recent fine examples of building skins. Predictably these include Moneo at San Sebastian, Eden Centre, Delft Library and others. Zumthor at Bregenz is on the front cover but not in the case studies.

This magazine format has the disadvantage that the buildings are described as more than their cladding with the result that the technical information regarding their fixing and jointing and detailed specifications of the materials used are difficult to interpret from the limited information given. Detailed drawings are normally 1:20 or 1:10 but like *Detail* magazine, from where the layout has been borrowed, they can only be regarded as generic to give general layout of the parts of the assembly with no guidance towards their source or the manufacturers involved.

Surprisingly for a German publication, the first more theoretical part, three essays by Schittich, Lang and Krippner, makes no mention of recent work being carried out by Jan Wurm and others at Aachen shown in Konstruktiver Glasbau 2, where the possibility to use treatment of the glass surface and shading devices as part of the overall structural performance of the assembly is described. Treatment of the glass using fritting, silk screening or interlayers does not have to be just decoration as Schittich suggests. The need for environmental control and perhaps less obsession with transparency may lead us into better development of kinetic facades and combinations of the physical and structural properties of lightweight cladding which this book might have been expected to predict.

There are some beautiful examples of such an approach buried in the book, chiefly von Gerkan & Marg's double glazed 'modern relic' panels at Volkenrode (originally at Hanover), summer space by Johl, Jozwiak, Ruppel, Berlin, and Behnisch's roof for the swimming pool at Bad Elster. Maybe for this reason alone the book is worth buying. ALAN BROOKES

POOR PERRET

AUGUSTE PERRET

By Karla Britton. London: Phaidon Press. 2001. £39.95

'Even with the extensive amount of serious research that has been devoted to Perret, the enigmatic, even impervious quality of his work remains a stumbling block', states Karla Britton in her preface; 'Written from outside the milieu of French technical analyses, ... this book seeks to make his work more accessible'. Her aim is 'to understand Perret as he understood himself'. Needless to say, she falls short of the mark.

Her introductory chapter, which skates through Perret's career at speed, and sections of her text dealing in more detail with three of his buildings (25 bis rue Franklin, 51 rue Raynouard and the Musée des Travaux Publics) read like perfectly acceptable student essays. But her 'thematic' discussion of Perret's work is a deal less satisfactory.

Although not the worst, the chapter on ecclesiastical architecture is both laborious and superficial because, despite copious references to published writings by a cast ranging from Le Corbusier to A. Trystan Edwards, Arnold Whittick, Peter Collins and Kenneth Frampton, Britton never really gets to grips with the subject. Political tensions between the Catholic church and the French Republic are sidestepped, yet diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican were severed from 1904 to 1921. If seen in this light, the publicity Perret attracted with Notre Dame du Raincy (1922-23) might be better understood, as might the polemics it generated – particularly among Catholic architects miffed to be pipped at the post by a heathen.

Moreover, by eschewing any discussion of the Catholic liturgy and its architectural implications, Britton fails to appreciate that Perret's layout for St Joseph's, Le Havre (1951-54)

anticipated the requirements of Vatican II by a whole decade. Instead, she claims inner knowledge of countless souls: 'However refined the best examples, (Perret's) churches are not usually experienced as sacred spaces, as environments that encourage the individual to seek a relationship with God'.

Much of the book is torture to read : careless transcription, conversion or translation have produced a generous sprinkling of unreliable measurements and misinformation (e.g. the words 'recalling the poetry of Goethe who, while reclining on his divan' should read 'reminiscent of poetry in Goethe's collection *West-östlicher Divan*); some building descriptions beggar belief and so do many daft assertions. For instance, according to a story borrowed from Pierre Vago, Perret paid no heed to any of the exhibits in the architecture section at the 1936 Milan Triennale until he reached a large photograph of his own Mobilier National building, whereupon he stopped and said : 'Now that, that is architecture'. To Britton, this anecdote 'captures the myopic sense of achievement Perret felt', in that he 'seems to have been unaware of the ambivalence which is evident in the Mobilier. For him, it was a summarial reflection of the kind of architecture to which he aspired'. Perret deserves better, and so does the reading public.

CHARLOTTE ELLIS

The Coptic monasteries of Egypt are quite extraordinary. Lost in the deserts, they are some of the oldest religious foundations in the world, and St Antony's under a barren yellow cliff in the east of the country is the most venerable of them – perhaps the most ancient religious community in the world. Its thirteenth-century paintings have recently been revealed again after years of obscurity under layers of soot and bad overpainting. They are joyfully recorded in *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St Antony at the Red Sea*, edited by Elizabeth S. Bolman with photography by Patrick Godeau, Yale, London, £45.

GROTESQUE CONTRASTS

CITIES IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). London: Earthscan. 2001. £20

Some of us remember friends scraping together the cost of attending the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) held at Vancouver in 1976. They were part of the huge parallel gathering of voluntary and non-governmental organizations and they came back with more faith in their own priorities than in those of governments. In 1996, Habitat II was held at Istanbul, with a vast simultaneous forum of unofficial bodies. This massive report draws together strategies for sustainable social and economic development agreed as the Habitat Agenda signed by representatives of 171 member states at that conference.

The Secretary-General of the Habitat II conference felt that the principles on human settlement that came out of the Vancouver conference were mostly prescriptive and patronizing in tone and that it was consequently not surprising that the principles adopted there 'did not lead to decisive positive action.' Will Habitat II be similarly unproductive? This massive report finds that no country had an explicit policy on human settlements and that this is not unexpected, given the situation that the preparatory committee called the 'grotesque contrasts between extremes of wealth and poverty, between concentrated power and repression'. For there is in fact a gulf between politicians and the findings of the researchers they employ, and the actual value of this volume is most likely to be as a source of statistics to support the opinions of urban researchers around the globe.

COLIN WARD

IDEAL LANDSCAPE CAPTURED

LUIS BARRAGÁN'S GARDENS OF EL PEDREGAL

By Keith L. Eggener. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 2001. $40, £28

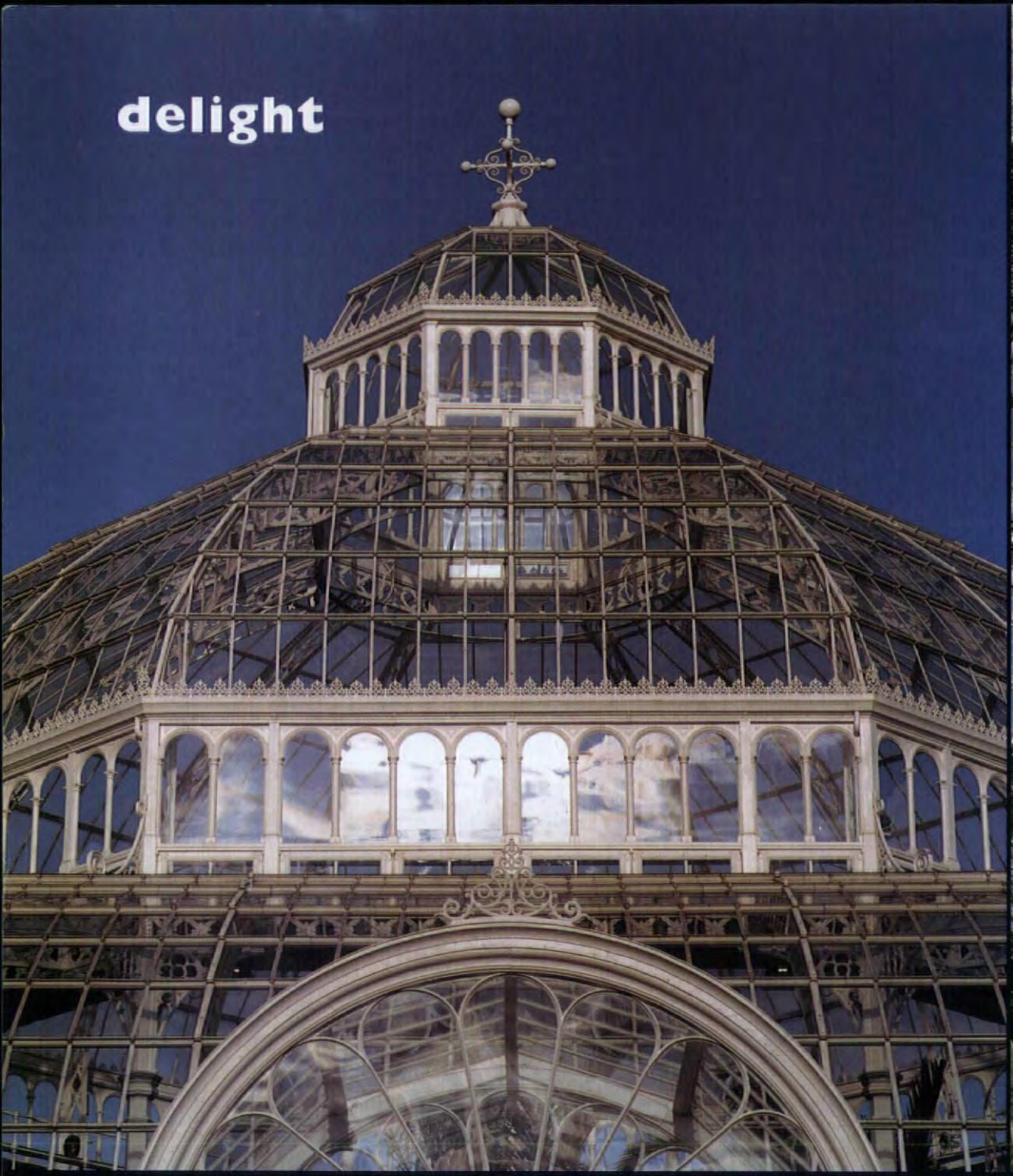
From 1945 to '53 Luis Barragán oversaw the conception, design, construction and successful marketing of El Pedregal. Keith Eggener explains in detail and with insight how 1250 acres of extraordinary natural landscape created by lava flow were transformed into an 'urbanistic suburbia' of 700 lots. 'Simple abstract' houses were set among gardens with layers of purplish black volcanic rock, in twisted vertical chimneys, stalagmites, and stalactites all enclosed by high walls or 'vertical gardens'. Public spaces, the Plaza de las Fuentes and Plaza Cigarro opened off the high walled streets and resembled the austere street facades and small urban squares of traditional Mexican neighbourhoods. This was a radical departure from the 'California colonial' style of houses set in lawns open to tree-lined streets, then fashionable for this type of development.

Barragán saw the project as 'a transcendental success, his most important and interesting work'. Its progress was recorded almost daily by the photographer Armando Salas Portugal, 40 of whose magical, close range, carefully framed photos illustrate the book and convey an idea of the Elysium that was El Pedregal in its early years.

ELIZABETH YOUNG

Book reviews from this and recent issues of The Architectural Review can now be seen on our website at www.arplus.com and the books can be ordered online, many at special discount.

delight



IN AN EXTRAORDINARY FIT OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL ENTHUSIASM, SEFTON PARK HAS BEEN CROWNED AGAIN WITH ITS GLEAMING IRON AND GLASS PALM HOUSE, NOW FAITHFULLY RESTORED TO VICTORIAN MAGNIFICENCE.

Sefton is one of the more affluent suburbs of Liverpool. In 1872, its park was inaugurated, a mighty green space like those of the other northern industrial towns: open to the poor and surrounded by the villas of the rich – a concept first propounded by Nash and Repton at London's Regent's Park in the early years of the century.

In 1896, the Palm House was completed. The shining iron and glass structure replaced the bandstand on the highest part of the park, and its octagonal space was filled with wondrous exotic plants brought to cold and grimy northern England from all over the Empire, which provided the city with its wealth. The prefabricated design seems to have been bought virtually off the shelf from Messrs Mackenzie & Moncur of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

By the early 1990s, the place was dilapidated, closed and threatened by demolition. Popular pressure, culminating in a 75 per cent grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, allowed restoration of the whole thing. It was dismantled by Shepley Engineers down to the basic eight columns and their crowning gallery, which were all abraided and repainted. Many of the glazing bars were found to be cracked because of differential expansion between wrought and cast iron elements after a new and more efficient heating system was installed after the Second World War.

All sound elements were cleaned and finished with modern paints; broken elements were replaced in cast spheroidal graphite iron to exactly the same sections as the originals. And the shell was re-assembled. Getting on for 4000 individually templated panes of toughened glass were carefully inserted, each in its particular place. Shepley's managed to achieve the original Victorian 3mm tolerances.

Now the Palm House glitters again as the crown of the park. The inside is less lush than it was, for the place is used for social events as well as botanical instruction. But there are still palms from all over the world, and the atmosphere combines gaiety, elegance and awe of the prodigality of nature in the way it must have done for our ancestors 100 years ago. MATTHEW MARR

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