

RIBA UK Awards: outstanding design honoured

O'Donnell + Tuomey's Rambling Houses

Annabelle Selldorf's art odyssey

Navigating BSR Gateway 2

**The RIBA Journal**

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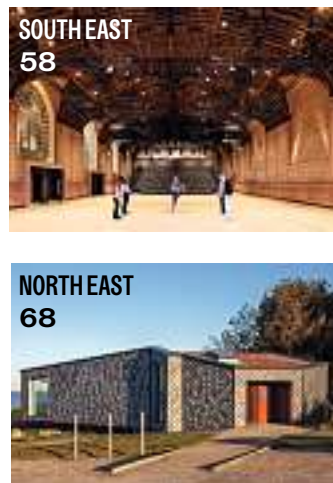
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# The Awards

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RIBA UK Awards:  
Reuse renaissance



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Are you an architecture superhero? Enter now!

On the cover One Portwall Square, a RIBA South West and  
Wessex Award winner, photographed by Timothy Soar



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# The Awards



There has been a clear shift towards the recognition of reuse in this year's RIBA UK Awards. There are the original cast-iron columns of the Hafod Morfa Copperworks in Wales, now a distillery and visitor centre, reinforced with discreet stainless-steel components. For the second time in two years, a London borough has led the way on reuse, with Tower Hamlets commissioning AHMM to repurpose the Royal London Hospital, which started life in 1751 and now houses 2,400 staff.

**Above** A 10-year reuse project at an urban scale by Hawkins\Brown: Central Foundation Boys' School near Old Street in Islington, London.

At the other end of the scale sit the lightweight interventions of the Farrell Centre and its urban room in Newcastle, with its bright and characterful designs. Many of the 116 winners in the RIBA UK Awards show architects creatively making the most of our existing buildings: reinventing churches and breathing new life into old homes, drawing on the texture, history and memory embodied in these, as they also move towards cutting carbon. ●

Eleanor Young

JACK HOBHOUSE

# Yorkshire



# 5

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£14m**

Total cost of projects

**5,062m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£3,558**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## WONDERLAB: THE BRAMALL GALLERY, YORK DE MATOS RYAN FOR NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM

Contract value: £3.5m GIA: 1,498m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,336

National Railway Museum's Wonderlab: The Bramall Gallery is an interactive STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) gallery designed to inspire future generations of engineers and inventors. With intergenerational appeal, it focuses on captivating the minds of children aged 7 to 14. The gallery's 18 interactive exhibits showcase different engineering and rail concepts, encouraging visitors to think like engineers and to develop skills as they design, build and test in a playful, permissive manner. Housed in the former locomotive repair workshop, the scheme is inspired by its layered history and authentic, raw interior. A calm and sustainable low-carbon natural material palette enables the interactives and large-scale art installations to take centre stage within the space. To create the interactives, a process of testing and prototyping involved more than 1,300 individuals, including experts within the rail industry and education, and members of local community groups and the general public. The overall quality of the gallery is outstanding and testament to the intelligent and ambitious brief, but also to a design team who have meticulously delivered.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith

Project Architect of the Year José Esteves de Matos



HUFTON + CROW (2)







NICK DEARDEN (2)

## HULL MINSTER, HULL

**BAUMAN LYONS ARCHITECTS FOR HOLY TRINITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

Contract value: £6.5m GIA: 2,345m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,772

The Grade I-listed Hull Minster, which is England's largest parish church by floor area, has been transformed into a sustainable community and cultural asset by an ambitious renovation and remodelling project. This was completed in three phases over 12 years. Comprehensive internal and external reordering of the building has enabled the Minster, which was on the brink of closure, to reintegrate with the surrounding city, protecting its heritage for future generations to enjoy. Works to the church include an improved entrance sequence, a reordered nave and choir vestry, and a new extension with a café space. Throughout the project, the materiality and detail of the Minster are referenced through the approach to details. The completed scheme has delivered new possibilities for the building, not only as a place of worship, but as a cultural and civic centre, gallery, marketplace and space of refuge.



## YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPACE, LEEDS ARKLEBOYCE FOR ST GEMMA'S HOSPICE

Contract value: £285,000 GIA: 45m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £6,333

The Young People's Space is a new, purpose-built facility for the Young People's Service at St Gemma's Hospice, within the grounds of the hospice's gardens in Moortown, Leeds. The sustainability-focused building provides designated accommodation and support spaces for children and young people, at the hospice and across the wider Leeds district, who have been affected by a family member's serious illness or death. The pavilion provides a combination of informal social and private meeting spaces, which overlook and open onto beautiful, well-established gardens. The architects collaborated with St Gemma's staff and a group of young people through a careful piece of co-design. The result offers comfort and emotional support to patients and families, and an invaluable template for developments in palliative care settings.

Small Project of the Year

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone



BUILDING NARRATIVES (2)



**PETRONELLA HOUSE, SHEFFIELD**  
**CHILES EVANS + CARE ARCHITECTS**  
**FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 612m<sup>2</sup>

Petronella House involves the refurbishment and extension of a substantial Victorian villa in a Sheffield conservation area. The client understood the importance of the building and wanted the house 'to re-emerge from years of under-appreciation'. The resulting project elevates the original building, blurring the boundaries between the house and its unashamedly contemporary new additions as an exemplar of conservation, restoration and refurbishment. Alterations seamlessly work with the original architecture's language, and new energy conservation measures are invisibly integrated throughout the house. The landscape has been completely updated to provide a contemporary yet sympathetic setting for this building of townscape merit. New cobble steps replace a tarmac driveway, and now bring a smile to people passing by.

HOWARDEVANS


**DUNCAN PLACE LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY HUB, LOFTUS**  
**EDABLE ARCHITECTURE FOR REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

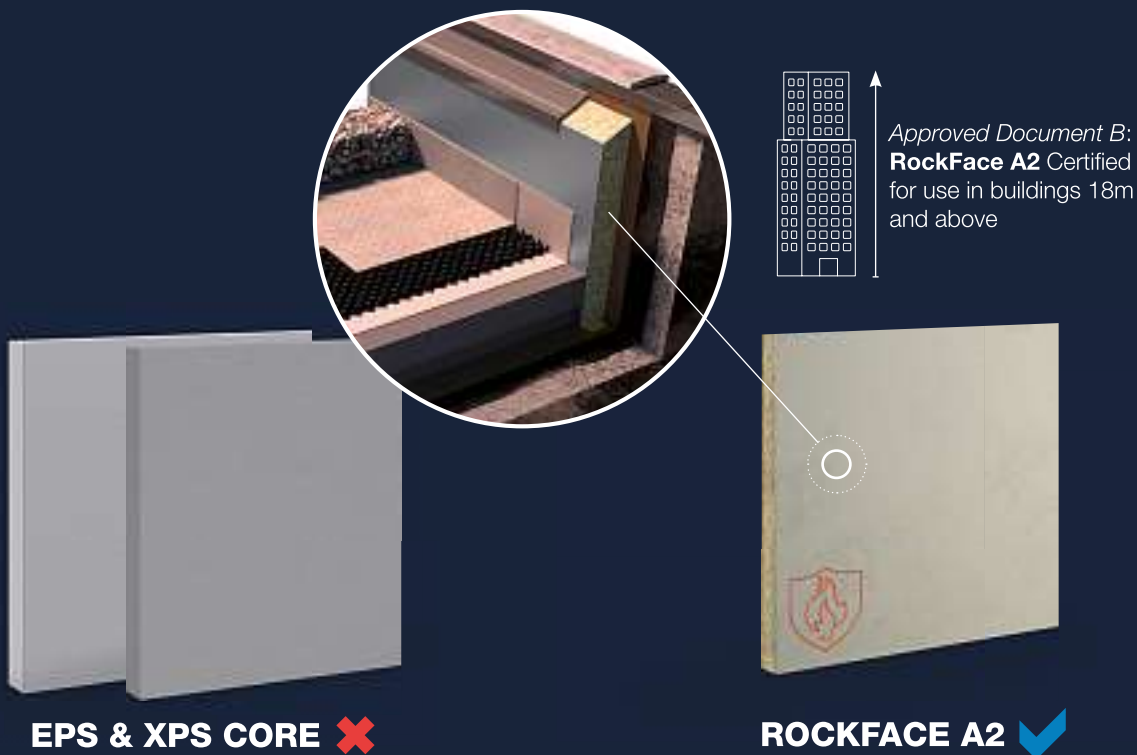
Contract value: Confidential GIA: 562m<sup>2</sup>

Duncan Place brings together an existing youth and community facility, family hub and library under one roof to create a cultural and community destination for Loftus. Working carefully and extending only where necessary, the project breathes new civic life into a historic building. The project includes internal alterations and two distinct extensions, each designed with its own character to reflect the differing briefs and context. Both were closely designed with the centre's users, including the existing youth group. Designed as a meeting place that feels welcoming to all, the form takes inspiration from the existing building, while the interior strategy makes a playful connection to the park. The library extension acts as a beacon and reconnects the neighbouring park to the high street, providing a new accessible front and linking the library to an outdoor event space.



SALLY ANN NORMAN





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# East



# 14

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£1.2bn**

Total cost of projects

**116,866m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£4,157**

Cost per m<sup>2</sup> of  
average project

## YOUNG'S COURT DEVELOPMENT AT EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

### STANTON WILLIAMS FOR EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Contract value: £21m GIA: 5760m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £3,646

The Young's Court Development is the largest single expansion of Emmanuel College Cambridge for over 100 years. It ensures that the college's historic campus continues to nurture communal life, providing spaces which bring the community together and support collaboration, interaction and the exchange of ideas. Part new build, part retrofit, Stanton Williams' scheme introduces new social and informal study areas as well as residential accommodation for 48 students. This new provision addresses the college's aspiration to accommodate all its undergraduates on the city-centre site. Intricately embedded into a 400-year-old network of collegial spaces, this exemplary project has transformed an area previously characterised by surface car parking on the southern perimeter of the college, repurposing underutilised in-between spaces and poorly performing existing buildings, and stitching them together in a dialogue of new and old.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith







JACK HOBHOUSE

**THE ENTOPIA BUILDING, CAMBRIDGE**  
**ARCHITYPE, FEILDEN+MAWSON AND EVE WALDRON**  
**DESIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

Contract value: £10.54m GIA: 2,939m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £3,586

The Entopia Building in Cambridge exemplifies sustainable innovation through the transformative retrofit of a 1930s telephone exchange. Commissioned by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) to house its global headquarters, this deep-green retrofit balances Passivhaus, BREEAM and WELL standards with the challenges of working on a heritage building in a conservation area. Led by Architype, the design team included Feilden+Mawson, ISG, BDP, and Max Fordham, alongside interior specialist Eve Waldron Design. The Entopia Building sets a benchmark for adaptive reuse, turning a historic structure into a vibrant, flexible and collaborative hub for sustainable leadership. Its reimagining has created a healthy environment where conversation can flow, ideas can be cultivated, and sustainability can be embraced.

Project Architect of the Year Mark Martines  
Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk



HUFTON + CROW(2)

**THE DISCOVERY CENTRE (DISC), CAMBRIDGE**  
**HERZOG & DE MEURON/ BDP FOR ASTRAZENECA**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 62,842m<sup>2</sup>

The Discovery Centre (DISC) is AstraZeneca's new global facility in Cambridge, envisioned as a hub for biomedical research and development, for education, healthcare, science, research institutions and companies. The architectural concept places research as a centrepiece activity, and puts science on display through openness, transparency, and reflection. The building is a triangular glass disc with rounded edges that loosely follows the shape of the site. DISC is defined by a sawtooth roof, running east to west to create a unifying zig-zag geometry of the overall envelope, and provide optimal natural lighting deep into the laboratories and office spaces.



JIM STEPHENSON



MADDIE PERSENT

**SUNSPOT, JAYWICK SANDS**  
**HAT PROJECTS FOR TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 1,490m<sup>2</sup>

Sunspot is a groundbreaking project in one of the country's most economically deprived places: the plotlands settlement of Jaywick Sands on the Essex coast. It stands on a central seafront site which had been derelict for many years, following the decline of the attractions that once anchored the economy and identity of the community. HAT Projects' design has created a joyful landmark, a new hub for the community and a catalyst for wider regeneration. The building provides 24 low-cost business units alongside a covered market, a community garden, a bus shelter, a café, public WCs and an outdoor events space. It was fully let within months of opening and hosts a weekly market and other community events, from theatre and music to training and drop-in clinics. Its zig-zag silhouette, distinctive colour scheme and the accents of canopies, awnings and signage form an unpretentious, generous and resilient architecture – reflecting the character of the community itself.

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone





**KNIGHTS PARK, CAMBRIDGE****POLLARD THOMAS EDWARDS AND  
ALISON BROOKS ARCHITECTS FOR HILL**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 40,306m<sup>2</sup>

Knights Park in Eddington, Cambridge, is a net zero-carbon low-rise, high-density development of 249 homes. This scheme forms a major site within the University of Cambridge's 150-hectare Eddington urban extension, a mixed academic and urban community that includes a primary and nursery school, health centre, hotel, supermarket and shops. This collaborative urban design offers a sustainable neighbourhood model, integrating avenues, lanes and pedestrian 'green streets' with a corresponding grain of residential typologies by Alison Brooks Architects and Pollard Thomas Edwards: terraced houses, courtyard houses, and villas, all rated Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5, with home offices. A trio of 'palazzo' apartment buildings signal a permeable neighbourhood threshold.

PAUL RIDDLE

**CLAYWORTH, DUNSTABLE****ARKLEBOYCE ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 477m<sup>2</sup>

This new-build private dwelling is designed for accessible use for a stroke survivor and her partner. The dwelling, set within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a contemporary and contextual response to the specific needs of the clients, and embraces the immediate and wider landscape. Everything is about comfortably handling a disability, and the result has been 'transformational' for the clients. The ambition was also to provide stylish living, and this has been elegantly delivered throughout the house. Totally at peace in its setting, the house delivers generous, flexible and accessible space to a family who wanted something special – and, in collaboration with their architects, got exactly what they wanted.

JIM STEPHENSON



JAMES RETIEF

**AMENTO, SUFFOLK****JAMES GORST ARCHITECTS  
FOR LIZ GOODRICH AND PETER MAVROGHENIS**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 250m<sup>2</sup>

Amento is a house that starts with an idea about geometry. The intersection of two perpendicular walls form a broken cruciform in plan, with each of the four quadrants having their own functional identity. Designed for keen horticulturalists, these walls frame four character gardens around the home, investigating the relationship of light, shelter and scale in the rural setting. Internally, the material and colour palette is stripped down to enable the vibrancy of the external natural world to dominate. Exposed Douglas fir beams extend from the interior, creating a generous threshold between the house and landscape. Outside, these thick diaphragm walls are punctuated by deep portal openings allowing access from one garden to the next.



**MILL HIDE, ROYSTON, HERTFORDSHIRE**  
**POULSON ARCHITECTURE**  
**FOR TIM AND ELIZABETH POULSON**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 507m<sup>2</sup>

The concept is essentially for a single sculptural form incorporating all the amenities for a country dwelling, rather than the more common style expressed in a range of building forms. The design solution is driven by a synthesis between that sculptural form and the parameters for a dwelling, where neither should be compromised and both elements are able to excel. The landscape character and the diverse ecology of the site in the countryside provided an opportunity for the design of a new house, at one with the natural surroundings, which extend and amplify the habitat for the adjoining nature reserve.



NICK GUTTRIDGE



KILIAN O'SULLIVAN (2)

**NORTH SEA EAST WOOD, NORFOLK HAYHURST & CO. FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 154m<sup>2</sup>

North Sea East Wood involves the remodelling of a 1980s bungalow for a retired couple, the architect's parents. The project reorganises the three-bedroomed home and provides a modest extension that envelopes the northeastern corner of the house with a flint skin. This approach maximises views out over the North Sea to one side of the site, while revealing its location at the foot of the expansive East Wood on the other. Internally, the project provides both an intimate set of connected spaces for the day-to-day lives of the two occupants, and convivial social spaces enjoyed by the extended family. The design provides places for reading and contemplation with views towards the horizon, and a dining space and thin-plan kitchen over the garden. It is a house that has been designed uniquely around how the owners wanted to live – and uniquely in response to its site.

Small Project of the Year







### CAST CORBEL HOUSE, NORWICH GRAFTED FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: £316,000 GIA: 110m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,873

Cast Corbel House is the debut design and build project by craft-led architecture practice, Grafted. The existing property suffered from poor insulation and a low-quality, draughty 90s kitchen extension, making it unbearably cold in winter and affecting the ability of the clients – a professional couple with grown-up children and several grandchildren – to enjoy their home. They were keen to host their ever-growing family, as well as friends, but many of the rooms in the house had become unsuitable for young children to play in or for guests to relax in.

Grafted's extension and ground-floor renovation sought to breathe new life into the five-bedroom Victorian house. In a nod to the existing brick detailing, the extension's ambitious facade features a columnal rhythm of red bricks and corbelled precast concrete panels that the practice fabricated in house. The kitchen largely embodies natural materials, offering a warm interior atmosphere for gatherings of any size. Interventions elsewhere focused on creating comfortable settings for work, rest and play, with heritage features carefully restored.



### JANKES BARN, COLCHESTER

LYNCH ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 191m<sup>2</sup>

The Jankes Barn conservation and landscape project involved extensive structural and fabric repairs to a dilapidated, Grade II-listed, timber-framed threshing barn and associated outbuildings in rural Essex, and their subsequent conversion for residential use. Work involved best-practice creative conservation and adaptive reuse to create an energy efficient new home while retaining the historic fabric and vernacular character of the agricultural buildings. The aim was to make as few changes as possible to the appearance of the existing structures both inside and out, thereby retaining the atmosphere of the place, and doing the minimum to enable them to be inhabited. The client is a landscape designer and the gardens she designed are integral to the architecture. The courtyard becomes a 'hortus conclusus', or enclosed garden, with a simpler, more formal composition at the rear – a square pond surrounded by a perennial meadow, overlooking open fields.

Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX



### DOVEHOUSE COURT ALMSHOUSES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

MOLE ARCHITECTS FOR GIRTON TOWN CHARITY

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 996m<sup>2</sup>

Mole Architects has completed a new Passivhaus-certified almshouse development for Girton Town Charity in the village of Girton on the outskirts of Cambridge. The development provides 15 one-bedroom bungalows and flats specifically designed for over 55-year-olds – an increasing demographic – who live or have family connections within the Girton Parish boundary, to enable them to live independently for as long as they can. The site was previously occupied by six bungalows constructed in the 1930s and 1960s and a further dwelling converted into the charity's offices. They were not well suited to occupation by the elderly, and fell well below the current space standards as well as suffering from structural issues, which precluded reuse.





PETER LANDERS PHOTOGRAPHY (2)

**HOUSESTEAD, SUFFOLK**  
**SANEI HOPKINS ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 510m<sup>2</sup>

The location, in the grounds of a large multigenerational family property, is within the Suffolk Coastal Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty alongside the Alde Estuary and is also in a site of special scientific interest. Having occupied a small annexe for 10 years and after five children, the clients began thinking about occupying another part of the estate and creating their own multigenerational home. An available derelict lodge was too small, but an adjacent, large, non-indigenous, self-seeded birch grove offered both a potential site and the opportunity for significant improvements to the heathland. The new 'lodge' perpetuates the evolutionary nature of rural estates and farms that change in response to external factors. The project was conceived in 2010 and approved in 2014 as a new isolated dwelling in the open countryside under (then) paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



**HARPENDEN HOUSE, HARPENDEN**  
**EMIL EVE ARCHITECTS**  
**FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 334m<sup>2</sup>

Emil Eve Architect's complete renovation of a detached Edwardian house – which had been operating as a nursery for many years – within the Harpenden Conservation Area has created a flexible family home with space to grow. It demonstrates the potential that high-quality contemporary design has to work in harmony with historic architecture. The addition of three angled volumes with a continuous undulating sawtooth roof creates distinct but flowing spaces. Expansive sloped rooflights illuminate the interiors with a calm, even quality which recreates the essence of Nordic light. A dramatic double-height space established at the centre of the house features a mezzanine library and establishes connections up and through the building.

TARAN WILKIN

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# London

## WEST

**6**

Winning projects

**£294.2m**

Total cost of projects

**63,634m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£4,589**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## NORTH

**5**

Winning projects

**£126.2m**

Total cost of projects

**18,043m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£5,084**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## EAST

**11**

Winning projects

**£470.8m**

Total cost of projects

**106,111m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£3,882**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## SOUTH EAST

**10**

Winning projects

**£62.5m**

Total cost of projects

**21,157m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£3,580**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## SOUTH WEST

**6**

Winning projects

**£109.9m**

Total cost of projects

**4,932m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£5,613**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>  
(excludes Houses  
of Parliament)



### YOUNG V&A, TOWER HAMLETS AOC ARCHITECTURE AND DE MATOS RYAN FOR VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Contract value: £8,400,000

GIA: 5,615m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £1,496

The Museum of Childhood has been transformed to create Young V&A, the UK's first museum built with and for young people: a light, bright and energising destination. Designed to foster creative curiosity and confidence in the next generation, it is the most significant intervention in the Grade II\*-listed building's 151-year history. A new sculptural 'kaleidoscope' stair has been added at the east end and a generous ramp has been set off the main central space (now called the Town Square), to create much-improved access. The square is surrounded by three permanent galleries containing 2,000 world-class objects from the V&A collection and a range of creative interactives spaces. Each of the galleries is announced by bold supergraphics visible from the main entrance, making what is on offer clear and inviting. Young V&A also includes a new temporary exhibition gallery, a shop, a learning centre and quiet space.





**LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION, NEWHAM**  
**ALLIES AND MORRISON FOR UNIVERSITY OF**  
**THE ARTS LONDON AND LONDON LEGACY**  
**DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 38,144m<sup>2</sup>

The new London College of Fashion brings an institution, which until recently operated in six disparate sites, together on the East Bank in Stratford. Catering for courses from journalism to jewellery, fashion illustration to footwear, menswear to marketing, it is a 21<sup>st</sup>-century atelier. Totalling almost 40,000m<sup>2</sup>, and housing thousands of students and staff over its 17 storeys, it is one of the world's largest centres for fashion. With its new home, the college has broadened the scope of what it teaches, and can stay ahead of the ever-changing ways of learning and teaching practice. There is a richness of flexible spaces for general learning, alongside specialist places for creativity and practice-based making. From a robust approach to materiality to a dramatic series of interior spaces, it provides a fitting backdrop to the colour of fashion and the charisma of its future creators.

**THE GILBERT & GEORGE CENTRE,**  
**TOWER HAMLETS**  
**SIRS ARCHITECTS FOR**  
**THE GILBERT & GEORGE CENTRE**

Contract value: Confidential  
 GIA: 602m<sup>2</sup>

Tucked away in a narrow yard off Brick Lane, the Gilbert & George Centre is an ingenious adaptive reuse of an 1820s former brewery on a restricted site. The logistical challenges and space limitations required a challenging approach to carve sufficient space for the centre's transformation; a basement level was constructed under the pre-existing building's footprint and a new above-ground side-extension was added. The deft concealing of so much of the centre's space means very little of it is read from the street. Rather, the centre is modestly announced by handmade gates in green wrought iron, which were designed by the artists themselves. This project provides a permanent home for an unrivalled artistic legacy to the public benefit and, as built representation of the artists' 'Art for All' ethos, free access for all members of society. The aim is for it to become a leading cultural institution as well as a hub for research, fostering public art education.



PRUDENCE CUMING © THE GILBERT & GEORGE CENTRE





### MARY WARD CENTRE, NEWHAM AWW FOR MARY WARD CENTRE

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 2,890m<sup>2</sup>

Occupying a distinctive, reinvented building on Stratford High Street in East London, the completed Mary Ward Centre serves as a vibrant community hub and haven for lifelong learning. Bright, bustling and inclusive, the centre embodies hope and future possibilities, offering genuine opportunities for connection and positive transformation within the local area. The renovated building promotes inclusivity and accessibility for all learners, fostering individual growth, collective empowerment and social cohesion. Sustainable governance stands as a core principle for the Mary Ward Centre, demonstrated by the project's circular design philosophy; from the RetroFirst approach, to working with local networks throughout the building life cycle to realise a regenerative model for procurement of materials, equipment and services.

NICK CAVILLE



### 8 BLEEDING HEART YARD, ISLINGTON GROUPWORK FOR SEAFORTH LAND HOLDINGS

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 3,386m<sup>2</sup>

8 Bleeding Heart Yard reimagines the pre-1970s accumulation of mid- to late-Victorian shops, warehouses and townhouses on this site in Hatton Garden that were demolished to make way for the concrete-framed, ribbon-windowed office building that has stood here since. The project actively explores the emblematic kunstform of a misremembered past embodied in a 3mm perforated recycled metal facade, concealing new timber roof and rear extensions, and upgrades to the existing envelope and internal organisation to suit a modern office environment. From a distance the building creates the illusion of permanence, of the authenticity and security of an often-idealised past. On approach this perceived solidity is just a mirage, with details slipped, abstracted and transparent, an incomplete memory and – in the manner of Palazzo del Te's apparently falling pediments and triglyphs – the expression of a facade as non-structural, decorative and abstracted from earlier tectonic forms.

TIM SOAR



### ST MARY'S WALTHAMSTOW, WALTHAM FOREST MATTHEW LLOYD ARCHITECTS FOR ST MARY'S WALTHAMSTOW

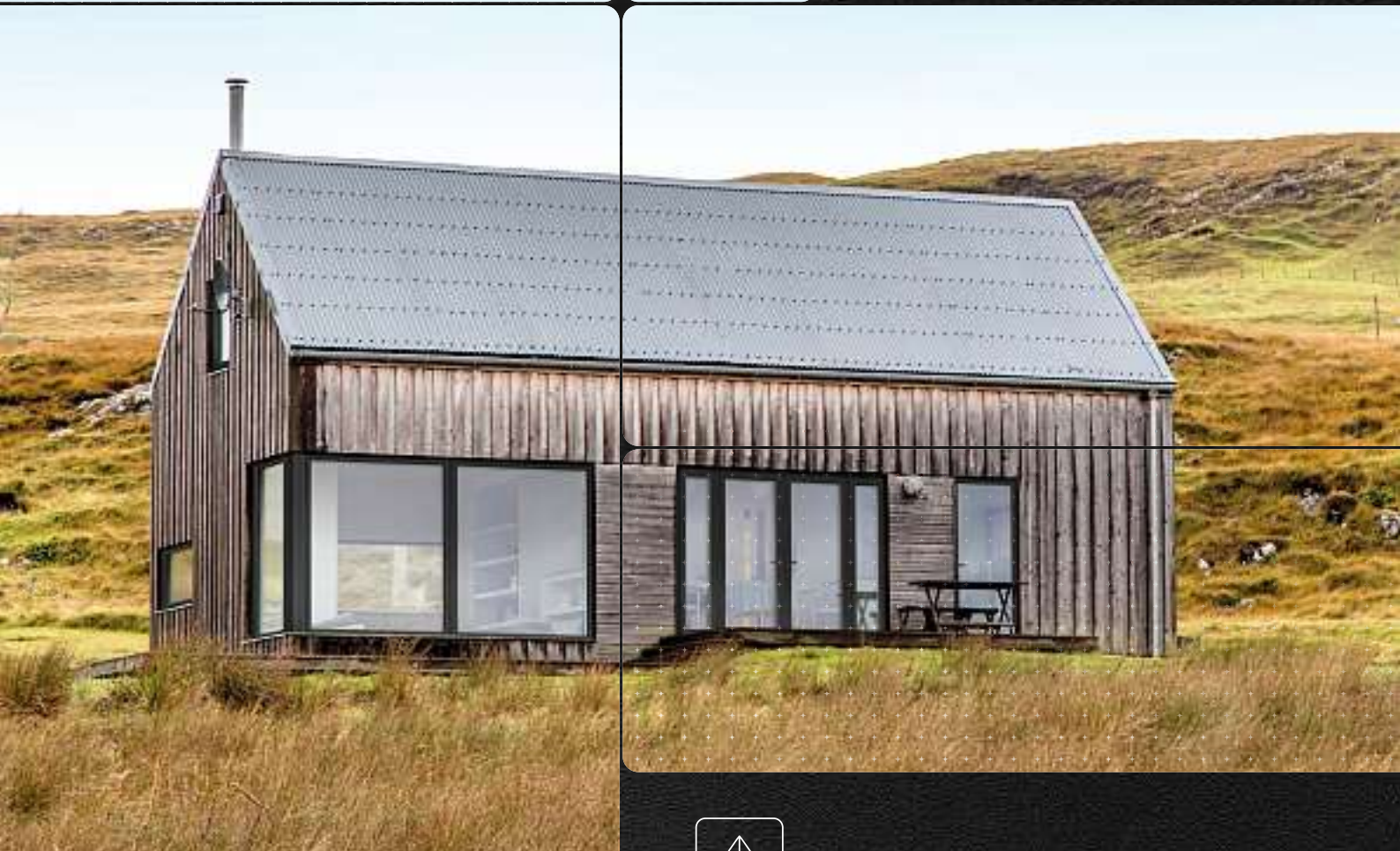
Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 750m<sup>2</sup>

St Mary's Walthamstow is a regenerative faith and community project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which enables both accessible and sustainable outreach, and the parish to enhance and secure the future of its Grade-II\* listed church. The vision at St Mary's was to bring local communities together to explore their heritage, cultures and histories in a flexible, inclusive and welcoming setting. The completed project, which includes restoration and reordering of the church and the addition of a timber extension, is a working parish church at the centre of the community, within a revitalised historic venue where all are warmly welcomed.

TIM CROOKER (2)







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# BUILD ON-SITE



**COMMERCIAL MVHR UNITS ASSEMBLED ON-SITE**

\*BlauBuild RV 1200HE successfully installed within the Royal Albert Hall







JAMES BRITTAIN

**CATCHING SUN HOUSE,  
WALTHAM FOREST  
STUDIOSHAW FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: £400,000

GIA: 97.5m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,100

Catching Sun House is located in Walthamstow, northeast London, on a brownfield site between Victorian terraces. It was designed to be a long-term home for the practice's founder. The plot was bought at auction with an approved planning consent for two houses, with costs shared with friends who have built on the other half. Several years then passed before construction began, giving time to refine the design. The building is conceived as a series of boxes connected by glazed screens, creating spaces – some internal, some external – which read as one. The articulated roof form gives ceiling height and clerestory windows allow light to penetrate, especially in winter. The material palette – a double skin of concrete blocks, polished concrete floor, anodised aluminium windows and coloured MDF – is kept simple.



**TOWER COURT, HACKNEY  
ADAM KHAN ARCHITECTS, MUF  
ARCHITECTURE/ART, CHILD  
GRADDON LEWIS ARCHITECTS  
FOR HACKNEY COUNCIL**

Contract value: £37,000,000

GIA: 13,622m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,715

Tower Court is made up of 132 new homes, divided into four blocks, plus an ambulance depot. They are typically six storeys high, with one rising to form a tower of 12 storeys. The site layout optimises views of mature trees, while doubling the density of the 1950s homes there previously. Despite this, the blocks sit at a comfortable distance from each other, their lozenge shapes narrowing at the ends to create informal relationships. The landscape between is pedestrianised and incorporates gently undulating levels, bridges, potted plants and benches. Care has been given to choices of surface, pattern and colour around the communal entrances, making each feel specific and celebrated. The brick detailing, entrance treatments and outdoor space show an attention to detail and elevate the typology from the level often expected in the tough housing procurement market.

ALEX SOLOMON



**BECONTREE AVENUE,  
BARKING AND DAGENHAM  
ARCHIO FOR BE FIRST (LONDON BOROUGH  
OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM)**

Contract value: £5,100,000 GIA: 1,735m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,939

200 Becontree Avenue encompasses 19 affordable homes and a community space across two villa-style buildings. This design choice enhances local engagement by maintaining harmony with the surrounding low-rise housing, yet achieves five times the density of nearby residences. Inspired by the neo-Georgian architecture of the historic Becontree Estate, the project prioritises character while delivering 100 per cent triple-aspect, high-quality homes. The development integrates playstreets and pedestrian routes, transforming School Way into an active communal space. This innovative approach underscores a commitment to sustainable, contextually rich housing solutions.



FRENCH+TYE (2)



**CENTRAL FOUNDATION BOYS' SCHOOL, ISLINGTON**  
**HAWKINS\BROWN FOR CENTRAL FOUNDATION BOYS' SCHOOL**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 13,000m<sup>2</sup>

Central Foundation Boys' School, a top-performing non-selective comprehensive school, has transformed its inner-city campus, providing state-of-the-art learning facilities for students. Over the last 150 years, seven buildings (including a former tabernacle chapel and Grade II-listed county court) had been co-opted into one school campus around a bleak central courtyard. The result was an ad-hoc collection of spaces that was no longer fit for purpose. The phased campus redevelopment sought to rationalise and consolidate the school's accommodation to enable more efficient use of the buildings, while keeping the school operational throughout. The conflicting issues on this congested urban site have been resolved with skill. The new facilities include new science laboratories and a subterranean sports hall, with existing buildings retained and refurbished. The project was delivered through a complex funding mix, including money from the Department for Education and proceeds from the inclusion of an eight-storey commercial building within the masterplan. Project Architect of the Year Negar Mihanyar, Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk

JACK HOBHOUSE

**TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL, TOWER HAMLETS**  
**ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS FOR LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**Contract value: £124,000,000 GIA: 26,269m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,720

Tower Hamlets Town Hall encompasses the restoration of the Grade II-listed former Royal London Hospital building, and the addition of a new-build extension to provide a home for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, consolidating several of the council's offices into one, more accessible location. Responding to key eras of the existing building's development, between 1757 and 1906, the design utilises architectural characteristics inherent in each to enrich the new internal environment. The Georgian formality of the external facades has been retained, the restored brickwork creating a backdrop to the council's activities within the new extension.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith

TIMOTHY SOAR (2)





**HARINGEY BRICK BUNGALOW, HARINGEY**  
**SATISH JASSAL ARCHITECTS FOR SHAZAD ASHIQ**

Contract value: £270,000 GIA: 66m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,090

This two-bedroom bungalow demonstrates what can be possible on a constrained backland site behind commercial premises, accessed through a narrow 1m-wide passage. Designed by Satish Jassal Architects, the layout features two offset volumes with sedum-topped pyramid roofs, creating dual courtyards that flood the interiors with light, making the compact home feel spacious. The green roofs provide neighbours with a more pleasant view, replacing typical backland clutter. A central living area is defined by coffered glulam ceilings rising to 3.5m, with timber chandeliers beneath rooflights. The use of handmade brick, oak, and steel emphasises the building's materiality. The site's limited access influenced construction, with all materials and equipment passing through the narrow alley. It is a simple building on a complicated urban site, using materials and light to create a sense of volume. This project highlights how thoughtful design and careful planning can transform even the most challenging sites into beautiful, functional spaces.



FELIX SPELLER (2)



RICHARD CHIVERS

**PINE HEATH, CAMDEN**  
**STUDIO HAGEN HALL FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 224m<sup>2</sup>

Pine Heath is an extensive whole-house renovation and sensitive energy-focused transformation of a modernist townhouse. Set in the Hampstead Conservation Area, the house was designed by Ted Levy, Benjamin & Partners in the late 1960s. Every element of the house was addressed and considered in detail. Layouts were reconfigured and bespoke interiors created to suit the owners' young family, including the addition of a new study-snug under the roof and an additional utility space under a slightly raised living-room floor. An upgrade of the external envelope and implementation of a renewable energy strategy delivered a reduction in heating demand of 77 per cent, and cut annual carbon emissions by 93 per cent. The scheme exemplifies Studio Hagen Hall's approach to enhancing and respecting postwar residential architecture, prioritising a rich dialogue between the existing character and contemporary interventions.



**NEW WAVE HOUSE, BRENT****THOMAS-MCBRIEN ARCHITECTS AND NEW WAVE LONDON FOR NEW WAVE LONDON**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 495m<sup>2</sup>

The project involved the construction of a 600m<sup>2</sup>, lightweight, Douglas-fir glulam timber roof extension atop an existing two-storey light industrial building in north London. The extension houses a large, flexible office space for New Wave London and additional units for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups within the London Borough of Brent. Designed with sustainability in mind, the use of glulam timber enhances both the aesthetics and environmental performance of the building. A key feature is the 100m<sup>2</sup> roof terrace, which offers outdoor space for tenants and improves biodiversity on site through green roofs and native planting. This terrace provides a communal area that promotes wellbeing and supports local wildlife. The project contributes to the local economy by fostering growth for emerging businesses, while adhering to high levels of sustainability, energy efficiency and accessibility, setting a fresh standard for urban commercial developments.

**MAITLAND PARK ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT, CAMDEN****CULLINAN STUDIO WITH ECE WESTWORKS FOR CAMDEN COUNCIL**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 10,377m<sup>2</sup>

Maitland Park exemplifies sustainable, community-centric design for healthy living environments. As Camden Council's first project to achieve a Home Quality Mark accreditation, its layout promotes wellbeing, integrating into an enhanced parkland setting and encouraging connection with nature. The estate was built in the 1930s, with successive waves of development until the 1980s. The new developments frame a mature central park with a series of brick buildings that share common details and forms across the two sites. The designs, developed through extensive consultation over several years, create a vibrant heart for the neighbourhood with 119 new homes and a new community hall and garden. New homes offer both social rented and private ownership tenures in a variety of sizes to suit Camden's housing needs, with fully accessible and adaptable dwellings provided across the development.

**TECHNIQUE, ISLINGTON****BUCKLEY GRAY YEOMAN FOR GENERAL PROJECTS**

Contract value: £80m

GIA: 6,881m<sup>2</sup>Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £11,600

Built within a former printworks and gin distillery, Technique is a new, art-led creative hub in the heart of Clerkenwell. The project has created new gallery space at street level alongside retail and office space for the creative industries. Set across six storeys with high ceilings and generous open volumes washed with natural light, Technique is richly textured at every turn. Reuse of the existing structure and facades, and the choice of sustainably sourced timber for new structures, have significantly reduced the project's embodied carbon. As well as providing robust and adaptable workspace and reanimating the street, the project achieves its aspiration of creating an industry benchmark for the low-carbon transformation and renewal of existing non-residential building stock.





**APPLEBY BLUE ALMSHOUSE, SOUTHWARK**  
**WITHERFORD WATSON MANN ARCHITECTS**  
**FOR UNITED SAINT SAVIOUR'S CHARITY**

Contract value: £25.1m GIA: 5,800m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,330

In Bermondsey, United St Saviours Charity (UStSC), a Southwark-based organisation of almost 500 years standing, set out the ambition to reinterpret the traditional almshouse, offering high-quality collective housing for older people. The new almshouse, Appleby Blue, provides 59 apartments and shared facilities. The site was originally council owned, occupied by a disused care home. A private developer purchased it and largely funded the new social housing as the off-site affordable component of a large residential development in Bankside. UStSC contributed to the construction cost, and will operate the almshouse in perpetuity, with rents capped at social housing levels. Witherford Watson Mann's role was not merely to design a building, but also to collaborate with residents and the charity to reconceive an almshouse community within the 21<sup>st</sup>-century city. This approach is apparent in every aspect of the scheme, from facilities shared with the local community to circulation spaces that promote chance meetings and chats, and help to combat loneliness.

PHILIP VILE



**BLenheim GROVE, SOUTHWARK**  
**POULSOM MIDDLEHURST, YARD ARCHITECTS AND NEW MAKERS BUREAU**  
**FOR UNBOXED HOMES**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 671m<sup>2</sup>

Blenheim Grove is a development of seven new-build dwellings on a vacant brownfield site next to the railway line in Peckham Rye. Working with the developer, Unboxed Homes, Poulson Middlehurst designed a scheme of shell-only houses and flats as part of the Greater London Authority's Custom Build Housing Programme. Each three-storey house was designed so that a variety of layouts could be created within the split-level buildings, by buyers who could choose and commission interior fit-outs to their own specification. The shells meet ambitious sustainability standards, with timber structure, triple glazing throughout and good airtightness. To showcase the principle of custom-build, this was a group submission to the Awards and includes examples of internal fit-outs by Yard Architects and New Bureau Makers, who helped two buyers turn their shells into beautiful homes reflecting their own tastes and personalities.

**CITIZENS HOUSE, LEWISHAM** ARCHIO FOR LONDON CLT

Contract value: £2.5m GIA: 653m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £3,828

Citizens House emerged from a local campaign to establish community land trust (CLT) homes on surplus council land. Homes are held in trust in perpetuity, with prices linked to local wages. Priced at 65 per cent of market value, all 11 flats are affordable. Archio was chosen through a public workshop for potential residents and local community members. Following a collaborative co-design process, it created a three-to-four storey building overlooking a landscaped courtyard. The design fosters community cohesion, with wide rear access decks promoting interaction and providing play space for children. Offset balconies offer sun and rain protection to the staggered south-facing windows of the floors below. Internally the homes are bright and flexible, with floor-to-ceiling windows and large balconies. The two-bed homes include extra-wide entrance halls, allowing for a dedicated space to work from.

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone





## RIBA UK Awards London

### IDLEWILD MEWS, CROYDON VPPR ARCHITECTS FOR BRICK BY BRICK / CROYDON COUNCIL

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 527m<sup>2</sup>

Idlewild Mews is a 100 per cent affordable-rent housing development on a complex infill site, which was previously occupied by garages and considered 'undevelopable'. Eight flats are contained within a multifaceted building where forms weave in and out in response to the narrow plot. The composition of the scheme ensures privacy for nearby residents while engendering a feeling of community. Its characterful shape and materiality provides a sense of identity for the homes, yet these features also make clear references to the built landscape. Internally the apartments are effectively planned, and feel bigger than they are. Through several small moves the architects have fostered neighbourliness: a built-in bench and shared paving next to each cluster of front doors, for example, provides a meeting point and a safe place for young children to play.



ELLIOT SHEPPARD

### WORKSTACK, GREENWICH DRMM FOR GREENWICH ENTERPRISE BOARD

Contract value: £4m GIA: 1,569m<sup>2</sup>  
Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,580

Constructed primarily from engineered timber, the five-storey WorkStack building occupies a modest-sized but prominent plot, forming a sculptural landmark on a busy but unremarkable Greenwich road. The client, Greenwich Enterprise Board, is a social enterprise developer providing affordable workspace in the borough, and the new structure is built on a disused site on the A206, previously used for wholesale warehousing. Designed to be affordable to rent, operate and maintain, the building provides 14 workshops for a mix of light-industrial and creative uses. Its cantilevered upper floors allow a variety of unit sizes, encouraging occupiers to remain in the building as they grow. This jettied form has the added advantage of providing shade to the floors below and shelter to the loading bay, and also allowed reduced foundations, requiring 25 per cent less concrete.



WILL SCOTT

### HARFIELD GARDENS, SOUTHWARK QUINN ARCHITECTS FOR RUTH SOMERFIELD

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 149m<sup>2</sup>

This project renovated a 1979 brick, steel and timber mews house, tucked behind a Georgian terrace. Originally challenged by low ceilings and poor ventilation, the house has been given a second storey, maximising natural light and creating an open-plan living area. The aim was to modernise a family home, enhancing its functionality while prioritising environmental efficiency and reducing energy costs. The architects preserved key elements of the original structure, carefully integrating bamboo-lined courtyard gardens to maintain a connection with nature. Drawing on mid-century modernist principles, the design used modular rooms and floor-to-ceiling windows to create a seamless flow between indoor and outdoor spaces.

### NIWA HOUSE, SOUTHWARK TAKERO SHIMAZAKI ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 365m<sup>2</sup>

Nestled within a once-derelict plot in south London, behind a row of terraced houses and at the end of a narrow lane, Niwa House is a new-build accessible home for a young family. The client's connection with Japan inspired a relationship between the house and the garden (niwa) rather like the concept of engawa, a covered corridor running along the perimeter of traditional Japanese dwellings.

The house is conceived as a lightweight pavilion – a continuous series of open-plan spaces interrupted by courtyards and the garden, forming a unique figurative shape that fits within as-found vacant land. The hybrid timber and stone structure is expressed through glulam columns extending through the basement and ground-floor levels to meet a network of stacked beams. Seemingly primitive in nature, these support and work in tandem with a thick limestone ceiling providing thermal mass and rigidity. Light enters overhead, filtered through beams and sheer curtains.



FELIX KOCH





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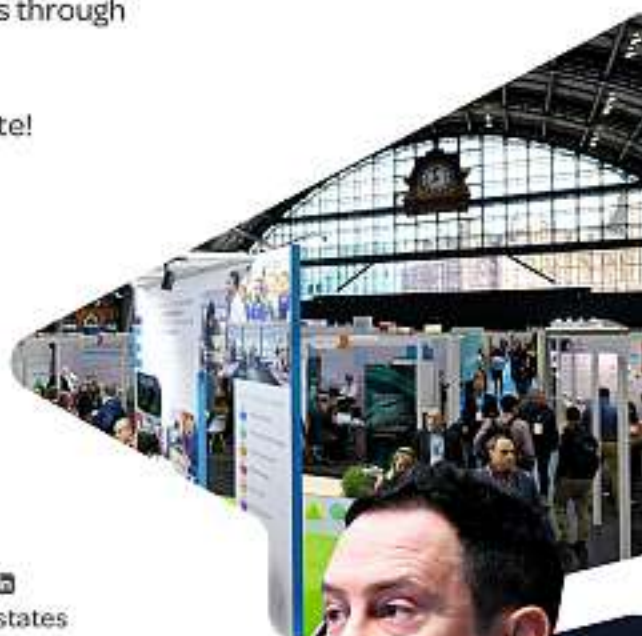
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**DESIGN DISTRICT C1 AND D1, GREENWICH**  
**ARCHITECTURE 00 FOR KNIGHT DRAGON**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 2,311m<sup>2</sup>

C1 and D1 are two of 16 new buildings by eight architectural practices, set within the new Design District at the heart of Greenwich Peninsula. They provide affordable workspaces and wider amenity spaces for the creative industries, and serve a vital placemaking role at the heart of the area. Architecture 00 designed C1 and D1 to encourage collaboration within the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) tenant community. The practice's self-finished covered concrete access decks provide thermal mass and external shading to the solar-controlled glass enclosing the workspace, as well as creating social spaces and extended active 'shop frontage', and allowing tenants to expand beyond their units to work on larger-scale projects. C1 also incorporates public toilets on the ground floor and a rooftop multi-use games area that offers wonderful views, and is open for use by the local community, driving inclusion in the area.



TARAN WILKHU

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS, SOUTHWARK**  
**BENNETTS ASSOCIATES FOR ROYAL COLLEGE**  
**OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 7,180m<sup>2</sup>

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has relocated to a new building on Union Street. This democratic and inclusive headquarters is part of a wider programme of modernisation by the historic medical institution, which had previously occupied leasehold premises in Regent's Park. The move has allowed the college to occupy a city-centre location and own its own building for the first time.

The headquarters is an exemplar of adaptive reuse and lean design, knitting together two existing buildings – a converted 19<sup>th</sup>-century warehouse and a 1980s office block – by creating a new central atrium with workspaces for college staff and partner organisations, conferencing facilities and a public café. Breakout spaces overlook the atrium, which further enlivens the building. As expected with this type of adaptive reuse, the associated embodied carbon is very low, and the project demonstrates an affordable way forward for similar developments.

JACK HOBHOUSE



DAVID GRANDORGE

**SIDCUP STORYTELLER, BEXLEY**  
**DRDH ARCHITECTS FOR LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 1,932m<sup>2</sup>

Sidcup Storyteller is a mixed-use public building incorporating a public library, café and Changing Places accessible toilet facilities at ground floor, with a three-screen cinema and flat-floored community/events space above. Nine apartments for sale complete the development, contributing to its financial model. The building, won in competition by DRDH in 2018, is the centrepiece of a programme of regeneration on Sidcup High Street. The bold new red-brick structure sits at a crossroads and responds to the massing and materiality of the high street to create a 'tower' on the corner. Its curved geometry and large-scale signage, inspired by Victorian public buildings, celebrate the entrance. On the ground floor, an exposed concrete frame creates a sequence of tall volumes divided by smaller timber-lined foyers that accommodate the secondary functions, with an effect that is both civic and welcoming.





**V&A PHOTOGRAPHY CENTRE, KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA**  
**GIBSON THORNLEY WITH PURCELL FOR VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 565m<sup>2</sup>

The V&A's Photography Centre is the most extensive suite of galleries in the UK dedicated to a permanent photography collection. Spanning global contemporary photography and cutting-edge commissions, to interactive displays and themed galleries showcasing the rich breadth and history of the collection, the seven galleries of the completed Photography Centre – five of which are new additions – enable visitors to experience photography and its diverse histories in new ways.

The highlight is Room 98 – a bold and highly crafted insertion to provide a home for the Royal Photographic Society library. Thousands of photos, cameras and books are held in floor-to-cornice shelving along three perimeter walls, arranged over two levels. With low lighting appropriate to the storage of light-sensitive materials and a few items of loose furniture, the space is welcoming and of human scale, somewhat contrasting with the vast galleries sitting on either side.



THOMAS ADANK

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC, WESTMINSTER**  
**JOHN SIMPSON ARCHITECTS FOR ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC**

Contract value: Confidential

GIA: 3,117m<sup>2</sup>

John Simpson Architects' project at The Royal College of Music was commissioned to resolve convoluted circulation that resulted from piecemeal additions to its campus in the 1960s and 1970s. The project included provision of new foyer and entrance spaces which were designed in the form of a triple-height toplit atrium with an adjacent external court, around which a café-bar, restaurant and green rooms are arranged to serve as the social heart of the school. Two new multifunctional performance venues – acoustically isolated, with adjustable internal acoustics for different types of music – have been created below ground, as well as space for a new museum to display the college's significant collection of historic musical instruments. This has been constructed in a 'contemporary classical' style, complementing and tying together the diverse range of existing listed buildings, including those by Arthur Blomfield and Sidney Smith.



ANDREAS VON EISENDEL

**ELIZABETH TOWER, WESTMINSTER**  
**PURCELL FOR STRATEGIC ESTATES/  
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 610m<sup>2</sup>

The Elizabeth Tower is the pinnacle of Parliament: the symbolic heartbeat and timepiece of the nation. Its restoration is a testament to the careful preservation of historic landmarks, craftsmanship, and the integration of modern engineering techniques. At the project's inception in 2015, the tower was overdue for its next repair cycle; the subsequent conservation and refurbishment project has been the most extensive in its 160-year history. The design team's objective was to undertake comprehensive repairs, while undoing harmful previous interventions, and extending the interval before the next refurbishment to 50 years, safeguarding the tower's future as a cultural monument and heritage site.

SIMON CAMPER



**LOWER HAM, KINGSTON UPON THAMES**  
**FLETCHER CRANE ARCHITECTS**  
**FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 371m<sup>2</sup>

Lower Ham is situated on the banks of the river Thames in Kingston upon Thames. Located on the edge of the conservation area, the home seeks to become part of the river-facing architecture in a distinctly contemporary manner. What is not so apparent from the street front is the secret and serene courtyard garden and reflecting pond which are wrapped within the U-shaped ground floor. Red brickwork, lime mortar and a colour-matched concrete coping combine to create a heavy, anchoring ground-floor character that is contrasted by the vertical tower's more delicate timber latticework. Key living spaces and the master suite are arranged within the tower, with far-reaching and panoramic views over the river.

LORENZO ZANDRI



**COSTA'S BARBERS, WANDSWORTH**  
**BRISCO LORAN AND ARRANT INDUSTRIES FOR DUNCAN BLACKMORE**

Contract value: £110,000 GIA: 54m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,037

Costa's Barbers is a shop on Battersea High Street, remade as a space for living, for work, and for trade. The works have transformed a vacant retail space into a flexible home that retains a meaningful connection to its historic commercial setting. It was undertaken as a collaborative project between Brisco Loran and Arrant Industries, with the team acting as designers, builders and clients, and Brisco Loran now occupying the space as its first keepers.

Provoked and enabled by an expansion of contentious permitted development rights, and with concern for their impact on the character of our high streets, the project explores how domestic life need not retreat towards the private, but might instead join with commercial activity, enriching the permeable and dynamic public nature of our street life. The project is characterised by a very public yellow-painted timber shopfront, and a private whitewashed composition amongst the familiar brick backs of London. London Small Project of the Year

JIM STEPHENSON



**CHELSEA BRUT, KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA**  
**PRICEGORE FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 215m<sup>2</sup>

Chelsea Brut is the conservation, refurbishment and extension of a 1960s townhouse to create a contemporary, low-energy family home. The thermal performance of the existing fabric has been radically improved and new services installed throughout. The exterior has been restored, and the interior reconfigured and extended, taking advantage of foundations 1.5m lower than the existing floor level to create a dramatic kitchen, dining and living space with a 3.5m ceiling. This has been extended into the small oasis of a garden which forms a nature connection with the planted roof above the extension. Existing materials are exposed in their raw state, plasterboard is replaced with lime plaster, and lime slurry was applied to the exposed soffits of the clay-block floors. Internal insulation is 100mm-thick breathable wood fibre, floorboards are reclaimed, and joinery was dyed, practically eliminating the use of paint throughout.



JOHANN DEHLIN





## SOHO PLACE, WESTMINSTER ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS FOR DERWENT LONDON

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 36,980m<sup>2</sup>

Soho Place is a vast urban jigsaw that builds on the arrival of the Elizabeth Line to bolster the regeneration of Oxford Street. It comprises two mixed-use blocks framing a new civic plaza, Soho Place. The north block, 1 Soho Place, is a 10-storey, two-tier building housing 3,066m<sup>2</sup> of retail space across three floors and 17,840m<sup>2</sup> of office accommodation across 10 floors. The south building, 2 & 4 Soho Place, is nine storeys tall, with the lower volume containing the first new-build West End theatre to open in 50 years. Above it, meanwhile, sits 1,672m<sup>2</sup> of independent office space.

TIMOTHY SOAR

## THE GREENHILL BUILDING, HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HARROW CHRIS DYSON ARCHITECTS FOR HARROW BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contract value: £1.8m GIA: 438m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,109

The Greenhill Building, a teaching and events building on the Harrow Arts Centre campus, which Chris Dyson Architects won following a 2019 design competition, is proving popular for a range of activities, from bhangra dance classes to photography workshops. The project is an early example of a fully cross-laminated timber (CLT) arts centre; the method, more typical in education and commercial buildings, was proposed by the design team as an affordable, low-waste and low-carbon alternative to structural steel. Lightweight and fabricated off site, the system reduced the need for expensive foundations and meant that the entire main build was completed in under nine months. The team worked creatively with a limited budget, and an inventive approach to site, form, structure and materials has delivered a bright, flexible building of enduring value to the local community.

DAVID CHURCHILL



ROBIN FORSTER

## HALLELUJAH PROJECT, WESTMINSTER PEREGRINE BRYANT ARCHITECTS FOR HANDEL HENDRIX HOUSE

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 830m<sup>2</sup>

Handel Hendrix House presents the homes of George Frideric Handel, who lived at 25 Brook Street from 1723 until his death in 1759, and Jimi Hendrix who moved into an adjoining flat in 1968. The buildings are presented as an evolving celebration of their lives, with the project restoring them to the forms the musicians occupied. Handel's historic ground and lower-ground floors and Brook Street facade have been reinstated, the lightwell reopened and railings reinstalled. Returning modern retail space to its post-Great Fire of London plan form required major structural remediation, while being mindful of budget and the challenges posed by a tight central London site and a Grade I-listed building. Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX





### DAVENTRY HOUSE, WESTMINSTER M&E FOR WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 6,106m<sup>2</sup>

M&E has transformed a previously problematic, 'undevelopable' site in order to unlock new opportunities for regeneration by Westminster City Council. Daventry House provides 59 affordable social-rent homes for elderly people to live safely and independently, supported by a flat for a live-in manager (60 homes in total). The 13-storey community supported housing scheme also incorporates flexibly designed enterprise incubator space for the Church Street community, to boost circular strategies in the local economy and help nurture SME businesses. Its distinctive position on axis with Lisson Grove forms a gateway to the local regeneration area, activating and enhancing the neighbourhood streetscape.

TIMOTHY SOAR

### CHANCERY HOUSE, CITY OF LONDON DMFK ARCHITECTS AND NORM ARCHITECTS FOR THE OFFICE GROUP/FORA

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 16,000m<sup>2</sup>

Set atop the London Silver Vaults – the capital's historic subterranean silver market – the transformed Chancery House is a sector-redefining workplace. dMFK Architects has refurbished, reconfigured and extended the building, collaborating with Norm Architects to deliver the interior architecture. The retrofit has stripped back an aesthetically incongruous glass curtain-wall facade of a 2000s extension in favour of a higher-performing cladding system, reconfigured the ground-floor structure to enable better permeability and introduced new, carefully planned lightwells and courtyards to bring light into the previously dark interiors and lower floors. A major driver in the design of the internal spaces has been the recent sea change in working behaviour, from nine-to-five desk-based work to greater flexibility and autonomy. The facility, which was 75 per cent let within three months of being launched, features lovely shared workspaces, and breakout and amenity spaces including state-of-the-art gym and fitness studio, rooftop terrace, courtyards and a café.

JACK HOBHOUSE



### QUADRANGLE BUILDING, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON, WESTMINSTER

HALL MCKNIGHT FOR KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 3,280m<sup>2</sup>

The Quadrangle Project brings a building that occupies a highly unusual and constrained site back into use. Situated entirely within the Grade I-listed context of the founding campus for King's College London, the project was intended to create a flexible and inspiring home for a modern engineering department, whose goal is to lead in innovative education and research. The roof of the existing building, which forms the external quadrangle space, has been repurposed for use and enjoyment by the whole campus. Internally the existing late-1940s building, occupying two basement storeys, is transformed into generous teaching and learning spaces, designed with close attention to providing flexibility in day-to-day use and over the long term. Students are immersed in an educational environment where theory, learning, collaboration, practical experimentation and making are practised within a highly accessible and open environment at the heart of the historic campus.



JOHAN DEHLIN



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# East Midlands

## 2

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£15.1m**

Total cost of projects

**3,886m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£3,293**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

### ST MARY'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY, DERBY HAWKINS BROWN FOR DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 2,316m<sup>2</sup>

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby is the first purpose-built biophilic primary school in the UK, delivered using the Department for Education's GenZero principles. The new building replaces the original school, which was destroyed by fire in October 2020. As part of an innovative pilot scheme with a standardised approach to new school buildings, the design pioneers long-term flexibility and adaptability. It consists of five single-storey timber-frame buildings organised around a canopy that provides a linking 'spine', with each year group housed in a wing of classrooms. At the centre is a 'town square' that serves as a welcoming arrival point, covered by the high canopy. This outdoor space is surrounded by essential functions such as administration, a library, a hall and a space for faith activities. St Mary's reopened its doors in December 2023, and has been acclaimed as the UK's greenest primary school.

Project Architect of the Year David Brook  
Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk

### PRIMARY, NOTTINGHAM PRICEGORE FOR PRIMARY

Contract value: £240,000 GIA: 1,570m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £153

Pricegore has completed the first phase of a long-term campus strategy for a Nottingham arts organisation. Primary is an artist-led charity that provides studios for more than 50 artists and creative practitioners alongside a public programme of exhibitions and events. The works to Primary's Grade II-listed, Victorian former school building home are realised as gestures of welcome, aimed at strengthening the relationship between the organisation and the surrounding city, visitors and residents. Pricegore has established a new open entrance, improved inclusive access, and added a large studio-kitchen as part of a long-term vision to reorganise, enhance and expand Primary's facilities and programme. The charity's characterful ex-primary school site includes workshops, independent galleries and bookshops, as well as an award-winning bakery.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith

Small Project of the Year

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone

MATTHEW LING



MATTHEW BLUNDERFIELD

# Northern Ireland



# 5

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region

**£62.3m**

Total cost of projects

**19,187m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£2,518**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## ONE ELMWOOD, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST, BELFAST

**HAWKINS\BROWN AND RPP ARCHITECTS FOR QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 11,076m<sup>2</sup>

With its bright red, exposed steel frame and its succession of generous internal spaces, One Elmwood provides a dramatic new focus for the lives of the students of Queen's University Belfast and acts as a 'home away from home'. The easy, informal, welcoming character offers an ideal place for pastoral transactions – from financial to wellbeing support. It includes Mandela Hall, a multipurpose space capable of accommodating gigs and student fairs. A simple rectangle on plan, the building's four elevations each assume a different character, but the principal facade facing the historic Lanyon Hall is entirely glazed. This gives the building an exciting transparency at night. During the day this is more effective from the inside out, reinforcing the importance of the relationship between the building and its 19<sup>th</sup>-century predecessor.

Client of the Year

## SILVER BARK HOUSE, HILLSBOROUGH

**MARSHALL MCCANN ARCHITECTS  
FOR FOUR SEVEN HOMES**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 359m<sup>2</sup>

Silver Bark nestles into a sloping site, framed by trees and with views of the Mourne Mountains. The contractor-led project achieves understated luxury alongside exceptional sustainability: designed to Passivhaus standards, it exceeds RIBA 2030 carbon reduction targets by more than 50 per cent, incorporating a timber frame, wood-fibre insulation, and minimal concrete. The house has three interconnected volumes that minimise visual impact and frame a courtyard, capturing sunlight and offering refuge from the wind. Timber cladding flows over walls and roof, blending with its surroundings. Huge windows flood interiors with light, creating spaces that feel calm and connected to nature. Silver Bark is a blueprint for sustainable, beautiful living, proving thoughtful design can thrive on a tight budget. Sustainability Award







**STUDENT HUB, QUEEN'S BUSINESS SCHOOL BELFAST, BELFAST**  
**TODD ARCHITECTS FOR QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 6,797m<sup>2</sup>

TODD Architects' Student Hub for Queen's Business School, within Belfast's historic Riddel Hall campus, responds to the school's growth and evolving educational needs, creating a sophisticated learning environment bridging education and professional development. Sited on a former lawn and car park site, it integrates into the mature woodland landscape. With diverse teaching spaces — lecture theatres, study areas and executive education facilities — and a toplit triple-height atrium, the design connects multiple levels through innovative spatial planning. Achieving BREEAM Excellent certification, the hub shows a commitment to sustainability through innovative design strategies, including a geothermal heat system and thoughtful landscape integration.

Building of the Year, Client of the Year

DONAL MCCANN (2)



**LIGHT HOUSE, HOLLYWOOD MCGONIGLE MCGRATH FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 350m<sup>2</sup>

This dwelling consists of two terrace houses overlooking Belfast Lough. The proposal was for a modest extension, creating an open-plan living/ dining/kitchen space between the house and garden. Internally, within the rear returns, an opportunity for reinvention arose during construction, enabling ground- and first-floor rooms to be interconnected by introducing double-height voids and removing certain internal walls. These toplit voids carry natural light deep into the plan, and internal windows within them allow for borrowed light and glimpses between floors. The project shows how it is possible to create complex spatial connections within an existing form, while reinforcing the importance of adaptability to enable a family to continue to live in and enjoy their home.

AIDAN MCGRATH



PAULLINDSAY

**NEW GATE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE, DERRY**  
**MCGURK ARCHITECTS FOR NORTH WEST CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 605m<sup>2</sup>

This hub for creativity and community engagement boldly occupies a corner site in the Fountain area of Derry/Londonderry. The historic three-storey house that defined the site's corner has been restored and reused to provide a series of offices and meeting rooms, plus a café. A new, modern building insert now sits on a previously derelict site along the street, housing the main, multipurpose rehearsal and performance space, with activity rooms above. A full-height circulation space connects them at each level. Each of the three forms asserts its identity through a different materiality: painted white render for the former house, an articulated brick facade for the new building, and a dark grey panelled and glazed strip for the circulation space. Designed with inclusivity and sustainability at its core, the project achieved a BREEAM Very Good rating, incorporating renewable energy systems and responsible material sourcing. It stands as a testament to the transformative power of the arts, delivering a lasting cultural landmark for the city and its people.

# West Midlands



# 5

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£164.2m**  
Total cost of projects

**57,040m<sup>2</sup>**  
Total GIA

**£3,802**  
Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## COVENTRY UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND SOCIETY, COVENTRY BDP FOR COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

Contract value: £43m GIA: 17,605m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,444

The project comprises a transformation of the 1960s School of Art and Society, together with a new-build courtyard infill to link together adjacent buildings and provide a new heart for the faculty. Through meticulous assessment of the eclectic set of existing buildings, BDP developed a complete reorganisation that revitalised academic environments and fostered interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. By retaining nearly 80 per cent of the existing facilities and strategically positioning the new-build element, the team seamlessly integrated disparate departments into a cohesive whole. This innovative approach enriched academic exchanges and served as a catalyst for community engagement, promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration and providing the college with a new front door and shop window – a vibrant nexus for civic interaction. The transformation involves repurposing existing spaces to provide active and collaborative pedagogies, an overhaul and expansion of specialist workshops and studios, and new high-tech immersive and media spaces.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith

## UNIVERSITY OF STAFFORDSHIRE WOODLANDS NURSERY, STOKE ON TRENT

FEILDEN CLEGG BRADLEY STUDIOS  
FOR UNIVERSITY OF STAFFORDSHIRE

Contract value: £3.1m GIA: 751m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,128

The new on-campus nursery at the University of Staffordshire was designed with a commitment to sustainability, ensuring it would educate and care for future generations without negatively impacting the environment. As a net-zero carbon building, sustainability shaped every design decision. Natural, low-impact materials were carefully selected to create calm, nurturing interior spaces. Timber beams, wood-wool ceilings, rubber flooring and plywood joinery define the teaching areas, offering a warm and inviting atmosphere for children and staff alike. The highly insulated timber frame is clad in stepping larch boards, combining durability with a connection to nature. Distinctive rooflights flood the interior with natural light while providing efficient ventilation, reinforcing the building's focus on environmental responsibility and wellbeing. This thoughtful approach balances functionality and sustainability, creating an inspiring space for learning and care.

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone

Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk

NICK GAVILLE



DANIEL HOPKINSON





## RIBA UK Awards West Midlands

### ONE CENTENARY WAY, BIRMINGHAM HOWELLS FOR MEPC / FEDERATED HERMES

Contract value: £113m GIA: 35,517m<sup>2</sup>  
Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £3,358

One Centenary Way is a new landmark for Birmingham that defines the next generation of sustainable workspace, adding another significant chapter in the city's transformation into a lively, mixed-use metropolis. The 13-storey building sits above the A38 Queensway Tunnel, negotiating a challenging, split-level site connecting two of the city's most important civic spaces, Chamberlain Square and Centenary Square. It's the first completed building of phase two of Howells' Paradise masterplan, and provides workspace for 3,500 people, along with hospitality, an outdoor terrace and communal amenities at ground-floor level. Project Architect of the Year Simon Pope



HUFTON + CROW

### HANBURY HALL, WORCESTERSHIRE HOWELLS FOR NATIONAL TRUST

Contract value: £1.9m GIA: 247.4m<sup>2</sup>  
Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £7,680

The new pavilion restaurant for the National Trust's Hanbury Hall harmoniously unites contemporary architecture with the Grade I-listed Queen Anne building in a setting of parterre gardens, conceived by landscape architect George London in 1705. The project carefully bridges the gap between old and new by introducing accessible entrances and routes, enhancing visitor experience, reinventing settings for food, retail and education and proudly showcasing a continuity of English craft skills and building traditions. The seamlessly contemporary timber and tile-clad pavilion — connected to the main house via the lightest touch of a glazed vestibule — reinforces and animates a historic service courtyard with new public-facing café life.



GREG HOLMES



### OLD FIRE STATION, WORCESTER KKE ARCHITECTS FOR GUTHRIE ROBERTS

Contract value: £3.2m  
GIA: 2,920m<sup>2</sup>  
Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £1,400

KKE Architects was appointed by Guthrie Roberts in 2020 to prepare an application which would readdress the potential of the existing buildings through a more creative and ambitious conversion. The approach retained the opportunity for a commercial use on the ground floor. To enable this to happen, the project inserts apartments into the roofspace, leaving just two flats on the ground floor. These roofspace apartments required access, further daylighting and ventilation from the courtyard side, so a new access walkway was formed on the courtyard side with extensions to existing stairways. The large canopy that cantilevers over the internal courtyard was retained, and converted into a shared urban terrace and garden to give a green heart and elevated public space for the people who make the apartments their home.





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Architect: Free Spirit Architectural Design & Conservation  
Photographer: Tony Ellis Photography

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Working with an architect, Andy and Sarah blended their preferences - Andy favouring a modern style, while Sarah leaned towards a more traditional aesthetic. Ensuring ample light in the new expansive space was a priority. Opting for 3in1 roof windows, they focused on ventilation to prevent potential overheating from having glass at both ends of the extension.

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# South West



# 10

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£52.9m**

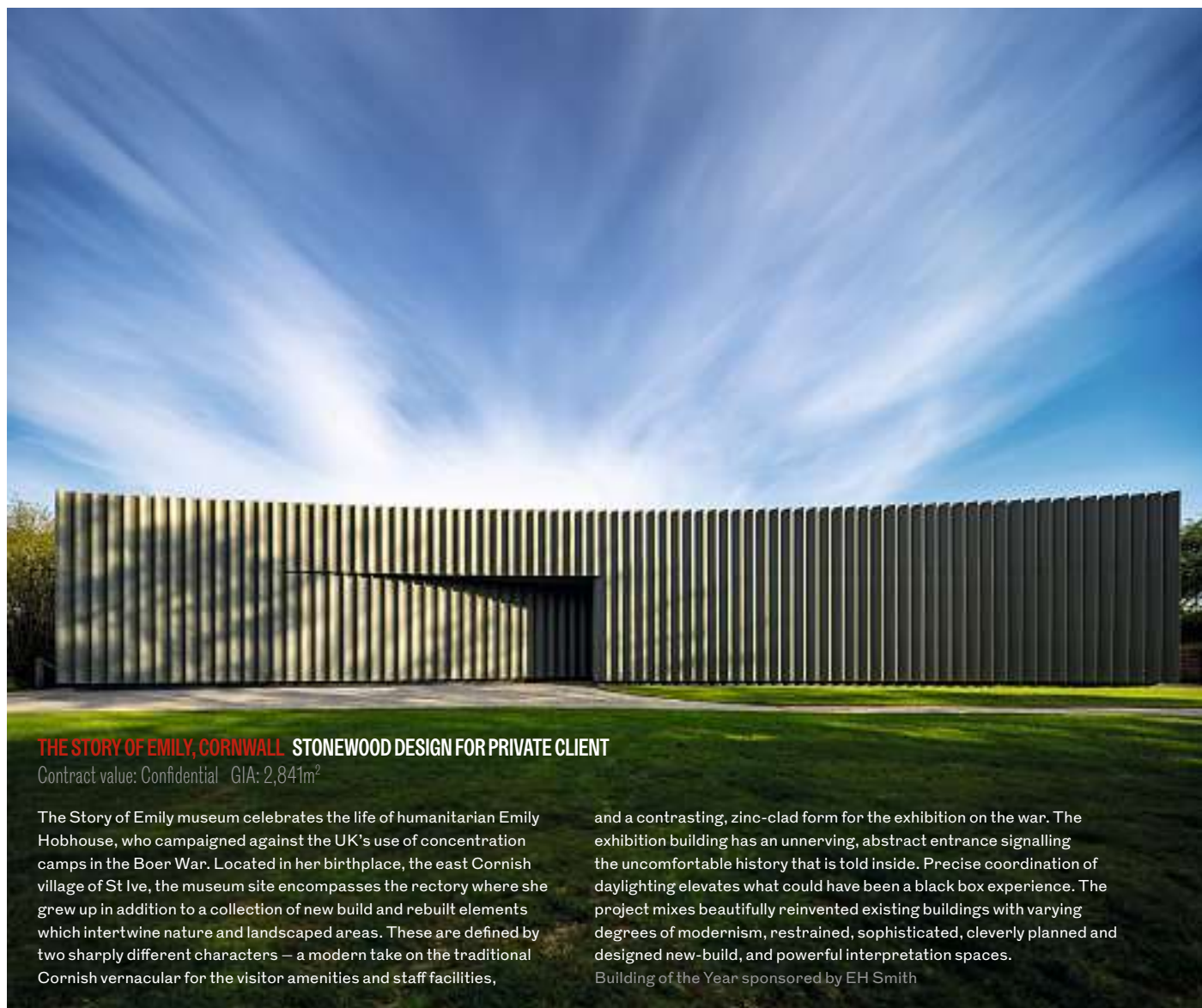
Total cost of projects

**13,253m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£4,393**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>



## THE STORY OF EMILY, CORNWALL STONEWOOD DESIGN FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 2,841m<sup>2</sup>

The Story of Emily museum celebrates the life of humanitarian Emily Hobhouse, who campaigned against the UK's use of concentration camps in the Boer War. Located in her birthplace, the east Cornish village of St Ive, the museum site encompasses the rectory where she grew up in addition to a collection of new build and rebuilt elements which intertwine nature and landscaped areas. These are defined by two sharply different characters – a modern take on the traditional Cornish vernacular for the visitor amenities and staff facilities,

and a contrasting, zinc-clad form for the exhibition on the war. The exhibition building has an unnerving, abstract entrance signalling the uncomfortable history that is told inside. Precise coordination of daylighting elevates what could have been a black box experience. The project mixes beautifully reinvented existing buildings with varying degrees of modernism, restrained, sophisticated, cleverly planned and designed new-build, and powerful interpretation spaces.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith





**ONE PORTWALL SQUARE, BRISTOL**  
**ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS FOR**  
**NORD DEVELOPMENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 4,505m<sup>2</sup>

This is a robust building delicately slotted into a tight urban setting. It is an outstanding example of a simple yet sophisticated, highly energy-efficient office development that sets a new benchmark for commercial offices in Bristol. The scheme replaces a disused building, originally part of 100 Temple Street designed by John Wells-Thorpe, with a new six-storey freestanding office block set back from Portwall Lane by a lively pocket square. Reacting to the latest Grade A office standards, the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to maximise occupant comfort and amenity for staff attraction and retention, the building combines modern and flexible floorplates with generous light and space in a bold design.



TIMOTHY SOAR (2)

**HAZELMEAD, BRIDPORT COHOUSING, BRIDPORT**  
**BAREFOOT ARCHITECTS FOR BRIDPORT COHOUSING CLT**

Contract value: £9,500,000

GIA: 3,779m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,714

Through the creation of 53 exemplary new timber-framed homes, Hazelmead provides safe, sociable, accessible, sustainable and affordable dwellings at a time when the need for good affordable housing has never been greater. It is located on the outskirts of Bridport and is to date the largest completed cohousing development in the UK. The collaborative scheme has been spearheaded by Bridport Cohousing Community Land Trust (CLT) over the course of more than a decade. Designed to the AECB CarbonLite New Build Standard, the project reflects a commitment to affordable, sustainable, community-focused living for a mixed-tenure, multigenerational neighbourhood. Hazelmead distinguishes itself from many new housing developments thanks to the way simple things have been done well here. The design team has shown innovation and made thoughtful use of environmental technologies, stretching the budget through repetition and robust material choices that feel distinctive and characterful.

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone

Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk



REBECCA NOAKES (2)







## TWO-FAMILY HOUSE, CORNWALL RUNDELL ASSOCIATES FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 721m<sup>2</sup>

Two-Family House is a seaside retreat, set into the cliffs above the bay of Mawgan Porth on the Cornish coast. The house was conceived as a gathering place to be shared by two families, along with extended families and friends. The 'twin' brief demanded that creative solutions were found to satisfy two disparate sets of family requirements. The building has an understated yet striking profile, sunk deep into its dramatic cliffside setting. Materials were chosen for their visual interest and ability to withstand harsh conditions, while internally a natural palette creates a warm and textured atmosphere evocative of the locality. Simple but with beautiful detailing, materially stunning, cleverly planned and disguised within its context, this is a technically impressive building, both in construction resolution and project management.

TRISTAN STOOKER

## THE COWSHED, GLOUCESTERSHIRE DESIGN STOREY FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 90m<sup>2</sup>

The Cowshed is a beautifully planned and executed conversion of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century, Grade II-listed single-storey cowshed and two-storey bullpen, in the Cotswolds National Landscape, into a intimate two-bedroomed weekend home.

The clients purchased the barn with an extant consent. They approached Design Storey to explore a new design blending contemporary and historic features, to make the best use of space and celebrate the unique qualities of the building. The design approach was conservation-led and collaborative; both sides of the barn were united by expert planning, including inserting a timber pod into the building housing a new staircase, mitigating a level change and acting as a divider between the bedrooms and bathrooms. An innovative approach was taken to reuse of the building's timber structure, which was 'lifted' into its original position, providing an interesting construction challenge and enabling complete reuse with minimum intervention. Even the original padstones, discovered during construction, were reused. Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX

LAWRENCE GRIGG



## SHIRE END WEST, LYME REGIS RAK ARCHITECTURE FOR ALAN DODKINS AND SUZY GALINA

Contract value: £480,000 GIA: 240m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £200

Shire End West by rak architecture involves works and additions to a Grade II-listed, three-bedroomed home, which perches on a Lyme Regis hillside on England's southwest coast. The clients' brief was: 'To fix all the problems with our quirky old house without losing its magic, so that we would feel joy every time we arrived home!' This required a careful process of removal of later additions, to declutter the original house and replace a tired existing extension, as well as looking for ways to improve the energy performance of the original building, preserving its architectural features. The house can now make the most of its far-reaching views of the historic Cobb harbour and Golden Cap hill. It is an enchanting and heartwarming collaboration between the architects and clients, which has produced an outcome that, although small in scale, packs in many fun elements and is a meaningful and impactful space.

Small Project of the Year



PATRICIA RAYNER





**STUDIO COTTAGE, CIRENCESTER**  
**ASHTON ARCHITECTURE AND REBECCA MILTON**  
**ARCHITECT FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 235m<sup>2</sup>

Nestled on the southerly edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Studio Cottage occupies a 0.6ha site, 5 miles west of Cirencester. The overarching brief was to breathe life into tired buildings to create a charming yet practical family home. The project had two main parts, the first being an extensive refurbishment of two Grade II-listed buildings, Studio Cottage and Thatch Annex, sensitively joined with a minimally framed five-sided glazed link. The second is the creation of a replacement outbuilding, Garage Barn, in the southwestern corner of the site. The key challenge was to carefully peel back the layers of existing walls, floors and roof linings to create a more thermally efficient, watertight and comfortable building, while respecting the significance of the listed facing materials. Ashton Architecture's design of the new elements is well judged and finely executed, improving the functionality for family living while heightening its significance.

Project Architect of the Year John Ashton



**FERRY HOUSE, SALISBURY**  
**AR DESIGN STUDIO FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 296m<sup>2</sup>

Despite its distinctive formal character, the takeaway quality from this new house on the outskirts of Salisbury is the careful crafting of the interior spaces that belie what could be seen as a bold 'statement' building. A dilapidated cottage has been replaced with a home with three asymmetrical wings spread out into the riverside landscape, mimicking the red kites soaring above. The splayed wings offer views up and down the river. AR Design Studio worked closely with the client to maximise accessibility and ensure the house was bespoke to their every need; the upside-down house enables all amenities to be accommodated on a single floor, with the lower ground floor providing the additional space needed for large family gatherings. The landscape has been meticulously designed to generate soft ramps up and down the site, avoiding the need for obvious ramps and lifts to traverse it.



**A HOUSE OF WOOD SHINGLE, BATH**  
**FORGEWORKS ARCHITECTS FOR CELIA MCCARTHY**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 241m<sup>2</sup>

A House of Wood Shingle dramatically transforms a 1950s bungalow by wrapping the entire exterior in a natural cedar cladding and reconfiguring its interior spaces to create a highly insulated, energy-efficient family home. Sitting on a hillside location overlooking the city of Bath, the project challenges the potential for reworking existing fabric into a new visually cloaked and insulated form. It is a collaboration between Forgeworks Architects and the client, Celia McCarthy of interior design firm Richardson Studio, who lives there with her young family. The architects have rationalised a previously cavernous and contorted plan, to produce more harmonious and well-proportioned spaces. The personal interior complements the carefully considered architecture, delivering a house which celebrates the principles of retrofit and reuse over demolish and new build.

**THE ORCHARDS, FROME**  
**PREWETT BIZLEY ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

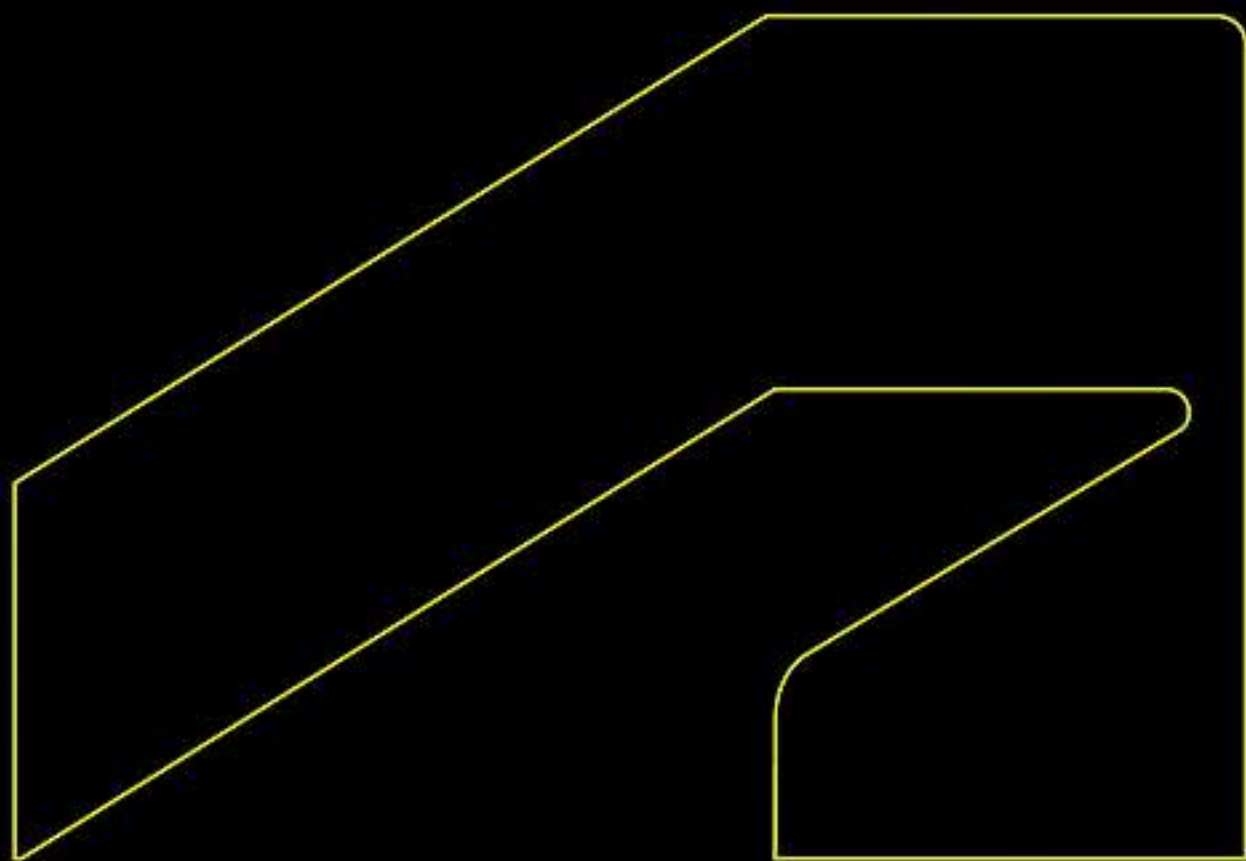
Contract value: Confidential GIA: 305m<sup>2</sup>

The Orchards is a low-energy, low-carbon house for a young family that blends New York loft living with a new type of Somerset prairie house. The 0.8ha site slopes north, down towards water meadows where the Mells and Frome rivers meet at the eastern end of the Mendip Hills. Surrounded by mature native hedges, it feels tranquil and secluded, enhanced by longer views to woodland on a ridge to the north. The house is a continuation of the practice's work to find an appropriate rural architecture that is modest but strong, unassuming but sophisticated, domestic but referencing the agricultural. It is intended as a harmonious addition to the rural landscape, treading lightly while expressing its own character. The interior is conceived through the connections between spaces, bringing in light from several directions, allowing visual contact between rooms, and remaining flexible to future changes.

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2025  
2026  
2027

# South

6

Winning projects

Projects by architects  
in the regionProjects by architects  
from outside the region

£58.1m

Total cost of projects

9,845m<sup>2</sup>

Total GIA

£5,950

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## THE JACKSON LIBRARY – EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD

### NEX FOR EXETER COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 700m<sup>2</sup>

The comprehensive refurbishment of Exeter College's library combines sensitive heritage repairs with transformative contemporary interventions, reimagining one of George Gilbert Scott's most significant works at the University of Oxford. Constructed in 1857, the Grade II-listed neo-Gothic library required extensive structural alterations, including the replacement of roofs and the introduction of new rooflights, a 14m cantilevered timber mezzanine, extended floor space, new stairs, and a complete overhaul of services and lighting.

Nex Architecture, in collaboration with Donald Insall Associates, carefully balanced historic preservation with modern functionality. A new Clipsham stone entrance and lift provide universal access to the library for the first time, while bespoke oak joinery has been carefully integrated with restored historic features.

Passive environmental strategies, such as natural ventilation and automated shading, improve comfort and sustainability. The finished project delivers a bold yet sensitive transformation, protecting the building's historic character while creating an inspiring, flexible, and sustainable library for the benefit of future generations of students.

Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith





**HOPE STREET, SOUTHAMPTON**  
**SNUG ARCHITECTS FOR ONE SMALL THING**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 1,354m<sup>2</sup>

Hope Street reimagines rehabilitation for women involved with the justice system and their children, offering a compassionate and trauma-informed alternative to custodial sentencing. Conceived as a home rather than an institution, it provides uplifting spaces where women can heal, develop life skills, and prepare for independent living. The design centres on dignity and trust, featuring communal lounges, activity rooms, a coffee shop and counselling spaces, all designed in a warm and domestic architectural language.

A therapeutic garden lies at the project's heart, offering spaces for reflection and connection, symbolised by a central river birch tree that represents hope. The building avoids institutional triggers, prioritising privacy, safety and belonging. Natural materials, high levels of daylight, and biophilic design create a restorative environment.

Hope Street balances secure, welcoming accommodation with an open connection to the community, embodying a forward-thinking, sustainable approach to justice and wellbeing that uplifts its residents and inspires change.

Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone  
Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk



**RHODES HOUSE TRANSFORMATION, OXFORD**  
**STANTON WILLIAMS FOR THE RHODES TRUST**

Contract value: £27m GIA: 5,321m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £5,074

By modernising, refurbishing and extending the 100-year-old, Grade II\*-listed Rhodes House, Stanton Williams has enabled the Rhodes Trust educational charity to evolve while remaining within its historic premises. The transformation required significant interventions and major structural alterations to the building and, within a highly constrained site, the creation of a new 300-seat conference hall and foyer spaces, new office and residential accommodation and a new glass pavilion in the West Gardens. This overlay of state-of-the-art residential and conference facilities has opened Rhodes House to new audiences while significantly improving its layout and environmental performance, helping the Trust to generate income to secure its future.



HUFON + GROW (2)



**BLenheim Palace Orangery, Woodstock**  
**NICK COX ARCHITECTS FOR BLENHEIM PALACE**Contract value: £2.15m GIA: 414m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £5,190

Blenheim Palace called for an overhaul of the declining, impractical glazed Orangery's roof with extra repairs to the adjoining kitchen and flagstaff. The roof was thermally inefficient and unsafe, and use of the space restricted by glare, brightness, noise, control of climatic conditions and disruption to visitor access. During the work, priorities were to cut operational energy use and increase the space's practicality and accessibility.

The refurbishment works to the Grade I-listed Orangery restored a slate roof and solid ceiling to the building. As a restaurant and the primary event space for the palace, providing significant revenue for the World Heritage Site, it was vital the Orangery project met the palace's targets. Discussions with the client team, Historic England and the council, plus various submissions and pandemic disruptions, all enabled reassessment of the existing conditions and historic information to culminate in the current scheme.

**THE OLD BYRE, ISLE OF WIGHT****GIANNI BOTSFORD ARCHITECTS FOR JOSEPH KOHLMAIER**Contract value: £375,000 GIA: 166m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,259

Set on a ridge amid acres of pasture above West Cowes, Isle of Wight, near shipyards and light industry, The Old Byre is a conversion of two farm buildings into a home that also affords residency and working spaces for visiting artists. The project retains the footprint and structure of the original barns, wrapping them in insulation and corrugated cement board externally.

The form reflects the function. Responding to a modest budget, Gianni Botsford Architects has produced a lean and elegant design which balances the site's agricultural history with a domestic warmth and scale. A courtyard forms a large outdoor room, contained on four sides and inviting reflection. It is an intimate space that encourages creativity. Calm workspaces, a library and accommodation overlook the sloping concrete surface. With translucent polycarbonate facades and large glazed doors, rooms are animated by sunlight throughout the day. At night, they appear to glow from within.

Small Project of the Year

**ETON SCHOOL HALL, WINDSOR****HOPKINS ARCHITECTS FOR ETON COLLEGE**Contract value: Confidential GIA: 1,890m<sup>2</sup>

School Hall was built in 1908 to commemorate the South African War of 1899–1902 and was originally used for assemblies and school functions. The project involved the alteration and refurbishment of the hall to provide a world-class music and performance space for the school. The works improve the flexibility within the hall by providing a tilting floor to enable raked- or flat-floor events. New bench seating for the audience can be stored below the floor. Improvements have also been made to the room acoustics, with increased absorption plus a new acoustic array at high level, and acoustic reflectors to the hall perimeter to better focus sound upon the audience. New lighting and discrete environmental systems have also been installed. Fundamental to this work was the preservation and enhancement of the original hall with all of its important historic features.



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# South East

8

Winning projects

Projects by architects  
in the regionProjects by architects  
from outside the region

£49.8m

Total cost of projects

7,517m<sup>2</sup>

Total GIA

£4,021

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## **SHEERNESS DOCKYARD CHURCH, SHEERNESS** **HUGH BROUGHTON ARCHITECTS FOR SHEERNESS** **DOCKYARD PRESERVATION TRUST**

Contract value: £5.9m GIA: 874m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £6,750

Gutted by fire in 2001, the Grade II\*-listed Sheerness Dockyard Church was on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. Now though, following a £5.9m transformation, it stands resurrected as a hub for local people on the Isle of Sheppey, which is consistently ranked as one of the country's most socially deprived areas.

The revitalised 19<sup>th</sup>-century former church hosts a coworking space with support for young entrepreneurs, a café, public exhibition areas and an events space. Externally, the building has been faithfully restored to its original design, while the interior scheme presents surviving features alongside contemporary interventions that complement the robust elegance of the original architecture.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith  
Project Architect of the Year Robert Songhurst  
Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX



DIRK LINDNER (2)





**BURY GATE FARM, WEST SUSSEX**  
**SANDY RENDEL ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 582m<sup>2</sup>

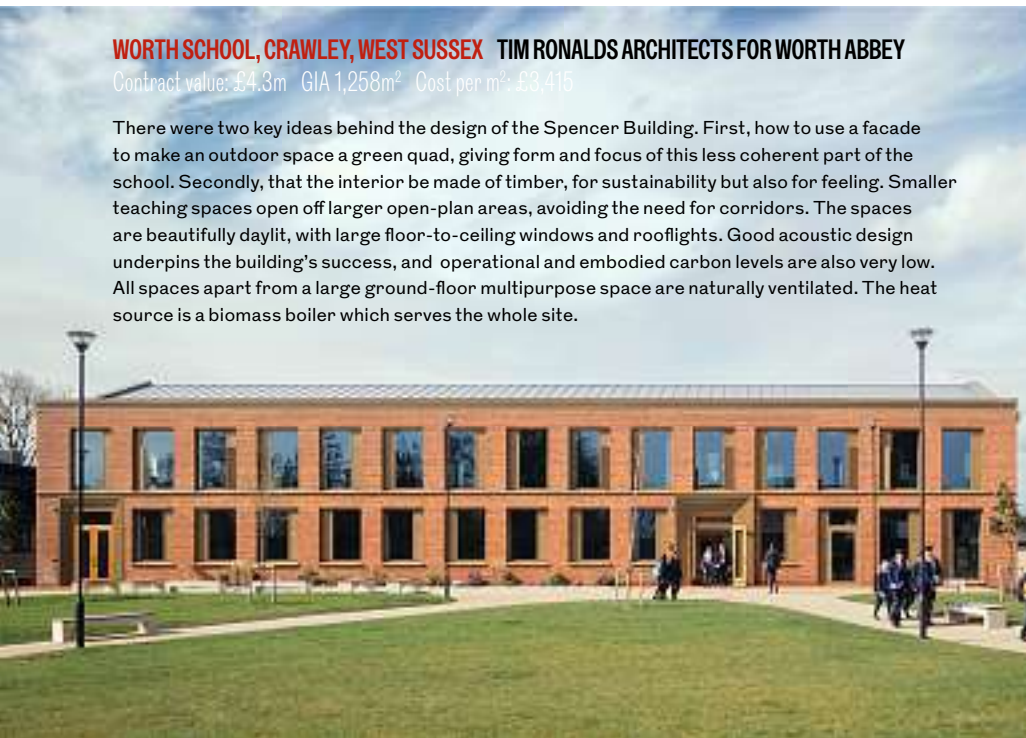
Bury Gate Farm is a new-build five-bedroom dwelling that replaces a dilapidated 1950s bungalow within the South Downs National Park, near Pulborough in West Sussex. Set on rising ground and against a dense wooded backdrop, the site opens up to the south and west offering expansive views towards the Downs.

It is designed as contemporary reinterpretation of a parkland villa, which is a historic typology within this part of Sussex, and draws the surrounding landscape into the composition. The building is low in embodied and operational carbon, and is designed to be physically robust, flexible in use and of enduring character.

**WORTH SCHOOL, CRAWLEY, WEST SUSSEX** **TIM RONALDS ARCHITECTS FOR WORTH ABBEY**

Contract value: £4.3m GIA 1,258m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £3,415

There were two key ideas behind the design of the Spencer Building. First, how to use a facade to make an outdoor space a green quad, giving form and focus of this less coherent part of the school. Secondly, that the interior be made of timber, for sustainability but also for feeling. Smaller teaching spaces open off larger open-plan areas, avoiding the need for corridors. The spaces are beautifully daylight, with large floor-to-ceiling windows and rooflights. Good acoustic design underpins the building's success, and operational and embodied carbon levels are also very low. All spaces apart from a large ground-floor multipurpose space are naturally ventilated. The heat source is a biomass boiler which serves the whole site.



**BRIGHTON DOME CORN EXCHANGE AND STUDIO THEATRE, BRIGHTON**  
**FEILDEN CLEGG BRADLEY STUDIOS FOR BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL, FOR BRIGHTON DOME & BRIGHTON FESTIVAL**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 3,500m<sup>2</sup>

Set in Regency gardens near the Royal Pavilion, Brighton's Grade I-listed Corn Exchange and Grade II-listed Studio Theatre have been refurbished by FCB Studios for modern audiences. The project restores four historic buildings, and includes a new link building that transforms a former courtyard into a public foyer, improving connections between venues. Conservation revealed and restored features like the Corn Exchange's arched timber frame, while new spaces, including a toplit bar, gallery, and pedestrian-friendly restaurant, enhance visitor and artist experiences.

Upgrades provide Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival (BDBF) with greater flexibility, accessibility, and infrastructure. A new creative space, Anita's Room, supports local artists and community groups. The Corn Exchange now hosts diverse events thanks to such modern features as sub-floor storage, a motorised truss and energy-efficient ventilation. The Studio Theatre, which has been reconfigured for intimacy and versatility, now connects better to its surroundings, with improved capacity and facilities, including a ground-floor restaurant.

Regional Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone

**KNEPP WILDING KITCHEN & SHOP, HORSHAM**  
**KANER OLETTE ARCHITECTS FOR KNEPP WILDING**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 611m<sup>2</sup>

The Knepp Wilding Kitchen & Shop is a multifunctional series of spaces featuring a café/restaurant and farm shop showcasing sustainable, local produce, alongside dedicated visitor facilities. The amenities, focused on the reuse of agricultural barns, support the wider project of rewilding the Knepp Castle Estate in West Sussex, which was previously intensively farmed. Initially envisioned as space for an external organic produce company, the project has developed naturally into the Knepp rewilding charity's public face, welcoming thousands of visitors to its estate.







RORY GAYLOR

### HASTINGS HOUSE, HASTINGS HUGH STRANGE ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 209m<sup>2</sup>

The careful repair of the concrete terraces of a steeply sloping rear garden in Hastings suggests a metaphor of darning; of precise interventions of anchoring and patching, in place of demolition and replacement, stitching the dilapidated site towards reuse. Onto this mended hillside, a series of lightweight timber structures enable the existing Victorian dwelling to reorientate towards the outside spaces. A sense of interconnection, natural light and far, layered views now permeates the previously dark and isolated ground-floor rooms of the house. A new route, formed with both repaired and new elements, winds its way up the rear garden, tying buildings and landscape together.



SAM GRADY (2)

### SEA, SKY HOUSE, WHITSTABLE, KENT LIDDICOAT & GOLDHILL FOR SOPHIE GOLDHILL AND DAVID LIDDICOAT

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 300m<sup>2</sup>

Sea, Sky House is a low-embodied-carbon, low-energy self-build scheme by the sea in Whitstable. It was built as a co-development for three families, building the homes together and sharing communal spaces and facilities. Liddicoat & Goldhill's house focused on combining environmental technologies with a philosophy of employing reused materials, all within a constrained construction budget, and while integrating the interior with the dramatic natural setting. Having bought the site in 2018 with friends, the architects won planning permission, raised finance and built the house – by hand as the main contractor – over the following four years. They collected materials during the design process, adapting them to the house, and adjusting the design to suit their discoveries. They set their own brief: to explore the ideal texture and atmosphere of domestic architecture. This experimental objective was achieved while building a community with friends and creating a home for their young family.



LORENZO ZANDRI

### TRIANGLE HOUSE, SURREY ARTEFACT FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 183m<sup>2</sup>

Triangle House is a detached home at the end of a cul-de-sac in Epsom, developed by Ideal Homes in the 1950s. Artefact created a new wing to the house that chases the afternoon sun at the back of the garden. Crafted from triangular blue blocks and terracotta tiles, with a warm yellow ceiling, the extension references the tones of the existing house and the client's heritage, inspired by the 1985 book Caribbean Style. The architecture is framed by an exotic planting scheme by Phenomena, and lush planting unfurls along the sweeping blue terrace that unites the existing house and the extension.

Small Project of the Year





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# North West



# 4

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£290.2m**  
Total cost of projects

**31,943m<sup>2</sup>**  
Total GIA

**£6,748**  
Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## VESTIGE, CHESHIRE EAST SMITH YOUNG ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 232m<sup>2</sup>

Vestige extends and converts an existing detached Edwardian house into a new family home. The original house was suffering from a long-term lack of repair, and reflected a pattern of use that was far more relevant to life more than a century ago. The project evolved into a journey of discovery and adaptation, an investigation into repurposing, recycling and resourcefulness. Conceived as an augmentation of the original house plan, the spatial composition was directly influenced by the nine-square grid. This new family home examines a fundamental tension of architecture – the responsibility to belong to its surroundings in terms of scale, proportion, and material, while facilitating the patterns of everyday life through the making of rooms. Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith and Small Project of the Year





**THE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENT (SEE) BUILDING,  
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD, MANCHESTER**

**SHEPPARD ROBSON FOR UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD**

Contract value: £35,749,062 GIA: 15,288m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £2,327

The University of Salford's SEE Building is a flagship, all-electric facility that unites 12 school directorates in the heart of Peel Park Campus. The 15,288m<sup>2</sup> building supports evolving educational needs with state-of-the-art spaces for architecture, robotics, computing and engineering disciplines, including a strong floor with a seven-tonne crane, Class 2 laser facilities, and specialist testing laboratories. A central, naturally lit four-storey atrium fosters collaboration, connecting flexible teaching spaces, STEM labs, and research environments. Breakout areas and informal study zones encourage interaction, while showcase spaces enable students and staff to exhibit work. Delivered on time and on budget, the project's industrial aesthetic references Salford's engineering heritage, with colourful exposed structural elements and intuitive circulation enhancing the user experience. The design prioritises accessibility, with inclusive features shaped by early consultation, and achieved BREEM Excellent through a fabric-first approach and mixed-mode ventilation.

Project Architect of the Year Matthew Taylor

**AVIVA STUDIOS –  
FACTORY INTERNATIONAL, MANCHESTER  
OMA FOR MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

Contract value: £240m GIA: 13,350m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £17,978

This landmark new cultural space in the heart of Manchester is one of the largest and most ambitious developments of its kind in Europe. Aviva Studios, home of Factory International, is designed by OMA, and is the firm's first major public building in the UK. The development has been led by Manchester City Council, with backing from the government and Arts Council England. Factory International operates the cultural centre, as well as delivering the citywide Manchester International Festival every other year.



MARCO CAPPELLETTI



JACK HOBHOUSE

**THE CATKIN CENTRE AND SUNFLOWER HOUSE, LIVERPOOL  
CULLINAN STUDIO WITH 10ARCHITECT FOR ALDER HEY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 3,073m<sup>2</sup>

The Catkin Centre and Sunflower House, designed by Cullinan Studio and Turkington Martin, and delivered by 10architect, bring together specialist mental health facilities, previously scattered across the hospital site and city, in two connected buildings. The Catkin Centre provides outpatient services including around ASD, ADHD, development paediatrics, child and adolescent mental health, eating disorders and crisis care. Sunflower House is a 12-bed inpatient mental health unit providing a home-from-home for young people with complex and enduring mental health conditions, one of only six in the country. Facilities surround courtyard gardens, creating a warm, welcoming environment with strong connections to nature. This project truly enhances the possibilities for a therapeutic environment.

Regional Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone



PAUL RAFTERY

# Why ceramics remain products for the ages

What's the future for ceramics? A buzzing RIBA J event hosted at Iris Ceramica Group's London ICG Gallery contextualised it between fascinating talks on Italy's Futurist past and a radical rethinking of a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Rome palazzo

The craft of ceramics is one of humankind's oldest. Since the first shaping and heating of clay 10,000 years ago, the craft has developed and informed every artistic and architectural movement, remaining critical to modern processes of design and architecture. RIBA J readers were invited to Clerkenwell for an event touching on a few of those artistic moments and to learn about how technological advancements have progressed the ancient craft into the future.

It was hosted at the London showroom of Iris Ceramica Group – the ICG Gallery. A showcase space blending technology and ceramic materials, it offers a sensory journey through surfaces and solutions. Many of Iris Ceramica Group's 2,500 materials clad the three floors of its flagship UK store, with countless others packed into sliding drawers, walls, furniture and reveals in a thoroughly Soane-like presentation.

Chiara Cola, foundation design studio lead and senior lecturer at London Metropolitan University, started proceedings by introducing her research around Italian Futurism, the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century movement propelled by poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti alongside



SIMONA SANTELLI

**Above** London Met University's Chiara Cola discussed the influence of Futurism applied to her textile design specialisation.

**Below** ZHA director Paola Cattarin discusses the firm's work at Rome's Palazzo Capponi.



SCOTT KERSHAW PHOTOGRAPHY

artists including Umberto Boccioni and Giacomo Balla. 'We are already living in the Absolute, since we have created eternal, omnipresent Speed,' Marinetti wrote in his 1909 Manifesto, a document rejecting the slow past in favour of speed, youth, industry, power, and violence.

Cola presented her VR-infused artistic projects, bringing Futurist energies a century forwards through today's technological advancements, closing with modernist poet Mina Loy's 1914 pronouncement: 'You prefer to observe the past on which your eyes are already opened... but the Future is only dark from the outside, Leap into it – and it explodes with Light.'

Futurism transcended materials and disciplines – even cookery – and, as with all cultural movements, ceramics were in the mix. Bulgarian Bauhaus graduate Nikolay Diulgheroff studied architecture in Turin, where he contributed to Marinetti's Futurist Meals cookbook. He also started working with ceramics, whimsical Futurist bowls, vases, and tea sets – designs which could be argued foreshadow Memphis Design PoMo geometries, but certainly also fit into expanded, international Art Deco movement Futurism segued into.

Appropriately, Iris Ceramica Group is the main sponsor of Art Deco: Il trionfo della Modernità (The Triumph of Modernity), an exhibition filling a series of grand rooms within Palazzo Reale, Milan. Across artworks and design objects, it considers how Deco drew on similar modernist ideals of industrialisation and technology as Futurism, but also embedded an aesthetic and narrative of ancient cultures. It's packed with porcelain, with several of Gio Ponti's ornate, playful vases and plates among other ceramics by Duilio Cambellotti, Dagobert Peche, and Giovanni Gariboldi.

There is a dedication to both the history and future of ceramics at Iris Ceramica Group, a firm founded in 1961. Though missing out on Futurism and Deco, it has worked across several artistic and architectural styles over its five-decade existence – and is similarly invested in today's pressing technological





CHRIS DALTON

concerns: net zero, carbon neutrality, and green energy.

The group's UK head of specification, Giacomo Bertoni, brought a sense of future manifesto to the conversation in describing the company's work on decarbonisation via its H2 Road to Net Zero action plan. By 2030, its H2 Factory, the world's first ceramic factory designed to run entirely on green hydrogen, will be fully operable. Sited in Castellarano (a small town in the province of Reggio Emilia), it is being designed to enable the production and storage of green hydrogen from just solar energy and rainwater.



SCOTT KERSHAW PHOTOGRAPHY

Last year, the pilot plant produced its first Ceramica 4D slab, a new technology emulating the textural depth and grain of stone and marble within a manmade ceramic, using green hydrogen and natural gas. This blend represents an initial transitional step that will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the short term and pave the way to exclusive use of 100 per cent green hydrogen in the future.

In Rome, Zaha Hadid Architects used some of the Iris Ceramica Group's products in its techno-Baroque restoration and transformation of Rome's Palazzo Capponi into the Romeo Roma Hotel. While the architectural shell and courtyard of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century palazzo was intact, few original interiors survived prior occupation – including as governmental offices. ZHA's radical and playful addition to the building began in 2015 with designs by Zaha Hadid before her untimely passing, and more since picked up by project director Paola Cattarin and her team, to expand on with a luxury of technology and materials not possible even a decade ago.

Futurism's sense of urgency and science, as well as the consideration of historic reference with technological futures of Art Deco, are present in the scheme. 'Our interiors can be powerful,' Cattarin says. 'But we were always very respectful of the original palazzo.' Suitably, Iris Ceramica Group provided one of ZHA's meticulously detailed products, most notably used in the Deluxe sinuous, folding bedrooms finished with polished ebony and chestnut akin to the most luxurious yachts. Behind the bed's headboard, part of the total sculptural form, is a sunken bathtub.

'We selected the Iris Ceramica Group's surfaces because of their durability,' Cattarin explained, a nod to the products' water resistance, strength, and ability to be formed into a shape classical marble might be, still holding a depth of grain in its body. More than just providing a product, 'Iris Ceramica Group were very supportive during the design process,' the architect added, 'providing us with all the technical information we needed.'

Whatever future historians deem the culture of today's era, it will surely



IRIS CERAMICA GROUP

be discussed as a period of rapid change and speed of technological advancement that the Futurists could only have dreamed of – but also one urgently wrestling with climate breakdown and a reflection upon the past.

Ceramics have been around for 10,000 years. But to ensure that they will be for a further 10,000, resilient and recyclable products – such as those by Iris Ceramica Group, soon to be manufactured in carbon neutral factories, with decarbonised and circular economies in mind – will be critical. ●

**Top left** ZHA's vision at the Romeo Roma Hotel radically reconfigured internal spaces, while respecting the heritage structure throughout.

**Left** Iris Ceramica Group's Giacomo Bertoni discusses the firm's plans to take ceramics into the future.

**Above** 'Attract' is ICG's innovative, dry magnetic laying system: a 100 per cent reusable surface solution (magnetic laying system licensed by Magface).



**IRIS  
CERAMICA  
GROUP**

# Wales



# 4

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in the region



Projects by architects  
from outside the region

**£12.7m**

Total cost of projects

**3,046m<sup>2</sup>**

Total GIA

**£4,674**

Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>



## NYTH, BANGOR, GWYNEDD MANALO & WHITE FOR FRÂN WEN

Contract value: £3,014m

GIA: 714m<sup>2</sup>

Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,221

With a focus on supporting young people to take part in the arts, Frân Wen works to create exciting Welsh-language theatre. After it outgrew a previous building in Bangor, Frân Wen has at Nyth reused a redundant Grade II-listed church, which had fallen into disrepair, and offered in its place a state-of-the-art theatremaking space for young people, creating a new heart for the community. The bold expansion of a disused undercroft introduces level access to the newly formed main foyer, while minimising alteration to the exterior and compartmentation of the main nave space. Frân Wen's recent live theatre show Olion ended with a promenade performance of 100 community actors and an audience of more than 400 strolling through Bangor and arriving at the new centre, showcasing Nyth's ability to accommodate scriptwriting, stage set making, rehearsals, dressing and community performance, all under one roof.

Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith  
Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk  
Regional Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone



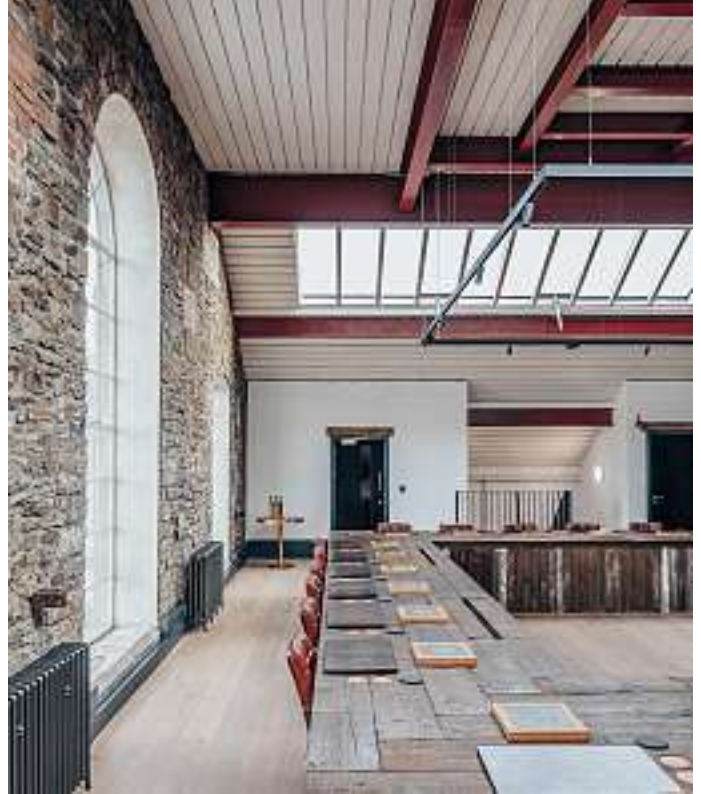




**CROES FACH, CRICKHOWELL, POWYS**  
**HALL + BEDNARCZYK ARCHITECTS FOR BEN AND FERNANDA RUSSELL**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 398 m<sup>2</sup>

Croes Fach is a 400m<sup>2</sup> family home located in the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park, replacing a nondescript 1950s house that sat on a different part of the plot. The new multigenerational dwelling provides five bedrooms and an independent ground floor annex, plus additional storage and garaging. The site's setting prompted a design that celebrates a dramatic outlook, with the dwelling relocated to the highest spot in the garden, and open-plan living spaces set on the upper floor to gain mountain views while maintaining a connection to the garden. A kitchen, dining area and lounge look out to the natural landscape through a 15m-long and 3.3m-tall glass wall, which opens onto a slate terrace leading directly to a lawn that rises from the garden below. Ground-floor bedrooms pivot in their orientation towards the garden, resulting in two axes of alignment which carry through the design composition.



**HAFOD-MORFA COPPERWORKS DISTILLERY AND VISITOR CENTRE, SWANSEA**  
**GWP ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHER HUMPHRYES FOR SWANSEA COUNCIL**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 1,857m<sup>2</sup>

Following closure in 1980, Swansea's 5ha historic Hafod-Morfa Copperworks site fell into dereliction. The Penderyn Distillery and Visitor Centre was the project with which Swansea Council looked to kickstart the site's regeneration. It involved the restoration of the derelict Grade II-listed Victorian powerhouse and its fit-out as a whisky distillery with four stills, and the reuse of the Grade II-listed rolling mill for a barrel store. The development also includes a new-build visitor centre and link structure set within the historic revetment walls connecting the two, incorporating the presentation of archaeology and interpretation of Swansea's leading role in the copper industry.

Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX

**DELFYD FARM, SWANSEA RURAL OFFICE FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 77m<sup>2</sup>

Delfyd Farm is a remote coastal farmhouse in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Gower Peninsula, south Wales. The clients, a creative couple, wanted to improve the spatial quality of the ground floor of their home, to accommodate family and friends. The project, designed by Rural Office, consists of two modest domestic extensions, one either side of the existing farmhouse – a guest wing to the east and a dining/sitting room to the west, adjacent to the existing kitchen. They read as four distinct volumes, scaled to defer to the hierarchy of the original farmhouse.

Small Project of the Year and Project Architect of the Year Neil Haddrill





# North East

4

Winning projects

Projects by architects  
in the region
**£15.7m**  
Total cost of projects

**4,129m<sup>2</sup>**  
Total GIA

**£4,840**  
Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

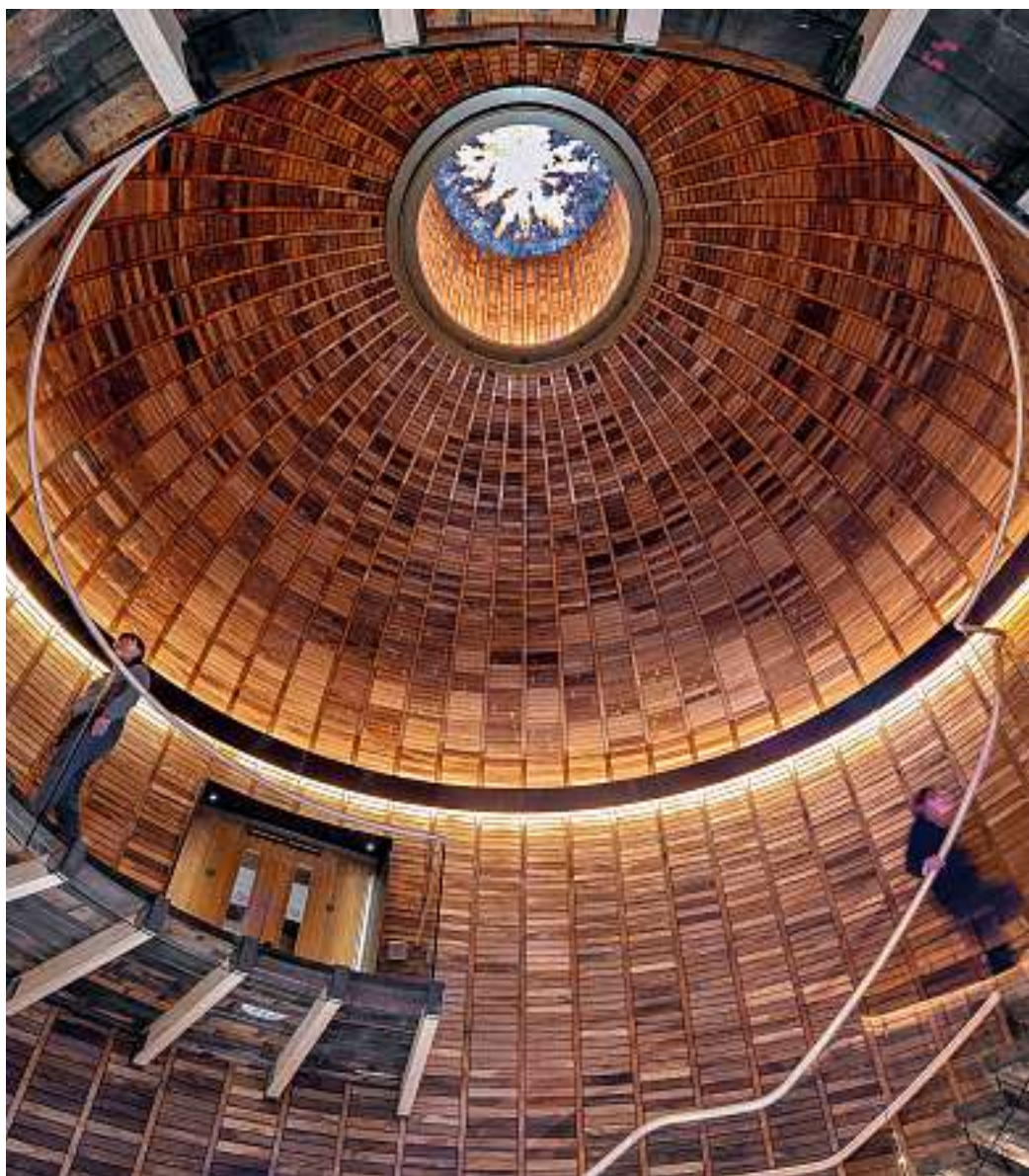
## AD GEFRIN ANGLO SAXON MUSEUM AND DISTILLERY, WOOLER, NORTHUMBERLAND ELPHICK ASSOCIATES FOR AD GEFRIN ANGLO- SAXON MUSEUM & DISTILLERY

Contract value: £10.2m GIA: 2,958m<sup>2</sup>Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £3,452

Ad Gefrin incorporates an Anglo-Saxon museum and full-process whisky distillery (including secure cask store), a bistro, a shop and visitor facilities. Located in a landmark position at the gateway to the Wooller conservation area, it sits adjacent to the A697 arterial route. The private client, the Ferguson family, aimed to revitalise the local community by stimulating the visitor economy. They transformed a derelict site with a new-build scheme echoing ancient aesthetics, in addition to reconstructing a 17<sup>th</sup>-century dye mill and cottage. Together, the client and architect selected the design team via a competitive tender process that prioritised local and regional companies.

Project Architect of the Year Richard Elphick  
Building of the Year sponsored by EH Smith  
Client of the Year sponsored by Equitone  
Sustainability Award sponsored by Autodesk

SALLY ANN NORMAN (2)







**FARRELL CENTRE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**  
**SPACE ARCHITECTS AND ELLIOTT ARCHITECTS FOR NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**

Contract value: £4.6m GIA: 1,023m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £4,497

Space Architects and Elliott Architects collaborated to transform a Grade II-listed building in the heart of Newcastle into the Farrell Centre – an 'urban room' for the city, which opened to the public in 2023. Instigated by Sir Terry Farrell and forming part of Newcastle University's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, the centre's mission is to widen the debate around the built environment by exploring the crucial role architecture plays in contemporary society in innovative, challenging and engaging ways. Central to the design is the new entrance area. Open on both sides, it creates an informal, welcoming atmosphere, with a feature stair drawing visitors towards the gallery and activity spaces on the upper levels. The design demonstrates how historic buildings can be creatively repurposed with a balance of contemporary intervention and sympathetic restoration, and has already proved to be successful in its ambition of creating a vibrant and inclusive urban room.



**WHITBURN COASTAL CONSERVATION CENTRE, WHITBURN, NEAR SUNDERLAND**  
**MAWSONKERR ARCHITECTS FOR NATIONAL TRUST**

Contract value: £575,000 GIA: 100m<sup>2</sup> Cost per m<sup>2</sup>: £5,750

The centre is a collaboration between National Trust and SeaScapes marine landscape partnership scheme, sited next to Souter Lighthouse in Whitburn, South Tyneside. It forms a gateway to the Leas coastline and enables groups to use the space as a hub for conservation work and nature programming, helping raise awareness of coastal conservation issues. The design complements the 'heavy' lighthouse, grounded to the rock, with a lightweight 'floating' structure merging into the landscape, with framed views of the lighthouse and open views of the coast. The building almost wears the Trust's mission as a jacket, with an exposed timber panel structure internally and 100 per cent recycled plastic tiles from construction waste externally, showing how material can be reused rather than polluting coasts and seas.



**ROCKET HOUSE, NORTHUMBERLAND**  
**NAPPER ARCHITECTS FOR PRIVATE CLIENT**

Contract value: Confidential

GIA: 48.2m<sup>2</sup>

The project's main focus has been the sensitive restoration and refurbishment of the existing building, which is situated in an exposed, coastal village. The existing building is a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century 'rocket house', a unique building type accommodating lifesaving apparatus which would be used when coastal conditions prevented lifeboats from being deployed. As this is one of the last few remaining rocket houses on the North East coast, the project has been vital to keep this important piece of local heritage alive. The original rocket house building has been fully restored, and the design intervention looked to rework a previous 1990s extension to the property – which provided cramped amenity space – by adding a new roof structure and window to make this area more functional. Throughout, the building has been refurbished to provide a modern and comfortable place to stay.

Small Project of the Year

Conservation Award sponsored by VELUX

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Architecture: SOTA Architecture  
Interior: Louise Holt Design  
Photography: Renee Kemps



# In the Cotswolds, a barn extension demonstrates the benefits of sustainable clay lime plaster

Armourcoat's Clay Lime Plaster finish has been extensively and effectively used at New Country House, designed by local practice SOTA

Armourcoat's naturally sustainable Clay Lime Plaster finish is used across walls and structural column and bulkhead architectural features at New Country House – a contemporary extension to an existing barn located in the Cotswolds Area Of Outstanding Beauty. Completed in late 2024, the project was led by local architecture practice SOTA, which specialises in contemporary and traditional architecture in the Cotswolds, with interiors by Louise Holt Design.

The stunning new home seamlessly marries a 19<sup>th</sup>-century stone threshing barn with a striking contemporary extension. The new addition curves with the natural landscape in which it is sited, its elegant form creating a gentle, organic contrast with the original barn structure. This sculptural, flowing shape grounds the building within its natural setting while introducing a sense of movement and modern refinement to the overall composition.

Armourcoat Clay Lime Plaster is used together with natural stone and oak as part of a restrained palette that establishes a timeless foundation to the home's inherent elegance, with its striking architectural curves. Introducing a textured matte stone finish with a natural raw aesthetic works in harmony with local setting, complementing the distinctive design of the new Cotswolds home.



## Images above

Wall finish: Armourcoat Clay Lime Plaster, Colour 001.

Project name: New Country House, Gloucestershire.

Architecture: SOTA.

Interiors: Louise Holt Design.

Used in Colour 001 – Organic White, the natural clay lime plaster provides a gentle, soft off-white tone and delivers subtly textured interest across the new home, which marries tradition and modernity. The finish is applied to interior walls throughout the ground-floor zone, which follow the natural curve of the building, plus several architectural structural forms. These include columns and bulkheads in the hallway and entrance zone,

along with a bespoke seating area in the main living space.

Crafted for architectural interiors, Armourcoat Clay Lime Plaster finish is made in the UK using natural mineral materials, with a minimum of 71 per cent recycled content and zero cement or VOCs. Hand-applied on site, its alluring organic aesthetic introduces natural texture and depth to interior walls and ceilings, with minimal environmental and health impact. ●

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# Scotland



# 11

Winning projects



Projects by architects  
in Scotland



Projects by architects  
from outside Scotland

**£232.6m**  
Total cost of projects

**46,646m<sup>2</sup>**  
Total GIA

**£5,475**  
Average cost per m<sup>2</sup>

## UNION TERRACE GARDENS, ABERDEEN

**STALLAN-BRAND ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN & LDA DESIGN  
FOR ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 1,310m<sup>2</sup>

Stallan-Brand, in collaboration with LDA Design, has revived Aberdeen's key public space, Union Terrace Gardens. The objectives for the project were derived through an extensive engagement process, ensuring public and political support for the project.

The addition of three refined, lantern-like pavilions – accommodating a café, restaurant and wine bar – reactivates the gardens' edges and creates a safe, inviting space. The project also delivers extensive landscape and engineering work: 43,000 plants, new play spaces, rebuilt granite steps and a fully accessible aerial walkway connecting upper and lower levels. Conservation work includes the restoration of statues, railings, arcade arches and even the subterranean Victorian toilets.

Union Terrace Gardens is now a landmark public space in harmony with its historic setting. Forgotten spaces have been repurposed, and contemporary architectural and landscape interventions enriched through sensitive restoration, creating a cultural and inclusive destination that strengthens the connection between people and place.

CHRISTOPHER SWAN (2)





## RIBA UK Awards Scotland

### FAIRBURN TOWER, MUIR OF ORD SIMPSON & BROWN FOR THE LANDMARK TRUST

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 120m<sup>2</sup>

Fairburn Tower, dating from around 1545, is a rare example of a surviving tower house from the Scottish Renaissance. The building fell into disrepair and became a ruin for over 100 years. It was on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland until it was identified by the Landmark Trust as a potential project. Simpson & Brown was appointed to convert it into a self-catering holiday let. The project carefully balances authentic restoration and creative, sustainable retrofit providing the historic building with an appropriate reuse which meets visitor expectations. For the windows, the architect followed the historic pattern of lead lights over timber panels, adding opening panels and secondary glazing together with internal shutters, all fitted with purpose-designed and hand-forged ironmongery. It also worked with artist-craftsman Paul Mowbray on a Renaissance-style painted ceiling, referencing the Rohaise Room in Delgatie Castle in a design unique to the Fairburn Tower.

RIAS/Equitone Project Architect Award, Julie Barklie



LANDMARK TRUST (2)

### HMP & YOI STIRLING, STIRLING HOLMES MILLER FOR SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE

Contract value: Confidential

GIA: 10,905m<sup>2</sup>

HMP & YOI Stirling is a new 100-person justice facility for women in custody in Scotland, replacing the previous HMP Cornton Vale prison on the existing site between Cornton and Bridge of Allan, north of Stirling. The design is focused on wellbeing, and offering a therapeutic and gender-specific response. The facility incorporates seven predominantly single-storey buildings including a front of house, central hub, retreat, animal care and three house buildings, all designed around a rich, well considered landscaped environment.

The design responds to its rural setting and local vernacular with a calm and coherent material palette: sandstone-toned masonry, zinc cladding, and pitched roof forms inspired by traditional farmsteadings. Generous courtyards and garden spaces form a continuous spatial thread throughout the site, offering light, views and a connection to nature in every direction.

RIAS/TCM Capital Innovation Award



CHRISHUMPHREYS





### RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL, PERTH ARCHITYPE FOR PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Contract value: Confidential  
GIA: 4,283m<sup>2</sup>

Having concluded an outstanding first year of post-occupancy building performance evaluation, Riverside Primary School stands proud as the first certified Passivhaus school in Scotland, and shows the impact of well-designed, healthy learning environments. With energy efficiency at its core, Riverside has exceptional air quality, consistent thermal comfort and an energy use intensity (EUI) demand of 45kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year. Well-proportioned brick facades with green windows are complemented in the school's quiet, ordered interior by a neutral colour palette and non-toxic materials such as linoleum, wood-wool fibre acoustic panels and natural maple joinery. Combined with thoughtful planning, this has created an uplifting, inclusive, comfortable and calm environment that supports educational and developmental wellbeing.

RIAS/Luths Services  
Sustainability Award  
RIAS/TSA Scotland's Client of  
the Year Award

### GAIRNSHIEL JUBILEE BRIDGE, ABERDEENSHIRE MOXON ARCHITECTS FOR ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 7,250m<sup>2</sup>

The Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge opened to the public in late 2023, after a design and construction period that included seven years of advocacy with heritage bodies and the local community. The new crossing is a simple but confident companion to the Category A-listed Gairnshiel Bridge immediately upstream, itself a masterpiece of 18<sup>th</sup>-century military engineering. As well as diverting traffic away from the historic bridge, through form and material the Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge is rooted in the immediate context of the Cairngorms and reflects the graceful profile of the original structure, which has now been safeguarded for the enjoyment of future generations.

The bridge's design incorporates robust materials including recycled, locally sourced granite for the parapets and embankments and weathering steel for the primary structure. A slender profile was maintained by tapering the cross section of its lower portion so as to achieve a gently curved linear form. The weathering steel girders will blend to muted tones, merging with those of the surrounding glen in the Cairngorms National Park.





## ALDOURIE CASTLE ESTATE, INVERNESS PTOLEMY DEAN ARCHITECTS FOR WILDLAND

Contract value: Confidential

GIA: 3,538m<sup>2</sup>

This project involved the repair and conservation of the Category A-listed castle at Aldourie, along with its derelict, partly collapsed walled garden and steading range. The castle was rehauled and extended, while the wider scheme focused on the restoration and enhancement of the garden landscape by Tom Stuart-Smith, to recreate the spirit of what had once been a visually rich and important Highland estate. A new 'Home Farm', biomass building, boat house, gate lodge and suspension bridge were added to reconnect and re-energise a remarkable historic composition on the banks of Loch Ness. Additions to the castle and the new buildings illustrate a thorough understanding of the work of the significant historical architects who worked on the estate, such as David Bryce and Sir Robert Lorimer, and show how their work can be developed with a sense of informed wit.

RIAS/Confor/TDUK Timber Award

SIMON KENNEDY



ROSS CAMPBELL

## ROSEBANK DISTILLERY, FALKIRK MLA FOR IAN MACLEOD DISTILLERS

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 4,448m<sup>2</sup>

Established in 1840, Rosebank whisky was known as 'King of the Lowlands', but the business closed in 1993 and the distillery fell into disrepair. When Ian MacLeod distillers acquired the site, it contained listed warehouse buildings and some buildings past repairing. A passionate and dedicated collaborative team worked to restore the building as a working distillery and visitor attraction. Honouring the building's heritage, preservation and reuse were prioritised with many of the original building materials reutilised. The chimney and lock keeper's cottage were restored, a 'dunnage' maturation warehouse was remade using original bricks, and the 103-year-old mill was retained as part of the working production line. Traditional materials and forms are offset by bold modern interventions, notably the striking glass frontage framing gleaming pot stills within. Securing new jobs, supporting local suppliers and improving the tourist offering, the reopening has made a significant contribution to Falkirk.

RIAS/VELUX Architectural Heritage Award



KEITH HUNTER

## THE NUCLEUS BUILDING, EDINBURGH SHEPPARD ROBSON FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 8,130m<sup>2</sup>

Designed as the new heart of the University of Edinburgh's King's Buildings campus, the Nucleus Building expands undergraduate teaching and offers a variety of learning environments. It provides a much-needed focal point and meeting place for students and staff, creating an attractive space for study and enhancing the student experience. Its facilities encourage students and staff to spend more of their time on campus.

The Nucleus Building fosters a vibrant environment that cultivates a world-leading community of excellence in science and engineering teaching, research, and industry, proudly integrated into the heart of the local community. The architectural language is both contextual and contemporary, with a robust brick colonnade forming a civic base that supports a composition of carefully scaled volumes above. Internally, the structure is both complex and intuitive: generous staircases and a luminous atrium connect the Nucleus Building vertically and flood it with natural light. Despite the scale, it remains human-centred.





### ELLENGOWAN REGENERATION, DUNDEE COLLECTIVE ARCHITECTURE FOR HILLCREST HOMES (SCOTLAND)

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 5,825m<sup>2</sup>

Ellengowan Regeneration replaces 124 postwar dwellings, which had poor thermal and acoustic insulation, with 130 new homes – a mix of accessible flats, cottage flats, and family terraced houses – plus a corner shop. The open-space strategy retains the green, leafy character of the existing development to respect and retain its strong community spirit, and the housing designs take advantage of the steeply sloping site to ensure all the living spaces enjoy views over the River Tay to Fife. Phase 1 (70 dwellings) was completed in 2023 and Phase 2 (60 dwellings) will commence in early 2026.

A simple palette of materials – principally brick facades and painted timber window frames – provides the area with a unified and calm aesthetic. Housing that faces onto Baxter Park uses a recessed brick detail to create shallow inverted bays, and a regular, tenemental rhythm appropriate to the conservation-area context. Each entrance features public artwork by Tom Pigeon.

KEITH HUNTER

### KINLOCH LODGE, LAIRG GRAS FOR WILDLAND

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 751m<sup>2</sup>

Kinloch Lodge has been meticulously transformed from a dated and poorly-serviced sporting lodge into a comfortable, restful and more sustainable holiday home for groups of family and friends. Originally built by the Sutherland Estates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was then extended, modernised and added to in a piecemeal manner over the following decades. As part of an ongoing masterplan for the wider estate, GRAS has revitalised the lodge; carefully and sensitively repairing, replanning and enhancing the existing building cluster to create a high-quality and inspiring place to stay that is equal to the spectacular landscape in which it sits.

Unusually, interior walls are lined in painted butt-beaded boarding, which has been repaired and reinstated following thermal improvements. Caithness slate was used extensively for the floors, and special purpose-made washers of the correct gauge were used for the fixings to corrugated iron.

FRAN MART FOR WILDLAND



### CAOCHAN NA CREIGE, ISLE OF HARRIS

IZAT ARUNDELL FOR PRIVATE CLIENT

Contract value: Confidential GIA: 85m<sup>2</sup>

Caochan na Creige is a handmade house in the Outer Hebrides, and is the first new-build home by emerging practice Izat Arundell. The name means 'little hidden one by the rock', as the sculptural form is designed around a substantial Lewisian gneiss rock that dominates the site. Internally, the living spaces wrap around this natural feature which creates a soft 135-degree angle. This angle is used throughout the design and demonstrates the strength of site-specific architecture. Initially conceived as a concrete structure, budget constraints led to a creative redesign: the final timber-framed house is clad in full-thickness local stone, giving the home the appearance of a modern-day blackhouse, nestled in the terrain. A concrete ring beam, washed to reveal the stone aggregate, echoes the original concept and adds a contemporary contrast to the handcrafted exterior.

RIAS/Laurence McIntosh Award for Architectural Interior

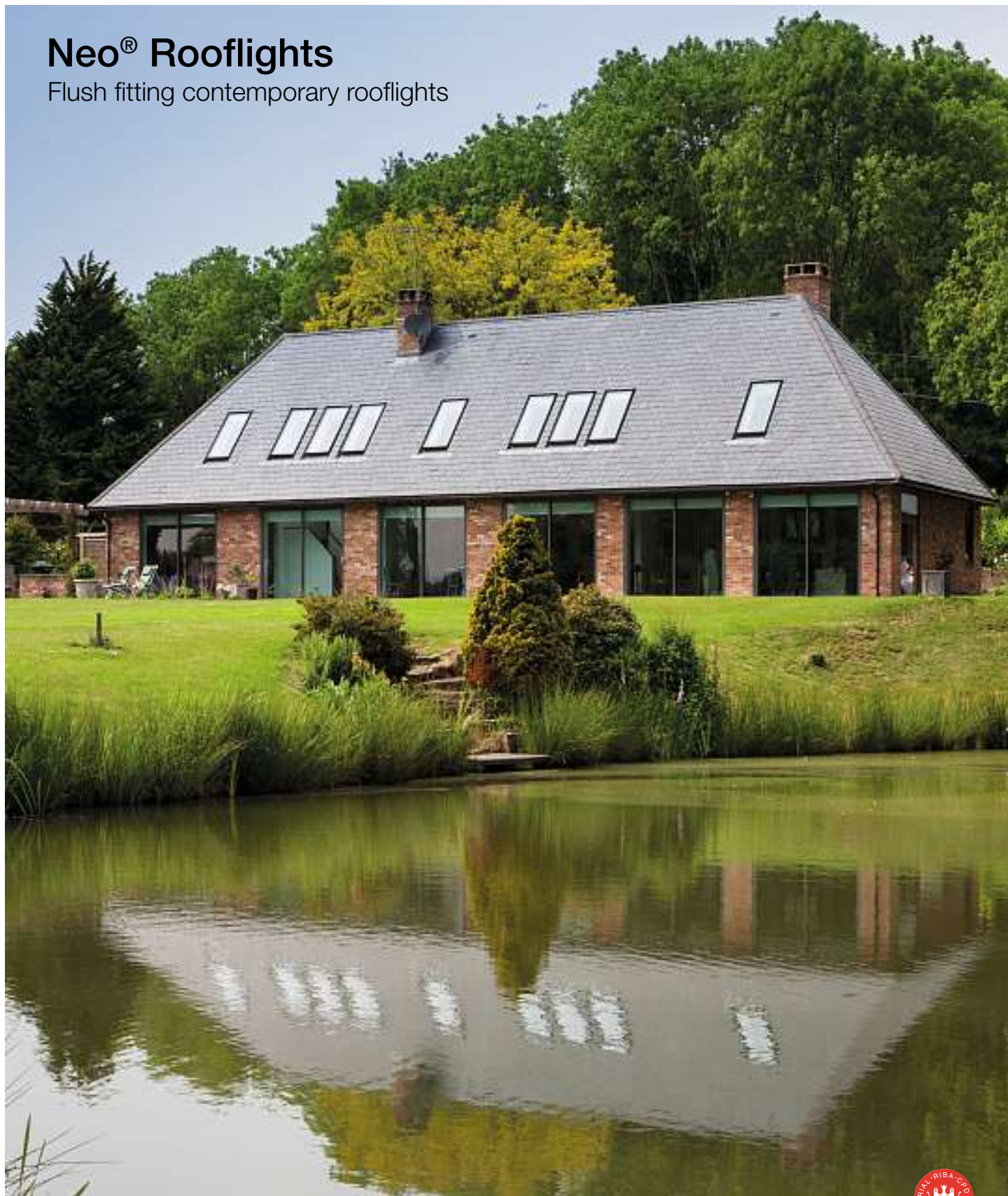


RICHARD GASTON (2)



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Battersea Power Station



DAVID JERRED MILES (4)

## Celebrating a century of independent brickmaking

This year, Northcot Brick marks 100 years of award-winning traditional brickmaking. The company's bricks feature in many iconic buildings, and it continues to innovate

As one of the last remaining independent brickworks in the United Kingdom, Northcot is a hidden gem. From its factory in the Cotswolds, it produces an extensive range of traditional handmade, wirecut, and reclaimed-style bricks, much sought after for their warm tones and distinctive character.

Its specialist bespoke brick-matching capabilities have produced award-winning brick architecture, from the Stirling Prize-winning Newport Street Gallery to several RIBA Nationals and five 'Supreme' Brick Award-winning projects.

### From a Churchill connection to Battersea Power Station

Northwick Brick & Tile, as it was known, was founded in 1925 by Sir Winston Churchill's cousin, Captain E. G. Spencer-Churchill, who wanted to create jobs for families who were living on his estate.

Initially, he intended to grow materials for basket making. Instead, he discovered a rich seam of Lower Jurassic and Middle Lias blue clay, excellent for brickmaking.

In the 1930s, these high-quality bricks prompted his friend Sir Giles Gilbert Scott to order approximately six



Above Northwick Brick &amp; Tile



million Golden Brown Pressed bricks to construct Battersea Power Station, which was then Europe's largest brick building.

Almost a century later, conservation architects Purcell used historic documents to identify Northcot as the original manufacturer, and the enormous task of turning out 1.3 million handmade bricks for the Power Station's restoration began.

This involved creating two bespoke blends, each with six or seven brick colours, meticulously laid out to match the exterior pre-war walls at various stages of weathering. They were produced by a team of just five master brickmakers!

### Traditional handmaking – a 'working museum'

Visitors often describe the brickworks as a 'working museum'. The Victorian 'Pan Mill', which was purchased secondhand in 1927, still processes clay for handmade bricks and is believed to be the oldest working example in Europe.

The Hoffman kiln, installed when the factory was built, continues to produce bricks with greater organic variation than modern kilns.

At the heart of the operation, highly skilled master brickmakers still throw processed clay by hand into sanded moulds to create bespoke bricks and special shapes with traditional creases and smiles.

### Advanced bespoking capabilities

Over the years, Northcot has extended the scope of its production to fully automated wirecut and 'tumbled' reclaim ranges.

It has also refined its sophisticated weathering techniques to enable the subtle ageing and bespoking of the majority of brick types.

By combining technical advances with traditional craftsmanship, Northcot's master brickmakers can match most regional brick variations. This has led to work with several National Trust and Historic England properties as well as contemporary architectural projects.



**Above from top** Newport Street.  
Dorothy Garrod Building at Newnham College  
Cambridge.  
Radley College Chapel Extension.  
Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings.

### Award-winning brick architecture

Over the past decade, Northcot has created bespoke brick blends for several RIBA National award-winning projects. Manchester's Whitworth Gallery (MUMA, 2015 RIBA National) featured smooth, bespoke, machine-made bricks with handmade specials, reflecting the dark red of the original Edwardian building.

Northcot created two distinct, acclaimed blends for the Newport Street Gallery (Caruso St John, 2016 Stirling Prize), which matched the 'common' style brick facades of the semi-industrial listed building. Newnham College's Dorothy Garrod Building (Walters & Cohen, 2019 RIBA National), meanwhile, used a stunning blend of four bespoke red handmade brick types for the intricate facades, and solid bricks used in striking contemporary 'hit-and-miss' brickwork.

Radley College Chapel Extension (Purcell, 2023 RIBA National) featured three bespoke handmade and machine-made blends with special shapes to complement the Grade II\* listed Victorian Chapel. And the restoration of Shrewsbury's Flaxmill Maltings (Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, 2024 RIBA National) required three bespoke blends with matching specials. This involved the handmaking of oversized 'Great Bricks', 'which were one-third larger than standard bricks!'

### New product launches

As a passionate advocate of brick architecture, Northcot continues to innovate and develop new products. To mark its centenary, the company will unveil its new Artisan Brick range at exclusive Open Days, where architects can experience behind-the-scenes tours of the historic brickworks. ●



Book your space for our  
1 July Architects Open  
Day using the QR code

or call: 01386 700551  
[www.northcotbrick.co.uk](http://www.northcotbrick.co.uk)

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RISING STARS

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DOORS AND WINDOWS

2025



# 2: Intelligence

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HOUSE: CHANGING  
THE WORLD, ONE  
TERRACE AT A TIME  
ANDERS STRAND LUHR  
AND ERIKA SUZUKI,  
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TEN ARCHITECTURE  
AND THE GREENEST  
HOUSE MOVEMENT

We've worked on many retrofit projects for private clients over the years and, despite best intentions, sustainable features are the first to go when the tenders come in. After a while we thought: OK, what can we do? Everybody knows what is needed, the technology exists, we could sit and wait for prices to fall or grants to rise, or we could instigate change.

Extending and splitting Victorian terraces generates profit: it's a proven model. So why can't we put that uplift towards creating sustainable homes that reflect life today, addressing the crises in our housing and communities? A standard split puts a big flat suitable for families on the first floor and loft, without garden access. Add a second stair, and it can occupy the ground and part of the first floor instead, with a smaller flat upstairs, complete with terrace.

Good design is sustainable because people stay, and these conversions can be done on an ongoing basis without displacing communities. The approach extends to infrastructure: if you share a commodity, it becomes cheaper and more efficient. Running ground-source heat pumps across back gardens would make the technology financially viable, offer cheaper energy and tackle fuel poverty.

We found one sustainable development model in the Ise Shrine, Japan, which is rebuilt in a perpetual 20-year cycle that sustains a web of people, resources and expertise. An ongoing retrofit process could create a similar web to tackle every UK home, learning from mistakes and developing knowledge via repetition, rather than design teams and contractors going their separate ways after each project ends. We know this needs to be done at scale to have impact, and we're finding partners for the Greenest House through the Alliance for Sustainable Building Products. It involves a lot of cold-calling, but these firms are passionate about change. Like the Norwegian culture of *dugnad*, everyone contributes expertise and knowledge, and everyone benefits, in part through access to markets.

Next goals include further work on renders, servicing solutions and environmental data. But we're also prioritising a sustainable model to keep profit within the system, whether via councils, ethical investors, or even saying to our partners, 'OK, let's do this thing, together' – because wouldn't it be great if all development could be like this? ●

*'An ongoing retrofit process could create a web of people, resources and expertise to tackle every UK home, learning from mistakes and developing knowledge via repetition'*

**Below** At this year's Venice Biennale, Office Ten is launching the Greenest House ([greenest.house](https://greenest.house)), a new model for redeveloping terraced houses that flips the traditional approach on its head, generating sustainable homes and a sense of belonging.



OFFICE TEN ARCHITECTURE



Intelligence is officially approved RIBA CPD. Look out for icons throughout the section indicating core curriculum areas.



# Thinking through making

Traditional Irish settlements had ‘rambling houses’ whose doors were always open to harpists, fiddlers and singers needing shelter for the night. John Tuomey tells Chris Foges about O’Donnell + Tuomey’s three experimental Rambling Houses created with furniture maker Joseph Walsh – places for gathering and conversation that demonstrate the value of hands-on expertise

## How did this project evolve?

I’d met the furniture maker Joseph Walsh at a crafts exhibition. Having asked us to design a test piece, he spotted a sketch in my notebook of a conceptual ‘vessel’ for zenithal light, and offered to make it. We went on to do a few investigative pieces together.

At Joseph’s farm at Fartha, County Cork, he has an annual festival for makers, Making In. He suggested we build something to mark the occasion. I emailed a sketch of three similar structures, with the idea they would be made by local craftsmen with materials found nearby, as a demonstration of a vernacular intelligence that is not yet gone but is not properly harnessed. Joseph replied with one line: ‘How about one a year for three years?’

He knew carpenters, general builders and a thatcher, so we got started with Passage House, a thatched structure on the path between his studio and workshop.

## How did collaboration shape the project’s design?

I wanted a stone ‘footprint’ and a rising timber structure. A fantastic builder, Ian Scannell, set out foundations and found

big fieldstones for piers. We brought in a couple of stonemasons to make low walls of vertically stacked stone, like those found on rivers around Cork. Stone-to-timber connections were made by a local blacksmith. Joseph has connections with a furniture college in Japan, and asked if they might send somebody who knew about traditional timber joints. A great man came for 12 days and developed some bespoke details that worked in native Douglas fir.

We didn’t do hardline drawings. I made sketches and card models, and Joseph made larger timber models which builders could measure from. Sheila [O’Donnell] and I set out the lines on site using string. It was a fantastically head-clearing experience because we are used to ranks of project managers and client advisors. Here the programme was: June, foundations; July, stonework; August, structure and thatching. At the September event it immediately became a gathering spot and a beautiful space for music recitals.

## What did you set out to demonstrate in its construction?

We wanted to work with solid wood that isn’t treated or kiln dried. The

O’DONNELL + TUOMEY



Design, construction  
& technology



timbers are large, but since they are dry-jointed and pinned with dowels, I don't think there's much redundancy. We worked with sawmills whose native Douglas fir wasn't structurally graded, but by testing it to destruction we've demonstrated its capacity. We must use more structural timber, and there's nothing like building with it to interest other people.

For the thatch I wanted an American crew-cut: sharp angles, not fuzzy lines. The thatchers did a lot of mocking up until everyone was happy. We had to cut reeds in January and dry them until summer. Those sequences are in danger of being forgotten, and it's great to maintain them with fresh ideas.

Reeds are interwoven or overlapped to get a thickness at the bottom, where wet thatch deteriorates fastest. Thatchers return every 10 years to remake the edge. The ridge is on a 20- or 30-year cycle. When you thatch a building you're committed to maintaining it, which raises questions about liability, guarantees and expectations of longevity in conventional construction.

### **What was the thinking behind the second building, Stone Vessel?**

My initial intention was three similar structures, like a little campsite, but at the first festival I realised there's no point in repetition. I'd enjoyed watching the stonemasons work, and asked one if he thought we could build a stacked stone structure. 'Well now,' he said, 'if you were doing that I'd come back next year.' I'd also been thinking about stone-roofed chapels in Ireland, where hermit saints holed up in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. So I proposed an angular structure aligned east-west to catch the rising and setting sun.

Again, it developed organically, with models but no construction drawings. One mason knew another, and an archaeologist got involved. Together we planned to build it entirely in fieldstone from the farm, which took a lot of excavation even though it's a small thing.

Once we got started, the masons told us the stone was too friable to give



**Above left** Passage House and Stone Vessel form a backdrop to the Hedge Theatre stage.

**Above** The prismatic Stone Vessel contains a rounded chamber lit by oil lamps in beaten copper,

on brackets handmade in bronze.

**Below** Passage House incorporates a flagged floor and stone piers from a nearby quarry, and dry stone walls quarried from the site.







O'DONNELL + TUOMEY

sharp edges. We wanted a clean-lined form with a 'soft' centre, so we found harder sandstone at a nearby quarry, and limestone from Tipperary to make lintels. I questioned myself about that, but looked at structures like St Kevin's Chapel at Glendalough, and saw they all made openings or quoins in that way.

#### How did the stonework take shape?

We started by drawing the lines of a 9m-high building in the sky, with string tied to scaffolding poles. The 15 masons brought stone up to the string, drew a line and cut it by hand. They were excited because while they had repaired national monuments, they'd never built from scratch. It was a colossal endeavour.

Solid stone is roughly coursed to make walls, and corbelled in the roof. It's crazy that we quarry stone in Ireland and send it to Portugal to be sliced into cladding. It makes more sense to build with it, and this is a good demonstration of that ethos.

We needed to site the building in its surroundings. Our Japanese carpenter had heard of a guy doing temple gardens in Kyoto. He arrived without knowing exactly what he was coming for. It was interesting to see how their traditions have been maintained, and what we could learn. They use boulder stone, laid so that large and small pieces interlock and self-settle. Low walling around Stone Vessel is built in that style, from stone that Irish masons would reject.



STEPHEN TIERNEY

**Top** Hedge Theatre, which completes the trilogy, is entered via a gravel path slicing through raised ground, with walls of vertically stacked stone.

**Above** A roof of reeds cut from the Shannon. **Below** Cutting the capstone for Stone Vessel, which employed stonemasons from Ireland, France and the UK.



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#### Why did you turn to stone again for the third structure?

At the second festival I decided we shouldn't do another pointed roof, but was thinking about the quarries we'd excavated – wonderful chambers of space. Walking between the pavilions, I backed myself into a thick hedge to get out of the rain and imagined a theatre between the rows of thorn bushes. Hedge Theatre crosses the boundary into the next field, with the amphitheatre on one side, a timber stage in the hedge, and the pavilions as a scenic backdrop.

Because an excavation would fill with water, we raised the ground from a long way off and built the auditorium inside. Its plan is based on asymmetrical tree rings. Sinuous retaining walls of dry-stacked fieldstone make theatre boxes, terminated by standing stones.

We wanted to counterpoint the blandness of typical building specifications, and the feeling of loss they arouse. I've seen structural-grade stone dug out in order to bring in concrete blocks for fat bungalows; what's to hand is often treated as having no value. Having finished three pretty rhetorical pieces, we are now talking with Joseph about a prototype 'lean house' that uses the intelligence of the vernacular, adapted to be economical and scalable.

#### Do the Rambling Houses offer other architectural lessons?

Three quite different structures add up to one thought. I'm interested in that because working life rarely allows us to develop our thoughts through making; everything is specified in advance.

We're not trying to set an alternative course for construction, but to show that there is undervalued intelligence in the hands of people who make things. If there was more respect and consultation between designers and makers, the class hierarchy might not be so extreme.

At Stone Vessel, a mason from Cumberland hesitantly asked for a word: 'All the lads are wondering what it's actually for.' I asked what he thought of it and he said, 'Oh, it's the best bloody thing I've done in my life.' Well, that's really what it's for – to honour their work. ●



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'To tackle climate challenges, the construction industry must adopt solutions that enhance resilience while supporting sustainability,' Stuart Sadler, technical services director at Tremco CPG, explains. 'ME007 FR is a step forward in both.'

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**Above** illbruck ME007 FR Window & Door Membrane HD is the first product in a new range of '+' Class B membranes to be launched from illbruck.





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# Making an entrance

Three practices share their experience, advice and strategies on making it through the Building Safety Regulator's Gateway 2 process for higher-risk buildings with Jan-Carlos Kucharek



Design, construction  
& technology

The new gateway system implemented by the Building Safety Regulator to audit the design safety of higher-risk buildings (HRBs) is leading to widespread frustrations among architects, about both the mechanics of submitting to the Building Safety Regulator and the extensions of time that dog the process. What advice and strategies can architects share who have made it through – or are still stuck in – the Gateway 2 process?

## Predictability and consistency are key

But first, the problems. Ben Oram, head of technical at Buckley Gray Yeoman and architectural technical lead group (ATLG) chair, explains that while basic issues such as the BSR's portal functionality are being tackled, 'the big things we need from the BSR' are predictability and consistency. 'We need

to know what's expected, how long it will take and how the day-to-day process works,' he says. Oram cites a recent Build UK report, which offers useful guidance on gateway deliverables and timings, but draws attention to anecdotal evidence that the statutory 12-week determination process has been subject to extension of time requests that can quite easily triple that timeframe.

One problem is that the process doesn't tally with design and build (D&B) contracts. This is maybe due to the lack of pilot projects that could have identified pain points, speculates Oram, and perhaps due to the route itself. 'Dame [Judith] Hackitt's clear concerns around D&B contracts make me think the Building Safety Act was aiming to target the worst bits of it,' says Oram, noting that traditional D&B delivery stages are now proving a poor fit for Gateway 2. He adds: 'It might not spell the end of D&B, but it's certainly pushing most of the work to the left of the Gantt chart.' The regulatory framework, while worthy in ambition, may not take account of 'how buildings are procured and design happens,' Oram continues. 'Industry will need to change to suit.'

So how, then, do you structure a project and optimise submission processes to keep delays to a minimum?

**Above** Maber Architects' Beeston Square student housing in Nottingham for Cassidy Group.

## Lived experience

Maber Architects' £36m Beeston Square project in Nottingham is an eight-storey 'courtyard' block of 419 student studio flats, designed for the PBSA provider Cassidy Group, and was one of two projects submitted after the May 2024 transition period closed, with Gateway 2 approval received in October 2024. Nick Keightley, Nottingham studio director at Maber, feels success – determined in 24 weeks – was down to how the 70-strong firm had prepared itself, the client and consultant relationship and the ordered nature of their submission. Here are their lessons for success.

## Prepare – and work with who you know

'We had set up an internal building safety working group – five of us, tasked with reviewing legislation, looking at BSA guidance, establishing competency requirements, attending any relevant forums, undertaking the RIBA Principal Designer courses, collating press articles, considering submission methods – even speaking to our insurer.



From this research we developed our toolkit for fulfilling the entire building regulations principal designer (BRPD) role, from appointment to completion, and Beeston Square was the first HRB project of ours to go through it,' Keightley says.

Success was aided, he believes, by the design team having worked on the Beeston project for three years previously – and by a well-established and trusted relationship. 'Choosing the D&B route, with us as principal designer, the client appointed contractor Bowmer + Kirkland with a pre-contract services agreement (PCSA) to help as principal contractor over the Gateway 2 period.' This path is increasingly being adopted to overcome the fact that contracts are tending to not be signed until RIBA Stage 4, right after Gateway 2 approval.

#### Organise the team to deliver

Given the unsettling perplexity the profession feels when navigating the Gateways, there's a refreshing simplicity to Maber's approach. Keightley says the first thing he did was screenshot every page of the BSR application portal to ascertain what was being requested, in order for the firm to create a tracker. 'We noted all of it,' he recalls. 'Whether a report, drawings or mandatory occurrence reporting plan, we listed it out and alongside it ran the exact BSA clause pertaining to it. Then we generated two spreadsheets – ours, which was design-focused, and one for client submissions.'

From this, Keightley says, the practice created its compliance tracker. This includes a design responsibility matrix (DRM), to break down the Building Regulations relevant requirement and compliance approaches – whether approved document, BS

or fire engineering solution – and to allocate design team responsibility to all of them. This meant sitting down with team members to look at demands and deliverables, and assign each of them a lead role: principal designer, principal contractor, structural or M&E engineer, or fire consultant. 'Engage with the other design consultants from day one – and be forensic on responsibilities,' he adds.

#### Think like the regulator

'We thought about how the BSR would receive the information and how the regulatory lead case officer might send it to other multidisciplinary team (MDT) consultants,' Keightley continues. 'Our philosophy was: if all this information is going to be split up and sent out as distinct packages, we'll create a sum of parts that was digestible from their end.'

'If the MDT wanted to review Part L, we'd list critical items on the building regulations compliance statement, also pointing them to key drawings to show how it was complied with – and we did that for every part of the regs,' he adds. 'A drawing might be relevant to different parts of the approved documents and, and if so, we noted it every time it was. Don't hand over a set of drawings and expect them to work out where information is hidden. Our philosophy was the easier we made it for the BSR to review, the more likely it would stay at the top of the pile and get dealt with.'

**Below** The lower-level public realm aspects of the Leeds Dyecoats scheme, with housing in the background.

#### DYECOATS, LEEDS FOR LATIMER

##### 42 weeks to Gateway 2 Approval in Feb 2025

Phase 1 of this £100 million residential-led scheme is 434 homes in three housing blocks, which while similar in nature and designed by the same team for the same client, were seen as separate applications. We are aware of other schemes that have been split between different BSR review panels, which could take different views on the same strategy, so we requested they be dealt with by the same MDT. Luckily, the BSR consented.

Initially, we weren't clear about the gateway process, so we appointed BSM CDM consultancy Safer Sphere as principal designer. We assume that role now, but it was good to have them onboard at the time. BSR's portal was problematic to upload to, not user-friendly, and could be improved to provide status and tracking to make the process more transparent. We had to pursue the BSR for updates over the approval period. Since the lack of these makes clients nervous, we now tell them to allow six months to get approval.

The client entered into a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA) with the D&B contractor and a fixed price was agreed prior to Gateway 2 approval; the contract was signed the day after it was received – at Stage 4. There were real challenges holding to the price during the submission.

In the future, we believe we'll see contracts being let at end of RIBA Stage 3 – 'Stage 3+' – so the gateway process will be managed by the contractor, the architect is novated and the principal designer is appointed at that stage. There would be a full NBS spec at that point and further employer requirements included so as to benchmark quality.

I think RIBA stages might need to adjust, because clients are already adapting them to suit their procurement needs. BSR's HRB requirement is such that you need a contractor on board to do the contractor's design portion (CDP) of the application.

**Luke Walter, London director of architecture, Broadway Malyan**

Our philosophy was: if this information is going to be split up, we'll create a sum of parts that are digestible







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Only supply the information a multidisciplinary team needs to reach a decision: you just need to evidence compliance

### Be methodical

The BSR portal demands many mandatory items – including project and team information, competence declarations, construction control plans and fire emergency files – but all the drawings are simply uploaded into one folder at the end. ‘We were submitting 185 drawings altogether and we thought, ‘they’ll never understand where it all is’, so we decided to cross-reference meticulously,’ says Keightley.

The BSR’s demanded building regulations compliance statement became Maber’s core document and the firm listed each approved document part, from A to T, and allocated them to the consultants who would need to provide the evidence of compliance. As BRPD, Keightley says this took discipline and meant a steep learning curve. ‘An acoustic consultant might have wanted to do a Stage 4 report and we’d say, “We don’t want that, we want a Buildings Regs report; we just need to know exactly how you propose meeting Part E compliance, so our drawings can reflect that.”’ Going through the regulations methodically also meant whittling down the task scope. ‘No gas boilers? Then don’t worry about flues and combustion elements. Stick only to what relevant to your project; and of that, who then needs to discharge it.’

### Don’t overspecify

‘Only supply the information a MDT needs to come to a decision and no more – what we prepared was tailored just to Building Regs compliance,’ Keightley continues. ‘They don’t need to know everything about the design – we just need to evidence compliance.’ So, for an external wall say, the BSR is interested in structural and fire safety aspects of that



**Above** Visualisation of Paddock Johnson's Chestergate housing scheme in Stockport.

build-up, so state those clearly. ‘We did specify products, insulation and cavity closers, for instance, but not brick types as that’s not a regs item. We redacted typical details to only show what the BSR need to evaluate.’ Likewise, you don’t need to fully specify a reception desk to supply a drawing proving a wheelchair will fit under it to meet Part M, he adds. ‘We did one drawing showing where the waste storage was, its capacity and how a vehicle accessed it: not the world’s most exciting drawing but it did the job, and via our regs compliance list, they knew just where to find the information.’

### Don’t over-dimension

Given that, post approval, any change is considered either a notifiable or a major change, Maber took the view not to dimension anything not critical to demonstrating compliance. Furthermore, if Part M defined a minimum door width or maximum travel distance, these dimensions were reflected in the GA plans. ‘Why state a door is 1300mm wide or 18m from an accessible WC, when both dimensions might change in design development?’ Keightley points out. Don’t state every dimension only to become hostage to them later. Tailor them to show clearly they are within minimum, or maximum, regulation parameters. ●

### CHESTERGATE, STOCKPORT FOR GREAT PLACES HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**29 weeks into Gateway 2 application, submitted October 2024**

The scheme is a £33m residential HRB of 150 apartments, over two blocks. The application was submitted in October 2024, is yet to be determined, and so far we’ve had two BSR extension-of-time requests. Lack of communication has been the key issue. When you submit, you aren’t allowed to contact anyone, which is frustrating. You are then unable to answer clients’ questions about timelines, which makes planning and cash flow management hard. If grant funding is at risk, the project could become unviable.

As this process was new to our client and the principal contractor, there were gaps in understanding around the areas each was responsible for. To keep things moving and ensure the application went in on time, we stepped in to provide support and drive the process. The absence of example documents or templates, such as for the construction control plan, added to the complexity, and some uncertainty around responsibilities led to quite a bit of back and forth.

Once approval is granted, attention turns to change control, which is raising concerns as we continue to navigate Gateway 2. We’re also having to manage change control on-site without clear guidance on what qualifies as a recordable, notifiable, or major change. Fees also present their own challenges. In many framework tenders, the Building Regs principal designer role seems to be included late in the process, often without a full understanding of its scope. Pricing is typically tied to a percentage of construction value, which doesn’t always account for the wide variation in project complexity. These frameworks are competitive to secure, but once you’re on them, the terms are fixed for three to five years, so fee proposals can feel like a leap of faith, especially with the role still evolving.

**Victoria Millward, director, Paddock Johnson**





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# Getting past the obvious

A RIBA Spec webinar sought to move discussions on sustainability towards a holistic viewpoint that links achieving viable, durable built environments with delivering social justice

**Below** Flexible layouts and efforts at placemaking characterise ABA and PTE Architects' Knights Park housing in Eddington, Cambridge.

'Addressing sustainability isn't just about how we build, it's about how long we build for,' said Jan-Carlos Kucharek, opening RIBA Spec's sustainability webinar. Citing Victor Kossakovsky's 2024 film *Architecton*, where ancient ruins juxtapose with concrete in a musing on longevity and destruction, Kucharek reiterated: 'Design isn't only about performance, it's about endurance and purpose.' That sentiment framed a discussion that went beyond familiar topics to examine intersections between environmental sustainability and socioeconomic and health-based concerns. It championed a more holistic understanding of sustainability which asks: who are we designing for, and how do our buildings support their futures?

'Concrete is the most consumed material on the planet, with implications that hang in the air like its dust,' noted Kucharek. The issue of air quality was one of many raised by Dr Marcella Ucci of UCL's Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources. Studies show, for instance, that high levels of indoor PM2.5 (particulate matter) impair memory and attention, while adequate filtration can reverse these effects. From indoor air quality and biophilic design to spatial layouts that encourage physical activity, design impacts cognition, productivity, and quality of life.

Acoustic comfort also fits this category. Oscar Acoustics' Innovation

Centre in Kent, rated A+ EPC, shows how healthy, sustainable workplaces need not skimp on originality. 'I went over the top,' said Ben Hancock, describing a characterful office saturated in the firm's recycled paper-based acoustic finishes, which also act as efficient thermal insulators and conform to BREEAM, LEED, and WELL standards. Projects and products like these demonstrate that health, environmental and aesthetic goals need not be competing priorities.

'Healthy buildings aren't a luxury; they're key to a sustainable future,' Ucci added, stating a position shared by such organisations as the WHO and the World Green Building Council. And 'designers are agents of public health, whether they realise it or not'. Inadequate insulation; mould exposure; obesogenic urban design – all carry social consequences. And 'pollution disproportionately harms the poor', Ucci explained, 'making energy choices a matter of social justice'. Sustainable, healthy built environments are linked with achieving equity in populations. If this is neglected, built environments perpetuate conditions that 'are not just inequalities but injustices'.

Positive social values are evident in the Knights Park housing development in Eddington, Cambridge. A joint project of Pollard Thomas Edwards and Alison Brooks Architects, it delivered 249 homes with flexible layouts, robust insulation and strong placemaking.



PAUL RIDDLE





**Left** The UCL Bartlett School's Dr Marcella Ucci spoke on the negative effects of poor internal air quality, and how biophilic design might remedy this.

**Right** dRMM's WorkStack at Charlton Riverside: 'better, leaner and smarter'.

**Below** WorkStack's passively ventilated, minimal interiors provide simple, flexible spaces for users.



'We were able to do quite a lot here because it's Cambridge,' admitted Alexis Butterfield, noting the area's higher affordability threshold and the nature of the client. Still, 'Cambridge let us test ideas – and now they're scaling beyond'.

The homes have 500mm-thick walls with 300mm insulation, timber roofs and structures to cut embodied carbon, plus terraces and split levels to maximise light and aspect. 'The mews houses make the streets car free and community focused,' said Michael Müller. Above-ground space focuses on people and biodiversity, with swales not just acting as drainage but as landscape features. The project's identity stems from 'true collaboration: swapping models, sharing pens from day one', the architects said.

The scheme also mitigated brick's high embodied carbon via the buildings' energy performance. Brick is used in above 80 per cent of new homes. 'Bricks are not the problem; how we make them is,' noted Sarah McGrady, group innovation and sustainability director at Michelmersh. The firm, which makes 125 million bricks annually, has slashed emissions by 47 per cent since 2003 and led a hydrogen-firing trial that cut firing emissions by up to 84 per cent. 'There's no one-size-fits-all solution,' McGrady said. 'Each site needs its own roadmap.'

Initiatives include renewables, circular production, and sugar cane-based packaging. Although challenges remain – including limited hydrogen availability and electric kiln tech still in infancy – Michelmersh is committed to publishing factory-specific EPDs to help architects specify based on carbon data.

Transparency was also central to the message of Kathy Ramsbottom, from Thrislington Cubicles. 'If we can't measure it, we can't fix it,' she said, regarding LCAs and EPDs, stressing their importance for accountability. Ramsbottom pushed for scrutiny of such greenwashed materials as bamboo, which often has more embodied carbon than assumed. She cited the firm's tough supply chain procedures, cradle to gate/grave/cradle reuse projects, take-back packaging schemes, and FSC-certified materials as more genuinely sustainable. She also emphasised the need to eschew passing trends in favour of 'building qualitatively'. 'We're not telling architects to stop expressing themselves,' she said, 'as long as they are happy with that design for the next 15 years' because the ironmongery is built to last. Fit for purpose comes first.



dRMM's project WorkStack, a light industrial building in Charlton Riverside for the Greenwich Enterprise Board, brings us full circle here. 'It's not just about less carbon, it's about smarter space,' said dRMM's Steve Wallis.

Composed of stacked, cantilevered CLT volumes on a steel base ('we imagined a kind of log stack') it achieved a 65 per cent embodied carbon reduction (271kgCO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup> upfront) and an A-rating under LETI guidelines. Its exposed timber, passive ventilation and minimal finishes underscore a fabric-first approach. 'We left the CLT exposed,' Wallis said. 'Why hide what's doing the hard work?' Yet WorkStack is also a social strategy, delivering 428 jobs per hectare. 'We wanted to build something that feels industrial, but does things better, leaner and smarter,' Wallis added.

The message was consistent throughout the webinar: good design is long lasting, adaptable, and socially embedded. 'There's no single solution, just relentless innovation,' as McGrady put it. Or, in Kucharek's words: 'Designers are not just shaping structures – they're shaping futures.' ●

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# Making practical experience perfect

The ARB's recommendations for the future of professional training are welcome, but significant questions remain



Business, clients  
& services

After a little over a year of work, the Architects Registration Board (ARB)'s Professional Practical Experience Commission (PPEC) has published its findings on the future of professional training for students of architecture. Its recommendations have been keenly awaited by schools of architecture, as the missing part in the ARB's reformed regulatory framework for qualification as an architect in the UK

When the ARB announced reforms to the longstanding Part 1, 2 and 3 structure of education, it appeared as though the thorny question of professional practice had been side-stepped. For a long time, it has proved difficult to find a way to effectively regulate PPE, and during the recent reforms it appeared to have been placed reluctantly in the 'too tricky to do' pile.

Instead, the decision was taken to hand the problem to this independent PPEC. Its headline recommendations have been accepted by the ARB board, which is now considering the more detailed recommendations to be announced in the summer. The commission's initial findings were



unsurprising to many in the sector. The quality of PPE students' experience is highly variable in quality, outcomes and the support provided. There are very worrying indications of inequality based on gender and race in both pay and access to employment. In addition, employment opportunities favour students with networks in the industry, and are unevenly spread geographically.

Overall, the PPEC concluded that there was an overwhelming case for systemic change, with the ARB, education providers and employers all needing to act together to bring about improvements to better support 'trainee architects'. Few, if any, would dissent from the commission's aims, but how to best achieve them?

## No easy options on regulation

The headline outcome for schools of architecture is the proposed new 'coordinating' role. This is a key recommendation in response to the question of who exactly should be responsible for ensuring an improved experience for trainee architects, and this is where the thorniness of the problem draws first blood.

The commission is effectively recommending increased regulation of professional practical experience. But the costs associated with this increased regulation can only be funded from four sources: taxpayers, architectural practices, students or universities. None of these is attractive, but the final option is the one that the commission has recommended – the coordination role required to improve PPE should be carried out by schools of architecture.

**Above** Professional practical experience in a positive, nurturing environment, as seen here at David Miller Architects, contributes enormously to individual skills and the quality of the profession.

AGNESE SANVITO

The actual costs are subject to debate, but what is not in debate is that higher education is already in a deeper than usual financial crisis. The PPEC's suggestion that its providers offer more oversight was an entirely predictable one. In short, it is a regulatory question more than a financial one. PPE is provided by practices, but the ARB does not regulate practices, only individual architects. Regulating architectural practices would therefore seem impossible without statutory change. It should also be remembered that students can currently gain qualifying PPE employment with firms other than architectural practices.

However, through accreditation the ARB does regulate schools of architecture, so the commission has logically identified that the ARB can regulate PPE via these schools. Yet this overlooks two very important questions. First, would schools want to do it? And secondly, how could they do it?

## Risk versus reward

The report states that the commission envisages that the old three-part structure of education will be replaced by a two-part structure, consisting of an undergraduate degree (not ARB-accredited) followed by a single graduate qualification that includes all the academic and practice outcomes (including PPE). This may happen, but it equally well may not.

Universities may take a look at the risk and reward associated with the coordination of PPE and the assessment of the practice outcomes (broadly, the old Part 3) and decide that there is little reward to be had, and an awful lot of risk. It's quite possible that schools may decide to only deliver the academic qualifications (undergraduate degrees in architecture and MArch degrees as two-year courses, or as integrated master's degrees). This is, after all, their core business. None of the PPEC's other recommendations would appear to prevent this approach, and in the current financial environment for universities, it could appear the preferable route.

This leads to the second question: how could schools effectively coordinate all PPE? A significant amount occurs when trainee architects aren't registered with any higher education provider – definitively they aren't students, they are employees. In these instances, the schools' role can only be to prepare the future architect for work, as is already required in the ARB's standards.

Perhaps to overcome this problem, the commission recommends that the ARB encourages schools to submit new qualifications that cover both the academic and practice outcomes. However, the ARB has not previously encouraged the development of specific types of courses, and for very good reason. The sort of course that is being envisaged may suit some schools, but it may be entirely unsuitable for others.

This is partly due to specific risks around delivering courses with integrated placements. At any time when, through no fault of the school, jobs are unavailable, the model can quickly lose its appeal, as either the student has to suspend studies, or move to a non-placement route. In this scenario, meeting practice outcomes would be indefinitely delayed, or impossible.

Oversight of PPE is relatively costly, time-consuming and not a core business for higher education institutions. If a school decides to deliver qualifications that require it to fulfil the commission's recommended coordinating role, it is likely the cost will either be passed on



**Above** If higher education institutions take on some form of regulation of professional practical experience, cuts may be required to existing offerings for students.

to students, or other aspects of student offers will be cut to compensate.

Increasing the costs to overseas students is less politically sensitive, and these costs may be passed on directly if it were thought that the market could support the increase. For home students, who are subject to the annual tuition fee cap, other mechanisms may have to be used to try and cover costs.

This will inevitably mean cutting some other aspect of the students' education, or in some cases universities may simply choose to withdraw their course. It is possible that the existing range of Part 3 courses, which are offered throughout the country, sometimes in small cohorts, will evolve into a far smaller range of options centred in our large metropolitan cities.

#### **Moving the debate forward**

The commission's recommendations for practice include the introduction of mandatory training in mentorship and a code of conduct revision to ensure support for trainee architects. While important, these changes don't

Oversight of PPE is costly,  
time-consuming and not a  
core business for higher  
education institutions

address the key problems practices face in supporting the next generation of architects: how to afford better levels of pay, and to ensure there are sufficient training opportunities to meet demand.

The report acknowledges these questions to some extent, but also includes some rather surprising statements. For example, the assertion that 'higher pay will generate higher productivity' prompts one to wonder why the UK doesn't solve its own productivity problem by simply paying everyone more. This may ungenerously highlight a single clause in a generally well-written report, but equally questionable is the suggestion university employees should 'supervise' students' work in practice. Hopefully this too was just a drafting slip, since it seems highly unlikely that any university would accept such a responsibility.

PPE is a fiendishly difficult subject to tackle. We are not in pursuit of the perfect system, but are, at best, seeking to adopt the least imperfect one. If a consequence of these reforms is that the quantum of professional practical experience opportunities available to students is reduced, then who is likely to bear the impact? Experience suggests it is unlikely to be the well connected or externally supported student, but may rather be just the sort of student that the commission highlights as being currently most disadvantaged.

There is much to be commended in this report, but the acid test will be whether its recommendations will, overall, make the pathway to the profession better for the next generation. The commission was given a tough brief in advising the ARB, and its members deserve thanks for advancing a debate which has been delayed for too long.

The aims they have set out are laudable, but questions remain about how they might best be achieved. As Cicero put it, at about the same time the future of architectural education was first being discussed, 'advice is judged by results, not by intention'. ●

Professor Alex Wright is head of architecture at the University of Bath





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# Forward-facing lenses

RIBA/J/Future Architects Film Competition prizes went to a love letter to London, a tale of bread production and a reflection on a mountain hut, writes Flo Armitage-Hookes



Architecture for  
social purpose

Animation, AI, stop motion, wide-angle views and more all featured in entries to the inaugural RIBA/J/Future Architects Film Competition. In previous years, our annual competition for students and young professionals has asked for written essays, but this year entrants deftly turned their lenses to filmmaking, with exciting and varied results.

The judging panel, made up of architectural photographer Edmund Sumner, communications consultant Rob Fiehn and 3D artist and filmmaker Silvia Tossici, was thrilled by the creativity shown and the range of architectural issues and personal subjects thoughtfully explored. 'It was incredibly difficult to pick a winner,' reflected Fiehn.

Entrants were asked to engage with one of three themes – Making buildings, In practice or After architects – with the latter proving especially popular.



JULIETTE LOUBENS



IMMANUEL LAVERY

**Top, above** Runners-up Juliette Loubens' saga of bread, and Immanuel Lavery's Highlands hut study.



MARCO NICHOLAS

**Above** Winner *Dear Holloway Road*, by Marco Nicholas, captured the hectic essence of the London thoroughfare through rapid edits.

The most successful films captured and retained the viewer's attention and carefully considered what to include in the tight two-minute time limit.

This is certainly true of the winning film, *Dear Holloway Road*, by Marco Nicholas (Part 2, working at dMFK Architects), which penned a love letter to the chaotic street over fast-paced snapshots of shops, traffic and people and took a £200 prize. 'This is a very well-thought-out, complete film,' praised Fiehn. 'The soundtrack and editing reflect the eclectic and messy look of the road itself,' concurred Tossici. Sumner was particularly struck by the film's emotion: 'It's beautiful, utterly genuine and truly moving.'

Two runners-up each received £100. Juliette Loubens (Part 1, studying at The Bartlett) delighted with an animated tale of circular and local bread production. 'It deals with a big idea through small parts – from families to mice and bed bugs', said Tossici. Fiehn commended the use

of the architectural cross-section to link people together, 'Wes Anderson-style'. Immanuel Lavery (Part 2) contemplated and evocatively captured a remote mountain hut in the Scottish Highlands. 'It's a film of moody and solitary beauty,' said Tossici. 'A truly cinematic piece of work leaning into architecture in its most primal form,' echoed Sumner.

Commendations were awarded to two worthy entries. *Inhabitation* by Katherine McKay (Part 1, studying at Northumbria University) explored the relationship between architecture and raving with footage, quotes and a passionate voice-over. 'This is a subject close to my heart,' said Sumner, 'made better by some fine music and striking imagery.' Abdullahi Dahiru (Part 2, working at Stockwool) looked to the future in Lagos 2054, with vignettes of life after a climate catastrophe. The judges agreed it was a pressing subject, inventively depicted. 'It's exactly what young architects should be engaging with,' Fiehn emphasised. ●

See all the prize-winning films at [ribaj.com/film-competition](http://ribaj.com/film-competition)

# Powers of Ten: play with scale to gain pounds

Can you create an object, installation, building or urban intervention that plays on the idea of scale, to inspire wonder, drama – or shock? Using SterlingOSB Zero as a material for transforming spatial perception, you could win £2,500

In 1977, the American architects Charles and Ray Eames released a groundbreaking film. It was based on Dutch educator Kees Boeke's 1957 book *Cosmic View*, which looked at our universe and planet – and us – in an attempt to visualise the world we see, the inner world we can't, and the distant ones we can barely comprehend.

The result was a nine-minute film, *The Powers of Ten*. Opening with a couple lying on a picnic blanket in a park, it is a study in orders of magnitude, zooming out exponentially to the edges of the universe, before zooming back into their bodies to the size of an electron. The Eameses' clever scale shifts take us from a 1:1 understanding of reality, to revealing the complexity and magic of existence.

Architects have had a technical fascination with scale ever since the Renaissance, when the idea of drawing

buildings as a prerequisite to building them resulted in an abstraction that effectively brought the modern profession into being. They still occupy this territory, albeit with contemporary technology: like the Eameses' film, architects can 'zoom in' or 'zoom out' of their drawings ad infinitum, with no loss of detail.

## Investigating the nature of scale

In our competition's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we are asking you to utilise SterlingOSB Zero board to investigate the nature of scale.

Take inspiration from Borromini's arcade at the Palazzo Spada – a sophisticated perspectival play on scale – or Thomas Chippendale using elements of grand classical architecture and incorporating them at far smaller scale in his famous 18<sup>th</sup>-century furniture. Using mirrors, in 1909,



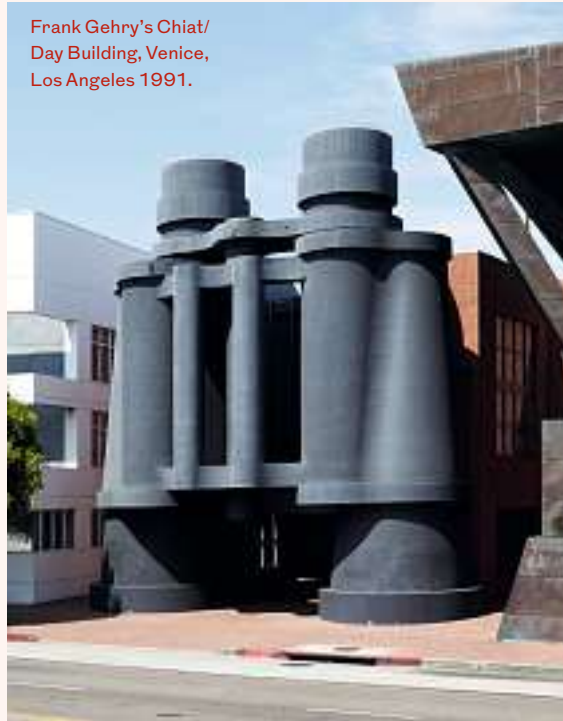
Charles Moore's  
1978 Piazza d'Italia  
urban regeneration  
project in  
New Orleans.



architect Adolf Loos made a tiny Vienna bar look enormous, while in 1970s Italy, practice Superstudio ran black-and-white grids on its Quaderna furniture and imagined extending them to cover the world. And what about Frank Gehry's binoculars?!

What would YOU do? Using SterlingOSB Zero as your base material, we want to see you putting your imagination and ingenuity to use, in order to create your own physical meditation on the nature of scale.

It might be a model, sculpture, piece of furniture, mise-en-scene, a building, a folly – or even a monument! What we'd really like is to get a sense of how you are playing with the principles of scale to intrigue, amuse or confound the viewer, using the simplicity of SterlingOSB Zero – with other materials, perhaps – to create something that is both captivating and illusory. ●



Frank Gehry's Chiat/Day Building, Venice, Los Angeles 1991.

OLIVER FERROTTI / RIBA COLLECTIONS

## WHO CAN ENTER

We welcome entries from experienced architects, emerging architects, those in Part 1 and 2 professional training, and diploma and undergraduate architectural students. Applying to all, we want the emphasis to be on imagination and fun – so enjoy yourselves!

## JUDGING

Powers of Ten judges, chaired by RIBA's deputy editor Jan-Carlos Kucharek, will look for imaginative responses to the brief that make best use of SterlingOSB Zero. We anticipate other materials and surfaces will form an integral part of any proposition, but expect SterlingOSB Zero panels will be the main constituent of the design. Because this is a conceptual brief, we do not require entrants to meet building codes or standards.

In this competition, the winning proposal will be the one that in the judges' view proves the most imaginative, intelligent or playful response to interrogating the nature of scale. It may have a context – or none at all – but we expect it to be theoretically buildable, and that a construction strategy could be evidenced.

You should also be able to explain the specific benefits that using SterlingOSB Zero brings to your proposal – whether that be in terms of structure, space-forming, sustainability or aesthetics.

**Left** Adolf Loos created a Tardis from his tiny 1909 American Bar in Vienna.

## DEADLINE

**Entries should be received no later than 14:00 BST, Monday 23 June 2025**

## TO ENTER

**Go to [ribaj.com/powers-of-ten](https://ribaj.com/powers-of-ten)**

Entries should be submitted on no more than two A3 sheets, supplied electronically as PDFs and uploaded to the official entry website.

How you choose to describe your proposal is up to you but may include:

- Plans and sections explaining the proposal nature, its structure and material choices.
- 3D or perspectival images that communicate how any play on scale is being achieved.
- Any supplementary images (such as model shots or visualisations) which entrants feel would best convey the proposition.
- An explanation of no more than 500 words should be uploaded to the website entry form, describing the proposal and in what way it claims to meet the brief.

Find out more about the nature of SterlingOSB Zero at [ribaj.com/osb-properties](https://ribaj.com/osb-properties)

## JUDGES

**Sian Briggs**, director, Alcove Architecture (2024 competition co-winner)

**David Connacher**, marketing manager, West Fraser Europe Ltd

**Stephen Proctor**, director, Proctor & Matthews

**Gurmeet Sian**, founder, Office Sian

**Jan-Carlos Kucharek**, deputy editor, RIBA

## NOTES

- The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into by organisers or judges regarding entries or winners.
- First prize of £2,500; three Commended prizes of £500.
- Shortlisted entries will be notified in writing, with entrants subsequently invited to the winners' announcement and prize-giving event, which will take place on 25 September 2025.
- By entering this RIBA competition, West Fraser has your agreement to using your name/company name and collateral produced by our marketing agency – videos, interviews, case studies, images – for our company's website, social media, digital and print media titles.
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**Above:** Heydar Aliyev Centre by  
Zaha Hadid Architects with DIA  
Holding, Azerbaijan 2016  
© Hufton and Crow

**Left:** Punchbowl Mosque by Angelo  
Candalepas and Associates,  
Australia 2024 © Rory Gardiner

\* See website for full list of  
countries and criteria.



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# 3: Culture



In working with light, Emily Marshall is as artistically aware of the shadows that frame it; but then there's always been what is manifest and what is not. 'I wanted to be an architect, but got the feeling the successful ones had to have money behind them,' she says ruefully. 'I was aware that's not my background, and I wasn't going to train for years to earn nothing, so I figured the next best thing would be to photograph buildings.'

It's ironic that, shooting for clients like Inigo and The Modern House, Marshall is exposed daily to luxury and opulence. While she appreciates time granted to capture the experience of being in such homes, it's via long shoots for the Landmark Trust that she feeds her fascination with tracing light over time as it passes over rough stone walls or peeling plaster, or into dark timber nooks. Marshall may have documented over 1,000 houses, old and new, in all.

Chelvey Court took her breath away. It was bought semi-ruined over 40 years ago, by two young couples who moved into different parts of the house without ever dividing it. As their families grew, a decades-long process of light-touch, contingent restoration meant they expanded into empty rooms as they saw fit and could afford – 10 bedrooms, two living rooms, kitchens and bathrooms – all the time sharing the grand Jacobean staircase at the home's heart. Marshall found this intimate custodianship touchingly rare and precious: the great walls and roof restored as a unifying act, but the rooms bearing individual traces of parallel lives and generations. Intervened on but delicately so; one more veneer in Chelvey's passage through time. ● Jan-Carlos Kucharek

**Emily Marshall**  
**Chelvey Court, Somerset, 2024**  
Sony A7 IV. 24-70mm lens



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*'Experimenting could bring something quite different to pebbledash, if practices are brave – or foolhardy – enough to call it that'*



## Textured, local and unloved for too long

Eleanor Young likes a bit of pebbledash – and believes its rehabilitation is overdue

'Now I'm going to start dashing,' says the guy on YouTube. Watching him grab handfuls of pebbles and throw them expertly at the still-wet slurry with a flick of the wrist, it is clear this is an art, with richness and depth. Moreover, it is an art that has the power to connect buildings with their place using just a scattering of local stone.

Not that it normally does – bags of pebbles can come from anywhere.

I have a kind of geeky fascination with pebbledash, so bad it is good. That is how pebbledash has been considered for so long. Picture swathes of suburban semis encased in the rough dull brown, in the front garden a hopeless mattress smothering weeds. The back ends of coastal towns in decline, inhabitants peering bleakly out past pebbledash and PVC to the wind and rain. Economically erected concrete-panel garages with a spattering of sharp stones. It was a useful cover up for spalling brickwork and uncoordinated joints.

But let's go back to its romantic history: of harling in Scotland, where pebbles and other aggregates were mixed into the render and safeguarded the structures below – as on the Fairburn Tower, 10 miles west of Inverness, where pink harling has brought back a stone ruin as a fairytale castle (see p72). Or to Charles Rennie Mackintosh's elegant Hill House, outside Glasgow. You can trace an optimistic line through Norman Shaw and the Arts and Crafts movement and see the harling and roughcast mix morphing into pebbledash as it is translated from country homes to philanthropic workers' housing at Port Sunlight on Merseyside – where the precisely cut hedges offset cottagey leaded windows, oversized chimneys and deep, asymmetrical roofs. Here, pebbledash reads as a reference to a bucolic past rather than a suburban and council house future.

At a time when the widespread results of a trend towards cladding, and overcladding, in smooth, coloured render (and minimal drip details) has familiarised us all with water stains and grubbiness, it is cheering to think there are other options. In the course of a week, chats with two people at the forefront of architecture showed how the techniques of pebbledash and its architectural language are actively developing.

Both were at fairly early design stages, exploring how local stones could be co-opted as the pebbles of pebbledash, grounding and enlivening their projects; a house and a culture centre. Could chalk or flint enter the mix when designing a stone's throw from the white cliffs of Beachy Head? The pieces might be larger than the 3-8mm standard, they might add intensity of colour with granite, or brightness and glint with quartz. Perhaps they could be made from the leftovers of quarrying larger format stones. Could the stones' grading and size also vary from top to bottom? Maybe they will end up being something closer to a roughcast or harling, or limewashed.

Experimenting could bring something quite different to pebbledash, if practices are brave (or foolhardy) enough to call it that. We should all be relieved to get some local texture back into the super-smooth architecture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ●

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In the Scottish West Highlands, a self-build holiday home combines contemporary techniques and local traditions to maximise a modest plot  
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**Left** Pebbledash:  
It's actually quite  
interesting close up.



# Put down your ego, and follow the evidence

Ahead of RIBA's 2025 AI report launching, Muiyiwa Oki calls for a data-driven approach

Cities are built on layers of decisions – some deliberate, most accidental. We masterplan, we plan, we argue about aesthetics, but how often do we check the real receipts – how places perform, where people go, what they avoid?

We need to mine data to design better, not more. That means streets and architecture that work because they are designed for how we behave, not how we wish we would. Every day, our cities generate countless data points: foot traffic patterns, energy use, public space utilisation. Yet most end up in digital landfills. Data doesn't care about your vision statement or awards, it just records what's happened. Right now, we're ignoring it: an inefficient, irresponsible practice.

Architects exist to shape cities as places for living. That's why campaigns for active roles of city architects – synthesisers, bridging the gap between policy, data, design and lived experience – are gaining traction. Architecture is always slow to adopt new tools. We still celebrate the lone genius sketching visions, while the world moves to evidence-based design. Part of this is tradition, but part is that it's easier to rely on intuition than to collect real usage data, admit when data contradicts your assumptions – or change course. To break the cycle, there is a role for an architecture figure, who leads across municipal boundaries and could apply data in key ways.

## Treat data as a design material

Not as an afterthought or marketing bullet point. If you're designing a school, you'd better know how current schools are used, not just when new, but after five years of kids using them.

## Measure what works

The tech industry calls this 'instrumentation' – building systems that track their own performance. Why don't we do this with physical spaces? If a new park isn't getting used, we should know why within weeks, not years.

## Democratise the data

Councils gather reams of information, while citizens use apps to circumvent bad design



every day. Look at how people modify cycling routes in apps like Strava – that's free urban planning research we're ignoring. We could be documenting how residents modify social housing, mapping where pavement repairs cluster in cities, and studying how building materials actually age in different climates.

As we prepare to launch our 2025 RIBA report on AI, my plea is that we use it to interrogate the evidence. Trainee architects need to work with data as they would a material to shape, test and iterate. Decision-makers must hire people who prize evidence above ego.

At the same time, we can't worship data blindly. I've seen planners justify bad decisions because 'the numbers said so'. Data illuminates, it shouldn't dictate. We must ask better questions:

- Not 'how many people pass through here?', but 'why do they hurry through this section?'
- Not 'is this space occupied?', but 'what kinds of activities happen here?'
- Not 'does this building meet regulations?', but 'do people thrive here?'

We don't need more data. We need the will and skill to use it. That means teaching data literacy in architecture schools; requiring post-occupancy evaluations for public projects; and creating simple tools for small practices to gather insights. Rewarding designs that work, not just look good.

The technology exists. The knowledge exists. What's missing is the professional courage and capacity to say: 'This isn't working – let's fix it.' ●

**Above** How can architects make better use of data?

## AWARDS SEASON

The 116 winners of our 2025 UK Awards, published in this issue, showcase the best of architecture across the country. From this group, shortlists for our Special Awards – Neave Brown Award for Housing, Reinvention Prize, Stephen Lawrence Prize, and Client of the Year – will follow. Look out for the announcements in the final week of July.



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Annabelle Selldorf's National Gallery revamp has had a tricky birth – but the architect remains serene

Words: John Jervis Portrait: Agnese Sanvito

# Toughing it out







© THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, PHOTO EDMUND SUMNER

At this point in the Sainsbury Wing saga, Annabelle Selldorf might be forgiven for gritting her teeth. Charged with updating a highly controversial public building with an overpacked programme on an unforgiving site, dealing with acknowledged flaws and changed functions, she's endured half a decade of condescension from British pundits with strident opinions but few constructive suggestions. Yet, after a small ribbon-cutting ceremony, with final tweaks ongoing, she exudes contentment: 'It was unbelievably nice, with the builders, some of the architects, some gallery people – it was moving.' An encomium follows to Gabriele Finaldi, director of the National Gallery since 2015: 'He's not only unbelievably smart, but truly kind and inspirational. You don't get that every day.'

Rather than being a duty fulfilled, this praise clearly comes from the heart – and building close collaborations, even enduring friendships, is key to Selldorf's practice. It's an approach that finds a highly receptive audience among art galleries looking to extend, restore and upgrade. A small current selection: an expansion at the Art Gallery of Ontario is now under construction; a third project for the Clark Art Institute is kicking off; and a first major Paris project, at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent, was announced in early May.

Selldorf refuses any 'architect to the arts' tag, and the CV of her 65-strong New York practice reveals mixed-use developments, one-off residences, university projects, a rammed-earth winery, and a strong line in waste management. Yet art institutions, each one with its complex accumulation of spaces, politics, public, patrons and finances, do seem to gratify her 'singular frame of mind': 'When you renovate or restore, you have to ask how the structure works, what it

**Above** The substitution of clear glass for the original tinted glazing at the National Gallery's Sainsbury Wing enhances the relationship with the adjoining Wilkins Building.

**Opposite** Annabelle Selldorf leans against a new column in the lobby, its incised Pietra Serena cladding reflecting the material's use in the galleries above.

could deliver. There aren't formulaic answers, as each building has a personality and each institution has a DNA that is truly theirs. You need to understand it, work with it, preserve it, augment it, challenge it, whatever the case may be. I find that process super-interesting.'

Managing the strongly held opinions of art-world folk via reasoned dialogue must require resilience. I ask whether she ever feels like imposing a vision. 'I do come with knowledge, allowing me to circle around, figure out the practical thing, the reality of the infrastructure. Then there's a more intuitive interpretation, the desire to find something less tangible. I don't believe in imposing myself, but also don't want to be self-effacing, to disappear – I want you to find something that you weren't able to see before, that results from understanding all these circumstances, then to push further to something that's different, that's new, that elevates you.'

The undertaking is perhaps made easier by a Cologne upbringing immersed in the arts – Selldorf's father was an architect, her mother an interior designer and Sigmar Polke a family friend – but also by the nature of that upbringing: 'When I was a kid, you were not supposed to talk at table over the adults – you had to find your own way to feel relevant. And my way is to not force you to say, "Oh my God, you're so relevant," but to find yourself. So I seek to be very specific – to know for myself what I am after.'

If art institutions approve of this consideration (it has led to positions on the board of the Chinati Foundation and the Bard Center for Curatorial Studies, among others), some in her own profession have been less generous, particularly around two projects by Venturi Scott Brown. In 2022, having already been critical of alterations at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Denise Scott Brown condemned Selldorf's 'arbitrary, meaningless' proposals for the Sainsbury Wing, strongly defending the integrity of its conception, rather than engaging with its new role as the gallery's main entrance.

Selldorf always knew a project involving unprecedented planning applications on a 30-year-old, Grade I-listed building was going to be hard. With no extra space, constraints abound. Venturi Scott Brown's widely admired second-floor galleries are on a level with those of the original Wilkins Building, thus the rest of the packed programme needs to be squeezed onto four low-ceilinged storeys below: 'It's like a bag; you just have to stuff it full with all those things.' Alterations focus on easing the journey from



NICHOLAS VENEZIA

street to galleries with additional light, space and sightlines, including a new forecourt and subtle reductions to heavy ironwork outside; opening up the lobby horizontally and vertically to allow for a pause post-security and pre-art; creating a genuine mezzanine with a bookshop, restaurant and bar; and employing clear glazing to enhance views in, out and across. The connection with the adjoining Wilkins Building is strengthened, and the Sainsbury Wing's facade, with its folds, fades and cutouts, has new visibility and transparency.

These steps are logical attempts to deal with difficulties noted during the Sainsbury Wing's inception and operation, and in its new duties. Yet a chorus of press, preservationists and ex-RIBA presidents has lined up alongside Scott Brown to present its longstanding problems as complexities, some using intemperate language suggestive of self-publicity, some about-turning from their own early disparagement of the original design. In this narrative, the ground floor has been recast as a sensuous crypt, from which visitors are released into the light of the collection galleries, rather than fleeing its depressing gloom.

Although she sees humour in the scenario, Selldorf admits she is not immune to criticism: 'I am the kind of person who gets a little scared and wonders if the other shoe is gonna drop. Even so, I didn't anticipate people would feel free to say such things. I really try to think of it as a sign that they care, but if somebody accuses me of making an airport lounge, I do get a little offended, because that's just not what I do.'

Recent praise for the sensitivity and dexterity of another protracted, prickly renovation by Selldorf Architects, at the Frick Collection, New York, affirms the validity of her approach, learning about the institution, understanding its differences, ensuring it works. Although empathetic to the personal journey that has led early critics of the Sainsbury Wing to embrace it as an old friend, she believes 'it doesn't really help an institution serving the public. I don't so much

**Above** The expansion of New York's Frick Collection focuses on increasing and enhancing space for display, amenities and research, while retaining a unique character derived from its origins as a private mansion.

**Below** A new wing connecting the research centre and main museum at the Clark Art Institute will be the third collaboration between Selldorf Architects and the Massachusetts-based institution.

care about changes in opinion, but I do care about things that don't work: the unpleasantness of queueing for coats where others are trying to get to exhibitions, or standing outside in the loggia and in the rain. That has very little to do whether you like an old shoe or not – those issues are real.'

Certainly, as a survivor of the 1990s iteration myself – working on catalogues in a basement across the road, pushing through its heavy doors to assist stocktakes in its underperforming bookshop, attending meetings in its dark boardrooms and empty restaurant – to preserve the Sainsbury Wing's failings does not seem a generous public act. And Selldorf and Finaldi firmly believe that an attitude of welcome takes precedence over material or form when providing the public with access to its own collections. They clearly enjoy working and facing difficulties, together: 'I think we came out at the other end knowing that we did things with reason and authenticity.' An extensive refurbishment of the gallery's research centre awaits both next year.

Selldorf is grateful for the 'responsibility and privilege' that is her own office, but also salutes the 'small city' that makes up an undertaking of this size: 'I feel lucky to lead projects, and have distinct ideas, but you always have to validate them. You're not out to realise your own thing come hell or high water, but in constant dialogue with the wider team, the client, the regulatory agencies, and the constituents who will use the building.' The result? 'I think there's a generosity of spirit in the National Gallery, and we've brought that to a space that wasn't living up to it before. Now, when you explore the galleries, you know that everything that's below exists to get you there. And I'm really proud of that.' ●

JEFF GOLDBERG COURTESY OF SELLDORF ARCHITECTS





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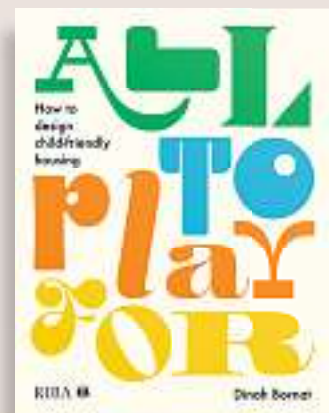
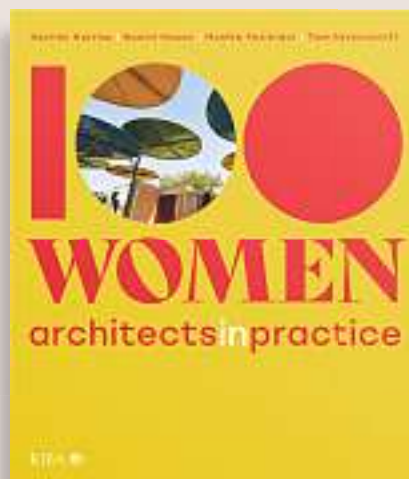
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The Yorkshire-born architect held himself and his Dundee students to exacting standards – which he applied in his beautiful, self-built family home



## Barry Heathcote 1940–2025

Barry Heathcote was perhaps typical of his generation. Born in wartime and coming of age with the postwar boom, he left school to be a technician in Sheffield's parks department, took night classes, went to study at Leicester School of Art and then at the Architectural Association in London. A working class 'Yorkshire lad', he loved fishing and developed a strong sense of place and family despite losing both parents before adulthood. He travelled widely and had a love of art, cinema and philosophy and a dislike of 'middle-class entitlement and ignorance of the labour movement of the industrial north'.

After the AA, Barry worked in London and Oxford for over a decade. At the Oxford Architects Partnership, key projects were Beechwood House residences at All Souls College and Cleeve Court in Streatley-on-Thames, Berkshire. This elegant scheme for 11 Scandi-modern town houses by the river incorporated various architectural ideas Barry later used in his own home.

His work straddled the gap between British modernism (economic planning, timber elements and gardens) and the emerging postmodern vernacular. He called his approach 'romantic pragmatism', a term coined by Peter Davey in the Architectural Review in 1983 to describe work that drew on Frank Lloyd Wright and Rudolph Schindler rather than the utilitarianism of Europe's modernist pioneers. Barry greatly admired Peter Aldington's house at Turn End and the work of Ted Cullinan, with its references to context and careful timber detailing.

In 1976, Barry became a lecturer at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD) where his wife Sue, a textile designer, also worked. When he retired, Barry was head of school. Ex-colleagues remark on his intellectual acumen, openness and generosity. Barry gave

Graeme Hutton, today's deputy dean, his first proper teaching job despite their divergent architectural approaches. 'He never shied away from critical confrontation,' recalls Hutton.

Barry's former students remember his passion, high standards and kindness; and his family 'hoose' at Dura Den, in rural north Fife. Barry took six years to design Underwood and 10 more to build it with Sue and the children, Helen, Libby and Tom. Former student Samuel Penn notes the similarities between Barry's teaching and homebuilding: 'He approached both with conviction, and a perfectionism that may have held him back from doing more. He set a high bar for himself and his students. His critiques were exacting – often feared – but grounded in clarity and depth of judgement. He challenged us to work harder, to take architecture seriously.'

Underwood's planning is immaculate, with an economy cultivated in the 1970s off the back of the modern movement and material shortages. The children's bedrooms are almost monastic in dimensions and bathrooms are carefully planned, allowing extra space for living. In Scotland there was a small group of modern architects in the 1950s to 1970s who reimagined the relationship between house and landscape (see Morris and Steedman). Barry's house stretched this modern tradition while engaging with vernacular form and craft. He built it almost entirely himself, including many reclaimed materials. His students followed the project's progress; it became a real exercise in teaching and learning. When it was finally published in Alder 02 in 2023, it captured the imagination of many of today's young architects trying to square the circle between energy conservation, daylight and views. ●

Penny Lewis is a lecturer in architecture and urban planning at the University of Dundee

### IN MEMORIAM

**Nick Perry**  
ELECTED 2014, LONDON

**Jakob Beer**  
ELECTED 2008, BERLIN

**Catherine Eaton Davis**  
ELECTED 1979, CAMBRIDGE

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**Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London**  
**Robert Matthew and Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, 1962**

Described as a 'tent in the park' by its architects, the Commonwealth Institute was the first British example of a shallow pre-stressed concrete hyperbolic-paraboloid roof – and the largest, covering an area of 3,130m<sup>2</sup>. In spite of its innovative design by Robert Matthew and Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, the Commonwealth Institute received much adverse reaction from the architectural press, although the landscaping by Sylvia Crowe with its screen of limes, stepped paving and pool was praised for bringing the 'park down to the High Street'. Criticism since its opening in November 1962 has since given

way to admiration, leading to a Grade II\* listing in 1988 and battles to save the building when threatened with demolition in 2002.

In 2008 the Design Museum was confirmed as the new occupant and Rem Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) was brought in to reconfigure the site, with Allies and Morrison and John Pawson engaged to work on the main building. Sylvia Crowe's subtle landscaping has been replaced, with a harder, bolder affair, and three new rectilinear residential blocks now partly obscure the original building. ● Suzanne Waters

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