PRESERVATION

by cracarchitects

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Wednesday, 23.02.2011 - Introduction



cracpreservation is a title temporarily given to describe the collaboration between two Part 1 Architects. CR stands for Cecilia Rudstrom and AC for Alex Cox.

As this is the first post it seems necessary to explain the purpose of this blog, hoping that at a later date there will be a more complete description and evidence of our activities elsewhere.

We want to document the process of a project we started on Tuesday 22.02.2011. I hope the forum of the blog with the aid of Google Documents will help us communicate our ideas more efficiently and make up for the little free time we both have.

Both me and Cecilia are currently working for architectural practices and felt the need to supplement our professional education with some research leading to design. To do this we sought a suitable competition that would give us an open enough brief to meet both of our needs but provide parameters to ensure the project has meaning. It seemed important to be relevant!

We found a competition on www.deathbyarchitecture.com.
The brief supplied us with a concept that we could interpret how we wished:

“Return to the City: Suburban Sprawl after We Leave”

The full brief can be found here:

http://www.deathbyarchitecture.com/viewCompetition.html?id=1386

We intend to produce a spatial response, aided by research, to this concept.

As we both have busy schedules the forum the blog will provide is perfect. It can be accessed by either of us at any point when we feel inspired. It also allows us to communicate about the subject matter and each others work. I hope the overall collaboration will be recorded honestly by the blog, step by step as the process evolves.

Alex Cox

All spelling mistakes have been kept for authenticity.

Contributors



Cecilia Rudstrom



Alex Cox

Format


CRACPRESERVATION
An Architectural response to Preservation
Home
cracarchitecture
Contributers
The Project
Influential Styles and Techniques Dump
PRESERVATION
Preservation
An Architectural Investigation
LATEST
South Hill Park Conservation Area
This is a typical example of a difference of opinions. On the left is a brutalist building from 1965 and the one to the right one from 1956. Located in the South Hill Park Conservation Area, many consider these two buildings located next to each other, to be scars in a otherwise so traditional and uniform conservation area of terraced houses. Even if this might not be everyone's taste, one must be able to see the value of diversity in any area, even if might sting ones eyes. Buildings like these represent less than 0.2% of all listed buildings and these run a higher risk to be subject to irresponsibly alteration or even demolition, leaving very little for future generations
CATEGORIES
Alex's Posts
Case Study 01 – Robin Hood Gardens
Case Study 02 – Barbican Estate
Case Study 03 – OMA/AMO
Cecilia's Posts
Facebook
Uncategorized
TWITTER
OMA AMO - Live Tonight - Sold Out! I'm taking my note pad so I can remember it all! 3 weeks ago
Cracarchitects have a presence on the London


CRACPRESERVATION
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PRESERVATION
13.03.2011 – Barbican Tour
Today I was invited at short notice to the Barbican Centre for a tour of the Arts centre and various walkways throughout the complex. The guide was very knowledgeable and overall the tour was very interesting. It took about an hour and a half and dealt with many aspects of the building from materiality through to the sites history.
For those who may not know, the Barbican estate is in the City of London and is a mixed use, predominantly residential, council funded development that was completed in 1982. It's perhaps most famous for dividing opinion much like the Smithson's Robin Hood Gardens from the same era. It's often grouped in with other buildings from the same era as being part of the 'Brutalist' movement. The term Brutalist or Brutalism could be mistaken as derogatory, it actually has quite positive origins. It's derived from the French term 'beton brut' describing a process used for pouring concrete; specifically a shuttering that is used to leave a mark on the face of the concrete. Le Corbusier described this method of concrete production as honest and without ornament, which later modernist movements thought were desirable qualities to express through their architecture.


cracarchitecture
The content of each map is purely dictated by Google. I thought it quite interesting to map whatever Google maps found worth mentioning in each grid square.
I am not sure how they decide what is shown on their maps but surely it must be based on the most Googled places, the most visited places or places paying for advertising. I will have to look in to this closer because it is quite interesting how Google dictates what information we receive.
I will also look into the darker areas of the map, and explore whatever is there. I too found it very interesting to see areas that look like they do not get a single ray of light.
04/04/2011 at 11:16 PM Edit
Reply
Leave a Reply
Logged in as cracarchitecture. Log out?
Post Comment

Meetings

04.03.2011 - 22.02.2011 - First Meeting

We met at Starbucks (Waterloo Station) at 19:00. This seemed like a suitable place as it would be open late and we would undoubtedly need coffee (though for some strange reason, I ended up not having any).

I approached the meeting with a few questions related to what I wanted to get out of the collaboration and asked Cecilia the same. It seemed important to lay this down first:

Q: What do we want to get out of the competition?

A:

1. Model making practice - Touchstone models, process models and site models. Both of us are a little rusty since University!
2. Drawing practice - I'm fed up with computers and have wanted to improve my sketching skills for a long time.
3. Photographic skills - I'm fed up of taking photographs which mean nothing and therefore get lost on my computer, never to be looked at again!
3. Reading - To have an immediate reason to research and learn from books, magazines and the web!

Now this was out-of-the-way and clear we began discussing how to interpret the concept. Cecilia had prepared some photographic research (that I hope she will put up on here!) that would provoke a discussion. The photographs (or images) dealt with themes 'post human'; visions of life after we leave, wildlife running truly wild and structures crumbling over time. These images were a perfect response to the initial brief.

All the competition requires is a single vignette concerning the concept. But as we discussed the prospect of creating images like this we gradually started questioning their relevance to today and whether this was important. Did our 'response' need to be relevant and useful? If the vignette dealt with a time after humans had left, was the role of an architect necessary? Surely architecture is defunct when the last human leaves? Nature doesn't require architecture to structure itself and imitating nature, it seemed, would be a thankless task.

It soon became clear that for the concept to have any relevance humans would need to be present. What if we were to return after we left? After all Cecilia's images of post human wilderness were undoubtedly seen through human eyes and even from human height. This brought about all new concerns and questions.

SCANS

First Meeting

Preservation soon became the focus. If we planned to leave what would we preserve and if we didn't prepare what would we want to be preserved. The memories of a culture are important to us, after all we all have ego's and want to be remembered to validate our existences (in my opinion :D).
We asked our selves questions:
Why are we concerned with preservation?
What deserves to be preserved?
Who decides what remains?
How do you preserve things?
What is the point in preserving?
What are the benefits?
All these question will hopefully be explored over the coming weeks but for now we set about beginning our research. We needed to focus the investigation, give it a date and a location, to be able to start at all. The date was Now! and the location was London. We both live here currently, so we have that in common and share similar concerns. We don't know where we stand at the moment! We don't even properly know what preservation is! So it's important not to restrict ourselves too much.
We are creating a plan of the area we will study. It's arguably the centre of London, St Paul's. It's a good a start as any and an area full of old and new. By zooming extents on Google Maps (we couldn't find OS maps for free) we are able to indiscriminately cover the area by using the dimensions of two A1 sheets to create the boundaries. We wanted to remove ourselves at this stage from making any conscious decision as to what should be preserved! Over this we will put a grid of A4 dimensions that serves only to navigate the site rather than create considered sectors.
We are also trying to consider what our opinions are about preservation, to get a greater understanding of where we stand initially.
Hopefully this will be uploaded in the next few days and we can discuss it further and think about the possibilities it presents. This is just an approach to get the ball rolling; it might not prove to be the right approach.

Alex Cox

SCANS

First Meeting



04.03.2011 - Site Plan (oOriginal Size A1)

First Meeting

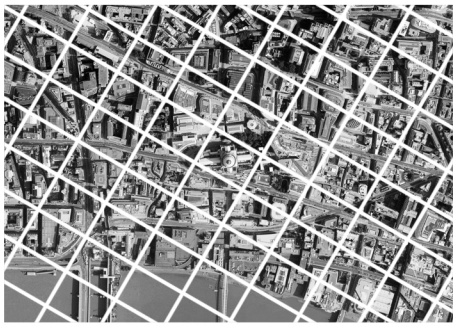


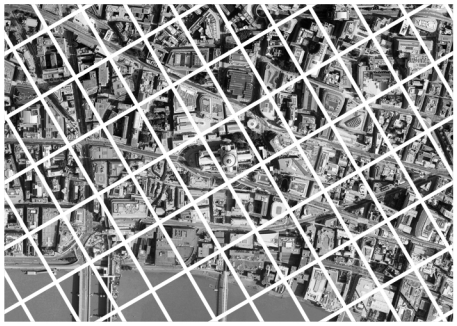
18.04.2011 - Site Plan (Original Size A0)

First Meeting

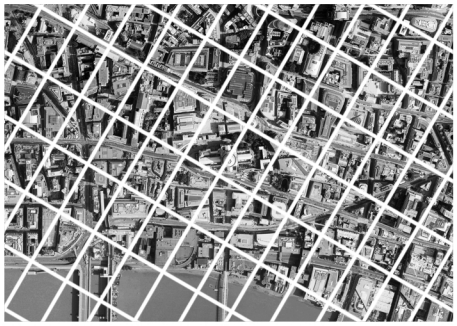
PRESERVATION

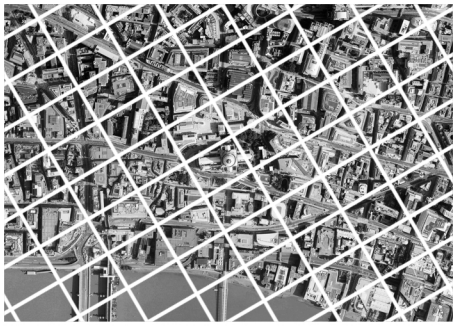












First Meeting

04.03.2011 – Second Meeting

This was a last minute thing. We both had a lot on this week and Cecilia has stuff on this very evening, but we had a quick meet up to check on progress and bounce a few ideas around.

The location was surreal to say the least. Brawling skin heads, strip club promoters and no internet…..It had to be Green Park :D. We met in the Café Nero's round the corner from the station. The interior is nice but there was a weird turnout tonight. Two fella's started a punch-up after they bought their coffee's and a group of strip club promoters parked themselves right behind us. They were a memorable sight because of their bright purple leotards and 'NASA' silver bomber jackets! Surprisingly quite a cool uniform. Anyway the reason I digress is because not much was put on paper this evening. We didn't need it! It seemed clear that were in the throws of the research stages of our project and a discussion was necessary. We discussed the subject and the project itself. Reaffirming what we wanted from it and the need to be honest and fair so that our conclusions (if any) would be honest and fair.

Cecilia had a brainwave and suggested we could ask everyone we know (via facebook of course) what they would preserve given the chance. We broke it down into two questions:

1. What would you preserve if you had to leave the earth for 100 years?

2. What would you like to leave behind, to be remembered, if you had to leave forever?

Hopefully this will bring back interesting results and humanise the investigation.

We got onto bigger topics such as: If we were coming back to earth, as a species, what would we liked to have left behind so we could get up-and-running again as fast as possible? Questions of how do you preserve considering you have no way of knowing what the future holds? Is space the only definite in the future? Is it society the one thing you should preserve because that way it would be easier to re-populate what we already knew?

So we agreed on what the next few weeks had in store for us:

The overall need was to formulate a brief!

We would do this buy gathering data from people we know and researching case studies. I planned to visit Robin Hood Gardens, obviously thinking and writing would have to be a big part of it.

Alex

CRAC PRESERVATION



Third Meeting



Fourth Meeting



Fifth Meeting

Preservation

Cecilia Rudstrom - Preservation



CRAC

New funding model could kickstart Battersea

Andrea Klettner

The developer behind Rafael Viñoly's revamp of Battersea Power Station hopes a new financing model will kickstart the £5.5 billion funding stream needed for the project.

Plans to introduce tax increment financing (Tif) to help fund major infrastructure projects in the UK were announced this week by deputy prime minister Nick Clegg at the Liberal Democrats' autumn conference.



Viñoly's power station scheme.

Battersea Power Station developer Treasury Holdings provided one of the case studies for the government's review of Tifs, based on its regeneration plans in the Nine Elms corridor — including the power station itself and an extension to the Northern Line with two new stations.

Managing director Robert Tincknell said the government's announcement could prove crucial.

"We are hopeful that Nine Elms, will qualify, given the quantity of development there and the huge benefits that the Tif could offer," he said.

Tincknell added that the developer was preparing a transport and works act order for the Northern Line extension plans, which it hopes to submit to the government at the end of the year, and that the overall outline application was likely to be heard by Wandsworth Council in mid-October.

Earlier this year, London mayor Boris Johnson wrote to the chancellor urging him to introduce the American-style Tif scheme which he said would "have the potential to help regenerate Battersea Power Station" and its surroundings, creating 20,000 to 25,000 jobs and developing up to 16,000 new homes.

Tif, which allows local authorities to borrow against the predicted growth in their locally raised business rates, is already used in the US to fund major projects. Details of its rollout in the UK will be included in next month's comprehensive spending review.

British Property Federation chief executive Liz Peace said: "We are delighted the government has taken such a far-sighted step to ensure that new infrastructure — which will be vital to rebuild the UK economy — can be delivered, even at a time when public funding is scarce.

"Ministers should be congratulated for offering industry what would appear to be absolutely brilliant news, although obviously the devil will be in the detail."

Siobhan Morrin - Preservation

Jonathan Cox - Preservation

Valene Cox - Preservation

The Williamsons - Preservation

Facebook - Preservation



Colin Attrill
Q1: A fake map, coordinates and instructions of how to find the alien race that abducted me.

Q2: My wheelchair, I think i`d be needing it!

about 3 weeks ago · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

Amanda Wren likes this.

Write a comment...

Daryl Page
Q1: My ice skates that have my blood on them so that when the tech exists, future generations can clone me. (science fobid)

Q2: A sakura (cherry blossom) tree cos every other plant would have been wiped out by then... or maybe a book on the 'communist manifesto' ha.

about a month ago · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

Colin Attrill likes this.

Write a comment...

Amanda Wren
You should read "The Body" by Hanif Kureshi if you haven't already done so....

Q1, the benefits of good handwriting
Q2, the Norfolk Broads and Fens - so special but so temporary and my sheepskin lined brown boots! (Can port/red wine last for 100 yrs? - if so, i'd lay a few bottles down to mark the return to earth)

Martin Beards
Q1 - a homo sapien inclusive virus to wipe humans off the face of the world; leaving the world for TEHanimalz

Q2 - TEHanimalz

on Saturday · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

Jonathan Cox
Q1: My humongous pickled penis
Q2: The enslaved Human race that has been awaiting their Gods return!

on Thursday · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

View all 6 comments

Caerwyn Sandhu Q1: The plague. Q2: My own personal cure for the plague.
Thursday at 3:42am · Like · 2 people

Wayne Patrick Martin Q1: My recipie for fish curry Q2: A massive shares portfolio
Friday at 11:20am · Like · 1 person

Ed Bolla
1: a bowl of porridge
2: porridge in some sort bowl recepticle

on Wednesday · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

Messi Antonio Gramsci
my beard , chocolate spread

on Wednesday · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

Peter Smith likes this.

Sophie Constantinou
Q1: my silver bracelet, Q2: my family (in little cocoon pod things).

on Wednesday · Like · Comment · Unsubscribe

CRAC

09.03.2011 - Facebook Questionnaire Cecilia had an idea that we could ask all the people we know two questions:

Question 1: If you had to leave the world forever (alien abduction/death…or whatever floats your boat) what one thing would you leave behind/preserve to be remembered by?

Question 2: If you only had to leave the world for 100 years and you were coming back what would you preserve so it was there when you returned?

If we did this via facebook the data would be recordable and searchable so we could ues it. THe group is up and running and people have aleardy commented. There are 217 members as of five minutes ago so I hope things go well.

Link to the Facebook Group:

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_18761841460854 2&ap=1

Alex

Hadid speaks up for South Bank Centre

Zaha Hadid has criticised as "unbelievable" the government's decision not to list the South Bank Centre, insisting the 1960s complex deserved statutory protection.

Her comments came after architecture minister John Penrose this week overruled English Heritage and refused to list either the arts centre or Waterloo Station.

It is the third time ministers have rejected the South Bank Centre for listing.

Hadid told BD: "The South Bank Centre is significant and definitely merits listing. It's rare in London to have something done as a coherent ensemble, and the South Bank Centre is an excellent example by some of the UK's most interesting designers of the time.

"In 1998, I designed a show on art and architecture at the Hayward Gallery and found it a great place to work.

"The rawness and purity of these buildings is what makes them so contemporary. Although of different periods, each building works well within the cohesive urbanism and cultural domain of the South Bank. With very little effort, it could be made spectacular."

The Twentieth Century Society pledged to appeal against Penrose's decision, describing the Hayward Gallery as the South Bank's "third grace", alongside the grade I listed Royal Festival Hall and grade II* National Theatre.



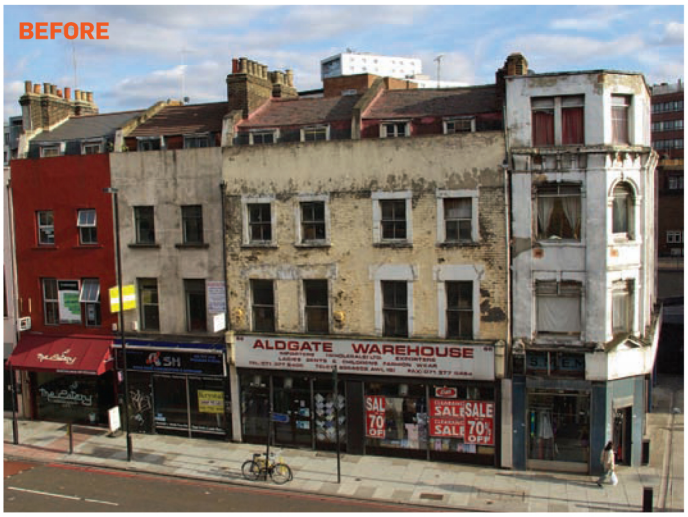
"Rawness and purity" failed to persuade architecture minister to list the arts centre.

Senior caseworker Jon Wright called the government's move "devastating" and said it raised questions about how seriously it took EH's advice, particularly as Penrose has overruled the heritage body in half the post-war cases he has looked at.

"EH has a right to feel aggrieved or even undermined because their assessments were thoroughly decent," said Wright. "They are the government adviser on the historic environment but are they being trusted?"

■ Cabe has welcomed Haworth Tompkins' £70 million scheme for London's National Theatre which goes to committee on Wednesday.

CR AC





No U-turn on High Street plan

Julian Harrap Architects has completed the first phase of the High Street 2012 project by restoring the facades of six 19th century buildings on Whitechapel High Street.

Around 100 buildings will be refurbished as part of the £10 million project, which a Tower Hamlets spokeswoman confirmed would go ahead, despite this week's "disappointing" news that the Olympic marathon has been re-routed away from the road.

"High Street 2012 means much more to the east end than a chance to bask in the media spotlight," she said. "It is about delivering a long-term regeneration legacy."

CR AC

Victorian Society issues at-risk list

The Victorian Society has published a list of the 10 most threatened buildings in England and Wales.

It follows an appeal to the public to nominate the country's best and most at risk Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Of the 10, seven are listed at grade II*.

Victorian Society director Ian Dungavell said: "These 10 are now seriously at risk, due to poor planning, stalled developments or simply neglect."

He added that the recession should not be used as an excuse for owners to sit on their hands and do nothing.

Among the threatened buildings are a boarded-up former orphanage in Liverpool designed by Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse, and a grade II* listed office building in Euston Square, London, now threatened with demolition by the planned High Speed Two rail link between London and Birmingham.

It is the fourth year the society has compiled such a list.

THE 10 MOST ENDANGERED BUILDINGS

- Hammerton School, Darnall, Sheffield
- Grimsby Ice Factory, The Docks, Grimsby
- Bradgate House Stables, Groby, Leicestershire
- Royal Liverpool Seamen's Orphanage, Liverpool
- 30 Euston Square, London
- Unitarian Chapel, Manchester
- Old Fire Station, Barry, south Wales
- Former Wedgwood Institute, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent
- Normansfield Hospital, Teddington
- Former Moseley School of Art, Birmingham



Grimsby Ice Factory

Lessons from 60s Camden



ELLIS WOODMAN

An exhibition on council homes in the sixties demonstrates how current procurement processes hamper good quality social housing

Visiting Cook's Camden, the newly opened exhibition on the social housing built by Camden Council in the sixties and seventies (see *Culture* page 22) makes for a humbling experience.

One is left to wonder quite how — as recently as 30 years ago — it was possible to build housing for low-income families at a scale and to an architectural standard that is simply unimaginable today.

What happened? The death of the local authority architects' department may be part of the answer, but there is surely no shortage of private practices that have shown they have the skills to design affordable housing and the appetite to do so working in the UK today.

The programme to build a series of affordable housing schemes around south London's Elephant & Castle has long promised to be a demonstration of some of that talent. It may yet achieve that goal. However, it has been painfully slow in coming and for many of the people that it was originally intended to serve it has simply been delivered too late.

These are the residents of the 1974 Heygate Estate, the vast scheme at the heart of Elephant & Castle on which the first phase of demolition work is soon to begin. The new housing was meant to accommodate them close to the site of their vacated homes, but the slow pace of delivery has ensured that they have been dispersed very much more widely. To all intents and purposes, a community has been squandered.

The blame lies with a procurement route that was infinitely more complex than that by which the monuments of Cook's Camden were delivered. Southwark Council owns the land on which the projects are being realised and conducted the competitions by which an exceptional roster of architectural talent was assembled. However, the council then passed responsibility for the projects' construction to a group of registered social landlords, on the basis of agreements about how many of the units in each scheme would be market housing and how many affordable.

Maintaining this crucial development equation did not prove easy, not least because the RSLs were being asked to carry a considerable level of risk. The schemes had yet to secure planning permission and a number of them struggled to do so.

Further delays resulted from the council's failure to describe the boundaries around a number of the sites properly. All this played out against the backdrop of a collapsing housing market, with the effect that the potential value of the market housing was reducing by the week.

In many cases, it fell to the point where projects had to be put on hold or the development equation recalibrated significantly. A number had to be cancelled outright.

If there is a lesson to be learnt it is that, in such arrangements, it is incumbent upon the local authority to minimise the risks to RSLs, so as to ensure the swiftest possible delivery. Southwark should have taken the schemes to planning itself.

However, this is also perhaps a useful moment to ask whether a procurement method so susceptible to market forces is ever going to deliver the social housing this country needs. Cook's Camden reminds us that, not so very long ago, there was another way.

Slow delivery means that, to all intents and purposes, a community has been squandered

A purpose far beyond books



ELLIS WOODMAN

Libraries provide communities with a vital physical infrastructure, so closures sit ill with the notion of the Big Society

Sandy Wilson used to tell the story of how Cedric Price heaped derision on his 30-year struggle to build the British Library, claiming that the very idea of the library would be redundant by the time the project completed.

Anyone who has recently battled to secure a seat in Wilson's reading room will tell you that predictions of the building type's death are some way from coming to pass yet. Nonetheless, if Cedric Price was with us today he would find no shortage of evidence to support his case.

Last Sunday was Save Our Libraries day, a countrywide protest against the threat that local government cuts are presenting to as many as 500 libraries. It is tempting to imagine Price's mischievous response: an analysis, perhaps, of the relative costs of keeping the libraries open and of issuing a free Kindle to every one of their users.

If we think of libraries as nothing more than a means of providing access to knowledge then the Kindle solution wins out every time. In libraries where the lend-rate is low, the price to the taxpayer of each loan can be as high as £15.

What is at stake, however, is very much more than the free provision of books: a place for children to congregate freely in a safe environment; a place where the socially excluded can find support and companionship; a place of political engagement. The local library is nothing less than many communities' public living room.

For many on society's margins, it may prove an essential means of escaping a life of dependency. Factor in the cost to the taxpayer of severing that kind of lifeline and the Kindle solution begins to look considerably less attractive.

One also wonders how the government squares this building type's potential demise with its ambitions to foster the Big Society.

If local communities are really being expected to take on greater responsibility for such functions as education and planning they require a basic level of physical infrastructure to do so. Kitchen tables and web forums will play their part but the need to maintain a space where discussion can take place in public remains paramount.

The library also performs a crucial representational role — often the largest building in a town centre and one of very few that offers an expression of collective values. Schools, historically, have been another but the likelihood of such a function being inscribed in the pages of the forthcoming James Review is not, one can safely assume, too great.

A century ago, Britain owed its libraries, schools and other civic infrastructure to the largesse of the likes of Carnegie and Passmore Edwards — both figures who had a keen understanding of the role that architecture plays in shaping a society.

Today, it seems we have to look to a contemporary philanthropist like Alain de Botton to find a proponent of that principal. The Fat and Grayson Perry designed "Temple for Everyone" that his charity is backing would be considered a remarkable structure in any period.

In one which seems to have lost faith with the idea that architecture has a role to play in public life, it is a much-needed shock to the system.

The library is often one of very few buildings that offers an expression of collective values

CRAC

20th Century Society steps in over ABK Redcar library

Andrea Klettner

The Twentieth Century Society has launched a last-ditch attempt to save one of Redcar's landmarks.

Following BD's revelation last week that Redcar & Cleveland Council is planning to demolish Ahrends Burton & Koralek's 1971 Redcar Central Library to make way for a new £31 million leisure centre development designed by S&P Architects, the society held a board meeting where it unanimously decided to apply for listing.



ABK's 1971 library.

The society is now preparing the case with a view to submitting this to English Heritage within two weeks. It is backed by ABK founding partners and library designers Richard Burton and Peter Ahrends.

Burton said he was "delighted" by the news and defended ABK's original designs, which extended to a masterplan of the surrounding area.

"At the time, Peter Ahrends drew up plans that showed an implicit route projecting from the library with space for new public buildings off it," he said. "I can't understand why they've gone the other way."

Burton added that the original designs demanded a concrete frame, but that this was altered to steel after the council said the North-east was "steel country".

"That input was the start of what made it [the building] what it is," concluded Burton.

Redcar was the first library built to briefs developed by the then Department of Education and Science to make libraries more user-friendly by including elements such as cafés, children's areas and exhibition space.

Jon Wright, senior caseworker at the Twentieth Century Society, said the fact that ABK's 1973 Maidenhead Library was grade II listed in 2003 could help Redcar's case.

"The building had a major impact on the already listed Maidenhead library with which it has definite design relations," he said.

"This seems a step backwards for Redcar Council, who were so pioneering at the time, and it's sad that they are now being short-sighted about what they achieved."

■ Author Philip Pullman has spoken out against the "barbarism" of plans to close Kensal Rise Library in north London, designed by Done, Hunter & Co, and opened in 1900 by US author Mark Twain.

Case Study 01
Day After
Tomorrow

Population 0

What comes to mind when you start looking at 'the world after we leave' is naturally what we are most exposed to by the media. The 'World after People' series on the History Channel captures the essence of what we know or believe will happen to the world when we reach population 0.

But is this really relevant? Sure, it is fascinating and somewhat thrilling to think of what will be left and slowly dissolve into nothing, but there seems to be a certain need amongst people to feel that even though we no longer exist, something else can find use in our great accomplishments. This string of thoughts feels dated and rather subjective. If we are not here to use what we have produced, what is left is just a toll on nature, something it will do its best to get rid of. Maybe our responsibility if we leave for good is to level our cities with the ground, get rid of whatever is manmade and erase any trace of us ever being here.

http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/aftermath-population-zero-3225

http://www.history.com/shows/life-after-people

Cecilia





PRESERVATION

If the human population would have to leave this planet, not to return for thousands of years, what would remain when we returned?

The idea of preserving culture, religion, architecture or even ideals is something that is very important to the human bread. We want to learn by looking forward as well as looking back, but we also want to educate, not only our own generation but the ones to come. We want to be remembered, not necessarily as individuals, but at least as an era. We have the need to make a mark on our planet and show that we have done something great that needs to be remembered.

So if you were put in the situation, what would you choose? If someone asked you what single thing you would save or preserve for future generations, would we all make basically the same choice? If you are religious you might choose to preserve a church, if you are a librarian you would probably pick a library, if you are the prime minister you might pick the House of Parliament. It is the great and impressive buildings that are often remembered and saved, but what this would really meen is that we would return, thousands of years from now to a city, country or world filled with libraries, churches, monumental buildings and nothing else. If we were to return, surely there would be much more useful things to preserve? If the population of London would leave and then suddenly return, surely the things that make the city function the way it does would be the most important things to keep intact. If we would return and try to inhabit the city again as quickly and smoothly as possible what would be the easiest way to do so?

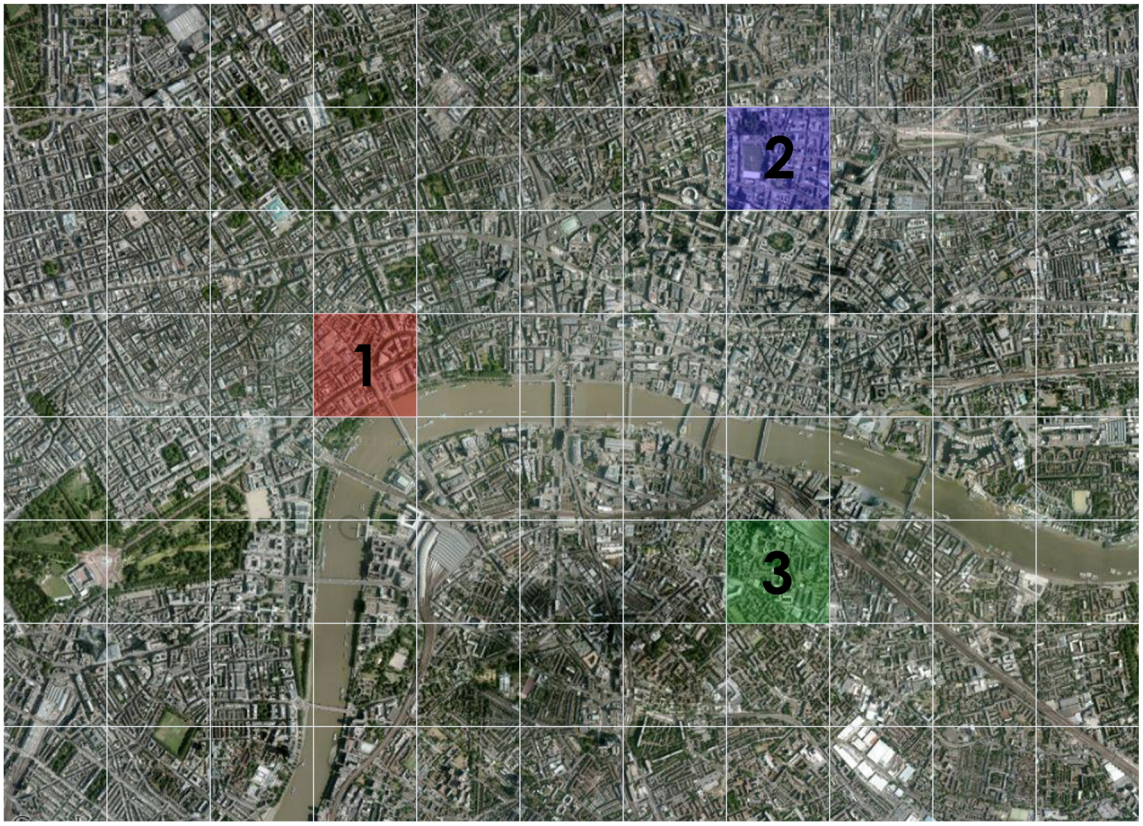
If you would leave, but return within your lifetime however, most people would probably choose to preserve very different things. I am certain that most people would choose to preserve whatever is dearest to themselves whether it is a home, a memory or something else entirely.

Cecilia

Case Study 02
Google Grid

If you grid up London, what will you find?

If you would grid up London and preserve everything within an area, what would you find? When it comes to the discussion of what should be preserved when it comes to architecture people naturally have different views. To make sure that a little of everything gets saved this might be the way to do it… Lets see what we get!



GRID 1:

History:
Somerset House,
London Transport Museum,
Theatre Museum
Transport:
Covent Garden Station
Culture:
Lyceum Theatre,
Theatre Royal,
Royal Opera House
Accommodation:
Residential,
The Savoy Hotel,
Strand Palace
Religion:
St Mary Le Strand
Education:
London School of Economics,
Royal Ballet School
Business:
Offices,
Retail,
Institutes:
The Design Council,
High Commission of India

GRID 2:

Accommodation:
Residential
Travellodge
Religion:
Wesley's Chapel
Education:
Cass Business School
Business:
Offices,
Retail,
Carnegie Investment Bank,
Honorable Artillery Company
Institutes:
Healthcare Commission,
Royal Statistical Society,
London Rebuilding Society,
Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing

GRID 3:

History:
The Old Operating Theatre Museum,
Fashion & Textile Museum
Accommodation:
Residential
Religion:
St George the Martyr Southwark
Transport:
London Bridge Station
Education: Wine & Spirit Education Trust
Business:
Shard,
Post Office,
Offices,
Retail
Healthcare:
Guy's Hospital

Comment - Friday, 18.03.2011

It's worth saying that to make sure the methods used were un-biased we had to be as removed from the gridding process as possible. As it was only an exercise and had no immediate connotations we used Google Earth to choose the area. If this method of preservation was to be taken up globally then there would be an argument for a impartial survey. Though considering the depth that Google have gone to record their data and their relative impartialness, maybe they could fairly be consulted. So with the source decided we needed to decide on scale; scale of the map and scale of the grid. So as not to affect the experiment we chose to 'Zoom extents' using Google (the most detailed view they supply) and by screen shooting the view we could gradually build up the map/plan. The boundary or parameters was an A1 sheet at 300dpi. This was a manageable size and made the outcome impossible to pre-determine therefore removing our biases from the process. We ended up with three plans. One large 'City of London' view, which you can see above, and two A1 larger scale plans with St Pauls on the Left of the page. So at a later date they could be pieced together into one A0 plan that would become the basis and starting point for future experiments, a region.

It's really interesting to discover what is in each square of that grid! How did you decide what to record and what to leave out? What were your parameters? I think not to have parameters would be impossible, but it's also important for clarity and reliability that we state our sources. If it was face book then the original data is as important as the outcome. I always think of it like a survey, if you don't know the demographic when looking at it then is useless and sometimes pretty dangerous. Its something advertisers and promoters often use to their advantage by only making certain information available, never revealing the whole picture! So I think we need to be thorough! And we are being!

Also I love how the gridded map gets lighter and darker in areas almost as if it's worn down with use. I mean surely we should be preserving what's used the most, and therefore means the most to people? Could a footfall study of this area bring exciting results? If we new which shops/businesses/hotels (whatever the parameters suggest) had the most footfall, then we would know what to preserve. I can see us ending up with several maps for different types of people, even different individual people. There's no end to how detailed this could get! Imagine if you did one for different stages in people's lives?

I look forward to chatting more about this. Cool work!

18/03/2011 at 1:34 PM

Comment - Monday, 04/04/2011

The content of each map is purely dictated by Google. I thought it quite interesting to map whatever Google maps found worth mentioning in each grid square.

I am not sure how they decide what is shown on their maps but surely it must be based on the most Googled places, the most visited places or places paying for advertizing. I will have to look in to this closer because it is quite interesting how Google dictates what information we receive.

I will also look into the darker areas of the map, and explore whatever is there. I too found it very interesting to see areas that look like they do not get a single ray of light.

04/04/2011 at 11:16 PM

Case Study 03
The Maldives

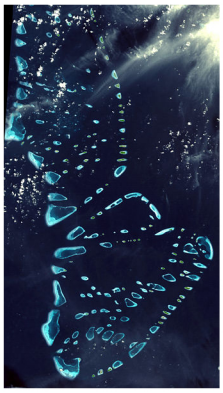
Monday, 04/04/2011 - The Maldives – A Modern Atlantis

I have just come back from a vacation in the Maldives. It is my second time there and it is one of my favorite places in the world. The nation is located in the Indian Ocean and consists of 26 atolls with a total of 1192 islands out of which only 200 of them are inhabited. The country has a population of 300 000 of which about 103 000 live in the capital Malé. The Maldives is the smallest Asian country in terms of population and land area but it is also the lowest country in the world with an average ground level of 1.5 meters above sea level.

With sea levels constantly raising the existence of the Maldives is now threatened. If the sea level, as estimated, rises almost 60 cm by 2100 much of the nation will be submerged. For this reason the president of the Maldives announced in 2008 that he planned to purchase new land in India, Sri Lanka and Australia for his people to inhabit when the nation sinks. This would be founded by the income of tourism, the nation's larges income together with the fishing industry.

But the worries of the Maldives are not only that of rising sea levels but also the destruction of a unique ecosystem. The waters of the Maldives are home to a large variety of colorful coral reefs as well as 300 species of fish. By the El-Nino effect in 1998 and the 2004 tsunami much of the coral life was destroyed and many species living here were threatened. On the island where I stayed a marine biology centre has been set up to help save endangered species and help restore the coral reefs. With a technique of placing man made frames where corals can grove they have succeeded in restoring much or the reef around the island. Great success has also been made in the breeding of endangered fish species, as well as monitoring the manta ray and whale shark population. It is remarkable to see that while some are struggling to save the nation others are focused on saving the ecosystem that exist here so that it will remain, even though the nation might disappear.







Case Study 04
English
Heritage

The first conservation areas were designated in 1967 and today there are over 8,000 conservation areas in England. They are designated for their special architectural and historical interest and are divided in to five different categories.

- Listed buildings
- Scheduled monuments
- Registered parks and gardens
- Registered battlefields
- Historic wreck sites

To many of us, conservation area means an area of specific architectural interest, which should be protected in every aspect from further development or alterations. Few people actually know that there are several categories of conservation and that preservation is not the main purpose of these.

When it comes to 'listed', 'scheduled' or 'registered' buildings or areas they are there to help us acknowledge and understand our shared interest and history. When it comes to buildings, the older it is, the more likely it is to be listed. All buildings before 1700, which survive in anything like their original condition, are listed. In England there are approximately 374,000 listed buildings and about 30 500 other listed subjects.

Out of all listed buildings only 0.2% is from 1945 or later.

A building can receive listing in three different ratings:

- Grade I: the buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be of international importance. Only 2.5% of all listed buildings are Grade I

- Grade II*: the building is a particularly important building of more than special interest. 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II*.

- Grade II: the building are of national importance and of special interest. 92% of all listed buildings are in this class.

Listing is NOT a preservation order, preventing change. Listing is an identification stage where buildings are marked and celebrated as having exceptional architectural or historical interest. Listing does not freeze a building in time, but prevent changes from being made to it without special consent.

When thinking of preservation in this way, one have to question if something we build today will ever be left in lets say, a hundred years. In today's society, trends change quickly and buildings become dated in no time. If we are only to list buildings that are over a certain age, much of what we see in today's cities will be torn down and replaces with something new and shiny, leaving nothing but very old or icon buildings for future generations. Surely, there must be a more responsible way to look at protecting our heritage. I am not in any way saying that we shouldn't protect our oldest parts of our history. We certainly should! But the danger in being so selective is that we will be left with a very narrow category of protected subjects. When identifying what should be 'listed', 'scheduled' or 'registered' a wider selection should maybe be considered or looked at. It feels to me that what is considered important or highly valued by the majority of our society does not always represent as wide a range as it should.

Sunday, 17/04/2011 - Comment

Alex, this is where I feel that Robin Hood Gardens come in. Something that is so unique in its way should be valued for what it is or has been, should surely be preserved in some way.
As we discussed last time we met, a very low number of such estates today exist and it is frustrating to know that something so historically valuble might be torn down.

17/04/2011 at 10:24 PM

Monday, 18/04/2011 - South Hill Park Conservation Area

This is a typical example of a difference of opinions. On the left is a brutulist building from 1965 and the one to the right one from 1956. Located in the South Hill Park Conservation Area, many consider these two buildings located next to each other, to be scars in a otherwise so traditional and uniform conservation area of terraced houses. Even if this might not be everyone's taste, one must be able to see the value of diversity in any area, even if might sting ones eyes. Buildings like these represent less than 0.2% of all listed buildings and these run a higher risk to be subject to irresponsibly alteration or even demolition, leaving very little for future generations.

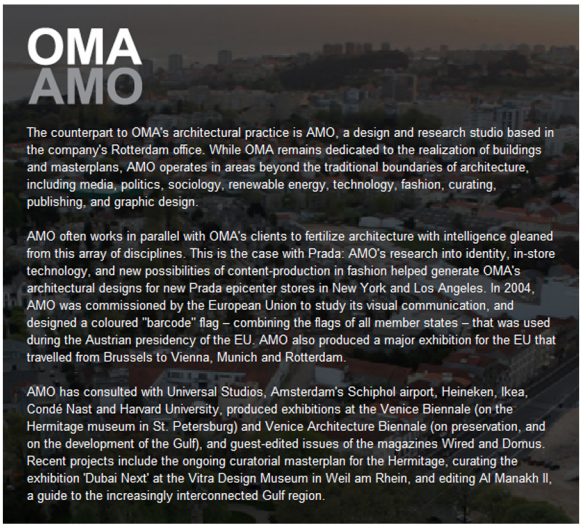


Case Study 05
OMA:AMO

Case Study 05 - OMA/AMO

CRAC

AMO - I think they have similar interests



AMO - Preservation / Destruction: OMA - CRONOCAOS

Royal Academy Lecture Description:

RA Forum: Future Memory
28 March 2011

At the Geological Society, Piccadilly



CRONOCAOS exhibition at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale Di Venezia Image courtesy OMA, photographed by Marco Beck Peccoz In their 2010 Venice Biennale installation, Rem Koolhaas' OMA addressed the growing concern for preservation and its consequences for how and what we remember. "Through our respect for the past, heritage is becoming more and more the dominant metaphor for our lives today - a situation we call cronocaos . We are trying to find what the future of our memory will look like". Ippolito Pestellini and James Westcott of OMA discuss the provocations and implications of preservation, exploring how "our obsession with heritage is creating an artificial re-engineered version of our memory…"

Respondents include Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, and the artists, Jane and Louise Wilson. Chaired by Christopher Woodward, Director of the Garden Museum.



The following text is a transcript of the OMA Cronocaos lecture at the Royal Academy on Monday, 28.03.2011. It is transcribed from the audio file released by the Royal Academy of Arts and all linguistic errors are preserved for historical accuracy.

The minutes are presented in their entirity in the left column with any key passages highlighted in red. These parts are then discussed in the column on the right.

Ippolito Pestellini:

Good evening, first of all thanks to the Royal Academy for having us here! We are very, very happy to contribute to this event. We hope we will make clear some of the things that we thought were not so clear during the exhibition.

Cronocaos it's basically the first attempt of our office to put into a system a body of research, and work, on the practical level. Of course OMA is also an architectural practice. It started in 2003, when we were asked to curate the expansion and curate a massive expansion, Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg. That was basically the beginning of our official interest in preservation, although a latent interest in the subject was already present in several of the projects of the office, since the early seventies. What we did was to first look at the evolution of preservation, and what we discover is that preservation in fact it's a product of modernity. It's very much linked to specific moments in history related to development or even revolution.

So the commission, the monument in France, was the first official act of preservation. Few years after the French revolution, the society for the protection of Ancient buildings in the UK was of course in a moment of great development for the country, so industrial development. As you see these are some of the, for example, inventions that were, basically developed in those years. Preservation is expanding, both in terms of scales and typologies. If we trace an evolution of the typologies of what is being preserved, from the 18th Century to,

They believe the act of preservation is a natural occurrence in a civilisation that is forced to live alongside the old with the new. It is not possible to constantly update or re-build cities. It is also impossible to expand inwards without 'deforestation' of the old, separating the relics of the past from the buildings that still have a use in modern society. So preservation is the grading of the past efforts by today's standards.

We are exponentially increasing the amount of things we preserve as a society. This may be due to the fact that as time passes there are more things to appreciate. We also gain expertise of how to appreciate and understand things from our past; technology helps us to dig deeper. Also, as our species grows and becomes more enlightened there are more tastes and beliefs to satisfy. Therefore the range of preserved things increases.

let's say, the present time, we could basically list, at the beginning of course, ancient monuments and then we begin somehow to include our....to preserve basically anything that could be inhabitable, from monuments to more recently, casinos or Thames or even highways. The same thing that..(noise interuption).....conservation of scale so we begin to preserve through times, larger portions of earth. So from monuments to entire districts or cultural landscapes as we define them. This ..(noise).. defines the proliferation of institutions related to preservation that increase exponentially through time. But also the exponential increase of UNESCO sites, that it's basically the diagram is showing in red, and in white it's the 'tentative list increase' of each country. Basically every country, every four years, deliver a list to UNESCO of entities that could be basically preserved or let's say they are, they are called exactly the tentative list, which is basically exponentially increasing. If we sum up all this, all the territories, from monuments to cultural landscapes as we called them, which are falling under the regime of preservation, we end up with a very scary percentage of the world which is, which falls under, any regime of preservation. So currently approximately 12 percent of the world it's off limits, that means cannot be really changed because its subject to a very strict regime of preservation which is, which we thought was, a very important discovery, because of the position to, of course, of an ever accelerating need of development and progress. At the same time if we trace the argument of specific acts that were produced through times, at the beginning of, let's say, of the first declaration of preservation were very exact and precise.

The argument as we move through history becomes more and more vague, so at the moment we comb let's say some of the requirement to list let's say a specific monument or cultural landscape under the UNESCO, for example, listing, can be defined as current and past social expressions; somehow a very vague definition that allows in principal a lot of free interpretation to the possibility of listing something as worth habitating.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations established on 16 November 1945. Its stated purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and the human rights along with fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the UN Charter.

Whilst preservation could be seen as an act for future generations it can impede the present. The preserved buildings can often impact on their surroundings and disrupt the natural growth of a city by becoming an obstacle. Preserved building need to undergo modifications of else they become relics that future generations cannot relate to.

As the requirements of humans becomes ever more varied, so too do the criteria that need to be met for a building to be preserved. With so many contradicting theories on the requirements of a preserved building it is easy to get lost.

This of course has something to do with the scale of the phenomenon. It the preservation, if the territory of preservation is basically expanding all over the world, we said before 12 percent, and UNESCO as an institution has to deal with all, basically, preservation at a global scale, we could say the past is becoming a sort of tool of development. That makes the criteria's for sites to be listed as a World Heritage site sometimes very vague and elastic. That's because UNESCO has to face also the political responsibility to distribute the World Heritage status to several countries. This graph shows specifically the countries that have received specifically the World Heritage status, recently, have increased a lot their touristic expectation. Although their touristic incomes in terms of percentages, so a developing country that is basically submitting a list of sites to UNESCO is expecting to receive somehow the World Heritage and this supposedly is, is considered, let's say, a tool for its development.

Another thing that we discovered through our investigation, is that the time span between, let's say, the objects that are preserved and the actual moment when they are preserved is basically decreasing. That is something, of course, that has to do with, of course, this sort of urge or expansion of preservation. So we started to preserve, of course, monuments in 1882, and then we began to, let's say, preserve monuments, or cultural landscapes, which are very close to the present time. To the point that now we could think that at the very point that things are produced, we could think in advance if they could become, basically, something to preserve for the future. In a way preservation, from a retrospective practice, could become a prospective practice.

In fact that happens to one project of our office. It's a house that was built for a private client in France, and it was finished, basically completed, in 1998. In 2002 it was declared a National Monument. In the same year our office was asked to rethink the concept of the house and of course we were not allowed to touch anything. Specifically because the

With preservation comes advertising and global recognition. Countries are proud of their artefacts as they represent the success of their heritage and their relevance on the world stage. It is a desirable thing for a country to be inundated with 'preserved' or 'listed' buildings. Through tourism these destinations can become a countries main industry.

The added competition and pressure for a country to gain 'listed' status also add pressure on to UNESCO's job. It must be seen to be acting impartially. To accept or refuse a country's request for listing could have great repercussions. Jobs and livelihoods could be at stake for areas counting on the renovations a listing would bring.

It is therefore not hard to understand how a country might strive for listed status in order to become a 'developed' country or a 'world player'.

Could you preserve a building before it had even been completed? Practically this is not a good idea as you have no way of telling whether a building will be a success until it's been used for its purpose. But it isn't hard to imagine a building that has such cultural or political importance it could warrant protection of some kind.

conditions of the project were frozen in time, which is a funny condition, of course, because the architect was the creator of the particular piece of architecture was not able to basically manipulate it again. The house has an interesting story. It was designed, maybe some of you know, around a platform that was able to move up and down the section of the building. And that was because the owner of the house was a severely sick person moving a wheelchair. So the platform was his own office and a way to move around the building. When we were asked to, not being able to modify anything, basically we just changed the meaning of the platform moving up and down, from a place of sorrow and work to a place of leisure. So we just replace a desk, a working desk, with a cushion, a very superficial intervention. The cushion was of course displayed in the Venice biennale as a sort of example, in the Venice architectural biennale, as a sort of debris of our preservation battle.

So far there has been a sort of neglect, the discussion of preservation has been basically focussed on a very, very old and academic, you could say, opposition. So you could say by the thinking of Viollet-le-Duc and john Ruskin, one proposing, let's say, the authenticity of monuments or architecture in general in the city, the other one re-proposing instead, the possibility to re-establish the original conditions of monuments. Now what is kind of interesting is that this kind of opposition has become a way to design and formalise, specific parts of cities. What probably fits best the term Cronocaos in this sort of preservation story, what we call the preventive argument. In historical centres somehow all over the world, when you are close to a monument, and this is for example for me very eminent for the place where I come form which is Italy, you are supposed to build according to specific rules that don't allow necessarily to build new architecture or, let's say, architecture with a new or modern style. That generates somehow a sort of 'fake' or a condition that we call a historical blur, where you don't rally realise what's new and what's old. It's a sort of melting pot that doesn't really have any sort of

Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814 – 1879) was a French architect and theorist, famous for his interpretive "restorations" of medieval buildings. Born in Paris, he was a major Gothic Revival architect.

John Ruskin (8 February 1819 – 20 January 1900) was an English art critic and social thinker, also remembered as a poet and artist. His essays on art and architecture were extremely influential in the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

If you are allowed to renovate a listed building, there is an expectation for the architect to pay homage to the existing and to compliment it where possible. Despite how old or out-of-touch the existing architecture might be it is necessary to add rather than subtract to it. This can often lead to strange combinations of new and old, in order for the building to meet modern requirements and play a role in society. This in turn can lead to misunderstanding about the buildings origins and which areas of the building are original. This could be more damaging to a buildings legacy than demolishing it in the first place.

historical identity.

This is somehow a project, our preservation project in Harvard, in the United States. It was also an analysis of the place. The Cronochaotic, let's say, situation here is that we found out that many buildings in Harvard have a kind of very strict preservation regime, that only fix the facades, somehow, as a sort of something to preserve, but not to use. So Cronocaotic somehow situation is that the interiors are being readapted several times. They look completely modern but inside the buildings are sort of, they look historical, but they're not. And other side effects in another case somehow, this is a city which was declared in Libya, called Gadamesh, which was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO, in the same year, it was in the seventies, in the same year, grew at the south side of Gadamesh. Now the regime of preservation here was extremely strict. That led, somehow, to the old city, not to be able to transform, readapt to new function. People fled into the new city that never really acquired a status of a real urban centre. So at the end, because of the listing, the whole city was completely empty, or, let's say, it suffered a very strong decline of population. The old city never really reached the status of a real urban centre.

Again another example 'fake' that turns into history, the Sagrada Familia, in Barcelona. It's a building that was listed as a World Heritage site in 1984. In fact, as many of you know, is a total non-authentic building which is trying somehow to accomplish a very old project from Gaudi. That probably, at least as many people think, has acquired the status of world heritage because of somehow the sort of touristic attraction generated by this, but anyway it's a fake, and it's a fake that becomes preserved. Now the urge of preservation is actually expanding in also the non-tangible domains or the intangible domains. So when we preserve, or at least since 2003, we also preserve the intangible. So the preservation enters into the non-physical domains. That means traditions cultures or representation of folk tradition, languages. There is basically a very very specific list that

Buildings can become stage sets, uselessly preserving past memories only for superficial, shallow enjoyment. Again, if a building cannot function anymore, is it really a good idea to preserve its image without leaving it anything to prove its worth?

Cities filled with too many preserved buildings can become 'ghost towns'. If every part of life has a strict set of rules it becomes too hard to live. There is no way to pre-empt the placement of a listed building. If it is located in a socially deprived area then it could be more of a nuisance than a benefit as the occupiers may not have the funds needed to maintain it.

Buildings are now not the only things to be preserved, we now preserve ways of life and things we see as a benefit to the present and future. From National and European laws to folk laws, there is an argument for almost any part of life to be preserved as important to someone, for good or bad.

UNESCO is working on, that is somehow including from storytelling to festivals to handcrafts, acupuncture to folk songs to dance, worldwide heritage and so on; anything that has to do with traditional production of culture, so languages we said. So china, in China acupuncture has been declared intangible heritage and of course now several other countries are now trying to preserve some of their oldest traditions. This is, for example the wrestling, oil wrestling, in Turkey, which is a very ancient way of fighting. And Venice has, let's say, requested to preserve Gondolas tradition, and, let's say, the tradition of how to make them and how to build them.

We also looked recently at the tentative list of the UK, which is of course extremely variated and diversified. And then we were actually very surprised to read this statistical, which we found very, very funny, because it was basically a journalist responding to the long list of, to the long tentative list presented to UNESCO. And he found it so vague and diversified and so open, let's say, that he proposed his own, let's say, list of heritage. That of course includes things that you will know probably better than me, that James introduced me to, and are of course not necessarily serious. But somehow this is actually a very funny way to express this fever with preservation that's somehow expanding everywhere and is expanding also in the domain of art. So as you know Marina Abramovic gave an incredible show at MOMA, the past year. In 1977, this is Marina Abramovic performing her own art, in 2010 this is not Marina Abramovic performing her own art. Which, of course, opens up a whole discussion about preservation of instant performances.

Now there is of course a very wide spectrum of things that are preserved. The very chaotic situation includes, of course, the fact that 'fakes', historical fakes, are preserved as they move throughout history, like Sagrada Familia. But we could also make other examples like the reconstruction of Dresden that is on a World Heritage site even though it is a complete fake, because it was destroyed during WWII, and then rebuilt completely.

Marina Abramović (born November 30, 1946) is a New York-based Yugoslavian performance artist who began her career in the early 1970s. Active for over three decades, she has recently begun to describe herself as the "grandmother of performance art." Abramović's work explores the relationship between performer and audience, the limits of the body, and the possibilities of the mind.

The Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família : commonly known as the Sagrada Família, is a large Roman Catholic church in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926). Although incomplete, the church is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and in November 2010 was consecrated and proclaimed a minor basilica by Pope Benedict XVI.

Dresden is the capital city of the Free State of Saxony in Germany. It is situated in a valley on the River Elbe, near the Czech border. The Dresden conurbation is part of the Saxon Triangle metropolitan area.

So in this urge of preservation or in this expanding preservation, we highlighted a moment in history, which we call the Black hole of preservation, where it's basically related to the architecture produced between the 1960's and the 1990's or architecture as social project. That is at the moment completely neglected or at least, we could say, it doesn't fall under any specific regime of preservation. In general it was a moment in history, of course, very precious for architects. Somehow the Public Sector what was extremely strongly supporting the ideas of architects and the possibilities of architecture to really re-invent cities and the way that people who live. So architecture as social project.

Most of the things that have been lost. This is an example of the Palast der Republik, in Berlin. It has a very troublesome story but it was of course a multifunctional building, hosting to soviet assembly of East Berlin that was erased, torn to the ground, instead of just building a new, let's say, 'historically looking' Palast, or Schloss, will be rebuilt. Normally this moment in history was much related to social housing, as I mentioned before, this is just a quick catalogue of all the houses, all social housing, erased or demolished or in danger of demolition around the world. And this is somehow, let's say, the way architecture was described in those years by medias, by architects; so slogans of celebration of the same kind of architecture. So you see, on the top, architects celebrating the kind of moment in history, some projects, some covers of magazines, and the same slogans turning to slogans of accusations.

Somehow the political situation has changed, the Public Sector is much less, is much weaker somehow, than before. Because of the rise of Private Economy, the private investments are probably bigger than the public ones. That kind of season in architecture has been basically considered something to destroy or ugly and sort of a social debacle. The phenomenon, we thought of course that the phenomenon was strictly European or western, and instead of like mapping only three hundred of these projects that have

Palast der Republik or The Palace of the Republic in Berlin was the seat of the parliament of the German Democratic Republic, the People's Chamber, and also served various cultural purposes. Located on the bank of the Spree River between Schloßplatz and the Lustgarten (both referred to jointly as Marx-Engels-Platz from 1951 to 1994), it also housed two large auditoria, art galleries, a theatre, 13 restaurants, a bowling alley and a discothèque.

been completely lost through time. So from the 1950's to the 1990's we just found out that the phenomenon is absolutely global.

This is a slide from a building in Milan, one of the masterpieces of Brutalist architecture, used to be a correction facility for young boys. Most of the projects were of course socially orientated projects or social housing or public institutions. And of course, I mean a very famous project here, Robin Hood Gardens, that is basically, probably, facing, going to face, the same fate. So oblivion and potentially demolition.

One of the things that of course should be considered about this moment in history of architecture is that there was a lot of enthusiasm for mass production and the materials related to mass production, which of course have a lasting time, so a life span, which is very reduced. So the same architecture that as architects, or as OMA, we claim should be preserved, because its relevant, because its important in history, then has a sort of lifespan which is extremely limited, because of the material that has been built. So we raised the issue, ok, should we preserve something that is meant to last only for thirty of forty years? What are the implications of this? At the end of the exhibition basically we listed our 26 projects. Basically we showed 26 projects of our practice chronologically ordered. The intention here was definitely not to deliver a sort of 'single polemic' or to give answers to the analysis that I just presented, but it's actually the other way around. By doing these projects we found out that it's the preservation domain is so complex, that somehow every single of these experiments, or every single example of these projects, are somehow responding to specific situations; they cannot be reused to a single polemic. So it's our own history of preservation, somehow, that some of our framed projects are put into four main factors, a place, time and agenda, so a concept about preservation, which is always different in every 26. And then of course the revolution of these agendas. We made them available as a sort of tier of block pages, a catalogue, in order for people to

Many British buildings from this period dealt with social problems in a new and pioneering way. After the war we had the opportunity to rebuild much of the country and reassess the way in which our cities function. Many of the buildings proposed a modern way of life that was not, at first, easy to adhere to. This caused friction that was directed at the new architecture. The buildings never really overcame this stigma and are still disliked by many today as a reminder of the bad times.

Post war buildings also experimented with materials. Ideas of mass production and multiple-use were popular and influenced the buildings. But due to economical pressures for buildings to outlive their original life span it is easy for them to fall into disrepair if unmaintained.

The act of preserving is such an opinionated and personal act that it is becoming ever increasingly difficult to please everyone when preserving.

create their own 'preservation booklet', or magazine. We presented several projects and as I was saying before, completely different ones from each other, mostly to, those projects were dealing with reuse, which is something that we are very interested in. So reuse of existing structures.

This is a project that we did in Essen. It's basically the transformation of a former coal mine facility into a museum. We were very, let's say the office was quite happy, to be able to deliver a new program within this old building, just adding a little for to make it accessible. Which was simulating, somehow, the old infrastructure of the industrial plant and then inside without tearing off basically everything, so it was a purely and intelligent colonisation of the existing spaces. Of course without taking into consideration the technical elements that were needed in order to do so. Sometimes we looked at, for example, other projects of preservation, trying to deliberately respond differently from our competition briefs.

In this case this is a competition for the National Museum of China. We were asked to build a building outside, so close, a new building close to the original one. We decided instead to use the original building as a mould and then have the building inside, have the new building inside. As I mentioned before one of the most important projects related to our investigation on preservation is our, let's say our ongoing, collaboration with Hermitage. We were asked to rethink the Curatorial Master Planning but also to propose some architectural interventions. What is very interesting about the Hermitage is that, because, of course, of the specific historical development of St Petersburg, the Hermitage didn't fall into the rush of modernisation that many other Museums, around Europe and the world, went through. So what we thought was actually interesting was that, ok, this is a specific situation where we could propose a different way to treat the building that is not about transforming it, it's not about making it more modern. The rooms of the Hermitage, if we turn into a catalogue, we were asked to be able to

Some feel a more sensible way to maintain the physical and historical presence of a building is to propose another use for it. This means there are new set of people concerned with its upkeep and it will remain relevant to the public domain and continue to influence future generations.

Essen is a city in the central part of the Ruhr area in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Located on the River Ruhr, its population of approximately 579,000, which makes it the 9th-largest city in Germany. For the year 2010, Essen was the European Capital of Culture on behalf of the whole Ruhr area.

Interventions in preserved buildings don't need to be large or costly. They can be something as small as a wheelchair access ramp or accessible toilets.

The National Museum of China flanks the eastern side of Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China. The mission of the museum is to educate about the arts and history of China.

The State Hermitage is a museum of art and culture in Saint Petersburg, Russia. One of the largest and oldest museums of the world, it was founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great and open to the public since 1852.

host American Art, which is normally need a lot of space. So none of these rooms was big enough to host, let's say, big exhibitions. We said that this was a quality, I mean keeping lets say to rooms as they were. And it was a quality actually to keep the building as much as possible as it is; so neglecting, let's say, necessity to modernise, necessary spaces and the way the art was displayed, which is sometimes completely awkward and completely not following, somehow, the current modern standards. So as you see here, one of the most important pieces of probably the recent history, more or less recent history, is exposed between two very fluorescent lights. The separation from the actual art is almost nothing, so extremely dangerous in itself. The thinking about this was that this was a very intimate and extremely interesting condition to show art. So what we thought instead, ok, let's take the dilapidated space that are currently present in the Hermitage, leave them like that. This is of course a provocation, and just relocate art in order to, to use the dilapidation of the spaces to enhance somehow, some of the major masterpieces of the Hermitage.

We are currently working also in a very complex project in Venice, located in a sort of specific situation because of the Rialto Bridge, the project, which is ongoing in the office since one and a half years approximately. Venice as you know has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, overall all, like the whole island, the whole centre island, since 1974. That means that, somehow, any single transformation within the city is extremely difficult. It's extremely difficult to adapt buildings, it's extremely difficult to propose any sort of change and then consequently it's extremely difficult to inject modern function within the existing conditions, because they require, of course, different structure, they require different organisation.

It's, of course, building overly representing the history of art, because of their specific location and now its empty, its vacant like many other buildings, one of the spectrum of preservation is actually a list in

Venice is a city in northern Italy known both for tourism and for industry, and is the capital of the region Veneto, with a population of about 270,660. Together with Padua and Treviso, the city is included in the Padua-Treviso-Venice Metropolitan Area.

The Rialto Bridge is one of the four bridges spanning the Grand Canal in Venice, Italy. It is the oldest bridge across the canal.

specific areas of Europe, specifically in southern Europe. Preservation creates situation where, because of the non-ability of transforming places, the places are left vacant. So people don't want to invest time into reuse the existing materials because it's too demanding, in terms of economical effort, in terms of bureaucratic effort. So the...(noise)...stands like this basically, it's a sort of a muted icon of the Mercantil Era. It used to be a trading place for German merchants to trade in Venice, so a very active fulcrum of the city. It has a very, what we pointed out in this project is that it has a very complex history of transformations. So it was rebuilt several times, transformed and readapted to several, to different uses, trough history. Here are some pictures of some evidences of the last transformation in the 1930's so you can see that basically what we claimed for our project is that, somehow, authenticity was not really an argument for this kind of building.

So this is an excerpt of the legislation system of Venice which is saying, ok , you can't do anything, and we said ok but if this is applying to a 16th century building then maybe, considering that probably 70% of our palace is non authentic, maybe then this law doesn't really apply. So basically we claimed for this project, like we called for this project, preservation of change, so the preservation of the possibility to readapt and then we said the program for the building would be a departments store. So a very, very city based program or like a civic program, which is completely missing within Venice at the moment. Venice has a problem, which we think is actually very important, because the city is losing a lot of inhabitants, and again preservation is a sort of way to embalm cities and then turning them into similar cultures. Then this is a sort of slogan for the project and then the sort of transformation which we are proposing, which of course, is a department store. So we are bold enough to somehow propose the very means to make a department store to be able to work, so escalators through the courtyard will be able to move, in order to host the programmatic, let's say, to host public

Preservation is not always a blessing. It can be a costly process, due to maintenance costs and the requirement of higher standards of renovation. This to, can have an effect on the population of a historically important city. People can get priced out.

Mercantilism is an economic theory which holds that the prosperity of a state is dependent upon its supply of capital; that the global volume of international trade is "unchangeable;" and that one party may benefit only at the expense of another. "Unchangeable" in this sense may be taken to mean that the European and global economies are seen as zero-sum games, though that economic concept did not yet exist in the mercantilist period. During it, economic assets (or capital) were represented by bullion (gold, silver, and trade value), which was best increased through a positive and healthy balance of trade with other states (exports minus imports).

The preservation of a buildings right to remain current and useful.

events, so to keep the public quality of the spaces. We will regenerate some of the frescos so the building into new moulds ready to fashion, somehow, in Venice maybe. This is very cheesy but it was a way to communicate this idea. A huge intervention in the roof, which is made possible because of the roof top will be a public space, so open to the citizens. So far we've talked about reuse. One of the strategies of our office, basically approach preservation on the opposite side. So destruction as a possibility of preservation or destruction as a possibility to preserve specific area of context.

It could be argued that in order to maintain a building in an ever changing climate it is important to give it room so as not to affect or get affected by its surroundings. Cities must expand and contract as time passes but a preserved building by definition cannot 'move with the times' so must be given a cushion from the real world.

This was a project that was, basically, it's a project that was meant for La Defense, in France. It's a very old project of the office. Here what we said, what the office said, is that some of this architecture is the product of a very cheap process, it's what we call junk architecture, of the peripheries, related to not necessarily of course housing but the small production facilities and so on. What we proposed is to scrape, basically, this existing tissue and allow cities to grow on the areas that are liberated by demolishing architecture which is not relevant. So somehow imagine that you have peripheries, where every 25years because of the possibility of a very quick cycle, pieces of the cities are scraped to leave space somehow for new development. That can be then scraped once again. We thought this could have been a quite interesting way to control the sizes of cities, so that we apply the same sort of thinking to other situations finding out that the space you could liberate, just imagining a phasing of this type its enormous. So limiting the growth of cities and limiting the ability or let's say the impossibility or the huge burden to deal with the growth of peripheries and so on. So let me come back one second, we mentioned to somehow rephrase the convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural Natural Heritage into the Convention Concerning the Demolition of World Cultural Junk as a possibility of preservation.

La Défense is a major business district of the Paris aire urbaine. With a population of 20,000, it is centred in an orbital motorway straddling the Hauts-de-Seine département municipalities of Nanterre, Courbevoie and Puteaux. The district is at the westernmost extremity of Paris's 10 km long Historical Axis, which starts at the Louvre in Central Paris and continues along the Champs-Élysées, well beyond the Arc de Triomphe before culminating at La Défense.

By strategically demolishing areas of low concern, you leave a cushion for the preserved buildings and space for the city to expand again.

James Westcott:

I'm going to talk not about OMA projects specifically but a couple of examples of where this interest in preservation has led us. And as Ippo explained, if preservation was a modern and western invention coming out of the enlightenment, in the East they have a very different understanding. So at the moment were making a book about the Metabolist Architects, in Japan. This is a group that emerged in the late 1950's and announced themselves in 1960 and their philosophy was one of reuse. They didn't believe in permanence at all. They knew that cities would crumble, especially since they all came up at the end of the Second World War. So they said 'let's embrace the inevitability of change' and instead make buildings that have capsules or elements that can replaced when they need to be. And it was an Avant-garde movement that was... well we found it very surprising, because it's an Avant-garde that's routed in tradition.

We found out that they were very obsessed with the Ise Shrine, which is one of the most holy sites in the Shinto religion, in Japan. Every 20 years the Ise Shrine is rebuilt in an identical way so that when they visited the shrine in 1960 and photographed it from a helicopter, what they saw was actually new and old at the same time, which is a situation which we can't really imagine in the west. Yeah they had a very, there extremely sensitive to the transience of architecture. They basically, they gave up on the idea of permanence, especially vis-à-vis the European addiction to permanence.

This is the capsule tower built by Kisho Kurokawa in 1972, in Tokyo. It's one of the crowning achievements of Metabolism and one of the only semi-permanent realisations of capsule architecture. It was an expression of Japanese triumphant modernity and the economic miracle and Kurokawa even had the idea that you could remove a capsule and put it on the back of your car and take it to a holiday resort on weekends. It was an icon in downtown Tokyo and still is, but now we're in the situation where it's under threat, it's in a totally dilapidated state. So now we're

In the late 1950s a small group of young Japanese architects and designers joined forces under the title of "Metabolism". Their visions for cities of the future inhabited by a mass society were characterized by large scale, flexible, and expandable structures that evoked the processes of organic growth. In their view, the traditional laws of fixed form and function were obsolete.

Ise Grand Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to goddess Amaterasu-ōmikami, located in the city of Ise in Mie prefecture, Japan. Officially known simply as Jingū , Ise Jingū is in fact a shrine complex composed of a large number of Shinto shrines centred on two main shrines, Naikū and Gekū.

Shinto or kami-no-michi is the indigenous spirituality of Japan and the Japanese people. It is a set of practices, to be carried out diligently, to establish a connection between present day Japan and its ancient past.

Kisho Noriaki Kurokawa (April 8, 1934 – October 12, 2007) was a leading Japanese architect and one of the founders of the Metabolist Movement.

presented with a paradox because Kurokawa himself never intended the capsules to be permanent. The intention was always 'when they wear out you remove them'. But somehow the economic situation didn't exist where it was viable to do that, the emergence of the market economy made it not economical to do that. So now, and it was built of really transient materials as we saw earlier. So when we visited we found a very dilapidated state but also with still some vitality inside. However 70% of the residents voted for it to be demolished and to try to find a developer to build a completely new tower, probably not based on these principals at all. But the funny thing is that Kurokawa himself also started buying up capsules within it so that he could have votes to try to sway the opinion. But he himself, back in the day, had proposed a building that was a time bomb in itself, it had dynamite imbedded in it, so the total opposite of preservation. And he himself had also experienced the erasure of one of another of his utopian fantasies, a holiday resort in the north of Japan called Hawaii, for people who couldn't afford to go to Hawaii. Again a triumph of modernity and the swinging 60's Japanese style but demolished when it later went out of business. The dotted line indicated that its under threat but not actually demolished. This 80% of local residents want to demolish this building but it was reused as a school. Kenzo Tange, the father figure of Metabolism, has also been a victim of this different kind of thinking about preservation. One of his masterpieces was destroyed, two of them actually. This is another utopian scheme by Kionocu Taki. It's a tree shaped community from the 60's, and finally he had a chance to realise at least one of the trees in the 1980's sometime, but that to was demolished in 1994, so from a kind of Aesthetic intolerance or when a utopian vision expires, to when a political vision becomes intolerable.

So in Cronocaos exhibition we had a lot of furniture around as well as the huge cushion. We had chairs and desks and signs from Haus der Kunst, in Berlin, even a door knob. So the Haus der Kunst was built in 1933 as an aura making machine for the Nazis. So after the war it was a building

Kenzo Tange (September 4, 1913 – March 22, 2005) was a Japanese architect, and winner of the 1987 Pritzker Prize for architecture. He was one of the most significant architects of the 20th century, combining traditional Japanese styles with modernism, and designed major buildings on five continents. Tange was also an influential protagonist of the structuralist movement.

The Haus der Kunst (literally House of Art) is an art museum in Munich, Germany. It is located at Prinzregentenstrasse 1 at the southern edge of the Englischer Garten, Munich's largest park.

that was unacceptable, tainted beyond belief. So then it developed a long history of interventions that were basically trying to erase this shame. Or re-habilitate the building through erasure and suppression. At a certain point, all of the interior was white washed like a literal kind of cleansing, even the door knob, but then even that wasn't enough, they removed all the door knobs and put them into storage. So this is why the building is so shameful. It was inaugurated in 1937 in these halls; it also housed the famous degenerate art exhibition, an also kind of borderline fascist exultation of the human form. So in 1956 afterwards they really tried to veil all this grandiosity with curtains and then another kind of interior design and erasure; so all the time its shame and guilt until in 2003 it started to be used for contemporary architecture. These trees were added in 1960, another kind of veiling to hide the building out of shame.

So this is Paul McCarthy, so in a way he's increasing the veiling but also parodying it at the same time, as if to say everything's just fine inside this building. It's funny that the monumental scale of the interior itself actually works very well with contemporary art, as Gilbert and George found out. Yeah so what we did for Cronocaos is exhume this furniture that had been in the basement since the 1950's, because even the design of furniture was considered to be tainted somehow. So we hauled all of this furniture all the way to Venice. It was an experiment really to see what would happen with the aura of this furniture. You know, would we still tip toe around it and treat it piously? What we found out during the installation of the exhibition is that we didn't, it became totally every day, banal and so therefore, in a way, a successful rehabilitation through reuse, rather than erasure. So within the situation of the exhibition itself we created our own mini Cronocaos.

Thanks.

Paul McCarthy (born August 4, 1945 in Salt Lake City, Utah) is a contemporary artist who lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

Gilbert & George are two artists who work together as a collaborative duo. Gilbert Proesch (San Martin de Tor, Italy, 17 September 1943) and George Passmore (Plymouth, United Kingdom, 8 January 1942) have become famous for their distinctive, highly formal appearance and manner and their brightly coloured graphic-style photo-based artworks.

Architects Journal, 7 April, 2011

Cronocaos: Heritage and heresy

By Jay Merrick

Change and chaos are natural parts of the human psyche. How can we reconcile this with the desire to preserve, asks Jay Merrick

The Royal Academy Forum, Future Memory talk Preservation/Destruction: OMA – Cronocaos took place on 28 March 2011

'Sic transit gloria mundi': thus passes the glory of the world, wrote the Catholic monk Thomas à Kempis, in 1418. The transit of architecture through time, physically and memorially, is richly protean subject matter: any reaction or theory about the effects of time, nature and the mind on buildings instantly mutates, or wobbles like mercury in the palm.

About 12 per cent of the world's surface – including portions of sea and landscape, and 1.8 per cent of the built environment – is subject to preservation orders. Rem Koolhaas and OMA believe heritage values, and our perception of them, have become hyper-chaotic: it's an ideal and highly marketable subject matter for Modernists for whom compulsive research is a therapeutic buttress against the complex demands of the free market.

Speaking at the Royal Academy Forum on Future Memory, OMA's Ippolito Pestellini and James Westcott reprised various thrusts of the practice's Cronocaos installation at the 2010 Venice Biennale (AJ 01.10.10). There, OMA announced, 'We are trying to find what the future of our memory will look like… our obsession with heritage is creating an artificial, re-engineered version of our memory… the ambition of the global taskforce of "preservation" to rescue larger and larger territories of the planet, and the – corresponding? – global rage to eliminate the evidence of the postwar period of architecture as a social project… we show the wrenching simultaneity of preservation and destruction that is destroying any sense of a linear evolution of time.'

Not quite. The future of our memory is unknowable; contemporary buildings are creating artificial, re-engineered versions of a chaotic present; there is no 'global rage' about socially concerned architecture because shopping is more totally, and subtly, enraging; and simultaneities of time are a long-established given in our lives: see, for example, any Medieval cathedral (and Marvin Trachtenberg's fascinating book, Building-in-Time, Yale, 2010), Constant Nieuwenhuys' anti-capitalist city, New Babylon, and Reservoir Dogs.

The info-visuals shown by Pestellini – overlapping graphs, grids and stamp-sheets of images – seemed predictably complicated. But he raised interesting issues, as did Simon Thurley, director of English Heritage. Through Unesco, said Pestellini, the past was becoming a tool for touristic development, even as our ability to conflate past and present values of place and architecture becomes increasingly blurred: 'Historical fakes are preserved as if they would represent history… Dresden is a complete fake… We live in a very romantic moment, which is not about real memory… preservation is so difficult that it has less to do with proper historical methods. It's more about the imagination.'

OMA's approach to large-scale heritage conservation is to apply re-patterning to urban fabric. Their idea to demarcate portions of La Defense district in Paris to be 'scraped' clean and rebuilt periodically is dynamically interesting; less so, their proposed patternings of old and new in Beijing in the form of grids, stripes and Rodchenko-like zonings. Why not a series of overlapping outlines of SpongeBob Squarepants?

Heritage is experienced from different personal positions of time, place and emotion; the clichés of a remembered colour, smell, quality of light or a single small detail, are actually rather compelling. Is it a subtle essence or atmosphere of the past that we crave, rather than starkly arbitrary presentations of heritage substance? Thurley suggests our interest in heritage is 'something that's inbuilt in the psyche of the human race'.

The artists Jane and Louise Wilson were present, and their images of wartime gun emplacements on the French coast reinforced Thurley's idea of an atavistic craving for remains. The sombre bunkers, fractured or overgrown, defy purely historical definition: they have become Ur-objects that repel dates and purposes; they are indescribably memorial, yet also metaphysically of the future.

However old and new are re-collaged by architects, they will remain a contiguous fusion of the obvious and the fugitive. And as we gazed at the visuals of OMA's scheme to convert a Venetian palazzo into a department store, with red escalators veering across its central courtyard, this truth, at least, was beyond doubt.

Should the British taxpayer be funding Unesco?

YES

Adam Wilkinson
Director, Edinburgh World Heritage



The withdrawal from Unesco in the 1980s was ostensibly in protest at the state of the organisation. Today, however, it is a very different organisation: well-administered and respected by professionals working in its many fields, of which culture and heritage make up a small part, for the support and expertise it brings to the table.

World Heritage status and other Unesco cultural designations, such as City of Literature and City of Music are about recognising the importance and relevance of our cultural heritage to the contemporary world, whether it be the relevance of the Scottish Enlightenment or the recognition that our prehistoric ancestors at Stonehenge saw themselves as part of a wider world.

In this respect, the UK's membership of Unesco is not so much a question of "what do we get from it", but "what can we give". The UK has some of the leading experts in the investigation, care, management and conservation of the historic environment, and through Unesco and its structures we are able to share these skills and spread best practice. In return, our eyes are opened to the rest of the world and to different ways of looking at our own culture and society.

The fundamental driver behind all this is the pursuit of peace and avoidance of war through creating understanding between nations of their common cultural ground. Peace creates prosperity. Given the human and financial cost of going to war, £12 million seems like a bargain.



Wilkinson Eyre's Dyson Academy in Bath was scrapped following pressure from Unesco regarding the world heritage site.

NO

Robert Adam
Director,
Adam Architecture



Unesco is a global quango. Quangos are sometimes useful but often self-serving. At least national quangos can be called to order by governments. Unesco is only under the control of another monster quango, the United Nations, and governments of the world just cough up to keep it going. If everyone pays, no one's in control; something that's owned by everyone is owned by no one. This is a formula for a massive gravy train.

International Unesco staff and their friends trot the globe, they meet at special conferences in exotic places, they bump into one another in airport business lounges, they splash about in luxury hotel pools, they talk about culture in little coteries and they issue documents hardly anyone reads. A wonderful life.

To be fair, the lucky beneficiaries of this charmed quasi-academic life can do some good. Remote and ignored places can be rescued from neglect and ignorance. But there is a sinister side. Unesco staff can act like global heritage policemen, threatening to take away World Heritage Site status, persuading governments to make decisions based on the opinions of an unelected outsider.

Worse still are the charters and memorandums put out by cliques of "experts". These take on the force of law as they pass into national regulations hardly touching the sides of a democratic process. Is this right? In these straitened times, all quangos should feel the cold blast of accountability.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Add your views at bdonline.co.uk

CRAC

Haymarket 'threat to city's Unesco status'

The director of Edinburgh's heritage watchdog has condemned Network Rail's plans for Haymarket station, saying they could threaten the city's Unesco World Heritage status.

Marion Williams, director of the Cockburn Association, spoke out after Edinburgh councillors approved IDP and Halcrow's designs for the £30 million expansion for the fourth busiest station in Scotland.

She said: "The plans are disappointing and short-sighted. Unesco World Heritage is keeping a watchful eye on Edinburgh. Dresden lost its status because of over-development. It's not something we can ignore."

The proposals for the extension, which were put before planners under the Railways Acts, 1839 - 1889, include a new concourse over the car park area, a wide over-track waiting area, new platform canopies and new escalators. But the use of the act meant that no consultation took place.

Critics claim that as a result the designs fail to relate to neighbouring developments such as Richard Murphy's hotel and commercial scheme on the Goods Yard site for Tiger Developments.

"Network Rail wouldn't talk to Tiger Developments, which is working on the site across the road, to make sure the schemes tied in with each other," added Williams.

A spokesman for Network Rail said: "When complete, Haymarket will be transformed into a fully accessible modern interchange facility."

SEE DEBATE PAGE 9

CRAG

Remember the past, but don't repeat it



OWEN HATHERLEY

The government threat to stop funding Unesco shows a tortured relationship with conservation

On one level, the coalition government's "yellow card" to Unesco — its threat to withdraw all funding from the international body if it can't "show results" — is an example of how the lunatic fringe are now running the country. Not to mention an amusing delusion of grandeur, as if Unesco were some Regional Development Authority Cameron could patronise and pick on. But inadvertently or otherwise, it says something odd and intriguing about the surprisingly tortured relationship between conservatism and conservation.

It's telling that Robert Adam has expressed support for cutting funding to Unesco. Partly this is a matter of right-wing ideology — things "owned by everyone" and run by experts are apparently bad, like parks, museums and the NHS — but partly something more complex. Adam's Athlone House scheme in Hampstead is facing the kind of unimpressed, conservationist, contextual scrutiny more commonly reserved for modern buildings, so he might appreciate decisions being taken out of the hands of historians and scholars.

The role of Unesco in architecture and planning is essentially as a sort of international Civic Trust, awarding World Heritage Site status to the worthy and smiting those who transgress it. Perhaps a Unesco could have been able to stop the destruction of Nash's Regent St, or Soane's Bank of England, which were replaced with... conservative, classical buildings.

Similarly, in a strikingly ill-judged article published as the dead were still being picked out of the rubble of Christchurch, Simon Jenkins declared that its cathedral must be rebuilt to its original form, to prevent the mistakes of the post-war era. More Warsaw, less Coventry — and explicitly against the strictures on reconstruction from William Morris, founder of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. Meanwhile, Blimps everywhere lament English Heritage's attempts to preserve modernist buildings.

Jenkins likes to brand his opponents as sundry Bolsheviks and "totalitarians", so it's amusing that the counter-examples he invariably advocates are post-war Warsaw, where a Stalin-controlled government remade the destroyed historic core; and more recently, Yuri Luzhkov's authoritarian Moscow, where blingy neoclassicism and reconstruction were the order of the day. Now, much like post-war Coventry and, say, post-war Bristol, these should not be lumped in together. Forties Warsaw and forties Coventry in their different ways created something special, unique and still impressive; nineties Moscow and sixties Bristol something rightly derided. This isn't a matter of ideology, but quality.

So why, then, is it that — from Adam and the government's firm public school caning of Unesco to Jenkins' contempt for SPAB and English Heritage — that conservatives so often dislike conservationists? Perhaps it's to do with the difference between an interest in history and a longing for the past. Conservation can reveal the ruined without genuflection, without wanting to turn the clock back. In fact, by showing the marks of time, you make clear that the clock can't be turned back. For some, this is unforgivable.

Case Study 06
Barbican
Estate

Sunday, 13.03.2011 - Barbican Tour

Today I was invited at short notice to the Barbican Centre for a tour of the Arts centre and various walkways throughout the complex. The guide was very knowledgeable and overall the tour was very interesting. It took about an hour and a half and dealt with many aspects of the building from materiality through to the sites history.

For those who may not know, the Barbican estate is in the City of London and is a mixed use, predominantly residential, council funded development that was completed in 1982. It's perhaps most famous for dividing opinion much like the Smithson's Robin Hood Gardens from the same era. It's often grouped in with other buildings from the same era as being part of the "Brutalist" movement. The term Brutalist or Brutalism could be mistaken as derogatory; it actually has quite positive origins. It's derived from the French term 'beton brut' describing a process used for pouring concrete; specifically a shuttering that is used to leave a mark on the face of the concrete. Le Corbusier described this method of concrete production as honest and without ornament, which later modernist movements thought were desirable qualities to express through their architecture. Architects like the Smithsons and Chamberlin, Powell and Bon (the architects behind the Barbican) both took this notion to heart and adopted it in their architecture.

C,P&B (Chamberlin, Powell and Bon) were given the opportunity to work on what was to be a huge regeneration of one of the worst hit areas of London during the Second world war. There previous success with housing in the same area, and their relatively modern style of architecture made them the popular choice, the Barbican would become their life's work. What you see today is the product of nearly 40 years worth of work. From the street it can seem quite imposing; this is not helped by the busy roads that border the site. The hard edge that is presented to the rest of London was intentional and justifiably makes the buildings unpopular with many.

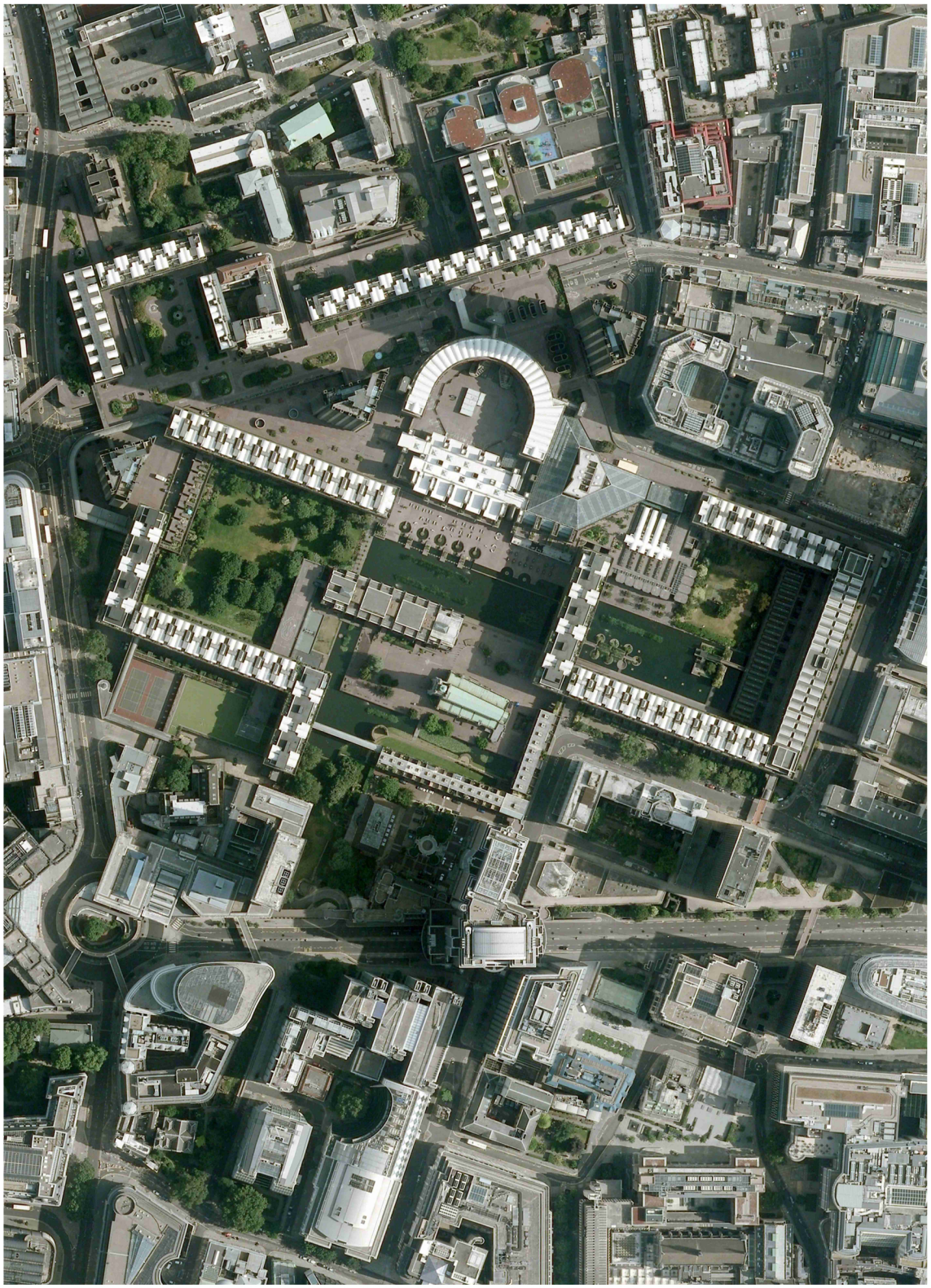
The Barbican and preservation are synonymous. During its realisation, its use and eventually its Grade 2 listing the barbican has dealt with preservation varying ways. The following study will try and highlight the many ways in which the building has preserved, and become a part of history



















Case Study 07
Robin Hood
Gardens

PRESERVATION

Monday, 07.03.2011 - Robin Hood Gardens -
The first look at a study in preservation

Over the next week I will be gathering information on the highly publicized Robin Hood Gardens in order to gain an understanding of the arguments for and against its preservation. I wont go into the history of the place right now as I wouldnt do it justice, but I hope this might turn into a reasoned, structutred and informed argument either for or against. I also hope to use this investigation as a way of understanding preservation as a wider subject. More to come……



Case Study 07

Sunday, 06.02.2011 - Visit to Robin Hood Gardens

I was recently given a short report on the current debate over the preservation of one of London's key examples of post-war social housing, Robin Hood Gardens. I knew of the place and was aware of the press coverage it was getting but the report encouraged me to make the short journey east to make up my own mind.

The site has been chosen for a major re-development involving the demolition of the existing 40 year old flats in favour of several newer buildings. My current understanding is that the new flats will be more energy efficient in their everyday use and also will take up less space; more flats meaning more money! This is going to take a little more examination at a later date but over the weekend I visited the flats to record my first, uninformed impressions of the place. It might not be there for much longer so I had to get in quick.

Robin Hood Gardens is in a pretty remote area of London. It's on the fringes of Canary Wharf and the area hasn't seen much regeneration considering its proximity to the city. Never the less the height of the flats is still an imposing presence from the road. The hard face of one of the blocks shields the building from a busy road leading to Canary Wharf and is the higher of the two. When in the enclosed garden area you are taken aback by how private it feels. The noise from the perimeter streets is minimised by the bulk of the surrounding buildings, only interrupted by the buzz of a plane overhead. Noise is also reduced by employing concrete 'fins' on the facades to break up the noise. On the exterior (road side) each level has an exterior walk way that also breaks up the sound. So when you're sitting on one of the robust wooden benches you get a nice feeling of tranquillity, even if it is freezing cold. Local kids are cycling around the mound which almost creates a circuit track (reminiscent of a Corbusier Unite?). The enclosed garden is probably the best kept feature of the site. Concrete play sculptures and sturdy landscaping mean it copes with the heavy use.

If only the same care and attention had been paid to the rest of the development. Its immediately noticeable how densely populated these flats are. Youtube can provide you with examples of interiors but this is perhaps most strikingly expressed on the façade as each flat uses their balconies differently. The whole place has such a personal feel, the flats are well lived in and every inch of personal exterior space seems to be being used. So much so that I was conscious of taking photographs as it felt like an invasion of privacy. They must hate the sudden influx of architects nosing around (sorry residents!)

There's no doubt that there are some great features in the buildings. The generous circulation lobbies, expressed in the façade, and the car park 'moat' that surrounds the flats are nice touches with socialist leanings. You can't help but admire the equality of space and light. However the mass and tones of the building create a very cold atmosphere that could be quite depressing over time. It also looks as if the building has never been renovated, paint and concrete has deteriorated and in a shared building who is responsible for renovation? The council don't seem to be doing much.

This is just an initial response. I've done very little research as of yet so things may change. But this is someone's home, moving into the flats today would be tough. But the question is, is there a future in the building? Is it worth keeping and what are the possibilities for regeneration? Hopefully we might come to a conclusion over the next few weeks.



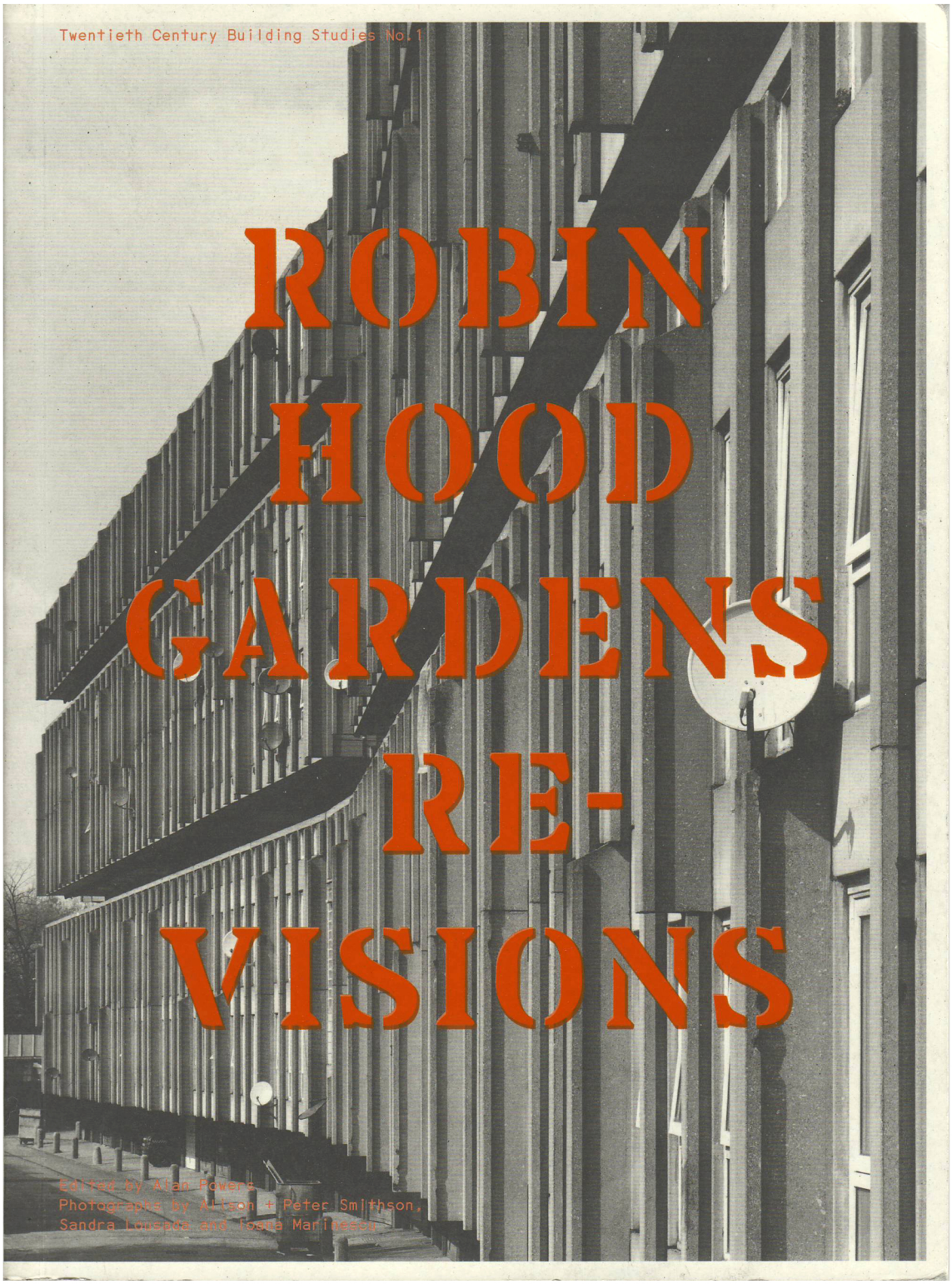








Robin Hood Gardens
Re-visions



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ble. Public housing presents particular difficulties, and relatively little of it is listed. Even so, there is a strong case for the inclusion of Robin Hood Gardens as one of the few works by architects of continuing international reputation, and one that embodies significant ideas absent from their other buildings.



side, although it presents further historical and current evidence supporting the case for listing. The overall impression was that English Heritage did not wish to engage with the theoretical explanations offered by the Smithsons in their writings. Robin Hood Gardens was judged against a set of standards represented



Court in March 2009 (an event mainly focussed on new building products and services), where the point was strongly made that demolition and replacement involved a considerable waste of energy and materials.



the lifts and stairs 'inviting one to linger and pass the time of day.'[3] These ideas were perhaps ill-adapted to English weather, but the underlying motive, that the form of social mass housing could achieve some of the positive aspects observed in traditional streets while riding above the increase of motor traffic, persisted. At Robin Hood Gardens, the tall spaces by the lifts, where one



of most kinds of public housing was mounting during the late 1960s, but a report by W. F. R. Stewart for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1970 found that 'on the whole, people preferred balcony access flats because they were more likely to meet other people that way.'[5] A report in *New Society* magazine in 1971 quoted an American survey finding



dimension entering our lives.'[7]

Responding to the need to create a park, the architects looked to the eighteenth century practice of contrasting simple building forms with an artificially modelled landscape, and made their own version. They also made analogies between Robin Hood Gardens, the Royal Crescent, Bath, and the Inns of Court as similar con-



Smithson in the USA. Long's 'A Line Made by Walking, England 1967' and Smithson's 'Spiral Jetty', 1970, are key works that relate to the form of the hill at Robin Hood Gardens, with its suggestion of a prehistoric mound in the centre of the city. The Robin Hood Gardens landscape was the precursor of several projects by



tion that, along with other concrete buildings, Robin Hood Gardens could be preserved as a digital model.

The passion architects felt for putting in its place.

We may not have changed the government's mind, but the campaign has helped ensure that build-



couldn't understand why the estate wasn't already protected, and were appalled by the then architecture minister Margaret Hodge's suggestion that, along with other concrete buildings, Robin Hood Gardens

views on 20th century architecture. It became clear there was a growing unease not simply with what we are pulling down, but what we are putting in its place.

We may not have changed the



and public expectation at a time of change and social advance. Whether it is considered good or bad is not really the question; what is important is what it represents and what one learns from it.

Like Victorian architecture, writing and building. They were very important in changing the direction of British architecture in the 50s and 60s, away from the generic modernism prevalent at that time towards a more tailored regional response.

Their designs for housing, and

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one learns from it.

Like Victorian architecture, which was laughed at for many years, it will come to be appreciated for what it is. The destruction of great architecture, from the Adam broth- more tailored regional response.

Their designs for housing, and the priorities they tried to bring to the task over and above the modernist obsession with production, were very influential. In their competition

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provoked a lot of discussion, because it is an extraordinary example of how architects' social idealism and aesthetic intentions mean nothing if the building is not properly managed. This could change, as will the public's perception of this period of example of Le Corbusier's visionary approach that this country has ever had. Along with James Stirling and Denys Lasdun, they were the best designers of their generation, and rank in stature with the UK's best artists such as Francis Bacon,

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be tripled.

The vast environmental and social impact of getting rid of these places is unthinkable, and building replacements is both expensive and environmentally damaging.

The disruption to communities into existing communities.

The survival of an urban society depends on inter-ethnic integration and a strong social mix. It takes decades to lay down the foundations of community, yet a costly, careless decision to wipe out estates will only accelerate the social unravelling and shortage of affordable homes.

Of course, tenants living in cities and was in Britain's dense terraced streets.

And third, established community links help integrate newcomers into existing communities.

The survival of an urban society depends on inter-ethnic integration and a strong social mix. It takes decades to lay down the foundations of community, yet a costly, careless decision to wipe out estates will only accelerate the social unravelling and shortage of affordable homes.

Of course, tenants living in housing will quickly realise that wiping out Robin Hood Gardens will not of itself produce homes for people who simply cannot compete in east London's bitter housing market.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Surveying Robin Hood's riches

As a member of the Twentieth Century Society, I deplore the statement on last week's front page by its spokesman, condemning architects bidding for the Robin Hood Gardens site.

He voiced disappointment that "competent" architects were involved, implying that incompetent architects might be relieved of such condemnation. Surely a replacement for this (non–designated) heritage asset needs skilled and imaginative, let alone competent, architects.

PPS5 requires local authorities to assess the significance of the heritage asset to be affected by development and, indeed, its significance to a particular community, such as the Twentieth Century Society, and to seek its views.

The merits of the new development must justify the loss of the heritage significance in a proportionate manner, regardless of the fact that it is not designated.

The PPS5 Practice Guide defines a heritage asset as one that "holds meaning for society over and above its functional utility", the significance of which "justifies a degree of protection". In my view Robin Hood Gardens at least achieves this status.



Part of London & Quadrant and Telford Homes' proposal for the site.

Though personally I have never liked the building, it cannot be doubted that the Smithsons attempted through it to revolutionise high-density living when tower blocks had clearly failed. It went a long way, but not far enough to deserve designated listed status. While the idea should be listed, the building needs fundamental transformation. Economics seems, not surprisingly, to be pointing towards full replacement.

Let's support the local authority to grasp the situation and excel in its proposals using high-calibre architects, and maybe also keeping a small sample of the existing buildings. Cabe is still there to help and should see the competition entries now to avoid potential delay and redundant or expensive extra work.

Richard Coleman
London SW1

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Designs to replace Robin Hood Gardens revealed

Shortlisted architects condemned as council prepares to announce winning scheme

Andrea Klettner & Elizabeth Hopkirk

The controversial plan to tear down the Robin Hood Gardens estate will move a step closer in the next few days when a winner for its replacement is named.

Proposals by Tower Hamlets Council to take the wrecking ball to the housing estate, designed by Alison and Peter Smithson, caused outrage among the profession, with more than 2,000 people, including Richard Rogers and Zaha Hadid, backing a BD campaign to have it listed.

This week Simon Smithson, architect son of Alison and Peter, again condemned the decision to knock the estate down. "If it's pulled down I think history will view it as a real act of vandalism," he said.

But the east London council is understood to be preparing to announce the winning team for the replacement scheme as early as next week. A council spokeswoman added that its recommendations would be made to Tower Hamlets' mayor early next month.

Just two bidders are now left in the race for the £500 million redevelopment, and today BD exclusively publishes the first images of their proposals.

The first team, fronted by Swan Housing & Countryside Properties, features Aedas as masterplanner with designs from Jestico & Whiles, Glenn Howells and Maccreanor Lavington.

The second team, led by London & Quadrant and Telford Homes, features designs by HTA and Squire & Partners.

Both involve tearing down the existing 214 flats and replacing them with around 1,700 new homes on an enlarged site known as Blackwall Reach. Work could begin late next year once detailed designs have been drawn up.

Simon Smithson added: "When you look at the density of these schemes, it's clear it's a real estate deal that's impossible to resist. Tower Hamlets has its eyes on a quick buck in tough times."

The fate of the flats was sealed in May 2009 when the then culture secretary Andy Burnham granted them immunity from listing for five years, allowing the council to proceed with its plans.

Jon Wright, senior caseworker at the Twentieth Century Society, condemned the architects bidding for the scheme. "It's very disappointing to see competent architectural firms looking at the replacement of a building like Robin Hood Gardens when there are so many practices thinking creatively about reuse," he said.

But this week the two practices defended their designs. A spokesman for the Aedas team said: "We think our proposals are good enough for regenerating the original vision the Smithsons had."

And Sally Lewis, head of urban design and masterplanning at HTA, said: "We have produced a public realm-led masterplan, where we designed the park simultaneously with the buildings. We really wanted to create something that felt like the rest of London."

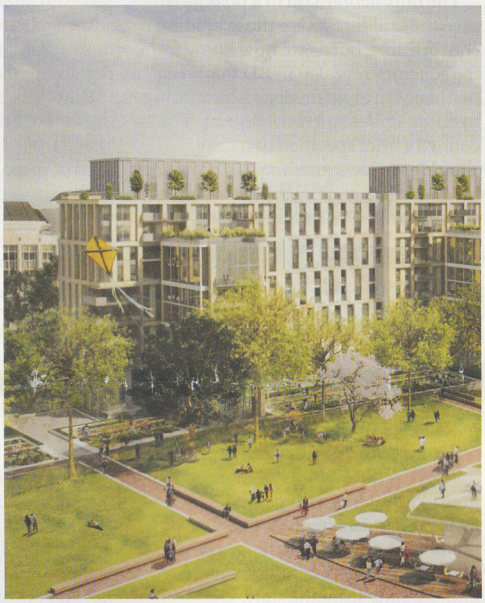
A shortlisted project by Stock Woolstencroft for Tower Hamlets Community Housing retained one of the two 1972 blocks, but it was rejected by the judges.

MORE PICTURES AT BDONLINE



SWAN HOUSING & COUNTRYSIDE PROPERTIES

This plan proposes 1,621 new dwellings, 35% of them affordable, built in phases with the tallest tower standing at 42 storeys. Swan hopes to start work in early 2012 and finish in 2022.



LONDON & QUADRANT AND TELFORD HOMES

This proposal will include 1,731 new homes with 10-storey buildings lining the park and the tallest towers standing at 41 storeys. Around 575 of the homes would be affordable.

A broader failure of vision



ELLIS WOODMAN

Neither of the projects in contention to replace Robin Hood Gardens looks likely to address the basic problems of the site

Despite the best efforts of BD, the Twentieth Century Society and many hundreds of supporters from around the world, the campaign to save Robin Hood Gardens was a failure. Alison and Peter Smithson's seminal housing scheme in east London is yet to be demolished but it has been cursed with an immunity from listing that extends for another three and a half years.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the local authority that built the project only to allow it to fall into dereliction, remains determined to see it levelled. The extraordinary speed of the council's programme for selecting a consortium to undertake the site's redevelopment has been forcefully dictated by that crucial three-and-a-half-year window.

The only people still in a position to save the buildings were those bidding consortiums, but as we now know from the schemes revealed in BD this week, neither of the two finalists is proposing to do so. It is easy to see why not. The council's brief specified that they should provide something in the region of 1,700 units — a figure that dwarfs the 214 units the estate currently offers.

The site being addressed is larger than Robin Hood Gardens alone but the proposed level of development still represents a very considerable densification. The towers stocked with what will no-doubt be billed as "luxury apartments" at the south end of both schemes are there to bankroll the rehousing of Robin Hood Gardens' residents to the north. The sad truth is that, given the quantity of market housing the consortiums were required to accommodate in order to balance their development equations, the reuse of the Smithsons' buildings was an impossibility from the start.

And yet, with the battle to save Robin Hood Gardens lost, some consolation will at least be offered if its replacement proves to be a scheme of architectural distinction in its own right. Of the projects in contention, the Swan Housing & Countryside Properties submission presents the more persuasive plan but sadly neither is particularly convincing. That is because the pressures that have always blighted Robin Hood Gardens remain very much in place. The undeniable deficiencies of the Smithsons' scheme are above all failures of urban connectivity — a product of the Robin Hood Gardens site being effectively a traffic island bordered by A-roads to north, east and west and by the docklands light railway to the south. Since no attempt has been made to address these fundamental problems, one can but wonder quite how its replacement can be any less of a ghetto.

What has been sorely lacking throughout this process is any clear vision from Tower Hamlets as to what kind of piece of city it is hoping to see built. The schemes have responded to a development framework drawn up by property consultancy GVA Grimley — a document that is packed with generic advice about active frontages and balcony provision but offers next to nothing about the urban character to which the designs might actually aspire.

What has been sorely lacking is any clear vision from Tower Hamlets as to what kind of piece of city it is hoping to see built

In its rush to do away with the Smithsons' project, Tower Hamlets has simply failed to undertake the propositional planning that this incredibly complex site demanded. The private sector can do much but as the long-suffering residents of Robin Hood Gardens look set to find out, it can't do everything.

Wigglesworth looks at Robin Hood rescue

The Twentieth Century Society has commissioned Sarah Wigglesworth Architects to explore ways of reusing Robin Hood Gardens in a last-ditch bid to save the buildings.

The society, which joined BD in campaigning to have the Smithsons' modernist landmark in east London listed, is convinced there is a financial and environmental case for keeping it, as well as an architectural one.

It has asked Wigglesworth to produce a scheme that could convince owner Tower Hamlets Council and the Homes & Communities Agency not to raze the entire estate.

However, the winner of a £500 million competition to find a high-density replacement is due to be announced next week.

Both shortlisted teams propose total demolition of the estate. The first, fronted by Swan Housing & Countryside Properties, features Aedas as masterplanner and designs by Jestico & Whiles and Glenn Howells. The second, led by London & Quadrant and Telford Homes, has designs by HTA and Squire & Partners.



Sarah Wigglesworth
Charged with producing a scheme to head off total demolition

A third scheme by Stock Woolstencroft for Tower Hamlets Community Housing retained one of the two 1972 blocks, but was rejected by the judges.

Once a winner has been chosen, the public will be consulted. Work could start late next year.

Wigglesworth's initial findings will be released in January to coincide with the launch of a book on Robin Hood Gardens published by the Twentieth Century Society.

Director of the society, Catherine Croft, said: "Knocking down RHG would be both a loss to architectural heritage and to the viable housing stock of London."

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 8

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Robin Hood remodelled

Sarah Wigglesworth Architects has devised a scheme that could save Robin Hood Gardens from the bulldozers by showing how it could be remodelled into modern family homes. The proposals include building extra flats on the roofs and over the car park as well as converting existing flats to suit larger families.

Better insulation and new windows would significantly improve the buildings' environmental performance.

The twin blocks in east London, designed by Alison and Peter Smithson and completed in 1972, face demolition. Tower Hamlets council is due to select within weeks one of two high-rise schemes which would obliterate the current flats and parkland.

Wigglesworth launched her pro-bono scheme this week alongside a new book, Robin Hood Gardens: Re-Visions, published by the Twentieth Century Society, which campaigned with BD to have the flats listed.

Speaking at the launch, BD editorial director Amanda Baillieu said the campaign had sparked an important debate on post-war architecture.





Robin Hood Gardens design panel axed

Design for London alarmed as advisers' concerns on rebuild are ignored

Andrea Klettner

Design for London (DfL) has slammed a decision by Tower Hamlets Council to disband the design steering group overseeing the £500 million redevelopment of Robin Hood Gardens in east London.

Eleanor Fawcett, head of design for the Lower Lea Valley at DfL, who sat on the panel, said the council now faced a "huge challenge" to make the project a success.

"I was surprised that the group had been disbanded now that the developer was procured, and alarmed that there is now no arrangement to support and critique the design process," she said.

Members of the panel believe the project does not justify the demolition of Robin Hood Gardens as the scheme is not radical enough in its changes to the area and the proposals do nothing to ensure the site is no longer "a cut off island".

A source close to the panel said: "A clear and convincing vision is yet to be found for the integration of the Robin Hood Gardens site with the wider area. The responsibility for that lies with the local authority — to make the context for the preferred developer."

The panel featured representatives from Cabe and the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation as well as DfL.

It had met numerous times to assess the quality of the proposals for the controversial development, which includes the demolition of the original estate, designed by Alison and Peter Smithson.

Following the decision to abolish the design steering group, the council wrote a report for its cabinet recommending the team led by Swan Housing and Countryside Properties and their architects Aedas, Glenn Howells and Jestico & Whiles to take the scheme forward. The report failed to mention any of the panel's concerns or recommendations.

Redevelopment of the wider area, known as Blackwall Reach, will now be taken forward in phases and a planning application for the project will be submitted later this year.

A spokeswoman for Tower Hamlets said: "The [design steering group] initially met to consider the project partners development framework proposals, then reconvened to consider the proposals submitted by potential development partners, providing valuable feedback contributing to the design and procurement processes."

WHAT THE COUNCIL IS PROMISING



Central park area of the Swan Housing and Countryside Properties' proposed development.

Mayor of Tower Hamlets Lutfur Rahman recently wrote to residents of Robin Hood Gardens outlining the "lasting improvements" the £500 million scheme will bring to the area.

Of the 1,600 new homes proposed, 690 will be for affordable rent or shared ownership, with 530 of these units earmarked for social rent.

Rahman said that priority would be given to "existing tenants and homeowners who want to remain in the area", and that the phased works would allow people to move into new homes "at the earliest opportunity".

Representatives of the preferred partner and council officers will now visit residents — all of whom are promised a home in the borough — to explain rehousing choices.

In addition to homes, the new development will provide community facilities, shops, parkland, a new school, safer streets, a new mosque and improved access to surrounding neighbourhoods.

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