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# RIBA Awards 2013



52 covers, 52 winners on the Stirling Prize longlist  
THIS COVER Jerwood Gallery, HAT Projects



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**W**hat is the relationship between buildings that gain a RIBA Award, and architectural output as a whole in any given year? If the question seems odd, or even pointless, it can be put another way. To what extent is good, or even outstanding, architecture influencing the quality of supposedly ordinary lives in supposedly ordinary places? And what might a small, ostensibly unremarkable development in Woodbridge, Suffolk, have to do with these questions?

The profession should certainly hold up its artefacts for judgement, and the hazards of praise, damnation, or irony; and design excellence must, by definition, be exceptional. But, in the case of British architecture in 2013, we might also wonder if *exceptional* means admirably rare, or in some way profoundly isolated.

That's not meant as a blunt provocation to architects who have managed to deliver award-winning buildings, or those who have striven to create high quality work, only to be derailed by circumstances beyond their control. It is perfectly right

that the profession should be proud that architecture as diverse as HAT Projects' Jerwood Gallery, Henley Halebrown Rorrison's Akerman Health Centre and Jonathan Hendry Architect's meticulously eccentric Beach Chalet should be garlanded with RIBA Awards.

Nobody would wish to think of these buildings as isolated, in any sense. And yet it's hard not to fend off Caspar David Friedrich-like images of them as symbolic icebergs of intelligent intent, adrift in the turbid, overheated oceans of global dumbing.

For the generation of British architects at the sharp end of the 21st century, this undercurrent of lumpen compromise and curtailment solidified in the noughties when, for example, procurement processes ensured that the design of new academies usually defaulted into vast, securitised oblongs with one or two zingy features and an atrium down the long axis.

The architecture of schools by designers such as Sarah Wigglesworth remain off-trend. While interviewing Colin Stansfield Smith in the downstairs café at the RIBA very

#### Previous page

The Chapel of Saint Albert the Great, Edinburgh, by Simpson & Brown Architects

**Opposite** Akerman Health Centre, by Henley Halebrown Rorrison

**Below** HAT Projects' Jerwood Gallery in Hastings

recently, it was salutary to be reminded that the architecture of a school should itself be educational in the way the design should express the school's relationship with its particular environment and uses. These relationships are, of course, subtle exercises in ethics and community.

In commercial architecture, pre-crash, the profligate use of supposedly artful block colours on facades has become the cladding equivalent of Neil Kinnock's fatal 1992 rallying call in Sheffield: 'We're alright!' There was also the Lottery-funded recourse to landmark-unique-iconic-stunning architectural schemes sold as miraculous socio-urban rebirths; too often, they are diversionary implants whose re-energising effects are based on the placatory allure of shopping environments.

The vision of iconic architecture as a unique fertilising agent still taints the work of intelligent and thoughtful architects. I notice, for example, that Tonkin Liu's Rainbow Gate public sculpture in Burnley has gained a Regional Award. Given their ability to design with originality – consider their superbly rigorous Camera Jewel House – it was jarring to encounter their subtitle for Rainbow Gate: 'After the rain comes the rainbow. Burnley is a destination once again.' This time, one hears something very like Margaret Thatcher's voice: 'In view of this new sculpture, I declare Burnley to be vibrant, and therefore a place that may occasionally be visited by strangers.'

Strangers will not be able to visit nearly a quarter of the 116 buildings that won RIBA National and Regional Awards this year, as they are private houses. There is nothing wrong with owning or commissioning a house of architectural merit. Who would not want to live in Adolf Loos's Villa Müller, or in one of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian homes or in Living Architecture's Dune House, >>



BOTH IMAGES THIS SPREAD: DANA MARINESCU





# Public

**P**ublic buildings once again have the biggest showing in this year's RIBA Awards, with 10 securing the coveted accolade and four achieving the EU honour. Among them is the sensitive restoration of Astley Castle by Witherford Watson Mann, which 'saves the essential and eliminates the incidental', as critic Joseph Rykwert observed. Arts venues come out well: HAT Project's self-assured Jerwood Gallery; Hackett Hall McKnight's soaring MAC with its honed basalt tower; Gareth Hoskins with PJP's elegant harbourside Mareel Arts Centre. Much of the work uses colour and materials to powerful effect: The Hive, by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, has golden metal shingle cladding which shimmers in the sun; while the streamlined yellow aluminium roof of the Enzo Ferrari Museum in Modena by Future Systems and Shiro+Studios is the architectural equivalent of a ride in a gleaming sports car. Surely some Stirling Prize contenders here? **Emily Booth**

## Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre, Antrim, Northern Ireland Heneghan Peng

**1** This BREEAM 'Excellent' scheme (AJ 04.10.12) can be understood as two folds in the landscape: one fold up to accommodate the building and a second fold down to form the car park. Between these two folds a ramp leads towards the causeway itself, which lies 1km away. The two geometries play against one another. The building appears to be born of its place: the irregular lines of basalt columns grow and recede into the landscape to form the building's edges, while the roof becomes a part of the landscape's contour.

CLIENT: NATIONAL TRUST  
CONTRACTOR: GILBERT-ASH  
CONTRACT VALUE: £18,500,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 1,800M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: NORTHERN IRELAND



### Awards key

☒ National ☑ EU  
☒ International



## Astley Castle, Warwickshire Witherford Watson Mann Architects

**2** The client's brief was to provide a contemporary house (AJ 05.07.12) within the ruins of a 12th century manor destroyed by fire in 1978. Putting the bedrooms and bathrooms on the ground floor and communal spaces above makes the experience of the house very special. The most impressive spaces are the ruins of the Tudor and Jacobean wings, where the reading of the remains is enhanced by the new interventions. The architects have developed carefully considered rules and a methodology for new construction against the existing structure.

CLIENT: THE LANDMARK TRUST  
CONTRACTOR: WILLIAM ANELAY  
CONTRACT VALUE: £1,350,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 285M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: WEST MIDLANDS



## Heartlands, Redruth, Cornwall Stride Treglown

**3** The 7.7-hectare Heartlands site is the gateway to the area's last working mine: Robinson's Shaft. Working closely with the numerous client bodies, the architect has painstakingly pieced together a site not only of well-restored and new buildings, but one with a strong narrative. In an area with some of the lowest levels of prosperity in England, this project is an optimistic catalyst for social change for the community and by the community – and one in which 'architecture' is rightly prepared to take a back seat.

CLIENT: BIG LOTTERY/HCA/CORNWALL COUNCIL/EUC MIDAS  
CONTRACTOR: MIDAS CONSTRUCTION  
CONTRACT VALUE: £35,000,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 2,211M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: SOUTH WEST



## Mareel, Lerwick, Shetland Isles Gareth Hoskins Architects with PJP Architects

**4** Resulting from a national competition, Mareel (AJ 18.04.13) is the UK's most northerly arts venue. Its design draws on the utilitarian forms of traditional industrial harbourside warehouses, but inside lies a warm interior, designed to welcome visitors. This high-quality and inclusive arts and cultural facility provides much-needed performance and recording spaces. This is an inspirational venue and, together with the new museum and council offices, with which it links, Mareel is a key catalyst to the regeneration of this waterfront edge of Shetland's capital.

CLIENT: SHETLAND ARTS  
CONTRACTOR: DITT CONSTRUCTION  
CONTRACT VALUE: £12,400,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 3,600M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: SCOTLAND





**The Mac, Belfast, Northern Ireland**  
**Hackett Hall McKnight**

**5** The complex brief for a multifunction arts centre with two theatres, three galleries, rehearsal spaces, studios, café and bar has been resolved to create a world-class public arts venue (AJ 10.05.12). The volumes are stacked; over seven storeys around a central top-lit foyer space, yet each is well conceived and beautifully lit in its own right. Smaller spaces are threaded around these large volumes in a seamless manner, again without compromise. It is a building where the process of discovery sets up a series of delightful surprises.

CLIENT: THE MAC  
CONTRACTOR: BOWEN / MASCOTT JOINT VENTURE  
CONTRACT VALUE: £13,335,159  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 6,260M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: NORTHERN IRELAND



**Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire**  
**Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios**

**6** The concept of using Roman remains as the foundations for the new shelter was a bold move, but one wholeheartedly supported by the National Trust, English Heritage and Cotswold District Council's conservation officers, as it avoided the need for new footings on sensitive ground. The shelter is designed so that 'archaeology remains the star of the show'. The resulting architecture is refreshingly restrained and understated, refusing to impose itself on the site. Rather, it will weather gracefully as a part of the landscape and its unearthed riches of mosaics.

CLIENT: NATIONAL TRUST  
CONTRACTOR: CS WILLIAMS CONSTRUCTION  
CONTRACT VALUE: £2,227,200  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 460M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: SOUTH WEST

**Jerwood Gallery, Hastings, East Sussex**  
**HAT Projects**

**7** The Jerwood (AJ 26.04.12) is small but it has the unmistakable gravitas of a public building. The building's carefully modulated scale does not overpower the surroundings. Like the nearby iconic fishing net sheds, the Jerwood is black. However, instead of tarred timber this is due to its green-black terracotta tiles, whose glaze the architect describes as 'oily'. The collection galleries are treated as rooms in a house. There is a temporary exhibition gallery with a contemporary feel, and a café, counter-intuitively located upstairs, with views over the town and the beach.

CLIENT: JERWOOD GALLERY  
CONTRACTOR: CONISTON  
CONTRACT VALUE: £3,500,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 1,250M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: SOUTH/SOUTH EAST



**Stowe Landscape Gardens Visitor Centre, Buckingham**  
**Cowper Griffith Architects**

**8** The Grade II\*-listed New Inn, the gateway to Stowe Landscape Gardens, is approached and the courtyard entered with little sign of new hands at work. The oak frame repair and replacement work reaches a powerful conclusion with the diagonal grid frame to the chapel-like glazed restaurant space. All original fabric was retained where structurally stable and repaired with the honesty expected of a specialist conservationist. Thus the original welcoming character is revived but conservation is balanced against the need to create visitor access to all of the buildings.

CLIENT: NATIONAL TRUST  
CONTRACTOR: ISG  
CONTRACT VALUE: £6,000,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 1,463M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: SOUTH



**Ironmonger Row Baths, London EC1**  
**Tim Ronalds Architects**

**9** The original public bathhouse was built in 1931 and a swimming pool was added in 1938. In this complex refurbishment project the architect has created a new basement by reconfiguring load-bearing walls, allowing the spaces to feel lighter, more transparent and welcoming. The new internal finishes use terrazzo combined with iroko joinery, which offers a durable civic quality in the spirit of the original buildings. Yet the feel is modern and the baths have all new services and fittings to current standards, maximising sustainability and accessibility.

CLIENT: LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON  
CONTRACTOR: WATES CONSTRUCTION  
CONTRACT VALUE: £14,300,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 4,610M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: LONDON EAST

**The Hive, Worcester**  
**Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios**

**10** The Hive houses a joint university and public library, the county archive, a local history centre and a multi-agency customer service centre. With its golden metal shingle cladding, the building shines like a beacon, and has an articulated roof form inspired by the distant Malvern Hills and iconic Royal Worcester kilns. The interior is conceived as a town square, with all the facilities in plain sight. The seven cross-laminated timber roof cones define the interior and bring in daylight.

■ SUSTAINABILITY AWARD  
CLIENT: UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER AND WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CONTRACTOR: GALLIFORD TRY CONSTRUCTION  
CONTRACT VALUE: £60,000,000  
GROSS INTERNAL AREA: 12,371M<sup>2</sup>  
REGION: WEST MIDLANDS