

## A year of triumphs, slumps and debate

It was a year when battle lines were drawn over aviation, architects were the unsung heroes of the Olympics, and the AJ campaigned to raise the status of women in practice. *Richard Waite* looks back on a year in architecture



MAKE ARCHITECTS

### RIBA REPORT REVEALS SHOCKING COST OF BIDDING ON OFFICIAL JOURNAL TENDERS (AJ 24.05.12)

*Angela Brady, RIBA president*  
 The story of the year has to be the RIBA's procurement campaign [which showed that public procurement was costing UK architectural practices £40 million a year], and the launch of 'Ladders of Opportunity' in May 2012. This was a huge piece of work carried out by our team of 57 people across the industry, spearheaded by Walter Menteth and a dedicated team of professionals all



working for better, fairer and more inclusive procurement. This remains my number one presidential priority for 2013.'

*Nick Johnson, ex-Urban Splash*



'Public procurement is a perennial bugbear for me and in these straightened economic times it's not getting any easier or any cheaper. May's headlines that public procurement is costing the industry £40 million a year probably understates the true picture - £40 million poured down the plughole when it should be used to plug the gap.

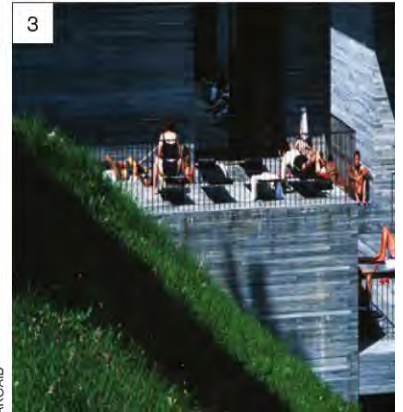
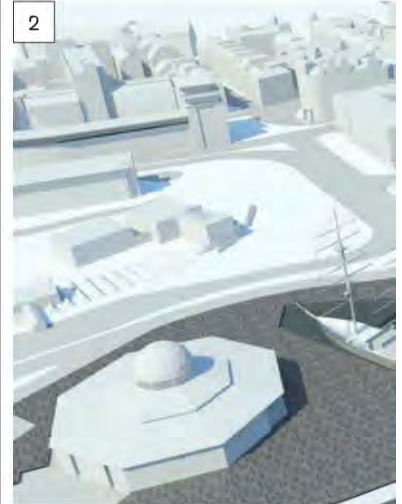
2013 needs to be the year when the industry unites to call time on this abhorrent practice of wilful waste. I blame lawyers, I blame our dogged adherence to Euro-rules, I blame Microsoft Word for giving us cut-and-paste, I blame the ignorance of those who know how to work the system but know not how to judge the consequence of their actions.'

### MAKE REVEALS STANSTED AIRPORT MEGA-HUB PROPOSAL (AJ 19.10.12)

*Ken Shuttleworth, Make*



'Getting the question of airport capacity (1) resolved should be



ARCAD

a primary driver of the current administration if it is serious about retaining the UK's position in the global economy. The more debate there is around this issue during Howard Davies' study, the better.'

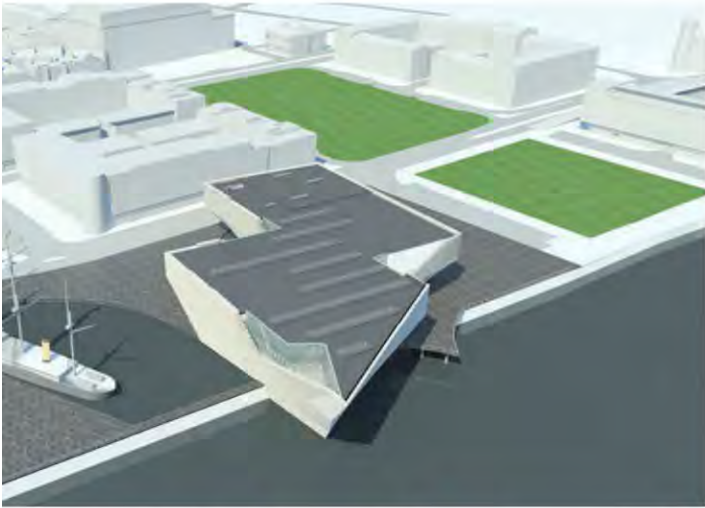
### DRY LAND BECKONS FOR KENGO KUMA'S V&A WATERFRONT OUTPOST IN DUNDEE (AJ 15.10.212)

*Ben Addy, Moxon Architects*



'The scale of the expenditure [on procurement] is eye-watering and, while speculation is an intrinsic [and welcome] part of architectural practice, one





wishes that design was at centre stage in such speculation and that it was always reliably judged. The Dundee V&A (2) is a perfect case in point – such a project would have made an incredible two-stage design competition and, with the winning scheme being subject to such fundamental changes after the event, it vividly proves the lie to the idea that the pre-qualification system somehow ensures a better outcome. It is only when design itself is rigorously and reliably interrogated that you can be most sure to get the outcome everyone wants (which is good design).’

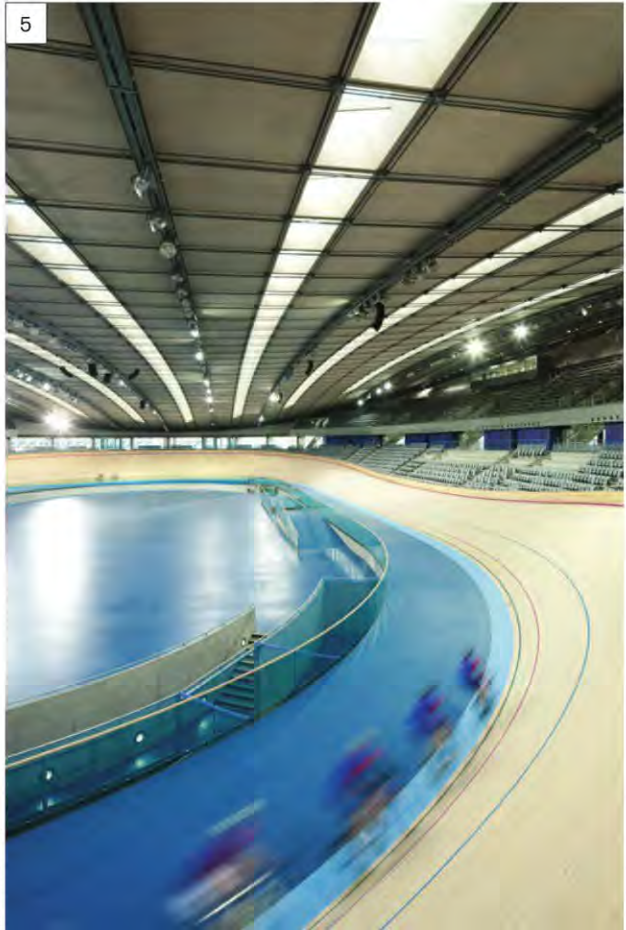
**PETER ZUMTHOR WINS 2013 ROYAL GOLD MEDAL**  
*Cindy Walters, co-founder of Walters & Cohen and joint winner of the AJ's inaugural Woman Architect of the Year Award*



‘Peter Zumthor (3) winning the RIBA Gold Medal, at last; the thoughtfulness and excellence of his work is inspiring, consistent and timeless.’

**SHOCK SURVEY RESULTS AS THE AJ LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO RAISE WOMEN ARCHITECTS' STATUS**

*Erin Davidson, partner, Feilden + Mawson*



RICHARD DAVIES



‘The biggest story came at the beginning of the year: the very welcome news that the AJ had launched a campaign to raise the status of women architects (4). I was shocked to see the inaugural survey of 700 women in architecture found that 47 per cent said they get paid less than men for the same work and 11 per cent experienced sexual discrimination at least once a week. In the early stages of my career I experienced many of the barriers and discriminations highlighted in the article. Thankfully my firm takes an enlightened stance.

When I was younger I would probably have turned the other cheek or walked away from an issue to avoid confrontation. Now I will push back if I feel that someone is discriminating against me... and I've found that by doing so, discrimination is much less of an issue in my day-to-day work. It is wrong that we should have to fight to be respected, simply because we are women.’

*Dieter Gockmann, director, EPR Architects*



‘In a year in which we welcomed the world to the Olympic and >>





HUFTON + CROW


Paralympic Games, showcasing the best of British architecture and celebrating diversity on a global scale, it is a shame we do not seem to be able to do the same as a profession. We should all be doing more to enhance, support and celebrate the diversity of architects we work with regardless of age, sex, sexuality or ethnicity and we should be championing a new generation of architects that truly reflects the societies we live in.'

**OLYMPICS BOOST CLIENT ENQUIRIES DESPITE GAG ORDER (AJ 02.08.12)**  
*Murray Levinson, partner,*

*Squire and Partners*

 'The London 2012 Olympics (5) was the main event of 2012, a staggering spectacle of British architectural talent showcased to the world. Peter Murray and Angela Brady's drive to ensure the architects received full recognition for their contribution to the success of the games was a big story for the profession.'


**STANTON WILLIAMS WINS 2012 STIRLING PRIZE WITH SAINSBURY LABORATORY (AJ 13.10.12)**  
*Hugh Broughton, director,*  
*Hugh Broughton Architects*

 'The awarding of the Stirling Prize to Stanton Williams for the Sainsbury Laboratory (6) was recognition of the real value of carefully considered, well-built architecture. This is an exciting turn away from the disturbing world of one-hit wonder architecture, which appeared to celebrate the skills of the CAD technician over the artistic ability of the architect and which had characterised the over-indulgence of the Noughties.'

**SCHOSA CHAIRMAN ALEX WRIGHT SEEKS BLUEPRINT TO**

**TRANSFORM UK ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION (AJ 05.05.12)**

*Harriet Harriss, senior lecturer in architecture,*  
*Oxford Brookes University*

 'Despite the introduction of £9,000 fees to University students and the decline in architecture applications this year, overall student numbers are continuing to increase, yet state funding continues to decline. Right now, other subjects clearly hold more appeal. We need to get to the bottom of why this is the case. For starters, under-resourcing schools continues to





threaten the integrity, focus and even the opportunities offered by an architecture degree, despite the fact that its content, quality and rigour far exceeds that of the majority of undergraduate degrees and for this reason has potentially far more and multifarious commercial applications. If we want to attract talent into the discipline, we need a more tenacious professional business model for the profession of architecture. This starts with a critical examination in both schools and practice about the reach and ambition of architectural expertise. Instead of arguing over the fault lines in professional boundaries with the advancing army of subcontractors, we should be focusing upon new territories and how we might re-engineer or apply our expertise to impact on other industries and agendas. It is this that will make architecture a valuable and attractive proposition for the next generation.'

**MAYOR FERGUSON TALKS TO THE AJ: 'THIS IS THE BIGGEST JOB ANY ARCHITECT CAN HAVE' (AJ 16.11.12)**  
*Dominic J Eaton, Stride Treglown*



'George Ferguson (7) really cares about Bristol and will make significant improvements to the city. He is a great communicator and is passionate about the built environment and, as a result, his architectural skills will be used to good effect in his new role. He will be a fantastic ambassador for the profession by demonstrating how these skills, which include creative and pragmatic thinking combined with a clear determination and vision, can be used to achieve his goals

**CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT SHRANK BY A WHOPPING 5.2 PER CENT IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR (AJ 26.07.12)**

*Hank Dittmar, chief executive, The Prince's Foundation*



'The continuing recession in the industry drives all else: planning reform, the declining role of architects in the construction process, and the appalling problem of housing supply and quality. We must adjust to a world of refurbishment and renewal and find a way to build ordinary buildings well.'



*Piers Taylor of Invisible Studio*



'Most architects are waiting for the construction sector to recover, rather than accepting that their role in it needs a radical overhaul and they need to reinvent the marginal service they provide.'

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING STARTS SLUMP BY 65% (AJ 12.06.12)**

*Roger Stephenson, Roger Stephenson Architects*



'It continues to be scandalous, the difference between what the government says it wants to do and what it actually has any intention of doing. In all my professional life I have never known such a low level of activity in the provision of housing.'

**OSCAR NIEMEYER: 1907-2012 (AJ 06.12.12)**

*Murray Fraser, professor of architecture and global culture and vice-dean of research for the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment*



'The biggest story of the year has to be the death of Oscar Niemeyer, (8) aged 104 years. He was a living

legend and if anything can symbolise the final passing of the era of classic Modernism, it has to be the passing of someone who practised so passionately right until the end. He was a genuine zealot. Is there anyone like him in architecture today?'

**CHIEF CLAIMS CABE 'HEALTHY' DESPITE MAJID'S SHOCK DEPARTURE (AJ 13.12.12)**

*Martyn Evans, Cathedral Group*



'Whatever happened there is just another nail in the coffin of an organisation that was once a vibrant and well-resourced support structure for good and thoughtful design – now cut off at the knees and seemingly in its death throes. We need more central government support for great urban design in this economic climate, not less. Who is championing space standards in volume housing; green infrastructure; cross-borough masterplanning; great public space design; inspiring school design and a million other crucial building design issues? Architects, that's who – on their own. The lack of government interest and support is shameful.' ■