

EMAIL

SAME NOSTALGIA DIFFERENT PERIOD

The problem with Douglas Murphy's argument in his essay 'Don't Look Back in Anger' (AJ 16.01.15) is that it is steeped in a nostalgia no less gooey than that which afflicts Prince Charles – same sentiment, just different historical periods.

This results in extraordinarily arbitrary judgements whereby the Terrys' scheme for the Hyde Park Barracks is 'Stalinist' while morally decent housing looks like Alexandra Road Estate. I suspect the majority of the public would consider this a positively hilarious reversal of their respective attributes.

Simon Gill

CONCERNS OVER PATEL TAYLOR HOMES

It is always good to see quality design work for older people, but while Patel Taylor's courtyard housing is a fine design, there are some aspects that raise questions.

Firstly the cost, which you give as £2,350 per m², is about 30 per cent higher than most current low-rise housing. I roughly calculate a cost for construction of about £205,000 – an extraordinary figure for a two-bed affordable home. Visually the results are excellent, but the amount of brick in each house must be very high, and the figures for embodied energy will be correspondingly disappointing.

I'm also interested by the claim the designs were derived from a study of English alms-houses. Many of the characteristics are indeed present, but what is missing, to judge by your pictures, is the vital sense of community. This scheme seems instead to be essentially defensive, with each house separate and inward-looking behind its courtyard wall.

Richard Morton, director, RM Architects

AJ ONLINE

ONEROUS POQ FOR MILFORD BEACH HUTS

This is typical of the increasingly risk-averse approach of the public sector. New Forest District Council is, in effect, marginalising the vast majority of architectural practices and favouring those with huge PI cover.

As a practice of 14, we have recently been precluded from bidding for a new £5 million civic HQ for Halifax Council as a result of its financial criteria, despite the fact that we carry £10 million PI cover and have delivered schemes of up to £31 million.

I would like to know that the RIBA is proactively addressing this matter as a priority.

Simon Dunstan

The council doesn't seem to understand that the figure covered is for each and every claim – how can there ever be single claim against the architectural design component for £5 million on a beach hut?

Severe lack of common sense in procurement policies, which is no doubt leading to higher costs for them than necessary.

Chris Medland

PAOLOZZI MURALS

Hawkins and TfL should be ashamed if they destroy these panels, which can be relocated within the station or preserved elsewhere. Crossrail is bland and has little sense of place as it is without destroying such fine and much-loved artwork.

Thomas Mackillop

The murals would be great in some swanky restaurant but have always been a bit too dark and intimidating on the tube. You can't beat bright lights and magnolia paint when you are forced to go underground. And who on earth has the time to look at them when clambering on and off the escalator?

Seymour Alexander

LINKEDIN

TAXPAYER HAS RIGHT TO FEEL ROBBED OVER DUNDEE V&A

I don't think the ballooning costs of Kengo Kuma's Dundee V&A create public distrust, they just reinforce the previously held views developed over 80 years of architects in the UK designing self-serving garbage that ruins our historic cities while talking in a fawning language of nonsense about the exploits of others they admire for being a bit more new in their interpretation of the current architectural fashion.

Right now it's seen as awfully clever to get your Part 2 student to draw something on the computer that can't reasonably be built, and then give it to your technicians to try and make it stand up, as if by magic, while you swan around convincing your client that the king's new clothes are actually beautiful, the gimmick is going to be worth the big joke, and not to worry about the cost.

Of course the client buys it, because their intent and ego are wrapped up in the initial conceit, and they can't back down, even when it goes pear shaped and it turns out that your corbelled concrete 'honesty' has to be held together by a very complex and very dishonest steel frame, in the way that a concrete specialist engineer could have told you if you had been in the mood to listen to anyone.

This is all OK if it is actually the client's own money. In this case it isn't, and I for one am not in on the joke. I think that the taxpayer has the right to feel robbed by a construct of arrogant foolishness

Gordon Gibb, Gibb Architects, expert witness, adjudicator

FOLLOW ME KARL SHARRO



Name Karl Sharro

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Bio Architect, joker, blogger and extremely bad cartoonist.

Joined Twitter March 2009

Tweets 62.4k

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Typical Tweet Those little gems for pop futurism are always the most exciting architecture to see in any country. Almost entirely divorced from all else.

Picture tweets In this house by Peter Eisenman there's a crack in the middle of the bedroom, separating his and her beds.



Frank Gehry responded to the figurative impulse by replicating animals or objects, hilariously. Ages ago.



Peter Eisenman again, this column doesn't reach the floor and stops mid-air.

