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Volume builders

ARU's latest building for its Paju Book City development in South Korea **P.10**

Cabe at 10

The design watchdog celebrates its first decade **P.6**

BUILDING DESIGN ARCHITECTS' FAVOURITE WEEKLY

RIBA raises alarm over designing out terrorism

Security chief voices dismay at institute's criticism of Home Office guidance

Ruth Bloomfield

Architects could see major schemes thrown out at the 11th hour on the say-so of undertrained counterterrorism advisers, the RIBA has warned.

In its official response to new Home Office guidance on designing out terrorism, the institute has raised serious questions over the role of counterterrorism security advisers (CTSAs) — police experts who will be consulted on the security ramifications of applications as they are submitted.

The Safer Places report was launched by Home Office security minister Alan West in April and aims to ensure counterterrorism design measures are included in new buildings to help protect crowded places from attack.

But the RIBA's stance, which has emerged on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks, has infuriated the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), whose chief accused it of "completely overblowing" the situation.

In its submission, the RIBA complained that police input at the planning stage was too late and demanded the government clarify exactly how much "leverage" the advisers will have.

"We shall stick our heels in over what we consider the most important targets"
Chris Phillips

"There has been more than one case of planning permission being turned down after counterterrorism issues were raised by CTSAs," the RIBA stated. "Our concern is there is not enough consistent training of CTSAs... nor is there consistent training of local planning officers."

The RIBA also complained that the document places "disproportionate emphasis" on the risk of car bombs and should also advise architects on how to mitigate biological and nuclear threats.

But detective chief inspector Chris Phillips, who heads NaCTSO, expressed exasperation at the RIBA's response.

Phillips said architects were free to call upon a CTSA for advice at any stage, and pointed out architects and students could also attend NaCTSO-run courses to learn about counterterrorism design requirements.

"We have now prioritised potential targets across the UK," he said. "We shall stick our heels in over what we consider the most important targets, but that is unlikely to happen very often."

NaCTSO did object when a national supermarket chain proposed new stores with underground car parks deep enough to fit a double decker bus.

"You drive a bus filled with explosive material under a building and you can take it down," said Phillips. The store later agreed to lower the height of the car park.

A Home Office spokeswoman said it would publish a response to the comments later this year.

... as Ground Zero grows

Eight years after the September 11 attacks, the redevelopment of the Ground Zero site has moved forward with the handing over of the last parcel of land to developer Silverstein Properties.

Up until now landowner the Port Authority of New York had been paying $300,000 a day in late delivery penalties to Silverstein, which owns the lease on the land.

Construction has already begun on tower four, by Fumihiko Maki, but work has stalled on tower two by Foster's and tower three by Rogers Stirk Harbour.

Silverstein stands to forfeit its lease if they are not finished by 2014, but reports suggest that the delays in site preparation and funding issues could yet delay completion by decades.

PHOTO: JOE WOOLHEAD, COURTESY OF SILVERSTEIN PROPERTIES

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Crossrail design disappoints Cabe

Design panel says Atkins' Farringdon building is 'pedestrian'

Ruth Bloomfield

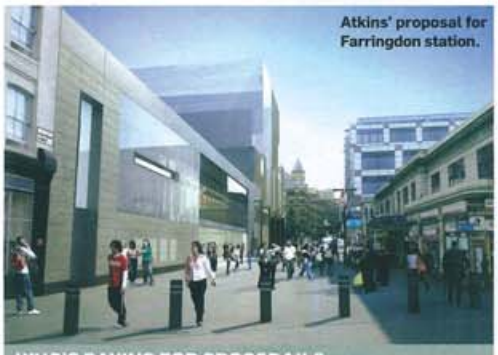
The first scheme to be vetted by Cabe's dedicated Crossrail design review panel has been condemned as disappointing and pedestrian.

Atkins' glass and stone ticket hall entrance building for Farringdon station in central London will serve passengers using both Thameslink and Crossrail services. This week it secured planning from Islington Council.

But following a review, Les Sparks, who chairs the newly created Cabe panel, claimed the scheme, in Cowcross Street, fell short of the exceptional quality required for the £15.9 billion transport project.

Crossrail is set to link Heathrow and Maidenhead, to the west of the capital, with Abbey Wood and Shenfield, to the east, from 2017.

"We are rather disappointed," Sparks said. "The point we have made is that it replaces a listed building and is opposite a very attractive underground station.



Atkins' proposal for Farringdon station.

WHO'S PAYING FOR CROSSRAIL?

The £15.9 billion cost of Crossrail will be met by a complex web of borrowing, grants, contributions and levies.

This week, mayor Boris Johnson announced a £1 billion loan from the European Investment Bank to put towards the "unstoppable" project, brushing aside persistent concerns about funding such a vast capital project in a recession.

In total, Transport for London and the GLA have pledged £7.7 billion towards Crossrail, around half of which (£3.5 billion) will be raised via a supplement on business rates from next year.

Meanwhile the government has pledged £5.6 billion, including contributions from the City of London and BAA, with Network Rail stumping up £2.3 billion. Further contributions will come from the Canary Wharf Group and Berkeley Homes.

"We feel that Cowcross Street is a very special place and we want very good architecture. It is not terrible, it is not a disaster, but pedestrian is a good word to describe it. We are very ambitious about the architecture for Crossrail."

Ahead of the planning meeting on Tuesday, Design for London also criticised the "nondescript" plan, which will replace a terrace of two-storey grade II-listed buildings opposite the existing station.

It said it would prefer the buildings' facade to be retained, and the new building "inserted sensitively" behind it.

Atkins' double-height entrance building, for Network Rail, needs to be built separately to the main Farringdon Crossrail station — being designed by Aedas — to cater for separate expansions to the Thameslink line. When Crossrail opens it will act as an extra station entrance for the service.

Atkins' design and access statement promises the scheme will "set a new benchmark in rail infrastructure".

Network Rail spokesman Graham Goodwin said: "There has been extensive consultation with the local authority about the need for the building and the chosen solution. A lot of work has gone into the proposal and we stand by it."

Earlier this year Crossrail chairman Terry Morgan sparked controversy when he claimed that ensuring the line left a design legacy in terms of top-quality architecture might push costs up too high to be realistic.

His remarks outraged leading architects who had worked on London's Jubilee Line Extension.

Holl to be hands-on after Glasgow win

Leading American architect Steven Holl will take a hands-on role in his firm's winning designs for a new £50 million building for the Glasgow School of Art.

New York-based Steven Holl Architects this week beat competition from Elder & Cannon, Hopkins, Benson & Forsyth, John McAslan & Partners with Nord, Spanish firm Francisco Mangado Architects and Irish architect Grafton to land the scheme, which will sit opposite the world-famous Mackintosh building.

The firm will carry out work on its first British project, with local practice JM Architects acting as executive architect.

Contest organiser Malcolm Reading said the judges had been impressed by how much time Holl was prepared to commit to the project. The lead architect on the scheme will be Chris McVoy but Reading said: "The project can expect to see a lot of [Holl]."

The news came as a blow to Nord partner Alan Pert, who admitted he may now be forced to cut jobs at his 18-strong practice.

"The reality is that there is not a lot of work and every job counts these days," he said. "This scheme has longevity and for us it would have been a real honour to get it."

Holl's winning scheme for the Glasgow School of Art building.

Meanwhile, Glasgow architect Alan Dunlop said the job should have gone to a local firm. He told the Glasgow Herald: "This has got nothing to do with parochialism. It's about a major cultural institution that should be promoting Scottish talent."

The judging was held in Glasgow last week with the panel chaired by David Mackay of Barcelona-based MBM, following visits to buildings by the shortlisted architects.

Follett may reverse Coventry listing

Architecture minister Barbara Follett is to review English Heritage's decision to list Coventry's 1950s market building amid claims the listing threatens US firm Jerde Partnership's £1 billion city centre masterplan.

The circular 1957 building, designed by the city architecture department, was grade II listed in June on the advice of EH, which highlighted its "remarkable" interior and rooftop car park.

But following protests led by Coventry MPs Geoffrey Robinson and Jim Cunningham, Follett said she would look again at the listing.

The city council is keen to proceed with redevelopment. It claims the majority of the 3,000 residents who visited an exhibition on the plans were broadly in favour of the biggest regeneration planned for the city in 50 years.

Jerde's 20-year plan for Coventry includes a striking egg-shaped public building, 200,000sq m of retail space, new parks and residential and office blocks on a 66ha site.

Coventry market, built in 1957.

PHOTO: COVENTRY TELEGR

But Jon Wright, Coventry caseworker for the Twentieth Century Society, accused the council of being "complicit" in the incremental destruction of the city's original post-war masterplan.

He said: "Architecture from the fifties is still struggling to be understood. Coventry is utterly unique. There's no reason to think if cities like Coventry had been left as set pieces of post-war architecture, art and design they wouldn't, in 70 years' time, have come to be viewed on a par with Bath."

King's Cross schemes are a gas

Feix & Merlin's helter-skelter slide (below) and Hakes Associates' giant reflective events space (right) are among five designs shortlisted for the £2.5 million refurbishment of a grade II listed gasholder in London's King's Cross.

The shortlist also includes Bell Phillips & Kimble, Gustafson Porter and Loop Architecture, and was chosen by the King's Cross Central Development Partnership from more than 80 submissions in an open competition to find a new role for the 25m-high Victorian gasholder.

The competition brief called for a design that would transform the gasholder into a community amenity and a landmark that celebrated the heritage of the structure and the natural environment surrounding the nearby Regent's Canal.

The five firms were chosen by a jury consisting of representatives from King's Cross Central masterplanners Allies & Morrison, Porphyrios Associates, Townshend Landscape Architects and the King's Cross Development Partnership. The designers will now develop proposals further before presenting them to the judging panel, before the announcement of a winner at the end of next month.

The overall 27ha King's Cross development features 10ha of public space and 740,00sq m of mixed use development, including the new Central Saint Martins College of Art campus by Stanton Williams.

FOR MORE IMAGES
of all five shortlisted schemes, go to www.bdonline.co.uk

Fat studio for BBC Wales

Fat is working on plans for a major new BBC facility in Wales. The proposed 19,000sq m building, at the Roath Basin site in Cardiff Bay, will be used as a drama production village for the corporation, which is under pressure to move more of its work out of London.

Hospital drama Casualty, as well as Dr Who and Torchwood, could all be filmed there, along with Welsh language programmes.

There is also a possibility the BBC could move its main Welsh headquarters, currently in Llandaff, Cardiff, to the site.

In total the Roath Basin scheme — which already has outline planning permission — will create more than 90,000sq m of commercial space and more than 1,000 homes. There will also be leisure and community facilities on the brownfield site, which is being developed by Igloo Regeneration.

As part of the project, two dry docks will be flooded to help give the site more than 1.6 miles of uninterrupted waterfront.

The site's masterplanner is DEGW, and local firm Holder Mathias Architects is also working on the BBC scheme.