

# the Forty- Second Lecture

*Westfield Park*



My solution, described in Lecture Forty, to the **50-year-old problem** of what I now call the **'Constant City'** (the City that is always the same, whatever its size), depended on some of JOA's prior Architectural inventions. Yet it seemed that it was the **radical nature** of those inventions, when **finally unveiled** on the **very continent** that **had originally provoked their creation**, back in the Winnipeg of 1954, which had led to their rejection by the Architectural Professors of Rice - and my ineluctible **decision to script these Lectures**.

**And the most hated of these was the oldest - older, even than the 'tabooed' Architecture.**

**It was the large-scale graphical decoration that I call Iconic Engineering.**

Yet if any design for the **Constant City** is to be realised it must be clear, from that Fortieth Lecture, that the way to transform a row of rent-paying city-blocks into a **wide river** is through a **medium capable of the extended and powerfully metaphorical narration** that only **ornament and decoration** can provide. My only hope of success was through such a level of **iconic richness**, not to say **profusion**, that its prospect so terrified the pusillanimous Architectural Professors of Rice University that they laid a **futile taboo** upon JOA's demonstration of the **mere beginnings** of such an Architecture. They **banned their Freshmen** from being distracted from their ignorance by having as much fun as their Engineer peers (I have always found it easier to find a literate Engineer than a numerate Humanist).

It took JOA twenty years, since its foundation in 1974, to **perfect the systems built at Rice**. It took twenty years from receiving my initial impetus over Winnipeg's Riviere Rouge to founding JOA. I was trying, for the **whole of these forty years**, to **invent a cleverer lifespace** than the one I saw being born in the North America of the 1950's. The rise and fall of post-WWII Neo-Modernism, of High-Tech, of Post-Modernism, of Deconstruction (still going strong as I script), of Bio-Tech (Green Architecture) and of Neo-Neo Modernism makes it **virtually impossible to find projects that illustrate a successful Urbanity**. All are **sub-urban** in the literal sense of **failing to rise to an Urbane level**. It is difficult to illustrate the 'iconic engineering' necessary to an urbane lifespace without abandoning 'modernity' and **retreating into 'History'**. But **this has never been an option for JOA**.

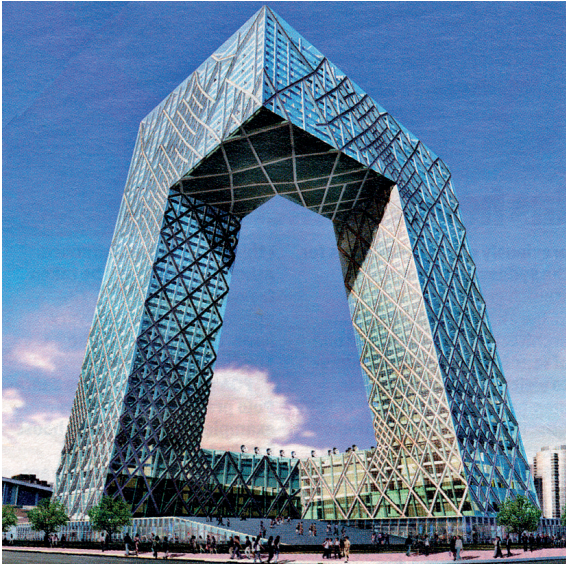
My point is succinctly made by illustrating the September 2011 cover of Scientific American that, for the first time in its history, admits that the **future of our species is 'Urban'**. The 'Special Issue' is filled with **essays quite innocent of anything one might call 'architectural culture'**. But then the fault for that must be laid squarely on the Architectural savants of the 20C to **invent any plausible 'general theory'**. Jejeune essays on the intellectual fertility of slums and the excellence of turning trash into electric light alternate with pleas for 'retrofitting' and 'smart' bicycles that report air quality. The finale is a **pean of praise for "difference"** from the pen of **cyberpunk (Neuromancer) author William Gibson** who is so completely 'media-muddled' as to describe Europe as "Disneyfied".

*But the cover says it all to anyone literate enough to read it. The foreground (which would have been unmown hay in '70's High-Tech), is at least the Ocean. This might have been urbanistically encouraging if the 'high-rises' did not look out on its asphyxiating oblivion rather than inwards to an iconically-fertile Urbane Plaza.*



*The iconically puerile cover of the issue of Scientific American that confirmed that neither Anglo-America nor 'Science' had even the remotest 'concrete' vision of the 'all-urban' future that they reluctantly 'recognised'. Fifty years earlier it would have been the remotely-controlled love-nest autos tooling out along mega-highways to the Ranch-house 'burbs. A hundred years earlier it would have been Dan Dare rocket ships whizzing around sky-cities. What is this collapsed vision of 'bent' boxes and empty water?*

One wonders why the 'C' and the 'S' are not similarly contorted into their alphabetical referent. Surely the *Illustrator* is not so ignorant of the work of Koolhaas, and others of similar enthusiasms, to imagine an Architect could not be found to execute such an alluring project?



If Koolhaas can build this for China, why not a big '\$' for Scientific American? At least the elevators could be vertical. They could run up and down the vertical 'bar' of the '\$'.

Quite 'buildable'. Anything can be built today. Which begs the question why? The higher rooms in this 'Death Star' would be fried by the sun and roasted by the internal temperature gradient. But who cares when one is sitting on a lake of Kuwait's oil.

The 'buildings' themselves are executed in 'stick and panel' curtain walling. this accurately reproduces the fate of the Architectural Profession in the USA after its savants failed to complete the Structurlist project for an universal Architectural technique which was the intellectual project of the 1950's. Until the advent of 'shape-shifting' computation and the fashion for the bizarre forms that these powerful techniques make possible, an American Architect of skyscrapers spent more time worrying about the width of his 'reglets' that anything else. A reglet is the groove (always recessed) between two adjacent panels on a building's outer skin or 'curtain wall'.

A small dirigible (first popularised in the drawings of the 1980's Neoclassical luminary Leon Krier) promotes 'Greener', A construction crane advertises 'smarter' and a Skysign says 'Better'. Such a catalogue of urbanistic cretinism would be hard to find. Why would an intelligent reader expect to find anything luminous inside?

It is on a par with the greatest project now running, (2011), in my own city, London. It is not so much for its size or value as for the fact that it will represent to the whole globe what London, and in fact England and Britain, have to contribute to the general culture of human livespace-design.



The 'Olympics were awarded to London in 2006. This illustration of the projected 'build' was published a year later. The towers of Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs rise mistily above the 'flag' for the 'Stadium'. The design can be seen as a 'park' containing sporting venues. London appears a 'green' city of houses rather than high-rise apartments.



## The design of the 'Olympic Park' was familiar to those who followed its history.

The scheme to the left had been published on 23.01.04, two and half years before the 2012 Olympics were given to London. The site was the swampy bed of the River Lea. This can easily be discerned from the belt of blackness (signifying industrial use) that falls from the top of Abercrombie's 1944 County of London Masterplan, illustrated lower left. It joins the Thames river just downstream of its largest meander - that seems to hang downwards, like a sac between the City of London (a black oval) and the West End (a red oval). This down-hanging sac when viewed in the 2004 illustration (to the left), appears, because we are looking down the Lea Valley from the North, to be on the far (Southern) side of the 1980's towers of Canary Wharf. These now constitute London's 'Docklands'. The towers were built after Containerisation ended the utility of the 19C buildings, beautifully illustrated by Gustave Doré in Lecture 32, page 9.

This, then, on the left, was what won the Olympics for London.

All the forms are sinuous, even the buildings in the right foreground, that later became the boxy broadcasting centre, sport 'green roofs' and are holed like a golf-course. But the most striking features are the enormous paths, indicative of the press of huge but amiably meandering crowds, that 'skain' like some elastically-stretched pizza-topping, across the brilliant blue of the picturesquely-named Waterworks River, Three Mills River and Bow Back River - all steel-piled ditch canalisations of, as the London Streetmap pe-dantically calls it, the "River Lee or Lea".

This design was already familiar to those who followed its history. The above was published on 23.01.2004 under a headline advertising that the cost in fees of the Olympic bid, two and a half years before it was won by London, was already £20,000 a week.

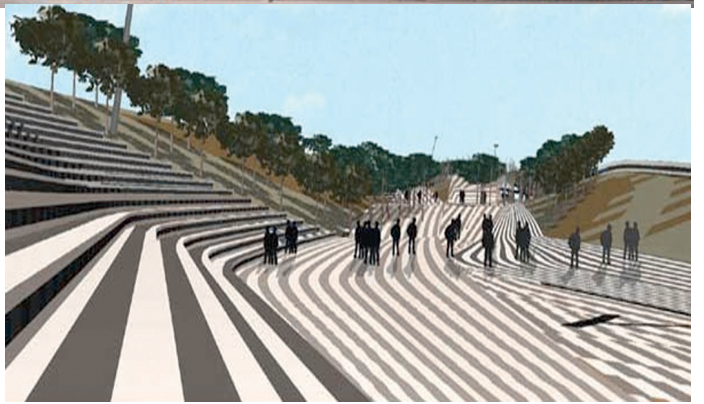


Patrick Abercrombie's 1944 plan for the LCC, as it was then, shows the swampy tract of the Lea River Valley as a major industrial area (coded dark grey to black) which feeds down from the top of the page into the centre of the London Docks. Locate where it joins the Thames by finding the 'hanging sac' of the Isle of Dogs that lies between the Lea and the black oval of Financial 'Square Mile' of the 'City of London' itself.

In Rocque's 1746 map the River Lea joins the Thames downstream of the Isle of Dogs.



*The Muse of London's Olympics has an androgyne bulk and hairstyle at odds with the fructifying curvaceousness of the future she (or is it he?) denotes. How different to the nubiles of the 1951 Festival! The buildings clone each other by the simple laws of the fashionable 'chaos theory'.*



*A close-viewing of the branching and splitting 'pathways' in the view above reveals that the overall site design (by 'Foreign Office Architects' (FOA) imposes an equally 'Mandelbrotian' cloning into their immense surfaces. Their striped finish imitates a running track. The Spectators imitate the role of the Competitors. Can one change tracks? All is semantic confusion.*



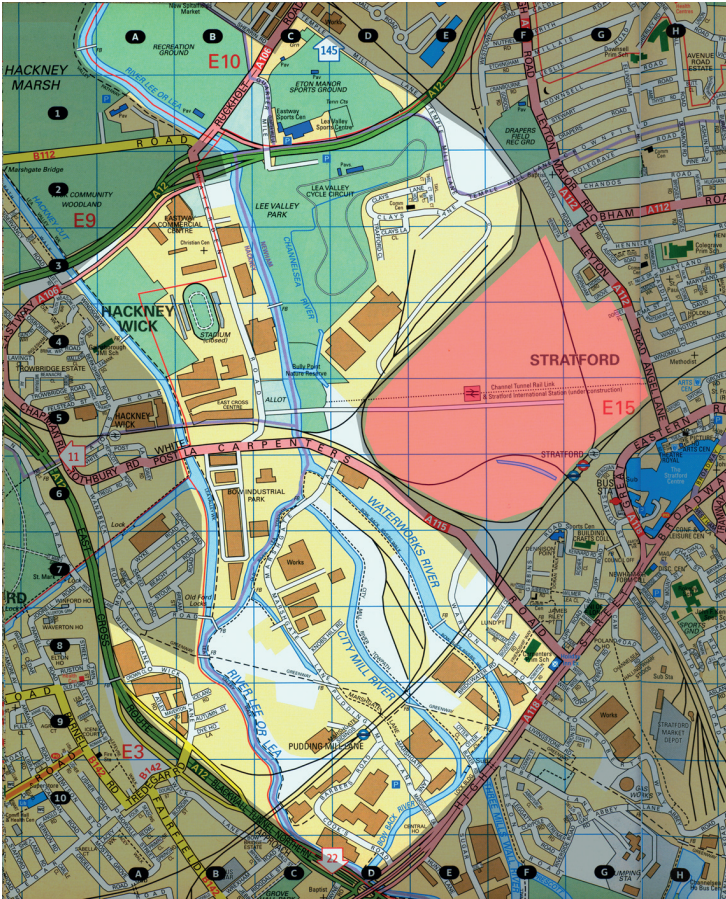
*It has become technically possible to build almost anything that can be 'drawn' (that is to say computed). Architects feel more free to propose forms that defy the current laws of economic construction. Note the running-track stripes on the lusciously curvy FOA-designed bridge leading to the delicately veined 'petals' of the stadium.*



*At last, inside the Stadium we escape the Alice-in-Wonderland world of an Architectural iconology so impoverished by 'Functionalism' that it must put pedestrians onto autoroutes. These tracks harbour only Athletes. Escaping this unaccustomed conventionality, the designer makes every spectator an ethnic-minority Briton. A soft and friendly 'blimp' floats in the still, warm, air.*



*Underlying the stadium-design is an extension of the idea that non-linear, or even stochastically-computed, forms can be built. These model (buildings?), exhibited at the AA School were 'coagulated' by rapid-prototyping machines.*



The Harper-Collins London Street-map atlas of 2006 shows the Olympic Park site to be the last remains (the brown buildings are factories) of what has ALWAYS been Britain's biggest concentration of manufacturing - London's East End. The pink area was rail marshalling yards. It was already cleared to build the Stratford Station of Eurostar.



The red to-and-fro arrows of the Stratford International (Eurostar) Station lie half-way up the right hand side of the Park. The densely-packed courtyard-blocks of the Athlete's Village lie just above it to the North. The rest of the Park shows a scattering of athletics venues. All are connected by the oversized pedestrian path system that, with its ramps up and down to the narrow, sheet-piled, water-ways, has the same form, and even scale, as an urban motorway. The 'Garden of Ballistics' remains the iconic model!



An aerial of the site shows, in pink, the rail marshalling area all cleared, and ready for construction of the commercial surroundings to Stratford Eurostar. The factories remain. A last testament to the 1947 project, reported in Lecture Three: 'The End of Urbanity' to rid British cities of 'workers'.



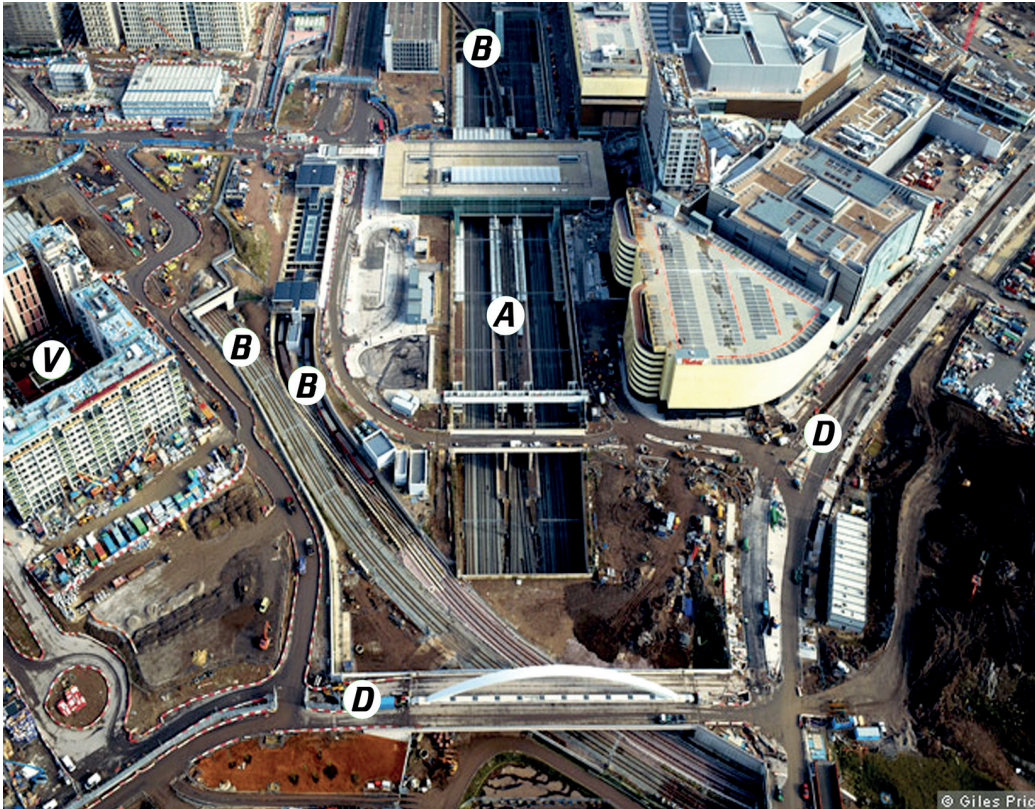
The slow penetration of Reality (it took around four years) shed the 'motorway paths' of their multiple 'running-track' stripes. Lenticular banks of sand emerged, as if from the 'drying out' of the tsunami of Spectators. But the stadia had not yet met their 'quadrating' Nemesis. They still looked forward to a 'indeterminately', amoebic infantility.

**The first thing to go from the pedestrian 'skein', as the 'Noughties' passed-by, were the running-track stripes.**

Then, while retaining its 'pedestrian motorway' width, the river of asphalt developed, like a drying stream, islands of sand. Finally these became, as below, so 'greened' that they were no longer visible from the digital designer's stratosphere. The Olympic Venues, no longer attached to their giant asphalt 'vine' seemed, like the Cheshire Cat, to vanish into the leafy English landscape. Meanwhile the Olympic Village expanded. While never losing its admirably urbane courtyard-block form, it became lower and sported, as below, the fashionable 'green roof'.



The more time hurried by, the less the design resembled its Olympic-getting original. Yet the picture still looked plausibly 'green'. But then moss will grow on anything in Britain's damp, sea-stained, air. More 'housing' appeared.



As building progressed shock upon shock of the technical and economic realities of construction chipped away at the foundations of the Olympic-winning design.

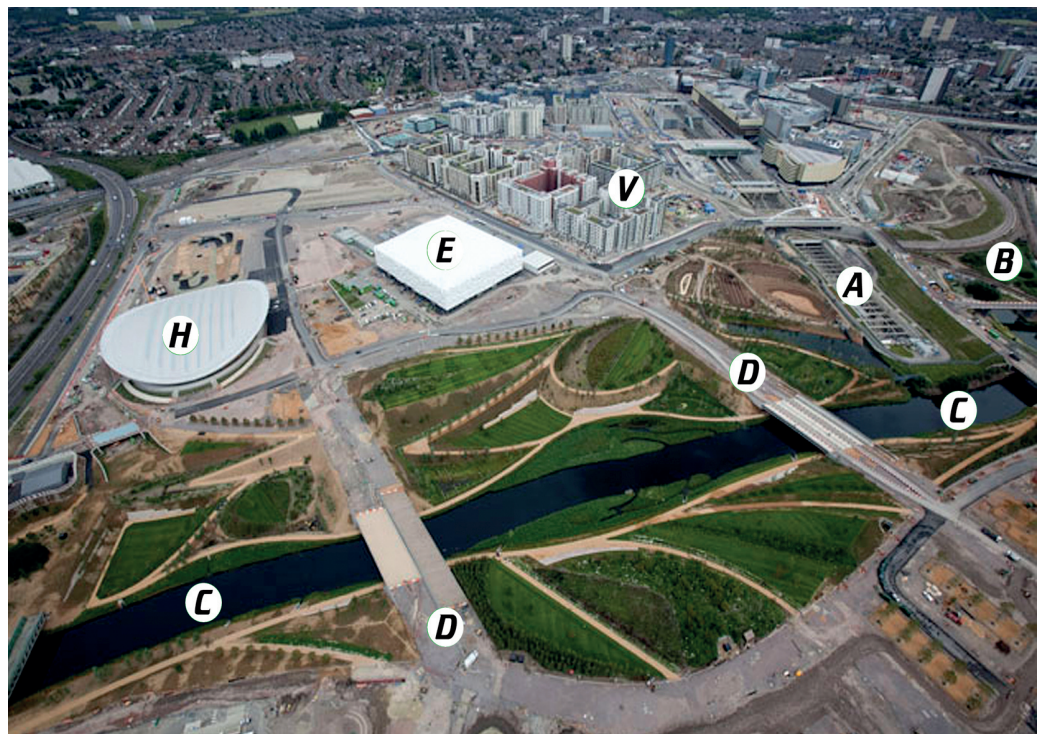
These were truths which any novice-builder knows. But they do not cloud the clever heads of those living in the digital dreamworlds promoted by the Architectural Academies. The bridges over the River Lee (or Lea) turned-out as slab-sided as the arrow straight high-speed Eurostar whose open-topped 'tunnel' 'A' can be seen to burrow (on the right) under the waters of the Lee River 'C'.

ALL THE BUILDINGS ON THE 2.5 SQ KM OLYMPIC SITE WERE DEMOLISHED. Only the canals and two levels of railways remained. The Eurostar 'A', ran under the suburban rails and those of the Metro 'B'. The 'Olympic Park' then buried these under a deck of roads 'D' before heaping the multi-storey 'Village' 'V' on top of these. The Canals ran above 'A' and below 'B'. This meant four levels of transport, two rail, one water and one road. Infrastructure costs were huge. This was not a greenfield site for bungalows.

ALL THE BUILDINGS ON THE HUGE 2.5 SQ.KM SITE WERE DEMOLISHED. ITS EARTH WAS INCINERATED TO RID IT OF JAPANESE KNOTWEED.

IT'S ALL NEW!  
BUT WHERE IS THE PARK?

The 2007 Lehman Bros/ Derivatives Crash struck down any hope that the Olympic Development could be funded by real estate sales - especially of the housing that had supported the property boom of the Blair years. Land for 'development' began to be sold to balance the books. The only land left free to become the promised 'Park' were the steeply-sloping and canalised banks of the Lee River



The permanently elegant oval roof of Michael Hopkins' Olympic Cycle-Velodrome 'H' is to the left of the demountable fabric box of Wilkinson Eyre's Basketball Arena 'E'. Behind them, to the right, is what Edwin Heathcote, the Correspondent of the Financial Times, called the "Guangzhou-style" Olympic Village 'V'. Having lost the elastic stickyness of the original 'pizza-topping' bridges 'D', the only field left on which to practice the stochastically aimless shapes of non-linear 'Green Geometry' is the unprotestingly vegetative swaths of the Canal 'C' and the eponymous Olympic Park itself.

Bridges are most rational, both structurally and economically, when they are straight. This one also serves to carry the large tubes of service-ducts under its roadway to clear the high-level power cables of the electric railway. The foundations of such a bridge must be built on an existing ground-level that has firmed through age. Then the soft new earth can be heaped-up by bulldozing to provide ramps to its elevated level. If anything heavy rests on such soft new earth it will sink into it. None of this information comes out of a chairbound Archi-Nerd's computer's 'parametric' doodling as it draws pizza-topping shapes. It seems to have been quite a shock to the original Site-Planners. A case of 'Modelling-Through' that came 'unstuck'!



**THE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGES WAS LOST.**

*THEY COULD NOT BE 'NATURALLY' CURVED-WORMY.*

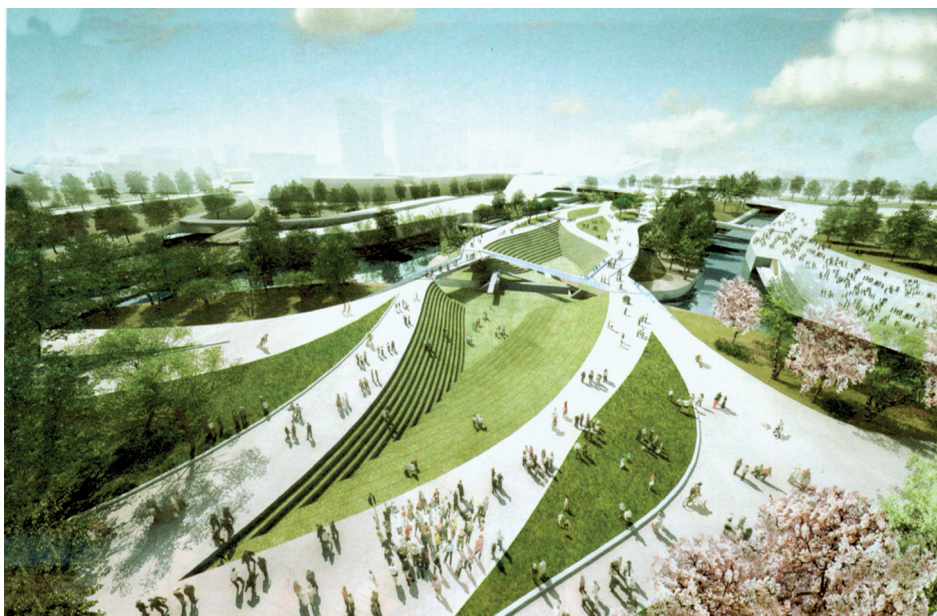
**The 'Park' also was vanishing under financial pressure.**

The distance between the water and the new 'Ground Level' of the 'Olympic (City) Park' had to be increased to allow it to sail over all the levels of transportation. But this meant that no one could use the increasingly steep banks on each side of the River.

The site of the Olympic Park is a valley. Its vertical dimensions have been exaggerated by the need to bury the high-tension electrical cables that once strode across its marshy ground. There is also the additional height needed to build-over the electric railways. These, as elsewhere on the North banks of the Thames, provide their power from overhead cables. Only trains running out of London to the South use the third rail system.

The Architectural consultancy of Heneghan Peng won the competition to cut and carve these useless banks into a very fair approximation of the stochastic, non-linear, pizza-topping, post-tsunami powerflow geometry originally proposed for the whole Olympic Park by the disbanded-by-2009 FOA partnership of Alexandro Zaera-Polo and Farshid Mousavi.

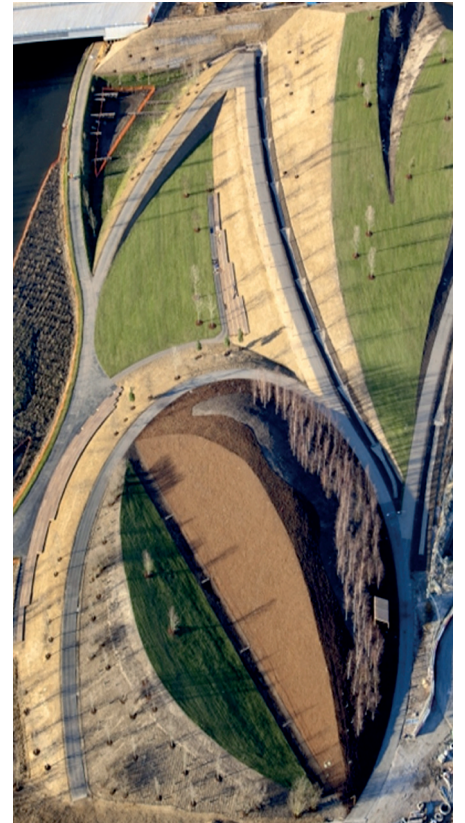
The wandering devotees of Sport, especially those unable to obtain the curiously hard-to-buy tickets to the Events, would still be able to experience the most up-to-date landscape gardening on a Lifespace newly understood to be subject to giant forces of an indeterminate kind devoted to inscrutable ends. For this was to be the lesson of the Blairite years...lie down and let the MARKET wash over you!



Back in 1962, working in the LCC/GLC on Huntingdon's 'overspill housing' (Lecture 4: Great Escape), I discovered that earthmoving was cheap. I used it for the purpose, albeit misguided, of separating walkers from automobiles. What is this, the winning design, by Heneghan Peng, for the Olympic 'Park'? Useless, Ugly and 'Hard to Maintain'...What can it be but 'muck-shifting Fine Art'?



*If torn between the Olympic Arena and the rustic delights of the Olympic Park, the undecided punter can rely on a big Telly to check what's going on.*



*An aerial photograph, above, taken with the low evening sun, clearly shows the counter-formal, contra-functional delights of the Olympic landscaping. It is entirely useless for playing games, kite flying or simply ambling aimlessly over fallen leaves and under big old trees. It will cost a fortune to 'garden' with the wonderful variety of plants that its designers clearly wish to plant its steeply-sloping shapes.*

**If the Notion that Le Jardin Anglais could be Magicked into a 21C City was not a deliberate fraud played upon the Olympic Committee then perhaps its abject failure could be blamed upon the Economic Crisis brought-on by the equally fantastical extension of limitless banking credit to the poorest 'consumers'.**

**But what, then, was left of the Olympic Committee's real interest - the main reason why any City is awarded an 'Olympics'.**

**What of City-Planning Culture itself?**



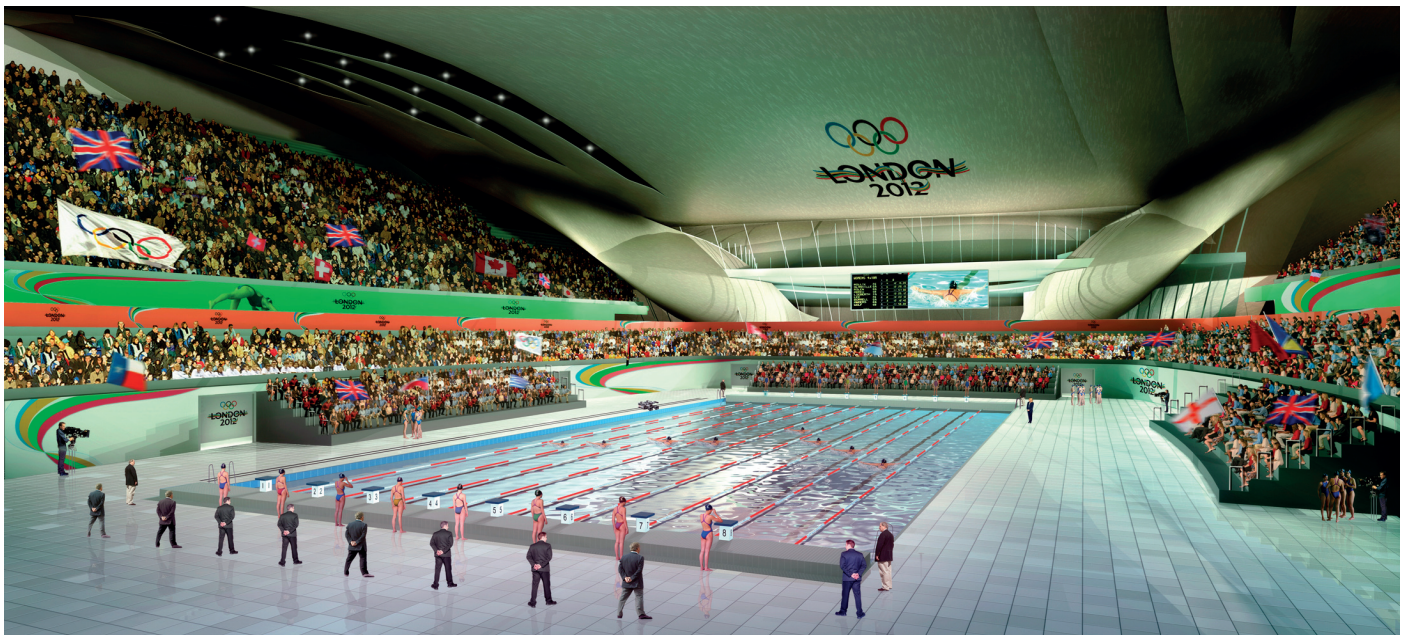
*The 'Olympic Park' is a left-over, a piece of flotsam and jetsam from the wreck of a design, that of FOA, which surfed that very British, very Alice-in-Wonderland, wave of paradox. How clever to win an Olympic contract, that everyone knows is designed to advance a capital city's urbanity, by proposing a Park! At the same time, how deeply pusillanimous, how profoundly cowardly, and how transparently incompetent! This view, illustrating the 'Legacy' condition shows the unredeemed, urbanistically illiterate shambles that is Britain's contribution to 21C culture, advancing from every side. The Red Tower of the Orbit says it all: a pointless shambles topped by a temple to stomachs.*



An illustration of the 'space' between the Zaha Hadid Aquatic Centre (Left) and the Stadium (Right), presumably re-built for football, its only viably economic support. Everything is shown in 'Legacy' Mode. All pretence of an 'Olympic Park' has been abandoned. The 'banks' of the Canals are steepened into vertical walls of sheet piling. All that remains of 'Park' are rows of tiny 'bonsai' trees shipped in by the Developers. The buildings are the usual rent-boxes.

## From Olympic Park to Pulp City.

Where are the Lea River water-voles and Otters now? Boris Johnson's 'Olympic Scribble' tower lifts its 'eatery' to view an evening of damp pavements and mist that has, nevertheless brought out the thousands to view one of the giant tellyscreens. The only building of taste and distinction is Zaha Hadid's. Everything else, from the digital drive of the Mittal-Kapoor Red Tower to the pink underwear of the stadium, is subliterate pulp.



The original interior view of the Aquatic Centre illustrates the sole 'performance'. The 'stars' are slim girls. Their trainers, garbed in boxy grey uniforms stand behind each slender athlete in the aggressive posture of bodyguard-minders. One cannot help thinking of Trilby and Svengali. The 'act', as everyone knows, is to dive into the tank and thrash up and down as fast as one can. To this end the ODA has bought, for £M245 of public money, a building variously called a 'splash' a 'wave' or a 'whale'. Its dramatic and beautiful exterior is seen on the left of the nocturnal view at the top of the page. A curiosity of the building is that most of the 15,000 Olympics 'paying guests' sit in temporary 'sheds', made from scaffolding poles, outside the powerfully modulated space of the Hadid AquaDrome itself.

The only Olympic Venue to fully live up to the non-linear, 'Bio-Tech', Lycra-stretch styling of the original Park'-Design is Zaha Hadid's Aqua-drome.

When won in competition its wavy roof sported two crests. These soon shrank by one in order to achieve the £M75 budget. At that point, in the second illustration (next page), a heptastyle portico appeared, whose latticed towers looked like structural 'props'. These then morphed, in the third and final picture, to show extra seating being added to the venue to lift its seat count to 15,000 for the Olympics. These 'panniers' would then be demolished to leave the Aquatic centre in 'legacy mode' with 2,500 seats.

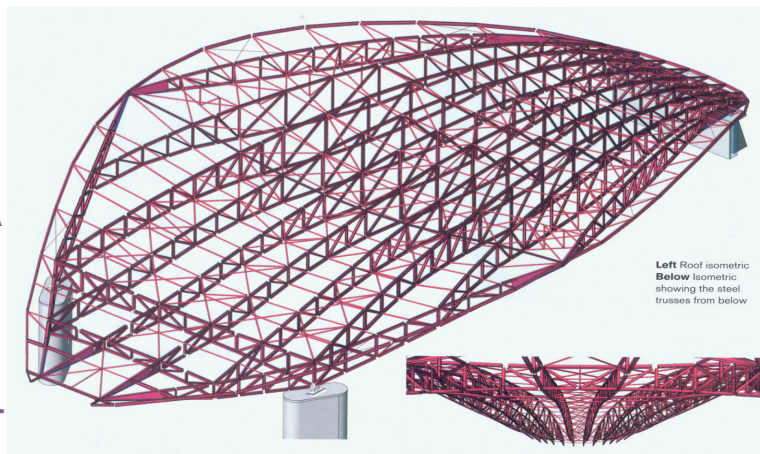
The effect is curious, like a dolphin with water-wings. The ODA is vociferous in their defence, arguing that the whole point of the Olympics is its virtue as 'legacy'. This is like saying to the guests to one's house: "I have had to make my house stupidly ugly in order to entertain you. But it will be really nice when you are gone!" The British could be arrogant in the 19C, when we had more battleships than all the navies of the globe combined. In the 21C we are just another middle-size state. We have to earn our respect if we wish to influence affairs.

This strange history of Zaha's 'water-wings' perfectly illustrates the reason why even the ordinary journals for my Profession, serving its median culture and predisposed to support its efforts, slowly fell out of love with the Olympic Legacy as it appeared above the ground.

Not that they could propose any better!



The roof is Bio-Tech but the swimming pools are the usual oblong tanks. No one pretends that this is a temporary structure or that the 'landscaping' is anything more than a wide ditch with rusty steel walls (here obscured by reeds) to canalise floodwater. Is this massive basement on a canalside towpath the Olympic Park?



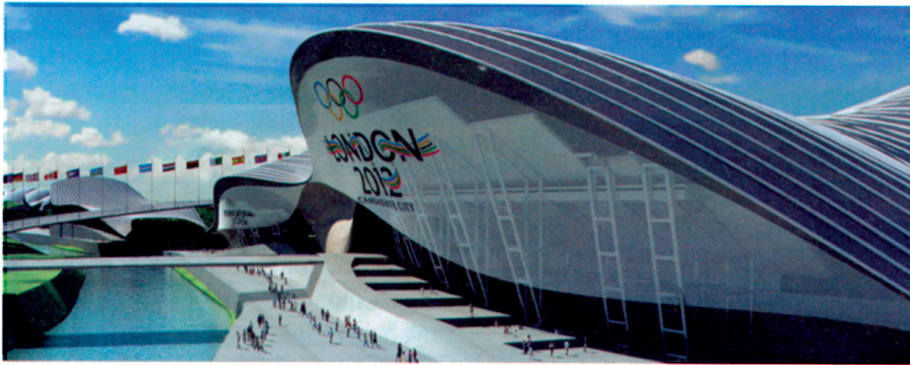
Left Roof isometric showing the steel trusses from below

Engineers, with their computer-cut steel whalebone, to the left, have become the 'corsetiers' of Bio-Tech. The Mittal-Kapoor Red Tower sports the same Red Corsetry while saving the cost of the Burkean "round and shiny" cladding-skin.



The roof 'waves' down towards the pool to reduce the volume of air that one must heat for the comfort of the swimmers. This cut off the view of the diving from the rear of the 15,000 temporary (Olympic) seats. Spectator sports destroy all internal 'Architecture', leaving a huge void 'filled' by the triviality of 'Sport'.

## Aquatic Centre: swan dive or belly flop?



**DIVING IN:** Hadid's competition-winning entry in 2005 was a graceful double wave design.



**TREADING WATER:** After budget cuts, the 2006 redesign saw the undulations flatten.



**STILL AFLOAT:** The latest design adds temporary armbands to accommodate 17,500 spectators.

The Olympic Delivery Authority has denied that Zaha Hadid's Aquatic Centre has been compromised by legacy concerns, despite the addition of two massive seating stands for use during the 2012 games.

The centre was originally conceived as a 20,000-seat venue. But in the planning application, made public this week, that figure had dropped to just 2,500, with 15,000 extra

spectators accommodated by temporary stands flanking the longer elevations of the centre.

Senior Olympic officials said the success of the site's buildings post-games was more important than how they looked during the two-month event, adding that the facades of the seating wings could serve as hoardings or billboards.

An ODA spokesman said: "We first discussed using

temporary seating in November 2006. There have been no fundamental changes to the permanent legacy building and we don't think the seating wings compromise the design."

Legacy masterplanner Graham Morrison also backed the final design, calling it an "icon" of the 2012 event which the architect is "still proud of".

Zaha Hadid Architects refused to comment.

*The terminally decayed state of the iconic culture of 21C city Planning registered some slight synaptic discharge when offered a swimming pool in the shape of a wave (or originally two waves). But it was not to be. The price went up from £M75 to £M240. The ODA website announced, triumphantly, in 2011, that the Aquadrome had been "delivered on time and on budget". Its Burkean 'baby's bum shininess' would have ensured a visual appeal were it not for the inexplicable prosthetics. THE 'WAVE' HIT THE BALING-BUCKET*

## MANY PROJECTS OF QUALITY EXHIBIT A 'DIFFICULT' BIRTH.

*Such histories are of no consequence in themselves and experienced protagonists, on all sides of the table, come to expect it. What counts, as everyone knows, is the final result.*

*So here, at least for the Olympics, a major event in any state's history, even one as arrogant as Britain, it is important that the result is not the absolute shambles represented so far.*

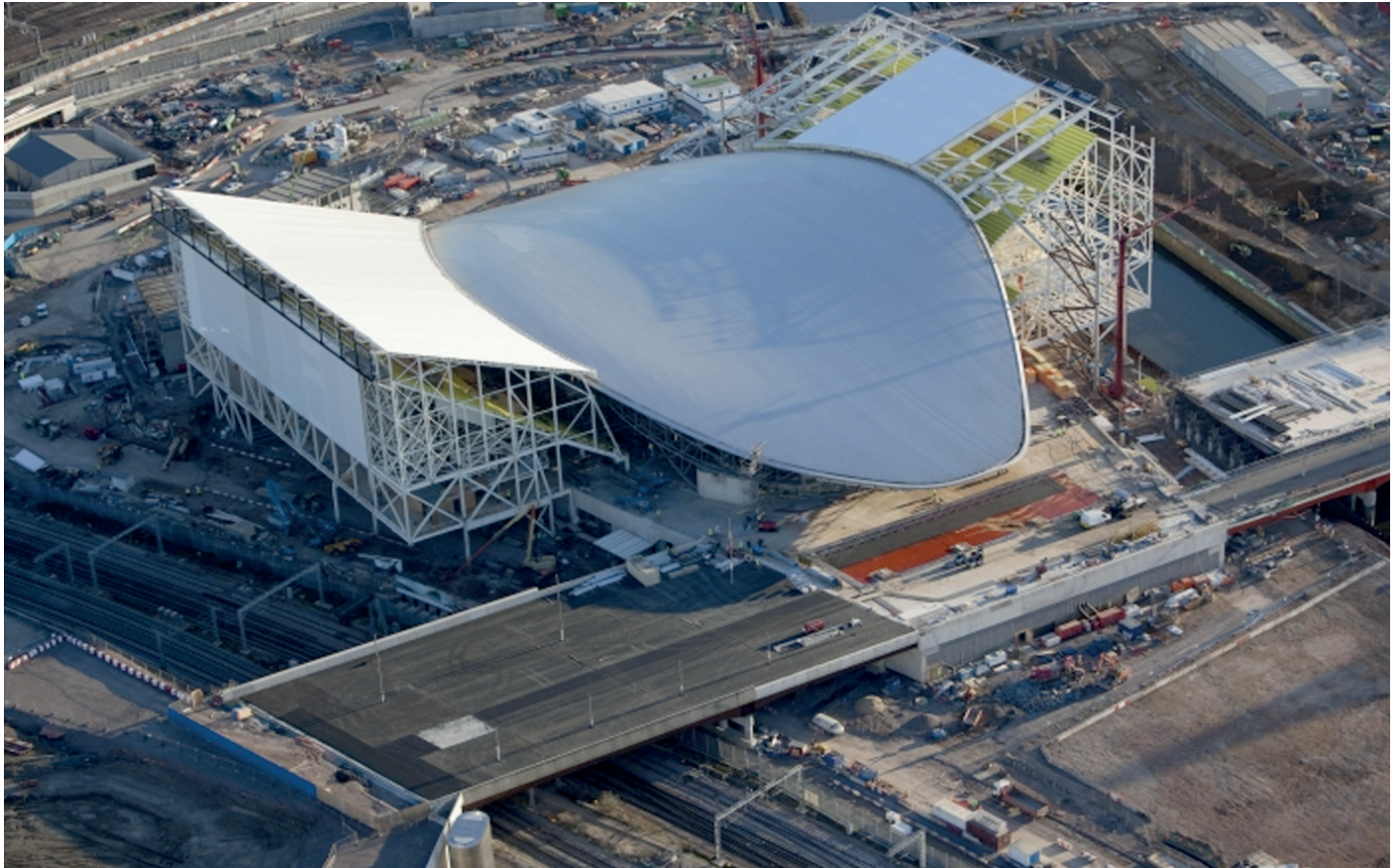
## It is legitimate to ask why?

*But the answer is buried so deep in the lifespaces-design culture that one had invent these 44 LECTURES to begin to understand it when I say that it is, firstly, the result of having no general theory of urbane culture, and, secondly, of having no general theory of the generic components of such an urbane fabric. These I have called 'Blocks' to which term I add the epithet 'island', or 'isola'. A culture with such a dimension to its understanding would not have proposed an essay in monumentality as a mere sheath, however slinky and shiny to a couple of oblong water-tanks.*

*It would have been able to build, with £M240, a structure of sufficient interest to qualify for the status of a Monument.*

*Its general theory of Urbane Culture would have enabled it to make this structure of sufficient interest to 'stand up' for itself. It could therefore have been built to be sufficiently capacious, internally, to receive temporary bleachers for 15,000 spectators, within its permanent volume. One can imagine the uppermost tiers, with a volume the size of the Roman 'Baths of Caracalla', being entertained by being unusually proximate to the icon-rich ceiling inscriptions.*

*The footprint of such a £M240 'monument' would also be large enough for baths of a more conceptually rewarding sort than mere thrashing-tanks for muscle!*



*How to add 15,000 seats to a 2,500-seat venue. The slinky-curvy bridges of FOA's 'winning' design have morphed into the usual 'structural slabs' (that we see spanning one of the many railways.). But they will still be too exposed to traverse when London's famous wind and rain blows and drizzles across them. The ODA must pray that August 2011 is not repeated in 2012. Every original design strategy has come unstuck. An extraordinary demonstration of the incompetence of our newly-digitised, historically-ignorant, ex-Blairised, lifespace-design culture. The Aquadrome and its 'Park' are triumphs of Construction over Design incompetence.*

**Some of the other stadia, were planned to be temporary from their inception.**

**The Basketball Arena was a cleverly 'funky' plastic bag by the excellent firm of Wilkinson Eyre . The Handball arena, on the other hand made no attempt at wit. It was just a box with corrugated metal walls, like any 'Big Shed' from which the goods of the Consumer Economy' find their way to us. Much the same can be said of the Water Sports Arena and the Netball Arena.**



*The Basketball Arena is a clever design by the Architects Wilkinson Eyre. It is both demountable and easily renewable'. It is wholly owned by its builder, Barr construction of Scotland. They hope to ship it to Brazil for the de Janiero Olympics of 2016. A new stretch-PVC skin, printed in Rio Carnival colours would camouflage its 1000 tonne steel skeleton as entirely 'new'. Sadly Rio failed to 'bite'.*



*The dreariest temporary arena is the so-called "Copper Box", for handball. Devoid of any formal conception it was only 'saved' by that most vulgar of all recourses: the employment of a luxurious and costly surface cladding. Its corrugated copper will acquire a pleasing patina just in time for its replacement by the expected tide of domestic capital that all hope will re-float the next boom.*



The 90,000 seat 'Bird's Nest' 2008 Olympic stadium in Beijing cost an amount still hidden by the Chinese Government. It has found no means of subsequent economic use to set off against its \$M12 p/a maintenance cost. Its design, by Herzog & Meuron + Wei Wei could be described as "Up yours Bucky".

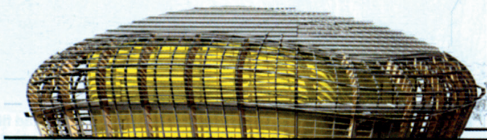


The maniacally oversized scribble that is the physically inconsequential 'envelope' reinforces the Decon trashing of the 'Architectural Facade'.

**PHILHARMONIC CONCERT HALL**



**MULTIPURPOSE CONCERT HALL**



**YOUTH CENTRE**



**SCHOOL**



Foster's used Generative Components to propose four related but individual buildings for its Valery Gergiev Cultural Centre design.

Only slightly less offensive, to 20C Architects, than the hated 'Decoration' is its public version - the 'Facade'. Buckminster Fuller invented, back in the 1950's its ultimately Positivist antithesis: the invisible outer skin. By the 21C the self-evident geometrical authority of this Urbanistically lethal device had begun to crumble and sag as if weighed down by the guilt of its urbicidal criminality. Herzog, Meuron and Wei-Wei managed to sell one of its most extravagant versions to the Chinese Government as both a Work of Fine Art and the antithesis of all that Fuller preached.



The cloak of invisibility that would banish the ogre of the FACADE is no longer an incontestably 'Platonic' sphere, but an all-too-fleshy cage that sags with the flabbiness of a Modernity that has lost its confidence.

A Dymaxion Dome enveloped the U.S. pavilion at the Montreal World Expo of 1967. It was one of the high-water marks of the postwar drive away from Urbanity and towards suburbia. The cleverness of it was that while polluting the globe by its unsustainable environmental economy it created 'bubbles of environmental purity' that were (in theory), invisible.



*Billed as 'old rubber tyres needing to be trashed'. In fact a useful zinc galvanising workshop and a perfect wildlife corridor down the quietly canalised Lea River.*



*A view of the work-shop users. One of the first tasks was to underground the huge electricity pylons seen in the distance. This is expensive. It also 'sterilises' the ground for the huge high-tension cables can not be built-over.*

*The Stadium Island was occupied with the usual two-storey workshops, all as busy as they might be so close to the centre of the City. The Lea Valley housed the last remnants of what was, during the 'Empire' the largest concentration of manufactories in Britain. Shed a tear for their passing.*

**It was proclaimed, from the beginning, that the London 2012 Olympic stadium was never to become the huge 'white elephant' of its Athens and Beijing predecessors. So its first ambition was to be demountable and sold-on as 'previously enjoyed'. This turned-out to be unrealistic. So it settled-down to be as cool and spare as a bicycle - the sort of thing a British Engineer likes to invent - no messing about with 'Disegno'!**



*Britain's pusillanimous politics, during the second half of the 20C, saw to it that 'making things', and the 'working classes who made them, would no longer exist in Britain. This picture records the final extinction of what was, during the Empire, their greatest concentration by number and volume of manufactories - London's Eastern Quarter.*



*As a boy of eleven, back in the dying Indian Raj of 1945, I was trying to picture the England I had seen only once - at three. My image was of a soft green island. But I had been told that "there were some nasty black smudges on it". The Boy was sure of only one thing concerning these blemishes. They had to be removed! The blacknesses turned out to be the very reason for the existence of the Imperial Officer Class into which I had been born. They were the industries, powered by tidal waves of international capital, that had swept my mother's family to Argentina and my father's to India. The Fall of the Empire had swept me back to London, where it had all begun. Here on this field of desolation that was the 'Olympic Park', the last 'black smudges' were erased. What would 'New Labour' build in their place?*



*'Olympic 'Ground Zero' - a true 'tabula rasa'. This is how 'building' really begins. To pretend otherwise is not to live in the real world. Destruction is the 'easy' part. Men love to kill. It is what makes humans, like chimpanzees, so dangerous. It is what to build-up after this Act of Negation that is the problem. It is to answer: "what is the 'future' brought by the 'Entablature'?"*

**I had imagined that, as is usual, the Designers would avoid any regularity to their design. 'History' is the normal expedient chosen to justify the shambolic lifespaces prescribed by their Betters for the 'island people'. But here, in Stratford all 'History' was rigorously smashed flat! Blair himself campaigned for the 2012 Olympics. Did he not issue an order to his Cabinet, after his first, 1997, landslide victory, that "No one is to be photographed in front of anything 'old'"?**

**The British State had created, at the beginning of the 21C, two and a half square kilometres of bare earth on which one could have inscribed the shape of any lifespaces one wanted. There were, it is true, some small drainage channels and a few railways. But all of them would be built-over and buried where necessary. This was a real 'terra nullius'.**



*The absolute opposite to the Beijing 'Bird's Nest'. London 2012 is 'bleachers' for 80,000 and nothing more. The seats are tilted up onto their carefully-calculated 'sightline' slopes'. The space thereby 'created' below them is treated as mere 'collateral damage'. This was a truly 'Functional' building.*

*The undercroft of the Stadium has all of the qualities of a modern house-attic - a tangle of skinny props and no real space. The 'hospitality-room's are located "elsewhere". Its designers seem not to have heard that the major part of any stadium's income comes from merchandising and renting out its social rooms!*



*Prefabricated concrete planks on a steel rake. Nothing could be simpler. If the designer's had enclosed this structure inside a 'building' the steel would have needed fire-proofing, so becoming more expensive. The vast spaces below this 'concrete floor' were left open to the weather. What could they be used for - after all? It is just one more proof of the abject sub-urbanity of Established Island Orthodoxy that a 'public' building should not be allowed to provide for the sorts of social space that make a stadium, like a railway station, a place of meetings and association. The effect of this determined stupidity is to have built a structure that, after the Olympics, has no use at all that does not include a virtual rebuild (with public money) so as to make of it a football, or other, stadium capable, even of paying its way with all of the very well established non-spectator sport uses that support structures like the Epsom Races 'Queen's Stand'. This sporting fixture is restricted, by ancient laws, to occur on ONLY FIVE DAYS IN THE YEAR! It 'stands' survive by being an 'entertainment'. Did the Suits who ran the ODA have heads on their tailored shoulders?*



*All of the curvy, non-linear maths Bio-Tech styling has gone. The bridges are mere slabs. The Stadium is no longer an unfolding mechanical lotus-flower. It is a tension ring propped-up by 'Diagonal of Denial' zig-zags like the 1951 'Dome of Discovery' built for the 'Festival of Britain' - shown to the right. Is this because the Utility-Sign 'romance' of the post-WWII Attlee government brings nostalgic tears to the eyes of the newly-qualified Architects of the 21C?*



*The perfect building for the Architecture Autre devotees of the early 21C. Its population has been relentlessly equalised by a dedication to the ocular examination of the positivist ritual of a purely physical act measured by a number. The interior is flooded by 'Natural Light' - albeit shining from the (tabooed) 'above'. Yet from where else could the sun shine? The interior forms a circle, that most 'universal', indivisible and thereby 'equalising' of forms. Above all other attractions for the devotees of the 'Autre' is that this great interior, by all of these imperatives, is entirely and totally evacuated of every slight vestige of the hated apparatus of their own ancient medium - that of Architecture.*

## We have now explored four ways to design a Stadium.

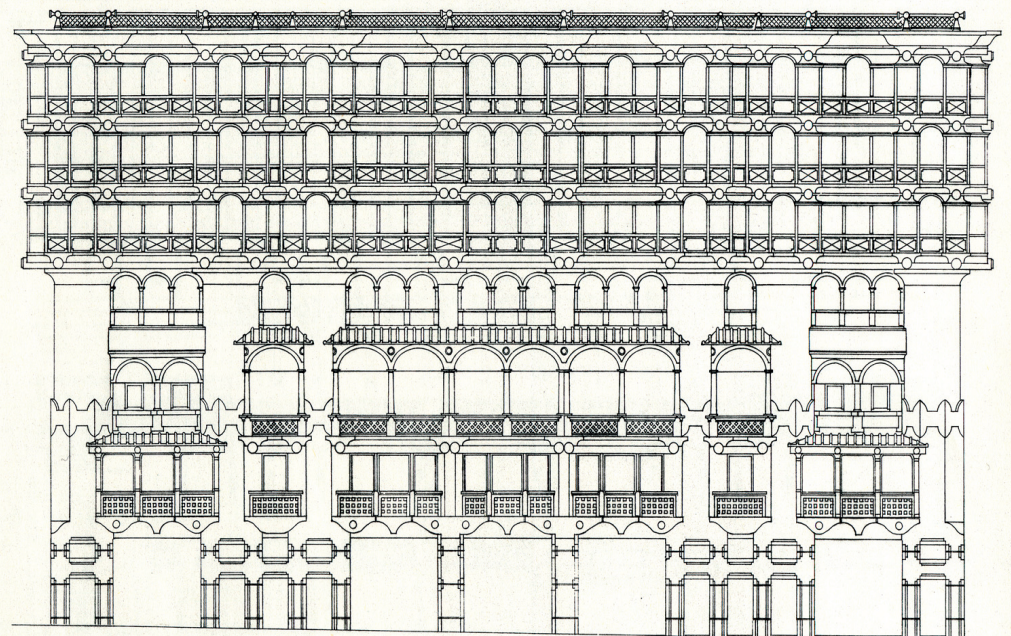
The first Solution, canonised in the 1950's by Buckminster Fuller and enthusiastically adopted by British High-Tech, is that of the 'Cloak of Invisibility' or 'Face Lift' which we explored in Lecture 23: 'Demolition Derby'. It seeks to avoid the problem of designing a face, or 'Facade' to a building by making it, ideally, into a glassy bubble that both veils its contents and dissimulates them by reflecting everything in view except its real interior. This was the solution espoused by the Beijing Stadium albeit in the bowdlerised 'Decon' version popularised by the Chinese 'artist-of-protest' Wei-Wei. One hopes that he fully understands quite how much he screwed-up his authoritarian government! For it seems that they, themselves, in their relative innocence, are an easy prey to such as Herzog and Meuron or, to take another example, Rem Koolhaas' grotesque TV Centre. One must be happy to see that the 'Cloak of Invisibility' has not been a tactic employed by London 2012.

A Second solution is to build something suited to an everyday performance and then saddle it with a temporary exterior housing the Olympic functions. This is the solution adopted by the Zaha Hadid Aquadrome. It is the worst solution of all of those for 2012. It is strikingly incompetent.

A third solution is to build entirely temporary venues. This was adopted for the three arenas for Basketball, Handball and Water-Polo. While this may seem rather clever, it is in fact, only very slightly less stupid than that of the 'lean-to' Aquadrome. For even temporary venues need concrete foundations, roads, drains, power and other services. These must then be torn-up and destroyed later. Their lightweight superstructures may be 'dismounted' and sold-on. But such 'recoupings' are infinitely small compared to the original cost of inventing and creating the venue. Their main advantage is that they do not remain to remind us of the failure to conceive of a true 'legacy' solution.

A fourth solution is that adopted by the 80,000-seat Stadium. This is to build a permanent venue but to do it as cheaply and 'Spartanly' as possible. This is not very clever either. For while the 'Populus' Stadium for London 2012 is not such a 'big' white elephant as those left behind by Athens '04 and Beijing '08 it is still a stadium that appears to have no use except huge Athletic events. My own Football Club, Tottenham Hotspur, offered to buy it on condition that they rebuild it to suit that particular version of the native cult of Newtonian ballistics. But the offer was refused. This Stadium is to remain for Athletics. But then its very Spartan brutality ensures that it is not suited to that most essential of revenue-streams which is conferencing, merchandising, entertaining and generally ministering to the cult of the venerated object - in this case the Athlete - for which it must be rather easy to design a temple. The striking incompetence my own Profession in this department must never cease to amaze those who would employ them to such an anciently credited end: That of building Temples!

in 1988 JOA worked, for the usual few weeks, on an invited competition to design a new Queen's Stand for Epsom Racecourse. The Course, is, by ancient statute, only allowed to run for five days every year. For the other 360 days the Stand survives, economically, by lending itself to the pursuit of 'hospitality'. I enclose a view of the 'hospitality' side of the Stand, ie. the one facing away from the racecourse!



NORTH ELEVATION

The Facade of the JOA design for an invited competition to renew the Queen's Stand at Epsom racecourse. The Competition was masterminded by Evelyn Rothschild. He did not like our design and took his displeasure out upon our innocent Project Manager. He chose something Art-Gallery white against which the frocks of the girls would show-up like Works of Art. JOA suffered the same fate, of Death by White-Out, in the competition for a new Opera House at Compton Verney.



3.10



3.11

Utzon's 1956 concept sketches show the Clouds and the Sea with Nothing in between. He then shows Roof and Podium likewise. There is no 'interior'. Where is 'idea' of the Opera-House itself?

For a Fifth recipe I turn to a critique that I wrote, in the May 1983 issue of the Architectural Review, of a competition for a new Sainsbury Supermarket. In it I explored the peculiar enthusiasm for pitched roofs that swept all the way down to the ground. I associated this with a similar, but less common tendency. The solidly unwindowed 'podium' or base to a building. These tendencies can be given full reign in the large interiors needed in a "Tent-and-Bunker" out-of-town shed that, like most shops, requires no windows in its outer walls.

But perhaps their best known demonstration was Joern Utzon's Sydney Opera House.

Even his 1956 concept sketch consisted of nothing except the ruggedly jagged base and the billowing folds of the floating 'sail-canopy'. Neither walls nor columns intruded upon this perfectly 'faceless' (or de-faced) Arcadia. For the tactics of a 'big' roof and 'big' base, when used together, have the useful consequence of excusing the task that 'Modernism' disables the contemporary Architect from discharging, that of designing a persuasively 'urbane' Facade to a street.

A story lies behind this 'a-facadia'. This 'facadaphobia', this horror of the Facade.

It was told by Peter Smithson as he was designing his entry to this same Competition:

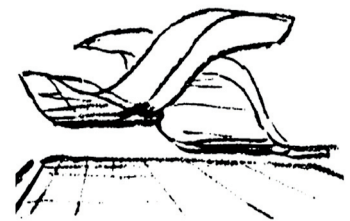
"John", he said, "Modernism is incapable of designing the 'Great Interior'".

I, a mere student, did not understand him at the time. But an examination of Utzon's building will help us know Smithson's meaning.

For what Utzon's 'concept' revealed, and the tragic saga of the Opera House confirmed,



The competition jurors are all in drip-dry shirts and holding pipes (except Leslie Martin, far left, who changed Cambridge from 3-year Historical into 5-year Vocational). Saarinen (centre) grasped the iconic brilliance of Utzon's design.



3.12



3.13

Utzon 'cloud-roofs', when they reach the ground, veil the fact that there is no 'interior'.

# It was a pure void.

Utzon's competition drawings were rescued from a dustbin of 30 rejected designs by Eero Saarinen, the Finnish-American Architect of genius. Saarinen invented a different architectural 'iconic' to suit the 'character' of each and every one of his commissions. The General Motors Design Centre had shiny, two-toned blue, 'hot-waxed' metal panels. The Ezra Stiles and Morse Dormitories at Yale had 'Old Gothic' rough stone walls and irregularly-planned room footprints. New York's CBS head office was a black granite monolith extruded seamlessly upwards like the thrusting tower in the film 'Brazil'. The TWA Airport Terminal was a curvy concrete Pterodactyl. So Eero would have grasped the iconic power of putting, in the middle of Sydney City's social space (its huge sea-bay anchorage) a kryptophanic 'sculpture' recalling the white sails and upturned boats of the immigrants, the Anglo-Gothic of their churches and even the shark's jaws of Bondi - and all on top of a 'terra-nullius' slab of bare rock!



With the demise of the classical language of architecture as the basis for monumental works that express civic values after World War II, the Sydney Opera House is the culmination of the search for an alternative means of expression that had preoccupied progressive architects since the 1920s (Goad 2005).

*Cahill was onto a loser in wanting, back in 1955, a 'great work of Art' inside the city (of Sydney or any other). As Philip Goad, the eminent Australian Architectural Educator confirmed above: Urbanity was Dead. Suburbia was the flavour of the Post-WWII world.*

**The Concert-Hall/Opera House was born of the conjunction of two men, the Conductor, Composer and Oboist Leon Goosens and the Labour Politician and Governor of New South Wales, Thomas Cahill. Cahill wanted to site it Downtown, next to Wynard railway station.**

**The Politician wanted it 'inside' the city. The Artist wanted it outside, in a 'natural' environment. It was was the 'Pantheist' Goosens who won the argument to build it on Bennelong Point.**

**The 'terra nullius' / Mayan pyramid base cost \$AuM5.5, The famous roof shells cost \$AuM12.5. These were difficult enough to invent. Their huge weight ('sails' they were not), required new foundations to be broken through the already-built 'Mayan' Podium.**

**At this point, in 1965, some 10 years after the competition was won, the project hit very rough water. The Conservative party replaced the Labour Party in NSW and forced Utzon, a year later, to resign. Designs came and went, with work being demolished and re-made. The ultimate cost of the interiors was \$AuM56. The final bill was 14 times the competition budget.**

**None of this would matter, in the end, if the interiors had been worth it. But they are not. The big Hall is weirdly long and thin with, as one would expect, a worthless level of detail, all, of course, executed in the inevitable 'Nordic' blond wood. Its width was cramped by the dominating geometry of the famous shells. The only relief from the confused 'undercroft' quality of the Foyers is the view out over the waters of Sydney Bay - an entirely suburban prospect of tinny glass rent slabs and ranch-house villas not to mention the endlessly soporific sea.**

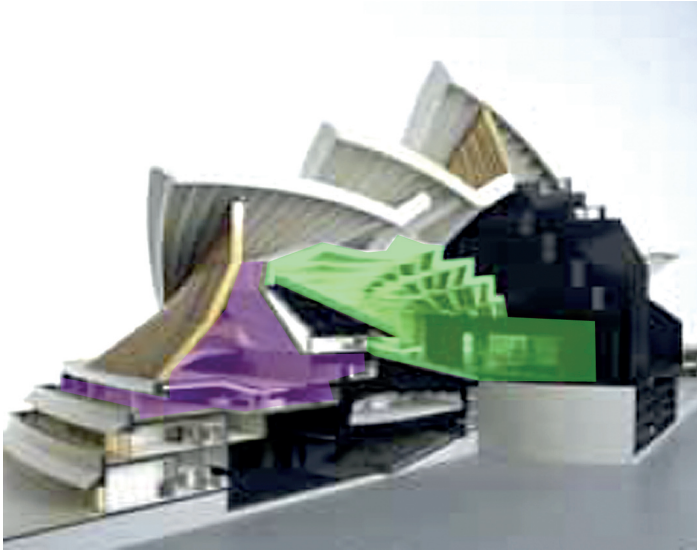
*Even today in 2012 - a half-century later - an internet advice for visiting cruise-liner travellers proposes only two principal monumental sites for Sydney. They are the Harbour Bridge and Utzon's Opera. Both address Sydney's essential 'social space': the Bay. Cahill's 'Downtown' never made it to the A-List.*



*To achieve 'World Monument Status' for the Opera House, Australia had to promise to 'have a care' of the views from it - such as this one - of Sydney's Downtown (with 'cruiser'). How much worse could it get?*



*George Street, 'down to the Rock's' - with the Harbour Bridge in the background, is Sydney's main thoroughfare. One can see why Cahill wanted an Opera House to improve it.*

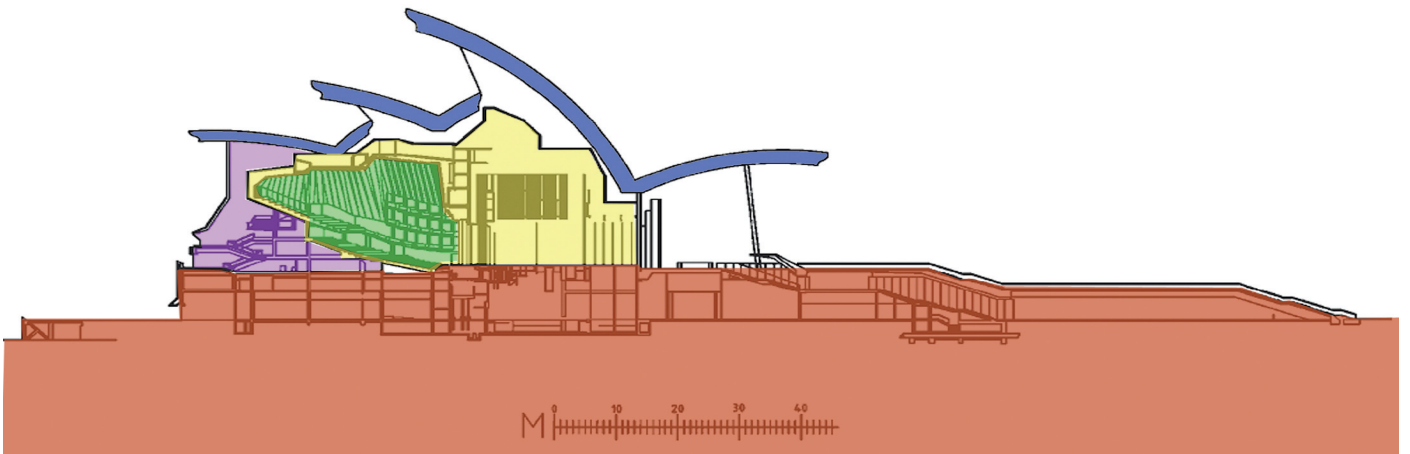


The sectional model, from Joern Utzon's own office, slices open to show the **Concert Hall** itself crushed and contorted between the vastly flapping sails and the huge, 'terra nullius', base. The **Foyer** which, in the best halls, is the best space, to suit those parading in it, is simply left over space, with even less shapeliness than the **Hall**.

**Lecture Three, 'The End of Urbanity'** described how the 1950's were, in Britain a high water mark for that destruction of civic culture which has marked the whole second half of the 20C. In Australia it was no different.



The Concert Hall is as long and thin. Trying to take advantage of the soaring vacancies of the sails, it became too high for acoustic best practice. The effect is a latterday upturned Ship-Cathedral of Nordic Timber



The Restaurant, to the left, the Concert Hall, centre, and the Opera House, right, open their 'Gothic Vault' jaws to receive those who climb the immense flights of steps. None of these eccentricities would matter if only there were beautiful 'rooms' beyond.

The **Foyer**, which in the best Concert Halls and Opera Houses, is always the best space, because it serves to 'show off' those parading and meeting in it, is here the most miserably shapeless crevice whose only relief is to look out at the sea. The **Philharmonic Hall** itself is only slightly less formally inconsequential, being too long, because squeezed by the elegant sail-shells and too high, in attempting to use the space they leave behind. The **Second Hall**, dedicated to **Opera and Ballet**, has, because again squeezed by the sail-shells, a stage that is too small to stage the grandest presentations! The 'Tower' for the theatre scenery could, au contraire, not be high enough because of the sails! The scenery had to be lowered into the podium, a solution that failed to succeed.

Goosen's choice of site denied the City an 'urbane' monument. Utzon's anti-classical poetic denied music, ballet and opera their 'camera lucida'.



A Cruise liner, Bay Bridge and now the building that has become the symbol of Australia itself: sails landing on an uninhabited rock. They ring Sydney Bay as if it was the Ocean in Miniature that once constituted the British Empire itself. Water is short in most of the subcontinent. It's a long way from the homes the Australians once sailed out of. Maybe living around the ocean gives Aussies a sense of security. There it is, backing them up as they face the daunting prospect of making the deserted and desert-like Outback the great resource that one day, somehow or other, it must become. One day, like all of those descended from the Anglo colonists, they will have to invent symbols, iconic buildings even, that look 'inward' to the 'Interior'. Until then, the cities remain shambolic and the sea promises 'escape'.

## But Australia got an Icon.

Some Critics propose that Sydney's Opera House was the first of the many so-called 'iconic' buildings that we examined in Lecture 23 'Demolition Derby'. I reject this. Utzon's Opera House may not be the best Opera House, as an interior, but its exterior is the very opposite of those, a half-century later, by Gehry, Liebeskind and Hadid. The latter all deny any 'iconic' literacy. Utzon's is replete with it. In my address to DoCoMoMo of 2008, and in Lecture 23, I coined the categories of the 'Diagonal of Denial', 'Pixel Blur', 'Cloak of invisibility' and 'Mask of Innocence' to decipher the aniconic ambitions of 'Deconstruction'. Utzon's work is equally counter-urbane but I prefer to describe it as 'cryptophanic', from Crypto, to hide and Phanein, to show. This is an oxymoron, that is to say a conjunction of opposites. As such it can either be merely tiresome or the most ambitious of communicative devices. For to reveal the hidden (that is to say the unknown), is surely the ambition of all philosophy. So what, in fact, has been 'revealed'?

*The Opera House, that has so fascinated the world since it was brought into being, communicates, as only an encrypted icon can, with the power of a conjunction of symbolic forms and images. The glistening glazed tiles that are found on the surfaces of the huge 'sails, with their clever patterns of 'reglets', seem both reptilian as well as avian. In this they recall the meaning, rather than the form, of both the pedimental 'aetos' and peripteral 'ptera' of the Hellenic temple's encircling collonnade. The spheroidal fractions perch, like an invading armada, light but powerfully threatening, especially when seen head-on as gaping jaws. Yet they also recall the primitive huts of withies used by the pre-historic Marsh Arabs of Mesopotamia that the 19C argued, without much proof, to be the aboriginal basis for the Neo-Gothic being espoused, by both the Romantic and the RealPolitik-ical of the Northern Europe from which the Australians came. Then, of course, there is the enormous 'rock' on which the ship-sails-huts have settled. What can this be but the legal idea that the subcontinent was a 'terra nullius', both 'natural' as well as bare of any pre-colonial occupants, - an idea only abandoned in the mid-1970s, when the Australian Aborigines began to obtain some land-rights.*

Yet it would seem that no such narrative was in the mind of Utzon.  
**BUT IT IS THE READER WHO ULTIMATELY DECIDES.**

I explore these iconographies merely to show that any conjunction of symbols will act to initiate the process described by Paul Ricoeur when he wrote:

**"The symbol leads to thought."**

My own proposal, which has been patent in these Lectures, is that buildings should be richly iconic. However I also argue that buildings, and especially cities are far too important to be merely left to the confused reveries of the 'Artist'. The iconic, or representational function of a Building, and even more a City, is to 'ground' human life in a 'reality'. Reveries, especially of a confused and wayward sort, are an important part of such 'realities'. But they should be reserved for the lesser dimensions of surface-inscriptions and free-standing sculptures. Buildings should not be subject to them. For to lower them to this status, that of a 'waking dream' is frivolous. Sydney, Australia, and even the 'world' for that is now the Opera House's legal status, has a bewitching building. But the city of Sydney is still a counter-urbane shambles. Goossens' pantheism drove him to seek a communion with atavistic urges to 'commune with the sea and the sky'. Cahill, the Politician, asked for 'urbanity' - "an Opera-House by the Railway-Station".

**But the Architectural and City-Planning culture of the day was incapable of responding to his request.**

***Is it any better today?***

My digression to the Sydney of the year 1956, the time of my second year of study as an Architect, is not without pertinence to the analysis of London 2012.



*All roof and basement with nothing but glass in between. The 20C could never do a facade that shaped the street walls that created Ahrendt's 'Space of Appearance'. The Velodrome would sit on its 'Park-side' hill. But then, after the sporting events, it would be enveloped on three sides by residential development. Only the view above, taken from the deeply-sunken Lea River, would survive to confirm the "Tent-and-Bunker" Sub-Urban ambitions of the 20C.*



**The first move was to build the 'rock' onto which this bird-boat would settle.**

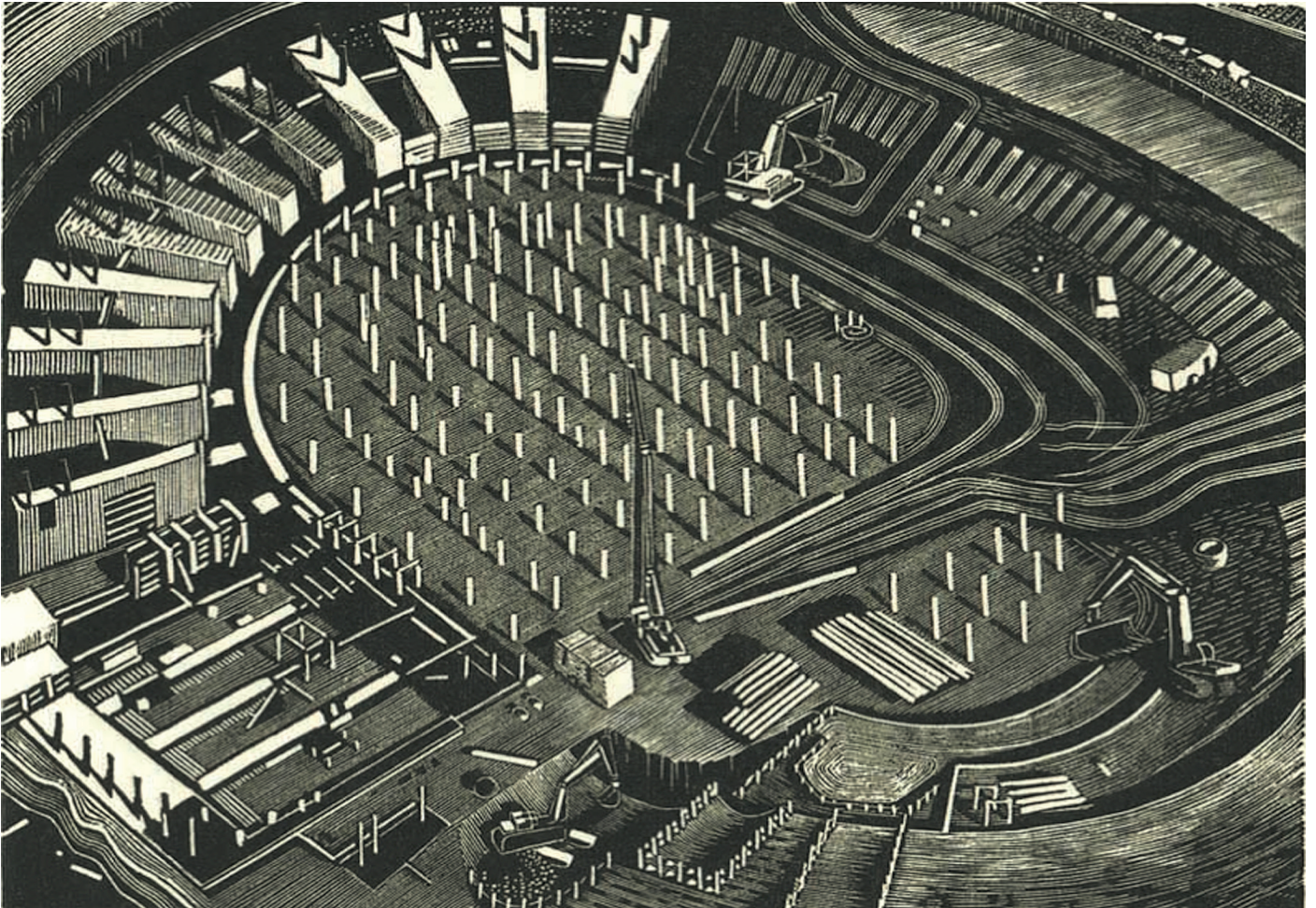
First a layer of blue polythene was placed over the whole site. It received the crushed stone base-layer. Then a second layer of pink polythene was laid to support the central deposit of MOT No. 1, again a graded rock base. These make for a firm as well as porous base, like a raft, in which to dig the foundations without going too deep into the Thames alluvium. Earth-moving is cheaper than cast concrete and giant machines dig such rocks out of places like Scotland to bring it South in giant trucks - one of which can be seen emptying its load.π

*The futility of the 'Corbusian Fantasy'. There never were any "rolling fields and rushing rivers" just the flattened mud of Nothingness-Negation left by the Advent of the raft of Reason as it fell upon the Debris of History. The illiterate Nordic Naturalism of the 20C left Mankind with no clue as to how to respond. The miracle of the Velodrome is that Hopkins reacted so well!*

**THEN THE CONCRETE FOUNDATIONS ARE LAID IN THIS 'NEW ROCK'.**



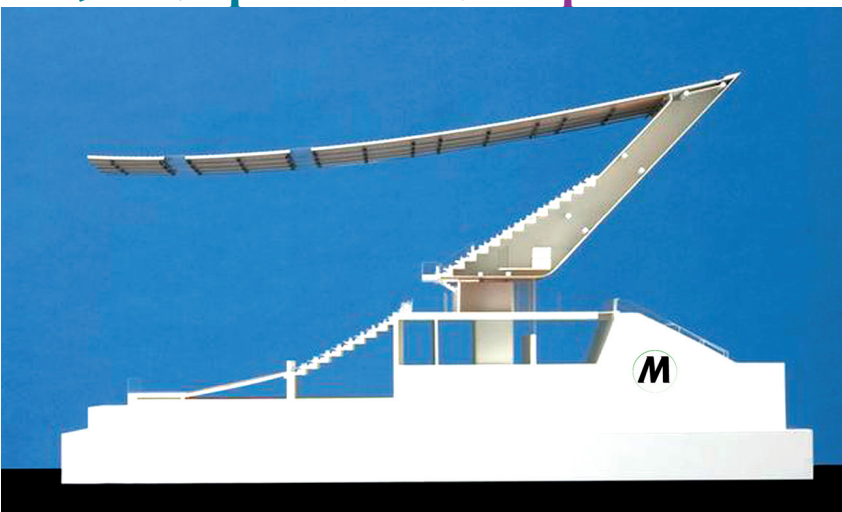
*The foundations to the Velodrome looked, at this stage, like a cemetery filled with standing stelae surrounded by the tombs of rather more substantial persons. In fact the slender pillars in the centre were to support a 'suspended' concrete floor that would fill the middle of the velodrome. While the heavy walls radiating around the edge were to bear not only the weight, but the enormous horizontal forces from the roof. For this, though 'light' by constructive standards, not only weighed hundreds of tons but was, in addition, to be stretched to hang, like a huge tent, from its edges, sagging into its centre. One would not want the foundations to move sideways!*



*This woodcut, made of the previous scene, illustrates the aesthetic beauty not only of the concept of this building, but its disciplined execution. Large scale building is like the marshalling of an army of the old sort, in which the manoeuvring of troops had a grandeur all of its own that the battle, when it was joined, tragically destroyed! In building, not only can the 'battle' of construction be beautiful, but the outcome as well. Sadly, today, the construction-site is usually more aesthetically pleasurable than what is left when the workers depart. But that is not, usually, their fault. It is that of the Owner and his Advisers.*

**THE VELODROME CAN COME TO REST ON A SYNTHETIC DOME OF 'ROAD-METAL'.**

**It 'floats' there like a boat whose awning sail holds its ample 'hull' in a compressive vice.**



*Hopkins' 'sail', or 'awning' covering an arena dug into the sand is a more persuasive invention than that of Utzon's Opera House of flowering sails. But the plastic play of the 'bird' alighting on a heavy 'rock' is generated from the same kinaesthetic discourse. The two floors of 'earth mound 'M' are all 'artificial', in that they were bulldozed up against the building's concrete walls after they had been cast..*



*The starched 'cornette' of a nun from the order of the Daughters of Charity as photographed in Dublin in 1964. The joy of distinct forms, when they are used abstractedly is that they "lead to thought". Sadly the 'Sisters' no longer wear their 'winged' helmets.*



*The heavy ring of steel 'S', held up on zig-zag steel columns, can be seen rising like a wave above the seats to the right. It acts like the rim of a tennis racket with the steel wires of the roof stretching from side to side, across it and the Arena. The wires form a lattice, or grid, into which panels of wood and concrete are laid before receiving a corrugated metal covering. Translucent rooflights fit into certain of these 'squares' forming a pattern and letting in some diffused, shadowless, daylight. Direct sunlight, which would be beautifully dramatic, is not allowed because the contrast between lit and dark arcs could momentarily blind the riders. The ramps down at 'R' exit the Velodrome.*



*The shape of the 'canopy' roof is that of an hyperbolic paraboloid. Its advantage is that it can sag inwards yet still shed rainwater out to its rim. Two earthmoving machines, a Bulldozer and a Digger, may be seen on the huge piles of soil being heaped against the building. They have not yet obscured the open floor beneath the narrow slit of glass that, running around the whole building, serves to 'float' the 'boat' off terra firma in the way visible on the next page.*



*Standing on the wide circulation level, half way up the raked seating, one finds oneself in full command of both the Park and the River as well as the cycle track. One receives the impression that the reversing curvatures of the 'boat-sail' are 'in being' above one and can be understood as a reification of the '(C)raft of Advent'. At this point the whole 'build-up' reaches that so-familiar point in 20C Architecture. It 'goes nowhere'. The inability of 20C Architectural culture to extend itself from the material into the metaphysical brings all further narrative to a halt.*



*And so it is with the Interior, when finally we contemplate its precisely composed lines. It is a let-down. It is surprisingly dull. The chief fault is in the ceiling, the rooflights respond in no way to the excellent bi-axial symmetry of the Plan. The Ground, or Footprint Plan itself has inscribed the four corners essential to a fully rhetorical symmetry. The ceiling is a mere piece of graph-paper, the rooflights could have been composed to provide axes, corners and a centre, so necessary to the Award Ceremonies proper to a competitive sport. Hopkins are a firm who draw all of their inspiration from engineering, and very much less from Theatre. Both are essential.*

**The Velodrome's physical functions are relatively modest, when compared to an Opera House. But it is a great interior room. Its excellent external iconicity and its disappointing interior only serve to make the same point, though less forcefully, than Sydney Opera. Little has changed over the half century between them. There is still no concept of what the late Peter Smithson called the 'Great (Modern) Interior'.**



The first images of the Athletes' Village did not depart from the Stratford-as-a-Park theme that had won London the 2012 Games. In the view above is the Illustrator thinking that the waters of the Lea Valley might be rebuilt as Stratford-on-the-Veneto, or was there a profounder intimation of the 'River of Somatic Time' from 'Source' to 'Sea'?

**THE CONCEPT OF 'PARK' STILL DOMINATED THE EARLIEST IDEAS FOR THE ATHLETE'S VILLAGE.**

I like to think of it as an unconscious vision of that eternal narration of the River of Somatic Time, and the 'Valley of the Republic.'

But this was all some time before the 2007 bursting of the Mortgage-based Derivatives bubble and the Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy. It became difficult, in 2007-8, to fund any housing development at all. The State had to absorb the banks' bad debts and, as part of that whole catastrophe, act as final source of credit to build the 17,500-bed Athlete's Village. Dreams of a park-like rusticity abruptly faded.

The 'Venetian-canal' vision, above, with 'Balconies of Appearance' and at least one of its its apotropaic guardian-towers (albeit somewhat moth-antiqued), did not survive the '07 fiscal shock.



Athletes' Village looking north

Web-cam views appeared that looked like Guangzhou built by Dutch plattenbau factories.



Athletes' Village looking east



They were confirmed by aerial photographs of buildings never before seen in Britain. These were superblocs descended from the antique traditions that I had studied. But these were versions corrupted by the Totalitarian Bureaucracies of Eurasia, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and built as instant slums. Our winter sun would never even touch any part of their dank, dark courtyards. What was their ambition?

The simplest explanations are usually the best and the most likely to be true. To build more apartments on a site reduces the fraction of the cost of the land in the price of an apartment. The slow part of building is the planning, the layout and the infrastructure of services, drainage, roads and foundations. Once one is going upwards the production of rooms increases. Things speed up. Its quicker to build one building of twelve floors than two of six.

'Stratford City' as it has always been called, was planned by its various promoters, both Public and Private, as early as 2002. Its existence was part of the appeal of London's 'pitch' to the IOC. The Olympics would help to regenerate an underprivileged part of the Capital.

**It was of the greatest importance.**



Any half-decent state can run a big athletics event. But the Olympic games is more than that. For better or worse it has become the most important 'event' on the globe. It is an event that 'showcases' its host city and its host nation. New countries and relatively obscure countries almost bankrupt themselves to put on an impressive 'show'.

So why give it to Britain, a nation that was, not so very long ago, the most powerful nation on the globe, or to London, still one of the most famous cities in the World? Why would London want it? To become more famous still? Why if not for the World to see what this declining great power, origin of the global language and much of the global political, legal and fiscal culture, could do with something as 'pedestrian' as building a city fit for the greater fraction of the human race to occupy? After all, that is what most of the members of the International Olympic Committee are interested in, not whether their own obscure countries, are going to be 'sitting at the top table'.

The basic site-planning tool chosen for the Athlete's Village was the Continental Island-Block. Unfortunately it was built too high for our Northern Sun to reach, during the winter months, the floor of its enclosed 'cortile' The view above shows that the concrete roof to the underground car parking remains to be built, and covered with earth to form a poorly-insolated 'Square Garden' in which grass will refuse to grow.

And what has London come up with?

**A PARK!**

Britain is evidently not going to try to compete at the silly game of building 'ideal cities'. Everything in these 44 Lectures indicates that the English despise cities, reserving them solely for 'commerce'. If one wishes to 'live', one lives in the 'country'.

The Mortgage famine of 2007 prevented the developers of Westfield from funding the residential fraction of 'Stratford City'. By the time that the Olympic Delivery Authority had taken this over there was no time for anything except pre-cast concrete 'plattenbau' Continental Blocks.



Seen from further away it turned-out that there were not just two of these super-blocks but 63 individual blocks all joined, like beads in a necklace, into eleven of the great 'Wells of Darkness'. They would house 2,818 apartments.



The lower two storeys retain the 'primitive' house-and-garden of the suburbs. Above them have been placed eight floors of apartments. This is claimed to be a conjunction of the rustic and the urban. In fact it merely illustrates Chateaubriand's dictum, that one may go directly from 'Primitivism' to 'Decadence' without passing through the intervening period he called 'Civilisation'. The wall of 'rapid-racking' apartment-cubby-holes squats on it's two-up-two-down cottages, with their little 'gardens' without having synthesised, or even consummated, a persuasively 'urbane' offspring.

It is pleasant to be in the sun, with some casual acquaintances, while enjoying the shelter from the wind that such courtyards provide. Yet the only part (above and to the right) where such pleasures can be enjoyed in the summer sun has been denoted as ground-level private gardens by the designers of these blocks!

These garden-level houses are modelled on the London Terrace house. One may build two or three stories of apartments on top of them and achieve both sunlight and urbanity. But to place a further eight floors creates overdeveloped squalor - especially when the rest of the 2.5 sq kilometer site is vacant of urbane employment!

Nothing is so important to the Urbanity which mediates a 'sustainable' city than the manner in which its citizens 'reside' within it.

The sad thing is that this sudden, dramatic and large-scale (though very belated) introduction, to London, of the ancient and excellent urbane component of the courtyard block should have been done with such physical and iconic incompetence!

It is as if the desire was for this 'introduction' to fail.

Physically, these blocks are too high and too closed-in. They are too dense for our Northern sunlight. The geometries of the sun's trajectory during the months of the Winter Solstice are quite free of the 'fuzzy logic' that so fires-up the imagination of the Architectural Avant Garde. The social space of these isola-blocks will be dark and dank during the relatively balmy winters of Stratford. The mosses will luxuriate and a slippery green mould cover anything porous, like wood, masonry and brick.

What was in the minds of the cynics who put up these 'wells of darkness'? Were they thinking "the residential isola-block is the 'daily bread' of a successful Urbanity"? Britain has fought the idea of Urbanity, and the City of Citizens, for centuries. So why not build some isola-blocks in such a way that they will be hated - too small, too high, too dark and as ugly as only the aniconic can achieve. Then no one will want them and we can go on living in the suburban shambles to which we are accustomed. DOWN WITH URBANITY!

If this was not the case then why is this its actual effect? Does our Establishment sleepwalk? Do they actually KNOW how the sun moves?



What is the use of adopting the isola-block form with A: a certain (even very slight) bi-axial symmetry, B: a vertical narrative to its accommodation, while choosing to REMAIN IN DENIAL of 1: an entrance or entrances, 2: corner-towers, 3: a vertical narrative to the facade from Podium to Entablature and 4: A cortile floor that is physically usable for kids. The Stratford 'isola' prescription is as physically crippled as it is iconically moribund.



**Yet it is a truism, accepted by all sides of the livespace-design professions, that a generally-accepted 'house-type', capable of urbane deployment, never emerged during the whole period of the 20C.**

**The Northern cities of Britain built thousands of small, privately-funded apartments in downtown high-rises. They promoted a 'vibrant' cafe-life during the period of derivative-fuelled mortgages.**

**THE VALUE OF NO OTHER CLASS OF 'RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY' FELL AS FAST AFTER THE 2007 CRASH. NO ONE WANTED TO ACTUALLY 'LIVE' IN THEM.**

**Like 'Retail-led Renewal': that parallel city-planning strategy of those New Labour years, this 'Central Area Housing' proved 'unsustainable'.**

*The 'Decadence' of these twelve-story Continental bureaucratisations of the isola-block now look-out over the 'Primitivism' of the two-storey garden cottage estate. Where is the successful offspring of these two extremes. Where is 'Civilisation'? Where is Urbanity? It was never even WANTED.*

**'LIVING PLACES' HAVE TO BE TREATED AS MORE THAN A MERE 'ASSET CLASS' IF A CITY IS TO BREED CITIZENS.**

**But that, as I showed in Lecture One, 'The End of Urbanity', has seldom been the policy of any Administration since the publication, a half-century ago, of 'The Redevelopment of Central Areas'.**

**British culture, and all the imitations that we parented during and since the End of Empire, has yet to engage with the cultural enterprise of how to obtain a city-culture worth pursuing as an antidote to the Nordic Suburbanism whose fatal ecology is destroying both our own patrimony and that of our children.**

**The 2.5sq. km. of the Stratford Olympic site, as it will appear in 'Legacy Mode' is all the proof needed that Anglo city-planning culture has yet to receive the slightest inkling of what these 44 Lectures treat.**



*The Eleven Olympian 'Wells of Darkness' fill and empty as the sun circles overhead. 20C town-planning theory expressly argued against the 'isola-block'. Corbusier anathematised 'streets' as mere 'traffic-ducts'. Now, in a panic, following an Olympic 'city-design' that was predicated on 'looking natural' we have these Anti-Theses to 20C Modernity in a form designed to render sterile any attempt to revive Modernity through widening its understanding.*

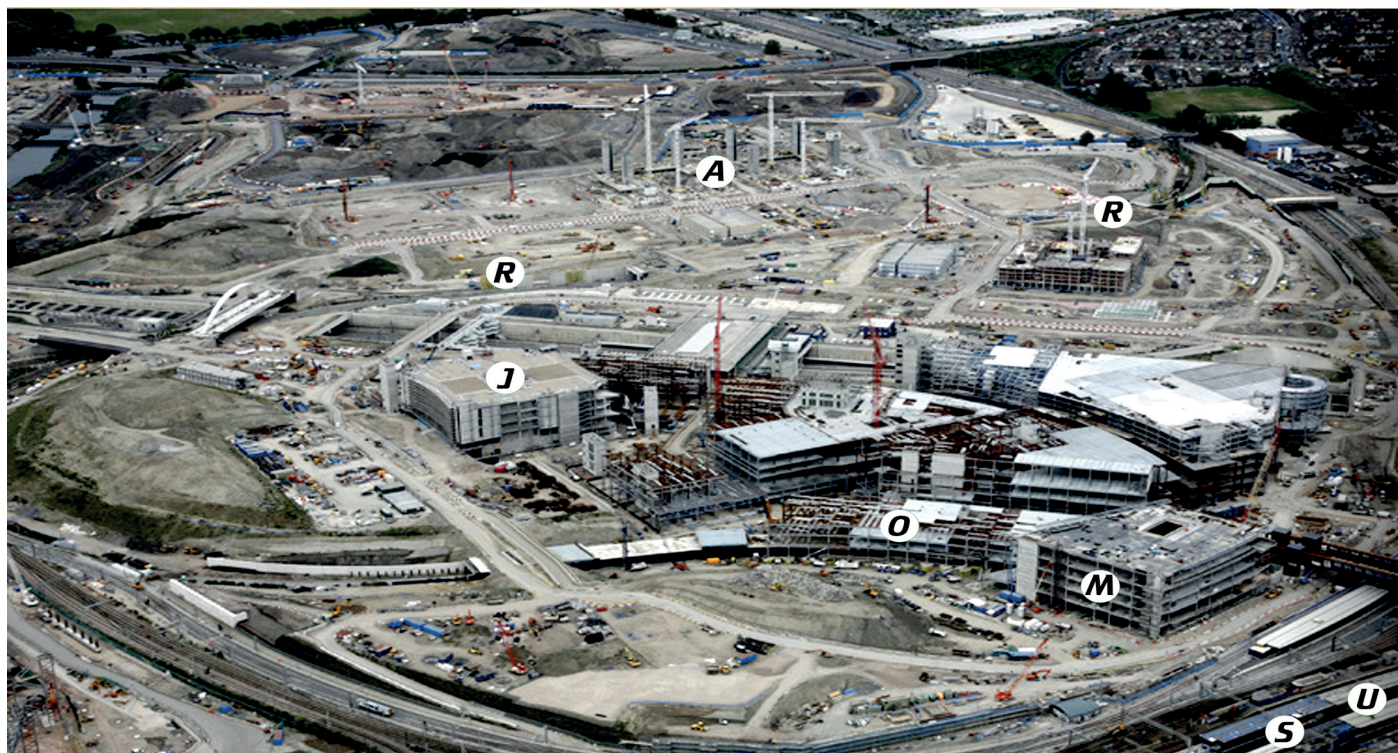
The plans for the post-Olympic legacy do not show any more of the Olympic 'wells of darkness'. But neither are there any attempts at 'London Squares' or the tall TERRACES whose densities made them possible.

The piece of Olympic Park that used to harbour the amusingly-abused white crumpled envelope of the temporary Basketball Arena is shown built-over with narrow streets and close-packed 'yards'. The wild ambition of the Olympic 'blocks' is abandoned for some more of the inconsequentialities of the native lifespaces. The delicious aroma of Urbanity wafted by the unaccustomed body of the Isola Block was rendered into a reek of ugly incompetence by the Olympic Wells of Darkness. The reward for this failure is a return to Ye Good Olde shambles of London's 'Trad' Lifespace.



A view of the Stratford Site after the Olympics. The Velodrome 'V' is to the right and the Olympic Village 'A' to the left. Between them is 'Chobham Manor' a proposed Post-Olympic neighbourhood of new houses and apartments. No doubt the charm of Chobham's inconsequentiality (it appears to be a happy 'Mediaeval' muddle 'castellated' by an enceinte-wall of 'guard-houses'), will appeal to any house-buyers appalled by the pointless regimentation of the 'wells of darkness' that were built across the road for the Athletes.

Meanwhile, and preceding the housing in time, we find that 'Stratford City' has already been built. There was no need for Urbanity where people resided. It had all gone to 'WESTFIELD'.



The land for the Olympic Village, although owned by the Olympic Delivery Authority, was leased to Westfield. BUT, after the Lehman crash, the ODA had to take back all the residential development. But Westfield did not delay their side of the work. The 'wells of darkness' Athlete's Housing 'A' was only just beginning when the huge Westfield Stratford Shopping Centre 'J, O & M' was almost finished. Note the railway, buried from 'R' to 'R', that no longer bisected the site and the Underground 'U' and Suburban 'S' Rail Stations that 'inspired' Westfield's 'Cataclysmic Money'.



In 2010 Westfield declared: "Over 70% of all (Olympic) Spectators would be passing through Stratford City". Well why not?. This was London after all. Except Stratford City was not part of any city as we know it. It was a 2,000,000 sq. metre shopping mall - the biggest 'urban mall' in Europe. One entered this 'city' over a bridge with glass sides (to reduce the wind). Its 'gate' was made by two faceless glass cubes of rentable office space A glass sided pedestrian bridge formed the lintel to the 'city gate.' Its only 'icon' was the sign (in bright red) which read: "Westfield".



*This was not Stratford City. It was 'WEST-FIELD CITY' - its owner, planner and creator.*



The Cor-ten bridge 'B' into 'Westfield City' enters from the bottom left. It takes Spectators who arrive by Suburban rail and the Underground Metro. More arrive via the Docklands Light railway to underneath Marks and Spencer 'M'. More still by the Eurostar Station 'E' to the right. Eurostar is ten minutes to St. Pancras and two hours to Paris. Westfield City's Citizens can live in Northern Europe. The Olympic Village 'V' is to the right. The 'life-belted' Aquadrome 'A' the first 'destination' after one has walked down the street 'C' called Westfield's 'Chestnut Avenue'.

## SO WHAT'S NEW?

The 'Citizens' of Westfield will feel at home. Its just like every other High Street in every other Country Town eviscerated of living and working (over the last 50 years) to become a 'shopping and administrative centre'. Lacking any Listed Buildings (the Factories failed to provide) the Architecture (should one use this word?) is about as iconically cretinous as it could possibly be. Do developers do this because by failing to provide any mental food 'for free' they encourage the shopper to buy it Retail?



## WHAT ELSE CAN ONE DO?

'Chestnut Plaza' leads from the three railway Stations, Underground, Over-Ground and Dockland's Light, over the Cor-Ten bridge, to the Olympic Stadia.



**Chestnut Plaza leads to The Town Square, well more like a slight swelling for the Citizens to pause before visiting, however vicariously, the next temple (if only they were!) to shopping.**

**It looks like a city, it feels like a city with its 'human scale' streets and spaces.**

**BUT NO ONE MAKES THINGS HERE.**

**NO ONE INVENTS THINGS HERE.**

**NO ONE HAS IDEAS HERE.**

**NO ONE TEACHES THINGS HERE.**

**THERE IS NO POLITICS HERE.**

**FINALLY,**

**NO ONE LIVES HERE.**

A Main Street leads, as of course it should, to the Town Square. What do we find there? The big John Lewis Department Store and the Waitrose Supermarket.

**THERE IS NOTHING HERE, IN THE WHOLE 2,000,000 SQ. METRES, EXCEPT READY-MADES FOR SALE.**

to the Right:

**CHESTNUT PLAZA AT NIGHT.**

**WESTFIELD OFFERS ITS 'PUNTERS' THE CHANCE TO WALK AROUND IN THE DARK AS AIMLESSLY AS ONE CAN ALSO DO IN THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY!**





It is true that **Westfield** have built some 'office space' in their 'City'. But this was in the formula from 1947. "Administrative users" were the only other users allowed to remain in the 'Central Area' - along with SHOPPING.

White collar workers could remain at the Centre. They were the higher class. Selected from the generality by meritocratic examinations, they performed the administrative and fiscal functions. The blue collars, banished to the housing and industrial estates had to travel-in to meet the white collars and then, lucky people, SHOP.

The so-called "Street" reveals that Westfield City harbours other sorts of Citizen than Shoppers. The 'rapid-racking' silos of Office-Workers loom in the distance.

Westfield's prescription for the Administrative Workers is as secretive as for the shops. The office-silos are a shiny blankness. Nothing whatever is 'said' by their 'Architecture'. We can classify them under the Lecture 22 'Decon' categories of 'Face Lift' and 'Cloak of Invisibility'. WHY are they so uncommunicative?

## WHAT CAN IT BE BUT FEAR.

Why was all craft-work and manufacturing driven out of the city? Why were the manual workers not re-housed inside the towns and cities of Britain? Why were they all turned back into miserable suburban-rustic cottagers when they had experienced the splendour of the great industrial cities that had powered the Empire?



Swot hard at your A-Levels and you may make it through to the Meritocracy. You won't live 'au centre'. But you could have a 'hot-desk' and one day, a desk on the outer wall. From this you may gaze-out on Nothing.



I had found this despicable strategy when I served in the Expanded towns division of the LCC/GLC. People who were Londoners, citizens of the greatest City on Earth, capital of the greatest Empire the Earth had ever known were shunted out to miserable two-up-two-down estates on the edge of ridiculous little 'country towns'. They were villains again, press-ganged into the country after the departure of the Romans. Civilisation had ebbed away from them. Urbanity was no more. But they could drive-in to its false imitation and buy it like miserable supplicants. It was no longer theirs by RIGHT OF RESIDENCE.

## **AFTERWORD: THE FORTY-SECOND LECTURE: 'WESTFIELD PARK'.**

*I was aware that The London 2012 Olympics had been 'won' with Ye Good Olde Englishe promise of 'Ye Natural Parke' - or Le Jardin Anglais, as they call it in Paris. But it was not until JOA began to analyse its actual design that the absolute unreality of FOA's Running-Tracks of Parkland really clarified. Is it just that drawing things on computers removes them from the tightly 'enfleshed' neural feedback behind hand, eye and mind? Is it that this new looseness introduced by the interposition of the computational 'black box' allows the expenditure of thousands of pounds of fruitless fees on the months and months of the pure silliness of the Olympic Park of Parallel Paths to the Fructiously Ripening Lifespace of Curvy Bridges and Petalicious Olympic Stadia?*

*Then as the 'Olympic Legacy' drama unwound its curious tale through the public media it became clear that it was not the Olympics that had seeded the whole 'Olympic Legacy' City/Park, or whatever it was supposed to become, but a long-standing decision to use the pre-existing Eurostar Undersea-to-Paris Express Stop at Stratford to inseminate a massive suburban building boom. It was this huge 'capital-event' that drew the Olympics to it, like the Death Star's Tractor Beam, rather than the reverse. In this it closely resembled the way that the 1999 Millenium/Dome ended-up on the tip of the Greenwish peninsula because in that position it could sit on the end of the biggest and newest metro line built in London for half a century. These sequences were obvious to the entrepreneurs who built railway lines across the USA, or even out into a 19C city's suburbs-to-be. They knew you paid for the capital cost of the railway by buying-up the cheap farmland around the spots where the trains would stop. Such simplicities have been long-overlaid by the Meritocratic preachings of 20C Land-Use Planning.*

*Our old clients Rosehaugh-Stanhope were involved in the early stages of Stratford (Train-Stop) City, along with a galaxy of their favourite Architects - namely Lords Rogers, Foster et al. But they disappeared along with the overall 'Scalextric Park' design to be replaced, around the complex of three diverse public-transport stations by the Giant Global Shopping Mall Developers - Westfield. Then the 'Park' moved away upstream to the steeply-ramped banks of the Lea River where their moveable plant-pot forests became confused with the spaghetti-junction acrobatics of the BMX rough-riding cycle-track.*

*Finally some of the most brutally 'Continental' mass housing of the sort flung up by the Class-War bureacracies of France and Holland was erected for the 'Athletes Village'. Its 'plattenbau' slabs created courtyards so tight and deep that the winter sun would never refresh the turfs laid for the promotional pics.*

*It would be really hard to imagine a worse way of creating a Sustainable Community/Olympic Legacy. It was just another swathe of British Rubbish.*