

## Breaking the mould of vanity publishing

Every issue of **arq** published to date has contained at least one paper on a building, series of buildings or planning project. All have been generously illustrated and written at a depth and length which the professional press can no longer sustain. But, on closer inspection, all is not well.

For example, in the first of two papers in the design section of this issue, Peter Blundell Jones' provides a penetrating review of Rudolphe Luscher's skilful and elegant extensions to an undistinguished group of school buildings. However, the many fine photographs which accompany Blundell Jones' critique are notable for the fact that every single one depicts an uninhabited space. There's nothing new in this: both author and **arq** are caught in a system of architectural photography in which space is often shown uninhabited.

In the second paper, Frank Duffy describes how architecture has served as a catalyst in the 'change management' of a major international airline. It's an intriguing account with many hopeful pointers for architecture and architects. Peter Cook's photographs are well populated but Duffy himself makes it clear that further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of Waterside in meeting British Airways' corporate objectives and in raising productivity.

But will even an enlightened client like BA permit any post-occupancy evaluation of the building, its fabric and environmental systems? And, if it does, will the airline, its insurers and its lawyers allow it to be published? It is important that they do so for, in the long run, research which covers a broad spectrum of inter-related factors and is focused on buildings of architectural significance is truly valuable for society at large.

For too long, architectural publishing has illustrated and reviewed largely unoccupied and untested buildings. Photographers and critics have had to make the best of a situation in which they are really only welcome before a building becomes fully operational. They, at least, can be forgiven - which is more than can be said of editors fighting to be the first to publish this or that new building.

This mould of what might be described as architectural vanity publishing must be broken. It damages our image and reputation as a profession by contradicting our stated goals. It isn't vanity. It's counterproductive.

THE EDITORS

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