

Building with words

In a past issue of **arq** (9.3+4), we addressed the idea that drawings and models are not simple and neutral things that architects think through. Neither are they merely instruments of communication – communication between architect and client, engineer and project manager, contractor and subcontractor. On the contrary, our editorial argued, the conventions of drawing and modelling condition much about the architecture that's built. Drawing conventions, so deeply ingrained in our habits and intellectual structures, inform the ways in which we're able to think as architects.

This issue returns to a similar theme. Here we look not at drawings and models but instead at some of the other documents used to make buildings – specifications, regulations, contracts and job correspondence – the textual tools of building. These documents usually remain on the periphery of any discussion about architecture as such. Typically they are consigned, unloved and unnoticed, to the literature of practice management and economics, imagined simply as a necessity for getting the job done. Here we argue that, given their substantial influence on built architecture, and on architectural culture, these documents deserve more critical attention.

The contents of this issue were first presented at a conference devised by Tilo Amhoff, Nicholas Beech and Katie Lloyd Thomas and held at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, in February 2011. That event, its intentions and the papers reproduced here are outlined in two reports: introduced by the event organisers (pp. 197–199) and reviewed by Mark Dorrian (pp. 200–204). Liam Ross, for example, provides a forensic analysis of the impact of window-cleaning regulations on the design of elevations, thought through in the context of Edinburgh's New Town (pp. 205–209). The lawyers Anne Bottomley and Nathan Moore present two case studies to show how contracts, just like buildings, can be imagined and designed creatively to encourage the results desired (pp. 261–268). If a vivid illustration of the power of contract documents is required, Sarah Wigglesworth's paper (pp. 210–216) illustrates how, in two of her own projects, different contractual processes contributed to very different architectural outcomes.

Collected in, and between, the papers presented here are some fruitful new directions for architectural research. The influence of contract documents, like the influence of drawings and models, is a theme to which **arq** will return.

THE EDITORS

architectural research quarterly

Subscribe now for 2012

arq

Innovative in conception, unique in breadth and generously illustrated, this pace-setting quarterly publication from Cambridge University Press links, on a global scale, the worlds of architectural practice and research. **arq** regularly includes extensive peer-reviewed sections on design, history, theory, construction, environmental design, information technology and practice – as well as structures, urbanism and documents. These are supplemented by letters, reports, reviews, a directory of specialist research centers and consultancies and an annual index. Each issue opens with a leader and closes with insight, a personal end-piece. In its ten year history, **arq** has published work from all over the world: from Chile to Sweden and from Japan to the Netherlands – with a strong representation from the United Kingdom and United States. **arq**, like architecture itself, is all-embracing and written by and for both practitioners and academics. It provides an outlet for all those who wish to disseminate their work to an international audience.

Please enter my subscription to
arq: architectural research quarterly, volume 16, 2012

- £220/\$370 institutions print and electronic
 £32/\$54 students print only
 £44/\$68 individuals print only

EU residents only. VAT may be payable at your local rate if not registered.

Our VAT registration number: GB 214 1416 14

If registered, your VAT registration no:

Total subscription payment £/\$ _____

EU residents only, if not registered
add VAT at appropriate rate £ _____

Canadian residents, add 7% GST \$ _____

Total £/\$

Name _____

Address _____

Payment enclosed

- Cheque in sterling or US dollars
(payable to Cambridge University Press)
 Credit Card – VISA | MasterCard | American Express
(delete where applicable)

Card no _____

Expiry date _____

Signature _____

Photocopy this page and send your order to:
Journals Customer Services, Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 8RU, UK

T +44 (0)1223 326070

F +44 (0)1223 315052

E journals@cambridge.org

or in USA, Canada and Mexico send to:

Cambridge University Press, 32 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10013-2473, USA

T (914) 937 9600

F (914) 937 4712

E journals_subscriptions@cup.org

arq16.3