



Fig.1

THIS MONTH : YOU DON'T GET AWAY THAT EASILY

You may have thought (hoped fervently, perhaps) that the One 17 newsletter had passed on. Not so. Just when you thought it was safe to open your in-box: here we are again. A brief sojourn over the summer months to recharge the batteries and we're ready once again to bring you the wonderful world of architecture and design as seen from our spot on the planet.

What has changed since we last spoke? Well, the recession is over apparently, for which I'm sure we're all mightily grateful. Oh, no sorry, that was yesterday. Still in recession, apparently. More importantly, the refurbished bridge over the stream by our site entrance (locals call it the 'well') is now complete and looks rather fine though we say so ourselves (Fig.2). The landscaping around the pond has matured (Fig.1, Fig.3) and we're looking forward to our bonfire next month.

Global warming remains a major talking point and there is now broad agreement on the need to reduce CO2 emissions. Whether we like it or not, if we accept the principle of global warming (and I accept not all do) then buildings must play an important role in the drive to reduce energy use.

In truth, the more energy efficient we can make buildings, the better it

must be, if for no better reason than it makes them cheaper to run. And yet there is still no blanket reduction of VAT on refurbishment and upgrading of existing homes. If we only seriously concern ourselves with the energy efficiency of new buildings it will, rather like paying off a credit card debt at the minimum payment per month, take forever to achieve our goal.



Fig.2

In theory at least, the motor car remains optional, whilst we all need buildings to live in. So why is it that we have seen the introduction of the scrappage scheme for cars and huge government support for producers of the internal combustion engine but

nothing, to all intents and purposes, for construction?

On that basis should we not have a scrappage scheme for old energy inefficient buildings and massive public support for new, energy efficient development? Well no, I don't think we should.

Admittedly this would significantly increase membership of the Rubble Club, the slightly tongue in cheek 'support' group set up to help architects who have been traumatised by seeing buildings they have designed demolished in their lifetimes. The great thing about so much of the built heritage of this country is that it can be adapted to new uses, and made more energy efficient, so that the embodied energy in the old dears (which is not inconsiderable) can be saved, in part at least.





Fig.3

Which is of course a reminder why it is important to make the buildings we design and build as good as we can in the first place, with as long a design life as we can imagine. Not much in our designed environment lasts as long as buildings. Pulling down a building, any building, after only a few years is a colossal waste of energy, resources, time, thought and people's efforts.

In fact most of the summer seems to have been taken up with political parties vying to outdo each other on subjects such as deregulation of the professions, abolishing space standards in buildings, setting improved space standards, relaxing planning legislation, tightening planning legislation, setting up more partnering frameworks, and arguing about sustainability and value for money, whatever those last two mean. Nothing about meaningful support for construction.

I think very little will happen for the built environment in legislative terms until after a general election, so perhaps the best option is to enjoy this holiday from change; I fear an avalanche of new legislation once the electoral dust settles.

On a very different note, Formula 1 has not been without controversy but I imagine anyone vaguely interested in the sport will welcome a British World

Champion. One 17 has been linked with F1 as One 17 GC, our graphics arm, has undertaken all the branding, display and print materials for the F1 in Schools Challenge. This brainchild of Andrew Denford, who runs an engineering company in Brighouse, is a simple idea brilliantly promoted. It aims to engage schoolchildren between the ages of 9 and 19 in engineering, science and technology through association with the glamorous world of Formula 1 motor racing. The programme is now international and very high-powered, as you can see from photographs taken at this year's grand finals held in London. Find out more at www.f1inschools.co.uk



Could we not do the same for construction? Where's the glamour connexion in building to excite schoolchildren? Who would you want to stand next to at the red carpet event? Who is our Lewis Hamilton?



Fig.4

It's good to be back. We hope you have not suffered too badly in recent months and we look forward to working with you as we look to the future. Oh yes, and in the unlikely event that you have nothing better to do, One 17 has recently started a series of blogs (Fig.4):

<http://one17design.blogspot.com>

<http://kidpremiership.blogspot.com>