

# Starting points on an architectural journey

BD asked architects to name the buildings that have most inspired them this year

This was a year when the Stirling Prize was taken home by its youngest ever winners, and one in which a number of Witherford Watson Mann's contemporaries also came into their own, writes *Ellis Woodman*.

I particularly admired Duggan Morris's Ortus building at Maudsley Hospital in south London and RCKA's nearby TNG Youth Centre: both public buildings in which the architect was instrumental in the formulation of the brief, allowing for the development of a very particular spatial arrangement and method of construction.

The past 12 months have also seen the talents of a number of older architects come into focus. Niall McLaughlin's Bishop Edward King Chapel at Cuddesdon was both its architect's most fully realised building to date and a strong contender for the title of the most impressive church to be completed in Britain in the past 40 years.

However, the two projects that most resonated with me were united in their allegiance to the classical tradition.

Caruso St John and Craig Hamilton have had very different careers – the former dominated by commissions from the contemporary art world, the latter by country house work – but in the Tate Britain refurbishment and Williamstrip Bath House, they found themselves drawing on closely related sources.

More persuasively than any building realised in this country since the death of Donald McMoran, these projects suggested the ongoing possibility of a progressive classicism.

At odds though they may be with the dominant architectural culture, I would venture that these projects will yet prove to be among the most influential of 2013.



Williamstrip pool by Craig Hamilton Architects.



**ADAM KHAN** ◀  
Adam Khan Architects  
A good year for prizes! Laure Prouvost's work was the best of the Turner Prize show but not the 'lookies' or critics' favourite – so well done, judges, for engaging with work of depth... and the same goes for the Stirling Prize.  
My highlight of the year was to see Tate Britain reimagined and utterly transformed – no longer the ugly duckling. Perhaps Astley Castle and the Tate can change the stale received wisdom about heritage in Britain and get people looking at Dollgast, Herrmann Czech and Lutyns.  
The new Calder Gallery gives the Hepworth a valuable project space, and Roger Hiorns' stunning opener showed the human figure as profound and shocking and beautiful.

Caruso St John's refurbishment of Tate Britain.



**PIERS TAYLOR** ▼  
Invisible Studio  
Shigeru Ban's Cardboard Cathedral in Christchurch was not necessarily the best building I've seen all year, but it's the one that meant the most to me, as it reminded me of the obligation architecture has over and above its own physical actuality.  
All too often, architecture is just glorified industrial design. Here, the cathedral acted to remind a city authority bogged down in the politics of its own reconstruction of the responsibility it had to its occupants – occupants who realised the building of the main city-led rebuild process. It shows the vast difference good architecture can make over and above the merely adequate.



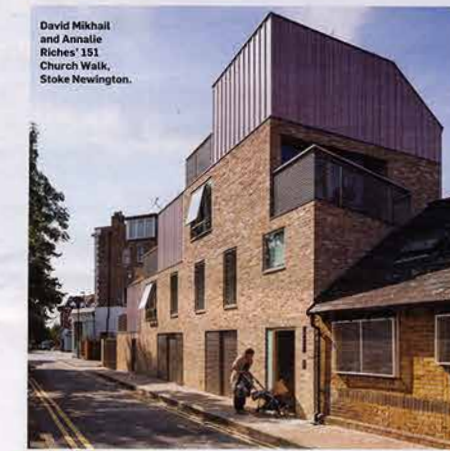
Above: Grafton Architects' medical school in Limerick; Right: the Cardboard Cathedral.

**MEREDITH BOWLES** ▲  
Male Architects  
Grafton Architects' University of Limerick Medical School reminded me of why I get out of bed in the morning. It's a smallish building but hugely ambitious, grand but raw. It

transforms simple teaching rooms into rich, theatrical spaces, with a generosity that verges on the heroic.  
The central space soars above the entry, rich in timber details against massive concrete. The section of the building

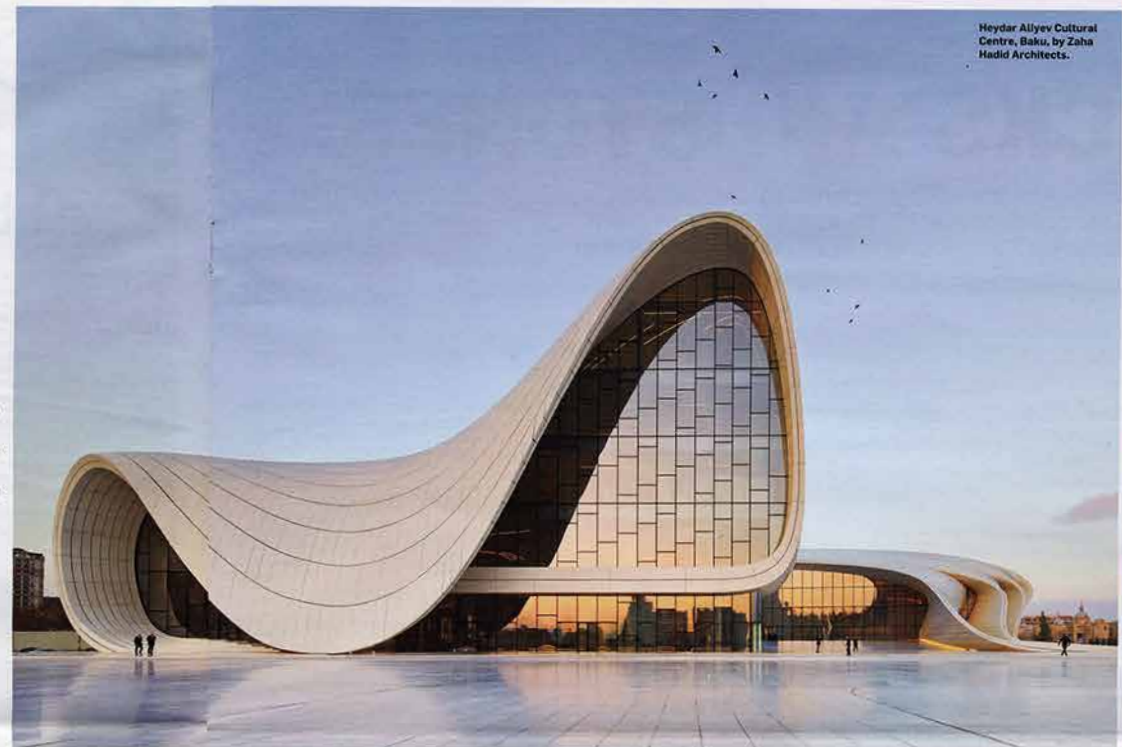
is complicated, with many ways for light to get in from above and down into the central spaces.  
This is the sort of project that the best students dare to design but grown-up architects rarely build.

**DAVID MIKHAIL AND ANNALIE RICHES** ▲  
Riches' 151 Church Walk, Stoke Newington.



**MARY DUGGAN** ▲  
Duggan Morris Architects  
I was lucky enough to see Church Walk by David Mikhail and Annalie Riches as a RIBA Award jury member this year, and I was struck by the detailing of the brickwork. They made a simple decision to use flush jointing, but did it really well.

Brickwork is generally perceived as a material that has mass, and this is normally overlaid by recessing the joints using various methods allowing shadow to create a further patination. The flush joints reduced the facade to a singular entity with the appearance of a painted canvas – really beautiful.



Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre, Baku, by Zaha Hadid Architects.

**PIERS GOUGH** ◀  
CZWB  
The best moment of the year was standing on the huge white paving slabs that sweep from the adjacent boulevard and sweetly curl up to seamlessly become the carapace of Zaha Hadid's Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre in Baku, Azerbaijan.  
The next best moment was looking from the soaring top floor down a cascade of sweeping levels to the architect herself, wondering on mis: "Where is Patrik?" And the next best was the delicious smell of that oak auditorium.  
The building is swooningly brilliant inside and out. It promises flowing space and delivers avalanches of it. The sequencing of complex geometries into each other is consummately designed and carried out.  
It reads like a gorgeous unequivocal love letter from Hadid to her homeland.



St John's College, Oxford.

**CLARE WRIGHT** ▲  
Wright & Wright  
Canterbury Quadrangle in St John's College, Oxford, has been extraordinarily inspirational to us this year. Moving towards and through it, with sight of the garden beyond, is a heartbreakingly beautiful experience. One is contained and released; there is a repetitive rhythm of arched forms, singular and multiple; the quadrangle is powerfully geometric, in some parts rich in detail, while in others simple.  
We are working within it and designing a scheme to extend it with a new study centre.  
The primary lesson of this Baroque masterpiece is that it stays vibrant and alive because the important tenets are upheld and preserved but, within those, there is constant renewal.



St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Manhattan, by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue.

**CRAIG HAMILTON** ▲  
Craig Hamilton Architects  
I discovered St Bartholomew's Church in New York by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue recently – and what a jewel it is. Consecrated in 1918, it embodies in every detail Goodhue's first real attempt at a modern, universal language of architecture.  
Out of his experiments in this church developed his late masterpieces such as the Nebraska State Capitol building. At St Bar's he collaborated with the sculptor Lee Lawrie and the designer Hildreth Meier to develop this new language. The mysterious interior beautifully demonstrates his profound belief in the immanence of God.



Rosemount Square, designed by Aberdeen's own city architects.

**MALCOLM FRASER** ◀  
Malcolm Fraser Architects  
I have been most inspired by Rosemount Square, Aberdeen: a granite pocket Karl Moser-Hof built during the second world war; an urban-dense 104 tenement flats, with its encircled court stuffed full of children's play areas.  
Who, on seeing it, would not feel inspired to try to rescue the simplicities of a civic, collective effort that puts sunlight and shared space at its heart, over the box-tick stasis of contemporary process?