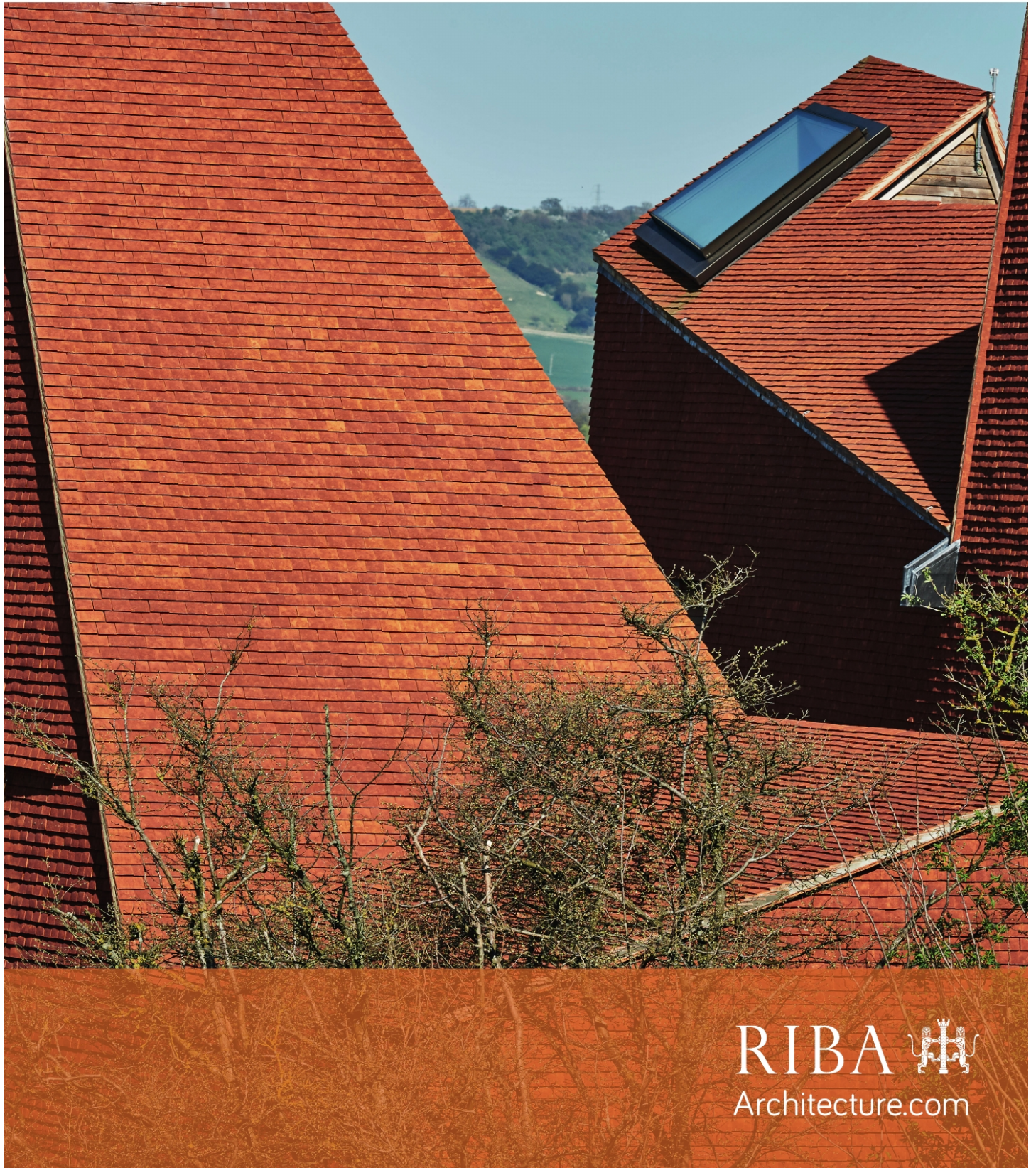


Residential 18

Royal Institute of British Architects
Directory of Chartered Practices



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Guest Foreword



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Good architecture is about using design to solve problems, some of which may not be obvious to the client.

Our homes tell our stories.

I've always loved buildings. I remember being delighted as young boy to accompany my father to his place of work. He was a telephone Engineer for the Post Office, (now BT), and the organization owned some of the most beautiful buildings which were the local telephone exchanges. These elaborate Victorian facades housed an even more elaborate array of wires, switches and cables, an interesting juxtaposition.

I hadn't realised it but these quarterly trips to my father's work were the beginning of my love affair with buildings, architecture and design. I was intrigued by the fact that these buildings hid a secret; they were so beautiful from the outside, yet you would have no idea of the application of the interior space simply by looking at it. As buildings they were both beautiful yet functional. This is the key to any successful building and particularly a residential home.

Many years later I set up the construction company Illustrious Homes and to date we have delivered over 8000 refurbishments, builds and renovations. We have worked on social housing stock, residential homes, sports centers and schools. In the process we have worked with architects both big and small, but one constant remains, almost entirely without exception, the most successful projects I have worked on started with a good design, with a good architect.

Good architecture is about using design to solve problems, some of which may not be obvious to the client. This is why I always recommend that my clients use an architect. However, for too long architecture has been seen as primarily concerned with the production of drawings. Whilst this is an important element of the architectural service, there are many additional services that an architect can offer.

It is important that clients understand these services and their benefits. In my opinion services such as project architecture, contract administration and design management play a vital part in the success of a project. The RIBA have played, and continue to play, a vital role in helping clients first understand the breadth of architectural services available and second, to gain access to these services. A directory such as this is a brilliant resource for clients looking to build or improve their homes.

The UK housing market presents an exciting challenge for architects and contractors alike. There is a dire need for well designed social housing. Historically the best architects designed social housing, think Le Corbusier and the 'Cite Radieuse'. So it's great to see recent innovative social schemes by architect firms such as Rogers Stirk Harbour (Y:Cube) and Niall McLaughlin (Silver Town), but there is still more work to be done by architects of all shapes and sizes.

In the residential space rising house prices are forcing individuals and families (especially in our commercial centers) to live in yet smaller spaces. So the need for good and inventive architecture has never been more important. Our homes tell our stories, they are where we live, where we raise our families where we laugh and where we cry. It is paramount that we strive to create a truly collaborative working environment where client, architect and contractor all work closely together in order to deliver the best residential projects.

Architects must be bold, be brave and make sure they engage fully with the client and contractors. This way client, contractor & architect can all work together to create a home that is both beautiful and functional, a home that truly tells a story.