



February 2009

## **A last hurrah? New architecture in the Square Mile**

City planner Peter Rees on its past and future, Maxwell Hutchinson on SOM, Patrick Lynch on Eric Parry, plus Grimshaw and GMW

Swiss doubles: Brendan Woods on Christian Kerez and Valerio Olgiati

Jørn Utzon's final work • Stamp on Palladio • Sam Jacob on the M25

Envelope: Massimiliano Fuksas, Clash Associates, Sauerbruch Hutton

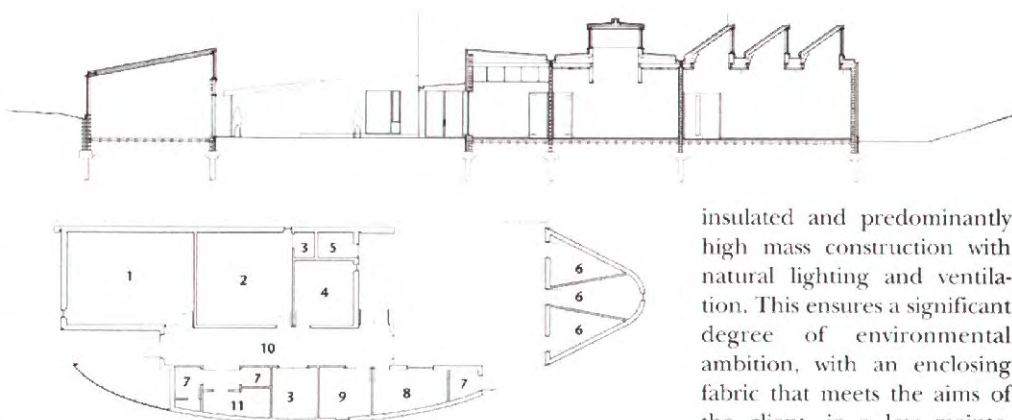


**Artistic endeavour**  
Clash Associates' Level Centre in the Peak District.

The Level Centre is the new home to First Movement, an organisation that develops arts projects with people with learning disabilities, writes Clash Associates. The Level (Live Event Link) project allows creative collaborations between different groups of learning disabled people who live many miles apart, by means of live video and audio link-ups.

The Level Centre building has flexible spaces with facilities for general purpose arts and creative events. They facilitate a wide range of performing, visual and media arts projects, and are equipped with lighting, sound, video projection and data services. The main spaces are supported by a range of ancillary meeting rooms, offices and toilet facilities along with creative industry studios available for rent to local artists.

Situated near Rowsley at the edge of the Peak District National Park, the building has a distinct character emanating from the strong forms and materials used in its



**Top/above** Bold architectural forms are expressed using zinc cladding and brick; view of the entrance courtyard; section.

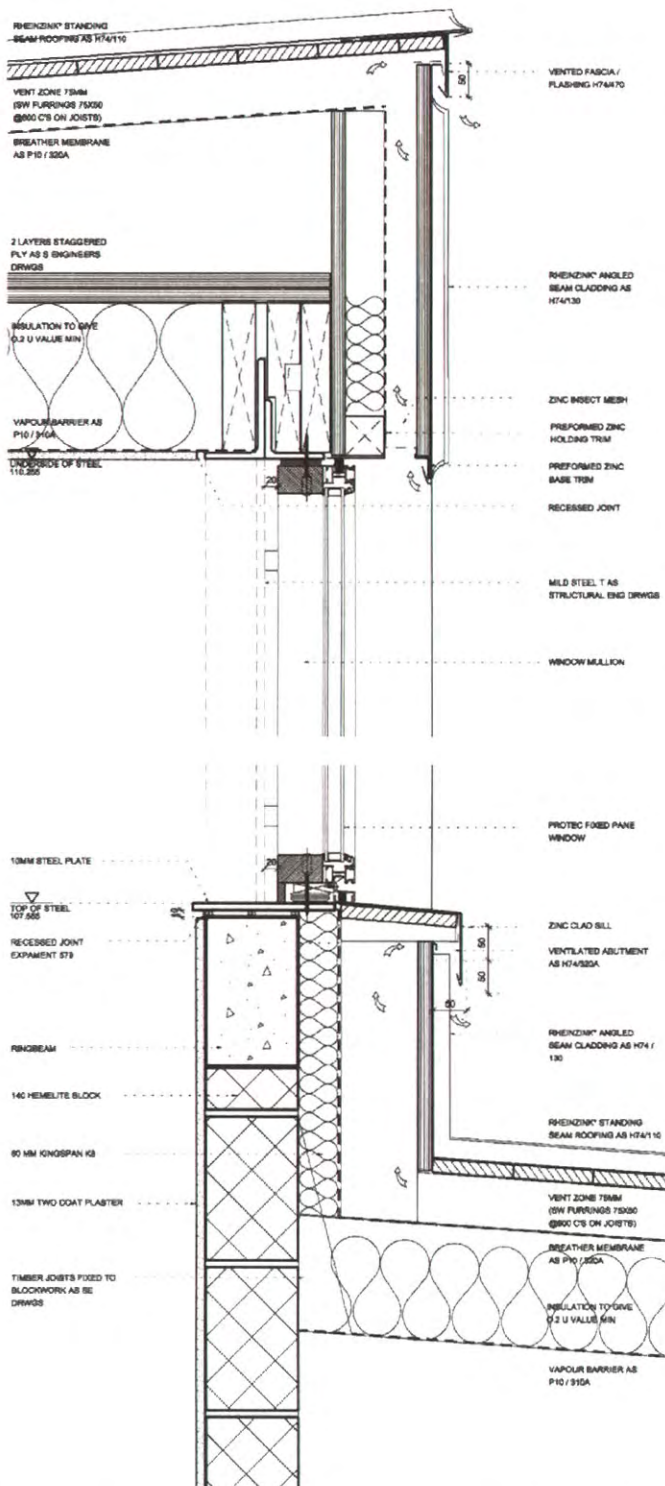
**Floor plan** 1 Arts events space, 2 Level space, 3 store, 4 technology studio, 5 plant, 6 creative studio, 7 wc, 8 meeting, 9 office, 10 foyer, 11 shower/changing.

construction, including hand-made brick and zinc, although it blends easily into the valley and surrounding hills.

The project uses a low-technology, intelligent design approach, combining highly

insulated and predominantly high mass construction with natural lighting and ventilation. This ensures a significant degree of environmental ambition, with an enclosing fabric that meets the aims of the client, ie a low maintenance, flexible and robust structure with good thermal and acoustic qualities.

The scheme provides a friendly, safe, accessible and inclusive place with clear spatial organisation, allowing easy and intuitive movement



through a sequence of spaces which are intended to encourage creativity and lift the spirit.

The structure is blockwork up to ring-beam level with timber and steel framework above. The building is clad in graphite grey zinc and handmade brick. Ventilated zinc construction was chosen because it is well suited to the geometry of the building and more economic than a non-vented system. Careful consideration was given to vent locations in order to minimise their number and maintain

crisp lines at the corners and edges of the building.

The wall construction comprises 140mm by 215mm blockwork, 60mm rigid insulation and horizontal battens, breather membrane, an 80mm vent zone with vertical battens, 25mm ply, underlay, and standing seam 0.8mm pre-weathered pro slate grey zinc.

The roof construction comprises a vapour barrier, timber joists/insulation zone, a breather membrane, vent zone, 25x125mm regularised boarding and standing seam

0.7mm pre-weathered pro slate grey zinc.

The design takes advantage of the large quantity of high level strip glazing, utilising the head and sill details as discreet vents. A wide vent zone in the walls produces a greater air flow, allowing for closed eaves details. The air is drawn up the wall and across the roof prior to being expelled at the sill of the clerestory window.

The handmade brick wall is constructed with third stretcher broken bond.

**Above left** Detail section through facade at eaves level.

**Above right** Ventilated zinc construction was chosen because it suited the geometry of the building and was cost effective; the double-height foyer is naturally lit using clerestory glazing.

**Project team**  
 Architect: Clash Associates; project team: Peter Clash, Ewan Stone, David Head; structure: Price & Myers; qs: Nigel Tate Associates; services: Hulley & Kirkwood; access: Michele Taylor; contractor: Wildgoose Construction; client: First Movement Trust; photos: Martine Hamilton-Knight.

**Selected suppliers and subcontractors**  
 zinc wall/roof cladding: RheinZink; windows: Protec Windows; facing bricks: Freshfield Lane Brickworks; blockwork: Topblock; curved glazing to roof lantern: Reglit; flooring: Altro; lighting: Philips.