

PIELL

Richard Rogers + Architects

From the house to the city



TU201 / W7

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FIELL

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Renzo Piano 'Richard Rogers is a great architect. He is the only architect I know that can be a humanist at 9 o'clock in the morning, a builder at 11, a poet just before lunch and a philosopher at dinner time. This is what I call a great architect.'

FOREWORD 7

By Sir Nicholas Serota.

INTRODUCTION 8

By Deyan Sudjic.

EARLY WORK 11

'Early work' highlights projects carried out by Richard Rogers as part of Team 4 (Norman and Wendy Foster and Su Rogers). This section explores the early theories applied in Rogers' works including flexibility, legibility and the research and use of new production processes as can be seen in the Zip-Up House and the Rogers' House.

PUBLIC 26

Public spaces are the physical realisation of a society's values. They are shaped by the communities that use them, which in turn are shaped by the spaces that define them. Public space is a catalyst, generating energy and excitement. It brings a calm and stillness that offers a respite from the noise and chaos of cities.

LEGIBLE 54

Legibility in architecture finds order, scale and expression in the process of construction. The concept of legibility can be understood as an attempt to make visible the activities that take place inside a building, to give them an identity, rather than leaving them as anonymous functions within uniform blocks.

LIGHTWEIGHT 72

Lightweight structures achieve more with less material. Rogers' practice is firmly in the lightness camp, consistently seeking to find the maximum economy of means – doing more with less through close interaction with engineers. The result is an architecture that is lightweight and which responds to functional needs.

GREEN 92

'Green' implies buildings and cities that are designed to be environmentally responsible. Architects, scientists and politicians need to work together to reshape cities in such a way that ensures that they use less energy. The use of natural resources to warm and cool buildings provides the starting point for shaping our buildings and cities.

TIMELINE 111

A foldout reference of selected projects by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners.

TRANSPARENT 130

Transparency in architecture is a representation of the breakdown of traditional hierarchies, as well as opening up buildings to light and view. Layering materials allows for the play of light and shadow to be manipulated to create the impression of transparency.

SYSTEMS 152

Innovative production processes and high-tech materials that were inconceivable two decades ago have made it possible for building systems to become more flexible, adaptable and efficient. Architecture can now be the product of components made in the controlled conditions of the factory rather than on site. The discipline of such production methods gives form, scale, rhythm and legibility both to the individual parts and to the whole of a building.

URBAN 182

Compact, multi-centred cities are the only environmentally sustainable form of urban development for future generations. They are a rational and economical way of creating human settlements that offer a high quality of life. They need to combine living and work, and encourage the rich and poor, the young and old to mix freely. Pedestrians, bicycles and public transport take priority over the car, and environmental responsibility is the driving force behind the planning of such settlements.

CITIES AND THE FUTURE 200

By Richard Rogers.

WORK IN PROGRESS 202

Current and future works are featured in this section, which demonstrate how Rogers' approach is evolving as a result of the influence of his younger partners, Graham Stirk and Ivan Harbour. Within this section, the themes that define the partnership's work have been adapted to make them relevant to new demands and requirements, including climate change.

INSIDE OUT 236

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Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners



An Evolution: Richard Rogers Partnership becomes Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners

In 2007, Richard Rogers Partnership became Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSHP), reflecting the increasingly important role played by two of the younger directors, Graham Stirk and Ivan Harbour, alongside other established directors, like Mike Davies, Andrew Morris and Lennart Grut.

The practice's long-standing constitution and philosophy remain unaltered: RSHP continues to be owned by a charity and the directors

have no financial stake in the business. But this new name signals the practice's ability to look to the future and tackle the challenges ahead – from economic uncertainty, to climate change, to affordable housing.



1 Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, 2008

2 Directors, 2009

Standing: Andrew Morris, Lennart Grut, Graham Stirk, Ian Birtles, Mark Darbon, Ivan Harbour and Mike Davies

Seated: Richard Rogers, Richard Paul and Amarjit Kalsi

Over more than three decades, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSHP), has attracted critical acclaim and many international awards and honours. It has become one of the most admired architectural practices working internationally.

The practice was founded in 1977 by Richard Rogers; one of the great innovative figures of our time and in recent years has evolved as the result of his partnership with two other exceptional architects, Graham Stirk and Ivan Harbour.

The practice is best known for such pioneering buildings such as Centre Pompidou, Paris; the European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg; Terminal 4 Barajas Airport, Madrid; and Lloyd's of London, the Millennium Dome and Lloyd's Register of Shipping, all in London.

However, Rogers is also one of the most creative thinkers in the world about the issues of urban planning and the way we need to adapt our lives and our cities to the economic and environmental challenges of the early 21st century

The work of RSHP ranges very widely to include airports, cultural projects – such as its current extension to the British Museum – hospitals, residential developments and office buildings.

Central to the philosophy of the practice is a commitment to quality in the public spaces that surround buildings, in order to ensure that inner-city areas are places that welcome the whole community. This commitment permeates all RSHP buildings, both public and private.

The practice has won many awards including, exceptionally, the Stirling Prize for Terminal 4 Barajas Airport in 2006 and again in 2009 for Maggie's London.

Richard Rogers is the 2007 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate, the recipient of the RIBA Gold Medal in 1985 and winner of the 1999 Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Medal. His creativity burns as fiercely now as it did in those early projects conceived 40 years ago.

Sir Nicholas Serota
Director, Tate

FOREWORD

Richard Rogers has built a reputation as one of the key architects of his generation. His designs are remarkably consistent, representing a sense of optimism about the possibilities of the modern world. For a working architect, he has taken an unusually active part in public and political life; contributing to government policy with his work on the UK's Urban Task Force, and the advocacy of high density sustainable development; and as an advisor to two successive London mayors, Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson.

Over the last 45 years, Richard Rogers and his many colleagues and collaborators have worked to develop a shared architectural language. This is born of a fascination with the processes of construction and with the way that people relate to the buildings around them. It has sustained his architectural practice in many incarnations, firstly under the name of Team 4; then as Piano + Rogers; later as Richard Rogers Partnership; now as Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners. The firm has a global reach, undertaking a wide range of projects from South Korea to Mexico and the USA, as well as across Europe.

This language is the product of the many people who make the practice's projects a reality. Graham Stirk and Ivan Harbour his two key present-day partners – together with other partners such as Mike Davies, John Young and Laurie Abbott – have, themselves, been intimately involved in seminal projects with Rogers that have helped to refine the subtleties of this language and created an architectural vocabulary and grammar which can be read across all work – built and unbuilt.

The practice has moved from such early speculative projects as the 'Zip-Up House', which explored how off-the-shelf components used for refrigerated containers might be put

to work for prefabricated housing, to more recent attempts at approaches to low-cost housing. It has worked on high-rise office towers, airports and masterplanning projects, seen perhaps at its most developed in the competition-winning scheme for Pudong, Shanghai's new business district, and such unique projects as the Millennium Dome in London, essentially a cable-supported tent.

These themes represent an attitude to the practice of architecture as a social as well as a technical and spatial art. They are concerned not just with the creation of mute objects but with a wider understanding of the possibilities of design. Some represent the abiding values of architecture. Others are responses to a rapidly changing world. The way that the office itself is constituted and owned by a charitable trust, and Rogers' own work as an advisor on urban affairs to national governments and city mayors is another reflection of those themes. Beyond the design of individual buildings, the practice has always considered the wider urban dimension.

Public spaces are the physical realisation of society's values. Rather than creating introverted closed buildings, the practice has worked to make them permeable, bringing life to the spaces around them.

In contrast to some of the more traditional methods of the construction industry organised predominantly along craft lines, architecture can now be the product of repetitive components made in a factory. It makes the building process far more precise, and more economical. As a result, architects need to design buildings in ways that recognise this, rationalising the details, understanding structure as an assembly of carefully engineered pieces.

Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners has a preference for lightness and transparency, rather than for the monolithic and the heavy, and not just for aesthetic reasons. In the past, architecture has been used to represent traditional hierarchies. Transparency breaks these hierarchies down, as well as opening up buildings to light and view. Legibility in architecture finds order, scale and expression in the process of construction. The practice designs buildings that make it clear how they work, and how they are made. Structure is exposed and visible, each element in a building such as stairs and services is articulated.

For many years, the practice has worked to promote the idea of compact, multi-centred cities as the only sustainable form for urban development. Such cities make the best use of scarce land and can support efficient public transport systems. They are also more likely to encourage the kind of rich social diversity that is the mark of a flourishing city.

Lightweight structures achieve more with less material. It's a strategy that reflects an attitude to the careful use of resources, and is the route to an elegant economy of means. Sustainability has been an essential quality since the early days. 'Green' implies buildings and cities that are designed to be environmentally responsible. It is not about a style.

Until modern times, successful human settlements have always been based on environmental balance. Cheap energy upset that balance. Architects are now obliged to redress the imbalance, using means that range from the passive to the technological.

Richard Rogers was shaped in part by his family background, the product of an Anglo-Italian upbringing. His cousin, Ernesto Rogers, was a member of the celebrated Milanese practice

BBPR, that built the Torre Velasca in Milan. As editor of *Domus* magazine, he wrote the famous editorial in 1946 which suggested that from a close enough examination of a spoon, it would be possible to understand the nature of the kind of city that the culture that created it would build. Richard Rogers has always subscribed to this idea. In essence, he believes that there is a kind of design DNA running through projects at every scale, and perhaps also, that it is the connection between architecture and the people who use it which is essential to bringing it to life.

Rogers was born in Florence, Italy in 1933, but moved to England as a child. He was educated at the Architectural Association in London in the decade following World War Two. He was taught, among others, by Alan Colquhoun and then went through the transforming experience of a postgraduate year at Yale. In America he was exposed at first hand to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, and Charles Eames. He was a student of Paul Rudolph, who gave him a crash course in form shaping; of the historian Vincent Scully; and of Serge Chermayeff, who provided him with an insight into the sociology of city planning. James Stirling was a visiting tutor.

Yale was also the place where he got to know Norman Foster. After graduating and a spell working for SOM in San Francisco, Rogers went home to start his first practice Team 4 with Norman and Wendy Foster and Su Rogers, his first wife. In the brief life of Team 4, they completed Creek Vean. This is a remarkable private house that owed much to Rogers' experiences of America where he and Foster – under the spell of the inspirational teaching of Scully – had visited every Frank Lloyd Wright building that they could find. While travelling around the States, Rogers was also greatly influenced by visiting Charles and Ray

Eames' house in Santa Monica, and other great modern buildings such as Rudolph Schindler's Chase House in West Hollywood and Raphael Soriano's Shulman House.

Team 4's largest work was Reliance Controls, the now demolished factory outside Swindon that drew on the precedents of Charles Eames and the work of the Southern California Schools System to produce Britain's first 'high-tech' building. The building was characterised by diagonal cross-braced structure and exposed steel I-beams.

After Team 4, Rogers established his own practice under the wing of the Design Research Unit, the design consultancy started by his father-in-law, Marcus Brumwell, also the client for the Creek Vean house. They built a roof-top extension to accommodate the studio in Aybrook Street, in London's Marylebone. This was memorialised by Jan Kaplicky, Rogers' one-time assistant, with a montage that showed a VW Beetle plugged into the building's roof. What happened next was what made Rogers' name, and laid the foundations for the practice as it is today. Almost as soon as Rogers had established a practice with Renzo Piano, they entered – much against Rogers' better judgment – the competition to build a new arts centre in the middle of Paris.

Modernism looked exhausted in the 1970s, but the Pompidou Centre in Paris re-energised it. Some 30 years after its completion, the Pompidou is still an extraordinary achievement; a tour de force in the manipulation of construction and materials, inspired in part by the work of Jean Prouvé, who was in fact the chairman of the competition jury, and also, perhaps, by the counter-cultural flamboyance of the period. The Pompidou could be seen as the progeny not just of Prouvé's meticulous, deft engineering and

making, but also of the impermanence of Cedric Price's architectural projections and the playful anarchy of Archigram. But unlike either of them, the Rogers' team was able to go through with the project, and actually build what seemed like an impossible vision at the outset.

Rogers and Piano went their separate ways after the Pompidou was completed. Rogers' practice explored some of the themes suggested by the Pompidou in the Lloyd's of London building. These are buildings which are highly legible: the way that they work is made visible, with a structural system clearly articulated; there is a clear distinction between served and servant space, in the manner of Louis Kahn who had inspired Rogers as a student.

When the climate against experiment and innovative architecture hardened in the 1980s, Rogers refused to compromise. He maintained his approach and his design philosophy.

Today the practice is busy across the world, taking part in the reconstruction of the former World Trade Center site in Manhattan, New York, as well as working on projects in Japan, China and Australia and across Europe on architectural and masterplanning schemes.

Deyan Sudjic
Director, Design Museum, London

This section highlights projects undertaken by Richard Rogers as part of Team 4 (with Norman and Wendy Foster and Su Rogers). It explores the early theories applied in Rogers' works including flexibility, legibility and the research and use of new production processes as can be seen in the Zip-Up House and the Rogers' House. It provides a fascinating insight into Rogers' early thinking on the organisation of work and living space and the ability of buildings to adapt to changing requirements over time. Many of the projects in this section hint at the boldness of the Pompidou Centre and Lloyd's of London and demonstrate an awareness and application of new materials in construction that was years ahead of its time.