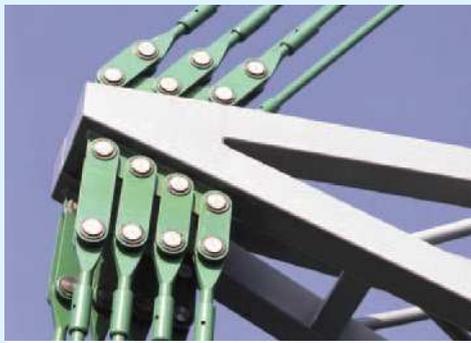


¡PILLO!



High-Tech landmark under threat

Plans to demolish a Grimshaw-designed 1980s Homebase superstore as part of a major new housing scheme have been criticised by the practice's chairman and have triggered a campaign by the *Architects' Journal* to reuse rather than rebuild in the interests of sustainability.

The *AJ* reported that, under proposals drawn up by part of the **Berkeley Group**, hundreds of HTA-designed homes will be built at the site of the Tesco Extra store in Osterley, west London, with the nearby Homebase making way for a new Tesco Extra plus further homes in a scheme by **Patel Taylor**. In all, 2,250 dwellings are planned across the two linked sites.

Grimshaw chairman **Andrew Whalley** calls the scheme 'short-sighted and unsustainable', particularly given that the Homebase will be replaced with another superstore. He worked on the design of the Homebase – which stands on the A4 opposite **Bannister Fletcher's** famous Gillette building – in 1986 in his first job for the practice.

"Aside from its eye-catching design, visible both from the road and from the Heathrow flight path, the Homebase project was also conceived to be as flexible as possible to ensure the accommodation of future use," Whalley wrote to the *AJ*. 'The long span structure accommodates 4,180m² of column-free space, ideal for various adaptations.

Any new development at this site, and for that matter at any building site, should take into consideration the structure that may already be there. While we give attention to buildings for reasons of heritage or other architectural importance, we should also consider the inherent sustainability in adaptive reuse projects."

The Homebase is on the **Twentieth Century Society's** Top 10 Buildings at Risk list for this year.

While the society has submitted a listing request, the developer has submitted a request for a certificate of immunity from listing.

Twentieth Century Society caseworker **Grace Etherington** called the building pioneering and said: "Grimshaw designed an exciting and dramatic store, far from what shoppers expect of a standard retail building, and the column-free design offers a remarkable level of flexibility for future use.

The building makes an excellent contribution to the Great West Road, referencing the Gillette Factory's prominent tower across the road and displaying the best of British High-Tech architecture to visitors making the journey into the city centre along the A4."

Berkeley Group defends its position at length, their conclusions being: "At present, the site is in a single unsustainable use, offers very little to the local community, the public realm around the site is of poor quality and there is a lack of ecology and biodiversity..."

If the Homebase building is listed, this unique opportunity to unlock these brownfield sites will be lost, and no homes, new jobs, community facilities or significant biodiversity improvements will be delivered. ■



No consensus on consensus

Labour splits have reached a nadir after failing to find a consensus on the word 'consensus'.

At a meeting to merge several Brexit motions at their conference there was a discussion about the definition, with some suggesting that it meant unanimity while others felt that it could mean a minority ceding to the majority. ■

I feel their pain

The RTPi's ICN (Independent Consultants Network discussion forum) shares the daily toil of its members. Here's a recent example.

I don't think it helps that (certainly in my area) the LPA fudges the MHCLG returns by getting developers to agree to an extension of time when the officer finally gets around to sorting things out.

So the reality (which I am guessing is quite possibly <10% being decided in 8 weeks, as they are still taking at least 4 weeks to validate and this hasn't changed for some time) is not reflected in the published data and quite possibly not even understood by Councillors.

A pinch of salt for the statistics we publish in each issue then. ■

BELOW: Is this a GLA outpost in the Costa Brava? And the significance of the Independista flag? We should be told.

