

Studio Sergison
Spring Semester 2010

Work/place



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Aerial photograph of St. Giles area

Introduction

Jonathan Sergison



The studio will continue to investigate an urban architecture through the study of normative programmes. London will again be the setting for projects.

The theme for this semester's work is work/place. A number of sites in the St. Giles area of central London have been selected. We will begin by looking at a standard work place to understand the social landscape of office space.

A number of exemplary office buildings will be studied and students will then start working individually. Projects should be developed firstly as carefully considered urban concepts and later as intelligently argued tectonic and typological solutions.

A visit to London will be organised at the beginning of the semester.

The studio will continue to be supported by lectures and seminars by invited experts.

Coenties Slip, New York/ Wall Street,
Thomas Struth, 1978

The direct correlation between productivity and employees' sense of wellbeing has been recognised for a long time.

Many people spend more time at work than at home and the need to personalise a place of work needs to be considered in design. All too often one is bemused by the kind of general office detritus that is on display, when the designer of the building has insisted on floor-to-ceiling glazing for reasons of architectural purity.

Another crucial factor is the size of the office floor plate and the distance from the external envelope. Employees should not be far removed from natural light and interiors should retain a relationship with the surrounding city. Furthermore a deep-plan building is incapable of dealing with air movement in a passive way and is often reliant on energy consuming air conditioning.

It is invariably the interstitial, programmatically less determined spaces that prove to be the most vital: the landing of a staircase, the lift, or the location of a vending machine or photocopier as informal meeting places. The encounters they promote do not directly increase productivity but engender a sense of collectivity, which is beneficial to both employers and employees.

The tension between function and spaces without an obvious programme should be carefully judged, for they determine a good working environment. An office should be designed with more than a tight net-to-gross ratio in mind: we should be careful with the space between with in-between spaces. The size of the lifts, the sequence of spaces between street and desk, so as to support both flexibility and a sense of belonging.



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1
Foyer of the Seagram Building,
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1958

2
Office space inside the Seagram
Building, Ludwig Mies van der
Rohe, 1958

3
Water Street, New York,
Thomas Struth, 1978

4
The Economist Plaza, Alison and
Peter Smithson, 1959-1964

Context: St Giles

St Giles's Circus is the intersection of Oxford Street, New Oxford Street, Charing Cross Road and Tottenham Court Road in the West End of London. The word Circus is arguably a little misleading as the buildings around the traffic intersection are not all rounded, as with for example Oxford Circus. The area is historically known as St Giles's, but can now be seen as the point where the corners of Soho, Covent Garden, Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia meet.

From the Roman period to the mid 19th century, St. Giles's High Street was the main approach to the City of London from the west. In the Middle Ages, the city's gallows were located at St. Giles's Circus alongside a cage for prisoners. Later, when the place of public execution was moved west to Tyburn Tree, the Angel Inn near the Circus became a stopping point for the condemned on the way to Tyburn where they would be offered a final drink. The Church of St Giles in the field next to the Inn was founded in 1116 by Matilda of Boulogne as a leper church and hospital whose estate ran south as far as today's Shaftesbury Avenue. The current Grade 1 listed church is the third on the site and was re-built in a Palladian style in 1733.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the area became home to migrants and developed in an unplanned manner that became known as 'the Rookery' and was notorious for its crime, poverty, overcrowding and disease, with several outbreaks of plague starting there. William Hogarth depicted the area in his celebrated engraving Gin Lane.

The development of New Oxford Street and Shaftesbury Avenue in the mid 19th century broke up the area though the alleys and courts around Denmark Street retain some sense of this character and Denmark Street is one of the few streets in London where original 17th century terraced facades survive on both fronts. The area was bombed during the Second World War and the majority of the commercial development in the area



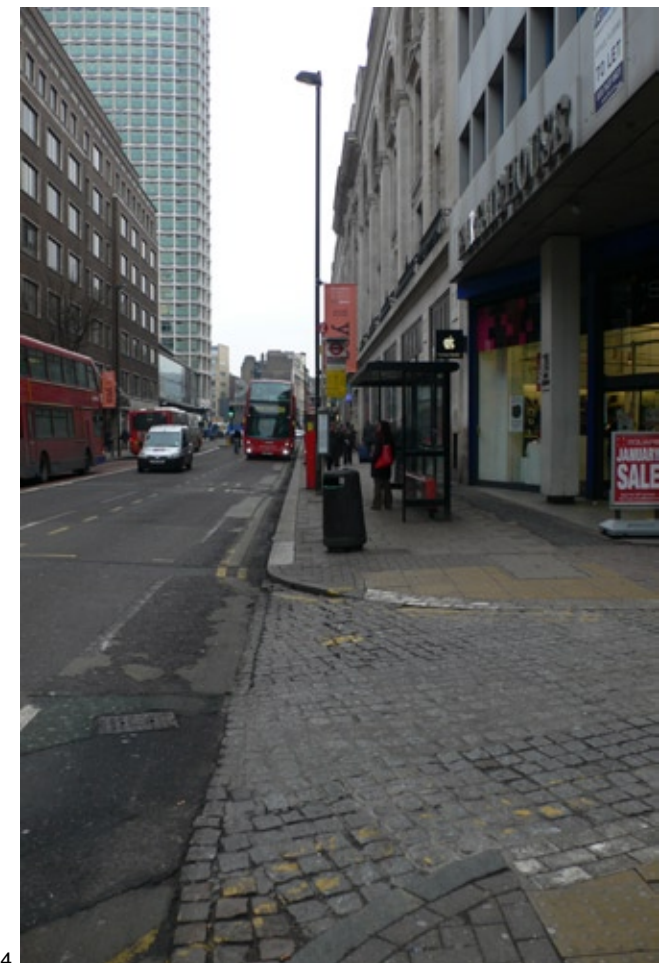
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- 1
Shaftesbury Avenue
- 2
New Oxford Street, looking east
- 3
Soho Square, looking east
towards Centre Point
- 4
New Oxford Street, looking west
towards Centre Point

has been of poor character.

The area is today dominated by Centre Point Tower, located on the south-east corner on New Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road. As part of the Centre Point project the developer was to have included a modern traffic roundabout and transport interchange but this part of the scheme was not delivered.

Tottenham Court Road tube station is located beneath the intersection and redevelopment to build a Crossrail station with a new entrance and public square which will be known as Centre Plaza is currently in progress.



12



3



1
Night skyline with Post Office Tower

2
Newman Street at night

3
Bedford Avenue

4
Tottenham Court Road, looking south



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First exercise: A study of work space

Your first piece of work will be a study of an office interior, which will involve an investigation of what makes a place of work and a survey of the interior architecture of an office.

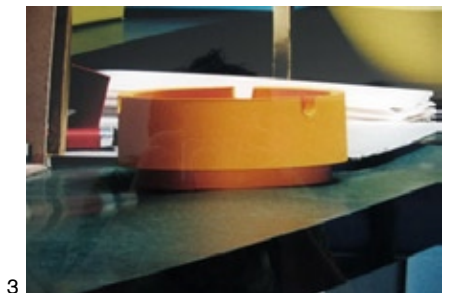
You will need to locate an existing office building with a large internal footprint. This should be somewhere you can gain access to easily. A carefully made photographic record of the space should be made. You should then make a large (1:10 or 1:20) scale model of this space recreating the image you have taken as a photograph. The model should then be carefully photographed to represent the atmosphere and character of this interior. A lecture will be given to help inform your understanding of the technique and conceptual basis for the study



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1
Office, Christine Erhard, 1998

2
Entrance hall, Christine Erhard,
1998

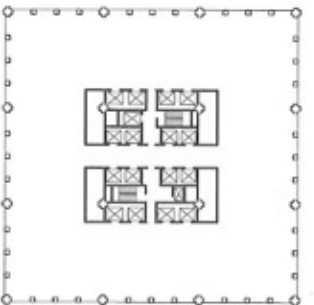
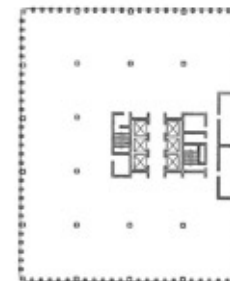
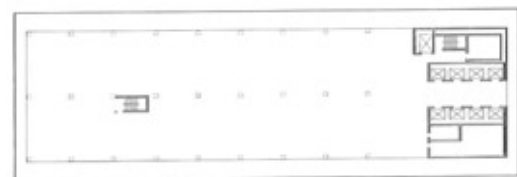
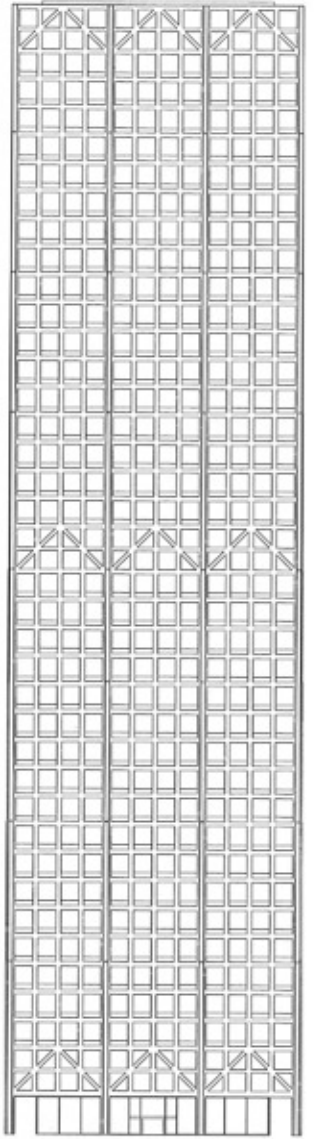
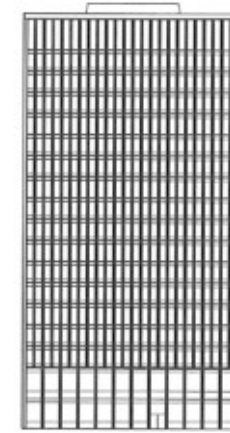
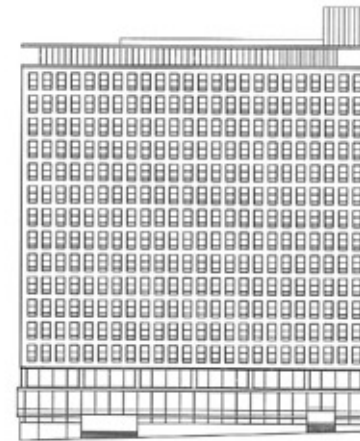
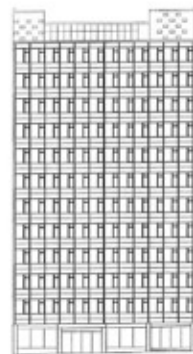
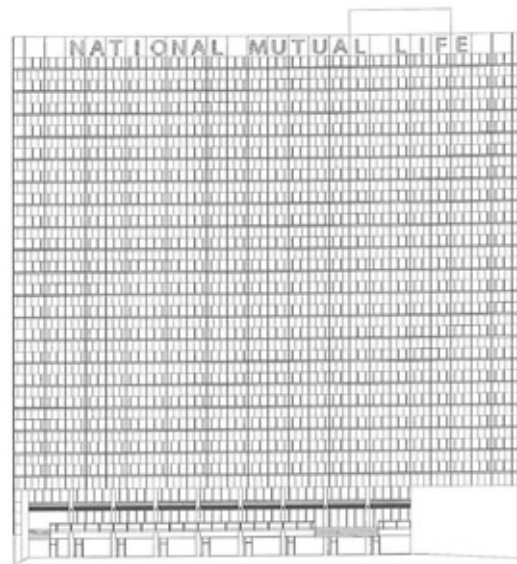
3
Detail from "Kitchen",
Thomas Demand, 2004

4
Detail from "Kitchen",
Thomas Demand, 2004

Second exercise: Survey

A number of exemplary office buildings have been selected for study. These are all situated in central London and represent known types or solutions that can be instructive in terms of your own questioning of what a large office building is and how it might be possible to substantially develop a financially valuable central London site.

This exercise should be undertaken precisely and rigorously. Working in pairs, a 1:100 drawing should be produced of the ground floor, typical upper floor and elevations of the building you are studying. We would also expect you to produce reliable factual information about the building that will enable this work to form part of a common and shared body of knowledge.



Reference buildings



1, 2

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7

8



4, 5, 6

9

10 11

1
New Zealand House, Trafalgar Square, London WC2, RMJM, 1959-1963

2
Euston Tower, 286 Euston Road, London NW1, Sidney Kaye, 1970, renovated by Arup Associates

3
Centre Point, 101 New Oxford Street, London WC2, Richard Robin Seifert & Partners, 1959-64

4
30 Finsbury Square, London EC2, Eric Parry Architects, 1999-2003

5
5 Aldermanbury Square, London EC4, Eric Parry Architects, 2001-2007

6
23 Savile Row, London W1, Eric Parry Architects, 2007-2009

7
The Economist Building, 25 St James's Street, London SW1, Alison and Peter Smithson, 1959-64

8
Holland House, Bury Street, London EC3, Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1914-16)

9
IBM Central London Marketing Centre, South Bank, London SW, Sir Denis Lasdun, 1978-84

10
Broadgate, City of London, London EC2, Arup Associates with Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1984-91

11
ITN Headquarters, 200 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, Foster and Partners, 1989-1990

Project

Your project should be understood as three discrete but overlapping pieces of work.

Stage 1

In the first stage we would ask you to develop an urban concept for your site. A collectively produced 1:500 massing model needs to be constructed. Using this, you should develop options that explore an appropriate urban concept for your site. We would expect numerous possibilities to be explored before you develop a more refined version of your preferred option. In the first instance, models should be made quickly and in a way that is not precious. The final model should be accurate and carefully made from timber.

A presentation will be made to introduce this stage.

Stage 2

The second stage will be to develop a plan and facade concept for your building. Emphasis will be placed on drawings made at 1:100 scale for plans and elevations and 1:50 for section studies.

You will be expected to explain the relationship your building has to the city.

A presentation will be made to introduce this stage.

Stage 3

The final piece of work will involve the production of two perspectives. The first one should represent the relationship of your building to the city. The second one should illustrate an interior and its relationship to the outside. A presentation will be made to introduce this phase of work.



Programme 2009

Date	Event	Details	Assignment
18 – 19 February	Introduction to semester	Jonathan Sergison (JS) presents studio and spring semester. Presentation on 'illustration architecture' by GN	Book tickets and accommodation for London field trip Choice of office interior
25 - 26 February	Tutorials		
4 – 5 March	Reviews	Review of place of work study. Presentation: 'How to make a survey of a building' by Jonathan Sergison	1:20 / 1:10 model photographed
11 – 12 March	Field visit to London	Please see separate programme for detailed information	Survey of housing projects and site visits
17 – 18 March (AAM closed on 19 March)	Reviews	Review of survey work Project briefing	Survey drawing of office building 1:100
25 – 26 March	Tutorials	Lecture by JS: 'A case for the normative'	Begin 1:500 work model of building in context
1 April	Reviews	Guest critic: Martin Steinmann Introduction to stage 2	1:500 model
15 – 16 April	Tutorials		Plan, facade, section 1:100 / 1:50 drawings
22 – 23 April	Tutorials		Plan, facade, section 1:100 / 1:50 drawings
29 – 30 April	Tutorials		Plan, facade, section 1:100 / 1:50 drawings
6 – 7 May	Tutorials		Plan, facade, section 1:100 / 1:50 drawings

Date	Activity	Event	Assignment
13 – 14 May	Reviews	Presentation of perspective drawing, reference drawings	1:100 drawings 1:50 sections
20 – 21 May	Tutorials		Perspective
27 – 28 May	Final review	Invited critics: Eric Parry, Cino Zucchi	1:500 model 1:100 plans 1:100 elevations 1:50 section 1 external perspective 1 internal perspective Powerpoint presentation

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Reading list

The Architecture of the City
Aldo Rossi, MIT Press 1982

A Guide to the Architecture of London
Edward Jones & Christopher Woodward, Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2009

Papers 2
Jonathan Sergison and Stephen Bates, London 2007

Words and Buildings
Adrian Forty, Thames and Hudson, London 2000

London: the biography
Peter Ackroyd, Chatto and Windus 2000

Georgian London
John Summerson, Yale University Press 2003

Without and within
Mark Pimlott, episode publishers 2008

Tower and Office
Iñaki Ábalos and Juan Herreros, MIT press 2003

Curtain Call. Melbourne's Mid-century Curtain Walls
Marika Neustupny, RMIT University Press, Melbourne 2006

Reconstructing Space: Architecture in Recent German Photography
Michael Mack (ed.), Architectural Association, London 1999