

## Architecture and Education I Interview 9

### Neil Gillespie I March 2014

**Samuel Penn:** I'd like to begin by asking you where you were taught and who you think made a significant impact in the way you thought about architecture?

**Neil Gillespie:** I was taught at the Edinburgh College of Art from 1972 to 1978, so I didn't stray very far from my home patch. Significant teachers, probably only one – Andrew Jackson – who was an old school Edinburgh architect, whose heyday was probably the 1950's-60's. He was a Arne Jacobsen, Gunnar Asplund disciple. His method was to go over and over the idea iteratively until it was absolutely clear, and he also limited you to one material, one that he would give you. For the entire year every building was brick. What was interesting is that of course you understood a little bit about brick at the end of the year but really it was about designing with a material in mind. It wasn't an open book. He was a harsh critic, and what he really concentrated on was the integrity of the plan and section – what was the idea, what was the organisation, what was the volume, what was the space. He was probably the only influence at that time, which wasn't really a great time for education – the 70's – there was a lot of emphasis on process, briefing processes and so on, which was primarily a response to the market which was doing a lot of hospitals and schools. The idea was secondary. It was pretty dismal.

**SP:** And in what way did he stand out as different?

**NG:** He came from a slightly older time. Someone who was trained at the end of the Beaux-arts. Moving in to modernism but still with roots in drawing and thinking about materials – less about 'process' and more about 'buildings'. I think that's what it is, I suppose he was one of Alan Reiach's generation and it's interesting that I ended up coming here (Reiach & Hall Architects). He was elegant, white polo neck, grey tweed jacket, immaculate and very concerned about detail. I remember a story about him. He was given a parking permit by the college and he had to put it on his windscreen, and he didn't know how to locate a disc on a thing that should be kept clear, so there was a huge discussion about where he could put his parking permit. What he eventually did was to put it on the sunshade, and he would flip it up, and only flip it down when he was parking. He was that kind of guy, you know the Bang and Olufsen school of design, very Scandinavian.

**SP:** What were his references when he talked about architecture?

**NG:** Asplund. Asplund was more about design. You know, the product.

**SP:** Do you know where he was educated?

**NG:** I don't really know but I imagine Edinburgh. He was very much part of that Edinburgh School.

**SP:** There seemed to be a lot of people looking to Scandinavia at that time?

**NG:** At that time, they were the only references. When I joined Reiach and Hall on my year out in practice, Alan Reiach and Stuart Renton both had the same references, same school, with the addition of Eames which was being looked at again in the late 70's – primarily because of Norman Foster and Richard Rogers and High-tech. Reiach and Hall got the British Steel Building for which they got an award in 1978, and it was totally in that Hi-tech style, very clean.

**SP:** You were a bit late to be part of the Hi-tech movement. In your education I mean. Strangely, you were kind of taught as a Scandinavian rationalist?

**NG:** Yes. But interestingly there wasn't ever any Alvar Aalto. Alan Reiach was interested in Aalto. But Aalto was seen to be too artful, too personal, too individual.

**SP:** Something you couldn't make into a method?

**NG:** Yes. But he was admired as a rogue, an artist. I remember going to the Aalto exhibition in the early 80's. I think it was the last big exhibition of an architect's work in Edinburgh at the RSA. And I remember going round that with Alan Reiach, and he was correcting all the plan drawings, which were wrong, apparently. That's when the catalogue came out. And it's sad but it's also about the only major exhibition of that kind that I can remember coming to Scotland. It was a big deal. There was a

publication and it was properly exhibited, and there were a lot of his paintings. I'm not sure who organised it. But it certainly stuck in my memory.

**SP:** Other than Andrew Jackson's year, what did you personally find interesting at school. What were your references. What were you looking at?

**NG:** Our office went on a trip Berlin recently and we were hovering around Mies' National Gallery. But in the background there's that James Stirling building. That was causing a lot of ripples at the time. James Stirling was causing big ripples at the school – toward the end of my time there.

**SP:** That was an exceptionally post-modern building.

**NG:** Yes. As a student I remember going round all the Stirling buildings, but strangely all the Foster buildings too – Foster had been doing a lot of work in the London Docklands – the Reliant Controls Factory, he'd done these very cool buildings. And then there was Stirling. We obviously went to see Leicester and the Florey building and all his early work. But then there was all this other stuff bubbling up which was confusing everybody - I have to say. Then the other figure was Louis I Kahn. So there was this discussion about Kahn and Stirling and in the background this Scandinavian rationalism. And I suppose like all young people, you rebel against your fathers and I started drifting away from the Scandinavian toward the High-tech. But that was primarily because of working at Reiach & Hall. I think Stuart Renton could see the connection between Jacobson and Hi-tech. The fact that he was involved in making furniture, glassware, cutlery – there was this kind of paring away to simplicity – you could see that Stuart specifically was getting excited by Eames and High-tech. It was interesting.

**SP:** In your opinion, while you were at school, or in this environment, was it still the case that there was something clear to communicate about what you should learn to be architect. Was something being passed on to you – from one generation to another?

**NG:** Yes definitely. The description of Andrew Jackson's method was really about trying to unearth the diagram that was going to come from the brief, the site, and an attitude to it. The attitude wasn't a personal one – I don't know... for example there's a pedestrian route through the middle and things hang off it – that wasn't your idea, that was just architecture's idea – let's explore that. There was definitely this notion that at any moment you could take a piece of tracing paper and lay it over a drawing and investigate what the underlying idea was. And then there's a series of decisions that you make, but you're building on something that's a universal idea, if that makes sense. I think he thought - and I suppose that's the way I think, because you're only a product of your education or your experience, I probably think that as well - that you can always work back to what the idea is, and then work forward again. What's interesting now is this notion that there is a light bulb that comes on in your head. That it just happens. That is alien to the way I was taught to think about it.

**SP:** I was taught by the same generation – just. And apart from the urban regeneration agenda which had crept in in the 90's, it still felt as if there was a discipline that was being passed on. The reason I'm asking about your education is that I'm finding it hard to grasp what we are passing on now. All I see is a studio where students meet various individuals who all have their own particular ideas. From the student perspective, they just have to patch together an education. It's happenstance and accident – and if you look back through history you realise that the best architects were not conventionally educated anyway. They tended to seek out their masters.

**NG:** I think the problem is that there's this assumption that every work could be a masterwork, if only you had the talent or inspiration in the moment. And I think there are masterworks, but I also think that there is, not a profession, but a discipline that involves the making of buildings. And I'm not sure what turns some buildings in to great buildings and some into lesser buildings. My question is – is it divorced from that process – the masterwork – or is it just something in the process as you go through it, that it comes out? But not every work by an acclaimed master is a masterwork. There is work that is just work and then something about that piece of work, something to do with the timing, when it happens, raises it into something more than just a work. The designer may not even have intended it to be a masterpiece, it just becomes one.

**SP:** Certainly, a particularly good example is Sigurd Lewerentz, who of course worked tirelessly his whole life and produced, what are now regarded as his masterpieces right at the end. I guess to be a master at something you will have had to work hard at it. It doesn't just come out of nothing.

**NG:** Do you think he recognised them as masterpieces?

**SP:** It's hard to say. But I think your right. At the moment there's an obsession in education about creating masterworks which could be seen as unhealthy. It's putting the cart before the horse to some extent.

**NG:** And I think the pressure we put on young designers, with the teaching system as it stands, is all about recognising the talented ones, and recognising the great piece, and we're disappointed when somebody doesn't perform. For me it's just about thinking. You know, working here and working at college is the same thing. It's just that at school we miss out the production phase. It's still sitting down with others and asking – what does that mean? I would kind of agree with you, I think I would find that pressure too much. It's interesting, we get a lot of flack for being dull – we've done that one before – when are Reaich & Hall going to stop using brick – which for me seems a bizarre thing to say. We're not coming up with any more ideas is what someone said on a website. I'm not sure what that means but I guess we'll have to try harder!

**SP:** It's Andrew Jackson's influence. Still working with brick.

**NG:** But the reason we work with brick now is entirely different. It's more about the loss of 'making' within the construction industry. Our client will be a contractor who will define how something is made, based on some financial deal they have with some supplier here or there. So the thing about brick or in-situ concrete and materials like that – almost materials from the 1950's – is that they are still materials that have to be 'made', you still have to make a brick building, you still have to make a concrete building, whereas with other buildings you assemble envelope packages. And maybe it's nostalgic. But also I do think there's a ground swell of people, not just in architecture, but in lot's of other areas, from food to music where people are looking for something that's more connected with people rather than a bigger organisation.

**SP:** A bit more modest perhaps? I'd like to veer off slightly and ask you about your preoccupations at the moment. Is there anything that you're particularly interested in at the moment – architecturally?

**NG:** Personally?

**SP:** Yes.

**NG:** Well. I'm really interested in the imagination, in particular my own imagination, by things that are really personal and unique to me - family holidays up North on the North coast or something like that. And it's taking me a long time to realise that these things could be the basis of something you might use in your architecture, because somehow you want to become part of the scene that everybody else is in. So you become a High-tech person because interesting people are doing Hi-tech, or you become Post-modern because of James Stirling's eloquent at it and so on. And then there's a moment where you sort of say – and for me it's happening too late, because I'm too old. But what would happen if you actually just did things because it was something that interested, or came from you. So now I have this photograph, that I use at the beginning of my talk, of me when I was about 11 holding a salmon on the very North coast of Scotland, and I can barely hold it up, and there's a kind terror in it because it was a bloody scary thing, a huge salmon. And actually I'm beginning to realise that there's an architecture in that that I've not really explored. I started to explore it in the Pier Arts Centre or perhaps in this new design for the Kilmartin House Museum. But in most other projects it goes back to Andrew Jackson's thing about finding the key or the diagram.

**SP:** Let's go back to the salmon. You said there's architecture in it?

**NG:** Yes. If you read Neil Gunn, the Highland River, there's a story in that where the hero – a boy – goes to collect water on a freezing morning, this is the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century before the first world war, and he clatters the bucket into this pool in the burn (Scots for stream), and there's this huge salmon. The first chapter is about his fight in the pool to kill this salmon and take it home to his family. Of course he's poaching, so there's an undercurrent there too. But the way Neil Gunn writes about it there's this connection with absolute raw nature – and fear. And I think there's an architecture in that. There's an architecture that's about these really, almost severe, constructions in a landscape for example. You know, at the moment we're bound by trying to please a lot of people – planners, conservation people, the public, the Daily Record – keeping all these people from worrying that the

building looks ugly. So, at what point do you have the confidence to say, yes, that's what it is, that's what it's about?

**SP:** I think it can take a long time.

**NG:** It's taken me too long. I really admire young architects who've got the confidence and direction at such an early age. I think it's amazing.

**SP:** Whether it's real or not is the thing though. One or two come along where it is real.

**NG:** Yes and then you recognise it immediately. It's something that touches you.

**SP:** They're just original and don't care what other people think.

**NG:** I mean, an example is our Bannockburn building that's just finished where I described it as grim. You know it's a battle field where 20,000 people died in one day, and there's this sense that as a visitors centre should somehow be friendly or a happy place, whereas we were trying to impart a serious mood so that it would cause people to reflect. All these discussions we've had about doubt and melancholy is about an inverted outlook – and we thought that was appropriate for this building. The grey brick and the black tiles. That's proven quite difficult for the public. In the past I've found the criticism really difficult. But now I say – exactly – it is grim!

**SP:** Is there a specific building that is very close to your heart?

**NG:** A specific building? Anywhere?

**SP:** Anywhere.

**NG:** Well, I suppose when I was young before I was an architect there was one building that used to impress me enormously was Kinross House by Sir William Bruce. And it's just because I'm from that area, but it's beautiful, almost severe prism, sitting in that landscape with that clarity about it. I didn't really understand how good it actually was then. But now that I've studied it I realise the proportion and everything is superb. That was a big influence. Another building that was pretty influential at college was St. Brides church by Gillespie Kidd & Coxa. That one stopped us all in our tracks when we went to visit it.

**SP:** How influential were they to you at that time?

**NG:** Not really, because at that time you've got to remember that there was a definite East West schism, and Gillespie Kidd & Coxa and that Glasgow thing was more figurative work, more gestural. I'm obviously simplifying things, but I remember Isi Metzstein accusing Allan Reid of designing churches as if they were gym halls with stripped Scandinavian brick with a glazed end looking out to a little walled garden with a cross in it. Whereas their buildings were hugely inventive in terms of the section and plan and the processional, not process, route through the building. They were at opposite spectrums. And there was a kind of Roman Catholic sense on the one side and there was a kind of East coast Protestant thing going on. And I always wondered if it had something to do with the coastline. You know on the East coast where you fall off a cliff and on the West were you've got all this layering. Interestingly in contemporary art you get this as well. The abstract artists around that time were all East coast based, whereas the Glasgow boys coming out of that school were more figurative, more in to texture and colour. So St. Brides was brave.

**SP:** Did you visit it when it was new?

**NG:** Yes. We went to see it, and we went to see St. Peter's Seminary - and as students that knocked us all sideways because it was brand new and it was so complex in terms of the section and elevation. It was a bit of a revelation.

**SP:** In those buildings you could probably see what Andrew Jackson was trying to convey in his class. They were all about the clarity of the idea in plan and section. In your own teaching, what is it that you try to pass on?

**NG:** As you know, you think I'm a bit of a nervous person. At college I did pretty well but I really wasn't sure of myself, remember in 1978 tutors used to call you by your second name, so for my entire time there I was Gillespie, actually for the first 6 months I was Jellicoe but didn't have the nerve to correct them, and I guess the main thing I can contribute is to get my students to realise is that they're part of a bigger family and that the answers are not always that clear and that no one really knows when they sit down at the table. I want them to feel that everyone is taking part in the exploration of that idea. What I try to get across is that we're all just seeing the idea they've marked on a piece of paper for the first time, and if its possible to have an intelligent conversation about it, to cast your eye everywhere for reference or ideas, I'm not talking about solutions, but some kind of inkling about how to explore that plan idea, that section. I don't think I have anything to impart that's a great thesis.

**SP:** I guess that's imbedded in my question. Is there still a thesis?

**NG:** Maybe not. But I like the notion that you're passing on some insights.

**SP:** Have you passed on an insight?

**NG:** I doubt it.

**SP:** Give me one of your architectural insights.

**NG:** Maybe insight's the wrong word. Maybe it's awareness.

**SP:** Come on, don't wriggle your way out of this. Give me an insight, an architectural observation.

**NG:** Off the top of my head? I can't think of one.

**SP:** It could be a recent one... or one you learned a long time ago... it's up to you.

**NG:** What, like the way you hang a door as you go into a bedroom? (laughs)

**SP:** Actually yes, that is an architectural insight.

**NG:** Well, I always remember going to the Villa Savoye when I was in my final year and my tutor... when I say Andrew Jackson was my main influence, obviously there were others who were also important. But he was the most consistent.

**SP:** Of course.

**NG:** Anyway, we stood in the maid's room in the Villa Savoye, with this tutor, and he explained that everything we wanted to know about architecture existed in this one little room. That was it. If you could understand how that plan had been made you would understand everything. And what it is obviously, you know the maid's room – there's a column and there's a door. And the door opens in such a way that the rest of the room isn't revealed to the person outside. So with this simple move you've created public and private space, by hanging the door on the right hinge, so when it opens the whole room isn't revealed. The column works with the door to give you a kind of portal where you stand to meet someone. But the column also, because it's asymmetric in the room, creates an area in plan for the wash hand basin. So there's a core and a service area and the space that it services. And then the ribbon window lights the whole room. So in this tiny little space you get the notion of public and private, served and servant, daylight and artificial light. There it is. And I suppose that was an insight. Here we are. This is the kind of issues you will deal with on a hospital building, a town hall, or a theatre, about thinking where someone stands in relationship to space and how you organise a plan. If there was an insight that I would pass on, it's probably that. Because, certainly when you start college, the language and everything about it is strange, we architects inhabit a strange world.

**SP:** It's a bit like a private society. I've noticed what I call 'society words' creeping in more and more – like tectonic which is about a lot of separate things, typology instead of type, methodology instead of method, materiality instead of material, and these aren't the worst. These short cut words, like neo-liberalism, or post-fordism and so on... when pushed no one really knows why they're using them or what basic concept they grew out of. I think it's dangerous. A dangerous kind of non-thinking.

**NG:** I must say that during my education those particular words weren't being used. They've been introduced more recently. That's the arcane part of the discipline. The Villa Savoye example was clear, it didn't confuse or obscure things. To start in the first years with the abstract concepts and ideas could scare students away, because they don't have a footing in the world of architecture yet. In the later years it's ok to talk conceptually, because by then they understand the working blocks of the discipline and it's more about how you decide to do this or that – tools to decipher what the right idea is. In the end we are asking what the idea that you can hang your exploration on is. There are any number of hooks and traps.

**SP:** I'm going to skip to another question. There are a lot of little questions.

**NG:** It's like Chinese water torture. (laughs)

**SP:** (laughs) Yes. What's your favourite period in architecture?

**NG:** I'd say the 1950's.

**SP:** That's very specific.

**NG:** I know. It's not just the architecture, it's product design, fabrics etc.

**SP:** It's your parent's generation.

**NG:** Yes, probably. And it took me a long time to realise that. I think it's probably because there was a period, and I'm coloured by the UK and Scotland. But there are not many alternative era's in Scotland. It's post War and the economy is starting to pick up with work for everyone. But more than that, because people had come out of the War there was this understanding of the frailty of life... and the ability to move on, and the idea to do something modern or contemporary. And they still had the talent from an education that was grounded in considering colour, and texture, and shadow, and light. So they still had the skills which was being projected on to new ways of making things, and there was a kind of freedom. If you look at the furniture from that era it's still all about people. It's not gone into this madness of furniture that's hugely uncomfortable to sit on chair. There was a certain frugality about it. The wealth wasn't there. It was a period when there still weren't huge resources. And there was an optimism. Now, certainly in Scotland, there seems to be so much critical nit-picking and scrutiny of people getting on with the work that it's become difficult to create. For me that looked like a really fertile period. People were still making glass ware and ceramics that were actually useful. And then you get this strange period in college when it wasn't clear if these crafts were art or product design. But then, in the 50's these crafts were still regarded as incredibly noble. You could be a potter, and that was noble enough. You didn't have to be a potter, conceptual artist, poet, sculptor. You could just be a potter, or a furniture maker. It was always connected back to...common sense is the wrong phrase, it sounds dull, but it was connected back to people. I think it went through in to the 60's and started to fall apart with mass production.

**SP:** Another question. Is the building the idea or does the idea become a building? Do you work out the idea through the process of designing and in the end the idea is the building itself, or do you have an idea that you impose which then becomes the building.

**NG:** For me it's always the first.

**SP:** Are there then principles that can be externalised from the process, or are they always inherent in the actual design process.

**NG:** I think they're always inherent in the design process, in the actual work.

**SP:** Then what is there to teach?

**NG:** I'm not quite sure what the word 'teach' means.

**SP:** I imagine that there's a group of people, and a certain hierarchy, where someone has something to tell someone else who wants to learn, someone who's listening.

**NG:** I guess what I do is that you just experience that process with the student, as if it was me.

**SP:** They get to be part of your experience?

**NG:** I think that's what it is. You are working with them as if it were your own project. So you ask the questions that you might ask yourself - just as if you were talking out loud, and they pick it up. That's how I was taught. You rehearse the same things over and over again. So there's no real difference between the lower and upper years. And this continues through your career, and as you go on you pick up the vocabulary of architecture, the ways to do things. It's the same question you're asking but it just becomes more focused. Instead of saying - are we going to have a door here to get in to this room, it becomes - how do we want to get in to this room.

**SP:** A prerequisite for that is that you need experienced people. If you just relied on a system, or a curriculum it wouldn't work.

**NG:** Is this not the case for all creative disciplines? You're looking for somebody to explore some territory. But it's them that's exploring it and you're there with them - a member of the studio rather than a teacher.

**SP:** But Andrew Jackson was definitely your teacher? He was more experienced than you.

**NG:** Yes that's true. What he said at the beginning of the session was kind of interesting. He said, all the buildings are going to be made of brick - I don't want any discussion about that - we've got enough to do just exploring the plan and the section - if you have a problem with that then you will have to decide to go somewhere else. Then, as a student you would think - ok, a year of my life. I'll get to the end of this year and I'll maybe have learnt something useful, and if it isn't useful, then I'll have learnt something anyway, because I'll know this is not the way I want to look at the world. That was his attitude, he wasn't really interested in another way of looking at the world. In the 70's there were a lot of social issues about how architects might get involved with community groups to better understand what was needed. And that was a really powerful voice, there was a lot of decent in architecture schools, a lot of sit-ins. So he said, you can do all that next year, but you need at least one year where need to be able to sit and recognise a good plan, a good section, or a lesser plan and section. And he did this by getting us to draw plans and sections to understand them.

**SP:** How important was precedent to him?

**NG:** It was confined to two or three architects. We would look at what Asplund had done, or Jacobsen or occasionally Aalto.

**SP:** Are there times, even now, where you realise that something you're doing has come from an Asplund plan.

**NG:** I'm not sure. But I know the curves of our Kilmartin House design came from Reima Pietilä and Aalto's Finlandia Hall with its scalloped hall and the relationship between it and the trees. We tried it in the Dunfermline Museum competition entry. So there are themes that you try to introduce in your work.

**SP:** Where do you think Aalto got it from?

**NG:** Well. I don't know. He was a genius.

**SP:** Was he?

**NG:** Yes, of course he was genius. Wasn't he? Lakes, forests... (laughs)

**SP:** Yes of course he was a genius! But that's the thing. There's a genius, and everything after is a drip down effect that we copy, adapt or interpret...

**NG:** Yes, but to go back to that earlier thing, I think there is a danger that we, in education, are promoting that everyone could be that genius. And that's not what it was like when I was being educated. What that generation expected from us was to go out in to the world and make decent buildings. They wanted you to be decent. I mean, Alan Reich's favourite criticism of anything in here, when you were young, was whether or not you were being wilful. Wilful was the word that he used all the time - you're imposing your will on your client. He didn't like that.

**SP:** But certain works that you might regard as masterpieces now, like Kazuo Shinohara's Centennial Hall, is a very wilful building. Would you consider that wilful?

**NG:** Yes, hugely wilful.

**SP:** Michelangelo, was he wilful?

**NG:** But the difference is that education wasn't about creating those people. I suppose the attitude in those days was that those kind of people would look after themselves, and that the job of the school of architecture was to teach or help create decent architects, and the person who is to become a Michelangelo is on a different track anyway.

**SP:** Can they be taught? Have you ever met one?

**NG:** A genius in the making?

**SP:** Have you ever met a genius?

**NG:** Maybe I have, but I'm just too thick to see it. I think as I get older, you mentioned Shinohara, I'm attracted to people that I don't understand - because there are a lot of architects that I understand. In all things, as you get older, even with food, you become attracted to more difficult tastes - "that's a really interesting piece of cheese" and you give it to your child who throws up, and you go, "why did you do that" and he says "because it's horrible" and you go "is it"? So people like Shinohara, or even the Ogiati's of this world are the more difficult tastes. Things can border on the ugly. There's something about them that's unsettling. It's more attractive.

**SP:** To whom though? Is it interesting to anyone other than the connoisseur architect?

**NG:** Not just architects, but also artists who are drawn to images and spaces that are unsettling. Think of contemporary musicians whose work is tonally jarring, not melodic, they're there to heighten the sense that you're listening or hearing. What I find interesting is when everyone can appreciate it - there's often a common agreement that a work is a masterpiece - you can walk into a building and everyone goes "ah, I get it" - what makes that happen? For instance, I'm aware that on entering a Zaha Hadid building I'll probably go "ah, I get it" - that it will affect me - even though I'm programmed, because of my education, to find her work really difficult.

**SP:** Likewise, we were taught not to enjoy it - which is ridiculous and incredibly narrow-minded. Zaha Hadid was vilified then, during my education, and still today - usually by lesser architects. Nowadays I find myself defending her work in class - because it's good. There's no two ways about it.

**NG:** When I was looking at one of her buildings the other day I thought - these are places that are phenomenally powerful. That's got to be pretty good. But it's not work that I can imagine ever being involved in. For me the problem is the hype that goes with it.

**SP:** It kind of brings me back to the question about whether there is a discipline to pass on or whether, really, it's just 'anything goes' as long as it's imaginative, or good?

**NG:** I wrote an article in the AJ (Architects Journal) defending Enric Miralles' parliament building, which as you know was getting an enormous amount of flack. And it basically came down to this - we are all agreed that Miralles was a great architect, and this is one of his masterpieces, and it's here, and we might need to take some time to understand it - and maybe we won't understand it. But the fact that we've got that kind of quality building here. And even if it's not our way of looking at the world here in Scotland, it still remains absolutely significant and we should have room for it. When I visit it I feel more alive, compared to the banality of normal circumstances. His world, his view is impossible to teach. There was a question put to Benedetta Tagliabue (Miralles' widow) at a lecture before he died. It went like this "this is all very well, but I'm an architecture teacher, and the students are really interested in this, and it would seem to me that with Miralles it's all purely intuition, intuitive design" and Benedetta responded "you're right it's intuition that took him thirty years to acquire". What she was saying was that it wasn't divine inspiration, and that he worked incredibly hard, through Aalto and Kahn, because Kahn was a big influence on him, so that eventually his language emerged. And to dismiss it was simplistic.

**SP:** Last question. Big space, or small really well designed space - accident or control?

**NG:** Tricky one. That's really hard. Over design and the small space is what I've been moving toward but the things that excite me is accident and probably big space.

## **Architects Journal**

### **Andrew Jackson, architects' favourite tutor, is dead**

Andrew Jackson, ARIBA ARIAS, architect and teacher; born January 30, 1919 died March 28, 2001

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Influential Edinburgh tutor Andrew Jackson died on 28 March. Last month, in the AJ's annual survey of the architectural profession, he came out top in the question: 'Which tutor has had the most influence on your life?' Jackson was born in 1919 and brought up in Dunfermline. He saw service in the Second World War and went on to train as an architect at Edinburgh College of Art and what was then Heriot Watt College. After graduating he worked for the East Kilbride Corporation and, after a spell on his own, joined Reiach and Cowan Architects, for which he took charge of building the college of agriculture for the University of Edinburgh. During this time he took part in nine competitions (both industrial design and architecture) and was premiated in them all. Jackson's design for the Roman Catholic Church in Liverpool earned him a commendation, and a winning proposal for a furniture design competition in 1948 brought him a two week trip to Denmark and Sweden. This trip was to have a lasting influence on his approach to architectural design. Jackson began lecturing at Edinburgh College of Art in 1953, where he taught until his retirement 29 years later. Over the years he developed ideas that provided his students with a rational approach to structuring the design of buildings. He also put a great emphasis on the obligation of architects to create an environment that people could both enjoy and appreciate - through the proper handling of natural materials, the use of colour and the quality of light. His teaching become known outside Edinburgh and he taught briefly at the University of Virginia and the Oslo School of Architecture. Jackson will be sorely missed; it is unlikely that we will see another teacher like him.