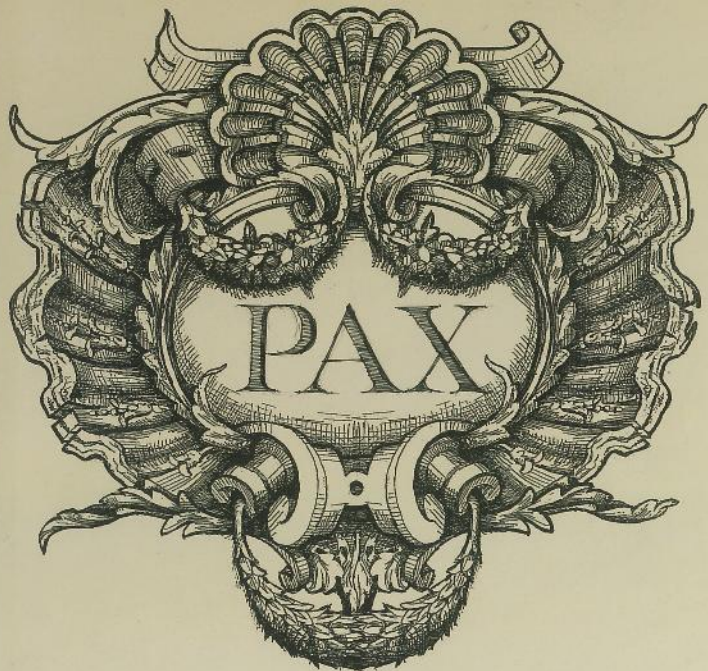




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At peace with tradition

New classicism is alive and kicking

Prize draw: Three classicists show off their skills with the pencil

Cambridge footlights: Downing College's theatre revives William Wilkins

No impediment: Robert Adam on why there's room for all tastes

Romancing the stone: Bath's Southgate centre aims to blend in



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THE HIGH GAME

YES, THIS IS THE 21ST CENTURY. No, we have not gone mad. A whole issue devoted to traditionalism, mostly of the neoclassical variety? Why? Well, this is something I've wanted to do for a long time, first because I find the work – and the motives behind it – interesting, and the drawing skills and craftsmanship often exemplary. And secondly, because of the need for biodiversity in the profession. We need all styles, to strengthen the art and science of architecture. In recent years architecture has become very pluralistic – some would say too much so, where is the style of today? You can argue this as much as you like, but the fact remains that traditionalism is one of the many strands available, and one of the healthier ones too.

We can however only scratch the traditionalist surface in one issue. Even though only around 2% of all practices would place themselves in this camp, as Robert Adam says on page 40, that still leaves a lot of work, and a good few practices, who are not represented in these pages simply because of lack of space. But this minority is a significant one. Nor is the 18th century image sometimes still attached to these firms relevant any more. Most practitioners engage fully with the modern world. Quinlan and Francis Terry's website is a model of simplicity and clarity. Adam uses YouTube and Twitter. At Ali Sagharchi's Mayfair offices you'll sit on Eames chairs, not Chippendale. Demetri Porphyrios is as transatlantic as any modernist. They all tackle commercial, urban architecture as well as private country houses.

What made us explore traditionalism now is the "Three Classicists" exhibition at the RIBA (May 6-29). Ben Pentreath, George Saumarez Smith and Francis Terry are talented architects and draughtsmen, friends who work for rival firms, and represent the next generation of this – this what? Movement, style, dogma, approach? They believe fervently in the classical tradition, but they understand architecture other than their own. Perhaps most welcome is that this exhibition is not controversial. Today, the RIBA can stage such a show without batting an eyelid, or seeing it as some kind of threat. Pax, indeed.

HUGH PEARMAN
EDITOR



HORSES FOR COURSES

THERE'S SOMETHING more than a little romantic about this complex, but in fact it's a very large equestrian centre in Extremadura, Spain. Eat your heart out, Newmarket! It's a prospectus through the heart of England's horseracing industry, yet we have not had to compare with this yet. Designed by Spanish Gale Architects of London, who also head Alvaro Siza's (who crafts last year's new Santiago Centre with us on page 44), on his health working with Carmel Partridge and since 2002 has run his own 16-strong office and now chairs the RIBA's 43-member Traditional Architecture group.

Conceived as a village set on a hillside, the project – dramatically sited on a plain beneath mountains – has a large residential element. You might not expect the medieval language of load-bearing masonry to be suited to the large clear-span spaces needed for the indoor exercising and training of horses, but Siza's architecture has been tuned to the region's 19th-century industrial buildings, many of which were also done in the medieval manner – for inspiration, he throws lightweight steel trusses between parallel colonnades to create these spaces. The first phase is under construction now. **RE**