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Exploring professional and academic notions of alternative practices, a way of working is proposed that is open-ended and shaped by the processes of its own production.

A theory of making: methodology and process in architectural practice

William Tozer

This paper sets out to challenge assumptions about both normative practice and alternative practice. A historical case study of alternative practice is used to re-read the nature of architectural production since the modern period, and a contemporary mode of alternative practice is proposed which operates within the established profession but is informed by this alternative reading [1, 2]. This proposal seeks to remain fully engaged with the production of the built environment, using to its advantage rather than resisting the mechanisms of the profession.

The text is drawn from research I am conducting at the Bartlett School of Architecture through the PhD by Design programme. The research aims to examine the gap between what architects say they do and what they actually do, and its relation to the perceived gap between the architectural profession and academia. Architects and academics often imply a singular and well-understood definition of 'normative practice' before calling for investigations of and proposals for alternative modes of practice.[1] It is also suggested that these modes are likely to have explicit social and political agendas, or to define themselves outside the professional realm of the architect.

Normative and alternate practice

'Normative practice' seems to be generally understood by academia as the production of drawings and other representations by registered professional architects working in offices, with the intention of their contents being constructed as buildings.[2] This understanding is reinforced by the professional institutes whose structures of registration and professional development posit design as a practical rather than intellectual



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1 *In the Fold*, William Tozer: rooflight openings are detailed so as to conceal their frames, supporting the sculptural appearance of the overall form

2 Clockwise from top left: Moller House, Adolf Loos, Vienna, 1927–28; *Semi-detached* & *In the Fold*, William Tozer

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undertaking. Against this background, academia defines 'alternate practice' as a variation of the above where the process is motivated by an agenda – or more broadly, as any form of architectural activity that does not result in the production of buildings. If normative practice is recognised as coming equipped with an agenda or agendas, then alternate practice identifies such agendas as outmoded and proposes their replacement. Aside from drawings, models and other representations, processes of normative practice are assumed by academia to be creatively neutral, and so they are given only professional rather than intellectual consideration. Due to academia's intellectual focus on drawing and modelling, its interest in practice is generally limited to a very small minority of architects, whose stated design methodologies also highlight these concerns and are explicitly intellectualised. Implicit in this process is an assumption that the limitations of 'normative practice' stem from the profession and its professional bodies, but not from academia. It is argued here that a definition of 'normative practice' is required to interrogate the assumptions of both the profession *and* academia in order to be productively critical, rather than simply exacerbate a retreat into autonomous realms.[3] The identification of what is currently normative by these terms requires a critical reflection upon what is generally considered avant-garde, rather than the comfortable consignment of each other's entire field as 'normative' and one's own as 'alternative'. In these terms, to both the profession and academia, contemporary 'normative practice' – as it pertains to architects and their relation to the built environment – could be described as the valorisation of large-scale building and novelty of form-making; and reciprocally related predilections for large practices, the competition format, and apparent conceptual complexity.[4]

Practice and research in academia

The above discussion of normative and alternate practices sets aside definitions of architecture that do not pertain to the built environment, but this should not be understood as an attempt to diminish the importance of the separation between professional and academic realms. It is acknowledged that this separation provides a useful distance in every discipline, allowing academia time for reflection and experimentation free from the constraints and limitations of the profession.[5] The implications of academic experimentation and reflection for architectural practice may not be immediately clear, but this does not diminish its potential importance. However, there is a danger that if the research of architectural academia is not sufficiently connected to its original subject, the built environment, it will become an increasingly autonomous field focused on self-reflexive relations to its own body of knowledge. This danger is most evident in academia's willingness to frame research only in relation to existing research, a connected resistance to engage with the bulk of the profession, and in attempts to redefine its own operations as practice rather than research. While one could make an argument for such an autonomous discipline as an intellectual field, the problems of the built environment remain unaddressed. Furthermore, it could be argued that this form of investigation constitutes a normative form of academic architectural practice, connected to the normative model of the profession identified above. If academic research is to have significant implications for the built environment, the apparent unwillingness of many practising architects outside an 'avant-garde' minority to engage with academic notions of architecture cannot be dismissed as entirely a failing of the profession. Rather, this would require academia to engage with the issues of the profession, and connect its own body of knowledge with these themes. Through understanding its own mechanisms and potential, architecture could develop modes of operation that are resonant with them, rather than adjunctive; aligning design processes with stated methodologies, and academic and professional understandings of the discipline.

In the introduction to *The Reflective Practitioner*, Donald Schön argues that '[Universities] are institutions committed, for the most part, to a *particular* epistemology, a view of knowledge that fosters selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry'. Conversely, Schön explains that it is 'as though the practitioner says to his academic colleague, "While I do not accept your view of knowledge, I cannot describe my own"'. He concludes that such 'attitudes have contributed to a widening rift between the universities and the profession, research and practice, thought and action'.[6] The very labelling of practice as 'normative' is indicative of a polarisation of academia and practice into autonomous fields. While architectural academia is perhaps too readily dismissed by practitioners because it fails to address most of the



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problematic issues involved in practising architecture, many aspects of practice can be dismissed by academia because they do not appear worthy of intellectual consideration. Academia focuses the vast majority of its intellectual attention on design, and gives only 'professional' consideration to the other subject areas required for practice. Architects' relationships with their clients, other professionals, contractors – and with one another – are generally understood in academia as creatively neutral, and unrelated to architectural design. These facets of practice are viewed as practical rather than intellectual, and an investigation of their role in the design process is dismissed in favour of the introduction of material from outside the discipline of architecture that is more recognisably intellectual.

In *The Projective Cast*, Robin Evans laments architecture's tendency to draw upon mathematics, the natural sciences, the human sciences, painting, and literature, and asks 'Why is it not possible to derive *a theory of architecture* from a consideration *of architecture*?'.[7] Like all creative disciplines, architecture benefits immensely from its relationships with other fields, but it can be argued that it does so at the expense of a full understanding of its own field. While architectural practice could draw its inspiration only from the field of architecture, it is proposed here that architects should draw their inspiration wherever they please, but that their use of such inspiration would be greatly enhanced by a fuller understanding of their own discipline. While an artist might draw inspiration from physics or philosophy, there is an inherent understanding in art practice that this inspiration must be given form through the processes of art and can only hope to represent or make some form of commentary on its inspiration. Conversely, the discipline of architecture seems inclined to attempt to reinvent itself in the image of other disciplines, and believes that through this process it will embody all of the meaning of its inspiration.[8]

Modernism: functionalism versus fine art architecture

It is argued here that the gap between architects' stated design methodologies and their enacted processes, and the associated polarisation of architectural practice and academia, can be attributed to the beginning of the modern period. It is proposed that an understanding of this schism demonstrates a possible mode of alternate practice that is intellectually engaged with the mechanisms of the profession rather than imposed intellectual or professional agendas. The argument centres on the agendas of architecture in the modern period; in particular the inadequacy of functionalism to provide sufficient explanation for Modernist space and form. It is proposed that modern architecture has little relation to its stated agendas, and that instead the movement signals the point at which architecture effected a transition from decorative art practice to fine art practice. Adolf Loos is a prime candidate for this alternative reading of Modernism, and his discussions of his architecture in relation to art and ornament are particularly illuminating. Loos also discusses the influence on his work of a number of processes of practice that are generally considered design-neutral, including clients, photography and publishing.

It can be argued that the Modernist agenda of functionalism masked the actual changes that were taking place in architecture creatively, particularly in the processes of architectural form-making *[3]*. Architecture has of course always been functional,

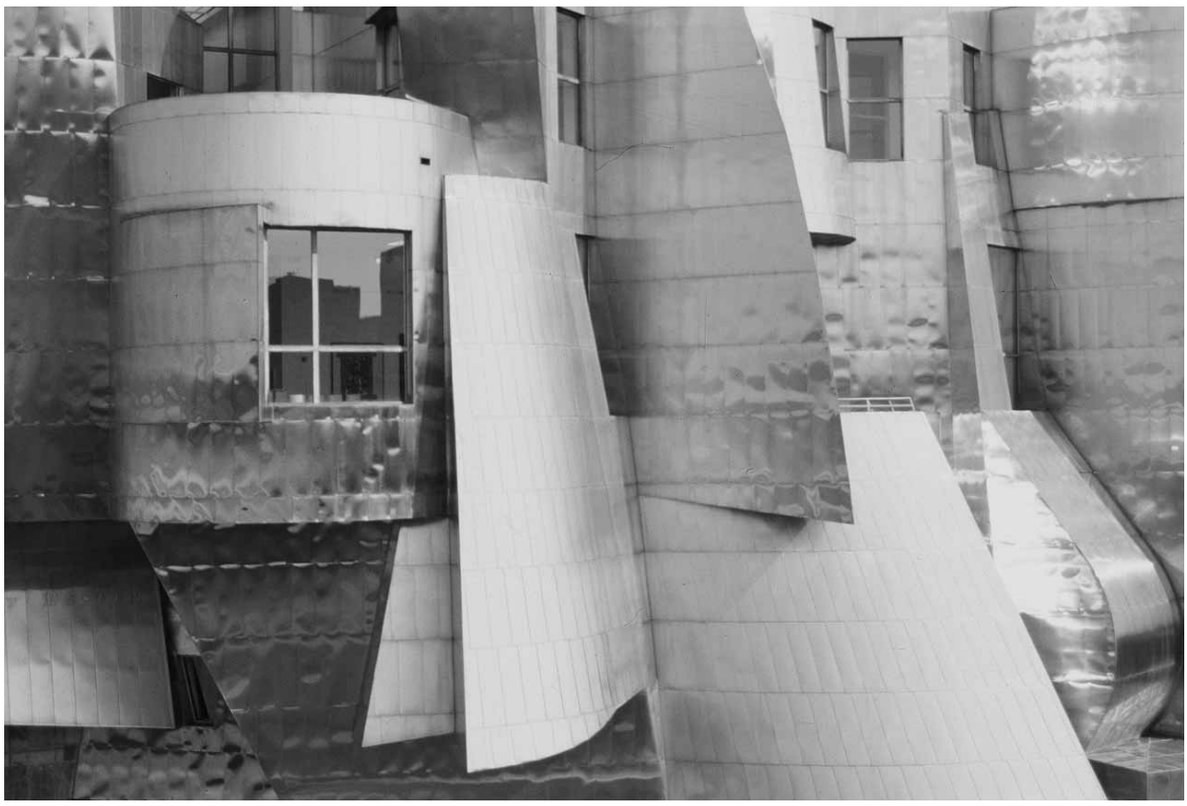
3 German Pavilion, Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona, 1929

4 Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier, Poissy, 1929–31



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and the functions that it fulfils have always changed in response to economics, politics and society. Furthermore, it seems highly questionable that modern architects precipitated a new morphology of buildings following functional concerns.[9] Rather, it seems fairer to conclude that architects were observers of 'functionalist' architecture, rather than its authors. As building typologies and technologies changed to adapt to new programmatic requirements, architects observed these changes and considered their visual and spatial potential for their medium. While the rhetoric of Modernism would have us believe that key sources of inspiration were industrial objects such as cars, ships and aeroplanes, these technological innovations immediately brought changes to buildings to accommodate them; and it is observation of these buildings that was the more likely influence on modern architecture.

From this perspective, it is interesting to consider why architects were so attracted to this architecture born of new functional requirements, and how they altered it. It has been argued here that the advent of modern architecture can be seen as the point at which architecture made a transition from decorative art practice to fine art practice. Architects would have seen in the emerging building technologies the opportunity to make compositions of their entire buildings in the way that painters, sculptors and other fine artists do with canvasses, objects and spaces. Where architecture had previously encompassed the application of surface ornament to recognisable building forms, modern architecture eschewed surface ornament and instead concerned itself with making ornamental compositions of the new building forms themselves. Architecture of course continued to be 'functionalist' in the modern period, and the relationship was perhaps more overt and stated, but this seems not to have been the defining characteristic of Modernism; and it fails to explain the radical aesthetic changes in architectural form.

Architects' statements of functionalist methodologies in the modern period can thus be understood as almost completely divorced from the processes through which they were making architecture; as creative agendas concerned primarily with the compositional potential, both visual and spatial, of new building technologies and functions *[4]*. Emerging technologies had challenged the traditional role of the architect, arguably rendering the profession an adjunct to engineering solutions making use of new technologies. In this context, it is no surprise that architects might have adopted a way of speaking about their architecture that enabled them to reposition their role more centrally, as giving visual expression to the new technologies. This gap – between what architects say and what they do – is the distinction made here between methodology (a *statement* of motivation and actions) and process (an *observation* of motivation and actions). While there were political and economic advantages to be gained by the invention of the functionalist agenda, it can be argued that for most modern architects this was not premeditated deception, but simply a misunderstanding of their own modus operandi.

From the beginning of the modern period, it is possible to divide all architectural production into two categories, on the basis of whether the architecture's ornamental quality resides in the surface decoration of a recognisable building form, or the overall composition of building forms and

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5 Weisman Art Museum, Frank Gehry, Minneapolis, 1993

6 Steiner House, Adolf Loos, Vienna, 1910

7 Rufer House, Adolf Loos, Vienna, 1922

components *[5]*. These categories might be labelled 'traditional' and 'modern', as the second category was precipitated by the Modern Movement. This constitutes a revisionist history of Modernism that sets aside the statements of the movement's authors in favour of observation of its processes and outputs. This distinction usefully liberates discussions about the period, and all that has followed it, from the limitations of widely held assumptions about the functionalist underpinnings of modern architecture. It renders as sub-categories of Modernism all the geometry-based movements of architecture that have followed the early modern period, on the basis that they share fine art ambitions but simply manifest them using different shapes. Conversely, the definition also re-categorises as traditional any architecture that uses the vocabulary of building, ornamented or not, rather than attempting to assume an ambiguity of appearance. Modern architecture is correlated with the fine art object, whose function is uncertain and meaning is open to interpretation; and traditional architecture with the decorative art object, whose function is certain and meaning is singular. This redefinition aims to encourage both the profession and academia to move their focus away from the pursuit of novelty of form for its own sake. Similarly, the redefinition is not a call for a return to early modern rectilinear geometries, but simply for recognition that form-making is the mode of communication rather than the content of architectural meaning. Individual practitioners and academics will of course have their own geometric preferences and these may be conceptually grounded, but it is the ideas represented by architectural forms that are most significant, not their geometry. In *The Projective Cast*, Robin Evans challenges the assumption that geometry should be sought in the composition of drawings or buildings.[10] Evans instead proposes that we embrace the unstable notion of projection as central, and focus on the space between thinking and imagination, imagination and drawing, drawing and building, building and perception. In the light of this observation, the endless pursuit of new geometries as a strategy for delivering architectural significance seems optimistic and misguided, and divides both practitioners and academics into meaningless partisan groups.

Adolf Loos and alternate practice

An examination of the work of Adolf Loos provides support for this argument, as his work spans the historical transition from traditional to modern architecture and he wrote widely about his design motivations. His writing demonstrates an unusually close correlation between his stated methodologies and his design processes. Consequently, Loos' work provides a model for an alternate mode of practice where architects develop their design methodologies



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through reflection upon *all* of the processes by which their work is designed and brought to fruition.

While Robin Evans' notion of architecture as a projective medium could be interpreted as a call to privilege the representation over the building that it describes, an examination of the work of Adolf Loos provides insights into a mode of built architectural practice that embraces this idea. Rather than seeking to invest his architecture with meaning through geometry, Loos' sparse architecture appears at first inspection to be silent *[6]*. Kenneth Frampton has observed that '[t]his silence spoke of the gap between fact and value as precisely and paradoxically as Wittgenstein's distinction between the sayable and the unsayable'.[11] Implicit in this statement are the observations that architecture is a cultural endeavour, and that it can possess meaning aside from that communicated by its geometry.

While Loos' architectural forms can be usefully understood as silence in the face of cultural chatter,

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they could alternatively be read as an alternative form of ornament at the scale of the entire building *[7]*. This amounts to an interpretation of Loos' form-making as a treatment of architecture as fine art practice – a mechanism for transmitting meaning through the composition of form and space. Major impediments to this view would appear to be Loos' own statements in relation to architecture and art. Loos' 1910 publication *Architecture* is generally interpreted as an affirmation of architecture's provisional status, by comparison to the projective quality of art. However, while Loos proclaims that 'Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument', this could be read as a statement of the ambiguous requirements on architecture by comparison to art. While art can readily aspire to revolution, discomfort and provocation, architecture is required to provide comfort, security and responsibility. In this context, the statement could be seen as simply a statement of the relative freedom of the tomb and monument from architecture's usual professional and functional requirements. Similarly, in relation to the house, Loos remarks that 'Man [...] loves the house and hates art'. While this is generally interpreted as a statement of Loos' own mode of practice, it seems more consistent to read it as a critique of the architecture of others – design born of the inertia and comfort of his metaphoric dog by the fire.[12]



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This reading of Loos' work as artistic and ornamental also requires defence in the face of his apparent disregard for ornament. A closer examination of his attitude to ornament and decoration reveals that he proposed their deployment when functional decision-making could not provide answers required by the design process, and as a form of cultural communication *[8]*. Pevsner describes Loos' work as compositions of materials and proportions, rather than ornamental.[13] But implicit in this definition is the notion that ornament has not disappeared, but simply shifted in scale. While Loos' use of false beams, non-load-bearing columns, and space-enhancing mirrors runs counter to Modernist proclamations on transparency and truth, Loos insisted that these elements were not ornamental because they were part of the architecture and were natural materials. The notion that the elements are not ornamental hinges on the idea that their ornamental quality stems from their role in the overall architectural composition, and that the psychological perception of this composition is more important than its actual presence. In this sense Loos' architecture provides a mode of practice that to some extent addresses the projective space of architecture identified by Robin Evans *[9]*.

This analysis hinges partly on a reading of Loos' writing as ironic and humorous rather than literal and entirely serious. In relation to Loos' apartments, Kenneth Frampton comments that it 'is ironic, to say the least, that Loos never regarded any of these arrangements, however spatial and disjunctive, as being architecture'.[14] Frampton seems to take literally Loos' proclamations on the limits of architecture, despite acknowledging that his architecture is 'proto-Dadaesque',[15] and over a decade earlier recognising in Loos' work 'the ready-made sensibility of Marcel Duchamp'.[16] Viewed in the context of his friendships with Dadaist artists such as Tristan Tzara, Loos' proclamations can be read entirely differently. The writing style of Tzara's *Dada Manifesto* closely resembles Loos' own irreverent and sprawling texts. Loos' preference for simple rectilinear geometries could be said to run counter to Dada, but is perhaps explained by Frampton's observation of 'Loos' insistence, after Wittgenstein [...] on the fact that there is no single universal language, in architecture or in anything else'.[17] In these terms Loos' 'taste' in art objects was for those whose interpretation is unclear and dependent upon

8 Kärntner Bar, Adolf Loos, Vienna, 1908

9 Kärntner Bar, Adolf Loos

10 *Pavilion*, William Tozer: a new rectilinear building fragment is separated from the existing house by a slot of obscured glazing and appears to lean against the adjoining new pavilion living space

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interaction with the viewer. Another explanation for Loos' choice of simple geometry could be extrapolated from Robin Evans's observation that 'it is more difficult to make a building art-like than a picture because the perceptions of the building are more in themselves but less manageable, less capable of full orchestration'.[18] Loos' work demonstrates an alternative reading of Modernist space as place-making rather than functionalism, and he exposes the active roles of processes such as commissioning and photography in informing architectural design.

Self-reflective practice

I have drawn from these reflections on Loos in my own design work in practice. My own architectural production is examined here as a case study of the potential of this approach, and it should be stressed that a diversity of architectural form and space could be accommodated. The aim is not to promote a particular design process, let alone a typology of form or space, but rather to encourage architectural discussion focused on the processes actually at play rather than adjunctive agendas. Consequently, the fact that the following observations on my own practice describe a particular approach should not be read as didactic. Rather, they should be seen as the consequence of the inevitably binary decision-making required to *make* architecture as opposed to the ambivalence afforded or demanded by academic consideration *[10]*.

There is nothing novel about the methodology by which my practice of architecture is conducted and, while less usual, my parallel activities of writing and teaching are certainly not uncommon. Rather, it is proposed that my practice is not 'normative' simply because it recognises the non-neutral character of its own modes of operation. The work does not possess an explicit conceptual agenda or meaning, but instead subscribes to a view of architecture as art practice: permitting design moves to be openly instinctive and wilful rather than systematised; and accepting that the meaning of the work will be multiple and open-ended. Compositions of form and space are proposed in relation to the *observation* of their projective implications for their settings, rather than in isolation or in relation to a stated design agenda. Furthermore, it is proposed that authorship in architectural practice resides not in the act of producing a drawing or any other form of representation, but in the establishment of a practice culture. In light of these observations, the slow growth of the size of the projects and the practice is considered vital, and so competitions have to date been actively avoided as the resultant rapid growth of a successful outcome would almost inevitably have resulted in a normalisation of the projects as practice culture was imported in a wholesale fashion with the sudden arrival of large numbers of new staff.

It is proposed that these decisions about the running of a practice constitute the predominant design processes at play in the production of built architecture. Nonetheless, there are a number of processes at work in my practice that are more readily recognisable as design processes. Axonometric drawings are used extensively because they allow a design to be explored while simultaneously representing both the empirical and subjective aspects of the project. Throughout the design, documentation and construction process, projects are represented in a composite manner – through a variety of drawings, texts and images – in order to communicate the multiple manner in which one experiences a building. Similarly, the projects are



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often presented together rather than in isolation, reflecting their serial relationship to one another as a body of work *[11, 12]*. The role of text, whether written or spoken, is recognised as equal or dominant to that of drawing in coercing built architecture into existence. These modes of production and representation are used in order to challenge the dominance of mechanisms that are implicated in determining the nature of normative practice in both practice and academia as framed above. While the role of drawing is questioned more generally, particular suspicion is directed towards the dominance of perspective as a projective representation of proposed architecture, whether in the form of a computer-modelled rendering or otherwise, and the single photographic image as a descriptive representation of built architecture. However, it is once again not the particular deployment of my own processes that is proposed, but simply the notion of critical self-reflection upon process and its potential impact on architectural design.

11 *Semi-detached* & *In the Fold*, William Tozer. *Semi-detached* was conceived as a serial redrawing of a number of previous extensions to Victorian and Edwardian houses. The roof form of *In the Fold* is battened to conceal its structure and clad with birch-faced plywood so as to appear as a single, folded, abstract surface

12 *Hackney House*, *Sleeper*, *Victorian Hoarding*, *Karntner House*, *Pavilion*, William Tozer. *Hackney House* joins together two terrace houses and the design draws upon and abstracts the proportions and scale of the existing buildings. Galvanised steel and aluminium insertions to the rear elevation of the *Sleeper* project reference the immediately adjacent railway lines. The rear elevation of *Victorian Hoarding* recalls a site hoarding while utilising the material palette and proportions of the existing building. Through material selection and the use of mirror, *Karntner House* creates the impression of a single open plan space within the found object container of the original building. The *Pavilion* extension can be understood as a lens through which views of both the garden and the existing house are mediated

Serial and integrated innovation

Demonstrating the results of such an approach to architecture is almost by definition problematic, as one proceeds on the premise that meaning should not be singular or readily legible. Rather than introducing external inspiration in order to determine spatial or formal arrangements, my projects aim to make visible the latent aspects of an architectural project – site, client, practice and drawing, writing and talking. The particular circumstances of each of the projects are considered through a vocabulary of form and space that has in turn developed from the circumstances of the projects that precede it *[13, 14]*. Materials and forms from the surrounding site are redeployed in the design, but misplaced in order to elicit reconsideration of the context. Structure is concealed or placed unexpectedly to encourage consideration by the viewer of an aspect of building usually taken for granted. The open-endedness of a building site is engendered in the finished building through the use of raw materials or materials treated to appear unfinished, and spatially through the introduction of unexpected glimpsed views between spaces and levels. Less tangibly, the personalities of clients are manifest in the character of the buildings, which could usefully be understood as architectural portraits. While the projects are autonomous to some extent, given the manner in which they develop from one another, they are in a sense collectively one project. Where normative practice speaks of imported phenomena, this alternate mode of practice proceeds from and references its own processes of production and representation.

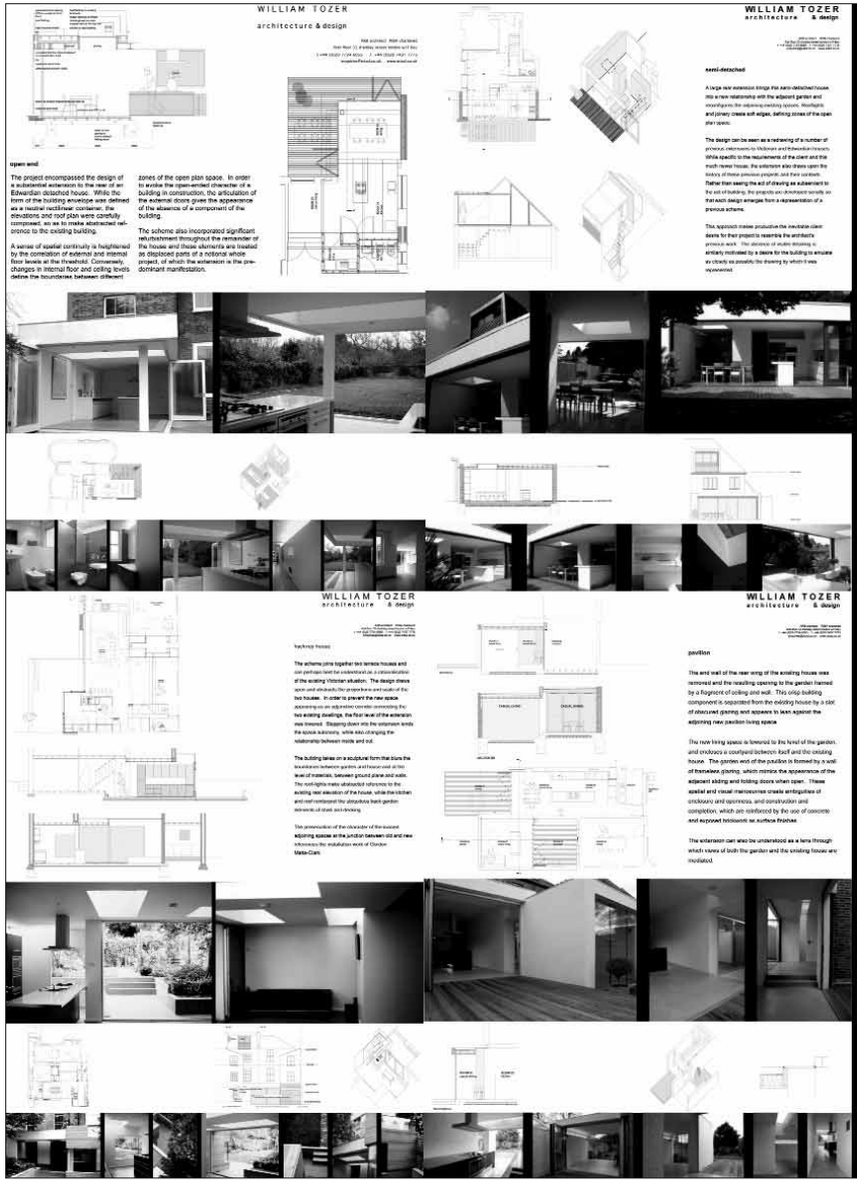
This is an alternate view of architectural practice where innovation is not sought in the wholesale

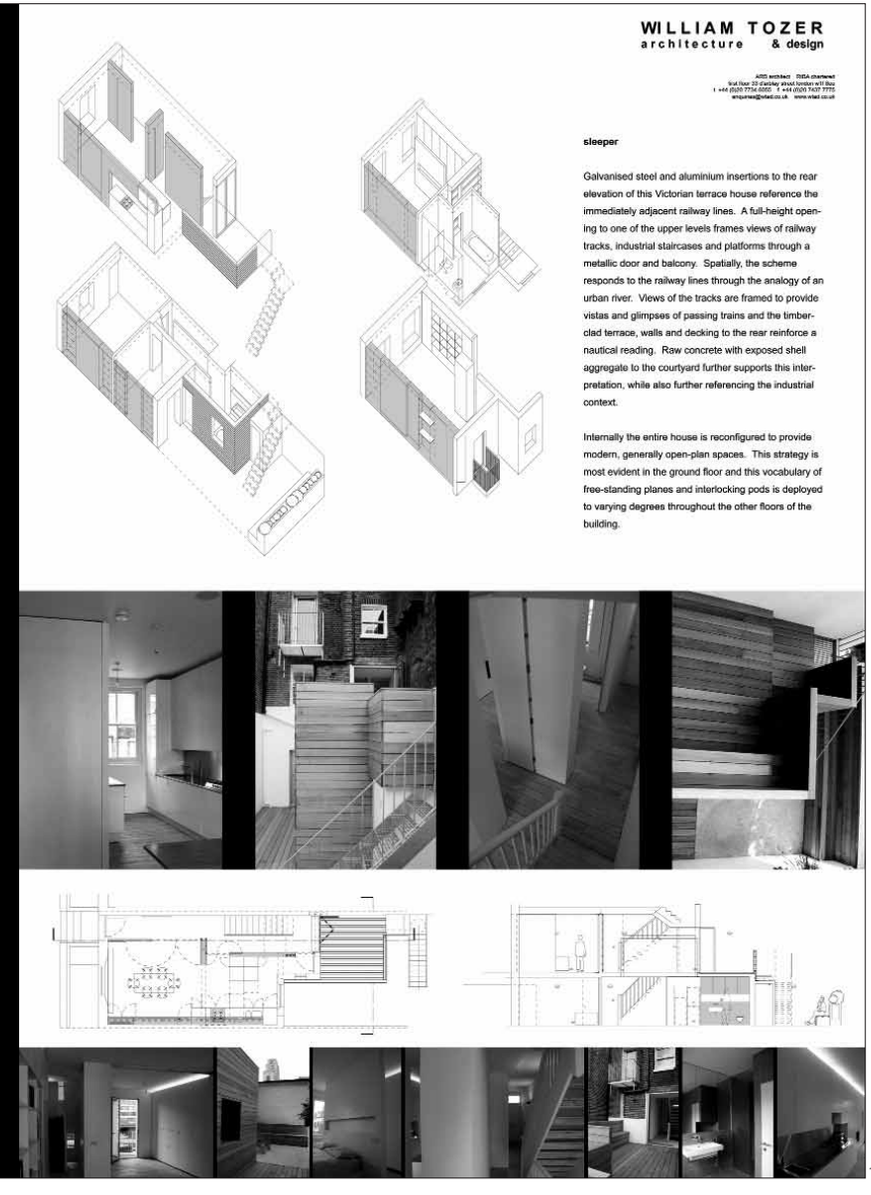


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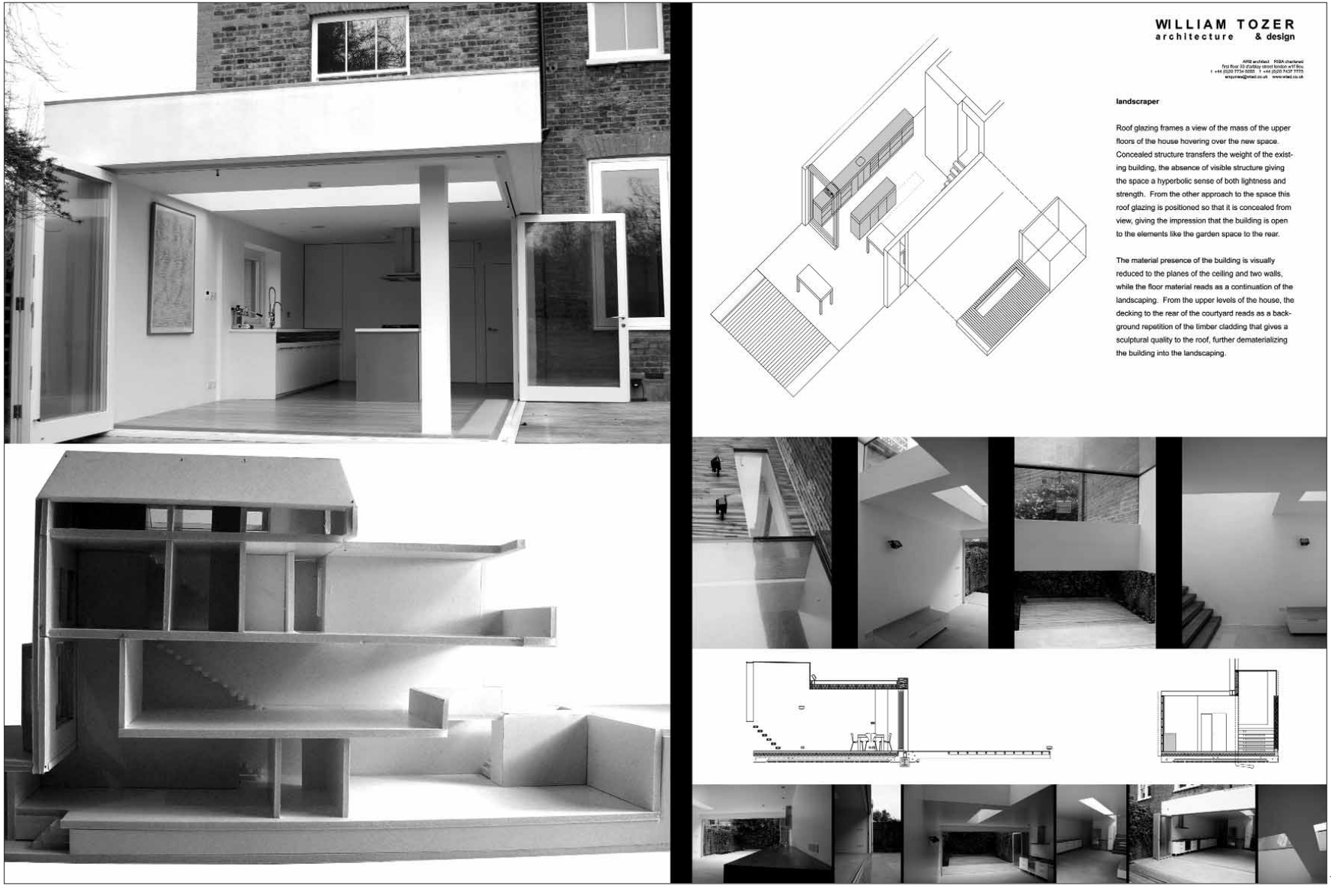
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13 Selected projects & *Sleeper*, William Tozer

14 *Open End*, *Sleeper*, *Composite House*, William Tozer. The unexpected positioning of structure in *Open End* evokes the open-ended character of a building in construction. *Composite House* collages together spatial and formal vocabulary developed in a partial form through the preceding projects



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reinvention of building form or space, drawing methods, or socio-political agendas, but rather in a recognition and understanding of the active role of a large number of processes of practice that are frequently considered design-neutral. Decisions such as the size of projects undertaken, the speed of growth of a practice and its projects, and the management of clients are recognised as design processes, and design methodologies developed that integrate them. A reconsideration of Modernism as 'fine art architecture' diminishes the perpetual imperative to find a new architectural agenda and associated geometry to replace it and, more importantly, the desire to propagate its replacement in a partisan way. Terence Riley has written of a 'conjunction of mutually derisive terms: "blobs" versus "boxes"',[19] concluding that 'dissimilar forms are not necessarily ideologically oppositional and [that ...] formal distinctions in architecture are not the most important ones'.[20] A refocusing of the profession and academia on the processes of architectural production has the potential to address Schön's concern for 'research [that] functions not as a distraction from practice but as a development of it' *[15, 16]*.[21]

It is argued here that the ambition of architects to *embody* political, social and cultural agendas in their design processes and buildings has its origin in a disingenuous explanation of modern architecture as building with an agenda or agendas. While architecture is a potential locus of political, social and cultural activity, it cannot embody these phenomena. It is almost essential for architects to possess some degree of belief in the notion that a built environment can influence human action or emotion, but the idea that a building can embody politics, culture or society is fundamentally flawed. One need only look at the conversion of buildings to different functions – or recall the ordinariness of sites of acts of violence, bravery or creativity – in order to appreciate the extent to which such an attempt is folly. Furthermore, attempts to attribute agendas to space and form are almost inevitably undertaken at the expense of addressing issues which *are* within the capacity of architecture and its practices. Unless one is to opt out of making buildings, it cannot be denied that architecture involves the creation of objects in space, the physicality of which demands that aesthetic decisions be taken about their appearance. This is not to reduce the act of making architecture to decisions of taste, but on the contrary to recognise its potential as a fine art medium; to inspire and to provoke contemplation beyond its own physicality. While 'normative practice' would expect any such inspiration and contemplation to be definable as the result of an applied agenda, the alternate mode of practice proposed here would argue for an architecture that is open-ended and shaped by the processes of its own production. As only a very small proportion of buildings are currently designed by architects, many opportunities exist for architectural practice to be redefined in ways that have a direct impact on the built environment. The model of alternative practice proposed here does not require the discovery of a new and elusive zeitgeist, but simply the recognition that architecture can have wide-ranging social, political and cultural impact without limiting itself to large-scale projects, novel geometries and overt agendas.

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15 *One Up One Down*, William Tozer; Moller House, Adolf Loos; *Public House*, William Tozer

16 *Pavilion*, William Tozer: spatial and visual manoeuvres create ambiguities of enclosure and openness, and construction and completion, which are reinforced by the use of concrete and exposed brickwork as surface finishes

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Notes

1. An example is the Call for Papers for the Alternate Currents symposium at the Sheffield School of Architecture, 26–27 November 2007, at which this paper was first presented.
2. The Alternate Currents Call for Papers invited submissions 'that operate outside the standardised and prescribed tenets and working methods promoted by the professional bodies' and buildings were notably absent from or peripheral to most of the symposium papers.
3. While it is relatively commonplace for academics to engage in practice, the proportion of practising architects engaged in academia is very small. Furthermore, the engagement of academics in practice is seldom connected with the issues that dominate the profession, and practices that engage in research tend to do so either as a professional rather than intellectual undertaking, or as an entirely separate activity. The distinction is so established that when one speaks of 'practice' in academia it is assumed that one refers only to an avant-garde minority and that the majority of practice does not warrant intellectual consideration.
4. Small residential work is frequently commodified as 'bread and butter' revenue to keep young practices afloat, infantilised as an opportunity for architects to 'cut their teeth', or trivialised by comparison to an architect's 'first real building'. A single house is generally considered insufficiently complex to be the subject of a final year student project, and geometrically elaborate work dominates the end-of-term shows of architecture schools. Examples are numerous and widespread, but the following is indicative: 'After two decades spent designing houses, Peter Märkli is at last building at a substantial scale', Ellis Woodman, 'Beyond Babel: the work of Swiss architect Peter Märkli', *Building Design*, 27 (2007).
5. This principle can be observed in any discipline, and is discussed in relation to architecture by Peter Carolin, 'Laboratory Time'.
6. Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Ashgate, 1983), pp. vii–x.
7. Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast, Architecture and Its Three Geometries* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995), p. xxxvi.
8. For example, in describing the design process for the Möbius House, Ben van Berkel asserts that the 'diagram liberates architecture from language, interpretation, and signification', as cited by Terence Riley, 'Projects', in *The Un-Private House,* ed. by Laura Morris (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), p. 128. The implication of the architect's statement is that the architecture embodies the meaning of its scientific inspiration, rather than simply utilising it as a creative starting point.
9. Theodor W. Adorno argues that, 'the question of functionalism does not coincide with the question of practical function [...] The difference between the necessary and the superfluous is inherent in a work, and is not defined by the work's relationship – or lack of it – to something outside itself'. T. W. Adorno, 'Functionalism Today', in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. by Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997).
10. Evans, *The Projective Cast*, p. xxxi.
11. Kenneth Frampton in Robert Schezen, *Adolf Loos, Architecture 1903–1932* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996), p. 15.
12. Adolf Loos as cited by Aldo Rossi in *Adolf Loos, Theory & Works*, Benedetto Gravagnuolo, ed. by. Andrea Branzi, trans. by C. H. Evans (Milan: Idea Books, 1982), p. 14.
13. Nikolaus Pevsner, as cited in Panayotis Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), p. 49.
14. Frampton in Schezen, *Adolf Loos*, p. 17.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Yehuda Safran, Wilfried Wang and Mildred Bundy, *Adolf Loos* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain and Precision Press, 1985), p. 12.
17. Schezen, *Adolf Loos*, p. 18.
18. Evans, *The Projective Cast*, p. xxi.
19. Riley, 'The Un-Private House', in *The Un-Private House,* p. 29.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
21. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, pp. xi.

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Biography

William Tozer is conducting doctoral research by design at the Bartlett School of Architecture and runs his own architectural practice, previously shortlisted for the Young Architect of the Year Award and featured in numerous publications. He taught design for several years as a part-time lecturer, and is a prolific published architectural critic.

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