

From the editor

Home is central to all our lives

Talking with Sheila O'Donnell recently at the second AJ 'In conversation with...' event, held at the Roca London Gallery, was both a privilege and a pleasure. And it was the thoughtful way she spoke about her 'longest ever project', which particularly resonated.

That 'longest ever project' is the home (*pictured*) she shares with business partner and husband John Tuomey in Dublin – a house which has been remodelled many times over the years to suit the different stages of their shared family life.

'It will always be a work in progress,' she says. 'You can keep talking to an old building and it gives you more ideas about what to do. I sometimes think how much richer the world would be if we were to take into account the lives buildings have had before.'

The idea and importance of home, expressed so eloquently by

O'Donnell, is something that prompts much of architecture: making safe, comfortable, creative places in which people can grow and thrive. Context is important too – the notion that places have unique identities that should be respected and considered.

So it's heartening to cover a range of projects that speak to the rich idea of home in this issue – and that two of these are social housing schemes. In its retrofit of three Glasgow tower blocks, Collective Architecture has tackled heating poverty and has improved social areas. Its Cedar Court project also recognises that these tower blocks are an important gateway into the city –

part of the collective memory that makes up Glasgow's identity.

Bell Phillips' Richmond Green, Century House and Ludlow Lodge represent the first new wave of social housing schemes that Sutton Council has undertaken for decades. Each has a distinct context, but each features subtle design details that tie the trio together aesthetically. This is not a one-size-fits-all standardised approach. Instead, it's about building sensitively for different communities, and for the long term.

Of course, resonating through any discussion of the importance of home, community and the right to safety and security is the devastating Grenfell fire, and its terrible loss of life. The Grenfell Inquiry's initial phase has now reported, and you can read Ella Jessel's coverage of its crucial findings on page 6. Home is central to all our lives. Many people called Grenfell Tower home. Their loss must not be forgotten.

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