Editorial

I am sure that you will have noticed that this issue has a different cover. Well, more than the cover has changed. Palgrave Macmillan is now the publisher. Palgrave Journals has a high reputation in this field, being a global publisher in both the professional and academic arenas. The change of publisher offers the Journal a global marketplace for the distribution of the Journal and, as a result, a wider arena from which to draw upon the expertise of those faced with interpreting the implications of the condition of a building. The wider experiences will help to build up a strong database of the trends in deficiencies that increase the cost of maintaining or managing buildings. I want the Journal to include the experiences, for example, of those on the European mainland as well as those from the USA and Australasia.

Some of the information already coming through reinforces the virtue of having a journal with an international bent. By reading, for example, Norwegians writing about timber decay, Russians about failures in concrete or Swedes about brickwork failures we are reminded that building design must be location specific. The local conditions create the microclimate that is found to challenge many buildings. The importation of designs used in other parts of the world, or even of designers less familiar with local challenges, has contributed to the reduced performance of many buildings. I remain concerned about the international design of buildings using a technique that worked in one part of the world without researching the climatic, economic and material challenges to be experienced on the new site.

For example, in Kuala Lumpur the outside of the Twin Towers needs to be washed on a continuous basis to remove the pollutants that are damaging the stainless steel used on the external face of the building. Every day workmen, using water carefully selected for its pH level, swing from gondolas to wash the vertical sides of the Petronas Towers and the bridge. They cannot reach the spires at the top of the building so twice a year abseilers ascend to wash the pointy bits (at something over 450 metres high). Was it a decision of the designer to sacrifice the efficiency of the building for its appearance or was it an accident that came from a lack of appreciation of the local climate and the prevailing air movement (and the abrasive content of that air) at this cross-valley location? The location of this building, until recently the tallest in the world, on the flight path of bird migration has resulted in frequent bird strikes adding to its maintenance problems.

Of course, in mentioning the comparative height of any building one becomes embroiled in the definition of tall or tallest building in the world. It becomes a matter of academic debate whether one includes the various masts and whether the mast can be supported by wires (the KVLV-TV mast in North Dakota is 628 metres high) or must be free standing (the CN tower in Toronto is 553 metres high), or even placed on top of a building (the Sears Tower is 529 metres high), or whether the topping of a building

with a spire enclosing the mast changes the interpretation (the Petronas Twin Towers are 452 metres high). Should height only mean habitable height (the Taipei Tower 101 at 448 metres high or the under-construction Hong Kong International Commerce Centre at 490 metres)? Should communication towers be included in buildings, or how much accommodation on the top allows them to be included as a building (the Borj-e Milad tower in Tehran has 12 floors of accommodation and is 435 meters high), or even whether structures rising out of the water should have their below-water height included (the Mars platform in the Gulf of Mexico is over 900 metres high from the sea bed). The debate continues even as new buildings are designed and built internationally.

This international flavour reminds us of the limited quality of some of the building materials that are available on the market. For example, tiles manufactured in China and Japan have adhesion to their backing strips that has been low in performance, resulting in major damage being caused where the tiles have been applied to the external face of buildings.

We start the second volume of the Journal with high hopes for its continued development and expansion. In this edition we have varied the international experience with UK-based information. Jørgen Bech-Andersen writes about the agencies of decay in timber and the Danish experience of insuring against fungal decay in the home. Jorge de Brito and Fernando Branco write about the performance of concrete used in the *tauromaquia* after exposure to the Portuguese climate when the concrete is not protected or maintained. Andrew Thompson provides a valuable piece on rights of light, forewarning of the changes that may come about to the compensation for infringements of rights of light. Melanie Smith writes about the implication of access legislation for historic buildings in England and Wales. Ralph Burkinshaw writes about damp diagnosis, and reminds us of the limitations of electrical resistance moisture meters. As equipment they accurately record the resistance of the material being tested, which the informed surveyor must then interpret and not just accept without challenge. There remains too much misdiagnosis of dampness within buildings through the misinterpretation of moisture meter readings.

We also include valuable guidance from Sean Smith and his colleagues on the design of sound insulation in separating walls, and Barrie Church and Geoff Winckles write about responsibilities for the gas pipework in the UK. I recall that a few years ago an inspection of the gas installation in a London block of flats revealed the absence of ventilated ducts, failure of pipes to be marked, incorrect selection of stop cocks, fire doors to ducts with ventilation openings cut in them, cleaning materials stored in pipe ducts, no earth bonding to gas meters, pipes bedded without sleeves in concrete and the structure damaged by holes cut for pipework. The rest of the insulation was OK.

Best wishes for the New Year.

Malcolm Hollis
Managing Editor
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