

## BEDFORD SQUARE

### the joylessness of administered space.

m.cousins

For all the concern with space in architectural education there is a strong omission. While architecture schools still worry about public space, very little is said about a type of space that is growing, is dominating us, and should be resisted. It is institutional space, and its presence cuts across any division between public space and private space. The main characteristics of institutional space are to make you aware that the space you are in is administered. This is closely tied to the idea that it is regulated. In spatial terms, administered space dispossesses you of the space. The dispossession in this case means that we cannot relate directly to the space, save via the world of regulation. Pass through it, wait in it, often queue in it – we can do everything in it except be in it.

Administered space shows itself in different ways. Sometimes it is through spatial organisation. Administrative space is the close friend of the corridor, from which stem large cupboards that contain a desk, a telephone and an administered person – this is usually called an office. In the corridors themselves there are administered doors – they are not for privacy nor for keeping the cold out though it is sometimes claimed they have an obscure relation to fire. These arrangements can

be inserted into previously pleasurable buildings, but they have a highly effective capacity to drain pleasure (and indeed intelligence) from the building.

Administered space also has a close relation to excessive signage. We could say that the general sign of administrative space is the command 'DO NOT'.



This is the most general form of the 'DO NOT' command. Of course, the prohibition will always be made concrete in terms of 'no smoking', 'no eating', 'no drinking', but these are superfluous. Their use in administered space is not directly related to trying to prevent some alien objects appearing, but to declare that the space is under the regime of the prohibition and regulation.

The diagrammatic form as shown above (and reverse) is what we might call the fundamental ornament of administered space. It is the Victorian diagram of administration, a spatial and institutional virus.

*Mark Cousins is*

## MORWELL STREET

### crisis & the validity of authority.

e.dodman

Administered spaces are distinct from other spaces because there is an agreed upon set of rules that govern the space. One knows not to shout in a library, not to run in the corridor, and not to drink in the computer room. Most of the time these rules and conventions are adhered to – we read the signs and wage no conflicts with them.

There are, however, times when the rules are broken – when we subvert the meaning of the space and temporarily make it our own. Take for example the airport during delays. As soon as the message is relayed, a flurry of activity takes place. Holidaymakers and businessmen alike set up their own small areas of personal space: vast halls become small corridors as people surround themselves with their bags and unpack their belongings; seats for waiting become beds, toilets turn into bathrooms. The power socket plays a central role in the way these spontaneous clusters form and organise themselves.

The 'delay' causes the space to transform from one we would ordinarily just pass through to one in which we might possibly have to dwell. Our relationship with the spaces changes, from transient to semi-permanent, from administered to personal.

What causes this shift in attitude?

The rules that govern administered space are only ef-

fective if they are perceived as stemming from a valid power – an attitude of 'crisis' changes our relationship to the responsible authority, and we are given an excuse to ignore the regulations defining that space. In the case of the airport, we only adhere to the complicated ritual of passing through immigration and security because we are trying to get through and out of the airport as swiftly as possible. When our departure is jeopardised, we linger and mark out our own territory.

The delay breaks that contract, the rules are no longer valid, we make the space our own.

Much like the recent student protests, the students started to inhabit the space in a different way in which to make their point.

When the rules lose their validity the students started to dwell in their universities overnight, by which they were overthrowing the power of the administered space. The 'crisis' can take many forms: it may be out of our control (like a natural disaster) or one we search out ourselves. In either case, the crisis provokes us to question our role within the realm of administered space and highlights that it is never somewhere we belong.

*Eleanor Dodman is a third year student at the AA.*

## TIMED SPACE

With perhaps the exception of 'fuck', there is no word in the English language less definable than 'space'. Its manifold meanings cover everything from the outer universe to abstract mathematics – everything from the public domain, to that internal place where we dream.

In Western philosophy space is not distinguishable from time, since the two are seen as categories of the same conceptual framework (one that describes the basic relation of all things). This is testified in the Latin origins of 'spatium', which can mean both 'distance' and 'duration'. Space and time are not entities in their own right, hence the proliferation of variations on their abstract meaning.

Similarly, they are terms without hierarchy. By prioritising space over time, 'planned' space implies an atemporal and preexisting spatial condition within which humans can only ever act as agents of predetermined activities. Not only is this concept flawed, it produces a rigidity completely at odds with the era in which we live.

If 'planned space' exists anywhere, it is only inside the atemporality of my Macbook. Its purely coincidental relationship to the temporal space in which I exist is what Borges would call 'the association of ideas'. I do not want to be misunderstood, I am not criticising Wright & Wright's redesign of the AA – I am questioning the very ideology upon which it was founded. It seems to me an inherently archaic exercise. Accordingly, a wholly new type of school plan is demanded, one whose organisation is founded on the flexibility of time and the fluidity of space (establishing a fulcrum between the domains of the real and virtual). In this sense, something like an AA 'time plan' would seem a more appropriate starting point.  
*J.Self.*

## "CARDBOARD CITY"



Heathrow Terminal 3 during the Christmas Cock-Up. Photo by J.Selwyn.

## OUT OF TOUCH

The recent controversial front-page article by an anonymous contributor to the GDT was a clear provocation outlining concerns whispered around the school. It is a shame these topics have to be discussed anonymously but there has been a distinct lack of communication from the top of the school. This has created an atmosphere of paranoia. It's time to demand clarity.

I recently discovered that Brett hadn't signed a contract since his re-election, citing a desire to alter his official title from Director of the School to that of the Association. Last Friday this proposal was approved by the council – both staff & students have expressed that leadership change ought to be discussed with the membership before any decision is made. This has not been the case.

The President responded: Brett's scope of responsibility hasn't changed & this contract is a reflection of his current duties. True to an extent, the scope of the Director of the Association has increased significantly with the Master Plan & its fundraising, the Hooke Park Development & the Life -Long Learning programme.

In the run-up to Brett's re-election, a list of students' demands was published, which stressed: "we need a director that can focus on the school & not the association". On the contrary, the unelected role of Academic Head has increased in power, & further separated the Director from his academic responsibilities.

These points were voiced to the council two meetings ago. By approving Brett's proposal, a clear message has been sent to the school community that the Council has no interest in consulting its members. Regardless of debate on the pros & cons of a CEO of the Association, the AA Council has abused the trust of its members & proven itself to be out-of-touch & inept.  
*A.Mooradian.*  
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Do Not! by Mark Cousins.

## ANONYMOUS

*Kiss and tell, while keeping your name out of the papers...  
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"Word on the street is that until recently our school was lending money to its employees. As a school community we are in the dark about how our money is spent and I think we should demand to know." Anon from 5th year.

"Our generation needs to wise up." 3rd year Anonymous.

"Word out to Belinda, thanks for your continued suffering on our behalf." Anon.

"This school has always been founded on trust. We need to make sure it stays that way." 4th year Anonymous.

"I don't care what you say, I like the green carpet. I really do. It reminds me of a Woody Allen film." An Anonymous visitor to the school.