

THE WORLD ARCH BRIEFING · DAILY BRIEFING

24 October: Housing Above the Tracks, a Theatre Grown Up, and Estates Reprieved

A housing award for building above infrastructure, a gallery turned into a working studio, a bungalow that doubled without moving, a concrete frame given a timber second life, a theatre that grew up, and two estates that survived the bulldozer.

By World Arch Journal · Published 24 October 2026 ·



Haussmann residential facades in Paris. Photo: R Boed, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY 2.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY 2.0

This edition selects six reports published on 21–23 October 2026 and checked on 24 October. Each story links directly to its original publication, and every photograph is an independently licensed image of

the actual subject — never a news outlet's own picture. "Our reading" is independent commentary, not on-site reporting. Estimated reading time: nine minutes.

DAILY BRIEFING · GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE NEWS

Sources checked 24 October 2026. Source statements and our interpretation are distinguished below. How we work [↗](#)

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

What these stories mean together

Across these six stories, the most interesting architecture is not the new object on the empty site. It is the negotiation with what is already there: a housing block stitched over transport infrastructure, 63 apartments carved from a parking garage, a gallery that stops exhibiting finished work and starts showing the work itself, a bungalow doubled in size on its own footprint, a 1960s science block keeping its concrete bones under a timber crown, and two estates whose residents refused demolition for fifteen years and won. The profession keeps announcing that the future is reuse; this week, the evidence arrived from six directions at once.

- Addition: when does building on top of, inside, or above the existing city produce better housing than a cleared site — and when is it just harder?
- Process: what does the public learn when a studio works in the open, and what does the studio risk?
- Retention: who gets to decide that a building — or an estate — is worth keeping, and what finally tips the decision?
- Affordability: awards keep rewarding affordable homes in expensive cities. What would it take for that to be the norm rather than the prizewinner?

This issue draws on six published reports from ArchDaily, Dezeen, Architectural Record and e-architect. It does not independently assess the award jury's deliberations, the Berlin exhibition's four proposals, the Manchester extension's construction, the Amherst building's carbon figures, the Yard Theatre's acoustics, or the Lambeth estates' refurbishment costs.

Six stories: housing above the tracks, a studio in the open, a bungalow doubled, a timber crown, a theatre grown up, and two estates reprieved

This edition pairs two Paris housing projects that won the European Collective Housing Award — one built above transport infrastructure, one converted from a 1957 garage — with an exhibition in Berlin where a gallery becomes a working architecture studio, a Manchester bungalow doubled in size on its own footprint, Herzog & de Meuron's mass-timber student center rising from a retained concrete frame at Amherst College, a Hackney theatre rebuilt from its own demolished bricks, and the news that two of London's most contested post-war estates will not be demolished after all. Each story links directly to its original publication, and every photograph is an independently licensed image of the actual subject — never a news outlet's own picture. "Our reading" is independent commentary, not on-site reporting. Estimated reading time: nine minutes.

01 / Two Paris projects win the European Collective Housing Award

Source published: 23 October 2026



Cité de Refuge, Le Corbusier's 1929–33 Salvation Army hostel in Paris — the city's long history of collective housing. Photo: Rory Hyde, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 2.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 2.0

La Métropolitaine, by Ignacio Prego Architectures and Thibaud Babled Architectures, and a garage conversion by Atelier Téqui Architectes have won the second edition of the European Collective Housing Award, in the new construction and renovation categories respectively. The winners were announced on 8 October 2026 in San Sebastián, after a selection process involving 192 entries from 36 European countries.

La Métropolitaine is built above existing transport infrastructure at the edge of Paris, combining social housing, affordable student housing and public facilities in a single structure facing the new Palais de Justice. Every apartment, from one to five bedrooms, runs through the building's shallow depth — city on

one side, garden on the other. The jury singled out the public owner's commitment to keeping rents affordable in one of the city's most sought-after locations.

The renovation prize went to Atelier Téqui's conversion of a 1957 garage in Paris's 11th arrondissement — a Grand Prix de Rome design by Claude Béraud — into 63 apartments and a retail space. Floor slabs, columns, beams and the facade's cantilevered concrete elements were kept; the vehicle ramps went. Above the retained frame, a new addition in steel, cross-laminated timber and larch cladding packs in up to 99 kg/m² of bio-based materials, with landscaped courtyards, winter gardens and a rooftop vegetable garden.

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the award's second edition nearly doubled its reach — 36 countries, 192 entries — and both winners answer the same brief: add homes without erasing the city. Building above infrastructure and inside a garage are not compromises; they are the sites the next decade of European housing will be built on, because the empty sites are gone. The telling detail is the jury's praise for affordable rents as an architectural achievement. It should not be remarkable that social housing stays social — but in Paris, it is, and the award knows it.

Read source: ArchDaily — Two projects in Paris win the European Collective Housing Award, 23 October 2026 ↗

02 / A Berlin gallery becomes a live architecture studio

Source published: 23 October 2026



Berlin-Mitte's government quarter — the city whose existing fabric is the subject of the Aedes live studio. Photo: Ansgar Koreng, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 3.0 de. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 3.0 de

CHYBÍK + KRIŠTOF has opened “Building the Existing City” at the Aedes Architecture Forum in Berlin — an exhibition that turns the gallery into a working architecture studio. Running from 23 October to 3 December 2026, it centres on four proposals for Berlin sites, chosen through an open call that invited anyone — residents, initiatives, institutions, owners — to nominate buildings or urban situations in need of transformation.

The four projects will be developed pro bono over six weeks, in collaboration with the communities attached to each site, with the studies presented at a closing event on 3 December. Around the working studio, the practice shows its built work — the Jihlava Municipal Arena, the Nusle Brewery neighbourhood, the Lahofer Winery — through four themes: play, live, activate, adapt, plus a programme of lectures, film screenings and school workshops.

OUR ANALYSIS

most architecture exhibitions show finished work; this one shows work happening, which is a braver proposition. The open call is the interesting mechanism — it lets the city nominate its own problems rather than waiting for a client. The risk is also the point: designing in public, with communities watching, leaves nowhere to hide the compromises. If even one of the four proposals survives contact with reality, the format will have earned its six weeks.

Read source: ArchDaily — CHYBÍK + KRIŠTOF turns Aedes into a live architecture studio to develop four Berlin projects, 23 October 2026 ↗

03 / A Manchester bungalow doubled: squeezing a quart into a pint pot

Source published: 23 October 2026



A Manchester bungalow of the type Loader Monteith doubled on its own footprint in Prestwich. Photo: Bob Harvey, via Geograph / Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 2.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 2.0

Scottish studio Loader Monteith has transformed a two-bedroom, 69 m² red-brick bungalow in Prestwich, near Manchester, into a four-bedroom family home — “squeezing a quart into a pint pot,” in the studio’s phrase. A rear brick extension opens the living spaces to the garden; a new upper floor is tucked beneath a dormer roof; the front keeps its street manners with a green-toned copper entryway against the red brick.

The clients, Matt and Angie Maurer, took on much of the construction themselves. Inside, the plan is reorganised around the section: street-facing bedrooms and a study at the front, a trio of interconnected kitchen, living and dining spaces in the rear extension stepping down to a sunken dining area level with the garden, and a skylit stair rising to the new first floor. Materials are pared back — concrete floors,

white walls, exposed timber joinery — with decorative brick corbelling borrowed from Prestwich's own patterns and a sedum roof overhead.

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this is the small project as proof of concept. Doubling a 69 m² bungalow without demolishing it, on its own footprint, is exactly the kind of ordinary-heroic work the housing crisis actually needs — thousands of underused small houses, extended with care, beat a handful of exemplary new builds. Note the method, too: the studio started by analysing Prestwich's brick architecture rather than importing a style. Context as a design tool, not a constraint.

Read source: Dezeen — Loader Monteith expands red-brick bungalow in Manchester, 23 October 2026



04 / Herzog & de Meuron gives a 1960s concrete frame a mass-timber second life

Source published: 22 October 2026



The Main Quad at Amherst College — the Olmsted-designed campus where Herzog & de Meuron's timber-topped student center has opened. Photo: David Emmerman, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY 3.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY 3.0

Amherst College has inaugurated the Ford Student Center & Dining Commons: Herzog & de Meuron's transformation of the 1960s Merrill-McGuire science building, with Sasaki as executive architect. The architects kept the concrete framework of the lower two levels, removed the upper floors to reopen sightlines across the Olmsted-designed campus, and added two new mass-timber floors above — nearly 120,000 square feet of dining commons, theatre, dance and maker spaces organised around a daylight central gathering route.

The numbers are the story: retaining the structure saved an estimated 1,900 metric tons of embodied carbon; the fully electric building pairs geothermal with rooftop solar and is projected to cut operational

emissions by roughly 93 percent over sixty years. Above the retained frame, the timber addition steps back into pavilion-like volumes — lightly oiled western red cedar over near-black stained wood — with deep overhangs tuned to limit solar gain. It is the Swiss firm's first completed educational project in the United States.

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the project is a built answer to the carbon-budget argument — the greenest structure is the one already standing, and the most convincing low-carbon architecture right now is a retained frame wearing a timber crown. The 1,900-ton figure deserves to travel: it puts a number on what “adaptive reuse” actually saves, which is what turns a virtue into a specification.

Read source: Architectural Record — Herzog & de Meuron's Ford Student Center & Dining Commons opens at Amherst College, 22 October 2026 ↗

05 / The Yard Theatre grows up: a makeshift venue becomes permanent

Source published: 21 October 2026



Queen's Yard, Hackney Wick — the former industrial quarter where the Yard Theatre has grown from a makeshift venue into a permanent one. Photo: Oxyman, via Wikimedia Commons — CC BY 2.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY 2.0

Takero Shimazaki Architects has rebuilt the Yard Theatre in London's Hackney Wick — originally a three-month makeshift venue in a converted warehouse, designed by Practice Architecture in 2011 — as a permanent 224-seat theatre with a bar, backstage facilities and community space. The architects kept the brick walls of the adjacent former brewery, framed the new pitched auditorium in laminated veneer lumber on reclaimed tubular steel, and finished the stacked-box exterior in fibre-cement, polycarbonate and K-Briq — bricks made from over 95 percent recycled material.

The signature move is vertical: a former crane tower refashioned as a 23-metre ventilation chimney, clad in translucent polycarbonate, glowing as a beacon over the neighbourhood. Demolished bricks were

reused in the stage wall; an Antony Gormley figure stands on the roof. What was horizontal and industrial is now stacked and civic — the founder calls the form “church-like,” a cultural building with a presence to match its permanence.

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venues that start temporary usually die temporary; the Yard’s survival into permanence is the real story, and the architecture honours it by keeping the makeshift’s DNA — reclaimed steel, reused brick, industrial lightness — while giving it the dignity of a civic room. The K-Briq cladding and the reused structure make this a quiet materials manifesto, which pairs neatly with this week’s other reuse stories. Fifteen years from warehouse to landmark: that is how cultural infrastructure actually gets built.

Read source: Dezeen — Takero Shimazaki revamps theatre into “church-like” London venue, 21 October 2026 ↗

06 / Two London estates saved from demolition after fifteen years of resistance

Source published: 23 October 2026



The Central Hill Estate, Crystal Palace (1967–75, Rosemary Stjernstedt) — saved from demolition with Cressingham Gardens. Photo: Robin Stott, via Geograph / Wikimedia Commons — CC BY-SA 2.0. Photo source ↗ · CC BY-SA 2.0

Lambeth Council has dropped decade-long demolition plans for the Central Hill Estate (1967–75, Rosemary Stjernstedt) and Cressingham Gardens (1969–79, Ted Hollamby) — two of London’s most significant post-war housing estates — committing instead to retention, refurbishment and bringing empty homes back into use. The decision follows a change of political control in May’s local elections and ends a resident-led campaign that ran for nearly fifteen years, through four judicial reviews and an independent inquiry.

Both estates sat on the Twentieth Century Society’s Risk List; both were repeatedly refused statutory listing. Central Hill’s 374 homes step down a steep Crystal Palace hillside in flat-roofed and pitched cubes of London stock brick; Cressingham’s 306 low-rise homes wind around mature trees by Brockwell Park. The council concluded comprehensive redevelopment was no longer financially viable — retention won on the numbers as well as the principle.

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this is the most consequential housing story of the week, and it was won by residents, not architects. Fifteen years, four judicial reviews, and a change of council later, the argument that demolition was the only viable future collapsed under its own arithmetic. The profession should sit with the uncomfortable part: these estates survived despite the system, not because of it. Now comes the harder test — a refurbishment worthy of the architecture and the people who defended it.

Read source: e-architect — Central Hill Estate and Cressingham Gardens saved from demolition, 23 October 2026 ↗

The editor's test: what the existing city is worth

Six stories, one ledger. Paris adds homes above infrastructure and inside a garage. Berlin opens the studio doors. Manchester doubles a bungalow without moving it. Amherst keeps its concrete and grows timber. Hackney gives its theatre permanence. Lambeth keeps its estates standing. None of these projects starts from a cleared site, and none treats the existing city as an obstacle.

OUR ANALYSIS

the week's useful discipline is a valuation exercise. Before any demolition, refurbishment or new build, ask what the existing place is already worth — in carbon, in community, in embodied skill — and make the proposal beat that number honestly. The projects that did are this week's news. The ones that couldn't are next week's cautionary tales.

Further reading

- Browse the previous briefing (23 October)
- The kitchen extension handbook: layout, light and planning permission (UK)
- Why your home gets damp: condensation, mould and how design fixes them
- What good dense housing looks like: 8 lessons from the 2026 Stirling Prize winner
- Adaptive reuse: keeping the buildings worth keeping
- Carbon budgets for buildings: how architects set a CO2 target and hit it
- Browse every dated architecture briefing

Source notes

Official announcements and source reporting are linked below. Interpretations labelled “Our reading” are World Arch Journal commentary, not claims made by the source organisations. No sponsored placement is included in this edition.

1. ArchDaily — Two projects in Paris win the European Collective Housing Award, 23 October 2026 ↗
2. ArchDaily — CHYBÍK + KRIŠTOF turns Aedes into a live architecture studio to develop four Berlin projects, 23 October 2026 ↗
3. Dezeen — Loader Monteith expands red-brick bungalow in Manchester, 23 October 2026 ↗
4. Architectural Record — Herzog & de Meuron’s Ford Student Center & Dining Commons opens at Amherst College, 22 October 2026 ↗
5. Dezeen — Takero Shimazaki revamps theatre into “church-like” London venue, 21 October 2026 ↗
6. e-architect — Central Hill Estate and Cressingham Gardens saved from demolition, 23 October 2026 ↗

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