

## TRADA Workshop – Judging Velocity

Elizabeth Turner

Timber Research and Development Association (TRADA)

### TRADA National Student Design Competition – Velocity in British Timber

This year to celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, TRADA launched a brand new design competition aimed at university schools of the built environment primarily schools of architecture and engineering.

The competition was organised by TRADA's successful University Engagement Programme<sup>1</sup>. The programme aims to educate lecturers and students alike about timber in construction and offers resources and support to mainly UK universities in a number of forms. A series of online written resources are available as well as a dedicated University Liaison Manager who can deliver lectures/workshops to students. In addition, we run a variety of 'in university' competitions some of which benefit from timber industry sponsorship.

The National Student Design Competition was an extension of these competitions but offering an opportunity to all UK undergraduate students to participate.

#### *Developing our brief*

TRADA had a desire to offer an infrastructure project to design in timber a large building or structure. We were also keen to use a real site that offered real life challenges for students to address. In addition, a desire to develop a landmark timber building in an urban environment was a goal

We explored a number of options and chose cycling as a theme as it offered a sustainable method of transport and is an issue currently very much on the forefront of planners' minds.

Following research, we were delighted to get in contact with Dan Cook, Education and Training Manager for the Cycle Touring Club (CTC), and based in Sheffield and who suggested a potential site - Parkwood Springs. This is a large, open space that lies on a hill just north of Sheffield city centre providing fantastic views southwards back to the city and looking out to the Peak District National Park to the north and north west. It includes a relatively new

mountain bike trail that Dan was instrumental in developing. Adjacent to Parkwood Springs is a now derelict Ski Village and a landfill site due to be filled and returned to the City in 2018. As an area in need of regeneration, the entire area offered an ideal opportunity to develop our brief which was confirmed by a site visit.

TRADA was keen that the brief be the same for all disciplines and we aimed to produce something that would be suitable for inclusion into curricula but also for students to work on alone should they wish.

We deliberately kept the brief fairly open, offering two sites for students to consider and simply asked for a number of aspects to be included in the cycling super-hub. As well as main hub, we required that a smaller structure for the city centre be designed too.

The buildings were to be built in British timber – introducing a sustainable theme for the entire competition – sustainable construction/local transport/local materials.

The brief<sup>2</sup> tasked students with designing a landmark timber building in Sheffield to provide secure parking for up to 1000 cycles plus ancillary facilities such as cycle retail/workshops, changing facilities, a multiuse community space and a café. The city centre hubs needed to house 50 bikes and serve as a visual link back to the main hub building.

Key to the success of the competition was a catchy name - Velocity was very much a play on words - and accompanying logo which we were pleased with.



Fig. 1. Velocity logo

### *The submissions*

Students were able to work in teams of up to 4 and each entry was asked to submit up to 10 N° A3 pages detailing thier project to cover research and design/concept development, plans sections and elevations including the building layout. Detail drawings of various elements were also asked for along with information about the timber species/products used.

Based on the submissions we received, we found that the brief was used in different ways by each of the participating schools - some students completed the project as part of a long module whereas others had only three weeks to complete the work. Most students worked as teams.

We received entries from both architecture and engineering students and although both groups had approached the brief from different angles the design element stood out in the best submissions from both. Typically the engineering students had included the most written information and technical research whereas, unsurprisingly, architecture students produced visual submissions relying more on imagery to fulfill the requirements of the brief.

### *Judging*

Judging took place in two parts. Firstly all the submissions were assessed by a group of TRADA judges to produce a shortlist of 6. We based our decisions on the criteria set out in the brief. Following this, the shortlisted submissions were sent to Wayne Hemingway – one of our guest judges - for comment and teams were invited to a final judging day held in London. Each team was asked to deliver a 15 minute presentation of their scheme to a panel of judges that included members of the TRADA Advisory Committee, Dan Cook of the CTC, Keren Fallwell of the Timber Trades Journal and Johnny Tucker of Blueprint magazine. The students all produced engaging and very professional presentations and one team had made a film. All of the

judges were impressed by the standard of the presentations and students' engagement in questions.

Prizes will be awarded at Timber Expo at the NEC on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014 when students will be reprising their presentations.

### **An invitation to the AAE Conference 2014**

Although we have completed our judging and know who has won we would like to see if differences lie between how architectural educators assess students' work and the views of TRADA's judging panel.

Therefore, you are invited to 'judge' the entries on day one of the conference to score each entry. Your results will be collated and used to create an AAE shortlist of 6 submissions.

On day two the 'AAE shortlist' and the 'TRADA shortlist' will be exhibited to see if any differences are present.

### **Introducing Airspeed**

The TRADA National Student Design Competition will run again for the 2014/2015 academic year.

We are pleased to be working with the Yorkshire Air Museum and Professor John Edmonds of the University of Nottingham a trustee of the museum to develop a new brief. The brief will be to design in timber both an iconic gateway and a new hangar/visitor centre linking to an existing hangar - watch out for more information soon.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> [www.trada.co.uk/academic](http://www.trada.co.uk/academic)

<sup>2</sup> [www.trada.co.uk/academic/designcompetitions](http://www.trada.co.uk/academic/designcompetitions)