

Right Inside Invisible Studio's woodland studio

Below Coppice Workers' Shelter, Westonbirt Arboretum

Q In a nutshell, describe your practice

A An invisible studio, based everywhere and nowhere.

Q What do you do that is different from more mainstream practice?

A Our structure is much more fluid, allowing an agility that means we can work in a different manner to many practices. We have no employees. Everyone is a collaborator and working with other people or on their own projects. We learnt from Amateur Architecture, who said 'we need to be able not to work if the conditions aren't right'. Because we have no overheads, we can adapt and coalesce around specific projects, rather than have a fixed workforce we need to keep busy.

JIM STEPHENSON



Invisible Studio

128 **Q** Tell us about a current project that exemplifies this

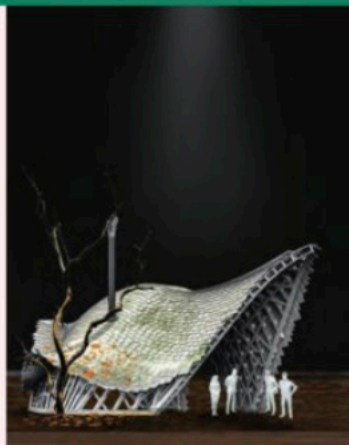
A For the new project we are delivering for Westonbirt Arboretum, which was won in collaboration with Xylotek Advanced Timber Structures, we built a team to bring together very particular types of expertise in timber and participation. We are designing and constructing the project with local community groups and with timber from the Silkwood at Westonbirt. The project isn't something that many practices could afford to take on if they were only designing it, but designing and constructing it allows us to act (architecturally) in a different manner.

Q How should the profession respond to the climate emergency?

A Other than not building, our key focus has to be in two areas. The first is the whole life carbon of the buildings we design. The other thing we need to focus on is living densely. The greenest cities are typically the densest ones, where we share resources and travel less.

Q The AJ100 celebrates the UK's largest practices. How do you judge practice success?

A We judge success by doing interesting work. Our take on what is interesting shifts, of course, but we're not remotely interested in turnover. I can't even tell you what our turnover is and I don't care.



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Q How successful have you been at convincing clients about the climate agenda?

A These things are still super-complex and we try our best. We're not holier-than-thou. Making a building is an incredibly complex process of steering something through an enormous set of conflicting issues. To pretend we always manage to make perfectly sustainable buildings would be a delusion. But we're doing our best to grapple with the issues.

Q How do you measure social impact and do you think the profession is taking it seriously enough?

A By creating a framework which details what the theory of change will be, how the work you carry out day-to-day will lead to long-term change, and how the design of a building complements and supports the activity happening inside. Then, create a monitoring plan which details how and when and in what format you will collect data that will provide evidence on how outcomes and ambitions are being achieved. And, no, we're not doing enough. The culture is to finish it, photograph it, and fuck off. Long-term monitoring is essential, as indeed Architects Declare has articulated with its pledge for long-term post-occupancy evaluation to be offered by architects as an essential part of their appointment.

Piers Taylor, founder, Invisible Studio