

Thomas Heatherwick

Designing the Extraordinary

Hazel Frith March 2021



UK Pavilion Shanghai 2010

- Born 17 February 1970, now 51
- Attended Sevenoaks School
- Studied what was then 'Wood, Metal, Glass and Ceramics', now Three-Dimensional Design, at Manchester Polytechnic
- Followed by MA Royal College of Art
- Mother jeweller, grandmother textile designer, great grandfather owned Jaeger



Heatherwick Studio philosophy

‘The discipline of ideas’

**Three dimensional design - not
multidisciplinary architecture, sculpture,
furniture, metalwork, fashion**

Early Work

Kiosk/Pavilion 1991-2

- Now owned by Cass Foundation
Goodwood Sculpture Park



Early Work

Gazebo 1994

- RCA final project
- Sponsored by Terence Conran, built in his garden
- Tilting stacks of birch ply support each other structurally
- 18 feet high



Heatherwick Studio

Founded 1994

Harvey Nichols Facade

1997 London Fashion Week

- First major public design project
- Ribbon of laminated birch ply winding in and out of shop frontage
- *'Playful urban surrealism'* - The Architectural Review
- Won a D&AD Gold Award



Materials House

1998-9 Materials Gallery, Science Museum, London

- Lottery funded commission
- Combines 213 different materials built up in undulating layers
- Intended to be exploratory and tactile
- Library describing the materials adjacent

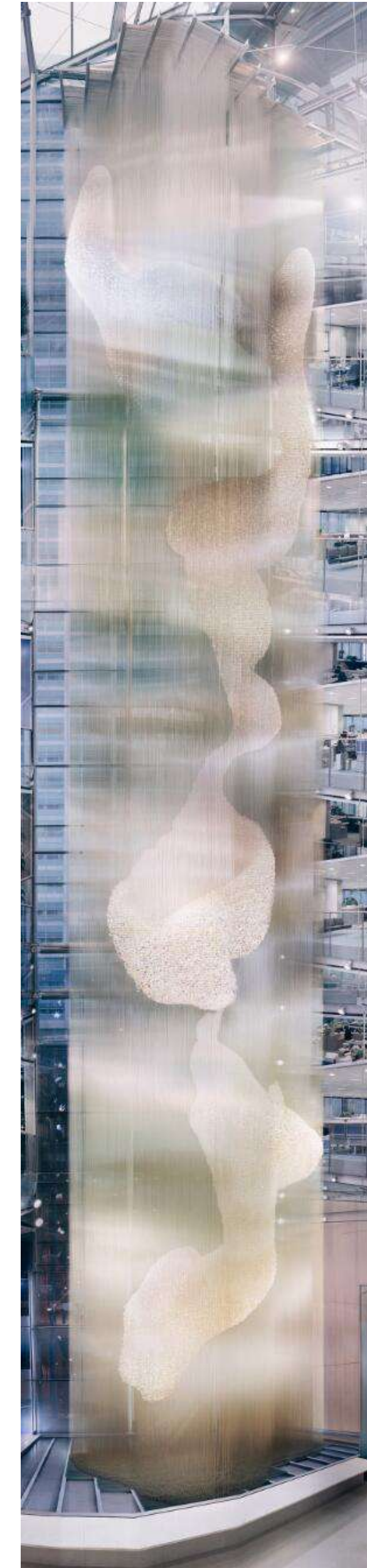


Photographs Science Museum

Chandelier - Bleigiessen

2002 Wellcome Trust

- 42,000 droplets of glass suspended on 27,000 high tensile wires
- Hanging down through 8 floors



Photography Wellcome Trust

- By 2000, Senior Fellow RCA and External Examiner
- 2004 - youngest practitioner to be appointed Royal Designer for Industry
- 2004 - Curated an exhibition at the Design Museum of 1000 everyday design objects he had collected for Terence Conran Foundation
- 2009 Exhibited extruded aluminium seating, Haunch of Venison
- June 2012 Designing the Extraordinary, V&A, first major solo retrospective
- Elected to Royal Academy May 2013
- 2013 - CBE for services to the design industry
- Four honorary doctorates
- Honorary Fellow of Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

Paternoster Vents

2002 London

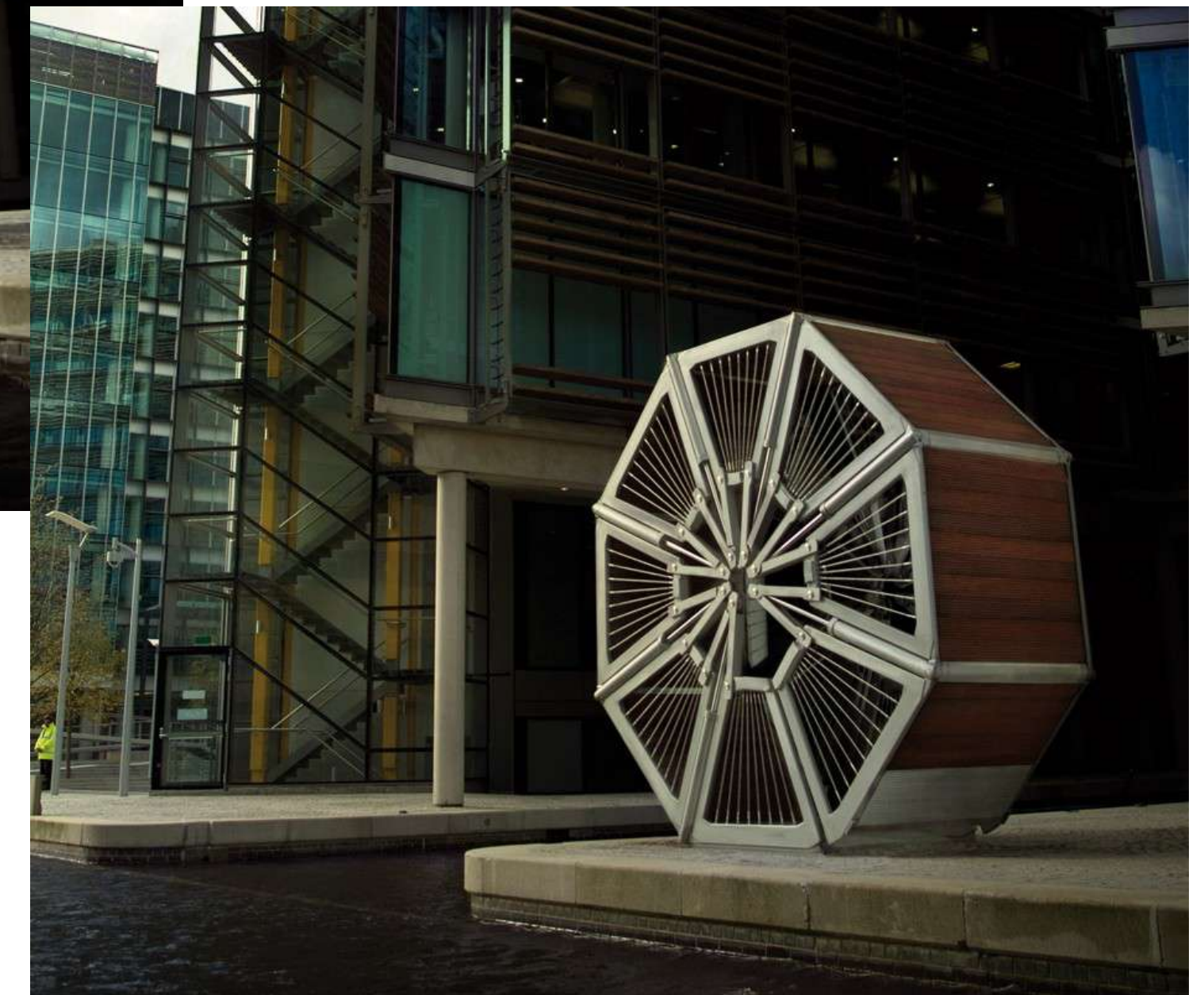
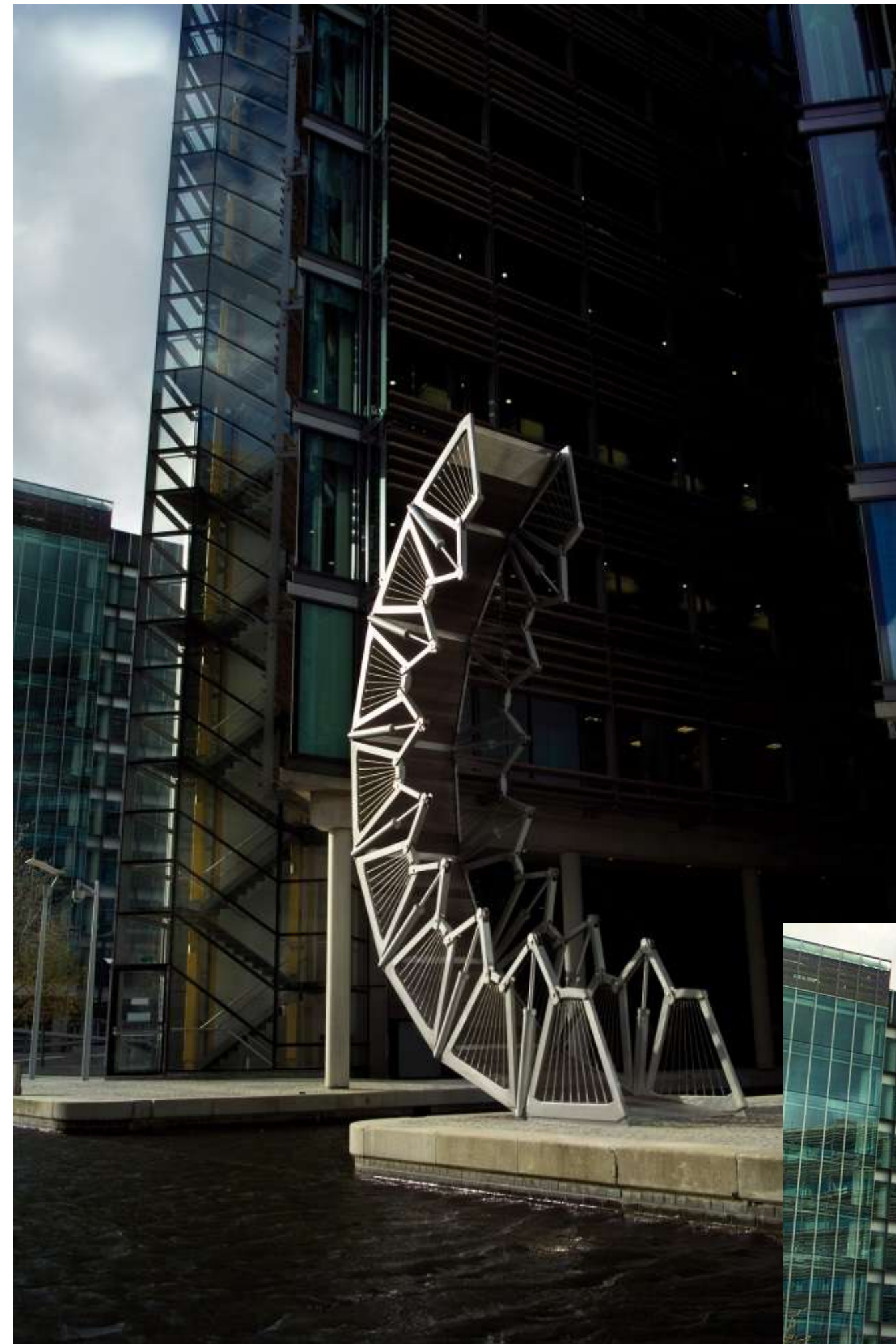
- Also known as 'Angel's Wings'
- Stainless steel
- Hides the vents for underground electrical substation



Rolling Bridge

2004-5 Paddington Basin

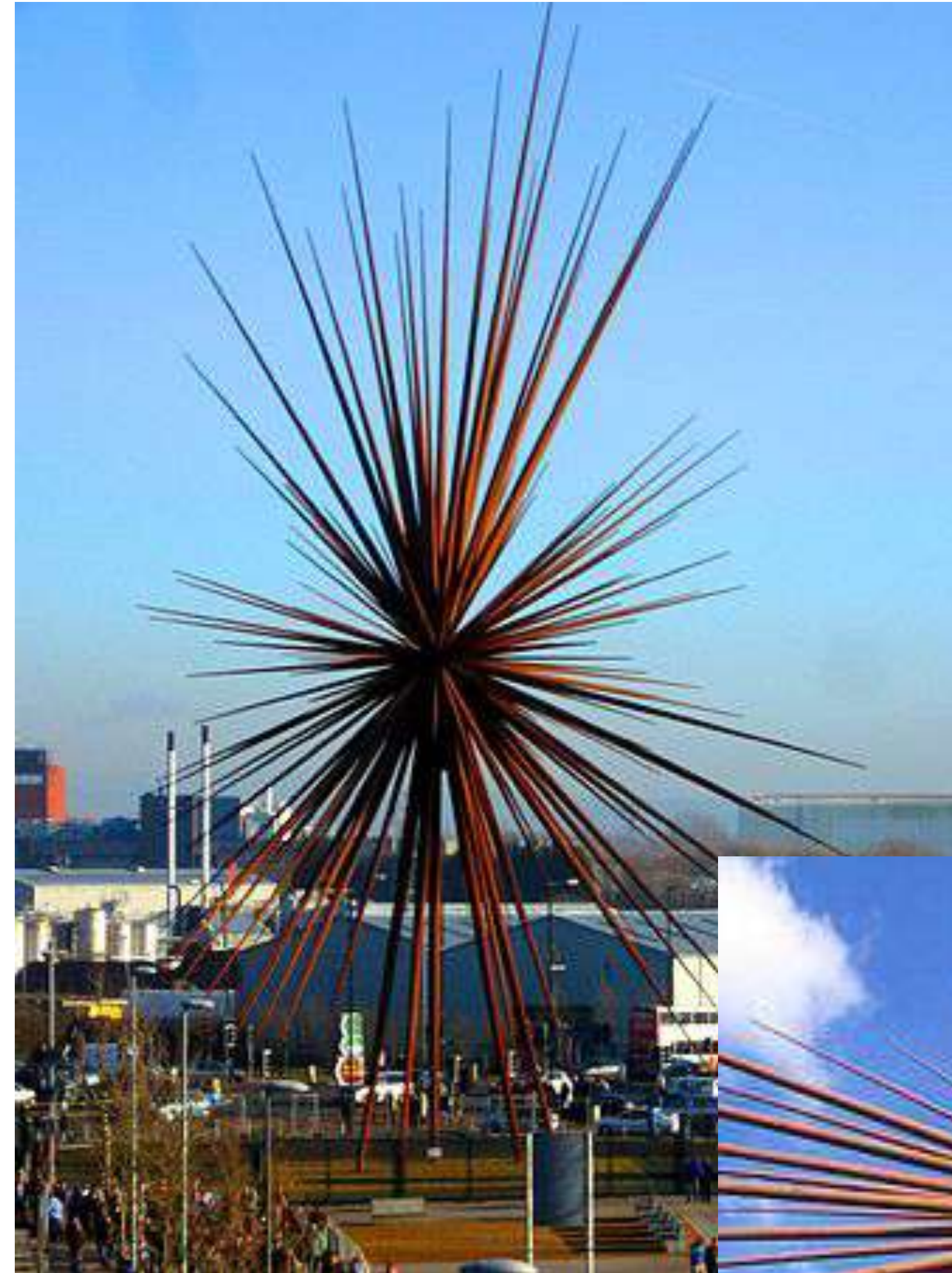
- Curling moveable bridge
- Scheduled to unfold three times a week
- Cost £0.5 M
- Currently not working
- Ingels - *“The most complicated way to make a drawbridge, by far the slowest and most expensive but really cool”*



'B of the Bang'

2005 Manchester

- To commemorate 2002 Commonwealth Games
- 56 m high, 150 tonnes, 180 giant steel spikes
- Tallest public sculpture erected in Britain
- Named after a quote from Linford Christie - to represent the burst of energy needed to shoot out of the starting blocks
- Cost £1.42 M



- One spike dislodged within two weeks. 22 spikes removed over the next four years
- *‘A great tribute to Manchester - a loss not just of an inspirational art work but also of the Council’s nerve’ - Anthony Gormley*
- Council sued Heatherwick Studio and settled out of court for £1.7M
- Council’s statement - *‘B of the Bang is a magnificent artistic statement and it is regrettable that technical problems undermined that vision’*
- Danny Boyle loved the sculpture and asked TH to tender for the Olympic cauldron
- B of the Bang was eventually taken down in 2009

East Beach cafe

2005 Littlehampton

- Designed to be in keeping with the beach rather than the Georgian buildings along the front
- Consists of ribbons of weathered raw steel welded in 'contours'
- RIBA National award 2008



Boiler Suit

2007 Guy's Hospital

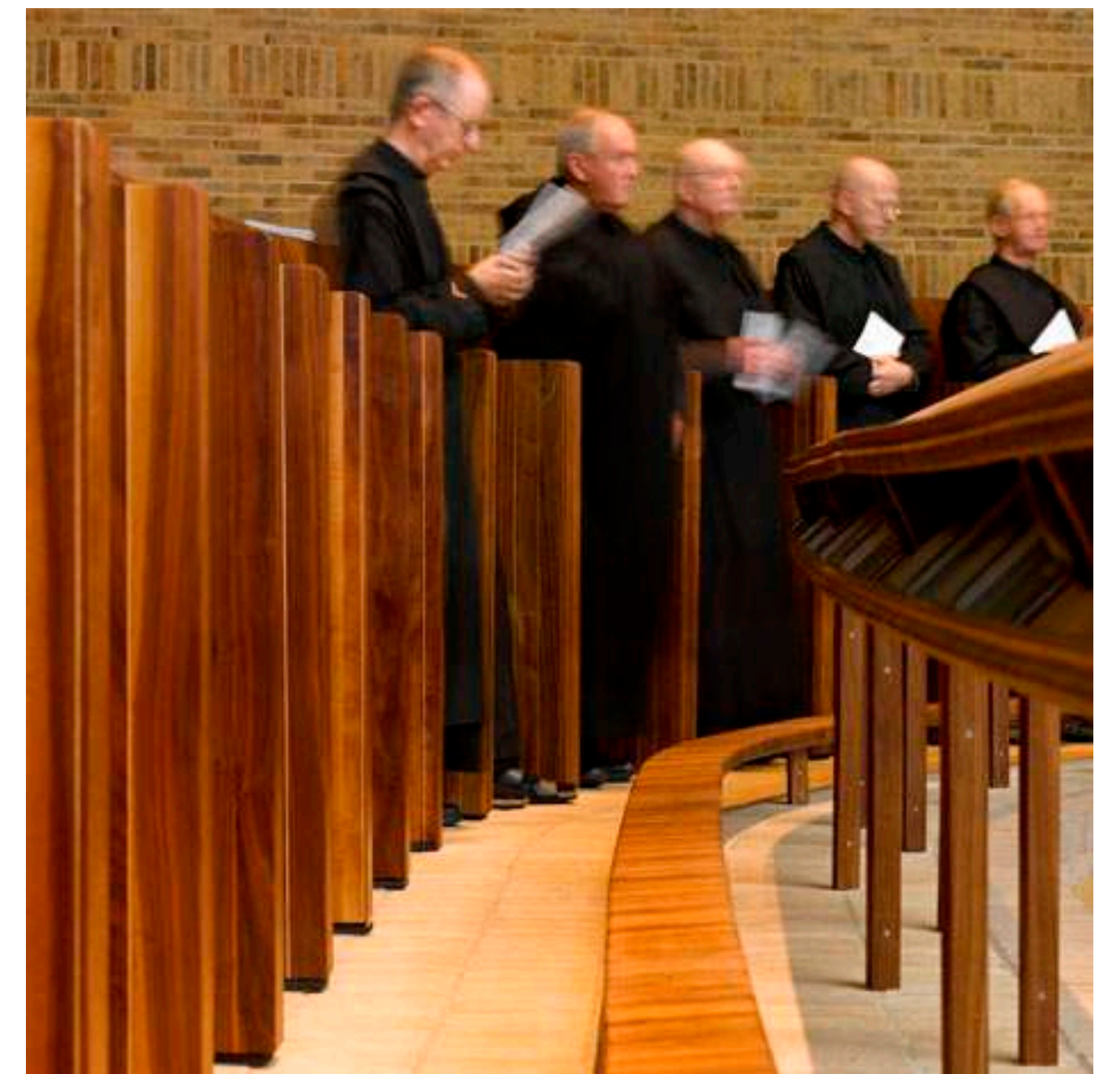
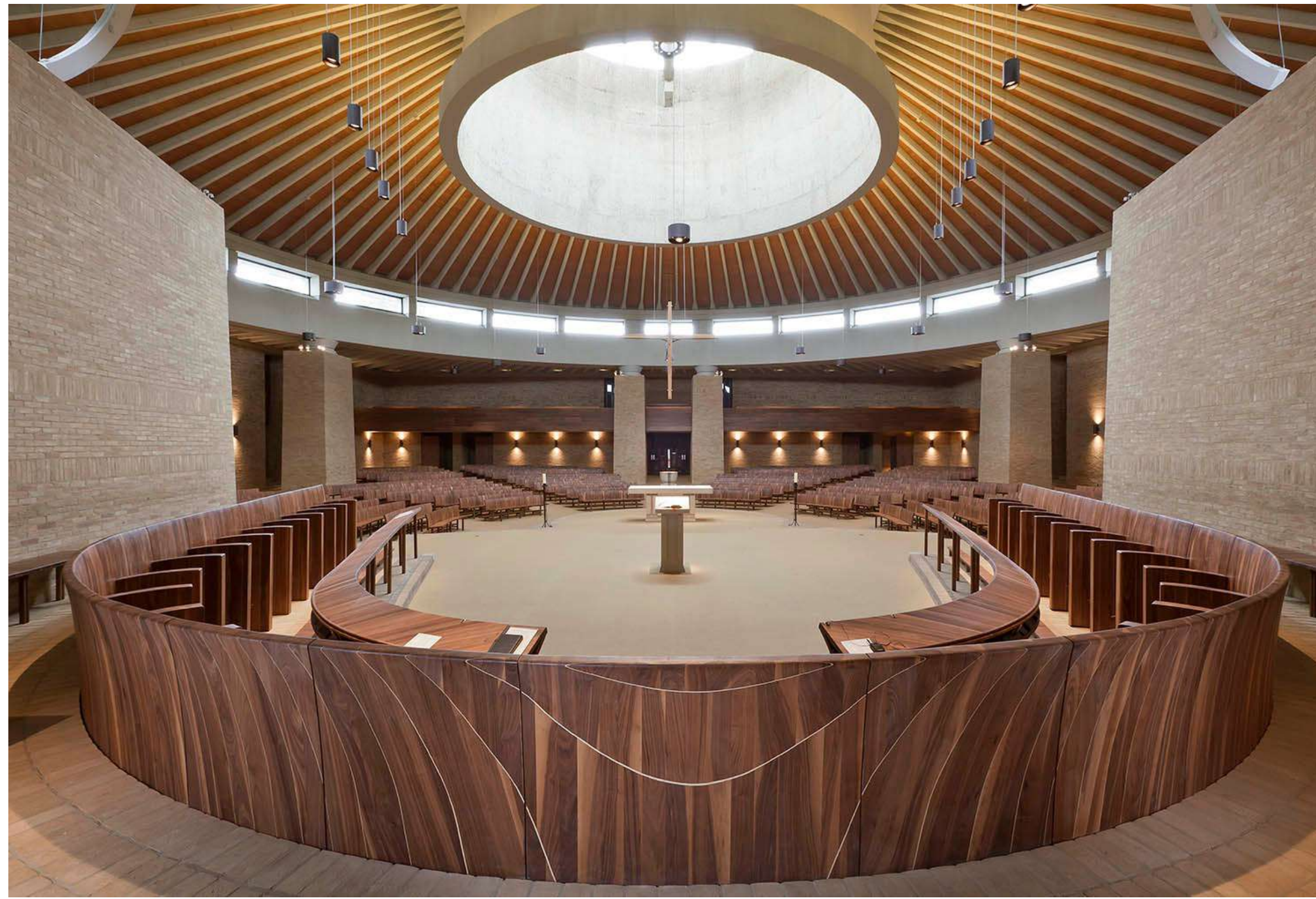
- A facade to encase the boiler house and enhance the hospital approach
- Lit at night, consists of 108 undulating tiles of steel braid



Worth Abbey, West Sussex Interior 2009 - 2011

- Abbey designed by architect Francis Pollen in 1974, interior refitted 2009, furnishings designed by Heatherwick Studio
- Solid wood cracked and some church pews taken out of commission. TH blamed the contractors who went out of business, for poor workmanship, not the design. Outcome of dispute unclear
- Also in 2009, Bradford City Centre park concept

Worth Abbey
Interior 2009



Aluminium extrusion seating 2009

- 'Endless bench'
- Highly polished electroless nickel plated aluminium extruded and allowed to fold



Photography Peter Mallett

Spun Seats

2010

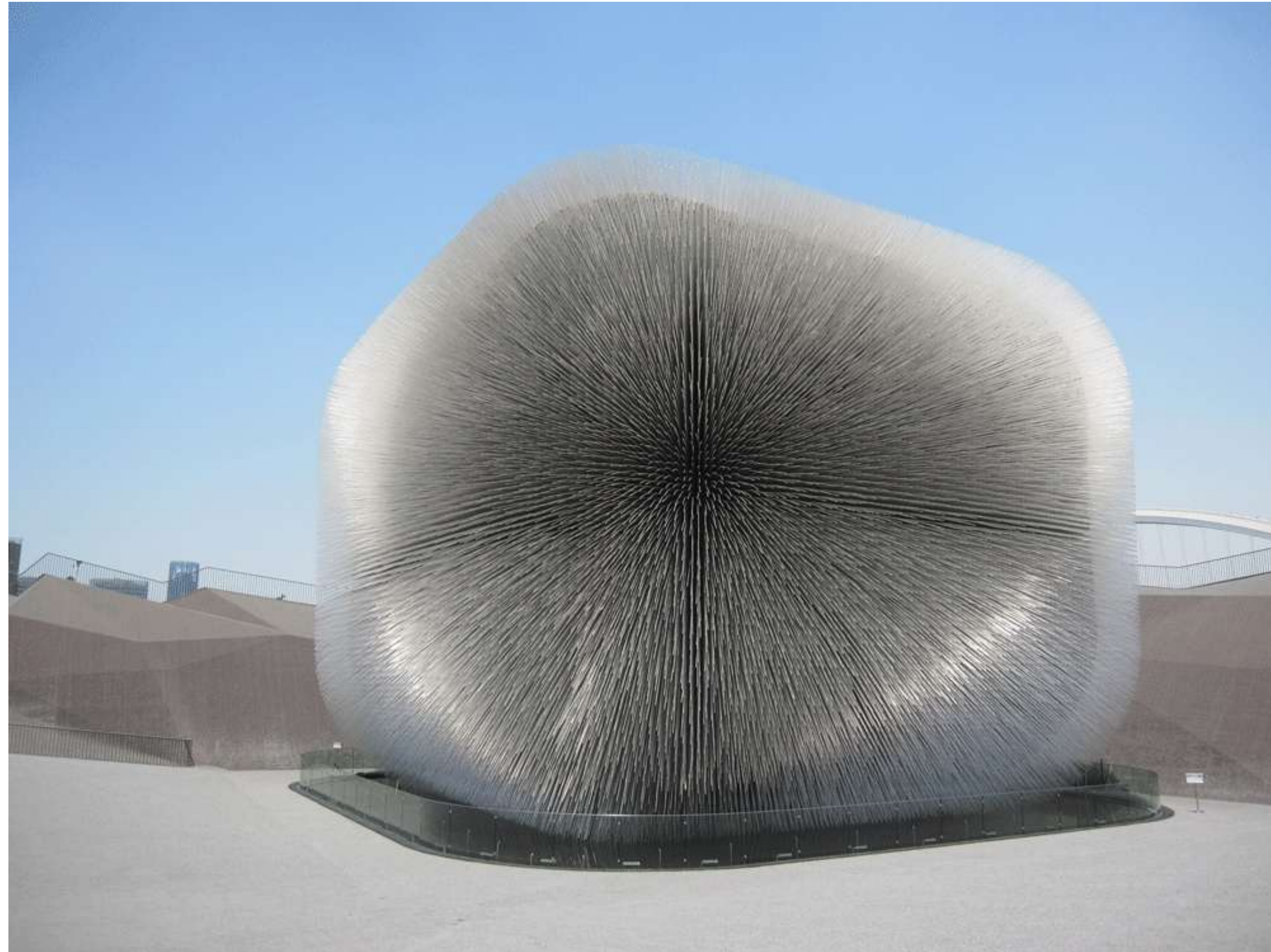
- Can buy in moulded plastic for about £350
- Also made in metal and granite

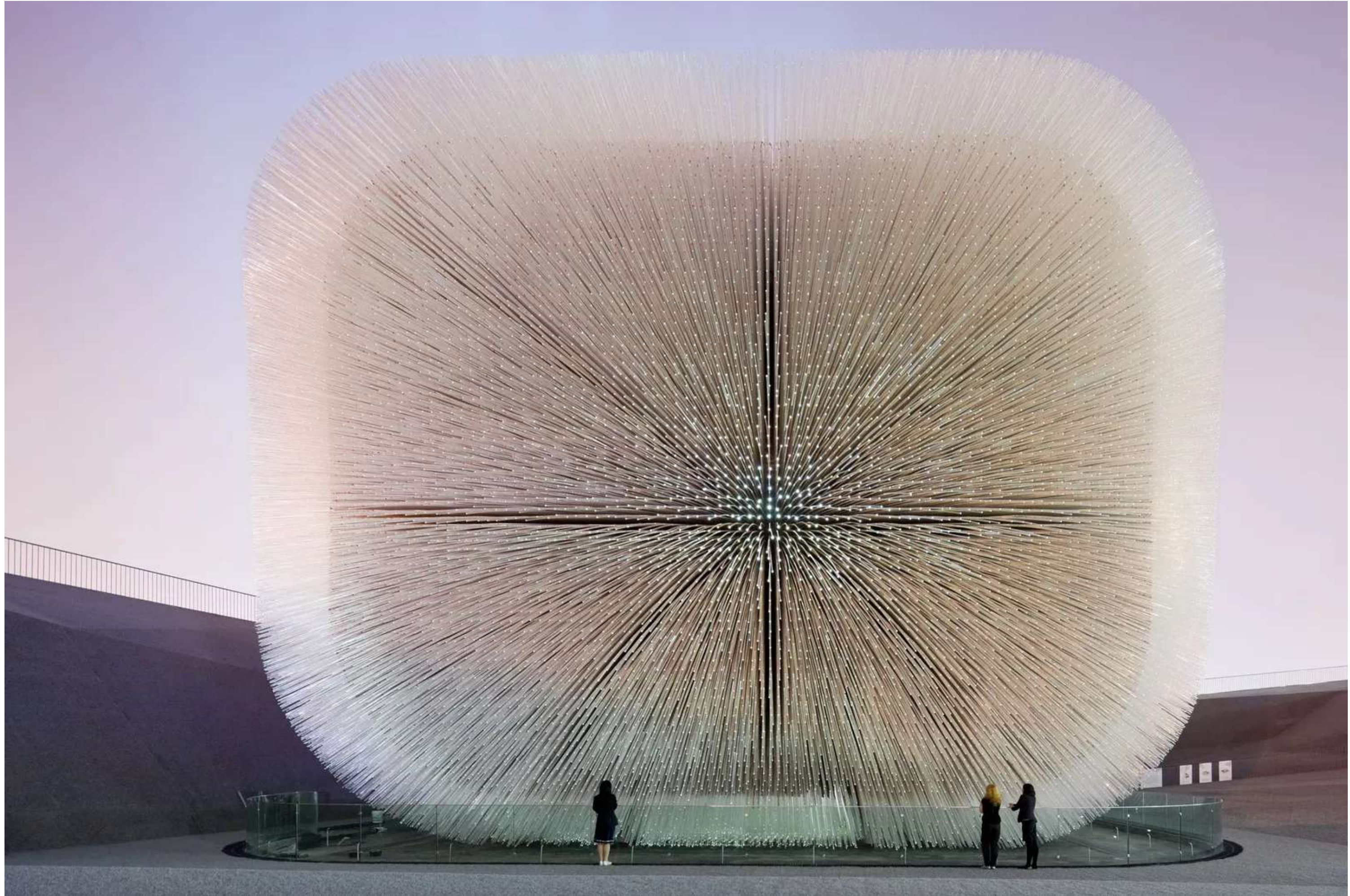


UK Pavilion

2010 Shanghai Expo

- Also known as 'the Seed Cathedral', built in conjunction with Kew Gardens Millennial Seed Bank
- 20 metres high, 60,000 aluminium/clear acrylic rods, 7.5 metres long. Quivered in the breeze, a seed in each tip
- Visited by more than 8 million people
- Won top prize for best pavilion, RIBA international award, RIBA Lubetkin prize and London Design medal.





The Seed Cathedral

Routemaster Bus

2012 London

- Commission by Boris Johnson when Mayor of London
- More polluting than promised although 40% more fuel efficient than conventional diesels, and 15% more than hybrids.
- Cost twice as much as other designs, 1000 were made, discontinued in 2017





New Routemaster built
by Wrightbus



Bombay Sapphire Gin Distillery

2010-2014 Laverstoke Mill Hampshire

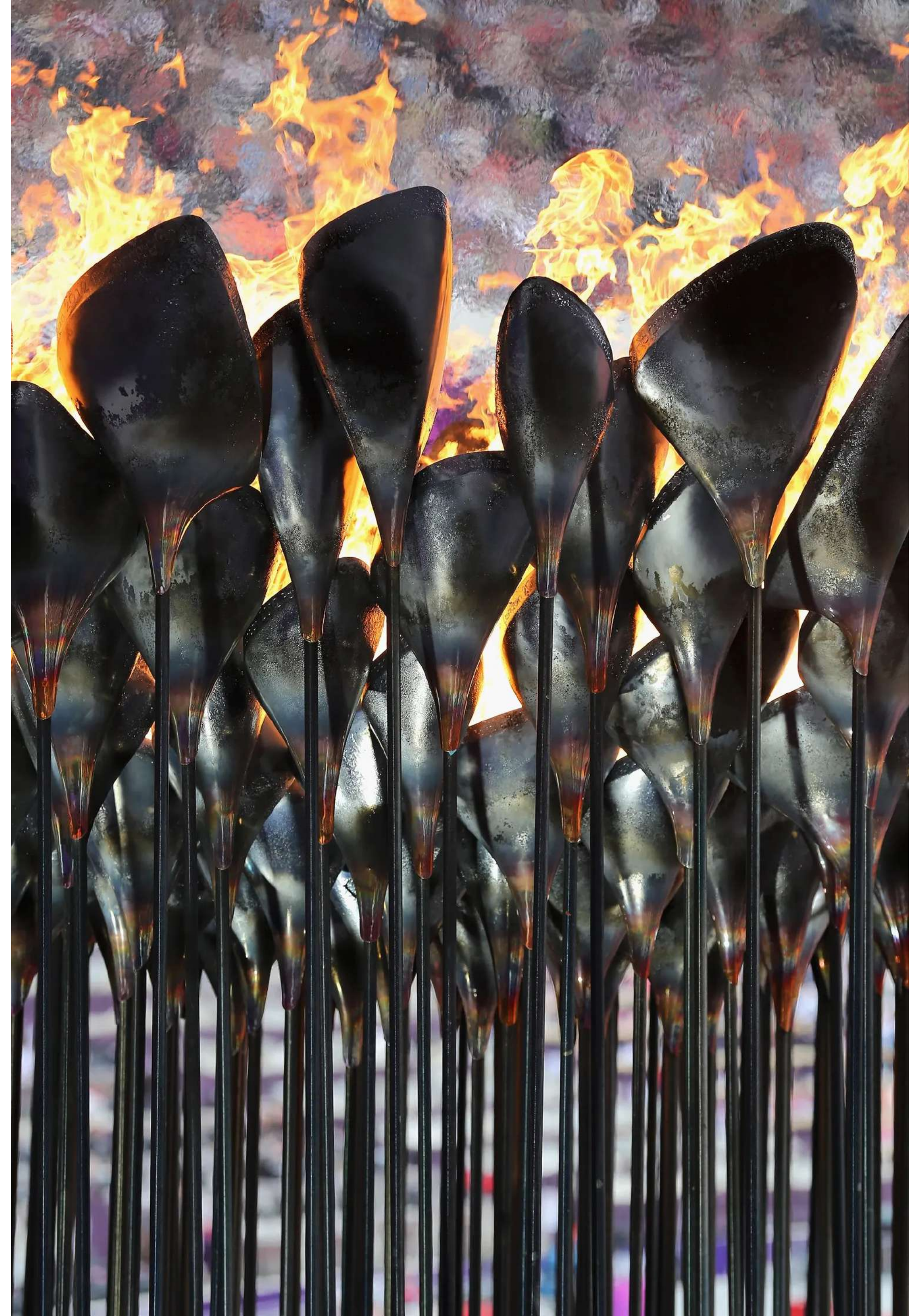
- Whole redesign of derelict paper mill site
- Two curved glasshouses, temperate and Mediterranean, to grow the gin botanicals
- Waste heat from the still house is circulated through the glasshouses



Photography by Iwan Baan

Olympic Cauldron

2012





Olympic Cauldron London 2012

- Lit during the opening ceremony
- 204 pieces were brought into the stadium by children representing each team
- Mounted on stems and raised to merge into one huge flame representing the 204 nations coming together in peace
- After the close of the Olympics, the copper petals were sent to each nation competing
- An example of the copper petal is held in the Royal Academy collection
- Awarded Best British Work of Visual Art of 2012
- In 2013, controversy that the design was identical to one produced by New York studio Atopia presented to the Olympic committee in 2007. Heatherwick insisted it was based on a student design of his from 1993. Some sort of out of court agreement reached.

Garden Bridge over Thames

Design started 2012

- Idea of Joanna Lumley and Boris Johnson
- Heatherwick proposed design and won tender
- Scrapped by Sadiq Khan 2018 - costs spiralling



Learning Hub - The Hive

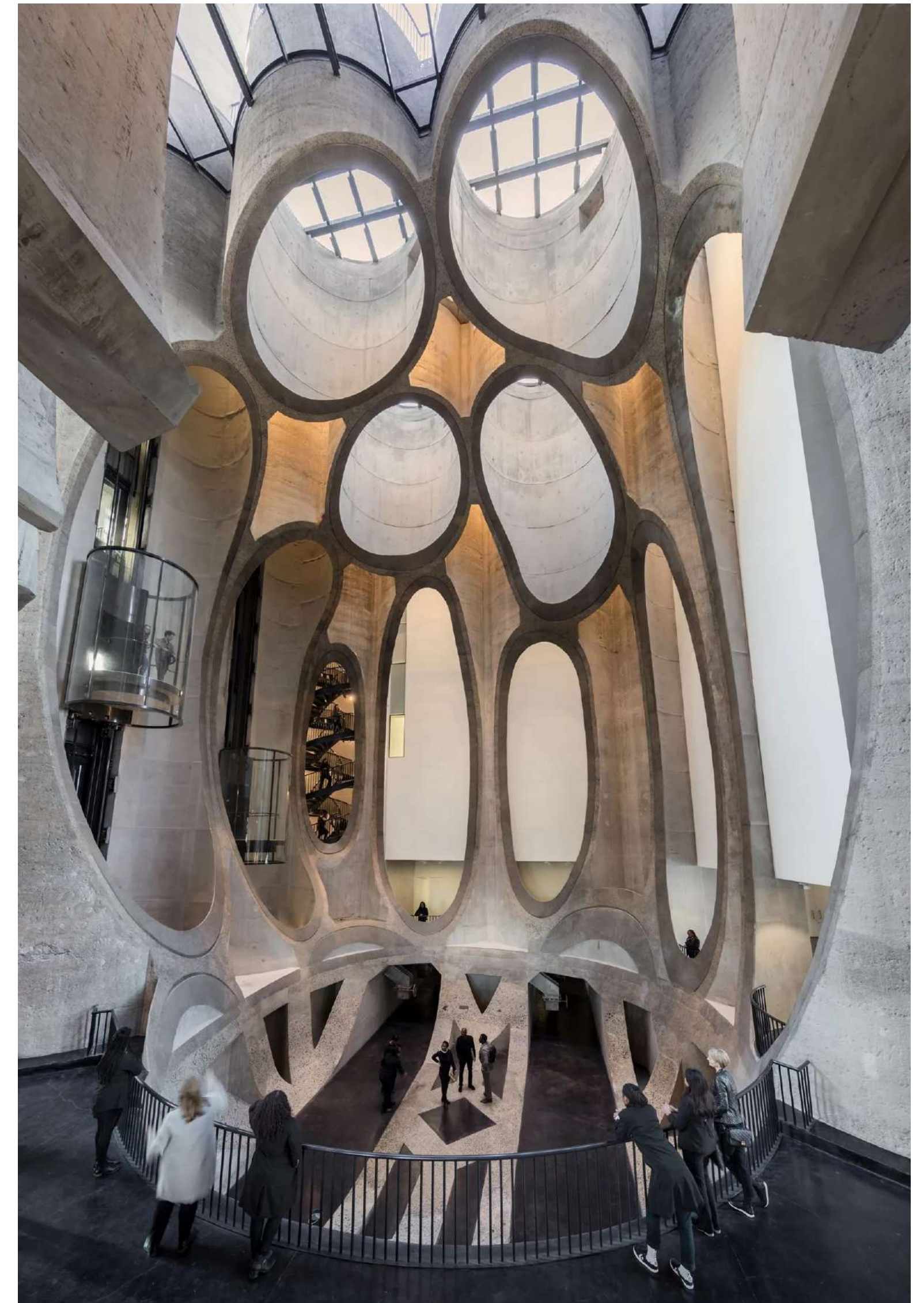
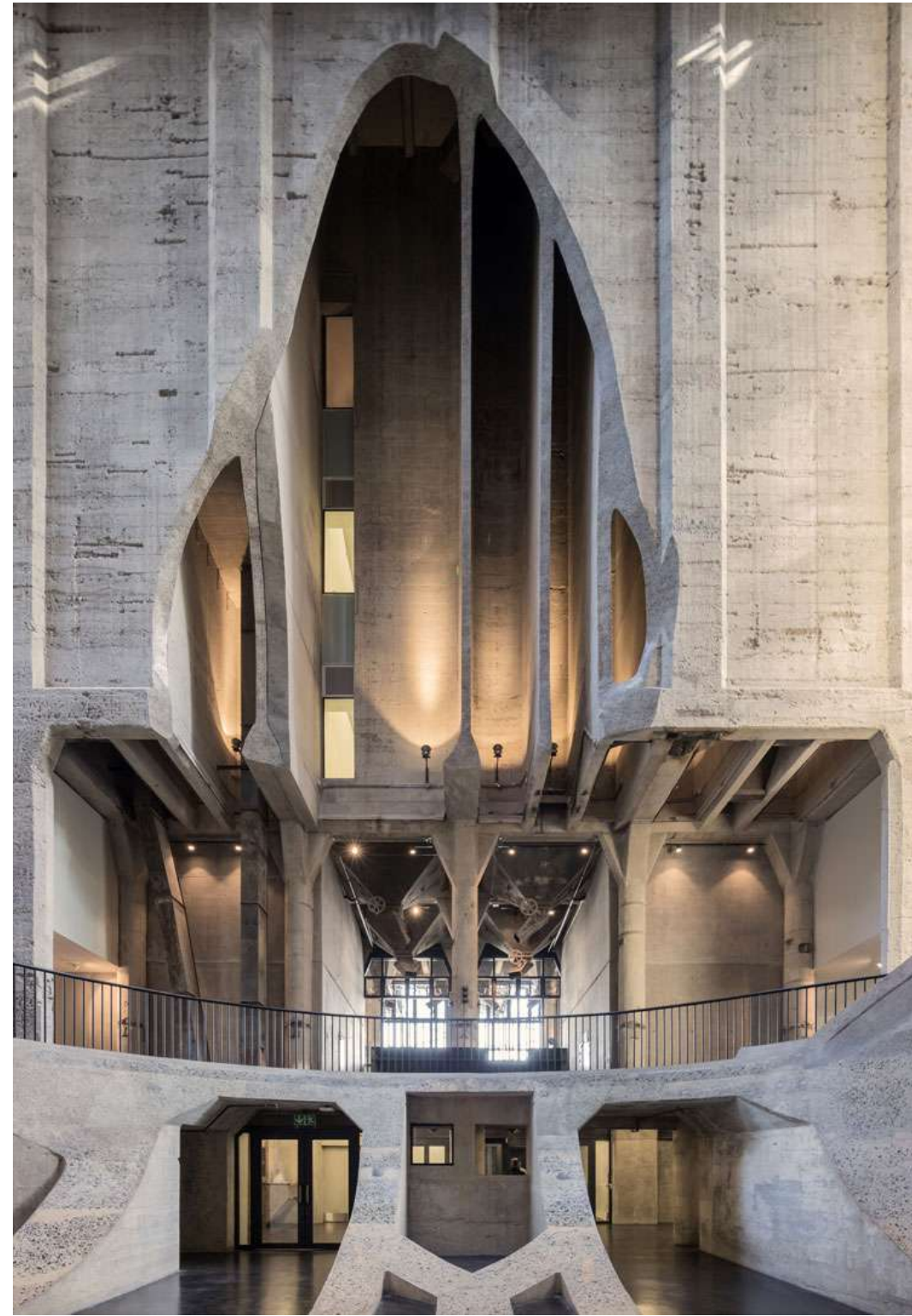
2015 Singapore

- For Nanyang Technological University (33,000 students)
- Learning spaces to encourage interaction - 56 tutorial rooms around a full height atrium
- Won an award for Creativity in Concrete



Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) 2017 Cape Town South Africa

- Conversion of historic grain silos
- 42 vertical concrete tubes - specialised concrete cutting developed
- RIBA 2018 shortlist for best international buildings

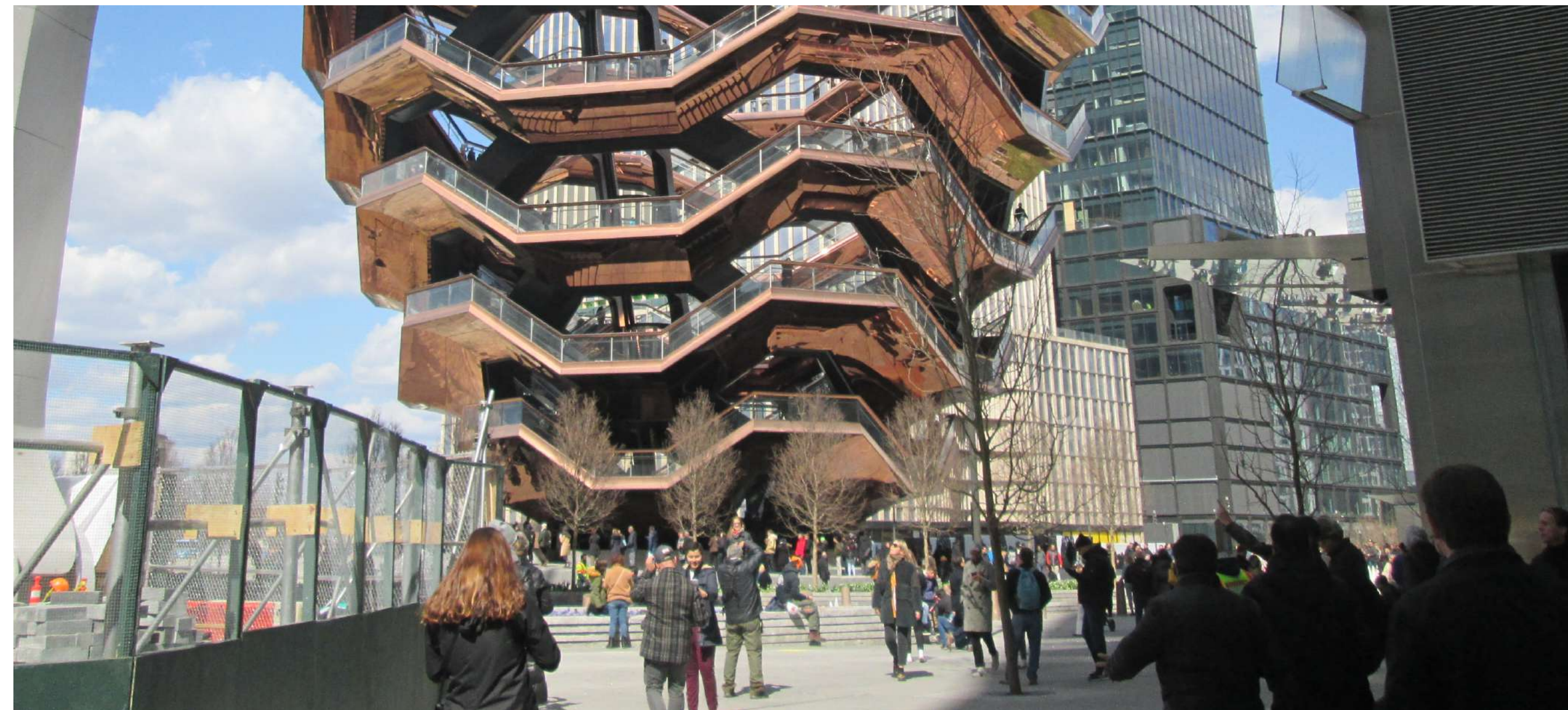


Vessel

2013-2019 Hudson Yard New York

- Commissioned by billionaire Stephen Ross as public art/visitor attraction, called it his 'optimistic folly'
- 16-story, 150 ft tall structure of interconnecting staircases
- Copper clad steps, arranged like a jungle gym and modelled after Indian step wells can hold 1000 people at a time
- Initial estimated cost \$75M, actual cost \$200M





Maggie's Centre

2019 Leeds

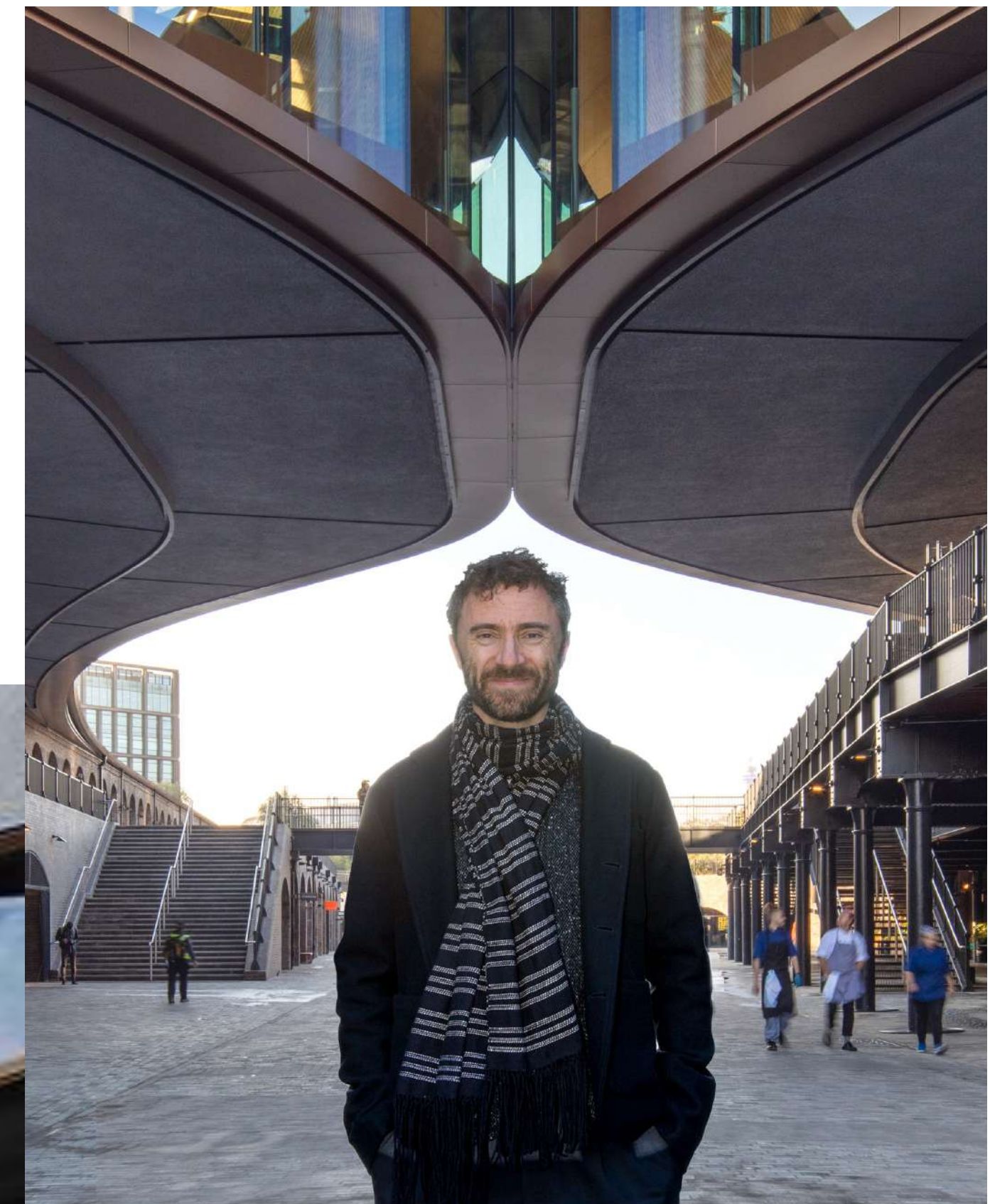


Photographs Maggie's Centres

Coal Drops Yard

2018 King's Cross

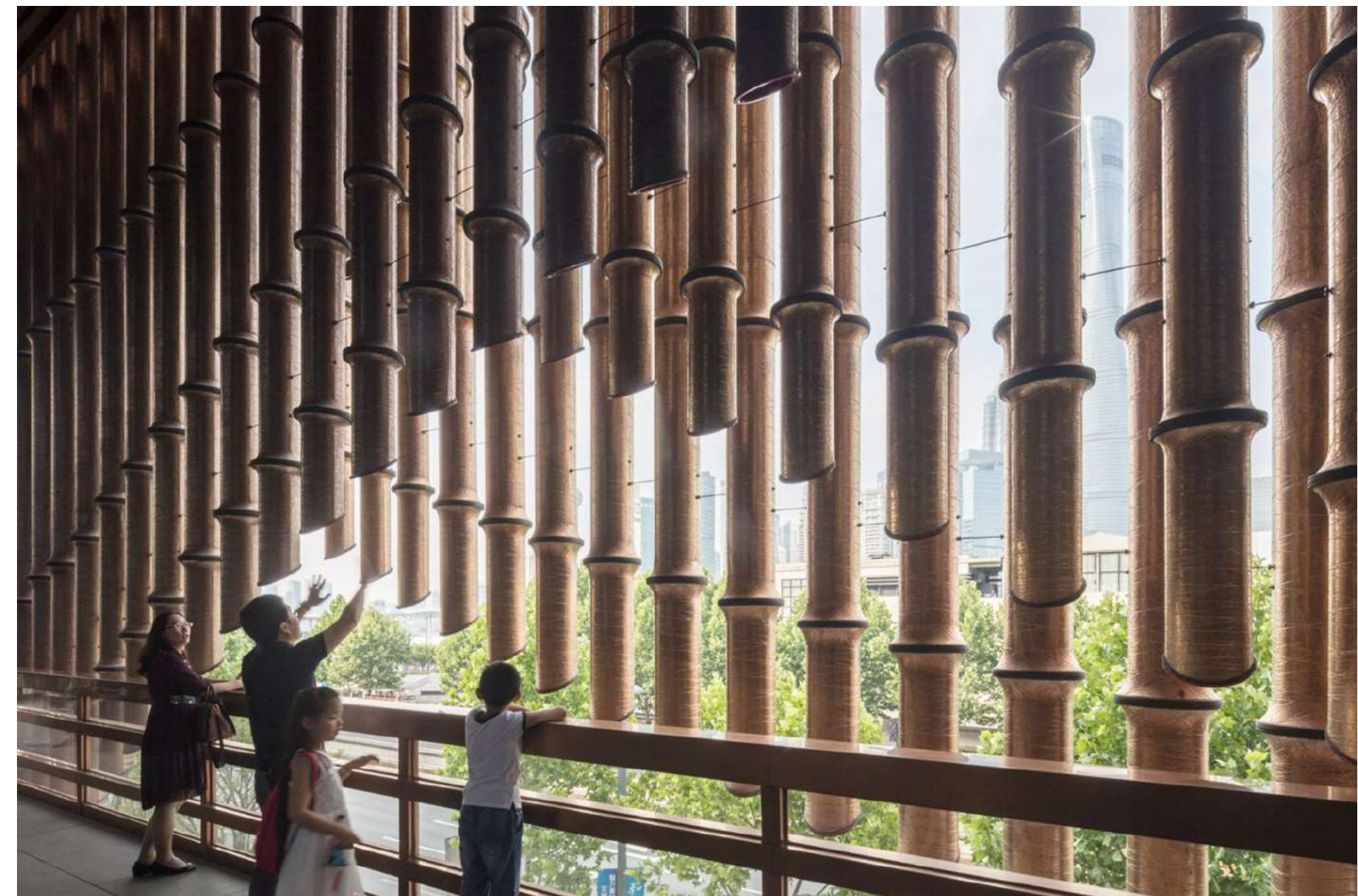
- Renovation of the old coal drops buildings
- 'Stitches' two buildings together
- Stretched roof to shelter events



Cultural Centre

2017-2019 Shanghai

- With Foster and Partners
- Within the Bund Finance Centre
- Curtain-like facade of bronze tubes - 3-layered moving veil



Photography Laurian Ghinitoiu

Current projects

- Currently working on 30 projects in 10 countries
- With Bjaerke Ingels Group (BIG) on Google HQ, Mountain View, California, and Google HQ, King's Cross (the Landscrapper building)
- Apartments, Vancouver
- Hotel Abu Dhabi
- 1000 Trees Development, Shanghai



Hotel concept Abu Dhabi

Alberni Street Towers Vancouver





Google HQ offices, California and London

Landscaper Building King's Cross

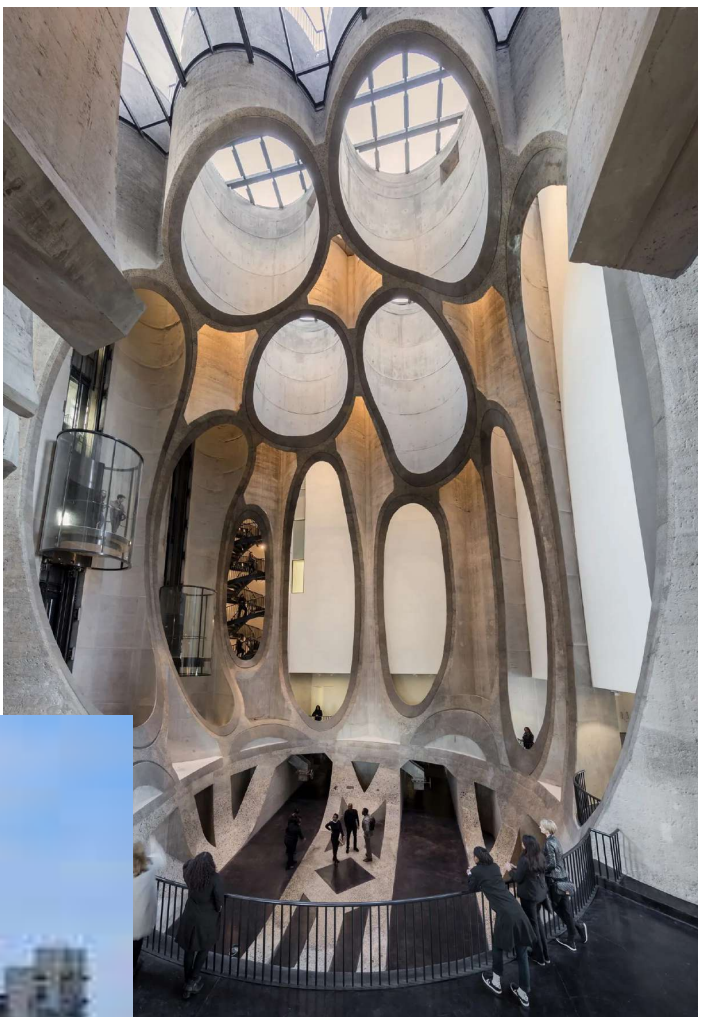
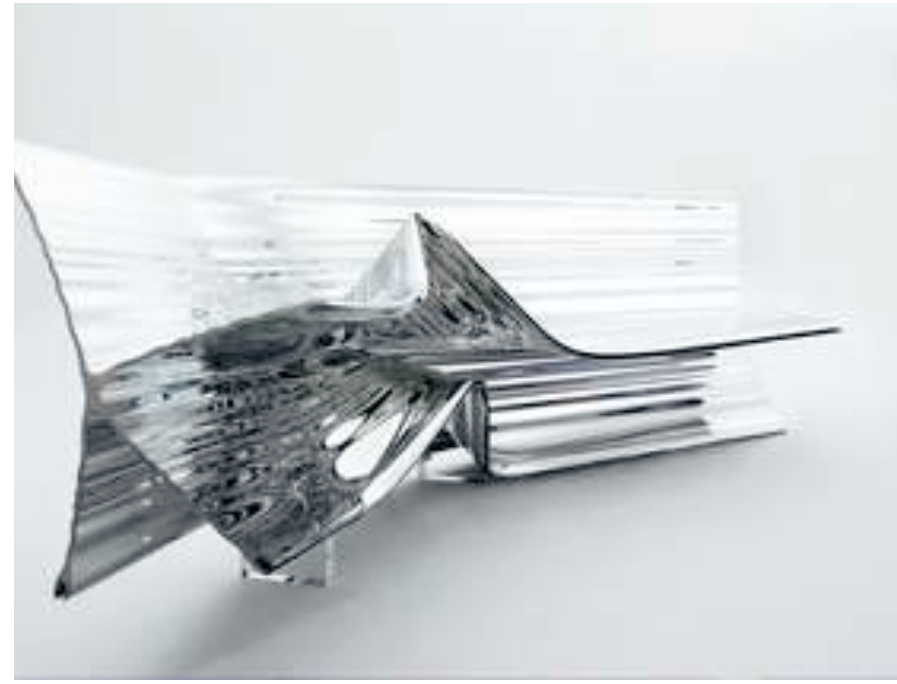
Mountain View, California



“Heatherwick Studio is a team of over 200 problem solvers dedicated to making the physical world around us better for everyone. Based out of our combined workshop and design studio in Central London, we create buildings, spaces, master-plans, objects and infrastructure. Focussing on large scale projects in cities all over the world, we prioritise those with the greatest positive social impact.

Working as practical inventors with no signature style, our motivation is to design soulful and interesting places which embrace and celebrate the complexities of the real world. The approach driving everything is to lead from human experience rather than any fixed design dogma.”

“Positive and pragmatic, the studio’s team are collaborators whose role is to listen, question, then lead the conception and construction of special and unusual places. Ingenuity and inspiration are used to make projects that are affordable, buildable and sustainable.....Our best future projects are those that teach us most.”





Thank you
Any comments/ questions?