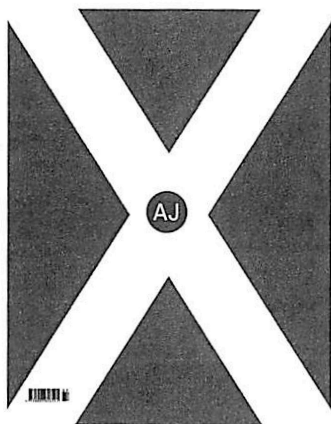


Last issue  
AJ 12.09.14  
Established 1895



- Email the AJ  
letters@architectsjournal.co.uk
- Comment at TheAJ.co.uk
- Twitter: @ArchitectsJrnl
- Facebook: TheArchitectsJournal
- LinkedIn: Architects' Journal
- Post letters to address below

The letter of the week's author will receive an AJ mug. Letters should be received by 10am on the Monday before publication. The AJ reserves the right to edit letters.

## Goodwin Sands is a better airport location



I am not surprised that the Airports Commission has rejected the proposal for an airport on the Isle of Grain (AJ 05.09.14).

When Lord Foster launched his idea of a 'Thames Hub' airport on the Isle of Grain in 2011, I examined the idea and concluded that the environmental constraints and existing strategic infrastructure on the site meant that his scheme was undeliverable. The huge cost of creating replacements for both the habitat and the infrastructure would be prohibitive.

Following that I wondered where a new four-runway airport could be located in south-east England in the event that the expansion of Heathrow and/or Gatwick were not politically acceptable. I concluded that the only site where such a large development could be sited without excessive environmental damage was off the Kent coast on the Goodwin Sands, in an area which has no statutory environmental designation.

It is inevitably the case that expanding either Heathrow or Gatwick is the least expensive way of gaining additional runway capacity. A new offshore hub airport is only an option if Heathrow and Gatwick expansion is blocked by political factors, and to date that has been the case. Whether the Airports Commission will succeed in overturning that political block remains to be seen; if it does not then Goodwin Airport may yet get the chance to be the 21st century hub airport that the UK needs.  
*Tim Beckett, Beckett Rankine Marine Consulting Engineers, London SW1*

## Bungalows make sense for downsizers

Brandon Lewis, the new minister for housing and planning told the Daily Telegraph recently that England needs more bungalows for older people to live in (TheAJ.co.uk 19.08.14). This [he said] would free up bigger homes for families with children; and bungalows would be ideal for people, like his parents, who would not

consider retirement homes.

He is right, in one sense. Encouraging older people to downsize in retirement and free up a potential new family home could have a significant impact on the housing crisis.

The 'active third age' as RIBA Building Futures described it, will be a generation of older people who are active and participating in society in a different way. Britain's population of over 60-year-olds is set to rise significantly over the next 20 years, greatly outstripping increases in younger age groups. So our towns and cities will have to embrace an entirely new demographic phenomenon.

Newly built smaller homes are usually designed with a first-time buyer in mind and are unlikely to meet the needs or aspirations of an older, established homeowner. Developing this kind of product represents a potential market opportunity, rather than an existing one. It might be that the solution is building more bungalows, but I suspect that attractive, new homes for an older market could be based on many other models, too.  
*Anna Scott-Marshall, head of external affairs, RIBA*



The Architects' Journal  
Telephone House,  
69-77 Paul Street,  
London EC2A 4NQ  
TheAJ.co.uk  
020 3033 2736  
E Firstname.Surname@emap.com  
T 020 3033 plus extension

Artistic editor: Amy Clapp  
Editor: Christine Murray (see inside)  
Artistic deputy editor: Will Stone (copy)  
Editorial assistant: Rachel Ransome (copy)  
News editor: Richard Watt (copy & layout)  
Competitions editor and international news: Mark Fisher (copy)  
Technical editor: Owen Proctor (copy)  
Technical reporter: Laura Malt (copy)  
Special projects editor: Emily Smith (see inside)  
Sustainability editor: Helen Newman (copy)  
Publications editor: David Townsend (copy)  
AJ Buildings Library editor: Tim Rowland (copy)  
Creative design: Elin Wadman  
Art editor: Paul Smith (copy)  
Graphic designer: Elin Wadman (copy)  
Production editor: Alex Gordon (copy)  
Production editor: Hannah  
Amy Clapp (see inside)  
Editorial director: Paul Reed

Chief executive officer: Nicola Christie-Miller  
Managing director: architect  
Richard Beckett  
Commercial director: James MacLeod (copy)  
Business development manager: Carl Evans (copy)  
Creative director: William Lacey  
Account manager: Hannah Beckett (copy)  
Production manager: David Evans (copy)  
Business editor: Stephen Beckett (copy)  
Business editor: Lindsay Wharton (copy)  
Creative editor: Richard Gordon (copy)  
Production manager: David Evans (copy)

AJ subscription  
subscribe@architectsjournal.co.uk/  
AJ@EMAP  
Back issues and subscriptions  
Email:  
help@backissues.architectsjournal.co.uk  
Telephone:  
0844 441 8844 if quote  
priority code 'ajw'

