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HOT DIP GALVANIZING

Editorial

The full flexibility of galvanized steel is shown in our latest issue. Sutton Hoo, one of the most significant archaeological sites in Europe has benefited from a new visitor experience centre, the pinnacle of which is a viewing tower. The timber clad, internally wrapped, structure with etched galvanized steel reveals a contrasting materiality that will soften gently over time. A space to pause and take in the views.

Travel by long ship has fortunately been replaced by slightly more sophisticated modes of travel. Our issues today, however are not limited to comfort or speed.

There is an obvious need for improvement of our infrastructure, which is signified at present by HS2. It is vital for us all that this is implemented with circular principals in mind. This will include long-term durability of materials that encompass the possibility of reuse or repurposing that should be an inherent part of our design philosophy.

A simple example of long term thinking and reuse is featured within our article on page 10. A galvanized steel Elascon football stand was saved from demolition and has seen a new lease of life at a neighbouring club. It has already provided 40 years of service and has saved its new club €165,000.

Iqbal Johal, Editor

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Photo front cover | *Gareth Gardner*

by Iqbal Johal

Bold interventions

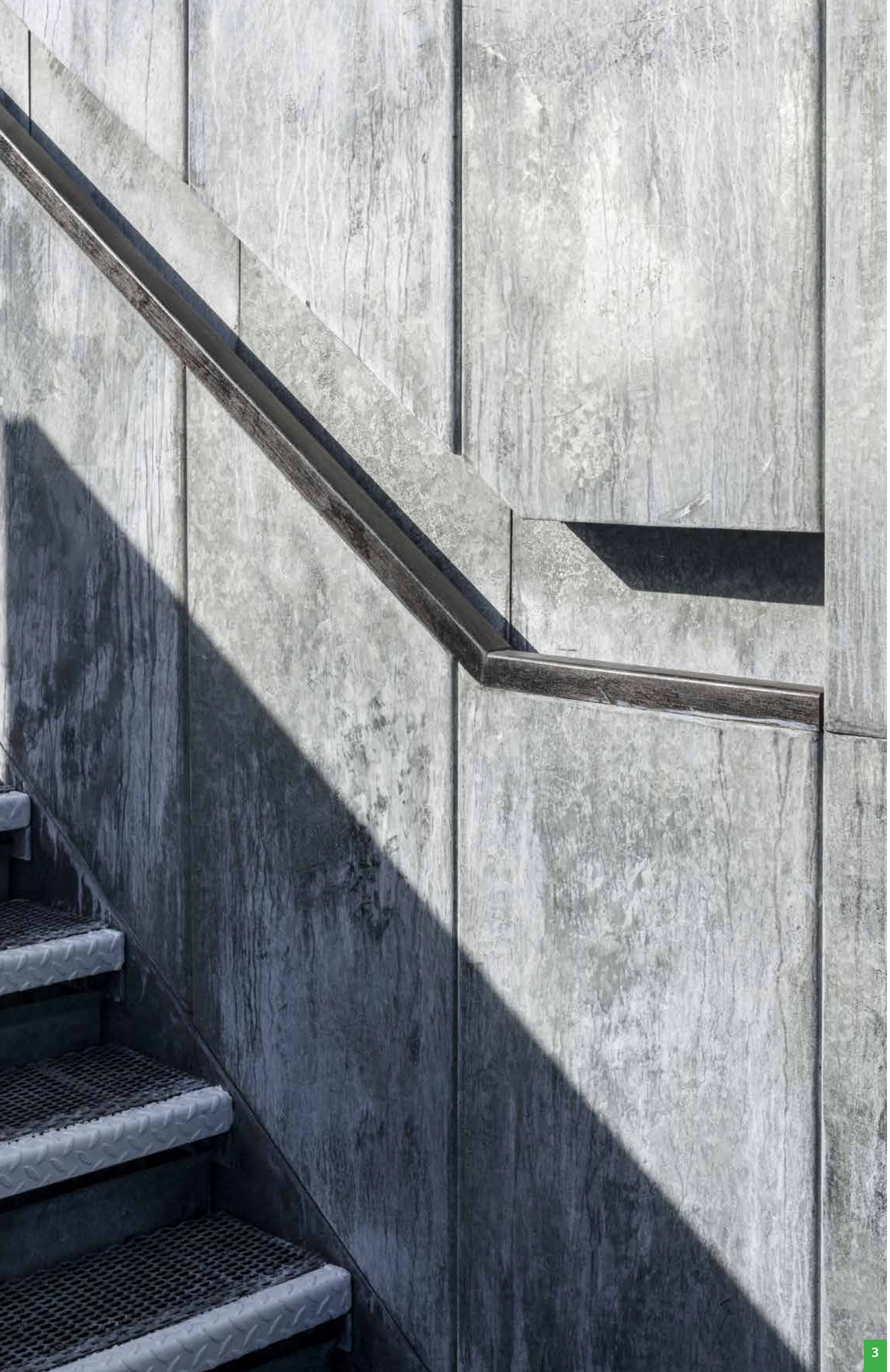
Sutton Hoo, Suffolk

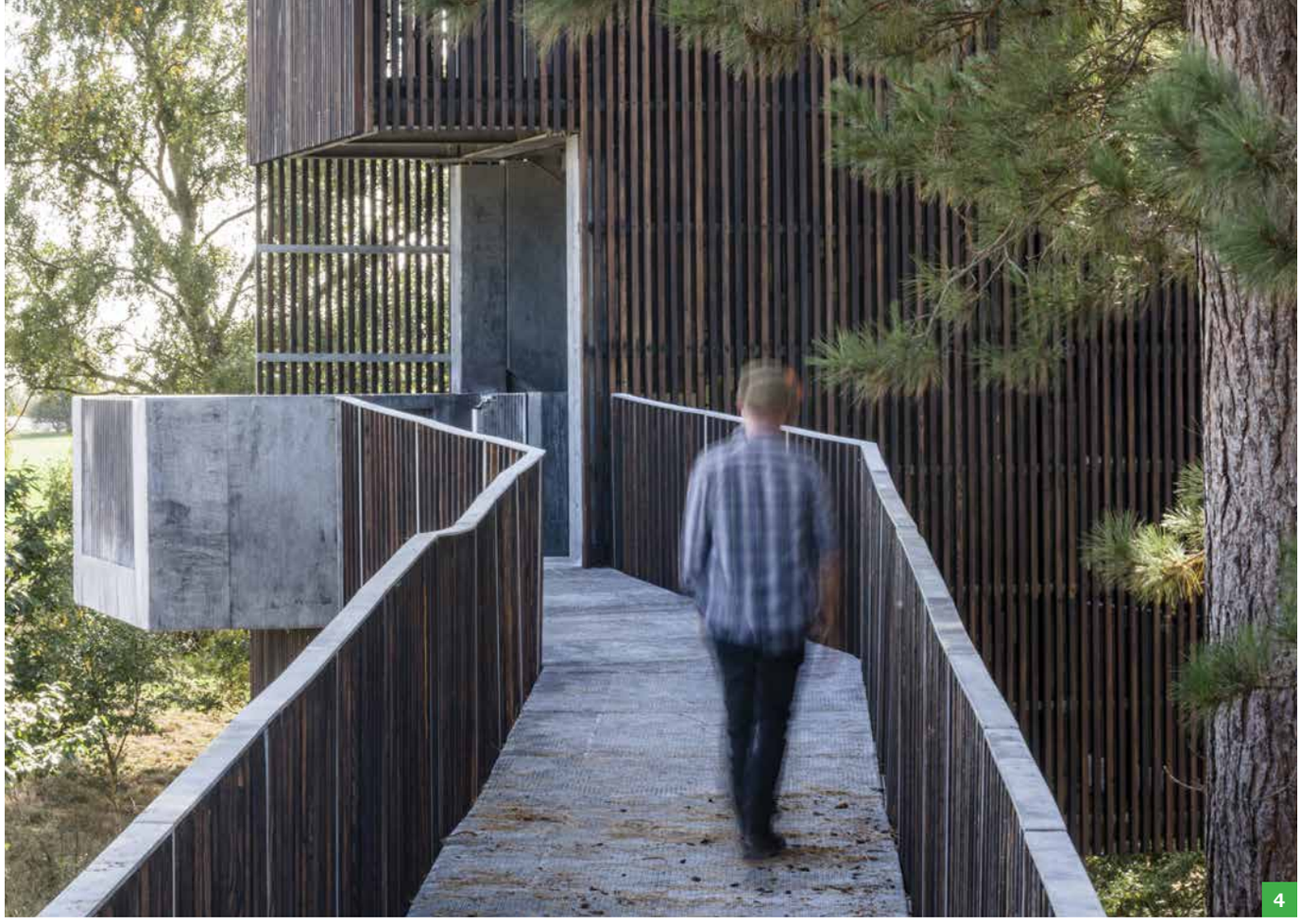
1 | *A new 17 m-high viewing tower, allows views over the burial site at Sutton Hoo for the very first time*

2 | *Internally folded galvanized steel panels form the perimeter and landing soffits to the tower's staircase*

A major new visitor experience journey to the Scheduled Monument of Sutton Hoo, one of Europe's most significant archaeological sites, has been completed by Nissen Richards Studio. The five-year project, involved working closely with the archaeological and visitor engagement teams from the National Trust. The redesign involved creating a carefully choreographed journey through the landscape. Including new thresholds, interpretive moments and major exhibition displays, as well as designing a radical new intervention in the form of a 17 m-high viewing tower, allowing views over the burial site for the very first time.

The Anglo-Saxon royal burial ground at Sutton Hoo site dates from around 590-650 AD and represents a particular moment in English history. The site is comprised of 17 burial mounds and the surrounding landscape, with the principal 'Great Ship Burial' mound dating from around 625 AD. Located on a 'hoo' (meaning 'hill'), with a valley to either side, it occupies a heightened spot on the River Deben in Suffolk. As for who was buried there, the National Trust comments, "We will never know for certain who was buried in the Great Ship Burial, but the leading theory is that it was King Rædwald of East Anglia,".





The tower, which could be seen to signify a contemplative end to the experience, consists of a semi-permeable, charred timber clad structure, wrapped around a galvanized steel frame. Gaining planning permission from the local authority and Historic England was seen as something of a triumph. Nissen Richards Studio Director Jim Richards explains, "Our approach to the tower was shaped by the complexities and opportunities of working in such an historically important environment. At the heart of our design process was a need to minimise the disturbance to the fragile archaeological layers beneath the surface. This ultimately led to the use of a highly efficient steel structure with a minimal footprint. The charred larch skin is left unsealed to soften over time, merging with the surrounding woodland".

In contrast to its outer unassuming appearance, internally, folded galvanized steel panels form the perimeter and landing soffits to the tower's staircase. These are used to encase the steel support framework to match the dyed concrete used elsewhere within the project and create a weathered industrial aesthetic. "We worked with the steelwork contractor on finishes that could be achieved through the normal galvanizing process. This included experimentation with various levels of acid washing and created the darker tones of the steelwork, which at times resembles concrete," Richards points out.

The stairs act as a light, porous galvanized structure combining galvanized grating panels that are extended onto the landing areas. Two viewing areas are formed using cantilevered steel sections projecting from the tower to provide visitors room to pause and take in the views.

"The tower and our interventions within the landscape have been designed to work with daylight and sit in the same realm as the Burial Grounds themselves, to be enjoyed as they are."

3 | *Acid washing was used to create darker tones for the folded galvanized stair panels*

4 | *The design of the tower was the result of experimenting with a number of typologies, with the final form a slender galvanized steel structure, clad in charred larch timber*

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Nissen Richards Studio
Photos | *Gareth Gardner*