

SAVE OUR TRICORN

The **fascists** want to take control of the Tricorn as a bulwark against placelessness.

The **capitalists** want to destroy the Tricorn as it discourages consumption.

Each of these is a form of **demolition**.

Proles for Modernism will realise the Tricorn as a 'machine for revolution', as it was designed.



NO NEW PLACES!

Meet at:

**The Surrey Arms, Surrey Street (off Commercial Road), Portsmouth
12.30pm - 2.30pm**

We will walk from the pub to the Tricorn, via the Commercial Road pedestrian precinct.

We will defend the Tricorn against the fascist attack and then celebrate our victory with simulations of cultural events.

SMASH THE DEMOLITION

23rd April 2000

*Proles 4
modernism*

In Elen's Bower: the 'Druidic' Temple Under the Tricorn

Modernism is not a style, it is a truth . . .
Rodney Gordon, *Tricorn Architect*

The Tricorn & Sacred Geometry

The Tricorn is a vast multi-storey complex on a triangular site in the centre of Portsmouth (UK). It was built in 1966, being designed by Owen Luder and Partners and built by Taylor Woodrow. A Late Modernist building made of concrete, it comprises a ground-level shopping precinct laid out in the form of narrow streets leading to a large central square. This was intended to echo the form of an Arab Casbah or old English country town. The function of the ground floor is as much social and psychological, as commercial. It is based on the notion that for the working classes in Britain the street represents a medium for communication: the street is "...the traditional playground for children and the only public space available for mass meetings and large scale sociability." (1) The building covers 4 acres of ground; the floor space is 12 acres. This spatial 'tripling' of a three sided building signifies the presence of 'sacred geometry' in the design.

The Tricorn also incorporated a multi-storey department store, offices, flats, two pubs, a night-club and a restaurant. In 1967 it won the Civic Trust Award for its "exciting visual composition." In 1968 it was voted Britain's fourth ugliest building. Since then Taylor Woodrow have purchased the building they constructed, with the intention of demolishing it and developing the site for 'Cascades 2', a 'seductive' post-modern shopping centre. (2)

Conservation & Demolition

According to local tradition, the Tricorn was constructed on the site of an ancient 'Druid' temple; a Portsea Island equivalent of Stonehenge. (3) Far from destroying the henge site, the Tricorn - a building which embodies notions of social progression and (holy) trinity - is seen as protecting the hidden temple. "The earth on which sacred blood was spilled is there, under us." (4) It is considered bad luck to disturb the Tricorn site. Ill-fortune will visit the city if the building is knocked down. The plan to demolish the Tricorn



- which has been beset by bad luck and delays - still exists. The intention of Taylor Woodrow to build Cascades 2 is widely expected to bring about the destruction of the city, "a calamity by sea" or "the return of the many dead to our streets." (5). As yet, the Tricorn cannot be profitably demolished. The cost of demolition, when set against the potential development value of the site, is too high. The Tricorn still defies the 'cult of consumerism'.

Creating poetry out of brute matter

The presence of a 'Neolithic' 'ritual landscape' on Portsea Island has long been conjectured. Antiquarians such as Edward King (6) and Henry Rowlands (7) presented diagrams of sites which 'appeared to disappear'. The apparent destruction of the fairy realm, and the occupation of those sites by commercial and military extensions of the state, have been documented since the first period of 'the commodification of the Megaliths' and the subsequent incorporation of wider landscapes into organised 'space'. The development of 'objective' mapping techniques and the deployment of 'Realism' in art further beggared experienced and led to the construction of property and, by extension, of 'places'. As subjectivity, along with tradition, was invalidated, so the rights of non-property owners were constructed as 'absent'. Jonathon Meades, in his groundbreaking utilitarian survey of Portsea Island (8), explored the alignments that still exist between aspects of 'identity', 'landscape' and the 'linear' construction of 'time', which he argued to be an ontological construct, born of capitalism, designed to create feelings of obsolescence in commodified identities, leading to the cult of youth, the marginalisation of older people and a further 'erosion' of traditions, both in terms of how these related to 'rights' and to topography.

Creating matter out of brute poetry

Nennius, underpinning an entire philosophy, created prosaic catalogues of generic landforms - a kind of pattern book of landscape construction techniques - from which the name and genre of 'Brutalism' can be traced. He listed the main tenets of early Brutalism; a focus on materials in their natural state; 'space' as 'quality'; a hostility to ornamentation; the presence of 'a machine metaphor' (typically - in the case of henges - relating to eclipse prediction and 'Victory Over Death'); the unification of shape and form, of interior and exterior; an emphasis on function; the construction of a 'universal' style, of a "new plastic language" (9); the unification of society under a fixed or monumental ideology; the translation of 'truth' into 'beauty'; exaggerated abstraction. He stated that "an object's durability should be parallel to the time it lasts



in physical terms.” The henges and stone circles of the late Stone Age and Neolithic periods were designed as ‘machines for living’. They ‘simultaneously’ negated the class differences inherent in society and consolidated - in massive blocks of stone - the social power of a tiny elite of architects, poets and shaman-priests. “The henge builders acquired the intellectual and emotional bias for a practical functional approach to design. This could also be called a form of ideological control . . . hegemony and infrastructure were manipulated and used as a tool to define an intended society.” (10)

The journey into contradiction, the path that would eventually lead to dualism, the science of dialectics and the separation of the material and spiritual realms, had begun. ‘Unity of being’ was fractured within the process of its realisation. This was where Eden once was, and how it ended. It rests beneath the Tricorn now, under a symbol of the trinity, until it is opened and destroyed.

Power & Proportion

In a post-industrial Portsmouth, with the translation of cosmopolitan values into insularity, the modernists fought a rearguard action, attempting to create - at the heart of Portsea Island’s sacred landscape - a single, architectural structure that channelled the unity of being envisaged by the Neolithic hierarchs into an image that simultaneously represented the identity of Portsmouth and the cosmopolitan or internationalist ideology which had been all but destroyed and (as Ludor pointed out) ironically emphasised by the second world war. Ludor, existing outside of time, as the ‘mythical ‘British’ King Ludor Rous Hudibrass and as Owen Ludor (an ‘architect trapped in a man’s body’), completed his project to “recapitulate futurity, within linear time” in 1966. The Tricorn - the “tight Kissing Dress” of Portsmouth’s transvestites - was raised to contain the ‘earth energies’ of the ancient henge which still exists below the concrete erection and, cutting across ‘barriers’ of ‘space’ and ‘time’, to import atmospheres from outside of the city (and

thus from off the island) along sacred spirit paths, which some call ‘ley’ ‘lines’. From Hilda’s Low to the Triangle at Halsea; from St. Catherine’s Hill to the Old Padded Mound; “the Tricorn does take the fun out of shopping.” (Le Corbusier)

The pure geometry of the circle is represented as a triangle. The universe is a three sided girl: Angry, Inclusive and Proud.

1. *The New Brutalist*, Rayner Banham, page 142, para 2.
2. The Cascades Centre, a foil to the otherworldly Tricorn, was completed some years ago as an extension to Portsmouth’s Commercial Road.
3. Antiquaries of the 17th and 18th centuries were convinced that such monuments as ‘hengés’ were built by Druids, although it is now thought likely they were constructed by utopian communists, from 2500 BC onwards.
4. Local trader, Charlotte Street market, Portsmouth. The open air market exists in the shadow of the Tricorn. Charlotte Street partly overlays the sanctuary of the ‘Druid temple’.
5. (*ibid.*) Both quotes.
6. *Munimenta Antiquaria*, 1799.
7. *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*, 1723.
8. Meades, *History, Civil and Ecclesiastical, and Survey of the Antiquities of Portsmouth*, 1952
9. Le Corbusier, *The Tragic View of Architecture*, Charles Jencks, page 137, para 1.
10. Meades, *History, Civil and Ecclesiastical, and Survey of the Antiquities of Portsmouth*, 1952



One of the two Portsea Island Gyres.

The position of the third gyre - “which goes neither ‘up’ nor ‘down’” - remains unknown.

TRICORNOGRAPHERS UNITE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRICORN SHOPPING CENTRE

1964 - March 2nd, work starts on the new Tricorn centre, called the 'Casbah'. The site is leased for 99 years.

1964 - September - The Tricorn wins an architectural design award.

1966 - May 19th - The first stage opens. The Lord Mayor says "it looks horrible from the outside".

1966 - December - Users of the new wholesale market in the Tricorn complain about conditions in the building.

1967 - The Tricorn wins the Civic Trust Award for its "exciting visual composition."

1968 - 50 shops remain empty. The building wins an award as the 4th ugliest in Britain.

1978 - Cascades centre is planned to include refurbishing or demolishing the Tricorn. Designers say it is going to be hard to refurbish and expensive to knock down.

1995 - January - Demolition plans are finally announced for the Tricorn - £20m replacement planned.

1995 - October - Only 3 shops remain in the Tricorn.

1997 - April - Original date of demolition.

1997 - July - Proles for Modernism and FreeArt Collective stage the Commercial Road 'Working' to protect the Tricorn.

1997 - Oct - Demolition delayed again.

1999 - January - Demolition delayed again.

2000 - Proles for Modernism save the Tricorn

ARRIVAL / THE SURREY ARMS

If you are travelling by train, alight at Portsmouth and Southsea station. Turn right when you exit the station and head for the main pedestrian precinct (Commercial Road). Just before you reach the precinct Surrey Street turns off to your right. The pub is about 10 yards down the road on your left. To walk from the station to the pub takes about 5 minutes.

The pub provides the usual range of beers and it does hot food. There is no garden, but children are allowed in. The pub is about 10 minutes walk from the Tricorn.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

URGENT CALL TO ACTION!

Third Position fascists plan to occupy the Tricorn Shopping Centre (Portsmouth) on Sunday 23rd April 2000. These 'discrete' fascists mean to enact an Easter Rising, an English Rebirth.

CONFRONTATION AT THE TRICORN

As the Far Right reorganises within the environmental and regionalist movements they make increasing use of 'geomancy' and myth. April 23rd is St. George's Day and Easter Sunday. They intend their 'rising' to echo the Irish 'original' of 1916, thus enclosing it.

FIGHTING ART WITH ART

They will empark an anti-English tradition, making it part of 'our' 'English' 'national' 'landscape'. The intention is to raise 'British Israel', in which landscape - as 'divine King' - is dissected into 'regions' along Anglo-Saxon 'regal' lines.

STORM THE THREE CORNERED SPHERE

We aim to save the Tricorn for the Proletariat (in general and particular). We know becoming within the 'three cornered sphere'. Despite the failures of the demolitionists, the Tricorn is still under threat.

DEFEND NOTHING AGAINST IDEALISM

Demolished - with that Brutal form lost - an object (the dancer) in a depth of field (the dance) will be lost within fragmented images of 'things'. Defeating fascism is only the first step. We must save the Tricorn for the future, to ensure our unhinged consciousness.

CONTRIBUTE!

Proles for Modernism is an edgless organisation working towards quantum proletarian revolution. We seek *nonist* solutions to the issues of proportion, epistemology and meaning. We combat Third Positionism with the notion that all 'positions' are absurd. Please contribute simulations of your culture at the Tricorn on 23rd April.



REVOLUTION WITHOUT CO-ORDINATES