

Editorial

2012 was one year, perhaps of many, during which a celebrity couple and a social media company both ‘went public’. While somewhat different in purpose and nature,¹ in revising their official relationship status with the outside world there remained a shared result: the rules of engagement had changed. For Kimye and Facebook, a piece of themselves would no longer be their own but out there, to be bought, sold, and exchanged on the open market.²

As definitions of ‘publicness’ go, it's hardly a positive one, but it does encompass some of the complexities inherent in how a public realm is shaped and realised, whether spatially, socially, or otherwise. Indeed, it might be better for our understanding of what it means to be public if we were to move beyond definitions of the term that seek to describe a rarified collective order, one often linked to halcyon days of tendentious existence. In reality, or at least our reality, the architecture that society does make is more akin to limited public acts commissioned by private parties. In this context, the boundaries of what constitutes public life, public realm, or the ‘public interest’ are destined to remain a contested space, one in which ideologies come to the fore. The question, for this issue of *Building Material*, is where does the public aspect of architecture reside and how might it be calibrated?

Thinking collectively, however, *Building Material* is itself sustained as a collaborative process. Joint published by the Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI), the All-Ireland Architectural research Group (AIARG) and the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF), the journal is a project that survives due to the diversity of support and experience provided by each organisation.

It is equally dependent on the time and expertise of a peer-review panel who have applied their knowledge as critical feedback regarding the research within these pages. And, of course, so much is required of those who forward, revise, and resubmit their work for publication. Without the ongoing contribution of our authors, there would be no present edition. Many thanks are owed to both writers and reviewers alike.

Continued too is the categorisation of texts as either ‘Research’ (texts which have been drafted, edited, and revised through the peer-review process) or ‘Observation’ (texts which have been invited, such as those by Helena Fitzgerald and Philip Lawton, and texts which are simply non-academic in format). In doing so, our intent is that *Building Material* might act as a platform for a broad range of methods and analysis in architectural research, and that a variety in approach, essay type, and depth is appropriately reflective of the culture of which we are a part. It is one small private act for, we hope, the public good.

Michael K. Hayes
Editor

1 Should we really compare the burgeoning romance between Kim Kardashian and Kanye West with the stock market flotation of a website provider? _(ツ)_/

2 Their methods sharing something in common; both semi-dependent on clicks for relevance and profitability.