Another stage was ‘bluing in’, when plans and sections were coloured to differentiate solid from void, a seemingly menial task that was done with a lot of care. These drawings weren’t for show; they just served as a model for the ink or hatching to fill the structural elements, after necessary adjustments.

There were times when Jim himself would colour in presentation drawings. He seemed to be happiest sitting among us in the basement of 75 Gloucester Place with his cigar, listening to opera, hatching with his Faber-Castell pencils.

Alexis Pontvial, a student of Stirling’s in Düsseldorf, worked in the office from 1977-79. His practice is based in Stockholm where he is also a professor of urban design.

Paul Reigh

After I had worked on the Bayer headquarters competition during my 1978 summer vacation, Jim came to my degree show at the RCA in 1979 and invited me to return to do presentation drawings of some recent projects.

Being assigned the task of making these ‘after-drawings’ was a bit like being given the number 10 shirt at Old Trafford. The office walls were lined with iconic drawings penned by legends such as Ross Brown, Ulrich Schada, Werner Kreis and Léon Krier, back to Ed Jones’ axonometrics for the 1975 ‘Black Book’.

During my time in Gower Street Place Jim drew little; he didn’t keep a sketchbook and he didn’t have his own board. With some notable exceptions, his practice was to sketch over others’ drawings, and he loved ‘colouring-in’. He would sketch on anything and everything, and with whatever was to hand – including red Bic pen on yellow copy paper. But Jim was passionate and interested in the craft of the drawing: when I left to return to Dublin he gave me copies of two of his favourite books – Thomas Hope’s Household Furniture and Interior Decoration and Schinkel’s Berlin Bauten und Entwürfe.

The ‘after-drawings’ was in a category of its own. Days, or sometimes even weeks, could be spent looking for an ideal image to represent the essence of a project which, as often as not, differed from the reality of the scheme design. Essentially analytical rather than representational, they were sometimes done long after the design was completed: my upview full-frontals of the Manhattan townhouses, described as ‘preliminary sketches’ in Rizzoli’s 1984 monographs, were not drawn until 1980 – almost two years after design work was finished and the scheme suspended.

Often many versions were made of the same drawing. In the Notes from the Archive exhibition catalogue, Tony Vidler remarks that my cutaway aerial view of Rice School of Architecture was ‘preparatory’ to a similar drawing in the ‘White Book’ (Buildings and Projects 1975-92). In fact, one is an axonometric, the other is an isometric, and both were done at the same time for Jim to decide which representation of the scheme he preferred. In this case it was the isometric, which then became the ‘authorised’ version published in the Rizzoli book.

What Reyner Banham called the ‘strong but fastidious’ quality of Stirling’s drawings was achieved with ink on tracing paper. But the Kahn influence of my Dublin tutors, Shane de Blacam and John Meagher, led to a fashion at University College Dublin for pen and ink crystalline paper. ‘Imported’ from Dublin to the UK, it was used by a few in the RCA studios, Jim for some time before settling for Faber-Castell drawing pencils, and back to ink pen. It was a fine art at that time.

Siggi Wermuth

The Star Wars poster came up for me after the film was back in the cinema. I cut a strip from each one of the comics, and put the piece on display in the store window. I called the piece ‘Landsaw’ and it came about a few days after the first release of the film.