

# RIBA



To Council

From ARB Review Group

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Subject Appendix 2 - Report of the ARB Review Task Group

## Appendix 2: Historical Background to Architects' Registration

The RIBA has been instrumental in the setting up and developing the registration of architects in the UK.

From 1905 the policy was to secure satisfactory training of architects by statutory powers. In other words the essential issue has always been education, training and professional practice leading to qualification for entry into the profession. The policy had its origins within the architectural profession long before then (from the 1880s), and in a certain way this was realised in the Architects Registration Act 1931.

The basis of the policy (on registration) had always been that the profession was governed by voluntary associations of practising architects and that the profession would retain control of registration. This was reflected in the composition of the registration body (ARCUK) established by the 1931 Act.

Crucially, professional control of the Register was taken away by the government's decision which was realised in the 1996/97 Act. This had not been generally expected by those of the membership who before then had been in favour of continuing protection of the title 'architect'. The significance and effect of the change is now becoming more widely understood.

The following list outlines the key events in the history of the Registration of Architects and the Protection of the title "Architect":

- 1834 Royal Institute of British Architects granted its Royal Charter.
- 1884 Society of Architects formed, after a campaign by a group of ARIBA to be allowed to vote on RIBA affairs had been resisted by FRIBA.
- 1887 Architects and Engineers Registration Act Committee formed as an independent committee to promote a bill for registration of architects, engineers and surveyors. The bill was withdrawn after chief bodies representing engineers petitioned against it.

- 1889&1891 Architects Registration Bill Committee put forward bills for registration of architects, which were strongly supported by the Society of Architects but opposed by an independent group of prominent architects and artists.
- 1892 Papers published, defining the profession of architecture:  
Norman Shaw and T.G.Jackson (eds.) “Architecture, A Profession or an Art”.  
William H. White “The Architect and his artists, An essay to assist the public in considering the question is architecture a profession or an art”.
- 1902 Architects Registration Bill Committee amalgamated with the Society of Architects as a joint Registration Committee.
- 1905 RIBA Education Policy was adopted for statutory powers to secure satisfactory training for architects by way of registration of title, by and through the RIBA.
- 1908 RIBA Licentiate Class formed, for architects who could show evidence of competence, without exams. On closure in 1913, over 2000 had been accepted.
- 1924-1959 RIBA Standing Registration Committee
- 1925 Amalgamation of RIBA and Society of Architects: most of Soc. of Arch. Members transferred to Licentiate class, which was reopened.
- 1927 RIBA Registration Committee has draft bill introduced in Parliament, but opposed by IAAS and FAS.
- 1931 Bill recast and enacted as the Architects (Registration ) Act 1931, enabling the Register of Architects to be established under a statutory body called the Architects Registration Council of the United Kingdom (ARCUK). The Council was to be made up of representatives of all architectural bodies in U.K. in proportion to the numbers of their memberships on the Register, and representatives from government departments and related professional bodies. Under ARCUK, the RIBA system of exams etc. was accepted for registration. (The provisions of the Act constituting the Board of Architectural Education were repealed when ARCUK was reconstituted as ARB in 1996/7.)
- 1938 The Architects Registration Act, 1938 changed the protected title from “Registered Architect” to “Architect”.
- 1992 Government, in response to a request from ARCUK, commissioned review of the Architects Registration Acts by an independent assessor (John Warne).
- 1993 Warne Report published - principal recommendation: abolition of protection of title ‘architect’ and disbanding of ARCUK. RIBA Council initially supported this recommendation, but this was resisted by the RIBA membership. As a result RIBA campaigned for the retention of protection of title with a ‘stream-lined’ registration board.

- 1996 Part III of Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, among other things, reconstituted the registration body as the Architects Registration Board (ARB).
- 1997 Architects Act 1997, a consolidating act, brought together the provisions of Part III of the 1996 Act and previous registration legislation. The Architects Registration Board then established with a majority of appointed lay members and a minority of elected Architect members.