



The Pipeline

A Newsletter from the Policy and International Relations Department

Volume 5, Issue 6
17 august 2007

Institute gears up for conference season

With the three main political parties gearing up for their annual conferences, the RIBA is set to embark on what it describes as its 'most ambitious party conference programme to date'.

A series of events and activities have been designed to put new president Sunand Prasad into the political spotlight, while the institute has joined a coalition of organisations which will take over a venue in each conference town to highlight climate change issues.

Evening receptions, with the title 'Climate change – building skills', have been scheduled for each of the conferences. These events, a joint effort between the RIBA and the Institution of Civil Engineers, will show conference delegates what the architecture and engineering professions are doing to equip people with the skills to respond to climate change.

The RIBA's new climate change toolkit, to be unveiled to members at the small practice conference next month, will be previewed at these fringe receptions, which will hear from a range of senior MPs.

Hazel Blears, secretary of state for communities and the environment, will speak at the reception for the Labour conference; Chris Huhne, Blears' Liberal Democrat shadow, and Greg Barker, environment spokesman for the Conservatives, will take the platform at their respective receptions.

Sunand Prasad will speak at all events with ICE vice president Jean Venables at the Conservative and Lib Dem receptions,

Scott Steedman, another ICE VP, at the Labour event.

'The profession is having to deal with more demanding planning legislation and building regulations to deal with climate change, and

we as an institute are doing all we can to give our members the skills to meet that shifting agenda,' said RIBA head of political affairs Steven Harding.

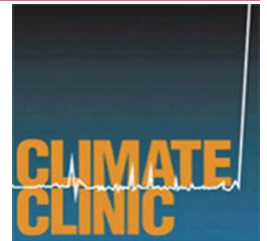
Further events, called 'Climate Clinics', will also run at each party conference. These have been put together by a variety of bodies – including the RIBA, a major partner in the scheme, Friends of the Earth, the Energy Saving Trust and Christian Aid – and will be open to the public. The Independent and MTV are among the media partners which will take the climate clinics' activities to a huge public audience.

The RIBA is also arranging 'Ask an architect' sessions which will allow party delegates and local residents to talk to institute members about environmental matters. Members in the areas hosting the conferences have been asked to volunteer their time for these events.

Prasad will share a platform with the Housing Minister Yvette Cooper MP at the Labour conference, speak alongside Lib Dem environment shadow Andrew Stunnell at an IPPR event and Zac Goldsmith at the Conservative conference.

The three receptions are being sponsored by Building and Regeneration magazines. The Liberal Democrat reception is on 18 September in Brighton, followed by the Labour reception on 25 September in Bournemouth and the Conservative event on 2 October in Blackpool.

For further information please contact Steven Harding at steven.harding@inst.riba.org



Services in the Internal Market Directive

It has been over 6 months since the Services Directive was adopted in December of 2006 following the battle of negotiations that preceded its approval. The UK has begun its implementation of the Directive (deadline, December 2009).

The BERR department, (Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform) is looking primarily at UK benefits. However the Directive will also help UK business move into other EU member states. BERR has been meeting with other member states and discovered that progress is varied.

The BERR team leading on the services directive have been making good progress towards implementing the directive.

- Point of Single Contact – a study has been undertaken on what the likely shape of the UK PSC. The results can be found <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file40401.pdf>. It indicates that the PSC should be a microsite with core work done elsewhere such as Business Link, and that it should not be a point of completion.
- Screening process – All departments have been contacted to report back any legislation that may fall into the directive. This is now being assessed to see which pieces will need amending to fit with the directive. DTI have said there should not be too many changes but that any changes will be consulted with stakeholders.

Link to BERR website

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/europeandtrade/europe/services-directive/page9583.html>

The European Commission has set up a team to lead on the implementation of the directive, and have been running a number of workshops for member states over the past six months, which the UK have been attending. At the end of July the Commission produced guidance on how the Directive should be implemented. This can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/guides/handbook_en.pdf

There has been varied progress across EU member states on implementing the directive. Good work has started in the UK, Netherlands, and Finland, though less progress in France, Greece, Portugal and Spain.

Items to watch

- Consultation from UK Government expected in Autumn 2007. The consultation will focus on Mutual Assistance, Quality of Services, the Point of Single Contact and the Screening process.
- European Parliament Internal Market Committee is working on an 'own initiative' report on the implementation of the directive, with Evelyn Gebhardt acting as rapporteur

The RIBA is involved in a number of groups including

- the SIM work group of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) (focusing, in particular, on the voluntary convergence elements of the Directive e.g. working on a pan-European Code of Conduct, development of a Quality Charter, and PII);
- the BERR's Services Directive Core Group is informed, through the CBI, of Business Europe's working group on Services.

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The RIBA's response to the CLG's Planning White Paper

On the 17th of August the Public Affairs team submitted the RIBA response to the Government's 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' White Paper. The team, together with members of the Planning Group felt that although the paper's proposed streamlining of the planning system should be welcomed, these measures should not be instated at the expense of good design within the application and approval processes.

After the RIBA's successful contribution to many design related issues in Kate Barker's Review of Land Use Planning, we felt disappointment that much of this was not carried through to the White Paper. We feel that key to this is the need to push for the systematic (rather than ad hoc) use of regional design panels and the widespread appointment of duly empowered design champions for important projects.

Members of the RIBA Planning Group Roger Shrimplin and Peter Stuart also highlighted various pitfalls in the White Paper's attempted deregulation. Proposed changes to permitted development rights for householders were felt to be inadequate, potentially increasing the volume of work handled by planning authorities instead of decreasing it. The RIBA again called for the reform of unrealistic time targets within the planning system; the 13 week timeframe for larger projects is seen as a limiting rather than helpful measure. It was also felt that the White Paper could have done more to address the reduction of carbon emissions from all building types rather than focus solely on new buildings.

However, the Government's apparent lack of commitment to matters concerning design within the planning system which was seen as the most pressing issue. Our outgoing President Jack Pringle reiterated this in the press release that went out with the response. He said "Good design...is an enabler, not a cost and will ensure development has a positive impact on our communities for generations to come."

For further information contact David Plaisant at david.plaisant@inst.riba.org

London Olympic Update

Following a positive recent meeting between RIBA and the Olympic Delivery Authority, we can now give a more optimistic overview of the Games' development and the design quality that is coming to the fore.

The RIBA has been taking the role of 'friendly critic' over the last 12 months, never scared to criticise and question the approach towards design procurement, but also very willing to help the ODA to improve its processes and understanding of the design issues. We believe that the pressure we have applied, and the help we have offered over the last year has been helpful, and has strengthened the design message. Now, we understand that design champions have been identified within the CLM consortium (the ODA's delivery partner), which is a major step forward. Overall the attitude towards design, and how it should be procured, has improved vastly within the ODA. We are approaching crunch time, and many challenges still exist.

However, in responding to these challenges, the quality of the design-focused team that has been assembled within the procuring authority demonstrates the increased acknowledgement of the importance of design to the ODA's success, and bodes well for the eventual success of the London Olympics.

Existing barriers to Good Design

The ODA's Procurement Rules

Due to the ODA being an entirely 'new' procurement authority, it has needed to develop its own rules and guidelines over a very short space of time – for most Government-sponsored authorities this takes many months or years to develop. Many of the resulting rules are quite literal interpretations of Office of Government Commerce's own rules and guidelines. These strict interpretations have caused problems not only for many small UK companies (e.g. relating to differing calculations of turnover size), but also international architectural practices, for example due to rules relating to equality and inclusion policies that are not easily compatible with foreign practices and are proving real barriers to entering the Olympic supply chain for many practices.

Budgets

The fixed capital budget for the overall Olympic delivery programme and for individual projects will not change. Therefore, delivery must be innovative, well prepared and co-ordinated if design and delivery quality is not to suffer. Fixed capital budgets mean that there are risks relating to materials' availability (and therefore cost) and reliability, the additional costs of procuring truly sustainable products and design, the growing shortage of UK skills and labour, coupled with any underlying construction market inflation. With this in mind, certainty of both supply and performance is now critical.

Upcoming Challenges

Many of the projects are still to be procured, and there will be opportunities throughout the supply chain running

well into 2008. Many of the smaller projects are nearing being tendered, and so architectural firms, particularly smaller and more innovative practices, will do well to keep abreast of developments and tendering opportunities as they emerge over the coming months. There are also a couple of more specialist challenges posed by the forthcoming waves of procurement, relating to the type and uses of the venues and facilities:

Temporary Structures

Many of the forthcoming procurement will be carried out under more complex processes and will themselves be more complex projects and venues. Many of these will be temporary, or more flexible structures that must sit lightly on the land, be moveable or have a future function and so maintain flexibility of use after the Games. They will have a different emphasis on design, with the priority being for innovation in functionality or moveability. There will broadly be two standards of temporary venue – more sophisticated and higher profile venues, such as the basketball and fencing locations, versus more functional, smaller-scale projects, such as temporary ticket offices, visitors' centres, shelters and front of house facilities.

The ODA have been very clear in their message that 'temporary' does not equate to lower design quality. However, communicating the needs of the various temporary structures will be a challenge. The skills and methods developed in delivering the temporary structures will be a significant part of the Olympic legacy – the Government always intended a skills and expertise legacy within the UK construction industry that can be reapplied and exported after the end of the London Olympics.

Undescribed venues

By the turn of the year, the ODA will have procured or be in the process of procuring all the major venues. But the next wave will be made up of currently unidentified venues – marquees, smaller temporary structures, etc. It appears that this will be an excellent opportunity for younger, less experienced and smaller practices to become involved. It looks likely that the ODA and LOCOG will use panels of designers for these structures, but the venues themselves for the moment are described only in generic terms. Expect further detail in early to mid-2008, probably post-Beijing.

Next Steps

The RIBA is now looking to develop ideas further in concert with the ODA to explore in more depth the issues and emerging best practice relating to developing temporary structures. We hope to address the need for research on temporary venues – looking at their design, manufacture, movement and how to capture the skills legacy. A seminar towards the end of the year is possible, bringing together UK and Olympic experience and the most forefront knowledge of off-site construction, modern methods and materials and emerging international best practice.

For more information on how the 2012 procurement process works, to view all current tender opportunities and how to get involved, visit <http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/business-centre/index.php>

The Changing Face(s) of Council

President Elect Sunand Prasad takes up his post on 1 September, with Jack Pringle now assuming the role of Immediate Past President.



Sunand Prasad

The following new members have been elected to Council for the 2007-08 session:

National:

Jane Duncan
Oliver Richards
Russell Brown
Tony Lloyd
Neil Wilson
Nick Willson

Ulster:

Terence McCaw

Student reps:

John Killock & Katie Wilmot

RIBA Yorks:

John Edmonds

VP membership & RIBA South:

Andrew Salter

RSAW President:

Gareth Scourfield

A number of members were also re-elected: Geraint John and Roger Shrimplin (RIBA East) David Falla, Mike Lawless and Patricia Malet-Bates (RIBA South East), Colin James (RIBA South) and Leslie Hutt (RIAS North).

An induction session for new Council members will be held at the RIBA on 4 October. The first meeting of the new session takes place on 9 October.

A new recruit in PIR

The Policy and International Relations department welcomes David Plaisant, who joins the team as Public Affairs co-ordinator. David has been recruited to work alongside Steven Harding to boost the public affairs capacity of the institute.



David joins the RIBA from SAVE Britain's Heritage which is an independent heritage campaigning organisation. As well as researching the many historic buildings at risk in England and Wales, David handled much of the organisation's dealings with the press and the public. He has also been a member of various national working groups dealing with local government and Westminster on heritage and conservation issues. In 2005, he graduated from University College London with a degree in European Social and Political Studies.

RIBA Learning & Skills Awards 2007 Call for Entries

The RIBA and Learning & Skills Council will launch their 2nd Further Education Awards programme in early September. These awards will celebrate design excellence in recently completed Further Education buildings.



A prize of £5000 will go to the architect whose project demonstrates the most effective and innovative learning environment of a further education building. There is a commendation prize of £2000. Buildings must have been completed between 1 June 2005 and 30 September 2007. The deadline for submissions is Friday 2 November 2007.

For further information please contact

FEawards@inst.riba.org

Meet the PIR Team

Director, Policy & Int'l Relations	Ian Pritchard
Head of Policy	Ewan Willars
Head of Public Affairs	Steven Harding
Policy & Public Affairs co-ordinator	Jamie Hodge
Public Affairs co-ordinator	David Plaisant
Client Forums Co-ordinator	David Noel
Policy & Future Studies Co-ordinator	Tamsie Thomson
Council + Board Secretary/ International Relations Co-ordinator	Sally Welbourn
PIR + LSC Forum Co-ordinator	Chloe Sadler
Secretary for Constitutional Affairs	Jane Muir