
Council Courier

9.12.2020

This is an informal account of the discussions and decisions most recently taken at Council. Action notes and official minutes will be produced in due course.

Obituary

Council resolved to send condolences to next of kin.

Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations.

Minutes of previous meeting, 30 September 2020

Agreed as a correct record.

President's report

Highlights of presidential activity for the last three months:

- Changing the Culture meeting of the Construction Industry Industry Safety Steering Group (ISSG - led by Dame Judith Hackitt)
- Conservative Party conference (panel member)
- RSAW and RIAS Council meetings
- Meeting Joanna Averley Chief Planner, MHCLG
- CIC Conference
- RIBA Smart Practice Conference
- ARB Board and RIBA - ARB Liaison Group meetings
- Corporate Member leadership summit

MHCLG consultation on Architects Act

In November 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a consultation into proposed amendments to the Architects Act 1997. It seeks feedback on two areas of proposed government reform:

- 1) Building safety (setting and monitoring the competence of architects)

Recognition of international qualifications

This reform has arisen out of two separate events; the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety by Dame Judith Hackitt, and post-Brexit lobbying by RIBA and others in the sector to allow for future international recognition of professional qualifications in architecture.

Written responses from Council members were requested for submission to Lucy Monks by the beginning of the following week to inform the RIBA's response to the consultation. Comments from the floor included:

- Part 1 was not as effective and valuable as it should be, wasting students' time and money, whilst part 3 was not imposed on all incoming architects. On the other hand, the RIBA imposed obligations on associate architects. The RIBA needed to make progress on the prescription of qualifications.
- It was critical to bring people back into the flow of architectural education, making it easier to give part 1 accreditation to students from other pathways. A RIBA exam still existed which would award Part 1 to those outside the architecture school system.
- The RIBA should set higher standards and make its members better servants of society. The problem was that ARB did not carry the same obligations.

Mandatory competences

Council was asked to note the previously approved Mandatory Competence for Health and Life Safety and associated Knowledge Schedule, and to endorse the additional Mandatory Competences for Climate

Literacy and Ethical Practice and their associated Knowledge Schedules.

Council agreed the recommendations unanimously, subject to any minor amendments from the Standards Committee. Any other comments were invited to be submitted to Adrian Dobson, executive Director for Professional Services.

Regulation of function

At its meetings on 25 June 2020 and 13 August 2020, the Council considered issues relating to the UK regulation of Title and of Function. It was noted that the current UK Architects Act regulated the use of the title "Architect" but permitted any person to carry out the professional functions for which architects are educated and trained.

In the light of the discussion, Council decided that the issues raised required further consideration. A Review Group had been created to consider the matter in more detail. Chaired by Roger Shrimplin, the group had met a number of times and their paper was discussed.

Council then voted to agree all recommendations in the paper, namely to:

- note the conclusions that had already been reached and what further work was required.
- Request RIBA Board to pursue a governmental regulation of function for architects as a policy of the RIBA.
- recognise that further research was essential, to record the existing extensive regulation of various professional functions within the UK.

Climate emergency

Council members Duncan Baker-Brown, Anna Webster and Maria Smith encouraged the Council to endorse their draft letter to the

RIBA Board urging a variety of action on the climate emergency. This was not to suggest that the RIBA was not already doing a great deal. The organisation needed to carve out more space to pursue these initiatives.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- The RIBA and the architectural profession could not offer leadership in isolation – it needed a low carbon 'alliance' which included the construction industry and the clients themselves.
- Social justice or 'environmental equality' must go hand in hand with the climate agenda.
- Designers did not have much say on climate – architects would need to partner with others to make a difference.

Council then voted to agree, with one abstention, the following requests to the RIBA Board:

1. To provide funding to support the initial planning of the RIBA Climate Action Hub so that, among other things, it is coordinated with the new RIBA Strategic plan, and has a clearly defined statement of intent and purpose. This will allow us the time to prepare a programme of work and activities to ensure that the Climate Action Hub is effective, efficient, and impactful. It will also allow us the time to prepare a plan for funding of projects and activities organised by the Climate Action Hub. We would hope that when properly considered that the RIBA Board would be in a position to sanction for the long-term and appropriate financial support of this ambitious venture.
2. To sanction the setting up of a Governance Board for the Climate Action Hub to steer the project. Members of the Board, Council and other RIBA members could apply to be on this Governance Board. It would probably be appropriate to invite people from outside RIBA to join the Governance Board. Conversely one or more of the vacant seats on the current RIBA

Board could be filled by working within the new Climate Action Hub.

3. To ensure that Climate Action Hub have full cooperation of the RIBA Board, RIBA Council, RIBA Groups etc., and to have access to RIBA facilities and networks, digital and otherwise.

Board report from acting Chairs Nicky Watson/Graham Devine

Board activities for priorities for October and November had included review and endorsement of RIBA rebrand, sign off of proposals for RIBA Awards 2020 and 2021, budgeting for 2021 and accompanying business plan, the development of proposals for committee structure, annual report and accounts.

Chief Executive's Report

Main items:

Covid-19: The RIBA's offices remain closed following the latest lockdown and the revised tiered system introduced in England on 2 December 2020. The majority of the RIBA's activities continue to be delivered online and through remote working arrangements. The recent announcement of the first approved vaccine in the UK gives the first real indication of a return to physical operation in 2021, though at this stage there is still little known to be able to plan with any certainty.

Awards: Following the cancellation of the 2020 Awards and Stirling Prize the team had worked on an alternative approach which will see the 2020 entrants become the entry list for 2021, no new entries for 2021 and then business as usual from 2022 onwards ("Class of 2021" buildings would all be eligible). This one-off reset will allow us to introduce new criteria for 2022 in line with the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge (and other criteria if required).

RIBA Professional Services Contracts: a new series of contracts was launched in October developed in collaboration with other organisations including Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation, Institute of Historic Building Conservation and the British Institute of Interior Design.

Membership report

In addition to the practical support provided by extending the renewal period and increasing access to reduced rates, a number of significant, cross departmental CV-19 related - and other - initiatives have been, and continue to be developed and delivered to improve the offer, support and experience of the Membership:

- a. New **online renewal** and online **staff management** tool for **Chartered Practices**
- b. Launch of the **RIBA Academy** and 'online CPD', with over 40 hours of content to free to Members planned for 2021
- c. The **RIBA Covid-19 hub** provides a suite of resources. The content is wide ranging and regularly update
- d. The Member exclusive **RIBA 'Recovery**
- e. **Roadmap'** – an online digest of resources that have been developed in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on architects
- f. **'Paywall first initiative'** - an initiative was implemented to ensure all key member facing, technical and support content on Architecture.com is locked down to Members only. Content that serves the public good and the Institute's charitable aims remains open to all
- g. **Find an Architect** is the most visited section of architecture.com. Nearly 7,000 clients have used the service in the last year, for projects worth a combined total of £2.83bn, resulting in 50% of RIBA Chartered Practices being matched to at least one client.
- h. The highly visible **'Work with an architect' client**

- i. **campaign** was launched to great success, with initial data showing a 78% increase in traffic to Find an Architect
- j. A suite of **new** and **updated digital contracts launched** with a 50% Member discount
- k. Development of a suite of digital **Practice Tools**, including fee calculator and management
- l. applications, anticipated to be launched Q1 2021
- m. Additional, new titles added to the pack of core publications and documents available to Chartered Members as part of the membership

Professional Standards report

Council noted the report.

Standards Committee

Council unanimously agreed the following:

- A. Jonathan Rees to be appointed as Chair, and Roger Shrimplin be appointed as Vice-Chair, of the interim Standards Committee to terms of office expiring on 31 August 2021.
- B. Council's formal consent be given to amendment by the Board of RIBA Regulation 7.9.1 so that it reads:
 - (a) *The Standards Committee shall comprise at least five and not more than **twelve** individuals to include:*
 - (i) up to **nine** Chartered Members; and
 - (ii) at least three independent persons (who are not members of the RIBA).
- C. An expression of interest process be undertaken as outlined so as to recruit a Chartered Member on Council as the ninth member of the interim Standards

D. Committee with a term of office until 31 August 2021.

E. It also noted the progress summary on the work of the Standards Committee Review Group.

Professional conduct under the new constitution

Council received a list of amendments to be made to the Code of Professional Conduct, Code of Practice and Disciplinary Procedures to bring them in line with the new Constitution. Approval was sought for immediate amendments to the Code of Professional Conduct, Code of Practice and Disciplinary Procedures and approval sought for formal adoption of the Codes and the Rules.

The RIBA Standards Committee had met on 19 November 2020 and gave their approval for the above changes to be made and for the Codes and Procedures to be amended and republished as a matter of urgency - subject to any comments or issues raised by RIBA Council.

Council's comments were therefore sought regarding the immediate amendments to the Code of Professional Conduct, Code of Practice and Disciplinary Procedures and the formal adoption and republication of the Codes and the Rules.

All recommendations were carried unanimously.

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