

We live in uncertain times but the changes needed to deliver a better country cannot wait. Action is needed on the climate emergency, the housing crisis and building safety in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. **People, Places and the Planet: The RIBA's Manifesto for Change.** The next government must

commit to bringing together the right regulation and the best expertise to tackle the huge challenges our country faces. This manifesto outlines how architects can use their expertise, experience and passion to help our politicians ensure that the built environment is safer, better and more sustainable. Good design does not cost the earth: more of the same won't cut it.

We live in uncertain times but the changes needed to deliver a better country cannot wait. Action is needed on the climate emergency, the housing crisis and building safety in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The next government must commit to bringing together the right regulation and the best expertise to tackle the huge challenges our country faces. This manifesto outlines how architects can use their expertise, experience and passion to help our politicians ensure that the built environment is safer, better and more sustainable. Good design does not cost the earth: more of the same won't cut it.

Alan Jones, President, Royal Institute of British Architects

Time to decide

- 1 Brexit must be resolved – but an agreement is only the first step
 - 2 This is an emergency – more of the same is not enough
 - 3 Safer, greener, better designed: our priorities for the next government
-

1 Brexit must be resolved – but an agreement is only the first step

The next parliament must resolve the current impasse while avoiding a no-deal Brexit. Clarity about Brexit won't solve the economic and political uncertainty which is undermining business confidence. We need our government to lead by example: setting higher standards, opening up new markets and developing a skills and immigration system that allows architecture practices to develop domestic and international talent. Architects want to play their part in making the UK the best place in the world to live, work and invest. Regardless of what happens with Brexit, the next government cannot afford to sit back and hope for the best.

2 This is an emergency – more of the same is not enough

Fighting the climate emergency, tackling the housing crisis and ensuring that people are safe in their own homes will not happen unless we acknowledge that business as usual won't work. We need investment, leadership and effective regulation from government alongside radical reform of the construction industry. Grenfell and the spate of fires since have highlighted that buildings, materials and methods that were thought safe simply are not: this was not just a tragic accident, it was the product of a broken system. Like Piper Alpha and Hillsborough, the Grenfell disaster should lead to fundamental changes in how we design, build and procure buildings.

3 Safer, greener, better designed: our priorities for the next government

HOUSING AND PLANNING

The next government must commit to real change: bringing new players into the market to boost supply, promoting higher standards and addressing the quality and safety concerns that continue to cast a cloud over the industry. The lack of effective and integrated planning means that too many poor quality and unpopular developments continue to win approval against the interests of local communities. Local councils need proper resourcing and the confidence to know that if they reject a poorly designed scheme they won't see their decisions overturned by national politicians. We believe that a greater role for architects can help change and refocus the debate to ensure that new homes are greener, safer and better designed.

Whoever you are, wherever you live and whatever your situation, you should have the right to expect your home to be affordable, safe and sustainable. This won't happen without a rethink about how houses and communities are planned, designed and built.

- **Boosting supply:** Relying on the volume house builders won't solve the housing crisis. All borrowing caps and restrictions on local authorities need lifting and land made available to SME, housing association and public sector housebuilders.
- **Empowering communities:** Local plans should be updated to include local design and development guidelines which can be used to provide greater certainty for developers and reassurance for communities.
- **Investing in planning departments:** Local and regional government must be empowered and resourced to promote high quality placemaking. Rather than seeking to bypass planning altogether, the next government should give local authorities the resources they need to invest in planning teams and the powers to demand better design across the board.
- **Proactive planning, not development control:** Permitted development and viability loopholes in the planning system need to be closed to create a level playing field that ensures that all homes and buildings meet the same scrutiny, sustainability, safety and quality standards.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Architects have a leading role to play in reducing the environmental impact of the built environment. The RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge goals set out a pathway to a greener and more sustainable built environment which covers the construction, use and reuse of buildings.

- **Improve regulation and procurement:** The next government should make a priority to ensure that by 2030 all new and refurbished buildings:
 - Reduce operational energy demand by at least 75%, before UK offsetting
 - Reduce embodied carbon by at least 50-70%, before UK offsetting
 - Reduce potable water use by at least 40%
 - Achieve core health and wellbeing targets
 - Provide better information on the real-world performance of buildings through actual in-use measurements to drive quality improvements.
-

BUILDING SAFETY

The industry needs wholesale culture change, but it also needs the government to act swiftly and with vigour – not just make minor changes to regulations. England has fallen behind other countries in its approach to fire safety regulation. We need strong, clear and prescriptive baseline fire safety requirements to ensure that buildings are safe by design.

- **Ban the use of combustible materials on high-rise buildings:** The use of combustible materials should be prohibited on the outside of all buildings over 18 metres tall.
- **Safer means of escape:** All new multiple occupancy residential buildings over 11 metres tall should have at least two stairways, offering alternative means of escape for residents and access for firefighters.
- **Improved fire warnings for residents:** Centrally addressable fire alarms should be fitted in all new and converted multiple occupancy residential buildings and as a minimum, in all existing multiple occupancy residential buildings above 18 metres tall when undergoing refurbishment work.
- **Make sprinklers mandatory:** Sprinkler systems should be mandatory in all new and converted residential buildings, and as a minimum in existing multiple occupancy residential buildings above 18 metres tall when undergoing refurbishment work.

BREXIT AND BEYOND

Architects come from around the world to practice here because British firms and universities have a reputation for excellence and innovation. We need skills and immigration systems that allow us to build on these strengths and continue to develop domestic and international talent. The UK is a global hub for architecture; the next government must play its part.

- **Amend the Architects Act to open up new markets:** The Architects Act should be amended to enable the UK to sign mutual recognition agreements around the world.
 - **Maintain close links to our neighbours:** Cultural, economic and professional links to European nations must be maintained.
 - **Reform our skills and immigration systems:** We need an immigration and skills system which works for the UK's architects and our global architecture sector.
-