**CANDIDATE FOR RIBA VICE-PRESIDENT MEMBERSHIP**

|  |
| --- |
| Valeria PAssetti |
| **a.** | **Name and address of Practice:** Conception ArchitectsGothic House, Barker Gate, Lace Market, Nottingham, NG1 1JU |
| **b.** | **Position/title:** Principal Architect |
| **c.** | **Qualifications:** Doctor of Architecture, MA in Philosophy |
| **d.** | **Declaration of interests:** Consul of Italy for the East Midlands, ARB, IHBC, SPAB, ICOMOS |
| **Election Statement:** |

I have worked tirelessly during my time as Regional Chair of the East Midlands with a passion for the needs of our profession which was recognised by my fellow architects who elected me for a second term, making me the longest serving member of the Nation & Region committee with over four years’ experience. I took my role very seriously and I never missed a regional or Nations and Regions Committee’s meeting, despite being the principal architect in a busy practice and the mother of newly born twin boys. I feel it is now time to use my experience at VP Membership level, where I believe my negotiating skills, honed as a long standing diplomat, and my passion for the profession, will help to grow RIBA’s influence as a world leader in defining standards in the built environment, making me the best person for the job.

Devolution, Brexit, member acquisition and retention, increasing the number of members from ethnic backgrounds, sexual equality in the workplace and the changes in education are all issues which RIBA members will be facing in the next two years. The RIBA will need to ensure that members will feel relevant and heard. The position of VP Membership, especially with reference to the N&R Committee is crucial to ensure that member services are increased and more architects realise the benefits of being a member of RIBA. In order to do this I pledge to work closely with the representatives of the Nations and Regions, to ensure that our volunteer members have the support and the ear of the RIBA, by reporting any issues and proposals to RIBA Board and Council.

With Article 50 triggered, the RIBA needs a VP Membership who understands the issues faced by our members from both sides, EU members who have made the UK their home and UK firms who want reassurance that they can continue to employ EU talents as well as continuing to win work in Europe. In February of this year, a RIBA report found that 25% of architects working in the UK (not all of which are Chartered) were EU citizens. My views and fears were mirrored by a recent open-letter published in the Guardian supported by leading names such as Richard Rogers, David Chipperfield, Amanda Levete and Peter Cook amongst others. At a time of unprecedented change, the RIBA needs a VP Membership that can navigate these turbulent waters and I believe that I am the candidate that has this unique set of skills and experience. As an Italian trained architect who has worked in the UK for many years, whilst also maintaining a diplomatic position as the Honorary Consul of Italy since 2006, I can see the coming negotiations from both sides of the table. I give credence to the importance and relevance of the RIBA brand and its appeal to international audiences, and I am a passionate advocate of the pertinence of our profession on our society at large.

Members also need to consider the consequences that RIBA internal operational changes will have in the way we deliver services to the profession and whilst I positively support devolution and look forward to working in this new dynamic environment, I am committed to working with individual regions and nations to define and improve the new shape of RIBA. I believe that this newly shaped RIBA also needs to better represent the diversity that defines our profession. When men make up more than 80% of RIBA architects even though the students of architecture are almost 50:50 split between the sexes, we have to consider why so many women are leaving the profession. As a woman and mother with a growing practice, I understand the stresses felt by some women in our profession. I have faced prejudices as many have, but with the support of my family I have been able to keep my commitment as Regional Chair and N&R committee member throughout my pregnancy and continue to be actively involved with various Universities as a lecturer and mentor to the younger generation. As East Midlands Chair, I have sat in many regional and N&R committee meetings as the only woman surrounded by white males. Once my term ends, there will once again be one single woman around the table. I believe that this is not representative of the diversity which characterises our profession and the RIBA role model campaign confirms my views. I want to be the VP Membership who stands for diversity and who delivers results!

Why should I be the next Vice President Membership of the RIBA? Because for the first time in decades, the RIBA finds itself in a position that is more dynamic than the built environment itself. The RIBA must keep pace with the changes ahead, both at home and abroad and it needs a Vice President Membership who has the skills, experience, tenacity and broad shoulders to see us through with a clear vision.

In summary therefore, I am an experienced architect, currently the longest standing Nations & Regions Committee member and a seasoned Diplomat: RIBA members can be sure to find in me, an organised VP who will put members’ needs at the centre of her agenda with a defined strategy of how we can deliver it over the next two years. I am a working mother with a growing practice, a 19 year old daughter and six month old twin boys. Members can be assured of my commitment, energy and organisational skills. Lastly, I am passionate and driven enough to make things happen in my term as VP Membership. I stand for the Profession, the Institute and every member that we serve, where others see problems, I see opportunities

Dr Valeria Passetti RIBA IHBC