



## Edge Debate No 38

### "Are you dwelling comfortably: the need to re-define comfort in buildings"

Tuesday 28th October 2008, 6-8pm

Canada House  
Trafalgar Square, London SW1Y 5BJ  
*Hosted by the Canadian High Commission*

Current expectations and standards of comfort are almost certainly unsustainable and new methods and ideas will be required if there is to be any prospect of a significantly lower carbon society. Adopting more technically efficient solutions of heating and cooling buildings to current standards is insufficient. This debate arises from a recent *Building Research & Information* special issue\* that challenges our concept of what comfort is. Instead of being a "scientifically determined", monotonous temperature that must be maintained throughout the year, it argues that comfort is a socially-negotiable notion and therefore contains a larger degree of flexibility. Unfortunately, over the past 50 years most people's expectations for a comfortable indoor temperature have narrowed to a small temperature range. In the context of the existing building stock, increasing the range of acceptable indoor temperatures (to more closely follow outdoor temperatures) would significantly reduce energy demands as well as create other positive benefits.

This presents a series of challenges for policy makers and the construction industry:

- a policy debate to contemplate the scale and nature of the challenge
- rethinking current standards, the provision of comfort and thinking about comfort
- expanding inhabitants' expectations and creating a demand
- identifying successful design and management approaches for building occupants to tolerate and appreciate a wider temperature range (and thus avoid rejection or revenge effects)
- altering market conditions – especially the valuation of buildings

Tom Delay, The Carbon Trust Chief Executive, has been invited to chair the event and there will be short presentations by:

Richard Lorch  
Dr Bill Bordass  
Philip Parnell  
Prof. Michael Kelly

Editor, Building Research and Information  
Usable Buildings Trust  
Drivers Jonas and RICS Sustainability Working Group  
Chief Scientific Advisor, DCLG

I would be grateful if you could arrive at 5.45, so we can start promptly at 6pm. Canada House is hosting 'A Global Change - how communities in four continents are responding to climate change'. A

Please reply **by or before 21<sup>st</sup> October** to Jane Powell at [Jane.Powell@rambollwhitbybird.com](mailto:Jane.Powell@rambollwhitbybird.com) if you are able to attend. Places are limited. Your name must be on the guest list to gain admittance to Canada House.

**Robin Nicholson**  
Edge Committee Convenor  
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Edward Cullinan Architects  
1 Baldwin Terrace, London N1 7RU

\* E. Shove, H. Chappells, L. Lutzenhiser (2008) Comfort in a Lower Carbon Society, special issue of *Building Research & Information*, Vol 36 (4).  
A key paper is the Editorial by E. Shove, H. Chappells, L. Lutzenhiser and B. Hackett (2008) Comfort in a lower carbon society. *Building Research & Information* vol 36, no 4, pp 307 – 311.  
downloadable from:  
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=g794016402~db=all>

**Dr Bill Bordass**  
Usable Buildings Trust  
**Chris Beauman**  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
**Paddy Conaghan**  
Hoare Lea  
**Michael Dickson PPIstructE**  
Buro Happold  
**Dr Frank Duffy PPRIBA**  
DEGW  
**Dr Garry Felgate**  
GFC  
**Rachel Fisher**  
RSA  
**Prof Max Fordham PPCIBSE**  
Max Fordham LLP  
**Andy Ford**  
Fulcrum Consulting  
**Simon Foxell**  
The Architects Practice  
**Bill Gething**  
Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios  
**Jim Green**  
Baylight Properties  
**David Gryth**  
Arkitema, Denmark  
**Prof Peter Guthrie**  
University of Cambridge  
**David Hampton**  
The Carbon Coach  
**Dr Jan Hellings**  
Olympic Development Agency  
**Prof Paul Jowitt**  
Heriot-Watt University  
**Janet Kidner**  
Lend Lease  
**Chani Leahong**  
Fulcrum Consulting  
**Richard Lorch**  
Building Research and Information  
**Duncan McCorquodale**  
Black Dog Publishing  
**Mike Murray**  
1 to 1 Solutions Ltd  
**Robin Nicholson**  
Edward Cullinan Architects  
**Andy Parker**  
Buro Happold (India)  
**Michael Pawlyn**  
Exploration Architecture  
**Adam Poole**  
Engineering Relations  
**Andrew Ramsay**  
Engineering Council  
**Bruno Reddy**  
Arup  
**Yasmin Shariff**  
Dennis Sharp Architects  
**Dr David Strong**  
Inbuilt Ltd  
**Lynne Sullivan**  
Inbuilt Ltd  
**Chris Twinn**  
Arup  
**Bill Watts**  
Max Fordham LLP  
**Prof Mark Whitby PPICE**  
Ramboll Whitbybird

**Jane Powell**  
Debate Secretary

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