



Edge Commission on Future Professionalism: Note 7

In the Spring of 2014 the Edge is holding a Commission of Inquiry to examine how the professional institutions and other industry bodies are planning to address pressing issues facing the design and construction sector and how they can act together to reinforce the value of professionalism in the decades ahead.

The Commission will be chaired by Paul Morrell OBE, the former Chief Construction Advisor to the UK Government, alongside a distinguished panel drawn from across the sector. The Commission's report will include a series of recommendations and an agenda for collaboration, intended for adoption by the construction industry's professional institutions.

The Commission builds on the Edge's 'new professionalism' workstream, which has been underway for the past two years and has included the Special Issue of Building Research & Information on New Professionalism published in January 2013. The work of the Commission will also pick up on recent work carried out by various other organisations including; the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Foundation of Science and Technology, the RSA as well as by the individual institutes.

There is a well-established narrative that the professions generally, and those in the construction industry in particular, are under siege and that the professional institutes need to act to re-establish the importance of professional values for society and the value of professional affiliation for their individual members. But action, if it is to be taken, cannot be carried out by individual professional institutions on their own; a concerted move to redefine professional values will be necessary. The Commission will examine what actions might be available to the professional institutions and how they could work together to implement those recommended by the panel.

The Inquiry will take evidence from a wide range of bodies and individuals. Evidence gathering sessions will be held in public as a series of evening Edge Debates in the Spring of 2014, each tackling a different theme with input and evidence from appropriate professional bodies and other witnesses.

The themes to be addressed at each Debate will be:

- **The Environment:** Should it be a professional requirement to address environmental issues, including responsibility for long-term performance and reporting? (5th March 2014)
- **The Economy:** How can professionals continue to do what they regard as the right thing, when this is not a priority for their client? (23rd April 2014)
- **Society:** How can professionals working across the built environment and their institutions maintain relevance and deliver value to society? (7th May 2014)
- **Future value:** How can institutes share and co-operate to improve the quality, standing and value of professionals? (22nd May 2014)

Paul Morrell will chair each session, leading a panel of experienced industry figures, and in front of an invited audience, will hear from three/four speakers, each addressing the given topic and with the main speaker representing the world outside the professions. Subsequent speakers will be senior members and officers of the professions and their institutions. Speakers will be cross-examined by the Panel, before the topic is offered to members of the audience.

The Commission is engaging with the most senior executive and elected members of the key construction institutes, including the ICE, RICS, RIBA, CIBSE, CIOB, IStructE, the RTPI, Landscape Institute, RAE and the Construction Industry Council, and will continue to work with them as the Commission makes its recommendation. A meeting of Chief Executives and serving and future Presidents will be held to discuss the findings of the Commission and agree any immediate actions and programmes.

Members of the panel are: Jenny baster of Arup, Tony Burton, Senior Partner, Gardiner & Theobald and Chair elect of the CIC, Isabel McAllister of MACE, Alan Penn Dean of the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment and Karen Rogers of Heathrow Airports Ltd.

The evidence taking sessions will take place from March to May 2014. These events are being organised by the Edge with sponsorship from The Arup Foundation and will be held at the Building Centre. Individual sessions are sponsored by Rehau.

The Commission will be supported by a professional rapporteur, Denise Chevin, previously editor of Building, who will also co-ordinate the preparation of the report and recommendations.

The Edge will be continuing their work on professionalism through and beyond the Commission of Inquiry with the Commission's report acting as a guide for their future engagement with the professional institutions in the industry.

"If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change"

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*, 1958

The Edge is an inter-disciplinary construction industry think tank sponsored by The Building Centre, CIBSE, ICE, IStructE, SocEnv, RIBA, RICS and the UCL Energy Institute. The Edge is an Associate Member of the CIC.

Contact: the Edge, (contact@edgedebate.com)

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