

Edge Debate 46 - Professionalism
RICS, 15 September 2011

**Professionalism:
*getting to places
markets can't reach?***

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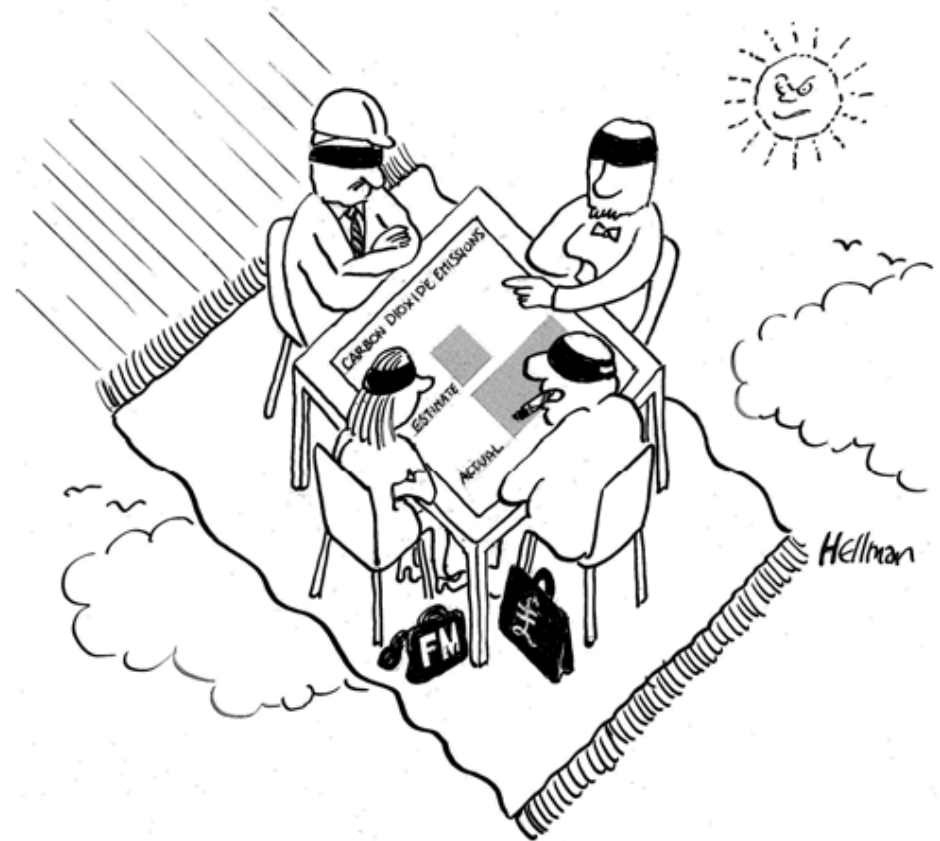
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For most designers and builders, *building performance in use is another country ...*

“in theory, theory and practice are the same, in practice they aren't.”
SANTA FE INSTITUTE

“designers seldom get feedback, and only notice problems when asked to investigate a failure.”
ALASTAIR BLYTH
CRISP Commission 00/02



Recently-completed buildings: *What do we tend to find?*

- Often they perform much less well than anticipated.
 - Unmanageable complication is the enemy of good performance.
So why are we being forced to make buildings more complicated in the name of sustainability, when we don't get simple things right?
 - Buildings are seldom tuned-up properly and controls are poor.
So if we have more to do, what chance do we have?
 - Design intent is seldom communicated well to users and managers, implicitly or explicitly.
Designers and builders tend to go away at handover.
 - Good environmental performance and occupant satisfaction can go hand in hand, *but only where committed people have made it happen.*
 - Modern procurement systems make it difficult to pay attention to critical detail. *Not a good idea when promoting innovation.*
 - Facilities management services leave a lot to be desired.
 - **Hardly fit-for-purpose for a step-change in building performance!**
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Some typical examples from recent buildings: *Poor window design, leading to overheating*



Cutting Carbon in Commercial Property through:

- Green leases
- Sustainability measurement and benchmarking
- Valuation of sustainable buildings
- Owner occupier partnerships
- Sustainable retrofitting
- Guidance for property agents

... and how about turning off the perimeter lights in sunshine? >>>>>>>>>>

Why are we being encouraged to spend money on green bling when we aren't getting the fundamentals right?



In 1994, two of these boilers heated a 3000 m² university building – E Fry UEA (@ 15 W/m²).



So why does a recently-completed “zero-carbon” school have 60 W/m² of biomass boiler power with gas backup?

Will markets and governments get things right? *Probably not! Today's news ...*

From: UK-GBC INFO <info@ukgbc.org>
Subject: **Important policy update on DEC's**
Date: 15 September 2011 10:27:44 GMT+01:00
To: Undisclosed recipients:;

Dear Members

The Energy Bill had its Report Stage and 3rd Reading in the House of Commons yesterday. I'm sorry to say that Government did not introduce an amendment which would have put down the enabling legislation to allow for a roll-out of Display Energy Certificates (DECs). It seriously calls into question how Government could possibly meet its commitment to extend DEC's to commercial buildings by October 2012 and, as something of a touchstone issue, is a pretty depressing indictment of the government's approach to green buildings more generally.

As you know this is something of a long-running saga, the latest phase

Changing the way we do things: *A new professionalism?*

- Construction-related institutions require their members to understand and practice sustainable development.
- How can members do this unless they understand the consequences of their actions?

SO HOW ABOUT?

- Re-defining perceptions of the professional's role, to follow-through properly and engage with outcomes.
 - Closing the feedback loop – rapidly.
 - Making much more immediate and effective links between research, practice and policymaking.
-

Why do we need a new professionalism?

What has changed?

- The urgent need to reduce the environmental impact of existing and new buildings: *we must now find ways to do this quickly and reliably.*
 - Shortages of financial and material resources: *we can no longer afford to “invest” in the wrong things, but we can take time to do things more carefully.*
 - Rapid technological, social and economic change: *professionals need to keep ahead of the game.*
 - **Increasing (often unnecessary) complication** of requirements, process and product: *we need to find what really works well and how to do it better.*
 - **Outsourcing of technical and operational skills**, research and feedback by government: *we need to replace this lost practical expertise.*
 - **Excessive reliance on economics**, contracts and markets: *we need to go beyond the specification and the profit motive.*
 - **Virtualisation of education, practice and regulation**: *professionals need to confront the consequences of their actions, learn from them and share results.*
 - **30 years of professionalism being regarded as anti-competitive or elitist**: *but how else can those we trust also have the wider interests at heart?*
 - **Destruction of professional judgment by PR**, *reinforcing received wisdom.*
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Soft Landings:

Helping to enable the new professionalism

Encourages follow-through and feedback, *with better briefing and reality-checking beforehand.*

In case studies, major benefits were identified – in one school electricity use was halved. Often, occupants were more satisfied.

However, clients were often reluctant to buy in, regarding it as an added expense, and something the industry should just do routinely.

One local authority couldn't even agree with itself (*as part of a LEP*) to spend a bit of money from one budget to tune the building, even though another budget could reap the savings within 12 months, and then over and over and again.

Yet again, are the British ***sparing no expense to get something on the cheap*** ... N PEVSNER

It's not a question of affording to do it, *you can't afford not to do.*

So shouldn't we appeal to professional ethics?



the **SOFT LANDINGS FRAMEWORK**

for better briefing, design, handover and building performance in-use



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