

EDGE Report to sponsoring Institutes (CIBSE, ICE, RIBA & RICS)
re. 2005-06 & 2006-7

Edge activities

In the last year (2005-6) the Edge has been busier than ever, supported by our sponsor institutions (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE & RICS), as well as by funding and the direct involvement of the Carbon Trust.

The Edge has recruited a number of new members to its committees (see below) and continues to attract a very high calibre of attendees to its debates; ranging from MPs, senior academics and construction professionals and influential public figures such as the fashion designer Katherine Hamnett. Direct, active contact is maintained by members of the Edge with the various constructional profession institutes and groups as well as with Constructing Excellence, the Strategic Forum (including its Sustainability Sub-group), CABE, the Construction Industry Council, the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) and the European Forum for Architectural Policies (EFAP). Members are in regular contact with government departments, including; DTI, ODPM, DEFRA, DCMS, OGC and DfES, as well as ministers and members of both houses of parliament. Members of the Edge teach and lecture widely, both in the UK and abroad as well as being active professionally in the design and delivery of significant projects across the world.

New members of the Edge in 2005-6 include:

- Chris Beauman, Senior Adviser, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- Michael Dickson, Buro Happold, IStructE President 2005-06, Chair Construction Industry Council 2000-02
- Chris Twinn, Associate Director, Arup
- David Strong, Managing Director, BRE Environment
- Andy Ford, Director, Fulcrum Consulting
- Jim Green, Development manager, Baylight Properties

Other new Edge committee attendees and potential members include:

- Peter Head, Director, Arup
- Duncan McCorquodale, Black Dog Publishing
- Lord Redesdale
- David Rogers, Building
- Peter Bishop, Director of Culture and Environment, Camden Council

Debates

Holding debates on significant issues continues to be the mainstay of the Edge's various activities. In 2005-6 our debate programme was entirely given over to a series of discussions on Energy. The latter three of these were linked to examine the supply, demand and balance of the energy equation and have all been reported on as commissioned articles in 'Building' (see below).

25th April **Energy step-change – the view from the Future** held at the ICE and chaired by Mark Whitby, director of Whitbybird the engineering consultancy. Speakers were Walt Patterson of Chatham House, Matthew Rhodes, MD of Encraft, Joe Short, Director of Dynamic Demand, and David Hirst, Director of ResponsiveLoad Ltd.

This debate has led to a push for wider knowledge and acceptance of dynamic demand, including support for a clause in a private member's bill (Microgeneration Bill).

- 28th Sept **Energy debate #1. Supply: What are our needs and can we meet them?**
Held at the RIBA and chaired by Peter Guthrie, Professor of Engineering Cambridge University. Speakers: Dr. David Fleming, energy consultant & Jeremy Leggett CE of Solar Century.
- 19th Jan **Energy debate #2. Demand: We are running out of atmosphere**
Held at the ICE and chaired by Peter Guthrie, Professor of Engineering Cambridge University. Speakers: Colin Challen MP, Chris Beaman, European Bank of Reconstruction and David Fisk, professor of Engineering for sustainable development, Imperial College
- 3rd May **Energy debate #3. Balance: Living within our means**
Held at the ICE and chaired by Peter Guthrie, Professor of Engineering Cambridge University. Speakers: Aubrey Meyer, director of the Global Commons Institute and Lord Oxburgh, Former Chairman of Shell Transport and Trading.

The Edge committee meets on a regular basis to plan the debates and review and follow up on the resulting outcomes. Janet Kidner of Battle McCarthy acts as minutes secretary, while Jane Powell continues to arrange the events.

Edge Column

In September 2005 an agreement was reached with the weekly journal 'Building', the most widely read journal across the construction industry, for the Edge to contribute a regular column. This allows issues to be explored in a public forum and for the outcomes of Edge debates to be reported and disseminated widely.

Edge columns in Building:

- 28th Oct 2005 Energy supply – Author: Adam Poole
- 13th Jan 2006 Regulations – Author: Simon Foxell
- 10th Feb 2006 Energy Demand – Author: David Rogers
- 5th May 2006 Zero carbon schools – Author: Simon Foxell
- 19th May 2006 Energy balance – Author: Adam Poole

Carbon Counting – The Edge pledge

Dave Hampton, carbon coach and member of the Edge has developed and organized, with funding from the Carbon Trust, a carbon counting spreadsheet for members and others to record their carbon consumption on. To date 12 Edge members have completed the assessment with more to follow. The pledge has also been trialed in a number of offices – all with the intention of creating awareness of the amount of carbon that various lifestyles generate.

Some basic patterns have starting to emerge. For many, home energy consumption represents the largest proportion of their footprint, although the biggest variable is air travel. Generally (with some exceptions) the footprints of Edge members are a little larger than we might like them to be. Whilst it is true that all committee members core business can have a massively higher leverage on UK emissions than their activity at home, members' awareness of their own shoe size can only be beneficial.

Voluntary Energy and CO₂ declaration (VECD)

The VECD has been further developed by the Usable Building Trust (UBT) for the Edge following the original funding from the Carbon Trust, and with £5000 of support raised from Edge members, and was trialed on and developed further for the 2005 RIBA awards programme (see below). UBT also obtained funding from the Pilkington Energy Efficiency Trust to test ideas a VECD data collection questionnaire for buildings in use and to review energy information in buildings featured in the forthcoming book, Sustainable Architecture UK. This work is currently being completed.

A separate report on preliminary results emerging from the VECD will be available in the near future.

Sustainability Awards

Bill Gething and Bill Bordass, both of the Edge, were appointed to the judging panel of the RIBA's sustainability award in 2005. The opportunity was taken to test ideas for the VECD on reviewing design energy use data for the four shortlisted entries; and actual energy consumption was also included. The award was given to Cobtun House, Worcester, a single storey dwelling for a wheelchair user. This won the award largely for its materials and construction, although its energy in-use was also low. The same methodology will be used again by Gething & Bordass for the RIBA in 2006.

The VECD-related checklist, developed for the awards, was successful and has attracted wider interest, with magazines and competitions making use of the ideas and institutions and universities making suggestions for further development. A paper on its development and use has also been accepted by the international journal Building Research & Information for a special issue on sustainability assessment. This is available on request.

Dave Hampton of the Edge has also been instrumental in developing the Civic Trust's own sustainability awards. It is hoped to spread best practice in this area to other award schemes.

Edge book

A six-thinking-hat session was held to facilitate development of a first Edge book looking at the impact of climate change and demographics on various aspects of the built environment by 2015 and the role that policy decisions might have in dealing with these. Discussions are currently being held with a publisher to develop the book into a series of pamphlets/booklets for publication in 2007.

Letters

Edge member Dave Hampton continues to get numerous letters published in the national press on the subject of Carbon emissions and climate change as well as being involved in many more campaigns including promoting 'Come off it day' and 'Purple' day.

UK Green Building Council

The Edge has been discussing the proposal of committee member, David Strong, to encourage the establishment of a UKGBC as an independent charity or not-for-profit company. The proposals are in development but work has been done by a group from Cranfield University who reported their findings before the Edge debate on the 3rd May.

Edge workstreams 2006-7

- **Debates**

The Edge will continue to arrange debates on a range of themes, including both professional and sustainability issues. It will also be using debates to develop new thinking about the relationship between wellbeing and the built environment (see below). Future debates are planned on the lessons to be learned from designing the city of Dongtang in China and the sustainable city as well as on health and the built environment.

- **Publishing**

Writing and publishing activities will be built upon and expanded, including making the column in Building a regular feature and producing books and pamphlets. The link with Black Dog Publishing looks set to be very productive in encouraging and facilitating the output of a series of provocative booklets to be widely disseminated through a partnership with a national newspaper (see below for funding details).

It is intended to use the Edge structure and wider membership to hold a number of scenario building sessions examining policy decisions and actions taken now (2007) that would have had a significant impact (adaptive and/or mitigating) when looked back on from the year 2020 in the light of predicted climate and demographic change. The output would be in the form of a series of (approx 6.) books starting with a scene setting introduction, followed by four books, each with a pair of essays on separate themes connected with the built environment (e.g. Education/Working, Resources/Materials, Travel/Community, Leisure/Age), and culminating in a volume of responses/conclusions.

- **Brokerage**

One of the Edge's main successes in the last year has been its work brokering relationships between other external parties and it is set to continue with this. The main focus will be on the main professional institutes and their presidents and senior executives, but links will be maintained and developed with other groups, especially including those in Parliament (including the All Party Climate Change Group and Colin Challen MP in the House of Commons and Lord Redesdale in the Lords).

- **Wellbeing**

The Edge is planning to carry out a long-term investigation into the link between wellbeing/quality of life and the built environment. This will take the form of debates, discussions and publications. A partnership with CABE has been established to kick this workstream off with a joint debate on the subject of obesity and the design of buildings and urban areas. Further work may look at the role of evidence-based design and the impact of densification in cities and towns.

- **Voluntary Energy and CO² Declaration (VECD)**

The importance of realizing and become aware of the quantum of our carbon usage in both our lifestyles and buildings will continue to be a major aspect of the Edge's work. The Voluntary Energy and CO² Declaration, with its link to the EU energy certification for buildings, will help designers, owners and users of buildings to become more aware of how their buildings are performing and encourage and enable the achievement of higher and higher standards.

It is intended that the VECD will be developed to allow its use without expert assistance so that a wide range of consultants can use it to assess the actual carbon emissions and energy usage of buildings. Its use will also be promoted for the judging of industry award schemes to reward truly sustainable buildings and to discourage the giving of awards to the profligate and resource hungry.

- **The Edge pledge**

The pledge also makes the quantity of carbon emission/usage better understood and therefore reducible. It is intended to spread the use of the pledge to other interested parties, especially colleagues and the governing councils of the built environment institutes and to get a much wider debate going on the amounts of carbon usage by individuals and households.

- **The Edge website**

The current Edge website www.at-the-edge.org.uk provides a platform for the contemporaneous notes from debates to be published and will reproduce the texts of the Building 'Edge column'. But there is considerable room for development to make it a more attractive and functioning site that reflects and builds upon the Edge's wider remit and activities.

The Edge will be seeking new sponsorship in 2006-7 to allow it to carry out major improvements to the website.

- **Edge education project**

As it reaches its 10th anniversary the Edge believes it should consider using its accumulated knowledge and expertise to develop an educational resource that might assist school children working on built-environment projects, those considering a career in the built environment professions, and/or the general public. The Edge will be seeking sponsorship to allow it to develop this project.

- **Policy thinking**

The Edge will continue to focus on the built environment and in particular the potential policy agendas of its sponsor institutes. The Edge has the freedom to think widely and incisively, consulting experts and provocative theorists and practitioners as it does so. The Edge will use this freedom to help develop and influence the approach and policy development of the mainstream institutional bodies as well as to inform decision making processes amongst designers, built environment professionals, contractors, clients, regulators and many others.

Funding

Core funding for the Edge is provided by the Carbon Trust which supports activities including the web-site and administration of debates as well as specific projects such as the VECD & Edge pledge. The four sponsor institutes (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE and the RICS) also provide invaluable support in-kind through the hosting of debates on their premises and access to senior members and staff.

In addition the Edge continues to benefit from the time provided by a range of senior members of the construction professions including architects, engineers, surveyors, planners, social scientists and others, including several former presidents and vice presidents from the institutes who are active on the Edge committee.