

# Edge Debate 52 – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012

## Building a State of Equilibrium

"...the increase of wealth is not boundless" John Stuart Mill, Principles of Political Economy, 1848

Progress has been measured in percentage points of growth in GDP since the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 and since then those running economies have been fixated on ensuring that GDP growth is kept as high as possible. This has meant burning more and more of the earth's fossil fuels and exploiting the world's other natural resources to maintain ever greater levels of consumption and turnover. This is not sustainable – but the question remains whether there an alternative model that provides prosperity and a good quality of life, maintains individual freedoms and does not rely on perpetual growth; of activity; of population; of resource extraction and environmental degradation? If so, should we be investing in a different sort of infrastructure now and preparing for what the New Economics Foundation has described as the Great Transition.

A state of equilibrium requires an economy that maintains and recycles natural resources and stays within its share of global carrying capacity. The construction industry would have a major role to play in establishing and managing the infrastructure and built environment to enable such an economy and way of life. Many versions of the good, sustainable life have been developed and proposed in recent years and some are even economically feasible. Can the limited investment currently available be channelled into establishing a self-supporting and non-depleting economy, one that addresses the full range of social, economic and environmental concerns? Can we build it?

### The Edge Debate will discuss:

- The nature of a successful equilibrium economy
- The role for the construction industry within it
- The investment, skills and understanding required
- Managing the transition

### Chair:

- Chris Beaman, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

### Speakers:

- Ken Webster - Ellen MacArthur Foundation on a Circular Economy
- Victoria Johnson, New Economics Foundation & contributor to Zero Carbon Britain
- Simon Rawlinson, EC Harris

The Edge is an inter-institutional ginger group involving CIBSE, ICE, RIBA and the RICS and seeks to promote interdisciplinary co-operation between construction professionals. We seek to encourage change in the industry through intellectual debate, political lobbying and inter-institutional working. Synopses of previous debates are recorded on our website [www.edgedebate.com](http://www.edgedebate.com)

If you would like to join us at this debate please contact Simon Foxell at

[sf@architectspractice.com](mailto:sf@architectspractice.com). Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis.

**Venue:** The Lecture Hall, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)  
Parliament Square, London SW1P 3AD

**Timing:** Debate 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Drinks and networking - 9.00 pm

**David Adams**  
Willmott Dixon  
Construction

**Guy Battle**  
dcarbon8, Deloitte

**Dr Bill Bordass**  
Usable Buildings Trust

**Chris Beaman**  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

**Caroline Cole**  
Colander

**Dr Alison Cooke**  
Cooke Associates

**Paddy Conaghan**  
Hoare Lea

**Dr Frank Duffy PPRIBA**  
Co-Founder DEGW

**Gary Felgate**  
Chop-cloc Ltd

**Rachel Fisher**  
Nation Housing Federation

**Prof Max Fordham PPCIBSE**  
Max Fordham LLP

**Andy Ford PCIBSE**  
Mott MacDonald Fulcrum

**Simon Foxell**  
The Architects Practice

**Bill Gething**  
Sustainability + Architecture

**Jim Green**  
Baylight Properties

**Prof Peter Guthrie**  
University of Cambridge

**Dave Hampton**  
The Carbon Coach

**Stephen Hill**  
C20 futureplanners

**Mike Hitchens**  
Pell Frischmann

**Dr Dorte Rich Jørgensen**  
Atkins

**Prof Paul Jowitz, PPICE**  
Heriot-Watt University

**Janet Kidner**  
Lend Lease

**Prof Doug King**

**Francis Li**  
Buro Happold

**Richard Lorch**  
Building Research and Information

**Dr Mike Murray**  
One Creative Environments Ltd

**Robin Nicholson**  
Edward Cullinan Architects

**Michael Pawlyn**  
Exploration Architecture

**Adam Poole**  
Buro Happold

**Dr Sunand Prasad PPRIBA**  
Penoyre and Prasad LLP

**Lars Ostenfeld Riemann**  
Ramboll

**Yasmin Shariff**  
Dennis Sharp Architects

**Prof Richard Simmons**  
University of Greenwich

**Simon Smith**  
Smith and Wallwork

**Lynne Sullivan**  
sustainableBYdesign

**Chris Twinn**  
Arup

**Prof Lorna Walker**  
Lorna Walker Consulting

**Bill Watts**  
Max Fordham LLP

**Eleanor Warwick**  
King's College

**Jane Wernick**  
Jane Wernick Associates

**Prof Mark Whitby PPICE**  
Davies Maguire + Whitby

**Albert Williamson Taylor**  
AKT II

**Jane Powell**  
Debate Secretary

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