

The professional challenge for the 21st Century



NEXT 100 YEARS

The problem with professional institutions is...

*...they are not **members' clubs...***

...being a professional member is not the same as belonging to a trade association or trade union...

*...we are not here to **defend** any group of members' particular business models...*



What this professional body **needs** are...

- A public interest obligation, not necessarily for the advantage of members
- Educational and entry standards
- A requirement for CPD or lifelong learning
- Regulation, control and enforcement; and
- The existence of professional standards and ethical rules





The challenges for professionals

- **No shared understanding of sustainability** in which to apply new knowledge and to redefine the public interest values that professionals need to reflect in their everyday practice
- **Weak action learning cultures**, on-the-job and for sharing acquired knowledge and skills, with clients and across traditional professional interests and identities
- **The erosion of ethical values and social context** as the fundamental guiding principles for personal and professional behaviour.



The story of the professions and public life in the **post-deregulation era?**

- *Professionals defined the public interest and **presided over** the expansion and outsourcing of the welfare state.*
- *Public knowledge was **privatised, fragmented, or just lost.***
- ***Professional 'know best' attitude** prepared ground for Thatcher/ Blair, and created apathy in the face of selling 'the family silver' and privatisation.*
- *The parent state keeps its citizens **'in perpetual childhood... power is absolute, provident and mild...it is well content that the people should **rejoice**, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing'** [de Tocqueville]*
- ***Think** more [PFI] schools, hospitals, consumerism, house prices, vicarious wars... **"Rejoice" (Thatcher & Blair) Don't think** or debate the consequences of 'How'*

Brainwashed, the polite professional and British way...

- *A key to training professionals is ‘assignable curiosity’. Children are **naturally curious**. Professionals learn that curiosity is a series of **tasks assigned by others**.*
- *On entering training, students are optimistic and idealistic. On leaving, they are ‘pressured and troubled’. They realise that ‘the primary goal for many is getting compensated sufficiently for **sidelining** their original goals’.*
- *In spite of their education, professionals think **less independently** than non-professionals. They use **corporate** jargon – “model”, “performance”, “targets”, “strategic oversight”.*
- *What makes the **modern professional** is not technical knowledge but ‘**ideological discipline**’.*

John Pilger reviewing *Disciplined Minds* by Jeff Schmidt (Rowman & Littlefield) in New Statesman June 27th 2011

The New Citizen

*“It’s a time to rethink the role of markets in achieving the public good. There’s now a widespread sense that markets have become detached from fundamental values... that we need to **reconnect markets and values.**”*

Michael Sandel

Professor of Government, Harvard Uni

2009 Reith Lectures

The New Professional Ethic?

“The meltdown has really put a focus on standards, on competence, and on regulation. These skills and values are embodied in the Institution.” CEO Professional Body 2009

“Rules of Conduct”:

- **Thou shalt be reasonably competent, and diligent in going about thy clients' business**
- **Thou shalt go to a reasonable number of CPD lectures and not fall asleep in them**
- **Thou shalt definitely not run away with thy clients' money**
- **Thou shalt worship the shareholder value of thy clients and thy employers**

‘My first duty is to my client’s shareholder value...’

Section 172 Companies Act 2006 describes the duty of a director to promote the success of the company:

- (1) A director of a company must act in the way he considers, in good faith, would be most likely to promote the success of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole, and in doing so have regard (amongst other matters) to—**
- (a) The likely consequences of any decision in the *long term*,**
 - (b) The interests of the company’s employees,**
 - (c) The need to foster the company’s business relationships with suppliers, customers and others,**
 - (d) *The impact of the company’s operations on the community and the environment***

Propriety = Unethical

- *“One of the most commonly made mistakes is to confuse professional propriety with an ethical position, as if acting in accordance with the codes of professional conduct will ensure ethical behaviour... **standards even my hairdresser could meet.**”*
- *“Simply meeting the requirements of a code of conduct that serves only the client’s or the professional’s interest may be **unethical** in my terms.”*

‘Architecture Depends’ MIT, 2009

**Professor Jeremy Till, University of Westminster
Dean of Built Environment**

..... do it better

- *“The duty upon members of... to behave ethically is, in effect, the duty to behave honourably; in modern words, ‘to **do the right thing**’*
- *Members of ... should always be aware of their **overriding responsibility to the public good**. A member’s obligations to the client can **never** override this*
- *The ‘**public good**’ includes care and respect for humanity’s cultural, historical and archaeological heritage, (and) to **protect the health and well being of present and future generations** and to show due regard for the environment and for the **sustainable management of natural resources**.”*

**ICE ROYAL CHARTER, BY-LAWS, REGULATIONS
AND RULES[2008 Update]**

The New Professional Practice?

“We read the market right.”

*“Our reorganised consultancy is a state of mind”, **he beamed.***

“What this boils down to is a shift from project focussed to client focussed consultancy.”

Interview with major surveying firm in the building press September 2009

Everyday compromises

- *“We **promise as little as possible** at planning and then sell the client’s land”*
- *“Well, this a Sustainable Offer, and that is a Commercial Offer”*
- *“The whole CPD session was aimed at **how to avoid** Part L [of the Building Regulations]”*
- *“We’ll build more sustainable homes, provided people are prepared to **pay more**”*
- *“I liked your proposal, **but** I really am tied up with rent reviews for the next nine months”*

“Professional fouls would disappear if the effect of committing them was worse than that of keeping to the rules.”

*The Professional Foul in Football: Tactics and Deterrents,
Journal of the Operational Research Society 2003*



Do we dare change before we have to?

“Important lessons can be learned by the property profession. The most critical one must be that the process of developing new policy, and changing mindsets must start long before implementation becomes critical.”

RICS Land Journal Nov-Dec 2008




What does it **mean** to be a professional **for a sustainable world**?

Professional bodies need to decide if professionals owe a duty of care to the public through the promotion of sustainable development, both **as a citizen and as a privileged professional**

Individual professionals need to consider whether and how they can **align their personal and professional values** and actions.

Values and ethical purpose must be **learned, sustained and refined in a social context**; otherwise they have no meaning and provide no purchase on guiding professional behaviour

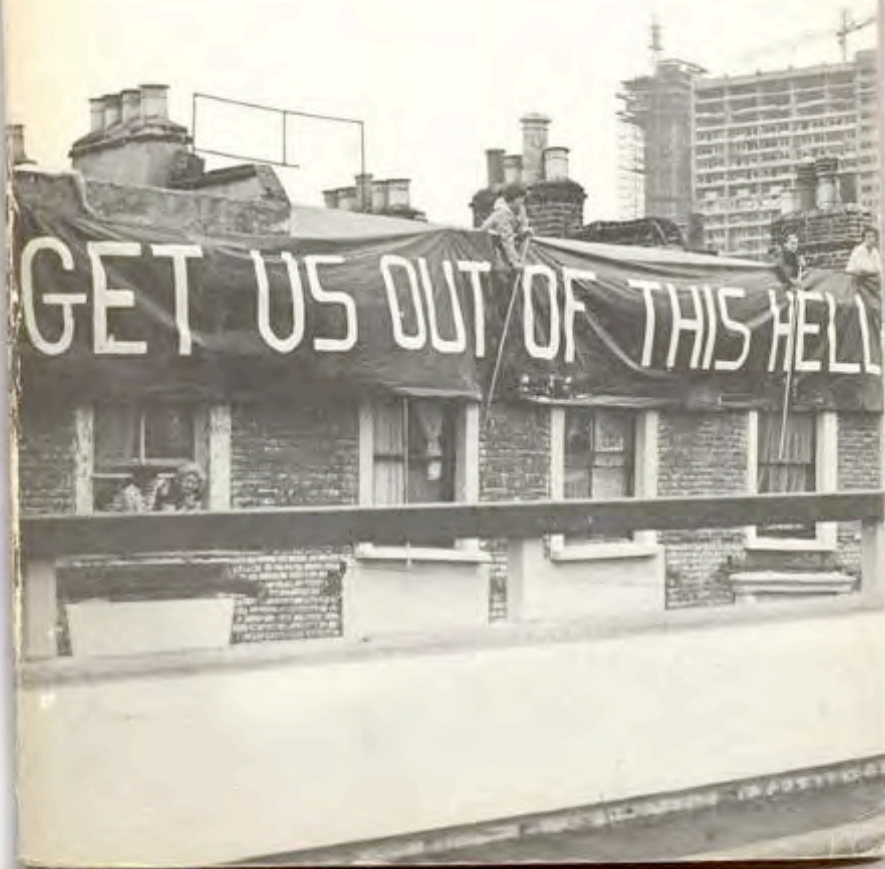




a Pelican Original

After the Planners

Robert Goodman



1972

“It is no longer possible for us to masquerade as disinterested, or objective professionals, applying our techniques with equal ease to those clients we agree with, as well as to those we disagree with. We are, in effect, the client for all our projects, for it is our own society we are affecting through our actions.”

2011

A professional manifesto:

Challenge conventions

Design as if it's your own

Have the courage to make a stand

Learn from your mistakes

Be honest about what you don't know

Be a steward of the community and its resources

Take a wider role

