



# EDGE Report - August 2013

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**Jane Powell**  
Debate Secretary

SUPPORTED BY  
**The Building Centre, Carbon Trust,  
CIBSE, CIC, CIOB, ICE, RIBA, RICS,  
IStructE, UCL Energy Institute**

The Edge is a multidisciplinary built environment think tank with members drawn from across the built environment professions and beyond

## Edge activities - summary

In the last year the Edge has been more active than ever before; holding over twice its usual number of high-level policy debates, held the third in its series of Cities Workshop and has been closely involved with the Government's Green Construction Board.

The Edge has maintained its essential connections with its sponsor institutions (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE, IStructE & RICS), who have been joined this year by the CIOB. The Edge has also become an Associate Member of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and established formal links with the UCL Energy Institute and The Building Centre.

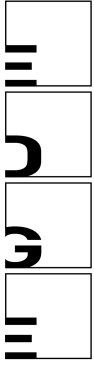
## The Edge committee

The Edge 'Committee' continues to meet on a monthly basis with several members achieving additional prominence:

- Bill Bordass was awarded an OBE for services to the architectural and engineering professions and to sustainable development in the 2013 New Year's Honours List.
- Jane Wernick won the First Women of the Built Environment Award
- Andy Ford has been appointed Professor of Systems Engineering in the Built Environment at London South Bank University
- Robin Nicholson was made an Honorary Fellow of CIBSE and an Honorary Professor at the University of Nottingham
- Bill Gething, together with Katie Puckett, published 'Design for Climate Change in February 2013 (RIBA Publishing).
- Doug King prepared the report on 'The Case for Centres of Excellence in sustainable building design' for The Royal Academy of Engineering
- Francis Li has been awarded a doctorate by University College London
- Andy Ford was appointed Chair of the CIBSE diversity panel which also includes Edge members Dorte Rich Jørgensen
- The Seawater Greenhouse project was launched in Qatar at the UN Climate Change Conference by Michael Pawlyn and Bill Watts
- Bill Bordass, along with Adrian Leaman of the Usable Buildings Trust, edited the Special Issue of the journal Building Research and Information on New Professionalism, published in January 2013
- Edge members Lynne Sullivan (representing the Edge) and Sunand Prasad continue their role on the Green Construction Board

In 2012-3 the Edge welcomed onto the Edge Committee

- Colin Haylock, Haylock Planning & Design and Immediate Past President of the RTPI
- Professor Roberto Amendolia of the University of Sassari, previously visiting scientist at CERN and Scientific Attaché at the Embassy of Italy in London
- Jane Briginshaw
- Dr Mark Dawson, Buro Happold
- Chris Jofeh, Director at Arup
- Professor Tadj Oreszczyn, Director of the UCL Energy Institute, and
- Andrew Scoones, The Building Centre Trust



The Edge aims to be at the intersection of the construction industry professions, research bodies and policy-making groups inside and out of government. To that end its members maintain regular contact with professional and academic bodies, technical and campaigning organisations and central and local government departments. Members of the Edge also 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

Members of the Edge committee continue their active involvement with sponsoring construction and built environment institutions as well as other groups including; the Academy of Urbanism, Aldersgate Group, All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group (APPCCG), Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), British Property Federation, Building Futures, Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC), Cambridgeshire Quality Panel, Civic Trust, Construction Industry Council, Design Commission for Wales, Design Council, European Forum for Architectural Policies (EFAP), Global Commons Institute (GCI), Green Deal fora, Good Homes Alliance, National House-Building Council (NHBC), Research Excellence Framework Built Environment Panel, Royal Town Planning Institute, Shape east, Royal Society for the Arts, UK Green Building Council

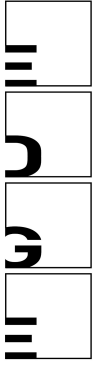
The Edge has close links with a range of UK research bodies including the Bartlett School of Planning, the Building Research Establishment (BRE), Cambridge University Engineering Department Centre for Sustainable Development, Imperial College London, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), School of Construction Management and Engineering University of Reading, the Technology Strategy Board (TSB), the University of Bath, London South Bank University and in particular the UCL Energy Institute.

In addition to the Edge's sponsor organisations members of the Edge are in regular contact with Government Departments including; BIS, DECC, CLG, DEFRA, DCMS, DfE and The Cabinet Office, as well as ministers and members of both Houses of Parliament.

## **Edge workstreams 2012-13**

### **1 Edge Debate**

Holding debates that examine areas of policy-making and developing technical understanding remains the Edge's central activity. Debates examine questions that urgently need airing, but are not necessarily susceptible to easy answers. Edge Debates use an invited expert audience, including senior members of the sponsoring institutions, civil servants, academics and practitioners as well as politicians and influential public figures, to discuss and make sense of pressing issues facing the construction industry and its professions. Over the past year the Edge has run a series of debates aiming, as ever, at challenging the thinking of the professional institutes and others in the construction and property industry.



## **Debates held in 2012 – 13**

Debate 50 – October 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, BIS

### **Setting the Conditions for Innovation**

Chair: **Richard Miller, Head of Sustainability, Technology Strategy Board**

Speakers: Peter Head, Robert Webb & Michael Pawlyn

Debate 51 – October 30<sup>th</sup> 2012, City Hall, London

### **London redistributed?**

Chair: **Nicky Gavron – London Assembly member and former Deputy Mayor of London**

Speakers: Ziona Strelitz, Michael Edwards, Ben Rogers

Debate 52 – November 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, RICS

### **Building a State of Equilibrium**

Chair: **Chris Beaman – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development**

Speakers: Victoria Johnson, Simon Rawlinson

Debate 53 – January 31<sup>st</sup> 2013, The Danish Embassy

### **Construction Needs Women, Because .....**

Host: **Anne Hedensted Steffensen, Her Excellency the Danish Ambassador in London**

Chair: **Harvey Francis, Vice-president Skanska UK**

Speakers: Katherine Whitehorn, Stephanie Wray, Charlotte Morgan

Debate 54 – February 20<sup>th</sup> 2013, The Building Centre

### **A New Professionalism?**

Chair: **Rab Bennetts – Bennetts Associates and Trustee, The Design Council**

Speakers: Bill Bordass, Frank Duffy, Kathryn Janda, Stephen Hill, Will Hughes

Panel: David Fisk - President CIBSE, Harry Rich, Chief Executive RIBA,

Kenneth Creighton - Director of Professional Standards RICS,

Michael Brown - Chief Deputy Director CIOB, Keith Clarke - former chairman CIC

Debate 55 – March 6<sup>th</sup> 2013, Ecobuild

### **The Politics of Carbon Emissions Data**

Chair: **Simon Foxell – The Architects Practice**

Speakers: Doug King, Tadj Oreszczy, Lynne Sullivan

Debate 56 – March 7<sup>th</sup> 2013, Arup, Bristol, hosted by CIBSE South West region

### **Building Information Modelling**

Chair: **Dr Mike Murray, One Creative Environments**

Speakers: Steve Race, Ben Roberts, Paddy Conaghan, Ronnie Rennoldson

Debate 57 – April 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, The Danish Embassy

### **The Health Dilemma: achieving scale and efficiency**

Host: **Anne Hedensted Steffensen - Her Excellency the Danish Ambassador in London**

Chair: **Sunand Prasad - PPRIBA, Penoyre & Prasad**

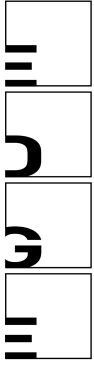
Speakers: Sir Muir Gray, Paul Westbury, Marlene Willemann Würgler, Teva Hesse

Debate 58 – May 29<sup>th</sup> 2013, RAE

### **Is creating an Institute of the Built Environment the answer to a 'fragmented and ineffective' industry?**

Chair: **Professor Alan Penn, Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, UC**

Speakers: Terry Wyatt, Mike Murray



Details of all Edge debates, including presentations, speaker biographies, lists of attendees and notes of the debate are available at [www.edgedebate.com](http://www.edgedebate.com)

The 2013-2014 series of Edge Debates will include a focus on developing elements of the National Plan (see below) and following through on the ideas inherent in the New Professionalism by looking at individual institutions' responses to the future of the construction industry.

## **2 Edge Cities**

In February 2013 the Edge held its third Cities Workshop in collaboration with Buro Happold and the Italian and Danish Embassies in London. The full day session addressed the issue of Smart Cities bringing a wide set of disciplines together to examine "How Scary is Smart?" Participants arrived thinking they understood something about smart cities and left knowing far more, but with the realisation they knew very little. A full report on the day's proceedings is available at [www.edgedebate.com](http://www.edgedebate.com)

A fourth Edge Cities event is planned for 2014 along with other work tackling this most urgent of topics.

## **3 Consultation**

The Edge offers its services to government, built environment bodies and professional organisations as a source of positive criticism and considered ideas. In the last year it has worked with

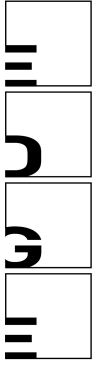
- The Government's Chief Construction Adviser
- The Green Construction Board where members of the Edge sit on the main Board and the Board's Routemap, Buildings and Knowledge and Skills working groups
- The Danish Embassy
- The Italian Embassy
- CIBSE
- SCHOSA / UK Architectural Education Review Group
- Building Research & Information Journal
- The Technology Strategy Board
- The Greater London Authority Planning Committee
- The UCL Energy Institute
- Radio Marlow

## **4 Brokerage**

Fundamental to the Edge's work is the idea of linkage and making connections between different disciplines and between the worlds of research, practice and policy-making. The Edge works with its sponsoring professional institutes, their presidents and senior executives; with governments and their advisers and agencies; with academic and research organisations; with think tanks, arms-length delivery bodies and pressure groups to encourage cross-disciplinary thinking and solution finding.

In 2013 the Edge supported the UCL Energy Institute in establishing the RCUK Centre for Energy Epidemiology, launched in May. The Edge is represented on the Centre's steering committee and will continue to work with them in achieving and communicating a better understanding of energy use in the UK.

The Edge is currently supporting the establishment of an independent Institute of Building Performance – an initiative being led by Bill Bordass.



The Edge has been working with several of the construction institutes to develop and promote a pan-industry professional code as proposed by the Edge and published in the New Professionalism special issue of BR&I. The proposed elements of a new professionalism are attached to the end of this report.

The Edge is also proud to have been an early signatory to Building Magazine's Green for Growth campaign.

## 5 Thinking and Beliefs

The Edge is a thinking organisation, providing a forum for a wide range of industry expertise to come together to address current issues, policy development and emerging ideas, to reconsider previous experience and bring extensive practical knowledge to bear on present problems.

The Edge's focus is the built environment and the professional bodies that work with it; but it has the freedom to think widely and to propose initiatives and policy ideas that address the big picture. It will continue to use its institutional freedom to challenge, to provoke and to influence. Importantly, the Edge's thinking capacity is available to other built environment bodies to help them develop thinking, share ideas, test propositions: a necessary sounding board for the industry only used to dialogue within its own segment.

In November 2012 The Edge gave evidence to the SCHOSA Review on UK Architectural Education (UKAE), proposing a move to more multi-disciplinary and evidence-based approach to design, while developing greater specialist skills and multiple routes into the profession.

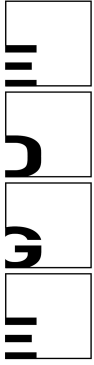
The Edge has also been supporting members giving evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment's Inquiry into Sustainable Construction and the Green Deal.

In 2013 the Edge developed a set of 6 'Edge tenets', a live set of positions describing the Edge's general aims and intentions:

1. **Interdisciplinary:** bringing built environment professionals together, along with others who share their concerns.
2. **Open and creative:** working across all disciplines and with competitors and collaborators alike.
3. **Strategic in approach:** encouraging accessible and shared knowledge and seeking to connect place, practice, policy and research.
4. **Visionary:** in identifying the issues and in promoting effective and urgent responses to both local and global challenges.
5. **Professional:** developing a broad-based ethic of responsibility to social and environmental demands based on an equitable global framework.
6. **Business-like:** furthering the skills and capacity of the UK construction industry to promote prosperity and deliver a better built environment.

The tenets are there to be debated and changed as necessary. Comments are welcome.

Individual Edge members have also been contributing to a monthly series of verbal essays, 'Leading Edge voices', on Dave Hampton's Watt Next show on Marlow FM. Several of these essays can be heard at <https://soundcloud.com/carboncoach>



## 6 Research Edge

The Research Edge is a group within the Edge working to connect research, practice and policy-making communities in the built environment sector and to promote open access to publicly funded research. The Research Edge, in dialogue with the Technology Strategy Board, has proposed a number of research projects and is looking for suitable research partners to realise them.

## 7 Edge Funding

The Edge currently runs without external funding and is dependent on the goodwill and contributions of its members, their employers and its sponsor institutes (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE, RICS and IStructE). In the recent past the Edge has been generously funded by the Arup Foundation and the Carbon Trust.

The sponsor institutes provide support in kind through the hosting of debates at their premises along with the provision of refreshments and access to senior members and staff. The individual companies of Edge committee members generously host Edge committee meetings on a regular basis.

The Edge also benefits greatly from the time provided by a range of senior members of the construction professions including architects, engineers, surveyors, planners, social scientists and others, including current and former presidents and vice presidents from the institutes who are active on the Edge committee.

The Edge is currently actively seeking funding for the year 2013-14 and beyond in order to continue and develop its activities, in particular the Edge debates and the work of the research Edge. Please contact Simon Foxell of the Edge at [sf@architectspractice.com](mailto:sf@architectspractice.com) if you are interesting in discussing this further.

The Edge August 2013

### **Some elements of a new professionalism**

These are a draft set of actions proposed by the Edge and reproduced in the editorial of the January 2013 Special Issue of Building Research and Information journal. They are aimed at what the individual professional can do.

1. Be a steward of the community, its resources, and the planet. Take a broad view.
2. Do the right thing, beyond your obligation to whoever pays your fee.
3. Develop trusting relationships, with open and honest collaboration.
4. Bridge between design, project implementation, and use. Concentrate on the outcomes.
5. Don't walk away. Provide follow-through and aftercare.
6. Evaluate and reflect upon the performance in use of your work. Feed back the findings.
7. Learn from your actions and admit your mistakes. Share your understanding openly.
8. Bring together practice, industry, education, research and policymaking.
9. Challenge assumptions and standards. Be honest about what you don't know.
10. Understand contexts and constraints. Create lasting value. Keep options open for the future.