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

Edge activities - summary

Collaboration for Change

The Edge's main focus in the past year has been on the publication of its report, Collaboration for Change, authored by Paul Morrell and published in May 2015. The report is the formal output from Commission on Future Professionalism and has been accompanied by numerous meetings events and presentations.



Predominant among these has been continued engagement with the professional institutions (CIBSE, CIOB, ICE, IStructE, RIBA, RICS, SocEnv) that the Edge works in partnership with, as well as the Construction Industry Council (CIC), and one-to-one meetings have also been held with a wide range of other institutions, some new to the Edge, including the Design Council, LI, RTPI, RSA, UKGBC, CIAT, BIFM, APM, CIHT, CIPHE and CABE.

The Edge has been very pleased that The Ove Arup Foundation has continued its support of the Commission. The Foundation has generously funded the publication and ongoing dissemination of Collaboration for Change.

The Edge is currently engaged with a programme of events to discuss Collaboration for Change in centres across the UK.

Research digest

The Edge has also been pursuing, in partnership with CIBSE, one of Collaboration for Change's main recommendations, the urgent need to improve research dissemination throughout the industry. This has been especially apparent in the light of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise that took place in 2014-15. Multiple meetings have taken place with professional institutions and others on a proposal to provide practitioners with a regularly published digest of research findings to help them actively engage with work currently underway.

Edge debates

The regular series of Edge debates continues with events exploring key issues that affect the whole industry. Topics in the last year include:

- Wellbeing in buildings
- The costs and value of construction
- The sustainability of tall buildings
- Educating the industry
- Cycling and the liveable city
- Does built environment policy work?

The Edge committee

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

- Jane Wernick was awarded a CBE for services to structural and civil engineering in the New Year's Honours list
- Lynne Sullivan continues her work on the reshaped the Green Construction Board and has recently been appointed the RIBA's Ambassador for the Climate Change Agenda.
- Simon Foxell published the second edition of *Starting a Practice: A Plan of Work* (RIBA Publishing, January 2015) and co-Guest edited the Special Issue of Building Research & Information (BRI) on Closing the policy gaps: from formulation to outcomes (July-August 2015)
- Both Paddy Conaghan and Professor Tadj Oreszczyn have been elected Vice-presidents of CIBSE.
- Elanor Warwick has been awarded her PhD by Kings College, London for her work on '*Defensible space as a mobile concept: the role of transfer mechanisms and evidence in housing research, policy and practice*'.
- Richard Simmons and Robin Nicholson have joined the steering Group for the All-Party Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group's Inquiry into Design and Behaviour in the Built Environment
- Garry Felgate has become Communications Director of the Association for the Conservation of Energy and a founding director of The Energy Pension Company
- Paddy Conaghan has been on the Research Excellence Framework Built Environment Panel

In 2014-5 the Edge welcomed George Adams, the UK Engineering Director of SPIE, onto the Edge Committee. George is an immediate past-president of CIBSE and is Chair of the CIC Green Construction Panel.

The Edge works at the intersection of the construction industry professions, research bodies and policy-making groups inside and out of government. 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, Design Commission for Wales, Design Council Cobe, Good Homes Alliance, Landscape Institute, National House-Building Council (NHBC), Place Alliance, Royal Academy of Engineering, Royal Town Planning Institute, the RSA, Trees and Design Action Group, Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the UK Green Building Council

The Edge has close links with a range of UK research bodies including the Bartlett Schools of Environment, Energy and Resources and Planning, 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), Innovate UK, School of Construction Management and Engineering University of Reading, the University of Bath, London South Bank University and in particular the UCL Energy Institute.

Edge workstreams 2014-15

1. The Edge Commission of Inquiry on the Future of Professionalism



Following the series of evidence-taking sessions that underpinned the work of the Commission in 2014 the Edge published the Commission report, 'Collaboration for Change' authored by the former Government Chief Construction Adviser, Paul Morrell, in May 2015.

Publication of the report was preceded by a series of meetings and consultations with 19 professional institutions and bodies* as well as, through the CIC, to all of its institutional members. A pre-launch briefing dinner was also held for senior representatives of industry institutions, addressed by both Paul Morrell and Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the RSA, at the Institute of Civil Engineers in April 2015.

The report was launched in May 2015 at an event held at Arup's London offices and included presentations from Paul Morrell, Lord Deben, Sue Illman PPLI and Tony Burton, CIC Chair. The findings of the report have been covered in depth by a range of industry journals, including Building, Construction News, Infrastructure Intelligence, the Architect's Journal and the RIBA Journal.

Collaboration for Change identifies six areas where institutions could, by joint action, demonstrate their effectiveness and thereby enhance their relevance and value:

- **Ethics and the public interest** and a shared code of conduct
- **Education and competence**
- **Research and a body of knowledge**
- Collaboration on major challenges, including **industry reform** in the interests of a better offer to clients, **climate change** and **building performance**.

The launch is currently being followed up with a series of presentations and discussions across the country that will last well into 2016 and further rounds of individual meetings with the leaders of the professional institutes.

To date events to discuss Collaboration for Change have been held as follows:

- 13th May 2015 - CIBSE Away Day, Windsor
- 28th May 2015 - CIC Annual Conference, Buckinghamshire
- 2nd June 2015, Vision, London
- 19th June 2015 – AJ Breakfast Club, London
- 9th October 2015 – National Urban Design Conference, Bristol
- 26th October 2015 - Cambridge Forum for the Construction Industry
- 6th November 2015 – SCHOSA Conference, Cardiff
- 24th November 2015 – Cardiff University & The Hub, Arup
- 7th December 2015 – IDBE, Cambridge
- 10th December 2015 – The Rumford Club

Further events are planned for 2016 in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Reading, Sheffield & Southampton.

The Edge Commission of Inquiry is sponsored by The Ove Arup Foundation with additional support from Rehaus

* ACE, APM, BIFM, CABE, CIAT, CIBSE, CIHT, CIOB, CIPHE, ICE, IES, IStructE, LI, RAEng, RIBA, RICS, RSA, RTPI, SocEnv

2. 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 construction industry.

Debates held in 2014 – 15

Debate 64 – October 1st 2014, Davison Highley, London

Buildings for Humans: Are We in Danger of Value Engineering out the Wellbeing of Occupants?

In conjunction with: **The Feeling Good Foundation**

Chair: **Andrew Scoones, ngenuity Ltd**

Speakers: Richard Francis, Elina Grigoriou, Derek Clements-Croome, Lynne Sullivan, Elanor Warwick, Charles Seaford

Debate 65 – 26th November 2014, The Bartlett, UCL, London

What is the true ratio? : costs and value of construction,

Chair: **Peter Hansford, Chief Government Construction Advisor**

Speakers: Graham Ive, Don Ward, Roger Madelin, Will Hughes

Edge Debate 66 – 9th February 2015, UCL Energy Institute, London

Is it a Problem that Practice and Research do not Connect?

Chair: **Stephen Hodder, President RIBA**

Speakers: Tadj Oreszczyn, Paddy Conaghan, Richard Lorch, Bill Gething, Richard Miller

Edge Debate 67 – 11th February 2015, City Hall, London

Skyscrapers vs the Planet

Host: **Nicky Gavron AM, Chair London Assembly's Housing and Planning Committee**

Chair: **Pam Alexander, Design Council Cobe & Covent Garden Market Authority**

Speakers: David Fisk, Simon Sturgis, Lynne Sullivan, Claire Das Bhaumik, Simon Allford, Steve McKechnie

Edge Debate 68 – 20th April 2015, London Southbank University, London

Educating the Industry

Introduction: **David Ball, Chairman, David Ball Group**

Chair: **Clare Wildfire, Director, Mott MacDonald**

Speakers: Charles Egbu, Gavin Killip, Tom Dollard, David Adams

Edge Debate 69: 27th April 2015, The Danish Embassy, London

Using cycling to build a more liveable city

Host: **Claus Grube, His Excellency the Danish Ambassador in London**

Chair: **Carl Pittam, England Director, Sustrans**

Speakers: Sir Andy Haines, Riccardo Marini, Klaus Bondam

Edge Debate 70 – 10th November 2015, The Design Council, London

Does built environment policy work? And how should professionals engage?

Chair: **Simon Rawlinson, Head of Strategic Research and Insight at Arcadis UK, member of the Construction Leadership Council**

Speakers: Richard Simmons, Kathryn Janda, John Alker, Fionn Stevenson, David Waterhouse, Ian Cooper, Simon Foxell

3. Edge Research

The Edge believes that the industry needs to achieve better linkages between the academic, policy-making and practice communities to ensure that developing knowledge is shared and disseminated more effectively and rapidly, that research can be focused on critical areas of concern, that lessons learnt are not forgotten and research efforts are not unnecessarily duplicated. As a result many of our recent debates have been research focused and we continue to work closely with the peer-reviewed journal Building Research and Information.

In February 2015 the Edge arranged a round table discussion between representatives of 8 of the major professional institutions with the outcome that the C8 inter-professional group was tasked with proposing a way forward in response to the Edge's challenge. A follow up round table was held on the 2nd December 2015.

The issue of research dissemination was aired at an Edge organised event at Ecobuild in March 2015, entitled, **Ideas that construction needs - why are they gathering dust on a shelf?**, with speakers including: Robin Nicholson and Tadj Oreszczyzyn of the Edge, Stephen Hodder, President of the RIBA and Dr Jason Green of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

In response to its own challenge the Edge has been developing a proposal, latterly in collaboration with CIBSE, for enabling research findings to be better disseminated into practice through a regularly published Research Digest. A business plan and dummy of the digest was discussed at the December round table and is out to consultation with the institutions.

4. Consultations

The Edge has responded to a number of consultations over the past year. These include:

- The Place Alliance discussion paper - August 2014
- Improving the Display Energy Certificates regime for public buildings, March 2015
- The Select Committee on the National Policy for the Built Environment, October 2015



In consequence the Edge was asked to present to the Big Meet 2 of the emergent Place Alliance (October 2014) and has given evidence in person to the Select Committee for the Built Environment (December 2015). Both the presentations can be accessed via the Edge website.

The Edge has confirmed its support for The Place Alliance.

5. Engagement

The Edge has also engaged with others in developing ideas for the industry. These include:

- With Building magazine in the development of its Agenda 15 campaign
- With the CIC Green Panel in its response to John Ashton's Challenge to produce 10 game-changing ideas.

6. Thinking

The Edge is a thinking organisation and provides 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 sounding board for the industry only used to dialogue within its own segment.

In the last year in addition to the institutions and other bodies named above the Edge has met with:

- The Aldersgate Group
- BIM2050 group
- The Building Centre
- Building Magazine
- Building Research & Information Journal
- The Danish Embassy
- Design Council CABE
- Ecobuild
- The Centre for Energy Epidemiology
- Foresight, Government Office for Science
- The Government's Chief Construction Adviser
- The Greater London Authority Planning Committee
- The Green Alliance
- The Green Construction Board
- House of Commons Energy Climate Change Committee
- London South Bank University
- MADE, design:west midlands
- The RSA
- University of Reading
- Urban Land Institute

The year ahead

The Edge will be spending much of the first part of 2016 taking the discussion that has followed the publication of Collaboration for Change around the core cities of the UK and possibly overseas. Events are already booked as follows and more will be fitted in wherever possible:

- University of West of England & Arup, Bristol
- Heriot-Watt University and University of Edinburgh
- CIC North East with 2 Universities in Newcastle
- Reading University
- Regeneration Skills Collective Wales (RSAW, ICE, RICS, RTPI Cymru, LI Wales, CIOH Cymru) at Arup Cardiff

The series of meetings will culminate in a year-on meeting of the consultee Institutions in May 2016 to review the findings and discuss progress on the reports six areas for collaborative action.

The Edge is collaborating in arranging an event at Ecobuild 2016 to address the issue of the performance gap to be chaired by Paul Morrell and involving the panel of the Edge Commission on the future of professionalism. The Edge will be addressing the performance gap directly with its partner organisations.

The Edge will continue its work on the proposal for a cross-industry research digest, 'Built Environment Tomorrow', as requested by the combined group of institutions at the round table event on the 2nd December 2015.

A series of Edge Debates for 2016 is in preparation on a range of topics, potentially including: Decentralisation, Natural capital, The burning research questions, Exporting professionalism?, Permitted development and Air quality

The Edge will also continue its dialogue with the construction industry institutions and organisations not least by involving them in the next Edge Commission, which will tackle the issue of education for a changing industry. Watch this space!

Edge Support & Funding

The Edge currently runs without external funding and is dependent on the goodwill and contributions of its members, their employers and its partner organisations (the RIBA, ICE, CIBSE, RICS, IStructE, CIOB, SocEnv, CIC, The Building Centre and UCL Energy Institute). In the recent past the Edge has been generously funded by The Ove 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 have generously hosted the monthly committee meetings. In 2014-15 these have been held at: 5th Studio, Arup, Atkins, Buro Happold, Cullinan Studio, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCBS), Hoare Lea, Lend Lease, London South Bank University, Penoyre & Prasad Pell Frischman, Ramboll, sustainableBYdesign and UCL Energy Institute.

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 support for the year 2015-16 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 contact@edgedebate.com if you are interesting in discussing this further.

the Edge, December 2015

www.edgedebate.com