

Beatrice Fraenkel
Chair, ARB
Architects Registration Board
8 Weymouth Street
London W1W 5BU

11th December 2012

Dear Beatrice,

The RIBA very much welcomes the co-operative and constructive working relationship that has developed between the ARB and the RIBA over recent years. This is currently demonstrated by our working closely together on the proposed changes to the EU Professional Qualifications Directive with the UK Government and ACE.

However, the RIBA is becoming increasingly concerned about the ARB's extension of its activities into member and practice support services, which are well beyond the statutory remit prescribed for the ARB by the Architects' Registration Act 1997. Under the Act the ARB's function is to keep and make publicly available a register of suitable qualified architects and to control the use of the title "architect"; it is not to promote the use of architects by clients. The RIAS, the RSUA and the RSAW share these concerns, as you will know from your recent correspondence with the RIAS.

We support increasing the public awareness of architects' registration and the protection of the title "architect" in the UK and we will continue to support the ARB in achieving this. But it is not appropriate, or we believe lawful, for the ARB to encourage architects to use "ARB" as a professional qualification affix, to develop the register into an on-line directory which you are encouraging registrants to use as a marketing tool, or to attend consumer shows to promote the business of registrants.

The recent ARB ebulletin gave us serious concern in the way the ARB now refers to registrants as "members", and talks about "flying the flag for architects". The ARB is not a membership organisation and therefore does not have "members".

Not only is all of this outside of the ARB's statutory remit, it also significantly undermines and overlaps with the role of the professional bodies such as the RIBA, RIAS, RSUA and RSAW. This is placing the ARB into direct competition with the professional bodies, which is putting in jeopardy our co-operative and sensible working relationship. I am sure that this is not the ARB's Board intent.

These extraneous activities are detrimental to the ARB as they must be detracting the ARB from its key duty of protecting the use of the title "architect" by persons not registered to use it. This is the most appropriate way for the ARB to support the profession. However, we are increasingly aware of criticism of the ARB not fulfilling this duty in a meaningful way. We steadfastly encourage and support the ARB in focusing on its rightful function to protect the use of the title "architect".

The RIBA Board asks that the ARB consider the contents of this letter and provide the RIBA with written assurance that it will discontinue all activities which are not within its statutory objectives.

Stephen Hodder and Richard Brindley are looking forward to meeting you and Alison Carr on the 18th December, in Liverpool, to discuss these issues in more detail, before you respond formally to this letter.

I look forward to hearing from you and to us continuing our efforts to build a close and meaningful relationship between the RIBA, RIAS, RSUA and RSAW.

Yours sincerely,



Angela Brady
RIBA President
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Copy: Alison Carr, ARB Registrar and Chief Executive