

RIBA-USA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

April 30, 2009

San Francisco, California

1. Opening remarks by Derek Bradford, President

(a) Derek welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance.

(b) He reported that we are the largest international region. The U.S. region is now incorporated as a Pennsylvania not for profit corporation with 501(c)(3) (tax exempt) status granted by the IRS.

(c) He emphasized the need to have member outreach to better inform RIBA members in the U.S. of our events and programs. He noted that we are trying to create an up-to-date email address list and that Niall Saunders has done this for all members west of the Mississippi and the same needs to be done for the area east of the Mississippi. We presently have to our knowledge more than 400 RIBA members in the U.S. He spoke on the need to utilize the 501(c)(3) status which allows sponsors to deduct their donations and sponsorship contributions as charitable contributions. The organization has also opened a bank account in the name of the corporation with Philadelphia and Los Angeles accounts. This meeting is to bring members up to date and to discuss the relationship with RIBA including the ongoing work on reciprocity which he hopes will one day be re-established.

2. Address by Sunand Prasad

(a) Sunand gave a brief historical overview of RIBA and asked us all to consider what the role of the RIBA is now on its 175th anniversary.

(b) In 1958 at an Oxford conference architecture was made an academic subject. In his opinion, architects lost ground because the profession became caught up in academia. Architecture should be an attitude of mind not so much just design, but doing what serves your client and understanding how design works.

RIBA needs to do more than just validating schools. For example, it needs to share its wealth. The library is an immense resource. Thirty-five of the collection of Palladio prints (RIBA has the largest collection in the world) will be coming to the U.S. in the future as a traveling show. There is a photography collection containing photographs since the birth of photography. The library has one of the finest collections of drawings, photos and documents and is willing and ready to share these under the right conditions. It is up to us to explore and exploit any connections and/or liaisons with major art institutions. This would be good PR for RIBA-USA.

Schools are crippling students who can think and imagine but not deliver. He encouraged architects to take the lead on “design build” being in a better condition than the financial community to deliver on quality, etc. Architects can’t afford to not be informed. Projects are being driven by finance not sustainability.

(c) He's only had two years to bring his ideas forward. We knew the recession was starting and the building boom ending. In the last five years, RIBA has retaken a position at the government table. This includes promoting the duty of all public authorities to practice good design and planning, and strategies for climate change including a climate change bill.

The U.S. may start to lead on climate change. There has been a big change at the AIA and in Germany and Australia. England and the RIBA are losing ground. The meeting at Copenhagen in December will be a big moment and the Obama administration is gearing up for that meeting.

A flagship program was proposed by the government asking for \$3 billion for upgrading existing stock. It would be a good return on capital. The bill didn't get passed but may in the future. He noted that by upgrading public property the government is "priming the pump" for the private sector.

(d) Knowledge communities are being set up by RIBA to incorporate knowledge that is not in the institution but is multidisciplinary. We need to get away from the silos and separation of institutions. The web allows us to quickly form communities and attract younger people. We should put more pressure on RIBA sharing its wealth which we all own and should be able to see (talking about the library).

(e) It is not sustainable that regions do not get some of their dues back. This should be our right. This will energize people to participate. There is an issue as to what is the right size of governance that will engage the individual. He recommends that we get tough with RIBA about receiving RIBA funds for example, for staffing and website maintenance.

In the attempt to reverse over-centralization he encourages the formation of and continuation of the international chapter/regions. Funding requests should be consistent and compelling.

James Fischer – James noted that this has already been raised by him at the council meeting and he will continue to push this idea forward.

Sunand Prasad – We should be pressing this issue together with the other international chapters.

James Fischer – We need to grow local chapters and address the RIBA Trusts. He had an opportunity to see the library by appointment and saw photos of New York that do not even exist in New York. We are nominally a region but not treated the same way as other regions.

Sunand Prasad – Other regions do receive support for staffing although not direct transfers of money. In addition, we can ask for marketing, fundraising and assistance in organizing the database.

Niall Saunders – Message should go back to London that we are a tremendous resource, we do joint programs with the AIA and have developed a great relationship. We have also developed ways to disseminate knowledge.

Sunand Prasad – While cuts at Portland Place make it difficult to contemplate receiving funding our message should be that they need to build for the future.

3. Chloe Sadler Presentation on International Programs

(a) Chloe commended RIBA-USA on being the most active group. In addition to RIBA- USA there are three other chapters/regions in the process of formation: Hong Kong, Singapore and the Gulf. Each will be invited to nominate an “ambassador” to lead. Models may be based on the RIBA-USA structure but legal status will vary depending on the country. Some uniformity would be desirable for branding, websites, etc.

All are challenged by the funding issue. The new chapters are being developed at a different pace.

(b) The Gulf will launch this fall. They are organizing programs for CPD, setting standards for Design excellence, organizing student programs, and recognizing non-RIBA architects.

(c) Singapore was launched last November. They are working on becoming a society (legal entity). They need to work more on coordinating with the local Singapore Institute of Architecture.

(d) Hong Kong has an ambassador and a “steering committee” but is still organizing. There are 700 RIBA members in Hong Kong and 60 on the mainland. They haven’t gotten enough feedback yet from locals.

(e) The individual chapters/regions can help fulfill CPD requirements, provide lectures and organize competitions as well provide links to knowledge communities.

Sunand Prasad – Richard Hastilow is close to retirement and will be RIBA’s traveling representative for the next 11 months. We should be prepared to host him. Chloe will update us on his schedule.

James Fischer – Cityscape is going to be in New York in the fall. This would be a good time for Mr. Hastilow to come to New York.

Phil Allsop – We have a monumental problem in U.S. cities right now. We have an opportunity with this administration which is providing money for renewal and infrastructure. We need to be back at the table.

4. Nominations for President of RIBA-USA

Derek Bradford – The call for nominations by the end of May will go out (by email and on the website) (Sunand suggested using the RIBA’s bulk email facility: ADESTRA).

Thus far Jonathan Wimpenny has been nominated by the board.

James Fischer – Portland Place can bulk email with attachments. He also suggested that it would be better to list the U.S. members by state. Kathy Ditchfield at RIBA said that they would do that.

5. Chapter Reports

(a) Jonathan Wimpenny asked Cynthia to report and ask that members refer to RIBA's website for current events in New York and California. May 13 is the launch date for a major Frank Lloyd Wright exhibit hosted by the Guggenheim in New York.

(b) Niall Saunders reported that negotiations will begin with Chris Gribbs, the AIA convention manager for a reciprocal arrangement between AIA and RIBA-USA to provide booth space for each institute. RIBA-London will need to get involved. More to follow.

(c) A burgeoning new chapter was discussed for the San Francisco area. Cynthia will advise on Bylaws and Board Trusteeship. Web space should be made available in due course.

6. Fundraising

(a) New partners and ideas are needed in addition to lobbying at RIBA's door. A call was put out for suggestions and help in getting this going. Government grants may also be available. Volunteers are needed to follow up on this. Because of the 501(c)(3) we can offer deductions to sponsors. David Nixon was in London to see the Palladio exhibit which was packed. He supported a mini-traveling exhibit touring the U.S. Sunand Prasad reported that they are still organizing but will probably be coming to the Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh and the Morgan Library in New York. Now is the time to ask for other locations. Derek Bradford noted that the question will be insurance and packing and therefore we need to see if we can find institutions who will cover these costs. Sunand Prasad recommended we get someone from RIBA-USA to be the liaison in this effort. RIBA is probably willing but we need to find the hosts.

Phil Allsop – noted that venues that are institutions with ticket prices are willing to pay the costs normally.

James Fischer – we should be strategic about where to bring the exhibit to drive membership. Also, since RIBA has subsidiary companies such as the Trust and Enterprises we should have a liaison person for each. This would be another way to drive membership.

7. Discussion

(a) David Nixon announced that there is a new organization that would like to have a relationship with RIBA-USA: The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). There is a Space Architecture Technical Committee which is a fast growing technical committee. He would like to establish a link to our website and start a liaison role to see what more can be done. The website for the Space Architecture technical committee is www.spacearchitect.org.

Sunand Prasad – this is a perfect example of a knowledge community and in this case for example RIBA-USA could host this knowledge community. Ideally in the future when someone goes to www.architecture.com they should see all of the knowledge communities.

(b) The topic of reciprocity was again raised. There is no new progress following the ARE/NCARB discussion. The Transatlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) offers a possible way forward over a seven year plan of action. This also applies to other professions. At the present, the best way for RIBA members to gain a U.S./state license is to undertake the full panel of the ARE. The difficulty lies in the heavy cost and having one's transcripts recognized. UK universities should seek accreditation in the U.S. James Fischer has been pushing for this.

NCARB has no power, is just a clearing house. The second problem is that in the U.S. there is no single entity that can act on behalf of the 50 states each of whom have their licensing requirements. Sunand Prasad noted RIBA is not in the negotiations as it is not a licensing entity. Further the EU complicates things as the requirements are different in each of the EU countries. Bottom line, it is unlikely that anything useful will be accomplished for a number of years.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned for a catered social reception followed by a presentation by Steven Ehrlich at 5:30 pm. Both were very successful and enjoyed by all present.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Fischer
Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: I HAVE UNDERLINED ACTIONS WHICH NEED VOLUNTEERS.
PLEASE CONTACT ANY BOARD MEMBER IF YOU ARE WILLING TO HELP. PLEASE
FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME FOR EMAIL ADDRESSES,
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