

# AIA UK

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AIA/UK investigates

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Number 3

September 1994

## Another Fizzle?

"Jobs outlook 'best for five years' reports the Sunday Telegraph, while Construction News recently said "Back to the boom days by 1999".

But is this really happening for Architects? We surveyed several of our members to see if their firms had witnessed any such upturn in business.

Despite Mr. Major's assurances that the economy has recovered, the consensus was guarded optimism, at best. The fact is

most members still aren't putting in longer hours, and only a few firms have increased their staffs.

Caroline Cole of Arup Associates says that her firm continues to receive calls from potential clients, but now the "new work is of a more interesting nature." She added, "to call it an increase [in business] is a bit premature."

She suggests that the market might more accurately be described as clients "contemplating doing interesting work again."

A spokesman for Pantheon Partnership noticed better prospects for new work in the last four to six months than during the last two years. Established clients are resuming work on jobs halted during the slump, but the firm has not seen new clientele generated by the recovery. Small firms like Smith, Lance, Larcade & Bechtol, report the same experience.

Likewise, Hellmuth Obata and Kassabaum noticed that clients are dusting off projects and taking another look at them. Paul Purvis, Director of Marketing, feels more upbeat about the economic climate than he did a year ago, based on statistics reporting new architectural work orders. HOK's

workload is as heavy off-shore as in the UK, which has led the firm to hire five new architects in the last three months.

Peter Tao of Kohn Pedersen Fox says "there is definitely more activity." KPF is receiving more proposals for specific projects, and there are more users exploring future work. "But are they jobs?" he asks. "No. I'm very cautious."

Scott Gentilucci of Studios noticed an upturn in business over the last six months, "but I don't know how long it will last." He likewise sees old client faces with new work. His firm serves "quarterly-driven businesses" whose strategies for facilities

management can be rethought quickly.

"The new work is different," he says "because the length of the leases has been reduced. Clients want flexible short-term facilities, and are reluctant to commit to more than five years."

But opinion may soon swing back to pessimism, according to Amy Chamier of RIBA's research department. Statistics in the final issue of *Architect's Journal* will show that the recovery in job orders is faltering, she said. "The half percent increase in interest rates is not going to help large projects," she concluded.

## Non-USA Architects Given Dues Equity

The national organisation of the AIA will cut the dues nearly in half for International Associates (registered architects who are licensed outside of the US).

On 2 August, AIA national announced that dues for foreign-registered architects

who practice and reside in the jurisdiction of a chartered AIA chapter will be reduced from \$309 to \$165 (£100). This is the same price that US architects pay to belong to AIA.

The announcement culminates the efforts of the London/UK chapter to equalise costs and benefits. Last May, Stephan C. Reinke, London/UK Chapter President, introduced a resolution at the National Convention which called for a review of international membership.

"This policy is a very positive step by the Institute toward an International Profession and recognition of the Global Marketplace," said Reinke. "In

fact the AIA has taken the lead in International Membership and in collaboration with other organisations around the world."

The AIA London/UK chapter now has more than a dozen members who qualify for the new dues structure. "We would encourage members of RIBA, RIAS and other Royal Societies to take advantage of this new policy," said Reinke.

### Problems with AIA Online

So you took the advice from the last issue of this newsletter and sent off for your free copy of *AIA Online*, "the information and communications network for the building industry," according to User's Manual Version 1.0.

The index of services is impressive. But installing the database is another matter. So far as this writer can determine by quickly calling member firms, only one computer in London has been half-way successful in using the service.

The main problem developed because *AIA Online* receives at no greater than a 9.6 baud rate (the modem speed), whereas many newer modems operate at the higher 14.4 rate.

Access seems to be restricted to SprintNet, which does have an 071 London telephone number.

SprintNet and *AIA Online* both have technical assistance helplines, the latter more responsive than the former. Or call PC Computer Problems, 071-371-0201.

### Continuing Education Credits to be required

AIA members will have two years to complete the required continuing education units (CEUs) in order to maintain their membership as of January 1995.

The AIA Continuing Education System will organise and accredit programs which are graded according to three Quality Levels. Level One courses must have a professional purpose and offer appropriate learning resources. (The Ben Barrett Brick seminar for example).

Level Two courses include level one criteria plus a requirement for interactive learning, and Level Three incorporates the lower levels and also must be based upon the actual needs of the participants.

The amount of credit earned is determined by multiplying the number of hours spent in "directed learning activity" by the quality level.

The course provider handles the paperwork. The London/UK chapter is trying to become registered as a recognised provider.

## NEWS

### AI Architect replaces MEMO

In a few weeks chapter members will receive the first issue of *AI Architect*, a 24-page monthly newspaper that replaces the AIA's regular newsletter.

The newspaper will be printed on tabloid-size newsprint, and will bring twice as much information as MEMO could cover.

The new format was chosen to make people more aware of the

news value of AIA activities. "A newspaper also creates a sense of community," according to Doug Gordon, Executive Editor.

*AI Architect* will focus on people rather than buildings, which will be covered by *Architecture* magazine.

The new publication absorbs not only MEMO, but also all of the PIA newsletters. Each practice interest area will have a news section. Other regular sections will report on the AIA Foundation, affiliate news, government affairs and executive board actions.

### Design with Brick

Robert Baldwin, Technical Director for Ben Barrett & Son (Brickwork) Ltd. and Stuart Bell DipArch RIBA, Technical Director for Marshalls Clay Products Ltd. will give an illustrated technical lecture about brickwork in construction.

The talk will be held 18 October at 74 St. James Street, London from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.

Topics include a review of modern applications and the possible uses of reinforced brickwork. The speakers will

discuss how to look for a specialist brickwork contractor, how to control quality, what not to write into a brickwork specification. Participants will be encouraged to raise questions and join in the discussions.

The evening qualifies for level 1 continuing education credits if AIA attendees complete registration forms available at the seminar.

Admission, wine and hors d'oeuvres are free. Please contact Stephan Reinke at 081-748-8088 (fax: 081-748-3475) if you plan to attend.

## NEWS

### Design Charette at US Embassy

On Saturday, 5 November 1994, AIA/UK will sponsor a day-long ideas competition for the redesign of the US Embassy to be held at the Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London.

AIA/UK invites all interested architects, other professionals, students, and interested members of the public to participate.

In 1955 Eero Saarinen won the competition to design the new American Embassy in London and ever since the building was

completed in 1960 it has been a controversial landmark.

AIA/UK has decided the time is ripe to consider what the best outward expression of America on British soil should be, in this the first year of its London chapter's founding.

Participants are invited to work either individually or in teams and will be encouraged to create practical or fantasy alternatives to the existing building.

The fee for the event will be £5 for students and £10 for others. Student participants will receive one year's membership to the AIA London/UK chapter.

Teams will be lead by the following architects from leading firms: Pierre Baillargeon, HOK; Peter Ellis AIA RIBA, Skidmore Owings & Merrill; Lee Poliso AIA RIBA, Kohn Pederson Fox; David Walker AIA RIBA, Swanke Hayden Connell and Yann Weymouth AIA, Arup & Associates.

Judging will take place at 5 pm the same day. Admiral William Crowe, US Ambassador is the honorary chairman of the jury whose members include; Nicholas Baskey, Minister Counsellor Admin. Affairs, US Embassy, Patrick Collins AIA, Chief Architect, Office of Foreign Building Operations, US State

Dept. Paul Finch, Editor, The Architect's Journal, Robin Nicholson, Vice President, RIBA, Sydney Sporle, Dir. of Planning & Environment, Westminster City Council and Daniel Smith AIA RIBA, Vice President, AIA London/UK.

All registration forms must be received by 21 October as Embassy security will only admit people whose names appear on their list. Doors will open at 9.30am and judging will commence at 5 pm ending at about 6.30 pm. Drinks and sandwiches will be provided. Contact Dan Smith for registration details. Tel: 071-488-3340, Fax 071-4898 0140.

## Asian Markets to be explored at Conference

Marketing and architectural practice in Southeast Asia will be the focus of an AIA conference on 5-11 November in Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China.

Convening in Hong Kong for the first three days, the program will give a general introduction to the region's economic development patterns and resulting markets for architectural services. Case

studies will be presented of various building types at differing scales.

The last two days, held in Shenzhen, the People's Republic of China, will cover markets and practice in China. The program aims to give an understanding of how architectural projects are undertaken and completed in the PRC. Site visits to completed and developing projects are scheduled.

For further information, contact Stephan Reinke at 081-748-3475.

## Have you tried...?

One of the best-kept secrets and least-used resources for business development is the World Aid Section (WAS) of the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

WAS is part of the Projects and Export Policy Division (PEP) of the DTI, and acts as a central source of information about projects funded by multilateral development agencies.

WAS offers its services to all bona-fide British companies, including suppliers of services,

contractors and consultants. WAS has information on projects financed by the World Bank Group, Inter-American, Asian and African Development banks, and numerous other agencies and funds.

For further information contact Liz McSheely on 071-215-6520.

## NEWS

## AMERICAN AND BRITISH PLANNING CONTROLS TO BE DEBATED

Planning control in the USA has always differed markedly from British practice. A seminar sponsored by the American Institute of Architects London/UK chapter will compare the two systems and address the issue of where planning control is heading.

The seminar is entitled "American & British Planning: Zoning vs. Discretionary Control". Debating the issue

will be a panel consisting of Gordon Chard, Director - Development Division, City of Westminster, Denzil Millichap, planning lawyer with Linklaters & Paines and Peter Rees, City Planning Officer with the Corporation of London. Roger Kallman Assoc. AIA, planning partner, Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM), will be the moderator.

The panel will debate the merits and deficiencies of the two systems and field questions and comments from the floor. The US has traditionally favoured the owner's right (as exercised by his architects' design) to develop his property as he

wished, within the stipulated zoning formulas. However development "as of right" is increasingly being challenged by the emergence of design review boards and other forms of control.

Are American and British systems heading in a similar direction?

The UK has seen planning authorities increasingly abandon plot ratio and other rules-based methods of planning control, preferring to evaluate the appropriateness of development within its given context.

What are the merits of this system, and how can its abuse be prevented?

The seminar will take place Wednesday, 16 November at 6.30pm in the auditorium at Victoria Plaza, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1.

Coffee will be served from 6pm. The event is open to all interested individuals, but for security reasons registration is required. There is a charge of £5.50 (£2.00 for students) which can be paid by posting your cheque to:

AIA London/UK 2 Harker Street, London SW3 2LG Telephone: 071-589 1387. AIA members can earn continuing education credits at Level 2 if they complete the registration forms and return them to the Chapter officer.

## PEOPLE

## Spirit of Abercrombie Returns

The RIBA-London Region and the RTPI, London Branch are holding the fourth annual planning and design conference at the RIBA on Thursday, 17 November. Entitled "The Spirit of Abercrombie", the conference commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the 1944 London Plan, produced by Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Hon FAIA, and will aim to project the wisdom of 1994 forward to 2044.

The opening address will be delivered by John Gummer, UK Secretary of State for the Environment. Professor Sir Peter Shephard, Hon FAIA, RTPI, PPILA, PPRIBA, Dean Emeritus of the School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, will give the keynote address. He was one of the original members of the Abercrombie design team.

Other speakers include Professor Peter Hall of the Bartlett School of Architecture, formerly Professor Planning at the University of California, and Cedric Price of the Architectural Association.

The conference will cost £35. Brochures, registration forms and further information are available from Meta van der Steege, tel. 071-580-5533.

## Last Issue's Contest Answer

Congratulations to those of you who correctly identified last month's building.

Raymond Hood designed Ideal House, also known as the American Radiator Building, with Canadian Architect Gordon Jeeves as the London sequel to his famous American Radiator Building in Mid-town, New York.

Space limitations have curtailed this month's contest, but be assured. it will return...

## EVENTS

**October 15:** Registration deadline for Embassy Redesign charette.

**October 18:** Design with Brick Seminar.

**November 5-11:** International Markets & Practices Conference, Hong Kong and China.

**November 15:** AIA London/UK Annual Design Awards, call for entries.

**November 16:** American & British Planning Control Systems: Prescription vs. Discretion. Seminar sponsored by London/UK chapter at 6:30.

**November 17:** RTPI Planning Seminar.

**December 7:** AIA London/UK Winter Party and Benefit.

**February 1:** AIA London/UK Annual Design Awards, deadline for submission.

**February 23:** AIA London/UK Annual General Meeting and Awards Presentation.

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## Committees

**Public Policies:** Roger Kallman, Chair, 071-930-9108.

**Membership/Professional Services:** Tom Giannini, Chair, 071-221-9296.

**Communications/Publications:** David Walker, Chair, 071-374-4371.

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## AIAUK

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The newsletter of the London/UK Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

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*AIAUK*, would like to hear from you. Please send comments, suggestions, and opinions to:

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London SW10 9HT

## MEMBERSHIP

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Membership in the London/UK chapter of the AIA is over 70 architects. There continues to be considerable interest in membership, and in order to accommodate as many individuals as possible, we have established the following membership categories:

**Architect:** Individual licensed to practice architecture in the US.

**Associate Member:** Individual holding a professional degree in architecture without an architectural licence in the US, working under the supervision of a US-licensed architect.

**Professional Affiliate:** Individual representing an allied profession.

**International Associate:** Individual holder of architectural licence or equivalent from a non-US licensing authority.

**Student Affiliate:** Student pursuing a degree in architecture or urban design.

Please send me more information on membership in the London/UK chapter of the AIA.

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Mailing address

Town

Post code

Daytime telephone number

send to:

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