

Reflect Critically and Act Fearlessly: A Survey of Ethical Codes, Guidance and Access in Built Environment Practice

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In uncertain national and global times, built environment professionals may consider ethics a luxury, something to get around to when they have more experience or stability or freedom to choose what to take on and what to stand up for. Existing reviews of professional ethics assure the opposite is true. Tom Fisher insists it is in these moments that we must overturn unsustainable assumptions to redefine what is essential.¹ The Edge Commission argues this requires a collective response.² However, such studies question how professional conduct and practice can be modified to acknowledge this duty beyond the client when architecture bodies have faced stringent and sustained criticism for failing to define the specific ethical challenges raised by the profession and for failing to set high standards to meet them.

This paper contributes to these urgent debates by setting out for the first time a comprehensive study of the ethical dimensions of the built environment professions. Its constructive critique is principally oriented to professional bodies for architecture, examining the codes of conduct and practical guidance of the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA) against sixty-four other UK and international built environment professions ranging across construction, design, energy, engineering, heritage, planning, project management, surveying, sustainability and transport.

The paper asks how specific ethical dilemmas raised by built environment practice can be navigated with confidence and clarity. This gives rise to three aims and arguments. Through a systematic review of professional bodies, it aims to identify distinct ethical dimensions of built environment practice; expose commonalities and divergencies in ethical principles and resources; and provide constructive recommendations based on proven examples to help professionals practice ethical reasoning as it applies to their work.

Through this survey it argues that, perhaps more than other professions, the process of conceiving, making, using and transforming the built environment is aligned to ecological, social and material conditions. Practitioners need to be aware of increasing resource scarcity, inequality, and power imbalances as they 'can hardly dissociate the success of their work from the solution they bring to those problems'.³ Built environment practice therefore demands an ethical standpoint. There is no point where practitioners can absent themselves from it. But the decisions they take will always have a cost personally, professionally or publicly. Built environment bodies consequently have a vital role to play in supporting practitioners to approach and act on these knotty dilemmas from an informed and empowered position.

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The paper is structured in five sections. The first section provides a contextual introduction to codes, guidance and access which emerged as key matters to address. The following three sections examine each matter in turn, bringing ethical resources of sixty-six UK and international professional bodies in dialogue with specialist literature and new essays from established and emerging professionals. The final section sets out key findings and recommendations from the research, demonstrating successful means to set ethical standards, provide ethical guidance, and promote ethical awareness. These have been shared with ARB and RIBA as they undertake widespread reappraisals urging them to take an active role to empower built environment practitioners to reflect critically and act fearlessly.⁴

1 Contextual introduction

This paper was conceived and commissioned as part of the Ethics Commission led by Professor Jane Rendell at the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL.⁵ In line with much contemporary research into applied ethics, this long-term work highlights the importance of ethics as a practice, in this instance by examining codes, guidance and access.⁶

The ethical contours of built environment professional bodies present an uneven terrain. Ethical values feature in institutions' charters, statutes and codes of conduct. Standards of integrity, objectivity, competence and confidentiality are common features across codes of conduct, but others promote principles of individual responsibility and collective aspiration on key ecological, social and built environment issues facing the profession.

Overarching principles are only the starting point for conducting an ethical practice as it is through the specific that ethical judgments come to be made. Practising ethics in the daily life of a professional involves seeing how well those codes work in action and what issues can and cannot be resolved by following them. Ethical values are therefore also present in guidance documents as it is through self-evaluation and worked lived examples that practitioners can develop skills to make ethical judgement.

Ethics, like architecture, is a practical subject and its exercise is in debate. Some organisations discuss ethical issues openly and share information publicly, crucial to the profession's constant need to evolve and refine an ethical stance. A key aspect of this project has involved discussing these matters of codes, guidance and access in conferences, seminars and workshops. This includes a lecture to Part 3 Professional Practice and Management in Architecture students at the Bartlett School of Architecture, a significant proportion of whom subsequently tackled essays on the role of professional bodies in responding to ethical challenges. They address a range of high-profile cases: from new nuclear power stations and major infrastructure projects to embodied energy and sustainability assessments; from displaced populations and homelessness to migrant construction worker labour conditions and gender discrimination; from authoritarian regimes and human rights to (the predominant issue among these papers) the regeneration of London's social housing estates. Incisive argument from these essays are included, with full permission, alongside specialist literature to convey appraisals of professional bodies from both emerging and established professionals.⁷



Rules of Conduct for Firms
04 June 2007 version 5
With effect from 01 January 2012



rics.org/regulation



Code of Professional Conduct



APM Code of Professional Conduct

CODE OF ETHICS
2015

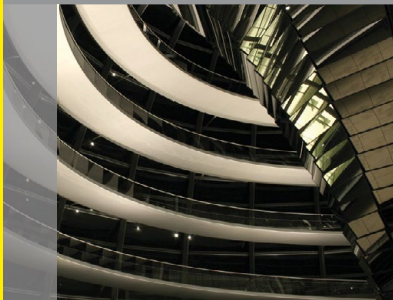


PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY
IN CONSTRUCTION

ENGINEERING COUNCIL
ROYAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING

The Institution of Structural Engineers

Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes



STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES
for the Engineering Profession



www.engc.org.uk/professional-ethics

c b c

CHARTERED BUILDING CONSULTANCY SCHEME
CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND RULES



The Architects Code: Standards of Professional Conduct and Practice



Architects Registration Board



Chartered Building Consultancy
Professionalism and Integrity in Construction

Landscape Institute

THE LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE CODE OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE FOR LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS

May 2012

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Code of Professional Conduct and Rules



Code of Conduct, Guidance and Disciplinary Procedure

IHBC CODE OF CONDUCT

The object of this Code is to promote those standards of conduct and self-discipline required of a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation in the interests of the public and the protection of the built heritage.

The main object of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the promotion, for the benefit of the public, of the conservation of, and education and training in, the conservation and preservation of buildings, structures, areas, gardens and landscapes which are of architectural and historical interest and/or value in the United Kingdom. This built heritage of the United Kingdom, which is part of society's common heritage and which should be available to everyone, is, however, a limited and irreplaceable resource. It is therefore the duty of all members of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation to act for and to promote the protection of this built heritage.

Subscription to this Code of Conduct for individuals involved in the conservation and preservation of the built heritage assumes acceptance of these responsibilities. Those who subscribe to it and carry out its provisions will thereby be identified as persons professing specific standards of competence, responsibility and ethical behavior in the pursuit of historic building conservation work.

This Code therefore indicates the general standard of conduct to which members of the Institute are expected to adhere, failing which its governing body may judge them guilty of conduct unbecoming to a member of the Institute and may reprimand, suspend or expel them. It is established under the terms of Article 7.3 of the Articles of Association of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and all members and affiliates shall subscribe to it. To this end the Council has agreed the following clauses giving more detail of the requirements of the Code, which requirements shall apply notwithstanding any permission or agreement to the contrary by or with any body or client employing or consulting any member.

1. Those engaged in the conservation of historic buildings, areas and landscapes will adhere to the highest standards of ethical and responsible behaviour in the conduct of the conservation of such buildings and sites.
2. Members shall conduct themselves in a manner which will not bring the conservation of the built heritage or the Institute into disrepute.
3. Members shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, creed, religion, disability or age in their professional activities and shall seek to eliminate such discrimination by others and to promote equality of opportunity.
4. Members shall present historic buildings, areas and landscapes and the conservation and preservation thereof, in a responsible manner and shall avoid and discourage exaggerated, misleading or unwarranted statements about conservation matters.
5. Members shall not offer advice, make a public statement or give legal testimony involving the conservation of the built heritage, without being as thoroughly informed on the matters concerned as might reasonably be expected.
6. Members shall take all reasonable steps to maintain their professional competence throughout their working lives and shall comply with the Institute's continuing professional development regulations; as employers and managers, members shall take all reasonable steps to encourage and support other members in maintenance of professional competence and in compliance with the Institute's continuing professional development regulations.



[Fig. 1]

A selection of Codes of Conduct from built environment professional bodies in the UK.

2 Codes

To identify the ethical contours of codes of professional conduct, it is helpful to begin by listing some in full. Since this paper takes UK architectural professional bodies as its focus, it begins with the ARB, a public interest body established by Parliament in 1997 to regulate the architects' profession and ensure 'good standards within the profession are consistently maintained for the benefit of the public and architects alike'.⁸ Those who wish to practice under the title 'architect' must be fully qualified through the accredited architectural education system and formally registered. The ARB states:

As an architect you are expected to:

1. Be honest and act with integrity;
2. Be competent;
3. Promote your services honestly and responsibly;
4. Manage your business competently;
5. Consider the wider impact of your work;
6. Carry out your work faithfully and conscientiously;
7. Be trustworthy and look after your clients' money properly;
8. Have appropriate insurance arrangements;
9. Maintain the reputation of architects;
10. Deal with disputes or complaints appropriately;
11. Co-operate with regulatory requirements and investigations;
12. Have respect for others.⁹

The other important body for the architectural profession is the RIBA, an elective membership professional body established in 1837 'for the general advancement of Civil architecture, and for promoting and facilitating the acquirement of the knowledge of the various arts and sciences connected therewith'.¹⁰ The RIBA lists:

Honesty, integrity and competency, as well as concern for others and for the environment, are the foundations of the Royal Institute's three principles of professional conduct.

Principle 1: Integrity, *Members shall act with honesty and integrity at all times;*

Principle 2: Competence, *In the performance of their work Members shall act competently, conscientiously and responsibly. Members must be able to provide the knowledge, the ability and the financial and technical resources appropriate for their work;*

Principle 3: Relationships, *Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others.*¹¹

Although these two institutions differ in their roles and remits, the codes are remarkably similar. In the *Edge Commission* report on the future of professionalism, Paul Morrell identifies further core values which, almost without exception, feature across built environment professional body codes of conduct:

Integrity: honesty, straight dealing, reliability, safekeeping of client funds;

Objectivity/independence: the avoidance of bias,

conflict of interest or influence over-riding judgement;
 Competence, due diligence and rigour: possession of a defined body of knowledge and level of skill; maintaining the appropriate level of skill; performing services only in areas of current competence; practising with care and in compliance with agreed technical standards;
 Fitness for purpose: ensuring that services actually meet and fulfil needs and expected outcomes;
 Confidentiality: treating matters learned about others in confidence, and publicising only with authority;
 Professional conduct generally: complying with the law and the regulations of the institution, and not bringing the profession into disrepute.¹²

Morrell advises harmonising these standards across the institutions, claiming ‘the value of this exercise would lie not just in the creation of the standard, but also in the enrichment of a shared understanding of ethics that would be the product of the discussion and debate necessary to develop it’.¹³ While the specific challenges in upholding these standards will be different for each profession, an example of harmonisation can be witnessed in the International Ethics Standards (IES), co-signed by the RIBA, a global set of standards ‘for those operating in the land, property, construction, infrastructure and related professions’.¹⁴

Returning to UK architectural bodies once these common principles are set aside, the ARB’s code includes ‘Considering the wider impact of your work’, which further guidance elaborates, ‘Where appropriate, you should advise your client how best to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources’.¹⁵ The RIBA guidance to their third principle, ‘Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others’ reinforces this responsibility, ‘Members should be aware of the environmental impact of their work’ and adds ‘Members should respect the beliefs and opinions of other people, recognise social diversity and treat everyone fairly. They should also have a proper concern and due regard for the effect that their work may have on its users and the local community’.¹⁶

The ARB and RIBA have faced criticism from established practitioners for failing to define and meet the specific ethical challenges raised by architectural practice. Jeremy Till identifies few values or standards of behaviour beyond ‘the short-term protection and the duty of care to the client’ and contractual relationships with other professionals.¹⁷ This ‘self-defining circle’, Till continues, ‘turns its back on something rather important, which is architecture’s outside, all those events, forces and contingencies that are beyond the direct control and definition of the profession... [It is] to do with the consequences rather than the object of architecture’.¹⁸

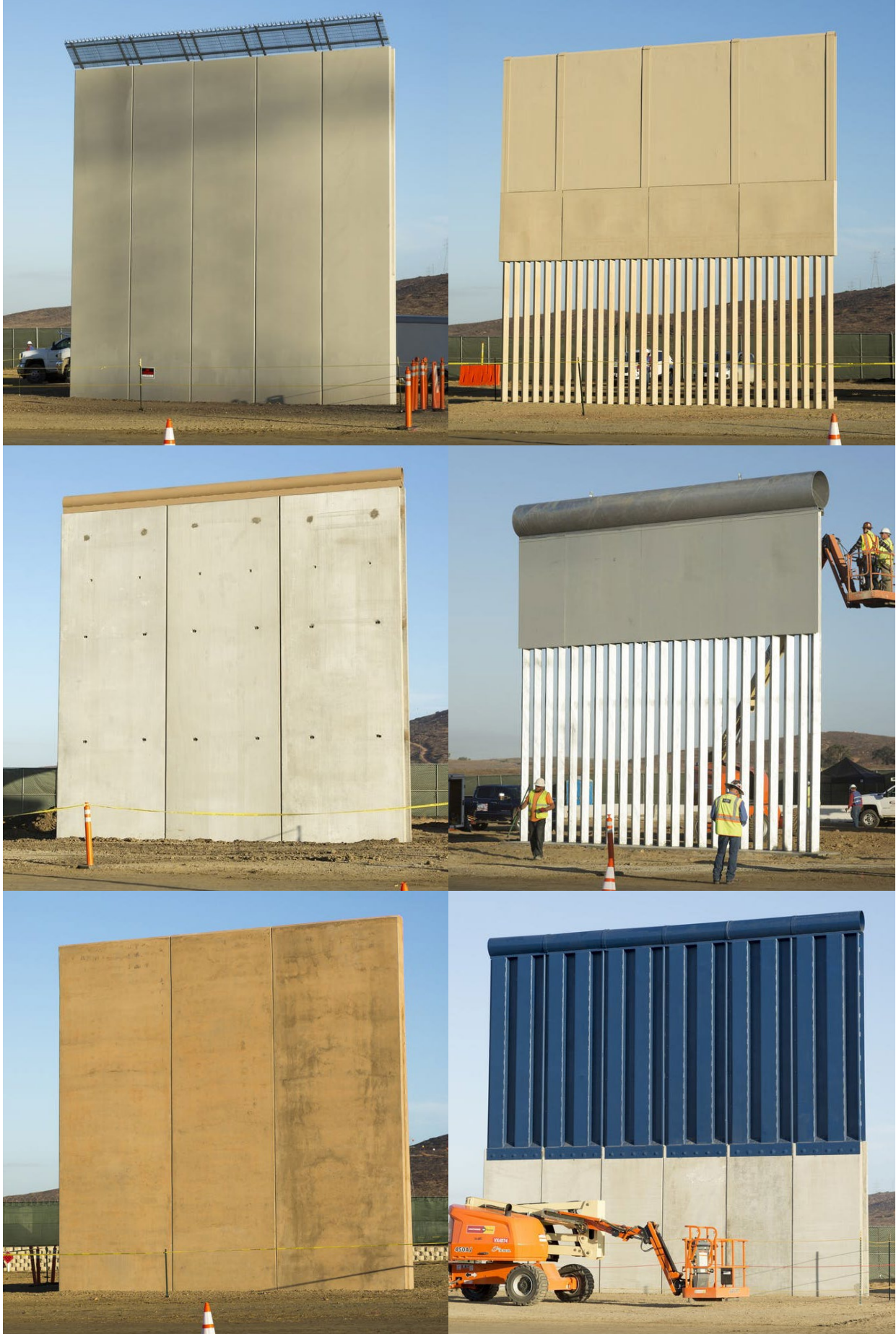
It is these contingencies which Jane Collier refers to when she claims, ‘Architecture is very different from the other arts, because since its function is to create appropriate places and contexts of social life its purpose is by definition ethical’.¹⁹ These codes, Saul Fisher also notes, do not yield ‘a well-rounded moral picture of architectural practice’, they are ‘inappropriately rigid’ and ‘hardly the stuff of moral philosophy that focuses on flexible, individual ethical choice. Further, such codes present the content of moral claims without the benefit of the supporting reasoning’.²⁰

What may prove more surprising and concerning to architectural professional bodies is how critical emerging professionals are of these codes. In her Part 3 essay, Jennifer Pirie states, 'It is clear that the profession acknowledges its role in a wider social and public context, but to what extent is often a cause for debate. The codes of the ARB and the RIBA appear prescriptive in the definition of professional conduct, but vague on the application of a set of moral or ethical principles or a commitment to a wider public'.²¹ This lack of guidance on application is of particular importance in times of national and global uncertainty. To Thomas Trudeau:

The Codes, then, leave the architect in a confusing position. By virtue of architecture's engagement in shaping social environments, and its associated environmental impacts, the profession involves inherently ethical questions; the Codes of Conduct indeed suggests these issues should be considered, but give little guidance as to the manner or extent of that engagement. Until such time as the Codes of Conduct are modified, the architect is left to make their own ethical choices. In this context, the codes provide little support for ethical behaviour in the face of decreasing fees and reduced agency.²²

Shea McGibbon draws attention to the RIBA's mission statement, to 'champion better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and our members', an aspiration she finds absent from the code: 'The role of RIBA and ARB in this sense should be to actively encourage and champion new ways of working other than the architectural office, highlighting other ways of doing things'.²³ On this, Samuel Wigginton concludes with constructive proposal, 'Whilst the *Architects Code* is at least consistent with the ARB's concerns, the *Code of Professional Conduct* must change to reflect the ambitions of RIBA by providing more thoughtful and robust ethical guidelines which would aid an architect in their ethical reasoning... the RIBA ought to lead by example by bringing the *Code of Professional Conduct* more in line with those from other professions and use the best elements of each to inform the publication of new standards'.²⁴

The following subsections take up this suggestion. Surveying the full range of built environment professions reveals five common ethical duties in the codes of conduct of other bodies which set a benchmark for ethical practice: duties to take independent action, to prioritise the public over the client, to care for and enhance our ecological, social and built environments.



[Fig. 2]

Over the last year, architects in the US have debated the ethics of Donald Trump's border wall. Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2017.

2.1 Individual duty to act

The survey of key issues facing the profession begins with the individual duty to act. Emerging professionals are critical of the weak position UK architectural bodies adopt in empowering individual responsibility to take action on ethical issues. The ARB's fifth principle asks members to 'consider the wider impact of your work'.²⁵ To Ruairi Cassidy, the word 'consider' 'goes far to highlight the ambiguity of these outlined professional moral values' which 'relinquishes all jurisdiction and authority such core values should possess'.²⁶ The RIBA does not advance this principle, as Trudeau demonstrates by analysing the third principle:

architects practicing in the UK are to have a "proper concern and due regard for the effect that their work may have on its users and the local community," while at the same time are to be "aware" of the environmental impact of their work. No further clarification of what constitutes "proper concern" or "awareness" is given. Notably, clause 2.5 states the architect is "expected to use their best endeavours to meet the client's agreed time, cost and quality requirements for the project." The differences in the strength of language present between these clauses is such that client's ability to efficaciously service the client via a transactional relationship appears of greater import than any environmental concern.²⁷

Other built environment bodies advocate a much stronger position on the individual's duty to act. On integrity, the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAoE) explains, 'For some, integrity may also mean "standing for something", trying to change practices and attitudes that seem less than ethical; it might mean trying to influence for the better the practices of an employer, the engineering profession, or even society at large'.²⁸ On their principle 'Make a difference', the Chartered Institute of Housing provides further details:

Trusting in your professional judgement and not being afraid to act; Asking questions when you feel something is not right; Fostering independence and empowering others to take control of their lives; Challenging negative stereotypes; Contributing positively to those you are responsible for, your colleagues, your organisation and the community; Be an advocate for the profession; Be prepared to be innovative and encourage change.²⁹

This empowering position is written in the codes of conduct and ethics by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) which implores members to 'exercise fearlessly and impartially their independent professional judgement to the best of their skill and understanding' and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) which urges members to 'Take responsibility: The global professional and ethical standards suggest that if something does not feel right, you need to do something about it, for example, speak up'.³⁰

The difference in conviction and ambition between UK and international architecture bodies can be witnessed in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects' (RAIA) statement preceding its codes, calling for members to:

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commit themselves to the attainment of high standards in architecture, and through its practice to maintain general wellbeing by upholding commonly agreed values of: ethical behaviour; equality of opportunity; social justice; aspiration to excellence, and competent professional performance. They are expected to: serve and advance the public interest through appropriate involvement in civic activities, as citizens and professionals; promote environmental awareness and the appreciation of architecture and urban design; encourage informed public debate on architectural and urban design issues; respect, conserve, and enhance, the natural and cultural environment; encourage and maintain responsible ecologically sustainable and energy efficient design and development, and strive to contribute to the development of architectural knowledge, culture, and education.³¹

Some built environment bodies assert how this empowerment to take action must be accompanied with critical reflection. The IES urges practitioners to 'regularly reflect on the standards for their discipline, and shall continually evaluate the services they provide to ensure that their practice is consistent with evolving ethical principles and professional standards'.³² A reflexivity to issues of knowledge and methods of practice is taken on by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA):

A member shall work towards the development and continuous improvement of the profession by contributing to, and challenging, existing knowledge and professional practice where appropriate, by devising and validating new techniques, by ensuring that others benefit from his/her own experience and knowledge and by using his/her best endeavours to foster a culture of continuous professional development and career progression.³³

2.2 Public duty

Having considered the responsibility of the individual to act, the next issue concerns a duty to the public. The RIBA's principle on competence sets out how:

Members are expected to apply high standards of skill, knowledge and care in all their work. They must also apply their informed and impartial judgment in reaching any decisions, which may require members having to balance differing and sometimes opposing demands (for example, the stakeholders' interests with the community's and the project's capital costs with its overall performance).³⁴

This balance, however, is repeatedly undermined by other sections of the code. The first guideline under 'Conflicts of Interest' states:

Members' personal, private, religious, political or financial interests should not conflict with their duties and obligations to their clients. Should such a conflict arise it should be declared to the client or employer, and, if the conflict is unacceptable or cannot be resolved, the member should withdraw from the engagement or resign from the employment.³⁵

These restrictive parameters to act are repeated in the first guideline under 'Relationships': 'members are expected to place their duty to their clients and/or employers ahead of their personal religious beliefs or political convictions. If a member is faced with a situation which presents them with a personal moral dilemma, they should withdraw from the situation'.³⁶

This question of public duty has received considerable attention from established practitioners. During evidence sessions conducted for the *Edge Commission* report, Morrell observed among contributors a 'widespread unease that the balance has tilted too far towards the interests of members and their clients, and that the professions have a duty to take a more active role in matters of great public interest'.³⁷ This point of view is reinforced by Till's accusation that the ARB code 'gets architects off the hook', with its duties to the client over the public which he claims only to subscribe to 'the value system and phoney ethics of the marketplace'.³⁸

Both the ARB and RIBA positions stand in direct contrast to Lord Benson's criteria for the professions, 'Those rules and standards should be designed for the benefit of the public and not for the private advantage of the members' and are a far cry from Bill Bordass and Adrian Leaman's principle in *Elements of a New Professionalism* 'Do the right thing, beyond your obligation to whoever pays your fee'.³⁹

Other built environment bodies affirm an unequivocal commitment to the public. Before their rules of conduct are listed, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (ICMM) state members 'should always be aware of their overriding responsibility to the public good. A member's obligations to the client can never override this, and members should not enter undertakings which compromise this responsibility'.⁴⁰ If we return to the opening lines of the RIBA code, the duty to the public is, at best, secondary and, at worst, outside of the other principles entirely: 'Honesty, integrity and competency, as well as

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concern for others and for the environment, are the foundations of the Royal Institute's three principles of professional conduct'.⁴¹

Conversely, a prioritisation of the public is clear from the order and orientation of the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*: 'The Code applies to the professional activities of all classes of Members, wherever they occur. It addresses responsibilities to the public, which the profession serves and enriches; to the clients and users of architecture and in the building industries, who help to shape continuum of knowledge and creation which is the heritage and legacy of the profession'.⁴² This is also the case for the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), which affirms a 'special responsibility of our profession to serve the public interest with compassion for the welfare of all people' in its first obligation '1. Our Overall Responsibility to the Public: Our primary obligation is to serve the public interest and we, therefore, owe our allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of the public interest that is formulated through continuous and open debate.' Even their second obligation, '2. Our Responsibility to Our Clients and Employers' is framed in the public interest: 'We owe diligent, creative, and competent performance of the work we do in pursuit of our client or employer's interest. Such performance, however, shall always be consistent with our faithful service to the public interest'.⁴³ On this point, however, Morrell issues caution:

There is something of the Emperor's new clothes in the institutions preaching the public interest when it is not policed by the Privy Council; when that obligation is rarely passed down to individual members in the form of binding regulations; when institutions face a democratic difficulty in establishing a point of view about the major issues facing society (particularly given that, for many of them, there is more than one legitimate point of view); and when it has not been possible to trace any cases of members being expelled from institutions for operating within the law but outside the public interest. It would therefore be genuinely in the public interest if the institutions were to clarify and codify exactly how they understand the term 'the public interest' in pursuit of the obligations of their charters, and produce (as for ethics) a rigorous, harmonised view of their expectation, both on behalf of themselves and of their members. This would include articulating the issues that arise, engaging with the public, raising the profile of public interest with members (as for ethical issues) and giving them practical guidance – specifically as to the extent to which their conduct and practice should be modified to acknowledge a duty that extends beyond the immediate one owed to clients.⁴⁴

These issues of practical guidance and public engagement are tackled in the third and fourth sections of this report. Before this, Morrell's call to define and codify the public interest has already been addressed by some institutions. For example, in terms of a clear definition, the ICE states, "The "public good" includes care and respect for humanity's cultural, historical and archaeological heritage, in addition to the duties specified in the Rules of Professional Conduct to protect the health and well-being of present and future generations and to show due regard for the environment and for

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the sustainable management of natural resources'.⁴⁵ Further to this, the RTPI states:

Members can fulfil their 'public interest' duty by having regard to: Long term consequences of the planning proposal or issue in question and their professional involvement; Inter-related and cumulative effect of decisions; Use of accurate and relevant technical information; Views of stakeholders and public agencies and representations made by local residents and businesses; Protection of natural and historic environments or any features of special interest; Public amenity, safety, design and accessibility. As is often the case there will be tensions between these issues, however as a professional planner you are responsible for reconciling these in a way which best serves the achievement of sustainable development.⁴⁶

In terms of a codified mechanism to integrate this duty to the public, the AICP makes a clear distinction between principles and rules in the first two sections of their code:

Section A contains a statement of aspirational principles that constitute the ideals to which we are committed. We shall strive to act in accordance with our stated principles. However, an allegation that we failed to achieve our aspirational principles cannot be the subject of a misconduct charge or be a cause for disciplinary action.

Section B contains rules of conduct to which we are held accountable. If we violate any of these rules, we can be the object of a charge of misconduct and shall have the responsibility of responding to and cooperating with the investigation and enforcement procedures.⁴⁷



[Fig. 3]

Before her untimely death, Zaha Hadid was interviewed by Radio 4 and interrogated over the working conditions of construction workers in the Middle East, in particular Qatar leading up to the construction of facilities for the World Cup in 2022. She rightly defended a lack of any deaths in her projects, but it spurred a wide discussion over the hundreds of migrants from Nepal, India and other countries working on other construction projects that die every year. Source: Middle East Monitor, 2017.

2.3 Ecological duty

Further to principles of individual responsibility and duty to the public, this survey has exposed a number of key issues facing the profession, beginning with ecological duty. By prioritising the client and stopping short of requiring action, Trudeau concludes the codes of conduct from both UK architectural bodies ‘provide little clarity in encouraging (or requiring) the architect to minimise harm to the environment, let alone ameliorating it’.⁴⁸ Under the principle, ‘Consider the wider impact of your work’ the ARB expands ‘Where appropriate, you should advise your client how best to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources’.⁴⁹ Under the principle, ‘Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others’, the RIBA calls on members to ‘be aware of the environmental impact of their work’ but it again falls short of a duty to act on this awareness.⁵⁰

This weak position is exposed by other built environment bodies who oblige members to not only mitigate but enhance the natural environment. For example, The Landscape Institute (LI) sets out, ‘responsibilities to the character and quality of the environment. You should seek to manage change in the landscape for the benefit of both this and future generations, and should seek to enhance the diversity of the natural environment, to enrich the human environment and to improve them both in a sustainable manner’.⁵¹ The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IME) seeks to ‘ensure that the uses of the environment and its associated flora and fauna minimise any adverse effects and wherever possible give positive effects’.⁵² The Institute of Water (IoW) requires acting ‘in accordance with the principles of sustainability for the mitigation of environmental harm and the enhancement of environmental quality’.⁵³ And the RAIA expect members to ‘respect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural environment’.⁵⁴

While some other professional bodies are not as strong on ameliorating environmental conditions, they do propose duties to sustainability. For example, the AIA’s sixth canon ‘Obligations to the Environment’ promotes sustainable design, development and practice:

Sustainable Design: In performing design work, Members should be environmentally responsible and advocate sustainable building and site design;

Sustainable Development: In performing professional services, Members should advocate the design, construction, and operation of sustainable buildings and communities;

Sustainable Practices: Members should use sustainable practices within their firms and professional organizations, and they should encourage their clients to do the same.⁵⁵

It is important to highlight the critical difference between the ARB and AIA. The ARB calls architects to ‘advise’ the client ‘where appropriate’, suggesting it is not a requirement in all projects and offering no recourse should the client disregard this advice. The AIA however, takes a broader and stronger view, urging architects to ‘advocate’ for sustainable design and building.

2.4. Social duty

The second key issue to arise from this survey concerns social duty, defined by Richard Saxon as, 'a matter of perceiving and advocating community interests beyond those of the project paymaster'.⁵⁶ This obligation is absent from the ARB principles, 'Considering the wider impact of your work' and 'Have respect for others', which only issue responsibilities to consider environmental, not social, impacts.⁵⁷ The RIBA's principle, 'Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others' sets a requirement for members to 'respect the beliefs and opinions of other people, recognise social diversity and treat everyone fairly. They should also have a proper concern and due regard for the effect that their work may have on its users and the local community'.⁵⁸ Till stresses how this must be considered in relation to the RIBA's other principles, "“Regard to users” may hint at a wider responsibility, but when you actually dig down into that they are absolutely clear that your first responsibility is to the client'.⁵⁹ To expose these inadequacies, Till calls on philosopher Zygmunt Bauman's understanding of ethics: "“To assume an ethical stance means to assume responsibility for the other.” Bauman's other is a multitude. It is much wider than the client, it is all those people who brief, build, occupy, view, review, remake and inhabit architecture. The need to recognise ethics of architecture's outside becomes the necessity for changing practices'.⁶⁰

Other built environment bodies take an active stance on social responsibility to address inequalities of opportunity and resources. The AICP implores members to:

seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration; We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs; We shall increase the opportunities for members of underrepresented groups to become professional planners and help them advance in the profession; We shall contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities.⁶¹

A number of organisations confront enduring social issues related to imbalances of power, representation and knowledge. The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action (CSJCA) promotes 'Democratic participation: encouraging and enabling all participants to contribute meaningfully to decision-making and other aspects of the research process according to skill, interest and collective need'.⁶² NOVUS states, 'Public planning only works when the public plan. We believe in giving citizens the knowledge and tools to shape their built environment'.⁶³ The AIA affirm architects' social responsibilities with recent amendments to encourage:

Public Interest Services: Members should render public interest professional services, including pro bono services, and encourage their employees to render such services. Pro bono services are those rendered without expecting compensation, including those rendered for indigent persons, after disasters, or in other emergencies;

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Civic Responsibility: Members should be involved in civic activities as citizens and professionals, and should strive to improve public appreciation and understanding of architecture and the functions and responsibilities of architects.⁶⁴

This ‘civic responsibility’ is very similar to the RIBA’s mission statement, but where it is absent in the RIBA code of conduct, the AIA integrate it and encourage practitioners to act on it.

Engineering bodies recognise the responsibility that comes with professional privilege and expand concepts of impact to include future generations. The RAOE states engineers ‘hold a privileged and trusted position in society, and are expected to demonstrate that they are seeking to serve wider society and to be sensitive to public concerns’.⁶⁵ While the IME calls on members to ‘recognise the importance of socio-economic and environmental factors and shall minimise and justify any adverse effect on wealth creation, the natural environment and social justice by ensuring that all developments, throughout their life, use best practical and economic solutions to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.⁶⁶ For the ICE, ‘Members must take account of the broader public interest - the interests of all stakeholders in any project must be taken properly into account, including the impact on future generations. This must include regard for the impact upon the society and quality of life of affected individuals, groups or communities, and upon their cultural, archaeological and ethnic heritage, and the broader interests of humanity as a whole’.⁶⁷

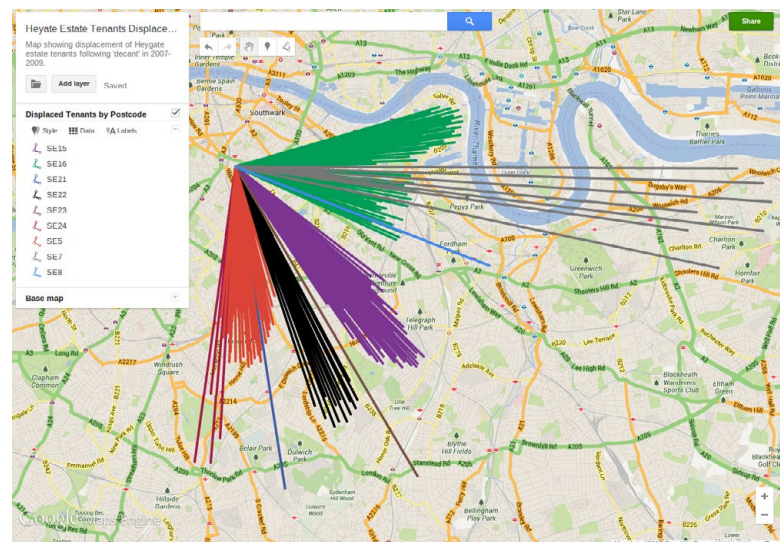
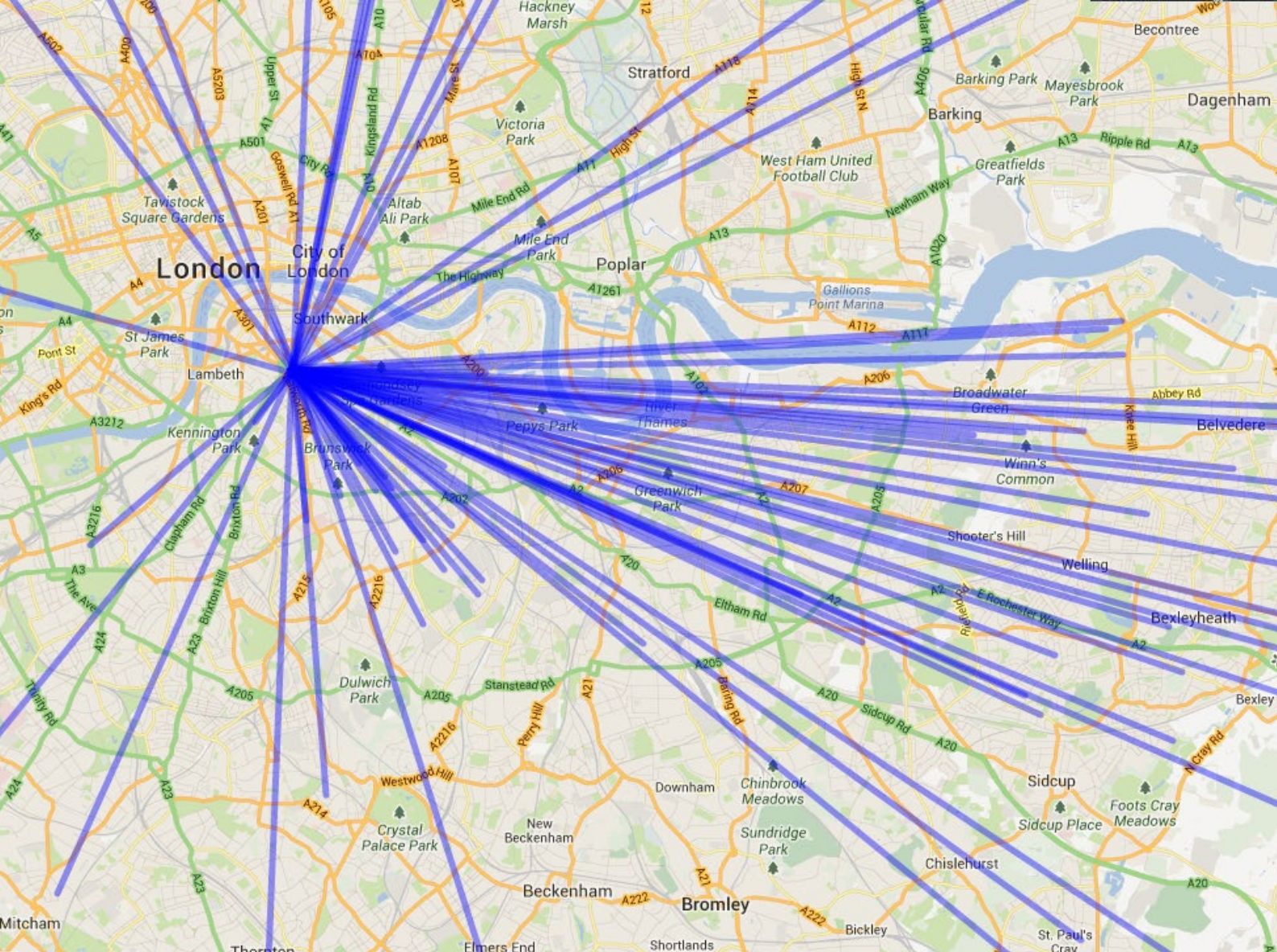
A number of organisations have lobbied for urgent action related to specific ethical dilemmas facing the professions. The practice of housing estate regeneration in London was the predominant issue confronted by Part 3 students at the Bartlett in their essays on Integrity and Ethics in the profession. These set out the compelling evidence on the net loss of social housing in London and the forced displacement of working class communities and described the actions from groups resisting and demonstrating alternatives to this practice.⁶⁸ The campaign group Fight4Aylesbury’s demand ‘paragraph 12 of the Architects’ Code against “discrimination because of disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other inappropriate consideration” be amended to include “economic class”’.⁶⁹ Architects for Social Housing have supplemented this, asking for ‘a new Social Code of Architects’ to be drawn up.⁷⁰ Amardeep Hanspal proposes a reciprocal approach to this issue, ‘As there is no professional or statutory body that developers are upheld against or required to adhere to, and with a growing number of Architects working for developers, should the RIBA write a client-specific Code of Conduct to define a professional standard for working with developers and reduce grey areas which are open to interpretation’.⁷¹

Firm action has also been urged by international groups. Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility have petitioned the AIA to amend its *Code of Ethics* to do more to protect human rights, stating, ‘The architectural profession collectively is responsible for the design of the built environment and must use our position to protect the public’s health, safety, and wellbeing from buildings that violate human rights’. Their proposed rule reads, ‘Members shall not design spaces intended for execution or for torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including prolonged solitary confinement’.⁷²

2.5 Duty to cultural heritage

The final issue to consider for the professions to address is a duty to cultural heritage. The codes of conduct of both UK architectural bodies identify a responsibility to the natural environment but are silent on a duty to the built environment as cherished resource and common heritage. Under the principle, 'Consider the wider impact of your work' the ARB expand 'Where appropriate, you should advise your client how best to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources' and the RIBA calls on members to 'be aware of the environmental impact of their work'.⁷³ As such they fail to meet even the basic passive standards of existing codes towards ecological and social contexts.

Attention to the impact and context of the existing built environment is overlooked by all but a few professional bodies. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) declares the built heritage of the UK, 'part of society's common heritage and which should be available to everyone, is, however, a limited and irreplaceable resource'. They call for responsibility for its conservation, preservation and enhancement: 'Members shall strive to conserve and preserve historic buildings as an artistic, archaeological, academic, educational and economic resource and as a source of enjoyment now and in the future.'⁷⁴ The Cifa describe the historic environment as 'a vulnerable and diminishing resource', the LI calls on members 'to enrich the human environment' and the AIA to 'respect and help conserve their natural and cultural heritage while striving to improve the environment and the quality of life within it'.⁷⁵



[Figs. 4&5]

Maps of displaced leaseholders and tenants from the Heygate Estate, built in 1974 and home to 1,260 households in spacious but chronically under-maintained flats and maisonettes. From 2011-14 it was demolished as part of an estate regeneration scheme with 1,034 homes on social rent replaced by 2,704 new homes only 82 of which were allocated for social rent, with a further 198 as affordable rent and 316 as shared ownership homes. Source: Southwark Notes and Archives Group, 2013.

3 Guidance

While the previous section details the ethical values embodied in codes, this section concentrates on the guidance practitioners are offered by built environment bodies to address ethical dilemmas. Nada Tayeb provides a strong critique of the guidance provided by the ARB and RIBA: ‘The tepid Codes of our regulatory and professional bodies hang as theoretical accessories because of their deficiency in offering the critical thinking skills essential in aiding moral reasoning’.⁷⁶

Further to the principle ‘Consider the wider impact of your work’, the ARB expands, ‘Where appropriate, you should advise your client how best to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources’.⁷⁷ Guidance on how to advise or evaluate this quality is not provided. Similarly, further to the principle ‘Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others’, the RIBA expands, ‘members are expected to place their duty to their clients and/or employers ahead of their personal religious beliefs or political convictions. If a member is faced with a situation which presents them with a personal moral dilemma, they should withdraw from the situation’.⁷⁸ This complex ethical situation is not supported with further guidance. It is for this reason that Jeffrey Chan Kok Hui claims codes

cannot substitute for the architect’s ethical judgment of prioritising values. After all, the architect is hired because he or she alone has the overview and capacity to make difficult choices among competing constituencies – the clients, the building’s users, the neighbours and the general public, as well as “voiceless others” that include the poor and marginalised, as well as the environment, both natural and man-made – all of which will make different claims on this architect’s sense of duty. Which of these constituencies should the architect prioritise and which should the architect de-prioritise, and at whose expense? And how justifiable is the architect’s decision? These important questions are not ones that can be answered by appealing to the professional codes of conduct or to the technical expertise of the architect, but to ethics alone.⁷⁹

During evidence sessions conducted for the Edge Commission report, Morrell repeatedly asked contributors, ‘what do you do, as a professional, when your principles point one way, and a client’s needs or wants point in another?’⁸⁰ The lack of ‘any clear or convincing answer from any speaker’ he concludes ‘only served to reinforce just how knotty a dilemma it is’ but ‘the impression (and a suspicion levelled at most of those in practice) is that the client’s wishes will almost always prevail – and “doing the best we can” (which one can take to mean seeking to persuade the client to do things differently) is the closest that professionals might come to standing against their clients’ demands’.⁸¹ Indeed, this is more than is required by architectural codes of conduct in the UK.

Emerging practitioners assert the role professional bodies must play in supporting practitioners to make ethical judgements with confidence by identifying clear paths forward from these knotty dilemmas. In her Part 3 essay on professional ethics, Stephanie Nell proposes, ‘we should not focus on the rules, codes and principles set out by the RIBA and ARB but

Reflect Critically. Act Fearlessly.

rather on their role in playing a part of the problem solving when addressing particular ethical issues'.⁸² Maarten Mutters agrees, 'Arguably, it is the duty of our professional bodies to facilitate the reflective process that occurs in the act of creating architecture and is crucial to the profession's constant need for developing and refining an ethical stance'.⁸³

Looking across built environment professional bodies and literature, there are a number of resources to improve ethical awareness, facilitate ethical reasoning and encourage ethical action through self-evaluation questions, case studies, courses, toolkits and ethics textbooks. These tools will not eliminate dilemmas, they are however capable of opening up a new horizon where things may be seen for what they are. Even trying them out can extend moral awareness in an expanded moral universe.

3.1 Self-evaluation questions

The first resource is the provision and promotion of self-evaluation questions. When confronting an ethical challenge, the RTPI advocates setting aside sufficient time to run through a considered process rather than making a snap decision, claiming 'it is the mark of a reflective practitioner to demonstrate the ability to weigh up competing issues or tensions in order to come to a reasoned professional decision'.⁸⁴ It provides a set of basic questions to aid this process applicable to any specific ethical dilemma:

Do you have enough reliable information?
 Is it legal?
 Does it comply with your employer's policies?
 Is there a conflict of interest?
 Have I considered all relevant stakeholders?
 Can I clearly state the reasons for my decision?
 How would my actions be perceived by others?
 Have you kept a record or note of your decision and reasoning in case your actions come under scrutiny at a later date?
 Would you do anything differently in the same situation?⁸⁵

It is interesting to note as these questions progress, practitioners are increasingly called on to employ empathy and reflexivity. Other professional bodies extend self-evaluation questions beyond specific situations. The Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) further questions reflect on impact outside of internal office and professional-client relationships:

Do I challenge inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory behaviour?
 Am I able to see things from another person's perspective?
 Do I give and receive feedback in a constructive and collegiate manner?
 Do people trust my professional judgement?
 Do I own up to mistakes and learn from them?
 Should I discuss my decision with others before I commit to action?
 Did I have the right information to make my decision?
 Have my actions impacted negatively on others, even if unintentional?
 Do I try to leave others better off?

Reflect Critically. Act Fearlessly.

Do I lead by example?
Do I speak up when I know I should?⁸⁶

While the RTPI presents a flow chart of questions to ask with a particular dilemma, the CIH offer more self-reflexive questions to ask on a continual basis as tools to force you to confront uncomfortable truths about your work. Any practitioners responding would want to give straightforward, positive answers, and when they cannot, it calls for ethical reasoning which cannot be assisted by consulting codes of conduct. Addressing architects, Part 3 student Matt Volsen proposes,

it must fall to the RIBA and ARB to help promote a transparent and accessible discussion about the need for a rigorous self-ethics. But capturing the importance of an ethical agenda will always be difficult in a written code. Perhaps what is more important is the discussion itself, which is becoming more apparent in the media, and if it becomes a more overt part of architectural education, more readily carried out in employment and practiced when bidding for new work, if it becomes something that the profession practices upon itself, perhaps it will better equip architects to position themselves within the growing complexities of society.⁸⁷

3.2 Case studies

To identify, analyse and respond effectively to ethical concerns a number of professional bodies present case studies as key resources. The RAoE's exemplary *Engineering Ethics in Practice* provides a set of 18 case studies drawn from real engineering situations that illuminate each of the Academy's *Statement of Ethical Principles*.⁸⁸ The aim of the guide is to help engineers practice ethical reasoning as it applies to these situations. Through detailed descriptions and discussions setting out different courses of action, the guide demonstrates how 'ethical considerations are already built into the decisions made by engineers, yet that these issues can be navigated with confidence, clarity, and above all with the same high standards of rigour, evidence and rationality that engineers already apply to other aspects of their roles'.⁸⁹

Nell calls for ethically grey areas in practice to be 'coupled with situation ethics which turns down the idea of "prefabricated decisions and prescriptive rules" being a solution to seemingly unethical conditions and rather welcomes the idea that evaluations of these scenarios should be made on an individual basis and should not be partial to rigid and prescriptive rules but rather guided by more fluid recommendations'.⁹⁰ To encourage this, the AICP invite practitioners to annually submit scenarios for the *Ethics Case of the Year* and, from these, has developed a 'complex set of hypothetical scenarios, sample problems and question-and-answer sessions around which training and other discussions can be focused'.⁹¹ The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) has developed a thoughtful set of eighteen interactive case studies;⁹² the RTPI include fifteen short case studies on a number of different dilemmas;⁹³ and RICS provide separate downloads for five short case studies.⁹⁴ Crucially, as these case studies have been developed by professional bodies, they sit alongside codes of conduct, demonstrating standards alone are insufficient guides to support the ethical reasoning and judgement of practitioners.

3.3 Courses

Courses are an important means to update knowledge and develop skills of ethical reasoning with others. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Academy has developed the industry's first massive open online course on *Construction Ethics and Compliance*.⁹⁵ The free five-week interactive course is 'designed to empower people to make better decisions in their daily construction work: improving relationships, identifying conflicts of interest and taking steps to minimise risk. The CIOB Academy wants to nurture a new generation of ethical leaders, to show why it is sometimes necessary to go beyond legal compliance and to give people the confidence to speak out when something is wrong'. In this outstanding resource, topics are illuminated through social learning, questionnaires, videos, articles and quizzes.⁹⁶

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICMS) also provides a free five-unit online course in *Understanding Conservation*, 'intended to challenge your understanding of the skills necessary to act as a conservation practitioner'. The Council explains, 'You should be willing to recognise that, despite your experience gained through practice, there is a more complicated, challenging and philosophical knowledge base that requires constant updating'.⁹⁷

Under the *Architects Act 1997*, architects must ensure that they are competent to practise. The ARB sets requirements on maintaining competence and the RIBA obliges Members to undertake a minimum of 35 hours of CPD relevant to their work every year. 20 of the required 35 hours must derive from the 10 topics provided by the RIBA CPD Core Curriculum to help members to 'practice smartly, in order to achieve better outcomes, better businesses and social purpose' as well as 'ensure professionalism, competence and higher aspiration'.⁹⁸ The seminars include ethical issues drawn from practical case studies and scenarios such as *Ethics in architecture: best practice for sourcing materials, products and people* but these are regrettably behind paywalls and for members only.⁹⁹ The RIBA CPD online portal features some free CPD videos and articles but these are exclusively provided by product manufacturers.¹⁰⁰

3.4 Toolkits

Some professional bodies go further to provide toolkits for facilitating ethics training. The AICP requires planners to complete 1.5 credits of ethics training per two-year reporting period. Their *Ethics in Planning Toolkit* is constantly updated to integrate new topics such as social media and includes material for planning ethics sessions, transcripts from national conferences, examples of best practices, slide templates and links to a webinar which conveys some of the techniques described in the toolkit.¹⁰¹ The ICE has developed a 'SayNo Toolkit' to give specific and practical guidance when dealing with external third parties.¹⁰²

3.5 Ethics textbooks

The final resource of ethical guidance involves the array of excellent textbooks in which built environment practitioners draw on the body of philosophical study devoted to what is meant by ethics and how to apply it in order to address ethical questions within these developed frameworks of thought. The IET recommend good introductory texts for those who would like to explore ethics further.¹⁰³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to review these (28 examples are listed in this endnote) but the following two adopt interesting approaches to encourage ethical reasoning.¹⁰⁴

In *Ethics for Architects*, Thomas Fisher introduces 50 case studies based on real-life situations ordered according to the six canons of the AIA's *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*.¹⁰⁵ Fisher grapples particularly with decisions that involve personal risk, drawing upon the four main approaches to Western ethics to work through the most appropriate response: what it means to be a good person (virtue ethics) or to have a good society (contract ethics), and what is the right action in terms of the individual (duty ethics) or the group (utilitarian ethics). Fisher argues these four approaches relate broadly to four phases of architectural projects.¹⁰⁶

In *A Theory of General Ethics*, Warwick Fox moves beyond existing approaches to ethics to develop a single, integrated approach that encompasses the realms of inter-human ethics, the ethics of the natural environment, and the ethics of the built environment.¹⁰⁷ He identifies six categories of ethical concerns raised by built environment professional practice: '1. Basic forms of professional conduct'; '2. The physical impact of the built form upon people who have direct contact with it'; '3. The psychological impact of the building upon people who have direct contact with it'; '4. Cultural fit or symbolic resonance'; '5. Physical impact upon the environment'; '6. Design fit, that is, the extent to which a building fits with its natural, social and built contexts when considered purely in terms of its design'.¹⁰⁸

Although these authors approach ethical questions from different philosophical positions, common among them is the conviction that experience alone does not lead to learning. This requires setting aside dedicated time for reflection. Terry Williamson, Antony Radford and Helen Bennetts describe the process of making and managing the built environment as an active negotiation between 'ethical theory, the environmental, social and building contexts, and personal and stakeholder evaluations'.¹⁰⁹ This process of going backwards and forwards between an ethical theory and personal action is described by philosopher John Rawls as 'reflective equilibrium', seeking to reach an acceptable balance, and by Donald Schön as 'reflective practice', seeking to gain insight into the underlying assumptions and priorities which inform everyday actions.¹¹⁰ From his examination of 'the architect's ability to critically evaluate their own cognitive process', Part 3 student Mutters reinforces the importance of such exercises, 'by developing their skill to reflect on complex situations, architects can continually improve and refine their moral standards thereby increasing the profession's resiliency and improve their professional service to client, environment and society'.¹¹¹

What is the architect's role in the housing 'crisis'?

What is the architect's role in the housing 'crisis'?

architecturalworkers.wordpress.com
@archiworkers

Hosted by Architectural Workers

What is the architect's role in the housing 'crisis'?



What is the architect's role in the housing 'crisis'?

The Rotunda Community Hall
Cressingham Gardens Estate
Tulse Hill, London SW2 2NJ

Wednesday 28th June
19.00–21.00
Free event, all welcome

With
Architects for Social Housing
Concrete Action
Paul Karakusevic Karakusevic Carson Architects
Paul Watt Birkbeck, University of London
Save Cressingham
More participants TBC

Hosted by
Architectural Workers – an independent network of people who work in and around the building industry, specialising in urban regeneration. We exist to expose and critique the conditions of our work, alongside the role it plays in gentrification, social cleansing and environmental discrimination.

Talks hosted by the architectural establishment are designed to focus the blame of the “housing crisis” on developers, planners, politicians and the construction industry. We are taught that as designers, we are problem solvers, and thus the “housing crisis” is one of quantity and material production. As a profession we see ourselves as obedient service providers for our clients, ‘making the best of a bad situation’. It’s time to re-think the role of the architect.

This debate will re-position the architect as an active, politicised contributor to this ‘crisis’. We will re-link the experiences of the people directly affected by our work to the drivers of design.

Representatives of London’s leading regeneration practices will debate alongside Concrete Action, Architects for Social Housing and representatives from Cressingham Gardens, a council estate in Lambeth currently under threat of demolition.

We will explore the motivations and challenges of our work, as well as how we contribute to a collective vision of a rapidly-changing London. This will be an open discussion where all people, panel speakers and audience have an equal say.

[Fig. 6]

What is the architect's role in the housing 'crisis'? debate poster.

Source: Evening Class, 2017.

4 Access

This survey of built environment practice raises a final matter concerning the profession – opening access to ethical discussions and resources beyond members. In the Edge Commission report, Morrell addresses the position and purpose of professional bodies, proposing, ‘Legitimacy would be increased if efforts are made to include the wider public in both plans and debates on issues directly affecting them (such as fracking, for example), sharing expertise objectively, in substitution for presuming to know best based purely on that expertise – replacing, or at least supplementing, exclusivity in favour of inclusivity’.¹¹² To begin to redress this, there are a number of precedents on how to open access and involve the many spheres of publics outside of membership bodies at all scales: collectively drafting principles and standards, opening access to debates, sharing access to resources, providing online platforms, revising and expanding awards.

4.1 Collectively draft principles and standards

The *Convention on the Use of Space* in the Netherlands was written through a series of public drafting assemblies engaging a diverse range of participants: ‘lawyers, activists, academics, squatters, researchers, and cultural workers’, where the document was ‘created, amended, critiqued, and transformed’.¹¹³ The RIBA has made steps towards such collectivity, becoming a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact, contributing to development of EU ethical standards and joining the International Ethics Standards Coalition.¹¹⁴ It also exhibited the work of the Open Charter Agency, a proposal for ‘a new platform for discussion and engagement for the architecture profession and those involved with it to clarify, critique and act upon critical issues determining the role of the architect and their identity – a catalyst for positive change’. This was ‘conceived after extensive direct research into the image, role and definitions of the architect around the world, collecting over 5000 voices which revealed widespread confusion and fear of architecture as a profession’.¹¹⁵

4.2 Open access to debates

The RIBA host events and exhibitions on pressing issues such as the diminishing stock of social housing in London but face criticism from groups such as Architects for Social Housing for denying access to critical voices in debates, and from Architectural Workers for instead ‘platform[ing] the practices that are carrying out the estate destruction which leads so many to be displaced’.¹¹⁶ Alternative debates such as Architects for Social Housing’s *The Truth About Grenfell Tower* and Architectural Workers’ *What is the Architect’s Role in the Housing ‘Crisis’?* successfully open key issues to the public. They invite practitioners who adopt a wide range of positions, host events in venues local to affected communities, and release full films and transcripts of the dialogue between public and professionals.¹¹⁷ Further underscoring this need, Part 3 student Ka Lo Carol Lau argues, ‘what is regarded as best practice should not come top down from any professional bodies but from the exchange of experiences among professionals. Active ethical debates need to be encouraged within the industry’.¹¹⁸

4.3 Share access to resources

The RAoE provide summaries and recommended actions on new issues affecting engineering ethics, for example a roundtable meeting on the development and use of autonomous systems, stating, ‘Early attention to the issues raised by the introduction of these technologies is important to ensure that their introduction has the public interest in mind and has appropriate support’.¹¹⁹ Part 3 student Étain Neary has called on the ARB to set out guidance on ‘how to uphold the ethical responsibilities of an architect’ when ‘Questions arise as to whether the architect has less ethical responsibility when they are no longer legally accountable for the delivery of a project, such as in a Design & Build scenario, or if they are appointed by (or novated to) a contractor to progress another architects design’.¹²⁰ Within a ‘turbulent socio-political and *economic* context’, Mutters suggests the ‘architectural profession could benefit from a guidance document that looks beyond the architect’s duty to represent a client and how it could mitigate the ethical risks of representing large commercial developers’.¹²¹

Morrell calls on institutions to share research and collaborate on pressing issues. On research, ‘Institutions should recognise the importance for their future of re-establishing a working body of knowledge, and of disseminating research and best practice – for example, by establishing a joint think tank, a King’s Fund for construction, to conduct develop, curate and disseminate research, and to develop policy for the industry’.¹²² On collaboration, ‘The authority of the institutions would increase exponentially if they presented a shared view on matters of public interest, and particularly those that are too big for any one institution – such as industry reform in the interests of producing a better offer to clients; fixing the gap between predicted and actual performance of built assets (a gap that would be a scandal in any other industry, and should be in construction); and addressing the impact of the built environment upon climate change’.¹²³

4.4 Provide online platforms which share knowledge and connect practices

Building Rights is an online resource of planning expertise in trial phase by David Knight which aims to be the ‘Mumsnet of the built environment’ by aggregating questions and answers as ‘user-generated, peer-reviewed and independent’. Knight argues ‘Public knowledge of the mechanics of planning – its rules, workings, processes, even its very function – is spectacularly low, and this communication failure will, if not addressed, cause the planning system to slip ever further away from its purpose and from its public... We need ready access to the tools available, to best and worst practice, to tangible and legible examples and explanations’.¹²⁴ An alternative online platform is proposed by Part 3 student Fatemeh Tehrani to support architects who are willing to participate or build their practice on providing humanitarian relief. Tehrani calls on professional bodies such as RIBA to initiate ‘an online database where practices can access the current list of humanitarian projects, both underway and planned for the future, and choose to get involved based on their capabilities and the size or the location of the projects. Such online platform could also help architects to connect with non-profit and charity organisations as potential investors’.¹²⁵

4.5 Revise and expand awards

The *Disobedience Award* run by Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab seeks to highlight ‘effective, responsible, ethical disobedience’ by honouring ‘work that impacts society in positive ways, and is consistent with a set of key principles, including non-violence, creativity, courage, and responsibility for one’s actions’.¹²⁶ Further to this, Part 3 student Adam Brindley recommends establishing, ‘a new award that focuses on social values to help promote ethics within the construction and design industry’.¹²⁷

RIBA Ethics and Sustainable Development Commission

The RIBA has established a new Commission on Ethics and Sustainable Development, as approved by RIBA Council.

In its first year, the commission will consider how the architectural profession can best reflect its core values of public interest, social purpose and sustainability, including its engagement with the UN's Sustainable Development goals.



[Fig. 7]

The newly-formed RIBA Ethics and Sustainable Development Commission has set in motion meetings to consider how the architecture profession can best reflect its core values of public interest, social purpose and sustainability. Source: RIBA, 2018.

5. Findings and recommendations

This paper concludes by reviewing key findings and providing recommendations. Reading across the ethical resources of sixty-six UK and international built environment professional bodies reveals standards of integrity, objectivity, competence and confidentiality are commonplace, but some professional bodies choose to elevate conduct beyond this base level. They set principles of individual responsibility and collective aspiration on urgent ecological, social and built environment issues facing the profession, provide tools for practitioners to stimulate ethical reasoning and make ethical judgements with confidence, debate these issues openly and share this information publicly. In doing so, they demonstrate the potential for codes, guidance and access to raise ethical standards of the profession, thus exposing the inadequacy of the ethical position of architecture bodies in particular.

From analytical discussions, emerging and established architectural professionals are particularly critical of the weak position the ARB and RIBA adopt in empowering individual or collective responsibility to take action on ethical issues, as well as the lack of support to approach and act on these dilemmas which carry personal, professional and public costs. They argue codes are not robust enough to expect or encourage an architect to address ecological, social and material concerns which define built environment practice or act in the interests of the public against the client. They identify insufficient guidance to facilitate the reflective process that occurs in the act of creating architecture and support ethical behaviour in the face of decreasing fees and reduced agency, Design and Build and PFI. While the RIBA hosts debates, offers training, lobbies for certain causes and awards achievement, these discussions and decisions, of importance to the perception and the direction of the profession, are often behind paywalls, divorced from its code of conduct, and distanced from the public.

Examples of best practice from UK and international examples demonstrate successful mechanisms for built environment bodies to take an active role in expanding ethical awareness, facilitating ethical reasoning and celebrating ethical action. These form the basis of the following set of fifteen recommendations related to guidance, codes and access. In the face of this compelling evidence and demonstrable means to define, codify and encourage action, the ARB and RIBA must seize the opportunity presented by their ongoing procedural reviews and empower built environment practitioners to reflect critically and act fearlessly.

5.1 Guidance recommendations

Built environment bodies should prioritise the development of guidance. This must emerge from real ethical challenges reported by practitioners and the public, provide access to rigorous evidence and analysis, and combine applied and theoretical knowledge. For practitioners to identify, analyse and respond effectively to the specific ethical dilemmas raised by their work on the built environment, professional bodies should provide access to a full set of resources:

1. *Raise difficult issues through self-evaluation questions to stimulate ongoing reflection*
2. *Untangle knotty dilemmas through case studies to identify clear paths forward*
3. *Deliver free interactive courses to develop reflection and reasoning skills*
4. *Train others to make informed decisions through toolkits*
5. *Expand ethical awareness through practical and philosophical texts.*

5.2 Codes recommendations

Built environment bodies should set the benchmark, not the baseline, for individual and collective responsibility to the full range of ecological, social and built challenges.¹²⁸

6. *Empower practitioners to reflect critically and act fearlessly*
7. *Prioritise the public over the client*
8. *Enhance ecological diversity*
9. *Seek social justice*
10. *Enrich cultural heritage.*

5.3 Access recommendations

To involve the public and contribute to informed public debate, built environment bodies must strive to remove all barriers to discussions, information and resources:

11. *Devise collective responses to key issues*
12. *Debate ethical concerns openly*
13. *Share resources with the public*
14. *Build new platforms to connect practitioners and the public*
15. *Celebrate ethical action.*

[Fig. 8 Overleaf]

Spreadsheet bringing together the 66 codes and 51 guidance resources from built environment professional bodies. NB: The web links are active in other formats. Source: Author, 2017.

Type	Organisation	Code of conduct / ethics	Guidance documents
Architecture	American Institute of Architects	Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct	X
	Architects Registration Board	The Architects Code: Standards of Professional Conduct and Practice	X
	Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists	Code of Conduct	X
	International Union of Architects	UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism	Charter for Architectural Education
	Royal Australian Institute of Architects	Code of Professional Conduct	X
	Royal Institute of British Architects	Code of Professional Conduct	Code of Professional Conduct Guidance Notes Professionalism and Ethics CPD Resources
Royal Institution of Naval Architects	Code of Professional Conduct	X	
Construction	Chartered Building Consultancy	Code of Professional Conduct and Rules	X
	Chartered Institute of Building	Rules and Regulations of Professional Competence and Conduct	Construction Ethics and Compliance Online Course
	Chartered Institute of Housing	Code of Conduct	Code of Ethics
	Construction Industry Council	Code of Conduct for Approved Inspectors	X
	International Ethics Standards	An Ethical Framework for the Global Property Market	Q&A
Design	British Institute of Interior Design	Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics	X
	Chartered Society of Designers	Code of Conduct	X
Energy and Environment	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	Code of Professional Conduct	Professionalism and Environmental Ethics Masterclass
	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	Code of Ethics and Professional Standards	X
	Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management	Professional Ethics and Code of Conduct	Professional Ethics Workshop
	Energy Institute	Code of Professional Conduct	X
	Institute of Chartered Foresters	ICF Code of Conduct	X
	Geological Society	Code of Conduct	X
	Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining	Code of Conduct	X
	Institute of Water	Code of Conduct	X
	Institution of Environmental Sciences	Code of Professional Conduct	X
	Landscape Institute	Code of Standards of Conduct and Practice for Landscape Professionals	X
Royal Geographical Society	Fellows Code of Conduct	X	
Engineering	Association of Building Engineers	Code of Professional Conduct	Online Seminar Video: Professional Ethics & Standards
	Association of Consulting Engineers	ACE Code of Business Practice	X
	Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering	Code of Professional Conduct	X
	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers	Code of Conduct	X
	Institute of Highway Engineers	Code of Conduct	X
	Institution of Civil Engineers	ICE Code of Professional Conduct	Interactive Toolkit
	Institution of Engineering and Technology	Rules of Conduct	Interactive Case Studies Resources on Ethics and Professionalism Ethics for Engineers Course
	Institution of Engineering Designers	Code and Rules of Professional Conduct	Ethics and the Designer: an IED workshop
	Institution of Fire Engineers	IFE Code of Conduct	X
	Institution of Healthcare Engineering & Estate Management	IHEEM Code of Professional Conduct	X
	Institution of Mechanical Engineers	Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations	X
	Institution of Structural Engineers	Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes	Example Ethical Scenarios Reading List
	Royal Academy of Engineering	Statement of Ethical Principles for the Engineering Profession	Engineering Ethics in Practice Engineering Ethics and the Academy Engineering in Society Ethics and Emerging Technologies Philosophy of Engineering
	Society of Environmental Engineers	Code of Conduct	X
Society of Operations Engineers	Code of Professional Conduct	X	
Heritage	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists	Code of Conduct	X
	Institute of Historic Building Conservation	Code of Conduct	Understanding Conservation Course
	Institute of Conservation	Code of Conduct	Ethics Resources
	International Council on Monuments and Sites	ICOMOS Ethical Principles	Ethical Commitment Statement for ICOMOS Members
Planning	American Institute of Certified Planners	AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct	Ethical Principles in Planning Ethics in Planning Toolkit Ethics Case of the Year Annual Ethics Reports The Ethical Planning Practitioner Guidebook
	Royal Town Planning Institute	Code of Professional Conduct	RTPI Practice Advice: Ethics and Professional Standards Ethics, Negotiation and Mediation Seminar Report
	NOVUS, Planning Officers Society	X	A Manifesto from the Coalface of Public Planning
Project Management	Association for Project Management	APM Code of Professional Conduct	Ethics in Project Management The Importance of Ethics in Professional Life
	Association for Project Safety	Code of Professional Conduct	X
	British Institute of Facilities Management	Code of Professional Conduct	Facilities Management Diagram Guidance to Ethical Procurement and Supply
	Chartered Institute of Arbitrators	Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct for Members	X
	Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply	CIPS Code of Conduct	Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Ethical Procurement Online Seminar
	Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors	Rules of Professional Conduct	X
	Independent Surveyors and Valuers Association	X	X
	Institute of Residential Property Management	The Code	X
	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors	Ethics and Professional Standards	Ethical Case Studies Interactive Ethics Walkthrough Ethics Decision Tree Frequently Asked Questions Ethical Standards Video
	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health	Code of Conduct, Guidance and Disciplinary Procedure	X
Transport	Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation	Code of Professional Conduct	X
	Institution of Highways & Transportation	Code of Professional Conduct	X
Other	Association of Interior Specialists	X	X
	Building Rights	X	Building Rights
	Convention on the Use of Space	X	Convention
	Institute of Acoustics	Code of Conduct	X
	Institution of Lighting Professionals	Code of Professional Conduct	Guidance Notes
	Open Charter Agency	X	Open Charter
Society of Professional Journalists	Code of Ethics	Ethics Committee Position Papers Ethics Committee Blog Ethics Case Studies Journalism Ethics Casebook Ethics Hotline	

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- 5 This paper is part of the Ethics Commission led by Professor Jane Rendell at the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL. It aims to develop a vision and code to guide the practice of ethics in teaching, research and enterprise specific to the built environment. Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, *Ethics in the Built Environment*, 2018.
- 6 The conceptual and practical context of this research has derived from the work by Jane Rendell. Rendell has developed ethics as a form of critical spatial practice through her investigation into UCL's decision to accept funding from the charitable arm of BHP Billiton, her pro bono work into the regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, and her leadership of the Bartlett Ethics Commission. For refereed articles, see: Jane Rendell, 'Giving an Account of One-self, Architecturally', Special Issue of the *Journal of Visual Culture*, 2016; Jane Rendell, 'Critical Spatial Practice as *Parrhesis*', special issue of *MaHKUscript*, Journal of Fine Art Research, 2016; Jane Rendell, 'Arry's Bar: condensing and displacing on the Aylesbury Estate', in Michal Murawski and Jane Rendell (eds.) *Reactivating the Social Condenser*, special issue of the *Journal of Architecture*, 2017. For book chapters, see: Jane Rendell, 'Figures of Speech: before and after Writing', Jonathan Charley (ed.) *Writing and Architecture*, London: Routledge, forthcoming 2018; Jane Rendell, 'Configuring Critique', Chris Brisbin and Myra Thiessen (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Criticality in Art, Architecture, and Design*, London: Routledge, forthcoming 2018; Jane Rendell, 'Activating Home and Work', Sandra Loschke (ed.), *Rethinking Architectural Production: Between Experience, Action and Critique*, London: Routledge, forthcoming 2018.
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