

One of the main preoccupations of the RIBA for longer than anyone living could possibly remember, and which has again come to the fore in these straitened times, has to do with the development of a viable policy for the direction, management and economics of the supply of teaching for aspiring architects in the nearer and further future; and this must be one of the major concerns for any policy-maker or legislator with relevant responsibility.

Hard economic data and time-span projections may be less than helpful if an intelligible and imaginative ordering of the manifold complexities is lacking. Inevitably, one of the questions pressing for attention is: whether there can be a future in which the ARB could be more usefully engaged in the interests of the profession and the public, as distinct from performing as a Whitehall outstation?

In any review of the matter, the simple question has to be: why would Whitehall need a Register of Architects, protected by an apparatus for specifically criminalizing the use of a common and much loved word of the English language, now to be found extended into “framework architecture”?

In reality, this legal apparatus seems to do less than nothing to raise the esteem of the profession among either the informed or uninformed members of the public or of the legislature; or for the development of architectural education in the present century. Is the better course in the interests of the public and the profession to recognise the ARB as nothing but an impediment on the whole, and say so, with reasons?

NOTE ALSO: In particular, in connection with the status of the ARB as “competent authority”, any review of the legislation would have to take into account the numbers of architects crossing any EU Directive territory border who need a UK “competent authority” certificate. The review would have regard to the numbers forecast for the purposes of (1) the formal legislation impact statement submitted to Parliament; (2) the departmental “Framework” document signed up with the ARB, and (3) the current ARB Business Plan.

The author of this note commends to readers the film *Politist, adjectiv* (2009). See review at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/oct/03/police-adjective-film-review>.