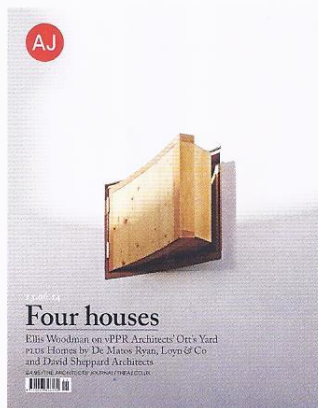


Letters

Last issue
AJ 13.06.14
Established 1895



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The letter of the week's author will receive an AJ mug. Letters should be received by 10am on the Monday before publication. The AJ reserves the right to edit letters.

Identifying a role for AF

Congratulations to Simon Allford for succinctly stating (AJ 13.06.14) some fundamentals that characterise the RIBA, the NLA and The Architecture Foundation (AF), enabling the latter to identify a logical structural place within architectural discourse in London. That the RIBA poses as a charity promoting architecture, rather than architects, is a reality usually glossed over.

Interestingly, however, the only unmentionable – which has continued for 21 years without financial or programmatic crises – is Open-City's Open House London. Why? Because that project dares to energetically engage the general public.

Many architects are strong and often engaged supporters (including Allford), but some see it as a marketing opportunity; the majority ignore its intercourse with a mostly non-client body of building owners, managers, etc.

This equation of support-exploitation-ignorance repeats itself around the world, and the organisation strives to protect its core values of openness, public engagement, sharing and non-

profit/zero-financial gain in every city where it has been adopted.

Meanwhile, architectural tourism has become a huge international business. That all this hardly amounts to community engagement speaks volumes.
Ken Allinson, Architectural Dialogue, an Open-City partner

AF entrepreneurial flair

PLACE has done exactly what Allford suggests (AJ 13.06.14). We have moved out of a useless space into a place we renovated for £20,000. We have dropped the 'bookshop' and are focusing on the work in hand. We have become an organisation that does serious projects, as well as enabling others too. The accounts are stable and we predict a better 2014. Whoever takes over the AF needs to have the right mix of experience and be in some part entrepreneurial.
Michael Corr, creative director, PLACE, Belfast

No more room for AF

I'm sad to hear of the Architecture Foundation's (AF) troubles; 20

years ago under founder Ricky Burdett, its vigorous exhibition programme and high-quality publications led public debate and were crucial to developing my own interest in the subject.

But now we have the NLA and Open-City as well as the RIBA and I'm not convinced there is room for yet another voice, in the capital at least.

Ironically, of course, it was the AF who fought hard for a proper London architecture centre in the former Museum of Mankind behind the Royal Academy.
Chris Rogers, architectural writer, Edgware

Harlem references

LETTER OF THE WEEK I'm going to fly to New York and ask a random selection of Harlem residents if they have noticed and appreciated how Sugar Hill (AJ 13.06.14) references the houses of their local area. If even one of them says yes I will buy David Adjaye tickets to the World Cup final (assuming he hasn't already got them).
Simon Gill, director, Simon Gill Architects



The Architects' Journal
Telephone House,
69-77 Paul Street,
London EC2A 4NQ
TheAJ.co.uk
020 3033 2736
E Firstname.Surname@emap.com
T 020 3033 plus extension

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