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Oliver Richards

Putting Architects First

Whole Life sustainability
of buildings – the power
of being able to measure
6 June 2014

I recently had a master class from the architect Simon Sturgis on a whole life approach to carbon in buildings. It demonstrated brilliantly the power of an architect being able to measure aspects of a building's performance and thereby prove our worth.

Simon now spends 99% of his time on his Carbon consultancy. His thesis is that if you think about the whole life cycle of a building you can draw very different conclusions about how to design and which materials to use.

You can challenge his assumptions but he opens them

Oliver on Twitter

#richards4riba thanks new eminent architect supporters inc. Eric Parry Keith Bradley Chris Wilkinson Evans Vettori Roz Barr Michal Cohen

The Questions and from the RIBA Small Practice Group and our answers can be found here: richards4riba.com/riba-small-pra...

Great way to close a #riba presidential campaign @johnassael office. Lots of positive enthusiasm for the potential of @RIBA +support members

Head to my website to see the @RIBA Small Practice Group Questions to 2014 Candidates for President + answers given by me and @JaneDuncan15

Please have a look at the latest article published by @ArchitectsJrnal about my presidential campaign- architectsjournal.co.uk/news/the-race-...
#richards4riba

up to inspection in considerable depth. And this sort of UK knowledge and expertise leads the world.

What I found refreshing was that he advocates thinking about the whole life-cycle energy costs of a building under 2 headings:

- 'capItal account carbon' =

Capcarb

- 'current account carbon' =

Opcarb.

- Only 15-20% of the total life-cycle energy of a building is currently controlled and regulated

- because such strides have been made in improving building performance (the regulated carbon), making further savings here is increasingly hard and there are better areas to target.

- 75% of the total energy consumed by a building is spent in making, using, and occupying it

- we should target areas where the best benefits can be efficiently achieved.

- anaerobic digester power plants (which create heat and power) are much more efficient than renewable energy sources and can recycle food and general waste – tackling 2 problems in one

He finished by saying – if you want to build a wall – brick is energy rich at the outset but it lasts well. A timber fence has less embedded carbon but will need

to be replaced many times. And what really matters is the way that you dispose of the timber – which can totally skew the energy equation in favour of the brick wall.

I thought this approach to Whole Life Sustainability was enormously refreshing. We architects need to start thinking differently. The RIBA can help spread the message and locate the tools to measure our own impacts.



Design by Harding.

Please note that the campaign for RIBA President 2015 has come to an end and this website will no longer be updated. It remains here in full and I will reply privately to any emails you would like to send. Do make your voice heard by voting in this vital election. Voting takes place between from 18 June to 27 July. Thank you for all your support during the campaign. Kind regards, Oliver

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