

Coarum Workshop 3 – RIAS Communication

By Christina Gaiger – Helen Lucas Architects

The third members workshop in the Coarum series on “RIAS Communication,” was organised and hosted by Helen Lucas Architects Ltd, Edinburgh on 17th May 2018.

“The ease of modern communication conceals the distance between us”

The importance of communication runs through every aspect of The Royal Institute of Architects in Scotland, it is a complex subject which also overlaps with governance and transparency. However, the focus of Workshop 3 was not to dissect the internal workings of the RIAS but to look at communication in three ways:

1. Image
2. Information
3. Outreach

The speakers for the workshop included:

Gail Turpin, Gail Turpin Design: ‘The Importance of Image & Visual Communication’
Astrid Johnston, AST + RED: ‘Information Distillation – What do you want to say?’
Andy Summers, Co-Founder Architecture Fringe: ‘The Mosaic of Architectural Culture in Scotland’

Gail and Astrid’s presentation explored the importance of a website, it’s image, material content and message. The website has become a natural progression for branding and is a key platform to deliver information. The development of a website naturally asks the question *‘how do you want to present and represent yourself?’*.

Andy addressed the bigger picture, and posed the question: *‘do we have an idea of what we want to do in Scotland as a profession?’*

Key points that emerged from the workshop for future RIAS Strategy and further discussion include:

The RIAS Website

The website should deliver a clear message and act as an advertisement for the profession. It is a public face for the importance of Scottish Architecture, alongside a resource for architectural practices. It requires refinement and a re-design.

The RIAS Logo

The RIAS logo carries a lot of history, however despite its heritage it forms more of a barrier than an invitation to explore. The RIAS should look at it’s message as a whole; who do the RIAS want to reach out to, and how can the graphical representation (across the board) help to facilitate this?

Printed Communication

If the website provided a better platform for content and news updates, could the RIAS Quarterly become an annual publication? Printed communication is very important and niche publications are having a resurgence. However, is *‘less but better’* a more progressive strategy?

The Cultivation of Events & Community Engagement

The RIAS should promote and support freelance architectural events in Scotland. It is not key for the RIAS to organize or play a role in these events, however their promotion and continuing encouragement is critical. They are an important resource which highlight key architectural issues and concerns of both the public and the profession.

Connectivity

The RIAS should connect with overlapping activity, civic groups, academia, community groups, practices and local authorities etc. to harness cumulative energy and facilitate progress. This could be done on an issue by issue basis to link the best available resources.

The voice of the RIAS

The heritage of the RIAS has value, the strength and weight of the professional body is essential in order to lobby and engage with the government on behalf of the industry. The capacity of the RIAS should be utilised as a means for positive change.

In summary, the representation of the RIAS should help to support and celebrate the profession. It is a public interface, which can offer a strong platform to promote Scottish Architecture.

A video recording of the workshop is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOdLTq1WIGs&t=4s> and please continue the discussion by contacting strategy@eaa.org.uk