

Chartered Institute of
Architectural Technologists

397 City Road
London EC1V 1NH
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 7278 2206
info@ciat.global
architecturaltechnology.com
@ciatechnologist

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Dear Colleagues,

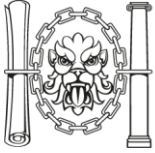
RE: RIBA announcement and regulatory reform of building design professions

On Friday, along with other CIAT Members and affiliates, and colleagues across the built environment sector, I read RIBA President Chris Williamson's announcement that he will not be renewing his ARB registration in 2026 (and as such, will no longer be able to use the title of "architect"). This is part of a wider effort by RIBA to secure significant regulatory reforms in the UK, including "introducing new legislation defining reserved activities".

In view of the significance of this move, I felt I ought to write to you to outline CIAT's position on these issues.

The longstanding view of CIAT is that the status quo, in which the title of "architect" is protected in legislation, creates a needlessly complex regulatory landscape for professionals, clients and procurement professionals alike, and gives some professionals an unfair competitive advantage over others, without significantly enhancing safety or quality in the practice of building design. The Institute has consistently advocated for both procurement and legislation to focus on the functional requirements of projects, rather than on particular professional titles, in order to enable innovation. For this reason, CIAT would not oppose efforts to review the Architects Act (1997).

As detailed in CIAT's June 2025 position paper, "*Safety, innovation and diversity in building design*", CIAT would be open to reform which focuses on competence to deliver specific safety critical functions. However, it is crucial that any such reform does not repeat established mistakes or further entrench inequities. Regulation must also be proportionate to risks and consistent in its approach to individuals and professional organisations.



Therefore, if reform is deemed to be essential, an updated regulatory model must:

- Be co-designed by professional bodies, ensuring that all voices are heard and reflected.
- Focus regulation on safety critical functions – such as those assigned to the Principal Designer (Building Regulations) – rather than arbitrary professional titles.
- Require ongoing demonstration of competence to undertake those functions.
- Align regulatory requirements to approved standards (e.g., for the PD BR role, PAS 8671).
- Ensure that every competent professional has the opportunity to demonstrate their competence, regardless of specific professional titles.
- Maintain the independence of Professional Institutes in protecting and enhancing professional standards, with external oversight of regulated functions only.
- Be realistically implementable across the built environment sector.

It is not yet clear exactly what model of regulation RIBA supports in lieu of the current arrangements, and CIAT is aware that various models have been put forward by other bodies in recent months. CIAT is therefore committed to working with our partners across industry, including through the Construction Industry Council, to ensure that any regulatory reform genuinely enhances safety and quality in building design, while enabling our sector to grow and thrive.

Yours faithfully,

Usman Yaqub BSc (Hons) PCIAT MFPWS

President, Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists