

Guidance Note for CIAT Members on the Use of 'Architect'

CIAT



Architects Registration Board

Endorsed by the Architects
Registration Board



Background

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) was established under the Architects Act 1997 to regulate the profession of architecture in the UK. Under Section 20 of the Act, the title 'architect' is legally protected, and an individual or business may not use the title 'architect' unless registered with the ARB.



Restrictions Surrounding the Title 'Architect'

The ARB focuses on preventing the misuse of the title, as well as raising awareness of its restricted use, rather than solely pursuing prosecutions.

It is a criminal offence to use the title 'architect' in connection with a business or practice while not listed on the ARB Register. This restriction applies to individuals and business entities, such as limited liability partnerships or companies.

According to the Act, an entity may only use the title 'architect' if the business is managed and controlled by a registered architect and the architectural work is conducted by or under the supervision of a registered architect.





Most Common Misuse of Title

Apart from the more obvious scenario where your promotional copy explicitly states or implies that you are an architect when you are not, there are other common situations where the usage of architect may be unintended. This guidance aims to highlight these scenarios and provide practical steps to help you avoid such misunderstandings.

Online Presence

Listing sites

One common issue arises from online directory listings, such as those on Yell.com, where individuals or practices may be categorised under 'architects'. Similar miscategorisations can occur on platforms like Google and professional networking sites such as LinkedIn.

Although these listings are sometimes created without your authorisation, it is important to regularly review your online presence to ensure you are not miscategorised. Any inaccuracies should be promptly identified and corrected. We recommend keeping records of any communications regarding your requests for removal or recategorisation, as this will help demonstrate your best efforts if your request is ignored or refused.

Review sites

Review platforms such as Google Reviews and Trustpilot provide your clients with the opportunity to share feedback about your business. However, clients may sometimes mistakenly refer to you as an architect. While you are not responsible for how others describe you, we recommend responding politely to clarify that you are an Architectural Technologist, not an architect.

To minimise the likelihood of such misunderstandings, ensure you clearly communicate your professional title (e.g., Chartered Architectural Technologist) to your clients. Regularly monitoring reviews and, where feasible, requesting corrections can also help maintain accurate representation of your business and services.

Embedding reviews from review sites

Some review platforms provide tools to embed customer reviews or testimonials directly onto your website or social media profiles. If you use these features, it is essential to carefully manage any references to the title 'architect'. Publishing content on your website that suggests you are an architect, even if it originates from someone else, could make you accountable for the misuse of the title.

In addition to the advice provided earlier, we recommend consulting with your web developer whenever updates are made to your site. Many review embedding tools or 'widgets' offer features to filter reviews, block specific entries, or blacklist keywords such as 'architect'. Implementing these measures can help ensure compliance while still showcasing valuable customer feedback.

Website Metadata

When promoting architectural services through personal or business websites, misuse of the title 'architect' can occur in various areas, including domain names and website content.

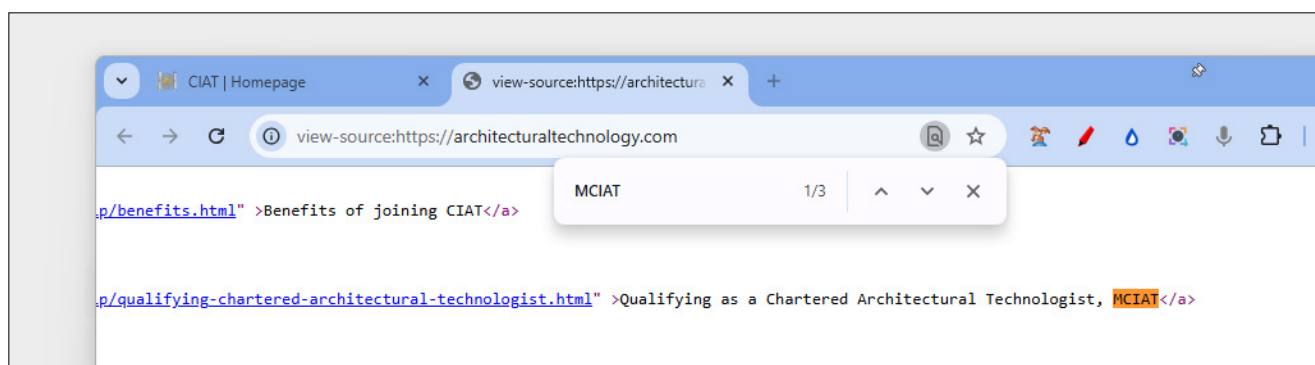
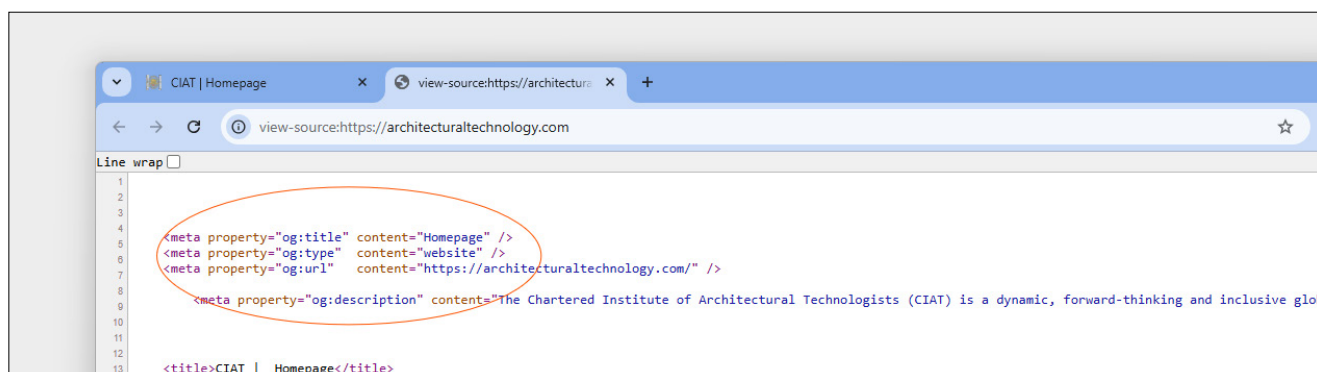
A less obvious but important area to check is metadata, such as 'meta tags'. These are used to improve online visibility and often include descriptions or keywords. If these inadvertently contain the title 'architect', they could lead to your website appearing in search engine results under the 'architect' category, which may result in non-compliance.

This issue often arises when web developers, aiming to enhance search engine optimisation (SEO), unknowingly use the term 'architect' without understanding the legal restrictions or distinctions. To avoid this, the ARB strongly recommends informing your web developer about these restrictions when commissioning or updating your website. Additionally, reviewing and removing any existing references to the title 'architect' in your metadata is essential to ensure compliance.

A simple way to check your site's metadata is by 'viewing the source' of your website. For example, in Google Chrome, you can press **CTRL + U** to view a page's source code, which will look similar to the example below:

The orange circle in the screenshot highlights some of the meta tags. To locate specific terms, press **CTRL + F** and search for any word in the source code. For instance, in the example provided, a search for 'MCIAT' on the Institute's homepage source code reveals 3 instances of the word.

Using this method, you can go through your site page by page and identify some of the less obvious occurrences of 'architect'.





Designatory Letters

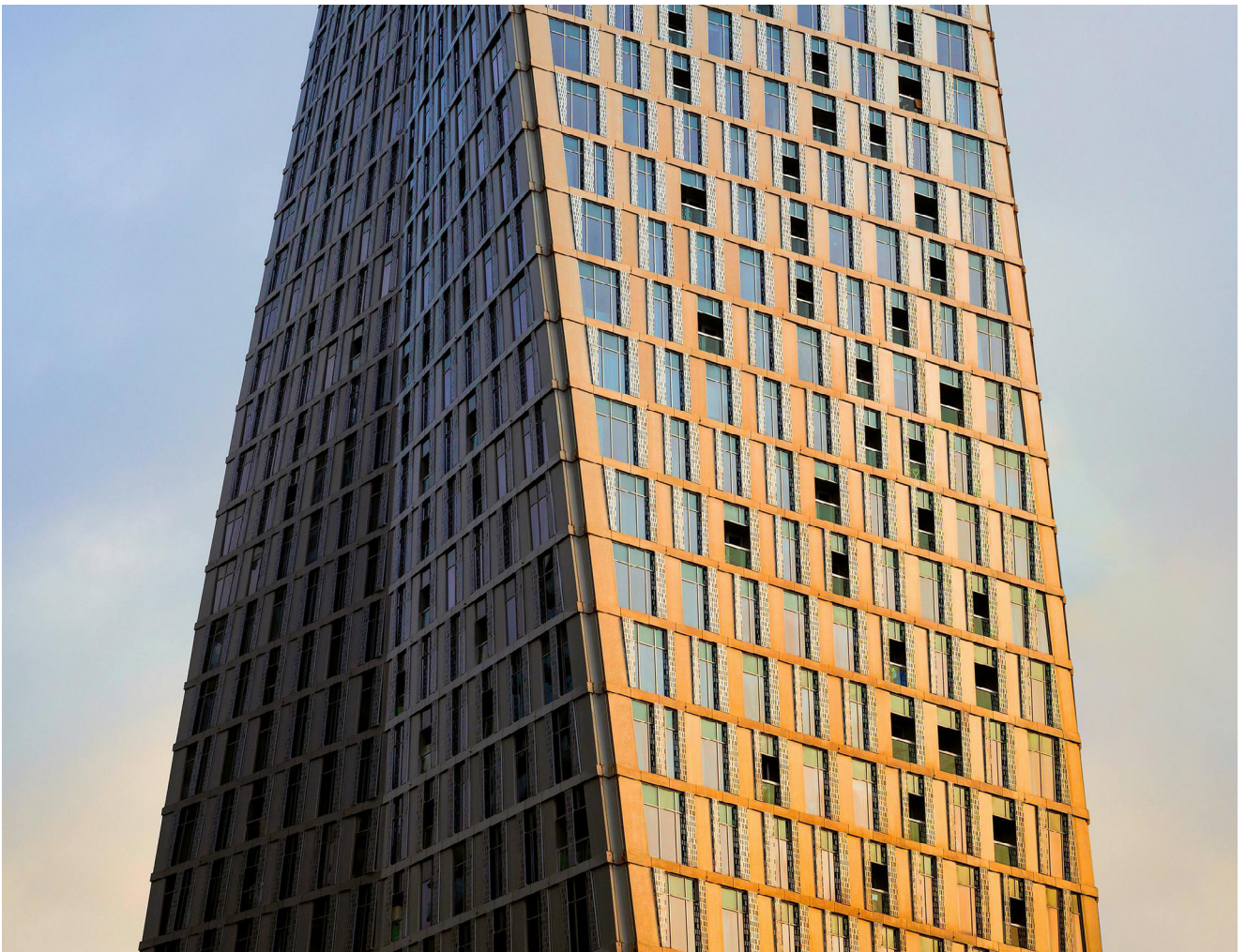
Social media

Social media is no different from any other aspect of your online presence, and many of the issues discussed earlier can apply in this context as well. For instance, it is considered good practice to politely respond and correct anyone in your comments who refers to you as an architect. Additionally, if the platform you're using allows business listings, ensure that your categorisation is accurate and reflects your professional title appropriately. Taking these steps will help maintain clarity and compliance across your social media channels.

RIBA Membership

Some CIAT members may also hold affiliate membership with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

While RIBA membership is not restricted to ARB registered individuals; the acronym 'RIBA' is associated with the legally protected title 'architect'. CIAT members should be aware of this and cannot use the acronym unless they are registered with ARB.



Summary

Overall

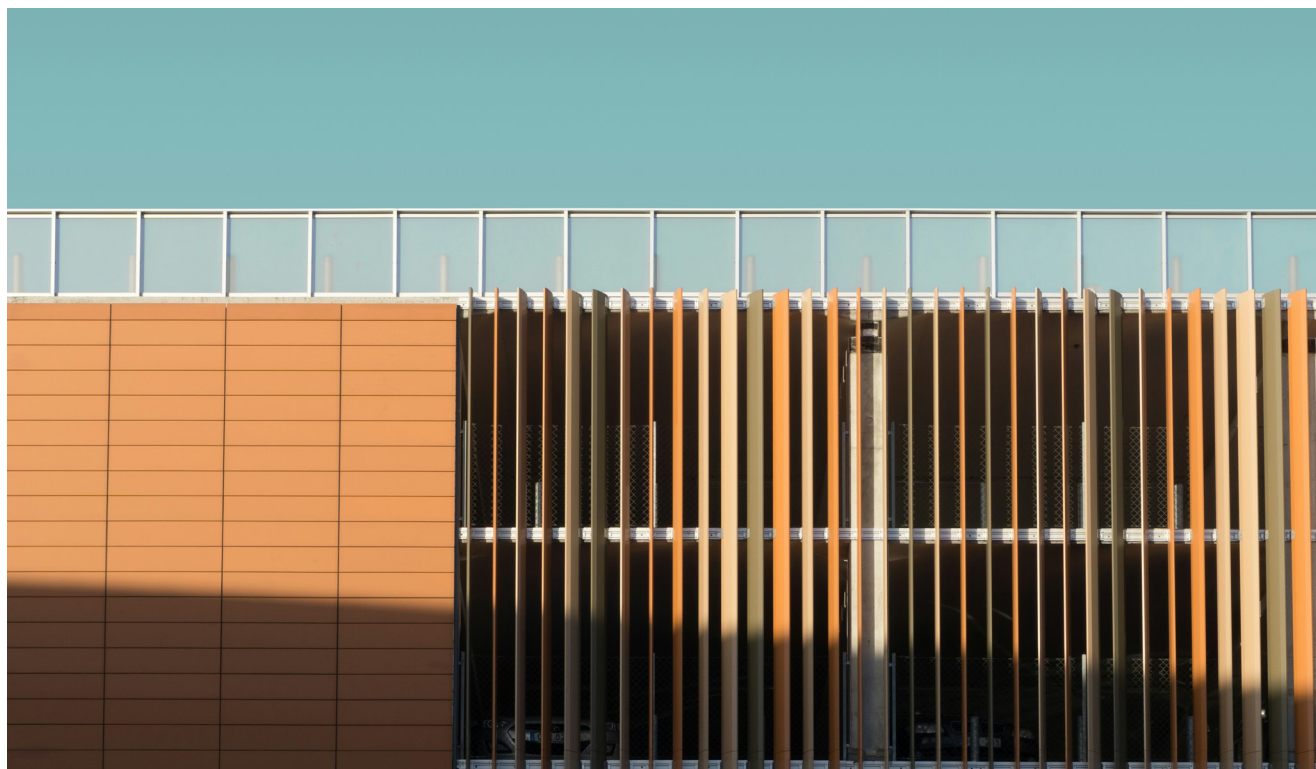
The ARB and CIAT strongly recommend that individuals and practices review their online presence, including social media, website content, and directory listings. Other trading materials, such as letterheads, terms of engagement, planning documentation, signage, and verbal representations to clients, should also be carefully reviewed to ensure compliance with restrictions on the use of the title 'architect'.

In addition to the legal restrictions imposed by the Architects Act 1997, as a member of CIAT, you are bound by the Code of Conduct, which aims to ensure that members and affiliates do not misrepresent themselves or the services they provide. Adhering to this code is essential for maintaining professionalism and upholding the integrity of the profession.

Actionable steps

1. Ensure your business categorisation on listing and social media platforms aligns with your professional title.
2. Inform your web developer of restrictions around the word 'architect' and encourage optimisation around appropriate terms such as 'architectural'.
3. Monitor review platforms like Google Reviews and Trustpilot for client feedback that misrepresents your professional title and respond to correct any inaccuracies.

It's important to regularly check these as platforms and their widgets may be updated such that something that was previously compliant becomes non-compliant.





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