

The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Update

CANADIAN ARCHITECTS AND SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada issued a communique on June 5, 1987 concerning the state of shelter for the homeless in Canadian cities and communities. This statement was issued at the conclusion of a two day series of discussions and debate held for Canadian architects and interested members of the public under the theme of "Architecture: of Heroes and the Homeless."

Rudy P. Friesen, FRAIC, President of the Institute, noted that while many questioned the role of architects in the provision of shelter, it has become evident that many Canadian architects are actively involved with local community organizations in responding to this important social problem. Mr. Friesen challenged his colleagues to become more active and to seek new avenues of influence and create more opportunities to respond to the needs of the homeless.

In concluding the conference the following resolution was adopted by the delegates:

There is now a fundamental problem in this country with regard to the provision of affordable housing for all segments of the population. While it is most drastically affecting those groups we now describe as "homeless", it is also affecting the ability of vast numbers of average working Canadians in many parts of the country to live in dignity and comfort in our towns and cities. It threatens to undermine the viability and stability of our communities and exacerbate the widening gap between haves and have nots.

The growing problem of "homelessness" underlines the urgent need for a complete re-examination of these policies, programs and regulations. This is not a plea for indiscriminate "deregulation" and compromise in quality, but rather a call for an intelligent re-evaluation of the ends we are trying to achieve and the means we have at our disposal.

It is our belief that such a re-examination would and should lead to new solutions across Canada which reflect the diversity of its regions.

We believe that the Architectural profession can make a significant contribution to this re-examination by working with other groups including planners, developers, non-profit housing and co-op housing producers, community groups, and government agencies.

In support of this objective, we propose that in acknowledgement of the present crisis,

1. The Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments of Canada must respond immediately by developing innovative policies at all levels, which:
 - (a) target the minimum annual provision of 50,000 affordable and permanent housing units over the next decade, in order to achieve a significant net increase in affordable housing across the country;
 - (b) encourage the redevelopment and intensification of use of private and public lands and buildings within existing municipal boundaries for such housing.
2. The RAIC should, through its Architectural Network Housing Committee:
 - (a) work with these government agencies in achieving the above objective;
 - (b) promote a program of education and information dissemination which publicizes the extent, and architectural response to, the current housing crisis;
 - (c) promote the expansion, and provide a focus for, the network which exists between architects, planners, social service agencies and other non-governmental agencies;
 - (d) promote the expansion of the services and programs currently provided by the RAIC in developing countries, and encourage the transfer of lessons learned from this experience to Canadians.

Canadian and U.S. Architects Sign Agreement on Trade in Services

The Presidents of The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA), working closely with their respective trade negotiations teams headed by Simon Reisman and Peter Murphy, signed an Accord on Professionalism and trade in architectural services in October 1987 setting the stage to work towards reciprocity for Canadian and U.S. architects practicing on both sides of the border.

The joint agreement, signed by RAIC President Terry Williams and AIA President Donald J. Hackl outlines principles of professionalism for maintaining high standards of architectural practice and professional conduct in North America.

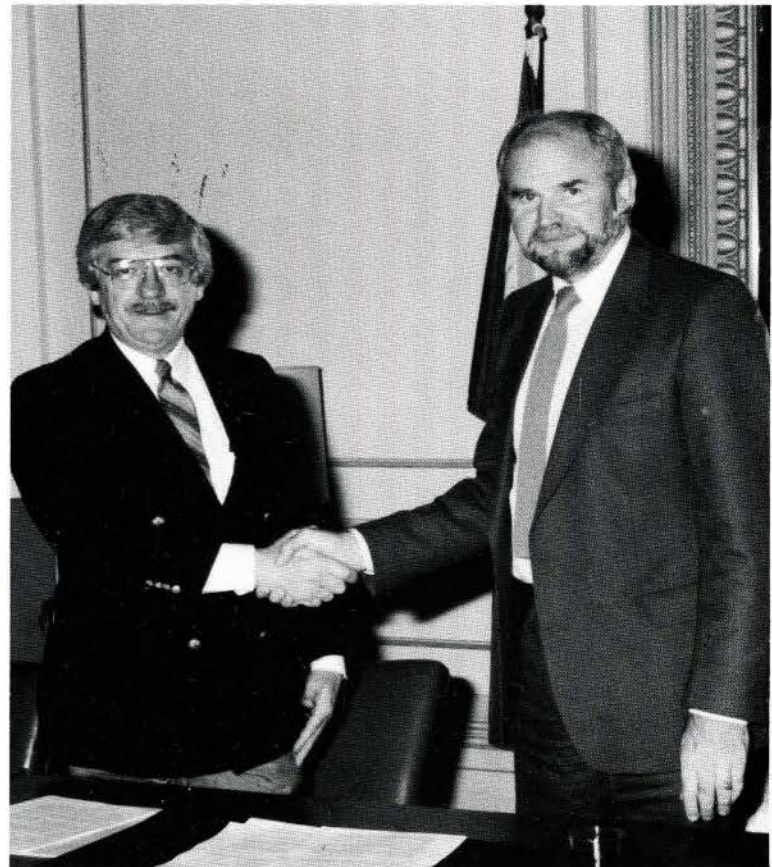
Both Institutes have worked over the past year to establish an approach to professional services within the current free trade negotiations. After consultations and endorsement by the provincial architectural licensing organizations and the Boards of the RAIC and AIA, they proposed that the professional issues related to trade in architectural services not be dealt with by the negotiators but left to the profession to achieve mutual recognition of professional standards. This became acceptable to the trade negotiators once both Institutes demonstrated a commitment to achieving this objective by adopting a detailed Work Plan.

Pat Carney, Minister for International Trade wrote recently to Present Williams, "The RAIC position on free trade . . . represents the first effort among the professions to address the potential impact of a free trade agreement, and provides a useful model for other professions to follow. I commend you and your organization for your leadership and your creative approach to objectives of mutual benefit to the RAIC and to Canada."

Williams reported that this Accord and Work Plan would form a formal sub-agreement on architectural services as part of the larger free trade agreement between Canada and the U.S. if such an agreement is completed. "We have been advised that no other profession will have the benefit of such a sub-agreement and we are pleased to have been able to take the lead in this regard" said Williams.

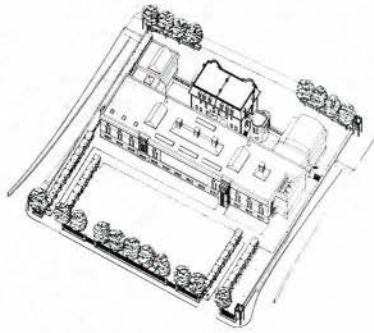
The accord addresses the expertise, autonomy, commitment and accountability of both groups to ensure that architects meet acceptable standards, provide expert advice to clients, bring a high level of "selfless" dedication to their work, and accept responsibility for their advice. The statement stresses that architectural professional standards "be established and maintained in the interest of public health, safety and welfare," particularly in regard to architectural education, registration and discipline of architects.

The two Institutes will now undertake a period of joint research and consultation with provincial/state jurisdictions to advance the objectives set out in the agreements and will report back to their respective governments by late in 1988.



AIA President Donald J. Hackl (left) and RAIC President Terry Williams after signing of historic agreement on trade in architectural services.

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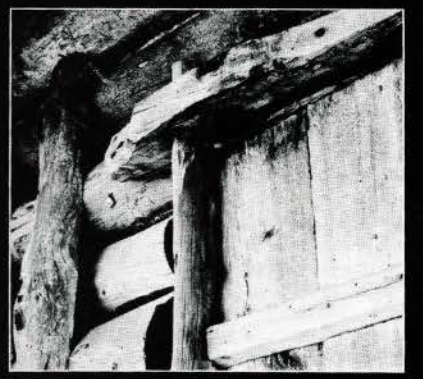
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