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## LETTERS

### Arb must tackle discipline flaws

The letter from Beatrice Fraenkel (*Letters* August 2) stating Arb works as a regulator for the benefits of architects and the public alike is not borne out by the way Arb has dealt with a number of recent disciplinary cases – some widely reported in the media.

I have been involved in two cases where Arb procedures in investigating and deciding complaints have not been handled correctly, efficiently or – most importantly – fairly during the investigation process and in one case the final PCC hearing.

I get no pleasure from asking you to print my views as a past chairman of Arb and someone who believes the Registration Board has a very worthwhile function. But there are clearly serious flaws in the way Arb is conducting its disciplinary procedures. If not rectified, these will provide persuasive ammunition to those who wish to see Arb abolished – something I believe would be potentially disastrous for the profession and the RIBA.

**Owen Luder**  
Past chairman, Arb

■ I note that Arb is poised to launch a penalty on Joshua Whitfield Berry after Westminster Magistrates Court fined him for causing unauthorised work to be done to a listed building (*News* June 21). Again it highlights the vulnerability of architects in daily practice, and more so at the hands of our self-appointed "regulator".

We all know it is impossible to predict the condition of a building at the design stage, and faults usually reveal themselves during the opening-up process. At that stage the architect has to make quick decisions knowing that if he waits he is at risk of being sued for delays.

I don't know the precise circumstances but I have no doubt Berry acted with the best interests of the building and project in mind. What is worrying is that he must join the architects who will have their reputations blighted by Arb under its inherently unfair procedures.

As one of those abused by Arb and its PCC, I don't hold out much hope of Berry receiving a fair hearing.

**Andrew Plumridge**  
Newbury, Berkshire

### Dittmar's views are borne out

Hank Dittmar (*Opinion* July 26) highlighted the latent contradiction in recent planning reforms between the promotion of growth through building more housing and a wish to return power to local communities. How this pans out can be seen in what was a failure in the campaign to "save" the Castle pub in Battersea High Street.

It seems the pub is being torn down and replaced by not much more than a large space to be labelled "Public House". This is likely to be shorn of most of what helped to make the pub so successful: open space for outdoor activities, cool-cellar facilities, the tenant operators and the relaxed feel that an individual building can give.

**Peter Deakins**  
London SW11



Finland: show us the money.

### Aalto hits just the right note

If Finland in 1986 could have Alvar Aalto on its banknotes (*Archive* August 2), can we expect Norman Foster, Richard Rogers or Zaha Hadid on a banknote sometime soon – and not have to wait hundreds of years, by which time cash will be extinct anyway?

**Simon Carne**  
London SW13

### Style is one part of the package

I would love to agree with Owen Hatherley (*Opinion* August 2) that the British working class go to Benidorm because of the modernist architecture, but the reality is they put up with slab block hotels because they are affordable.

You don't have to be Robert Adam to suggest that, given a larger pay packet, the majority of working men and women would prefer a mock traditional villa.

**Simon Gill**  
London SW6

### Be precise about design and build

I read with interest your article on Hammond Court by Mae Architects (*Building* July 26). I am disappointed, however, that my own practice, Stephen Davy Peter Smith Architects, is not mentioned, as we were responsible for trying to retain Mae's original design concept, which I believe we achieved.

One of the many pitfalls of design and build is the change in architect from design to production information stage. It is incumbent on the architect responsible for the design stage to ensure the design is thoroughly resolved before the project is tendered.

Rather than grumble about negatives, we need to impress on clients the need to develop the design to a fully detailed stage prior to issue of tender information. This is the only way the end result will get close to the vision.

**Stephen Davy**  
London N1

### Help us preserve front gardens

We are shocked that Eric Pickles is encouraging renting out parking in residential front gardens. As members of the Bring Fronts Back campaign, we are concerned about the disastrous impact on streets where one garden after another is dominated by cars, dustbins and the aridity of metal, concrete and Tarmac where once there were hedges, grass and tended plants.

**Terry Brown & Rob Cowan**  
London SW18

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