

White Paper

We hope that this Resolution will be the galvanizing initiative to focus the Institute on a building science and technology. Architects all around the world are moving toward a new paradigm where the inspiration for design comes from a deeper understanding of how their buildings work and how their work can have relevance. Architects and their clients are looking for ways to create higher performance buildings. The Institute, as a knowledge-based institution needs to be in a position to help its members realize these goals.

The tools of our trade need to be improved dramatically, not only in the area of computers, but also in development of new construction materials to solve problems in better ways, standards for testing of actual construction, a host of constructability issues. In particular, we need to pay attention to the management of heat, air and moisture (HAM) in our buildings and their enclosures.

The construction industry in the United States is balkanized into silos of expertise. The architects have participated in this balkanization by staking out design as their territory. This Resolution asks that the Institute assist architects in re-centering their role. We believe that architects are uniquely situated to lead the construction industry because architects are in the central position between the engineers and other consultants and the owner. In some respects they are the only ones that are potentially capable of facilitating the breadth of the necessary dialogue, from conceptual design and site selection through to flashings and commissioning.

To take on this role, architects will have to examine the entire breadth of their position within the design community. For example, there might be a separate degree in building science and technology that might be a prerequisite for being an architect.

We will need to encourage our engineers to rethink their approach to design, to include creative responsibility at the outset of projects. And, we will have to review the implications of architects taking leadership in building science and technology on professional liability insurance, agreement forms, etc.

We urge your positive vote on this Resolution.

Read at Convention, May 21, 2005