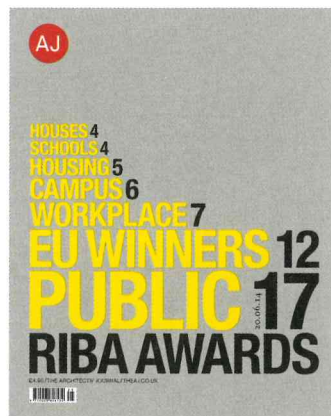


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The letter of the week's author will receive an AJ mug. Letters should be received by 10am on the Monday before publication. The AJ reserves the right to edit letters.

No real competition

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Rory Olcayto's leader column ('With 10 national RIBA awards in five years, is FCBS the best design architect in Britain? AJ 20.06.14) on RIBA Award-winning practices was interesting, but part of the reason why Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCBS) has won so many RIBA Awards is that there is just not enough competition.

The RIBA Competitions office organised just 19 competitions last year, compared with 500-plus in Switzerland. Other talent just does not get a look-in. Until we can encourage more clients to use competitions, the favoured few will mop up the work. No wonder FCBS continues to get awards. So no, we should not read anything into FCBS's success.

The London School of Economics must be congratulated for opening up this area. It has appointed a wide range of architects and freely admits it would never otherwise have considered O'Donnell + Tuomey for its Student Centre.

Dominic Kramer, director, Morton Wykes Kramer

Awards are misleading

FCBS is not the 'best' design architect in Britain (AJ 20.06.14) if you judge it by its work at Mount Pleasant. Perhaps a better way of assessing such claims would be to judge a practice by its worst work, rather than by its best. We, the public, have to live with everything: the good, the bad and the ugly. Architects should be accountable for it all – not be allowed to trumpet only those projects that win medals.

Your article also highlights Allford Hall Monaghan Morris and Allies and Morrison, which also contributed to the unfolding disaster at Mount Pleasant. It is not their fault: their hands were tied by a poor and unchallenged brief, but the result is a tragedy. Such examples should not be allowed to go unnoticed because awards roll in for a tiny minority of work.

Edward Denison, online

Quantity, not quality

In Felix Mara's introduction to the RIBA Awards (AJ 20.06.14) he wrote: 'There's also a 25 per

cent increase in the proportion of London projects in this year's list of national awards, which is a frank register of where the quality is.'

Sorry, Felix, but surely that penultimate word should be 'quantity'? If most of the money is in the capital, then most of the construction is in the capital, then *ipso facto* most of the quality – you get my drift.

Robert Longthorne, online

Correction

Amanda Levete's comment in our news feature on the Skyline campaign last week ('How can the planning process be made to deliver great tall buildings?' AJ 20.06.14) was altered in error to read: '[An expert Skyline Commission ...] must balance perspectives that are not limited by boundary or councillors' localism.' The passage should have read: 'For an expert Skyline Commission to have an effect, its views must be statutorily incorporated into the planning process. It must balance the localism of councillors with perspectives that are not limited by boundary.'



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