



Information Policy & Compliance

bbc.co.uk/foi

13 June 2008

Dear

Freedom of Information request – RFI2006000281

I refer to your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act") dated 24 April 2006, namely:

You have released some correspondence relating to the Broadcasting House project in your response RFI2005000897.¹ You also withheld some citing negotiations at the time which may have been compromised. With several months passed, I am writing to ask you to release those letters to me.

The documents withheld at that time were as follows:

- 17 Aug 2005 - Email (with two attachments), Ann Callow (MJP) to Mark Thompson (BBC).
 - Attachment 1 - Transfer Structure Simplification Process
 - Attachment 2 - email from Whitbybird to MJP.
- 19 Aug 2005 - Letter, Mark Thompson (BBC) to Sir Richard MacCormac (MJP)
- 24 Aug 2005 - Letter, Sir Richard MacCormac (MJP) to Mark Thompson (BBC)
- 25 Aug 2005 - Letter, Sir Richard MacCormac (MJP) to Michael Grade (BBC)
- 01 Sep 2005 - Letter, Michael Grade (BBC) to Sir Richard MacCormac (MJP)
- 03 Oct 2005 - Letter, Mark Thompson (BBC) to Sir Richard MacCormac (MJP)

In our response of 22 May 2006 we explained to you that the negotiations referred to in our response to the original request (RFI2005000897) were still in train. As such, the BBC considered that section 43(2) of the Act still applied and we were still unable to release the

¹ This request was for 'all correspondence on the procurement of the new Broadcasting House project: internally at the BBC Property Group; and between the BBC and LandsecTrillium.'



above information, as the disclosure of such would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the BBC.

We noted that there was a public interest in accessing information held by the BBC about the Broadcasting House Project, but that the release of the correspondence could impair negotiations on the Project and/or impair the integrity and viability of the decision-making/negotiation process to a significant or substantial degree without a compensating benefit to the public.

The Information Commissioner has asked the BBC to reassess our position on this information. We now consider that section 43(2) no longer applies to this information and are able to release it to you. Please find attached the above-listed documents.

You will note that we have withheld email addresses and phone numbers from these documents under section 40(2) of the Act as this information constitutes personal data and disclosure would breach the second Data Protection Principle (fair and lawful processing).

Kind regards,

Stephanie Simmonds
Senior Advisor
BBC Information Policy and Compliance

From: Ann Callow WITHHELD, S40
Sent: 17 August 2005 17:33
To: S40
Subject: Transfer Structures

Dear Mark,

I promised I would follow up our meeting with some further information.

During the meeting I said that work on our preferred structure had been thwarted.

I enclose a record of the Transfer Structure Simplification process which shows where it got held up. In particular we were prohibited from completing assessments of both the steel and concrete options of the 29x18 grid. So no proper comparisons with the other more conventional options could be made and there remains no objective case against it in terms of programme, cost or risk.

I also enclose a statement from Whitby Bird about risk which is self explanatory.

At our meeting Keith Beal stated that a decision had already been made and any further delay in deciding the form of the transfer structure would delay the design of the basement. We are the designers and that is not our view. The basement design is in flux and can accept options.

I suppose that Bovis have made the decision not to build this great piece of architecture and it is part of a deal.

The BBC will lose the iconic heart of the project and staff the most wonderful and inspiring space. This is a fundamental change, yet there has been no formal consultation, I feel very uncomfortable with this. One of the vitally good things about this project has been the huge support and enthusiasm from the real clients, the staff.

Best wishes

Richard MacCormac

Ann Callow
Marketing Assistant/Project Administrator
MacCormac Jamieson Prichard

9 Heneage Street, London E1 5LJ

S 40

w: <http://www.mjparchitects.co.uk>

MacCormac Jamieson Prichard Limited
Registered in England, No. 03163770

21/11/2005

Transfer Structure Simplification Process
Event Schedule as of 17 August 2005

Presentation 19 July

Options presented:

- 1) 18 x 9 Vertical column grid, concrete or steel
- 2) 18 x 18 Vertical column grid, concrete or steel
- 3) 29 x 18 grid, 2 dimensional tree, concrete or steel
- 4) 29 x 18 grid, 4 dimensional steel tree

DECISION: 3) and 4) rejected. 1) and 2) taken forward.

Presentation 25 July

Options presented:

- 1) 18 x 9 Vertical column grid, concrete
- 2) 18 x 18 Vertical column grid, concrete

New 5) 18 x 18 Vertical column grid, steel

DECISION: 1) and 5) rejected. 2) to be taken forward, and additional option prepared with V-shaped columns. **Further option raised by RMC (29 x 18 Angled column grid)** to be worked up by Design Team for to same level of detail. Perspectives to be prepared of each option for comparison.

26 July

A. Asbury emailed team stating that MJP was to carry out 2 week exercise on the additional option but that it must be based on 18 x 18 grid, and would be carried out free of charge.

RMC responded that the grid spacing for the additional option was 29 x 18, based on the current Stage E geometry and that we would not carry out the work for free.

Peter Frackiewicz responded to RMC reiterating the points made by A. Asbury.

Terry Dobbins responded to PF's email supporting RMC's statement.

Presentation 1 August

Options presented:

- 2) 18 x 18 Vertical column grid, concrete

New 6) 29 x 18 Angled column grid

New 7) 18 x 18 Angled column grid, concrete

DECISION: 2) rejected. Additional perspectives of options 6) and 7) to be prepared for comparison.

2 August

Bob Ogilvie emailed RMC to confirm the BBC's intention to go forward with option 6) and 7) and compare the two.

Presentation 8 August

Options presented:

- 6) 29 x 18 Angled column grid, steel
- 7) 18 x 18 Angled column grid, concrete

DECISION: Bob Ogilvie requested copies of all perspectives. After the meeting BLL reported that a steel column option was not desirable. MJP and WB agreed to prepare a version of the 29 x 18 Angled column structure in concrete for further discussion on Wednesday.

8 August – 10 August

MJP & WB continued to work on 29 x 18 Angled column in concrete. Meeting with BLL and Byrne Brothers was arranged for 10 August but cancelled by BLL.

11 August

Decision-making meeting held between BBC, BLL and LS. We have subsequently learned that the decision to reject the 29 x 18 Angled column option and proceed with the 18 x 18 vertical column option was taken.

Released by the BBC under
The Freedom of Information Act

Amanda Churchill

From: Reception [reception@mjparchitects.co.uk]
Sent: 17 August 2005 17:08
To: Ann Callow
Subject: FW: BBCW1

From: Mark Whitby WITHHELD 540
Sent: 17 August 2005 16:44
To: Reception
Cc: Terry Dobbins; Mike Crane; Des Mairs
Subject: BBCW1

Richard

Thank you for the call. As I said we all have to face risks both in life and in our projects and at the BBC these are well rehearsed.

The transfer structure as designed to date is a classic example of this and the fact that it is considered a risk is a part of the process of mitigating that risk.

What I have noticed in engineering many buildings and bridges is that where a team member identifies risks and shares those concerns with the whole team it is rarely a problem. In fact the opposite occurs and what might have been perceived as next to impossible becomes child's play with everyone wondering what all the fuss was about. This is the case for the transfer structure. Our job if the structure goes ahead will be to constantly assess with the team the risks involved and work together to mitigate them. This is the essence of engineering.

Where risks surface to cause problems is often just when people have become complacent to them...and are seeing the process as easy.. which is the case with many who copy pioneering work.

The transfer structure at BBCW1 is a challenge but one my fellow directors Des Mairs and Terry Dobbins, and myself, who are closely involved with the project, are not daunted by and whilst it would be unwise to compare with other projects by no means the greatest challenge we or our industry have faced.

However as I discussed what ever the outcome of this current debate the BBCW1 needs your energy and passion and I am especially concerned that this process should leave you so dispirited. I know there are more challenges to overcome and am keen that we all work together with the whole team including Landsec and Bovis to achieve a building worthy of your inspiration, fit for purpose that all, especially the BBC, can have lasting pride in.

Mark

Mark Whitby

whitbybird

60 Newman Street London W1T 3DA
www.whitbybird.com

whitbybird Ltd registered in England and Wales reg.no. 03659970

21/11/2005



From the Director-General

Richard MacCormac
MacCormac Jamieson Prichard
9 Heneage Street
London
E1 5LJ

19th August 2005

Dear Richard,

Thank you very much for taking the time to come in to see me this week to discuss the W1 project and the issue of the transfer structure. Both in our meeting and in our subsequent phone conversation you left me in no doubt about how passionately you feel about the issue and how central you feel it is to the wider project.

My own career as a programme-maker and as a commissioner of programmes from people of outstanding creative vision and talent means that I have learned to take concerns of this kind very seriously indeed. We all want to do everything we can to achieve your vision for this building. Clearly though there are other factors I have to consider in addition, especially the issues of cost, risk and timetable.

I can see that the debate about the transfer structure has been complex and frustrating, not just for you but for all the parties. I also recognise that different parties have different recollections of exactly what was said or wasn't said at different points in the process. You seemed to hint in our meeting at elements of bad faith either on the part of Bovis, Whitby Bird or the BBC team. I don't see any evidence of that at all. The evidence to me points to a group of people wrestling in good faith with a difficult and complex issue under the pressures of time and cost.

I have weighed up all of the information at my disposal and all of the arguments made to me by you and others this week. I have also passed on to the BBC team the point you made to me yesterday about what you say is the lack of a proper risk assessment of the various proposals on the transfer structure. I recognise that the process as a whole may not have been perfect. I also recognise that you believe that your most recent proposals have not had a comprehensive airing. I do believe however that all of the essential points at issue have been debated at length and on a number of occasions. I believe that the meeting held between the BBC, Land Securities and Bovis on 11 August did have sufficient information at its disposal to make an informed decision. Despite the passionate and I know entirely well-intentioned case you have made to me, I do not believe I can or should overturn that decision.

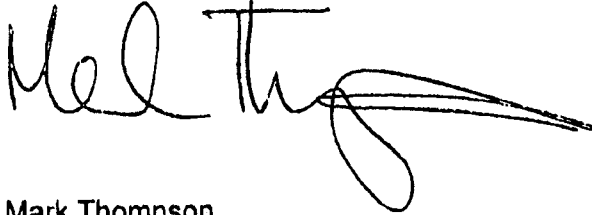


INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Although I know this will be a considerable disappointment to you, I would urge you to continue to have faith not just in the project but in our creative commitment to it. I am very anxious that you should take a full part in the remainder of the project. I have told Keith and the team that it is essential that they listen to your take on the simplification process with great care. Please do not assume that my unwillingness to reverse this decision means that every other decision will go against you. We will make sure that each decision is decided on its merits with the creative issues weighed carefully alongside cost and timetable.

I remain totally committed to the quality of the project personally. I hope that, despite this setback in the relationship between you and the project team, we can quickly rebuild a strong – indeed a stronger – working partnership.

With all best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Thompson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Mark Thompson

Released by the RBC under
the Freedom of Information Act

9 HENEAGE STREET, SPITALFIELDS, LONDON E1 5JJ

telephone 020 7377 9262 facsimile 020 7247 7854 e-mail mjp@mjparchitects.co.uk web www.mjparchitects.co.uk

Mark Thompson
British Broadcasting Corporation
Media Centre
Media Village White City
201 Wood Lane
London
W12 7TQ

RECEIVED
26 AUG 2005

24 August 2005

Dear Mark

BBC Broadcasting House Redevelopment

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. I am grateful for your commitment to the project.

However, I think that the project is at a watershed which needs to be understood by all parties if we are to go forward. Either the scheme continues to be stripped of its architectural quality, until it becomes entirely unworthy of the BBC, or there is a reaffirmation of the original aspirations of the project and determination to create a work of architecture.

I must accept your decision about the News Room structure. However, it has taken the heart out of the project and eliminated what had already become, for architectural critics and those informed about the project, its great icon. This is an immense loss. My concern is for the BBC rather than simply personal disappointment.

But to me this loss also signals a real crisis in the way decisions in the future are to be made. I see three interrelated issues: evaluation, long and short term benefits, client / architect roles, responsibilities and relationships.

All I asked for in the transfer structure process was that it should be properly evaluated. It was an ambitious idea but also a simplification of the scheme already part of Bovis' contract, so it wasn't rocket science! I would have been disappointed but reconciled if we had been able to participate in an objective evaluation which proved the structure really had consequences for risk, time and cost.

I dwell on this because of the implications for future decisions.

The decision also brings into focus the tensions between long term and short term benefits which are characteristic of most projects.

Chairman Sir Richard MacCormac CBE FRIBA RA, Managing Director Jeremy Eslop, Company Secretary Mike Evans
Directors Matthew Dean, Mark Hines, Duncan McKinnon, Liz Pride
Associates David Allerton, Derek Gibbons, Marion Guerin, Yvra Kritz, Anthony Pryor, Reza Schuster, Daniel Shabetov
Senior Architects David Bulley, Chris Burrows, Kathryn Grossman, Matthew Mallon, Edward Rhodes, David Rose
Architects Richard Cohen, Sebastian Drewes, Gerald Fox, Andrew Froad, Andy Jones, Hal Jones, Lucy Jones,
Joanna Macdonald, Stephen Mowry, Richard Moorby, Julie Morrison, Joann Tang, Joe Wrightley
Consultants Peter Jamieson
MacCormac Jamieson Prichard Limited Registered in England No. 03163770

I fully appreciate the need for the short term 'wins' to expedite this project. But the vital issue in any ambitious scheme is to establish a process of evaluation and negotiation which keeps the long term at the forefront of consideration. That is no longer the case, and I foresee a process (which has already started) which establishes a schedule of erosion of every architectural characteristic of our design deemed irrelevant to 'fitness for purpose' whatever that is! No serious work of architecture can stand up to that kind of simplistic judgement. Nobody is taking a long view; how are we all going to be judged in five years' time and how are staff going to feel for the next fifty years?

This brings me to the issue of roles, responsibilities and relationships. You have asked Keith to listen to my 'take', my perceptions of architectural value. But my understanding is that his total responsibility as sole client is to win back time and money and reduce risk. I am convinced, as you clearly are, that there are enormous and critical issues of quality and creativity central to the project. But I currently have no authority to represent such issues. I have no authority to be a surrogate client. It is not an exaggeration to say that I and my colleagues are now little more than draughtsmen for the project managers. For me to have any authority I need the commitment from the BBC at a high level to support the architectural vision. I believe I should regularly report to the Executive Board. In the meantime I will keep in touch with you as the current simplification process develops.

We are a great and famous architectural practice which has given the BBC what has hitherto been the design for a marvellous building. What I am experiencing now is an insufferable contempt for what we have achieved and for what I personally stand for. I have never experienced anything like this, and it is not something I or my brilliant team would have to live with over the next five years!

Two alternatives face us. One is that cost and timetable prevail over just about all other considerations and the project ends up no better than a spec office building. This would be a disaster for the BBC but that is the current direction.

The alternative is a reaffirmation of the original aspirations of the project and what it offers as an inspiring working environment. We need recognition of our design leadership and creativity and of our willingness to engage in a collaborative process in which architecture is respected. We are wholly committed to this project.

Please can we come to an understanding about this soon. At present we feel that the project and we as a practice are dying the slow death of a thousand cuts!

With all best wishes

Yours sincerely
Richard MacCormac.

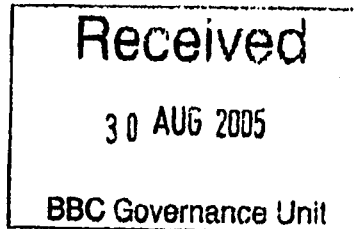
Sir Richard MacCormac

P.S. I am going on holiday - for which there is never a good time! I will be in touch with the office!

9 HENEAGE STREET, SPITALFIELDS, LONDON E1 5UJ

telephone 020 7377 9262 facsimile 020 7247 7854 email mjp@mjparchitects.co.uk web www.mjparchitects.co.uk

Michael Grade
BBC Television Centre
Wood Lane
London
W12 7RJ



25 August 2005

Dear Michael

Broadcasting House Redevelopment

I am writing to you to record what I believe to be a serious setback to the architectural aspirations of this project. A decision has been made to abandon the News Room transfer structure and hence the great space it made at the heart of the building. I believe that this would have been one of the most wonderful and celebrated spaces in the world.

It was included in Bovis' contract but has now been abandoned because of 'risk'. There may well be risk, but there has been no formal risk evaluation which I believe there should have been to justify such a loss of value.

Mark and I have been in correspondence about this and I have made it clear that I accept the decision, however reluctantly.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Richard MacCormac

Sir Richard MacCormac

cc - DA'S OFFICE
CHRIS KANE
JOHN SMITH



From The Chairman

1 September 2005

Sir Richard MacCormac
Chairman, MacCormac Jamieson Prichard
9 Heneage Street
Spitalfields
London E1 5LJ

Our Ref: 12020250

My dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter of 25 August regarding the redevelopment of the BBC's Broadcasting House and its decision to not go ahead with the News Room transfer structure.

I am sorry that you are not happy with the BBC Executive's decision regarding this, but this is not a matter with which I can involve myself. As Chairman of the Board of Governors I do not have any role in such operational matters which the Board delegates to the Director-General and his management team. I note that you have already been in correspondence with Mark Thompson and that you have met with him and John Smith. It is appropriate that any concerns you have should continue to be raised with them.

Many thanks for your letter.

MICHAEL GRADE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



From the Director-General

3 October 2005

Sir Richard MacCormac
MacCormac Jamieson Prichard
9 Heneage Street
London E1 5LJ

Dear Richard

Thank you for your letter of August 24. I hope you can accept my apologies for the regrettable delay in replying.

I wanted first to express my gratitude to you for your part in ensuring that the working partnership behind the project remains effective in the face of the concerns you raise. I am grateful too for the suggestion, raised via Richard Sambrook that BBC stakeholders might be offered the opportunity to look in detail at the simplified plans. I understand that John Smith will now be looking into the possibility of arranging a seminar, which we feel offers the best format to ensure that all fully understand the issues at hand. I will of course aim to attend the seminar myself.

I very much hope that the increased understanding fostered by such an event might help to answer your concerns – perhaps in a more direct manner than that offered by ongoing correspondence between ourselves. However, as your letter touches upon several pressing issues, I hope it will prove helpful if I briefly outline the BBC's position.

I think it worth stressing firstly that the BBC remains committed to producing a world class facility for our teams, and that our prime consideration in achieving that excellence remains the total integration of space, technology, and people. I appreciate your concerns on the long-term implications of decisions made towards these ends, and the importance of appropriate processes of evaluation and negotiation in this context. I must however disagree that current practice does not allow for a longer view to be taken. Rather, I can assure you that all review recommendations are being made in the light of the long term benefits – in particular to the BBC's operational requirements and with very careful regard to the needs and skills of BBC staff. Indeed, no decisions are being taken without considerable input from the occupier divisions. Further, those recommendations are made in context with the totality of the operation - including of course creativity, future proofing, flexibility, running costs and lifecycle.

Cont'd/



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

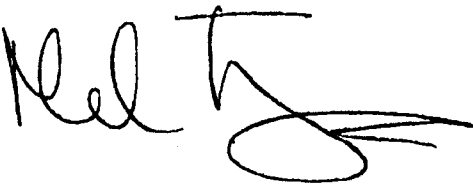
Your letter also touches upon questions of roles and responsibilities, and while I appreciate your concerns in this area I must stress that the project director has my full support for the work that he is doing, and I cannot agree with your suggestion that his remit is simply to "win back time and money and reduce risk." I have charged him with delivering for the BBC a world class broadcast facility to house a centre for journalistic excellence, while ensuring that we make effective use of public money. The role of the design team is to deliver the most effective solutions and alternatives to the briefing requirements based on their considerable experience and within the contexts of creativity, budget and time. It goes without saying that the role of the architect is integral to the successful delivery of this remit.

Project governance however reflects the responsibility for performance and delivery of the project managers. This is reflected in the contractual relationships which the BBC has entered into with both Bovis Lend Lease and Land Securities Development. I firmly believe that the current working relationships are the right ones, and that all parties are enthusiastically focussed on successful delivery of the project.

I can assure you that there is absolutely no question of contempt for the skills of the various teams, or of their achievements. In fact we believe that there is a reinvigorated passion for the project, and are delighted to have the assured commitment of MJP towards this end.

Once again please accept my thanks to you for your part in that commitment to the success of the project, and my sincere hope that the end result of this process is a unique building with which all can be justly proud - one which is entirely worthy of the BBC, and of your efforts.

Best wishes



Mark Thompson

Released by the BBC under
Freedom of Information Act