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What is the Optimal Structure for Organisations Representing Design and Designers on the Island of Ireland?

By

BARRY SHEEHAN

THESIS
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Professional Design Practice

School of Art, Design and Printing, Faculty of Applied Arts,
Dublin Institute of Technology, 2009

Abstract

The research question addresses the issue of the structure of organisations that represent the interests of design and designers on the island of Ireland. The role of designers in Ireland is seen by society as marginal, rather than one central to the economic, social, and cultural well being of the island and those who live on it. This problem is exacerbated, as the organisational structures of those who play a key part are both confused and confusing.

The answer to the question of what is an optimal structure lies in the literature that has been written on the subject and the experiences of the people who have played a key role in design organisations both on the island of Ireland and abroad. The significant literature was reviewed and ten key people were interviewed as part of this dissertation.

The dissertation ends with conclusions and recommendations. These, if adopted, will help designers make better use of their collective resources, enabling them to increase the awareness of the importance of the role that design plays on the island.

The island of Ireland is celebrated for its creative skills; the arts, literature and music. All are world renowned. Design is a creative activity. So why is Irish design not celebrated widely? The dissertation concludes that part of the answer lies in the fragmentation and dispersion of Irish designers, their lack of unity and their lack of a common voice. With no voice, the interests of Irish design and its designers are simply not being listened to; either on the island, throughout Europe, or internationally.

The dissertation recommends that the representation of designers should be seen as separate to the representation of design. Design promotion can be undertaken on an all-island basis, whilst design support should be undertaken locally. If each of these activities is clearly defined and delivered, then we can move toward the creation of a design council.

This has been done successfully in Norway, a country that has been striving to reduce its economic dependence on oil. Norway has invested heavily in design support and promotion for over ten years with significant results. This island has lessons to learn from Norway. The head of the Norwegian Design Council, Jan R. Stavik was interviewed as the final piece of this dissertation.

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The MAPDP has been undertaken in teams, and I would like to thank my teammates Amanda Graham and Kevin Sexton, together with James Keane, for all their help, advice and encouragement throughout the entire year of study.

My hopes at the start were that the course would be fun and that I would learn something. Thanks to all of the people mentioned above, my hopes have been significantly exceeded.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

‘I would think that what would be generally called the design world has a confused profile and a dispersed and diluted profile.’

‘Irish design: it’s not a brand, but it could be a brand.’

Interviewed as part of this dissertation, architect and president of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, Seán O’Laoire points to the unfulfilled potential of Irish design. The organisational landscape on the island of Ireland is brimming with proliferation of, and confusion between, numerous organisations promoting the interests of design and designers.

To begin to build Irish design as a brand, we will have to unpick the confusion between the different organisations promoting design and designers.

The aim of this dissertation is to begin the process by looking at the organisational structures that underpin the organisations representing design and designers on the island of Ireland.

1.2 Research Question

What is the optimal structure for organisations representing design and designers on the island of Ireland?

1.3 Aim

The aim of the research is to establish whether there are significant structural changes that need to be made to the organisations on the island of Ireland relating to design and designers, to make them more effective.

1.4 Objectives

To answer the research question and achieve the stated aim, the following objectives need to be met:

Define what design and what a designer is.

Define what a profession and what a professional is.

Investigate industry-supported design organisations.

Investigate government-supported design organisations.

Map the existing design organisations on the island of Ireland. Understand what they do, why they do it and how they do it.

Analyse international best practice.

Understand principles underpinning organisational design.

Propose principles that govern the successful structure for organisations representing design and designers on the island of Ireland.

1.5 Rationale

The research is divided into five main chapters followed by an appendix containing references but also significantly, the interview transcripts.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research question, and gives some reasons as to why the research question was asked, as well as the relevancy of the research question.

Chapter 2 is the literature review. This chapter aims to find out what has been written about the topics raised by the research question and to comment on them. Review in this context is both a verb and a noun. The literature is reviewed and a review of the literature is produced. Gaps in the literature that need further research are identified.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design that has been used in this dissertation. It looks at the theoretical underpinnings and positions adopted in acquiring the research. The design stance taken with regard to epistemology, theoretical perspective, research methodology and research methods is explained. Issues of ethics and confidentiality are outlined.

Chapter 4 relates to the questions asked at interview. They seek to find data that is incomplete or not found in the literature review that may help to answer the research question. What questions were asked, why they were asked, what the key points in the answers are and what conclusions can be drawn from the answers are discussed in detail.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations. Key points that address solutions to issues arising through the study of the research question are established. Recommendations for further areas for study are stated.

1.6 Context

There are numerous reports into how design is organised in Ireland, but there is a disconnect between them. This research hopes to contribute recommendations that will enable greater connections and clarification of objectives between those organisations representing the interests of design and those organising the interests of designers on the island of Ireland.

The research will benefit the stakeholders involved in the representation of design and designers. It may also benefit the government, as design is important to the economy, the business community who engage designers, and the public, who are consumers of design.

It is hoped that this dissertation will have impact and enable change. The dissertation alone will not do that. It may provide an indication of previous failure and ways forward, but of itself, it will not achieve these objectives. This can only begin to happen if the dissertation is read and the conclusions implemented.

Implementation is the key issue. As Garrett Stokes notes in his interview, 'All the study is done, all the reports written, all the plans are already in use in countries around the European Union and further afield. They are getting on with the job … where are the Irish?'

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review covers the key areas addressed in the research aim: designers, professionals, organisational structures and representational bodies.

The first section deals with design and designers. What exactly is design, and who are designers?

The second section deals with professions and professionals. What exactly do we mean by the term 'profession', and what exactly is a professional?

The third and fourth sections look at industry-supported design organisations and government-supported design organisations on the island of Ireland.

The sixth section investigates the mapping of design organisations on the island of Ireland.

The seventh section looks at international best practice. What is done in other countries?

The final section deals with organisational structures and looks at best practice thereof.

2.2 Design and Designers

2.2.1 A Definition of Design

Design is a simple word but has a complex definition. It is both a verb and a noun. Design can refer to the process and to the product. It can refer to the form and function of an object. It can refer to its visual appearance and its technical function.

The Industrial Designs Act 2001 states that design means 'the appearance of the whole or a part of a product resulting from the features of, in particular, the lines, contours, colour, shape, texture or materials of the product itself or its ornamentation' (2001, p. 8). This is a narrow definition, concentrating on appearances.

The ICSTI Statement on Design and Development (2002, p. 10) cites John Thakara: 'Although many people perceive design to be all about appearances, design is not just about the way things look. Design is also about the way things are used, how they are communicated to the world, and the way they are produced.'

The design critic Stephen Bayley, delivering the William H. Walsh Memorial Lecture in Dublin in October 2004, defined design as 'applied creativity'. He noted that the Design Council in the United Kingdom had failed to provide an agreed definition for design. Bayley's definition is both wide-ranging and simple. Applied creativity is the definition of design that underpins this dissertation.

2.2.2 A Definition of a Designer

Bayley's definition implies that a designer is anyone who applies creativity. Herbert A. Simon (1996, p. 111) states, 'Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.'

Using Simon's criterion, everyone is a designer, as everyone devises changes that turn existing situations into preferred ones. However, there are significant differences between amateur and professional designers. Mankind has been consciously altering his environment for thousands of years. Design and designers have, of course, existed, even if they were unrecognised, untutored or uncategorised.

Bernard Rudofsky, in the preface to his book, *Architecture without Architects* (1961), begins the categorisation, referring to non-pedigreed architecture: 'It is so little known that we don't even have a name for it, vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous, rural, as the case may be.'

Design as an activity had also been undertaken in Ireland for centuries. The Book of Kells and Newgrange are both internationally renowned. The traditional Irish thatched cottage is a prime example of successful design undertaken by amateur designers. Kevin Danaher (1978) quotes from a Scandinavian ethnologist:

> Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building material, the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or a rock. Built of stone, clay, sods, grass and straw brought from the vicinity, the house harmonises with the landscape to which it belongs. Whenever old building traditions are maintained its features are of fine simplicity.
>
> Danaher 1978, p. 7

Reducing the amount of energy required to heat the homes, together with using locally sourced materials, provided a template for sustainable design that would be seen as advanced today. The criteria outlined by Bayley and Simon in relation to design and designers were adhered to, but the designers were amateurs.

It is clear that amateur designers are capable of achieving significant successes. What of the professionals?

2.3 Professions and Professionals

2.3.1 A Definition of a Profession

Professions Australia defines a profession as:

> A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.
>
> It is inherent in the definition of a profession that a code of ethics governs the activities of each profession. Such codes require behaviour and practice beyond the personal moral obligations of an individual. They define and demand high standards of behaviour in respect to the services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues. Further, these codes are enforced by the profession and are acknowledged and accepted by the community.
>
> www.professions.com.au

This definition outlines the key components of a profession; ethical standards, public acceptance, special knowledge, recognition of a body of learning and research. Governance of the profession is via a code of ethics that goes beyond the moral obligations of the individual. This code is acknowledged and accepted by the community. Significant markers of professional development include; mentoring, professional examinations and continuing professional development.

2.3.2 A Definition of a Professional

A professional is someone who adheres to the criteria noted above, but we all use the term 'sports professional', the professional criterion simply being someone who plays a sport for money. It is interesting when one considers the points raised by Donald A.Schön (1991, p. 4), where he discusses the crisis in the professions and cites Harold L. Wilensky (1964), who asks if we are seeing the professionalisation of everyone. If professions are to be taken seriously, we need to clarify what they are.

Claiming to be a professional organisation is not something that can just be applied as a name – it must have truth. *Standards for Professional Accreditation Processes* (June 2008), produced by Professions Australia, provides a detailed classification system for organisations that seek to offer professional accreditation. Standards such as these should be adopted by any organisation in Ireland purporting to have professional members.

2.3.3 The Development of the Professional Designer

Rolf Loeber (1981), states that the profession of architecture emerged in Ireland in the seventeenth century. Three groups developed: the craftsman architect, the officer architect and the gentleman architect. The craftsmen typically served a seven-year apprenticeship with a master craftsman, the officer architects moved from designing fortifications to designing domestic architecture, and the gentleman architect developed from persons familiar with architectural pattern books and from being introduced to architecture abroad, from the Grand Tour. As in England, the new architects made a conscious study of design and moved to a supervisory rather than an executive role.

Architecture as a profession was firmly established in Ireland with the founding of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) in 1839 (www.riai.ie). Four years earlier, in 1835, the Institute of the Engineers of Ireland, now known as Engineers Ireland, was founded (www.iei.ie). The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) had been founded one year prior to this, in 1834 (www.riba.org).

Dorothy Goslett notes (1971, p. 242) that the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) was founded in 1754 as the Society for Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. William Shipley founded the organisation with the object of 'stimulating industry by means of prize giving competitions'. The role of the RSA has changed since its foundation (www.thersa.org), but in its original form, it was not unlike today's professional organisations, with an emphasis on competitions and exhibitions.

Victor Papanek (1984, p. 30) says that 'the first industrial design society was formed in Sweden in 1849, to be followed shortly by similar associations in Austria, Germany, Denmark, England, Norway, and Finland'.

Conor Clarke (2002, p. 8) is of the opinion that 'the arrival of Dutch designers in the 1950s was perhaps the most crucial step in the development of graphic design as a professional discipline in Ireland'. One of the early graphic design immigrants, Jan De Fouw, went on in 1958 to become a founding member of the Institute of Creative Advertising, shortly thereafter to become the Institute of Creative Advertising and Design (ICAD 2005, p. 3). ICAD was followed by the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) in 1972.

The development of professional designers did not mean an end to amateurs undertaking design. As Adrian Shaughnessy (2005, p. 18) notes, 'Today, graphic design is far less mysterious. You can study it at school, and any kid with a computer discovers fonts, layout and image manipulation at about the same time as they learn to stop using a diaper.'

Most professional designers decry the use of computers by amateurs professing design skills, but irrespective of the professionals' opinions, the practice continues. Noted design authors such as Ellen Lupton (2006) have edited books for the amateur designer, such as *D.I.Y. Design it Yourself*, that aim to advance design as a common language, as well as demystify the technical complexities of design realisation. The position of the amateur, self-taught designer is being reinforced.

2.3.4 The Profession of Design

There are numerous separately defined design disciplines, and the number of disciplines is expanding. It is useful to attempt to classify the types of design disciplines.

> Taking that old stand-by the 'broad view', it is convenient to group the work into three simple categories, though the distinctions are in no way absolute, nor are they always so described: product design (things), environmental design (places) and communication design (messages).
>
> Norman Potter 2002, p. 11

The Institute of Designers in Ireland, IDI (2009), lists the following categories for members: Design Education, Design Management, Exhibition & Interior, Fashion & Textiles, New Media, Product Design, TV/Theatre/Film Design and Visual Communications. It should be noted that not all members may be designers or possess design qualifications. For instance, members in Design Management may have non-design-based qualifications. Indeed, the separate discipline distinctions are blurring.

It is common to find a product designer designing interiors and an architect designing furniture. ICAD does not separate designers into categories, and qualifications are not required to become a member. Design Business Ireland is moving away from primarily representing graphic designers. The RIAI, RIBA and Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) solely represent architects, but for other design associations, the boundaries are not so simple.

> The rise of branding may partially account for the growing interdisciplinarity of design within the profession as designers seek and clients demand greater integration of product, graphic and interior design in order to create coherent and fulsome design solutions.
>
> Guy Julier 2008, p. 12

Speaking about the UK, Julier states:

> The majority of design practice is in graphics and interior-related fields, embracing corporate identity, corporate literature, packaging and/or branding, consumer literature, exhibitions, multimedia, advertising, retail and information design, while only 19 per cent of UK consultancies offer product design and only 6 per cent offer furniture design.
>
> Julier 2008, p. 22

Interestingly, Julier excludes architecture from his list of design categories.

2.3.5 The Profession of Architecture

Julier is not alone in separating design and architecture. Goslett, in her book, *The Professional Practice of Design*, also refers to 'other designers and architects' (1971, p. 157).

Additionally, Potter probes at the confusion between architecture and design: 'It should not be necessary to say that architects are designers (even if the matter is, occasionally, in doubt).' Potter (2002, p. 11).

> One question will certainly be asked (it always is). Why so many architects in a book about design? If the profession is only half as bad as its critics insist – as pompous, as falsely omniscient, and as socially divisive – should we have any truck with them at all?
>
> Potter 2002, p. 78

Julier also sees a difference between architecture and design, and places a clear difference with respect to the professional standards.

> Major professions have 'normative curricula' in their training in that there are agreed national standards in their content and assessment. They are also professionally regulated with standard agreed working procedures and norms of commercial conduct. They also often have an agreed, but not fixed, structure of pay. In architecture in Britain, for instance, these features are developed and administered by the Royal Institute of British Architects. Meanwhile the 'minor' professions, such as design, exhibit diverse curricula, are not professionally regulated, and their pay structures are largely market driven.
>
> Julier 2008, p. 44

Julier clearly defines architecture as a 'major' profession with design as a 'minor' one. He notes a struggle between the two:

> In many cases the minor profession historically has referred to a major profession for its research paradigms and its norms and procedures. At the same time the minor occupation has been engaged in a struggle to build its own discursive structures, to free itself of dominance and develop its own professional culture.
>
> Julier 2008, p. 44

Even in their web presences in Ireland, the different architecture and design communities are different. The architecture community is active on Archiseek (www.ireland.archiseek.com), whilst the designers from product design, visual communications and multimedia are active in Creative Ireland (www.creativeireland.com). There are marginal levels of crossover.

The literature suggests that there may be a difference between architecture and other design disciplines. How does this manifest itself in reality, how is it expressed in the structure of design organisations, and is it relevant?

2.4 Industry-Supported Design Organisations

2.4.1 Design Organisations on the Island of Ireland

Industry-supported design organisations on the island of Ireland include:

The Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI)
Design Business Ireland (formerly the GDBA)
The Institute of Creative Advertising and Design (ICAD)
The Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI)
The Interiors Association (IA)
The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
The Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland is the representative body for professionally qualified architects in Ireland. The objectives of the RIAI are for the growth of architecture and associated arts and sciences, and also to protect the interests of architectural education and for the encouragement of high standards of professional conduct. Some 3,500 architects and about 70 practice companies are members of the RIAI. Whilst the RIAI has members throughout the island, it is primarily focused in the Republic of Ireland (www.riai.ie).

The Architectural Association of Ireland was founded in 1896 ‘to promote and afford facilities for the study of architecture and the allied sciences and arts, and to provide a medium of friendly communication between members and others interested in the progress of architecture’ (www.architecturalassociation.ie).

It should be noted that both Engineers Ireland and the RIAI were formed before the foundation of the Republic of Ireland, and their all-island basis has a historical aspect that differentiates them from more recently formed design organisations.

The Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) has 870 members with an additional 370 student members. It was founded in 1901. The RSUA is the regional body of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and a formal alliance was created between them in 1925, shortly after the foundation of the Irish state. The RSUA is not an all-island body, but it does have members based in the Republic (www.rsua.org.uk).

ICAD was founded in 1958 as the Institute of Creative Advertising. In the early 1960s it became the Institute of Creative Advertising and Design. Its mission is to foster and reward creativity in advertising and design. ICAD has 340 members. It is an all-island body (www.icad.ie).

The IDI was established in 1972 as a professional body representing the interests of Irish designers from different disciplines practising in Ireland. Its function is to promote high standards of design, to foster professionalism and to emphasise designers’ responsibility to society, to the clients and to each other. The IDI was initially known as the Society of Designers in Ireland (SDI).

According to the APCI (1994, p. 397), the number of members of the IDI at 1 January 1994 was 265. Today’s membership is some 300 members, so there is no evidence of significant growth in the last 15 years. The IDI is an all-island body (www.idi-design.com).

The Graphic Design Business Association (GDBA) was established in 1991 to promote and support the Irish graphic design consultancy sector. In September 2008 the membership of the GDBA adopted Design Business Ireland as its new name, reflecting the desire that design companies from backgrounds other than visual communications join the organisation. It is the stated objective of Design Business Ireland that the initials DBI are not used for the first year of its existence. This convention is adhered to in the text. There are presently some 50 member companies of the GDBA and one associated body, which is the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Design Business Ireland is an all-island body (www.gdba.ie).

Founded in 2006, the Interiors Association is a multifaceted support network open to the broad spectrum of professionals working within the interior architecture and interior design community.

The objective of the Interiors Association is to enhance the profile and status of the Irish interiors industry on a nationwide basis by facilitating and supporting a body of professionally accredited members. The Interiors Association is an all-island organisation with approximately 100 members (www.theinteriorsassociation.ie).

There are other design organisations with members on the island of Ireland. Many, such as the Design Management Institute (DMI) in Boston, are based overseas.

Enterprise Ireland (1990, p. 9) estimated that there were some 6,000 people employed in design in Ireland: 3,700 in design consultancies and the remainder in in-house design departments in manufacturing companies. This figure of 6,000 must have increased as a result of the developments in the economy since 1999.

The IDI (2007) listed 95 design-related courses in universities and colleges on the island of Ireland. Assuming that there would be 20 graduates per course per year, then one would expect in the region of 1,800 graduate designers every year. Some of the courses have been recently developed and some are well established. Averaging a five-year output yields a figure of some 9,000 designers, yet between the IDI, ICAD, IA and Design Business Ireland, there are just over 1,000 members.

It is useful to make a similar comparison with the RIAI. There are four schools of architecture listed by the IDI in the Republic. Taking similar output estimates, one would expect that a five-year output of architects in the Republic would be in the region of 400 architects. The RIAI has some 3,500 members. So, clearly, a much higher number of architects join the RIAI than designers join comparative design organisations. Even if one accounts for immigration and emigration, the numbers joining Irish design organisations are still relatively low.

The question must be asked: why is this?

2.4.2 Professional Design Organisations on the Island of Ireland

Which of these organisations are really professional design organisations? No qualifications are required to join ICAD and there is no code of conduct. The IDI has a code of conduct but it is not discipline-specific. Design Business Ireland, through its GDBA website, mentions professional development only fleetingly, merely encouraging members to pursue professional development through its firms. None of these organisations or the IA, has professional entrance exams.

The RIAI and RSUA are distinctly different in that in order to become a member one must sit such an exam. Functions central to the life of a professional, such as continuing professional development (CPD), are compulsory.

Interestingly, Sarah Dougher (2002), in her book, *100 Habits of Successful Graphic Designers: Insider Secrets on Working Smart and Staying Creative*, mentions professions only fleetingly. One of her 100 habits is to 'provide service to your design community'. The reasons for so doing are oblique, and range from being able to organise lectures that the participant may want to attend, to learning how to get people to attend events and how to work with a board of directors. The central issue relating to being a professional designer is not addressed.

Janice Kirkpatrick, when addressing the members of the IDI at the William H. Walsh Inaugural Lecture, in Kilkenny in September 2003, spoke of a kind of hybrid position:

> Now creative people have their own powerful and inexpensive machines: their own means of design, production, distribution and promotion through their personal computers. They take what education they can, and tailor it to fit, or go on-line or extracurricular to beg, steal and borrow what they need to get by.
>
> IDI 2004, p. 17

Kirkpatrick may be right – perhaps designers will adopt a hybrid education. Perhaps being a professional is not seen as central to being a designer. Architecture is once again different to the other design disciplines. It places a significant emphasis on professionalism.

2.4.3 The All-Island Dimension

Most of the design organisations have an all-island dimension, having members from all parts of the island. Naturally, some organisations have stronger representation in Northern Ireland, the prime example being the RSUA. For the organisations based in Dublin, it is in Dublin that most of their activities take place.

The RIAI has a counterpart based in London, the RIBA. Just as the RIAI has members north of the border, the RIBA has a substantial body of members in the Republic of Ireland. EU regulations mean that qualifications are recognised throughout the Union, and architects are free to join a variety of organisations, although they may need to register in individual countries in order to practise.

Architects are not alone in having different organisations from which to choose. In London, the D&AD represents designers and creatives, and is seen as an equivalent to ICAD (www.dandad.org). Likewise, the IDI has an equivalent in the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD; www.csd.org.uk). Design Business Ireland also has a direct equivalent in the Design Business Association (www.dba.org.uk).

The options of parallel organisations based in Dublin and London leave designers in Northern Ireland with interesting choices. There is a view that the organisations are either London-centric or Dublin-centric, and do not adequately support the needs of regional members on either island. Regional issues must be considered. Design and designers need organisations to represent their interests to government. In the case of Ulster, which government?

This issue is not confined to the island of Ireland. Speaking at the William H. Walsh Inaugural Lecture, Janice Kirkpatrick spoke of dealing with two governments in Scotland. Not only is there governmental overlap in Scotland, but the Lighthouse, Scotland's International Centre for Architecture, Design and the City, also has substantial overlap of functions with the RIBA and the Design Council, both based in London.

Clarification is needed.

2.5 Government-Supported Design Organisations

2.5.1 Kilkenny Design Workshops

Kilkenny Design: Twenty-One Years of Design in Ireland, by Nick Marchant and Jeremy Addis, was published in 1985, at a time when Kilkenny Design was still an active organisation.

The book describes the formation of the unique hybrid that was Kilkenny Design Workshops (KDW). Córas Tráchtála, the Irish Export Board, was granted administrative responsibility for improving standards of industrial design. A group of eminent Scandinavian designers was invited to Ireland, and in 1962 its report, *Design in Ireland*, was published. It was decided to create a community of experienced designers who, together with craftsmen and technicians, would interact, share resources and pool ideas, in prototype form, before being adopted by industry.

The decision was made to seek a location outside Dublin. Thus, in 1963, Kilkenny Design Workshops was founded as a private company wholly owned by Córas Tráchtála. The KDW was the first industrial design practice set up by a government. The exact role of KDW changed substantially in subsequent years.

In 1974 KDW was made directly responsible to the Minister of Industry, and later the Minister for Finance became the major shareholder. Later, growth was mainly targeted at the Kilkenny shop and indeed production of stock to supply the shop.

In her lecture, Janice Kirkpatrick stated:

> By the time Kilkenny finally closed its doors in the late eighties, the political climate had changed so much that it was hard to imagine the context in which the project was originally created way back in the early ’60s. Today, the EU would condemn it as anti-competitive.
>
> IDI 2004, p. 10

The definitive history of the Kilkenny Design Workshops has yet to be written. It can be argued that in setting up an ‘in-house’ consultancy, Córas Tráchtála and the government held back the development of an independent design-consultancy sector. Likewise, it could be argued that the creation of KDW showed what good design could achieve for Ireland.

As noted by Marchant and Addis (1984, p. 96), ‘The broadening of Kilkenny Design’s scope, from its beginnings in the traditional crafts to its interaction with Ireland’s new industries, has been a hand-to-mouth affair, one successful project being used to gain the next.’

This lack of an overall vision led to the elimination of Kilkenny Design as a force for Irish Design. KDW closed in 1988. The lack of a defined structure or strategy led to an inevitable result. This mistake would be repeated.

2.5.2 The Design Council

Kilkenny Design is not unique. The Design Council in the UK (www.designcouncil.co.org) has had a similar roller-coaster journey. It was founded in 1944 as the Council of Industrial Design by the British Board of Trade (Fiell and Fiell 2006, p. 169).

It has undergone much iteration since, mirroring in part events at Kilkenny Design. In 1956 it opened a shop in London’s Haymarket to sell what were considered to be well-designed British products. It was renamed the Design Council in 1972, restructured in 1994, and has been the subject of much criticism.

Stephen Bayley wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, 17 December 1993:

> Today’s Design Council is a leaderless, muddled, directionless quango facing massive cuts in its grant of £7 million from the Department of Trade and Industry. It looks as if its main role – advising industry about design – will be taken away and given to a network of offices called Business Links. Overmanned and under-loved, the Design Council is a cruel parody of its ancestor organization, which led the world out of darkness into the bright lights of design promotion.
>
> Stephen Bayley 2002, p. 223

2.5.3 Design Ireland

> Established in January 2000, the objective of Design Ireland is to inspire and encourage a positive understanding and utilisation of design by all strands of society, in particular business bodies and Governmental agencies, while internationally demonstrating the creative success and vitality of Irish Design. Design Ireland, an initiative of the combined representative bodies of the Irish design community, has been established as a result of the Government review of the Irish design consultancy sector. Design Ireland is the voice of the design industry in Ireland. It's a business-focused enterprise and encompasses all the design disciplines.
>
> www.designireland.ie

Design Ireland grew out of the Enterprise Ireland-commissioned report *Opportunities in Design: Strategies for Growth in the Irish Design Sector* (1999):

> The Design consultancy sector in Ireland is fragmented and diverse, comprising many small design consultancy practices, operating within different design arenas. While there are a number of different industry associations i.e. the Institute of Designers in Ireland, Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI), the Graphic Design Business Association, Institute of Creative Advertising and Design, etc, no one organisation represents the interests of all designers. As a consequence design is not represented at an industry level; there is no cohesion, poor networking, both within design areas and across design disciplines and little cross-fertilisation of ideas.
>
> Enterprise Ireland 1999, p. 20

The Design Coalition document, *Design Ireland Background* (2000), notes that Design Ireland was funded with the sum of £225,000 from the Small Business Operational Programme (SBOP). Additional funding was initially provided by the four founding design organisations to the sum of £50,000 in total per annum.

Tom Finlay notes in his Design Ireland study report:

> It was originally envisaged by the proposal to secure initial funding from the SBOP (Small Business Operational Programme) that Design Ireland would be self-financing after a number of years. However, this has not been achieved and I believe could not be achieved. Specifically, as Design Ireland was increasingly perceived as an umbrella representative body for the design industry, the individual constituent bodies saw it as usurping their roles and their potential revenue streams.
>
> Finlay 2003, p. 4

Finlay also notes that,

> The board of Design Ireland should be added to without delay to include customers of design from both the private and public sectors. In addition, an independent chairperson should be appointed who has the necessary profile and business background.
>
> Finlay 2003, p. 2

Design Ireland developed the Design Ireland Skillnet. The Skillnet created a revenue stream used by Design Ireland to ensure its survival. With a structure that contained no mechanism to raise other revenue, Design Ireland existed on a voluntary basis, supplemented by Skillnet funding. With cutbacks in Skillnet funding in 2009, Design Ireland could no longer survive and ceased trading.

2.6 Mapping of Design Organisations

2.6.1 Proliferation of Government-Supported Design Organisations

Numerous state-sponsored agencies are involved in the promotion of design on the island of Ireland. In the Republic they operate at a county level, at a regional level and at a national level. The Donegal Design Directorate, Design Shannon and Enterprise Ireland all have overlapping roles. This leads to confusion. Taking just one example, all three had a direct involvement in a design-oriented skillnet.

InterTradeIreland was established under the Belfast Agreement to coordinate the work of business and trade development on an all-island basis (www.intertradeireland.com). In February 2009 it published a study on the design-services sector on the island of Ireland. As part of the study, a report was commissioned by the Centre for Design Innovation in Sligo, entitled *A Micro Study of Design Promotion and Design Support on the Island of Ireland*. This micro-study was published in April 2008.

The first proposition (p. 31) states that design promotion could be more effective at an all-island level. The second proposition (p. 31) states that best practice in design support should be shared where possible. In detail it states:

> The research has shown, that whilst there are plans North and South for growing the capacity of the main economic development agencies to manage and/or deliver design support programmes, nevertheless taken from a whole-island perspective, the design support is fragmented (with little sharing of expertise or information across the different providers).
>
> Design Connect 2008, p. 32

The executive summary categorises the weaknesses:

> There are significant strengths in current provision of design services and support on the island of Ireland, however there are also opportunities to optimise areas of weakness and thereby enhance the competitiveness of businesses on the island. In particular, the fragmentation of design promotion and support activity leads to incomplete regional coverage, inconsistent messages, poor policy congruence and ineffective use of resources.
>
> Design Connect 2008, p. 3

The fourth proposition (p. 32) states that policies for design on the island of Ireland should be aligned with emerging EU policy for design.

The proliferation of state agencies in the Republic and confusion as to their roles is not confined to the design sector. In 2004 the Enterprise Strategy Group published *Ahead of the Curve: Ireland's Place in the Global Economy*. It recommends:

> The Boards of Forfás, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland should have a number of directors in common and in particular a common Chairperson.
>
> The enterprise activities of Shannon Development should be brought within the remit of Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.
>
> The City and County Enterprise Boards (CEBs) should be integrated into the mainstream enterprise development system by establishing a Central Coordination Unit in Enterprise Ireland. This unit should provide central direction, technical support, shared services and quality assurance, to further enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of CEBs.
>
> Enterprise Strategy Group 2004, p. 115

Such a central coordination unit could simplify and clarify design support in the Republic. What then of Northern Ireland? InterTradeIreland notes:

> It is clear that individually, each of the design support bodies and economic development agencies in both jurisdictions work very hard to promote the role of design and thereby build the market of potential clients. Indeed the approach taken by agencies North and South is very similar, so the natural question is how much more efficient and effective they might be if a consistent and coordinated all-island approach was taken.
>
> InterTradeIreland 2009, p. 33

2.6.2 Proliferation of Industry-Supported Design Organisations

As with government-supported design organisations, the landscape of industry-supported design organisations is confused.

There is confusion as to who is represented, what is being represented, and to whom it is being represented. Designers are involved, both professional and amateur. So too is government.

> This professionalizing process has involved the proliferation of institutions dedicated to the promotion of various aspects of design and systemizing or safeguarding of its practice. In the United Kingdom, as in many countries, some of these have been state-funded organizations instigated by designers yet highly responsive to the greater demands of government policy.
>
> Julier 2008, p. 43

Julier points to a significant aspect of design organisations: many are partially or wholly state funded, some having been started by government itself, as was the case with Kilkenny Design Workshops. Julier also speaks of the difficulties of proliferation, specifically with regard to forming an agreement to restrict the system of free pitching.

> In this system, consultancies risked spending time and resources for no financial return, if they did not win the pitch. If the design industry had had a single institutional representative, then a blanket agreement among designers regarding the acceptability of this approach may have been arrived at. But with a proliferation of representative bodies, a consensus could not be achieved.
>
> Julier 2008, p. 43

2.6.3 Representing Design and Representing Designers

> Founded in 1944 as the Council for Industrial Design, this government quango has always had the remit to 'promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British industry'. That does not necessarily mean promoting the British design industry, a major bone of contention for many designers who felt the Design Council should do more to represent their specific interests.
>
> Design Business Association 1992, p. 9

As with Stephen Bayley, the DBA is openly critical of the Design Council. They note the difference between representing design and representing designers.

Design can be important to the national economy. The self-interest of designers is not. There has been significant confusion between the representations of the two by representational design organisations as well as government agencies on this island and in Great Britain.

The importance of design to the Irish economy has been outlined in reports such as the *Opportunities in Design* report, published by Enterprise Ireland in 1999. Similar reports have been produced in the United Kingdom and on a pan-European basis, stressing the importance of design in the European regional economy.

The Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI) statement 'Design and Development' notes that Design Ireland was mainly representative of designers:

> Design Ireland is currently in the process of implementing an awareness programme. This private sector organisation represents graphic designers, industrial designers and advertising practitioners. However the prime focus of this programme is on promoting the design industry.
>
> ICSTI 2002, p. 5

The confusion between design organisations, state agencies and the representation of design and designers continues to proliferate.

> In the UK the Design Council, funded through the Department of Trade & Industry, promotes the use of design to businesses, most of who continue to ignore it. It does not directly support designers or the development of design industries. In Scotland, design disappears down a gap between the Department of Enterprise & Lifelong Learning and Department of Sport, Culture & Tourism and things have become further complicated by including design as one of the new 'Creative Industries', a sector that buries design amongst a whole bunch of activities, many of which have no social or economic imperative at all.
>
> Janice Kirkpatrick, IDI 2004, p. 11

The interests of design are not the same as those of designers. There are individual professional objectives and there are government objectives, and they do not always align.

An analogy can be made with farming and agriculture. Agriculture is seen as important to the national economies of Ireland and the United Kingdom. There is the Department of Agriculture in the Republic (www.agriculture.gov.ie) as well as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland (www.dardni.gov.uk).

The interests of farmers are seen as different. They are separately represented by various bodies, such as the Irish Farmers' Association (www.ifa.ie) in the Republic and the National Farmers' Union in Great Britain (www.nfuonline.com).

The separate objectives of the departments of agriculture and farmers' organisations are clearly and widely understood. This is clearly not the case with design and designers, as indicated in the aforementioned quotation from the Design Business Association.

Whilst representing architects and architecture, the RIAI clearly understands that it must represent the interests of its members. When the Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan TD, stated that 'architects had yet to feel the chill winds of economic reality', the RIAI responded in the strongest terms, with a letter to the Tánaiste, commentary on national radio stations and letters to the national newspapers. The response is published in the appendix (http://www.riai.ie/index.html?id=7463).

What of other design organisations? Issues of importance to members, such as the arrival of IKEA, awarding of contracts to overseas agencies, etc., largely go uncommented upon.

2.6.4 Design Promotion and Design Support

Design Connect highlights international best practice in relation to design:

> International best practice recognises that both design promotion and design support are required in order to have impact on a given company. Both activities take place in Ireland and Northern Ireland but by a range of government agencies with different priorities as outlined below. When viewed from an all-island perspective, this leads to gaps in provision, inconsistency in message and poor cost-effectiveness.
>
> Design Connect 2008, p. 7

Design Connect identifies six providers of design promotion and support on the island. They are Enterprise Ireland, Design Shannon, the Donegal Design Directorate, the Centre for Design Innovation, Design Ireland and Design Ireland Skillnet, all in the South, together with Invest Northern Ireland in the North.

Design Ireland and Design Ireland Skillnet, the Donegal Design Directorate and Design Shannon have little activity, with no members listed or events scheduled on the Donegal Design Directorate website (www.donegaldesigndirectorate.com) and no events listed in the 'next event' section for Design Shannon Skillnet (www.designshannon.ie). These organisations have effectively ceased trading.

The recommendations of the Enterprise Strategy Group should be implemented. The remnants of Design Shannon and the Donegal Design Directorate should be absorbed and coordinated into Enterprise Ireland. This would leave just two providers of design promotion and support on the island: Enterprise Ireland in the South and Invest Northern Ireland in the North. Even the activities of Enterprise Ireland must be questioned. The Design Unit, set up in Enterprise Ireland following the *Opportunities in Design Report* shows little sign of current activity. There is nothing substantial on the Enterprise Ireland website and when telephoned on the 11th September 2009, the main Enterprise Ireland reception denied any knowledge of the design unit's existence (www.enterprise-ireland.com).

Design Connect proposes that design support is best undertaken at a regional level and that design promotion is best undertaken at a national level. InterTradeIreland can coordinate design promotion on the island with its two affiliated agencies, Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland. Design support can be provided by the county enterprise boards in the South, coordinated by Enterprise Ireland. Invest Northern Ireland can continue to provide design support in Northern Ireland.

Design support and promotion should be ongoing and sustainable. Organisations such as Design Ireland were set up with short-term SBOP funding. When the funding runs out, the organisations suffer. Longer term funding or integration within existing organisations is essential if programmes are to be sustainable.

2.7 Design Organisations: the International Dimension

2.7.1 The European Dimension

There is also a proliferation of state-sponsored and industry-led organisations in Europe, many influencing decision-making at EU level. They are therefore directly relevant to the interests of design and designers in Ireland.

BEDA is the Bureau of European Designers' Associations:

> BEDA exists to ensure permanent liaison between the professional societies of designers, the promotional, educational, research, social and design management organisations and networks within the countries of Europe, and to act as a liaison between them and the authorities of the European Union.
>
> www.beda.org

BEDA sees three strands: the designers and their professional societies, design management organisations and government. There are 23 member countries listed. For some countries, more than one organisation is listed. For example, the United Kingdom members' page lists the Lighthouse, based in Scotland, Design Wales, and the Design Council and DBA, both based in London.

Membership organisations do not typically cover architecture. Interior architecture is well represented, but architecture is notable by its general absence. The example of the United Kingdom is interesting. For instance, the Lighthouse covers all disciplines including architecture, but Design Wales, the Design Business Association and the Design Council do not. The RIBA is not listed as a United Kingdom member.

There are two representative organisations based in London, one in Scotland and one in Wales. What of Northern Ireland? Either one is not required or it has simply been forgotten about. Northern Ireland seems to have fallen between the various United Kingdom organisations and the organisations based in the Republic of Ireland. There may be advantages in being loosely connected with both centres in that there may be opportunities to seek support from both. The disadvantage, of course, is that both may actually ignore Northern Ireland.

Interestingly, Ireland is not listed in the BEDA member countries, although the IDI continues to list BEDA as an affiliated organisation in Ireland (www.idi-design.ie/about/affiliations.htm 11 July 2009). Several countries take an active role in pursuing the representation of design in the European Union through their involvement with BEDA. Ireland is not one of them.
In January 2008, BEDA president Michael Thomson (UK) and vice-president Jan R. Stavik (Norway) met with the vice-president of the European Commission to establish a design policy in Europe (www.designluxembourg.lu).

Stavik, managing director of Norsk Designråd (the Norwegian Design Council), has noted, 'The Norwegian Design Council is commissioned by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to present Norwegian design in general and young designers in particular at selected events worldwide.' The emphasis on promoting young designers is telling (Royal Norwegian Embassy 2008, p. 5).

'Norway has long been considered the little brother of Scandinavian design, but this is definitely changing. In recent years, a new generation of designers have put Norway's business community on the world map.' (*Design from Scandinavia* 2009, p. 60)

'Research commissioned by the Norwegian Design Council in 2005 shows that as many as 83% of Norwegian managers claim that design is important for the results of their business.' (Jan R. Stavik, Jörgenson and Lindberg 2007, p. 5)

The Norwegian government is not sitting back on the last ten years of achievement. 'In order to help spread knowledge about the benefits of design methodology, we are providing NOK 10 million in funding in 2009 for the pilot project Design-Driven Innovation Programme.' (Sylvia Brustad, Minister for Trade and Industry, Norwegian Design Council 2009, p. 5)

Finland (pop. 5,250,275) is a country similar in population size to the Republic of Ireland (pop. 4,203,200; www.cia.gov). In June 2000 the Arts Council of Finland and Ministry of Education published the document 'design 2005! Government Decision-in-Principle on Finnish Design Policy 15.06.2000'. Writing in the foreword, the Minister of Culture states:

> Finland has to make design and its widespread application one of its key know-how areas. It is only through such diffusion that design can gain significance as a factor promoting the quality of everyday life, job creation, cultural identity, Finland's image abroad and the competitiveness of Finnish business.

Finland sees design as offering wide-ranging benefits: improving the quality and competitiveness of Finnish products and services; generating product, service and production innovations; and promoting citizens' well-being. It believes that a national design culture of international renown strengthens the national and cultural image of Finland.

Design is seen as a holistic enterprise. 'Design will provide a basis for Finns' well-being and satisfaction.' (Ibid. p. 10)

The Finns exclude architecture from the design programme:

> In this programme, design is an umbrella term covering industrial design, arts and crafts, design management and interior design. Industrial design also includes ceramics, glass, textile and fashion. The programme also deals with arts and crafts as part of the entity of design. Graphic design also has points of contact with this entity, especially as regards corporate communications.
>
> (Ibid. p. 13)

In the 1990s the government and business invested heavily in the technological development of Finnish industry. It was felt that to increase international competitiveness; further input was required by increasing the use of design.

The aim was that by 2005, 30 per cent of possible users of design would enlist the services of qualified designers and that 50 per cent of Finnish enterprises would take design into account in their strategic planning. It was hoped that by 2010 these figures would rise to 50 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively.

By way of comparison, in 2007 the Centre for Design Innovation in IT Sligo published a survey of design and innovation amongst Ireland's SMEs. They found that only 15 per cent of Irish SMEs use design strategically. This is significantly below the target that Finland had established for 2005.

This point is underpinned by the ICSTI (2002, p. 13), which states, 'Research by Shannon Development indicates that fewer than 18% of companies use design in a conscious way.'

Ireland falls significantly behind its European counterparts in terms of both design organisations and their position in Europe, as well as in terms of strategic use of design.

2.7.2 The International Dimension

There is a worldwide hierarchy of design associations and significant effort has gone into establishing a framework into which individual countries design organisations can easily fit.

The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid) is a worldwide organisation with respect to industrial design. Icsid lists over 150 member organisations in more than 50 countries, representing an estimated 150,000 designers (www.icsid.org). In common with other international design organisations, Ireland used to have strong representation. John Turpin, in his essay on the Irish design reform movement of the 1960s, notes that the Icsid congress and general assembly was held in Dublin in 1977 (Doordan 1995, p. 268).

The International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI) was founded in Denmark in 1963. The IFI's membership covers 70 member associations, institutions and schools in 45 countries. The IFI represents over 65,000 practising interior designers worldwide (www.ifiworld.org).

The International Council of Graphic Design Associations (Icograda) is also a worldwide organisation. Founded in 1963, it is a voluntary assembly of organisations concerned with graphic design, visual communication, design management, promotion, education, research and journalism (www.icograda.org).

Icograda is a good example of how international design associations gain critical mass and industry focus. With member organisations in 67 countries, Icograda has a worldwide membership. By way of example, the AIGA, formerly known as the American Institute of Graphic Arts, is a full member of Icograda, bringing more than 21,000 members alone.

Icograda is an organisation that had strong representation from Ireland in the past. Raymond Kyne was president between 1983 and 1985, and Mary V. Mullin was secretary general from 1987 to 1999. Indeed, the Icograda general congress was held in Dublin in 1983.

Most countries' design associations list participation in organisations such as Icograda and Icsid. The IDI claims to be affiliated with Icograda, Icsid and BEDA, amongst others. A review of the IDI website lists little active participation in these bodies. The size of the IDI and other representational design bodies is insufficient to actively participate to a full extent in international bodies. The organisations are primarily run by volunteers, and there are not the resources to actively take part in organisations outside the island.

The International Design Alliance (IDA) was formed in 2003 as an alliance between Icsid and Icograda. In September 2008, the IFI joined the IDA.

The IDA brings together worldwide representative organisations representing product design (Icsid), visual communications (Icograda), and interior design and interior architecture (IFI). The profession of architecture is not included and is clearly seen as being a separate profession, different to the three that make up the IFA.

The representation of professional designers from different disciplines is being coordinated on a global level, but Ireland plays no active part. Nor can it. The lack of resources to actively participate means that Irish designers have no voice in the organisational bodies worldwide.

2.8 Organisational Structures

What is an organisation? Individual or group behaviour occurs in organisations. In the book *Work and Organizational Behaviour*, work organization is defined as:

> A deliberately formed social group in which people, technology and resources are deliberately coordinated through formalized roles and relationships to achieve a division of labour designed to attain a specific set of objectives efficiently.
>
> Bratton, Callinan, Forshaw and Sawchuk 2007, p. 5

> Many managers in business today complain that they feel as though they are 'fighting fires' all the time. They are continually focused on short-term problems without a chance to pull back and think through the consequences of options and decisions. Rather than analyzing strategic opportunities, planning for business growth, or developing their people, they are caught up in day-to-day doing.
>
> Galbraith, Downey and Kates 2002, p. viii

Getting the right organisational structure is the key to ending the fire-fighting that exists in all professional design organisations.

Naomi Stanford (2007, p. 1) states, ‘Organisation design, in this book is defined as the outcome of shaping and aligning all of the components of an enterprise towards the achievement of an agreed mission.’ She goes on to state:

> Leaders interested in the design of their organisation have an edge. They believe that an organisation behaves in the way it is designed to behave. If it is not designed correctly – an analogy is a poorly designed racing car – it will not be successful.
>
> Stanford 2007, p. 3

Galbraith et al. (2002) discuss the levers of change in an organisation. They describe the three levers as business strategy and vision, choosing the players on an executive team and designing the organisation. They state that while all levers are equally important, organisation design is frequently the lever given the least attention.

It is the lever of organisation design that this dissertation examines.

Galbraith et al. (2002) as well as Stanford (2007) state the need for organisational flexibility and response to change. Stanford discusses building the capability to morph:

> Leaders need to accept that their current organisation design will inevitably give way to a future design, and would do even better if they understood and acted on the necessity to be continuously and consciously thinking about the whole organisation design. They should also grasp the fact that designs must be constructed to respond to dynamic environments and that building adaptive capability into design is a necessary part of the process.
>
> Stanford 2007, p. 263

John Roberts (2004, p. 286) states, ‘A firm that does the same things in the same ways as the competition cannot be better than its rivals, and the head-to-head competition that will ensue will guarantee it gets to keep very little of any value it might create.’

Many of the representational professional design organisations seem to do the same things as each other. We have established that they are too small to have organisational capacity to achieve significant representation in many areas, such as representation on an international level. There is significant overlap and waste of the scant resources available.

Taking Stanford’s point, it must be recognised that there must be considerable change in the organisations that represent designers and those that promote and support design.

2.9 Analysis of Literature

The amount of literature specifically concerning the organisational structures of design organisations is minimal. However, conclusions can be drawn from breaking down the research question into components and investigating those components separately.

2.10 Summary of the Literature Review

2.10.1 Conclusions from Literature Review

Design is applied creativity.

Not all designers are professionals, or want to be. There are significant numbers of practising amateur designers and they have achieved significant successes. Amateur design is thriving, hybrids are developing. Is design considered a profession?

Architecture and engineering are the longest-established design organisations on the island of Ireland. The number of members of the design organisations representing these disciplines significantly exceeds the memberships of other design organisations. There are very modest numbers of members in the other professional design organisations.

Most industry-supported design associations are all-island.

There have been numerous government initiatives to fund design. Ranging from Kilkenny Design Workshops to Design Ireland Skillnet, these initiatives have failed.

There is a proliferation of government- and industry-supported design organisations. There are significant levels of overlap between many of the design organisations. There is also confusion between government- and industry-supported design organisations.

Ireland is not participating in the organisation of design at a European or international level.

Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all organisations is essential to reducing overlap and wasted resources. The structure of the organisations must be streamlined – resources are limited and there is a feeling that all of the organisations are fire-fighting.

2.10.2 Objectives Met

We have defined what design and designers are and examined what it means to be a professional. The role of industry- and government-supported design organisations has been investigated. The nature and extent of the organisations, both on the island of Ireland and internationally, has been established.

We have ascertained difficulties in the organisational structures, particularly with respect to overlap and confusion.

2.10.3 Gaps Identified in Literature Review

The literature review has only provided pieces of information. We need to connect them, to make them coherent and to synthesise the information to form conclusions and ultimately recommendations.

We need to find out whether designers see themselves as professionals and whether architecture is different to other design disciplines. We need to establish why so few designers join professional organisations.

Who should promote the interests of design and who should promote designers? Are the existing organisations doing a good job? What are the weaknesses of the existing organisations?

Are there advantages to being all-island? Is a design council a good idea?

Galbraith outlined three key questions. Why do we need to change? Where do we need to go? What will the end state look like? These will be developed through the research section.

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies the approach taken to the research design. It defines the collection of the data that attempts to answer the research question. It addresses Dr, Carrie Winstanley's issues (2009, p. 224) of what was done, why it was done, with whom it was done, where and when it was done, and why it was done that way.

Michael Crotty (2003, p. 2) identifies four questions that form the basic elements of any research process:

What *methods* do we propose to use?
What *methodology* governs our choice and use of methods?
What *theoretical perspective* lies behind the methodology in question?
What *epistemology* informs this theoretical perspective?

Crotty suggests that the four questions inform one another and follow in sequence: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods.

3.2 Epistemology

David Gray (2009, p. 17) says that 'epistemology provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate'.

Crotty defines epistemology as the theory of knowledge (2003, p. 3). He notes that there are many theoretical stances, methodologies and methods. By way of simplification, he describes three strands of epistemology: objectivism, constructivism and subjectivism.

According to Gray (2009, p. 18), objectivist epistemology holds that 'reality exists independently of consciousness' – in other words, there is an objective reality 'out there'. Constructivism rejects this view: 'meaning is *constructed* not discovered'. On the other hand, with subjectivism, 'meaning does not emerge from the interplay between the subject and the outside world, but is imposed on the object by the subject'.

This dissertation adopts a constructivist view. Truth, or meaning, is constructed from the experience and knowledge gained from people, things, events and their interaction.

3.3 Theoretical Perspective

Gray (2009, p. 14) poses the question of whether in research we should begin with theory, or should theory itself result from research?

According to Gray, the deductive approach moves towards hypothesis testing, after which the principle is confirmed, refuted or modified. Conversely, through the inductive approach, plans are made for collecting data, after which it is analysed to see if patterns emerge that suggest relationships between the variables. It is the inductive approach that is taken to answer the research question. The research question itself is not statement-based, and it is necessary to collect elements and evidence to construct an answer to the question.

Winstanley (2009, p. 18) identifies the difference between empirical and non-empirical dissertations. Empirical dissertations involve collecting data. This dissertation takes an empirical inductivist approach.

Crotty (2003, p. 4) outlines theoretical perspectives on research design including, amongst others, positivism, interpretivism, feminism and post-modernism. Gray (2009, p. 21) states that in terms of epistemology, interpretivism is most closely related to constructivism. Crotty (2003, p. 67) states that the interpretivist approach 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world'.

3.4 Research Methodology

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight define methods and methodologies:

> The term *method* can be understood to relate principally to the tools of data collection or analysis: techniques such as questionnaires and interviews. *Methodologies* has a more philosophical meaning, and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research.
> (2006, p. 58)

Of the five examples that Gray (2009, p. 21) gives of the interpretivist approach (symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, realism, hermeneutics and naturalistic inquiry), it is phenomenology that defines this approach to the research design. Gray is of the view that 'Phenomenology holds that any attempt to understand social reality has to be grounded in people's experiences of that social reality.' It is these experiences of the social reality that will be sought through the research.

3.5 Research Methods

Winstanley (2009, p. 49) describes techniques that can be used to generate research: interviews, observations, questionnaires, rating scales, standardised tests and surveys. Crotty (2003, p. 5) adds several more methods, including focus groups and case studies.

3.5.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Qualitative and quantitative research are the principle strands of data collection.

Winstanley (2009, p. 17) defines quantitative data as 'numerical data and focuses on classification and statistical models and numerical information that's collected as objectively as possible using research methods'. She defines qualitative data as usually taking 'the form of words, pictures and objects, and the data can be subjective because the researcher is personally involved in collecting rich data'.

> If for example, some kind of intervention or experimental design is planned, then it is likely that quantitative methods will be adopted. On the other hand, if the project seeks to conduct an ethnographic study which focuses on the meanings and interpretation participants give within a particular cultural setting, then the data are likely to be qualitative.
>
> Gray (2009, p. 58)

Meanings and interpretations are at the centre of the research question. The dissertation uses qualitative research to provide data to underpin the answers to the research question.

> *Quantitative* surveys (e.g. asking people to rate a series of statements about an organization on a scale of 1 to 5) are the least useful tool in an organization assessment. You may get a superficial sense of what works but will miss the details and complexity regarding how one issue impacts another. In addition, without knowing the issues it is difficult to formulate the right questions.
>
> Galbraith et al. (2002, p. 37)

Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkmann's book on qualitative research interviewing (2009, p. xvii) begins with the phrase 'If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk with them?' In Kvale's earlier book, as a counterpoint to quantitative interviewing, he states, 'The basic subject matter is no longer objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted.' (1996, p. 11)

The issue of meaningful relationships is critical to this dissertation. The experience of a number of people in senior positions in a variety of design-related organisations gathered over multiple years is what is required to be analysed. Talking to them and mining for rich data is the preferred method.

> Qualitative research often is not restricted to the production of knowledge or insights for scientific purposes. Often, the intention is to change the issue under study or to produce knowledge that is practically relevant – which means relevant for producing or promoting solutions to practical problems.
>
> Uwe Flick (2007, p. 6)

3.5.2 Interview

Kvale and Brinkmann note (2009, p. 3) that the interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. Winstanley (2009, p. 145) discusses the advantages and disadvantages of one-to-one semi-structured interviews. She notes that there are advantages in terms of flexibility and disadvantages in terms of preparation time, interview time and follow-up time. Analysis would suggest that the potential information to be gathered outweighs the disadvantages of time, and this approach has been taken in approaching the interviews.

3.5.2.1 Purpose of Interview

The purpose of the interview is to gather data. Blaxter et al. (2006, p. 172) describe interviews 'as a very useful technique for collecting data which would likely not be accessible using techniques such as observation or questionnaire'.

3.5.2.2 Structure of Interview

Gray (2009, p. 373) states that a semi-structured interview is essential when a phenomenological approach is being taken. The semi-structured approach allowed for some variation in the questions asked of each person. All interviews were conducted face to face to accommodate a semi-structured approach. In this respect, it was necessary to travel to Sligo, Belfast and London to ensure that the appropriate interview could take place.

All of the interviewees were asked the same questions, irrespective of their background or position. The questions were not outlined in advance so as to allow a free flow of thoughts and ideas, rather than methodical and overtly structured answers. On occasion the exact phrasing of the question was modified to reflect the interviewee's background, but the overall structure and format was consistent. The opening questions were closed questions, and gradually the questions were altered to more open questions, leading to more open discussions as the interview progressed.

On several occasions the interviewee developed answers to questions in advance of the questions being asked. This was encouraged so as not to restrict the flow of the interview. Likewise, the interviewee was free to go off the topic, and unless this took the thrust of the interview towards a dead end, this was encouraged.

The final interviewees are the president and immediate past-president of BEDA. In the case of Michael Thomson, the immediate past-president, two additional questions were asked, which relate to the international dimension. Jan R. Stavik is the final interviewee. As managing director of the Norwegian Design Council and president of BEDA, Stavik has unrivalled experience and knowledge of design support and promotion. Rather than ask questions more suited to design professionals, he was asked questions relating to the conclusions derived from the research undertaken.

3.5.2.3 Objectivity of the Interview

With the exception of the Stavik interview, the interviewer refrained from giving any indication of his own opinions, as recommended by Winstanley (2009, p. 93). A conscious decision was made not to lead the interviewee. On occasion an interjection was made to refocus the interviewee towards the question asked.

3.5.2.4 Sampling

Ten interviewees were selected. This number would not be statistically meaningful if the research was qualitative rather than quantitative. The numbers are reasonable for qualitative research, where the aim was to accumulate informed personal opinions in relation to the research question.

3.5.2.5 Relevance and Suitability of Respondents

The interviewees were selected using a number of criteria. All hold or have held senior positions in design organisations, most being at presidential or board level. Most of the interviewees were members of several organisations and had held key positions in several. This was deemed desirable, as the information supplied would provide rich crossovers.

To achieve representation, a member of each of the significant professional design organisations on the island of Ireland was interviewed, as well as three who have significant experience in international design organisations. Three of the interviewees selected are from Northern Ireland so as to achieve an accurate all-island view.

Only one of the interviewees is female. This may represent bias in the profession, as almost all of the interviewees were selected because of their roles as existing principals or founding members of their organisations.

3.6 Interpretation

Blaxter et al. (2006, p. 221) introduce four related concepts of interpretation: significance, generalisability, reliability and validity.

3.6.1 Significance of Results

The significance is interlinked with the interviewee. It is not significant solely for what has been said, but who has said it. The interviewees have been specifically chosen because of their depth of knowledge. What they say, particularly when their views are in conflict with other interviewees, provides richness.

3.6.2 Generalisability of Results

This study is small-scale. It looks at a narrow range of organisations aligned to a specific discipline. It may be that some of the research undertaken and conclusions drawn will have minor significance beyond the discipline of design. The range of interviewees and scope of answers mean that they may help to provide answers to research questions not posed by this dissertation.

3.6.3 Reliability of Results

The transcript was typed by an experienced professional knowledgeable of the subject and the concepts behind the questions. The draft transcript was then reviewed by the interviewer. Only minor revisions were made to the verbatim transcription of the conversation. Steiner Kvale has noted (1996, p. 170), 'One possible guideline for editing, doing justice to the interviewees, is to imagine how they themselves would have wanted to formulate their statements in writing.' Accordingly, some regularly repeated phrases such as 'Basically, I think that … ' or 'One could say that … ' were eliminated.

To ensure reliability, the typed interview transcript was sent to each interviewee for review and comment. Any substantial revisions are noted in the appendix.

3.6.4 Validity of Results

Gray (2009, p. 375) states that, in the case of semi-structured interviews, 'The issue of validity can be directly addressed by attempting to ensure that the question content directly concentrates on the research objective.' The transcriptions are printed in full to allow other researchers to validate the conclusions of this dissertation.

3.7 Ethics

Gray (2009, p. 73) lists four main ethical principles that should underpin interviews:

Avoid harm to participants.
Ensure informed consent of participants.
Respect the privacy of participants.
Avoid the use of deception.

To deal with these issues, the interviewees were interviewed in places in which they would feel comfortable, which they either selected or agreed to in advance of the interview. The agreed basis of the interview was that all interviewees would be named, referenced and the transcript published in full. The interviewee would be given the opportunity to make corrections to the text in the event that there were errors or that some items, on reflection, were best left unpublished. The purpose and basis of the interview, the topic being studied and the nature of the publication of the transcript were all outlined in detail prior to the interview.

3.7.1 Issues of Confidentiality

To be of value and so that there would be transparency, reliability and validity, all of the interviews were conducted on the basis that the transcripts would be published. Therefore, no confidential interviews took place.

As the interviewees were discussing issues relating to professional design organisations rather than issues pertaining to their own businesses or personal lives, issues of confidentiality are minimised. The interview was designed to ascertain the individual's opinion, rather than that of the organisation that they may represent.

It could be that this would put an interviewee in a difficult position, with respect to the organisation that they may be understood to represent. It could also be the case that the interviewee would not want members of an alternative organisation to read their view in what will be a published document. However, in order to answer the research question and for that answer to be validated and be of meaning to a wider audience, it was necessary to publish the views of the individuals concerned.

3.7.2 Conflicts of Interest

Many of the professional designers in Ireland are members of more than one representational design body. It is common for many designers to be members of both the IDI and ICAD. Likewise, it is common for there to be significant overlap in members of the IDI and Design Business Ireland. The interviewees were typically members of more than one professional design organisation.

In the context of the research, it must be borne in mind that there could be conflicts of interest that may affect the interview. One of the difficulties for all of the representational design organisations is that they may compete for members. It may be that the interviewees express views that are representative of the organisations' immediate best interests, rather than their considered personal opinions.

3.8 Scope

The research question contains an all-island dimension. Whilst it would have been easier to limit the question to the Republic or to Northern Ireland, this would have been invalid, as many of the organisations are all-island or, in the case of the RIAI, predate the foundation of the Irish state.

Likewise, the professional design organisations are not limited to particular design disciplines. This is because several design organisations represent more than one design discipline, and whether or not this is a good idea forms part of the study.

The number of organisations and the all-island dimension means that ten interviews were undertaken. This is seen as an appropriate number to adequately address the scope of the question, bearing in mind the time available to the study.

3.9 Summary of the Research Methods

We have established that this dissertation takes an empirical inductivist approach and that it was necessary to obtain, collect and analyse primary data in order to answer the research question. An investigation into epistemology has established that the dissertation has a constructivist view and that the research methodology uses a phenomenological approach, seeking to ascertain the interviewees' experiences to inform our answer.

Qualitative interviews form the basis of the primary research. The sample size, whilst small, allows for in-depth analysis of the subject and a rich variety of responses to emerge. The transcripts are published, allowing the validity and reliability to be independently assessed, as well as allowing other researchers to utilise it for further research. The scope, although wide, is defined, and the interviewees have the breadth of experience and knowledge to inform answers to the research question.

Chapter 4. Interview Questions

4.1 Introduction

The literature review outlined the existing knowledge that addresses the research question. A series of gaps in the knowledge were identified.

The research design indicated that a qualitative interview with a semi-structured approach was the most appropriate research technique to provide information that would address the gaps in the available knowledge.

Questions were devised to provide answers that would address these gaps. A detailed list of the interviewees, their positions and the interview transcripts are included in appendix C, with each full transcript following. Each extracted quotation is taken directly from the interviewees answer to each particular question.

The interviewees are listed below, in order in which they were interviewed, together with the letter signifying the appendix in which their transcript can be found. The most senior position that they hold, or have held in design organisations is listed.

D: Dawson Stelfox
President, Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)
E: Damian Cranney
President, Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI)
F: Garrett Stokes:
Past President, Institute of Creative Advertising and Design (ICAD)
G: John O'Connor
Board Member Design Ireland
H: Elaine Butler
Past President, Interiors Association (IA)
I: Seán O'Laoire
President, The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
J: Brian Kavanagh
Chairman of the Finance Committee, Engineers Ireland
K: Toby Scott
Former Director, Design Council, London
L: Nicholas (Nick) Cloake
President, Graphic Design Business Association (GDBA)
M: Michael Thompson
Former President, Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA)
N: Jan R. Stavik Interview Transcript
Managing Director, Norsk Designråd, Norwegian Design Council
President, Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA)

4.2 Key Questions Asked at Interviews

4.2.1 Question 1
Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?

Purpose of question 1:
Most of the interviewees are known to the interviewer. This question attempts to ascertain the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee at the outset, so that transparency can be demonstrated.

Key points in the answers to question 1:
It is not that the writer knows a lot of people or interviewed friends and colleagues. Most of the interviewees also know, or know of, each other, indicating that the design organisation community is a small and committed one. Nick Cloake states, 'We have a common calling in that we are serial committee people.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 1:
There are small numbers of people involved in the design organisation community on the island of Ireland and in Europe. Most of the people involved in design organisations are known to each other.

4.2.2 Question 2
Do you consider yourself to be a designer?

Purpose of question 2:
Most of the interviewees trained as designers. However, many have gone into design management and administrative or teaching positions. Some may no longer see themselves as designers. If they do not, then how can a traditional design organisation that represents designers represent them?

Key points in the answers to question 2:
The majority of the interviewees simply answer yes. Architect, Dawson Stelfox, and engineer, Brian Kavanagh, answer emphatically, 'Yes, very much so,' and 'Absolutely,' indicating almost an affront that the question was asked.

The literature review referred to Simon (1996, p. 111): 'Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.' Architects and engineers can be considered designers. The literature review also concluded that there were differences. These will be probed in subsequent questions.

Nick Cloake relates the answer directly to an activity, answering, 'Yes and no.' He considers himself to be a designer by profession, but is becoming more of a design manager, the implication being that managers do not design. Damian Cranney has a similar view, but sees the term 'designer' as being valid in a team context.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 2:
Engineers and architects emphatically consider themselves to be designers. So too do design managers. Once trained as a designer, the title remains, even if the activity changes.

4.2.3 Question 3
If you are a designer, what do you design?

Purpose of question 3:
Many of the design organisations represent one design discipline, others represent several. It is common for designers to work across, and sometimes change, disciplines. The answers may help address whether design organisations best serve their members by addressing a number of design disciplines or, rather, focus on one.

Key points in the answers to question 3:
Most interviewees have a single focus to the things that they design. Damian Cranney simplifies the answer to 'I design communications,' although he started as a product designer. A few, such as Garrett Stokes, range across the design spectrum, from graphics to jewellery design. Dawson Stelfox notes that he sometimes designs furniture, but crucially, he has not designed products for sale.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 3:
Designers typically classify themselves as designing within a narrow sphere of disciplines, though the disciplines may change over time.

4.2.4 Question 4
Can you briefly describe your professional background?

Purpose of question 4:
This question is designed to frame the professional background of the interviewee. It is separated from what the interviewee designs, so as to focus on how they see themselves as practitioners. Many designers practise a different design discipline than they studied in university. The question seeks to tease out whether design organisations should be flexible and adapt to members' needs and changing work practices.

Key points in the answers to question 4:
Michael Thomson and Damian Cranney originally trained as product designers and are now a design manager and a design consultant, respectively. Cranney describes his background as 'quite varied, which is increasingly common these days'. John O'Connor graduated as a visual communications designer and is now a head of school at DIT. All three have changed their membership of organisations, or started new ones, as their careers progressed.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 4:
As individuals change direction in their careers, they may choose to join a new organisation, or start a new organisation, rather than adapt an existing organisation.

4.2.5 Question 5
Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?

Purpose of question 5:
This question sets the context for the interviewee to discuss professional organisations. It may be that the interviewee does not see themselves as being a member of a design organisation or indeed a professional organisation. The question seeks to probe whether there is a 'one size fits all' solution to design organisations or whether a series of discreet organisations is desirable.

Key points in the answers to question 5:
Most of the designers interviewed are members of more than one design organisation. This may indicate that the designers take a varied approach to their work, or that the existing organisations may not suit designers' needs. Architects and engineers take a different approach to other designers. They are only members of organisations directly related to the disciplines in which they qualified, be that the RIAI or RSUA. This may reflect that the organisations more accurately suit their needs, or may indicate narrowness in their disciplines.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 5:
Designers other than architects and engineers have a 'pick and mix' approach to design organisations, tailoring membership to suit their needs. Organisational change may be needed to suit designers' needs, with a more encompassing role taken by organisations such that a single organisation may suit members' needs.

4.2.6 Question 6
Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?

Purpose of question 6:
The interviewees were deliberately chosen for their executive experience and detailed understanding of how their organisations operate.

Key points in the answers to question 6:
Many of the interviewees have held executive positions in a number of different organisations. John O'Connor and Garrett Stokes are founding members of the GDBA, but both also sat on the councils of ICAD and subsequently Design Ireland (also, in O'Connor's case, the IDI). Stokes is also past president of the Art Directors' Club of Europe, being the only Irish person to hold that position.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 6:
As with other questions, the answers may indicate that existing organisations do not meet designers' needs. Designers will effect change by the creation of new organisations, rather than change existing organisations to provide an exact fit to their needs.

4.2.7 Question 7
What is the purpose of the professional design organisation in which you hold an executive position?

Purpose of question 7:
Many design organisations lack a specific focus, with a multiplicity of reasons for their existence. The question attempts to tease out the complexities of the purpose of the design organisations.

Key points in the answers to question 7:
Dawson Stelfox and Seán O'Laoire note that the RSUA and RIAI represent the twin interests of architecture and architects. Garrett Stokes indicates that ICAD's role is to 'foster and reward creative excellence'. These commentators are more interested in the quality of the work that is being produced, rather than their members self interests.

Elaine Butler states that the Interiors Association's role is to 'support designers'. This approach is more narrowly defined and is specifically pointed to the interests of the designers themselves, the quality of the work being produced, is not mentioned.

Nick Cloake notes that Design Business Ireland provides 'a resource for design businesses … promoting effective design to all audiences'. Cloake introduces another focus, the consumer of design services, rather than the designers, being the central focus.

Damian Cranney states, 'I perceive the IDI's role to be that of a resource, a kind of a bank of knowledge, a forum for facilitating debate, exchange of ideas, learning through events and lectures. It is definitely more than that, but that is something that it does well.' This is a more encompassing role, a wider view of a design organisation. But as noted in the literature review, the focus of the IDI is on the individual designer.

There is no exact commonality between the organisations, with differences as to whom or what is being represented. Brian Kavanagh notes that the 'purpose of EI is to be the trusted voice of engineers in Ireland'. Kavanagh introduces an element of public involvement and interest in design organisations and what they do, something not generally reflected by other interviewees.

‘The purpose of Design Ireland, as I understood it, was to provide a single voice representing the design profession at its widest possible interpretation in Ireland and to promote design services, at a national and international level, both to government and to industry.’ John O’Connor looks at the wider role of Design Ireland, its overarching structure attempting to marry the interests of the design and designers. As we understand from the literature review, this is a role that has ceased as Design Ireland has effectively closed.

Michael Thomson notes the role of BEDA as being different to the other organisations. ‘BEDA is an association of associations. … BEDA represents the professional design industries across Europe and that includes designers, but the designers themselves cannot be members. … We like to say that we represent something like 400,000 designers working across Europe.’ As identified in the literature review, this representation is something that designers on this island are not involved in.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 7:
There is no clear template for what the design organisations do or why they do it. The purpose ranges across designers, businesses and creative excellence, amongst others. Design Ireland attempted to unite these separate voices, but failed, leaving a void to be filled.

BEDA has a significant task in representing design industries across Europe but as we have seen earlier, Ireland is not playing an active part.

Who exactly is doing what, and why they are doing it, must be clarified and simplified. Otherwise there is needless confusion and continued waste of resources.

4.2.8 Question 8
Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation?

Purpose of question 8:
There are a variety of entry criteria to the different organisations. The literature review raised the issue as to whether some of the organisations are professional design organisations at all. The question aims to clarify which of the organisations has a professional ethos.

Key points in the answers to question 8:
Most organisations require a design qualification to gain entry. The IDI will consider a lesser qualification, supplemented with appropriate work experience. Anyone can join ICAD. Anyone working in the interiors industry can join the IA. However, there are different categories of membership in the IA, and it is possible to join at a lower level and progress, depending on the level of experience and education obtained.

In Chapter 2 we looked at what constitutes a profession. Many of the organisations use the word professional liberally, but without formal policies on professional examinations, continuing professional development and mentoring can they really be considered to be professions?

Engineers Ireland, the RIAI and the RSUA, as a regional body of RIBA, can only be joined by passing a professional examination. On this island they are unique in this respect.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 8:
Professionalism is fundamental to being an architect or engineer. It may not be fundamental to other designers. We know that the purposes of the organisations differ, but so also does the attitude to professionalism. With some organisations not even possessing entry qualifications, they cannot be considered to be representing a profession.

4.2.9 Question 9
How many members are there in your professional design organisation?

Purpose of question 9:
The answer will provide an indication of the organisation's relative organisational capacity and ability to influence decision-making.

Key points in the answers to question 9:
Engineers Ireland is the largest body, with 22,000 members, followed by the RIAI, at 3,500, and the RSUA, with 870 chartered architects. In comparison, ICAD has 200-300 members, the IA 100, the IDI 300, and Design Business Ireland 300-500.

There is a large difference in scale between the organisations. With organisations of less than 300 members what capabilities have they to operate effectively and efficiently? Dawson Stelfox has noted that at 870 members the RSUA has limited resources but what of the smaller organisations with 300 or less members?

Most of the organisations rely solely on members' subscriptions and naturally the smaller organisations will have restricted budgets. With a membership fee of €225 (www.idi-design.com) and a membership of some 300 members the IDI has an operational budget of less than €70,000. This can fund one employee and an office at best, a situation replicated by other organisations such as ICAD, and not achieved by some other organisations.

The literature review noted that many managers feel that they are 'fire-fighting' all the time. Small organisations do not have the resources to adequately manage operational and strategic issues, leading to exactly this 'fire-fighting' scenario.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 9:
There is a significant difference in the sizes of the architects' and engineers' organisations, compared to other design organisations. The smaller organisations have a limited capacity to get things done. With a number of smaller organisations it may make more sense to amalgamate, and at a minimum, share administration costs.

4.2.10 Question 10
Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining, and if so, why?

Purpose of question 10:
This question attempts to identify weaknesses in existing organisations and identify strengths in newer, emerging organisations.

Key points in the answers to question 10:
Damian Cranney is considering joining the Design Business Association in London, as 'the offering is better, more useful, more valuable' than Design Business Ireland's. He notes that he struggles to appreciate its value, conceding. 'That may well be because we are based in Belfast.'

Elaine Butler raises the concept of joint membership and notes that the Interiors Association is considering revenue-pooling between organisations.

Toby Scott introduces the separation of the interests of design promotion from those of designers. 'I am still doing work which promotes design at an individual level. Therefore I would hold fast the idea that I can't become a member of a membership organisation that supports its members.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 10:
Designers will switch to organisations that better represent their needs, and regional issues may induce a change of organisation. Some form of membership-sharing as considered by the Interiors Association, is an option for design organisations. This may allow them to address more issues and better address their members' needs, thereby addressing Cranney's main issue.

As noted by Scott the interests of design promotion are different from those of designers. By aligning himself on the support side he feels that it is inappropriate to be involved in organisations supporting designers. A clear definition of the roles of organisations will reduce duplication and allow organisations to more effectively represent their members, leading to an increase in the loyalty of those members.

4.2.11 Question 11

Can you tell me if there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of, and can you tell me why you left?

Purpose of question 11:
This question is similar in intent to question 10. Rather than focus on the strengths that a new organisation offers, it is specifically designed to identify weaknesses in existing organisations.

Key points in the answers to question 11:
The architects and engineers remain in their core professional organisations. Neither Dawson Stelfox nor Seán O'Laoire have changed organisations or started others. They joined the relevant professional organisation representing architects and rose to become president of their respective organisations.

Damian Cranney left the Chartered Society of Designers because it was 'a kind of stuffy organisation and very much about professional standards and protocol'. John O'Connor left ICAD. 'I kind of drifted away from it because I was never too interested in the awards side of it.' Nick Cloake left and rejoined ICAD a number of times, returning during the negotiating process of setting up Design Business Ireland. Garrett Stokes has a liberal approach to organisations, joining several, on the island of Ireland and in Europe.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 11:
Architects and engineers stay wedded to their professional organisations. In comparison, other designers regard membership of design associations as optional rather than fundamental, picking and choosing depending on their needs.

4.2.12 Question 12

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?

Purpose of question 12:
Questions 12 and 13 investigate whether there is a difference in representing the interests of design and of designers. There may be confusion as to whether organisations are representing design, designers or both.

Key points in the answers to question 12:
Most of the designers interviewed are of the view that designers should take responsibility for the interests of designers. Toby Scott says, 'An industry design-support body, unquestionably.' Michael Thomson is in agreement, but says, 'Who they are representing them to is another question. Do you want the interests of the design profession to be represented back to the design profession, or do you want representation to government?'

He also notes other difficulties – the restriction of offering and the reliance on membership fees. 'There is a layering of service provision, which is interesting because these organisations survive principally on their membership fees. It's very difficult for membership organisations to extend their offers, to actually relieve their reliance on the membership fee.'

Dawson Stelfox notes difficulties in the fact that the RSUA has a royal charter that dictates that it must represent architecture and architects. He questions how this can be done when the organisation primarily survives on membership subscriptions.

Brian Kavanagh notes that Engineers Ireland holds a trade-union licence. This is useful as many of the organisations' members work in the public service. Holding a trade-union licence is an important point, indicating that the organisation specifically represents the interests of its members in a commonly understood way.

John O'Connor questions whether there are simply too many organisations. 'I wonder now if we have room for all the various different bodies that we have, and I am coming around to the view that, really, Design Business Ireland and the IDI should merge and that there should be discussions with the RIAI, although I suspect, in terms of mergers, the architects are not going to dilute themselves.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 12:
Designers should take primary responsibility for representing the interests of designers. There are difficulties when they also try to represent design, particularly when it comes to financing this proposition. The reliance on membership fees restricts the offering of organisations but O'Connor sees mergers of various bodies as offering a solution, but excludes the architects from such a merger.

Designers also need to decide to whom they are representing – their members or government? There may be too many design organisations, and some form of merger or alliance should be considered.

4.2.13 Question 13
Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of design?

Purpose of question 13:
This question can be considered in tandem with question 12. It may highlight confusion in design organisations as to whose interests are being represented.

Key points in the answers to question 13:
Seán O'Laoire is of the view that in terms of Ireland and who should promote the interests of design or designers, you cannot promote one without the other.

Dawson Stelfox notes the difficulty of representing both architecture and architects and refers to achieving the right balance, with the balance, in the case of the RSUA, leaning towards architecture. He notes that there is an Association of Consultant Architects (ACA) in the UK, which acts as a trade union for architects.

Damian Cranney sees the job of design promotion as being down to the government 'because the value of design is directly related to the size of the industry and therefore the economy'. As we have seen earlier, this is something that is clearly understood by the Norwegian and Finnish governments.

Garrett Stokes sees five interdependent players as having responsibility: designers/innovators/creatives, business, education, professional bodies and government. He does not say exactly how the relationship would work, but he does identify the stakeholders, something Michael Thomson develops, 'If you see design as a component of a bigger picture for economic growth or development of a nation, then I think design, hopefully, can be represented by many other types of players – the stakeholders, other than just designers per se.' He also states, 'Higher up the political-value chain, the discussion of whether or not the design sector should receive government support is simply not a decision that designers alone can make.'

Toby Scott discusses market failure and the government's role to intervene and adjust for market failure. The government should work to encourage demand and also to ensure that design education meets the needs of the economy. 'The government needs to do two things: one is to work on the demand side, to encourage demand by demonstrating the impact that design can have, but it also needs to work on the supply side, to undertake some activity which better aligns the education of young designers to the future needs of an economy.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 13:
The government needs an involvement in the promotion of design. It is recognised in Europe that it forms part of an overall economic dimension. Other stakeholders also have an interest, not solely the designers.

4.2.14 Question 14
Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions? If so, please clarify.

Purpose of question 14:
The literature review identified architecture as one of the longest-established professions. Many commentators see architecture as being separate to design. Is it possible to treat architecture in a similar way to other design professions?

Key points in the answers to question 14:
There are numerous points of difference quoted by the interviewees, ranging from 'permanence' (Dawson Stelfox), 'physical output' (Damian Cranney), 'public understanding' (John O'Connor), 'concern with craft and not with business' (Elaine Butler), 'scale' and 'social accountability' (Seán O'Laoire), 'guardians of the most complex design process' (Nick Cloake) and 'chartered status' (Michael Thomson).

John O'Connor points to the perception of the designer. 'If you say you're an architect, everyone knows what you're doing. But if you say you are a designer, people aren't really clear – they often think you are a printer.'

These are serious differences but Scott sees a fundamental difference with relation to government involvement. 'Designers are supporting the creation of value. That's what they do very well, which, then, for me, creates a mass distinction between them and what architects do.' Thomson also sees a governmental difference, 'There is already a very strong representational body, ACE, which already represents architecture at the European level.' O'Connor, Stelfox and O'Laoire highlight similar legislative differences, raising the issue of registration of the title 'architect'. As a legal requirement in order to be able to practise, registration further separates architects from other designers.

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 14:
Clearly all of the interviewees see a difference, as did the authors Guy Julier, Norman Potter, noted earlier. We have established that architecture is different to other design disciplines. Everything from public understanding, social accountability, the creation of value and representation in Europe mark architecture out as different.

If such differences exist, why group architecture with other design disciplines, why not let it stand alone?

4.2.15 Question 15
With the exception of architecture, in your opinion, why do so few designers join professional design organisations?

Purpose of question 15:
It was established in the literature review that the percentage of graduate architects joining design organisations is high. By way of comparison, the number of other designers joining design organisations is low. Why is this?

Key points in the answers to question 15:
Dawson Stelfox and Elaine Butler are in agreement, saying respectively. 'They don't have to.' and 'Because the market doesn't demand it of them.'

Rather than point to the self interest of designers, Damian Cranney and John O'Connor also look to the offerings of the organisations. Cranney states, 'It's not seen as a necessary mark for professional standards. … There are few design organisations that have anything tangible, or a kind of perceived, genuinely meaningful value, to offer designers.' This is echoed by O'Connor, 'There are no immediate benefits. … The industry or designers themselves don't actually genuinely see a benefit. … The industry doesn't support the organisation. In other words, if you are looking for work, you are never asked, "Are you a member?"'

Garrett Stokes is more direct. 'They don't believe in them, and they are right.'

Nick Cloake and Toby Scott discuss the issue of design not being considered as a profession, something that was highlighted in the literature review. Cloake states, 'Two reasons. One is apathy. … The other is that I think designers have yet to realise they are a profession. … Designers, I think, are also naturally single people. They operate on a kind of a solo basis and they aren't great team players. They are not joiners.' Toby Scott agrees, 'There is no need. … There is no professional accreditation or sense of continuing professional development.' He also states that 'the economics are poor'.

This point is echoed by Michael Thomson, indicating the tricky times of recession, when members state, 'Why do I pay €400 to my organisation? What value am I getting?' This is of course the case, but we have established that some organisations have little revenue. Without significantly increased revenue, how can they increase their offering?

Seán O'Laoire also highlights the issue of financial interest when speaking of why architects join organisations. Irrespective of the quality of offerings of the RIAI and RSUA, significant numbers of architects join. 'Being a member is fairly fundamentally linked to you and your capacity to be employed.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 15:
There are many reasons why designers do not join design organisations. They are clearly outlined by the interviewees. There is a financial imperative for architects to join. The opposite may be the case with designers. They do not join because they do not have to.

The offerings may be inadequate, leading to low membership numbers. Low membership numbers directly imposes financial constraints, resulting in limited offerings. A way out of this downward spiral is for organisations to pool resources, financially and administratively, to boost the offering, changing the direction of the spiral.

4.2.16 Question 16

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all-island organisations?

Purpose of question 16:
Most of the professional design organisations claim an all-island remit. Does this work in practice? The question seeks to understand how an all-island body can represent design and/or designers to two different governments.

Key points in the answers to question 16:
John O'Connor considers the size of our population. 'We are a small economy and we are a small population. We need to pull in as many supporters as we can.'

Dawson Stelfox welcomes the idea, but points to difficulties with separate legislation, ministers and policies. He states, 'The mountains are the same, whether you're in Connemara or in the Mournes, but it's not as easy as that because the educational system is structured differently – the Sports Council, emergency services – so all sorts of things are structured differently. Philosophically, it makes sense to have one body. There are huge practical difficulties.' Dawson Stelfox runs a practice with offices in Belfast and Dublin, so he is used to overcoming such practical differences.

Seán O'Laoire talks of a cross-border cooperation between similar organisations. 'We do have a seat for an RSUA delegate at the monthly RIAI council meetings.' This is an interesting approach. Not quite the Interior Associations' approach to dual membership but one that would ensure that at least two organisations were appraised of what each other was doing, thereby reducing the potential for overlap and waste.

Brian Kavanagh is supportive, 'I think one of the key strengths of Engineers Ireland is, yes, it is an all-island basis and we have always brought people together from across the border.'

Nick Cloake has a similar view to Stelfox, seeing difficulties with tax laws and currency, but concludes, 'All those things are worthwhile because, as an island, we are much more powerful as a group than we are separately. So it's worth it. None of the barriers are insurmountable or not worth the effort.'

Toby Scott separates the issue with respect to design support and design promotion. 'Direct design support, which provides direct assistance to individuals and companies to use design effectively, that's much better done at a local level. … But broad design promotion, which is going out there and saying, "Design is wonderful," and also generating standards of practice and accreditation, is much better done on a larger scale, so therefore, in my mind, all-island is the only way to go.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 16:
All-island organisations present practical difficulties, but the critical mass of a larger organisation makes it worthwhile to overcome them.

Design promotion should be separated from design support. Then issues with operating in separate economies with separate governments can be overcome.

4.2.17 Question 17
What is your view of government-sponsored design councils? There is one for the United Kingdom, based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic? Would you welcome an all-island design council?

Purpose of question 17:
The aim of the question is to determine the interviewee's opinion of design councils, and whether an all-island design council should be an aspiration.

Key points in the answers to question 17:
Toby Scott and Michael Thomson have played key roles in the Design Council in London. Scott would welcome an all-island design council for the purposes of design promotion. Thomson takes a similar view. 'I don't know that you would call it a design council in the south of Ireland, but I would have thought some body that was clearly focused at a national level for Ireland could bring benefits in coordination of resources and raising awareness of the design capacity in Ireland.'

There is a Design Council in London, which as we have seen in the literature review, has had its critics. Damian Cranney is also critical. 'Technically, the United Kingdom incorporates Northern Ireland, but actually, the Design Council is very London-centric. You've got the island of Great Britain being Scotland, Wales, England, and that is really their stomping ground. The message really doesn't travel to Northern Ireland. There's no activity, there's no feet on the ground, and there is that kind of separation of the water.'

Reflecting his primary focus in visual communications, Nick Cloake notes a difficulty in trying to get government to support a design council. 'We are not a manufacturing country, and as a result, government gets frustrated. Because when you talk to government about design, they see large plants outputting furniture, lamps and bicycles.'

Speaking directly of the Republic, Garrett Stokes is pointed. 'Ireland has an Arts Council and a Crafts Council and we have a Heritage Council. Is something missing?' Stokes is unconcerned whether a design council would be all-island or not. 'Just as long as we had one.'

Seán O'Laoire thinks that an all-island authority is necessary, but looks beyond the examples of design. 'Just as the tourism authority fragmented the island north and south, I think we can ill afford not to have an all-island design council.'

Not surprisingly, Michael Thomson has a lot to say about design councils. He sees a design council of being of value. 'Actually, a design-council-type body creates a public point of reference, both externally and internally for government, about design and why design is important, why it relates to innovation and why it relates to a better quality of life. It helps us to approach the challenges of sustainability and climate change and the future challenges that we face – systemic challenges that demand systemic responses.'

He notes that inconsistency of funding throughout the EU, 'The Design Council is funded through government here in the UK. Not all design councils or national and regional bodies for design promotion are funded by government.' Thomson and BEDA are working hard to resolve the inconsistencies. 'One of the reasons that BEDA has been talking of European-level policy is to try and persuade the European Commission that there is a need for coherent action at European level. Therefore, if there is coherent action, that means that there should be a coherent funding guide for the development of national-level design councils for all member states.....'BEDA's role is especially to communicate the value of design innovation to the European Commission, so it's not like the other organisations. It is representing design as a key strategy for Europe's future.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 17:
A design council is seen as desirable by the interviewees, at least in the Republic. It is felt that the Design Council in London is not actively serving Northern Ireland and that in principle; an all-island council would be welcomed.

The approach to the operation and funding of design councils in Europe varies from country to country. BEDA is actively pushing the EU to promote a coherent approach throughout Europe.

4.2.18 Question 18
What is your view of the promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?

Purpose of question 18:
This question is designed to ascertain the interviewee's understanding of the role of state agencies in design support and promotion. It may highlight confusion in the offerings and in the overlap between the areas of responsibility of the state agencies and design organisations.

Key points in the answers to question 18:
Reflecting his background in architecture, Dawson Stelfox is more concerned with government agencies' promotion of design quality than the promotion of design itself. 'I think the state agencies have been very lax in terms of quality of design until quite recently.'

Garrett Stokes is unequivocal in condemning state intervention in the consultancy sector, highlighting the Kilkenny Design Workshops in particular. 'The piecemeal support from the state, linked to the piecemeal interventions by the design industry in the form of our professional bodies doesn't work, and hasn't worked. … KDW was given some important and high-profile commissions from other state organisations. These strategies had a detrimental effect on the indigenous industry – private companies could not develop the design expertise they needed. … An initiative that was supposed to be a catalyst for change and growth in the industry actually had the opposite effect. … So while in Finland/Norway/Sweden the indigenous design industry was supported and brought to maturity by design councils, the Irish industry became neutralised. … KDW neutralised the ability of the indigenous design industry to develop effectively.'

Some such as John O'Connor are critical, highlighting the disparate role of the agencies. 'I don't think any of the state bodies have really engaged with the potential of design. … There are some very good initiatives, but they are not joined up.'

There seems to be confusion as to what these agencies do. Referring to Enterprise Ireland, Damian Cranney notes, 'Perhaps the fact that I don't know enough is an indictment of what they do.' It may be unfair to criticise Enterprise Ireland, as Nick Cloake explains. 'Enterprise Ireland has been a good supporter over the years, but in reality they are the wrong organisation because their interest is in export.'

Elaine Butler echoes Cloake's point and gets at the centre of issues of design support and the construction sector. 'Enterprise Ireland is really only interested in exports, and the industry that I'm involved in, interior design and interior architecture, doesn't add a lot to the GDP.' For this sector, state involvement in design promotion and support is largely irrelevant.

Designers do not appear to have high regard for the state agencies involved in design. The engineers do. Brian Kavanagh is reasonably happy with the role of Enterprise Ireland in particular. 'Enterprise Ireland has been very helpful currently, in promoting trade delegations to various places.' Seán O'Laoire has a holistic view, looking at both sides of equation. 'The people who are out on the ground, marketing design, need to know what they are talking about, need to know what the message is, and I think, equally, designers in various parts of the design universe need to understand where the commonality exists between their various activities and where the differences exist.'

Perhaps designers are unrealistic, seeing the role of a design council as being to help out designers as individuals, rather than to be of benefit to the economic and cultural life of the island. Perhaps if the focus was on design rather than designers there would be more chance of a design council being created. Michael Thomson points to the expectations of designers. 'You know, we want design to be more talked about, we want more funding or grant support for design, we want government to persuade companies to make use of design, and why aren't more companies making use of design?'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 18:
Designers have limited confidence in state agencies with responsibilities for design. As with the industry-supported organisations, there is confusion, with a lack of 'joined-up thinking'. The architects and engineers are little concerned, either being more interested in design quality rather than design promotion, or content to be involved with trade delegations overseas.

Seán O'Laoire and Michael Thomson point to both the designers and government agencies needing a clear understanding of what they are doing and what they are trying to achieve. The role of government is ill-defined and it can be argued that by becoming involved in a design consultancy, the Irish state may have held up the development of an independent sector. Once again clarity is required in order to reduce overlap and waste between organisations.

4.2.19 Question 19
What are the weaknesses in the structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?

Purpose of question 19:
This question highlights the issues centrally addressed in the dissertation. It is placed last in the series of questions to allow the interviewee to have considered the aspects raised in the first 18 questions prior to answering. The question as to what is the optimal structure was not asked as it forms the central theme of this dissertation.

Key points in the answers to question 19:
Seán O'Laoire highlights an important issue. 'I would think that what would generally be called the design world has a confused profile and a dispersed and diluted profile.' O'Laoire is not along in referring to dilution. Toby Scott concentrates on a similar issue. 'Fragmentation. … If design in Ireland were a company and it had a brand, what would that brand really look like? Well, I would suggest that it would look pretty odd. You would have a company which was effectively selling exactly the same product but calling it different things and using different language to describe it.'

Dawson Stelfox refers not to fragmentation but to the size of the individual organisations. 'The weakness, I suppose, is that you've got 800-odd members in the RSUA, small staff, very limited resources. … It's all self-generated money, so there is no public money going into the RSUA at all and yet it is supposedly performing a public function.' Brian Kavanagh thinks the issue is also one of size. 'Engineers Ireland does speak with more gravitas because of its broad base, and I think other organisations are very niche, like, for instance, the architects – they are quite a small organisation.' Kavanagh's point is most interesting because he concludes that the RIAI is quite a small organisation, whereas it is roughly ten times the size of the IDI and ICAD.

Garrett Stokes argues for a larger body than exists at present. 'I can tell you categorically, there isn't a single organisation in Ireland today that could step up to the plate. They are all fine organisations, don't get me wrong, they do exactly what their members expect, but they have a specific purpose in each case, and it is not possible that part-time volunteers (many of whom join the boards of these organisations without any previous similar experience) can ever deliver, over a sustained period, the kind of design leadership this country needs.'

Like Stokes, John O'Connor looks at the creation of a new organisation. 'Let's say you had another body, let's call it Designers in Ireland. Now, that body should be a member of IBEC, it should have links with the Chamber of Commerce, it should link with all the educational organisations, and we don't see any of that, and not only do we not see it, we don't even see people who realise that it needs to be done,' O'Connor goes on to say, 'I don't think the design sector is actually confident enough in itself. … I don't think there is a sufficiently businesslike approach.' The lack of business skill is picked up by Scott 'I think, also, that there is a lack of skill, both at managerial level and in organisations.' The reason for the lack of skill is identified by Damian Cranney; the organisations are run by the members, not independent persons with business skills. 'I can only talk with any real authority, I guess, about the IDI...We are both the membership and the management of the organisation...our weaknesses are we are not clearly defined vis-à-vis the other design organisations.'

Even allowing for the fact that the designers must run their own organisations Elaine Butler raises a problem. 'There really are very few people who are willing to pull everybody in by the reins and say, "What are we doing?", "When are we going to do it by?" and "Who is responsible for it?" and then, more importantly, hold people to account.'

Butler's issue is reiterated by Nick Cloake. 'The single biggest problem is resources. There is a small pool of people who are passionate about it, and it requires them to dedicate fairly significant amounts of their time to make things happen, so we are under-resourced.'

Cloake goes on to say 'When someone gets an idea, instead of coming to an existing organisation, they tend to set up a new one. … The design community itself has yet to recognise the benefit of strong representation. The business community doesn't understand what design is about and what the design industry is about, which is the design industry's fault.'

Michael Thomson raises the issue of funding which of course is related to the size of the organisations and their capacity to raise funds from members. In the literature review we noted organisations that were started with government funding and subsequently failed. He argues for longer term funding. 'I think that the organisations that are there are very vulnerable to funding – for example, the Skillnets' process… are structured around the availability of one-, two- or three-year programme funding, and that is a great hindrance to supporting a sustainable approach to programme development.'

Conclusions drawn from the answers to question 19:
Scale is a key issue. The size of the organisations is clearly identified as a weakness. This manifests itself in many ways but the small size of the organisations leads to a small management pool, a pool which may not have the ability to effectively manage the organisations.

Finances and organisational resources are mentioned by several interviewees, both a direct result of the limited numbers of members. There is a public aspect to the promotion of architecture and design. As the associations generate their own revenue, why should they use this to promote wider design issues?

As finances are limited, the organisations have sought government funding for programmes such as the Design Ireland Skillnet. This funding is generally limited to between one and three years, after which the organisations close. This is not a sustainable model.

4.3 Analysis of the Interviews

The industry-supported design organisations are typically small in size, with relatively few people involved in organising them. Typically, the members are also the management of the organisations. This has the negative effect of placing members in positions that they may not be qualified to manage, with the membership slow to criticise poor performance of the voluntary managers. This point was raised in the literature review by Tom Finlay who wrote a report on Design Ireland, recommending that business people be involved at board level.

Financial limitations pose significant difficulties. Low membership numbers lead to a lack of funds, which in turn limits the organisations offerings, which subsequently results in low membership numbers.

A method must be found to break this circle. With a number of smaller organisations it may make more sense for smaller organisations to form alliances or mergers. This revenue sharing concept is suggested by Elaine Butler, but even if it is adopted, taking Dawson Stelfox's point, how can, and why should, designers also fund the promotion of design, when resources are limited and there are wider beneficiaries than just the designers?

Architects and Engineers are different. The RIAI and Engineers Ireland are sufficient large to run independent premises with a team of dedicated full time staff. Engineers and architects emphatically consider themselves to be designers but they are organised differently to other disciplines. Professionalism is seen as a key component, with professional examinations and continuing professional development being key aspects of membership. As Seán O'Laoire outlines, the entry to the profession is strictly controlled, with graduates of a recognised school having to gain two years practical experience and then sit entrance examinations.

When designers take issue with an organisation, rather than change it from within, they tend to join, or start, a new organisation. This may reflect their training and problem solving skills set but it contributes to the stagnation of growth in the existing organisations. A simpler approach would be to build a larger organisation that meets the needs of a variety of members, with increased offerings that may encourage greater membership. The development of a professional focus may also increase the standing of membership within design practices, having the effect of encouraging designers to join. One strategy towards building a larger organisation is to group the organisations into those that see professionalism as a key component and those that do not.

It is clear from the interviews that the interests of design are different from those of designers. The interviewees are of the view that designers should take primary responsibility for representing the interests of designers, Toby Scott saying 'An industry-support body, unquestionably.' Michael Thomson says, 'Who they are representing them to is another question.'

The government should take the primary role in design promotion and support, which are recognised in Europe as drivers of economic performance, and promotion and support should be separated, in accordance with international best practice. This was identified by Michael Thomson in the literature review and is backed up by the interviewees, perhaps unsurprisingly as most of them are designers. Damian Cranney points to a good argument for state involvement, 'because the value of design is directly related to the size of the industry and therefore the economy.'

All-island organisations present practical difficulties, but there are advantages in design promotion being organised on an all-island basis with design support taking place locally.

The centralisation of disparate government resources in the Republic was highlighted by the Enterprise Strategy Group and discussed in the literature review. This, together with separating design promotion from design support may make for better use of resources. Toby Scott is strongly of the view that design support should be done on a local basis but with regards to design promotion. 'All-island is the only way to go.'

A design council is seen as desirable by the interviewees. The Design Council in London is not actively serving Northern Ireland and in principle, an all-island council would be welcomed. Perhaps reflecting his lengthy career in industry-supported design organisations Garrett Stokes is unconcerned as to whether a design council would be all-island 'Just as long as we had one.' Of course a central issue would be funding, particularly in times when treasury budgets are under extensive scrutiny. The solution may lie in Europe. The funding of design councils in Europe varies from country to country, with, in the case of the Republic, it being non-existent. BEDA is actively pushing the EU to promote a coherent approach throughout Europe, but without active involvement in BEDA, the view of Irish designers is unheard.

Designers have limited confidence in the existing state agencies with responsibilities for design. It may be that the agency that comes in for most criticism is the wrong target with several designers recognising that Enterprise Ireland's remit is export, something with which design services are not often directly involved, playing a secondary, and often unrecognised, role. Perhaps the problem lies with what designers in Ireland typically do. As Nick Cloake has identified, 'We are not a manufacturing country, and as a result, government gets frustrated. Because when you talk to government about design, they see large plants outputting furniture, lamps and bicycles.'

It is noted that a clear definition of the role of all of the organisations, both industry- and government-supported is necessary, both in terms of what the design organisations do and why they do it. As resources are limited for both parties, hybrid organisations with some government funding for programmes, such as the Design Ireland Skillnet are created.

This funding is generally limited to between one and three years, after which the organisations seek additional revenue, usually without success. Government funding and voluntary resources are wasted in regularly setting up and closing down organisations, with little operational efficiency in the intervening period. As Michael Thomson notes, 'I think that the organisations that are there are very vulnerable to funding – for example, the Skillnets' process… are structured around the availability of one-, two- or three-year programme funding, and that is a great hindrance to supporting a sustainable approach to programme development.' This is not a sustainable model and must be reconsidered by industry and government, or more precious resources will be wasted.

This dissertation questions what the optimal structure for organisations representing design and designers on the island of Ireland is. Garrett Stokes concludes, 'We need to start again, from the beginning.' He may be right but before we do, we should have a closer look at what other countries are doing.

4.4 Interview with Jan R. Stavik, Norwegian Design Council

An extensive amount of information has been gathered from the interviewees in relation to design organisations on the island of Ireland. Failure in both industry- and government-supported design organisations has been identified. Whilst suggestions have been made as to how government-supported design organisations might work and criticisms stated, there is a need to examine how best practice is undertaken overseas. The literature review identified significant steps made by Scandinavian design organisations, particularly those in a Finland and Norway.

Jan R. Stavik is both the managing director of the Norwegian Design Council and current president of BEDA. As such he is well placed to explain international best practice. Stavik was the final interviewee. With extensive international experience of design promotion and support, specific questions were developed for his interview, which drew on the issues raised in the previous nine interviews.

Norway is a country that has a population similar in size to Ireland. It has derived significant revenue from oil and gas and this has been heavily invested, as the finite nature of the commodity is recognised. (www.norway.ie). Design has been taken seriously by the Norwegian government.

> The world is changing and we are facing major challenges...To overcome these changes and achieve success in a global competitive environment we need innovative companies and business environments across the whole country...Design is definitely one of several tools that companies can use in their efforts to be innovative...I really believe that Norwegian business will produce a number of international successes, based on using design in a systematic manner over years to come.
>
> Norwegian Design Council 2009, p. 4, 5

Sylvia Brustad, Minister of Trade and Industry, quoted above understands the importance of design as a key component in innovation and Norway continues to invest in design. Writing in the same document. Jan R. Stavik notes:

> The overriding concern of the Norwegian Design Council is to contribute towards value-creation and competitiveness in Norwegian business and industry through increased engagement in design and innovation.
>
> Norwegian Design Council 2009, p. 6

Stavik clearly understands the need to reduce Norway's dependency on oil as an economic driver. Quoted in the book, *Norwegian Design 2008,* he states:

> Historically, Norway has been a nation of raw materials. But times are changing, and the era of declining oil production is just around the corner. If we are to reach the ambitious target of becoming one of the world's most innovative nations, we must quickly learn to benefit from the unique competence of our designers.
>
> Dan Jörgenson and Åke Lindberg 2007, p. 5

With a declining economy, Ireland can look to Norway which has been significantly investing in design to reduce its dependency on oil. Stavik's interview provides answers to the issues pertaining in Ireland.

The following quotes from Jan R. Stavik are all taken directly from the interview transcript. The interview transcript is printed in full in appendix N.

Stavik outlines the significant investment made by the Norwegian Government in their Design Council, since its inception nearly half a century ago. 'The Norwegian Design Council has been there since 1963, having different roles with and without government money. Over the last 20 years, plus or minus, we had government money.' The money has increased as the government has understood the role that design plays in innovation. 'We have managed over these years to increase the understanding on a political level and on the bureaucratic level in the ministry, which can be shown by the fact that we had, when I started, a budget from the ministry of £600,000...my annual budget, which is now around £4 million, is, in budget terms, the second-largest design council in Europe after the UK, which has a budget of about twice that.'

The Norwegian Design Council derives some money from running design awards and promotional events but is mainly state funded as Stavik explains, 'We are financed 90 per cent by the Norwegian government, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry.'

The organisations role is to promote design. 'The purpose is to be what is called in the English language "a design promotion organisation". Promoting design in terms of not selling Norwegian design, but encouraging, influencing and assisting Norwegian industry in becoming more professional in using design as a tool in innovation.'

Stavik clearly separates the interests of design from those of designers, saying, 'Designers are not important, but design is...The government is not going to subsidise a professional group of people such as designers.'

Stavik outlines what his organisation's focus is, 'We are thinking of design as a process and as a tool for innovation...We never start thinking disciplines. We start thinking about the Norwegian industry.'

Stavik is clear to draw the distinction between advising a company on design and acting as a consultancy, an issue we have noted earlier with respect to Kilkenny Design. 'We also do advising or consulting to individual companies – not to play a consulting company, but to assist them. As I said, not just to inspire, but to help them.' Of course the stimulation of the use of design by industry also stimulates the design consultancies. 'Every time we go into a company, we create a job for a designer because we never do the designer's job, even though I have designers here because they know the process.'

'When we have a company client and they ask us to find the best designer, we always present three, and we always try to make one of them a rookie, a young designer.' This point of encouraging young designers is also highlighted by the commitment to 100% Norway, an exhibition held at 100% Design in London. This investment pays off as noted by curator, Henrietta Thompson:

> "...since the first 100% Norway exhibition in 2003, the design scene on this side of Scandinavia has snowballed. Refreshingly evolved far beyond the cultural clichés that have sometimes blighted the North in the past, Norway's design output today is internationally relevant, planet-aware and innovation-driven"
>
> Royal Norwegian Embassy 2008, p.7

The investment in design is paying off. As noted in the literature review the Norwegian Design Council's research shows that 83% of Norwegian managers claim that design is important for the results of their business.' (Jörgenson and Lindberg 2007, p. 5)

'Norway has long been considered the little brother of Scandinavian design, but this is definitely changing. In recent years, a new generation of designers have put Norway's business community on the world map.' (*Design from Scandinavia* 2009, p. 60)

The governments' role in design support and promotion in Norway is clearly defined and there are key lessons for Ireland. Stavik is also involved in the design organisations in Europe as president of BEDA. This also provides lessons for Ireland.

Norway is not a member of the EU, so it may seem strange that an official representing the government would be involved in BEDA. Stavik clarifies the government's view, 'Certainly they think it's great that Norway (being almost the only one who is not a member of the EU) is actually the president of an EU related organisation.' This is a situation that Stavik has helped to cultivate, 'This organisation, when I took over, was very much a small, not very visible organisation, looking at its little agenda inside Norway, and never really looked outside.' Norway's involvement shows how organisations can cross administrative and political boundaries, something that also happens on the island of Ireland.

Norway appreciates the value of design and wants to be involved in its European dimension, even if they are not members of the EU. There is a growing acceptance that BEDA has moved away from industry-supported design organisations towards government-supported design organisations. 'Over these last five, six years, I think my type of organisation has increased their share in terms of membership in BEDA, and now we are probably representing 40 per cent of the members.'

This move has several advantages. ' That means that we have had more resources, we could travel more, we could have more meetings, we could do things, and maybe we also have a different mindset because quite a few of my colleagues in the type of organisation that I represent have a business background and not a professional design background. That may be unfair, but that seems to make a hell of a difference in that context.'

The issue of the benefits of the involvement in organisations of people with a business background, is one that was raised earlier by several commentators. Stavik agrees with previous commentators highlighting issues with industry-supported design organisations. 'Most of the associations are so small. The biggest challenge we have in BEDA is for basically poor design associations to see why they should be a member.'

He explains EU policy. 'In the year 2000, the EU made the Lisbon Declaration, which was their policy and huge focus, their policy on innovation. We can't compete on price. We have to compete on being smarter, better and more creative. They started to focus on and map what are the creative industries, and they were the fastest-growing part of the economy, and, of course, one of the many elements within the definition of the creative industries is design.'

BEDA has an involvement is to ensure that design is central to EU policy. 'They spent huge amounts of money, we are talking tens of billions of euros for programmes to encourage European industry to become more innovative, but there was not a word about design. So we said, "There is a big important thing missing in the whole thing." Through this, they have changed the strategy to say that we are not forgetting that we have a bunch of designers with us, and we are going to make sure that we don't forget that.'

Stavik is not simply pushing a government agenda 'For the designers it would be great if we could get design higher up on the political agenda. We saw this huge discrepancy between the importance of design and the importance of designers from country to country. In some countries there was a huge amount of money being used. In other countries, they didn't exist.' There is no design council in the Republic and no active one in Northern Ireland. Additionally none of the industry-supported design organisations are active in BEDA. This exacerbates a situation where this island is being left behind, in design terms, in the EU.

Designers need to be more involved, but they exist on this island in small organisations with limited numbers of members. Stavik pinpoints the difficulty with representing designers in Europe. 'Designers still do not exist as a registered profession, so nobody knows how many there are. If you want to do lobbying against politics or bureaucrats, the first two questions are: how many of you are there and how much do you mean to the economy?'

Design promotion and support are well organised and funded in Norway and in many parts of Europe. As someone who is at the centre of European design organisations we need to pay close attention to Jan R. Stavik's experiences.

Designers of themselves are not important, and governments are not going to subsidise their activities. Design is important as a tool in innovation and governments should fund this, on an equal basis throughout Europe. Design councils as government agencies should not do the designer's job, but by being active in design promotion, jobs for designers will follow.

Design is a key component in innovation, something that is taken very seriously at EU level. In order to make a difference at EU level, the numbers of designers need to be counted and how much they mean to each economy documented. BEDA is working very hard to stress the importance of design to the EU. The designers and state agencies on this island must play an active part if we are to effectively use design as a driver in innovation and the economy.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to synthesise the data gathered from the literature review and primary research, and draw from this data, recommendations and conclusions. It also sets a direction for further research. The research question set out to establish an optimal structure for design organisations on the island of Ireland, and these conclusions and recommendations directly address this question.

In the literature review, Galbraith, Downey and Kates posed three questions (2002, p. 10):

'Why do we need to change?'
'Where do we need to go?' and
'What will the end state look like?'

These are addressed in this, the final chapter.

5.2 Conclusions

The conclusions address Galbraith, Downey and Kates first question (2002, p. 10) 'Why do we need to change?' The significant issues of difficulty that have arisen during the course of the research are elucidated.

5.2.1 Interests of Design and Interests of Designers

There is a difference in the interests of design to those of designers. It is not possible to adequately represent both. The organisations must understand the difference and select an appropriate focus. This focus must be clearly communicated to the government, the business community, the consumers of design as well as to the designers themselves.

5.2.2 Professional and Amateur Designers

There is a difference between professional and non-professional designers. This must be recognised by designers and their organisations. Where an organisation seeks to represent professionals, then they must adopt professional standards.

The professional bodies should cultivate links with business organisations such as IBEC, ISME and chambers of commerce.

There is merit in organisations that solely promote an interest in a discipline. The AAI is open to people with an interest in architecture. The RIAI is only open to people who want to practise architecture in a professional context. This is a model that other design disciplines should consider adopting.

5.2.3 Architecture and Engineering

Architecture and engineering are different from other design disciplines. They are longer established, have large memberships, distinct professional standards and a liability to the general public. Promoting engineering and architecture will not in itself promote growth in the economy.

Promotion at the higher level of the construction industry will promote growth in the economy, and therefore the professions of architecture and engineering.

5.2.4 Issues of Scale

The IDI, ICAD, IA and Design Business Ireland are small organisations, particularly in comparison to Engineers Ireland, the RIAI and the RSUA. The size of the organisations limits their organisational capacity to get things done.

5.2.5 Design Promotion and Design Support

There is a difference between design promotion and design support. This must be recognised by all of the stakeholders. Promotion and support are essential to increase the strategic use of design.

5.2.6 The All-Island Dimension

Design Support can be undertaken on a local basis. Design support is best undertaken on an all-island basis.

5.2.7 The International Dimension

Design organisations on the island need to be active participants in European and international design associations. They must re-engage and contribute as in the past. This will enable design policy on the island of Ireland to be aligned with the emerging EU policy for design.

5.2.8 Government-Supported Design Organisations

Government-supported design organisations have failed. Inadequate funding, lack of organisational clarity and overlap of functions have contributed to the failure.

Government must understand the importance of design to the national economy, its role in design support and promotion, and simplify the structure that enables comprehensive delivery. It should not actively engage in creating state-run design consultancies.

5.2.9 Clarification of Design Organisations

There is confusion as to what industry- and government-supported organisations do, for whom they do them and why they do them. There is significant overlap and duplication of effort. There is significant waste of few resources. A simplification of the mapping of organisations is essential. The agreed mission of each of the design organisations should be defined and accepted between the parties. Organisations should be streamlined so as to reduce the overlap.

5.2.10 Structure of Organisations

Structures in design organisations must be clarified so that there is an understanding and continuation of policy, rather than changes occurring according to differing presidential or councils' interests.

Several commentators have noted the lack of skill on the part of designers engaged in organisations' management structures. Consideration should be given to opening up boards to persons with experience from outside the design community.

Whilst it may be desirable to have a single-discipline focus in industry-supported design organisations, issues of scale and changes in design practice mean that a larger organisation serving more than one discipline may better represent designers' needs.

5.2.11 Towards a Design Alliance

It has been commented that there is a need for an overarching body involving all of the stakeholders. Rather than create another body in the mould of Design Ireland, an informal design alliance should be created, which allows closer communication between all of the stakeholders with an interest in design on the island of Ireland.

5.2.12 Towards a Design Council

Design councils and their roles vary from country to country. BEDA is actively addressing the issue of equality of design promotion and support across Europe. Ireland must be involved in this process.

There must be clear understanding that design, rather than individual designers, is important to government and the economy.

Design organisations must understand that they are not design councils, promoting and supporting the interests of design to the national economies. By confusing the issue, they are allowing government to evade its responsibility to promote design effectively.

A government-funded design council would be welcomed. In order for one to come into existence, the industry-supported design organisations must first get their structures right.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations address Galbraith, Downey and Kates second question (2002, p. 10), 'Where do we need to go?' The recommendations are concise and carefully directed.

5.3.1 The Representation of Designers

The organisations that wish to create a professional structure for designers should consider amalgamating. In the short term, some revenue-sharing and pooling of resources should be discussed. Specifically, there is merit in the IDI and Design Business Ireland meeting to discuss some form of formal amalgamation.

Any new organisation should clarify that it is primarily representing the interests of designers and their companies. This organisation should develop links to organisations such as IBEC and chambers of commerce, so as to best promote their members' professional interests.

The architecture and engineering professions are already well organised and have attained critical mass over the past one and a half centuries of organisation. There is no need to consider a formalised union between the design organisations and either of these bodies.

There is validity in design organisations such as ICAD, which do not have a professional focus, but rather address the needs of practitioners with an interest in design. These organisations should not be encouraged to join the professional organisations.

Additionally and separately, an informal design-alliance organisation should be set up, which can play the role of liaison between all of the industry-supported design organisations.

5.3.2 The Representation of Design

5.3.2.1 Design Promotion

Design promotion should take place on an all-island basis.

The initiatives undertaken by InterTradeIreland in this regard should be welcomed, not just by the industry bodies, but crucially, should be supported by both Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland. The focus of this promotion should be to the business community, as consumers of design.

Industry-supported organisations must also be involved with design promotion, but primarily regarding the interests of their members. This must be clearly understood by these organisations.

5.3.2.2 Design Support

Design support should be undertaken locally.

The recommendations of the Enterprise Strategy Group with regard to the coordination of all state agencies and regional bodies such as Shannon Development and county enterprise boards, should be implemented. Design support should be centrally coordinated. Design support in Northern Ireland by Invest Northern Ireland should continue.

5.3.2.3 A Design Council

There is broad support for a design council on the island. The governments should be questioned as to why they have not funded a design council in the Republic and why the Design Council in London has little presence in Northern Ireland.

The creation of a design council in the Republic has not happened and does not look like it might happen in the short term. To assist in bringing about such an activity, the industry-supported design associations must become active in BEDA and help drive the issue forward at the EU level.

5.4 Summary

The summary addresses Galbraith, Downey and Kates final question (2002, p. 10), 'What will the end state look like?'

It might not look any different, for the Irish design organisation landscape is littered with forgotten reports with recommendations that went nowhere. The last major report, Enterprise Ireland's 1999 report, *Opportunities in Design: Strategies for Growth in the Irish Design Sector* led to the creation of two significant organisations, the industry- and government-supported organisation, Design Ireland, as well as Enterprise Ireland's internal design unit. Neither of these organisations is currently active, seemingly quietly ceasing activity along with others such as Design Shannon and the Donegal Design Directorate.

The dissertation has been limited to studying the structure of those organisations involved in design-related activities. Clearly there are significant areas for further development in order to begin to establish Irish design as a brand. The four that most immediately arise out of the research are:

How can the creation of the necessary amalgamations and alliances of the existing industry-supported organisations take place in a coordinated and efficient manner?

How can the governments become more actively involved in the promotion and support of design on the island of Ireland?

How can we create the circumstances in which fully functioning design councils are seen as not just desirable by designers, but essential by governments?

What is the role of education on the supply side of the design equation?

Tom Finlay notes in the executive summary of his report into Design Ireland, 'There is no shortage of good analysis and recommendations as regards raising the profile of design in Ireland. What there is a shortage of is good implementation.' (Finlay 2005, p. 1)

In order to know what the end state will look like we either need to accept the status quo, where design is at best seen as a marginal activity on this island, with little relevance to the population. We know what this state looks like, a state where the economy demands innovative solutions to drive growth, but where a key component, design, is left untended, with little government investment in the sector. Where there is large scale unemployment in the design community.

The alternative is to implement the recommendations of this dissertation and all of the recent documents that precede it, the *ICSTI Statement: Design and Development,* (ICSTI 2002) The Enterprise Strategy Group *Ahead of the Curve: Ireland's Place in the Global Economy* (Enterprise Strategy Group 2004) report and others, most particularly support the work presently being undertaken by InterTradeIreland.

What then will the end state look like? Well it should look a bit like it does in Norway. A country with a population about the size of Ireland's, a location on the edge of Europe, a government that over ten years ago recognised that design was a key driver in innovation and put serious investment into the sector. A country that has a burgeoning International design reputation, one that sees it being involved in design decisions taking place at the centre of Europe.

This dissertation begins with a quotation from Seán O'Laoire: 'Irish design: it's not a brand, but it could be a brand.' If we look abroad, and if we adopt the lessons learned, and the best practice implemented, then Irish design will be a brand.

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Appendix A: List of Design Organisations

Industry-supported design organisations on the island of Ireland

Design Business Ireland (formerly the GDBA)
Baseline
Castleforbes House,
Castleforbes Road,
Docklands,
Dublin 1
T: +353 1 889 3150
www.gdba.ie

The Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI)
Office No.1
43/44 Temple Bar
Dublin 2
T: +353 1 635 1428
www.architecturalassociation.ie

The Institute of Creative Advertising and Design (ICAD)
103 Francis Street
Dublin 8
T: +353 1 471 6099
www.icad.ie

The Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI)
The Digital Hub
Roe Lane
Thomas Street
Dublin 8
T: +353 1 489 3650
www.idi-design.com

The Interiors Association (IA)
Suite 226
3 Lombard Street East
Dublin 2
T: +353 1 672 9492
www.theinteriorsassociation.ie

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
8 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2,
Tel. + 353 1 676 1703
www.riai.ie

Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)
2 Mount Charles
Belfast
BT7 1NZ
www.rsua.org.uk

Government organisations supporting design on the island of Ireland

Enterprise Ireland
The Plaza
East Point Business Park
Dublin 3
T: +353 1 727 2000
www.enterprise-ireland.com

InterTradeIreland
The Trade and Business Development Body
The Old Gasworks Business Park
Kilmorey Street
Newry
County Down
BT34 2DE
T: +44 28 30834100
www.intertradeireland.com

Invest Northern Ireland
Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7ES
T: +4428 9023 9090
www.investni.com

Industry-supported European Design Organisations

Art Directors Club of Europe
Plaça dels Angels 5-6
08001 Barcelona
Spain
T +34 934 437 520
www.adceurope.org

The European Council of Interior Architecture
Correspondence:
Oudezijds Voorburgwal 306
1012 GL Amsterdam
The Netherlands
T. +31 20 625 3973
www.ecia.net

The Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA)
Koloniënstraat 56
7° floor
1000 Brussels
Belgium
T. +32 2 212 94 29
www.beda.org

Members of BEDA

Austria
Design Austria
designforum im MQ, Museums Quartier, Hof 7, Museumsplatz 1
A-1070 Wien
T. +43 1 52 449 490
www.designaustria.at

Belgium
Union des Designers en Belgique - UDB
Allée Hof-ter-Vleest Dreef 5 (box 6)
B-1070 Bruxelles
T. +32 2 5 235 204
www.udb.org

Design Flanders
Koloniënstraat 56 6° floor
B-1000 Brussels
T. +32 2 227 49 6
www.designvlaanderen.be

Czech Republic
Czech Trade
Dittrichova 21
128 01 Prague 2
T. +420 224 907 537
www.czechtrade.cz

Denmark
Danish Designers/Danske Designere
Kristianiagade 8
2100 København Ø
T. +45 33 137 230
www.danishdesigners.com

Estonia
Estonian Association of Designers - Eesti Disainerite Liit
Suur-Karja 14
10140 Tallinn
T. +372 555 736 87
www.edl.ee

Finland
Design Forum Finland
Erottajankatu 7
00130 Helsinki
T. +358 9 6220 8110
www.designforum.fi

Ornamo Teollisuustaiteen Liitto Ornamo ry –
Finnish Association of Designers Ornamo
Unionkatu 26
00130 Helsinki
T. +358 9 6877 740
www.ornamo.fi

France
APCI - Agence pour la Promotion Creation Industrielle
24 rue du Charolais
75012 Paris
T. +33 143450450
www.apci.asso.fr

Germany
Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen
Gelsenkirchener Strasse 181
45309 Essen
T. +49(0)201 30 10 4-0
www.red-dot.de

Hungary
Hungarian Design Council
P.O. Box 552
1370 Budapest 5 Pf.552
T. +36 1 474 55 60
www.mft.org.hu

Italy
Associazione per il Disegno Industriale - ADI
Via Bramante 29
I-20154 Milan
T. +39 02 33100164
www.adi-design.org

Associazione ltaliana Progettazione per la Comunicazione Visiva - AIAP
via Ponchielli 3
20129 Milan
T. +39 02 29520590
www.aiap.it

Associazione ltaliana Progettisti in Architettura d'Interni - AIPI
Via Gerolamo Borgazzi 4
I-20122 Milan
T. +39 02 58310243
www.aipi.it

Art. e School
Via delle Conce 14 rosso
I-50122 Firenze
T. +39 055 247 8510
www.arteschool.com

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Politecnico di Milano, Via Durando 38/A, DI.Tec.
20158 Milano
T. +39 0 2 2399 7206
www.polidesign.net

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Via Durando 38/A
20158 Milano
T. +39 0 2 2399 7216
www.design.polimi.it

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Dizaina Informacijas centrs
Ausekla iela 11-101
Riga, LV-1 Riga
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Norsk Design - og Arkitektursenter, Hausmannsgate 16
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Design Council
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Industry supported International Design Organisations

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Appendix B: Key Questions Asked at Interviews

1. Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?

2. Do you consider yourself to be a designer?

3. If you are a designer, what do you design?

4. Can you briefly describe your professional background?

5. Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?

6. Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?

7. What is the purpose of the professional design organisation in which you hold an executive position?

8. Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation?

9. How many members are there in the professional design organisation?

10. Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining and if so why?

11. Can you tell me if there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and can you tell me why you left?

12. Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?

13. Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of design?

14. Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?

15. With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?

16. Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all island organisations?

17. What is your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one for the United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic? Would you welcome an all island design council?

18. What is your view of the promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?

19. What are the weaknesses in the structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?

Appendix C: List of Interviewees

Dawson Stelfox
Architect
President, Royal Society of Ulster Architects
Member, Royal Institute of British Architects
Member, Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

Damian Cranney
Design Manager
President, Institute of Designers in Ireland
Corporate Member, Design Business Ireland

Garrett Stokes
Visual Communications Designer
Jewellery Designer
Past President and Honorary Member, Institute of Creative Advertising and Design
Past President, Art Directors Club of Europe
Founding Director, Graphic Design Business Association
Corporate Member, Design Business Ireland
Former Board Member, Design Ireland, representing ICAD
Member, Association Typographique Internationale
Member, The International Institute for Information Design

John O'Connor
Visual Communications Designer
Head of the School of Art Design and Printing. Dublin Institute of Technology
Design Ireland Board Member, representing Education
Former Council Member, Member, Institute of Designers in Ireland
Former Council Member, Institute of Creative Advertising and Design
Founding Secretary, Heads of Art & Design in Ireland
Founding Director, Graphic Design Business Association
Corporate Member, Design Business Ireland
Member, Association Typographique Internationale
Member, Bureau of the European Design Associations

Elaine Butler
Interior Architect
Founding Member, Past President, Committee Member, Interiors Association
Former Committee Member, Design Ireland Skillnet Steering Committee

Brian Kavanagh
Engineer
Council Member, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Engineers Ireland
Member, Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland

Seán O'Laoire
Architect
President, The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

Toby Scott
Founding Director, Centre for Design Innovation Sligo
Former Director, Design Council, London
Former Head of Arts Funding, Department of Culture Media and Sport, London
Fellow, The Royal Society of Arts, London
Member, Association of MBA's

Nicholas Cloake
Graphic Designer
President, Design Business Ireland (formerly GDBA)
Founding Director, Design Ireland
Former Council Member, Member, Institute of Designers in Ireland
Member Institute of Creative Advertising and Design

Michael Thompson
Facilitator Strategist Consultant and Advisor
Former Executive Board Member, International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, 2001-2005
Former President, Bureau of European Design Associations, 2007-2009
Former International Knowledge Expert, Design Council, London
Former Adviser on the Creative Industries to State Secretary, Vienna, Austria
Programme Director, Torino World Design Capital, 2008
International Advisory Committee Member, Seoul World Design Capital, 2010.
Initiated the World Design Report and facilitated the successful creation of the International Design Alliance (IDA).

Jan R. Stavik
Managing Director, Norsk Designråd, Norwegian Design Council,
President, of Bureau of European Design Associations, 2009

Appendix D Interview with Dawson Stelfox

Location: Consarc Design, 4 Cromac Quay, Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 2JD
Date: 08 July 2009
Duration: 44:14 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?
We have no professional or personal relationship; I met you for the first time this morning.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes very much so, design is an integral part of the practice of Architecture, so absolutely.

What do you design?
I design buildings I design spaces, I design artefacts, furniture, bits of buildings that interface with people, a whole range of things, primarily concerned with buildings and spaces around them.

But you would design furniture and parts of the pieces that go into buildings?
Yes.

Personally I do a lot of work with old buildings, with restoring buildings, with adding buildings, adding extensions to buildings and very often you're designing stair balustrades, sometimes bits of furniture, right down to quite fine detail of things, window screens, a whole range of things. So I think, in particular working with older buildings you tend to design down to a finer level than you might do with some new buildings.

Would you ever design products or gone that far?
Products, no. I don't think I have ever designed a product for sale in that sense, no.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
Well I'm an architect. I qualified originally back in 1980, my 1st degree, 1982, my 2nd degree. I am a Member of both the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland; I've joined both professional bodies.

I've worked both for myself and at times over the years I've worked for the building preservation trust, voluntary bodies. Primarily I work in private practice with the Consarc Design Group, who are largely based in Belfast but we have a small office in Dublin and a small office in Derry as well.

So you are a member of the RIAI and the RIBA?
Yes

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
I am currently President of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects which is the RIBA region which covers Northern Ireland. We are an Independent Royal Chartered Body but we are also the RIBA Northern Ireland region. We are a slightly odd body in that regard, we are independent from the RIBA but we are fully integrated in the RIBA.

As President of the RSUA I sit on the RIBA council, but we have our own Royal Charter and finances are separate. We operate independently in that regard so it's a slightly complicated relationship.

What is the purpose of the RSUA?
The RSUA has two core purposes. One of which is to represent the interest of architects and the second one, and it's an equal one, is to promote the advancement of architecture. Both of these two constitutional requirements are built in and neither one takes precedence over the other.

We are looking at the interests of architects, but also promoting architecture as architecture.

Who is eligible to join the RSUA?
Anybody who joins the RIBA and is living in Northern Ireland is automatically a member of the RSUA unless they choose not to be. You can join the RSUA and choose not to be a member of the RIBA. Very few people do that. There would be a handful people who would do that.

How many members are there in the RSUA?
There are about 870 Members in Northern Ireland and about 300 student members. But 870 Chartered Architects.

Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining and if so why?
No

Can you tell me if there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and can you tell me why you left?
No

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers? Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of design?
The RIBA was set up under a Royal Charter and as such must promote both architects and architecture. This can cause difficulties.

There have been examples of buildings in Belfast that have been criticised for the quality of their architecture. This creates difficulties if the RSUA criticise the quality of the building as they may be criticising the work of a member.

However the role is to promote architecture as well as architects and it is a question of achieving the right balance. The balance is generally more towards representing architecture.

In the UK there is also The Association of Consultant Architects (ACA) whose first aim is the representation of architects.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
Yes. It has to do with permanence. Architects create buildings that last for a long period of time. Largely the public have no choice on the selection of these buildings. A well designed hospital will help patients recover more successfully from illnesses.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
They don't have to.

Architects in the United Kingdom have to join the Architects Registration Board (ARB) in order to practice as an architect and there is now registration in the Republic.

Do you see an advantage or disadvantage of professional design organisations being All Island organisations?
I joined the RIAI because I've always worked, not quite on an all island basis, but in the south as well as the north. Initially you didn't have to join the RIAI to be able to work in the South; you know this parity of European qualifications. I could work in the south based up here, but I took the view that you should join the professional body of the country that you are operating in.

It has advantages because the RIAI obviously run CPD courses and things which relate specifically to practice in the South, because legislation is a bit different. The building regulations are different, planning systems are different, so things are a bit different. I took the view to join. There would be a number of RIAI members in the North. There are also RIBA members in the South.

Being a member of both doesn't cause any particular problems. I think the difficulty in one or other organisation trying to look on an All Island basis is the fact that legislation is different. Different ministers, different policies. It would be quite difficult for one professional body to deal with that.

I know a wee bit about this. I'm involved with the Mountaineering Council of Ireland which is the governing body for mountaineering. It is an All Island body and they've always been an All Island Body but effectively it has to be run as nearly two bodies within it because you're dealing with two separate sports councils, two separate governments, slightly different policies and also to a certain extent a geographical spread of people. You've got people based from Kerry to Donegal to North Antrim; it's actually easier geographically to get people together.

One of the things we are actually looking at, at the moment, is an All Ireland Mountaineering Training Board, which is the body that which does all the qualifications for people taking kids out into the mountains and things. There is a study going on as to whether or not it is feasible to do an All Island Training Mountaineering Board and that's throwing up all sorts of interesting things because in principle people say yes, 'Ireland is a small place, so why do you need two separate training boards?'

The mountains are the same whether you're in Connemara or in the Mourne's but it's not as easy as that, because the educational system is structured differently, the sports council, emergency services, all sort of things are structured differently. Philosophically it makes sense to have one body. There are huge practical difficulties with that and I would imagine it's the same for any organisation just because there is such disparity.

I think there should be better, more co-operation between the RSUA and the RIAI. There are some who get on well together, the RIAI join England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland twice a year for what's called the Five Presidents' meeting. The RIAI, the RIBA, the RIAS which is the Scottish body, the RSAW, the Welsh body and the RSUA get together to share information and things.

Do you have a view as to the advantages of a Design Council? I know that the Design Council in the UK probably links more with other designers other than architects.
I haven't any real personal involvement with the Design Council at all. It does tend to come into product design and furniture design and things like that rather than buildings and those would have an influence.

I think in general, my impression of it, is that it is a positive influence in terms of raising people's awareness of design standards and the fact that there are benchmarks of good design.

I think the difficulty with things is separating the subjective from the objective and trying to identify good design principles which are not just fashion and not just personal preference. I think that is where the Design Council has been very successful in terms of recognising good quality design, which is not just fashion but looks into ergonomics and in turn into function.

That's important and coming from a practical Architectural background you would expect me to say that. For me good design is not something that is just beautiful but also has to work as well. That's surely where the ergonomics comes in, where the function of it comes in. Vitruvius' principles of Architecture: Commodity, Firmness and Delight should be present not just in buildings.

What is your view of the promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?
I think the state agencies have been very lax in terms of quality of design until quite recently. It certainly used to be the case and largely still is, that we've got quite used to lowest common denominator thresholds when it comes to design quality.

That's through government departments themselves, it's to do with the planning systems under the threshold levels it sits. There has been a prevailing attitude up here to more or less let developers who are prepared to build something, well then let them build it.

There hasn't been real incentive for the recognition given to good design. Now the Ministers Advisory Group, which I mentioned earlier on, is meant to deal with that. It's meant to be the equivalent of CABE in England which is if you like: criticising, setting standards, promoting good quality design. Its early days yet and it hasn't really got off the ground but that's what it is meant to do.

Then PLACE which is funded by state bodies, funded by the Arts Council, funded by some of the other government departments in Belfast City Council. Michael Hegarty has just been appointed and that's meant to try and make the public case for it. The argument a lot of times when you're pushing government departments is about there's no public interest not a public ground swell. People just want shelter and a roof.

So part of the task is to build that public interest and public involvement so you get public clammer for good quality design, you get the mass of the public behind you looking for it, as opposed to just a few hundred precious architects.

Getting the broad public support for good quality design is essential to get state agencies to take it seriously.

Do you see any weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the Island of Ireland?
Well I suppose I wouldn't know much about them, except the architectural ones. The weaknesses I suppose is that you've got 800 odd members in the RSUA, small staff, very limited resources. If it's to fulfil that wider promotion of architecture function then it's very difficult to do that within the resources of the members contributing to that.

The money comes in to the RSUA, partly from members' subscriptions, partly from running CPD events and things like that which is also members' money, partly from commercial activities, with the shop and things like that.

Effectively it is all self generated money. There's no public money that goes into the RSUA at all and yet it's supposedly performing a public function. Where public money does come in is through PLACE. Maybe that is the right balance but at the same time the RSUA sees itself having this public interest role and yet its own members are paying for that to happen. There isn't public money going directly into the RSUA to fulfil that public interest role.

Public money goes to PLACE and maybe that is the right balance. There is a network of architecture centres. I don't think there is one in Dublin. There is the Lighthouse in Glasgow and there is Design Something in London but architecture centres generally around the UK are not well funded and mainly all of them are struggling.

Appendix E: Interview with Damian Cranney

Location: Enterprise train travelling between Belfast and Dublin
Date: 08 July 2009
Duration: 22:14 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the Interviewer?
Yes we are colleagues. We have worked together and we obviously know one another through design organisations, such as the Institute of the Designers in Ireland.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes.

If so what do you design?
I think that the question is presumptuous. It presumes that calling yourself or thinking about yourself in that way means that it's an individual task. If you reframe that and see design in a commercial context, as a sort of a team effort or a discipline that is worked on by a team, then I collectively design communications.

Yes but you would probably be listed as design management?
In the IDI.

Yes
Correct.

Do you consider yourself a design manager as much as a designer?
Design Management is a very broad area. The term initially was applied to the management of a design function on the client side, within organisations.

The design management function would have seen that individual managing an architecture program or a design program, essentially working with suppliers and external designers. It evolved since then on the communications side with international marketing and consultancy and on the product side, design thinking and new product development and in architecture all sorts of other things.

So I can relate in terms of the logic and the thinking that is applied to that discipline. It's also the fact that yes I manage the design process.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
Quite varied, which is increasingly common these days in our profession. I trained as a product designer, majored in product design, worked then for a year and a half as a junior graphic designer, self taught really. Studied a Masters in Design Management in London, spent a period of time during my masters program doing design research and consultancy.

Then I worked in a company, Bissett Adams whose specialism was that they were an Architecture practice with Identity Consultancy parts: they had a kind of graphic design agency within a large creative environment. We had architects, we had interior designers, we had graphics people, and a team of brand consultants. What they did was design big libraries, lots of showrooms for all the big automotive clients, Rover, Honda and all these types of people. That suited me because I learned in there. I spent two and a half years there, working on branding assignments, on new business, the commercial side of the business. Working with architects and interior designers as well and being exposed to quite large programs at work, so that was all great.

I went from there to work as a design manager for a design management consultancy called Bradley McGurk Partnership. I had a sort of strange kind of experience there in that I found myself managing design projects, which I disliked completely because I was working with other design consultancies and not getting to do any design or influence the process in a meaningful way. This may have been due to my standing in the company, but moreover I'm not sure that you can outsource Design Management. It needs to be embedded in the team 'doing' the design work.

I then went from there to spend about 6 months in the Vard Partnership and on to Dynamo where I was very happy for about three years. I was back to doing what I really enjoyed doing which was graphic design, some hands on work, dealing a lot with clients, new business development, selling, but also the strategic front end thinking in branding assignments. So literally doing all the things I had previously done but with an emphasis on process and management. It was essentially boot camp for my own business which I'm doing now.

Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?
Design Business Ireland, a lapsed member of the Chartered Society of Designers in the UK and member of the Institute of the Designers in Ireland.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
Yes, I'm a council member of the IDI, an officer and I am currently President.

Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining and if so why?
Yes. I would consider joining the Design Business Association in the UK because it's my perception that the offering is better, more useful, more valuable to our Organisation and that might unfortunately displace our membership of Design Business Ireland.

And might that be because you're in Belfast as opposed to Dublin?
Possibly, but moreover it's because what they produce, the materials and the value of the materials and the programs and the kind of training that they run, are a much better fit for our needs as a Design Organisation.

I struggle to appreciate the value of Design Business Ireland and for us and that may well be because we are in Belfast.

What is the purpose of the professional design organisation of which you hold an executive position?
I perceive the IDI role to be that of a resource, a kind of a bank of knowledge, a forum for facilitating debate, exchange of ideas, learning through events and lectures. It is definitely more than that, but that is something that it does well.

Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation?
At the minute any individual who has a professional design or a recognised design qualification and/or a lesser qualification, with the appropriate experience working as a professional designer.

How many members are there in your professional design organisation?
300; in around that.

Are there any other professional design organisations you would consider joining and if so why?
Yes. The Design Business Association in the UK, and also DNAD for its Design and Art Direction. Purely from the point of view that we might consider entering the DNAD Awards at some point this year.

Can you tell me there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and tell me why you left?
The Chartered Society of Designers. In my opinion it is the British or English equivalent of the IDI. In fact it is a kind of stuffy organisation and very much about professional standards and protocol and defining really what the design profession is and should be, rather than a much more agile and dynamic organisation, which I think is what the IDI is, which is much more active.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
I think industry. The designer should themselves have to do that, and I think it has been a primary interest of designers. I think that it is Design Business Ireland as an organisation in terms of their mandate and what they say they are in business to do.

So do you think it is design organisations as opposed to government?
I don't think Government has any more of an obligation to the Design Industry than it does to any other industry.

Certainly Invest NI has a design remit and has a design unit and their objective is to promote the value of design. I think it is designers themselves, design companies and how they are organised around an institute or an organisation like Design Business Ireland.

The problem is that there needs to be a majority of design businesses on the Island that say Design Business Ireland is our professional design organisation, that is not the case and that's where there is a chink in the armour.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interest of design as opposed to designers?
Design promotion usually falls under the remit of government.

From a professional point of view and from a commercial stand point I know that if I'm talking to a client or a customer who is unconvinced as to the value of design then the project is unlikely to evolve into the kind of project we are interested in doing. Now that may well be because of the size. So yes individual designers and design companies have an obligation to promote design but I think that that is the job of the Government because the value of design is directly related to the size of the Industry and therefore the economy.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
The differences are semantic and also about the physical output and the nature of the solution being delivered. The process is very similar.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
Because there are few design organisations that have anything tangible or a kind of perceived, genuinely meaningful value to offer designers. It's not seen as regulated and it's not seen as a necessary mark for professional standards to aspire towards.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being All Island organisations?
There are only advantages in my opinion

And what advantages are there?
We are uniquely positioned in Ireland where we have essentially two governments on one Island. So if you're clever enough you can glean all kinds of benefits in that situation.

I think that the advantages are that you have the ability to tap into essentially another market, another industry and to have diversity and go to events. If you're in the North you can even go to events and share ideas with people from another separate economy but at the same time be members of the same organisation and therefore have that distance but at the same time have that proximity.

It looks to me that you could somehow play one government off against the other to a certain extent:
Not really. We don't derive any benefits from Enterprise Ireland or anything like that. I guess one could. Wearing my member professional organisation hat, I guess we have initiatives that depend on Enterprise Ireland support so therefore I benefit in that way.

What's your view of government sponsored Design Councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an All Island Design Council?
Yes. Absolutely.

The Design Council in the UK is there to support the design role in the UK economy and they do an excellent job working from government within Government, promoting the value of design which provides all kinds of benefits to the UK design industry. There isn't really a similar body here at all. There are all kinds of programs, publications, white papers; standards on design which interestingly provide learning resources to designers themselves but essentially their objectives are to promote design to the wider economy.

Does that message get watered down north of the Watford Gap?
Technically the United Kingdom incorporates Northern Ireland. But actually the Design Council is very London centric. You've got the Island of Great Britain being Scotland, Wales, England and that is really their stomping ground. The message really doesn't travel to Northern Ireland, there's no activity, there's no feet on the ground and there is that kind of separation of the water.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?
I don't know enough about what Enterprise Ireland do, I know they have been doing it for quite some time and perhaps the fact that I don't know enough is an indictment of what they do do. I perceive them to do a reasonably good job, who knows?

I think Invest NI have historically done a good job and lent their support. I have seen that support drift in terms of resourcing and in terms of how serious they are with design.

I think that due to a number of papers and research papers that have been published in recent years along with various other reasons Invest NI for the last two years have really reaffirmed their support to the design Industry and really got behind it, are resourcing it properly and are doing a pretty good job actually.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the Island of Ireland?
I can only talk with any real authority about the IDI and our weaknesses are: we are not clearly defined, we are not well enough defined vis-à-vis the other design organisations in Ireland so that's a problem for members because members can't clearly disseminate the information being given and make clear enough distinction between the two. That then trickles down then in to the perceived value of being a member because where there's confusion, there's confusion around where the designer is going to put his money, further exasperated by things like the economic downturn.

Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses is that we are not commercial enough and again this is completely related to this notion around perceived value. Another weakness is the fact that we are both the membership and the management of the organisation. Council and the management of the Institute are essentially on a volunteer basis and rely on the time that busy people can put into it.

There are weaknesses in terms of the structure of the organisation; there are weakness in terms of our perceived value and how to communicate. I think this is the year of transition and I think last year was too and I think we are going through a period where everything is up for grabs and under review.

Appendix F: Interview with Garrett Stokes

Location: Langkawi Restaurant, 46 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4
Date: 10 July 2009
Duration: 34:02 minutes

Note: Subsequent to the interview Garrett Stokes requested that the following proviso be included. He also edited the answers extensively.
As this is an interview (and I don't know the questions yet), I have not prepared responses in advance. I expect that whatever we discuss, it will be clear that I am expressing my own personal views, I am not inclined to 'hold back' and I will be forthright – some of my remarks will be a little strong, as I hold very strong views on the topic. Also my responses will be generally brief (and often lacking in fine details) since this is not of 'book length' – and there is little opportunity for elaborate answers.

Can you state your relationship with the Interviewer?
I know you from your involvement with various bodies like Design Ireland and from your involvement with Design Week and this would be the primary way in which I've been introduced to you and gotten to know you over time.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes.

If so what do you design?
I am a graphic designer; I design all kinds of graphic material. I am creative director in a busy successful design company called Catalysto - so I oversee the design and creative process in our company. I am also a jewellery designer, generally working on one-off pieces in precious metals but I have also designed commercially produced ranges for other jewellery companies. I have also worked collaboratively with Alan Ardiff (a well known jeweller) on the design of small sculptural pieces.

So you have gone from graphics to jewellery, have you ever designed furniture?
No.

Do you sell jewellery commercially?
Occasionally. Yes. It's usually very expensive, precious metals, precious stones.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
My first job was in the printing and book publishing industry, initially as a designer working with a small team. I then entered the Advertising business – and soon became a Creative Director (in a small Dublin based advertising agency).

I then spent a few years freelancing with a number of agencies, usually on one-off projects. After a few years I set up my own corporate design consultancy.

I have been involved in education as a lecturer for a number of years. I helped devise (and deliver) the curriculum for the Graphic Reproduction Technology Diploma, which was a post-degree course of one year, designed to give technical skills to creative designers graduating from the design colleges. I provide private tuition in the area of typography.

I've a background in publishing. I've published two magazines: one was a creative magazine called 'CREATIVE,' published in the late 80's for the Irish creative industry. I was its editor – writing and commissioning articles and art-directing the photographers and illustrators. Another was called FRESH, which was a music magazine that became the second biggest selling magazine in Ireland at the time after the RTE Guide; it sold up to 40,000 copies per issue. I was its Creative Director/Designer and very often its graphic artist, writer, photographer, interviewer etc. I sold it to the largest printer in Ireland, Graphic Universal.

I am an active member of several important professional bodies nationally and internationally. In some cases they are long established, in some cases I helped establish them. I have devised Awards criteria and set judging standards for creative awards locally and internationally. I have chaired juries of eminent creative and have participated as a jury member. And I have won some awards as well!

Most recently I have turned to (serious) writing and have my first book – 'Under the Influence of Salomé' – (providing a full detailed history of the Oscar Wilde play Salomé and its enormous influence on the world of Art, Design, Culture) due out in Spring 2010.

Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?
I am a member of the Association Typographique Internationale (ATypI) and of The International Institute for Information Design (IIID).

I was elected President of ICAD – the first designer to hold this position. I was re-elected to a second term after which I removed myself from the arena – I always had an issue with people staying on the board beyond a reasonable term, as I think these types of organisation need constant renewal and re-invigoration. I am not involved now – although I am an honorary member (as a past president of ICAD).

I am a past president of Art Directors Club of Europe. I am the only graphic designer who held that position and I'm the only Irish person who held that position.

I served for a number of years on the board of Design Ireland. Our company is a corporate member of Design Business Ireland. I was on the founding board of the GDBA and served for a number of years.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
In addition to those listed above, I helped set up the GDBA; I was on the original Board of the GDBA in 1992.

And why did you do that?
There were a number of catalysts for setting up the GDBA, but the primary one was that AIB had, in the early 1990s, commissioned Wolff Olins - one of the leading design consultancies in the UK - to carry out the design and implementation of a new corporate identity for the Bank. Irish Life soon followed their example (and both brands are still in use). Because of this, the Irish design industry lost the ability to pitch for projects of that scale (AIB had gone to a UK design practice to have its design needs satisfied - a de-facto statement by the leading Bank that no Irish design company could have carried out this project) and this was the latest 'design industry failure' in a long list of events that restricted the growth in the Irish design industry at that time and has continued to restrict it even today.

A quick 'tour' of some of these failures is as follows: The Government of the day set up Kilkenny Design Workshops in 1963 as part of what was then Córas Tráchtála Teoranta (CTT). KDWs primary responsibility was for the promotion, assistance and development of Irish industrial design and the improvement of design standards. Initially their focus was actually on the craft industry. CTT still retained responsibility for the marketing and design needs of exporters.

The purpose of Kilkenny Design was to give Ireland a design industry, based on the Scandinavian model. Design was considered to be something that we could do in Ireland - like a craft or cottage industry but more highly developed. (KDW initially was not heavily involved in Graphic Design, which in the early 1960s was not a well understood industry/discipline in Ireland). Later Kilkenny Design recruited a number of graphic designers – some really superb designers (many non-Irish), and KDW was given some important and high profile commissions from other state organisations. These strategies had a detrimental effect on the indigenous industry – private companies could not develop the design expertise they needed if they were going to compete for design commissions on international markets and they could not develop the portfolios of work required if they were going to present themselves convincingly in front of commissioning panels and compete with the large European design houses of the time.

In 1965 Kilkenny Design Workshops (KDW) officially opened. The workshops focused on craft-based design for industry. The first Kilkenny Shop, originally intended to sell prototypes, opened in Kilkenny in 1966, followed in 1971 by the Kilkenny Shop in Dublin. KDW closed in 1988. It employed 130 people; 82 in the Kilkenny workshops and 48 in the Dublin and Kilkenny retail shops. It was financed by an annual grant-in-aid from the Department of Enterprise and by fee and royalty income – it was receiving £1 million per year in grants when it closed. (In 1981 the grant-in-aid was £688,000 and fee income was £136,000 by 1982 the grant-in-aid had gone up to £874,000 and fees had declined to £120,000. KDW expanded into the UK market and could not sustain the level of sales it required).

So in actual fact an initiative that was supposed to be a catalyst for change and growth in the industry actually had the opposite effect and instead of creating an environment where Irish designers could pitch, for example, to Aer Lingus or Board Failté and directly employ designers of a level of experience who could carry out these projects, Kilkenny Design Workshops brought in oversees designers and recruited graduates in Ireland and then took the lucrative (local) contracts. These were largely government contracts and Kilkenny Design was a government organisation and they effectively kept the indigenous industry out of these contracts - the result was that the indigenous industry never got the opportunity to (for example) go to an international airline and say 'we have just completed the rebranding of Aer Lingus – and we can do this for you too' (this is how the international aspect of the local design industry should have been grown ... by developing the ability to compete internationally). So instead of actually providing opportunities for the indigenous design industry to grow, in many ways KDW neutralised the ability of indigenous design industry to develop effectively.

So while in Finland/Norway/Sweden the indigenous design industry was supported and brought to maturity by design councils the Irish industry became neutralised (unconsciously and accidentally and with no blame being directly apportioned to any individual).

It fell to the Irish design community to begin the process of developing infrastructure to support and grow itself from within. A group of design professionals came together and formed an organisation called Graphic Design Business Association of Ireland. The GDBA was set up at that time for a number of reasons - the failure of the previous attempts to establish a national design organisation, AIB had commissioned overseas designers (and so did Irish Life) and there was no prospect of the Irish Industry ever becoming internationally active and recognised. Neil Condron from Marketing Image, John O'Connor, myself and others got together and formed the GDBA, in order to establish a professional body supporting the business of design.

You were an original board member of the GDBA?
Yes ... around the time I was president of ICAD.

What is the purpose of ICAD?
ICAD's function is to foster and reward creative excellence in Irish Advertising and Design. It fosters and rewards - so obviously ICAD's Annual Creative Awards are its method of rewarding great examples of Irish creativity in Advertising and Design. And it fosters creative excellence by running events and programmes like Upstarts (for creatives at the beginning of their careers) and other events that perhaps bring international excellence in creativity to the attention of members.

Who is eligible to join?
Anyone can join. All the people in advertising actually join because their peers are members and people in design tend to join because there are design categories they can enter their work into for judging. In the past, in an attempt to inspire members, ICAD has given Irish designers working overseas a special category in the ICAD creative competition. ICAD was a member of the Art Directors Club of Europe. That had some impact on bringing Irish work to international judging arenas in the past but it no longer has because ICAD has dropped out of ADCoE. As presidents change so do the organisation's priorities.

How many members are there in ICAD?
At a guess 250/300.

Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining and if so why?
No. Not at present. I have served as President of ICAD, on the board of Design Ireland and Design Business Ireland, the RIAI is not 'my area'. I have never been involved in IDI – I have been too busy!

Are there any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and why?
I haven't fallen out with any of them (contrary to expectations!). But they all go through periods of strength and periods of weaknesses and periods when they are focused and periods when they are not and periods when their priorities change and don't suit me or when they change and do suit me.

I haven't always been a member of the GBDA since I helped set it up. I withdrew from it after a few years, in the belief that it is better for Boards and Committees of Organisations like this to change with predictable regularity so that there's a given period for people to serve on the board or committee etc; ICAD is a one year Presidency.

Sometimes a President may be re-elected - I was re-elected for a second term, I don't see a problem with that - but I do see a problem with three or four or five years with the same people because this can lead to stagnation.

Who do you think should take the primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
There is no question about who should be nurturing the design community and helping it develop towards a truly internationally traded services industry that is also capable of assisting local businesses drive export growth by harnessing the power of design.

Government, the State has to be centrally involved and has to provide the finance required (a big ask in these days of An Bord Snip). One of the issues hampering this is the fact that many people outside the industry (I would include Government; Business; State Organisations and other) don't realise that they are all taking about the same 'thing' although they use different terms. The truth is that Innovation / Design / Creativity are the same thing – in Ireland we have taken a simple truth and by calling it by different names we have made it complex and difficult – instead of tying it together and making our industry (design/innovation/creative) strong and effective on both home and international markets.

Designers Innovate and Create everyday – across a range of fields, successfully defining a problem, analysing it, creating an innovative solution and implementing the solution professionally and effectively.

At the moment there is no single entity in Ireland promoting design/innovation/creativity. If you were to go to Thailand today, you would find the department of their Prime Minister actively promotes design in Thailand. It is a body that was set up in about 2004; it is internal to the department of the Prime Minister. It is very important. They have stated that (for example) while they are perceived at the moment to be a low cost producer for products like craft-work and jewellery, they will need to move beyond that over the next few years because their role as a low cost producer in jewellery and craft will be taken by Vietnam and Cambodia.

They are looking (up) to South Korea, which has had staggering success in developing its design industry (through the Ministry of Knowledge Economy / Korean Institute of Design Promotion / Korea Society of Design Science / this year they celebrate the 44th Korean Design Exhibition). So in Asia there is acceptance of the role, the increased importance of the role of design in a country like Thailand.

They realise that they have to move beyond their current moving to an innovation economy or design economy or creative economy. They attached a lot of importance to establishing a design organisation within the department of the Prime Minister.

This would be tantamount to Ireland setting up an organisation in the department of, or guided by or nurtured by the department of the Taoiseach. I have great admiration for these people (Thai and Korean on the one hand and Scandinavian on the other) and so much frustration about our own inability to .... (frustration makes me 'lost for words').

In a recent issue of Design Week: you can read that the Design Council in the UK has a meeting in No. 10 Downing Street, to talk to the Prime Minister about the importance of design and where it's going in the UK and what he can do to keep the UK creative industry at the high ranking it is at. These are countries (UK / Thailand / Korea / Sweden / Norway / Finland / Denmark etc.,) that understand exactly how important design, innovation and creativity are to their economies.

We don't, so we don't actually have the body who you are asking about in the question – one that could take primary responsibility for design.

Do you see a difference between promoting design as opposed to promoting designers?
We are a very small fish and will remain so. But we could 'fight above our weight'.

It is very difficult for such a small economy as ours to advance its design industry/community to the point at which it becomes visible and active in the global design community. But it's potential to act as a catalyst for growth in the economy (through the development of the design industry itself and as a provider of world class services to the innovation (business) sector) is too important to be neglected.

We should talk about promoting the design sector in Ireland in those terms (promote sector as opposed to designers) ... we could have a maximum of a 1000 members (of various organisations) who are designers. Another group who are creatives (advertising art directors and copywriters) innovators (who are really product designers [they used to be called industrial designers] and conceptual designers) and architects and if we brought them all together in one organisation, we might have 3000-5000 members. It is not big enough to reach any kind of critical mass where it could support, promoted and develop itself.

And when anyone talks about promoting the design sector it is always easy to reach for the obvious solution (which is) 'let's get business to understand how beneficial – or essential – good design is to their business' and everything will work out. Well this isn't the way forward, we need a tight bonding between (1) designers/innovators/creatives and (2) business/industry and (3) education sector and (4) professional bodies all acting in concert and all moving in one direction, together within an infrastructural unit that has to be funded by (5) government. These are five interdependent players all of whom have to act in concert in order to move the economy forward.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
Well of course I could go down to the detail of why they are different, but in terms of the common session we are having, I don't think that they are different.

I think we need to get moving on this whole area (design and, in the case of the architectural sector, the interior designers working on commercial projects (not private housing) and we need to get moving as a country, a strong unit, not as competing factions and we need to understand that Finland has a thirty year advantage over us (in 1979 The Finnish Design Council was founded to encourage and increase design, production, marketing and the use of good. high-quality objects and products.).

We (our industry, policy makers and government) need to know that Thailand has got a five year advantage in terms of taking serious steps to grow and nurture their design community. Korea has more than forty years and I use the word design to mean creative, innovative etc.

Ireland has an Arts Council and a Crafts Council and we have a Heritage Council. Is something missing?

We have endless reports based on endless surveys of either Industry in general or the design industry. We have reports, findings, recommendations - but no one to implement them.

With the exception of architecture, in your opinion, why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
They don't believe in them and they are right.

And if they did believe in them they wouldn't know which one to turn to. The evidence of this is to be seen in the very low attendance at the professional bodies' AGMs, the low membership numbers, unwillingness to pay fair membership fees etc. They just don't believe that the professional bodies can or will be of any assistance to them. I am quoting this from conversations over several years with many members of various bodies - and non-members too.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all island organisations?
Theoretically there should be an advantage in numbers. In practical terms it is probable that the Design Council in the UK best serves the needs of Northern Ireland's designers and it will be a long time before any 32 county body comes close to providing the same service.

Probable? Is this just based on a theory of yours?
If I was practicing in the North of Ireland, I would be fulsome in my support of the Design Council and I wouldn't take seriously the previous initiatives here, because the twenty six county initiatives have failed ... if the initiatives hadn't fallen on their face this interview / conversation certainly wouldn't be taking place, because all the infrastructure that the design innovative or creative community needs would be in place.

You and I would be talking about a different Ireland – we would be talking about a place where Design Education produced exceptional creative graduates, who readily found rewarding and satisfying jobs / careers in thriving go-ahead design companies, who were competing successfully on International markets – an Ireland where the word Innovation actually meant something and was not just a 'trendy' buzz-word-of-the-moment used in order to make the user of the word seem to be 'in-touch / doing something positive / showing leadership.

Look at the evidence. UK Design Council = Hero /// Irish design council = zero. Who would you rely on in this case?

If the twenty six counties got their act together would you be in favour of an all island body?
Different story there Barry, if we got our act together. There isn't any single body that can properly represent the economic and creative needs of the Irish Design Community and Irish Industry at this moment. There isn't and there just isn't going to be one based on the current model(s).

I know. I helped set up the GDBA and I know what it is and I know what it tries to do, I was President of ICAD and I know what it is and I know what it's trying to do, I was President of the International equivalent of ICAD (ADCoE) and I know what it is and I know what it is trying to do, etc., etc., (sorry for being tedious) and I can tell you categorically there isn't a single organisation in Ireland today, that could step up to the plate. They are all fine organisations, don't get me wrong, they do exactly what their members expect but they have a specific purpose in each case and it is not possible that part-time volunteers (many of whom join the boards of these organisations without any previous similar experience) can ever deliver, over a sustained period, the kind of design leadership this country needs.

But could it be integrated?
Yes, of course but this would not be helpful or necessary. Can you imagine the transformation that would happen here if an overarching body, responsible for design/innovation/creativity, was properly established and funded and run by an energetic visionary design leader and a strong board - and the boards of the existing bodies were provided with the infrastructure they need and were unleashed and allowed carry out their tasks without the constant struggle that these boards face now? We would have a revolution in the design, innovation and creative arena.

We would quickly rise from our usual ranking, close to the bottom of the design industry charts and start actually achieving our potential (as distinct from endlessly talking about our potential). Our business sector would have a resource on tap that would be second to none and that sector would utilise it to bring innovative products and services to market, in an effective manner that greatly increases their chance of success. It's just a dream though, isn't it?

What's your view of government sponsored design council's? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
I've been in most of the Government sponsored design bodies in Europe. While President of ADCoE I travelled in each capital of Europe (in a country where we had members and at the time that was really all of Scandinavia and most of Europe – except what became known as the emerging economies). So I have travelled to all the Design Councils: I know what they do, I know how they do it, I know why they do it, I know how passionate they are, I know how well funded they are, I know how single-minded they are. And it is very easy to see how successful they have been.

The longer this interview goes on, the more frustrated I become about the condition of our industry and about the lack of support that leaves our industry and industry in Ireland generally, at such a competitive disadvantage – we are so far behind and are taking no action whatsoever to rectify the situation.

We are so far behind that it really makes no difference whether we had a 26 county, or an all Ireland body – just so long as we had one (the sound of desperation?).

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTrade Ireland?
State Agencies involve themselves in this arena because they know that design is important to business success and economic growth. But their job isn't to run a design/innovation council or to seek to have a design/innovation council established ... and there is no reason why we should expect them to share the objectives of the design industry. It is not their job, is it?

Sometimes we hear politicians talk about innovation and it's clear they just don't really understand what they are saying (politicians, policy makers etc.). They may be leading-edge thinkers and strategist in any number of disciplines, but when they think about design, design promotion, design activity, innovation, they are thinking about something else to what we, in the industry know is the real point of design and the real point of being a country where though-leadership in the design and innovation field is absolutely fundamental to our national economic success.

The piecemeal support from the state linked to the piecemeal interventions by the design industry in the form of our professional bodies doesn't work, and hasn't worked.

If it does I want to see the evidence of success (and I know there is no evidence).

When will we (the Irish design and creative industry) see the blindingly obvious truth – the evidence of underdevelopment of the design sector is overwhelming although we would all like to ignore it...

- Irish design companies seldom if ever succeed internationally.
- Very few Irish designers develop international reputations and those who do are usually based overseas.
- Irish designers very seldom win international creative or design awards.
- Irish designers are very seldom selected for international juries.
- There is no (central) infrastructure at all to support Design/Innovation/Creativity in Ireland other than in the form of the professional bodies that are presiding over small groups of members whose interests they seek to promote separately to the needs of their sister organisations.
- Clients don't take designers seriously.
- The state doesn't take design seriously.
- And very often designers themselves don't take the profession seriously either...

... and sadly there is little or no evidence that this could change in the short term.

Our professional community, the policy makers and educational institutions have yet to see that it is necessary to reach towards world class standards. And it is really demoralising to see graduates who are potentially 'great' designers, spend years qualifying and then leave the country to start the careers they know they can't get at home.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?

They are watching the opportunity to do something that will really make a difference to our economy and our society go by, be taken up by the Scandinavian countries, by Korea, by just about every other country.

And let's be honest – there is a tendency for senior people in our industry to be protective of ICAD (if that's their 'club') or IDI or GDBA for the same reason ... and this makes them seek to be at the centre of things or put their own interests at the centre of things.

Now I fully understand this and in a way it is this tendency that has kept the organisations alive, when otherwise they would have closed. So it has been fundamentally positive in many respects. But on the national stage it has had a limiting effect. We need to set all this aside and – let's say for a period of five years (because it will take five years at least to fix this) – we all put our shoulders to the wheel, we all leave self-interest and the interest of our organisations to one side and work together to get out of the really pitiful state our profession is in.

We don't need to change the structures of the existing bodies. We need an overarching structure, separate to anything that exists at the moment or has existed in the past in this area.

Here it is, the crux of the situation: We need to start again, from the beginning, with all the lessons learnt, with a clear set of objectives and an even clearer map of how we will deliver the objectives, in a given time, with provable results and we need the State to get behind this – not get involved in it but get behind it and support it.

We also need the design education sector, design professional bodies, design community to give it 100% support.

We need to stop 'messing about' with new organisations, groups and bodies, new reports, new studies, new sets of objectives and new reasons not to take immediate and decisive action.

All the study is done, all the reports are written, all the plans are already in use in countries around the EU and further afield. They are getting on with the job ... where are the Irish?

Really, answer the question ... where are the Irish? The answer is depressing.

Appendix G: Interview: John O'Connor

Location: School of Art Design and Printing, DIT, Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1
Date: 14 July 2009
Duration: 22:17

Can you state your relationship with the Interviewer?
I am a colleague on the board of Design Ireland and a reporting line, because you report directly to me as Head of School.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes.

If so what do you design?
Graphic work for print and occasionally, designed for screen.

Have you designed anything else, ever played around with furniture, jewellery?
Never have really. The broadest range of visual communication you could imagine, so it would have ranged from major complex sign systems, right through to the whole corporate identity, graphics for TV, film and the computer screen, but mostly in that sphere.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
Heading up a design company, well still heading up a design company, but it was a small company with about 5/6 employees for about 15 years or so, doing all the work that that involved, which included design work, client liaison and general management and all the rest of it. I then entered into academia in 1995, as Course Director on the Diploma in Graphic Reproduction Technology. So Lecturer for four years and then became Senior Lecturer in Design and Head of School in 1998, which has now engaged me with more management and strategic level operations of the Institute. Graduated as Visual Communications Designer in 1984, worked in various advertising agencies, design houses in the UK and in Ireland and in television graphics. Set up Information Design. Then I did a Masters between 1991 and 1993.

Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?
The Institute of the Designers in Ireland, the International Society of Typographic Designers and BEDA, the Bureau of the European Design Associations.

With BEDA, are you personally a member?
Yes. There was an opportunity to do that a number of years ago, which I took up, so I have a BEDA Certificate which is kind of peculiar. I am a founding member and secretary of the Graphic Design Business Association, but I am no longer a member of that now, as the School is an associate member. Design Ireland and the Heads of Art & Design in Ireland.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
Yes, in pretty much all of them: I was a committee member of ICAD, a council member of the IDI, Board of Design Ireland and on the committee of GDBA.

What is the purpose of the professional design organisation of which you hold an executive position? Take Design Ireland for example:
The purpose of Design Ireland as I understood it was to provide a single voice representing the design profession at its widest possible interpretation in Ireland and to promote design services, at a national and international level both to government and to industry.

Who is eligible to join Design Ireland?
I always found a bit of confusion about that. My view was that Design Ireland didn't necessarily have members, either individual or corporate members as such. In other words it wasn't a representative body that way, but it obviously had representative sections of the sector.

I was representing Education, but the GDBA were represented, the IDI was represented, the RIAI were represented and ICAD were represented. Therefore by default all their members were members of Design Ireland. I was never clear on how the membership operated particularly, maybe that's an issue.

How many members are there in your professional design organisation?
I have no idea but there must have been a good few hundred.

Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining and if so why?
No.

Which ones are you not considering joining?
I was aware of the Interiors Association, a couple of Illustrator Associations. There were various other design ones that recent graduates tried to set up, but I made a decision about sticking with a few key ones.

Can you tell me are there any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and tell me why you left?
GDBA is the only one.

Effectively once I gave up my design practice as my primary source of income, my design company is now just a one man band if you like, and I felt it wasn't appropriate or necessary to be a member. Although I still support the organisation, it's the only one I've withdrawn from.

ICAD also, I kind of drifted away from because I was never too interested in the awards side of it. I won a few of them in the early days and then I didn't win anything. I just kind of ran out of steam in terms of the awards, I wasn't too interested in them. I was much more interested in the GDBA awards which were kind of hardcore, the IDEA awards.

But your still associated with the now Design Business Ireland through DIT presumably, you're the driving force in that?
Yes that's right.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
I think the IDI, designers as individual professionals. That's the body that should be representing, and promoting and supporting individual designers.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interest of design?
Probably a couple of bodies. I think there should be one body, but I think that at the moment the GDBA or Design Business Ireland certainly promote design to the business community in general, and I think they do a very good job of that and they should continue to do that.

In terms of promoting design on a more national level to government, in other words not specially relating to business issues, but also educational issues and all those matters, I have felt that Design Ireland should be doing that; clearly that hasn't worked so well.

I wonder now if we have room for all the various different bodies that we have and I am coming around to the view that really Design Business Ireland and the IDI should merge and that there should be discussions with the RIAI, although I suspect in terms of mergers the architects are not going to dilute themselves.

I'm not quite sure how you get that one body but I definitely don't think we should be having an ICAD, an IDI and a Design Business Ireland and a Design Ireland.

All four are just causing confusion. I don't see any conflict in the IDI wing of whatever the new body is, continuing to represent designers, a membership which is a corporate membership representing design to the business community, specifically interested in business issues and then another wing or arm or section of it which takes responsibility for the wider sectors, maybe links with education, promoting design to government etc.

But in general would it be true to say that the people who are promoting the interests of design, are designers in some form of organisation, as opposed to government?
I think yes, but I think we should also have other business people who are not designers engaged with it.

I don't we should be looking to government to do it; we have kind of moved on from that, I did think there was a time when we needed a government supported design council. I think now what we need is an organisation that is fuelled by designers, driven by designers, but also has powerful lobbyists from within the business community engaged as well. People like IBEC and all of that.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
Well one clear difference between architecture is the requirement (I am not even fully clear on how that works) to register as an architect. I do think that is one difference, at least it was possible to even engage in that debate for architects.

I don't think any other form of designers can even engage in that level of debate, such as graphic designers, web designers, and product designers. We did look into it some years ago and the Competition Authority was very much against it. So there's that issue that differentiates architects from other forms of designers.

The same could be applied to design engineers, for instance, so engineers have to be qualified as engineers and have to be members of Engineers Ireland. That statutory requirement for engineers to be appropriately trained is presumably because of the engagement in public works, building bridges and things, that you don't want collapsing. And the same thing applies to architects, so those are the differences. I think the statutory requirements and the scope of the work that designers are engaged in, in other words the building work and other areas around it.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
I suspect because there are no immediate benefits. The requirement to join.

I suppose the architectural profession is also a much older profession it had a long long time to establish itself and so I reckon everybody knows what an architect is but not everybody knows what a designer is.

If you say you're an architect everyone knows what you're doing. But if you say you are a designer, people aren't really clear, they often think you are a printer. I think most architects join the RIAI because of the exams position and then stay on for the other benefits such as training etc.

The trouble with the IDI for young graduates coming out is that there are no obvious benefits; you don't have to be a member to practice. Being a member doesn't entitle you to do certain exams and get more qualifications, which would help you get more work. The Industry doesn't support the organisation. In other words if you are looking for work you are never asked 'Are you a member'?

The industry itself doesn't appear to value membership. Then you've got the conundrum whereby, because they are all voluntary bodies then the amount of support that they can provide is fairly limited. Effectively I think the problem is that the industry, or members of the Industry, or designers themselves don't actually genuinely see a benefit. That's why you don't join and the reason for that is that designers work very independently, they work on their own, they like to design things themselves, so they like to design their own organisation.

So you have that kind of sad thing where designers don't have a sense of professional identity like other business people. The first thing you find people on a business course do is that they set up study groups and buddy systems. You don't see that in design. Students tend to go off and do things on their own, and whether that's innate to designers or whether it's because of an educational system I'm not sure yet.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design organisations being all island organisations?
Yes, I would think so, certainly in my thinking; I was a founding member of the Heads of Art & Design in Ireland for instance, we deliberately named is so that an all island membership would be possible even thought is has been started by three school in the south. We need to pull in as much support as we can because we are a small economy and we are a small population, we need to pull in as many supporters as we can.

We can't afford to ignore what is right on our door step; and also that kind of links you into the UK, it is a way of getting involved because the people in the North are linked with us and are also linked with the UK, critical mass, business opportunities etc etc I think it's really important things are all island where possible.

What's your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
Certainly it was my sense going into Design Ireland all those years ago that was what we were shooting for. That's what we were aiming for and we needed that and the model in my head was the Design Council in the UK. I really felt it was important that we had something like that.

That didn't come to pass and it looks like it isn't going to come to pass so I've been thinking other directions and I now wonder if it even came to pass would it necessarily be a good idea, this is only gut feeling now, I don't have any evidence one way or another. If I were honest, I think a Design Council in some sense would be a good idea, in other senses the nature of the way things happen in Ireland, it might end up stultifying things because it would get designers off the hook for becoming responsible for their own sector.

I think one of the biggest problems we have, is we haven't taken responsibility maturely, for developing our own sector outside of developing our own companies. I don't hear or see that many people talking about taking on a responsibility for building up the sector.

Now that may be because people don't have the time, they don't have the scope, they don't have the ability, but I don't even hear a need for it and when I say that, what I don't hear is a genuine understanding that the sector means the people currently working in the sector, the people who have retired from the sector and the people who are going to be coming in to it.

That means taking responsibility for education for new entrants into the sector, for the current cohort of people working in the sector, for the people who have retired out of the sector and then for all the people who have an ancillary link in it.

I don't see anybody thinking that that is an important view and it's important to encapsulate all of those and attend to all those various different stake holders and influence those stake holders and influence what's coming in and what's going out.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?
The first thing I would say is that I don't think any of the state bodies have really engaged with the potential of design.

I think there have been various attempts to do so: to engage with design, but I don't think any of them have ever shown any real understanding in design: either the potential of design, what is required to nurture and develop a vibrant design sector that could actually develop export markets.

I would have to say I've been disappointed in the response. That's all through my career, from heading up a design company where I was incredibly disappointed with the lack of support and the lack of engagement and as I've gone on in my career and have taken a more central role in the sector, continuing lack of the realisation of how you could actualise the potential of design, to impact on the economy. There are some very good initiatives, but they are not joined up.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?
I don't think there is a sufficiently businesslike approach: for instance if we had one body which represented designers and let's leave architects out for the moment the RIAI have a strong following, and let's say you had another body and whatever you called it 'Designers in Ireland', now that body should be a member of IBEC it should have links with the Chamber of Commerce it should link with all the educational organisations.

We don't see any of that and not only do we not see it, we don't even see people who realise that that needs to be done. So I think the weakness is number one, a weakness in lack of confidence: in other words, I don't think the design sector is actually confident enough in itself and its ability. Designers, we ourselves don't believe that we are important players in the Irish economy, so we always go into these meetings in organisations thinking of other businesses as more important than us. Now that's probably a result of being a young industry. I would see the design sector still in its infancy, maybe in its adolescence effectively.

When I graduated in 1984 there were something like two or three design companies and most design in Ireland was done by advertising agencies. So you are talking about a very young sector. I don't think we have confidence in ourselves. I don't think we believe that we have role in those organisations, but I think that if we are ever going to get that confidence and develop that, until we actually begin to go into them and say we want to be part of IBEC, and the GDBA may have possibly opened discussions there, I don't know, these things were muted at various times and they have to be done. We have got to do it, we have got to get in there and be there with all those national organisations that represent industry.

Appendix H: Interview with Elaine Butler

Location: Tucana Suite, Clarion Hotel, IFSC, Dublin
Date: 17 July 2009
Duration: 17:28 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?
Class mate in Master of Arts in Professional Design Practice.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes.

What do you design?
Spaces.

Anything else?
No.

Do you design furniture?
Not really. I suppose it if is integral to the space I may design furniture on occasion but it's happening rarer and rarer.

And they are not products?
No

It might be a reception desk for a hotel or something like that?
Yes.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
I graduated as an environmental designer in 1996; that was the title that was given to me. It was an advanced diploma in environmental design and then I went to work in architectural practices pretty much until I went out on my own in 2002. I did some work in non-architectural practices but substantially my work experience was in architectural practices.

And would you still call yourself an environmental designer or would you call yourself an interior architect?
I went from environmental designer to spatial designer. That was partly because British Airways ran a TV ad in which someone called themselves a spatial designer. I thought maybe people will understand that term now but it didn't get anywhere. When I worked in architectural practices I was always referred to as an interior designer and then when I went out on my own, I didn't really know what term to use. At first I used the title of interior designer, then spatial designer and then ultimately I started to use the title interior architect, mostly because it was beginning to gain a little bit more recognition in the market place.

Can you tell me which professional design organisations you are a member of?
I am currently only a member of the Interiors Association (the IA) but in the past I was associated with the Design Ireland Skillnet.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
I was on the Steering Committee of the Design Ireland Skillnet and I was a former President of the Interiors Association. Currently I am a Committee Member of the IA.

Am I right in saying you are one of the founding members of the IA?
That's right.

What is the purpose of the professional design organisation in which you hold an executive position?
To support designers who work or study in the interiors industry in Ireland.

Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation?
Anyone who is working or studying in that industry.

How many members are there in your professional design organisation?
Approximately 100.

Are there any other professional design organisations that you are considering joining and if so why?
None at the moment. The IA is talking to a few Associations about dual membership but other than that I'm not looking to join any other associations at the moment.

Can you tell me are there any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and tell me why you left?
No, I approached a few associations at one time or another but I never went through the process of joining.

Was that for any particular reason?
Lack of activity on their part. The RIAI didn't want somebody who wasn't an architect, which is understandable, the IDDI who used to be the IDDA didn't returned my phone calls, and I wasn't quite sure what the IDI did.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
I'm probably not 100% sure on the structure and the reporting process for the associations. I thought that Enterprise Ireland set up Design Ireland and Design Ireland set up the IDI. So I thought Design Ireland was above IDI but I recently found out that that is not the case. So up until recently I would have said Design Ireland, but now I'd probably pick IDI.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interest of design or do you see a difference?
I suppose it depends on the issue, yes it would be better if they were handled by different organisations. I see the IDI as closer to policy making than the IA and the IDDI. In my mind they are grass roots organisations and look after more practical concerns like CPD lectures and stuff like that. Issues such as the quality of design education and the promotion of design are things that I would like to see the IDI looking after, whereas if someone was looking for some practical information on design colleges in Ireland I would see the IA as being best place to provide that sort of information.

But it is always designers and their own internal organisations that are promoting design and designers?
I think designers are the best placed people to support fellow designers but I feel that those involved in the promoting of design would need to have a good understanding of business, so that they can communicate well representatives from other industries.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
I do see a difference in their approach to business or their attitude to the business community. This is a complete generalisation, but most architects seem to begrudge the business aspect of what they do: as far as they're concerned architecture is their craft; their vocation and they feel aggrieved at having to deliver, to programme, on time and to budget. I think product designers and graphic designers have a better sensitivity to the commercial needs of the client.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
Because the market doesn't demand it of them. I think that if clients were asking designers which association they were a member of; there would be a much higher registration rate. In our experience in the IA people come to CPD lectures on topics that they are being asked about on site. So if their clients are asking them whether this product is sustainable, or whether the timber has an FSC certificate, the designer feels obliged to learn more about these issues. We find that there's a real reluctance to invest time in continuous professional development.

In Dublin we've found that designers feel they gain more by collaborating or sharing information than they actually lose but that is not the case outside of Dublin. We've found that, in general, designers outside of Dublin are very suspicious about the practical benefits of attending events with competitors, for fear of giving away some valuable information about clients. It appears that outside of Dublin the competition is so fierce that people think that they are going to achieve competitive advantage by keeping apart from competitors.

Are you an all island body?
In theory yes but in practice it hasn't happened. We tried to run events in Galway and Cork but to date they haven't been successful in starting a local IA chapter. Ideally we would love to have chapters in Belfast, Kilkenny, Cork and Galway.

You do have members that are based north of the border from what I could gather from your website?
We did have a few but I don't know how many we currently have across the border. We really struggled to serve members outside of Dublin. It's a catch 22 we tried to run events in order to get a bit of a relationship going but it's just so hard to do it remotely. I think that the crucial issue comes down to having the right people on the ground who are able to drive it on and to generate a culture of collaboration. As in everything in life it all comes down to having the right people.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all island organisation?
Well I think that anything that broadens your view of the world is advantageous. For instance, our members outside of Dublin often have different concerns to our Dublin members. One of the issues facing rural designers is the issue about non-designers chancing their arm in showrooms in order to get discounts. It's very hard for suppliers to know who is a professional designer and who isn't and so designers outside Dublin are very keen on a membership card that they can show to suppliers. Now that's not really an issue in Dublin at all, and we wouldn't be aware of it without our non-Dublin based members.

You differ from other organisations in that you have 3 or 4 categories of membership. The higher level categories you have to have a degree for and the lower level categories you have to have an interest in interior design?
You can join as a student or graduate member as long as you can prove that you've studied interior design or interior architecture. Associate membership is open to anyone you working or studying in the interiors industry in Ireland. It's quite easy to join as an associate once you have a letter from an employer or proof of your qualifications, but the privileges that are given to associate members are quite limited. Full membership is based on a combination of experience and or education and the level of formal education and experience required differs depending on the title that you wish to be registered under.

So you could work your way up from the lower category to the top category over time?
That's the idea.

What is your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
Well I think if anything happened it should be all island, I don't see why anything should just focus on the Republic, because I think that if anything, we can learn from one another. I really think the Design Council does a great job so in theory, yes I would support.

But the success of anything comes down to people on the ground. You could have the most amazing idea but if you don't have the right group of people in a room then it's just going to go nowhere.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?
Well it sort of is irrelevant to me and I'll tell you why.

Enterprise Ireland is really only interested in exports and the industry that I'm involved in: interior design and interior architecture doesn't add a lot to the GDP. It might improve the quality of life for Irish people, but it doesn't do a tremendous amount for export sales, so any focus on promoting design ignores our Industry because we don't really contribute a lot to the growth of the economy.

We would argue that people might spend more if they go to a nice hotel or a nice restaurant, but it is very hard to quantify whereas with a well designed product or brand it is easier to see the relationship with real profits. So in our experience we tend to be ignored in any advertisement about design.

So you would see state agencies having a role to promote the production of things that we sell or receive in order to bring money into Ireland?
Yes and it makes complete sense to me that Enterprise Ireland focus on export.

Even though in theory you can export interior architecture or interior design services, in reality it's only really on a very small scale. So I understand why Enterprise Ireland is really not focused on our industry. That's why I'm personally quite happy to get involved in an association that looks after its own members. I don't think it's the government's role to look after us; we should look after ourselves.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design Bodies on the island of Ireland?
I would levy a criticism at almost all Irish organisations, design and non-design alike.

I think that as a nation we lack good management skills and people with balls. Meetings tend to become talk shops and there really are very few people who are willing to pull everybody in by the reigns and say 'What are we doing?', 'When are we going to do it by?' and 'Who is responsible for it?' and then, more importantly, hold people to account. I think this is the largest problem in Irish design organisations although it's not a problem solely confined to them.

Appendix I: Seán O' Laoire

Location: Murray O'Laoire Architects, Fumbally Square, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8
Date: 21st July 2009
Duration: 25:01 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?
I've heard of you. You are a fellow architect and I now have some sense of your mission at this point and your background, which obviously reflects your interest and focus on your thesis subject.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes.

If so what do you design?
I design structures that facilitate the provision of architectural and urban design services in which I'm engageable as a strategist, as a manager and indeed as a practitioner but because I am a founding director of a practice I recognise that design is if not as much of a process as product, certainly process is very much part of design.

As an architect you have done master planning but do you span across to furniture design or products?
We have done. We have a very active interior architecture section and inevitably that gets down to the scale of the door knob and occasionally furniture. We have designed all the plywood furniture fit outs for this office, for example we have designed all our work stations.

But not for production or sale?
No.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
My professional formation as an architect was in UCD between 1965 and1970 after which I went to England, Italy and subsequently went on to undertake postgraduate studies in Urban Design at the University of California where I stayed for two years for the Masters Program, after which I was retained as the manager of an off campus practice called The Urban Innovations Group. This was an initiative which allowed faculty members in planning and in architecture to have a private practice but mainly on a pro bono basis, after which I returned to Ireland, which was in serious recession, with very few jobs.

A job for an urban design lecturer came up in DIT. I applied, was asked to interview, I got the job only to find out that even if I got the job it doesn't mean the job existed, so I had the wonderful experience for working for three years in DIT on a paltry hourly rate. The position was never confirmed but I did manage to look in to have an enriching experience tutoring in 5th year. I found it was a very enriching experience. Equally I found that if I had stayed there, the record would go round and round and wouldn't have been good for the students or good for myself.

I took a flyer one day and said that I am out of here. I had maintained in contact with a UCD colleague Hugh Murray who lived in Limerick, who himself had become disillusioned with a small job he got but he had a father who dug him out and rented a small office. We had no work but we decided to work together and we built up a practice thirty years ago. It has grown from that size to two hundred and fifty people employed last year, that's now down to about one hundred and seventy five, in three locations in Ireland and in Moscow, Aachen in Germany and Bratislava and a branch office in Krakow.

Can you tell me which professional design organisations you are a member of?
I am only a member of one which is the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
This is my presidency year in the RIAI,

What is the purpose of the RIAI?
The purpose of the RIAI historically was to promote the interests or architects and architecture, very much a 19th century concept of a professional association which had both self interest and at a more altruistic level to promote the cause of architecture.

That has obviously mutated significantly by the Building Control Act of 2007, which empowers the institute to be the guardian of the title of Architect which in turn is defined by the various EU descriptions of the professional formation and attributes of an architect.

In becoming a voluntarily organisation that relied on its own powers of persuasion or whatever clout it had, it has now an additional privilege but also responsibility of defining the term and in turn is accountable effectively under the Consumer Protection Act.

Who is eligible to join the RIAI?
Graduates of a recognised School of Architecture course, who then obtain two years of practical experience and pass a part three examination in professional practice.

How many members are there in your professional design organisation?
To my knowledge there is something in the order of 3500. There is also practice membership.

Are there any other professional design organisations that you considering joining and if so why?
Obviously over the years I've know people in the IDI, and I have been guest lecturer at their conferences. I would be friendly with a number of people in that cross over area. I have considered it more recently. You have reminded me in terms of the evolution of your own interest, that amongst many things that probably aren't going to come to full fruition, I've tried to start to look at where architecture fits in as a whole landscape of branding Ireland. I have an on and off initiative with some people including Enterprise Ireland, where I sit on the board of the Masters programme for people exporting services. I sit on it four times a year just to review progress on it.

It struck me and it has struck me for years that the weeping and gnashing of teeth with the total collapse of the construction sector and with the design sector, that the construction sector particularly, is very fragmented in Ireland. Also just looking at the earlier initiatives we were suddenly flying out to Dubai thinking that someone was going to give us a job in the street. It was rather pathetic, but you also found out that we either haven't the appetite for it or haven't felt the need to start to look at what attributes that say an Irish construction manager, an Irish builder would have, that would to give them a competitive edge.

Equally Irish designers haven't done that seriously. There is serendipity with a bunch of people who got talking. Frank Hughes came on board and he introduced me to a designer who had worked for the Institute, Conor Clarke. We are an ad hoc group. The starting proposition was the discovery of how other countries do it and Conor brought my attention to a pack that every emissary in Dutch Government gets throughout the world. The number of crime bills we have in this country probably reflects the way we think. But there is an infinite connection between all sorts of activities in our area of design.

The branding in Holland doesn't distinguish between clogs tulips and ship building, it's the same. Una Parsons from the Crafts Council is on the group, she has a background in Engineers Ireland, she is an engineer, and it's an interesting mixture. She was also interested because again crafts, design, art, without even questioning semantics or reality, we immediately box things. The proposition being that we are such a small country better known if anything for our wars and our literature, and music perhaps and dance but certainly even though we might think that because Grafton Architects win the Barcelona Prize that we are known for design but we're not.

Irish design: it's not a brand but it could be a brand.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers and who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interests of design?
I think if you're talking about design in Ireland, you can't really do one without the other. I think you have to somehow identify Irish design that has a specific attribute and you can certainly identify Irish designers who embody certain values or a way of looking at the world.

Equally with architecture, the recent decades have been dominated by Starchitects. It would be unthinkable ten years ago that Frank Gehry would be on the Simpsons or that people would know about a Gehry Building or that they would use the word icon. My own view is that the commodification of design and aesthetification of individuals has disregarded the potential of design as a much larger force.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so, can you clarify why?
I think certainly the way buildings are made and have been made increasingly in the western world the focus of architecture has been about: I often make the analogy between the score and the libretto in Opera. The Architects job is to write both the libretto and the score, the score being the working drawings, to the extent we are removed by and large from the actual manifest construction of the object whereas a lot of designers are in control of that process.

Not all of them but say a jewellery designer inevitably sits down and makes things but also does the conceptual work, perhaps does study drawings and templates and so on and industrial designers to a lesser extent. I think probably scale and accountability would be other aspects and if it wasn't too inflated I think social accountability should be part of that process because of the impact on other people.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
I'm always intrigued by that myself. I suppose that in relation to the RIAI it is important in terms of the employment and not even status but in terms of a perception that being a member is a fairly fundamentally linked to you and your capacity to be employed.

It's even more so now since registration. I'm always struck by the fact that you never see actors in the theatre, artists at exhibitions. Whether it has got something to do with formation training or whether it's got to do with an element of guardedness of trade secrets, I've never had the sense of tribal alliance amongst artists and it's perhaps the fact that it doesn't have that sort of link to employability or status.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design organisations being all island organisations?
We do have a seat for an RSUA delegate at the monthly RIAI council meetings.

Does the RIAI doesn't actively seek membership from north of the border?
I'm not too sure. I don't think that it proselytises. I think people join for different reasons. The RSUA is an off shoot of what was the RIAI and split along the same lines as the North and would have been seen by people from nationalist Catholic backgrounds as essentially a Protestants club but that's no longer the case. There are northern members like Barry Todd who is very active, who was pitching for work down here. In fairness people like Barry had a bigger view of the world as well.

What's your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
I would develop a Design Council that would reflect a lot of things that you and I are discussing here. I think that there has to be some recognition for very selfish reasons of survival but also the notion of creativity and value added activity generally that design is very over exploited in all its capacities. I would include everything from engineering to industrial design in that and again just as the tourism authority fragmented the island north and south I think we can ill afford not to have an All Island Design Council.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTrade Ireland?
I think the biggest challenge is finding a common language for describing what we mean by design. By that I don't mean some sort of existentialist journey I think that the people who are out on the ground marketing design need to know what they are talking about, need to know what the message is and I think equally designers in various parts of the design universe need to understand where the commonality exists between their various activities and where the differences exist. I think it is a cultural thing which a council could have a very positive role in bridging; in fact this is the kind of catalytic move that did bring those strands together.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design organisations on the island of Ireland?
Obviously when you are as close to them as I am in the RIAI on a daily basis you probably feel that there is reasonably high visibility or certainly more visibility than there was ten years ago.

I think that if you look over the last number of years and see where you saw the word ‘design’ it generally was in the property pages, designer houses and the debasement of that word. I think that reflects perhaps the impotence of some of the otherwise excellent people in product design, graphic design and so on.

I would think that what would be generally called the design world, has a confused profile and a dispersed and diluted profile.

Appendix J: Interview with Brian Kavanagh

Location: Garland House, 28-30 Rathmines Park, Rathmines, Dublin 6
Date: 22 July 2009
Duration: 20:22 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?
We have known each other for 25 years, we have a professional relationship, and we work with one another.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Absolutely.

If so, what do you design?
I design building structures.

Do you design anything else?
I do some small amount of civil works, do I design anything else? Probably not.

Have you ever had a go at say designing a piece of furniture or jewellery?
No. Sorry, I do act as an architect on some jobs.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
I graduated from University College Dublin in 1987 with an Honours Degree in Civil Engineering: even though it is a Structural Engineering Degree. I spent two years in the UK working for a contractor. I then came back to Ireland in 1989 and joined Thomas Garlands. I started as a junior design engineer then progressed to being a senior design engineer. I spent almost four years as a resident engineer on Tallaght Hospital. I was appointed a director in 1998 on my return from Tallaght.

Can you tell me which professional design organisations you are a member of?
I am a member of Engineers Ireland and the Association of Consulting Engineers Ireland.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
Yes, I am currently chairman of the finance committee of Engineers Ireland. I am a member of executives and a member of council. I have previously been chairman of the structures and construction division.

What is the purpose of the Engineers Ireland?
The purpose of EI is to be the trusted voice of Engineers in Ireland.

Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation?
There are various grades of membership starting with Level 6 technicians who all have to have some form of engineering qualification going up to a chartered engineer who needs to be Level 8 qualified.

You are a civil engineer: can a mechanical engineer join Engineers Ireland?
Yes we are a multi disciplinary organisation we cover all types of engineering in Ireland. We have 28 different sectors which range from regional areas to divisions and societies. Those divisions and societies are things like civil, structural, construction, geotechnics, to aeronautical; there is an ICT division as well.

How many members are there in your professional design organisation?
Approximately 22,000

Would you be one of the largest professional organisations on the island?
We are. The only one I think that is bigger is the bankers.

You are also one of the oldest?
Yes, since 1835, we are definitely one of the oldest in the British Isles.

Are there any other professional design organisations you would consider joining and if so why?
I have considered joining the Institution of Structural Engineers, the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Institute of Health Care Estate Mangers.

How do they relate to Engineers Ireland? What's the difference between the Institute of Structural Engineers and Engineers Ireland?
The Institute of Structural Engineers and Institute of Civil Engineers are UK based organisations. They are discipline specific. We would have very close working relationships with the Irish divisions of the civils and the structures.

So there are Irish divisions of essentially UK organisations?
Correct.

Are you an all island body?
Yes, one of the regions is Northern Ireland. We also have a division in the UK.

Can you tell me there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and tell me why you left?
I was a member of the Institution of Structural Engineers a long long time ago. The reason I left was probably financial, actually I am not sure why I left. I was also a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers when I was working in the UK.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers, engineers?
It would be the aim of Engineers Ireland as I have already said, to be the trusted voice of engineers in Ireland and as an all island and all discipline body, I can say that we have a very key position in society and that we don't represent any particular niche.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interests of design, engineering? The professional body could be seen by government as being similar to a trade union?
Interesting enough Engineers Ireland holds a Trade Union Licence for the public sector engineers i.e. the local authority engineers.

There is an argument that engineering is very important to the Irish economy. Should there be someone at government level representing engineering and the values of engineering?
Probably there should be, because one of the major problems is that you don't have a single minister to deal with: you have the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Communications, you have the Minister for Health, you have the Minister for Education, you have the Minister for Transport, there is a whole range.

One of things I say when I talk to students, school children: - there is nothing in the room that you're sitting in that hasn't been touched by engineering, everything is involved with engineering.

Do you see a difference between engineering and other design professions and if so please clarify?
One of the great assets of an engineer is that engineers are essentially problem solvers and they analyse problems and come up with solutions. I think we are one of the few design professions that can actually do that. I think that does set us apart from the likes of the architects or the graphic designers or whoever who are trying to design the aesthetics.

We are dealing with the whole being whether it being a system or a building or the integration of a telephone system or whatever it is.

With the exception of architecture it seems that few designers join professional design organisations? What is the situation with engineers?
The last census would suggest that there are about 70,000 engineers in the country, or people calling themselves engineers and that would actually be backed up by the college outputs. And as I said earlier we have 22,000 members.

That's pretty good return I would say.
Yes about a third**.**

Yes but you could say that a certain number would be over a particular, say retirement age, a certain number may be working in an office where they decline membership to save themselves some money.
Absolutely and that's obviously a challenge for Engineers Ireland.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design organisations being all island organisations?
I think one of the key strengths of Engineers Ireland is one yes it is an All Island basis and we have always brought people together from cross border but one of the most important strengths of Engineers Ireland is a cross disciplinary and also a cross employer background. Consultants, contractors, employers, and government agencies are all members of Engineers Ireland and certainly when the Competition Authority investigated the profession they saw that as one of the huge strengths that we were able to actually pull people from a number of different sectors together.

You said government agencies are members, what do you mean by that?
The Individuals working in the Department of Health, Dublin City Council etc.

What's your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
Well there is the Forum for the Construction Industry which is a government sponsored body which has representatives from Engineers Ireland, the Architects, the Quantity Surveyors, the Contractors, Construction Industry Federation obviously and also the Department of the Environment.

What do they do?
Their principle idea is to try and smooth out difficulties that arise in the construction industry. One of the things the industry has had rammed down its throat recently is the new Government Forms of Contract, which tore up the old RIAI and GDLA forms of contract. That is something that the actual construction industry cancelled but it was rammed down their throat by the Department of Finance who didn't understand how the industry worked.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTrade Ireland?
Well certainly they do, for instance Enterprise Ireland has been very helpful currently in promoting trade delegations to various places say in the Middle East. Where, obviously the industry here is in dire trouble and they are trying to open new markets. Now in fairness I think they are currently looking at trade mission to Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi is dead.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design organisations on the island of Ireland?
I'll put my ACEI hat on and say that is very much a niche organisation, it's purely consulting engineers so there is something like one hundred companies and maybe three hundred members of that organisation. It is very much a niche organisation and does very good work.

Something like Engineers Ireland does speak with a more gravitas because of its broad base and I think other professional bodies are very niche, like for instance the architects, they are quite a small organisation. The same with the quantity surveyors, you have two or three quantity surveying organisations on the Island. So in many respects they do need to come together more, now in things like the Construction Industry Council and the Construction industry Forum things are being brought together but there probably should be more of that.

So you would say then that at 3500 members the RIAI is still a small organisation?
Yes.

Appendix K: Interview with Toby Scott

Location: The Scott House, Sligo
Date: 28 July 2009
Duration: 36:27 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the Interviewer?
I met you as a direct result of your position as forthcoming president of the IDI.

In establishing the Centre for Design Innovation in Ireland I had wanted to develop strong and close links with the design industry support bodies, as I described them then. Therefore it was important for me to get to know you as the incoming president and I needed to get to know the industry support bodies. I felt that it was absolutely essential to not only encourage the demand for design in Ireland but also to encourage the supply side and that was the natural route to market, if you like.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
No, not at all, I am a John the Baptist, that's all I do. I'm an evangelist. I will talk about it and say how wonderful it is but I'm not a designer. In the classic description of what a designer is.

I didn't study design. I have precious little visual or temporal spatial acuity. However I would say that I am a very strong design thinker and so I would take what I consider to be three classic core competencies or behaviour as designers and I apply those things in my thinking so I would describe myself as a 'design thinker'.

And what are those three things?
The three things which I think designers do incredibly well: they look at things from a user's perspective so that every problem is looked at from a user's perspective. Second thing is that they visualise complex concepts, so instead of trying to write things out in long, inch thick documents, they try and visualise things. The third thing they do fantastically well is to prototype in context.

Those three things are distinctive about designers but also they are the behaviours which add greatest value in what they do.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
My professional background is mixed but it is basically the creative industries and advocacy within the creative industries. My first job was saying how important the Arts were so I spent a lot of time advocating on behalf of the arts. I then spent a long time advocating on behalf of creativity.

Creativity is an important thing in terms of the economy and society as a whole. I moved from creativity to think that rather more specifically, design was the most potent mechanism for encouraging creativity within society, mainly because it was the most practically applied creative practice and that could be used to create competitive advantage for businesses and nations.

Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?
I am a member of the Association of MBA's. I am a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and I think that's it.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
I've not held any position within a practicing consultancy. I've acted as an associate within a couple of design consultancies so collaborated on projects, companies like 'Tangerine' for instance. Otherwise I have acted as executive, I've been a director on the Design Council UK and I was founding director for the Centre for Design Innovation in Ireland.

What are the purposes of the professional design organisations of which you held executive positions?
My vision for both of them was design promotion, very very straight forward. And in both cases they were slightly different, the role that I felt that they should have was to both inspire and enable, two key words.

Inspire people to use design as a means of operating more effectively but also to enable them to use it effectively, I felt that there was a two pronged approach. Very much on the demand side it is about encouraging people to use design effectively. Inspire them first and then to enable them.

Taking the two organisations, do people join those organisations or how does it work?
No, neither organisation was a membership organisation. In fact the Design Council took a very particular decision whilst I was there, which I was party to, which was effectively to exclude designers from participating. This was not an active decision so much as a passive decision i.e. we stopped encouraging people to participate, designers to participate and part of the reason for that was that we did not and I felt very strongly, that we could not act as advocates for the profession if we were also supporting the profession. But we would be preaching the benefit of design whilst effectively being a design support organisation.

Equally at the Centre for Design Innovation we had no designers as members. We had lots of people who would follow our activities, particularly students who looked at what we were doing, for instance our blog, our publications and things like that.

But again we were incredibly keen to distance ourselves from the profession whilst being aligned with it, in order to make sure that at no point could we ever be accused of supporting or advocating for an industry of which we were a part.

Are there any other professional design organisations you would consider joining and if so why?
The swift answer is no in the classic sense. I still feel as though I would like to continue the work that I am doing, notwithstanding the fact that I am no long part of the Centre for Design Innovation.

I am still doing work which promotes design at an individual level. Therefore I would hold fast the idea that I can't become a member of a membership organisation that supports its members. So I've never become a part of an industry design support group. I am intending to become part of various international membership organisations that advocate on behalf of design so I would be very happy to be a member of BEDA.

Are there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and if so, can you tell me why you left?
No.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
An industry design support body, unquestionably.

IDI, GDBA, RIBA?
Or in my view ideally a single organisation which undertakes to support them all, because I passionately believe that in the end they are doing the same thing.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interest of design?
That is a really good question and it comes down to an issue of market failure. Let's assume that we are in a very open economy which is predominately market led. We are not a command economy, we are not a socialistic economy, we are quite open. But having said that, the government in Ireland has taken a view which is to support various parts of the economy where there is what I would describe as market failure. That is to say that normal market forces have meant that certain activities don't happen.

I would argue, I think quite passionately, that an understanding and an appreciation of the impact design can have by businesses is one of those areas and the reasons for that market failure are really straightforward they are similar to other countries but there are a couple of things which are very particular to Ireland.

What's particular to Ireland is that it has no great industrial heritage, I don't mean that in any way to be rude, but it didn't experience the industrial revolution in the same way that other countries did:

Would you include Northern Ireland in that?
I would include it to an extent; yes there were great benefits for being part of First and Second World War for the North in that they became great manufacturing hubs.

The point here is because particularly in the Republic, without that industrial heritage, it meant that there was no great tradition of industrial design and I think that has therefore limited awareness of the impact that the design profession can have on everyday objects. That's a problem.

I think that Ireland is very similar to other countries in that there is a degree of risk aversion around the use of design, because it is investing upfront in something which needs to be validated only by experience. You can't pre validate it, that's a problem. There's a cost issue, it's perceived as being expensive and that then is very hard to calculate or justify that expense at the early stage of a product.

I think also that there is a lack of skill both at managerial level and in organisations and actually I don't think that there is an enormous amount of design skill being taught at an academic level. I think that there is fabulous teaching around visual communication in Ireland; I think that's incredibly strong. I think there are some very very very fine architects practicing, but I think we fail as a country when it comes to industrial design and we haven't even started to touch the surface around say areas of interaction design, service design, experience design and some more challenging areas.

Therefore would you see it as a role of the government to promote design?
So therefore we do have market failure and if we have market failure then it is the role of the state because the state has indicated it will do that in other circumstances. It is the role of the state to intervene and adjust for market failure. And so here is lovely example where I think the industry should be supporting itself. The Government needs to do two things: one is to work on the demand side to encourage demand by demonstrating the impact that design can have but it also needs to work on the supply side to undertake some activity which better aligns the education of young designers to the future needs of an economy.

We are preparing designers very badly for a new economy. We are still teaching them to do things which were relevant twenty years ago and in the end design has changed. The role of design has changed fundamentally: it's not that it's no longer about two and three-d rendering but it is increasingly about facilitation and collaboration and co-creation. I'm not that sure we are educating people particularly effectively to learn those behaviours and then apply them effectively in the workplace.

And so the job of government is to indentify education to provide the supply of the right sort of people that we need and create demand within business to ensure that it is using design more effectively, because it works.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
Yes.

My view is that there are three types of design activity. All of which use the three things that I have talked about: user understanding, visualisation of complex concepts and prototyping in context. At one end of the scale I think you have designers craft, making things and stuff which is nice. And I would include within that furniture, fashion, jewellery. That is a legitimate activity but I would suggest that it is high quality design; but it's not design as I would see it in the future. I think you then have architecture a very distinct design discipline.

The third category of design is basically design services to business where a designer provides a service to a business to undertake something which increases the profitability of the business or increases its turnover or basically in the end makes it more money.

Design is a business activity; it is adding value in some way shape or form. So be that a graphic designer who supports the creation of a brand for an organisation, or an industrial designer who creates a new product, or one of what I would describe as the new breed of designers who through co-creation collaboration creates a wonderful innovation or who supports an internal thinking around process design, or takes a new user understanding to create an insight for a company which becomes a new innovation. Designers are supporting the creation of value, that's what they do very well.

Which then for me creates a mass distinction between them and what architects do because I don't think that's what architects do. They have a much narrower, very much tighter brief and their job is not so much about creating business value. I think they would argue that it is an ancillary benefit; I would absolutely agree with that, you know that you create a wonderful building which becomes perhaps of benefit to the company which commissioned it. Or it can be sold for a higher value simply because it is better designed and works more effectively, or it could be more productive as a work space and therefore create value for an organisation but that's not what they set out to do.

So my distinction would be design as craft, design as architecture and the area in which I am particularly interested in, design as a business service.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
I think that is mostly to do with the structure and scale of the industry.

All of the surveys have been done: I have done one in Ireland on behalf of InterTrade Ireland; I've done three in the UK on behalf of the Design Council: we know what the industry looks like. On average, it is made up of small companies with between two and four people in them. Obviously there are extremes, lots of one person organisations and the bell curve is quite heavily skewed down towards the start, but on average they are between two and four people, they have been in business for four years, they will on average last for about eight years as businesses.

When do people sign up for membership organisations? Well pretty much as soon as they come out of college, because they want to have some degree of credibility. Then they lapse because their revenue goes down and then they may re-join a little later when they become part of an organisation. So I think that's the reason, the economics are poor. The second reason which is just as important is because there is no need. That's partly because there is no professional accreditation or sense of continuous professional development.

If I'm an accountant, a lawyer, a doctor, a surveyor for goodness sake, I know that in order to be respected by my peers and to continue to get work that I need to have continuous professional development. I know I can get, let's say an engineer through my industry support body, so a bit of a carrot and a stick there, but those bodies become strong because they are providing a valuable service and as well creating value for the profession as a whole, by saying that if you are accredited with us you are by nature high quality.

Now I fully appreciate that that is harder within the design sector and it is more likely to create fragmentation of different types of design, but in the end that may be the most effective way of going, in order to demonstrate both effectiveness to the outside world and to create value internally within the sector.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all island organisations?
I did a survey for InterTrade Ireland again which showed there was almost no trade between Ireland and Northern Ireland or Northern Ireland to Ireland in terms of design services.

Off the top of my head I think it is just over 1% of all Republic of Ireland companies did business in Northern Ireland and I think about 3% of Northern Ireland businesses did work in the Republic. It was minuscule almost didn't register at all in a meaningful statistical sense.

So that puts me on the horns of a dilemma. Because there is no communication between the two, it makes sense for there to be an all island body in order that they would then encourage best communication, or it argues the other way in that there should not be an all island body, because clearly two companies or individuals working in both jurisdictions that are so radically different that never the twain shall meet and there is no point in bringing them together.

My personal view is 5.2 million people, it's just too small; design promotion particularly is a mass activity, it's a mass market activity, you're trying to create and communicate a single message and do that with simple words which are then spread out to a large number of people, that is much more cost effective if it's done at a large scale.

Direct design support which provides direct assistance to individuals and companies to use design effectively, that's much better done at a local level, because it takes into account local needs and the intelligence about the area and the individual companies. But broad design promotion which is going out there and saying 'design is wonderful' and also creating standards of practice and accreditation are much much better done at a larger scale so therefore in my mind all island is the only way to go.

What is your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
My view of Design Councils has changed and I think that for instance the UK Design Council had to, has evolved quite radically in the sixty years of its existence.

The 1950's was; how can be rebuild a trashed economy by moving away from utility clothing and standardisation of production, to create value in products? In the '60's it was how can we create colour? How can we differentiate ourselves as a country again within manufacturing? In the '70's it was how can we compete with the Far East? And how can we design things in order to compete with that?

In the '80's interestingly the organisation almost died because the '80's was the decade that design either forgot or remembered because everything was design, you had a design house style, design handbag, design phone, so design was lost. The '90's was all about, increasingly design for services: design for process moving away from manufacturing. The noughties have increasingly been around design within public services and communities and things like that. So a Design Council has to continually reinvent itself.

Having said that I think the Design Council in the UK has probably done its job. I think they're coming to a point where they will be able to walk out, turn the lights off and sufficient work has been done.

That has not been the case in Ireland because of the market failure we talked about before, so I still that think there is, and it is a headline activity, it's saying 'We as a nation believe that this activity is sufficiently important that we are going to put some money and support behind it.'

In the end this is all about just creating a policy which says 'Design is important' therefore, for instance, it becomes embedded in procurement policy. Design becomes important in procurement and it's written into the third paragraph on the 5th line, on the 5th page, saying though shalt ensure high quality design standards according to these things. Or it becomes embedded within national standards or it becomes embedded within an education programme.

So the role is diminishing in the UK, its increasing interestingly in countries like Italy where they are really struggling to let go of a heritage: an industrial design heritage which now is meaningless. It has become less important in countries like Finland and Sweden who have leapt the hurdle and who are now investing heavily in design at every level. The job's done.
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You would welcome a design council, an all island one?
I would very much welcome a Design Council - I think ultimately an all island one, because as I said earlier design promotion is better done on an all island level, in order to simply benefit from economies of scale.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTrade Ireland?
Invest Northern Ireland has a strong heritage of taking design support directly to business. I'm being very precise about my language because what they are very good at is going out and working directly with businesses and investing to help them use design to create better products predominantly.

They have put their money where their mouth is. I think their programme has failed to a certain extent because they have focused on, through no fault of their own, the programmes have tended to focus on branding and graphic design rather than on other higher value added activities, but increasingly they have put their money where their mouth is.

InterTrade Ireland I think is ambitious: they see design as a point of competitive advantage for themselves and I think they have absolutely done some of the most interesting, exciting work in this area, and certainly being provocateurs in this space. What is interesting to my mind is that they find it hard to operate in this space, because they don't get a lot of support from their sister organisations, Invest NI and Enterprise Ireland, where you would have thought collaboration would have been really useful and nice and important.

Enterprise Ireland I think is populated with some very very high quality thinkers at an operation level who would wish to implement design support but there is no appetite for it at a senior policy level in the organisation.

Forfás I think absolutely get it but there is a policy gap in terms of timescale and thinking: between what Forfás thinks and how it is then implemented within the agencies.

The IDA I just don't think that it's even on their radar.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?
Fragmentation.

In the end, think of design like a business. If it were a business how would we now describe the brand that design has, we would describe it as hopelessly fragmented. If design in Ireland were a company and it had a brand, what would that brand really look like? Well I'd suggest it would look pretty odd, you would have a company which was effectively selling exactly the same product, but calling it different things and using different language to describe it.

Now you could just argue very strongly that this was a portfolio brand and that you had various things which were similar, but actually what did that achieve? As we know from design 101 or branding 101 you get cannibalisation amongst the consumers or users of those various brands. So the person who buys Persil, do they then buy Ariel or Omo or Surf or an own brand from a supermarket? Then you just get desperate cannibalisation where people eat off each other.

If we are serious about straightforward promotion then what we got to do is recognise what it is it that design does well. I think I have outlined what I think it does well, and promote that to the exclusion of other conflicting messages. Because in the end the audience, and I'm not saying they are not bright, they are very very bright, very talented, but unless there is a straightforward message which says design does these things and does them really well and it can add value, be that as an architect or an interior designer or as a interaction designer or as a visual communicator, then nobody is going to win.

We are going to end up with each different part of the branding mix is going to cannibalise off each other in the same way that Dr. Pepper might cannibalise off Lilt, or Coca-Cola or whatever else.

Fragmentation is the biggest problem but also it is a partial solution to the problems we have outlined earlier in the conversation.

Appendix L: Interview with Nicholas (Nick) Cloake

Location: 26 Gordon Street, Ringsend, Dublin 4
Date: 6th August 2009
Duration: 24:31 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the Interviewer?
We met during the very early stages of Design Ireland and setting that up. Since then there has been interaction on both the IDI council and a variety of other initiatives such as Design Week. We have a common calling in that we are serial committee people and as a result we came across each other in that respect over the past decade.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
Yes and No. I consider myself to be a designer by profession, but becoming more a design manager. In fact I would consider myself to be a tactical designer rather than a graphic designer.

If you are designer, what do you design?
Principally we advise and create brands for people. The verb of that is actually designing the finished output. But to me I see design as a noun not just a verb and the verb activity can actually be carried out by a huge amount of people, design professionals. But the idea of a tactical designer, without sounding punctilious, is quite exclusive. The problem with designers in general is that they are more concerned with craft than effectiveness.

Assuming that you are somewhere in the branding, visuals communication area, do you ever design pieces of furniture or a piece of jewellery or your kitchen?
I designed clothes at one point, I designed stage sets: I worked in the opera for a year or so and I worked in every theatre in Dublin except the Abbey. I have designed furniture and I've even designed gardens, oh and a playground.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
I studied Visual Communications from 1978 to 1982 in DIT, or the College of Marketing and Design now known as COMAD. During that time I also did a teaching, TS course. On leaving in 1982 there were basically about three graphic design companies in Ireland. Most graphic activity went through advertising agencies and that didn't appeal to me so I became a teacher for 5 years in Castleknock College. That didn't appeal to me in the 4th year so I moved to London and became a freelance designer. Then I came back and set up firstly Cloake Nugent Design Partnership. Michael is quite famous he is the guy who set up Atheism Ireland and co-wrote I Keano. Michael's career path was outside design so we closed the business and I set up Baseline with Alec Drew in 1990 and I've been pursuing that since.

Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?
I'm a member of ICAD, IDI, and Baseline is a member of a multitude of business things such as the Ireland China Business Association, the Irish-Indian Business Association and the SFA. We are members of everything, and the company is a member of Design Business Ireland.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
I have had a number of posts in the Graphic Design Business Association, including Chairman.

Were you a founder?
Not of the GDBA. I was one of the founder directors of Design Ireland. I was on the council for a number of years of the IDI. I was on the executive of Design Ireland again representing the IDI and I am currently the Chairman of Design Business Ireland.

You weren't anything with ICAD then?
No, I never saw a role for myself in ICAD or how I might contribute.

What is the purpose of the professional design organisations of which you hold executive positions?
The purpose of Design Business Ireland is two things. One is it is to provide a resource for design businesses as opposed to design individuals. It is charged with promoting effective design to all audiences but it is also an initiative to try and make sense of the design representative landscape.

Where there is overlap, Design Business Ireland is trying to have a single focus so that it doesn't detract from other organisations, and they don't overly detract from ours.

Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation?
Any design business from the following disciplines: Visual communications, branding, design management, commercial interiors, new media, product design, and there are more being considered such as fashion, but you must be in business three years, any discipline.

Am I right in saying DIT has some quasi memberships?
We offer associate memberships to education facilities that include professional design courses and their curriculum, with a view to having an engagement in education where possible.

How many members are there?
There are only company members, there are about 60.

Any idea of how many people would be in those member companies overall?
It would differ; it would go from operations where we have one or two members to organisations like the Brand Union and Neworld which would have dozens.

In around 300?
300 – 500.

Are there any other professional design organisations you would consider joining and if so, why?
I have looked at a number of international ones. I was a member of the Type Directors Club of New York, but these are more to do with personal professional growth and nurturing.

But you are a member of the Design Management Institute?
No, but I attend a lot of their European conferences.

Are you considering joining any at the moment?
No, if the Hong Kong Design Association wants me I'll join them.

Can you tell me there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and tell me why you left?
I left ICAD a number of times but returned mainly to be part of the negotiation process in setting up Design Business Ireland and things like that.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
The Institute of Design.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interest of design?
I think it should be a combination of the IDI and Design Business Ireland and a government body involved in enterprise.

Are you saying that to promote design the individual design organisations, be it IDI or Design Business Ireland or whoever, should together with government promote design?
Yes. I think organically the design representative bodies will promote it, quite often inefficiently because of resources. If government has a desire to develop a knowledge economy, then the design community is absolutely essential to it and also there are examples throughout Europe and the world, of design playing a central role in government.

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
It's strange. I work with many many architects and I don't think of them as designers, which is probably unfair: I think that they are probably guardians of the most complex design process and as a result the space that they occupy in terms of the representative bodies as in the RIAI suits them best.

I think architects think differently, I think their process is almost completely different to the process I would use in design. I think architects both benefit and suffer from the self belief that they can design anything, but in effect they can't. For example on many occasions we worked with architectural practices for signage projects because we find them not to be brand focused and signage is a manifestation of a brand.

With the exception of architecture in your opinion why do so few designers join professional design organisations?
Two reasons. One is apathy which is basically prevalent as it turns out, in many English speaking countries and others. The other is that I think designers have yet to realise that they are a profession. I think designers by their nature in Ireland have grown up in the wrong education system, where people who have visual skills become designers, which isn't necessarily the best way.

Designers I think are also naturally single people, they operate in a kind of a solo basis and they aren't great team players. They are not joiners.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all island organisations?
All island in the context of Ireland is possibly more an emotional thing than a feasible thing. The two jurisdictions cause problems immediately in terms of currency because Britain chose not to join the rest of Europe in the Euro. That poses an immediate difficulty. There are also different tax laws there.

So if Design Business Ireland runs a legal seminar in Dublin, Cork or Galway it has to be changed for it to work in Northern Ireland. But apart from that, all those things are worthwhile because as an island we are much more powerful as a group than we are separately. So it's worth it. None of the barriers are insurmountable or not worth the effort.

What's your view of Government sponsored Design Councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
Government design councils in my view have a single focus, which tends to be on product. We are not a manufacturing country and as a result government gets frustrated because when you talk to government about design they see large plants outputting furniture, lamps and bicycles, cars and shelves for computers.

Ireland just doesn't have that infrastructure. I think government should understand what the design landscape is in Ireland.

I recently met InterTrade who I have immense respect for, and InterTrade are looking at an all island promotion of design. But what they had actually said was that the branding and visual and communication side wasn't really relevant because that seemed to be well dealt with on the island, that they were focusing on something much further down the design chain and they were looking for product and innovation. I think they're going to have problems finding it.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland?
I would have limited exposure to InterTradeIreland but I would see them as being a potential ally for Design Business Ireland. I would see any organisation that is willing to actually promote design, designers and the design industry as being worthwhile engaging with.

Enterprise Ireland has been a good supporter over the years, but in reality they are the wrong organisation because their interest is in export. If they were to focus on ways for the predominant design profession, which is visual communications, purely because of the numbers, if they were to focus on ways to export that, then they would be pushing an open door. But the criteria for the support from Enterprise Ireland is quite narrow, the organisation must comprise 10 people, with a turnover of three million euro, one million euro of which has to be in exports.

When I was in Milan at the DMI European conference there was a discussion as to why Milan was a design centre and they spoke about having the ability to manufacture. They have great people who can make things. We put it to them that in Ireland design is in our DNA, particularly visual communications, for example the Book of Kells.

There is a huge potential to make Ireland a design centre for certain types of design: for design consultancy. I think we are actually excellent design managers. From my interaction with design organisations throughout Europe, we are certainly as good as the best and would surpass a lot of the others.

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?
With the exception of the RIAI, which we will decree is a design body: the single biggest problem is resources. There is a small pool of people who are passionate about it and it requires them to dedicate fairly significant amounts of their time to make things happen, so we are under resourced.

The other side is that apart from being under resourced, the design community itself has yet to recognise the benefit of strong representation. The business community don't understand what design is about and what the design industry is about, which is the design industries fault. As an industry that has a predominance of communication professionals in it, it's incredible how we have never really got to grips with bringing Irish industry into the fold.

Currently I think we have only penetrated Irish business to about 40%, if even. And I suppose what really has to change is that design professionals have to engage with their institute because it is there that they can cultivate and develop their skill. They can interact and learn more and surely through working with people or meeting people they can just improve their profession. The Institute is perfect for that and the Institute should provide as many opportunities for people, even just to socialise and develop relationships.

From the business side Design Business Ireland needs to relentlessly pursue that a) design is good for every facet of this country and b) that design companies will be stronger and better resourced if they support a better representative body. But it is going to take another generation in my view. The real fear is that there are some really principled people within our industry e.g. Garrett Stokes, Pat Kinsley, Neil Condron, John O'Connor in DIT, Jimmy Walsh and I am leaving out many who are really important. When they become fatigued by what they are doing, there is a real fear that there are no new people to replace them. Our organisations and all design organisations require fresh blood or they die.

I think the other thing is that I genuinely believe that government should look to organisations like the IDI and Design Business Ireland as a way of actually promoting the design culture, because they already have a group of passionate people who would do it and if they can fund, and it's not even stupid money, it's actually a self fulfilling, self paying investment, that they will get more towards the idea of a knowledge economy and an innovative economy than they would by creating new organisations.

The other big issue in design organisations is that when someone gets an idea instead of coming to an existing organisation, they tend to set up a new one which is frustrating and actually pointless, because it either draws meagre resources from the existing ones or else it fails because it hasn't got the power to stand on its own. Hopefully Design Business Ireland is in a way such a narrow focus that it can assist wherever possible.

Appendix M: Interview with Michael Thomson

Location: Hilton Hotel, Paddington, London, England
Date: 12 August 2009
Duration: 36:52 minutes

Can you state your relationship with the interviewer?
I have no relationship with you at all.

Do you consider yourself to be a designer?
I consider myself to be a design strategist and I trained as a designer in Belfast and Germany.

If you are a designer what do you design?
I design strategy and I help design companies do the design before the designing as it were. It's about setting up the strategic approach to projects so that when the design gets done, then it is on the mark in terms of fitting the business objectives or client's aspirations.

I do a lot of creative facilitation work as well: helping design companies think through their designing before their mark-making or form-giving. I don't do the actual form-giving in the sense of the physicality of things, but I do very much contribute in terms of the strategic construct or the understanding of what the concept might be. This supports first thinking and concept generation.

But you trained as a designer?
Absolutely, 3D in Belfast and Germany.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
I started with 3D design in Belfast and after graduating, I did a scholarship year in Germany in 3D design. Then I qualified as a teacher at Jordanstown and spent five years running an art and design department in a very difficult secondary school in Northern Ireland. Following this, I worked as the Education Officer for the Design Council in Belfast for seven years.

In 1995, I set up Design Connect working internationally on design strategy: working with design companies helping them understand where they are going and working with Governments on design policy. On design policy, I've worked in Iceland, New Zealand, Ireland, Italy and most recently last year, in Qatar in the Middle East.

I spend a lot of time inside design companies working with them on projects, helping them build capacity. I am also Martin Darbyshire's Consulting Director on Strategy for' Tangerine' a strategic product design consultancy based in London and Seoul.

Did you ever do things like design a piece of furniture for example?
I used to in my younger days, but not anymore.

Can you tell me which professional organisations you are a member of?
I have been a member of the Design Business Association (DBA) until they slightly changed their categories, so now I am an associate of the DBA because I am not a practising hands-on designer. I was a member of the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) for seventeen years but I left that a long time ago. I am a member of the Design Management Institute, (DMI), in Boston.

Do you hold or have you held an executive position in any professional design organisation?
I was the chairman of the CSD in Northern Ireland in the early 1990's. That would have been when they had the chapter there. Since then, I have been a Board Member of the Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA), and was elected President for the term 2007/2009.

You mentioned that the CSD had a chapter in Northern Ireland that has that closed?
As far as I know, yes. I left the CSD six, seven or eight years ago, maybe more. So I'm not sure what the update on that is, but I don't think they are organised in Northern Ireland anymore, I'm pretty certain they're not.

Who is eligible to join your professional design organisation, in this case BEDA?
BEDA is an association of associations open to design organisations across Europe from all Member States and indeed from the European Economic Area. For example, the Norwegian Design Council is a member, as is DDI - the national-level design council for Spain – and the Design Council in London. Professional design associations include Danish Designers and Design Luxembourg. There are also regional design centres such as the Barcelona Design Centre, in Barcelona.

One of my interviewee's claims to be a member of BEDA: or he thinks he is, he seems to think that he became a member of BEDA?
No you can't be a member of BEDA as an individual person; it's not an association of individuals, it's an association of associations. The membership also includes professional design associations so we like to say that BEDA represents the professional design industries across Europe and that includes designers, but the designers themselves cannot be members.

How many members are there in BEDA?
At the last count it would have been somewhere in the region of forty two members in twenty three European Member states plus Norway plus Switzerland. Of those forty two members something like fifteen or twenty are professional design associations.

So as a direct membership representation it is something like 80,000 designers. But we like to say that we represent something like 400,000 designers working across Europe.

Are there any other professional design organisations you would consider joining and if so why?
There are none at the present time that I am considering joining.

Can you tell me if there are any professional design organisations that you are no longer a member of and tell me why you left?
I was a member of the Chartered Society of Designers; I ran the Northern Ireland region. When I came to London in 1995 I was very closely involved and then became their Vice President with responsibility for international affairs. After about seventeen years of membership I just felt that it wasn't right for me to remain a member any longer so I resigned.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for promoting the interests of designers?
Well I think the concept of the professional design organisations is good because I think that what you have is a community of practice: both cross disciplinary / multi disciplinary. The opportunity for organisations to represent the professional practice interests of the professional practitioners whether it is in intellectual property or contracts or business development is valid and good for the sector.

Of course there are both trade associations like the DBA, and the professional associations like the CSD that represent the individuals, so I think immediately you have a distinction. There is a layering of service provision which is interesting because these organisations survive principally on their membership fees. It's very difficult for membership organisations to extend their offers to actually relieve their reliance on the membership fee. That can be very tricky especially at times in recession. You know when members are saying 'Why do I pay €400 to my organisation, what value am I getting?'

I think that the industry as a whole should in a sense be happy that there are representative bodies representing their interests. Who they are representing them to is another question. Do you want the interests of a design profession to be represented back to the design profession, or do you want representation to government? There are questions around that in terms of purpose.

Is it reasonable to say that you think designers should be representing the interest of designers?
Yes they should certainly be closely involved.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for the promoting the interest of design?
I think that is a wider discussion than the practice of design. I think that for me that relates back to strategy for the economy, it relates back to the bigger dimension, the bigger picture of innovation and innovation strategy. If you see design as a component of a bigger picture for economic growth or development of a nation than I think design hopefully can be represented by many other types of players, the stakeholders other than just designer's per se.

Of course designers need to be involved and engaged in those levels of discussions to be able to bring the credibility of practice as it is today into those discussions. There often is a very understandable, identifiable concern from practising designers that the organisations of government or other types of bodies, such as say Business Links here in the UK, that actually the guys on the ground don't really understand design and in a sense that, at various levels is true.

The higher you go up the political value chain, the discussion of whether or not the design sector should receive government support is simply not a decision that designers alone can make. You have to involve other stakeholders in the game

Do you see a difference between architecture and other design professions and if so please clarify?
Well I think that there are differences and nuances between all of the design professions. A fashion designer versus a graphic designer, information architect versus a web designer, a web interface designer or a product designer versus an industrial designer. There are so many differences. There is also increasingly, service design.

There are so many nuances that are determined by the output of what that person or that designer is engaged in. It's the old question of Le Corbusier and his chair, did he design good chairs because he is an architect or did he design good buildings because he could design amazing chairs?

Very often in the world that I work in, in terms of policy and so on, architecture is often not included. It is seen as separate and I think that's probably because architecture has chartered status whereas no other design profession has that, or is anywhere near it.

With BEDA for instance, the RIBA isn't listed,
Architecture isn't included in the membership of BEDA. It's not included as a category.

Why do you think that is?
It's because it is seen that there is already a very strong representational body, ACE, which already represents architecture at the European level.

If you are talking to bureaucrats, as BEDA has been doing at the highest level in the Commission over the last two years about why there is no policy for design at the European level in connection with the innovation agenda, then actually, to start talking about architecture is seen to be something that's very very different to design for innovation.

Are there advantages or disadvantages in professional design bodies being all island organisations?
The answer has to be yes, but maybe not at all times.

It depends on how you stratify the landscape that you are dealing with. There are going to be areas that are more strategic that should be all island or could be all island where you've got integration even in terms of the level of connect and know how between the organisations on both parts of the island of Ireland. That there is some way of reducing duplication of effort or needless duplication of resources.

You have also got the layer of what happens regionally or what happens within a city area or whatever. So you have to have locality and specifics but again, at a certain level, what I was saying in the InterTrade Ireland report was that it would seem that there are opportunities to build advantage of benefits if you take a whole Ireland perspective.

There is a perception that design organisations that are based in London are not operative throughout the UK. Is this the case?
I think if you look at the DBA now they have a much stronger regional strategy. Whether they have got specific representatives from Northern Ireland or not, I'm not sure. I do know they have a very strong regional support, here in Scotland, in the South West in the North West. I know they are very strong in Bristol and looking out towards Cornwall. You have for example the BDI, British Design Innovation. They've got regional representation as well but whether or not that goes as far as Northern Ireland, I know there are links and talks but whether it's formalised or not, I am not sure.

What's your view of government sponsored design councils? There is one in United Kingdom based in London. Would you welcome one in the Republic or on an all island design council?
That's quite a complex question.

One of the key benefits of the Design Council in the UK is that it actually converts and influences government in bureaucracy, bureaucrats and civil servants. So somehow or other it gives a legitimacy to the idea of somebody even talking about design at the level of policy in government. So for example, current work at the Design Council is looking at a scheme to bring design to something like the top two hundred list of civil servants in the UK.

So they're talking about how you start to build a language set around design and design understanding and awareness amongst the top most influential civil servants. I think that that is a task that designers wouldn't be interested in doing in their professional practice necessarily, but yet the connect of a better informed policy machine to try and attribute resources into design over the medium to longer term brings benefits is critical to the sector.

The Design Council is funded through government here in the UK. Not all design councils – or national and regional bodies for design promotion – are funded by government. If you look across Europe some are funded by industry ministries, economy ministries; some are funded by cultural ministries and some are funded by both. Actually, a design council-type body creates a public point of reference both externally and internally for government about design and why design is important; why it relates to innovation and why it relates to a better quality of life. It helps us to approach the challenges of sustainability and climate change and the future challenges that we face, systemic challenges that demand systemic responses,

At another level of course there is need for some form of co-ordination around what is the regional support for businesses that need to use design. If you can motivate businesses to use design then the design industries are part of that cycle. This in turn, means that there's a greater demand for design and then the quality of the suppliers of that demand has to regroup has to become more efficient and so on. I think there's something like an internal cycle there that if you can get these parts or these players more aware of the role of design or why design might make a difference to them and make them more profitable, more competitive, then that is something that has benefits.

I don't know that you would call it a Design Council necessarily in the South of Ireland, but I would have thought some body that was clearly focused at a national level for Ireland could bring benefits in co-ordination of resources and raising awareness of the design capacity in Ireland. Having done the work with Toby Scott for the Centre for Design Innovation in Sligo, I am not sure if it would be a Design Council for all of Ireland. I don't know if it would be that necessarily, but I do think that some connecting mechanism or a round table that would allow those entities to speak to each other would be very valuable.

Don't forget there are two things: the design industries across Europe are very very tiny. If you look at them relative to other industries 70% of design companies are between one and nine people, across the whole of Europe and that's from the EU's, research, And if you then look at Design Councils: funding for Design Council's is very very fragmented across Europe. If you look at the UK Design Council they are getting approximately £8 million grant in aid per year. They employ sixty or seventy people. If you go to other places in Europe the picture is not so robust. For example in the Czech Republic two to three years ago the Industry Minister closed down the Design Centre of the Czech Republic that had been in place for decades.

They have since put a small mechanism in place but it's not the Design Centre of the Czech Republic – it is a department of a department of government.

If you look to other East European countries a lot of these organisations are fighting on a year to year basis to stay alive on very little funding. So one of the reasons that BEDA has been talking of European level policy is to try and persuade the European Commission that there is a need for coherent action at European level. Therefore if there is coherent action that means that there should be a coherent funding guide for the development of national level and design councils for all Member States.

What's your view of promotion of design or designers by state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTrade Ireland?

I think that there are some elements here that remain disconnected. I think the designers very often are looking for a certain set of outcomes or a sensation that something is happening to their agenda. You know; we want design to be more talked about, we want more funding or grant support for design, we want government to persuade companies to make use of design, and why aren't more companies making use of design?

I think on the other hand those agencies: they've got a longer deeper agenda in terms of research in terms of gross, size or gross effect on the economy or whatever, so I think somehow these things are on the same continuum but they are not very connected. For example, I think it's changing now but until recently, the Design Council hadn't been talking to the design industry at all, hardly at all, which I have always said doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. I think that it is changing. Equally the DBA is developing its ability to talk to government so it has set up this Parliamentary initiative which is like a shadow select committee process specifically to look at procurement in the public sector. In this instance, the DBA is involved in policy development so I think there is a merging or blending of these agendas which is not a bad thing

What are the weaknesses in structure of the existing professional design bodies on the island of Ireland?

I think that the organisations that are there are very vulnerable to funding for example the Skillnets process. It was a fantastic stroke of genius to get design involved as a basic skill or competence for business and to receive a funded programme of development through that route. Of course you are structured around the availability of one, two or three year program funding and that is a great hindrance to supporting a sustainable approach to programme development. It is very difficult to make these organisations self sustaining. They are reliant on government funding or grant aid.

I think the design professions themselves are quite cliquey too: you get the graphic designers doing their thing and the architects doing their thing and the product designers doing their thing. I think the structure actually does need to be looked at in a more holistic sense so that all of these players can see that they are playing on the same canvas - even though they may not feel like that at the moment.

In fact the design organisations are usually fighting for budgets and for members. They are trying to retain their memberships so they have to be territorial as well. They are scared about somebody else coming in and taking members away from them. This can work against collaborative working.

I think structurally there is a layer that's missing, that layer between the government policy and the practitioners on the ground. I think it is in that layer that we could actually have some interesting opportunity where government could, not necessarily create another entity but would actually facilitate or enable better understanding or a mental model of the overall framework in which these different entities sit, where they sit in the landscape of the customers and the users that you are actually focused on at the end of the day.

So looking at the full spectrum ranging from the guys doing the design, providing design services, creative business services right across then to the other side to the businesses and industry that actually need design services of different types - how do you get these two cultures to actually come together to interact more?

I'm trying to get an understanding of how international design organisations are linked can you provide some illumination?
I was instrumental in creating the International Design Alliance (IDA) and that happened over a period of three years. We actually created the IDA in 2005 which was able to turn around thirty years of mutual distrust of each of the other organisations by stopping to talk about the territorial language set, by showing that each of those organisations had autonomy within the concept of the IDA. That there was no sense of Icsid taking over Icograda and vice versa or the IFI. That is was seen to be an interface where those organisations could work on projects together that none of them could do alone. That's where the World Design Capital concept came from and that is where the World Design Report concept came from as well. And both those organisations are trying to make that happen: the World Design Capital has happened in Torino already in 2008.

The IDA structure was a point of cultural change in building the right mutual understanding and the right language set between the players in the different organisations so they could actually start to build trust between each other and that's very much down to trust between individuals. It's down to the individuals. Can these individuals sit in the same room together? You have to work very hard to be able to get that to happen.

BEDA is a very different type of organisation than Icsid, Icograda or IFI which are in a sense partly representational service provision organisations for design bodies and for their members.

BEDA's role is specially to communicate the value of design innovation to the European Commission, so it's not like the other organisations. It is representing design as a key strategy for Europe's future. We had to learn first of all the political structures into which we wanted to talk and it has taken a long time to do that. We had to learn to speak a bit of political speak as well, rather than designer speak, and we had to always try and find a way of bringing these two worlds together in a way that's beneficial and we have had a lot of success with that approach.

I have to say principally by connecting design closely to innovation. But I think in terms of being able to talk to government, bureaucrats and policy makers: if you walk in the door and say we need a policy for design, design is this is, that design is the answer for everything then you're going to come up against closed doors. If you say design adds value and enhances innovation strategy and innovation with companies then you are in a different place in terms of what you can talk about because actually, you're fitting design into something that is much bigger.

What would do you think would be the long term effect of Ireland not being represented on the world design organisation stage is?
The medium term impact of that is a loss of visibility on the international stage for Ireland; that Ireland is a credible entity in terms of its economy, difficult just now; that there is a design competence there, and that there is a national design quality that it is something that others could learn from. It is a two way street thing.

I think with regard to membership of international organisations, the usual thing is that the old adage holds true – 'The more you give the more you get'. If you go in just expecting to get something then you maybe won't get very far. 'What can I give?' rather than 'What can I get?' is a more powerful approach. I think the other thing is that membership immediately, and in a profound way, internationalises the network that would be available to the players in Ireland.

If the Innovation Centre in Sligo or even Enterprise Ireland or the IDI were effective, full blown members of these international organisations then there are a lot of benefits to be gained from building an international network. The catch 22 is that in order to achieve this, resources are required for membership fees and for participation – for example in international congresses. Icsid's next congress is to be in Singapore and Icograda's will be in Beijing.

As far as BEDA is concerned the more countries and organisations it can represent back to the European Commission, the more credibility that brings for design.

Appendix N: Interview with Jan R. Stavik

Location: Norsk Designråd, Oslo, Norway
Date: 3rd September 2009
Duration: 39:24 minutes

The interview began with an outline of my initial conclusions from the research question.

The first thing that I have discovered in the organisation of design bodies in Ireland is that Architecture is somehow different; there are 3,500 architects and about 1,000 designers in the organised bodies. The architects have been around in a professional organised body for about 150 years and they see themselves as very different. Architecture is not a driver of the economy. If you drive the construction industry you will drive architecture, but if you drive product design you may drive other things as well. These are some of the things that I am teasing out.

Designers in Ireland don't seem to see themselves as professionals and by designers I'm excluding architects. The numbers of people who join associations, be they professional or not, is very low. It would seem that designers don't see themselves as professionals and don't get involved in professional or amateur organisations in Ireland.

The next conclusion is the most obvious one. The design associations in Ireland are too small. With 300 people you can't organise anything. You can get a nice bunch of volunteers, but it's hard to get anything done.

The most critical thing is that I think that there is a difference between representing designers and their needs, wants and their desires and representing design. Specifically my view is that the designers are self interested, they have certain interests. They are not of themselves important to the national economy. But design is. A designer wants the world to be better for the designer, designers get paid more money, they get loads of work and they're all jolly and happy. But design is important to the economy, whereby if we create better products more things will follow.

Designers have to some extent left the government off the hook. Because there is confusion between who is representing what, design hasn't been in Ireland, adequately represented.

What is your relationship with the interviewer?
Do I know you personally? No.

Are you a designer?
No.

Can you briefly describe your professional background?
Business School Graduate. I've spent twenty five plus years of my life totally outside this world. I've been working for, and running, Norwegian and International companies, mainly within the broad sense of marketing or general management.

I started working for Unilever; I've worked with the breweries, I made the first ever contract by Norway's largest brewery with Guinness. I worked with Guinness. I worked with Coca Cola. I worked with Carlsberg. I have been European director of Norwegian Cruise Lines. I've worked with toothbrushes. I started a factory from scratch in Malaysia; I did that for two and a half years. So; basically business, management, marketing. Being in charge of marketing in various places, obviously I have been hiring a lot of designers. I know a little bit about product development and branding and packaging, the whole works.

Therefore I had a good feeling about what design and the design process is all about. When we came back from Asia I just felt like doing something else and just running brands or companies or stressing my wits out. Of all the people who knocked on my door this was one I liked the most.

What is the purpose of Norsk Designråd, the Norwegian Design Council?
As you said designers are not important but design is.

The purpose is to be what in the English language is often called a Design Promotion Organisation. Promoting design in terms of not selling Norwegian design, but encouraging, influencing and assisting Norwegian Industry in becoming more professional in using design as a tool in innovation.

We are financed 90% by the Norwegian Government, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

And the remaining 10%?
That's basically the design events. We charge people who apply for our awards because we have a very very thorough jury system. We do not make money, we lose money but at least it supports our budget.

We also do advising or consulting to individual companies. Not to play a consulting company but to assist them. As I said, not just to inspire, but to help them.

The reason why we charge them money for that is that it enables my budget to hire three more people. So it is more of a supplement to my budget. These things add up to the 5 to 10% of my annual budget which is now around four million pounds; which is, in budget terms, the second largest design council in Europe, after the UK, which has a budget of about twice that. But then they have ten times more people.

What disciplines do you include in your design support or promotion?
We never start thinking disciplines; we start thinking about the Norwegian Industry.

Industry in Norway is now 80% services, at least I think of all new companies, 80% are service companies, but of course we still have some good old industry. There has been a lot of interesting industry developed over that last thirty five years when we have had the oil. So off-shore, shipping, off-shore shipping supplies. Worldwide, not only to the Norwegian operators.

There is still a lot of good old industry out there, good new industry and physical objects. We are thinking of design as a process and as a tool for innovation, whether you're talking about creating totally new products for consumers, which is the lowest part of our economy. Helping engineers to think better solutions for under water oil drilling installations into of course the service side and lately also into public services.

We have a disastrous health service and an immense amount of money from the oil enables us to run it as if nothing happened. So there is huge potential for improvements in public services. Transportation and health are two of the biggest ones.

We basically think of design as an improvement tool or an innovation tool and then whatever categories we put them into depends on the job to be done.

You mentioned that you run awards?
Yes, there of course we have classic categories. I'll give you this year's awards book from March, there you can see the categories, you can see the criteria's, you can see the summary of the judges etc.

Do you think that design and designers are well represented in Norway; do you think the structure works?
I think design is fairly well represented.

We have managed over these years to increase the understanding on a political level and on the bureaucratic level in the Ministry, which can be shown by the fact that we had, when I started, a budget from the Ministry of £600,000 and we are now at £4,000,000.

So they have obviously understood that we are doing something which is important, important for them of course, as the government is not going to subsidise a professional group of people such as designers. That's why they are all dirt poor. But they can support a function, an understanding or a market failure which means that a lot of the companies do not understand the importance.

That is basically the main reason why a lot of governments give money to institutions like ours. To wake up the industry who didn't see the light. That's why design is represented this way. We have our colleagues in an organisation called Norskform who also look after to some extent design but mostly architecture but everything within the public space so they are financed by the cultural department.

We deal with business and industry and everything that is financial economy and they are all about teaching school children and look at open spaces, having architects competitions etc. Together we cover most of the areas where design is represented and together we also work to some extent putting exhibitions to show Norwegian design or design related products abroad, sort of a side line.

Design is well represented. Designers are probably as poorly represented as in most other countries, except that with our work and through the fact that we do consulting to individual companies to help them with the design process, it means that every time we go into a company we create a job for a designer because we never do the designers job, even though I have designers here because they know the process. We have a big database of designers here. So we create jobs for the designers also.

Are you seen as a referral agency?
Yes we are match makers as well.

Does that get you into areas of conflict?
Every now and then and that's why we have statistics for it, last year we assisted fifty four companies and we had thirty eight different designers. When we have a company client and they ask us to find the best designer, we always present three and we always try to make one of them a rookie, a young designer.

We leave it up to the company to choose, so I think we handle that pretty well. Every now and then there is some designer storming up to us asking us why we give companies strategic help when they can do this and I tell them that we only worked with fifty companies last year and there seventy eight thousand nine hundred left and why did you not run after them?

Designers are notoriously bad in selling themselves and they hate knocking on doors. That discussion comes up every five years or so and then it drops dead as soon as we sit down with them.

What in your opinion is International Best Practice; do you think you do it pretty well?
As far as representing design I think we are one of the good ones.

To what extent Norwegian Design Associations are good or bad and who are the really sharp associations, I think that boils very much down to size. That's at least from appearances. You see some of the American ones and you see some of the UK ones. I see them visible, but I don't know what kind of job they do and to what extent their members are happy.

I have a quote which says that 'Norway has long been considered the little brother of Scandinavian design, but this is definitely changing. In recent years a new generation of designers have put Norway's business community on the world map'; would I be right in saying it is your role to drive that forward?
To be very immodest about it, this has come about from what we have done over the last ten years; showing Norwegian designers, young designers and having Norwegian Design Exhibitions eight years in a row in London. We will be there again in September during the London Design Festival.

You mentioned ten years Jan; have you been in business for ten years?
The Norwegian Design Council has been there since 1963, having different roles with and without government money. Over the last 20 years, plus or minus, we had government money. I have run this for the last ten years.

What's the difference between what you would describe as Nordic and what would be considered Scandinavia? Please excuse my complete ignorance.
It is a purely geographical one: Scandinavia is a physical thing, those countries physically link; Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. And for the Nordic countries you include Finland and Iceland.

I'm assuming in Scandinavia you have separate currencies?
We have one each, five currencies. Four of them have the same name, they are called Kroner, 'crowns', but the Finish Crown is called the Finish Mark. They are all different and the rates are different.

Are any of the Countries in the EU or about to get into the EU?
Iceland might be entering but that's a big question for the moment. Denmark was one of the earliest ones actually; they have always been so dependent on trade with Europe. Sweden and Finland went in about the same time, around 1994 and Norway had two referenda saying 'No'.

In terms of design is there a grouping within the Nordic Countries or Scandinavia that co-ordinates either design promotion or design support?
Not in the meaning of co-ordinated. We have a network which has been very much up and down in terms of how active it has been.

In the old days there was something they called the Scandinavia Design Council with meant that similar organisations met once a year. That sort of fell apart. The biggest single event was when we spent quite a few years trying to get our act together and a lot of money together and to be the organiser of what was the World Design Congress in 2005, where all the five Nordic countries were partners. We had 1,500 people from fifty two nations coming here and we had events in Oslo, Copenhagen and Gothenburg in Sweden.

The World Design Congress is a joint Congress of the three international bodies, Icsid, Icograda and the IFI. Every two years they each have their own Congress. Every sixth year they have a joint congress. We baptised it the World Design Congress. We applied for it. We got the sort of mini Olympic thing that you apply to have it, and when you win it you think why the hell did we win it? Because it's a job for four years and I was the unlucky one, being the President of the whole thing. Money was so hard; it was hell for four years.

It was an interesting exercise to have seventeen design related organisations from five countries to agree on doing it, to agree on the content, to agree on the theme and to agree on who is going to do what. That was an interesting one and of course by doing this, the network got tighter. But we have no activities that I could call coordinated.

Why is Norway involved with European Design Promotion, I know that you are the President of BEDA?
If I hadn't been there, my guess would be that the Norwegian Design Associations would either not know the name BEDA or they couldn't care less because they have more than enough on their own focus.

You're there and obviously the organisation you represent is founded by the Government and there is an implication therefore that the government sees this as being of value?
Certainly they think it's great that Norway (being almost the only one who is not a member of the EU) is actually the President of an EU related organisation.

Most of that is related to my background as an international animal. I've never done anything in my life where I didn't feel it was important to have my eyes beyond the borders of the little funny country with all the money. That was my initiative.

This organisation when I took over was very much a small, not very visible organisation, looking at its little agenda inside Norway and never really looked outside. The initiative was on a personal level. Most of the associations are so small. The biggest challenge we have in BEDA is for basically poor design associations to see why they should be a member.

What brought BEDA from forty years of barely having enough money to meet, to now being a policy advisor to the European Government in Brussels, has been the fact that people like myself and people with similar backgrounds and coming from organisations who could actually afford to have someone who did some work, because I'm not depending upon invoicing my hours.

Over these last five, six years, I think my type of organisation has increased their share in terms of membership in BEDA and now we are probably representing 40% of the members. That means that we have had more resources, we could travel more, we could have more meetings, we could do things and maybe we also have a different mindset because quite a few of my colleagues in the type of organisation that I represent have a business background and not a professional design background. That may be unfair but that seems to make a hell of a difference in that context.

William H. Walsh founded Kilkenny Design Workshops in Ireland. He was much influenced by The Plus Craft workshops in Fredrikstad; can you tell me something about that?
That was the famous glass blower, crafts company. They existed for many many years and they opened up their shops and their glass blowing to tourists. They made everything from cheap tourist things to really nice glass ware. They were part of a very blooming crafts business or activities that were running for quite a few of years. This is probably the reason why there are several very good active glass blowers in the Fredrikstad area which is an hour and half south of Oslo. It is a historic name that most of us have heard of and bought something from and it's now off the map.

BEDA is an association of associations. In general, architecture as such is excluded. If you take the United Kingdom for example the RIBA is not included. I was wondering is that a deliberate policy or is it just happenstance?
I don't know what kind of discussions they had in the late 1960's when they started BEDA in 1969. All the time the name has been designer. The only change is that we changed it for the 2005 Congress, where we took the strategic move and said that we have now for thirty five years represented the interests of the design profession.

We have now had affiliated members for three, four, five years who have been design centres, design councils and the like. We think not only should they be full members but there were some strong movements and people like Michael Thomson and myself, Isabel Roig in Barcelona, Severin Filek in Austria, a group of five to ten people who said; 'Should we continue for the next forty years and just meet for dinners and talk about designers and how lousy they are paid or should we try to do something more about it?'

Some of us came from organisations who work either confronting or rather working with Government. We succeeded with that and getting used to political lobbying. We had said that we are a European Organisation, but in fact it was only open for EU membership organised associations. Now it's a geographic Europe with Brussels the centre of the wheel. So why shouldn't we try to play a role on the political scene trying to make Brussels realise that design is an important tool.

When in the year 2000, the EU made the Lisbon Declaration which was their policy and huge focus, their policy on innovation. Realising that Asia was a threat, Europe has to wake up. We can't compete on price; we have to compete on being smarter, better and more creative.

They started to focus on and map what are the creative industries, and they were the fastest growing part of the economy and of course one of the many elements within the definition of the creative industries is design.

Architecture is there as well. Books and television are probably the biggest ones in terms of money but design is an emerging one. At the same time they spent huge amounts of money, were talking tens of billions of euros for programs to encourage European industry to become more innovative but there was not a word about design. So we said there is a big important thing missing in the whole thing. Through this they have changed the strategy to say that we are not forgetting that we have a bunch of designers with us and we are going to make sure that we don't forget that.

Also for the designers it would be great if we could get design higher up on the political agenda. We saw this huge discrepancy between the importance of design and the importance of designers from country to country. In some countries there was huge amount of money being used. In other countries they didn't exist.

Designers still do not exist as a registered profession so nobody knows how many there are. If you want to do lobbying against politics or bureaucrats the first two questions are: how many of you are there and how much do you mean to the economy? You can't get the answer because the answer doesn't exist unless you make an estimate which most countries do and the figures are so bad we don't even believe them ourselves.

Since you are not a doctor or engineer or architect or whatever, you don't exist as a statistical entity. Therefore nobody knows because you can't just count the number of schools and say okay we have so many graduates and times so much there must be 1,250, because half of them study elsewhere and they don't register anywhere when they come home.

If I get a Masters in the Royal College of Art and I come home, I might join the Norwegian Association of Industrial Designers but probably I wouldn't because they are so small they can't do anything anyway. So I have no idea how many designers there are in Norway. I know there are two hundred and fifty members but there must be several thousands who have an education, I don't know what they do, because there is no register anywhere.

I know there are 1,200 members of Graphil, which is the local graphics organisation. But they also have 50% who are illustrators, which in most countries are two different organisations.

Then you have the old architect discussion. I was there when Icsid launched the idea of merging the three, Icograda immediately ran away and IFI ran even further away because they never finished the discussion whether they are architects or designers. In some countries they think they belong more to the designers and other countries they see designers as 'a bunch of unsuccessful artists, but I'm actually an architect'. Unfortunately I don't know enough about it, but I hear all the arguments.

Appendix O

Full Text of Letter sent to Mary Coughlan from RIAI President Seán O'Laoire, relating to the 'chill winds' of the MacGill School Address.

< 28 July 2009
Mary Coughlan TD
Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise Trade & Employment
23 Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: MacGill Summer School
Dear Tánaiste
I am writing regarding our remarks, as reported in the Irish Times of 21st July of your address at the MacGill Summer School, where you listed architects as one of the professions that had yet to experience 'the chill winds of economic reality' and also included architects as those who were guilty of 'economic conceit'.

These inaccurate and unfounded remarks have caused grave distress and concern among architects and others associated with the profession, as you have probably seen from correspondence in the Irish Times and also correspondence sent to your office. It is difficult to understand how the numerous print media, radio and television, coverage of unemployment among architects have not been noticed by you or your officials. This is simply a matter of public record. Perhaps you might wish to ask one of your officials to spend a brief period of time with the RIAI, meeting the staff who are dealing with architects and architectural technicians who are suffering significant financial hardship. For information purposes I enclose a file on emails received to date on your speech.

The RIAI has always worked for the advancement of architecture and the improvement of quality in the built environment, in co-operation with Government Departments and Agencies, and does not engage in public debate simply to generate media coverage. In this case the strongest possible response was essential to convey the level of outrage and concern caused by your ill judged and poorly researched remarks.

Incomes in Architecture
It may well be that you consider architects to have profited from the high levels of construction in recent years and to have made sufficient reserves to carry them through this period of contraction. In 2008 the ACE (Architects Council of Europe) commissioned an independent Sectoral Survey of the Architectural Profession in Europe. This survey was conducted by Mirza and NACEY a highly respected UK research company. It was stated that the data for Ireland was within an 8% range of accuracy. The following table shows average earnings for architects in Ireland in 2007 and as you will see the average for all was €65,000.

EARNINGS
Average Earnings €'s
Sole Principals 75,000
Partners/Directors 80,000
Private Practice Salaried 60,000
Other Private 72,500
Local Authority/Government 70,000
Other Public 60,000
ALL 65,000

This was at a time of unprecedented activity in construction and where Irish architects were the most productive in the EU. Some architects would have had above the average earnings but also, below such levels. Many architects would be perfectly happy to earn an average of €65,000 this year. As you can see that these are not incomes which would generate reserves to carry anybody through difficult times. This survey was entirely consistent with other surveys which have always indicated that professionals in the construction industry are the lowest earnings of professionals generally, and among construction professionals, architects are at the lower end of the scale.

I hope you might agree that that your remarks were inaccurate and I would hope that you might, in the spirit of co-operation which we will all need to get through these very difficult times, correct these remarks at an appropriate time.

The Competition Authority
The remarks also appear to include architects as a grouping in which there are significant changes required in the context of the Competition Authority's various reports on the professions. I would have thought, at the very least, your officials might have read the Competition Authority Report on Architects which was clear on the matter. The executive summary stated:

'the Competition Authority has only a small number of concerns about how the architectural profession operates in Ireland. Unlike some of the professions reviewed by the Competition Authority architects are not restricted by layers of unjustified, disproportionate restrictions on competition. Competition seems to be working well for consumers of architectural services and the economy as a whole. Where the Competition Authority has identified unnecessary or disproportionate rules or restrictions, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) has been proactive in addressing the Authority's concerns'.

In order to clarify the matter further I have included a detailed analysis of the Competition Authority's observations and the present state of these various recommendations.

Enterprise Ireland
Your remarks regarding 'economic conceit' could also have unfortunate consequences for the work being carried out by Enterprise Ireland to promote the export of services by Irish architects which will be an important element in the recovery of this Country. Enterprise Ireland has been proactive in working with the RIAI and architects on developing these markets to generate employment will be available for architects in Ireland so that they can make a contribution to the tax base rather than being on Social Welfare at a consequent cost to the Exchequer. Your remarks about 'economic conceit' are inappropriate and unhelpful in the context of this important and significant work by Enterprise Ireland.

Fee Reduction
In trying to make some sense of your remarks it did appear to the RIAI that you may have been referring to the 8% reduction introduced under the Emergency Provisions in recent legislation. Most of the professions referred to in the legislation have enjoyed the benefit of agreed terms between themselves and various Government Departments, for a fixed service on a short term basis, and not on individual competitive fee bidding or tendering. Construction Consultants since 1987 have bid for work on a competitive basis unlike many other professions. In recent years these provisions have been revised to comply with EU procurement measures and the Department of Finance has implemented a series of stringent procedures for competitive bidding for construction and architectural services.

In this context there are some reasons why construction consultants such as architects, engineers and quantity surveyors have resisted, to some degree, these proposals. As I have said, in the first instance, these services were procured under competitive basis and more recently on a lump sum basis. Having competed at a bare subsistence or below cost level it is very difficult to make further cuts. The second area of difficulty is that where services have been procured on a competitive basis, on a percentage of construction cost, construction costs are now 30% lower than projected costs with a consequent result that, where a project proceeds to construction stage the consultants may have now income whatsoever to actually provide a service during the construction and contract administration phase; therefore the cut being requested is in effect 8% of a zero income.
Despite these reservations the professional construction bodies, including engineers and quantity surveyors, have had recent useful discussions with the Department of Finance with a view to regularising the system, risk evaluation and achieving an appropriate outcome, because again everybody realises the need for change in our present economic difficulties.

Value for Money and the Smart Economy
Colm McCarthy in his public comments on the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes has observed that the management structure of the State has become 'cluttered'.

If you would like to see an example of 'clutter' in State governance and management you need look no further than our present planning, regulatory and procurement systems. I attach a report on delivering a more effective planning service which has been submitted as part of the CIC (Construction Industry Council) submission to Government on alternative funding methods for construction. If your Department is seriously interested in the 'Smart Economy', and moving forward with an enterprise based culture the RIAI would welcome the opportunity to discuss the range of reforms that could be implemented in order to deliver a more effective planning and procurement system and would providing value for money for the State and reducing cost for all parties.

Planning for the Future

I am sure you are aware of the Submission to Government by the Construction Industry Council with a vision to save 70,000 jobs over the next three years, maintain highly skilled resources in Ireland and deliver a necessary structure and excellent value for money for the public benefit, with minimum additional State borrowings.

The energy, expertise and enthusiasm in the architectural profession needs to be harnessed in order to plan for the smart economy, the green economy and the economic recovery of this nation.

The RIAI has been working with a number of interested parties on the branding of Irish architecture, design and construction, similar to the long established 'Dutch Design' brand. Irish architecture has a substantial international reputation with, for example, Grafton Architects being awarded the first World Prize for Architecture, success by Irish practices in major international competitions and general media coverage. This level of success should be used creatively both in the Smart Economy but also in internationally traded services.

I hope this has given you some background and understanding of the genuine anger, hurt and distress caused by your remarks. If you want to seriously engage in how to make Ireland more competitive and how the architectural profession can genuinely assist, the RIAI's door is open.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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Seán O'Laoire B.Arch.M.Arch.in UD PRIAI
President RIAI

31 Jul 2009