RIBA

Memorandum

The RIBA's monthly Future Trends Survey was launched in January 2009 to monitor business and employment trends affecting the architects' profession. Participants give monthly predictions for overall workload and staffing levels over the next three months, and are also asked about their workload predictions in key sectors: private housing, commercial, community and public sector. Practices are also asked on a quarterly basis about their current workload and staffing levels. The Survey is carried out by the RIBA in partnership with the Fees Bureau. Results of the Survey, including a full graphical analysis, are published each month on www.architecture.com.

The following is a summary analysis of the results from the March 2011 Survey returns.

Future workload (March 2011)

How do you expect the architectural workload in the organisation you work in or own to change over the next three months

Overall

Expect	%
Decrease	19
Stay the same	54
Increase	27
TOTAL	100
Balance	+8

(The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting more work and those expecting less.)

There has been little change in the overall RIBA Future Trends Workload Index this month, which stands at +8 in March 2011, representing a marginal increase from +7 in February 2011.

Evidence of a north-south divide in confidence levels about future workloads continues to grow, with practices in London (balance figure +16) and the South East (+23) now significantly more confident about their work prospects than those in the North of England (-15), Northern Ireland (-75) and Scotland (-25).

The following graph plots the RIBA Future Workload Index over time:

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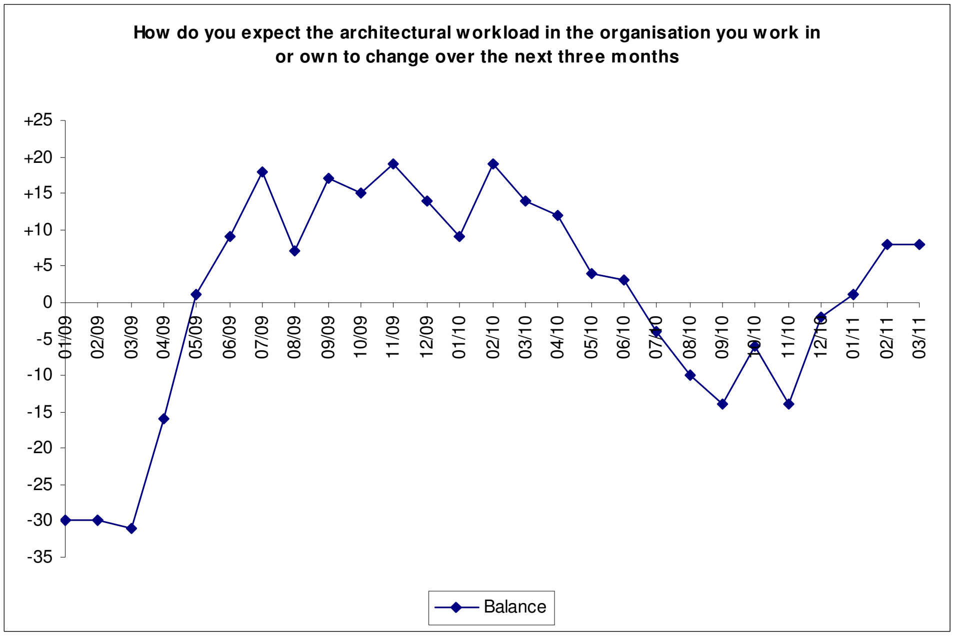

The private housing sector forecast remains the most positive of our sector forecasts, and has increased slightly this month, up to +11 in March 2011 from +9 in February 2011. Unsurprisingly the public sector remains the sector with the weakest confidence levels (balance figure -18).

The commercial sector forecast remains in positive territory at +3, but we have not yet seen a trend of sustained increases in this index of the type which would indicate significant new momentum in the market for the procurement of commercial buildings. The community/third sector forecast remains in negative territory (balance figure -4), but is on an upward trajectory.

The following graph tracks the sector predictions in the RIBA Future Trends Survey over time:

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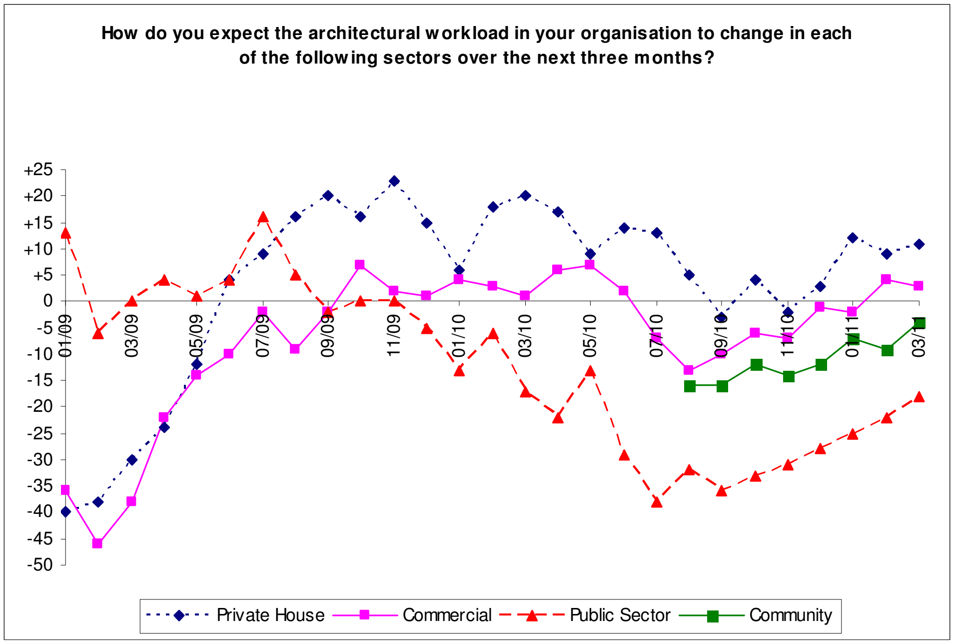

Future staffing levels (March 2011)

How do you think the number of permanent architectural staff employed in your organisation will change over the next three months?

Permanent Staff	%
Decrease	12
Stay the same	80
Increase	8
TOTAL	100
Balance	-4

(The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting to employ more permanent staff in the next three months and those expecting to employ fewer.)

The RIBA Future Trends Staffing Index for March 2011 is -4, an increase from the February 2011 figure of -8. This illustrates that overall confidence levels are still generally not sufficient to make practices feel comfortable about increasing their staffing levels. Large practices in particular (balance figure -14) remain cautious about taking on additional permanent staff. When asked about the prospects of employing more temporary staff our practices are similarly wary, returning a balance figure of -2.

Approximately a quarter of our respondents continue to report that they have personally been under-employed in the last month.

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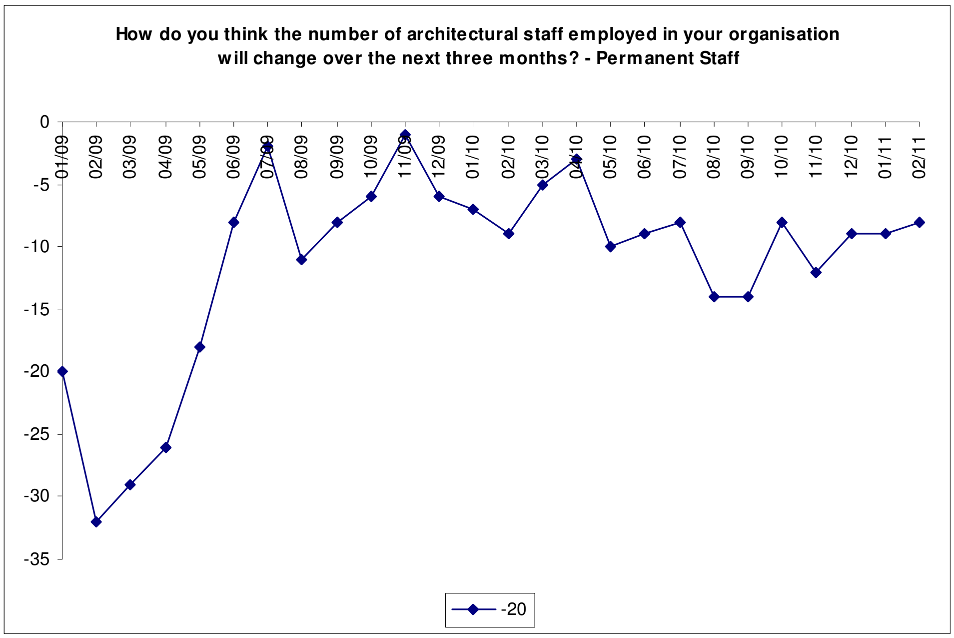
The following graph plots the RIBA Future Trends Staffing Index over time:



There appears to be widespread consensus that the balance of work for architects is likely to swing somewhat towards refurbishment and conversion and away from new build over the next few years. Amongst our practices, projects involving work to existing buildings currently represent 60% of overall workload.

A number of contributors have commented this month that they are increasingly adapting their business models to encompass a broader range of services, including for example community engagement, acting as expert consultants and undertaking research projects. These slightly more intangible types of services are not really addressed in our current survey methodology, and we will be giving thought as to how such diversification might be included in the survey. Anecdotal evidence received this month suggests continuing resilience in high-end, private residential work, but intense competition and pressure on fees in the public sector housing market.

The RIBA Future Trends Survey is based on a representative sample of the range of different practice sizes and geographical locations which enables analysis of the trends in sectors, size groups and by nation and region. A total of 233 practices took part in the Survey in March 2011. The development of a larger database of respondents will increase the statistical accuracy of the survey, and if your practice would like to participate in future months, please contact the RIBA Practice Department on 020 7307 3749 or email practice@inst.riba.org. The survey takes approximately five minutes to complete each month, and all returns are independently processed in strict confidence by our partners the Fees Bureau.