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## **In Memoriam: Nicholas Terry 1947-2008.**

A modest but powerful leader who was cut off in his prime.

Nick Terry, recently chairman of BDP, died on November 30th 2008 after a 14 month battle with cancer. He was due to address the RIBA International Conference in Paris in October 2007 on a subject dear to his heart, the Building Information Model as a route for architects to regain control of design, when he was struck down with the first symptoms.

Nicholas John Terry was born in 1947 in Nottingham and first joined BDP from the University of Bath at its Manchester office in 1972, together with his architect wife Dorothy. They both worked on the Europa Nostra medal winning Milburngate Centre, Durham and Nick on the unrealised conversion of Albert Dock, Liverpool, into a Polytechnic. In 1975, frustrated by the travails of the UK economy, Nick and Dorothy flew to Vancouver and 'condensed 12 years experience into the next three', as he saw it. He worked for Arthur Erickson, 'the most talented architect I ever worked with', on the famous Vancouver courts building and gained a lifelong enthusiasm for North American architecture and working methods, not to mention its landscape. He joined the Canadian institute.

Returning to the UK in 1978, he worked for John S Bonnington on Middle East work for two years whilst building his own house in Thriplow, Hertfordshire. He then returned mentally to North America by becoming Vice President for Design and Managing Director of Heery International Architects and Engineers in London. George Heery was an Atlanta-based architect who thought that architects should be builders, or if not then certainly project managers. Nick did nine years with Heery, working on commercial and corporate projects across Europe and polishing his understanding of clients and construction management.

He was then lured back to BDP in 1989 by Bill Jack to join the burgeoning London Office and lead commercial work. That was just before the crash of 1990-93, but Nick survived where many others did not because of his obvious talent and flexibility. He became central to the major National Lottery projects for the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Opera House. Nick chaired the joint venture company Dixon Jones BDP which took the Opera, won back in 1983, through to triumphant completion in 1999. The Albert Hall, a second national treasure, was a multi-discipline triumph for BDP. In parallel Nick used his North American skills to lead Cribbs Causeway mall in Bristol for Prudential, Niketown at Oxford Circus and the Jubilee Place

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retail podium at Canary Wharf. Nick became an equity partner of BDP in 1995 and chairman of the practice for two terms from 2002 to 2006. From 2006 until his illness struck he was executive chairman of BDP's southern region.

Throughout his career, Nick worked to achieve seamless collaboration between designers and with constructors. As the Building Information Model concept began to emerge, Nick saw the potential to facilitate good practice and pushed it at BDP and internationally. He became the UK chairman of the impossibly-named International Alliance for Interoperability (IAI) now thankfully called BuildingSmart. The IAI develops the conventions which enable software on any design platform to exchange information. Car and aircraft design are both done on multi-dimensional CAD models but they use proprietary platforms which the leader imposes on all the suppliers. Construction could not work that way, Nick believed, and the Interoperability campaign bore fruit outside the UK. Singapore now provides online planning and building regulation approvals to users, as does Norway. The US General Services Administration insists on all government building being done on Interoperable BIM as it retains open competition and makes their buildings so much easier to manage. Nick was trying to open EU and UK government and industry eyes to all this when he was taken. He had just been appointed to chair the British Standards Institute construction sector, to rebuild the standards concept for the UK to exploit the new tools.

Nick was tall, slender and charming, with a taste for bright ties and dark suits. He was a global citizen and a great persuader. He managed never to work on weekends, even at the cost of working 16 hour days in the week. He will be sorely missed by many, but most of all by Dorothy and daughter Alex. Whom the gods love....

Richard Saxon CBE

*Nick's predecessor as chair of BDP.*

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