

IBP AWARDS ENTRY 2018 ELLA JESSEL, ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL | NEW JOURNALIST

Before joining the AJ in May, I had written little about architecture and design, let alone the arcane worlds of procurement, architectural education or the main professional bodies.

From the start I threw myself into the role, making contacts quickly and embedding myself in the industry. During my first few months at the AJ I went to the BCO Conference in Berlin, visited scores of practices and developers, and even joined past RIBA president Owen Luder (90) at an Arsenal game.

In this time I have written more than 230 stories, across a range of topics and in a variety of styles from hard news to comment pieces and analytical reports based on exclusive data. These stories have had nearly 190,000 page views and I became the most-read author on the AJ website in June.

I'm keen to get to the heart of the story and determined to uncover the truth, whatever the obstacles. Among the biggest stories I've worked on are:

[Architecture 'still up its own backside' says U+I chief Richard Upton](#)

It may be a hard message for our readers to hear, but any honest insight from a developer client is gold dust for architects.

Richard Upton was a vocal live wire and, in this piece, I was trying to capture his personality while spelling out this very serious lesson for the profession. His highly contentious thoughts clearly resonated – the article was read by more than 5,000 people.

[Student survey: Only the rich need apply to study architecture](#)

I helped put together the survey – learning from how the AJ had previously approached architectural education – and then unpicked the reams of data we received.

As I trawled through the responses it became clear how the traditional route into the profession was becoming increasingly expensive and out of reach for many.

I worked with the art team to pull together a comprehensive and comprehensible feature which I hoped would become a genuinely useful 'tool' for anyone wanting to enter the profession. The story racked up a huge 7,721 page views.

[Architects break silence on Grenfell](#)

One of the first tasks given to me at the AJ was to lead on the magazine's coverage of the Grenfell disaster and the subsequent inquiry.

Until this piece, which took hours of work contacting and persuading leading industry voices to finally speak out, the profession had remained worryingly silent on Grenfell.

The issues surrounding the tragedy are highly technical, however I have now written around 30 stories on the subject. This story alone was seen by more than 5,400 readers.

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