

'One-off opportunity' to put young practices on the map

The government must grasp the "one-off opportunity" to make the London 2012 Olympics a launchpad for the next generation of architects, a group of young architects told Olympics minister Tessa Jowell this week.

Just a week after *BD* revealed calls for young architects to be given a central role by the master-planners of London's successful bid, the RIBA's Young Practitioners Panel has made an impassioned plea in an open letter to

figures such as Jowell and London mayor Ken Livingstone.

The letter, supported by RIBA president-elect Jack Pringle, called for some competitions to be "tailored" to smaller firms run by principals qualifying within the past five years. More modest projects could also be earmarked for such firms, it suggested, and a lack of experience could be overcome through mentoring partnerships with more established practices.

See Letters, page 8.

Now let the young compete in 2012

An open letter to the RIBA, Ken Livingstone, Tessa Jowell, London 2012 Committee, Cabe and the Architecture Foundation from Pascale Scheurer, chair, and on behalf, of the RIBA Young Practitioners Panel

The Olympics are a fantastic opportunity for architecture. The benefits to young athletes were specifically mentioned in the bid — but what about the emerging generation of young architects?

As young architects and fledgling practices, we ask for your support to ensure that we get at least some crumbs of the £2 bil-



Will younger practices get a chance to shine at London Olympics?

lion pie of built work that will happen over the next seven years.

A number of competitions and tendering procedures should be tailored for individuals and architecture firms with, say, fewer than five staff and where the principals are within five years of qualifying. Some smaller projects could be earmarked for us (bus

shelters, shops, small parks, etc) or larger projects split between several practices in a co-ordinated way, such as accommodation for officials and athletes. Our lack of experience can be shored up through mentoring partnerships with established firms and through the input of the RIBA and Cabe.

Young architects are a fabulous resource of innovation. Our recent academic training has given many of us a deep understanding of and commitment to sustainability, and we are well placed to understand the needs of young athletes and visitors.

The Olympics represent a one-off opportunity to launch the next generation of architects — a “lasting legacy” to the profession as well as to the games and to London — but we need your support to make it a reality.