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Autodesk Responds to Open Letter on Revit

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Autodesk pens letter on Revit in response to British group—offers a detailed explanation of its development logic, promises a commitment to listening.

Autodesk has **promptly responded** to the **open letter on Revit**, initiated by British design firms, and publicized on Monday earlier this week.

On July 27, a group of global and elite British design firms, including Zaha Hadid Architects, Grimshaw, and Rogers, Stirk, Harbour + Partners, and nearly two dozen others, sent a **public letter** to Autodesk CEO Andrew Anagnost asking essentially for more attention in the development of Revit for architecture practices working at the leading edge of design, while simultaneously committing to fairer and more stabilized pricing.

Autodesk's Response

Autodesk's response to the media was immediate in the opening hours of the letter, saying, "We are aware of the open letter from several design firms addressed to Autodesk. We take their feedback seriously and are currently reviewing its contents to inform our response and address their concerns."



Autodesk responds to Open Letter on Revit.

Now at the end of the week, Autodesk has offered an open letter back to the customers who wrote the open letter and posted this on its corporate website. It opens with a thank you and notes, "you identified issues that we must take to heart, and which highlighted where we have fallen short."

Autodesk admits that it has underinvested in architectural modeling functionality but explains that like every company with finite resources they have made investments in recent years that focused attention on engineering and construction sides of Revit with the aim of maximizing the value for the entire AEC stakeholder chain.

"Our goal with Revit has always been to maximize the value it brings to the AEC market, and to do that we must enable all major stakeholders to participate in the BIM process." In order to focus on engineering and fabrication workflows on the build side, the result was "a slowdown in development on core architectural modeling capabilities."

More Detailed Responses

As we noted in our report on the open letter, there were largely three major areas that were of pressing concerns that drove the letter's creation: (a) lack of development effort in Revit for architecture, (b) lack of stable pricing and licensing pathways, (c) a cultural reorientation inside Autodesk, a la, Satya Nadella's Microsoft transformation.

Autodesk's open letter back largely addresses each of these three areas at least once in various sections of the letter. As for Nadella's statements about "obsessing about our customers"? That spirit of empathy is best left to be judged by Autodesk's customers behind the letter. The letter today does say: "Engaging in open dialogue with customers remains fundamental to how we plot our path forward."

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As for the second item above, on licensing? The letter emphasizes how subscription provides a whole "new set of customers access to their software, without requiring large upfront investments"—a clear benefit of how licensing models do work in general. It also mentions trade-in offers. But it never mentions the larger issue of accelerated increasing costs nor the new named-user licensing model—both the crux of the matter for those behind the letter.

On the first item about Revit development itself, about the features that the group of British architects' mention in their letter, Autodesk says "Our goal with Revit has always been to maximize the value it brings to the AEC market, and to do that we must enable all major stakeholders to participate in the BIM process. In pursuit of this goal, we increased our product development to better serve engineering and construction customers."

The company acknowledges in essence that their development focus with Revit has been in prior years has been on engineering and construction sides of the AEC industry and "at the end of last year we increased our investment and resources for architectural capabilities."

To read Autodesk's complete response [go here](#).

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On the same day, Autodesk published its response to their customers who wrote an open letter on Revit, the British group behind the first letter sent out a press notice to media announcing that their original letter provoked an international response by AEC firms around the world and that 18 additional practices wished to add their names to the original letter. The group also further included 10 more practices that did not sign but signaled their support.

The additional 18 firms including a further group of elite marquee design practices, including US-based Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (BCJ), well-known for their design of Bill Gates's estate, Pixar's corporate headquarters and for Apple Stores around the world, among other award-winning architecture. The list of 18 firms are:

- BC Architects – South Africa
- Cooper Carry – United States
- Portman Architects – United States
- Atelier Tissot – France
- CGL – United Kingdom
- Shepheard Epstein Hunter – United Kingdom
- Vibes – Netherlands
- SAOTA – South Africa
- MIZA – Canada
- Idesign-solutions – United States
- Studio 3 Architecture – United States
- Goody Clancy – United States
- Oslo works – Norway
- SGA – United States
- PDP London – United Kingdom
- Bohlin Cywinski Jackson – United States
- Workshop Collaborative – United States
- Mochly-Eldar Architects – Israel

From the press release it notes:

About the Group

The original group of 17 firms (now 35 firms), co-ordinated by industry veteran and IT consultant Iain Godwin, created the open letter as price increases of Autodesk's flagship BIM tool, Revit, had dramatically increased the cost of ownership. This was combined with a fundamental lack of development of the software which suffers a lack of scalability and product performance.

Other issues raised included: The complex and ever-changing license models, lack of commitment to open standards for data exchange, a loss of trust, and a lack of communication on a roadmap for the next generation architecture tools.

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