



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Professor Ian Hargreaves
Intellectual Property Office
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

17th February 2011

Dear Professor Hargreaves,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group regarding the ongoing review you are conducting into how the intellectual property system can better drive growth and innovation.

As a background to the industry, UK furniture manufacturing contributes £8.3 billion to the country's GDP, which equates to almost 2% of manufacturing output, and employs 112,000 people within 8,360 companies. The industry has a high proportion of micro and small to medium size businesses.

The Group is concerned there is a disparity at present between the protection given to copyright creators and unregistered design right owners, for instance furniture designers. UK businesses spend more than £23bn on design investment and we agree with Anti-Copying in Design (ACID) that there needs to be a clearer Intellectual Property (IP) policy to support the significant role of design.

We support the calls from ACID to:

- ensure that design is included in future National IP Policy
- bringing design right infringement in line with copyright infringement (e.g. the penalties available in a Magistrates Court for copyright infringement are up to £50,000 and for design infringement £5,000)
- encouraging declared IP respect within Corporate Social Responsibility
- reducing the cost and complexity for SMEs of enforcing intellectual property rights within the UK and Internationally.

The design rights of many small furniture designers are of significant value to our economy. The Group supports the submission by ACID to the review and we hope the report concludes that the Government needs to ensure design rights infringement are firmly placed on an equal footing with copyright infringement.



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Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. McPartland', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephen McPartland MP
Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group

cc Baroness Wilcox