

RIAI

The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland is the national body for the promotion, regulation and support of architecture in Ireland.

The RIAI engages with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public to promote the value of quality and design in architecture: to deliver attractive and sustainable built environments; to enrich our distinctive culture and heritage; to contribute to the competitiveness of our economy; and to improve quality of life for the people of Ireland, today and for generations to come.

The RIAI is designated as the competent authority for architecture in Ireland under EU Directive 2005/36/EC. As official registration body under the Building Control Act 2007, the RIAI is committed to discharge its obligations for administration of the Register of Architects in Ireland.

The RIAI seeks to provide architects with the professional training, education and research support required to consolidate the role of the RIAI - and the architecture profession generally - as champions of exemplary practice in architecture and urbanism; and to provide high quality professional services, public education, outreach programmes, and consumer protection to clients, end-users and the public.

Foreword+

The 2010-2013 Action Plan sets out the RIAI's policy objectives and actions for the promotion, regulation and support of Architecture in Ireland.

For many years, the RIAI - through its director John Graby, its presidents, executive, council, committees and membership - has pursued many of this plan's objectives to deliver exemplary practice in architecture and urbanism, and provide high-quality professional services, and consumer protection, to clients, end-users and the public.

The Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 - and designation of the RIAI as the State's registration body for architects - is official recognition of the importance of architecture in Ireland today; to deliver attractive and sustainable built environments; to enrich our distinctive culture and heritage; to contribute to the competitiveness of our economy; and to improve people's quality of life, now and for generations to come.

The 2010-2013 Action Plan is based on an inspired initiative by my predecessor Sean O'Laoire to use the time now available to architects to undertake a strategic review of the profession, and to examine the place of architecture - and the practice of architecture - in the context of the many crises facing not only architects, but Ireland as a whole. I wish to record my appreciation to all who contributed to its preparation.

The strategic review will be judged by our success in delivering on the policies set out in this Action Plan. I look forward to working with central and local government, state authorities, the professions, industry, clients, the public - and most of all architects - to ensure survival, renewal and recovery of the profession as champion of the importance of quality and design in architecture to the advancement of Ireland's economic, social and environmental policy objectives.

Paul Keogh
PRIAI (2010 - 2011)

Introduction +

In January 2009 the RIAI council adopted a resolution to undertake a strategic review of the architecture profession in Ireland.

The review encompassed a wide-ranging appraisal of the RIAI - and the profession as a whole - to review its strengths and weaknesses at this time of extraordinary economic, social and environmental uncertainty. The review also set out to assess the challenges and scenarios for the future of architecture - and the practice of architecture - in Ireland presented by:

- Contraction in the construction industry and the market for architectural services;
- Ireland's medium to long-term economic, social and environmental forecasts;
- Publication of the Government Policy on Architecture;
- Implementation of the Building Control Act and the Register of Architects.

Over a period of twelve months, architects - including private and public sector salaried architects, and architectural technologists - took part in nationwide seminars to discuss current issues, and define a range of objectives and actions for survival, renewal and recovery. Further meetings were held with targeted government and public officials, clients, stakeholders and RIAI committee members.

If anything came from the review process, it was the sense that while architects are currently in a very difficult place, they are positive in their wish to contribute to the wider debate about paths to national recovery, and how they might bring a unique perspective to that discussion.

There was a consensus that less work should not mean less analysis and fewer ideas. Rather the opposite: that the current recession offered a time for reflection on the achievements and failures of the past decade, and how this reflection could feed into positive initiatives for the future.

There were strong ideas on how Government could stimulate capital investment and employment, and how, in turn, architecture and urban design could contribute positive economic, social and environmental advantages to the 'Smart Economy' policy framework.

While central themes recur, new objectives such as research and the export of services came into focus. And the review brought out criticisms of how architects had relinquished areas of skill and expertise to other sectors. There was concern for the impact of a thoughtless lowest-price fee culture on quality and design, and a sense that architects needed to be pro-active in developing new business models and a more rounded public profile.

On the positive side, support for the new Government Policy on Architecture and creation of the Register of Architects was unanimous, and there was strong emphasis on the challenges presented by Ireland's demographic projections and the contribution architects could make to the sustainability challenge.

Achievement of the status as official body for administration of the Register of Architects was seen to reflect a strong commitment in the RIAI over many years - through its successive presidents, councils, committees and members, together with the director and executive - to the pursuit of many of the review's objectives.

In summary, the strategic review examined the capacity of the profession to adapt to the changed landscape in which architects will practice in the foreseeable future; it set out a range of objectives and actions for survival, renewal and recovery, and to ensure that the RIAI emerges from the current recession in a stronger and better position to fulfil its role as the national body for the promotion, regulation and support of Architecture in Ireland.

I wish to record my appreciation to all who contributed to the strategic review, and I hope that the resulting Action Plan 2010-2013 provides a consolidated road map for the Institute's mission as it goes forward into a new landscape of challenge, accountability and opportunity.

Beir Bua is Beannacht

Seán Ó Laoire
PRIAI (2008 - 2009)

1

Objective+

Promote the value of quality and design in architecture to the advancement of Ireland's economic, social and environmental policy objectives, and the delivery of a high-quality built environment.

Actions+

Promote recognition of the economic, social and environmental value of quality and design in architecture;

Promote and publicise the quality of contemporary Irish architecture and the achievements of Irish architects at home and abroad;

Promote RIAI members' initiatives to highlight the skills and expertise of the architect, and the value of quality and design in architecture;

Promote, commission and publish evidence-based research on quality in architecture, construction, urban design and the built environment;

Promote and support awards, exhibitions and other initiatives to promote the value of quality and design in architecture and the built environment;

Promote and support the international branding of Irish architecture, and the export of Irish architectural expertise and architectural education.

2

Objective+

Promote the importance of first-class infrastructure and a high-quality built environment to the delivery of Ireland's 'Smart Economy' framework, and its economic, social and environmental objectives.

Actions+

Engage with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public to identify existing infrastructural deficits - in education, health, housing, arts, culture, leisure and urban planning;

Promote recognition of the planning, infrastructure and urban design implications of Ireland's medium to long-term demographic projections;

Promote recognition of the economic, social and environmental value of investment in well-designed and well-built infrastructure, including sustainable urban development;

Promote recognition of the long term economic, social and environmental costs of poor quality in architecture, construction and urban planning;

Engage with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public to advance improved procurement and development models, and new proposals for funding critical infrastructure;

Highlight identified inefficiencies and changes required to effect improvements in planning and legislation, such as construction contracts, building control, planning, procurement and property conveyancing.

3

Objective+

Champion the theory and practice of Sustainable Development; to combat climate change and to improve quality of life for the people of Ireland, today and for generations to come.

Actions+

Promote the RIAI, and the architecture profession generally, as champions of best practice in the theory and practice of sustainable development and urbanism;

Engage with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public to promote the principles of sustainable development in planning, urban design, heritage conservation, and public procurement;

Promote the theory and practice of sustainable development in RIAI awards, publications and research initiatives;

Establish new RIAI CPD programmes and accreditation in the theory and practice of sustainable development and urbanism;

Advance RIAI's engagement with the schools of architecture on expanding curricula in the theory and practice of sustainable development and urbanism;

Extend the RIAI's engagement with Sustainable Energy Ireland in promoting initiatives in the theory and practice of sustainable development and urbanism.

4

Objective+

Establish the RIAI structures and programmes required to support the objectives and actions contained in the Government Policy on Architecture 2009 - 2015.

Actions+

Review the Government Policy on Architecture, and establish structures and programmes to implement its RIAI-specific objectives and actions;

Advance RIAI-specific initiatives to promote the Government Policy on Architecture's objective of delivering quality in the built environment, including urban design, planning, heritage and green procurement;

Engage the RIAI council, committees and membership in implementation of RIAI-specific actions in the Government Policy on Architecture;

Promote, support and publicise the position and function of the architect in the public sector; in central and local government and in the semi-state sector;

Liaise with government on developing initiatives to utilise architects, architectural graduates and architectural technologists in social employment schemes to further the objectives and actions in the Government Policy on Architecture, and other national policy objectives;

Liaise with government, industry, local authorities, educational bodies, the Arts Council, the Architectural Association of Ireland, the Irish Architecture Foundation, the Irish Architectural Archive and others in advancing the objectives and actions set out in the Government Policy on Architecture.

5

Objective+

Engage with government, the professions, industry, and the public to effect improvements in the planning system, and to promote sustainable, and design-led, planning in Ireland.

Actions+

Highlight the need to advance plans to provide the spatial and urban frameworks required for Ireland's medium to long-term demographic projections;

Continue the RIAI's engagement with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public on identified inefficiencies in the planning system, and actions to effect improvements;

Engage with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public to highlight the value of quality in planning and urban design, and actions to effect improvements;

Engage with government, local authorities, planning professions and the Urban Forum to promote implementation of the Government Policy on Architecture in city and county development plans;

Engage with the planning professions and the Urban Forum to develop joint CPD programmes in sustainable and design-led planning for architects and planners;

Engage with the planning professions and the Urban Forum to develop joint CPD programmes in sustainable and design-led planning for government, industry and local authority officials.

6

Objective+

Advance implementation of the RIAI structures required to administer the Register of Architects under the 2007 Building Control Act and relevant EU directives.

Actions+

Engage with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public on the implications of the 2007 Building Control Act and establishment of the Register of Architects;

Continue liaison with RIAI members, registrants and non-registered practitioners on the implications of the 2007 Building Control Act and establishment of the Register of Architects;

Review RIAI governance and operational structures to ensure implementation of the Act's RIAI-specific duties, and to provide enhanced consumer protection to clients, end-users and the public;

Continue the RIAI's engagement with government, the European Commission, national and international professional bodies and the public on the implications of the Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC, the Services Directive 2006/123/EC and other relevant EU issues;

Continue RIAI's public awareness campaign on the implications of the 2007 Building Control Act and establishment of the Register of Architects;

Continue to monitor illegal use of the title 'Architect' to provide consumer protection to clients, end-users and the public.

7

Objective+

Promote best practice in the procurement of architectural services; to deliver quality, value and risk management for commissioning bodies, and to enable practices of all scales participate effectively in the public procurement process.

Actions+

Engage with government, the professions, industry and public bodies to promote recognition of identified inefficiencies, and actions required to effect improvements, in the procurement of architectural services;

Engage with government, the professions, industry and public bodies to develop procurement protocols that prioritise quality and design in architecture, and the importance of whole-life versus lowest-price tendering;

Promote the value of the architectural competition system, to enable firms of all scales - including smaller and emerging practices - participate effectively in the public procurement process;

Develop codes of practice and public tender templates focused on quality, value and risk management, and the elimination of discriminatory criteria in the public procurement process;

Develop CPD programmes on job costing and fee tendering to enable architects implement improved risk management practices when participating in the public procurement process;

Engage with international professional organisations on research and development of best practice procurement models for the commissioning of architectural services.

8

Objective+

Review RIAI governance and administrative structures to achieve operational improvements, and to provide consumer protection and high-quality services to architects, clients, end-users and the public.

Actions+

Review the composition, election and functions of the RIAI council, and implement measures to effect improvements;

Review measures to achieve broader membership engagement in RIAI affairs, and communications between council, committees, executive and membership;

Review existing committees' terms of reference and membership, and the scope for new committees in key economic, social and environment sectors;

Engage the RIAI council, committees and membership in implementation of the RIAI Strategic Review's objectives and actions;

Review RIAI governance and administrative structures to provide extended support services to architects, clients, and the general public;

Review the RIAI's financial framework, and implement actions to consolidate the institute's medium to long-term finances, including projects to generate new sources of income.

9

Objective+

Provide architects - including private and public sector salaried architects, and architectural technologists - with the professional training, education and research support required to deliver best practice and high-quality services to clients, end-users and the public.

Actions+

Promote CPD Engage to ensure that all members meet current RIAI Code of Professional Conduct obligations;

Promote the RIAI Good Practice Guide, and develop an RIAI quality assurance standard for the practice of architecture;

Expand RIAI CPD programmes that provide architects and architectural technologists - including employees in private practice and the public service - with the professional education, training and research supports required to deliver best practice;

Expand RIAI CPD programmes that provide architects and architectural technologists with the skills and training required to practice as viable business entities and to develop new business models for today's economy;

Extend engagement with the schools of architecture to expand programmes that will equip architects with the education and training to deliver high quality professional services, practice as viable business entities, and develop new business models;

Promote, develop and support the role of the RIAI architectural technologist in the practice of architecture, and set up mechanisms to establish the RIAI as the competent authority for architectural technology in Ireland.

10

Objective+

Promote the need for evidence-based research in architecture, conservation, construction, urban design and the built environment - including green enterprise - and identify key research objectives relevant to architectural practice and consumer protection.

Actions+

Engage with government, the professions, industry and third level educational institutions on developing an agenda for research in architecture, construction, conservation, urban design and the built environment;

Promote the RIAI as a recognised industry and professional research resource, with the capability to commission and publish research relevant to architectural practice and consumer protection;

Identify sources of funding in government, industry and philanthropic trusts to support and publish RIAI commissioned research;

Identify international research organisations, methodologies and research findings as models for an Irish research agenda;

Promote research on the need for a national physical asset register which would identify and evaluate all property in state, state agency and local government ownership;

Establish architectural research prizes in the RIAI awards, and RIAI promoted schools of architecture scholarships.

11

Objective+

Expand the RIAI's education and outreach programmes to achieve a wider social, cultural, political and public awareness - and appreciation - of architecture and of environmental issues.

Actions+

Expand existing RIAI public information and education programmes in architecture, conservation, urban design, construction and the built environment;

Develop existing initiatives and forge new collaborations, such as Simon Community, Irish Architecture Foundation, Architectural Association of Ireland, the Urban Forum, and The Campaign for the Arts;

Continue and expand RIAI participation in key state and local authority bodies, such as county enterprise boards, joint government committees, local government, etc;

Continue and expand RIAI engagement with public, professional and voluntary bodies in key infrastructure areas, such as education, health, housing, and planning;

Engage with the European Commission and other international bodies and professional organisations on joint collaboration and research programmes;

Promote 8 Merrion Square as an 'open-house' for architectural events such as colloquia, conferences and exhibitions.

RIAI Policy Objectives

- 1** Promote the value of quality and design in architecture to the advancement of Ireland's economic, social and environmental policy objectives, and the delivery of a high-quality built environment.

- 2** Promote the importance of first-class infrastructure and a high-quality built environment to the delivery of Ireland's 'Smart Economy' framework, and its economic, social and environmental objectives.

- 3** Champion the theory and practice of Sustainable Development; to combat climate change and to improve quality of life for the people of Ireland, today and for generations to come.

- 4** Establish the RIAI structures and programmes required to support the objectives and actions contained in the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015.

- 5** Engage with government, the professions, industry, and the public to effect improvements in the planning system, and to promote sustainable, and design-led, planning in Ireland.

- 6** Advance implementation of the RIAI structures required to administer the Register of Architects under the 2007 Building Control Act and relevant EU directives.

- 7** Promote best practice in the procurement of architectural services; to deliver quality, value and risk management for commissioning bodies, and to enable practices of all scales participate effectively in the public procurement process.

- 8** Review RIAI governance and administrative structures to achieve operational improvements, and to provide consumer protection and high-quality services to architects, clients, end-users and the public.

- 9** Provide architects - including private and public sector salaried architects, and architectural technologists - with the professional training, education and research support required to deliver best practice and high-quality services to clients, end-users and the public.

- 10** Promote the need for evidence-based research in architecture, conservation, construction, urban design and the built environment - including green enterprise - and identify key research objectives relevant to architectural practice and consumer protection.

- 11** Expand the RIAI's education and outreach programmes to achieve a wider social, cultural, political and public awareness - and appreciation - of architecture and environmental issues.