

Letter to the Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Dear Deputy,

As you are probably aware, on foot of Part 3 of the Building Control Act 2007, there is a particular legal significance to the use of the title ‘architect’. Since the launch of the statutory Register of Architects (provided for under Section 14 of the Building Control Act 2007) in November 2009, only those persons named on the Register may use the title ‘architect’. Under Section 18 of the Act, it is a criminal offence for any person who is not so registered to use this title either alone or in combination with any other words or letters, or name, title or description implying that the person is so registered. It is also an offence for any person who is not registered to practice or carry on business under any name, style or title containing the word ‘architect’.

As you know, the purpose of this legislation is to protect consumers so that every person using the title ‘architect’ has had their competence independently assessed before being included on the Register. Unfortunately, research carried out by the RIAI has indicated that there are over 500 practitioners who are not included on the Register but who are still offering services to the public under the title ‘architect’.

In order to regularise this situation and ensure that the law is complied with, the RIAI will shortly be writing to these practitioners offering them three options to deal with their situation and to avoid the prospect of criminal prosecution:

1. If the practitioners meet the qualifications requirements of the Act they can apply for registration immediately. Information on the Routes for Registration is available in the Admissions Section of the RIAI Website www.riai.ie/admissions
2. The Act provides alternative mechanisms for people without listed qualifications to nonetheless obtain registration. Details of these are also available in the Admissions Section of the RIAI Website www.riai.ie/admissions, Admission Route E – Technical Assessment and Admissions Route F – Register Admission Examination.
3. It is also open to the practitioners concerned to cease use of the title ‘architect’ in such a way as may be a contravention of Section 18 of the Building Control Act 2007. If they intend availing of this option, they will be asked to sign a form of undertaking and return it to the RIAI. As with any legal document, they will be told that they should take legal advice on the matter if they wish.

I’m sure you will agree that it’s important that the Building Control Act – as passed by the Oireachtas – is enforced and that consumers are protected through ensuring compliance with the law.

For your information, I have attached a copy of a FAQs document on the Building Control Act and the registration processes contained within it. If you have any query relating to this letter or in relation to the operation of the registration process please don’t hesitate to call me on 01-6761703 or email me at jgraby@riai.ie.

Finally, you may have seen an article in the Irish Times last Tuesday – written by former Chief Economist with the Central Bank, Michael Casey – in relation to architect’s duties and responsibilities to their clients. Unfortunately, this article contains many errors and creates an unfair and untrue picture of the client-architect relationship and other matters. The RIAI has been seeking a right of reply to this article and – out of courtesy – we will copy you on our corrective piece in the coming days.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Graby', written in a cursive style.

John Graby,
Director of the RIAI