CONSERVATION POLICY
The Constitution of the RIAI sets out that the main object for which the RIAI is established is to undertake and encourage the general advancement of architecture for the benefit of the community.

Under this remit, the RIAI regards the sustainable conservation of architectural heritage as integral to the skill set of the architect. This requires the architect to be informed by international charters and conventions that guide the practices of working in the historic environment\(^1\).

Since 1992, when the RIAI developed its first Conservation Policy, many of the actions called for in it have been realised\(^2\). The RIAI supports the statutory protection of the built heritage. It has increased the understanding of conservation amongst its members through Conservation Induction Modules and the Conservation Accreditation System.

The RIAI considers that excellence in architectural design, practice and management have important roles to play in the sustainable conservation of historic buildings and places.

The purpose of the Conservation Policy of the RIAI is to set the highest standard for the conservation of our built inheritance and to make conservation an integral part of the practice of architecture.

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\(^1\) International Charters and Conventions (including The Charter of Venice and The Burra Charter):
http://openarchive.icomos.org/431/1/monuments_and_sites_1_charters.pdf

\(^2\) Actions realised since the publication of the first Conservation Policy of the RIAI:
- The RIAI issued its Conservation Policy in 1994;
- The RIAI issued its Guidelines for the Conservation of Buildings in 1995;
- The RIAI issued its Conservation Guidelines for Planning Authorities in 1997;
- Ireland ratified the Granada Convention in 1997;
- The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage is nearly complete;
- Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 now provides the statutory protection to the built heritage through the Record of Protected Structures and through Architectural Conservation Areas;
- Local Area Plans include conservation;
- There are Conservation Officers in many planning authorities;
- The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Local Authorities has been published;
- Government Policy on Architecture commits the State to the highest standards in conservation;
- A start has been made in financial assistance for heritage buildings and areas;
- The Construction Industry Heritage Contractors Register has been established; and
- The RIAI Conservation Accreditation System has been running for two decades.
The Conservation Policy of the RIAI is that:

• The understanding of the cultural significance of architectural heritage is central to its conservation,

• The continued use of our built heritage offers the best way for ensuring its physical and cultural survival,

• The importance of research and the sharing of knowledge is crucial to the development of conservation,

• The skill set of the architect in conservation should include collaborative design, practice and management,

• The successful resolution of the complexities involved in the conservation of our built heritage requires architectural training and expertise, and

• The architect should be the leader in conserving our built heritage.

Within this framework the RIAI seeks to further the protection, conservation, suitable adaptation, restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings, groups of buildings and sites which, by virtue of their particular character and special interest, form part of our built heritage.
The RIAI seeks to achieve the above by:

1. Asserting its commitment to conserving the built heritage.
2. Advancing informed conservation as an integral part of the practice of architecture.
3. Expanding the role of education in developing an awareness of the architectural heritage.
4. Engaging with the continual professional development of architects to integrate the knowledge base of conservation principles with the competency of the architect on the Register.
5. Strengthening its links with appropriate national and international bodies involved in conservation.
6. Supporting public awareness of the conservation process.
7. Encouraging new solutions to design challenges and the integration of high quality interventions in historic buildings and places.
8. Advocating for innovative regulatory policies which enable sustainable adaptation for re-use of historic buildings, without compromising their heritage significance.
9. Promoting the appointment of architects with conservation expertise within regulatory bodies and public/private sector agencies.
10. Fostering traditional skills and craft trades involved in conservation.
11. Emphasising the need for financial incentives for conservation purposes.
Photography

Front Cover
National Gallery of Ireland, Heneghan Peng Architects & Blackwood Associates Architects

Back Cover
Image left - O’Donoghue Centre for Theatre Drama & Performance, Taylor Architects
Image right - People’s Park Pavilion Cafe, Howley Hayes Architects