

Irish Architectural Archive

Climate Action Policy

Introduction

The Irish Architectural Archive was established in 1976 to collect and preserve records of Irish architecture, and make those records available to the public.

In 1996, the IAA was assigned 45 Merrion Square as its home by the then Minister for Finance, Ruairí Quinn TD. In developing its brief for the building, especially the storage areas for archival documents, the IAA advocated for a sustainable approach to the provision of the required internal environment. The brief noted that 'the higher the stability afforded by the physical make up of the rooms - insulation etc. - the lower will be the reliance on (and the cost of) the air-conditioning system'. This led the OPW, supported by the SEAI, to construct the first passive archival stores in Ireland. These have now been in use for almost 20 years, providing the cool, dry, stable conditions required for the long-term preservation of paper documents in a passive, sustainable way.

The IAA has continued to invest in sustainability where and when it can. For example, the halogen and fluorescent lighting system in the Architecture Gallery was upgraded to low-energy LEDs in two phases in 2019 and 2021, and the lighting in public and staff areas of 45 Merrion Square was changed to LED in 2023.

This policy is intended to build on this legacy to enable the IAA to address environmental impact issues and climate change actions and requirements.

Policy Statement

In the face of the Climate Emergency, the IAA recognises that it has an obligation to measure and understand the environmental impact of its activities, to minimise that environmental impact, to seek continual environmental improvement, to prevent pollution, to adapt to climate change, and to encourage environmental awareness within the organisation.

The IAA is committed to incorporating environmental management practices into its everyday activities.

The IAA is committed to complying with applicable environmental, legal and other requirements that apply to its activities.

Implementation

To achieve the objectives of the policy statement, the IAA will:

Measure, track, and report on energy use so as to understand the environmental impacts of its activities and operations.

Minimise energy use by encouraging and establishing habits of energy awareness and routines of consumption reduction.

Improve its environmental impact through waste management, recycling, and green procurement.

Encourage and facilitate the use of public transport for those working in and visiting the IAA, and the use of green transport options for IAA operational activities such as collection acquisition and transport.

Adopt a climate-aware stance where possible across the full range of IAA activities from reusing exhibition frames to prioritising sustainability in IT procurement.

Facilitate access to records which help, encourage and support the sustainable use or reuse of existing buildings.

Limit digitisation of analogue material for conservation, preservation and access purposes so as to avoid large accumulations of rarely accessed and yet environmentally impactful digital surrogates.

Appoint a staff member to champion this policy internally and review its activities regularly to ensure compliance.

Develop an action plan to advance the aims and objectives of this policy.

Review this policy annually to ensure that it remains relevant, practical and achievable.

The IAA board has ultimate responsibility for the environmental performance of the organisation. It will ensure that the necessary plans and resources are put in place to achieve the objectives of this policy.