

RIAS ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

1. **Mission Statement**

Maximum Architectural Value.
Minimum Environmental Harm.

2. **Background**

2.1 This statement is based on the Agenda 21 Agreement from the 1992 UN Summit on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, to which the UK and many governments world-wide are fully committed.

2.2 Reference has been made to policies produced by other national and international architectural and associated professional bodies.

See Appendix I "Declaration of Interdependence", UIA 1993.

3. **Policy**

3.1 In recognition of the significant influence that architects and associated professional have on the indoor, local and global environment, the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) endorses the following environmental statement.

3.2 **The RIAS promotes a lifecycle approach to the design and construction of buildings and their components which does not endanger environmental or personal health, and which respects biodiversity, inter-generational responsibility and social equity.**

3.3 The RIAS supports the objectives incorporated in Agenda 21, to which the UK and international governments have committed themselves, in particular a precautionary approach.

3.4 The RIAS also commits itself to implementing appropriate actions to communicate this policy to its members, clients, contractors, communities, end-users and policy makers.

4. **Key Issues**

4.1 The minimisation of pollution and resource depletion, in all forms.

4.2 The promotion of inter-generational responsibility; awareness of social equity; and preservation of biodiversity.

4.3 The maintenance and enhancement of environmental quality.

5. Objectives

The RIAS will promote actions which address the above issues and which uphold the freedom of the design profession to make maximum design intervention towards the aim of environmental accountability.

In particular it will seek to support: -

- improved briefing to include an environmentally sound approach from the outset of projects;
- interdisciplinary working from an early stage to encompass design and management aspects;
- a life-cycle approach to design from inception, reuse and adaptation, to ultimate demolition;
- appropriate life-cycle costing, including environmental costing;
- continual development of professional standards to include environmental issues as a norm;
- appropriate changes to building standards regulations, and British Standards;
- relevant, improved and high quality information;
- means which ensure the integrity of information;
- sustainable urban and rural planning and associated land use and transport policies;
- publication of analysis-rich, best-practice case studies;
- social equity as identified in Agenda 21.

6. Implementation

6.1 **In pursuance of the above the RIAS will actively promote the production of positional papers and other forms of guideline and technical information, and seek to keep these regularly updated. This policy will be reviewed periodically.**

6.2 Immediate Action

Develop a small but practical 'checklist' document related to the RIBA Plan of Work, outlining areas where a creative and effective response can be made by architects in their everyday actions. This is referred to as the "RIAS Green Thumbnail Guide".

6.3 Medium to long term

(ie over the next three years), a trilogy of publications: -

- “Positional Papers” based on a lecture series to be presented by leading proponents of an environmentally sound approach to architectural design.
- “Green Architects’ Guide to Running a Job” is a fuller development of the Green Thumbnail Guide. It is based on the assumption that it is more effective to amend existing sources of information than to add more documentation to the ever - increasing load to which architects have to refer.
- “Best Practice Case Studies” This will require the largest amount of resourcing, but has the potential to be the most effective tool for practices.
- Interim publications in RIAS Quarterly Practice Information “Energy and Environmental Knowledge” section are envisaged.

CPD delivery can also assist.

An accreditation scheme for individuals or practices applying the policy, should be investigated.

Commentary:

This document follows the agreement signed by 178 governments (including UK) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 covering

1. Climate change
2. Biological Diversity (Biodiversity)
3. The Rio Declaration: 27 principles for guiding action, emphasising poverty alleviation
4. The Forestry principles
5. Agenda 21.

These were built upon at the Inter - governmental conference in Kyoto in 1997.

Definitions:

Bio-diversity: A shortened form for the biological diversity of species and habitat.

Sustainability/Inter-generational responsibility : Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Social equity : “Eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in living standards... are essential to achieve sustainable development” Rio Declaration.

Life-cycle approach : taking into account the potential for change in a building’s use during its projected life, and the potential for reuse, recycling or reconstitution of its systems and components.

Lifecycle costing : A set of tools which enable the analysis of cost of maintenance, replacement and refurbishment of a building over its initial projected life.

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DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

UIA/AIA World Congress of Architects, Chicago, 8 -21 June 1993.

“In recognition that:

A sustainable society restores, preserves and enhances nature and culture for the benefit of all life, present and future;

- a diverse and healthy environment is intrinsically valuable and essential to a healthy society;
- today’s society is seriously degrading the environment and is not sustainable.

We are ecologically interdependent with the whole natural environment;

- we are socially, culturally, and economically interdependent with all of humanity: sustainability, in the context of this interdependence, requires partnership, equity and balance among all parties:

Buildings and the built environment play a major role in the human impact on the natural environment and on the quality of life.

- sustainable design integrates consideration of resource and energy efficiency, healthy buildings and materials, ecologically and socially sensitive land use; and an aesthetic sensitivity that inspires, affirms and ennobles;
- sustainable design can significantly reduce adverse human impacts on the natural environment while simultaneously improving quality of life and economic well-being:

We commit ourselves, as members of the world’s architectural and building design professions, individually and through our professional organisations, to:

- Place environmental and social sustainability at the core of our practices and professional responsibilities
- Develop and continually improve practices, procedures, products, curricula, services, and standards that will enable the implementation of sustainable design
- Educate our fellow professionals, the building industry, clients, students, and the general public about the critical importance and substantial opportunities of sustainable design
- Establish policies, regulations, and practices in government and business that ensure sustainable design becomes normal practice
- Bring all existing and future elements of the built environment - in their design, production, use and eventual reuse - up to sustainable design standards”.

Olufemi Majekodunmi
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