

**Irish
Architecture
Foundation**

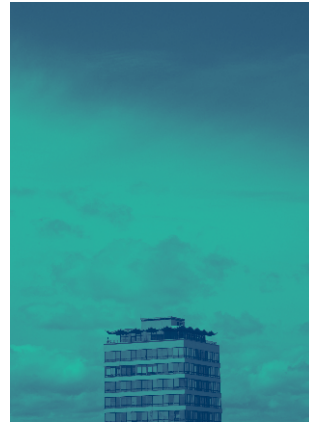
Our shaping future

STRATEGY 2019 – 2023

architecturefoundation.ie

Chairperson's Statement

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We cannot take anything for granted. As a public facing organisation, the Board of Directors needed to know for sure if the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) makes a difference to the culture of architecture and people's engagement with it. To find out, we decided to ask our audience and stakeholders about our impact and to help us strategise for the future. We hosted five workshops in Dublin, Limerick and Cork, with a combination of invited funding and programme stakeholders, followed by an open public survey online. We gathered the data, thoughts and comments; they were honest, critical, creative, generous and enlightening. This Strategy 2019-2023 is a direct outcome of that process.

The IAF was established in 2005 as a not-for-profit company with charitable status by a number of organisations including the Arts Council of Ireland, Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI), the Irish Architectural Archive (IAA), the Office of Public Works (OPW) and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI). It was set up to address a range of matters to do with public engagement with architecture, including those issues raised by the Government Policy on Architecture 2002-2005 and Arts Council research in this area. The role of the Foundation was further underpinned by Action 34 of the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 which sought to support initiatives developed by the IAF to further the aims of the policy.

The IAF has grown and matured over the years. We are a forum for the dissemination and discussion of the culture of architecture, with the intention of increasing awareness of and an interest in architecture, the meaning of space, and the development of the built environment.

In delivering this Strategy, the Foundation is committed to an ongoing peer to peer engagement with the founding stakeholders, by championing shared interests and advocating collectively for the needs of architecture. To aid

this objective we have formally re-established the Stakeholder Forum, for both public and private funders, collaborators, and founding representative bodies. The Forum will meet annually to discuss the development of the IAF and mutually beneficial opportunities. In 2017, the IAF undertook a Corporate Governance Review, that has honed our governance structures and fine-tuned our skill base for the Board. This is to ensure we grow artistically, while incorporating an active and strategic priority to strengthen capacity.

The next five years will present us with significant opportunities to communicate the vital issues and topics that engross the overall ethos and unique personality of IAF. We will work with architects, communities, policymakers and built environment professionals on initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural, and ecological challenges of the built environment. We will use this strategy to guide our programme choices, to ensure that we continue to reach more diverse audiences and to communicate 'who we are' with clarity, courage and pride.

As Chair of the Board of the IAF, it is remarkable to appreciate and understand the driving force and passion of the Director and the incredible team behind the IAF and to see the impact the Foundation has had relative to its scale and resources. The IAF is a positive force and a great family, to which we welcome new audiences, funders and collaborators, with whom we can seek new opportunities for influencing public engagement with architecture and the built environment, to eventually provide a dedicated centre for architecture.

We have been given a new sense of purpose; it is written here in this plan.

Pauline Byrne
Chairperson

Profile & Context

Profile & Context

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The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) was officially convened and launched in June 2005. The intention was that this new cultural organisation would be independent, formative and above all else, ensure that architecture served the people. For more than a decade, the IAF has established a network and track record of delivering major projects, primarily aimed at developing audiences for architecture in Ireland, while also raising the profile of Irish architecture abroad. Its programme of exhibitions, talks, film screenings, symposia, competitions, publications, school and community workshops is intended to raise awareness and generate conversations, as well as critically engage a diverse public.

Funding

The IAF has been regularly funded since its foundation by the Arts Council, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Office of Public Works, with regular project funding from Dublin City Council (DCC) and the Department of Education and Skills¹. In recent years it has received substantial private sector support.

Profile

Some of the IAF's key projects to date have been driven by the need to raise the profile of Irish architecture and engage a public both here and abroad. The Foundation delivered their first Open House Dublin in 2005 to an audience of 3,500 visits and has grown this festival to 33,000 visits to heritage, modern and contemporary buildings in two days in 2018. In 2013 the IAF began its ongoing talks series called New Now Next in partnership with Arup, and five years later this continues to be a successful public platform for internationally renowned architects to speak in Ireland. The IAF's outward promotion of Irish architecture was achieved by a talks programme called Irish Architecture Now that toured to six cities in the USA in 2013, and We Built This City, an initiative to celebrate the Irish diaspora's contribution to London, New York and Chicago, curated as part of Irish Design 2015.

Education

The IAF's educational remit has continued to grow a strong learning and community programme, which includes an innovative urban design project for young people called Place Shapers, and the National Architects in School Initiative, which reaches 32 schools across the island. As part of this initiative a blog and school resource pack for teachers, students and architects called My Architecture Design Journal was created. The Arts Council, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht enable this programme.

Curation

Delivering on its objective to grow a culture of curating architecture, the IAF completed a three-month residency in the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2014 and partnered with the Irish Film Institute on an architecture and film festival in 2012. They have had the honour on three occasions of commissioning the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the biggest architectural event in the world.²

Community-led initiatives

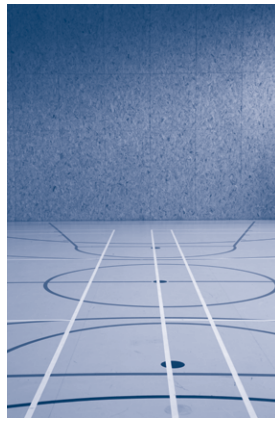
In addition to providing a discursive space about architecture for its publics, the IAF has become actively involved in physically shaping the built environment. In 2018, the Foundation received an award from the Creative Ireland National Creativity Fund for a community-led design initiative called Reimagine, to be rolled out across seven towns in 2019. In 2016, it launched a project to build a Play and Skate Park in Ballyfermot, through an innovative and collaborative process with Dublin City Council and philanthropists Matheson. The park will open in 2019.

H Waterford Festival of Architecture Sharing Event, National Architects in Schools Initiative 2018, photo by Ste Murray

G Abbey Theatre, Dublin Plays Itself 2012, courtesy of the IAF

F Liffey Walking Tour, Open House Dublin 2018, photo by Simon Mills

E Jeffrey's House, Ards Forest Park 2014, photo by Carla Killeen



Digital

The IAF website and social media platforms communicate to the largest number of people interested in architecture in Ireland and its exhibitions and events have been featured in national and international media platforms. Following a number of years as a guest within larger institutional buildings, in 2016, the IAF moved into its first home on Bachelors Walk, a building leased from DCC. It is from this HQ that it delivers this mission.

Audience

In summary, the IAF have an audience that is engaged and growing, a network that is national and international, a sector that is active and responsive, a following that is in need of innovative solutions and creative responses to urgent issues in the contemporary built world. Our audience profile has grown broader and deeper. Our programme attracts the general public, professionals in the built environment, and policy makers. We will continue to serve the needs of these constituents and build a programme to engage across multiple sectors.

Cross-disciplinary activity

The Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Foreign Affairs with its Global Ireland 2025 framework and government bodies like Creative Ireland, the OPW, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council all recognise the important role architecture plays in the cultural health of society and Ireland's potential abroad. These agencies have made explicit the connections between the arts and well being, tourism, enterprise, cultural identity and people. Currently, there are a number of creative organisations either wholly or partially interested in architectural programming, some from within the practice of architecture, others from history, heritage, visual arts, geography, planning, social and environmental science. This cross-disciplinary activity has multiplied the players, activity and participants in the field, and suggests a rich tapestry of possibilities for the IAF.

International

The growing global success of Irish architects has not gone unnoticed amongst international commentators and by the Irish government and was further strengthened when Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara of Grafton Architects were the invited curators of La Biennale di Venezia in 2018.³ The success of this initiative leaves a lasting legacy in Ireland for emerging Irish architects, architecture and artistic culture as well as being an outward expression of Irish identity to the rest of the world. The IAF is poised to maximise on this incredible legacy, not least by playing a part in magnifying the scale and impact of Ireland's global reputation in arts, including architecture, heritage and culture.⁴

Public Policy

While the international status of Irish architecture is at an all time high, the IAF understands that in today's funding climate public funding alone cannot be sufficient and the Foundation has attracted substantial support from business. However, it must also advocate for architecture to be embedded across public policy and be an active member of a new creative ecology that the government is embracing.

The future

The local, national and international landscape in which the IAF operates, its achievements to date, and its collective recognition of the importance of architecture provides a rich context for the IAF's five-year strategic plan, as it sets out with courage and optimism a route to achieving its mission in these challenging and exciting times. New discoveries will be made, new cultural production will be stimulated, and new enterprises will be generated that will shape our future.

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1. Over the years the IAF has also received grants from Failte Ireland, Culture Ireland, Creative Ireland, the RIAI and the Department of Foreign Affairs for specific initiatives, and other Local Authorities for reoccurring or once off local projects, namely Dun Laoighaire-Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council and Donegal County Council.

2. SubUrban to SuperRural 2006. *The Lives of Spaces* 2008. *Of deBlacam and Meagher* 2010.

3. Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, from Grafton Architects, Dublin were the first Irish people to curate La Biennale di Venezia in its 123 years history. Their exhibition was titled Freespace with 100 exhibitors from all over the world, it delivered a record 275,000 attendees and it generated thousands of press and online articles.

4. Under the Arts Act 2003, architecture is considered one of the eleven artforms.

N Luttrellstown event, Place Shapers 2012, photo by J Savage

M Letterkenny Regional Cultural Centre, The Everyday Experience 2014, photo by Paul McGuckin

L 'Of' DeBlacam and Meagher, Limerick 2011, photo by Peter Maybury

K Douglas Hyde Gallery, Open House Dublin 2018, photo by Ste Murray

J Basketball Court - Sean O'Casey Community Centre, Architecture Alive, Open House Dublin 2012, photo by Richard Gilligan

I Trinity College Museum Building, Open House Dublin 2018, photo by Ste Murray



The Irish Architecture Foundation is actively communicating to the public a deeper understanding of architecture as a civic right. Outside of architects themselves and the architectural institutions, there is no other body fulfilling this critical role. If we are to develop and grow the culture of architecture in Ireland we need the public to understand its' potential to improve lives and transform our environment. Architecture is currently understood as 'design' and as an instrument of commercial forces. Only when it is understood as a key cultural force will the public be in a position to demand that architecture be valued and promoted as a civic right.

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara
*Directors, Grafton Architects,
 Cultural Ambassadors for Ireland
 Curators 16th International Architecture Exhibition -
 La Biennale di Venezia 2018*

Irish Architecture Foundation

OUR PURPOSE

To inspire people to build a better world

OUR VISION

We see a future where architecture is a civic right, fundamental to the fabric of life, culture and history, and a confident expression of who we are and who we might become.

OUR MISSION

To champion the power of architecture to transform lives and improve the places where we live, learn, work and play. Through a dynamic programme of activity, we inspire people to understand and shape their world.

OUR VALUES

Openness

We are open to ideas, inclusive of all people and generous in creating opportunities for everyone to engage with and be inspired by architecture.

Excellence

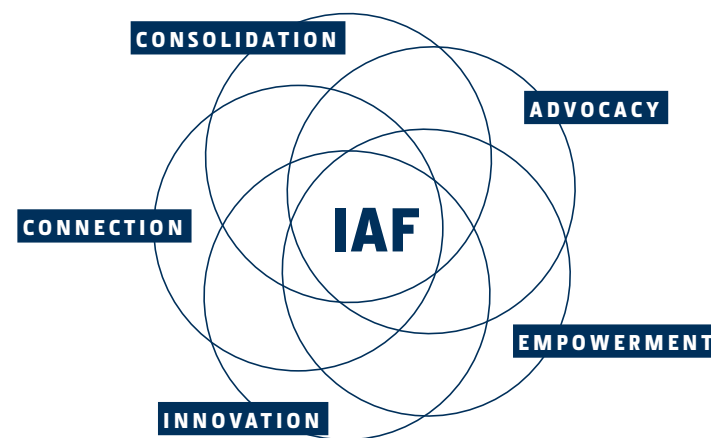
We promote best practice in all that we do and are committed to sharing the exceptional work of others.

Courage

We have the confidence to ask questions, to challenge norms and to try things out. We embolden others to do so too.

Strategic Goals

Our Strategic Goals are the areas of work that we will focus on over the course of the next five years. By concentrating on them we will be true to our purpose and will achieve our mission and vision. For illustration and informational purposes we have separated out each goal. However, in reality they are fluid. They intersect, merge and support each other.



OUR PRINCIPLES

Our strategic goals are underpinned by the principles of inclusion, generosity, enquiry and independence.

Advocacy

The cultural and societal value of architecture is understood.

We believe that the quality of buildings and urban and rural landscapes depends on the demands of an informed public coupled with open and resourced architectural practice. We will continue to promote the importance of architecture to the wider society by communicating the potential of architecture and advocating for its societal, economic and cultural value. On a practical level, as an organisation with an overview of the creative industries, we can share our knowledge, experience and expertise to help others deepen their connection to architecture and encourage them to develop related initiatives.

We advocate for the creation of a national centre for architecture, which will have a dedicated exhibition and learning space to serve our audience, with a national and international remit to strengthen the mission of the IAF. A new centre will enhance the public's understanding of the creative, social and historical impact of architecture, in addition to building a culture that supports current and new practice.

OBJECTIVES	SUCCESS
1 Make the case for the inherent value of architecture in people's lives with policy makers, cultural and community innovators, commissioners, planners, the media and the general public.	We will have documented and demonstrated the value of architecture in people's lives and informed government and policy makers, educators and funders.
2 Create the best conditions for architecture and built environment industries to thrive, with a particular focus on current and emerging practice.	There will be increased opportunity for architectural initiatives locally, nationally and internationally.
3 We will make a case for the development of a new national centre for architecture, with exhibition and education spaces and a national and international programme.	A capital campaign will be underway to create a new cultural space for architecture.
4 Raise the profile of architecture in Ireland and abroad, helping to promote excellence to a broad range of audiences.	We will have increased discussion about architecture across a number of realms including the media. This will involve a more diverse and larger audience for initiatives around architectural culture.

2019 – 2023

Empowerment

People are confidently engaging with architecture.

People can be empowered through knowledge, access to experiences and by being supported in taking direct action. We produce engaging programmes that introduce people to architecture and architecture to people. We produce exhibitions, learning programmes in schools, publications, and a range of activities driven by a need to know about how architecture shapes—and might reshape—contemporary life.

The IAF believes that cultural participation and engagement can significantly enhance the well being of society. We create the conditions where people working with design teams can shape their own environment actively and not reactively. We support groups to become more involved in the design process in their neighbourhoods in response to a need that they have identified.

OBJECTIVES	SUCCESS
1 Create opportunities for increased public participation in shaping the built environment especially for communities of interest and communities of place.	We will see an increase in architectural activity across the country, by us and by others and the development of long-term partnerships with groups, local authorities, planners and architects.
2 Embed and resource community engagement and community-led design initiatives in the IAF’s annual programme.	A community-led design unit will be operating from the IAF, which will encourage opportunities for architects working as socially engaged practitioners on place-making initiatives.
3 Review and develop our National Architecture in Schools Initiative.	The National Architecture in Schools initiative will have grown with more schools and architects participating.
4 Develop and strengthen our talks, projects and exhibition programme.	Through a range of data collection techniques we will evidence a broader and deeper engagement by our audience in all our programmes.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Innovation

There are new ways of thinking about and practicing architecture.

The IAF is an independent, open and reflective agency strongly attuned to current developments and future trends in the realm of architecture and related disciplines. We believe that architecture, as subject and practice, must be open and self-reflective in order to maintain its relevance in society. At a moment in which the ways we live, work, and think are shifting, we should take time to consider and question how we frame our understanding of architecture and its relationship to people, culture, society and the environment. We have a duty to respond to contemporary issues. We are excited by the unconventional, experimental, contextually rich and culturally engaged. Together we will make new discoveries that can transform our future.

OBJECTIVES	SUCCESS
1 Enable research and critical thinking to foster new kinds of exchange that spark long-term dialogue and debate about architecture and the built environment.	We will have worked with institutes of learning and research and creative organisations to develop initiatives that will deepen understanding of architectural culture and its audiences.
2 Communicate a holistic perspective on architectural practice that considers architecture’s impact on culture, society, history and the earth.	We will have presented and disseminated a programme that challenges orthodoxy and reveals new thinking about what architecture is, how it can engage the public and our responsibility to the planet.
3 Drive initiatives about curating architecture and architectural programming as dynamic interdisciplinary modes of communication, research, learning and engagement.	We will have enabled more curators of architecture, collaborated with many disciplines and encouraged inventive thinking about exhibition making.
4 Trial new forms of learning that consider the breadth and depth of audience engagement in equal measure.	People will be engaging in new forms of project based learning and digital communication tools for different users.

Connection

People and organisations have come together and achieved more as a result.

The original concept that drove the formation of the IAF was one of connection; that of people to architecture and architecture to people. We believe good design is in everyone’s interest, and that our reach and impact is always amplified by working together. As an organisation that is a facilitator and initiator, connection is central to our practice. Our role is in facilitating wide public engagement and being a channel across multiple sectors including culture, arts, community, education and innovation.

OBJECTIVES	SUCCESS
1 Offer mentorship to initiatives delivered by others that seek to raise the profile of architecture in our built environment.	There will be an increase in architectural related projects being programmed, curated and delivered across Ireland.
2 Increase opportunities for people, architects and built environment professionals to connect.	There will be larger audiences for architecture as a result of our working with architects and a wider range of professionals and initiatives.
3 Develop better tools of communication and learning.	There will be accessible information and increased opportunities for the public to access architecture.
4 Collaborate and build strategic partnerships outside of Dublin, at a regional, national and international level.	There will be a strong infrastructure of allied agencies (inside and outside architecture) that will work together to ensure architecture matters.

Consolidation

Our capacity to deliver has been strengthened and secured for the future.

Survival means reinforcing our people, know-how and financial resources over the duration of this plan. Our existence relies on an imaginative and transformational programme, educational and learning opportunities, institutional marketing and an audience to serve.

We will put in place the best management and governance practices to enable the IAF to be a thriving cultural organisation. We will strengthen our financial position to allow us to deliver the best programme to our growing audiences. We have a responsibility to fulfil our mission each year and to ensure we have the capacity (people, know-how and money) to do so.

OBJECTIVES	SUCCESS
1 Secure, diversify and grow our public and private funding.	Our financial position will be strengthened. Everyone in the IAF understands and participates in our culture of fundraising.
2 Reinforce our brand.	The IAF as a brand will be more visible, enticing and impactful through stronger institutional marketing and communications.
3 Strengthen our board, staff resources and infrastructure.	We will have delivered our best work, retained the best people, and ensured IAF is an inclusive and progressive place to work for programme participants and staff.



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Credits

This Strategy was developed and approved by the Board of the Irish Architecture Foundation with the assistance of the Strategic Development Committee (SDC) following consultation with the IAF Executive and team, funding and programme stakeholders in Dublin, Cork and Limerick during summer 2018.

Board Members

Pauline Byrne (Chairperson IAF), Neil Dalton, Terre Duffy, Dr Lisa Godson, Ali Grehan, Professor Fiona Kearney, Helen McCormack, Dr Muiris O Ceidigh, Aidan O'Connor, Ciaran O'Connor, Ciarán ÓGaora, Louise O'Reilly, Carole Pollard.

Strategic Development Committee (SDC)

Pauline Byrne, Neil Dalton, Terre Duffy, Ali Grehan, Dr Lisa Godson (Chairperson SDC), Professor Fiona Kearney, Louise O'Reilly.

Acknowledgements

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Photo of IAF HQ 2016 (above), by Lisa Whelan

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