



Carrigtohill, Cork, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

To whom it may concern,

Please find below the public consultation submission from INTBAU Ireland, concerning the proposed new National Policy on Architecture

INTBAU Ireland is the Irish chapter of INTBAU, a global network dedicated to creating better places to live through traditional building, architecture, and urbanism.

INTBAU was established in 2001, and has since gained over 30 chapters and 6,000 members in more than 100 countries worldwide. INTBAU's mission is to support traditional building, the maintenance of local character, and the creation of better places to live. We do this through workshops, summer schools, study tours, conferences, awards, and competitions. Our three objectives are to research, educate, and engage as widely as possible on the value and relevance of traditional architecture and urban design.

Founded in 2009, INTBAU Ireland is the all-island Chapter of the International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism. Our aim is to promote sustainable traditional practices in the design of the built environment of Ireland's towns and rural areas.

Education is our primary focus; developing courses in Classical and Traditional architecture as well as collating and disseminating practical information for professionals and researchers in our network. By being linked to an extensive worldwide network, INTBAU Ireland is uniquely placed to connect our local members with exemplar projects and professionals across the globe. We also provide a platform to support and showcase local traditional projects to our network at home and abroad.

The importance of tradition in the creation of new architecture in Ireland is growing rapidly as society seeks and recognises solutions in the imbedded wisdom of our existing architectural heritage. INTBAU Ireland aims to provide practical advice and helpful support for those interested in traditional solutions when designing and appreciating all kinds of buildings, architecture and urbanism in Ireland

For more information see <https://www.intbau.org/>



*“There is a timeless way of building.*

*It is thousands of years old, and the same today as it has always been.*

*The great traditional buildings of the past, the villages and tents and temples in which man feels at home,  
have always been made by people who were very close to the centre of this way.*

*It is not possible to make great buildings, or great towns, beautiful places, places where you feel yourself,  
places where you feel alive, except by following this way.”*

The Timeless Way of Building, Christopher Alexander 1979

## **1. Contact Information**

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## **2. Top Priorities**

**Vision** - The Irish Government should aim to foster a new holistic and caring architectural culture that disregards the short-term fashions and theories that have dominated the profession over the past century and instead look clearly and honestly at the Irish architectural traditions that have worked in the past; traditions that still prove overwhelmingly successful in providing homes that we can be proud of for all our citizens, families and communities.

**Content** – Informed and informative guidance documents and building codes with simple solid solutions for professionals and citizens alike, which provide leadership and encouragement to create architecture that all people can cherish and love over many generations.

**Actions** – The architectural education system must be reformed and underpinned by encouraging more humane and practical solutions to the needs of our changing society; solutions that provide architecture with aesthetic and physical resilience.

Government must provide leadership by ensuring that all architecture that it funds either directly or indirectly exemplifies the timeless values embodied in our extant rich architectural heritage. The state must also immediately improve effective enforcement of existing legislation, which to date has had mixed results.



### 3. Themes

Firstly we would like to highlight and express our support for the sentiments of Minister Josepha Madigan in the excerpt below, taken from the introduction of *Places for People*

*“The policy will support high quality architecture which respects our cultural identity and past traditions of building settlement”*

The 5 main themes outlined in the *Places for People* document are very comprehensive and we would like to compliment the authors for providing such an excellently written and visionary guidance document. Below are INTBAU Ireland’s views on these themes.

### 4. Designing for climate resilience and sustainability

The key consideration for Climate Resilience and sustainability needs to be the **increased lifespan** of buildings. There are many aspects to this which are outlined below

The “greenest” building is one that is already built so existing buildings must be treated as assets rather than liabilities by encouraging and funding appropriate conservation, restoration and reuse.

Using simple, natural, and sustainable **materials** with a proven track-record will ensure that they can be easily replaced when needed or recycled if necessary.

Design with ease of **maintenance** as a priority will ensure that the inevitable wear and tear can be monitored and mitigated easily

Design **aesthetics** and details based on past successes which will ensure that buildings will age gracefully, be loved by the public and so ensure their longevity and resilience.

**Flexibility** of designs will ensure that buildings can **adapt** to new unforeseen uses.

[The battle to curb our appetite for concrete](#)

[‘The greenest building is the one that already exists’](#)

[Experts call for ban on glass skyscrapers to save energy in climate crisis](#)

[How glass skyscrapers took over the world—and why we need to stop building them](#)

[Are We Air Conditioning Our Planet to Death?](#)

[You know we’re in trouble when even the green experts are greenwashing](#)



## 5. Designing quality places for public benefit

Our public spaces are a vivid expression of what we value as a society and how we wish to live our lives. We need to ensure that the needs of people and the quality of their lives are placed above all else when considering the designs of quality **placemaking**.

Our public places provide the backdrop for all of our everyday lives, and so it must not be treated as a commodity that can be bartered and traded at the expense of our communities and our society.

**Public consultation and ongoing active engagement** for our public space will tap into the priceless resource of common sense solutions that have been overlooked in the past in favour of “innovative” theories. This will ensure that the identities of our communities are valued and enhanced, leading in turn to more sustainable outcomes.

[Create Streets](#)

[A Place To Call Home](#)

[Form-Based Codes](#)

[The Missing Middle](#)

[Five Big Ideas for Designing Today's Cities](#)

[What is traditional development?](#)

[How Can We Build Again in Beautiful Places?](#)



## 6. Respecting the Past, shaping our future.

Our built heritage is of enormous importance as our historic structures are imbued with the precious memories of our ancestor's stories. Without these memories as a foundation to work from, we can never hope to progress as a society, and we will simply continue to make the same mistakes over and over again.

But built heritage should not be treated as a static unchanging series of objects. All buildings must be allowed to grow and evolve over time. If we limit our vision by placing our built heritage into a form of academic formaldehyde, they will forever be considered as something foreign and unrelated to our present day lives.

We should not consider "built" heritage as simply something from the distant past, but instead as **"building" heritage**, which allows the various traditions that brought our most cherished places into existence once again come to the forefront of how we build and shape our environment in the future.

To deny the relevance of our best architectural and building traditions for future work is like living with no memory, and we can never hope progress as a society if we insist on imposing an unnatural amnesia on our imaginations. The 20<sup>th</sup> C. blind obsession with "innovation" has not led to the kind of progress that we can be proud of. We need to reassess exactly what we mean by progress and innovation against the decidedly mixed results of architecture in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Our architectural and building traditions form a treasury of **both physical and intangible heritage** that has successfully helped to form our identity in the past and has the power to do so again in the future.

[Building Tomorrow's Heritage: What Historic Structures Can Teach Us About Making a Better Future](#)

[Criteria for an Intelligent Architecture](#)

[The Secret of Beauty: Order and Complexity](#)

[Classical architecture makes us happy. So why not build more of it?](#)

[Beauty or the Machine? Learning from the nostalgia of architecture](#)

[The "B" Word: How a More Universal Concept of Beauty Can Reshape Architecture](#)

[The Story of Irish Vernacular Architecture](#)



## 7. Leadership

Leadership in architecture comes from solid, visible actions rather than fine words or glossy information campaigns. Government needs to show that it is serious about reforming our architectural culture so that it is fit for purpose in what appears to be a very uncertain future.

Government is in a unique position to provide this leadership and can use its strength, its particular perspective and vision that create a new model of how to design and build for our country. The state needs to be brave and singular in its outlook, looking far into the future rather than allowing short-termism to continue to dominate our building culture.

The reliance on private sector involvement to provide the kinds of solutions that our society needs is something that has not proven to work well in the past. The *laissez faire* attitude of past governments that effectively outsourced its' responsibilities and leadership simply cannot continue. Where private involvement is to be used, it must be accompanied by stricter oversight and guidance by empowering authorities with far better funding and statutory powers.

[How to defeat nimbyism: build more beautiful houses](#)

[The answer to solving the housing shortage is at our doorstep](#)

[Housing Britain, A Call To Action](#)

[More Good Homes](#)

[We are re-entering an age of necessity and must design accordingly](#)

[Why Reusing Buildings Should Be the Next Big Thing](#)



## 8. Knowledge and innovation

Education is the key to the essential reform of our how we design and build in Ireland into the future.

We need to first ensure that the basics of our education systems have **solid foundations**. This includes placing more emphasis and value on the **skills** of our workforce. If we demonstrably value our **artisans** more clearly, this can only help to increase pride and quality in our work.

Rather than emphasising outmoded “innovation”, we instead need to relearn many of the essential traditional skills that have been largely ignored, as inferior industrial materials and technologies have come to dominate the construction sector. Research into **traditional solutions** should be immediately prioritized and their recommendations implemented.

In terms of architecture, education in this field is in crisis across the western world with educational institutions are struggling to provide graduates with requisite skills that are truly applicable to challenges we face.

The architectural education system must be healed by reversing the inexplicable decision to wipe away centuries of knowledge and rely solely on the theories of a small number of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernists. We must reintroduce the choice to study **traditional architecture** for students and to end this unnecessary architectural divide between the past and the future.

[Architecture Programs Need a Change: Put People First—Not ‘Art’](#)

[Young people keeping dying trades alive](#)

[We Can’t Go on Teaching the Same History of Architecture as Before](#)

[Traditional Architecture Education and the need for grass root initiatives](#)

[Language Lessons](#)

[The Englesberg School of Classical Architecture](#)