RIBA

RIBA Environmental Manifesto

The RIBA is committed to the principle of sustainable development which it defines as:

Development which raises the quality of life and serves the goal of achieving global equity in the distribution of the Earth's resources whilst conserving its natural capital and achieving significant and sustained reductions in all forms of pollution especially emissions of greenhouse gases.

The RIBA will use its influence with government and, through the UIA, with the international community, to endorse this principle and translate it into action.

Objectives

The institute will maintain the following strategic objectives.

1. Assist the government in framing legislation and devising economic instruments to achieve a radical reduction in the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases

2. Encourage the government to give practical support to the development of renewable energy systems, in particular to subsidise the widespread installation of solar cells, as happens in other advanced economies

3. Exploit the potential of existing buildings to be adapted to new uses

4. Optimise the development of brownfield sites and the enhancement of urban densities

5. Encourage development that is easily accessible to public transport

6. Support the Construction Industry Council in its aim of promoting sustainable design and construction practices across the industry

In pursuit of the principle of sustainable development the institute urges its members to ensure that every intervention into the built environment not only improves the quality of life but also uses all available means to eliminate waste, curb pollution and conserve energy and natural resources.

RIBA Environmental Checklist for Development

1. Has consultation been proposed with the community at the design stage?

2. Has every attempt been made either to develop on a brownfield site or reuse an existing building?

3. Will the proposed development achieve the highest standards in terms of energy efficiency and the conservation of natural resources?

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4. Will consideration be given to the production of on-site electricity from renewable sources?

5. Has the opportunity to use recycled materials been explored?

6. Is the proposed development capable of being adapted to other uses in the future?

7. Will it achieve optimum standards of comfort for its inhabitants?

8. Does the proposal achieve an appropriate density for its location?

9. Has the potential for a mixed development on the site been realised?

10. Does the proposal involve significant investment in landscaping?

11. Does the proposed development make a significant contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the community?

12. Does the proposed development have access to a range of public transport options?

13. Will the proposed development make a significant addition to the amenity of the wider area and does it pose any threat to the amenity of its immediate neighbours?

14. Will the development be in harmony with the wider built environment?

15. Is it proposed that the design process will, from the start, be a collaborative enterprise involving all the design professions?

16. Have steps been taken to ensure that the development will not adversely affect the micro-climate, for example by downdraughts or funnelling of wind?

17. Will the proposed development contain areas of public access or create new pedestrian routes?

RIBA Key Indicators for Sustainable Design

1. Minimising the use of fossil-based energy in terms of the energy embodied in the materials, transport and the construction process, and the energy used during the lifetime of the building.

2. Making best use of recycled materials and renewable materials from a verifiable source.

3. Avoiding all ozone-depleting chemicals in terms of manufacture and system operation, including HCFCs.

4. Where possible using alternatives to materials containing volatile organic compounds.

5. Designing to make maximum use of natural light whilst also being aware its limitations.

6. Exploiting the potential for natural ventilation in the context of an overall climate control strategy which minimises energy use and maximises comfort.

7. Making best use of passive solar energy whilst employing heating/cooling systems which are fine-tuned to the needs of the occupants, with air conditioning used only in exceptional circumstance.

8. Ensuring that building management systems are user-friendly and not over-complex.

9. Identifying opportunities to generate on-site renewable electricity (embedded systems).

10. Identifying the potential for exploiting the constant ground temperature for evening-out the peaks and troughs of summer and winter temperature.

11. Minimising the use of water; harvesting rainwater and grey water and purifying for use other than human consumption.

12. Minimising rainwater runoff by limiting the extent of hard external landscape.

13. Creating an external environmental which is both a visual amenity and also offers environmental benefits such as summer shading from deciduous trees and evaporative cooling from water features.

14. Whilst taking account of these key indicators, ensuring that designs meet the highest standards of technical proficiency in combination with aesthetic excellence.

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