WORKING WITH AN ARCHITECT

An RIAI Registered Architect will help you unleash the hidden potential of your home

Edition 2

RIAI

2020 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Shortlisted
Two Brick Houses by Luca Architecture
Image ©Donal Murphy

WHAT ARCHITECTS DO

Whether you are planning to build your dream home or are extending and renovating your existing home, a Registered Architect has the qualifications, vision and experience to take you expertly through your building project. An Architect does a lot more than just provide you with a design, they will:

- Set a viable brief and budget
- Guide you through the planning process
- Obtain quotes for the work
- Manage consultants like surveyors and engineers
- Monitor the budget and
- Administer the construction contract

They also have an important role to play in investigating and creating sustainable solutions for your home, including:

- Making your home livable now and for your future needs
- Embedding resilence against future fluctations in the climate
- Improving energy efficiency and thermal comfort
- Creating spaces that are beautiful and healthy
- Advising and managing home energy upgrades
- Finding ways to reduce your carbon footprint and protect the environment

An Architect can prove invaluable on your project. They can save you money, as they will advise on potential grant schemes relevant to your project, the cost benefit of various sustainable options, as well as research viable alternatives and solutions to suit your budget.

Architects

design | inspire | guide | manage | advise

2018 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Best House Award - Winner
Vaulted House by GKMP Architects
Image ©Alice Clancy

MAKE SURE YOU WORK WITH A REGISTERED ARCHITECT

In Ireland, the title ‘Architect’ is registered and a person cannot use the title ‘Architect’ unless they are on the Register of Architects. Being placed on the Register reflects the standard and competence of an Architect.

About the RIAI

The RIAI is the Regulatory and Support Body for Architects in Ireland. The online Register lists over 3400 Architects.

Check if your Architect is registered with the RIAI here:

https://www.riai.ie/work-with-an-architect/register-of-architects

The RIAI also promotes the value that Architecture brings to society for everyone’s benefit and engages with government, the professions, industry, clients and the public. www.riai.ie

RIAI Vision

Inspiring excellence in architecture to deliver a sustainable and resilient future.

2021 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner;
Baltrasna House by Ryan W Kennihan Architects
Image ©Aisling McCoy

HOW DO I FIND AN ARCHITECT?

On the RIAI website you will find a search tool – the RIAI Practice Directory – that enables you to find an RIAI Registered architectural practice in your area. You can search the directory by practice name, by skill or simply by location. You can also filter this search to check if your Architect has any additional skills relevant to your project. https://www.riai.ie/work-with-an-architect/find-an-architect

You can also search the Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) Energy Renovation Advisor Register for Members of the RIAI with particular expertise in home energy upgrades. https://www.igbc.ie/energy-renovation-advisors-register/

If you are struggling to find a suitable RIAI architectural practice, please contact the RIAI with details of the project and location, and the RIAI can assist with your search.

Please see our contact details on the back page.

2020 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
A House, Coach House & Garden by Culligan Architects
Image ©Alice Clancy

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Architects' Fees

An Architect's fee depends on the requirements and complexity of each project and the scope of services required. Some Architects will charge on the basis of a percentage of the total project cost (excluding VAT on construction costs), others on a fixed price lump sum, or on a time charge basis. In the vast majority of cases the Architect's fee will be subject to VAT at the relevant rate. Fees should be agreed before a project commences, and this appointment should be agreed in writing, through the use of an RIAI Client Architect Agreement signed by both the client and the Architect.

Building Costs

The cost of your build will depend on a wide range of factors including house size, construction methods, materials, features, level of finishes and site context. Your Architect may provide advice on potential grant schemes relevant to your project which may offset some of your costs.

Cautionary Note: The domestic housing construction market is suffering from inflationary costs, and may continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Talk to your Architect and refer to the RIAI website for updates on cost guidance that must be viewed and assessed on current market conditions.

2021 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
House for a Gardener by LiD Architecture
Image ©Brian Cregan

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The RIAI is committed to inspiring excellence in architecture to deliver a sustainable and resilient future. We advocate for all new and retrofitted buildings to be net zero whole life carbon by 2030 under the RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge.

What does the RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge mean for your project?

It is a voluntary initiative for Architects and clients, which sets targets in the following areas:

Operational Energy - *The amount of energy to run and use the building.*
A reduction in the amount of energy needed to operate your home. This could be through improving the building fabric, reducing heat loss and introducing renewable technologies.

Embodied Carbon - *All the carbon emitted in producing buildings.*
A reduction in the amount of carbon typically produced for a project of this size. This could involve specifying low embodied carbon products and also being mindful of waste reduction.

Potable Water - *Water used by individuals for washing, drinking, cooking.*
A reduction in the amount of water required to run your home, through water efficiency. It helps to build resilience to future stresses on water supply.

Health and Wellbeing benefits - Good ventilation, airtightness, low toxic finishes and access to views and light, contributes to good indoor environment quality and can have a particularly positive effect on physical and mental health.

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
Middleton Park Gate Lodge by TAKA Architects
Image ©Alice Clancy

What are the benefits to taking the Climate Challenge?

- Lower running (operational) costs
- A home which is more resilient to fluctuations in energy and water supply and external temperatures
- Measuring embodied carbon could create a leaner design with less waste
- Opportunity to avail of green mortgage rates from having an energy efficient home
- Opportunity to avail of home improvement grant schemes aimed at energy efficiency
- Potential increased value of your home
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Increased level of internal thermal comfort (warmer in winter, cooler in summer)
- A whole-life approach to sustainability, starting at home

Talk to your Architect about how to implement the *RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge* goals within your project. You could also discuss how to integrate a Post-Occupancy Evaluation into the schedule of services provided. Further information is outlined later in this document.

To find out more about the *RIAI Climate Challenge* and ways to design sustainably, refer to RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge and *RIAI Sustainable Design Pathways Guide*.

Domestic renovation and extension, initial consultation via RIAI Simon Open Door
Curve Appeal by Islander Architects
Image ©Peter Molloy

OVERVIEW OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Planning Requirements

Based on your brief, your Architect will advise if planning permission is required, or if the proposal would be considered exempt development, and whether it will be required to apply for a Section 5 Declaration for the works. Further criteria may need to be taken into consideration if your home is a protected structure. Refer to the RIAI Old House New Home guide and Working with an Older Building webpage for more details.

Health and Safety Obligations

Clients have a number of obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013. A client must appoint a competent Project Supervisor for the Design Process (PSDP) and a competent Project Supervisor for the Construction Stage (PSCS) subject to criteria as set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

Upon completion of the project, the PSDP will provide a safety file for the completed structure. This must be kept and made available, as it will be required or future maintenance or renovations.

Further guidance on the duties of a client may be found at https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_and_forms/publications/construction/homeowners_guidance.pdf

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Highly Commended
Seoidin Courtyard House by Darragh Breathnach (Dua)
Image ©Shane Lynam

Building Regulations and Building Control (Amendment) Regulations - BC(A)R

The building owner is ultimately responsible for ensuring that building works are carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations. In relation to the Design and Construction of buildings, the building owner should ensure that they appoint a competent builder and competent registered professionals to act as Designer and as Assigned Certifier. We advise that you read the RIAI Client Guidance Note on BC(A)R and the DHPCLG Guidance available on our website for further detail.

An Architect is typically the most appropriate professional to act as Design Certifier and Assigned Certifier under BC(A)R, S.I.9 of 2014. Should your Architect also be the Assigned Certifier on a project, it is important that this appointment be made under a separate agreement. In August 2015, the Irish Government introduced an 'opt out' from BC(A)R for one-off houses and domestic extensions (S.I.365). There are implications for 'opt-out' which should be discussed with your Architect. You should also refer to the Department circular "Information Note for Owners of new dwellings and extensions who opt out of Statutory Certification for building control purposes"

Certification

Upon completion of the works, if the project has been carried out under the requirements of S.I.9 of 2014, the Assigned Certifier will submit a Certificate of Compliance on Completion and all relevant supporting documentation, under the requirements of S.I.9 of 2014 (if applicable). The Building Control Authority must validate and register this Certificate prior to the home being occupied.

Your Architect will also provide Opinions on Compliance with Planning Permission and / or Exemption from Planning Control, and Opinions on Compliance with Building Regulations. These are important legal documents and the original documents should be retained with your title deeds as they may be required for conveyancing purposes.

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Highly Commended
Seoidin Courtyard House by Darragh Breathnach (Dua)
Image ©Shane Lynam

HOW DOES IT WORK? THE PROJECT STAGES

Stage 1 Development of the Project Brief

Stage 2 Initial Design Stage

Stage 3 Developed Design and Planning Application Stage

Stage 4 Detailed Design and the Tender Process

Stage 5 Construction Stage

Stage 6 Post Occupancy Evaluation

2020 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
In, On and Over the Earth by A2 Architects
Image ©Marie-Louise Halpenny

1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT BRIEF

The Brief

Meet with your Architect to discuss your requirements and aspirations. The information you provide for your Architect is called ‘The Brief’.

A good starting point is to go through your existing home and make a list of what works and does not work for you. Consider whether potential adaptability and future-proofing of the design is important.

Project Parameters

Advise your Architect of your budget, time frame, sustainability and energy efficiency goals, health and well-being requirements, accessibilty needs, landscaping, and any other parameters or services you feel are important, as they will impact on the design.

Agree a time plan, budget, roles, the best method of communication and the services you require with your Architect.

Evaluation of Performance

You may also consider carrying out an evaluation of your home before the design work begins, called a Pre-Occupancy Evaluation. This can identify what works and doesn’t work well in your home in terms of layout, function, thermal comfort, ventilation, indoor air quality and other health factors, daylight levels, energy consumption, embodied carbon already committed in the building fabric, amongst others.

Domestic renovation and extension, initial consultation via RIAI Simon Open Door
Curve Appeal by Islander Architects
Image ©Islander Architects

Post-Occupancy Evaluation

You may also want to consider a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) upon completion of the project. POE is the process of measuring the performance of a building after it has been handed over to the end user and evaluating how the 'in-use' scenario compares to the Design Objectives as set out during the briefing stage.

Client / Architect Agreement

Your Architect will advise on the appropriate Client / Architect Agreement to be signed and will explain the relevant terms and conditions prior to signing.

Time spent at this initial stage is invaluable, as this will form the basis for the development of your designs.

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Workplace and Fit-out- Winner
Working from Home by Simply Architecture
Image © Celeste Burdon

2 INITIAL DESIGN STAGE

Survey

Surveys of your site (new build) or your existing home (extensions, renovations and retrofits) will be carried out. These surveys will form the basis for initial designs in the form of sketch designs.

Specialist Requirements

Your Registered Architect will advise on the need for the appointment of specialist consultants or services based on your project brief. They will advise on planning requirements, building regulations, and health & safety regulations.

Initial Design

Your Architect will develop an Initial Design in the form of sketch designs. Presentation tools your Architect may choose to use could include floor plans, elevations (views) and sections (cut-through), 3D visualisations, physical models and moodboards (where agreed as part of the service).

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Your Architect should be able to provide an initial evaluation of the sustainability benefits of different design options, based on size, orientation, building fabric, etc. This may include a preliminary evaluation of the outcome metrics of the RIAI 2030 Climate Challenge. Your Architect may advise on possible grant funding available.

2021 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Public Choice Award
Field Stonewall House by Taylor McCarney Architects
Image ©Taylor McCarney

3 DEVELOPED DESIGN AND PLANNING APPLICATION STAGE

Developed Design

Your Registered Architect will prepare further detailed drawings to develop the design, and incorporate requirements of planning, building regulations, and health & safety regulations. They will also evaluate the design from a sustainability perspective and ensure that the relevant measures are incorporated, and report on the performance outcome of agreed efficiency metrics.

The input of any specialist consultants will be incorporated in these drawings.

Further reviews may be undertaken to ensure the project is developing in accordance with the project brief, timelines and budgetary requirements. *(Note: You cannot build from these drawings).*

Planning Application

If planning permission is required, your architect will prepare the necessary drawings, documentation and reports in conjunction with the design team. They will make the application on your behalf and lodge with the relevant Planning Authority.

2021 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Highly Commended
House at Kimmage by Steve Larkin Architects
Image ©Alice Clancy.

4 DETAILED DESIGN AND THE TENDER PROCESS

Detailed Design

Your Registered Architect may need to incorporate statutory requirements and any changes as required under a grant of planning permission. A review of the project to ensure compliance with building regulations is advisable during detail design stage.

The Architect will coordinate and manage the Detailed Design process, including the inputs of other consultants. This may include a further evaluation of the building performance outcomes and life-cycle costing.

You may need to revisit relevant grant schemes discussed and ensure that you have submitted all relevant applications and supporting documentation.

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Highly Commended
Saltpans Cottage by Pasparakis Friel
Image ©Peter Molloy

Tender Process

The Architect and design team will prepare tender documentation, drawings and specifications, and any other relevant documentation to enable main and specialist contractors to provide quotations.

Your Architect will also advise on the most appropriate RIAI Form of Building Contract as well as any statutory requirements which need to be complied with. They will also advise on insurance requirements during the construction stage.

It is advisable to seek costings (tenders) from at least three contractors for a project. You and your Architect should be satisfied that each of the contractors is competent to carry out the work. You should ask a contractor to see examples of previous work relevant to your scope and speak to previous clients.

The successful tender may not necessarily be the lowest one. In fact, if a tender is very low, the contractor may have missed something. In some cases, an Architect and client may agree to negotiate a tender price with just one contractor.

Your Architect will coordinate the tender process, and at the end of this stage, they will report on the tenders received.

2021 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
House for a Gardener by LiD Architecture
Image ©Brian Cregan

5 CONSTRUCTION STAGE

Your Architect will act as the administrator of the Building Contract between you and and the contractor.

They will provide advice on requirements for compliance with relevant statutory requirements (planning, building regulations and health and safety).

During the construction stage, your Architect will inspect the building work at regular intervals to ensure that it is being carried out generally in accordance with the contract documents and statutory requirements.

Your Architect will provide you with updates at regular intervals on the progress and quality of the work, and any issues which may arise on site. They will also act as the liaison point between the client and the contractor, and they will be the main point of contact for queries and decisions to be communicated between the client and the contractor.

Your Architect will provide technical support to the contractor, and coordinate inputs required from other consultants.

They will also issue certificates of payment due to the contractor, in conjunction with the Quantity Surveyor, if one has been appointed). Cashflow planning may be necessary, particularly with lender / grant requirements.

2023 Wood Awards Ireland - Small-scale Building - Winner
The Forge by Broadstone Architects
Image © Shantanu Starick

PROJECT MILESTONE — COMPLETION

Prior to completion, and before you take ownership, take note of the following:

What information do you require before moving in?

You should receive confirmation that all systems have been correctly commissioned and are operating to the greatest efficiency (heating, ventilation, hot water, etc).

You should be fully familiar with how the various systems operate within the home, where all relevant controls are located (e.g. heat pump controls, lighting, safety shut off valves for water, etc).

The PSDP shall provide you with a copy of the Safety File, based on information provided by the contractor. The contractor should provide the relevant Operations and Maintenance manuals and all other associated documentation to inform you as to how to manage and operate all installations in your home.

Certification

The issue of the Certificate of Practical Completion by the Architect is a milestone in the project. At this stage, the contractor hands over possession of the site to the client. Your Architect will advise of your obligations under the contract, and the necessary insurances you should have in place.

The contractor shall provide all necessary certification to the Architect to enable them to complete the certification process.

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Commended
Hiding in Plain Sight by Architectural Farm
Image ©Ste Murray

Upon completion of the works, if the project has been carried out under the requirement of SI9, the Assigned Certifier will submit a Certificate of Compliance on Completion and all relevant supporting documentation. The Building Control Authority must validate and register this Certificate prior to the home being occupied.

Your Registered Architect will also provide an Opinion on Compliance with Planning Permission and / or exemption from planning control, and an Opinion on Compliance with Building Regulations. These are important legal documents and the original documents should be retained with your title deeds as they may be required for conveyancing purposes.

Snag List

Under the RIAI Building Contract, the Architect is the arbitrator of the standard and quality of the building work.

The Architect will draw up a snag list to identify any building defects before you take ownership. Typical building defects may include poor workmanship and finishes; or minor items which have not been completed, but do not adversely affect occupying the home.

2020 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
In, On and Over the Earth by A2 Architects
Image ©Marie-Louise Halpenny

6 POST-OCCUPANCY EVALUATION

Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is the process of measuring the performance of a building after it has been handed over to the end user. It evaluates how the 'in-use' scenario compares to the design objectives at the outset of a project. Some Architects may offer this service. This should be carried out after a pre-agreed period of time post-occupation, usually after twelve months, and will assess objective data (collected from sensors, meters, utility bills, etc.) and subjective data (collated through questionnaires filled out by occupants).

The outcome of the POE will determine if there are any items in the home needing to be addressed (e.g. adjustment of heating and ventilation system settings, how and when the systems are being used, increasing frequency of maintenance contracts, reviewing fabric which is performing better / not as well as expected, etc.) which would improve the functionality of the home for the end users.

Confirm with your Architect whether they provide this service, and whether this POE service is included in your Client-Architect agreement. The scale and format of the data collected should be agreed at the outset of the project.

WHAT TO DO IF ISSUES ARISE?

If issues arise during your building project, raise them with your Architect as soon as possible, preferably in writing.

The Architects' Code of Conduct obliges Architects to have a written procedure for prompt and courteous handling of complaints.

If you are unable to resolve your dispute directly with your Architect, the RIAI provides a non-statutory dispute avoidance and mediation service you may wish to consider.

RIAI Website

The RIAI website has fantastic free resources in the Work with an Architect section:

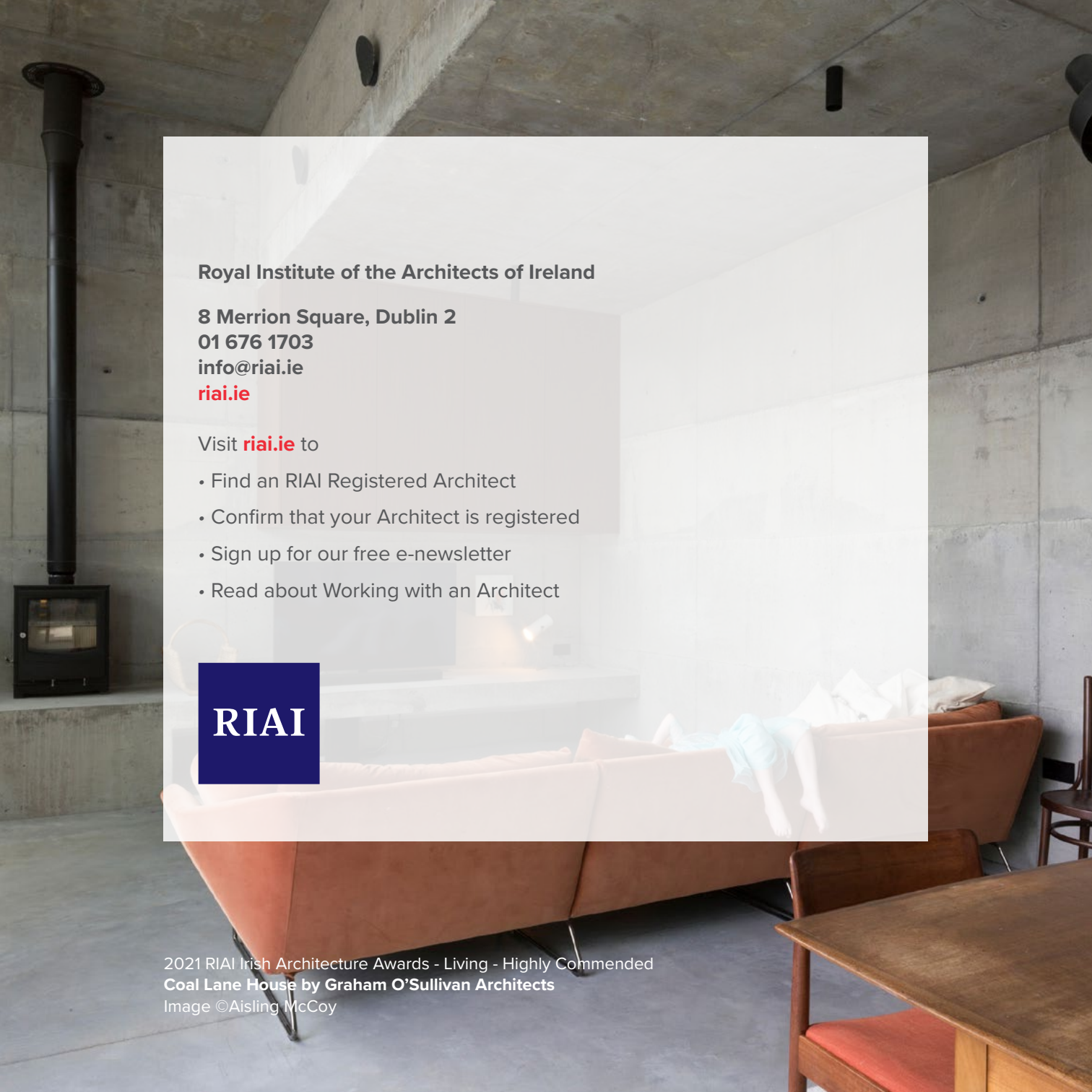
https://www.riai.ie/work-with-an-architect

house + design is a consumer magazine published annually by the RIAI and Architecture Ireland Publishing Ltd. It includes features on new builds, extensions, renovations, and garden design. It's available in newsagents nationwide and the RIAI Bookshop. house + design is Ireland's only dedicated magazine for Architect-designed homes and interiors.

house + design magazine is available from the RIAI Bookshop at a cost of €4.99.

https://www.riai.ie/discover-architecture/house-design

2022 RIAI Irish Architecture Awards - Living - Winner
The Willows by Peter Nickels Architects
Image ©Andrew Campion



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Coal Lane House by Graham O'Sullivan Architects
Image ©Aisling McCoy