Gormley Launches Open House Dublin 2007 and Announces The Development of a New Policy On Architecture

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Speaking at the launch of Open House Dublin 2007 by the Irish Achitecture Foundation, Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, today (18 October) announced the development of a new Policy on Architecture.

The Minister stated, *"It is vital that we continue to recognise the social and cultural importance of architecture in society and promote the achievement of a built environment of the highest quality." He went on to say, "it is important to respond to the changing nature of issues relating to the evolution of the built environment, and it is in that context that I have approved the development of a new Policy on Architecture."*

The new policy will address issues which have arisen in the years since publication of the first policy. Minister Gormley explained that *"It will place more emphasis on sustainable development of the environment and on urban design. It will continue to encourage and support high quality modern architecture. The policy also aims at incorporating architectural heritage in a holistic, integrated manner. Finally, it will develop an action plan which will respond to, and promotes awareness of, all those areas."*

The Minister said that *"In the coming weeks I will appoint a Steering Committee with representatives from a broad spectrum of public and private sector nominees, who will oversee the development of the policy. This will be underpinned by three focus groups to specialise on each of the proposed three core themes namely promoting quality in the built environment, promoting sustainability and promoting awareness.*

During the development of the new policy on architecture there will be extensive public consultation. Minister Gormley continued *"As part of the consultation process, a number of broader nationwide seminars or "**think-ins**" will be hosted where a range of individuals/organisations involved in the built environment and members of the public will be brought together to discuss the main themes emerging during preparation of the policy."* He added, *"It is intended that the policy and action plan would have a six-year lifespan."*

Referring to Open House Dublin 2007, Minister Gormley said *"This event, which is in its second year, has captured the imagination of Dublin citizens. Last year up to 10,000 people, young and old, took to Dublin's streets during Open House Dublin to visit a diverse range buildings – from architect-designed modern houses and apartment schemes to historic properties and landmark public buildings."*

The theme of this year's event is ***"The Living City"*** - buildings which make up a vibrant city from our offices and workplaces to our homes and community centres.

The Open House Dublin programme includes over 30 new buildings and events this year. Dublin's youngest quarter – the South Docklands – features the award-winning legal headquarters Riverside One and No 1 Grand Canal Square. Contemporary new residential buildings include Gallery Quay, Hannover Quay, Reuben Street Apartments and the Wooden Building.

There is also the opportunity to see some innovative residential architectural projects including the conversion of three Temple Cottages in Broadstone, the Long House on Percy Lane and a contemporary mews house in Ballsbridge.

Some of our historic buildings are also on view to the public, including Government Buildings, City Hall, Iveagh House, the Custom House, OPW Offices on St Stephen's Green and the Royal Irish Academy.

Minister Gormley pointed out that a new event called OpenSpace has been added to the programme of events for this year. This features walking, cycling and boat tours.

All OPEN HOUSE DUBLIN events are free of charge, and only a small proportion will require pre-booking.

Further information on Open House can be obtained at
www.architecturefoundation.ie