

1 OUR COMMITMENT

With construction still contributing 30-40% of global carbon emissions, we are aware of the need to set objectives and focus on our activities in relation to cutting carbon emissions within our sector. S+SA recognises the importance of environmental sustainability and is committed to promoting and acting in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. We will continually strive towards being an environmentally friendly place to work, adopting a culture that reflects this to ensure there is an increasing positive impact. Our Environmental and Sustainability Policy applies to the Practice as a whole and our influence on our designs.

We recognise that we have the opportunity to design for the longest possible building life span and to use the least environmentally damaging resources. We will wherever possible conserve existing buildings and use renewable resources and promote re-use of materials with consequent energy and material savings.

We have the ability to utilise specialist software produced by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to assess environmental performance of the buildings we design and strive to achieve the highest BREEAM ratings.

It is the policy of the Practice to:

- continue to comply with all relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- continually seek to improve environmental performance.
- quantify and reduce environmental impacts, bearing in mind the whole life cycles of energy and material supplies.
- integrate environmental concerns into all planning and design decisions.
- minimise the environmental impact of new buildings during their construction and use.
- improve staff environmental awareness and understanding.
- provide suitable training on environmental issues for employees.
- recognise and encourage the contribution every employee can make towards improving environmental performance.
- manage and conserve energy and water efficiently within its premises.
- promote the use of less environmentally damaging transport options.
- promote a safe and healthy workplace through education and motivation.
- encourage all employees to apply in the wider community the environmental values that they develop in their work.
- review and, where possible, improve our performance each year with positive action in any areas where improvement is needed.

We strive to continually improve our environmental performance through the periodic review of our Environmental Management System, and by carefully considering the environmental and social impacts of our current and future activities.

2. DUTIES AS AN EMPLOYER – IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

We are mindful of our obligations as an employer to enhance environmental awareness among our staff and we will continue to reduce our own emissions by the following methods:

- Providing up to date and relevant information, instruction, and mandatory training.
- Incorporate best practice in environmental management.
- In the procurement and consumption of resources, prioritising products and services which enable carbon reduction.
- To reduce fuel consumption and lower exhaust emissions, encourage walking, cycling, car shares, and using public transport to attend meetings/site visits etc.
- Promotion of our Cycle to Work Scheme
- Recycling toner cartridges, paper, and all other office consumables, wherever possible, through safe and responsible methods.

The Practice will look to implement objectives to reduce our consumption of material resources, fuel and energy and to maintain links with relevant environmental bodies.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EMPLOYEE

Whilst the Directors accept the main responsibility for the establishment of the Practice's Environmental Policy, responsibility for the implementation, operation and satisfactory performance of the Policy lies with individual employees who have a very important role in co-operating with and embracing the spirit of the Policy. Our employees play a vital role in the reduction of waste and lowering emissions and we will embrace a consciousness of sustainability within the practice through:

- Regular internal discussions.
- Collation and internal publicity of staff related sustainability information via team meetings.

4. DUTIES AS A SERVICE PROVIDER – DESIGNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

We have a particular role and obligation towards the protection of the environment and should lead the way in accomplishing sustainable development that will meet the long-term needs of future generations. We aim to work in close collaboration with our clients and co-consultants to give the highest priority to the short and long term welfare, health and safety of the community. We should consider regional, global and cumulative effects of projects, in addition to the local effect.

Our design activities will seek to:

- Reduce energy consumption of buildings and promote on-site reusable energy systems.
- Design to encourage walking and cycling and to optimise the use of public transport.
- Promote the use of low embodied energy materials to minimise waste and pollution.
- Promote brownfield sites.

- Design to protect and conserve water, promoting the use of rainwater.
- Design to minimise the effect of development on flora and all forms of wildlife and maintain their habitat, including protection of ground water and natural water courses.
- Design to provide a healthy internal environment with suitable ventilation, fresh air, daylight, user friendly controls and low noise levels.

Our aim is to ensure:

- careful evaluation of the environmental benefits and adverse impacts of proposed projects;
- conservation of energy;
- reduction in the use of non-renewable resources and increased re-use of materials;
- reduced waste production through improved transportation and distribution systems and recycling of waste products;
- restoration or improvement of damaged land, polluted water supplies and disturbed ecosystems;
- affective transfer of environmental knowledge and experience.

We will achieve this through:

- the Practice and its employees keeping informed on global environmental trends and issues;
- discussing environmental problems with professionals from other disciplines;
- providing information to clients about environmental problems and how adverse effects can be considered.
- actively supporting and participating in relevant environmental education;
- promoting research and development relevant to protecting and improving the environment.

4. PROJECT ACTIONS

Our Architects will take the following actions for each project that we are involved in:

- evaluate the positive and negative environmental impacts of each project;
- within our site analysis, we assess public transport provisions and local plan targets in line with sustainability;
- liaise with our clients on environmental issues and work with them to address concerns, in so far as project constraints permit;
- suggest alternatives to clients if environmental risks emerge;
- develop improved approaches to environmental studies and consider environmental effects early in the planning process;
- evaluate the long-term consequences of environmental changes;
- make clients aware that architects can reduce, but not always eliminate, adverse environmental impacts,
- Appraise Clients on how to minimize the adverse effects of projects in all phases – initial planning, design, construction, commissioning, operating and decommissioning.