



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/113

Date Thursday, 4th April 2019

Dear Mr. Foxe,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

- **copies of any valuation reports held relating to the purchase of a property on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington DC.**
- **copies of any submissions prepared for the Secretary General and/or Minister relating to the above purchase.**
- **copies of any correspondence/recommendations from the Irish Ambassador relating to the above purchase.**
- **copies of any correspondence between your Dept and either the Dept of the Taoiseach or PER relating to the above.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 20th March 2019

I have identified 21 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 19 of the records and to part-grant 2 of the records.

The Embassy of Ireland to the United States of America in Washington is one of the most important diplomatic missions for Ireland.

The Embassy has an important role in citizen support services, in the promotion of Ireland's economic interests, including hosting events in support of the state agencies, such as IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Bord Bia; supporting US immigration reform efforts, advancing reconciliation on the Island of Ireland, and the advancement of Ireland's objectives on Brexit. These issues are key to the Departments foreign policy objectives and promotion of Ireland in the United States.

The Department acquired the building directly adjacent to the Embassy. This building will provide the extra space to allow us increase the mission staff complement both in the short and longer term. We will be able to provide enhanced public service to our citizens and

boost the promotion of Ireland's business, cultural and arts and economic opportunities in this important location.

Records number 4 and number 12 are being part granted to you at this time under section 36 of the 2014 Act – Commercially Sensitive Information. The records relate to commercial information. I have considered the public interest in releasing this information as the public have an interest in how the Department spends tax payers funds. However, on balance, I believe that the public interest is best served by not disclosing commercial information where it could prejudice the competitive position of the Department.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Carr', is written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Carr