



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha Department of Foreign Affairs

26 February 2021

Ken Foxe
Right to Know

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2021/007

Dear Mr Foxe,

I refer to your recently submitted request for information, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, in which you requested the following:

A copy of the architectural survey or condition report following an inspection of Villa Spada in 2019

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on the 15th of January 2021. The record concerned does not appear to exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken. We carried out a search of all relevant paper and electronic files both at Department of Foreign Affairs HQ and Embassy of Ireland, Rome, but were unsuccessful in locating the record. While I cannot say for certain, this may be explained by the fact that the reference you extracted from an internal Departmental inspection report referred to a survey having been conducted in 2019, but did not refer to any report prepared following that inspection.

I am therefore refusing your request on administrative grounds under section 15 (1) (a):

- (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where—
(a) the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken,

For your information the Embassy network worldwide is used by the Department and state agencies in pursuit of its strategic goals on behalf of the State. They consist of offices and official accommodation, which provide platforms for our Missions to promote Ireland's political, economic and cultural interests and values, provide services to our citizens, develop strategic stakeholder relationships and represent Ireland in international organisations.

The Department must ensure that its buildings meet security and health and safety standards, as well as providing universal access facilities as part of our duty of care to staff, users and visitors to our buildings. The Department maintains appropriate health, safety and security in

our buildings and, in addition, complies with any additional national standards/requirements in local jurisdiction obligations.

All refurbishment at Embassies are conducted in line with the Department's procurement obligations under Government public tendering and contracting rules, including both National and EU Public Procurement thresholds.

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, (€10 for medical card holders). A copy of the medical card should be provided to avail of the reduced fee. 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,



Donal N. O'Connell