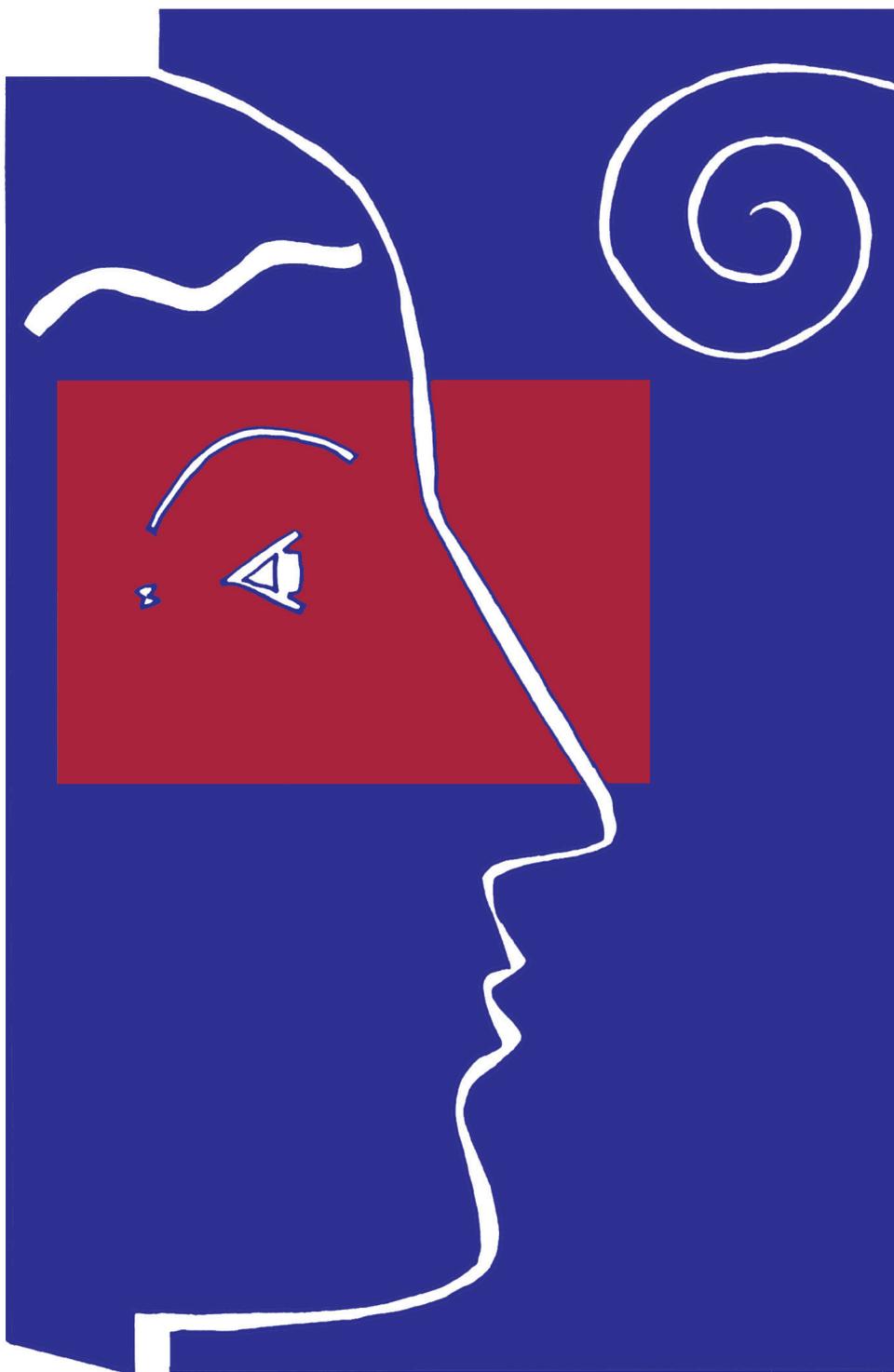


# opus

## ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION AWARDS 2006



Presented by

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The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

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*Bank of Ireland  
OPUS Architecture  
& Construction  
Awards 2006*

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

# Bank of Ireland Opus Architecture and Construction Awards 2006

## Assessor's Report

The OPUS Awards, which began seven years ago, formally acknowledge the symbiotic relationship between architecture and construction. Paying lip-service to good contemporary design is easy but supporting good architecture and quality construction in a more real sense involves an empathy with the processes involved and an ability on the part of the client, architect and contractor to bring quality buildings to reality. This is the reason why this award scheme has site visits to short-listed buildings. It is also the reason why we have architects, contractors and an engineer as part of the panel of judges.

## Aims and Objectives

- To promote architectural design that rises above pure utility, beyond basic construction, to combine all that is practical and necessary with a building that is meaningful, humane and beautiful;
- To recognise and publicly acknowledge excellence in building construction that combines management and teamwork with workmanship, ingenuity and performance against programme;
- To communicate to the public the contribution of Irish architects, contractors and their clients to Ireland's cultural and economic life.

## Judging Process

Up to two years ago any work from the office of an Assessor was prohibited from entering the awards. With the new enlarged format for the awards and additional assessors this rule was felt to be too restrictive. An Assessor is required to declare an interest in any project submitted and to withdraw from the adjudication when the project is being assessed. All concerned rigorously adhered to this process.

Some 151 entries were submitted this year. One day was spent doing the initial short-list. A second day was devoted to a further refinement of the short-list. The Assessors then visited the projects of this refined short-list. Seven days of site visiting and judging were spent by the assessors in this year's awards process between early September and today. This level of assessing is unique to the OPUS Awards process. The Assessors' discussions were open, vigorous and without any agendas. The awards are fundamentally pluralist, inclusive rather than exclusive. We seek the watermark of design and construction excellence rather than stylistic preferences. The time of the Assessors was freely given and is without financial reward.

## **Site Visits**

Our site visits looked for the essential meat and marrow of the project. We looked at the difficulty of the particular problem to be solved, the architectural quality of the proposed solution and how well the built quality had been executed. We sought buildings that would be embellished by use, not embarrassed by it.

There was such a variety of work submitted, from house extensions to city scale projects. Small was not always beautiful. Big was not always brash. In fact, the larger projects were the most contested award categories with some of the most intriguing and interesting work. But there were also little jewels of buildings exquisitely designed and constructed on difficult sites that would confound less skilled architects and contractors. The best buildings displayed insight as well as intellect; and sensitivity as well as toughness in achieving their goals. There are no shrink wrapped solutions in the awards tonight.

## **Awards**

The number of awards and commendations to be made tonight was not restricted by arbitrary numbers or award headings, but rather by the intrinsic quality of the submitted schemes. For this reason there are Commended, Highly Commended and Awards to be presented to you this evening. The Award is a bronze sculpture of significant value specially designed for the OPUS Awards. An award will be made to both the architects and contractor involved in a selected scheme. Citations will also be read.

I wish to thank my fellow assessors Eugene Cleary, Noel Dowley, Roger Dunwoody and Pearse Sutton for their insight, dedication and good humour throughout the extended judging process.

The assessors want to thank all who submitted projects to the OPUS Awards. We appreciate that it takes courage and conviction to submit a design and a building for scrutiny by others and for the results to be made public.

Goethe, the German philosopher, described architecture as frozen music. To become music, sounds must be chosen and arranged. So it is with architecture. It is only through the composition of space and the selection of materials, brought together in light, that architecture is created. But architecture is both an art and a science, and the science of construction is a vital part of the orchestra that helps create our physical environment. Our mutual task is to create environments that help make human beings human.

The projects we award here tonight do that and more.

**Ciarán O'Connor FRIAI**  
**Chairman of Assessors**  
**7.11.2006**

# Student Awards

Three schools of architecture submitted projects by their final-year students. Each school has its own educational approach but, as practioners and builders, we would not like architects to become talkitects. We would like to see unity of competence, combined with a diversity of architectural ideas. Architecture, after all, is both an art and a science.

We have five Commended, two Highly-commended and three Awards in recognition of the high standard of submissions in the Student Category.

## Commended

Louise Souter, UCD

We commend Louise Souter for her project Translations: Temporality in Space, for its research and specific approach for the Aran Islands.

## Commended

Jane Lamour, UCD

We commend Jane Lamour for her project Humanising the Institution: Art Galleries and Public Space, for its analysis and urban infill qualities in the City of Belfast.

## Commended

Niamh Ni Mhorain, DIT

We commend Niamh Ni Mhorain for her project Language Learning Building, for its insight and response to a demanding brief.

## Commended

Leigh-Ann Daly, DIT

We commend Leigh-Ann Daly for her project A New Fashion & Textile Faculty for NCAD for its approach to a demanding site.

## **Commended**

Michael Bradley, DIT

We commend Michael Bradley's thesis ACHQ: The City Muse, which proposes a brave response to a difficult site that is near the disaster that is Hawkins House.

## **Highly-Commended**

Sara King, DIT

We highly commend Sara King for her project Developing Ceannt Station, Galway. Her thesis proposal acknowledges the city structure of Galway while looking to its future.

## **Highly-Commended**

Hugo Lamont, DIT

We highly-commend Hugo Lamont's Werberg Street Model School for the Applied Leaving Certificate, which researches educational needs and the repair of the city, while at the same time combining social conscience with architectural skill.

## **Award Winner**

Emma McGloin, DIT

We make an OPUS Student Award to Sligo Museum, Library & Archive by Emma McGloin for the successful resolution of a demanding brief, combined with a difficult but dramatic city.

## **Award Winner**

Martin McCauley, Queens University, Belfast

We make an OPUS Student Award to Martin McCauley for his thesis Small Town, Big Ideas: A new mixed-use Quarter for Donegal Town, which translates extensive research into the existing urban qualities of Donegal Town with a well-considered proposal for a new urban quarter.

## **Award Winner**

Laurence Lord, DIT

We make an OPUS Student Award to Navan Urban Regeneration by Laurence Lord. This well-researched, carefully-analysed and site-responsive design proposal for what is now a left-over site is handled with great imagination and architectural skill.

## Under €750,000

There is one Commended, one Highly-Commended and three Awards in this awards section.

### Commended

**Project:** 3 Killiney View, Dublin

**Architect:** Box Architecture, Dublin

**Contractor:** Britz Construction Management, Dublin

An existing 1950s semi-detached house close to the Dart line and within a Victorian suburb has been transformed from a dreary conglomeration of badly-built extensions into a bright and thoughtful family home full of light and space and built to a good standard.

### Highly-Commended

**Project:** Beechfield, Termonfeckin, Co Louth

**Architect:** McGarry Ní Éanaigh Architects, Co Louth

**Contractor:** SFH Construction Ltd, Co Armagh

A standard-issue 1950s house has been so transformed by its new extension and renovation as to be a contemporary home of quality and presence beyond the confines of the original building. Natural materials are used with care and precision and the landscape of the site respected and enhanced by all new additions.

# Under €750,000 (cont.)

## Award Winner

**Project:** Refurbishment & Extension to a Victorian terraced house, Donnybrook, Dublin

**Architect:** Bone O'Donnell Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Robert Doyle Construction Ltd, Dublin

This project included a new extension and part refurbishment of a 2-storey Victorian house and its 3-storey return. The built intervention transforms the return and, in so doing, creates a dialogue of contrasts of line, proportion and light to the benefit of old and new. The complexity of design and construction is very well handled. A site visit was necessary to discover these qualities.

## Award Winner

**Project:** 13A Thor Place, Stoneybatter, Dublin

**Architect:** ODOS Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** CKC Ltd, Dublin

This is another project where only a site visit can tell the full story. The corner site in a very compact inner-city area is transcended by a masterful house plan full of imagination and invention. When first seen from the road the external form and colour are somewhat ordinary and everyday but, when the front door opens, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Vistas between inside and outside combine with ingeniously-introduced light to create fluid spaces, hallowed out from the excavated semi-basement. This is a well-designed and built house loved by its clients.

## Award Winner

**Project:** Addition to a Period House, Sandycove, Co Dublin

**Architect:** DTA Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Mick Deevy Construction Ltd, Dublin

A large addition to a Victorian villa on a difficult site with significant structural issues can be a daunting task for any architect and contractor, but not so in this unique case. This addition has a creative and intelligent impact beyond its own footprint. The conductivity between old and new is electric, while the contrasts spacially and in construction terms are explored and elaborated. This is a very difficult project executed with rare design skill, beautifully formed and built.

# Housing

There are two Awards in this section.

## Award Winner

**Project:** St Gerard's Court, Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo

**Architect:** MV Cullinan Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Burns Construction Ltd, Galway

This is an urban infill scheme for social housing in a backland town center site designed with skill and intelligence. All the essential elements of urban regeneration are brought together to resolve significant site problems and create a new courtyard, street and plaza that form a seamless, yet distinct, urban addition to Ballyhaunis. Mayo County Council is to be commended for initiating this worthwhile project which combines modest building elements with civic responsibility, well built to a good quality of finish.

## Award Winner

**Project:** 5,6,7 Church Lane, Rathmines, Dublin

**Architect:** Cloonan O'Donnell with Carew Kelly Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Carragoon Construction, Co Kildare

A 15-metre wide garage site now supports three family houses whose deep plan has been creatively manipulated in cross-section to give a variety of appropriate and light-filled spaces. What appears on plan to be pragmatic and workaday is found on a site visit to be an insightful interrogation of workaday realities and urban renewal. The quality of workmanship from brickwork to plaster and joinery is good.

# Heritage

There are two highly-commended projects in this category.

## Highly-Commended

**Project:** Belvedere Orphanage Housing, Tyrellspass, Co Westmeath

**Architect:** deBlacam & Meagher, Dublin

**Contractor:** Oliver Donlon Developments, Ballymore, Co Westmeath

These five orphanage buildings dating from 1850 were in an abandoned and derelict state when the site was purchased for social housing. It is to the credit of Westmeath County Council that they choose to restore, reconstruct and sensitively extend this significant local landmark. The architect and contractor responded to the significant challenges involved with insight, skill and craftsmanship.

## Highly-Commended

**Project:** Cobh Social Welfare Office, Cobh, Co Cork

**Architect:** Architectural Services, Office of Public Works, Dublin

**Contractor:** Cummor Construction, Blarney, Co Cork

The old Custom House in Cobh, once boarded up, has been carefully restored and extended. Its new life as a social welfare building brings an interplay of continuity and evolution between the restored old building and the carefully-inserted new building. Significant street level differences are boldly bridged, breathing new life into an important town. The quality of restoration, research, design and building are of a high standard.

## Under €7 Million

There are two Commends and one Award in this category.

### Commended

**Project:** Residential Community Building for the Sisters of Mercy, Mater Hospital, Dublin

**Architect:** MCO Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** M & P Construction, Saggart, Co Dublin

A new convent building within the curtilage of the protected Mater building is not an easy task. The new green-agenda building and associated landscaped areas provide a contrast with the original hospital, and are responsive to, and reflective of, the nuns' need for private and contemplative space.

### Commended

**Project:** Teachers Resource & Learning Centre, Sandford Park School, Dublin

**Architect:** DTA Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Kingston Construction Ltd, Dublin

This modest building needed to be visited to be fully appreciated. It does all the right things in respecting its older neighbours yet is precise, assured, contemporary and well constructed.

## Under €7 Million (cont.)

### Award Winner

**Project:** Galway City Museum, Spanish Arch, Galway City

**Architect:** Architectural Services, Office of Public Works, Dublin

**Contractor:** John Sisk & Son Ltd, Galway

This small building does many things very well. A derelict site adjacent to the Spanish Arch has been positively transformed into a new civic space defined by the new museum, the old city wall and the free-flowing river Corrib. Unlike most museums, it is outward and not just inward looking. It embraces the city vistas and could be a cultural metaphor for a dynamic Galway. We hope it will be an active cultural center rather than an old-fashioned museum. We know that Galway has been waiting a long time for a new museum but this building was worth the wait. It also raises the standard of design and building for the city of the tribes.

## Over €7 Million

There are two commended, three highly-commended and three Awards in this category.

### Commended

**Project:** Diagnostic Hub, Endoscopy Unit & Link Building, Bon Secours Hospital, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

**Architects:** Burke-Kennedy Doyle Architects

**Contractor:** Bowen Construction Ltd

This was a difficult project to design and construct. Four phases of work had to be executed while the original hospital continued with specialised operations. Old and new interconnect with ease and mutual respect. The original 1950's hospital has been re-invigorated without being ignored.

### Commended

**Project:** Scotch Hall, Drogheda, Co Louth

**Architects:** Douglas Wallace Architects

**Contractor:** John Sisk & Son Ltd, Dublin

Large shopping centres are not renowned for their sensitivity of scale and positive contribution to neglected urban renewal areas, but the Scotch Hall project is a welcome exception. A new pedestrian bridge, the integration of protected buildings, a riverside location and a good mix of commercial uses including a hotel, apartments and all the necessary car parking, combine together to make a positive contribution to the renewal of a redundant industrial site. Drogheda has been added to rather than subtracted from by this development.

# Over €7 Million (cont.)

## Highly-Commended

**Project:** Nurses Education Building, WIT, waterford

**Architects:** A & D Wejchert & Partners Architects

**Contractor:** Cleary doyle Contracting Ltd, Wexford

The WIT Campus continues to improve with this latest addition. The buildings atrium is central to its use by students but it is also central to its environmental strategy for daylighting, natural ventilation and energy consumption. Energy cost savings of 40-50% have been aimed for. High levels of methane and carbon dioxide below ground and a demanding structure were met with skill and competence by both the design team and contractor.

## Highly-Commended

**Project:** The Steelworks, Foley Street, Dublin 1

**Architects:** Laughton Tyler Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Rogerson Redden Associates Management Contracting

The brave development in a once neglected area of Dublin city centre shows how urban renewal and architecture, coupled with build quality, can help rather than hinder regeneration. We were impressed by the mix of uses and the quality of the courtyard buildings but less so with the street elevations. Nevertheless, this development is a quantum quality improvement on what was here before and augers well for the future.

# Over €7 Million (cont.)

## Highly-Commended

**Project:** City Quarter, Lapps Quay, Cork

**Architects:** Scott, tallon Walker Architects

**Contractor:** PJ Hegarty & Sons Ltd, Cork

This is a dignified and thoughtful redevelopment of two derelict sites. The urban pattern, scale and waterfront location have been responded to in a clear and contemporary manner. The mix of uses will support future regeneration adjacent to the city centre. Difficult site construction issues were overcome by the contractor. Positive collaboration between the client, the design team and contractor has given Cork city a kick-start to further urban regeneration.

## Award Winner

**Project:** Áras Chill Dara, Naas, Co Kildare

**Architects:** Heneghan Peng Architects in association with Arthur Gibney & Partners, Dublin

**Contractor:** Pierse Contracting, Dublin

The new Kildare County Council Civic Offices appeared more striking in photographs than in reality. For the first time there was a significant difference of opinion among the Assessor's. Some felt that the building oscillated between delight and disappointment, between geometry and gesture, and missed opportunities compared to the competition entry. Others felt that the light filled interiors, the clarity of circulation, the bravado of its engineered construction and its environmental concerns overcome enough of their many niggling reservations. Naas has gained a contemporary prototype building of considerable presence. Kildare County Council have a building to support their aims and have supported emerging architectural talent. The contractor has delivered a quality-built building originally pregnant with potential.

## Over €7 Million (cont.)

### Award Winner

**Project:** Cork County Hall Redevelopment, Cork

**Architects:** Shay Cleary Architects, Dublin

**Contractor:** Rohcon Ltd, Cork

The redevelopment of the 1968 County Hall is a significant achievement. The recently old is transformed through the sympathetic re-interpretation of its original 1960's character. The new additions of concourse, council chamber and environmental controls, are dramatic, appropriate and effective, respectively. The environmentally active facade is a fine filigree of glass louvres in stainless steel frames and is a striking counterpoint to the tower facade. The new top floor gives panoramic views of Cork city and county. Overall the building has been transformed by an interplay of continuity and evolution brilliantly orchestrated by its architect and executed beautifully by its contractor.

### Award Winner

**Project:** Marine Institute Headquarters, Rinvilla, Co Galway

**Architects:** Architectural Services, The Office of Public Works, Dublin

**Contractor:** John Sisk & Son Ltd, Galway

This is a project that photographs do not do justice to. On one level it is a metaphor for the nature of the ocean — surging fluid, changing, eroding with a life of its own. On another level it is anchored deep down to its site and building brief. The attention to concept, detail and construction throughout the building from materials to fittings is intensive and invigorating. The enthusiasm of the client for the building was palpable. We came away uplifted by what had been achieved in architectural, landscaping and building terms. This is a building for people and marine science that rings as sweet as a ship's bell.

# Timber Award

This year's sees the introduction of a Wood Excellence Award. The award is made to the designers and manufacturers of a design or designs that the Opus assessors feel displays excellence and ingenuity in design and execution.

## Award Winner

**Project:** Marine Institute Headquarters, Rinvilla, Co Galway

**Architects:** Architectural Services, Office of Public Works, Dublin

**Joiner:** Woodfit Ltd, Athlone, Co Westmeath  
Calwood Ltd, Galway

The Wood Award is made to the Marine Institute in Galway for its poetic and pragmatic use of timber, from furniture to acoustic walls and from paneling to flooring. The flexibility of wood is combined with its sensuous tactile qualities to meet the functional requirements of its many end uses. The beautifully-designed and made joinery and furniture also provide a psychological warmth that only a natural material such as wood can give.