

# Discovering the new in Dublin

We asked our readers and the online community at MIMOA which exemplary or innovative, hidden or spectacular buildings in the Irish capital should be included. Participants submitted their favourite picks to the MIMOA website. Unless otherwise noted, the final selection of projects was contributed by A10 correspondent Emmett Scanlon, who here guides us through **Dublin's** best new architecture.

■ DUBLIN (IE) — TEXT: EMMETT SCANLON, ILLUSTRATION: HARMEN VAN DER HORST

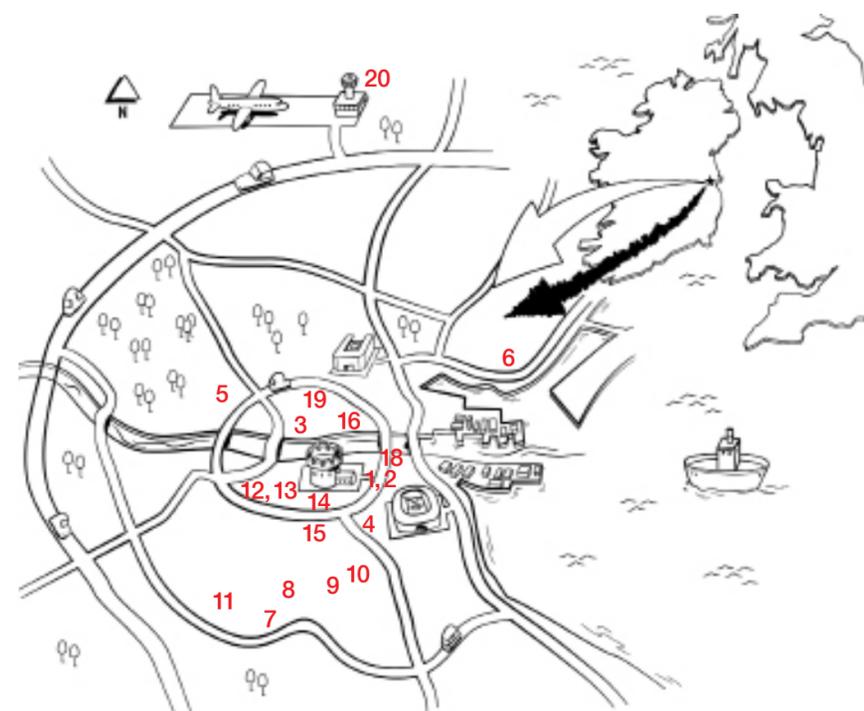
Dublin's design pulse is quickening. The scale of operation may be currently curtailed but there is now a new sense of a developing design community in the city. On the one hand, initiatives such as PIVOT Dublin provide a focus around which architects and product, interior and graphic designers can gather. On the other, Dublin's growing design maturity has begun to permeate the city streets in a more obvious way than ever before. This is perhaps because Dublin is realizing that good design helps attract people to the city and helps sell things. It has also been recognized by commissioners that Dublin has a strong crop of designers who are ready, willing and able to make their mark on the retail and cultural landscape. These factors, combined with a new, economically-driven pop-up culture of places to eat, drink and shop, means plenty of locations in the city centre

are having their insides redesigned. Many are on South William Street and Clement and Peko, BEAR and Project 51 must feature in any design tour of the city centre. Nearby, too, is **Coppinger Row** (1) designed by **architecture republic**, a dark room on a busy pedestrian street that has been elegantly fitted out in a kind of urban-collage of hard and soft materials, making for a fresh and immediately relaxing space. Nearby is **Brown Thomas** (2), Ireland's luxury brand store. Brown Thomas has begun to sponsor Irish designers by working with **CAST architecture** and **Nigel Peake** in 2011 to design its **Children's Rooms** on Grafton Street, Dublin's main shopping street. They required a series of bespoke rooms for boys', girls', and baby clothing, a gifting area and a room for shoes. Oak parquet is used to loosely delineate the areas, with Peake's drawings telling the story of the shop and its history in the city.

Smaller, well-designed places are scattered across the city, with two notable cafés by **Designgoat** worth a walk north or south from the city centre. In **brother hubbard** (3), on Capel Street, warm ash wood and the clever use of custom-made, powder-coated steel is inventive and quietly exciting, subtly supporting the culinary ethos of the café. In **3FE** (4), a café and a barista school on Grand Canal Street, in a large, sunny room hard on the street the aesthetic is raw, basic and bare, with scaffolding poles and elbows and plywood being used to custom make furniture inside and out.

If PIVOT Dublin is that rarest of animals – a publicly-funded body actively supporting good – private clients remain the real heroes of Irish architecture, and no less so in Dublin. Dublin is a city of houses, and many of its suburbs, a fifteen-minute tram, train or car ride from the city centre, are full of newly built or extended and renovated homes. A few of these heroes are, of course, those architects who have found ways to build their own homes. **A2 Architects** built two mews homes on **Lucky Lane** (5) in the north of the city (see A10 #37), one of which is occupied by a director. The two houses represent the first in a larger plan to make a new terrace of 'double-return' houses responding to the existing typological context of Stoneybatter. Living is upstairs, with bedrooms on the street; the houses are built of brick, glass and steel, with first floor courtyards front and back. Interiors are bare but in parts are lined with warm golden plywood. Also on this side of the city is architect **Donal Hickey's** own house and studio (6) on Nun's Lane. Situated in the rear garden of a suburban housing estate, the house and studio combination was designed for the site with three courtyards. Materials are typically architectural – black granite, concrete, terrazzo with mother of pearl, and stainless steel offset against dark-coloured boards of iroko. Back on the south, two of the three directors of **FKL architects** built their own house in Rathmines. The **A-House** (7), a single-family house located on a mews lane in a Victorian suburb of Dublin, has a rather austere exterior but this hides a light-filled, sunny and elegantly organized interior ready for family life, and with an 'A' energy rating. →

Dublin is realizing that good design helps attract people to the city.



**1 COPPINGER ROW RESTAURANT (2009)**  
Architect: architecture republic  
Address: Coppinger Row, 1 William Street South



**2 CHILDREN'S ROOMS, BROWN THOMAS (2011)**  
Architect: CAST architecture with Nigel Peake  
Address: 3rd Floor, Brown Thomas, 90 Grafton Street, Dublin 2



**3 BROTHER HUBBARD CAFÉ (2011)**  
Architect: Designgoat  
Address: 153 Capel Street, Dublin 1



**4 3FE (3RD FLOOR ESPRESSO), COFFEE SHOP AND BARISTA SCHOOL (2011)**  
Architect: Designgoat  
Address: 32-34 Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2



**5 LUCKY LANE MEWS HOUSES (2009)**  
Architect: A2 Architects  
Address: Lucky Lane, Dublin 9  
Contributed by: A2



**6 HOUSE AND STUDIO (2007)**  
Architect: Donal Hickey Architects  
Address: Nun's Lane, Killester, Dublin 5



**7 A-HOUSE (2009)**  
Architect: FKL architects  
Address: Rathmines, Dublin 6  
Contributed by: P\_Kelly



**8 HEDGE HOUSE (2010)**  
Architect: GKMP Architects  
Address: Ranelagh, Dublin  
Contributed by: Michael\_Pike



**9 MEWS HOUSE (2009)**  
Artist: TAKA  
Address: Leeson Street, Donnybrook, Dublin 4  
Contributed by: Taka\_architects



**10 BRICK HOUSES (2009)**  
Architect: Grafton Architects  
Address: Waterloo Lane, Dublin 4



**11 RATHMINES SQUARE (2010)**  
Architect: Donnelly Turpin Architects  
Address: Rathmines, Dublin 6



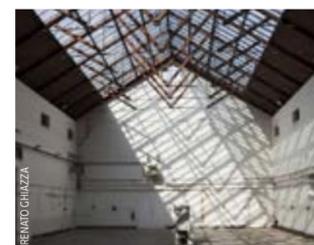
**12 HOUSING REUBEN STREET (2006)**  
Architect: FKL architects  
Address: The Coombe, Dublin 2



**13 TIMBERYARD SOCIAL HOUSING (2009)**  
Architect: O'Donnell + Tuomey architects  
Address: The Coombe, Dublin 2  
Contributed by: Matthias\_Hanzlik



**14 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (2009)**  
Architect: Grafton Architects  
Address: Merrion Row, Dublin 2  
Contributed by: Naomi



**15 DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION BUILDING (2011-2013)**  
Architect: Alfred G. Jones (original building, 1865), Office of Public Works (IMMA works)  
Address: Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2



**16 REFURBISHMENT OF BUSARAS BUS STATION (2007)**  
Architect: Michael Scott architect (original building, 1952), Office of Public Works  
Address: Store Street, Dublin 2



**17 EXTENSION OF SCOIL MHUIRE ÓGH (LORETO SENIOR PRIMARY SCHOOL) (2011)**  
Architect: Mary Laheen Architects  
Address: Crumlin, Dublin 12



**18 THE LONG ROOM HUB (2011)**  
Architect: McCullough Mulvin Architects (MCMVA)  
Address: Trinity College, Dublin 1



**19 ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH OF ST GEORGE AND ST THOMAS (2008)**  
Architect: Original architect unknown (1930), Clancy Moore Architects  
Address: Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin 1



**20 LANDSIDE BAR (2011)**  
Architect: dePaor Architects  
Address: Terminal 2, Dublin Airport

## (Discovering the new in Dublin)

In another great architecture tradition – that of families sponsoring their young sibling-architects to design new homes – the **Hedge House (8)** by GKMP and the **Mews House (9)** by TAKA are two fine examples. The Hedge House is located on a wedge-shaped site at the eastern end of a Ranelagh mews lane, and is entered from a courtyard open to the laneway. It also a very low-energy (A-Rated) construction with a timber frame clad in white bricks, at times subtly but exquisitely detailed. TAKA's brick mews house is in the garden of a large Victorian House on Leeson Street. The mews house is traditional in form but radical in detail, enjoying a sunny aspect and casting shadows on its own face with its intricate brick detailing. Close to both these houses is a pair of **brick houses (10)** on Waterloo Lane, designed by **Grafton Architects**, built for one of those private-hero clients, showing remarkable spatial ingenuity and that shared Dublin fascination with brick. On a restricted city site measuring just 10 x 30 metres, the pair of 160 m<sup>2</sup>, three-bedroom houses were constructed. Each house has an open-plan ground floor containing all living accommodation, the bedrooms hung like solids in the voids, allowing sun and light to filter down through the house from above. Many of these homes open their doors to the public in October when the Irish Architecture Foundation holds the annual Open House Dublin weekend.

Brick is also commonly used in collective housing schemes in the city. There are three recent projects worth noting. **Donnelly Turpin** has made a common civic space at **Rathmines Square (11)** with a public swimming pool on the street and a sports centre on the first floor. Above these facilities are located 46 apartment units, grouped around and accessed from a shared first floor podium/garden.

At the western edge of the city, **FKL architects** have created two sophisticated, L-shaped brick housing blocks at **Reuben Street (12)** with empty retail units on the street (see A10 #15). Funded by a private developer, this housing scheme was intended to act as a pivotal landmark for this area of Dublin city, and it works: as you drive east into Dublin, it is the first tall building you see, marking the city's historic core. Further into the city, **O'Donnell and Tuomey** worked hard in their dense, solid brick **Timberyard (13)** to persuade the authorities to allow people to live on street level like they have done in adjacent houses and cottages for hundreds of years. As one looks at the built-in terrazzo planters at each front door, now full of plants, and compares these to the numerous empty retail units in this part of the city, their argument seems painfully obvious. The brief was to provide 47 dwellings for Dublin City Council and a street-level community space on a backland site which emerged when the Coombe bypass cut through the existing city pattern.

Dublin is not only adding to, reworking, extending and reoccupying houses, it is doing this with civic buildings as well. **Grafton Architects** revealed the new 'dancing' limestone-clad building for the **Department of Finance (14)** on Merrion Row, close to St Stephen's Green, back in 2009 (see A10 #21), but behind the scenes it connects into Government Buildings via a renovated 19th-century billets building. A challenging site in a very historic context, a south-facing aspect pushed circulation to the street, making one of Dublin's best contemporary staircases, with incredible views up and down the street.

Solid bars of limestone are used throughout to give the building weight and mass appropriate to its function as a government department. Not far from here is **Earlsfort Terrace (15)**, an elegant edifice built in 1865 for the **Dublin International Exhibition**. This state-owned building is now enjoying something of a rebirth with its tectonically memorable corridors and variously-sized rooms being used for art and architecture exhibitions on a fairly regular basis. In part the home of the National Concert Hall, it also now houses the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

But while new life is being breathed into Earlsfort, work to renovate Ireland's modernist masterpiece, **Busáras (16)**, has arguably smothered the radical detailing and mosaic tile and concrete materiality of the original building. Designed by **Michael Scott**, it is Dublin's most devious building (generally architects love it, while the public still hates it), but it remains a work of art with its exquisite mosaic detailing, and is still in use as both the home of the **Department of Social Protection** and the city's main bus station. Another civic extension of formal and material strength is to be found at **Scoil Mhuire Ógh** (Loreto Senior Primary School) **(17)**, in east Dublin, by **Mary Laheen Architects**. This extension faces a busy road with a varied and formally confused context around it. The assertive but austere concrete is softened by the honey wood, while the interior is full of light and spatial intrigue, making for a very satisfactory and exciting learning space.

Inserted into the daunting historic context of Trinity College is the stone-clad **Long Room Hub (18)** by **McCullough Mulvin**, a space for thinking and for sharing the unique collections of the Long Room at Trinity College Dublin (see A10 #40). The building perches on the end of the Arts Block, closing the nearby square and framing the prospect to Front Square. The context is challenging, and the architects have made a clearly stated intervention in the context. Just off O'Connell Street down from the Spire, **Clancy Moore** worked with a boat builder to create new timber meeting rooms in an **historic church (19)**. The intervention is at the front of the church, built of solid dark walnut and organized in such a way that it draws you into the building before you realize it's there. Light fittings and door handles designed by the architects make this a thoroughly complete design.

When faced with economic decline it is easy to get despondent, but consider recent work in the city of Dublin and the prospect feels a little brighter. In any case, the boom-driven, aluminium-clad frenzy in Ireland was good for building but not all good for architecture, as any visit to Dublin via its airport shows. However, as you fly out again, stop in **Tom de Paor's Landside Bar (20)** in Terminal 2 for a drink. It is an oak-veneered plywood deformed grid shell rendered as a baldachin over bar and server. The snug is excavated as a series of parallel vaults with service strips between. You can only encounter this bar as you leave Dublin, but it is worth the stop – a project like this is the real taste of Dublin design. ←

The MI Tour Guides are published in A10 magazine and available online at MIMOA ([www.mimoa.eu](http://www.mimoa.eu)). A10 readers and members of the MIMOA community may directly contribute to the guides. Your participation is welcome! Please suggest projects for upcoming MI Tour Guides by uploading your choices to the MIMOA website. In the next issue (A10 #51 May / June 2013) we feature Barcelona.

## In the next issue:

### Eurovision

#### Russia

Eurovision presents an overview of the current state of architecture in a specific European country. Russia is the focus in the upcoming issue.

### Tour Guide

#### Barcelona

Barcelona's old centre constitutes one of the greatest concentrations of Gothic architecture in Europe. Beyond this core are some of the world's more bizarre buildings, surreal spectacles like Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Família. But what about the exemplary projects of today? A10 and MIMOA invite you to suggest your favourite contemporary buildings in Barcelona for the upcoming MI Tour Guide by uploading them at [www.mimoa.eu](http://www.mimoa.eu). A10's Spanish correspondents Gonzalo Herrero Delicado & Maria José Marcos will make the final selection based on your choices.

### On the spot

#### Update

Balancing buildings are hot. Following MVRDV's Balancing Barn, built for Alain de Botton's Living Architecture holiday homes project, gravity defying constructions are popping up throughout Europe.

...and much more. A10 #51 will be published 1 May 2013.

ADVERTISEMENT

The competition starts  
on 18 March 2013 via  
[www.european-europe.eu](http://www.european-europe.eu)

European 12

10  
European  
Adaptable City

european

National Information Market  
on Saturday 23 March 2013  
with presentations of the  
Dutch sites and lectures  
Venue:  
Het Nieuwe Instituut,  
Museumpark 25, Rotterdam  
the Netherlands

Three sites in the  
Netherlands: in Assen,  
Groningen and Schiedam

European Nederland  
office@european.nl  
[www.european.nl](http://www.european.nl)  
for more information