

Anatomy of design success

Cork and Munster impressed at the hotly anticipated Oscars of Irish architecture, according to **Eve Kelliher**

THE slick operation that altered the anatomy of a Cork icon and gave it a 21st-century facelift has scooped a sought-after design award.

Adaptation and reuse of existing buildings is a sustainable approach to climate change and it was also a category that elicited a particularly strong response in the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) 2021 Awards, revealed on Friday.

And it was O'Donnell + Tuomey's impressive transformation of the former anatomy school at University College Cork into a vibrant student hub that won the top prize in this section.

Meanwhile, an award for conservation went to the sensitive restoration of the Swiss Cottage in Co Leitrim, by Buckley Partnership Architects.

Also in Cork, and again back to new student facilities, further recognition arrived in this year's awards as Student Civitas, Lee Point Student Accommodation, by Scott Tallon Walker Architects, shared the top prize in the "living" category, along with two outstanding private homes — House for a Gardener in Northern Ireland and Baltrasna House in Skerries, Co Dublin.

Munster scored again as the award for wellbeing was presented to Healy Partner Architect's The Padel Club in Limerick.

STRONG TURNOUT

The work of RIAI architects overseas was celebrated with McCullough Mulvin Architect's Learning Laboratory for Thapar University in Punjab, India, the winner in the International category.

Overall, there was strong representation of Irish architecture at home and abroad as the RIAI announced the 2021 award winners, which acknowledge achievement in architecture and recognise the quality of work carried out by RIAI members and the contribution registered architects make to the



The Student Hub at UCC by O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects.

Picture: Jed Niezgoda



Room with a view: The Student Hub by O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects.

Picture: Jed Niezgoda



The open-plan living area at Student Civitas, Lee Point, accommodation.

Picture: Philip Lauterbach



Students at the five-floor UCC hub on its opening day in February.

Picture: Clare Keogh

built environment.

Projects submitted for the 2021 awards were practically completed between January 1 and December 31, 2020.

Marking the 32nd year of the awards, the RIAI announced 17 winners across all categories, including Adaption & Re-Use, Cultural or Public Buildings, Learning Environments, Wellbeing, Public Spaces, Workplace, Living, and International. The award winners include projects in Cork, Dublin, Donegal, Down, Leitrim, Limerick, Louth, Offaly, as well as Punjab, India.

Public projects amongst the winners include the renovation and retention of the original garda station

building in Donegal Town by Rhatigan Architects which was a double award winner in both cultural/public buildings and the Sustainability categories.

A new extension to Scoil Uí Mhuiri in County Louth was given top prize in the learning environments category.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Architects Department's Covid-19 response for placemaking from Blackrock to Sandycove and in Dundrum was a joint winner alongside King John's Castle in Carlingford, Co Louth in the public space category.

The quality of Irish workplaces was recognised with two awards this year — North Dock by ABK Archi-

itects and Babel Academy of English by Stephen Mulhall, nineteeneighty studio for fit-out.

A special award for Research through Practice was awarded to Ryan W Kennihan Architects for their work on Baltrasna House and Beach Road House. Finally, John McLaughlin Architects and Queen's University Belfast were awarded for their research in "Keeping it Modern".

PUBLIC CHOICE

The RIAI Public Choice Award was announced earlier in the week with over 10,000 online votes being cast by members of the public.

The winning submission was Field, Stonewall, House

by Taylor McCarney Architects, which was in March the sixth house to go through to the final of RTÉ's *Home of the Year*.

The design for the house was conceived as a series of parallel fieldstone walls that fit seamlessly within the rural setting in the west of Ireland.

The wide variety of projects included in this year's shortlist demonstrates "the diversity of great work being carried out by Irish architects across the country and further afield", according to Ciaran O'Connor, RIAI president.

"Despite Covid-19 having an impact on construction projects delivered in the last 12 months, we received almost 150 entries for work

complete in 2020 and the quality was exceptional," said Mr O'Connor.

"Architects are invaluable in how they enrich the communities we live in — our daily lives, our homes, schools and colleges, and the public spaces we enjoy.

"I would like to particularly congratulate the winner of our Public Choice award, Taylor McCarney Architects, for their exceptional design.

"Collaboration is at the heart of each of these projects so, we must also congratulate the clients and our colleagues on the design teams whose contribution is key in getting these results."

Full details of all the winning projects are available at www.riai.ie