



## Forestry

# 2016 Wood Awards Ireland



Seventeen shortlisted projects by Irish designers highlight wood as a versatile medium. Donal Magner reports

The second Wood Awards Ireland, held last Friday night in Farmleigh, Dublin, “demonstrated that Irish designers are using wood in a way that would have been unthinkable a few decades ago,” claimed Paul Harvey, chair of the Wood Marketing Federation (WMF) who organised the awards supported by the Royal **Institute of the Architects** of Ireland (RIAI).

“The range of categories for which the awards were made emphasise the versatility of wood in the various uses,” said Andrew Doyle, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry, who presented the awards.

“Wood Awards Ireland is more than a competition among individual projects, it also highlights the Irish forestry sector, which has been engaged very successfully in cultivating a renewable and sustainable resource.”

This year’s Irish Wood Awards received over 40 entries which were shortlisted to 17 projects covering large- and small-scale buildings, conservation, furniture,

innovative wood design and international structures by Irish designers.

### Homegrown wood

While there was heavy reliance on imported species, a number of interesting and award-winning projects emerged using home-grown wood. For example, Donaghy & Dimond Architects utilised Himalayan cedar growing on the Tibraden estate when building an extension to the gate lodge.

Sitka spruce provided by the Murray Timber Group was the structural timber utilised by the Nós Workshop in building a stage at the Sligo Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann last year.

Sawn Sitka spruce and oriented strand-board – provided by Glennon Brothers and Coillte – were the chosen materials for the project Big Red. Architects Clancy Moore, Taka and Steve Larkin combined to design this major installation at the London Festival of Architecture last year.

### European ash

Magnus Celestii, by Cork designer Joseph Walsh, won the innovation category award for a critically acclaimed installation in the Sculpture Park, Salisbury, England. The freeform ash spiral begins as a desk before climbing upwards from floor to ceiling and ending with a large shelf on the side wall of the artist’s gallery.

“This extraordinary installation combines vision with ingenuity,” said Ciaran O’Connor, state architect and chair of the judging panel.

### Chestnut

Two major public buildings tied for the large-scale building category award. The Model School, Inchicore, Dublin, comprising an extension of six new classrooms, resource rooms, general purpose hall and staff facilities has transformed the space previously occupied by an over-extended 1853 school. “Wood plays its part with brick in giving a strong sense of place,” said O’Connor. Sweet chestnut,



a species with great potential in Ireland, is the main structural wood.

The Samuel Beckett Civic Campus at Ballyogan Road, Dublin, "uses wood in an integrated and knowledgeable way," he said. Seven timber species, sawn and engineered, were used in this large complex.

#### Oak

Ryan Connolly a young designer based in Monaghan, won the furniture award for designing and making a suite of desks, chairs and display units in oak and walnut for the OPTICA shop in Dawson Street, Dublin.

"This shop aims at high end merchandising that is matched by high-quality design and execution evident in every aspect from wood selection, jointing and craftsmanship to site installation," according to the judges' citation.

#### American ash

The Carmelite Prayer Room in Clarendon Street Priory, Dublin received a special award for creatively using American ash in remodelling and restoring what is essentially a room within a room.

"It is a space that is both powerful and ephemeral, a place in terms of its identity, and wonder, that you will remember," said Ciaran O'Connor in his citation. Three major projects competed for the international category. Two "highly commended" awards were presented to the OPW Milan Expo 2015 project and the aforementioned Big Red installation at the London Festival of Architecture.

The category winner was the unique Wind and Rain Bridge in Fujian Province, China. This project, led by Donn Holohan, Irish lecturer in Hong Kong University relied on traditional design, combining digital design methodologies which allowed a rapid and complex bridge assemble carried out by locals using basic hand tools.

Bucholz McEvoy, received the overall award for their magnificent Samuel Beckett Civic Campus in Ballyogan, south Dublin. "The project combines and in-

tegrates many facets of the art and science of wood design" claimed O'Connor.

"The success of the awards depends on the collaboration between the WMF and RIAI, the generosity of sponsors and time given freely by a meticulous judging panel," said Paul Harvey, WMF chair.

The awards are vital in changing attitudes to wood in Ireland where we have a masonry rather than a wood culture, but attitudes are changing towards wood, claimed Carole Pollard, RIAI president.

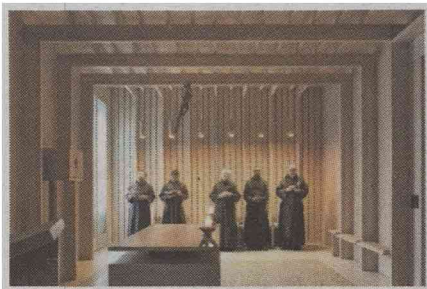
"Our human response to wood evolves from our familiarity with it as a natural material," she said. "We trust wood. Our architects know its technical strengths, that it can be procured from sustainable sources, and that its versatility as a building material is unique."

The awards were sponsored by COFORD, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the American Hardwood Export Council, Enterprise Ireland and Coillte. The judging panel, chaired by Ciaran O'Connor, comprised: Dr Sandra O'Connell, RIAI; Simon O'Driscoll, Simon O'Driscoll Furniture; Des O'Toole, Coillte; Margaret Walsh, Mike Shanahan & Associates; John Winslow, Donnelly Turpin Architects; Neil Kerrigan, Enterprise Ireland; and Sean Harrington, Sean Harrington Architects.



**Magnus Celestii**, by Cork designer Joseph Walsh, won the innovation award for a critically acclaimed installation in the Sculpture Park, Salisbury, England, using fabricated ash.





The Carmelite Prayer Room in Clarendon Street Priory, Dublin, by Niall McLaughlin Architects, received a special award for creatively using American ash in a restoration project.



Andrew Doyle, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry, who presented the awards at the 2016 Wood Awards Ireland in Farmleigh, Dublin, with Carole Pollard, president, RIAI, Merritt Bucholz, Bucholz McEvoy, outright winner, and Paul Harvey, chair, Wood Marketing Federation.



Bucholz McEvoy received the overall award for the Samuel Beckett Civic Campus in Ballyogan, south Dublin, where seven species of wood are utilised.