

## Reimagine...Tallaght Melt the Walls Open Competition



The Irish Architecture Foundation in partnership with South Dublin County Council Arts Office and Tallaght Community Arts present a competition for the commission of an architectural or designed intervention for Chamber Square, Tallaght, Co. Dublin for September 2019.  
Deadline 28th June 2019

## **Overview**

The IAF have a new programme called Reimagine... Through Reimagine the IAF works with a number of local communities across Ireland who have come to us with a challenge or issue they see in their locality and we work with them to co create an architectural/ design solution. Tallaght is one of these towns.

We want to use creative strategies and potential architectural interventions to find a way to better connect people, places and organisations in and surrounding Chamber Square in Tallaght town. We want to increase collaboration and engagement between these institutions and their immediate neighbours and, through increased activity, enhance the spaces in Tallaght. The institutions we refer to are Rua Red, Civic Theatre, Tallaght Library & County Hall and Tallaght Community Arts (TCA) (but could also include The Square, Tallaght IT...). The place we refer to is the open space called Chamber Square on the doorsteps of Rua Red, Civic Theatre, Tallaght Library and County Hall. The people we wish to engage are the neighbours to Chamber Square: the people and families living in the apartment buildings surrounding the square, who do not yet engage with the institutions in large numbers.

Rather than coming with a preconceived notion of how to immediately connect people, place and institutions, we began this project with started an investigative process to establish how the people living in the immediate surrounds of Tallaght's cultural amenities and the regular users might begin to use these amenities more, or how these amenities might serve these people better. Our mission is to 'melt the walls' between the institutions themselves and between the institutions and their neighbours.

From autumn 2018 to spring 2019 we have been investigating in small ways how local people can engage better with these institutes and spaces through a series of light-touch engagement activities anchored to existing events/festival/activities in Tallaght's cultural calendar. Previous activities undertaken ranged from drop in arts and design sessions, design workshops, mapping projects (to reveal where in Tallaght people move *to*, where people move *through*, where people linger and where they would like to linger, how they currently used Chamber Square) all designed to build a picture of what people like about their place, what they want from their place and how we might enhance their place through further activity or interventions from summer 2019 onwards.

We invite teams to apply with an indication of how they would engage with the local communities and what issues, if any, they wish to focus their research and project development on. We also wish for teams to propose a creative outcome for the project, although it is important to understand that this outcome may develop over the course of the process of collaboration with the project's participants. The project must consider creating a welcoming environment in Chamber Square which connects the square to its civic neighbours as well as neighbours further afield. The project should have a tangible outcome but also respond to and signal the programmatic work happening in the civic spaces.

## **About the Commissioners and Partners**

This call out is commissioned by the South Dublin County Council and Tallaght Community Arts and run by the Irish Architecture Foundation.

**South Dublin County Council** South Dublin County is one of three new local authorities to emerge in Dublin in 1994. It has an integrated approach for quality cultural, social and economic development, putting peoples' lives - those who live, work and visit South Dublin County - at its crux.

With Tallaght at its centre, it spreads out to the foothills of the Dublin Mountains, borders the edges of the city and the nearby counties of Kildare, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire and Wicklow. The county is a place of complex identity, intersected by motorways, housing estates, and industrial parks. It is a place where the urban and rural unexpectedly meet. Green plains and higher mountains are never distant.

**Tallaght Community Arts** Established in 1996 Tallaght Community Arts creates opportunities for artists and the people of South Dublin County to explore together the transformative and celebratory power of the arts for the wellbeing of all.

**PARTICIPATION:** Our work focuses on participatory arts, encouraging and supporting people of all ages to be involved in the making of art. We put people at the centre of the creative process. We create work in the heart of communities; in schools, community gardens, football stadiums and individual people's homes as well as in designated arts spaces.

**PUBLIC CELEBRATION:** Our work nearly always invites the public to join us in sharing and celebrating the work that participants have achieved working alongside artists.

### **Irish Architecture Foundation**

The Irish Architecture Foundation has an established network and track record of delivering major projects primarily aimed at developing audiences for architecture in Ireland, while also raising the profile of Irish architecture abroad. Their programme of exhibitions, public realm projects and competitions, publications, school and community workshops, talks and symposia is intended to generate dialogue as well as critically engage a diverse public. The IAF was established in 2005, and our vision is to encourage initiatives which push the boundaries of definitions of architecture and its effect on society, culture and community.

The Irish Architecture Foundation will run this competition, as well as promote the project through all stages.

## **Findings**

People are already using the space in a number of ways:

Parking bikes  
Pushing prams (toys and real)  
Walking  
Gymnastics  
Twirling  
Dog walking  
Chalk drawing  
Reading  
Sitting listening/watching phone  
Scooting  
Cycling  
Reading  
Smoking  
Taking a break,  
Sitting on steps  
Football  
Hurling  
Playing  
Eating Lunch  
Meeting people  
Running up ramps and down steps  
Scooting down ramps  
Coffee Break  
Training  
Filming  
Climbing the wall

People want the space to be more welcoming or inviting but want it to remain as a space, not be fully occupied by something. (*Research report, Appendix 1, Question 3, Response A*). People are happy with the initial change being temporary (*Research report, Appendix 1, Question 3, Response B*)

The idea of Chamber Square being used as a spill out area from the civic spaces was very popular. Suggestions included: place for shows/choirs/ensembles from Rua Red and Civic to rehearse/showcase, place to read books from the library, Arts + Crafts classes move into the space...etc

Maybe a little market or something to catch attention and make you stop. For kids, an extension of the activities that happen in the library happening in the Square...Get some of the theatre people out here on good days, rehearsing etc. Music sessions or a choir would be nice (*Research report, Appendix 1, Question 3, Respondent 6*)

In the children's activities a green space, water feature and spaces for yoga, reading, drama, play all feature highly in what children want to see in Chamber Square. (*Research report, Appendices*)

3&4)

80% of those survey and the Dance event in the Civic Theatre would spend time in The Square rather than the surrounding public spaces (*Research report, Appendix 2, Q 11*). How do we increase dwell time in Chamber Square.

Seating and green space are most common to adults and children, and both demographics asked about activities that happen in the building to spill out to the square. They all mentioned that they would only want things to be temporary, so the spaces could be adapted for different uses. For many Chamber Square is an alternative to the parks nearby the built space attracts people ie ramps for children using scooter/bikes/running.

play small use run something playground good Works library  
square space things seating greenery maybe make nice  
open kids activities Seating greenery

Word cloud from answers to the question 'What would you like to see in this space?', full answers Appendix 1 Q3

Please find the full research report in the competition pack.



Response from Melt the Walls Reimagine Workshops, photo by IAF

## **Aim of the project**

To design an intervention, or series of interventions in Chamber Square and the surrounding environ to 'melt the walls' between the public and cultural spaces surrounding the square in response to the established wants and needs of its users and neighbours.

## **Criteria for Assessment**

Rather than selecting the winning team based just on the proposed outcome/s, we will also select the winning team based on the expertise within the team, the approach that would be used to develop the project in collaboration with local people, those passing by, or communities of interest, and evidence in the application of an interest in and sensitivity to the challenges faced by local communities when using public space in South Dublin County. The marks will be allocated as follows:

**Team** The winning team will be a multi-disciplinary team which includes an architect or architectural graduate. We encourage the team to also include a broad mix of professional backgrounds and skill sets that may include, but not be limited to, designers, artists, geographers, social scientists, social workers, community workers, urban planners and so on. The application form must contain a brief biography of all team members (all team members must be confirmed at the time of application) as well as a maximum of five examples of projects or research undertaken by one or more team members relating to consultative processes, community-led design, urban realm projects or engaging temporary interventions. Lastly, a member of the team must be able to provide Public Liability insurance indemnifying the Council against all claims to the limit of €6.5 million and Employer's Liability to the value of €13 million as required.

**Marks: 15**

**Proposed Outcome:** This outcome will be further developed in collaboration with local groups in the area and will in some way explore or elucidate the challenges and opportunities presented to local residents to Chamber Square and use of public space.

This outcome may be speculative, discursive, or may even go some way towards improving the experiences of local people in Tallaght's public spaces and will demonstrate the role architecture can play in engaging users and locals with public space and cultural spaces. During the research phase of this project it became apparent that there is a degree of disconnection between the civic/cultural institutions in the area, in particular with regard to the promotion of each institutions' programmes. Audience members in one would like to know about the others, while staff and visitors alike suggested a need for centralised communications/signposting. Proposals which aim to address this, and/or offer a means to host programming for all institutions, will be favoured.

A tangible outcome is required for this project but consideration should also be given to the communication methods of the project and how it signals these connections to Chamber Square and its neighbours. A condition of this proposal is that a series of public engagements must be included to further develop initial proposal. Through this research we have gained valuable insights which have shaped this brief but further engagement sessions will be required by the team awarded the competition. For example, we would expect a number of sessions to take place to which we will invite the immediate neighbours (contacted through their residents' associations and/or property management companies) to



gain their insight on the proposal and give further insight on how they use the space.

It has been noted during the course of this project so far that there are a number of visual cues existing in the space which do not suggest Chamber Square as being a welcoming environment i.e. no signs, nothing to draw you in, security presence strongly felt. It would be beneficial if projects proposed could consider creating a welcoming space for all that highlights the connections to the civic spaces surrounding the square, their programmes and the wider neighbourhood.

It should be understood that the proposed outcome may develop over the course of the project, given the project's highly collaborative nature. **Marks: 30**

### **Budget**

The budget for this project is €19,000 **in total**.

This is to be inclusive of:

- design fee
- team expenses
- cost of process & consultation; the collaborative aspect of the project, research, development
- delivery of the outcome; materials, transport and construction costs of any outcome physical or otherwise
- VAT
- Removal if installation if applicable
- and any other expenses.

The winning team will present a well thought-out budget reflective of all of these costs and showing that the resources allocated to this project will be used to their maximum potential, while also being realistic and achievable. **Marks: 30**

**Methodology and timeline** Rather than just propose a predetermined outcome, the winning team will also describe their experience of or interest in running, learning from and creating work inspired by a collaborative process. They will explain the approach they will take in order to develop the project and will demonstrate that they will be flexible in their approach and responsive to the needs of the project's participants. They will explain how they will develop the project over a planned period of time, lasting up to two months (but it can be shorter than that). **Marks: 15**

### **Demonstrable interest in architecture with regard to engaging communities in Public and Cultural Spaces**

The winning team will demonstrate an interest in and sensitivity to the challenges and opportunities presented in engaging the public in cultural and public spaces, an awareness of architecture's impact on communities and an enthusiasm for encouraging use in all communities.

**Marks: 20**

## **Competition structure**

This is an open call with submissions to be made to the Irish Architecture Foundation, by post or email, on or before 28 June 2019. A jury will select the winning team. We anticipate that this will be a one-stage competition, but reserve the right to shortlist and interview teams should the jury feel it is needed.

Teams apply by completing and returning the competition application form, which must contain short biographies of all confirmed team members, a maximum of five examples of previous work or research related to the project and brief answers to a number of questions related to Melt the Walls. Applicants should also provide artwork for an A0 board detailing their proposal for an intervention in Chamber Square.

Submissions should be sent by email or post (five hard copies) to:

[engagement@architecturefoundation.ie](mailto:engagement@architecturefoundation.ie) Melt the Walls Irish Architecture Foundation 15 Bachelor's Walk Dublin 1



Mapping sessions during Dance2Connect, photo by IAF



## **Competition timeline**

5th June Competition opens

18 June Deadline for questions

21 June Circulated answers

28 June Ideas submitted

3-5 July Judging round one and finalists decided

7-14 July Shortlisted project (6) on display in Library to get public feedback

19th July Winner announced based on public and judges opinion

26th July Contract signed

August 2 weeks further development with commissioners and Audience

16 September Launch and something in place

## **Competition jury:**

The jury will be made up of nominees from the following organisations:

SDCC Architects Department

SDCC Arts Office

Tallaght Community Arts,

Civic Theatre,

Rua Red

Tallaght Library

Irish Architecture Foundation

## **Deliverables:**

- 1 Number of community engagement connection points to give greater insight into the challenges and values in the area which should be reflected in the outcome
- 2 An intervention or series interventions July-Sept 2019 connecting cultural spaces to community and encouraging greater use and ownership. Something to be in place for the 16 September to have a launch event.

## **Terms and conditions**

- Applications received after 28th June will be deemed ineligible.
- While we strongly encourage multidisciplinary teams to enter, the winning team must contain at least one architect or architectural graduate.
- Furthermore, one member of the team must be able to provide Public Liability insurance indemnifying the Council against all claims to the limit of €6.5 million and Employer's Liability to the value of €13 million as required.
- The winning team may be subject to Garda Vetting.
- The winning team will be contracted by the Irish Architecture Foundation to undertake the project. It will consult and liaise with the commissioners to secure site(s) or venue(s) for consultative elements, development of the project and the project outcome. as required, and it will liaise with SDCC specifically to secure any permissions required for the project's development and outcome.
- The project outcome must occur in South Dublin County Council by 16 September 2019.

**Further information** For further information, contact the IAF's engagement officer Anne Kearns at [engagement@architecturefoundation.ie](mailto:engagement@architecturefoundation.ie). Questions should be submitted by 18 June and answers will be circulated publicly 21 June