



Reimagine...The Walks, Loughrea Open Competition

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) in partnership with Galway County Council Architectural Conservation Office and the Loughrea The Walks Project Steering Group with support from Creative Ireland and 2020 European Capital of Culture; Small Towns Big Ideas present a competition for the commission of an architectural or designed intervention for The Walks, Loughrea, Co. Galway for Spring 2020.

This Open call worth €20,000 (incl vat) will see the winning team collaboratively engage with groups from Loughrea in order to develop a public outcome, installation, temporary intervention and/or happening in the The Walks, Loughrea in 2020

~~Deadline 29th November 2019~~ This deadline has been extended to the 13th December
Revised competition dates below.



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The Brief

The Walks-Loughrea is an open call for an architect-led multidisciplinary team to explore creatively with the local community how The Walks could be used and cared for by the local community, and better connected to the town. The mission is to highlight The Walks and its benefit to the community as a recreational and heritage space.

This Open Call is commissioned by Galway County Council , Galway 2020 with additional grant-aid support from Creative Ireland and produced by the IAF's Reimagine Programme. (see Context section)

The aim of the stakeholders, through this open call is to use creative strategies and potential architectural interventions to find a way to better connect The Walks with the rest of Loughrea Town. They intend to increase awareness of the current conservation work in the area and the historic importance of The Walks. Crucially, they want to encourage people's use of such an excellent local amenity and increase dwell time in the area.

This Open call worth €20,000 (incl vat) will see the winning team collaboratively engage with groups from Loughrea in order to develop a public outcome, installation, temporary intervention and/or happening in the County in 2020. There are 3 stages.

- Collaborative Process: Meet the stakeholders and community to research, co-create and develop the public output.
- Public Output: Create a temporary installation to house conversations during Galway 2020
- Programming Events: Curate a programme of activities to take place in the installation. These should be done in collaboration with and answer the needs of the locality and could cover topics such as, but not limited to, the impact of architecture on daily life, change of use in public realm, biodiversity, challenges in rural Ireland, impact of art and culture in rural Ireland, changing towns and how we live in them...etc

The total budget for this project including design fee, manufacturing, install, de-install, storage, transport, events, expenses and including VAT is €20,0000

The project outcome will also encourage and empower people and communities of all ages to engage in a creative way with the issues revealed through IAFs consultations from Spring to Autumn 2019 (see Reimagine The Walks Research Report available on the IAF website). We wish for teams of architects, artists, designers, historians, archaeologists and others to reflect on how The Walks can better serve locals. The aim of the Reimagine project is to reveal the positive impact which considered public realm architecture and design of public space can have on communities.

The IAF, with the Loughrea The Walks Project Team's Steering Group, have proposed to create a temporary architectural intervention to frame conversations and activities along The Walks. Reimagine... aims to ensure as many people from the community have a say in their local environment. Therefore, the IAF have spent a number of months researching how people use The Walks, how they feel about them and how they feel about a project such as this. This information has been used to shape this brief, more details can be found in the context section of the call.

To enter this open call complete and submit the **IAF Reimagine The Walks Open Call Application**

Form available on the IAF website along with artwork for an A0 board detailing the proposal for an intervention for The Walks.

Context

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) launched a national campaign in 2019 called Reimagine... This programme works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to challenges, issues or opportunities they've identified in their locality. We then work with them to co-create an architectural/ design solution The Walks, Loughrea was selected as one of these towns for 2019.

In this project we looked at the area known as The Walks in Loughrea. The project team approached us as they wanted to raise awareness and use of this area. They also wanted to draw attention through this project to a larger conservation project which was happening in the same space. We aim to use creative strategies and potential architectural interventions to find a way to better connect The Walks with the rest of Loughrea Town. We want to increase awareness of the current conservation work in the area and the historic importance of The Walks. Crucially, we want to encourage people's use of such an excellent local amenity and increase people's dwell time there.

The people we wish to engage with are local community members, those who live and work in the area. We wish to engage new users and also encourage those who currently use it as a pathway from a-b to use it in different ways and spend some time there.

Rather than coming with a preconceived notion of how to engage people with the space, we began this project with an investigative process to establish how the people living and working in the immediate surrounds of The Walks might already use this amenity, what would make them use it more, or how this amenity might serve these people better. Our mission is to highlight The Walks and its benefit to the community as a recreational and heritage space.

From Spring 2019 to Autumn 2019 we have been investigating, in small ways, how local people already use this space, what makes people disinclined to use it and what other potential uses people envision. Previous activities undertaken ranged from drop-in arts and design sessions, mapping exercises (to reveal how children in Loughrea visit The Walks, which entrances and exits they use), interviews and questionnaires all designed to build a picture of what people like about The Walks, what they want from the space and how we might enhance the space through further activity or interventions from spring 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. The project must consider creating a temporary architectural intervention along The Walks which connects the area to the community and the conservation works currently on going. The project should have a tangible outcome but also respond to the community's need, feedback and wider works currently happening on The Walks. 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 attached research report outlines the observations seen during this research and the responses of the local community. It also highlights what people see as important in The Walks and what they want to have reflected in such a project. This information should inform your project submission.

The Location

The Walks are a cruciform walkway behind the main street in Loughrea Town dating from the C18th. The Walks run parallel to the main street running from St Mary's Abbey to Station Road. The perpendicular stretch is referred to as North Mount. The cruciform is a paved walkway surrounded on both sides by trees. Along it runs a stream, which makes part of the medieval moat of the town. The bridges and walls which run on one side of The Walks are currently under a large scale conservation works, a project run by the local town team. The Walks were designed as a public space to congregate, socialise and exercise. It is the ambitious aim of this project that, by activating the space through a temporary architectural intervention, we can encourage the public to reclaim this space and use it for these original purposes but also new and exciting ways. We are inviting entries for an architectural/ design solution to draw more attention to this project and space of opportunity.

The Walks Conservation Plan commissioned by Galway County Council describes The Walks as:
... a broad tree-lined T-shaped promenade, c. 350m in length, located to the north of town centre, from which it is easily accessed. A high stone wall separates the area from the town's commercial centre. A river flows at the base of this wall, along the length of The Walks. It follows the line of defences of the medieval town moat, which was constructed around the middle of the 13th century. The medieval moat represents an important phase of Anglo-Norman activity associated with the town and is the only surviving element of the original 13th century town defences. It is unique to Ireland, being the only still functioning medieval moat in existence, albeit considerably reduced in size.

It is unclear when the walkway or promenade was put in place. The earliest reference to The Walks dates to the 1791 Clanricarde Estate Map, where it is referred to as the 'Clanricarde Walk and River.' It is likely that the medieval town moat was converted into a narrower channel as part of the late 18th century landscaping works. The footbridges and The Walks wall also appear to date from this time. The Walks retains great character and has a special significance for the local community being a valued amenity. The river is an important spawning ground for trout. The Walks is located within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) for Loughrea town and the Zone of Archaeological Potential for the historic town of Loughrea (RMP No. GA105-150).

The Conservation Action Plan for The Walks has been prepared under instruction from Galway County Council in order that this historic asset can be preserved into the future.

The Walks and the Watercourse



Figure 1: Site Location Map © Government of Ireland

About the Commissioners and Partners

This call out is commissioned by the Galway County Council Architectural Conservation Office and Loughrea's The Walks Project Steering Group with support from Creative Ireland and Galway 2020 and produced by the IAF.

Galway County Council

As well as the Architectural Conservation Officer Mairin Doddy, the IAF are also working across several sections of Galway County Council on this project including the Senior Area engineer Gerard Haugh, Area engineer Brendan Sheehy, Heritage officer Marie Mannion and Bernie Donnellan, Community Enterprise and Economic Development and liaising with National Parks and Wildlife Ranger Ann Bingham.

Loughrea Town Team's Steering Group

The IAF are collaborating with the Loughrea The Walks Project Steering Group, responsible for the conservation work along 'The Walks' in Loughrea Town. The steering group consists of representatives from the following community organisations in the area:

Chairperson: Cllr. Michael Maher – rep. for Loughrea Medieval Festival

Vice – Chairperson: John Cuddy – rep. for Loughrea Chamber of Commerce

Secretary: Mary Nix – rep. for Loughrea Tidy Towns

Treasurer: Cllr. Shane Donnellan – rep. for Loughrea Heritage Group

Members; JJ Hannon & Pat Scully – reps. for Loughrea Anglers Association

Project Coordinator: Ursula Marmion

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 produce this competition, as well as promote the project through all stages.

Supporters;

Galway 2020

Galway will be the European Capital of Culture in 2020. As one of the largest cultural events in the world, Galway 2020 promises to deliver a year of thrilling, life-enhancing experiences through culture and the arts. The exciting pan-European programme for the year will see events in unexpected venues and locations throughout the region on the islands, in remote villages, in fields, mountains and on beaches. From food, music, dance, literature and visual arts to poetry, theatre, sport and largescale spectacle, everyone will get the opportunity to enjoy a fun-filled, once-in-a-lifetime experience. galway2020.ie

Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland Programme is guided by a vision that every person in Ireland will have the opportunity to realise their full creative potential. It is an all-of-government initiative, from 2017 to

2022, to place creativity at the centre of public policy. Further information is available here:
<https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en>

The National Creativity Fund enables the Creative Ireland Programme to activate, enable and support genuinely ground-breaking and innovative initiatives, research projects and community programmes, which have creativity and wellbeing at their centre. Through a series of strategic partnerships with cultural organisations, education and academic institutions and healthcare specialists, the selected projects are ambitious, innovative and inclusive and will help inform and implement the vision of the Creative Ireland Programme right across Government. Over €1.2m will be invested in the 30 initiatives over the duration of the Fund in 2018 and 2019.

Key Findings from Research Phase

On average 12 people pass through The Walks every half hour.

The busiest time observed on The Walks was a sunny lunchtime.

In order of how often mentioned, In order to use the space more people would like to see the following activities (listed in order of how often mentioned):

Cleaned Up

Events and Activities

Longer Walkway, connected to Lake

Kids area

Lights

Less antisocial behaviour

Historic, Interpretation

Planting, landscaping

Picnic/coffee area

Weather

Benches

Bins

(Research report, Fig. 13)

People are aware that teenagers use the space. While some would like to see less antisocial behaviour or loitering others are very aware that teenagers need a space to congregate and socialise. Some respondents have pointed out that if more was done to make the space more open ie ensuring possible to see along the path, more lighting or just provide more space (less overgrown in areas) so that people feel more comfortable sharing the space. Someone else pointed out that there is no garda presence in the area and perhaps this could be beneficial. While these are solutions not achievable within this brief they should be considered in the process as needs the community has identified.

The Walks are used by people of all ages (Research Report, Fig. 2) and should be accessible to all.

There is a fairy trail on The Walks but not many children from 5-15 were observed using The Walks.

Some respondents commenting that this needs upkeep and perhaps further additions.

One respondent did highlight that they associate The Walks with queuing for funeral wakes, as there's a funeral parlour at one side.

Dog Walking is the third most common activity observed on The Walks.

The Town Team have raised concerns that damage could occur to the pieve if left there for a period of time, through both weather and vandalism. As this is the case the proposed idea has to be a temporary installation which can be installed and reinstalled.

Criteria for Assessment

Rather than selecting the winning team based solely 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 Loughrea.

Items to be considered in this Open Call:

- 1.) To design a temporary architectural intervention for The Walks in response to the established wants and needs of its users, neighbours and stakeholders.
- 2.) The design should be able to be easily installed and reinstalled over the course of 2020 as part of the Galway2020 programme.
- 3.) The structure should respond to the community's needs for events or activities in the space and to the historic importance of the area it's in.
- 4.) It is crucial to this project that the overall design is to be agreed upon by the local community and feedback from the community must be adapted into the design. 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.
- 5.) The project should have a tangible outcome but also respond to the community's need, feedback and wider works currently happening on The Walks.
- 6.) It is also required that the appointed design team will propose approximately three events to engage the local community with the structure. These events should be included in the proposed budget.
- 7.) 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 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: 10

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 community when using this public space.

A tangible outcome is required for this project but consideration should also be given to the communication methods of the project and how it connects to the larger conservation project. A condition of this proposal

requires that a series of public engagements must be included to further develop the initial proposal. This outcome may be speculative, discursive, or may even go some way towards improving the experiences of local people Loughrea's public spaces and will demonstrate the role architecture can play in engaging users and locals with public space. Through the research phase of this project 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 the town Team Steering Committee) 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 there has been a degree of antisocial behaviour in the area, this should be considered in the outcome. Proposals which aim to address this, and/or offers a means for including youths in the area, as well as the wider community, to develop a sense of ownership in the local community over the project, will be favoured. A number of events that can take place in and around the interventions should be included in the proposal.

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 €20,000 *in total*.

This is to be inclusive of:

- design fee
- team expenses, including travel
- 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
- At least 2 installs and de-installs
- VAT
- Removal of installation
- 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: 20

Methodology and timeline

A prerequisite of Galway2020 funding is that this project is in place as part of their Spring programme in 2020, February-May. The aim of this project would be that this intervention could be installed and reinstalled a number of times in the year to frame activities or events that could happen on The Walks as part of Galway2020. Therefore 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.

Marks: 10

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.

They will also indicate in their project proposal how they intend to engage the wider community in the design of this project and in the programming around this intervention in 2020. Engaging the local community and allowing them multiple points to feed into the overall project is crucial to Reimagine... as such, proposals which highlight a number of engagement opportunities will be favoured.

Marks: 30

Competition structure

This is an open call with submissions to be made to the Irish Architecture Foundation, by post or email, on or before 29th November 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 necessary. The public will also have a voice in the selection process.

To enter this open call please complete and submit the **IAF Reimagine The Walks Open Call Application Form** available on the IAF website along with artwork for an A0 board detailing their proposal for an intervention for The Walks.

Teams apply by completing and returning the competition application form (digitally or physically), 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 IAF Reimagine... The Walks, Loughrea. Applicants should also provide artwork for an A0 board detailing their proposal for an intervention for The Walks.

Submissions should be sent by email or post (five hard copies) to:
engagement@architecturefoundation.ie Reimagine The Walks, Irish Architecture Foundation 15
Bachelor's Walk Dublin 1

Competition timeline

18 October Competition opens

1 November Deadline for questions

8 November Circulated answers

~~29 November~~ Ideas submitted **Revised date 13th December**

~~2-4 December~~ Judging and finalists decided **Revised date 16/17th December**

~~11 December~~ Winner announced based on public and judges opinion **Revised date 18th December**

~~13 December~~ Contract signed **Revised date 19th December**

~~Mid December-January~~ 4 weeks further development with commissioners and Audience **Revised date January**

~~January to early Feb~~ Fabrication **Revised date February**

~~Feb:~~ First install **Revised date March**

Competition jury:

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

Galway Co Co Architectural Conservation Office

Loughrea The Walks Project Steering Committee

Youth voice

IAF

Forward Planning Section GCC

An independent appointed architect

Deliverables:

1 A 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. These community engagement points should run during the development stage of this project and once the intervention is delivered.

2 A temporary architectural intervention or series of interventions from February - October 2020 which enhance The Walks encouraging greater use, dwell time and ownership by the local community. Something to be in place for the first install / event February 2020.

3 A number of proposed events to engage the community with this structure.

Terms and conditions

- Applications received after 29th November will be deemed ineligible.

-Entries which have not considered community engagement will not be considered.

- 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. They 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 they will liaise with Galway County Council specifically to secure any permissions required for the project's development and outcome.

- The project outcome must occur in The Walks by 28 February 2020.

Further information For further information, contact the IAF's engagement officer Anne Kearns at engagement@architecturefoundation.ie. Questions should be submitted by 1 November and answers will be circulated publicly 8th November