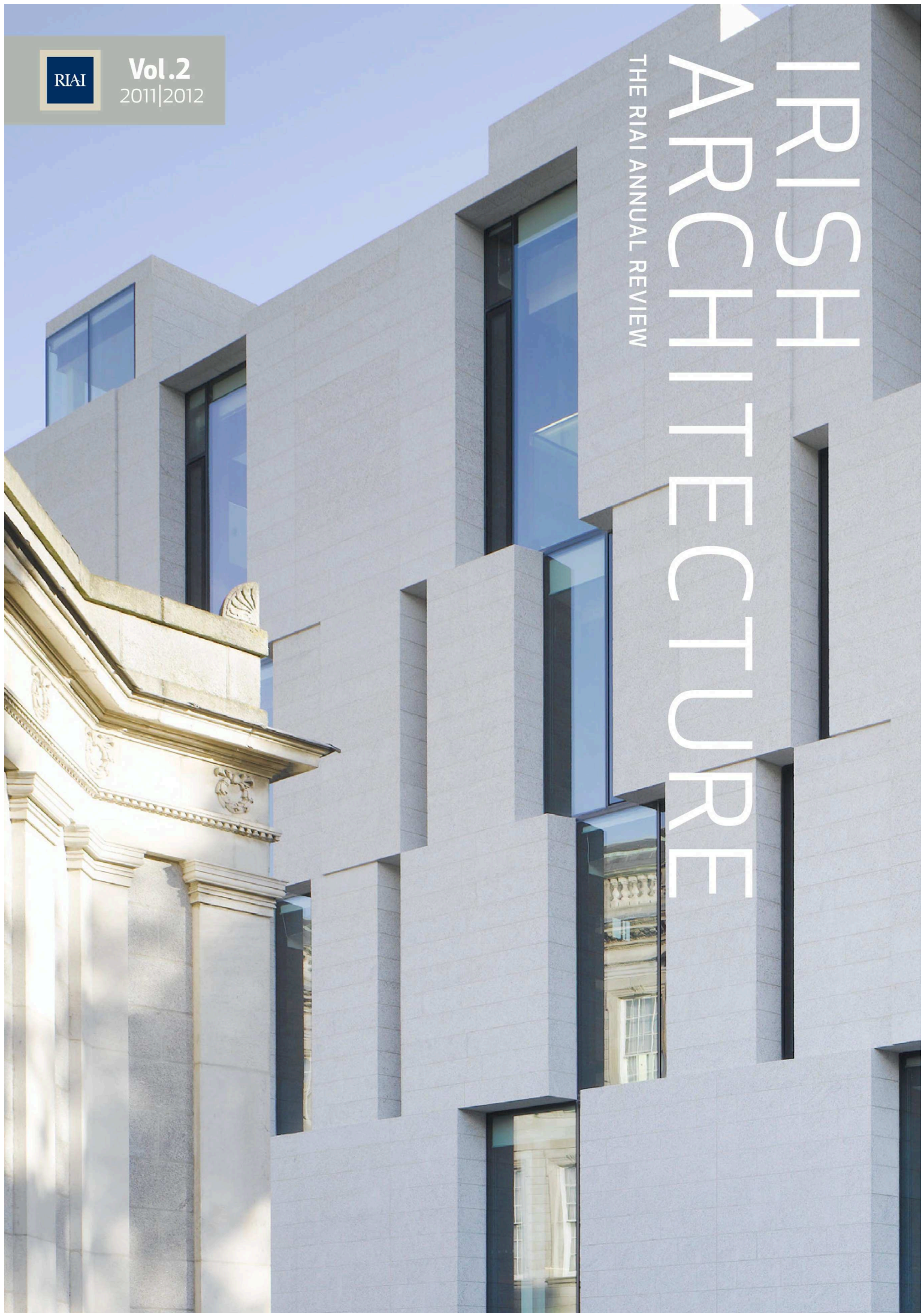




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# IRISH ARCHITECTURE

THE RIAI ANNUAL REVIEW



# LORETO ABBEY DALKEY SPORTS HALL

This open, two-stage architectural competition was for the design of a new sports hall located to the rear of Loreto Abbey Dalkey. The brief comprised a sports hall, gym, performance stage and associated changing rooms and facilities.

Loreto Abbey Dalkey is a Catholic convent secondary school in Dalkey, South Co. Dublin. Located on a remarkably beautiful and very exposed site, overlooking the sea, it has a proud history dating back to 1843. Today 600+ girls, day students aged 12 to 18 from the local area and from a wide hinterland, attend the school. All students play sports; either formally on teams or through individual sports/PE classes and through their own individual interests.

The school wished to put in place a sports hall to complement the existing school and its surroundings, for the use of the school community and to accommodate specific sporting groups from the wider Dalkey community, who use the existing sports facilities in the school, outside of school hours.

A wide range of design and site configuration solutions were proposed in the 93 competition entries, ranging from a completely underground complex to simple elegant forms.

## Assessors:

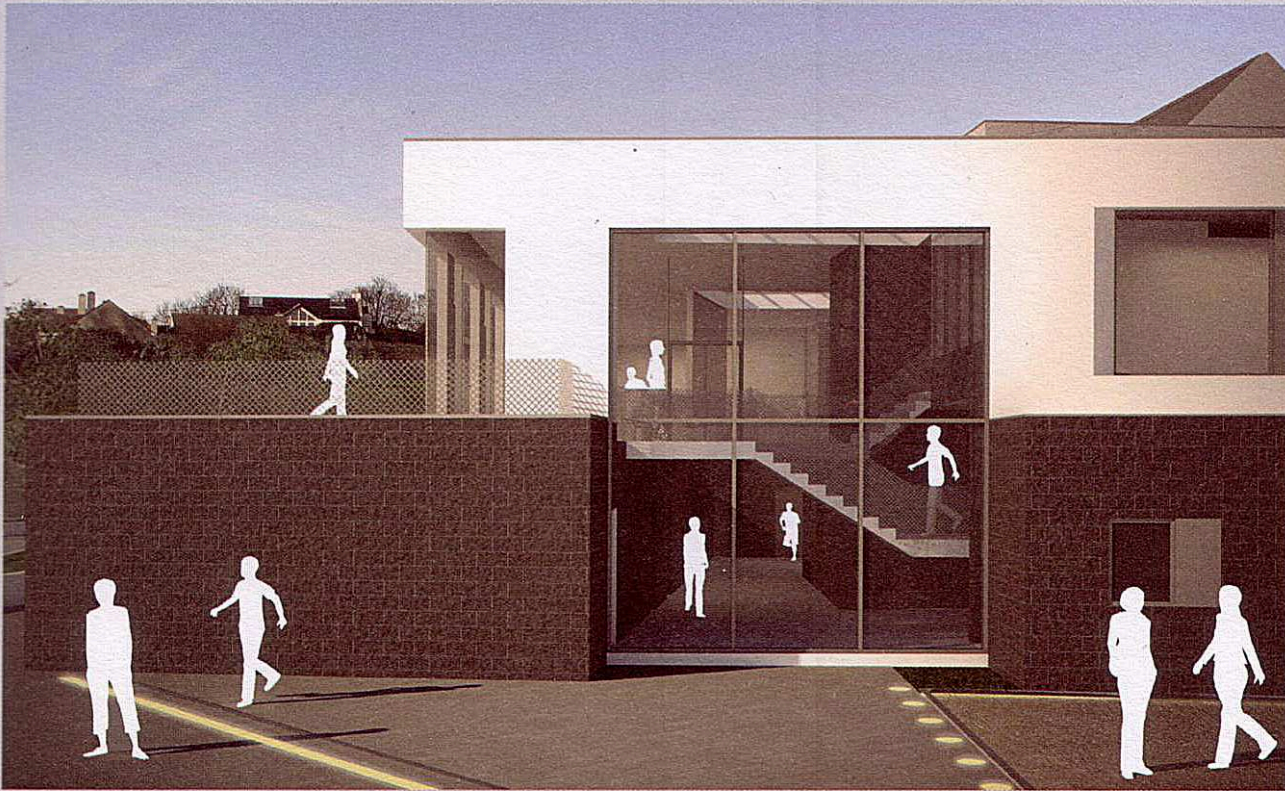
**Robert Dunne**  
Principal,  
Loreto Abbey Secondary  
School, Dalkey

**Hugh Morris**  
Loreto Buildings Officer

**Rosie Webb**  
Senior Executive Architect,  
Galway City Council

**Robin Mandal**  
Architect,  
Robin Mandal Architects

**Helen Murray**  
Architect,  
School Hall Committee,  
Parental Advisor



**WINNER:** Ambient Architecture, Dublin

This submission dealt comprehensively with the brief and clearly responded to the jury's Stage 1 report. The architectural strategy allows for a comprehensive method of addressing the brief with the sensitive breakup of the large mass of the hall. It is a strong concept that can be flexibly adapted to the clients' needs without diluting the concept.

This scheme also dealt comprehensively with the design criteria set out in the brief. The new building allows for the appreciation of the spectacular views out to sea from the fitness and studio spaces with an external terrace at first floor for viewing matches. This external terrace could also be used for outdoor activities from the fitness room.

The location and scale of the entrance to the building is welcoming and large enough for large gatherings of students and in facilitating public access in the evenings. The studio and fitness room respond successfully to the requirements in the brief and have an integral relationship with the hall and out to the views.

Key elevations to the school and across the playing fields consist of various components and materials to successfully break up the large mass of the hall and articulate the facades. Materials chosen are sympathetic to the existing buildings and are hardwearing but perhaps a little utilitarian and will need some detailing and liaison with the promoters.

This scheme had the greatest separation from the boundary with Sue Ryder housing by rotating the main hall from its original position. The location and design of the public entrance is strong, visible from the avenue and generous in its internal dimensions. There is also a strong emphasis on the interconnection of internal and external spaces by the use of viewing galleries internally and externally. Landscaping has been carefully considered, in detail, finishes and in the connection with the existing school.