

Open House goes outdoors with cycle rides and boat trips – and some jaw-dropping homes

Guided tours of the capital including Temple Bar and the Liberties feature in this year's programme, as well as that old reliable - envy-inducing homes

EMMA CULLINAN

Having been forced to go virtual by the Covid-19 virus last year, Open House is back with limited site visits this year.

Online tours and outdoor events will also feature at this year's annual weekend of free architecture tours and events organised by the Irish Architecture Foundation.

"When we think about architecture, we probably do imagine interior spaces or the outer facades of buildings," says Nathalie Weadick, director of the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF).

"But, as this year's programme really demonstrates, it is also about our city and green spaces and how we live and move around them."

The Open House event, which has been linking people to the architecture of their capital city for 16 years, runs from 15th to 17th of October.

It's a wonderful programme this year, comprising cycle rides, boat and bus trips, and guided tours of Georgian Dublin, Temple Bar, the Liberties, Kilmainham, the Monto and docklands. Events such as tours by Valerie Mulvin of Temple Bar or of Grand Canal Dock by James Pike, along with Ciaran O'Connor's story of the restoration of the glasshouse in Glasnevin's botanic gardens, among other tours by architects and historians, promise to be great and informative.

However, the in-person events are always over-subscribed, so most people will be watching films, doing self-guided tours and virtually viewing buildings.

A positive in this is that you will avoid the usual jostling to see inside houses and can instead view them from your mid-century armchair. This year they include homes by Brennan Furlong Architects, Steve Larkin and Robert Bourke Architects, among others, and all are worth viewing. Plus there is an office by Lawrence and Long.



The virtue of virtual viewing is wider accessibility, as highlighted by Minister of State for Heritage Malcolm Noonan, who said at the launch that this year's programme will reach "an even broader audience".

"One of our focus points for the 2021 Open House Dublin programme and the IAF is accessibility," says Weadick.

"Many people can feel excluded or marginalised by the built environment. Post-pandemic it is time to start re-thinking how we design experiences and public spaces to remove barriers where possible to ensure a welcome for all. This

year we have looked at opportunities to make Open House Dublin more accessible and more open and will continue to strive for this in all our programming going forward."

Irish sign language interpretation will be available at tours and events and a collaboration with the AIRA app provides access to visual information for blind and low-vision people.

Naturally, the wider accessibility is also geographical, with the diaspora being able to see what is happening at home.

All events are free. For the full programme see openhousedublin.com

Six things to do without booking

Placencia

The extension and renovation of a house in Killester, north Dublin, Placencia, which overlooks a green to the front and the Dublin-Belfast railway at the back. Brennan Furlong Architects & Urban Planners show how to bring in lots of natural light and create a sleek, but warm and animated interior, using terrazzo floors, white brick walls, a patterned ceiling and timber divides. An online tour will go live on October 15th.

Thomas Street

A five storey open-plan office by Lawrence and Long with basement parking. Preserved oak beams and brick vaults from a pre-1700 Dutch Billy house and tavern were found on the site and incorporated into a 21st century design. An online tour will go live on October 15th.

House at Kimmage

This former joinery workshop, re-imagined by Steve Larkin Architects, was extended to the four sides of its site. The old walls of the workshop walls were reinforced to create an en-

closed garden. The house's relationship with the exterior is reinforced by piers and colonnades that create covered spaces. An online tour will go live on October 15th.

Home energy upgrade webinar

Advice from architects and energy experts who will explain how and why you should upgrade your home's energy efficiency and the support that is available to do this. 11am-12.30pm on Sunday 17th.

Marino + Fairview Architekt

One of three self-guided Architekt tours for children this

one, created by architect Evelyn D'Arcy, visits the neo-classical Casino at Marino and the Marino housing estate, which was inspired by the garden city movement.

Films

There are 10 short films on the architecture of the city, which can be watched all in one go (this takes about an hour). It starts with the Poolbeg towers, and why they are loved; there is a film about the serene, exquisite sacred space at St Theresa's Priory by architect Niall McLaughlin; there are stories about the redevelopment of so-

cial housing at Dolphin House and Rosemount Court and why enclosed outdoor spaces matter; and Shane deBlacam provides an entertaining and beautifully honest insight into the creation of a copy of Vienna's Loos Bar in Trinity College.

There is also a film about a skate park in Ballyfermot animatedly described by its users; a tour of the neo-Gothic Chapel Royal in Dublin Castle; the story of Temple Bar by Frank McDonald; plans to create a cultural quarter in Parnell Square by Grafton Architects; and an overview of Dublin's streetscape by architect Niall McCullough.



■ Clockwise from left: Placencia, a house in Killester, North Dublin; Thomas Street, a five storey open-plan office by Lawrence and Long; and Dublin's iconic Poolbeg Towers will feature in a film shown as part of the event.

Co Dublin €1.5m

Handsome Georgian residence

49 Montpelier Parade, Monkstown, Co Dublin

Description: Striking looking, well-located, renovated period property on popular Monkstown terrace
Agent: Colliers

BERNICE HARRISON

The owner of 49 Montpelier Parade bought the austere-looking, three-storey, over-garden-level house in the popular Monkstown terrace in 2002. The property at that time was being sold in two lots – the house, which was in need of considerable renovation, and a part of the long back garden with mews potential.

Wanting to keep the entire intact, he bought both lots, paying €815,000 in total.

He wasn't interested in starting on building a mews, although permission was at one stage granted. Instead, he planted the southwest-facing 120ft (37sq m) back garden once the major renovation was complete.

The home has 222sq m (2,400sq ft), with three bedrooms, four reception rooms and a large kitchen/breakfast room opening out onto the garden. It was an upscale boom-time renovation from the new roof down to reworking the garden level.

As for fittings, the country-style kitchen is Chalon, with top appliances including the serious cook's favourite, a Lacanche range.

When the house was built in 1800 the first owners would have used the front-facing first-floor room that spans the width of the house as a drawing room. The current owner did the same, and the room – with its trio of sash windows, white marble fireplace and a polished timber floor – is an elegant space. An ensuite bedroom on this floor has a window over the rear garden.

The best views are from the window of a top-floor bathroom with sunken bath, which looks clear across rooftops to the Dublin mountains. Two arched windows on the turn of the stairs give similar Three



Rock Mountain views, as well as a great deal of light.

The main, second-floor bedroom is front facing, with three half-sized windows and a cast-iron fireplace. The third bedroom is to the rear and also has a cast-iron fireplace.

At hall level there is the traditional layout of the dining room opening into a sitting room.

The owner put the house up for sale in 2012 – which in hindsight was around the bottom of the market – and it didn't sell, despite a price cut from €1.25 million to €1.05 million, before it was taken off the market. As

he was moving away, he continued to use the house on visits back to Dublin before renting it out.

Montpelier Terrace is set back from the road, with a strip of greenery providing a useful shield from the traffic.

Number 49 has pedestrian access to the rear and parking is on-street.

Now that this level of the market has picked up considerably, he has once again placed the striking-looking, well-located, renovated, Ber-exempt, period property for sale, this time through Colliers, asking for €1.5 million.

Dublin 4 €500,000



Perfect pad for a young techie

150 The Links, Elm Park, Merrion Rd, Dublin 4

Description: A two-bedroom apartment completely refurbished with design flair by Brazilian owners
Agent: Owen Reilly

KEVIN COURTNEY

If you could design the ultimate pad for a young techie with an eye for style, you probably wouldn't do much better than this superb two-bedroom apartment in the Elm Park complex off Merrion Road in Dublin 2.

Number 150, The Links, has been completely refurbished by its owners, Lucas and Luiz, both professionals working in the tech industry, and they've transformed what was a standard, but perfectly serviceable apartment into an interior design dream.

The couple, both from Brazil, bought the apartment in 2019, and recruited an architect friend from Brazil, Leandra Susin, and Luiz's sister, designer Ana Zago, to reimagine the space to suit their style. The result is a superb living space in turn-key condition where any hip young professional would be delighted to hang their trilby.

The original carpeting has been replaced by engineered wood floors with underfloor heating, and the walls are imaginatively decorated in shiny, grey wallpaper to give a stone effect, punctuated in places with bespoke decorative black wooden batons.



A spacious entrance hallway leads into a stunning kitchen/dining/living space, with a floor-to-ceiling west-facing bay window overlooking Elm Park Golf Course and looking out to the Dublin Mountains. Don't worry – there's enough tree cover so you don't have to see the golfers in their check chinos. You can host an intimate dinner party in this space, or close the sliding doors to create a sunroom on a balmy summer's evening.

The livingroom has a Gazco electric fireplace that keeps the place cosy, with bespoke storage units from Kube to keep the place nicely Kondo'd. The original kitchen was a separate room – a concrete pod built into the apartment. The owners decided to make it open-plan, and had to get the engineers in to dismantle the pod, and were delighted to find they'd gained extra ceiling and wall space by removing the interior brickwork. The new kitchen is

by Nobilia, again in stylish grey, with a Calacatta Gold quartz countertop, and new Siemens appliances.

The master bedroom has a bespoke walk-in closet by Kube and an ensuite with shower unit. The second bedroom has been adapted for working at home during the pandemic, with a sofa-bed and a built-in workstation that can be closed away at the end of the day, drawing a line between work and home life. The main bathroom, with bath and shower unit, opens into this bedroom and into the hallway; both this and the ensuite are luxuriously tiled with quartz countertops and Sonas units.

Having created a professionals' paradise, the couple are now ready to move to a larger space for themselves and their dog, a King Charles spaniel named Oisín – "the real owner".

Elm Park was built by high-profile property developer Bernard McNamara at the height of the property boom in 2006; it is now occupied by a mix of renters and owners. Number 150 comes with an underground parking space, and there's access to a gym, plus a 1km running track that circumnavigates the complex. There's a fine coffee shop, The Art of Coffee, on Elmpark Green, and a newly opened speciality food and wine shop, Elm Epicurean. Elm Park is just off the Merrion Road near the Merrion Gates. Buses will take you straight into town, while the Booterstown Dart station is just 10-minute walk.

Number 150 The Links, at 75sq m (807sq ft) with a Ber rating of C2, is on sale through Owen Reilly for €500,000.