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**Client**  
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**Structural Engineers**  
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**Services Engineers**  
RPS Group

**Landscape Consultant**  
Howbert and Mays

**Kitchen Consultants**  
QA Design

**PSDP**  
OLM Consultancy

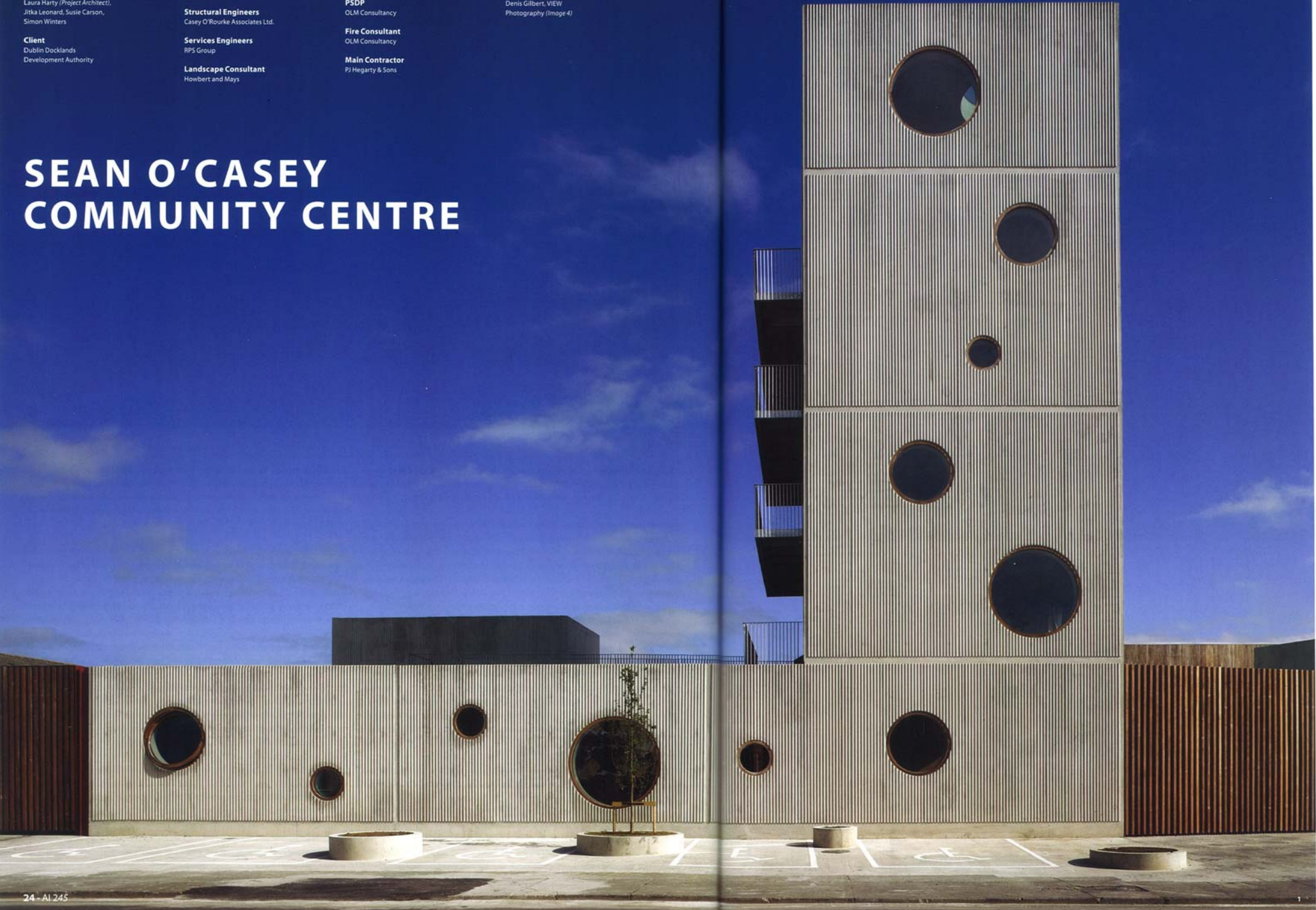
**Fire Consultant**  
OLM Consultancy

**Main Contractor**  
PJ Hegarty & Sons

**Photography**  
Michael Moran

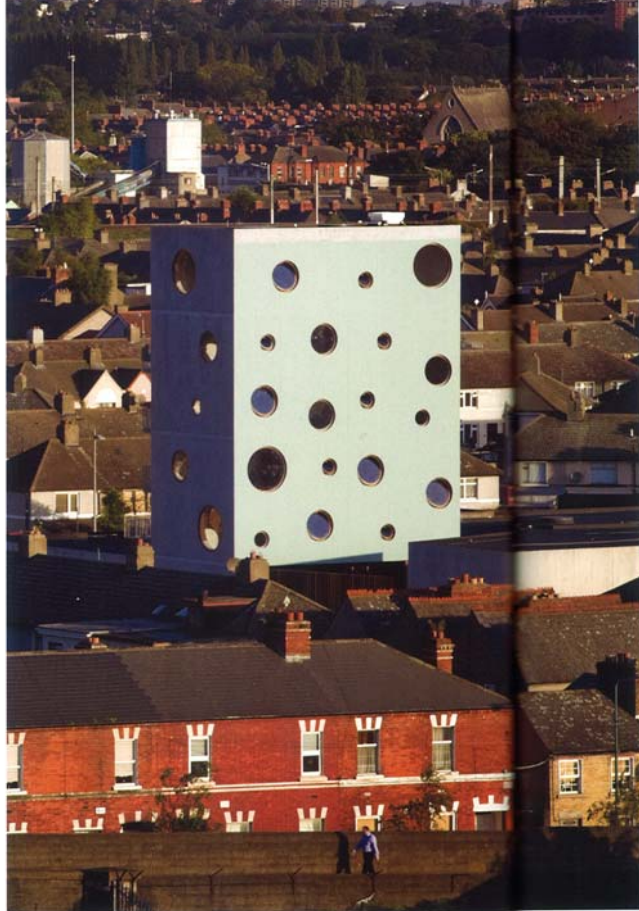
Denis Gilbert, VIEW  
Photography (Image 4)

# SEAN O'CASEY COMMUNITY CENTRE



**PROJECT SIZE**  
2,088m<sup>2</sup>  
**VALUE**  
€8.4m  
**DURATION**  
17 months  
(on site)  
**LOCATION**  
East Wall,  
Dublin





### O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects' Account

This community centre is for the long established East Wall docklands community. The building includes childcare, senior citizens' daycare, sports and drama facilities. Built on reclaimed land, its street network swivelled against the dominant grid iron urban development, East Wall is circumscribed by the curved lines of 19th century railway tracks and the straight line of the 18th century sea wall. Offset from the Georgian grid that runs parallel with the River Liffey, it is a place apart; a section of the city with its own sense of identity, contained within city-scale infrastructural boundaries. The site for the project is on the cleared ground of a former school building within the low-rise density of the neighbourhood of two-storey terraced housing.

### Analysis of Brief and Client Aspiration

It was clear from the brief that much of the accommodation should ideally be located on the ground floor, in particular the community crèche, daycare centre for the elderly and the sports hall. The crèche required easy access to protected outside areas to allow the children to play and learn in fresh air.

Given the extent and scale of commercial development in the docklands area close to the East Wall, it was a stated aspiration of the East Wall Community Development Council that the new building would be a visible expression of the East Wall Community as part of the living city. They wanted a high building.

### Building Form

The design concept is for a single-storey building, punctuated with courts and gardens with a single tall element; a 'learning tower' of education and meeting rooms marking the skyline to identify the special status of the building in its urban landscape. The crèche, daycare centre, foyer/café and gym all open into and overlook landscaped courtyard gardens. Educational rooms, staff and meeting rooms are in the tower, which is located at the front of the building to ensure easy access as well as a clearly visible presence on the street. Four separately functioning blocks emerge from a single-storey plinth which is cut out to form four courtyard gardens. The gardens are densely planted with semi-mature native trees and shrubs. Three sizes of circular windows and roof lights perforate the outer corrugated shell. Small portholes at eye-level, middle sized windows at desk-level and larger openings at body-scale provide points of communication between the world within and the larger world outside the containment of the courtyard complex.



The courtyards provide diagonal transparencies between the different social activities of the centre, connecting old with young and relating passive and active recreations.

### Sustainability Features

Environmental aspects include GGBS cement and a ground source heat pump combined with passive measures such as high thermal mass and insulation. These result in low energy consumption, reduced CO2 emissions and low annual heating bills.

### Materials

External walls are corrugated fairfaced concrete, cast against a formwork of corrugated iron, an industrial material indigenous to the context. Glazed screens to the garden courts are framed in untreated FSC hardwood.

1 The building is composed of a single storey plinth and tall element

2 One of the four courtyard gardens of the scheme

3 The 'learning tower' (containing educational rooms and offices) emerges as a tall structure in the low-rise East Wall community to mark the building's special status

4 A play of 'screen and shadow' at the escape stairs

