

ARCHITECTURE IRELAND

Timberyard by O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects
New Housing and Thomond Park
Toxic Loans and NAMA
2009 Irish Architecture Awards
Interview with Kim Nielsen 3XN

July/August 2009 - €10 (INC VAT)

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RIAI



TIMBERYARD SOCIAL HOUSING

ARCHITECTS

O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects
 Sheila O'Donnell, John Tuomey, Jeana Gearty (Project Architect),
 Cian Deegan, Gary Watkin, Harriet Browne, Sam Laffin, Thomas Pickert

CLIENT - Dublin City Council

QUANTITY SURVEYORS - Cyril Sweet, Paul Maguire, Peter Hanley

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS - Downes Associates

SERVICES ENGINEERS - Buro Happold

MAIN CONTRACTOR - Townlink Construction Ltd.

PHOTOGRAPHY - Dennis Gilbert, View.

Project size - 3,800m²

Value - €13m

Duration - 20 months

Location - Coombe Bypass, Dublin

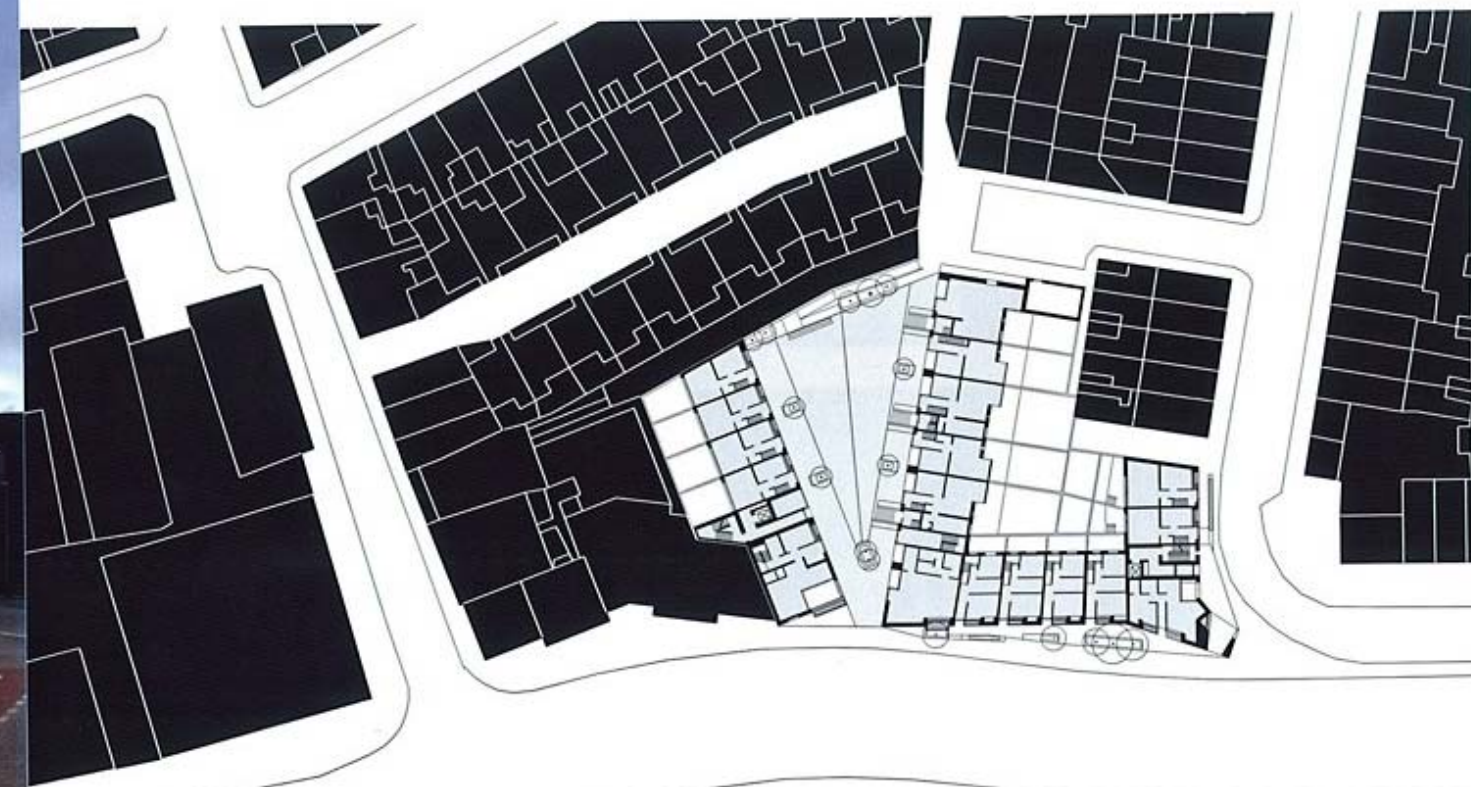
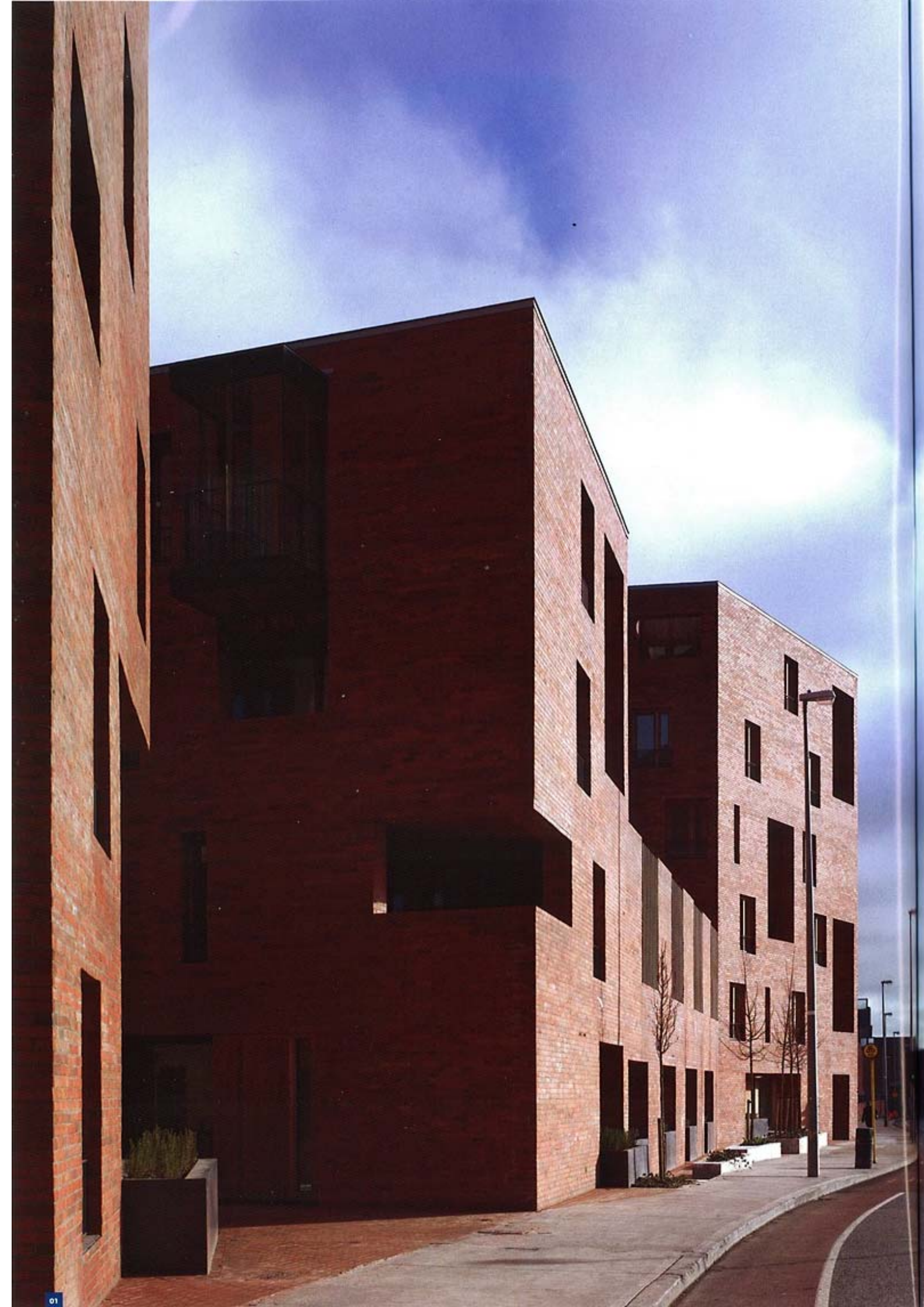
REPORT

By O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects

The development consists of a new housing scheme comprised of 47 dwellings and a street level community facility in the historic Liberties area of Dublin. The project was generated by the construction of the Coombe Bypass. A backland site was opened up and the urban design requirement was for a new street frontage to heal the wounds caused by the road engineering operation. The design centres on a new public space on the site of a former timber yard, making

a residential enclave with a sense of place. The scheme works between the six storey scale proposed in general along the new Cork Street corridor and the smaller scale of the existing houses behind the site. The new buildings are in brick, with hardwood windows and screens to terraces and roof gardens. The windows are offset from each other in the walls to work with the complexity of the residential accommodation within, and to emphasise the continuity of the

brick surface. The walls are modulated with recessed porches and terraces and projecting bay windows to give a depth and complexity to the building's edge and an interface between the private world of the house and the neighbourhood. The development proposes to provide scale, identity and a piece of living city, which connects new development in the area to the historic character of the Liberties



Site Plan

1. In urban design terms, the Timberyard scheme has been designed to heal the wounds of road engineering works.
 2/3. Elevations are modulated with recessed porches and projecting bay windows.
 4/5. Apartments plans vary to take advantage of views and context.

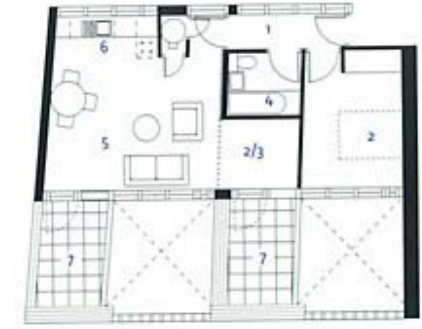


Section

- 1 Entrance Hall
- 2 Bedroom
- 3 Study
- 4 Bath
- 5 Living/Dining
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Terrace
- 8 WC



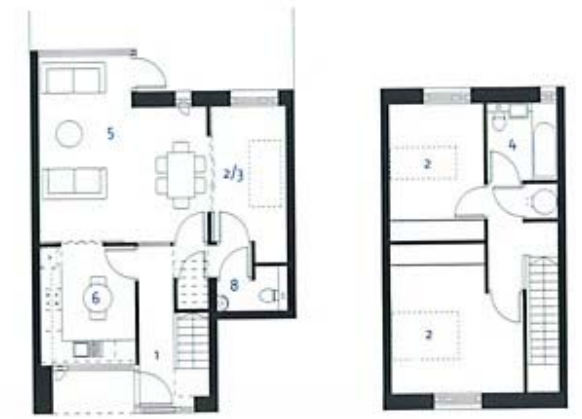
Unit D10



Unit C2



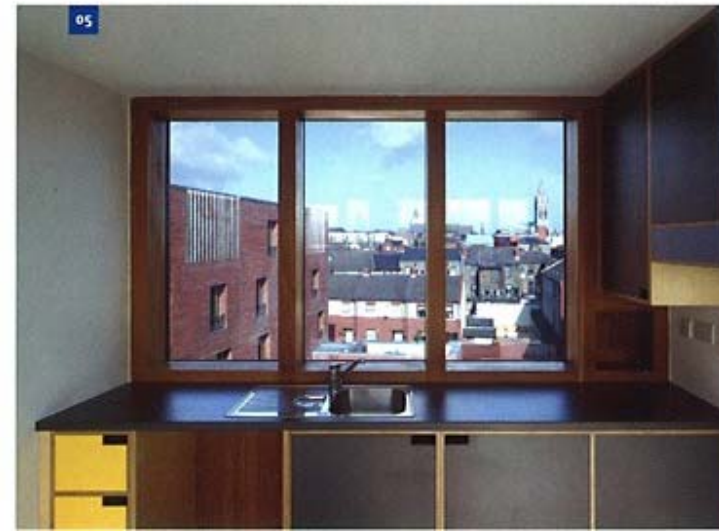
Unit B7 / Duplex

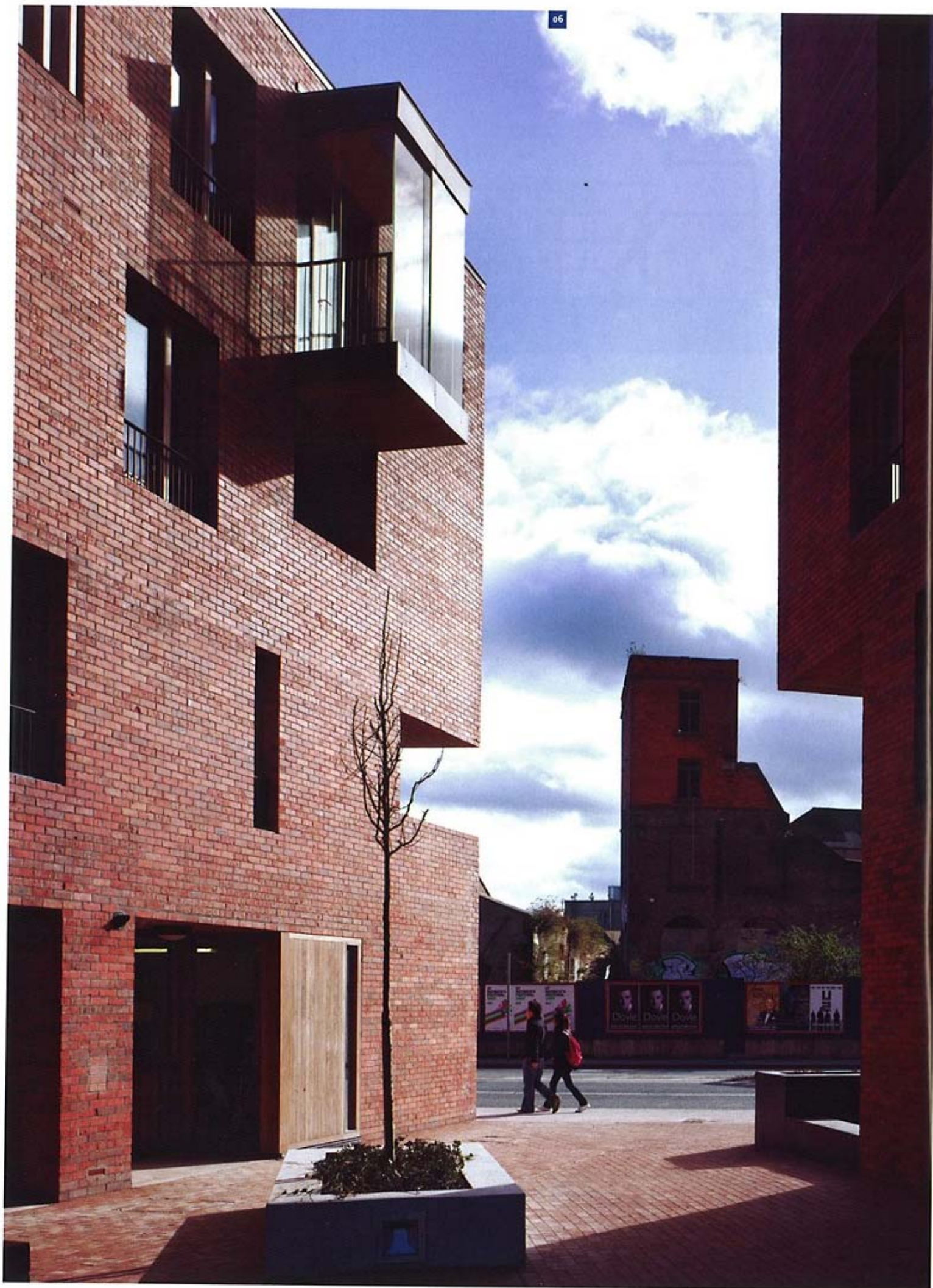


Unit B2 / Duplex



Ground floor plan





CHINESE PUZZLE IN THE LIBERTIES

By Kester Rattenbury

At first, O'Donnell + Tuomey's Timberyard social housing project in Dublin looks simple. These days, modest elegant, everyday pieces of architecture can mask anything from the exquisite to the banal. But this one is not just lovely in itself. The more time you spend here, the more it includes or opens up.

ODT don't make a fanfare about changing a repressive idea of city social housing, but change it they do. Unpromising housing types were required (flats above shops). It's an unpromising site - a major road, slicing and ignoring its subtle, overlooked historical context, cutting charming, small residential streets from the Newmarket, Dublin's medieval centre (abandoned as the city drifted north in the 17th and 18th centuries). The Timberyard uncovers how interesting this place is.

This comes on you gradually. The buildings look plain but lovely; a well-made part of an unappealing road. They casually open to form a small square, oddly shaped and sunny, sloping to set up a rising view of city trees and roofs to the north, discovering an older, human city, linked with streets and alleys. They welcome the Marian grotto, established on the site; chamfering a corner and building

a special niche to include it. ODT wholly resisted the official demand for flats above shops (typical in the depressing big road). They thought the lovely houses around, or Dublin's Georgian terraces, with their gardens and yards and front doors and pleasant streets were a far better model. The flats and maisonettes they designed are immensely, pleasurably, (and hugely time-consumingly) varied. All are double-sided with two or three outside spaces - at least one per aspect - a big balcony, garden or winter garden outside the living spaces, a smaller one outside the kitchen. The arrangement alternates in even the simplest flats. Neighbours' double-height spaces interlock like a Chinese puzzle. Yet the whole thing has the simplicity of a child's drawing of a Georgian house. This takes a huge design commitment, and makes wonderful places to live. I would move city for many of these (something I couldn't say for the prizewinning Accordia luxury housing project in Cambridge.) There are south-facing streetfront maisonettes with interlocking balconies and gardens communicating with street and neighbours. There are neat, private flats running laterally from big street to small with east-west city views

(probably my favourites). There's a glorious one looking north over the big catslide roof. The kitchens and detailing are fabulous. To talk about them in bulk is misleading: each is as distinct as an individual home; with its own spaces; its own relationship with neighbours and city.

Yet they form a coherent, neighbourly, generous whole. That modest brick form does some quietly spectacular things - opening to let in the sun, and swooping from six storeys to frame the rising waves of the little houses behind like perspective lines - an optical trick tilting the city into frame. You won't get all this from drawings or photos: it links into other senses: of orientation, of enjoying views, or the sun on a wall, of history, of how to spend time. It's designed as a small, specific place in a big city; one of those you keep going back to. Like its very different sibling on the other side of the city, the Sean O'Casey building, "It feels like saying something simple", says Tuomey. It slows you down, invites you to spend time well, opens up the city to you: its history, its humanity, its physical substance. From an unpromising site and generic models, this is something utterly specific and special. A lovely place to be.

