



## Assessors' Report

### Holy Cross Parish Church Improvement Competition

#### Assessors Present:

Fr. Kieran McDermott, Parish Priest, Holy Cross Parish  
Paul O'Neill, Chair, Parish Development Committee  
Eddie O'Shea FRIAI, Diocesan Representative  
Gay McCarron B.Arch. FRTPI, Parish Development Committee Member  
Martin Donnelly MRIAI, Parish Development Committee Member  
Deirdre McCulloch, Artist, Parish Development Committee Member  
Cathy Prunty RIAI (Arch. Tech.), Parish Development Committee Member

#### Report:

The assessors were impressed by the diversity and quality of the 23 valid submissions for this single-stage ideas competition.

The range of issues to be addressed and the potential for conflicting solutions required skilful balance in the ideas put forward and made for a challenging response. The assessors appreciated that in some cases a potential solution to an issue identified in the brief could have an adverse impact on a potential solution to another issue. The proposals generally showed sensitivity to the problems of implementing improved practical and liturgical elements in the context of a protected structure.

It was considered that the competition will be of considerable benefit to the Parish of Holy Cross in clarifying the brief to be prepared for works to secure innovative improvements to the church which, it is hoped, will be implemented shortly following Diocesan approval.

The assessors were unanimous in their decision that the Prize fund of €10,000 should be awarded as follows; €6,000 to Submission 24, €3,000 to Submission 2 and €1,000 to Submission 14.

The assessors welcome the opportunity for the parish to view the exhibition of the competition submissions from Thursday, 26 November to Sunday, 29 November 2009 in the Parish Hall.

#### Winner – Submission 24: Niall D Brennan Associates [www.ndba.ie](http://www.ndba.ie)

The concept of this submission addressed the areas of particular interest of the brief.

The creation of the Welcome Area including the baptismal font should add to the enjoyment of and participation in church celebrations and sacraments. While the foregoing solution reduces the seating capacity, the assessors considered that the shortfall could be readily addressed in refining the details of the layout at a future stage.

The simple glazed entrance screen incorporating images of the parish notices was considered to be very successful. Movement and circulation were well considered for all liturgical events.

The modest opening up of the forecourt area by the removal of the existing railings together with the continuation of the paving proposed for the church grounds across the public footpath and street immediately in front of the church was considered to be a successful approach in making the church more accessible.

**Highly Commended – Submission 2: Lawrence + Long Architects [www.lawrenceandlong.com](http://www.lawrenceandlong.com)**

This submission stressed the opening up of the access to the church by replacing the constricted side porches with new glazed porches. The lower level of the northern wall of the original church was to be replaced with a glazed wall filling the back of the church with light. The new baptism font location in a gathering area at the rear of the church was to be linked by a simple water channel through out into a courtyard / garden in front of the parochial house terminating at a proposed large sculptural cross. The assessors considered that the views into the garden area detract from the axial importance of the main altar.

**Submission Number 14 – de Blacam and Meagher Architects [www.deblacamandmeagher.com](http://www.deblacamandmeagher.com)**

This submission was a considered and sensitive proposal. The issue of access and movement was considered in a number of ways including the creation of a new courtyard to the side of the church between the existing railings and the Parochial House.

The assessors particularly liked the inclusion of chairs to replace existing benches to create, amongst other things, a greater aisle width.

The inclusion of a second small garden and a new south west window, replacing the mortuary chapel was considered to be an attractive visual initiative.

October 2009