

Irish buildings nominated for world awards

Monks in the new extension to their monastery at the historic Mount Melleray Abbey in Co Waterford.

PHILIP LAUTERBACH



Paul Melia

TWO Irish buildings have been shortlisted for a prestigious architectural award.

Wexford County Council offices and an extension to the Mount Melleray monastery in Co Waterford have been nominated for the World Architecture Festival awards, which will be held in November.

Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) president Paul Keogh said the nominations were testament to the high quality of buildings being completed here.

"This is a prestigious event," he said. "It's not surprising that two Irish entries are shortlisted. Given our size, Ireland is really punching above its weight."

"It just shows that despite the recession here and the

shortage of new commissions, we've come out of a period when we've really built an awful lot of very good buildings."

The Mount Melleray project was designed by dhb Architects, based in Waterford and involved building a new accommodation wing. Director Fintan Duffy said the project presented particular challenges.

"Melleray is a national monument, as well as a protected

structure, and there was also the challenge that it's a working monastery."

"I'd like to think this will translate into more work. We were nominated last year and it gives us a certain reputation nationally."

The second project, Wexford County Council's civic offices, were designed by Robin Lee Architecture with Dublin-based firm Arthur Gibney.

"We're delighted," Mr Lee said yesterday. "We're delighted for the council as well because they were a fantastic client. The central idea is for a civic forum - a central space for public gatherings."

Now in its fourth year, the competition attracted its highest number of entries to date, with 704 entries from 59 countries.

Entries range from Tasma-

nia to the Arctic Circle in Norway, with new countries such as Libya, Haiti and Cambodia appearing alongside the USA, UK, Australia, China, Japan and Spain.

The Università Luigi Bocconi faculty building in Milan designed by Grafton Architects won the World Building of the Year award two years ago.

Dublin is also shortlisted for World Design Capital in 2014.