

Sustainable Development: Oasis Plaza Project



The OASIS Plaza in Omagh (Omagh Accessible Shared & Inclusive Space) has scooped an Outstanding Achievement Award at the CEEQUAL 2016 Awards held in London on 28-29 November 2016. The OASIS Plaza project beat off stiff competition from several nominated projects to take the outstanding achievement award in the category for 'Community and Stakeholder Relations'.

The £4.345m project, which was officially opened by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in June 2015 and was funded through the EU Peace III programme, managed by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB), was designed by McAdam Design and built by FP McCann Contractors. The Outstanding Achievement Award for Community and Stakeholder Relations recognised the contribution of both the design team and the finished build and in particular the involvement of the local community, school children and companies from the project's construction to its finishing touches.

CEEQUAL is the evidence-based sustainability assessment, rating and awards scheme for civil engineering, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm projects. It promotes and celebrates high environmental and social performance in the specification, design and construction of civil engineering works. The CEEQUAL Outstanding Achievement Awards recognise and acknowledge projects that

demonstrate pinnacle best-practice performance and highlight some of the top sustainability achievements by civil engineering projects in countries around the world.

The Judging Panel described the OASIS project as having a “great concept” with the potential to really make a difference. The Panel Members stated, “This Scheme has made a big statement on how to bring communities together – it is a landmark in the development of community interaction. All sections of the community and stakeholder groups were engaged in all aspects of the project, from development to delivery.”

The OASIS Project includes a riverside pedestrian and cycle path along the banks of the River Strule, a Plaza, a link across the Strule River with a new pedestrian/cycle bridge and an elevated walkway into Omagh town centre. The Project has successfully joined the town up logistically and reduced the need for car travel. It segregates traffic and pedestrians, provides green spaces, and encourages trade in the town.

The aim of the OASIS Project is to enhance the physical and psychological links between disparate communities in Omagh Town. It provides safe, neutral, shared open spaces that increase opportunities for interaction through work and recreation. It reclaimed underused and unwelcome spaces and previously inaccessible lands within the town.

Since its official opening the OASIS Plaza has been the venue for several large-scale events, such as the St Patrick’s Day Festival, the Mid-Summer Carnival, the Halloween event, and other sporting events such as the Irish National Cycling Championships in 2015. Notably the Peace Pledge Project, launched in September 2015, witnessed 46 schools from across the Omagh area, representing primary, post-primary, controlled, maintained, integrated, Irish medium and Special Needs placing 46 stainless steel peace pledge plaques at the Plaza, each bearing a pledge to work towards peace and respect.

Speaking after the Awards Ceremony, the Chairperson of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Councillor Mary Garrity said,

“I was absolutely delighted to be a member of the Party representing the Council at the Awards Ceremony in London and to receive the Community and Stakeholder Relations Outstanding Achievement Award was the icing on the cake. Given that the CEEQUAL Awards are recognising projects from around the world, we were delighted that the OASIS Plaza had been shortlisted but to actually be a winner was absolutely amazing and testament to the outstanding work of the collaborative efforts of the Council, the Design Team and the Contractors. I wish to personally thank and congratulate McAdam Design and FP McCann for the sterling work they undertook with the Council to make the OASIS Project an internationally recognised shared space and CEEQUAL Award winner. I would also like to personally thank the

Council's Director of Regeneration and Planning, Ms Alison McCullagh, for her involvement and dedication to the project."