


The houses that never made it

They were fine designs, but money, planners or events stopped them being constructed. **Mark Keenan** salutes the great unbuilt

Dublin city council approved the design, but it was shot down by An Bord Pleanala. The architect's second effort was a sleek poured concrete design in which the two residences appeared to be a single home. **Why didn't it go ahead?** An Bord Pleanala approved this design on the day that Bertie Ahern resigned. It quickly became clear that the property market was turning sour and the developer wisely put the project on "indefinite hold".


Some of the most engaging work by the best architects never sees the light of day. It might surprise the average punter to know that up to two-thirds of designs are never built. Even the great Frank Lloyd Wright was hit regularly by changed circumstances, bankrupt clients and uncooperative planning authorities. In all, 380 of his projects were never constructed. One design that did get built — eventually — is in Delgany, Co Wicklow. It is the first Wright house in Europe and was constructed three years ago by Marc Coleman, who obtained permission to go ahead with a mothballed 1959 design by the great master. Ireland had an explosion in home designs during the boom years but, after the bubble burst, many architects found, like Wright, that their clients were cleared out or simply cleared off. Other homes are not built because planners put the kibosh on them. Some are concept designs that are intended to provoke debate rather than be constructed. To show off the homes that have never seen the light of day, Home Ireland asked the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland to canvass its members for images of their best-laid plans that went astray. This week and next week, we will present a selection of the submissions in order to celebrate the effort that went into them. So here's to the great unbuilt.




Slated in Sligo
Who: Sterrin O'Shea
Where: A rural site in Co Sligo overlooking Benbulbin
When: 2008
What it is: Designed by Sterrin O'Shea who cut her teeth with Grafton Architects and FKL, this design was drawn up for a young couple who wanted to turn a 1930s protected cottage into something special. The dark cramped cottage had to be retained (a planning condition and a budgetary constraint) and a two-storey extension would not be permitted. The cottage overlooks the Atlantic coast to the west and Benblben to the north. O'Shea attempted a contemporary take on rural themes, deliberately eschewing hard box forms for traditional pitched forms and cladding in traditional slate. The interior, however, was designed as an open-plan space with picture windows framing the stunning views. Timber boxes inside would house service areas such as the kitchen and bathrooms.




The bank pulled the plug on this Sterrin O'Shea extension in Co Sligo; Colin Galavan's house in Foxrock fell victim to the recession, far left



Leahy designed this Cork home but its client lost interest



Open Office Architects's plan for a Rathgar mews



Niall D Brennan's homes in Killiney were put on hold

original via a glazed link, but slipped in to allow for a screened car parking forecourt and deck area. This new structure would mirror the profile (pitch/height/width) of the original cottage and be clad entirely in slate matching that of the existing pitched roof. A secret staircase cut into the timber box would give access to the loft, which would overlook the double-height living/dining space. **Why didn't it go ahead?** Permission was granted in 2007 but the plan was stopped by the banks. The clients returned to their bank to find that it would no longer finance the scheme. The clients still want to proceed.

Undecided
Who: Leahy & Associates
Where: A rural site with views in Innishannon, Co Cork
When: 2007
What it is: A 4,000-sq-ft home reflecting local forms and materials. It was designed in glass and cut stone, with a rounded roof reflecting the rural barn form commonly found in the landscape. **Why didn't it go ahead?** The clients kept changing their mind on what they wanted and eventually lost interest. As a result, the design didn't even make it to planning.

Concrete boots
Who: Sean Fogarty of Open Office Architects of Dublin
Where: A lane in Rathgar, Dublin 6
When: 2005
What it is: Open Office Architects was commissioned by a lawyer who had dabbled in development to design two adjoining mews houses in a back lane in Rathgar. The architect's first design was for two distinctly different residences: one two storey, the other of three floors; one in render, one in brick.

Triosunk
Who: Niall D Brennan Associates
Where: A site in Killiney, Co Dublin