

Irish Architects win top international design awards in New York City Douglas Wallace gets top plaudits for Peter Mark and Go Fresh designs

(January 2008) - Douglas Wallace, the major Irish firm of architects, designers and project managers, has been recognised in New York City as one of the world's top retail store designers, on foot of recently completed design work for Ireland's Peter Mark Group and the Go Fresh retail convenience store. Douglas Wallace was selected from over 170 other award candidates, among the 1,000 strong membership of the Retail Design Institute.

In the International Store Design Competition, the company scooped two top awards marking the contribution of design to successful retailing. At an awards ceremony which took place in New York City, the Irish firm was awarded first place in the Service Retail Category for its interior design of the Peter Mark Mary Street salon, and the company also received the award for first place in the Convenience Store category for the Go Fresh retail store in Dublin's Tara Street Station.

Douglas Wallace is a participant in Enterprise Ireland's Scaling Programme, which promotes the growth of Irish companies to a scale capable of competing more aggressively in international markets. The company is headquartered in Dublin with offices in London, Belfast and Galway. It is the largest multidisciplinary practice in Ireland and among the leading full service firms in the UK.

Douglas Wallace is expanding its business into Europe through organic and acquisitive growth. Last year, the firm invested €2.8 million in acquisitions and announced the creation of 75 new high skilled jobs in Ireland.

The award winning design for the Peter Mark salon on Mary Street is bright and visually appealing with its use of white and light colours, punched with powerful red and orange graphics. Vibrant red resin screens and chunky shag pile carpets on the walls added to a highly modern and lively environment. The resin flooring for the salon has iridescent colours resembling shampoo that has spilled onto the floor.

The design has also created a retail store within a salon, allowing people to purchase hair care products without committing to a new hairstyle. The finished design is an informative, fun retail unit which allows customers to learn about products by speaking with the trained Peter Mark staff. The idea is that people can shop in Peter Mark without having to commit to a new hair do.

The brief for Go Fresh was to create a new concept for a convenience store in an existing unit in Dublin's Tara Street Station, situated under the barrel vaulting of a bridge. Working alongside a graphic designer, bespoke graphics and branding were created while lighting was used as an architectural element, creating distinct and visually identifiable zones within the unit.

A main addition and feature to the store was the keyhole entrance which operates as a frame to the unit and works as a point of interest to encourage customers into the store. Finished in a high gloss white lacquer, a structured contrast has been made against the exposed station walls.

Douglas Wallace has turnover in excess of €18 million, a total of 180 staff, design studios in Ireland and the UK and clients and projects across Europe. Group turnover is projected to grow to over €30 million by 2010. Together with enterprise

Ireland, the company is strongly focussed on new market development opportunities, committed to achieving scale and increasing its sales in global markets, while maintaining its headquarters and a substantial presence in Ireland.

Tom Cusack, Director Americas for Enterprise Ireland, the trade and technology board of the government of Ireland commented in New York: "Industry accolades of such prestigious nature are a major coup for Dublin-based Douglas Wallace and underscore the caliber and quality of Irish companies and their ability to compete in world markets."

"These are prestigious awards which mark us out among some of the world's top architecture and design houses," commented Hugh Wallace, Chief Executive of Douglas Wallace. "It is a significant international recognition of Douglas Wallace's creative expertise and our ability to push the boundaries of design to the limits with new concepts and implementations. Visual and sensory appeal are among the strongest selling points which any retail operation can have. Both Peter Mark and the Go Fresh convenience store are pioneers of cutting edge retail design in Ireland and internationally and we are delighted to be a contributor to their success".

Ends

Retail Design Institute

Since 1961, the Retail Design Institute (formerly the Institute of Store Planners) has been the only international professional society totally dedicated to the challenges and rewards of retail store planning and design. Based in New York, members include architects, industrial designers, interior designers, planners, draftsmen and detailers, visual merchandisers, graphic designers, lighting experts, project and construction managers, CAD & IT specialists, & marketing specialists.

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