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Annual
Summit
Report,
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About the Annual Summit

The second Annual Summit of Open House Europe (OHEu), a collaborative project co-funded by the European Union, took place in Dublin from January 29 to February 1, hosted by the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF). This year's summit centred on the 2024 annual theme, 'Accessibility and Inclusion', exploring how cities can become more inclusive, adaptable and welcoming to all. With the title 'The City Invites', the summit embodied a call to action—a challenge to reimagine cities as spaces that embrace diversity, celebrate inclusion and thrive on collective creativity. Through discussions on participatory democracy, the creative reuse of existing structures and universal design, the event explored how urban spaces can evolve to foster connections, enhance accessibility and unlock their full potential for all inhabitants.

The Annual Summit is a key gathering that unites festival organisers, architects, urbanists and the public in meaningful conversations about architecture and the built environment. By engaging with the year's overarching theme, the summit fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange across diverse communities and professional fields. The public programme, also titled 'The City Invites', welcomed visitors into thought-provoking discussions and panels featuring leading voices in architecture, design and civic participation. It also included seven guided tours and an exhibition opening, offering an immersive exploration of the theme. Meanwhile, the internal programme featured eight presentations (excluding the previously mentioned public discussions) and seven guided tours, providing a valuable platform for Open House festival organisers to share experiences, exchange insights and strengthen their collective expertise.

The event was organized by the Irish Architecture Foundation (Dublin, Ireland), in collaboration with the Culture and Management Club (Brno, Czech Republic), Forum Kunst & Architektur (Essen, Germany) and Open House Europe coordinators, with the support of Open House Worldwide (OHWW).

Annual Summit programme



Annual Summit 2025. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

The opening day, Thursday, January 29, was dedicated to the Open House community. The morning started with a welcome from IAF and OHEu representatives and continued with four snap presentations by festival organisers from Lisbon, London, Valencia and Barcelona. The afternoon sessions explored the 2024 annual theme more deeply. This was followed by a presentation from a group of sociologists, focusing on the festivals' audience development results and possible impact. There was also a highly anticipated fundraising workshop. The evening shifted to a public format, starting with the launch of the Visual Stories exhibition, which marked the event's official public opening. Soon afterwards, 'This City Imagined', a panel discussion revisiting the 30-year legacy of the Temple Bar neighbourhood in Dublin took place, attracting many curious residents.



Annual Summit 2025. Public Programme. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

The second day continued the first day's theme publicly, addressing architecture professionals and enthusiasts from Dublin and the wider Open House community. The day started with a welcoming speech and three panel discussions: 'The City Belongs' on participatory democracy in city design and planning; 'The City Reused' on unlocking the potential in an already-built city, and 'The City Includes' on housing that is accessible to all. Breaking up the discussions were some guided tours of the Dublin Castle, which was located in front of The Printworks, the Annual Summit venue.

The last day of the Annual Summit was less official and was dedicated to exploring the city. In general, there were 6 different guided tours, divided into three blocks so each person could go to a maximum of three guided tours during the day.

The Annual Summit programme was shaped by the experience of the previous year's Annual Summit in Lisbon. Thursday was chosen for the internal part with the official opening of the event in the evening. Friday was dedicated to the public, however, the theme dictated that it was going to attract more people with professional backgrounds in architecture, design and culture. Saturday's programme was broader and focused on allowing the public to enjoy the city.

Day 1: Thursday, January 30



The first day of the Open House Europe Annual Summit featured welcoming speeches from the Irish Architecture Foundation and the OHEu coordinator. Its first part was dedicated to exploring curatorial practices and ways of curating the Open House festival programmes. The second part of the internal programme was spent reflecting on OHEu audience development monitoring and evaluation, and exploring new ideas for funding. The day culminated in the official public opening of the Annual Summit with the Visual Stories exhibition.

Annual Summit 2025 Photo by Ste Murray ©
Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Internal session for OHEu and OHWW



Internal session. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

‘Curatorial Practices and the City’

Chosen as the perfect opening for the internal programme, this presentation was delivered by Emmett Scanlon, Director of the Irish Architecture Foundation and one of the main organisers of the Annual Summit in Dublin. Emmett provided a compelling introduction to curatorial practices, often associated with museums, and explored how these methods could be applied to the urban environment. He discussed how curatorial narratives can bring attention to lesser-known but fascinating local stories, aiming to inspire and critically examine the potential of curatorial practices beyond traditional contexts. This keynote speech set the tone for deeper reflection on how cities can be curated to reveal their hidden histories and unique cultural elements.

Snap presentations on curatorial

‘Guest Curators - One Voice’ by Carolina Vicente and Joasna Martins, Open House Lisboa

The presentation explored how Lisbon collaborates with emerging architecture practices to develop a unified thematic vision for Open House Lisbon. Since 2017, the city has invited architects and interdisciplinary professionals to curate the festival, offering a fresh perspective on Lisbon’s architectural and urban landscape each year. This curatorial approach transforms the festival into a dynamic dialogue about the city’s evolution, reflecting themes such as urban transformation, decentralisation, the influence of water on the city and the invisible forces shaping urban identity. By focusing on a single new theme every year, guest curators craft a narrative that highlights Lisbon’s architectural diversity, historical layers and social dimensions. Each edition of the festival culminates with a publication, which is highly sought after by architecture enthusiasts. The presentation explained how these curatorial decisions shape public engagement with the city and create a distinct yet cohesive storytelling framework that resonates with both residents and visitors, offering a deeper understanding of Lisbon’s evolving architectural identity.



‘Guest Curators—One Voice’ presentation. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

‘Guest Curators—Many Perspectives’ by Hafsa Adan, Open House London

This presentation described how Open House London collaborates with a diverse cohort of partners to uncover multiple narratives about the city through their local festival. Unlike an approach with a singular thematic focus, this model embraces an array of voices, allowing different curators to highlight distinct aspects of London’s architecture, urban development and social history. Each year, guest curators, ranging from architects to writers and cultural commentators, form their selection of buildings, spaces and events that reflect their unique perspectives, creating a layered and multidimensional experience.



‘Guest Curators—Many Perspectives’ presentation. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm



Internal session. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Snap presentations on curating festival programmes

‘Beyond the Festival’ by Ana María Álvarez, Open House Barcelona

This presentation explained how Open House Barcelona extends architectural discourse beyond the confines of a single festival, transforming the city into an ongoing platform for public engagement. A key example of this ongoing engagement is MxA—Music and Architecture, an initiative that explores the deep connections between sound and space. By merging architectural environments with musical experiences, MxA highlights how both disciplines shape human perception and interaction. Through site-specific performances, experimental compositions and immersive soundscapes, the project invites audiences to experience architecture beyond its visual and structural elements, engaging with it as a resonant, living entity. By integrating initiatives like MxA into the city’s cultural programming, Open House Barcelona demonstrates how architecture can remain a continuous, multisensory conversation, fostering new ways to experience and interpret the urban environment.

‘Growing the Festival’ by Amparo Dominguez Soler, Open House Valencia

This presentation explores the evolution of Open House Valencia (OHV) as it transformed from a single-weekend event into a month-long celebration of architecture and design. Highlighting key milestones from its early years to its current expanded format. A crucial aspect of this expansion has been building a strong network of partners, including architecture studios, universities, institutions, and volunteers. The OHV Collective plays a central role in fostering community engagement, promoting networking opportunities, and enhancing cultural initiatives such as guided urban tours, heritage trips, and premium architectural experiences.



'The Youth Voice in Open House Europe'. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

'The Youth Voice in Open House Europe' by Blaithin Quinn, Open House Dublin

This presentation, which was followed by a Q&A, emphasised the value of including a youth programme in future editions of Open House Europe festivals. It highlighted the energy, creativity and fresh perspectives that young people bring to decision-making processes. By exploring their natural ability to spark change through curiosity, collaboration and active citizenship, the session demonstrated why empowering young people with meaningful participation in culture is crucial for the future.



Internal session. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Evaluation of Open House Europe audience development by Tadas Šarūnas and Rūta Sventickytė

The session, led by the sociologists Tadas Šarūnas and Rūta Sventickytė, introduced the current results of the OHEu festivals' audience development monitoring, shared the collected data and explained the methods used. Essential questions were raised to consider in the following year, such as monitoring needs, available resources and usage of data. The second part of the session was dedicated to understanding the meaning and possibilities of the collected statistics, exploring suggestions and looking at how to read and use the data.

Fundraising workshop by OK Consulting (OKC)

RAISE (an initiative aimed at promoting private investment and driving philanthropic activity for arts and cultural organisations) supports selected arts and culture organisations of all income levels in enhancing their regular funding by building capacity to secure significant new private and philanthropic investments. Mary O’Kennedy and Sabrina Kevany from OK Consulting delivered the RAISE Programme on behalf of the Arts Council and facilitated this workshop, with guest speakers Tom Clinch and the IAF.

A few weeks before the Annual Summit, the OHEu coordinator together with the IAF organised an online introductory session on fundraising with OKC for the Open House community (OHEu and OHWW). The decision to have an introductory session online was made to collect information on essential challenges and issues that the OH community was facing so that a more focused presentation would be delivered during the Annual Summit and the value of the live session would be maximised.

Following the online session, all attendees received a survey to provide insights about their festival’s funding model before the Annual Summit. The survey responses helped shape the direction of the fundraising workshop, which began with a brief analysis of the results. It then covered the fundamentals of fundraising, including developing a fundraising strategy, identifying common mistakes, outlining the basics of planning fundraising and reviewing success stories.



Internal session. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

The official opening of the public programme



The launch of the Visual Stories exhibition. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

The launch of the Visual Stories

Every year, Open House Europe runs an international open call for visual stories, encouraging festival participants to share their views on architecture and reflect on the annual theme through photography, film, drawing and other visual art forms. The annual theme of 2024 was 'Accessibility and Inclusion'. There were 127 applications related to 14 Open House festivals of which 36 were selected. All selected entries became an exhibition whose launch began the public programme of this year's Annual Summit in Dublin.

The team of the IAF, who were the main organisers of the Annual Summit, were responsible for the exhibition's display. The Open House Europe project coordinator was responsible for the exhibition's catalogue. In the near future, the exhibition will travel to other partner Open House festivals and will be displayed during their local festivals in 2025. Also, more catalogues will be printed and sent to the authors whose artworks were chosen to be exhibited during the event.



The launch of the Visual Stories exhibition. Welcome speech. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



The launch of the Visual Stories exhibition. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

‘This City Imagined—A discussion on Dublin, thirty years in the making’

In 1991, Group 91—a young collective of architects—won a competition to revitalise Dublin’s Temple Bar, a run-down and nearly abandoned district at the time. This project became a turning point in Irish architecture, establishing it as a powerful social, cultural and political force. More than 30 years later, this panel discussion revisited the legacy of Temple Bar, exploring its long-term impact and the architects’ careers that followed.

Moderated by Christele Harrouk, editor-in-chief of ArchDaily, and Emmett Scanlon, director of the Irish Architecture Foundation, the conversation brought together John Tuomey, Shane O’Toole, Siobhán Ní Éanaigh, Valerie Mulvin, Yvonne Farrell and Shay Cleary. Together, they examined how architecture shapes urban spaces, the evolving vision of cities and the gap between imagined ideals and built realities.

The discussion took place immediately after the opening of the Visual Stories exhibition, creating a dynamic setting for reflection and exchange. Both events drew an engaged audience of around 600 attendees, making it one of the summit’s highlights and reinforcing the importance of revisiting past projects to inspire future urban development.



Discussion ‘The City Imagined’. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Discussion 'The City Imagined'. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Discussion 'The City Imagined'. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Day 2: Friday, January 31



The second day of the Annual Summit continued at The Printworks, Dublin Castle, and started with a warm welcome from Martynas Germanavičius, project lead of Open House Europe. After this, three public lectures followed: 'The City Belongs' panel delved into the transformative role of community involvement in urban planning; 'The City Reused' explored adapting existing spaces for creative and sustainable futures, and 'The City Includes' tackled housing access and universal design principles, asking how to ensure cities are inclusive at every level. There was also a guided tour of the Dublin Castle, located right in front of The Printworks.

Annual Summit 2025. Photo by Ste Murray ©
Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Public programme

‘The City Belongs—Participatory democracy in city design and planning’

This conversation explored the social and transformative potential of participatory democracy in the design and urban planning of European cities. The aim was to examine how community involvement in decision-making creates more inclusive, equitable and sustainable places. The panel highlighted strategies and shared examples for empowering citizens to shape the environments they inhabit and uncovered how collaboration between citizens, government actors, planners and designers can transform not just the built environment but also the way we connect and thrive as communities.

This panel was moderated by Manijeh Verghese, CEO of Open City, and featured Aliénor Saint-Cast, head of studies at Plateau Urbain; Marta Ribera Carbó, European project director of The Shift; Ailbhe Cunningham, architect and founder of Ample Space; Akil Scafe-Smith and Seth Scafe-Smith, co-directors of Resolve Collective.



Discussion 'The City Belongs'. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Discussion 'The City Belongs'. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Discussion 'The City Belongs'. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

‘The City Reused—Unlocking potential in the city that is already built’

This panel unlocked the innovative potential of reuse and creative adaptation in transforming structures, buildings and spaces for cultural and creative use. By reimagining what already exists, cultural heritage can be preserved, environmental impact can be reduced and new life can be breathed into spaces, making them accessible and welcoming to everyone. The discussion highlighted creative solutions to urban challenges, accessible innovations and the impact of these strategies on climate action, civic and cultural pride, and community resilience.

This panel was moderated by Cormac Murray, architect, lecturer at TU Dublin and series editor at TYPE, and featured Barbora Ponešová and Marie Joja, architects and placemakers in Archipop; Timo Hauge, head of the Industrial Heritage Team at the Department for Culture, Sports and Industrial Heritage at Regionalverband Ruhr; Matthew Griffin and Britta Jürgens, co-founders of Deadline Architects; Daniel Bell, architect at Atelier LUMA.



Discussion ‘The City Reused’. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Guided tour of Dublin Castle

The Annual Summit venue was The Printworks, near Dublin Castle. To have an introduction of the location in which the Open House delegates spent most of their time, an optional guided tour was organised during the lunch break.



Guided tour of Dublin Castle. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Guided tour of Dublin Castle. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Guided tour of Dublin Castle. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

‘The City Includes—Housing for a city, accessible to all’

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the right of people with disabilities to adequate housing and the right to be included in their community. Article 19 affirms that people with disabilities have the right to live independently and make their own choices on where and with whom they live. However, in practice, many people with disabilities cannot find housing to suit their needs and experience barriers to accessing housing such as long waiting lists, affordability and a lack of suitable housing. With experts by profession and experience, this panel explored how best to ensure the principles of universal design are applied to design and construction and how to ensure services and support are there for people to live independently in their communities.

This panel was moderated by Louise Bruton, freelance journalist, disability rights activist, DJ and playwright, and featured Fíonnadh McGonigle, standards and monitoring officer at the National Disability Authority and Centre for Excellence in Universal Design; Nicola Ryan, co-director of Studio Red Architects; Jack Kavanagh, director of Move the Needle; John Fulham, public engagement manager at the Irish Wheelchair Association; Felix Hemmers, project manager and curator at Baukultur Nordrhein-Westfalen.



Discussion ‘The City Includes’. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture

Day 3: Saturday, February 1

The last day of the Annual Summit was dedicated to exploring the city of Dublin. The IAF team organised three blocks, each featuring three guided tours to choose from. Two of the blocks were the same to allow participants flexibility in planning their time. Each participant had an opportunity to take part in a maximum of three excursions throughout the day.



Temple Bar Tour. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Temple Bar Framework Plan Tour. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Tour itinerary

The first block (11:00–12:30)

- ‘Temple Bar Framework Plan Tour’ by Valerie Mulvin, director of McCullough Mulvin Architects.
- ‘Open House Junior Architrek Walking Tour’ at Trinity College Dublin by Stephen Mulhall, director of nineteeneighty studio.
- ‘The Liberties Walking Tour’ by Stephen Coyne, programme coordinator of The Liberties Business Area Improvement Initiative.

The second/third blocks (14:30–15:30)/(16:00–17:00)

- ‘ESB Headquarters Tour’ by Kieran O’Brien, director of Grafton Architects, Chris Crolly, director of BDP, with a short foreword by Pat Boyle, group property manager of ESB.
- ‘Irish Architectural Archive Tour’ by Colum O’Riordan, CEO of Irish Architectural Archive and Simon Lincoln, exhibitions and outreach officer.
- Introduction to tactile models and conversation with Emile Conway and Tadhg Charles on making festivals more accessible and inclusive.

ESB Headquarters Tour

Awarded 'Best Workplace' at the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) annual design awards in 2023, the ESB headquarters at 27 Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, is an exemplar of the Institute's ethos: to inspire excellence in architecture and recognise the contribution registered architects make to the built environment. Grafton Architects and O'Mahony Pike Architects' design for the ESB headquarters involved an assemblage of interlocking interior and exterior spaces, with multiple-level pathways and sunken courtyard gardens. Geothermal piles, roof-mounted solar panels and efficient energy management systems contribute to the building's sustainability credentials and BREEAM 'Excellent' rating.



ESB Headquarters Tour. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Irish Architectural Archive Tour

This tour of the largest terraced house on Merrion Square gave participants an opportunity to learn about its history, see the latest exhibitions and discover the work of the Irish Architectural Archive. It was established in 1976 by Edward McParland and Nicholas Robinson, and the Irish Architectural Archive collects and preserves the records of Irish architecture, from the earliest structures to contemporary buildings.

Irish Architectural Archive Tour. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



Temple Bar Framework Plan Tour

Following 'The City Imagined—A discussion on Dublin, thirty years in the making', Valerie Mulvin conducted a tour of Temple Bar, describing the concept behind the Temple Bar Framework Competition and Group 91. The tour included the main areas and buildings designed by Group 91.



Temple Bar Framework Plan Tour. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation



The Liberties Walking Tour

For centuries, Dublin's Liberties area has been a distinctive mercantile quarter of the city; its streets and buildings telling the story of working life in Dublin. From the ancient Thomas Street to the iconic Guinness Brewery, this walk by urban planner Stephen Coyne took delegates on a journey to rediscover and reappraise some of Dublin's best industrial architectural heritage, highlighting some of the new contemporary uses and influences that are currently transforming the area.

Introduction to tactile models and conversation with Emile Conway and Tadhg Charles

In October 2024, Emile Conway, a jazz vocal artist who has a visual impairment, and Tadhg Charles, an architect specialising in emergent technology, developed a tactile tour with 3D Models for festival visitors with vision loss at the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). In this talk, Emile reflected on and shared her experience in developing and delivering this tour, as well as giving insights into her broader experience in this area. Tadhg presented a short slide show concerning his work and research on 3D printing. The session finished with an open discussion, taking questions and hearing from delegates.



Presentation by Emile Conway and Tadhg Charles. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

Communication

Communication of the Annual Summit was executed by the project's coordinator, Architektūros fondas, and the Annual Summit's host, the Irish Architecture Foundation. Both the planning and execution of communication of the second Annual Summit were a collaborative effort. The communication plan was developed and implemented by Open House Europe's Communications Coordinator Vilius Balčiūnas, IAF Head of Strategic Communications Breena Cooper, and IAF Communications Officer Felicity Maxwell.

The IAF's communication channels provided the necessary reach to engage local audiences in the promotion of the Annual Summit's public programme, as well as increasing the international visibility of the event. The IAF distributed local press releases and initiated news interviews. To effectively reach the IAF's local audience, extensive information about the public programme was communicated via their newsletter, website and social media channels.

A communication materials package, including texts announcing the event, promoting the public programme and illustrations, was provided to all project partners, which ensured a wide engagement of audiences across the continent. A detailed event programme was published on the Open House Europe website, including a schedule of the event and information about the speakers at the Annual Summit. An extensive communication campaign took place on the project's social media channels, in collaboration with the IAF. The campaign promoted a detailed event programme and provided extensive information about the panels and speakers. Moments from the summit were also shared on social media channels, and further communication is planned as content from the summit is received (discussion recordings, photos, etc.).

Besides the OHEu's and the IAF's communication channels, an international press release was published on the E-flux platform (through their website, newsletter and social media). The project's media partnership with the largest online architecture platform, ArchDaily, enabled information about the event to be published on the website's homepage, generating interest and attracting professionals across the continent and beyond.

Organisers' reflections on the Annual Summit

Anna Cassidy, Open House Dublin

The Irish Architecture Foundation's experience organising and hosting the Annual Summit in Dublin was not only rewarding but also deeply enriching. The opportunity to collaborate with festival organisers from Essen, Brno and the Open House Europe team emphasised the critical importance of teamwork, collective effort and a shared vision. Each partner brought unique perspectives and strengths to the table, helping to shape an event that exceeded expectations.

From the early planning stages, our brainstorming sessions were instrumental in defining the summit's objectives and setting clear goals for the year. These discussions allowed us to create a solid framework for the event, ensuring that each aspect was carefully thought out. Responsibilities were effectively delegated, with the OHEu project team and Open House Dublin taking charge of the internal programme, while Open House Dublin, Open House Essen and Open House Brno worked together to curate the public programme.

The event commenced at The Printworks, Dublin Castle—a spacious building and lecture hall situated in the heart of Dublin. This iconic location set the tone for the summit, offering an ideal setting for both the internal and public programmes. One of our key priorities was to invite international speakers from diverse backgrounds, which we felt was crucial to addressing the central theme of accessibility and inclusion in a meaningful way. This helped to ensure the summit's discussions were both rich and relevant to global audiences. The venue's layout was also carefully considered, with smaller breakout rooms designated for the internal programme, while the large lecture hall was used for the public sessions, allowing us to accommodate a broad and engaged audience.

In addition to the content, we placed a significant focus on public programme attendance. Working closely with our communications team, we promoted the summit both internationally and within Ireland, ensuring wide visibility across various platforms. This collaborative effort led to substantial media coverage in prominent Irish news outlets, as well as a robust online presence. The result was a high attendance rate and a significant boost in participant engagement, underscoring the success of our promotional strategy.

Reflecting on the experience, hosting the Annual Summit has proven to be an immensely fulfilling and valuable endeavour for the Irish Architecture Foundation. The successful collaboration between all parties involved highlighted the profound impact of strategic planning, strong teamwork and the flexibility to adapt to emerging challenges. Feedback from participants—including OHEu consortium members, public programme panellists, and attendees—was overwhelmingly positive. This affirmation of our collective efforts further solidified Open House Dublin’s commitment to organising meaningful and impactful events in the future.



Annual Summit 2025. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Martin Pešl, Open House Brno

The Annual Summit of OHEu 2025 provided an invaluable platform for exchanging expertise on accessibility and inclusion in urban spaces. As a co-organiser, Open House Brno highly valued the depth of discussions, especially in the public programme.

The public programme had enormous attendance, sound speakers and sparked discussions among visitors. The Brno team extensively enjoyed the sessions on Friday and the panellists we invited (Marie and Barbora) fit in seamlessly with the Open House community and were very fond of it. The reflections in Saturday's programme on Dublin's Temple Bar regeneration resonated with Brno's ongoing urban development challenges. Additionally, the tours of the Irish Architectural Archive and ESB Headquarters, together with the introduction to tactile models were an excellent combo.

I felt Thursday could have been 48 hours long, as the presentations on engaging curatorial approaches and dream-like donation schemes were very enriching. I had a good debate with the team from Open House Barcelona on the guest cities approach. Internally, I thought as an organiser, we did not stress the importance of introducing new partners and guest cities enough (Rome, Palma, Bergen). On the other hand, introductions happened spontaneously, and I take responsibility for not talking to the delegates from Rome more intensely.

This summit reaffirmed Open House Brno's commitment to fostering the development of the OHEu project and inclusive urban environments while offering practical takeaways for future editions. We are grateful for the flawless collaboration with Open House Dublin and Open House Essen.

Natalia Taranta, Open House Essen

As co-organisers, we were very happy to be a part of this year's Annual Summit and to contribute the voice of Essen, the Ruhr Area and NRW to the discussions. It was a great opportunity to share our experiences and perspectives while also learning from the diverse group of participants. The selection of topics in the public programme was particularly compelling, addressing urgent global issues with a strong focus on inclusion. These conversations were crucial and it was inspiring to see how different cities and organisations were tackling these challenges in their contexts.

Beyond the public discussions, the internal programme played a key role in fostering deeper exchange. The insights into fundraising strategies and the ways other cities are developing and expanding their festivals were especially valuable. It was encouraging to see how different approaches can strengthen our own initiatives, and we came away with new ideas to explore.

Another major highlight was the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across Europe. The networking aspect of the summit was incredibly fruitful—not just for our team but also for the guests we brought along. We've already started conversations about potential collaborations and we're confident the relationships that were built during the summit will lead to exciting new projects in the future.

I truly appreciate the on-site organisation by the Irish Architecture Foundation, as well as the preparations and co-organisation with both Open House Dublin and Open House Brno.

Open House Europe team



Open House Europe team picture. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation

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