

FLOATING CITIES? WELCOME TO IRELAND IN THE YEAR 2030

THIS is what an alternative Ireland might look like by 2030...

By then, we could be living in floating cities and invisible seaside holiday homes, enjoying a railway system that halves commuting times across the country.

Those are among the imaginative ideas of the next generation of leading Irish architects set to turn heads at the world's foremost architectural exhibition in Venice in September.

The show will be held from September 10 to November 19 next in Italy.

Ireland was one of just five countries specially invited to exhibit in the main Italian hall — a sure sign of the prestige attached to the Irish entry.

The theme of the 2006 event is "Cities, Architecture and Society". "SubUrban to SuperRural" is the Irish entry

for the show that looks ahead over the next 25 years and explores urban sprawl — problems and solutions.

One third of all Irish homes have been built since 1995, 80pc of them outside the major urban centres.

SHOWCASE

This has resulted in extreme suburbanisation and the population is set to grow by 38pc in the next 25 years. The architectural firms involved took on the challenge of envisioning how 'SubUrban' Ireland can evolve into a 'SuperRural' one between now and 2030.

Minister John O'Donoghue said today: "The Venice Biennale is the world's foremost showcase for architecture and I am delighted that we have been able to support Ireland's best young architects in presenting

their work, and showcasing Ireland, to such a large international audience."

Some €140,000 — over 42pc of the total budget — was secured from the State agency, Culture Ireland, to support the Irish entry to the event.

The Irish Architecture Foundation's Shane O'Toole, said: "Nine architects of the generation who will shape our children's Ireland have spent the spring and summer fleshing out a series of projects and scenarios that offer different glimpses of that future."

The nine Irish firms taking part are Boyd Cody Architects; Bucholz/McEvoy Architects; dePaor Architects; FKL Architects; Henchion and Reuter Architects; Heneghan Peng Architects; MacGabhann Architects; ODOS Architects and Dominic Stevens Architect.

— ISABEL HURLEY



THE FUTURE: One of the designs to be presented at the Venice exhibition