



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**
Office of the
Planning Regulator



NBHS

An tSeirbhís Oidhreachta
Tógtha Náisiúnta
National Built
Heritage Service

Safeguarding and Enhancing our Historic Towns

An Integrated Approach to Regeneration

Mona Hallinan

Architectural Conservation Advisor

National Built Heritage Service

28th of February 2025



NBHS

An tSeirbhís Oidhreachta
Tógtha Náisiúnta
National Built
Heritage Service



- National Inventory of the Architectural Heritage – Recording and Ministerial Recommendations.
- Planning and Legislation – Planning & Development Act - Prescribed Body for architectural heritage.
- Guidelines – Ministerial /Technical/General
- Advisory
- Training
- Funding Initiatives and Incentives



Bróga House, Washington St, Cork, O'Mahony Pike Architects

Overview

Multi benefit outcomes that architectural heritage can generate.

Over arching principles of conserving, managing and developing historic structures and places.

Creating a strong integrated policy framework for architectural heritage to support legislative provisions.

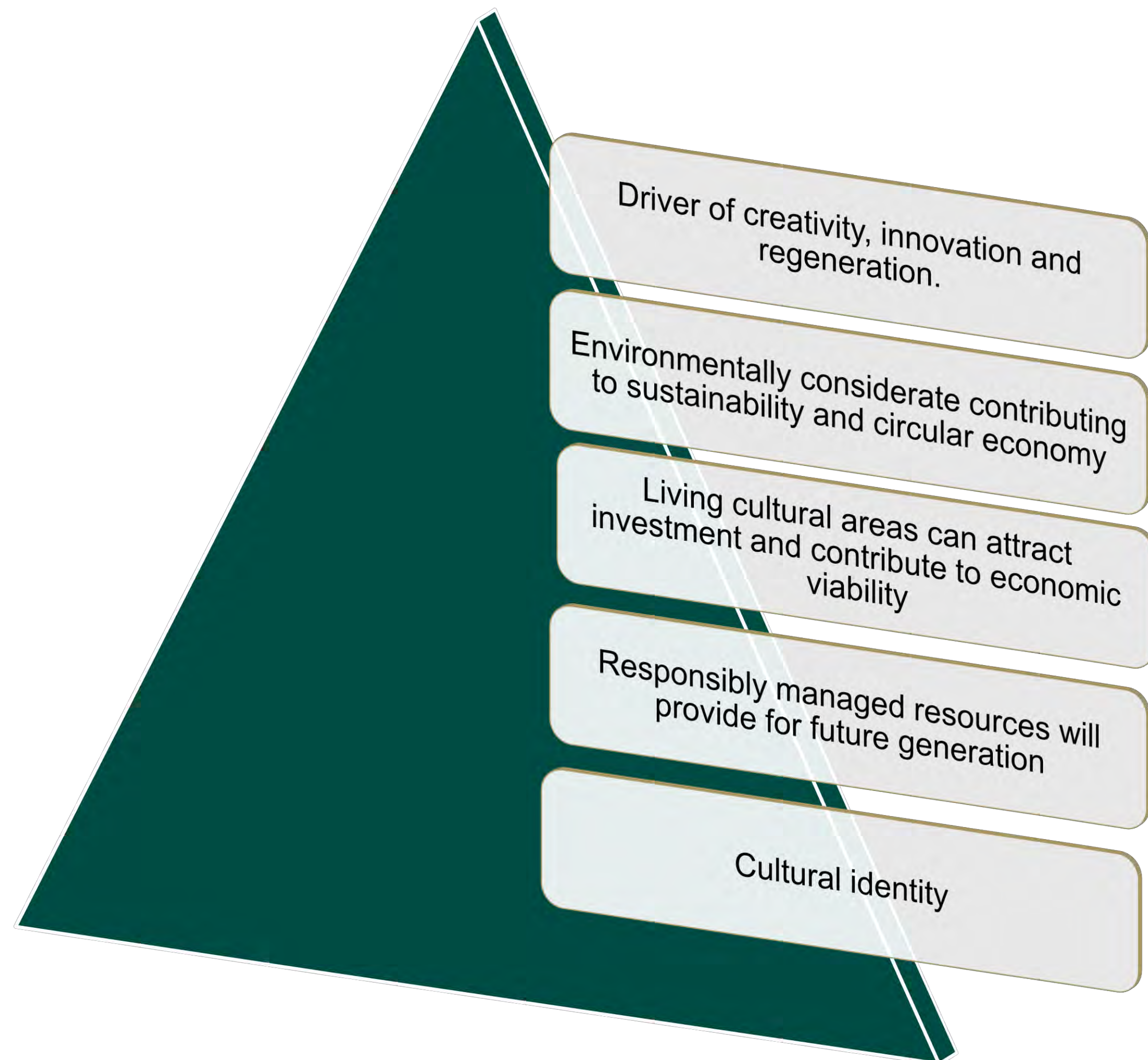
Architectural heritage in the development management process — achieving high quality outcomes.

Case Study in Practice — Westport, Co. Mayo. Presented by Simon Wall



Nano Nagel Place, Douglas Street, Cork. Jack Coughlan Architects, Photo by F22 Photography

Built Heritage is an asset that contributes to multi-benefit outcomes



Programme for Government & National Planning Framework

There are 14 National Policy Objectives relating to built heritage in the NPF

- Compact and Sustainable Growth
- Regeneration and Place-making
- Town Centres First Approach
- Climate Action, Sustainability and Circular Economy.
- Responsible Environmental Management.
- Cultural Tourism

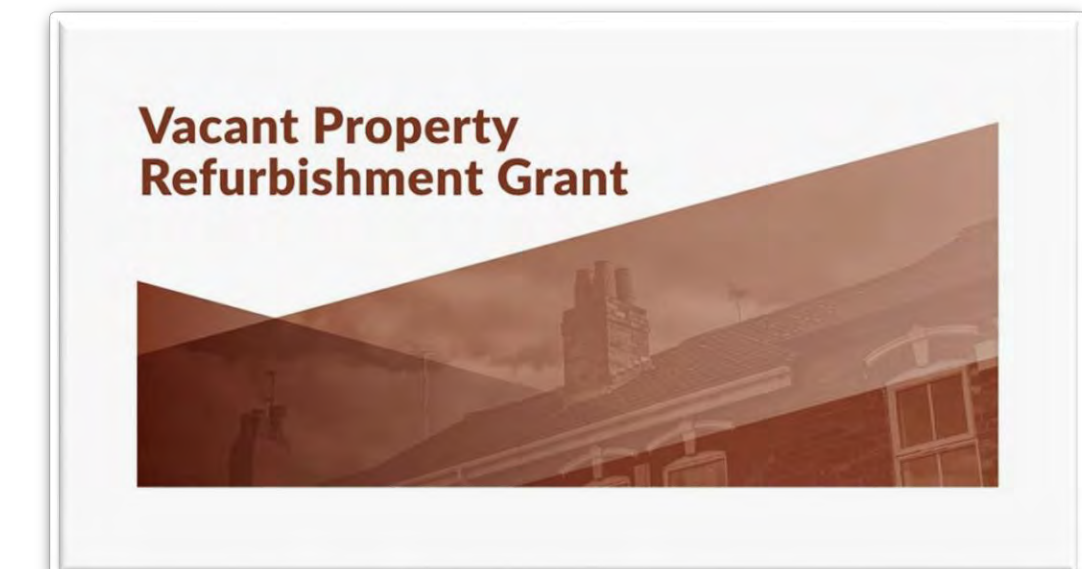
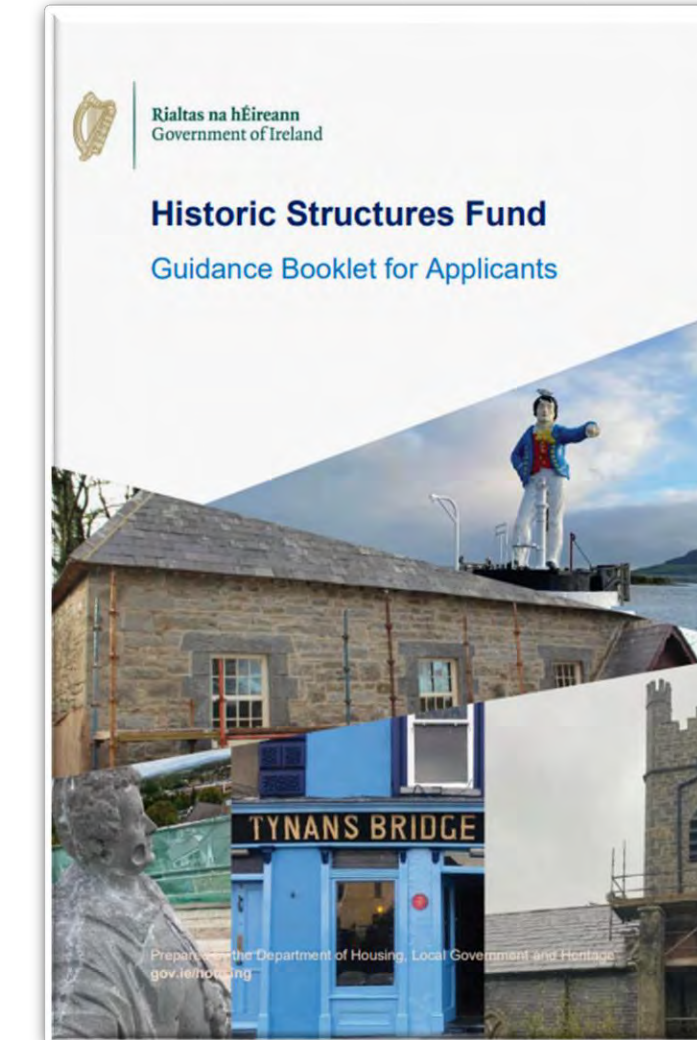


Kinsale Library, RIAI Award Winner 2024, Cork County Council Architects' Department, Photo by Jed Niezgoda.



Financial Supports

- Urban & Rural Regeneration Development Funds.
- THRIVE- Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme.
- Historic Structures Fund & Built Heritage Investment Scheme
- Historic Towns Initiative.
- Conservation Advice Grant Scheme
- Croí Cónaithe - Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants.
- Town and Village Renewal Schemes
- SEAI Traditional Homes Pilot



Resourcing Local Authorities



Cumann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Management Association



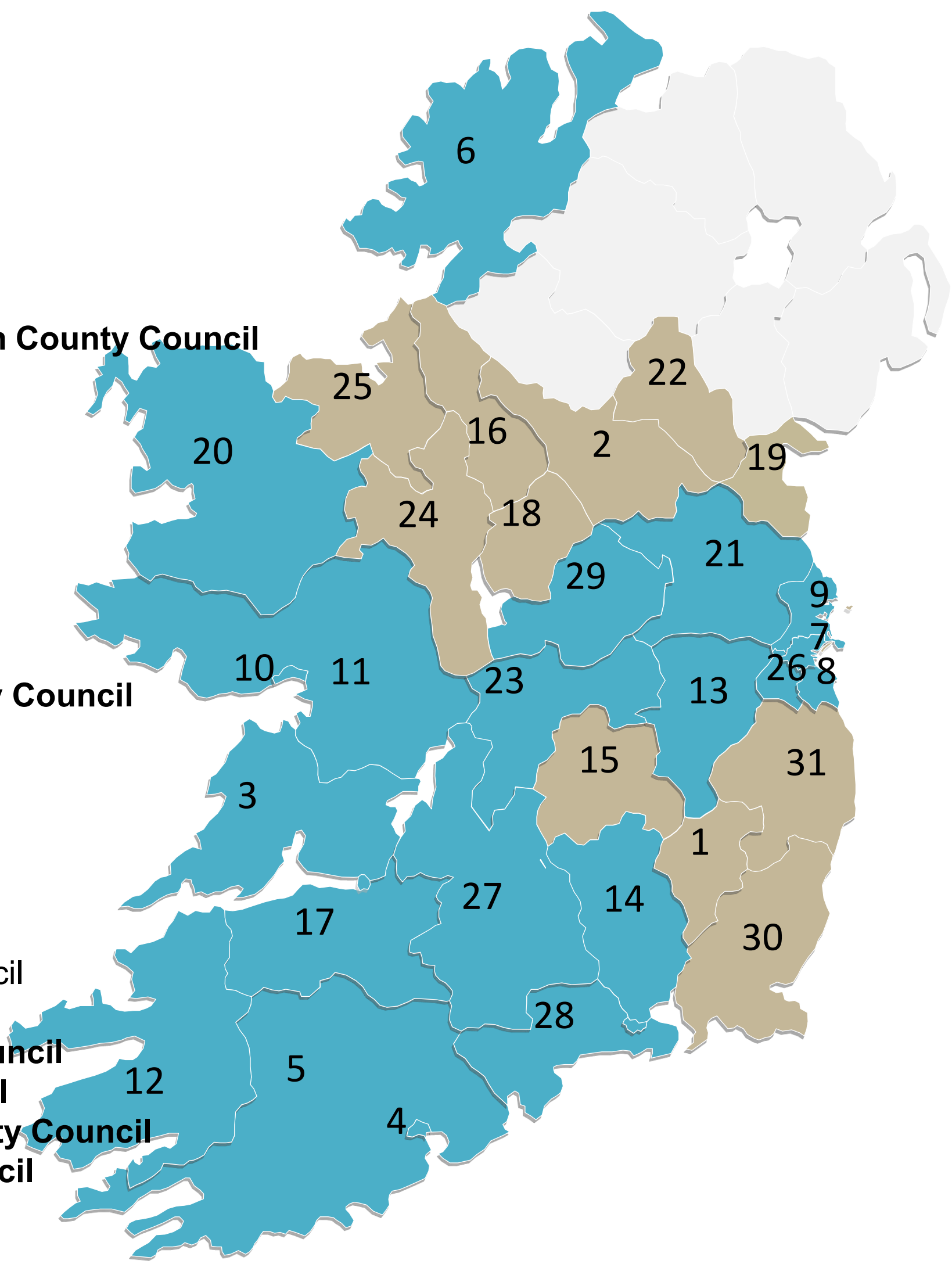
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



NBHS

An tSeirbhís Oidhreachta
Tógtha Náisiúnta
National Built
Heritage Service

1. Carlow County Council
2. Cavan County Council
3. **Clare County Council**
4. **Cork City Council**
5. **Cork County Council**
6. **Donegal County Council**
7. **Dublin City Council**
8. **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council**
9. **Fingal County Council**
10. **Galway City Council**
11. **Galway County Council**
12. **Kerry County Council**
13. **Kildare County Council**
14. **Kilkenny County Council**
15. Laois County Council
16. Leitrim County Council
17. **Limerick City and County Council**
18. Longford County Council
19. Louth County Council
20. **Mayo County Council**
21. **Meath County Council**
22. Monaghan County Council
23. **Offaly County Council**
24. Roscommon County Council
25. Sligo County Council
26. **South Dublin County Council**
27. **Tipperary County Council**
28. **Waterford City and County Council**
29. **Westmeath County Council**
30. Wexford County Council
31. Wicklow County Council



**Employs Architectural
Conservation
Officer/Personnel**



**No Architectural
Conservation Officer
Employed**

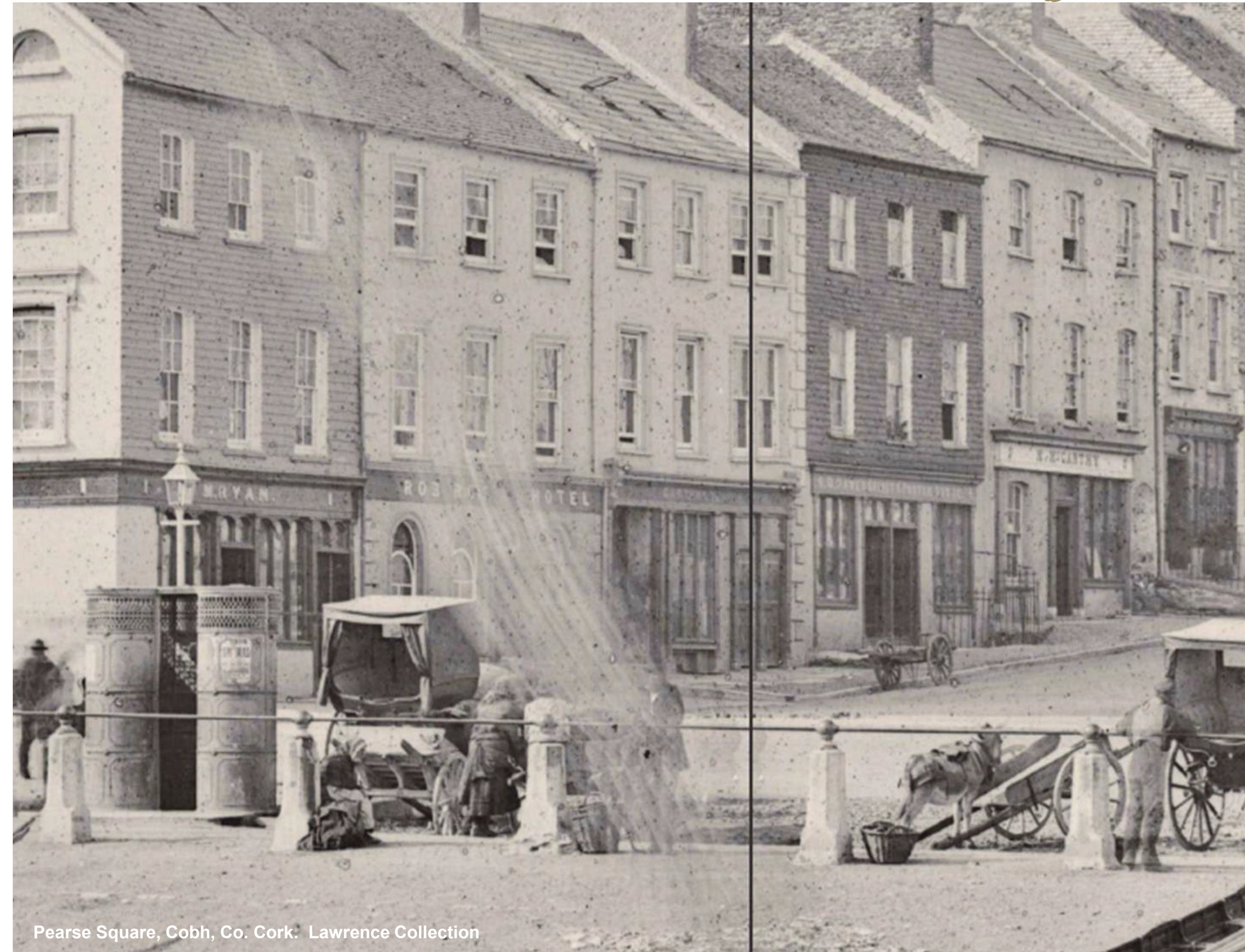
Appointment of
heritage professionals
across Ireland signals
new era for protection
of heritage

18/31 Local Authorities have ACO/s, 2 have positions that are currently unfilled. 12/18 have 1 ACO, 5/18 have two ACO's and 1/18 has more than two ACOs.

Architectural Heritage – Objective

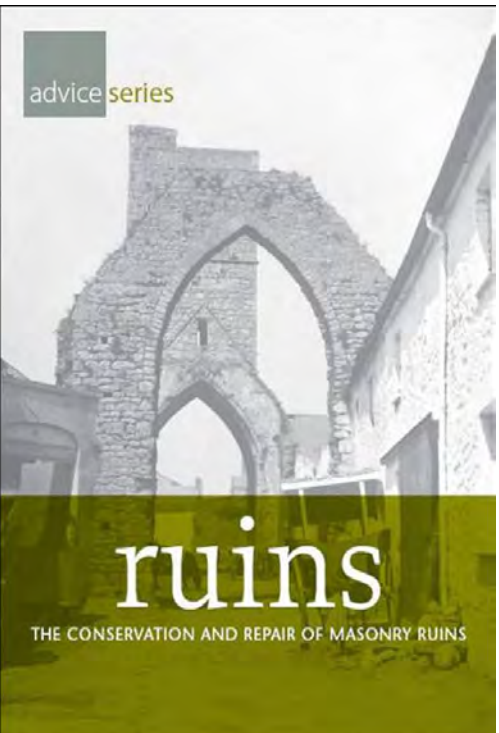
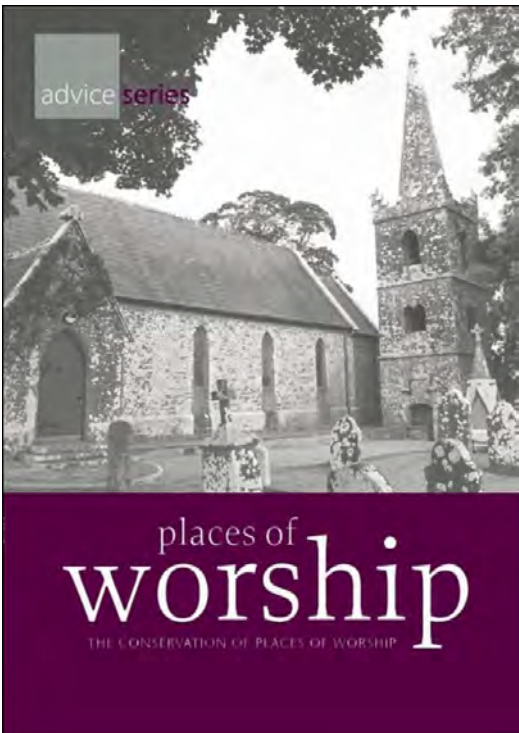
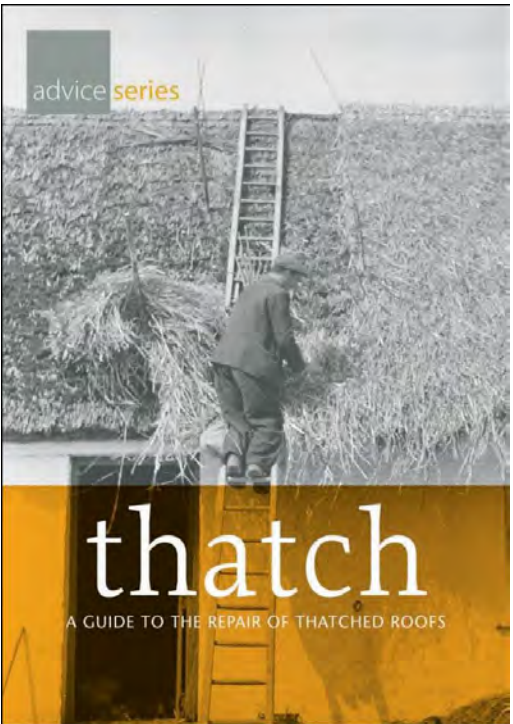
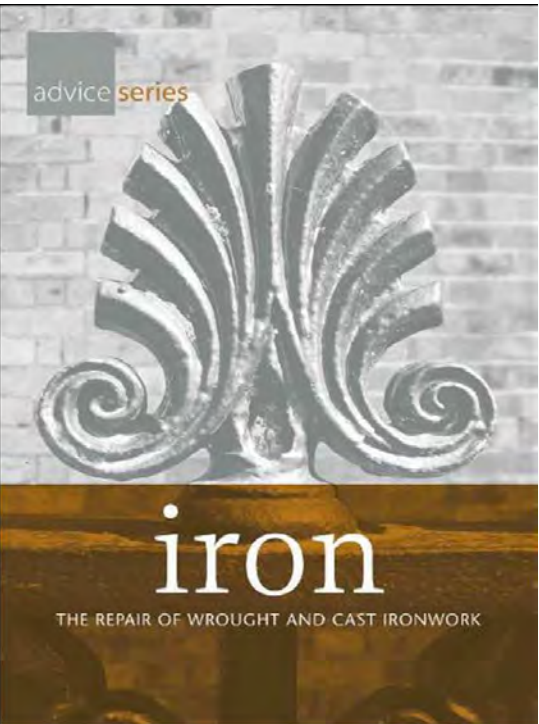
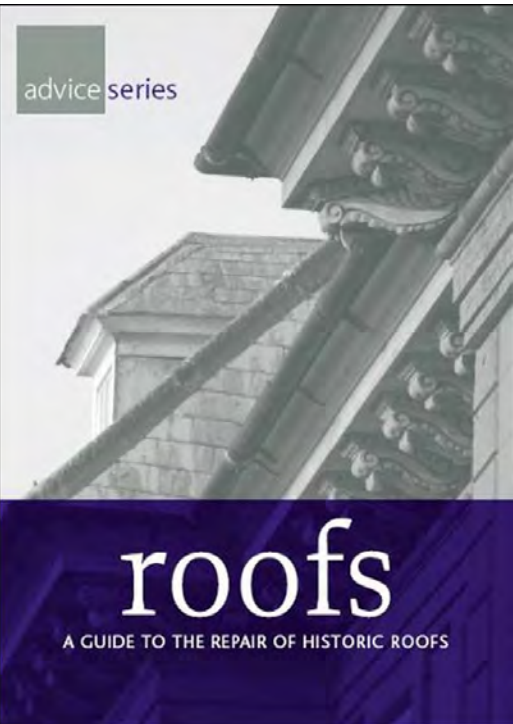
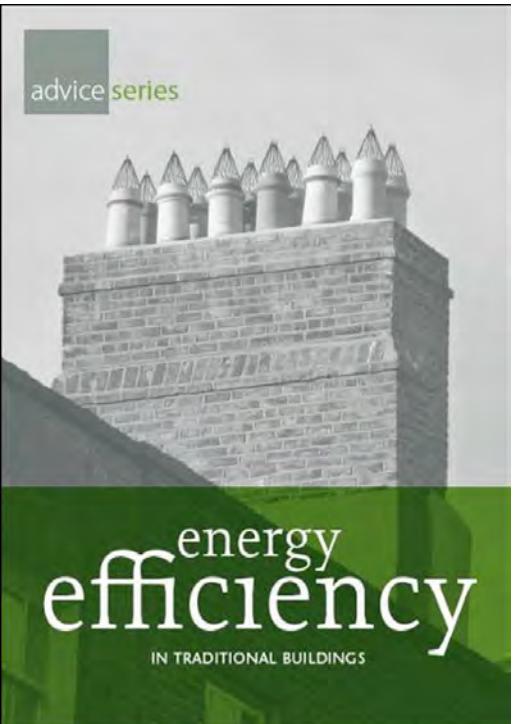
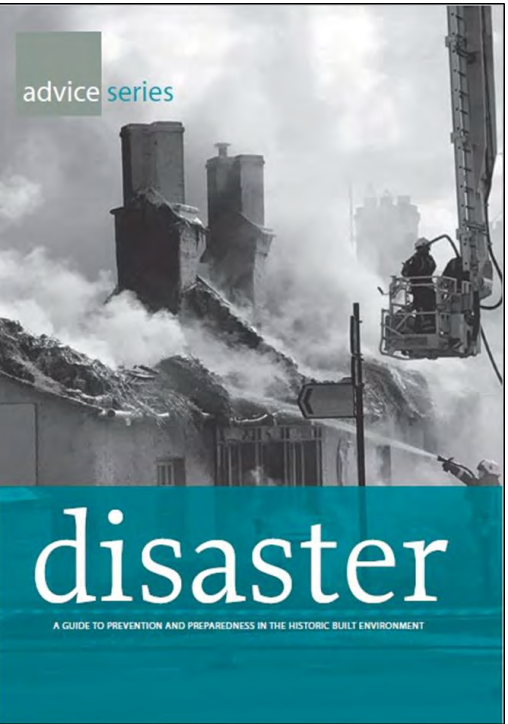
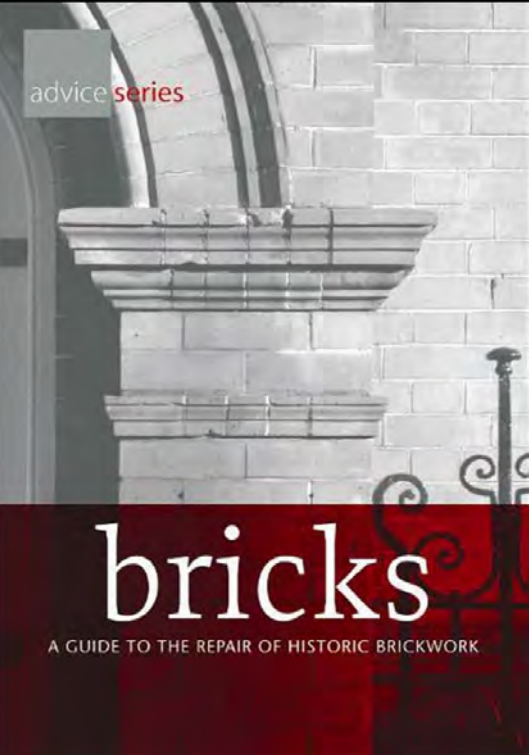
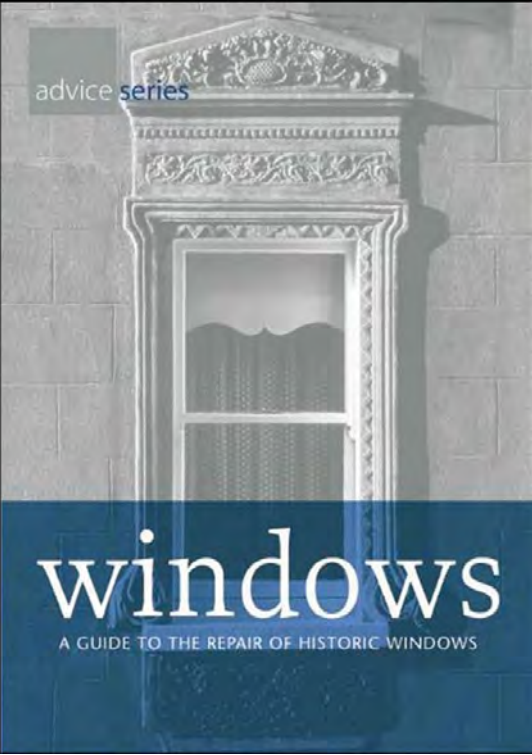
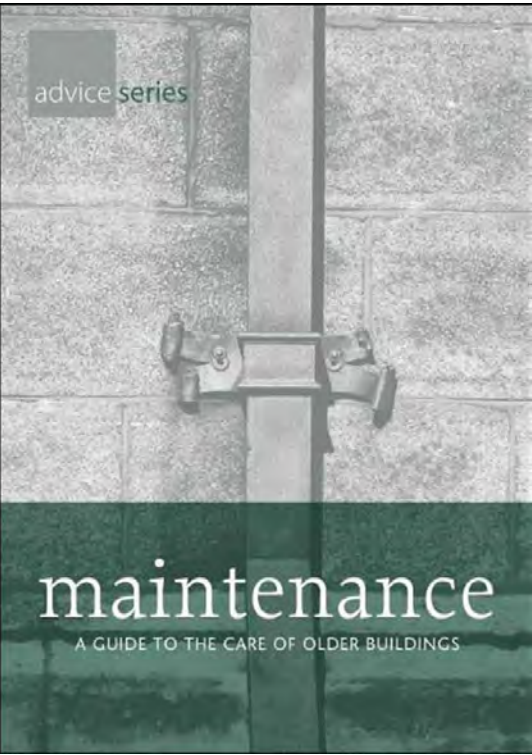
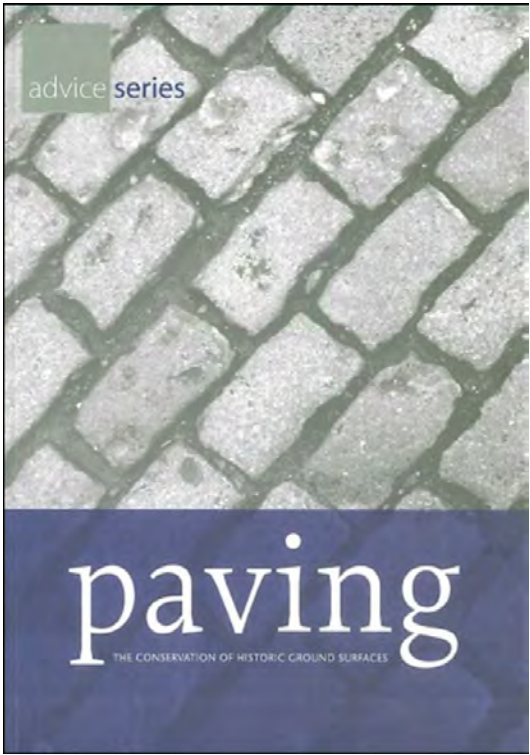
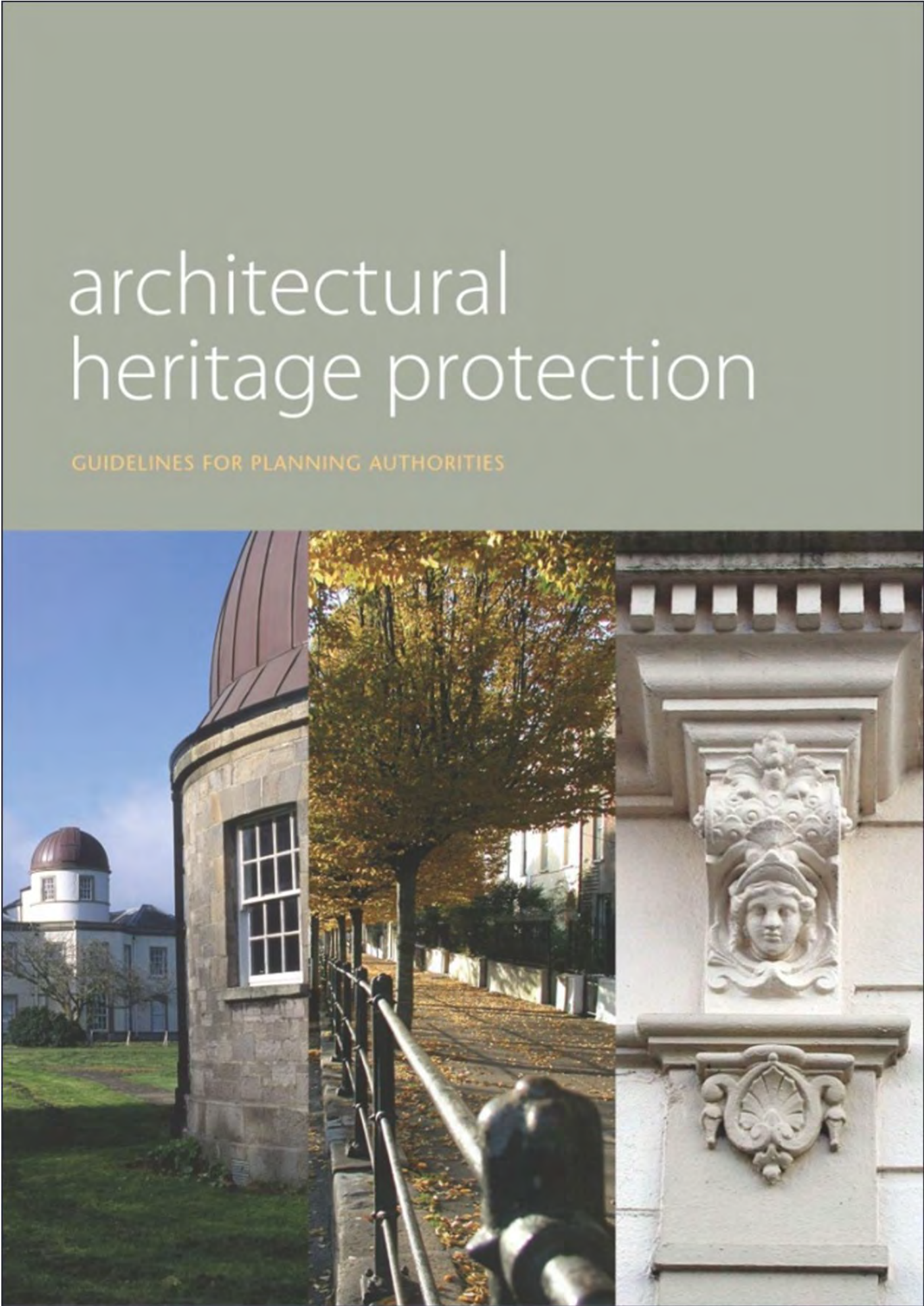


Architectural heritage is a **finite** resource -
The objective of conservation is not to
prohibit change but to safeguard and
manage it responsibly.



Pearse Square, Cobh, Co. Cork: Lawrence Collection

Guiding Principles



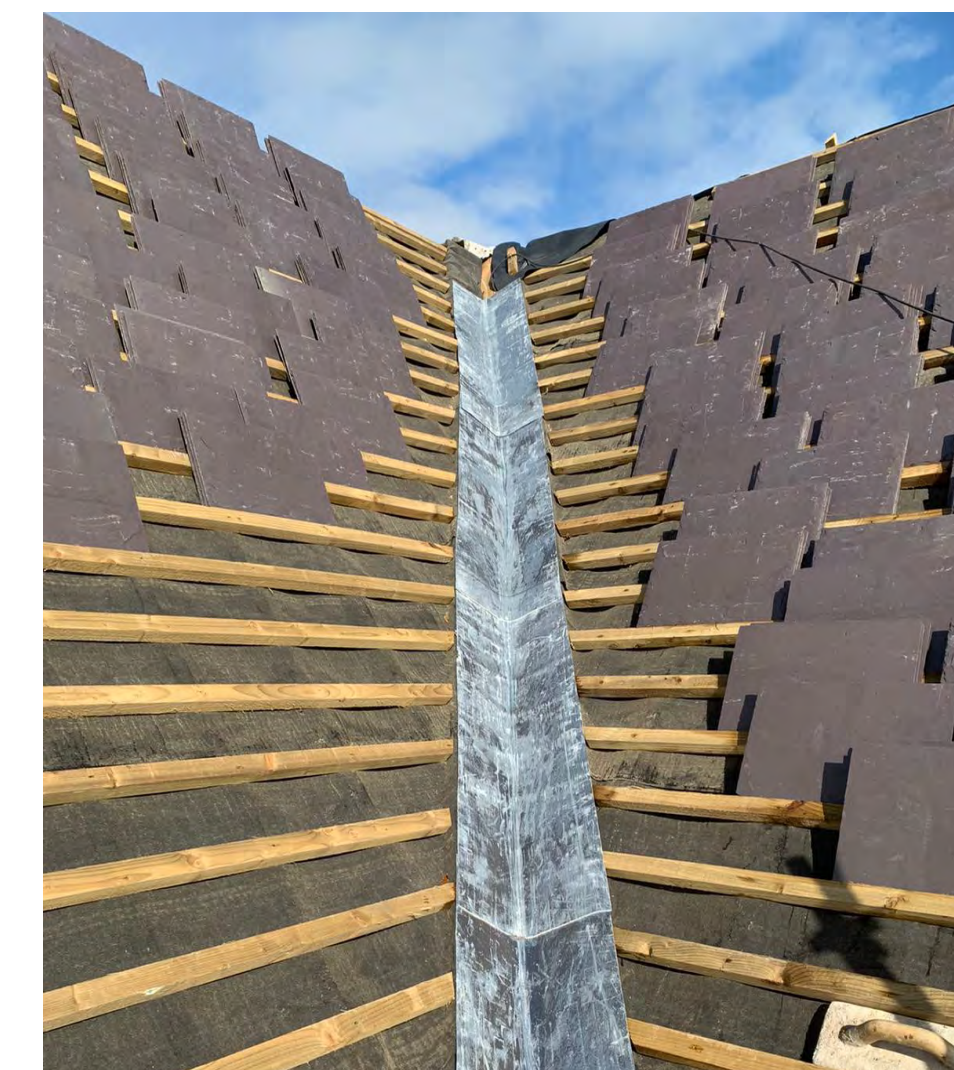
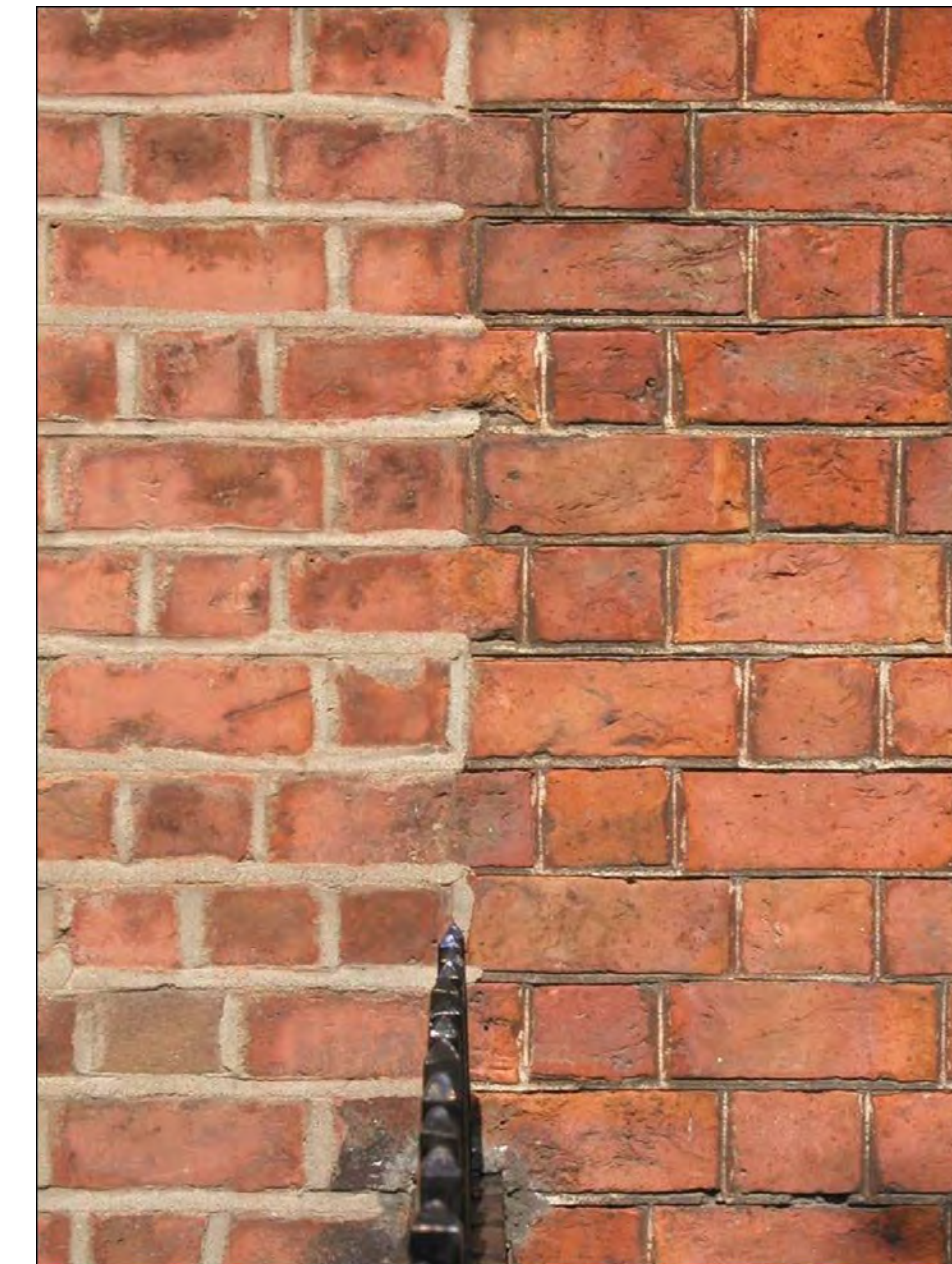
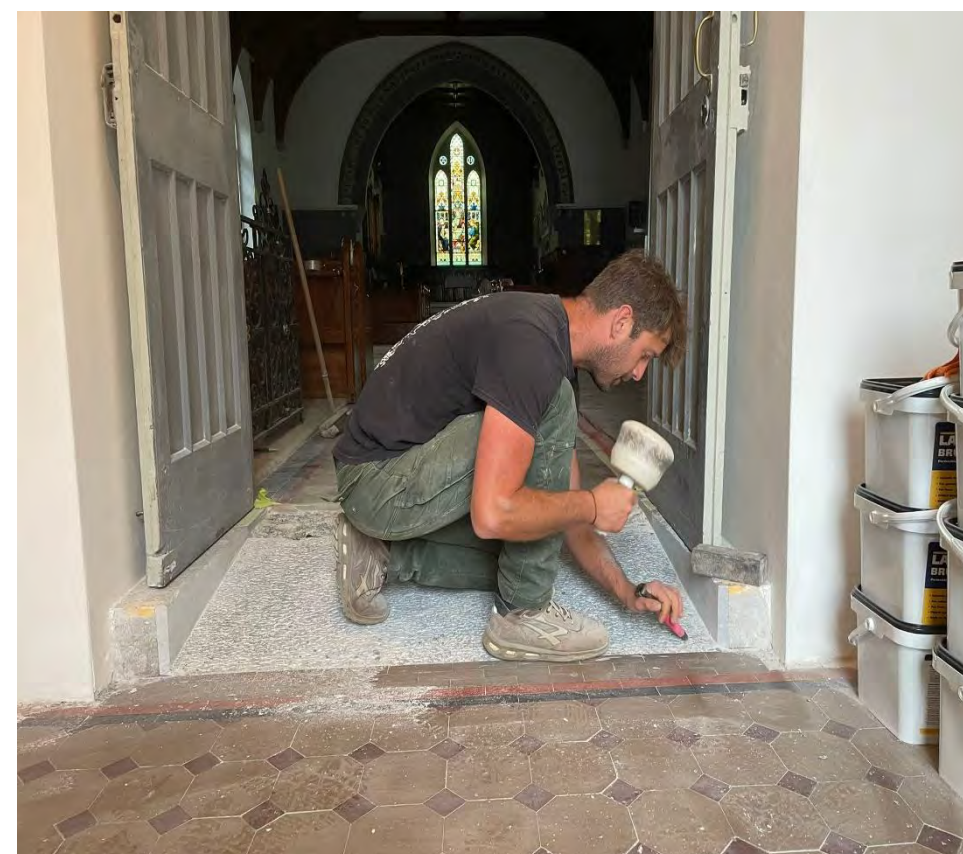
Guiding Principles

- **Special Interest/Character** – Understanding and protecting the special interest/character.
- **Use** - Keeping a building in use.
- **Advice** – Use suitably qualified people with demonstrated experience in conservation.



Guiding Principles

- **Repair** – rather than replacement.
- **Materiality** – use of appropriate and compatible materials.



Guiding Principles

- **Minimum Intervention** – As little as possible and as much as necessary.
- **Avoid Conjecture** – What one might think it should look like as opposed to knowing what it looked like.

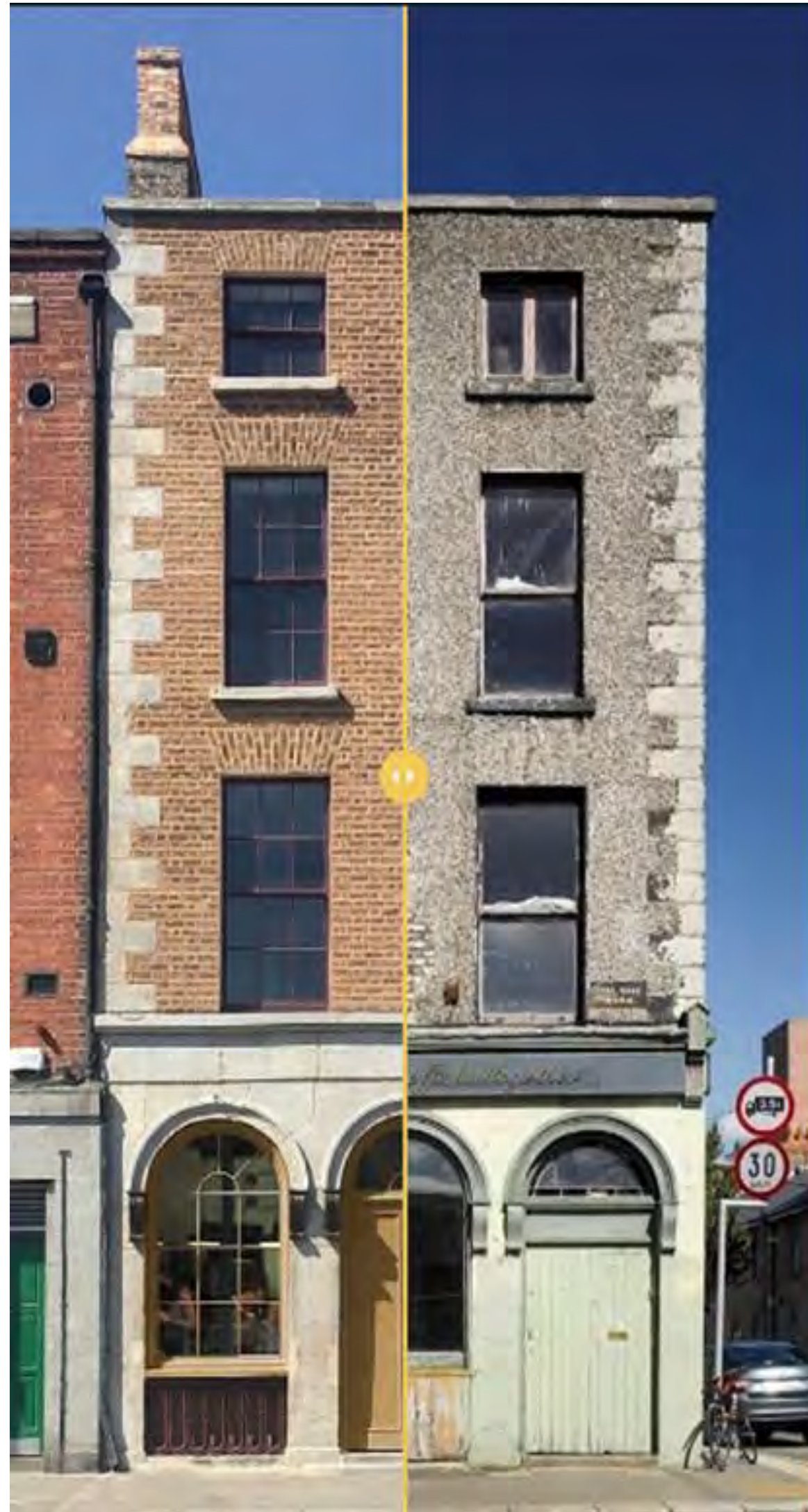


Image © Dublin Civic Trust. Photo by Ros Kavanagh



Images courtesy of Jessie Castle Cork City Council, Architectural Conservation Officer



Guiding Principles

New Design in Historic Settings



The Crescent, Cobh, Co. Cork.



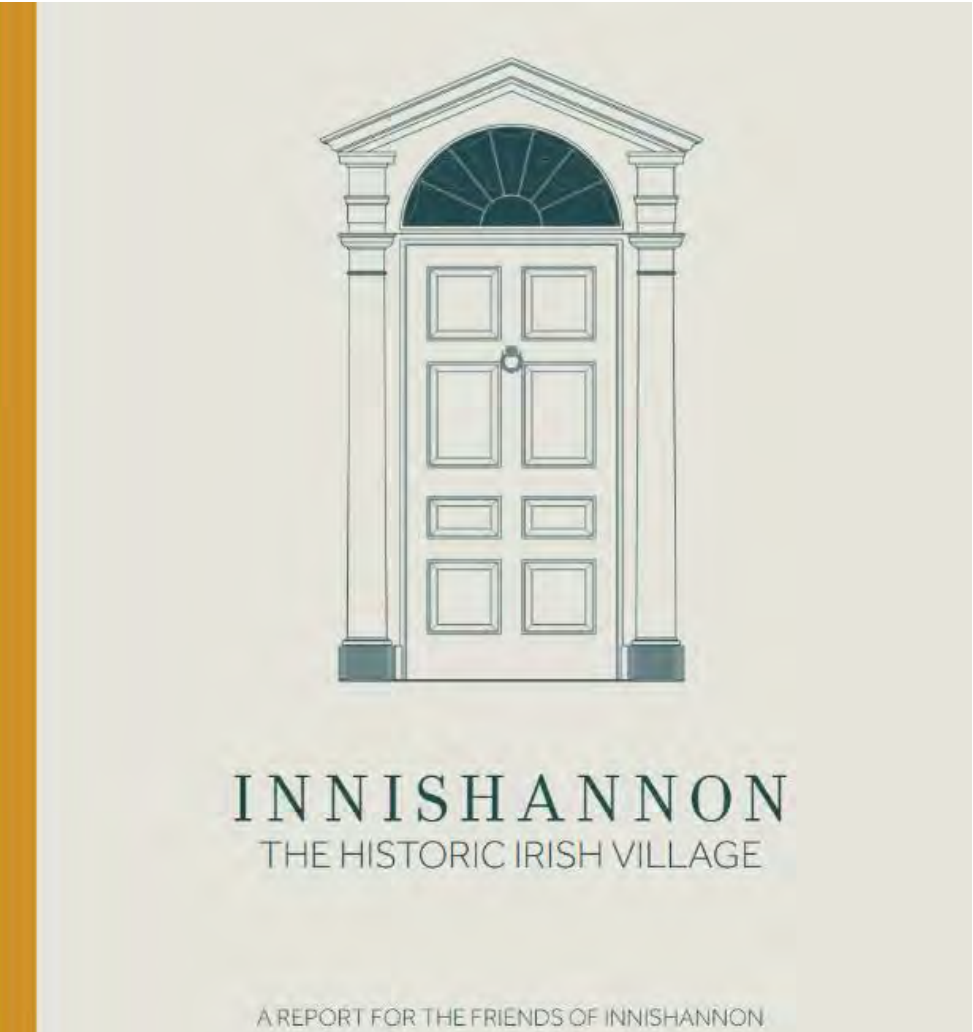
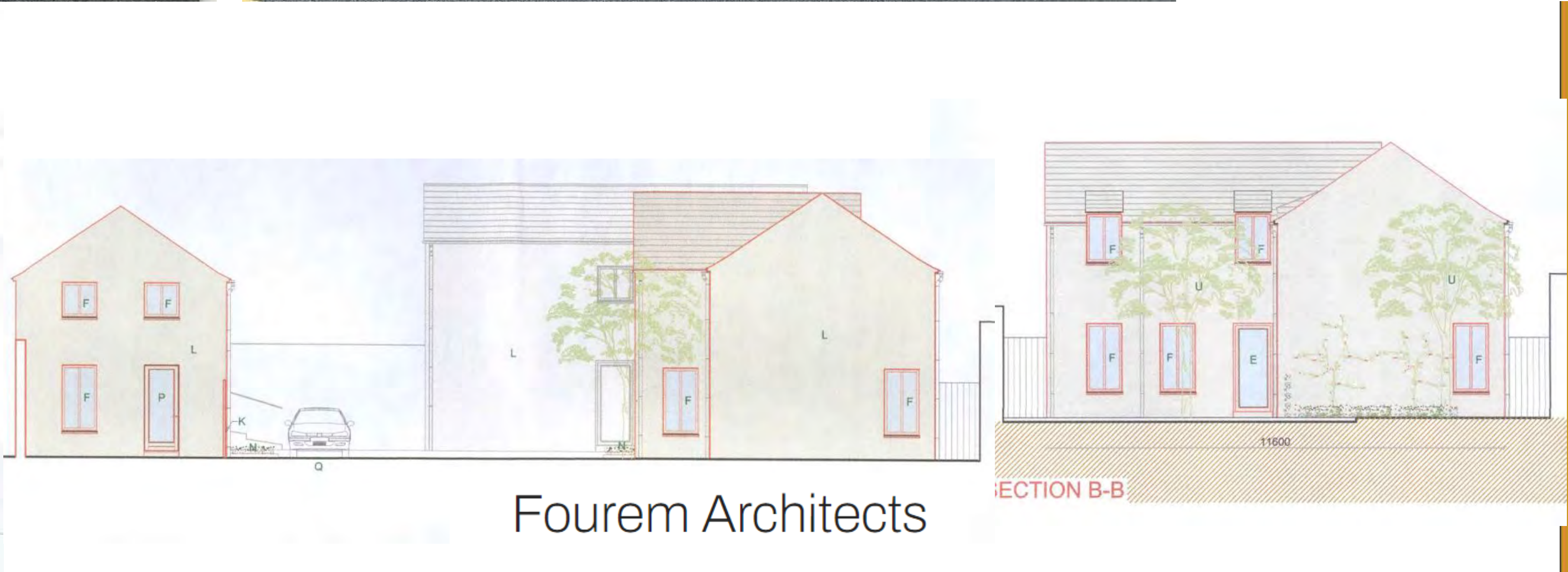
Cashel Palace Hotel, Cashel, Co. Tipperary. Reedy Architecture + Urbanism



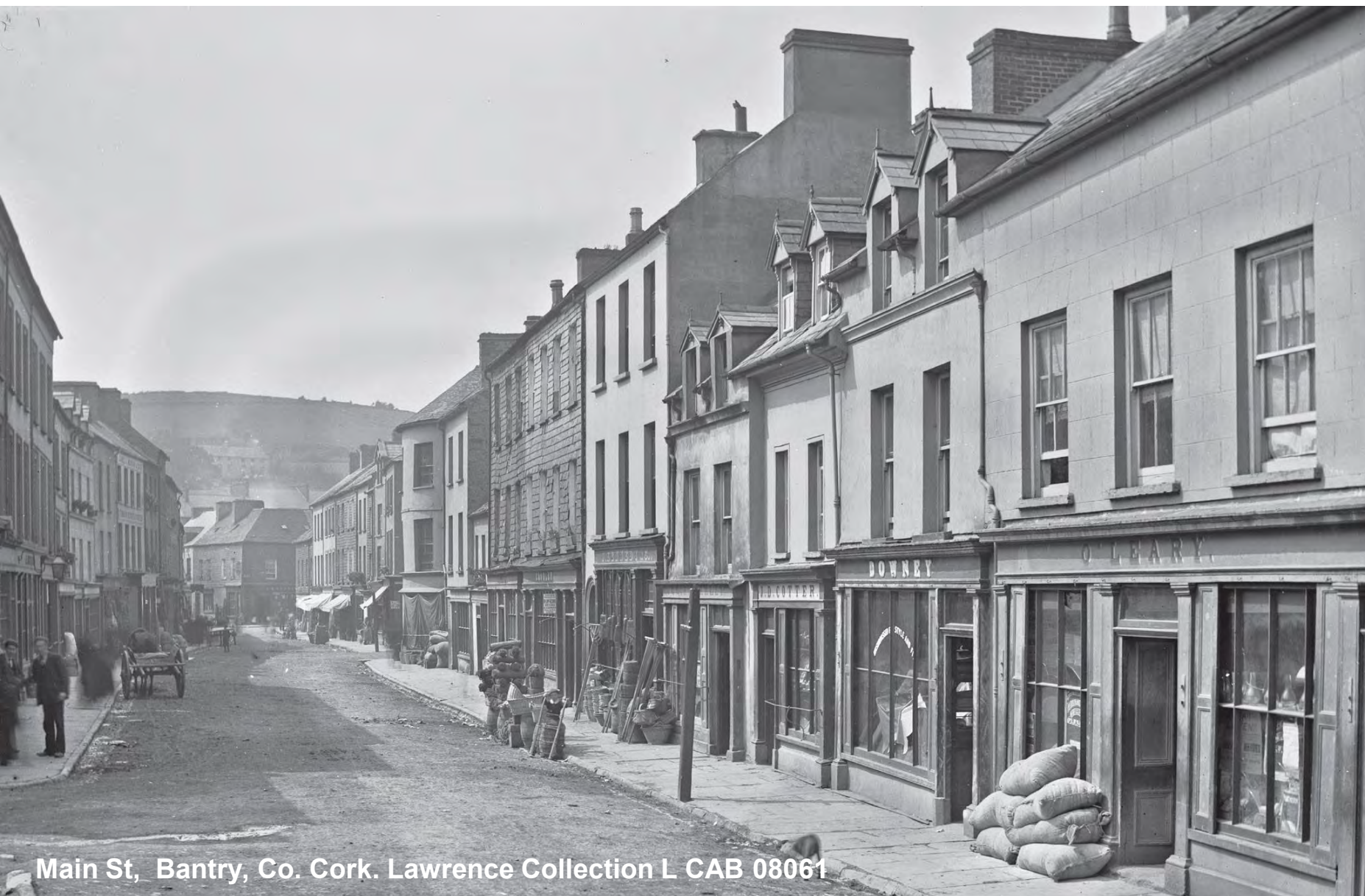
Brighton College, Brighton, UK. Allies and Morrison Architect. Photo by Denis Gilbert

Pastiche V Contemporary

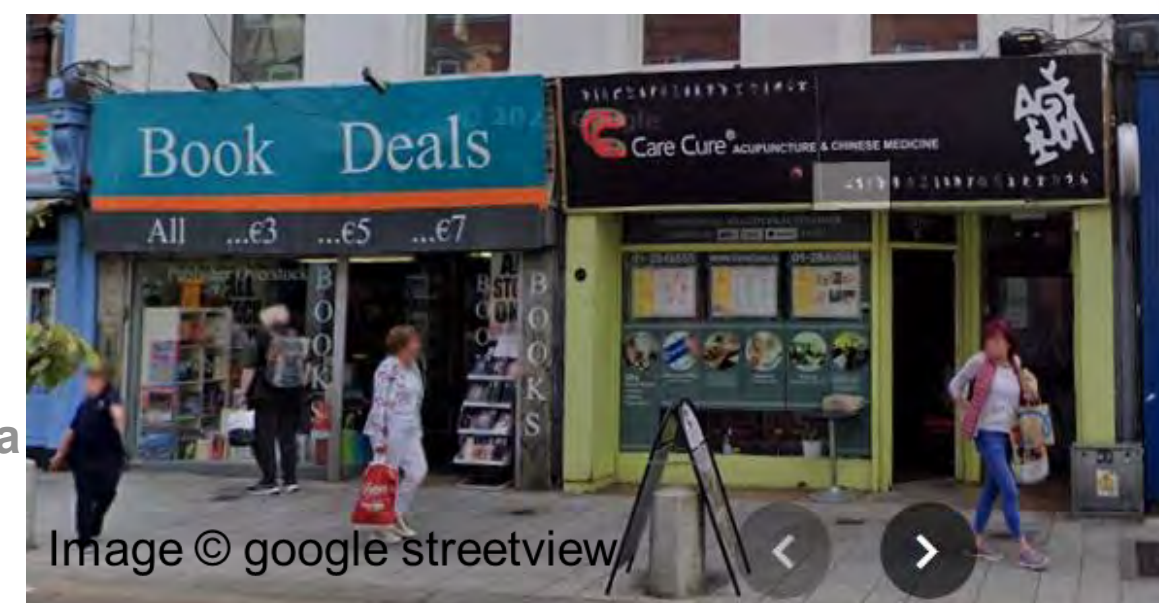
Guiding Principles - Restoration of Character



Guiding Principles – Restoration of Character



The restoration of character can be revealed by simple actions such as removing clutter, reinstated with the aid of research and onsite investigation and enhanced by refined design interventions.



Guiding Principles – Contemporary

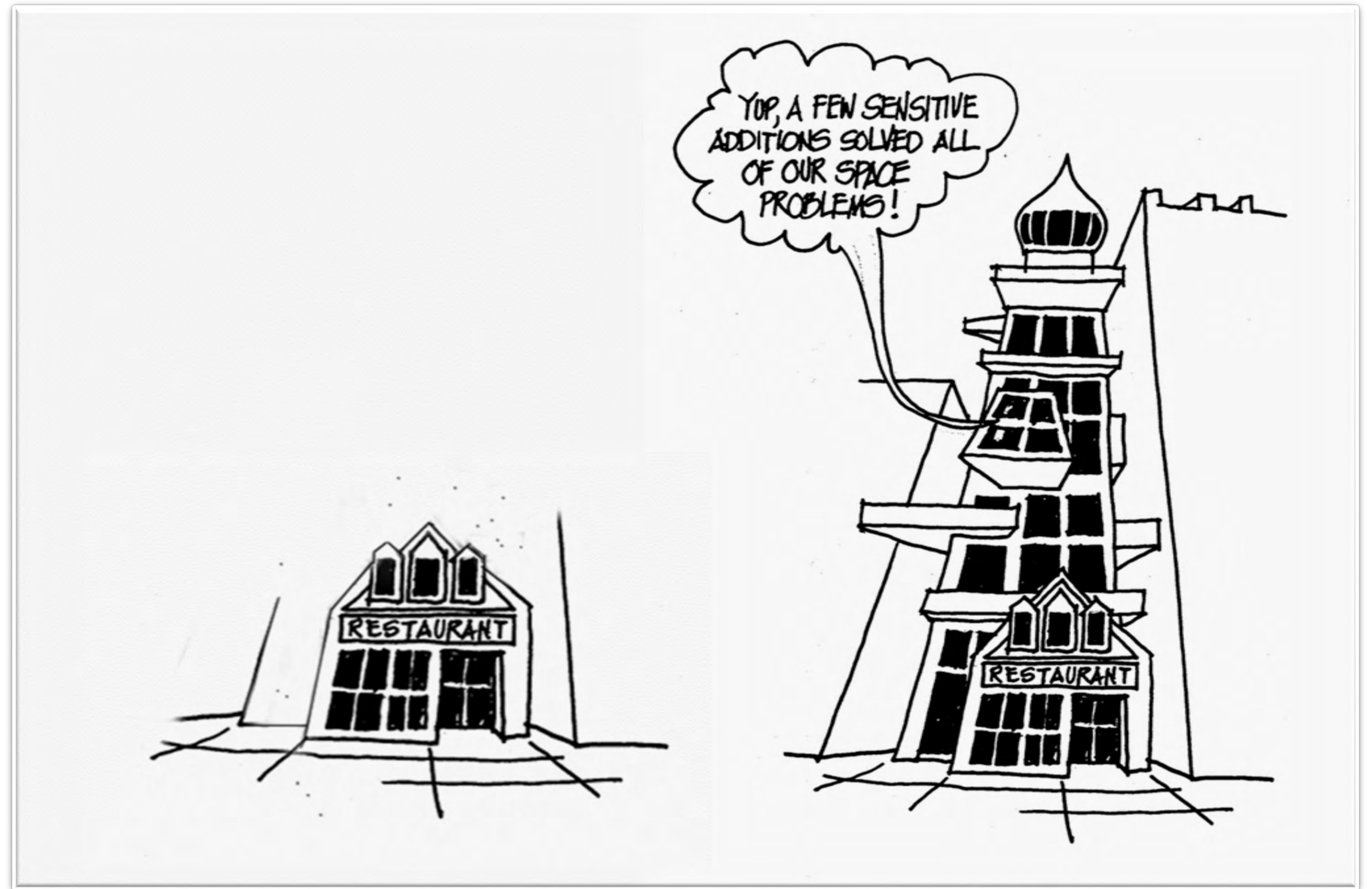


Understanding Place –

Appraisal of the character should be made to inform the design proposals.

An **informed and responsive** design proposal will address;

Scale and Massing
Form
Materiality



Guiding Principles

Responsive Design – Contemporary



St Mary's Church, Medieval Mile Museum Kilkenny. McCullough Mulvin Architects Photo © Christian Richters



Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, McCullough Mulvin Architects. Photo © Ros Kavanagh

New aesthetic and forms introduced into a historic setting skilfully and respectfully can be greatly complimentary to the historic environment.

Guiding Principles

Responsive Design – Contemporary



Good designers start with research into the place they are designing for and that knowledge maintains good design in new interventions and prevents the dilution of the character of the historic built environment.

Guiding Principles

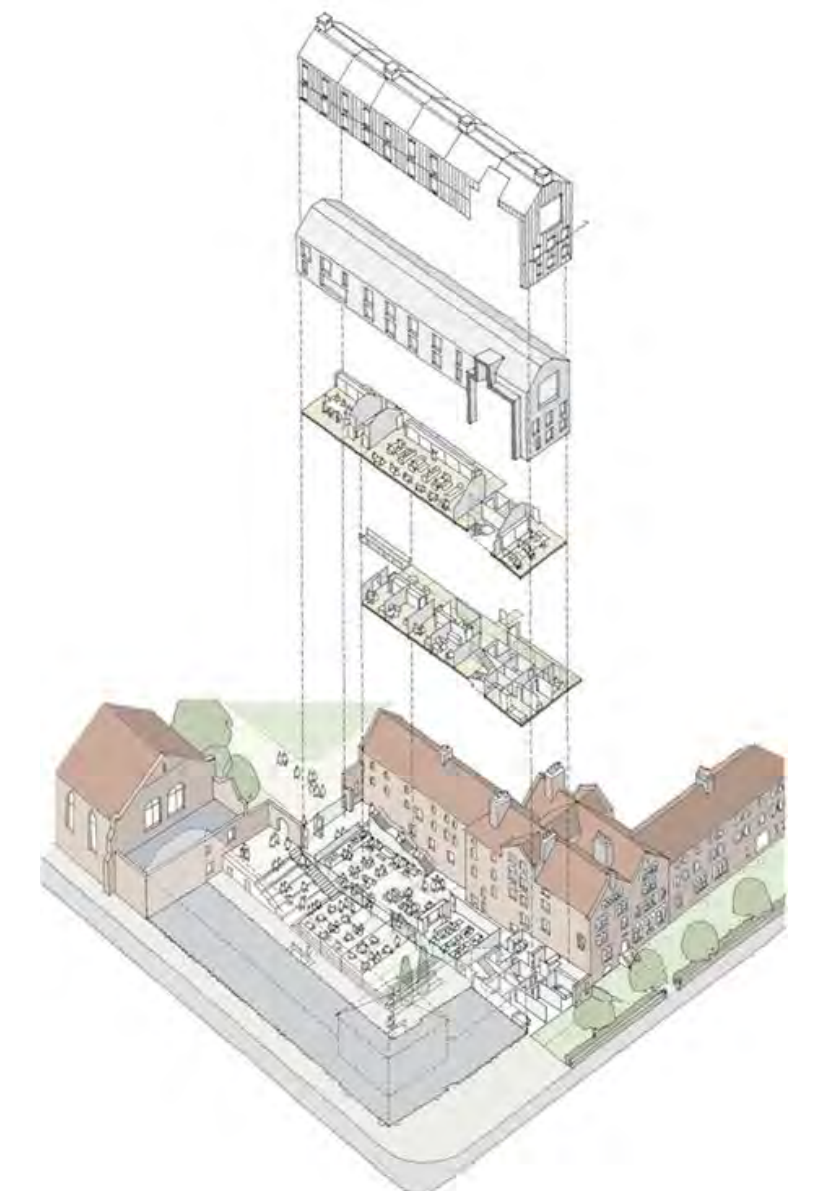
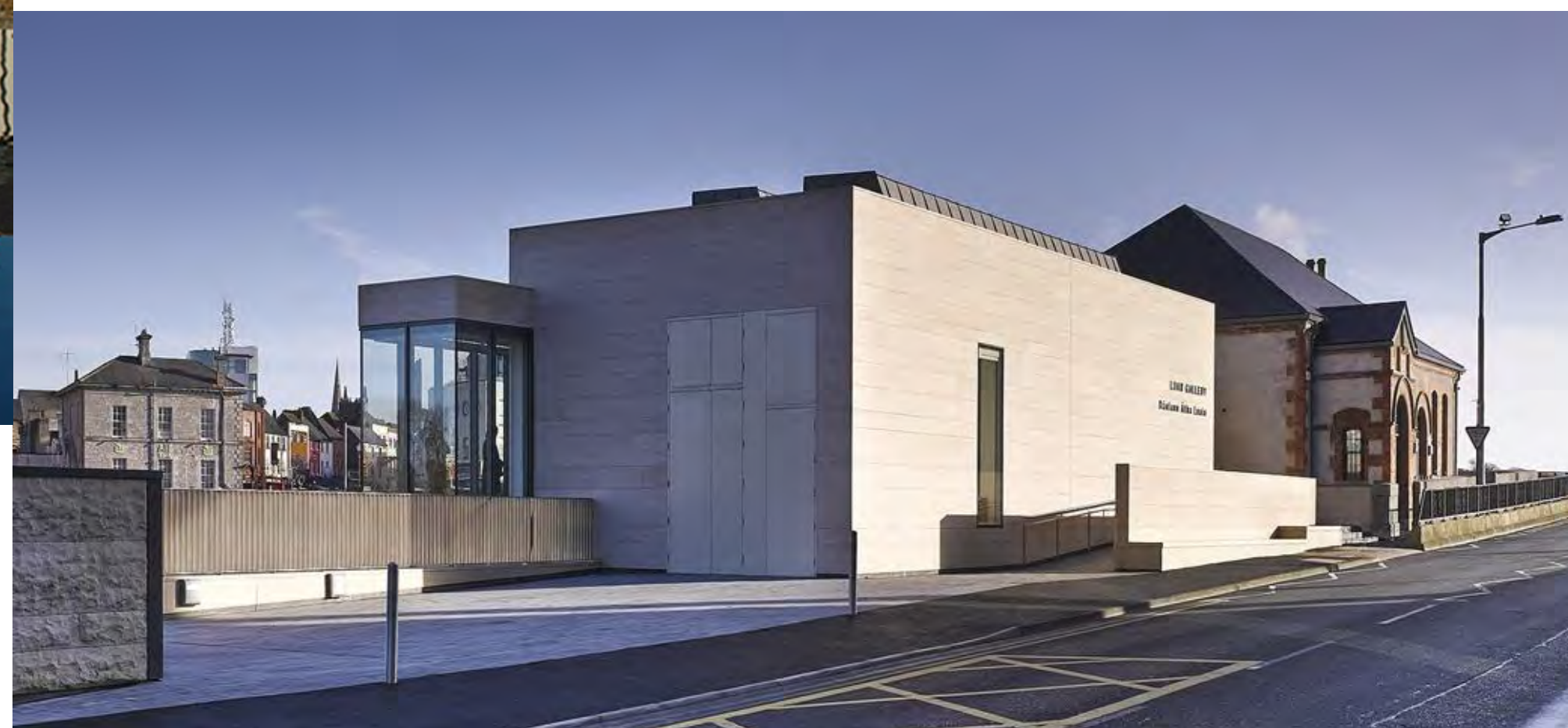
Responsive Design – Contemporary



©The Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney, UK

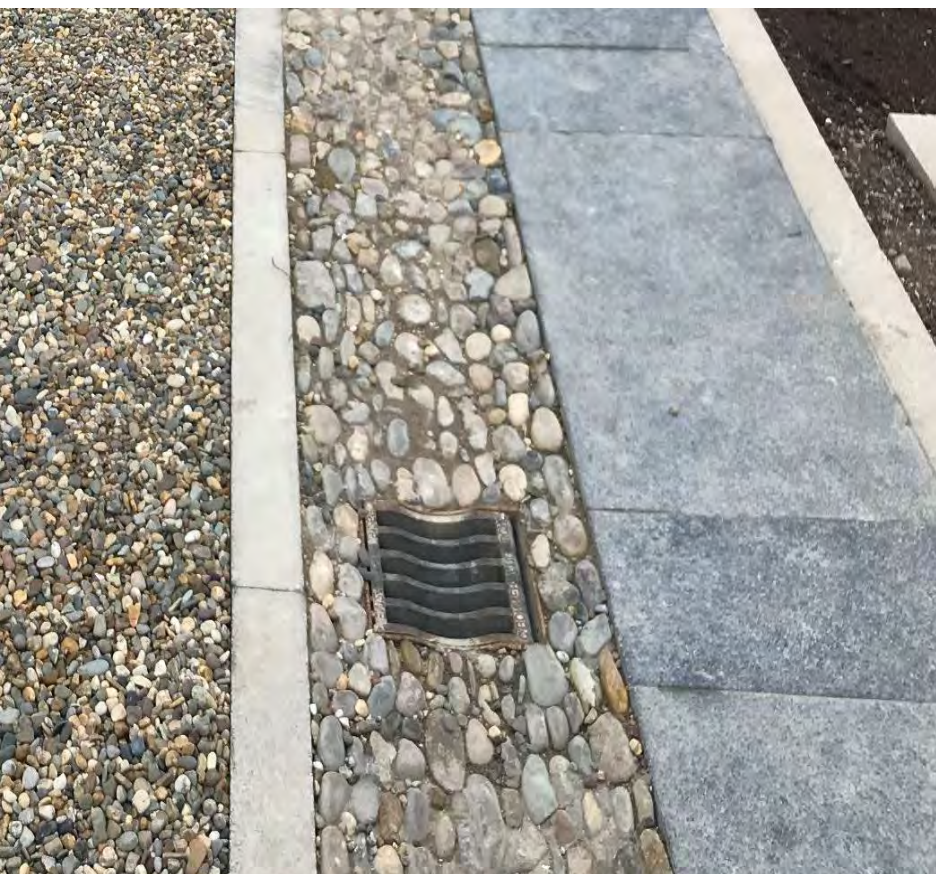


Waterford Courthouse, OPW. Image ©The Courts Service



Guiding Principles

Responsive Design- Public Realm



Clonakilty Public Realm, Cork County Council Architects' Dept.



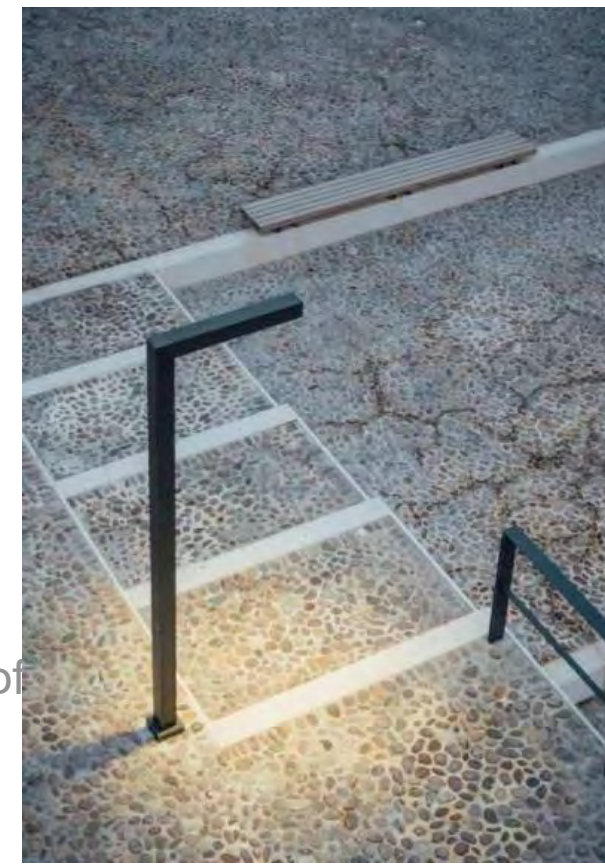
Rush Library, Fingal County Council. McCullough Mulvin Architects



Ballymahon Library, Longford County Council, Sean Harrington Architects



Limestone Paving, Nicholas Street, Cork City.



Mallow Public Realm, Cork County Council Architects' Dept.



Stradbally Market House, Laois County Council. Lotts Architecture and Urbanism

How do we currently safeguard, manage and enhance our built heritage?

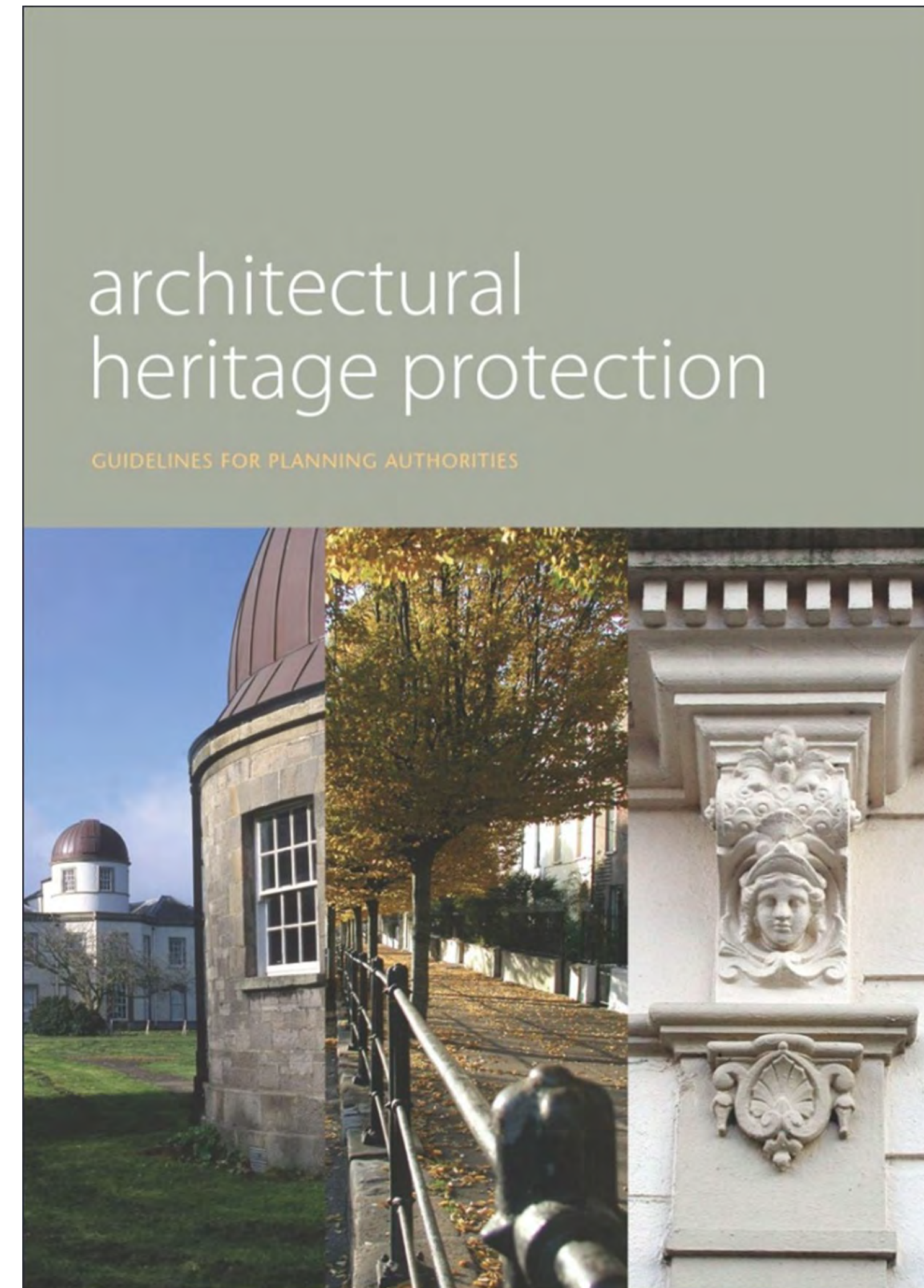


Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Systems

- Legislation
- Policy Framework
- Planning – Development Management
- Design /Advice Guides
- Action Plans/Strategies

Systems Support

- Financial Supports
- Training and Development - Addressing the skills gap.
- Resourcing/Specialist Personnel
- Public Outreach, engagement and promotion.



Developing Policy - Understanding Place and Character



Evolution of Place – How has a place come to be ?

What are its origins and how has it evolved historically to the present day.

Are land uses / socio-political/economic factors at play.

Is this evolution of place still evident and actively shaped the current built environment ?

Spatial Qualities – What are the street patterns and shape ?
What are the plot patterns and use ratio ?

What is the relationship of buildings to the street ?

Is there defined/designed public and private spaces and how are these presented ?

Are there important views and vistas and/or inter-related views and vistas ?

Are there historic surfaces and street furniture still present?

Building Characteristics – What are the primary building characteristics – Height, shape, no. of bays, roof shape and finish, Wall finishes and materials ?

Is there a particular style and or type that dominates or is prevalent ?

Micro/Granular Characteristics –

Predominant features or architectural treatments that cumulatively create a distinctive character such as:

window types and material, doors, chimney's, decorative features such as mouldings, cast iron boundaries, masonry/brick boundaries, terraced gardens, shopfronts.

CDP/LAP Policies and Objectives



- Set out **policies and objectives** for Protected Structures & Architectural Conservation Areas.
- These should be **clear and concise**, avoid over proliferation.
- Ensure **alignment** with other relevant policy areas, such as housing delivery, place-making, climate, tourism, housing, regeneration areas, zoning objectives.
- When preparing and/or assessing developments ensure **regard** is given to policies and objectives outlined in the relevant plans.

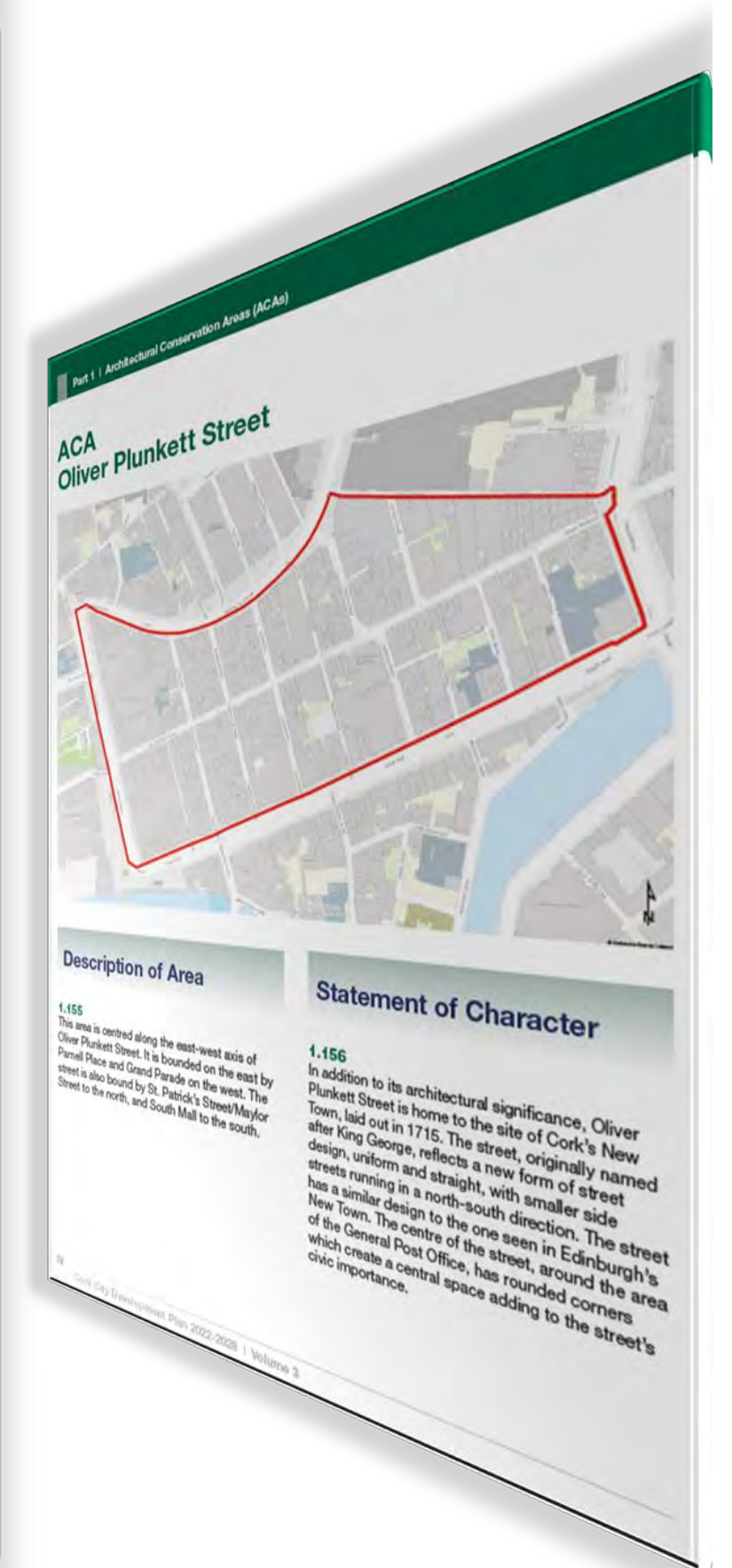
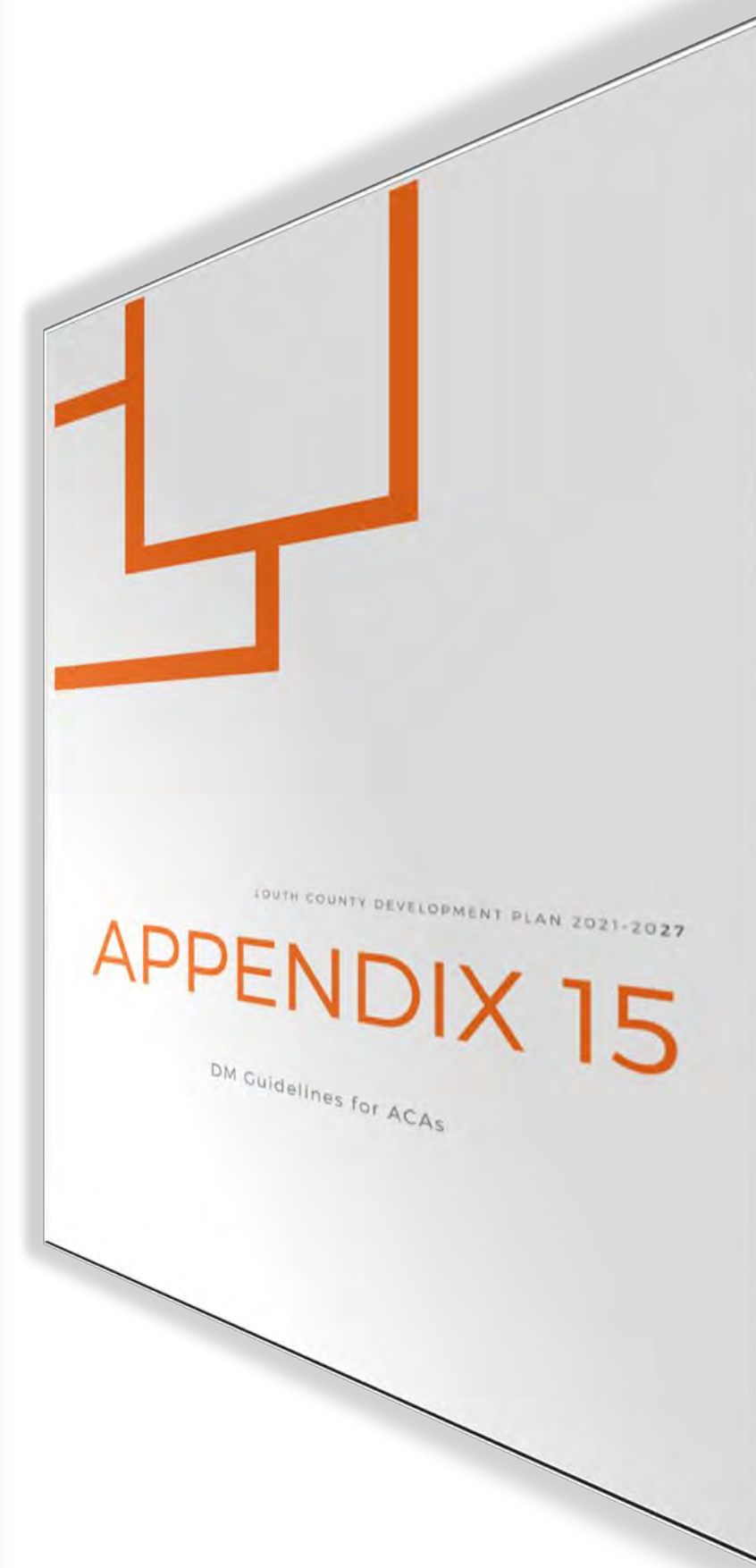
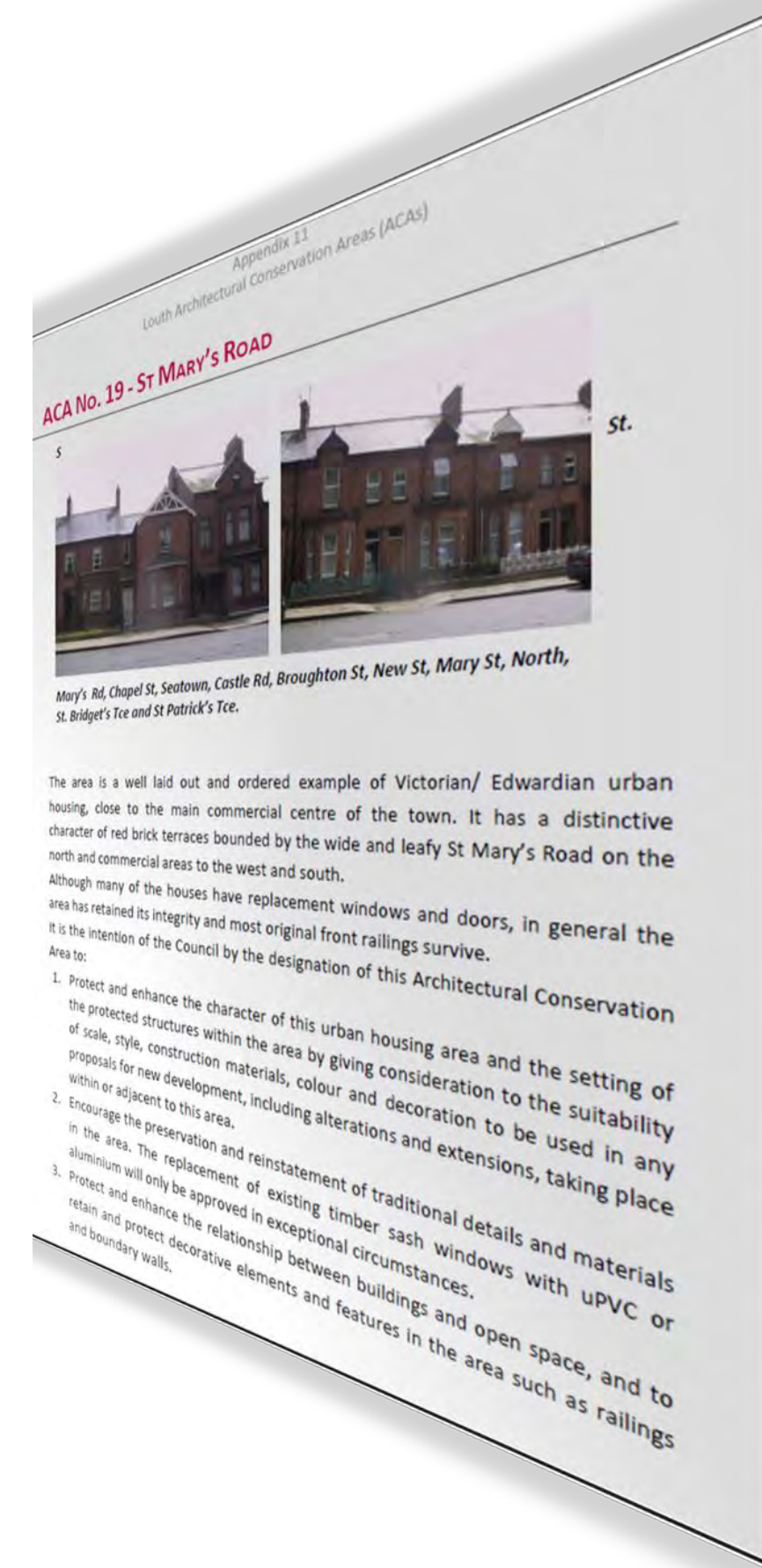
County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-14: Record of Protected Structures

- a) The identification of structures for inclusion in the Record will be based on criteria set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011).
- b) Extend the Record of Protected Structures in order to provide a comprehensive schedule for the protection of structures of special importance in the County during the lifetime of the Plan as resources allow.
- c) Seek the protection of all structures within the County, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. In accordance with this objective, a Record of Protected Structures has been established and is set out in **Volume Two Heritage and Amenity, Chapter 1 Record of Protected Structures**.
- d) Ensure the protection of all structures (or parts of structures) contained in the Record of Protected Structures.
- e) Protect the curtilage and attendant grounds of all structures included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- f) Ensure that development proposals are appropriate in terms of architectural treatment, character, scale and form to the existing protected structure and not detrimental to the special character and integrity of the protected structure and its setting.
- g) Ensure high quality architectural design of all new developments relating to or which may impact on structures (and their settings) included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- h) Promote and ensure best conservation practice through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons.
- i) In the event of a planning application being granted for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, that the repair of a protected structure is prioritised in the first instance i.e. the proposed works to the protected structure should occur, where appropriate, in the first phase of the development to prevent endangerment, abandonment and dereliction of the structure.

Statements of Character & Development Management Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings



- **Statements of Character and Development Management Design Guidelines** provide a practical guide to complement and achieve the policies and objectives contained with statutory plans.
- They provide relevant information on design responses and documentation required within the planning process.

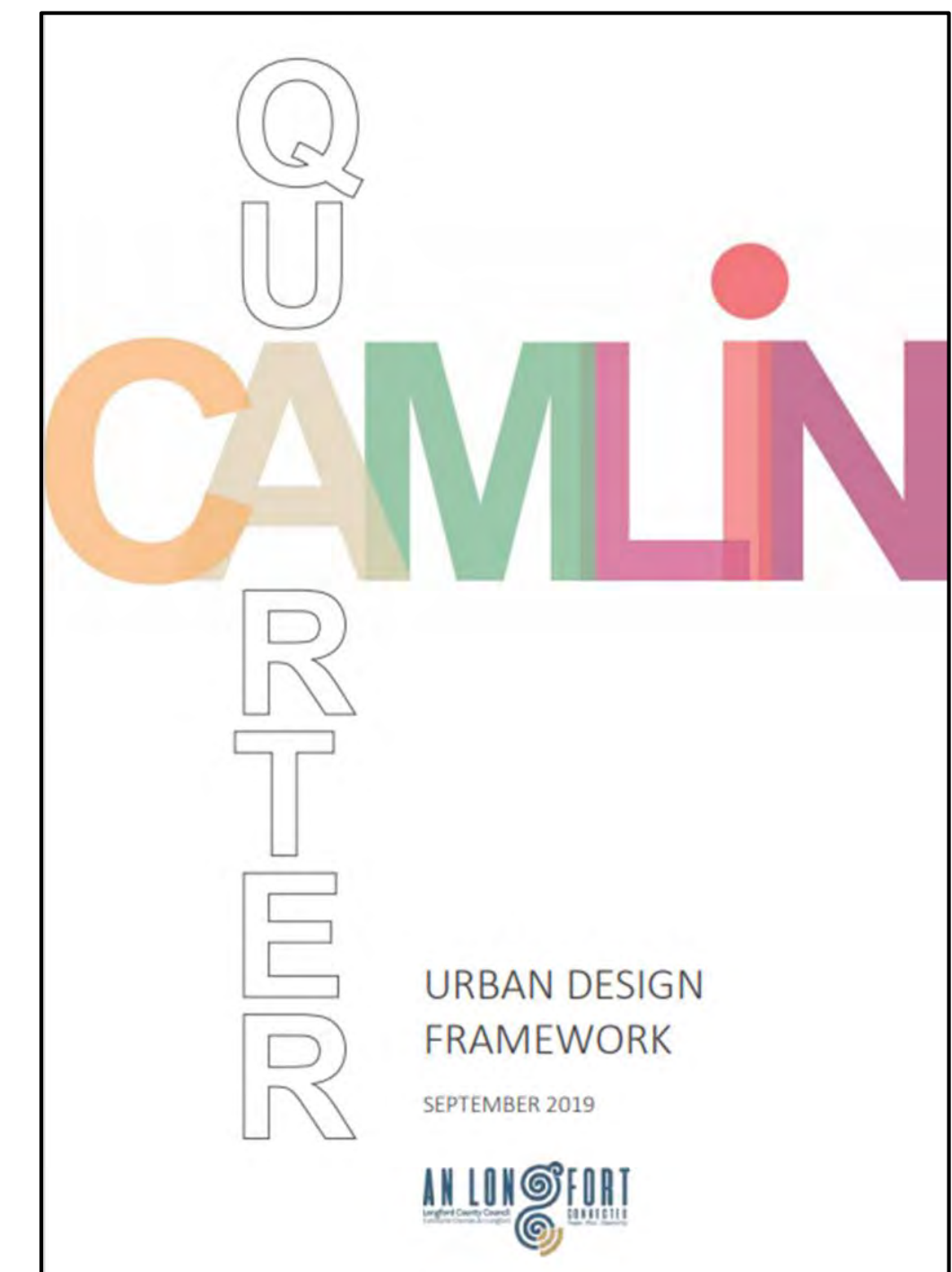


Urban Design Framework

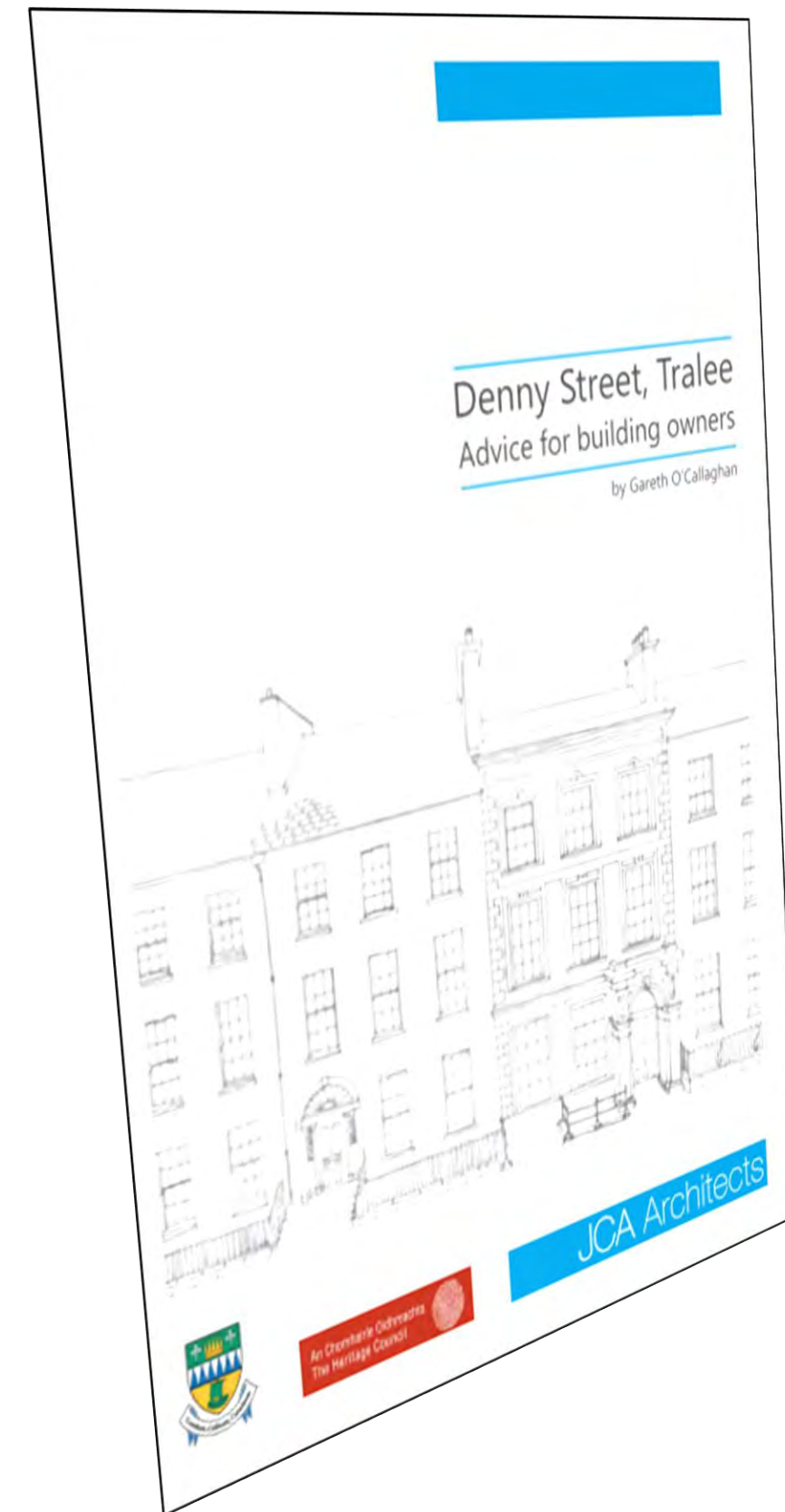
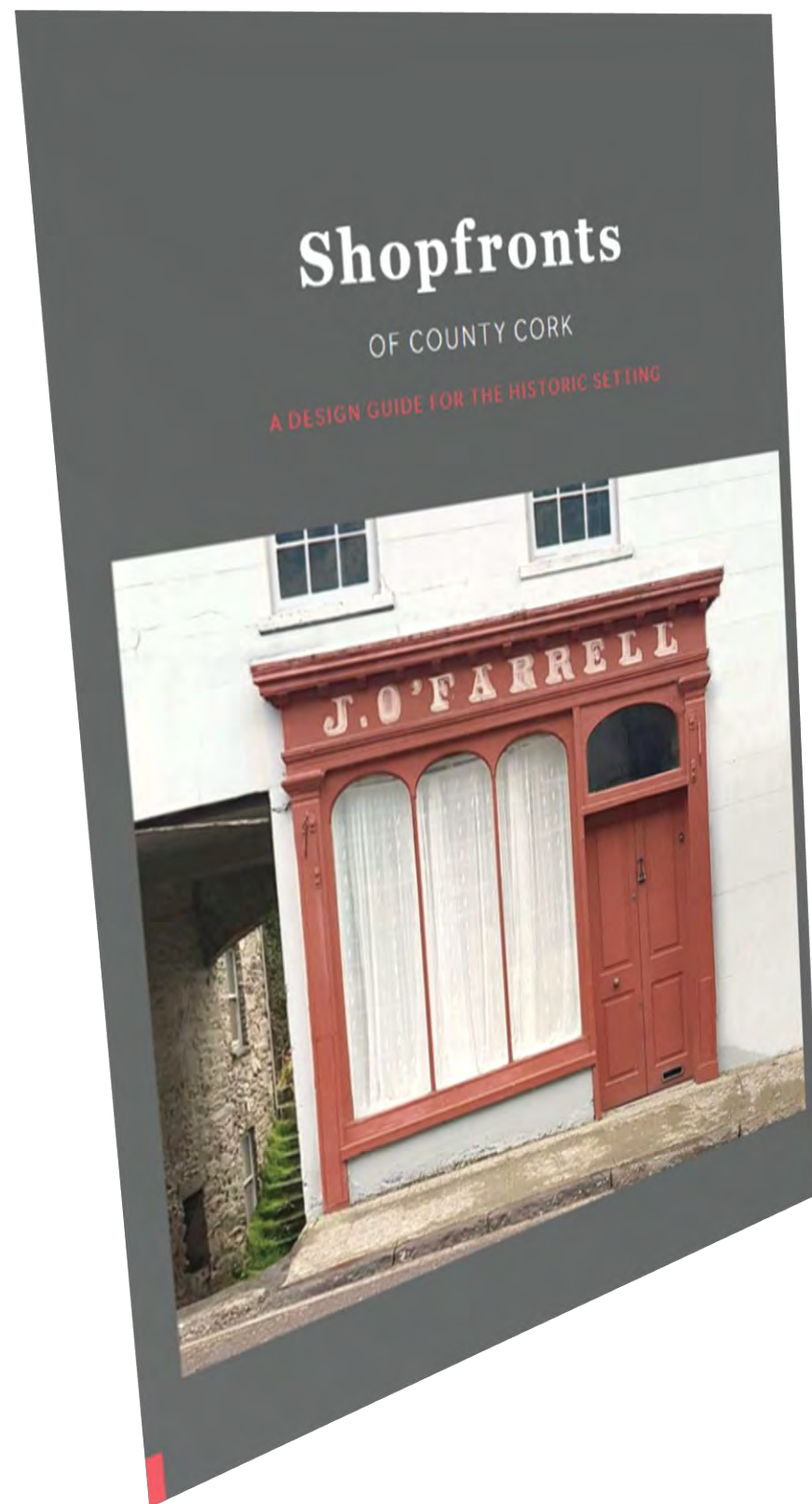


Urban design frameworks involve generating ideas and preparing realistic design concepts based on consultation, research, and analysis.

The UDF sets out an integrated planning and design approach for the future development of urban areas.



Standalone Local Authority Design Guides



Creating Opportunities



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council



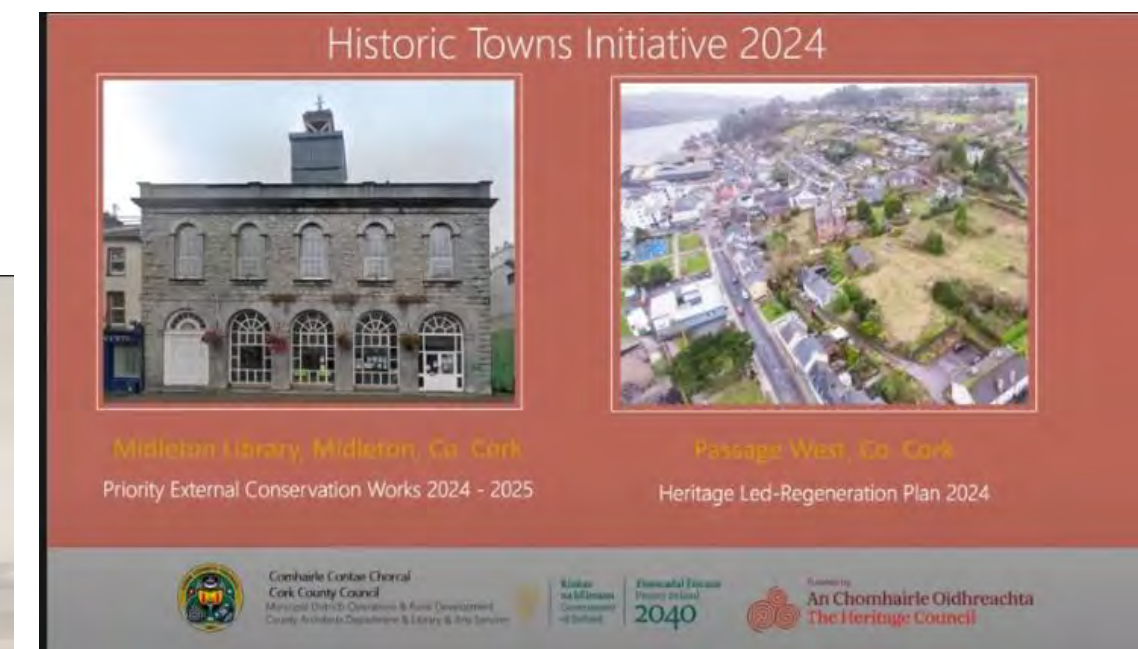
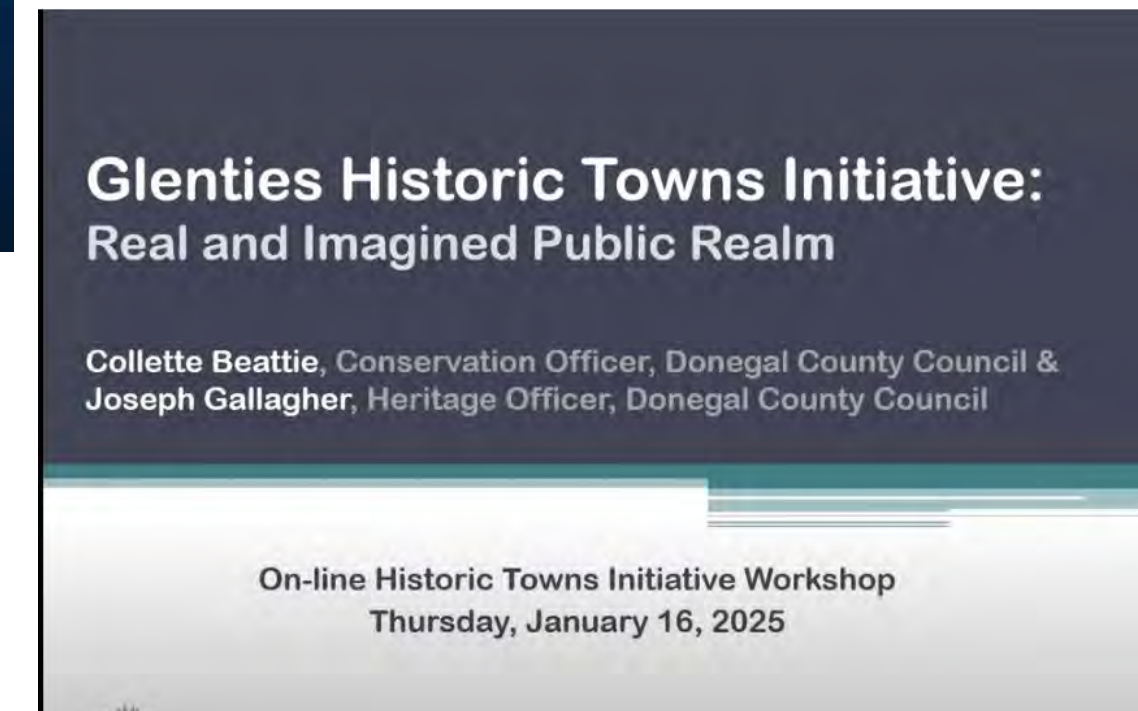
Restore - Remove the clutter and restore the historic town character

Reveal – The spirit of the community

Re-define - The public realm to serve the needs of the community while simultaneously enhancing its unique cultural heritage.



Historic Towns Initiative

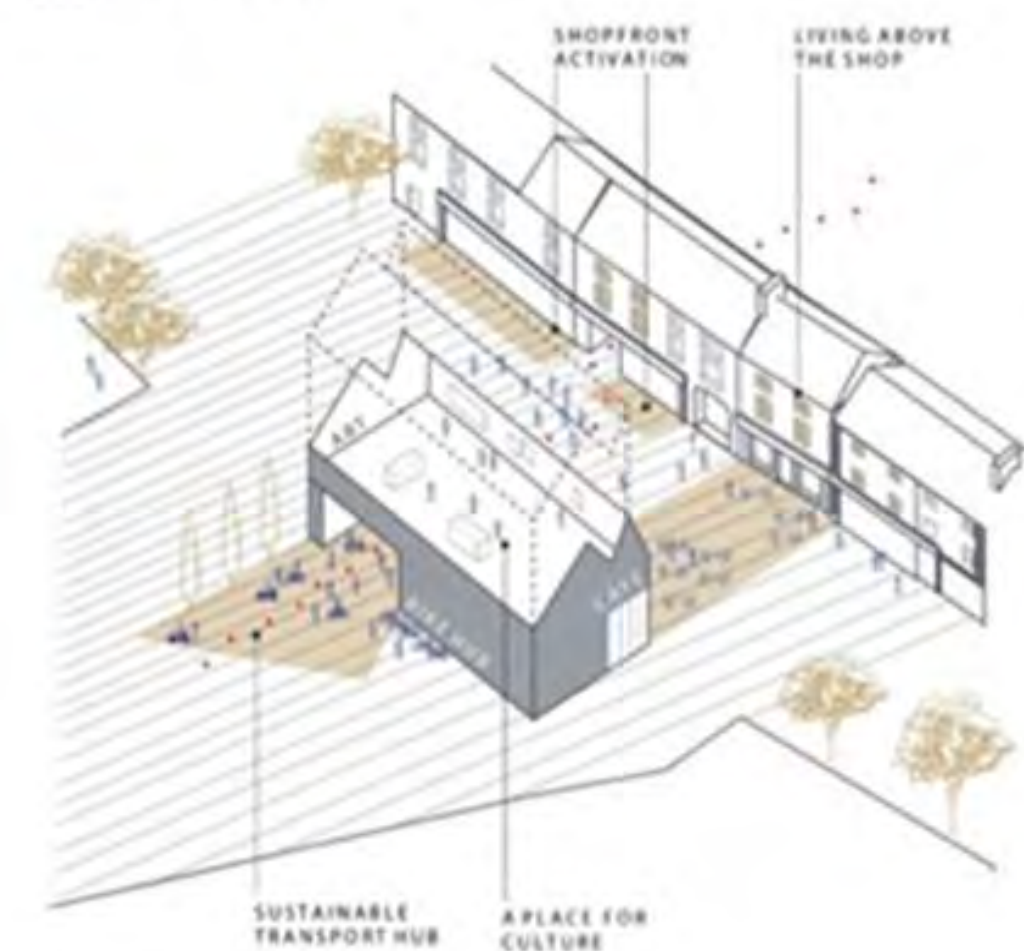


The Historic Towns Initiative (HTI) is a joint undertaking by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Heritage Council which aims to promote the heritage-led regeneration of Ireland’s historic towns. The HTI is an excellent model to support Town Centre First actions.

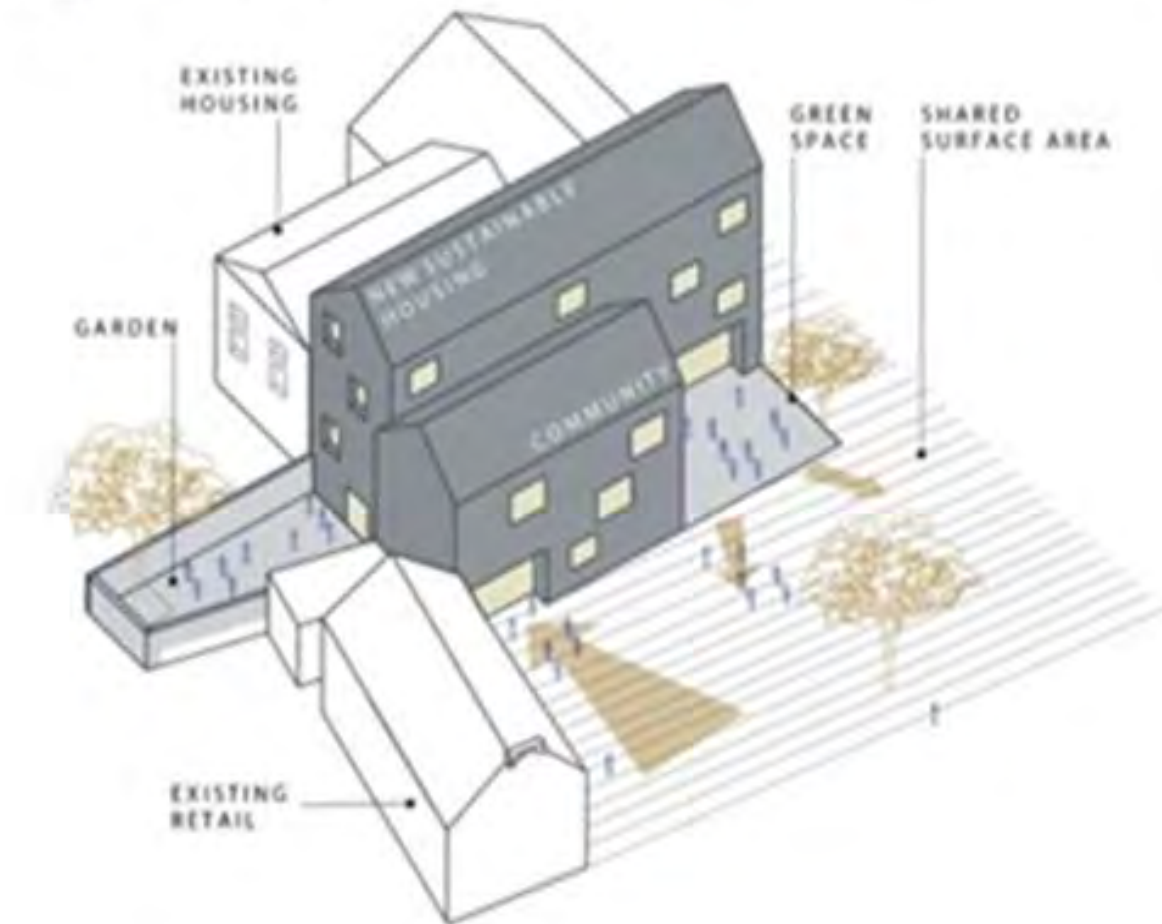
Urban Regeneration – Integrated Approach



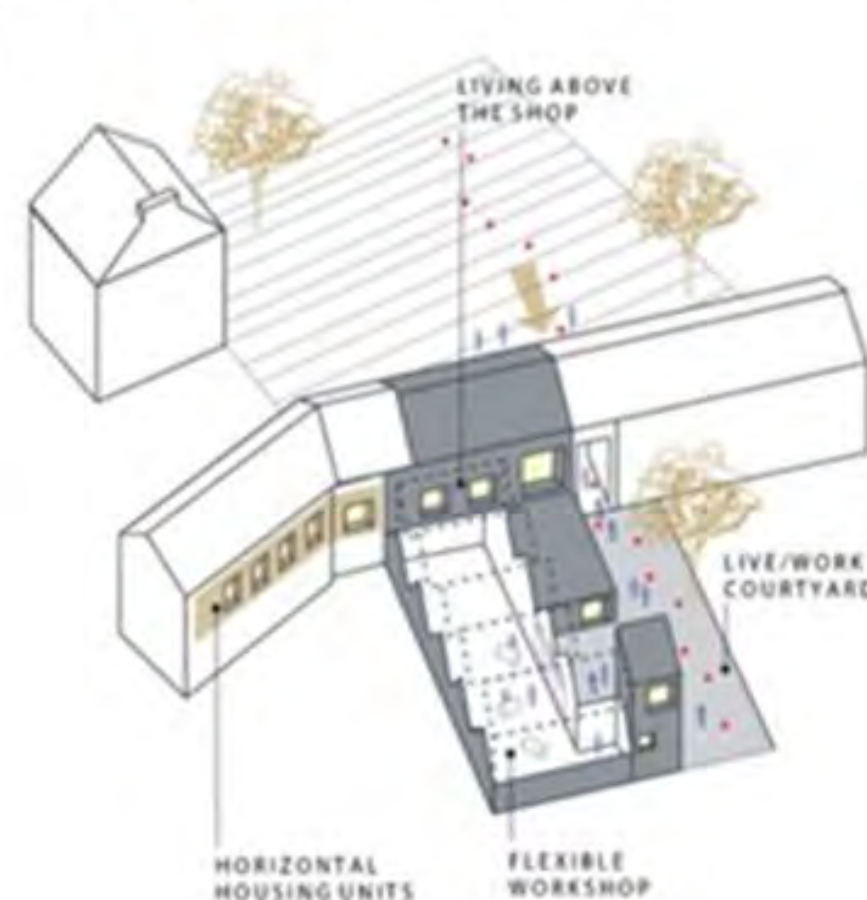
① ACTIVITY



② INFILL



③ LIVE/WORK HOUSING

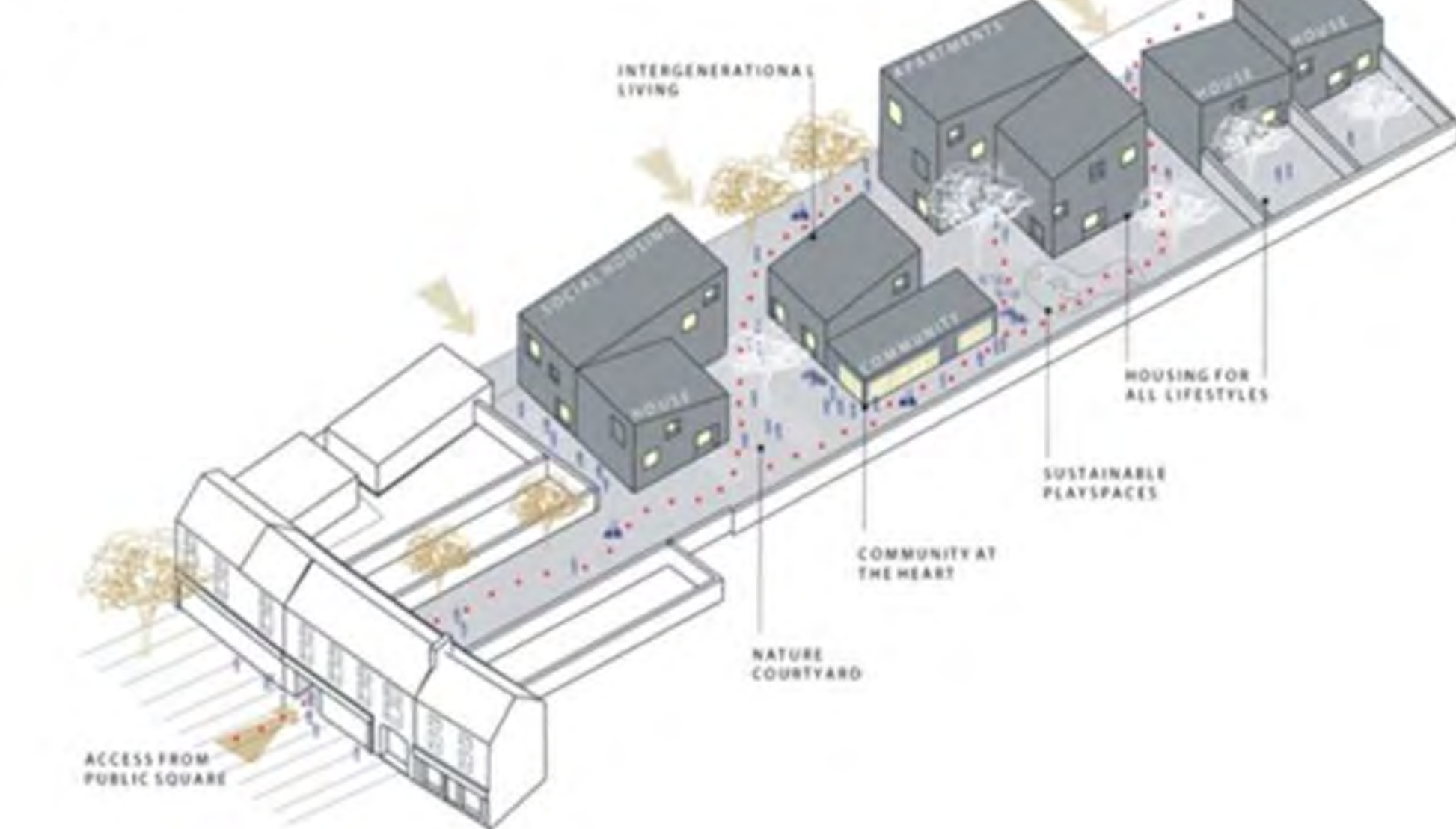


Mountrath, Co Laois - 100 small ideas for sustainable change.

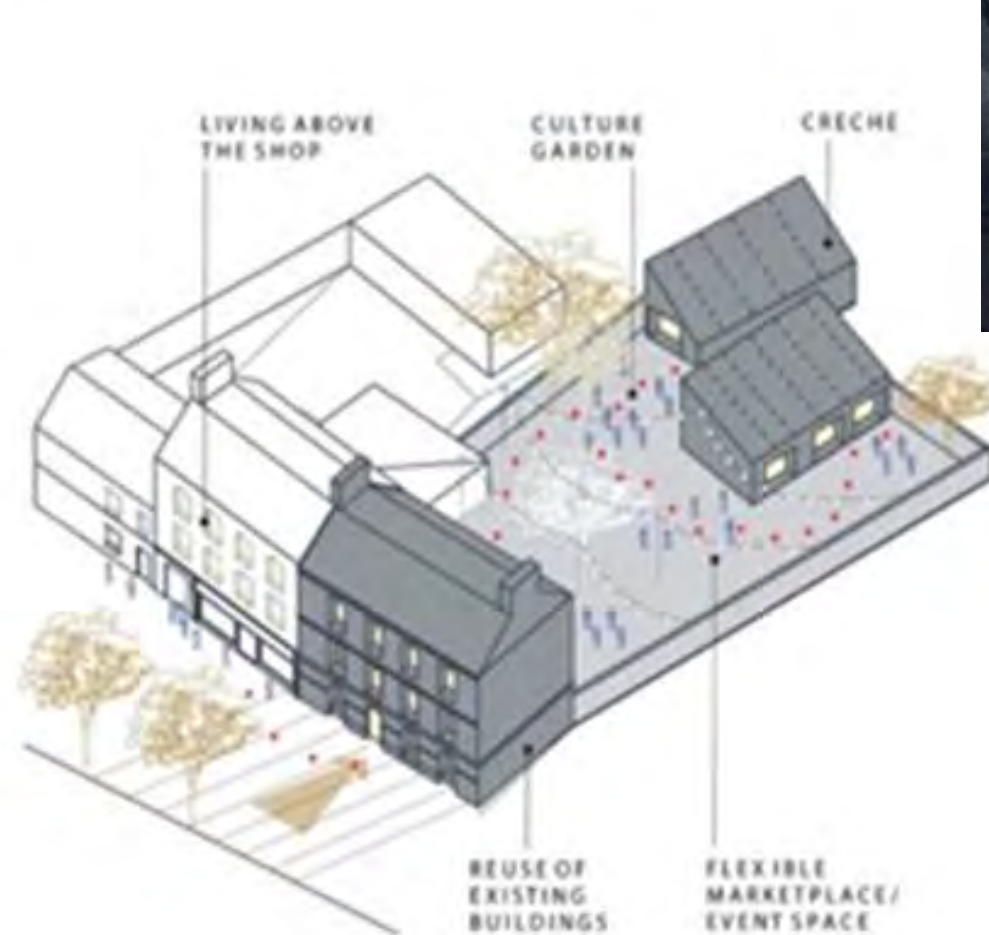
Valerie Mulvin (McCullough Mulvin Architects)



④ BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT



⑤ REUSE



Housing Unlocked

A celebration of innovation, optimism and imagination

Development Management



- **Exempted Development:** Section 57 & Section 5
- **Pre-Planning**
- **Planning Application** – Further Information Clarification and Conditions of Permission.
- **Enforcement** – Section 59, Section 60, Section 151.
- **Derelict Sites and Sanitary Act**



Ramelton, Co. Donegal



Ráth Mealtain
RAMELTON

Heritage Town

Historic Town

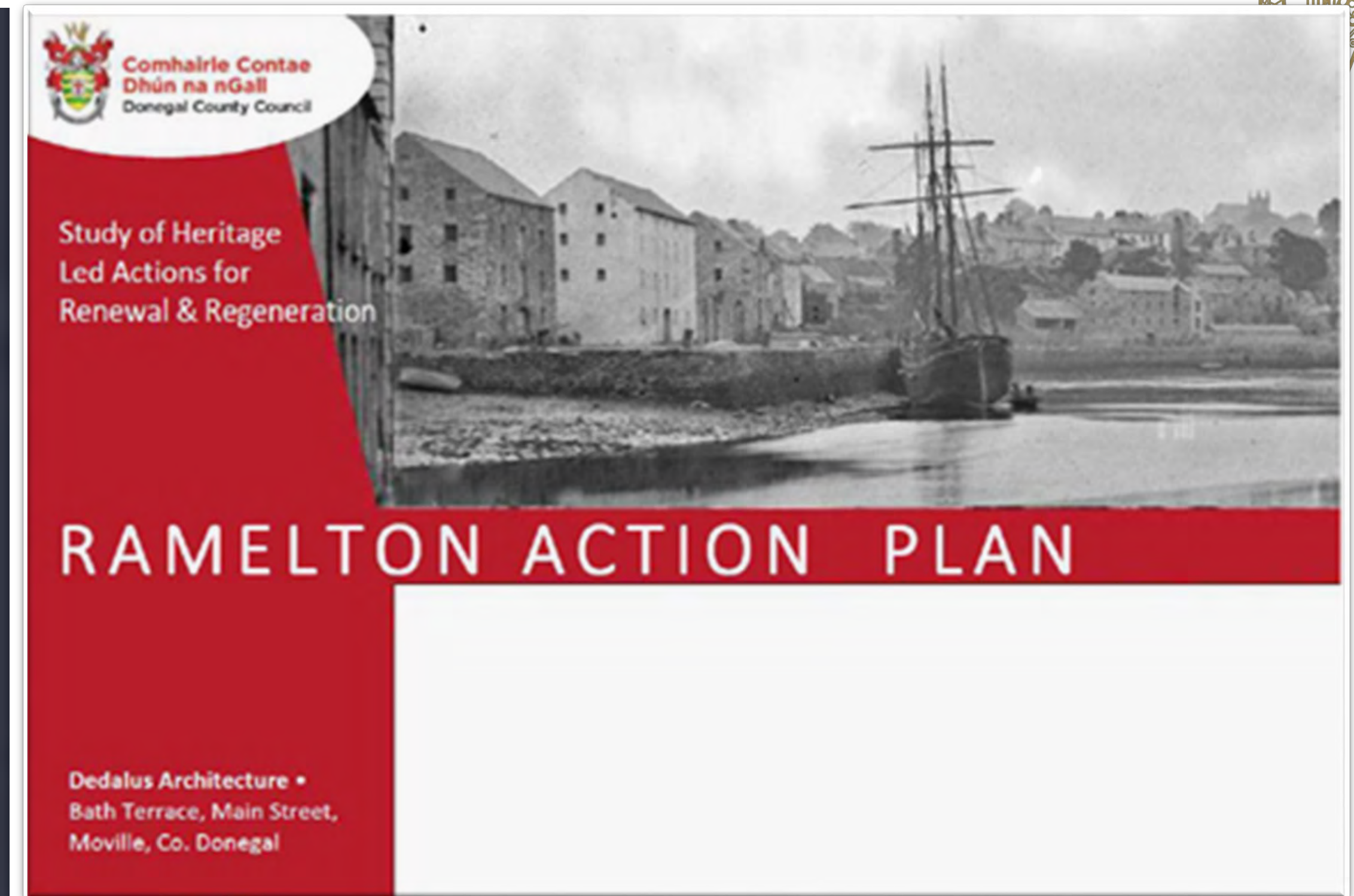
40 Protected Structures

115 structures on the National
Inventory of Architectural
Heritage

8 Recorded Monuments

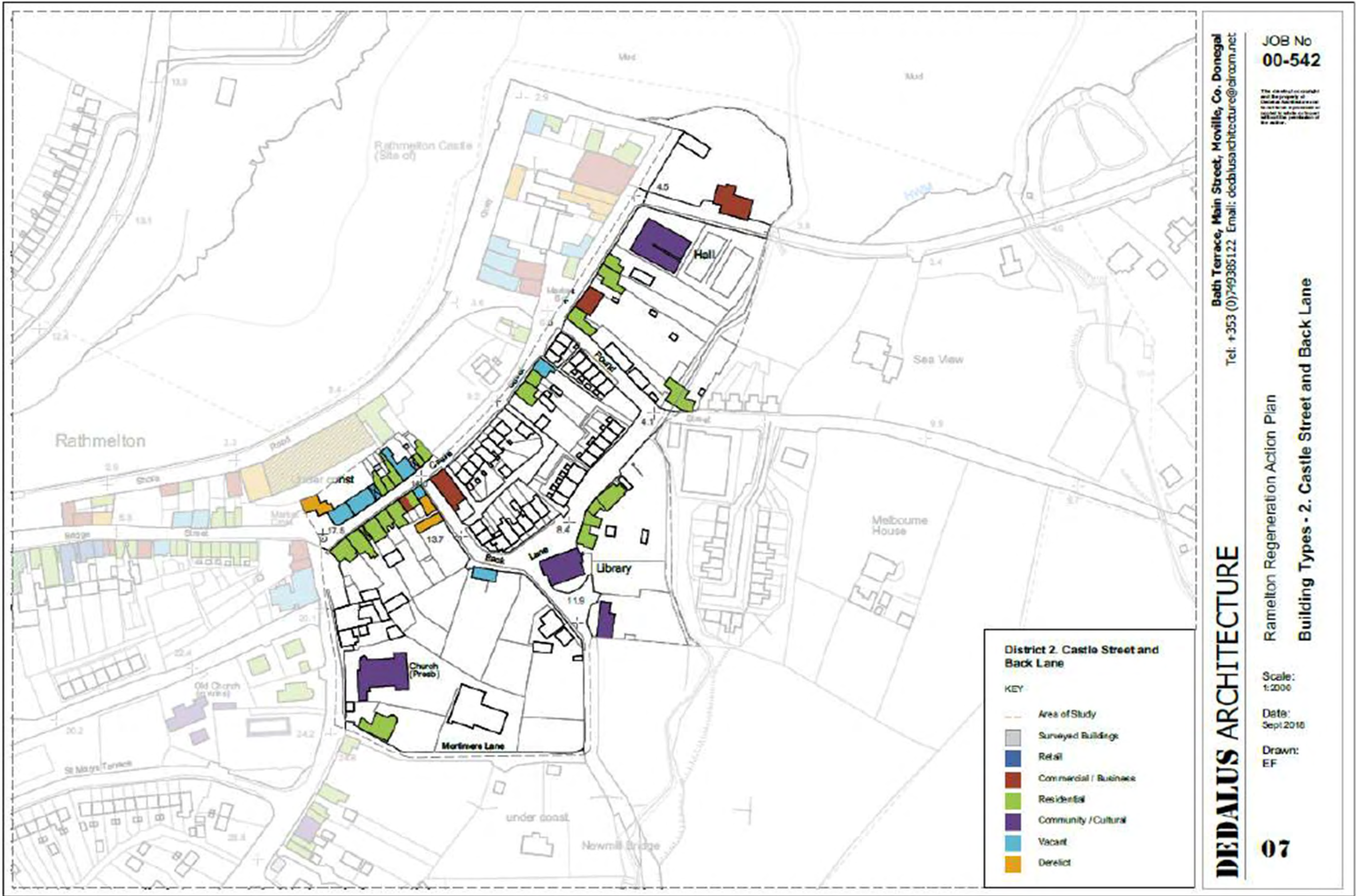
Wild Atlantic Way

Layer 2 Strategic Town with . . .
“a special economic and
tourism function. Future
development should be
informed by [the] built heritage
to protect [its] unique historic
character.”



All images for Ramelton/Ballyshannon are courtesy of Collette Beattie, Architectural Conservation, Donegal County Council.

Ramelton, Co. Donegal



Ramelton, Co. Donegal



- Community, Private Owners & Local Authority Combined Project.
- Multi-disciplinary team
- Plan & Vision
- Survey - Understanding of Significance
- Public engagement and participation.
- Focus on restoration/reinstatement character.
- Successful project outcomes – multiplier effect.



Ramelton & Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal



Ramelton, Co. Donegal



Historic Towns Initiative Donegal

YouTube · Donegal County Council · 20 Sept 2023



<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/historic-towns-initiative>

ACA – Conservation and New Design



No.	Reason
1	Having regard to the justification and argument made for demolition and the regional significance of the structure on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH: 20851033) together with its position in the core of the Architectural Conservation Area, the complete demolition of the heritage structure(s) would conflict with the provisions of the Kinsale Town Development Plan 2009 which encourages that older buildings, such as which are not listed but have some architectural heritage are rehabilitated (Policy Objective RPS 3) especially ones which are an inherent part of the streetscape within an Architectural Conservation Area (Policy Objective ACA 1). The proposed development would adversely affect an Architectural Conservation Area and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2	The proposed design in terms of scale, mass, and insensitive design which is lacking in local context would have a serious detrimental impact on the overall character of the Architectural Conservation Area and therefore conflicts with Policy Objective ACA 2 in the Kinsale Town Development Plan 2009, which seek to ensure development will conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area. The proposed development would adversely affect an Architectural Conservation Area and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3	The plans and particulars submitted do not provide for adequate off road parking facilities to serve the development. The on-road parking and the traffic movements likely to be generated by the development would interfere with the free flow of traffic and endanger public safety by reason of obstruction of road users.

The Board decided to refuse permission, generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations.

Reasons and Considerations

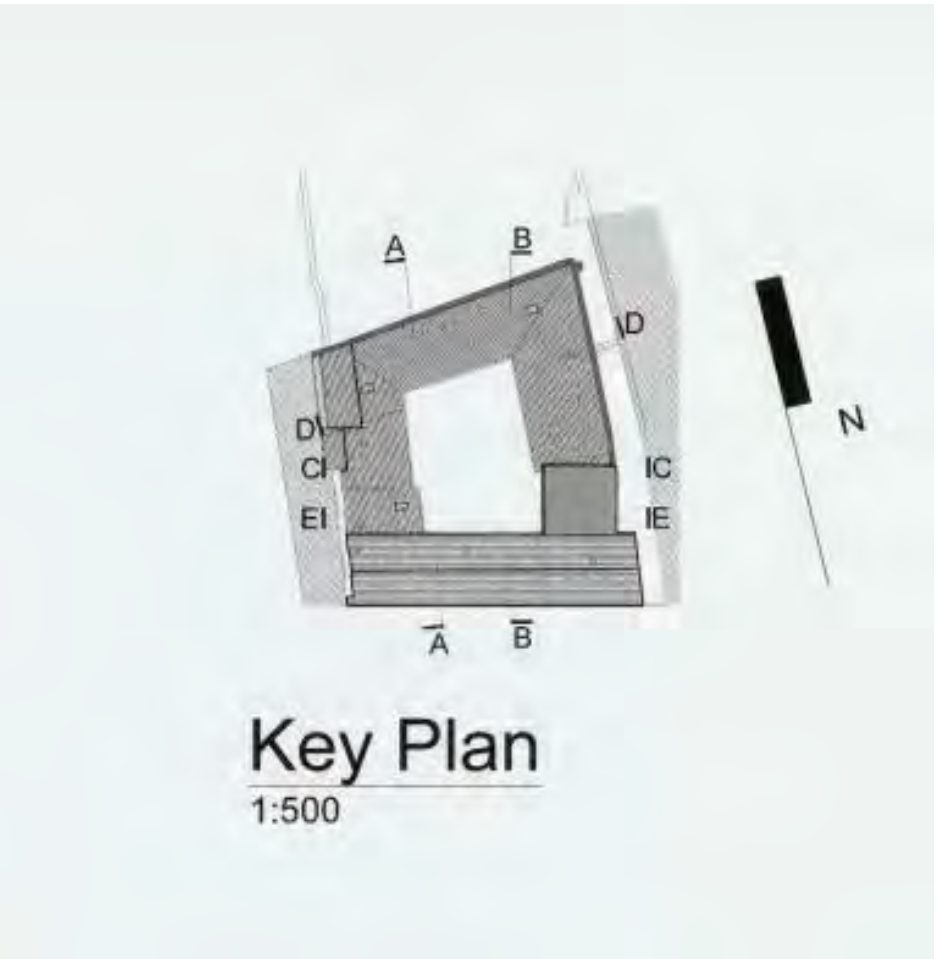
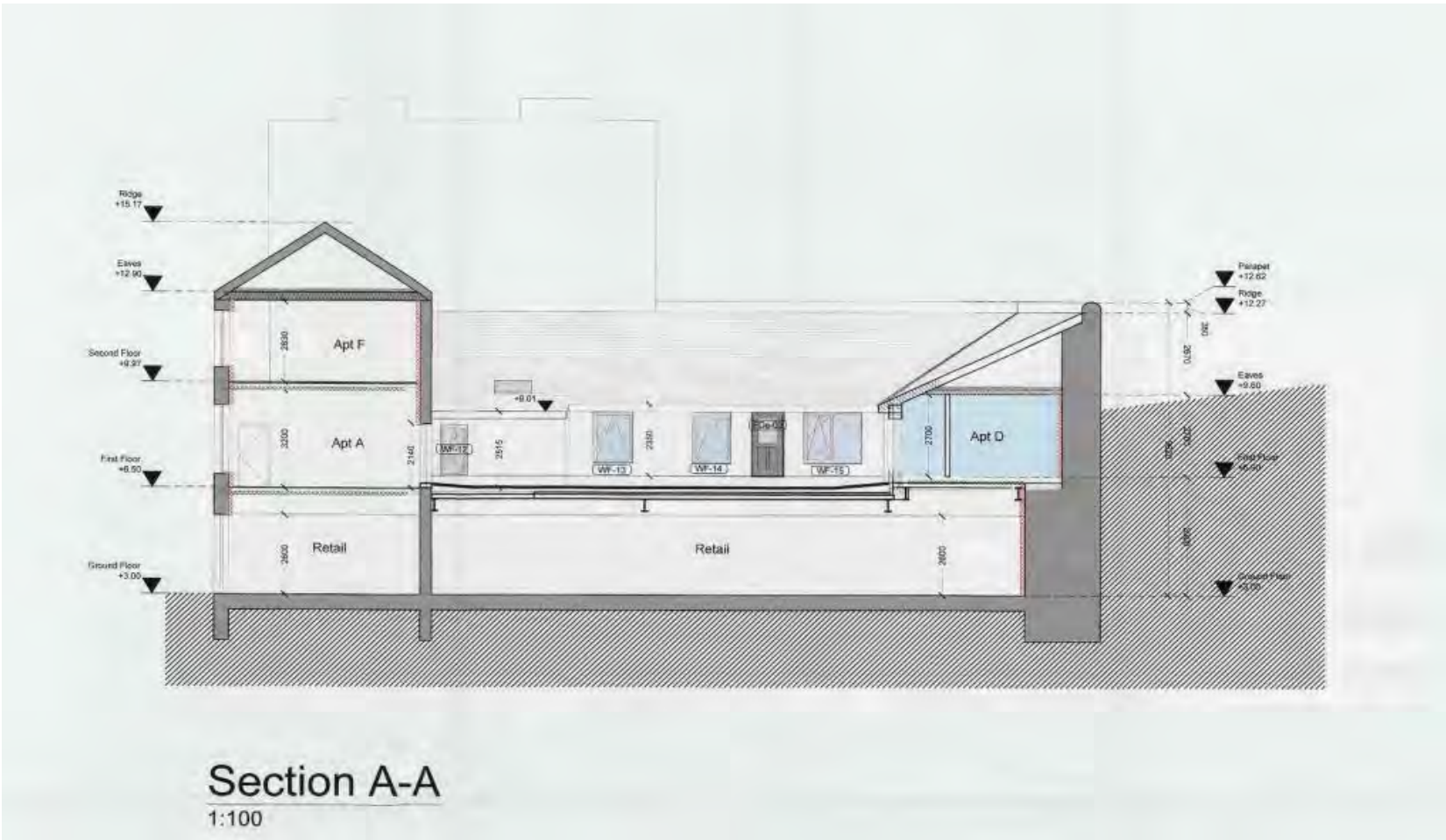
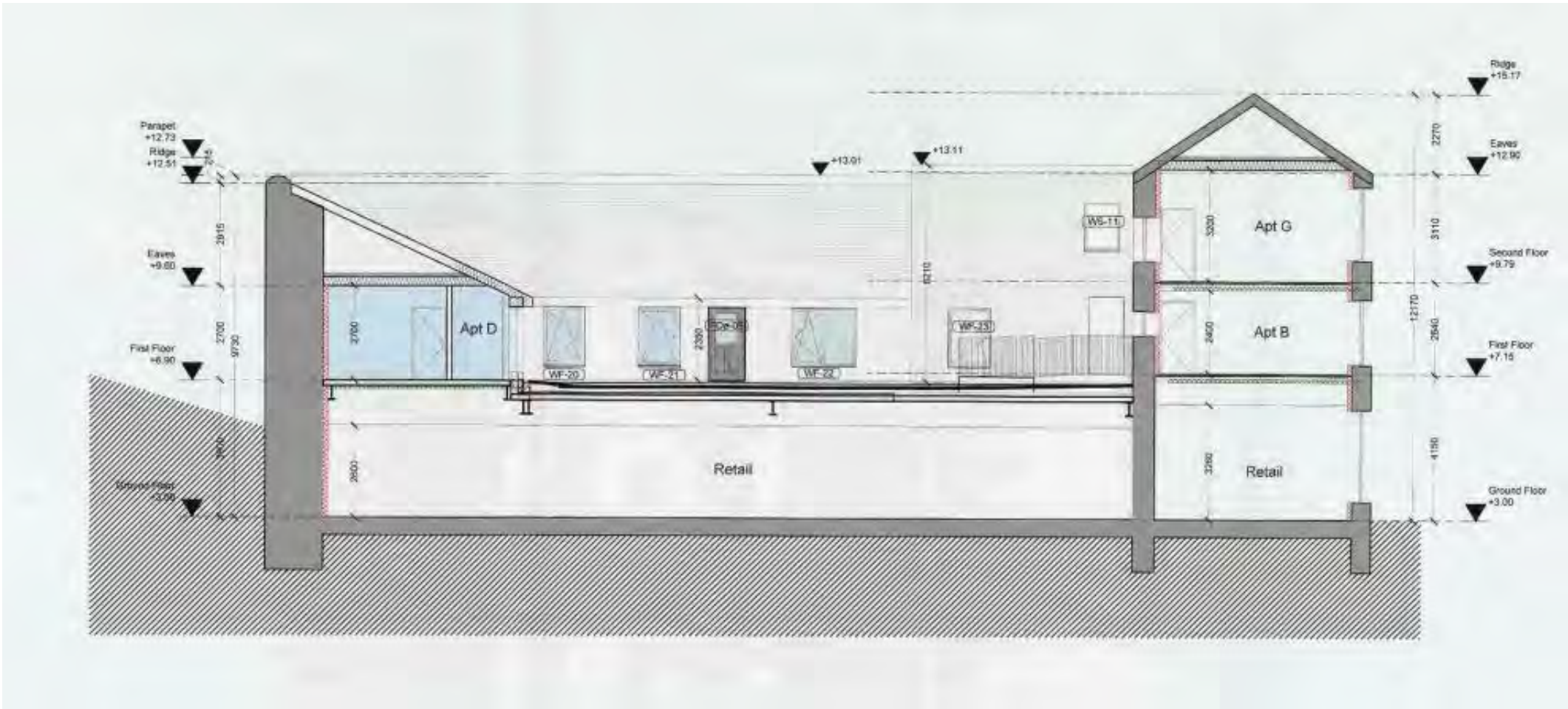
1. The demolition of an existing historic building which is listed on the NIAH (Ref. No. 20851033) would fail to have due regard for the intrinsic historic character of Kinsale town centre. The proposed development would materially affect the character of the Kinsale Architectural Conservation Area and would thereby seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would be contrary to the provisions of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, which promotes the rehabilitation of historic buildings in preference to their replacement, to Objective HE 4-5 of the Cork County Development Plan, 2014 which aims to conserve and enhance the special character of the ACA's and to policies RPS 3, ACA 1 and ACA 2 of the Kinsale Town Development Plan, 2009. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. PA reason for refusal No.2

ACA – Conservation and New Design



A refurbished and amended ground floor retail unit and 7 no. two bedroom apartments.



Protected Structure – Conservation and New Design



18 new social homes by Clúid Housing – 11 in the historic buildings and 7 new additions.

Part VIII Development by Cork County Council.

Multi-Disciplinary Team – Conservation Architects,
Jack Coughlan Associates

Cross Directorate Collaboration – Housing, Planning
and Heritage

Funded by DHLGH under the CAS scheme which was
administrated by Cork County Council

Protected Structure – Conservation and New Design



Convent of Mercy, Bantry, Co, Cork. Images courtesy of Jack Coughlan Architects.



Protected Structure – Conservation and New Design



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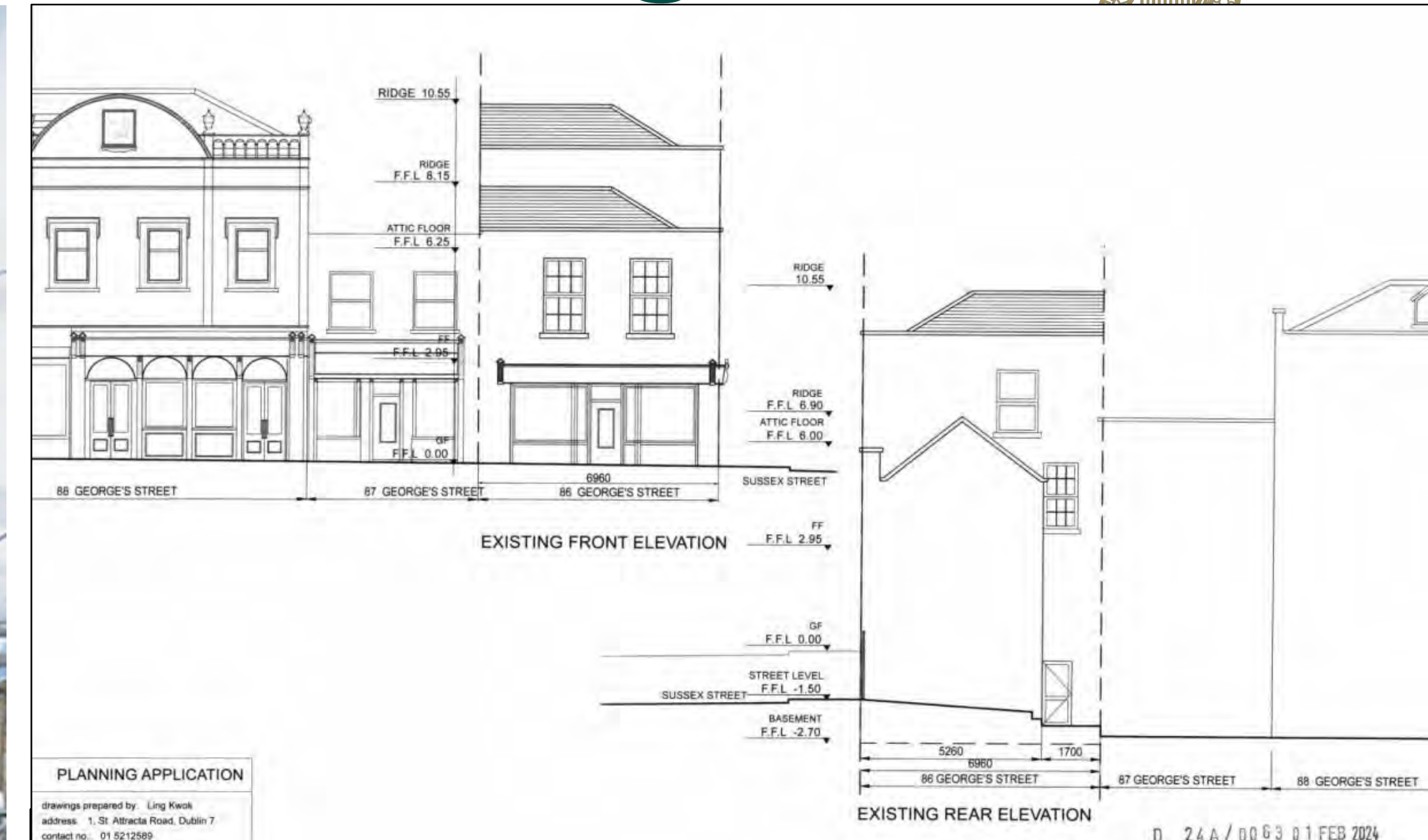


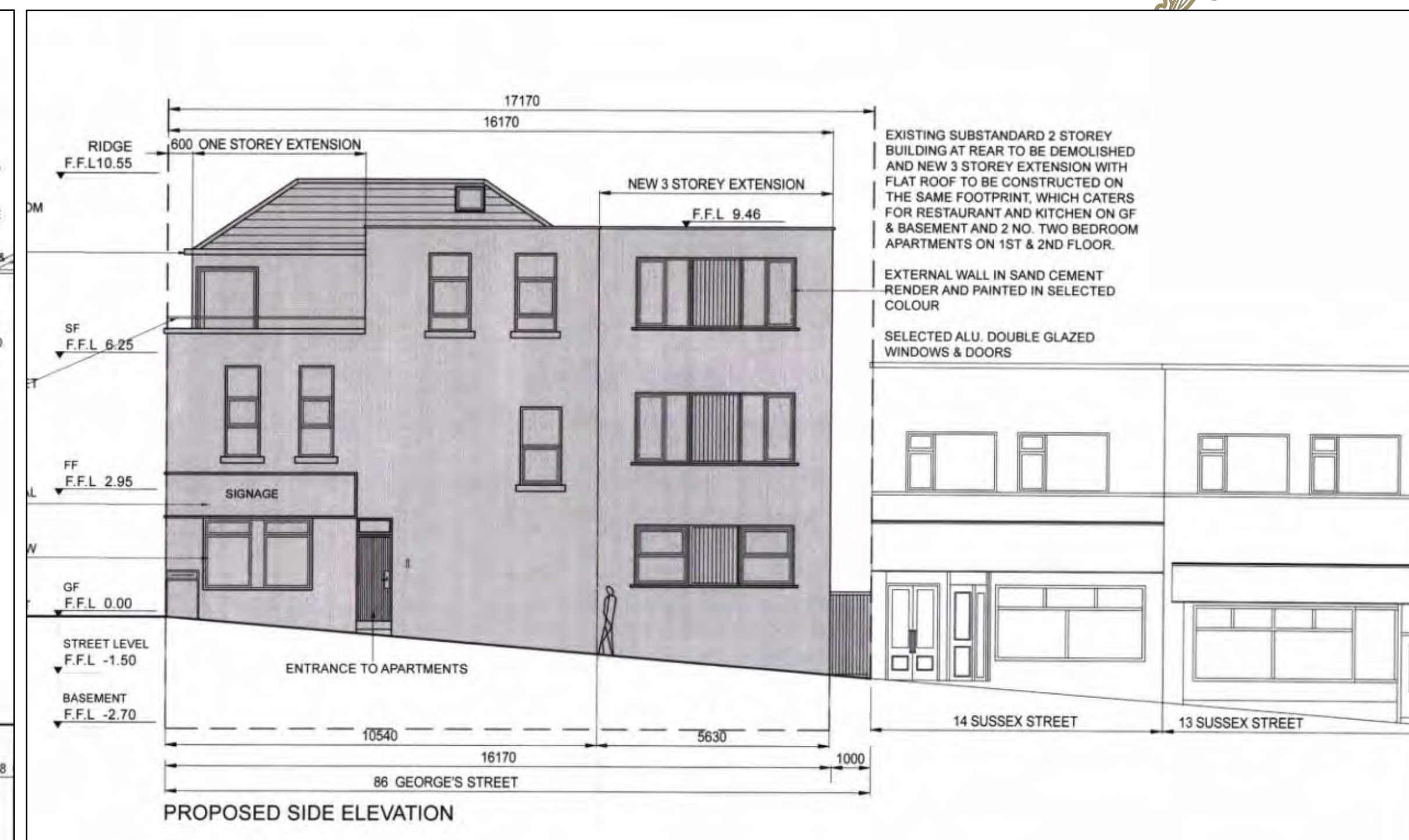
“I feel like I have landed in heaven. I love my new home and I couldn’t ask for more. There is a nice little community emerging in the old convent and it’s lovely to be part of it”

Historic Streetscape –New Design



Demolition of existing substandard two storey building at rear and construction of three storey extension on the same footprint and a second floor extension at the front. Change of use to restaurant with take away and kitchen in basement. New timber shopfront ..Change of use from 1st and 2nd floor office to residential.. 1 two bedroom apartment on first floor and 1 two bedroom apartment on second floor





Refuse – Did not comply with Objective 7 under Section 17.8 of the Interim Dun Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan, as set out in Appendix 17 of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown CDP 2022-2028, which seeks to ‘*encourage the development of buildings of the highest architectural quality that are appropriate to its context*’. Second refusal reason related to not according to minimum design standards for apartments.

Historic Streetscape –New Design



Partial change of use at ground floor level from retail to office (36.3sqm) ...change of use at first floor level from office to residential ...provide a part additional storey at second floor level to provide a two bed apartment... Elevational changes, signage, plant and all other associated development works above and below ground.



Historic Streetscape – New Design



Historic Streetscape – New Design



2332 - 24-25 George's St. Lower, Dun Laoghaire

Architects Statement

Planning Report

Prepared in Respect of an Application for
Permission for the Change of Use and
Extension of Nos. 24-25 George's Street
Lower, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin



Granted with Conditions;

Has regard to Town Improvement Scheme :
'Living Streets for Dun Laoghaire'

Has regard to Shopfront, Signage and
Advertising in CPD

Reference made to DLR Conservation
Divisions best practice principles relating to
extensions.

Conditions places in respect of materials,
signage, advertising and amendments to
shopfront windows

Summary

Architectural heritage is a **key communal asset** in unlocking the potential of the built environment to meet the varying aims and objectives of current national policies, strategies and statutory frameworks.

Be familiar with and utilise the **architectural heritage resources** at your disposal.

Develop a strong and aligned **policy framework** and **apply it consistently** throughout the planning process to support and maintain high quality outcomes.



High Street, Tullamore, Co Offaly. Images courtesy of Rachael McKenna, Architectural Conservation Officer, Offaly Co. Council.

Summary

The **Architectural Conservation Officer**, where employed is the best resource available to you. Early engagement and continued communication will ensure a timely and efficient delivery of services.

Meaningful cross collaboration and communication both internally and with external stakeholders will benefit a project.

Small projects can be started out which grow gradually into a significant and noticeable result.

Exercise restraint – Consider significance, character and context to enable informed decision making to allow for repair, longevity and sympathetic modern interventions.



“Every Place must identify its strongest, most distinctive features and develop them or run the risk of being all things to all persons and nothing special to any.”

