

SURVEYORS

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SPECIAL EDITION

THE REAL COST OF RENOVATION



Chartered property,
land and construction
surveyors

IN THIS ISSUE

MAJOR SCSI RENOVATION
REPORT LAUNCHED

INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER
FOR HOUSING

RETROFIT AND REFURB



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



NEWS



FEATURE



EDITORIAL



INTERVIEW



THE LAST WORD



SURVEYOR PROFILE



FEATURE

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OUR REPORT OFFERS REAL SOLUTIONS

OUR NEW REPORT ON THE REAL COST OF RENOVATION SETS OUT A PATHWAY THROUGH WHICH VACANT AND DERELICT BUILDINGS CAN BE BROUGHT BACK INTO USE.

As Ireland continues to deal with the challenges of an unprecedented housing crisis, much debate has focused on the significant number of vacant properties nationwide that could be refurbished to provide much-needed accommodation. Our Real Cost of Renovation Report provides data-driven, evidence-based cost information and practical insights on the renovation of a selection of 20 vacant and derelict properties across the country to assist Government, State agencies, and potential homeowners and investors to understand the key challenges and opportunities in utilising existing properties for residential use. With the integration of cost modelling, I believe the findings of this report will also help dispel the myths and address widely held views across the country that lead to individuals and investors not undertaking refurbishment of derelict and vacant properties. Six of those case studies are featured in this edition of the *Surveyors Journal*.

Opportunity

At a time when rents are at an all-time high, the majority of house prices are prohibitively expensive to the average buyer, high construction costs are challenging new housing development viability, and we are working towards carbon neutrality by 2050, it is imperative that a pragmatic approach is taken to ensure the viability of renovating current building stock for residential use. It will take time and a concerted effort by many to move the dial in relation to repurposing and renovation of units for residential accommodation. There are often a multitude of challenges facing building owners and investors in taking on such projects, and this report aims to highlight the practical, financial, and regulatory challenges involved. It also provides practical recommendations for policymakers on how these challenges can be overcome.

The importance of professional advice

While this report will be of benefit to those seeking general information on vacant property renovation, each property has unique characteristics and therefore professional advice should be sought before embarking on refurbishment projects. SCSi Chartered Surveyor members working across 12 surveying disciplines are well placed to provide both technical and cost advice. For owners and prospective buyers navigating areas such as planning, fire certification, building regulations, planning regulations, financial/viability assessments, construction, and sales and rental market advice, this report will hopefully assist in the renovation of projects across the country.

I would like to thank all members and the wider stakeholder group who have contributed to this report. Your expertise and knowledge were invaluable in informing this research.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kevin James
SCSi President



TACKLING RENOVATION

OUR FIRST SPECIAL EDITION FOCUSES ON THE NEW 'REAL COST OF RENOVATION REPORT'.

Welcome to the first special edition of the *Surveyors Journal*. There will be two of these in addition to the usual four editions – a total of six per year. This will allow for complex topics of interest to surveyors, the land, property and construction industries, and society as a whole, to be more thoroughly explored than is possible in an article in a normal *Surveyors Journal*. One such subject is the renovation and refurbishment of older buildings for residential use, which is the subject of this special edition.

The real cost of renovation and the problems involved are difficult to get a handle on, often resulting in a fear of undertaking projects such as the rehabilitation of older properties. This can deter people from buying older properties, and to a bias towards new build. In turn, this leads to the neglect of beautiful streets in towns and villages, despite the increasing appeal of living in mature areas with established amenities.

At a time of acute housing shortage, urban dereliction is naturally attracting increasing attention. I have often heard commentators, politicians and media presenters asking the question why are so many vacant buildings not renovated, often with a sense of exasperation. Certainly there is an increasing need to make better use of existing buildings and to reap rewards from the renovation and maintenance of as much of our built heritage as possible. For sure there is growing appreciation of how lovely urban settings can be greatly enhanced by bringing older traditional buildings into residential use, not to mention the contribution to meeting climate targets.

Set out in some detail in this special edition is the SCSi's Real Cost of Renovation Report, which contains 20 case studies of different property types, and assesses the costs and viability of these very different projects. These shed light on the resources and requirements for bringing vacant and derelict buildings back into residential use and to standards that will match those of new builds.

We all know that undertaking a refurbishment or renovation project is often a fraught exercise with great uncertainty, not least trying to estimate the costs involved. Every project will be unique, and getting insights and cost estimates is difficult and a deterrent to even thinking about refurbishment. This special edition will help in understanding the process, costs and possibilities, and perhaps grow confidence in undertaking such projects.

EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor



VIABILITY OF RENOVATION PROJECTS

Financial viability (without grants)
of case study properties:



Financially viable

25%

Financially unviable

75%

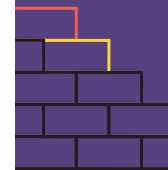
Number of case study
properties suitable for
owner occupiers

13 out of 20



Number of properties
viable (without grants)
if purchased
and then renovated

4 out of 13



Number of properties
viable (without grants)
if already in ownership

8 out of 13



Barriers to renovation
projects coming on
the market (SCSi survey):

Percentage of SCSi members
who felt that planning and
regulatory restrictions were the
most significant barrier:

54

Percentage of SCSi
members who felt that
costs and lack of tax
breaks/incentives were the
most significant barrier:

31



Source: The SCSi Real Cost of Renovation Report, 2023.

KRA SUSTAINABILITY AND APPOINTMENTS



KRA Renewables worked with Hibernia Real Estate Group to improve sustainability.

Hibernia Real Estate Group engaged with KRA Renewables to gain advice on improving sustainability, reducing energy bills, and minimising the carbon emissions of the properties in its portfolio.

Over the past few years, KRA Renewables has reviewed multiple properties in Hibernia Real Estate Group's portfolio, analysing the energy systems and identifying viable opportunities for implementing renewable technology, such as solar PV as a step towards sustainable practice and energy efficiency. After each energy audit, KRA states that a comprehensive report was issued detailing opportunities for cost optimisation using a techno-economic modelling process. A thorough



Seán McVeigh.



Keith Darling.

energy audit clearly calculates current energy usage, identifying any inefficiencies in business machinery and operations.

New appointments

KRA Renewables has hired Keith Darling and Seán McVeigh as Senior Manager and BEC Project Coordinator, respectively. The company states that Keith brings a wealth of experience to its renewable engineering teams, with a decade of operational management experience. According to KRA, Seán is highly skilled and experienced, and leads community energy grant projects as part of its sustainability team.

WALLS CONSTRUCTION ANNOUNCES DESIGN + CONSTRUCT DONATION

Walls Construction has announced that it will support Design + Construct, Ireland's first centre of excellence for architecture, construction and engineering (AEC) education and research at TU Dublin. The university states that Design + Construct will leverage its expertise to address the key challenges of 21st century construction. Upon completion, the centre will be located at TU Dublin in Broombridge, Cabra, representing a €30m project.

According to TU Dublin, Design + Construct will deliver world-class collaborative multidisciplinary learning for students across all levels and disciplines, from apprenticeship to doctoral research, as well as providing education and research facilities critical to the next generation of construction graduates in technologies such as off-site and modular construction, near-zero energy building, robotic construction and the digitisation of the construction process.

Commenting on the announcement, Adrian Corcoran, Chief Operating Officer of Walls Construction, said: "This is a deliberate strategic decision for Walls as our organisation, and the Irish construction industry, will benefit enormously from a collaborative-based research, training and education facility that produces uniquely qualified students exposed to multidisciplinary learning and understanding prior to embarking on their careers".

Welcoming the announcement, Orna Hanly, Head, Design + Construct Project at TU Dublin, said: "In their generous support of Design + Construct, Walls Construction is endorsing a radical rethinking in how TU Dublin delivers AEC education, championing academic excellence and ensuring students leave the university with the attributes and capabilities necessary for prolific careers in the industry".

REDUCTION IN EMBODIED CARBON NEEDED

Carbon emissions released before the built asset is used (upfront carbon) will be responsible for half of the entire carbon footprint of new construction between now and 2050. Therefore, the built environment sector has a vital role to play in responding to the climate emergency, and addressing upfront carbon is a critical and urgent focus.

Disused buildings may be seen as a resource; by protecting and updating them effectively, we can avoid expanding the embodied carbon inherent in new developments. This is something that Grayling Properties states it is very passionate about. It states that its team has a strong track record of refurbishing disused buildings. Since 2015, according to the company, it has retrofitted more than 1,000 apartments. The company believes the best and most sustainable way of preserving buildings is to make them relevant, useful and fit for purpose for their owners and occupiers.

Given that 80% of the building stock that will exist in 2050 is already built, retrofitting will be key to achieving net zero emissions. Not only will retrofitting abandoned structures and repurposing developments improve overall energy efficiency, it will also lead to a

better standard of living, impacting on the surrounding communities and economy.

Rathmines House is one development that the company states it is excited about. According to the company, this project will see a commercial office building transformed into a co-living space, providing premium city living and amenities for residents in more than 110 units, and extending the life cycle of the asset by an additional 30 years.

The retention, rehabilitation and reuse of older buildings can play a pivotal role in the sustainable development of Dublin. The city contains many examples of buildings that are well designed, soundly constructed and fit for continuance of use.



Peter Horgan, MD, Grayling Properties.

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NEW STATE AGENCY TAILTE ÉIREANN LAUNCHED

A new State agency, Tailte Éireann, has been created through the merger of the Property Registration Authority, the Valuation Office, and Ordnance Survey Ireland. The Government states that Tailte Éireann will provide a comprehensive and secure property title registration system, a professional State valuation service, and an authoritative national mapping and surveying infrastructure.

Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning, Kieran O'Donnell TD, launched Tailte Éireann on March 1. All the functions currently carried out by the Property Registration Authority, the Commissioner of Valuation, the Boundary Surveyor, and Ordnance Survey Ireland will now be performed by Tailte Éireann. SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter has been appointed to the board of Tailte Éireann by Minister Darragh O'Brien TD, following an open competition overseen by the public appointments service.

As an integrated land and property service, Tailte Éireann will help to support the planning process and professionals by providing one central

body for information and data to assist planning and land information. Speaking at the launch, Minister O'Donnell said: "I am pleased to launch Tailte Éireann today. The new agency is the primary national source of property information and geospatial data, and will be a leader in developing and delivering land information services. These functions are essential for underpinning the State's economy in many areas, including property, planning, agriculture, local government, the environment, and construction".

Liz Pope, Interim Chief Executive of Tailte Éireann, said: "I want to express my gratitude to all of our colleagues from the three merged organisations for their ongoing work and commitment, especially throughout the merger process. I also thank our colleagues from the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage for their assistance in establishing Tailte Éireann. We look forward to working collaboratively with all our stakeholders in developing integrated land and property services in Ireland".

OVER 45 YEARS BUILDING BETTER CAREERS



Ardmac states that the key to its success is its people. According to the company, it fosters an environment that promotes the personal and professional growth of all its employees. Ardmac believes a career with the company is an opportunity to be part of a community, a space where you can learn from leaders within the industry, and have the chance to expand your skills in a variety of sectors.

Ardmac states that it delivers high-value workspaces and technical environments in Ireland and across Europe. The company provides



trade contracting and main contracting solutions, serving markets including data centres, micro-electronics, pharmaceuticals, med-tech and commercial offices. Ardmac has recently been working on cleanroom projects for WuXi, Abbvie and Boston Scientific, and hyperscale datacentres across Europe.

The company offers a trainee scholarship for quantity surveyors, which is a hybrid on-job and at-college programme. Ardmac is recruiting quantity surveyors at all levels.

ARC CINEMA REFURBISHMENT

The Building Consultancy has recently completed the refurbishment of the Arc Cinema in Drogheda. The works completed include the upgrade of the main screen to a HYPERSENSE auditorium featuring a new 40ft curved wall-to-wall screen, the latest 4K laser projection, and Dolby Atmos immersive sound. The company states that the auditorium is completed with the cinema fan in mind, providing electric recliner seats.

The remaining screens have also been upgraded, with new seating throughout to provide customers with the best comfort available according to The Building Consultancy. The final element of the project comprised the full refurbishment of the entrance lobby and concourse areas, to provide a modern and vibrant space.



The Arc Cinema in Drogheda, recently refurbished by the Building Consultancy.

KRArenewables.

2023 COMMUNITIES ENERGY GRANT

Grant-Funded Energy Efficiency

KRA Renewables are acting as Project Coordinator for the 2023 Communities Energy Grant through SEAI. As a Grant Coordinator, KRA Renewables facilitate grant applications on behalf of the beneficiaries and support established and innovative approaches to achieving energy efficiency in Irish communities. Funding is available across sectors and building types, and funding of between 30% and 80% is available for projects which reduce energy use and increase energy efficiency.

About Us

Our in-house team of Energy Auditors, Energy Engineers, LEED Accredited Professionals, Project Managers and Chartered Building Surveyors make us the perfect partner to assist you on your retrofit journey. We help to deliver energy savings to homeowners, communities and private sector organisations, and pride ourselves on our community-oriented and cross-sectoral approach. KRA Renewables can assist with all works related to Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Technology, Energy Audit, Tendering, Project Management and the overall Grant Process. We have now opened our Grant Application Process for 2023 and are accepting projects for inclusion. If you are interested in finding out more about the process or have a project that might benefit from funding, please get in touch and we would be happy to discuss it with you in more detail.

Phone: 01 524 0555 **Email:** ciara@kra.ie **Website:** www.krarenewables.ie

1,300 ATTEND ANNUAL DINNER



SCSI President Kevin James addresses the Annual Dinner.



At the SCSi Annual Dinner (from left): SCSi President Kevin James; SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter; Paul McDonnell, Bank of Ireland; and, comedian Colm O'Regan, who entertained the audience on the night.

It was wonderful to once again enjoy our Annual Dinner and to celebrate all that our profession has achieved despite great challenges in the last couple of years. After two years it was fantastic to see a sold-out return of this annual event.

This year's Annual Dinner was attended by 1,300 property and construction professionals from across the nation. Thank you to all who took part, and special thanks to our sponsors Bank of Ireland and Addleshaw Goddard for their support.

MONITORING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Occupier and investment sentiment in commercial property – which includes retail, office, and industrial property – declined significantly in 2022, with most Chartered Commercial Surveyors believing the property cycle is now in a downturn phase. Of the three sectors, the industrial sector recorded the highest investor and occupier sentiment levels. According to the SCSi's 'Commercial Property Market Monitor 2023', 53% of Chartered Surveyors believe the market is in 'early downturn' – up 15% from last year – with a further 22% reporting that the cycle is in 'mid-downturn' phase.

The majority of surveyors (53%) expect prime office capital values to decline by up to 10% this year, while just under



half (48%) expect prime retail capital values to fall by up to 10%. With regard to prime office rental values, 42% expect to see a decline in rental values by as much as 10%, while one in three surveyors forecast that they will remain the same.

As with the office market, retail has faced many challenges over the last few years, but some positive signs did emerge in the survey, with over half of respondents (54%) forecasting that prime retail rental values will remain unchanged in 2023.

Once again, the industrial rental sector continues to paint a more positive picture, with seven out of ten respondents forecasting that prime industrial rental values will either remain the same or increase by 5% in 2023.

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF MEMBER

We're delighted to introduce a new staff member who has recently joined our SCSi team. David Williams will be working with our finance team as our Finance and Operations Manager.

We hope you'll join us in welcoming David to the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, and encourage you to reach out to him with queries, ideas and suggestions.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022



Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.



From left: Kelly Canterford MRICS, Founder, Tigrou Consulting; Ramona Patton, Head of Compliance, Savills; SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter; and, SCSi President Kevin James.

It was fantastic to have over 180 delegates attend our 2022 National Conference, 'Meeting the Challenges of Climate and Cost', in Dublin's Mansion House. We were delighted that many members joined us to hear the 15 speakers from across the Industry. It was wonderful to again connect with colleagues and listen to industry experts sharing their valuable insights on many topics.

Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien TD also addressed the conference, and spoke on the housing targets for 2022 and 2023. He said that next year would not be without its challenges against an uncertain economic backdrop. Vasileios Madouros, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, spoke on the bank's mortgage policy. Both highlighted the valuable input of the SCSi, including via our reports and submissions and the sharing of expertise by our members, which they stated has a significant impact on policy development.

Special thanks to our exhibitors MyHome.ie, Ordnance Survey Ireland and I am Sold, and to our sponsor, *The Irish Times*, for supporting the Conference.



Vasileios Madouros, Deputy Governor at the Central Bank of Ireland.

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SME PROPERTY GUIDE

The SCSi and Dublin Chamber came together recently to publish a new 'Guide to Property for SMEs'. The guide covers a wide range of commercial property-related topics that owners of small and medium enterprises need to be aware of. These include issues such as: buying or leasing; valuations; insurance; tax allowances; rent reviews; service charges; dilapidations; sustainability/ESG; commercial rates; and, many more. The SCSi is partnering with Chambers Ireland to roll out the guide in other regions this year. Members can access the guide via our website.

At the launch of the new 'Guide to Property for SMEs' were (from left): Val O'Brien, Chartered Building Surveyor; Arlene Maguire, Vice Chair, SCSi Commercial Agency Professional Group; SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter; and, Stephen O'Leary, MD of Olytico, and Vice President, Dublin Chamber.



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TENDER PRICE INDEX

A new SCSi report shows that while construction costs are continuing to rise, the rate of increase eased significantly in the last six months of 2022. The latest Tender Price Index shows that the rate of commercial construction inflation increased by 4% in the second half of 2022, down from a record high of 7.5% in the first six months of the year.

According to the Tender Price Index, which is the only independent assessment of commercial construction tender prices in Ireland, the annual rate of inflation from January to December 2022 was 11.5%, down from 14% in the preceding year. The report indicates some variation across the regions, with a higher rate of inflation of 5% recorded in the Rest of Leinster and Connacht/Ulster, while the median rate in Dublin and Munster is in line with the national figure of 4%.



40TH RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MARKET MONITOR

The SCSi recently published the 40th edition of its Residential Property Market Monitor – Review and Outlook 2023. The report was featured on the front page of the *Irish Independent* and in *The Irish Times* business section. It received excellent coverage across national and local newspapers. Broadcast coverage was across the airwaves. John O'Sullivan, Chair of the SCSi's Practice & Policy Standing Committee, was interviewed by Bryan Dobson on RTÉ and Matt Cooper on Today FM, among other stations like Newstalk, Cork's 96FM, Wicklow's East Coast, and LMFM in Louth.

The SCSi has used this research to raise awareness of our concerns with regard to the rental market. Other bodies, such as the Irish Property Owners Association, cited our research to seek further changes to support landlords.

Special thanks to all the agents who completed the survey and submitted property data, with particular thanks to John O'Sullivan for conveying the findings so eloquently. This report is only possible with the input of your insights and our shared property knowledge.



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SHARING HOUSING INSIGHTS

An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD, recently held a conference on Housing for All with critical stakeholders, at which SCSi President Kevin James and Planning & Development PG Chair Lisa Rocca were invited to provide insights on behalf of the SCSi on how to expedite the targets of Housing for All, including increased housing delivery to take into account the rising population.



An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD.



SCSi President Kevin James.




Planning & Development PG Chair Lisa Rocca.

The SCSi anticipates a further busy period of engagement with the Government and relevant Departments over the coming weeks, as we publish key evidence-based reports on the property, land and construction sector, including the updated rebuild costs, which will inform the Defective Concrete Block Scheme.

The work on the SCSi's Real Cost of Renovation is eagerly

anticipated by the Oireachtas Joint Committee, with the Committee Chair, Steven Matthews TD, providing an open invitation upon its completion.

Our working groups and the general member surveys that we issue are vital to this critical policy work. We invite you to let us know if you'd like to get more involved by emailing us.



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REWARDING EXCELLENCE



The SCSi launched the Surveying Excellence Awards at the National Conference in December. The Awards are a marker of industry standards, best practice and rewarding the surveying profession for the integral part they play in the built environment. The Surveying Excellence Awards are a recognition of excellence, continued learning, sustainable innovations and embracing technology to enhance the built environment. Considering a variety of criteria, the Awards Panel will assess submissions from all disciplines.

PROPERTY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT LUNCH



Pictured at the PMFM lunch were (from left): special guest Nina Carberry; Jane Mangan, moderator; Vincent Hickey; Peter Lynskey, Burlington Engineering; Lily Ellis, Global Alliance Director at CBRE (GWS); and, SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter.

Our 2023 Annual PMFM lunch featured Nina Carberry (former jockey, *Dancing with the Stars* winner and *Ireland's Fittest Family* coach). Nina was interviewed by Jane Mangan as over 100 property and facilities



Over 100 members gathered at the annual Property and Facilities Management Lunch.

management professionals came together at this year's lunch. It was wonderful to gather in person and reconnect with colleagues. Special thank you to Burlington Engineering for sponsoring this year's event.

Tailte Éireann, a new State agency to manage and develop Ireland's land, property, and location data.

The Property Registration Authority, the Valuation Office, and Ordnance Survey Ireland have merged to become a new organisation called Tailte Éireann.

Tailte Éireann provides a comprehensive and secure property title registration system, a professional State Valuation service, and an authoritative national mapping and surveying infrastructure.

Business will continue as usual while Tailte Éireann is being established. Customers can continue to use existing channels for all registration, valuation, and surveying services.

Find out more at tailte.ie



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EXPERIENCE MATTERS

PART 1

WITH GROWING AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO RE-USE EXISTING BUILDINGS, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTION, SURVEYORS MAY WANT TO CONSIDER THE SPECIALISM OF BUILDING CONSERVATION.

Use it or lose it – an old adage, as relevant today as it ever was. Be it knowledge, skill or ability, we surveyors need to apply it, or we risk losing it. The same is true of our buildings. Those experiencing redundancy, vacancy or dereliction are undoubtedly at greater risk of deterioration, damage and ultimate loss. We need to re-use them. Refurbishment and renovation of our existing buildings presents its challenges, but more importantly, it presents a unique opportunity to breathe new life into our towns and cities while satisfying the ever-present societal need for places to live, work and entertain. Of particular note is that compared to the alternative of new build, re-use is more conducive to achieving our European Union and United Nations climate change commitments.

Within our built environment, there exists a rich variety of buildings, the majority of which were built since the advent of the modern cavity wall, damp-proof courses and cement mortar. Nonetheless, the buildings that came before, i.e., those of traditional construction, still represent a significant proportion of the built environment. This cohort must be handled differently to buildings of modern construction for many reasons, chief among them to ensure that the interventions involved in refurbishment and renovation, while achieving the short-term success of re-use and new life, do not inadvertently cause the deterioration of the building fabric and occupant health in the long term.

In brief, we need to do it, but we need to do it right, which brings us back to the opening line: knowledge, skill and ability. For protected structures and traditional buildings of all shapes and sizes, the surveyor requires a particular knowledge base and skillset to practise good building conservation. So, how do we go about acquiring that?

FEATURE

Jimi Johnston BSc (Hons) MSCSI
MRICS MSc CHE PG Dip ABRC
Assistant lecturer, TU Dublin



Managing change

The starting point is to rubbish the myth that building conservation,

i.e., the protection and conservation of old buildings, is about 'preventing' change. It is not. It is about 'managing' change in an informed way, to ensure the best possible outcome for the building in the long-term interests of society.¹

However, it is acknowledged that building conservation makes significant demands on the practitioner. It is a complex field where clients, buildings, setting, condition, proposals and significance vary considerably from one commission to the next. No 'one size fits all' solution exists and each project must be considered on its own merits. As Powys advised: "It is not wise to lay down dogmatic rules, for when they are made, one is apt to be confronted by a case where they do not work".²

Building conservation necessitates a blended skillset, including a sound understanding of historic building technology, an investigative mind, and the ability to steer a project towards a positive outcome. Decision-making plays a crucial role and the practitioner must at all times endeavour to make informed and justifiable decisions based on a clear and defensible philosophy.

Professional accreditation

The RICS established the first professional accreditation scheme in 1992 to provide recognition for individuals specialising in building conservation. Many other built environment professions have since followed, while equivalent SCSi accreditation became available in 2014. Both the SCSi and RICS schemes draw heavily on the 14 fundamental principles in the ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and Training (1993).³ Indeed, both explicitly refer to these Guidelines as the very "basis for the assessment" of the "candidate's experience and expertise".^{4,5}

The accreditation scheme is open to all professional groups, and comprises an assessment of practical experience, which requires the submission of an application and summative overview of the candidate's experience supported by five case studies. These should demonstrate the representative breadth and depth of the applicant's knowledge and involvement in conservation projects at a level commensurate with that of an accredited conservation professional under the stipulated competency headings:

1. Conservation philosophy.
2. Construction techniques.
3. Defect diagnosis.
4. Project management.

Finally, the applicant must participate in a one-hour interview before a panel of two to three independent assessors.

Paradox

At this point, a slight paradox emerges whereby the candidate is required to evidence knowledge and experience at an accredited level of competency, thereby requiring them to be practising or exposed to work at the level of an accredited professional for some time before applying. The dilemma of the 'chicken and the egg' arises.

BUILDING CONSERVATION NECESSITATES A BLENDED SKILLSET, INCLUDING A SOUND UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORIC BUILDING TECHNOLOGY, AN INVESTIGATIVE MIND, AND THE ABILITY TO STEER A PROJECT TOWARDS A POSITIVE OUTCOME.

Many candidates will find it difficult to acquire the necessary breadth and depth of experience in the context of their own working environment. This scenario is not unique to the surveying profession, or to Ireland. Working environments vary, but it is perhaps fair to say that many Irish-based surveyors work in commercial surveying practices with limited or infrequent exposure to relevant conservation projects. With few exceptions, they do not work in surveying practices specialising solely in building conservation. Those working as sole practitioners face the same, if not greater, obstacles.

Some surveyors are involved for very specific parts of conservation projects, as part of a wider project team. Others will be involved on a one-off basis, perhaps at the outset, advising on conveyancing and acquisition, and making recommendations for future repair and maintenance, but subsequently having little or no involvement in the project phase. So how to square the circle (so to speak)? In part 2 of this article, which will be in the next edition of the Surveyors Journal, we will attempt to offer some suggestions for doing just that.

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HOUSING IRELAND



MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE DARRAGH O'BRIEN TD SPEAKS ABOUT HIS DEPARTMENT'S PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR, INCLUDING SIGNIFICANT PLANS IN RELATION TO VACANT AND DERELICT PROPERTIES.

It's no exaggeration to say that Minister Darragh O'Brien has one of, if not the most, challenging portfolios at Cabinet. Solving the housing crisis is the Government's number one priority, encapsulated in Housing for All, its all-of-Government housing plan to 2030, which contains over 200 specific actions across several Departments. Minister O'Brien feels that the adoption of this plan in 2021 represented a step-change from Government in relation to housing delivery that is now beginning to bear fruit: "It's a multi-annual, fully funded plan. The State is the biggest actor in housing now, through the delivery of social homes at a scale that we haven't seen in decades, new-build homes, and affordable homes to purchase. We're advancing schemes like the First Home

scheme, the shared equity model (where we've had about 800 approvals), and cost rental".

Obviously, the top priority for the coming year is to increase the number of homes, keep the pipeline of development going, and thereby also address the country's homelessness crisis: "Last year we set ourselves a target of 24,600 new homes. We have a target this year of 29,000 homes to be delivered. That will be challenging but is doable".

Vital to achieving these goals is ensuring that the legislative infrastructure of the State is fit for purpose, and Minister O'Brien and his Department are engaged in two significant

INTERVIEW

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WE NEED AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING SYSTEM AND LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF STATE INFRASTRUCTURE.

pieces of work to this end. First is the consolidated planning bill, which he says is the most significant reform of planning law in over two decades: "We need an efficient and effective planning system and legislation that supports the delivery of State infrastructure, of private infrastructure, of homes, but that also keeps at the centre the right of the person and the community to have their say. I want that passed by the end of quarter two this year".

He's also moving forward with legislation to provide for an independent buildings regulatory authority: "Things have improved over the years but we still need to have an independent building standards regulator set up on a statutory footing. I want to see that pass this year as well".

Redress

The need for regulatory reform is nowhere more clear than in the issue of historic defects in apartment buildings, and on the day of our interview the Minister announced Cabinet approval of a significant redress scheme, which he says will be fully funded and retrospective, so that owners' management companies that have already commenced remediation will be reimbursed for appropriately certified works: "This is a very significant decision for between 62,500 and 100,000 apartment and duplex owners. It will take most of this year to get the legislation drafted and passed, but it means that owners' management companies can continue with their work in the secure knowledge that we're going to be supporting that cost".

The parameters of the scheme will reflect the recommendations of the Working Group to Examine Defects in Housing, in which SCSl members played a crucial role: "The Working Group did a superb piece of work. I think it's an exemplar of how to get to grips with an issue as large as this and come out the other side with recommendations that we can implement".

He sounds a note of warning though to those who were responsible for these defects in the first instance: "There is a lesson, and a very serious one, for the construction sector, that fundamentally, we're dealing with this because of bad materials, bad practice, bad governance. We will continue to look at all avenues available to us to seek recompense from those who are responsible. In the meantime, due to this market failure, the State will and step in, and rightly so".

Tackling vacancy

Another central element of policy is bringing vacant and derelict properties

back into use, as housing stock, as part of efforts to regenerate our towns and villages, and to help meet climate and sustainability commitments. The SCSl's major publication on the subject, 'The Real Cost of Renovation Report: Vacant and Derelict Properties for Residential Use', is a detailed look at the many complex issues involved in this process, from funding and regulation, to the practicalities of carrying out a project. Minister O'Brien is aware of the challenges, and says his Department is already working on addressing them, firstly by identifying exactly how many such properties there are: "We didn't have a Vacant Homes Unit within the Department, and that has now been established with senior staff. Every local authority has been given full approval for at least one full-time Vacant Homes Officer, and I'm pleased to say that 30 of the 31 local authorities now have a full-time Officer. They will continue to do assessments in their own counties, report to our Vacant Homes Unit, and we will have a way of capturing the work that's being done".

Having identified the properties, however, funding their purchase and renovation can be a challenge, particularly for those depending on mortgage finance. The Croí Cónaithe scheme, launched last August, is central to the Government's response, and the Minister says that applications so far have exceeded expectations: "We've had 700 applications already. Croí Cónaithe provides a €30,000 grant for a vacant home. You can also get the SEAL grant on top of that, which is €29,000, and if it's a derelict home, €50,000 is the grant, and it's not linked to the value of the property".

The Minister hopes that this will ease the concerns of mortgage lenders who might be reluctant to fund the full cost of a project if that cost might exceed the resale value of the property. He intends to engage directly with the financial institutions on this: "If I'm a lender, and I'm seeing that that chunk of the sale price is actually being given to affray the cost, it would certainly, in my view, substantially reduce any perceived risk that the lender might have. I am going to engage directly with the Banking & Payments Federation Ireland on this, and I'm confident that we'll have good engagement with them".

Issues have also been raised regarding the amount of red tape involved in funding applications, and the delays in accessing funding. The Minister is open to examining these issues as part of a review of Croí Cónaithe later this year: "I've expanded the scheme already to rural one-off properties, and to the cities. I'm open to making changes if it can help to unleash more because we have the funding. If I expend the €50 million that I have for this fund, we will have more capital to put into it. I will carry out a review from around nine months out, which would mean from April or May this year, so by the time we get to next August, if I want to make any changes, I can make them at that stage".

Another serious stumbling block has been regulatory issues, in particular around fire and accessibility. A review of Part B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations has recently gone to public consultation, a three-month process after which the Minister hopes that real progress can be made: "If we're to crack the nut of 'above-shop' living in particular, we need to make changes here. There is, in my view, a wealth of potential in above-shop in our towns and villages. I've made some planning changes already

ANOTHER CENTRAL ELEMENT OF POLICY IS BRINGING VACANT AND DERELICT PROPERTIES BACK INTO USE AS HOUSING STOCK.

to exempt the development of commercial property and the conversion of them into residential. The Part B changes will be important to further unlock that potential. We've also got to look at what's done in other jurisdictions, and we've looked at that through the expert group that's worked on Part B, other measures that can be put in place to make sure we're not in any way reducing safety. We've had extensive engagement with the SCSi, Engineers Ireland and others as part of this work, and we need to get moving on it".

Challenges

Many of the challenges facing the Minister are outside Government control. Covid lockdowns, and supply chain and construction cost inflation issues caused by these, and by the war in Ukraine, have put pressure on targets. However, the Minister feels that things are turning around: "I'm not going to read into a trend on the basis of a couple of months' data, but we are seeing inflation reduce somewhat. Supply chain issues have in the main resolved themselves, but cost of construction has been exacerbated by what continues to happen in continental Europe. We brought forward through Minister Michael McGrath at the time the inflation framework, burden sharing effectively between the State and the developer to lessen the blow of cost increases, and that could continue to run through the course of this year. That's meant that a lot of sites that might have stalled haven't stalled, and were able to go back to work".

There are other things the State can do: "There will be a big focus this year on modern methods of construction. As a State we can do a lot more in that space, and the State should lead by example. Some local authorities are using it, others are not, and we are putting together a plan to expand that because what that sector needs to see is line of sight on orders to be able to scale up. It's not always cheaper, but it's more efficient time wise, and it also helps in relation to the issue of labour shortage".

How we design developments is also crucial: "There's an opportunity to design very good high-density developments that are own door and don't have to be high rise. Within the next couple of weeks, we'll be publishing our draft guidelines in relation to high-density developments. I think we can help to reduce the cost of development and delivery while maintaining very good design standards and in some instances actually improving them".

It's a high-pressure job, but the Minister isn't daunted by the challenges:

"It's a great honour to be able to do it. I'm not saying I get everything right, but I love the job I do. I'm confident in the work that we're doing and that, given the time, we can effect the change that's needed".

SCSi contribution

The Minister acknowledges the SCSi's assistance to his Department: "The SCSi has been absolutely brilliant in the support that they've given Government. The SCSi's work has been absolutely invaluable on very significant pieces of legislation such as the defective concrete blocks report. I as Minister, and Government, are extremely appreciative. It's another example of the value of the SCSi, and how courteous, professional and responsive the team has been".



Keeping busy

Originally from Malahide in Dublin, Darragh O'Brien still lives in the area, which is part of the constituency he represents, Dublin Fingal. In his spare time, he likes to keep busy: "I love sports. I'm one of the only Fianna Fáil cricketers in the Dáil. I'm an avid fan of the Irish cricket team. My daughter Caoilinn plays a lot of football, and I try as best as possible to go to her matches and get her to training. I love going out for a walk. I like reading when I get the time. I don't like being idle. I like to be busy, so I don't really feel the need for a lot of time to relax".

A HOMEOWNER'S EXPERIENCE



SHANE FLEMING SPOKE TO THE *SURVEYORS JOURNAL* ABOUT HIS OWN REFURBISHMENT PROJECT, AND THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A PROBLEM-SOLVING ATTITUDE DURING THE PROCESS.

Shane and Christine Fleming are on the home stretch of their refurbishment of a house in Portobello, Dublin 8. All going well, they hope to be in before the arrival of their new baby, says Shane: "The pressure's on. We need to get it done before the baby arrives. The baby's coming in May. We're hoping to be in there before then and we should be – fingers crossed".

The project is a refurbishment and extension of a three-bed terraced house: "It was vacant for some time. We bought it through probate. It needed a lot of work. It had no heating system; it was just the original four fireplaces. The water system only went to a rear kitchen and bathroom that was just a very poorly constructed add-on put in at some stage. The wiring around the house was pretty bad as well. So it was a full strip down of the entire property all the way down to brickwork, knocking down the kitchen and bathroom level, then we got planning permission to do a two-storey extension or a part two-storey extension, which

included a kitchen, a small study, and two extra bathrooms".

The house had originally gone sale agreed with another party, but this deal broke down when Covid hit: "We put in an offer when everything was in lockdown, hoping to try and get a deal on it. Didn't quite go that way but eventually, a few months later, we did get a very good deal on the property. We were travelling back and forth to New York, where my wife's family is from, so we were okay on timeline because there was a probate issue. We were happy to sign the contracts and let them resolve that probate issue over time".

FEATURE

Colm Quinn

Journalist and Sub-editor,
Think Media Ltd



Challenges

Work started on site in June 2022, and it has not all been easy going: "We've had a few issues. One of our big delays was at the start

UNDERTAKING A PROJECT LIKE THIS IS NOT FOR THE FAINTHEARTED: “I KNOW THESE PROBLEMS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN, SO WHEN THEY DO, IT’S JUST A MATTER OF HOW YOU DEAL WITH THEM”.

where our architect took on a few much bigger jobs and was just overworked and she was struggling to get staff to help out with this type of project. When the contractor was appointed, one of our neighbours started to complain about a boundary wall and the contractor got worried about it and felt that he couldn't do any more work until that was resolved. That still hasn't really been resolved, but we've taken lots of legal advice and basically confirmed with the contractor that it was okay for him to keep working”.

One of the big challenges was that Christine and Shane were often in the US while work was being done: “We've spent the majority of our time in New York for the last two years. It was a challenge. I wouldn't do it again in regards to trying to manage a project like this from abroad”.

Shane says the project would have moved quicker had they been in Ireland, and the periods that they made the most progress were when they were in Dublin.

Getting materials to site on time was a challenge at different points. On one occasion, it was quite hard to get steel, which added an extra week or two to the project. Some other items were just taking longer to get to Ireland than they would have a few years ago. They also had to employ a structural engineer, says Shane: “We had to add some steel supports for all the extension work. We knocked out the back of the house, so we had to do a lot of steel supports throughout the house. We took out two fireplaces as well, which were pretty big, so again, there's a lot of supports gone in to shore up all that block work and everything we took out of the house”.

Close by, the old DIT Kevin Street building is being demolished and redeveloped, so surveyors were involved to make sure the vibrations from the demolition wouldn't affect anything they were doing in the house.

Grants

There are grants available for this kind of project and the house was in the right area for the couple to avail of the Living City Initiative, which provides tax relief for those renovating properties for occupation in special regeneration areas in Irish cities.

They also availed of a home improvement energy grant, which they went through Superhomes to get. In terms of the grant, Shane says it



has been very time consuming and slow: “We had to start the project without knowing what we were getting and there's all sorts of complications if you start and they haven't inspected the property. They don't know what your original base point was and what you're bringing it up to, but we were able to get around that by providing original BERs, and detailed reports and surveys of the property before we'd started the work. We got a grant of about 20 grand to help with the energy rating”.

Shane questions if it was worth it, because to get the grant they had



to do things that they may not have otherwise. He says that while the house will have a good BER, they had to make sure floors, insulation, windows, and the heating system were all a grade higher than perhaps the house needed in terms of bringing it up to a modern standard.

Advice

Shane says undertaking a project like this is not for the faint hearted. He has worked in property for 20 years, mainly on the commercial side

but also on some renovation projects, so he does know how these things work and that there will inevitably be some complications on any project: "I know these problems are going to happen, so when they do, it's just a matter of how you deal with them and moving on as quickly as you can or as cost-effectively as you can".

He says if he were doing it again, he'd have to be more hands on: "I think my advice is that these things can be very hard if you're doing a family home. They can be very hard on your actual family in terms of added stress levels".

RETROFITTING AS PART OF A RENOVATION

TO ACHIEVE THE GOVERNMENT'S TARGET OF RETROFITTING 500,000 HOMES BY 2030, GRANTS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED FOR A NUMBER OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES.

Renovation or refurbishment provides an ideal opportunity to retrofit a property to make it more energy efficient. As part of the nation's drive to cut carbon emissions, retrofitting of older properties to make them more sustainable is a stated

Government policy goal.

To help homeowners with the cost of this, the Government, through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), has a number of grants on offer for energy efficiency upgrades. While these grants are welcome, the bureaucracy for homeowners and property professionals can be onerous.

Better Energy Homes Programme

This programme is for homeowners and landlords, and is for pre-2011 property, with the renewable energy systems also available for pre-2021 properties. You must use an SEAI-registered contractor and BER assessor.

Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme

This scheme provides energy upgrades for homeowners on low incomes. It must be applied for by the owner occupier of a pre-2006 built home, which has a BER rating below C. The applicant must be in receipt of: Fuel Allowance; Working Family Payment; Jobseeker's



THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND, HAS A NUMBER OF GRANTS ON OFFER FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES.

Allowance; Disability Allowance; Domiciliary Care Allowance; One Parent Family Payment; or, Carer's Allowance.

National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme

To apply for this, the homeowner's property must undergo a deep upgrade, have been built before 2011, and achieve a minimum BER B2 after the upgrade. They must not already have used grants for the same upgrades and must use an SEAI One Stop Shop.

Energy upgrades

The energy upgrades cover a massive range of improvements. Homeowners can apply for them or go through one of the SEAI's One Stop Shops, which take care of the whole process of applying for the grants and organising the work. There are grants available for: floor insulation (€3,500); new external doors (€800 per door); mechanical ventilation (€1,500); air tightness (€1,000); home energy assessment (€350); heating controls upgrade (€700); solar water heating (€1,200); and, solar PV panels (€2,400 max.).

These grants are offered at flat rates across property types, but there are other grants that are based on the type of property (see panel).

ATTIC INSULATION:

- apartment: €800;
- mid-terrace house: €1,200;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €1,300; and,
- detached house: €1,500.



RAFTER INSULATION:

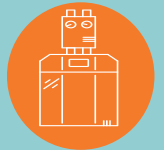
- apartment: €1,500;
- mid-terrace house: €2,000;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €3,000; and,
- detached house: €3,000.

CAVITY WALL INSULATION:

- apartment: €700;
- mid-terrace house: €800;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €1,200; and,
- detached house: €1,700.

WALL INSULATION – INTERNAL DRY LINING:

- apartment: €1,500;
- mid-terrace house: €2,000;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €3,500; and,
- detached house: €4,500.



WALL INSULATION – EXTERNAL:

- apartment: €3,000;
- mid-terrace house: €3,500;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €6,000; and,
- detached house: €8,000.

HEAT PUMP SYSTEMS:

- apartment: €4,500;
- house: €6,500; and,
- air to air: €3,500.

CENTRAL HEATING SYSTEM FOR HEAT PUMP:

- apartment: €1,000; and,
- house: €2,000.

NEW WINDOWS:

- apartment: €1,500;
- mid-terrace house: €1,800;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €3,000; and,
- detached house: €4,000.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

- apartment: €800;
- mid-terrace house: €1,200;
- semi-detached or end of terrace house: €1,600; and,
- detached house: €2,000.



On the ground

Krystyna Rawicz of KRA spoke to the *Surveyors Journal* about her own experience with the grants process and retrofitting more generally. One important factor she says is to have an experienced contractor overseeing the project. Unfortunately, there are not many out there as this is quite low-profit work as things stand. Krystyna says there are many subcontractors who can do their individual job well, such as cavity wall filling or attic insulation, but looking at the detailing between all the elements is a main contractor's job and is very important for the overall success of the retrofit. If the retrofit is not done right, there can be problems with indoor air quality, condensation, mould and cold bridging.

Krystyna's advice is to seek advice. Talk to a professional as soon as possible. Don't rely on the contractor because while they may know about a lot of the elements that are grant funded, they may not know about the rest of the work that is needed

Krystyna says: "Ideally, you should get a Chartered Building Surveyor who's experienced in residential retrofit and renovation to advise you from the outset, on the specification and scope of works, costs and how to manage the works".

The Government's target of 500,000 retrofits by 2030 is a tall order, one that grows every year we don't hit the yearly targets. However, Krystyna believes that there is a solution that would assist this retrofitting ambition. Energiesprong is a Dutch initiative, which has spread to other countries recently. Under this model, the majority of your retrofit is done in a factory and people stay in their homes while it is being done. There is an element of on-site work, such as

**IDEALLY, YOU SHOULD GET A
CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYOR
WHO'S EXPERIENCED IN RESIDENTIAL
RETROFIT AND RENOVATION TO ADVISE
YOU FROM THE OUTSET.**

replacing windows, but this only takes a short period of time. The insulated panels come to site having been made specifically for your property in a factory, and are then affixed to the outside walls and placed in the attic. The heating upgrade comes to site as a self-contained plant room and is placed adjacent to the building. What is done on site is the installation of PV panels, and new windows and doors. It is funded through the homeowners' electricity bills, so you use the money you save on your energy bills by getting the upgrade to pay for the upgrade over a long period. Krystyna says that it works but that numerous models need to be loosened up in Ireland for it to work here, and that either the Government or someone with deep pockets needs to back it.



CASE BY CASE

The SCSI's Real Cost of Renovation Report contains 20 case studies of different property types, which assess the costs and viability of different renovation projects.

To shed light on the costings and requirements for bringing vacant and derelict properties back into use, the SCSI took 20 properties of different dwelling types, located across the country, and assessed the costs of renovating them for residential purposes. The main purpose of this exercise was to determine any financial viability gaps that exist in renovating property to residential use and to quantify that financial viability gap.

Financially viability definition

Financial viability was calculated by taking the market value of a property in its vacant or derelict state, plus the total cost of renovating the property for residential use (minimum BER 2), and then calculating the property's market value on completion of renovations. Whether the property is financially viable is calculated by determining whether the final market value is greater than the starting market value plus the renovation costs.

Definition of derelict units

The SCSI defined a unit as derelict if it met the following criteria:

- it contains land or structures that are in a neglected or unsightly condition;
- it contains dangerous or ruinous structures;
- it has accumulated a lot of litter or other waste due to the vacant nature of the site and illegal dumping/littering; and,
- it contains the following indicators of dereliction;







- broken, missing, or boarded up windows;
- partially demolished/ruinous building(s);
- dirty façade/peeling paint;
- graffiti;
- loose masonry or falling plaster/holes in roof;
- plants growing out of masonry or roof;
- unsecured entrances, trespass, or squatters;
- missing/broken/leaking rainwater gutters or downpipes;
- rotten timber;
- litter/illegal dumping; or,
- unsightly boundaries (damaged hoarding, etc.).

Assessments

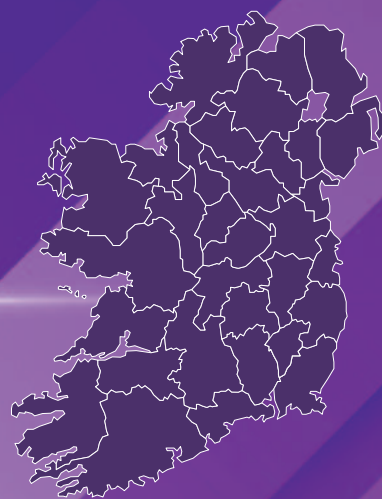
Each property underwent a building cost assessment from an SCSI Chartered Quantity or Building Surveyor. Using an SCSI-approved cost assessment template, a Chartered Building or Quantity Surveyor visited each property and applied their expert judgement to identify the works that would be required to bring the property back into habitable use, and their related costs.

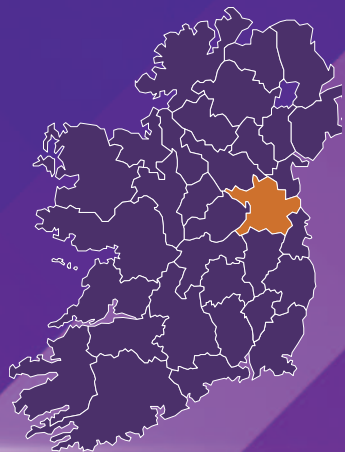
In addition, an SCSI valuer was assigned to each property to carry out a pre-works and post-works market valuation on the renovation/development costs assessment report from the construction surveyors. Building cost assessments and market valuations were carried out on a Gross Floor Area basis.

The SCSI categorised the unit types within the case studies as follows, based on the 'Bringing Back Homes – Manual for the reuse of existing buildings' document prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage:

					
Type 1: Existing dwelling	Type 2: Non-dwelling converted into a residential dwelling	Type 3: Two-storey building with over-the-shop accommodation	Type 4: Three-storey building or higher with over-the-shop accommodation	Type 5: Rural one-off dwelling	Type 6: Non-residential converted into multiple dwellings

On the following pages, we have selected six examples from the 20 case studies that are included in the final report.





CASE STUDY 1

Type 1 Property, TRIM, CO. MEATH

CASE STUDY ONE



BASIS OF COST ESTIMATE

Floor plans as provided

AREAS

Unit	GFA	Beds
01	81	2
Total	81m²	

BUILDING INFORMATION

Type 1	Existing dwelling
Approximate age	1890
Condition	Derelict
GIFA at purchase	51m ²
GIFA at completion	81m ²
Units at completion	1
Beds at completion	2
Status	Pre-construction



“This house is part of a terrace of 10 houses near the town centre in Trim. They are very small, with no inside bathroom, and would have to be extended to be viable and habitable to a modern standard.

As the house is a protected structure, this adds to the complexity of the project. This would be a sensitive project due to its conservation status, and would probably have a longer than normal lead-in time, as full planning permission would have to be obtained to refurbish it. From a financial viability point of view, you would never get back what you put into it without assistance

in the form of tax relief and/or grants.

This could be a worthwhile project, these buildings could really enhance the streetscape. If they are not renovated, they could very quickly fall into dereliction and beyond the ability to refurbish them. It's great having protected status, but unless it's backed up with grant aid they will fall into dereliction, and I'd hate to see that happening.”

Ronan Harlin BSc (Hons) Building Surveying MSCSI MRICS
Director, Val O'Brien & Associates

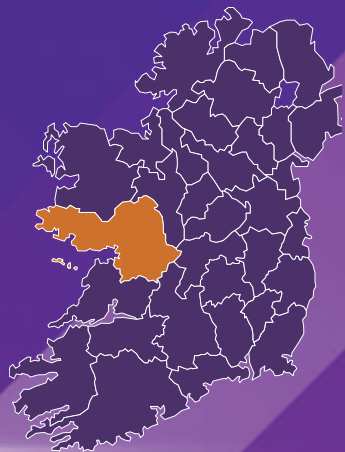
DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Ref.	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
00	Demolition/strip out	1	item	6,000	6,000
01	Substructure	1	item	18,000	18,000
02	Structure	1	item	36,600	36,600
03	Structure completions	51	m ²	412	21,000
04	Finishes	51	m ²	539	27,500
05	Services (pipe and ducted)	51	m ²	373	19,000
06	Services (electrical)	51	m ²	157	8,000
07	Fittings and fixtures	1	item	18,500	18,500
08	External works	1	item	3,000	3,000
09	New-build extension	30	m ²	2,500	75,000
	Total net construction cost				€ 232,600
10	Main contractor preliminaries	Incl.			
	Total gross construction cost				€232,600
11	Design team fees	1	item	25,000	25,000
	Total professional fees				€25,000
12	Planning costs	1	item	3,000	3,000
13	Utilities connections (ESB/water)	1	item	1,500	1,500
	Total State fees, levies and cap contributions				€4,500
14	Contingency	10%			23,260
	Total contingency				€23,260
15	Total development budgets excl. VAT				€285,360

KEY COST DRIVERS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Ref.

01	Derelict residential dwelling	08	Refurbishment of doors and windows
02	GIFA 81m ²	09	New central heating system and rewire
03	2 beds	10	Specification to B2 BER rating
04	New build extension 30m ²	11	Preliminaries incl.
05	New insulated floor slab	12	Contingency 10%
06	New internal layout	13	Construction costs as of Q3 2022
07	Medium spec. fit-out		



CASE STUDY 2

Type 1 Property, SALTHILL, CO. GALWAY

CASE STUDY TWO



BASIS OF COST ESTIMATE

Floor plans as provided

AREAS

Unit	GFA	Beds
01	201	3
Total	201m²	

BUILDING INFORMATION

Type 1	Existing dwelling
Approximate age	1980
Condition	Fair
GIFA at purchase	142m ²
GIFA at completion	201m ²
Units at completion	1
Beds at completion	3
Status	Completed



“This was an existing dwelling that had outlived its purpose for the family and they wanted to make it more suited to their needs. It was a challenging site as there was limited access for the purpose of building the extension. Its location is in the centre of Galway, and the house got a full modern refit to an A3 rating. There is huge demand for units in the area, which is what helps to make the project ultimately viable from a financial point of view.

A major element of this project was the use of off-site construction for the extension. Timber frame panels were

craned onto the site. This reduced the cost, and also reduced the timeframe and the need for labour. It’s a great example of how modern methods of construction can be used to make projects possible or viable that might not have been in the past. The owners now have a modern home with an A3 rating and a high-quality finish. Contractors GreenTec took a very professional approach that can be seen in the final finish.”

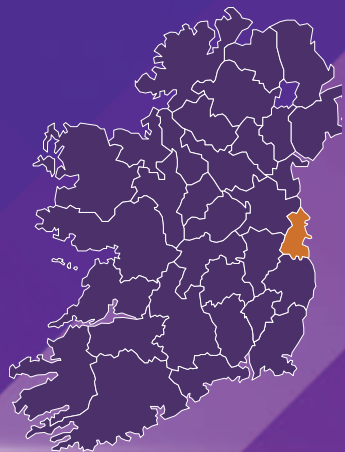
Aonghus Callanan, Chartered Quantity Surveyor
Director, TC Estimating Services Ltd

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Ref.	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
00	Demolition/strip out	1	item	6,000	6,000
01	Substructure	1	item	4,389	4,389
02	Structure	1	item	52,648	52,648
03	Structure completions	142	m ²	103	14,696
04	Finishes	142	m ²	275	39,000
05	Services (pipe and ducted)	142	m ²	93	13,250
06	Services (electrical)	142	m ²	48	6,750
07	Fittings and furniture	1	item	5,000	5,000
08	New build extension	59	m ²	2,956	174,376
	Total net construction cost				€316,109
09	Main contractor preliminaries	Incl.			
	Total gross construction cost				€316,109
10	Design team fees	1	item	9,500	9,500
	Total professional fees				€9,500
11	Planning costs	1	item	3,500	3,500
12	Utilities connections (ESB/water)	Incl.			
	Total State fees, levies and cap contributions				€3,500
13	Contingency	Incl.			
	Total contingency				-
14	Total development budgets excl. VAT				€329,109

KEY COST DRIVERS AND SPECIFICATIONS

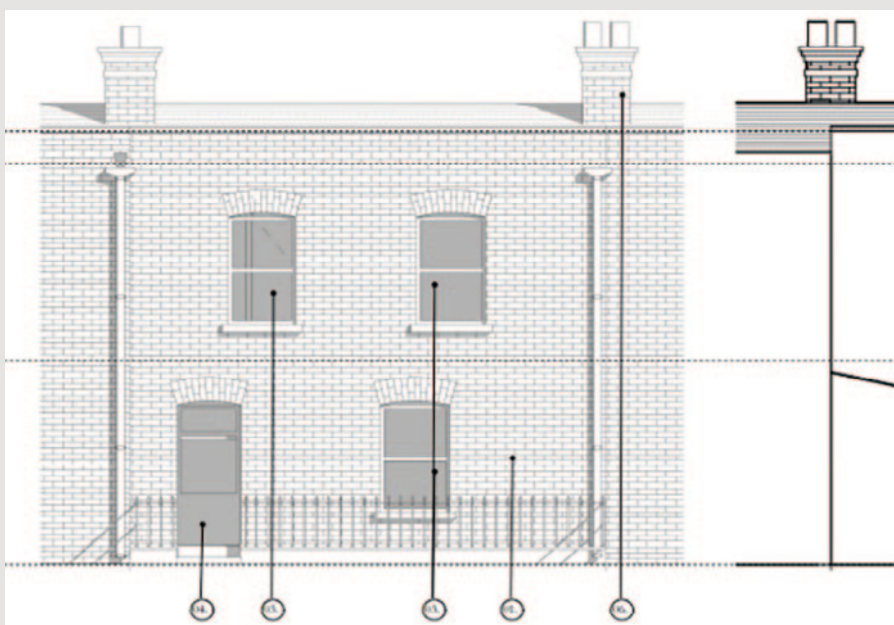
Ref.			
01	Existing dwelling – fair condition	09	Medium spec. fit-out
02	GIFA 201m ²	10	Minor structural repairs
03	3 beds	11	Window and door upgrades
04	New build extension 59m ²	12	New central heating system and electrical upgrade
05	New insulated floor slab	13	Specification to A3 BER rating
06	New internal layout	14	Preliminaries incl.
07	New stairs fitted	15	Contingency incl.
08	Repair of existing roof	16	Construction costs as of Q2 2022



CASE STUDY 7

Type 1 Property, PORTOBELLO, DUBLIN 8

CASE STUDY SEVEN



BASIS OF COST ESTIMATE

Floor plans as provided

AREAS

Unit	GFA	Beds
01	124	3
Total	124m²	

BUILDING INFORMATION

Type 1	Existing dwelling
Approximate age	1900
Condition	Poor
GIFA at purchase	112m ²
GIFA at completion	124m ²
Units at completion	1
Beds at completion	2
Status	On site



"This project is a refurbishment and extension of a three-bed terraced house in Portobello, Dublin 8: "It was vacant for some time, and needed a lot of work. It had no heating system. The water system only went to a rear kitchen and bathroom that was just a very poorly constructed add-on, and the wiring around the house was pretty bad. So it was a full strip down of the entire property all the way down to brickwork, knocking down the kitchen and bathroom level.

Then we got planning permission to do a two-storey extension or a part two-storey extension, which included a kitchen, a

small study, and two extra bathrooms. We had to add some steel supports obviously for all the extension work. We knocked out the back of the house, so we had to do a lot of steel supports throughout the house. We took out two fireplaces as well, which were pretty big so again, there's a lot of supports gone in to shore up all that block work and everything we took out of the house."

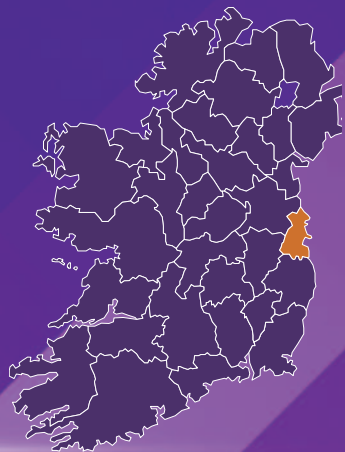
Shane Fleming MRICS MSCSI
Fleming Real Estate

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Ref.	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
00	Demolition/strip out	1	item	5,544	5,544
01	Substructure	1	item	11,956	11,956
02	Structure	1	item	83,846	83,846
03	Structure completions	112	m ²	22,674	22,674
04	Finishes	112	m ²	35,426	35,426
05	Services (pipe and ducted)	112	m ²	24,592	24,592
06	Services (electrical)	112	m ²	18,601	18,601
07	Fittings and furniture	1	item	33,088	33,088
08	External works	1	item	30,673	30,673
09	New build extension	12	m ²	2,500	31,500
	Total net construction cost				€297,900
10	Main contractor preliminaries	5	%		14,895
	Total gross construction cost				€ 312,795
11	Design team fees	1	item	18,000	18,000
	Total professional fees				€18,000
12	Planning costs		item		-
13	Utilities connections (ESB/water)		item		-
	Total State fees, levies and cap contributions				-
14	Contingency		Incl.		
	Total contingency				-
15	Total development budgets excl. VAT				€330,795

KEY COST DRIVERS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Ref.			
		09	New internal layout
01	Poor condition habitable residential dwelling	10	Medium/high-spec. fit-out
02	GIFA 124m ²	11	New windows and doors
03	3 beds	12	New central heating system and rewire
04	New build extension 12m ²	13	Specification to A3 BER rating
05	New insulated floor slab	14	Preliminaries 5%
06	New stairs	15	Contingency incl.
07	New roof	16	Construction costs as of Q2 2022
08	Structural upgrades	17	Located in Architectural Conservation Area



CASE STUDY 9

Type 2 Property, DUN LAOGHAIRE,
CO. DUBLIN



BASIS OF COST ESTIMATE

Floor plans as provided

AREAS

Unit	GFA	Beds
01	87	2
Total	87m²	

BUILDING INFORMATION

Type 2	Non-dwelling converted into a residential dwelling
Approximate age	1900
Condition	Fair
GIFA at purchase	67m ²
GIFA at completion	87m ²
Units at completion	1
Beds at completion	2
Status	On site



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CASE STUDY NINE

"This is a former barber's shop that I am converting into my home. As a quantity surveyor, I carried out a feasibility study first, including factors like the development budget, scope of works, etc. This is absolutely crucial to projects like this, and I would love to see feasibility grants available here as they are in Scotland to help get these projects off the ground.

Because I had done the feasibility study, and designed to budget, I knew that the project was financially viable. This gives comfort to me as the homeowner, to the banks, and to the estate agents.

Age, size and condition are the cost drivers in these projects. Everyone can do this but you need support from the appropriate professional at the appropriate time, such as a Chartered Surveyor. These buildings are quite old and the longer they're vacant, the more work is required, so advice from an appropriate professional is vital. You also need to accept that these projects can be very slow."

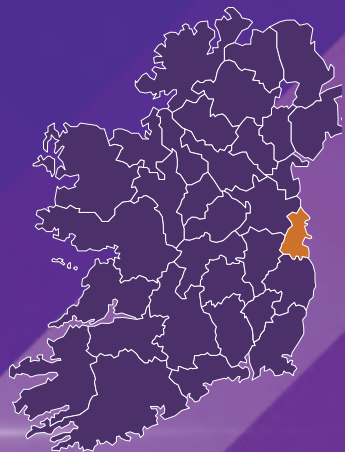
Nick Taaffe, Chartered Quantity Surveyor
Principal consultant, Arcadis

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Ref.	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
00	Demolition/strip out	1	item	6,000	6,000
01	Substructure	1	item	6,400	6,400
02	Structure	1	item	16,700	16,700
03	Structure completions	67	m ²	88	5,900
04	Finishes	67	m ²	145	9,700
05	Services (pipe and ducted)	67	m ²	190	12,700
06	Services (electrical)	67	m ²	149	10,000
07	Fittings and furniture	1	item	9,800	9,800
08	External works	12	m ²	117	1,400
09	New build	20	m ²	2,700	54,000
10	Attic conversion	20	m ²	100	2,000
	Total net construction cost				€134,600
11	Main contractor preliminaries	Incl.			
	Total gross construction cost				€134,600
12	Design team fees	1	item	14,000	14,000
	Total professional fees				€14,000
13	Planning costs	1	item	4,000	4,000
14	Rates office fee	1	item	250	250
15	Utilities connections (ESB/water)	1	item	800	800
	Total State fees, levies and cap contributions				€5,050
16	Contingency	Incl.			
	Total contingency				-
17	Total development budgets excl. VAT				€153,650

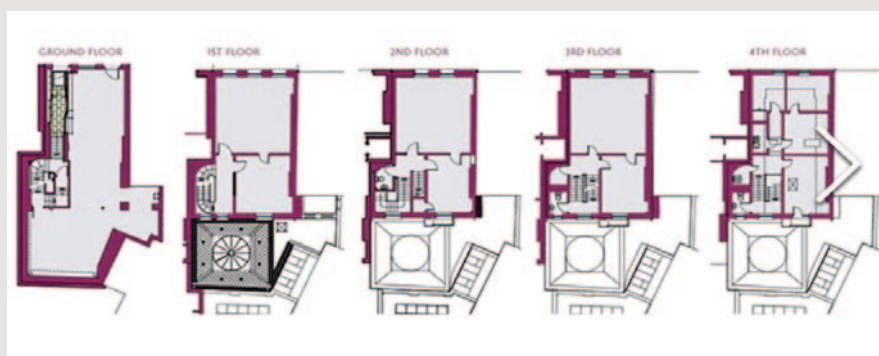
KEY COST DRIVERS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Ref.			
01	Not listed as a protected structure	10	New insulated floor slab
02	Existing commercial premises	11	Medium-spec.
	Water and electricity supply noted		fit-out
03	Attic previously converted – finishes required only	12	Heat pump for hot water with electric radiators and PV
04	GIFA 87m ²	13	Specification to B2 BER rating
05	2 beds and 2 bathrooms	14	Burglar alarm by client
06	Rearrangement of internal walls	15	Preliminaries incl.
07	Floor repairs	16	Contingency incl.
08	Roof repair	17	Construction costs as of Q2 2022
09	New build extension to rear		



CASE STUDY 11

**Type 4 Property, GRAFTON STREET,
DUBLIN CITY CENTRE**



BASIS OF COST ESTIMATE

Floor plans as provided and site visit

AREAS

Units	GFA	Beds
01	59	1
02	59	1
03	59	1
04	59	1
Total	236m²	

BUILDING INFORMATION

Type 4	Three-storey building or higher with over-the-shop accommodation
Approximate age	1900
Condition	Fair
GIFA at purchase	397m ²
GIFA at completion	397m ²
Units at completion	4
Beds at completion	4
Status	Pre construction

“This is not a protected building but must be treated in a similar way. For a project like this, it is vital to have the right team. A building surveyor is a pathologist who understands how a building behaves. A healthy contingency is also vital – up to 20%. With proper analysis beforehand, you should never need to draw all of that down, but it is vital to manage client expectations. Regulations are vital and mandatory, and there are mechanisms within the Technical Guidance Documents to allow professionals with the right expertise to work with these traditional buildings and treat them appropriately. We’re very

inventive and there are lots of modern products that we can use. We need the regulators to work with us, to recognise lateral thinking and to approve solutions where they are scientifically proven and recommended by the experts. If we have a solution, let us do it. As surveyors and within the SCSi, it’s incumbent on us to lead the way, providing solutions and elevating the profession. We need to work together.”

Brigid Browne MSc BSc MIEI MSCSI MRICS
Managing Director, Fortress Planning

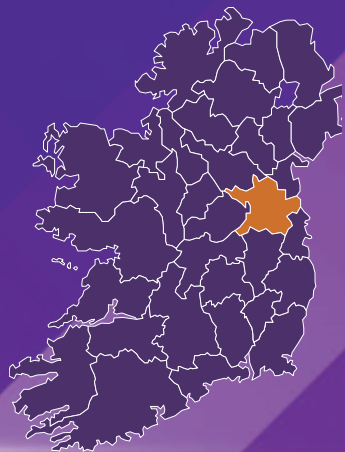
DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Ref.	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
00	Unit 1	59	m ²	1,664	98,185
01	Unit 2	59	m ²	1,649	97,310
02	Unit 3	59	m ²	1,658	97,810
04	Unit 4	59	m ²	1,683	99,310
03	Landlord areas/circulation	1	item	38,634	38,634
05	Main building works	1	item	41,830	41,830
	Total net construction cost				€473,078
06	Main contractor preliminaries	22	%		104,077
	Total gross construction cost				€577,155
07	Professional fees	14	%		80,802
	Total professional fees				€80,802
08	Planning contributions	1	item	16,000	16,000
09	Rates office fee	1	item	1,000	1,000
10	Utilities connections (ESB/water)	1	item	1,500	1,500
	Total State fees, levies and cap contributions				€18,500
11	FF&E	1	item		3,500
	Total FF&E				€3,500
12	Contingency	15	%	70,962	70,962
	Total contingency				€70,962
13	Total development budgets excl. VAT				€750,918

KEY COST DRIVERS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Ref.

01	Protected structure	09	Mechanical ventilation
02	No opening up works performed	10	Works to main building included
03	Existing vacant units – water and electricity supply noted	11	Upgrade to fire system allowed for
04	Reasonable condition throughout	12	Burglar alarm by client
05	Medium-spec. fit-out	13	No work to commercial space
06	1 bed and 1 bathroom per unit	14	Traffic management excluded
07	Heat pump for hot water with electric radiators and PV	15	Preliminaries 22%
08	Specification to B2 BER rating	16	Contingency 15%
		17	Construction costs as of Q2 2022



CASE STUDY 19

Type 5 Property, KELLS, CO. MEATH

CASE STUDY NINETEEN



BASIS OF COST ESTIMATE

Floor plans as provided

AREAS

Unit	GFA	Beds
01	171	2
Total	171m²	

BUILDING INFORMATION

Type 5	Rural one-off housing
Approximate age	>100 years
Condition	Poor
GIFA at purchase	65m ²
GIFA at completion	117m ²
Units at completion	1
Beds at completion	2
Status	Completed



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“We wanted to renovate a property as our family home, and this cottage enabled us to live closer to work. As a surveyor, I could design it myself so I was client and surveyor, a bit of a double-edged sword at times. You start with the best intentions regarding keeping as much of the original fabric as possible, but as time goes by you realise more and more has to come out. Construction costs also skyrocketed during the build, so we had to change our plans and reduce the build by one room. It's important to price around but it's also important to watch things like floor area, and try to be economical with space.

When choosing a contractor, don't go purely on price. Make sure it's someone you can work with over a long period of time. It's also important to make decisions on design and fit-out as early as possible to prevent delays. On paper this project is not financially viable, but it was about more than money for us – the time and money we save on our commute, and the quality of life that gives us, makes it worthwhile.”

John Anderson
Chartered Building Surveyor

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Ref.	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
00	Demolition/strip out	1	item	7,000	7,000
01	Substructure	1	item	7,130	7,130
02	Structure	1	item	36,401	36,401
03	Structure completions	65	m ²	142	9,218
04	Finishes	65	m ²	197	12,774
05	Services (pipe and ducted)	65	m ²	185	12,004
06	Services (electrical)	65	m ²	46	9,513
07	Fittings and furniture	1	item	17,440	17,440
08	External works	1	item	3,171	3,171
09	New build extension	52	m ²	2,500	130,000
	Total net construction cost				€244,650
10	Main contractor preliminaries	Incl.			
	Total gross construction cost				
11	Design team fees	1	item	8,500	8,500
	Total professional fees				€8,500
12	Planning costs	1	item	500	500
13	Utilities connections (ESB/water)	1	item	2,270	2,270
	Total State fees, levies and cap contributions				€2,770
14	Contingency	Incl.			
	Total contingency				-
15	Total development budgets excl. VAT				€255,920

KEY COST DRIVERS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Ref.			
01	Previously derelict	07	Specification to B2 BER rating
02	GIFA 117m ²	08	New windows and door
03	New build extension 52m ²	09	New central heating system and rewire
04	New floor slab	10	Fencing, driveway and landscaping
05	2 bedrooms	11	Preliminaries incl.
06	New septic tank and percolation area	12	Contingency incl.

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BRINGING OLD BUILDINGS BACK

DAVID HUMPHREYS, GROUP DIRECTOR AT ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS (ACP), SPEAKS ABOUT HIS WORK WITH OLDER BUILDINGS AROUND THE WORLD AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING THE RIGHT APPROACH.

David Humphreys began his career in horticulture and landscape architecture. After a period lecturing in the University of Queensland in Australia, a move to the UK led to a job with the landscape department of English Heritage, where his love of old buildings (and complex projects) began to really take shape: "They funded me to do an MSc in project management and I started running projects. I loved dealing with older buildings and with all the different disciplines".

The culture at English Heritage was also inspiring, with professionals of all disciplines working together and sharing expertise, and this is something David sought to bring to Ireland when he came home 23 years ago and set up Architectural Conservation Professionals (ACP), a unique, multi award-winning company that brings the various disciplines together on conservation projects in Ireland and abroad. ACP has offices in Singapore and Newfoundland, which has led to projects both in those locations, and as far afield as Sydney, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and Myanmar. David runs the group, with colleagues Noel Taaffe leading in Singapore/Southeast Asia, and Simon Collins in Canada. The company deals with all sorts of projects, large and small, so David's days are varied: "I'm usually up about six, get into the

office about eight, and deal with emails and what's come in overnight. All day yesterday I was working on a project for Irish Rail where we're doing repairs to an old Victorian station canopy. I would say that more than half of my time is out on site. I wouldn't have it any other way".

Like many surveyors, David says there's no substitute for getting into a space in person: "You've no idea what you're going to find. It's never a dull day".

Managing expectations

Of course, working on older buildings brings a range of challenges, and one of David's responsibilities is to manage client expectations, and give people a realistic appraisal of what can be done. This is especially relevant when it comes to buying and renovating an older property to make it your home: "The last thing I want you to do is buy a house that has got a lot of problems and you don't know what you're getting yourself into. That's where doing a good survey matters".

When a project is viable, then it's a pleasure for David and his colleagues to be involved: "You're there beside them to support them".

David is Chairman of the SCSI's Conservation Working Group and a member of the working group that produced the SCSI's report on refurbishment, and says it's a welcome setting out of the facts around these projects, and the challenges involved. He feels that the economic model in particular must be addressed: "If we were to take a historic building and turn the economic model differently, so that there was an incentive, tax breaks, something that has an immediate effect, like a lower rate of VAT, then

there's a real impact on the upfront cost. We have to make it more real for people".

He also feels that planning reform is needed: "If we look at Part Four of the Planning Act, I've concerns that it's not working as well as it could and in some cases is working against what it was originally designed to do. You have planners who probably have no expertise in historic buildings making calls on this, and it creates uncertainty for potential buyers. That uncertainty works against historic buildings".

For David, the community impact of bringing these buildings back into use is vital: "If you have an active, viable, vibrant community in a small village or a town, there's a pride, and those buildings are safe for the next generations".

Busman's holiday

David's hobbies are work related: "I have a workshop, I call it the Lab, and we have a forge and timber shop. I love working with historic iron. I also enjoy spending time

on committees because it's stimulating in the sense that you're challenged all the time".

He's also very interested in the relationship between buildings and health, and has trained and practices as an Ayurvedic medical practitioner: "The impact of buildings on our health, particularly modern materials, the electronic environment that we're putting ourselves in, is phenomenal. Old buildings, if they're looked after, are very healthy. You have an environment that is made of natural materials, mostly, whereas a lot of modern buildings are not".



SURVEYOR PROFILE

Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor,
Think Media Ltd



RENOVATION – WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT

THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN OUR REPORT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO THE CHALLENGES FACING THOSE UNDERTAKING RENOVATION PROJECTS.



Tackling Ireland's vacant and derelict buildings for residential use holds significant opportunities in addressing our housing supply crisis, our climate change commitments, and our desire to rejuvenate urban and rural communities. Moreover, it aligns with the Government's Housing for All policy. It's perhaps not surprising that the SCSi's Real Cost of Renovation Report found that financial viability was a key challenge for those wishing to achieve this goal. Homeowners or investors requiring external finance from financial institutions will be unable to release societal, environmental or community benefits if potential projects are clearly in the red. The introduction of grants – such as the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund and those available from the SEAI – is most welcome. Still, it is clear from the SCSi's analysis that the currently available incentives and supports, while definitely assisting with the problem, are inadequate to make a meaningful difference for a significant

number of Ireland's vacant homes or convertible buildings.

Feasibility and funding

One question that other report contributors and I were asked at the Leinster House launch of the Report was how to ensure that limited public funding is put to its absolute best use. To this end, the Report recommends the introduction of early feasibility grants to consider the unique nature of each renovation project. This will give early access to the expertise needed for financial viability analysis and a regulatory compliance review. The feasibility study could become a prerequisite for applying for increased grants, rather than a universal increase on projects that don't warrant them. A more tailored approach to the renovation grants system should also be coupled with funding tranches. The need to wait until the end of the renovation only adds to the financial viability issues such projects face. However, achieving change is not solely down to Government grants. The SCSi will bring this report to meetings with financial institution representatives, to encourage them to review their lending process for renovation projects. We believe that if lenders established a clear

set of lending policies and guidance for prospective renovators, this would significantly help with the onerous question of viability. The Report has also recommended installing a specialist 'on-lender' type initiative whereby funds are directed through lending partner agencies at preferential rates to support renovation projects, similar to the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland. In addition to financing, the report has identified the complexity of regulatory compliance, which could be overcome with the publication of detailed technical guidance, specifically for vacant and derelict properties, for professionals and local authorities. The SCSi is also preparing a submission on Part B (Fire Safety) as part of the current consultation.

Worth the effort

Out of our 20 case studies, only five projects were both financially viable and regulatorily compliant. Doubling that figure is well within reach, and increasing it further in the medium term could be straightforward with the introduction of quick new measures. Giving a family a home with less carbon impact while rejuvenating communities is undoubtedly worth that effort.

THE LAST WORD

Lisa Rocca MA MSc MRICS
MSCSI
Chair, SCSi Report Steering
Group



THE IRISH TIMES
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HOME & DESIGN

The image displays the 'The Irish Times' website on three different devices: a desktop monitor, a tablet, and a smartphone. The desktop monitor shows the full website layout, including a navigation bar with links like 'HOME', 'SPORT', 'BUSINESS', 'OPINION', 'LIFE & STYLE', 'CULTURE', 'MORE', 'VIDEOS', 'PODCASTS', and 'RSS'. Below the navigation bar, there are links for 'Home & Property', 'New to the Market', 'Property Clinic', 'Design', 'Table 5', 'Fine Art & Antiques', 'Gardens', and 'All Life & Style'. The main headline reads 'BUYING YOUR FIRST NEW HOME' with a sub-headline 'How to find the right property for your budget'. Below this, there is a large image of a modern living room with green sofas and a coffee table. The article title is 'Two-bed apartments at Broomfield Hill €110,000' and the text mentions 'The Irish Times' and 'The Irish Times'.

The tablet and smartphone show the same website content, but the layout is scaled to fit the smaller screens. The navigation bar is collapsed into a hamburger menu, and the main headline and image are scaled down to fit the tablet and smartphone screens. The article title and text are also scaled down to fit the smaller screens.

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