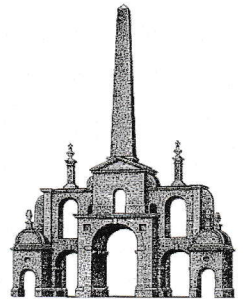


Birr and Midlands Chapter Irish Georgian Society

Conserving Ireland's Architectural Heritage



Review of County Development Plan,
Forward Planning Department,
Offaly County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Charleville Road,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly.

26.09.2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Birr Chapter of the Irish Georgian Society was founded in 1993 to promote the awareness of the unique architectural heritage of Birr, the most complete planned Georgian town in Ireland. In the intervening years we have broadened our area of interest to include the whole of County Offaly and the Midland region, both rural and urban. We have lobbied various bodies on issues of importance to the area, raised funds for projects relating to architectural preservation and promoted awareness through extensive tours, lectures and educational publications. We welcome this opportunity to have an input into the 2021-2027 Development Plan.

The BCIGS promotes our built environment heritage as a key attraction to the tourist industry which positively benefits our region's economy and creates local jobs for our youth. Since the 1980s there has been a steady erosion of architectural heritage as evidenced by the Shaffrey Architectural survey from that period. Features, such as, wooden sash windows and doors replaced by uPVC, original shop fronts being replaced with unsympathetic pastiches, public realm features removed or replaced with concrete and removal of rendering etc.

It is vital that awareness be raised from County Council level down to the person in the street that this steady erosion is destroying the potential for further tourism industry growth and related employment.

It is important that the Council Planning, Heritage and Environment Departments etc, should interpret and positively enforce the planning laws in a way that is sympathetic to the built architectural heritage of our urban and rural landscapes.

To this end we actively support the Dept. of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht document, "Architectural Heritage Protection" 2011 to form the backbone of the 2021-2027 proposed Development Plan. <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Architectural-Heritage-Protection-Guidelines-2011.pdf>

We understand that only development sympathetic to our heritage will enhance the economic social and cultural progress of our county and make it a pleasant place for us all to live in.

Yours Faithfully

John Joyce
Chairman.

Chapter Head: Earl of Rosse

Executive Committee: John Joyce (Chairman), Elizabeth Fogarty (Hon. Sec.), Gerard Browne (Hon. Treasurer)

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