

The Artists' Apartments, 1-2 John's Square



**An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta**
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



John's Square Public Realm Enhancement Scheme



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013
Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND



SOUTHERN & EASTERN
Regional Assembly
Promoting Our Region



"The art of city making is a challenge. Our goal should be the city as artefact, where designed and accidental environments of streets, buildings, landmarks and open spaces are brought to life with human activity. Cities are communities of people, living organisms, community networks and social dynamics."

Charles Landry

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Except as otherwise noted, all
photography by Deirdre Power
Design by copperreed.com

Make a Move Festival

Photo: Damien Wilson/widumedia.com

Dance

Dance Limerick is based at 1 & 2 John's Square. The premises houses a fully equipped dance studio with mirrors, a sound system and offices. Across the square is a beautiful performance space in the St. John of the Cross Church.

Dance Limerick's purpose is to act as a resource hub for professional dance artists providing a platform for artistic dialogue, research, creation, presentation, promotion and practical support for contemporary dance and its production. Alongside this, the programme will feature a range of performances, talks and projects for the wider public. Dance Limerick is currently funded by the Arts Council and Limerick Local Authorities.

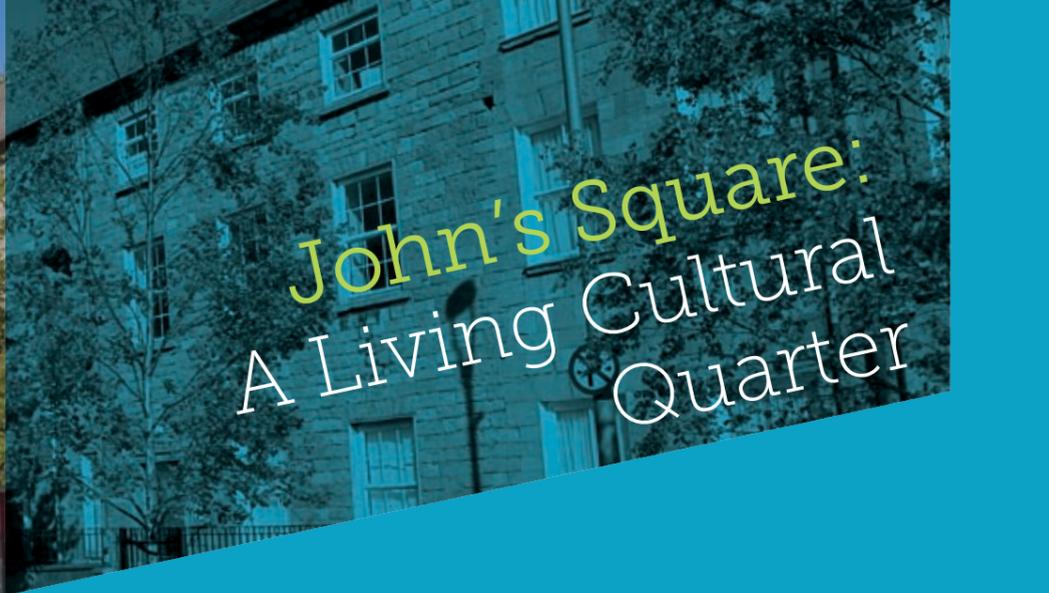


JOHN'S SQUARE
Limerick's Living Cultural Quarter

Subsidised living space scheme for artists
1-2 John's Square, Artists' Apartments

Dance Limerick Studio

Photo: Conor Buckley Photography



John's Square: A Living Cultural Quarter

This refurbishment houses eight apartments for artists, the provision of these affordable living spaces is part of Limerick Council's cultural strategy to create conditions that support the creative process and outputs. The scheme will encourage living and working within the urban environment and attract artists to live in the heart of Limerick City.

Living Spaces for Artists

Artists, arts organisations and cultural practitioners have a significant place in the history and future of Limerick, in the role they play in positioning the city as Ireland's Cultural Capital, vibrant and sustainable. The Living Cultural Quarter is an example of this vibrancy and a sustainable approach to supporting individuals, organisations and development.



The subsidised living space scheme for artists was formulated in response to recognition that artists living in the city required a range of supports, including better living facilities. In 2010 The Arts Council and Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned an all Ireland research report, which found that total average personal income for an artist in Ireland in 2008 was considerably lower than average workers¹.



¹ Hibernian Consulting, Insight Statistical Consulting with Dr. Clare McAndrew and Cathie McKimm (2010), *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland*, Dublin: The Arts Council and Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned report (pp. 11-12).

John's Square - A History

Limerick's earliest modern public space.

In 1751, John Purdon put forward a proposal to build houses in the form of a square, all to be built at the same cost and to be based upon the same plan. When the houses were built in the 1750s, they were done so at a cost of £630 per house. The houses were large and commodious and for many years continued to be inhabited by wealthy county families.

As a demonstration of how a Palladian country house could be adapted to an urban situation, John's Square is a notable success. Eight houses identical on the outside were set on three sides of the square.

The design stressed form, and individual identity was subsumed into the architectural design scheme. Two larger end houses were later added and fitted exactly into the original pattern. By the late 19th century decline had set in, and the houses were used for various functions.

St John's 3RD/14th Scout Group (The Bishop's Own)

St John's 3rd/14th scout group has been based in John's Square since 1950. During that time thousands of young people have passed through the unit, which is steeped in scouting history.

Recently, through Grant aid, the generosity of a benefactor, and volunteers, the St. John's Scout Group building was refurbished. This supports a wide range of activities and services to our scouts and the community into the future.

A vibrant artistic community

John's Square is now a reinvigorated area that is home to a cluster of cultural facilities, the Artists' Apartments, Dance Limerick studios and performance space in St. John of the Cross Church, and the nearby Limerick Artists' Studios.



Application for six of the apartments is through an open call. The other two apartments are reserved for short-term use, both as a resource for existing arts organisations that provide cultural activities for the City and to establish new relationships with a variety of external partners through residencies.

The refurbishment of the Artists' Apartments adds to and complements strong existing cultural landmarks, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Culture House at No. 2 Pery Square and the Hunt Museum.

Above:
Veronica Nicholson, 'Guerrillas of Love: Intervention #1'

John's Square: A Living Cultural Quarter



Highlights from Limerick's Cultural History

- 1977 ev+a founded
- 1978 Appointment of a Midwest Arts Officer, headquartered in Limerick, the first appointment of its kind in the country
- 1981 Belltable Arts Centre opens
- 1985 Carnegie building designated to Limerick City Gallery of Art
- 1985 First Kate O'Brien Weekend
- 1987 First cultural agreement between The Arts Council and local authority signed with Limerick Corporation
- 1989 Appointment of the City Arts Officer in Limerick City Council
- 1990 Founding of Limerick Jazz Society
- 1990 Acquisition of the National Collection of Contemporary Drawings to the Permanent Collection at LCGA
- 1991 Public Music Library opened at Limerick City Library Headquarters
- 1992 Development of Limerick Artists' Studios by Limerick Corporation and The Arts Council
- 1992 Old Custom House Limerick, designated as permanent home of The Hunt Museum
- 1993 University Concert Hall opens
- 1993 Official opening of Limerick Artists' Studios
- 1993 Irish World Music Centre founded at University of Limerick
- 1995 Relocation of Irish Chamber Orchestra to Limerick
- 1995 Umbrella Project and Fresh Film Festival established
- 1996 Cuisle Poetry Festival established
- 1996 European Structural Funds allocated to LCGA
- 1997 Hunt Museum opens at The Custom House
- 1999 Limerick Printmakers established
- 1999 Lyric FM established and located in Limerick
- 1999 Opening of Phase I redevelopment of Limerick City Gallery of Art
- 2002 Publication of An Integrated Arts Strategy for Limerick
- 2004 Contact Studios established
- 2005 Opening of newly refurbished St. John of the Cross Church for Daghdha
- 2008 Irish Chamber Orchestra purpose built facility at University of Limerick
- 2009 Creative Limerick (use of vacant spaces)
- 2009 Opening of redeveloped Limerick School of Art and Design Campus, LIT
- 2009 Association of Irish Choirs relocated to Limerick
- 2011 Phase II redevelopment of Limerick City Gallery of Art
- 2012 Opening of Lime Tree Theatre at Mary Immaculate College (500 seats)
- 2013 Opening of 1-2 John's Square, Artists' Apartments, subsidised living space scheme for artists

Investment in John's Square

After establishing in 1967 that the houses in John's Square were in a dilapidated condition, Limerick City Council acquired No. 1 & 2 John's Square and listed them as buildings of artistic, architectural and historic interest. In 1973 Limerick City Council restored No. 1 & 2 and subsequently won a European Architectural Award.

Under ACCESS I funding the office, studio and St. John of the Cross church were developed by the former Daghdha Dance Company and opened in May 2005. The Artists' Apartments, complete the process of refurbishing the buildings of No. 1 & 2 John's Square in their entirety.

The Square itself has recently undergone a €1.5 million redevelopment by Limerick City Council, the John's Square Public Realm Enhancement Scheme. The new pedestrian-friendly space provides the venue for performances and events, as well as an attractive amenity in which to meet, stroll and enjoy the City. It now forms an appropriate setting for the fine historical buildings which surround John's Square, including St John's Cathedral, St John's Hospital and the limestone townhouses.

These investments in the City revitalise the area, build upon an already dynamic heritage of arts activity and stimulate further development opportunities. This cluster of cultural facilities truly forms a vibrant cultural heart for Limerick City.



Just Breathing, Alice in Wonderland
Photo: AberCrombie Photography

1-2 John's Square Artists' Apartments

The refurbishment of the residential Artists' Apartments, 1-2 John's Square took place through co-funding by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Access II scheme under the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and Limerick City Council.

The €403,273 construction contract was carried out by Henry Connolly Builders. Brian Grubb Architect and Patrick Molloy and Partners Chartered Quantity Surveyors formed the design team on the project on behalf of Limerick City Council (The Architects Department and Arts Office).

The John's Square Public Realm Enhancement Scheme

The John's Square Public Realm Enhancement Scheme was co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Southern and Eastern Regional Program, administered in Ireland by the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly.

The €1.5m construction contract was carried out by Wills Bros Ltd, Civil Engineering Contractors.

The scheme design was prepared by Nicholas de Jong Associates (Urban Design), with O'Shea Consulting (Engineers) and Lawlor Burns & Associates (Project Management), on behalf of Limerick City Council (Transportation and Infrastructure).



Make a Move Festival
Photo: Damien Wilson/widumedia.com

