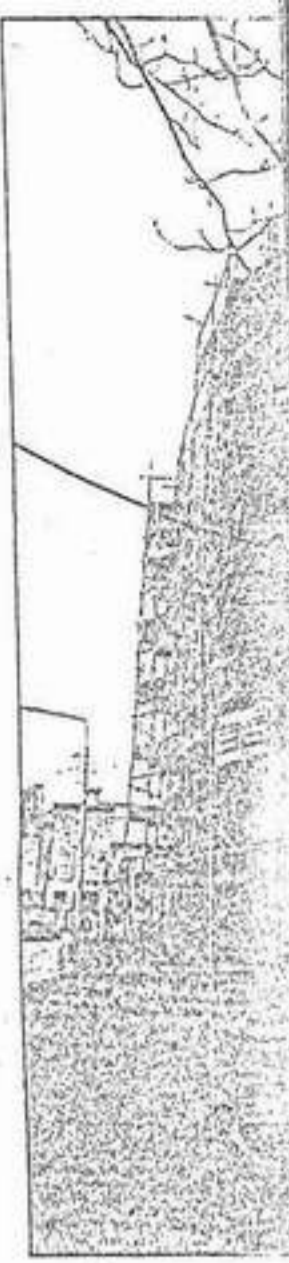


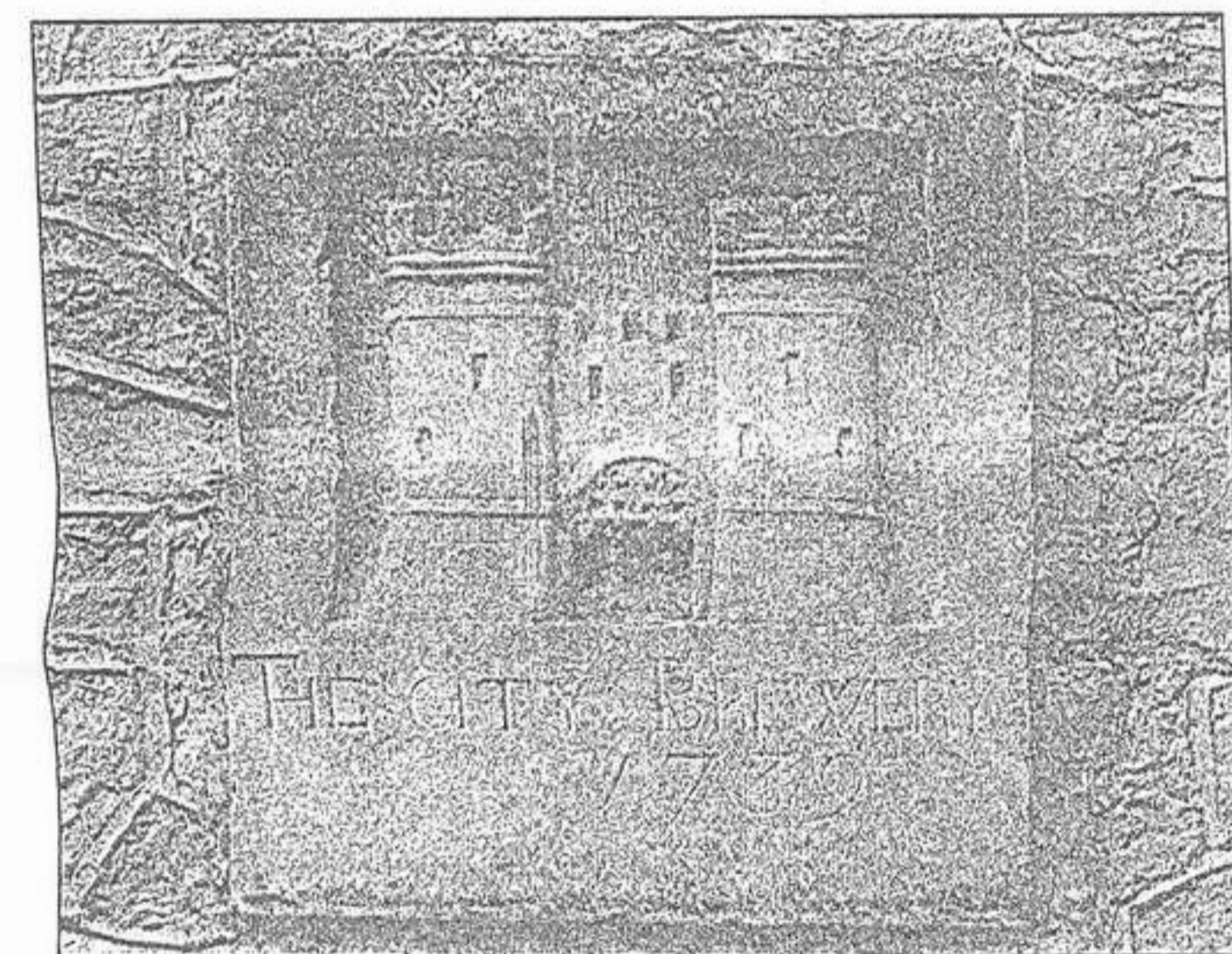
● Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre . . . improving facade on river



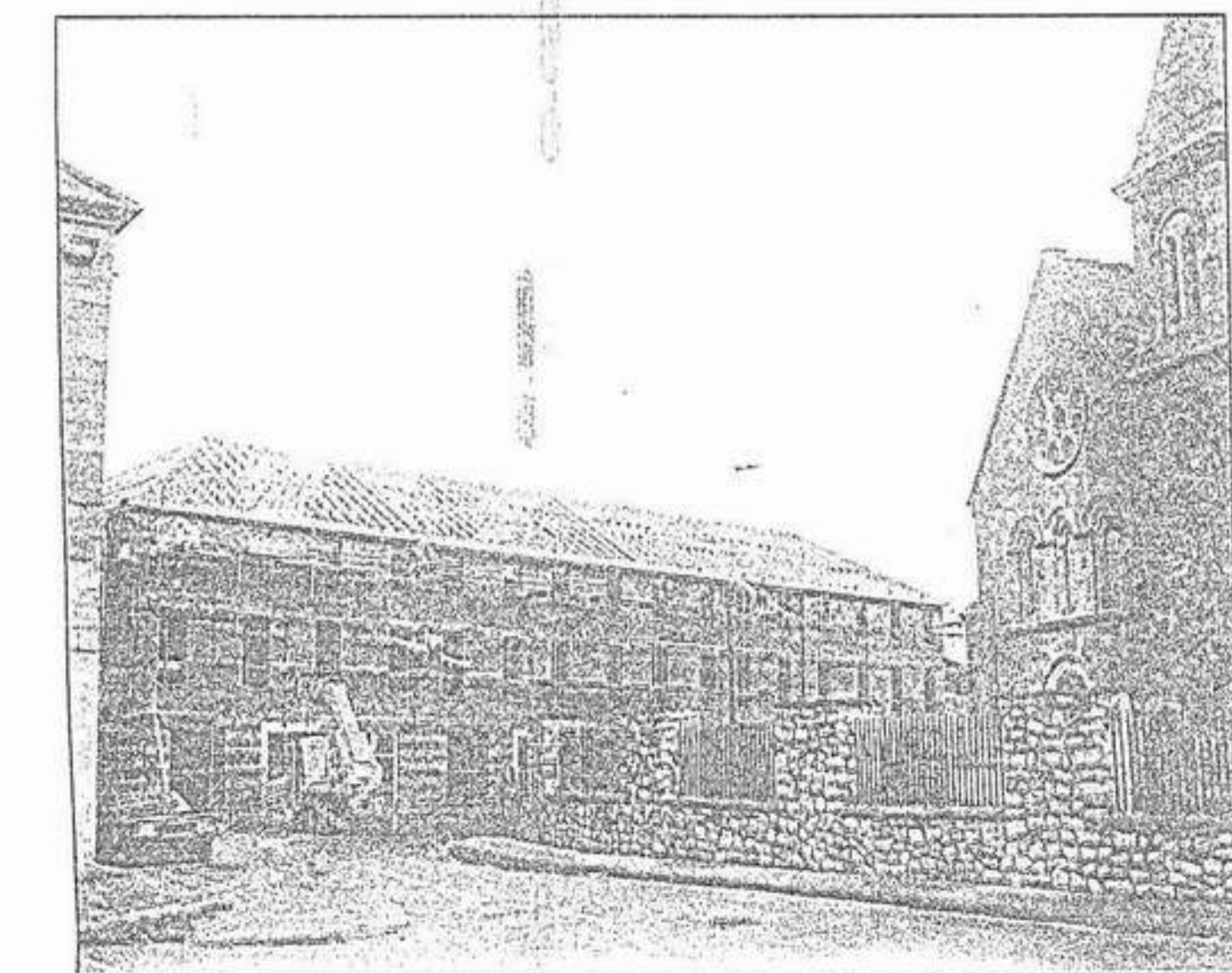
● One of the entrances to the Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre



● King John's



● Old Stone plaque in Coffee Shop, in new Civic Offices



● New Housing in Church Street, near St. John's Church

The character of Limerick

Limerick City Chief Architect Jim Barrett reports on the planning behind the transformation of Limerick's riverside and inner city areas . . .

LIMERICK, for many years the city all architects (nearly) loved to hate, is making a serious "comeback". The city's latter-day resurgence is based on a sound historic infrastructure containing a good formal Georgian area, a medieval island (King's Island) and a traditional "Irishtown", all attractively pulled together in planning terms by the strength of the Shannon.

It is dismissed by many as a semi-derelict market town with no obvious centre, a city which turned its back to the river.

But an objective assessment of most major Irish towns (and not a few European ones) will show that in this respect Limerick is not unique.

The international reduction of shipping has resulted in the decline of docklands everywhere and with a few notable exceptions the commercial centres have tended to distance themselves from the decayed riverfronts.

Latterly much development has been directed at these areas, the most notable examples being London Docks, Liverpool and, closer to home, Dublin Custom House Docks.

The establishment of the Custom House Authority and the introduction of the Urban Renewal Act in 1986 provided both the model and financial tax regime for a programme of urban regeneration in Limerick, the scale of which the city has not seen since the Georgian Newtown Pery area was developed in 1760.

Under the direction of Tom Rice (City Manager at the time) an Inner City Project Team was set up and this combined the planning, architectural, technical, legal and administrative strength of the Corporation with the developmental, promotional and financial expertise of the Shannon Development Company.

That semi-state agency with its role as industrial and tourist development organisation for the Mid-West Region made its expertise available to the Project Team and in so doing changed the nature of the promotional team from a strictly Local Authority sub-committee to a more aggressive development task force. The response of the members of the Project Team and the public was dramatic.

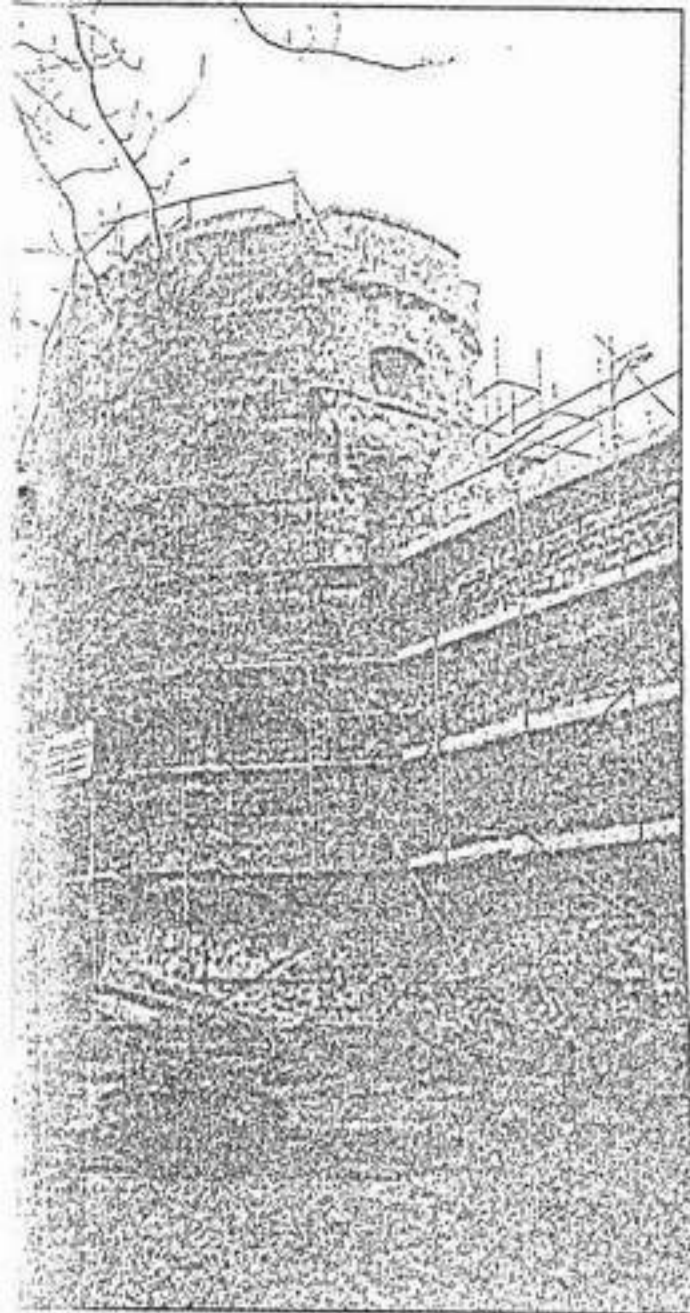
LAND PURCHASE

Successive programmes of land purchase meant that with the introduction of the Urban Renewal Act, the Corporation was in a position to take possession of some nineteen acres of derelict lands, within the Designated Area.

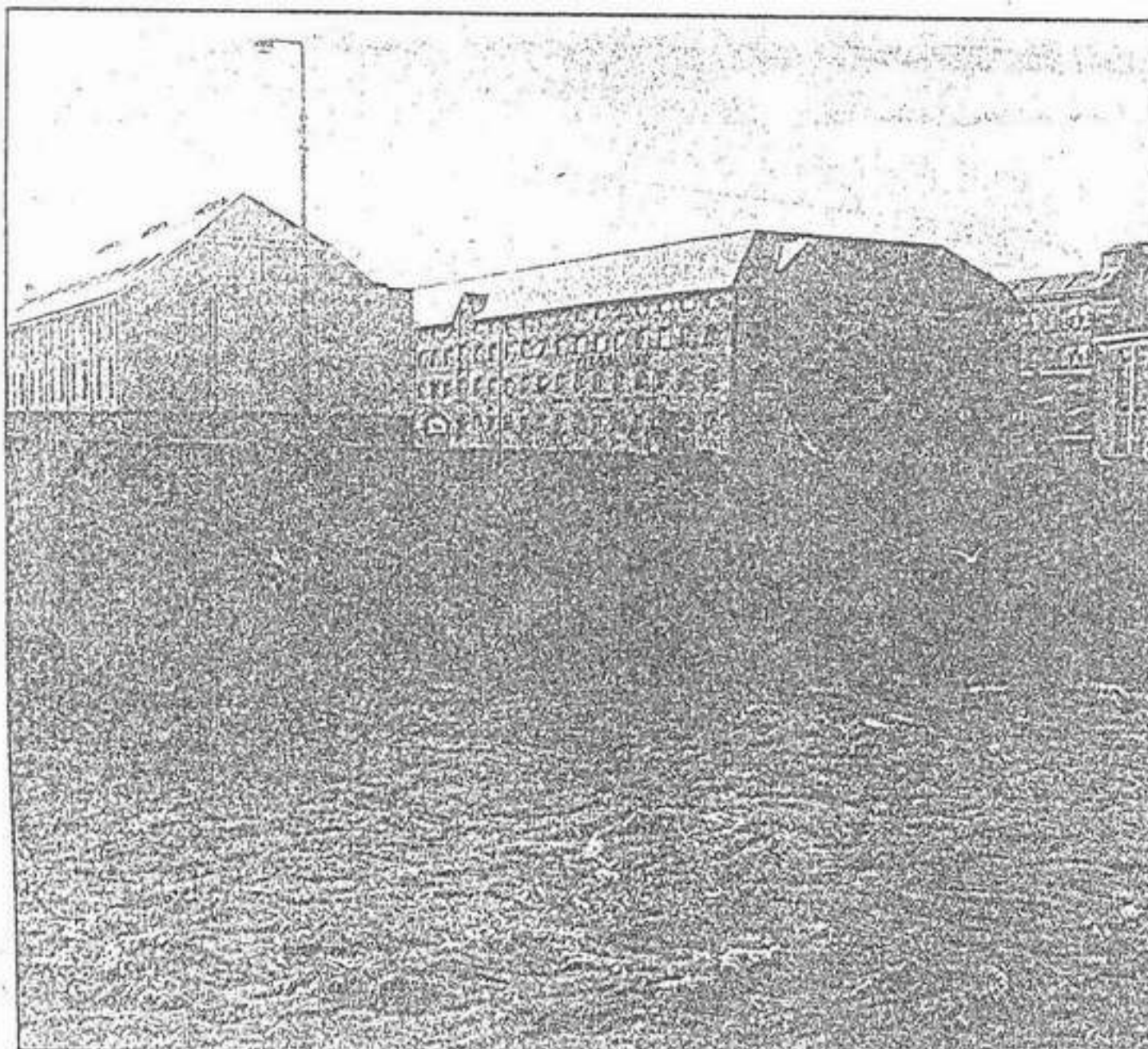
● Jim Barrett

Planning Johnsgate & Co. Shaffrey, were demand for the housing meant a position to a programme of

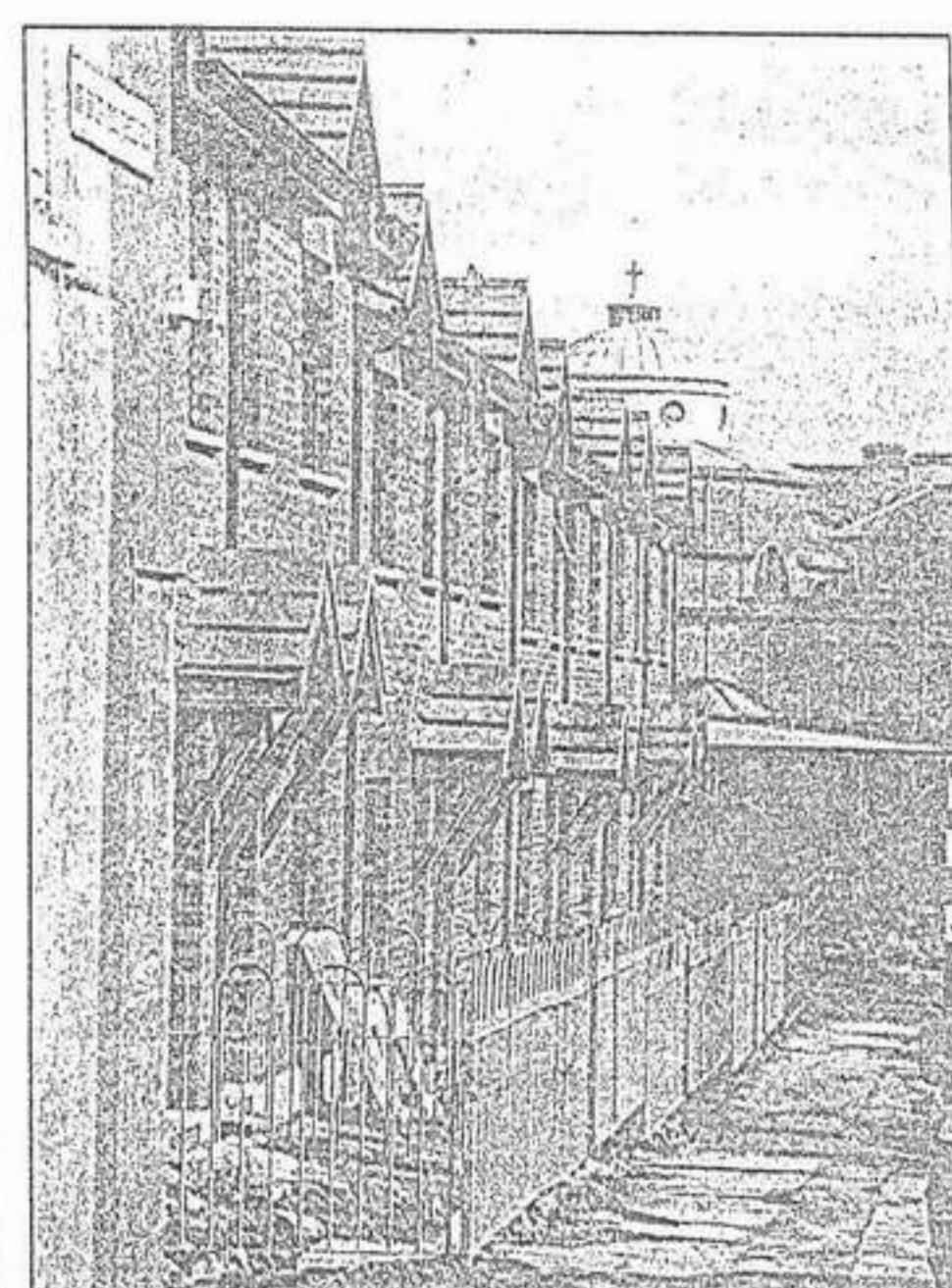
Based on and with the private into Corporation's planned way to the Development Project Team development at



St. John's Castle undergoing restoration work

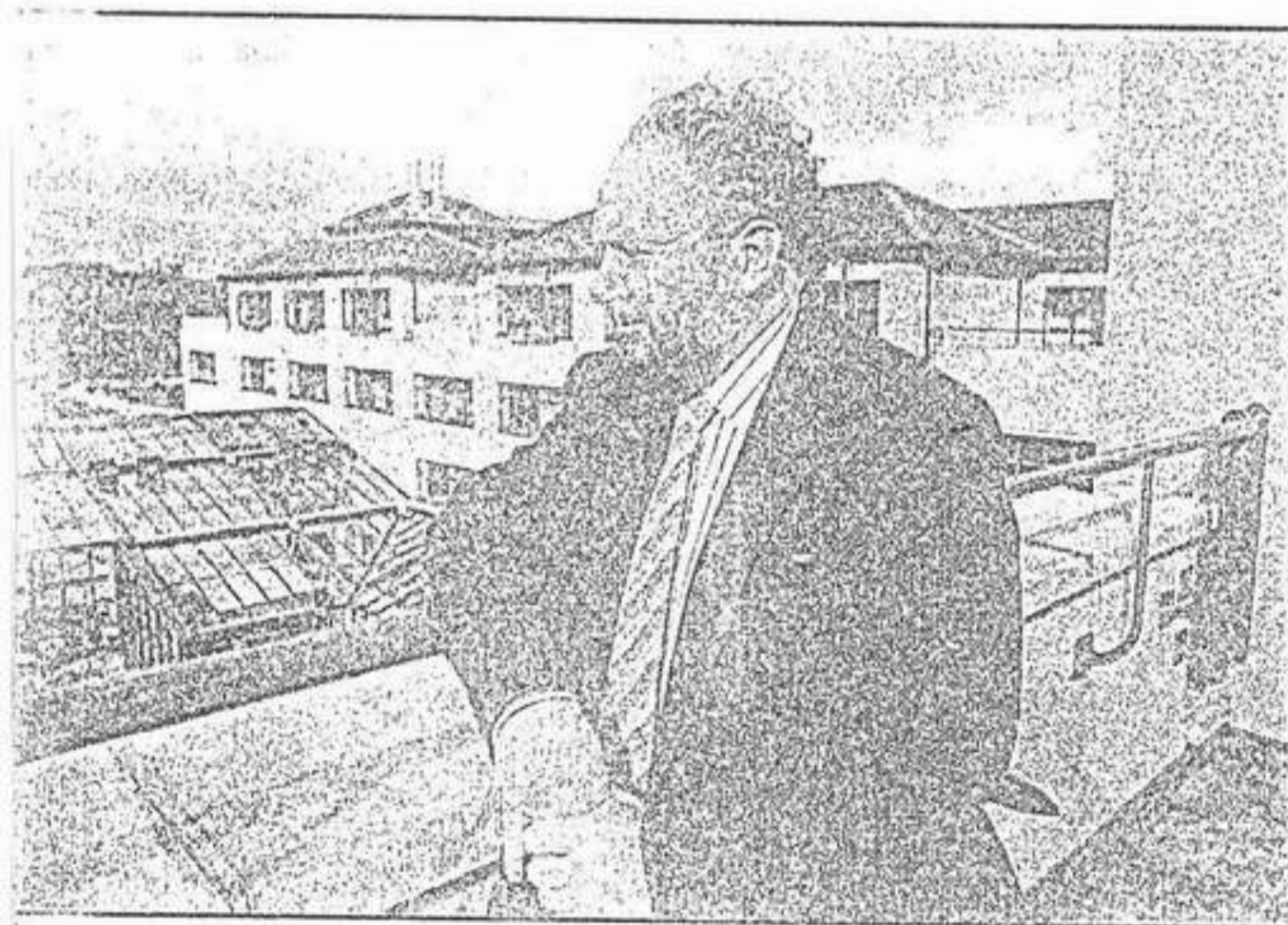


● New development in Michael Street, opposite the Granary, with Abbey River in foreground



● New housing development in John's Street/New Road area, with Good Shepherd convent in background

Changing face Limerick City



Barrett, City Architect, with Limerick's new Civic Offices in the background

Planning studies, including the Strategic Action Area Plan by Patrick [unclear] were available and a reduced [unclear] for the traditional Local Authority [unclear] that the Corporation was in [unclear] to concentrate its energies on a [unclear] of urban schemes in this area.

From the City's Development Plan [unclear] the twin objective of attracting [unclear] interests to develop the [unclear] lands and to do so in a [unclear] to achieve the aspirations of [unclear] Development Plan, the Inner City [unclear] set about identifying clear [unclear] areas, an associated land use

strategy and establishing a list of potential developers.

CIVIC CENTRE

The Corporation's own requirements for a Civic Centre to house its various Departments and a multi-storey car park were progressed immediately and following a competitive "Design Build" process a new City Hall has become a reality and the car parking requirement formed the basis of the Arthur's Quay Shopping Development by Tiernan O'Callaghan Development Company.

These schemes were both located in

Riverfront sites and have had the effect of directing substantial emphasis onto the river while at the same time acting as a catalyst for further developments.

The City Hall scheme, designed by Burke-Kennedy Doyle and costing £7 million has now been occupied and has succeeded admirably in achieving the objective of the design brief to provide a relaxed open building reflecting a more democratic and open relationship with the public. The four storey building respects the neighbouring Castle and Cathedral in terms of scale and colouring and a particularly successful feature is the development of the Quay edge as a pedestrian thoroughfare with high quality urban landscaping.

Access to the individual public offices is from a glazed street complete with cafeteria, all of which look out over the Curragour Falls making full use of what must be one of Europe's most dramatic locations.

ARTHUR'S QUAY

The completion of the Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre (Architects: John Thompson) has enabled the Corporation to develop its plans for a major Riverside City Park on what was previously a car park. Works are progressing on this project by Murray O'Loaire (Architects) with Gerry Mitchell as the Landscaping Consultant and it is due for completion by November 1990. Its completion, when taken in conjunction with the new City Hall, will certainly bring the Shannon into sharp focus.

● To Back Page

PHOTOGRAPHS: Arthur Gough

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