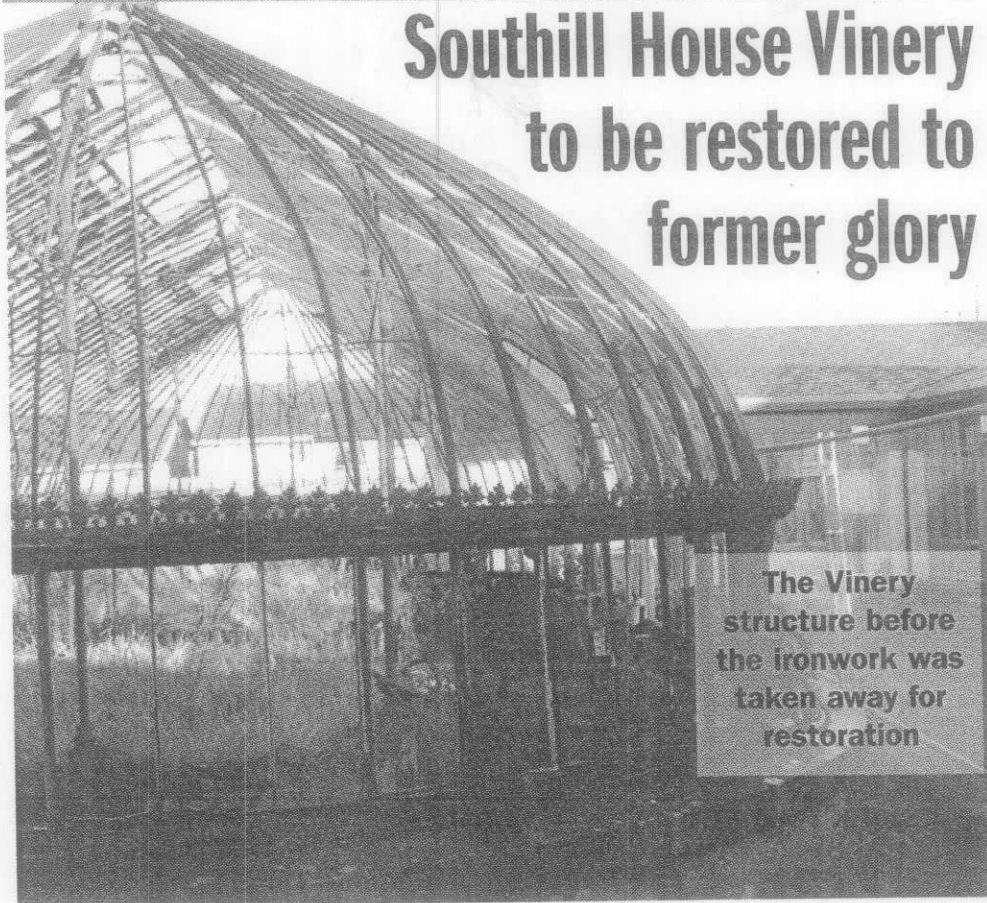


Southill House Vinery to be restored to former glory



The Vinery structure before the ironwork was taken away for restoration

By Colum Coomey

THE rare and exquisite Turner Vinery at Southill House is to be restored to its former glory.

The Vinery is set to be converted into a dining area.

The glasshouse which is on the grounds of Southill House is believed to be 150 years old and was constructed by the legendary clothing manufacturer, Peter Tait in the 1860s.

John Hanafin of Southill House Campus told the Limerick Post,

"The Vinery is part of the heritage of Southill House and one of very few of these vinerys still surviving in the country".

The structure which consists of a brick base with decorative iron was

designed by Richard Turner who also designed the glasshouses at the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin and Q-Gardens in the UK.

Mr Hanafin said that "In 2008 and 2009 the ironwork was dismantled and taken away to be restored

Planning permission has been lodged with Limerick City Council for the use of the Vinery to be converted to a cafeteria area with an adjacent food preparation area and toilets.

This restoration work is being completed in conjunction with the construction of the Southill Energy Centre on the grounds of Southill House.

It is estimated that the restoration will be completed by 2012

which includes the re-erection of the steel work and glazing.

Mr Hanafin estimates that the restoration will cost in the region of €500,000 and emphasised the importance of the project.

"We will be restoring a valuable piece of the heritage of the city of Limerick and the country".

Project architect for the restoration is the Clonlara based Brian Grubb who has previously worked on St

Flannan's Cathedral in Ennis and Abington Church in Murroe.

Mr Grubb said of the challenge: "this is a beautiful little building which is quite early and quite special and it's incredible that the structure has remained so firm, straight and true over the past century".

According to Mr Grubb it was difficult to establish a specific date for the Vinery but it was eventually penned at the early 1860s to correspond with Peter

Tait's career.

"He had made a fortune selling army uniforms during the Crimean War and later to the Confederate Army during the American Civil War. The Confederate Army began their demise in the late 1850s and this must have been when he was at the peak of his wealth and wanted everything that a successful man had, including a Turner Vinery".

He said that the building's transformation into a cafeteria poses many challenges and modern heat recovery systems need to be put in place.

However he remains optimistic: "These are all challenges which can be overcome and there is nothing worse than restoring an old building which is then put into mothballs".



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