

Civic Trust to build on City's X-Factor

By CLODAGH O'LEARY

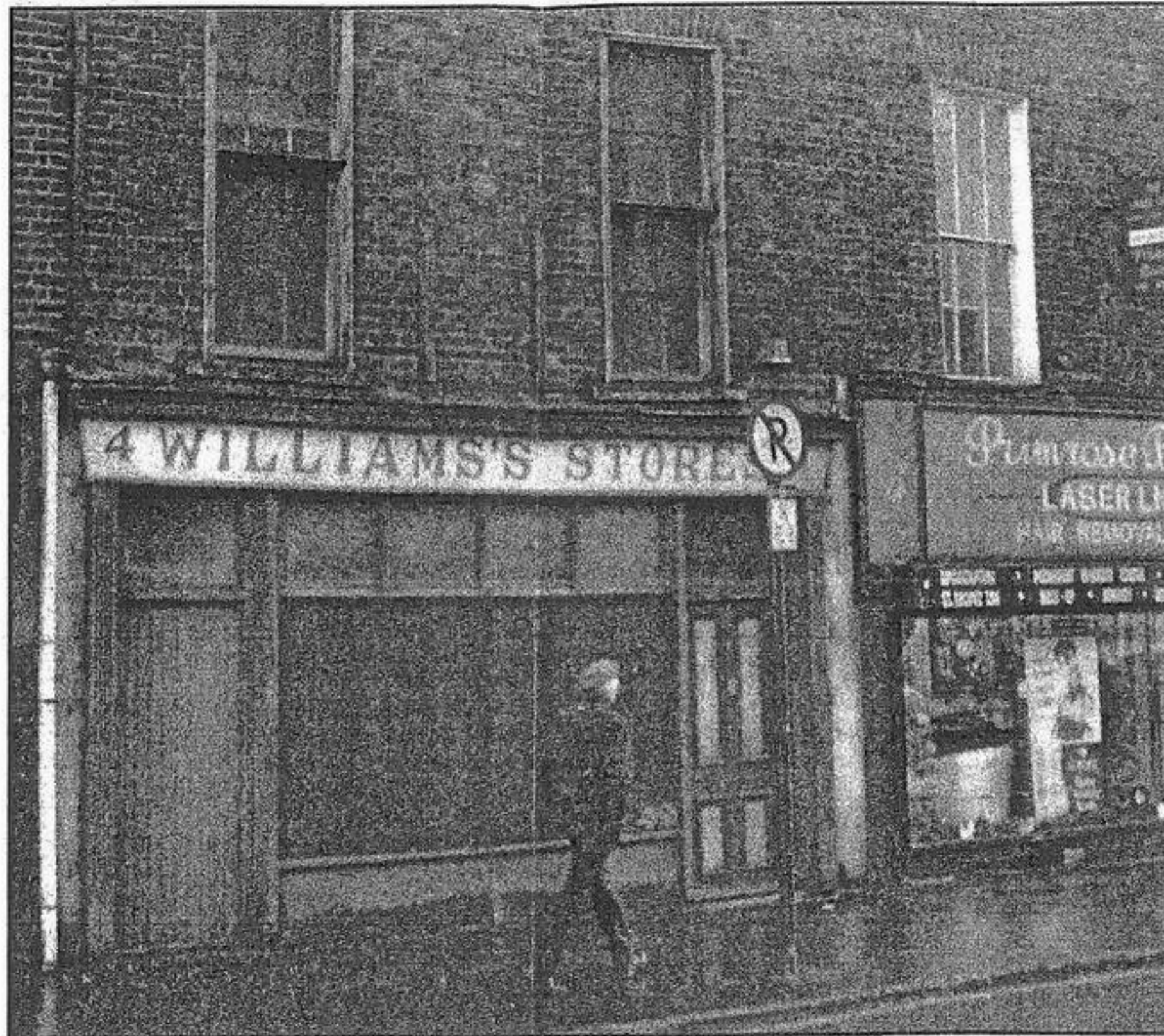
LIMERICK Civic Trust are preparing to undertake two of their highest profile projects ever in the next two years—the restoration of Catherine Hayes' birthplace and refurbishment works at The People's Park.

At their AGM this week, the Trust outlined their plans to raise €2m to carry out works at 4 Patrick Street, where the opera singer was born.

"This unique project seeks to celebrate the life and times of an 18th century Limerick-born megastar. Plans include the restoration of her London grave, the redevelopment of her birthplace at No 4 Patrick Street and the creation of a bursary for students of classical music honouring her achievements. We believe this will be a major new project for Limerick Civic Trust and look forward to its development over the coming years," Chairman of the Trust, Pat Daly, said in his report to the board.

Another ambitious series of projects revolve around the People's Park—the city's "major asset and civic amenity".

The Trust propose to create a new entrance to the park at the junction of upper Mallow Street and Boherbuoy, facing Colbert Station—the Pery Portal, named after the Pery family.



Civic Trust plans a lans include the redevelopment of Catherine Hayes' birthplace at No 4 Patrick Street and the creation of a bursary for students of classical music

Initial plans will see the new entrance framed by two 15 feet-high corrugated bronze pieces of art.

The Trust have written approval from the Earl of Limerick and trustees of the park and both parties agreed to donate €75,000 each—the sum they received for selling their freehold to the City Council to allow for the controversial residential development at People's Park—to carry out works at the Park.

But the proposals have not yet been finalised, and the Trust must give a full presentation to City Council before any work begins.

Plans have been outlined to refurbish the park kiosk, to erect information panels on the history of the park at each entrance, to refurbish the stonework and gates at the main entrance, to repair the drinking fountain, to provide wheelchair access to the Band Stand and there is also a

possibility of putting floodlighting on the Spring Rice Memorial.

Another exciting initiative in 2007 will be the launch of the Civic Medal Award, designed by Limerick-born artist Thomas Ryan.

The award, suggested by Mr Ryan, will see a medal presented to an outstanding building in the city. The medal design will also become the Trust's new logo.

In his report to the board, Director of the

Trust, Denis Leonard raised two issues—funding and new members.

"My strong recommendation is to develop what I'll describe as the new factor. New projects, new funds, new members, new ideas, new trustees and executive members. We have to continue the process of developing the new generation of Limerick Civic Trust activists. We own very valuable assets and we have a very important niche in Limerick," he said this week.

"We have to develop and protect both into the future. It's a responsibility we inherited from thousands of benefactors and sources who have given financially and otherwise to Limerick Civic Trust since 1983."

As of September 30 this year, the Trust, in its 23-year history, has undertaken 121 projects at a cost of almost €13m. They currently employ 64 people.

Mr Leonard said that the Trust was very highly regarded at every level in the city.

"The best way of maintaining this is to adopt the "new factor" as the working motto of the Executive," he concluded.