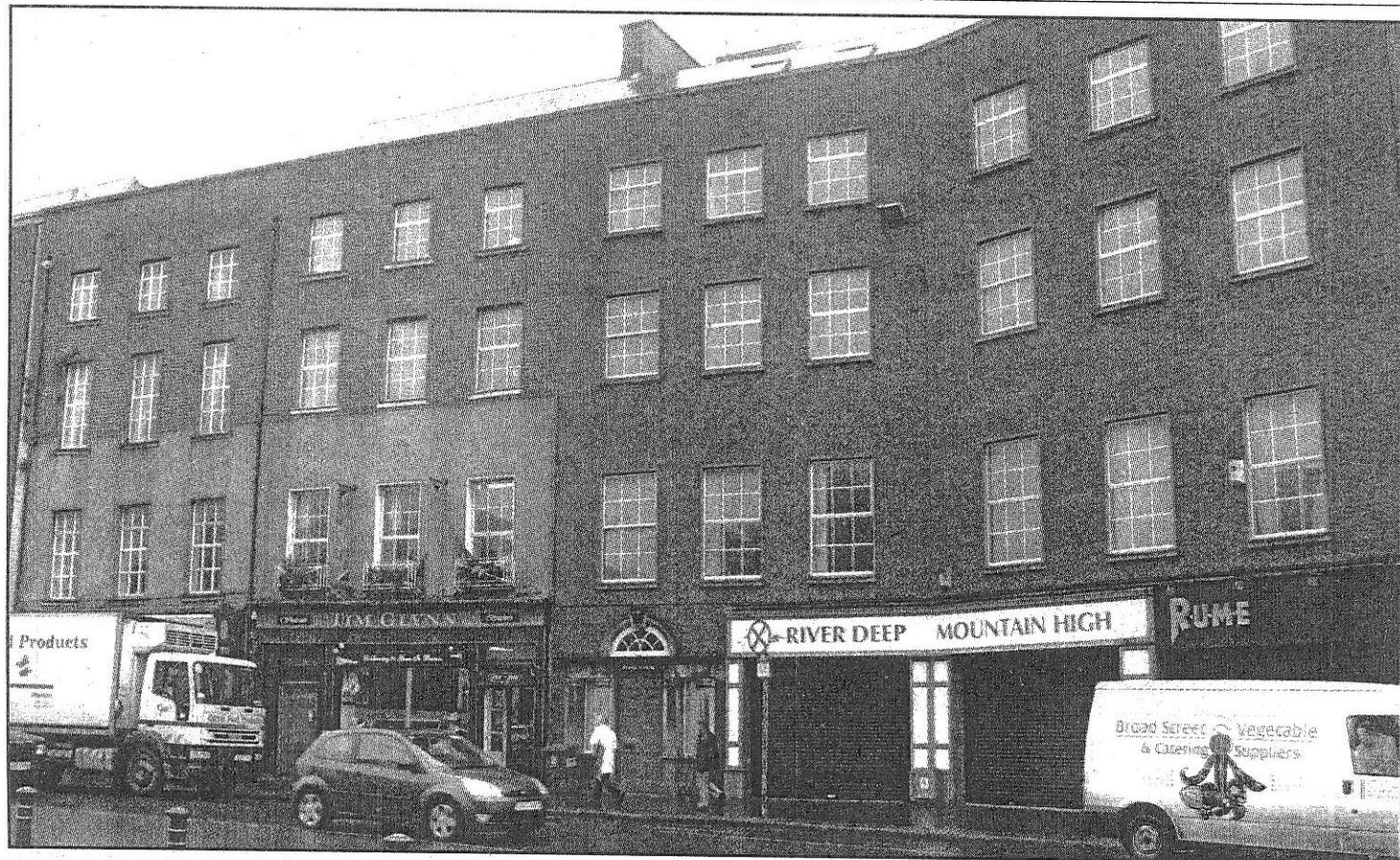


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GENERAL NEWS



The four Georgian buildings on Rutland Street which were to be demolished to make way for the Opera Centre

(LL)

Conservation crux for Opera Centre

By ANNE SHERIDAN

FOUR Georgian buildings on Rutland Street which were due to be demolished for the construction of the €250m Opera Centre will now be conserved and repaired.

"We are reviewing the report by An Bord Pleanála and our design team are currently examining their plans," said Suneil Sharma, CEO of Regenerations Developments Ltd.

The new conditions outlined by the planning body primarily take into account the objections submitted by four appellants, especially noting those by local architect Cáit Ní Cheallacháin.

Ms Ní Cheallacháin, who refused to accept a €250,000 pay-off to withdraw her objection, criti-



The new Opera Centre: has been given the green light with some conditions

cised the initial plans on the grounds that architectural heritage would be lost if the project went ahead.

Subsequently, four Georgian buildings at number 4, 5, 6 and 7 Rutland Street, which were set to be demolished, are

to be conserved and repaired and possibly integrated into the overall development.

The planning body has also requested further information on the "sky bridge" linking the retail space with a car park on Denmark Street.

Cllr Pat Kennedy described the new plans as a "balanced approach".

"It is now essential that Limerick City Council formulate a comprehensive development plan," he said.

Mayor Joe Leddin and Andrew Mawhinney of

Limerick Co-ordination Office expressed their delight that the shopping centre had been given the green light.

"It is certainly the beginning in the next chapter of a remarkable transformation project involving the regeneration of our city into a truly modern urban and exciting place to live," said Mayor Leddin.

The project, which will be the biggest development in the country when it goes ahead, is set to bring 1,200 new jobs to the region.

Denis Leonard of Limerick Civic Trust said they were pleased that the project had received a positive response.

"I just hope the conditions aren't too onerous," he said.

The company are currently in talks with a number of different retailers and expect to make an announcement shortly.