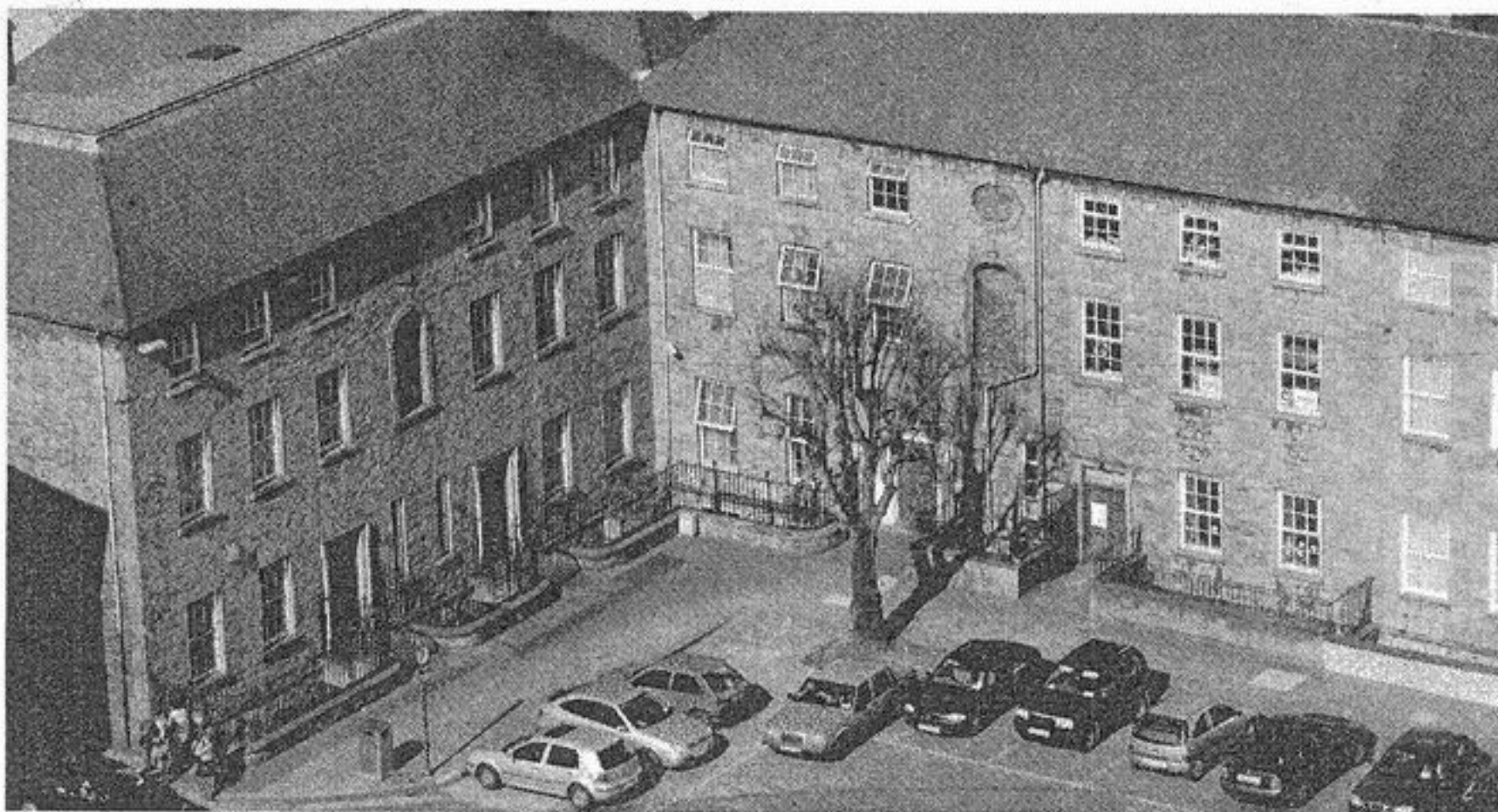


Square revamp could be catalyst for 'old quarter'



St John's Square is due to be upgraded

by Marie Hobbins

Historic area where Limerick won a famous victory

THE tendering process is underway for the refurbishment and upgrading of John's Square, and work is expected to be completed in 2012.

The historic square, built circa 1750, was once acknowledged as the city's most fashionable residential areas.

Close to €2million will be spent on repaving the square in granite, the installation of street furniture, new public lighting and the introduction of a one-way traffic flow from Garryowen to the city centre.

The refurbishment should, insists Cllr Diarmuid Scully, include new signage.

"This is a very historic area - the army of King William of Orange was defeated there, yet there is no signage to indicate that this is where Limerick won a famous victory," he told a meeting of the city

council's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Calling for a comprehensive presentation on what the refurbishment work will involve, Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon also recommended that a full presentation be provided for the local community.

"This could be given in St John of the Cross Church in the square," he suggested.

Referring to the water fountain opposite St John's Cathedral, which the city council, with the co-operation of Limerick Civic Trust restored two years ago, he repeated a call for the installation of a protective railing around it.

"A lovely job was done on the fountain but unfortunately, after a while it began to attract people who congregated around it to consume alcohol, which, given its proximity to the cathedral, with weddings, funerals and religious events taking place, is not appropriate.

"I have been calling for the installation of a railing around it to prevent people squatting down on the fountain".

Director of services, Oliver O'Loughlin, assured Cllr O'Hanlon that work is

currently underway around the water fountain.

Cllr Orla McLoughlin wants the old streets surrounding the square to be prioritised.

"We could develop a historic quarter by paying attention to the very old streets and the back alleys - these should be incorporated into the John's Square project.

"This entire area is long overdue a complete revamp - I've often seen visitors to the city wandering down back streets - they love to see the authentic areas that reflect the old city and its history," she said.

The contentious issue of transferring the Patrick Sarsfield sculpture from the grounds of St John's Cathedral to a more prominent location, was raised by Cllr Pat Kennedy.

"The local people would prefer that Sarsfield stays in the same position, and I agree with them.

"John's Square is very important for the image of the city and it is vital that the houses be maintained and where required, be upgraded," he concluded.

Safety is main priority at unfinished estates

by Marie Hobbins

PUBLIC safety will be the main issue for Limerick City Council in dealing with unfinished housing estates. There are four estates which have been inspected: Drominbeg in Rhebogoe; Wallers Close, Roxboro; Shelbourne House, at the rear of the Holy Rosary Church, and Allendale Square on the South Circular Road.

Said senior planner Kieran Reeves: "We have commenced negotiations with the developers or receivers, and in the event of failure to achieve a satisfactory outcome, we can apply to the Department of the Environment if the required work is not carried out but first of all, we will make the sites safe".

The threat to people's safety on these

estates places an onus on the council to make sure the sites are safe," Cllr Kevin Kiely stressed.

"We must do this, even if it means we have to go to the department or the courts". Referring to an instance of vandalism on the Wallers Well estate, Cllr Jim Long said that protection against such criminality should be a matter of urgency.

Bonds lodged with City Council.

Shelbourne House €66,000; Griffin House, no bond but discussions underway; Waller Close, €60,000; Hartstonge Gate, €385,600; Strand House, €100,000; Drominbeg, €244,000; Allendale Square, €108,433.

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54 Catherine Street, Limerick City

Tuesday, 28th June 2011

10.00am-1.00pm and 2.00pm-4.00pm

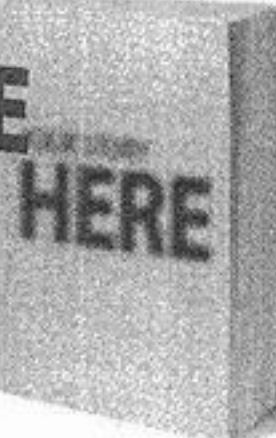
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