



Culture Company, 14 Henrietta Street, Children

# Conserving story, history & architecture



Discovering 300 years of history within four walls



**DUBLIN**



554,554



Participatory governance of cultural heritage



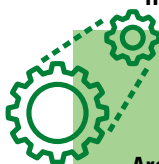
## Challenge

The challenge was to prevent the loss of important Georgian architecture, modern social history and stories of local and domestic life. After the last tenement residents left this architecturally and socially significant area in the late 1970s, the house at 14 Henrietta Street fell into decay. The suburbs began to be built and preserving living memories of tenement life in Dublin and local stories, before they were gone, was a priority.



## Solutions

The 2002 city-wide Heritage Plan and subsequent Henrietta Street Conservation Plan ensured the building was preserved. The municipal heritage office identified it as a site to tell stories of its inhabitants across three important eras in local, national and international history. The museum was formed, and continues to collect stories, to present an 'if these walls could talk' experience, blending personal experiences and objects into the restored fabric of the building.



## How ?

### Architecture

Acquired through the Henrietta Street Conservation Plan, to rescue the last intact Georgian street in Dublin, the conservation focused on retaining, preserving and recovering, the building becoming the main artefact in the museum's collection.

### History

With historians, conservators, architects and former residents, the layers of history the building could unravel were uncovered. Focused on how the history of the house reflects the social history of Dublin, it traces the journey of a grand Georgian townhouse from a family home, to legal offices, to a tenement (housing over 100 people during the 1911 census). It gathers, interprets and exhibits, creating a truly immersive experience.

### Stories

Tour guides engage with visitors, former residents and the local community, using active listening to reveal the building's place in local, national and global history through stories of domestic life and the people of the house. First-hand memories from former residents animate the building's curation. Oral histories are continually collected and inform new and responsive programming.

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## Budget/Financing

€ 5 million

The capital budget, including building purchase, rescue, stabilisation and conservation was €5 million, financed 70% by Dublin City Council and 30% by the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and the Heritage Council at national level.

The museum's operational budget is funded through multi-annual funding from Dublin City Council, earned income and project funding awards secured by the Culture Company.



## Management

Dublin Culture Company has led the development. Rather than a standard cultural department in the city, it is an independent organisation wholly owned by Dublin City Council. It runs cultural initiatives and buildings across the city with, and for, the people of Dublin. It also hosts an EU lab to foster international cooperation and help local creatives access EU funding. Architects, conservators, social historians, former residents, artists and archivists worked as an advisory group. As well as in tours, interviews and workshops, these groups continue to assist the museum's work and participate in voluntary advisory panels. This partnership model brings together the local authority, Dublin's culture company and the local community. It is one that the city intends to apply to other heritage conservation and restoration projects in the future.



## Links

[www.14HenriettaStreet.ie](http://www.14HenriettaStreet.ie)

Social Historian Donal Fallon interviews a former resident:

<https://bit.ly/304aN2l>

Mrs Dowling's Flat <https://bit.ly/2WXTPB2>



## Transferability

- Combine and integrate a collaborative approach to the preservation and ongoing presentation of heritage.
- Engage with your local community and identify what stories they have to tell about cultural heritage and infrastructure. Reflect and respond to the people, their stories and experiences through programming in a sustainable way.
- Ensure local community participation in a non-hierarchical multi-stakeholder group for each of development phases (restoration, conservation, and implementation).



## Impact

### People:

- "This project has lifted the heart, soul and minds of people in this community and given voice to those who are seldom heard."
- A people-centred approach creates relevant experiences. Collecting stories safeguards social history and informs responsive programming.

### Municipality:

- Participatory methodology for stakeholder buy-in.
- Importance of social innovation to participatory cultural heritage creates valued community resources

### Impacts:

- Peer awards - EuropaNostra special mention 2018 (conservation), European Heritage Days Stories Award 2019 (story collecting), shortlisted by the jury of the EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture 2019, nominee European Museum of the Year Award 2020.
- Transferable model for people-first methodology.



## Contact

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