



(c) David Murphy

Warehouse of Ideas

A cultural quarter in Ireland's oldest city



(IE)

WATERFORD



55,000



Cultural heritage
for sustainable development



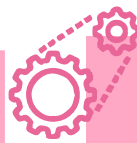
Challenge

O'Connell Street was once the retail centre of Waterford City and remains a central thoroughfare in the city. It boasts many heritage buildings with specific historical significance to the city. In recent years, it has lost much of the prosperity and energy of its past and is struggling to find a purpose in the modern city. New beginnings and a fresh distinctiveness are evidenced through the diverse communities who call it home, the range of cultural assets located on the street, the emerging scene of bars and cafés, and the cultural hub offered by Garter Lane Arts Centre.



Solution

By collaborating closely with the local school of architecture, the city of Waterford has provided a space for architectural students to create a "warehouse of ideas". The initiative brings creative young people and the city's decision-makers into a reciprocal relationship that helps envision a creative, sustainable regeneration of the city and an action plan for its cultural heritage. This includes co-design activities for cultural events and the mapping and recording of streets for future projects. The aim is to develop the historic 18th century Georgian area of Waterford, into a vibrant cultural realm.



How ?

- 1 In 2018, Waterford Cultural Quarter (initiated and managed by Waterford City and County Council) and the Department of Architecture at SETU (South East Technological University) began a continuous collaboration on co-research and co-design projects for the historic area of the city. Their offices and studios are in neighbouring cultural heritage buildings in the Cultural Quarter of Waterford City.
- 2 In 2020, the architecture students began their semester-long 'Urban Complexities' design studio in the Cultural Quarter of Waterford. As part of their curriculum, they have undertaken intensive studies on area mapping and recording of potential spaces within the Cultural Quarter for art and heritage projects (using data from the planning department of Waterford City and County Council).
- 3 The students are involved with Waterford Cultural Quarter and The Irish Architecture Foundation Re-Imagine programme to make prototype stalls for a craft market in the Cultural Quarter. They participated in public consultancy workshops as part of this process and the winning prototype will be produced and used in the market by 2025.

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Budget/Financing

€ 750,000 (2021-2025)

- The Waterford Cultural Quarter project has a 5-year budget of €750,000 (2021-2025) and is entirely financed by Waterford City and County Council.
- Waterford Cultural Quarter has also received funding as part of the Creative Spirits Urbact Implementation Network 2017-2019, a network of nine European cities, funded by the European Union in the frame of the [URBACT III Programme](#) and received €57,769 in funding.



Management

- The initiative is an equal collaboration between the Department of Architecture, School of Engineering, South East Technological University, Waterford; the Waterford Cultural Quarter, initiated by Waterford City and County Council and; the Department of Services, Planning, Corporate and Culture, Waterford City and County Council.



Links

- <https://bit.ly/3GkBGTO>
- <https://bit.ly/3QilqGi>
- <https://bit.ly/3X8cRBk>
- <https://bit.ly/3Gk1hfo>
- <https://bit.ly/3Qh2ngl>



Transferability

This model of practice could be replicated in other European cities and regions where a Department or School of Architecture has a formal engagement with an administrative authority.

Some tips for transferring this model to a different context are:

- Embrace new flexible modes of working.
- Students do not see barriers, they see opportunities. Have realistic expectations of outputs. The work is mostly exploratory.
- Value high-level thinking.



Impact

- The sharing of whole area street spatial mapping research, whole street elevation studies and 3D visualisations of the Cultural Quarter will be used in future adaptive reuse developments in the Cultural Quarter.
- Locating the Architecture Department in the centre of Waterford City has enabled the students to engage in the urban realm on an ongoing basis; raises the visibility of the Architecture Department and associated activities with the general population and, crucially; prompts interaction between local initiatives and the Department of Architecture.
- The process has forged relationships which engender trust between academia and policy makers.
- The Waterford Cultural Quarter Crafts Market Co-Design Project involved students, local craftspeople and community stakeholders. This brought all actors into dialogue making sure all needs were met. This feedback has been organised into a methodology for Design and Strategy, and Management and Logistics for future planning of the market.



Contact

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