

## FEATURE



Above, Street life revitalised at Magazine Gate thanks to the repair of the old Northern Counties Hotel under the Walled City Townscape Heritage Initiative. Right, The former Irvine Printing Works, Waterloo Street (fully occupied).

away a million people crossed the Peace Bridge in its first fifteen months. There's not much sign of them in Shipquay Street. Why's that? Next time you come off the bridge on the cityside notice which direction you head and where that takes you. Chances are you'll turn sharp right along the river, or maybe sharp left. If you want to cross the Foyle Embankment dual carriageway you'll still walk to the right towards the pedestrian crossing.

Once across you'll either head to the Guildhall, Guildhall Street, and maybe into Guildhall Square. If you head up Shipquay Street, you'll probably be on the right hand side going up.

The left hand side is mostly deserted. When a street is empty of people, it takes courage to invest money in repairing run down old buildings, however special.

Ideas for a pedestrian bridge linking the walled city with St Columb's Park and Ebrington were first mooted

back in the early-mid 1990s. The aim was to create a physically unified heart for the city. The Peace Bridge has gone a long way towards this,



A taste of things to come for the Foyle Embankment? Pedestrians and vehicles share movement safely on London's Exhibition Road.

but we're not there yet. Over four years ago Derry's movement patterns were analysed by internationally renowned 'Space Syntax'. Its findings revealed the single most impor-

tant action needed to reverse the almost terminal economic decline in the Walled City was achieving a direct pedestrian route from the Peace Bridge

into Shipquay Street.

Chronic economic malaise in this and other inner city streets, and persistent nervousness by property owners to apply for very attractive

THI funding packages, is proof (if proof were needed) that the greatest obstacle to the full uptake of the remaining THI grant is property owners' lack of confidence that their investments will turn into viable commercial businesses.

Removing the barrier to direct pedestrian flow from the Peace Bridge into the Walled City caused by the Foyle Embankment's kit of parts and fast moving cars, is a matter of urgency if we are to reverse the continued economic decline of the Walled City, support completion of Walled City Partnership's THI Phase II, and ensure the £6.5 million public/private sector THI investment already made pays dividends.

