

## FEATURE

# A great quirky wee street

In Part Two of our look at the THI building programme we examine the work being carried out in Derry's famous Waterloo Street

## WALLED CITY

By MARY KERRIGAN  
EDUCATION OFFICER  
WALLED CITY PARTNERSHIP

In this article, the second of a three-part series highlighting the Walled City Partnership's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) - building repair programme in Derry - MARY KERRIGAN focuses on the "rescue and repair" work at Waterloo Street.

Small is beautiful. The narrow fronted, brick buildings winding uphill at Waterloo Street form one of Derry's most attractive, old streets.

Completed by 1909, this was a 'Mecca' for local and Donegal shoppers until decline started in the early 1980s.

Set on reversing this, the Walled City Partnership (WCP) targeted clusters of old buildings in Waterloo Street for its Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) repair grant.

Ten years later, the effectiveness of this vision is clear.

Last March, the former Irvine Printing Works, became home to Northern Ireland's leading contemporary dance company - Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company. Injection of the Heritage Lottery THI funding allowed greater repair work on this important building.

Ailbe Beirne, Echo Echo's company manager, remarked: "The THI grant totally transformed the building."

Its front door, opening on to Hangman's Bastion, really increases comings and goings along the city walls.

Skillfully repaired, even small buildings really improve a street's appearance. Under THI grant, as much as possible is repaired.

Waterloo Street backs on to the city walls. Facing two public thoroughfares, repair of both frontages means more bang for the HLF buck. Repairs to its natural 'Bangor Blue' slate roofs, painted timber sliding sash windows, cast iron roof-lights, and replastering in lime really lifts the experience of 'walking the walls' as well as Waterloo Street.

Removal of external steel roller shutters was another strict condition of the THI grant.

In a still challenging political context, taking the plunge on this demanded a huge leap of faith.

First off the blocks, seven years ago, was local services engineer, Paul Burke, at numbers 22 and 24 Waterloo Street.

Geared up to replace broken windows every couple of months, not a window has been broken and graffiti artists leave un-shuttered shop fronts alone.

Building contractor, Frank Ferry and his wife Joan, believe the Richmond Centre - built to revive commercial life in the devastated walled city - proved to be Waterloo Street's death knell.

Removal of traffic in the late 1980s - not to mention the cheap, imitation brick paving - changed the appearance of the street: negatively. 'Foyle-side' was the final nail in the coffin. Shoppers went elsewhere.

Seizing the THI grant opportunity, last summer, Frank and Joan lovingly repaired numbers 23 and 25.

Holding out for the 'right' tenants, they were delighted when 'Lollipop Kids' and 'Hullabaloo' moved in after Christmas. They join other THI 'babies' at 'Pippa' and Janice Milligan's 'Opticians'.

As Frank Ferry remarked: "It's really great to see this quirky, wee street come back to life!"

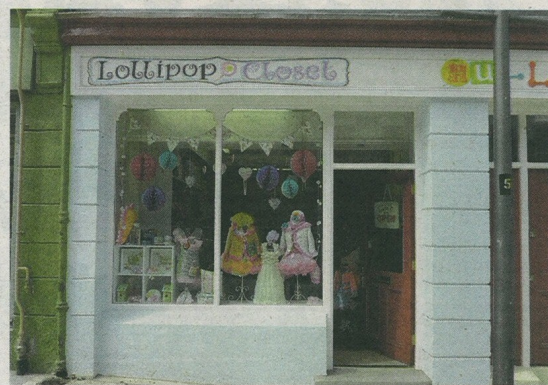
Steady progress and Walled City Partnership's strategic clustering decision has resulted in a heritage led regeneration scheme within this quarter of the walled city that really punches above its weight - visually and financially. The impact is disproportionate measured against the relatively small grant (in construction terms), a voluntary board, and one Project Officer.

Walled City Partnership's first HLF grant was £1 million. This levered an overall spend of £4.479 million.

Partner funding from Planning NI, Department for Social Development, NIHE, NIEA, and private property owners, made everything stack up. A second grant of £1.669 million means twenty five build-



The junction of Castle Street and Waterloo Street which has benefited greatly from the Walled City Partnership's THI initiative.



One of the Waterloo Street premises revamped as part of the Walled City Partnership's THI project.



1-3 Castle Street (also forms 22 and 24 Waterloo Street) which was repaired under Phase I of the Walled City Partnership's Townscape Heritage Initiative.



NEW-LOOK... Recently completed THI properties at Nos 23 and 25 Waterloo Street.

ings are almost complete and WCP's aim of repairing and bringing 56 buildings into full use is becoming reality.

From seedlings, Walled City Partnership's Townscape Heritage Initiative has become a significant regeneration force in Derry - and a shining example in Northern Ireland. Its repaired buildings are Walled City Partnership board's collective legacy to the first UK City of Culture 2013.

Stalwart chair Mary McLaughlin and her team have driven a steady path through the debris and dereliction of the worst years of the Troubles, transforming this quarter of the walled city - truly cause for joyous cultural celebration.

See Friday's 'Journal' for Part III: 'The Seeing Project'.



1960s... Waterloo Street in its heyday.