GETTING STUCK-IN WITH STUCCO:
PAT McAULIFFE’S LISTOWEL

Seminar & Workshop
10th JULY 2018

FEEDBACK REPORT

A Collaborative Initiative By
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Victoria McCarthy
Architectural Conservation Officer
Kerry County Council
November 2018
INTRODUCTION & SETTING THE SCENE

History of Pat McAuliffe’s Shopfronts
Pat McAuliffe lived and worked in Listowel, Co. Kerry from 1846 to 1921. In a career as a plasterer and builder he applied exterior plaster, or stucco, upon shopfronts and townhouse facades in the region. From the 1870s on he began to develop an ambitious and often exuberant style, using a broad range of elements culled from the vocabulary of classical architecture and ornament while exploring an eclectic mix of art nouveau, Celtic and Byzantine influences.

Setting the Scene
The purpose of this project was to showcase Pat McAuliffe’s contribution to Ireland’s vernacular built heritage and to enable collective understanding, appreciation and knowledge, particularly among its custodians, of the importance of this heritage. It is important to protect Listowel’s architectural identity. As a society, we must realise the impact of small but numerous changes on the character and long-term survival of our heritage assets. The need for appropriate conservation repairs in addition to meeting the challenges of modern retailing and commercial needs, has, at times, resulted in pressure on this finite resource.

The Listowel Heritage-Led Regeneration Strategy
In 2015 Kerry County Council commissioned the Listowel Heritage-Led Regeneration Strategy which aims to environmentally, economically and socially regenerate the historic town of Listowel. The strategy sets out a shared vision for the rejuvenation of the town following public consultation. As part of this process, the strategy identified the “Big 6” – six heritage assets as being particularly unique to Listowel and central to the success of the strategy. Pat McAuliffe was specifically highlighted as being an integral element of Listowel’s architectural heritage.

Statutory Protection
Many of the shopfronts and other McAuliffe buildings are protected structures in the Record of Protected Structures in the Listowel Town Development Plan 2009-2015 (as extended) and are also part of wider Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) designated in the Development Plan. The buildings are included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

European Year of Cultural Heritage Community Grant Scheme 2018
The Listowel Business and Community Alliance applied for funding under the European Year of Cultural Heritage Community Grant scheme in 2018 to focus on Pat McAuliffe and his Listowel legacy. Listowel’s shopfronts are unique and deserve recognition. The Listowel Business and Community Alliance was successful with funding provided by both the Heritage Council and Kerry County Council towards the event.
Aims and Objectives
There were four main aims and objectives of the seminar:

1. Highlight Listowel’s Architectural Heritage
2. Outline the Genius of Pat McAuliffe
3. Architectural assessment of Pat McAuliffe buildings by a conservation architect
4. Practical advice from conservation specialists

Seminar Preparation
The Conservation Architect called to all the Pat McAuliffe building owners in Listowel town during the month of June to carry out a condition survey of the buildings identified in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Contact was also made with the Limerick Conservation Officer to ensure the Abbeyfeale community, another location where Pat McAuliffe has left his legacy, was fully appraised of the event and invited to attend the seminar and workshop in Listowel. The Alliance invited local businesses, Listowel Tidy Towns, the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society, along with An Taisce, Kerry County Council, Listowel business people, and local agents. The event was also widely advertised in the local print media and on social media, using in particular, the contacts the Alliance has made since its inception in 2017.

Excerpt from local newspaper highlighting the event

Seminar Information
The Listowel Heritage-Led Regeneration Strategy was available as were copies of the Advice Series prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Conservation leaflets on various aspects of conservation repairs were also provided. Books and DVDs of the County Kerry National Inventory of Architectural Heritage survey were available to all. Information about conservation grants and other publications including the “Shopfronts of County Cork” and Seán Rothery’s “The Shops of Ireland” were also available during the event.
During early preparations for this seminar, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht were very supportive of the proposed event and wished to help promote Listowel’s Pat McAuliffe shopfronts. Accordingly, contact was made closer to the seminar date and one of Pat McAuliffe’s buildings, The Emporium, 15 Church Street, Listowel, was chosen to feature as the Building of the Month in June, prior to the July seminar. It was expected that this would also help promote the seminar and workshop. Excerpts from Seán Lynch’s book were used and photographs from the County Conservation Officer. The owner of The Emporium had a beautiful shopfront window display to celebrate the inclusion of the building in the NIAH’s Building of the Month. Following this initial publicity, the editor of History Ireland featured The Emporium as the Gem of Architecture in the Autumn edition.
The Building of the Month - The Emporium, Church Street, Listowel by Pat McAuliffe. This building is featured on the link below and demonstrates how much history Listowel has within its beautiful buildings. Well worth a read. buildingsofireland.ie/Surveys/Buildi ...

5:01 AM - 7 Jun 2018
The seminar and workshop was also afforded particular mention in the Tidy Towns Report for Listowel.
“This Adjudicator would visit Listowel just to look at the shopfronts alone. The wonderful stucco work, the colours and the high standard of care make your main streets a joy to wander along. These are locally appreciated as an event to learn about this craft, this was advertised at your Heritage Centre” (p.22).

“It is very encouraging to read of the recent funding acquired for the protection of Pat McAuliffe’s unique legacy and examples observed were excellent” (p.26).

Excerpts from Adjudication Report for Tidy Towns, 2018, Listowel National Winner, Ireland’s Tidiest Town

Display of Seminar & Workshop Advertising at Entrance to the Seanchaí Kerry Writers’ Museum
There were five speakers at the seminar and workshop:
1. Setting the Scene: Victoria McCarthy, Kerry County Council
2. Listowel Through the Lens: Vincent Carmody, Author and Local Historian
3. The Genius of Pat McAuliffe: Seán Lynch, Author of “The Stuccowork of Pat McAuliffe of Listowel”
5. Practical Conservation Advice: Colm O’Sullivan, Capital Mouldings, Cork

Victoria McCarthy, Architectural Conservation Officer, Kerry County Council. Victoria’s presentation highlighted the Listowel Heritage and Community Led Regeneration Strategy and how the seminar evolved from this strategy. Victoria outlined the basic principles of shopfront design and how vernacular commercial architecture has changed over the centuries. Victoria then spoke about Pat McAuliffe and his work and used photographs of Listowel’s shopfronts to highlight detail. Her presentation concluded with advice and guidance on how to maintain historic shopfronts and where to go for advice and funding.
Late 19th Century - A Time of Change

Point of departure – building style, materials & technology
Larger plate glass windows revolutionised facades & shopfront design
Pattern Books

What is Stucco?

Plaster – gypsum, lime & marble powder
External uses – imitate stone
Internal uses – ceiling/wall decoration
Decorate vernacular buildings

Celtic Revival (late 19th century)

Ornamental, avoiding straight lines & only occasionally using symmetry
Often involving complex symbolism
Spirals, key patterns, lettering, zoomorphics, plant forms & human figures
Vincent Carmody is a local historian and provides tours where he outlines his knowledge about the comprehensive history of the town, its inhabitants, and its hinterland, from the 19th century up to the present day. Vincent is also the author of “Listowel: Snapshots of an Irish Market Town, 1850-1950, published in 2012 and the North Kerry Camera, Listowel & its surroundings (1860-1960), published in 1989. Vincent’s presentation comprised an extensive collection of photographs from Listowel town where a wide range of buildings, streets and local scenes were presented to the audience. Vincent also identified how Listowel has changed over the years using the medium of photography to highlight how Listowel has grown and developed over time.

Seán Lynch is a Kerry-born artist currently living in Brussels. Alongside representing Ireland at the Venice Biennale in 2015, he has worked alongside Michele Horrigan at Askeaton Contemporary Arts, enabling over a hundred artist residencies and site-specific projects to be made in southwest Ireland. Seán published "The Stuccowork of Pat McAuliffe of Listowel" in 2008. Seán outlined how Pat McAuliffe used the façade of vernacular buildings as a canvas on which to erect living art and he showed how symbols, a variety of artistic styles and influences were employed, often on the same building. Seán focused on both Listowel and Abbeyfeale and included pictures of architectural features which have been lost over time. Seán explained how the German word “Gesamtkunstwerk” perfectly described how Pat worked which is translated as a work of art that makes use of all or many art forms or strives to do so. The following images are excerpts from Seán’s presentation.

Maintaining historic shopfronts

Remember - you have an antique!!

Repair rather than replace

Decorate with appropriate colours and mind the detail

Remove unnecessary signage, wiring, cables & simplify lighting
Mary O’Connell is based locally in Kerry and is a practising Registered Architect with Conservation Accreditation, with 20 years post qualification experience on various projects types from Residential to Educational, Healthcare, Commercial and Civic Projects with specific interest in Conservation Projects. Mary had surveyed Listowel’s shopfronts that were attributed to Pat McAuliffe and spoke about their detail and architectural features; some very obvious, and some almost hidden. Mary concluded with advice about best practice. The following images are excerpts from Mary’s presentation.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Getting Stuck in with Stucco</th>
<th>The Maid of Erin, 12 Main Street</th>
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Colm O’Sullivan, from Capital Mouldings is based in Cork and is involved in conservation and restoration work and uses traditional materials with a focus to preserve old decorative work is wherever possible. Notable projects include City Hall, Cork, Muckross House, Killarney, St John the Baptist’s Church, Kinsale
and St. Anne’s & St. Mary’s North Cathedral Cork. Colm brought moulds and plaster samples with him and showed the attendees how stucco could be repaired or how moulds could be made. Colm outlined how damaged features can be reassembled and repaired and how reversed moulds can be made. Colm also answered several questions from the audience as there was clearly particular interest in seeing the practical side of stucco conservation.
FEEDBACK FROM WORKSHOP

As part of the seminar process, a workshop was held following the seminar. The aim of the workshop was for attendees to discuss themes and key issues raised. The following are the main comments:

“Listowel with its Pan-European Features is Floating above Kerry”

Continue to promote legacy of Pat McAuliffe – liaise with the McAuliffe family
Promote architectural heritage of Listowel in general
Invite Nationwide to do a feature on the McAuliffe Works in Listowel
Set up a local Community Group to focus on the McAuliffe Works in Listowel
Earmark a building and source funding to restore same in totality with specialists’ involvement as a pilot project
Devise a Summer School dedicated to expertise in stucco work and art workshops based on the works of McAuliffe that could also focus on one of the existing McAuliffe buildings as a restoration project per annum etc. (Similar to the template set by the Archaeological Summer Schools in the Burren)
Use Listowel Library to create art workshops and Competitions for Children based on the McAuliffe Stucco Art Works
Each building be 3d videoed and or laser scanned /surveyed and recorded for an online website / you tube page dedicated to McAuliffe/Produce a Single Online website dedicated to McAuliffe to be created
The Council should prepare a leaflet re guidelines on the painting and continued maintenance issued associated with the McAuliffe Buildings including appropriate colours to be used
The Council should prepare leaflet re guidelines on the painting and continued maintenance issued associated with the Protected Buildings in general in Listowel and issue to owners
Pat McAuliffe’s Centenary will be 2021 – earmark all plans to create an event / festival to celebrate same
Initially earmark Heritage Week to organize 1 event about McAuliffe in relation to same
Invite Schools of Art or Architecture to base a seminar project based on the McAuliffe buildings
Have master craftsmen do more events to demonstrate practical conservation work
Local authority conservation officer to be prominent/accessible to builders
The following work programme is proposed to continue the success of the seminar and workshop and to build on the enthusiasm and buy-in from the Listowel community.

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<tr>
<th>Task/Programme</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Liaise with the McAuliffe family regarding Pat McAuliffe following initial discussions – display of McAuliffe artefacts and centenary celebrations (liaise with Abbeyfeale Community Council in relation to Centenary also)</td>
<td>Q 3 &amp; Q 4 2018</td>
<td>LBCA, KCC, Limerick CC</td>
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<td>2. The Architecture of Listowel: WOW!: Heritage Week 2018 Event</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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<td>3. Disseminate Feedback Report to attendees and key stakeholders</td>
<td>Q 4 2018</td>
<td>LBCA &amp; KCC</td>
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<td>4. Review key issues from condition survey to identify common challenges facing McAuliffe’s stuccowork</td>
<td>Q1 2019</td>
<td>LBCA &amp; KCC</td>
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<td>5. Pursue funding options &amp; possible joint workshops/education/training for key problems identified to inform community</td>
<td>Q2 2019</td>
<td>KCC ACO</td>
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<td>6. Prepare and disseminate information for owners of protected structures/owners of buildings within designated Architectural Conservation Areas</td>
<td>Q2/Q3 2019</td>
<td>KCC ACO</td>
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