

Conserving Ireland's Architectural Heritage

New Life for Historic Buildings and Places through a Shared Culture of Adaptation & Reuse

Europe House, 11 Chatham Street, Dublin 2 | 27th March 2026



Palazzo Butera, Palermo, Sicily
Images courtesy of Marco Cassina



Adaptation & Reuse Conference

New Life for historic buildings and places through a Shared Culture of Adaptation & Reuse

7 structured RIAI CPD Points

This conference is organised by the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland, the European Commission Representation in Ireland, in partnership with the Irish Georgian Society and supported by the Office of Public Works and National Built Heritage Service.

The legacy of the **European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018** contributed to the first EU architectural policy, *Towards a Shared Culture of Architecture – Investing in a High-Quality Living Environment for Everyone*, and aligned with the **New European Bauhaus (NEB)** initiative. Europe must lead a cultural shift toward inclusive, sustainable and quality-driven transformation of buildings and places. This requires prioritising the reuse of existing building stock alongside new construction, avoiding unnecessary demolition and waste, supporting circular economy principles, sustaining traditional skills, and promoting good practice in retrofitting, repair and maintenance.



New European Bauhaus
beautiful | sustainable | together

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Ireland's **National Policy on Architecture - *Places for People*** developed alongside these EU initiatives. Collaboration and engagement continues under the **EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026**, with participation in the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group on *High-Quality Living Environment for All*, benefiting from shared experience in implementing EU architectural policy, the NEB and the **Davos quality criteria and Baukultur**. The **EUmies Awards** visit to Dublin in 2024 provided further opportunity to explore the theme of Adaptation & Reuse under the title 'Unlocking Potential' with the key note delivered by Professor Emeritus Loughlin Kealy (UCD), examining the evolution of practice in conservation and adaptive reuse across Europe.

As part of Ireland's EU Presidency, a series of public events is planned in November 2026 under the banner of '**Value for Many**', coordinated by the Office of Public Works and National Built Heritage Service in partnership with various organisations across the sector.

Ireland hosts the EU Presidency at an important moment for architecture; with various European cultural strategies, policy strands and funding mechanisms under review.

The EU Work Plan for Culture – which will include architecture within the broad church of cultural and creative sectors – begins a new three-year cycle starting in 2027, the end of which will likely coincide with local and general elections in Ireland. Within this context, a core legacy objective of Value for Many is to position architecture as a matter of general public priority.

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This conference on Adaptive Reuse forms part of that programme and will explore architectural policy and the NEB approach in the context of *Places for People* - architecture as a continuum, integrating built heritage with contemporary design to support circularity, sustainability and the continued use of historic buildings with discussion set in the context of the Krakow Declaration 2024 ; ‘New European Bauhaus – Heritage & Transformation’. Ireland is also the first EU Member State to embed NEB principles within European cohesion policy through the **ERDF THRIVE programme**, supporting heritage-led regeneration of vacant and underused public properties. **ERDF THRIVE** demonstrates how strategic investment can ignite local regeneration, bringing design, innovation and community vision together under the government’s Town Centre First policy and supporting the New European Bauhaus approach. A strong culture of **adaptation and reuse** will deliver better outcomes for the planet, communities and irreplaceable heritage resources.





9.00 Registration

(coffee & light breakfast served on arrival)

9.30 Welcome

Fearghas Ó Béara,

Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland

Peter Power,

Head of the European Commission Representation in Ireland

Jacqueline Hall

Chair Irish Georgian Society

10.00 Session 1 - Leadership

Chair & Introduction; Conor Sreenan, State Architect and Principal Architect, Office of Public Works

10.10 Key Note

Historic places and spaces under transformation – Varvsstaden

Olof Martinsson, Heritage Officer for Malmö (Stadsantikvarie)

Panellists; Morris Conway, Waterford City & County Council, **Niamh Kiernan,** Architectural Conservation Officer, Dublin City Council. **Lar Joye,** Port Heritage Director, Dublin Port Company

11.00 Session 2 - Culture

Chair; Fionnuala Sweeney, Head of Film and Architecture, the Arts Council.

Introduction; Graham Bell, Europa Nostra

Baukultur: an integrated approach to European heritage assets

(Please note programme subject to changes)

11.10 Key Note

Gare Maritime and other projects of transformation, re-imagining existing buildings and places with high quality interventions and materials, distinguishable from the original construction.

Michiel Riedijk, founding partner and principal architect, Neutelings Riedijk Architecten

Panellists; Sarah Woods, Assist. Principal Archt. OPW (**National Concert Hall**), **Valerie Mulvin**, Director, McCullough Mulvin Architects (**Central Hotel**), **Gerard Carty**, Director, Grafton Architects (**Crawford Art Gallery**)

12.00 Session 3 - Sustainability

Chair; Graham Hickey, CEO, Dublin Civic Trust

Introduction; Emmett Scanlon, Director, Irish Architecture Foundation

12.10 Key Note

Do “as little as possible but as much as is necessary”: three projects adopting this philosophy in the successful adaptation and reuse of cultural, housing and institutional historic structures in Ireland (**Athy Market House, Portlaoise Convent, Haulbowline Block 9**), **Ciaran O’Brien**, Director, O’BFA

Panellists; Joe Lawrence, Director, Lawrence & Long Architects, **Niamh Lunny**, CEO, Irish Landmark Trust, **Giulia Vallone**, RIAI Urban Design Committee/Cork County Council

(light lunch will be served)



14.00 Session 4 – Quality

Chair; Angela Rolfe, President, ICOMOS Ireland

14.10

Introduction

The New European Bauhaus - *Beautiful, Sustainable, Together*

Elena Montani, Head of Unit, New European Bauhaus Coordination Unit, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission.

14.20 Key Note

Palazzo Butera: a project for Palermo and Europe

Dr Claudio Gulli, Director at Palazzo Butera, art historian and curator.

Panellists; Andrée Dargan, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Architect (Kelly's Hotel & Wash House), **Grainne Shaffrey**, Shaffrey Architects (West Gate House, Drogheda), **Frank Cooney**, Cooney Architects (Gorey Market House), **Nicola Matthews**, ERDF THRIVE in Ireland, Built Heritage advisory/National Contact Point New European Bauhaus



15.10 Session 5 - Case Studies

Chair; Michael O'Boyle, RIAI Historic Buildings Committee, RIAI *Old House New Home*.

15.15

Former Belfast Bank, Rathmines and 30 Parnell Square House, **Colm Doyle** and **Lisa McVeigh** co-presenting, DMVF Architects

15.35

Magazine Fort, Phoenix Park: stabilization & repair works/traditional skills, **Audrey Farrell**, Senior Architect OPW and **Shane Nolan**, Managing Director of Nolans Group Conservation & Restoration Ltd.

16.00

Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Deanery Mews: traditional knowledge and innovation, **Fionnuala Hayes**, Howley Hayes Cooney Architects

16.20

Strokestown Park House and National Famine Museum & Kylemore Abbey, **Michael Horan**, AXO Architects

17.00 Closing Remarks

Charlotte Sheridan,

RIAI *Old Town New Place*, and Chairperson of Architecture & Planning Committee Irish Georgian Society.

(followed by Refreshments & Networking opportunity)





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