

# Submission Details

RECEIVED: 18/09/2024

## Submitter

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Note	

## In relation to application

Application Number	PT8LL153
Applicant Name	Limerick City and County Council
Development Address	52 New Road, Thomondgate

# Thomondgate Residents Association

## Submission Re 52 New Road Thomondgate

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### Background and history.

This property dates to the mid 1800's approx. and became known as Whelans pub and was the home of The Bard of Thomond michael hogan one of limericks most celebrated poets who is commemorated by a statue at kings johns castle and a blue plaque at the building.

The property remained a working pub with lived in accommodation overhead until 2015 when it closed and went up for sale , LCCC bought this property in 2017 .

Since LCCC bought this property we have been advocating for the property to be brought back into use as accommodation, plans were relayed to us that the property would be renovated/retrofitted and turned into 6 approx apartments ,we fully supported this plan and were keen to see it proceed , we became very frustrated at the lack of progress and had emailed such to LCCC , earlier this year we wrote again inquiring as to a start date and we received an email saying works were scheduled for september this year to retrofit and turn it into apartments.

We would like to make the following observations on behalf of the many residents who have raised their concerns and shock that the former home of the Bard is now proposed to be demolished.

The property has been in the ownership of LCCC since 2017 , the property was bought with its roof intact and watertight and in good physical condition and was a working pub with accommodation overhead which was in use just 2 years previous , the damage to the roof that allowed water in that damaged the floors to the point of collapse happened on the council's watch .,why did they not protect this valuable asset instead of letting it become derelict to the point where they now want to demolish it.we believe this to be negligent on behalf of LCCC.

The engineers report we think is poor ,running to only one page and only a few paragraphs outlining the reasons for demolition.it states it would be easier and more expedient to demolish , They reported the building needed underpinning and had 2 cracks in the wall that needed investigation to see how deep they are, they did not assess the cracks themselves to determine the extent of the cracks which is the point of getting a survey. The report does not say the

building is structurally unsound and we therefore believe the building can be underpinned and conserved .

No cost analysis was provided re demolition and rebuild versus underpinning ,retrofitting and conservation.

Did LCCC engage a conservation architect consultant to commission a report on the cost and viability of a retrofit/conservation program, we do not know as no mention was given in the part 8 application.

LCCC said it gave due consideration to the historical significance of the building but yet did not write to the conservation officer for their assessment ,there is no mention in the part 8 of the historical significance of the building , it is acknowledged that a letter has been sent to the heritage officer.

We believe prior to the part 8 application a conservation,heritage and an archaeological assessment reports should have been carried out and submitted with the application,

While this property falls just outside the architectural conservation area of old Thomondgate we believe it is so close to this conservation area and in the vicinity of JJ Bowles the oldest pub in Limerick ,the Treaty Stone and numerous other landmarks that it merits a more considered approach.

LCCC said in a public media statement that the roof is not original nor are the windows , we think this is a very weak argument, there are ordinary people up and down the country taking on buildings like these in far worse condition and retrofitting and reinstating original features like windows and slate roofs ,these people are being actively encouraged by councils and the state to save our built heritage. LCCC should lead by example and do the same.

There is no site specific knotweed treatment plan in the application, the whole area is knotweed infested which requires an adequate implementation plan as this has implications for when works can proceed. with a site having to be deemed knotweed free for 3 years before work may begin.

It is stated in the application that an active knotweed treatment program is in place and ongoing, we have concerns as to the methodology of this program, with no invasive species management plan submitted we are concerned about the type of chemicals in use in proximity to the river Shannon, a special protected conservation area and Whether the contractor is licensed and registered in the use of chemicals,

Public realm is now recognised as being vital to the success of our original built heritage and how we repurpose these buildings to fit modern day needs, the characteristics of this building speak to our heritage and the placemaking of the time ,they were the equivalent of a community centre, a hub ,a social space which gave a distinctive character to where we lived,worked and socialised ,this is not just nostalgic but we argue merits great care in how we treat buildings like this .

To remove this building is to remove the character of the area as so little of it remains in this part of Thomondgate.

We welcome this opportunity to make this submission.

Sean mc ilfatrick

On behalf of The Thomondgate Residents Association.

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