



International Uilleann Piping Centre Project

When Na Píobairí Uilleann (**NPU**) was founded in 1968, the future of uilleann piping was uncertain, with few players and only one manufacturer. Thanks to the efforts of **NPU**, there are now thousands of players and skilled full and part-time manufacturers throughout the world. Uilleann piping is a vibrant, living tradition which, in 2017, was the first Irish element inscribed to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The uilleann pipes are a uniquely Irish instrument, their distinctive sound provides an introduction and a gateway to Ireland's wider heritage and culture.

NPU itself is an internationally recognised cultural institution and is the only Irish UNESCO accredited cultural NGO.

Since 1982 **NPU** has operated from No.15 Henrietta Street, leased from Dublin City Council. However, this fine Georgian building, though central to the present-day strength and health of uilleann piping, has several distinct limitations – in both space and design – which constrain further development.

Fortunately, **NPU** has an opportunity to construct an extension on the adjacent vacant site, where No.16 Henrietta Street once stood. This addition would in effect double the space currently available to **NPU** and provide significant benefits including:

- opportunities for visitors to experience uilleann piping and pipemaking, as a UNESCO recognised artform.
- a museum and exhibition spaces
- improved access to facilities and resources throughout No.15 and No.16
- **NPU's** PipeCraft instrument making training facility will relocate to No.16 resulting in annual savings of over €20,000 in establishment costs in perpetuity
- expanded performance and tailored tuition spaces

The International Uilleann Piping Centre will cost an estimated €8.0 million (inclusive of fees and fit-out) and take two years to complete. To date, many milestones have been completed:

- an award-winning design has been adopted
- Part 8 planning permission secured
- Heads of Agreement in place with Dublin City Council to develop the site
- Cost Benefit Analysis Report has been completed
- Detailed cost estimate completed.

Commercial and economic benefits will accrue from:

- New visitor centre which will expand NPU's reach and, in conjunction with the 14 Henrietta Street Museum, will help to make Henrietta Street an essential stop on every tourist's visit to Dublin. These visitors will be an important revenue stream for NPU and the north inner city.
- The theatre will greatly increase audience capacity at public performances. It will also be a space available to the wider community for events and performances.
- Expanded teaching and mentoring programmes.

Making full allowance for the extent to which some of this activity would have occurred somewhere else in the economy in the absence of the project, it is calculated that the net economic gain, directly and indirectly from the project would be €362,000 in Year 5, rising at approximately 5% per annum thereafter.

When the commercial and economic gains are added and discounted by the 4% rate specified in the Public Spending Code, it is found that the Net Present Value of the project is €364,000, thereby surpassing the economic threshold of acceptability in the Code.

But cultural investments cannot be judged on an economic basis alone. The **NPU** Project will:

- enhance cross-border relationships, engaging with all communities and traditions.
- provide a cultural and community hub
- consolidate and expand NPU programmes at Henrietta Street creating an essential hub for traditional arts for the whole island and abroad.
- Provide cultural tourism opportunities to experience uilleann piping and pipemaking.
- conserve and enhance the Henrietta Georgian streetscape
- bring activity to the inner city which has unquantifiable but tangible benefits

The move to Henrietta Street forty years ago provided **NPU** with a platform to develop into the vibrant cultural organisation that it is today. This visionary project promises transformational development and the opportunity for a greatly expanded base of activity.

Since 1982 **NPU** has completed restoration and project development work on 15 & 16 Henrietta Street totalling €1.73m (in cash and kind), net of government grants in present day terms. This was achieved through a combination of fundraising activities and voluntary in-kind work.

NPU has a successful track record of responsible management, careful stewardship of resources and keen artistic awareness. This organisational experience will ensure a valuable and successful outcome for all stakeholders.

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