

Third Presbyterian Church, Great James Street, Derry/Londonderry



Set back from the street front on Great James Street in Derry/Londonderry stands the impressive B+ Listed Third Presbyterian Church, also known as the 'Scots Church'. A very powerful neo-classical composition, it was built in 1837 to the designs of County Surveyor, Stewart Gordon. The sandstone façade of the three-bay two-storey church is dominated by a projecting central-pediment portico supported by four ionic columns on a broad flight of steps, flanked by scrolled edges. The interior layout has been largely maintained, with much detailing intact. The church was one of the first buildings to be constructed on Great James Street, part of an early Victorian development of the area, along with the laying out of Queen Street, which is overlooked by the church.

After it closed in 1982, the church was left derelict and vulnerable to vandals for many years. With no prospects in



Continued on page 10



Expertise in ready mix building solutions.

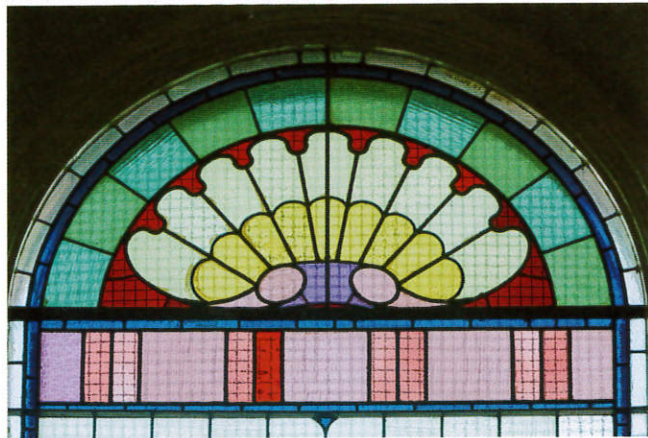
Offering a vast range of ready mixed products including concrete, mortar, plaster, screed, Exposa® Decorative Concrete and Ultraflo® liquid screed for both residential and commercial projects.



www.rtu.co.uk
T. +44 (0) 28 9085 1441

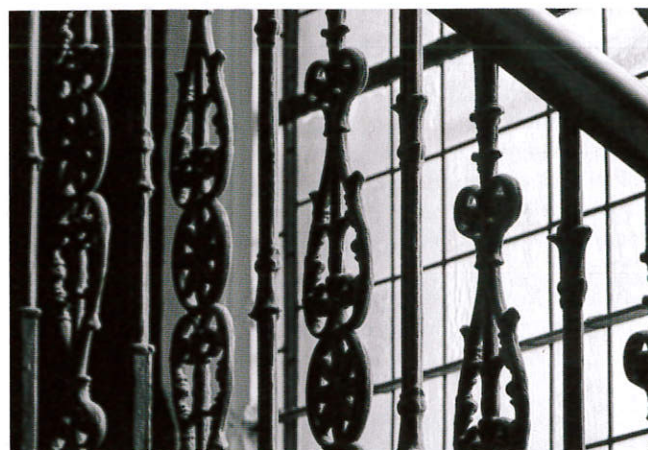


Continued from page 8



sight, it was added to the Built Heritage at Risk in Northern Ireland (BHARNI) register in 1993. Purchased by An Gaeláras in 2014, the church's future looks much more positive. However, it is still in need of repair and for a permanent use to be secured. Necessary urgent works were performed on purchase, but no further remedial work has been undertaken. There is serious dry rot throughout the building and the roof timbers are especially damaged. An Gaeláras have successfully restored the adjacent manse and transformed it into an Academy of Traditional Irish Music. Their aim for the church is to create a centre for the exploration of cultural identity, along with providing a unique space for arts and cultural events.

Places of worship make up six percent of BHARNI.



No longer operating for their intended function, churches present unique challenges for successful reuse. Modern adaptation requires an individual approach informed by an understanding of the significance of the building, its contents and setting. An informative guide to reuse of churches is 'New Life for Churches in Ireland: Good Practice in Conversion and Reuse', published by the Ulster Historic Churches Trust. Evaluating successful examples of church adaptation, it noted that the best designs were sympathetic in retaining the spiritual sense of place and architectural significance of the building. Former buildings at risk, Duncairn Culture and Arts Centre (formerly Duncairn Presbyterian Church) in Belfast and St. Patrick's Church in Claudy are examples of how redundant churches can once again become heritage assets and community focussed spaces.

It is hoped that funding can be obtained for the sympathetic restoration and adaptation of the 'Scots Church'. A new use would provide a more secure future for this impressive heritage asset and allow it to once again contribute to community life, economy and sense of place. ○

Leah O'Neill
Heritage Projects Officer
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society



The Built Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland Register is managed by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. More information can be found on website: www.uahs.org.uk

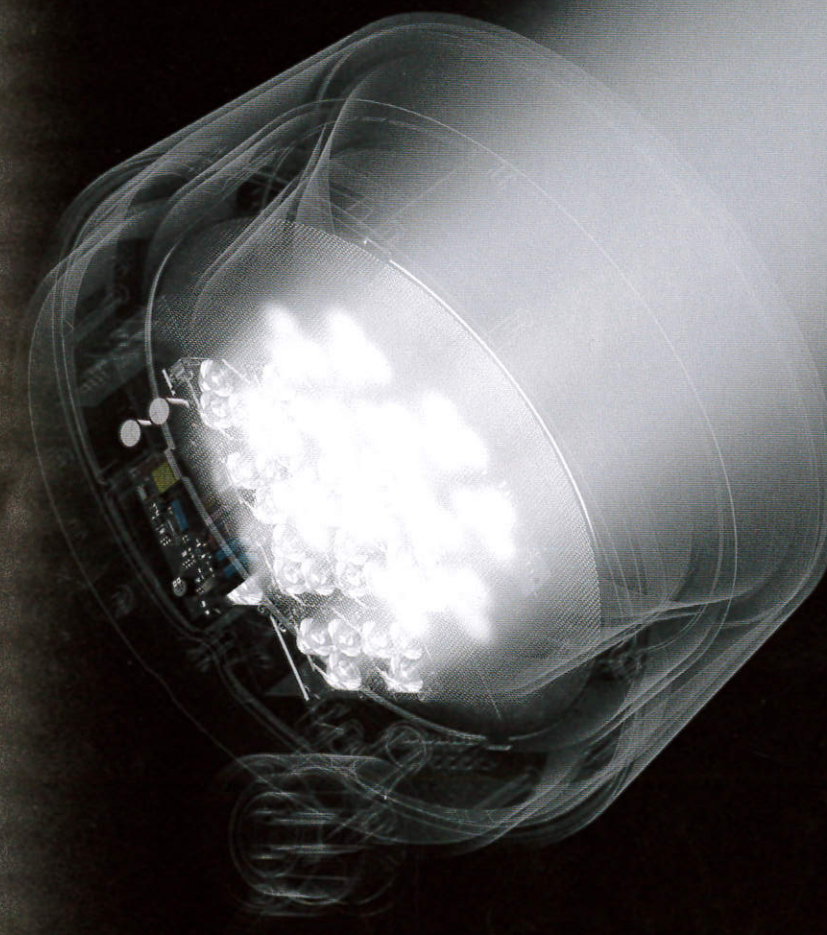
ERCO

Signpost

ERCO has reconsidered outdoor lighting.

The Kona projector with LED is the robust precision tool for illuminating façades and monuments. High luminous flux and maximum visual comfort for lighting tasks in the outdoor area.

www.erco.com/kona



light digital