Barriers & Opportunities for adaptive re-use of vacant space in towns:
Ballina Case Study
or...
BALLINA | January 2017 | VACANT
BALLINA | January 2017 | VACANT
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BALLINA | January 2017 | VACANT
or...
or.....

why are these buildings empty?
or ..... 

why are these buildings empty?

&

what are we going to do about it?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CHANGE FROM ‘02–’16</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BALLINA</td>
<td>4627</td>
<td>4280</td>
<td>4021</td>
<td>4136</td>
<td>-11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASTLEBAR</td>
<td>6585</td>
<td>6185</td>
<td>6049</td>
<td>6162</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTPORT</td>
<td>5314</td>
<td>5163</td>
<td>5543</td>
<td>5894</td>
<td>+11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAREMORRIS</td>
<td>2685</td>
<td>3170</td>
<td>3987</td>
<td>4487</td>
<td>+67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BALLYHAUNIS</td>
<td>2149</td>
<td>2598</td>
<td>2994</td>
<td>3056</td>
<td>+42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from AIRO Census Mapping Module Northern and Western Regional District Data*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Housing Stock 2011</th>
<th>Housing Stock 2016</th>
<th>Vacant Housing 2011</th>
<th>Vacant Housing 2016</th>
<th>Vacancy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballina</td>
<td>2278</td>
<td>2315</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebar</td>
<td>3244</td>
<td>3291</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westport</td>
<td>2773</td>
<td>2890</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claremorris</td>
<td>2047</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballyhaunis</td>
<td>1496</td>
<td>1512</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from AIRO Census Mapping Module Northern and Western Regional District Data*

**Note National Vacancy Rate is 9.8% according to the Housing Agency**

Normal vacancy rate considered to be around 4-7%
Census 2011 SA Housing:
157016013/157016014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA CODE</th>
<th>15,933</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA NAME</td>
<td>157016013/15701601</td>
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<tr>
<td>ED NAME</td>
<td>002 Ballina Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>Mayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Type</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House/Bungalow</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat/Apartment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ballina Urban Electoral District

49 Houses
43 Apartments
2 Not stated
Total dwellings 94

Owner Occupier no Mortgage 32
Owner occupier w/Mortgage 0
Private Rented 47
Social Rented 15

Unoccupied Households 108
Vacant Houses 103

Total Stock 204
Vacancy Rate 50.50%
Town Centre Health Check Vacancy Rates for Ballina

Single Use Residential
143 Occupied; 54 Vacant

Multiple Use Residential
200 Occupied; 74 Vacant

Residential Vacancy Rate January 2017: 37%
Barriers
BARRIER #1:

Supply is not being released to the market
These four properties are the only ones available for sale within the Ballina Urban ED in March 2017 (daft.ie)
why?
1. Retaining the property for occasional use
2. Owner has moved into a nursing home
3. Owner has died, and the estate is awaiting legal action
4. Owners are not aware of the options, such as Repair & Leasing Scheme
5. Real or perceived problems with renting the property
6. Owner awaiting upturn in the market or drip-feeding properties onto the market.
7. Owner lacks access to finance to upgrade property
8. Difficulty in obtaining planning or other regulatory consents
9. Lack of motivation by the owners.
10. Difficulty finding a suitable design professional to carry out refurbishment works.
11. Would not make financial sense to sell or let out.

*Source: Housing Agency Consultation to inform National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy under Pillar 5 of Rebuilding Ireland*
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BARRIER #2:

Lack of coordinated management of vacancy
Existing Options

- Repair to Lease Scheme
- Compulsory Purchase Orders
- Buy and Renew Initiative
- Urban Renewal Initiative
- Rural Action Plan
- Living City Initiative
- Acquisitions of Vacant Homes by Housing Agency
BARRIER #3

The Statutory Maze
Without any guarantee that development can proceed, the
time, cost and risks of adapting vacant buildings actively dis-
encourage re-use.
By beginning with sources covering broad swathes of data such as the Dublin City Development Plan, the Local Area Plan and the Dublin City Council Planning website, we can gather information to gradually work towards the more niche aspects of every planning application.
3 Statutory Processes that anyone embarking on adaptive re-use encounters:

1. **PLANNING**: Change of Use. Min 3 months. **Cost. Time. Risk**

   BCAR Design Certifier. **Cost**
   BCAR Assigned Certifier. **Cost**

3. **HEALTH & SAFETY REGS**: PSDP appointment. **Time. Cost**

**Ireland:**
Time: 5.5-13 months depending on requests for further info/appeals
Cost: €8500-12500 professional fees for change of use alone*

**UK:**
£696 and one stop shop process.

*Source: Mel Reynolds*
Opportunities
A streamlined, managed, & integrated approach to re-use of vacant space is needed which includes:

- a Local Authority one-stop shop that helps people to re-use vacant buildings
- a wider range of change of use exemptions
- full implementation of annual TCHCs & town management
- fewer but more user-friendly incentives
- pilot urban design informed approach to a model town
...and which dis-incentivises long term vacancy through a mix of:

- removal of discounted rates for vacant space
- vacant building levy* **
- property tax on 2\textsuperscript{nd} homes
- serious action on sequential development – use it or lose it.

* Paris is introducing tax of 60% market rent on vacant properties
** PMV Trust poll shows that majority are in favour of a vacant building levy
The opportunity would then exist to engage local owners, tenants and community stakeholders to co-operatively re-design town cores to become desirable and affordable places to live.
Potential space for parking and shared gardens

Vacant space with potential for re-use as dwelling space
Housetown Study:

An informed Urban Design approach to adaptive re-use and placemaking as the first step towards provision of new homes.
Housetown Section
150+ new homes, new public space and gardens, shared amenities, a walkable lived-in, vibrant town.
Conclusions:

Good management of towns must tackle long term vacancy.

Regular land use & vacancy mapping is essential as part of this.

The TCHC methodology can provide a coherent, evidence-based methodology for both of the above.

An informed Urban Design approach that includes the local community has the opportunity to create efficient, vibrant, urban placemaking, high quality attractive homes, & integrated walkable communities.

Adaptive re-use of vacant space must design for contemporary dwelling needs, including private open space, car ownership and ground floor footprint.
THESE ARE OUR TOWNS