

*Hometown Architect* is a key initiative of the Irish Architecture Foundation's *Reimagine* placemaking programme, which works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to problems or opportunities they've identified in their locality.

Funded by the Arts Council and Department of Rural and Community Development, with additional support to the Irish Architecture Foundation from the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, *Hometown Architect* aligns with the Town Centre First policy, which aims to revitalise towns across Ireland, building and sustaining vibrant town centres where communities can flourish.

*Hometown Architect 2024* builds on the successful 2023 round of projects in Aughrim, Co. Wicklow; Belmullet, Co. Mayo; Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare; Tipperary town; and Tuam, Co. Galway. It is a catalyst for active citizenship in the built environment, encouraging creative connections between community groups and architecture professionals to deliver ground-up implementation of the national Town Centre First policy.

In 2024, three communities will be awarded support to the value of €10,000 for projects that focus on the regeneration of their town centres.

*Hometown Architect* invites joint applications from community stakeholders and local architects with proposals that focus specifically on the improvement of some aspect of their local town or village centre. The architect or community stakeholder may be the lead applicant and applications must indicate who the lead partner will be. Proposals may for example take the form of creative consultations, collaborative research, temporary installations, spatial interventions, tactical urbanism projects, or pilots for ambitious urban realm projects.

The Irish Architecture Foundation aims to support those involved in reimagining the economic, social, and cultural importance of Irish towns and villages. Changing patterns of work have presented an opportunity to transform the way we live - to reverse the trends of suburban sprawl, commuter belts and hollowed out town centres. Many people have left cities for towns and villages across the country, bringing with them new energy and useful skills to contribute to local initiatives.

Online information sessions will be held on the following dates, outlining the application process in detail, and giving the opportunity to ask questions during a Q&A discussion:

- Info session 1: Tuesday 21st Nov, 1pm - 2pm. Register [here](#)
- Info session 2: Wednesday 13th Dec, 12pm - 1pm. Register [here](#)

## WHO CAN APPLY

### Who is eligible to apply?

- ↻ This programme is open to applications from, but not limited to: Voluntary and Community Organisations; Town Teams; Non-Profits; Cultural Organisations; Social Enterprises, Local Authorities; Public Bodies. Project groups should have a demonstrated link to the location of the project.
- ↻ Applications must be made in partnership with an architect, who should also demonstrate a link to the location of the project.
- ↻ The lead applicant must be clearly identified on the application. If the lead applicant is a community stakeholder, they must be registered as a legal entity (e.g. registered charity, CLG, DAC). If the lead applicant is an architect, they must be registered with the RIAI. All lead applicants must accept responsibility for arranging necessary insurance cover for the duration of the project.
- ↻ Applicants who have received *Reimagine* Funding in the past are invited to reapply with a new or next phase project proposal.
- ↻ Proposals must have a focus on improving town or village centres. For more information on what defines a town, please see separate FAQs document.

### Who is not eligible to apply?

- ↻ Applications from profit-making enterprises.
- ↻ Applications from Individuals i.e. not part of a project team.
- ↻ Applications from single interest groups. Project proposals must be of benefit to the wider town community, representing diverse needs and interests.
- ↻ Projects outside of the Republic of Ireland.
- ↻ Projects that already have a fixed outcome or design.
- ↻ Projects that do not demonstrate opportunities for co-design or community engagement.
- ↻ Projects that do not have a Town Centre First focus.
- ↻ Projects that do not provide professional fees for architects.

## HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be completed through the online form [here](#). Only applications submitted through the online form will be considered.

**The deadline for applications is 19th January 2024.** Late applications will not be considered.

We recommend completing your application in one sitting, although progress can be saved if necessary. If saving your progress to finish later, please make sure to enter your email address to receive the link to resume your application.

A confirmation email will be sent after the application is successfully submitted.

You can use [this questions guide](#) to prepare your answers in advance, then copy and paste your answers into the online form. This way you don't risk losing your answers in case of technical issues. For best user experience, the form should be completed on a laptop or desktop computer.

Consider including information on the following questions within your application:

- 🔄 How can the IAF particularly help in this project (as opposed to another organisation)?
- 🔄 Where is the project based, what type of area is it?
- 🔄 What stage is the project at currently?
- 🔄 Is it likely that some 'thing' will happen within calendar year 2024? (the project may not be fully complete in 2024, or could be one phase of a longer term engagement, but at least one moment of significance should occur in 2024)
- 🔄 Is there at least one connection to a strong community group?
- 🔄 Will there be staff time commitment that helps push the project forward?
- 🔄 Can you finance an outcome, big or small?

- ↻ What is the social impact of this project?
- ↻ What policies and initiatives could this project connect to i.e. New European Bauhaus, County Development Plan, National Policy on Architecture etc.

If you have any difficulties completing the form, please contact

[reimagine@architecturefoundation.ie](mailto:reimagine@architecturefoundation.ie)

### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE OFFER

Selected proposals will receive €10,000 total funding. Payments will be made to the lead applicant. Applications should include an indicative budget of how funding will be split between professional fees and other project expenditure. The Irish Architecture Foundation supports the Arts Council's ['Paying the Artist'](#) policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists (including architects) and expects all applicants to comply with the principles set out in their guidelines. Applications which do not include professional fees for project architects will not be considered.

Applicants will receive additional supports from the Irish Architecture Foundation and Department of Rural and Community Development, including:

- ↻ Mentoring and practical support from the IAF's *Reimagine* placemaking team
- ↻ Community toolkit, including community engagement tools and other useful resources
- ↻ Branding and communication resources and support
- ↻ Access to support from local Town Regeneration Officer through Town Centre First National Office

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Project selection will aim to reflect a geographical range, as well as diversity in themes, groups and outcomes. Projects must be located within a town or village, as defined in FAQs.

Specific criteria used to judge applications:

1. Capacity/Feasibility. We encourage you to be creative, but consider what could stall a project - access, site safety, ownership. Also, has your team worked together before on a project that demonstrates your ability to work collaboratively? Can the team commit required time and resources to achieve project outcomes?
2. Ambition/Impact: Carefully considered projects, even at a small or medium scale, can have a large impact. How will your project positively affect the built environment of your town, your community, and your group?
3. Architectural and Design Value: How important is the design of the built environment to this project? We will prioritise working with groups and projects that will benefit most from the unique support that the Irish Architecture Foundation can offer.
4. Town Centre First: How does your project contribute to the regeneration of your town centre? Does it align with the Town Centre First policy goals of “creating town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community”? Particular opportunities identified in the Town Centre First initiative include:

2.1 | Climate Change and Adaptation of our Towns

2.2 | Digital Transformation and New Ways of Working and Living

2.3 | Demographic Change and Housing Choice in Towns

2.4 | Experience-Led Retail

2.5 | Regeneration of Public Space

2.6 | Sustainable Mobility

2.7 | Realising the Existing Cultural and Heritage Assets of Places

2.8 | Gaeltacht and Gaeltacht Service Towns

2.9 | Empowered, Inclusive and Engaged Communities

Full Town Centre First policy details can be found [here](#).

## KEY DATES

- 🕒 Open call launch – 9<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023
- 🕒 Information sessions - 21<sup>st</sup> Nov 2023 and 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023
- 🕒 Deadline for applications – 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024
- 🕒 Judging period (including interviews with shortlisted applicants) - Jan/Feb 2024
- 🕒 Announcement of final applicants - Feb 2024
- 🕒 Project commencement – Feb 2024
- 🕒 Project end – Dec 2024

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 🕒 Where the lead applicant is a local group, they must be registered as a legal entity (e.g. registered charity, CLG, DAC).
- 🕒 Where the lead applicant is an Architect, they must be registered with the RIAI.

- ↻ Lead applicants must accept responsibility for project management of the project, and arranging necessary insurance cover for the duration of the project.
- ↻ Funds will be awarded in February 2024 and must be spent in full by Dec 31st 2024. The usual process is for funds to be drawn down in payments of €4,000, €4,000 and €2,000 over the duration of 2024. If this is not feasible with your project, an alternative payment schedule can be discussed.
- ↻ Awarded funds can only be spent on the project proposed in initial application. If after funds are awarded there is a change in circumstances, e.g. cancellation of project, withdrawal of either party, applicants must inform the Irish Architecture Foundation immediately. In this situation, the decision to continue or withdraw funding will be made at the discretion of the Irish Architecture Foundation.
- ↻ By completing the application form, you confirm that the Irish Architecture Foundation may retain your details and share with relevant third parties as required under the selection process and programme administration. Your data will be held in accordance with GDPR requirements, full details of our Data Protection Policy can be found [here](#).
- ↻ Selected applicants agree to acknowledge the support of the Irish Architecture Foundation and its funders in any published materials relating to the project.
- ↻ Selected applicants consent to their project details being included in marketing communications from the Irish Architecture Foundation and its funders, and to make themselves available for interview or other marketing purposes as required.
- ↻ The Irish Architecture Foundation reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions and selection criteria, to exclude any application, and to cancel this open call at any stage without prior notice.



## **ABOUT REIMAGINE**

*Reimagine* is the nationwide placemaking programme of the Irish Architecture Foundation. It is a key way in which the IAF works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to problems or opportunities they've identified in their locality. *Reimagine* facilitates the connection of architects and local partners, enabling communities to play an active role in the development of their neighbourhoods, streetscapes, parks, villages and towns.

Since 2019, *Reimagine* has worked with seventeen communities around Ireland on projects identified by the communities themselves. Through annual Open Calls, we select communities and projects proposing solutions to improve their built environment. Like each community, each project was unique. These have ranged from creative community consultations, collaborative research, temporary installations, and spatial interventions. Architects have worked with historians, ecologists, men's sheds, Tidy Town committees, library goers, economic development groups and school children among other groups. *Hometown Architect* builds on the work and learnings from these previous Fieldwork projects, further details of which can be found [here](#).

Our [website](#) is the online home for *Reimagine*, acting as a central portal for placemaking where we create and share resources, enable a network of advocates and a growing community of practice interested in regenerating communities. This portal is a national centre of information for placemaking toolkits and training, with a free webinar archive, case studies, essays and the latest placemaking news.

The *Reimagine* programme was initially developed with funding from the Creative Ireland Programme's National Creativity Fund. *Reimagine* and associated projects are now funded by the Arts Council, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

## **ABOUT THE IRISH ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION**

Established in 2005, the Irish Architecture Foundation is Ireland's independent organisation for the advancement of culture and communication of architecture. The Irish Architecture Foundation is principally funded by the Arts Council, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, and the Office of Public Works, which enables it to deliver projects like *Reimagine*.