

CUSTOM BUILT

Dating back to 1874, Derry's Custom House has been an iconic structure on the city's skyline for many centuries. Now, following a £3.5 million refurbishment this grade B1 listed building has opened its doors to the public once again as the stunning new Custom House Restaurant & Wine Bar...

Derry city's hospitality landscape has received a welcome boost with the opening of the new Custom House Restaurant & Wine Bar.

The £3.5 million refurbishment of the grade B1 listed building has led to the venue opening its doors to the public once again; standing proudly as an elegant mix of traditional, classically styled interiors subtly blended with modern colours and designs.

All ports in Ireland had a Custom House; these were used to levy tax duties immediately on goods brought ashore from ships berthing at that port. The Custom House in Derry

“this restaurant provides the customer with a memorable dining experience”

would have been originally designed by an architect employed within the Office of Public Works in Dublin, with the original interiors opulent with riga oak, mahogany and pitch pine, which all sadly were lost during the bombings in the 1970s.

Owners Sukhpal Kular and Christopher Moran purchased the venue back in 2008 and began plans with the view to providing affordable luxury to the area. Renovations began in March 2010 to the designs of p4mcg Architecture, as well as utilising the services of Nugent's Hospitality Equipment, Stephen's Catering Equipment, Advanced Cash Control Systems, Derry's Furniture, Delta Systems, Inspired By Design, Home Comforts, Benchmark Builders and Be Designs.

“The building had experienced bomb damage on several occasions throughout its history,” explains Sukhpal, “It was just a cement shell; there was nothing ornate internally so we could completely strip and restructure the

building from the ground to the top floor in order to add the three storey extension from the rear.”

A historian was commissioned to carry out a report on the building and unearthed a photograph from 1906, which showed that there was a second entrance through the front of the building. When the building was purchased it housed only one entrance point through the front façade. However because Paul McGarvey, the head

architect was able to show that there had previously been two entrances the team at Custom House were allowed to cut a hole in the listed frontage, returning the building to its former state.

This move enabled disabled access and additional capacity for fire escape purposes.

“It was basically a horse and cart entrance which had been sealed up over the years, so we were allowed to reinstate it.” Sukhpal explains, “It really helped with the main flow of the building as it is now used as our main entrance”

Following extensive planning between owners Sukhpal and Christopher, architect Paul McGarvey of P4mcg Architecture and interior designer Audrey Gaffney of Be Designs, the doors were finally open to the public once again.

On first entering the building it's not only the open space and height of the ceiling that's impressive. Eyes are drawn to the black and white classic tiling and the impressive grandeur of the panelling used throughout.

Purples blend with the walnut timber and textured wallpaper adds to the classic stair detailing. However the true wow factor of this first impression is

