The Spirit of Place

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Country
Ireland is an island in the Northern Atlantic Ocean, located on the edge of Europe and separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea. Its marginal position has characterized its history as one of instability and conflict\(^1\), the remnants of which are still evident today. Divisions and inequalities persist in spite of present economic success. The separation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, caused by centuries of sectarian conflict, generates a border that divides the Protestant part of the island from the Catholic majority. If the border is currently de facto invisible due to the British membership in the European Union, the possibility of a “Hard Brexit” puts into question the future relationship between the two parts of the island.

Unlike most growing countries, Ireland’s population peaked at 8 million inhabitants in the XIX century and has never recovered since. The sharp decline can be attributed to the Great Potato Famine of 1845, which claimed the lives of 1 million while 3 million emigrated abroad. Today, close to two centuries later, its population is a mere 6 million. The Irish countryside, once inhabited by a myriad of tenants and independent farmers, lies bare and depopulated. In contrast, the cities of the East – Dublin and Belfast, are concentrated with more than 60% of the total population and a vast majority of economic activities. These conditions produce a North-South divide by political and religious differences, and an East-West divide by economic and demographic disparity.

Highway
To addresses these divisions the Republic of Ireland has proposed the construction of a series of highways – a project called The Atlantic Corridor\(^2\). This new transport infrastructure will run along the west, linking all major towns and cities in the region. The new National Planning Framework (2040) foresees a population increase of 1 million\(^3\). This necessitates a distribution of development along the west, counter the existing polarization around Dublin. The Highway and the consolidation of the west will create a North-South axis. This may allow for a permanent economic link through Derry/Londonderry,

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\(^1\) The settlement of protestants in Ireland is called Plantation and dates back to the XVI century. George Hill, The Fall of Irish Chiefs and Clans and the Plantation of Ulster: Including the Names of Irish Catholics and Protestant Settlers, (Kansas City: Irish Roots Café, 2004), i-vi. Hill describes the plantation as a ‘movement’. “...the movement which we now familiarly designate the Plantation of Ulster.” After the two Gaelic chiefs of Ulster, the O’Neill and O’Donnell, were defeated by the English army in the war that continued from 1594-1603, the native earls fled the island. Six counties of Ulster under their rule were confiscated by the English Crown, and then granted to the Scottish and English servitors for easier control of the land. Hill writes, “With only two, or perhaps three exceptions, every native landlord, and every native tenant within the bounds of the six counties was dispossessed and displaced.” For map illustrating the Plantation scheme, see Jonathan Bardon, The Plantation of Ulster: War and Conflict in Ireland, pp.12.

\(^2\) Atlantic Corridor Project is an initiative by a consortium, consisting of academia and national international companies, aiming to improve the mobility connection between the cities of south and west of Ireland. The project calls for the increase in funding by the Irish government for the infrastructural network. This was, according to the consortium, in response to the rising spate of government cutbacks in infrastructure. National Planning Framework 2040 puts the Atlantic Corridor among the priority projects.

\(^3\) The Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government, Ireland, Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework, (Government of Ireland, 2018), 1-5. The report drafted as a basis for the framework states the purpose of the framework is to outline a comprehensive national vision and to provide the principles to manage future population and economic growth in Ireland over the next 20 years. The report expects the framework to influence the strategic planning of urban and rural areas in a regional development context.
thereby establishing a new set of relations with Northern Ireland. While the National Planning Framework is ambitious, it is also vague. Although the highway is a clearly delineated object, its effects on the territory are not defined. These indeterminacies leave room for interpreting a wide range of possibilities and spatial outcomes.

**Countryside**

Among other regions, the North-West of the island is the most likely to be affected by these futures. In particular, the future of Donegal will be largely determined by the success or failure of the new infrastructure and its promised economic development. Located between the towns of Sligo in the South and Derry/Londonderry in the North, it is one of the most economically fragile counties in the Republic. This remote county is characterized by small towns, forests, peat fields and a continuous low-density sprawl, a result of the unplanned growth during the economic boom of the 1980s. Contrasting elements concur in defining a landscape that is layered and composite. A dispersal of fine aggregates that could be described as “Zwischenstadt” or an “urbanized hinterland”. Its economic fragility is highlighted by its geographic position. Surrounded by the sea and Northern Ireland on either side, its connection to the Republic is a narrow strip of land, making it susceptible to the effects of a possible hard border with Brexit. Donegal’s beauty and barrenness, its futures and fragility, expand the space to speculate on the encounter between the highway and the country.

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4 James Curl, The Londonderry Plantation 1609-1914, (Phillimore, 1986), 121; Use of name Derry, insisted by the Irish Catholics or people of Republic of Ireland, and Londonderry, advocated by English Protestants or people of English Northern Ireland, is in constant dispute. Maps, for example the Google map, would often display both names. Curl satires this, “Ireland was always a paradox: Ulster is no exception.”

5 The Celtic tiger years determined the construction of a large number of second homes defined collectively as “Bungalow Blitz”.

6 F.H.A. Aalen, et al, Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), 5. In Ireland, the mark left by the long settlement is so pervasive, the landscape can be seen as being cultural. “Here, the profusion of human features coalesce and form a virtually continuous layer. ….an artefact.”

7 Word introduced by German urbanist Thomas Sieverts to define the urbanized territory between two cities.

8 Definition employed by American urbanist Neil Brenner to describe the condition of the contemporary countryside.
Balanced development for Ireland calls for a sustainable process that is different from that of single major-city centered development happening at present. The project situates this current aim and the idea for new spatial forms of manufacture facilities via design proposal of a whiskey distillery. Manufacture space is rooted in its smaller context in site, labor, domestic market, and on a larger context, relates to international supplies, logistics, non-domestic markets. This varying scale of network, within which a manufacture space located in the rural operates, reflects the larger context that links the specific place where the distillery is located to its larger surroundings. The distillery needs spatial strategies to market itself as being associated to a distinct place, while still playing between the smaller and wider contexts.
The project proposes a new type of distillery architecture, which, in search for extreme place-associated branding for the global market, will take on the form of the village/city itself as the livelihood and cultural/social image of the place.

New distilleries operates in a network, each of which forms a village, dotted along the Atlantic Corridor for logistic reasons and for collective, co-operative management and marketing. Representative site is selected, a set of two closely located village near the town of Donegal.

Using distillery as a vehicle, the project aims to answer the question: “What role does architecture play in differentiation, especially the place-associated differentiation, in the wave of globalization, and how is it constructed, practiced and become applicable to other locations?”

Aldo Rossi describes the city as a collection of memories, where architecture is an essential element that adds to the identity of the city. In reverse, a city can also affect its new architecture as a context. But when a development is expected on an almost bare ground, led by a physical infrastructure as in west of Ireland, it presents questions as to how a new architecture should respond to or be a part of a larger context.

The County and the Whiskey:

Some historians claim that the monks in Ireland were the first to make whiskey around the 11th century. It grew to be one of the main pastime activities to add to the merriment of life, and then as a mid-sized or a cottage industry, as whiskey became an established commercial item.

Until the 18th century, the distilleries with exception of a few did not grow big, as it was highly taxed by the English government to gain revenue. Against this, the spirit grew highly popular in Ireland. The easing on taxes to encourage more distillers to register for licenses and the drop in production of French brandy in 1880s due to grapes disease boosted the sales of Irish whiskey overseas, expanding its market to Europe and Northern America. This boom gave rise to big scaled distilleries in form of factory clusters.

Unfortunately these “golden years” did not last long, the economic recession hitting Ireland in early 1900s, followed by drink prohibition of 1919 in the US and then by the trade dispute between Ireland and the UK in 1930s. The industry almost died out, only two big names surviving to be acquired by overseas companies.

Since 2000, the industry is seeing a revival. Increased interest from foreign markets and stabilised trade conditions saw leap in sales. Individual micro distilleries started establishing themselves, dispersed throughout the country. To distinguish themselves against existing older Irish distilleries with label “since-”, these new distilleries brand themselves to a particular place. Meanwhile, the ingredients and the machineries used, and the market rely much on the foreign places.
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The Highway and the Whiskey:

The project proposes a scenario that the Atlantic corridor facilitates more distilleries to overcome the logistics problem of Donegal and situate themselves along the stretch, but soon becomes saturated. In order to tackle the place-identification competition, the distilleries break down the scale and associate to a village, parcelling along its people and culture. The distillery takes the form of the village itself, its various stages of production and management dispersed throughout the village or villages.

The Countryside and the Whiskey

The dispersed collective industry can be referenced from the old farming practice in arid lands of west Ireland, the Rundale. It is a collective farming system where the farmers would form a cluster, taking turns to farm potato or oats on different parts of the field, throughout the year. This was to ensure equality in farming the harsh mixture of bog, sand, stony and good pieces of land that west Ireland presented. An area immediately around the houses would be used for domestic purposes- farming other vegetables, to keep cattle whose waste, along with peat, was an important fertilizer for the crop. The present land division in the rural derives much from this practice.

Taking distillery as the vehicle, the project examines what role architecture can play in place differentiation and future development of rural Ireland, in its tension between the local and global relations.

Dunville’s whiskey poster, 1837. Irish whiskey posters generally display certain “Irishness” with cultural symbols or Irish landscape.
Posters advertising the Irish whiskey...

SOURCE: (all poster images) Old Irish Poster website, www.oldirishposter.com
Barley field near Cork, Ireland.

SOURCE: Irish Whiskey Tourism Strategy (2017), published by Irish Whiskey Association
Illustration of Watercourse distillery in Ireland, from The Whiskey Distilleries of the United Kingdom (1887) by Alfred Bernard.
Distillery workers loading the casks of whiskey for sale. The distillery buildings and the number of casks ready to be sent show the scale in which the Jameson’s distillery at Dublin operated in 1900s.

Site Information and Drawing

The view on highway leading to Donegal. This highway will be connected to be part of the Atlantic Corridor.

Solitary houses by the highway.
The varying topography and vegetation of Irish countryside.
Zoom in on the project site, the selection of two representative house cluster.
Outcomes and Deliverables

The spaces used for distilling in Ireland through history are examined to identify major morphological changes and affecting factors, to form the basis for the future of the distillery space in Ireland;
1. Mid-size and illegal small distilling of 1700s,
2. Large scale distilleries of golden years of Irish whiskey_1800s,
3. Present rise of micro distilleries.

The future distillery also takes into account the present and future global relations that it plays in, in terms of market, reliance for ingredients, machineries, etc.

To situate the resulting speculative architecture that takes on the form of a village, the village formation process in Ireland is studied, starting in 1700s, where the commercial collective farming took on hold in west of Ireland and affected the settlement forms and land division.

The project outcome will be expressed through following set of materials:

1. Morphology drawing of distillery.
2. Site model (1:1000)
3. Architectural model (1:500)
4. Architectural drawing set (1:200)
   Detail drawings (1:50)
5. Documentation booklet of site, industry and distillery proposal.
6. Video of history of the industry and project proposal.
Still houses of old and new distillery. Same stills, new shells.
Preliminary Schedule

WK 30-34
Concept development, working model (1:1000) of project site.
Morphology drawing of Irish distillery.

WK 35
Monday, August 27–Friday, August 30: Compulsory kick-off workshop

WK 36
Monday, September 3–Friday, September 7: Workshop 1 with Olaf Gipser

WK 37
Monday, September 10: Presentation of collective work
Thursday, September 13 and Friday, September 14: Workshop 2 with Ido Avissar
Model of site (1:1000) and partial model of project (1:500), experimentation with concept and design.

WK 38
Monday, September 17: Submission of proposal for collective publication
Thursday, September 20 and Friday, September 21: Workshop 3 with Olaf Gipser
Architectural plan and elevation (1:200)
Draft of publication text.

WK 39
Monday, September 24–Monday, October 1: Excursion to the Poland [Exact dates TBC based on travel]

WK 40
Thursday, October 4 and Friday, October 5: Workshop 4 with Ido Avissar
Architectural drawings set (1:5000 & 1:200)
Draft of documentation booklet of distillery and site.
Development of publication text.

WK 41
Monday, October 8: Presentation of draft collective film for midterm presentation
Thursday, October 11 and Friday, October 12: Workshop 4 with Olaf Gipser
Friday, October 12: Submission of select midterm materials to thesis examiner and transcription of new conversation with expert
Documentation of distillery working process and photographs.
Architectural Drawing (1:5000 & 1:200)
Model (1:500)

WK 42
Monday, October 15: Presentation of draft proposal for thesis exhibition and event
Wednesday, October 17: Submission of final draft text for publication
Architectural Drawing (1:5000 & 1:100)

WK 43
Monday, October 22: Pencils down, submission of collective work
Wednesday, October 24: Pencils down, submission of individual work
Thursday, October 25 and Friday, October 26: Compulsory midterm presentations
Wednesday, October 24 and Thursday, October 25: Workshop 5 with Thomas Weaver
Morphology drawing of distillery.
Site model (1:1000)
Architectural model (1:500)
Architectural drawing set (1:200)
Documentation booklet of site, industry and distillery proposal.

WK 44
Thursday, November 1 and Friday, November 2: Workshop 6 with Olaf Gipser
Development of the architecture design
Development of detail drawings (1:50)

WK 45
Monday, November 5: Submission of final draft images for publication
Architecture drawing set (1:200)
Detail drawing set (1:50)

WK 46
Thursday, November 15 and Friday, November 16: Workshop 7 with Ido Avissar
Refinement of proposal_concept and drawing.
Architecture drawing set (1:200)
Detail drawing set (1:50)

WK 47
Thursday, November 22 and Friday, November 23: Workshop 8 with Olaf Gipser
Refinement of proposal_concept
Development on video of site and project proposal

WK 48
Monday, November 26: Pencils down, submission of collective work
Wednesday, November 28: Pencils down, submis-
sion of individual work
Thursday, November 29 and Friday, November 30: Workshop with Thomas Weaver; and dress rehearsal (including collective material, individual projects, draft publication, draft design for exhibition, and draft outline of final public event and presentations)
Friday, November 30: Submission of final project dossier to examiner
Morphology drawing of distillery.
Site model (1:1000)
Architectural model (1:500)
Architectural drawing set (1:200)
Documentation booklet of site, industry and distillery proposal.

WK 49
Monday, December 3: Pencils down, submission of all collective work
Wednesday, December 5: Pencils down, submission of all individual work
Thursday, December 6 and Friday, December 7: E2 (go/no go presentation)
Morphology drawing of distillery.
Site model (1:1000)
Architectural model (1:500)
Architectural drawing set (1:200)
Documentation booklet of site, industry and distillery proposal.

WK 50
Monday, December 10: Submission of all final collective and text for publication
Tuesday, December 11: Submission of final exhibition design
Wednesday, December 12: Submission of draft portfolio
Friday, December 14: Submission of draft final film and short. Book sent to graphic designer.

WK 51
Monday, December 18: Submission of all final individual drawings and text for publication
Wednesday, December 20: Submission of draft draaiboek for final event
Friday, December 22: Presentation of revised final film and short. Completed publication sent to printer
Thursday, December 21 and Friday, December 22: E2 Retakes

WK 2
Monday, January 7: Dress rehearsal for E3 and submission of final portfolio
Friday, January 11: Dress rehearsal for public final event and presentations

WK 3
Wednesday, January 16: Send all individual panels to print
Friday, January 18: Send all collective panels and banners to print. Second dress rehearsal for public final event and presentations

WK 4
Monday, January 21: Submission of all final models for exhibition
Tuesday, January 22 and Wednesday, January 23: Exhibition build-up
Thursday, January 24: Exhibition installation
Friday, January 25: Submission of all required final materials to the TU Delft Repository.

WK 5
Monday, January 28: Dress rehearsal for public final event and presentations
Tuesday, January 29: Second dress rehearsal for E3
Wednesday, January 30: Final preparations for public final event and presentations
Thursday, January 31: Public final event and presentations
Friday, February 1: E3 with thesis examiner and graduation ceremony


Precedent Studies


“This commercial function is the basis, in terms of production, of an ‘economic’ explanation of the city that, beginning with the classical formulation offered by Max Weber, has undergone a specific development.....

Given a function based classification of the city, it is only logical that the commercial function in both the city’s formation and its development presents itself as the most convincing explanation for the multiplicity of urban artifact and is tied to economic theories of the city.”
Expert 1 on whiskey and micro distilling:

James Doherty, director at Sliabh Liag Distillery,
Line Road, Carrick, Co. Donegal
Sliabh Liag distillery is a micro distillery which is the first to be built in the Donegal county in over 170 years.

What are the basic ingredients in making a whiskey?
When we are making a single malt whiskey, we are using a malted barley. When we are making the single grain whiskey, we will be using a combination of malted barley, regular barley, and rye.

Do you make the malt the barley on site?
No, we won’t be malting on site. We bring in the malted barley. It is from barley fields in the midland. They have a couple of good malting sites there. That is where the good barley grows as well. Also barley from Scotland—barley, wheat, rye, winter wheat.

How is Irish whiskey different?
It’s in the spirit still. We have 500 litre ones. The spirit is passed through three stills. The Irish whiskey have the triple distillation process. The Scottish has double. Why? History attacks. Back in the 1800s we, the Irish distillers, were very heavily taxed by the English government at the time, and not so much on the Scotland, on their malted barley. Now the Irish distillers could not use the malted barley economically, it was too pricey. So they had to, I guess, invent or come up with new ways, methods of making whiskey. They started experimenting with oat, wheat— the winter wheat, and rye— combinations of them. And just the regular barley. And they found out that with combinations of them— the mash bill— they could make a really good whiskey. But they needed to distill it three times. So that triple distillation came out of a necessity. Now we’ve kept that triple distillation technique because it makes our whiskey the Irish whiskey. And Irish whiskey is famous for being smooth and that’s one of the reasons why triple distilling is done.

So you could still make a whiskey through double distillation, but it is triple distilled to make it smoother?
Definitely you could. And larger distilleries in Ireland, they use the double distillation. But we distill three times. And you might ask ‘why not distilling four times, five time..?’ Well, there is bound to be a limit. When you are over distilling, you are distilling the taste away. The more you distill, more cleaner it gets. The more ‘neutral’ it gets.

And that is Irish whiskey by law?
Plus you have to age it three years. So we use ex-bourbon and ex-sherry barrels to age the distilled spirit for three years. And you might get a good grain whiskey with mixture of rye, malt and barley after three years, but when you are making a single malt, it will take minimum six years. And more the better.

Where do you get the barrels from?
We will get most of our bourbon barrels from America. And why we get our barrels from America? There is a law in America. They are allowed to be used only once. That’s the law. And that’s great because Scotland and Ireland takes them in. You break down the barrel— you break off the top, you break off the bottom and you break off the staves and they are transported. And when they arrive in Ireland, you make them up again.

And whiskey? Is it as it is, or is it mixed?
You can mix. And there is a lot of mixing going on, there is a lot of experiment going on for all aspects of making whiskey, especially with aging. You can have mixed barrel staves. (With sherry and bourbon?)

You could. You could. It’s so much good. So the inside of the inside of the barrel is slightly toasted. Why from inside is that what it does is it creates basically a carbon filter. So the liquid is filtered through the carbon, the layer of the barrel, and then the unwanted flavours are taken away. And unwanted flavour from the wood are held back. And good flavours could come from the wood. After time the liquid pick up the colour, pick up the honey, the sweet and vanilla from the wood.

And reassembling the barrel, do you do it here or do you have it done somewhere else?
At the moment it is somewhere else. We have it done somewhere else. It is planned for the future distillery (Sliabh Liag distillery plans to rebuild
and expand their present distillery. We want to go into that field. We also want to bring in our own water and make it integrated.

**So you produce whiskey as main?**
No, we produce gin. Our whiskey is blend of whiskies made around the island. You see, 80% of whiskey on the market is a blend, and every company has a blend whiskey. So it is easier to have it now, than make one. We plan to do that with the new distillery. It takes time to make and age, so we hope to have by 2022. So a long time.

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**Tell me about your gin.**
Its name is An Dúlamán, and we are calling it an Irish Maritime gin. And that is because five of our ingredients, they are the seaweeds. Now they are locally harvested. With Gin, its different from whiskey. You already start with an alcohol that is called GNS.-Grain Neutal Spirit. This spirit is neutral. Remember I said when you distill something again and again, you get something neutral? Well this stuff is very highly distilled. It is distilled above 96.5%. There is no taste. It’s just alcohol. What it allows you to do, is to put in your flavour afterwards.

**What do you flavour your gin with?**
Ours is the highest specification for distillation. Its called Above London Specification. So you are only allowed to use natural ingredients, can’t add in any sugar afterwards. Or colouring, or anything like that. What you get is one shot pure distillation. And then we flavour it with natural ingredients including seaweed. And you get your best seaweed on the lowest tide of the full moon. It makes sense because the seaweed close to the shores have been covered and protected by the sea for nearly a month. And then juniper. A gon has to have this. Also angelica, bark and roots. *(all from Ireland?)*
No except the seaweed they are primarily medit
mediterranean. So Macedonia, Egypt...Then also coriander seeds, cinnamon, sweet orange peels

How long does it take to come up with a right combination?
Oh months. Months, really. It takes awhile to come up with the right combination, the right ratio. I have a couple of stories to tell.

And why are the still used always copper?
Copper gives a flavour. That’s why copper is the preferred metal. And chemistry and science tell us that copper cleans some unwanted compounds that are there in your water. If you have too much iron in your water copper will filter that. So when we want to make our operation bigger, we won’t just buy the same still. Because it won’t taste the same. We might be buying three or four of the same we have right now.

Expert 2_on large scale distilleries of Irish Distillers group that operate as different brands under same management
-Jameson’s Distillery, answers to be received back.

Expert 3_on mono cities, or industry/ commercial activity centred village
-expert to be contacted
Conversation with experts
Preliminary Impression
The Berlage.