LICENSED PREMISES
PROPERTY MARKET

REVIEW 2025 & OUTLOOK 2026

Lisney
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

CONTENTS

The Licensed & Leisure Team

THE DUBLIN LICENSED PREMISES SOLD IN 2025

Bar Rua
32 Clarendon Street,
Dublin 2

The Twin Oaks
Ashleigh Centre,
Castleknock,
Dublin 15

The Green Hen
(Leasehold Interest)
33 Exchequer Street,
Dublin 2

The Step Inn
Stepaside,
Co. Dublin

The Willows
Ballinteer,
Dublin 14

The Queens
Castle Street,
Dalkey, Co. Dublin

Vaughans Eagle House
105/107 Terenure Road North,
Terenure, Dublin 6W

Kodiak
304 Rathmines Road Lower,
Rathmines, Dublin 6

Peter's Pub
1-2 Johnson Place,
Dublin 2

Pipers Corner
105/106 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1

The Market Bar, Idlewild, & Chelsea Drugstore
(Leasehold Interest)
Fade Street, Georges Street,
Dublin 2

Fitzgeralds
22 Aston Quay,
Dublin 2

The Newtown House
Malahide Road / Newtown Road,
Coolock, Dublin 5

Cleary's
36 Amiens Street,
Dublin 1

Floods
140 & 142 Sundrive Road,
Kimmage,
Dublin 12

The Estuary
North Street
Swords,
Co. Dublin

Fade Street Social
(Leasehold Interest)
4-6 Fade Street,
Dublin 2

The Lighthouse
88 Upper George's Street,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin

Against the Grain
(Leasehold Interest)
11 Wexford Street,
Dublin 2

Hennessys Findlater
Dorset Street,
Dublin 1

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OVERVIEW OF THE LICENSED PREMISES PROPERTY MARKET 2025

DUBLIN MARKET

Rory Browne
Divisional Director

“20 Pubs Transacted”

The Dublin licensed premises property market in 2025 experienced a steady level of transactional activity, with the number of completed sales broadly mirroring 2024. However, total transactional value declined by approximately 40% on 2024 levels. This reduction was largely attributable to the absence of exceptionally high-value transactions that featured in 2024, most notably the sales of Devitt’s on Camden Street and Kennedy’s in Mount Merrion, together with a marked increase in leasehold interest assignments during the year.

In total, 20 licensed premises changed hands in Dublin, realising a combined value of approximately €40.2 million, compared with €69.6 million from the same number of sales in 2024.

Of these transactions:

- 57% achieved prices below €2 m
- 36% fell within the €2 m - €5 m
- 7% were between €4 m - €6 m
- 20% related to leasehold interests, reflecting a scarcity of freehold opportunities in core trading locations

Of the transactions completed, 65% were offered for sale publicly and 35% were completed off-market.

At year-end, a further 11 units were sale agreed but not yet completed, representing a combined value of approximately €15 million which bodes well for early 2026 activity.

Peter’s Pub, Dublin 2. Sold by Lisney.

The Queen's, Dalkey. Sold by Lisney.

Market Bar, Idlewild & Chelsea Drugstore. Sold by Lisney.

Market Bar, Idlewild & Chelsea Drugstore. Sold by Lisney.

A total of 19 licensed premises were publicly offered for sale in Dublin during the year. Of these, six completed, five were sale agreed, five remained available at year end, and three were withdrawn, again underlining the importance of realistic pricing.

Purchaser activity in Dublin continued to be dominated by publicans, who accounted for 80% of transactions, followed by investors at 15% and developers at 5%.

Activity was slightly more focused in the suburbs which accounted for 11 of the 20 sales. Notable suburban sales in 2025 included The Twin Oaks (Castleknock), The Step Inn (Stepaside), The Queens (Dalkey), Vaughans Eagle House (Terenure) and Kodiak (Rathmines).

The highlights of the City Centre transactions included Peters Pub, Market Bar, Bar Rua and Fitzgeralds.

Off-market activity declined in 2025 but still accounted for 35% of transaction volume and 26% of total value.

The Share Purchase sale structure accounted for 21% of volume and 36% of value.

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MARKET INSIGHTS & OUTLOOK

MARKET INSIGHTS & OUTLOOK

Shane Markey
Divisional Director

Insights

The quality of assets offered to the Dublin licensed premises market in 2025 was well reported, with a number of high profile transactions completing including Peters Pub, Market Bar, The Step Inn and The Queens. While the overall number of sales mirrored 2024, purchasers continued to show a clear preference for established, high-quality premises with proven trading performance and strong day-to-day cashflow. This was particularly evident in the €2m–€4m bracket, where 85–90% of sales have consistently occurred between 2023 and 2025. Publican purchasers continue to dominate this segment of the market, driven by the long-term trading security and operational control such assets provide.

Two suburban premises, The Step Inn and The Queens, achieved in excess of €3,250,000 each, reflecting strong demand for properties in areas with higher levels of discretionary spend and the opportunity to trade at these locations. Both were purchased by publicans seeking to expand their portfolio.

Demand was driven by publicans, accounting for 80% of total transaction volume and an 85% of overall transactional value, highlighting not only the resilience of the sector but also the depth of confidence among experienced operators with proven trading models.

> “Purchasers continued to show a clear preference for established, high-quality premises with proven trading performance”

The consistency of activity in the number of transactions over the past three years suggests that operators have adapted to the ongoing operational challenges within the hospitality sector. This adjustment has translated into renewed confidence and reinvestment, with demand remaining firmly focused on well-located, high performing premises.

The large number of leasehold transactions in the city reflects the limited supply of city-centre premises, prompting operators who previously might have overlooked leasehold assets to actively consider them. This scarcity has also driven competitive bidding for the opportunity to operate in these locations.

Importantly, 2025 saw an increase in public offerings, with a higher proportion of vendors opting to bring assets to the open market as pricing expectations became more closely aligned with achievable values. This contrasts with recent years where off-market transactions were more common. A notable driver

Against The Grain. Acquired by Lisney.

The Green Hen. Sold by Lisney.

The Step Inn – Sold by Lisney.

Piper's Corner. Sold by Lisney.

Fitzgerald's. Sold by Lisney.

of this increased supply is retirement-led disposals, with long-standing family operators choosing to exit following strong post-pandemic trading years, some challenging trading headwinds and a consistently strong demand for their assets. These sales typically involve well-maintained, profitable assets, and consequently attracted strong interest. A public sale is often the chosen route where the retiree seeks comfort that the best price for their premises was achieved. The sale of high profile assets also provides comfort and confidence to other long-standing operators particularly those already contemplating retirement or an exit, to bring their own premises to the market. This pattern was evident throughout the year.

A divergence between city and suburban transactions continued to emerge. City-centre premises particularly those benefiting from tourism flows, office worker footfall, and established hospitality clusters remained the most sought after, achieving competitive bidding and superior pricing relative to suburban neighbourhood pubs and in cases achieving anywhere from 15 – 20% above the guide. The prevalence of leasehold sales in 2025 highlights this focused demand as publicans appear to be prepared to overlook their traditional preference of freehold assets to gain a prominent location within the key trading areas. Suburban assets, while still trading steadily, faced more selective demand, with purchasers more sensitive to operational challenges, broader economic pressures, and the need for capital expenditure.

Lending criteria continued to influence purchaser behavior, with banks applying increased scrutiny to sustainable EBITDA, cashflow, and repayment capacity. Assets priced ahead of trading fundamentals experienced reduced engagement or prolonged marketing periods, reinforcing the importance of realistic pricing strategies.

Outlook 2026

Demand in 2026 is expected to remain primarily focused on the core city centre locations, where the potential for premium pricing is supported by strong turnover and profit evidence from the 2025 market. This will provide owners with greater flexibility to increase prices in line with ongoing cost inflation, particularly for high-quality, well-located assets.

Publicans are expected to remain the dominant purchaser group, although their share of transactions may moderate from the exceptionally high levels seen in 2025. Developer activity is likely to remain limited, reflecting the scarcity of redevelopment opportunities and declining appetite for apartment development sites outside prime locations due to elevated construction costs.

Private Equity purchasers are expected to remain active throughout 2026, continuing to seek opportunistic acquisitions. That said, given their strict investment criteria and the limited availability of suitable assets, we anticipate only a small number of transactions, primarily within the €6 million-plus value bracket.

Following the strong multiples achieved in 2025, we expect a continued flow of higher-quality city centre units being brought to the market, as owners seek to capitalise on favourable trading and investment conditions.

We also expect continued use of the share purchase structure for acquisitions for higher-value assets, particularly where latent Capital Gains Tax exists. The principal benefit to the purchaser is a reduction in stamp duty from 7.5% to 1% alongside the potential for a reduced CGT liability for the vendor. A discount may be applied to reflect the liability however it is rarely pro-rata as pub purchasers generally have a long holding period which is often over 20-30 years. However, this transaction structure typically involves extended timelines, a significant increase in legal and professional fees, and extensive due diligence with an increase in the number of professionals advising on the transaction which can result in relatively minor issues capable of delaying or derailing a sale. It is important to note that not all sales are suited to completion by way of share purchase/ company disposal as there must be an attractive saving to both vendor and purchaser that is not eradicated by the additional due diligence costs.

The trend towards off-market transactions is also expected to re-emerge in 2026, particularly for high-value city centre assets. In this segment, a limited but highly active and well-capitalised purchaser pool can be identified, facilitating discreet sales, often the preferred approach for publicans.

Vaughan's Eagle House. Sold by Lisney.

Business Challenges

Staffing

The hospitality sector continued to experience significant staffing challenges through 2025, with many businesses reporting persistent difficulties securing appropriately trained and skilled personnel. These shortages have continued to exert inflationary pressure on labour costs, driving wage and salary increases across the industry.

Under Budget 2026, the National Minimum Wage increased from €13.50 to €14.15 per hour from 1st January 2026. This further heightens labour cost pressures for hospitality operators. As before, increases at the minimum wage entry level often trigger upward wage pressure throughout the staff hierarchy and senior staff may seek commensurate pay rises, pushing overall staff costs higher.

> "Staffing challenges through 2025, with many businesses reporting persistent difficulties securing appropriately trained and skilled personnel"

Staff costs already representing a substantial portion of operational overheads for a typical licensed premises and are likely to increase further. This rise threatens to erode bottom line profit, especially where revenue growth or pricing power is limited.

These pressures are compounded by additional labour related obligations introduced or maintained alongside the wage increase including employer contributions to pension auto enrolment schemes, PRSI, statutory sick pay, and increased public holiday entitlements. Together, these measures add to employment costs, posing a continued challenge for profitability and viability in the sector.

As staffing remains challenging and labour costs rise again in 2026, operators across the wider hospitality industry must consider strategies to mitigate cost pressures whether through operational efficiencies, revised pricing, or shifting service models to preserve long term sustainability.

VAT on Food Sales

The VAT rate on the sale of alcohol has remained at 23%, while the VAT rate on food and catering services in hospitality is set to decrease from 13.5% to 9% from July 2026. This represents a significant development for the sector, following years in which the VAT rate had been restored to 13.5% after a temporary reduction to 9% during the pandemic to assist recovery.

The reduction in VAT provides a degree of relief to hospitality operators, particularly those with food-led businesses, where labour and operating costs continue to rise due to increases in minimum wage, PRSI and other employment-related obligations. While the cut does not apply to alcohol, it offers an opportunity to partially offset these cost pressures for venues with a strong food component.

Industry representative bodies, including the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA), the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI), and the Restaurant Association of Ireland, have long advocated for a return to the 9% rate on food sales to protect jobs and support the viability of the industry. While alcohol-focused premises will see limited benefit, the reduction will provide meaningful support to operators in the broader hospitality sector, allowing them to manage rising overheads and labour costs more effectively.

Repayment Capacity

In reviewing recent licensed premises transactions, Lisney has noted certain instances where operators considering disposals have scaled back in terms of operational intensity, resulting in profitability falling below the level typically required to support the purchasers debt repayment. While this may not present a concern for the incumbent proprietor, it can create challenges during the sales process.

Prospective purchasers often base their valuation and engagement decisions on actual trade levels, which may not align with the more optimistic projections or the underlying operational potential of the business. Banks, when assessing lending capacity, generally adopt a conservative approach grounded in current trading performance. This discrepancy can limit buyer engagement, reduce the pool of active bidders, and ultimately constrain the value realised on sale.

Ensuring consistent operational performance and demonstrating sustainable profitability is therefore critical in maximising market interest and maintaining strong transaction outcomes.

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PROVINCIAL MARKET

PROVINCIAL MARKET

Niall Kelly
Surveyor

The provincial licensed premises market showed a notable uplift in activity in the main cities during the year, with Galway and Cork at the forefront. Both cities recorded high-profile transactions, signalling confidence in well-located, established and high-volume trading assets. This marks a notable shift from recent years, where activity was subdued.

In Cork city, Attestor's acquisition of The Reardon Group for a reported price of excess €30m was the standout transaction. Cork also witnessed the sale of The Flying Enterprise & Sober Lane complex which achieved a price in excess of €5m whilst in Galway, The King's Head realised a figure exceeding €7m. These transactions underline the strong demand from publican purchasers for prime city-centre premises with proven trading performance and sustainable turnover levels.

The Kings Head, Galway City. Sold by Lisney.

The Flying Enterprise, Cork City. Sold by Lisney.

Overall, while the wider provincial market remains selective, these sales demonstrate that quality licensed premises in core urban locations continue to attract competitive interest and strong pricing.

Price sensitivity remains a defining feature of the provincial market. Where pricing expectations are aligned with trading fundamentals, transactions can be achieved. Conversely, misaligned expectations continue to suppress activity.

> "The provincial licensed premises market showed a notable uplift in activity in the main cities during the year, with Galway and Cork at the forefront"

An Sibin, Dunshaughlin. Sold by Lisney.

IN FOCUS

Tony Morrissey
Director

"The Return of Concept Driven Operators"

A notable development over the past 24 months has been the re-entry of concept-driven and experience orientated offerings into the licensed premises market, a cohort that has been largely absent for several years. Historically, this segment of the market was defined by visionary publicans who were prepared to challenge how conventional licensed premises could operate.

Previous generations of such operators included Liam and Des O'Dwyer, whose acquisition of a former travel agency on Dawson Street and its transformation into what is now the highly successful Café en Seine was, at the time, widely viewed as a high-risk venture unlikely to succeed in the Dublin market. Similarly, Paul Keaveney reshaped expectations with landmark venues such as Dakota, The Odeon and 4 Dame Lane, while John Reynolds introduced the POD and Market Bar complexes — each playing a pivotal role in redefining Dublin's hospitality landscape in line with the emerging consumer demand for contemporary, high-quality, concept-led offerings.

That same entrepreneurial spirit is now clearly re-emerging. The trend is reflected in the growing popularity of experience-led venues in Dublin, including Pitch and Flight Club on Dawson Street, Lane 7 on Clarendon Row, and the highly anticipated Dión which opened in December 2025 located on the top floor of the former Central Bank. These new offerings highlight a clear shift towards immersive environments in which entertainment, hospitality and premium drinks are combined to create a more meaningful consumer experience. While similar concepts have long been proven in larger markets in the UK and US, there was, until recently, a widespread perception, not unlike that faced by the O'Dwyer brothers on Dawson Street in the late 1990's, that such experience-led formats carried a heightened level of risk within the scale and trading dynamics of the Dublin market.

This evolution is being driven largely by younger consumers, who are increasingly prioritising the overall experience rather than alcohol consumption alone. This demographic is exploring a broader range of beverage categories, with particular interest in spirits, cocktails and premium drink brands. For this cohort, the drink is no longer the destination; instead, it forms part of a wider, more curated social experience. This changing consumer behaviour is reshaping demand and, in turn, influencing how licensed premises are being conceived, valued and traded.

Over the past year, our firm has been approached by several concept-driven operators seeking to establish a presence in Dublin. These entrants, many of which are international brands are actively looking for premium space within the city to bring their innovative hospitality models to the market.

> "This evolution is being driven largely by younger consumers, who are increasingly prioritising the overall experience rather than alcohol consumption alone"

A key barrier to entry for these operators is the substantial footprint required to successfully execute their concepts, coupled with the need for locations within specific city quadrants associated with Dublin by these brands. This combination of size and locational requirements significantly narrows the pool of suitable opportunities — in some cases to the extent that such space is highly unlikely ever to become available, leaving new development or off-market acquisition of existing large-scale venues as the only viable routes to entry.


FINEST
JAMAICAN
RUM

The trend towards off-market transactions is also expected to re-emerge in 2026, particularly for high-value city centre assets.

STATISTICS YEAR END REVIEW 2025

Chart A: Licensed House sales Analysis 2016-2025 represented as the annual percentage of the total number of transactions in the Dublin market.

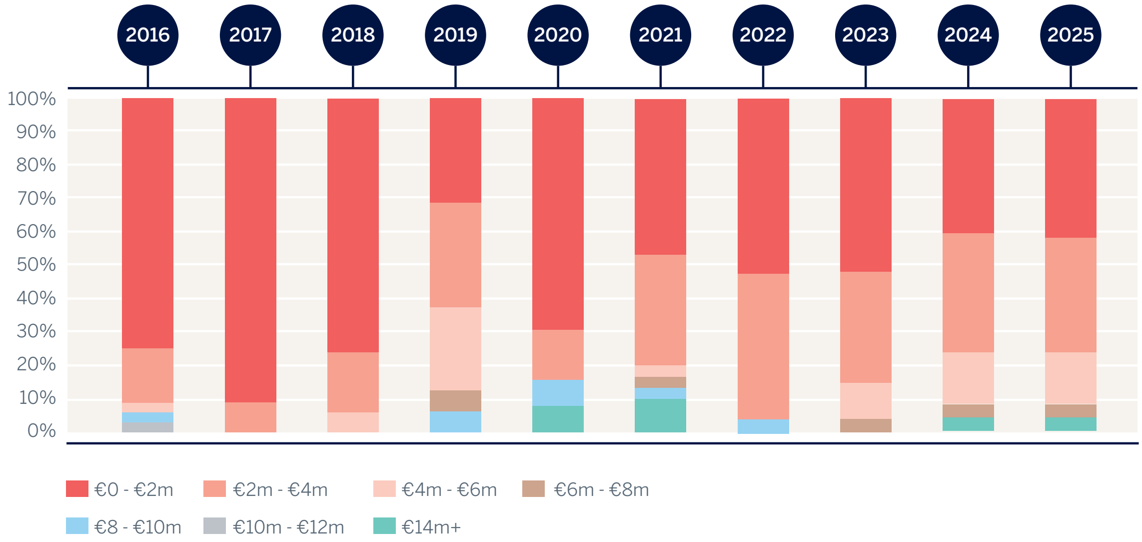


Chart B: The capital value of the Licensed House Transactions / Sales in Dublin 2016-2025.

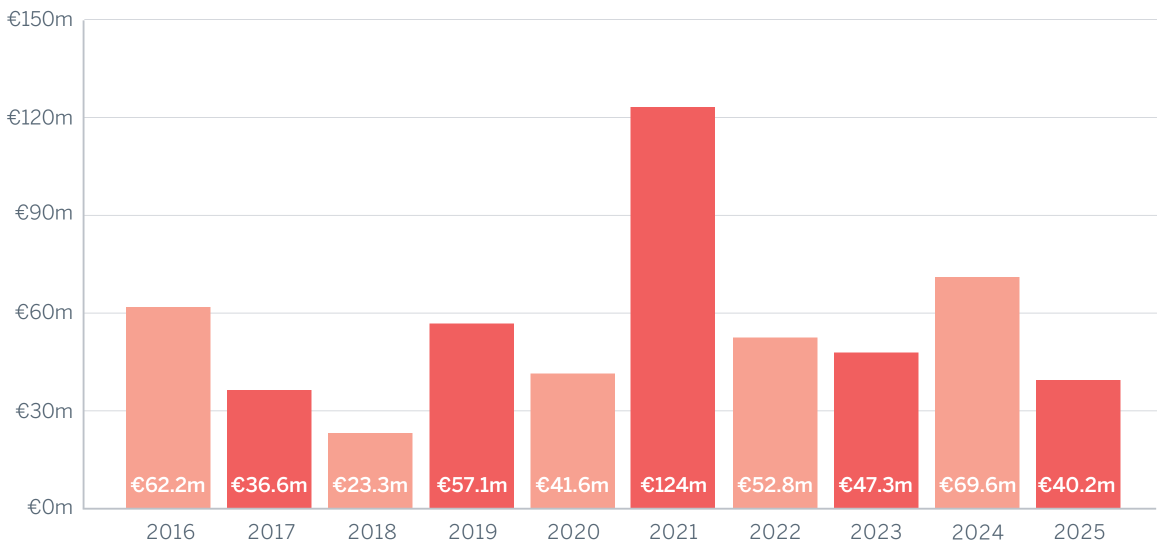


Chart C: Excise Duty Fee for the renewal of a 7-Day Publicans License under the 1992 Finance Act.

	TURNOVER NET OF VAT	FEE
1	**Under €190,500**	€250
2	**€190,500 – €381,000**	€505
3	**€381,000 – €635,000**	€1,140
4	**€635,000 – €952,000**	€1,775
5	**€952,000 – €1,270,000**	€2,535
6	**€1,270,000 +**	€3,805

Chart D: Volume of Licensed House Transactions in Dublin 2016-2025 represented as a percentage of the total number of Public Houses in Dublin.

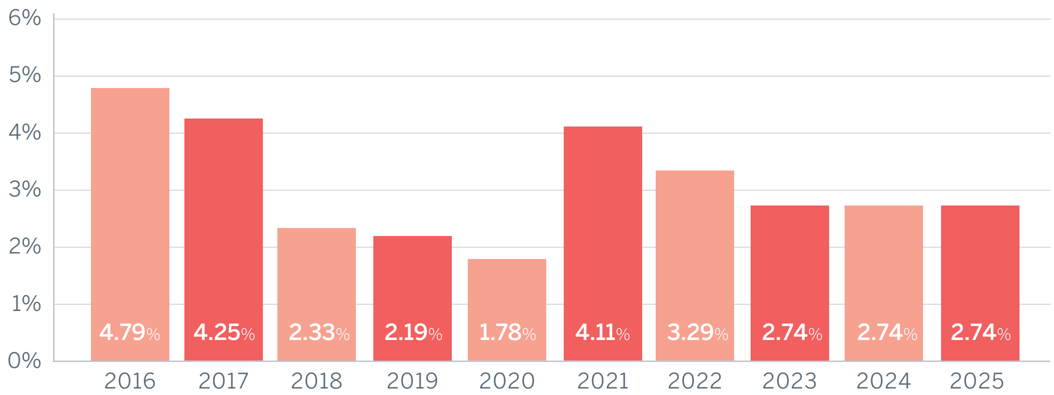
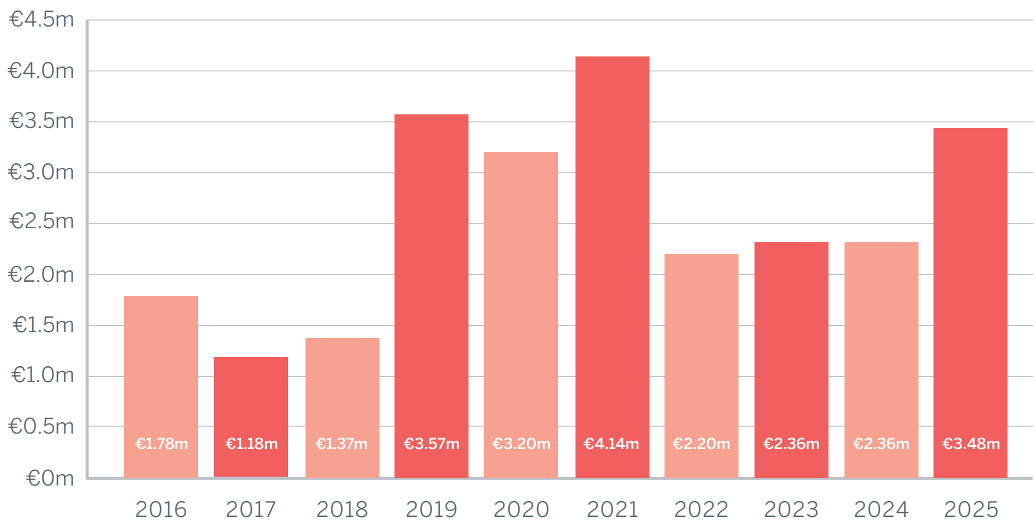


Chart E: The average sale price of the Licensed House Transactions / Sales in Dublin 2016-2025.



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