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## Limerick Georgian City Demonstration Project

### Proposed Infill Residential Development

at

58 O'Connell Street Limerick

on behalf of

Limerick City & Council

Part 8 Planning Application

Design, Planning & Architectural Heritage Report

December 2022

## 1. Design & Planning Report

### Introduction

1.01 In accordance with Part XI of the (Planning and Development) Acts 2000 (as amended) and Part 8, Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), notice is hereby given that Limerick City & County Council proposes to carry out the following development at 58 O’Connell Street, Limerick and lands to the rear (Eircode V94 XV70) which are designated as a Protected Structure (Reg. No. 3520), and within an Architectural Conservation Area, in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-28.

1.02 The proposed Development consists of a change of use and remodeling of the former city library at 58 O’Connell Street, including a rooftop extension to provide commercial space at ground floor level, plus 5no. apartments at basement, first, second and third floor levels, as well as in the proposed rooftop extension. The proposed apartments comprise 2no. one-bedroom units and 3no. two-bedroom units.

1.03 The material alterations, repairs and renewals proposed to the Protected Structure at 58 O’Connell Street consist of: removal of existing internal partitions, alterations to existing partitions, replacement of existing internal doors and joinery, fire upgrading of existing walls and ceilings, installation of mechanical and electrical services, PV panels and plant at roof level, as well as sundry remedial works not impacting on the character or special interest of the protected structure.

1.04 The proposed Development also consists of a change of use and part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse to the rear of the site – between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street – to provide 3no. apartments at ground, first and second floor levels. The proposed apartments comprise 2no. one-bedroom unit and 1no. two-bedroom unit.

1.05 The part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse includes retention of flanking walls along the north-east and south-west boundaries of the site, plus the careful taking-down and restoration of a section of the perimeter wall at the north-east corner of the property – to facilitate construction access to the site as well as to provide the pedestrian connection between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street envisaged as part of Limerick City and County Council’s project to rejuvenate the city centre’s laneways.

1.06 The proposed development includes the creation of a semi-private courtyard between No. 58 O’Connell Street and the proposed mews building – to provide residential amenity space, as well as bicycle and bin-storage, for the residential apartments.

1.07 Services and siteworks proposed to facilitate the proposed development include: new water, electricity and comms supplies; new foul sewage and storm water connections to public mains; air-to-water and roof-mounted PV panels for heating and ventilation.

1.08 The report that follows outlines the physical, planning, and historic context within which the scheme now presented for Part 8 planning approval has been prepared, as well as a description of the development proposed and the principal design and statutory objectives underpinning the design.

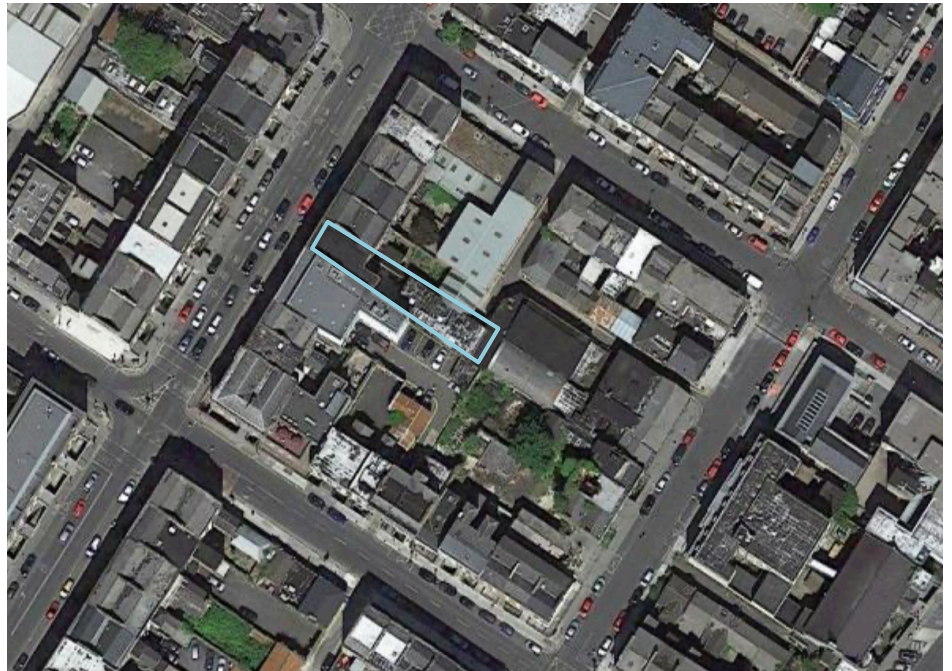
## 2. Context

### Site Description

2.01 Located in Limerick’s city centre and forms part of the historic Georgian core, the site measures 0.048 hectares and comprises No. 58 - a Georgian townhouse which accommodates an office in the ground floor of the building. The remaining upper floors, basement and rear building are currently vacant.

2.02 The Georgian building fronts onto the city’s main thoroughfare; O’Connell Street. Located towards the southern end of this street, it forms part of an urban block with flanking streets of Glentworth Street and Mallow Street to the north and south of the block respectively. The rear of the site has a narrow frontage onto Glentworth Lane.

2.03 The site has frontages onto O’Connell Street, and onto the laneway linking Mallow Street and Glentworth Street.



*Satellite view with No. 58 O’Connell Street highlighted*

**No. 58 O’Connell Street**

2.04 The front of the subject site consists of a terraced Georgian house, No. 58 O’Connell Street, formerly the city library, a protected structure (RPS Reg. No.3520) which extends to four storeys over basement.

2.05 From the 1930s to the 1990s No.58 housed Limerick’s county library in both the O’Connell Street building and the two-storey book store to the rear.

2.06 The O’Connell St. elevation to No. 58 has been much altered in the past. Its brick elevation has been plastered in a sand-and-cement render, with raised quoins on both sides. And an enlarged shopfront-type window, with an unsympathetic window has been inserted on the ground floor.

2.07 While a protected structure, the interior has been much altered. Steel beams have been inserted to support intermediate floors, with the loss of original ceilings and cornices.



*No. 58 & 59 O’Connell Street*

2.08 The front building of No. 58 is flanked by a similar Georgian building, No. 57, to the north, and a modern office building, No.59 and 60, to the south.

2.09 The rear storage building extends to the full extent of the site to the rear, with stone elevations to its facades to both Glentworth Street and Mallow Street.



2.10 The elevation to the Glentworth Street side contains attractive archways, much altered, but worthy of restoration. The wall to the Mallow Street side is to be partly retained, while the stone / concrete wall on the Catherine Street side of the site will be Rebuilt with stone salvaged from the demolition works.



*Aerial view of the rear of No. 58 O’Connell Street (red brick building)*

2.11 The rear of the site backs onto a large development site that fronts onto Catherine St. and which was subject of a recent planning approval – for a five storey mixed-use development that faces onto the subject site (Planning Ref: 20222).



*Elevation to laneway leading to Mallow Street,*



*Elevation to Glenworth Lane showing stone wall to be taken down and reconstructed.*

### 3. Planning Context

#### Introduction

3.01 Located in an Architectural Conservation Area, within the Limerick Development Plan 2022-28, No. 58 is designated as a Protected Structure (Reg. No. 3520) and described as an end-of-terrace two-bay four-storey-over basement rendered former townhouse, built c.1820

#### National / Local Planning Policy

3.02 The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets the vision and strategy for the development of Ireland to 2040. It places major emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements, rather than continual expansion and sprawl. The target is for at least 40 per cent of new housing to be delivered within the built-up areas of cities, towns and villages on infill and/or brownfield sites.

3.03 The NPF puts forward policies to enable the four cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford to each grow by at least 50% to 2040 and to enhance their significant potential to become cities of scale. It envisages a population increase of 50% to 60% for Limerick City and suburbs to c. 140,000 persons by 2040. This will require increasing and diversifying the City's employment base and attracting more people to live in the City, both within the City Centre and in new green field development areas.

3.04 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Regional Assembly reflects the policies and goals of the NPF and outlines a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan for the Limerick Shannon area.

3.05 Among the policies set out is to support the regeneration and continued investment into Limerick City through initiatives such as Limerick 2030 and Limerick Regeneration and to further enhance Limerick City as a primary economic driver for the Southern Region.

3.06 The Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 is focused on city-centre

first policies in order to encourage urban regeneration. This was reinforced by the adoption by Limerick City and County Council of Limerick 2030, Living Limerick City Centre Initiative.

3.07 The key objectives are the revitalisation and densification of Limerick city centre including renewal of vacant and underutilised building stock by embedding emerging economic and employment opportunities in derelict buildings.

3.08 The Limerick Laneways Project is part of the wider Living Limerick City Centre Initiative. The laneways are to provide alternative routes through the city centre, while also providing important recreational and amenity space, as well as supporting new development in the curtilages of older buildings.

3.09 Under the Living Limerick City Centre Initiative No. 58 O’Connell Street is one of two key pathfinding projects in the Living Georgian City Programme demonstrating new residential living in the city centre through the careful restoration and upgrading of existing Georgian building stock.

3.10 No. 58 O’Connell Street is located in an area zoned “City Centre” in the *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028*. The specific zoning objective is:

*The Georgian Quarter will experience on-going renovation of its building stock with a substantial increase in the number of residents and level of business activity to create a bustling and vibrant mixed use residential and business district. The distinct qualities of the area are well established and there is a need to preserve the Georgian fabric, as well as the complex elements, which contribute to the character of the built environment of Newtown Pery.*

3.11 Within the “City Centre” zoning, Objective ECON 01 outlines the objectives of the Council, namely:

*‘Enhance the vitality of the City Centre through a mixture of uses, reuse of vacant units, increased residential population and revitalization. Retail is an integral part of the City’s economy complementing its inherent strengths including innovation, enterprise, tourism, culture and services and has an important array of amenities, vibrancy, liveability / quality of life and quality-built environment. Development shall be designed so as to enhance the public realm and creation of a sense of place’.*

3.12 No. 58 O’Connell Street is within the *South City Centre & Newtown Pery ACA*. Development Plan Objective EH 053 applies in the area. One of the main objectives of the Council is to:

*“Seek a high quality, sensitive design for any new development(s) that are complementary and/or sympathetic to their context and scale, whilst simultaneously encouraging contemporary design which is in*

*harmony with the area. Direction can also be taken from using traditional forms that are expressed in a contemporary manner, rather than a replica of a historic building style.”*

## **National Planning Guidelines**

3.13 Government guidance has been published in respect of density (Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009), urban design (Urban Design Manual - A best practice guide, 2009), building heights (Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018) and apartment design and density (Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020).

3.14 The guidance document Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009, urges development of residential accommodation at higher densities.

3.15 The Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018, states that the Government considers that there is significant scope to accommodate anticipated population growth and development needs, by building up and consolidating the development of our existing urban areas.

3.16 The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020, identify three main urban typologies for which particular considerations are set out in respect of residential development.

3.17 The first of these typologies is that described as "Central and / or Accessible Urban Locations": which locations include those within walking distance (i.e. up to 15 minutes or 1,000- 1,500m), of principal city centres, or significant employment locations, that may include hospitals and third-level institutions. These are stated in the Guidelines to be suitable for small to large-scale and higher density apartment development, depending on location.

3.18 The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020, sets out a number of requirements for apartment developments including some so-called Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR). In general, there is a relaxation of many of these requirements for development on small sites (less than 0.25ha) and/or in urban regeneration developments.

3.19 In higher density developments, comprising wholly of apartments in more central locations that are well served by public transport, the guidance document *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020*, advocates a default policy for car-parking provision to be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated in highly accessible areas.

## **Apartment Design Standards**

3.19 In December 2020, the Government published the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

3.20 To a considerable extent, the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020, supersede certain requirements of local authority development plans.

3.21 The Guidelines emphasise the need for greater provision of apartments nationally, stating that it is:

*"critical to ensure that apartment living is an increasingly attractive and desirable housing option for a range of household types and tenures... and that the economic and regulatory conditions are such that apartment development attracts both the investment and the seeking out of this crucial form of housing by households, that will then result in greater delivery of apartments in Ireland's cities and towns and other appropriate locations".*

3.22 The Georgian building at No 58 O’Connell Street meets the criteria for the first location type set out in the Guidelines, namely Central and / or Accessible Urban Locations. According to the Guidelines, such sites are suitable for small to large-scale and higher density development – depending on location – that may wholly comprise apartments.

3.23 The Guidelines state that the 2016 Census shows that, if the number of 1-2 person dwellings is compared to the number of 1-2 person households, there is a deficit of approximately 150% and that in future a majority of households will comprise one and two-persons.

### **Specific Planning Requirements**

3.24 The Apartment Guidelines contain a number of Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) that planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are to have regard to under Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in carrying out their functions. They include the following:

3.25 SPPR1: Apartment developments may include up to 50% one-bedroom or studio type units (with no more than 20-25% of the total proposed development as studios) and there shall be no minimum requirement for apartments with three or more bedrooms.

3.26 Statutory development plans may specify a mix for apartment and other housing developments, but only further to an evidence-based Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), that has been agreed on an area, county, city or metropolitan area basis and incorporated into the relevant development plan(s).

3.27 However, SPPR 2 qualifies these requirements in respect of urban infill sites up to 0.25ha. The site in the current instance is below this area threshold and could come within the scope of SPPR 2. But, in any case, the unit mix proposed accords with SPPR 1.



3.28 SPPR2: For all building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size, or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25 hectares, the following apply:

3.29 Where up to 9 residential units are proposed, notwithstanding SPPR 1, there shall be no restriction on dwelling mix, provided no more than 50% of the development (ie. up to 4 units) comprises studio-type units;

3.30 Where between 10 to 49 residential units are proposed, the flexible dwelling mix provision for the first 9 units may be carried forward and the parameters set out in SPPR 1, shall apply from the 10th residential unit to the 49<sup>th</sup>. For schemes of 50 or more units, SPPR 1 shall apply to the entire development.

3.31 SPPR3: Minimum apartment floor areas are as follows;

- Studio apartment (1 person) 37 sq.m.
- One-bedroom apartment (2 persons) 45 sq.m.
- Two-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 73 sq.m.
- Three-bedroom apartment (5 persons) 90 sq.m.

3.32 Minimum floor areas for apartments are set out at SPPR 3. For one-bedroom units the minimum is 45 sqm and for two-bedroom (four person) units it is 73 sqm. In addition, provision is made for smaller two-bedroom units of 63 sqm, or less, suitable for three persons, provided that these make up no more than 10% of the total number of units in any private residential development.

3.33 However, this limit does not apply in the current case per SPPR 2. (The proposed scheme meets the above criteria in that all one-bedroom units exceed the minimum of 45 sqm, in most cases by a significant amount, and all two-bedroom units exceed 63 sqm.).

3.34 The Guidelines emphasise the need for a good mix of apartment sizes and require that the majority of all apartments in any proposed scheme of 10 or more apartments shall exceed the minimum floor area standard for any combination of the relevant one, two and three-bedroom bedroom unit types, by a minimum of 10%. Subject to design quality, this requirement may be relaxed for smaller, infill schemes on sites up to 0.25ha.

3.35 SPPR4: In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following apply: A minimum of 33% of dual aspect units will be required in more central and accessible urban locations, where it is necessary to achieve a quality design in response to the subject site characteristics and ensure good street frontage where appropriate.

3.36 In suburban or intermediate locations, it is an objective that there shall generally be a minimum of 50% dual aspect apartments in a single scheme.

3.37 For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 33% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis, but subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects. (The proposed development complies with this requirement and would, in any case, come within the discretionary application for sites less than 0.25ha.)

3.38 SPPR5. Floor to ceiling heights are required to be as follows: Ground level apartment floor to ceiling heights shall be a minimum of 2.7m and shall be increased in certain circumstances, particularly where necessary to facilitate a future change of use to a commercial use. For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis, subject to overall design quality. (The existing Georgian building at No. 58 O’Connell Street contains no ground floor apartments. The ground floor unit in the new mews development will have a floor to ceiling height of 2.7m.)

3.39 SPPR6. A maximum of 12 apartments per floor per core may be provided in apartment schemes. This may be increased for building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, subject to overall design quality and compliance with building regulations. (The proposed development complies but it should be noted again that the site is less than 0.25ha.)

## Planning History

3.40 There is only one record on the LCCC website of a planning application at No.58 O’Connell Street, namely Reg. Ref. 04770098, which refers to permission granted in 2004 to the then Limerick County Council for retention of a telecommunications mast on the roof of no.58 O’Connell Street.

3.41 Recorded planning permissions on adjoining / adjacent lands as follows:

- Reg. Ref. 03/770395 refers to permission granted to Brian O’Connor in 2004 for construction of an office and commercial development at No.59 / 60 O’Connell Street. The development consisted of a five storey over basement building with commercial use on the ground floor and basement and office use in the upper floor levels of the building. The top level is a penthouse floor which is set back from the front façade.
- Reg. Ref. 20222 refers to permission granted in 2020 to Thanos Securities Ltd for redevelopment of a substantial block of land on a site incorporating 14-41 Catherine Street, immediately to the rear (south-east) of No.58 O’Connell Street. It includes a six storey structure accommodating three floors of offices and three floors of apartments above, facing onto the lane at the rear of No.58 O’Connell Street and use of the lane for vehicular

access to a new basement car park (17 spaces). The development also includes refurbishment to Nos. 35, 36 & 37 Catherine Street, and conversion to office spaces comprising three storeys over basement level (c.710 m<sup>2</sup>), the demolition of Nos. 34, 38, 39, 40 & 41 Catherine Street, a new atrium at ground floor level enclosed by three new floors of office accommodation comprising c.3,495 m<sup>2</sup>, construction of 24no. apartments over a further three storeys with a total internal floor area of c.2,139 m<sup>2</sup>; a communal roof terrace at the sixth floor, with an overall maximum height of 30.06 metres from basement floor. Of note, Condition No.16 of the grant of permission requires that the laneway from Catherine Street to Glentworth Street shall be reconstructed over its full length and width.

- Reg. Ref. 20972 refers to permission granted to the Peter McVerry Trust for alterations and refurbishment to existing Protected Structure No. 2 & No. 3 Mallow Street, RPS Ref. No. 3064 & No. 3065 to provide a total of 2 No. 1-bedroom apartments including a new extension at roof level to provide 2 No. 1-bedroom studio apartments. The development also includes a new independent apartment building and entrance gateway to the existing rear access laneway, new refuse & bicycle storage, plant areas & new courtyard area.

#### 4. Historic Context

##### Historic Background.

4.01 Limerick city expanded westwards in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when it became a base for British trans-Atlantic trade. The Georgian area of Newtown Pery was developed during this period.

4.02 While the Irishtown was recorded as a distinct location in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century it was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that settlement extended beyond the island on which the original city was founded.

4.03 While much of this expansion is attributable to the New Town devised by the Sexton Pery family, the hands of the state, civic authorities and others were also at work. Sequential building campaigns, undertaken by numerous speculative developers and builders, saw Limerick’s main thoroughfares constructed from circa 1800 to the 1840’s.

4.04 The layout of Pery Square and the townhouses to the west of the People’s Park were built as part of the masterplan believed to have been devised by Davis Duckart for the Sexton Pery family and drawn up by Christopher Colles in 1769.

4.05 The grid iron street pattern and the guiding rules on the construction of buildings in the area is a unique example of Georgian planning in Ireland. The plan for the area is credited to city planner Edmund Sexton Pery. The development started in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century and by 1787 much of Newtown Pery was built.



*Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1840-1844.*

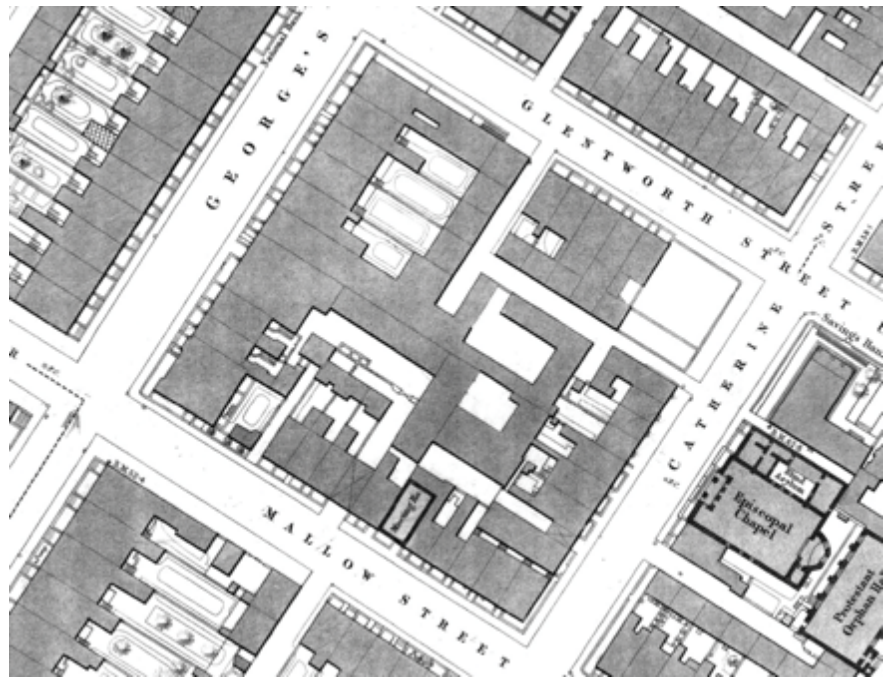
4.07 The Irish Historic Town Atlas, volume 21: Limerick, gives a date of 1770 for O’Connell Street which was originally known as George’s Street (Lenihan, 370). The Registry of Deeds contains a deed relating to George’s Street dated 1800 (Registry of Deeds, RD 532/115/348327).

4.08 More precise information relating specifically to number 58 was obtained from the records of the sale of the estate of the Earl of Limerick which was sold at auction in June 1907 and included properties in Newtown Pery. The catalogue contains maps and particulars for each of the properties including information on the valuation and original deeds. Those for 58 O’Connell Street state that it was sold in a lot with number 57.

4.09 A free farm Grant dated 13th August 1852 was made between William Henry Cecil Tennison, Earl of Limerick and William Dunscombe Russell in conversion of a renewable lease, dated 18th July 1803 from Edward Lord Viscount Perry to William Russell. This gives a date of 1803 for the building which was originally used as a house.

4.10 The NIAH dates No. 58 to approximately 1820. The street is shown on McKern’s map of 1827 but individual buildings are not. The house is shown on the first Ordnance Survey map of 1840, with the buildings occupying all of the plot.

4.11 No. 58 is indicated as number 17 on the Griffith Valuation Manuscript town plans of 1850 and was occupied by John and James Tuthill and was described as a house, offices and yard. The lessor was the representatives of William Russell Esquire.



*Extract from 1870 OS map showing No. 58 O’Connell Street*

4.09 The more detailed 1870 and 1900 Ordnance survey maps show No. 58 occupying the entire plot with a lane to the rear and a basement and steps to the front.

4.10 The rendered shopfront to the ground floor was added in around 1880. George’s Street was renamed O’Connell St. in 1917 or thereabouts.

4.11 At some point, post-independence, No 58 was converted to the county library, and the redbrick return was added around 1980.



*Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1919*



## 5. Development Description

### General Description

5.01 The proposed Development consists of a change of use and remodeling of the former city library at No. 58 O’Connell Street, including a rooftop extension to provide commercial space at ground floor level, plus 5no. apartments at basement, first, second and third floor levels, as well as in the proposed rooftop extension. The proposed apartments comprise 2no. one-bedroom units and 3no. two-bedroom units.

5.02 The proposed Development also consists of a change of use and part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse to the rear of the site – between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street – to provide 3no. apartments at ground, first and second floor levels. The proposed apartments comprise 2no. one-bedroom unit and 1no. two-bedroom unit.

5.03 The material alterations, repairs and renewals proposed to the Protected Structure at 58 O’Connell Street consist of: removal of existing internal partitions, alterations to existing partitions, replacement of existing internal doors and joinery, fire upgrading of existing walls and ceilings, installation of mechanical and electrical services, PV panels and plant at roof level, as well as sundry remedial works not impacting on the character or special interest of the Protected Structure.

5.04 The part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse includes retention of flanking walls along the north-east and south-west boundaries of the site, plus the careful taking-down and restoration of a section of the perimeter wall at the north-east corner of the property – to facilitate construction access to the site as well as to provide the pedestrian connection between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street envisaged as part of Limerick City and County Council’s project to rejuvenate the city centre’s laneways.

5.05 The proposed development includes the creation of a semi-private courtyard between No. 58 O’Connell Street and the proposed mews building – to provide residential amenity space, as well as bicycle and bin-storage, for the residential apartments.

5.06 Services and siteworks proposed to facilitate the proposed development include: new water, electricity and comms supplies; new foul sewage and storm water connections to public mains; air-to-water and roof-mounted PV panels for heating and ventilation.

5.07 The objective is to develop the site using both the existing built fabric and new building structures, as a high-quality apartment development, in accordance with the Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022-2028

5.08 The proposed project is intended to be a demonstrator project in the

adaptation and reuse of Limerick’s Georgian fabric.

5.09 The proposed development has been designed to comply with Government guidance as set out in the DHPLG’s Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, 2007 the Design Standards for New Apartments (2020) and the more recent Design Manual for Quality Housing

5.10 The proposed development provides for 8 no. residential units with a mix as follows:

- 4no. one-bedroom / two-person apartments
- 4no. two-bedroom / three-person apartments

5.11 With an overall site area of 0.048 Ha, the development provides a housing density of 184 units per hectare. With 20 no. bedspaces, the density corresponds to 461 bedspaces per hectare.

## **No. 58 O’Connell Street**

5.13 The existing Georgian house at No. 58 O’Connell Street is to be conserved and be brought into residential use by its conversion to 4no. one and two-bedroom apartments, retaining the Narrative 4 educational use on the hall floor as described hereunder.

5.14 Entered off the street-level hallway, the Narrative 4 accommodation consists of two rooms – front and back – separated by an entrance lobby (for Part B compliance) and an accessible toilet.

5.15 The street-level entrance hallway is retained intact, with the original Georgian screen conserved in-situ, save for the installation of short ramp to provide an accessible access to Narrative 4’s accommodation from the courtyard.

5.16 The basement apartment is accessed via a new staircase from the rear of the street / courtyard level hallway. It consists of a one-bedroom apartment with a combined kitchen / dining / living room to the front, that gives onto the front lightwell area, a central lobby with a bathroom off, and a bedroom to the rear that has a doorway to a second private open space.

5.17 The existing main staircase – not the original – is retained to access the upper floor apartments and the returns at each level, which it is proposed would be converted to home-office units (with separating lobbies off the staircase) to serve the various apartments.

5.18 The first, second and third floor apartments are identical two-bedroom, three-person units. Each contains a combined kitchen / dining / living room to the rear, with one double and one single bedroom to the front – both entered from a protected lobby off the main hall / stairway, which also gives access to the apartment’s bathroom.

5.19 The new-build fourth floor extension to No. 58 contains a one-bedroom apartment which is setback from the street edge – to provide a private roof terrace.

It consists of a combined kitchen / dining / living to the front, with a double bedroom at the rear – both entered from a protected lobby, which also gives access to the apartment’s bathroom.

5.20 This apartment is accessed from a new staircase in a proposed extension over the existing return, which is accessed from the existing 3<sup>rd</sup> floor return.

5.21 The apartments meet with the DHPLG’s space standards, insofar as is possible within the constraints of working within an existing Georgian house, and accommodating the required plant for the proposed air-to-water heating and ventilation system. Details are set out both on the submitted drawings and attached schedules.

5.22 Heating and ventilation will be provided by an air-to-water heating / ventilation system, with roof-mounted photovoltaic panels; thereby providing an environmentally responsible heating and ventilation system, without impacting on the appearance of the protected structure from street level.

5.23 Private amenity space for the proposed apartments falls below the areas provided in the DHLGH’s Design Standards for New Apartments (2020). However, these provide for a relaxation – in part or whole – and on a case-by-case basis, subject to overall design quality, which we submit is appropriate in the case of the adaptation and re-use of a protected structure.

5.24 The front elevation will be retained as is, including its non-original render and quoins. The existing sash windows will be retained, overhauled as necessary, and the unsympathetic ground floor window to Narrative 4 will be replaced by Crittall – or similar – steel casements as shown on the drawings.

5.25 The rear façade will be retained essentially as is, save for some enlargement of existing opes to provide ‘Juliette balconies’ to the living rooms on this side. The fenestration proposed consists of composite aluminum windows with painted metal railings.

5.26 The remedial works proposed to the existing protected structure are those required – ‘as much as is necessary and as little as possible,’ – to bring the building back into use and to secure its future going forward (see architectural heritage impact statement below).

## **Rear Mews Building**

5.27 The proposed Development also includes a change of use and part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse to the rear of the site – between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street – to provide 3no. apartments at ground, first and second floor levels. The proposed apartments comprise 2no. one-bedroom unit and 1no. two-bedroom unit.

5.28 The proposed three-storey apartment building sits in the back portion of the former library store to the rear of No. 58 O’Connell Street. It is deemed to be

either an integral part of the protected structure, or a stand-alone building within its curtilage.

5.29 The entrance to these three apartments – and to the rear of No. 58 – is accessed from a new laneway linking Glentworth Street and Mallow Street – a pedestrian connection envisaged as part of Limerick City and County Council’s project to rejuvenate the city centre’s laneways.

5.30 The part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse includes retention of flanking walls along the north-east and south-west boundaries of the site, plus the careful taking-down and restoration of a section of the perimeter wall at the north-east corner of the property – to facilitate construction access to the site as well as to provide the aforementioned laneway connection.

5.31 The proposed development will provide for the creation of a semi-private courtyard between No. 58 O’Connell Street and the proposed mews building – to provide residential amenity space, as well as bicycle and bin-storage, for the residential apartments.

5.32 The proposed ‘mews’ development will provide 2no. one-bedroom and 1no. two-bedroom apartments.

5.33 Entered from the passageway from the new laneway, the one-bedroom ground floor apartment has a double bedroom opening onto the inner courtyard, while its combined kitchen / dining / living space is in a new structure outside the perimeter of the former library store.

5.34 The first-floor apartment above is a one-bedroom unit with a similar plan to the one below. Entered off a shared staircase, its double bedroom looks onto the courtyard, while its combined kitchen / dining / living space overlooks the new laneway (passive surveillance) and the existing parking areas on the Mallow Street side of the block.

5.35 The second-floor apartment is similar in layout to those below, save for the addition of a second (single) bedroom, on account of the larger floorplate available to this unit on account of its top-floor location.

5.36 With level access to the ground floor apartment and staircase access to the upper floors, these apartments are fully compliant with the building regulations in terms of access and use for persons with disabilities, and all room sizes all comply with the DHPLG’s space standards.

5.37 As with the front building, the roof-mounted photovoltaic panels and air-to-water system will provide the apartments with an environmentally responsible heating and ventilation system, without impacting on the appearance of the structure from ground level.

5.38 The new ‘mews’ block facades are proposed to be finished in a light-

colored clay brickwork; with zinc standing seam roofs and composite aluminum windows. Painted metal railings are proposed for balconies, stairs and gates, as well as the privacy screens to ground floor windows facing the new laneway.

## 6. Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

### General

6.01 Located in an architectural conservation area, No. 58 O’Connell Street is designated as a Protected Structure (Reg. No. 3520) in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-28.

6.02 As such, the adaptation and reuse of this historic building will follow conservation best practice as set out in publications such as the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht’s Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Shaping the Future - Case Studies In Adaptation And Reuse In Historic Urban Environments (edited by PKA, architects of the Georgian Limerick Project) as well as the Department’s advice series publications on various elements of fabric.

6.03 The proposed adaptation and reuse of No 58 to residential will have a positive impact on the architectural heritage of the protected structure. As apartments, it will be in keeping with the building’s original use – one of the primary objectives of architectural conservation.

6.04 Although the conversion to apartments creates conservation issues in term of the sub-dividing original spaces, No. 58 has already been subjected to significant alterations and structural interventions associated to its conversion in the 1930s to its library use, resulting in the loss of much original fabric, including ceilings, cornices, joinery and much of the original staircase.

6.05 The sole surviving element of historic fabric is perhaps the entrance hallway door and screen, which will be preserved and conserved in its original condition as part of the proposed Development by inserting the required fire lobby within the Narrative 4 accommodation.

6.06 The alterations and structural interventions carried out in the past will result in the works now required in relation to fire and building regulations compliances having little or no impacts on the character or special interest of the protected structure. The works will be the minimum required – ‘as much as is necessary and as little as possible,’ – to bring the historic structure back into use and to secure its future going forward.

6.07 Further detailed inspections and opening-up works will be carried out prior to the commencement of works – under the direction of a conservation-accredited architect who will oversee the scheme throughout all work stages.

6.08 The front elevation will be retained as is, including its non-original render and quoins. Consideration was given to removing the render to reveal the original



brickwork, but deemed to be impracticable and laden with risk of greater damage to the fabric.

6.09 All of the existing sash windows will be retained and restored to their original condition, with the addition of new sash chords and conservation-grade draught-proofing. And the unsympathetic ground floor window to Narrative 4 will be replaced by Crittal – or similar – steel casements as shown on the drawings.

6.10 The rear façade will be retained essentially as is, save for some enlargement of existing opes to provide ‘Juliette balconies’ to the living rooms on this side. The fenestration proposed consists of composite aluminum windows with painted metal railings.

6.11 The sub-division of the Narrative 4 rooms, with the addition of a lobby and WC facility are necessary additions to comply with the building regulations and will have no impact on the special interest of the protected structure.

6.12 The rear return is to be retained and externally insulated to improve thermal performance while also distinguishing itself from the original Georgian building.

6.13 A section of the façade of the former library store / warehouse facing onto Glentworth Lane will be carefully taken down to facilitate construction access to the site. It will then be reinstated with the upper segmental archway and the covered up lower archway reintroduced to provide the aforementioned pedestrian connection between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street. A method statement will be prepared and submitted to the planning authority’s conservation department in advance of the works commencing.

6.14 The design of the proposed apartments has been developed to minimise the alterations required to the existing floor plans. Wherever possible, the original rooms to the rear been left intact; and it is proposed that the smaller cellular spaces required – e.g. bathrooms – will have lower ceilings so that the form of the original spaces can be appreciated wherever possible.

6.15 Wherever original features such as door and frames, cornices, skirtings, rails and other joinery features are extant, these will be retained and, where possible, repairs will be prioritized over replacement of original materials and finishes. In relation to new work required, the use of processes that are reversible will be used wherever possible.

6.16 The essential purpose of the development proposed is to return vacant floorspace to its original residential use. This development will return the building to good condition, and secure its future without the loss of any element of significance relative to its Protected Structure listing.



*Dawson Street Dublin. Paul Keogh Architects. Conservation, adaptation and reuse.*

## 7. Design Objectives

### General

7.01 The objective for the proposed development is to construct a demonstrator project of best practice in terms of the adaptation and reuse of a protected structure within Limerick’s historic Georgian core.

7.02 The conservation impacts have been outlined above in terms of best practice. Most importantly, the return to residential use proposed will contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the historic centre. The impact of the proposed development will therefore be entirely positive.

7.03 The scheme is designed to provide a high-quality and attractive intervention that will reinvigorate the street frontage onto O’Connell, while also creating new active street frontages to revitalize the laneways and back streets of the urban block.

7.04 The revitalisation of this plot within the urban core will hopefully act as a spur for adjoining properties to follow suit.

7.05 Within the context of working within a Protected Structure (No.58) and a tight urban site, the apartments have been designed meet with the DHPLG’s space standards, insofar as is possible within the constraints of the site.

7.06 Where building separation distances (as set-out in the LDP 2022-2028) are not achieved, careful consideration has been given to design and layouts of the units. Habitable rooms facing towards the central courtyard do not directly face each other to protect residents’ amenity.

7.07 With upper floors of residential living on both O’Connell Street and the rear laneways, passive surveillance of the public realm will be greatly increased,

with ‘eyes on the street’ helping the city become a safer and more welcoming place – especially after hours.

7.08 The laneways behind O’Connell Street will be activated by the creation of linkages, the presence of goods and services on the lanes and the provision of residential access points through these laneways.

7.09 The ground floor of the new mews building uses deep low-level planters to give residents more sense of privacy from the courtyard and new laneway. Privacy screens will also help to ensure privacy to rooms facing directly onto the pedestrian laneway.

7.10 The inner courtyard is proposed to be finished to a high level, with both hard and soft landscaping. Communal bin and bicycle storage will also be provided in the courtyard for residents of both the existing and new buildings. Refer to Don O’Malley’s M&E report and drawings for details on lighting within the courtyard.

7.11 Sympathetic and complementary materials have been selected for new build areas based on their harmony with the contextual material palette, aesthetics, durability and suitability of use.

7.12 In view of the city-centre location, no car parking is proposed for this development. The applicant is engaging with other LCCC city initiatives and private operators such as Go-Car to set up car sharing schemes for the future residents. Secure and enclosed bicycle storage is proposed within the courtyard.

7.13 Refuse Storage has been considered as an integral part of the design, and the refuse store proposed at No. 58 O’Connell Street complies with LDP Waste Storage and Collection Standards (Section 11.3.4 of LDP).

7.14 The proposed development has been designed to be TGD Part L and NZEB compliant. The design proposals incorporate air-source heat pumps for ventilation, water and space heating demands. Don O’Malley and Partners’ mechanical and electrical report is included in this package.

7.15 Outline structural designs have been prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers; both for the existing house at No. 58 and the new mews building. Details are included in their Part VIII submission package.

7.16 A pre-connection enquiry to Irish Water, by Punch Consulting Engineers, has confirmed that there is an existing combined sewer on O’Connell Street and Glentworth Street, and that there is adequate capacity to cater for the proposed development. Refer to the report by Punch Consulting Engineers for further details.

7.17 The proposed stormwater network is sized to accommodate the volume of attenuation needed to reduce the peak run-off from the site. Refer to the report

by Punch Consulting Engineers for further details.

7.18 Punch Consulting Engineers’ report details the flood risk considerations, and it confirms that the site falls within Flood Zone C under the Flood Risk Management guidelines, and that Justification is therefore not required.

7.19 Don O’Malley and Partners have investigated the availability of ESB / Eir / Virgin Media / Siro connections to cater for the proposed development. Refer to Don O’Malley’s report for further details

7.20 Openfield Ecological Services were engaged to complete an appropriate assessment (AA) screening report, a site inspection / invasive species survey and a full ecological impact assessment. The report concludes that the proposed development would not cause significant impacts. Copies of the reports are included in this planning package.

7.21 As part of the site appraisal and design development stages, the following surveys have been undertaken:

- Measured surveys of buildings, boundaries and immediate context.
- Ground investigations to ascertain soil conditions and presence of rock.
- An asbestos survey was procured and asbestos containing material were removed from site.
- CCTV survey of existing drainage.

7.22 The current initiative between Bird Watch Ireland and Limerick City & County Council identifies locations for the installation of swift nest boxes and other features into new buildings. All recommendations arising from the Part VIII process will be incorporated into the later design stages in respect of No.58 O’Connell Street.

7.23 A bat survey was completed by Malachy Walsh and Partners during the roosting season: it found no evidence of roosting bats on site.

7.24 Cognisant of the site location and access issues, a detailed construction management plan will be prepared before any development is carried out; it will include input from the design team and all specialist consultants brought onto the project as well as consulting stakeholder departments such as LCCC’s planning, roads and traffic, environment and transport departments.

## **8. Statutory Matters.**

### **Pre-planning consultations**

8.01 Pre-planning consultations have taken place in LCCC’s one-stop-shop meetings with representatives of LCCC’s planning, conservation and building control departments. Comments and recommendations received have been incorporated into the plans now presented for Part 8 approval.

8.02 Michael Slattery Associates have been engaged to provide fire safety

and universal access consultancy services. MSA’s review of the outline designs has been incorporated into the plans presented for Part 8 approval – to ensure compliance with Part B and Part M of the building regulations in due course.

8.03 A presentation was made to the elected members on December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2022. The proposals were well received, with no major impediments to the approval of this Part 8 application identified.

8.04 The applicant will be engaging with external stakeholders, including adjoining property owners and occupiers, and current tenants to inform them of the proposals in advance of the application going on public display.

## 9. Conclusions

### Summary

9.01 A Government-funded demonstration project in the reuse of brownfield urban lands and building stock, we submit that the scheme prepared for Part VIII approval is in accordance with national and local policy, including Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

9.02 The proposed development accords with the principles of architectural conservation set out in international charters as well as Irish publications such as the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht’s Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Shaping the Future - Case Studies in Adaptation and Reuse In Historic Urban Environments.

9.03 The proposed adaptation and reuse of No 58 to residential will have a positive impact on the architectural heritage of the protected structure. As apartments, it will be in keeping with the building’s original use – one of the primary objectives of architectural conservation.

9.04 The development proposed will include a programme of essential repairs to the structure and fabric of No. 58, which will be a contribution to the long-term protection of the city’s Georgian heritage.

9.05 The part-demolition of the former library store / warehouse to the rear of the site will facilitate the pedestrian connection between Glentworth Street and Mallow Street envisaged as part of Limerick City and County Council’s project to rejuvenate the city centre’s laneways, as well as providing residential accommodation that will provide passive surveillance to the new laneway.

Signed



Paul Keogh FRIAI FRIBA

December 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

## **Appendices**

### **1. Project Team**

**Project Team****Applicant.**

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**Chartered Quantity Surveyors**

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Representative: Margaret Flannery

**Civil and Structural Engineers**

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Representative: Kevin Mullery

**Mechanical and Electrical Consulting engineers**

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Representative: Pat Condon

**Planning Consultant**

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Representative: Karl Kent

**Fire Safety Consultant / Access Consultant**

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