

Ongoing Renovations and Improvements at the Old Schoolhouse in Grange

Discussion Document for Consideration with Limerick City and County Council Officials

It is uplifting to observe that renovations are presently (November 2017) underway at the old schoolhouse in Grange.

Room Enlargement

The dividing wall between the two inner rooms has been removed, leading to a good-sized single room, with great potential. A sliding divider will be installed, providing the option to create two smaller rooms as occasion may require.



Restoration works on foot of the wall removal will be undertaken, and a new wooden floor will be laid. It might be advantageous to remove the old cast-iron 'Range' fire and its small walls before fitting a new floor. With the entry to the chimney blocked up, a straight wall will be ideal for locating a small stage for performances. The fireplace at the northern end of the room could remain as a focal point. Will it be possible to fit floor insulation, prior to laying the new boards? In addition, it is thought that a suspended ceiling with appropriate insulation would greatly enhance the new large room, making it warmer and obviating a need to decorate the existing lofted ceiling.

Grange is most grateful to Limerick City and County Council for arranging and funding these works and, indeed, several lots of previous works internally and externally.

Smaller Rooms to the front (2) and rear (2), adjoining the new large room

If the wall dividing the existing two front porches could be removed in total, or partially from floor level upwards, the resulting new room would make a good reception room with a cloaks facility as well.

Similar alterations for the two adjoining rooms at the rear would provide space for a small kitchen/dining area.

Significant Works to Building are required

However, it must be said that much internal work is required in order to make the now three large rooms and the adjoining smaller rooms comfortable and functional. They are rather a mess at present. The objective ought to be to have accommodation that is up the standard of a modern day-care facility for older persons, so that that the facility will be suitable for a wide range of socialisation activities over the day, and not solely for infrequent evening meetings.

Eliminate Water Ingress

In the first instance, there is need to ensure that the building in its totality is secure from water ingress. It has been observed that views from the attic point to remaining weaknesses where daylight is clearly visible through the roof. If this is so, then remedial works are essential and urgent.



A view of the roof from outside the building – from the rear at the northern end – shows a number of slates dislodged or missing. In addition, grass/weeds growing on the roof and in and around the gutters needs to be removed.

In both of the outer large rooms, remedial works to the roof structure (below roof valleys) are evident - a steel supporting structure was introduced in each case. Are these works final or is there more to be done? If final, can the steel be 'boxed-in' for appearances sake?

Window and External Door Restoration or Replacement

The windows to the building appear to be in poor repair – in fact, significant decay is obvious. Can they be restored and re-painted (internally and externally) or do they require replacement? In either case,



draughts need to be eliminated and openings need to be functional. Ideally, double glazing or better is required. Similarly, external doors need to be restored/painted or replaced, eliminating draughts. The main entrance door needs to look well – the existing compromise



is really not suitable, going forward. A modern letter box should be installed on one external front door as well as a door bell. Alternatively, a steel post box can be installed on an outside wall at the front of the building.

All windows should be fitted with commercial-type blinds. Renewal of all window boards should be considered – some seem to have rotted.

Internal Walls and Ceilings

All internal walls and ceilings need to be repaired and finished smoothly and painted. A preferred solution for the new larger room has been mentioned above. Consider skirting boards. Is dry-lining required anywhere? Paintings, prints and photographs should be hung on the walls of the three large rooms – Grange should have sufficient material for this purpose.



Under no circumstances should decorated walls be defaced or marked. Relatively inexpensive whiteboards and noticeboards should be fixed to walls in each of the three rooms. In addition, movable whiteboards on stands can be used as occasions require.

Communications Technology

Broadband/wireless facilities should be installed in the building with several associated power points throughout the three large rooms. An expert should be asked to draw up a plan. The plan should include a large drop-down screen in the new large room, including connectivity/projection for TV and computers. TV aerials as appropriate should be installed externally.

Fireplaces



The future of the four fireplaces should be considered. Are any of them functional? Restoration in so far as possible and clean-up should be undertaken.

Or should they be removed?

Removal of the 'Range' has already been proposed above.

Heating

If the building is to be maintained in good order, functional and usable, some kind of adequate heating will be required throughout. Heating will be essential in order to maximise utilisation throughout the year. The options need to be considered in the context of costs and sustainability. This examination should be undertaken immediately. Does the attic cavity require modern insulation? Is it feasible to pump modern insulation to adhere to the inside of the slates? In addition, could wall insulation be pumped in the wall cavities in the two end rooms?

Furniture

Modern functional tables and chairs (comfortable) are required, designed for easy storage and easy movement from room to room. Table sizes should be chosen to facilitate best usage of room dimensions. In addition, storage is required for books, documents, etc. This calls for a set of built-in closed shelving or free-standing furniture - consider the options.

Kitchen

A well-designed compact kitchen will be required, including essential electrical appliances with extraction facilities as necessary. The two smaller rooms at the rear adjoining the new bigger room might be designated for this purpose. A suggestion has already been made above in this regard.

Shower and Hot Water

A shower area is desirable and best location should be considered. An electric shower is probably the best option, but the options to generate a hot-water supply from roof-mounted solar technology might also be considered. Such hot-water would also be available for kitchen and other bathroom purposes. A cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken.

Is Electrical Wiring Adequate and Safe?

It is thought that upgraded electrical wiring is modern and safe, but it might be prudent to review this again.

Formation of Project Plan in Consultation with Limerick City and County Council

Item	Works Name	Description of Agreed Works	Priority 1,2 etc	Cost - €k	Start and Finish Dates
1	Eliminate Water Ingress				
2	Further Wall Removal				
3	Windows, Window Boards, Blinds and External Doors				
4	Internal Walls, Ceilings, Skirting Boards, Painting and Fixtures				
5	Communications				
6	Fireplaces				
7	Heating, Attic and Wall Insulation				

8	Furniture				
9	Kitchen				
10	Shower				
11	Solar Panels				
12	Electrical Wiring				
13	Other				

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