

Proposed Waterford City & County Council Development at 'The Munster Express', 37 Merchant's Quay, Waterford under the URDF scheme; Projects F and H

Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended)
Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) Part VIII, Revised 2021.

Recommendation to Commence Part VIII Process

Objective

- To create a technological office building and exhibition space which showcases the City's entrepreneurial use of data, with lettable spaces for project teams, enhancing Waterford and the South-East region. The existing Munster Express building will be integrated with a newly constructed three-storey building along Hanover Street with the main public entrance from O'Connell Street.
- Location; Munster Express, 37 Merchant's Quay, Waterford, X91 DC83.



Fig.1: OSI Map of Site Location and Red Line Boundary.

Site Appraisal

- Central location in Waterford City, along Merchant's Quay, Hanover & O'Connell Street.
- Four-storey protected structure, acquired by WC&CC: currently used as head office for Munster Express newspaper with smaller single and multi storey, commercial units along Hanover Street & O'Connell Street.
- Related Planning Applications;
 - Planning Ref. 00508888 – 4 Hanover St. (Change of Use)
 - Planning Ref. P8 14/06 – Hanover St. (Resurfacing Works)
 - Planning Ref. P8 06/02 – O'Connell St. (Street Improvements)
- Site is fully served by utilities.
- 37 Merchant's Quay (only) is on the NIAH (Ref: 22500329).
- Building/Site lies within the following areas;
 - Architectural Conservation Area; 'Trinity Within'
 - General Conservation Area; 'Waterford City'
 - Zone of Notification, 'R134123' (Sites and Monuments Record and



Record of Monuments and Places)

Building Brief/Accommodation

- The Ground Floor will accommodate public access with flexible multi-purpose exhibition/lecture space, a multi-storey atrium space connecting all levels, meeting rooms and ancillary services.
- First Floor will accommodate flexible format data/computer labs and workshops with control room and ancillary meeting/service areas.
- Second Floor will accommodate offices and meeting rooms with ancillary spaces.
- The roof area will accommodate a terrace, environmental sensors, and renewable energy technologies.
- No.37, Merchant's Quay, will have the ability to function as an autonomous commercial unit.
- The flexible office space will allow individuals and organisations to establish workspaces on-site when developing ideas and testing information. The primary objective of this project is to harness data generated by the City and Region in the areas of environment, transport, enterprise, education, and governance and assess this information to inform the decision-making process to create better outcomes for the City and Region.
- Locating the facility along Hanover Street, Merchant's Quay and O'Connell Street provides very positive regenerative characteristics at the centre of the developing Waterford Cultural Quarter.

Building History

- The building was originally constructed as a house, c.1790, possibly with a commercial presence to Merchant's Quay. The house formed a substantial composition of balanced proportions that retains most of the early features dating to renovation in 1898 and is a Protected Structure (22500329) of Regional Importance.
- The building, together with a house of similar appearance immediately to south-east (22500328 / WA730838), is an important component of the streetscape of Merchant's Quay, forming a prominent corner leading to Hanover Street and across from The Granary (22500295).
- The building was further extended between 1948-59 along Hanover Street forming the shorter single-bay, three-storey building with hipped roof behind parapet. The pitched-roof warehouse was added by 1974 and expanded to include the General Office Supplies building; together these were once used as a vehicle garage and showroom. These 20th century additions are not on the NIAH register or Protected Structures list within the Waterford City & County Council Development Plan 2022-2028 and are not considered to have architectural or heritage value.

Scheme Delivery

Project delivery will be managed in-house by WC&CC staff (Contracting Authority) in accordance with the Public Spending Code and Capital Works Management Framework pillars:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| a. Part 8 Complete: | Q3 2023 |
| b. Detail Design / Tender: | Q2 2024 |
| c. Procure Scheme: | Q3 2024 |
| d. Construction Start: | Q3 2024 |

Project construction is anticipated to last approximately 20mths and will be procured in accordance with National Procurement Guidelines for the most economically advantageous tender return. External consultant appointments will similarly adhere to OGP guidance.

Waterford City & County Council will be part of a special Designated Activity Company (DAC) which will oversee and manage the facility.

The project is an exceptional opportunity to establish the City as a technological, adaptable hub at the centre of the Southeast Region which has the capacity to generate new industries and regenerate the urban life in the City Centre. WC&CC is very anxious to proceed with this proposal as presented and are notifying the elected members of the Metropolitan District of its intention to commence the Part 8 process.



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Artists Impression, Hanover Street looking North.