

SOCCER - MARKETS FIELD REDEVELOPMENT

Markets Field on track for June 5 opening

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REDEVELOPMENT work on the Markets Field Stadium remains on track to be completed in time for Limerick FC's to stage their SSE Airtricity League Premier Division clash with Drogheda United at the venue on June 5.

When redevelopment work is completed at the end of this month, the Markets Field will be a Category 2 UEFA stadium with a capacity of 3,075.

George Lee, of the LEDP, who is project leader on the Markets Field redevelopment, explained: "We are now four weeks out and the whole project is progressing right on target. I am absolutely satisfied the stadium will be ready for Limerick FC's fixture with Drogheda Utd on June 5. Our design team have given us every assurance. We had a design team meeting on Monday and everyone is 100% telling us that this is going to happen on June 5."

The redeveloped main stand at the Markets Field will have seating capacity for 1,340. Away fans will be facilitated on a demountable stand on the Geraldine Villas end of the ground.

George Lee said: "We have all the precast installed ready and waiting for the seating to be installed in the main stand over a period of a number of days. Around the same time the demountable stand for away supporters on the far side which will cater for 340-350 away supporters will be erected.

"The pitch surface is being manicured at this stage. The permanent markings have been put on it for the placement of the pitch. That allows us to draw the lines. The goal posts arrive over the next couple of days.

"Our floodlighting has been commissioned on one end and people will have seen them on the other night. All the wiring has been done for the end and we are working on the final ducting to connect up. That should be good in the next week or so.

"The dressing rooms are 95% there at this stage. The place is being painted. All the electrics are being completed at this stage. Our security system has been put in place.

"We are in the course of constructing a hospitality suite where the old bar was. That hospitality suite will be available to Limerick FC and to any other groups or organisation using it on match day. The hospitality will have the facility to take more than 100 people seated.

"We don't have a bar. That was done purposely. One of the goals of LEDP is supporting the community. There are 10 pubs within a five-minute walk of here and three within a stones throw. We want them to get the business.

"Once we are finished with all of the heavy trucks coming in and out, we will be pulling the tar and chip behind us and that will finish off the aesthetic look of the ground.

"For June 5 we will have the place looking as good as possibly can be. We should have it up to full capacity on that day. There may be some minor aesthetic things that need to be done. June 5 is not the end date, it is actually the start date. From there we got from being a construction site to being an operational stadium. Then we go into maintenance and looking after the place.

"It is very exciting at this stage. It is the culmination of a building phase which has been going on in earnest since just before Christmas. In reality, it has been going on for nearly two years in the planning and all of that. I think we have developed something here which Limerick people are going to be extremely proud of. I am at pains to point out we are not Thomond Park.

"We are not the Gaelic Grounds, but we are the Markets Field. The venue brings with it a history and tradition that is almost in the Limerick DNA. This is for the people of Limerick.

"We will be looking at this

ground in terms of 'outside of the box' activities.

"I know I will have a lot of memories, a lot of emotion tied up on the opening night at 7.40pm when the lights are on and the tempo is building."

Limerick FC captain Shane Duggan and his father Ger, who previously played with Limerick, had a kick-around on the excellent new playing surface at the Markets Field.

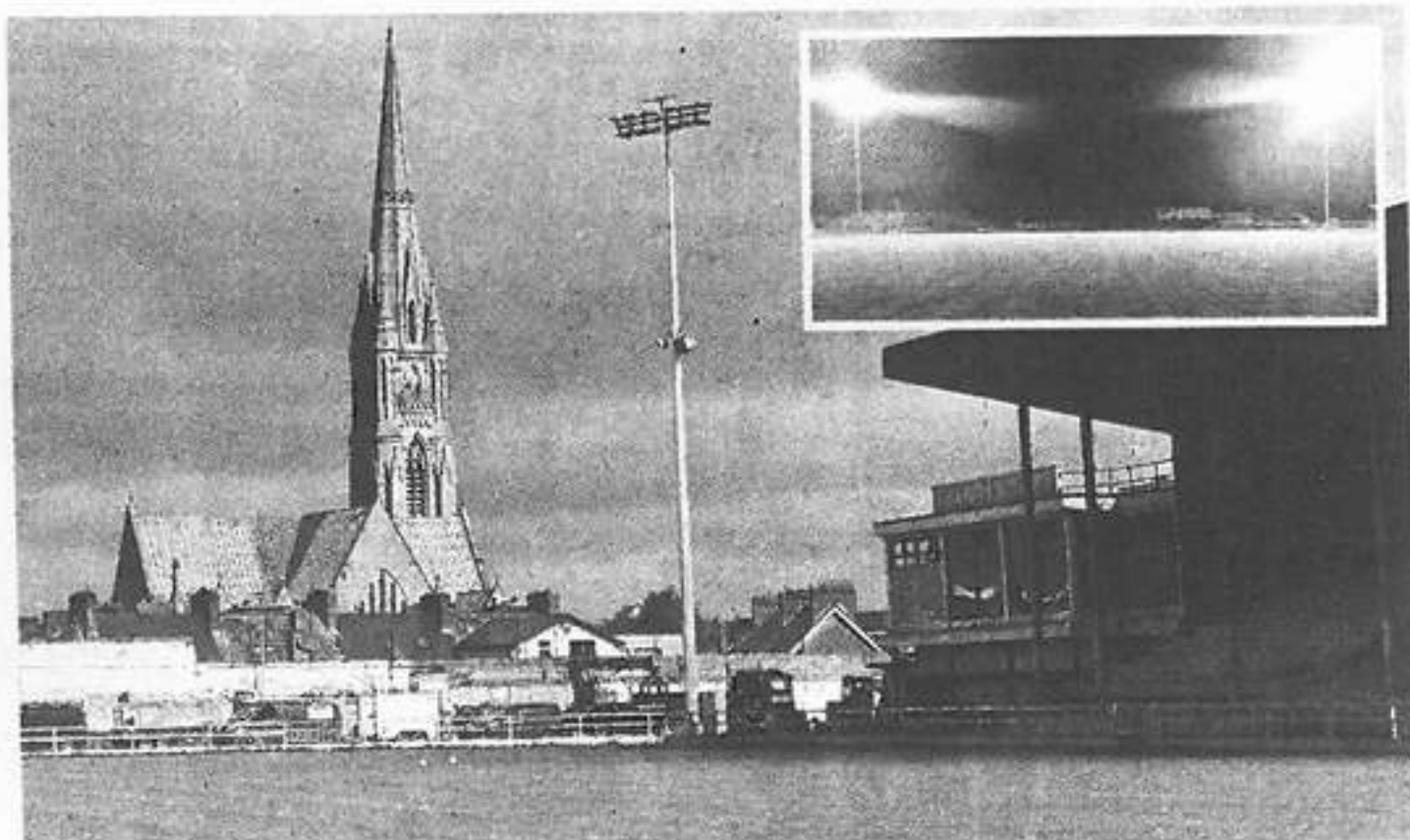
"Limerick FC will have a number of run-outs here prior to that first game. The surface is just so different to what they are playing on presently and pretty much to anything being played on currently in the League of Ireland. It is a pristine surface which hasn't been played on since it was laid two years ago.

"I would like to think, even though it is not in our gift, that it might also mark a turning point for Limerick FC in their season and they can get things going. I know Martin Russell is very upbeat about what is going to happen when we come in here as well.

meanwhile, Markets Field and LEDP have decided to name the two turnstiles and team entrance after people, organisations or places that have connections to the ground.

Fans are, through Facebook, invited to register their votes for their chosen name through the Markets Field Facebook page. This phase of the voting process will finish on this Sunday, May 17 at midnight.

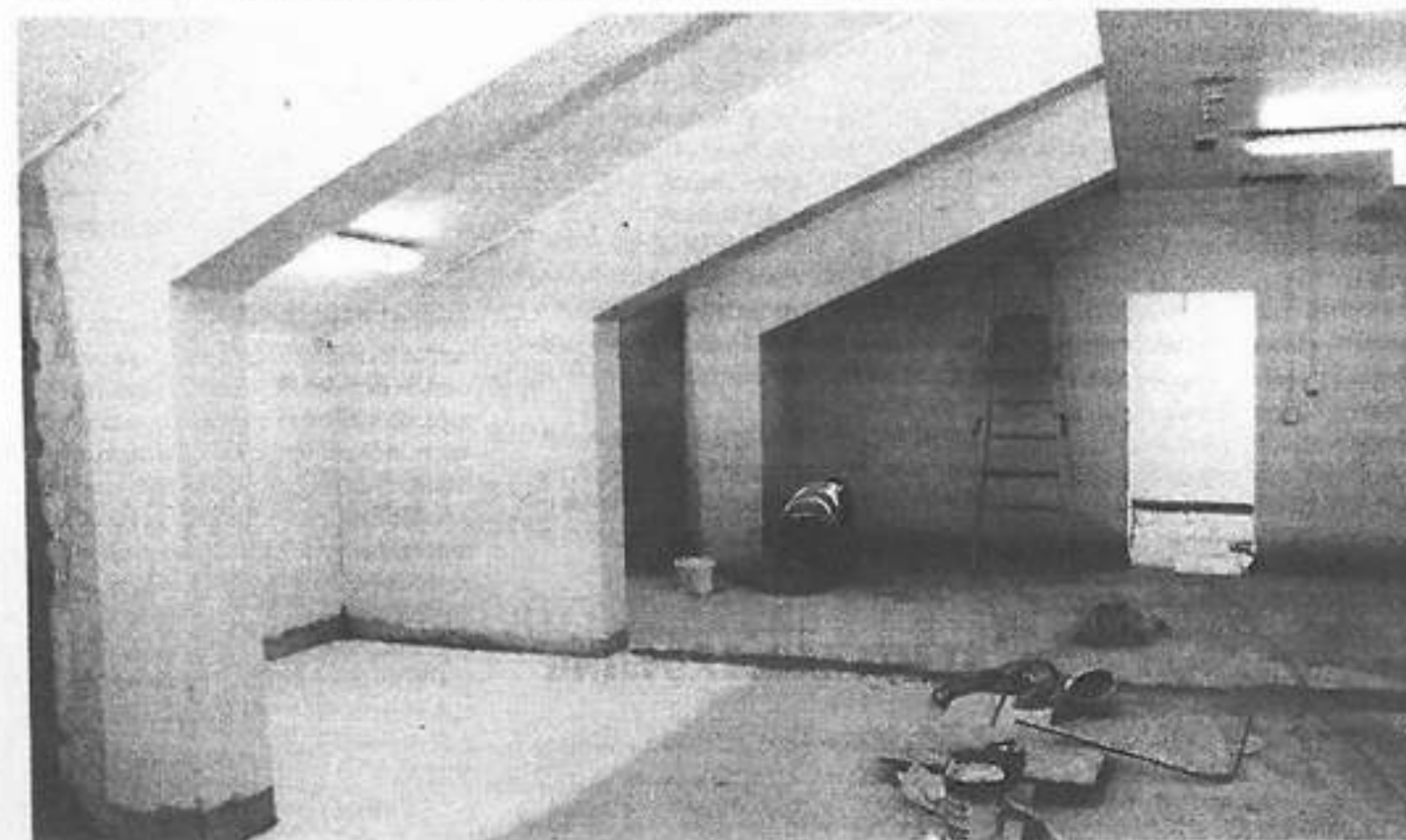
The top six nominations will then be entered into a voting process that will allow people to vote through a premium text number with the proceeds of the text going to Milford Care Centre. Text lines will remain active until the end of May. The nominee with the most votes on the text line will have the players entrance named after them, second will be the home turnstile, and third will be the away turnstile. members of the public are invited to vote on the Facebook page and like and share the page.



Redevelopment work on the Markets Field will be completed in time for Limerick FC's Premier Division clash with Drogheda United at the venue on June 5. Inset, new floodlights at the Markets Field turned on this week



The main stand at the Markets Field where seating will be put in shortly. It will boast a capacity of 1,340



Working is nearing completion on the home dressing room at the Markets Field



Work is continuing on the new-look Markets Field Stadium which, when completed at the end of the month, be a Category 2 UEFA stadium with a capacity of 3,075