

The planning authority has applied permission but has attached new conditions, including reducing the number of bedrooms by 19 and expanding the communal garden and open space for residents. Planning consultant Brendan McGrath, on behalf of Dr James and Mona Molloy, St Nessian's Road, had argued the "proposed open space provision is unsatisfactory, consisting of a small, internal formal garden that will be in the shade most of the time and a peripheral linear lawn area of varying width" and that "an attractive external physical environment" part

An Bord Pleanála has granted permission to Barchester Healthcare to build a nursing home in Raheen. The international care group is chaired by Denis Brosnan, left, and backed by JP McManus

of the original design concept had been "designed out during the course of the planning application". Supporting documentation for the application outlines that Barchester's proposals exceed HIQA guidelines on both personal and communal space in nursing homes. Speaking to the Limerick Leader last month, Mr Brosnan said that while he did not have specific details

on the Raheen application, Barchester's international experience in the UK and the United States was that "we set the standards and others follow". Residents who appealed to An Bord Pleanála highlighted other concerns including road safety (particularly where elderly drivers are involved); traffic congestion and parking provision and properties being overlooked,

Meath, last year and plans to introduce the American-style concept of retirement villages here. The Dooradoyle home is the second Irish facility planned by Barchester, which is backed by investors such as JP McManus, John Magnier and Dermot Desmond. It does deal with the health authorities overseas (the NHS in Britain and Medicare/Medicaid in the United States) and while Barchester is also talking to the HSE, the bulk of its patients and residents are private.

## Home is where the art is for Frank McCourt

John Hogan

FORMER classmates of Frank McCourt are being sought to take part in a special celebration to mark the official opening of their old school as an art centre in April.

Leamy House on Hartstonge Street is already welcoming students for art classes in the 170-year-old building, which closed as a school in 1952. Local artist and co-owner of the building, Una Heaton, has secured the services of Leamy House's best known past pupil to open the art gallery and school this April but she is also asking that McCourt's old school friends take part in the ceremony.

"I'm keeping it under wraps for now what exactly it is I'm planning but I'd like to get Frank's old friends from the school to join us on the day," said Una, who also appeared on last week's Late Late Show to discuss her new art centre.

"Anyone who is interested in joining us can contact me at the school. Nothing to major will be required of anyone who comes, it will be a reunion of sorts for the old class and a chance to join in the celebration of this new beginning for the school."

Frank McCourt has written and spoken about his time spent in Leamy's National School in his books and interviews, once recalling his last teacher, Mr O'Halloran, who he described as the only one to offer words of encourage-



Artist Una Heaton putting the finishing touches to the art centre she plans to open at Leamy's School

ment.

"He told us we were distinct, unique individuals with a right to think for ourselves. And that was just before we left Leamy's National School," McCourt said in a 1999 interview.

To serve as a reminder of the

Limerick writer's days in the school, visitors to the new art centre will be greeted at the front door by an old blackboard with the words "Frank was here" scrawled across it.

The Leamy House art centre will offer both evening and day

classes to experienced and beginner artists while the gallery will also be open to any local artists who wish to use it for an exhibition.

Those wishing to take part in any of the classes should contact the school on 319710.

## Blaine crazy for Moyross magician Leon Andersen

Gerard Fitzgibbon

MOYROSS magician Leon Andersen has revealed that he could be on this way to the Big Apple in the near future to work with the most famous illusionist of them all - David Blaine.

Leon met up with the American superstar magician while on a visit to an international magic conference in Blackpool, England recently, and is currently in talks about the possibility of travelling to New York to work with Blaine in teaching magic to underprivileged children.

Leon said that Blaine was hugely impressed when he told him about his Irish Academy of Magic on Mary Street - the only magic school in the country - and said that he would like to replicate the

idea in the States: "I was over the biggest magic convention in the world in Blackpool, with over 4000 other magicians from across the world, and I got a chance to speak with David and sit beside him at one of the shows. I told him about the school, he seemed very interested and said that he was

doing something similar in New York hospitals and schools. We immediately clicked - he is a really down to earth guy."

Since it opened in August, over 60 children have graduated from Leon's Academy. Interest is as high as ever in the four-week course, which also teaches young kids to build up their confidence through performing tricks in front of all their friends: "I work closely with Limerick Youth Service as well teaching tricks to local kids and also travelling to different youth clubs in the UK. One of the most important things I try to teach them is that no matter where you're from if you're passionate about something, whether it's music or magic or dancing, you'll get there if you put your mind to it."

Leon has launched the second book in his "Class Magic" series. His first book, "Ten Ways To Fool Your Friends" was a best-seller and covered a variety of basic, easy to learn tricks. For more information about Leon and the Irish Academy of Magic, log on to [www.theirishacademyofmagic.com](http://www.theirishacademyofmagic.com) and [www.leonandersen.com](http://www.leonandersen.com)