

City art gallery set to become a museum

■ Development works will entitle gallery to more valuable and historic exhibitions

By ANNE SHERIDAN

THE EXPANSION of Limerick City Gallery of Art is due for completion next May and development works should see the gallery being upgraded to full museum status within the next two years.

Marian Lovett, acting director of the gallery, said the works are a "very, very exciting development for the gallery and for Limerick" and will create the potential for more ambitious exhibitions.

The €1.4 million redevelopment will see the premises expanded at three sides of the building, veering on to the People's Park, and will put Limerick "on the international art map".

Ms Lovett told a sporting and cultural meeting at City Hall this Monday night that the works "will make it fully deserving of museum status" by 2012, thereby allowing the gallery to show more historic and valuable work.

The redevelopment of the

gallery will include a cafe, workshop area and wet-room for artists' materials, and dedicated storage space.

The plans, designed by Murray O'Laoire Architects, will also allow for more research, improved administration and archival space.

The renowned architectural practice went into liquidation this year, but co-founder Hugh Murray is now independently overseeing phase two of their capital development.

The gallery will also become more user friendly especially for wheelchair users, said Ms Lovett, as the old push-doors at the entrance will be replaced by electronic doors.

A new glass roof and new lighting system will "add to the gallery's appearance and appeal".

Viewing the stages of development, Labour Cllr Tom Shortt described the redesign as "absolutely beautiful, stunning to see such a piece of modern architecture merging into the city."

"We will be more than proud to see tourists going

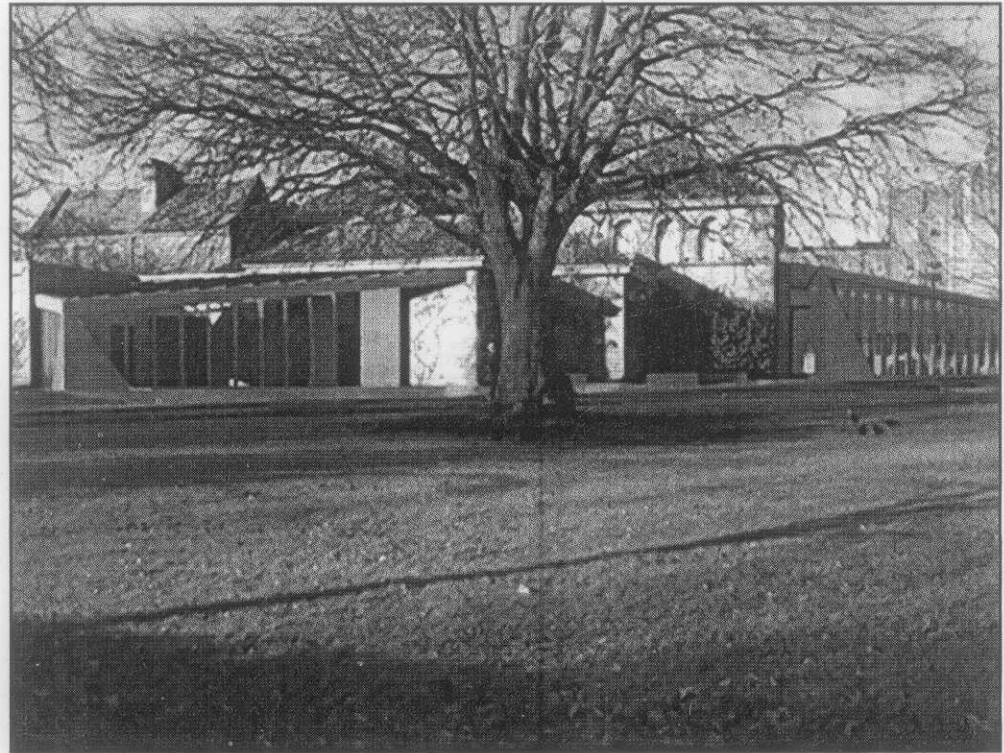
into the city gallery now."

Independent Cllr Kathleen Leddin said while galleries by young artists are springing up across the city, this gallery "should be at the centre of all our art work."

Director of service, Pat Dowling, said tributes must also be paid to Mike Fitzpatrick, former curator at the gallery and the "real architect" of the plans, as well as Pippa Little, who is temporarily on leave.

The Carnegie Building closed its doors last May, and some of its works have been rehoused in the Hunt Museum and Limerick City Council before the gallery reopens.

An impression of how the Carnegie Building, Limerick City Gallery of Art, will look after the €1.4m redevelopment is finished in 2011. The development works will see the gallery upgraded to full museum status and bring more valuable and historic exhibitions



The Imperial Bar

