

Plain sailing for plan to knock Boat Club?

By ANNE SHERIDAN

PLANS to demolish the Boat Club on Sarsfield Bridge are expected to be submitted to Limerick City Council's planning department before the end of October, even though the building is currently listed as a protected structure.

City councillors are expected to vote on the motion to remove the Boat Club from the list of protected structures early next month, in order to process the application.

Developer Michael Daly of Fordmount Properties said the €10m to €20m development will be a "signature piece, which will create a statement about what the city is all about.

"It's very much in the early stages but we've a good bit of work done so

far. We expect to have the model done in two weeks," said Mr Daly.

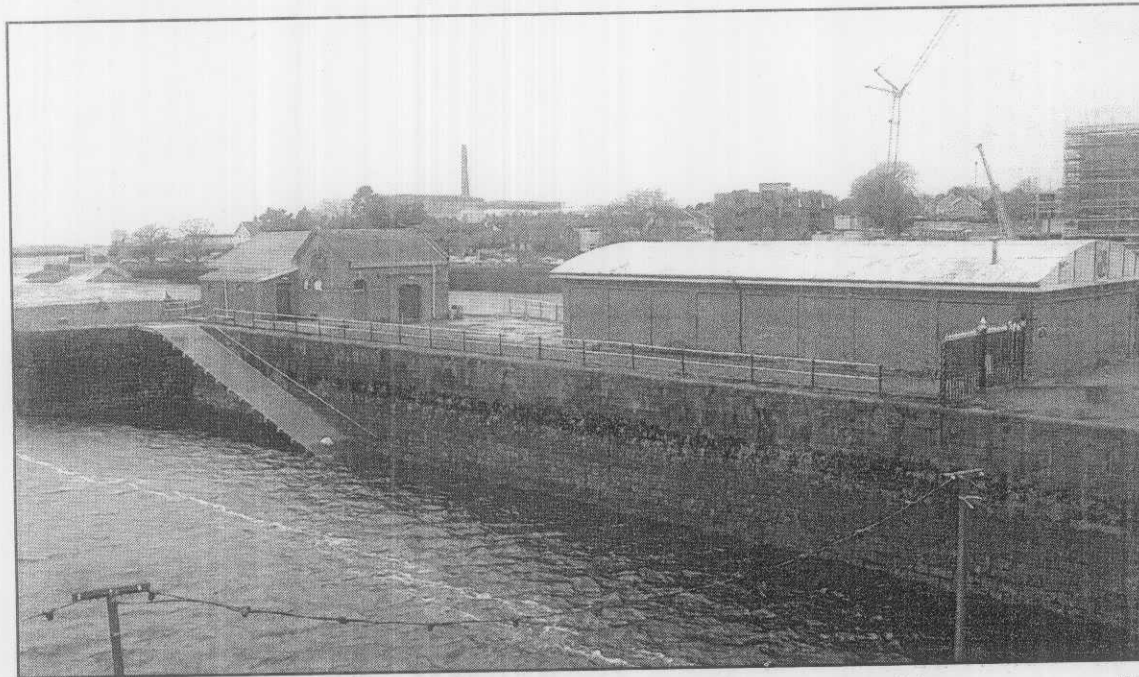
He said this development "is more about doing something for the city rather than making a stack of money" and said founding a more modern and usable building for the rowing club was the driving force behind the project.

A footbridge is proposed to link the new building with Poor Man's Kilkee, which would connect the area with the pedestrianised area of Bedford Row.

However, the proposal is likely to face opposition from a number of councillors.

Cllr Kathleen Leddin said she believes the building should be upgraded. "We don't need another modern building on a very traditional looking bridge. We already have the Hilton and the nearby apartments," said Cllr Leddin.

But Labour Cllr Joe Leddin, who is a member of the Boat Club, said he believes this is



Limerick Boat Club: opposition to plans to delist the club to allow for its demolition (LL)

"a win-win situation" for the club.

"There is no use for this building in its cur-

rent structure. We would be better off clearing the site and putting in a more attrac-

tive building. The new building will complement Limerick City Council's riverside

strategy," said Cllr Leddin.

He noted that the rowing club has had severe

difficulties in attracting members in recent years and has struggled to purchase much needed equipment.

But they will now have a state-of-the-art building, which will attract more people into the club. At the moment they're finding it quite difficult to maintain members," he said.

The two-and-a-half-storey building will also house commercial units and Cllr Leddin mooted the possibility of having a restaurant in one of these units.

"There really should be a queue of people on the quays trying to get in there," he added.

Cllr Kevin Kiely said he is fully supportive of the plans.

"The building, in its current format, is a shambles. It's really an eyesore and was never finished properly to begin with. The new building will accommodate the rowing club and give it a state-of-the-art premises," said Cllr Kiely.