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Revised plans for boat club to be submitted to City Council

■ Mayor Gilligan says revision will have to be 'pretty exceptional' if he is to support development

Anne Sheridan

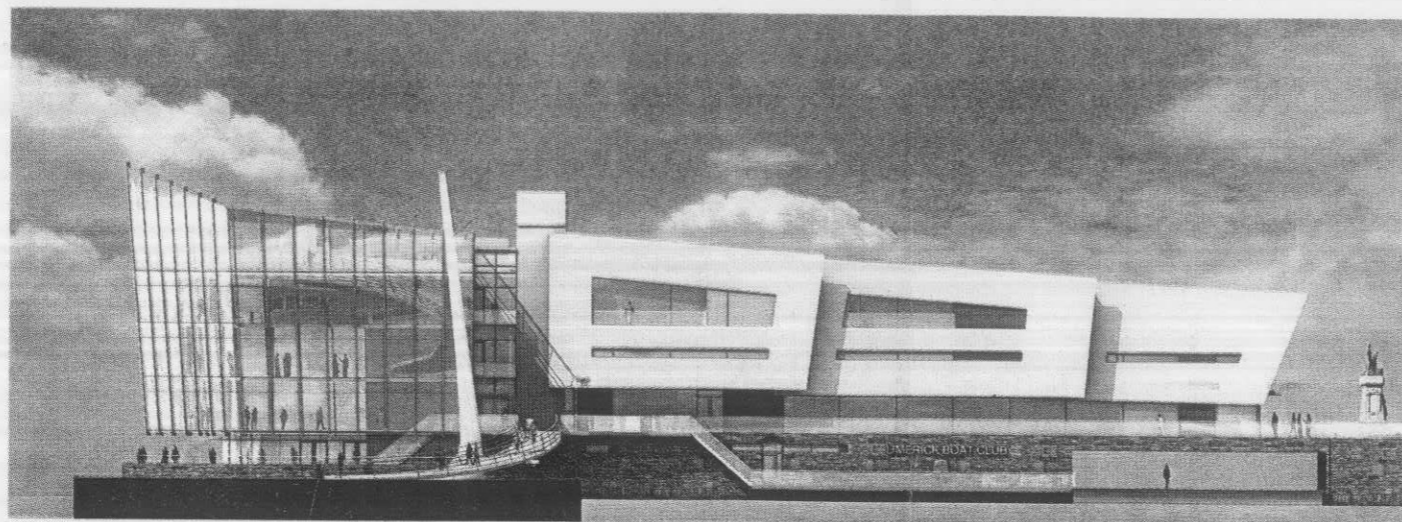
THE future of Limerick Boat Club will be decided by city councillors within the next two weeks, as revised plans for the €20m redevelopment of the club are to be submitted to City Council this Friday.

However, Mayor John Gilligan told the Limerick Leader the plans would have to be "pretty exceptional" if he was to support the development.

"I haven't seen the new designs, but it is one of the most sensitive sites in Limerick and people have to get used to the idea that it's not a commercial site," said Mayor Gilligan, who described the original design as "appalling."

Club members, who have said the development could transform the area around Sarsfield Bridge and change the fortunes of the club if it received planning permission, have warned the club will not exist in five years' time if planning was refused.

The club is to make a presentation to city coun-



A drawing from the revised plans to be submitted by Fordmount Developments for Limerick Boat Club to the City Council this Friday

cillors next week in the hope that they will vote in favour of a material contravention to rezone the site and to remove the building from the list of protected structures. To receive the green light, a majority of the 17 city councillors will have to vote in favour of these amendments in a fortnight.

If the project receives

support, the building built in 1870 will be demolished to make way for an "iconic" glass and steel structure, which will rehouse the club and have a restaurant on its upper level.

The president of Limerick Boat Club, Dermot Moloney, wants councillors and the public to look at the bigger picture and said

the proposal put forward by Michael Daly of Fordmount Developments represented a "once in a lifetime" opportunity for their club.

"If the project doesn't go ahead the club won't be here in five years. We've done the architectural and heritage reports and there isn't anything of value there any more. We've

addressed the issues with the monument and the change of access to Poor Man's Kilkee. None of the councillors has raised objections that we haven't addressed," said Mr Moloney.

Mr Daly said the last three months had been dedicated to revising the plans in response to suggestions from the public

and planners.

The new plans had reduced the height of the building by seven metres and includes "a dramatic new bridge, which is very striking and architecturally pleasing."

Furthermore, the new bridge to Wellesley Pier will link up with Bedford Row, where Mr Daly is proposing to build the city's

first cinema complex in a decade.

The director of Fordmount Developments said while he was pleased with the revisions by Belfast-based McCann Moore architects, who were also involved in the design of Riverpoint, it is city councillors who will have "the last hoorah".

But councillors across the political spectrum are divided about the plans, with Labour's Cllr Gerry McLoughlin stating the proposed development could establish a "state-of-the-art boat club," and "bring Limerick into the 21st century".

Last June, objections were lodged by Thomond Archaeological and Historical Society, Sinn Fein and local surveyor William Peacocke. An Taisce, the Green Party's James Nix and Askeaton resident Billy McGuire also made submissions regarding the development.

The planning application should be decided upon by City Hall within four weeks of its submission.

Magic man Leon lets us in on tips to fool our friends

Gerard Fitzgibbon



Leon: aims to make magic more accessible

THE rising star of Irish magic, Limerick's own Leon Andersen, is to launch his new book "Ten Ways to Fool Your Friends" in the city this Friday.

The Moyross entertainer, who opened Ireland's first ever school of magic on Mary Street earlier this year, is sure that the book's easy-to-learn tricks will help create a new generation of magicians and performers.

"I felt it was important that the book was aimed at kids, and that they could follow it easily. Every other book trying to teach magic is about 300 pages long, and filled with too much information that puts a lot of kids off. I know - books like that put me off magic for a long time. My book is only 50 pages and is all about quick, easy steps kids can pick up overnight," Leon said.

The book, which will be launched at the country's only dedicated magic shop on Mallow Street, is the first volume of Leon's 'Class Magic' series. "The idea is to teach a few basic tricks in the first book and to let kids to get a feel for performing magic. The second book, which we're going to call 'Ten Moves in

Magic' will be the next step up for the kids who want to keep on learning. There's no point in introducing complicated things like the hindu shuffle too early. And by the way Mark, I meant to say the six of hearts," he said.

Leon also told the Limerick Leader that he is enjoying the increased publicity he has received since he opened the magic school.

"It's been pretty crazy but I'm loving every minute of it. There are one or two new projects in the pipeline, I can't really say much. Maybe even something for TV in the future."

Leon added that he had received overwhelming interest in courses at his magic school, and that he was optimistic this would continue to grow: "Hopefully things are going to get even bigger," he said.

Developers:
€40m project
will revitalise
Catherine St

CLANCYS