'Threat' over lease for castle angers Kennedy

By TRISH O'DEA

CLLR Pat Kennedy alleged at the City Council meeting that Shannon Development was issuing "a threat" to the Corporation over the granting of a lease for King John's Castle.

The main bones of contention in a proposal before the City Council to underlease King John's Castle to Shannon Development are two sections of Covenant 5 of the proposal.

Covenant 5 states that the underlessee, which is Shannon Development, "shall undertake not: (a) to demolish or remove wholly or in part or to disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with the demised premises, or (b) to excavate, dig, plough, or otherwise disturb the ground within, around, or in proximity to the demised premises, or (c) to renovate or restore the demised premises" without the agreement of the Corporation and the OPW.

The argument from Councillor Pat Kennedy and Councillor John Ryan is that the proposal allows the Corporation to prevent Shannon Development from doing certain things to the Castle, but it does not allow the city council to tell Shannon Development to do something to the castle.

Indications from Shannon Development that a £3.7 million development grant for Castle Lane could be held up by a failure to hand over the lease were not met warmly.

Describing this statement from Shannon Development as 'a threat', Cllr Kennedy said: "several millions were spent on that castle, more than £3.7 million, without any lease or any title documents".

He added, "I don't believe in the threats that have been issued here, millions have been spent here on an ad hoc basis."

Alderman John Gilligan argued that both tourism and livelihoods are threatened by the present state of the castle.

He asked why, instead of a qualified stone-mason, or someone who knows about the restoration of a castle, "the people who put a wooden toilet on Barrington's Quay and wrapped trees up in blankets" were put in charge of the project.

Those who supported the handing over of the lease included Councillor Gus O'Driscoll, who said that he is "proud to be getting £3.7 million to better Limerick".

Councillor Jack Bourke, saying that some people were being "mischievous" in linking the facade of the castle with the Castle Lane Development said, "I am firmly in favour of the assignment of the development of Castle Lane".

Alderman Sean Griffin admitted that he is very unhappy with the interpretative centre at King John's Castle, but added, "I didn't come here today to discuss that, I came here today to discuss whether or not the Corporation are going to grant permission to Shannon Development to develop Castle Lane".

Councillor Tim Leddin said: "My views on the matter are well known. The manager spoke at last week's meeting about the urgency of handing over the lease, I think there is nothing to be gained by procrastination."

And Councillor Dick Sadlier pointed out: "We are here to discuss the development of Castle Lane. The facade of King John's Castle is an entirely different matter. I think it has been disingenuous of some people to hold out that this meeting was concerned with the interpretative centre."

But Cllr Kennedy stressed, "people say the issues are not joined, of course they are joined".

He quoted the wording of the Covenant 5 and warned: "We shouldn't surrender the authority and the control that we have."

And Cllr Ryan agreed: "I don't think they are two separate issues."

On proposals from Senator Jan O'Sullivan and Alderman Jim Kemmy, a committee will be set up, made up of residents, members of Shannon Development and members of city council, and this will monitor the development of the Castle area.

On board the LE Orla during a visit to Limerick Docks were: David Pearse with his children Sinead and David, Ian Caldwell and John O'Doherty. (LL)

Novena to the Sacred Heart

THE Novena to the Sacred Heart will take place in the

There will be two sessions daily, one at 11.30 am