

City Hall won't bid for tsb's Stone Jug

By ANNE SHERIDAN

A DOZEN bidders are expected stake their claim for the historic Stone Jug building on Glentworth Street, when it goes under the hammer in late April, but the Mayor of Limerick and a number of councillors have disqualified Limerick City Council from the multi-million race for the listed property.

It was mooted this week that a discussion on buying the building, which is currently in the hands of permanent tsb, was expected to take place at the council's cultural and sporting strategic policy committee at City Hall on Tuesday next.

However, Cllr Kevin Kiely, chairman of the committee, has confirmed that what was once known as the Penny Bank, is not on their agenda. "It's highly unlikely that the council would consider buying the building for a number of reasons. The city council are on the look-out for a location for the library but the Stone Jug is not suitable and the price is likely to escalate," said Cllr Kiely.

Mayor of Limerick, Cllr Joe Leddin, stated that the council would need to have a definite proposal for the building, but as the auction is 20 days away the possibility of bringing this to the board is very slim.

"We can't be spending millions of taxpayers money if we can't think of a specific use for it. It's an awful lot of money and the council would have to think long and hard about it, especially when there's other pressing demands on our doorstep. There would also need to be a formal agreement and a



The interior of the former tsb bank on Glentworth Street

proposal, but at this stage, when the auction is only a few weeks away, we won't have the time to research it," said Mayor Leddin.

Local auctioneer John de Courcy, who is handling the sale, said since this newspaper revealed the details of the auction two weeks ago, at least 14 people have passed through the doors of the building, which has an initial asking price of €1.65m.

"There has been a lot of interest and more than a dozen people have been to see the building. Then again, a lot of people know the building quite well, so they may not even

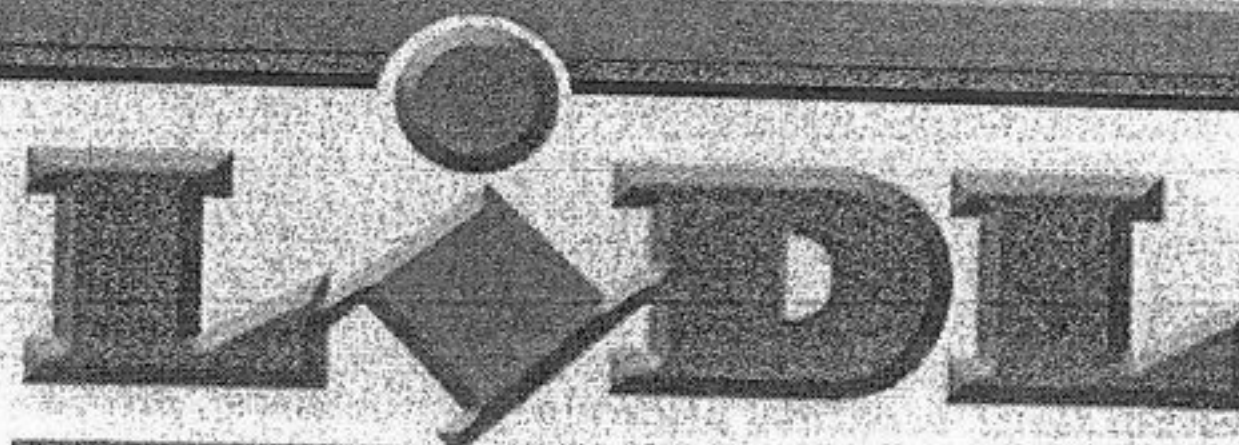
need to see it," said Mr de Courcy, who is optimistic the building could fetch more than the initial asking price.

"It's a very unique building and is really lovely inside. It's a great opportunity for someone to buy a nice building and use it either for personal use or commercially,"

said Mr de Courcy.

Architects, solicitors and accountants as the most obvious prospective buyers but he said there are many other possible uses for the site, including a restaurant, credit union and betting shop, as the latter wouldn't require a change in planning permission.

The building, which was commissioned by W.H. Owen in 1839 and built by Sir Thomas Deane, is noted as being one of the finest small buildings in Ireland in a neo-classical style. The auction will take place on Wednesday, April 25, at 3pm in Pery Hotel, Glentworth Street.



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5