

# Market Trust back after 90 years in receivership limbo

LIMERICK MARKET Trustees are back in business, and it took an Act of the Oireachtas to sort them out.

The trustees are the body which operates the various market sites around the city.

But the board was in receivership for 90 years! And they blame the British Government.

What happened was this:

The Limerick Markets Act of 1852 set up the Market Trustees, and succeeded a tangle of previous laws, rules and regulations dating into the mists of history.

But it contained a time-bomb which would cause havoc in due course. This was the so-called Schedule C of the Act which set out a list of charges to be levied upon farmers and traders using the markets — so much per cow, so much per gallon of milk, so much per chicken, per pig, per sack of potatoes, and so on. And it took no account of inflation.

So, after a few years, the trustees found that they were in a loss-making situation.

Such daft price rigidity was by no means unusual in those days — or even now. As anyone who has a boat locally will tell you, the fee for the use of the locks on the Shannon — including the whopping 98-feet high double-column one at Ardacrusha — was less than 20p until this year, and had remained unchanged since Ardacrusha was built in the 1920s. Officialdom usually refuses to admit that it is human, and that prices will gallop along with inflation. The result is an immutable set of rules, which are rapidly overtaken by events.

So it was with Limerick Market Trustees.

Fifteen years after they were set up, they badly needed money, but they had no authority to raise their charges. Oh no, that was considered to be too much

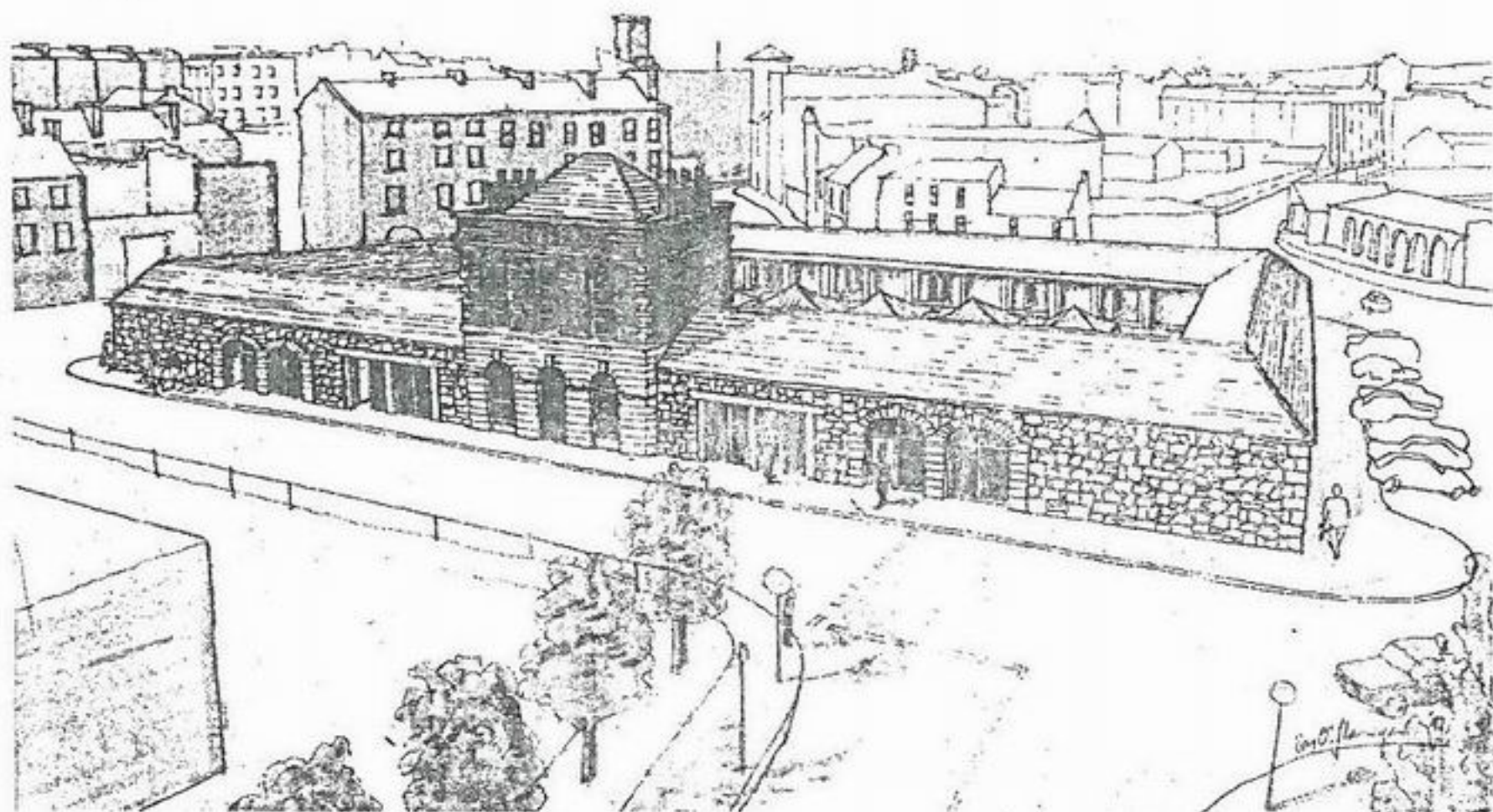
tural heritage conservation programme.

After the Milk Market is completed, plans are in place for further develop-

ment of the other market areas in the city, mainly in joint venture works with the private sector.

Now the trustees are in

possession of lands which are underutilised at present, including the whole area around, and including, Markets Field.



What the restored and developed Milk Market will look like.

## £1m plan to develop Milk Market launched

By DYMPHNA BRACKEN

THE MILK Market is to be restored and developed in a £1m joint venture between the Market Trustees and a private developer John Reidy, of Reidy Properties. Work is expected to start in September.

The core of this restoration and redevelopment centres on the old Milk Market at Cornmarket Row, Carr Street, Mungret Street and Watergate and the designation of Cornmarket Row, Mungret Street and Robert Street — linking to Cruises Street development at Denmark Street — as pedestrianised streets, paved and landscaped for open market

Mungret Street to its original design and construction of 1830 which the trustees will retain for their own use and let out for appropriate civic exhibitions, functions and public events.

The project specifically provides for 17 retail shops around the perimeter, fronting mainly on Mungret Street, Carr Street and Cornmarket Row, with alternate openings into the inner courtyard for market days.

The inner courtyard treatment will involve complete repaving, drainage and public lighting along with a new spectacular high level central pergola covering supported by the original steel columns obtained from the

securable public toilets and stores accommodation to contain the continental style by arrangement to the market traders in the courtyard and on the public streets designated for trading.

The street trading is very important point of the overall plan as it ensures the connecting of the market quarter with the Cruises development.

The Corporation will complete street paving and landscaping in the area.

Since the termination of the receivership of the Limerick market Trustees over three years ago, the Chamber of Commerce, under manager, Brendan Woods, has taken over the executive administration of the



The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in plenary session at Westminster, finally saw fit to pass an amending Act in 1862 to allow for a new schedule of charges to be imposed.

And ten years on, the trustees were financially knackered again.

So the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in plenary session at Westminster, saw fit to repeat the exercise and fix a revised schedule of charges.

All of which was daft, because who the blazes in the UK parliament knew whether the butter market, the milk market, the hay market, the potatoe (sic) market or the markets field were doing well or not?

The result was predictable.

On June 14, 1898, less than 50 years after its establishment, the trustees were placed into receivership, their affairs being in financial shreds.

The receivership lasted for 90 years — despite the fact that, in 1921 the Westminster parliament again acted to raise the tolls payable locally.

The receiver was usually the city manager. The trustees, as elected, had merely advisory powers.

And so things stood until 1988 when the then receiver, Tom Rice, sold a parcel of land to himself (in his capacity as city manager) for the construction of the new fire station. This put the trustees' finances into the black and allowed a petition to the High Court to lift the receivership. The administration of the trustees was placed pro tem in the hands of the Chamber of Commerce.

Then came the Limerick Markets Act of 1992 (first submitted to the Oireachtas in 1989 by Leahy and O'Sullivan, law agents to the trustees since the turn of the century), one of the very few private Bills to be passed by the Oireachtas in recent decades. Now the whole properties of the trustees have been valued and a large EC grant of £150,000 for the restoration of the Milk Market has been approved under the architec-

yard of the Milk Market on Saturdays.

The development will include the restoration of the Market House on

Road during demolition, all of which will cover in about 50% of the courtyard.

The development also includes fully-fitted and

portfolio.

The chairman of the Limerick Market Trustees, Eddie Butler, is also president of the Chamber.

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