

Restoring city's old Potato Market

By DYMPHNA
BRACKEN

AN IMAGINATIVE and ambitious plan for the development of the Potato Market in Limerick city, costing in the region of £200,000, was unveiled by Limerick Civic Trust this week.

The plan envisages restoring the market for arts, crafts and trades. The stalls in the courtyard will be discantable, so the area can be used for civic receptions, band recitals and open air theatre. An archive and interpretation centre will be created in addition to illuminated tourist trails.

Through Limerick's M.E.P., Mr. Tom O'Donnell, T.D., the Civic Trust have submitted an application for 45 per cent of the funding for the project to the European Environmental Protection Fund. Limerick Corporation have contributed £25,000 to the project.

Sanctioned

The Potato Market project has been sanctioned for manpower assistance for over a year, but due to cutbacks, funds have not yet been made available.

Mr. Denis Leonard, chairman, Limerick Civic Trust, said he was confident that the people of Limerick would join and support the trust and contribute at least £15,000 to the project.

"Support for the project will mean lasting and permanent visible value for money and a vast improvement in Limerick's appearance," he said.

Limerick Civic Trust - the first of its kind in the country - acquired the Potato Market site by way of an arrangement with the Market Trustees and Limerick Corporation.

The project outlined by the trust will provide employment for at least 20 people, including 15 trainees supported by a draughtsman, a foreman and possibly three others in specialist areas such as carpentry, metalwork and plumb-

ing.

Mr. Leonard made a special appeal to persons with valuable artifacts, including old horse troughs, to place them at the disposal of the trust, who intend to restore them and ensure their safety for the future.

Speaking at the unveiling of the new plans, the Mayor of Limerick, Cllr. Terry Kelly, said that one of the problems of living in such a historic city was that the fabric was in need of constant repair and possibly over a number of years people were slow to realise this.

She suggested that organisations like the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary or the Soroptomists could become involved in the collection of the £15,000 needed from the people of Limerick to complete the project.

Mr. Tom O'Donnell, T.D., M.E.P., said he would be exploring every avenue in Europe to secure funding for the project.

He said that some of the commissioners were already aware

of Limerick's heritage due to their visit to the city last year for the Christian Democrat Conference, but he felt it would be prudent to invite some members of the commission to the city again to view the project.

He described the project as "imaginative and positive" and complimented the Civic Trust on their involvement.

When the trust was originally formed it was firmly established that it would benefit areas comprising Limerick city and county.

Due to the recent fine weather, the trust were able to start their first county project - the Jewish burial ground in Castletroy - by clearing fallen trees and overgrowth. It is hoped to complete a small memorial park in honour of the Jewish community who form an important part of Limerick heritage.

Projects

The trust have 18 other projects which form part of an overall plan

to complement and develop on their major projects at the Potato Market and St. Mary's Cathedral.

The overall estimate of the cost of their 1984 activities has been professionally assessed at £250,875.

Sites - Anco Trainee Projects: 1, Charlotte Quay; 2, Drum and Fife Bank Hall; 3, Burke Castle; 4, Tole House Toilet. **Civic Trust Membership Projects:** 5, Side of Tole House; 6, Across from Bishop's Palace; 7, Island Road, near St. Mary's Convent; 8, Island Road, across from Credit Union on Athlunkard Street; 9, Newgate Lane (clear site); 10, Newgate Lane (graffiti); 11, Corner Broad Street/Gratten Street; 12, Corner John Street/New Road; 13, High Street; 14, Finish Matthew Bridge Corner; 15, Clean up and highlight inscription on Cathedral Wall. **Major projects:** 15, St. Mary's Cathedral Boundary Wall (completed); 16, Potatoes Market; 17, Fountain in Cathedral Square; 18, St. Michael's Graveyard; 19, Limerick Memorial Monument.



At the Civic Trust press conference in the "Mellick" this week (left to right): Mr. Denis Leonard, chairman, Limerick Civic Trust; Cllr. Terry Kelly, Mayor of Limerick, and Mr. Tom O'Donnell, T.D., M.E.P.

Picture: JOHN F. WRIGHT.