

Milk market plans get off the ground

Anne Sheridan

THE Milk Market, which attracts traders from across the county and beyond, will temporarily move to nearby Ellen Street in the city as construction work is set to begin.

From November 7 next, the market will literally move on to the street as contractors L & M Keating Ltd move on site for the €2m development project.

Limerick's Milk Market is one of the oldest in the country, dating back to 1852, and by next year will become a six-day market, rather than operating for six hours each Saturday.

Under the new plans it will see its facilities upgraded to benefit traders, shoppers and the economy of the greater Limerick area.

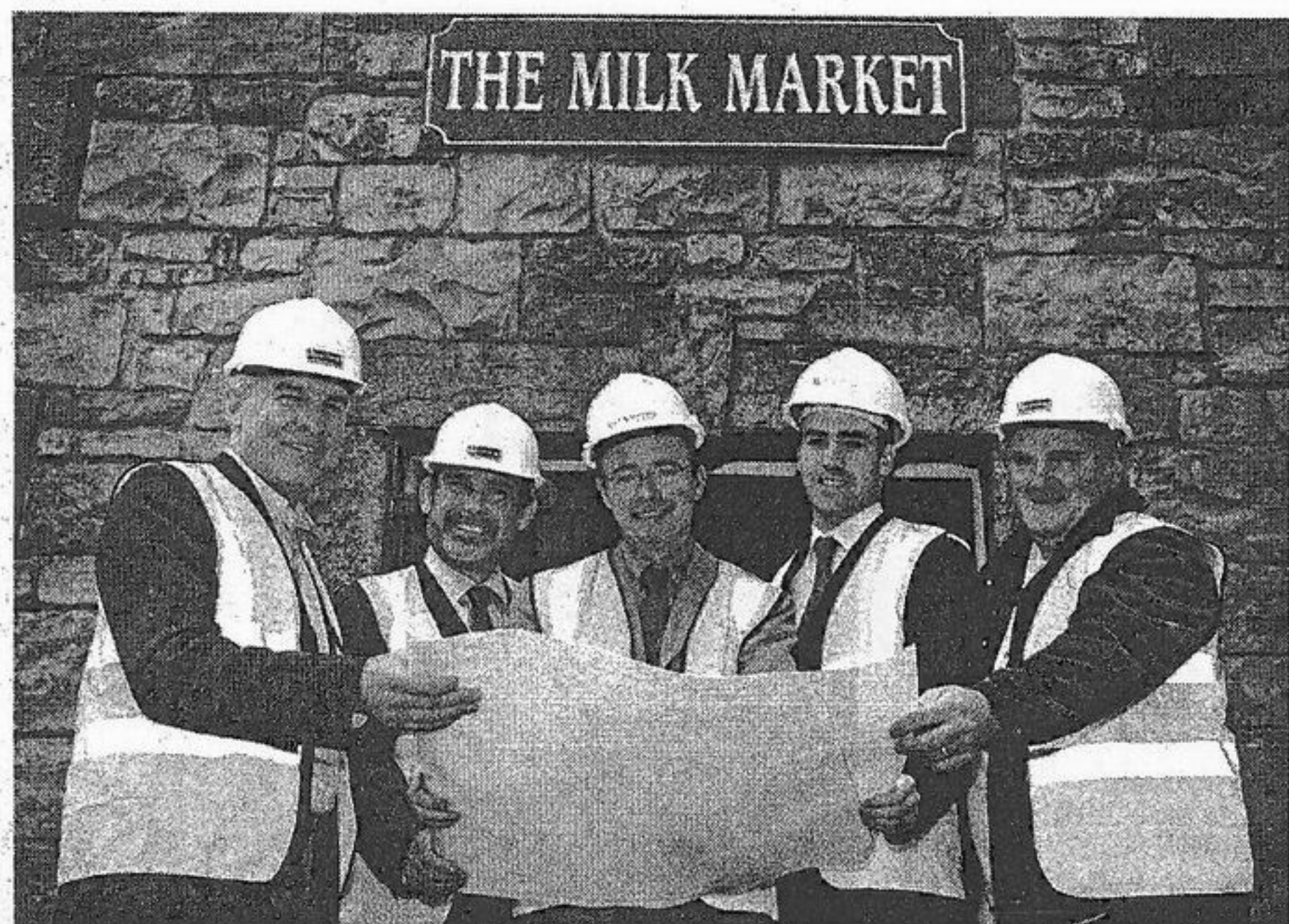
It is estimated that the newly upgraded facility will have the potential to increase footfall at the Milk Market by over 50 per cent per week when it re-opens in mid-2010.

It is also planned to make this historic venue available for other events such as Christmas markets, food fairs and classical concerts.

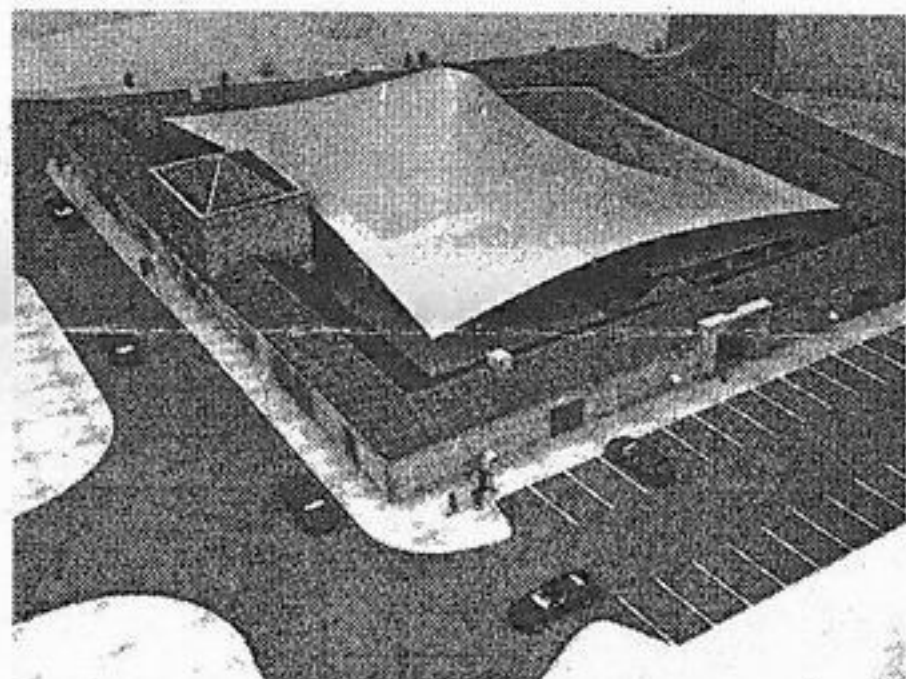
David O'Mahony, chairman of the Market Trustees, said their aim is to have the Milk Market recognised as the "outstanding example of best practice in market operations in Ireland and beyond."

The opening of the market next year is expected to be "a national event", and those in the food industry, including Darina Allen and Minister for Food Trevor Sargent, have supported the ideals behind the new market.

A seasonal calendar of events and stalls for the market is now being prepared, which will see a diversity of new and old



David O'Mahony, Market Trustees chairman; Louis Keating, L & M Keating Ltd managing director; Richard Rice, Healy and Partners director; John Reidy, architect; Reidy Dennany, engineer and Ger Kiely, Milk Market Traders' Representative Committee look over the plans for €2 million upgrade project to the Milk Market



This Saturday will mark the last day of trading inside the old Milk Market with traders moving to Ellen Street as construction is set to begin on the development project, right

traders attend on different days of the week, excluding Monday when the market will be closed.

However, some traders and regular visitors have concerns about the impact this modernisation will have.

Clarina resident and artist Jim O'Farrell, who has sketched numerous scenes of the market, is encouraging all Limerick people to "come out on Saturday and see the old market for the last time."

Mr O'Farrell said he fears that the market

"might lose some of its colour and vitality" as a canopy is due to be installed over the area.

"There is a fear there that it will turn into a supermarket, but I just hope it will not lose its authenticity," said Mr O'Farrell.

However, it has been argued that the erection of a shelter or canopy over the market will protect traders and shoppers from the elements during the winter months especially.

The artist, who recalled seeing turkeys being

plucked in the market many years ago, was commissioned to sketch "glimpses of old Limerick" in a series of the same name for this newspaper more than 20 years ago.

As part of that series the late Limerick journalist Seamus O'Cinneide painted the scene in words, describing country men discussing the day's prices and a young boy taking in the magic of the Christmas market, where geese, and not turkeys, were once the most popular choice.