

Care and attention to detail essential for glittering city centre development

by Marie Hobbins

CITY HALL is adopting a cautious approach to its consideration of planning

permission to a development that is being heralded as having the biggest impact on Limerick city's transformation

for the next two hundred years.

Though the official date for a decision on the Opera Centre is officially February 17,

there is reason to believe it will be at least a year before the city's planners give the go-ahead to the proposed 41,000

square metre city centre development that will comprise four floors fronting five streets - Patrick Street, Ellen Street, Michael Street, Denmark Street and Bank Place.

At a meeting of Limerick City Council, Cllr John Gilligan called for a scale model and professional presentation on the development, which he said will have the biggest influence on what the city centre will look like for centuries to come.

There has been huge overall enthusiasm for the development from both public representatives and the business sector, who for the past decade have seen new supermarket and mega retail stores opting for locations in the suburbs with subsequent rates going to the coffers of Limerick County

Council.

However, because of its strategic city centre location, plans for the development will undergo close scrutiny and delays in progressing the project could also be caused by objections lodged, archaeological digs, consultation and requests for further information.

Stressing the need for close scrutiny of every aspect of the development, Cllr Pat Kennedy said: "I'd like an assurance from the mayor that the councillors be consulted on every aspect of this development even though we do not have an executive role in this. It used to be usual to call in ward council-

lors for their views and I'd like to see this happening again," he said.

Mayor Scully said that as the planning application for the Opera Centre development is the most important in a generation, it is vital to get it right.

The development is modelled on an opera house design but is named in honour of the legendary Limerick opera singer, Catherine Hayes who went on to achieve international recognition and whose birthplace at 4 Patrick Street will be restored as a museum.

Planning permission has been applied for by

Regeneration Developments and the 3.8 acre site will, when completed be fronted by two glass entrances, one of which will face the river at Bank Place, looking across to George's Quay and the other will be on the junction of Patrick Street and Ellen Street.



One of two glass-fronted entrances to the Opera Centre development will be located at Bank Place.

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