

Woolies changing into shopping mall

By LEADER REPORTER

LIMERICK CITY centre will be given a new look later this month with the official opening of 12 shopping units on the site of the former Woolworth premises in O'Connell Street.

Newbridge-based businessman, Mr. Tom Treacy, purchased the property earlier this year for a figure believed to be in the region of £600,000.

The cost of conversion is estimated at around £500,000.

But Mr. Treacy's confidence in his investment is already paying dividends.

Enquiries

There has been a steady stream of enquiries for units, which are priced at between £7,000 and £10,000 per annum, depending on location and size.

Already seven clients have booked in - and negotiations are going on with five others.

Mr. Pat Kearney of Rooney Auctioneers, the sole letting agents, said there was a good mix of retailers, including newsagency, fabric interior designs, footwear, coffee dock, gift shop, costume jewellery and ladies fashions.

The first floor will consist of restaurant and health centre, and again negotiations are going on with interested parties.

There is a total area of 8,000 square feet on the ground floor with an additional 8,500 square feet overhead.

Though the premises were only purchased during the summer, the developer insisted on a pre-Christmas opening with the result that the various contractors worked well into the night to get the centre ready.

Units vary in size from 550 square feet to 800 square feet.

The traders who have signed up are well established in their chosen field.

Recession

Said Mr. Kearney: "While other major centres of population are suffering from the recession the opposite seems to be the case in Limerick. There is a waiting list for centrally located premises and the big interest shown in the Woolworths development proves my point".

The opening date is set for November 29 and developer Mr. Treacy expects that all units will have been taken by then. Other traders in O'Connell Street will welcome the transformation which has taken place inside a couple of months.

There were fears that the Woolworths site might remain undeveloped for several years. It had been turning into something of an eyesore.

Now the splendid facade has given a lift to the street which should benefit as a result, particularly with the former ESB premises also undergoing change.

The First National Building Society opened there last week and will soon be followed by Barclay's Bank, opening next door.



Work in progress on the new mall.

By JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY

WORK IS TO commence within the next fortnight on a major £5m housing development on the Mill Road in Corbally.

When Kenny Builders (Galway) purchased the former Kelly's site two years ago and announced their intentions to build semi-detached and detached houses, residents in the area became concerned. Fears were expressed about the suitability of the Mill Road to accommodate such a venture.

Green light

Planning permission was eventually granted by Limerick Corporation but their decision was appealed to an Bord Pleanála, who this week gave the green light to go ahead.

Mr. Martin Kenny, director, Kenny Construction, told the Leader that they were encouraged by the response already received from prospective buyers.

"This is our first excursion into the Limerick area having already built estates in Cork and Galway, and we believe that Corbally is the ideal site for us to start", said Mr. Kenny.

The site is on the left hand side of the Mill Road as one approaches from the city end, and is situated alongside the Hermitage housing development.

Upwards of 117 houses are to be built in the first phase and will

CORBALLY SCHEME STARTS IN FORTNIGHT

range in price from £35,250 to £60,000 for the detached properties.

Provision has been made in the 27-acre site for open space playing facilities.

It is envisaged that work will take upwards of two years and will generate anything up to 100 jobs at peak.

Mr. Kenny said that most of the money spent on development and construction would be left in the Limerick area and that the spin-off would be enjoyed by suppliers and manufacturers.

The houses are aimed at first time buyers and all grants will be available.

Mr. Kenny said: "The Mill Road is one of the loveliest spots in Limerick and it is our aim to keep our development in character with the area".

He described the location as excellent.

Optimistic

Despite the recession, Kenny's are optimistic about their plans for the Mill Road.

"We are spending a lot of money there but we have our homework done", continued Mr. Kenny. The new estate is to be called Meadowbrook.

The joint auctioneers are Rooney's and Leddins.

Kenny's decision to commence operations in Limerick will be welcomed by those in the building and allied trades, as work had almost come to a standstill on many sites.

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