

Charleville Court and Market House

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

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Introduction

The following report has been prepared by JCA Architects who were commissioned by Cork County Council to prepare a Part VIII application for the conservation, repair and extension of Charleville Court and Market House, Main Street, Charleville, Co. Cork.

The development will consist change of Use of Court and Market House (Protected Structure RPS No. 00013) to Office (Digital Working hub). Demolition of later infill extension to centre rear and relocation of public toilets to an alternative site. Conservation repair of existing building fabric, alternations to existing layout and the construction of a new integrated two storey extension to the rear of the building, including lift. Provision of a landscaped public plaza to Broad Street and all associated site works.

Statutory and Non Statutory Designations

1. Charleville Court and Market House is included in Cork County Council's Record of Protected structures (RPS No. 00013).
2. It is located within an Architectural Conservation Area (Charleville) in the 2014 Cork County Council Development Plan.
3. Charleville Court and Market House is a Recorded Archaeological Monument: RMP No. CO002-064 Market House.
4. It is also included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH Ref. No. 20806032).

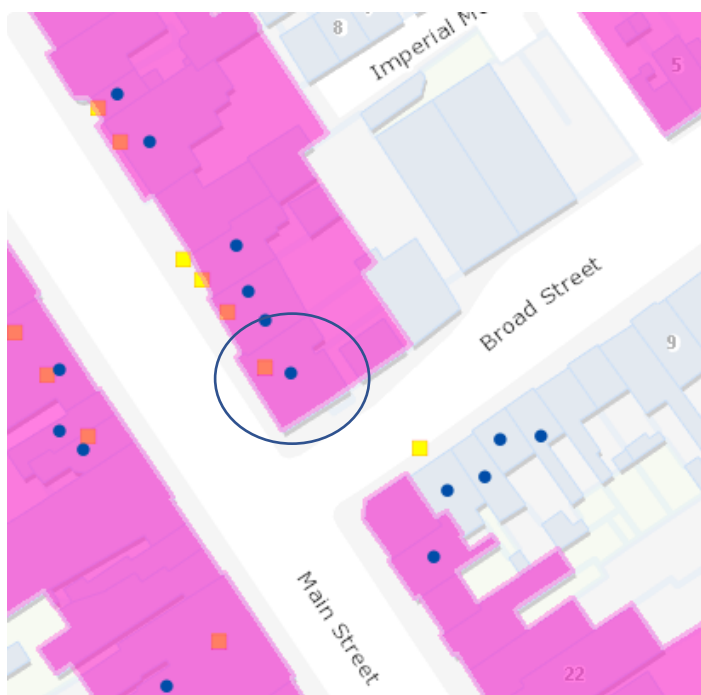


Figure 1: Heritage Map, indicating Architectural Conservation Area (pink shading), inclusion on Record of Protected Structures (blue dot) and NIAH (yellow dot)

Relevant Development Management Policies and Objectives

There are a number of policies in Chapter 16 of the County Development Plan 2022 which are relevant to this application.

As Charleville Court and Market House is a Recorded Archaeological Monument:

HE 16-2: Protection of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments and their setting included in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (see www.archaeology.ie) and the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally. In securing such preservation, the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Development Applications Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as outlined in the Frameworks and Principles for the Protect.

As Charleville Court and Market House is included on Cork County Council's Record of Protected Structures:

HE 16-11: Record of Protected Structures

- a) The identification of structures for inclusion in the Record will be based on criteria set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011).
- b) Extend the Record of Protected Structures in order to provide a comprehensive schedule for the protection of structures of special importance in the County during the lifetime of the Plan as resources allow.
- c) Seek the protection of all structures within the County, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. In accordance with this objective, a Record of Protected Structures has been established and is set out in Volume Two Heritage and Amenity, Chapter 1 Record of Protected Structures.
- d) Ensure the protection of all structures (or parts of structures) contained in the Record of Protected Structures.
- e) Protect the curtilage and attendant grounds of all structures included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- f) Ensure that development proposals are appropriate in terms of architectural treatment, character, scale and form to the existing protected structure and not detrimental to the special character and integrity of the protected structure and its setting.
- g) Ensure high quality architectural design of all new developments relating to or which may impact on structures (and their settings) included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- h) Promote and ensure best conservation practice through the use of specialist conservation professionals and craft persons.
- i) In the event of a planning application being granted for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, that the repair of a protected structure is prioritised in the first instance i.e. the proposed works to the protected structure should occur, where appropriate, in the first phase of the development to prevent endangerment, abandonment and dereliction of the structure.

As Charleville Court and Market House is located within the Charleville Architectural Conservation Area:

HE 16-15: Architectural Conservation Areas

Conserve and enhance the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas included in this Plan. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock, material finishes, spaces, streetscape, shopfronts, landscape and setting. This will be achieved by;

- (a) Protecting all buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and all other features considered to be intrinsic elements to the special character of the ACA from demolition and nonsympathetic alterations.
- (b) Promoting appropriate and sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of buildings and sites within the ACA and securing appropriate infill development.
- (c) Ensure new development within or adjacent to an ACA respects the established character of the area and contributes positively in terms of design, scale, setting and material finishes to the ACA.
- (d) Protect structures from demolition and non sympathetic alterations.
- (e) Promoting high quality architectural design within ACAs.
- (f) Seek the repair and re-use of traditional shopfronts and where appropriate, encourage new shopfronts of a high quality architectural design.
- (g) Ensure all new signage, lighting advertising and utilities to buildings within ACAs are designed, constructed and located in such a manner they do not detract from the character of the ACA.
- (h) Protect and enhance the character and quality of the public realm within ACAs. All projects which involve works within the public realm of an ACA shall undertake a character assessment of the said area which will inform a sensitive and appropriate approach to any proposed project in terms of design and material specifications. All projects shall provide for the use of suitably qualified conservation architects/ designers.
- (i) Protect and enhance the character of the ACA and the open spaces contained therein. This shall be achieved through the careful and considered strategic management of all signage, lighting, utilities, art works/pieces/paintings, facilities etc to protect the integrity and quality of the structures and spaces within each ACA.
- (j) Ensure the protection and reuse of historic street finishes, furniture and features which contribute to the character of the ACA.

Outline Historical Context & Description

Charleville Market and Court House is a three-bay, two-storey ashlar limestone building, sited on the corner of Main Street and Broad Street in Charleville. It was built in 1769, according to the date inscribed on the keystone of the central arch of the ground floor arcade.

The arcaded ground floor was originally the town's Market House, with the upper floor used for court sittings. In 1837 Samuel Lewis noted:

The Market is on Saturday, and is well supplied with provisions. Fairs are held on the 10th January, March 16th, May 12th, August 15th, October 10th and November 12th for fat cattle, pigs, hardware and other merchandise... The shambles for butchers' meat are in a small area at the back of the court-house.... Petty sessions are held in the town every alternate Monday, by the county magistrates. The court and market-house is a small plain building on the north side of the main street ¹.

Lewis provides no further detail about the building, and the name of the architect is unknown.



Figure 2: First edition OS map, surveyed 1841

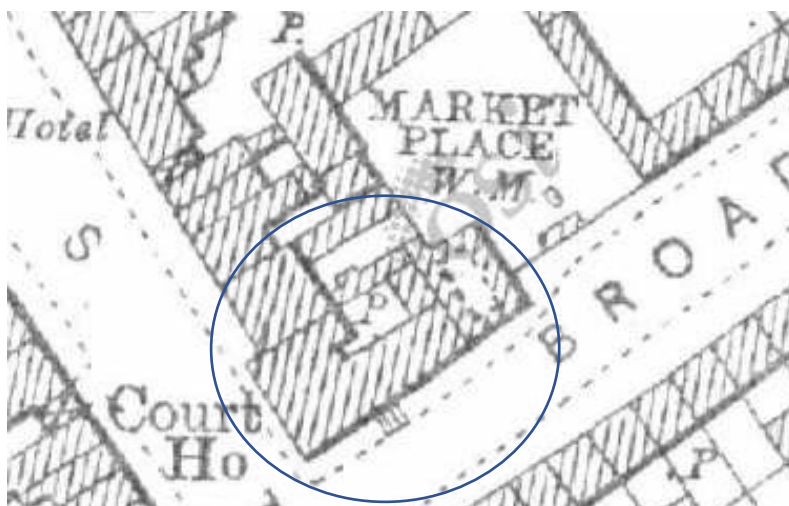


Figure 3: Large scale OS map, 1903

Late nineteenth-century photographs show the survival up to that stage of a striking, tall cupola, topped by a weather-vane. The cupola appears to have been removed in the latter half of the 20th

¹ Lewis, Samuel, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, (1837)

century. These photographs also provide evidence of the original, or at least early, multi-pane timber sash windows to the side elevation of the market house.



Figure 4: Photographs from the NLI's Lawrence Collection, dated c. 1880-1900, showing the cupola on the building in place



Figure 5: Comparative drawings of Charleville Court and Market House in its present form, left, and a 1715 sketch by Thomas Wright of Waterford Exchange, right

Although described by Samuel Lewis in the 19th century as a small, plain building, the design of Charleville Court and Market House was very characteristic of the typical early 18th century market house or exchange building, which would have had an open arcaded ground floor. As in Antrim, for example, at Charleville an external stone stair led to the courthouse located above the market house. These buildings had a formality of design and construction that was intended to set them apart from other urban buildings. Tall cupolas further distinguished their civic presence, as in Cork.



Figure 6: The Exchange building that stood in Cork, built c. 1705-10, left, with Charleville Court and Market house (right)

Renovations in the 1970's included the introduction of an acoustic tiled ceiling internally, and the replacement of the majority of the building's windows with uPVC.

The building is no longer in use. Court sittings were moved first from here to nearby Kilmallock, and then in 2013 to Mallow.

Current Description

The building has a hipped roof with an artificial slate covering and terracotta ridge tiles. There is a rendered finish to the pediment above the first floor at the front of the building. The rear returns have hipped roofs with artificial slate finish, with render ridging and some surviving cast-iron rainwater goods.

The walls to the front and side elevations of the main building are of dressed ashlar limestone, with punch-dressed stone finish to first floor and tooled stone finish at ground floor, with tooled limestone stringcourse and raised stone quoins.

The arcaded ground floor to the front and side has tooled limestone imposts and voussoirs, with projecting dropped keystones. There is a keystone to the centre arch bearing a date, assumed to be the date of construction. The arches, originally open, are now filled in by modern timber doors and windows.

The rear of the building has a roughcast render, with the scar remaining of an earlier, pitched roofed extension which has now been replaced by a separate public toilet building.

The side elevation, to Broad Street, is shorter, comprising just a single bay with an arch to the ground floor. There is a pair of lower two-storey rear returns.

The building has square headed window openings to rear returns, retaining timber sliding sash windows: single paned to ground floor south-east elevation and six-over-six, with horns, to first floor north-east elevation.

The building retains its original limestone steps to south elevation leading to an entrance door to the first floor Court Room, and the staircase retains a painted cast-iron railing. There are shallow limestone steps from street level to building level at south, with pavements having a modern block finish.

Interior

Ground Floor:

The front section of the original building, originally an open Market House, is divided into two rooms by a modern partition. Both areas retain some of the original stone flagged flooring, covered by later materials.

Both rooms have modern suspended grid ceilings and either exposed rubble stone wall finishes or modern plasterboard wall linings, beneath which some original lime plaster wall and ceiling finishes are likely to survive.

The two original rear projections presently house WC and storage facilities, as well as a later stair, with no original decorative features or joinery surviving.

First Floor:

The front section of the original building remains as a single Court Room, as it would have been originally. It has a suspended timber floor, retaining historic timber floor boards beneath a later covering.

The Court Room has a modern suspended grid ceiling and modern plasterboard wall linings, beneath which some original lime plaster wall and ceiling finishes are likely to survive.

The two original rear projections presently house WC, Judge's Chamber and storage facilities, as well as a later stair, with no original decorative features or joinery surviving.

Significance of the Court and Market House

The Court and Market House makes an important contribution to the historic architectural character of the town of Charleville. It is designed with reference to classical market houses typical of Irish cities and towns in the late 17th and early eighteenth centuries, with features such as an arcaded ground floor, a pedimented front façade, and originally a cupola drawing attention to its presence from further afield. Although Charleville's Court and Market house is a more restrained example of its type in a national context, it retains much of its formal architectural character and notably high quality construction materials.

The NIAH appraisal notes:

This imposing civic building forms a key social, historical and architectural focal point for the town. It is one of the earliest buildings in the town. The design is familiar throughout the country, sharing many features such as the round-headed openings and labour-intensive ashlar stonework. The building has always had an important civic function and has considerable potential for reuse.

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

Impact of Proposed Repairs to and Reinstatement of Historic Building Fabric

The Outline Scope of Works sets out the proposed repairs to the existing building. The repairs follow best conservation practice, avoiding unnecessary replacement of building fabric where it is found to be sound.

Roof: The existing historic Queen Post roof timbers are to be retained and repaired, with a timber decay study to inform further repairs. The existing modern artificial slate roof covering remains functional, though areas to be re-slatted are to use an appropriate natural slate. Existing cast-iron rainwater goods that are suitable for re-use will be retained, with new rainwater goods to be cast-iron rather than the existing uPVC. This will have a positive impact on the historic character of the roof.

Stonework: Research has shown that the building appears originally to have had a rendered finish, with only quoins and ashlar limestone exposed. The removal of the existing cementitious strap pointing will have a positive impact on the historic building fabric, allowing the fabric to breathe, and the application of a new lime render will also benefit the building fabric and restore the historic appearance and intended formal character of the building.

Windows: The original 6 over 6 timber sash window in the east elevation of the south east return is to be retained and repaired, and will be replicated for the other six windows throughout the building. The new timber sash windows will have a very significant positive effect on the appearance and overall historic character of the building.

Ground floor arched openings: The arched openings are integral to the original function and historic character of the building. Their present appearance, with sheeted timber entrance door and modern casement windows, has a very negative impact on the legibility of the building's original form and Market House function. The proposal to remove the door and windows and insert new fully glazed units, with an integrated glazed entrance door, will have a positive impact on the building by permitting the ground floor to again be read more clearly as an arcaded classical design.

The proposals to restore the original appearance of the facades, windows and insert fully glazed units to the ground floor arcade will also have a very positive impact on the surrounding historic streetscape.

Interior:

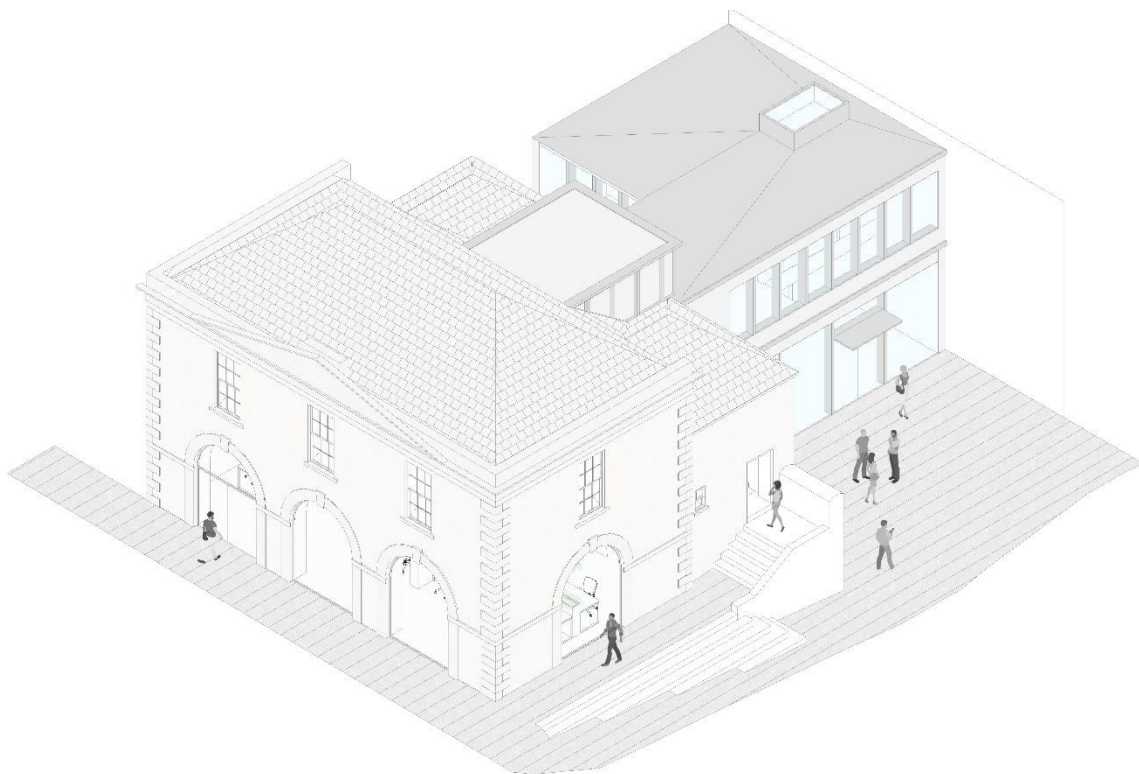
Floors: Where the historic stone flagged floor survives at ground floor level, it is to be retained. It should be left exposed where possible, but in areas where this is not feasible, it is to be protected and overlaid in a reversible manner. The impact of exposing the floor will be positive on the historic character of the interior here, while the impact of covering the floor as described will be neutral, as it is protected and can be exposed again at a later stage.

Ceilings: The present suspended modern ceiling has had a negative impact on the historic character and scale of the interior. Its removal to expose the historic lath and plaster ceiling, or reinstate it where it has been lost, will have a positive impact.

Walls: Existing modern wall linings have a negative impact on both the natural permeability of the historic construction materials and the historic character of the interior. Their removal, and repair or replacement of lime based plaster, will have a positive impact.

Impact of Proposed Interventions

The Working Hub:



The four arches on the ground floor are to be glazed and access to the ground floor through the northern arch. The ground floor of the working hubs consists of a reception area, a small kitchenette, provides for eight workspaces (in two co-working offices) and new lift to the first floor.

The interior at ground floor has already undergone significant change over time. The proposed introduction of new partitions to create two workspace areas and associated reception and kitchenette, and blocking of existing opes will have a neutral impact on the existing character of the space. A small area of the existing historic masonry wall is to be removed to widen an existing door opening to make it fully accessible. While this will have a minor negative impact on historic building fabric, the impact on the character of the ground floor interior is neutral as there is already an opening here.

The first floor of the building is currently accessed externally via staircase to the south (to be repaired). A new lift is proposed to make the first floor universally accessible to the users of the building.

The repair of the external staircase will have a positive impact on the building's appearance, historic character, and sustain this original point of access, which would have led to the Court Rooms in the building.

The lift is to be located in an area where the existing later building fabric is currently in very poor condition. It will not be visible from the front of the building, so will not have an impact on the principal historic streetscape. The upper part of the lift shaft will be visible from the street to the south east (side) elevation, although its height remains below the apex of the roof of the main building. This will have a minor negative visual impact, with mitigation to be provided by the cladding of new the structure in a dark material close to the colour of roofing slates.

The provision of fully accessible entry to and from the new lift will necessitate the removal of a section of the existing rear masonry wall. At present, this area of wall has a modern internal lining, but it is possible that there may have been a chimney flue in this area. It may already have been altered following the removal of the original cupola. While it is necessary in order to create a fully accessible first floor, the removal of masonry here will have a minor negative impact on historic building fabric.

The first floor of the Court and Market House is to be subdivided providing for a 4 person co-working office and for 8 open plan workspaces.

The interior at first floor level has had some later interventions when in use as a Court. While the introduction of new partitions to the former Court Room will have an impact on its original open plan form, the fact that these interventions are reversible provides a some mitigation, and they will enable the viable reuse of this currently vacant part of the building, which will in turn enable the continuing sustainable use and preservation of the building.

The back of house facilities of the ground floor provides quiet break out space, one disabled WC and two ambulant WCs. Two WCs and a staff store are provided on the first floor.

The existing spaces have been altered and have had a variety of uses over time. As they were originally accessed internally, it is necessary to remove some of the original masonry to create two new fully accessible openings into the rear lift shaft lobby. The removal of masonry here will have a minor negative impact on historic building fabric, although these are secondary spaces in terms of significance.

The addition of a new wing to the rear of the building will not involve any additional loss of existing historic building fabric. The set back design, with a public plaza to the front, will have a positive impact on the existing historic building, allowing it to be more fully viewed and appreciated from the rear. The materials chosen for the new building are contemporary and intended to rear clearly as a new intervention, rather than attempting a pastiche of the historic building. The scale, height and set back position of the extension are intended to rear as secondary to the principal historic structure.

Outline Scope of Works

1.0 Roof

- 1.1 Previous slating works appear to have weathered and protected the building from significant decay, the main hip roof and two returns are currently covered with a modern artificial slate incorporating a bituminous felt at the underside.
- 1.2 Much of the historic timber roof structure remains, including the queen post trusses, a significant number of rafters have been replaced / strengthened with new timbers alongside.
- 1.3 Following further inspection with the input of a timber decay specialist it may be necessary to carry further timber repairs to facilitate a new use below.
- 1.4 When there is a requirement for re slating a natural slate such as a Welsh Penryn Celtic Grade Blue Bangor slate incorporating a breathable roofing membrane at the underside should be used.
- 1.5 The section of lean to roof to rear of building and structure below, infilling area between the two returns is in very poor condition and should be fully replaced. This is the area identified for the potential installation of lift.

2.0 Rain Water Goods

- 2.1 Allow for the removal of the existing defective predominantly PVC system to east elevation and returns, salvaging any cast iron elements for refurbishment and re use.
- 2.2 Allow for new heritage cast rainwater goods, 100mm (4") circular downpipes with ears and 125mm (6") gutters by Hargreaves Foundry or equivalent.
- 2.3 Replace any damaged or decayed fascia and soffit timbers to match existing.

3.0 Parapet Capping / Gutter

- 3.1 It is apparent that a number of repairs have already been undertaken to the parapet capping, some, particularly the introduction of a lead course is likely to have afforded protection to the structure. Others such as the re rendering of cornice and frieze in a cement-based render has likely had unintended consequences as demonstrated by vegetation growth now apparent.
- 3.2 Vegetation growth should be carefully removed, and approved Biocide / Herbicide treatment applied. Where it is causing unintended damage the cement based render is to be removed, assuming the current visible lead course is preventing water ingress the underlying stones (if suitable) should be re pointed with lime based mortars or dressed in Code 7 Lead.
- 3.3 Condition of Parapet Gutter to be inspected, to be repaired and relined new Code 5 Lead and counter flashing if required

4.0 Stonework

- 4.1 Vegetation growth should be carefully removed, and approved Biocide / Herbicide treatment applied, followed by a Low-Pressure Steam Wash (e.g. DOFF System or similar approved) to remove any Debris and Loose Organic Growth.
- 4.2 The existing modern cement-based strap pointing is to be raked out and repointed with lime mortars to a flush finish.
- 4.3 As depicted in the Lawrence Collection photograph the snecked limestone of the building appears to have been rendered previously with the quoins and ashlar limestone exposed.
- 4.4 Allow for plastering with a 3-coat hydraulic lime plaster with the final coat a harling (wet dash) finish 3 - 6 mm rounded pebble or pea gravel based, not crushed angular stone, applied with harling trowel (similar to scudding spoon)

5.0 Windows

- 5.1 An original 6 over 6 Timber Sash Window remains in the east elevation of the south east return and should form the basis for the replacement of the other six number windows throughout the building, predominately at first floor level.
- 5.2 The new 6 over 6 Timber Sash Windows are to be box weighted and draft sealed.
- 5.3 Assuming timber heads throughout (to internal face where window set in limestone) allow for new replacement reinforced concrete heads to each window.
- 5.4 It is our understanding that the four number arched opes at ground floor level were once fully open and subsequently infilled, on this basis we suggest there may be an opportunity to insert new contemporary fully glazed units integrating a new glazed entrance door in one of the units.

6.0 Floors

- 6.1 Ground Floor: if existing, historic flag stone floor to be exposed, if a new floor is required the flag stones are to be protected and over laid in a reversible manner.
- 6.2 Suspended Timber First Floor: existing timber floorboards to be carefully lifted and stored for re use, joist ends embedded in walls to be exposed and inspected with input of timber decay specialist, where defective to be treated and splice repaired.
- 6.3 It may be necessary to upgrade suspended floor build up in terms of fire safety requirements.

7.0 Ceilings

- 7.1 Existing modern suspended grid ceiling to be removed, there are remnants of a lath and plaster chamfered ceiling at first floor which should be reinstated following works to roof.
- 7.2 Allow for repairs / replacement of regular damaged ceiling and decoration throughout

8.0 Wall Linings

- 8.1 Impervious insulated plasterboard linings to be removed and replaced with breathable insulation systems.
- 8.2 Allow for repairs / replacement of plaster in lime based plasters and decoration throughout.

9.0 Services

- 9.1 Electrical: Building is likely to require full electrical upgrade / renewal to facilitate new use
- 9.2 Mechanical: no existing central heating system, system required to facilitate new use
- 9.3 Sanitary: existing facilities not adequate for new use, upgrade / additional requirement

Photographic Record

Refer to Survey Drawings; SY100 Existing Ground Floor and SY101 Existing First Floor

Exterior



Image 1: Main Street / Front Elevation



Image 2: Broad Street / Side Elevation



Image 3: View of Side / Rear Elevation (from Broad Street)



Image 4: View of Rear Elevation



Image 5: Broad Street Public Toilets



Image 6: Existing Limestone Steps



Image 7: Existing steps to Courtroom Entrance

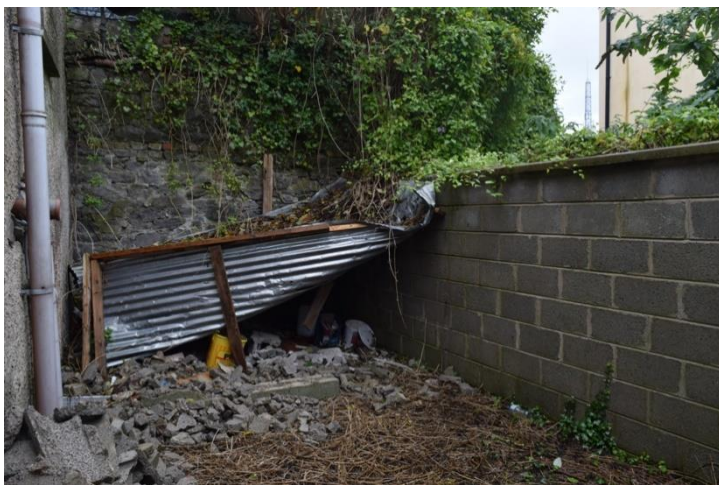


Image 8: View of rear yard



Image 9: Existing escape stair to rear yard.

Interior

Ground Floor



Image 10: Fanlight over 2nr. entrance doors.



Image 11: Men's shed. View to Main Street / west.



Image 12: Internal Stone work detail at arch.



Image 13: Internal Stone work detail at arch.



Image 14: Men's shed. View to north.



Image 15: Men's shed storage / wc. View to rear yard.



Image 16: Snooker Club.



Image 17: Snooker Club.



Image 18: Vacant room in later extension in poor condition.



Image 19: Vacant room in later extension in poor condition.

First Floor



Image 20: Court Room. View to North.



Image 21: Court Room. View to South



Image 22: Hipped roof timbers over Court Room.



Image 23: Hipped roof timbers over Court Room.

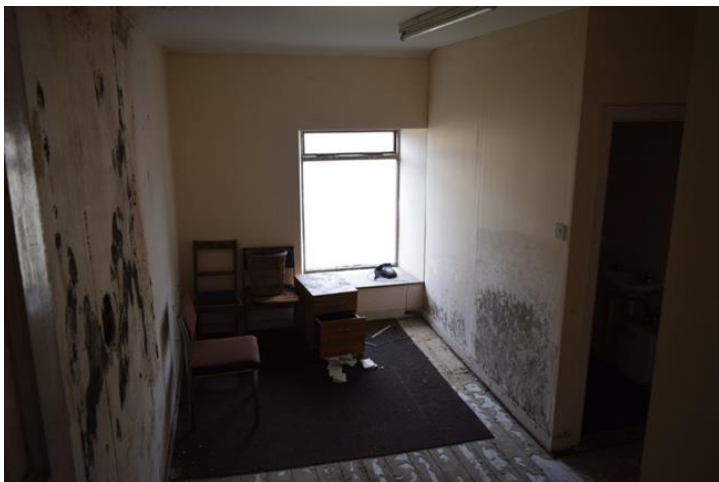


Image 24: Judges Chamber. View to east.



Image 25: Judges Chamber / WC. View to south.



Image 26: Exposed roof timbers of rear return (north)



Image 27: Lath and plaster ceiling exposed in later extension. Poor condition.



Image 28: Existing Stairs to Court Room accessed from Broad Street.



Image 29: Existing Stairs to Court Room accessed from Broad Street.



Image 30: Court Room. Location of new ope to provide universal access to first floor.

