

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016

To the Chairperson and Members of  
The Central Area Committee

## **PROPOSED NEW CITY LIBRARY, PARNELL SQUARE**

This report is a project status up-date on the City Library Parnell Square project for August 2016.

The project is being financed by Parnell Square Foundation<sup>1</sup> and carried out by its wholly owned development company PSQ Developments Limited with the support of Dublin City Council, Kennedy Wilson and the Office of Public Works.

### **Background**

Discussion and consideration of a city library for Dublin has been on the municipal agenda for many years. This long held ambition has led to consideration of a number of potential locations in recent times. During this period of consideration and site selection, the City Library Service developed the high level vision for the Library and this was translated into a detailed functional brief. This preparatory work was a key factor in the readiness to grasp the opportunity that arose in 2013 to locate the library at Parnell Square in the former Colaiste Mhuire buildings.

The ambitious vision outlined in the brief has been further developed to sketch design stage through regular meetings of the PSQ Developments involving an intensive and collaborative process of further investigation and research between the PSQ Developments and design teams, the city library staff, city council stakeholders and experts.

**Appendix 1** Outlines the project structures that have been put in place to deliver the vision.

**Appendix 2** outlines a selection of the key highlights in the journey from project announcement in April 2013 to the completion of Stage 2(a) Sketch design

**Appendix 3** contains a summary of consultation, engagement, research activity and library visits.

### **Current Project Status**

The designs developed as part of the Stage 2 (a) Sketch Design process have emerged through interrogation of the vision document and the functional brief. These designs deliver on the promise to create a library for the people of Dublin, a place to learn create participate, a library that will inspire and excite, welcome and include.

The brief outlines the following seven key concepts or themes that describe the nature of the library.

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<sup>1</sup> Parnell Square Foundation is a company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity in Ireland (Charity No. 20083182) see appendix 1 for further details.

## **1. Learning at the heart of the library**

The library will support individual and collaborative learning at all stages of life from pre- school to PhD with IT-rich Learning Suites for self-directed IT learning and spaces for mentoring and learning support. All subjects will be catered for with a particular focus on Music and the Visual Arts.

## **2. An inspiring place for children, young adults and families**

The library will be child and family friendly throughout with services designed to support family reading, the development of independent reading skills and a love of books that will last a lifetime. The Education Centre will provide an immersive learning experience in the creative arts.

## **3. A civic meeting place and hub**

The library will be a hub for citizen access, embracing multiple cultures with collaborative and showcase spaces available to the community. In particular it will welcome and reach out to those who may not see libraries and culture as something for them, providing a range of new meeting facilities for Dublin, from informal gathering points and a café through to more formal meeting rooms and an auditorium for larger groups.

## **4. The StoryHouse: A space for contemporary culture and literature**

The new library will be at the heart of the literary life of the capital and the emerging Cultural Quarter. It will celebrate writers and writing in the StoryHouse, a “City of Words” Centre offering open access to a rich experience of reading and live spoken word performance. It will exhibit and interpret the library’s literary collections to provide inspiration for learning and for creativity.

## **5. Supporting business and entrepreneurship**

The Innovation Hub will provide business know-how and physical spaces to support start-up businesses as well as formal classes and mentoring services. Practical support in the form of free wifi, work space, specialist reference material and professional guidance will help re- imagine and re- invigorate business services in the City Library. There will be a ‘commons’ space for exchange of ideas, support, networking and independent and collaborative co- working.

## **6. Forging relationships, connections and collaboration**

The library will be both an anchor and a catalyst for community activity that connects the range of cultural providers in the quarter. It will broker and facilitate relationships between cultural services and the wider community, providing facilities, expertise and the physical spaces that allow communities and organisations to come together. The library will work with existing cultural providers, including Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane and the Irish Writers’ Centre, Poetry Ireland, taking advantage of the synergies and shared objectives of these organisations to develop strong cultural partnerships.

## **7. A digital library for the 21st century**

The library will be saturated in digital potential, it will be as fundamental to service delivery as the collections and the staff. It will offer 24 hour access to resources on-line, and the availability of innovative, specially commissioned technologies, bringing unique collections to life and supporting learning. Intelligent building and library technologies will support self service, bookings, payments, way-finding and innovative ways to display and interpret the collections, allowing people to work in groups virtually and physically, both for learning and for recreation.

### **Sketch Design highlights:**

These 7 high level themes and concepts have guided the development process from idea and vision to sketch design. The current sketch designs include:

- 1000 seats for readers
- Meeting spaces throughout including:
  - 15 semi -enclosed 1 to 1 mentoring spaces, 9 multi use spaces for groups ranging in size from 8 to 25 people, bookable workshop and brainstorming spaces
- A 200 seat conference centre, with associated break-out and lobby space.
- 2 intimate performance spaces for 40 person and 60 person.
- Collection space for 150,000 items to accommodate both traditional media and new formats covering all subjects from A to Z
- An inspiring children's and young adults library with collections, storytelling, digital and study spaces.
- A music centre supporting learners, performers and listeners, offering spaces to record and edit, practice and perform. There will be access to instruments and music technologies in a supportive environment.

### **Next Steps and Approach to Planning**

The next stage of the project is Stage 2 (b) Design to Planning Submission. The first step in this phase will be to continue Site Investigation works. These works will provide valuable information about building and ground conditions and will serve to de-risk the project at construction phase.

The DCC Planning Department advised that nature of the development will require the preparation of an EIA. PSQ Developments Limited will carry out an EIA which will be included as part of their Planning Submission to An Bord Pleanála.

### **APPENDIX 1: PSCQ Project Structures and Resources**

The project is being financed by the Foundation and developed by PSQ Developments Limited with the support of Dublin City Council, Kennedy Wilson and the Office of Public Works. Kennedy Wilson is an international real estate investment and services company which has its main European office in Dublin. DCC will assume full responsibility for the future services and sustainability of the property portfolio following completion of the project. The OPW have agreed to transfer the properties to the ownership of the City Council to facilitate the development.

## Project Structures

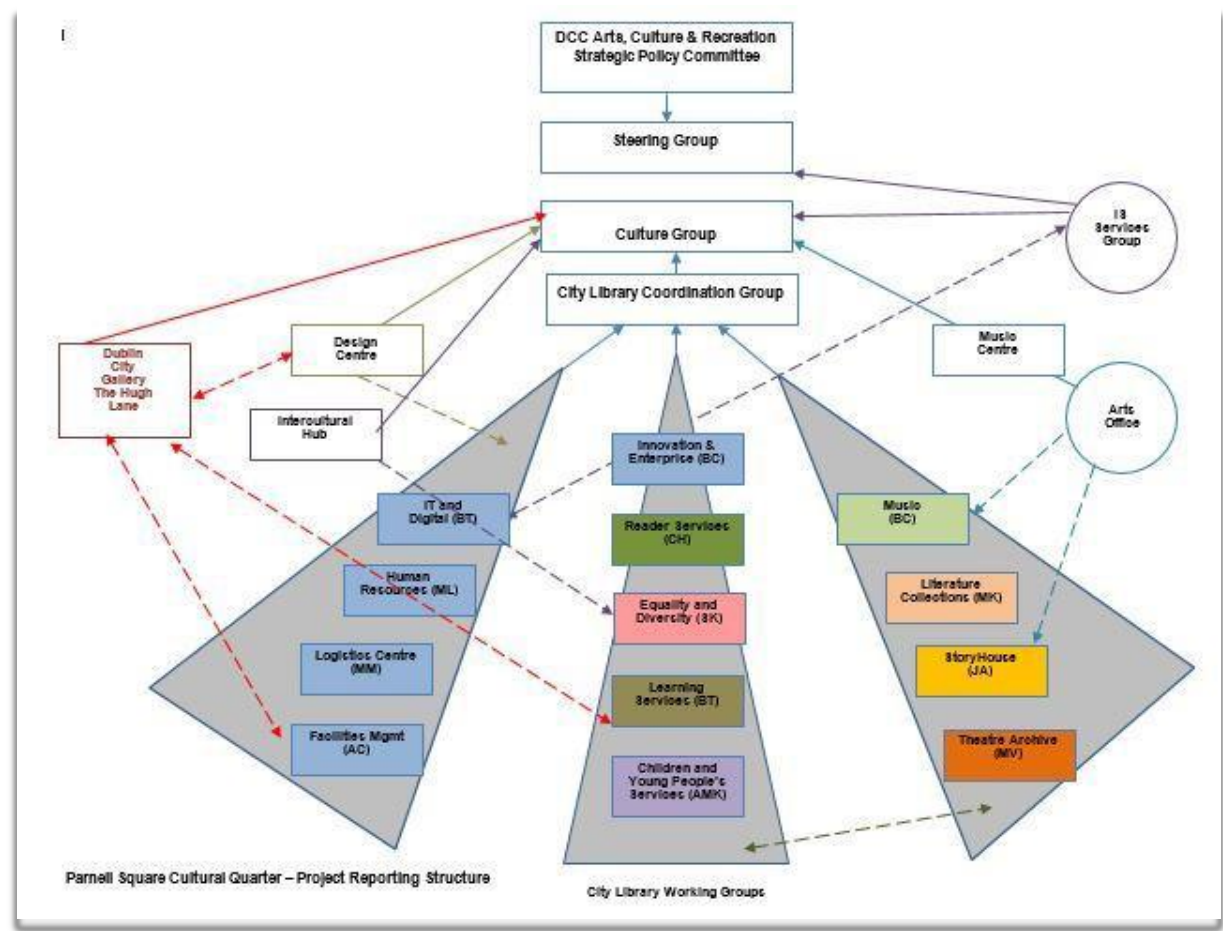
The **Parnell Square Foundation** (Charity No. 20083182) a charitable trust, has been established to fundraise and finance the process. The construction project will be developed by PSQ Developments Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Parnell Square Foundation. There are two directors from Dublin City Council (Brendan Kenny and Ali Grehan) and two directors from Kennedy Wilson on the Foundation. The City Librarian is a member of the Foundation.

The estimated project construction cost is €60 million (ex VAT and ex Fees). Project seed capital of €2.5 m is being provided by Kennedy Wilson to the Foundation, on a philanthropic basis. They will also lead the Foundation fund raising drive and provide expertise to assist in management of the development project.

Dublin City Council has committed a budget of €1.8 million over the next three years (2015 – 2017) towards its internal costs of supporting the project. DCC is paying the costs for the DCC project manager and other costs relevant to informing service development though the entire capital costs are envisaged to be met by PSQ Developments Limited with the support of Parnell Square Foundation. Libraries have assigned internal resources to the project - a Divisional Librarian supported by a Senior Librarian (work sharing). All members of the libraries Management team are responsible for leading working groups in their area of responsibility.

A DCC project risk register has been developed. This is regularly reviewed and up-dated in line with appropriate protocols.

## DCC Project Structures



The project has a number of working groups which are inter-linked and whose role is to support and report to the Foundation. The working-groups will assist the Foundation in ensuring that it the project is a robust and well managed process.

Brendan Kenny, Assistant Chief Executive is the project sponsor and chairs the **Internal DCC Steering Group** which meets every month to consider the project, its management, finance, work to date etc. The group has internal DCC representatives from Libraries, City Architects, Finance, Law, Communications, Planning and Traffic.

The **Culture Working Group** is united by the themes of “Learn, Create, Participate” and meets on a monthly basis. It is chaired by Margaret Hayes, City Librarian. The group has developed the functional brief for the library and other cultural uses and addresses ongoing communications and consultation. Library working groups feed into this committee.

Both groups include the relevant officials from disciplines / divisions within the City Council and a number of the officials overlap on both committee ensuring strong communication and management. Owen O’Doherty, Deputy City Architect is the project manager.

## **APPENDIX 2: PSCQ Project Milestones and Highlights**

### **2012-2013 Project Highlights**

Oct 2012	Establishment of the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter Steering Group
January 2013	Establishment of the Parnell Square Culture Group
April 2013	Project Announcement June
2013	Phase 1 Public Consultation
October 2013	Establishment of the Parnell Square Foundation

The announcement of the City Library Parnell Square project in April 2013 signalled the beginning of a period of intense activity, both in terms of public engagement and, behind the scenes, research and preparation.

Following announcement, much of the early work of 2013 was focused on planning and rolling out the phase 1 public consultation and engagement process, feeding the outcomes of that process into the development of the strategic brief. During this early stage project structures were put in place, ensuring a robust management and governance approach.

City library staff undertook research to profile and map the area surrounding the PSCQ. We identified key stakeholder groups as well as examining available area data to compile information on population, employers, schools, businesses, cultural facilities etc.

### **2014 Project Highlights**

Jan 2014	12 City Library and 4 Cultural Quarter Working Groups established	Jan
2014	<a href="http://www.parnellsquare.ie">www.parnellsquare.ie</a> launched	
Mar- Apr 2014	Picture Parnell Square Project	

April 2014	Completion of the PSQ Strategic Brief	July
2014	Establishment of PSQ Developments Ltd	
July 2014	Appointment of the Design Team by the PSQ Developments Limited	July
2014	Appointment of the EIA Team	
July 2014	Appointment of the Project QS	
August 2014	Fortnightly schedule of design review and development meetings commence.	
Dec 2014	Completion of the Stage 1 feasibility Report	

In January 2014, the city library service began an intensive period of research and review as part of the process of finalising the Strategic Brief. Twelve City Library working groups were established looking at all aspects of the future City Library's service with the aim of preparing extensive briefing material for the design team when engaged by PSQ Developments Limited. At the same time working groups were established looking at requirements for Music, the Gallery, Design and Interculturalism. These groups worked to prepare detailed background material regarding technical, operational and service requirements.

The project website was launched at the start of the year, following a public tender and design process, with all web content sourced and developed by city library staff.

During this time the procurement process to engage the design team to be appointed by PSQ Developments Limited continued, culminating in the announcement of the appointment of the successful architect led team of Grafton Architects and Shaffrey Associates by the PSQ Developments Limited in July 2014. Both the EIA team and Project QS were also engaged at this time.

The appointment by PSQ Developments Limited of the design team was followed by a series of regular fortnightly design review meetings. These meetings were attended by relevant stakeholders and requirements were examined in detail in order to properly inform the design process.

Following this period of engagement, the Design team issued the completed Stage 1 feasibility report in December 2014

### **2015 Project Highlights**

March 2015	Commencement of Stage 2(a)	
April 2015	Tender document for public art commission completed	
May 2015	Commencement of the PSCQ Digital Story telling project 'Dublin: a great place to start'	
May 2015	Words on the Street, European Literature night held on Parnell Square	

As the project entered the sketch design stage, members of the PSCQ Culture group met with a variety of stakeholders and advisory groups to further develop the brief. 14 design development meetings with the design team took place in 2015. There was a sustained focus on the user experience, collection and learning spaces, accessibility, retail/catering, music and the digital offer.

**2016 Project Highlights**

Jan 2016 Engagement of digital advisor, Brendan O’Shea

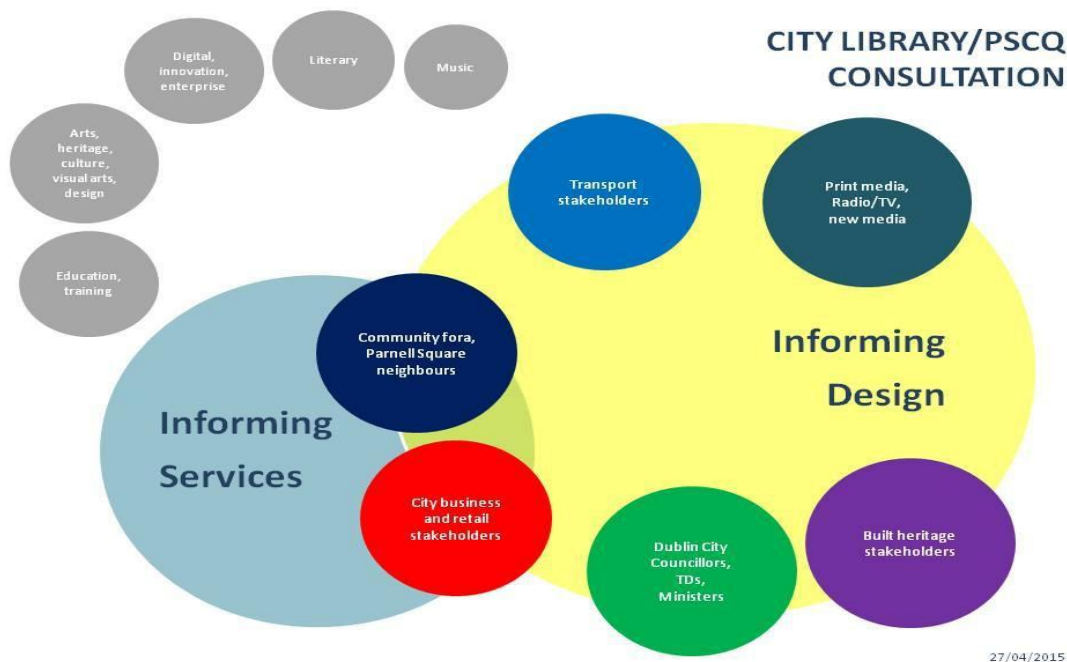
March 2016 Tender for Site Investigation works issued

Project Stage 2(a) Sketch Design: The PSQ Developments Limited has approved the Stage 2(a) Report submitted by the design team. In order to move to the detailed design phase, in preparation for submission for planning, site investigation works are required. Following the issue of a tender, approval to proceed with these works has been given and a commencement date will issue shortly.

**Appendix 3: Consultation, Communication, Research**

As far back as 2010, libraries have undertaken desktop research, site visits to a number of key UK and European City Libraries, library user surveys and best practice analysis as plans developed to deliver a new city library.

In addition to this the project team have met extensively with a range of stakeholders. Key stakeholder groups have been identified as follows: Arts, Heritage (including Built Heritage), Culture & Visual Arts; Literature; Music; Design; Education and Training; Local, National and European Government; Business and Enterprise; Community Organisations, Children and Families; Dublin City Council Stakeholders and Media.



Project team members have also conducted detailed research as required on specific areas of the library and cultural quarter such as music, catering and digital requirements.

This research has been both desktop based and involving practical site visits and attendance at conferences.

### **Engagement, Communication and Consultation - a selection**

Phase 1 Public Consultation was facilitated by Green Hat (May-June 2013) who made contact with around 22,100 people and captured their contributions. More than 1,300 actively engaged in the process. Consultees came from across the arts & culture sector, community, voluntary, education, local authority, history & heritage, architecture & design, residents, neighbourhood organisations and other sectors.

Library led consultations continued from 2014 to the present with local businesses, schools and stakeholder groups. The average number of people engaged with was over 500 each year.

The project website [www.parnellsquare.ie](http://www.parnellsquare.ie) and project social media presences were launched in Jan 2014. In its first year the website had 7447 users and 9320 sessions. The website was accessed in a total of 95 countries across the world. The twitter account has 668 followers with some of the more popular tweets such as announcement of the design team selection receiving over 1,500 views.

PSQ Developments Limited submits bi-monthly up-date reports to the Arts, Culture, Recreation and Community Strategic Policy Committee and monthly updates to the Dublin City Council monthly meetings.

### **Selected Research and Study Visits**

Project team members have attended at a number of conferences, study visits to libraries in Ireland and the UK, using such opportunities to highlight the project with colleagues internationally and locally. The following is a selection of these visits:

Study visit to Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester to view newly completed city libraries.

Visits to Irish libraries at Tullamore, Blackrock, Belfast, Abbeylaxey, Mountmellick, NCAD as well as the DLR Lexicon.

Visits to Cultural Centres such as Nerve Centre in Derry, Oh Yeah Music Centre in Belfast, Rua Red Arts centre in Tallaght, and HOME in Manchester

Attendance at Eurocities Conferences in Belfast and Helsinki.

**Margaret Hayes**  
**Dublin City Librarian**