

## **Feasibility Study: Bridgefoot Street, Merchants Quay.**

The vacant site on Bridgefoot Street/Island owned by Dublin City Council Street is now the subject of a Feasibility Study funded by the Urban Rural Development Fund. The City Arts Office under the direction of the Development Department applied for Feasibility funding (Category B) under this Government scheme. The application set out a proposal for a Creative Campus at Bridgefoot Street that provided Artists Workspaces in a manner that interacted with institutions such as NCAD and the Digital Hub and provided a significant community resource. This resource for the local community is now the subject of research and consultation (see Timeline attached). The objective once the Feasibility Study is completed this year is to apply for Category A funding to begin construction in 2021. The process of co-design by users and community is central to the Feasibility Study and this will eventually lead to a co-design groups working with the Architects appointed. It is estimated that the construction and redevelopment cost will be in the order of €20M.

It was also intended to study another site in Reuben Street that is owned by DCC but it was concluded that any development would be too disruptive to the Community garden located there. However two buildings on Merchants Quay (Nos 8 and 9) one occupied by DCC Fleet Management (9) and the other recently acquired from the Franciscans have now been included in the Study. Number 9 Merchants Quay is a fully restored 18<sup>th</sup> Century townhouse that could best be used as office or meeting rooms. Number 8 houses the now unused St Anthony's theatre behind a block of offices. Redevelopment of Number 8 and 9 could significantly add to the Bridgefoot Street site's appeal providing additional shared Arts, Culture and Community facilities.

There were significant delays due to Covid 19 but a major research project on the demand and design has concluded on Artists Workspaces for the City where 540 respondents participated. This has confirmed the chronic demand for low cost workspace for Artists and given critical feedback on cost, design and governance. Community consultation has now begun in cooperation with the Area Office and will, as Public Health guidelines allow, be in person or online as appropriate. Models of Governance such as Axis, Ballymun where Artists and community organisations work closely together are emerging as a model that is attractive and sustainable.

The Feasibility Report will conclude in November where Full Costings, Governance, Design and Construction Time line will be set out supported by the research and consultations referred to above.

Ray Yeates

City Arts Officer.

Timelines Attached