



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Report to Arts, Culture, Leisure
and Recreation SPC
26th February 2024
Item No. 14

Progress Report on 8 and 9 Merchants Quay

Dublin City Council having conducted a Feasibility Study and worked closely with Artists, Arts Organisations and Local Stakeholders is beginning the refurbishment and restoration of 8 and 9 Merchants Quay to create 20 Artists Studios with additional flexible desk spaces and to restore the former St Anthony's Theatre at 12 seats as a theatre and community resource.

These City Owned buildings are located beside the Merchants Quay Project and it is envisaged that close cooperation will occur between the facilities and the local Area. This will be achieved partly by having within the Artists in residence at Nos 8 and 9 a cohort that specialise in the Arts in Community and Schools that will give a local and outward working orientation to the day to day operation of the centre. It will naturally occur that local community and Arts organisations will collaborate and with temporary Artists' studios also planned for a vacant DCC owned site on Bridgefoot Street, it is hoped that an Arts supported regeneration approach will develop.

The City Arts Office as the Project Manager has invited Axis, Ballymun to advise Dublin City Council on best practice where Artists and Community Resource organisations work closely together and a Project Oversight Group will be formed to ensure best practice and also to work closely with the Project Manager led Integrated Design Team soon to be appointed.

In 2023 a private donor having read the URDF funded Feasibility Study approached Dublin City Council and Axis Ballymun to see if Dublin City Council and Axis would partner in the Capital funding required for the building and restoration works at Merchants Quay. The private donor will make €3M available to Axis as a Registered Charity and the Dublin City Council Capital Programme supported by The Department of Tourism, Culture Gaeltacht Arts Sports and Media will provide the balance of the €6m estimated cost under the Space to Create scheme launched last August .

The donor wishes to remain anonymous in the process but will also participate on the Project Oversight Group along with City Officials, External Contractors and Axis.

The Tenders for the Integrated Design Team have been recently assessed and appointment will occur shortly. The Co-Design approach taken at feasibility stage is central to the continuing engagement of stakeholders and the donor's interest and will continue to feature in all aspects of the Design and construction phase. A further tender for a Building Contractor will issue in the Summer of 2024 and construction lasting 9 months to a year will begin before the end of 2024.

This newly appointed Design Team will also address the refurbishment of the former Eden restaurant and the installation of temporary Artists' Studios on Bridgefoot Street.

Ray Yeates
City Arts Officer
26th February 2024