

# Dublin City Council launches details of Parnell Square Cultural Quarter - a new Cultural District for Dublin City

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- New City Library to form centrepiece of Parnell Square Cultural Quarter development
- Kennedy Wilson, acting on a philanthropic basis, to provide seed capital of € 2.5M and to lead remainder of fundraising
- Lord Mayor calls for public participation in Parnell Square Cultural Quarter planning process / discussion

**Dublin, Friday 5th April 2013:** Lord Mayor Naoise Ó Muirí today announced details of a visionary new project for Dublin city: the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter. The development will involve the construction of a new and innovative Dublin City Library on the site of Colaiste Mhuire on Parnell Square. The new City Library and the existing spectacular Hugh Lane Gallery will be connected by a civic plaza, creating a new intercultural district for Dublin. The project will fulfil the City's ambitions for a 'Civic Spine' connecting the capital's key historic places. It will be a new public landmark that will inspire physical and economic renewal. Seed capital for the project is being provided by international real estate investment and services company, Kennedy Wilson on a philanthropic basis. The company, which has its main European office in Dublin, will also lead further required fund raising and provide expertise to assist in management of the development. Preliminary estimates for the full development cost are €60m. Public consultation to explore how the cultural quarter can realise its potential for positive impact will commence shortly.

Lord Mayor Naoise Ó Muirí said: "Parnell Square is the first and finest of Dublin's Georgian Squares, the area has a rich and important history with philanthropic origins. This bold and visionary project can act as a catalyst for regeneration across the city, drawing Dubliners and visitors of all ages in new directions and creating new business opportunities. We will be drawing on the energy of local stakeholders to achieve this ambition. The communities, local employers and cultural and public institutions in the district can all play a part in making Dublin's north Georgian district great again with safer streets, great public spaces and a thriving culture of learning, creativity and business. I am delighted to be announcing details of this exciting project for Dublin city, and thank Kennedy Wilson for the company's support in helping us actualise this vision for Dublin. Today I invite all citizens to participate in a public consultation process to ensure that this will be a cultural space for all Dubliners and visitors to Dublin."

Dublin City Manager John Tierney said: " this project represents a powerful opportunity and catalyst for the redevelopment of this part of Northside Dublin. Dublin City Council is looking forward to working in partnership with Kennedy Wilson and with all the other stakeholders in bringing this major project to fruition."

Peter Collins, managing director, Kennedy Wilson Europe said: "Parnell Square has a long association with philanthropy; the Rotunda Maternity Hospital, Britain and Ireland's first public maternity hospital, built by Dr. Bartholomew Mosse in the 18th century was financed by private donations. Kennedy Wilson is proud to continue this philanthropic heritage through our involvement with this visionary development for Dublin city. As a company we are committed to supporting public projects in the cities in which we are based, that will have a genuine positive impact on the residents of those cities. In addition to providing the seed capital for the project, Kennedy Wilson will be leading the further fund raising effort to secure the finances to deliver this exciting initiative and to help manage the project throughout its development. Kennedy Wilson is committed to providing a lasting legacy for the people of Dublin, and we are delighted to be partnering with the City in the creation of a new cultural district for Dublin City."

Dublin City Architect, Ali Grehan said: "The Parnell Square Cultural Quarter will be at the heart of the cultural life of the capital, connecting and consolidating the Civic Spine which is a cornerstone of city development policy.

The Civic Spine is a route which includes the Grafton Street and Henry Street prime retail areas, important third level institutions and major cultural and tourism destinations. The Parnell Square Cultural Quarter will be a landmark destination which will complete the Spine at its northern end and will be the connector for extending this route north into the new Dublin Institute of Technology campus at Grangegorman. It will appeal to people of all ages with a particular emphasis on creative opportunities for young people. The development will be a fusion of contemporary and historic architecture unique to Dublin."

Dublin City Librarian Margaret Hayes, said: "I welcome the potential to realise the city's long held ambition of providing a new city library for the people of Dublin. A space to learn, create and participate will bring 21st century services to children and families, learners and researchers, readers and writers, workers and businesses. The project represents an investment in people and communities, a positive contribution to creating economic, social and cultural advantage and well being. The new City library and other Cultural activities will extend over the entire Colaiste Mhuire site offering new open flexible spaces together with more intimate learning and meeting spaces in the houses fronting Parnell Square. A welcoming entrance foyer will be created directly onto Parnell Square".

The Parnell Square Cultural Quarter project will see the development of a new city library on the site of Colaiste Mhuire, the re-development of the former Colaiste Mhuire buildings to form the entrance to the new City library and the provision of public rooms for a variety of cultural uses - from music, media, craft and

design. 20-21 Parnell Square will also form part of the cultural complex and a pedestrian plaza at the north end of Parnell Square will create new public events space in front of the cultural buildings.

Arrangements are being made for the transfer of the former Coláiste Mhuire from the Office of Public Works to Dublin City Council. We wish to thank the OPW for their great co-operation in helping to make the project a reality. Dublin City Council is the owner of the Hugh Lane gallery situated between the Colaiste Mhuire buildings and Numbers 20-21 Parnell Square. It is intended that the Hugh Lane gallery will form part of the overall Parnell Square Cultural offering and it will be significantly enhanced and its role and impact expanded by the development of this new City Library/Cultural Centre.

The public is being encouraged to participate in the consultation process around the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter. A series of public meetings and workshops are being planned to help develop a shared understanding of the expectations and needs of all stakeholders; from individuals, community groups, and public representatives to cultural promoters, educational institutions and businesses. These meetings will take place in tandem with the commissioning of the design and will inform the final design brief.

The public will be able to get further information at [www.dublincity.ie](http://www.dublincity.ie) or [parnellsquare@dublincity.ie](mailto:parnellsquare@dublincity.ie) or calling + 1 222 3389 (Ms Diane Dixon, Culture Recreation and Amenity Department).

**Ends**

**Notes to the Editor:**

#### **About Dublin City Library**

The existing Dublin City Library, located in the Ilac Shopping Centre on Henry Street, has over 500,000 visits every year and offers a 54 hours service to the local community every week. In 2011 this library provided 72,000 internet access sessions, hosted 1,042 events including class visits, reading groups and enterprise supports, provided 36,000 language sessions and gave out 301,000 book loans. Parnell Square Cultural Quarter offers an opportunity to explore the totality of creative possibilities of the quarter and its ability to transform and regenerate this area bringing the citizens of Dublin on a journey of Learning, Creativity and Participation , the destination- transformation for individuals and communities.

The Values and principles guiding cultural use in the proposed new City Library will include; Creativity, Inspiration, Inclusion, Integration, Learning, Participation, Connectivity local and International, Collaboration, Visibility.

The Parnell Square Cultural Quarter will be the new "Meeting Place" on the northside of Dublin City.

This 21st century Dublin City Library at Parnell Square will not be like any other library in Dublin or in the Country.

It will mirror best contemporary international practice which sees libraries as cultural brokers, building partnerships and relationships and mediating collaborative models of service delivery including shared spaces, co-locations, and fusion spaces.

The Dublin City library will expand the traditional mould with :

**Innovation/Enterprise Hub** – where start-up and established businesses and entrepreneurs will have access to information resources and advice , meeting, mentoring, exhibition and brainstorming spaces. Spaces for co-worker collaboration and hot -desking will be provided , supporting City councils role in local enterprise provision (example : UK model recently set up in 6 cities);

**Storyhouse** – a place for writers and readers, a creative commons for emerging and established writers to include residencies at civic, national, and international levels of excellence and engagement , visibility for the Dublin UNESCO City of Literature presence, intimate spaces for participation with literature via a hearth space and spoken word hub;

**Music Centre-** Building on historic print and recorded music provision to a new experience for music learning, practice and performance .Provision for Young People will be prioritised;

**Digital library** – High speed connectivity /digital suite for the learner, researcher, reader, creator – Providing learning across all ages/ addressing the digital divide/ providing test bed opportunities for new digital services and content creation , working in partnership with Dublin’s digital hub and digital industries , bringing the libraries collections to the world;

**Collaboration City library /Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane** - an expanded civic cultural offer . Both share common goals and aspirations and are internationally renowned – Dublin UNESCO City of literature (Focus on Literature) and the internationally renowned Hugh Lane collection (Art).

The potential examples of collaboration/ crossover are in Shared spaces where:

“Sister arts” can collaborate –explore and develop the relationship between literature and the visual, the illustrated and the written

- nurture creativity – storytelling, writing, illustration and art making
- encourage the experimental and the pioneering in both genres and exhibit results

- nurture and encourage current debate and dialogue and interrogation of the arts at local and international level
  - create a designated art and philosophical theory public library (none exists)
  - Create new digital content fused from both collections + Francis Bacon Studio
  - Share access to educational programming and lecture/learning facilities
- Other

New audiences for shared experiences- target 3,000 daily onsite visitors for library

### **About Parnell Square**

Parnell Square is the earliest, and regarded by many as the finest, of Dublin's Georgian Squares. Its significance in Dublin's history in fact predates the Georgian period as previous excavations have uncovered burials believed to be from the battle of Clontarf in 1014. In 1757 Dr. Bartholomew Mosse built Britain and Ireland's first public maternity hospital on Parnell Square, it was financed through money raised from the wealthy patrons of his adjoining 'Pleasure Gardens' developed earlier in 1750. The building of the Square was completed in 1785.

Today the Square is home to Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, which houses one of Ireland's foremost collections of modern and contemporary art. The original collection, donated by the Gallery's founder Sir Hugh Lane in 1908, has now grown to include over 2000 artworks, ranging from the Impressionist masterpieces of Manet, Monet, Renoir and Degas to works by leading national and international contemporary artists. The Hugh Lane's collection was further enhanced with the 1998 acquisition of the entire contents of Francis Bacon's Studio, donated by Bacon's sole heir John Edwards. The Gallery's wide range of activities both within and outside the Gallery includes an annual programme of lectures given by artists, philosophers and art historians. A lively education and outreach programme has forged strong links with local school and community groups with activities ranging from Kids Club workshops, adult education courses and a Sunday lecture series.

### **About Kennedy Wilson**

Founded in 1977, Kennedy Wilson is an international real estate investment and services company headquartered in Beverly Hills, CA with 24 offices in the U.S., U.K., Ireland, Spain and Japan. The company offers a comprehensive array of real estate services including auction, conventional sales, property services, research and investment management. Through its fund management and separate account businesses, Kennedy Wilson is a strategic investor of real estate investments in the U.S., Europe and Japan. For further information on Kennedy Wilson, please visit [www.kennedywilson.com](http://www.kennedywilson.com) .

