

ENNISKILLEN WORKHOUSE ENTRANCE BLOCK

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ENNISKILLEN WORKHOUSE TRANSFORMED INTO HERITAGE ASSET

QMAC COMPLETE £2.3M+ RESTORATION OF ICONIC ENNISKILLEN BUILDING...

QMAC Construction Ltd was entrusted with the sensitive heritage restoration of the Enniskillen Workhouse Entrance Block. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, in partnership with South West College, secured funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the £2.3m+ restoration project. It comprised demolition of unsympathetic extensions, the installation of a new passenger lift and stair extension, a new, glazed roof covering to a courtyard, as well as sensitive conservation work. The Grade B2 listed Victorian building, now part of Erne Campus, has been repurposed as a heritage centre and

business enterprise hub. The ground floor has been redeveloped as mixed-use exhibition, reminiscence and display space. The first-floor space has been revitalised as a state-of-the-art hub for business innovation and enterprise. Throughout the restoration work, a dedicated heritage skills and education programme enabled more than 100 local craftspeople and contractors to benefit from accredited training in heritage skills, and 12 apprenticeships were created. Kevin Boggs, a bursary holder on the programme who worked on the project, was a finalist in the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) Apprentice of the Year Award 2022.

KEY CHALLENGES
The conservation work was carefully conducted using the principle of minimal intervention in accordance with BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings, while retaining the original fabric and features, where appropriate. For example, pointing of stone/repair of pointing was carried out in lime, and a sample of new casement was submitted for approval prior to full procurement. A key aim was to ensure the building envelope, as well as the external and structural walls remained weathertight as they are made from lime. Exposing these elements would have resulted

in damp, which would have been detrimental to the long-term durability of the structure. The roof was opened and repaired in sections to keep the building weatherproof. The areas opened were temporarily covered using tarpaulins. The new extension was built early to establish how it would marry with the existing building – particularly the existing exposed rafter-ends. The work to the Exhibition/Seminar Room was important as there were time-consuming timbers to repair/replace as well as a concrete ring beam to construct. This work commenced when the building was weathertight and after the surrounding scaffolding had been disassembled. The splice repair of joists throughout the first floor was a key task. This required the use of planks/acrows to provide support. Underground ducting was installed to

the South West College boundary. This required close cooperation with the contractor working on the new South West College campus. When the neighbouring campus became operational there were many students in the general vicinity. A Traffic & Pedestrian Management Plan, a Deliveries Schedule to avoid peak time traffic and a Traffic Marshall were assigned to manage and reduce the risks. Commenting on the completed project, Jack Bothwell MCIQB, Contracts Manager at QMAC Construction said, “This project involved the transformation of a building which is recognised as a central part of the history of Enniskillen. We drew upon our extensive experience in the heritage sector to ensure the conservation work complemented and retained the character of the original design. We are delighted with the finished result.

This project is an excellent example of how an old building can be restored to become an asset to a local community. We would like to thank everyone involved in the project including our dedicated supply chain.”

PROJECT TEAM...

Client: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Main Contractor: QMAC Construction Ltd

Architect & Principal Designer: Hamilton Architects

NEC Project Manager & Quantity Surveyor: ESC Construction Consultants

Civil & Structural Consulting Engineer: RPS Group

M&E Consulting Engineer: Semple & McKillop