COURTS SERVICE
An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna

Longford Courthouse
Teach Cúirte Longfoirt

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Historical Background

Longford Courthouse is a five-bay three-storey over basement, double fronted courthouse built on the main street in 1793, probably on the site of an earlier building. The architect is unknown. The plan is a symmetrical arrangement on two-storeys over a bridewell basement. Steps lead to a Doric entrance door-case with a central first floor Venetian window above. The attic storey was added in 1859 to1860 and a pair of single-storey bridewell extensions were added to either side of the street entrance about 1900. The building was finished generally in plain lime render with limestone dressings to the windows, which were probably altered in 1859 to 1860 to sliding sash windows. One bridewell was also converted to a Tourist Office in 1970. The premises suffered serious outbreaks of rot in the early nineties and was closed in 1994 due to its poor condition.

Refurbishment and extension project

The space required for modern courtrooms and the necessary ancillary accommodation could not be accommodated within the existing building. It was decided to take down the rear section of the building. In addition, the acquisition of the adjacent licensed premises was important in that it provided additional floor space for court facilities as well as space for car parking. The yard will form a rear entrance for office staff, judges and secure entry for Garda Síochána and Prison Service vehicles.

The original Georgian building constructed in 1790 has been retained at the front of the courthouse. The original façade has been repaired. This involved the cleaning and repair of existing plaster and stone detailing, the repair of existing windows and the removal of the late Victorian bridewells at street level. Railings have been provided as indicated on the original Lawrence photograph of the premises which was taken around 1890. This work has provided a civic quality to the courthouse and the façade has been restored to its previous uninterrupted splendour.

The use of the grand jury room as a family law court was approved as a means of preserving the original space with minimal alterations as it provided a suitable and low-impact usage of this important room in the building.

The rear extension was envisaged as a clean-cut modern structure with deliberately contemporary finishes which would emphasise the separation from the original 1790 structure to a 21st century rear annex. The only visible insertion into the entrance hall is a fully glazed gallery as an access to the mezzanine level courtrooms which is suspended from the ceiling from steel beams located within the existing floor.

The building now has two large courts together with a family law courtroom and circuit and district court office accommodation. Consultation rooms, victim support room, media room and holding cells for prisoners have been provided. New services are provided throughout the building, together with universal access. The building complies with fire safety requirements. The courthouse has been cabled to accommodate videoconferencing and digital audio recording of proceedings. The building is also supported by a comprehensive information technology network.

Looking to the future

The new accommodation and facilities that have been provided in Longford will ensure that judiciary, staff, legal profession and all those who have reason to attend court in Longford will be able to carry out their business in comfort and with dignity. The refurbished and extended courthouse will meet the needs of the people of County Longford well into the 21st century.

Cúlra Stairiúil

Is teach cúirte chúig bhá, thrí stór os cionn íoslaigh, dhá éadan a tógadh ar an bpríomhshráid i 1793 é Teach Cúirte Longfoirt. Tá seans maith ann gur ar shuíomh foirgnimh eile a tógadh é. Ní fios cérbh é an t-ailtire leis. Tá an plean siméadrach thar an dá stór os cionn íoslaigh smachtlainne. Tá céimeanna ann a théann chuig príomhdhoras Dórach agus fuinneog Veinéiseach os a chionn ar an gcéad urlár. Cuireadh stór an áiléir leis sa bhliain 1859 go dtí 1860, agus cuireadh dhá shíneadh smachtlainne aon stór leis an dá thaobh den bhealach isteach den tsráid timpeall 1900. Tá críoch curtha ar an bhfoirgneamh i rindreáil aoil le haolchloch ar na fuinneoga a cheaptar a athraíodh sa bhliain 1859 go dtí fuinneoga saise sleamhnáin. Athraíodh smachtlann amháin go hOifig Turasóireachta sa bhliain 1970. Bhí droch-fhadhbanna lobhaidh ag an teach cúirte i dtús na nóchaidí, agus dúnadh é sa bhliain 1994 mar gheall ar an ndrochbhail a bhí air.

Tionscnamh athchóirithe agus sínidh

Níorbh fhéidir an spás a theastaigh i gcomhair seomraí cúirte nua-aimseartha agus an chóiríocht choimhdeach a théann leis a chur ar fáil laistigh den fhoirgneamh dá raibh ann. Socraíodh an chuid ar chúl den fhoirgneamh a bhaint anuas. Chomh maith leis sin, bhí ceannach an áitribh cheadúnaithe béal dorais tábhachtach sa mhéid is gur chuir sé spás urláir bhreise ar fáil d'áiseanna na cúirte chomh maith le spás carrchlóis. Beidh bealach isteach ar cúl sa chlós do lucht foirne agus breithiúna, agus bealach isteach slán do Gharda Síochána agus feithiclí Seirbhís Phríosúin.

Tá an bunfhoirgneamh Seoirseach a tógadh sa bhliain 1790 coinnithe i dtosach theach na cúirte. Tá an aghaidh a bhí ann ó thús deisithe. Bhí glanadh agus deisiú mhionsonraí plástair agus cloich, deisiú na bhfuinneog dá bhfuil ann agus baint na smachtlann Victeoireach ag leibhéal na sráide mar chuid de seo. Tá ráillí curtha ar fáil ar nós mar a bhí ar ghrianghraf Lawrence den áitreabh a tógadh timpeall 1890. Tá an saothar seo tar éis cuma chathartha a chur ar theach na cúirte, agus tá an aghaidh athcóirithe agus cuma bhreá uirthi arís.

Ceadaíodh úsáid sheomra ard-ghiúiré mar chúirt dlí teaghlaigh chun an spás a bhí ann a chothú an méid agus ab fhéidir agus an méid ba lú athruithe gur ghá a dhéanamh air, agus sholáthair sé seo úsáid fheiliúnach gan mórán tionchair ar an seomra tábhachtach seo san fhoirgneamh.

Chonacthas an síneadh ar gcúl mar struchtúr nua-aimseartha le píosaí comhaimseartha a chuirfeadh béim ar an scaradh idir an bunstruchtúr 1790 agus an chuid nua a tógadh san 21ú haois. Is é an t-aon rud a fheictear a cuireadh leis an halla isteach ná gailearaí mar bhealach isteach chuig na seomraí cúirte ar leibhéal idirurláir, rud atá crochta ón tsíleáil le bíomaí cruach atá laistigh den urlár dá bhfuil ann cheana.

Tá dhá chúirt mhóra san fhoirgneamh anois chomh maith le teach cúirte teaghlaigh agus cóiríocht cúirte cuarda agus cúirte dúiche ann freisin. Tá seomraí comhairleachta, seomra tacaíochta na n-íobartach, seomra na meán agus cillíní coinneála do phríocsúnaigh curtha ar fáil. Tá seirbhísí nua curtha ar fáil ar fud an fhoirgnimh, chomh maith le rochtain uilíoch. Comhlíonann an foirgneamh riachtanais slándála dóiteáin. Tá cáblaí curtha sa teach cúirte chun is gur féidir fís-chomhdhálú agus clostaifeadadh digiteach imeachtaí a dhéanamh. Tá líonra cuimsitheach teicneolaíochta eolais curtha ar fáil san foirgneamh freisin

Ag breathnú ar an todhchaí

Cinnteoidh an chóiríocht nua agus na háiseanna nua atá curtha ar fáil i Longfort go mbeidh na breithiúna, an fhoireann oibre, lucht gairmiúil dlí agus gach duine eile a mbíonn aon chúis acu freastal ar an gcúirt i Longfort ábalta dul i mbun gnó i gcompord agus le dínit. Beidh an teach cúirte athchóirithe agus leathnaithe ag comhlíonadh riachtanais mhuintir Chontae Longfoirt go maith amach san 21ú haois.

COURTS SERVICE
An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna

Design Team:

Architect :
Deaton Lysaght Architects

Structural Engineers :
Malachi Cullen & Partners

Services Engineers :
J.V. Tierney & Company Ltd.

Quantity Surveyor :
Duffy Gaffney Partnership

Project Management :
OPW Project Management Services.

Consultant Archaeologist :
Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.

Contractors for Longford Courthouse Project :
Main Contractor :
Michael McNamara & Company Ltd.

Electrical Sub-contractors :
H & F Electrical Ltd.

Mechanical Sub-contractors :
Laurence Mechanical Services Ltd.

Lift Sub-contractors :
Irish Lift Services Ltd.

Judges:

His Honour Judge Anthony Kennedy
Her Honour Judge Miriam Reynolds
His Honour Judge Donagh Mc Donagh
Judges of the Circuit Court

Judge John F. Neilan
Judge of the District Court

Court Officials:

County Registrar :
Ms. Imelda Branigan
Tel: 043 46410
Fax: 043 45699

Chief Clerk :
Ms. Mary O'Brien
Tel: 043 46410
Fax: 043 45699

District Court Clerk :
Mr. Kevin Murphy
Tel: 043 46491
Fax: 043 45449

Midland Regional Manager :

Ms. Ann Price
Tel: 057 9329140
Fax: 057 9329103

Foireann Deartha:

Ailtirí :
Deaton Lysaght Architects

Innealtóirí Struchtúracha :
Malachi Cullen & Partners

Innealtóirí Seirbhísí :
J.V. Tierney & Company Ltd.

Suirbhéirí Cainníochta :
Duffy Gaffney Partnership

Bainistíocht Tionscadail :
OPW Project Management Services.

Seandálaí Comhairleach :
Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.

Conraitheoirí do Thionscadal Theach Cúirte an Longfoirt:
Príomh Chonraitheoir:
Michael McNamara & Company Ltd.

Fo-Chonraitheoir Leictreach:
H & F Electrical Ltd.

Fo-Chonraitheoir Meicniúil:
Laurence Mechanical Services Ltd.

Fochonraitheoirí Ardaitheora:
Irish Lift Services Ltd.

Breithiúna :

An Breitheamh Onórach Anthony Kennedy
An Breitheamh Onórach Miriam Reynolds
An Breitheamh Onórach Donagh Mc Donagh
Breithiúna na Cúirte Cuarda

An Breitheamh John F. Neilan
Breitheamh na Cúirte Dúiche

Oifigigh Chúirte :

Cláraitheoir Contae :
Mrs. Imelda Branigan
Guthán: 043 46410
Facs: 043 45699

Príomh Chléireach :
Ms. Mary O'Brien
Guthán: 043 46410
Facs: 043 45699

Cléireach Cúirte Dúiche:
Mr. Kevin Murphy
Guthán: 043 46491
Facs: 043 45449

Bainisteoir an Lár-Réigiúin:

Ms. Ann Price
Guthán: 057 9329140
Facs: 057 9329103

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Táirgthe ag Oifig Eolais na Seirbhíse Cúirte ar ócáid na hoscailte oifigiúla den teach cúirte ag an Aire Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí, an tUasal Michael McDowell T.D., Dé Céadaoin, 26 ú Iúil 2006.

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