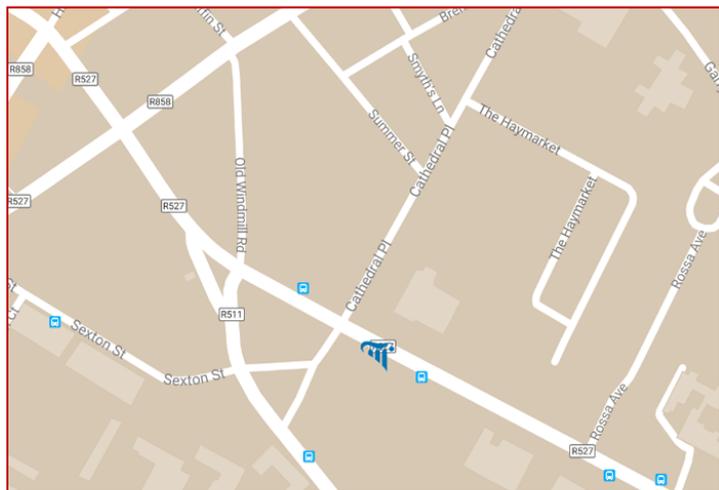




Limerick Courthouse Mulgrave Street



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The courthouse in Mulgrave Street is located on the site of a former artillery barracks, one of four in existence in Limerick in the 19th century. With two of the historically significant buildings remaining on the site, the courthouse project presented a unique opportunity to deliver a landmark civic building while contributing to the public realm of this old institutional district of Limerick.

Building design

The courthouse is a purpose built state-of-the-art facility. The main entrance is defined by the two gatehouses which framed the original access to the old barracks. The use of the gatehouses as a distinctive landmark entrance also creates a focal point from which the building has been arranged. The open-glazed circulation space behind the gate lodges is a contemporary interpretation of the traditional portico.

The layout of the courthouse responds to the functional requirements of the brief, different user group's needs and the site's orientation.

The public arrive through a glazed link into a large open space from where they can access consultation rooms, the jury assembly area, legal practitioners' rooms, court offices and victim support services. Six courtrooms have been organized on



the first floor in an almost symmetrical fashion either side of the entrance and around a large public concourse space. Each courtroom has natural light and views of the sky.

Externally a combination of hard and soft landscaping form a new public edge to Mulgrave and Sráid An Ceoil. The site perimeter is secured with a low limestone wall with railing, which follows the old line of the barracks wall, some of which remains in-situ to the rear of the site on Roxboro Road. High quality materials were used, predominantly limestone which references the native historical cut limestone in the protected buildings on the site and throughout Limerick.

History of the site

Limerick is often referred to as a garrison town given its history as a defensive stronghold over the last eleven centuries. In the mid-19th century there were four barracks in Limerick city as Limerick was the headquarters of the south-western district. The site of the new courthouse is located on a former artillery barracks, which was completed in 1807 and was in operation throughout the 19th century. During this period, Mulgrave Street was developing as an institutional district. The artillery barracks, county prison, lunatic asylum, county hospital and municipal cemetery all formed part of this district.



The complex was an enclosed set of buildings with a parade ground at the centre. The front entrance to the site was between the two surviving gatehouses and the back entrance was on axis with this along Roxboro road. A number of different barracks buildings were located within this complex, including stables, wagon shed, workshops, straw store, hay store, mobilisation stores, officers' quarters, magazine, arms storage, and several outbuildings, two of which survive today.



The former magazine store is listed on the record of protected structures for Limerick City and is noted as being of National Importance and 'an important and rare typology in Ireland'. It is a brick barrel vaulted single storey structure with limestone external finish and buttresses. This architecturally significant building has been restored while the new courthouse respectfully strengthens its presence.

The gatehouses are protected structures, and are listed as being of Regional Importance. They are architecturally interesting structures whose detailing is largely intact. The arcaded limestone structures; each having two ashlar limestone arcades to the street frontage and three arcades to the rear, have been restored and create a distinctive landmark entrance in the new courthouse design.