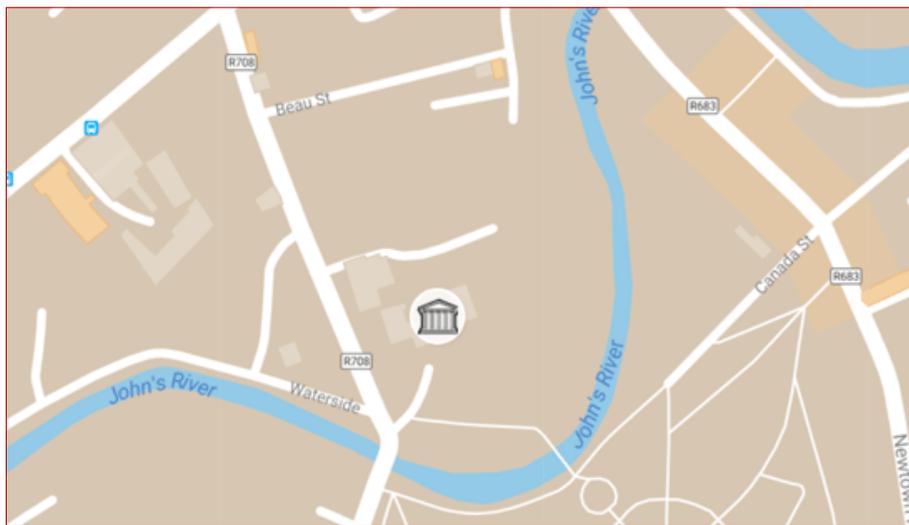




An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Waterford Courthouse



(All colour photos courtesy of Peter Moloney Photography)

Enquiries

Waterford Court Office

Courthouse, Catherine Street, Waterford.

Tel: +353 51 87 4657

Fax: +353 51 87 6084 / 87 6852

Email: waterfordcourtoffice@courts.ie

Office opening hours :

Monday to Friday:

10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

and

2.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Produced by the Courts Service

Information Office

www.courts.ie

April 2018



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



Waterford Courthouse dates from 1849, to a design by architect J. B. Keane. It is located on the site of the long-vanished 12th century Augustinian Priory of St. Catherine. It is listed as a building of national importance in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Set in mature parkland falling gently to a river on three sides, its granite Neo-Classical front façade is perhaps its most important feature

The original building had fallen into serious disrepair by the late 1970s, leading in 1977 to the necessity to demolish some two-thirds of the original Keane building. Only the front façade and the shell of the two courtrooms with their linking concourse remained. The present refurbishment has been careful to retain and enhance this core arrangement of spaces.

Building design

The kernel of the approach taken by the architects of the current project has been to re-instate the courthouse as a Neo-Classical 'villa-in-parkland', honouring the original setting devised by Keane in 1849.

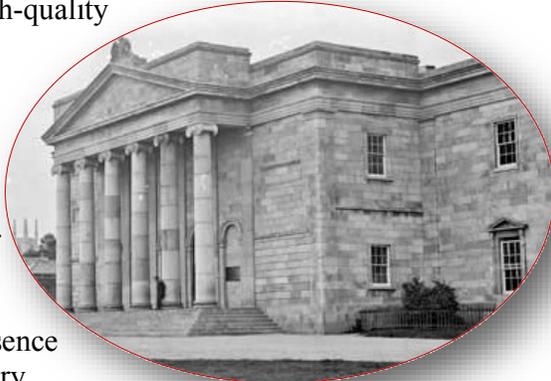


The surviving form has been extended to the north, with four classically proportioned elevations. The west and eastern planes of the existing building now restrain contemporary façades, thereby recreating what architectural scholars like to term 'the solid closed cubic block of the Neo-Classical ambition' of courthouses of that era. The newly formed 'cubic block' now contains some 6,000 sq.m. of accommodation, including six courtrooms.

The new accommodation has met the challenge to create a design that must defer to, and not detract from, Keane's set piece. It presents itself as open and approachable, while also projecting a *gravitas* appropriate to the administration of justice as a solemn act. The solution inspires confidence without being intimidating, is transparent and yet solid. Durable sustainable materials – granite, copper, glass and oak – are used throughout the complex, and were chosen to express a high-quality civic purpose, and to integrate sympathetically the new with the historical fabric.

The architects have created a new granite-paved public plaza on Catherine Street on the site of the former fire station.

It is designed to have a civic presence signalling itself as the new primary entrance, but without competing with the classical façade of the existing



courthouse. The plaza establishes a setting for the new, fully accessible, main public entrance façade.

The colonnaded expression of this façade acknowledges Keane's colonnaded portico to the south.

Internally, accommodation is organised around a central light-filled rotunda space – a 4-storey atrium rising to a zinc-clad clerestory drum. The rotunda animates the heart of the new 'cubic block'. This dramatic atrium is deployed to fuse the existing and new buildings into a legible whole. The entrances to all 6 courtrooms are visible from the atrium. Universally accessible, this atrium now acts as the main public orientation space, open and unthreatening. The complex becomes easy to read and move around.



Overall, the approach taken has ensured that the relationship between new and old is less one of contrast, but more one of a continuity; finding a successful balance between respecting context and identifying the new as new.

It has confirmed Waterford Courthouse's status as a building of national importance.