



## The Butler Gallery at the Evans Home

### CONSERVATION REPORT

McCullough Mulvin Architects

September 2016

*To be read in conjunction with impact statement and condition survey / recommendations in Carrig reports enclosed*

# **Conservation Report on the Conservation and Extension of the Evans Home, Kilkenny for the Butler Gallery.**

## **1.0 Introduction.**

The proposal for the Butler Gallery in the Evans Home in Kilkenny will have an impact on the conservation character of the Evans Building and its context within the overall curtilage of the site. The project has been designed carefully in line with the principles of the current conservation practice, incorporating the principles of reversibility. The works are designed to conserve the character of the existing building and minimize the impact of new work; limited new construction proposed will be carefully designed to work in a pleasing conjunction with the existing building, being sympathetically designed in the best spirit of sensitive modern intervention.

The original part 8 application (September 2010) for the Evans Home involved a phased proposal for refurbishment of two thirds of the building. This has now been adjusted to include the whole building: the temporary gallery as well as the permanent collection and Tony O'Malley galleries will now be housed in the Evans Home. The media gallery and ancillary support spaces to allow for accessing and servicing the building will be accommodated in two small contemporary extensions located to the North of the Evans Home.

Since the previous application, some works have been carried out on the Evans Home using funding obtained in a series of grants from the Heritage Council.

These include:

2011: Renewal of gutters & downpipes

2011: Refurbishment of chimneys – 8 no.

2012: Restoration of stone door cases – 4 no.

2015: Temporary repairs to roof areas following vandalism and theft of lead from roof

## **2.0 Existing Evans Home.**

### **2.1 Exterior.**

The H-shaped building will be conserved in all of its essential character. The nature of the project is such that the building will be fully refurbished and conserved. It is intended that the exterior will be re-pointed; this will involve the removal of the ribbon pointing on the elevations.

The existing roof will be repaired using the existing slates; new slates will be chosen to match the existing in size and material. A limited number of powder-coated metal rooflights and vents ( colour to match the roof finish ) will be included in the completed roof in association with the new uses.

The two open escape staircases to the rear of the building will be removed; the openings in the wall here will be returned to be window openings; a revised fire strategy that allows this to happen is discussed below. There are four original external doors to the building; these will be conserved and incorporated into the completed building. There are a limited number of original windows remaining in the building; these are located on the rear elevation and will be

conserved and restored. The remainder of the windows in the building date to the mid 20th century and are of no architectural merit; these windows will be replaced with windows to match the original design.

One window in the rere elevation from the proposed café is lowered to form a door; this door will be formed to incorporate the existing window joinery within it. One window in the side elevation from the proposed education room is lowered to form a door; this door will be formed to incorporate the existing window joinery within it. One window in the right hand wing to the front will be enlarged to allow for the delivery of art.

Connections between the new extension and the Evans Home have been carefully sized to match the existing openings and will be made through the existing window openings, brought down to form doors: one at ground level and two at first floor level.

There is a universal access ramp from the café door to the rere garden. There are two universal access ramps to a similar design from the front garden to the main front entrances. The distinction between the existing steps and the ramps will be clearly made in the detailing and construction.

## **2.2 Interior.**

The building is divided into three blocks for the purposes of description, Block A, Block B and Block C.

- Block A is the left hand wing as you look at the front of the building,
- Block B is the central part of the building and
- Block C is the right hand wing as you look at the front of the building.

In Block A, the proposed use is for education unit on the ground floor, with plant and storage rooms; the first floor will be used as a climate controlled gallery space. Walls are removed on one side of the chimneybreast in two locations on the ground floor; the majority of the wall within the education unit is also removed. This pattern is repeated on the first floor with a few more openings made on either side of the chimneybreasts.

In Block B, the proposed use is for a reception, café and serving kitchen on the ground floor and the administration along with some permanent collection galleries on the first floor level. On both floors, an ope is formed in the wall between the two central rooms. As noted above, one window in the cafe is lowered to form an access door to the garden.

In Block C, the cross walls and first floor will be removed to accommodate the temporary gallery. The double height gallery space will be internally lined out to provide a modern 'box-in-box' construction. As noted above, the deliveries door to the gallery will be require one of the windows to be enlarged and brought to the floor.

The general approach to the conservation is as follows:

### **General:**

It is proposed that the interior of the building will be conserved, with existing joinery and finishes maintained where feasible. All dry and wet rot will be addressed as a part of the conservation of the building.

Internal window joinery will be conserved; existing internal doors will be conserved (subject to final fire certification); internal roof joinery will be assessed and exposed in some areas. Careful repairs will be carried out where necessary, replacing timbers will be kept to a minimum.

Most of the fireplaces in the building are of mid 20th century date; these will be removed and the opes blocked up. Full exploration of all of the fireplace opes will be undertaken as part of opening-up works; any original fireplace surroundings will be refurbished and retained in situ.

Existing wall plaster will be retained where it is sufficiently stable; new plaster used in the building will be lime plaster.

Existing stone floors will be retained and restored.

The fire strategy for the building utilizes the two existing stone staircases; the corridor zone in Blocks A and C is formed into a protected corridor with fire rated doors giving access to rooms.

The environmental performance of the existing building will be substantially upgraded as a part of the works. This will be achieved by the incorporation of hemp insulation to the ceiling void and behind the window joinery.

Demolition works includes the removal of the library shelving within the central part of the building. Selective opes and voids will be opened within existing walls to support the new use of the building. These will be cut within a wall zone to leave a framing of original fabric and be finished in lime plaster. The location and extent of these opes is shown on the submitted drawings. Some opening will be required in the walls on the first floor to allow for the galleries to be connected. Again, these will be cut within a wall zone to leave a framing of original fabric and be finished in lime plaster. On the ground floor some cross walls will be removed to facilitate the inclusion of the temporary gallery. This room will be lined in a durable plasterboard-like material suitable for hanging work. This will be built in a lightweight manner, will be removable and behind this the traces of these walls will be left to allow for visibility and potential rebuilding if required in the future. Careful structural detailing will be used to allow for the retention of the chimneys, The removal of some fabric will be required in the small bathroom/WC zones at either end of the corridors on each level; the internal wall between the small rooms here is removed to provide a larger WC area.

### **3.0 Perimeter Walls.**

The perimeter walls of the Evans Home garden are essential to the overall character of the building and also contain a significant amount of historic fabric. Intervention and change to this perimeter wall is minimal. Please note that the site perimeter to the East is formed by hedging within the enclosure and does not run to the edge of the site or the garden around St Johns Church. The conservation of the perimeter walls will be undertaken on a phased basis. The approach to conservation will include:

Removal of excess vegetation. Re-pointing of perimeter wall with lime pointing. Renewal of cappings with will be undertaken with an appropriate mix of concrete and stone. Sections of perimeter wall at the South East corner of the site contain significant amounts of medieval fabric; no conservation work will be undertaken on this section of the wall without further licence.

A new metal gate is proposed for the arched gateway.

It is proposed to remove some the wall to the public car park to increase permeability and improve access. Stones from this wall will be reused to line the opening and to allow for repairs elsewhere along this stretch of wall. A carefully designed sliding metal gate incorporating lettering will form the boundary at the front of the site.

It is also proposed that the unroofed triangular garden building in the Northwest corner of the site will be refurbished

and re- roofed as a garden store in association with the renewal of the garden.

#### **4.0 Garden area.**

The garden around the Evans Home will be refurbished as part of this project and used for the external display of art. Existing habitats will be respected; existing trees on site will be retained with the exception of the two large trees directly in front of the front elevation of the Evans Home. New trees to agreed specification will be planted and are shown on submitted drawings. In general, existing green areas to the sides and rear of the Evans Home will be retained and refurbished.

The garden will be divided into zones around the Evans and will be landscaped as follows:

- Retention of stone mound and planted area and trees at South Eastern corner of the site. Location of bin store.
- Provision of limited bicycle parking adjacent to Southern boundary of the site: gravel area.
- Selected river gravel area directly in front of Evans Home.
- Incorporation of new ramp with stone surface from lower car park area to allow for deliveries and general access for the public from the Carnegie Library car park and the pedestrian bridge.
- Provision of area of stone & metal paving in universal access ramp that forms an archaeology garden with viewing areas for the archaeology incorporated around the ramp
- Provision of sculpture 'lawn' in front of the new building
- Provision of small areas below metal grids for viewing surfaces (cobble etc. set at lower level) in front of Evans Home. These will not affect the universal access for the building.
- Planting of wild garden and small forested area to the south of the building – along the boundary with St Johns.
- Main sculpture garden to east of the building (rear of the Evans Home) with stone plinths flush with the grass for display of art.
- Seating area adjacent to café on ground floor
- Provision of sensory garden to east of Block A giving a transition between the main sculpture garden and the children's garden
- Provision of children's garden to North of the building opening out from the education unit and incorporating stone paving and planting.

## **5.0 New Building.**

The new building for the Butler Gallery is located in the South-Western corner of the site. It comprises two small two storey pavilions. The reason for the new buildings is that the function requires it for access and WC provisions. The existing building provides insufficient access and servicing provisions for the gallery. The extension also provides a media gallery.

The location of the new building on the site- at the South-western corner- was chosen for the following reasons:

- Smallest amount of archaeology on site ( ref archaeology report )
- No overshadowing of garden or Evans Home.
- Most appropriate location functionally.

The character of the new building is very simple: a grouping of two small boxes providing stairs, lift, media gallery and WC's; together they are like a growth or 'culture' along the perimeter of the site. It is the relationship between the new building and the old- rather than the character of each independently- that will release the full potential of the architecture. The fine detail and material of the Evans will be countered by the simplicity of the new.

Functionally they are closely linked; the entrance to the whole complex is through the existing building; the new buildings "serve" the main building, together they form a seamless set of routes and spaces. The proposed double height within the existing building is balanced by the new buildings on the opposite side - the old responding to the new.