

Former Carnegie Library Dun Laoghaire

Heralding a new chapter in the life of this building

We are seeking Expressions of Interest for the adaptation and re-use of this wonderful building that can allow the architectural heritage of the building to yield aesthetic, environmental, community and public use benefits.

The creative challenge is to find appropriate ways to satisfy the requirements of the building structure to be safe, durable, deliver public value and public use on the one hand, and to retain its character and special interest on the other.

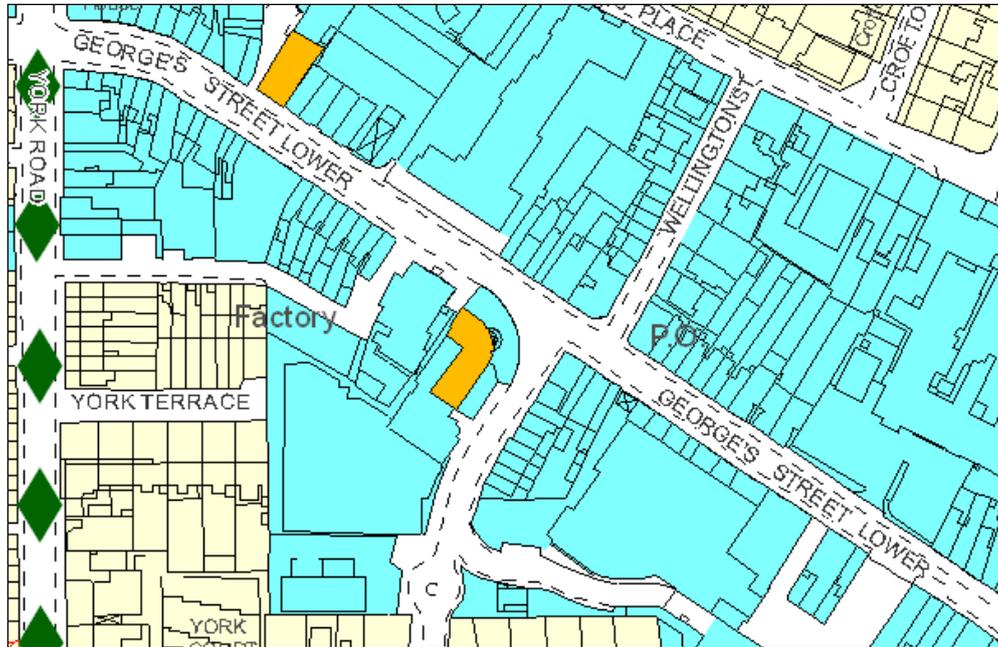


The History

Designed by O'Callaghan and Webb and opened in 1912, the Carnegie library in Dún Laoghaire (formerly Kingstown) is both larger and executed in a different architectural style to that of the other libraries in the County. It was designed as part of an architectural competition and interestingly it was built as per the plan apart from changes to the proposed Baroque entrance which were executed in a Classical style. O'Callaghan and Webb also designed the Carnegie library in Tralee, Co. Kerry which share similar architectural characteristics. Both buildings compare stylistically to the Carnegie Libraries in America.

Kingstown Town Commissioners were among the first to adopt the 1855 Public Libraries Act. In May 1884, a meeting was held in Kingstown Town Hall for the purpose of adopting the provisions of the 1855 Public Libraries Act and for having it applied to the township. The resolution was carried by a majority of 20 to 4. Over the next thirty years, the library service was to be located in three different venues, in the Town Hall, beside the Technical School at the corner of Eblana Avenue and Sussex Street and finally in the new purpose built Carnegie Library on Lower George's Street.

In recent years, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council took the decision to build a Central Library and Culture Centre as part of a programme of regeneration in the town. When the LexIcon was built the library staff vacated the Carnegie Building.



Map of building

The current Planning Context and objectives

- The site is located in the Old Town Quarter and zoned 'Major Town Centre' in the 2016-2022 County Development Plan
- The building is a Protected Structure
- SLO 107 applies to the Carnegie and states '*That Dún Laoghaire Carnegie Library be retained for public and community use*
- Section 3.1.4 of the Dun Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan states,

'Old Town Quarter:

b) Library Road to Cumberland Street

The former Dún Laoghaire Library is a Carnegie Building of considerable historical interest and architectural merit. Its reuse is an opportunity for animating and rejuvenating this part of the street. Any new use for the Library could link with the redevelopment of George's Place in generating activity in this area both during the day and at night. Rationalising left turning movements off Library Road could also assist in creating an attractive, softly landscaped public space along its frontage.

The length of street between Library Road and York Road has an architecture that is simple and robust but interspersed by buildings of high quality such as the former Working Men's Club. Along this section of the street, shops create a busy village character and this will be

strengthened by the new retail and residential development on the former Iceland site. New street trees and furniture, together with improved shop-fronts and signage, will continue to improve the general character of the area. Residential use at upper floor level will be supported and encouraged to enliven the street and to create demand for local services.

For this part of the town, outside of the primary town centre quarter, there are a range of Major Town Centre uses which will still be acceptable, but this will need to be in keeping with protecting the character of the building and retaining it for public and community use.

Old Town Quarter uses may include specialist home stores / crafts, young trend clothing / footwear brands, culture / galleries / gifts, music / books, restaurants / world cuisine and evening culture.

In addition, there are a range of uses that are permitted in principle or ‘open for consideration’ in the ‘Major Town Centre’ zone identified in Chapter 8, Section 8.3, of the 2016-2022 CDP. A number of potentially suitable uses could include

‘Craft Centre, Community Facility, Childcare Service, Cultural Use, Education, Enterprise Centre’.

Reuse should support the policy aims to rejuvenate this area, respect the historical character of this protected structure and ensure that the Dún Laoghaire Carnegie Library is retained for public and community use.

The local Cultural, Community and Economic context and objectives

Culture and Community

Dún Laoghaire has a vibrant and growing cultural community. In addition to dlr LexIcon, the town is home to the Pavilion Theatre, the Municipal Theatre for the County. IADT, one of the leading Creative Arts and Technology Institutes in the Country and a number of Music Schools as well as, Dance Theatre of Ireland’s Centre for Dance in Bloomfields,.

Nearby there is also a good range of community services and facilities including the Community Resource Centre, a Playground on Library Road, the Boylan Community Centre, a Citizens Information Centre and a newly opened Community Café on Eblana Avenue.

While the Carnegie was Dun Laoghaire’s Library up to 2012, dlr LexIcon is now home to Library HQ, the branch library and the Cultural Centre for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown. Dlr LexIcon plays a key role in the delivery of the cultural programme in the county. <http://libraries.dlrcoco.ie/using-your-library/find-your-library/dlr-lexicon>. With on average 10,000 visits per week, it is currently the busiest library in the County. It is home for the Municipal Gallery and the Studio performance space, offering opportunities for people of all ages to engage with cultural programming as creators, spectators and participants. While the main focus of the LexIcon is as the Cultural Centre for the community, it has been growing in importance as a location for the business community, and an increasing number of events have taken place which has included Enterprise Town Expo, DOJOCAN, Digital Dun Laoghaire Launch and various other local business events.

Cultural and community objectives for the County Council to be considered include how the reuse can support in, *Driving Quality of Life for All* which is a key corporate goal, and key

objectives for this include supporting the development of the County's arts and cultural service that meets the needs of the community, and supporting community engagement and participation including volunteerism and active citizenship.

Economic

The Carnegie is located in the Old Town Quarter end of Georges Street, where a number of independent home ware shops are located. This general area has also been growing in popularity as a key location for enterprise. A number of premises support enterprise in the vicinity, these include Harbour View, The Old Fire Station and opposite the Old Fire Station, there is a newly opened commercial co-working space 'Iplanit'.

The local economy is growing with the effects of the recession easing with an increasing numbers of small businesses and start up's setting up within the town of Dun Laoghaire.

In 2016 Dun Laoghaire was identified as a 'Digital cluster' in the Dublin Regional Enterprise Strategy 2016 – 22, with the area is increasingly attracting in companies in the Digital space, including a number of multinational players and fast growing newcomers. This is particularly given its key location and accessibility, more affordable rents and talent pool, and IADT and UCD close by.

Dun Laoghaire is a historic port town which attracts in many tourists and information is available at the Tourist Information Centre at County Hall or at <http://dlrtourism.ie/>. The area has the potential to attract many more tourists in, especially given the accessibility and the range of cultural, heritage and outdoors attractions within or near the town, including the Harbour, Maritime Museum, Oratory, the Metals and seafront walks as well as the People's Park which is home to the Co.Co. Markets and nearby Joyce Tower and Dalkey Castle.

The Dun Laoghaire Carnegie is an important part of the town's architectural heritage, and the reopening of the Carnegie for public and community use should help to not only safeguard this important building, but also help to enhance the vitality of this part of Dun Laoghaire, and enable the Carnegie to once again function as a key landmark for the town.

Any proposals for reuse, should consider the relevant goals and objectives in the adopted Local Economic and Community Plan for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown 2016 – 2021 (http://www.dlrcoco.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/local-economic-community-plan_1.pdf). This contains a number of high level goals and objectives related to

- High Quality Smart, Attractive Living & Working environment & Place to do business
- Promote enterprise and innovation
- Strengthen Skills and Enhance educational opportunities
- Increase social inclusion and reduce disadvantage in the county
- Develop Civic engagement within the County.

In addition, a corporate goal for the County Council is to *Create an environment for Economic Growth*, (<http://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/council-democracy/corporate-plan-2015-2019>) and key objectives include

- Developing an enterprise friendly county that assists early phase businesses enhances innovation and growth and acts as a hub for small dynamic firms
- Supporting collaborative initiatives to improve economic development,
- Encouraging links / collaboration with organisations such as educational establishments/ third level institutions to support enterprise / creative and knowledge economies up skilling within the County
- Promote and develop tourism within the county as part of the wider region

Summary and Potential Suitable Uses

The Dun Laoghaire Carnegie provides a unique opportunity to revitalise the Old Town Quarter of Dun Laoghaire, and not only help in safeguarding this historic asset and bringing it back into productive use but also help in achieving a number of key goals and objectives for the town and county.

It will be important to ensure that the building is open for use on a daily basis, and year round providing use or services that support in achieving the objectives set out.

The following are identified as potential suitable uses; however others that align with the objectives can be considered for assessment

- **Centre for Educational Development and Innovation** – Supporting Lifelong learning, driving innovation/ collaboration between key educational institutes and enterprise/ start up's and the growth sectors in the creative or knowledge based industry within Dun Laoghaire Rathdown
- **Technological /Digital innovation Hub** – performing as a new innovation hub to support the development of Dun Laoghaire as Digital Cluster. The hub would be open to the public, support innovation in digital/ tech/ creative areas and provide co-working space, network events/ classes / supports for tech / digital skills such as coding workshops/ showcasing innovation as well as community space/ café.
- **Cultural /Community/Tourism Attraction** – building would be open year round for public and community providing a new cultural attraction/ experience related to Dun Laoghaire's heritage, and help in driving footfall and supporting the town in attracting more tourists.
- **Social Enterprise and Innovation Centre** – Functioning as a hub to encourage citizen engagement and develop social enterprise to achieve both economic and social gain for the local community and encourage collaboration and innovation