

Architects

Newenham Mulligan and Associates
 Michael Grace, Roelle Smit, Tom Byrne,
 Hazel Maxwell, Charles Ryan, Steven
 Ghesquiere, David Power, Evelyn
 D'Arcy, Sinead O'Rourke, Arifan Arshad

**Project Management Services
 and Monitoring Architect**
 Office of Public Works

Quantity Surveyors
 JCP Consulting
Client

Courts Service

Structural Engineers

Horganlynch Consulting Engineers
 Chris Southgate

Service Engineers

MacArdle McSweeney and Associates

Main Contractor

Purcell Construction Ltd.

Photography

Gerry O'Leary Photography

PROJECT SIZE

3,940 m²

VALUE

€10.5m

DURATION

24 months

LOCATION

Tullamore

TULLAMORE COURTHOUSE



Newenham Mulligan and Associates Architects' Account

Project Background and Building History

Tullamore Courthouse – a two-storey over basement cruciform structure completed in 1835 – is an important example of early 19th century courthouse design and one of the major works of John B. Keane Architect, who won the project through competition. The building is free-standing and set back at an elevated level behind a stone retaining wall and railings with mature trees in the foreground. It overlooks a public park and is adjacent the former prison. Of national significance, the Courthouse forms an integral part of the architectural and social history of Tullamore.

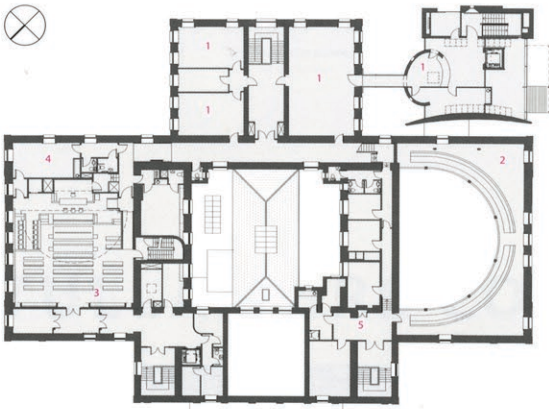
The first meeting of 'Kings County' Council was held in the building in 1899. The Courthouse was burned to its masonry shell in July 1922 and refurbishment works were undertaken from 1925 to 1927 to a design by Thomas McNamara. These works significantly altered the original building including the removal of one semi-circular courtroom. Between 1927 and 1999 there had been further significant alterations. The building was shared by the Courthouse and the County Council until 2002 when Offaly County Council moved to new offices nearby. This presented the opportunity to adapt the building and the brief from the OPW/Courts Service was to provide significantly improved facilities for all Courthouse users and Courts Service staff.

Design

The challenge of the project was to respect and conserve the character of the existing building by making the minimum intervention necessary in conservation terms, whilst seeking to meet the functional requirements of Courthouses, including security, universal access and fire safety. The detailed brief for the Courthouse was arrived at following an extensive consultation process, while detailed historical research was undertaken. The design was developed after a lengthy analysis of the existing building, and of the many interventions post the 1925-1927 works.

This analysis demonstrated that the north eastern side of the building had the least original fabric and has been substantially altered. There had been a fire in this part of the building in the 1960s. It was consequently decided

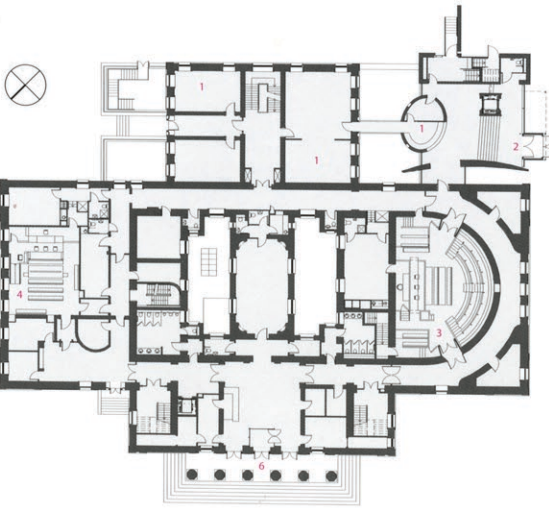




New first floor

- 1 Circuit Court office
- 2 Gallery of existing courtroom
- 3 New jury courtroom
- 4 Jury
- 5 Regional offices

- 1 Tullamore Courthouse is an important national example of early 19th century courthouse design. Conservation works set out to provide the functional requirements with minimum intervention
- 2 The building had been modified at various times including a 1990s addition
- 3 The introduction of a new building element allowed for universal access and improved security

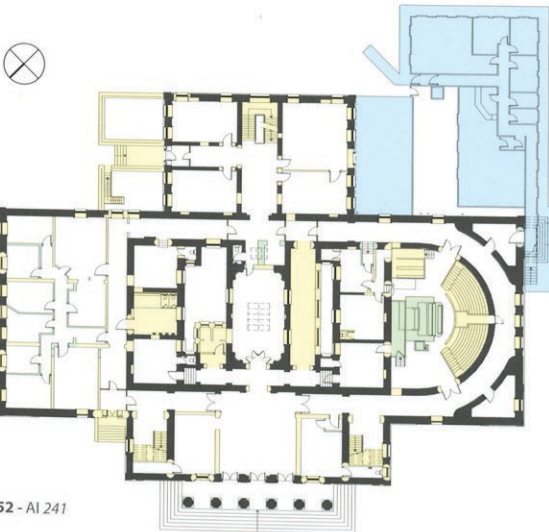


New ground floor

- 1 District Court office
- 2 New accessible public entrance
- 3 Existing courtroom
- 4 New family courtroom
- 5 Legal practitioners
- 6 Existing public entrance

Ground floor - historical dating

- Original Structure
- 1925 additions/alterations
- C20 (post 1925) additions/alterations
- Late C20 (post 1990s) additions/alterations



to locate two new Courtrooms in this area. Later additions had partially closed both the internal courtyards reducing light to many rooms. The design reverted back to the original 1832-1835 plan, allowing significant light into the centre of the building.

The introduction of a new building element, including an entrance to the Circuit and District Court offices, allowed access for all to the building and improved security. It also presented a more open, friendly and transparent image that is more appropriate for the contemporary Courts Service. The new building provides significantly more accommodation and facilities than were available in the existing building. This includes three Courtrooms including IT facilities, and Judges' rooms, Jury suite, Family Law suite, Victim support and Video Evidence suite, and 12 consultation/waiting rooms. New facilities have been provided for legal practitioners, An Garda Síochána, and the Prison Service. The Circuit and District Court Offices have their own distinct area on the south-east side of the building. The proportion of the Grand Jury Room in the original 1832-1835 building, which had been sub-divided, has been restored.

The inherent character, quality and presence of the existing building has been respected and retained. Considerable care and attention was taken to conserve the existing fabric including stonework, timber windows, doors and the surviving Courtroom. Particular care was taken to repair parapet stonework that had been cracked as a result of two fires in the building.

Sustainability

Working within the constraints of the existing protected structure, the design sought to maximise the use of daylight and natural ventilation. The original Courthouse had been designed around two central light wells that allowed light into the centre of the building and provided natural ventilation. These light wells had been significantly altered by later addition infills. The removal of these later additions significantly improved the amount of natural light and ventilation in the building. One of the original Courtrooms had been removed with its roof light in the 1920s. We located the largest of the new Courtrooms in this area, with a new roof light, allowing us to significantly increase the levels of daylight in this area.

4 The new Jury Courtroom

5 The new Family Law Courtroom

6 Reception area of the District Court

7 The refurbished entrance hall