

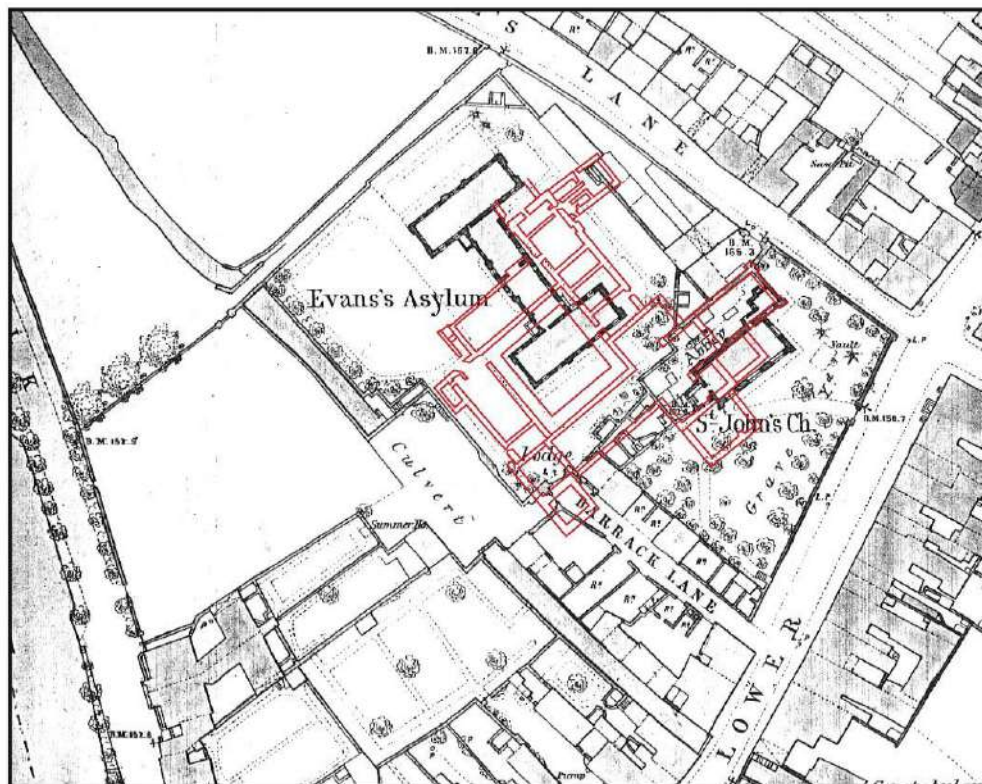
Conservation and Extension of Evans' Home, Kilkenny for the new Butler Gallery.



Evans' Home 2012

Background to the project & importance of adaptive re-use of buildings in Kilkenny

Evan's Asylum/Home was founded in 1818 and was built on the site of a military barracks & former 13th century Augustinian Priory. The building as an architectural landmark is little known due to its enclosed nature and sits on a site measuring c.0.36Ha/0.8 acres. Evans Home came into Council ownership in 1997 at a cost of IR£200,000 and various proposals for a new use were considered before agreement was reached in 2009 to develop it as the new Butler Gallery in a partnership with Kilkenny Local Authorities. The development of a cultural quarter was prioritised as key to the economic and cultural development of Kilkenny City & County. The Butler Gallery is regarded as playing an integral part in this development for Kilkenny & thus this project received unanimous endorsement of the Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council. It was always important that the building be adapted for an appropriate use and in a sensitive manner. The works have transformed the existing building, its gardens and boundary walls into a destination for art, archaeology, history, education and leisure and bring a very significant building in the City's history back into public use.



1871 Fig. 11. Overlay of plan of Kells Priory, Co. Kilkenny, with cloister reversed to north, on St John's Priory remains, base map 1871.

Building Conservation at Evans' Home

The project has been designed carefully in line with the principles of the current conservation practice, incorporating the principles of reversibility. A huge body of work was done on site investigations, archaeology, building surveys & materials analysis as well as research projects carried out by Butler Gallery on social history. Preliminary conservation works were carried out in advance of the main project with grant-aid from the Heritage Council, including renewal of cast iron gutters & downpipes in 2010, repair or rebuild of 8 stone chimneys in 2011 and in 2012 the 4 external stone doorcases were restored.

The main project obtained Planning consent in January 2017 and construction commenced on site in June 2018. Works were completed in May 2020. The H-shaped building has been conserved in all of its essential character with works designed to minimize the impact of new work; and limited new construction has been carefully designed to work in a pleasing conjunction with the existing building. The original building now houses a Main Gallery for temporary exhibitions, galleries for the permanent Butler collection and the O'Malley collection. A digital gallery and ancillary support spaces which allow for accessing and servicing the building are accommodated in two small contemporary extensions located to the North of the old building.



Chimney before repairs 2011



Repair/rebuild underway 2011



Completed works to roof and chimneys 2019



Doorcase before repairs 2012



Doorcase in completed project

External Walls, Windows & Doors

The exterior has been re-pointed which involved the removal of the sand & cement strap pointing on the elevations and replacement with lime mortar.



View south wing in 2016

Five original windows remained in the building; these are located on the rear elevation and were conserved and restored. The remainder of the windows dated to the mid- 20th century and were in poor condition and of no architectural merit; these were replaced with windows to match the original design.



Original Wyatt window before restoration



Wyatt window restored in Café

One window in the rear elevation has been lowered to form a door for the café; this door has been formed to incorporate the existing window joinery within it. One window in the side elevation was lowered to form a door from the Learning Centre. One window in the south wing to the front has been enlarged to allow for the delivery of art directly into the Main Gallery. Connections between the new extension and the original building have been carefully sized to match existing openings and are made through the existing window, brought down to form doors: one at ground level and two at first floor level. Original external doors have been retained & restored.

Universal Access

There is a universal access ramp from the front garden to the main front entrance and one to a similar design from the café door to the rear garden. The distinction between the existing steps and the ramps has been clearly made in the detailing and construction.

The Roof

The existing roof has been repaired using the existing slates; new slates were chosen to match the existing in size and material. Careful repairs were carried out where necessary to the roof structure and replacement timbers kept to a minimum



Roof slates & flashing in poor condition prior to repair



Re-slating underway



Re-slating completed

Interior.

The interior of the building was conserved, with existing joinery and finishes maintained where feasible. All dry and wet rot was addressed as a part of the conservation of the building.



Internal window joinery was conserved; existing internal doors were conserved and fire-proofed. Careful repairs were carried out where necessary to the roof structure, replacing timbers kept to a minimum



Original fireplace surroundings were refurbished and retained in situ where possible.

The left hand wing as you look at the front of the building, houses the learning centre on the ground floor, with plant and storage rooms; the first floor is used as a climate controlled gallery space. Walls are removed on one side of the chimney breast in two locations on the ground floor; the majority of the wall within the learning centre is also removed. This pattern is repeated on the first floor with a few more openings made on either side of the chimney breasts.



Learning Centre wet area- note original fireplace & “peintimento” wall panel

The central part of the building is used for reception, café and serving kitchen on the ground floor and the administration along with 2 permanent collection galleries on the first floor level. On both floors, an opening is formed in the wall between the two central rooms. As noted earlier, one window in the café is lowered to form an access door to the garden.



Main gallery space following demolition of internal walls & floor

In the right hand wing as you look at the front of the building the cross walls and first floor have been removed to accommodate the Main or temporary gallery. The double height gallery space has been internally lined out to provide a modern ‘box-in-box’ construction. As noted above, the deliveries door to the gallery required one of the windows to be enlarged and brought to the floor.



Roof structure stripped back



Roof truss detail

Finishes

Existing internal wall plaster was retained where it was sufficiently stable; new plaster used in the building was lime plaster.

Existing stone floors were retained, restored and relaid in hallways and corridors on the ground floor.

Staircases

The fire strategy for the building utilizes the two existing stone staircases; the corridor zone in the end blocks formed into a protected corridor with fire rated doors giving access to rooms.



Staircase at north end-note the limestone flagged floor re-laid



South staircase



Staircase detail

The environmental performance of the existing building was substantially upgraded as part of the works. This was achieved by the incorporation of sheep's wool insulation to the ceiling void and behind the window joinery.

Garden and Perimeter Walls.



Aerial view site 2016

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 was minimal mainly removal of excess vegetation and re-pointing of perimeter wall with lime pointing.



Detailed scan of perimeter wall in SE corner-south elevation

Sections of perimeter wall at the South East corner of the site contain significant amounts of medieval fabric; stabilization and conservation works will be undertaken on this by Kilkenny County Council in the near future.



Detailed scan of wall in SE corner-east elevation



Detailed scan of wall in SE corner-west elevation

A new metal gate has been installed in the arched gateway.

A section of the wall to the public car park has been removed to increase permeability and improve access. Stones from this wall were reused to line the opening and to allow for repairs elsewhere along this stretch of wall. A carefully designed sliding metal gate incorporating lettering & logo forms 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 store at a later date.

The garden around the Evans Home has been refurbished as part of this project, for the external display of art with extensive planting of trees and hedging. The garden has been divided into zones around the building and landscaped as follows:

- Incorporation of new ramp with concrete surface from lower car park area to allow for deliveries and general access for the public from the Carnegie Library car park and the Lady Desart pedestrian bridge.
- Provision of metal universal access ramp and an archaeology garden with viewing areas for the archaeology incorporated around the ramp
- Provision of gravel area with accessible pathways directly in front of Evans' Home and bicycle parking adjacent to Southern boundary of the site
- Provision of sculpture 'lawn' in front of the new 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 the rear of the Evans' Home (east side of building) for display of art.



Landscape plan

- Patio and seating area outside the café on ground floor to the rear
- Provision of sensory garden to the rear 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 Learning Centre and incorporating a lawn and planting.

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 new addition incorporates vertical circulation and WC provision to universal design standard as the original building did not provide these. The extension also provides a Digital gallery at first floor level. Its location on the site- at the South-western corner- was as it had lowest impact for archaeology on site, it would not cause overshadowing of garden or the original Evans' Home and it was the most appropriate location functionally.

The character of the new building is very simple: a grouping of two small boxes providing stairs, lift, digital 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 double height Main Gallery within the existing building is balanced by the new buildings on the opposite side - the old responding to the new



Building work nears completion

