

FAREWELL, FLOUR MILLS?



Derelict buildings and grain silos on the North Wharf.

Waterford City Council has sought tenders for the demolition of all derelict buildings and structures on the 5.7-acre North Quays site occupied by the listed R and H Hall Flour Mills building.

The local authority is understood to be attempting to put a 'real price' on the cost of cleaning up the land

mark site, with a view to advancing discussions with owners NAMA about its future.

The former flour mills, whose towering grain silos divide lands owned by the Port of Waterford into two sections, was purchased in 2005 from agri-food group IAWS by Zella (Waterford) Ltd, a consortium comprising Waterford-based McNerney Construction and Kent-based property developer Starnes plc.

The waterfront site was then central to a proposed multi million euro project involving hotels, marina developments, offices and apartments along the North Quays' 13 acres, stretching from Rice Bridge to the Abbey Church in Ferrybank.

However in 2008, a Cork-based development company that had planned to invest €37 million pulled out of the project and all development plans were shelved.

With McNerneys in receivership since 2012, control of the site has since fallen with receiver KPMG and NAMA.

Waterford City Council is tendering for the demolition of eight multi-storey concrete and steel buildings onsite (some of which are supported by piles on the foreshore), as well as 14 grain silo bases, an office building which is predominantly over water, a boiler house and numerous prefabricated buildings. See News 2 for more.

The nine-storey RH Hall Flour Mills building, constructed in 1905, is listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Ireland as “an imposing building of national importance”.

An innovative construction system was used in the construction of the flat-roof building, only the second such time these advanced techniques were used in the country at that time.

The result, according to Architectural Heritage Ireland, was a “strikingly modern geometric design, a distinctive feature in the landscape”.

Waterford’s North Wharf was built back in the 19th Century on what was originally the property of the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company.

The ‘Frank Cassin’ section was constructed in the 1960s to provide for a container terminal. However, apart from for tying up trawlers and visiting cruise ships, the wharves have been largely redundant since the port’s commercial operations were relocated downriver to Belview in 1993, aside from the visits of the International Tall Ships Race in 2005 and 2011.

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