



provide storage and office space along with training and ancillary facilities for the; UL Rowing Club, the UL Kayak Club, UL Sub Aqua Club, and the UL Mountain Bike Club. The project is to be initiated under the auspices of the ULSU.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on the 23rd February 2004 by the then ULSU President, Eoin O'Broin and UL Vice President, Administration and Secretary, John O'Connor. This was the legal agreement to underpin the construction phase of the project with provisions for a Management Committee once completed.

A Buildings Committee was established as per MOU for a Management Model for Design and construction of the project. A Design Committee was formed and following a tendering process the design by John Thompson & Partners Architects, was selected. ARUP Consultant Engineers, John Cuddy & Partners Quantity Surveyors were also appointed at this stage.



Fact finding missions to the UK were undertaken at the London Rowing Regatta Centre in East London, Henley and Eton re rowing Clubs and Powered Rowing Tank. Daire Cronin of the Rowing Club invited the world renowned Rowing coach Thors Nielson to verify that the stretch of water on the Shannon was suitable for rowing purposes, which Mr. Nielson duly endorsed in December 2002.

Another more unusual aspect to the concept of the Boathouse when the rowing tank was being investigated was the possibility of a technical training tool such as a "wave box" for the Kayak Club. This was deemed unfeasible. However a feasibility study on a Kayak Club development in the form of an off-river International Standard White Water course was undertaken by EPD Engineering Paddle Designs from the UK.



Subsequent to fact finding undertaken by Daire Cronin in the initial stages on behalf of the Rowing Club meetings with Dick Pirelli of Boston based company Stillwater Solutions were scheduled. This design of tank was chosen following recommendations from Ivy League US Campuses where Mr. Pirelli had previously installed Rowing Tanks.

On Sept 2006 the ground was broken by McCarthy's Contractors and in

October the foundations were finally laid. Progress from then on was swift. In November 2006 the boat bays were under construction and by January 2007 the Rowing tank was started. In February the walls on boat bays were completed and in March the final stages of tank were initiated. In May the much awaited pontoon arrived and in August the tank filled was finally filled.



On the 8th May 2008 a Boathouse Management Agreement was signed by the then UL Vice President for Finance Ailish Quinlivan and ULSU President St. John O' Donnabhain and a Management Committee was formed signalling the end of a long journey.

The Boathouse is now home to not only the Rowing Club and the Kayak Club but UL Sub Aqua and UL Mountain Bike. Both Clubs have benefited and are currently going from strength to strength in their development. The Sub Aqua Club for the first time in their history are the current UL Club of the year and undertake diving with their member from Ireland's West coast all the way to the Red Sea in Egypt. Currently plans are afoot to purchase a RIB, the last piece in their developmental jigsaw. The Mountain Bikers too now operate from the Ballyhoura's in Tipperary all the way to the down hill trails in Les Gets in France; this Club too has plans to develop in their pursuit of a Pump Track to assist with the development of its beginners and intermediate mountain bikers.



The students of UL deserve immense credit for their foresight and commitment to the development of the University of Limerick.

To date the students have contributed over €12 million to the University of Limerick's infrastructure. The opening of the Boathouse is a fitting tribute in this 20th year of University status.



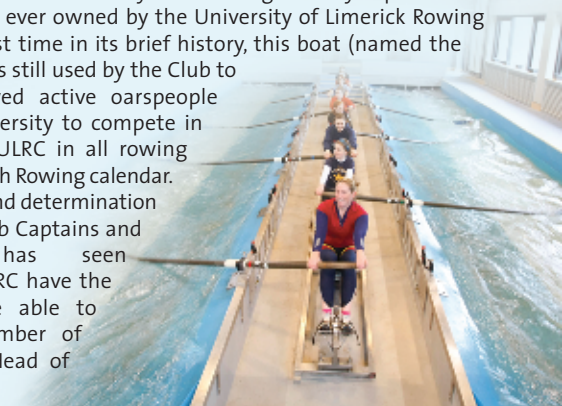
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**“ SOME SAY WHY – I SAY WHY NOT ”**  
**UL BOATHOUSE OFFICIAL OPENING**  
**SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**

From the foundation of the UL Rowing Club in the early 1990's, the Club had been surviving thanks to the hospitality of local clubs providing facilities necessary to teach their rowing crews. Because they did not have their own equipment, ULRC members arranged to compete in host club colours – not an ideal situation when trying to promote and grow their still very young club.

During the 1996 /1997 season ULRC established itself as one of the most active Clubs in the University. That season, the Men's Novice Eight Crew (competing for Shannon Rowing Club) accumulated a total of fourteen victories and achieved the honoured position of coming second at the Irish National Rowing Championships. The victories accumulated that season; in particular the victory at the Intersociety in the colours of ULRC gave huge momentum to the future success of the Club.

In 1997 some of the Club's senior members, including current Alumni and Rowing Club President Colin Byrne met with the then long standing President of the University, Dr. Ed Walsh, to communicate their 'plight'. Dr. Walsh committed his support to the principle of a rowing club on campus and enthused that the resulting infrastructure must be comparable (or exceed) the quality and standard of both national and international rowing facilities. It was on this simple principle that the boathouse was later designed. Indeed this too was the sentiment championed by the former VPAR and President Emeritus John O'Connor throughout the concept design stage.

During the 1997/1998 season ULRC hosted the Irish National University Championships and successfully raised enough money to purchase the first racing boat ever owned by the University of Limerick Rowing Club. For the first time in its brief history, this boat (named the Salmo Trutta, it is still used by the Club to this day) allowed active oarspeople within the University to compete in the colours of ULRC in all rowing events on the Irish Rowing calendar. The hard work and determination of the many Club Captains and committees has seen members of ULRC have the privilege to be able to compete a number of times in the "Head of





the Charles Regatta" in Boston, Henley Royal Regatta, London Metropolitan Regatta, Ghent International Regatta and many more. The publicity these events created for the Club and University was substantial and in conjunction with other work that the Club was involved in 1998/1999, ULRC was awarded "Club of the Year".



In 2000 the Club celebrated the phenomenal successes of the UL Novice Men's Crew 1999/2000, which had twenty-three wins including the Men's Novice Eight and Four categories at the Irish National Rowing Championships. This was the first occasion that ULRC ever sent a crew to compete in the Irish National Rowing Championships.

In 2001 the first Women's crew competed in the National Championships.

The University of Limerick Kayak Club (ULKC) is one of the oldest Clubs on campus, having been established in 1975 and has been successful over the years in winning the national Kayak Intervarsity twice in succession. In 2000 two of its members were members of the Women's Irish Canoe Polo Team. Up until 1997 the Club had the use of a prefabricated store but the construction of the Kathleen Lonsdale Building required the demolition of this structure. The Sports Department gave the Club access to its store as a temporary measure but like the Rowing Club the Kayakers had to increasingly depend on storing their boats off campus.



Matters came to a head in early 2001 when boats belonging to the Rowing Club were badly damaged by fire and the situation was further compounded when more boats were damaged and vandalised after the Trinity Regatta.



Both Clubs continued to canvas for the construction of a dedicated Boathouse in the Black Bridge area and were active in the Clubs and Societies forum in an attempt to secure a more permanent structure for their equipment.



The then SU President Mick Phelan had spoken with Miriam Hederma-O'Brien, then Chancellor of UL, who had a keen interest in rowing through her children. He had also spoken with Tony Bretherton, then Executive Director at University of Limerick Foundation, who was also involved in rowing through his children. The official opening of the Student Centre was attended by amongst others Prof. Roger

Downer, then President of UL and Frank Doyle (UL Foundation Chairman and retired VP of GE). Mick Phelan then sent Frank Doyle a letter of thanks on behalf of the students for the Foundation's contribution towards the funding of the Centre. Apparently this struck a chord with Frank Doyle as the Foundation had been delighted to support a student centric project (as opposed to the Library or similar projects)

Co incidentally in early 2002 Rosamond Healey, ex Captain of ULRC and an American student in UL with a knowledge of rowing programmes in the US, had made an impassioned plea to Roger Downer appealing for help with a boathouse. A copy of this letter was sent on to Tony Bretherton by the Clubs and Societies Development Officer, Paul Lee.

"...ULRC represents everything positive about student life and shouldn't have to struggle this hard to exist at this university. We are not merely a Club; we are a group of highly motivated young adults with one goal in mind - winning - on water and it life... We are not in the business of letting other people do hard work for us. We have researched the logistics and feasibility of the river out back (which is extremely suitable for rowing), met with the Limerick County Council, put together numerous proposals regarding a boathouse-location, structure, feasibility and worked on this project for over five years. We currently have taken it to the next level and have initiated a joint proposal with the Kayak Club and have brought the Student's Union on board with the project as well..."



Tony Bretherton requested that a document be prepared on a future project that the ULSU were interested in pursuing. This led to the Boathouse Proposal document which was sent on to him but was not discussed at a board level as some members felt it more prudent for the ULF to invest in core University projects such as a second library. In April 2002 Mick Phelan gave a presentation on the diverse activities of the ULSU and its successes with particular emphasis on Clubs and Societies activities. At the end of the presentation, one of the Governors, George Cunningham (who had been privately canvassed by a member of the Kayak Club whom he knew personally) put the question to Mick Phelan regarding any future projects the ULSU was investigating which allowed for discussion of the Boathouse project. There was genuine support for the project by the Governors. However once again the stumbling block was finance. Phelan suggested that if the University would provide the

land and agree to be partners in running the building, the ULSU would go to the student body to fund the project and John O'Connor, then VP Finance & Administration agreed to discuss the issue in more detail. That same afternoon a meeting was held with Prof. Downer to discuss ongoing C&S activities including the Boathouse Project, at which he stated "... I believe you have already cracked the nut on that one..." There was a subsequent meeting in May 2002 with ULSU, UL Sports Dept. and John O'Connor to discuss the proposal at which point it became clear that once the students funded the project and it didn't impact on the UL core budget and was built in accordance with the ongoing development of the University, the project was going to be taken on.

In preliminary meetings with the University, its contract management company Kieran Contract Management and the Buildings & Estates Department assisted in the preliminary costing of the proposed facility at £4.1m. The Kayak Club and Rowing Clubs had collaborated with the ULSU and Buildings and Estates on this initial £4.1million price tag and at this stage John O'Connor asked for suggestions for other beneficiaries at which point Paul Lee suggested the Sub Aqua and Mountain Bike Clubs.



One of the more unusual fact finding aspects of the Boathouse prior to the referendum when the issue of cost was very much under discussion was the idea of a straw bale house with external rendering.

Once a date for the referendum was secured and finance confirmed for £4.1m a new location was suggested by the University which is the current location. The Referendum Committee was established vis-à-vis Clubs & Societies Council with the four Clubs now providing the backbone of the referendum machine with assistance from other Clubs & Societies and ULSU

On April 9 2003 the Student Referendum was held and overwhelmingly passed on the 12th of April 2003 by 2710 votes (86%) to 357 votes.

"We the students of the University of Limerick propose to extend the mortgage of the Student Centre by a maximum period of 8 years or less, should the said mortgage be repaid before the period of 8 years, for the purpose of financing the construction of a boathouse for the use of the Clubs & Societies section of the Students Union. This Boathouse must

