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PROPOSAL FOR A MUSEUM OF IRISH MYTHOLOGY

Location : **Sligo** - Designated Gateway City for North West Ireland

Case for a Museum of Irish Mythology as a Core Tourist Attraction within the Future Development of the Lynns Dock area of Sligo

The basis for My Idea for a Museum of Irish Mythology is that North West Ireland might promote its Ancient Mythological Legends and Heritage as a Complimentary attraction to its sites of Megalithic interest in order to boost Tourism in the Region. The Proposal highlights Cultural and Civic Potential for the Docklands area of Sligo Gateway City alongside the standard Commercial Development model - a Museum of Irish Mythology and Regional Megalithic Archaeology . Ideally this would be a Large Building of International Architectural Significance which while boosting established Tourism markets could establish the North West as an International Destination for Experiential and Immersive Fantasy Tourism. The Promotion of the Mythological alongside the Megalithic could act as a Catalyst for a Significant increase in Visitors from Emerging Tourism Markets such as Asia and the Middle East.

Case for Proposal - why Sligo ?

Sligo is the Regional Capital of the North West of Ireland. Under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) It has previously been designated a Gateway City meaning that it has the Spatial and Infrastructural Potential required to grow its Population Significantly in the coming decades. In order for Sligo to grow into a City it requires Significant Government and Private Investment. In order to help attract some of this Investment - Innovative Proposals and an element of 'Blue Sky' Thinking is required. The Irish Government is currently engaged in mapping the Future for Urban Ireland beyond the Prime City of Dublin. A number of Regional cities are to be earmarked for expansion over the coming decades as a way to balance Economic and Social Growth across Ireland.

Sligo is situated within a Landscape of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However in terms of an Urban 'Destination' it lacks the Critical Mass required to attract and retain Tourist visitors. Sligo is bereft of a Civic Attraction of a Scale which could help to act as a Catalyst for the broader Development of Sligo into a Thriving Regional City. A Cultural / Civic Building whose Scale and Function would compliment and consolidate the array of Heritage Sites and Natural Attractions in the North West Region.



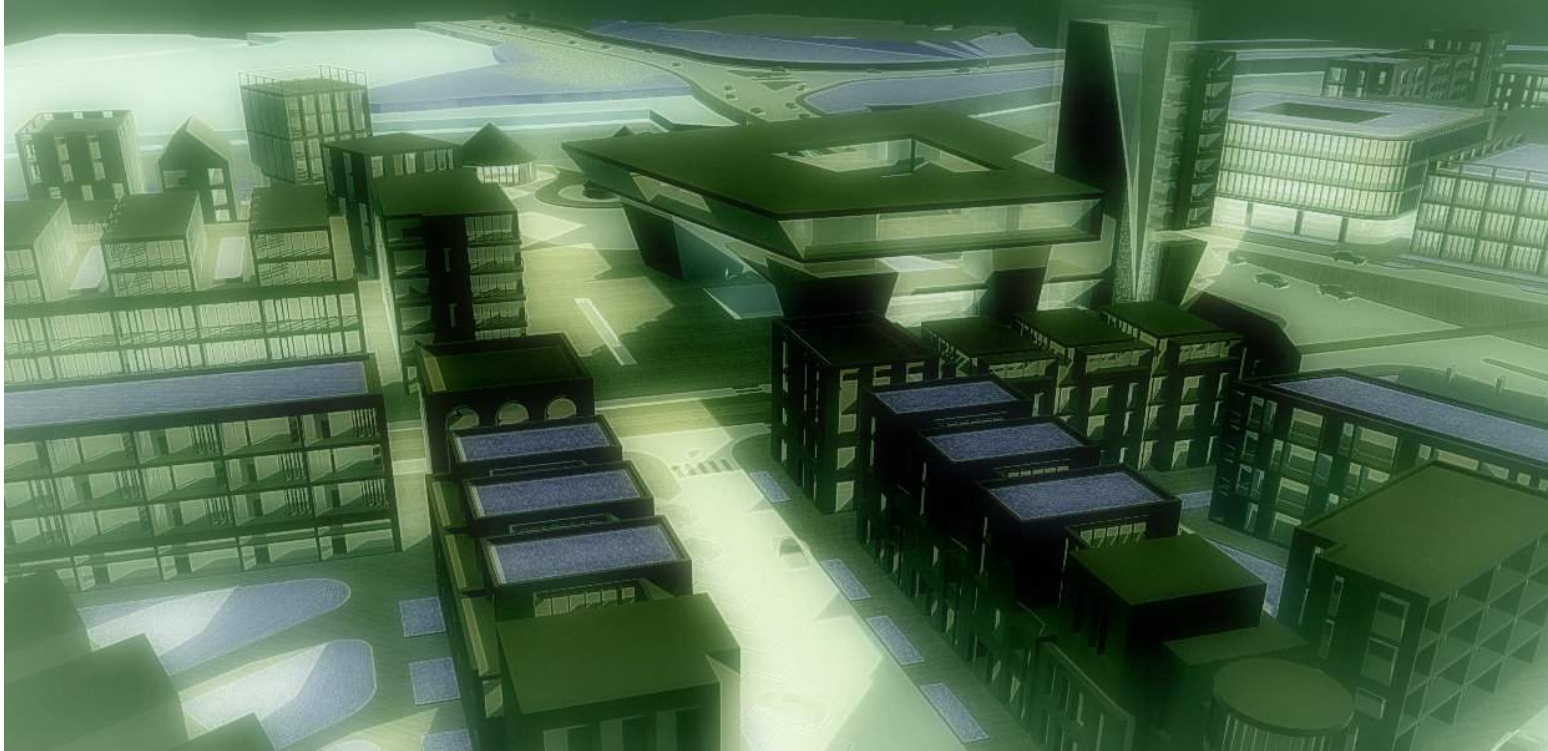
Example of a typical Route / Vista Creation to Museum and Gateway Tower



Axonometric View from South of Possible Masterplan with Museum of Mythology as Centerpiece

Sligo Docklands Development Plan Background

Sligo Development Plan makes provision for high quality Development within the future Regeneration of the Docklands area. Sligo Borough Council has previously commissioned a Masterplan document which indicates Potential for the Docklands. This Long Term Framework includes a Feature Tower, a Linear Riverside Park, a New Transport Hub (Train + Bus Station), a possible Light Rail route, and Anchor buildings such as a Concert Hall or Conference Centre. My Proposal extrapolates on this and suggests a Unique International Cultural and Tourist Attraction at the Core of the Masterplan. In addition to such a Building, the Masterplan Framework might also accomodate a series of River Front Departure points for Boat Tours, a new Archaeology Dept from Sligo IT and a Creative Hub with the possible inclusion of a Film Studio Satellite / Space Stages. The remainder would comprise the Standard Development Model of Residential and Commercial, and a Business Quarter Further West to close the Link with the Existing Industrial Estate.



Axonometric Illustrating Potential After Dark Environment - Note : Museum and Surrounding Building Forms are Indicative / in Progress and intended to show the Museum in a Future Docklands Context

Why Focus on the Mythological and Megalithic?

The North West offers an unusually high concentration of sites of major Megalithic and Mythological importance. The Immediate Hinterland has one of the highest densities of Prehistoric Archaeological sites in Ireland. It is the only place in which all classes of Irish megalithic monuments are to be found together. Sligo is also an obvious choice as a Hub to serve outlying Sites of Major International Archaeological importance such as Ceide Fields, Rathcroghan and Moytura / Cong. These Megalithic and Neolithic Heritage Sites draw a steady but relatively modest number of Tourists from Overseas. The Introduction of a Visitor Attraction also focused on Irish Mythology could compliment these existing attractions and reinforce their appeal. The Natural Beauty of the Landscape is another compelling reason why Sligo could host such a Museum. The most prominent Natural landmarks associated with Sligo and its wider hinterland are associated with well known characters and tales from Irish Mythology - ie. Queen Meadhb, Tuatha de Danann, etc. I believe there is an opportunity to tap into a worldwide interest in Legend by presenting these Irish Myths together alongside the Megalithic Heritage - juxtaposed against the picturesque backdrop of the North West Landscape.

It is evident from the International popularity of the Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Game of Thrones and Vikings Film/Tv series that Mythology and Fantasy has Significant Commercially Viable Precedent and offers some interesting Business opportunities. With the advent of the Digital Age and the ability to present storytelling via CG format, I believe Ireland Inc. has not grasped the potential of presenting its Mythology to a Global Audience via this medium. The Mythological Cycle for example is worthy of some form of representation via a Film / Television Series, Animation or Computer gaming, with Opportunity for Irish involvement and Employment. It may be that a Mythology Museum and any Parallel Media Productions would be intrinsically linked and could feed off each other in terms of Viability.



Study of Main Vistas



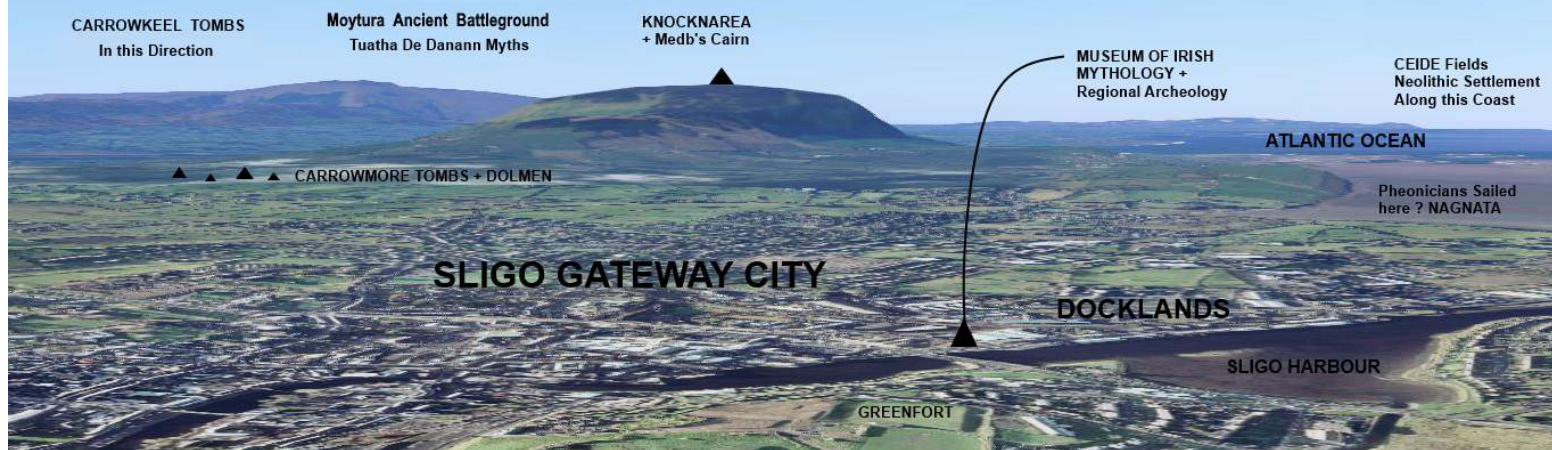
Development Description and Phasing

The Mythology Museum Development would comprise 2 Core elements - a Commercial Element and a Civic element which would allow for Phased Construction and Occupancy. The Commercial element would comprise a **Gateway Tower** and would likely be a 3 or 4 star Hotel with allowance for Adaptability. At the Ground level would be Cafe / Retail space. At Rooftop Level I envisage a Bespoke Lounge Bar / Restaurant with 360 views over the Sligo hinterland. A direct visual connection to the Mythological and Megalithic landscape - a potential tourist attraction in its own right accessed by a **Glazed Elevator Experience**.

For the Museum Element of the Proposal I propose an **Architectural Form which references a Megalithic Structure such as a Dolmen or Cairn**. A Dolmen structure is possible through use of Vertical Circulation cores from which Steel Trusses or Longspan RC Beams could span. The Building would be primarily Orientated to the Waterfront and would open onto a new Public Plaza where theatrical Macnas type performances or Reenactments involving Mythological Characters might take place. The Harbourfront would become a launch point for Boat Tours to complimentary Local attractions such as Inishmurray or further afield Ceide Fields. Waiting Rooms for Boat Excursions could take the form of Ancient Crannogs, which would break down the Scale of the Museum helping to Integrate it within the Public Park.

The Waterfront could even be shaped in such a way as to allow for the Garavogue to flow into the Public Park and surround these Crannogs. Furthermore any Water element of the Park might make allowance for Reconstructions of Ancient Vessels to actually sail into the Museum Atrium. The Museum Scope could expand beyond Irish Mythology to make allowance for theories relating to early human settlements on the West Coast (ie. the theory that Phoenician Sailors visited Sligo in Antiquity (Nagnata) and that Irelands Celtic People were preceded by visitors from the Mediterranean (Carthaginian Expeditions))

The Form of the Building would be Archaic and differentiated from more Commercial Architectural treatment of surrounding buildings by use of Materials such as Cut Stone and Random Rubble. A Central Courtyard or enclosed Atrium space could house Larger Exhibits. Visitors would circulate around this courtyard to Galleries and Auditorium space. The Location is readily accessible for pedestrians from Sligo town center and for vehicle drop off. Tourist Visitor Coach and Car Parking would likely be off site with a dedicated shuttle bus service. A proposed future Tram Route connecting the Town Core to the Industrial estate is outlined within the Urban Framework Plan of 2007. The area to the immediate west of the Museum and Plaza would likely be a Cluster of buildings comprising a Creative Design hub, an Archaeological Department Annex for Sligo IT and a mix of Commercial space such as Cafes and Restaurants. A new Street running North South from the Riverfront would open up a New Vista onto the Derry Mountains framed by the Museum Edge.



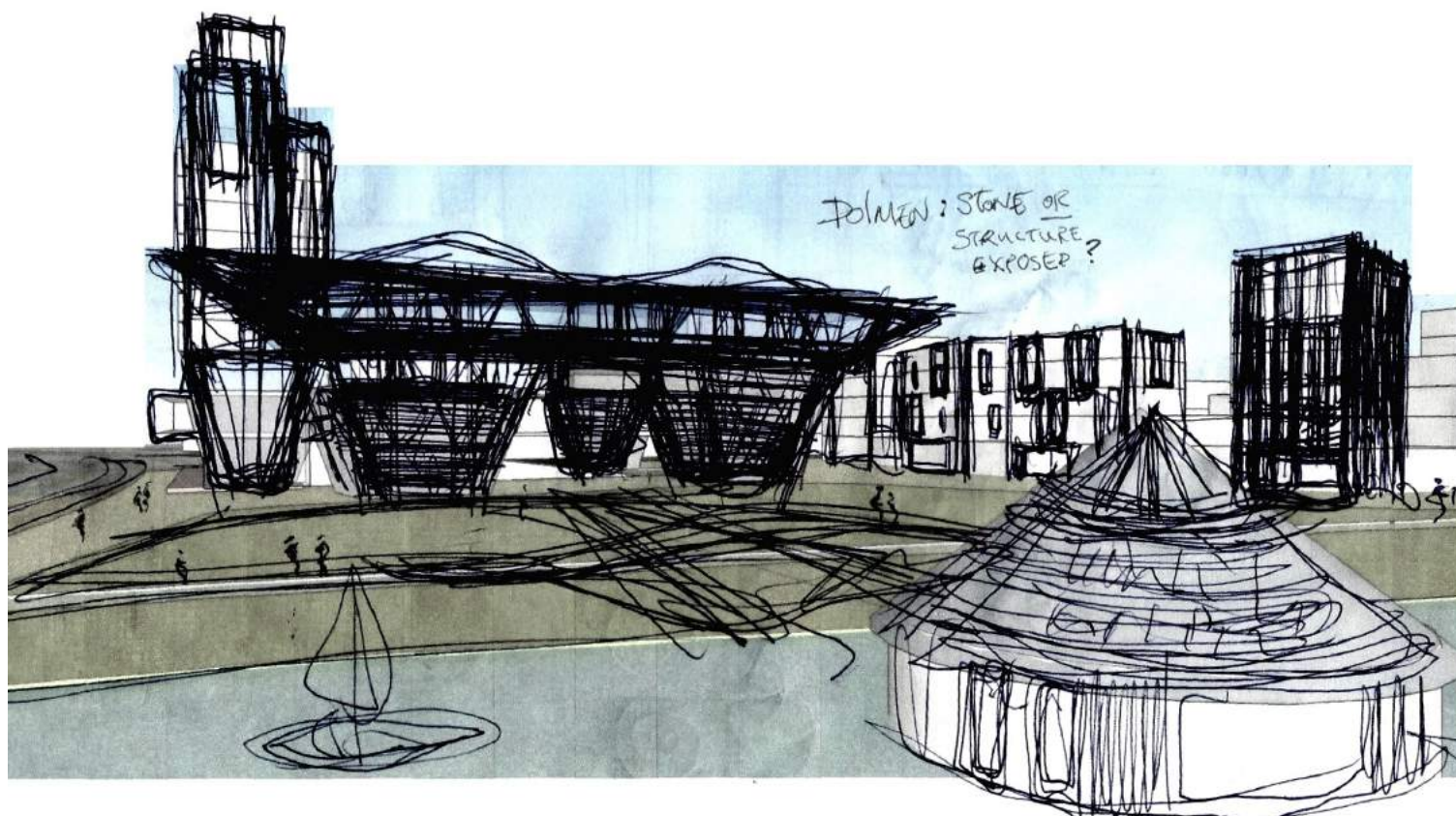
The National Spatial Strategy and the Case for Investing in Irelands Second Tier Cities - Should Sligo as the Geographic Capital of the North West Aspire to be one of Irelands 10 Largest Cities ?

Sligo Docklands contains many sites of Greenfield and Brownfield Development Potential with Strategic Regional Value relative to the exisiting built fabric of Sligo. In order for the Town of Sligo to grow into a City capable of attracting Future Investment and Employment it must look to the Docklands for Expansion. From Sligo County Council Website "The proximity to the city centre, the waterfront along the Garavogue Estuary, the unparalleled views of Benbulbin, Knocknarea and the sea, the variety of greenfield and brownfield lands with development potential – all these features confer a special character to the wider Docklands area. The Docklands LAP needs a clear vision of what it hopes to achieve, and how this will bring benefits in the long term, if it is to be effective in regenerating the area"

The National Spatial Strategy was put forward in recent years as a "Big Picture" Framework for achieving the Government's objective of more Balanced Regional Development. Dublins Status as a Prime City (A city that Dominates all others Nationwide in terms of Population, Geographic Spread and Economic etc) creates pressures in terms of Housing Supply, Quality of Life , Affordability etc. Economic activity outside Prime Cities often remains stagnate as the Prime City creates a Brain Drain effect. To Quote an Excerpt from a recentArticle in the Irish Times dated 9.09.2016

"Dublin's influence is so "dominant" that it may be unique in the western world". Department of Housing and Planning's senior planning adviser Paul Hogan said that the capital has 40 per cent of the State's population, and its output represents half of gross domestic product."Dublin is the same in size and population terms as the next 40 towns and cities combined in Ireland," Mr Hogan said, with a footprint extending from Cavan to Wexford."Outside of city states like Singapore I think this is possibly unique,". He said he had analysed comparable small countries such as Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Scotland and "in every single case they have twice as many cities as we do at the levels below Dublin". Growing regional disparities mean that the Government's forthcoming national policy framework is going to be this administration's "most radical document" and will require "serious engagement", Dr Seán Ó Riordáin, Public Policy Advisors' Network chairman warned.

ITERATION PROCESS - TIMELINE ILLUSTRATING DESIGN PROGRESSION FOR THE MUSEUM AND SURROUNDING BUILDINGS



View of Mythology Museum Building Entrance from Garavogue Estuary with Public Park and Crannog shaped waiting area for boat tours in Foreground



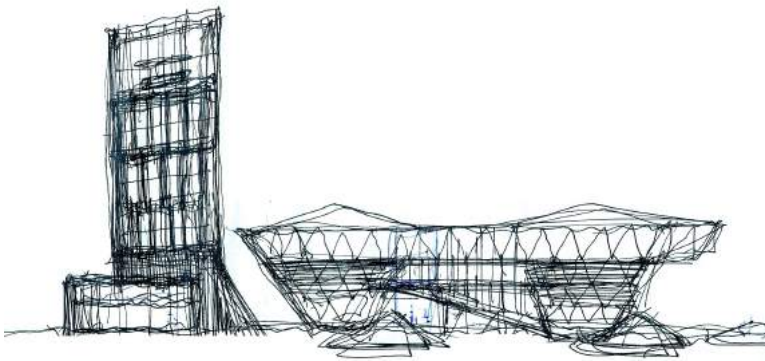
DESIGN Thinking

Archaic Form / Dolmen Reference for Museum. Standing Stone Tower Form (Hotel + Rooftop Bar + Glazed Elevator Experience). Crannogs as Waiting Areas for Boat Tours to InnisMurray. View West from Linear Park.

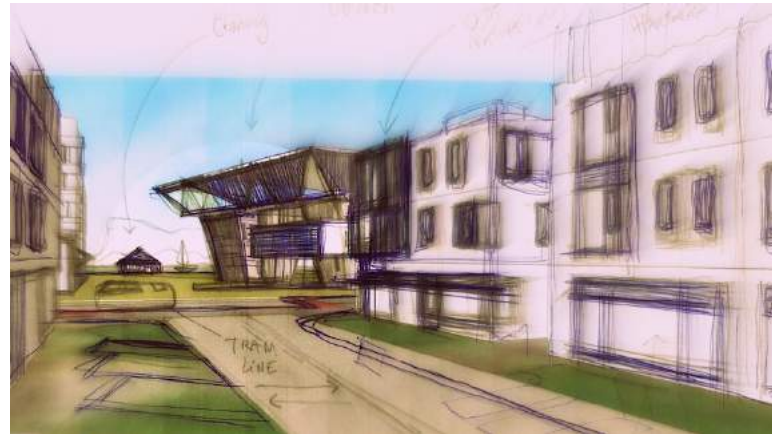


Axonometric View from South

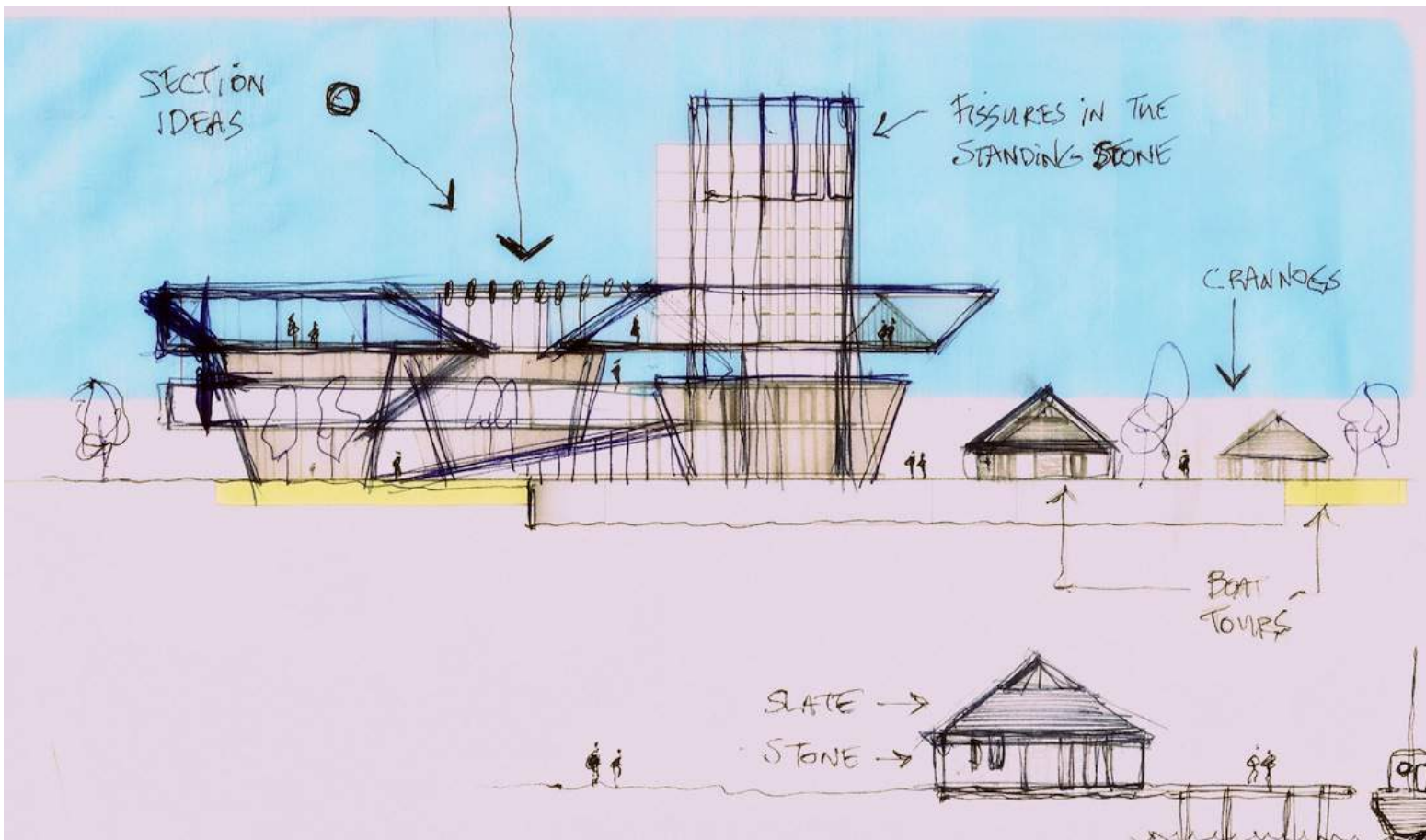
Creation of New Axis and Vista toward Crannogs from New Street



Truss Structure to support Cantilevered Dolmen 'Capstone' Expressed and carried throughout Building ?



New Street + Axis creates a Vista toward Museum Edge Riverfront Crannogs and Dartry Mountains

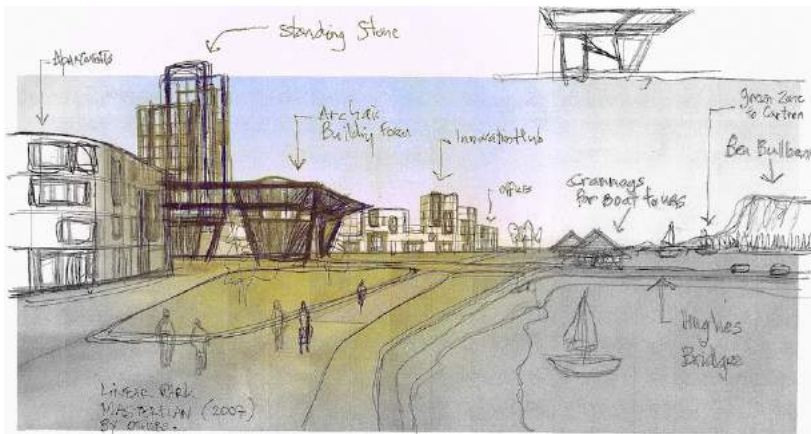


Sectional Ideas - Exhibit Route surrounding Large Central Display Space

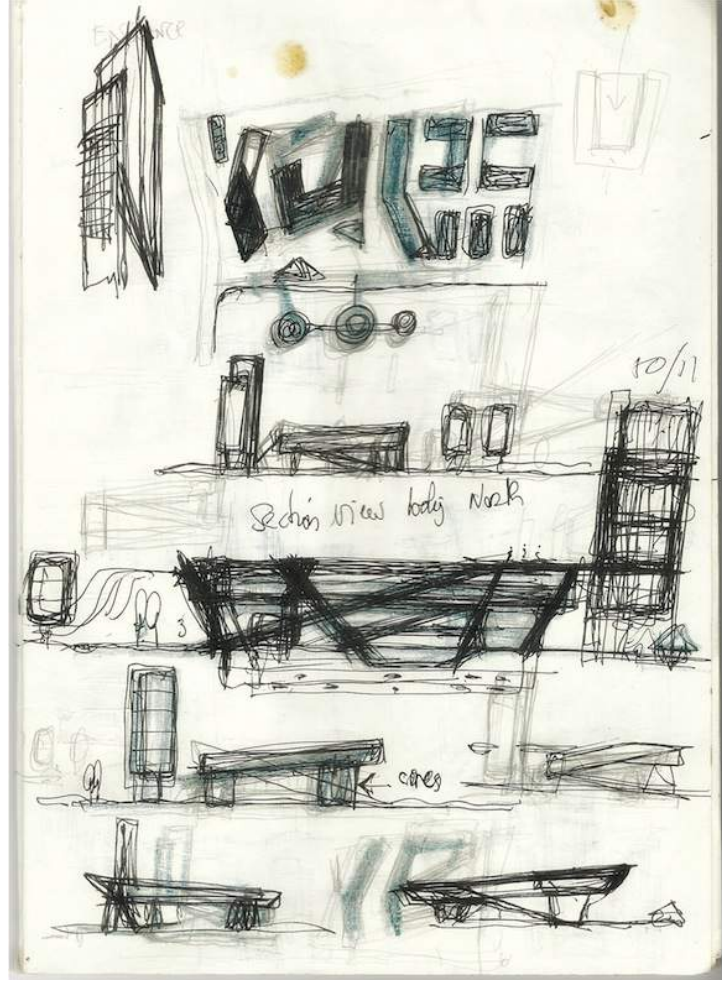


Plan Illustrating Integration of Museum Idea and associated surrounding activities into the 2007 Urban Design Masterplan by Luciana Campos (Commissioned by Sligo Borough Council).

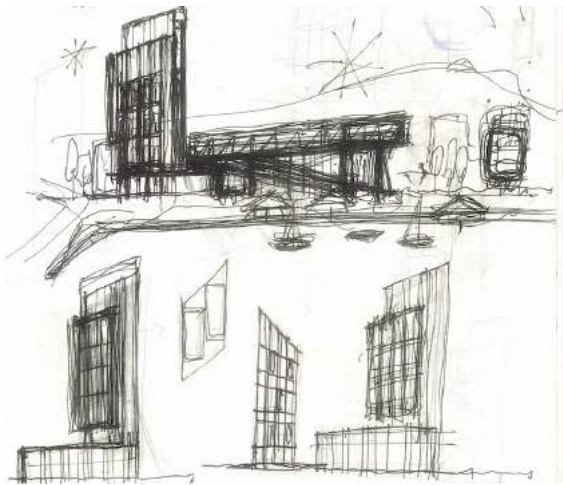
The surrounding Masterplan Layout is left generally intact with some minor modifications such as the Formation of New East West Link from the Museum through to a Business / IT Innovation Hub Element



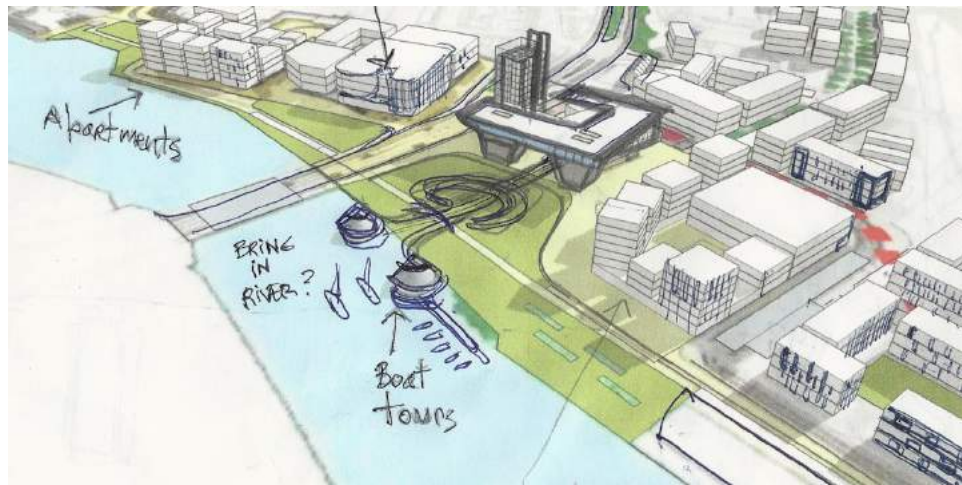
View West toward Museum + Tower from Beginning of Linear Park



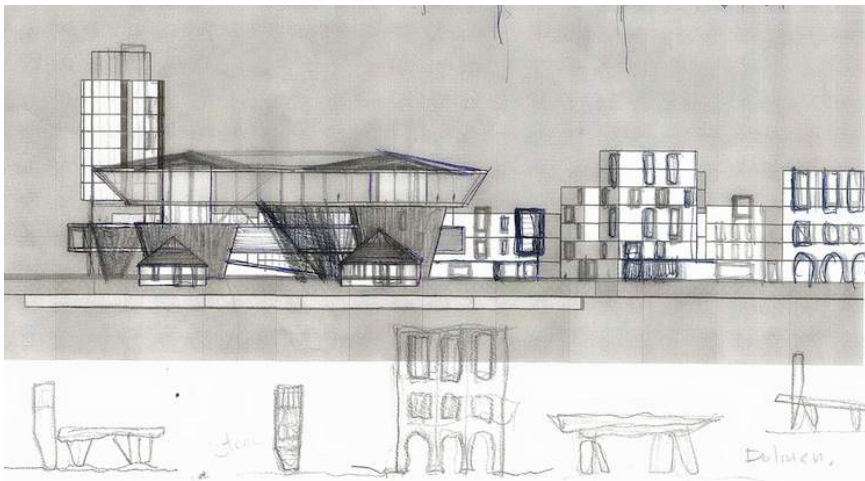
Excerpt from Sketchbook showing thoughts on Museum including Cross Section



Sketch Study of Tower (Hotel + Rooftop Bar) + Museum of Mythology



Aerial View from North West : Museum + Associated Activities located within 2007 Urban Plan by Luciana Campos. Crannog Structures shown on River Edge + Possibility of Bringing Water into the Public Park.



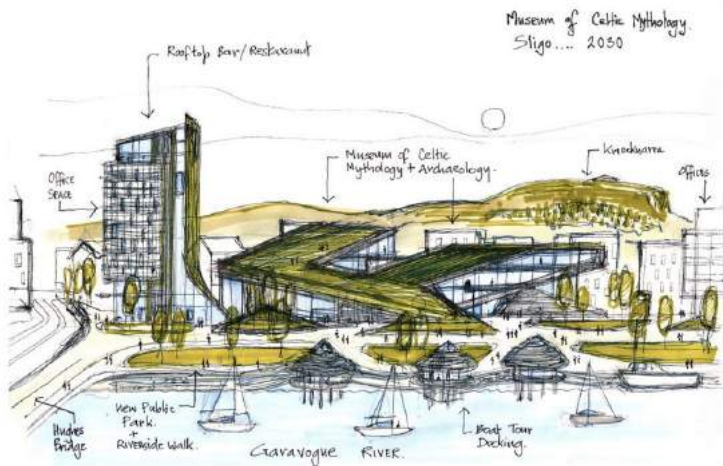
Tourism and Spin Off / Parallel Employment Potential

As already mentioned, Sligo and the North West needs a Core Urban Attraction which will retain Tourists traversing the Region. The Tourist market is underrepresented in the Northwest in comparison to the Ring of Kerry, Burren or Connemara. It has previously been questioned whether Visitors have sufficient incentive to stopover in the North West en route to the Southwest. What if there was a Tourist Attraction in the North West which strengthened its Position relative to the rest of Ireland - but in return provided a Catalyst for the Development of Emerging Tourist markets such as Asia or the Middle East along the Entirety of the Wild Atlantic Way ? As a reference , One could look to the projections for increased visitor numbers to Kerry following the inclusion of the Skellig Michael scene in Star Wars as an encouraging precedent.

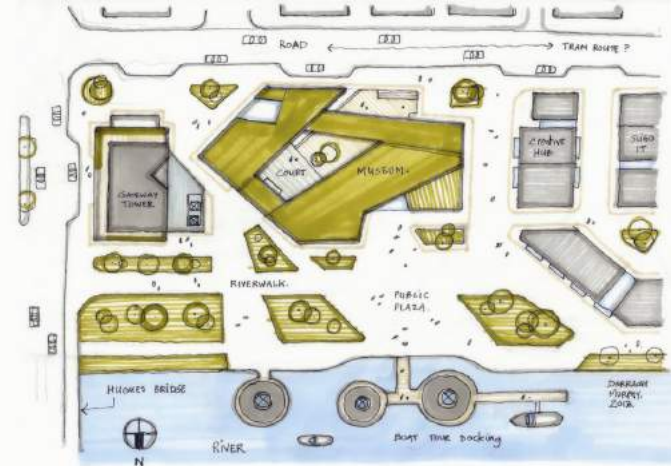
Employment / Revenue generation for Sligo County Council

Apart from the Local Employment and Revenue generating potential which might arise from a Development of this nature, there are several potentially significant Parallel Opportunities in related Industries and

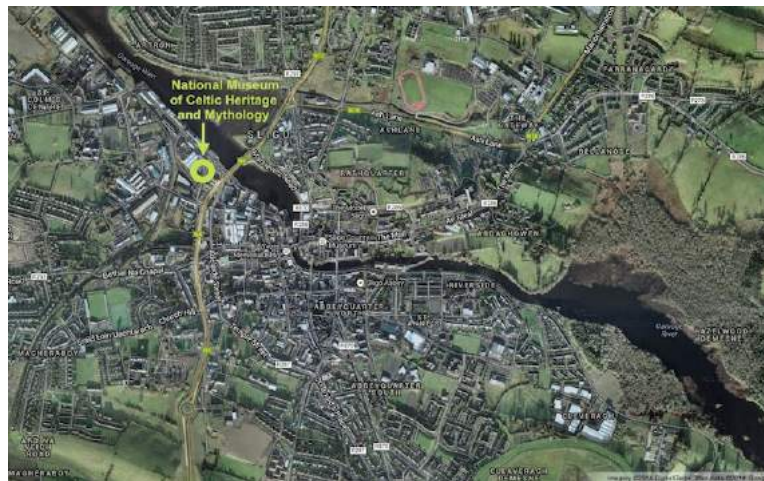
INITIAL PUBLICATION ON MY WEBSITE - 2013



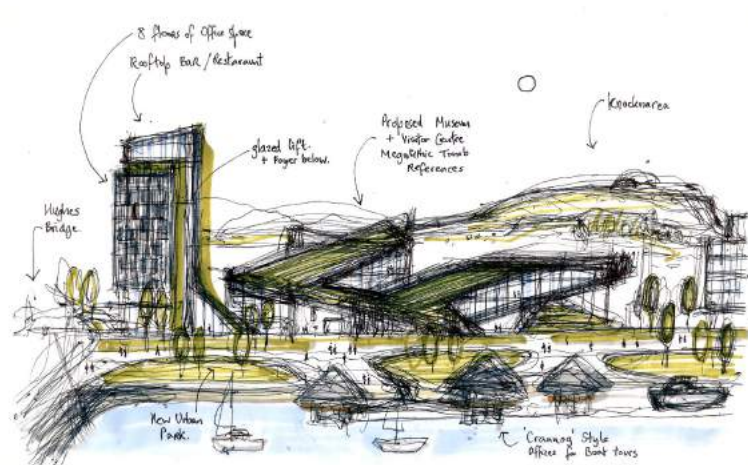
Sketch View from North of Hughes Bridge



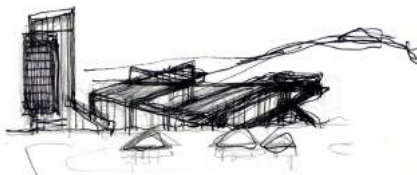
Outline Sketch Plan showing separate Tower and Museum Elements



Location Map of Hinterland - Sligo Town , Hazelwood Demense etc



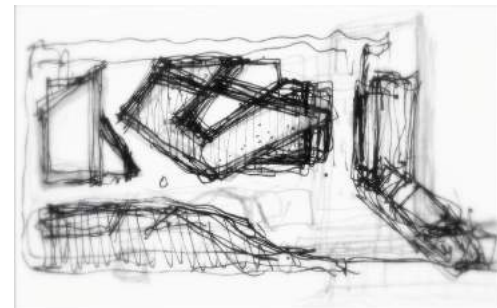
Concept Sketch - View from North of Hughes Bridge 2013



First Concept Sketch - 2012



Location Map - courtesy Google Maps



First Sketch Plan - 2012

Budget / Funding & Scale of the Proposal

Obviously this Proposal is in the realms of Blue Sky thinking, and any Civic Element of International Repute would be in the range of tens of millions of Euros Contract Value. It was conceived as a Project which would have International Standing and the Potential to act as a Key Anchor Building and Catalyst in the Future of Sligos Expansion into a City. It was also conceived as a Possible Contributing Solution to help alleviate a portion of the Long Term Debt which is currently under the management of Sligo County Council. The Proposal is based on the 'Bilbao Model' of Economic Development where a Major Signature Building coupled with a Big Idea has the Potential to transform a Regions Economy.

<http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21591708-if-you-build-it-will-they-come-bilbao-effect>

Funding might come from a range of sources such as a Local Business consortium, High Net Worth Investors (Irish or International) , Central and Local Government , Govt. Agencies such as IDA or Enterprise Ireland, , Irish or International Companies seeking association rights via Sponsorship, EU Funds, Philanthropic sources including Irish Diaspora , etc etc. A Commercial element such as a Gateway Tower / Hotel while having stand alone potential as a Phase 1 Development, would derive significant financial benefit by virtue of proximity to a Successful International Museum. Innovative funding / contractual arrangements *might* be put in place in order to recoup a portion of the cost of the Proposed Museum and to contribute to its upkeep.

FootNote : A 'Sligo County Museum' intended to act both as a Centre for Discovering the Material Culture of Sligos Past and as a centre for Regional Archaeological Excellence has previously been Proposed for a Site Adjacent to the Model Niland Arts Centre in the Forthill area of Sligo Town. This Museum was part of a Competition winning entry for the Model Niland Cultural Quarter and has been granted Planning Permission.

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