

Newcastle West Primary Care Centre

Shortlisted in the Building and Architect of the Year Awards, the Irish Building and Design Awards and the UK's Healthcare Design Awards, this primary care centre in Limerick designed by Hussey Architects reflects an evolved architectural language developed by the practice





Primary Care Centres are a relatively new building type to Ireland. We have evolved an architectural language over the design of a number of these buildings. The configuration of the buildings reflects principles inherent to this new building type and also reflects the building's important public function.

More articulated early buildings have given way to a simpler, more classical later approach. The primary care centre brief from the HSE references numerous technical standards. These standards are not entirely consistent. One such inconsistency is a restriction on window openings reachable by a child and the requirement that passive ventilation be maximised. At the Navan Road project, we made all HSE windows above ground level vertically proportioned. This allowed the top section of the window to open as far as possible.

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When thermally modelled, the maximisation of natural ventilation minimised the requirement for mechanical ventilation. At our second PCC at Celbridge, we developed this vertically proportioned window design into a chequerboard pattern on elevation.

The PCCs we have designed have all been privately developed and rented to the HSE. While this has meant they have been built quickly, unfortunately it has also introduced an element of value engineering. At Navan Road and Celbridge, the steel entrance canopies we designed were subject to this value engineering process. At Navan Road, the entrance canopy disappeared entirely. At Rialto, we found that private finance is less likely to value engineer a stone portico than a steel canopy. The emphasis on value engineering has spurred us to rely on older architectural principles in designing the buildings. Rialto PCC is largely designed around the $\sqrt{2}$ proportion.

Design Development

Building on our experience, the design of Newcastle West began to take shape incorporating the full height windows and stone portico developed on previous buildings.

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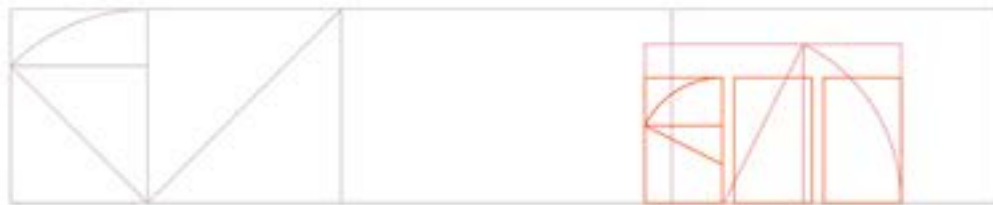
The building draws together a number of our design themes:

- The facade is simplified to an abstracted chequerboard
- Shadow gaps mark the floor and ceiling depth on elevation.
- Full height windows complete the pattern
- The top floor is set back to reduce the visual bulk of this large building in a small town
- A stone portico marks the entrance.

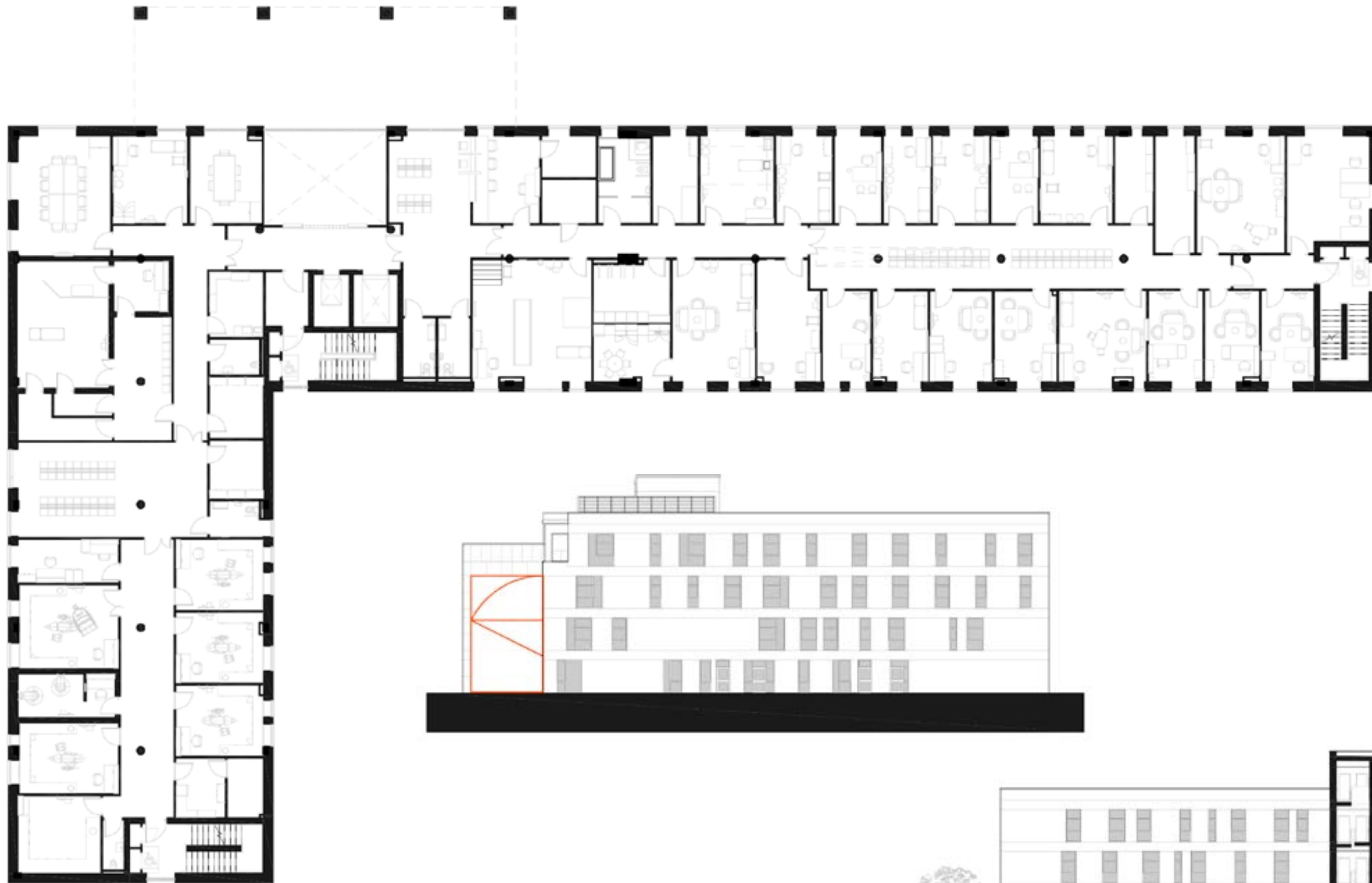
The building takes an L-shaped form facing both the main road to the north and the distributor road to the east. Patient parking is to the front of the building, with secure staff parking also to the rear. The northern edge of the site is landscaped and connects to the Greenway that runs along the site's western boundary.

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The Pharmacy and Tusla offices are marked on the elevation by single storey curtain walled projections. This curtain wall has been customised to emphasise the verticality of the mullions, which contrasts with the overall horizontality of the building. A triple height atrium is created to mark the entrance and orient the visitor to the building. This atrium is also marked by a curtain wall on elevation.



Architect: Hussey Architects
Civil & Structural Engineer: MWP
Mechanical & Electrical Engineer: MWP
Quantity Surveyor: Lawlor Burns
Main Contractor: Dinform Construction Ltd
Fire Consultant: Daire Byrne & Associates
PSDP: MWP