
Bishop William O'Higgins Heritage Project

Drumlish, Co. Longford



BISHOP WILLIAM O'HIGGINS

MEMORIAL SCULPTURE COMMISSION

Artists Brief

CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	1
ARTISTS BRIEF	
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Site.....	3
3. Site Visit	3
4. Materials	3
5. Selection Process & Criteria.....	4
6. Timescale	5
7. Budget	5
8. Contract.....	6
9. Insurance.....	6
10. Originality & Copyright.....	6
11. How To Submit a Stage 1 Proposal.....	7
APPLICATION FORM.....	8
APPENDIX 1: Site Plan.....	9
APPENDIX 2: Site Photos.....	10
APPENDIX 3: William O’Higgins Biography.....	11

SUMMARY

Commission

The Bishop William O'Higgins Heritage Project committee seeks expressions of interest from artists of all levels of experience in developing a new artwork to be situated outside the church on St. Mary's Street Drumlish, it will be part of the Drumlish Heritage Trail.

The commission is to commemorate the life of Bishop William O'Higgins and his particular significance to the local area. The commissioners are seeking a figurative bronze sculpture of Bishop O'Higgins.

Please Note: The project is subject to securing part funding through the EU LEADER Rural Development Programme.

Budget

The total budget available for the artwork is up to €65,000 (inclusive of VAT).

Site Visit

A site visit will take place on Saturday 20 May at 1.30pm

Deadline

The deadline for applications is Friday 23 June at 5pm

Applications

Applicants are requested to read the full content of this document carefully as it contains important information pertaining to all stages of the commission.

Please note that all submissions should be posted in hard copy to:

Bishop William O'Higgins Applications
Visual Artists Ireland,
Windmill View House,
4 Oliver Bond Street,
Dublin 8.

Clearly marked: BISHOP WILLIAM O'HIGGINS COMMISSION EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Supporting images may be provided in electronic format on CD, DVD, or Memory Stick.

Queries

This project is administered by Visual Artists Ireland on behalf of Bishop William O'Higgins Heritage Project committee. All queries should be sent by email to shelly@visualartists.ie

ARTISTS BRIEF

1. Introduction

The Bishop William O'Higgins Heritage Project committee wishes to commission an artist to create a bronze sculpture to commemorate the life and achievements of Bishop William O'Higgins.

This project will mark and make known this most distinguished son of Drumlish. His life and his achievements are a symbol of the hidden history and heritage of the locality.

William O'Higgins, born 1st August, 1794 at Barraghbeg, Drumlish, and Bishop of Ardagh & Clonmacnoise (1829 – 1853). He conceived the idea for, and laid the foundation stone in 1840, for St. Mel's Cathedral in Longford Town.

As a scholastic he obtained his Roman Doctorate, graduating with the highest honour -Maxima Cum Laude.

The Penal Laws had a devastating effect on education in Ireland. All institutions came under the control of the Crown and were repugnant to those who wanted to establish an Irish and Catholic ethos. Bishop O'Higgins established 'classical schools' around the diocese in Ballymahon, Longford, Athlone and Drumlish. In Drumlish he paid a teacher from his own private resources.

In later years as Bishop he became a voice for the rights of tenants. O'Higgins was both a supporter and friend of Daniel O'Connell. During his time as professor of English he had among his students – Drupanloup – the famous Bishop of Orleans; his Royal Highness- Duc d'Angouleme – son of the latter Charles and husband of Madame Royle the only surviving child of Louis XVI.

From the outset, Dr. O'Higgins set his heart on providing his diocese with a seminary and a Cathedral. On the 19th May 1840, the foundation Stone (from the ruins of St. Mel's old Cathedral at Ardagh) was laid in the presence of 40,000 people.

More biographical information in Appendix 3.

2. Site

The proposed site is beside the Church car park which fronts onto St. Mary Street on the R198, which is the main route from Longford Town. Barraghbeg, his birthplace is approximately 0.5 kilometres from where the sculpture is to be located. The original homestead of the O'Higgins Family is long demolished but the location is known and is to be marked with a plaque to link it with the main sculpture and is part of the proposed Drumlish Heritage Trail.

Site plan and photos in Appendix 1 & 2

3. Site Visit

A site visit will take place on Saturday 20 May at 1.30pm, meeting at the Church in Drumlish.

To register your interest in attending the site visit please email shelly@visualartists.ie or call 01 6729488 before Friday 19 May, 12 noon.

4. Materials

The Commissioners request that the material of the figurative sculpture will be bronze and treated with brown or black patina. A concrete plinth can be constructed for the sculpture if required, the dimensions to be specified by the artist in their proposal. The commissioners will be responsible for the cost of the concrete plinth for the sculpture.

5. Selection Process & Criteria

This is a single stage commission. The selection panel is comprised of representation from the Heritage committee, representation from the local community and an independent professional artist.

Submissions should include the following information:

- Completed Application Form
- A typed curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages)
- Examples of previous relevant work in the form of either
 - photographs (maximum size 30 x 25 cm)
 - digital images (jpegs on CD Rom or memory stick)no more than 8 images in total should be included
- Expression of interest (maximum 6 pages) outlining:
 - description of the artwork
 - technical outline, construction and installation process for the artwork
 - visual representation, drawings or designs for the proposed work
 - a full financial breakdown of the budget

Selection criteria:

- Artistic merit and distinctiveness of proposed artwork (30/100)
- Previous experience of working in this context (30/100)
- Clear and complete project outline & budget (20/100)
- Perceived ability to realise the commission & confidence that the proposal will be realised within the budget (20/100)

The successful submission will be the one awarded the highest marks.

The panel has within its power the right to:

- Select a preferred candidate from the proposals received;
- Reject all proposals as unsuitable and to enter into a targeted commissioning process.

6. Timescale

The intended timescale of the commission is as follows:

Site Visit	Saturday 20 May, 1.30pm
Deadline for Applications	Friday 23 June, 5pm
Notification of Panel Decision	Friday 7 July
Notification of Funding Allocations	October/November 2017
Signing of Contracts (subject to funding)	November/December 2017
Completion of Project & installation	To be clarified by artist

7. Budget

The total budget available for the artwork is up to €65,000. This amount is inclusive of VAT whether VAT responsibility lies with the artist or the commissioners. The successful artist will be responsible for the design and creation of the artwork including final installation within the budget. The budget must include all artists design fees, expenses, materials, insurances, production and manufacturing, engineer's reports, any relevant consultations and installation fees, transport costs, and other necessary fees in order to finalise the installation of the art piece.

The successful artist will be required to project-manage all associated work for the art piece. The successful artist will be expected to submit an itemised project budget that identifies all costs. It must cover all expenditure, design, documentation, materials, foundation costs, manufacturing, delivery to the site and installation of the finished art work, including all health and safety requirements.

The successful artist will be expected to submit an itemised project budget that identifies all costs. It must cover all expenditure, design, documentation, materials, foundation costs, manufacturing, delivery to the site and installation of the finished art work, including all health and safety requirements.

8. Contract

The project is subject to securing part funding through the EU LEADER Rural Development Programme. The final application for this funding will be made by the Bishop William O'Higgins Heritage Project Committee in July, naming the preferred candidate selected through this open call process. Contracts will be signed in November/December, subject to a successful funding decision.

9. Insurance

Artists will be required to have Public Liability Insurance cover for work that they may have to undertake onsite, and Employers Liability Insurance cover for any person that they undertake to bring onsite as part of the design or implementation phase of the project.

10. Originality & Copyright

All applications must contain a statement that the proposed design is of the sole creation of the artist and that no other person has or will have any legal call on the work.

11. How To Submit a Stage 1 Proposal

Proposal

- Completed Application Form
- A typed curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages)
- Examples of previous relevant work in the form of either
 - photographs (maximum size 30 x 25 cm)
 - digital images (jpegs on CD Rom or memory stick)
no more than 8 images in total should be included
- Expression of interest (maximum 6 pages) outlining:
 - description of the artwork
 - technical outline, construction and installation process for the artwork
 - visual representation, drawings or designs for the proposed work
 - a full financial breakdown of the budget

Submission Deadline

The deadline for applications is Friday 23 June 2017 at 5pm

Format

Applications must be in Hard Copy with either Hard Copy or Electronic Images on USB/CD. Please note that email submissions will not be accepted.

Who it should be addressed to:

Bishop William O'Higgins Applications
Visual Artists Ireland,
Windmill View House,
4 Oliver Bond Street,
Dublin 8.

Please Note

Late Applications will not be accepted. Proof of postage is not valid. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that their applications arrive in a timely manner with all supporting material provided.

Clearly marked:

BISHOP WILLIAM O'HIGGINS COMMISSION EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

APPLICATION FORM

1.0		
1.1	Name	
1.2	Email	
1.3	Address	
1.4	Telephone	
1.5	Name of main contact for correspondence	
1.6	Registered Company Number (if applicable)	
1.7	Are you VAT registered?	
1.8	Project Budget	
1.9	Please confirm you can provide a Tax Clearance Certificate if selected for the commission	
2.0	Please confirm that you will provide Public Liability Insurance and other insurances that are required for the delivery of your project	
2.1	Confirmation that the proposed design is of the sole creation of the artist and that no other person has or will have any legal call on the work.	
2.2	Confirm your application includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artists CV• Examples of previous work• Expression of Interest	

APPENDIX 2: Site Photos



APPENDIX 3: William O'Higgins Biography

William O'Higgins was born the 13th child to William and Elizabeth O'Higgins at Barraghbeg, Drumlish on the 1st August 1794, a time of great turbulence in Ireland. He was only 4 years old when the 1798 Rebellion took place, The Battle of Ballinamuck, just a few kilometers away saw Irish and French soldiers massacred and he would have heard about the horrific 'half hangings' and 'drownings' in the local bog holes.

His life and his achievements are and were significant for several reasons not alone that 'Glorious undertaking' which is St Mel's Cathedral in Longford Town. Bishop O'Higgins was a brilliant academic, visionary, diplomat, theologian and linguist.

His primary education began at his mother's knee and after that he attended a number of classical schools. In 1812 he was accepted as a student for the priesthood and would study at the Picpus Seminary in Paris at a cost of £40 per annum which was self-funded or met by his family.

Bishop O'Higgins spent 8 years in Paris and during that time witnessed the triumphant return of Napoleon from Elba. He witnessed too, his return to Paris a few months later after being defeated at Waterloo. He presented himself to the victorious Duke of Wellington and congratulated him on his victory – he knew the Duke could use his considerable influence to get the Irish College in Paris re-opened and he did (it had been closed from the time of the French Revolution in 1789). He continued his studies at the Sorbonne and on 20th September 1817 he was ordained a priest.

His reputation as a scholar was widely known in Church circles with the result that the Bishop of New South Wales sought to secure the brilliant young scholar for his dioceses, offering to make him his Vicar General. The Bishop of Ardagh refused to release him. In 1821 he moved to Vienna where he took up another teaching position, after that he moved to Rome for health reasons and completed his Doctorate in Divinity.

In their writings both Bishop McNamee and the Rev. John Canon Monaghan refer to his thesis and his defence of same. The thesis presentation and defence lasted 8 days and was presided over by an eminent Cardinal who later became Pope Gregory XVI; At the age of 30, Fr. William O'Higgins crowned his scholastic career by obtaining his Roman Doctorate, graduating with the highest honour -Maxima Cum Laude – the young man from Drumlish had acquitted himself brilliantly and honourably.

In 1826, he returned to Ireland and competed successfully for the Chair of Dogmatic Theology at Maynooth. He was only there a month when he was examined before the Commissioners appointed by His Majesty to inquire into the doctrine taught at Maynooth.¹

1. The reasoning behind the investigation of Bishop O'Higgins' theological views and training i.e. the question of papal infallibility and supremacy was of great importance to the Royal Commission – was the Temporal Ruler subject to the authority of the Pope? The head of the English Church was the Monarch and the Church had severed all ties to Rome. But the Irish populace were catholic and loyal to the Pope. Would this create a problem for England? Would the Irish subjects ignore the Temporal Ruler and give their support to the Pope – an intriguing question for the British authorities.

APPENDIX 3: William O'Higgins Biography

This was the first public concursos² held at the college and the questions put by the Commissioner were searching and demanding. In his book *Ardagh & Clonmacnoise*, Fr. Monaghan says "the depth and variety of his information, his lucid, masterly statements of the Catholic doctrines, his correct and satisfactory exposition of the Gallican³ and Ultramontane theories, his academic definition of papal authority, the logical precision and accuracy of his replies to all the questions put to him on that occasion were admired by even the most hostile to his creed.

In the words of Dr. McNamee he returned to Ireland:

"surely as accomplished a scholar as ever returned to her shores."

To his massive erudition as theologian and canonist he added an astonishing linguistic ability with a proficiency in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Irish, English, French, German and Italian. Add to this, his great knowledge of ecclesiastical art evidenced in the Cathedral that he laid the foundation stone for in Longford, and his intimate acquaintance with the men and movements of his time throughout Europe we have in this 'son of Drumlish' the finished product of all that best and noblest in the training of an ecclesiastic for the highest office in the Church.

On 30th November 1829 he was consecrated Bishop of the Diocese. In 1834 he convened a Diocesan Synod of his clergy and made his first *ad limina*⁴ visit to Rome where he was greeted by Pope Gregory XVI, who had as a Cardinal presided over his thesis for his doctorate. The people of the diocese were for the most part small farmers struggling under the demands of harsh and unscrupulous landlords.

The iniquity of the tithes system was raised by Grattan in 1787, in the 1830s the people rose up against it. On this issue, Bishop O'Higgins made the following resolutions and had them adopted by his clergy.

'that the paying of Tithes as they are now appropriated in Ireland, being contrary to reason and religion, it is the imperative duty of every sincere Christian to suffer any persecution, even death itself, rather than willingly acquiesce in their payment. He added further, any 'landed proprietor who may be so iniquitous and mean as to assist in the exacting of Tithes from his own impoverished tenantry must be held in abhorrence and contempt by every man of independence on principle.'

The unjust laws which kept the Irish people in bondage and in serfdom had to be repealed. Bishop O'Higgins was as ardent supporter of freedom from these unjust laws and was both a friend and supporter of Daniel O'Connell, the great Catholic Emancipator. The Repeal Movement was a peaceful one, and as it grew from strength to strength, the powers that be, let it be known that measures would be taken to suppress it. O'Higgins at a repeal meeting in Mullingar said –

2. *Concursos = contest from the Spanish*

3. *Gallicanism is the autonomy of the State*

4. *Per the Catholic Encyclopedia the visit ad limina means, technically, the obligation incumbent on certain members of the hierarchy of visiting, at stated times, the "thresholds of the Apostles", Sts. Peter and Paul, and of presenting themselves before the pope to give an account of the state of their dioceses.*

APPENDIX 3: William O'Higgins Biography

"I for one defy any Minister of England to put down the agitation in the diocese of Ardagh. If they attempt to rob us of the daylight and prevent us from assembling in open fields, we will retire to the chapels and suspend all other instructions in order to devote our time to teaching our people to be repealers. If they beset our Temple with spies, we will prepare our people for those circumstances and if for that they string us to the scaffold – in dying for the cause of our country we will bequest our wrongs to our successors".

As the battle for repeal waned and violence was advocated by some other movements, he said,

"we have no physical force men in our diocese, neither – thank God any school boy philosophers false and sanguinary repealers on volitarian newspapers. All of our exertions for the restoration of Ireland's independence are based on the sacred and immutable principles of true Christian morality. And we pity the folly and abhor the wickedness of any man who would rest his patriotism on other grounds."

The Penal Laws had a devastating effect on education in Ireland. All institutions came under the control of the Crown and were repugnant to those who wanted to promote and establish a more Catholic and Irish ethos. He established 'classical schools' in various places around the diocese; Ballymahon, Longford, Athlone and Drumlish. In Drumlish he paid a teacher from his own private resources.

In 1845, Sir Robert Peel introduced a bill which enabled the Queen's Government to endow new colleges for the advancement of education in Ireland, known as the 'Queen's Colleges, to be built in Munster, Connaught and Ulster. The followers of O'Connell were against these colleges as was also Bishop O'Higgins. With the support of other Bishops he favoured colleges similar to that in Louvain (Louven) in Belgium. News of the discord reached Rome where there was support for the Queen's Colleges by some Irish Bishops. A letter was sent to the Irish Bishops from a high ranking Vatican official recommending moderation and acceptance of the amendments to the statutes. This was not accepted by many of the bishops with the result that Bishops O'Higgins and McCabe were summoned to Rome in 1848 to present their views. They presented their case successfully on behalf of the supporting bishops. Rome eventually decreed in favour of an Irish College similar to Louvain and condemned the proposal for the Queen's colleges. Though Bishop O'Higgins was successful in Rome, and Rome issued a receipt the issue would only be fully resolved at the Council of Thurles held on 22nd August 1850. This was the first General Synod of the Irish Church since Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the first since the Council of Kells in 1152. Among the Acts passed was the Condemnation of the Queen's Colleges and the acceptance of the Roman receipt.

From the outset of his ministry, Dr. O'Higgins set his heart on providing his diocese with a seminary and a Cathedral. On the 19th May 1840, the foundation Stone (from the ruins of St. Mel's old Cathedral at Ardagh) was laid in the presence of 40,000 people.

The Cathedral "will be of the purest Grecian architecture, and entirely built of stone joined throughout with sheets of lead. Its front will exhibit 6 magnificent Ionic columns, enclosing a spacious portico. The tower nearly 200 feet high will be partly

APPENDIX 3: William O'Higgins Biography

composed of alternate tiers of Corinthian Pillars. The interior will be divided into 3 aisles, will contain seven altars of marble and the roof will be supported by twenty six lofty Ionic Columns of polished variegated marble. It will be dedicated to the honour of St. Mel first Bishop of this ancient see, and nephew of St. Patrick by whom at the very commencement of his apostolate he was consecrated”.

(When finished) “it will be the most chaste, most extensive, most elegant church in any part of the United Kingdom”.

It was an extraordinary undertaking especially considering the plight and the poverty of the people. At this time the ordinary people were very poor and were living in mud cabins of one room with a hole in the roof for a chimney. The wages of a labourer was 4 pence a day, and when the small farmer met the demands for rent, tithes and taxes there was very little left to support his family.

The Cathedral was ready for roofing when the blight struck in 1846, 47 and 1848 and with the blight came the Great Hunger. It is recorded that Bishop O'Higgins was grievously afflicted by the suffering of the people. In a letter written at Ballymahon to Dr Cullen rector of the Irish College in Rome, dated 17th May 1847 he wrote –

“Of course you have some idea from the papers of the state of the poor in Ireland. Never was any part of the globe visited with so prostrating destruction. It would sicken your heart to see those of our people who, up to this have escaped death. Persons of 20 years of age appear to be bending under old age and in many cases are become so shameless and idiotic from want of every kind.”

This diocese is composed of portions of 7 counties, Longford, Leitrim, Kings County, Sligo, Roscommon, Cavan and Westmeath. We thus of necessity participate most deeply in all wretchedness of the country. All our proprietors with scarcely any exception are absentees; and our condition is truly forlorn. We have in this Diocese five Poor Houses and the average deaths in a week are beyond 100 persons in each. In some instances, particularly in Leitrim, whole families are discovered to be dead in their cabins. The dead are frequently buried in bogs, cabbage plots, and even in the houses where they die. The most part of the land of Leitrim will be untilled this year and the Catholics will I fear before long, have nearly all disappeared from death or emigration. The clergy must soon be as destitute as the people. I go through the most destitute of districts on Sundays and sometimes in two chapels on the same day, preaching resignation to the will of God and giving what other consolation I can, and in my endeavour am assisted by the priests, who without exception have identified themselves with their flock. Fever, dysentery and starvation are everywhere. God alone can see the end.”

A few days after this letter was written, Daniel O'Connell died in Genoa. Dr. O'Higgins withdrew from politics and devoted himself solely to the relief of his famine stricken people and did the duty of his office as bishop of souls.

On the 3rd of January 1853, at Ballymahon, Bishop William O'Higgins passed to his eternal reward and his remains were interred temporarily in the old Church there, removed afterwards to the Vault of the new St Mel's Cathedral that he founded in Longford.

APPENDIX 3: William O'Higgins Biography

In his writings on Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, John Canon Monaghan DD wrote the following –

'Dr. O'Higgins was not less esteemed by his flock than by his brother bishops. Whenever, the Irish Church was to be represented at any foreign court, Dr. O'Higgins was selected for that honourable office, for which his familiarity with various European languages, the courtesy and dignity of his manners, his acquaintance with many of the principle men of Europe eminently qualified him. Among his papers have been found autographed letters from Emperors and Popes. He was deputed to visit the Irish College in Paris, he was unanimously chosen to go to and treat with the Court of Belgium about the Irish educational foundations' burses lost during the Revolution, a great portion of which were recovered, and twice he went to Rome sent by the majority of the Prelacy on the question of education. As a patriot, Dr. O'Higgins ranked first among the Hierarchy. He was greatly attached to O'Connell... he was the Dr. Croke of the period. Add to this the comments of Dr. Mc Namee, 'he was certainly a man of brilliant intellectual parts, of wide culture in languages and literature, of profound learning in his professional sciences of Theology and Common Law. At the same time he was a man of ardent temperament, heavily sympathising with the wrongs and sorrows of his flock- eager to assist them with voice, pen and purpose in their struggle against iniquitous exactions of the Tithe Proctor and the landlord. A patriot in the best sense, he must be allowed to have been..... whose only purpose in engaging in political action was the unselfish desire to restore native Government to his country as the most urgent and necessary means to effect her regeneration and to secure the happiness of her people'.