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Castle's visitor centre on hold for excavations

A €3 MILLION Government grant, aimed at building a visitors' centre in Nenagh Castle, remained secure — although the project will be temporarily halted due to archaeological excavations, which has led to the discovery of some important ruins.

Fianna Fáil's Máire Hctor said yesterday she was given assurances by Environment Minister Dick Roche that the funding, announced last July, was secure.

"While it's unfortunate that progress on the project will not happen as quickly as expected, we should also acknowledge the huge historical significance uncovered by archaeologists working on the site," she said.

"Digs so far have uncovered a significant part of the curtain wall of the 13th century castle. In addition, archaeologists have found what is likely to be part of a medieval manor house on the site of the proposed visitors' centre.

"These finds will lead to a full extensive archaeological dig on the site and that will delay the submission. Nenagh Town Council will make a decision on planning permission for the project." Ms Hctor, vice-chairperson of the Nenagh Tourism Marketing Development Committee, said the proposed visitors' centre would provide an attractive gateway to Nenagh Castle.

"It's intended that exhibitions and evening events will be hosted there for the local community.

"I am confident that the project will have a dynamic impact on the surrounding commercial and community life in the town," she said.