

**Carlow County Council** in partnership with Carlow Community Enterprise Centres  
**Preliminary Report**  
**Presentation House Community and Enterprise Centre, Bagenalstown, County Carlow**  
**Part VIII Process**

**Date:** 24/04/2023  
**Proposing Department:** Local Enterprise Office  
**Departments to Circulate to:** Transportation/Roads/Bagenalstown Municipal District Office  
Environment Department/Water Services  
Community, Recreation, & Amenity Department  
Fire Services Department/Building Control  
Finance Department  
Planning Department

**Context**

Bagenalstown is located in South Carlow bordering counties Kilkenny and Wexford, with Waterford to the South. There is a strong industrial and commercial base and it is surrounded by a strong agricultural hinterland and acts as an important economic centre for the surrounding rural hinterland in providing daily commercial needs. The River Barrow passes through the town centre, while the M9 passes close by and the R448, R705, and R724 serve the surrounding area.

The former Presentation Convent is a vacant building in the town and Carlow County Council in consultation with Bagenalstown Improvement Group and Bagenalstown Area Chamber of Commerce have purchased the building and wish to create Presentation House Community and Enterprise Centre as a multi-use facility to encourage both economic and community use.

Potential uses for this versatile space will include community use, meetings, conference spaces, craft space, business use, artistic use, cultural use, and will also include a kitchen area.

The purpose of this project is to protect and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Bagenalstown and to provide for and improve cultural, tourism, public facilities, amenity and other uses appropriate to the centre of a developing town core. It is an objective of the Council to encourage the full use of town centre buildings and lands including backlands and vacant properties, and the regeneration of this vacant building will lead to a more engaging and friendly civic space for tourists and locals alike.

The proposed Multi Use Centre for Bagenalstown is part of an overall strategic program of works in the area. Funding had been received by Carlow County Council from the Department of Rural and Community Development as part of the Town & Village Building Acquisition Measure 2022 to purchase the building and CCC now wish to bring the project to design stage and the design proposal is complementary to the area and would create significant potential for Bagenalstown in gaining new and additional infrastructure.

This new space in Bagenalstown will regenerate the area by decreasing dereliction and creating a space of endless possibilities for the community using a building which has been vacant and unused for some time.

With the regeneration of this vacant building, Carlow County Council hope to reinforce the critical role of Bagenalstown for the surrounding area. This will support not only retailers, but also retail services, restaurants/pubs, leisure and arts, providing more activity throughout the day. This will achieve regeneration by

a renewed focus on better integrating existing elements of Bagenalstown's urban fabric to provide new opportunities for growth and public interaction.

Detail drawings/maps of the area have been completed by ODLA Architects and Bowe Consulting Engineers and are included as part of this report.

### **Wider Strategy for Bagenalstown**

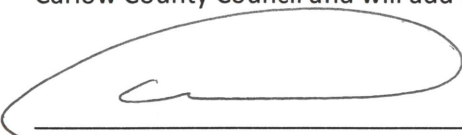
Carlow County Council with the support of the Town and Village Fund have developed a public realm plan for the enhancement of the area adjacent to the River Barrow, along with the Bagenalstown Streetscape Scheme to enhance the look of buildings throughout Bagenalstown centre.

The redevelopment of the former Presentation Convent into Presentation House Community and Enterprise Centre will be a key step forward for Bagenalstown and in conjunction with the public realm plan and enhancements to the town centre streetscape will bring a sustainability to the town and is in keeping with Carlow's County Development Plan 2022-2028, with particular reference to:

- Supporting the role of Bagenalstown by facilitating development that will contribute to the character and services function of the town while complementing and enhancing the quality of its attractive built and natural environment by delivering a high-quality standard of design
- Promote and support the use of previously developed brownfield, infill, derelict and backland sites in Bagenalstown, including the redevelopment of existing sites and buildings
- Facilitate and encourage the expansion of established enterprises operating in Bagenalstown, to promote additional enterprise and employment opportunities and to ensure that future development is compatible with the character, scale and function of the town
- Support the provision of co-working spaces within the town centre facilitating the establishment of new businesses and remote working opportunities for residents of the town
- Seek to enhance and provide recreational and community amenity facilities in Bagenalstown
- Support the development of a multi-functional community centre that facilitates community, recreational and sporting activities in a shared space subject to proper planning and environmental considerations
- Support the retention of buildings with architectural merit, significant architectural features, historic /heritage structures and archaeological sites that contribute to the town's character and setting.

According to Fáilte Ireland, one of the key visitor challenges facing any Town is perceived to be "derelict and unattractive buildings in prominent positions including key visitor corridors." Enhanced event spaces will not only encourage more tourism but also encourage locals to use the Town Centre as a place to meet, thereby increasing dwell time in the Town.

The creation of Presentation House Community and Enterprise Centre is part of a wider strategy for the development of Bagenalstown. The creation of an economic and community space has been a long-term aim of Carlow County Council and will add to the long-term sustainability of the entire area.

  
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Carlow County Council