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Design Statement: Former Bol THRIVE Application



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character of the existing Town centre and to provide for and improve retailing and commercial activities.

1. Introduction:

1.1. Carlow County Council proposes to redevelop the former Bank of Ireland premises at Court Place to office and community use. As part of this redevelopment, it is proposed to retain and refurbish the protected Georgian and Victorian elements of the structures on site.

1.2. The existing protected structures have a significant influence on the architectural character of the area. As such it was therefore important that the character of the scheme at the end of the Georgian terrace was maintained and respected. It's overall form and character is importance for the scale of the public realm and its framing of the courthouse in this space.

2. Site Context:

2.1. Site Location:

2.1.1. The site is located in Carlow Town and occupies prominent road frontage along the R417, north-west of Court Place, Dublin St, and Athy Road intersection. The existing building consists of a part single-storey and part two-storey vacant building formerly used as the Bank of Ireland Premises. The single-storey aspect consists of a 1970's and 1980's flat roof extension and a Victorian brick annex. The two-storey aspect at the front of the site consists of an adjoining original Georgian townhouse. The building is listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in the Carlow Development Plan (RPS CT38 10000614) and described as 'A complex consisting of a banking hall with a modern addition and two bays of an older Georgian building combined to form a single unit. Date circa 1900'.

2.1.2. The area of the overall site is c. 0.28 hectares. The site is zoned for Town Centre Uses in the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030. The objective of Town Centre Use zoning is to protect and enhance the special physical and social

2.1.3. The eastern section of the application site is located within Dublin Street Architectural Conservation Area as identified in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (Carlow Town Objective Map), and the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030. The site is also located within Intervention Area 3 -Barrow Track/ Civic Spine as detailed in Chapter 5 of the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030 and the subject of Project Carlow 2040 -A Vision for Regeneration. The development of this area provides the opportunity to integrate the site with the Town Core, thereby delivering enhanced connections through to the Courthouse, to the VISUAL and to Carlow College, along with the opportunity to link and integrate with the Council's offices (County Buildings) to the north.

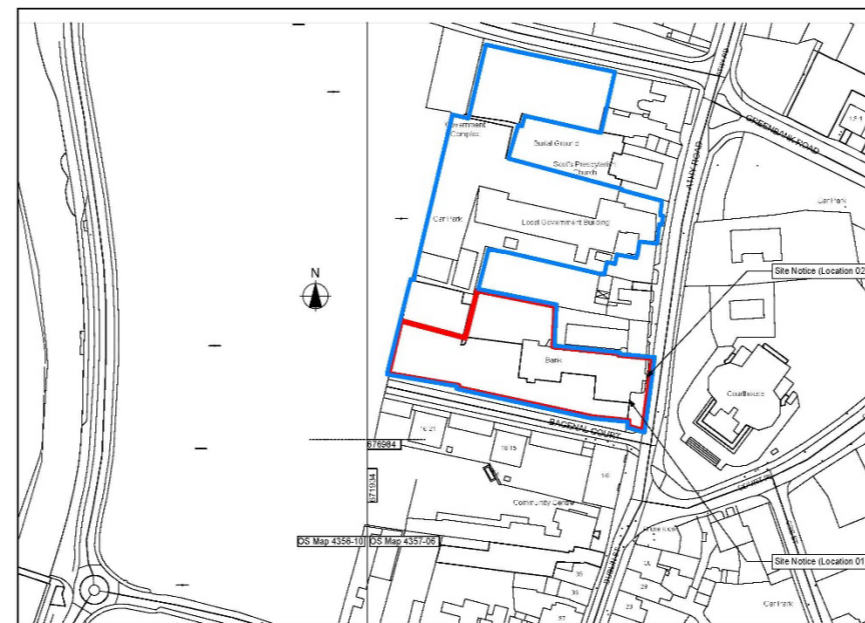


Fig.01: A location map is shown above, with the site outlined in red.

2.2. Site Physical Characteristics:

2.2.1. The proposed site is the former location of a Bank of Ireland customer branch. The site addresses the public street on its eastern side, from which vehicular access is also achieved.



Photo 01: View from the public street of the eastern boundary of the site.

2.2.2. The southern boundary of the site is shared with an adjoining apartment scheme. The access road of the apartment scheme runs along this boundary.



Photo 02: View from the rear of the site looking at the shared boundary with the adjoining apartment scheme.

2.2.3. The western boundary of the site is shared with private lands which offer significant development potential. It is the intention from the Project Carlow 2040 plan to facilitate pedestrian access for the development site through our proposed development as it offers an opportunity to improve access to the river Barrow from the town core.



Photo 03 : View from the end of the building looking towards the western shared boundary, a private site, towards the river.

2.2.4. The northern boundary of the site is shared in part with private offices and the Council own car park.



Photo 04 : View from the end of the building looking towards the northern shared boundary, the County Council's own carpark.

2.2.5. It is intended to facilitate the connecting of the council car park with this property to facilitate the future pedestrianisation of the area generally and the proposed vehicular access route from our site. This will allow for the opening up of the private lands along the river Barrow in the future.

2.2.6. While the majority of the existing structures on site are single storey, they are of an era that has not aged well and would not achieve current building regulations minimum compliance standards without a very deep and difficult retro fit.

2.2.7. There are elements of the existing structures that merit retention because of the architectural heritage value, hence why they are recorded on the RPS.

2.2.8. Nearly 50% of the site coverage is unbuilt. It served primarily as surface carparking for the former bank branch.

2.2.9. The site is served by existing connections to public services such as power, surface water and foul sewer.

2.3. Development Plans:



2.3.1. The CDP:

2.3.1.1. The policies and objectives for reutilising an existing vacant property in Carlow are set out throughout the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, including support for the reducing the number of vacant buildings and promoting consolidation of town centres by regenerating underused / vacant buildings. They include:

CS.012: Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres and targeted settlements in the county. (Chapter 2- Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy).

ED.P10: Address vacancy/dereliction and underutilisation of property within Carlow own by supporting an appropriate mix of alternative uses such as business start-ups, offices, workspace, residential uses etc subject to proper planning and environmental considerations. (Chapter 4- Enterprise and Employment).

TVC.P4: Promote the consolidation of town and village centres with a focus on the regeneration of underused / vacant buildings and strategic sites and the establishment of a mix of uses to encourage greater vibrancy outside of business hours. (Chapter 12- Urban Design and Placemaking).

CGR.P1: Promote and support the regeneration of underused town centre, village centre and brownfield/infill lands, in conjunction with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands. (Chapter 12- Urban Design and Placemaking).

CGR.P2: Facilitate the delivery of compact and sequential growth and urban regeneration in towns and villages by consolidating the built footprint through a focus on regeneration and development of key infill /brownfield /backland sites. (Chapter 12- Urban Design and Placemaking).

2.3.1.2. Built heritage policies and objectives are included in Chapter 10 of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 dealing with architecture and include:

BH.P1: Promote the conservation and reuse of early traditional structures, roofscapes of historic centres and the recognition of interrelationships between sites and landscape features in terms of the insertion of new buildings and managing their impact on the historic environment.

BH.P4: Support the development of sustainable infill in town back lands that is appropriate in scale and character to that of the historic centre, that transitions and accommodates surviving structures and retains the historic streetscape form particularly within sensitive areas of built and archaeological importance.

AH.P6: Protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential (Zones of Archaeological Notification) located within both urban and rural areas as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).

PS.P2: Ensure the protection and conservation of the character, setting and special interest of all buildings, structures (or parts of structures) and sites, listed in the Record of Protected Structures, including their curtilage, attendant grounds, and fixtures and fittings.

PS.P3: Ensure that all development proposals that affect a protected structure or a proposed protected structure, including proposals for

modifications, alterations, refurbishment or extensions, are sympathetic to and protect, conserve and retain the character, setting and special interest of the protected structure or proposed protected structure, in accordance with the 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011).

PS.P4: Require development proposals involving protected structures or proposed protected structures, to be subject to an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment as described in Appendix B of Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2011).

PS.P8: Promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and appropriate use and reuse of protected structures, and to actively encourage uses that are compatible with the character of protected structures.

PS.P10: Promote the retention of any original or early building fabric including for example timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, ironwork, traditional mortars, render and decorative or weather finishes and slate and vernacular architectural details. Likewise, the Council will encourage the re-instatement of historically correct traditional features.

PS.P11: Favourably consider the change of use of any structure included on the Record of Protected Structures, provided such a change of use does not adversely impact on the intrinsic character of the structure and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2.3.1.3. Urban design and placemaking guidance are provided in Chapter 12 of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, and in relation to relevant policies and objectives, includes:

UD.P2: Apply the following key attributes when considering public realm enhancements:

1. Attractive and visually pleasing urban spaces with high-quality design, materials, and installations (street lighting, furniture and signage).
2. Distinctive urban spaces with reference to local context and existing built heritage, character, and identity.
3. Accessible, connected and linked permeable urban spaces that facilitate ease of movement.
4. Functional urban spaces that foster activity and are safe and adaptable.

HW.P2: Promote compact urban form, which is appropriate to context, in the interests of efficient use of resources and optimising

the opportunities to walk and cycle, and the feasibility of public transport.

CGR.P1: Promote and support the regeneration of underused town centre, village centre and brownfield/infill lands, in conjunction with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands.

SF.P1: To encourage the preservation of authentic traditional shopfronts and particularly those deemed of townscape importance which contribute to visual amenity and character of the area.



2.3.2. Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030 (JULAP)

2.3.2.1. The site is located within land use zone 'Town Centre', the objective of which is - To protect, provide for and/or improve town and village centre facilities and uses.

2.3.2.2. The purpose of this zoning is to protect and enhance the character and vibrancy of existing town and village centres and to provide for and strengthen as appropriate retailing, residential, commercial, cultural, tourist and other appropriate uses. It will promote compact growth through the consolidation of development on town and village centre lands, allowing for a broad range of compatible and complementary uses, which will be encouraged to locate in this area in order to create an attractive environment to reside, shop, work, visit and in which to invest. The appropriate reuse, adaptation, and

regeneration of buildings, infill sites, backlands, vacant, derelict and underutilised lands, including residential development, will be encouraged. The full use of upper floors in retail and commercial premises in town and villages centres for residential use will also be encouraged. Primacy of existing Core Retail Areas will be retained and prioritised for any new retail development to enhance its vitality and viability. Retail proposals shall have regard to relevant policies and objectives in the Retail Strategy (Appendix 5) and Chapter 4 of this Plan and the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012. Town centre development proposals will be required to be of a high architectural quality, which contributes to a distinct sense of place and public realm, promotes sustainable modes of travel and be appropriate to its location. New commercial and retail uses will be accommodated in town and village centres. The size and scale of any such commercial or retail development shall be reflective of the role and function of the town or village in the settlement hierarchy.

2.3.2.3. JULAP Policies

2.3.2.3.1. Relevant Policies relating to the promotion of compact growth, urban regeneration, and the preservation and enhancement of built heritage contained in the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030 include:

SO.7: Manage the development of Carlow-Graiguecullen in a manner that protects, conserves, and enhances the natural, built and archaeological heritage of the area (Chapter 2- Carlow-Graiguecullen Strategic Planning and Vision).

URD.P1: Promote the town centre as the priority location for commercial, civic, social, and cultural development, along with a focus on urban regeneration that supports compact growth through the development of key brownfield, infill, and back/and sites. (Chapter 5- Urban Design, Town Centre and Regeneration).

URD.P5: Require that development proposals facilitate a connected network of streets and spaces which prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and provides for the possibility of connections to future development on adjacent lands. (Chapter 5- Urban Design, Town Centre and Regeneration).

URD.02: Support, advance, and facilitate the regeneration and development of the 6 no. Intervention Areas detailed in Project Carlow 2040 - A Vision for Regeneration, and in accordance with the urban design and implementation framework detailed in the regeneration strategy:

5. Town Centre - Potato Market and Barrack Street
6. Cultural Quarter (including links to Railway Station)
7. The Barrow Track/Civic Spine
8. The Pembroke District
9. The Burrin Riverfront
10. Link Streets (Dublin Street and Tullow Street)
11. (Chapter 5- Urban Design, Town Centre and Regeneration).

2.3.2.4. Built and Archaeological Heritage. (Chapter 9)

HR.P1: Promote and encourage heritage-led regeneration, including the conservation and sustainable use of historic buildings and sites integral to the history and evolution of Carlow-Graiguecullen, and in order to raise public awareness of this history, and to tackle dereliction and vacancy so as to improve the quality of life of the joint urban area by making it an interesting, unique, and attractive place for residents and visitors.

HR.02: Support the implementation and role of the 'Interventions Areas' identified in Project Carlow 2040 -A Vision for Regeneration, in enhancing the setting and context of key built heritage assets in Carlow Town, including improved access to and exposure and interpretation of these assets, and subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.

BH.P3: Ensure that all development proposals that affect a protected structure or a proposed protected structure in Carlow-Graiguecullen, including proposals for modifications, alterations, refurbishment, or extensions, are sympathetic to and protect, conserve and retain the character, setting and special interest of the protected structure or proposed protected structure, in accordance with the 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011).

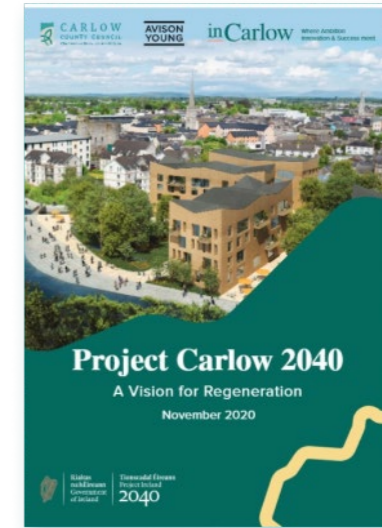
BH.P6: Ensure that development proposals do not obscure views, principal elevations and the character and setting of protected structures.

BH.P7: Prevent inappropriate alterations to protected structures, and to prohibit the demolition of any protected structure unless the relevant local authority is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. The demolition of a protected structure with the retention of its facade will likewise not generally be permitted.

BH.P8: Promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and appropriate use and reuse of protected structures in Carlow-Graiguecullen and encourage measures that support the climate proofing of these structures.

BHP9: Promote the retention of any original or historic building fabric including for example timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, ironwork, traditional mortars, render and decorative or weather finishes and slate and vernacular architectural details.

BH.P10: Proactively address dereliction, endangerment, neglect, and vacancy of historic buildings in Carlow-Graiguecullen, through the use of relevant statutory provisions and through the promotion of appropriate uses and the sensitive conservation of historic buildings, in conjunction with other relevant initiatives.



2.3.3. Project Carlow 2040

2.3.3.1. Project Carlow 2040 is a non-statutory plan which sets out a basis for Carlow town centre regeneration and future development. It identifies a number of distinct character areas. The proposed former Bol site is at the centre of the “Barrow Track / Civic Spine” quarter.

2.3.3.2. As contained in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, it is a policy of the Council to:

CSP.4: Support the town centre regeneration of Carlow Town and the delivery of the objectives of the Project Carlow 2040, A Vision for Regeneration. (Chapter 2 - Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy).

ED.P9: Seek to ensure the town centre becomes an attractive destination and driver of commerce and innovation through the implementation of Project Carlow 2040 A Vision for Regeneration. (Chapter 4 -Enterprise and Employment).

2.3.4. As contained in the Project Carlow 2040 Plan:

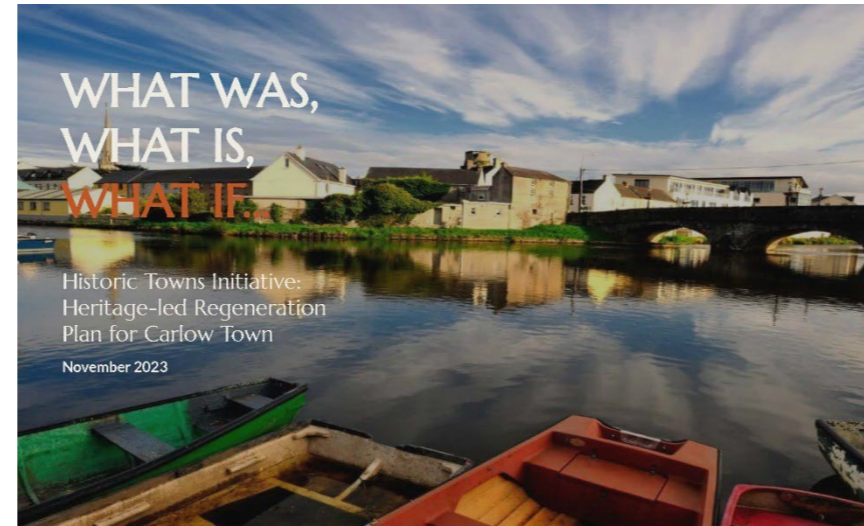
Principle 1 as contained in Project Carlow 2040 aims to reduce vacancy- The vibrancy of the Town Centre is a reflection of the wellbeing of the local economy and community life in Carlow. Increasing building occupancy is important to activate the Town Centre as a whole.

Principle 9 as contained in Project Carlow 2040 aims to deliver high quality and person- centred buildings and public realm- Carlow already has an enviable public realm rich in heritage and unique features. Future development should not only strengthen and protect this but should enhance it through quality design and materials and a person- centred focus.



Fig.02: The above Map is an extract from Project Carlow 2040.

2.3.4.1. As previously mentioned in Section 1.1 of this report, the site is located within Intervention Area 3 - Barrow Track/ Civic Spine as detailed in Chapter 5 of the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030. The development of this area also provides the opportunity to integrate the site with the Town Core, thereby delivering enhanced connections through to the Courthouse, to the VISUAL and to Carlow College.



2.3.5. Heritage Towns Initiative Plan – Heritage Led Regeneration Plan

2.3.5.1. Carlow County Council have prepared a Heritage Led Regeneration Plan in which the Former Bank of Ireland site has been identified as a key site.

2.3.5.2. The plan focuses on revitalising historic buildings, preserving their cultural and architectural significance while also making them suitable for modern uses. This will ensure the building's heritage is respected and enhanced. Here's how the heritage-led regeneration plan can facilitate a successful building refurbishment:

2.3.5.3. 1. Identifying and Preserving Cultural and Architectural Significance

2.3.5.3.1. **Heritage Assessment:** A key first step is conducting a thorough assessment of the building's historical and architectural value. This includes documenting original features, understanding the building's history, and identifying any elements that need to be preserved. To do this we

recovered as built drawings and photographs from the National Architectural Archive. We also had We also had an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment carried out by a Grade 1 Conservation Architect, Margaret Quinlan. As part of the Heritage Led Regeneration Plan the Former Bank of Ireland Site has been identified as an Asset under "Section 4.3 Action Plan"¹.

2.3.5.3.2. Incorporating Historical Features:

The project proposes that significant architectural elements, such as facades, structural components, decorative details, and historical features, are preserved or sensitively restored. This can include elements like brickwork, Plaster detailing, mosaic flooring, windows, and doors that contribute to the building's heritage.

2.3.5.4. 2. Creating a Vision that Balances Preservation and Modern Needs

2.3.5.4.1. **Adaptive Reuse:** Heritage-led regeneration plans often focus on **adaptive reuse**, which repurposes the building for new functions while retaining its historical character. For example, a former bank branch could be converted to civic offices and shared community rooms.

2.3.5.4.2. **Compatible Modern Additions:** The plan can guide the integration of modern additions or alterations, such as new floors, extensions, or infrastructure

¹ Historic Towns Initiative Plan –Heritage-led Regeneration for Carlow Town.

improvements. These must respect the building's original style, scale, and proportions, ensuring that new elements do not overwhelm or detract from the heritage value.

2.3.5.5. 3. Sustainable Design and Green Strategies

2.3.5.5.1. **Energy Efficiency:** The proposed refurbishment under a heritage-led regeneration plan can incorporate **modern sustainable techniques** without compromising the building's heritage. This is proposed to include improving insulation, retrofitting energy-efficient windows, or adding renewable energy sources like MRHV, Air to Water heat pumps, PV solar panels in ways that are sympathetic to the building's aesthetic, such as on the roof of the proposed new single storey extension behind a parapet wall.

2.3.5.5.2. **Eco-Friendly Materials:** The proposed works and in line with the plan which advocates for the use of materials that are sustainable and eco-friendly while also fitting with the building's original design. For example, Ground Granulated Furnace Slag (GGBS), brick slips as part of an ETIC panel system, sedum roof system and Diathonite cork insulated plaster.

2.3.5.5.3. **Building Services:** Upgrading the building's services, like heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (MHRV) systems, to modern standards without compromising the original interior design, can

ensure long-term sustainability and energy efficiency. We are proposing to introduce air to water heat pumps, HRV. PV panels and LED lights.

2.3.5.6. 4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

2.3.5.6.1. **Public and Local Involvement:** The heritage-led regeneration plan emphasised community engagement, ensuring that local stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and heritage groups, were part of the decision-making process. The plans evolution involved engagement processes and public input.

2.3.5.6.2. **Economic and Social Impact:** The Heritage Led Regeneration plan incorporates programs aimed at revitalising the local community by encouraging local businesses, cultural activities, or community spaces in the refurbished building. This can bring new life to the area and create long-term social and economic benefits.

2.3.5.7. 5. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

2.3.5.7.1. **Heritage Protections:** In most cases, heritage buildings are subject to strict planning and conservation regulations. A heritage-led regeneration plan helps navigate these regulations, ensuring that any changes or additions are compliant with local, national, or international conservation standards, such as national heritage protection.

2.3.5.7.2. **Conservation Standards:** The CDP, JULAP, Carlow 2040

plan and the Heritage Led Regeneration Plan provide clear guidance on meeting conservation standards for materials, design, and interventions. This includes aligning with established frameworks such as **Conservation Principles** or **Charter of Venice** (for internationally recognized heritage) as well as industry best practices.

2.3.5.8. 6. Enhancing the Building's Context and Surrounding Area

2.3.5.8.1. **Urban Regeneration:** The proposed project will contribute to broader urban regeneration efforts, transforming a long neglected and derelict building into a vibrant, and sustainable neighbourhood. By preserving the cultural fabric of the area, the refurbishment can help increase property values, attract businesses, and improve public realm spaces.

2.3.5.8.2. **Improving Accessibility:** The proposed refurbishment will include upgrading the building to meet modern accessibility standards (e.g., wheelchair ramps, wider doorways, more legible signage, sensory spaces), ensuring that it serves a broader community while respecting its historical elements. This will also be done in such a way as to ensure dignity of access.

2.3.5.8.3. **Public Spaces:** The regeneration plan can integrate public spaces such as public realm, new streets, green elements, and community rooms

that make the building more inclusive, accessible and useful to the public while complementing its heritage value.

2.3.5.9. **7. Economic Viability and Investment**

2.3.5.9.1. **Attracting Investment:** The Heritage-led Regeneration Plan is an important advocate for funding and investment from grant aided sources. Projects such as this can also incentivise private investment in adjoining sites.

2.3.5.9.2. **Long-Term Economic Sustainability:** By retaining the building's unique characteristics, the refurbishment helps ensure that the building can attract community users and visitors, contributing to its long-term financial sustainability and civic use.

2.3.5.10. **8. Skill Development and Craftsmanship**

2.3.5.10.1. **Traditional Skills Preservation:** The proposed works will involve the use of traditional craftsmanship and building techniques that are crucial for authentic restoration and refurbishment. This helps preserve valuable skills and crafts, such as stone masonry, woodwork, or decorative plasterwork.

2.3.5.10.2. **Job Creation:** Refurbishing a heritage building often requires specialized tradespeople and workers, thus creating jobs and providing opportunities for skill

development in the local community.

2.3.5.11. **9. Protecting and Celebrating Local Identity**

2.3.5.11.1. **Cultural Significance:** By refurbishing a historic building, the regeneration plan helps preserve and celebrate local cultural identity. This could include restoring public landmarks, such as theatres, town halls, or factories, which often play an important role in the community's history and identity.

2.3.5.11.2. **Public Education:** As part of the implementation of the plan we will include educational initiatives that inform the public about the building's history and significance, enriching local culture and history through exhibitions, tours, or publications. We will also promote the positive innovative initiatives taken to modernise the historic using both modern techniques and technologies .

2.3.5.12. **10. Heritage Interpretation and Public Engagement**

2.3.5.13. **Interpretative Design:** The refurbishment process will integrate interpretative elements, such as historical plaques, interactive displays, or public art installations, to help visitors and the local community better understand the building's historical and cultural context.

2.3.5.14. **Tours and Events:** We plan to offer meeting rooms, exhibition space, and cultural events within the refurbished parts of the building so we can engage the community and visitors, creating a deeper connection to the

building's heritage and enhancing its role in modern life.

2.3.5.15. **Conclusion**

The **heritage-led regeneration plan** facilitates building refurbishment by creating a balance between preserving historical significance and meeting modern needs. By integrating historical conservation with contemporary interventions, the plan ensures that the building is functional, sustainable, and culturally relevant while respecting its architectural and historical value. It also fosters community engagement, economic revitalisation, and contributes to the long-term preservation of local heritage.

2.4. Site Historic Context:

2.4.1. *Architectural & Archaeological Heritage:*

2.4.1.1. The eastern section of the subject site is located within the Dublin Street Architectural Conservation Area as demonstrated on the Carlow Town Objectives Map as contained in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, and on Map 9.2 in the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030 (JULAP). As detailed in the JULAP, Dublin Street is one of the most important streets in the town. It contains many 18th and 19th century buildings of considerable merit, a high proportion of which are listed for protection. The charm of this street lies in the harmonious relationships between a diverse and disparate collection of buildings.

2.4.1.2. As detailed in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment², the subject building is listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in the Carlow Development Plan (RPS CT38 10000614) and described as 'A complex consisting of a banking hall with a modern addition and two bays of an older Georgian

² AHIA report, prepared by Margaret Quinlan (RIAI Conservation Architect Grade 1)

building combined to form a single unit. Date circa 1900'.

2.4.1.3. There are approx. 20 other protected structures located within 200m of the site. The most notable protected structure in proximity to the site is the Courthouse (RPS_No: CT37), which is of national importance and located c. 12m east (opposite) of the site. The Courthouse can be described as being completed in the classical style in 1834 to the designs of 'Vitruvius' Morrison, consisting of a projecting central block, screened by an ionic portico on a wide podium with a return behind Date circa 1834 (Volume 2b Appendices, Appendix VIII, Record of Protected Structures, as contained in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028).

2.4.1.4. The **AHIA** concludes the following:

1. *The proposal will not have any adverse impact on the protected structure of the former Bank of Ireland premises and will be effective in restoring some of the character of the original building.*
2. *The scheme will be of considerable benefit to the streetscape opposite the courthouse which has become degraded but has much potential, particularly with the proposed pedestrian access to the river from Court Place.*
3. *The surviving features of the older section give historical continuity and should be retained and conserved*
4. *The single-storey extension to the south is of little architectural or historical merit or significance. However, the relocation and redesign of the entrance creates an opportunity to improve the streetscape and form the approach to the riverside walk along the Barrow.*

3. Urban Design:

3.1. Facilitating Sustainable Communities:

3.1.1. There are a number of ways that we have examined in order to ensure that we can empower

the community and help to deliver a more sustainable community and services to them.

- *Conserve Energy* – We have looked at ways of both reducing the energy demands of the proposed project as well as looking at more sustainable sources of energy.
- *Reduce and Recycle Waste* - We have looked to reduce the construction wastage of the proposed works.
- *Pollution control* – We will look at ways of minimising and reusing construction waste. Please refer to our supplementary “Do No Significant Harm” report.
- *Support local businesses* – By activating a long vacant property we are helping to revitalise the area. The works will also generate jobs and business for the area during the construction
- *Develop public spaces* – It is planned to allow for a number of rooms to serve as multi-use community spaces. It is also planned to create improved public realm spaces around the building.
- *Educate your community* – A significant benefit will be achieved by promoting the historic nature of the building and the innovative modern interventions. It will also be important to promote the future intended uses and services that the building will operate.
- *Engage and consult with local community* – There has been numerous and significant public engagement and consultations as part of all the plans noted in section.

3.2. Layout, Massing & Height:

3.2.1. When dealing with the protected structure careful consideration of layout, massing, and height was

critical in preserving its architectural integrity while adapting it to modern needs. Here’s how these elements have been addressed in our proposal:

3.2.2. A. Layout

3.2.2.1. - **Respecting the Existing Footprint:** The proposed layout, new additions or alterations complement the existing footprint without overwhelming the protected structure. This means preserving the spatial relationships between the original building, any new additions, refurbishments or alterations to the existing and its surrounding environment.

3.2.2.2. - **Integration with Surrounding Context:** The proposed new development respects the urban fabric and natural context of the site. For example, the refurbishment of the “modern” extensions, respects historical sightlines, and provides an opportunity to strengthen access to the Barrow track in a more sustainable way.

3.2.2.3. - **Access and Circulation:** ~We are proposing to modify access points to the existing site and buildings (entrances, exits, ramps, etc.). This has been done with careful consideration to the flow of the original structure while accommodating more modern needs like accessibility, legibility and public use. However, these interventions will not disturb or obscure key architectural heritage features.

3.2.2.4. - **Reversibility:** All changes are reversible, meaning they can be easily identified and undone in the future if needed. This assures the long-term preservation of the structure.

3.2.3. B. Massing

3.2.3.1. - **Maintaining Proportionality:** The massing of the new elements are proportionate to the original building. This has meant dismissing design options that would have entailed additions that were too large or too imposing in relation to the protected structure.

3.2.3.2. - **Subordination to the Protected Structure:** The proposed refurbished structures will be subordinate to the protected buildings to the front of the site. This is achieved by making minimal changes in height, simpler modifications in fenestration, and more discreet upgrades to the existing structures that would be secondary to the protected original structure to the front of the site. They will not compete with or overshadow the original building's prominence.

3.2.3.3. - **Sensitive Transitions:** The transition between the protected structure and the newer extension, have been designed with massing that creates a smooth and harmonious linkage. This will involve stepping back from the line of the façade on the street and tapering the massing to reduce visual impact as well as using different materials that complement the protected structure. The materials used are clearly of their time.

3.2.3.4. - **Use of Building Layers and Heights:** The proposed works respects the rhythm of the historical architectural layers—such as floor heights, eaves, and rooflines—in the design of the refurbishment works. For instance, the vertical elements of the new extension have been considered carefully to avoid disrupting the building's proportion or historic form.

3.2.4. C. Height

3.2.4.1. - **Avoiding Over-Scale Additions:** Height changes have been handled delicately to avoid overpowering the protected structure. As the extension is necessary, it is lower in height than the original structures to avoid visual disruption.

3.2.4.2. - **Preserving Sightlines and Views:** The new extension has been designed in a way that does not block important views of the protected structure, particularly since the building forms part of a historic streetscape.

3.2.4.3. - **Subtle Roofline Adjustments:** The design of the proposed structure's roofline is such that its profile has been minimised so that the aesthetic of the protected structure is not negatively impacted.

3.2.4.4. - **Use of Materials:** The massing and height of the new extension is complemented by using different materials that contrast but complement the protected structures finishes, helping to delineate new from old.

3.2.5. Conclusion:

3.2.5.1. When dealing with the protected structure, the layout, massing, and height have been carefully considered to ensure that the new additions and changes respect the historical and architectural value of the building. This includes maintaining proportionality, minimising the impact on sightlines, and integrating new elements in a way that is both sensitive and sustainable.

3.3. Movement & Permeability:

3.3.1. Encouraging movement and permeability in architectural and urban design is essential for creating dynamic, accessible, and engaging spaces that foster social interaction and sustainability. Movement refers to the ease with which people can navigate and interact with a space, while permeability refers to how easily different parts of the urban environment connect with one another. By integrating these concepts, cities and buildings can become more interconnected, liveable, and human-centred. Here are some strategies we are proposing to use to encourage both movement and permeability in architectural and urban design:

3.3.2. A. Create Accessible, Walkable Streetscapes:

3.3.2.1. **Pedestrian Prioritisation:** The new "street" and public spaces that prioritise pedestrians over cars, with wide, well-lit footpaths and traffic calming measures (e.g., raised intersections). As part of this proposal

we are removing the existing vehicular access from the site onto the Old Athy road. This entrance will now only be used for pedestrians and cyclists. The vehicular access is being proposed through the adjoining council car park.

3.3.2.2. **Active Frontages:** The extension has been designed to encourage active facades to all public sides. Transparent facades (e.g. public access to spaces) will invite pedestrians to engage with their surroundings. This will create visual permeability and encourages movement within the area.

3.3.2.3. **Wayfinding and Signage:** Clear, intuitive signage and pathways will make it easier for people to navigate the spaces, encouraging exploration and minimizing barriers to movement. It will also aid the public in accessing building services. We have also allowed for future permeability options with adjoining sites.

3.3.3. B. Design for Mixed-Use Development

3.3.3.1. **Diverse Functions:** Incorporating a mix of private office, public facing services, cultural, and civic amenity spaces in proximity ensures that people have reasons to move through and interact with different areas. Mixed-use spaces promote foot traffic and will support diverse user needs.

3.3.4. C. Promote Connectivity and Intersections

3.3.4.1. **Route Options:** This project will help to implement permeable street networks in the wider area that provide multiple routes to navigate, allowing people to choose their path and avoid dead-ends or long detours, while facilitating positive regeneration of the wider area.

3.3.4.2. **Linking Green Spaces:** Integrating parks, green-ways and blue-ways, and other public spaces into the street grid can help make areas more accessible and promote walking or cycling. Green corridors provide permeable

spaces that connect different parts of a town. This is one of the purposes of the proposed greenway through the site.

3.3.5. D. Design Open Public Spaces

3.3.5.1. **Parks and Plazas:** We have designed open public spaces that encourage movement and interaction. Plazas, parks, and other gathering places allow people to move freely and meet in dynamic, open environments. This project offers a unique opportunity to connect public buildings, civic spaces and private lands, which is why we have removed site access restrictions.

3.3.5.2. **Civic Squares and Courtyards:** The proposed project incorporates a central reception space that has multiple access routes from both within the building and from the outdoor spaces to allow permeability through large openings or pathways, connecting different parts of the urban fabric. It will also facilitate equal access to the main orientation space.

3.3.5.3. **Flexible Spaces:** We have designed spaces that are flexible in their use (e.g., public buildings that can host, performances, community events or public meetings and workshops). Such spaces encourage people to visit often and interact with the environment in different ways.

3.3.6. E. Incorporate Green Infrastructure

3.3.6.1. **Permeable Pavements and Green Streets:** The proposed streetscape and footpaths are designed with permeable materials that allow water to infiltrate the ground, reducing runoff and making the environment more sustainable. This creates a sense of movement both in terms of water flow and pedestrian movement with meeting our SUDS obligation as an integral part of the design solution.

3.3.6.2. **Bicycle Paths and Greenways:** Encourage cycling by integrating a dedicated

bike lane and bike-sharing programs into urban design. Bike paths will be combined with the pedestrian route that offer a safe, attractive route through cities, improving permeability across sites once the backland site has been opened up.

3.3.6.3. **Nature Trails and Urban Green Links:** We are proposing to establish green corridors that connect urban parks, rainwater gardens, green walls and green spaces, which encourage walking, cycling, and biodiversity.

3.3.6.4. **Car-Free Zones:** We are proposing to implement a car-free route through the site, to prioritise pedestrian movement and encourage more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, biking, and public transit.

3.3.6.5. **Bike Share and E-scooter Programs:** We are proposing to incorporate facilities for bike-share stations, e-scooters, and other micro-mobility solutions in urban planning, creating more flexible ways to move across the town.

3.3.7. G. Design Buildings with Permeable Ground Floors

3.3.7.1. **Open Ground Floors:** We have designed the project to create permeability at ground level by incorporating open, transparent, or semi-transparent spaces. Examples include a lobby or corridors that invite people to pass through or linger.

3.3.7.2. **Integrated Pathways:** We have tried to ensure that pathways through buildings or urban blocks are wide, well-lit, and welcoming, allowing people to easily move from one space to another. This could involve linking sites, streets, public spaces, and parks with easy-to-navigate routes through the site.

3.3.7.3. **Transparency and Visibility:** Where possible we have used materials that create visual permeability, such as glass doors, so people can see into public areas or through

passageways, enhancing safety and accessibility while inviting curiosity and movement.

3.3.8. H. Human Scale and Form

3.3.8.1. **Create Human-Scale Spaces:** We have avoided large multi-storey, monotonous blocks or stretches of concrete. The spaces have been designed at a human scale that encourage exploration, lingering, and interaction. This could include small-scale streetscapes and plazas that invite people to stop and interact with their environment.

3.3.8.2. **Architectural Openings and Public Connections:** We have created building entrances and openings that allow for the free flow of people through their spaces. This permeability creates public passageways within private buildings and invites movement. We have also prioritised making the universal access entrance of equal significance on the front façade without damaging the protected entrance.

3.3.9. I. Use Landscaping to Promote Movement

3.3.9.1. **Landscaped Pathways:** We have incorporate tree-lined paths where possible that encourage walking, exploration, and leisurely movement through the site. The proposed green spaces, green roofs, green walls and trees help soften the urban landscape and create more attractive, pedestrian-friendly routes.

3.3.9.2. **Street Furniture:** The design will include public benches, seating areas, and possible public art installations along the shared boundary with the apartment scheme that encourage people to stop, rest, and socialize, creating areas of engagement that naturally support foot traffic and human interaction.

3.3.10. J. Adaptive Reuse of Buildings

3.3.10.1. **Repurpose Existing Structures:** Instead of demolishing the entire building, we are reusing the existing structure, where protected

structures will be repurposed for new uses. This maintains the permeability of the area, preserving historical layers of the urban fabric and making spaces more meaningful and engaging for users.

3.3.10.2. **Mixed-Use Redevelopment:** We are proposing to reuse existing infrastructure, reimagine older or underused buildings for mixed-use purposes so we can integrate new and old spaces, allowing for greater connectivity and movement across the town.

3.3.11. Conclusion

3.3.11.1. We are proposing to create movement and permeability in architectural and urban design which is about fostering interaction, access, and connectivity between people, spaces, and functions. By prioritising walking, cycling, and public transportation, and designing open, interconnected spaces that are accessible to all, we can create urban environments that encourage dynamic engagement, inclusivity, and sustainability

3.4. Landscape Strategy:

3.4.1. Given the Urban context of the site there are limited opportunities for traditional “large open green space”. We have had to be creative with our planting and nature areas.

3.4.2. Consequently, our largest green area is on the roof where we are planning a sedum roof. This will be lower maintenance and self-sustaining.

3.4.3. We are looking a possible rainwater garden along the western boundary (rear boundary) of the site. This will be subject to detailed landscape design prior to tendering as it might also be the most suitable location for some native Irish trees and hedge planting.

3.4.4. There is also a possible rainwater garden location along the northern boundary (at the end of the new build extension).

3.4.5. We are also looking at introducing a green wall on a corner element of the single storey extension along the south facing facade (the end of the building facing the car parking).

3.5. Boundary Treatments:

3.5.1. The majority of the existing boundaries will effectively be retained as is.

3.5.2. The existing vehicular gate will be removed so the site will be opened up permanently.

3.5.3. There is the possibility in the future that the boundary between our site and the apartment scheme could eventually be removed, to create a wider segregated streetscape and public realm space.

3.5.4. There is a mesh fence between our proposed car park and the existing council car park. It is intended that this will eventually be removed entirely and the two car parks amalgamated. This will facilitate the pedestrianisation of on current vehicular access.

3.6. Car Parking & EV Charging:

3.6.1. The roof of the proposed extension offers significant capacity for PV panels. Should more be required on detailed design of the system to meet the onsite requirements then the “above car parking” option can be availed of in the future.

3.6.2. While we are providing car parking on site it is intended to encourage building users to avail of more sustainable local and active transport options.

3.6.3. It is also intended to provide a number of designated EV charging points beside the adjoining the buildings rear doors.

3.6.4. All carking spaces to be provided will be ducted to future proof for the expansion of the charging infrastructure on site.

3.6.5. The council are actively looking to expand the existing bike rental scheme in use throughout the town. This project will offer another key civic node for an expanded bike scheme.

3.6.6. The council are also looking at providing charging points for e-scooters.

3.7. Bike Parking:

3.7.1. We will be proving bike parking and a new e-bike rental location.

4. Building Design:

4.1. Site Strategy:

4.1.1. An integrated Masterplan

4.1.1.1. The project is developed as part of an overall design strategy that evolved as part of the Project Carlow 2040 plan. The original project brief set out some of the criteria as outlined in the Project Carlow 2040 objectives.

4.1.2. Back-lands site and River Access

4.1.2.1. The design proposal focuses on the site of the former Bank of Ireland branch premises. Regeneration of this site will help activate the site to the west between our site and the River Barrow. Our proposed project will offer the potential for a new pedestrian link through both, from the town centre to the Barrow track. This will help to unlock the potential offered by improved access and increased urban engagement with the waterfront.



Fig.03: The above plan showing the overall site circulation.

4.1.3. Site and Building Entrance

- 4.1.3.1. It is intended to add the proposed new car parking to the existing council car park to the rear, thus freeing up the existing access route to be used for pedestrian and cycle access only.
- 4.1.3.2. We are also proposing to provide EV charging points with PV panels on the building roof.
- 4.1.3.3. Given the protected structures configuration, it is impossible to create a universally accessible entrance through the existing front door. A core objective of the project brief was to provide equal universal access for all. To achieve this we are proposing a new pedestrian entrance from the main

street that gives improved universal access to the main reception area.

4.2. Building Uses:

4.2.1. Brief Requirements

- 4.2.1.1. There are a range of end users to be accommodated as part of this project brief. This includes council staff, members of the public using council services, councillors, community groups, service providers and members of the public unfamiliar with the premises.

4.3. Design Evolution:

4.3.1. Sustainability Strategies & Objectives:

4.3.1.1. A. Minimise building related impacts on the environment.

- 4.3.1.1.1. Minimizing building-related impacts on the environment is crucial for sustainable development and responsible architecture. There are several strategies and approaches to reducing a building's environmental footprint, ranging from design and construction practices to operational management and demolition. Here are some key ways to minimize these impacts:

4.3.1.2. B. Energy Efficiency and Conservation

- 4.3.1.2.1. - **Building Insulation:** We are proposing a significant increase of appropriate insulation in walls, roofs, and floors which will help to reduce the need for heating and cooling, significantly lowering energy consumption. It is also intended to concentrate on reducing

thermal bridging. High-performance windows (e.g., double and triple glazing) will also reduce heat loss. (Refer to the preliminary BER assessment conducted by the South East Energy Agency on our proposal). It is intended that as we work through detailed design, we will look at ways of further improving the buildings performance.

4.3.1.2.2. - **Efficient MHRV Systems:**

We are proposing to install energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (MHRV) systems which will drastically reduce energy use. Systems like heat pumps or radiant heating are more energy-efficient alternatives.

4.3.1.2.3. - **LED Lighting:**

We are switching to energy-efficient lighting, such as LEDs, which consume less electricity and last longer than conventional bulbs while reducing energy use.

4.3.1.2.4. - **Smart Building Systems:**

We are going to incorporate automation systems that optimize energy usage—such as smart thermostats and motion-sensor lighting—ensures that energy is only used when needed. We will also look at implementing a BMS system in the scheme.

4.3.1.3. C. Sustainable Building Materials

4.3.1.3.1. - **Low-Impact Materials:**

We will endeavour to use materials that have a lower environmental impact, such as locally sourced, recycled, or reclaimed materials. These reduce the carbon footprint

associated with transportation and extraction. For example, as a local authority we can reuse some of the tarmac used in the existing car park for resurfacing of roads in our existing county wide road network.

4.3.1.3.2. - **Sustainable Sourcing:** We have chosen materials that are sustainably sourced (e.g., FSC-certified wood) and have minimal impact on ecosystems.

4.3.1.3.3. - **Green Building Materials:** We have specified eco-friendly materials like certified timbers, recycled steel, or GGBS for concrete mixes, which have lower embodied energy and carbon footprints.

4.3.1.3.4. - **Non-Toxic Materials:** We will avoid materials that emit harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or other pollutants. Low-VOC paints, finishes, and adhesives improve indoor air quality. We have also had preliminary discussion with a local community enterprise producing recycled interior paints.

4.3.1.4. *D. Water Conservation*

4.3.1.4.1. - **Low-Flow Fixtures:** We will install low-flow taps, showerheads, and toilets to reduce water consumption.

4.3.1.4.2. - **Rainwater Harvesting:** We intend to collect and store rainwater for irrigation, flushing toilets, or other non-potable uses, minimizing the demand on local water supplies.

4.3.1.4.3. - **Water-Efficient Landscaping:** We will specify drought-resistant or native plants in landscaping that require minimal irrigation. Xeriscaping helps reduce water usage in outdoor areas.

4.3.1.4.4. **SUDS Based Solutions:** Refer to the Engineers reports for more details on the SUDS based site solution for surface water, but it should be noted that the SUDS considerations were key in determining the benefits of permeable paving solutions across the site.

4.3.1.4.5. - **Greywater Recycling:** Reuse water from sinks, showers, and washing machines for irrigation or toilet flushing to reduce water wastage where feasible.

4.3.1.5. *E. Renewable Energy Integration*

4.3.1.5.1. - **Solar Panels:** We are proposing to install photovoltaic (solar) panels on the roof or as part of the building's design will reduce reliance on grid electricity and provide a renewable source of energy. Please refer to the preliminary BER assessment for details on exact capacity and expected contributions.

4.3.1.5.2. - **Air to Water Heat Pumps:** We are proposing to use a heat pump for the space heating requirements as it provides an efficient, renewable energy solution, especially when combined with MHRV and onsite PV panels.

4.3.1.5.3. - **Mechanical Heat Recovery Ventilation:** - The use of MHRV in combination with heat pumps, underfloor heating, low temperature radiators and on-site PV panels, while optimising passive solar gain, will make for a very efficient space heating solution.

4.3.1.6. *F. Sustainable Site Development*

4.3.1.6.1. - **Site Selection:** This is a site that has already previously been developed. As such it will have minimal environmental impact. It is outside the ecologically sensitive area of the Barrow SAC. It is also outside the Barrow flood zone.

4.3.1.6.2. - **Minimizing Soil Disturbance:** We are proposing to use construction methods that minimize soil disturbance and prevent erosion. For example, we are preserving existing boundary vegetation and using permeable paving materials to reduce runoff and promotes natural water infiltration.

4.3.1.6.3. - **Biodiversity Preservation:** We will ensure that the building and site design maintain and enhance local biodiversity by preserving existing trees, planting native species, and providing green spaces like water gardens, green walls and green roofs.

4.3.1.7. *G. Waste Reduction and Recycling*

4.3.1.7.1. - **Construction Waste Management:** Implement waste management plans during construction to divert materials

like wood, metal, brick and concrete from landfills by recycling or reusing them. It is also intended to reuse the existing car park tarmac surface on some of the Local Authorities Road surfacing projects around the county.

4.3.1.7.2. - **Flexible Design:** The project has been designed with flexibility in mind, such as open plan office areas, so they can be adapted for future needs, reducing the need for major renovations or demolitions that generate waste.

4.3.1.7.3. - **Material Reuse:** We are incorporating reclaimed materials into the design of the building such as reclaimed wood, bricks, or steel minimising the need for new materials and reducing environmental impact.

4.3.1.8. *H. Indoor Environmental Quality*

4.3.1.8.1. - **MHRV:** The new extension to the existing building will use MHRV to a passive standard Rapid Natural Ventilation will also be possible. (e.g., operable windows, ventilation shafts, or stack ventilation) to reduce the need for mechanical cooling and improve air quality.

4.3.1.8.2. **Airtightness:** It is our ambition to build to a towards Passive Standard, which would be well in excess of the Irish building regulations standard of Part L regulations at a q50 of 5.0. For MHRV to run efficiently then

that standard should be less than 3.0 as a minimum. It is our ambition to be close to the Passive Standard of 0.6 (ACH50).

4.3.1.8.3. - **Daylighting:** The scheme has been designed to make the most of passive solar gain by incorporate large double glazed, thermally broken window frames on the south facing side of the building. Other sides of the new building will have triple glazed thermally broken window frames. South facing, skylights, or light wells to maximize natural daylight and reduce the need for artificial lighting during the day.

4.3.1.8.4. - **Low-Energy Appliances:** We will use energy-efficient, low-water consumption appliances (e.g., dishwashers, refrigerators) to further reduce energy and water use.

4.3.1.9. *I. Carbon Neutrality and Net Zero Energy Buildings*

4.3.1.9.1. - **Carbon Offsetting:** If it's impossible to avoid some carbon emissions, buildings can offset their carbon impact by investing in carbon-offset programs, such as tree planting or renewable energy projects.

4.3.1.9.2. - **NZEB Design:** We are striving for a net-zero energy building, meaning the building generates as much energy as it consumes. This can be achieved through the combination of energy-efficient design, renewable energy generation,

and effective energy storage systems.

4.3.1.10. *J. Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)*

4.3.1.10.1. - **LCA of Materials and Systems:** We have undertaken a preliminary Life Cycle Assessment³ to evaluate the environmental impact of materials, products, and building systems across their full lifespan, from extraction to disposal. This ensures that the building's environmental footprint is minimized throughout its entire life cycle.

4.3.1.11. *K. Green Certifications*

4.3.1.11.1. - **BER Assessment** – Please refer to the preliminary BER⁴ assessment prepared which will be used as a live and interactive design tools to monitor and respond to the design as it evolves. We will also be using other assessments such as LCA and LCC analysis to monitors impacts and inform the project evolution. It should also be noted that the nature of the environmental control systems proposed lends itself to being easily monitored and assessed over a given time period or use cycle.

4.3.1.12. *L. Sustainable Demolition and Repurposing*

4.3.1.12.1. - **Deconstruction Instead of Demolition:** It will be a requirement of the construction contract that a deconstruction programme is put in place an implemented instead of a

³ Preliminary LCA conducted by the South East Energy Agency

⁴ Preliminary BER prepared by the South East Energy Agency

demolition plan. This will allow us to salvage materials that can be reused or recycled.

4.3.1.12.2. - **Repurposing Existing Structures:** Where possible we are proposing to renovate or repurpose existing structures instead of building new ones. This reduces the energy and material impact of new construction and preserves the embodied energy of the old building. It also has the dual benefit of maintaining in use the elements of the project that are of local architectural heritage value that also give the quarter its unique character and identity.

4.3.1.13. *Conclusion*

4.3.1.13.1. We are trying to minimise the environmental impacts of the building, which will involve a holistic approach that incorporates energy efficiency, sustainable materials, water conservation, renewable energy, waste reduction, and thoughtful site planning. By prioritizing sustainability in both the design and operational phases of the building, design teams and building operators can significantly reduce a building's ecological footprint and contribute to a greener, more sustainable future.

4.3.1.14. *Create an attractive public realm to facilitate increased footfall to the Barrow track & town centre.*

4.3.1.14.1. Access to and through the site by private car remains possible, however as described previously the road space

currently allocated to vehicles will be repurposed to pedestrian use (through improved public realm and footpath areas), public transport and cycling (to improve access to the river and open adjoining sites).

4.3.1.14.2. The design also permits flexibility in terms of future pedestrianisation and/or permeability provision, whereby it will be possible through a modal shift in town centre transport.

4.3.2. Design Standards:

4.3.2.1. The proposed development has been designed with reference to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) with regards to the principles of design, such as viewing the proposed access route as a potential new public realm space and as a link route. Its hierarchy placing pedestrians ahead of motorists, and specific standards, such as lane and carriageway widths and appropriate corner radii.

4.3.2.2. Consultation with internal sections of Carlow County Council and County Council Fire Department has ensured that the design of the proposed development complies with access requirements under the Building Regulations, Technical Guidance Document B Fire Safety. This requires a minimum road width and access routes, which is provided as part of the proposed layout.

4.3.2.3. Universal access will be delivered by applying the principles defined through Buildings for everyone and other applicable standards, guidelines and best practices.

4.3.3. Options Studied



4.3.3.1. The first iteration we considered was the option of a light refurbishment of the existing structures on site. This presented a number of issues that required detailed consideration:

4.3.3.1.1. All existing structures are of an age where there are no Radon barriers. Carlow is known as a designated high radon zone.

4.3.3.1.2. The existing footprint is not compatible with the spatial requirements of the project brief.

4.3.3.1.3. To bring the existing structures up to modern building standards would require a very significant deep retro fit. This would be cost prohibitive with very

4.3.3.1.4. This solution offers little additional spatial gain.



4.3.3.2. The second iteration was the option of a multi-storey extension to the rear of the protected structures which would be retained and refurbished.

4.3.3.2.1. The multi-storey extension option is more efficient in terms of site coverage.

4.3.3.2.2. It is however over imposing in terms of mass and scale to the sensitive receptor such as the protected structure.



4.3.3.3. The third iteration that was explored was what we eventually applied for the first Part 8 planning permission for.

4.3.3.3.1. It involved demolishing the recent extensions, refurbishing the protected structure and

creating a new single storey scale appropriate extension.

4.3.3.4. What has subsequently become necessary, as a result of the grant funding obtained, is to redesign the project within the financial constraints of the allocated grant.

4.3.3.5. As a result of costing the previous iterations it was decided to go the route of a deep retrofit of the existing structures with a minimal increase in overall footprint.

5. New Bauhaus Ambitions

5.1.1. Delivering a project that complies with the New European Bauhaus (NEB) involves aligning with its core principles: sustainability, inclusivity, and aesthetics. The New European Bauhaus initiative, launched by the European Commission, aims to combine design, sustainability, and inclusiveness in the creation of future living spaces and community environments. Here's a number of ways that we have designed this scheme to factor in NEB compliance all the way through the project from inception to delivery and completion on site:

5.1.2. Key Principles of the New European Bauhaus

5.1.2.1. The three pillars the New European Bauhaus focuses on are:

- **Sustainability:** Minimising environmental impact and fostering a circular economy.
- **Aesthetics:** Creating beautiful, engaging, and meaningful environments.
- **Inclusion:** Ensuring accessibility and equity for all, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups.

5.1.3. Understanding these principles helps in guiding project design and execution to ensure that it aligns with the NEB's vision.

5.1.4. Design with Sustainability at the Core

5.1.4.1. Use of Eco-friendly Materials: We have chosen materials that are renewable, recyclable, and have minimal environmental impact. We have prioritised materials with low carbon footprints, such as recycled paint, GGBS for concrete mixes, sedum roof and locally sourced materials.

5.1.4.2. Energy Efficiency: We have designed the project so that the building complies with the highest energy-efficiency standards. We have implemented passive design techniques, energy-efficient MHRV systems, and renewable energy solutions (solar panels, heat pumps, etc.).

5.1.4.3. Circular Economy: We have focused on the reuse of materials, and considered the entire lifecycle of the project, from design to construction and eventual deconstruction or recycling.

5.1.4.4. Green Infrastructure: We have incorporated green roofs, urban gardens, biodiversity-friendly design interventions, enhancing the environment and promoting resilience to climate change.

5.1.5. Foster Inclusivity and Accessibility

5.1.5.1. Participatory Design Process: We involved the community and stakeholders from the beginning of the formation of the CDP, LAP, Heritage Led Regeneration Plan, Project Carlow 2040 Plan as well as in the design and decision-making process as part of the Part 8 process. We will also be engaging with vulnerable user groups as we get into the detailed design stage.

5.1.5.2. Universal Design Principles: A key tenant of the project brief was improving and prioritising universal access. The project is accessible to all, including people with disabilities. We have incorporated features such as primarily single storey design, ramps,

wide doors, low-energy lighting, sensory rooms and intuitive navigation systems.

5.1.5.3. **Social Inclusion:** Spaces have been designed to encourage community interaction and connectivity, with shared public spaces and places for social activities that bring people together.

5.1.6. Ensure Aesthetic Excellence and Human-Centred Design

5.1.6.1. **Artistic Collaboration:** As an Architect I have prioritised beauty and creativity while adhering to the NEB values. Aesthetics should be used not just for visual appeal, but to inspire emotional and cultural connection and have their own inherent value.

5.1.6.2. **Cultural Relevance:** We have designed spaces that resonate with local history, culture, and identity, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among the people who will use them.

5.1.6.3. **Human-Centred Design:** We have prioritised the well-being and comfort of the users by designing spaces that promote mental and physical health, connection to nature, and a sense of tranquillity.

5.1.6.4. **Biophilic Design:** We intend to integrate natural elements such as plants, green walls, green roofs, natural lighting, and open spaces that encourage interaction with nature, which also contributes to our sustainability goals.

5.1.7. Collaborate Across Disciplines

5.1.7.1. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** We have brought together architects, urban planners, engineers, sustainability experts, and community members to ensure a holistic approach to design and execution throughout the different stages of the plans and project designs.

5.1.7.2. **Co-creation with Local Communities:** This is a fundamental core principal of the NEB. The project is tailored to the needs, traditions, and aspirations of the community through participatory processes and engagement with local stakeholders from master-planning and project inception.

5.1.8. Adopt Innovative Technologies

5.1.8.1. **Smart and Sustainable Technologies:** We plan to implemented smart technologies that improve efficiency and quality of life, such as smart grids, energy management systems, and sensor-based technologies that monitor environmental conditions such as a BMS.

5.1.8.2. **Digital Tools:** We have utilised digital tools like Building Information Modelling (BIM) and virtual reality to optimize design and construction processes, as well as to engage stakeholders in real-time decision-making. BIM software has been instrumental in the projects design and presentation to Part 8 planning. We have also used energy modelling software and LCA calculation tools.

5.1.9. Ensure Long-Term Impact

5.1.9.1. **Social Impact:** The project will contribute positively to the social fabric of the community, such as providing public spaces, fostering economic opportunities, improved access to council services and improving quality of life.

5.1.9.2. **Environmental Impact:** We will ensure that the project not only adheres to environmental standards but also has a long-term positive impact on biodiversity, reduces pollution, and mitigates against climate change. Particular attention should be paid to the SUDS assessment. We have also carried out screening reports to confirm there are no negative impacts.

5.1.9.3. **Sustainability Beyond Construction:** We have considered the long-term management of the project, from maintenance to operational sustainability, to ensure that the values of the New European Bauhaus are sustained over time. We plan for the continued use of BIM software as a facilities management tool along with a BMS system for ongoing asset management.

5.1.10. Ensure Compliance with European and Local Regulations

5.1.10.1. **EU Green Deal:** We have designed the project so that it aligns with the broader goals of the EU Green Deal, which aims for carbon neutrality by 2050.

5.1.10.2. **Regulatory Compliance:** We have made sure that the project complies with European regulations related to sustainability, accessibility, and safety, as well as local building regulations and planning laws.

5.1.10.3. **Certification Standards:** We will obtain the relevant sustainability certifications such as BER so as to be able to demonstrate the environmental performance of the project. Preliminary BER assessments have been a pivotal design aid with design decision throughout the design process.

5.1.11. Focus on Education and Outreach

5.1.11.1. **Engage with the Public:** We will create outreach programs to promote and educate the community about the sustainable features of the project and how they can actively participate in maintaining it.

5.1.11.2. **Knowledge Sharing:** Share lessons learned and best practices from the project with other communities or developers to help spread the principles of the New European Bauhaus.

5.1.12. Measure and Monitor Impact

5.1.12.1. **Evaluate Outcomes:** We will implement mechanisms to evaluate the success of the project in terms of sustainability, inclusivity, and aesthetics.

5.1.12.2. **Continuous Improvement:** We will use user feedback and monitoring to improve the project over time, ensuring that it continues to evolve and meet the needs of its users while maintaining sustainability.

By incorporating these elements into our project, we can help ensure that it not only complies with the New European Bauhaus vision but also stands as a model for sustainable, inclusive, and aesthetically engaging spaces for future generations.

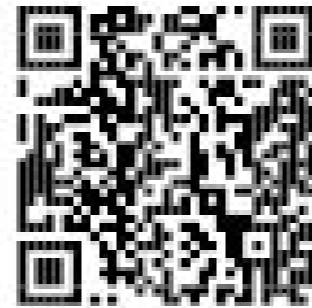
6. Appendix:

6.1.1. Planning Drawings – Refer to separate PDF attachments

6.1.2. Planning Reports – Refer to separate PDF attachments

6.1.3. Refer to earlier YouTube video of proposal (The proposal has evolved since this animation was made, but it's still relevant):

https://youtu.be/gzz_GwS6pyo?si=sDNaCAB6E3HLzy6A



6.1.4. Refer to YouTube video of current proposal:

<https://youtu.be/hboua73jV1s>

