

**Application for Approval in Accordance with
Section 177AE of Planning and Development
Act 2000 (as Amended) for
River Barrow Activity Centre
2021**

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For
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1. Introduction and Background

Carlow County Council (CCC) has had a long-term objective of developing a centralised Centre on the banks of the River Barrow creating a major community and recreational asset for Carlow town. This water-based development combines both recreational and economic briefs whilst also providing a base for many of the clubs active in the area. It provides storage, changing and community facilities coupled with a central café facing onto the River and becoming the public face of the scheme.

The River Barrow Activity Centre (RBAC) is being developed by the Council as part of an urban regeneration initiative and hopes to enhance the user experience of the River while revitalising the wider area and ensuring ongoing environmental protection of the river.

This project was tendered publicly in June of 2019 and awarded in Autumn of that year. Planning design for this project is ongoing, with this report forming part of the Approval Application by Carlow County Council to An Bord Pleanála. Approval is sought for this development in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article 249 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000 (as amended) and Sections 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The proposed scheme represents an outstanding opportunity to bring about comprehensive regeneration of the area and promote use of the river, reflecting its historic use — reconnecting users with the water as they once were. (Figure 1 below shows a crane on the proposed Site A, adjacent to the Barrow Navigation Companies Stores, Stables & Dock.)

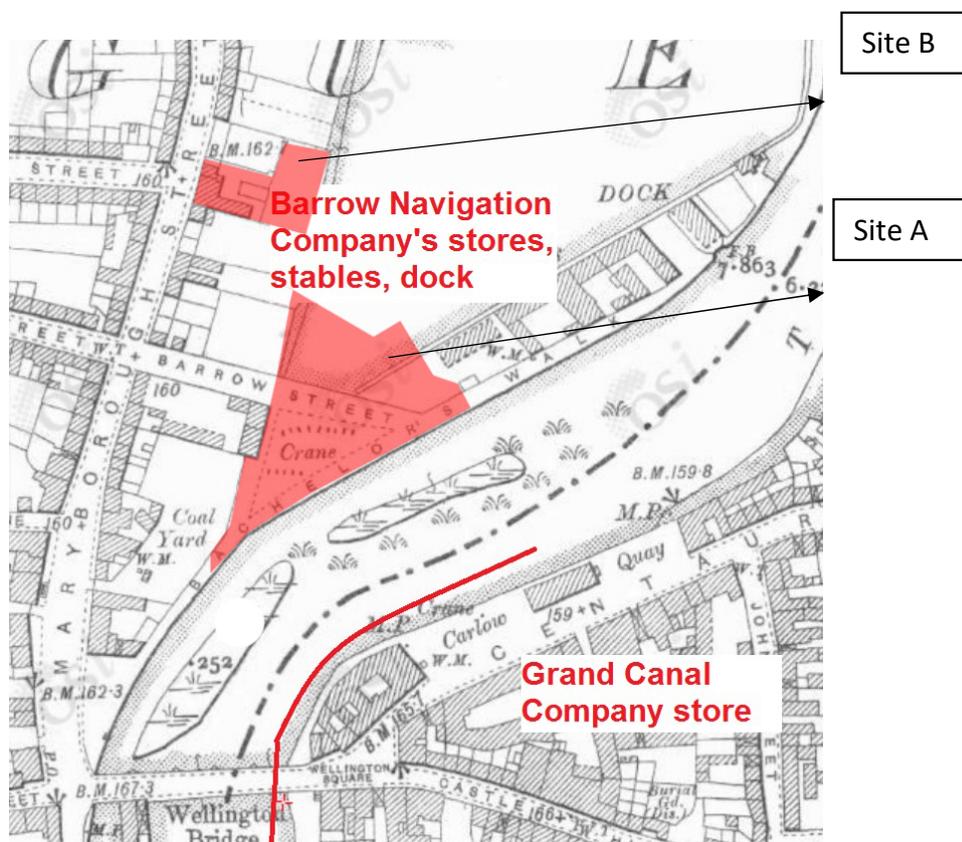


Figure 1: Historic Map with Site A and Site B indicated in red.

The proposed scheme will encourage this regeneration and reuse of the site, whether this happens physically through boating activity or visually from the café, terrace and covered public seating area.

The proposed plaza spaces adjacent will create safe places for people to sit and enjoy as well as pass through, with the potential for them to be used for events/activities. By simply occupying the space and promoting a vibrant culture adjacent to the water, it is envisaged that any potential for anti-social behaviour can be eliminated, and park users can feel safe and secure.

The brief for each of the units determined its overall form and volume, and they each have an identifying characteristic, which hints at their function. These forms are located to be distinct from one another in this way, but a subtle palette of materials (metal, timber, steel, polycarbonate and glass) is used to coalesce the building as a unified whole. The material choices knit together the three built elements to give the Centre a distinct yet cohesive identity.

2. Objectives and Constraints

The key objectives of the proposed development are as follows:

- Creation of a water based activity centre for Carlow to support community & recreational needs and to become an anchor for tourism in the area
- Renewed connection with the River Barrow for local residents and visitors alike
- To provide storage space, changing, training and meeting facilities for local clubs
- Provide facilities such as accessible bathrooms, café and outdoor seating area which bolster the Carlow Town Park as a destination for users and not just a space to pass through
- Engagement in a focused consultation with key stakeholders

The key constraints identified were as follows:

- Location is partly within a Special Area of Conservation
- Flood risk considerations
- Vehicular access requirements, including access for deliveries and emergency Services
- Site conditions at Site A reveal that the land was a former 'made ground' site and therefore thorough analysis of the soil through core sampling was required to be undertaken
- Existing utilities and drainage cutting through the sites (Site A and B)
- Requirement to address scale of the structure by dividing the building into smaller masses so not to detract from the natural setting of the river and the park adjacent
- Preserving as much of the green area as possible (this was done by developing within a corner of the park which comprises a more un-utilised part of the wider parkland area)

3. Description of Proposed Development

As outlined above, the aim of the proposed development is to revitalise the area and create a water based activity & community centre for both local residents and tourists to the area.

To meet this objective, the site chosen for the facility is a more under-utilised corner of the park. Its triangular shape informed the geometry of the masterplan with the three buildings each defining a corner and creating a shared central space, which is to be the heart of the scheme.

Works comprise of the main building works at Site A and associated carparking at Site B.

Works at **Site A** comprise of an overall scheme broken into 3 buildings as below, with the key features being the central pedestrianised area, the community buildings integrating several users and the stepped riverside access. Refer to drawing no: 1964-P-0001 for existing images of Site A.



Figure 2: Site Layout Plan (KHA)

1. The Centre is the **community building and café.**

This is one and half storey in height facing onto the river with an outdoor terrace and covered seating area. It has a mono-pitch roof raking upward to maximise river views and admit sunlight. The roof is a standing seam grey metal or similar to match that of the boathouse. A timber clad upper to match the boathouse appears to float above

walls of glass wrapping the main body. This is interspersed with metal brise soleil on the south and east to prevent overheating of the volume within. To the rear the thermally modified timber cladding meets a rendered and painted mostly solid volume which houses the ancillary spaces associated with the café. This volume opens directly to the outdoor space facilitating the sale of take away refreshments from beneath the canopy.

The lightweight steel and polycarbonate canopy provides shelter to users sitting outdoors to dine or queuing for take away while admitting light. It ties together the two buildings running parallel to the river's edge and defines the public seating area which rakes towards the Bachelor's Walk creating a new connection to the river's edge.

2. The facilities building:

The facilities building is the counterpart of the community/café building bookending the central space. It consists of:

- a. Changing/shower/toilet facilities including an accessible suite and covered outdoor shower facilities at ground floor level.
- b. A small storage locker within the ground floor of this unit, for the Parks department.
- c. The first floor boasts two large volumes for sports/recreation/training and community use with an additional storage area.
- d. This building is serviced by a TGD M compliant stair and lift.
- e. This building also has a public facet with social enterprise units facing onto the public realm space.

Where it abuts the outdoor dining area and new connection to the river this building has a subtle single storey flat roof volume rendered and painted to match the café. This houses two social enterprise units facing outward while tucked discreetly behind are universally accessible toilet/shower and changing facilities, with a bank of covered outdoor showers which can be shuttered at night. The remainder of the building is a two storey volume which crouches down on the riverside elevation with a roof matching the café but raked in the opposite direction. The same cladding is used to the upper volume housing the community facilities. Where it passes in front of large glass openings the cladding acts as a solar shade during the day and diffuses any light emitted by night.

The ground floor volume is finished to match the café, with a largely solid exterior for privacy and security, small linear openings of opaque glass admit light to the changing facilities housed within. The stairwell, lift core and plant room define the centre of this block and knit together the two volumes. A small bike store clad with the same material is located adjacent to the rear abuts the on-site parking area while allowing safe pedestrian passage to and from.

Please refer to the materials & precedents drawings (Ref No: 1964-P-0015:1964-P-0018) within Appendix A –Architects Drawings.

3. The **storage facility - the 'boathouse'**

It is single storey with a raked roof profile to admit overhead light and allow adequate clearance for oars and such.

- a. This unit is broken into facilities for the rowing club, dragon boat club and kayaking.
- b. On the side facing the park is an additional social-enterprise unit and storage facility assigned to the Youth Services.

A single storey series of sliding volumes with a jagged roof profile, clerestory lighting and solid walls/doors define the boathouse. Its language is robust yet visually attractive; it shares the same cladding and roof finish as its counterparts. The timber cladding is suggestive of older boathouses and the craftsmanship associated with rowing generally which has a rich heritage in the area. The 'Frake' or similar timber rainscreen finish has been thermally modified to give it a strength and longevity not typically associated with timber cladding meaning less maintenance and reduced swelling/shrinkage and even weathering.

Additional external works include:

- Central Public plaza with covered seating area
- Landscaping (Please see accompanying drawing "Proposed Landscape Plan" within Appendix A for more information)
- Turning and drop off area
- Stepped access to riverside with integrated seating from concrete and thermally modified timber. Refer to precedents page with Appendix A – Architects Drawings.

Works at **Site B** consist of a separate parking with barrier control access from Maryborough St. and pedestrian access directly to the park adjacent to the Centre facility.

4. Design Process

The public realm design has been developed by a multidisciplinary Design Team consisting of the following:

- Architectural, Urban Design and Conservation input from Kenneth Hennessy Architects
- Engineering input from DRA Consulting Engineers
- Ecological and Environmental input from Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.
- Landscape design input from Studio Townland

The development of the design has been guided by all relevant directorates within CCC, and in particular by Kieran Comerford, Conor Moriarty, Pierce Kavanagh, Helen Ryan, Brian O'Donovan and Kieran Cullinane; who have been central to the development of the design.

Consultation

A comprehensive public consultation process was undertaken by the design team leader in conjunction with Carlow County Council. Active groups and interested parties from the area were invited to a presentation and discussion on the scheme in March of 2020. They were each given the opportunity to voice concern/requests for facilities to be provided within the Centre. This data was recorded and fed into a matrix to help inform the project brief. (See Figure 3). The public bodies were consulted again once the design was developed and more recently sent a copy of the completed design drawings prior to applying for approval.

<h1 style="text-align: center;">Carlow Water Activity Centre - Brief Matrix</h1>		Group																	
		Carlow County Council (Client)	Carlow Rowing Club	Carlow Triathlon Club	Boat Trips	C. W. - Youth Development Agent	5th Carlow Scout Group	Carlow Park Run	Carlow Cycling Club	Dragon Boat Club	Councillor Fintan Pheelan	Carlow Community Fishing	Sen. Mairead Farrell	4th Carlow Scout Group	Mary Ryan	Graham Wall - Kayaking	Cliff Reid	Bobby Quinn	Ger Doyle - Water Safety Officer
Facility																			
Café																			
Indoor Training Facility / Gym																			
Secure Storage - Boats / Bikes																			
Changing Facilities																			
Meeting room																			
Canoe/Kayak/Bike Rental																			
Campsites Along River																			
Recreational Facilities																			
Climbing Wall																			
Concerns / Aspirations																			
Security / Vandalism / Safe operation of park																			
New Hub / Busy River																			
Accessibility of slipways in park																			
Access to park/waterway																			
CE Scheme Operation																			
Qualified Leaders																			
Conservation of existing path																			
Training Kayakers																			
No Commercial Use																			
Kayak Racing in a Future Club																			
Wildlife Reserves as attractions																			
Accessibility of slipways in park																			

Spaces / Facilities Requested

- Included Within Brief
- To Be Considered
- Not Catered For

Figure 3: Matrix Created following public consultation on 09.03.2020

5. Design statement and issues

Introduction and project justification

Carlow Town is strategically located in the Southeast of Ireland within an hour of Dublin and Waterford via the M9 motorway and rail link. There are also strong linkages with the Greater Dublin Area, the Midlands and West and to Rosslare Port via the N80, National Secondary Road.

The population of the Town is greater than 24,000 which represents over 40% of the population of the County. Carlow Town is an important local and inter-regional education centre with two Institutes of Higher Education (IT Carlow and Carlow College), six Second Level and Eight Primary Schools. There is a diverse range of industrial, commercial and retail activity in the Town which generates significant economic and employment activity.

In recent years following the economic downturn there was significant development on the periphery of Carlow town. As a result, the historic town centre was left with vacant or derelict sites and very little private sector development. The town lacks a definitive anchor or identity other than the public park which lacks supporting facilities.

The new scheme seeks to address this by defining a new Centre within the town centre, along the banks of the Barrow. We posit that the new development will stimulate economic growth in response to a greater influx of people, users, locals and tourists alike.

Carlow town has a well-established rowing club with a history of boat racing dating from 1859 or earlier. Other clubs include kayaking, park run, cycling club, scouts, triathlon and the dragon boat club to mention a few.

There are also a number of established events which are now run from/adjacent to the Park:

- The Dragon Run - 24th March 2019 (Irish Dragon Boat Association) - 220 athletes
- Carlow Triathlon - 19th May 2019 (Carlow Triathlon Club)
- Carlow Rowing Regatta - 1st & 2nd June 2019 (Carlow Rowing Club)
- Barrow Dragon Boat Regatta - 9th June 2019 (Irish Dragon Boat Regatta) - 340 athletes
- Carlow Town parkrun – held weekly on a Saturday morning. Average weekly participants in excess of 60.

Given the current level of water activities and interest in the River Barrow at Carlow Town Park, Carlow County Council have identified that there is a need for an Activity Centre at this location. The Activity Centre has been assessed as an economically viable business proposition, combined with club facilities along with a café and toilet facilities for the general public using the Town Park, thus incorporating both economic and recreational activities.

The proposed Centre makes good use of the River Barrow and is suitable for all ages and weather conditions. The Proposed Centre has the potential for teaching water sports, storage for clubs' boats and equipment, and has a social area and café.

The scheme will be the perfect host venue for events such as these with the rowing regatta alone seeing hundreds of visitors descend on the area. With the proper facilities in place, cafes, seating, storage, parking etc to accommodate the visitors they are more inclined to stay or return to the area, thereby invigorating the micro-economy locally.



Figure 3: Carlow Rowing Club at Skinners Lane circa 1921 (http://www.igp-web.com/Carlow/rowing_01.htm)

Design Concept/Context

The concept for the building(s) developed from provision of two linear buildings with a central space for loading/unloading boats. This developed into one linear building with the storage building rotating and sliding to respond to the geometry of the site. The linear volume housing the café and facilities originally was carved in half for two reasons:

- To accommodate a wayleave for buried surface water pipe discharging into river.
- The need for a visual and physical connection between the central space of the scheme and the river itself.

This area is the heart of the scheme. In response to some later public consultation a canopy was proposed over part of the area to provide a sheltered outdoor seating area.

Site Location

The site is located within the town centre area of Carlow, within walking distance of Kennedy Avenue to the east, and in the lower corner of a public park. Site A is immediately adjacent to the River Barrow to the east/southeast and an existing pontoon. The site chosen for the

facility is a largely under-utilised corner of the park. Site B is located adjacent to Maryborough/Sleaty St to the north of Site and within the town park site.



Figure 4: Site Location

Site A is located partly within/adjacent to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (Site Code 002162) representing both a key challenge and opportunity for development. In acknowledgement of this ecological designations of the site and its environs, potential for additional disturbance to the natural environment cannot be underestimated and has been analysed in depth in this report and its appendices.

In the selection of this site, given it is an area which is already developed to some extent, and currently has slipway boat access, it was deemed a less ecologically sensitive area and represents the best outcome for mitigating against any further deep encroachment on the biodiversity of the area. This site therefore provides for minimal interventions made on those areas of the SAC which have been untouched by human activities and undeveloped spaces which can be left as natural as possible.

Site B, the proposed ancillary parking area associated with the centre is located outside of the SAC. Refer to Appendix C containing the Natura Impact Statement for more information relating to the SAC.

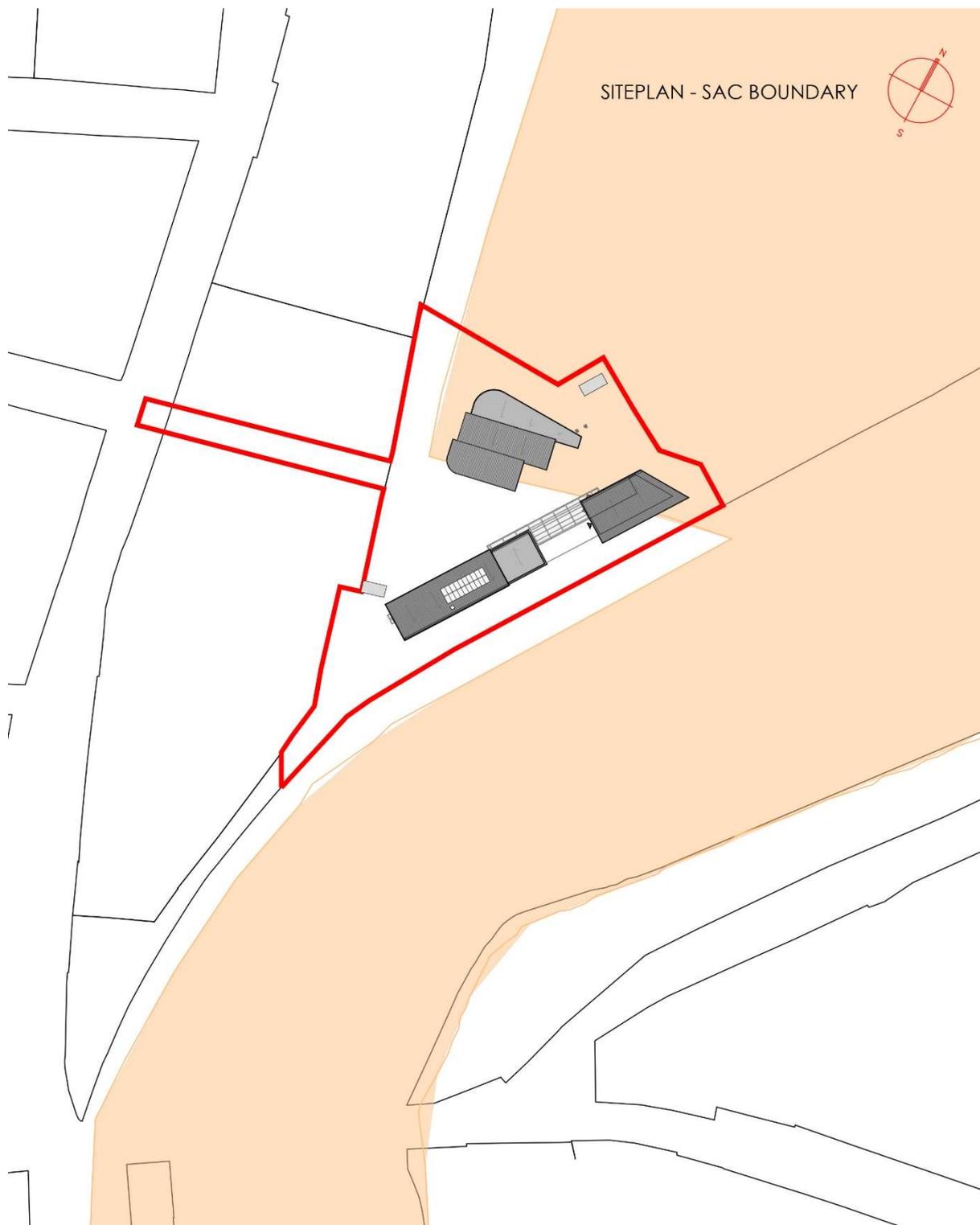
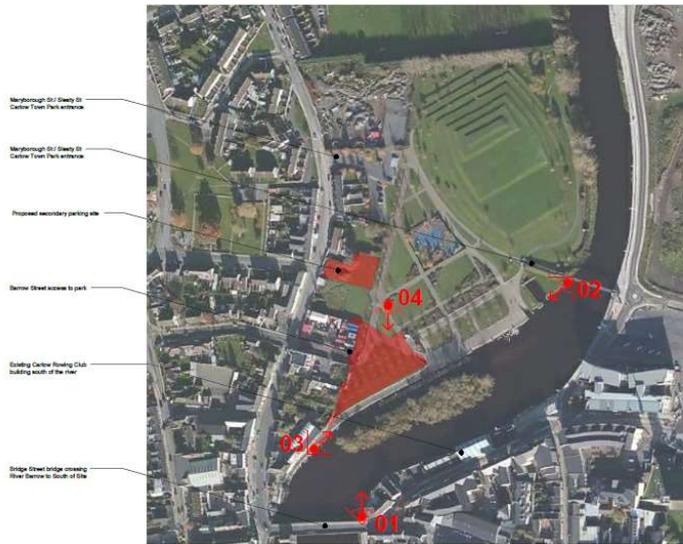


Figure 5: Extent of SAC (Site boundary indicated in red with proposed development in grey)

Historically this corner of the park the site is located on was the former site of a crane which facilitated loading and unloading of the boats associated with the Barrow Navigation Company stores & dock. (See Figure 6).



01 PROPOSED SITE FROM BRIDGE ST



02 PROPOSED SITE FROM PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



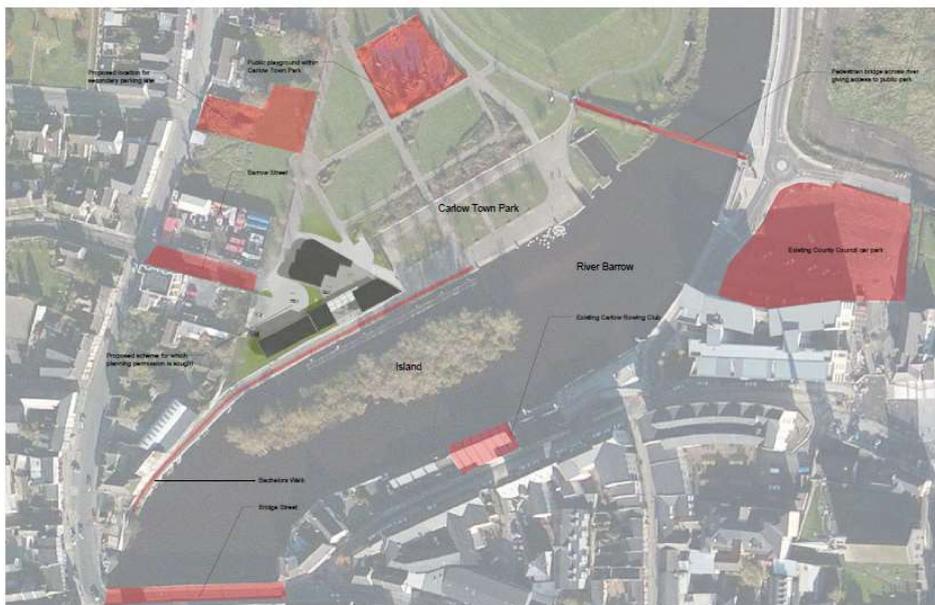
03 PROPOSED SITE FROM BACHELORS WALK



04 PROPOSED SITE FROM TOWN PARK LOOKING TO BRIDGE ST

Present day Site A is bounded to its southern edge by the River Barrow and the Bachelor's walk, a pedestrian route following along the river's edge.

To the northeast of the site is the Carlow Town Park and a public playground. To the northwest is the Barrow Street entrance. To the west are an oil depot and derelict buildings within a vacant site. Beyond these is Maryborough Street.



Site B is bounded to the west by Maryborough/Sleaty Street. To the south is O'Reilly Oil and coal, to the north existing residential development and the Town Park to the east.

6. Planning and Development

The likely consequences for proper planning and sustainable development on the site and wider town area are addressed in this section.

Two key documents are referenced in this section:

- Joint Spatial Plan For the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Area 2012-2018
- Carlow County Development Plan 2015 -2021

This section is divided into two components:

- a) Planning and Development requirements
- b) Planning and Development Policies

Planning and Development Requirements

This section has regard to site designations, planning history of the site, parking and general provisions of the Planning and Development Acts.

Site Zoning and Designations

As per the *“Joint Spatial Plan For the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Area 2012-2018”* The main RBAC site –Site A - is zoned *“Amenity and Open space”*. The objective of this designation is *“To preserve, provide for and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space”*.

The uses which are proposed and permitted in principle are as follows:

Site A

Community Facility, Recreational Facility, Café, Social Enterprise Units and Car-parking are all open for consideration within the relevant *“Amenity and Open Space”* zoning.

Site B

The proposed car park at Site B is zoned *“Residential: Established”*. The objective of this designation is *“To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities”*

The provision of a community facility is open for consideration within the ‘Residential Established’ zone. The car parking provision (0.096ha) is not a commercial car park but an ancillary facility to support the water based activity centre. It represents a small proportion (less than 20%) of the overall use zoning for Residential Established at this location and would not undermine the primary objective of the land use zoning at this location.

Protected structures, ACA and ZAP

There are no protected structures on Site A or B, or adjacent to it, though a few are located within the wider town centre vicinity, the closest being to the west of Maryborough Street to the west of the site and across the river on the Barrow Track.

The site (at Site A only) is partially located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). This is discussed in detail in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment in Section 7.

Neither Site A nor Site B are located within a Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP), but Site B is partly located within a Zone of Notification under Section 12 of the National Monuments Act (See Figure 7). There are no National Monuments located on either Site A or Site B.

Please refer to Appendix K containing a desktop study compiled by Kilkenny Archaeology on the site of the proposed development.

Given the recent use of the site as a 'made ground' the proposed development is unlikely to have the potential to affect any archaeological heritage which has been long since disturbed. In the course of construction works, should archaeological material be uncovered, the developer will be required to allow a reasonable time for any required excavation, monitoring, recording, consideration of excavation report and/or removal of any material.



Figure 7: Outline of Zone of Notification in purple (Historic Environment Viewer)

Parking

A detailed analysis was undertaken of the parking requirement and provision (See Appendix J: Parking requirement analysis) which resulted in a requirement of 19 car parking and 34 cycling spaces.

5 spaces are included at Site A, and 14 at Site B. One mobility impaired space at each parking site is provided, meeting the 5% requirement stipulated within the development plan. New cycling parking is provided at 3 locations: Two on Site A and one on Site B, collectively meeting the required 34 cycling spaces. See architect's drawings within Appendix A for details.

Planning history

There has been no substantial development on the site land or immediately adjacent to it in the latter half of the 20th century. The predominant land use is parkland, with the site being part of the Carlow Town park, which includes a park playground and some remnants of Barrow Navigation Company stores & dock.

In 2017-2019, permission was refused for the Barrow Navigation way. The proposal consisted of the development of a multi-use shared leisure route (Blueway), approximately 115 Kilometres (KM) in length, on the existing navigation towpath, which is a National Waymarked Way. The proposal included tailored surface finishes, information, directional and safety signage, and all other associated ancillary works. The proposed route traversed parts of counties Kildare, Laois and Carlow. The route commenced in Lowtown, County Kildare, passes through County Laois and finished in St. Mullins, County Carlow. Approximately 52KM of the route is in County Carlow, 16KM in County Laois and 47 KM in County Kildare.

Planning and Development Policies: EU and National Level

Any proposals located within the site area will be informed by a wide range of planning policy documents. The design process for the proposed Activity Centre has been informed by key pieces of National and regional legislation that informed the decision-making process, particularly with regards to habitats and the environment.

The following provides for the legislative framework of the principal concerns requiring attention in the design process from which a comprehensive design response has been formulated.

Key European Legislation and Conventions

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

The EU Birds Directive

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention of Wetlands of International Importance

The EU Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EC), and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC)

The Environmental Liability Directive

Environmental Liability Regulations (SI 547 of 2008).

Natura 2000 sites and Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment is derived from Articles 6 (3) and (4) of European Union (EU) Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations S.I. No 477 of 2011.

Legislation concerning water quality and protection

European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003)

Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD)

EC Water Policy Regulations (Amendment) (SI No. 413 of 2005)

The European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009)

Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 254 of 2001).

Alien Invasive Species

EU Regulation 1143/2014

EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030

National Legislation

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010

The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000

Flora (Protection) Order 2000

Irish Red Data Books

Tree Preservation Orders and Tree Felling licences

Planning Development Policies: Local Level

At a local level, both the “*Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban area 2012-2018 as extended*” and the “*Carlow County Development Plan 2015 -2021*” are of particular relevance in guiding the nature and extent of such development proposals.

Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban area 2012-2018 as extended

The JSP recognises the opportunities for tourism, in particular waterways tourism and the importance of protecting special natural and built heritage assets on which tourism depends and of effective environmental management. The JSP identifies a number of cross-cutting core objectives and thematic core aims, of particular relevance to the proposed RBAC which will also have significant community benefits across the following objectives:

Core Objectives:

CO4 Jobs and Prosperity

CO8 A Supportive Community

CO9 Green Infrastructure

CO10 Turning towards the River

CO12 A Vibrant Culture

Core Aims:

CA1 Economic Development and Inward Investment

CA 6 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

CA 7 Sustainable Communities and Social Inclusion

CA 9 Heritage

CA 10 Urban Design and Built Form

CA1 Economic Development and Inward Investment

“Encourage the sustainable and dynamic economic development of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area building on its pivotal role as a driver of economic growth in County Carlow and within the South-East and Midlands Regions”

The JSP acknowledges the importance of developing water based access and recreational activities in bolstering town centre and wider economic development and investment. The proposed RBAC is well positioned to elevate both the tourist potential of the River Barrow and the adjacent economic activities which result at a local level for local users of the Centre through careful integration of Centre facilities in this sensitive environment.

The RBAC also facilitates an opportunity to develop open gathering spaces for seasonal or periodic public events centred around water activities.

In the context of relevant policies in the JSP in support of encouraging sustainable economic development, the below are highlighted as being of particular relevance and which the proposed RBAC enacts:

- ECN O01** Build on the role of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area as the principal driver for economic development in County Carlow and reflecting its designation as a County Town in the South-East Regional Planning Guidelines, service town in the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines and its designation as a Level 1 Tier 3 retail town and its location close to county boundaries.

- ECN O06** Make efficient use of improved infrastructure and services including the road, rail, broadband and water networks to support economic development and pursue funding for other infrastructural improvements important to the future economic health of the local economy.

- ECN O07** Foster a compact and permeable town centre in order to support and generate synergistic commercial and retail relationships, to ensure the town centre is a bustling and attractive social and recreational hub that continuously builds on its potential to draw in locals and visitors

- ECN O09** Grow the tourism share of the economy of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area by promoting, encouraging and facilitating its sustainable development

In the context of relevant policies in the JSP in support of encouraging tourism as it relates to economic development, the below are highlighted as being of particular relevance and which the proposed RBAC enacts:

- ECN P17** Protect special natural, archaeological and architectural heritage assets along with the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre in order to support the development of tourism in the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area

- ECN P23** Foster the hosting of festivals in order to increase visitor numbers and increase the profile of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area as a visitor destination

- ECN P24** Encourage the development of commercial services for tourists subject to general planning considerations

CA 6 Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

“Provide and enable the provision of a range of well-maintained and managed open spaces, sporting facilities and recreational facilities accessible to all, convenient to the town centre, people’s homes and workplaces, catering to the needs and interests of different groups in the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area and in support of good public health”

The JSP recognises that the availability of recreational amenities, sporting facilities and open spaces are integral components of a good quality of life and good public health in an urban area and that public open spaces, sports and recreational facilities are in accessible locations to ensure everyone can achieve a good quality of life.

In the context of relevant objectives and policies in the JSP in support of encouraging appropriate recreation and open spaces, the below are highlighted as being of particular relevance and which the proposed RBAC enacts:

REC O03 Ensure the provision of green open spaces link with and address the Burrin and Barrow Rivers where practicable to maximise the amenity and landscape value

REC O04 Liaise with community groups, interest groups, commercial organisations and partnerships and support initiatives to improve or provide additional recreational and sporting facilities or amenities, subject to resources

REC P04 Promote the provision, maintenance and management of high quality indoor and outdoor sporting facilities which are accessible to all members of the community

REC P05 Facilitate the development of specialized sports facilities catering to the needs and interests of different groups within the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area

REC P06 Ensure sporting facilities are located in suitable areas and designed to ensure easy access and reduce traffic generation

REC P08 Support the principle of developing water sports facilities, subject to general planning considerations and the following criteria:

- a) The proposed facilities are compatible with any existing use of water, including non-recreational uses;
- b) It will not result in damage to sites of nature conservation importance or features of archaeological and built heritage;
- c) The development can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape or townscape surroundings and will not have an adverse visual impact;
- d) The development will not result in the over intensification of use leading to pollution, excessive noise and nuisance.

REC P09 Support the principle of developing commercial leisure and sporting facilities subject to general planning considerations

CA 7 Sustainable Communities and Social Inclusion

“Foster a sense of place, belonging and a good quality of life for all, by promoting social inclusion and community cohesion and ensuring the adequate provision of community facilities that cater to the diverse needs of individuals and the local society as a whole”

The provision of recreational amenities and public open space are key to addressing social exclusion and marginalisation. In the context of relevant objectives and policies in the JSP in support of encouraging sustainable communities and social inclusion, the below are highlighted as being of particular relevance and which the proposed RBAC enacts:

- SOC 001** Make the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area an attractive place to live and work by creating strong communities, facilitating and providing adequate community services and fostering a strong sense of place and belonging
- SOC 005** Encourage capacity building within local communities in order to harness local social capital and cultivate a strong civic society
- SOC P06** Work systematically towards creating a universally accessible built environment, that is buildings, facilities and spaces that can be accessed and used by all
- SOC P09** Ensure community facilities are located in areas where they can be easily accessed

CA 9 Heritage

“Protect the natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area and the special character of its landscape in light of its contribution to the distinct character and identity of the Area”

The value of the River Barrow as a natural heritage asset and its role as an intrinsic part in the contemporary character and the historical development of the town is recognised in the JSP.

In the context of relevant objectives and policies in the JSP in support of encouraging the protection of the natural heritage, the below are highlighted as being of particular relevance and which the proposed RBAC enacts:

- HER 005** Protect and foster terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and protect against invasive species
- HER 008** Preserve and enhance the special character of Architectural Conservation Areas within the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area
- HER 012** Ensure new developments respond to the character of the surrounding landscape and landscape features and have regard to the landscape character assessment set out within this section
- HER P01** Ensure all planning applications are screened to determine whether a full Appropriate Assessment is necessary in accordance with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010) and ensure the application of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive

- HER P02** Ensure full Appropriate Assessments carried out on behalf of developers are undertaken by competent and qualified professionals in accordance with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010)
- HER P05** Consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Inland Fisheries Ireland as relevant when considering applications that may have an adverse effect on the special interest of designated sites or the biodiversity of non-designated sites.
- HER P08** Ensure that landscaping schemes relating to business parks, residential development and other types of development foster biodiversity, as well as landscaping works in existing public open spaces.
- HER P11** Protect bankside vegetation along the Barrow and Burrin watercourses and ensure the protection of a riparian buffer zone measuring at least ten metres along the watercourses on greenfield sites in the interests of biodiversity as well as public amenity
- HER P12** Work with other agencies to address the issues of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species in the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area as these species pose deleterious threats to native vegetation, wildlife and eco-systems
- HER P24** Consider favourably development proposals within an ACA that would either preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the ACA. In considering applications for changes of use within ACAs, the Council will be concerned with maintaining the character of that area
- HER P36** Enhance the urban landscape of Carlow Town having regard to urban gateways, key open spaces, important landscape features such as the Rivers Barrow and Burrin and landmark structures. Dependent upon clear demonstration that there will be no impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive or significant adverse effects on other environmental receptors.
- HER P39** Ensure the effective management of lands adjoining the Rivers Barrow and Burrin to maximize views and interaction with these important landscape features. Dependent upon clear demonstration that there will be no impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive or significant adverse effects on other environmental receptors.

CA 10 Urban Design and Built Form

“Ensure the delivery of a safe, sustainable and liveable built environment suitable for everyone through good and well-considered design”

In the context of relevant objectives and policies in the JSP in support of encouraging quality urban design and built form, the below are highlighted as being of particular relevance and which the proposed RBAC enacts:

- DBF/O2** Deliver a high-quality built environment, by consolidating the urban structure, and reinforcing and enhancing the existing character with infill development or urban renewal and focusing on place-making with greenfield development
- DBF/O3** Foster the development of attractive, usable, durable and adaptable structures, spaces and places in order to foster the development of sustainable and cohesive communities
- DBF/O4** Ensure a satisfactory relationship between buildings and land uses and the delivery of new structures that are designed with special attention to the specific characteristics or features of the development site, its setting and the surrounding area
- DBF/O5** Encourage successful coordination of proportions, forms, materials, colours and details in new development and ensure that new buildings are fit-for-purpose and use internal and external space efficiently
- DBF/O6** Create and maintain a network of high-quality public open spaces in urban and suburban areas to foster good urban design and proper planning
- DBF/O7** Encourage an improvement of the environmental quality of the existing streetscape in urban and suburban areas
- DBF/O8** Ensure new streetscapes are well-considered and have regard to the principal functions of the street: place, movement, access, room for parking, drainage, conveyance of utilities and street-lighting
- DBF P01** Deliver development that creates or improves places or structures, so they are designed well-designed, feel safe, are well-organised, interesting to the eye and fit into their setting and have regard to the above assessment principles.

Sub-area Spatial Strategy

The JSP sets out specific objectives and policies that relate to the functional area of Carlow Town only. Objectives set out in this strategy which are particularly relevant for the proposed RBAC are:

- CTO2 Reinforce the quantum and diversity of uses within Carlow Town Centre**
- CTO4 Promote the development of the River Quarter and Riverside Regeneration**
- CTO5 Encourage specific urban renewal projects and advance opportunity sites**

CTO2 Reinforce the quantum and diversity of uses within Carlow Town Centre

The proposed RBAC diversifies the uses within the town centre adding to the vitality and vibrancy of the town.

CTO4 Promote the development of the River Quarter and Riverside Regeneration

The contemporary design of the RBAC complements the cultural agenda of the town and such development which promotes the inception of café and tourist amenities, and facilities is encouraged in the JSP.

CTO5 Encourage specific urban renewal projects and advance opportunity sites

The JSP identifies a number of Opportunity Sites within Carlow town. Though Site A is not on an identified Opportunity Site, it is immediately adjacent to Opportunity site no. 7, on Marlborough Street, which identifies that opportunities for employment uses in this area include tourism, leisure, catering and hostelry in support of waterways tourism. The JSP recommends that works along Bachelor's Quay and Marlborough Street should be designed to maximise interaction with the River Barrow. Site B is located within the Opportunity Site for a development opportunity.

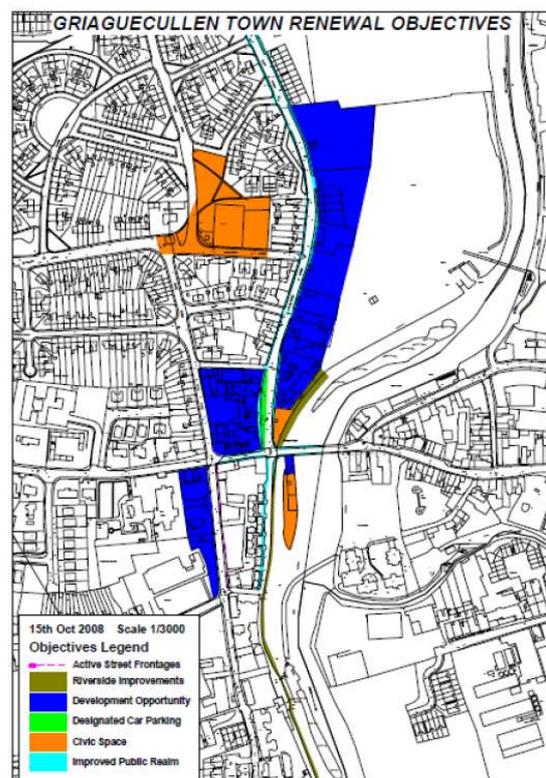


Figure 8: JSP Opportunity site 7: Maryborough Street

Carlow County Development Plan 2015 -2021

The proposed RBAC meets Development Plan Objectives and the main Development Plan provisions relating to the subject site and surrounding area, including relevant Core Strategy provisions. This section outlines policy and guidelines within the Development Plan which the proposed Centre strategically align with, promote and meet.

County vision and Strategic Goals

The proposed development aligns with the overall vision for development in terms of promoting cohesive communities and promoting high quality environment and amenities. Within this vision, the proposed scheme also aligns with the following strategic goals:

1. To provide for the sustainable growth of County Carlow in accordance with the settlement structure and Core Strategy Table
2. To promote balanced and sustainable economic development and employment by ensuring that a diverse range of economic sectors are developed
3. To build on the tourism opportunities of County Carlow in a balanced and sustainable manner
4. Facilitate the provision of and improvements to social and recreational infrastructure and provide access to new and existing community facilities throughout the County for all its residents
5. To provide for universal access, accessibility and ease of movement along roads and footpaths as a priority
6. To protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage and the landscape of County Carlow for future generations; and reinforce the distinctive character of County Carlow through ensuring that sites and species of biodiversity importance are identified, conserved and managed appropriately and by promoting awareness and enjoyment of the heritage of the County
7. To promote high quality architectural design in all new buildings in urban and rural areas of County Carlow - commercial, residential and public buildings with energy efficiency designed into all new buildings
8. Minimise the level of flood risk to people, business, infrastructure and the environment, through the identification and management of existing, and particularly potential future, flood risks. Flood risk will be incorporated in an integrated, proactive and transparent manner in line with evolving best practice into decision making processes for future development and use of land in the County

The proposed development also aligns with key Strategic Development Opportunities (which are supported by policies contained within the Development Plan:

- SDO 2 Enterprise And Employment
- SDO 6 Tourism

In the context of Carlow County Development Plan 2015 -2021, the following sections are of particular relevance to the proposed Activity Centre Development at Barrow Street:

- A. Economic Development
- B. Social Inclusion and Community Facilities
- C. Tourism, Recreation and Amenity
- D. Natural and Built Heritage
- E. Environment management, infrastructure and Water Services

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ED)

Carlow County Development Plan 2015 -2021 acknowledges the contribution that economic development makes to a community and the River Barrow is recognised as a contributor to this as a tourist and recreational amenity .

The proposed RBAC is well positioned to elevate both the tourist potential of the River Barrow and the adjacent economic activities which result at a local level for local users of the Centre through careful integration of Centre facilities in this sensitive environment.

The RBAC also facilitates an opportunity to develop open gathering spaces for seasonal or periodic public events centred around water activities. It is envisaged that the proposed RBAC would result in increased local economic activity to the area both by local users and tourists.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES (SI)

The County Development Plan highlights the objectives of the plan to “*providing accessible community facilities to serve the needs and expectations of a growing and diverse population*”. The plan particularly makes reference to the facilitation and reinforcement of local-level participation through partnerships - such as that proposed in the RBAC. Such a collaborative effort is seen as key to utilising social capital for promotion of inclusive communities.

TOURISM, RECREATION AND AMENITY

Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan establishes that although tourism contributes to the vitality and sustainability of a wide variety of local enterprises, it must be provided and managed in a way which is sensitive to the environment. Such sustainable tourism can provide a “*high quality product based on, and in harmony with, a high quality natural environment*”.

The proposed RBAC is such a development, which builds on the provision of existing riverside amenities and facilitates entry to the diverse, evolving tourism sector whilst also being

sensitive to the unique challenges of locating such a facility along the River Barrow SAC and preserving the character, natural resources and environment of the site location.

The Development plan highlights the River Barrow as a key tourist and recreational resource. However, the plan notes the current absence of any boat hire company on the River Barrow as a factor which reduces tourist activity. The potential of the largely undeveloped River Barrow area as a recreational resource are noted. The proposed RBAC aims to address this deficiency. The 'Barrow Corridor' along the rivers is highlighted as a significant natural asset to County Carlow with great potential for tourism and recreation, subject to a sustainable approach to development. Boating and cruising development is noted as being a particular opportunity.

The Development Plan also highlights the importance of leisure and social facilities to the well-being and functioning of Carlow's communities and the role of the Planning authority to reserve sufficient lands within the town centres to meet community infrastructure needs.

Section 8.11.8 on Riverside Development and Section 8.11.9 on Development associated with Water Sports are particularly relevant to the proposed RBAC.

The Development Plan acknowledges its role in promoting the natural amenity potential of the River Barrow to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, ecological and tourism benefits for the county and region as well as quality of life for local people as well as visitors. The Plan seeks to strike a balance between the use of facilities the sensitivity of the natural environment.

The proposed RBAC takes both these factors and criteria into account and provides a high level of design in terms of layout and materials, landscaping and surface treatments.

NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

Chapter 9 of the County Development Plan establishes how the *"protection of our heritage not only has environmental and quality of life benefits for the people of Carlow, but also brings significant economic benefits. Protection of our heritage for future generations is the responsibility of us all"*.

The value of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the county and the importance of these habitats is recognised and the statutory obligation of the Council to conserve and protect protected habitats. A core objective is to *"ensure, wherever possible, that developments or activities do not impact adversely upon wildlife and its habitats"*.

Section 9.1.7 on Inland waters, Section 9.1.8 on Riparian Zones and Section 9.1.9 on Protected Species are particularly relevant sections of the Development Plan and the proposed RBAC has due regard to the policy contained therein. The proposed RBAC is to be cognisant of existing river edge habitats and conditions and indeed is situated back from the river edge adjacent to an existing river walkway.

The careful management of non-native invasive species is a major factor to be addressed for any proposed development as outlined in Section 9.1.10. Whilst no evidence of invasive species is detected (See Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 for more detail on invasive species) should they be present this will need careful management and removal.

This section also highlights duties of the council under the provisions of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC), under which the highest level of conservation status applicable to the site area “...provides for the conservation and protection of sites which host natural habitats and species that are rare, threatened or vulnerable”.

The River Barrow SAC forms part of the collection of Natura 2000 sites and as such benefits from supranational conservation status. The below sections deal with the impact of the proposed RBAC on the SAC; please also see Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021, prepared by Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd. for detailed assessment of the impact on the SAC.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER SERVICES

Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan establishes the need for effective management of the impacts of development works and land uses on the natural environment as essential to good quality of life, human health, wildlife and diverse ecological systems.

The proposed RBAC has due regard for the policies within the plan with regard to air quality, soil quality, noise, light pollution, flood risk and has provided for same.

Given the site location as a former ‘made-ground’ site, Section 10.2.6 on Potentially Contaminated Land is particularly relevant. Development – such as the proposed RBAC – which will result in a recreational and social benefit to the local area/community is encouraged provided remediation measures for the lands are carried out. A detailed investigation has been carried out (see Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers) and appropriate measures taken to ensure that the land is treated properly before development takes place in accordance with EPA guidelines.

The treatment of surface water discharge, water supply and flood risk mitigation are likewise addressed in Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers).

Conclusion

The proposed RBAC complies with the relevant policies and objectives set out in the Development Plan and accordingly demonstrates that the development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7. Effects on the environment

The specific effects in terms of the likely significant effects on the European site of the proposed RBAC site (Site A) are dealt with in the next section; the likely effects on the environment in general during both construction and operational phases are addressed here. These include Environmental factors such as Cultural Heritage, Biodiversity, Soils, Air, Climate and Noise etc.

Impacts are identified and evaluated in terms of depth of effect. Potential impacts identified are minor, localised impacts occurring for a short duration over the construction phase of the project. Mitigation measures are proposed to address impacts where required.

This section should be read in conjunction with appendices:

- Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)
- Appendix D: Environmental Summary Report (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)
- Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)
- Appendix F: Flood Risk Assessment, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)
- Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)

A summary table is given here:

Table 1: Potential Environmental Effects

RECEPTOR	ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT
Human beings	Short-term increase in localised noise, dust and disruption during construction phase of project. Mitigation measures outlined in relevant appendices No cumulative/long term significant risk.
Architectural Heritage/cultural heritage	Low potential for possible impact on sub-surface archaeology. Positive visual impact
Air, Noise	Short-term increase in localised noise, dust and disruption during construction phase of project. Mitigation measures outlined in relevant appendices. No cumulative/long term significant risk.
Flora, Fauna	No significant risk
Soils	No significant risk
Water	No significant risk impact on the hydrological regime of the area/flooding. Potential for short term impact on water quality of river during construction phase. Mitigation measures outlined in relevant appendices
Urban Life	Short-term increase in localised traffic, noise, dust and disruption during construction phase of project. Short term impact of construction site on townscape Mitigation measures outlined in relevant appendices

Impact on other designations

The proposed development is not located in a Natural Heritage Area, Proposed Natural Heritage Area or Special Protection Area.

The proposed development is partially located within / adjacent to a Special Area of Conservation. See: *Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)* in terms of the likely significant effects on the SAC.

Construction Phases and Impacts

A full description of the proposed development can be found in preceding sections. Details of construction can also be found in the associated drawings: Appendix A

Please see *Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021* prepared by Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd. for further details on the construction and operational phases and impacts, likely emissions and/or discharges, phasing, and any mitigation measures proposed.

The CEMP communicates the key environmental obligations that apply to all site personnel, sub-contractors and visitors to the site, while carrying out construction activities as part of the proposed development. The CEMP defines the approach to environmental management at the proposed development site, outlining the work practices, construction procedures and responsibilities to be undertaken during the construction phase. Compliance with the CEMP, the procedures, work practices and controls would be mandatory and must be adhered to by all personnel and sub-contractors employed during the construction phase. The CEMP outlines, where necessary, the control measures that are required to avoid, minimise or mitigate potential effects on the environment and surrounding area.

Construction methodology statement and material choice

Refer to *Appendix A Architects drawings: 1964-P-0015 to 1964-P-0018* inclusive for proposed material choices. Refer also to *Appendix G – Construction Environmental Management Plan*.

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

The proposed site (Site A and B) contains no existing buildings, archaeological sites or ancient monuments. There are no protected structures on the site

boathouses and the craftsmanship associated with rowing generally which has a rich heritage in the area.

As such, the proposed development is in keeping with the character of this section of the Maryborough Street ACA, and indeed enhances the riverside character and use.

Visual Impact and Impact on vicinity



Figure 10: Current view of site from Bridge Street



Figure 11: Proposed view of RBAC from Bridge Street

Context

The proposed design of the RBAC has been informed by detailed analysis of the area and its wider context, including an understanding of the significance of the River Barrow adjacent; particularly in relation to flood prevention. The proposed RBAC is designed at a finished floor level to avoid impact of rising water levels, with the steps down to river facilitating higher river levels where people can chart the rise and fall of the water. The proposed structures at Site A are set at a level which provides protection from flooding up to the 0.1% AEP. (See Appendix F: Flood Risk Assessment, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers) for more detail.)

The design concept, forms and materials have been developed through extensive consultation with CCC, the relevant clubs and stakeholders and users of the facility, but also with due regard to the wider visual context.

The proposed RBAC is a standalone form visible from Bridge Street and is of a scale, form and character to signify its function and importance as a Centre building, whilst also respecting the scale and character of the surrounding streetscapes. The proposal is dual facing, addressing the river, with a much improved visual access from Henry Street and pedestrian access from Northern car park proposed.

The mix of activities provides a variety of use throughout the day and the week enjoyed by local people and visitors.

The building layout prioritises a people focused environment, with majority of parking provided in Site B, promotion of reduced driver speeds and use of shared spaces.

Existing river walkways and access points are maintained and enhanced, safeguarding views and river access. A vibrant, accessible attractive public space is created which retains the riverside elements and facilitates both existing pedestrian through movement and new riverside public spaces. The space that will be created will be attractive for small-scale events/activities.

Materials used are informed by older boathouses and the craftsmanship associated with rowing generally which has a rich heritage in the area. The building forms and facades provide animated facades on each orientation, including external covered space.

The landscape proposal includes native species, pollinator-friendly wildflower mix tree planting, small and multi-stemmed trees and native hedges, with steps and outdoor areas to enhance people's connection with the river. Please See accompanying drawing "Proposed Landscape Plan" for more information.

Secure, attractive parking is provided to a minor extent at Site A with 5 spaces, and at Site B with 14 Spaces. (See Section 6 above for detail of parking requirements)

The proposed RBAC proposes a safe, secure and enjoyable public spaces. Lighting will be provided to a minimum level in terms of what is required for security, and safe use of facility in winter months. Lighting will be non-directional in nature and thereby limit light disturbance to river species etc. refer to NIS within Appendix C. Passive surveillance is promoted by encouraged pedestrian through ways.

Air, Odour and Noise emission Assessment

- Please see: *Appendix D: Environmental Summary Report (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)*

For general assessment of water and air quality impacts

- Please see: *Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)*

For specific assessment of water quality and surface and groundwater impacts, air and noise impacts during Construction

- Please see: *Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)*

For assessment of water quality and surface and groundwater impacts, air and noise impacts as related to the SAC.

It is evaluated that considering proposed mitigation measures, there is anticipated to be no significant noise impact as a result of the proposed development during the construction or operational phases.

Ecology/biodiversity

- Please see: *Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)*

For assessment of flora and fauna, soils, water, invasive species, local biodiversity during Construction, and associated management and mitigation plans.

- Please see: *Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)*

For specific assessment of flora and fauna, soils, water, invasive species, local biodiversity as related to the SAC specifically; and associated management and mitigation plans

- Please see: *Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)*

For evaluation of the impact of proposed development on water services.

- Please see *Appendix F: Flood Risk Assessment, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)*

For detailed Flood Risk assessment of site and development.

Public Water Supply, Surface Water Drainage and Public Sewerage facilities

- Please See: *Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)*

For evaluation of the adequacy of the public water supply, capacity of public sewerage facilities to facilitate proposed development and the availability and capacity of surface water drainage facilities for proposed facility; as well as flooding history of site.

- Please see *Appendix F: Flood Risk Assessment, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)*

For detailed Flood Risk assessment of site and development.

- Please see: *Appendix D: Environmental Summary Report (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)*

For general assessment of water quality impacts

Flood Risk Assessment, Hydrological Assessment and Water Framework Assessment

- Please see *Appendix F: Flood Risk Assessment, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)*

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) issued on the 28th of January 2021 by DRA Consulting Engineers (Document Ref: K194) notes the proposed development site is located in an area susceptible to flooding however the proposed structures are set at a level which provides protection from flooding up to the 0.1% AEP.

Site A is within a flood risk zone however the site benefits from a certified OPW flood defence scheme. The report recommends all wastewater and surface water drains / sewers servicing the proposed development should be fitted with non-return valves to mitigate flood waters from rising up drains during extreme flood events.

- Please see: *Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)* for evaluation under the Water Framework Directive
- Please see: *Appendix D: Environmental Summary Report (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)* for general assessment of water quality impacts
- Please see: *Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)* for details on water services

- Please see: *Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)* for assessment of water quality and surface and groundwater impacts.

Traffic Impact Assessment

- Please See: *Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consultant Engineers)* for details on evaluation of the roads serving the proposed development.

Given the scale of the proposed development and the fact that it is located in an existing public space that is well served by the existing road network, it is considered that the level of increase in road traffic during the operational phase of the development would be negligible. As such, the existing road network is deemed to have sufficient capacity to safely serve the proposed development.

- Please see: *Appendix D: Environmental Summary Report (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)* for assessment of traffic impacts

8. Environmental issues: The likely significant effects upon a European site

The likely significant effects of the proposed development upon the European site designation is assessed in Natura Impact Statement (NIS); please see the scientific examination of evidence and data outlined in *Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021* prepared by Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.

This includes survey work results, baselines studies and further an analysis and assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the SAC. The report concludes that due to the recommended control measures and standard practice during the construction phase, it is considered that there would be no significant risks to the conservation objectives of the habitats and species for which the River Barrow and River Nore SAC has been designated.

It is considered that there would be no significant risk of negative impact, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. It is not anticipated that the proposed development, subject to recommended mitigation measures, by itself or in combination with other developments, would impact negatively upon the Natura 2000 network during the site preparation or operational phases of the project.

An EIA Screening has been prepared with reference to Schedules 5 and 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Please refer to *Appendix C: Environmental Impact Screening Report, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021* prepared by Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.

9. Appendices

- Appendix A: Drawings (Kenneth Hennessy Architects / DRA Consulting / Studio Town Land)
- Appendix B: Newspaper Advertisement
- Appendix C: Natura Impact Statement, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)
- Appendix D: Environmental Summary Report (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)
- Appendix E: Civil Engineering Planning Report, 2021 (DRA Consulting Engineers)
- Appendix F: Flood Risk Assessment, 2021 (DRA Consulting Engineers)
- Appendix G: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) of River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)
- Appendix H: Notices Issued to Prescribed Bodies (copies)
- Appendix J: Parking Requirement Analysis (KHA)
- Appendix K: Archaeological Assessment – Desktop Study (Kilkenny Archaeology)
- Appendix L: EIA Screening, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (Panther Environmental Solutions Ltd.)
- Appendix M: Site Investigation Report & Waste Characterisation Assessment, River Barrow Activity Centre, 2021 (IGSL Limited)