

INTRODUCTION

POBAL LE CHEILE REGENERATION PROJECT

FOREWORD

This document has been prepared by Kenny Lyons & Associates Architects for Longford County Council to set out the site masterplan and building refurbishments for the 'Pobal le Cheile' Project located in Ballymahon, Co. Longford.

The project is situated on the north-western end of Main Street (R392) in Ballymahon. It is spread across the Dean Egan Library, Convent of Mercy and Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille and encompasses the public realm between all three buildings. Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and Ballymahon Day Care Centre are to be located in the refurbished and extended Convent of Mercy with a proposed new Community Hall also to be located on its grounds with new parking and set down areas. Youth services are to be located in the refurbished and extended Dean Egan Library while a remote working hub and community workshop facility will be located in the refurbished and extended Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille. The adjoining public realm between all three buildings is to be enhanced to strengthen relationships between the cluster of community support services, creating a distinct quarter of the town while ensuring the buildings are brought back into active use.

The masterplan proposals and Part 8 Planning Application documents for the 'Pobal le Cheile' Project have been prepared based on the client brief and subsequent meetings with Longford County Council and with the relevant stakeholders involved.

SITE MASTERPLAN

The town centre site is approximately 1Ha and is triangular in plan, running north-west along R392/ Main Street from the Dean Egan Library to Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille and north-east from Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille to the Convent of Mercy. Residential development is located between the two buildings along Main Street while a commercial premises, education facility and St. Matthew's Church provides a buffer to the Convent. The site is predominantly flat with a slight drop to the rear of the Convent, however, there is a sharp incline from street level to the front of the Dean Egan Library.

The new public realm enhancement will run along Main Street and will encompass the frontage of the Dean Egan Library and Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille while improved car parking and set down facilities will be located on the Convent grounds. The project includes the segregation of dedicated access adjacent to Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille to the lands to the South and the widening of the lane adjacent to the Dean Egan Library to provide enhanced pedestrian and vehicle access. Features of the public realm enhancement will include enriched greening, priority to pedestrians and cyclists and high-quality material choices. It is envisaged that this improved space will create a sense of place within Ballymahon for the community support services connected to it and create a defined quarter for them within the town.

DESIGN STATEMENT

The Convent of Mercy will be renovated and extended to accommodate an expanded Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, extended Convent Day Care Centre, and other community services. The building is on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, reference no.: 13316005 and has been lying vacant for a significant period. The refurbishment will see part of an existing extension demolished, extended, and reconfigured to provide an appropriate layout with the addition of a vertical circulation core for accessibility. A considered approach will be taken to the renovation of the original building to enhance its architectural integrity and longevity and having regard for the principles of conservation. Vehicular access, parking, and set down arrangements will be altered on site to provide improved facilities to the building. A new community hall, which responds to the existing Convent architecture, will also be located on site to provide a larger community space for the town of Ballymahon.

The Dean Egan Library will be reconfigured and refurbished to conservation best practice to accommodate a youth centre. The building is on the County Longford Record of Protected Structures, reference no.: 103, and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, reference no.: 13316028. The existing access road to the side of the Dean Egan Library is not fit for purpose creating a traffic hazard in the area. This will be widened, and car parking provided to the rear to service the facility. It is envisaged that the main hall will be fully reinstated for youth centre use with the existing offices relocated to the existing stage area. The extension to the rear, which is not part of the original structure, will be removed and replaced with a single-storey extension comprising of large support rooms and ancillary spaces which will enable the community service to grow.

The regeneration of Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille will take place through the enhancement of the former school building and its curtilage. The building is on the County Longford Record of Protected Structures, reference no.: 255, and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, reference no.: 13316003. Internal works to the existing will see the provision of a remote working hub for the town while careful consideration will be given to the refurbishment of its exterior to provide it with a new identity on Main Street, again to conservation best practice. The extension and provision of parking to the rear will afford the building a new accessible entrance. The existing playground shelter will be revamped to accommodate an exterior workspace for the new community workshop facility proposed for the site.

MATERIALITY & FINISHES

Building and paving finishes will consist of a considered material palette that compliments existing structures and enhances the sense of place within the town by providing buildings and the public realm with an identity. Low or zero maintenance materials will be considered where possible to alleviate weather staining and ensure a sharp appearance in the long term.

Coloured render that compliments the existing Dean Egan Library is proposed for its extension to the rear while modern glazing is proposed for the rear extension to Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille as a juxtaposition between the proposed and existing. High quality glazing will be utilised where necessary throughout the project in a sensitive manner to maintain design quality. Complimentary render and aluminium materials will also be utilised in the community workshop on this site. It is envisaged the extension to the Convent will also use contrasting materials, such as fibre cement panelling against the existing building, to delineate the distinction between the old and new in line with the principles of conservation. All three existing buildings will be refurbished in a considered manner. Material choices for the new Community Hall will reference the palette of materials used across the project to tie into the existing fibre of the town.

Images included provide an illustration of the finish quality proposed throughout the project.



Coloured render (Tullamore Library)



Glazing (Tullamore Library)



Fibre cement cladding (terra by Swisspearl)