

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

This document has been prepared by Kenny Lyons & Associates Architects on behalf of Longford County Council. It outlines the site masterplan and refurbishment plans for the Pobal le Chéile project, located at the former Convent of Mercy in Ballymahon, County Longford. The project aims to transform the Convent site into a vibrant community hub. It will house the Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and the Ballymahon Day Care Centre within the renovated and expanded convent building. A new Community Hall will also be constructed on the grounds, alongside improved parking and drop-off facilities. The refurbishment seeks to reactivate the disused convent, reinforcing connections between key community services. The goal is to create a clearly defined and functional community campus that serves as a focal point for the town. The masterplan and accompanying Part 8 Planning Application were developed based on the client's brief and ongoing consultation with Longford County Council and project stakeholders.

SITE MASTERPLAN

The site, centrally located in Ballymahon, is approximately 0.473 hectares. It is bordered by residential development to the north, with Mercy Secondary School and St. Matthew's Church to east and south. The site is mostly flat, with a slight slope at the rear. The project will establish a distinctive community zone within Ballymahon, enhancing the visibility and accessibility of local support services. This transformation will foster a stronger sense of place and identity for the area. In addition to the main Convent site, a second parcel of land within the existing public car park is also included in the project. A section of this car park will be fenced off and segregated to create a designated access point to the farmland located to the rear of the site. This secure field access gate will ensure safe and managed entry to the agricultural lands, while maintaining the overall functionality of the public car park.

DESIGN STATEMENT

The Convent of Mercy listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Ref: 13316005) will undergo sensitive renovation and extension to accommodate the expanded Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, the enhanced Day Care Centre, and additional community facilities. The existing extension will be partially demolished and replaced with a reconfigured layout, including a new vertical circulation core to improve accessibility. Renovation works will adhere to conservation best practices to preserve the building's architectural character and ensure its long-term sustainability. Site access, parking, and drop-off areas will be redesigned to support the updated building functions. A new Community Hall, designed to complement the existing convent architecture, will provide a much-needed multi-use space for the town.

MATERIALITY & FINISHES

The project will employ a carefully selected palette of materials that complement the original convent structure and reinforce the site's identity within the town. Durable, low-maintenance finishes will be prioritized to reduce weathering and maintain a high-quality appearance over time. The extension to the convent will feature contrasting materials such as fibre cement cladding—to distinguish new elements from the historic structure in accordance with conservation principles. The convent building will be refurbished in a thoughtful, cohesive manner. Materials used for the new Community Hall will draw from the overall project palette to ensure a harmonious integration with the site and the broader urban context.

Visual representations included in this document illustrate the design intent and the anticipated quality of finishes throughout the development.



Coloured render (Tullamore Library)



Glazing (Tullamore Library)



Fibre cement cladding (Pebble by EQUITONE)