



Masterplan for HSE's Campus at St. Canice's/Lacken

Issues Paper for Pre-Draft Public Consultation



Introduction

The Council & the HSE are embarking on an exciting new Masterplan for the HSE Campus at St. Canice's/Lacken. The first step in this process is consultation and exploration and we are inviting all stakeholders and interested parties contribute to the making of this plan.

The campus is located in Kilkenny City, on the banks of the River Nore, see Map 1. The lands are approximately 24.7 Ha (61 Acres) in extent and include a wide variety of land uses (including office use, sports activities, residential care and agriculture) and vegetation (ranging from woodland to farmland).

The lands contain the original St. Canice's hospital (dating back to 1849) and associated outbuildings and Health Service Executive offices. Approximately 500 to 600 HSE staff and clients utilise St. Canice's and the offices on an ongoing basis. The lands also contain a Pitch and Putt club.

The campus comprises a significant land bank within Kilkenny City and presents an excellent opportunity for regeneration. Accordingly, the Council has now engaged with the HSE in the preparation of a Masterplan for the site in order to determine the optimal land uses and vision for the area.

Initial site investigations started in late 2019, but the advancement of the masterplan was stalled due to the Covid – 19 pandemic. The process is recommencing, and the HSE and the Council are committed to the development of the lands to benefit the HSE and the City in general.

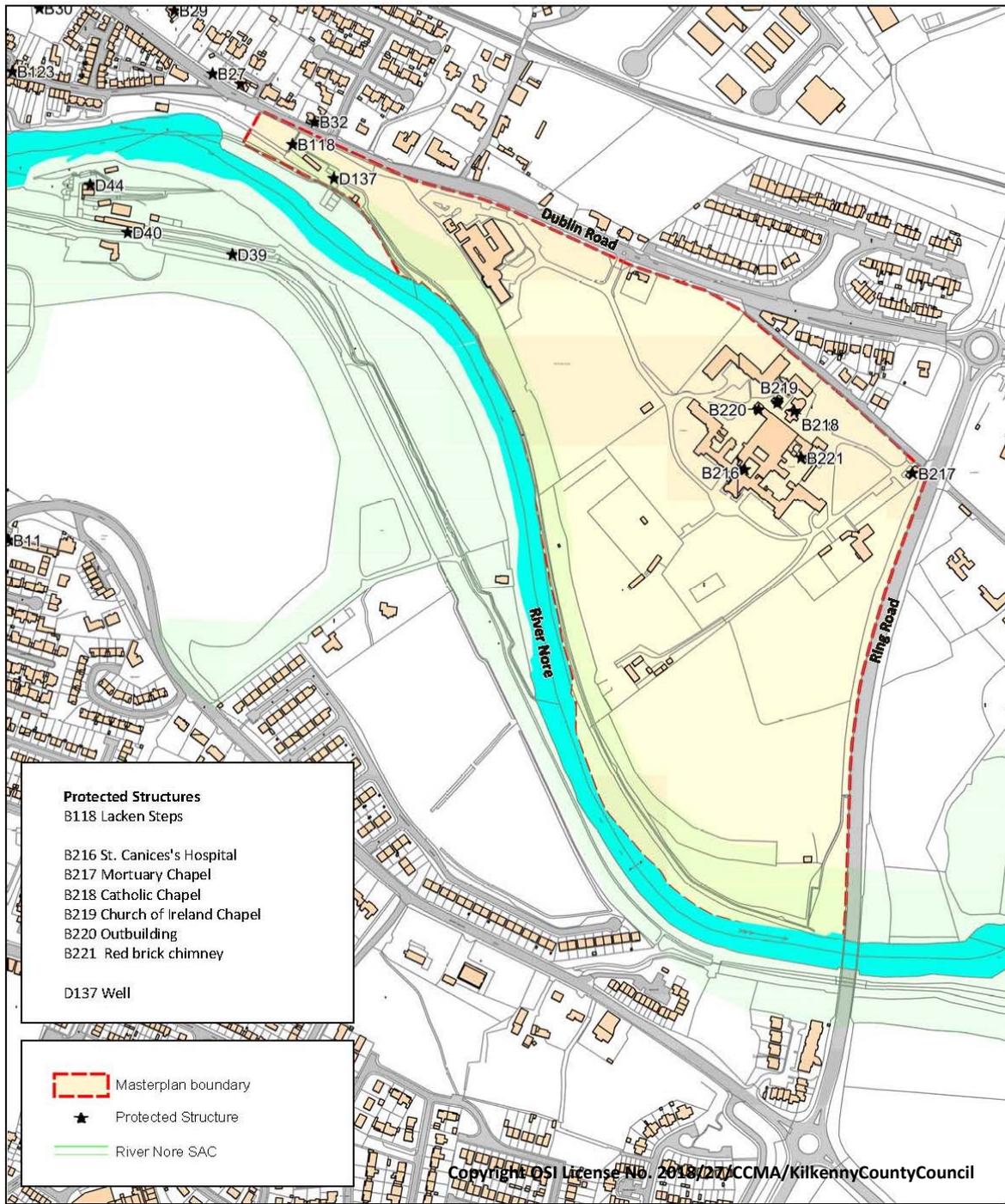


Figure 1: Site Location and context of the HSE's St. Canice's Campus Masterplan



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Figure 2: Aerial view of site location and context of the HSE's St. Canice's Campus Masterplan

Background to the Masterplan

Given the central location of these lands within the Kilkenny Ring road and adjacent to the City Centre, it is desirable to develop them with strategic objectives in mind.

The Healthy Eating and Active Living Programme is a national policy priority programme for the HSE. The programme was established in 2014 and focusses on better nutrition and improved fitness, the latter being the result of a more active lifestyle. In order to promote a more active lifestyle, the Masterplan will have this ethos in mind, creating opportunities for an active lifestyle in close proximity to the City centre, thereby not only benefitting the HSE, but also the residents of the immediate area and the city in general.

Due to the scale of the lands 24.7 hectares (64 acres) and its location close to the City Centre, there is also potential for other beneficial uses such as additional HSE requirements, housing, or other appropriate uses.

Kilkenny County Council acknowledged this unique opportunity site and included an objective in the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 (Objective Z10) and again in the draft City and County Development Plan 2021-2027:

6N: To complete the preparation of a masterplan for the lands at St Canice's campus in partnership with the Health Service Executive within the period of the plan.

Purpose of the Masterplan

A Masterplan is intended to provide a framework of detailed planning policies for particular lands which will be informed through a process of public participation and consultation. The Masterplan will set out the vision and core design principles that should be adhered to in order to achieve the vision for the particular lands. The plan will allocate development priorities and identify land uses to accord with the Development Plan objective while promoting the orderly and sustainable development of the area.

The Masterplan will consist of a written statement and accompanying maps including a Vision, Policies and Key Objectives specific to the HSE's St. Canice's campus. The Masterplan will also be informed and accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This Issues Paper is the first step in the preparation of the required Masterplan for the St. Canice's

campus lands and highlights key issues/questions that may need to be considered in preparing the plan. This final Masterplan will be adopted by both Kilkenny County Council and the HSE and will be placed on a statutory footing by virtue of its inclusion in the upcoming Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021.

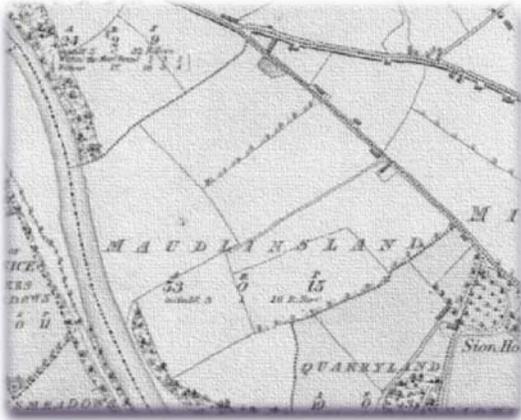
Context and History of St. Canice’s Hospital Lands

The land at St. Canice’s has enormous potential for development. The site can benefit from not only the amenity value of the proximate built environment, but also that of the natural amenity value of the adjacent River Nore Valley, which is both a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive. The hospital lands house several protected structures and contain several significant tree specimens.

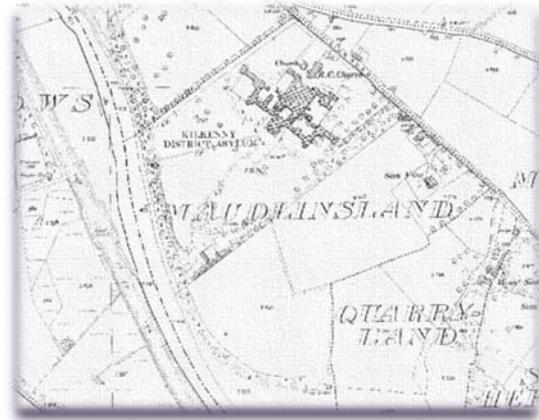
The hospital itself is a protected forty-one bay two storey Elizabethan revival style building, constructed between 1849 and 1951, (Record of Protected Structures Ref B216). The Hospital was purpose built to provide for psychiatric needs in Kilkenny and included extensive agricultural lands at the time. Over the lifetime of the hospital, the associated lands, which were farmed and contributed towards the self-sufficiency of the hospital, have been reduced significantly by the development of houses along the old Sion Road and the development of the Kilkenny Ring Road. The hospital functioned as a primary residential care unit until 1980s, after which the function of the hospital changed somewhat.



Figure 3: Lawrence Collection photograph of the Kilkenny District Asylum as it appeared in c. 1900



Pre- Hospital Lands circa 1839



Hospital Lands circa 1897

In a document setting out the history of the former South East Health Board, 1970-2004, the history of St. Canice's hospital was set out as follows:

St. Canice's hospital opened "on the 1st of September 1852. ... The hospital was designed by George Papworth and had accommodation for 150 people.....In 1856 the number of inpatients was 156 and, by the early 1900's the number exceeded 500. This included many extensions to the hospital and the purchase of Lacken house in 1906, which was used for accommodation until the 1960s. The number of patients peaked in 1939 at 550 and, at the time, the hospital was almost self-sufficient with supplies of meat, potatoes and vegetables from its own farm. In the 1980's the emphasis in healthcare changed from an institutional to a community care model and this has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of in-patients with the hospital caring for 90 patients in 2004."

With the opening of the 45 bed Department of Psychiatry in 2003 at St. Luke's General Hospital, it started to care for psychiatric patients from Kilkenny and Carlow, which further reduced demand at St. Canice's hospital. This shift away from institutional residential care has led to the lands at St. Canice's becoming relatively underutilised, particularly when considering its significant extent and central urban location. Part of the hospital lands are currently used as a pitch and putt course and others are leased for agricultural purposes.

The site is located within the Kilkenny Ring road and in close proximity to the City's core retail area. In accordance with National Policy on the utilisation of centrally located public lands for development, it is important to activate the land use to its full capacity

in accordance with the principle of active land management so as to secure the best benefit of the HSE and to the community of Kilkenny as a whole.

Some Key Issues to consider for St. Canice's Hospital lands

- Extensive strategically located lands within the Kilkenny Ring Road, proximate to Kilkenny City Centre.
- Diverse needs of the immediate area and Kilkenny City as a whole
- Ongoing operational needs of the HSE
- High quality landscape on the bank of the River Nore, which is a Natura 2000 site and a setting for the historic structures it contains
- Buildings of historic and social importance with built heritage dating back to the 1850s.
- Individual trees of importance and significant tree stands within the lands

What are the Key questions to consider?

Public participation is essential to help deliver an effective Masterplan. We now need your help. Below are some additional questions or issues which may offer some considerations if you are making a submission to the preparation of the Plan.

Questions to assist with your submission

Vision

- What should be the overall vision for St. Canice's lands and what should the Masterplan target to assist in achieving this vision?

Environment

- How can the landscape, natural and built heritage, green infrastructure and local biodiversity areas be suitably protected while accommodating the needs of the HSE and the city?
- How can this Masterplan enhance urban liveability?
- How can this Masterplan enhance resilience to environmental risks?

Health & Wellbeing

- How can the unique assets and characteristics of the site be enhanced and developed to take into consideration a health promoting green environment that would:
 - a. Promote physical activity
 - b. Enhance mental wellbeing
 - c. Enhance social interaction
 - d. Create multisensory restorative environments
 - e. Ensure a sense of place for new uses?
- Have you any specific suggestions to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking to and from the Masterplan area?
- How can we ensure that our plan supports all ages and will benefit all population groups and be multifunctional and inclusive?

Connections

- How can we ensure a networked approach that connects existing green spaces with new green spaces?
- How can this Masterplan encourage the utilisation and enhancement of existing amenity areas such as the River Nore linear park (Lacken walk)?
- What opportunities are there to connect to the River Nore and its walks?

Developments

- What is the most appropriate range of land uses for the development of the St. Canice's lands in order to protect and enhance the environment?
- How can we ensure that the needs of different groups are adequately catered for on the site?
- How should existing and new uses be configured on the lands?



East Tower of the St. Canice's hospital.

How do I get involved?

Now is your chance to give us your views! Kilkenny County Council will review and consider all of the pre-draft submissions received in the preparation the Draft St. Canice's Masterplan. Pre-Draft submissions can be submitted via email, online or sent in by post during the consultation period.

Note: There will be an opportunity to make submissions on the Draft Masterplan as the plan making process progresses and public notices and press releases will be published as these consultation stages arise and are scheduled.

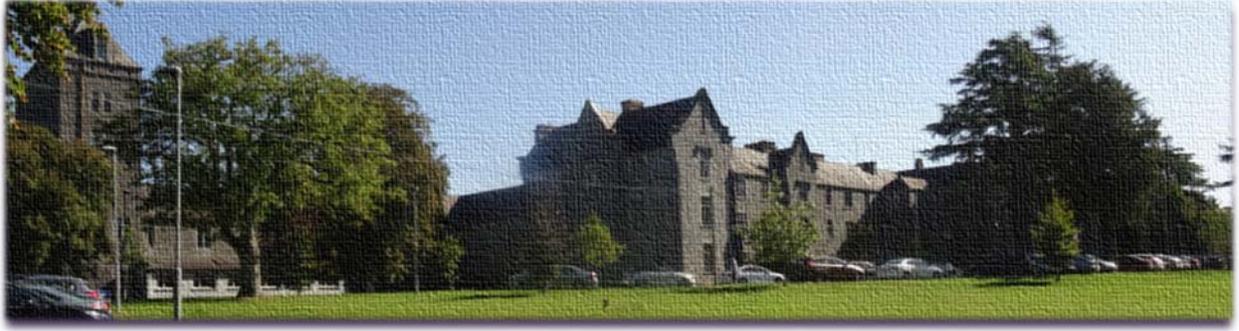
Submissions can be made before 5pm on 30th of July 2021 as follows:

- Online at: consult.kilkenny.ie
- By email to: ourplan@kilkennycoco.ie
- By Post to the Planning Department of Kilkenny County Council. See bottom of document

Public Information Event

In order to ensure that the public have had an opportunity to engage, you are invited to attend a **FREE ONLINE INFORMATION EVENT** scheduled for:

14th July 2021 at 19.00 – (Please register on Eventbrite and search - “St. Canice’s Masterplan”)



Submissions by Post

Pre-draft Consultation St. Canice's Masterplan

Planning Department
Kilkenny County Council
County Hall
John Street
Kilkenny

St. Canice's Masterplan Issues Paper

Submissions must be made no later than 5pm on 30th of July 2021

Name: _____

Address:

Contact details:
