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OUTLINE

CONSERVATION INSPECTION AND ASSESSMENT

FOR THE PROPOSED EXTENSION AND

REFURBISHMENT OF

THE MAYFAIR BALLROOM

AND ADJACENT CAR PARK,

HORSE BARRACK LANE,

KILKENNY

This report has been prepared independently by Roisin Hanley Architects Ltd as part of the submission prepared by Reddy Architecture + Urbanism on behalf of Kilkenny County Council for a Part 8 Planning Application further to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2013 and Section B1.1 of Appendix B of "*Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*".

THE MAYFAIR BALLROOM IS LOCATED

IN THE KILKENNY CITY CENTRE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

AND KILKENNY CITY ZONE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL RMP KK19-26

CLIENT: KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: 15TH DECEMBER 2014



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INTRODUCTION

S.1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Client Instruction

Acting on the instruction of Reddy Architecture and Urbanism, who are the design architects acting on behalf of Kilkenny County Council, this report has been prepared following a surface inspection of the "Mayfair Ballroom and adjacent car park" on 10th October 2004 and following a review of the proposed design intervention in November 2014 and the revised proposed design in December 2014

The Mayfair Ballroom site is comprised of the Mayfair Ballroom building and adjacent car park. The site is circa 0.225hectares and its boundaries are defined on the Northwest by the mediaeval town walls along the Breaghagh River, on the southwest by Watergate Street and on the southeast by Horse Barrack Lane.

A photographic record of the fabric of the building within its context has been undertaken and is appended to this document.

1.2 The Scope of the Report

The inspection and survey undertaken was to provide a photographic survey and conservation assessment of the architectural fabric of the Mayfair Ballroom building and to carry out an assessment of the proposed refurbishment and extension of the building on the fabric of the building and within the context and location of the building which is located in the zone of archaeological potential and which is located adjacent to two national monuments.

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There has been no opening up to inspect timbers and the inspection of the roof was from the ground. It should also be noted that there was no access to the external roof and all inspections of the first floor external elevations were from the ground.

1.3 The Mayfair site

The *Mayfair site* is comprised of The Mayfair Ballroom and adjacent car park.

The Mayfair Ballroom was last used recently by Diageo Brewery and has been modified for their requirements for offices and a canteen and a locker room.



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The Mayfair Building is constructed with rendered concrete walls. There is a double pitched roof of corrugated sheeting. The double roof is defined by metal roof trusses which are currently concealed behind ceiling tiles. There is no insulation in the building.

The building is located to northwest side of the building. The southeast side of the building is two stories high, including a balcony looking out onto the ballroom.

The ballroom is a large, high-ceilinged room with windows facing onto the Breaghagh River. The ballroom has been subdivided for offices and locker rooms.

A two storey concrete block built extension at the rear of the building and a lean-to kitchen extension at the front are both later additions added after the ballroom closed in 1973.

A yard enclosed by a high concrete block wall separates the building from the car park to the northwest. A service yard at the northeast of the building contains concrete steps that lead to a first floor entrance to the office extension.

The building is located directly beside the mediaeval town walls and the Breaghagh River. There is a very narrow area between the ballroom and mediaeval wall. The distance between the building and the mediaeval walls ranges from about 1m -1.6m at the most. A concrete block built boiler house at the northeast corner of the service yard actually truncates the mediaeval Town Wall.

It should be noted that there may originally have been a mediaeval bridge at the North West end of the building where the mediaeval wall butts out into the river.

The Car Park

A small car park at the southwest end of the site is separated from Watergate Street by a raised planting bed surrounded by a modern low stone wall. The car park is paved with tarmac.





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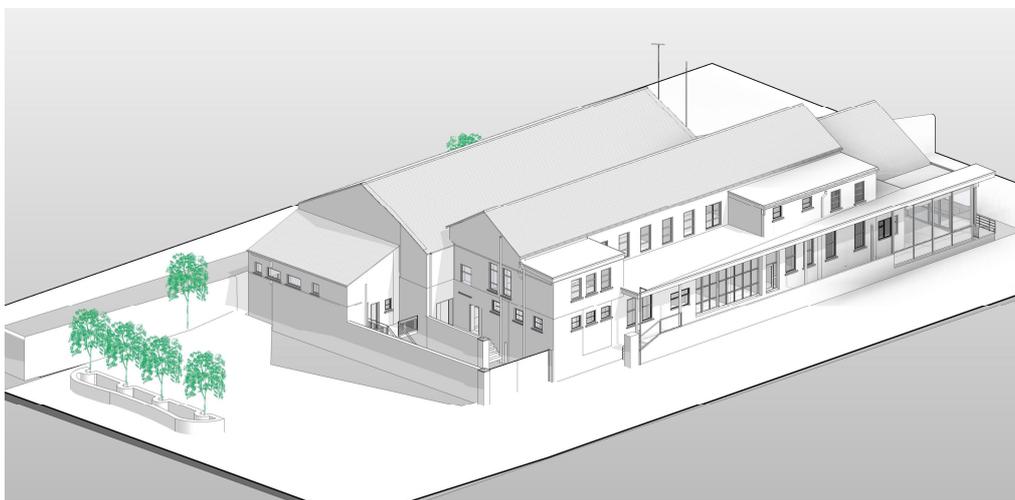
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The Mayfair Ballroom opened on St Stephen's night 1943. It was one of the most popular venues in the county throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s and it played host to a number of well-known American names including Ray Charles, The Everly Brothers, Dusty Springfield, The Tremeloes, Engelbert Humperdink, Chubby Checker and, just months before he was killed in an air crash, Jim Reeves, who played to 1,700 people, the biggest crowd ever seen at the Mayfair. The decline of the show bands resulted in the Mayfair closing in 1973 (katharineblake.wordpress.com).

There is a photographic record of the building attached to the conservation report.

Overall Conservation Assessment of the Mayfair Site



Carpark **Mayfair Ballroom**



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The building is constructed with concrete walls and an asbestos roof.

The main architectural features of the building are the:

- The double pitched roof
- The ball room
- The metal roof trusses which defined the ball room space and which are currently hidden by suspended ceilings tiles.
- The roof trusses of the adjacent rooms to the ballroom which are currently hidden by suspended ceilings tiles.
- Concrete block walls
- Aluminium single glazed windows.
- Social Significance of the use of the building as a ballroom.
- Most recent use of the building was offices for *Diageo*.
- The historical architectural fabric is of poor quality
- The conservation significance of the building is the social history of the Mayfair Ballroom
- A proposal to the building should recognise or respect the architectural form of the ballroom and the social history.

Conservation Assessment of the Context and setting of The Mayfair Site



Conservation Strategy to the Mayfair site

On the initial assessment of the Mayfair Ballroom it is clear that the main historical significance of The Mayfair Ballroom is not the historical fabric of the building but the social history of the building and its setting. The **social history** and **the setting of the Mayfair Ballroom** takes precedence over the fabric of the building.

It is essential that the conservation approach to the building focuses primarily on the social history of the building but more significantly the conservation approach



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has to focus on the **conservation of the setting of the building** within its proximity to the mediaeval walls, St Francis Abbey

The most significant characteristic of the Mayfair Ballroom is actually the site and context.

- A) The Mayfair site is located within , **a Zone of Archaeological Potential**, RMPKK19-26
- B) The Mayfair Ballroom is located within the Architectural Conservation Area of Kilkenny centre**
- C) The conservation approach will have to be considered within the framework of City Centre Conservation Policies and objectives and within the archaeological framework and policies as outlined in the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014 -2020
- D) The *Mayfair site* is constructed directly adjacent to the mediaeval town walls which are a recorded National Monument.
- E) The *Mayfair site* is located adjacent to the River Breagagh
- F) The *Mayfair site* is situated beside St. Francis' Abbey which is a National Monument.
- G) The existing view from St Francis Abbey is across the *Mayfair site* to building St Canice's Cathedral and mediaeval town wall to rear.
- H) As a result of the location of the *Mayfair site* it has a direct influence on the mediaeval Recorded National Monuments and the mediaeval setting.

The conservation approach to the intervention of such a building within the setting of a mediaeval town and mediavel buildings has to be approached in a slightly different way than if the architectural fabric of the building was the main focus.

This report will not emphasise the building fabric of the Mayfair Ballroom. It is considered that a lengthy analysis of each room of the Mayfair ballroom will distract from the fundamental importance of the mediaeval setting of the Mayfair site.

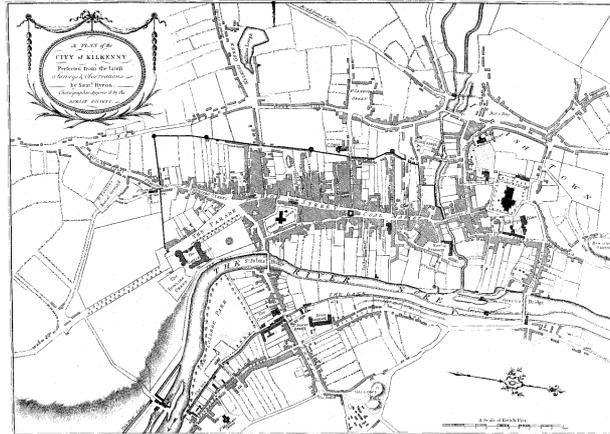
There is conscious decision to **refocus and highlight** the assessment and description of the **mediaeval structures and archaeological setting** of the Mayfair Ballroom **as fundamentally the mediaeval setting of the building is the most important aspect of the Mayfair Ballroom** and the **conservation spotlight** and design intervention to the Mayfair building should not deviate or move away from the **mediaeval setting of the ballroom** as set out in the development plan.



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The mediaeval setting as the primary focus of the conservation approach to the proposed design intervention to the Mayfair site



There has been a detailed archaeological Assessment of the medieval structures and archaeological zone carried out by Mr Collin O Drisceoil MA MIAI. This report identifies all of the recorded monuments and zones of archaeological potential on and adjacent to the Mayfair Ballroom site which is defined by the Mayfair Ballroom and adjacent car park. The historical information below is included in this report to provide an overview of the historical setting and background of the Mayfair site and the significant historical importance of the site and its setting within the context of the historic development of Kilkenny.

"The site is located on the southern bank of the River Breagagh, within the former flood-plain of the river Breagagh. Originally however the Breagagh was considerably wider than it is today (O Drisceoil 2004). During the earlier part of the thirteenth century massive reclamation works were undertaken within the old floodplains of the Nore and Breagagh to provide for the expansion of the town and a functioning quayside. This was achieved by dumping thousands of tons of refuse, stone and rubble between a successions of wooden revetments. Direct archaeological evidence for reclamation was uncovered to the rear of No.1 Irishtown, 50m north-west of the Mayfair building (Doyle 2004) (Licence number 02E1592). The project took place prior to the widening and deepening of the Breagagh River, part of the river Nore flood-relief scheme. Four metres of waterlogged archaeological stratigraphy was recorded including a series of timber fences, the remains of a post-and-wattle structure and a substantial riverside revetment. The bulk of the sequence dated from the late twelfth-fourteenth centuries and was associated with a large assemblage of finds.

The Mayfair site is bounded by the mediaeval Town Wall which were constructed on the bank of the River Breagagh. This is a National Monument. Following the reclamation of the Nore and Breagagh. Kilkenny's Town Walls were built to defend the urban population and create a secure marketplace. It is now thought that the bulk of the stone circuit was in place by 1300, having replaced a more constricted earthen rampart (Thomas 1992, ii, 131-2; Oxford Archaeology 2005, 55-62). The



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proposed development area is 10m to the northeast of the site of a gate on the Town Wall which is variously referred to as the 'Irishtown gate', 'Hightown gate' and 'Watergate', and linked the boroughs of Hightown and Irishtown. Its date of erection is not recorded though there is likely to have been a gate at this point from an early stage in the development of the town. It was demolished in the later 18th century and no accurate representation of it survives. The 1655 Down Survey map depicts a large rectangular gatehouse, though whether or not this is accurate is open to question. Similarly, Rocque's map (1758) simply shows a gap in the wall where the gate stood.

The Mayfair site is located adjacent to Saint Francis' Abbey. This is a National Monument. Saint Francis' Abbey was founded by Richard Marshall in around 1234 (Bradley, 2000). The remains of the thirteenth century choir survive. A portion of the area to the north of the abbey church, as well as the nave and cloister to the south, was excavated in the late 1960s by Marcus Ó hEochaidhe in connection with major development work at the brewery, which surrounds the monument. The excavations have never been fully published but a sketch-plan (published in the Old Kilkenny review 1975) and photographs (see below) indicate that an extremely large north transept with an aisle, in reality another church, was found to extend 22m north of the nave (also excavated) and chancel, which still stands. The transept is known to have contained an early 17th century graveslab (Manning 2007), indicating it was used for burial beyond the reformation.

From Saint Francis' Abbey there is a strong visual connection across the Mayfair building and across the Breagagh River to the mediaeval town and St Canice's Cathedral. The current Cathedral dates from the 13th century. The Cathedral stands on an ancient site which has been used for Christian worship since the 6th century. There has been a church dedicated to St Canice on the cathedral site since the late seventh century A D. The earliest church on the site is presumed to have been made of wood, later to be replaced in the later medieval period by a romanesque-style stone church. This was in turn replaced by the current imposing medieval cathedral. A few yards from the present south transept stands an imposing 9th-century round tower, 100 ft high. Accessible only by a steep set of internal ladders, it may once have been both a watchtower and a refuge. The summit gives a clear view of Kilkenny and the countryside around. The hill on which the cathedral stands is believed to be the centre of the first major settlement at Kilkenny, and the round tower suggests an early ecclesiastical foundation.[3] Much less is known about the early secular structures, but the area around the cathedral, called Irishtown, is the oldest part of the present city

It rose to such prominence that it became the principal church of the diocese of Ossory. On the eve of the Anglo-Norman incursions this ecclesiastical settlement, located north of the little River Breagagh in the area of the current cathedral, consisted of a church in the Hiberno-Romanesque style, a round tower and likely associated domestic habitation. Following the invasion it came to be known as Irishtown and was a possession of the bishop of Ossory

Kilkenny was the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Ossory and St Canice's. The name of "Kilkenny" itself retains the anglicised version of the Irish Cill Chainnigh, which translates as "Church of Cainneach", or "Canice".



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1.4 Overview of the City & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 that will inform the conservation approach to the building and its setting.

The conservation approach to the building is governed by the Architectural Conservation and archaeological policies as outlined in **Chapter 7 of the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014 -2020.**

The following extracts from the Development Plan are relevant in this regard :

7.3 Built Heritage

Built heritage includes all man-made features, buildings, and structures in the environment. It includes our rich and varied archaeological and architectural heritage. The most significant part of the built environment of Kilkenny is the quality of the city centre. This character comes from its unique setting and layout incorporating a number of distinctive elements.

7.3.1 Archaeological Heritage

*Archaeology is defined as the study of past people through the physical traces left by them in the landscape, often in the form of monuments, sites, features or objects. Our archaeological heritage contributes to our understanding of our past and also to our cultural, educational and tourism assets. Archaeological sites and monuments vary in form and date. They include early Christian ecclesiastical sites, churches, graveyards, medieval buildings, castles, industrial archaeology, earthworks (e.g. ringforts), megalithic sites, Fulachta Fiadh, and underwater sites. Archaeological remains may not always be isolated finds or sites but may have been linked at one time with other archaeological monuments in the immediate vicinity or sometimes in more distant locations – creating historic landscapes. **The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of Kilkenny City and Environs** and will provide guidance to developers and property owners regarding the archaeological implications of proposed developments.*

The National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 provide for the protection of the archaeological heritage. The principles set out in the Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999) provide the national policy framework in relation to archaeological heritage.

7.3.1.1 Walled Towns

*The Kilkenny city walls, built during the medieval period, would have historically formed a defensive line around the medieval town. Today, the walls are part-standing and part-buried. Town defences are considered to be monuments for the purposes of the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004. **The Council will support the National Policy on Town Defences which sets out national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of the defences of towns and cities.***



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7.3.3 Conservation Plans

Conservation Plans have been prepared for significant archaeological and architectural sites in Kilkenny city. These include **Kilkenny City Walls**, Rothe House, and St. Mary's Church and Graveyard.

Objective

To facilitate and support the implementation of the existing (and any further) conservation plans.

7.4 Architectural Heritage

7.4.1 Urban Structure

Kilkenny, often referred to as the medieval capital of Ireland, offers an abundance of fascinating historical sites. The historic urban centre of Kilkenny City retains much of its medieval fabric. Prominent buildings such as the Shee Almshouse, Rothe House and the imposing Kilkenny Castle are some of the better-known secular buildings about the streetscape, while numerous medieval religious buildings, such as St Canice's Cathedral, the Dominican Black Abbey and St Francis's Abbey, also survive. Buildings such as these, and other less well-known later medieval structures hidden behind Georgian and Victorian façades, are a feature of the surviving medieval streetscape.

In principle, it will be the policy of Kilkenny Borough and County Councils to retain and enhance the essential character of the historic city, whilst assisting in its continued but controlled development, enhancement and maintenance.

7.4.2 Public Realm

The architectural character of a city is determined not only by the importance of individual buildings and groups of buildings but also by the quality of the spaces formed by the buildings – i.e. the footpaths, streets, squares, parks, views and vistas are all of importance, and are an integral part of the urban structure.

Public realm can be best described as the form and use of outdoor areas and spaces that are accessible to the public. This includes many familiar types of place such as streets, squares, parks, car parks, as well as the physical and visual connections between them, and with buildings.

The public realm in Kilkenny is varied, from the grand civic space in the Parade to the many smaller and incidental spaces and the numerous streets and slipways of the medieval city.

The effects of proposed developments on the quality of the adjacent public spaces and the possibilities of creating new spaces will be an important factor in assessing planning applications. Pedestrians will be afforded priority in the use of the public realm throughout the historic city.



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7.4.6 Architectural Conservation Areas

Each development plan must include a policy objective to preserve the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within its functional area. An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve.

Objectives for all ACAs in Kilkenny City and Environs

- **To ensure the preservation of the special character of each ACA particularly with regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, building materials, historic street furniture and paving.**
- To designate ACAs where appropriate and provide a local policy framework for the preservation of these areas.

7.4.7.1 City Centre ACA

Description and historical background

The city centre ACA encompasses the medieval core of Kilkenny, the boundaries of which follow the line of the city wall to the west and north, the river to the east and Rose Inn Street to the south (see Figure 7.6). This area is defined by the central spine of the city running along High Street and Parliament Street with the medieval slips running to the east between High Street and Kieran Street and the surviving burgage plots to the rear of properties on High Street and Parliament Street. This part of the City contains some of the city's most architecturally and historically significant structures including St. Francis Abbey, The Black Abbey, St. Mary's Church, Rothe House, Shee Alms House, and the Hightown Circuit of the city walls, visual reminders of the city's prosperity in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. The Tholsel and the Courthouse are also within this area representing major contributions from the 18th century. Apart from these landmark buildings and structures (of which there is a high proportion in such a small area) the external built fabric of these streets dates to the 18th and 19th centuries. Even within this however, there are small reminders of the medieval past incorporated into many of the city's structures, particularly on High Street, and it is highly likely that there is further medieval fabric hidden from view.

The urban vernacular of much of the City Centre is characterised by rendered and painted facades with classically proportioned wall to window ratios and the survival of the timber sash as the most common window type. This presentation is typical of the commercial centres of most Irish towns. One departure from this type is the east side of Parliament Street which is home to a number of redbrick four-storey over basement Georgian houses. Adjacent to these is an important reminder of the 19th century brewing industry in the St. Francis Abbey Brewery.

Statement of character

The City Centre ACA is characterised by its evolution during the medieval period as Hightown, containing the residences of the merchant princes, the custom house/Tholsel, the market cross and later the courthouse. Much of the medieval street pattern survives with the main streets running along a north south central spine, having narrow slips unique to Kilkenny running downhill off the main street to the east and having long burgage plots



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running east-west to the rear of the properties on High Street and Parliament Street. The area today is characterised by a sizeable collection of landmark medieval and 18th century buildings set in an 18th and 19th century commercial streetscape of two and three-storey rendered facades with classically proportioned wall to window ratios and many surviving early shop and pub fronts to ground floor. In the north-east corner of the area is a significant element of Kilkenny's 19th century industrial heritage in the form of the St. Francis Abbey brewing site.

ACA Development Management Standards based on assessment of special character.

- CCACA 1: *Assessment of proposals for the presentation of commercial premises will require retention of genuine early/original shopfronts/pubfronts, and the provision of high quality contemporary design when new shopfronts/commercial fronts are proposed,*
- CCACA 2: *To maintain high standard of presentation of ground and upper floors by controlling the size, number and composition of advertisements on buildings to prevent and reduce visual clutter in the ACA. Plastic or neon signage will not be considered in the ACA.*
- CCACA 3: *To protect the remaining surviving medieval street pattern and tight urban grain, particularly the burgage plots to the rear of High St. and Parliament St. limiting large scale developments which may necessitate assimilation of smaller historic building plots and retention of the existing scale of three and four storey buildings.*
- CCACA 4: *To improve the visual appearance of the car parking area at the Market Yard and to ensure a high standard of architectural design for any development at Bateman Quay.*



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Summary of the policies of the City & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 considered in the design approach to the Mayfair site :

- *Endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on the archaeological heritage.*
- *To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains.*
- *Ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential. Where upstanding remains of a Recorded Monument exist a visual impact assessment may be required to fully determine the effect of any proposed development.*
- *Require the retention of surviving medieval plots and street patterns and to facilitate the recording of evidence of ancient boundaries, layouts etc. in the course of development.*
- *Safeguard the importance of significant archaeological or historic landscapes from developments that would unduly sever or disrupt the relationship, connectivity and/or inter-visibility between sites.*
- *The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny*



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- The Council will support the National Policy on Town Defences

“There should be a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and preservation of their character, setting and amenity”.

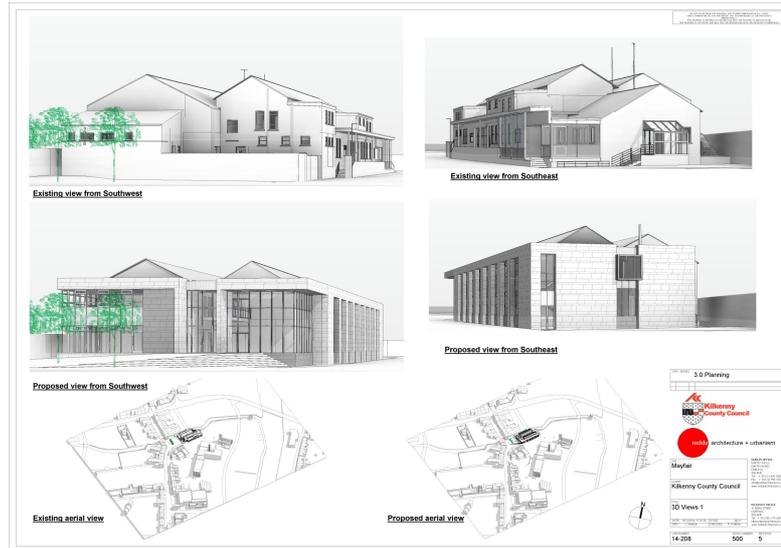
- To ensure the preservation of the special character of each ACA particularly with regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, building materials, historic street furniture and paving.



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The Architectural Brief and response as set out by Reddy Architecture and Urbanism



Façade Design

The brief developed after consultation with Kilkenny County Council identified the requirement to;

- Create facades that would be more reflective of the civic nature of the building.
- Address the public square to the west of the building
- Reflect the buildings location at the major entrance to the new Abbey Quarter
- Improve the thermal efficiency of the external wall build up to comply with the Building Regulations.

To accomplish this the random series of single and two storey extensions to the central double gabled form are replaced by a more ordered regular two storey form which wraps around its east, south and west facades. The varied fenestration designs and random fenestration pattern are replaced by a more ordered rhythmical design which is reflective of the proposed civic use of the building. It references the expressed rhythmical structural bays of the nearby Broomhouse Building.

The entrance to the existing building is from the raised walkway along its southern façade. This was driven predominantly by the security requirements of the brewery. The decision to convert the small car park to the west of the building into a public urban square suggested that the entrance to the proposed building should be located on the western façade to reflect this new public space. A more transparent façade is proposed to identify the public entrance and reflect the civic nature of the building.



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Currently the external wall of the Mayfair Building is uninsulated. This has led to high running costs for the St. Francis's Abbey Brewery and more importantly high levels of condensation on the internal face of the external walls which has led to a deterioration in the fabric of the building over time.

To address both these issues it is proposed to provide external insulation on the face of the existing facades to achieve the required thermal values. Rather than simply provide a render finish to this insulation to match what is existing it is proposed to over clad the external walls with natural Kilkenny Limestone and Blue Limestone. We believe that this is a more appropriate material given the civic nature of the building and its location at the gateway to the Abbey Quarter.

Materiality.

The facades of the existing building are finished with a painted render. Existing building reflective of its original use as a ballroom.

The pitched roofs are clad with profiled concrete cladding panels which given their age will probably contain asbestos.

Existing windows are a mixture of single and double glazed in timber and aluminium frames. The aluminium frames are not thermally broken and are creating condensation on the internal face of the frames which has contributed to the deterioration of the fabric of the building.

The external walkway is constructed from painted steel posts with glazing inset in aluminium framing with an opaque glass spandrel panel. The fascia and soffit are clad with aluminium sheeting.

It is proposed to replace these domestic / industrial type materials with material which would be more reflective of the proposed civic use of the building and its important location at the gateway to the Abbey Quarter.

Kilkenny limestone to the plinth of the building is proposed with Blue Limestone to the ground and first floor levels of the extended wall areas to the east, south and west. A vertical panel of Kilkenny Limestone is proposed on the west elevation.

The existing façade of the ballroom to the north will be externally insulated with a self coloured render finish achieving a minimum u-value of 0.27 w/m²/K.

All of the existing windows will be replaced with new double glazed window in a powder coated aluminium frame achieving a minimum u-value of 2.2 w/m²/K.

The existing profiled concrete cladding to the pitched roofs will be replaced with a standing seam metal roof achieving a minimum u-value of 0.20 w/m²/K.

Existing downpipes visible on the east, south and west facades will be located within the building to ensure the clean lines of the building are maintained.



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The new urban square to the west of the building and the new footpath along its southern and eastern sides will be constructed from a combination of varying lengths of Kilkenny Limestone with a hammered finish and varying lengths of Granite with a sawn finish.



View of Existing Building from Parliament Street (West)



View of Proposed Building from Parliament Street (West)



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Proposed three dimensional overview

The modern design proposal by Reddy Architecture and urbanism is a strong architectural urban building design solution to the proposed civic nature of the building.

"....To ensure the preservation of the special character of each ACA particularly with regard to building scale, proportions, historical plot sizes, building lines, height, general land use, building materials, historic street furniture and paving."

The mediaeval Town Walls bounding the Mayfair site are of National importance and signify the importance of the River in the historical development of the town and the connection to the river and town walls should be celebrated with an architectural response.

- ***"....The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny"***
- ***"...The Council will support the National Policy on Town Defences which sets out national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of the defences of towns and cities."***

In consideration to the historical context of the site the parapet has to be retained at the lowest level possible to ensure that visual connection between St Canice's Cathedral and St Francis Abbey is maintained. No mechanical plant on the roof structure should extend above the level of the parapet. A balance flue shall be provided.

- ***"....Safeguard the importance of significant archaeological or historic landscapes from developments that would unduly sever or disrupt the relationship, connectivity and/or inter-visibility between sites."***



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The proposal for the urban square in the location of the existing car park is a welcomed design proposal for the city. The glazed corner facing the square and the mediaeval walls allows a visible connection to the mediaeval walls that was previously disconnected. This will allow the public to view the walls and look across the river towards St Canice's Cathedral and supports the historical setting of the existing building. The provision of a glazed elevation to the river and mediaeval walls actively responds to the policy as set out in the Development Plan

- ***"....The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny .."***
- ***"....To ensure that development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature, and is sited and designed appropriately.."***
- ***"....The effects of proposed developments on the quality of the adjacent public spaces and the possibilities of creating new spaces will be an important factor in assessing planning applications"***
- ***"...The Council will support the National Policy on Town Defences which sets out national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of the defences of towns and cities..."***

The proposal to create a side gate adjacent to the mediaeval town walls should be monitored and the gate should only be closed at night for security reason. The gate should be opened during daylight hours of the working week to ensure public access to the town walls and their setting.

- ***"....The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny"***

The foundations of the new façade and extension are to be designed in such a manner so as not to impede on the setting or possible archaeological artefacts

- ***"....Ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential. Where upstanding remains of a Recorded Monument exist a visual impact assessment may be required to fully determine the effect of any proposed development. "***

The dropped windows to the elevation facing the river are welcomed as it reconnects the visible connection to the mediaeval walls.

- ***"....The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny"***



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The demolition of the existing plant room that truncated the mediaeval walls is welcomed. It is also essential from a conservation point of view that the mediaeval Town Wall does not become merely a rear boundary wall to a passage along the site. This area of open space at the Northwest area allows better access to the mediaeval walls and the river. It is at this point that the visual connection between St. Francis' Abbey across the river and mediaeval town walls to St Canice's Cathedral .

"....The Council will promote awareness of, and facilitate access to, the archaeological inheritance of County Kilkenny"

The proposal to expose the roof trusses in the original ballroom and ancillary rooms is warmly welcomed. It is also recommended that an architectural demarcation or piece of art work or mural is designed on the original external wall of the ball room that has now become an internal wall to the double height space that will celebrate or mark the original social history of the building as a ball room as this social history of the building is the most significant historical characteristic of the building and it is essential that this is recorded and delineated.



View of Existing Building from St. Francis Abbey (East)



View of Proposed Building from St. Francis Abbey (East)



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The existing view from St Francis Abbey to St Canice's Cathedral to rear and mediaeval town wall to rear.

The conservation recommendations of this report may be qualified and are fully dependant of the archaeological assessment being carried out prior to any construction of the extension.

- ***".... Endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on the archaeological heritage. "***
- ***"....To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains"***



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Conclusion

The Conservation approach to the design intervention of Mayfair Site has to be governed at all times by the significance of the mediaeval setting.



St Canices Cathedral



The mediavel walls



mediaeval visual connection





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In section 7.2 Mr O Drisceoil recommends that archaeological test excavations are required on the site prior to construction.

Mr O Drisceoil also recommends that a comprehensive building archaeology assessment of the Town Wall within the development area of site be undertaken.

I concur with the recommendations of Mr O Drisceoil that a detailed archaeological assessment should be carried out in particular at the car park area where the proposed extension is located and adjacent to the mediaeval town walls along the Northwest boundary of the site.

- ***"....Endeavour to preserve in situ all archaeological monuments, whether on land or underwater, listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and any newly discovered archaeological sites, features, or objects by requiring that archaeological remains are identified and fully considered at the very earliest stages of the development process and that schemes are designed to avoid impacting on the archaeological heritage. "***
- ***"....To require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological remains"***

I would strongly recommend that the archaeological assessment and the extent of the archaeological assessment be agreed in advance of any construction work or building contract. In particular I would recommend that the area of the car park and the area of the service yard located to the Northwest and the area alongside the mediaeval Town Walls bounding the river be assessed. It will be necessary to demolish or remove the concrete stairway and plant room in the service yard to facilitate the archaeological assessment and the extent of the tarmacadam and under sub surface of the car park should be agreed prior to construction or building contract. The areas of demolition can form part of the extent of the archaeological assessment to be agreed with the Minister and in compliance with the guidelines of procuring an archaeological licence to the National Monuments Service of the Departments of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This work should be carried out under a phase 1 preliminary contract that is completely separate to the main building contract as the findings may influence the proposed development.



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It must be clearly stated that this conservation impact report is considered a preliminary report and can only be read and considered as a feasibility academic exercise that is totally dependent on the findings of a full archaeological assessment. The conservation recommendations and conservation impact statement may fundamentally change depending on the findings of the archaeological assessment. In particular the design proposal or structural proposal may be required to change and this is totally dependent on the findings of the archaeological assessment.