

Director of Services Planning
Planning Department
Kilkenny County Council
John Street
Co. Kilkenny

Friday, 30th September 2016
[By email]

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE PROPOSED VARIATION 1A TO THE *KILKENNY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020* WITH REGARD TO MOUNT JULIET ESTATE, THOMASTOWN, CO. KILKENNY

Dear Sir/Madam,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mount Juliet¹, have retained Tom Phillips + Associates², to make this submission to the Proposed Variation 1a to *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2022* in relation to lands in our Clients ownership at Mount Juliet Estate, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.

Mount Juliet Estate is one of Irelands leading country estates providing high end service and hospitality for which Mount Juliet is internationally renowned. Our Client owns and operates Mount Juliet Estate and is seeks to further develop the Estate in a manner that will positively contribute towards meeting the expenditure requirement of the Estate, ensuring that Mount Juliet can compete in both the national and international market.

1.1 Purpose of This Submission

It is our opinion that lands within the Estate have the potential to provide for further residential development, as outlined in the Proposed Variation 1a to the Development Plan, and we welcome and support the Proposed Variation 1a in this regard. Following a review of the Proposed Variation 1a we seek to amend the wording of Objective 8 which, as proposed, limits residential development adjacent to the Rose Garden Lodges and to propose a new objective to identify sites at The Foxes Covert which are suitable to accommodate residential development.

¹ 2nd Floor Guild House, Guild Street, Dublin 1

² Tom Phillips + Associates, 80 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2



2.0 SUBMISSION ON VARIATION 1A TO THE KILKENNY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020

2.1 Our Client Welcomes the Proposed Variation

At the outset, we wish to outline that our Client welcomes the Proposed Variation 1a to the *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020* with regard to Mount Juliet Estate and is supportive of the potential to provide additional residential development associated with the estates sporting and recreational functions.

It is important to emphasise the need for this additional development within the Estate, as further detailed in the *Mount Juliet Integrated Tourism Investment – Review* prepared by Sherwood & Associates in April 2016 (refer to Appendix A).

It is stated that:

*‘The **provision of additional residential accommodation** associated with the estates sporting and recreation functions, **will positively contribute towards meeting the expenditure requirements of the estate**, ensuring that Mount Juliet can complete in the international market. Secondly they **provide a residential base to ensure all facilities can be sustained out of season**. Thirdly, they **provide the potential for guests to have extended stays at the estate and provide a diverse client base for tourists to mix with**. These three principles are fundamental to developing an integrated flagship project of this quality.’ [Our Emphasis]*

We highlight below some observations in relation to amendments which could be made to the Proposed Variation 1a which we will further support Mount Juliet Estate.

2.2 Lands Adjacent to Rose Garden Lodges – Retain Objective 8 as per the Current *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020*

Objective 8 is proposed to be amended to limit the number of additional lodges adjacent the existing Rose Garden lodges to a maximum of 6 No.:

*‘To provide for the development of additional lodges (**max 6no.**) adjacent to the existing Rose Garden lodges associated with the estate’s tourism, leisure and recreational functions without detracting from the estate’s landscape character and built and natural heritage.’ [Our Emphasis]*

The *2002-2008 Mount Juliet Area Action Plan* provided for the development of 8 No. apartments in this location. This figure was reduced to 6 No. apartments in the *2008-2014 Action Plan* and, having regard to the current Action Plan there is no limit imposed on the development of additional lodges at this location.

The provision of any residential development at this location will be subject to detailed design and assessment during the planning application process. Whilst it is acknowledged that this site is sensitive in terms of its location and setting, it is considered that this site can accommodate up to 12 No. high quality apartment units.



We request the wording of Objective 8 should remain as currently provided in the *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020* which does not impose a limit on residential development. Notwithstanding this, if the Kilkenny County Council sees fit to impose a limit on residential development adjacent to the Rose Garden Lodges, we submit that the quantum of 12 No. units is more appropriate.

2.3 Identify Lands Adjoining The Foxes Covert as Suitable for Residential Development – Proposed Objective 14

Having reviewed the Proposed Variation No. 1a, we consider there is a number of infill opportunity sites situated towards the south of Mount Juliet Estate, at The Foxes Covert, which have not been identified in the Proposed Variation 1a, which are appropriate to provide for residential development.

We refer to Figure 1 which highlights the location of the infill opportunity site at The Foxes Covert (Proposed Objective 14).

We consider it necessary that the Proposed Variation 1a to the *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020* recognises the potential of these lands to accommodate development associated with the Estate's sporting and recreational functions which will further support the sustainable development of the Estate. In this regard the following objective is proposed for inclusion in the Development Plan.

Objective No. 14

Provide for the development of up to 3 No. residential dwelling in this location which will enhance the residential component of the estate without detracting from existing residential amenity or detracting from the estate's landscape character and built and natural heritage context.

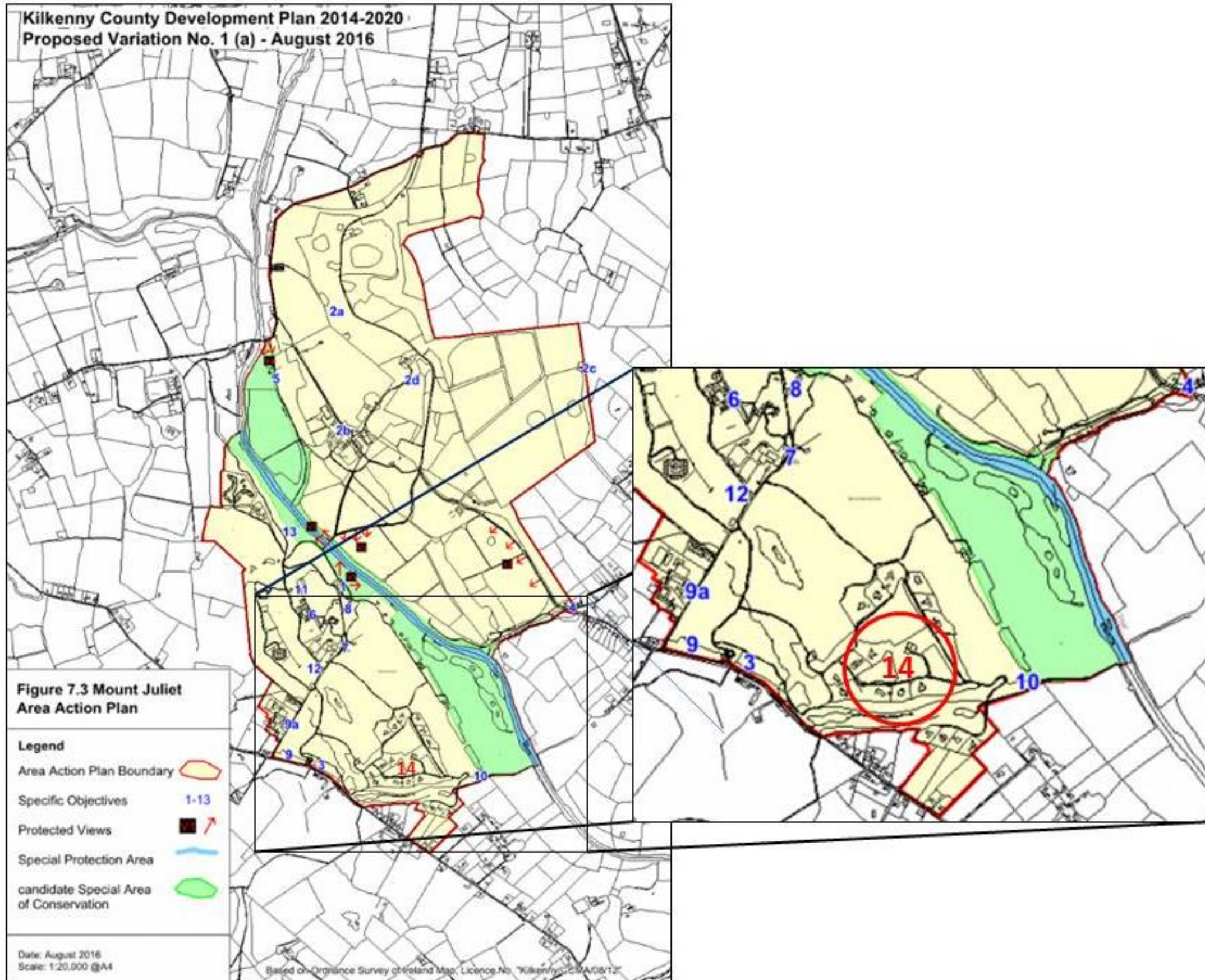


Figure 1: Proposed Amendment to Proposed Variation 1a of the *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020* to include Objective 14 to provide for up to 3 No. Residential Dwellings



3.0 Conclusion

The Mount Juliet Estate lands can facilitate an increased number of residential units as detailed in the Proposed Variation 1a of the *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020*.

Furthermore, it is considered that Objective 8, relating to the provision of lodges adjacent to the Rose Garden Lodges, should remain as per the wording of the current *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020* and a limit should not be imposed on the quantum of units to be provided at this location, which will be subject to detailed design.

We also consider that potential infill opportunity sites have not been identified in the Proposed Variation 1a with regard to lands in the vicinity of The Foxes Covert and that there is the potential to accommodate up to 3 No. additional residential dwellings at this location. In this regard we propose Objective 14 be adopted in the Proposed Variation 1a to support the provision of additional residential development.

In the interests of the future sustainable development of Mount Juliet Estate and the wider area, we request that Kilkenny County Council support the Proposed Variation 1a of the *Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020* and the further amendments detailed above.

Yours sincerely,

Gavin Lawlor
Tom Phillips and Associates



APPENDIX A

**Mount Juliet Integrated Tourism Investment – Review prepared by Sherwood & Associates
(April 2016)**

Mount Juliet

Intergrated Tourism Investment - Review



**SHERWOOD
& ASSOCIATES**



**TETRARCH
CAPITAL**

Introduction

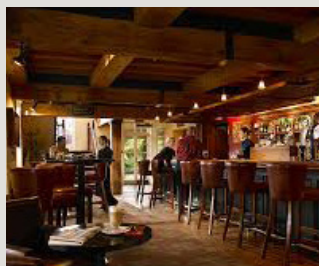
Sherwood and Associates have been engaged by Tetrarch Capital Ltd to prepare a review of the current integrated tourism investment planned for Mount Juliet and comment on how it aligns to current National and Regional tourism strategies and highlight the wider economic benefits.

Mount Juliet was built mid-18th century by the 1st Earl of Carrick across the River Nore from the former family seat, Ballylinch Castle. The interior of the house was richly decorated by the 2nd Earl of Carrick 1780's with plasterwork in the manner of Michael Stapleton. The demesne of Mount Juliet is one of the finest in Ireland with magnificent hardwoods and series of large walled gardens near the house. Mount Juliet was famous for its stud founded by Major Dermot Mc Calmont 1915, with The Tetrarch as 1st sire. In 2014 the estate was purchased by Tetrarch Capital with a plan to develop this important heritage resort further and consolidate it as one of Ireland's premier international resorts.

Fáilte Ireland - Rationale for Tourism Investment

Tourism is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors and has significant potential to play a further role in Ireland's economic renewal. In 2014, tourism was responsible for overseas earnings of €3.6 billion (excluding carrier receipts – airfares and ferry costs). Combining the data from the domestic market and international visitors, total tourism revenue for the economy in 2014 was €6.5 billion. Of this revenue, €1.4 billion directly benefited the Exchequer through taxation. The tourism sector supports 140,000 jobs in the accommodation and food sector alone, and overall employment in tourism is estimated to be in the region of 200,000.

Given Ireland's position as a small island economy, we are heavily dependent on the exporting sectors to generate the revenue that fuels domestic economic activity and provide a significant contribution to the taxation that funds public services. The focus of tourism policy is moving towards maximising the export contribution of tourism, while protecting the invaluable assets that are our natural, built and cultural heritage. This involves a change of focus from overseas visitor numbers to overseas visitor revenue. In terms of specific targets, by 2025 the Government's ambition is that



overseas tourism revenue will reach €5 billion in real terms (i.e. in 2014 prices), and employment in the sector will reach 250,000. This will be underpinned by 10 million overseas visits per year by 2025, compared to 7.1 million in 2014. An additional goal is that at least 95% of all visitors will be 'very satisfied' with Ireland as a destination in the Fáilte Ireland visitor attitudes survey.

In order to ensure the alignment of tourism investment with the needs of key consumer segments, Fáilte Ireland policy states that "future capital investment in tourism should be focused on projects that fit within the brand architecture (i.e. Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way and Dublin) and consumer segmentation framework (i.e. Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Social Energisers)".

While the quality of Ireland's tourism physical assets is quite strong, it is recognised that the "experience" is now the primary focus for the worldwide tourism industry, and capital investment is required in the existing tourism infrastructure to ensure that it can compete at the highest international levels and capture market share.

Ireland's Ancient East

Ireland's Ancient East is an experience brand. It is the key emotional pull and is being positioned as the reason visitors will travel to Kilkenny and the surrounding counties. Fáilte Ireland aim that over the next few years it will be the key pull that attracts visitors to Ireland and ensure they no longer just see Ireland as an 'I'll go there 'one day' destination. It aims to motivate to deliver 'I want to go there now'.

Fáilte Ireland believes that the biggest challenge (and opportunity) is that the current concept brand (Ireland's Ancient East) could be seen as worthy BUT not exciting enough to come and visit now.

It is critical that the propositions and communication is:

- Engaging
- Dynamic
- Exciting
- People can feel its power before they come
- Is contemporary- they can make the link from the past to feel it in their present

FáilteIreland are endeavouring to bring to life the immersive experiences that enable visitors to 'feel' the heritage and engage with the spirit of the past in a way that has contemporary relevance through sensory experiences.



The Ireland's Ancient East brand encourages tourism providers to make strategic investments in tourism infrastructure to create International quality destinations, which promote Irish experiences and encourage overnight visits within the target market segments.

Tetrarch Capital at Mount Juliet are making a series of significant capital investments to directly respond to this opportunity and create an enhanced visitor product and experience capable of delivering Fáilte Ireland's National objectives. This product will capitalise on the heritage values of Mount Juliet and provide the visitor with an immersive engaging experience. When complete the Estate will capture the essence of Ireland's Ancient East brand pillars and deliver a contemporary experience in a heritage setting dating back to the mid-18th century.

Role of Kilkenny in Tourism

Kilkenny County Council potentially plays a critical role in Ireland's Ancient East by actively encouraging the preserving and showcasing of the counties cultural tourism resources for visitors as recreational assets. Working in partnership with Fáilte Ireland on the successful delivery of the Ireland's Ancient East proposition will potentially enable Kilkenny County Council to bring new experiences to new audiences.

In support of tourism **The Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014 -2020** states;

"Tourism has been identified as a significant driver of the local economy. Tourism plays an important economic role within the county, and income derived from tourist activity is distributed across a wide range of economic sectors. Fáilte Ireland estimates that the tourism industry was worth upwards of €360 million in visitor expenditure to the South East region in 2010 and sustains at least 10,000 jobs. Building on what Kilkenny already had in terms of tourism product, the local authorities sought to assemble a number of tourism infrastructure initiatives which would add value to the Kilkenny tourist product."



Objectives 4E:

To continue the development of major flagship tourism projects within the county to enhance the tourism product for the county.

Mount Juliet is both a major flagship project for County Kilkenny and National Flagship project for Ireland. The planned investment will enhance the product offer and deliver a significant increase in important overseas tourism business. This increase in business will enable the economic benefit be distributed across a wide range of sectors

Planned Development at Mount Juliet

Since the purchase of Mount Juliet in 2014 the team at Tetrarch Capital have been working on an integrated investment strategy that will fulfil the following goals:

- Further develop the on-site infrastructure to enable it compete with International competitors
- Develop a product that will complement the new “Ireland’s Ancient East “ brand and align to National Tourism Strategies
- Access new business markets and segments
- Create a sustainable business model

There are a number of integrated components of the investment strategy these include:

- The development of residential accommodation associated with the estates sporting and recreation functions
- The development of 77 additional hotel rooms
- The upgrading of the Golf Course and facilities to meet PGA standards
- The further restoration of the House and development of business function facilities
- The development of additional leisure and activity facilities



Further Residential Accommodation

The provision of additional residential accommodation associated with the estates sporting and recreation functions are important as they have an number of functions, primarily they positively contribute towards meeting the expenditure requirements of the estate, ensuring that Mount Juliet can compete in the international market. Secondly they provide a residential base to ensure all facilities can be sustained out of season, therefore reducing the seasonal features for the facility. Thirdly, they provide the potential for guests to have extended stays at the estate and provide a diverse client base for tourists to mix with. These three principals are fundamental to developing an integrated flagship project of this quality.

Hotel Rooms

The previous provision of 67 rooms on site was considered inadequate to allow Mount Juliet compete in the market. This provision of new rooms will bring the onsite stock up to 120. This will be achieved by the enhancement and extension of existing infrastructure. The room stock when complete will be a five star standard and will complement this important heritage setting.

PGA Golf Course and Facilities

Over the last year Tetrarch Capital have invested over €1.25 million in the golf course / equipment and the current plans for additional golf facilities at a cost of €1.7 million will provide guests with a complete experience. The results of this investment have already paid dividends and in 2015 Mount Juliet was accepted into the prestigious European Tour Properties Network. This network is capable of driving substantial overseas business to Ireland.

Restoration Works and Business Function Space

One of the key assets that Mount Juliet has is the original house, under the current plan this is being further conserved at a cost of circa €1 million and a number of new business function spaces are being added. These spaces are important to allow delegates enjoy a contemporary experience in this unique heritage environment.

Additional Leisure and Activity facilities

An important part of the guest experience is to participate in activities both onsite and within the County, the planned investment will further develop the Spa, Leisure and Equestrian facilities. The current County Council investment in the Medieval Mile initiative will potentially encourage guests to spend time in the city and the surrounding county.

Tourism Impact

The overall capital investment programme requires a total investment of €15 million and is due to

Visitor Origin	2015	2018
UK	7.2%	10.0%
North America	16.2%	20.0%
Mainland Europe	6.5%	10.0%
Domestic	68.1%	55.0%
Other	2.0%	5.0%
Totals	100%	100%

be completed in 2017. This programme will have a significant tourism impact both to the estate and the surrounding County.

The direct economic impact of the proposed investment will include the income received and the creation of 56 full time equivalent jobs, this will bring the total number employed to 201 by 2018.

Visitor Origin	2015	2018
Holiday	74.5%	64.0%
Business	10.5%	16.0%
Conference	14.4%	18.0%
Other	0.60%	2.00%
Totals	100%	100%

the building phase.

It anticipated that the number of overnight guests will increase from 36,000 to 62,000; this is an increase of 26,000 guests. Of this increased number of guests it is projected that 45% of this business will originate overseas.

It is anticipated that the investment strategy will create new international business and conference business; these sectors are high yield and will provide economic benefit to the wider community.

To measure this economic benefit we use Failte Ireland's estimate of average daily diem spend. This diem spend differs according to whether the tourist is a domestic or overseas tourist. In the 2014 Failte Ireland statistics the following rates have been highlighted, €69 diem spend per day for a domestic overnight visitor and €83 diem spend for an overseas overnight visitor.

Therefore, when we apply this wider spend to the anticipated increase in guests we can predict that the indirect additional economic benefit derived from the investment is almost €2 million per annum. They provide key base load to ensure all facilities can be sustained out of season, therefore reducing the seasonality features for the facility.

This benefit is likely to be spread through the county in bars, restaurants, visitor attractions, transport and retail sectors. If the total impact of guests staying at Mount Juliet is assessed it is projected that indirect benefits of over €4.7 million per annum will be generated from 2018.

If day visitors attending events or participating in leisure activities at Mount Juliet are also considered this figure is likely to be far higher.

It is worth noting that every euro of tourism spends generates 24.5 cent of tax revenue and 55 international tourists support one tourism job.

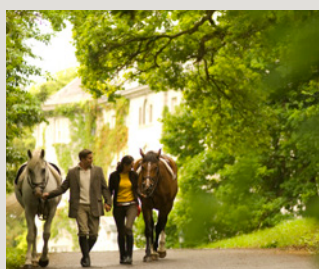
Conclusion:

The planned integrated tourism investment in Mount Juliet aligns closely to both National and Regional strategies and is capable of contributing significantly towards the aims and objectives of the new "Ireland's Ancient East" initiative.

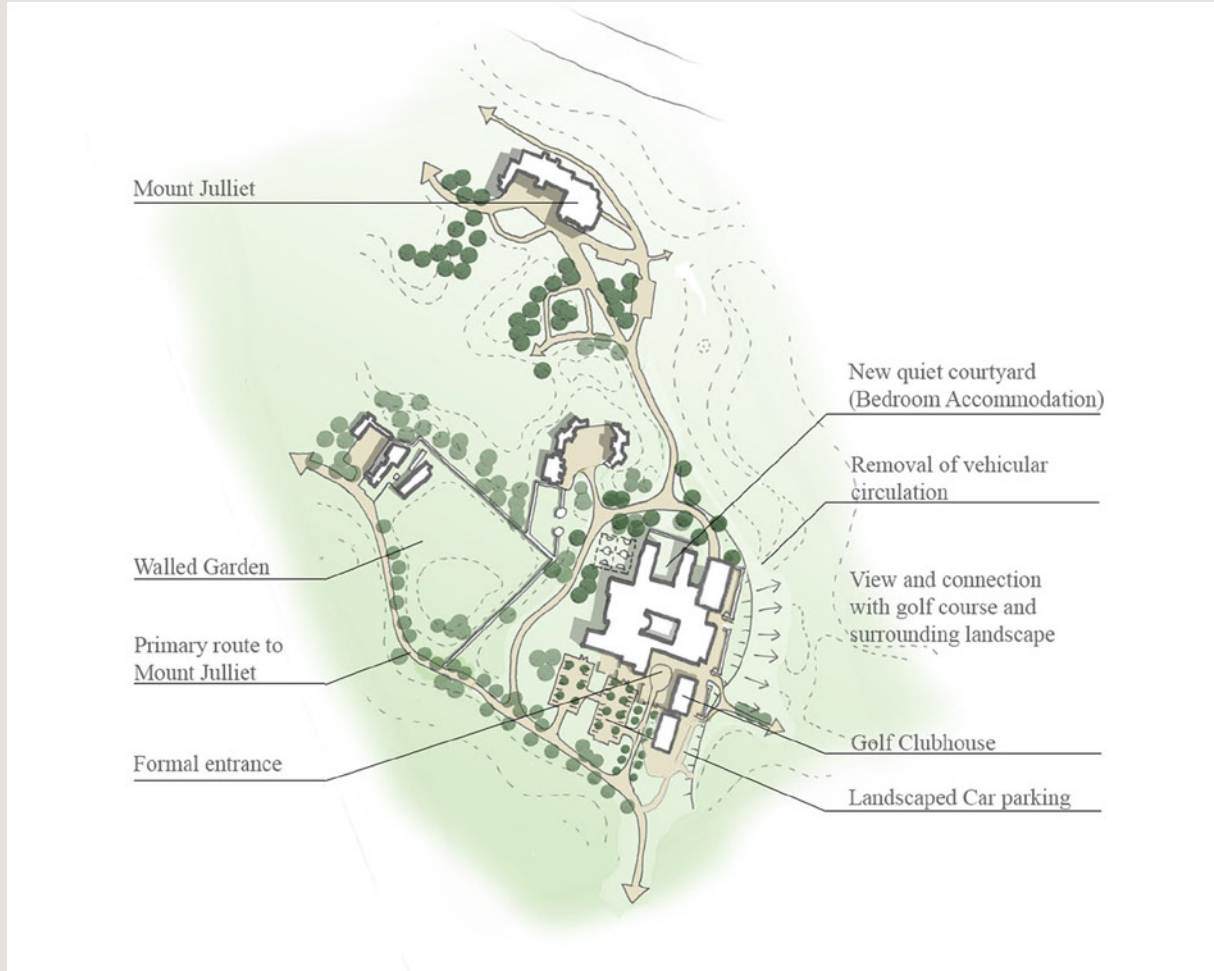
The new and improved facilities on site will provide the county with an international flagship project that is capable of sustaining over 201 jobs and contributing in excess of €4.7 million to the wider economy.

The integrated investment model being utilized by Tetrarch Capital follows the fundamental principles of International Resort development and is capable of delivering a sustainable business model into the future.

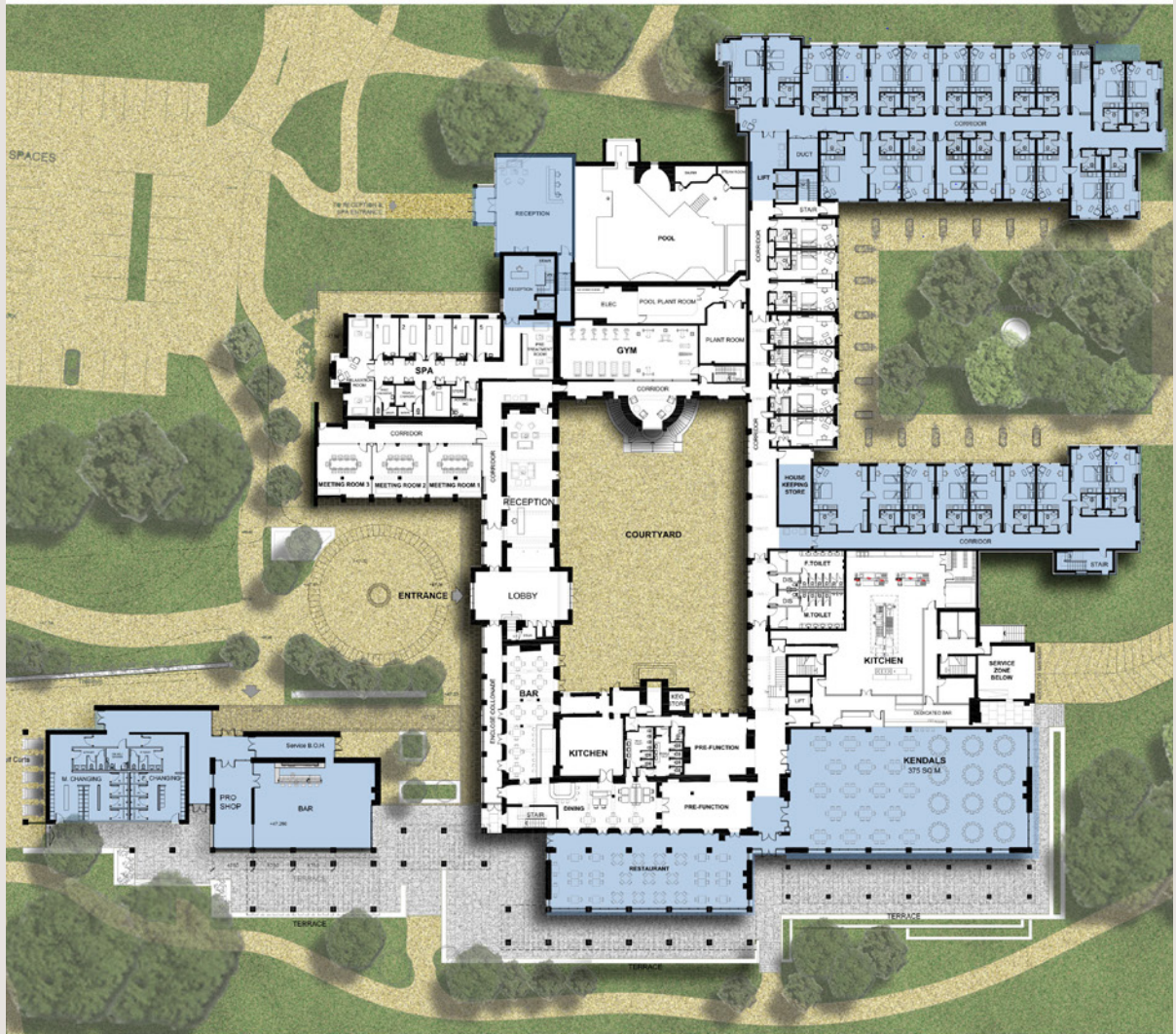
The provision of additional residential accommodation associated with the estates sporting and recreation functions, will positively contribute towards meeting the expenditure requirements of the estate, ensuring that Mount Juliet can compete in the international market. Secondly they provide a residential base to ensure all facilities can be sustained out of season. Thirdly, they provide the potential for guests to have extended stays at the estate and provide a diverse client base for tourists to mix with. These three principals are fundamental to developing an integrated flagship project of this quality.



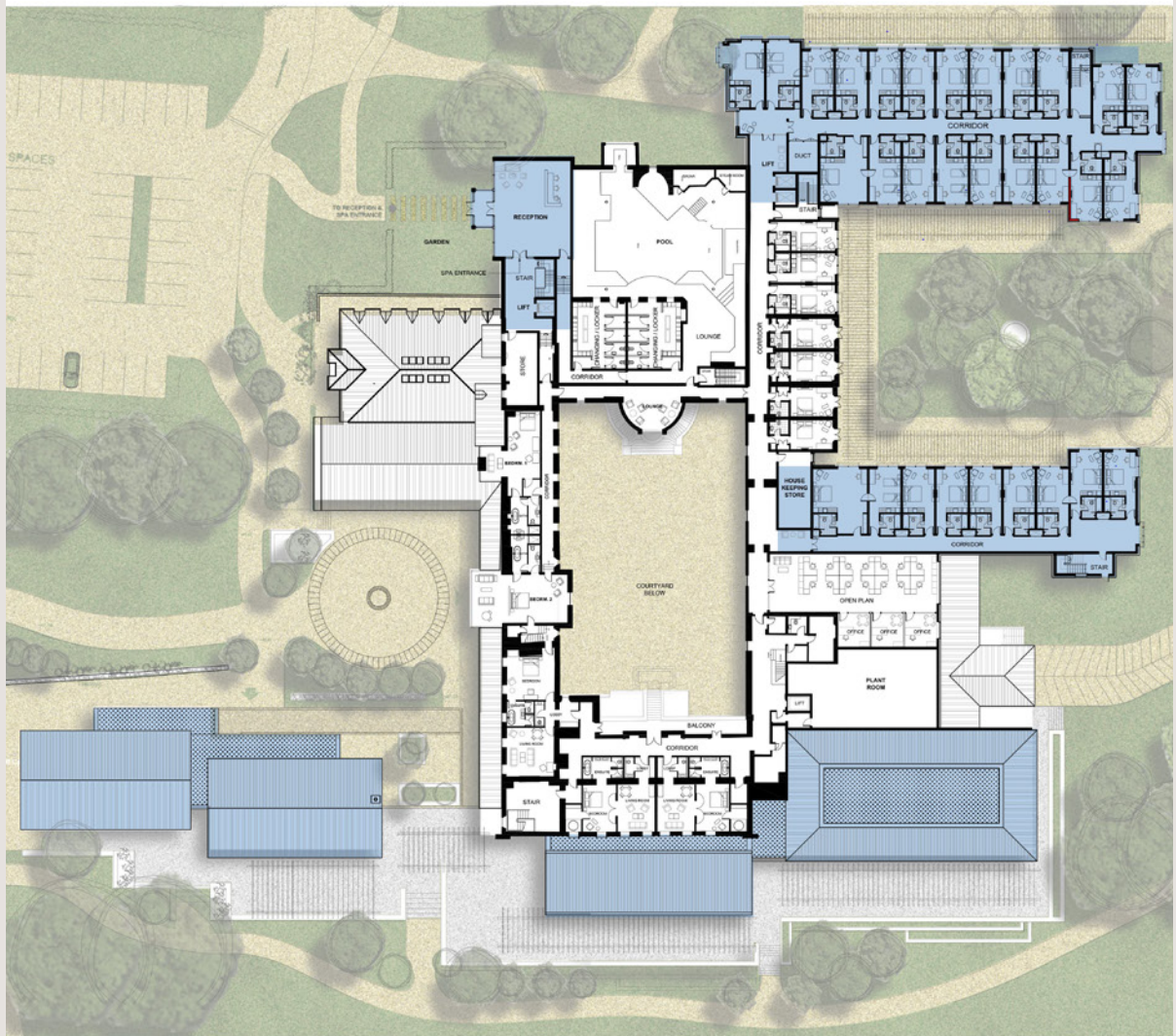
Mount Juliet



Hunter's Yard- Ground Floor



Hunter's Yard- First Floor



Mount Juliet Club House



Clubhouse elevation

President's Bar elevation

The Kendales elevation



Hunter's Yard- proposed refurbishment



Clubhouse elevation

President's Bar elevation

The Kendales elevation

Hunter's Yard- proposed refurbishment

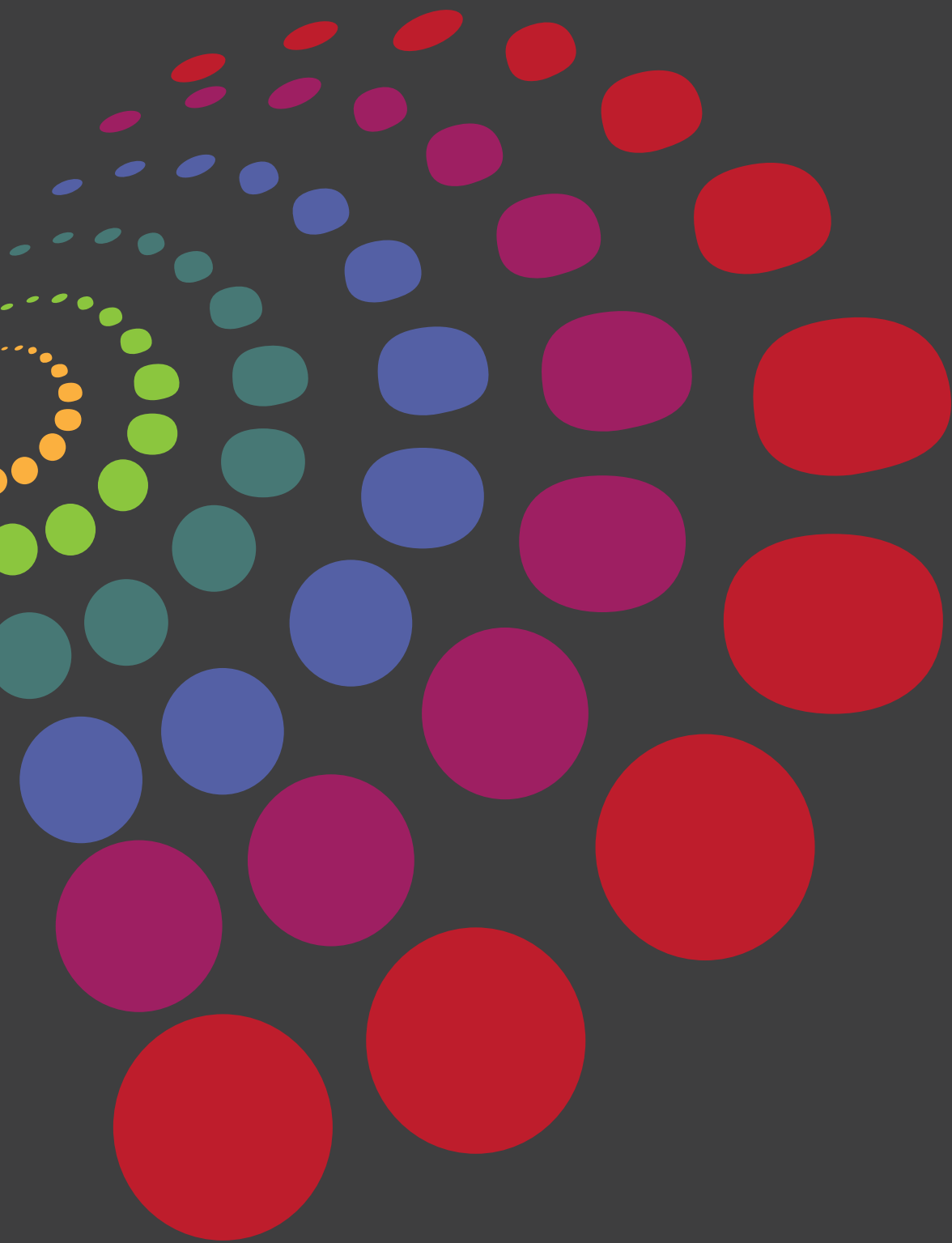


Clubhouse side elevation

The Kendales side elevation

Bedroom wing

Courtyard



produced by

**SHERWOOD
& ASSOCIATES**



designed by

ON THE DOT

