

**Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh**  
**Kilkenny County Council**  
**Planning Report**



**To :** Ian Gardner, Munciple District Engineer, Kilkenny

**From:** Arlene O' Connor, Senior Executive Planner

**Date:** 8/9/2021                      **Part VIII Ref:** P8/5/21

**Re:** Pre-planning report on proposed Watergate Urban Park, Watergate Theatre, Parliament Street, Kilkenny City.

**Part VIII Proposal**

The proposal is for a redevelopment of the Watergate Park to an urban park. This park will have the provision of a set of flexible spaces that can be configured according to event users, or a day to day usage, using both fixed and loose furniture to facilitate this change of use. The project also aims to provide a throughfare for pedestrians and cyclists, linking Abbey Street and Parliament Street with the adjacent Abbey Quarter Development.

**Zoning**

The site falls within a zoning of '*General Business*', within the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020, with an objective to provide for general development. The Permissible Uses as defined under Section 3.4.5.4 of the City and Environs Development Plan are dwellings, retailing, retail warehousing, wholesale outlets, offices, public buildings or places of assembly, cultural or educational buildings, recreational buildings, halting sites, hotels, motels, guest houses, clubs, private garages, open spaces, public service installations, medical and related consultants, restaurants, public houses, coffee shops / cafes, petrol stations, car parks, halls or discotheques. Those uses open for consideration are open space, workshop or light industry.

Thus this urban park would fall under an open space and is therefore acceptable on this zoned land.

**Heritage**

***Protected Structure*** – None in the immediate area.

***Recorded Monument*** – None on or immediately bounding the site.

***ACA*** – The site falls within the city centre Architectural Conservation Area.

***SAC*** – The site is approximately 35 metres from the Breaghagh River to the north west, a feeding tributary of the River Nore cSAC, which lies due east of this site.

***pNHA*** – The site is not within any pNHA.

***Zone of Archaeological Potential*** - The site is located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential, 'KK019-026 City', established under the National Monuments Act.

**Relevant Planning Policy and Guidelines**

### **Planning History**

**P.00/990137** – Permission granted to the Watergate Theatre Ltd for a new extension and associated site works.

### **Assessment**

This proposal is to redevelop the Watergate Park into an urban park. The use is proposed primarily as an outdoor seating space with sheltered areas to be provided to cater for inclement weather conditions. The use of the park as an outdoor entertainment area will also be utilised sporadically throughout the year, coinciding with festivals and local events. A raised stage area is required in order to facilitate outdoor performances and this will be covered by a roof and will be such that it could accommodate temporary lighting and sound equipment. An outdoor power supply that can be used for all potential events in this area will also be provided.

This park will have the provision of a set of flexible spaces that can be configured according to event users, or a day to day usage, using both fixed and loose furniture to facilitate this change of use.

Presently the site is a small urban park space with parking facilities also and a mobile phone infrastructural kiosk is also present. The site bounds Horse Barrack Lane to the and Parliament Street. The project aims to provide a throughfare for pedestrians and cyclists, linking Abbey Street and Parliament Street with the adjacent Abbey Quarter Development.

The entrance to Parliament Street will have a canopy to allow for a shelter for inclement weather but the entrance from Horse Barrack Lane will be more open. The boundary on the northern side of the site will be a 6 metre high timber screen with vertical strip lighting incorporated.

On the southern boundary, the timber screen will incorporate a facility for temporary lighting and sound equipment. This boundary will screen the rear of the existing hostel along this boundary.

As part of the proposal the unloading area within the car park will be maintained and it is intended to provide a number of parking spaces in the underutilised grass area to the rear of the theatre, namely 1 no. accessible space, 2 no. EV charging spaces and 5 no. standard short term parking bays. In order to carry out such works, the existing mobile phone kiosk will be replaced by a smaller unit and the concrete loading dock behind the theatre will be removed and replaced with a new hydraulically operated folding loading dock. In relation to servicing and delivery facilities for the theatre, an Autotrack Swept Path Assessment has been carried out for this the new loading bay.

In relation to existing drainage, the current park drains via overland flow to Horse Barrack Lane as does the loading dock to the rear of the theatre. New stormwater drainage infrastructure is planned to serve existing permitted developments in the immediate vicinity of this site and it is proposed that a new 150mm dia. Pvc pipe at 1:100 will be laid across Horse Barrack Lane to the rear of the theatre. These new stormwater drainage facilities will benefit this site and connect to the existing storm water sewers within the Abbey Quarter site which discharge via an existing interceptor to the adjacent River Breagagh. The stormwater management system for this site will incorporate as much as feasible SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System).

A small attenuation area is proposed in what is a grassed area to the rear of the theatre, designed to cater for the volumes of stormwater associated with 30 year and 100 year events. The tank will have a capacity of 11m<sup>3</sup> for the 100 year event.

In relation to the redevelopment of this underutilised green space to an urban park with the potential of throughfares from Parliament Street to Horse Barrack Lane and to the Abbey Quarter Site as well as having the potential to create a vibrant usable space which can hold different events, the Planning Authority look favourably upon this redevelopment project in Kilkenny city.

### **Pre-Planning Advice**

The following is advisable in relation to the future proposal for the Watergate Urban Park;

- The site layout plan should indicate clearly lighting proposed through the park, surface water drainage details and full specifications of all hard and soft landscaping.
- The Breagh River, which is directly feeding into the River Nore SAC and SPA, lies approximately 36 metres north / north east of this site boundary. As stormwater drainage is via new infrastructure which will discharge via an existing interceptor to the Breagh River, the impact on the River Nore needs to be further assessed in an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report by a qualified ecologist.
- Due to the site being within the City Centre Architectural Conservation Area, an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) is required along with a Visual Assessment of the proposed development, assessing the impact of this proposal on the ACA within which it is located. This AHIA should be carried out by a Conservation Architect.
- Due to the site being in the Zone of Archaeological Potential, 'KK019-026 City', established under the National Monuments Act, it is recommended that an archaeological assessment is carried out in relation to this proposal.
- A photomontage of how the proposed urban park will present itself on this site would be beneficial with the Part 8 application.

A O' Connor 8/9/21

Senior Executive Planner

Denis Malone 22/9/2021  
Denis Malone, Senior Planner

