



Metropolitan Workshop | Aecom | David Slattery | Mac Cabe Durney Barnes

A Cultural & Civic Quarter for Newbridge

Strategies for enhancing public life

**Metropolitan
Workshop**
Architecture + Urbanism

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Introduction

Proposal Summary

Application to Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2018.

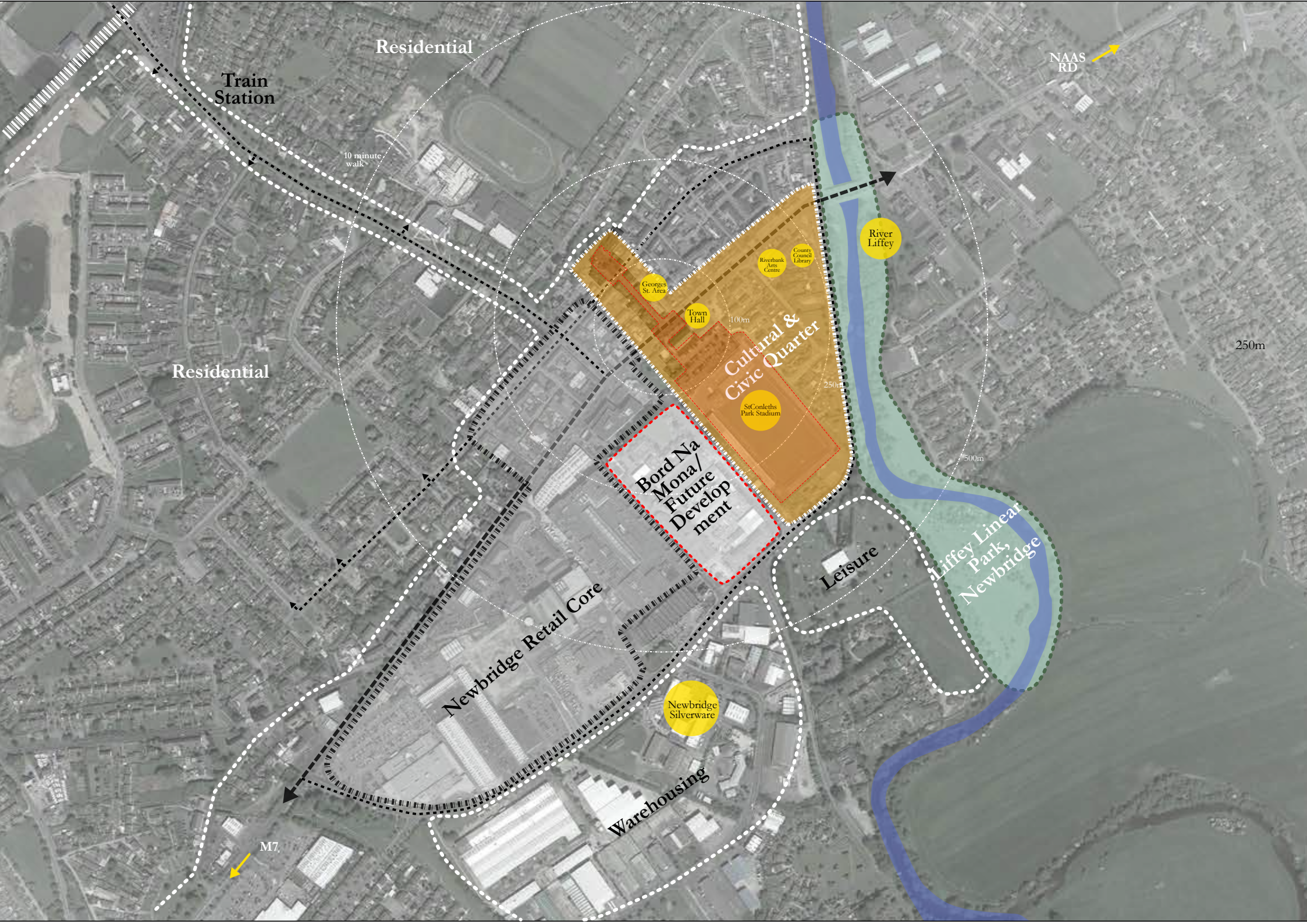
This proposal is to apply for funding under Category B to carry out further development work on plans to re-invigorate the historic heart of Newbridge and establish a "Cultural and Civic Quarter" drawing on the synergies, and in particular, the clustering of existing assets including the Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare Central Library, Newbridge Town Hall and St. Conleth's GAA grounds.

The focus of the regeneration will be the west end of the town and the URDF bid comprises three specific but linked projects comprising of:

- Redevelopment of Kildare Central Library
- Public realm enhancements to support development opportunities and provide a high-quality town centre environment
- Development of back land site.

This project will unlock these key sites and leverage development opportunities to be privately funded.

These schemes will be supported by a series of proposed and existing initiatives which do not form part of this bid but will underpin and complement the Cultural and Civic Quarter.



1 Proposed Central Library Services:

Kildare County Council proposes to construct a high-quality building on the site of the existing facility incorporating the best in library design of 2,340 sq metres of accessible, welcoming and free cultural space in Newbridge. Physical access into and throughout the building will be of the highest standards and will be informed by the Council's ongoing learning from its engagement with the disability sectors both statutory and voluntary. The project will combine the architectural heritage value of the original strategically located, Local Studies Library on the main street with new contemporary architecture. This new cultural and civic quarter will be further enhanced by being situated in the grounds of Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare Library and Arts Service Headquarters and adjacent to Newbridge Linear Park. The building design itself and its immediate external context will present a landmark statement about the importance of quality cultural space and resources and the role it will play in the life of the County. It will also mark the civic/cultural/economic regeneration of the town of Newbridge providing services and opportunities which sustain and nourish community cultural living. Cultural consciousness and participation will be promoted through community led services, resources and spaces focused appropriately in the areas of:

- Recorded heritage of the County
- Children's and young people's library
- Leisure and community living library
- Digital Learning Centre and Innovation Space

- Work Matters: Business and Employment Support Services
- Multipurpose spaces dedicated to interpreting/exploring life through exhibition, workshop, lectures and discussion.

2 Public realm enhancements:

The focus of the public realm enhancements will be the historic central axis of the Market Square, Georges Street and the Town Hall where there is an opportunity to develop a new civic space to complement the proposed refurbishment of St. Conleth's GAA grounds.

- a) The provision of a much needed "Town Square" has long been an aspiration of Kildare County Council and the local Chamber of Commerce. This will be achieved through the repurposing of the existing surface car park between St. Conleth's Park and the Town Hall which will unlock development potential around the edges providing active frontages overlooking a new space of civic importance which focusses on the protected structure of the Town Hall. The scheme will provide better pedestrian access to the stadium and a "front door" to Newbridge for visiting fans.
- c) Provide new crossing point and raised road table between the Town Hall and Georges Street strengthening the connection between the two and better highlighting the role of the Town Hall as a framed view to/from Georges Street.
- c) Regenerate Georges Street through reduction of clutter, resurfacing of street/ improvement of public realm, provision of better facilities including lighting, drainage, waste management etc.

- d) Redesigning Market square as a new civic space framed by a new building commercial building leveraging private investment to enclose the streetscape and square.
- E) Provide better linkages along Main Street through improved public realm between the River Liffey Linear Park, the County Library, the Riverbank Arts Centre and the projects mentioned above.

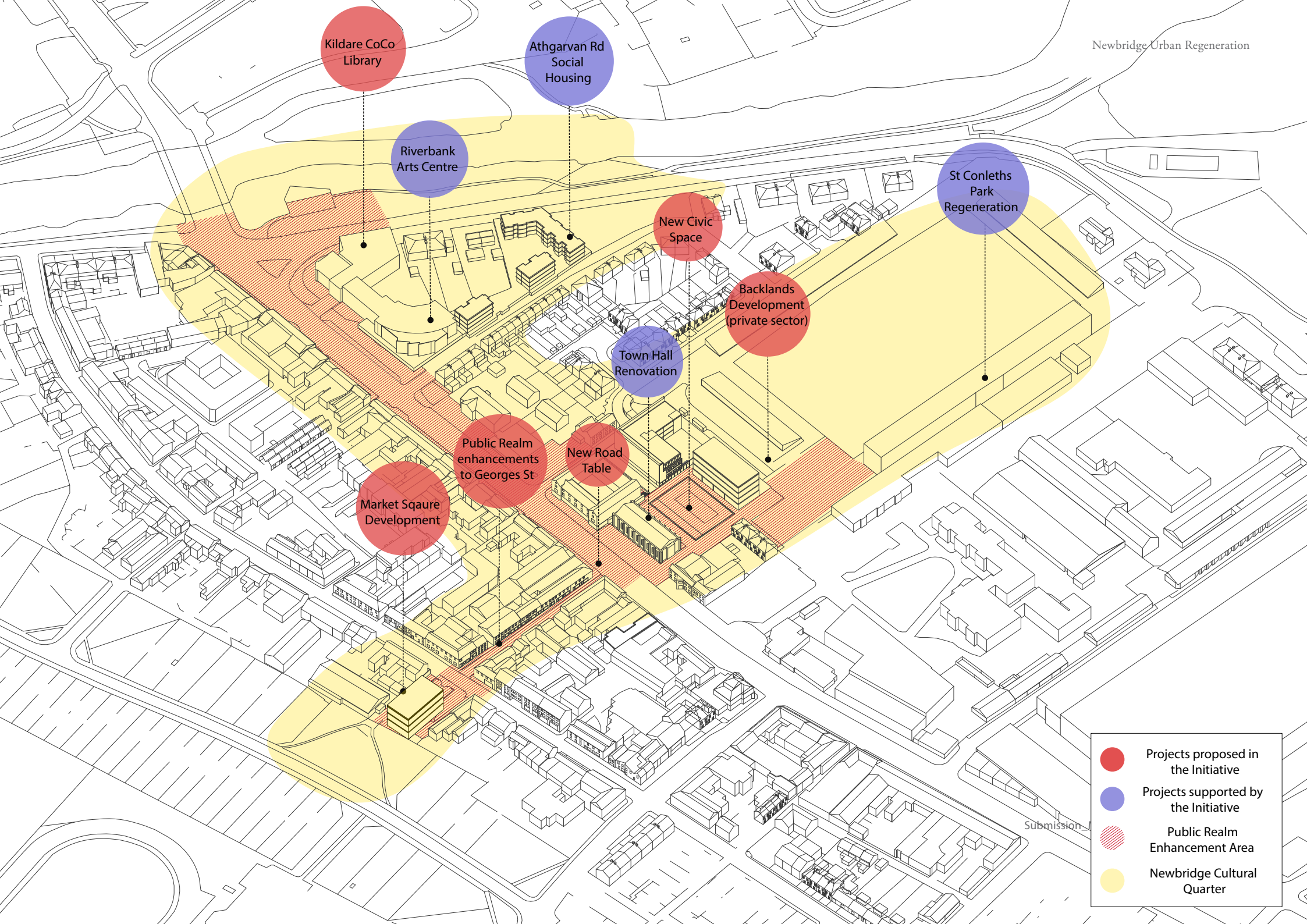
3 Development of back land sites:

The public realm improvements mentioned above will set the scene for private investment framing the new public spaces. Kildare County Council are already in talks with the GAA to discuss the marriage value of working together to provide greater development potential on the lands between

Newbridge Town Hall and St. Conleth's Park. The site is wholly in the ownership of KCC however working in partnership with the GAA affords the opportunity to increase the site area without infringing on the functionality of the stadium. It is envisioned that these sites would be suitable for much needed hotel, commercial and retail facilities which would support the emergence of a new Cultural and Civic Quarter. These projects will be developed using a powerful, overarching urban design strategy and design approach that makes all the projects in the initiative come together. Some preliminary studies have already been developed and are attached as an appendix to this application.



Proposed Georges St & Market Square Enhancements



Kildare CoCo
Library

Athgarvan Rd
Social
Housing

Riverbank
Arts Centre

New Civic
Space

Backlands
Development
(private sector)

St Conleths
Park
Regeneration

Town Hall
Renovation

Public Realm
enhancements
to Georges St

New Road
Table

Market Sqaure
Development

- Projects proposed in the Initiative
- Projects supported by the Initiative
- Public Realm Enhancement Area
- Newbridge Cultural Quarter

Newbridge Cultural and Civic Quarter

Newbridge Town Centre has undergone a rapid transformation since the opening of the Whitewater Shopping Centre and adjoining centres such as The Courtyard and Penneys. These retail facilities combined with the established business in the town have created a vibrant retail core of regional importance.

Notwithstanding this strong retail base, secondary streets such as Eyre Street, Georges Street and sections of Main Street are currently experiencing some difficulties in securing long term tenants and increasing footfall.

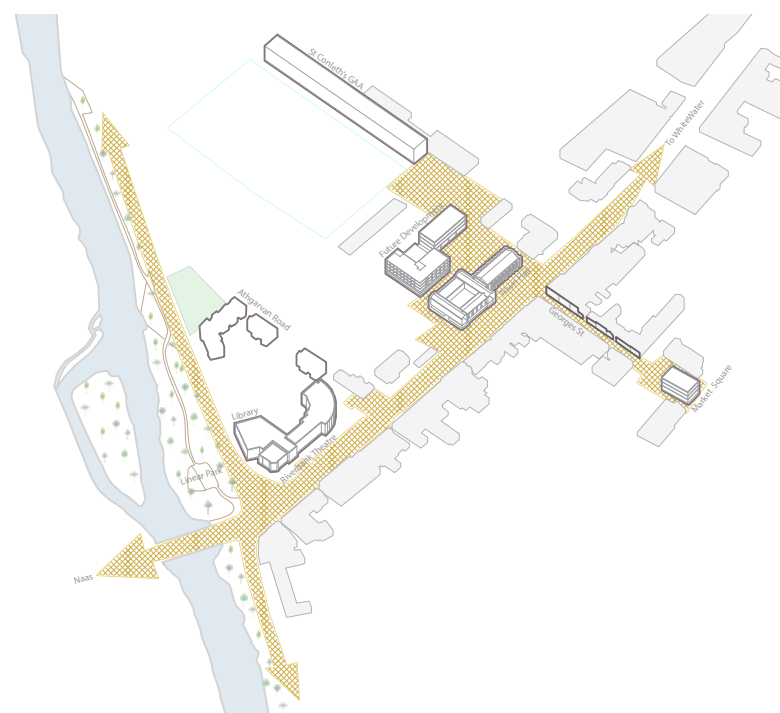
The LAP acknowledges that it is necessary to establish a development strategy to consolidate Newbridge and to assist the town in evolving with a range of employment, recreational, cultural, retail and educational facilities. It is a key aim to consolidate and strengthen the town centre and there are extensive lands zoned for town centre purposes which can accommodate the required expansion within a compact urban environment rather than at peripheral locations.

While current market conditions are buoyant, there has been little development coming forward in the east of the town, particularly in relation to the car park lands behind the Town Hall and the old Court House site. The generally poor environment has suppressed market values and appetite, compromising viability and preventing development.

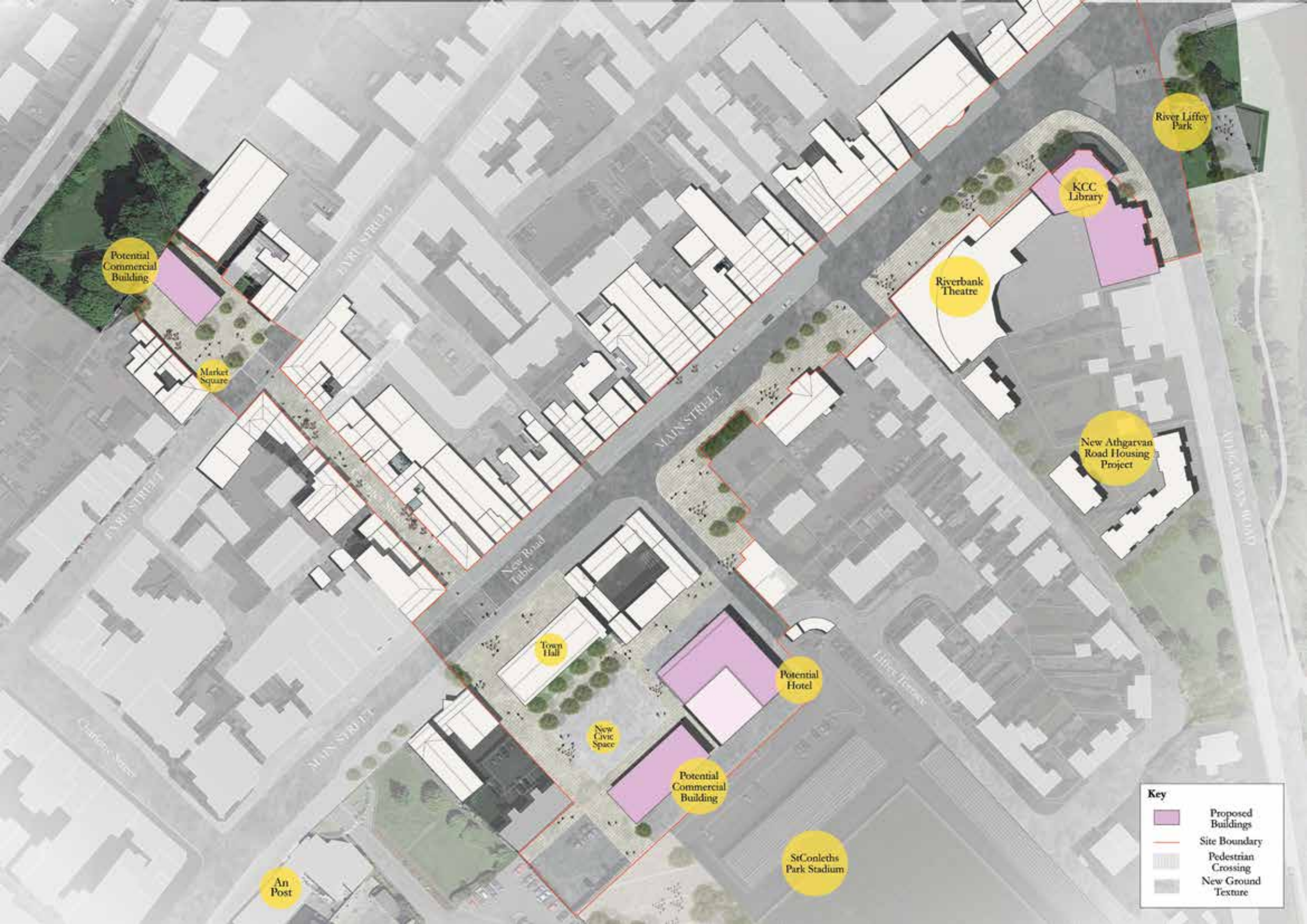
The projects detailed in section 3 will contribute to a much-enhanced environment which will stimulate private sector investment. This approach to regeneration and investment was adopted in Dublin Docklands, where public realm works including Grand Canal Square and the Campshires were undertaken prior to development. This stimulated development in an area where development was previously unviable and is now the highest value in the State.

To make such an improvement investment is needed and KCC have endeavoured to break the cycle of nothing happening by becoming a stronger stakeholder and participant in the process rather than relying on its reactive role as the development control authority. It needs to combine the two processes of major stakeholder and manager of Newbridge's future to improve the quality and impact of both roles.

The transformation of this central zone will then drive change in other locations and a beneficial cycle of investment and renewal that has been suppressed by recession and perceptions can be achieved.



Proposed New Cultural Quarter



Key

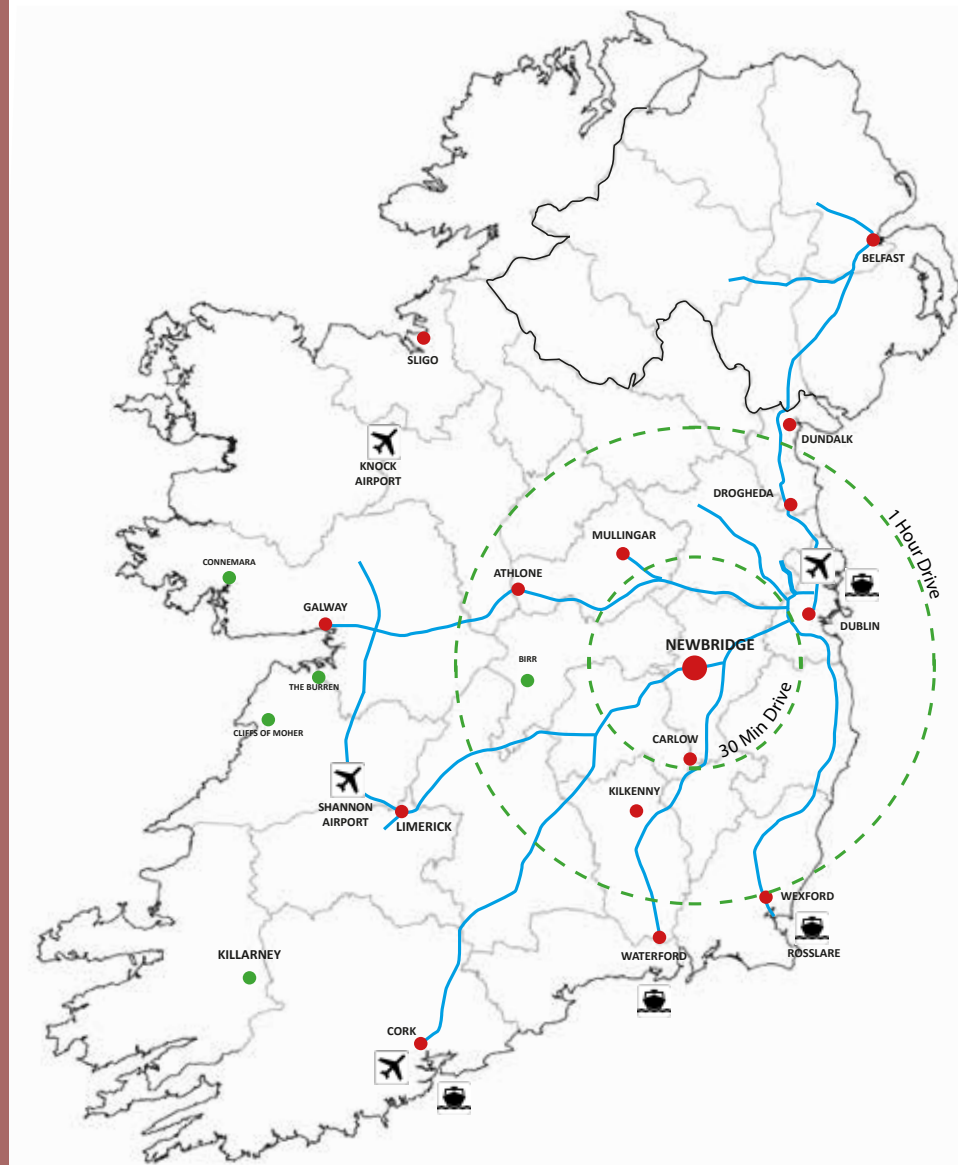
- Proposed Buildings
- Site Boundary
- Pedestrian Crossing
- New Ground Texture

1

Context & Analysis

Newbridge town is located on the banks of the River Liffey. Upriver are towns such as Athgarvan, Kilcullen and Blessington, while downriver are the towns of Caragh, Clane and Celbridge.

Newbridge is bounded by the Curragh Plains to the west, Pollardstown Fen and the Bog of Allen and Moulds Bog to the north west. Around the Curragh, and to the east are a number of stud farms. To the south the motorway now forms a boundary to the town.



Newbridge in Ireland



Train Station

Library &
Arts Centre

Liffey Linear
Park

Garda
Siochana

Town Hall

Main St

St Conleths
Gaa

Whitewater
Shopping
Centre

Courtyard
Shopping
Centre

Newbridge
Silverware



Historical Photos of Newbridge
Taken between 1890-1915

History of Newbridge

Newbridge town developed at a fording point on the left bank of the river Liffey. It is a relatively modern town with the first bridge probably built at the beginning of the 18th century. Moll's map of Kildare (1728) and subsequent maps mark the bridge. There are however, two important roads from the Christian era close to the town. The area is also rich in Celtic mounds, Norman moats and Christian sites. On the edge of the town one of the five great roads that led from Tara to the seats of the kings of the other provinces crossed the Liffey at the ford of Athgarvan.

The main town settlement probably dates to the establishment of a cavalry barracks in 1816. In 1837, the town consisted of a single street (main street) with a line of buildings on the north side and the barracks on the south side. The population at the time was 792 but Lewis in his Topographical Dictionary commented that "it is yet in it's infancy, and there is every prospect of it's increase".



Historical Map of Newbridge
6 Inch Black & White (1837-1842)



CONTEXT

Newbridge Town



Historical Map of Newbridge
6 Inch Black & White (1888-1913)

The decline of the military presence in the town brought a long period of stasis. However, in 1933, the foundation of the Rope factory brought some prosperity to the town. This was followed in 1935 by the establishment of a second factory on the barracks site which manufactured cutlery and began the town's historic association with quality cutlery. A third factory, making files and hacksaws was established in 1947. Newbridge Cutlery and Newbridge Jewellery are both now internationally known firms in terms of quality design.

The town is now an important service centre for the bloodstock industry and is also the headquarters of Bord na Mona which was established in 1947. More recent developments include Whitewater Shopping Centre which has placed Newbridge as a key commercial town Kildare and Pfizer, a leading pharmaceutical company being major employers alongside Horse Racing Ireland and the Department of Defence

Newbridge is home to Kildare Gaelic Athletic Association's county grounds St. Conleths Park, hosting both inter-county and club matches throughout the year approximately three to four times a week.

The designation of Newbridge as a Large GrowthTown II in the RPGs is reinforced in the county settlement strategy set out in the CDP. Large Growth Towns II are designated to act as important self

sustaining regional economic drivers, accommodating significant investment in transport, housing, economic and commercial activity with high quality transport links to Dublin and other large towns.

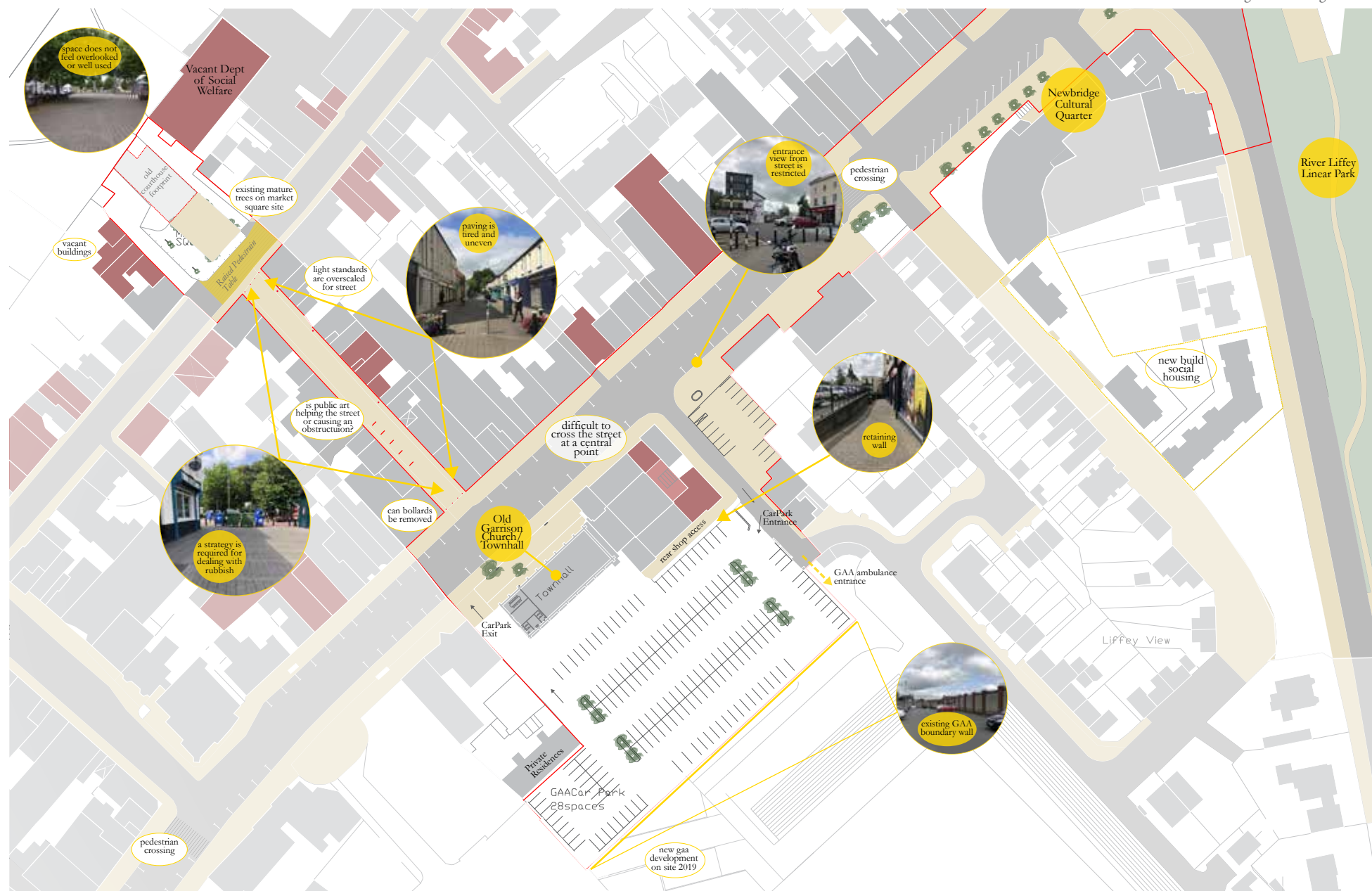
The CDP also recognises the sectoral strengths of Newbridge, which has a thriving innovation-driven enterprise sector and high-quality employment across a range of service sectors such as pharmaceutical, distribution, manufacturing, innovation and R&D sectors. Furthermore Newbridge has established itself as a key retail destination within the County.

It is envisaged that the town will continue to contribute towards the 'smart economy' with an emphasis on securing and creating new high end jobs with a specific focus across the above mentioned sectors.

Historical Photos of Newbridge
Taken between 1890-1915



Diagram depicting the different zones of Newbridge



Initial Site Observations



Top:
Historical Map of Newbridge
25 inch (1888-1913)

CONTEXT

Newbridge Town LAP

Newbridge LAP

The Newbridge LAP has a critical role to play in guiding and facilitating the future physical, social, economic and environmental development of the town. To achieve this, and in order for the town to reach its full potential, there are a number of key challenges which must be addressed. These include;

(i) Ensuring that the planning framework is established so that Newbridge can accommodate its population target in order for the town to be a driver of balanced development within the county and the region.

(ii) Facilitating a high quality of urban design in the town to improve urban streets, spaces and amenities within the town, and encouraging high quality architectural design in new development, making Newbridge an attractive place to live in, visit and do business.

(iii) Promoting Newbridge as an Economic Growth Town by encouraging and supporting significant new economic and research based enterprises in the town.

(iv) Encouraging the development of Newbridge in a sequential manner providing for the expansion of the town from its central areas in a coherent way.

(v) Supporting the re-use of land and buildings, particularly through back-land development and regeneration of town centre sites.

(vi) Expanding the quantity and quality of public open space for an increasing urban population through designating key assets along the River Liffey and key urban spaces within the built environment.

(vii) Ensuring the availability of local employment opportunities, community and commercial services, recreation and amenity facilities for the existing and future population of Newbridge.

(viii) Unlocking infrastructural constraints and ensuring adequate investment in infrastructure, to maintain and facilitate the physical, social, economic and environmental development of the town.

(ix) Minimising the impact of future development on the local environment by ensuring that all future development embraces a green infrastructure strategy.

(x) Minimising negative impacts on key natural assets such as Pollardstown Fen, Mouds Bog, The Curragh and the River Liffey.

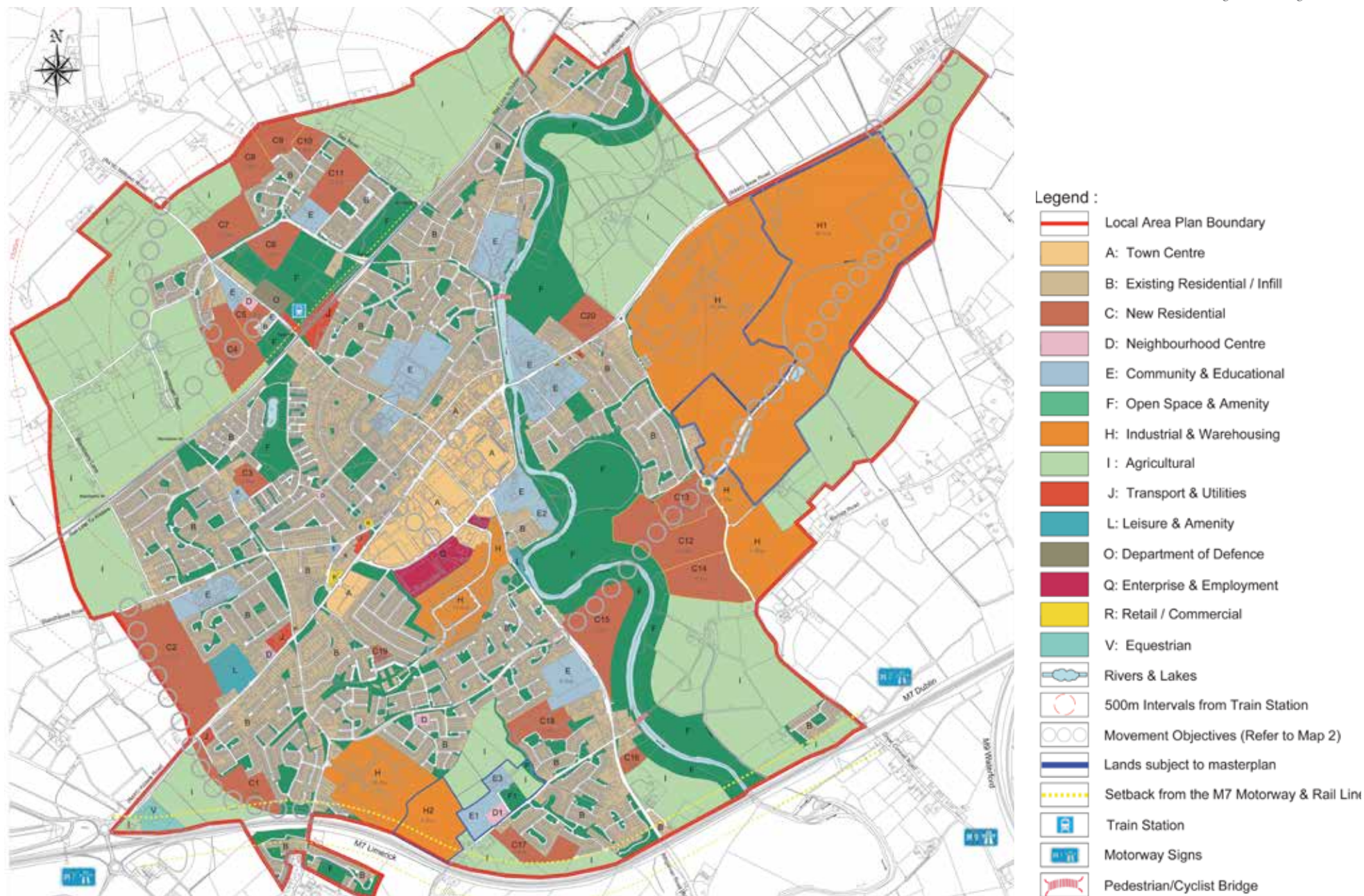
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Urban Design Strategy

An objective of the “Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013-2019” is to support the re-use of land and buildings particularly through back land development and regeneration of town centre sites. Indeed, the LAP notes in section 7.6.2.4 that there “is a deficit of public urban spaces (hard and soft) in the town centre. Where these areas exist, there are with little or no meaningful or attractive connections between such spaces”.

The Urban Design Strategy (above) of the LAP illustrates the area around the Town Hall and Georges Street as needing ‘strengthening’ and ‘expansion’ and an indicative design framework plan is provided for each area. These form the subject areas of this report



Public Realm Strategy

Newbridge’s existing street structure is dominated by four main approach roads into the town centre – from Naas, Kildare Town, Athgarvan and Milltown. The urban structure of the town centre is created around a dense pattern of streets and lanes to the north of the Main Street while the south side of the town centre is predominantly served by Military Road and Cutlery Road and the Athgarvan Road.

This pattern provides a high degree of permeability within the older town centre while a large area of the southern side remains impermeable, especially given the size of the plots and the lack of through routes.

The LAP also shows various opportunities to enhance the town centre via new building



Study Areas

edges, streets, public spaces and street enhancements. There are a number of poor street frontages with weak urban edges which detract from the vibrancy of the town centre. As the town expands, it is critical that new development addresses these issues through appropriate planning and design.

In accordance with Section 3.8 of the Guidelines, this Plan includes design briefs to promote the development of a number of key areas within the town centre inc. (4) Town Hall and Georges Street.

These design briefs have been prepared to assist the different parties involved in the planning process – landowners, developers, agents, design teams and the planning authority.



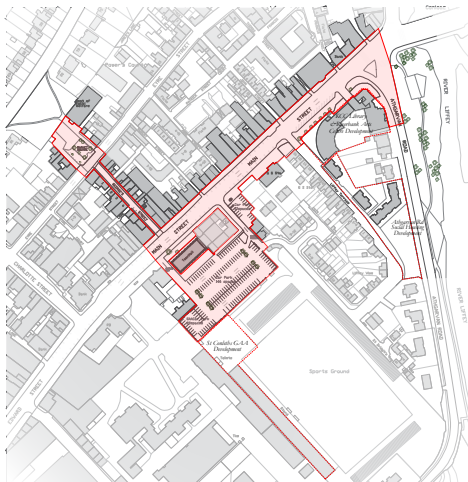
The Barracks in Newbridge
Circa 1910

Analysis

Immediate Site Context



Diagram depicting buildings and the site area



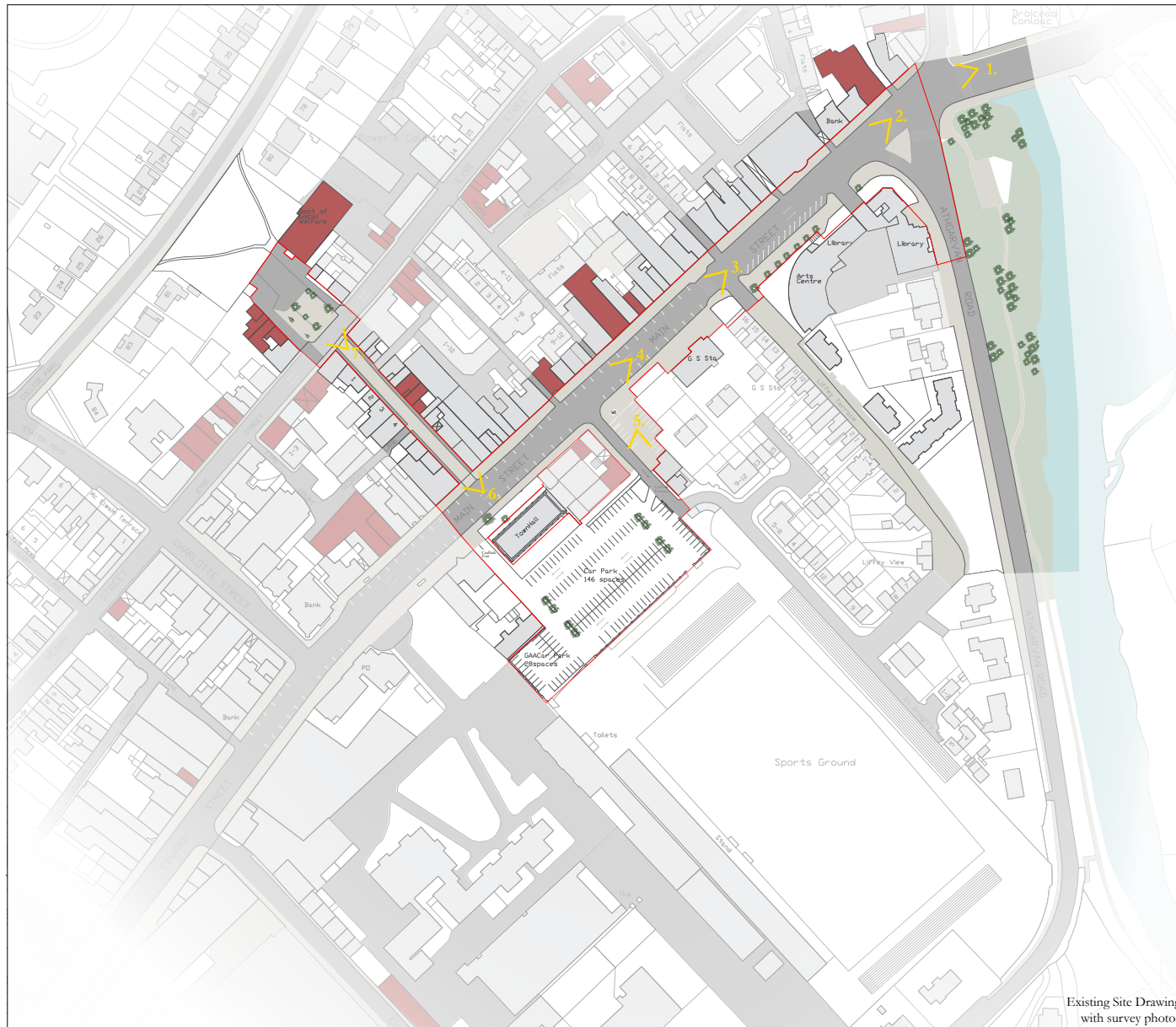
A Town Developed in Stages

An analysis of the town has been carried out of the study area which is presented over the next few pages.

The historical development of Newbridge is clearly evident in the town's structure. Primarily shaped as a garrison town with the establishment of the Cavalry Barracks in 1815, the barracks originally extended from the river Liffey to Cutlery Road along the south side of Main street. The north site of Main Street developed in tandem however the grain of the townscape is much finer in contrast with the coarse grain of the barrack yards and training grounds. The traditional town core primarily comprises modest 19th and 20th century buildings typical of market towns.

Over time the barracks were demolished and the various sites were redeveloped however the coarse grain is still evident in the town





1.

2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



Diagram of Existing Building Uses



Diagram of Ground Floor Materials

today and a network of streets and spaces, evident in the north of the town, is harder to find on the south side. Slowly these sites have become woven back into the urban fabric of the town however there now exists an opportunity to better integrate the east end of the town into this fabric.

The town's evolution is reflected in its urban structure. In Newbridge, there is a distinctive contrast between north and south of Main Street. The historical fine urban grain is evident in the north where the existing street and plot configuration are in significant contrast to the larger plots in the south. The blocks and land parcels are characteristic of various periods of development associated with the town. Significantly the larger urban blocks remain on the south side of Main Street – a legacy of the former industrial lands of the Irish Ropes site and the defensive Military Barracks (now Bord na Mona). Notwithstanding the opening of the Whitewater Shopping Centre, these blocks remain ill-defined and largely impermeable.

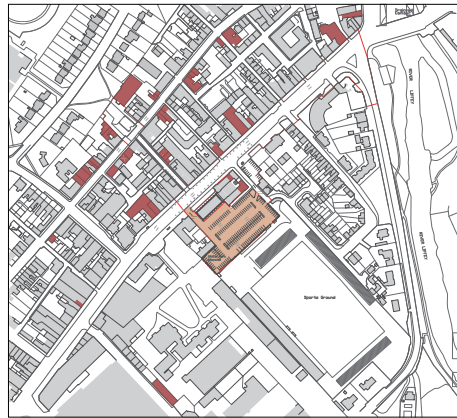
The landuse map opposite highlights a concentration of civic and cultural uses in the area. It also highlights and clustering of vacant units particularly when compared to the south west area of Main Street.

A strategy for public renewal should seek to consolidate the civic and cultural uses while creating the conditions for private investment in the area.

S1. St Conleths GAA/ Town Hall Car Park

Newbridge Main St, Liffey Terrace

Location Map



Site Boundary of St. Conleth's GAA Car Prk

Where

Town Hall Car Park, Liffey Terrace
Adjacent to St Conleths GAA Stadium

What

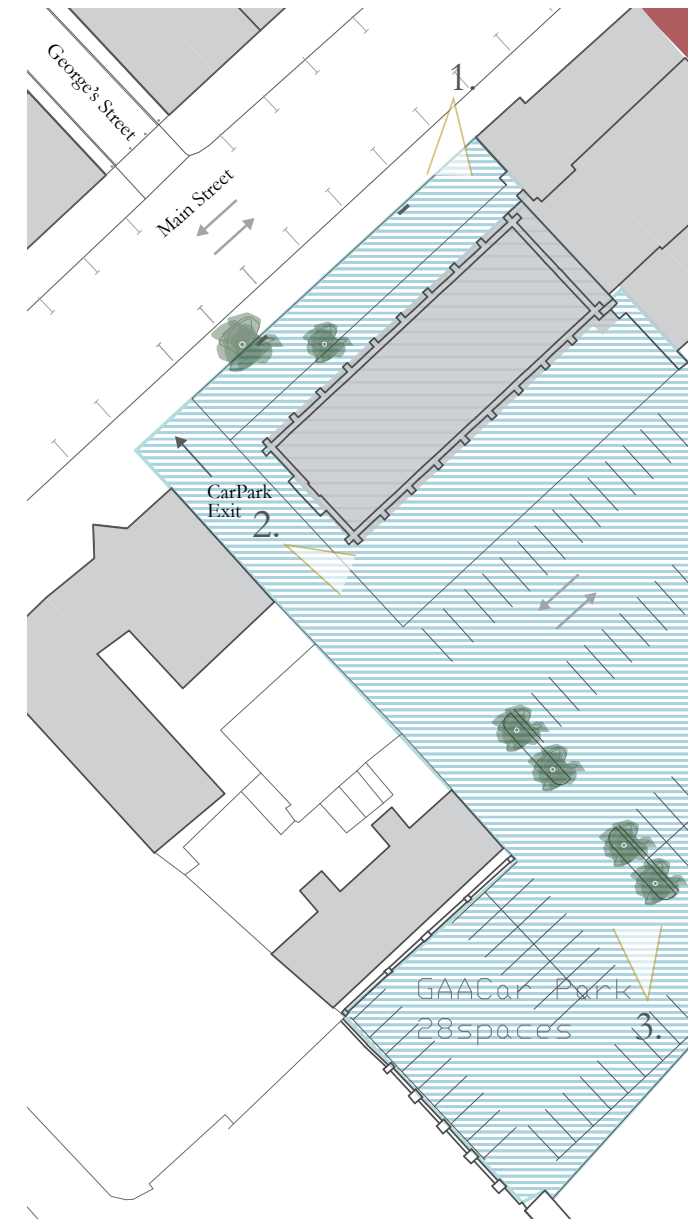
The site is currently used as a surface car park where cheap 'all day' rates apply. While the layout of the car park is very efficient, there

is a question mark over the applicability of the use of such a key site in the town and, in particular, as a setting for the town hall.

The car park also forms an interstitial space between the Main Street and St Conleths GAA grounds. This means that the entrances to the stadium are not visible and there is potential for conflict between vehicles and GAA fans. On match days the car park is closed to allow for sufficient spill out space without any obvious effect on the functionality of the town.

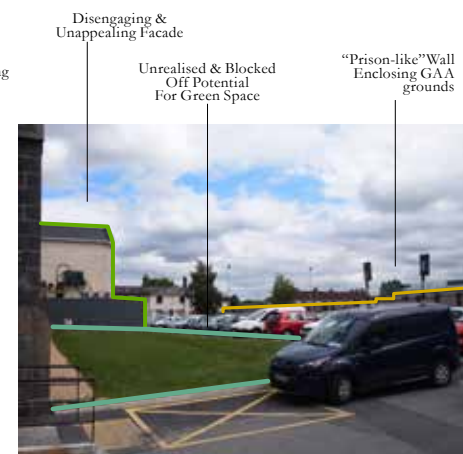
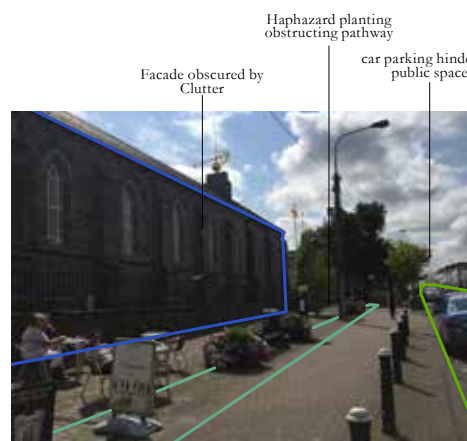
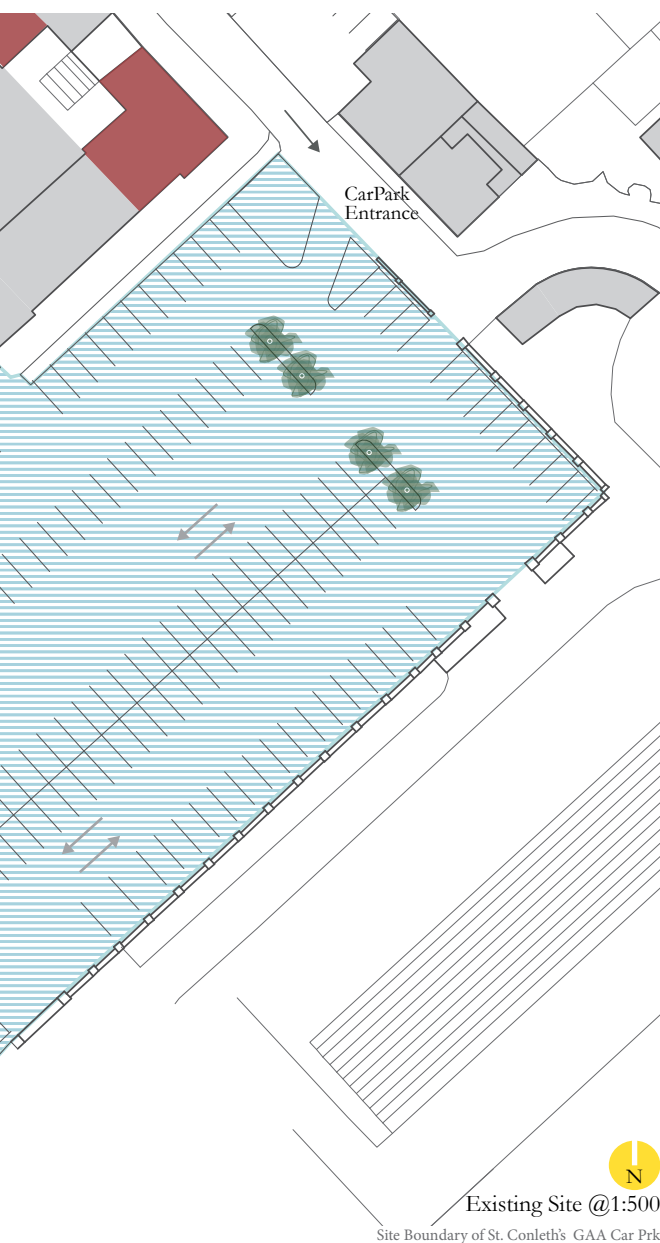
Why

- Satisfy the need of the LAP to provide a new cultural civic space for Newbridge Town
- Support the local economy by creating new private investment opportunities in the Northern side of the town
- Provide an opportunity for the Town Hall and GAA grounds to have a public space for further events and functions



Analysis

Site Briefs



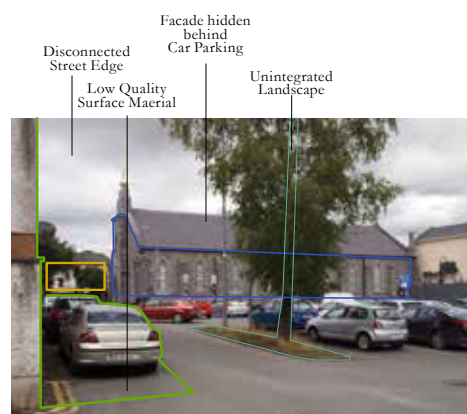
- Enhance the axis of the Town Hall and Market square to include the GAA grounds

How

Develop a backlands and public realm strategy for the site alongside KCC investigating the potential for private development on edges to form a civic square to the rear of town hall.

Priority

The urgency comes from the fact that the GAA intend to proceed with thier regeneration works and there is potential to engage with the private sector while the market is buoyant



S2. Market Square

Eyre St

Location Map



Site Boundary of Market Square

Where

Market Square, Eyre Street Facing Newbridge Town Hall and Georges St

What

The Market Square once housed the town courthouse a two storey structure with a formal facade which formed a framed view from Georges St and was set on a formal axis with the Town Hall. The courthouse was lost in a fire several years ago and the site has sat vacant ever since. Perhaps owing to the loss of footfall in the area some of the buildings facing are in poor conditions and are vacant.

In general the public realm is of poor quality with bollards and railings blocking views. There are some high quality trees which provide an important function to the area.

Why

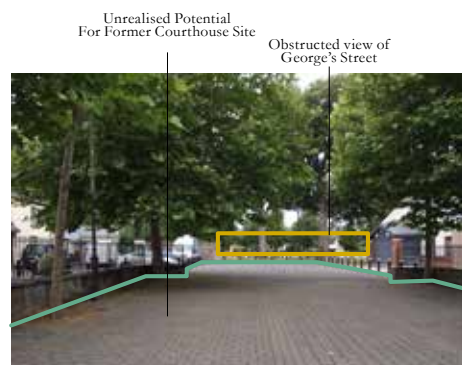
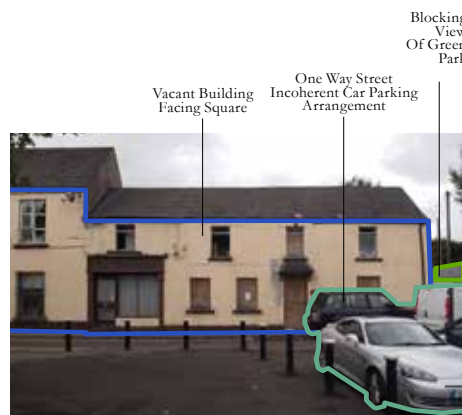
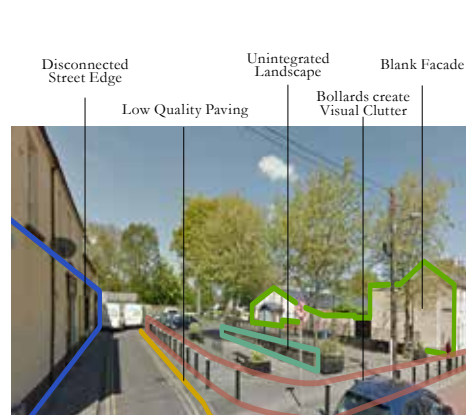
- Newbridge Courthouse was extensively damaged by fire in 2002 and eventually the site was cleared. This unfortunate event has left a scar in the set piece of framed views along Georges Street looking south to the Town Hall and north to the Courthouse. The building formed an imposing architectural feature on the streetscape of Market Square and



Old Courthouse on Market Square
(Courthouse now removed)



Site Boundary of Market Square



is now conspicuous by its absence. The proposals in this bid will set the scene for the site to be redeveloped.

How

KCC to promote the idea to companies currently seeking office spaces or commercial premises.

Priority

As a standalone project it could be delivered as soon as a suitable tenant is found. Public realm upgrades to the surrounding area will improve the attractiveness of the proposition.

S3. Georges St

Location Map



Site Boundary of Georges Street



Photograph taken of Georges Street

Where

Georges Street
Connecting Main St to Market Square & Eyre St

What

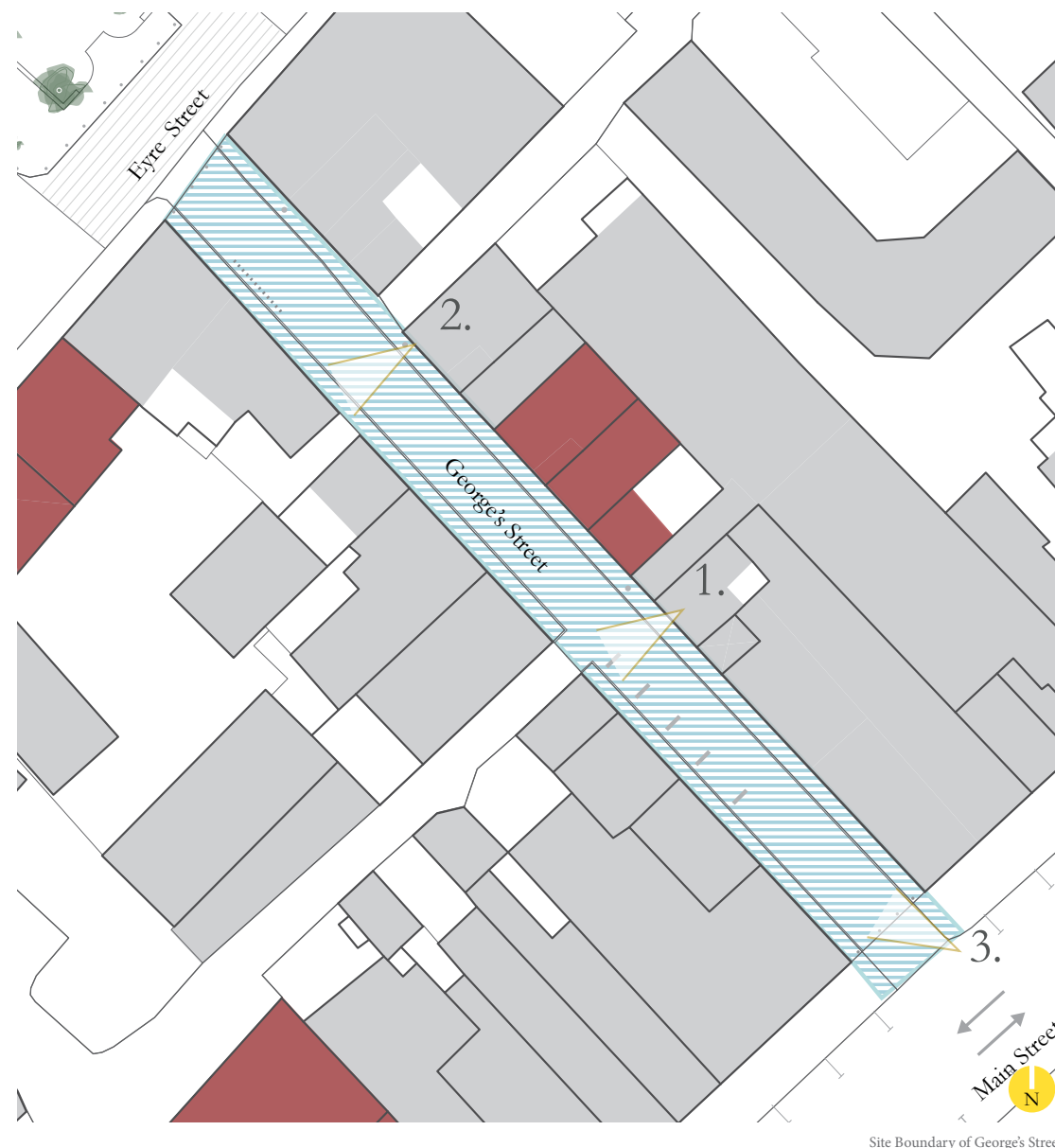
Georges Street is a primarily retail based promenade linking the town hall to the site of the former courthouse. It was pedestrianised in the early 1990's and over the years some additions have been made such as public art and potted plants installed.

The street terminates to the south on Newbridge Main Street, busy road of considerable width and volume. There is no safe crossing point to the town hall without walking some distance (minimum 150m) to the North and South.

Georges Street has some thriving business, especially cafe's and entrance, however the public realm is looking tired and some of the street furniture serves to inhibit movement and views.

Why

- Enable an inviting public realm for shops to open out onto the street to further a cafe/restaurant culture
- Reanimate an important historical axis between Market Square and Newbridge Town Hall.
- Provide a more inviting area with resting points in the town within public space
- Support the local economy providing a more attractive investment opportunity



Site Boundary of Georges Street



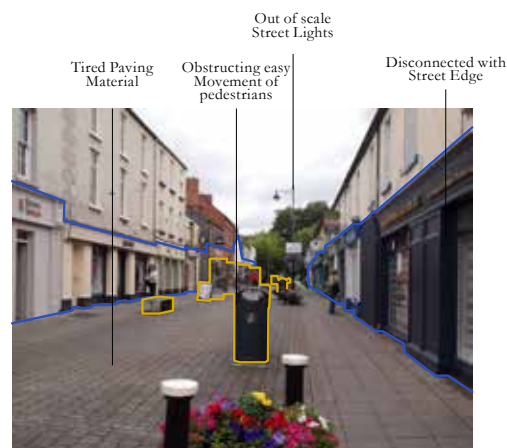
to retailers on both Georges St and in turn Eyre St to the North.

How

Apply for funding through the URDF 2018 to advance a feasibility and part 8 application

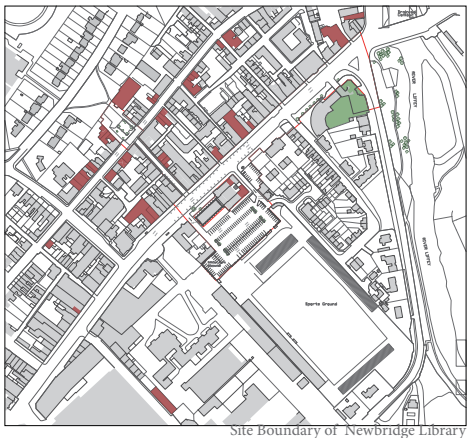
Priority

Georges Street is the subject of a priority design brief in the Town's LAP



S4. KCC Library

Location Map



Where
Main St, Athgarvan Rd
adjacent to Riverbank Arts Centre

What
Kildare County Council is one of the key public agencies charged with civic leadership and cultural/community development “To ensure that County Kildare is an attractive place to live and work by building strong inclusive



communities that have a sense of place and belonging. This will be supported by the provision of accessible community based facilities from which services and supports can be provided.” (Kildare County Development Plan, 2017-2023: p239).

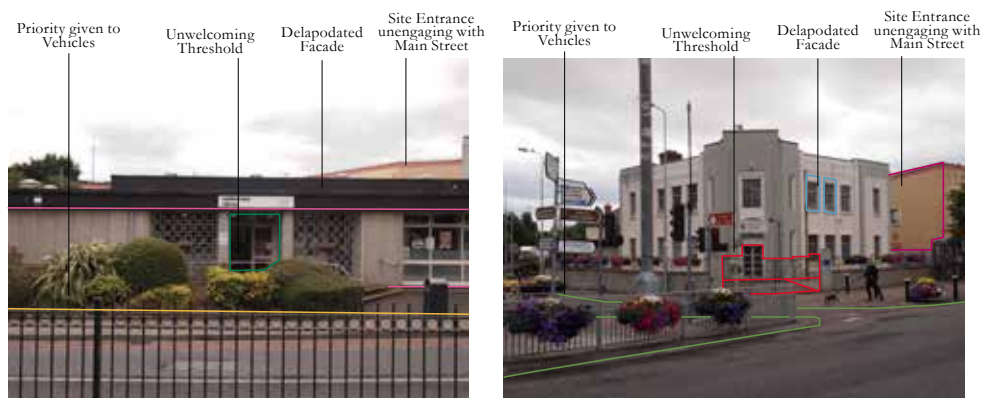
Why
-The proposed site as identified by Kildare County Council for the new Central library development is the original County Library and existing prefabricated community library situated at the entrance of the commercial and community core of Newbridge town fronting onto the main street. The existing prefabricated community library has outlived its intended lifespan and requires urgent attention.
-A modern and well-resourced public library contributes to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of communities.



Photographs taken of the Library



Site Boundary of Newbridge Library



-The public library is a curator of memory and is responsible for creating, storing and sharing local culture and historical records. The National Library Strategy includes a national programme to enhance digital access to Local Studies collections. The extensive storage facilities and new technologies proposed in the County Library will enable Kildare Library Service to continue to enhance access to the physical and digital collections in Kildare Local Studies, Genealogy and County Archives collections both in traditional format and in digital platforms.

How

The property is in the ownership of Kildare County Council. The Council sees this development as a major impetus for the regeneration of the entrance to the town centre seeding further developments in the public and private sectors.

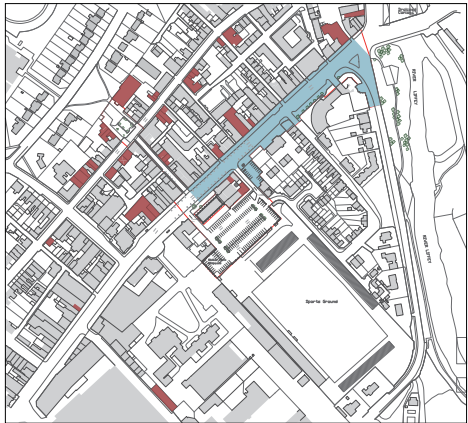
The site and town present a very high-profile location and context for this most significant cultural/social and economic development signifying the Council's commitment to heritage, imagination, creativity, knowledge, learning, ideas, and human development and growth.

Priority

The development of a Central Library for the County has been identified as a key strategy in order to provide an inclusive cultural, economic and educational service and a force for social/cultural cohesion that societies need (Ideas Realised – Spreading the Word, Kildare Library Services Development Plan, Kildare County Council, 2014 - 2019: p32). This correlates with the vision of the national strategy which states that delivering 'a progressive library service that meets the expectations of users requires library buildings that are fit-for-purpose and reflect the quality of services being delivered.

S5. Main St

Location Map



Site Boundary of the Main Street



Photograph taken of George's Street

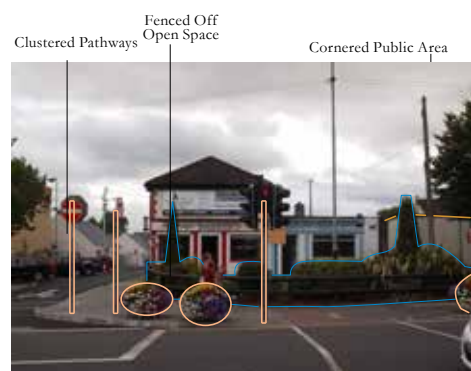
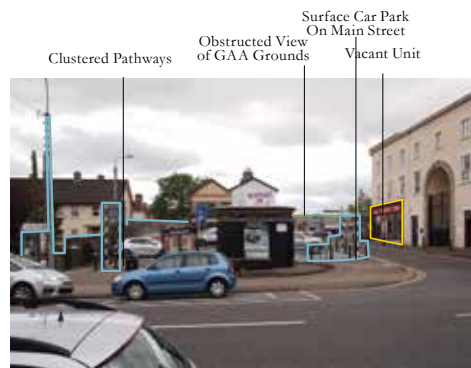
Where
Main Street
Liffey Linear Park to Cutlery Street

What
Public realm enhancements to be developed in tandem with NTA proposals for movement within the town.

- Why**
- Emphasise the cultural axis proposed through public realm enhancements connecting the River Liffey Park to StConleths Gaa Park passing KCC Library, Riverbank Arts Centre and Newbridge Town Hall
 - To create a more pedestrian friendly environment with areas to rest, park your bike reversing the car dominant streetscape
 - Support the further development of the Northern side of the town to support more local business.
 - Compliment the built proposals with public space that provides an attractive arrival point from the North of Newbridge Town
 - Connect and important cultural sites in Newbridge providing a more accessible and connected route to and from one and other.



Site Boundary of the Main Street



How

Studies to be progressed in tandem with other proposals in the town, ownership and boundary lines to be established, utility constraints to be understood, parking options to be reviewed etc .

Priority

This project has a medium priority in the sense that it will not, on its own, directly leverage private investment into the town however the improvements will likely have a positive effect on the economic outlook of the area.

2

Projects Proposed in the Initiative

P1. Kildare CoCo Library

Main St, Athgarvan Rd

Location Map



Proposed Central Library Services

Kildare County Council proposes to construct a high-quality building on the site of the existing facility incorporating the best in library design of 2,340 sq metres of accessible, welcoming and free cultural space in Newbridge. Physical access into and throughout the building will be of the highest standards and will be informed by the Council's ongoing learning from its engagement with the disability sectors both statutory and voluntary. The project will combine the architectural heritage value

of the original strategically located, Local Studies Library on the main street with new contemporary architecture. This new cultural and civic quarter will be further enhanced by being situated in the grounds of Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare Library and Arts Service Headquarters and adjacent to Newbridge Linear Park.

The building design itself and its immediate external context will present a landmark statement about the importance of quality cultural space and resources and the role it will play in the life of the County. It will also



Ground Floor Plan of Proposed Library



First Floor Plan of Proposed Library

mark the civic/cultural/economic regeneration of the town of Newbridge providing services and opportunities which sustain and nourish community cultural living. Cultural consciousness and participation will be promoted through community led services, resources and spaces focused appropriately in the areas of:

- Recorded heritage of the County
- Children's and young people's library
- Leisure and community living library
- Digital Learning Centre and Innovation Space



Render of Proposed Library

- Work Matters: Business and Employment Support Services
- Multi-purpose spaces dedicated to interpreting/exploring life through exhibition, workshop, lectures and discussion.

The Central Library will act as a force for social inclusion given its ability to act as a bridge between the urban contexts of the North and Centre and more rural communities of the South and West.



Elevation of Proposed Library

P2. St Conleths GAA - Market Square

Public Realm Enhancements & Backlands Development

The focus of the public realm enhancements will be the historic central axis of the Market Square, Georges Street and the Town Hall where there is an opportunity to develop a new civic space to complement the proposed refurbishment of St. Conleth's GAA grounds.

- A) The provision of a much needed "Town Square" has long been an aspiration of Kildare County Council and the local Chamber of Commerce. This will be achieved through the re-purposing of the existing surface car park between St. Conleth's Park and the Town Hall which will unlock development potential around the edges providing active frontages overlooking a new space of civic importance which focusses on the protected structure of the Town Hall. The scheme will provide better pedestrian access to the stadium and a "front door" to Newbridge for visiting fans.
- B) Provide new crossing point and raised road table between the Town Hall and Georges Street strengthening the connection between the two and better highlighting the role of the Town Hall as a framed view to/from Georges Street.
- C) Regenerate Georges Street through reduction of clutter, resurfacing of street/ improvement of public realm, provision of better facilities including lighting, drainage, waste management etc.

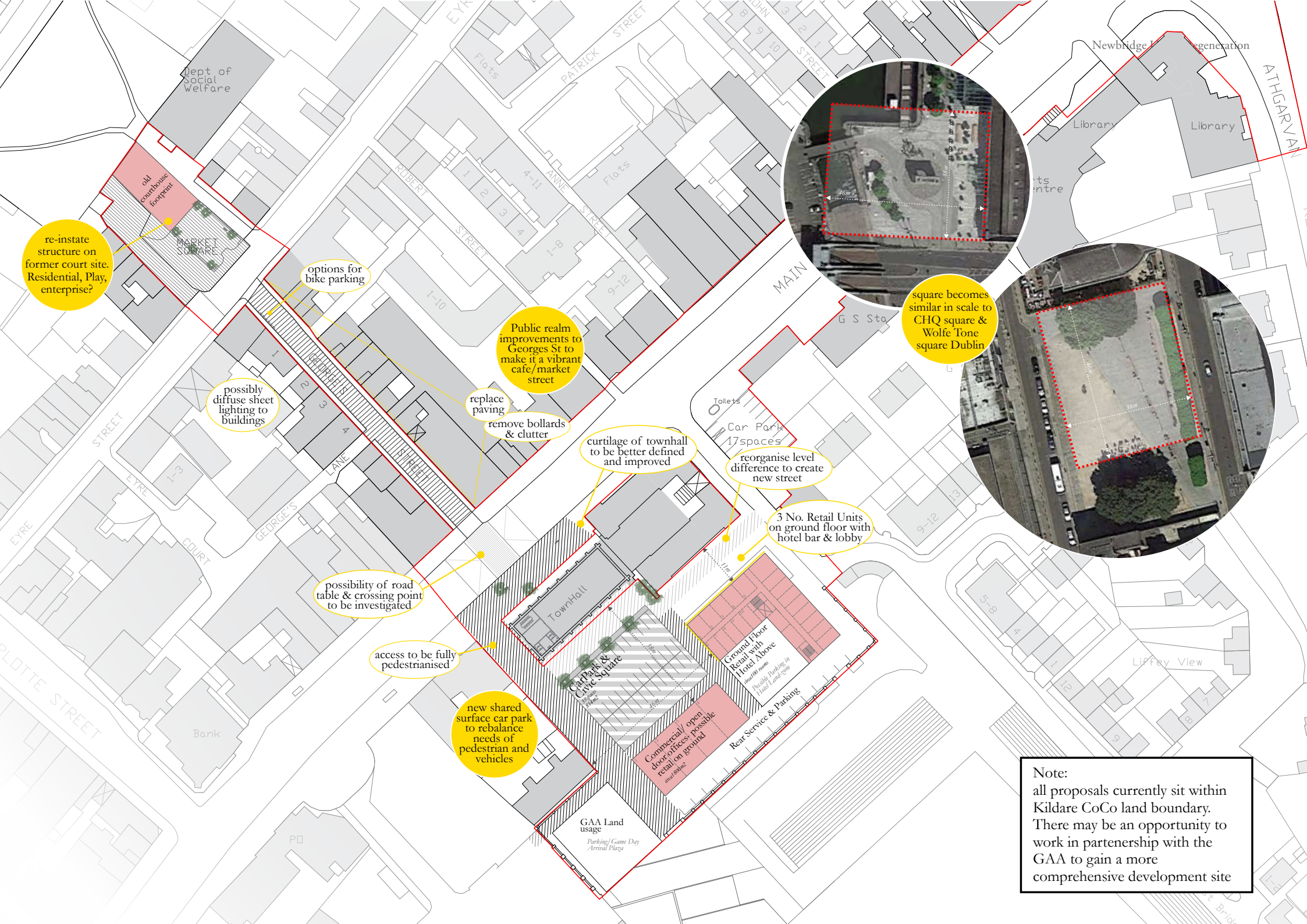
- D) Redesigning Market square as a new civic space framed by a new building commercial building leveraging private investment to enclose the streetscape and square.
- E) Provide better linkages along Main Street through improved public realm between the River Liffey Linear Park, the County Library, the Riverbank Arts Centre and the projects mentioned above.



Kilmainham Civic Space. Designed by DBFL



Bedford Hill Place. Designed by: Metropolitan Workshop



re-instate structure on former court site. Residential, Play, enterprise?

Dept of Social Welfare

old townhouse footprint

possibly diffuse sheet lighting to buildings

options for bike parking

Public realm improvements to Georges St to make it a vibrant cafe/market street

replace paving
remove bollards & clutter

curtilage of townhall to be better defined and improved

reorganise level difference to create new street

3 No. Retail Units on ground floor with hotel bar & lobby

possibility of road table & crossing point to be investigated

access to be fully pedestrianised

new shared surface car park to rebalance needs of pedestrian and vehicles

GAA Land usage
Parking/Car Day
Arrival Plaza

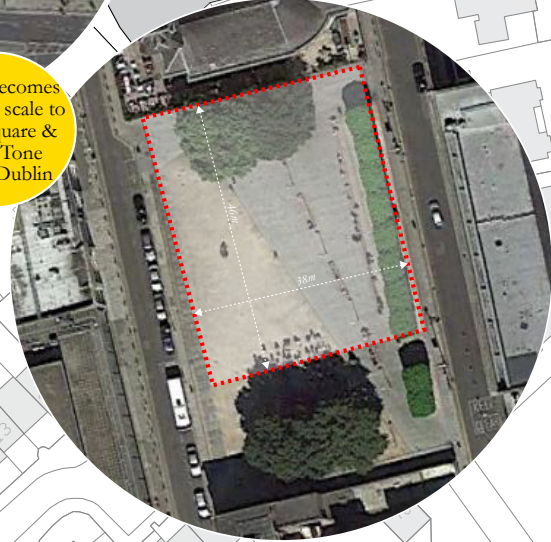
Commercial/ open
door offices possible
retail on ground
area 200sqm
Plot 7 Land 200sqm

Ground Floor
Retail with
Hotel Above
Public Parking in
Plot 7 Land 200sqm

Rear Service & Parking



square becomes similar in scale to CHQ square & Wolfe Tone square Dublin



Note:
all proposals currently sit within Kildare CoCo land boundary. There may be an opportunity to work in partnership with the GAA to gain a more comprehensive development site

Development of back land sites

The public realm improvements mentioned above will set the scene for private investment framing the new public spaces. Kildare County Council are already in talks with the GAA to discuss the marriage value of working together to provide greater development potential on the lands between Newbridge Town Hall and St. Conleths Park. The site is wholly in the ownership of KCC however working in partnership with the GAA affords the opportunity to increase the site area without infringing on the functionality of the stadium.

It is envisioned that these sites would be suitable for much needed hotel, commercial

and retail facilities which would support the emergence of a new Cultural and Civic Quarter.

These projects will be developed using a powerful, overarching urban design strategy and design approach that makes all the projects in the initiative come together. Some preliminary studies have already been developed and are attached as an appendix to this application.



Hildreth St, Balham.
Before



Hildreth St, Balham.
After



Whitewater Shopping Centre,
Newbridge



Visualisation of Potential Newbridge Civic Square

3

Projects
Supporting the
Initiative

P1 NTA Newbridge Transport Plan

Successful town centres need to be well-connected by road and rail at a regional scale and Kildare County Council are seeking to improve their regional accessibility through a separate URDF bid.

Critically this strategic connectivity must be balanced by excellent local accessibility. In Newbridge, there is a general sense that road infrastructure and vehicle movements dominate the town centre and cause severance between the area's distinctive districts and quarters. Improvement of the public realm can offer alternative and safe alternative active travel options helping alleviate congestion and meet climate action

objectives. The proposal therefore includes targeted measures to enhance permeability and connectivity and projects aiming to deliver an accessible, safe and attractive environment.

The NTA are in the process of developing a transport plan for Newbridge which are ambitious in scope and the subject of a separate URDF bid. The ambition is to remove through traffic from the main street providing the opportunity for culture and business to thrive.

Future Ambition for Newbridge

There are two potential approaches which will be determined by the overall objective for the town centre and the Main Street:

Traditional traffic management approach



Improvement but no big gain for the town centre

Remove through-traffic and reclaim Main Street



Regeneration of the town, providing the opportunities for business and retail to thrive



Concepts:

1. Traffic circulates around, rather than through the town
2. Utilising the Athgarvan Road as well as the future southern access road
3. Strategic traffic uses the M7 (accessing at Junction 12 for the majority of traffic)

Cultural Initiatives

P2 St Conleths GAA Redevelopment

Liffey View, Athgarvan Rd

Future Project Committed

St Conleth's Park is cut off from the town in visual terms and forms its own self-contained area. It is run down and disconnected from the rest of the town and feels unsafe to passers-by.

The home of Kildare GAA has recently gained funding and full planning permission to develop a new 2-storey Covered Main Stand building, with facilities within the Stand, comprising Players and Officials Changing

Areas, Spectator Concourses, Toilets Areas, Office, Multi-purpose room, VIP/ meeting areas, Food services/ bar, Stores, Plant Rooms and associated ancillary areas. As part of this project, there will be a new civic plaza at the main entrance area to the stand and flood lighting for the facility. The GAA intend to carry out these works in 2019 and are keen to work with the council to extend the public realm improvements back as far as Newbridge Main Street.

Location Map



Mitchell & Associates drawings of St. Conleth's Park Redevelopment



P3 Riverbank Arts Centre

Newbridge Main St

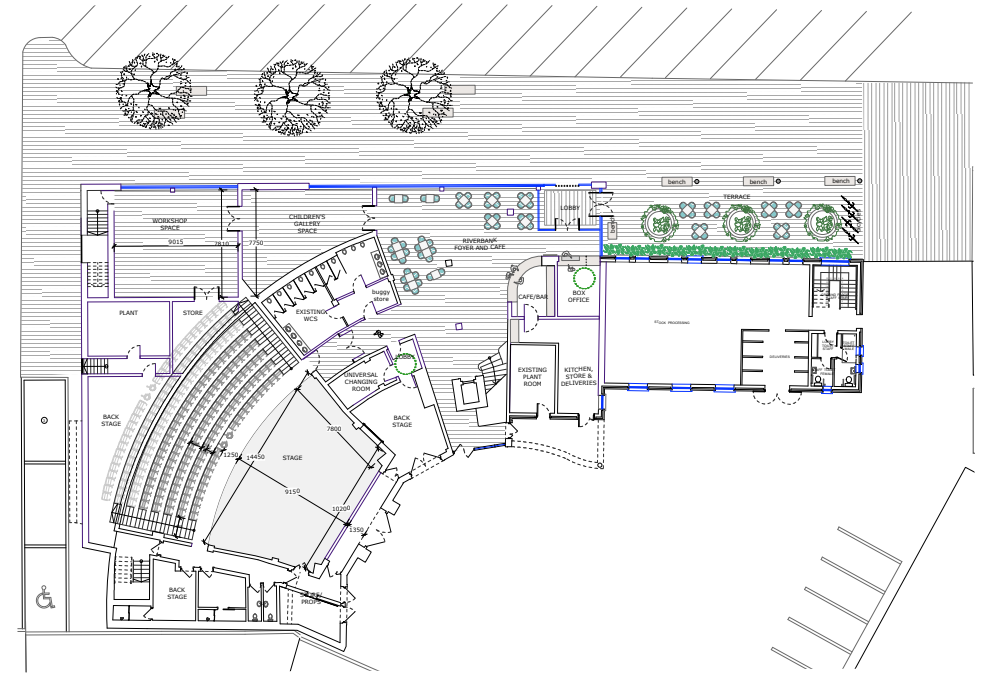
The Council operates an integrated Library and Arts Service which has initiated a wide range of cultural programmes throughout the County. A key part of the Library and Arts Strategy was the development of Riverbank County Arts Centre at Newbridge. In parallel with the library, The Riverbank have plans to redevelop their facilities allowing for a full refurbishment of the theatre which will bring improved and increased seating in the theatre as well as increasing the size and depth of the stage.

The theatre has been expanding its range of productions and attracting larger touring groups in recent years. These improvements will allow it to continue that growth and bring leading shows to a wider Kildare audience. The centre has attracted funding and is currently the subject of a separate bid under the URDF.

Location Map



Studio Red's drawings of proposed Riverbank Theatre



01 FRONT ELEVATION
(SK)201 PROPOSED DRAWING RAC
1:200

P4 Athgarvan Rd Social Housing

Liffey Terrace, Athgarvan Rd

Future Project Committed

Location Map



Drawings of Athgarvan Road Development

P5 Town Hall Renovation

Newbridge Main St

Phase 1&2 Completed

The town hall is a former Methodist church built in 1859 on the grounds of the former cavalry barracks. The barracks have now been substantially demolished. The church was deconsecrated after the closure of the barracks in the 1920s and was subsequently used as a recreation hall, the Town hall, a community training workshop and the parking wardens office. The building is a 9 bay gable ended gothic revival church.

It is proposed to re-landscape the surrounding area using high quality granite paving to provide a setting appropriate to the stature of Hall as a public building in the centre of the town. The existing footpath to the north will

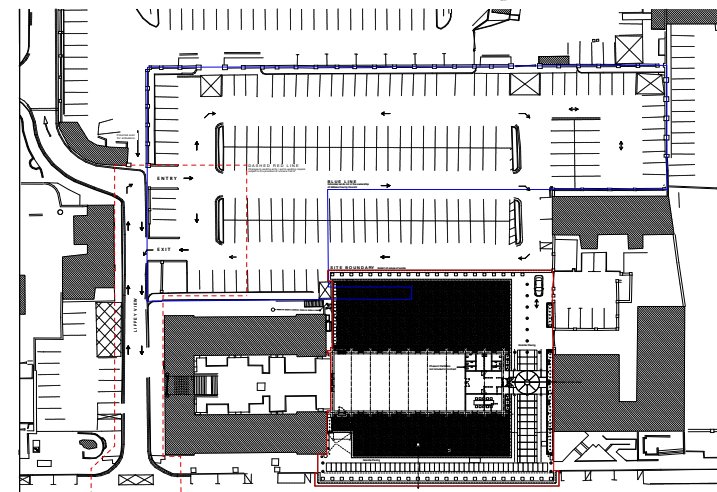
be extended to create a more generous space around the town hall. The existing lane to the west of the Town Hall will be pedestrianised. This will require the reorganisation of the carpark to the rear.

The Town Hall has undergone a substantial restoration project funded by Kildare County Council and is now available for public use. The project was originally conceived in three phases and phase one and two are now complete. The last phase involves improvements to the public realm and landscaping to the exterior of the building. These environmental improvements for part of the bid.

Location Map



De Blacham and Meagher Architects renovation of Town Hall



4

Schedule of Projects

Newbridge Order of Magnitude					AECOM
Item	Schedule of Works	Qty	Unit	Rate	Amount
1	80-90 Room Hotel (4F)* **				
1.1	Gross Internal Area	2,370	m²	2,600	€6,162,000
1.2	Extra Landzone	320	m²	2,600	€832,000
2	Commercial Block (4F)**				
2.1	Gross Internal Area	2,250	m²	2,850	€6,412,500
3	Market Sq Development Site**				
3.1	Gross Internal Area	1,000	m²	2,850	€2,850,000
Subtotal					€16,256,500
Contingency					€1,625,650
Professional fees					€2,682,323
Total costs - private sector					€20,564,473
4	Public Realm Improvement Works				
4.1	Surface Finishes	4,505	m²	350	€1,576,750
4.2	Fixtures and Furniture	2,253	m²	300	€675,750
4.3	Semi-Mature Trees	45	Nr.	500	€22,500
4.4	Supporting infrastructure	4,505	m²	200	€901,000
5	New Road Table				
5.1	Surface Finishes	2,163	m²	150	€324,450
5.2	Fixtures and Furniture (signage)	2,163	m²	300	€648,900
5.3	Supporting infrastructure	2,163	m²	200	€432,600
6	Car Park Civic Sq				
6.1	Surface Finishes	815	m²	100	€81,500
6.2	Fixtures: signage and lighting	408	m²	50	€20,375
6.3	Semi-Mature Trees	8	Nr.	500	€4,000
6.4	Supporting infrastructure	815	m²	100	€81,500
7	Rear Service & Parking				
7.1	Surface Finishes	1,040	m²	100	€104,000
7.2	Fixtures: signage and lighting	520	m²	50	€26,000
7.3	Semi-Mature Trees	10	Nr.	500	€5,000
7.4	Supporting infrastructure	1,040	m²	100	€104,000
8	Potential Further Landscape Works				
8.1	Surface Finishes	4,470	m²	350	€1,564,500
8.2	Fixtures and Furniture	894	m²	300	€268,200
8.3	Semi-Mature Trees	44	Nr.	500	€22,000
8.4	Supporting infrastructure	4,470	m²	200	€894,000
9	Kildare Central Library				
9.1	Gross Internal Area	2,340	m²	3,400	€7,956,000
9.2	Site Surveys	1	item	20,000	€20,000
9.3	Ground Conditions	1	item	150,000	€150,000
9.4	Supporting infrastructure	150	m²	200	€30,000
Subtotal					€15,913,025
Contingency					€1,591,302.50
Professional Fee (15% of Construction value)					€2,625,649.13
Total Costs - Public Sector					€20,129,977

*Assumptions

	2019	2020	2021	2022	post 2022	
	Overall Project Setup Stakeholder engagement Feasibility and preliminary diagrams	Land ownership issues Statutory Consents	Final Design Procurement	Construction	Construction Operation	
Fee	25% € 656,412	30% € 787,694.74	25% € 656,412.28	10% € 131,282.46	10% € 393,847.37	
Construction (including contingency)	0% € 0.00	0% € 0.00	0% € 0.00	25% € 4,376,081.88	75% € 13,128,245.63	
Subtotal	€ 656,412	€ 787,694.74	€ 656,412.28	€ 4,507,364.33	€ 13,522,092.99	€ 20,129,977
Amount of URDF funding requested	€ 492,309.21	€ 590,771.05	€ 492,309.21	€ 3,380,523.25	€ 10,141,569.75	€ 15,097,482.47
Match funding amount	€ 164,103.07	€ 196,923.68	€ 164,103.07	€ 1,126,841.08	€ 3,380,523.25	€ 5,032,494.16
						€ 20,129,976.63

***Assumptions**

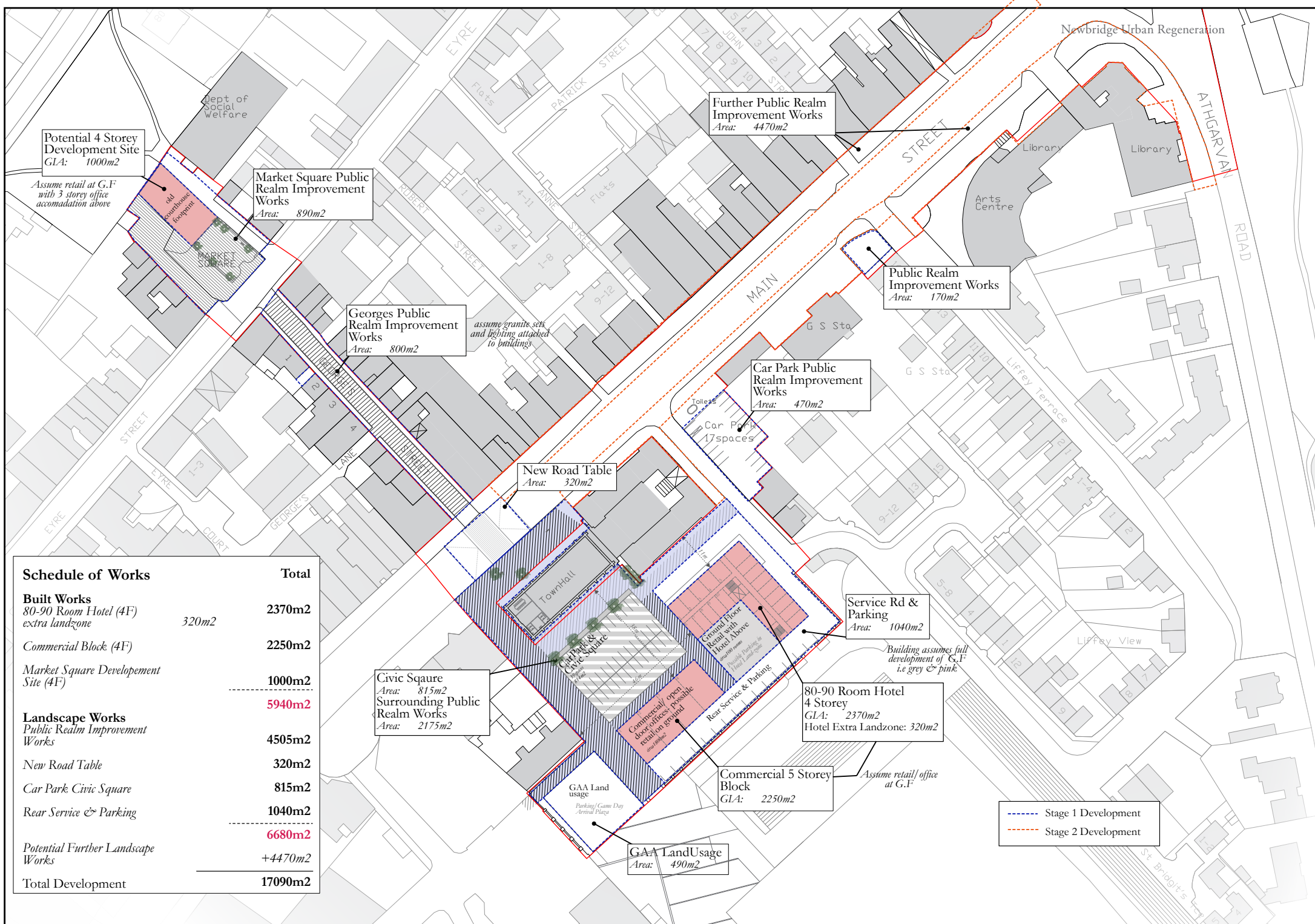
- 3-4 star hotel

****Shell and Core only**

- Speculative office development
- Basic "shell and core"
- Naturally ventilated
- Traditional materials and construction methods
- Basic finishes and services
- Landlord fit-out

Exclusions

- VAT
- Development Contributions
- Planning Contributions
- DAC and Fire Certs
- Removal of Contaminated material
- Phasings



5

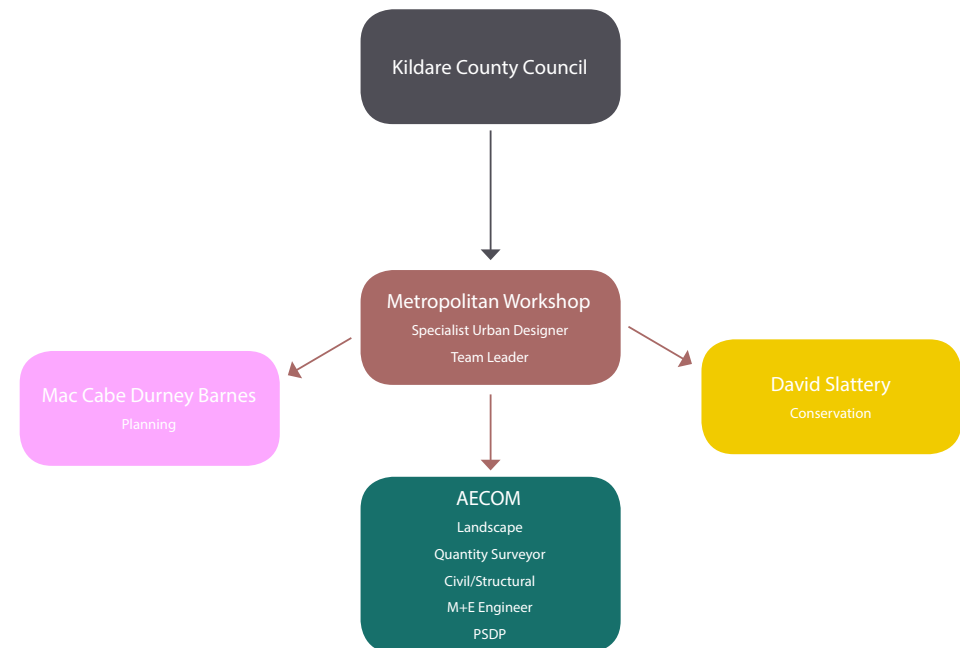
Our Team

Including terms and conditions

Design Team

Metropolitan Workshop have assembled a team for this commission who have worked together previously. The team brings unparalleled experience for projects of this kind and are committed to delivering an exemplary scheme for Kildare and Newbridge.

Individually and collectively we are passionate about making successful places and would relish the opportunity to work with Kildare County Council and local stakeholders. Our Team is:



Metropolitan Workshop

Architecture + Urbanism

Specialist Urban Designer- Team Leader

Through our architecture and urban design, in our research and press articles and through our involvement in national, regional and local design review panels, we strive to influence and improve the way people live.

Metropolitan Workshop principles have more than eighty-five years of combined experience of designing mixed-use, housing-led urban schemes and working with private sector developers and public sector housing agencies in the UK Norway and Ireland.

The perspective that our broad range of experience provides, gives the organisations we work with early confidence in the deliverability of their projects.

From bespoke houses to major urban residential-led, mixed-use projects, we

bring the highest possible standards of design thinking and delivery to the built environment at every scale and context.

We are experienced communicators and believe that resident and public consultations are crucial to finding the right solution, to give the community the opportunity to ensure proposals meet their needs and in doing so, those of the client.

We believe that there is always more than one good way to do something so we always offer options – this helps everyone



Planning

MacCabe Durney Barnes is a multi-disciplinary practice providing specialist planning, environmental and economic services. The practice provides spatial planning, chartered surveying and marine spatial planning. Their mission is to promote planning, environmental sustainability and economic development as a process for achieving an enhanced physical environment and consequent improvement to the quality of people's lives.



Conservation

The practice works and projects include the repair and conservation of historic stonework, brickwork and metalwork; the preparation and use of historic materials such as lime and the conservation and repair of decorative plasterwork, joinery and statuary are areas where the practice has a particular expertise. In addition, the practice has completed a substantial number of assessments of historic buildings and has provided consultancy services for the historic fabric aspects of a number larger mixed developments.



Landscape, Quantity Surveyor, Civil/ Structural, M+E, PSDP

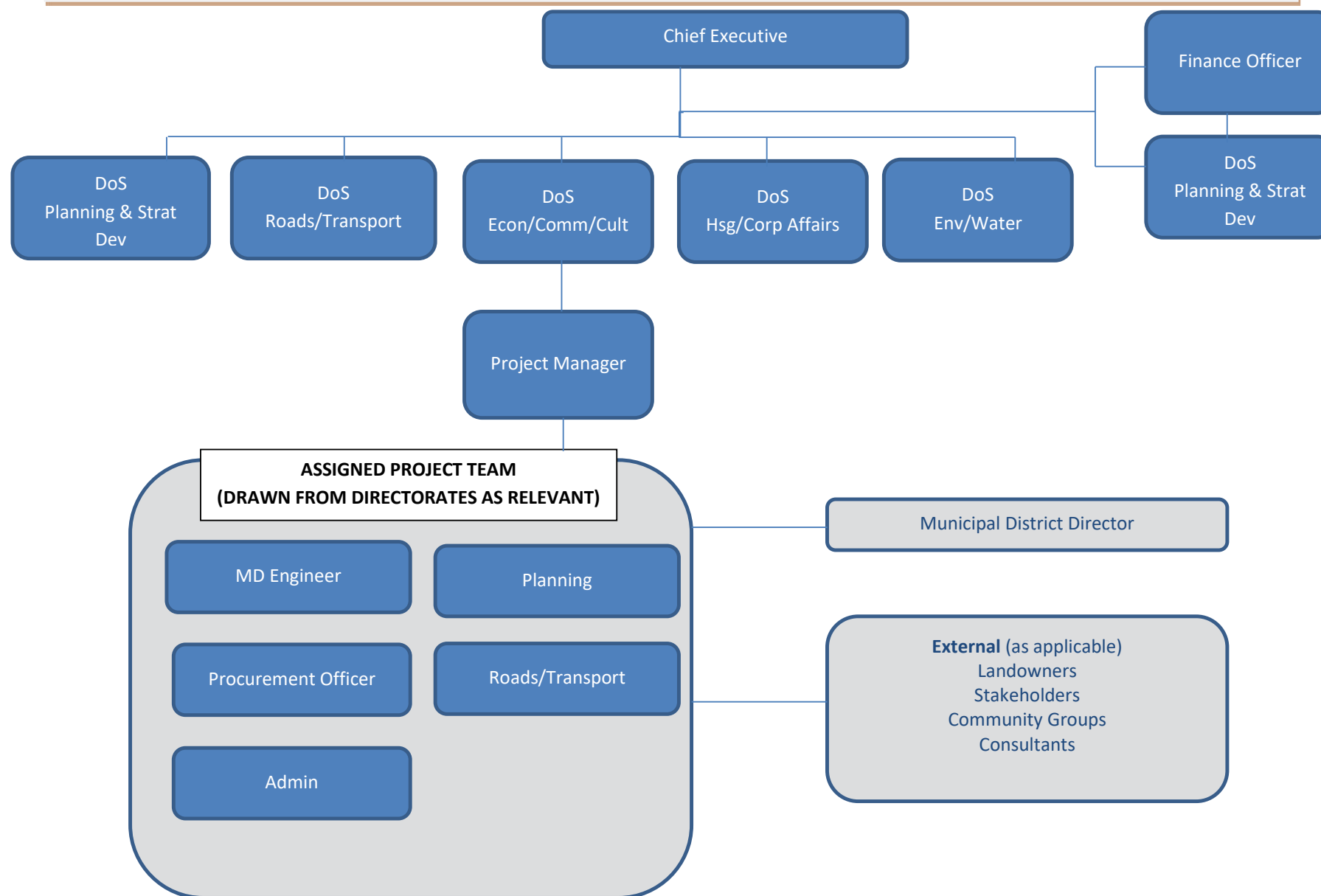
AECOM is global network of experts working with clients, communities and colleagues to develop and implement innovative solutions to the world's

most complex challenges. Delivering clean water and energy. Building iconic skyscrapers. Planning new cities. Restoring damaged environments. Connecting people and economies with roads, bridges, tunnels and transit systems. Designing parks where children play. Helping governments maintain stability and security.

AECOM connects expertise across services, markets, and geographies to deliver transformative outcomes. Worldwide, AECOM designs, builds, finances, operates and manages projects and programs that unlock opportunities, protect our environment and improve people's lives.

Appendices

Governance – SERVICE / FUNCTIONALLY DEFINED i.e. housed under DoS by SERVICE AREA – e.g. Economic, Community, & Cultural Development.



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Chief Executive's Office

URDF,
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local
Government
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

26th September 2018

Re: Application by Kildare County Council to URDF – Newbridge 1 (Cat B)

To whom it may concern,

I wish to confirm that Kildare County Council is fully committed to the regeneration of Newbridge town. The attached proposal seeks to address the area between St Conleth's Park, around the newly restored Town Hall, the pedestrianised Georges Street, Market Square, and down to the library building.

This proposal compliments the proposed refurbishment of the Riverbank Theatre and Arts Centre and will culminate in the creation of a cultural quarter in Newbridge of both Regional and National importance; appealing to our rich heritage on many levels.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Carey
Chief Executive

f /KildareCountyCouncil

@KildareCoCo

subscribe to rss feeds via our website

Comhairle Contae Chill Dara, Áras Chill Dara, Páirc Uí Dhubhúil, An Nás, Co. Chill Dara, W91 X77F.

Kildare County Council, Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X77F.

T 045 980200 • F 045 980240 • E customercare@kildarecoco.ie • www.kildarecountycouncil.ie

Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Chief Executive Office

URDF,
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local
Government
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

19th September 2018

Re: Application by Kildare County Council to URDF – Newbridge 1 (Cat B)

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I wish to confirm that Kildare County Council has sufficient funds available to commit to providing the match funding in respect of the above proposal and as set out in the attached application.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Carey
Chief Executive

f /KildareCountyCouncil

@KildareCoCo

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Comhairle Contae Chill Dara, Áras Chill Dara, Páirc Uí Dhubhúil, An Nás, Co. Chill Dara, W91 X77F.

Kildare County Council, Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X77F.

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Cumann Lúthchleas Gael

Coiste Chontae Chill Dara

Oifig CLG Cill Dara

Hawkfield Centre of Excellence

Milltown Road, Newbridge Co. Kildare

Tel: 045 431894

E Mail: kildaregaa@gmail.com

Web: www.kildaregaa.ie

URDF,
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local
Government
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

25th September 2018

Re: Application by Kildare County Council to URDF – Newbridge 1 (Cat B)

Public Realm Regeneration and Cultural Quarter

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I wish to confirm that Kildare GAA fully supports the above application by Kildare County Council.

I further wish to confirm that the Kildare GAA is committed to a collaborative partnership with Kildare County Council in the successful delivery of this project.

Our collaboration on this project will be of substantial social, cultural, educational, and economic benefit not only to Newbridge but to the Region also.

Yours sincerely,

Cormac O Giardubháin
Bainisteoir Oibríochtaí
CLG Cill Dara
Mobile: 087-6655661
Office: 045-430602



**County Kildare
Chamber**
Advancing business together

URDF,
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

24th September 2018

Re: Application by Kildare County Council to URDF – Newbridge

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I wish to confirm that County Kildare Chamber fully supports the above application by Kildare County Council.

I further wish to confirm that County Kildare Chamber is committed to a collaborative partnership with Kildare County Council in the successful delivery of this project.

Our collaboration on this project will be of substantial social, cultural, educational, and economic benefit not only to Newbridge but to the region also.

County Kildare Chamber represents 380 businesses in Kildare who in turn employ 37,000 employees.

Newbridge is a vital component of the economy in Kildare. Newbridge is a major growth town in Kildare and the re development of the town is crucial to the continued success we enjoy in Kildare.

Yours sincerely,

Allan Shine
Chief Executive Officer
County Kildare Chamber
Sallins Road, Naas, Co. Kildare



URDF,
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local
Government
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

Newbridge Tidy Towns Association
c/o 10 Connell Drive
Newbridge
Co. Kildare

24th September 2018

**Re: Application by Kildare County Council to URDF – Newbridge 1 (Cat B)
Public Realm Regeneration and Cultural Quarter**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I wish to confirm that Newbridge Tidy Towns Association fully supports the above application by Kildare County Council.

I further wish to confirm that Newbridge Tidy Towns Association is committed to a collaborative partnership with Kildare County Council in the successful delivery of this project.

Our collaboration on this project will be of substantial social, cultural, educational, and economic benefit not only to Newbridge but to the broader community also.

Yours sincerely,


Evonne Boland

Chairperson
Newbridge Tidy Towns Association

URDF
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local
Government
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

25th September 2018

**Re: Application by Kildare County Council to URDF – Newbridge 1 (Cat B)
Public Realm Regeneration and Cultural Quarter**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I wish to confirm that the Riverbank Arts Centre fully supports the above application by Kildare County Council.

I further wish to confirm that the Riverbank Arts Centre is committed to a collaborative partnership with Kildare County Council in the successful delivery of this project.

Our collaboration on this project and that of the redevelopment of the Riverbank Arts Centre will be of substantial social, cultural, educational, and economic benefit not only to Newbridge but to the broader community also.

Yours sincerely,



**Alex Rosiak
Acting Venue Director**

Riverbank Arts Centre
Main Street, Newbridge, Co.Kildare
Direct Phone: 045 448319 Email: alex@riverbank.ie Website: www.riverbank.ie

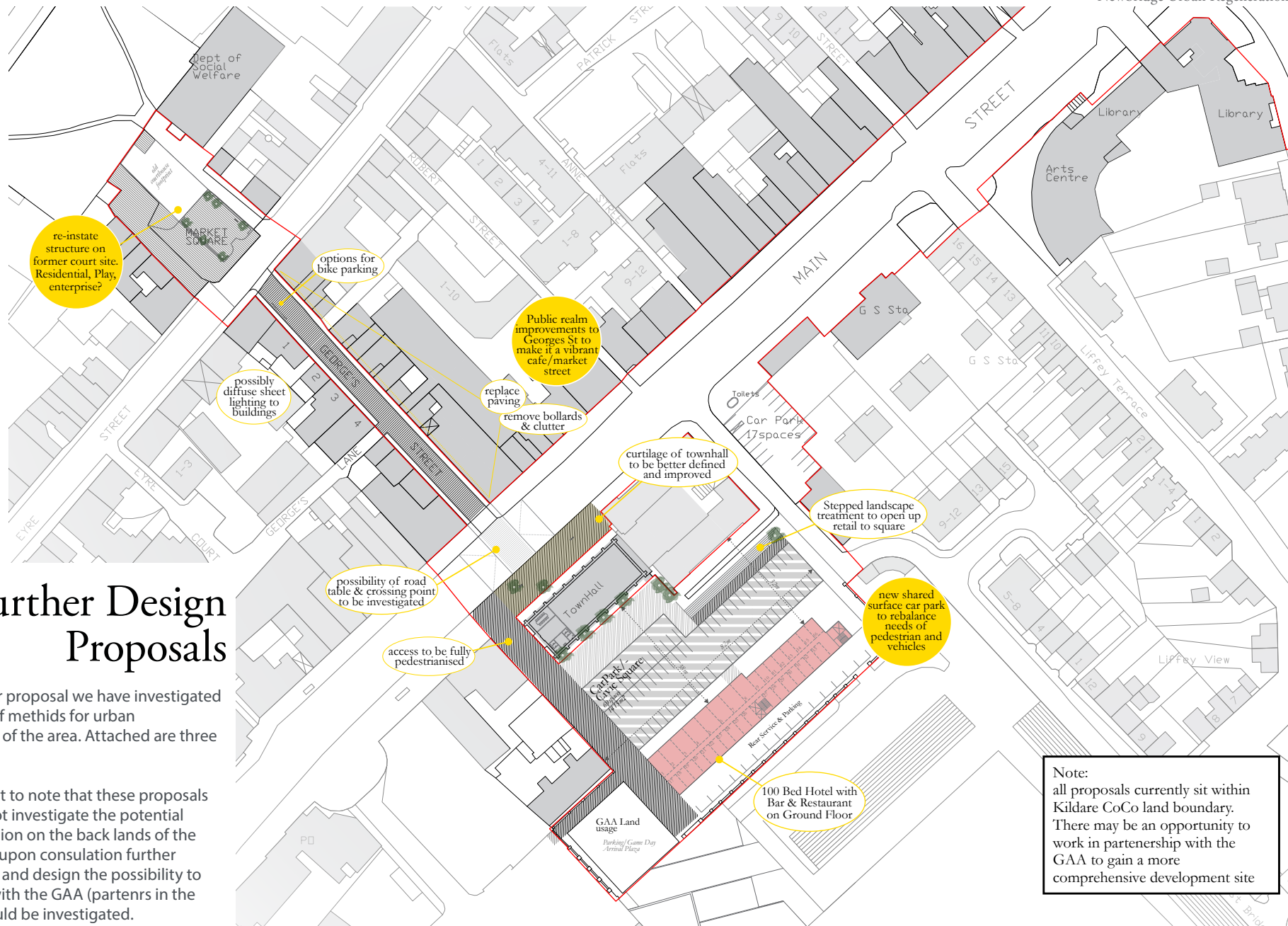
Riverbank Arts Centre, Main Street, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
Phone: 045 448327 | Email: info@riverbank.ie | Website: www.riverbank.ie

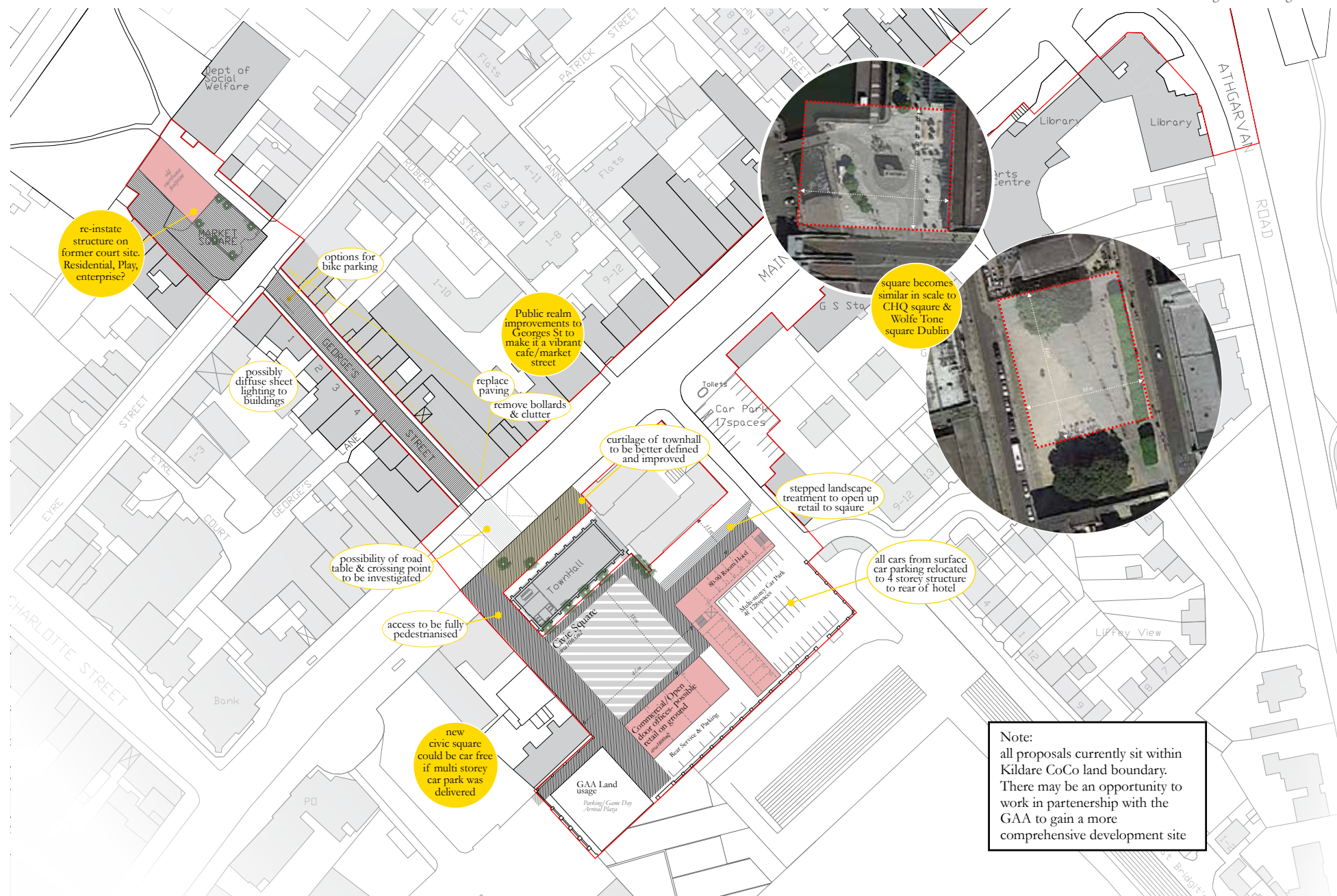
Riverbank Arts Centre acknowledges the financial support of the Arts Council and Kildare County Council
Riverbank Arts Centre CLG is a registered Charity (20074982) with Revenue Commissioners (CHY 19193)
Partnership Supporting Documents

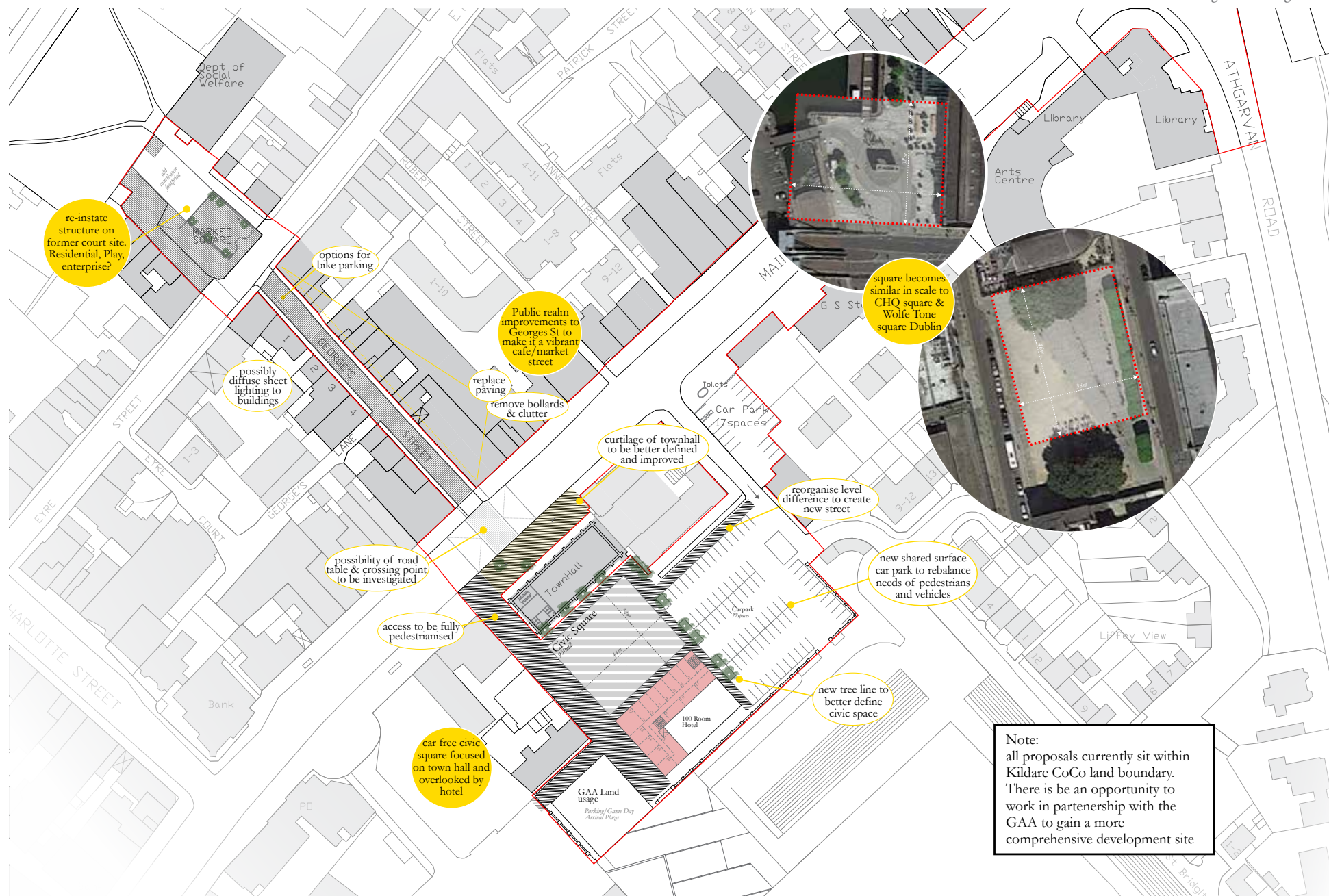
Further Design Proposals

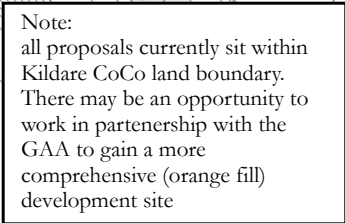
As part of our proposal we have investigated a number of methods for urban regeneration of the area. Attached are three iterations.

It is important to note that these proposals initially do not investigate the potential for collaboration on the back lands of the GAA site but upon consultation further investigation and design the possibility to collaborate with the GAA (partners in the proposal) could be investigated.









Kildare CoCo Library Proposal

A CENTRAL LIBRARY FOR COUNTY KILDARE INCORPORATING ARCHIVAL, RESEARCH, GENEALOGY, LOCAL HISTORY AND CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY SPACE

1. Introduction

Population Growth in County Kildare

Kildare is a significant population base within the State. Census 2016 outlines that the total population within Kildare was **222,504**. This represents 4.7% of the State total (4.76 million), 9.5% of the Eastern & Midlands Regional Assembly (2.32 million) and 32.2% of the Eastern Strategic Planning Area (SPS) (688,857). Kildare as a County has the fifth highest population in the State with only Dublin City, Cork County, Fingal and South Dublin with higher populations.

Kildare has a rapidly growing population. Over a 20 year period (1996 – 2016) Kildare experienced a 64.8% (+87,512) increase in its population base – the second highest in the State. The more recent growth rate (2006 – 2016) of 19.4% is the fourth highest in the State. This is explained by high levels of natural increase (birth rate) and a strong performance in estimated net migration. In comparison growth rates between 2011 and 2016 have been much slower for all areas across the country. During this period Kildare increased its population by 5.8% - the third highest rate of all local authorities.

Kildare has the highest rate of young people aged 0 to 24 years in the State. According to the 2016 Census, the population aged 0 to 24 years residing in Kildare was 81,517 and represents 3.6.6% of the total population – the highest in the State.

Kildare has high levels of child and youth dependency. Over 28% of Kildare's population is aged 0 – 18 years – the 3rd highest rate of all local authorities in Ireland. Given the size and significance of Kildare's existing population cohorts in the 0 – 4, 5- 12 and 13- 17 age ranges, it is evident that the profile of the County's population has not yet peaked and that there is likely to be an increased demand for children's and young people's services over the next decade. For instance the number of secondary school population (13 – 17 years) residing in Kildare has increased by 17.5% in the last five years.

The population of Newbridge returned at **22,742** in the 2016 Census seeing a 5,615 increase since 2011 and the Municipal District of Kildare/Newbridge has a population of 52,718. Construction of new houses in Kildare exceeded the State average. In the period since the 2011 Census 1,739 or 2.4% of all housing in Kildare was constructed. 18.2% of all housing constructed were in the Kildare/Newbridge MD. Forecasting the scale of growth into the future is laden with complexities particularly in relation to in-migration and fertility trends. However given a continuation of recent demographic trends combined with the influence of the proximity to the Capital City and by the National Spatial Strategy/Regional Planning Guidelines this County's population is likely to reach 250,000 by 2021 (Rural-Urban Dynamics in Kildare:Socio-economic patterns and trends, Kildare County Development Board, 2006).

This current demographic reality presents a picture of urban-rural complexities in a fast changing cultural environment. The County is part of the Greater Dublin Area yet conversely, much of the County boundary is shared with Counties that are part of the objective One BMW region. The North East is influenced heavily by its proximity to Dublin while the West and South is more rural.

1.2 The Case for a Central Library for County Kildare

Kildare County Council is one of the key public agencies charged with civic leadership and cultural/community development "To ensure that County Kildare is an attractive place to live and work by building strong inclusive communities that have a sense of place and belonging. This will be supported by the provision of accessible community based facilities from which services and supports can be provided." (Kildare County Development Plan, 2017-2023: p239).

The development of a Central Library for the County has been identified as a key strategy in order to provide an inclusive cultural, economic and educational service and a force for social/cultural cohesion that societies need (Ideas Realised – Spreading the Word, Kildare Library Services Development Plan, Kildare County Council, 2014 - 2019: p32).

This correlates with the vision of the national strategy which states that delivering 'a progressive library service that meets the expectations of users requires library buildings that are fit-for-purpose and reflect the quality of services being delivered.

It is important that library buildings have the appropriate space and layout to accommodate the full range of facilities, equipment and technologies required to underpin library services and support all types of users.' ('Our Public Libraries 2022: Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities': p33). A modern and well-resourced public library contributes to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of communities.

The public library is a curator of memory and is responsible for creating, storing and sharing local culture and historical records. The National Library Strategy includes a national programme to enhance digital access to Local Studies collections. The extensive storage facilities and new technologies proposed in the County Library will enable Kildare Library Service to continue to enhance access to the physical and digital collections in Kildare Local Studies, Genealogy and County Archives collections both in traditional format and in digital platforms.

1.3 Central Library as Key Intervention in County Strategy

Developing a coherent identity for Kildare is seen by Council as central to the promotion of quality of life. The Central library, through its collections and professional expertise will establish an accessible dynamic centre for the promotion of cultural continuity and cohesion.

The Central Library concept responds directly to this context as a trusted space, integrated into the local community and accessible to all which supports and facilitates education and skills development and provides access to ideas, information, knowledge, life options and opportunities. The public library movement has emerged from an ethos that is about underpinning democracy by providing citizens with a public well-spring of ideas and knowledge. As such it acts as a strategic publicly funded, non-prejudiced force for active citizenship. The Central Library concept is poised to be a critical intervention in the cultural, economic and social life of County Kildare, at a time when National and Local Government is concerned about civic leadership and engagement, promoting economic growth, positive community relations and healthy sustainable communities.

1.4 Central Library as Key Intervention in National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 Our Plan

The vision and strategy set out in Ireland 2040 is based on a set of values that will ensure Ireland's long term economic, environmental and social progress for all

parts of our country that is supported by a series of National Policy Objectives and will be aligned with the Government's ten year National Investment Plan.

The development of a County Library facility responds to key elements of the Ireland 2040 Vision for 'a fair society with strong social cohesion'. It will provide access to services that will support 'the highest quality of life for our people and communities' and it will help to support the development of 'a creative, innovative and culturally attuned society' (Ireland 2040 Our Plan). The proposed County Library will be a key civic resource within Kildare which supports community life and individual and group self-development. It will provide a trusted welcoming civic space for informal and formal meetings, access to leading edge digital technologies, access to the recorded historic and cultural heritage of the County and a wide range of resources and services for work, leisure, learning and creativity.

2. Proposed Central Library Services

Kildare County Council proposes to construct a high quality building incorporating the best in library design of 2,340 sq metres of accessible, welcoming and free cultural space in Newbridge. Physical access into and throughout the building will be of the highest standards and will be informed by the Council's ongoing learning from its engagement with the disability sectors both statutory and voluntary. The project will combine the architectural heritage value of the original strategically located, Local Studies Library on the main street with new contemporary architecture. This new cultural and civic quarter will be further enhanced by being situated in the grounds of Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare Library and Arts Service Headquarters and adjacent to Newbridge Linear Park.

The building design itself and its immediate external context will present a landmark statement about the importance of quality cultural space and resources and the role it will play in the life of the County. It will also mark the civic/cultural/economic regeneration of the town of Newbridge providing services and opportunities which sustain and nourish community cultural living. Cultural consciousness and participation will be promoted through community led services, resources and spaces focused appropriately in the areas of:

Recorded heritage of the County**Children's and young people's library****Leisure and community living library****Digital Learning Centre and Innovation Space****Work Matters: Business and Employment Support Services**

Multipurpose spaces dedicated to interpreting/exploring life through exhibition, workshop, lectures and discussion.

The schedule of accommodation, (Appendix 1) outlines the space allocations.

These zones reflect the key strategic programmes named in ('Our Public Libraries 2022, 2018: Pg 20), and address the three overarching national policy themes for the strategy – Reading and Literacy, Learning and Information and Community and Culture.

2.1 Access to the recorded heritage of the County through the Council's Special Collections including the County Archive and Local Studies collections as well as Genealogy resources. The facility will provide generous space for the appropriate storage of valuable material requiring special environmental conditions. The facility will accommodate a research and discovery reading space which will allow group and individual access to the unique County archival and local studies collection.

2.2 Interpretation of the County's heritage.

The second floor will include a multi-purpose area which will accommodate exhibitions, promotions and educational programming based on the special collections. This space will focus on presenting aspects of the County's heritage as a means of exploring the rich history and traditions of our County and exploring and enriching our identity and sense of place. The area will support cultural tourism and individuals in their pursuit of tracing their identity and ancestry.

2.3 Imagining and making sense of the world: children and young people's library.

The ground floor will accommodate resources and spaces focused on promoting reading and literacy development, imagination, creativity and confidence. Introducing children and young people to the world of knowledge, ideas, science

and technologies will be the priority thus balancing the development of technology literacies with reading and imaginative development as well as information filtering skills.

2.4 Leisure and community living library.

The ground floor as well as accommodating the digital learning centre will also provide a broad range of literature and imaginative works. Subjects and themes will range from philosophy, poetry, and personal development to music and art, gardening and travel and across a multitude of hobbies and interests reflecting the diversity and differences in the County's demography. This space will also accommodate an Irish language collection.

2.5. Digital Learning Centre and Innovation Space

Bridging the digital divide is a priority of the National Digital Strategy (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Doing More with Digital, National Digital Strategy for Ireland, 2013). The County Library will act as an important enabler of digital services and facilitator of digital skills development bridging the divide between the digital native and digital learner.

The Digital Learning Centre and Innovation Space will provide an environment for the community to come together to learn, work and create in a collaborative way. Equipped with the latest technologies the Central Library will provide a space for users to experiment and innovate providing access to 3D design, printing, web and graphic design, computer coding, circuit making and game design. The digital learning centre will also offer spaces for internet access and computer skills classes.

2.6 Work Matters: Business and Employment Support Services

The first floor will be a dedicated branded space with computers, broadband, Wi-fi, printing and scanning facilities, bookstock and online resources, space for events and programming on business and work related topics and information and resources aimed at supporting those engaged in further studies, job-seeking, re-skilling, enterprise and business creation.

2.7 Community and Culture: Exhibition and Workshop Spaces

The multipurpose space on the ground floor will also be designed for people of all backgrounds and abilities to meet and share ideas in an informal welcoming environment. This space will play a vital role in extending and deepening the range of meeting/relating opportunities provided by the Central Library and County Arts Centre. Programmed events for the space will also be influenced by national strategic programmes including Creative Ireland, the Right to Read initiative and Healthy Ireland at Your Library and award winning local programmes such as Toys, Technology and Training and Support to Secondary Schools Programme.

2.8 Anticipated Usage of the Facility

Given the Central location and range of services offered the library will have the ability to attract up to 400,000 visitors per year.

2.9 Relocation Strategy

During the demolition and construction phases of the project, the Library Service proposes to rent a unit in Whitewater Shopping centre. This temporary location can also act as a promotional vehicle and act as a stimulus for engagement with existing and potentially new clients.

3. The Case for Newbridge as the Ideal Location

3.1 Newbridge: Historical context

Newbridge town developed at a fording point on the left bank of the river Liffey. It is a relatively modern town with the first bridge probably built at the beginning of the eighteenth century. (No bridge is indicated on the Down Survey map of 1655). Moll's map of Kildare (1728) and subsequent maps mark the bridge. There are however, two important roads from the Christian era close to the town. The area is also rich in Celtic mounds, Norman moats and Christian sites. On the edge of the town one of the five great roads that led from Tara to the seats of the kings of the other provinces crossed the river Liffey at the ford of Athgarvan.

The main town settlement probably dates from the establishment of a cavalry barracks in 1816. In 1837, the town consisted of a single street (the present main street) with a line of buildings on the north side and the barracks on the south side.

The population at the time was 792 but Lewis in his Topographical Dictionary commented that "it is yet in it's infancy, and there is every prospect of it's increase".

The decline of the military presence in the town brought a long period of stasis. However, in 1933, the foundation of the Rope factory brought some prosperity to the town. This was followed in 1935 by the establishment of a second factory on the barracks site which manufactured cutlery and began the town's historic association with quality cutlery. A third factory, making files and hacksaws was established in 1947. Newbridge Cutlery and Newbridge Jewellery are both now internationally known firms in terms of quality design. The town is now an important service centre for the bloodstock industry and is also the headquarters of Bord na Mona which was established in 1947. More recent developments include Whitewater Shopping Centre which has placed Newbridge as a key commercial town Kildare and Pfizer, a leading pharmaceutical company.

3.2 Proposed site for new library

The proposed site as identified by Kildare County Council for the new Central library development is the original County Library and existing prefabricated community library situated at the entrance of the commercial and community core of Newbridge town fronting onto the main street. The existing prefabricated community library has outlived its intended lifespan and requires urgent attention.

The property is in the ownership of Kildare County Council. The Council sees this development as a major impetus for the regeneration of the entrance to the town centre seeding further developments in the public and private sectors.

The site and town present a very high-profile location and context for this most significant cultural/social and economic development signifying the Council's commitment to heritage, imagination, creativity, knowledge, learning, ideas, and human development and growth.

3.3 Building on Existing Synergies

The Council operates an integrated Library and Arts Service which has initiated a wide range of cultural programmes throughout the County. A key part of the Library and Arts Strategy was the development of Riverbank, the Library Headquarters

and County Arts Centre at Newbridge incorporating Library support systems for the County network, a 180 seat theatre, two galleries and restaurant. The site also currently accommodates the County Archive, Local studies and genealogy service and Newbridge Community Library.

Riverbank Arts Centre is currently the recipient of Dept. of Arts Culture and the Gaeltacht capital grant aid which will greatly enhance seating capacity and theatre space. The Central library development joined to Riverbank provides an excellent opportunity to create a Cultural Quarter consolidating the collections, programmes, services and diverse professional expertise within the Library, Cultural and Arts Services sector.

3.4 Newbridge: National and Regional Context

Newbridge is located 36 km south west of Dublin on the M7 and is at the geographic heart of the County. The National Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area designated Naas-Newbridge-Kilcullen as a “self contained regional centre in it's own right”. (Kildare County Council, Newbridge Local Area Plan: p.2). As a ‘primary dynamic cluster’ the three towns and hinterlands are poised to become a polycentric urban development area providing a counterbalance to the Dublin Metropolitan area for “employment, service provision and recreational facilities”. (Rural-Urban Dynamics in Kildare: Socio-economic patterns and trends, 2006). The area is served by an excellent road infrastructure enhanced by the recent completions of Kildare and Monasterevin bypasses.

Enhancements in national road infrastructure are complimented by significant improvements in local transport infrastructure. This includes cross-radial connections by bus to Newbridge from surrounding villages and towns as well as increased frequency of services to Dublin. The town is also located on a main national rail line. It is one of the highest score areas for transport in the County. These improvements are set to be consolidated as indicated by the National Development Plan and Dublin Transportation Office and now planned as part of the ‘Kildare Route Project’ by Iarnrod Eireann with increasing frequency of commuter and other services along the key Kildare to Heuston corridor.

The town's regional significance as a strong industrial/services/retail centre has been as already mentioned been further enhanced with the opening of the prestigious Whitewater retail centre. This facility incorporates Irish and international fashion and lifestyle outlets together with dining and entertainment facilities. It is the largest shopping centre in Ireland outside of Dublin at over 30,000 square metres. The Whitewater development is located within three minutes walk from the proposed Central library.

4. Nature and extent of existing service

4.1 Current community library

Kildare County Council has long since prioritised the development of new community library facilities in Newbridge.

The current public library facility in Newbridge was constructed in the late 1970s. It is a pre-cast structure with a flat felt roof and consists of approximately 550 sq metres of space divided between public access areas (350 sq metres) and office accommodation. The condition of this temporary structure has deteriorated over the last few years and is now in a very poor condition and is dated and unattractive. The design, amount and layout of space seriously restrict the delivery of modern library services. Accessibility both externally and internally is also poor. The nature of the space also severely restricts the extent to which access to technology, public internet services and digital learning opportunities can be provided.

The building cannot accommodate space for cultural/educational events and programmes except on a very limited basis. The library opens for 22.5 hours each week including one late night opening and each Saturday. In addition it also has 9 hours scheduled time for class visits, classes and programmed events. Membership at 4,627 is relatively lower than membership of other libraries in the County at only 23%. The number of items issued in 2017 was 42,088 which is also lower than other libraries in the County. The current operating environment which is dated and in poor condition, is not conducive to the functioning of a modern library service.

However, those libraries where membership, issues and general usage is higher are also libraries where amount and quality of space and resources are of a

significantly higher quality. The recently opened Athy Community Library is testimony to the fact that by providing a quality library facility the community will engage and harness the potential of a modern service. Activity in Athy is set to increase fourfold in the first year of operation.

Our Public Libraries 2022, The National Public Library Strategy (2018, p.18) states that 'in order to exploit the potential of our libraries and to provide a service that meets the needs of all users they will require library buildings that are fit for purpose and reflect the quality of services on offer, a library service with no barriers to access and use and libraries with the technological capacity to deliver services and resources demanded by a modern society.

Given the population projections for Newbridge and the complex cultural educational and informational needs already outlined, there is an urgent requirement for a substantially bigger and appropriately designed modern Central Library that can provide access to technology and resources and provide a welcoming modern space where people can reflect, connect and learn.

4.2 Current Archive, Local Studies and Genealogy Services

Current facilities for archive, local studies and genealogy services are provided at the old County Library Headquarters building. This space is insufficient to house current collections and is not sufficiently accessible. Consequently material is housed in a number of locations throughout the County which severely restricts access and good management. These collections are highly significant records of the County's heritage and urgently need appropriate accommodation as well as space for their interpretation and exhibition. The appointment of a professional librarian, an Archivist and a Genealogist means that with appropriate accommodation and enhanced opening hours the full potential of the collections can begin to be realised and maximised as an inherent part of the County's cultural life.

5. Conclusion

As one of the three fastest growing counties in Leinster with a predicted population of 250,000 by 2021 it is timely to develop a Central Library facility of high quality

architectural design and modern range of resources and spaces. The Central Library will be a key cultural catalyst within the County's overall development strategy located in the geographic heart of the County and on the high street of its second largest town with good transport services and in a polycentric urban development context.

The Central Library will act as a force for social inclusion given its ability to act as a bridge between the urban contexts of the North and Centre and more rural communities of the South and West.

Kildare County Council is committed to counterbalancing economic, commercial and residential growth with investment in cultural, environmental and civic development. The Central Library is seen as a major Countywide landmark in the provision of such infrastructure.

The proposed site is wholly owned by Kildare County Council and is positioned to provide a fitting context for the nature of the building and services proposed.

Finally Kildare County Council sees libraries and the opportunities they provide as a means of improving the quality of life of the County's citizens of all ages. Council is particularly conscious of the need for a Central Library in order to significantly increase access to information, knowledge, ideas and opportunities and also to enhance access to the recorded heritage of the County at a time of unprecedented social and economic challenge.

