

# Planning Report and Statement of Consistency

Improvements to Public Realm to Bridge Street and lands  
to the rear and side of The Grain Store, John's Street, New  
Ross, Wexford

Prepared on behalf of

Wexford County Council

*February 2026*



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

This planning report was prepared by MacCabe Durney Barnes on behalf of Wexford County Council in respect of proposed improvements to the Public Realm at Bridge Street and lands to the rear and side of The Grain Store, John's Street, New Ross, Wexford (A Protected Structure – RPS No. NR0143 – NIAH No. 15605016).

Pursuant to Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, as amended, Local Authorities or Local Authorities in partnership another party shall apply to An Coimisiún Pleanála to undertake development where it requires a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The Coimisiún is therefore the competent authority and may approve the development with or without modifications or refuse to approve. This report has been prepared to accompany the application to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

An Coimisiún Pleanála's Guidance Note<sup>1</sup> provides procedural advice in relation to submission of proposals for local authority developments under s.177AE (relating to appropriate assessment (AA) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended).

When considering a proposal under section 177AE, An Coimisiún Pleanála must have regard to:

- the likely effects on the environment of the proposed development,
- the likely consequences for proper planning and sustainable development in the area in which it is proposed to situate the development, and
- the likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European site

This report has been prepared to address the likely consequences for proper planning and sustainable development in the area in which it is proposed to situate the development, which must have regard to the following:

- Justification for the project;
- Main Development Plan provisions relating to the subject site and surrounding area including any relevant Core Strategy provisions;
- Relevant planning history relating to the subject site and the surrounding area;
- Relevant national, regional and local policies; and
- Description of use of adjoining, abutting or adjacent lands.

## 1.2 Background to the Development

The development seeks to provide for improvements to the Public Realm and pedestrian environment and improve permeability in the area behind an urban block bounded by John Street, Bridge Street and the River Barrow to the west, in central New Ross. The public realm works will activate and connect further sections of the river frontage which currently are underutilised and inaccessible to the public.

The proposed development seeks to complement the recently approved Part 8 development for the renovation and extension to the Grain Store building on John Street. The core aim of this proposal is to breathe new life into this section of New Ross and the town centre generally. The plaza and new connections

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<sup>1</sup> An Coimisiún Pleanála Applications for approval for Local Authority Developments made to An Bord Pleanála under 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended (Appropriate Assessment) Guidelines for Local Authorities ([www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie))

aim to attract the local community as well as visitors to use the space, pass through it and function as a catalyst for further development in the immediate area of New Ross.

### 1.3 Structure of the Planning Report

This planning statement is structured as follows:

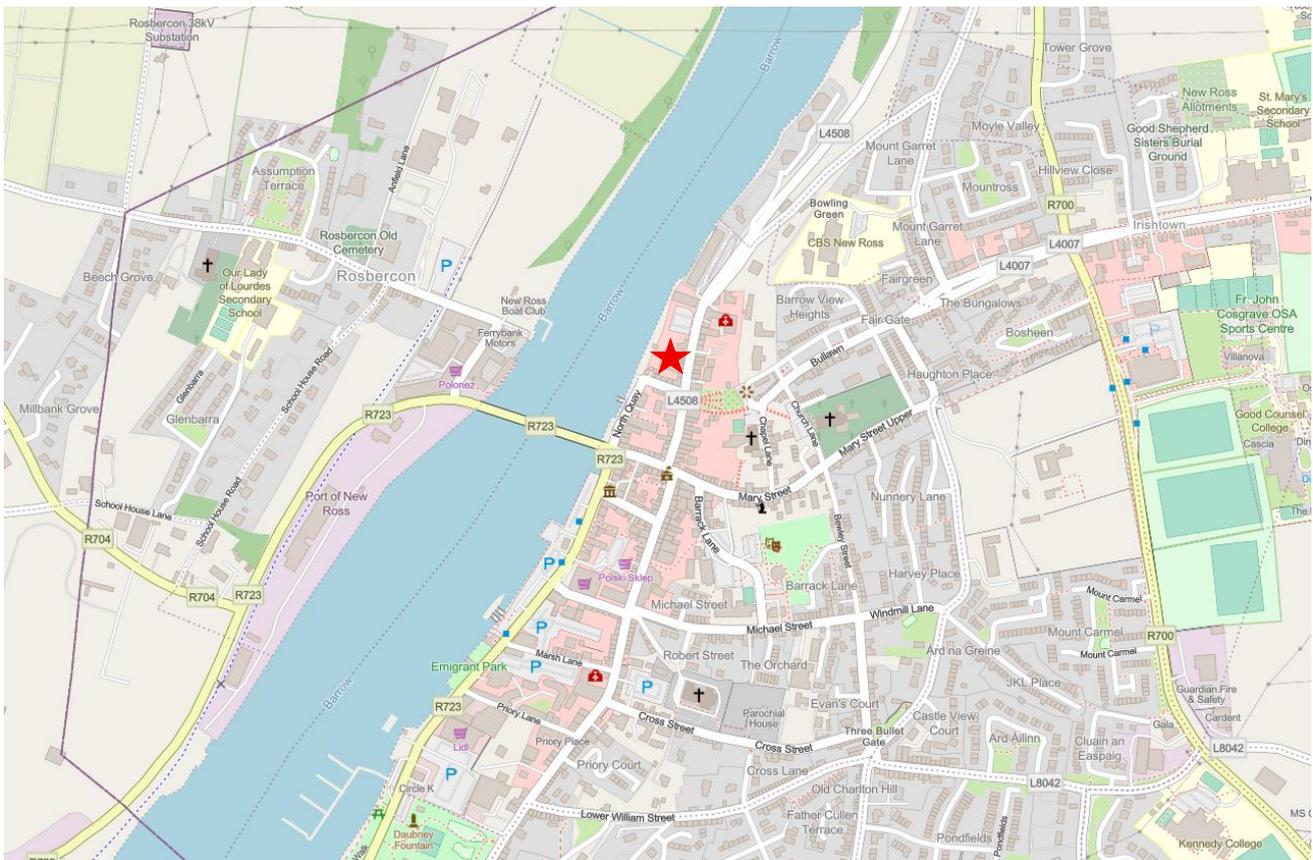
- It provides a description of the site and surrounding area, and of the proposed development.
- It outlines how the development complies with:
  - National policy
  - Regional policy; and
  - Local policy.

It gives an overview of relevant environmental matters, including ecology, environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment.

## 2. SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

### 2.1 Site Location

The site is located in the historic town centre of New Ross, County Wexford bounding the eastern bank of the River Barrow.



**Figure 1: Proposed Development Site at John St., New Ross (Source: OpenStreet maps, ArcGIS)**

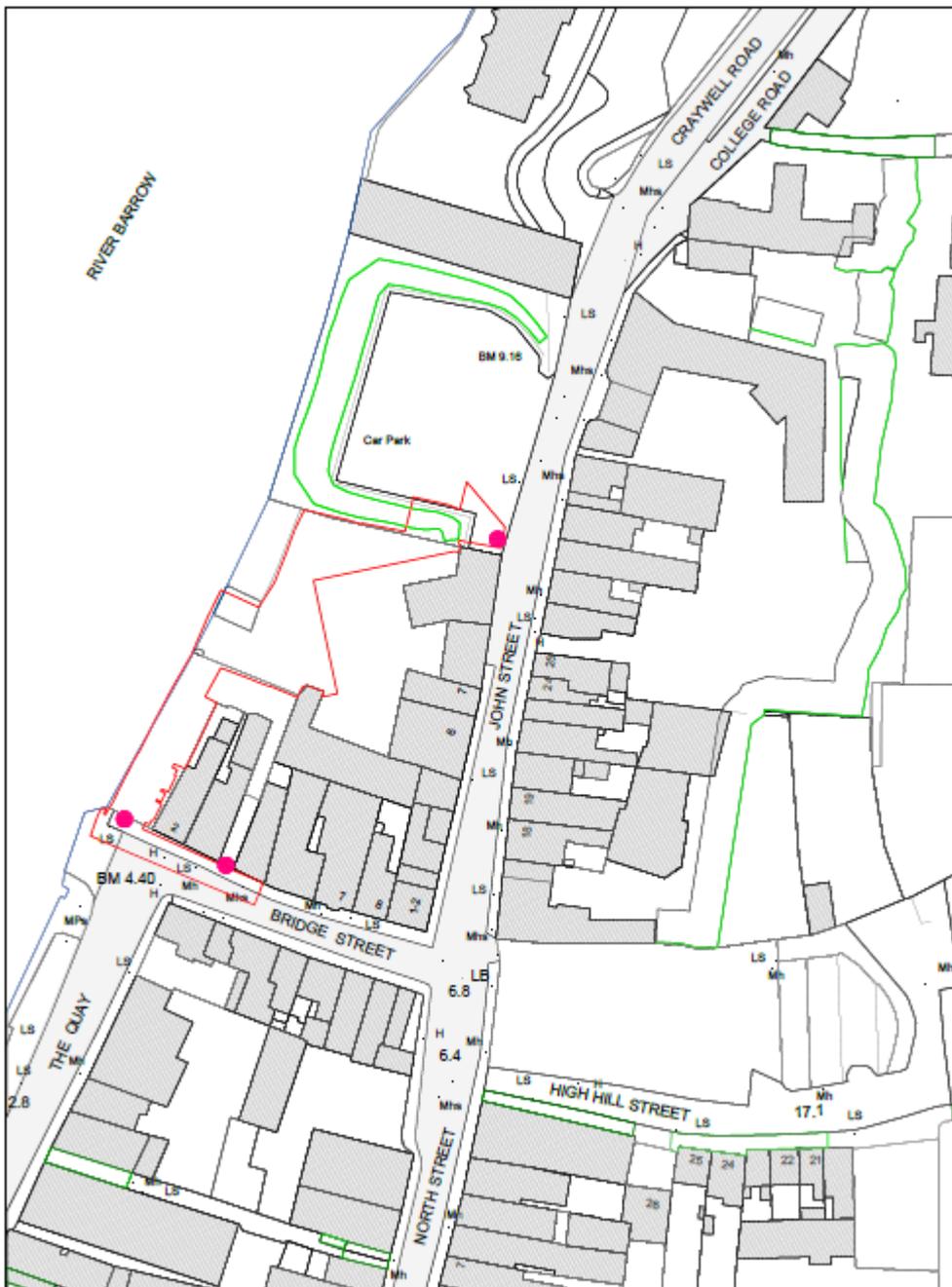


Figure 2: Proposed Development Site at John Street, New Ross (Aerial View) (Source: ODKM Architects)

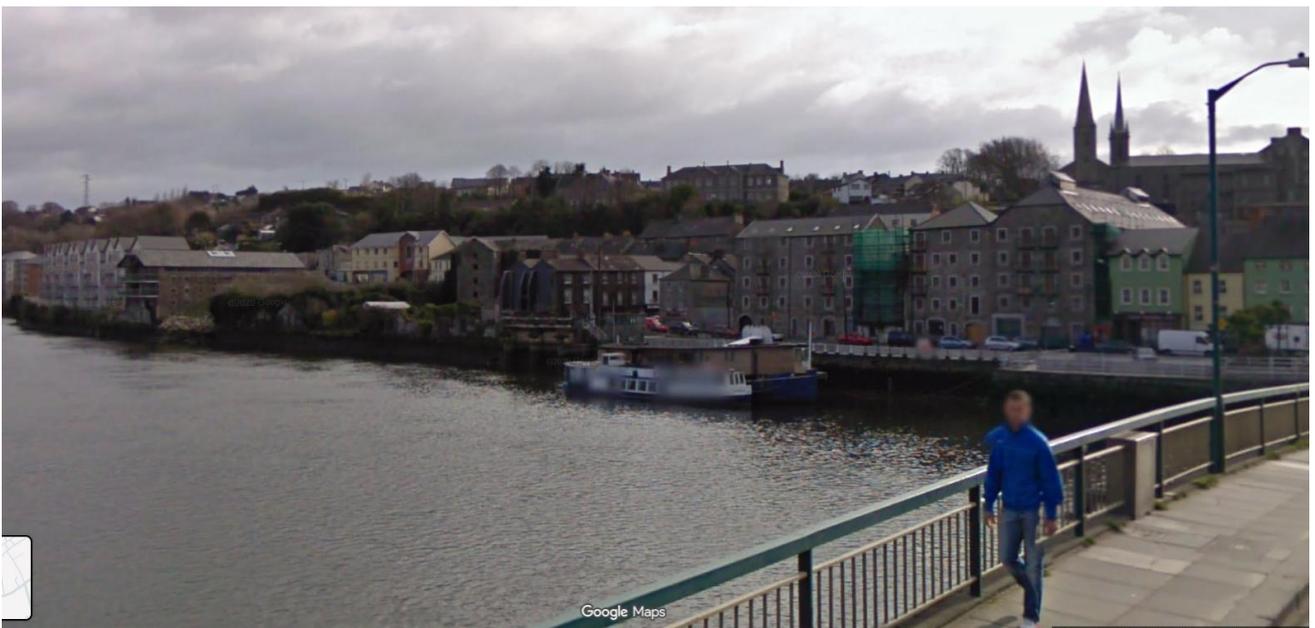
## 2.2 Site Description and Visual Context

Views of the subject site are illustrated in the Figures below. The landscape character of the area is dominated by the River Barrow and the steep topography of the town, which falls down towards the quays. North Quay provides an elegant traditional warehouse edge to the river and visual cornerstone to the town. The visual and physical extension of North Quay will support a more coherent river edge.

The High Hill Norman Park and Gardens are recently opened, serving as a connecting pathway between the quays (Dunbrody Famine Ship Experience and Ros Tapestry) and the 13th century St Mary’s Church. The park features an “arrival plaza,” offering ample seating and space for social interaction and outdoor events. There is a clear potential for interaction between the proposed public realm at Bridge Street/John Street and this dramatic terrace landscape feature.



**Figure 3 Aerial View of site showing hard surface and car parking to rear and connection to High Hill Norman Park to the east (opened 2022) (source: Google Maps)**



**Figure 4 View of North Quay and subject site from bridge. (source: Google Maps)**



Figure 5 View of the end of Bridge Street from North Quay (source: Google Maps)



Figure 6 View down Bridge Street towards river showing fall in levels (source: Google Maps)

## 2.3 Population

The New Ross Town Centres First Report (2023)<sup>2</sup> notes there has been low growth in the population in the town centre.

Table 1 shows that the population of New Ross as a whole has been increasing steadily since 1996 with the exception of 2011-2016 when growth rates slowed for many rural towns. The Electoral Division (ED) of New Ross Urban, which includes much of the town, including the town centre and the built area of Rosbercon, has declined in population, but for a modest increase reported in the latest Census. By comparison, a significant increase in population was experienced between 2002-2006 in the outskirts of the town in the ED of New Ross Rural, albeit from a relatively low base. The ED of New Ross Rural surrounds that of the Urban ED to the east of the river and includes a large rural hinterland as well as some of the town’s suburbs. Rosbercon ED is located to the west and is predominantly rural. The CSO also provides population data for the “settlement” of New Ross which, as of the latest Census data for 2022, consisted of 8,610 persons. The settlement boundary includes Rosbercon. However, the CSO changed the definition of the town at this time so that the 2016 figure of 8,040 is not directly comparable. The population of the rural environs has therefore continued to increase since 2002, while that of the urban centre has declined.

**Table 1 Population change New Ross, 2002 - 2022**

Electoral Division	2002	2006	2011	2016	2022
New Ross Urban	4402	4034	3907	3768	3938
<i>Percent change</i>	<i>-4.9%</i>	<i>-8.4%</i>	<i>-3.1%</i>	<i>-3.6%</i>	<i>4.5%</i>
New Ross Rural	2052	3367	4014	3942	4178
<i>Percent change</i>	<i>44.6%</i>	<i>64.1%</i>	<i>19.2%</i>	<i>-1.8%</i>	<i>6.0%</i>
Total	6454	7401	7961	7710	8116
<i>Percent change</i>	<i>6.9%</i>	<i>14.7%</i>	<i>7.6%</i>	<i>-3.2%</i>	<i>5.3%</i>

County Wexford as a whole has experienced robust population growth. Between 2016 and 2022, the county's population increased by 9%, rising from 149,722 to 163,919. This growth outpaced the national average of 8% over the same period, with Ireland’s population rising from 4.76 million to 5.15 million. Wexford also saw a notable increase in its elderly population, with those aged 65 and over growing by 25%, compared to a 22% increase nationally. The county’s average age rose to 40 years, slightly above the national average of 38.8 years, indicating an aging demographic trend<sup>3</sup>.

The Town Centres First report further notes:

*The demographics indicate that New Ross is not so different from many other rural towns with evidence of a rather skewed population in the centre and some deprivation, being balanced by relative prosperity on the outskirts of the town. It does indicate that New Ross is missing some of the younger demographics, including people of an age with young families, which suggests that people may have left (or not moved in) due to employment opportunities elsewhere. New Ross also lacks a third level college and this is demonstrated by the fact that only a modest segment*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/sites/default/files/content/APPENDIX-B-Demographics-Business-Tourism.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2023pressreleases/pressstatementcensusofpopulation2022-summaryresultswexford/>

of the population falls within the 18-25 age range, potentially compounding the problem of there being rather little for young people to do as reported by many of the project meeting participants and survey respondents. However, the comparison with Gorey shows no extreme differences.

Figure 8 below illustrates land use in the vicinity of the subject site, based on Geodirectory (Myplan.ie). It illustrates that the streets in the vicinity of the subject site are generally commercial in character, along a relatively confined main street vicinity, surrounded by residential and institutional uses.

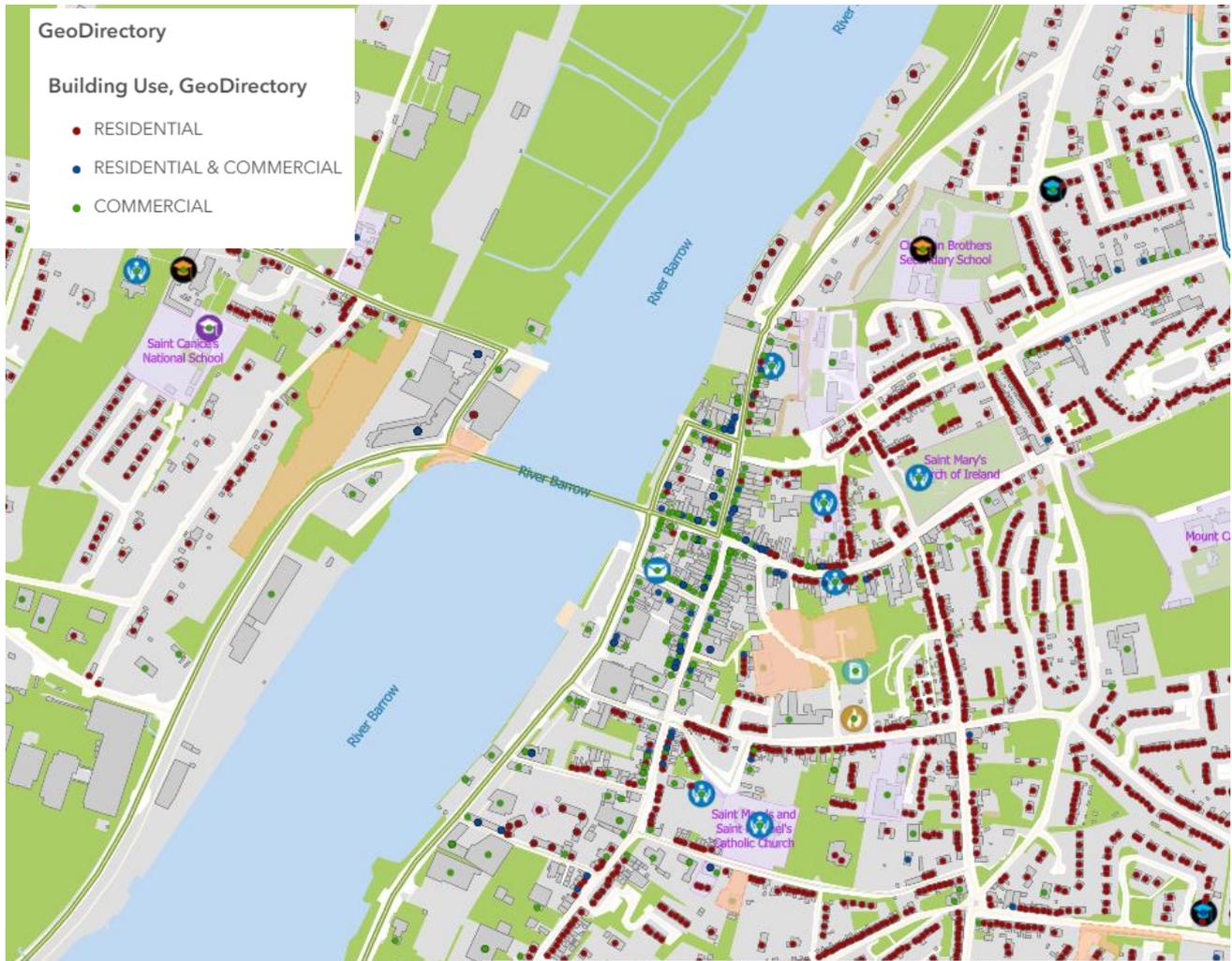


Figure 7 Land use in the vicinity of the project (Source: Geodirectory, LDA Maps)

## 2.4 Relevant Planning History

The following planning applications are noted.

Planning Reference	LAC2401 Part VIII - Local Authority Development
Applicant	Wexford Co. Co.
Location	The Grain Store, John Street, New Ross, Co. Wexford

<p>Description</p> <p>Decision Date</p> <p>Decision</p>	<p>(Alterations, Extensions &amp; External Works to The Grain Store, John Street, New Ross, Wexford (A PROTECTED STRUCTURE - RPS No. NR0143 - NIAH No. 15605016).</p> <p>05 Nov 2021</p> <p>30 April 2024</p> <p>Approved</p>
<p>Note:</p>	<p><i>The application cover letter notes:</i></p> <p><i>The Grain Store is highly visible, historic, and familiar. However, the existing building has been vacant for a number of years and while it underwent some remedial work circa 2010, it has fallen into further decay since those works were conducted. The core aim of this proposal is to breathe new life into the building, bring it back from the brink and celebrate it as the start of something new. It will be turned into a beautiful multifunctional space which attracts both the local community and visitors from afar to use it.</i></p> <p><i>A brief outline of the works are as follows.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Alterations to the existing building (including elements of the existing fabric) to bring the building into use as Offices, Community Room, Exhibition Space, Ancillary circulation, and staff/visitor facilities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Extensions to the building to provide new café/restaurant, kitchen &amp; services, and new lift shaft to connect all floors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Modest public realm improvement works to enhance the usability of the vacant yard and to provide connectivity and external facilities for the café/restaurant.</i></li> </ul>

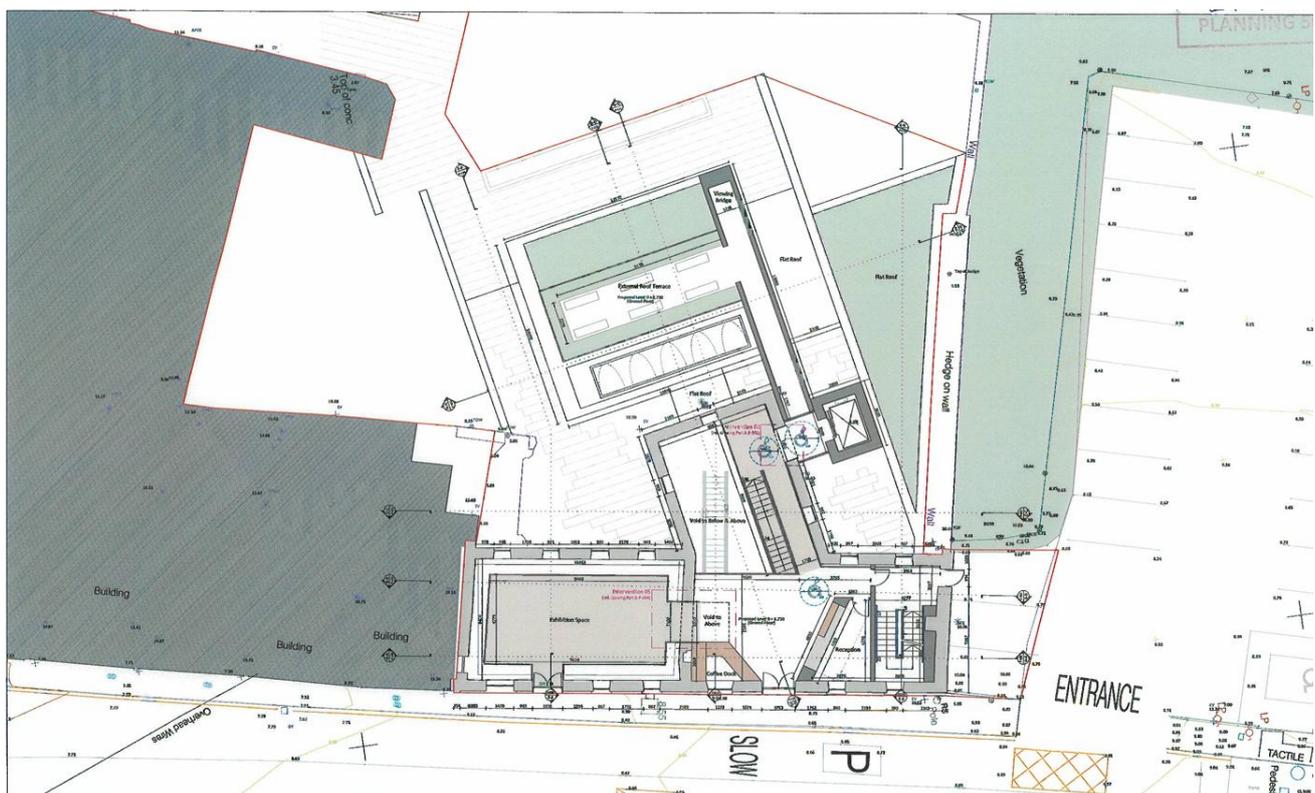


Figure 8 Ground floor layout plan for Grainstore redevelopment Approved Under Ref. LAC2401



Planning Reference	20211451
Applicant	Brendan Kavanagh.
Location	New Ross, New Ross Urban
Description	(1) Permission for the change of use of existing commercial premises with ancillary accommodation over, to separate commercial premises with 1 No.2 Bed apartment over with independent access (2) Permission to alter the front elevation to include a new access door to proposed commercial unit (3) Permission to demolish part of existing dilapidated rear extension to ground floor and all associated site works
Decision Date	05 Nov 2021
Decision	Granted subject to conditions
Note:	

## 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 Project Description

The proposed development comprises a public realm project for the construction of footpaths and shared surfaces. The description of works is as follows:

Improvements to Public Realm to Bridge Street and lands to the rear and side of The Grain Store, John's Street, New Ross, Wexford (A PROTECTED STRUCTURE – RPS No. NR0143 – NIAH No. 15605016)

- Relocating existing steps on Bridge Street to the east
- Removal of existing railings separating footpath and parking bays along Bridge Street and replacement with new solid guarding, planting and seating
- Removal of section of parking bays along Bridge Street to facilitate footpath widening to improve pedestrian connectivity
- Partial demolition of section of the wall between Bridge Street (abutting No.2 Bridge Street) to facilitate new connecting gently sloped pedestrian access route to new Plaza area in current yard. The new access route to be provided with solid guarding and walls with planting and seating
- Removal of existing concrete base alongside proposed new gently sloped pedestrian access route to provide soft landscaping at water edge
- Removal of roof and section of walls surrounding Open Storage
- Lowering stone wall between the yard area and the river and between proposed plaza and rear of properties on Bridge Street to 1100mm above ground level
- Removal of all redundant above ground and below ground services
- Demolition of Ground finishes (Part tarmac, part concrete) to the yard area to facilitate new public Plaza including hardscaping, soft landscaping and seating
- New tiered external stairs and landscaping from John Street to the Plaza level (on top of part of previously approved extension to The Grain Store, John's Street)
- Demolition of palisade fencing to the side of the building between John Street and Public car park and removal of 3 No. carparking spaces in John Street Carpark to improve pedestrian connectivity
- Repointing & cleaning of all existing and retained stone walls
- Associated planting and landscaping works
- Signage and wayfinding
- External lighting
- All associated site works and services

The ODKM Architectural drawings below set out the extent and detail of the proposed site.

### 3.2 Design Principles

The ODKM architectural report notes the Proposal is for a new multi-functional public plaza and to create two new main pedestrian access routes to serve this new space. A gently sloped pedestrian access route along the riverside connects the plaza to Bridge Street while tiered external stairs and landscaping connects to John Street.

New connections will aid pedestrian permeability in this locality as a far more visually interesting route will be created to that of the surrounding road and pavement network. The new plaza is proposed as the main focal point and is of a scale that will enable multi-functional uses. The connections and main plaza space will greatly improve the public realm and are all designed to provide natural and efficient wayfinding and orientation

The design of the public realm and choice of surface finishes relates to the hierarchy and use of space. This will be complemented by a lighting strategy, which is intended to provide comfortable external lighting appropriate to the use of space. Low level downward facing bollard lighting will be selected for pedestrian areas as these direct light onto the pavement. Low level illuminated strip lighting is used in certain locations such as the sloped access route and to solid edges to provide a continuous surface light onto the walking surface, and to minimise light pollution.

The Design Statement explains the design process and principles for the proposed development. These principles are in accordance with the urban design criteria set out in the 'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide' (DEHLG 2009).

- **Context:** The proposed development is designed in response to it's surroundings in New Ross and the river frontage.
- **Connections:** The proposed connections will be attractive routes to access or pass through the development lands for pedestrians. The layout is designed to provide new links that connect with the existing network of streets and spaces.
- **Inclusivity:** The design and layout enables easy access for all.
- **Variety:** The proposed activities that the plaza can house ranging from Markets, Temporary Event/Concert, Ice Rink etc. ensures that it can be used for a variety of uses which will bring vibrancy and footfall to the area.
- **Efficiency:** In essence this development will bring a derelict site back into productive use and bring it back into the public realm to ensure it is utilised.

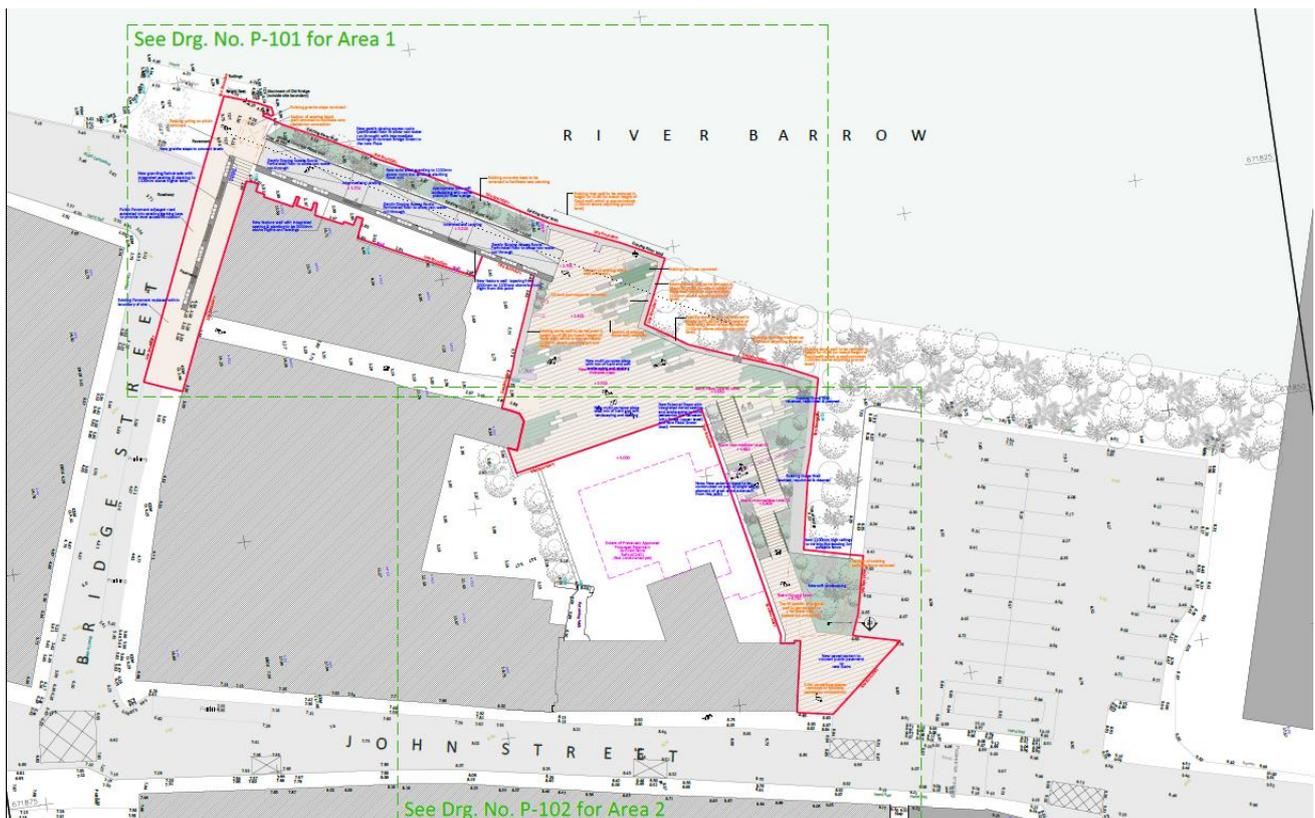


Figure 11 Site Location Plan of subject site (Source: ODKM Architects)

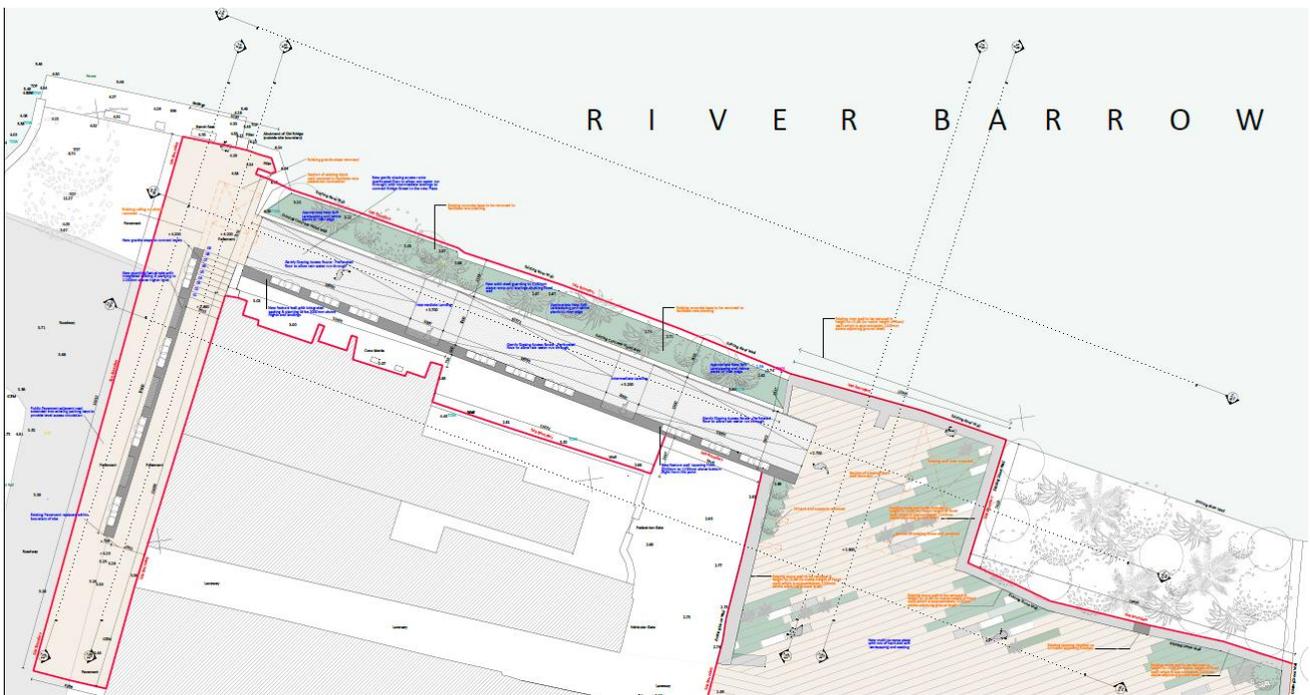


Figure 12 Proposed Site Layout Plan (Source: ODKM Architects)

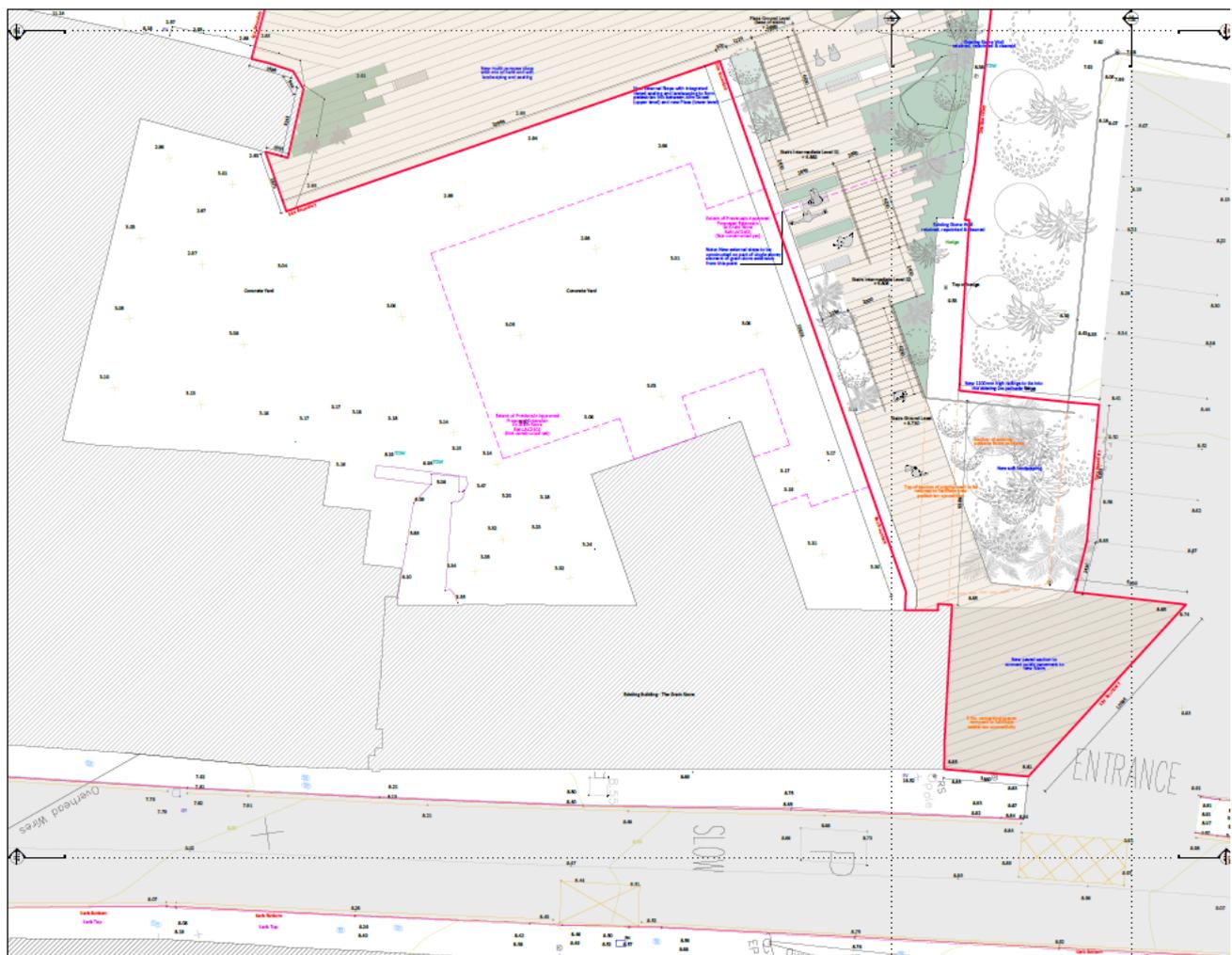


Figure 13 Proposed Site Layout Plan (Source: ODKM Architects)

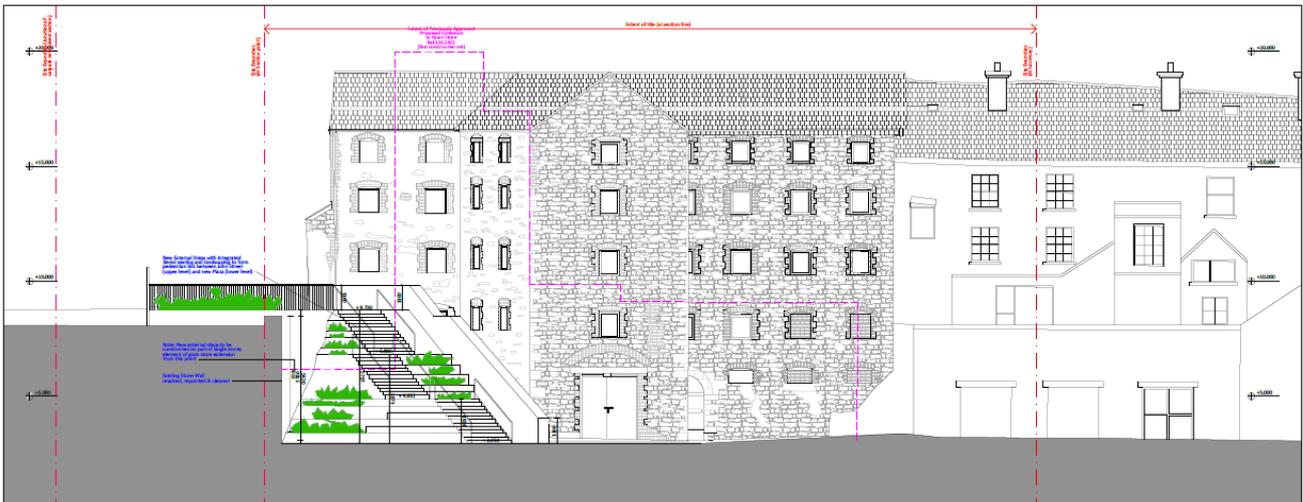


Figure 14 Elevation facing River Barrow (Source: ODKM Architects)

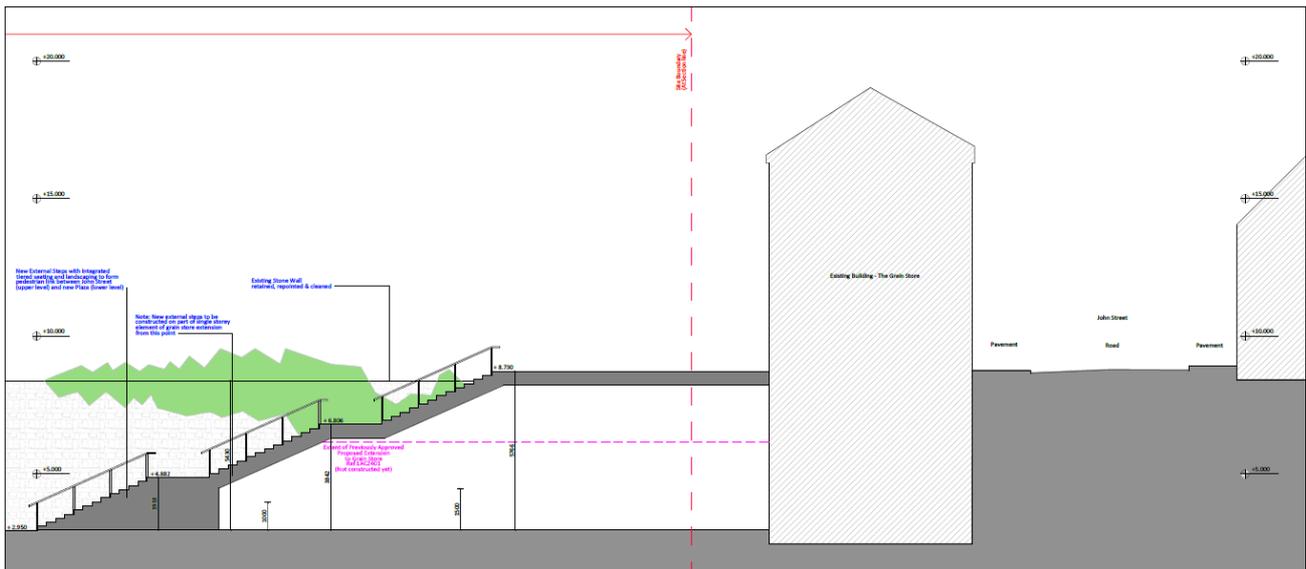


Figure 15 Cross section of site from John St. down to River Barrow (Source: ODKM Architects)



Figure 16 Elevation of Bridge Street where subject site bounds river edge (Source: ODKM Architects)

### 3.3 Drainage Proposals

A detailed drainage design plan has been prepared for the proposed development. The drainage design has taken into account the sloping nature of the site, with drainage features running with the existing ground contours to ensure that all surface waters arising at the site are captured within the drainage system, with no direct unattenuated discharge of surface water from the proposed development site.

The design of the drainage system incorporates the following measures:

- Surface water falling on green (grave) areas will infiltrate into green areas.
- Footpaths will be sloped toward adjacent green areas to allow for infiltration. Surface water from footpaths, which does not directly infiltrate to ground, will be collected by aco drains and directed to soakpits.
- Surface water from new roadway will generally be served by a french drain with land drain pipe the roadway. A soak pit area will be provided at the lowest point of the drainage run to accommodate any heavy flows of surface water than is not absorbed by the french drain itself.
- New gullies serving existing roadway/proposed roadway junction area are served by a soak pit.
- Main Pedestrian Access Ramp and stairs with non-porous finish to be accommodated by soak pit.

It is noted that Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) has not be carried out this development is considered flood compatible. The SSFRA that was undertaken for John St Grainstore development noted "Design for flood resilient construction accepts that floodwater will enter buildings and provides for this in the design and specification of internal buildings and finishes. These measures limit damage caused by floodwater and allow relatively quick recovery."

### 3.4 Engineering Services

A detailed Drainage planning report has been prepared for the proposed development by Brunner Consulting Engineers.

#### **PUBLIC DRAINAGE SUPPLY:**

The site is serviced by a surface water sewer which drains to the River Barrow to the west. It is proposed to connect to this public drainage system and maintain discharge characteristics.

#### **STORM WATER DRAINAGE:**

Wexford County Council (WCC) county development plan require all urban developments of significance to incorporate and provide the full suite of 'sustainable urban drainage systems' (SUDS) measures in order to minimise the extent of hard surfacing, culverting and surface water run-off. This is good practice and we have endeavoured to include as many systems as practicable for this development.

The system proposed at different stages are as follows:

1. Plaza hardstandings to have zoned permeable/landscaped finishes incorporated throughout

#### **Proposed System:**

The proposed development sees rainwater collected and directed to underground drainage through slot drainage channels. This drainage network will collect at the existing surface water outfall chamber, from which it discharges to the River Barrow watercourse via a non-return flap. The replacement of existing impermeable ground level hardstandings with permeable finishes, as well as

the incorporation of planting, diminishes the peak stormwater flows to the tidal watercourse.

The surface water network has been designed in accordance with the Building Regulations, Technical Guidance Document Part H

**Conclusion:**

All surface water run-off from the proposed development will be discharged to watercourse, designed for a 1 in 100-year storm event. The effective stormwater discharge from the applicant property is decreased by 20% as a result of this development. Refer to summary of areas below and Appendix A for Site Drainage Layout.

**Summary Of Areas :**

Total Site Area: 0.1116 Hectares

Existing:

Permeable Areas: 0m<sup>2</sup>

Impermeable Areas 1116m<sup>2</sup>

Proposed:

Permeable Areas: 220m<sup>2</sup>

Impermeable Areas 896m<sup>2</sup>

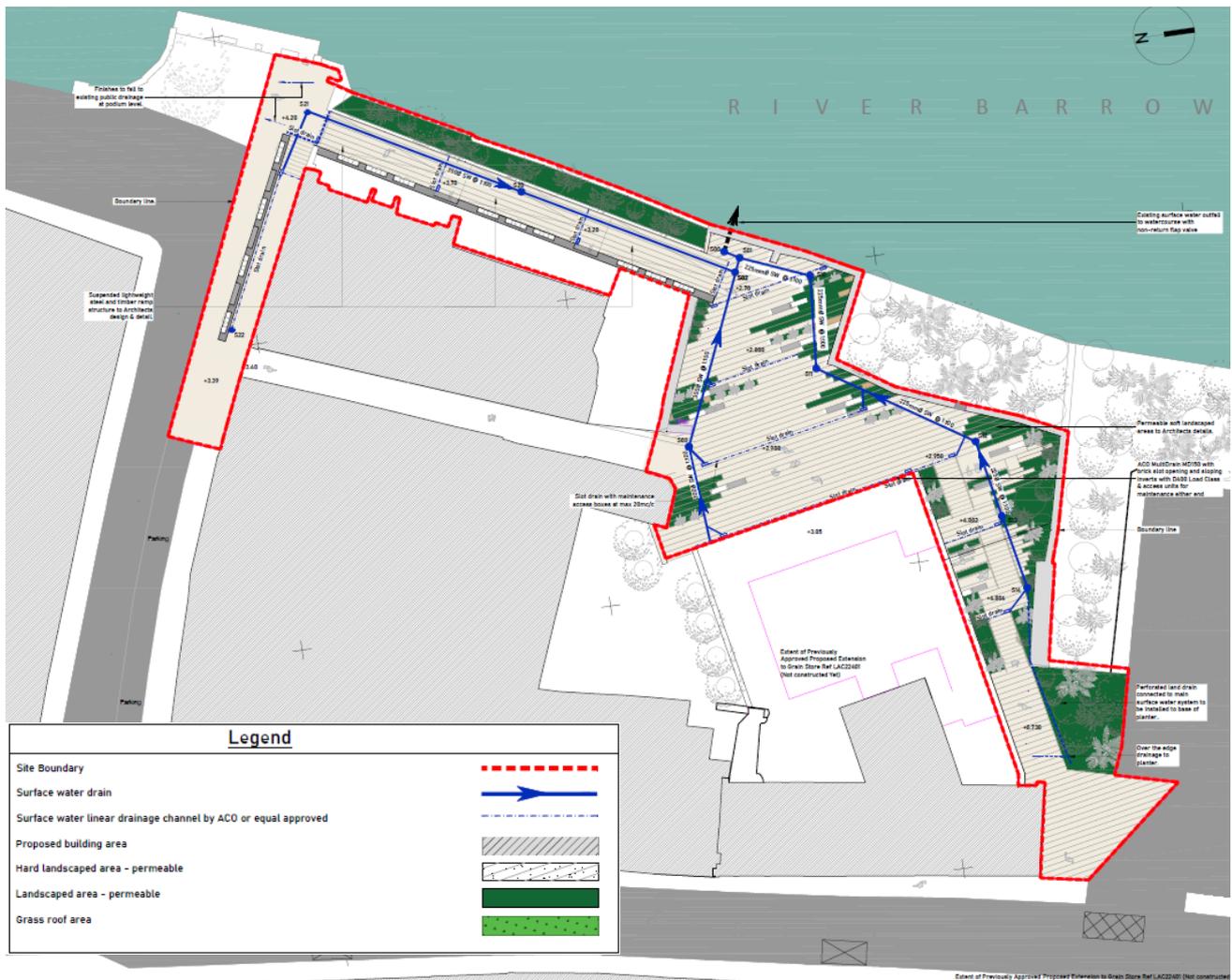


Figure 17 Proposed Site Drainage Layout (Source: Brunner Consulting Engineers)

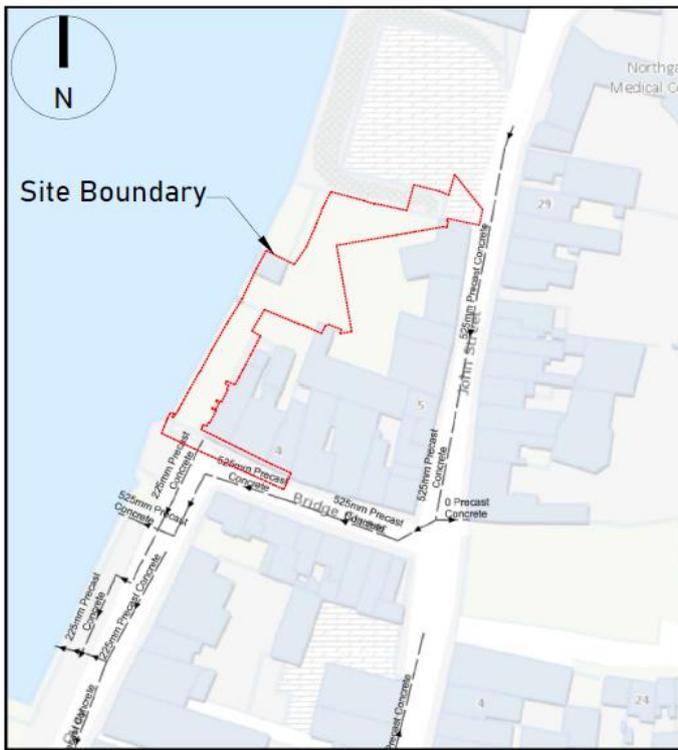


Figure 18 Public Surface Water Sewer Record extract (Source: Brunner Consulting Engineers)

### 3.5 Construction Management

A **Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)** has been prepared by Fehily Timoney. Mitigation Measures for Watercourses include the following measures to avoid, prevent and minimise potential impacts on all waters during the construction:

- The existing drainage infrastructure at the site will be blocked off in advance of works, with sandbags or similar, to remove the pollutant pathway to the River Barrow.
- Stockpiles will be compacted appropriately to prevent sediment runoff.
- Weather forecasts will be reviewed daily, and earthworks will not be undertaken during periods of heavy rainfall.
- Temporary silt fences will be installed around soil stockpiles.
- Refuelling of plant/machinery during construction will only be carried out offsite.
- Any diesel, fuel, hydraulic oils, cementitious material or any other hazardous material stored on site will be stored in bunded areas at least 50m from the river. The bund will have a volume of at least 110 % of the volume of all materials stored.
- Spill kits will be kept within the construction area and in each item of plant to deal with any accidental spillage.
- Portaloo's and/or containerised toilets and welfare units will be used to provide toilet facilities for site personnel. Sanitary waste will be removed from site by an appropriately-authorized waste disposal contractor.
- The contractor carrying out the works will be required to provide temporary works to prevent soil being carried out onto the local road. In addition, the contractor will be required to provide backup provision by way of a road sweeper to clean up fines as may be present.

For soil management, the following mitigation measures to avoid, prevent and minimize potential impacts on all soils during the construction are proposed:

- Any spillage of fuels, lubricants or hydraulic oils will be immediately contained, and the contaminated soil removed from the site and properly disposed of.

### **Resource and Waste Management Plan**

It will be the objective of WCC in conjunction with the appointed contractor to prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle and recover as much of the waste generated on site as practicable (in accordance with Waste Hierarchy Principles) and to ensure the appropriate transport and management of residual waste off site. This is in line with the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030, and the European Waste Management Hierarchy, as enshrined in the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended.

### **Assignment of Responsible Personnel**

It will be the responsibility of the contractor for the construction works (when appointed) to nominate a suitable Resource Manager who will have overall responsibility for the management of waste. The Resource Manager will have responsibility to instruct all site personnel including sub-contractors to comply with on-site requirements.

Any spillage of fuels, lubricants or hydraulic oils will be immediately contained, and the contaminated soil removed from the site and properly disposed of.

### **Noise and dust**

During the construction phase there is potential for increased ambient noise levels and potential temporary impacts on receptors in the surrounding area. If noise emissions from these activities are an issue, the scheduling of construction activity will be addressed such that durations of construction activity likely to exceed the 65 dB LAeq,1hr noise limit do not occur simultaneously with other construction activity.

Construction works will be carried out in accordance with best practice and in line with recommendations contained within BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014.

Mitigation measures to reduce **dust** nuisance and to minimise impact on air quality will be employed during the construction phase of the project. These mitigation measures will include the following:

- The contractor or equivalent must monitor the contractors' performance to ensure that the proposed mitigation measures are implemented, and that dust impacts and nuisance are minimised.
- Periodic road sweeping, as necessary, shall be put in place at the site entry/exit points.
- The site supervisor will undertake daily visual inspections to examine dust generation.
- The working area will be kept as small as possible so as to minimise potential dust generation.
- To suppress the migration of dust from site, a water bowser will be available to spray work areas and access roads, especially during periods where excavation works coincide with dry periods of weather or existing activities.
- All loads with potential to cause dust nuisance will be covered using strong, waterproof sheets such as tarpaulin sheets and will not be overloaded. This will minimise the potential for fugitive emissions during transport.
- Any stockpiles will be kept damp and covered to prevent windblown dust emissions.
- Construction plant will be routinely serviced to minimise the exhaust emissions during construction. Vehicles will not be left running unnecessarily and low emission fuels will be used where possible.

### **Traffic Management**

As with any construction project, the transport of materials on and off site will give rise to increased traffic and associated impacts. However, due to the very nature of construction these impacts will be temporary.

Traffic management procedures to manage traffic effectively on site and in the immediate vicinity of the development, to ensure the continued movement of traffic on the public roads and to minimise disturbance during the transportation of materials

### **Natura Impact Statement**

A Natura Impact Statement (**NIS**) has been prepared by Fehily Timoney. It sets out the Mitigation Measures for Surface Water Quality Perturbations - Construction Phase Surface Water Management, which repeat the bullet points set out above from the CEMP.

## **3.6 Archaeological Mitigation and Monitoring Measures**

We also refer to the **Grain Store, John Street, New Ross, Co. Wexford: Archaeological Assessment prepared by Dr Jason Bolton**. It sets out the following recommendations for the Construction Period:

**Archaeological Monitoring** should be carried out of any ground disturbance works which take place as part of the development, and also recording of the masonry rubble wall of the corrugated iron-roofed structure prior to lowering of the upper parts. It should be borne in mind that if any significant archaeological remains are found during the construction phase, further archaeological mitigation may be required.

Monitoring is licensed by the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and licence applications take a minimum of three weeks to process. As such, this must be factored into the lead-in time for the schedule for a planning application for any development work at the site.

**Retaining an Archaeologist:** A licensed and qualified archaeologist should be retained for the duration of the relevant works.

**The Time Scale** for the construction phase should be made available to the archaeologist, with information on where and when ground disturbances will take place. Given the surface area to be exposed (Fig.24), **it is strongly advised that this element of work be undertaken well in advance of any planned construction to allow for any archaeological issues to be resolved.**

**Sufficient Notice:** It is essential for the developer to give sufficient notice to the archaeologist/s in advance of the construction works commencing. This will allow for prompt arrival on site to monitor any ground disturbances. As often happens, intervals may occur during the construction phase. In this case, it is also necessary to inform the archaeologist/s as to when any ground disturbance works will recommence.

**Discovery of Archaeological Material:** In the event of archaeological features or material being uncovered during the construction phase, it is crucial that any machine work cease in the immediate area to allow the archaeologist/s to inspect any such material.

**Archaeological Material:** Once the presence of archaeologically significant material is established, full archaeological recording of such material is recommended. If it is not possible for the construction works to avoid the material, full excavation would be recommended. The extent and duration of excavation would be a matter for discussion between the client and the licensing authorities.

**Archaeological Team:** It is recommended that the core of a suitable archaeological team be on standby to deal with any such rescue excavation. This would be complimented in the event of a full excavation.

- **Secure Site Offices** and facilities should be provided on or near those sites where excavation is required.
- **Buoying** of any such areas would be necessary once discovered and during excavation.
- **Adequate Funds** to cover excavation, post-excavation analysis, and any testing or conservation work required should be made available.
- **Machinery traffic** during construction must be restricted as to avoid any of the selected sites and their environs.
- **Spoil** should not be dumped on any of the selected sites or their environs.

**Report on Archaeological Monitoring:** On completion of the monitoring, a report describing the results of the monitoring shall be furnished to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

**NOTE:** Recommendations are subject to the approval of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

## 4. PLANNING POLICY

### 4.1 National Policy

#### 4.1.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision April 2025

The Government of Ireland has developed a strategic framework called Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF) to direct development and investment. The NPF aims to establish a common vision and a set of goals for every community to guide the growth and development of Ireland until 2040. These goals are called National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) which are further articulated through National Policy Objectives (NPOs). The following NSOs and NPOs that are related to the proposal and are accompanied by a statement that explains how the Proposed Scheme aligns with them:

**NPO 12:** Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of

**NPO 14:** Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.

**NPO 15:** Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on:- [...] Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities.

**NPO 20:** In meeting urban development requirements there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.

**NPO 24:** Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades, and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

**NPO 90:** Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.

**NPO 26:** To support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.

**NPO 34:** Continue to facilitate tourism development and in particular the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, and a Blueways and Peatways Strategy .....

**NPO 89:** Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

## 4.2 Architectural Heritage protection Guidelines for planning authorities (2011)

The Architectural Heritage protection Guidelines for planning authorities note (para. 6.4.5) that *A planning application for works to a protected structure or proposed protected structure must include (in addition to the normal requirements to supply maps and drawings) 'such photographs, plans and other particulars as are necessary to show how the development would affect the character of the structure. The same requirements also apply to applications for permission for works to the exterior of a structure which is located within an ACA or an area it is proposed to designate as an ACA.*

The Guidelines note (para. 13.6.3) that *"In order to identify special features of the designed landscape associated with a protected structure, it will be necessary to carry out a historical assessment of the site. Some of the most important features may not be obvious at the outset without adequate survey and research using old maps, drawings, aerial photographs (both old and new), documents and other historical material. When assessing a designed landscape it is important to identify the historical layers of intervention that may exist and to respect the integrity of the site."*

This application is accompanied by a comprehensive Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment and Archaeological Assessment has been undertaken as part of the application packed prepared out by Dr. Jason Bolton. It evaluation of historical significance followed NIAH guidelines, together with standard survey methodologies for historic places and relevant published and publicly available work as referenced in the main body of the report, while also considering the requirements of current architectural heritage protection planning guidance on Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

## 4.3 Regional Policy

### 4.3.1 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020

The RSES provides policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) in response to regional assets, opportunities and pressures. This contributes to a spatial strategy with the intention of managing future growth and creating healthy and attractive places to live and work.

The RSES states in relation to New Ross :

*New Ross is an historic port town with a population of 8,040 (2016) offering an alternative business location with an active port facility. The Town has developed as a tourist hub and is home to the Dunbrody Famine Ship and starting point for the Norman Way. The South East Greenway linking New Ross to Waterford is under construction and due to open 2021. The town is an important retail and service centre with its own hinterland area where a continued focus on improvements to the public realm and urban regeneration in the town centre will support rejuvenation of the town. Improved linkages to the Eastern Corridor and to Waterford are a priority with limited public transport (bus) services serving the town*

## 4.4 County and Local Planning Policy

### 4.4.1 Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Wexford County Development Plan 2022-28 includes the following relevant policies and objectives.

## Chapter 5: Design and Place-making in Towns and Village

### 5.4 Goal

It is the goal of the Council to ensure that the towns and villages in the county are vibrant and inclusive, support their urban and rural communities and provide attractive and enjoyable living and working environments.

### 5.5 Strategy

The Council’s strategy is to create attractive, healthy, safe and efficient places through its own interventions and ensuring that all future developments achieve the highest standards in design and layout. Having regard to this, the key aims of the strategy are:

- Design Quality - To ensure that our towns and villages are attractive places to live and visit and that the design of development and the public realm is of exceptional quality.
- Place Based Design - To ensure that all new development is designed to respect, enhance and respond to its natural, built, cultural and social context.
- Connected Places - To ensure that future development has a coherent urban structure, is permeable and places people at the heart of the public realm.
- Compact and Rejuvenated - To ensure that development results in the efficient use of land, encourages walking and cycling and rejuvenates the area within which it is located.
- Vibrant, Inclusive, Resilient and Adaptable -To ensure our towns and villages are self-sustaining places which are vital and vibrant, with appropriate services, jobs, amenities and community facilities which are inclusive, accessible to all and are resilient to challenges such as climate change and economic instability.

Relevant planning objectives are set out in the Tables below.

**Table 2: WCDP 2022-2028 objectives (Design and Place-making)**

Design and Place-making in Towns and Village Objectives	
<b>Towns and Villages Strategic Objectives</b>	
<b>TV01</b>	To ensure, through our planning processes and investment decisions, that we create liveable, vital, diverse, inclusive, resilient towns and villages.
<b>TV02</b>	To promote a healthy County by improving physical and social environments to create vibrant, accessible, healthy and sustainable places to live, work and relax
<b>TV06</b>	To require high quality design in the public realm, architecture and in building functionality
<b>TV08</b>	To ensure, through the development management process and in local authority own development, that new development adds to the sense of place, quality, distinctiveness and character of our towns and villages
<b>Designing Quality Places Objectives</b>	
<b>TV18</b>	To implement environmental and public realm improvements in town and village centres to a high standard and finish in order to improve safety, image, identity and environmental quality. The Council will work with developers, stakeholders and local community groups to secure improvements to the public realm and pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of our settlements.
<b>TV19</b>	To require that new developments, streets, public spaces and other areas of public realm including parks are designed to reflect the design principles of Connectivity, Enclosure, Active Edge and Pedestrian Facilities/Activity4 and enhance the biodiversity of the town/village in which they are situated
<b>Connected Places and Street Design Objectives</b>	
<b>TV25</b>	All applications for new developments shall demonstrate (and graphically illustrate in the design brief where appropriate) how permeability considerations have been integrated into the development. In the first instance the needs of pedestrians must be considered and the scheme and its various routes should be designed to ensure walkability

<b>Vibrant, Inclusive, Resilient and Adaptable Objectives</b>	
<b>TV55</b>	To support development which will add to the vitality and vibrancy of our towns and villages including development which will increase population, result in additional services and extend opening hours, subject to normal planning criteria including residential amenity.
<b>TV56</b>	To ensure our towns and villages are inclusive and welcoming to all people.
<b>TV57</b>	To prioritise investment in towns and villages where it will achieve most benefit in terms of addressing disadvantage and legacy issues.
<b>TV58</b>	To ensure that new development in our towns and villages does not exceed the social or physical carrying capacity of the settlement.

**Table 3: WCDP 2022-2028 objectives (Chapter 7: Tourism Development)**

<b>Tourism Objectives</b>	
<b>Tourism Development</b>	
TM40	To safeguard the artistic, cultural and historic heritage of the county and to facilitate the expansion and development of facilities such as interpretative centres which are appropriate in scale, siting and design and suitably located adjacent to sites of interest, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria..
TM41	To develop the Arts, culture and heritage attractions throughout the county in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the Heritage Council, the OPW, the Arts Council, National Parks and Wildlife and other key stakeholders

**5.10.2 Regeneration - Active Land Management and Local Authority Intervention**

There are significant portions of well-located lands adjacent to town and village centres and public transport facilities, some of which are in public ownership. The Council will work together with the Land Development Agency to facilitate the appropriate redevelopment of these sites.

The Council will consider interventions such as site assembly using CPO, demolition and clearance or decontamination and the provision of facilitating infrastructure. When sites are acquired the Council will decide on the most appropriate mechanism to ensure appropriate rejuvenation which may include redevelopment for civic or amenity uses, public and private housing or the release of the land back to the market for redevelopment.

Table 5-1 of the Development Plan shows the Council's 'Priority locations for active land management and regeneration'. In respect of New Ross it states:

*Master-planning/design briefs, developments consents, site assembly including CPO, site remediation, enabling infrastructure, site development works, property development, public realm development, Derelict Sites, Vacant Sites/Urban Regeneration legislation*

Table 5-1 of the Development Plan shows the Council's *Timeline for Key Active Land Management Proposals* In respect of New Ross:

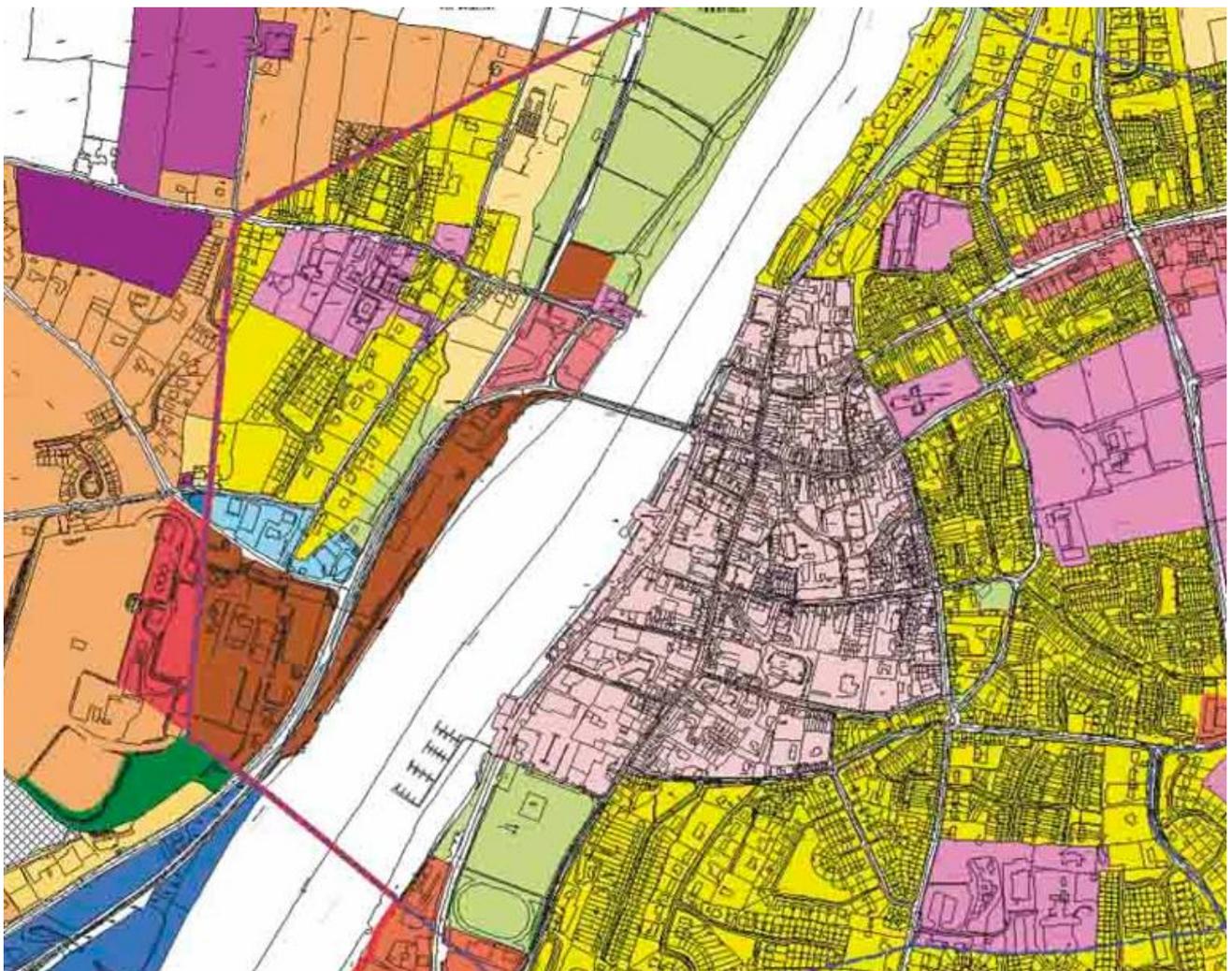
**Table 4: WCDP 2022-2028 objectives Table 5-1 ‘Priority locations for active land management and regeneration’ (Extract for New Ross)**

New Ross Town		
New Ross Destination Town	Way finding, public realm improvement, place making and identification, Derelict/Vacant sites/Urban regeneration	
High Hill Public Realm	Site assembly, public realm development.	Commence Construction – Q2 2021
Removal Oil Tanks on Quays	Site assembly, public realm development,	Start Construction – Q2 2021
John Street Hatch Lab	Site assembly, public realm development.	Application for planning – Q3 2021

#### 4.5 New Ross Town & Environs Development Plan (as extended) (now expired)

The New Ross Town and Environs Development Plan 2011-2017 was in effect until 2019. It is now expired.

The predominant land use in the town centre is the Town Centre Zoning with the objective; *“To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centre through consolidating development, maximising the use of lands and encouraging a mix of uses”.*



**Figure 19** Extract from New Ross LAP Zoning Map with site designated Town Centre

#### 4.6 New Ross Town Centre First Plan 2023

The objective of the Town Centre First Plan is *“to make New Ross a more attractive place to work, visit, live and do business and this plan strengthens our hand in achieving this goal”*. The plan was developed in consultation with local communities represent the vision of local people for their area and contain proposals for a diverse range of projects such as redeveloping derelict sites, creating community parks and walkways, boosting SME and tourism potential, and protecting historical landmarks.

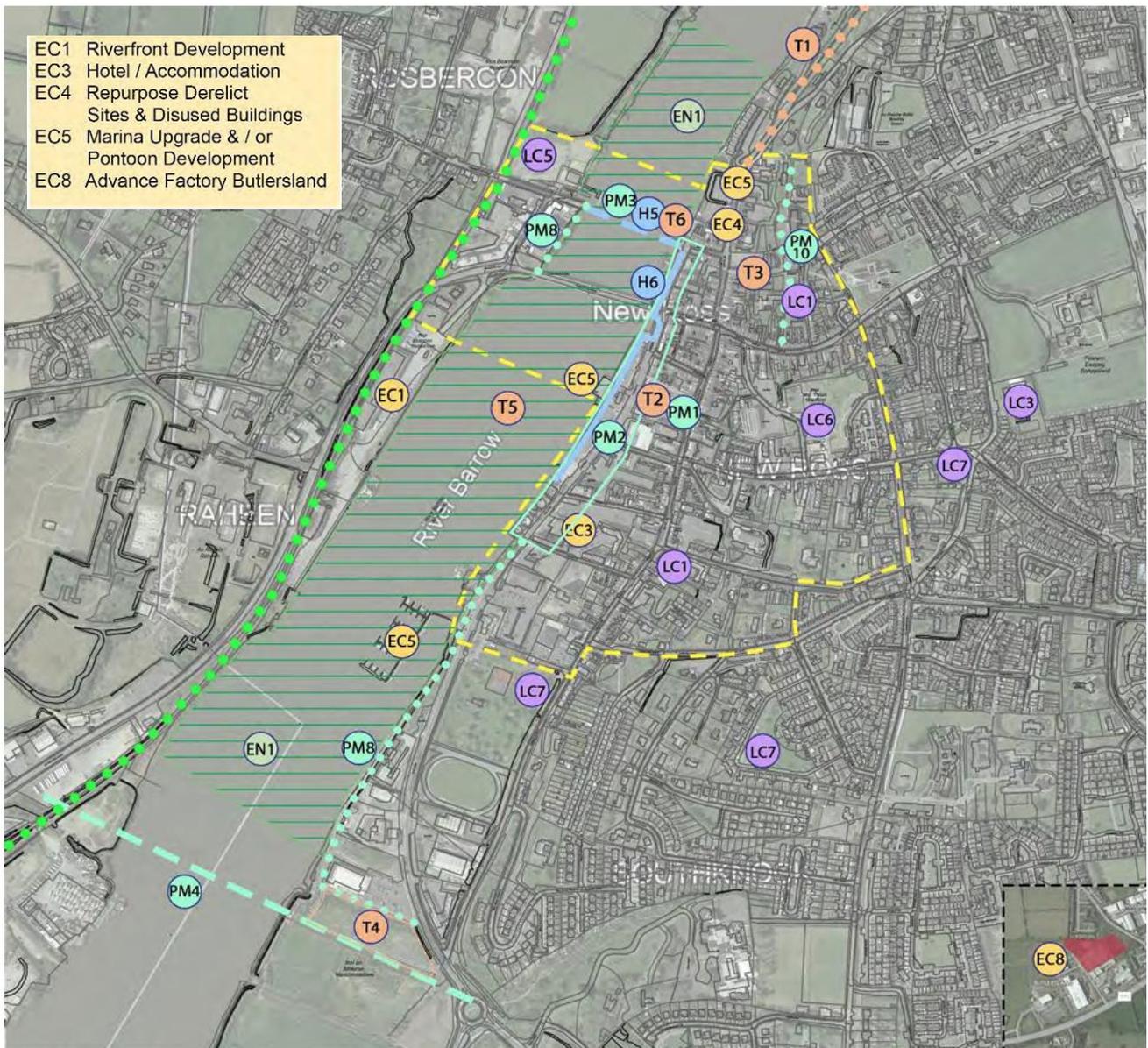


Figure 20 New Ross Town Centre First Map of Actions

The following relevant objectives are noted:

**THEME 4: PLACEMAKING + MOVEMENT**

To reimagine and reactivate the town centre as a place for all.

- Create a safe, friendly and accessible pedestrian environment in the town centre.
- Provide new river crossings, and circular and connected riverside walks with greenway.
- Reimagine car parking arrangements and traffic flow in the town centre.
- Provide dedicated bicycle lanes and bicycle parking.
- Consider provision of a funicular (cable car) system of “tuk tuks / buggies”.
- Have a dynamic and integrated network of movement by different travel means i.e., greenway, boats, pedestrian network, including pedestrianisation, Zipline & possibly Tuk Tuk.
- Connect and widen the pedestrian connectivity in the outside town centre.

## PM2 Reactivate Quays

- The River Barrow and its historic setting is a pivotal asset to the town. Enhance the riverfront and riverside in line with Actions EN1 and H6.
- Review parking arrangements, pedestrian connectivity and accessibility, and flood defence along the Quays.
- Reduce carriageway of the existing road, introduce bicycle lanes, parallel parking and urban greening as per standards set out in DMURS.
- Bring activities to the quays is key.

## **Proposed Scheme Response**

The Council's Planning Report for the Part 8 Grain store Scheme noted the following:

*New Ross is a historical town with a rich and diverse architectural and archaeological heritage. It was one of the first Irish towns to be developed by the Normans in the 12th century. The town's identity, character and sense of place are largely a result of the distinct heritage and historical development. The warehouse, that is the subject of the proposal, is a Protected Structure (RPS Ref. NRO143) dating from 1850. The structure represents an important element of the commercial and industrial legacy of New Ross having traditionally supported much of the local agricultural economy since the mid-nineteenth century. The proposal represents an important opportunity to repair and refurbish a Protected Structure and bring it back into use. The proposed development includes public realm improvement works which will transform and revitalise this part of the town centre. The proposal is an excellent example of amalgamating heritage conservation and economic renewal for the long-term sustainable development of New Ross.*

*The Grain store is a highly visible and historic building in New Ross, the building has been vacant for a number of years and while some minor remedial works were carried out in 2010, the building has fallen into decay. The aim of these works is to create a multifunctional space which it is anticipated will act as a catalyst for further development in the area which will bring this part of New Ross back to life. The proposed development offers considerable conservation gain for the Grain Store providing a complete refurbishment of this protected structure and a new sustainable use for a building that has been empty for a long period. The changes to the building are well thought out and should not have a significant impact on the special architectural heritage and character of the protected structure. The change of use of the building to a multifunctional space will be beneficial to the long-term sustainable use and conservation of this important building.*

It is considered that the public realm proposals will complement the proposed Grain Store project.

## 4.7 Cultural Heritage

Chapter 13 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out policy in relation to Heritage and Conservation. Heritage is defined in the Heritage Act, 1995 as including monuments, archaeology, heritage objects, architecture, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways.

Section 13.4.1 of the Plan states: In relation to a Protected Structure or a Proposed Protected Structure, the meaning of the term includes the structure, the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structure lying within the curtilage and its interior and all fixtures, fittings and features which form part of the interior or exterior of the structures.

A Record of Protected Structures (RPS) was prepared and is available in Volume 5 of the Plan. The RPS presently comprises in excess of 1,400 structures...The curtilage of a Protected Structure is often an essential part of the structure’s special interest. In certain circumstances, the curtilage may comprise a clearly defined garden or grounds, which may have been laid out to complement the design or function...

The Built Heritage Objectives of the Council are set out in the Table below.

**Table 5: WCDP 2022-2028 objectives (Built Heritage Objectives)**

Built Heritage Objectives	
Objectives	
<b>BH01</b>	To protect the architectural heritage of County Wexford and to include structures considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the Record of Protected Structures
<b>BH02</b>	To support targeted investment in the built heritage of our region including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund to assist owners to maintain our built heritage assets
<b>BH03</b>	To promote the development of heritage-led regeneration and engage in and promote initiatives to revitalise the historic cores of our towns and villages together with local communities, heritage property owners and other stakeholders
<b>BH04</b>	To consider, in the preparation of future local area plans, a Town first approach to the revitalisation of historic urban centres, which focuses on the repair and upgrade of existing historic buildings and their adaptation to new uses with regard to their architectural character and significance.
<b>BH05</b>	To protect our Architectural Heritage in the form of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and identify important groups of buildings/localities suitable for designation as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).
<b>BH06</b>	To protect the curtilage of Protected Structures or proposed Protected Structures from any works which would cause loss of, or damage to, the special character of the structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of heritage value within the curtilage or attendant grounds of the structure.
<b>BH07</b>	To ensure development within the curtilage of a Protected Structure is compatible with its character. This does not preclude putting forward innovative contemporary designs that respect the context of the Protected Structure.

The site is located just outside the edge of the Architectural Conservation Area for the town centre. ACA objectives are set out in the Table below.



Figure 21 Map of Protected Structures and ACA in New Ross

**Table 6: WCDP 2022-2028 objectives (ACA)**

Architectural Conservation Area Objectives	
Objectives	
ACA01	To protect and enhance the character of the designated Architectural Conservation Areas in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross, Gorey and Bunclody, including the views and prospects to and from these areas.
ACA02	To review current Architectural Conservation Areas during the preparation of subsequent local area plans, in conjunction with owners and occupiers and interest groups, with a view to preparing a Management Scheme and guidance on the treatment of structures and the public realm.
ACA03	To ensure that all proposed developments are carried out to the highest architectural and urban design standards within the Architectural Conservation Areas
ACA04	To protect existing buildings, structures, groups of structures, burial grounds, sites, landscapes and features such as trees, street furniture and paving, (including sub-surface areas) which are considered to be intrinsic elements of the special character of the Architectural Conservation Area, from demolition or removal and non-sympathetic alterations
ACA05	To ensure that all new advertising hoardings, signage, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, satellite dishes, masts, pylons, lighting, cctv cameras and car parking provision within an Architectural Conservation Area are designed, constructed and located in a manner that is complementary to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.
ACA06	To preserve historic street patterns and encourage pedestrianisation on key streets.
ACA07	To promote public awareness of the character and special interest of the Architectural Conservation Areas and to provide assistance and guidance in preserving these
ACA08	To ensure that applications in relation to a proposed development within an Architectural Conservation Area that entail extensive or complex works with a potential to have an impact on the character of the architectural heritage and/or landscape include a Character and Landscape Impact Assessment report and/or Heritage Impact Assessment. This report(s) should assess the implications of the development on the character of the special area in which it is located. This should be prepared by a suitably qualified person competent to make a qualitative assessment of the potential impact of works on the character and special interest of the Architectural Conservation Area and in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

#### 4.8 Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA)

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment and Archaeological Assessment has been undertaken as part of the application packed prepared out by Dr. Jason Bolton.

The AHIA evaluates the potential impact of proposed improvements to the public realm space on the special architectural heritage interest of the grounds associated with the Grain Stores on John Street, New Ross, County Wexford which is a Protected Structure (Ref. No.NR0143 'Nolan and Cooney, 8 John Street, New Ross, NIAH Ref No.15605016).

It confirms that the public realm works lie adjacent to three Protected Structures listed on the 2022-2028 Wexford County Development Plan.

- The John Street Grain Store is a Protected Structure (Ref. No.NR0143);
- No.2 Bridge Street (Protected Structure No.NR0001) ;
- New Ross Bridge (Old) and the Quay Wall (Protected Structure NR0086).

These three buildings were also appraised as of 'Regional' architectural heritage interest by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2005 (NIAH). The proposed public realm improvements lie outside of, but adjacent to, the northern end of the New Ross Architectural Conservation Area.

It is noted that the proposed improvements to the public realm are located in the former coal yard to the rear of the John Street Grain Stores, the vacant plot extending along the riverside at the site of the now-lost hotel at No.1 Bridge Street. An appraisal of impact of the different elements is summarised in the Table below.

**Table 7 Appraisal of Proposed works at Bridge Street.**

Proposed Work	Impact
Remove existing granite steps & Construction of new granite steps in to connect to new access route at upper level.	The existing steps and railings originally provided pedestrian access to the bridge (which was demolished c.1968). The steps have suffered from settlement. <b>Proposed Mitigation:</b> The existing steps should be assessed for potential salvage and re-use in the proposed new steps.
Remove Section of Existing Blockwork Wall	The wall is composed of a plain concrete blockwork wall which is of no architectural heritage interest and does not contribute to the streetscape. There are a number of information plaques mounted on the walls. Consideration should be given to re-mounting these within the new public realm works, or to provide alternative new signage on the significance of the bridge site.
Abutment of Old Bridge (outside of site boundary)	The north curving wing wall is outside the redline boundary of the development. However, this riverside wall has been dislodged and is at risk of collapse and in need of immediate repair. As this wall forms the boundary of the site, immediate repair should be included in the proposed works. The wall fragment should be carefully recorded, and then taken down and rebuilt in the same location.
Remove existing metal railing on plinth & replace with new balustrade with integrated seating.	The replacement of the existing metal railings and granite plinth with new integrated seating and planting, c.1100mm above current level as part of a scheme to extend the public pavement into the existing parking bays significant alters the space. The existing concrete ground slabs are not of architectural heritage interest. The metal railings and granite plinth have matching railings on the opposite corner and a section stands beside the southern curving wing wall, and clearly form part of a past public realm scheme. The metal railings are of good quality <b>Proposed Mitigation:</b> The existing metal railings and plinth could be salvaged and considered for re-use elsewhere in New Ross.

**Table 8 Appraisal of Alterations at and adjacent to the existing riverside masonry walls of the former Coal Yard.**

Proposed Work	Impact
<p>Existing River Masonry Wall &amp; Existing Stone wall separating coal yard from the former loading bay to be reduced to c.1100mm above current ground level, &amp; existing concrete doorway to be blocked up.</p>	<p>The proposed works have a negative impact as they remove historic fabric. The proposal to remove the concrete doorway and repair the wall with rubble masonry effectively erases a historic brick-arched opening, and the treatment of the crane loading bay is not addressed in the proposed works.</p> <p><b>Proposed Mitigation:</b> The existing walls should be carefully recorded prior to the commencement of works, and a copy of that record together with a text interpretation of significance should be deposited in the form of a report (preservation by record) in the local studies section of Wexford Library Service and with the Irish Architectural Archive.</p> <p>A specification should be developed detailing the finish of the wall-top (to prevent water ingress to preserve the wall - either with a new stone coping, or a durable NHL haunching), the mortar to be used for repointing, for rebuilding and for any haunching20).</p> <p>The stone from the upper parts of the wall should be carefully dismantled by hand and stored on pallets on site to allow sorting and re-use for repairs to all historic masonry walls within the project.</p> <p>The landscaping and treatment of the former crane loading bay (which will be visible from the plaza but outside the redline boundary) should be detailed as this area impacts the character of the former coal yard.</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of works, the quay walls (which should not be impacted by the proposed works) should be inspected from the waterside, and assessed for any necessary repairs.</p>
<p>Existing Corrugated Iron Roofed Stone &amp; Oil Tank to be removed</p>	<p>The existing corrugated roofed structure is is a twentieth century intervention to a reduced lean-to building which formerly stood at the site until at least 1951, and its loss would not detract from the character of the Protected Structure.</p> <p>The oil tank is supported by concrete blockwork and was a functional intervention to the area, and is also of no special architectural heritage interest, and its loss would not detract from the character of the Protected Structure.</p>

**Table 9 Appraisal of Alterations associated with the new tiered staircase in the north-east corner of the site.**

Proposed Work	Impact
<p>Construction of New Tiered Staircase</p>	<p>The top Section of Existing Masonry Wall in the North-East corner of the site to be reduced to facilitate the construction of the new tiered stairs. This masonry formed part of an early building and is currently obscured by mature vegetation. The repair of the wall should be considered a <b>conservation gain</b>.  <b>Proposed Mitigation:</b> The existing walls should be carefully recorded prior to the commencement of works, and a copy of that record together with a text interpretation of significance should be deposited in the form of a report (preservation by record) in the local studies section of Wexford Library Service and with the Irish Architectural Archive.                      The stone from the upper parts of the wall should be carefully dismantled by hand and stored on pallets on site to allow sorting and re-use for repairs to all historic masonry walls within the project.</p>
<p>New External Steps adjacent to proposed new external tiered steps</p>	<p>This flight to steps is to provide access into the previously approved extension to the Grain Store (Ref.: LAC2401) which has not yet been constructed. These steps will effectively form part of the new tiered staircase and enter a new structure, and should have no impact on the character of the Protected Structure.</p>
<p>Existing stone wall forming the north wall of the Coal Yard to be retained, repointed and cleaned</p>	<p>The wall formerly formed part of an earlier building (Fig.12) and may contain windows or other architectural features. The condition of the wall, and especially the wall-top, is unclear. The repair of the wall should be considered a <b>conservation gain</b>.  <b>Proposed Mitigation:</b> The existing walls should be carefully recorded prior to the commencement of works, and a copy of that record together with a text interpretation of significance should be deposited in the form of a report (preservation by record) in the local studies section of Wexford Library Service and with the Irish Architectural Archive. A specification should be developed detailing the finish of the wall-top (to prevent water ingress to preserve the wall - either with a new stone coping, or a durable NHL haunching), the mortar to be used for repointing, for rebuilding and for any haunching).</p>
<p>Section of existing palisade fence to be removed and new railings inserted</p>	<p>This is a modern fence bordering the car park, and its alteration with new railings of high quality and craftsmanship should have no impact on the character of the Protected Structure.</p>
<p>New multi-purpose plaza ground surface (hard &amp; soft landscaping with seating.</p>	<p>This replaces a twentieth century concreted ground surface. The replacement of one relatively modern surface with another modern surface of good design should have no impact on the character of the Protected Structure.</p>

In summary, the AHIA report concludes that the proposed development offers considerable conservation gain for the Grain Store by providing for a new public plaza and public access to the site, and allows necessary repairs and ongoing maintenance to the existing historic masonry walls which enclose the former Coal Yard of the Protected Structure. The proposed works should not have a significant detrimental impact on the and special architectural heritage values and character of the Protected Structure. The change to public plaza use by Wexford County Council should be of particular benefit for the future long-term sustainable use and conservation of the Protected Structure.

## 4.9 Archaeological Impact Assessment

The Archaeological Impact Assessment by Dr. John Bolton details the following **Assessment of Archaeological Potential** at section 4.1 of this report.

*The site lies on the west side of John Street within the walled town of New Ross. John Street is first mentioned in 1284/22 located between the Abbey<sup>23</sup> and the river wall, and the area is named as the abbey garden on the 1687 map (Fig.4). The grain store buildings were built during the second half of the nineteenth century, replacing earlier buildings on the street (Fig.9). The site is bordered by masonry walls and the rear elevations of other properties. The buildings, structures and river wall to the west are also marked on historical mapping and the courtyard, indicated as a 'coal yard' on the 1881 OS map, is hard landscaped with no surface traces of the lime kiln shown on nineteenth century maps (see Section 2.4). Much of the public realm area appears to have been used as a garden during the medieval period<sup>24</sup>. However, while there are no indications on historical cartography that there were medieval structures, there is potential for artefacts and other evidence of settlement activity. In addition, the bridge is an important post-medieval feature and there may be below-ground traces of this bridge or earlier quay or riverside structures in the public realm area on Bridge Street.*

- *The **site is located within the medieval walled town (WX029-013-),** and immediately adjacent to the River Barrow which was both part of the **defensive circuit (WX029-013005-)** as well as the economic focus of the town. The site is depicted as the abbey garden in the late seventeenth century, and **lies to the west of the possible site of the early medieval ecclesiastical site attributed to St. Abban (WX029-013012-).***
- *The proposed site was named as the abbey garden on the 1687 map (Fig.4) and was not developed until the second half of the nineteenth century (see Section 2.4).*
- *A number of shipwrecks are known from the River Barrow (Appendix 3) and the riverbed has high archaeological potential.*
- *Archaeological excavations in this part of New Ross have uncovered evidence of medieval settlement as well as seventeenth century stone structures (Section 2.5 & Appendix 2).*
- ***The known buildings and features on the site all date to the nineteenth (and possibly eighteenth) century and do not retain any archaeological significance,** though they are of architectural and industrial heritage interest<sup>25</sup>.*
- *The now-lost hotel on the riverfront was built after 1827 (Fig.5) and before 1837, and it is likely that traces of the foundations of these buildings survive below ground level.*
- *The north-western part of the Bridge Street lies adjacent to a former bridge (demolished c.1968) and there is potential for below-ground archaeology to survive in this area<sup>26</sup>.*

*On the balance of probabilities and with the currently available information, it is reasonable to suggest that **there is potential for below-ground archaeological features or remains to be located within the proposed public realm development area.***

The AIA includes a series of Recommendations for the Construction phase which are noted in section 3 of this Planning Report.

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening report has been prepared in respect of the proposed development by Fehily Timoney. It concludes:

*The proposed development does not individually or cumulatively fall into a class of development set out in Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2025 (as amended) and therefore, the requirements for a mandatory EIA can be screened out.*

*However, sub-threshold EIA may be required where the project would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Criteria for the consideration of sub-threshold EIA is set out in Schedule 7 and Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2025 (as amended). These criteria have been set out within this report with respect to the proposed development.*

*It is concluded however that sub-threshold EIA is not required for the proposed development, due to its minimal and limited impact on the receiving environment with respect to Schedule 7 and 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025 (as amended), Annex II of the EIA Directive and the screening checklist provided in the EC guidance document for EIA Screening, as set out in this report.*

### 5.2 Appropriate Assessment /Natura Impact Statement

A Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared by Fehily Timoney. The NIS report concludes:

*For the reasons set out in detail in this NIS, in light of the best scientific knowledge in the field, all aspects of the Proposed Development in isolation, or in combination with other plans or projects, which may affect the relevant European Sites (River Barrow and River Nore SAC and Lower River Suir SAC) have been considered.*

*Specific mitigation has been proposed in response to the potential for significant effects to occur. With the incorporation of site-specific mitigation measures, the Proposed Development alone will have no adverse effect on site integrity, in respect of the SACs' Conservation Objectives. This includes any potential interaction with other plans or projects leading to in-combination effects.*

*The NIS contains information which the competent authority may consider in making its own complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions. This NIS is intended to be used by the competent authority to determine that all reasonable scientific doubt has been removed as to the effects of the Proposed Development on the integrity of the relevant European sites.*

*Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites as a result of the Proposed Development, either alone, or in combination with other plans or projects.*

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the proposed development is for proposed improvements to Public Realm to Bridge Street and lands to the rear and side of The Grain Store, John's Street, New Ross, Wexford. The lands are under the control of Wexford County Council.

This report has been prepared to address the likely consequences for proper planning and sustainable development in the area in which it is proposed to situate the development, which must have regard to the following:

- justification for the project;
- main Development Plan provisions relating to the subject site and surrounding area including any relevant Core Strategy provisions;
- relevant planning history relating to the subject site and the surrounding area;
- relevant national, regional and local policies; and
- description of use of adjoining, abutting or adjacent lands.

The proposed is consistent with Development Plan Policies and Objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022 -28 under Chapter 5: Design and Place-making in Towns and Village, Chapter 7: Tourism Development and Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation.

The planning application is accompanied by detailed EIA Screening, which concludes the proposed development will not have a potential significant effect on the environment and a comprehensive AA Screening and NIS that finds *there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites as a result of the Proposed*

There is a recent Part 8 planning permissions on the lands for restoration and remodelling of the Grain Store building. The Proposed Development is considered to be consistent with regeneration proposals

There planning application has been prepared with regard to relevant Ministerial Guidelines and other national policy statements applicable to the proposed development. The development is supported by the National Planning Framework (NPF) National Policy Objectives, NPO 12, NPO 14, NPO 90, NPO 26 and NPO 89. The development is consistent with the general objectives for New Ross under Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region 2020 ..... that facilitates services for a growing population. The proposed development does not compromise or conflict with any heritage, archaeological, zoning or specific local objectives.

The application preparation has had regard to the Architectural Heritage protection Guidelines for planning authorities. The AHIA report concludes that the proposed development offers considerable conservation gain for the Grain Store by providing for a new public plaza and public access to the site, and allows necessary repairs and ongoing maintenance to the existing historic masonry walls which enclose the former Coal Yard of the Protected Structure. The proposed works should not have a significant detrimental impact on the and special architectural heritage values and character of the Protected Structure. The change to public plaza use by Wexford County Council should be of particular benefit for the future long-term sustainable use and conservation of the Protected Structure.

The planning application is accompanied by detailed CEMP, NIS, Archaeological and Environmental Assessments which includes a series of mitigation measures are proposed. It confirms the proposed public realm scheme will not have a negative impact on water courses, ground water, European sites or other Environmental Sensitivities.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028, it is therefore recommended the development proceed as proposed and in accordance with appropriate construction management and archaeological monitoring and mitigation measures.



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