

**CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS**

**District Play Area and Park for St Mary's / King's Island,  
Limerick**

**Landscape Architects Report for Part 8 Planning Application**



**For  
Limerick City & County Council**

**CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS**  
LAND PLANNING & DESIGN

**With**

- Punch Consulting Engineers
- Kompan Play Specialists
- Michael Barrett Partnership Quantity Surveyors
- John Kelleher Associates M+E Engineers

Date: June 2018

## **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Project Brief**
- 3.0 Planning Policy Context**
- 4.0 Site Description**
- 5.0 Site Context**
- 6.0 Design Statement**
- 7.0 Accessibility**
- 8.0 Materials and Construction**

**Appendix A: A3 Photomontage**

**Appendix B: A4 Drawing Register**

**Appendix C: A3 Site Location Plan**

**Appendix D: A1 Landscape Masterplan  
A1 Play & Exercise Equipment Arrangement Plan  
A1 Site Sections**

## 1.0 Introduction

Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, landscape architects, were engaged by Limerick City and County Council in September 2017 to provide and lead a multi-disciplinary team of design specialists for the development of proposals for a Part 8 Planning Application for a new play facility and park at St. Mary's / King's Island, Limerick.

**Design Team:** The design team and the various services provided are as follows:-

- Cunnane Stratton Reynolds - Landscape architecture/Urban Design/Employers Representative
- Punch Consulting Engineers - Civil & Structural Engineering
- Kompan - Play specialist advise
- Michael Barrett Partnership - Quantity Surveying & Cost Analysis
- Punch Consulting Engineers - Project Supervisor for Design Process
- John Kelleher Associates - Mechanical & Electrical Engineering

## 2.0 Project Brief

The project brief emerged from an extensive collaborative exercise by Limerick City and County Council, CWELL\* and the local St. Mary's community which seeks the provision of a play area for toddlers and young children and a range of outdoor fitness equipment catering for teens and adults. In addition, the park is to provide seating, attractive and low maintenance landscaping and adequate public lighting.

A public consultation exercise carried out by CWELL in mid 2015 revealed a considerable number of respondents interested in an integrated park of this nature with aspirations for the Community Centre to run outdoor 'keep fit' classes at the outdoor gym facility.

The brief highlighted the need for the new district play area and park to cater for disabled users and those with mobility issues. The facility should be defined by its inclusivity.

*\*(CWELL which stands for Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership, and Lifeskills is a specific diploma course developed and run by the University of in Limerick in partnership with St. Mary's Community to help address community health issues through a range of educational interventions)*

## 3.0 Planning Policy Context

The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) was adopted by the Elected Members of Limerick City Council in February 2014 and has the following overarching objective encapsulated in its vision statement:

*"Safe and sustainable communities of opportunity where people of all ages enjoy a good quality of life, a decent home and a sense pride about their place. Well serviced and attractive neighbourhoods will be physically connected and fully integrated with the social, economic and cultural life of Limerick."*

The vision of the LRFIP therefore aims to improve the quality of life in St. Mary's Park. The provision of a new area of play will achieve this vision by improving health through play and fitness. Furthermore in section 2.6.4 of the adopted LRFIP the following objective relating to St. Mary's Park and King's Island proposes to:

*"Provide for active playspace facilities, based on the existing and expected child population projections generated by the existing and future need. St. Mary's Park is under resourced in terms of active play facilities."*

The Design and Public Realm Code (DPRC) for the Regeneration Areas was published in 2015 and highlights a specific objective for a district level neighbourhood equipped area of play located adjacent to the Creche and Community Centre in St. Mary's Park. The following objective contained within the DPRC states:

*“A new district-level play area and multi-use games area will be provided in the open space between the fisheries weir and crèche.”*

A preferred location was discussed with a resident’s representative group – CWELL1 and the location proposed is in accordance with the overall objective of the DPRC. The proposed location has the benefit of being located at the interface between St. Mary’s Park and the wider King’s Island area and being immediately adjacent to a cluster of community focussed uses such as the existing Creche and Community Centre. This proposed area will be well overlooked by existing housing and centrally located within King’s Island for optimum overlooking and safety.

#### 4.0 Site Description

The site for the proposed District Play Area is located at Verdant Place, St. Mary’s Park, King’s Island, Limerick adjacent to the local community centre and creche and is to replace an existing, poorly equipped play area located further north on King’s Island at Oliver Plunkett Street and some distance from the community hub. The proposed site is currently a green open space 0.1 hectares (0.25 acres) in size. Refer to Figure 2.1 below.

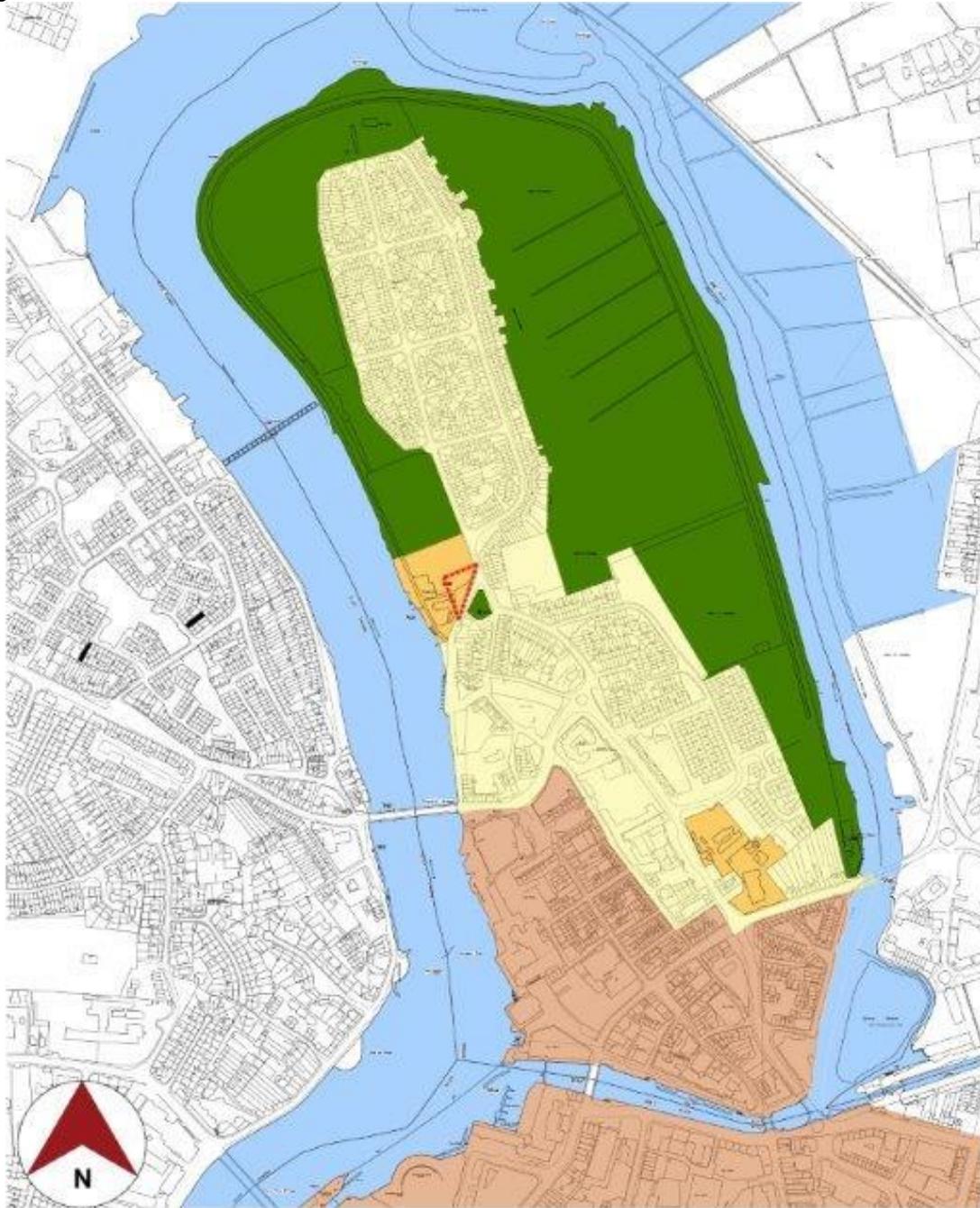
Figure 4.1 Site Location Plan



## 5.0 Site Context

St. Mary's Park and King's Island estates are established residential communities located just north of Limerick City Centre and King John's Castle. The island derives its name from the physical geography of the location, the island being formed by the encircling Shannon and Abbey Rivers. The island is flat and low lying and is partially subject to flooding from the adjoining rivers. Parts of the eastern and western edges of the island consists of undeveloped flood plains. St Mary's Park housing estate is located in the northern section of the island.

Figure 5.1 Site Context Plan



### Legend

	Special Area of Conservation		Education, Community & Cultural		City Centre Area
	Public Open Space		Residential Area		Site Location

## 6.0 Design Statement

### 6.1 Design Overview:

Design proposals for the new district play area and park are shown on Masterplan drawing no. 17482-2-101 and Site Sections drawing no. 17482-2-201. The design incorporates the following elements in line with the requirements of the project brief: -

#### Play Area: -

- Integrated Play Area with protective perimeter fence to cater for toddlers and juniors in the 0 to 10 years age range
- Safety surfacing
- Low grass mounds
- Tree and shrub planting
- Seating
- Litter bin
- Lighting
- Drainage

#### Outdoor Fitness Equipment: -

- Outdoor gym facility to cater for cardiac, rehabilitation and toning/strength

### 6.2 Design Concept, Layout & Inclusivity:

The design concept proposes the development of an attractive landform along the perimeter of the site which is facilitated by a cut and fill exercise on the site and re-use of the excavated material to create a series of mounds. The resulting park layout is enhanced by the inclusion of tree and groundcover planting and the low grass mounds which provide visual interest and variety through the seasons. Some of the play units are also integrated into the mounds which adds play value for children.

The layout of the park provides two distinct use areas i.e., the play area itself and the outdoor gym facility which is located at the southern extremity of the site just outside the play area fence but protected from the adjacent road by an existing roadside guardrail.

Good access to and from the new facility and ease of circulation within the core play area is central to the design concept. This, combined with the provision of spaces for children, parents and minders to socialise or simply observe is a key part of promoting inclusivity.

The play equipment has been selected to provide a range of play for children up to 10 years of age, regardless of physical or mental ability. A wheelchair accessible roundabout will have obvious benefits for children confined to wheelchairs and the popularity of this unit among all children will also promote social interaction between children of all age ranges and abilities. Nest swings are also popular with all children. The Babel Drum is a sensory play unit which will, again, have benefit for all users.

The play area also includes swings, see-saw, springer units, spinner unit and two multi-play units which are integrated into the landscape earth mounds described above. There is a hop scotch pattern imprinted on the access strip which facilitates freedom of movement around the centrally located play zone. There are two picnic suites provided as well as a park bench and litter bin.

(Refer to Play and Exercise Equipment Arrangement Plan Drg. no. 17482-2-401 for full details of play and exercise equipment).

A self-closing gate allows movement between the play area and the outdoor gym. The gym includes a suspension trainer, rope bells and steps which facilitate a range of training exercises.

The proposed design layout will provide a lasting framework for the playground and gym within which play equipment or exercise units can be renewed or upgraded in the long term.

Maintenance commitments associated with the new playground have been an important consideration for the project. The objective has been to avoid unnecessary maintenance burden while at the same time realising the aims and objectives of the brief for an inspiring district park.

Compliance with design standards for play areas, play equipment and health and safety: All play equipment has been specified to comply with BS EN 117 and will be installed on safety surfacing to comply with BS EN 1177



**Computer generated 3-D image of proposed District Play Area facility**

### **6.3 Community Consultation and Design Development:**

The design process has been informed by a community consultation which took place on the 11th October 2017 at St. Mary's / King's Island community centre. The consultation took the form of a presentation of sketch design proposals and discussion with the community to ensure that local needs and expectations were addressed. Design plans, sections and sketches were presented along with a computer-generated image of the proposed design to help reveal and explain design intent. The proposals were received favourably by the group and a range of useful comments suggestions put forward by the group gave rise to a number of design modifications.

### **7.0 Accessibility**

The play area and outdoor gym are easily accessed from the local street footpath system. Gateways to the play area are flush with adjoining surfaces and there are no constraints on access for wheelchairs or push chairs. Gates are self closing and can be operated with ease. Not all of the play equipment is accessible for those confined to wheelchairs due to constraints imposed by available space and budget. However, as outlined above, there are a number of play units specifically included for wheelchair users and free movement through the play area facilitates a sense of inclusion and social contact for all users.

### **8.0 Materials and Construction**

All materials have been specified with quality and durability in mind in line with the expectations of the project brief.

The play and gym equipment consists of timber and steel based products. Robinia timber is a durable hardwood with a 15-year guarantee. All steel elements are specified as galvanised and powder coated.

Safety surfacing consists of wetpour rubberised surfacing which is a common feature in play areas. There will be colour variation between the surfaces in the play area and outdoor gym facility.

All play equipment and safety surfacing will be installed in accordance with BS EN1177 and the park will be subject to a RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) inspection prior to being opened to the public.

Surfaces outside of the safety zones consists of resin bound gravel to add texture and a sense of quality to the play area environment. Seating and a litter bin have also been selected for the new facility. The perimeter railings to the play area are 1.2m high hoop-topped galvanised steel with a coloured powder coated finish.