

04th December 2024

To: The Cathaoireach and Each Member of the Municipal District of Adare Rathkeale

Re: Part VIII Planning Report for the Remodelling and Extension of the Adare Heritage Centre at Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

I enclose herewith the Director General's Report prepared in accordance with Section 179(3) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001(as amended) in respect of the proposed Remodelling and Extension of the Adare Heritage Centre at Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick.

In accordance with Section 179 (4) (b) of the above Act, it is proposed to proceed as indicated in Section 8 of this report.

Is mise le meas,



STEPHANE DUCLOT

Director of Service

Rural, Culture, Community and Tourism Development Directorate

Encl

Memo

To: Dr. Pat Daly, Director General

From: Vincent Murray, Director of Services, Planning, Environment and Place Making

Date: 3rd December 2024

Re: Part 8 Proposal, Reference PT8LL155 – Development at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850).

Dear Director General,

Please find attached for your consideration report prepared in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of the proposed Part 8 works to Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick

The proposal prepared by Discover Limerick DAC, has been evaluated taking into consideration all submissions received. It is concluded that the proposed development is in accordance with the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

It is recommended that the proposed development be recommended to the Elected Members of the Metropolitan District of Limerick.

Signed: 

Áine Leland, Executive Planner

Signed: 

Barry Henn, Senior Executive Planner

Signed: 

Vincent Murray, Director of Services, Planning, Environment and Place Making

**PART 8 REPORT & RECOMMENDATION IN ACCORDANCE
WITH SECTION 179 3(a) OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED)**

Re: Part 8 Proposal for the following:

Development at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850).

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

2.0 Description of the nature and extent of the proposed development

- for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide:
 - o reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level
 - o an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations
 - o existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage.

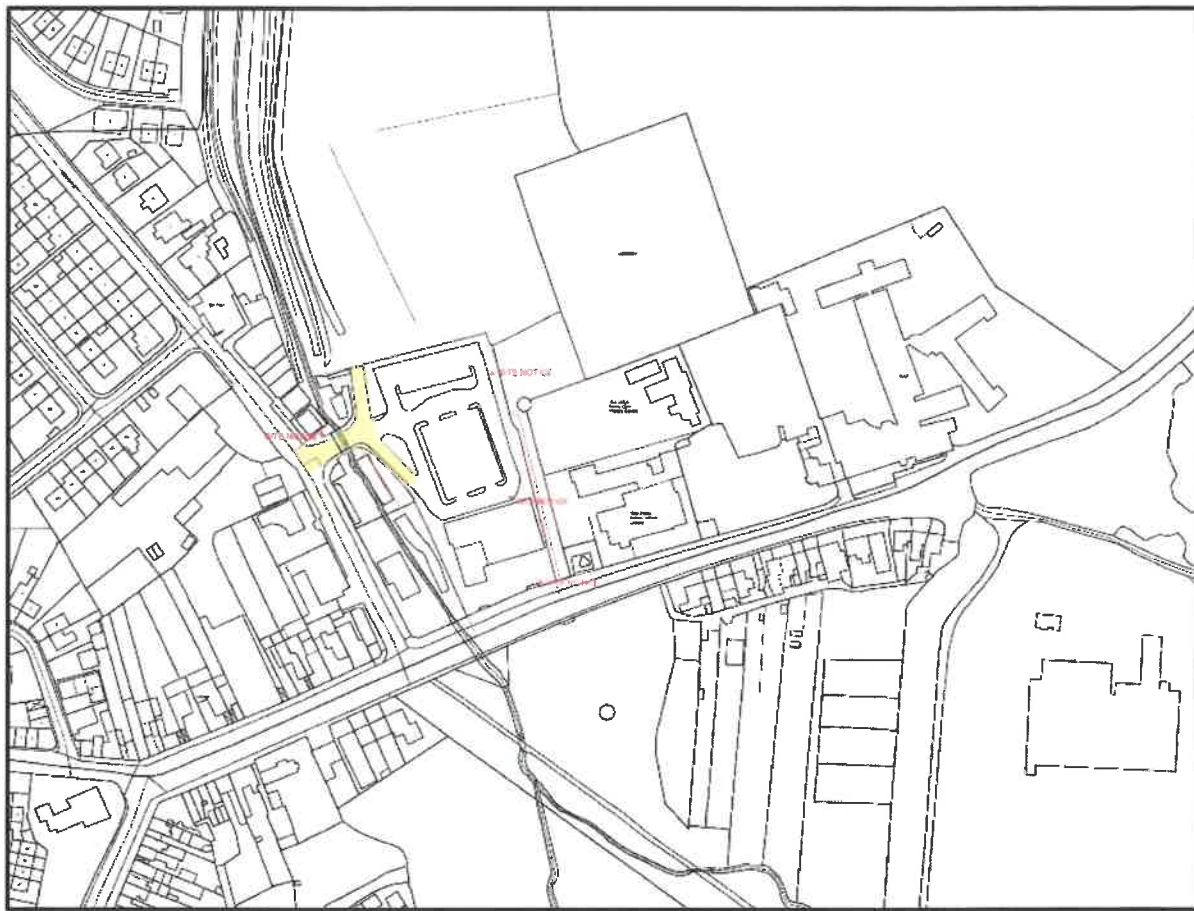
The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850)

At Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick

2.1 Site Location:

The site is located on Main Street within the centre of Adare village adjacent to the Trinitarian Abbey and opposite Adare Town Park. The site is occupied by the existing Adare Heritage Centre which is a single storey building with uses at attic level also on a site of 1.193ha in size. The site is bounded to the south by Main Street, to the east by the Trinitarian Abbey, to the west by an AIB bank and to the north by the car park associated with the Heritage Centre and which is accessed off the Station Road to the west.

Site Location Map



2.2 Public Consultation:

The plans and particulars were placed on public display from the 6th September 2024 until the 4th October 2024. Submissions and observations were invited up to the 18th October 2024.

3.0 Submissions with respect to the proposed development

A total of 13 no. written submissions / observations were received and are listed hereafter:

No.	Name	Date Received
SUB 01	Planning & Place Making Department, Limerick City & County Council	10/09/2024
SUB 02	Mid West National Road Design Office	10/09/2024
SUB 03	Patrick Fitzgerald, Adare	11/09/2024
SUB 04	Irish Water	16/09/2024
SUB 05	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	19/09/2024

SUB 06	Dunraven Estate Company, Adare	01/10/2024
SUB 07	Adare Community Trust	14/10/2024
SUB 08	Eleanor Purcell, Black Abbey Crafts Ltd	15/10/2024
SUB 09	Olivia Gardiner, Adare Woollen Mills Ltd	17/10/2024
SUB 10	Louis Murphy, Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare	17/10/2024
SUB 11	Cllr Adam Teskey	18/10/2024
SUB 12	Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DAU)	18/10/2024
SUB 13	Environment & Climate Action, Limerick City & County Council	14/11/2024

SUB (01) - Planning & Place Making Department, Limerick City & County Council

Submission Summary:

Acknowledgement of the development proposal noting the following:

1. Adoption of flood resilient finishes and construction measures is recommended.
2. Condition requiring preparation of an Emergency Flood Access and Egress Plan to be applied to any planning consent.
3. Condition requiring continuing liaison with the Adare Flood Relief Scheme project team to be applied to any planning consent given the potential for overlapping interests.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted. Response as follows:

1. Flood resilient finishes & construction measures will be considered as part of the proposal.
2. An Emergency Flood Access / Egress Plan will be prepared prior to commencement.
3. Continuing liaison with the Adare Flood Relief Scheme project team will be facilitated.

SUB (02) - Mid West National Road Design Office

Submission Summary:

Acknowledgement of the development proposal. No observations are contained.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted.

SUB (03) - Patrick T Fitzgerald, Adare

Submission Summary:

A 19 page submission by an Adare resident seeking to remind us of the richness of Adare's heritage offering by cataloguing some of the village's notable events, sights, travel and poetry writings. The observer suggests opportunities for reimagining the existing Interpretive Experience within the Heritage Centre noting that "the dismantling of the old exhibition can only be justified if the new exhibition is better". The author highlights notable events of the

recent past including Adare connections with the '4 in a row' All Ireland winning Limerick hurling team and planned / potential events of the future including the 2027 Ryder Cup and the opening of an Adare railway station. The observer's summation is in "hope, that only the very highest standards of excellence will be pursued to create a stunning exhibition befitting of such a special destination as Adare".

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are acknowledged. It is noted that the services of a specialist Interpretive Designer of national prominence will be engaged in the re-imagination of the Interpretive Experience planned to be housed centrally within the remodelled development.

SUB (04) - Irish Water

Submission Summary:

Acknowledgement of the development proposal noting the following requirements:

1. An Irish Water Connection Agreement will be required to be entered into in respect of a development specific water / waste water connection (standard condition).
2. Proposed connection to the water & waste water infrastructure will be subject to the constraints of Irish Water's Capital Investment Programme (noting that Adare's WwTP is nearing capacity and that connections are offered on a first come first served basis).
3. All development will be required to be carried out in accordance with Irish Water's standards, codes and practices (standard condition).
4. The developer will be required to comply with all conditions specified in any Irish Water agreements issued on foot of a Pre-connection Enquiry & Connection Application.
5. Confirmation of Feasibility of Diversions to be sought from Irish Water where it is proposed to build over an Irish Water Asset.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted. Response as follows:

1. An Irish Water Connection Agreement will be entered into.
2. The constraints of Irish Water's Capital Investment Programme are noted.
3. Irish Water's standards, codes and practices will be adhered to.
4. Requirements to comply with all conditions specified in any Irish Water agreements are noted.
5. Confirmation of diversion feasibility will be sought if applicable.

SUB (05) – Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Submission Summary:

Acknowledgement of the development proposal noting that any alterations to the adjoining N21 national road should conform to TII Publications.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted. Any alterations to the adjoining N21 national road will be undertaken in consultation with TII Publications.

SUB (06) – Dunraven Estate Company

Submission Summary:

A submission from the Countess of Dunraven, an adjacent landowner and purveyor of the lands used to enable construction of the existing Adare Heritage Centre, acknowledging the

rational / necessity for the internal rearrangements proposed as part of the development but questioning the external expression of the ancillary building form. The observer suggests that the proposed design is not in-keeping with any other buildings in the village and is insensitive to the Village's heritage context. The observer requests that the design be reconsidered by designers that understand heritage context.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted. The site's heritage context has been carefully considered by the specialist technical consultancy team engaged in the design of the proposal. The engaged multidisciplinary design team is led by Kavanagh Tuite Architects, an RIAI accredited practice who have been working for many years in the design and delivery of projects located within sensitive heritage environments. In addition to the conservation qualifications of its own practice members, Kavanagh Tuite Architects have been further supported in the development of the design proposal by the services of a locally based Grade 2 accredited Architectural Conservation practice – Gleeson McSweeney Architects. The contemporary design approach promoted aligns with the principles of international conservation charters for the design of new works in heritage settings. These principles are informed by a range of key philosophies and charters. These include the Venice Charter (1964), the Granada Convention (1985), the Burra Charter (1979-2013), Washington Charter (1987), Valletta principles (2011) and various European Conventions on the Protection of Architectural and Archaeological Heritage. In keeping with these philosophies, the architectural language of the new development is contemporary such as to provide a clear contrast in style while respecting the scale, materials, and other contextual aspects of the historic environment. The scale of the proposed intervention is subordinate to the adjacent heritage structures while also reflecting the two-storey scale of the primary Adare streetscape. The use of traditional materials (slate) reflect the palate of materials evident within the village context. An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) prepared by Gleeson McSweeney Architects forms part of the documents comprising the Part 8 application.

SUB (07) – Adare Community Trust

Submission Summary:

An observation highlighting the Adare Community Trust's support for the proposal noting the likely benefits of the development for tourism and community uses. The observer notes the importance of displaying the heritage of Adare (past and present) in all plans and highlights the potential flexibility for use of the street front area for events.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted.

SUB (08) – Eleanor Purcell, Black Abbey Crafts Ltd

Submission Summary:

A submission from a longstanding commercial tenant currently operating a gift shop from within the Heritage Centre, noting their support for the principle of redeveloping / modernising the Heritage Centre but highlighting 3 areas of concern with the proposal:

1. It is suggested that the proposal will downgrade the existing commercial purpose of the Centre by virtue of its proposed internal arrangement and provision of space. The observer suggests that the primary users of the facility are international tourists and tourism growth will not be supported by; (a) a reduction in the overall area of retail

accommodation, (b) lack of increased coach parking provisions, (c) insufficient increase in sanitary accommodation facilities. The observer also notes that provisions are not indicated in the proposals for tourism information panels, displays or an information desk.

2. It is suggested that the location and design of the proposed retail units will reduce commercial viability as compared with the current arrangements which benefit from direct access and advertisement via its frontage onto the foreground area of the centre.
3. It is suggested that the construction phase will impact negatively on the operation of the observer's business. The absence of a construction phasing plan as part of the Part 8 application documents is noted.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are acknowledged. Response to the various issue noted as follows:

1. It is neither intended nor expected that the existing commercial purpose of the Centre will be downgraded. A reduction in the overall area of retail space is not proposed. The central ground floor space has the capacity to accommodate a complimentary retail function. A degree of flexibility will be employed however in the design of the ancillary fit-out to ensure that the space retains flexibility to accommodate other 'out of hours' activities should such demand arise. An increased level of coach parking is not being considered on the site over and above increasing car parking capacity. Car parking capacity is proposed to be increase by 25%. Coach tours, which are a core component of visitors to the centre, generally stay for a limited window of time while car visitors have greater flexibility to prolong their stay in an area and engage further with the local tourism offering. A core objective of this development is to improve the wider tourism benefit for the village and county by engaging visitors more proactively at key visitor hubs such as this. Tourism information panels, displays and information desks are not indicated with the Part 8 application drawings as these will be developed as part of a subsequent fit-out development. These will form part of the Centre's offering and their design will be developed in normal course should the development be authorised to proceed. Additional public sanitary facilities are proposed at first floor level. An increase from five 'ladies' cubicles (at present) to nine was proposed between the two floors. This is proposed to be further increased to ten. Splitting the facilities will have the benefit of reducing queuing at peak visitor times and segregating crowds, particularly coach tour visits, which are a primary driver of crunch demand for sanitary facilities at the centre. There are also increases in provisions proposed for male and accessible sanitary facilities including a Changing Places toilet facility.
2. A core objective of the development proposal is to transform the building into a more open, inviting and appealing reception centre full of light and easily navigable. To achieve this, it will be necessary to relocate accommodation. The openness of the layout is expected to increase dwell time within the centre thus improving visitor engagement with the centre's offerings and services. It is not considered that the economic viability of the proposed retail offerings will suffer as a result of the repositioning of the retail spaces. Critically, the centre acts as an internal street moving people between the car park located to the north of the centre through to the main street located to the south of the centre (and vice versa). The proposed layout seeks to reinforce this internal street. The retail spaces are proposed to front directly on to this internal street and as such will

have shopfront interface potential with the full compliment of footfall engaging with the building.

3. It is acknowledged that a construction phasing plan has not been provided with the Part 8 application documents. There a number of options for management of this interface which will be explored with each stakeholder should the Part 8 application be approved and the development be authorised to proceed.

SUB (09) – Olivia Gardiner, Adare Woollen Mills Ltd

Submission Summary:

A submission from a longstanding commercial tenant (and local resident) currently operating from within the Heritage Centre, in the first instance, acknowledging the valuable contribution that the Heritage Centre plays, through tourism, in the vibrancy and economic growth of the village, secondly welcoming the proposal to upgrade the Centre while thirdly highlighting 2 particular areas of concern with the proposal:

1. Adequacy of public sanitary provisions noting that an increase from five to six ‘ladies’ cubicles is insufficient considering lengthy queuing currently experienced at peak visitor times.
2. Displacement and relocation of a sitting tenant (the observer’s business) and the ancillary potentially negative consequences (disrupting operations and jeopardising livelihood) on the observer’s business arising from a proposed alternative location.

Director General’s Response:

The contents of the submission are acknowledged. Response to the 2 noted concern areas as follows:

1. Additional public sanitary facilities are proposed at first floor level. An increase from five ‘ladies’ cubicles (at present) to nine was proposed between the two floors. It is proposed to further increase this to ten. Splitting the facilities will have the benefit of reducing queuing at peak visitor times and segregating crowds, particularly coach tour visits, which are a primary driver of crunch demand for sanitary facilities at the centre. There are also increases in provisions proposed for male and accessible sanitary facilities including the provision of a Changing Places toilet facility.
2. The commercial concerns of the observer as regards operating from an alternative location are appreciated. Critically, a key issue for the centre is that the building acts as an internal street moving people between the car park located north of the centre through to the main street located south of the centre (and vice versa). The rigid and cellular nature of the building’s existing internal layout is unable to comfortably accommodate the volume of pedestrian traffic currently being experienced at busy times. The resultant congestion, along with the tired nature of the centre’s facilities, deters people from engaging properly with the centre’s services and offerings. A core objective of this development proposal is to transform the building into a more open, inviting and appealing reception centre full of light and comfortably navigable. To achieve this, it will be necessary to relocate accommodation unfortunately. In reorganising the building’s programme of accommodation, careful consideration has been given to the location of retail components along the retained north / south primary circulation spine through the building. This is to ensure that those elements can benefit in full from the passing through-flow of pedestrian traffic. The north south circulation spine is proposed to be reinforced as an exciting light filled double height space that guides pedestrians directly

past the retail spaces. The openness of the layout is expected to increase dwell time within the centre thus improving visitor engagement with the centre's offering and services. Needless to say, there will be detailed engagement in planning the change should the Part 8 application be approved and the development be authorised to proceed.

SUB (10) – Louis Murphy, Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare

Submission Summary:

An observation acknowledging the importance of the Adare Heritage Centre to the village and welcoming the proposed investment which is noted as being long overdue. The observer notes that many of their hotel guests frequent the Centre and its redevelopment will add to their village experience.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted.

SUB (11) – Cllr Adam Teskey

Submission Summary:

A submission highlighting various issues the observer perceives with the proposal, the ancillary Part 8 application process and wider matters related to the Heritage Centre. The observer notes that he is not against the redevelopment of the centre in principle but cannot support the development without key concerns being addressed including:

1. The observer notes that the Councilor's had sought a meeting regarding the moving of the Heritage Centre company ownership from the Council to a (Discover Limerick) DAC. It is purported that the DAC was set-up without the requested consultation (and associated transparency).
2. The observer suggests that Councilor's have been misled noting that they were advised at a meeting that the changes were material alterations to the existing building and highlights that the Part 8 application describes a partial demolition of the building which on review equates to a 95% demolition.
3. The observer suggests that Councilor's have been misled noting that they were advised at the same meeting that costs for the project would be €6-8 million and then subsequently advised that the costs could be €20m. The observer requests that funding be made available for the replacement of village hall roof given the variations in cost. The observer notes that tax payer's money needs to be respected and value for money attained.
4. The observer suggests that the application is flawed and should be deemed invalid on the basis of a misleading 'partial demolition' description and a failure to display the Part 8 application documents in the Municipal Area office at Rathkeale and in the village of Adare.
5. The observers suggests that the design of the building needs to be revisited to be more in-keeping with the village's architectural heritage context.
6. The observer suggests that more car parking needs to be provided within the village necessitating the purchase of additional lands. It is also suggested that the proposed car parking finishes are not in-keeping with the area and should be reviewed.
7. The observer suggests that the layout does not go far enough to support existing business's operating from within the Heritage Centre. The observer suggests that the proposal represents a (further) mistreatment of the businesses.

Director General's Response:

The contents of the submission are noted. Responses hereafter to the various highlighted concerns correspond with the above numbering sequence:

1. Following agreement between the Adare Heritage Trust and Limerick City and County Council regarding the management of operations at the Adare Heritage Centre, Discover Limerick DAC commenced management of the Heritage Centre operations at the end of November 2023 under licence granted by the Local Authority. Discover Limerick DAC was established in April 2022 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Local Authority for the purposes of managing the operation of tourism sites (King John's Castle initially) falling under the Local Authority's responsibility. At the September 2023 meeting of the Municipal Area of Adare Rathkeale, a motion proposing transfer of the lease for the Adare Heritage Centre to Discover Limerick DAC was deferred. The facility continues to be owned by the Local Authority.
2. The Part 8 development description clearly describes the remodelling and extension of the Centre. The description of a partial demolition is factually correct. A specific drawing identifying the proposed scope of demolition was provided with the Part 8 application for clarity on the extent of the proposed demolition.
3. Current construction and wider project budget cost estimates will be shared with the Elected Members separately. Value for money will be attained via the implementation of procurement processes appropriate to the varying components of the project. Funding for other community proposed developments including upgrading of the village hall roof will be considered under separate funding applications.
4. The application is not considered to be invalid. The development description is not deemed incorrect and while it might have been better to also display the Part 8 application at the Council's offices at Adare / Rathkeale (this will be done going forward), the Council's policy regarding display of Part 8 applications has been adhered to with copies of the application being made available for physical inspection at both the Council's Dooradoyle and Merchant's Quay offices as well as digitally on the Council's Mypoint consultation platform. In addition to the minimum publication requirements, an advertised public display event was held in the village hall ahead of the Part 8 application being progressed. This was attended by approximately 47 members of the public. The presentation boards used for that display event have been available for inspection at the Adare Heritage Centre across the display and observation period in the event of local enquiry. While there were no requests to view the development proposal at any of the council's Rathkeale, Dooradoyle or Merchant's Quay offices, the digital version of the application (Mypoint) was visited more than 200 times across the display and submissions / observations period.
5. The surrounding heritage context of the development has been taken into careful consideration by the professional consultancy team engaged in the design of the development proposals. The appointed multi-disciplinary design team includes the services of a Grade 2 accredited Architectural Conservation practice who were involved in the preparation of an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA). This AHIA, which formed part of the Part 8 application, considers that the design is sensitive to the site's heritage setting, is subordinate to the adjacent heritage buildings and will add value to the Architectural Conservation Area.
6. The lands which are the subject of this Part 8 application are lands in Local Authority ownership. The Part 8 development proposal seeks to realise improved parking efficiencies at the site. In that regard, the reconfigured proposal would serve to increase the sites existing car parking capacity by a factor of approximately 25%. The proposed car parking finishes have been considered as part of the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment and are deemed to represent an enhancement of the Architectural Conservation area. While the suggested necessity for purchase of additional lands for

<p>increased car parking purposes is acknowledged, any such development or proposal would form the subject of a separate standalone development consideration.</p> <p>7. The development proposals do not represent a mistreatment of the existing businesses operating from within the Heritage Centre. The proposal considers how the retail functions of the facility could be accommodated with due regard to the flow of visitors through the building and how the retail components of the centre could maximise interface potential with such customers while simultaneously having regard to the wider objectives of transforming the building into a more open, inviting and appealing light-filled reception centre whose purpose will be to improve the wider tourism benefit for the village of Adare and county of Limerick by delivering a more pleasant setting in which to engage visitors more proactively.</p>
<p>SUB (12) – Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DAU)</p> <p><u>Submission Summary:</u></p> <p>A submission from the Development Applications Unit of the DHLGH noting that bats could be present within the building proposed to be altered. The submission requests that a bat survey be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and the ancillary report be furnished to the DAU prior to a decision being taken in respect of the application. The observer indicates that a derogation license will be required to be applied for to the National Parks and Wildlife Service should bats be discovered roosting within the building.</p> <p><u>Director General's Response:</u></p> <p>A Preliminary Ecological Assessment was conducted at the site ahead of the Part 8 application being lodged. The building was assessed for the presences of bats. Bat presence was not identified through the ancillary survey findings which suggested that the building was unlikely to be suitable for bat roosting purposes. A bat survey will be undertaken prior to the commencement of development works.</p>
<p>SUB (13) – Environment & Climate Action Department, Limerick City & County Council</p> <p><u>Submission Summary:</u></p> <p>Acknowledgement of the development proposal highlighting the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation / Submission of a Demolition Refurbishment Asbestos Survey. 2. Prior to construction, the preparation / submission for the written agreement of the Local Authority of a site specific Waste Management Plan noting a list of licensed waste collectors and waste facility sites proposed to be used as part of the works along with estimated tonnages of waste and demolition materials by type likely to arise. <p><u>Director General's Response:</u></p> <p>The contents of the submission are noted. Response as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Demolition Refurbishment Asbestos Survey has been undertaken at the site. No ACM's were detected. The Survey will be furnished to the Planning Department separately. 2. A site specific Construction Waste Management Plan addressing the points highlighted will be prepared and furnished to the Planning Department prior to commencement of the development.

4.0 Habitats Directive Project Screening Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been undertaken by JBA Consulting for the proposed development which examined the impacts the proposed development may have on

any nearby European Designated Sites. The Droichid'n Stream is located on the western boundary of the site, and which flows into the transitional waterbody of the Maigue Estuary approx. 300m downstream. While construction and demolition works may result in some pollutants and dust occurring, pollutants entering the stream is expected to be negligible as there is a buffer of existing vegetation, fencing and walls are to be retained. Reasonable construction measures will be carried out in line with the CEMP. There will be no water discharges into the stream as there is an existing storm water and foul water system present. To manage rainwater runoff, a soakaway is to be installed while runoff from the hard standing area will be managed on site by means of porous asphalt/grasscrete and soft landscaping. Excavation works are limited to a max depth of 1.2m which are considered shallow and unlikely to achieve groundwater strike.

The report concluded that Due to the location of the proposed site, the scale of the works, the distance to the Natura 2000 sites within the ZoI, the proposed project is not anticipated to have any likely significant effects via surface water, groundwater, land, or air pathways, to any Natura 2000 sites.

The Executive is satisfied given the nature and scale of the works and the nature of the existing surrounding urban environment, the development as proposed should not exercise a significant effect on the conservation status of any SAC or SPA either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and therefore a Stage 2 NIS is not necessary.

5.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

An EIA Screening Report has been prepared by JBA Consulting and submitted with the application which considered whether an EIA is required for the proposed development. The Screening report concludes that the characteristics of the proposed development are not considered likely to result in a significant impact on the environment by virtue of its size, nature or operational activities and can be easily mitigated through the use of standard environmental procedures and the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. The proposed development consists of the demolition, expansion of the cultural heritage centre and renovation of the carpark. The development will occupy a relatively small area, 1 hectare currently comprising of the curtilage of Adare heritage centre and carpark, and an existing carpark and access route to the east. Any environmental or noise impacts will be during the construction phase and not during operation of the development. Construction will not require significant use of natural resources, generated construction waste will be segregated and stored prior to transfer to an authorised facility for recovery/recycling/disposal.

The development does not fall within any of the threshold or sub-threshold requirements for a mandatory EIA as specified in Section 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). Having regard to the size of the development, located within a modified environment, the Executive is satisfied that the development as proposed does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

6.0 Key Policy Provisions

Adare Local Area Plan 2024-2030

There are two zonings associated with the subject site – *Village Centre* and *Educating & Community*.

Village Centre

To protect, consolidate and facilitate the development of Adare's commercial, retail, educational, leisure, residential, social and community uses and facilities.

Education and Community

To protect and provide for education, training, adult learning, community, healthcare, childcare, civic, religious and social infrastructure.

The Heritage Centre and associated car park has been identified in the LAP as an opportunity site and the proposals aim to unlock this potential by boosting community vitality and fostering a positive public environment in the village.

Objective SM 2 Car Parking: It is an objective of the Council As part of the Transport Plan for Adare to:

- a) Investigate the potential to provide alternative locations for car parking off Main St in Adare
- b) Explore the possibility of the provision of an overflow car park on lands to the rear of the Heritage Centre car park indicated as P on the Transport and Amenity Map subject to compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment contained in Volume 3 of this Plan and a Flood Management Plan detailing procedures including closure of the car park in predicted times of tidal inundation. Any development of a car park at this location shall demonstrate appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) which are in line with the appropriate and necessary environmental and ecological assessments as required. The proposed development supports the above objectives.

The Heritage Centre is noted to be an Opportunity Site within the Adare LAP.

Opportunity Site 1 Description: The Heritage Centre and car park with recycling centre to rear.

The site is located in the centre of the village and is zoned for Village Centre and Community and Education Use. The Centre is overseen by a Designated Activity Company (DAC), appointed by LCCC.

The site comprises of a building housing two retail units, a tourist information point, a library, café and public toilets. It also includes a car park with capacity for 89 cars and 6 coach parking bays and a public recycling facility. The building can be accessed from the front and the rear and there is a public plaza to the village side of the building. This building is the focal point for visitors to the village that arrive by coach. Bus tours to Desmond Castle, Adare operate from the centre between June and September.

Development Potential/Principles:

- Reimagine the layout of the Centre to explore opportunities to enhance the tourist facilities here to create a dynamic centre and focal point for tourists visiting the village. Potential exists to reorganise the public realm arrangements, retain and enhance the retail offering including the existing café and shops, reimagine the existing historical exhibition space and the community space afforded in the former Cinema room and the potential of the library to provide for a community hub. Upgrade of the toilet facilities is also required as is the need for a centralised information desk.
- The current parking provision shall be examined. This shall include for the provision of age friendly parking spaces and potential for a drop off point for coaches and long stay out of centre coach set down facilities. The Transport Plan being prepared for this village should investigate the suitability of a number of sites, including lands within the vicinity of the existing car park for the potential for the provision of car parking to accommodate relocation of spaces from Main Street.
- Any proposals for an overflow car park / new parking area, located on lands in Flood Zone will need to adhere to the provisions set out in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and will

require a detailed management scheme/plan to include for the closure of this area in times of predicted tidal flooding.

- To safeguard the adjoining watercourse, provision shall be made to ensure that no development takes place within 20m of this watercourse.
- An overall masterplan shall be prepared for the site and the overall development shall occur in a coordinated fashion.

Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028:

The Limerick Development Plan sets out the following policies and objectives with respect to acceptable development in the location in question:

Adare is designated as a Level 4 settlement within the Limerick Development Plan therefore Objective CGR O15 applies:

Objective CGR O15 Requirements for Developments within Level 4 Settlements

It is an objective of the Council within these settlements to facilitate development, subject to compliance with the following:

- a) To ensure that the scale of new housing developments both individually and cumulatively shall be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development. Generally, no one proposal for residential development shall increase the existing housing stock by more than 10 – 15% within the lifetime of the Plan, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the settlement has adequate capacity in terms of both physical and social infrastructure to support additional growth.
- b) The development of these centres shall provide for serviced sites and a variety of other house types and densities as appropriate.
- c) New commercial developments shall generally be located within the core area and shall contribute positively to the village urban fabric and streetscape.
- d) New community and social facilities shall be provided in conjunction with residential development is required.
- e) Where there is no treatment plant or limited capacity in the existing treatment plant, sewerage treatment for serviced sites shall generally be by means of individual treatment systems, subject to satisfactory site assessment and compliance with EPA guidelines. All systems shall be constructed so as to allow connection to public sewers in due course when capacity becomes available.

Policy ECON P7 Tourism

It is a policy of the Council to:

- a) Promote and facilitate the growth of the tourism industry in Limerick and tourism employment opportunities, through the sustainable development of urban and rural visitor attractions, amenities, facilities, festivals and events.
- b) Support the Limerick Tourism Development Strategy 2019-2023, the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick, the River Shannon Tourism Masterplan and the Limerick Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City Strategy, which inform the development of tourism in Limerick.

Objective ECON O45 Tourism

Support and harness the tourism potential of existing rural and heritage site amenities/attractions, including The Clare Glens, Lough Gur, Knockfierna, Munster Vales, Ballyhoura Country, Foynes Flying Boat and Maritime Museum, The Shannon Estuary Way, Curragh Chase, Fullers Folly and Adare Heritage Centre, in a way that promotes sustainable tourism.

Objective ECON O49 Tourism Facilities and Environmental Sensitive Areas

Tourism Facilities and Environmentally Sensitive Areas It is an objective of the Council to ensure that tourism facilities, are not located or designed where they would be significantly detrimental to environmentally sensitive areas, such as designated ecological areas, areas of archaeological potential or historic landscapes either existing or which may arise in the future, as a result of any surveys.

Objective ECON O50 Facilities and Amenities incidental to Tourist and Recreational Attractions and Scenic Views

It is an objective of the Council to consider public facilities and amenities of a type and scale that are incidental to tourist attractions and associated services where they would:

- a) Allow these attractions to be enjoyed and accessed by the public;
- b) Cater for basic needs of the public, incidental to the enjoyment of these attractions;
- c) Help to protect sensitive features through information and by appropriate management;
- d) Be adequately serviced and managed;
- e) Be inclusive to all members of the community. Applications must be accompanied by a management plan and justified by reference to a coherent, evidence-based tourism and recreational strategy applicable to the area. Such development should not impair the capacity of the road.

Objective ECON O51 Clustering of Tourist Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to cluster niche tourist/ visitor services and infrastructure, including locations where the service or tourist attraction currently exists.

7.0 Appraisal

Principle of Development

The site is located within the village centre of Adare, which is occupied by Adare Heritage Centre, Library, retail units. Coffee shop, car parking and ancillary uses. The front half of the site is zoned village centre as set out in the Adare Local Area Plan while the rear of the site is zoned *education and community*. As set out in the LAP community/cultural and tourism facilities are generally permitted on lands zoned *village centre* and *education and community* while a car park is generally acceptable on lands zoned *education and community* when it is ancillary to the primary use or with respect to car parking, if the site is identified in the Adare Transport Plan. As noted in the LAP the Heritage Centre Carpark reconfiguration should be considered within the Adare Transport Plan. Taking the account into above, and the existing use on site, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle.

Design/Layout

It is noted that following the consultation period Limerick DAC were contacted informally by the HSE with regards to the ground floor kitchen and staff welfare facilities. As a result, modifications are proposed to the general arrangement of the building layout which include a minor extension to the ground floor along the west elevation to allow for a greater kitchen space. The extension is within the enclosed service yard at ground floor only whereby the proposed furniture and garden storage area is to be replaced with an extension to the kitchen. Furthermore, the changes include alterations to the public toilet facilities in response to separate individual observations/submission lodged during the formal submission period to allow for sufficient public sanitary accommodation for female patrons/staff. It is considered that these changes are minor in nature and acceptable.

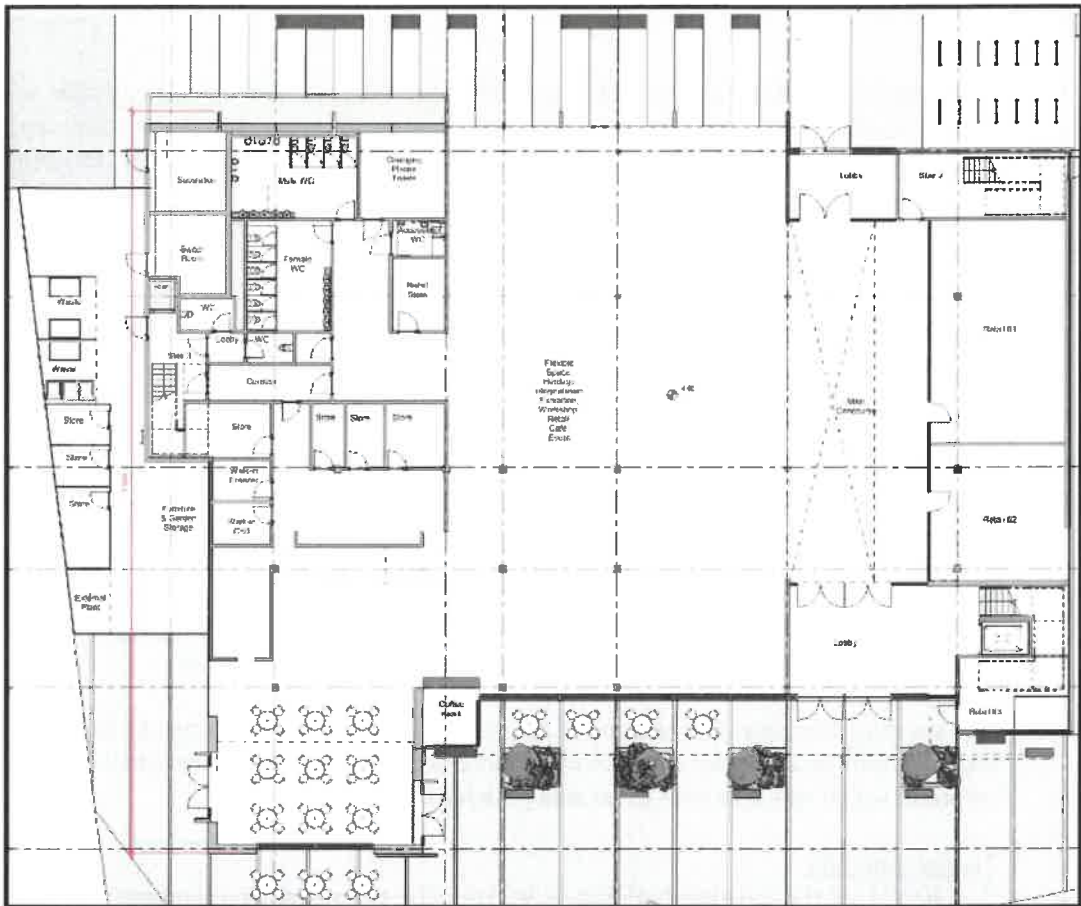


Figure 1: original layout

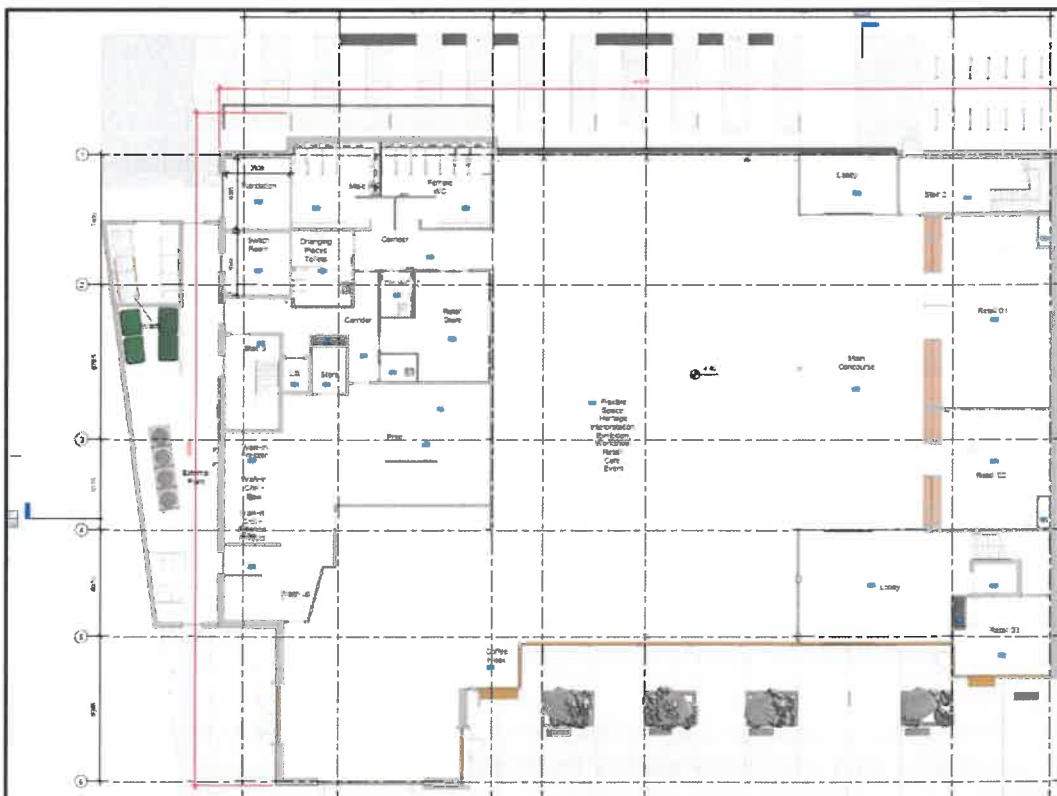


Figure 2: proposed changes following communications with the HSE

The existing building consists of essentially a two storey narrow plan design with two pitched roofs running east to west and two pitched roofs running north to south and a total gfa of 1540sqm. Existing uses on site include a central congregation space, reception area, exhibition area, 3 retail units, restaurant/café/dining area, bathrooms, storage, and a library at ground floor and a multi-purpose space, office accommodation, plant rooms and general storage at first floor.

The development as proposed includes for the demolition of the majority of the existing building and construction of a two storey, flat roof, contemporary style building so as to modernise the building in terms of energy performance, fabric and services, improvements to layout and spatial relationships both internal and external and updating the aesthetic of the furnishing and fittings. The ground floor will include a flexible space: heritage, interpretation/exhibition/workshop/retail/café, 3 retail units, kitchen/storerooms/plant rooms etc while the existing Library will be relocated to the first floor to the front of the building. The first floor will also include an exhibition/community use room, ancillary offices, storage, bathrooms etc. The new building will have a total gfa of 2536sqm and the footprint of same is generally in line with that of the existing building with proposed distances to boundaries comparable with existing separation distances.

The existing forecourt to the front of the building is to be redeveloped to include for new hard and soft landscaping and provide a more active pedestrian space which will act as an informal social space as well as an area which can host events.

Height/Amenity

The height of the existing building is 9.31m. The proposed development will result in a height of 10.135m. Given the change from pitched to flat roof, the existing surrounding uses, the height of the adjacent structures and the distance of same from the proposed development, the height is not considered overbearing in nature and will not lead to issues such as overlooking or overshadowing.

Parking/Vehicular Access

The existing car park is to the rear of the site and caters for approximately 113 cars and 5 coaches. As part of the development the car park will be reconfigured and extended towards to the northeast corner and which will allow for 142 car parking spaces, 4 coaches and 2 minibuses. The existing access via Station Road will remain unchanged. The carpark will be reconfigured whereby all traffic will be directed to one-way clockwise loop. The central aisles will have access for cars only and allow for 2 way traffic. Clearly delineated pedestrian walkways and crossings are provided throughout the car park. Adequate turning circles for large coaches and fire tenders is included. It is considered that the addition of approximately 29 new car parking spaces will help alleviate overflow traffic on Station Road during busy periods.

Vehicular access to the laneway immediately east is to be restricted between the Heritage Centre and the Dovecote except for access for funeral processions. A lockable drop down bollard will be placed to prevent unauthorised use. At the Dovecote, a new plaza is formed around it which will also act as a set down area for Our Lady's Abbey Girls School to the rear.

Bike parking is proposed at two locations – 1 adjacent to the rear entrance of the building and one adjacent to the central plaza to the front of the building.

Boundary Details

12 trees and a section of hedgerow will be required to be removed as a result of the development. It is noted that these are not sensitive and the majority will be replaced by additional planting. The two young trees at the front entrance will not be replaced. All remaining existing tree lines, along north, east and west boundaries are to be retained. A planting plan has been submitted with the application.

Public Lighting

A lighting plan has been provided for the remodeling of the car park and building. It is expected that the new lighting will be more sensitive for bats with lower light spill on existing habitats. Lighting control for the car park and outdoor areas are only on during hours of darkness and hours of use.

Finish Materials

A number of different finish materials are proposed including natural slate wall cladding to the majority of the elevations and which is broken up by bronze rain screen aluminium cladding, bronzed framed windows, ventilation louvres and elements of render. Large elements of glazing are proposed at first floor level which will overlook the church and associated protected structures within the immediate vicinity.

Ecological Assessment

A preliminary Ecological Assessment report has been carried out by JBA Consulting and submitted with the application and which includes an assessment of the potential impacts of the works on the habitats and species present at the site and surrounding areas. The assessment included mammal surveys, ecological walkovers of the site, aerial photographs etc. The assessment concluded that the proposed project found that there are no protected sites, species or habitats identified within the boundary of the Adare Heritage Centre and will not impact any protected sites, species or habitats identified within the Zone of Influence of this project.

This PEA outlines measures to protect potential roosting bats, as well as obligation to protect nesting birds during the bird breeding season, but this is not considered specific mitigation. No specific mitigation measures to protect the ecological features recorded are required and therefore there is no requirement for a full EcIA report for this proposed project.

Flood Risk Assessment

The site is located within Flood Zone A as set out in the Limerick Development Plan and the Adare Local Area Plan. A Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out by Cora Consulting Engineers. It notes that the overall footprint of the new development is 1400sqm and therefore similar to the existing building on site in terms of impact on the flood map. It notes that the building will be constructed with flood resilient material finishes and SuDS measures. I note the submissions from Planning and Place Making who have no objection subject to the adoption of flood resilient finishes and construction measures, the preparation of an Emergency Flood Access and Egress Plan and continuation of liaising with the Adare Flood Relief project team.

Services

The site is to be connected to the Uisce Eireann water and wastewater infrastructure. A pre-connection enquiry has been submitted which notes that a connection to both is feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Uisce Eireann.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed changes to the Adare Heritage Centre are acceptable and align with the policies and objectives of the Adare Local Area Plan (2024-2030) and the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028). The contemporary design approach is considered to complement the existing protected structures, ensuring that the character and heritage of the

site are preserved while enhancing its functionality. The introduction of modern spaces provides versatile and inclusive community areas, meeting the evolving needs of residents and visitors alike. This balance between heritage sensitivity and modern design demonstrates a thoughtful integration that supports the sustainable development goals of the region.

8.0 Conclusion

Having regard to the foregoing evaluation and the reason and considerations as set out, the proposal is in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022 - 2028 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Pursuant to Section 179(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the proposed development is recommended to the Elected Members of Limerick City & County Council for their approval.

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Dr. Pat Daly

Director General

Limerick City & County Council

Date: 4.12.2024

Limerick City & County Council

Re: Part 8 Proposal for the following:

Development at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850).

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination

Pursuant to the requirements of the above Limerick City & County Council is proposing the for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850) at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare. Co. Limerick

The plans and particulars for the proposed development were placed on public display from 6th September 2024 until the 4th October 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

Having regard to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and (inter alia) the Department of Housing Planning Community and Local Government's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010), screening of the development for Appropriate Assessment was carried out by JBA Consulting.

An AA of the proposed development is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information provided in the Screening report, the scale of the development and the size of the site, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans

or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. Therefore, this proposed project does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment Process. The Screening has determined that there is no potential for likely significant effects on any European sites.

For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the application for consent for the proposed development does not require an Appropriate Assessment or the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Order: That Limerick City & County Council as the Competent Authority having considered the AA Screening Report prepared by JBA Consulting makes a determination that, when considered either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will not be required to accompany the proposal for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850) at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick.




Dr. Pat Daly

Director General

Limerick City & County Council

Date: 4. 12. 2024.

Limerick City & County Council

Re: Part 8 Proposal for the following:

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Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Determination

Pursuant to the requirements of the above Limerick City & County Council is proposing the for the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850) at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare. Co. Limerick

The plans and particulars for the proposed development were placed on public display from 6th September 2024 until the 4th October 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

Having regard to EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (the EIA Directive), the guidance contained in the Department of Housing Planning Community and Local Government's "Impact Assessment Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development" (2003), Screening of the development for Environmental Impact was carried out by JBA Consulting.

The Screening has been carried out in accordance with the EIA Directive and to Annex I, II and III of that Directive, which sets out requirements for mandatory and sub-threshold EIA.

The proposal has been assessed in accordance with the criteria for sub-threshold development to determine the potential impact on the environment of the project.

The subsequent EIA Screening Report concludes that the development has been assessed under the environmental criteria outlined in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and an EIAR is not required. In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development will not have any significant impacts on the environment given the scale of development and the size of the site. All recommended mitigation measures and standard practices will be employed throughout the construction phase of the development to ensure that the proposed development will not create any significant impacts on the quality of the surrounding environment.

For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the proposal will not present a risk to the environment. As such this screening exercise concludes that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for this project.

Order: That Limerick City & County Council as the Competent Authority having considered the EIA Screening Report prepared by JBA Consulting for Limerick City & County Council, makes a determination that an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required to inform the development consisting of the partial demolition of the building at ground and first floor levels with remodelling and extension to provide: reconfigured and enlarged flexible cafe / retail / exhibition spaces along with new public toilet facilities including a changing places toilet, all at ground floor level; an extended first floor level to include a library, exhibition/community space, staff accommodation, additional public toilet facilities, storage rooms and ancillary plant; updated elevations to all facades of the building to include signage / interpretative panels to the north and south elevations; existing site layout to be amended to accommodate an improved public realm, updated landscaping, extended car and bicycle parking including accessible car parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and bus and coach parking with consequent changes to utilities and drainage. The site to which the application relates is within an Architectural Conservation Area and contains within its boundary the setting of a protected structure (RPS No. 850) at Adare Heritage Centre, Main Street, Adare, Co. Limerick.

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Dr. Pat Daly

Director General

Limerick City & County Council

Date: 4.12.2024