BAT DEROGATION LICENCE APPLICATION – NAOMH ÉINDE

Project Reference	240276-c
Date	27/08/2025
Subject	Naomh Éinde, Spiddal – Derogation License
Author(s)	Ryan Connors

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Introduction

MKO have been commissioned by Fiontar na Greine Teoranta to carry out additional bat surveys for the proposed development works within and around the Naomh Éinde Convent (IG Ref: M 12952 22267) at Spiddal. Co. Galway. The convent is a Registered Protected Structure (RPS No. 3953) with later modern structural additions. The original surveys were undertaken by Wildonfoot in September 2024 and the Report that was submitted with the planning application recommended that additional surveys be undertaken in Summer 2025 as part of the process required to determine whether the mitigation measures proposed in the planning application needed to be refined and as part of the preparatory works needed to support an application for a Derogation Licence to undertake works if the planning application is approved.

This briefing note includes a brief description of the proposed works; the additional survey works that have been undertaken by MKO and the proposed mitigation that is designed to ensure that there will be no adverse effects on protected fauna.

The additional bat surveys conducted in 2025 included a roost assessment comprising an external and internal inspection of the convent on the 18th June 2025. Evidence of active bat use was identified both internally and externally, with small accumulations of droppings located on spider webs below the soffit on the north elevation of the building and on an adjacent windowpane. Large accumulations of droppings and two deceased juvenile bats were recorded within the attic space in the convent.

Dusk emergence surveys were conducted on the 18th June and the 31st July 2025 and focused on the convent with two surveyors on the first survey and three on the second. Night vision aids (thermal cameras) were also used. A total of 188 common pipistrelles were observed emerging from behind the soffit on the north face of the building on the night of the 18th June. No bats were recorded emerging on the night of the 31st July.

The proposed works have been carefully designed to incorporate appropriate mitigation measures, ensuring that potential impacts on bats, their commuting corridors, and other ecological receptors are avoided or minimised.

Statement of Authority

MKO employs a dedicated bat unit within its Ecology team, experienced in scoping, carrying out, and reporting on bat surveys, as well as producing impact assessments in relation to bats. MKO ecologists have relevant academic qualifications, licences and are qualified in undertaking surveys to the levels required. The daytime walkover and inspection was carried out by licenced Bat Ecologist Ryan Connors (BSc., MSc.) (DER-BAT-2025-119) assisted by seasonal bat ecologist Marie Greaney (BSc., MSc.). The dusk emergence surveys were carried out by Ryan Connors, Project bat ecologist Clare Mifsud (Ph.D.) (DER-BAT-2025-152) and seasonal bat ecologists Marie Greaney and Noel Fahy (BSc.).

Background

Proposed Activity

The proposed development involves the creation of new Creative Education and Training Campus located on the site of the former Naomh Éinde Convent in An Spidéal Thiar, County Galway. A three-storey Civic Centre is proposed to be constructed next to the former convent (which will be retained). The Civic Centre will contain a library, auditorium, and other community spaces.

The existing Naomh Éinde Convent building will be renovated to support continued use as an institutional residential facility to support the new education and training facilities on the site. The renovation will involve the demolition of 70 sqm of building area (which is part of a 1990 two-story extension located at the rear of the Convent), and the demolition and removal of an existing, stand-alone, and partially buried 7 sqm garden shed. A 620sqm extension and internal reconfigurations will subsequently be constructed. Finally, works proposed include the repair and upgrade of the existing roof the three-story 1990 building extension to be constructed to the same height and style but removing 5 velux windows and replacing 2, as well as a new roof extending over the proposed new three-story extension at the rear. Additional works will include the installation and upgrade of all rainwater goods on the 1923 and 1990's buildings, insulation of the existing external building fabric as part of the deep energy retrofit, new electrical and plumbing installation, installation of a new rainwater harvesting system, solar PV panels, with rainwater tanks and heat pumps in the extension roof area.

Full details of the proposed works are provided in the Design Statement (Part 1, page 21), included in Appendix 1.

Location

The site of the proposed works area is Tearmann Einde, An Spidéal Thiar, An Spidéal, Co. Na Gaillimhe, H91 RCY6. (IG Ref: M 12952 22267).

Ownership

The site is in the ownership of Fiontar na Greine Teoranta of 8/10 Rock Hill Blackrock Dublin A94 HN29; Company Registration No. 611592.

Reason for Activity

The proposed development seeks to create an engaging and vibrant civic space at the heart of Spiddal. Crucially, the proposed revitalisation of the Naomh Éinde Convent will bring back into use a key historic

building in the village's streetscape, while ensuring the preservation and maintenance of a Registered Protected Structure. The internal reconfigurations, works to the roof, and external modifications are all necessary to safeguard and appropriately maintain the structure for future generations while ensuring that modern fire codes, energy efficiency standards, and accessibility standards are met.

The creation of the proposed Civic Centre will provide an enhanced space for the Spiddal Library and a new venue for Civic functions. Alongside the proposed film and music digital archive, the building is positioned to make a significant contribution to the vitality and accessibility of the Irish Language and the Cultural, Artistic and Musical heritage of the Gaeltacht. Further, the proposed Auditorium will facilitate holding community, educational, cultural, music, theatre, and arts events. Finally, the proposed enhancements to the public realm are a benefit to the entire village and will help to enhance the charm and character of Spiddal, while improving pedestrian safety and accessibility.

The aim of the proposed works to the former Convent are:

- To safeguard the structural and architectural integrity of the building by addressing urgent maintenance issues affecting the roof, including chimneys, roof coverings, and rainwater disposal systems.
- To prevent further deterioration of the structure, restore historic and protected features, and ensure the buildings remains weather tight.
- Support and enable to adaptive reuse of the building as part of the wider proposal, creating an engaging and active new civic campus in Spiddal which supports the community and wider Gaeltacht.

Planning History

The Naomh Éinde convent was constructed just over 100 years ago in 1923, as noted in Appendix 7 of the GCDP 2022-2028 and under its NIAH registration (Reg. No. 30327011). Regarding the planning history on site, the sole record is for an application which was made in 1990 under Ref. 61995 for a partial demolition and extension of the Convent. It was conditionally granted on 12/10/1990 by Galway County Council. The development description is set out below:

> *"Clochar na Trócaire, Spiddal, Co. Galway. We are applying to Galway County Council for planning permission to demolish part of existing convent and to replace same with a new residence, boiler house and shed, at above address."*

Proposed Works

The proposed works to the Convent are required to facilitate its new use as student accommodation which is an integral component to the proposed Creative Education & Training Campus. These works will consist of:

- Demolition of approximately 70sqm of 1990's building area along the rear Southwest elevation that form part of a 1990 extension and are not parts of the original 1923 building fabric (see Appendix 2 "Timeline of Construction" which details the history of the existing convent building). The extent of the internal demolition works proposed in this area are shown on Appendix 3 "Demolition works". There is a partially buried garden shed located near the Southern boundary and identified on Appendix 4 "Site Survey" and this structure will also be demolished. These works are required to facilitate the new extension to the south.
- Internal remodelling works to incorporate a new internal stairs and a lift to connect the 2 storey 1923 building with the 3 storey 1990 building. These works are required to make the building universally accessible and to comply with current Building and Fire Safety regulations. The existing buildings have no lift access currently and they are currently only connected at ground level with the upper levels currently accessed through two separate stairs at opposite ends of the building.
- Internal remodelling works to incorporate 27 double bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms, to include the restoration of internal window sashes within the 1923 section of the building.

- Provision of a new, part one storey, part three storey, flat roofed extension at the rear of the existing 1990's building, together with the installation of stand-alone bin store and plant store
- Upgrade and Refurbishment of the existing roof over the 1990 extension with a new fully insulated roof with natural slates roof finish.
- New paint colour scheme for the external render to provide an enhanced uniform and weather resistant finish to the building.
- Preservation and cleaning of the foundation stone and other stone features of the original 1923 building
- Installation and upgrade of all rainwater goods on the 1923 and 1990's buildings to provide a uniform finish in the form of metal downpipes (cast iron for the North facing façade and galvanised powder coated steel on the new extension and Western building gable)
- Existing natural blue Bangor roof slates to be salvaged and relaid where possible.
- All existing timber framed double glazed windows located in the 1923 building are to be repaired, upgraded and painted in a uniform sea green colour. The existing double-glazing panels will be replaced with new improved U value glazing as part of the deep energy retrofit of the building.
- All existing timber frame single glazed/stained glass windows are to be refurbished and retained. Care will be taken to preserve the stained glazing to the external facades with any intervention to be limited to the internal addition of secondary glazing to achieve the energy retrofit.
- All Windows located in the 1923 building are to be refitted with internal window shutters. These internal features were previously removed from the building at some point by the prior owners. The new owners wish to reinstate the shutters as they formed part of the original fabric of the 1923 building. These works should enhance the historic integrity of the original building. An example is preserved in only two locations currently on the landing of the internal stairs facing West.
- Existing PVC windows on the North facing elevation of the 1990's building are to be retained and upgraded to provide double glazing as part of the energy retrofit and painted Sea Green to provide a uniform treatment between the 1923 building and the 1990's building.
- All fireplaces in the original 1923 building to be retained and repaired where required, existing fireplaces to form an integral part of the new 'heritage' bedrooms interior design.
- The existing external building fabric is to be internally insulated as part of the deep energy retrofit required to enhance the energy efficiency of the building.
- New electrical and plumbing installation throughout.
- New exterior painting throughout.
- Installation of a rainwater harvesting system, PV panels and a new air to water heating and cooling system supported by renewable energy sources, as part of the deep energy retrofit and to enhance the long-term sustainability of the building.
- Site works associated with the upgrade of the building to provide universal accessibility and the formation of a patio area and a new surface car park to the East and South of the existing building along with the connections to existing utilities as required.

Ecological surveys and site assessment

Existing Information

National Biodiversity Data Centre

A review of the National Bat Database of Ireland on the 21st August 2025 yielded results of bats within a 10km hectad of the proposed works. The search yielded seven bat species within 10km. Table 1 lists the bat species recorded within the hectad which pertains to the proposed works site (M02 & M12).

A review of the NBDC bat landscape map provided a habitat suitability index of 28.0 (yellow). This indicates that the proposed development area has low-moderate habitat suitability for bat species.

Table 1 NBDC Bat Records

Hectad	Species	Date	Database	Status
M12	*Brown Long-eared Bat (Plecotus auritus)*	20/09/2019	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV

M02, M12	*Common Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto)*	20/09/2019	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
M02, M12	*Daubenton's Bat (Myotis daubentonii)*	11/09/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
M02, M12	*Leisler's bat (Nyctalus leisleri)*	26/05/2017	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
M02, M12	*Natterer's bat (Myotis nattereri)*	25/05/2017	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
M02, M12	*Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato)*	29/04/2022	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV
M02, M12	*Soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)*	20/09/2019	National Bat Database of Ireland	Annex IV

Designated Sites

Within Ireland, the Lesser horseshoe bat is the only bat species requiring the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The site is situated within the current known range for this species; however, no SACs designated for its protection lie within 10km of the proposed works area.

No Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), or proposed NHAs, designated for the protection of bats were identified within 10km of the proposed works area.

Previous Surveys

Surveys were conducted at the site by WildOnFoot in September 2024. Evidence of roosting bats was recorded within the attic spaces in the form of droppings and two deceased bats. One pipistrelle was recorded emerging from the structure during the dusk survey undertaken. Additionally, a static detector placed in the attic of the 1990's section revealed only Myotis species recordings suggesting that they are also roosting here on occasion.

Status of species in local/regional area

Table 2 Irish Bat Species Conservation Status and Threats (NPWS, 2019). Pressures and Threats are ranked from medium importance (M) to high importance (H) in the 2019 Article 17 report.

Bat Species	Conservation Status	Principal Threats
Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Favourable	**A05** Removal of small landscape features for agricultural land parcel consolidation (M) **A14** Livestock farming (without grazing) [impact of anti-helminthic dosing on dung fauna] (M) **B09** Clear---cutting, removal of all trees (M) **F01** Conversion from other land uses to housing, settlement or recreational areas (M) **F02** Construction or modification (e.g. of housing and settlements) in existing urban or recreational areas (M) **F24** Residential or recreational activities and structures generating noise, light, heat or other forms of pollution (M) **H08** Other human intrusions and disturbance not mentioned above (Dumping, accidental and deliberate disturbance of bat roosts (e.g. caving) (M) **L06** Interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens) (M) **M08** Flooding (natural processes) **D01** Wind, wave and tidal power, including infrastructure (M)
Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	Favourable	
Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*	Unknown	
Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*	Favourable	
Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentoni*	Favourable	
Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*	Favourable	
Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*	Favourable	
Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*	Favourable	
Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*	Inadequate	

Survey Objective(s)

The main objective of the surveys was to gather additional information on roosting, commuting, and foraging bats using the site and to identify and refine any important mitigation works that might be required to preserve features for bats. The surveys were designed to determine the nature, scale, and locations of potential bat activity in the convent and to assess the need for further surveys or recommendations to refine the proposed mitigation measures that were submitted as part of the planning application, as a means of ensuring that the proposed works safeguard bats.

Description of Survey Area

The survey area comprises the former Naomh Éinde convent and associated grounds, located in the centre of Spiddal village, Co. Galway, immediately adjacent to Cill Éinde Church. The original convent building, constructed in 1923, is arranged along a north–south axis and is connected to a later extension dating from the 1990s, which runs east–west. The structures are predominantly three-storey with attic spaces, several of which are lined with bituminous felt, and are currently in a derelict condition.

The site is bounded by the R336 to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Surrounding the convent are ornamental gardens, hedgerows, and scattered mature trees. Beyond the village to the north and west lies a substantial area of semi-natural woodland traversed by the River Boluisce, which flows from Boluisce Lake and discharges to the sea approximately 250 m west of the site. The woodland, together with the river corridor and coastal edge, provides high-quality foraging and commuting habitat for a range of bat species.

Survey Methodology

A roost assessment (PRA) of the former Naomh Éinde Convent and associated grounds in Spiddal, Co. Galway, was carried out on the 18th June 2025 by two MKO bat ecologists. The survey included a full external inspection of the convent building from ground level and internal inspections of the three attic spaces. Full access to the structure was attained. Additional ground-level assessments of mature trees within the site boundary were also undertaken to identify potential roost features (PRFs). Equipment used included torches, binoculars, thermal cameras, and an endoscope to search for evidence of bats such as droppings, staining, fur oil marks, feeding remains, or live/dead specimens, as well as to assess potential access points.

A dusk emergence survey was subsequently undertaken on the 18th June 2025, targeting the north-facing elevation of the convent where a potential roost feature had been identified during the PRA and in surveys previously conducted at the site in 2024. Two surveyors were positioned to provide full coverage of the building, with one stationed to the north and the other to the south. A follow-up dusk emergence survey was conducted on the 31st July 2025 to re-assess the roost and verify activity levels following the initial emergence observations.

Survey equipment included full-spectrum bat detectors, a thermal imaging camera to support visual observations. Dusk emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 1.5 hours after sunset. The survey effort is summarised in Table 3 and Figure 1 below.

Table 3 Bat Activity survey effort

Date	Surveyors (initials)	Survey Type	Sunrise/ Sunset	Start	End	Weather
18th June 2025	Ryan Connors & Marie Greaney	Dusk Emergence	22:07	21:52	23:37	16-14°C, Dry, Calm, Moon not visible%, Cloud cover 10%
31st July 2025	Ryan Connors, Clare Mifsud & Noel Fahy	Dusk Emergence	21:31	21:16	23:01	16°C, Dry, Calm, Moon 30%, Cloud cover 20%

Map Legend

- Red Line Boundary

Surveyor Locations

- Dusk 1 Surveyors
- Dusk 1 Thermal
- Dusk 2 Surveyors
- Dusk 2 Thermal

Ground-Level Tree Assessment

- PRF-I

N

Drawing Title
2025 Bat Survey Effort

Project Title
Naomh Éinde Spiddal

Drawn By	Checked By
RC	AJ
Project No.	Drawing No.
240276-c	Figure 1
Scale	Date
1:500	2025-08-27

MKO
Planning and Environmental Consultants
Tuam Road, Galway
Ireland, H91 VW84
+353 (0) 91 735611
email:info@mkoireland.ie
Website: ww.mkoireland.ie

Survey Results

External Inspection

During the external inspection of the Naomh Éinde Convent (Plates 1–3) on 18th June 2025, small accumulations of bat droppings were recorded on a windowpane and within spider webs beneath the soffit on the west apse of the north elevation of the 1990s extension (Plates 4 & 5). A Potential Roost Feature (PRF) was also identified directly above this location, consisting of a vent-like opening extending from the soffit of the west apse (Plate 6). In contrast, the 1920s building fabric offered no suitable roosting features, and no evidence of bats was observed within this structure (Plate 7).

Internal Inspection

During the internal inspection on the same date, two dead juvenile bats were recorded within the attic of the original convent attic space (Plates 8 & 9) (as was also recorded in the original Reports by WildonFoot). Substantial accumulations of droppings were observed adjacent to the carcasses along the interior wall of the west apse on the north elevation of the 1990s extension (Plate 10). A hole in external wall was noted above the droppings (Plate 11). Similarly, the 1920s building fabric contained no suitable roosting features, and no internal evidence of bats was recorded (Plates 12 & 13).

Dusk Emergence Surveys

18th June 2025: Significant roosting activity by common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was recorded, with 188 individuals observed emerging from beneath the vent-like feature extending from the soffit of the west apse on the north elevation (Plates 14–15 & Figure 2). This emergence point coincided with the area where internal droppings were recorded. Individual soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) were also observed commuting through the site.

31st July 2025: No emergence activity was recorded from the structure. It was noted that a high-frequency pest deterrent device was present on the third floor of the convent (Plate 16), which could have contributed to the absence of bat emergence. Common and soprano pipistrelles, as well as individual Leisler's bats (*Nyctalus leisleri*), were observed commuting through the site. The pest deterrent device has since been removed.

Ground-Level Tree Assessment

A ground-level inspection of trees within the proposed development site was undertaken to identify features with potential to support roosting bats. All vegetation on-site is proposed for removal to facilitate the development, with the exception of a mature Sycamore tree (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) located along the northern boundary (Appendix 5, TR 001).

The inspection identified two locations where trees displayed features with potential to support roosting bats:

1. **Sycamore Group (TR 006–012, Appendix 5)**
   A collection of sycamore trees is situated immediately inside the vehicular entrance gate on the north-eastern boundary of the site. Seven of these trees exhibited features such as holes, wounds and mature ivy that could provide roosting opportunities for bats (Plate 17–20). These trees were assessed as *PRF-I* (Colins, 2023).
2. **Lone Ash Tree (TR 002, Appendix 5)**
   A large Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is located to the north of the convent building (Plates 21 & 22). Several holes and cankers were identified in the trunk of the tree. This tree was assessed as having *PRF-I* suitability. The tree is affected by Ash Dieback disease, which may compromise its long-term viability.

No evidence of bats (e.g. droppings, staining, feeding remains) was recorded during the ground-level survey.

Plate 1: North Elevation of Naomh Éinde Convent

Plate 2: East elevation of convent

Plate 3 Southwest elevation of convent

Plate 4 Bat droppings on windowpane adjacent to west apse soffit north elevation

Plate 5 Bat droppings on spiderweb beneath west apse soffit north elevation

Plate 6 Vent-like Potential Roost Feature above droppings on west apse soffit.

Plate 7 Original 1923 convent building showing no suitable roosting features – southeast elevation

Plate 8 Dead juvenile bats found in attic of 1990s extension.

Plate 9 Dead juvenile bats found in attic of attic of 1990s extension.

Plate 10 Large accumulations of droppings adjacent to carcasses along interior wall, west apse north elevation.

Plate 11 Hole in blockwork directly above accumulation of droppings

Plate 12 1923 convent attic showing no evidence of bats.

Plate 13 1923 convent attic attic showing no evidence of bats.

Plate 14 188 common pipistrelles emerging from vent-like feature (red) on west apse soffit.

Plate 15 Exit point (red) for emerging bats

Plate 16 Pest deterrent device observed on third floor of 1990s extension building fabric (since removed)

Plate 17 Lifting bark on sycamore tree along NE boundary

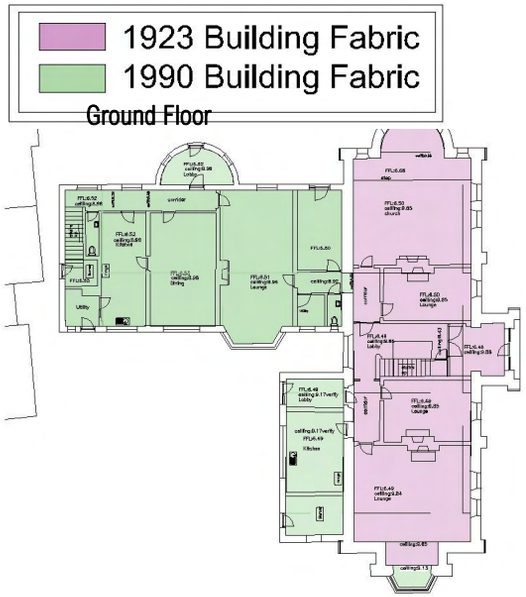
Plate 18 Tear out within sycamore tree on NE boundary

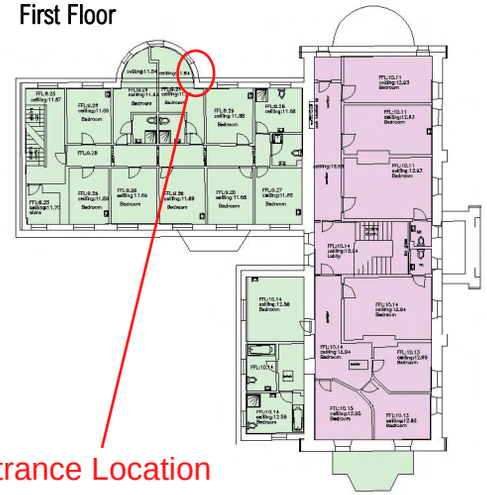
Plate 19 Mature ivy within sycamore along NE boundary

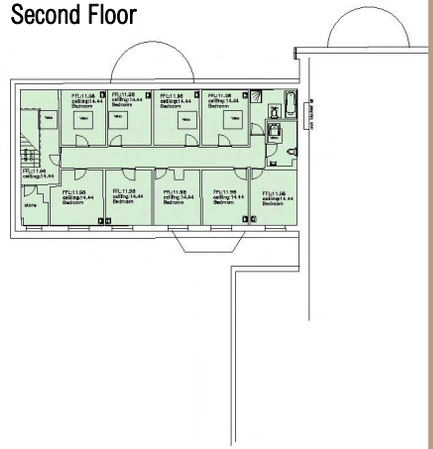
Plate 20 Wound in sycamore along NE boundary

Plate 21 Ash tree with holes and cankers badly affected by infection

Plate 22 Same ash tree from north aspect

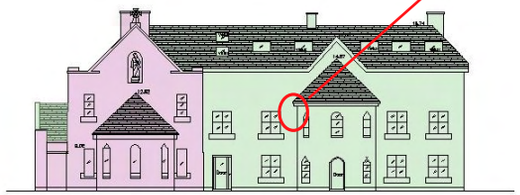




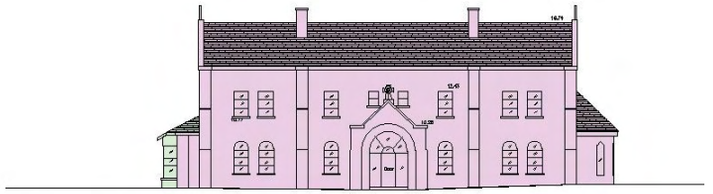


Roost Entrance Location

Front Elevation :



Side(east) Elevation :



Rear Elevation :

Side Elevation(west) :

4.3 Existing Clochar Éinde Naomhtha Plans

Population size and class assessment

Surveys carried out in 2025 confirmed the presence of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) maternity roost within the Naomh Éinde Convent. A peak count of 188 individuals was recorded emerging from a vent-like feature on the north elevation during the dusk emergence survey on 18th June 2025 (Plate 15).

No other species were recorded emerging from the structure in 2025. However, soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and Leisler's bats (Nyctalus leisleri) were recorded commuting through the site. The presence of juvenile carcasses, substantial accumulations of droppings, and high emergence counts during the peak breeding season confirm the roost as a maternity site used by a significant number of common pipistrelles. Surveys carried out by external consultant also recorded small numbers of suspected Myotis species potentially using the attic space. This was attributed to Myotis species calls on a static placed within the attic.

In line with current guidance (NRA, 2006), this roost is assessed as being of **Local (higher value)** to **County Importance**. While common pipistrelle is currently considered to have a favourable conservation status in Ireland (NPWS, 2019; see Table 2), the maternity roost remains a legally protected site and must be fully considered in the planning and scheduling of any proposed works.

Evidence to support the Derogation Tests

The NPWS document, *Guidance on the Strict Protection of Certain Animal and Plant Species under the Habitats Directive in Ireland* - National Parks and Wildlife Service Guidance Series 1 (2021), was reviewed before undertaking this derogation application.

Article 16 of the Habitats Directive sets out three pre-conditions, all of which must be met before a derogation from the requirements of Article 12 or Article 13 of the Directive can be granted. These preconditions are also set out in Regulation 54 of the Regulations.

The preconditions are:

1. A reason(s) listed in Regulation 54 (a)-(e) applies
2. No satisfactory alternatives exist
3. Derogation would not be detrimental to the maintenance of a population(s) at a favourable conservation status.

It is believed that the pre-conditions for granting a derogation licence have been met, as follows:

Test 1 – Reasons for Seeking Derogation

Regulation 54(2) (a)–(e) states that a derogation licence may be granted for any of the reasons listed (a) to (e). We are of the opinion that the following reasons apply:

> (c) In the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

The scope of works to the former Naomh Éinde Convent will be undertaken in a manner which minimises the scale of intervention and reduces potential disturbance to bats while still addressing key structural and safety risks The works are required in order to both enable the active reuse of a historic, town centre building, which is a key goal at the national, regional, and local level of policy. However, more crucially, many of the works are critically required to maintain and preserve the structure, which is a Registered Protected Structure under the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and on the NIAH register. Without timely intervention, these issues will likely lead to water ingress, timber decay, and potential structural instability.

The former convent is of regional architectural and social value (as determined by the NIAH) and lies at a prominent location in the streetscape of Spiddal. It's preservation and reuse are considered to be of high public interest. It is intended that as part of the proposed development, members of the public would have access to the grounds surrounding the former convent and that the site would become a key social meeting place and hub of activity in the village. Therefore, the presence of an unstable, unoccupied building presents a health and safety risk.

The building remains unoccupied due to its current condition, but the planning application currently under consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála would enable its reuse. The proposed conservation-led interventions are therefore necessary not only to safeguard the structure but also to protect public health and safety and preserve this heritage asset for future community benefit.

Test 2 – There is no Satisfactory Alternative

There is no satisfactory alternative to the proposed development. The proposal has been carefully designed to minimise the invasiveness of works to the structure, however given the scale of the upgrade works required, this will involve mechanical and electrical works, new insulation, new fire stopping works, slate roof replacement, external fittings and finishes, and insulation installation in the external walls and roof. The works will be undertaken in a manner which minimises the scale of intervention and reduces potential disturbance to bats while still addressing key structural and safety risks and enabling the retrofit and repurposing of the building to reposition it so that it remains in active use within the village for the next 100 years of its life.

The existing roost within the attic of the 1990s building cannot be maintained in situ, as this attic is to be retrofitted and incorporated into the new student accommodation. For health and safety reasons, the roost must therefore be translocated to a new location. To compensate, a purpose-built enclosed roost will be constructed within the attic of the 1923 building. This new roost will be designed to allow for long-term maintenance and cleaning, ensuring its continued suitability for bats.

The new roost will be installed in advance of the exclusion of the existing roost, and existing bat droppings will be carefully moved into the new structure by a suitably qualified ecologist to help encourage uptake by bats. Exclusion works will only proceed once the replacement roost has been established.

To minimise disturbance, the works will take place outside the peak bat activity period (May–August), and mitigation measures have been proposed as part of the original planning application. A more detailed schedule is not presently available due to delays with the planning process at An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Avoiding or delaying the works would allow ongoing deterioration of defective rainwater goods and roof coverings, continued deterioration of a protected structure, the potential for water ingress, and potential instability or permanent damage. In the long term, this would threaten both the building's integrity and the bat roosting feature it currently supports.

Do-nothing scenario: If repairs are not undertaken, the condition of the roof will continue to deteriorate, likely resulting in the loss of bat roosting opportunities, reduced ecological value, and more complex, invasive, and costly future conservation works.

Test 3 – Favourable Conservation Status

Annex IV species must be maintained at Favourable Conservation Status or restored to favourable status if this is not the case at present. The net result of granting a derogation licence must be neutral or positive for the species in question.

Surveys conducted in June and July 2025 confirmed the presence of a common pipistrelle maternity roost within the Naomh Éinde Convent. A peak emergence count of 188 individuals confirmed the roost's use during the breeding season. While common pipistrelle is widespread in Ireland and assessed as having a favourable conservation status (NPWS, 2019), the roost itself is considered of **Local (higher value)** to **County Importance**.

Additionally, roost surveys carried out in 2024 indicated the potential presence of a small number of Myotis species also roosting within the attic. Myotis species are also considered to be in favourable conservation status. The potential presence of individual Myotis species is considered of **Local (higher value)** importance. To compensate for potential impacts, new roosting opportunities for Myotis species will be created in the form of bat bricks within the 1923 building. The proposed works are therefore not anticipated to affect the favourable conservation status of Myotis species.

The existing maternity roost is located within the attic of the 1990s extension, which must be retrofitted for reuse as student accommodation. For health and safety reasons, the roost cannot be retained in this location. Instead, a purpose-built enclosed roost will be created within the attic of the 1923 building to provide a long-term, secure, and maintainable replacement. This will be installed prior to exclusion works, and droppings from the existing roost will be carefully translocated to the new roost space by a suitably qualified ecologist to encourage occupancy.

Through this approach, continuity of roosting opportunities will be ensured, and disturbance will be minimised by carrying out exclusion outside the peak bat activity period (May–August) and under ecological supervision. The new roost location will be designed to allow for long-term maintenance and cleaning, thereby ensuring its durability and suitability as a maternity site.

Accordingly, the roost will be translocated and enhanced, disturbance will be minimised, and no adverse effects are anticipated on the favourable conservation status of common pipistrelle or Myotis species at local or wider geographic scales.

Monitoring the Impacts of the Derogations

The following measures will be undertaken to ensure that the maternity roost of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and suspected Myotis species within the Naomh Éinde Convent is adequately protected and maintained during the proposed works and that long term mitigation measures are put in place to ensure that the proposed works safeguard bats and their habitat:

- *As bats were observed emerging from the structure, a bat derogation licence will be obtained from NPWS prior to the commencement of works.*
- *The existing roost within the 1990s attic space will be excluded outside the peak bat activity period (May–August) to allow retrofitting works to proceed. As the building is being repurposed for student accommodation, the roost cannot be retained in its current location due to health and safety constraints. All exclusion works will be carried out under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.*
- *To ensure continuity of roosting opportunities, a large, purpose-built enclosed roost will be constructed within the attic of the 1923 building in advance of exclusion works. This space will be specifically designed to accommodate a large pipistrelle maternity colony and will include suitable access points for bats. The design of the new roost will also incorporate access provisions for future maintenance, cleaning, and servicing, thereby ensuring its long-term functionality and security.*
- *Prior to exclusion, droppings from the existing roost will be carefully translocated into the new roost space by a suitably qualified ecologist to encourage colony uptake.*
- *In addition, bat bricks will be installed in the 1923 building to provide further roosting opportunities for Myotis species, ensuring species-specific provision and enhancing the overall ecological value of the site.*
- *The roost and roost entrance will be kept dark i.e. no artificial lighting and a dark corridor will be provided to allow bats emerging from the roost to commute to nearby habitat features. It is noted that this measure was previously agreed and facilitated by O'Neill O'Malley Architects to maintain an commuting corridor from the roost to the sensory garden on the northern boundary.*
- *Felling of trees with suitable roosting features (TR 002 & TR 006 – 0012) will be carried out with the assumption that bats may be present:*
    - *Trees with suitable potential roost features proposed for felling will be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist at the time of felling.*

- *Any tree felling will be undertaken at an appropriate time of year, as deemed by the project ecologist.*
- *Before limb removal or felling, trees to be gently nudged two or three times, with a 30-second pause in between. This practice aims to allow potential bats to wake and relocate, minimizing the risk of harm during the removal process (National Roads Authority, 2006).*
- *Felled trees to be left in-situ for a minimum of 24 hours before sawing or mulching to allow an opportunity for any bats present to escape (National Roads Authority, 2006).*

- *As part of the proposed works, new purpose-built roosting locations will be provided to compensate for the loss of potential tree roosts. A 2FN Woodcrete bat box will be installed within the site. The final location, height, and orientation (ideally between 3.6m and 6m above ground with a southerly aspect) will be confirmed by a suitably qualified ecologist.*
- *Any required artificial lighting throughout the wider site will be designed in accordance with ILP Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.*
- *Roof works (including any necessary removal of slates, installation of insulation, timber repairs etc.) will be undertaken outside the main bat activity period (May - August). A pre-commencement inspection by a licenced ecologist is recommended prior to works to ensure no bats are present.*
- *Prior to the commencement of works, a toolbox talk will be undertaken to ensure that all staff members are fully aware of the sensitivities of the site i.e. existing common pipistrelle/Myotis roost.*
- *Scaffolding will not be sheeted in the areas surrounding the new bat roost entrances and must be erected in a manner that ensures continued bat access to the structure. Scaffolding must be positioned so that it does not obstruct access to the new roosting area – a minimum 1m clearance must be maintained around the identified roost entrance.*
- *No artificial lighting will be used around the roost entrance or within the attic space during the bat maternity season.*

The surveys and recommendations provided in this report are in accordance with the relevant industry guidance. Provided that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the measures outlined within this report, and provided that the recommended mitigation measures are adopted, it can be concluded that no impacts on bats are anticipated at any geographic scale.

APPENDIX 1

Design Statement

Design Statement for Spiddal Creative Campus

On the Site of the former Naomh Einde Convent, Spiddal, Co. Galway , Ireland

Prepared By
O'Neill-O'Malley
Architecture + Project Management

Galway • Westport
www.onom.ie

Contents

1.0 Introduction

This design statement has been prepared by O'Neill-O'Malley Architects in support of a full planning application by Fiontar na Greine Teoranta, for a new Creative Education and Training Campus development on the subject site located at Tearmann Einde, An Spidéal Thiar, An Spidéal, Co. Na Gaillimhe, H91 RCY6.

The development will consist of the delivery of a master planned Creative Education and Training Campus, to include the development of a new Civic Centre and renovation, upgrade, and extension of the Naomh Einde Convent, a registered Protected Structure (RPS Reg. No. 3953) to provide student accommodation which supports the wider education and training campus. The subject site area extends to 4,435 sqm. The proposed development includes:

1. A three-story, 1,368 sqm. Civic Centre consisting of a new, state-of-the-art library and multi-functional auditorium and performance space as the core of the community space. Further facilities including a digital media education and training hub, film & music education and training spaces, artist studio spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, combined art gallery and ancillary café, and other ancillary spaces which will be provided to support the main facilities.
    - As part of the library, the digital media education and training hub will support and enhance the campus facility and the wider civic centre.
    - A public facing film and music digital archive will support the library and act as a domestic and international research centre and tourist attraction, enabling the study, preservation, and long-term vitality of the Irish Language and the cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht.

2. Renovation and extension of the existing Naomh Einde Convent to add 620 sqm. for continued use as an institutional residential facility and to support the new educational training facilities on the campus.

These works include:

- Modifications to enhance accessibility via internal reconfiguration of the existing structure, to include the addition of a lift, provision of a new sustainable and energy efficient heating system, and rainwater harvesting system.
- Restoration works including external repair and new paint works, the demolition of approximately 70 sqm of building area (which is part of a 1990 two-story extension located at the rear of the Convent), and the demolition and removal of an existing, stand-alone, and partially buried 7 sqm garden shed.
- The upgrade of the existing roof over the three-story 1990 building extension, to be include a new roof extending over the proposed new three-story extension at the rear.

3. Provision of solar PV to the new south facing roof of the extended Convent building and to the new Civic Centre building to enhance the energy efficiency and sustainability of campus facilities.
4. Improvements to the public footpath to enhance the public realm facing onto the R336 Road and the walkway to the east running between the R336 Road and the pier. This will include the removal and reuse of a portion of the existing boundary wall, and the relocation of on-street vehicular parking spaces within the new campus to facilitate the creation of a pedestrian plaza at the front of the Campus and the general enhancement of the public realm to include new paving, seating, and planters. Public realm and landscaping works will also include:
    - Provision of 54 no. new vehicular parking spaces (including 4 no. accessible, 2 no. Go Car, and 12 no. EV charging spaces); 53 no. cycle parking spaces (including 3 no. cargo/accessible spaces); and 1 no. bus set down space which will be managed in accordance with the Mobility Management Plan and Traffic Management Plan for the Campus.
    - Relocation of the existing vehicular access to the centre of the subject site. This will include, the creation of a new pedestrian and cyclist access point, which will involve the relocation and reuse of the existing vehicular gate pillars.
    - Provision of high-quality, landscaped internal public realm including the provision of a sensory sculpture garden which will include nature base drainage solutions and pollinator friendly planting.
    - Provision of signage, public lighting, EV chargers, site services and all other associated site development works.
5. All ancillary and associated development works.

This report contains details about the existing building, historic photographs and computer generated images of the proposed works, the rational for the proposed development, the conservation, ecology and sustainability philosophies applied by the Promoters all of which have contributed to the design evolution for the Campus Masterplan, the design evolution for the civic building and the proposals for the upgrade and deep energy retrofit of the existing convent building. The design shown in the proposals has been reached after a long consultation process with local stakeholders and with the input of a multi-disciplinary team of professional consultants. This process also included a pre-planning meeting with Galway County Council in June 2024.

This Architectural Design Statement has been produced to explain the design rationale for the proposed development and to confirm the appropriateness validity and sustainability of the design proposal which we submit is fully aligned with the goals of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northwest Region, the Galway County Development plan 2022-2028, Údaras na Gaeltachta strategy 2021-2025, the National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027, the Arts Council Strategy 2016-2025 and aligned with Failte Ireland's Visitor Experience and Development Plan for the Connemara Coast & the Islands.

The delivery of this exemplar project will have a transformative impact upon Spiddal and the Connemara Gaeltacht through its support of the Education, Theatre, Arts, Culture, Heritage, Film & Media, Music & Irish Language sectors which are Core Regional Strengths.

2.0 An Spidéal — Creative Campus—Project Vision:

(1) Mission:

To create a vibrant **Creative Campus** that celebrates & promotes the Irish Language, Education and Training, Culture & The Arts, Music, Film & Media Education & Training and Cultural tourism which are core assets and strengths within the Galway Gaeltacht.

(1) Promote an Spidéal as the Gateway to the Connemara Gaeltacht
(2) Reposition the village as a Premier Tourism hub on the Wild Atlantic Way
(3) Position the village as the home of Culture and the Arts
(4) Celebrate the village's Heritage & History
(5) Create Sustainable long term employment opportunities in the following key sectors:
- Education & Training
- Culture & the Arts & Music
- Tourism
- Film & Media training and education

(6) Make an Spidéal a great place to live, work and visit

(7) Position the new Civic Building building as a permanent hub location for
- An Irish Language Theatre Company
- Muintearas/Óige Na Gaeltachta (Community education and training organisations)
- an International Film Festival
- an International Literary Festival
- Oireachtas na Samhna (Irish Language Festival)
- Traidphicnic and other Music festivals
- a Literary/Film/Music Summer School (e.g. similar to MacGill/Merriman)

(8) Reposition the former Convent building as a centre for:
- Student Accommodation supporting the new Creative Campus
- Collaboration with Irish Universities and Regional Education and Training Boards
- Collaboration with a US University similar to Notre Dame—Kylemore Abbey and Sacred Heart University Dingle as precedent models

(2) Establish a Creative Campus which supports the Irish Language, Education & Training, Culture & The Arts, Music, Film & Media and Cultural Tourism

- An Education and Training facility that can provide Residential accommodation on Campus by converting the Convent into Residential accommodation & providing classroom spaces in the new Civic Building
- A Centre of learning, training and education for the Irish Language, Culture & The Arts, Music, Film & Media training, and Cultural Tourism,
- A new state of the art Public library building to include facilities for a Digital Media Lab, Digital Education and Training facilities, and Sensory facilities for children with Autism.
- A Public facing Digital Archive facility which supports and preserves the Gaeltacht's deep wealth of Trad Music and Irish Language media and provides a centre for research. This facility will be provided in collaboration with TG4 & RnaG
- A Multi-purpose Arts Centre and Performance Venue that will support the Arts and Theatre & Irish Language Literature and act as a Music and Arts Venue capable of hosting local, domestic & international productions
- An Art Gallery and Exhibition Space
- An Ancillary Café
- Meeting rooms, classrooms and community outreach facilities, to include multipurpose-rooms that could host various community groups
- A Potential Headquarters Location for
  - An Irish Language Arts/Theatre company
  - Ealaín na Gaeltachta
  - Muintearas/Óige Na Gaeltachta

(3) Proposed new Civic building concept:

- A landmark building that will be recognised in a local context by brand name and visibility.
- A building which takes full advantage of the strategic site location in the village centre and the Galway Bay and Burren/County Clare views
- Contemporary design that is sympathetic to the existing and historic built context within the village and which blends in to the local context
- A sustainable Building design which aligns with the Ecological and Sustainability ethos of the Campus
- Creation of an enhanced public realm and civic space in the village centre to include a sensory garden, public seating, planting and street lighting
- Exemplary Sustainable energy credentials to achieve Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) status through the use of initiatives to include: Air to Water Energy and heating systems, Solar PV, Electric EV Charge stations and Rainwater harvesting to minimise water usage

(4) Position the New Creative Campus as a model project in Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility

- **Educational Focus:** Future courses may emphasize ecology, sustainability, biodiversity, and marine ecology.
- **Green Accreditation:** The campus will seek "Green Campus" accreditation from An Taisce.
- **Sustainable Practices:** The project will include a deep energy retrofit of the existing Convent building, aiming for Near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) standards for both the upgraded convent and the new Civic Building
- **Energy Efficiency:** Emphasis on solar PV, LED lighting, and electric car chargers, heat pumps.
- **Sustainable Travel:** Promotion of walking, cycling, public transport, and shared vehicles.
- **Biodiversity:** Implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan with pollinator-friendly planting, bee hives, and nature-based drainage.
- **Water Conservation:** Use of rainwater harvesting and low water usage systems.
- **Waste Reduction:** Focus on recycling and the circular economy during both construction and operation.
- **Climate Resiliency:** Design for energy efficiency and flood risk future-proofing.
- **Environmental Education:** Integration of sustainability initiatives through the library and dedicated courses.

Green-Campus
An Taisce

The Green-Campus Programme

nearly zero energy buildings

Smarter Sustainable Campus Communities: A Guide for Campuses Embarking on the Green-Campus Programme

An Roinn Comhshaoil, Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Waste Management

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Promote Environmental Education

UISCE ÉIREANN : IRISH WATER

Building Climate Resilience

WATER Stewardship and Sustainability

3.0 Design Response to the Project brief

This section of the report outlines the design response and approach to the project brief from the development of the context analysis, the initial concepts and the design evolution of the scheme after taking into consideration the consultations and feedback from various stakeholders, flood zone constraints, the conservation requirements in respect of protected structures, the An Spideal ACA (Architectural Conservation Area), and consideration of the impact of the proposal on the local protected views.

3.1 Project Brief

The brief provided by the client outlined the requirements to develop a master plan for the overall site that contains Naomh Einde Convent, a Registered Protected Structure (RPS Reg. No. 3953) with the intention to renovate, remodel and extend the existing Convent building to provide student accommodation which supports the Campus and to develop plans for a new Civic Building anchored by a Public Library and Performance Venue which is to be located within the Site boundary along with enhanced public realm along the main village street, incorporating a sensory garden as well as surface car parking, bus set-down and bicycle parking.

For further details of the project and a full list of the proposed facilities please refer to page (pg. 7) of this Design Statement.

Existing Building– Overview of the proposed Works:

The proposed development includes works to the existing Naomh Einde Convent, a Registered Protected Structure (RPS Reg. No. 3953), as will be required to deliver a deep energy retrofit and upgrade of the building to facilitate its use as student accommodation. These works will consist of the following:

- Demolition of approximately 70sqm of the external building area along the rear West facing elevation that forms part of a 1990 extension. This part of the building does not form part of the original 1923 protected building fabric (see enclosed dwg no 3003 "Timeline of Construction of the existing convent building"). The extent of the internal demolition works proposed are shown on dwg no 3105 "Demolition works". It is also proposed to demolish an existing, partially buried garden shed which is located near the Southern boundary and identified on dwg no 3001 "Site Survey".
- Internal remodelling works to incorporate a new internal stairs and lift which will enhance the building to universal accessibility standards and to connect the 2storey 1923 building with the 3 storey 1990 side extension. Currently there is no lift access and the two distinct buildings are only connected at ground level with the upper levels being accessed through two separate stairs at opposite ends of the building
- Internal remodelling works to incorporate 27 double bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms
- Provision of a new, part one storey, part three storey, flat roofed extension at the rear of the existing 1990's building along with standalone bin and plant stores
- Replacement of the existing roof over the 1990 extension with a new fully insulated roof with natural slates finish and solar PV panels
- New colour scheme for the external render
- Repair of the existing 1923 Convent roof with the natural blue Bangor roof slates to be salvaged and relayed
- Repair and replacement of the existing single glazed windows with new double glazed windows to match the retained windows . All window frames to be repaired and painted in a sea green colour. Replacement of existing single and double glazing panels with new improved U value glazing to enhance the energy efficiency of the building.
- Internal insulation to the existing building fabric to upgrade the buildings energy efficiency and to target NZEB standards
- New electrical and plumbing upgrade throughout to include the installation of a Rainwater harvesting system to reduce water usage
- Installation of, PV panels and new heating and cooling system using renewable energy sources
- Site works associated with the formation of a new surface car park to the East and South of the existing building along with the connections to existing utilities as required

New Civic Centre Building:

An essential element of the vision for the new Creative Campus is to create a new Civic Building within the heart of Spiddal Village. The Civic Centre proposed will incorporate the following:

- A new part one, part two and part three storey building that will infill and strengthen the existing village centre street scape by following the established building line created by the former schoolhouse to the East and the Parish Church to the West.

The new building facilities will include

- A State of the Art Public Library developed to the new facility standards envisaged by the National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027, to include, Adult, Teenage and Children's facilities and a Sensory room and facilities for children with Autism.
- A 202 seat Multi functional Auditorium that is capable of acting as a Lecture Hall and as a Performance venue for the Arts, Theatre, Literary and Musical productions with back of stage facilities, to include artist/performers spaces, a green room, projector room, reception/ box office, and sanitary facilities for Patrons
- A Multi-purpose entrance foyer which will accommodate an art gallery and exhibition space together with an ancillary café.
- A Digital Learning, Education and Training Hub
- A Public Facing Digital Archive that can function as a Research Centre and a Tourism attraction.
- Artist Studio Rooms
- Classroom and Training rooms
- Community Meeting Rooms
- Staff facilities
- Raiwater harvesting
- PV panels & energy efficient heating & cooling systems

Proposed Creative Campus Facilities:

Civic Building:

- 202 seats multi-purpose Auditorium, Lecture Hall & Performance Space
- With retractable seating to maximise functionality
- Performers changing room & green room
- Projector and Multi media Room
- Public Library with Adult, Children and Teen Sections
- Sensory Room for children with Autism
- Digital E Learning and Training Hub
- Public Facing Digital Archive and Research Centre
- Studios, Classrooms, Training and Meeting Rooms
- Art Gallery & Exhibition Space and ancillary cafe

Potential Uses:

Former Convent converted into Student Accommodation:

- 27 En-suite Double Bedrooms
- Kitchen and Canteen facilities
- Staff Changing facilities & Ancillary Spaces

Irish Language Academy

- Education
- Learning
- Culture
- Exam Centre
- Post Primary Courses
- Teacher Training / CPD
- Study Abroad Courses
- Adult Learning

Arts and Music Academy

- Theatre Performance space & Music Venue
- Recitals/Concerts
- Tuition Centre
- Choirs & Ensembles
- Songwriting & Singing
- Teacher Training / CPD
- Study Abroad Courses
- Studio Space

Film & Media Training Academy

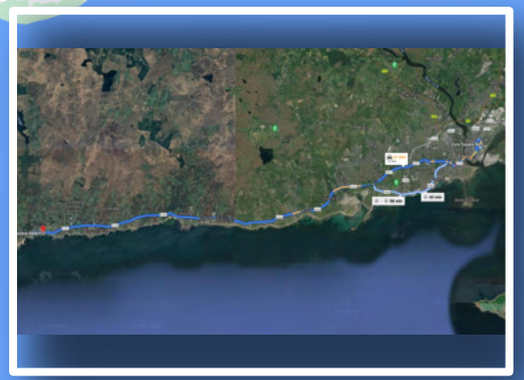
- Film & TV Crew Training
- Media Training
- Training Boot Camps
- Script writing & Editing Courses
- Study Abroad Courses

Community

- Yoga & Wellness Retreats **&** Workshops
- Public Library and Digital E Learning Hub
- Youth Club & Group Facilities
- Event Space
- Exhibition Space & Gallery
- Meeting & Activity Rooms
- Photography Studio
- Art Classes
- Sensory Garden/Sculpture Garden

3.1 Site Location & Context:

Creative Campus Location in Spiddal village centre



By Car: 38 minutes from Eyre Square

By Bus: 48 minutes from Eyre Square

3.1 Site Location & Context:

Aerial view of the subject site outlined in red

3.2 Site Location and Context

The site is located in the village centre of An Spideal, to the South of the R336 Coast Road. It is bounded by a former schoolhouse to the East, with a pedestrian laneway which provides a link from the village to the coastal walkway. Saint Enda's Church is located to the West and a number of shops are located to the North along the R336 which forms the main street of the village. The An tSean Ceibh and Galway Bay are located to the South of the Site.

The wider surrounding area is characterised by a mix of new and historic structures which make up the village core with mainly commercial, community, education and retail uses which form the village alongside a number of residential properties. See the aerial map on page 10 which shows the site within its central village context.

The subject site, measuring 4,435.32m2 in Area is located in the heart of the village, and it is a substantial site, which is significantly under utilised. The former Naomh Einde Convent stands on the Western half of the site and is a Protected Structure (RPS Reg. No. 3953).– See section 4.1 of this report for further details of the Protected Building Record. The site is currently accessed from the North Eastern corner with a second pedestrian only entrance located in the northwest at the front of the convent. The remainder of the site is a lightly landscaped garden with lawn areas, some planting and trees. (Please refer to the tree survey prepared by landscape architect Anthony Johns)

The site is enclosed by a stone wall along all boundaries with the exception of a small section of the Western boundary which is shared with Saint Enda's Church where the two buildings are in close proximity.

There are a number of other protected structures and Heritage Buildings in the immediate vicinity of the subject site. The sensitivity of the site to include the historic Convent Building and the adjacent schoolhouse and Church, which are all within an ACA, is fully acknowledged by the Promoters and the Design Team. The potential impacts on these heritage assets has been carefully considered by the design team to ensure that the proposed development makes both a positive contribution to the village whilst also respecting the history and culture of the village. Please refer to the Conservation Impact Assessment Report and the Planning Statement which accompany this application for further details of the approach adopted to respect the Heritage Assets.

In addition to the surrounding built context of the subject site there are also a number of environmental assets in the vicinity of the site as identified in the Planning Statement prepared by MKO. The Design team has considered the following as part of the project brief; :

- Protected Viewpoint no 26– Spideal Coast—which is a protected view of the sea scape from the pier. The subject site is located behind this protected view and the proposed development will have no negative impact on the protected view
- The R336 Road is designated as the Galway Bay Scenic Route. The subject site is within an Urban Environs Landscape, and is designated as an area identified as having 'low sensitivity to change'. The proposed site layout will open up a new view of the Coast & the Burren from the Centre of the village

As part of the project brief, the proposed development has given due consideration to the sites context and location and the scheme has been carefully designed to respect the architectural character of the village and the surrounding heritage assets, The new civic building provides a positive addition to the Village streetscape through the use of a contemporary design which respects the character of the ACA, whilst also distinguishing the new building from the heritage assets.

Careful consideration has been given to how the new civic centre building should be located within the site and the works required to enhance the public realm within the village. The new building has been carefully sited and designed to respect the adjoining heritage assets and to open up a view of the Galway Bay seascape and the Burren from the village core. See the aerial map below which shows the proposed development in context.

3.3 Initial Concept Sketch Design

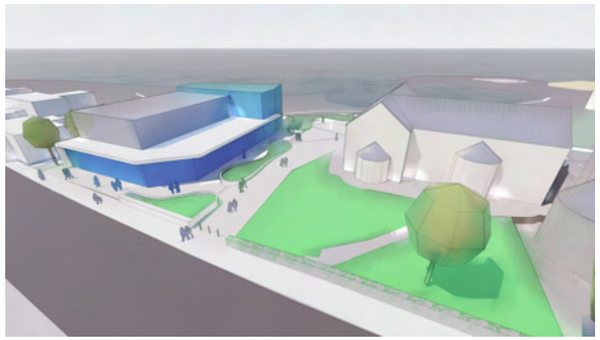
The Masterplan for the site has evolved from the initial sketch design proposals as illustrated by the concept visuals included on this page. Of uppermost importance for the Promoters was the preservation, refurbishment and deep energy retrofit of the existing Convent building, so that it can be repurposed for the next one-hundred years. There is an opportunity to repurpose this underutilised site to maximise its full potential within the village, to accommodate the proposed civic building along the Eastern boundary to incorporate a new state of the art Public Library, a 202 seat Multi-purpose auditorium capable of supporting the Education & Training Campus and acting as a performance venue, studio rooms, classrooms, an art gallery and exhibition space, with a view to creating an active community hub that is capable of serving the Education & Training Campus and of supporting numerous local organisations and community groups. (as listed in the project vision on page 4).

The refurbishment, extension and repurposing of the existing convent building into student accommodation, is central to the creation of a self-sustaining Campus that will support the core Education and Training functions of the Creative Campus facilities. The Public Library and Auditorium are central to the creation of the Creative Community hub venue and promotion of Education and Training, the Irish language and the Culture and Arts sector within the Gaeltacht.

The main considerations that have shaped the final master plan are as follows:

- The desire to preserve and protect the existing convent building with the proposed extension confined to the rear of the existing structure. This approach will ensure that there is no negative impact on the existing 1923 building as the extension is not visible from the main village streetscape.
- The New civic building has been carefully located along the Eastern site boundary in a manner that respects the Convent, the Church and the former schoolhouse and other heritage assets. This approach ensures that the new building is located outside the flood zone restrictions and it opens up unobstructed views of the Seascape and the Burren.
- Enhanced public realm is provided through the removal of the front boundary wall in front of the new civic building, widening of the existing footpath to incorporate hard landscaping such as public seating, planters and street lighting to create an inviting and accessible Creative Campus facility that will become a Community hub within the village.
  - Include a sensory garden in front of the Convent building minimising the visual impact of the proposed new works on the existing building
  - Promote sustainability through the use of sustainable materials, water use efficiency (to include water harvesting systems), energy efficiency through the use of renewable source of energy (maximise the use of PV panels), heat pumps, maximise natural light and ventilation, waste recycling and reduction, and by encouraging sustainable travel modes such as cycling public transport and EV charging.

Proposed Initial Site Master Plan Sketch and 3D Massing



3.4 Flood Zone Considerations

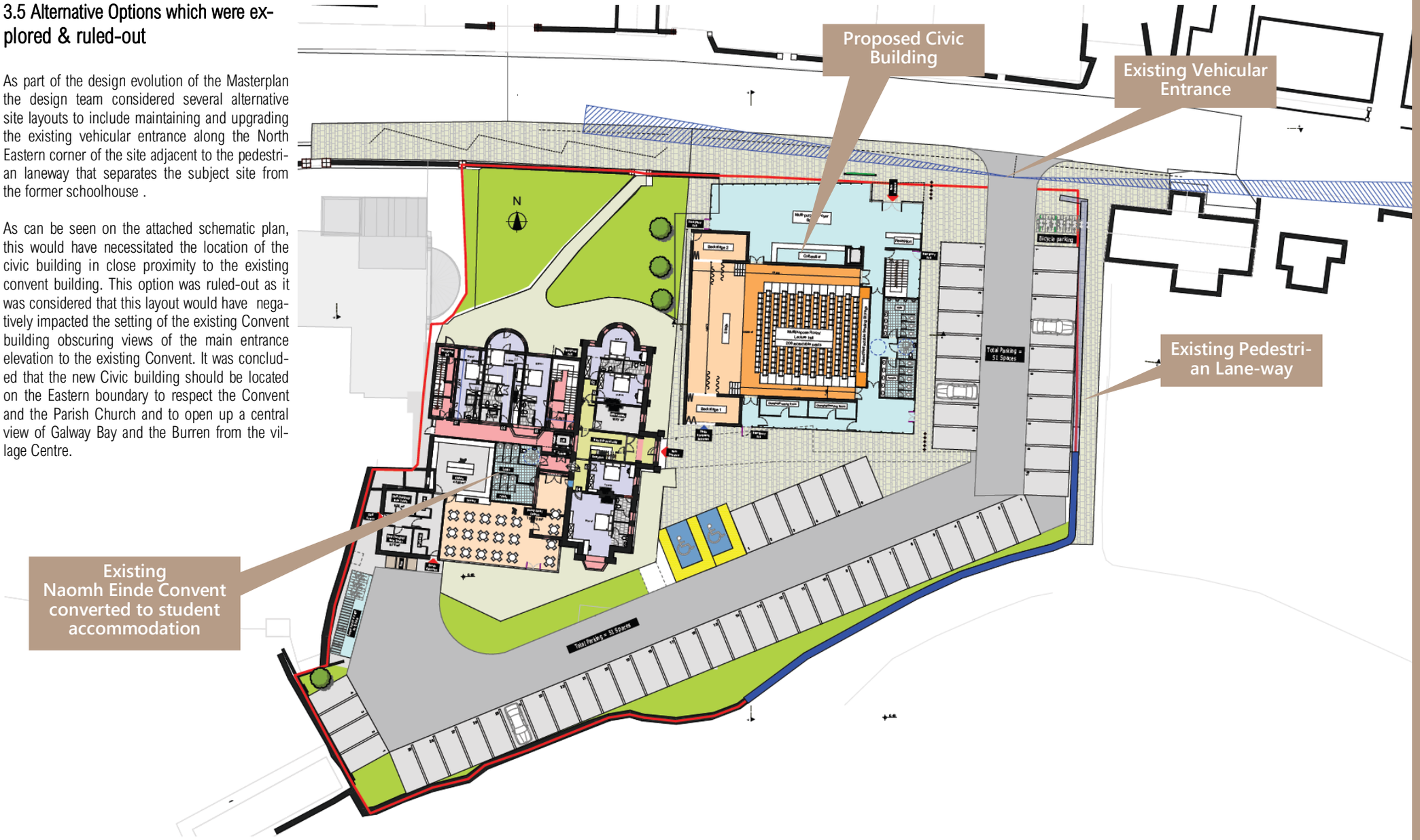
The design of the Campus has been significantly influenced by the requirement to ensure that all new construction is located outside of the local Flood risk zones due to the sites proximity to the sea shore and the need to future proof the Campus to protect against the risk of global sea rises & coastal flooding.

A Flood Risk Assessment Report has been prepared and all proposed buildings have been located within flood zone C as shown on the adjacent drawing.

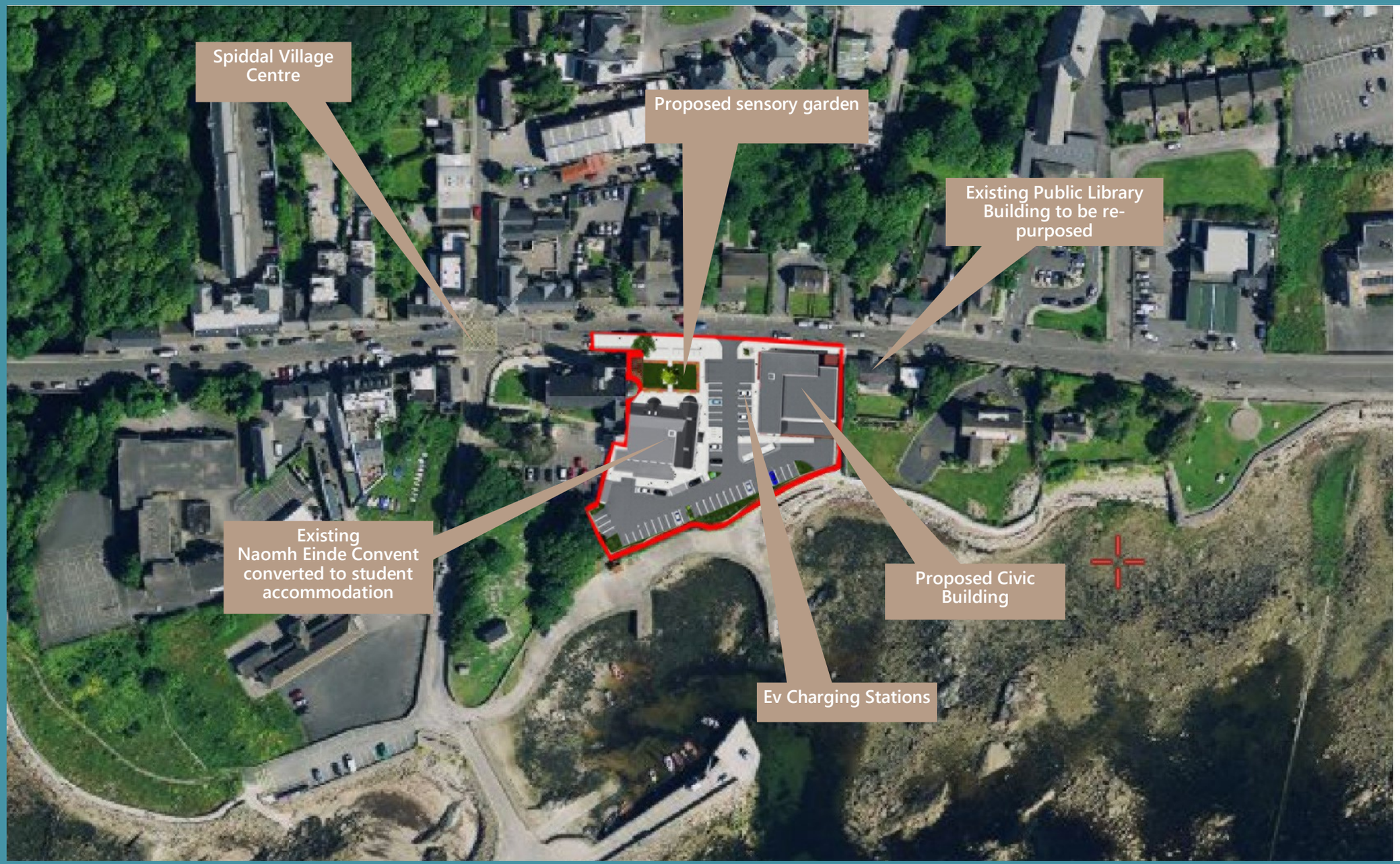
3.5 Alternative Options which were explored & ruled-out

As part of the design evolution of the Masterplan the design team considered several alternative site layouts to include maintaining and upgrading the existing vehicular entrance along the North Eastern corner of the site adjacent to the pedestrian laneway that separates the subject site from the former schoolhouse .

As can be seen on the attached schematic plan, this would have necessitated the location of the civic building in close proximity to the existing convent building. This option was ruled-out as it was considered that this layout would have negatively impacted the setting of the existing Convent building obscuring views of the main entrance elevation to the existing Convent. It was concluded that the new Civic building should be located on the Eastern boundary to respect the Convent and the Parish Church and to open up a central view of Galway Bay and the Burren from the village Centre.

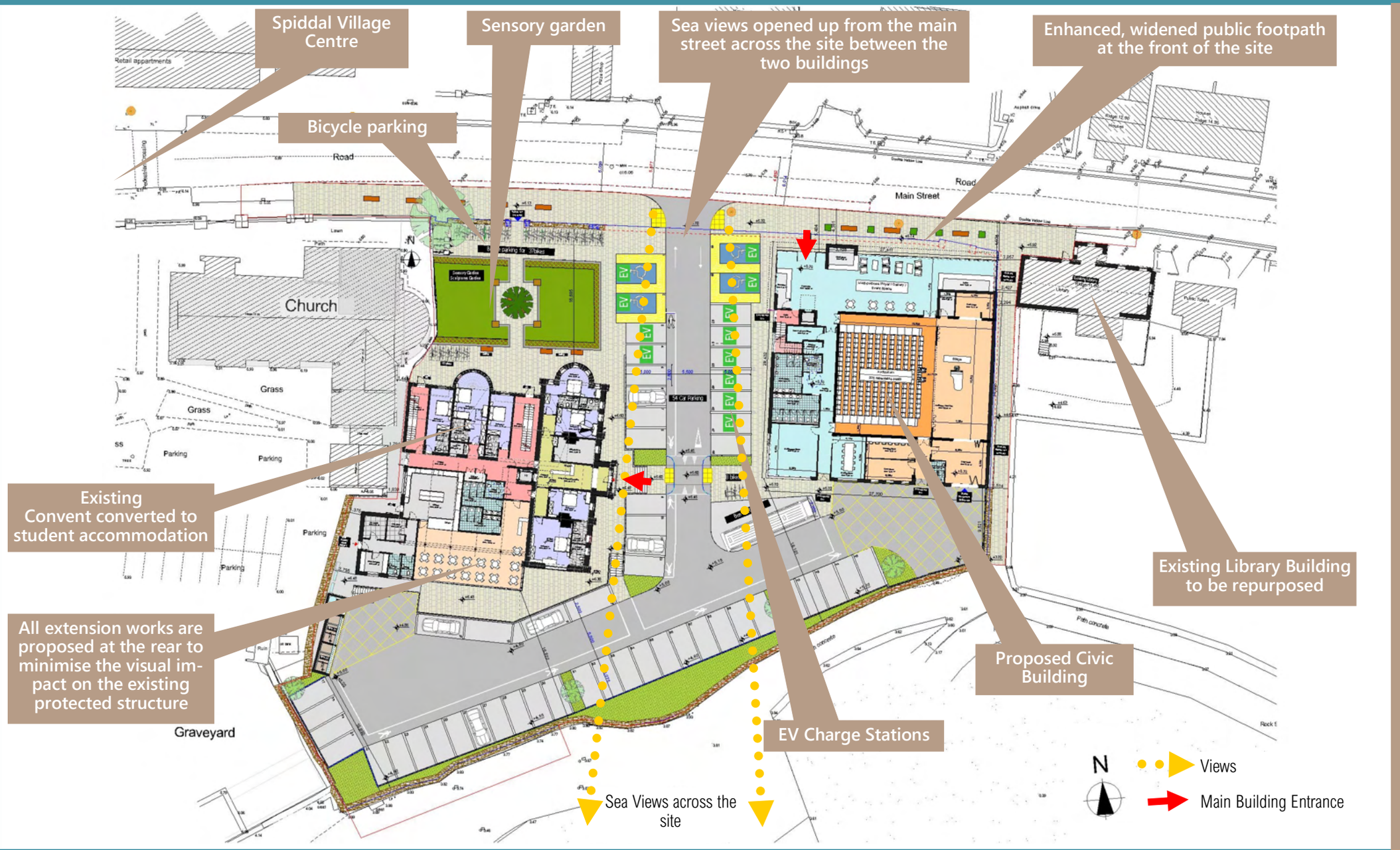


3.5 Explored & Ruled-out Site Access Option



3.6 Proposed Site Masterplan

3.6 Proposed Site Masterplan



3.7 Design Approach and Proposed Building Form

Layout

The design presented in this report represents the most appropriate design and layout for the new civic building after taking full account of the site constraints and the proximity of adjacent heritage assets. The new civic building has been located along the North Eastern boundary of the site in a manner that seeks to maximise the potential of this underutilised central village site by strengthening the village streetscape, whilst simultaneously enhancing the public realm and opening up views of the Seascape and the Burren in a way that enhances the accessibility of the proposed Campus from the main street.

The entrance foyer is enclosed in glazing on three sides to create an inviting transparent multi-purpose art gallery and exhibition space with an ancillary cafe at ground level. The foyer area will be a multi-purpose space and contains the main reception, a coffee dock, cloak room and a generous open space that can be used as a living gallery and exhibition space, which incorporates seating and tables ancillary to the coffee dock. The foyer's glazed perimeter offers 180 degree views of the main village streetscape, towards the East of the former schoolhouse, activating and illuminating the entry point to the pedestrian walkway which links the village to the Coastal walkway. The lobby area will also have views towards the West, of the Parish church and the village centre. The foyer provides direct access into the central auditorium which is intended to function as a lecture hall which supports the Education & Training Campus by day and which can act as a multi-purpose performance space to incorporate 202 retractable seats and a stage. A stage dock is located along the South-East corner of the building with vehicular access for deliveries. The building also provides for changing rooms and a green room to support actors and performers at the venue. Sanitary facilities for patrons are located adjacent to the lift/stairs and are easily accessible from the main auditorium space. The remainder of the ground floor provides for a studio and classroom/meeting room at the South-Western corner. The first floor of the Civic building accommodates the adult and children's sections of the Public library together with a sensory room to support children with autism and a staff room. The Digital Education Hub which supports the Public Library and the Education and Training Campus is also located at this level. The intention is that the Public facing Digital archive and research facility will be located in this section of the building. A small projector room is incorporated at this level to provide scope to utilise the multi-functional auditorium space for film screenings as part of the Campus's focus on Educational and Training in the film and media sector. An external plant area, with louvered screens is provided for at the rear of the building. The second floor accommodates the young adult and teen library section, and 3no studio/ classroom/meeting rooms.

Proposed Form

The civic building form has been carefully considered and designed to ensure that the contemporary building integrates at this location to create a positive contribution to the village streetscape whilst also respecting the existing built context and adjacent heritage assets. The building mass has been carefully considered and the building varies in height from single storey, adjacent to the former schoolhouse to the east, to two storey for the auditorium and three storey for the library which wraps around the auditorium along the North and Western sides of the building. (Please refer to the building height study on pg.18 of this report and the 3D massing sketch below). The building fenestration has been carefully considered to maximise solar gain and natural light throughout the building with the library spaces located to face the main street which maximises northern light to avoid direct sunlight into the reading areas.

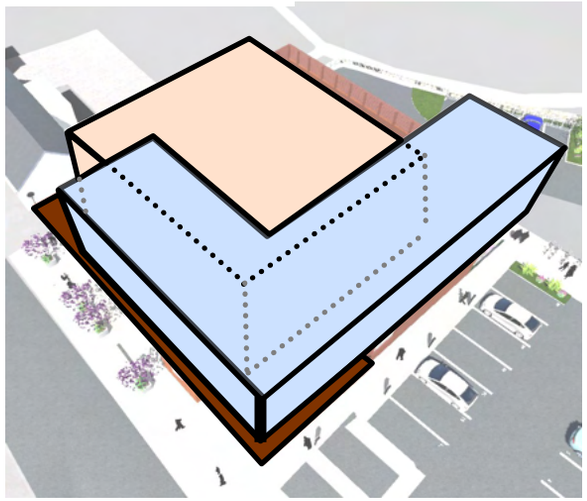
A number of larger windows have been strategically placed to frame important views of the village streetscape and the Galway Bay Seascape and the Burren as highlighted in the adjacent sketch.

2 Storey Auditorium box

2 Storey Library

Ground Floor entrance foyer

3D Massing



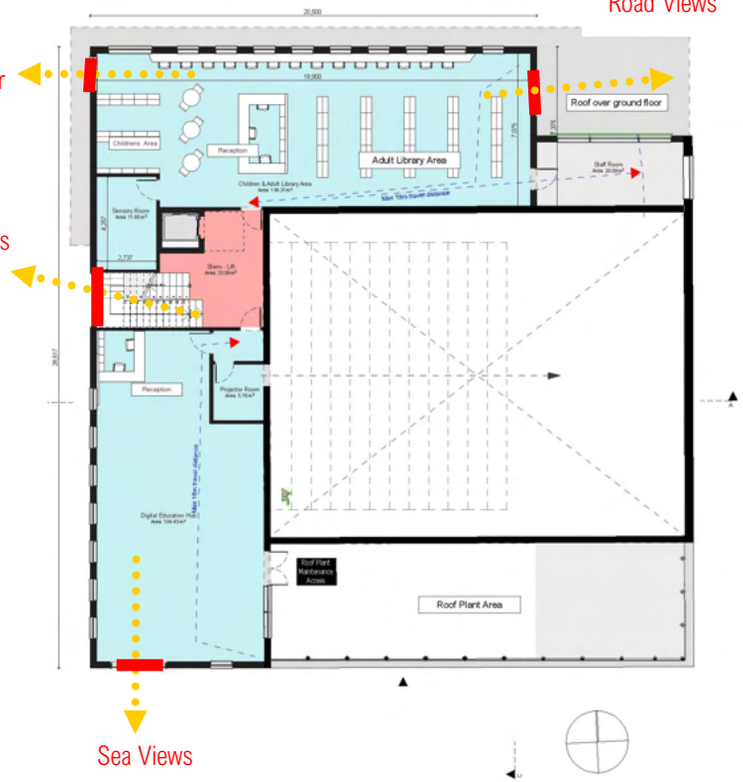
Sensory Garden,& Church Views

Framed Views at First and Second Floors

Full Height Picture Frame windows

Library/Coast Road Views

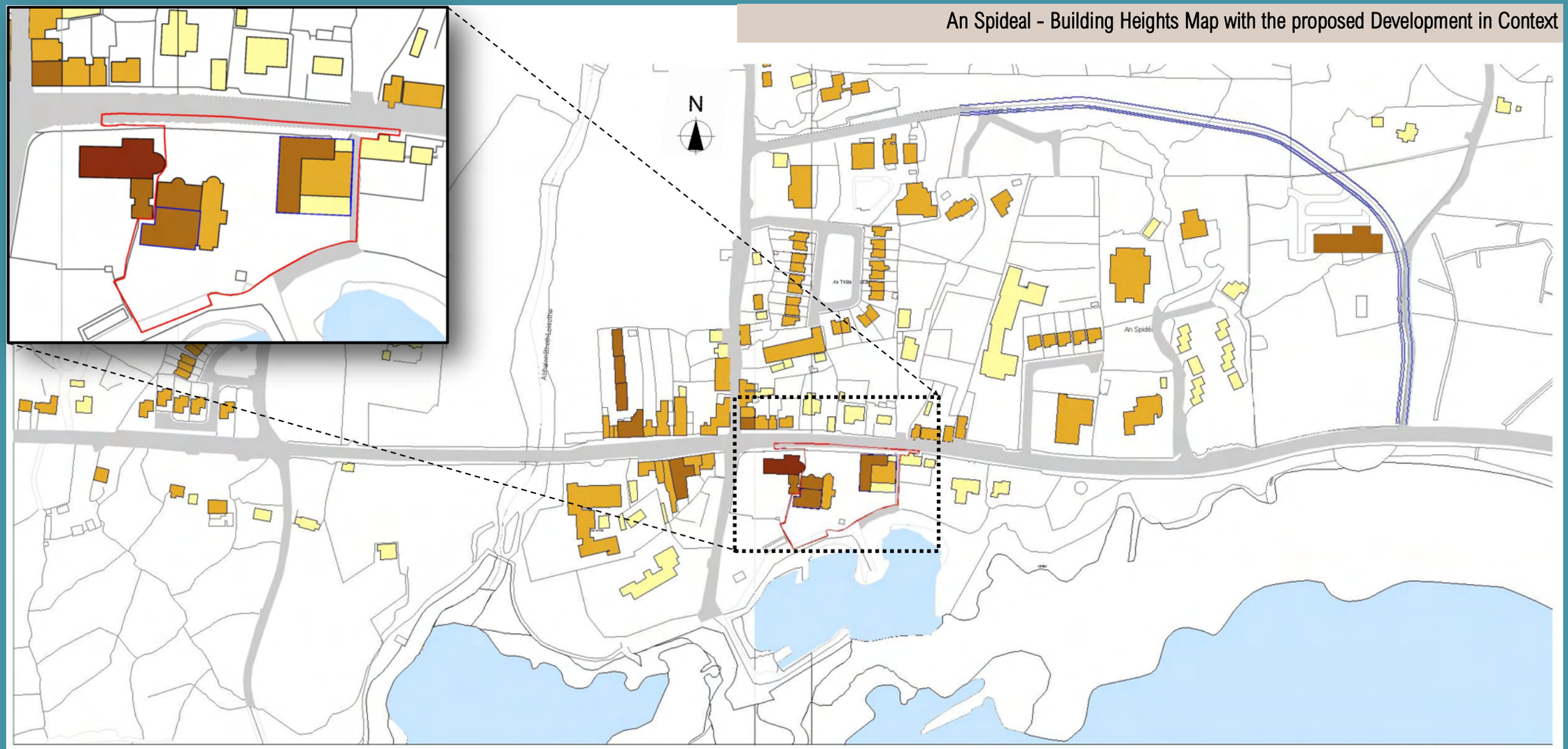
Church Tower Views



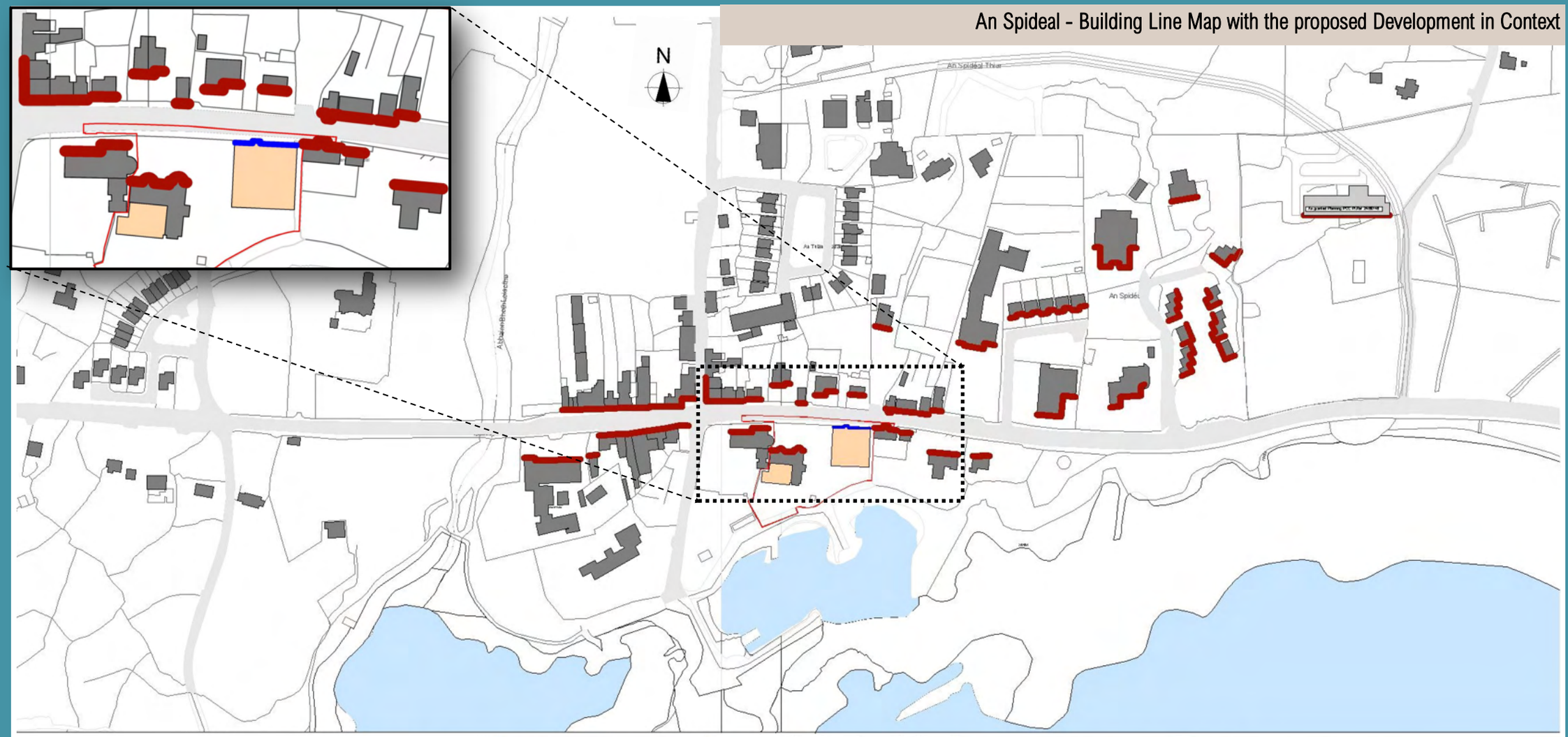
Sea Views

3.7 Design Approach and Building Form

An Spideal - Building Heights Map with the proposed Development in Context



An Spideal - Building Line Map with the proposed Development in Context



Building Line

We submit that the proposed civic building will make a positive contribution to the village street scape by activating an underutilised central village site. Please refer to the building line study above.

Key to Buildings Line Map An Spideal

- Existing Buildings
- Proposed New Buildings
- Relevant Site Boundaries shown in red
- Existing Building Line Along Barr Na gCurragh R336 Rd.
- Proposed New Building Line on Relevant Site

Site Area in the ownership of the applicant = 4,435.32m²

Planning Site Area outlined in red = 5,045.57m²

Proposed Parking = 54no. parking spaces (of which 4no disabled spaces, 2no Go car Spaces & 12 EV charging spaces)

Coach/Bus Set-down

55 bike parking racks

Proposed Student Accommodation Building Areas
Student Accommodation Ground Floor Area
Existing Building GFA= 338.5 m²
Demolition GFA = 36.8 m²
Proposed New Construction GFA = 276.42 m²
Student Accommodation Ground Floor GFA TOTAL = 614.92 m²
Student Accommodation First Floor Areas
Existing Building GFA= 313.55 m²
Demolition GFA = 33.3 m²
Proposed New Construction GFA = 172 m²
Student Accommodation First Floor GFA TOTAL = 485.55 m²
Student Accommodation Second Floor Areas
Existing Buildings to be refurbished GFA= 127.39 m²
Proposed New Construction GFA = 172 m²
Student Accommodation Second Floor GFA TOTAL = 299.39 m²
Proposed Student Accommodation Building GFA = 1,399.86m²

Proposed Civic Building Areas		
Civic Building-Ground Floor Plan		
	Auditorium Total GFA	282.98
	Back Stage	14.11
	Changing Room	15.74
	Cleaners Room	3.74
	Cloak Room	9.58
	Coffee Dock	13.93
	Comms/Server Room	8.01
	Corridor	8.58
	Corridor	34.65
	Female Toilets	20.97
	Foyer GFA	165.90
	Green Room	15.76
	Male Toilets	16.74
	Meeting Room / Classroom	22.74
	Multipurpose Room	39.83
	Part M Toilet	4.40
	Reception	8.15
	Stage Director	5.54
	Stage Dock	31.76
	Stairs	12.10
	WC-Shower	4.77
Civic Building-First Floor Plan		
	Children & Adult Library Area	139.97
	Digital Hub	104.43
	Projector Room	6.18
	Sensory Room	11.65
	Staff Room	20.09
	Stairs - Lift	33.09
Civic Building-Second Floor Plan		
	Circulation	33.09
	Corridor	13.14
	Storage/Staff	7.40
	Classroom 01	24.91
	Classroom 02	27.35
	Classroom 03	46.09
	Teen Library Area	144.46
Civic Building Net Area		**1,351.83 m²**
Civic Building Ground Floor GFA		**748.92 m²**
Civic Building First Floor GFA		**320.10 m²**
Civic Building Second Floor GFA		**299.03 m²**
Civic Building Total GFA		**1,368.05 m²**

3.8 Proposed Schedule of Accommodation

4.0 Existing Convent Building

This section of the report outlines the proposed works to the existing Convent building **a Registered Protected Structure (RPS Reg. No. 3953)**, which will be the subject of a deep energy retrofit which is required to reposition the building for the next one hundred years of its history.

As outlined previously in this report, the preservation, upgrade, refurbishment and repurposing of the existing Convent building is of uppermost importance to the design considerations and all works have been assessed by the Conservation Architect, ACP, who have been engaged on the project to provide advice and input on how the refurbishment works can be undertaken in a manner that respects and preserves the historical integrity of the building.

Existing Convent Building– Proposed Works:

The proposed works to the Convent are required to facilitate its new use as student accommodation which is an integral component to the proposed Creative Education & Training Campus. These works will consist of:

- Demolition of approximately 70sqm of 1990's building area along the rear South West elevation that form part of a 1990 extension and are not parts of the original 1923 building fabric (see enclosed dwg no 3003 "Timeline of Construction" which details the history of the existing convent building). The extent of the internal demolition works proposed in this area are shown on dwg no 3105 "Demolition works". There is a partially buried garden shed located near the Southern boundary and identified on dwg no 3001 Site Survey and this structure will also be demolished. These works are required to facilitate the new extension to the south.
- Internal remodelling works to incorporate a new internal stairs and a lift to connect the 2storey 1923 building with the 3 storey 1990 building. These works are required to make the building universally accessible and to comply with current Building and Fire Safety regulations. The existing buildings have no lift access currently and they are currently only connected at ground level with the upper levels currently accessed through two separate stairs at opposite ends of the building.
- Internal remodelling works to incorporate 27 double bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms, to include the restoration of internal window sashes within the 1923 section of the building.
- Provision of a new, part one storey, part three storey, flat roofed extension at the rear of the existing 1990's building, together with the installation of stand-alone bin store and plant store
- Upgrade and Refurbishment of the existing roof over the 1990 extension with a new fully insulated roof with natural slates roof finish
- New paint colour scheme for the external render to provide an enhanced uniform and weather resistant finish to the building.
- Preservation and cleaning of the foundation stone and other stone features of the original 1923 building
- Installation and upgrade of all rainwater goods on the 1923 and 1990's buildings to provide a uniform finish in the form of metal downpipes (cast iron for the North facing façade and galvanised powder coated steel on the new extension and Western building gable)
- Existing natural blue Bangor roof slates to be salvaged and relaid where possible
- All existing timber framed double glazed windows located in the 1923 building are to be repaired, upgraded and painted in a uniform sea green colour. The existing double glazing panels will be replaced with new improved U value glazing as part of the deep energy retrofit of the building.
- All existing timber frame single glazed/stained glass windows are to be refurbished and retained. Care will be taken to preserve the stained glazing to the external facades with any intervention to be limited to the internal addition of secondary glazing to achieve the energy retrofit.
- All Windows located in the 1923 building are to be refitted with internal window shutters. These internal features were previously removed from the building at some point by the prior owners. The new owners wish to reinstate the shutters as they formed part of the original fabric of the 1923 building. These works should enhance the historic integrity of the original building. An example is preserved in only two locations currently on the landing of the internal stairs facing West.
- Existing PVC windows on the North facing elevation of the 1990's building are to be retained and upgraded to provide double glazing as part of the energy retrofit and painted Sea Green to provide a uniform treatment between the 1923 building and the 1990's building
- All fireplaces in the original 1923 building to be retained and repaired where required, existing fireplaces to form an integral part of the new 'heritage' bedrooms interior design
- The existing external building fabric is to be internally insulated as part of the deep energy retrofit required to enhance the energy efficiency of the building
- New electrical and plumbing installation throughout
- New exterior painting throughout
- Installation of a rainwater harvesting system, PV panels and a new air to water heating and cooling system supported by renewable energy sources, as part of the deep energy retrofit and to enhance the long term sustainability of the building.
- Site works associated with the upgrade of the building to provide universal accessibility and the formation of a patio area and a new surface car park to the East and South of the existing building along with the connections to existing utilities as required

For further details of the proposed works, please refer to the enclosed ONOM drawing pack: dwg no 3106 Proposed Demolition works along with the Conservation Report prepared by ACP, the Conservation Architect engaged on the project.

The proposed repurposing of the existing building aims to revitalize an underutilized structure in the village core, transforming it into a vibrant hub that will benefit the local economy. The proposed development has the potential to position Spiddal village as a key center for celebrating and promoting the Irish language, education, culture, the arts, music, film, media, and cultural tourism—core strengths within the Galway Gaeltacht. By leveraging these cultural assets, the project will foster a thriving creative community hub that attracts visitors, supports local talent, and enhances the cultural heritage of the entire region.

Existing East Elevation

Existing South Elevation

Existing North Elevation

Existing Building Photographs Location Key Plan

1 Black background Internal Photographs on page 24

1 White background External Photographs on page 23

N

4.0 Existing Clochar Éinde Naomhtha – Photographs


1


2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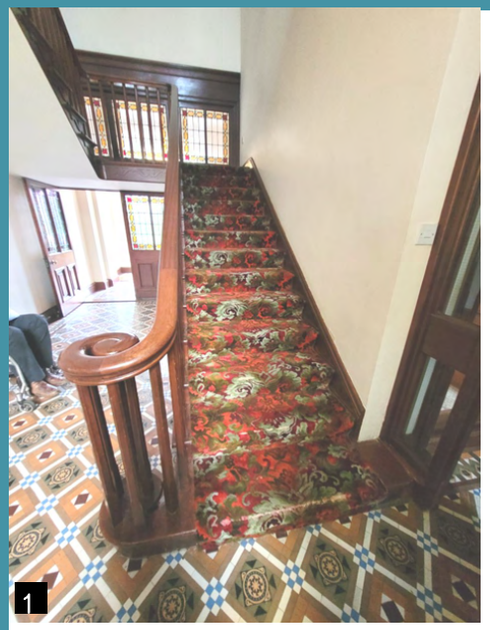
4.1 Existing Clochar Éinde Naomhtha -External

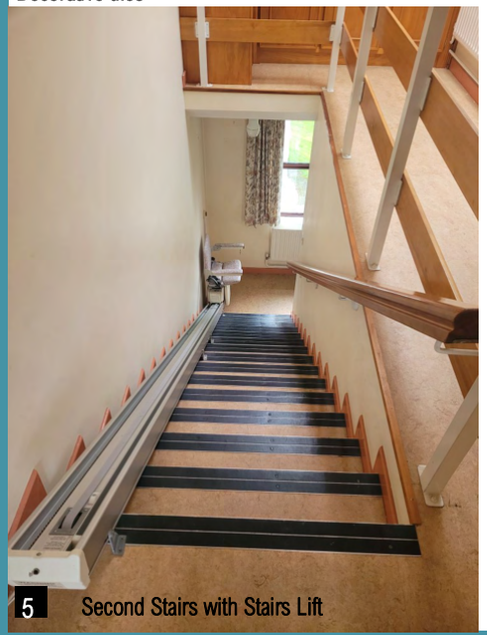
4.1 Existing Clochar Éinde Naomhtha– Internal

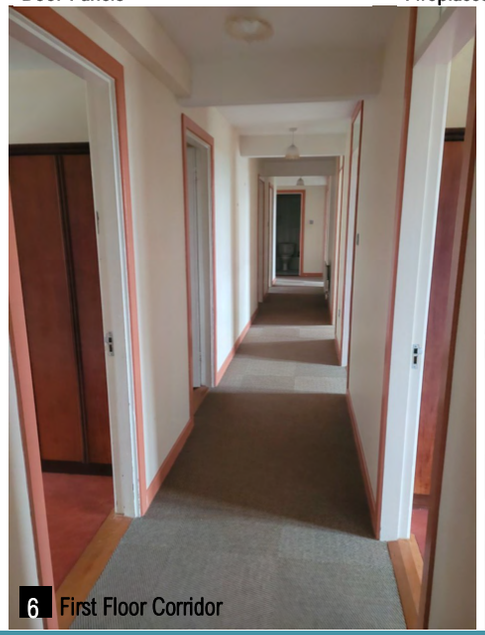

1 Decorative tiles

2 Door Panels

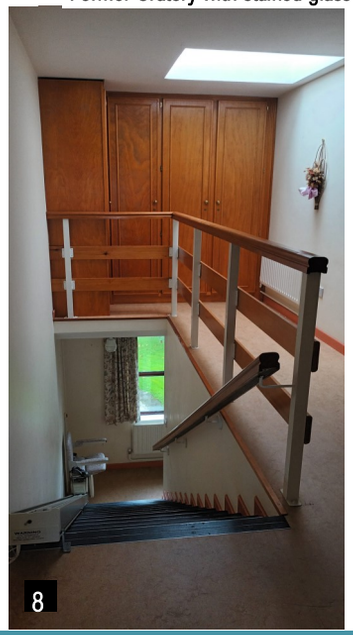

3 Fireplaces


4 Former Oratory with stained glass

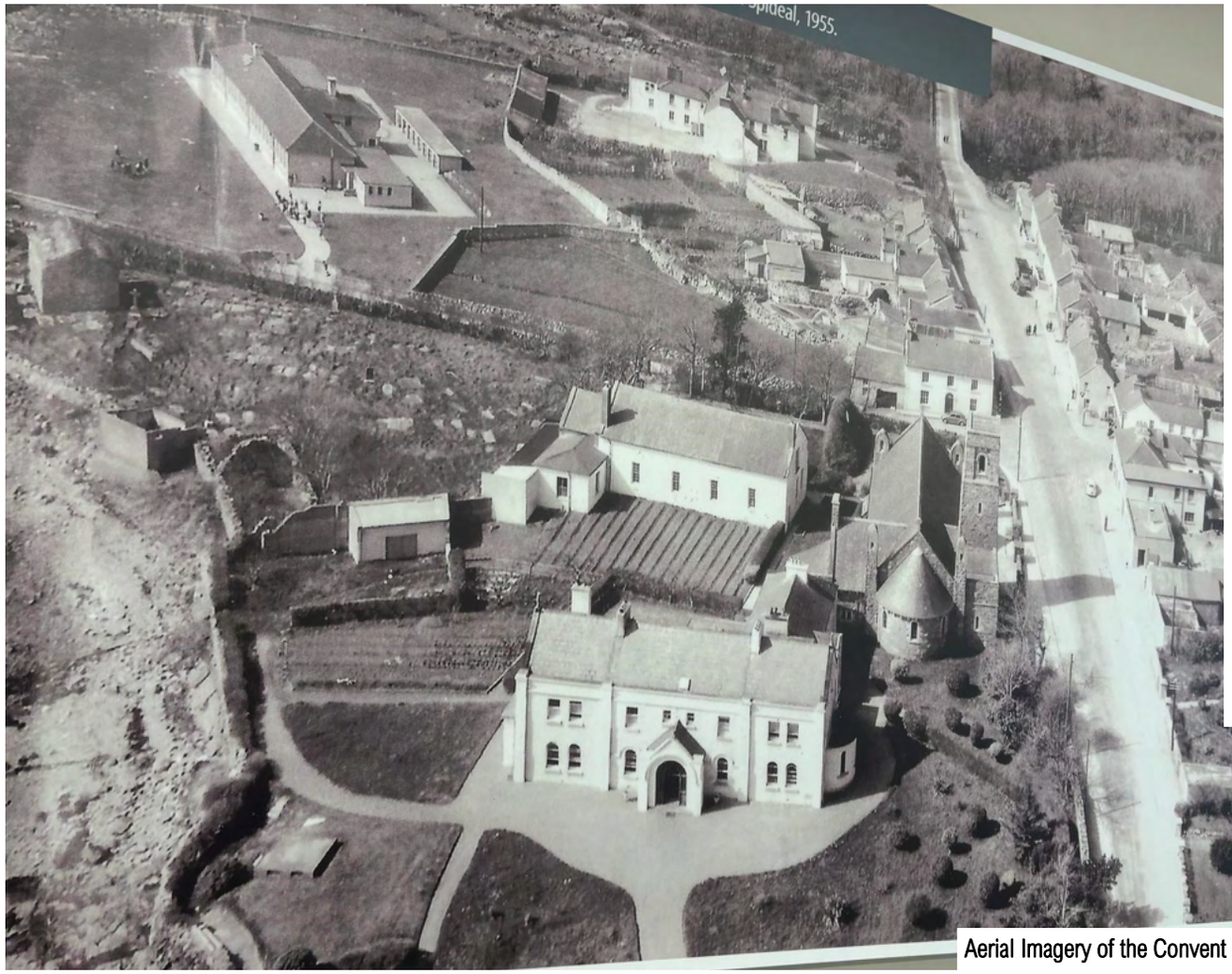

5 Second Stairs with Stairs Lift


6 First Floor Corridor


7 1990 Kitchen


8


9 1990 Kitchen



Aerial Imagery of the Convent 1955

Survey Data

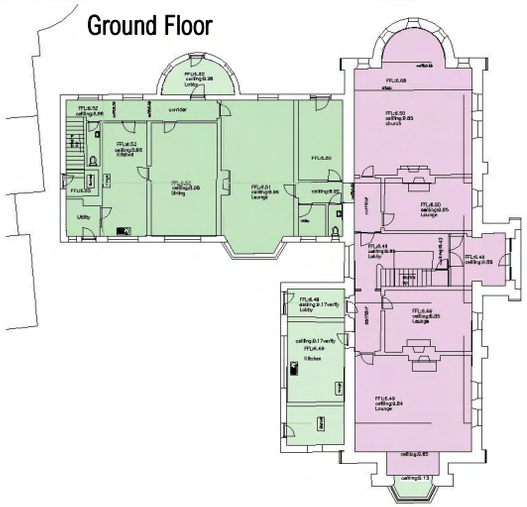
Reg No	**30327011**
Rating	**Regional**
Categories of Special Interest	**Architectural, Social**
In Use As	Convent/nunnery
Date	1920 - 1925
Coordinates	112939, 222262
Date Recorded	25/09/2008

Appraisal

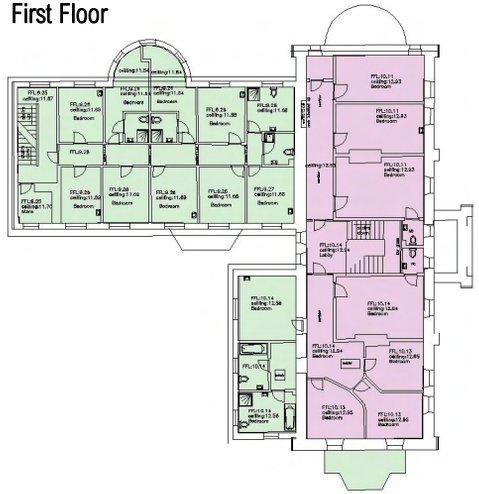
This building forms a key part of the village streetscape. It has many features of note, such as the different elevations and levels, bowed bays and embellishments that include hood-mouldings, cross finials and rendered surrounds to openings.

1923 Building Fabric
1990 Building Fabric

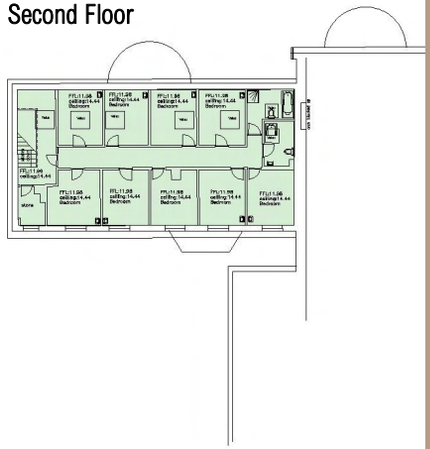
Ground Floor



First Floor

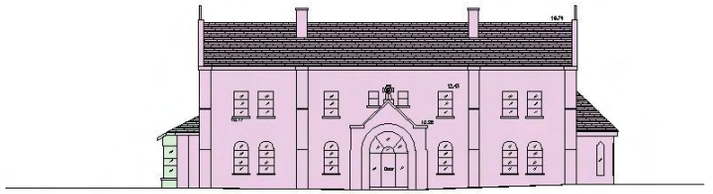


Second Floor



Front Elevation :

Side(east) Elevation :



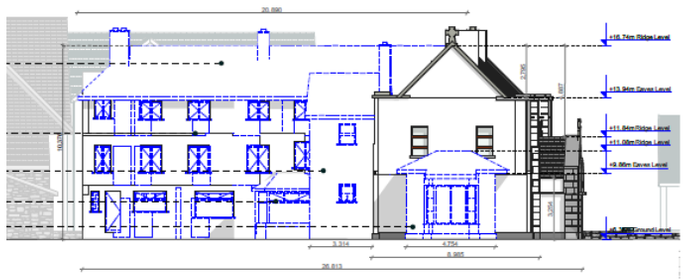
Rear Elevation :

Side Elevation(west) :

4.3 Existing Clochar Éinde Naomhtha Plans

4.4 Proposed Demolition Alteration Works

For details on the proposed extent of demolition and alteration works proposed, please refer to drawing no 3106 Proposed Demolition works.
The existing building forms a key part of the village streetscape. It has many features of note such as different elevations and levels, bowed bays and embellishments that include hood-mouldings, cross finials and rendered surrounds to openings. The Design intention is to preserve and restore all of the external protected features of the original 1923 building as well as ensuring that all works to the North facing façade of 1990's building are carefully co-ordinated to ensure a consistent treatment of both facades and elevations in recognition of their function as a key part of the village streetscape. As outlined in this report, the intention is to upgrade and restore the existing timber window frames, to include a new uniform colour scheme to all of the external elevations, through the use of a sea green colour for all window frames and white painted render/plaster. The proposed extension works are confined to the rear of the building. Whilst they will not be visible from the main village streetscape, they will be subject to the same uniform treatment and palette.
For further details regarding the impact of the proposed works on the existing building please see the enclosed Conservation Report prepared by ACP.

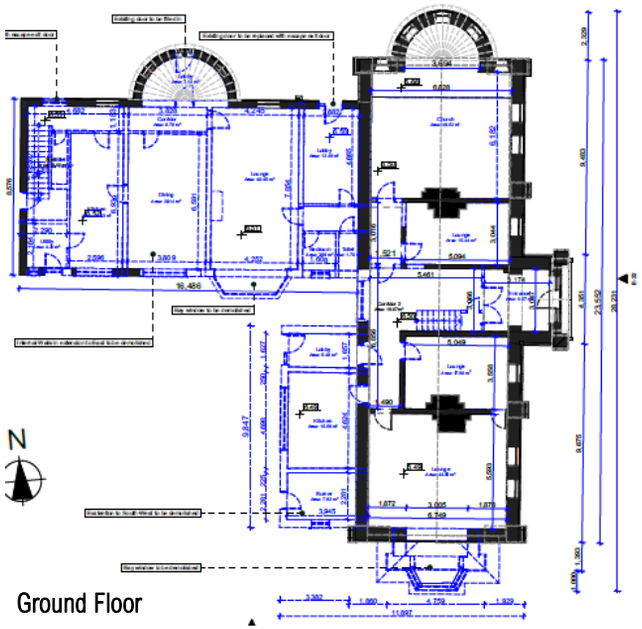


South Elevation

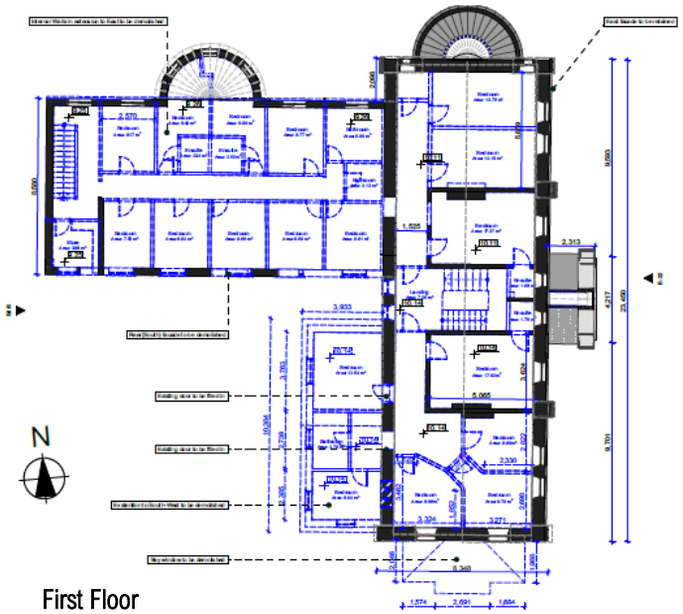
East Elevation

West Elevation

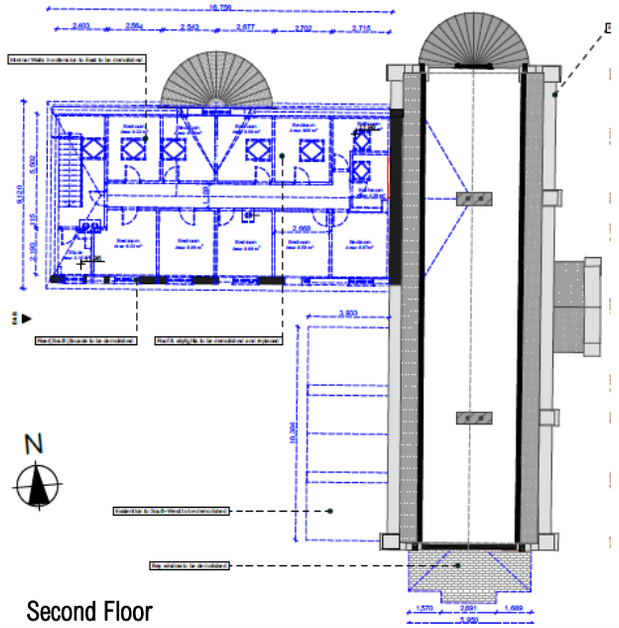
North Elevation



Ground Floor

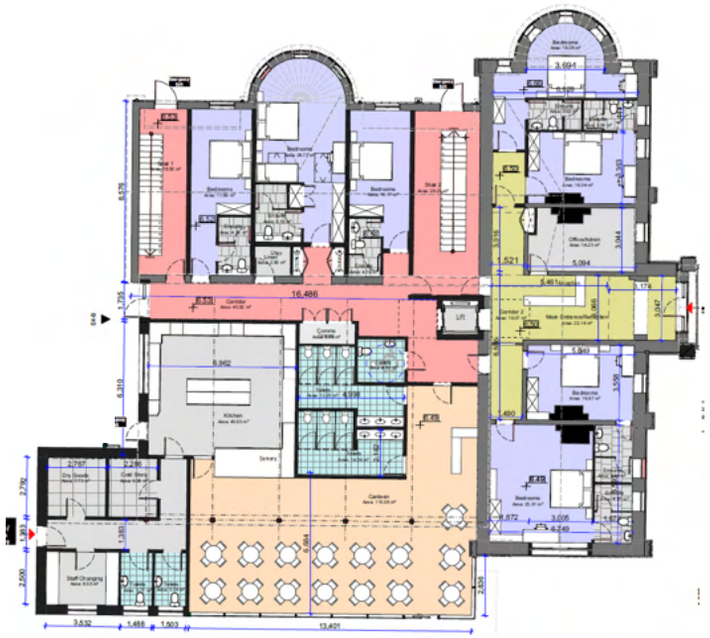


First Floor



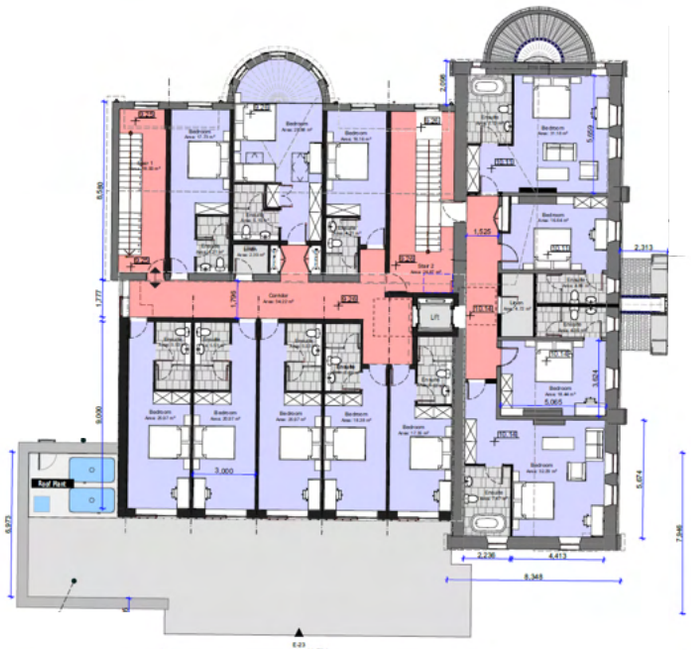
Second Floor

Refurbishment of the Convent to provide Student Accommodation comprising of 27 en-suite bedrooms and canteen



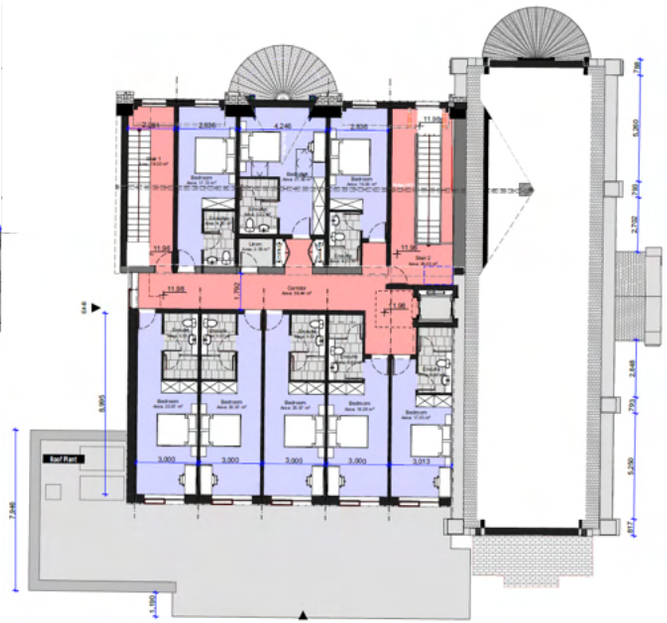
Proposed Ground Floor

Proposed Student Accommodation Building Areas
Student Accommodation Ground Floor Area
Existing Building GFA= 338.5 m²
Demolition GFA = 36.8 m²
Proposed New Construction GFA = 276.42 m²
Student Accommodation Ground Floor GFA TOTAL = 614.92 m²



Proposed First Floor

Student Accommodation First Floor Areas
Existing Building GFA= 313.55 m²
Demolition GFA = 33.3 m²
Proposed New Construction GFA = 172 m²
Student Accommodation First Floor GFA TOTAL = 485.55 m²



Proposed Second Floor

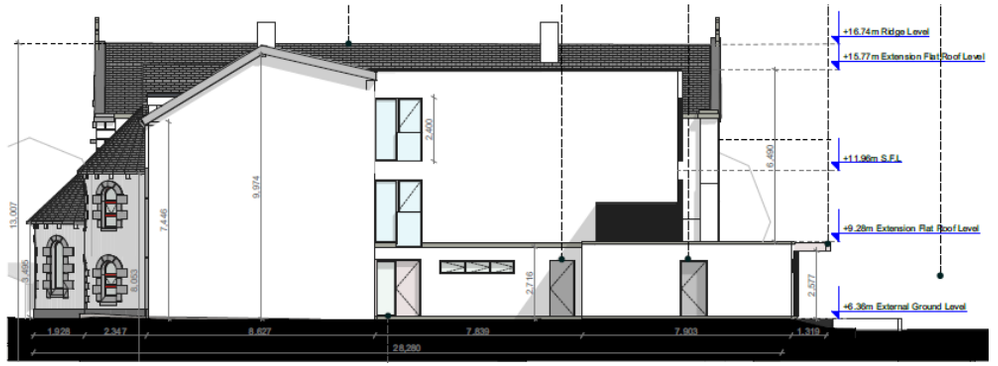
Student Accommodation Second Floor Areas
Existing Buildings to be refurbished GFA= 127.39 m²
Proposed New Construction GFA = 172 m²
Student Accommodation Second Floor GFA TOTAL = 299.39 m²
Proposed Student Accommodation Building GFA = 1,399.86m²

See drawing no 3108 Proposed Student Accommodation Floor Plans

Proposed East Elevation

Proposed North Elevation

Proposed South Elevation



Proposed West Elevation

4.4 Student Accommodation Elevations

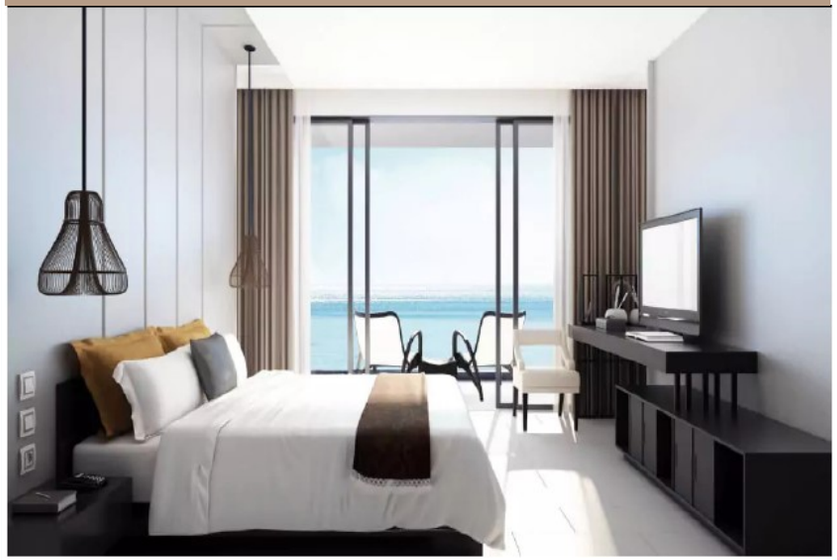
Sample Image of a Dining Room with panoramic glazing

Sample Image of a Dining Room with panoramic glazing

Sample Image of a Dining Room with panoramic glazing

We propose to retain the existing fireplaces and stained glazing, ensuring that all bedrooms within the existing building reflect the historic character in their internal décor style. This approach will preserve and highlight key architectural features,

Sample Image of a contemporary bedroom proposed in the new extension



Sample Image of a heritage bedroom proposed for the existing building

Sample Image of a heritage bedroom

Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey – Accommodation Model:

The Promoters have identified the Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey Global Centre and the Sacred Heart University Dingle as model examples of Education and Training Campuses. The Notre Dame Kylemore model is proposed by the applicant as a local example and model for the proposed student accommodation and repurposing of the existing convent building. Discussions with a number of US colleges have been initiated to create a partnership similar to the Notre Dame—Kylemore Abbey model. The Kylemore Abbey Global Centre features 16 ensuite bedrooms, which can cater to student or professional groups. Twelve of these bedrooms can accommodate triple occupancy, with one set of murphy -style bunk beds and one queen-sized sofa bed. Two of these bedrooms can accommodate four people, with two sets of murphy-style bunk beds and one sofa. The final two bedrooms are smaller "staff-style" rooms which can accommodate double occupancy, with each bedroom sleeping two people in murphy-style bunk beds. The Kylemore Centre can accommodate 48 individuals at full capacity. The bedrooms can also be utilized as single-occupancy rooms that are well-suited to adult and professional programs. For these adult programs, 14 individuals can stay in the bedrooms and utilize the queen-sized sofa beds for a more hotel-like experience. The two smaller "staff-style" rooms could be available for program organizers or staff. Desks are provided in each room, and all rooms feature views of the mountains and the lake. Bedrooms have full wireless connectivity, and residents access their bedrooms using electronic swipe cards. The swipe cards given to each resident will function for their specific bedroom, as well as the main door of the Centre.

The Promoters have identified that the Notre Dame– Kylemore Abbey design and functionality is a desirable model for the Student Accommodation proposed as part of the Spiddal Creative Campus. The design intent is to achieve a similar high quality, functional, energy efficient and sustainable design that achieves the same purpose whilst also respecting the historical integrity of the former Spiddal Convent.

Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey Sample Images of typical Bedroom & En-Suite

4.6 Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey Accommodation

Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey – Education, Training and Learning Spaces:

The Kylemore Abbey Global Centre features a large classroom that is technologically equipped to the highest standard, with high-speed WiFi, a large projection screen, a flat screen television for presentations, and a copier/scanner/printer. The classroom seats up to 50 people, and features a sound-proof barrier that can be utilized to make two classrooms of 25 people each. Kylemore offers a variety of layout options to facilitate lectures, roundtable discussions, meetings, and group work. It is envisaged that the Multi-functional Auditorium, studio spaces, classrooms and meeting rooms provided in the proposed Civic Centre building in Spiddal can be used as Education and Training spaces whilst also accommodating Community uses. The Auditorium has been designed to function as both a lecture hall and a Theatre/Performance venue based on the layout of the Mermaid Theatre in Bray which was identified as an example of an appropriately scaled and highly functional venue capable of hosting Arts, Theatre, Cultural and Musical performances. The design intent is to repurpose the existing Convent building to reactivate an underutilised building in the village core, and to provide a new Civic building that will become a community hub and which should boost the local economy unlocking the potential for Spiddal village to become an important hub that celebrates & promotes the Irish Language, Education & Training, Culture & The Arts, Music, Film & media and cultural tourism which are identified as core strengths within the Galway Gaeltacht.

Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey Sample Images of Learning Spaces

4.7 Notre Dame Kylemore Abbey Learning Spaces

5.0 Proposed Civic Building—Stakeholder proposals

1a. Civic Building – Library – in collaboration with Galway County Council

- The proposal is to work with Galway County Council to create a building that Inspires, connects and empowers the community.
- Facilitate social interaction, civic participation and community activity
- Create a learning, research, study and recreation hub
- Create a cultural quarter and an artistic hub
- Promote Information, Recreation and Inspiration
- Promote Creativity, Innovation & Imagination
- Promote Educational and Cultural Tourism
- Create a Universally accessible and Age friendly and user friendly environment
- Facilitate Equality, Inclusivity & Diversity
- Facilitate Energy efficiency and Sustainability
- Revitalise the Public realm
- Facilitate Cultural events. Exhibitions., Public access to superfast Internet – Gigabit Library, Computer and Language classes.
- Promote Adult literacy and the right to read programme.
- Support Book clubs. Neurodiversity, Story Trails & History Festivals
- Support Writer Festivals Children's Literature Festivals
- Create an ICT and e-learning hub that facilitates the delivery of E – Services to include; Music streaming, Genealogy, Coding

1b. Civic building—in collaboration with Creative Ireland

The proposal is to work with Creative Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media to promote and support the following initiatives;

- Creative Youth, Creative Schools, Creative Communities
- Creative Health and Wellbeing, Creativity in Older Age
- Creativity and Climate Action, Creative Industries
- Creative technology, The Shared Island Initiative

2. Civic Building - Theatre and the Arts – in collaboration with the Arts Council and Ealáin na Gaeltachta

- The proposal is to work with the Arts Council and Ealáin na Gaeltachta Teoranta to support artists, organisations, projects and events that celebrate and enliven the unique culture of the Gaeltacht through traditional and contemporary arts.
- Promote the development of contemporary and traditional arts in the Gaeltacht
- Promote the intrinsic value of the Arts as a catalyst for social health and well-being
- Facilitate the creation of a Creative Community Hub
- Promote collaboration in Digital Media and Communication
- Provide Education and Training facilities, Artist studio space, Co-working space and Exhibition space
- Provide Yoga and community space and infrastructure
- Provide a Gaeltacht venue for an Irish Language Theatre company
- Provide Facilities that support
  - The Irish language
  - The Cultural, Social and Economic development of the Gaeltacht
  - Cultural Diversity and Creativity
  - Local Arts programmes
  - Youth Theatre and Youth Arts programmes (Drama for Young people)
  - Arts in Schools and Education
  - The provision of classes in Traditional music, Oral arts, Dance and Sean Nós
  - Gaeltacht Festivals
  - Art in Health and Wellbeing
  - Culture Night
  - Heritage week
  - Seachtain na Gaeilge
  - Cruinniú na nÓg (National day of creativity for children and young people)
  - Cuisle, Scéim Neartu, Scéim Nóta
  - Celtic Neighbours & Tosta
  - Garraí an Ghiorra
  - Creative Youth partnership
  - Public Arts programme
  - Bealtine
  - Artists in Residency programmes (e.g Centre Culture Irlandais)

3. Digital hub—Publicly accessible Digital Archive—in collaboration with TG4 Screen Ireland and Failte Ireland

Work with TG4 and Screen Ireland to create, as part of the Digital hub component of the Civic building, a Publicly assessable digital archive of Irish language Film, Music and Media that doubles as a "knowledge repository" and research facility and acts as a domestic and international tourist attraction.

4. Education and Training Campus—in collaboration with TG4, Fís Éireann (Screen Ireland), Údaras na Gaeltachta and Atlantic Technical University (ATU)

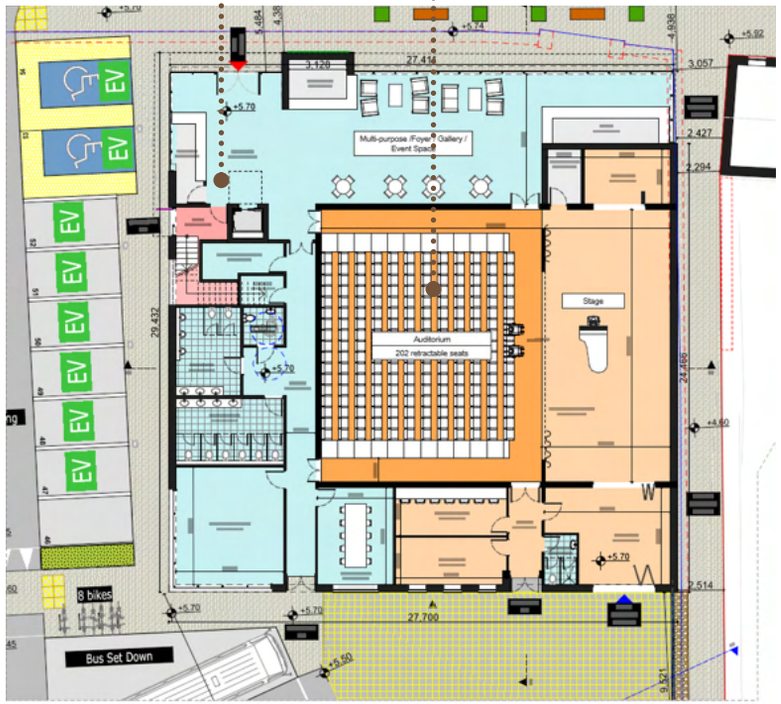
- Work with TG4 and Screen Ireland to ensure that the Education and Training Campus facilities and the Auditorium is utilised for the training and education of staff seeking employment in Irish language based TV Programming and Production.
- Work with TG4 and Screen Ireland to create a Media Development Unit that will act as a base to boost training and education in Irish language media through a unified strategy between TG4, Údaras na Gaeltachta and Fís Éireann
- Work with TG4, Screen Ireland and ATU to ensure that the Campus is utilised as a hub location to promote Education and Training in the Creative Technology Sector to include Film and TV production, Content Creation, Digital Art, Digital Design, Animation and Game Design and Immersive Technology sectors.

5. Educational Programmes to be hosted at the new Campus Facility—in collaboration with GRETB, ATU and domestic and International universities

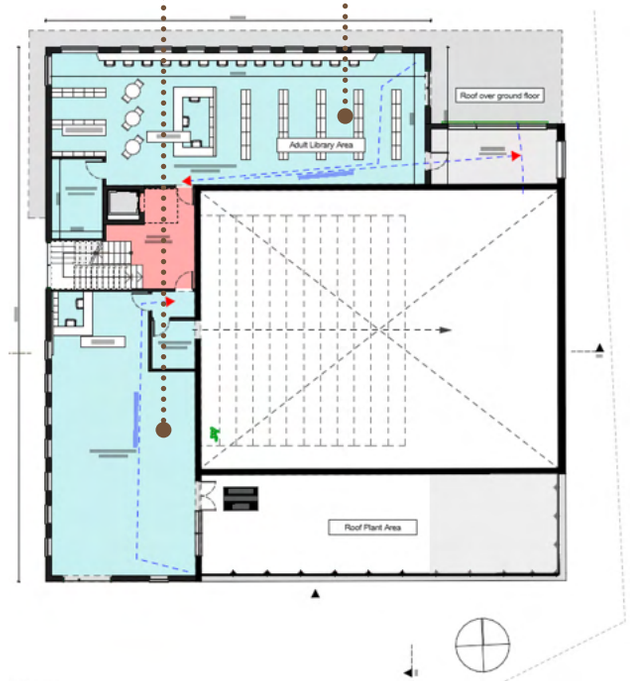
- USA Colleges – Study Abroad Programmes
- Ecology and Sustainability Courses and workshop
- Education and Training workshops
- School and Community workshops
- Health and Wellbeing workshops
- Community Film and Cinema Clubs
- Creative Writing
- Traditional Dance and Music workshops
- Visual Art Programmes
- Photography Programmes
- Film & Multi Media workshops
- Education and Training Seminars
- Yoga, Mindfulness and Wellness workshops
- Film And TV production Education and Professional training
- Digital media training

Civic Building Main Uses

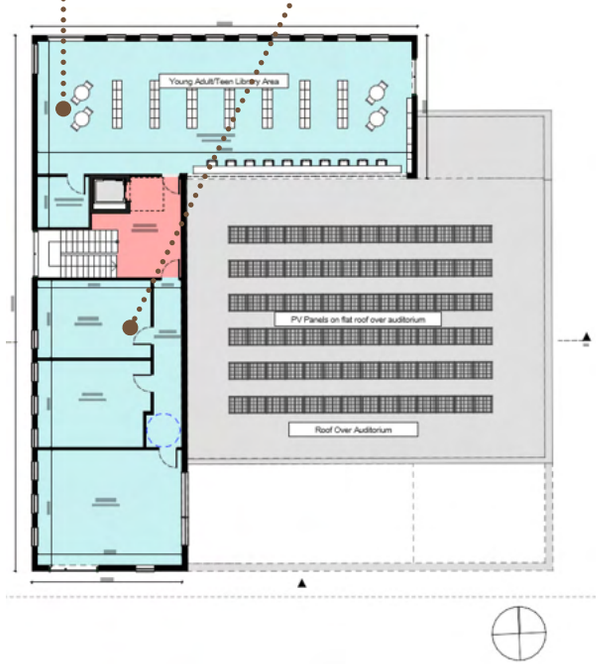
- Auditorium
  - Multi-purpose foyer
  - Auditorium with Ancillary Spaces
  - Classrooms and Meeting Room
- Public Library
  - Digital Hub
  - Public Library Adult-Teenage-Children-Sensory Room
- Digital Hub
  - Education and Training Rooms



Proposed Civic Building Ground Floor GFA = 748.92 m²
Proposed Civic Building TOTAL GFA = 1,368.05 m²



Proposed Civic Building First Floor GFA = 320.10 m²
Proposed Civic Building TOTAL GFA = 1,368.05 m²



Proposed Civic Building Second Floor GFA = 299.03 m²
Proposed Civic Building TOTAL GFA = 1,368.05 m²

See drawing no 3111 Proposed Civic Building Layouts

5.1 Civic Building Plans

National Vision for Public Libraries

The national *Vision* for public libraries is that they should be "attractive and welcoming spaces where all members of the community can access knowledge, ideas and information, and where people can reflect, connect and learn."

Library Development Programme 2021-25

- A **bright attractive, trusted, welcoming** civic space
- Self-service with **extended opening hours**
- Centrally located, **accessible and visible**
- **Leading edge digital** technologies to enhance the service and available for users with support from staff
- A **focal point** for all public services
- **Free service,** no fines or lending charges
- Valued by and **essential to communities**
- **friendly, skilled staff,** actively supporting and guiding users throughout the library
- Attracting **users of all ages** in large numbers
- **A wide range of resources and services** for work, leisure, learning and creativity, online and in-library
- **A meeting place,** informally and formally
- **Workstation facilities** for hot-desking
- The go-to place locally, with **national reach**
- Attracting and benefiting **local residents and users**
- Places for **creativity and culture**

Values of the Library Service

The public library service is a civic resource rooted in our communities. The library supports community life and individual self-development. These values form the foundation of the public library service.

Consultation on the strategy identified key values and principals that staff and users associated with the library service:

5.1 Civic Building Plans

Proposed Building Form

The civic building form has been carefully considered to ensure that it integrates to create a positive contribution to the village streetscape whilst respecting the existing built context of the village and the adjacent heritage assets. The building mass has been carefully considered and the building varies in height from single storey, adjacent to the former schoolhouse to the east , to a two storey element for the auditorium and three storey public library which wraps around the auditorium along the North and Western elevations. (Please refer to the building height study on pg.18 and the 3D massing sketch on page 16 for further context)

Materials and finishes

The Design intent is to provide a contemporary design to the Civic building which contrasts with the heritage assets. It is proposed to use a simple palette of robust low maintenance materials that can withstand the elements at this exposed location on the Atlantic Coast. The proposed external finishes provide for a smooth white painted render finish on the upper floors and Corten steel cladding on the façade at the entrance that serves as a backdrop for silver metallic signage and coloured render. The ground floor façade will be finished in a smooth maroon/rusty colour paint colour to match the Corten steel cladding at the entrance along with a pressed metal canopy cladding with matching colour spandrel panels. Metallic Raised lettering signage is proposed on the façade in three locations as shown on the Elevations drawing no 3112.

Landscaping and Public Lighting

The development provides an opportunity to create a welcoming and inviting public plaza in front of the new Civic building which opens up the Campus to the public and creates a new viewpoint of the Galway Bay seascape and Burren in the heart of the village. The proposal is to create a widened public footpath along the front boundary as a paved area incorporating Public lighting, seating areas, planters and soft landscaping as shown on the Landscape Design Proposal Plans enclosed. A sensory garden, which supports the Sensory facilities within the new Public library is also proposed in front of the Existing convent building. The intention is to create an enhanced open public space that will benefit the local community and enhance the public realm within the village in a manner that places the new Civic building and Education and Training Campus at the core heart of the village.

External lighting of the buildings will play an important role and a sensitive approach is required to accentuate the distinctive features of both the existing protected structure and the new civic building. It is envisaged to use downlighters to subtly articulate the main entrances and signage. Site lighting is specified as part of the M&E drawing pack submitted with the application.

Signage

The Design team and the Promoters are conscious of the sites location within an ACA, and it is envisaged that stylish signage will be provided on both buildings in a manner that respects the built heritage of the village. The Irish language will be given priority on all signage on both buildings. Please refer to dwg no 3102 Proposed Civic Building Plans and Elevations containing an example of the proposed signage design which will be settled with the local authority at a later stage.

Car parking and cycle facilities

The creation of the enhanced public realm in front of the Campus will necessitate the relocation within the site of the existing on street parking along the front boundary of the site. The loss of circa 14 on street spaces which will improve the Road safety as highlighted in the Traffic Report prepared by CST, is offset by the provision of 54 new carparking spaces within the Campus and an enhanced, attractive public realm at the heart of the village which creates a new view of the Galway Bay seascape and the Burren. The Campus will accommodate 54 new carparking spaces, to include 4 disabled spaces, 2 Go Car spaces and 12 EV car charging spaces, together with a dedicated bus/coach set-down area. The net effect should be a highly accessible Campus and a significantly enhanced public realm at the heart of the village. The Campus also provides for 55 new bicycle parking spaces, to include two cargo bike spaces. These bike spaces have been provided in front of the existing convent building behind the existing stone wall, as part of the overall master plan strategy to create an accessible Campus and to serve both the Student Accommodation and Civic building. The Campus will implement a Mobility Management plan and Staff changing facilities will be provided as part of the measures targeted to encourage sustainable travel and to reduce the reliance on private car transport.

Refuse Collection and Plantroom

A dedicated external bin store and plantroom has been provided to the rear and southwest of the site to serve both buildings.

Sustainability and Ecology

The Education and Training Campus has adopted a Sustainability policy that has influenced the Design intent of the project. The new Civic building and the upgraded Convent building which form part of the Campus have been designed to achieve Near Zero Energy Building status and exemplar Sustainability credentials through the use of modern insulation and building systems, Air to Water Heating systems and Solar PV Panels to enhance energy efficiency and sustainable power usage. Both buildings will utilise Rain water Harvesting to minimise water usage. Tree pits and nature based drainage solutions are utilised to minimise surface water run off. Swift boxes, Bat boxes and Bee hives will be provided for on the site as part of the sustainability strategy and as part of the Sustainable ethos that will be promoted by the Education and Training Campus and the Public Library. The Sensory Garden and all open spaces will utilise pollinator friendly planting.

- **Public Realm Improvements**: The current clutter of telephone poles, wires, and on-street parking at the front of the site will be simplified and enhanced through public realm upgrades. This includes placing cables underground, removing poles and on-street parking, and improving views of the Church, Convent, and schoolhouse from the village center.

- **Extent of the Public Realm Upgrades**: Public realm upgrades are proposed to extend from the front of the former schoolhouse to the Church, with the removal of on-street parking and seamless integration of new kerbing and paving. The enhanced/upgraded public realm will be a paved area incorporating seating, planters and the existing street lighting along the site front boundary extending to the space outside the former schoolhouse main entrance to the East and the main pedestrian entrance on the Church grounds to the West. See the Aerial View Below showing the extent of the public Realm works shaded in purple in dotted outline.

CGI of proposed Civic Building View from West to East of the proposed new entrance

- **No Impact on Church Access**: The public realm upgrades and relocation of parking within the campus will not negatively impact vehicular access to the Church for hearses or bridal cars.
- **Street Lighting**: the existing village street lighting present outside the front boundary will be retained

- **Protection of Key Views**: The siting of the new Civic building protects important views of the Church Tower and the Convent's main entrance, balancing the new development with the preservation of key village features.

- **Traffic and Parking Enhancements**: Recent minor traffic incidents highlight the risks posed by the current parking regime. The proposal to remove on-street parking in front of key protected structures and to provide new parking within the site will enhance the public realm, reduce traffic risks, and increase the quantum of overall parking in the village center.

5.2 Proposed Public Realm Enhancement

Sample image of street planters proposed

Sample image of street seating proposed

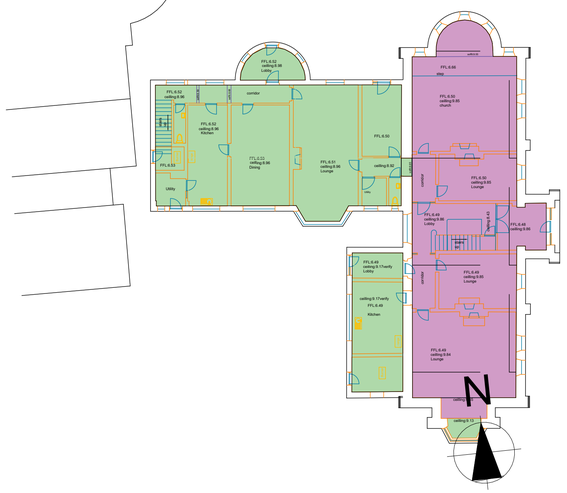
Sample image of formal sensory/sculpture garden

Sample image of formal sensory/sculpture garden

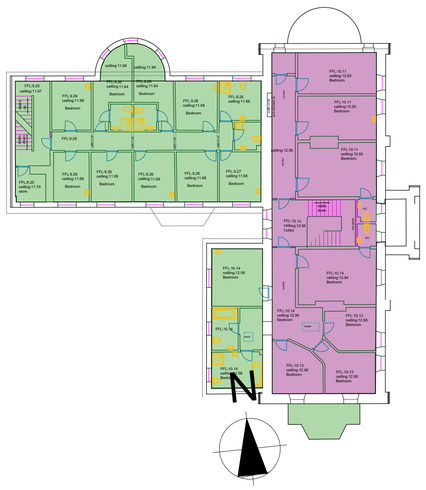
APPENDIX 2

Timeline of Construction of Existing Convent Building

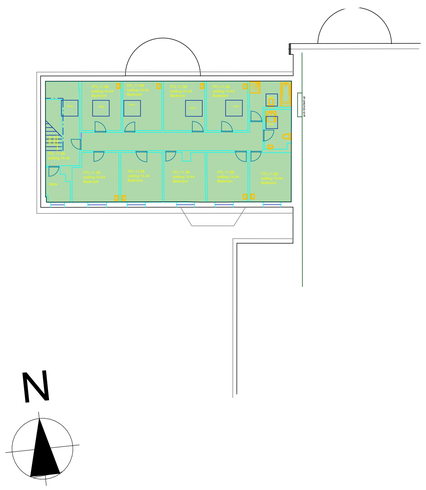
Ground Floor Plan :



First Floor Plan :



Second Floor Plan :

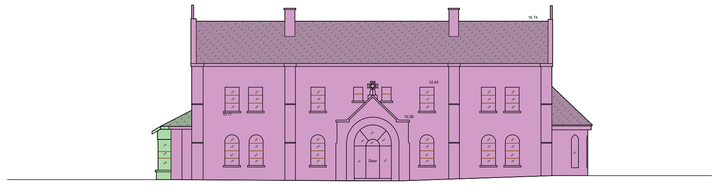


1923 Building Fabric
1990 Building Fabric

Front Elevation :

Datum : 0.0m AOD.

Side(east) Elevation :



Datum : 0.0m AOD.

Rear Elevation :

Datum : 0.0m AOD.

Side Elevation(west) :

Datum : 0.0m AOD.

No.	Date	Comments	By

REVISIONS

No.	Date	Comments	By

REVISIONS

Scale @A1: **1:200**

Drawing Purpose: **Planning**

Project: Proposed Creative Campus, Site of former convent in Spiddal Village, Co. Galway

Client: Fiontar na Greine Teoranta

Date: October 2024 Drawn by: CR Checked by: JON

File Ref. 3.09

Subject: **Timeline of construction of existing convent building**

Project No. **23193**

Drawing No. **3003**

Rev. **-**

O'NEILL O'MALLEY ARCHITECTURE

Barracks Yard, James Street, Westport, Co. Mayo **Ireland**

Ground Floor, Block 2/3, Galway Technology Park, Parkmore, Galway **Ireland**

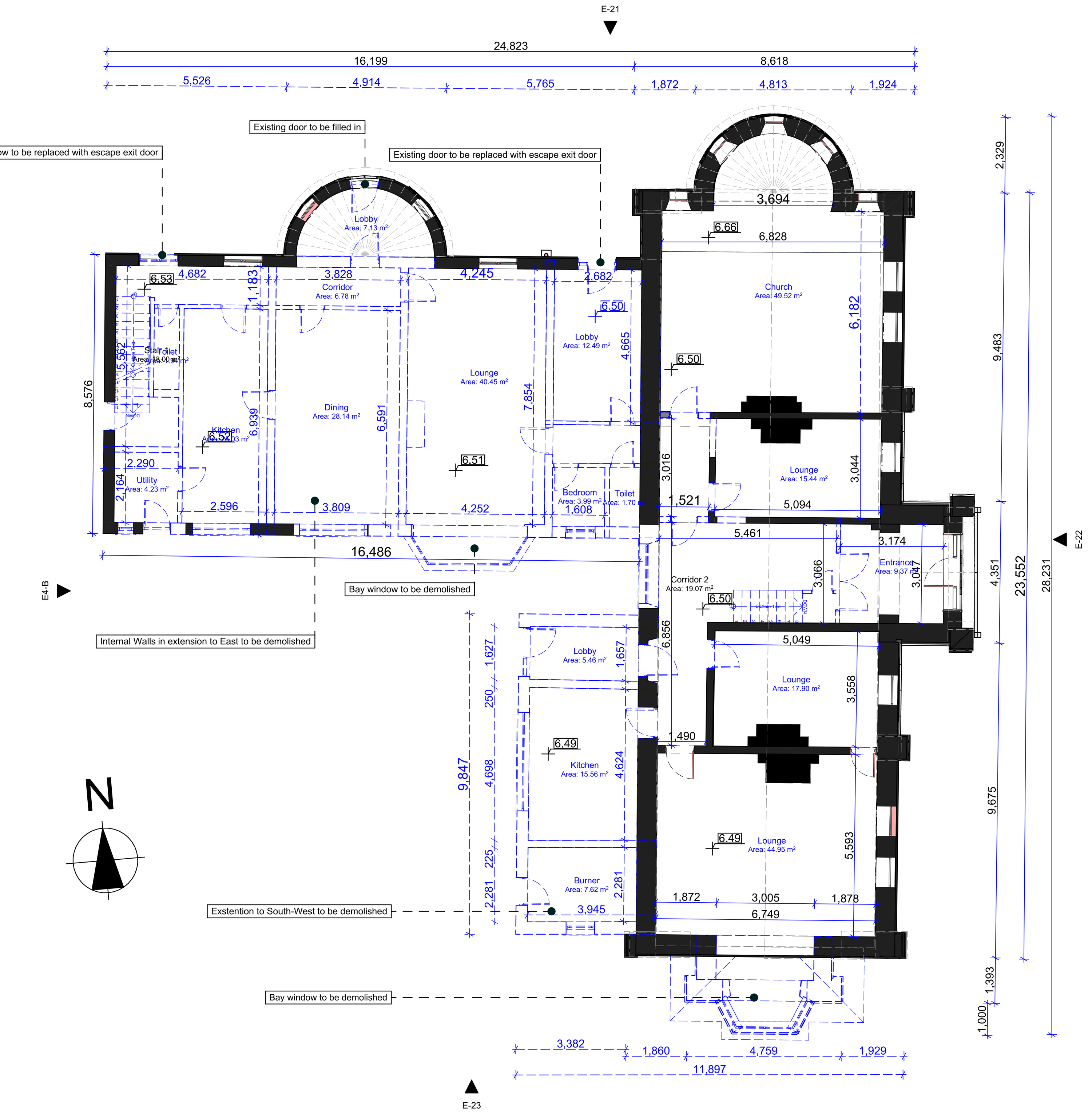
T: +353 (0)91 771033

E: info@onom.ie

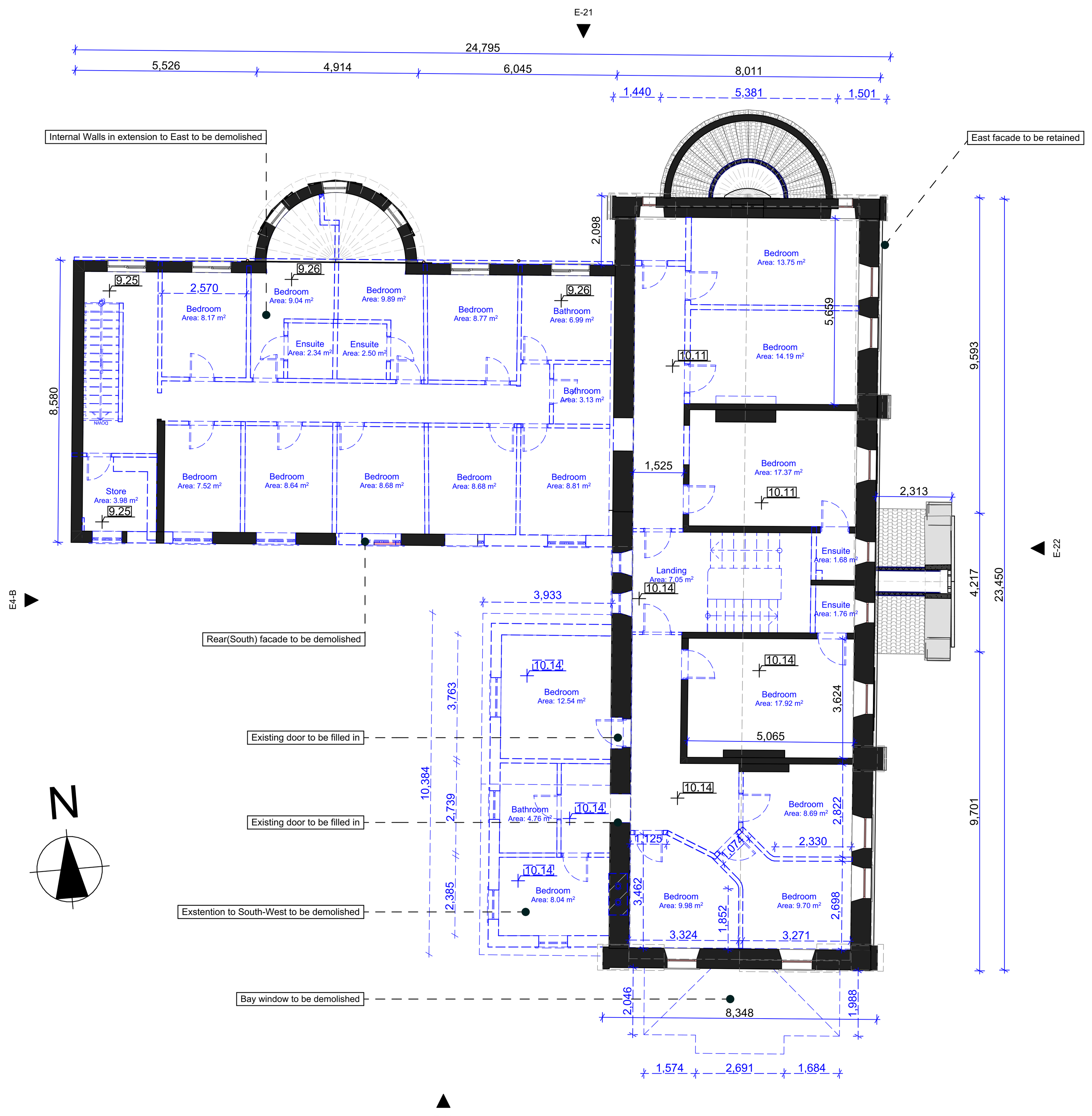
W: onom.ie

APPENDIX 3

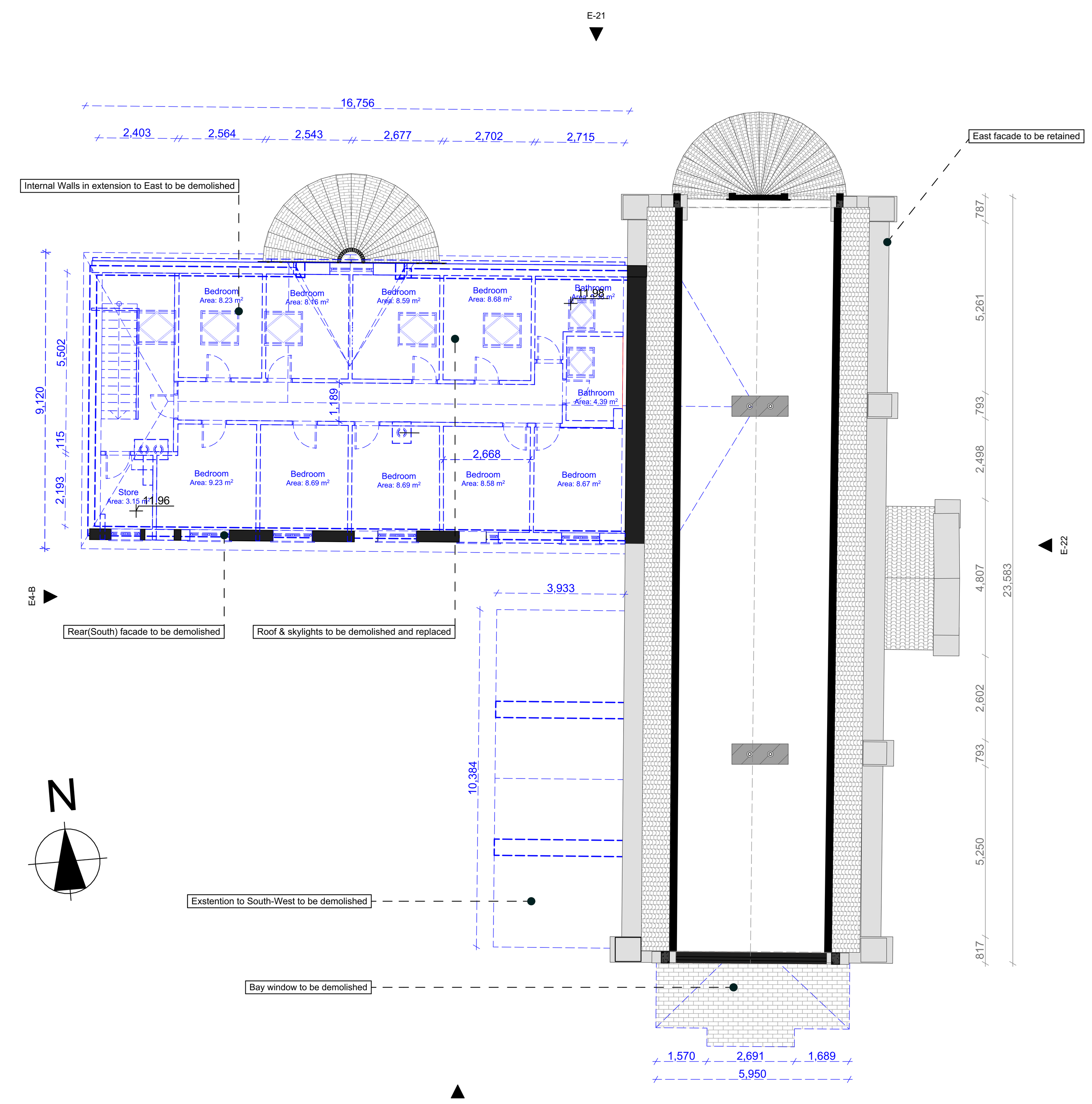
Proposed Demolition Works



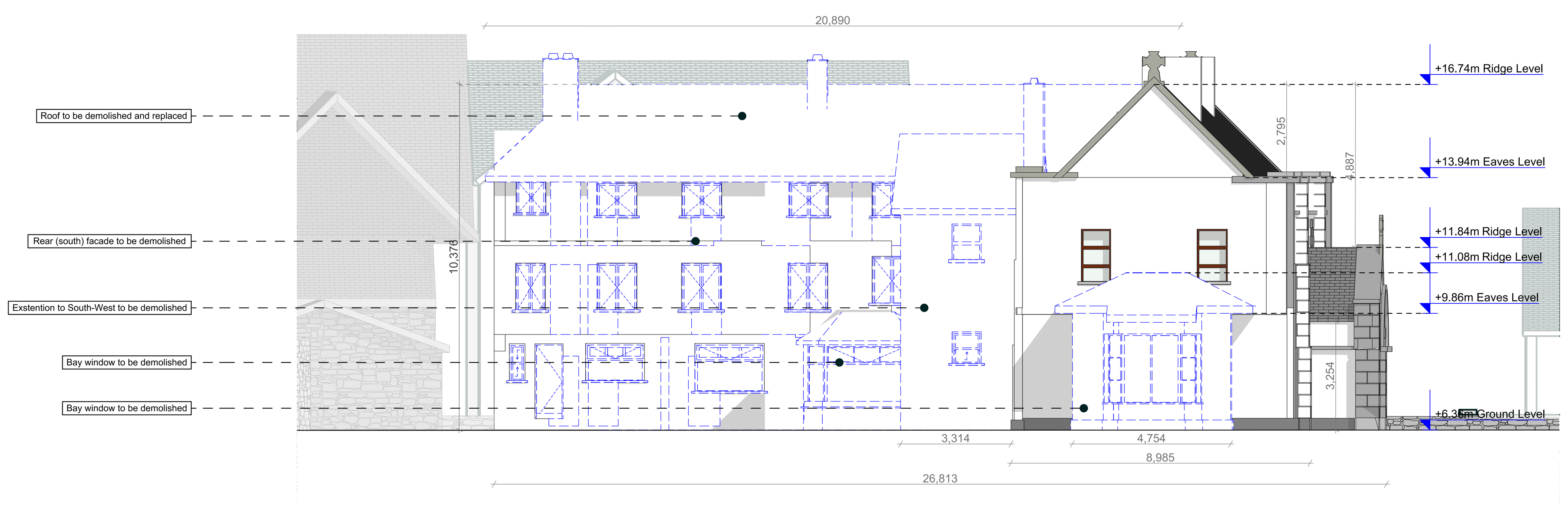
Ground Floor Plan 1:100



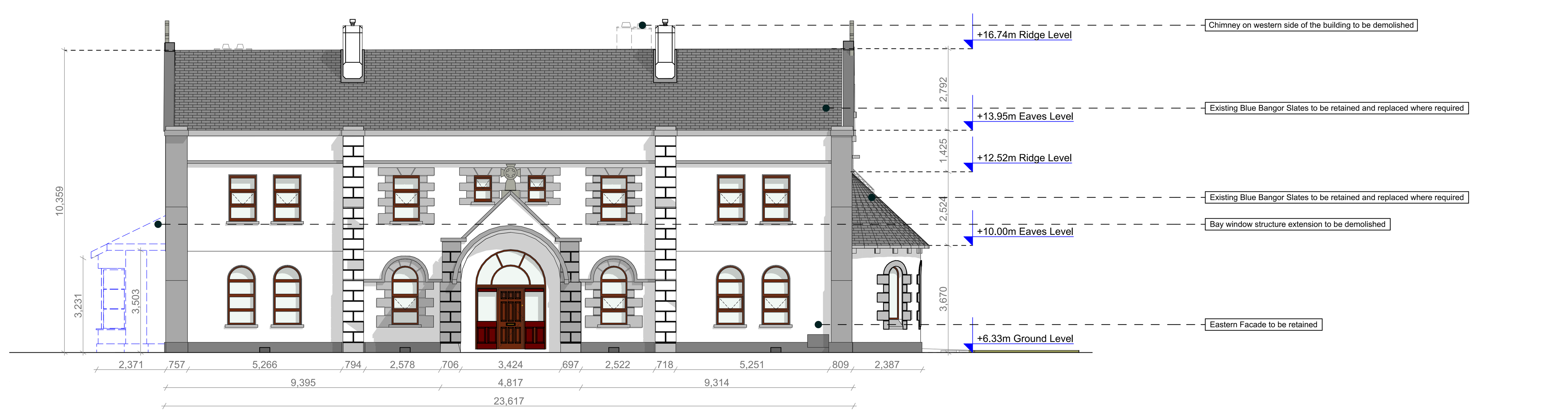
First Floor Plan 1:100



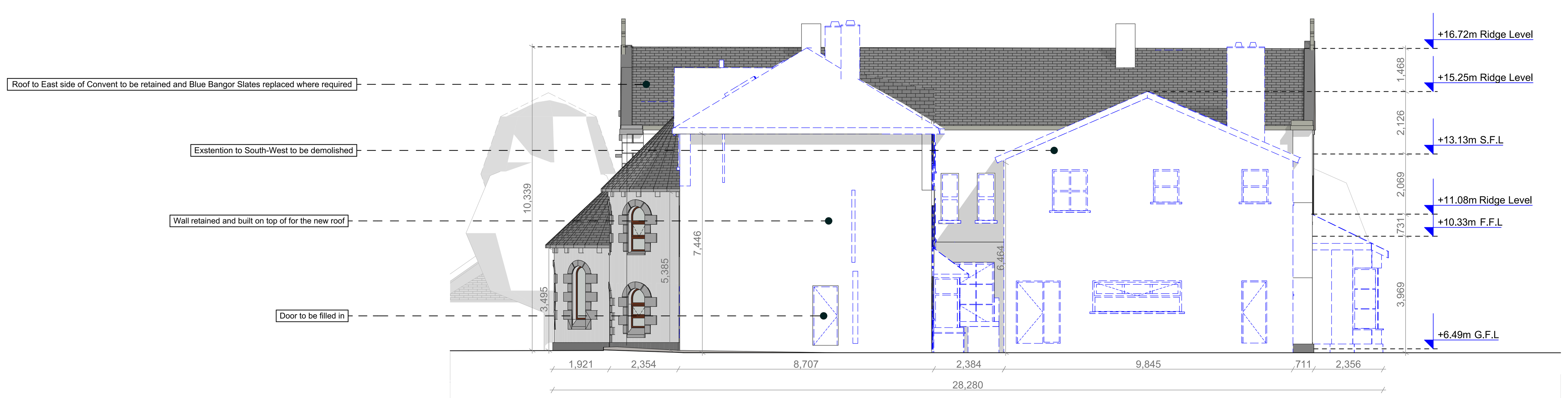
Second Floor Plan 1:100



Rear Elevation 1:100



Proposed Rear Elevation 1:100



West Facing Elevation 1:100

Front Elevation 1:100

Structure Proposed to be Demolished

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No.	Date	Comments	By

REVISIONS

No.	Date	Comments	By

REVISIONS

Scale @A0: 1:100

Drawing Purpose: **PLANNING**

Project: Proposed Creative Campus, Spiddal Village, Co. Galway

Client: Fiontar na Greine Teoranta

Date: August 2024 Drawn by: ÉK Checked by: CR

File Ref. 3.09

Subject: **Proposed Demolition Works**

Project No. **23193** Drawing No. **3106** Rev. **-**

O'NEILL O'MALLEY ARCHITECTURE

Barracks Yard,
James Street,
Westport, Co. Mayo
Ireland

Ground Floor, Block 2/3,
Galway Technology Park,
Parkmore, Galway
Ireland
T: +353 (0)91 771033
E: info@onom.ie
W: onom.ie

APPENDIX 4

Existing Site Survey Plan

Site boundary in ownership of applicant (4,435m²)

Site boundary of proposed works (5,045m²)

1. Clochar Éinde Naomhtha (The Convent Building)(RPS No. 3953)
2. Leabharlann - was a former school building (RPS No. 3794)
3. Spiddal Abbey - Small single cell chapel (RPS No. 739)
4. Old garden shed
5. Old Stone Chapel and Graveyard
6. Cill Éinde Church (RPS No. 738)

Existing Site Survey Plan 1:200

No.	Date	Comments	By

REVISIONS

No.	Date	Comments	By

REVISIONS

Scale @A0: **1:200**

Drawing Purpose: **PLANNING**

Project: Proposed Creative Campus, on the site of the former convent, Spiddal Village, Co. Galway

Client: Fiontar na Greine Teoranta

Date: October 2024 Drawn by: ÉK Checked by: CR

File Ref. 3.09

Subject: **Existing Site Survey Plan**

Project No. **23193**

Drawing No. **3001**

Rev. **-**

O'NEILL O'MALLEY ARCHITECTURE

Barracks Yard, James Street, Westport, Co. Mayo **Ireland**

Ground Floor, Block 2/3, Galway Technology Park, Parkmore, Galway **Ireland**

T: +353 (0)91 771033
E: info@onom.ie
W: onom.ie

APPENDIX 5

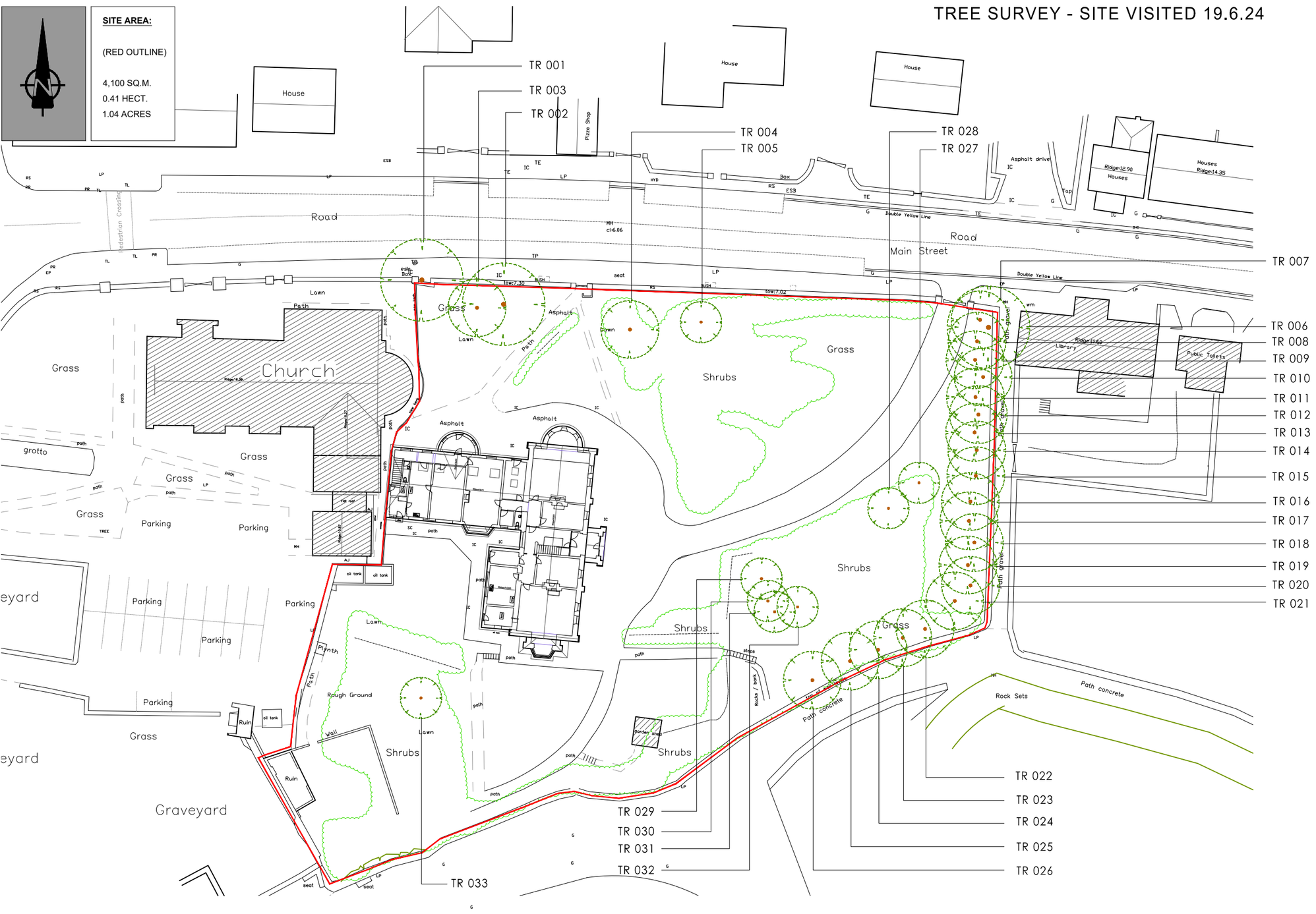
Landscape Management Plan

TREE SURVEY - SITE VISITED 19.6.24

SITE AREA:

(RED OUTLINE)

4,100 SQ.M.
0.41 HECT.
1.04 ACRES



LEGEND - TREES

All measurements are approximate & noted in meters.

No.	Species (Botanic Name)	Common Name	Height	Spread	Stems	Stem Diameter
001	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	7-9	8-10	2	.4
002	Fraxinus excelcior	Ash	7-9	8-10	2	.4
003	Prunus avium	Cherry	3-4	5-7	2	.2
004	Euonymus japonicus	Japanese Spindle	3-4	5-7	5	.1
005	Sorbus aucuparia	Mountain Ash	4-5	3-4	1	.1
006	Fraxinus excelcior	Ash	7-9	8-10	2	.4
007	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.4
008	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.25
009	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.2
010	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.3
011	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.15
012	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	2	.3
013	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	2	.25
014	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	2	.25
015	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.5
016	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.25
017	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	4	.2
018	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	1	.35
019	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	3	.15
020	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	6-8	6-8	5+	.2
021	Fraxinus excelcior	Ash	3-5	2-4	5+	.1
022	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	3-6	2-5	5+	.2
023	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	3-7	2-6	5+	.3
024	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	3-8	2-7	5+	.4
025	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	3-9	2-8	5+	.5
026	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	3-10	2-9	5+	.6
027	Sorbus aucuparia	Mountain Ash	4-5	4-5	4	.125
028	Fraxinus excelcior	Ash	4-5	3-5	3	.1
029	Fraxinus excelcior	Ash	4-5	4-6	1	.125
030	Fraxinus excelcior	Ash	4-5	3-4	3	.2
031	Tillia cordata	Lime	4-6	3-5	3	.15
032	Tillia cordata	Lime	4-7	3-6	3	.15
033	Malus domestica	Apple	3-5	3-5	4	.15

SURVEYED SPECIMEN TREES

MATURE MIXED SHRUB PLANTING

ANTHONY JOHNS NDH
LANDSCAPE DESIGN LTD

The Clay,
Ballinclea, Donard,
Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

Tel: 087 2869180
E Mail: aj@anthonyjohns.com
Web: www.anthonyjohns.com

PROJECT
CREATIVE CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT ADDRESS
NAOMH EINDE,
SPIDDAL VILLAGE,
CO. GALWAY

CLIENT
FIONTAR NA GREINE TEORANTA

DRAWING TITLE
TREE SURVEY

DWG NO. FIO-SPI/TS/001
SCALE 1:500 @ A3
DRAWN AJ **CHECKED** RM
DATE 25.6.24 **REF** RB

All measurements to be checked on site.
All areas refer to Bill of Quantities.

SITE AREA:

(RED OUTLINE)

4,100 SQ.M.
0.41 HECT.
1.04 ACRES

LEGEND

- GRASS
- PLANTING
- HEDGEING
- FLAG PAVING PATHS & CONCOURSE
- BOX PLANTERS
- SEATING BENCHES

Specimen Pink Cherry tree planting, with staking, irrigation piping & root barriers.

See Legend for full specification.

Specimen Rowan (Mountain Ash) tree planting in decorative planter with staking, irrigation piping.

See Legend for full specification.

Mixed shrub planting set in ground borders & decorative planters.

See Legend for full specification.

Formal 1200mm high hedge to formal front garden.

See Legend for full specification.

Flag paving

Bike racks

Bench seating

Bike racks

Sight Lines

Sight Lines

Flag paving

Bench seating on adjoining roadside paved streetscape for public amenity.

Bench seating

Bike racks

Flag paving

EV

EV

EV

EV

EV

EV

EV

EV

Bus Set Down

Flag paving.

Specimen tree planting, with staking, irrigation piping & root barriers.

See Legend for full specification.

Mixed shrub planting set in ground level borders.

See Legend for full specification.

Mixed shrub planting set in ground level parking partition & lower boundary line pocket borders.

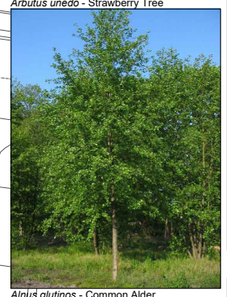
See Legend for full specification.

Specimen tree planting, with staking, irrigation piping & root barriers car park & to lower level planting pocket below proposed new retainer walling detail.

See Legend for full specification.

PROPOSED TREES

Arbutus unedo - Strawberry Tree



Alnus glutinos - Common Alder

Prunus avium - White Cherry

Prunus serrulata - Pink Cherry

Sorbus aria Majestica - Whitebeam

PLANTING LEGEND

Botanic Name	Common Name	No %	Size
Hedging			
2no. Staggerd rows @ 400mm Centres			
Fuchsia Riccartonii	Fuchsia	100%	2-3lt
Shrubs			
Cotoneaster lacteus	Late Cotoneaster	10%	2-3lt
Hebe vernicosa	Shrubby veronica	10%	2-3lt
Potentilla Red Ace	Cinquefoil	10%	2-3lt
Oleria x haastii	Daisy Bush	10%	2-3lt
Viburnum Davidii	David Viburnum	10%	2-3lt
Ceanothus Repens	Creeping Blueblossom	10%	2-3lt
Eleaeagnus x ebbingei	Oleaster	10%	2-3lt
Crocosmia x crocosmiliflora	Montbretia	10%	2-3lt
Cistus x purpureus	Rock Rose	110%	2-3lt
Potentilla Primrose Beauty	Cinquefoil	10%	2-3lt
Specimen Trees			
Arbutus unedo Rubra	Strawberry Tree	1no	12-14 RB
Alnus glutinos	Common Alder	1no	12-14 RB
Sorbus aucuparia	Mountain Ash - Rowan	1no	12-14 RB
Prunus serrulata	Pink Cherry	2no	12-14 RB
Sorbus aria Majestica	Whitebeam	2no	12-14 RB

NEW TREES

12-14, 14-16 OR 18-20 RELATE TO THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD METHOD OF SIZEING TREES, IT IS THE MEASUREMENT OF THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE STEM GIRTH AT 1M FROM THE GROUND.

EXISTING TREES

EXISTING TREE TO BE RETAINED

TREE ROOT BARRIERS

ALL TREE TO BE PLANTED WITHIN 3M OF ANY SERVICE LINE OR HARD STRUCTURE TO BE FITTED WITH ROOT BARRIER SYSTEM MEMBRANE TO AVOID ANY ROOT/SERVICES/FOUNDATIONS CONFLICT.

LIGHTING

6M TREE AVOIDANCE ZONE.

ALL TREES TO BE SET A MINIMUM OF 6M FROM ANY PROPOSED ADDITIONAL FULL HEIGHT PUBLIC LIGHTING TO ENSURE NO DISTURBANCE OF LIGHTS INTENDED ILLUMINATION FIELD.

EXISTING STREET LAMPS TO BE RETAINED

PROPOSED 900mm HIGH BOLLARD DOWN LIGHTS TO SENSORY GARDEN

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

REFER TO ARCHITECTS/ENGINEERS DRAWINGS FOR FULL BOUNDARY TREATMENT & RETENTION DETAIL.

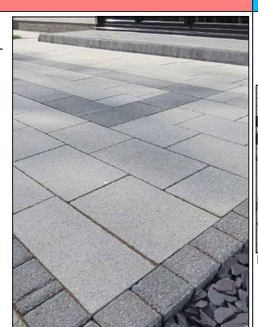
TIMING SCHEDULE

ALL SPECIMEN TREE AND SHRUB UNDERPLANTING TO BE PLANTED DURING THE FIRST 'BARE ROOT' WINTER PLANTING SEASON (NOV - FEB) AFTER COMPLETION OF ALL CONSTRUCTION WORKS.

HARD LANDSCAPE - SURFACES/PAVING

ALL PEDESTRIAN PATHS & CONCOURSE AREAS TO BE 'KILSARAN' OR EQUIVALENT STYLE FLAG PAVED.

EXAMPLE PHOTOGRAPH



ALL HARD LANDSCAPING PRODUCTS TO BE AGREED WITH GCC.

HARD LANDSCAPE - FEATURES/FACILITIES

BENCHES, PLANTERS & BIKE RAKES FOR PUBLIC AMENITY TO BE FROM HARTECAST OR EQUIVALENT CERTIFIED SUPPLIER.

EXAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS

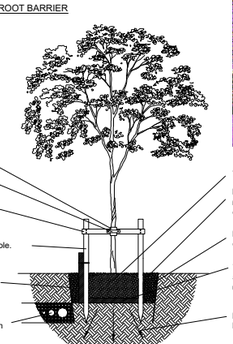
BENCH SEAT

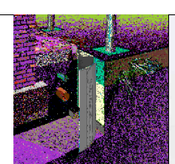
PLANTERS

CYCLE STANDS

ALL HARD LANDSCAPING PRODUCTS TO BE AGREED WITH GCC.

TREE PLANTING METHOD - ROOT BARRIER





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FIONTAR NA GREINE TEORANTA

DRAWING TITLE
LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

DWG NO. FIO-SPI/LMP/001

SCALE 1:500 @ A3

DRAWN AJ **CHECKED** RM

DATE 26.9.24 **REF** RB

All measurements to be checked on site.
All areas refer to Bill of Quantities.