



PLANNING REPORT

The Johnstown Estate Hotel and Restaurant Extension

The Johnstown Estate,
Johnstown (ED Innfield),
Enfield, Co. Meath,
A83 V070

NOVEMBER 2024

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF:
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1.0 Introduction

Hughes Planning and Development Consultants, 85 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, on behalf of Lefgem Limited, have prepared this planning report in support of a planning application to Meath County Council for The Johnstown Estate Hotel at Johnstown (ED Innfield), Enfield, Co. Meath, A83 V070. The proposed development, as per the description contained within the statutory planning notices, provides for:

- '(i) Construction of a three-storey extension to the rear of the existing hotel comprising 90 no. guest bedrooms with an area of plant at roof level of the extension;*
- (ii) Creation of opening in rear façade of the existing hotel at ground floor level with the omission of one existing guest bedroom to allow for a new single-storey connection to the proposed extension;*
- (iii) Modifications to the existing floor plan of the tenor suite at the ground floor level of the existing hotel to provide for a new restaurant , extend the existing kitchen, provide bathrooms and to separate the restaurant from the spa and gym;*
- (iv) provision of single-storey extension to the proposed restaurant at ground floor and a new entrance to the existing leisure centre;*
- (v) provision of extension to the basement level to the north-west corner of the existing hotel and provision of storeroom;*
- (vi) removal of existing external escape staircase from ground floor level to basement level and provision of a new entrance and reception area to gym;*
- (vii) provision of new replacement external staircase from ground floor level to basement level and alterations to existing openings and partition walls;*
- (viii) modifications to 6 no. car parking spaces comprising the provision of 4 no. accessible spaces to serve the restaurant and relocation of the remaining 2 no. spaces. Car parking numbers remain the same;*
- (ix) provision of 14 no. additional bicycle parking spaces for staff;*
- (x) provision of 2 no. external signs above new restaurant and gym entrances;*
- (xi) The development also includes all other associated engineering works, landscaping, lighting, and ancillary works necessary to facilitate the development. The subject property is within the curtilage of a Protected Structure (MH048-103).'*

This report sets out the planning rationale and justification for the proposed development, having regard to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, and considers a relevant planning precedent within the wider jurisdiction of Meath County Council. It is submitted that the development accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and that permission should be **granted** accordingly.

2.0 Site Location and Description

The Johnstown Estate is a luxurious 4-star just north of the County Meath and County Kildare border at Johnstown (ED Innfield), Enfield, Co. Meath, A83 V070. The proposal occupies an area of approximately 19.40 ha (47.95 acres) and is located just south of the M4 Motorway, north of River Blackwater, and is within minutes of Enfield town centre.



Figure 1.0 Aerial view showing the subject site (red star) in the context of the wider area.

The Estate contains 128 bedrooms and suites and comprises lush woodland and gardens for locals and visitors alike. Johnstown Estate provides extensive services, employment, and revenue to the local community Meath County Council. It has also become one of Ireland's premier leisure and hospitality destinations, having been ranked 4th in the Irish Independent Reader Travel Awards for Ireland's best spas in 2022. It was awarded 'Most Rejuvenating Parkland Retreat' in 2023 by LuxLife Magazine. The Estate also received the Fit-Out Project of the Year Award in respect of its spa.

The Johnstown Estate comprises 1 no. Protected Structure recognised in the Meath County Council Development Plan. Built in 1761, Johnstown House was the country residence of Colonel Francis Forde (a successful officer of the East India Company) and his family. Johnstown House has been entered on the Record of Protected Structures for County Meath under LA RPS ID 91488 and is described as '*an 18th century house of 5-bays, 3 storeys with parapet and cornice rendered with pedimented door case and four chimneystacks.*'

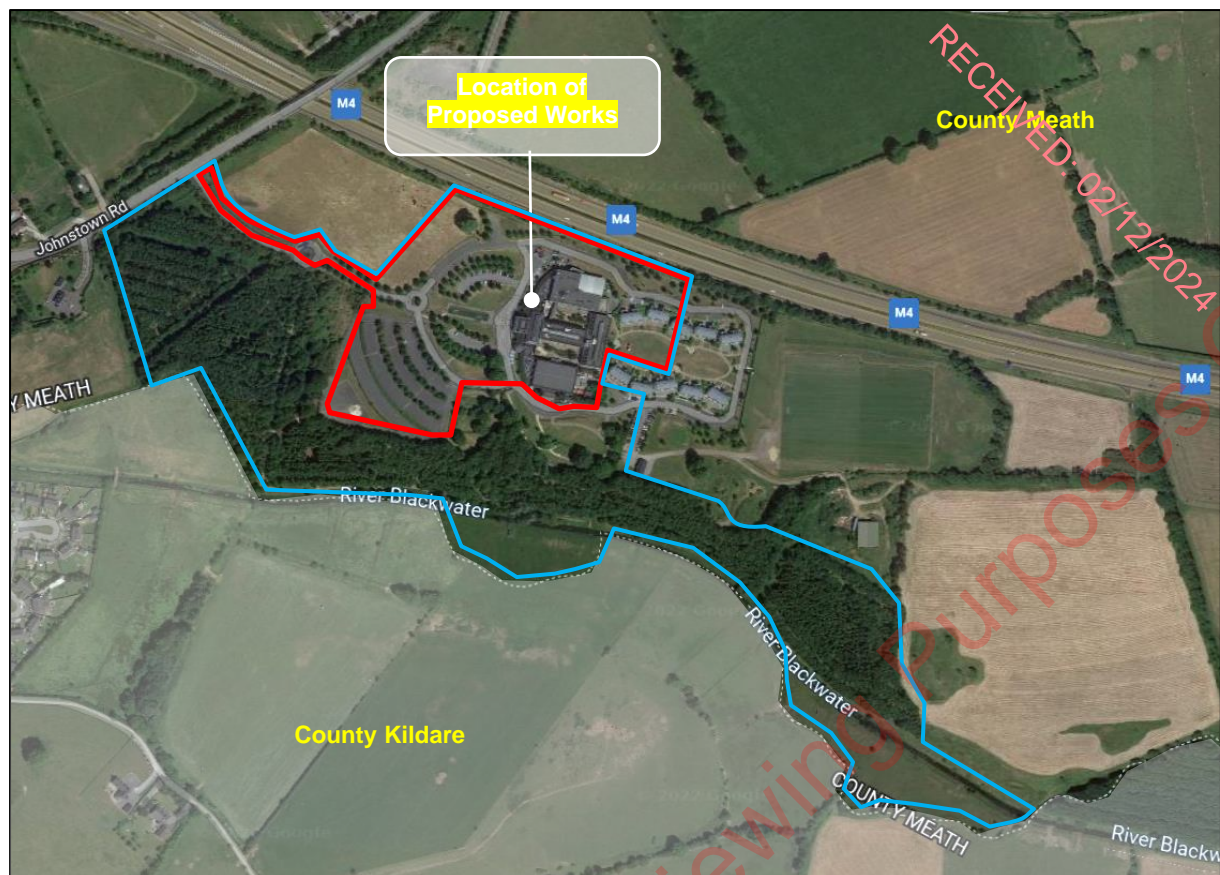


Figure 2.0 Aerial photograph showing the approximate ownership boundary (blue outline indicating ownership), application site (red outline), and the location of proposed works.

3.0 Planning History

The planning history of the site revealed that The Johnstown Estate Hotel encompasses a Meath County Council Protected Structure on its grounds. The Johnstown House (LA RPS ID: 91488), built in 1761, was the country residence of Colonel Francis Forde, a successful officer of the East India Company, and his family.

By way of a planning application made in 1999 under Reg. Ref. 99/833 and prior to the 2000 Planning and Development Act, it appears that the original surface fabric was stripped back to the bare structure with little of the original fabric remaining except for the basement and the roof. The significance of these findings and distinct details on the architectural history of the site can be found in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by Chris Ryan Architects, and included in this report.

3.1 Application Site

A review of the Meath County Council planning register revealed the following planning applications relating to the subject site. It is of note, that there are minimal planning documents available on the planning registry for the subsequent applications. Further to this, the applications are listed in order from most recent to oldest.

The Johnstown Estate, Johnstown, (ED Innfield), Enfield, Co Meath

Reg. Ref. 23613

Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 2nd August 2023 for 'the proposed works are principally to the existing banquet hall and conference centre located to the south of the main hotel building and associated external landscaped areas. The proposed external works comprise: (i) the provision of a new 210 sq.m. store room extension (5.450m in height) over existing service yard to the rear (east) of the building; (ii) a 136 sq.m. extension to the south

east corner of the building to provide a new glazed orangery bar; (iii) demolition of existing single storey draught lobby (30 sq.m.) and construction of a new 60 sq.m. extension (4.050m in height) on the northern side of the building to provide for a bar area (44 sq.m.) and 2 no. store rooms (8sq.m. each); (iv) a new 20 sq.m. entrance lobby with an external canopy to the southern side of the building; (v) 2 no. new external seating areas to the east and west of the proposed entrance lobby; (vi) a new vehicular circulation layout with roundabout and water feature to the front of the proposed entrance lobby, loading bay, access ramp, external stair case, footpaths; (vii) relocation of the approved bike store located in the service yard (Reg. Ref. 22/1089) underneath proposed store building; and, (viii) the provision of a landscaped seating deck to the south of the building. Proposed internal works comprise reconfiguration of existing conference and banqueting accommodation to provide (a) 2 no. conference banqueting suites (320sq.m. and 280 sq.m.), (b) 2 no. meeting rooms (180 sq.m. and 110 sq.m.). (c) reception lobby (135 sq.m.) and (d) associated toilets, storage, cloakrooms and staff areas. Retention permission is sought for 4 no. accessible car parking spaces provided to the front of the hotel (southwest facade) and existing landscaping works comprising an existing timber pergola structure to south of the hotel development. The development also includes all other associated engineering works, landscaping, and ancillary works necessary to facilitate the development'.

The Johnstown Estate, Johnstown (ED Innfield), Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 221089

Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 3rd February 2023 for the 'development consists of retention permission is sought for the external car parking layout including 8 no. car parking spaces, external paved hardscaping and external patio area inclusive of trees, bollards, and planters and kerbed grass lawn area to the north west of the site. Planning permission is also being sought for the (a) removal of existing windbreaker screens and parasol umbrellas; (b) demolition of a non-original side entrance to hotel bar to west elevation; (c) construction of a contemporary lightweight, glazed extension and lobby (132 sq.m) to west elevation; (d) forming of new internal ope to existing wall of bar; (e) fabrication of a new spa entrance design complete with a canopy to the west elevation; (f) the removal of 5 no. standard parking bays, due north of paved hardscaping area, to replace with 3 no. accessible parking bays, and; (g) all other associated works necessary to facilitate the development, within the curtilage of a protected structure (Johnstown House LA RPS ID: 91488) Significant Further Information/revised plans submitted on this application'

The Johnstown House, Johnstown, Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 21592

Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 30th June 2021 for the development 'of 8 no. car parking spaces, 8 no. Tesla parking signposts, 2 No. Tesla supercharger cabinets, 1 no. ESB substation/switch room and for all associated site development works within the curtilage of a registers protected structure reference number MH048-103.'

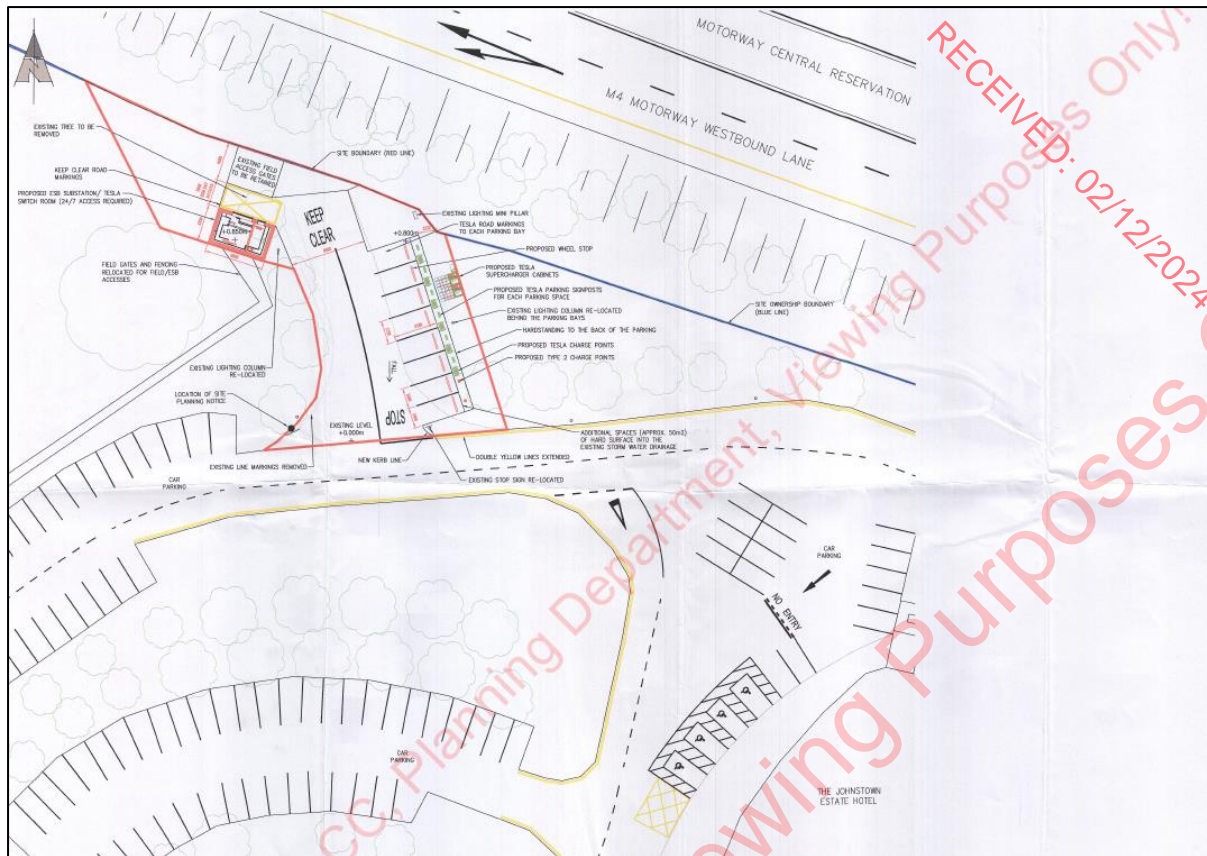


Figure 3.0 Proposed site plans and details granted under Reg. Ref. 21592.

Johnstown House, Johnstown (E.D. Infield), Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 002243

Planning permission granted on 13th July 2011 for 'alterations to previously approved plans (reg. ref. no. 99/833) to include retention of location approved banqueting centre to the south of the existing Johnstown House (List 1 Country Houses), and retention of location of approved leisure centre to north of existing Johnstown House, retention of revised elevational treatment to aforementioned banqueting and leisure centre, retention of minor alterations to approved leisure centre to include health spa and indoor and outdoor treatment pool facilities, retention of extended basement plant and service facilities associated with leisure facilities, including yard space, retention of basement plant office and service system associated with banquet, conference and hotel facilities, retention of an additional floor of bedrooms (48 no. rooms) within a modified roof profile over existing approved T-shaped bedroom block, including revised treatment to elevation to same, retention of alterations to height and internal mezzanine arrangements of approved glazed atrium connecting existing house with approved T-shaped bedroom block, retention of demolition and rebuilding of unstable outbuilding walls to the north of pavilion, retention of roof lights on Johnstown House, alterations to access arrangements, including a new entrance gate to comply with agreed alignment of N4 Kinnegad-Enfield-Kilcock bypass, provision of a boundary wall (1.5m in height) along the length of the service road to the north of the site, additional 132 no. car parking spaces (627 no. in total), revised landscaping, including a new water feature to the front of Johnstown House, new connection to the Johnstown Sewage Treatment Plant and all associated site development works on a site measure 4.7ha (11.61 acres) at Johnstown House, John (E.D. Innfield). Enfield, Co. Meath.'

Marriott Johnstown House, Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath

Reg. Ref. TA70146 Permission was refused by Meath County Council on 29th June 2007 'to erect a Marriott sign on our lands at the Marriott Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath. The proposed sign is in the curtilage of the protected structure Johnstown House'.

Johnstown (ED Infield), Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. TA/60082 Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 20th July 2006 for the 'retention of minor amendments to previously granted planning permission ref. TA/40538 to include alterations of condition no. 5 to allow for metal faced timber windows in place of timber windows at a site adjacent to the existing Marriott Johnstown House Hotel.'

Johnstown, ED Infield, Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. TA/40538 Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 8th July 2005 for the development of 'executive stay hotel suits, comprising of 40 units in 10 blocks, consisting of 24 two-bedroom suites and 16 one-bedroom suites. Additional 91 surface car park spaces associated site development and landscape works including connection to existing private treatment works will be provided. The development is on the curtilage of the protected structure Johnstown House.'

Johnstown House, Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 0149 Permission was refused by Meath County Council on 23rd March 2001 for 'the construction of staff accommodation. The accommodation comprises 5 no. blocks with a total floor area of 1600 sq.m.. Each of the blocks accommodates 4 no. units of two bedrooms, providing 20 no. units in total. Permission is also sought for a maintenance building, measuring 147 sq.m. & all associated site development works on a site measuring 0.81 ha (2 acres)'

Johnstown House, Enfield, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 99/833 Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 12th November 1999 for the 'extension, refurbishment & change of use to include the following: Refurbishment and change of use of main property from residential use to hotel use.'

4.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development as per the statutory notices comprises:

- (i) Construction of a three-storey extension to the rear of the existing hotel comprising 90 no. guest bedrooms with an area of plant at roof level of the extension;
- (ii) Creation of opening in rear façade of the existing hotel at ground floor level with the omission of one existing guest bedroom to allow for a new single-storey connection to the proposed extension;
- (iii) Modifications to the existing floor plan of the tenor suite at the ground floor level of the existing hotel to provide for a new restaurant, extend the existing kitchen, provide bathrooms and to separate the restaurant from the spa and gym;
- (iv) provision of single-storey extension to the proposed restaurant at ground floor and a new entrance to the existing leisure centre;
- (v) provision of extension to the basement level to the north-west corner of the existing hotel and provision of storeroom;
- (vi) removal of existing external escape staircase from ground floor level to basement level and provision of a new entrance and reception area to gym;

- (vii) provision of new replacement external staircase from ground floor level to basement level and alterations to existing openings and partition walls;
- (viii) modifications to 6 no. car parking spaces comprising the provision of 4 no. accessible spaces to serve the restaurant and relocation of the remaining 2 no. spaces. Car parking numbers remain the same;
- (ix) provision of 14 no. additional bicycle parking spaces for staff;
- (x) provision of 2 no. external signs above new restaurant and gym entrances;
- (xi) The development also includes all other associated engineering works, landscaping, lighting, and ancillary works necessary to facilitate the development. The subject property is within the curtilage of a Protected Structure (MH048-103).'

Planning permission is sought for Construction of a three-storey extension to the rear of the existing hotel comprising and the creation of opening in rear façade of the existing hotel at ground floor level with the omission of one existing guest bedroom to allow for a new single-storey connection to the proposed extension, along with modifications to the existing floor plan of the tenor suite at the ground floor level of the existing hotel to provide for a new restaurant, extension to the proposed restaurant, extension of the existing kitchen, bathrooms, separation of the restaurant from spa and gym, a new entrance and reception area to gym, remove and replace the existing staircase, and all ancillary works necessary to facilitate the development. Please find enclosed architectural pack by Darmody. We have included snippets below for reference:



Figure 4.0 Proposed ground floor plan.



Figure 5.0 Proposed first floor plan.



Figure 6.0 Proposed second floor plan.

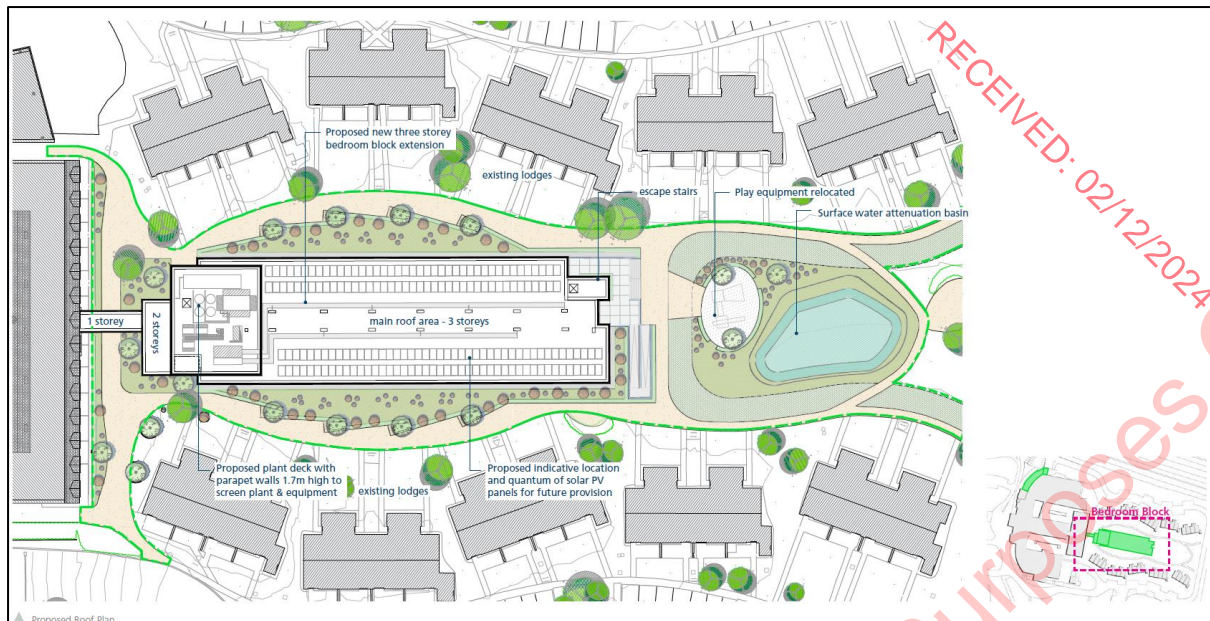


Figure 7.0 Proposed roof plan.

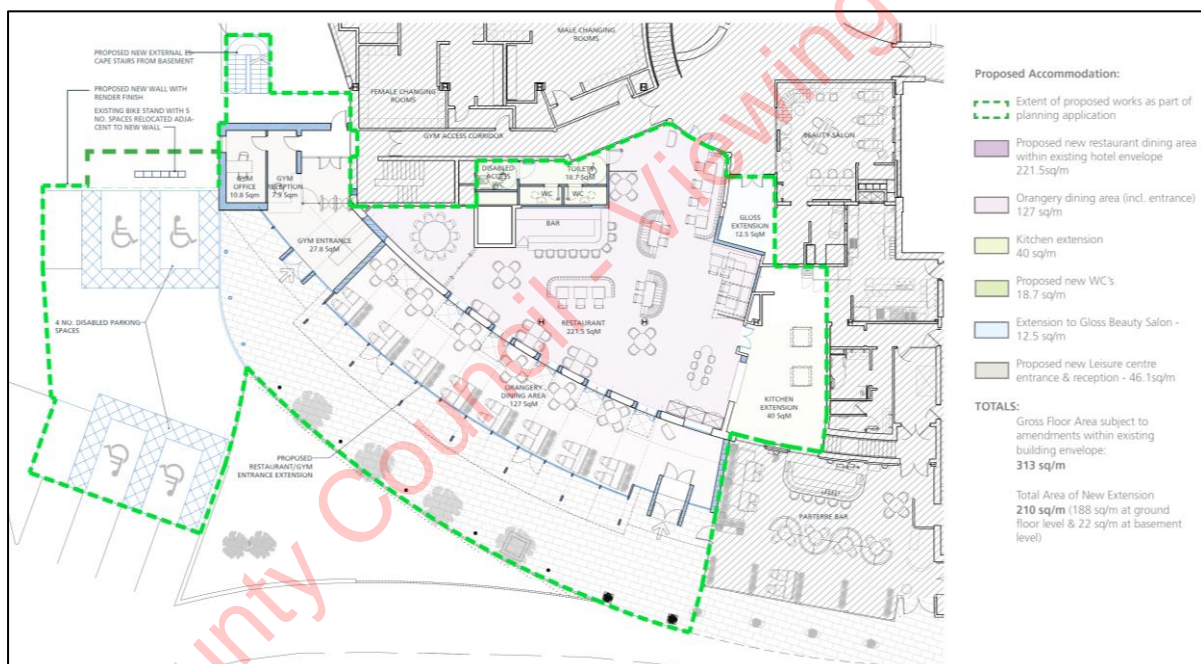


Figure 8.0 Proposed ground floor plan – restaurant.

5.0 Planning Precedents

5.1 Restaurant

The planning permission granted under Reg. Ref. KA200480 serves as a unique and appropriate precedent for the proposed works sought on the grounds of The Johnstown Estate Hotel with regard to the restaurant extension as they are similar locationally, design, and usage. The approved application was submitted to increase the provision of outdoor seating for wedding ceremonies (110 sq.m).

Clonabreany House, Crossakiel, Kells, Co Meath

Reg. Ref. KA200480 Planning permission was granted by Meath County Council 2nd July 2020 for the 'the addition of a glazed conservatory to existing wedding venue'; the protected structure known as 'Clonabreany House'.

The Chief Executive Order concludes the following with relation to the aforementioned application approval:

'Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the suitability of the site, the pattern of development in the vicinity, national, regional and local policy in relation to rural housing extensions, I conclude, that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the visual amenities of the area or the residential amenities of the properties in the vicinity, would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment or the ecology of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.'



Figure 9.0 Proposed 3D view submitted and approved under Reg. Ref. KA200480 showing the glazed conservatory addition to 'Clonabreany House'.

The proposed works submitted with this application provides for the provision of a glazed enclosure for seating (132 sq.m). In addition, it is similar to the design of the approved works under Reg. Ref. KA200480. We submit that the proposed works are consistent with that of similar development within Meath County Council and that the enclosed outdoor seating and ancillary works is appropriate for development of the Council.

Brabazon Restaurant, Tankardstown House, Rathkenny, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 22193 Planning Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 5th July 2022 for 'single storey extension (100sqm) to existing restaurant building and associated works (including external paving)'; A protected structure.

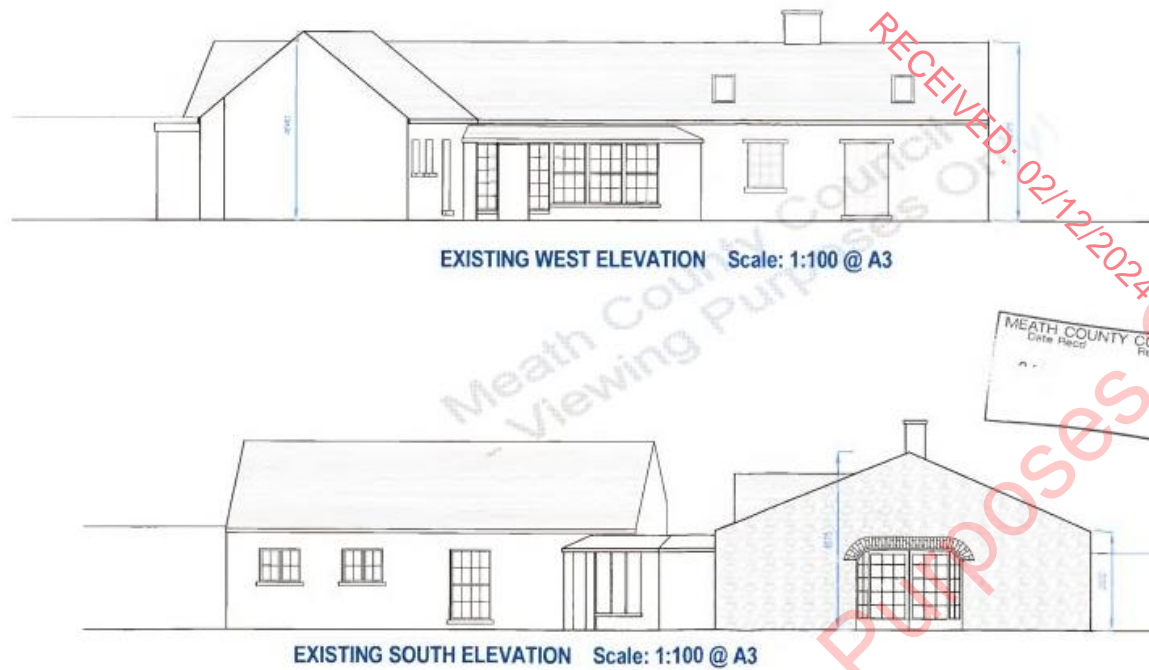


Figure 10.0 Existing elevations submitted with application under Reg. Ref. 22193



Figure 11.0 Proposed elevations submitted and approved under Reg. Ref. 22193 featuring an extension to the existing restaurant.

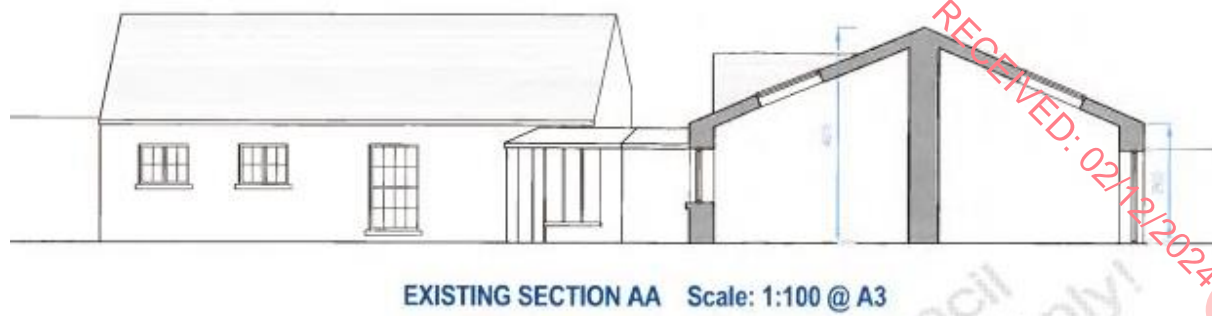


Figure 12.0 Existing section submitted with application under Reg. Ref. 22193

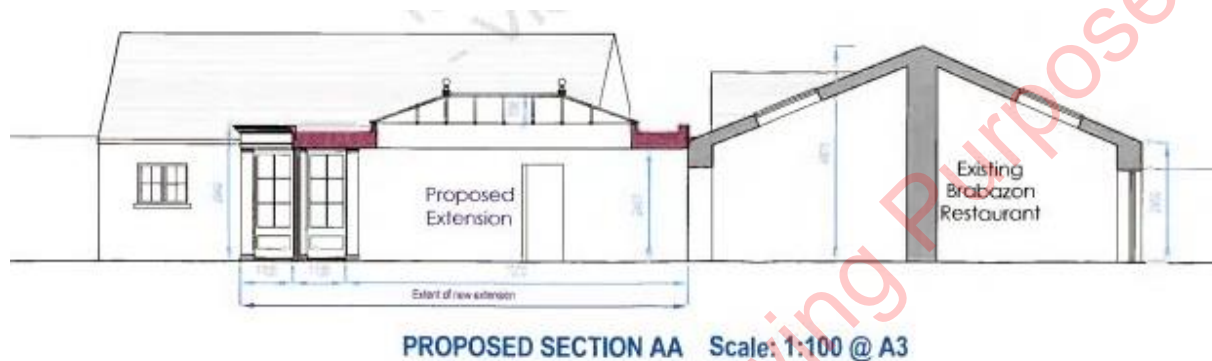


Figure 813.0 Proposed section submitted and approved under Reg. Ref. 22193 featuring an extension to the existing restaurant.

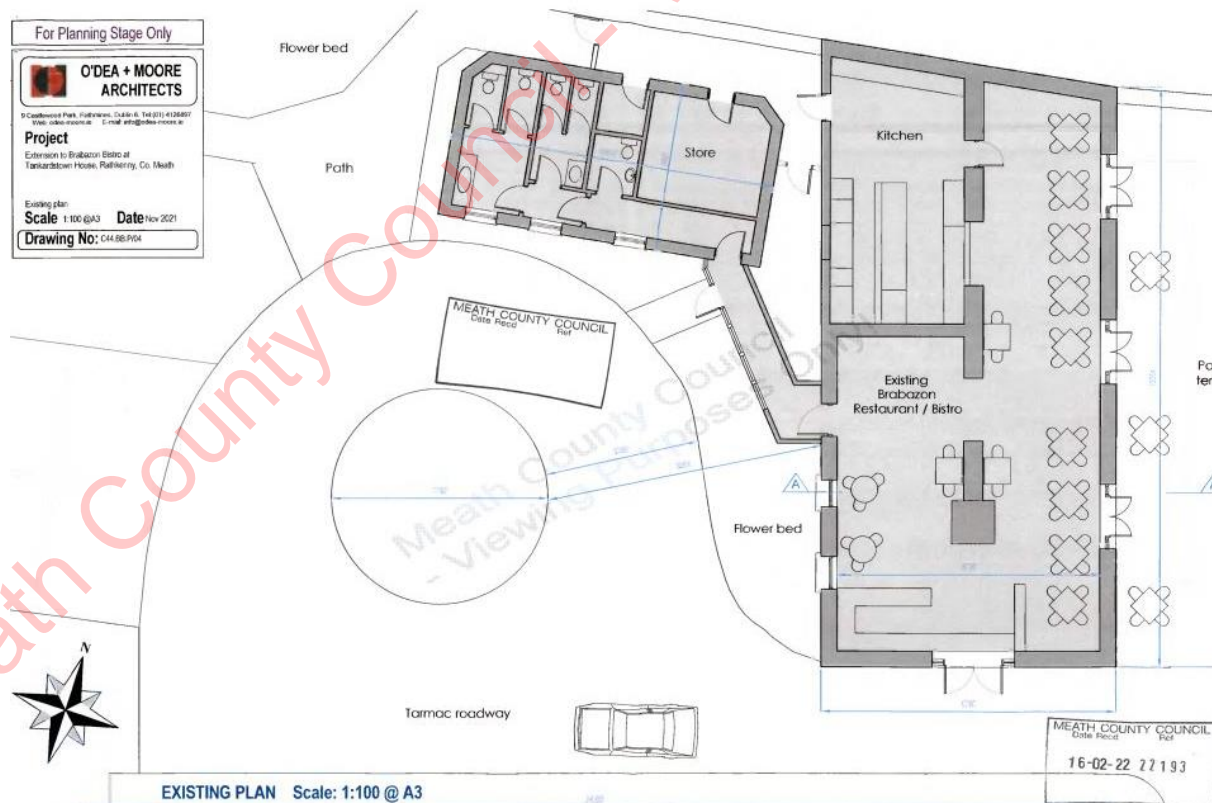


Figure 14.0 Existing layout plan submitted with application under Reg. Ref. 22193

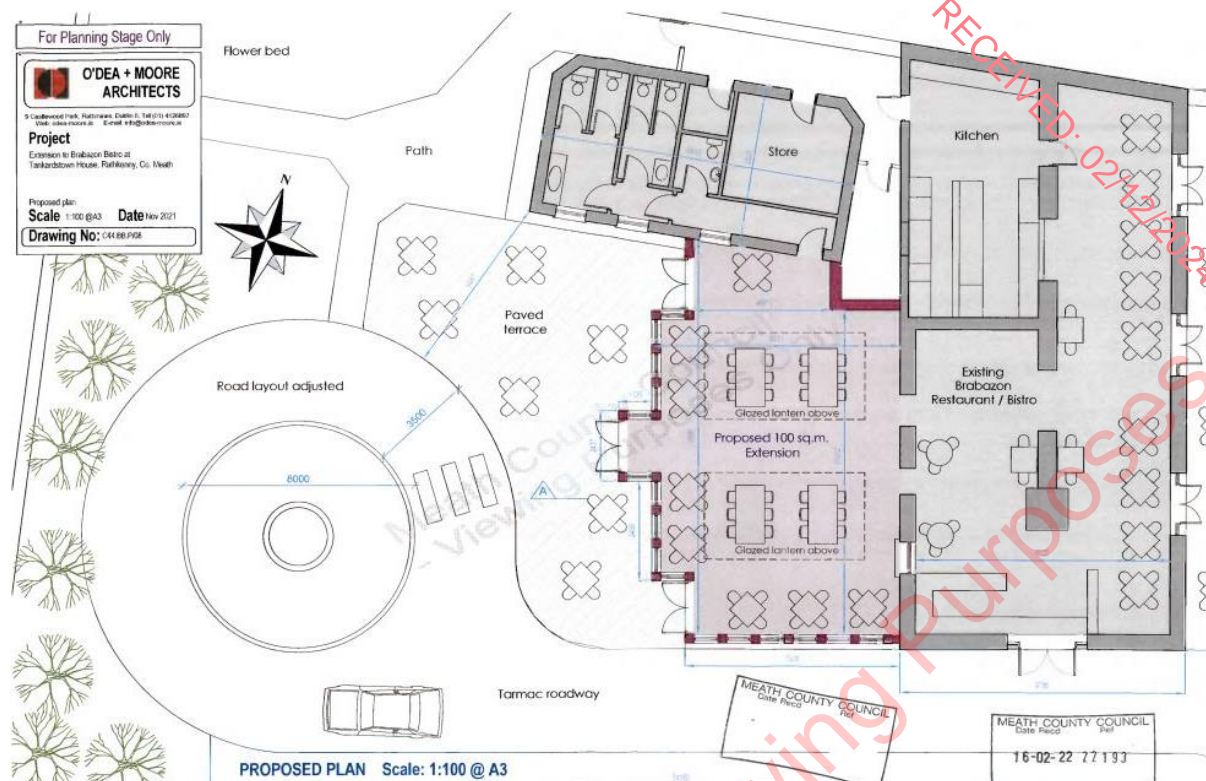


Figure 15.0 Proposed layout plan submitted and approved under Reg. Ref. 22193 featuring an extension to the existing restaurant.

The approved planning application under Reg. Ref. 22193 is similar in to the proposed development at The Johnstown Estate. Therefore, we submit that the proposed works are consistent with that of similar development within Meath County Council and that the enclosed additional seating and ancillary works is appropriate for development of the Council.

Kelly's Bar and Lounge, Frederick Street, Ashbourne, Co. Meath

Reg. Ref. 221611 Retention Permission was granted by Meath County Council on 9th February 2023 for 'an outdoor covered bar and seating area, pizzeria and all associated site works.'



Figure 16.0 Image of the covered bar, seating area, and pizzeria associated with an existing pub, which received retention permission under Reg. Ref. 221611.

5.2 Extension

The following planning permissions serve as appropriate precedents for the proposed works sought on the grounds of The Johnstown Estate Hotel with regard to the extension as they are similar locationally, design, and usage.

Bective House, Bective House and Demesne, Balgill, Navan, Co. Meath C15 X967

Reg. Ref. 23448

Planning permission was granted by Meath County Council 27th July 2024 for modifications to the previously permitted development (Meath County Council Planning Register No. 21/395 which included permission for reinstatement and change of use of the derelict Bective House and ancillary structures, demolition of two extensions to the rear and the addition of new extensions to the rear, to form hotel, with 104 bedrooms). The development now proposed includes: - Increased floor area of 835 sqm to the permitted new hotel extensions (extensions as permitted per Reg. No. 21/395 was 12,143 sqm) to give a total overall development, including existing buildings and proposed of 14,762 sqm to provided hotel accommodation of 92 bedrooms. - The total number of hotel bedrooms proposed will reduce from 104 (permitted) to 92. - The increased floor area in the permitted hotel extension is divided the basement + 580 sqm, ground floor + 74 sqm, first floor + 44 sqm and second floor + 86 sqm, together with a free standing electricity sub-station 50 sqm. - The additional basement area will be formed by incorporating the permitted undercroft and is to be used predominantly for an additional plant area, a minor extension to the restaurant and two small plant areas to serve the swimming pool and vitality pool. -The additional ground floor areas will include enlargement in area of five permitted hotel bedrooms facing into the inner walled garden plus balconies to serve these, extension of the permitted outdoor swimming pool, extended terrace and steps, a new outdoor vitality pool set in an extended terrace, extended lobbies and other minor extended hotel and services areas. - The additional first floor area will include enlargement of six permitted hotel bedrooms facing into the inner walled garden, plus balconies to serve these, enlargement of one permitted bedroom suite over the restaurant, maintenance stairs enclosure to flat roof at multifunctional area and omission of a permitted balcony in the spa area. - The additional second floor will include enlargement in area of six permitted hotel

bedrooms, enlargement of one permitted bedroom suite over the restaurant new service areas and new fire escape corridor enclosure, removal of a permitted balcony in the spa area. - A stand alone, single storey flat roofed electricity sub-station to the rear (east) of the permitted hotel extension, service road spur to serve the proposed sub-station and associated amendments to the permitted car parking area.

Headfort Arms Hotel, Headfort Place, Kells, A82D2C1

Reg. Ref. 2460152 Planning permission was granted by Meath County Council 28th May 2024 for the removal of existing mono-pitch metal roof structure to function room entrance foyer which also contains existing water storage tanks, to be replaced with an extension comprising two additional floors in a split-level layout to provide 10 no. guest bedrooms each with en-suite facilities. Also, to replace existing water tanks with new to be contained on new roof design, to include for internal and external alterations to existing structure and for connections to public services and all ancillary site works.

Dunboyne Castle Hotel & Spa, Dunboyne, Co Meath

Reg. Ref. 21852 Planning permission was granted by Meath County Council 25th June 2021 for - (i) 28 no. two storey and two and a half storey houses arranged in 5 no. terrace blocks to form courtyard type development. (ii) Apart-hotel consisting of 13 no. 2 bedroom hotel suites and 2 no. 3 bedroom hotel suites and cookery school/meeting space (284.2sq.m) - with adjoining kitchen garden - in 1 no. 3 storey (part 3.5 storey) block and all associated site development works including connections to existing services, parking etc. within the existing hotel grounds. The proposed development is located within the curtilage of a Protected Structure.

6.0 Relevant National & Regional Planning Policy Context

This section of the statement will examine the planning framework, including national, regional and local, that informs the use and development of the subject land. Documents of note are as follows:

- Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2018);
- Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (2019),
- Urban Design Manual (2009), and;
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

6.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018)

Published on 19th June 2018, Project Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework is the Irish government's overarching policy initiative which sets a vision and a credible development strategy to shape the country's national, regional and local spatial development in economic, environmental and social terms to 2040.

The National Planning Framework is focused on the compact development of existing urban centres to promote sustainable growth and allow for the increased viability of central services, shops and public transport in conjunction with the regeneration of existing built-up areas as opposed to the continual expansion and sprawl of cities and towns into the countryside at the expense of smaller villages. The NPF seeks to manage within the three regions of Ireland, which include the Northern and Western, Southern, and Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly areas, to allow for balanced growth and guided development.

The following policies of the National Planning Framework are considered to be relevant in the context of the proposed development:

National Policy Objective 4 *Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.*

National Policy Objective 5 *Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.*

National Policy Objective 11 *In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.*

National Policy Objective 16 *Target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.*

The proposed development at the subject site corresponds with the policy outlined within the National Planning Framework and the principles of sustainable growth within County Meath. The works proposed as part of the current application, which provides for accommodating additional commercial/public facilities in the form of an extension with additional bedrooms and a restaurant extension with an outdoor seating area will aid in creating more jobs within the town of Enfield and the creation of a people-centred environment, which is consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Framework.

6.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region, 2019

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES) replaced the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) in June 2019. The RSES supports the implementation of national government policies such as the National Planning Framework (NPF) and also sets the framework for local economic development and spatial planning in the Eastern and Midland Region, including the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

The RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the Region. The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Regions.

The RSES makes specific reference to Enterprise 2025 and notes that the national vision is that the Country is best placed to succeed in business by delivering sustainable employment and higher standards of living for all. Some of the key national economic priorities in Enterprise 2025 that set the parameters for the development of the RSES growth strategy include to:

- *Increase the emphasis on developing Irish owned enterprises – embedding resilience in our enterprise base, enhancing productivity and delivering quality jobs.*
- *Place a spotlight on innovation and talent and leverage our strengths in distributive technologies so that we achieve our ambition with more enterprises developing new products, services and solutions to compete effectively against international competition.*
- *Realise the full potential of our Regions through investments in placemaking – developing places that are attractive for business investment and for people to live and work.*

In light of the above economic priorities, it is noted that the proposed development will aid in the enhancement and evolution of an Irish-owned business, providing for additional job creation within an existing urban area and supporting the economic growth of Enfield.

In addition, the RSES includes County Meath within the Core Region under which the following goal is relevant:

'To promote continued growth at more sustainable rates, while providing for increased employment and improved local economies, services and functions to allow towns become more self-sustaining and to create the quality of life to attract investment.'

Given that the proposal is for upgrade works to an existing local and tourist establishment, it is submitted that the proposal will improve services and increase employment opportunity within the community. We consider the proposal to be in compliance with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region as it promotes sustainable development for which has the opportunity to attract investment and tourism.

6.3 Compliance with Urban Design Manual - A best practice guide

The best practice guide is based around twelve questions that have been drawn up to encapsulate a full range of design considerations for development such as that proposed on the subject site. These questions are *'a distillation of current policy and guidance and tried and tested principles of good urban design'*.

This planning report reviews the proposed development in this context in an effort to address the key issues of design, scale, massing and integration with the fabric of the area while respecting the amenity of adjacent properties and established residential areas. As stated from the outset, it is our opinion that the proposed development will not impinge on residential amenity of adjacent properties, nor will it have a negative impact upon the existing character of the area.

(i) Context - How does the development respond to its surroundings?

The existing building sits comfortably within the topography of the site, and its surroundings. The proposed upgrade works along the western façade provide an appropriate response in relation to the existing built environment and integrate well with the existing structure. It is submitted that the form, architecture, and associated landscaping of the proposed works have been informed, but not determined, by the surrounding area. The development would be finished with materials of the highest quality to ensure it creates a distinct scheme with its own character whilst continuing to integrate well with adjacent property.

(ii) Connections - How well connected is the new neighbourhood?

The is located just off the M4 motorway, and in walking distance of the towns of Johnstown and Enfield.

(iii) Inclusivity - How easily can people use and access the development?

The proposed development includes the refurbishment, upgrade and extension of an existing business premises to provide for enhanced facilities. The ground floor level of the proposal is directly accessible for disabled access. The site is highly accessible with its proximity to the M4 motorway and parking spaces for staff and visitors are also provided at the front of the property.

(iv) Variety: - How does the development promote a good mix of activities?

The range of uses available within the development is to be increased due to the site becoming more accessible to the public with the addition of additional indoor and outdoor seating within the development and additional bedrooms with a variety of sizes. This is considered to represent an appropriate mix of uses in considering the site's location and will aid in generating additional footfall within the area.

(v) Efficiency - How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?

The concept of efficiency and sustainable development are fundamental components of the design approach adopted. The proposal provides for the upgrade, modification and extensions of a portion of an existing premises on a serviced site just outside the town centre of Enfield which will safeguard its continued operation into the future development. The design has taken into account the accessibility by public transport in the area and the need to protect visual amenity.

(vi) Distinctiveness - How do the proposals create a sense of place?

The proposed development, through high quality contemporary design will create a positive addition to the identity of the locality, which will serve as a high-quality distinct development of moderate scale on a serviced site located within the existing area of Enfield.

(vii) *Layout - How does the proposal create people friendly streets and spaces?*

The proposed development will allow for the more efficient use of this commercial site situated just off the M4 motorway and within close proximity to Enfield Town Centre. It is considered that the proposed uses will benefit existing transport accessibility in the immediate area. It is submitted that the proposal will aid in creating a people centred space for customers.

(viii) *Public Realm - How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?*

The proposed outdoor seating area and extension of the restaurant at ground floor level will be appropriately surveillance from inside the existing premises and will accord with the principles of good design, providing an additional public amenity at the subject site. The proposed hotel expansion would be considered to be safe, secure and enjoyable.

(ix) *Adaptability - How will the buildings cope with change?*

The proposed works will be energy efficient and equipped for challenges anticipated from a changing climate.

(x) *Privacy and Amenity - How does the scheme provide a decent standard of amenity?*

The proposed works provides for a better use of the building as it becomes more open and spacious which ensures a high standard of amenity.

(xi) *Parking - How will the parking be secure and attractive?*

Visitor vehicular parking is situated to the front of the building with landscaping/planting provided in this area. Modifications to 6 no. car parking spaces are proposed comprising the provision of 4 no. accessible spaces to serve the restaurant and relocation of the remaining 2 no. spaces. Car parking numbers remain the same.

(xii) *Detailed Design - How well thought through is the building and landscape design?*

The materials and external design of the proposed extensions to make a positive contribution to the locality. Design of the buildings will facilitate easy and regular maintenance. Care has been taken over the siting of parking, traffic flow and landscaping.

6.4 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted 3rd November 2021 and is the relevant statutory plan for this area. The provisions of the Rural Area Types Development Pressure Area are also of particular relevance to the proposal, the objectives of which are transposed into the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan.

6.4.1 Land Use Zoning

The subject site is zoned 'RA – Rural Area' with the objective 'To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and rural-related enterprise, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage'. The vision for this zone is to 'ensure that any new development in existing areas would have a minimal impact on and enhance existing residential amenity.' Residential use is permitted in principle in this zone.

The zoning matrix included in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 indicates uses which are *Permitted in Principle* in the 'RA – Rural Area' zoning designation.

Permitted in principle uses are generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements set out in the plan. These permitted in principle uses include the following:

Permitted in Principle

Agriculture, Agricultural Buildings, Agri-Tourism, Boarding Kennels (Where the use is ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a main residence), Burial Grounds, Extractive Industry/Quarrying, Equestrian, Farm Shop (Only where the bulk of the produce is produced on the farm), Forestry related activities, Horticulture, Caravan and Camping Park (No static mobile homes or permanent structure unless ancillary to the operation of the campsite shall be permitted), Golf Course, Open Space, Research and Development (Rural related research and development only), Residential (Subject to compliance with the Rural Settlement Strategy), **Restaurant/Café (Only where ancillary to tourism uses or conversion of protected or vernacular structures)**, Sustainable Energy Installations, Utility Structures.

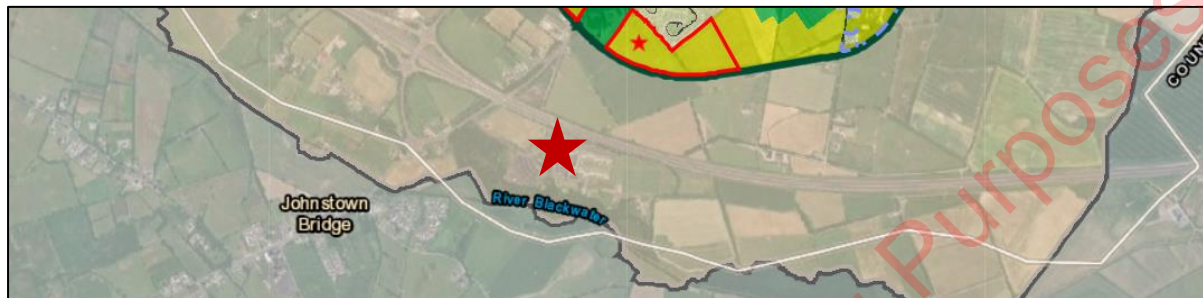


Figure 17.0 Extract from the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Map Portfolio. Subject area zoned 'RA – Rural Area' (shown using red star) and is south of Enfield's town centre.

6.4.2 Self-Sustaining Towns

As noted in Chapter 3 of the County Development Plan, the settlement of Enfield is classified as a Self-Sustaining Town. These towns have varying characteristics and differences can be seen in the factors that have influenced their growth and these traits are recognised in the RPGs.

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 acknowledges that Self Sustaining Towns vary in size, built form, and service provision. In addition, the County notes that the location of these settlements has influenced their growth rate and function primarily due to outbound commuting to Dublin. The Development Plan seeks to actively promote the expansion of these towns at a sustainable rate in line with the availability of local services and infrastructure. The following commentary from Section 3.7 'The Settlement Hierarchy and Future Population Growth in Meath' is noted:

'In the Self-Sustaining Towns there will be a strong focus on consolidation and strengthening the employment base and improving services which will support the creation of more balanced and sustainable communities.'

Further to this, we find the following policy objectives relevant to the proposal:

SH POL 1 *To ensure that all settlements, in as far as practicable, develop in a self-sufficient manner with population growth occurring in tandem with the provision of physical and social infrastructure.*

Located on a multi-modal corridor with excellent road and rail access to Dublin via the M4 motorway and the Dublin-Longford commuter rail line. The proposal for an extension comprising additional seating will encourage servicing to locals and tourists alike. This provides an opportunity to develop the employment base of Enfield based on the principles of sustainable transport provision while increasing the social infrastructure and encouraging tourism to the area. It is considered that the proposed development is within the context of the future development of Enfield and The Johnstown Estate as an economic driver within County Meath. Further, it will both strengthen the employment base and improve services in the area.

6.4.3 Enfield Settlement Strategy

Volume 2 of the Development Plan provides written statements and maps for specified settlements in which Enfield is cited. Enfield is noted as being located within the 'Trim' municipal district and a self-sustaining town as mentioned previously. The vision for Enfield is *'To support the sustainable consolidation of this multi-modal settlement with a balance of residential and employment development supported by its strategic location on the M4 Corridor and the availability of highly accessible lands suitable for employment and enterprise, whilst pursuing a continued pattern of development that respects the inherent characteristics of the natural and built environment.'*

The following statement is relevant to the application site:

'This plan seeks to promote Enfield as a dynamic location which can facilitate diversity in enterprise and employment development and investment opportunities.'

Further to this, the objectives below are relevant to the proposed works:

ENF POL 1 *To support the sustainable consolidation of this multi-modal settlement with a balance of residential and employment development supported by its strategic location on the M4 Corridor and the availability of highly accessible lands suitable for employment and enterprise.*

ENF POL 19 *To seek high quality design for all new proposals for, signage, parking arrangements and street furniture.*

6.4.4 Rural Development Strategy

County Meath is a predominantly rural county in terms of land use, with a large rural population. In realising the potential of rural areas in the County, the County established the following goal with regard to rural development:

'To encourage the continued sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the County'.

'The location of the county largely in the hinterland of the largest metropolitan area in the state has generated considerable demand for golf course and leisure estate type developments over the past decade.'

In support of this goal, various objectives have been established. The following objectives are relevant to this application:

RUR DEV SO 1 *To support the continued vitality and viability of rural areas, environmentally, socially and commercially by promoting sustainable social and economic development.*

RUR DEV SO 10 *To promote rural economic development by recognising the need to advance the long term sustainable social and environmental development of rural areas and encouraging economic diversification and facilitating growth of rural enterprises.*

It is considered that the proposal for the extension and extension of the restaurant at Johnstown Estate, a place of tourism and leisure supports the aforementioned goals of encouraging the continued vitality and viability of the rural area through sustainable development and by encouraging rural enterprise.

6.4.5 Rural Area Types Development Pressure Area

County Meath classifies rural areas under 3 distinct area types: *Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence*, *Strong Rural Area*, and *Low Development Pressure Area*. The subject location can be classified under *Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence* as shown in the Figure X.0 below. This rural area type exhibits the characteristics of proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of Dublin, with a rapidly rising population.

These areas broadly correspond with the three economic development clusters within the County which areas are based upon the strategic transportation corridors (both existing and proposed) that traverse the County with ready access to the Dublin Metropolitan Area. This area includes the commuter-belt and peri-urban areas of the county and are the areas that are experiencing the most development pressure for one-off rural housing.

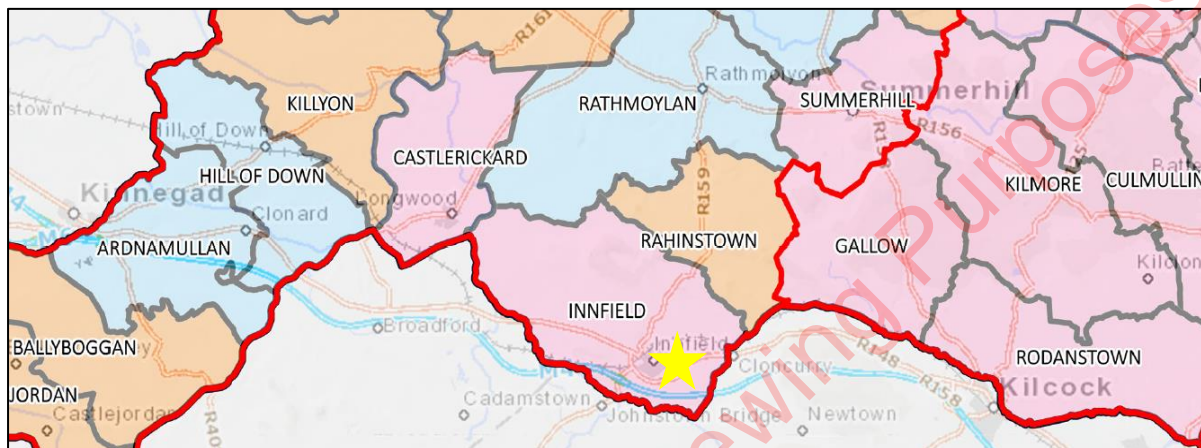


Figure 18.0 Extract from Map 9.1 - Rural Area Types Development Pressure. Subject area indicated using yellow star and is designated as a *Rural Area Under Strong Development Pressure*.

As the subject site is in an area classified as a *Rural Area Under Strong Development Pressure*, we consider the proposal to be consistent with the goal for rural development in Enfield and the wider context of County Meath.

6.4.6 Economy and Employment Strategy

Chapter 4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the economic vision for the County and acknowledges the opportunities for growth of urban areas and well-connected towns that are accessible to significant population catchments. The Development Plan also acknowledges that regional amenity and tourism has a significant role in the development of the county while also recognising the importance of ensuring tourist development does not have a negative impact on the overall character of the area.

The following policy objectives are considered relevant to the proposal:

ED POL 23

To support the development of activity tourism facilities, in appropriate locations, within the County subject to standard development management considerations being applied.

ED POL 26

Meath County Council shall positively consider and assess development proposals for the expansion of existing authorised industrial or business enterprises in the countryside where the resultant development does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area. In all instances, it should be demonstrated that the proposal would not generate traffic of a type and amount inappropriate for the standard of the access roads. This policy shall not apply to the National Road Network.

- ED POL 42** *To facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure such as accommodation, restaurants, car and coach parking and toilet facilities in the designated hubs throughout the County.*
- ED POL 43** *To promote the development of sustainable tourism and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to satisfactory location, siting and design criteria, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas identified as sensitive landscapes in the Landscape Character Assessment for the County. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment).*
- ED POL 44** *To support the development of new tourist facilities or upgrading/ extension of existing tourist facilities at tourist sites within the County such as the Hill of Tara, Loughcrew, and Trim Castle in conjunction with OPW and DCHG in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 and with proper Planning and sustainable development principles. These facilities should avail of shared infrastructure and services where possible and will be designed to the highest architectural and design standards.*
- ED POL 47** *To encourage the clustering of tourism products and services within identified hubs and nodes to facilitate the sharing of infrastructure and services, where possible, to increase linkages within and reduce leakage from the local economy.*
- ED POL 54** *To enable, facilitate, and encourage the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector through the provision of tourism enterprise developments in rural areas including open farms subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal Planning considerations. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment)*
- ED POL 64** *To facilitate the development of a variety of quality tourism accommodation tourist types, at suitable locations, throughout the County.*
- ED POL 69** *To facilitate, where appropriate, the conversion of former demesnes or estate dwellings and their outbuildings into tourism facilities subject to good Planning and Architectural conservation practice. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment)*
- ED OBJ 74** *To support the development of sustainable tourism and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to satisfactory location, siting and design criteria, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas identified as sensitive landscapes in the Landscape character Assessment for the County. (Refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment).*

It is submitted that the proposal positively contributes to the character and amenity of the surrounding area and plays a key role in developing tourism to the area while valuing sustainable development and maintaining visual amenity.

6.4.7 Landscape and Visual Amenity

The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) contained within the Meath Development Plan provides for the classification of Meath's landscapes into (1) types and values and (2) sensitivities. The LCA divides the County into four Landscape Character Types representing generic areas of distinctive character that makes one landscape different from another such as uplands or the coast. The LCA places a value on each landscape character type ranging from exceptional to low. Subsequent to the type and value being identified, the sensitivity of each character type is defined as its overall ability to

sustain its character in the face of change. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from high to low. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be less at risk from change.

The application site is located within a River and Estuary Character Type. The River and Estuary Character Type forms the central-southern boundary of the County and is identified as being part of LCA 14: Royal Canal.

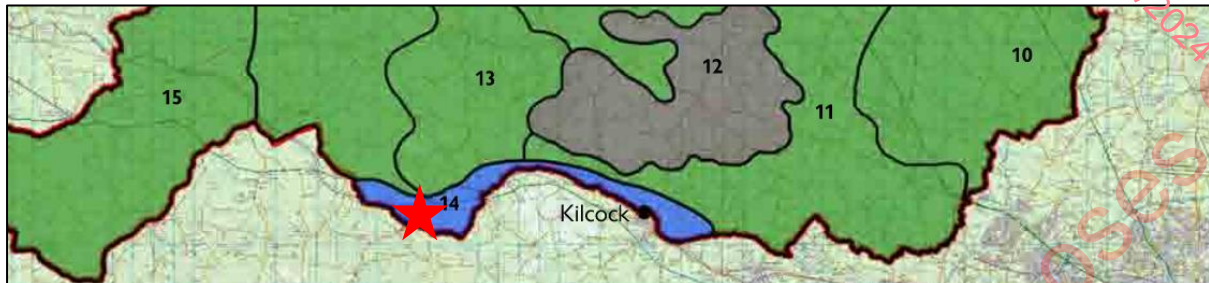


Figure 19.0 Map 1 – Landscape Character Types of Appendix A.05 of the Development Plan showing subject site (red star) within the LCA 14 – Royal Canal.

The subject site is also located in a 'High Value' amenity area shown in the image below.

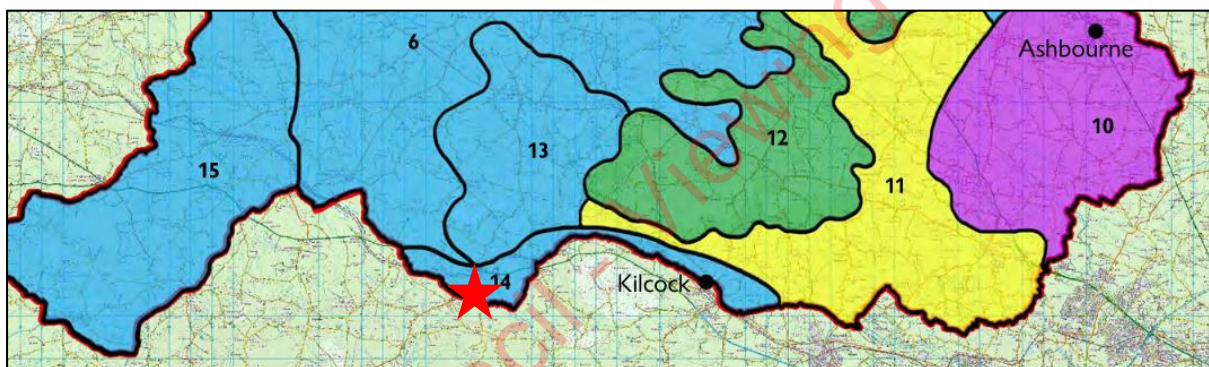


Figure 20.0 Map 2 – Landscape Character Areas of Appendix A.05 of the Development Plan showing subject site (red star) within the LCA 14 – Royal Canal and 'High Value' amenity area.

Landscape Character Assessment Objectives are as follows:

HER OBJ 49 To ensure that the management of development will have regard to the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity, and capacity to absorb change as outlined in Appendix 5 Meath Landscape Character Assessment and its recommendations.

As the subject site consists of upgrades to an existing development not visible from outside of the site's boundaries, it can be considered that the proposed development is consistent with the above objective and will have no impact on this LCA.

6.4.8 Energy Efficiency

Mitigation of the causes and impacts of climate change is one of the cross-cutting themes of the Meath County Development Plan. The Development Plan states that the issues to be considered in addressing this challenge include selection of building materials, type of buildings being constructed, orientation on site and lifetime energy demands of the building. The following objective is considered relevant to the proposed works:

DM OBJ 6 Building design shall maximise natural ventilation, solar gain and daylight, where possible, all new and renovated developments.

The proposed outdoor patio is comprised of glazing to let in natural light and provide for natural ventilation. It is considered that the proposed works will be energy efficient and consistent with the above policy objective.

7.0 Conclusion

The key objective of the proposed development is to enhance the existing Johnstown Estate premises and its current service offering, providing for a reinvigorated the interactive customer experience for incoming patrons with the provision of an added public amenity in the form of an outdoor terrace area and restaurant extension and expansion of the hotel with additional bedrooms which is considered to be appropriate in the context of the site's land use objective and accords with the objectives of the development plan in respect of sustainability and urban compaction.

The proposal, in terms of site layout and design, seeks to protect the existing amenity of adjoining properties and also to respect the character and appearance of the area in the vicinity of the M4 Motorway. The proposal is considered to be an efficient use of space and will be architecturally comparable for the area and the grounds it is situated on. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is compliant with the National Planning Framework as well as policies and objectives as set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Fundamentally, the proposed development would provide an enhanced experience for future customers and would aid in the creation of additional local jobs, as such we respectfully request that the Meath County Council see fit to **grant** planning permission accordingly.



Kevin Hughes MIPI MRTPI
Director
for HPDC Ltd.