

Monasterevin
Action Area Plan 1.



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Forward Planning Team, Kildare County Council, St. Mary's Naas,
County Kildare

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INTRODUCTION

This Action Area Plan has been prepared by Kildare County Council for lands to the West of the town centre and the River Barrow in Monasterevin. The need for the plan arises from the Monasterevin Local Area Plan, 2001. This Action Area Plan provides a framework for development within the study area. All proposals for development in these lands shall conform to the Action Area Plan.

LOCATION

The study area (approximately 10ha) is located adjacent to the West of the town centre of Monasterevin. The lands are bounded by the Grand Canal, to the Northwest, the River Barrow, to the North East and the National Primary Road (N7) to the South.

******SEE COLOUR COPY [SEPARATE FILE NAMED
'INTROpg']**

Planning Context

Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities, September 1999.

In the context of outer suburban and greenfield sites, the guidelines suggest that to ensure the greatest efficiency in land usage, net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare (14-20 per acre) should be encouraged. Development at densities less than 20 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged in the interests of land efficiency. On lands proximate to existing or proposed public transport corridors, densities in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare should be permitted.

Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2001.

Planning authorities should include in action area plans the identification of locations appropriate for the provision of the full range of childcare facilities. Under the Guidelines for large estates the provision of one childcare facility with places for 20 children for each 75 dwellings is considered appropriate. This level of provision is also considered appropriate for the plan lands.

Architectural Heritage Protection Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities

This document sets out guidance in relation to works or changes of use for Protected Structures. An Architectural Heritage Assessment Report in accordance with the guidelines shall be required in respect of structures that are protected.

The legislation and Guidelines are clear on the principle that demolition of a Protected Structure is not acceptable except in exceptional circumstances. Demolition of part of a Protected Structure must be justified and may be acceptable if the part does not contribute to the character of the structure. It is acknowledged that, in order to prolong their function and cultural life, it is generally necessary to keep structures that are protected in active use. Any proposed material change of use should be compatible with the fabric, character and special interest of the structure.

Social/Affordable Housing:

Under the Housing Strategy, which is part of the County Development Plan for Kildare, there is a requirement for 20% of residential units on zoned lands to be developed for social/affordable housing. This requirement applies to the lands in question.

Monasterevin Local Area Plan 2001

The development strategy of Kildare County Council as set out in the Local Area Plan for the town is to consolidate Monasterevin as part of the Kildare/Monasterevin growth centre. Monasterevin has historically been a service town for its rural hinterland. Moore Abbey, Glanbia and a number of local knitwear companies are the main employers. The town is connected to Ballymore Eustace reservoir and Ballykelly ground water sources. It has its own sewage treatment plant soon to be upgraded to a capacity of 6,000 population equivalent.

The study area is primarily zoned 'New Residential' under the Monasterevin Local Area Plan, 2001. There is a strip of land to the North West which is zoned 'Amenity and Open Space' (see map 2). It is the Council's objective to provide for *new residential development*, and to *protect and provide for recreation, open space and amenity*.

It is also an objective of the Council *to secure the preservation of certain items and structures of artistic, historic or architectural interest*. The Old Charter School, also known as the Hulk, is the central feature of the study area and is a proposed Protected Structure under section 3.11 of the Monasterevin Local Area Plan, 2001[as seen on front cover]. It is an objective of the Council to preserve views and prospects forming the settings and environs of Protected Structures.

It is an objective of the Council to protect views and prospects of the River Barrow and Grand Canal from all locations, across the site.

The Monasterevin Local Area Plan, 2001 has identified that an Action Area Plan is required prior to development within the study area (section 2.9) due to the prominence of the site and its sensitive location. Parameters have been set out as follows:

Urban Form: The Local Area Plan acknowledges that the site is an appropriate location for high-density residential development, which must be of an exceptionally high design quality and address the River Barrow and the Grand Canal.

Linkage to Town Centre: A new bridge over the Barrow, suitable for pedestrian, cyclists and the disabled is required. It shall be of a high standard of design.

Flooding: The flood plain of the River Barrow must be taken into account.

Access: Only a single vehicular access point shall be allowed onto the existing national road.

Conservation: The conservation/restoration of the Hulk is required. Furthermore, new development in the vicinity of the Hulk must be designed to respect the character of the building.

Open Space & Landscaping: Development shall take full advantage of the amenity opportunities presented by the Barrow and Grand Canal.

Vision & Policy Aims

The overall vision and policy aims guiding development within the action area plan are:

- 1. To encourage the conservation and re-use of the Hulk building.**
- 2. To ensure an exceptionally high architectural standard of design that reflects and respects the context of the site and provides for a high quality living environment.**
- 3. To provide linkage to the town centre via a footbridge.**
- 4. To develop the amenities of the site, including its relationship with the Grand Canal and River Barrow.**
- 5. To protect and enhance the amenity of properties in the area.**

Action Area Plan Development Strategy

The strategy for the development of the action area is to ensure coherent development of residential zoned lands. The action area lands consist of approximately 10ha and therefore have a potential capacity of 350-500units. Specific objectives are identified below. These provide a co-ordinated approach to the conservation of the proposed protected structure and the development of a quality living environment, which shall enhance the built fabric and amenities of the town and shall have a physical link to the town centre via a footbridge. A phasing programme has also been identified for the implementation of the action area plan.

The action area lands are zoned primarily New Residential. While housing is the primary use in this zone, recreation, education, crèche/playschool, clinic/surgery and nursing home uses are envisaged. Home based economic activities¹ can be important in terms of achieving sustainability and employment creation. A number of uses are 'open for consideration' as per section 3.2 of the Monasterevin Local Area Plan, 2001 and are encouraged. Likewise having regard to the proximity of the site to the town centre and railway station, small office units, which are not normally acceptable, will be acceptable within the site. This shall enable people living in the area to work locally and minimise transport demand.

Key sites within the study area include the Hulk building and the Northern corner of the study area, which overlooks both the Grand Canal and the River Barrow (referred to as the landmark site). It is an objective of the Action Area Plan that a mix of uses is encouraged/promoted at these sites given their prominent location. [See over]

¹ Small-scale commercial and professional activities carried out by residents of a dwelling, which are subordinate to the main use of the property as residential accommodation.

The Hulk

- (i) A use(s) that provides greater public contact/access shall be encouraged. The lower floors together with the adjoining teachers' houses, which shall be retained, plus the walled garden and outbuildings, would be suited for use as a cultural facility e.g. library, heritage centre, museum, gallery or exhibition space with associated ancillary uses such as tea room or craft shop. Alternatively, a community use would be acceptable such as a playschool, crèche or day care centre.
- (ii) Residential development would be acceptable on the upper floors of the Hulk itself.

Landmark Site

- (i) Given the prominent location of the landmark site, it is considered that a semi-commercial use would be desirable for a wider community benefit. The emphasis shall be to achieve a high standard of design that will be a magnet for public contact and maximise the potential of the site. A development maximising the tourism potential of the site such as a small hotel, guesthouse or hostel and restaurant/café shall be encouraged. Alternatively a mixed-use development including small office units, local retail unit, medical /consultant, health centre and gym would be appropriate.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

(1) Conservation

The Charter School, the Hulk [including ancillary buildings] is of important heritage significance because it represents an example of Irish eighteenth-century Palladian institutional architecture and because of its social and cultural history. It is one of the best remaining intact examples of a purpose built Charter School (c.1730-62) and has a National Rating for its architectural and historical importance.

The following objectives apply:

- (a) Any planning application for restoration of the Hulk shall provide an Architectural Heritage Assessment in accordance with Guidelines published by Duchas, the Heritage Service. Expert conservation advice should be engaged at design and specification stage and retained throughout the conservation works.
- (b) The Hulk and ancillary structures including the teacher's houses and outbuildings shall be repaired using traditional materials. The following principles of conservation shall be adhered to- *research prior to planning application; minimum intervention – repair rather than replace; respect the setting.*
- (c) The reinstatement of window openings to their original size and shape shall generally be considered acceptable, but precise detail shall be agreed through the development control process in consultation with Duchas, the Heritage Service.
- (d) The historic fabric of the Hulk and ancillary structures shall be retained as far as reasonably possible.
- (e) The integrity of the Protected Structure, its curtilage and attendant grounds must be preserved. Accordingly new development within the walled garden and to the front of the Hulk shall not be acceptable.
- (f) A landscaped belt/soft edge to the exterior of the garden wall incorporating a pathway, to appropriate standards, shall be required in order to preserve this site feature and enhance the enclosure of its surroundings. The width of this margin shall generally be in proportion to the height of the wall.
- (g) The vista from the N7 shall be preserved by retention of the existing laneway as a pedestrian/cycle access. This shall not be open for vehicular access.

(2) Urban Form

Urban Design

The action area plan sets out general parameters for urban design. These are not intended to be prescriptive, except in establishing overarching principles that are largely governed by conservation matters.

General Design Concepts:

- 1. Higher density development shall be encouraged generally within the study area due to its strategic location. At a micro-level within the site higher densities shall be encouraged along the river and canal frontages to provide for passive supervision of the open space.**
- 2. New building lines along the River Barrow and the Grand Canal should be established to generate a strong sense of streetscape, provide for pedestrian access to and passive supervision of the Riverside and towpath.**
- 3. Development shall address lands to the Southeast boundary of the site to ensure that any possible future development of these lands is not prejudiced.**
- 4. New development shall respect the site's topography and natural features.**

(a) Residential Mix

A broad mix of dwelling types to accommodate a variety of housing units to suit various stages of people's lives and market demand shall be encouraged within the site. It is envisaged that a substantial proportion of the development shall consist of townhouses and that apartments/duplex units will be located along the riverside and towpath areas.

It is an objective of the planning authority to achieve a dispersal of social and affordable housing throughout the development area.

(b) Building Heights

- (ii) Building heights throughout the site shall generally be subservient to the Hulk and shall not over-dominate or interfere with the setting of the Protected Structure.**

- (iii) Building heights along the River Barrow shall be encouraged to be higher in order to reflect the streetscape opposite along Moore and Main Streets. Likewise, the landmark building may incorporate a vertical statement to reflect its function and increase legibility within the site.

(c) Materials & Design Detailing

Monasterevin is an 18th century grid format town characterised by 3-4storey Georgian streetscapes, smooth rendered with pitched roof profiles. The Hulk is characterised by random rubble limestone, lime rendered and lime-washed, with cut granite soffits to eaves. There is also evidence of brickwork, which would originally have been rendered.

Specific Materials and Detailing

- (i) **Brick Work:** Traditionally there is little usage of brick within Monasterevin. The use of solid brickwork in new development within the environs of the Hulk will not be acceptable. Referencing to brickwork within contemporary design may be acceptable.
- (ii) **Stone Work:** Shall reflect and respect traditional masonry within the town and should use only stone indigenous to the area.
- (iii) **Fenestration:** Timber windows shall be encouraged within the study area in the interest of reflecting the historical context of the site.
- (iv) **Dormers:** Traditionally the use of this feature in Monasterevin is limited. This feature is not encouraged within the study area.
- (v) **Roofing:** Natural stone slates shall be encouraged within the study area in the interest of reflecting the historical character of the site and encouraging the use of traditional materials. Alternative roof covering may be considered acceptable depending on their aesthetic and visual impact on the Protected Structure.
- (vi) **Roads/Paving:** A variation in materials within the site shall be encouraged. In areas of high pedestrian use, monolithic tarmac/concrete surfaces will be discouraged.

(3) Open Space & Landscaping.

Amenity/Open Space, Walkways and Cycle Routes

- (a) The mature trees and hedgerows within the study area shall be subject to a tree survey by a suitably qualified person. It shall be desirable where feasible to retain these trees and hedgerows. A landscaping scheme including the management plan for the maintenance of open space and landscaping shall be provided as part of the development proposal.
- (b) Encourage the development of quality open space within the curtilage of the 'Hulk'. Proposals for landscaping shall be required at planning stage.
- (c) Develop pedestrian and cycle linkages within the site and to the town centre through the provision of a footbridge.
- (d) Develop the amenity value of the towpath and banks of the River Barrow for open space and pedestrian walkways.
- (e) Ensure high quality, safe pedestrian and cycle routes within the site.

(4) Linkage to Town Centre

- (a) A footbridge shall be developed to link the study area to the town centre. The footbridge shall be of high architectural standard and shall be built to the requirements of all relevant statutory bodies.
- (b) A central spine with a pedestrian/cycle emphasis shall provide a link from the Hulk through the new riverside streetscape, to the River Barrow and footbridge.
- (c) New development shall address lands to the Southeast in order to ensure that any possible future linkage to the town centre is not compromised.

(5) Access & Parking

(a) Road Access

- (i) The road to the front of the Hulk shall be a maximum 5metres wide and shall have a textured finish sympathetic to the Hulk.
- (ii) All other roads within the site shall be a maximum 6metres in width.
- (iii) Development shall be phased in order to ensure efficient management of traffic associated with the development onto the N7. A phasing programme has been identified. (see page 15)
- (iv) A roundabout junction with the N7 shall be required to facilitate development within the study area. A priority junction shall be acceptable in the interim to accommodate up to a maximum of 200 dwelling units or equivalent. In the event that the development post-dates the opening of Monasterevin By-Pass a priority junction accommodating up to a maximum of 300 dwelling units or equivalent shall be acceptable. [See phasing programme]

(b) Car Parking

Car parking shall be in accordance with the standards set out in the Monasterevin Local Area Plan. Reduced car parking can be considered in higher density areas in the vicinity of the footbridge due to proximity to public transport and the town centre.

It is an objective of the Action Area Plan to:

- (i) Ensure that the location of car parking shall not interfere with the setting of the Protected Structure.
- (ii) To encourage the use of innovative hard and soft landscaping to enable car parking to integrate with the site and avoid large expanse surface parking.

******PHASING PROGRAMME SEE
SEPARATE FILE NAMED flophase**

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT LEVY

A flat rate special development levy per dwelling unit shall be applied by condition to relevant planning permissions pertaining to the site. A square metre rate shall apply to non-residential development within the site. These levies shall be collected by the planning authority for the purpose of developing the roundabout. The precise levy shall be calculated at the time of grant of permission based on up to date costing.

All other standard development levies for services shall apply to development of the lands at time of grant.

SPECIAL CASH DEPOSITS AND SECURITY BONDS

A cash deposit or security bond shall be applied by condition to relevant planning permissions pertaining to the site to guarantee the satisfactory completion of the footbridge. The bond shall be refunded only when the planning authority has certified that works have been carried out satisfactorily.