

Mid Eastern Region  
Innovation Think Space  
MERITS Building

Part 8 Planning Report & Design Statement  
12th February 2018



## Legal

This report is intended for the sole use of the Kildare County Council in relation to a Part 8 Planning Application for a site located at Aras Cill dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co. Kildare, N91 X77F.

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Revision	Date	Notes	Prepared By	Checked By	Approved By
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## Contributors:

Metropolitan Workshop - Architects and Masterplanners  
DBFL - Transport, Structural, Drainage and Flooding Consultants  
Openfield - Ecology Consultants and AA screening



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# 1

## Introduction

The Team

Supporting Reports

The Brief and Project Scope

Project Description

This Design Statement has been prepared by Metropolitan Workshop, working with input from the wider project team on behalf of Kildare County Council.

### The Team

The project team consists of the following consultants and roles:

- Metropolitan Workshop - Architects
- DBFL - Transport, Strutral, Drainage and Flooding Consultants
- Openfield - Ecology Consultants and AA screening

### Supporting Reports

In addition to the plans and particulars required under the legislation, this architectural report should be read in conjunction with the consultant reports as submitted with this application, including the reports from:

- DBFL Consultant Engineers
- Openfield Ecology Consultants

### The Brief & Project Scope

Kildare County Council propose to develop a Mid Eastern Region Innovation Think Space (MERITS) on the site beside the County Council offices in an area zoned town centre.

This innovation think space will have a strong emphasis on data/tech start-ups and promote collaborative working.

The Vision of MERITS is to serve the emerging technology sector by connecting organisations and people, building market relevant solutions in addition to acting as a centre of excellence in supporting innovation within the small business sector across the region.

### Project Description:

The development will comprise of:

- Proposed new two storey Mid Eastern Region Innovation Think Space (MERITS) building with co-working incubation and accelerator space for technology entrepreneurs and technology businesses on a site of approx. 0.6 Ha. to include the provision of entrance reception area with canopy and signage; café; community rooms; meeting rooms; managers office;

conference area / function room, open plan office for hot desks and 10 no. business start-up office space; kitchenettes; associated service rooms; plantrooms; storage rooms; male, female and accessible toilets over two floors consisting of 1,210 sqm.

- A new vehicular ramp, pedestrian steps and ramp from the existing Aras Chill Dara car park, alteration and relocation of the existing 36 no carparking spaces providing a total of 91 carparking spaces on the site including 3 accessible carparking spaces 6 electric charging car parking spaces; 3 motor bike spaces and a sheltered bike parking area. The proposed development will provide an additional 55 no. carparking spaces for the proposed MERITS building.
- The proposals include all necessary services including on site water attenuation; utility and associated site works



Right: View towards existing KCC offices and the Lantern Building

# 2

## Site Context

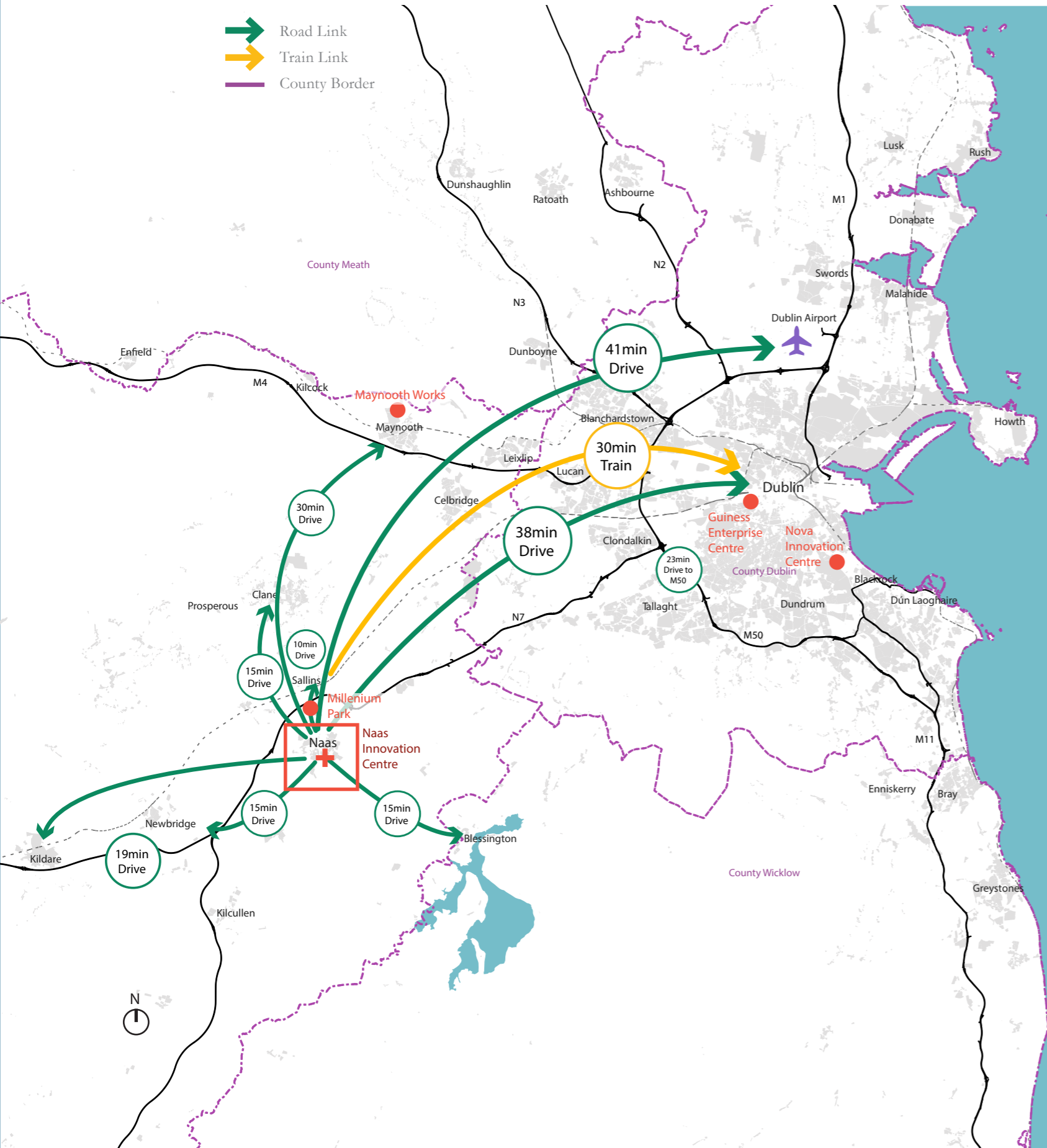
Regional Impact

Site Location

Site Photographs

Transport links within the Mid-West region

-  Road Link
-  Train Link
-  County Border



### Regional Impact

The town of Naas, An Nás - "The Place of Assembly", is situated in County Kildare, on the main road from Dublin to Cork, Limerick and Waterford. A couple of hours drive from most parts of Ireland, it has a variety of transport infrastructure that facilitates easy access to main towns and cities.

Dublin as well as Dublin Airport is easily accessible from Naas via the N7 and the M50 Motorway in approximately 40 minutes. The M7 Motorway also connects Naas with the South and South West. Bus services connect Naas to main towns and cities, as well as the Sallins and Naas railway station, located 10 minutes drive away in Sallins, which is used by many residents of Naas and the surrounding area commuting to Dublin. It has frequent trains throughout the day and travel times of approximately 30 minutes to Dublin city centre.

A cosmopolitan town of approximately 20,700 residents, Naas is the largest in the North Kildare Suburban region. As a major commuter town, many people reside in Naas and travel to Dublin. It has a young population and is growing rapidly, and expanding its residential offer.

### Local Industry

The key strengths of the Mid-East region include digital economy, internationally traded services, and high tech manufacturing. Naas has attracted residents who share a technical culture as hi-tech employees of major local industrial enterprises including Kerry Group, Intel, Xilinx, and Hewlett Packard. Kerry Group, for example, has opened a new technology and food innovation centre in the Millennium Park mixed-use business park located in Naas, that will serve their global and regional customers. The centre supports 800 research, product commercialisation, business development

and business support jobs.

Our direction has been influenced by the increased demand on the Mid East LEO's from the emerging technology sector for support in their development, the increase demand from small businesses for support in innovation, the success of Maynoothworks and a number of actions laid out in the Mid East Action Plan for Jobs in addition to the Kildare County Plan 2017 - 2023 (EO 4 Dev plan 2017-2023) continue to develop Kildare as a digital / innovative economy hub and leadership 'hot spot' by:

- Building on an existing critical mass in the IT and digital/tech sector and attracting further significant investment to further develop the sector to its maximum potential.
- Capitalising on the assets and resources of Kildare and the Mid East, i.e.. quality of life education and skill set of its workforce.

### Project Intent

The intent of this proposal is that the MERITS will complement existing innovative activities in the area like at Millennium Park, as well as becoming a significant new type of space to foster work, incubation, innovation, that will not only create a unique think space in Naas, but will also link in with existing activities in the Mid East Region.

This project will involve an important partnership with MaynoothWorks business incubator at Maynooth University to grow and support the existing technology ecosystem in the region. Through this link, MERITS' high tech community will be able to access support network and expertise of MaynoothWorks.

### Site Location

The town centre of Naas includes many shops, restaurants and night-life but with the expansion of the town many new outlets have been developed in new retail parks on the outskirts of the town, as well as the development of complexes like the Millennium Park business centre.

A short distance from the town centre is the subject site which is zoned as Town Centre.

Within the Naas Town Development Plan, Naas is identified in the RPGs as a “Primary Economic Growth Town” and is clustered with Newbridge to serve the Hinterland area in terms of employment and the provision of goods and services. There is an aim to:

*“Strengthen Naas’ role within the Greater Dublin Area as an economic growth town, to promote the growth of employment opportunities in all sectors in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; to reduce the levels of commuting and to provide for greater focus on community building and quality of life.”*

The area around the site is made up by a collection of civic buildings, such as the Kildare Council building, the Lantern Building, the Civil Defence building, as well as the adjacent Gael Choláiste Chill Dara primary school and the four-star Osprey Hotel. The neighbouring Osprey Hotel has 108 bedrooms, plus a restaurant, bar, spa, swimming pool and is capable of providing overnight accommodation for visiting delegates / companies.

The protected Lantern Building is the remaining structure of an important barracks which was built in 1813 and occupied under British Command. It has been left unused since 1998, however it has undergone restoration works to the facade and clock tower in recent years.

The Kildare County Council building that sits directly adjacent to the site was built in 2001 by Heneghan Peng architects and is formed around the civic garden which slowly inclines from the street to the building entrance. Two bars form the civic offices and are connected by ramps as a transitional space that allow views into the park.

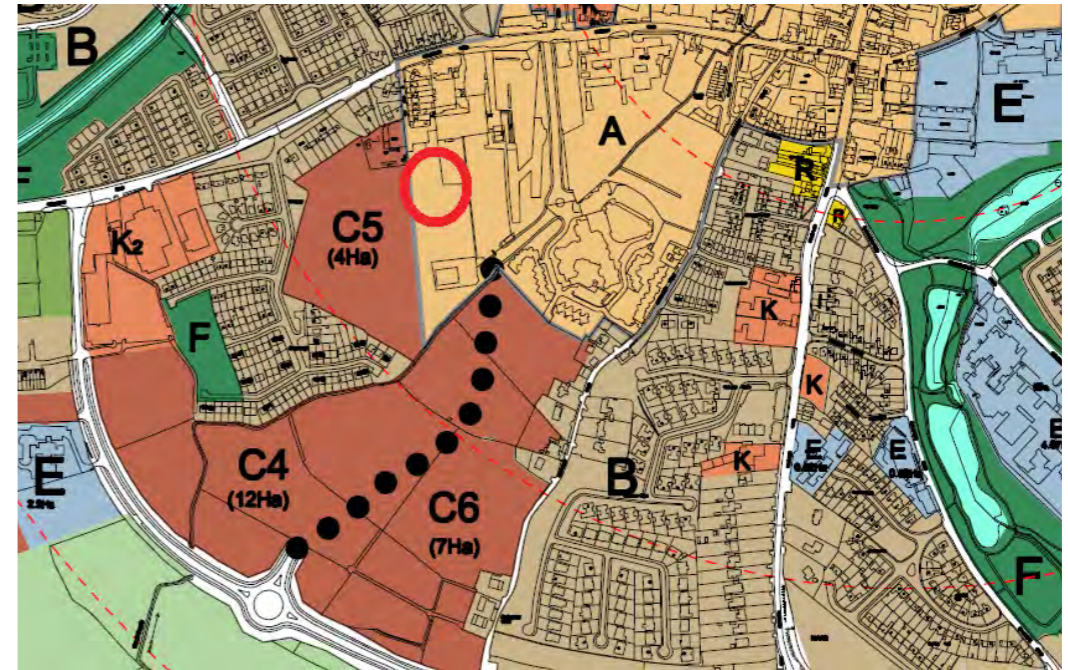
The site is located approximately 5-10 minutes walk from the town centre. It is also accessed by a bus stop directly outside Kildare County Council on Newbridge Road. There is a large car park servicing Kildare County Council adjacent to the site.

### Planning Policy Context

The subject site was zoned for “Town Centre” uses in the Naas Town Development Plan 2011-2017, as were the lands immediately to the north, east and south. The adjoining lands to the west were zoned for “New Residential” Development.

Having regard to the provisions of Chapter 14 of the Naas Town Development Plan 2011-2017, the proposed development and office developments are “Permitted in Principle” in areas zoned for “Town Centre” uses.

The site was not designated as a specific “Opportunity Site” or “Character Area” and therefore there were no specific development objectives for this site other than the general zoning and development control objectives as set out within the Development Plan.

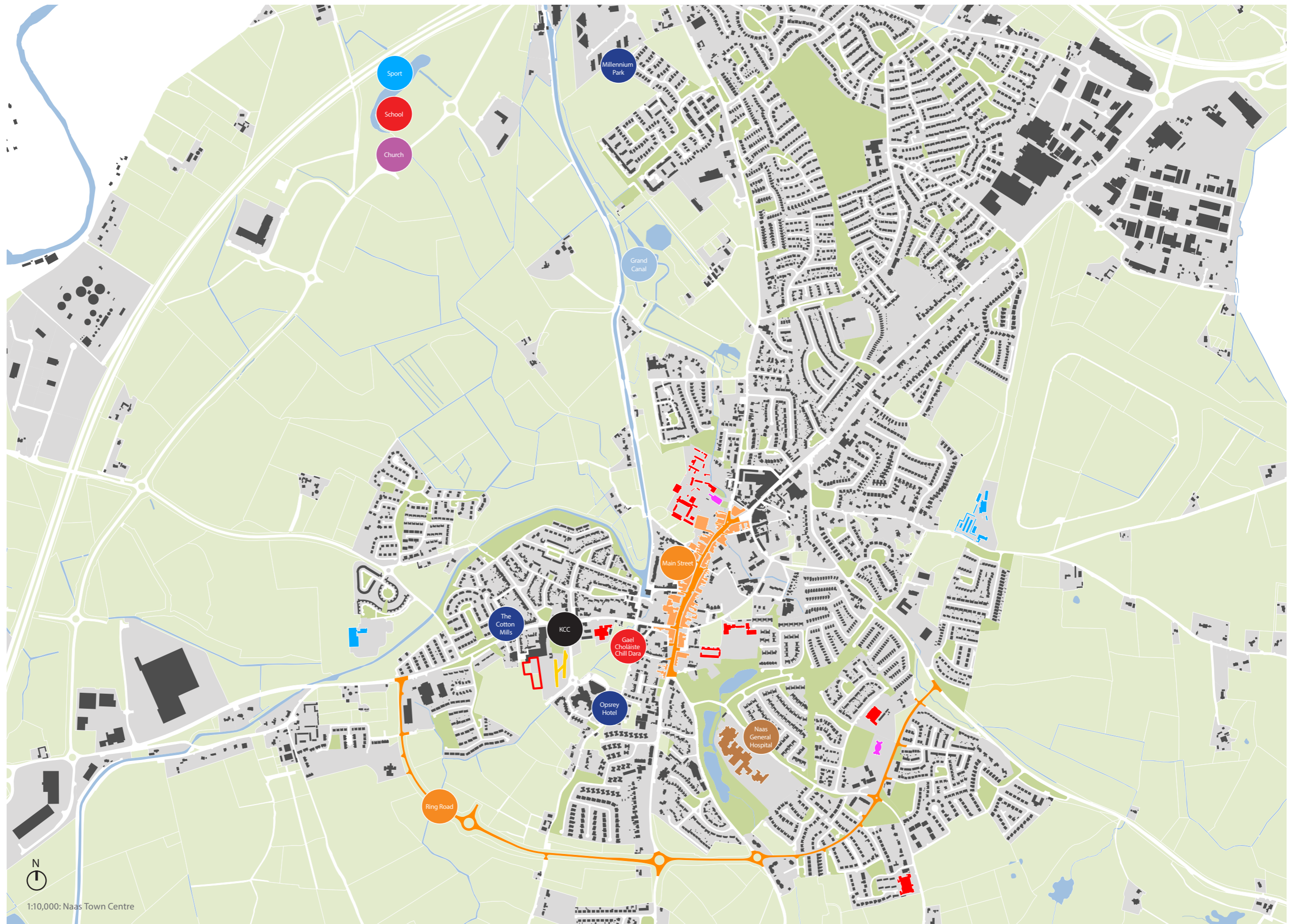


Above: Naas Town Development Plan 2011-2017, Zoning Map



- Right  
Aerial view of the site.
- Site
  - Key buildings
- 1 Cotton Mills
  - 2 The Lantern Building
  - 3 Kildare County Council
  - 4 Civil Defence Building
  - 5 Osprey Hotel
  - 6 Gael Choláiste Chill Dara



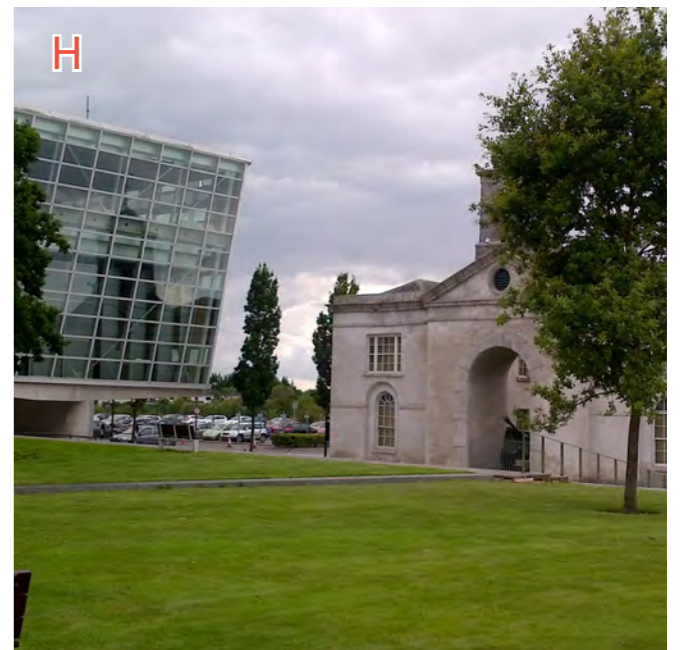
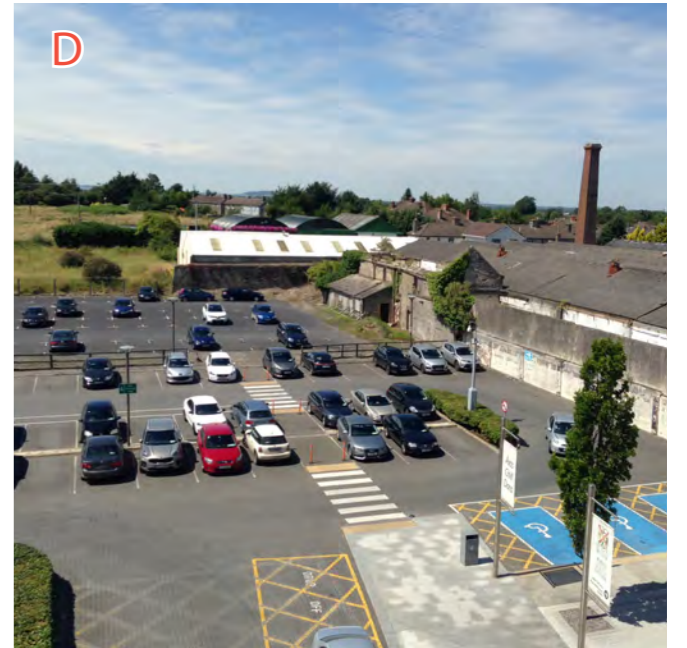
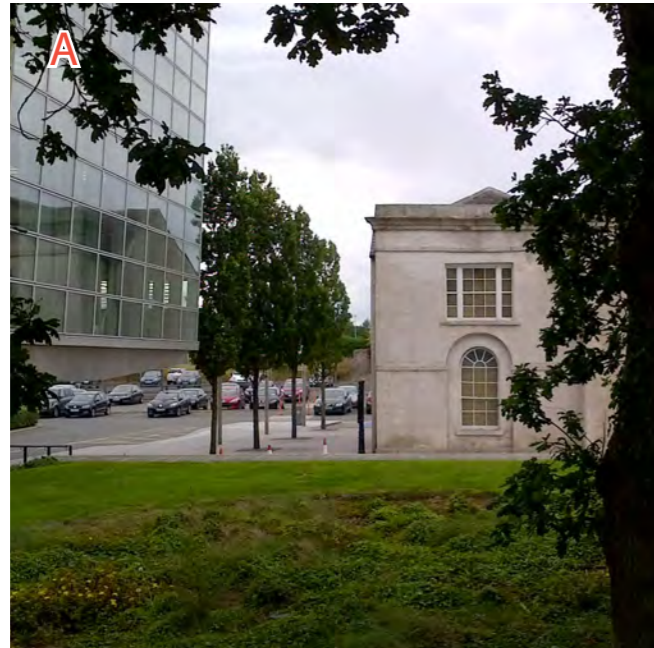


1:10,000: Naas Town Centre

Site Photographs

- A. View looking west between Kildare County Council HQ and the 'Lantern Building'
- B. View from car park looking East towards pedestrian link from Kildare County Council HQ.
- C. View looking North East towards site from inside Kildare County Council HQ, showing neighbouring Civil Defence Building.
- D. View looking South West towards site from inside Kildare County Council HQ, showing neighbouring industrial building (white) and vacant stone industrial buildings previously used as a mill.
- E. View from South boundary of site looking North.
- F. View from existing overflow carpark looking North East towards site, showing neighbouring industrial building (white) and stone boundary wall.
- G. View from site looking East towards Kildare County Council HQ.
- H. View from landscaped lawn to front of Kildare County Council HQ.





Photographs taken from and around the site

# 3

## Site Approach

Urban Design Principles

Transport

Built Context

Site Design Proposal



View towards existing KCC offices and the Lantern Building

### Urban Design Principles

The site is located to the west of the existing County Council office buildings. The adjacent lands are subject to a proposal for residential and site works have commenced. These works will also deliver a new link road connecting John Devoy Road to the Western Ring Road.

A number of locations for the building positioning on the site were considered, and the proposed option along the boundary of the over flow car parking on a North South axis proved most advantageous. This option will create a new connection to the council offices and the 'Lantern Building', and is a five minute walk to Naas Town Main Street. The drawing on the left illustrates the sitting of the building and links into which it will connect.

The proposed MERITS building will provide space, a community, and support systems and networks for new technology entrepreneurs and businesses to grow. This community will have access to 'innovation tools' such as shared production space and maker-space facilities.

### Transport

The site is located approximately 5-10 minutes walk from the town centre. It is also accessed by a bus stop directly outside Kildare County Council on Newbridge Road. There is a large car park servicing Kildare County Council adjacent to the site.



Civic buildings on site: the Lantern building sites adjacent to the Kildare Council building by Heneghan Peng.



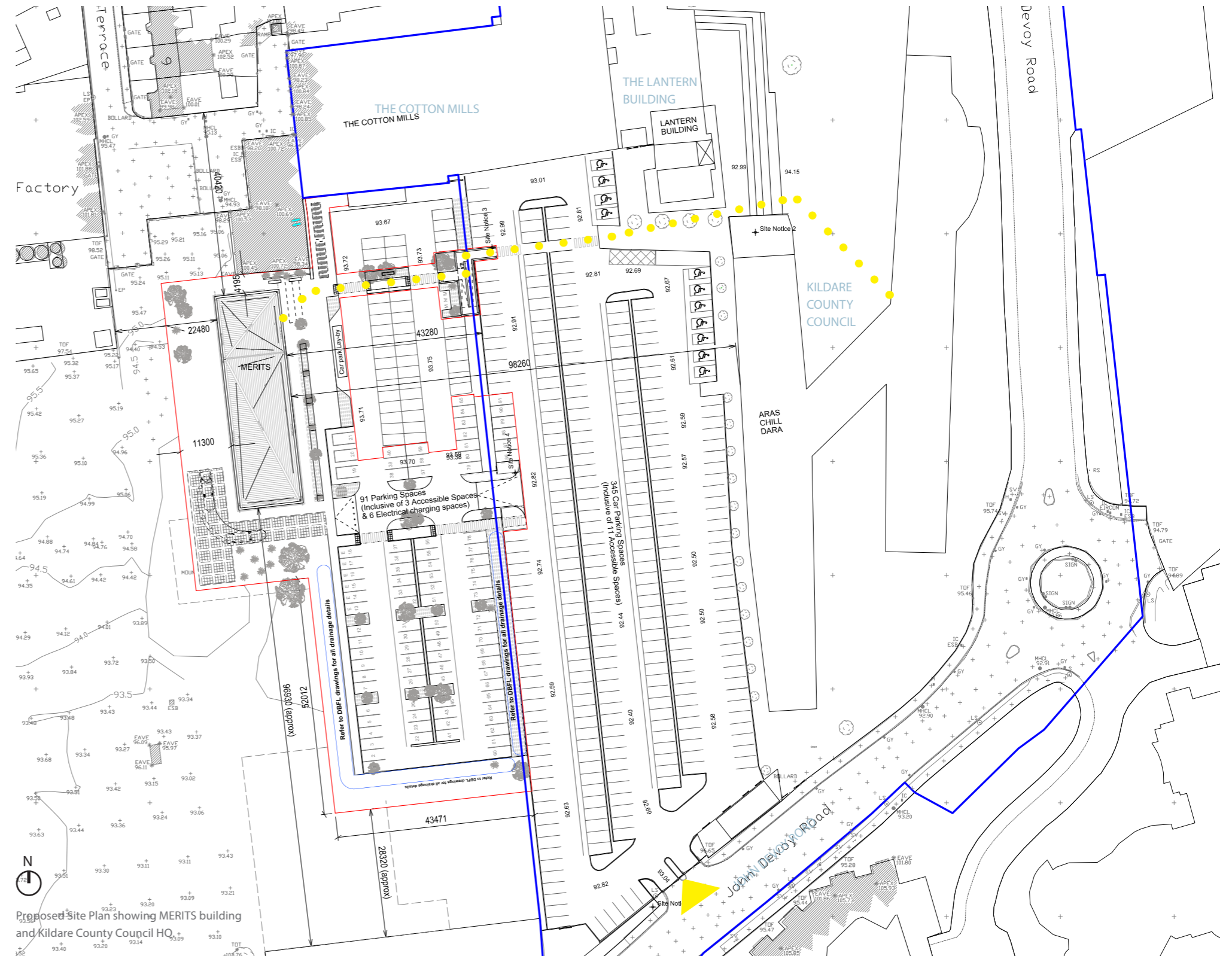
### Site Design Proposal

The proposed scheme sites the MERITS building west of the Kildare County Council Civic Offices at the opposite side of the existing surface car park.

The location chosen and orientation of the building entrance is on axis with the main entrance to the Civic Offices meaning that a strong connection can be made between the two buildings. This proposed building entrance has the advantage of being closer to the town centre and offers a potential future pedestrian connection back to Naas road via St. Patrick's Terrace, although a link through is not proposed at this time

Vehicular access will be provided through the existing County Council car park via the Devoy Road entrance.

It is envisioned that the strip of land to the immediate West of the existing car park and South of the proposed MERITS building could be developed in the future should there be a need to expand.



Proposed Site Plan showing MERITS building and Kildare County Council HQ

# 4

## MERITS Building

Briefing Elements

Layout

Setting Out and Structural Dimension

Flexibility and Expansion

Massing and Materiality

Precedents

Landscaping

Car Parking

Schedule of Accommodation



## Briefing Elements

MERITS' vision is to serve the emerging technology sector by connecting organisations and people, and to act as a centre of excellence in supporting innovative companies across the region.

The new, purpose built, co-working incubation and accelerator space for technology entrepreneurs and technology businesses will partner directly with Maynooth University and MaynoothWorks (MW) to extend and enhance the technology ecosystem in the region.

The space will provide the co-working community with the supports and networks that technology entrepreneurs and businesses need to start, grow and internationalise. Access to shared innovation tools, partnerships and connections with Maynooth University will enhance these opportunities. The intent is that the new space will be a significant 'step' change in the provision of space that fosters work, incubation and innovation, far superior to existing space in the Mid-East Region.

This direction has been influenced by the increased demand on the Mid East LEO'S from the emerging technology sector for support in their development, increased demand from small businesses for support in innovation, the success of Maynooth Works, and a number of actions laid out in the Mid East Action Plan for Jobs.

In addition, the Kildare County Plan 2017 - 2023 (E.O. 4. Development Plan 2017 -2023) promises to continue to develop Kildare as a digital hub, innovative economy and leadership hot spot by:

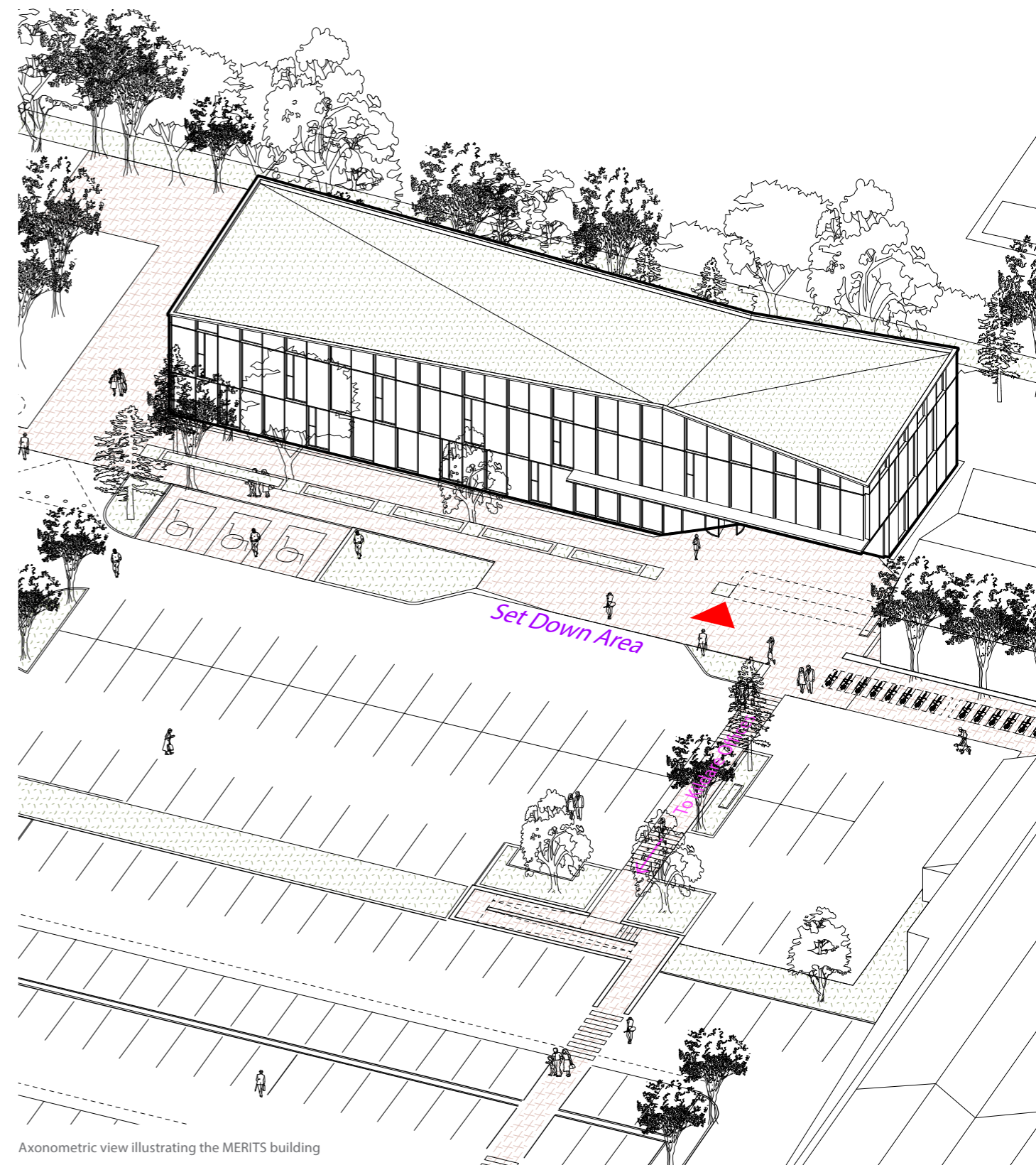
- Building on an existing critical mass in the IT and digital/tech sector
- Attracting significant investment to further develop the sector to its maximum potential.
- Capitalising on the other assets and resources of Kildare/ Mid East, i.e. quality of life, education, and skill set of its workforce, etc.
- Mobilising support for leaders in the ICT (education/ research/innovation) sectors, and economic development agencies by establishing a network of employers.
- Promoting linkage between the ICT/tech and research

sectors, and other relevant sectors and enterprises, to achieve synergy between these groups.

- Maximising the potential to combine funding opportunities, promoting public and private partnership across business and education.

With the support of partners in Enterprise Ireland; Kildare, Meath & Wicklow LEO'S; Maynooth University; Kildare County Chamber; KWETB; Skillnets; and other industry representatives, the vision of MERITS will be delivered by providing:

- Incubation space for indigenous enterprise and companies which graduate from MW.
- Acting as a soft-landing space for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- Think Space to existing companies seeking an offsite venue for ideation.
- Providing added benefit to clients through networking and access to research in Maynooth University in addition to providing Design Thinking and Innovation Consulting services and training.
- With a staff of 4 the industry-led approach will facilitate the delivery of tailored solutions to address specific new product development needs of industry partners.



Axonometric view illustrating the MERITS building

## Layout

The collaborative nature of the programme has been a key driver in the design and layout of the building.

The entrance has been located opposite the main entrance to Aras Chill Dara to allow a strong connection between the two buildings. The car park has been slightly modified to provide a pedestrian link.

The ground floor contains more public areas of the building such as the reception area, cafe, common areas, and hot desking facilities. The first floor contains the conference room, meeting spaces and open plan office spaces for enterprises which may have outgrown their hot-desk starting point.

The building is seen as open and accessible while maintaining a level of security and access control around office and work spaces. The building use and functions are less public and more cellularised on the second floor - a sense of community is retained by connecting the floors visually around a double height void rising over the entrance. Break out spaces and meeting areas are positioned around the circulation zones.



### Setting Out and Structural Dimension

The building is organised on a 1.5m grid which is a common module for this type of building. This is reflected in the structural grid and facade module.

The offices are typically 6000mm deep, allowing them to be naturally ventilated and naturally lit. This shallow depth allows for single sided ventilation in the offices, and in larger parts of the building, which is 14.3 meters at its maximum point, allows for cross ventilation.

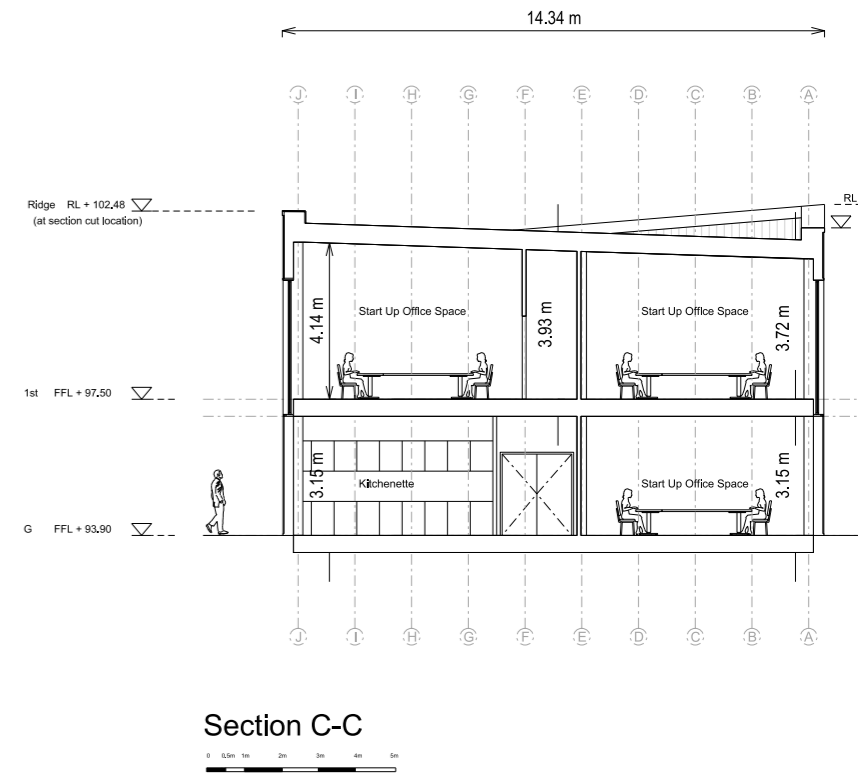
The width of the offices can be altered in 1500mm modules, following the facade and structural patterns - allowing them to be adjusted from 3000mm wide as required.

The floor to floor measures 3600mm, allowing for natural light to penetrate deeper in to the plan and better facilitates natural airflow.

### Flexibility and Expansion

In addition to the internal flexibility of the office spaces and their scope to expand or contract within a 1500mm grid dimension, the default office spaces have been specifically sized to each accommodate 6-8 people in a variety of layout options.

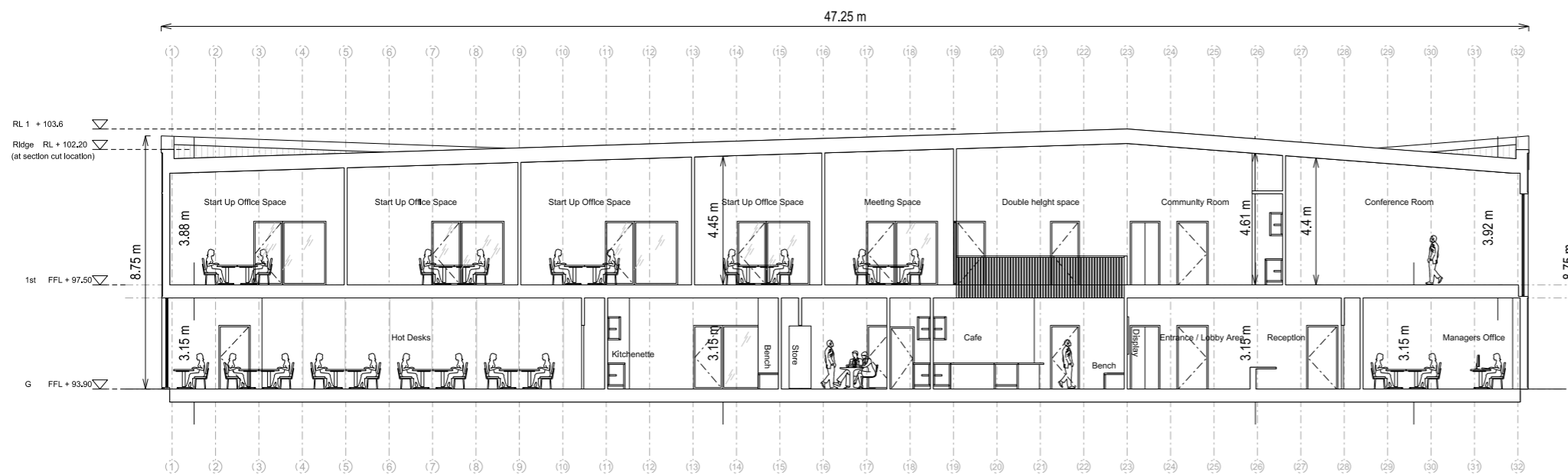
The building has been sited to allow for future expansion of the facility if the requirement presents. It is envisaged that the lands to the south could be developed as required. The fire stair located between gridlines 1-3 has been sized and positioned so that it would facilitate development to the south and become an internal stair.



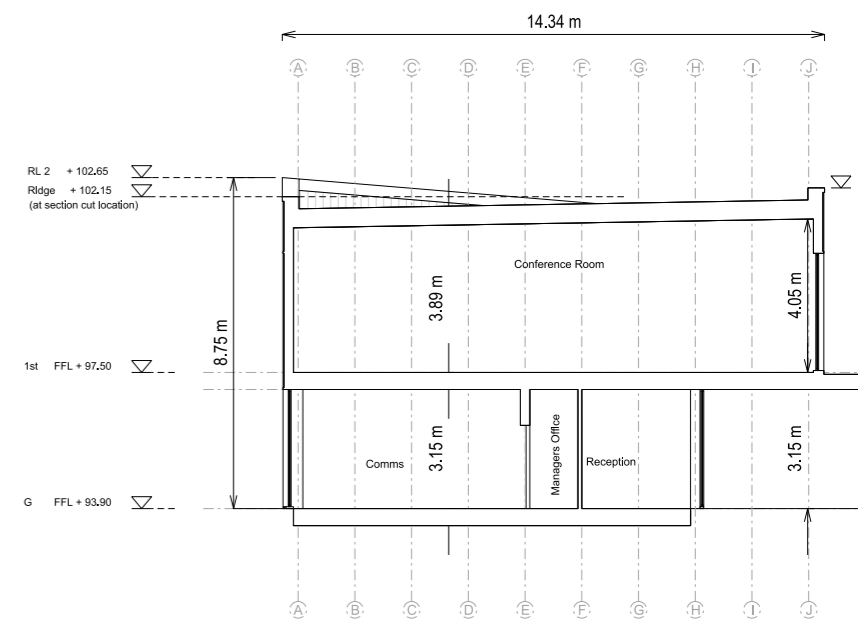
Section C-C

Metropolitan Workshop

Project: 1711 MERITS Building  
 Client: Kildare County Council  
 Location: Naas, Co Kildare  
 Title: Proposed Building Code Plan



Section A-A



Section B-B

### Massing and Materiality

The building is set out over two storeys with inflections on the ground floor to indicate entrances and more public areas. The roof profile is faceted and rises to a high point above the void space. This pitch gives significance to the building scale while respecting the adjoining two storey neighbours to the north. It also allows for a higher floor to ceiling height within the conference room/ function and main circulation space.

The building is conceived as light structure with a light skin of insulated cladding panels and aluminium panels with fenestration in between. The alternate rhythm of solid to void takes clues from Aras Chill Dara opposite.

Aluminium side panels within the window frame allow for user operated ventilation.



View from the pedestrian link through the carpark looking East at the entrance of the MERITS building - this elevation faces the Kildare County Council HQ. CGI's are for illustration purposes only.



Perspective showing the modulated facade of cladding panels  
CGI's are for illustration purposes only

Precedents

Samuel Beckett Civic Campus, Ballyogan, Dublin.  
Bucholz Mcevoy

Completed 2016.  
Area 3000sqm  
Library & Community Building including Crèche  
Multi-Purpose Sports Building including Sports Hall, Dance  
Studio and Gym, Sports Pitches, Skate area, Playground, and  
Civic Plaza.



Interior of library

North elevation, crèche and comm

### Precedents

Inchicore Model School, Dublin  
Donaghy + Dimond Architects

Completed 2015  
Classrooms, Resource Rooms, Staff Facilities, Multi-Purpose  
Hall



Maison de Santé, Vezelay, France  
Bernard Quirot Architects

Completed 2014  
Area 1085sqm  
Medical Centre, Pharmacy, Premises of Community of  
Communes





### Landscaping

The building has been set back from the car park edge to allow a landscape strip and planting. This will provide some foreground vegetation for the building users shielding views over the surface carpark. It will also help ground the building to the site.

### Car parking

Currently there is 380 no car parking spaces provided for Aras Chill Dara, which is entered from John Devoy Road. The proposed site for the MERITS building is 0.6 Ha and consists of 36 no. car parking spaces for Aras Chill Dara.

The proposed development is to provide a A new vehicular ramp, pedestrian steps and ramp from the existing Aras Chill Dara car park, altering of the existing 36 no car parking spaces providing a total of 91 car parking spaces on the site including 3 accessible car parking spaces 6 electric charging car parking spaces; 3 motor bike spaces and a sheltered bike parking area. The proposed development will provide an additional 55 no. car parking spaces for the proposed MERITS building.

View looking East between the Kildare County Council HQ and the Lantern Building, looking across the existing car park towards the entrance of the Merits building.



Use	Location	Room name	No. of people	Area	Description
COMMUNITY	Ground Level	Entrance/ Lobby area		18	No reception or staff member required with scope that there could be a pop up shop or small exhibition space
	Ground Level	Café		68	Open plan café near to entrance
	Ground Level	Community Room Ground Floor		32	open plan area with kitchen and coffee station with high level tables and sofa seating
	Ground Level	Meeting Space	2	21	
	Ground Level	Reception	2	13	
	Ground Level	Managers office	2	26	
	First Level	Conference/ Function Room		117	A room to seat about 50-60 people for meetings and conferences. Audio and Visual facilities Capable of being split into 3 separate work spaces
	First Floor Level	Community Room First Floor		29	open plan area with kitchen and coffee station with high level tables and sofa seating
HOT DESK	Ground Level	Open Plan Office space - 01 for Hot Desks	40	184	Hot space for capacity of approx 51 people
START UPS	Ground Level	Start up Office Space -01	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	Ground Level	Start up Office Space -02	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -03	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -04	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -05	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -06	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -07	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -08	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -09	6	37	for 6 - 8 people Fob accessed
	First Level	Start up Office Space -10	6	27	for 4 - 6 people Fob accessed
	Ground Floor	Cleaners Store		3	
	Ground Floor	Store		9	Located in 2 separate areas
	Ground Floor	Service Riser		1	
	Ground Level	Plant room		24	
	Ground Floor	Kitchenette		4	
	Ground Floor	Comms Room		17	For all IT and communications hardware
	Ground Level	2 No. Male Toilets, 3 No. Female toilets and 1 No. Accessible toilet		30	
	First Level	2 No. Male Toilets, 3 No. Female toilets and 1 No. Accessible toilet		30	
	First Floor	Service Riser		1	
	First Floor	Kitchenette		4	

### Schedule of Accommodation

A full schedule of accommodation can be viewed opposite however the main elements include:

- 10 x 36sqm office spaces – these will be dynamic spaces, or to accommodate businesses as they grow.
- 115sqm conference/ function room which can be subdivided in to 2 to accommodate Think Spaces & innovation workshops.
- Open plan office space with 40 x hot desks at a total of 150sqm.
- A print lab at 15sqm.
- Café
- Meeting rooms and break out spaces

The remaining space is used for circulation (corridors, stairs and foyer), and for services (bathrooms, plant room, and manager office).

Approx Occupancy	<b>100</b>	
Sub Total	992	Sq m
Circulation (17.6%)	218	sq m
<b>Total Floor Area(GIA - 2 storey Building)</b>	<b>1,210</b>	sq m
	<b>13,028</b>	Sq ft
Total Area of lettable Floor area	<b>547</b>	Sq m
% of Total Area	45%	
Total Area of Service Area	<b>124</b>	Sq m
% of Total Area	10%	
Total Area of Communal Areas and meeting Rooms, break out Zones	<b>322</b>	Sq m
% of Total Area	27%	

