

## **Document control**

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Project: St.Joseph's Convent, Ferbane

**Client: Offaly County Council** 

LUC Project Number: 12454

### LUC project team

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**Notes:** All image sources are acknowledged where appropriate. Where there is no acknowledgement, images are owned by either LUC or Kenny Lyons Associates Architects

### Date

September 2024

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### Introduction



Aerial Site Location Plan. Not to Scale

### **Project Background**

LUC have been appointed by Kenny Lyons Associates Architects to carry out the landscape design to support the refurbishment of St.Joseph's Convent, Ferbane, Offaly.

### **Project Vision**

The project aims to deliver an accessible, multi-functional external public realm in response to the refurbishment, extension and demolition of parts of the existing St.Joseph's Convent facility located in the heart of Ferbane on the banks of the River Brosna.

The project is part of a broader vision to provide the local community with:

- A publicly accessible public realm space.
- Enhanced links to existing Green Infrastructure assets including the River Brosna.
- A community garden that reflects the needs of users of the refurbished Convent building.
- A linear walk adjacent the River Brosna.
- An open area for flexible sports provision.
- An open area for potential future development.

### **Purpose of the Report**

This report provides supplementary information to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the site and explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development of the St.Joseph's Convent Landscape Masterplan.

It has been divided into 2 Parts:

- Introduction and Baseline Information
- Landscape Design Development

### **Key Reference Documents**

Key reports that the project will refer to include:

- Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027: Ferbane Town Plan
- Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ferbane, Co. Offaly, 2021
- Ferbane Community Action Plan, 2019

Secondary

## **Existing Access and Movement**



 View north up main street (N62) with facade of St. Joseph Convent on your right. Image Source: Kenny Lyons Associates Architects



2. Access point from Main Street Image Source: Kenny Lyons Associates Architects



3. Access to wider grounds. Image Source: Kenny Lyons Associates Architects





Secondary Internal route



4.Path looking east to basketball court running adjacent to 1960's Outdoor classroom building. Image Source: Kenny Lyons Associates Architects



5. Boundary Path along riverside looking south east. Image Source: Kenny Lyons Associates Architects





6. Path looking west to convent gardens Image Source: Kenny Lyons Associates Architects



Secondary Pedestrian Routes

Primary Pedestrian Routes





Pedestrian Access Point



Photograph location and direction of view



## **Existing Green Space and Green / Blue Infrastructure Assets:**



Convent Gardens - Upper

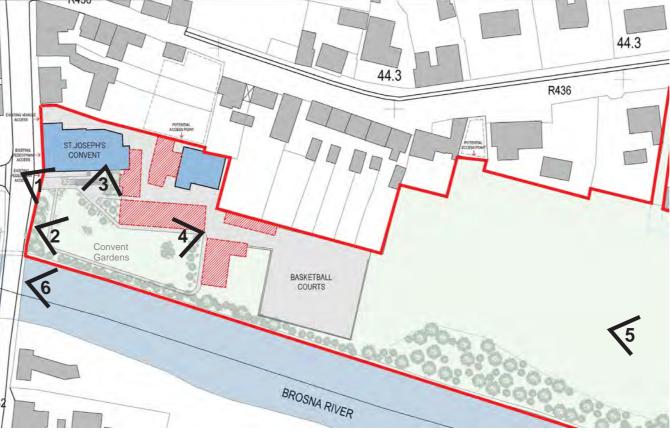












Key

Photograph location and direction of view







Gradens

Fields

Existing











- The existing convent gardens have a steep drop in levels and will require careful consideration to enable fully inclusive
- Some of the existing vegetation, particularly the conifers and ornamental shrubs are creating shade within the convent gardens and limiting the available light for new planting and particularly food growing.
- The River Brosna is within the Shannon River Basin (SAC & SPA) and will require additional consideration within the design process to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent, marginal and riverine vegetation).

### **Opportunities**

- The Convent gardens are well placed within Ferbane for community use.
- With selective tree and shrub removal the garden has the potential to offer an excellent micro climate for a community garden, including food growing and wildlife focus areas.
- The steep topography will require integrated design solutions to facilitate multi-user access both across and within the site.
- Although sensitive in its ecological status there is some excellent guidance from Inland Fisheries Ireland to promote access and use of the riverside for walks and informal recreation.
- The fields and GAA grounds to the east of the existing convent gardens offer an opportunity to create a mosaic of community green paces with the potential to improve health and well being, increase biodiversity and link to wider Green and Blue Infrastructure strategies emerging from the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027: Ferbane Town Plan.



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# Proposed New Access and Parking



1. Proposed Vehicle Entrance from Ballycumber Road - Connecting to proposed Car Park. Please note, building to be demolished.



2. Existing Access to fields on Ballycumber Road. Potential primary cycle and pedestrian entrance to residential plot and sports grounds.



3. Existing Maintenance entrance to pump station.



Key



Proposed Vehicle Access Point



Existing Vehicle Access Point Retained



Proposed Green / Permeable Car Park



Proposed Rain Gardens / Attenuation Tree



Proposed Linear SuDS

### **Overview**

- Vehicular access proposed from Ballycumber Road
- The proposed car park will provide a permeable bound asphalt access route alongside reinforced grass car parking spaces. Rain gardens with attenuating tree pits will be integrated into the soft landscaping around the car park. These features will form part of the wider Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) and will capture surface water run-off from the neighbouring hard surfaces.
- The middle Riparian and Outer Buffer Zones associated with the river Brosna require enhanced green solutions to respond to the ecological sensitively of this designation and with minimal impact on the water and riparian environment.
- Vehicle access and car parking will be sensitively integrated into the proposal to minimise visual impact on neighbouring
- Please note, the red line boundary has changed from that shown above as part of early stage development to allow for vehicular access from Ballycumber Road on the alignment of an existing building (to be demolished).





SuDS En Car park

**NTS** 

**Engineering within** 

Green / Permeable Car Park treatment

5.Infiltration trenches and rain gardens and attenuation tree pits to create an integrated SuDs management chain

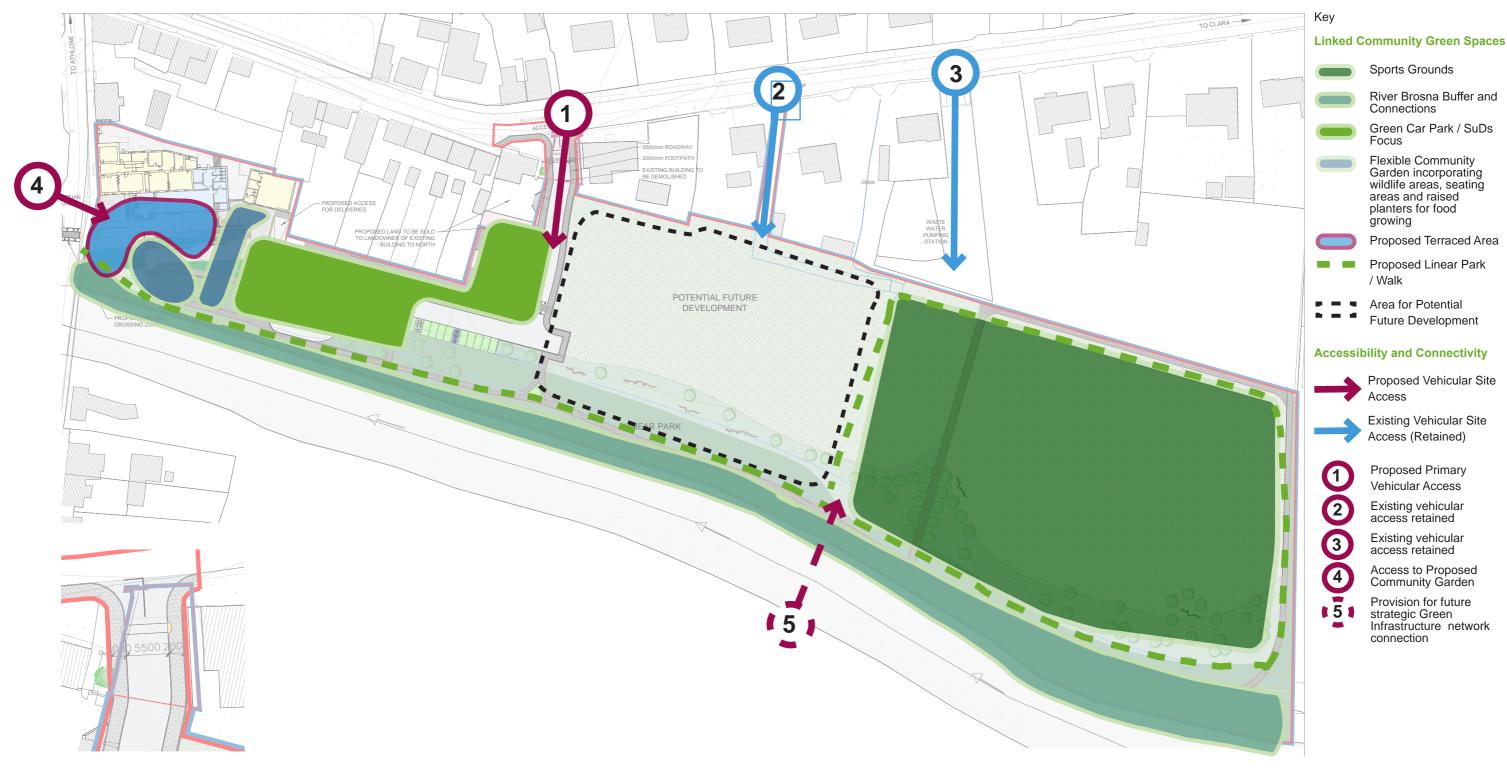




6. Tree planting within rain gardens to create additional screening to car park for neighbouring properties and to create additional green infrastructure linkages



## St.Joseph's Convent Landscape Design Concept Masterplan



- A number of design options were explored with the client team with input from key stakeholders to ensure that the landscape design responds to the specific needs of end-users.
- Within the final design option, there is a particular focus on accessibility ensuring that all points of the site are accessible by all.
- The final design option allows for flexibility in future uses so that the external public realm can address a number of user scenarios including temporary uses, the ability to accommodate outdoor furniture seasonally and the ability to facilitate outdoor learning opportunities.





## **Linked Community Green Spaces** Flexible Sports Area

### **Precedents**



Flexible sports area with routes through habitat rich planting. Image Source: Re-form Landscape Architecture



Diverse, layered planting based on native species to improve biodiversity.



Proposed soft Boundaries to tracks and paths: Soft boundaries include wildflower grass verges, swales and scrub areas.



Marginal species rich grasses give structure to informal sports areas.







Opportunities for interpretation and artwork along pedestrian routes to provide education and raise awareness of the ecological and cultural diversity of the site.

- A range of play and exercise opportunities can be catered for in a flexible format adjacent pedestrian routes.
- Flexible provision set within a framework of layered vegetation and landscape treatments including wildflower and species rich grass areas with informal paths, native tree, scrub, ditches and swales to promote enhanced biodiversity across the site. Habitats will be connected with native vegetation and species of local provenance for increased resilience.



# **Linked Community Green Spaces Flexible Community Garden and Proposed Terraced Area**

### **Precedents**



Tiered seating using gabions filled with reclaimed demolished site material and faced with local stone. Planting will create a soft frontage to the newly renovated and extended Convent.

Use of terraces to maximise usable space within proposed community garden with integrated ramped

pedestrian routes. This landscape project shown exemplifies the use of tiered plating that provides



Terraced grass areas on slopes to create more usable dwell spaces within the community garden. Image Source: Talking Grass



Timber wall-top seating to maximise multiple uses for proposed infrastructure. Image Source:





Terrace space to support flexible outdoor seating for community cafe located within refurbished convent. Image Source: Ikea



Accessible picnic tables. Image Source:



Community orchards provide excellent spaces to gather and pick fruit. Temporary seating can be used to create informal and flexible uses. Image Source: BBC Countryfile



Integration of wildlife areas into community garden to increase biodiversity within this part of the site.

## Overview

further dwell spaces. Image Source: TagVenue.com

- Stepped and tiered access can provide excellent elevated viewpoints over the River Brosna and wider gardens. Informal grass tiers allows for flexible and informal use whilst asphalt ramps and stone filled gabions provide retaining elements to access the more formal terraced areas near the community cafe and the proposed Assembly Hall for use as a multi-purpose space.
- The more formal ramped areas will be fully accessible and integrate landings, seating and planting.
- A community orchard and wildlife area will be integrated with wildflower meadows to ensure enhanced pollinator potential.
- The community garden will offer both formal and informal characters for both the public and community groups to use and enjoy.



# Linked Community Green Spaces Linear Park / Walk

### **Precedents**



Inclusive access for a variety of modes of travel: Pushchairs and wheelchaires. Ensuring the whole community can access the linear park. Interpretation, signage and wayfinding will further enhance access along the route.



Multiple user routes will conform to the correct widths set out in Transport Infrastructure Ireland guidance allowing for safe shared uses. Image Source:



Resin bound permeable surfaces are hard wearing whilst promoting Sustainable Urban Drainage. Image Source:



Nature based 'play along the way 'will have a low environmental impact and promote exploration , imaginative play and learning. Image Source:



sensitivities such as the banks along the River Brosna. This part of the Linear Park will support the deliver of the Landscape and biodiversity Strategic objective BLO-01 of developing an amenity route along the disused Clara-Banagher railway and the banks of the River Brosna in Ferbane, taking into account the environmental sensitivities of the site and Inland Fisheries Guidance document, Planning



Play set into wilder habitats can provide a sense of adventure and enclosure brining children closer to nature.



Recreational areas set within wilder habitats will require a maintenance plan to ensure vegetation doesn't encroach too readily, but they are a simple and inexpensive way to promote learning through play.

- The linear Park will create an additional publicly accessible Green Infrastructure corridor adjacent the River Brosna. There will be potential to create onward linkages in the future in alignment with the Offaly County development Plan 2021- 2027: Ferbane Town Plan.
- The River Brosna is a tributary of the River Shannon (SAC&SPA). Buffer zones would be subject to restrictions found within the Inland Fisheries Ireland Urban Watercourse Planning Guide. This will include sensitive design in respect of surfacing (permeable resin bound) and biodiversity enhancements.
- The proposed linear park will provide connectivity to the River Brosna, the potential development area (which will be a species rich pasture in the interim) and the flexible sports area creating additional accessible green space.



# **Linked Community Green Spaces River Brosna Buffer and Connections**

### **Precedents**



Image of non-native conifer trees along riparian buffer zone of the River Brosna. Recent tree survey states that all Lawson Cypress are Cat C or Cat U with recommendations for removal.



The River Brosna, pictured here from the bridge on Main Street, is a tributary of the River Shannon SAC & SPA. It offers a rich riparian habitat opportunities for a riverside walk along St Josephs Linear Park.



Buffer zone to the right in this picture will be retained and enhanced providing varying levels of riparian woodland edge. The field itself has been allocated for proposed residential development and a Linear Park, whic will link to St.Joseph's Convent and the proposed community garden, improving access to the River Brosna and expanding Ferbane's Green Infrastructure connectivity.



A timber viewing platform adjacent the River Brosna will provide the infrastructure required by small school or community groups to access the river and get closer to nature.



Accessibility will be at the forefront of riverside access



Example of timber decking / viewing platform. There is opportunity to include similar on the banks of the River Brosna which will offer opportunity to learn and investigate the river



Enhanced habitat creation within the River Brosna corridor including bird and bat box installation on existing trees

- Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment is a set of guidelines developed by The Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) to protect the ecological integrity of Rivers (including emergent, marginal and bank-side vegetation). Within this they recommended a buffer zone width of 20m or greater. It is important to note that, the urban landscape, unlike agricultural land comprises of many hard non-biological features and therefore a greater buffer width is needed than that normally associated with the protection of water courses.
- Creation of ecological mitigation earthworks parallel to the River Brosna to contain surface water run-off.
- The guidance on buffer zones mean that all hard surfacing, such as car parks that can transfer run-off into the water should aim to integrate an effective SuDS management chain that can provide nutrient neutrality.
- Removal of evergreen Lawson Cypress trees along the riparian buffer zone will open up views towards the river. The addition of native planting in its place will improve its ecological value.
- Within the IFI guidance wider buffer zones can be multifunctional in the urban environment if linked and managed appropriately, bringing greater benefits to the wider community. This riparian buffer is subdivided into three separate zones, each with a different function, width, vegetation type and use. The middle and outer buffer zone will be used for sensitive linear walk, the integration of SuDs and permeable surfaces and habitat and biodiversity enhancements within the River Brosna Corridor to promote green infrastructure connectivity with Ferbane.
- Providing accessible viewing platforms / observation decks over the river itself to support activities such as pond dipping and riverside interaction to support educational activities associated with St. Joseph's Convent.



## **Access and Connectivity** Pedestrian Access, Cycle Parking and Vehicle Parking

### **Precedents**



The proposals will offer opportunity for cycle parking at both the car park and pedestrian entrance and will be integrated with the wider design proposals.



Parklet style seating and planters will be incorporated into cycle parking provision where possible.



Electric Vehicle spaces and charging points will be included within the car park.



Space for cyclists will promote active travel and make St.Joseph's Convent a more accessible destination within the wider town / County GBI strategy. Image Source:



Space for Cycle parking will allow for adaptive / accessible cycles. Image Source:



The number of disabled bays allocated within the car park reflect Offaly County Council Guidelines



Example of electric vehicle charging points.

- Safe accessible cycle parking will be located at both the pedestrian entrance to the refurbished Convent and near the proposed car park.
- Adequate space for disabled car parking will be provided within the proposed car park with accessible paths and dropped kerbs to facilitate movement to the refurbished Convent buildings.
- Electric vehicle parking bays and charging facilities will be provided as part of the car park.
- Drop off / set down areas and turning circles within the car park will allow mini buses and small coaches to drop off passengers with more limited mobility closer to the refurbished Convent buildings.





## **Soft Landscape Framework Preliminary Soft Landscape Palette**

### **Precedents**



Grass Verges: Species rich grass verges are recommended along paths where practicable. This Soft Landscape component would align with Green Infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement objectives. Woodland: Native tree species are recommended to help reinforce landscape character, promote setting and increase biodiversity.



Rain gardens will form an integral part of the planting strategy and SuDS chain within the car park



### **Preliminary Plant Specification / Species**



Locally sourced, native tree, shrub and grass planting to the riverine fringe of the



Prunus avium



Sorbus aucuparia



Deschampsia cespitosa Image Source: PlantPartner



Luzula nivea. Image Source: PlantPartner



Image Source: PlantPartner



Myrica gale. Image Source: PlantPartner



Vaccinium myrtillus.



foeniculum. Image Source: PlantPartner



Aster x frikartii 'Monch'. Image Source: PlantPartner

- The preliminary soft planting palette has been developed in consultation with ecologists to ensure species respond to the existing character and does not impact on the sensitive nature of the River Brosna.
- Along the River Brosna corridor, planting will be native with a riverine character and consist of new trees, shrubs and marginal species rich grass areas.
- Within the community garden, planting is intended to display seasonal interest, texture and colour to respond to the architectural style of the refurbished Convent building, soften hard landscape areas and provide sensory experience for those passing through and dwelling within this part of the site. A community orchard and specimen trees will also provide a vertical green framework and soften and compliment views towards the new built form associated with the Convent refurbishment. Screening planting will be added to increase privacy for neighbouring residents and to screen service elements such as the gas tank and bin stores.
- Within the car park, SuDS rain garden planting which can tolerate equally wet and dry conditions will be chosen to form part of the SuDS chain and provide softer margins and green links to pedestrian routes.
- The linear park will comprise of species rich grass margins and new woodland edge planting to ensure sight lines and maintain natural surveillance whilst reinforcing the adjacent woodland character.
- Tree loss will be minimised. Tree removal is indicated in accordance with the tree survey and includes the removal of all Chaemaecyparis (Lawson Cypress trees) which are non-native and over-dominant on the river bank.
- Wetland biodiversity enhancements are associated with the SuDS proposals, including swales planted with species rich grass to form seasonal wet and dry habitats. Such features will form additional wetland links with the River Brosna habitat.



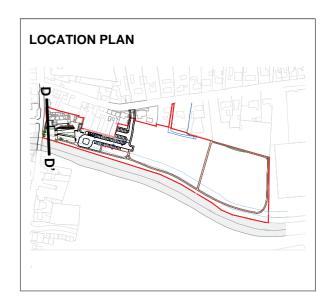
## **Landscape Masterplan**

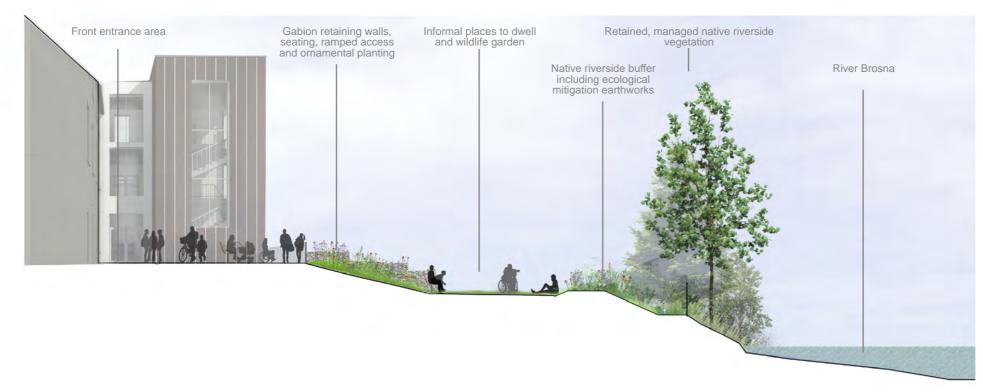




## Section Line DD - Through Central Community Garden - Through Proposed Slope







Proposed Section Line DD (Not to Scale)



## **Section Line EE - Through Community Garden - Through Proposed Steps**



