
Architectural Impact Assessment

St. Josephs Convent

Main Street, Ferbane, Co. Offaly

Offaly County Council



KENNY LYONS
Associates
Architects

PREFACE

This Architectural Impact Assessment has been prepared to support the application for permission for development at Main Street, Ferbane Co. Offaly. St. Joseph’s Convent is not a protected structure; however, the renovations will be carried out in accordance with conservation best practice, current building regulations and incorporating the input of qualified structural engineers where required.

The development will consist of the following:

- The refurbishment of St. Joseph’s Convent (NIAH Reg. No. 14806004), demolition of existing south extension and construction of new extension to the southwest of the convent.
- The restoration of the existing assembly hall building which is to be repurposed as a multipurpose space.
- The demolition of the existing stable building and existing modular classroom buildings.
- The creation of an urban garden and riverbank walk along the River Brosna.
- The creation of a new site entrance along the Ballycumber Road (R436)
- The provision of all groundworks, service connections, site drainage, internal paths, paving, parking, public lighting, public open space; and all associated site development works to complete the development.



Applicant: Offaly County Council

Application Type: Planning Application

Location: Main Street, Ferbane, Co.Offaly

ITM Centre Point Co-Ordinates: 611621,724560

Ordnance Survey Reference No.: 3428-B / 3428-D

Structure:
Detached L-plan five-bay three-storey building: Convent/Nunnery
NIAH Reference Number: 14806004
RPS Reference Number: N/A

Date of Assessment: October 2024



Figure 1: A view of the Front Elevation St. Joseph's Convent from Ferbane Bridge

INTRODUCTION

Historical Description: From National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

Detached L-plan five-bay three-storey convent, built c.1880, with single-storey flat-roofed porch and statue to front and five-bay two-storey rear extension. Fronts directly onto street. Hipped slate roof with terracotta ridge tiles, rendered chimneystacks with terracotta pots and cast-iron rainwater goods. Ruled-and-lined render to walls with smooth render to plinth. Raised rendered cross and hood moulding to porch. Replacement uPVC windows with tooled stone sills, with timber casement window to porch. Round-headed window opening to central bay of first floor, flanked by square-headed blind window openings in front of which stands a statue of Saint Joseph carrying the infant Jesus, set on a pedestal. Square-headed door opening with replacement timber panelled door. Rendered gate piers with double timber battened door to north. Garden bounded by random coursed wall to south.

Appraisal

As a building of minimal enrichments, the proud stature of this structure makes it an imposing feature within the streetscape of lower Main Street. The simple and austere form of the building is enhanced by surviving features such as the tooled stone windowsills and slate roof. St. Joseph’s convent is not a protected structure.

CORE DATA

Purpose of the assessment:

This Architectural Impact Assessment has been prepared to support the planning application for the development of which applies St. Joseph’s Convent Ferbane. This Architectural Impact Assessment has been prepared to support the refurbishment of St. Joseph’s Convent and its surrounding site.

Name & address of structure: St. Joseph’s Convent, Main Street, Ferbane, Co. Offaly

Form of Statutory Protection: None

Record of Protected Structures: None

NIAH Reference: 14806004

SITE HISTORY

In the 1700's, the original house at the site of St. Joseph's Convent, Main Street, Ferbane, was built by Daniel Kerney, being leased to a Mr Bernard by 1800. Following this, Dr Charles Dillon Fry leased the property from 1825 to 1873, after which the house remained vacant for twenty years, until it was acquired under a 99-year lease by Canon Sheridan, Parish Priest, in 1886. The property was then leased to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, a French Missionary order, with Canon Sheridan selling his interest to the sisters for £600 upon their arrival.

St. Joseph's Convent, Ferbane, was established in 1896. The primary mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny was to provide education for young people and engage in parish work. For over a century, the sisters dedicated themselves to Primary and Secondary Education and participated in various voluntary and pastoral organisations in the Parish, such as, Ferbane Youth Club and St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The original house within which St. Joseph's Convent's Girl's School operated contained twenty-two rooms, and various outhouses. In addition to this, by 1910, the Sisters had added two extensions to the structure. As well as functioning as a school, St. Joseph's Convent of course housed the nuns, until in 1923 they moved to the recently acquired Gallen Priory, residing there until their return to the convent in 1941. The land attached to the Convent served as a functioning farm late into the 1960's, when some of the outhouses to the rear of the land had been demolished in order to allow for further school expansion into the future.

St. Joseph's Convent Girls' Secondary School operated on site from 1896 until 1972, when it merged with St. Saran's Boys' Secondary School to form St. Joseph & Saran's Secondary School. In September 2004, St. Joseph & Saran's combined with the Community College to become Gallen Community School. The Sisters concluded their formal roles in Primary and Secondary Education in 2007 with the retirement of the last two teaching Sisters.

Throughout the convent's lifetime, it served not only as a secondary school, but also as a community hub; at some point part of the building was rented out as a bakery, and a men's social club with billiards tables was also housed within the structure. In addition, plays and concerts were staged within the convent, allowing the building to serve as more than just a school, and become a central community hub, something which we aspire to return to.

In order to honour the legacy of the sisters of St. Joseph's Convent, we aspire to transform this historic building into a vibrant community and educational hub. The renovated convent will include versatile spaces which can be used for educational programs, community meetings, and cultural events.

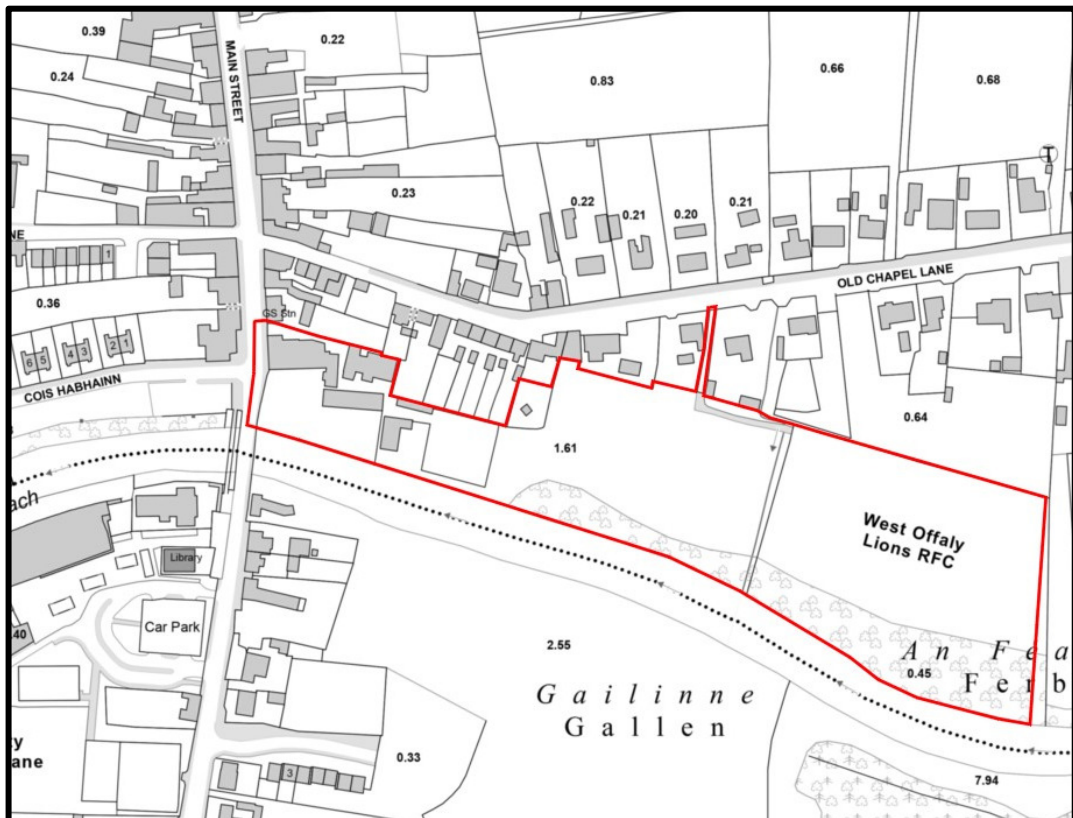
A key component of our plan is to renovate the existing Assembly Hall adjacent to the convent and convert it into a state-of-the-art multipurpose space.

This renovation project ensures that the building remains a cornerstone of the community for generations to come. By maintaining the architectural integrity of the convent while adapting it for modern use.

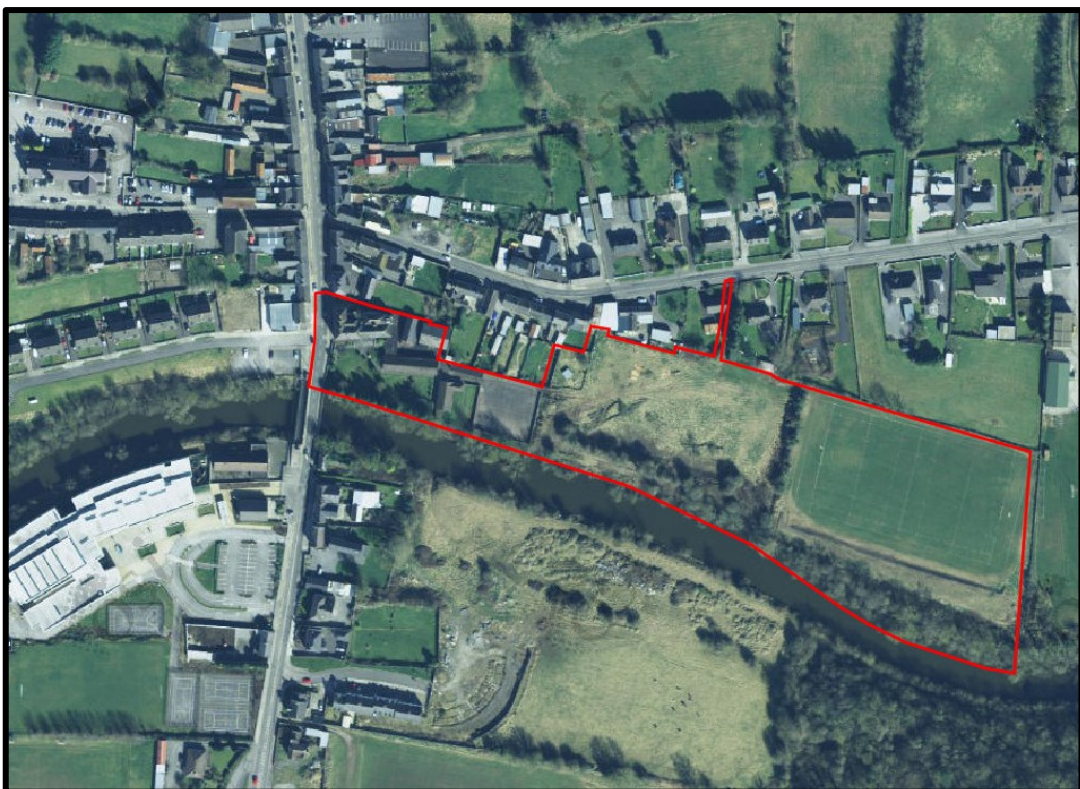
Our goal is to re-establish St. Joseph's Convent as a cherished community landmark, celebrated for its ongoing contributions to education and community welfare. With the support and involvement of Offaly County Council, An Síolán and the community of Ferbane. The aspiration is to create a dynamic and inclusive space that honours the Convent's heritage.

MAPS





KLA - Site Location Map



Google Maps – Ariel Image

PROPOSED WORKS

The proposed works are as a result of the applicants wish to suggest the following works:

- The refurbishment of the existing structure, of St. Joseph’s Convent. This renovation would include the replacement of all existing external windows and doors. It would also include the replacement of the existing roof. Demolition of existing lean-to and entry shed to the north and demolition of the front porch on the western elevation, both of which are not part of the original structure. It is important to note that such renovations will be carried out in accordance with conservation best practice, current building regulations and incorporating the input of qualified structural engineers where required.
- The Existing Hall Building will be retained and be clad with new external wall insulation. The existing slate roof is to be replaced with new Fibre Cement slates. All external windows and doors are to be replaced. Asbestos ceilings and floors will be removed and replaced.
- Demolition works which consist of the demolition of the poor-quality link building adjoined to the main building, existing stable building and existing Bantile Ltd classroom buildings which are all located south west of the main building. It is important to note that such renovations will be carried out in accordance with building regulations and with the guidance of qualified structural engineers.
- The construction of a three-storey flat roof extension to the southwest of the convent will provide much improved internal layout configuration for community services. The extension will be accessible from all three levels of existing building. The modern addition will provide a new lift and stairwell as well as new Toilet blocks, stores and ancillary. To include appropriate number of Swift bricks to northern façade.
- Internal works which include the dry lining of rooms insofar as possible to improve the thermal performance of the building. Minor demolition works internally include various internal walls to be demolished to repurpose rooms and provide the rooms required by the community. The existing central staircase will be demolished, and internal ramps will be installed in order to reconcile the array of levels within the building. The repurposing of internal rooms can be seen in detail in the drawings in the following pages.



- The creation of an urban garden and riverbank walk along the River Brosna by creating paths and landscaped areas along the riverbank. This element of the project transform the riverbank into a vibrant, accessible, and biodiverse space for An Síolán and the community of Ferbane. To include the placement of 5no. bat boxes in mature trees along the River Brosna, facing out onto the water.
- The construction of a new carpark to the southwest of the building providing 42 new parking spaces, including three accessible spaces, six age-friendly spaces, and six electric vehicle charging spaces. The new carpark will be accessed through a new entrance from the Ballycumber Road R436. A set down area and turning area will also be provided to south of site.
- Retention and cleaning / restoration of existing statue of St. Joseph on western façade of the existing convent building, along Main Street N62.
- New pedestrian entrance to be instated along Main Street N62, with appropriate boundary treatment and signage.
- New vehicle entrance to be instated at Ballycumber Road R436, with appropriate boundary treatment and signage.
- Existing boundary treatment around the site, other than previously mentioned new entrances, to be retained.
- The design concept for the extension focuses on modern architecture with clean lines, large windows for natural light, and a harmonious combination of aluminium, concrete, fibre cement panels and painted render. The materials were chosen for their durability, low maintenance, and ability to create a sleek and stylish appearance. Painted render finishes to contrast the existing building will be applied to exterior walls, providing a clean and minimalistic appearance. The architectural style and choice of materials for this extension will make clear that it is a later intervention in line with the principles of conservation.

Please see images overleaf of the existing building, and drawings of proposed works.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY



KLA – Image of the front elevation (western façade) of St. Joseph's Convent



KLA – Image of the southern façade of St. Joseph's Convent



KLA –Internal Image of the Ground Floor Corridor of St. Joseph's Convent



KLA – Image of ground floor multipurpose room of St. Joseph's Convent



KLA – Image of the first-floor landing of St. Joseph's Convent



KLA – Image of the coach house, which is to be demolished



KLA – Image of a modular Bantile Classroom Building which is to be demolished



KLA – Image of the existing assembly hall which is to be repurposed to a multipurpose space.



KLA –Internal Image of the existing assembly hall which is to be repurposed to a multipurpose space.



NIAH – Image of front elevation of St. Joseph's Convent c.2004



NIAH – Image of the southern elevation of St. Joseph's Convent c.2004

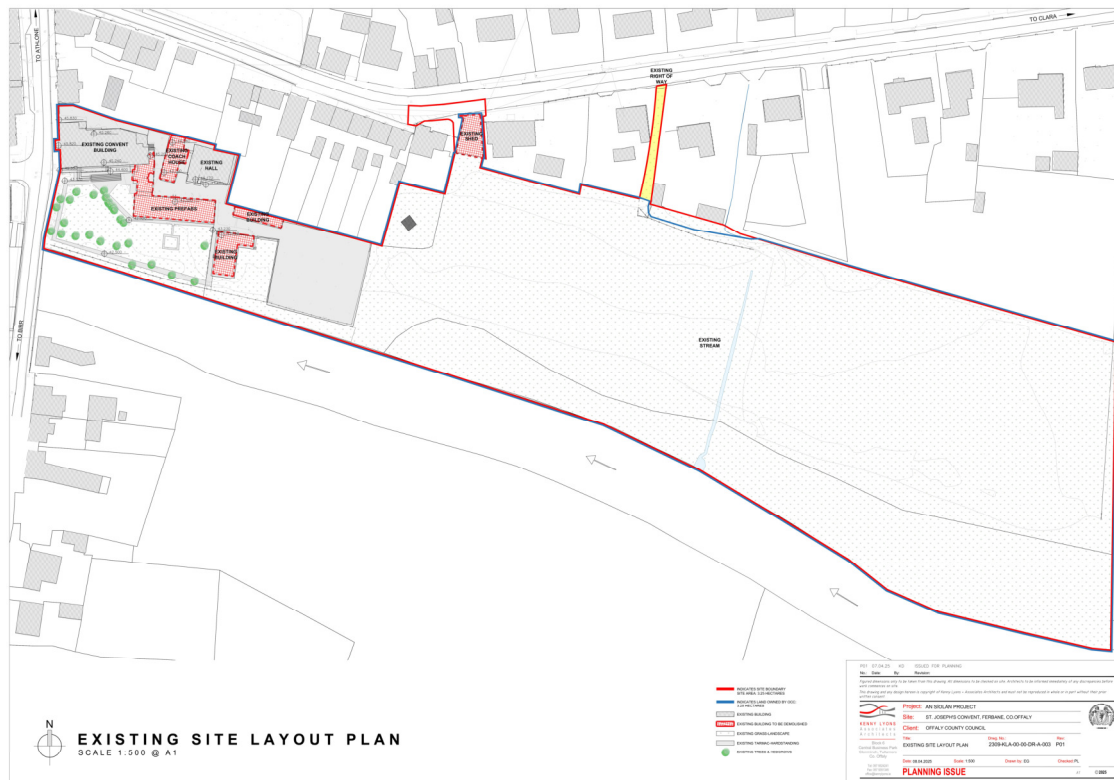


NIAH – Image of northeastern corner of St. Joseph's Convent c.2004

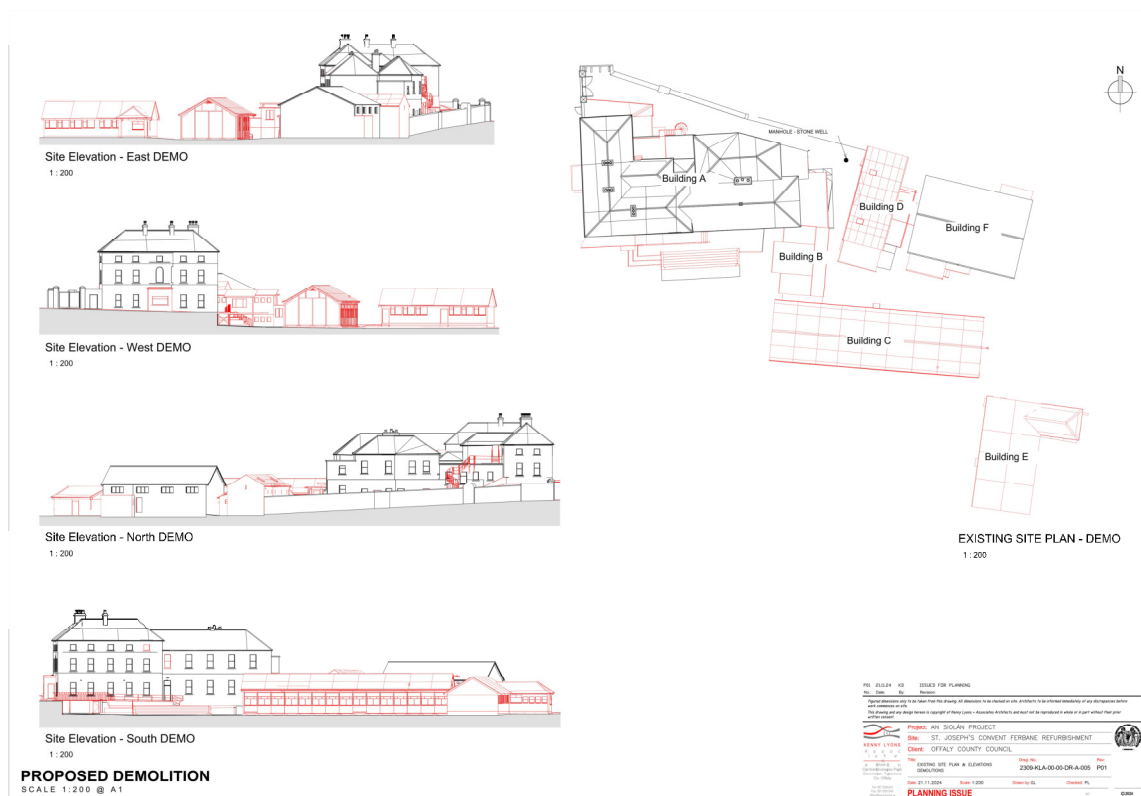


NIAH – Image of north side of St. Joseph's Convent c.2005

DRAWINGS

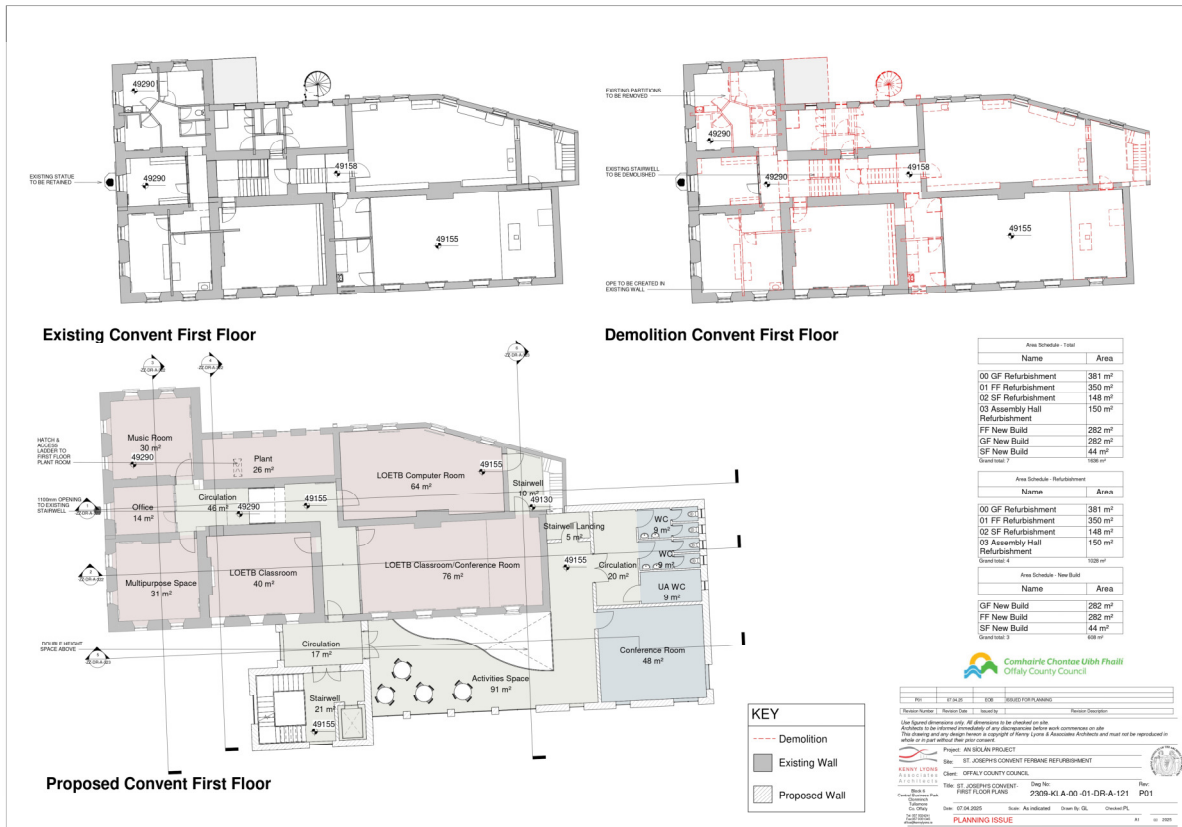


KLA – Existing Site Layout Plan

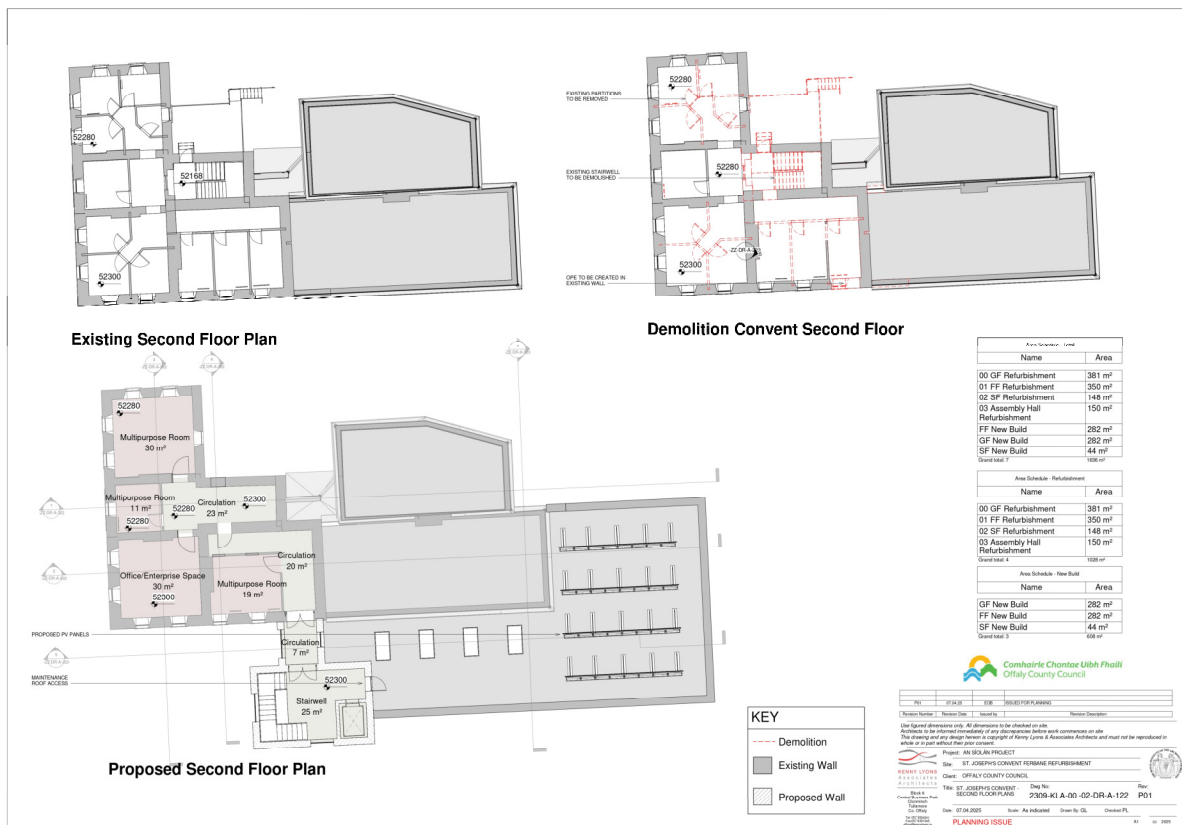


KLA – Demolition Site Layout Plan for St. Joseph's Convent



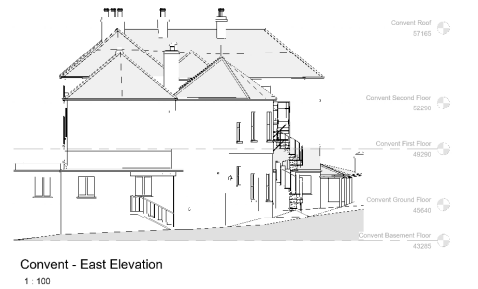


KLA – Existing, Demo, & Proposed First Floor Plan for St. Joseph's Convent



KLA – Existing, Demo, & Proposed Second Floor Plan for St. Joseph's Convent

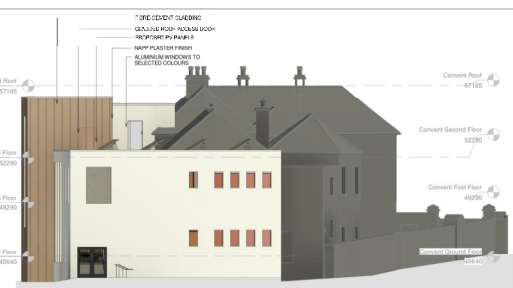
Architectural Impact Assessment – St. Joseph's Convent, Main Street, Ferbane, Co.Offaly



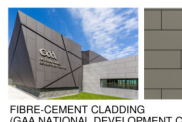
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

Project: AN SOLAS PROJECT
Site: ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT FERBANE REHABILITATION
Client: OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL
Drawn: ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT
Drawing No: 2309-KLA-00-ZZ-DR-A-220
Date: 04.04.2025
Scale: 1:100
Drawn by: CL
Checked by: PL
PLANNING ISSUE

KLA – Existing Elevations for St. Joseph's Convent



Reference Materials:



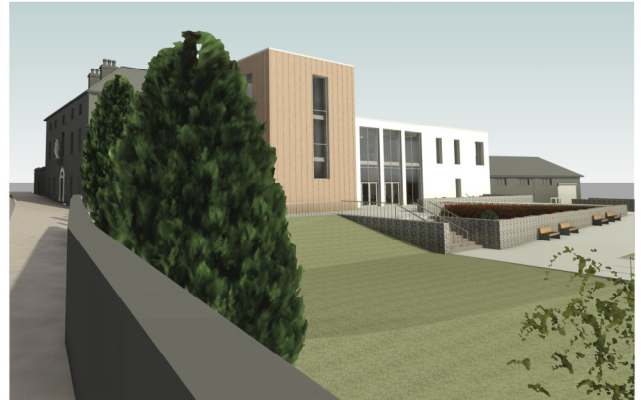
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Date: 04.04.2025
Scale: 1:100
Drawn by: CL
Checked by: PL
PLANNING ISSUE

KLA – Proposed Elevations of St. Joseph's Convent



SOUTH-WEST ISOMETRIC



BRIDGE VIEW



SOUTH-EAST ISOMETRIC



ENTRANCE VIEW

PET	21.11.20	NO	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	
Revision Number	Revision Date	Issued By	Revision Description	
<p><i>Use Ispaid dimensions only. All dimensions to be checked on site.</i> <i>Architects to be informed immediately of any dimensions before work commences on site.</i> <i>This drawing and any design herein is copyright of Kenny Lewis & Associates Architects and must not be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written permission.</i></p>				
<p>Project: AN ISOLAN PROJECT</p>				
<p>Site: ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT FERRIANE REHABILITATION</p>				
<p>Client: OFFICLY COUNTY COUNCIL</p>				
<p>Date: OPTION N - PROPOSED 3D VIEWS</p>				
<p>Dwg No: 2309-KLA-00-ZZ-DR-A-10</p>				
<p>Rev: R01</p>				
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KLA – Proposed 3D Views of St. Joseph’s Convent

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL:

The impact of the proposed intervention will be positive as it will refurbish the existing structure and complement its architecture with modern design sensitive to the existing form.

St. Joseph's Convent Schedule of Interventions:

Feature Ref	Description	Proposed Alteration	Impact Of Proposed Alteration	Evaluation of proposed works/ mitigating measures/ justification
Pitched Slate Roof	Hipped slate roof with terracotta ridge tiles, rendered chimneystacks with terracotta pots and cast-iron rainwater goods.	Repair and replacement of existing roof, chimneystacks and all other roofing elements.	This will have a positive impact on the building as it preserves the original roof structure and the buildings character.	This is a justified step to retain the original roof of the structure.
External Walls	Ruled-and-lined render to walls with smooth render to plinth on south and west elevations.	Front area of south wall and west wall to be dry lined with breathable dry lining system. North Wall and Northeast stairway wall to receive new external wall insulation and render.	This will have a positive impact as dry lining and external Insulation will improve the thermal performance of the building will be improved.	This is a justified step to ensure the majority of the original façade is not altered and the thermal performance of the building will be improved.
Front Porch	Raised rendered cross and hood moulding to porch.	Front Porch is to be demolished as it is not an original element.	The demolition of the front porch will enable the expansion of the footpath and enhance the public realm, while also restoring the original doorway and front facade.	This is a justified step to reinstate the original façade and open up the building to the street.
Windows	Existing uPVC windows with tooled stone sills, with timber casement window to porch.	Replacement of all external windows with new - Triple glazed aluminium windows with trickle vents .	Positive impact restoring the original character and fabric visuals of the building.	Best conservation practice will be implemented. Specialist window supplier.

Feature Ref	Description	Proposed Alteration	Impact Of Proposed Alteration	Evaluation of proposed works/ mitigating measures/ justification
First Floor Rounded Window and Statue	Round-headed window opening to central bay of first floor, flanked by square-headed blind window openings in front of which stands a statue of Saint Joseph carrying the infant Jesus, set on a pedestal.	Window to be replaced with new timber double or triple glazed sliding sash window. Statue to be cleaned, painted and restored if necessary.	Positive impact restoring the original character and fabric visuals of the building.	Best conservation practice will be implemented. Specialist window supplier.
Entrance Door	Square-headed door opening with replacement timber panelled door.	Existing Doorway is to be demolished and original doorway to be reinstated.	Positive impact restoring the original character and fabric visuals of the building.	Best conservation practice will be implemented. Specialist door supplier.
Vehicle Access Gates	Rendered gate piers with double timber battened door to north.	Repair where necessary.	Positive impact protecting the original character and fabric visuals of the building.	Best conservation practice will be implemented.
Boundary Walls	Garden bounded by random coursed wall to south.	Repair where necessary.	Positive impact protecting the original character and fabric visuals of the building.	Best conservation practice will be implemented.
Existing Extension	Five-bay two-storey rear extension.	Existing 20 th Century extensions to be demolished as indicated as they are in poor condition and not part of the original St. Joseph's Convent.	This will be positive as the existing extensions take away from the original convent and are in poor condition.	This step is necessary as the extensions do not compliment the architecture of the existing Convent and occupy a crucial area on this site where a new extension, sensitive to existing form, could be built.

Feature Ref	Description	Proposed Alteration	Impact Of Proposed Alteration	Evaluation of proposed works/ mitigating measures/ justification
Internal Works	Dry lining of rooms, minor internal demolition works, addition of internal ramps to reconcile levels.	The dry lining of internal rooms, where possible. The demolition of internal walls to repurpose rooms. The addition of internal ramps to reconcile levels and allow the building to be Part M compliant.	Positive as dry lining of rooms will improve thermal performance of the building. The demolition of some internal walls will create the space needed to meet the room requirements for a day care centre. The addition of internal ramps will make the building accessible to all users.	These works are justified as the Convent is an old building with poor thermal performance, therefore dry lining is needed. The new ramps are an essential addition to make the entire building accessible. The ramps are also vital to the fire safety and good circulation of the building.
Existing Assembly Hall Building	Assembly Hall with blockwork walls, concrete floor and a slate roof onto timber trusses and a suspended ceiling.	Entire perimeter to be reclad with new external wall insulation 150mm thick with new acrylic render and metal window cills. Existing slate roof to be reslated with new Fibre Cement slates. New, windows, doors and roller door to be installed.	This will have a positive impact as it will provide a new multipurpose space for the community.	This is a justified step as this building will supply a facility the whole community can avail of.
New Extension	Proposed three-storey flat-roofed extension to southeast of Convent.	Construction of a three-storey extension to the southeast of the Convent, using modern design and thoughtful materials which will be discreetly flashed to historic fabric.	Positive as the three-storey extension provides a new lift and stair core to access all three levels, and essential toilets and ancillary spaces.	This is a justified step as circulation within the building must be maximised and the convent has room requirements that need to be met and are satisfied through the facilities provided in this extension.

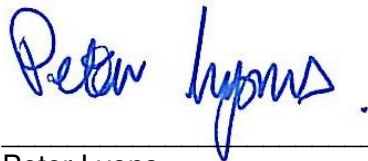
Significance of Structure:

The regeneration and extension of this structure is a necessary and important step to allow present generations to enjoy the physical expression of past generations. These works would also prevent the building from falling into disrepair and allow it to provide the vital space and resources needed for the rapidly growing community of Ferbane. The crucial restoration of this building will reinstate its architectural significance in the heart of the community of Ferbane and allow it to continue to be an integral element of the built heritage of the town.

Effectiveness of the Works:

The proposed works will preserve the integral parts of the original structure of St. Joseph’s Convent. We believe that the proposed refurbishment and extension of St. Joseph’s Convent will allow it to achieve its full potential and functionality and will be beneficial to the enhancement of Ferbane and allow the building to be preserved and celebrated for generations to come. The modern intervention with the new extension will provide the vital elements to ensure universal use of the building through the provision of a lift, stairwell and accessible toilets.

Architectural Impact Statement prepared on the 15/11/2024 by:



Peter Lyons
Accredited in Conservation Grade III
For Kenny Lyons & Associates Architects

BIBLIOGRAPHY & ICONOGRAPHY:

- 1) Offaly County Council Development Plan 2021-2027.
- 2) Historic Maps, Site Location Map – By OSI - (www.osi.ie).
- 3) Photographs by Kenny Lyons & Associates.
- 4) Photographs from National Inventory of Architectural Heritage - (NIAH)
- 5) Aerial Image from Google Maps.