Proposed Masterplan for Abbey Creative Quarter, Kilkenny

7th October 2013
Executive Summary

The acquisition of the 16 acre Smithwicks Brewery site from Diageo by Kilkenny Borough and County Councils is a significant event for Kilkenny which presents the city with a unique opportunity in the early years of the twenty first century.

Kilkenny has had a reputation since medieval times for the quality of its urbanism. It was the first Duke of Ormonde who brought to Ireland, from exile at the court of Louis XIV in Paris, an appreciation of the importance of architecture and public spaces to the enhancement of our cities and towns. It was he who conceived the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, the Parade in Kilkenny and Dublin’s Liffey Quays. The acquisition of the Smithwicks site affords the citizens of Kilkenny the opportunity to achieve in the twenty first century what Ormonde could not achieve in his lifetime: replanning the city to address the River Nore.

The site also presents the opportunity to redress the balance in respect of lost opportunities of the past: missing the Industrial Revolution (a blessing in disguise) and not being seat to a University (notwithstanding James II’s grant of a charter to the University of St Canice in 1689). The site presents the opportunity to accommodate a university or third level institute and a cluster of knowledge economy and social media companies. These uses will present Kilkenny with the opportunity to be a competitive city in the knowledge economy of the twenty first century and beyond.

The location of the site adjoining the medieval heart of the city provides not only an opportunity to regenerate the city economically and socially but also provides an opportunity to repair the fabric of the city, to reinstate traditional streets and slipways. To maximise this opportunity the Councils concluded that the development of an Urban Framework Plan/ Masterplan setting the parameters for the urban regeneration of the former St.Francis Abbey Brewery site in was essential. As well as directly determining the redevelopment of the site itself, the Masterplan will inform the policies and objectives of the Councils in respect to the ongoing development of Kilkenny City and its Environs.

The Urban Framework Plan is the culmination of an innovative planning strategy adopted by County and Borough Councils, where experts in the fields of economic development, town planning, conservation and architecture engaged in a series of workshops to suggest strategies for the urban regeneration of the site. Following this process a number of architectural practices were invited to submit formal proposals for their approach to the preparation of an Urban Framework Plan/Masterplan for the site. The international practice, Reddy Architecture+Urbanism, which has a long established Kilkenny office, was selected to work with the Council engineering and planning teams on this significant commission.
The Urban Framework Plan defines the principles for the regeneration of the site in respect of planning policies and objectives as identified in the National Spatial Strategy, the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan and the Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan.

The Plan sets out Conservation, Sustainability, Public Realm and Urban Design strategies for the site. These will deliver a mix of uses to ensure that this new quarter will be an vibrant and successful addition to the City which is both an attraction in its own right and an enhancement to the medieval core.

The Urban Framework Plan sets out guidelines for the design and delivery of:

- A new linear park on the banks of the Nore
- A new landscaped walk along the City Walls and Bregagh River
- Conservation of historic buildings on the site
- New public, landscaped spaces including a public square at St Francis Abbey
- Sustainable and energy efficient strategies for individual buildings and the overall site
- A university quarter centred on the regenerated industrial buildings to be retained on site
- A new residential/student residential district
- Indigenous and international knowledge economy uses on key sites
- Cultural, retail and tourist related uses on defined sites

The masterplan also identifies implementation mechanisms to ensure the delivery of the development on a phased basis, by the public and private sectors, over the next 10 to 15 years, subject to the vitality of the local and national economy.

In summary the Abbey Creative Quarter presents Kilkenny with a unique opportunity among Irish and European cities to create a modern intervention adjoining its medieval core which enhances its cultural heritage, improves its sustainability and allows it to compete in the knowledge economy of the twenty first century.
James Butler - Duke of Ormonde:

- Paris – Louis XIV
- French Renaissance
- Royal Hospital, Kilmainham
- The Parade, Kilkenny
- Dublin Quays

Bishop Berkeley (Bishop of Cloyne):

- Harvard University
- Yale University
- Berkeley University
- University of St Canice (Kilkenny College)
Historical Background

Map 1. Part of “The Heraldry of the city of Kilkenny”, 1655. Green Survey (National Archives of Ireland).

Original map in Gough’s “Heraldisc Description of the City of Kilkenny” (1758), reduced by approximately one-third (1:11,372).

Kilkenny 1655

Kilkenny 1758
Historical Background

Kilkenny 1800

Kilkenny 1910

ABBEY CREATIVE QUARTER KILKENNY
Context - International Identity

ABBEY CREATIVE QUARTER KILKENNY

THE ACADEMY OF URBANISM

THE URBANISM AWARDS 2008

THE GREAT TOWN

sponsored by Treasury Holdings

WINNER

KILKENNY

In this noble city the façades sing in the walls.
In the still centre of the comedy festival a cat smiles.

Why am I happy? Because I missed the last train home!
Wind whining for bus queuers and a breeze.
Ancient and modern ballad cap caught in the wind’s light.

Hunting is a kind of opium discourse. Loudly.
Even the rain wants to make you welcome, tipping your hat.

Sunday morning is the echoing footprint of Saturday night.
We built our love here, not last but strongest.
Capital of everywhere. Why go anywhere else?

Celebrating 40 years

kilkennyarts.ie

ABBEY CREATIVE QUARTER KILKENNY
Context – Attracting New Industries
Site Analysis – Lynchian Diagram Existing
Objectives – Heritage

Map of Protected Structures
Objectives - Heritage

1841 Historic Burgage Plot Lines

ABBEEK CREATIVE QUARTER KILKENNY
Site Analysis – Flood Levels
Objective – Linear Park

Map of Proposed Nore Linear Park
Objectives - Tourism

Map Indicating Existing and Proposed Tourist Routes
Masterplan Proposal – Base Map
Masterplan Proposal – Stage 1
Masterplan Proposal – Stage 2
Sketch Options

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4
ABBIEY CREATIVE QUARTER KILKENNY

Artists Impressions

[Image of a cityscape with people walking along a riverfront area]
Artists Impressions