

DESIGN STATEMENT

**Redevelopment of
Mayfair Building,
Horse Barrack Lane,
Irishtown,
Kilkenny**

Architectural Design Statement

**Submitted as Part of Planning
Application December 2014**



DESIGN STATEMENT

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1.1 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Reddy Architecture + Urbanism on behalf of Kilkenny County Council for a Part 8 Planning Application in accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000- 2013 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 -2013 and B1.1 of Appendix B of Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

The report contains details of the historical research of the site , existing building, existing drawings, photographs, proposals, the rationale for the proposed development, conservation philosophy, conservation methodology, and impact assessment.

The Mayfair Building itself was originally constructed as a ballroom and first opened its doors on St Stephen's night, 1943. During the 1950s, 60s and 70s the Mayfair Ballroom was Kilkenny's social hotspot. It was a very good ballroom and the venue for many important events including the Golf Ball, Rugby Ball and the Kilkenny County Council dance with music by many outstanding bands. It continued as such until 1973 when it closed. Shortly after the building was acquired by the St. Francis Abbey Brewery and was used as office accommodation, staff canteen and locker room. The building has been extended on several occasions over this period.

The brief shown in the proposals has been reached after an extensive consultation process with Kilkenny County Council.

The consultation process included ;

- Housing Department,
- Planning Authority

The proposed accommodation includes;

- Reception / Public Counter,
- Public toilets,
- Office,
- Staff canteen,
- File Storage,
- Staff Toilets,

The report follows generally the information requirements for Architecture Impact Assessment set out in Appendix B of Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The assessment includes a written account, drawings and photographs.

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1.2 Project Team

In response to the location of the site, the protected structures adjoining the site, the location of the site within an architectural conservation area and a zone of archaeological potential, and the significance of the proposed development the applicant, Kilkenny County Council, have assembled a design team with a strong record in successfully delivering urban infill developments within city centre environments.

The key members of the design team are;

Architect

Reddy A+U
41 Dean Street,
Irishtown,
Kilkenny City

Conservation Architect

Roisin Hanley Architects,
Lisieux House
5 Charlemont Terrace
Crofton Road
Dun Laoghaire.

Structural Engineer

Martin Peters Associates,
Consulting Engineers,
Ormonde Road,
Kilkenny City

M&E Engineer

Noel Lawler Consulting Engineers,
7 Patrick Street,
Kilkenny.

Archaeologist

Kilkenny Archaeology,
12 Parliament street
Kilkenny City

Ecologist

Moore Group,
Corporate House,
Ballybrit Business Park,
Galway,

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2.0 History

2.1 General History of the site

Four hundred years ago, James I, King of England granted Kilkenny a charter conferring on it the status of a city, with the title of Mayor for its chief citizen.

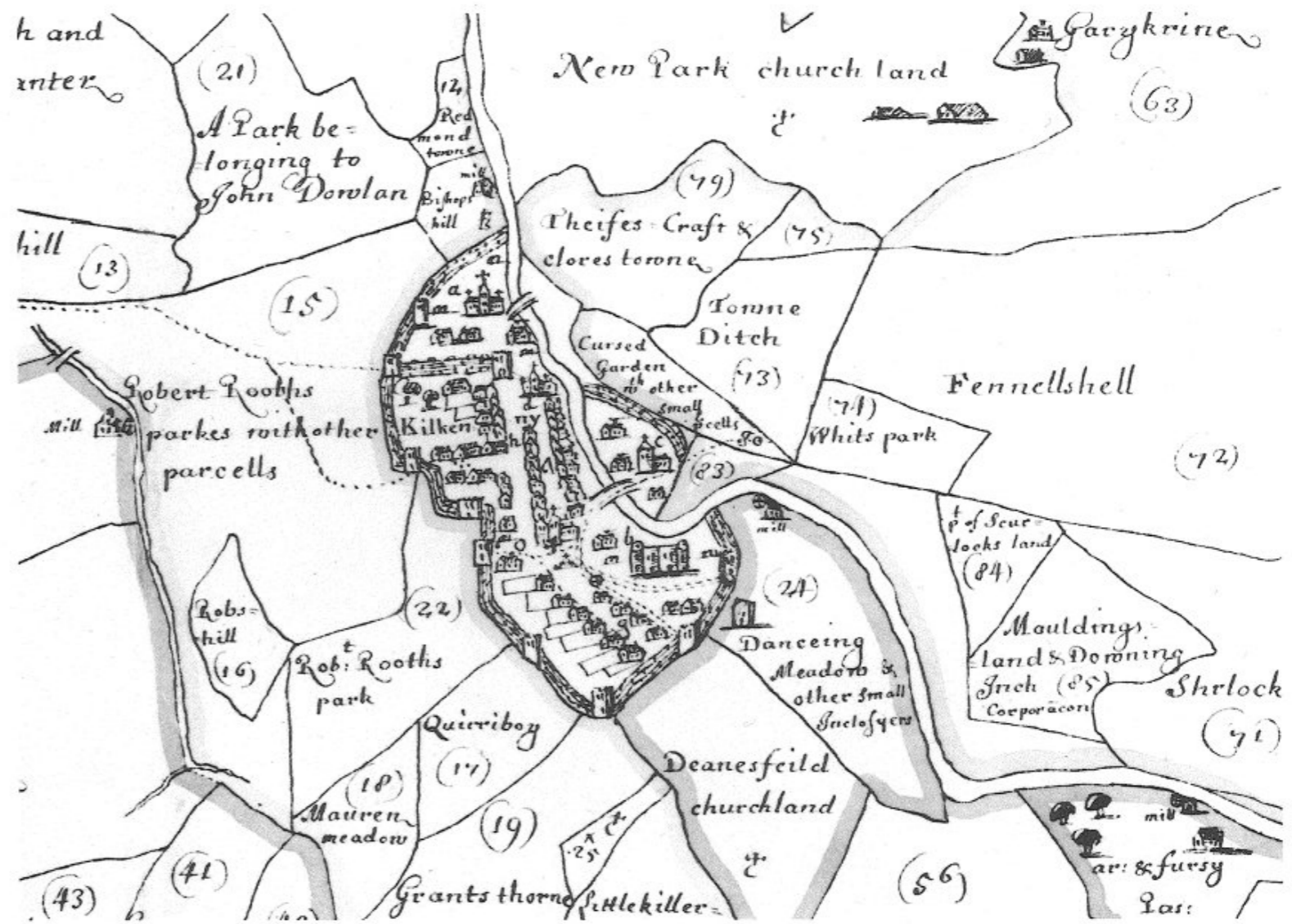
Four hundred years before that, in 1207, William Marshall, Lord of Leinster, had given Kilkenny a charter setting out the rights of its burgesses and freemen. Its first Council was elected in 1231 and since then Kilkenny has had a continuous record of municipal government.

From the 13th century to the end of the 16th the chief magistrate was known as the Sovereign, and since then as Mayor.

Even before the Norman Invasion, there was an urban settlement here. Cill Chainnigh was a stronghold of the kings of Ossory, the Mac Giolla Phádraig family. This early settlement centred on St. Canice's Cathedral, was known in after years as the Irishtown of Kilkenny, and formed a separate town from the Hightown, with its own Corporation until the 1830s.

Kilkenny retains many buildings from the early centuries of its existence. The Round Tower at St. Canice's is at least 900 years old; the Talbot Tower, was built around 1260; there are five medieval churches dating from the 13th century; Rothe house is the best known of a series of merchants' houses from the late 16th and early 17th centuries; a number of fine Georgian houses are to be seen on its streets. The two outstanding buildings in the city are Kilkenny Castle, and St. Canice's Cathedral.

As well as its built heritage, Kilkenny has an outstanding written record. The Tholsel on High Street is our city hall and houses a marvellous collection of documents from the 13th century to the present day. As well as the charters mentioned already, there are deeds, grants, leases and record books giving a unique insight into the governance of Kilkenny over the centuries. The gem of the collection is Liber Primus Kilkenniensis, a manuscript record of urban records containing a copy of William Marshall's charter, and continuing to the 16th century.



Map 4. Part of 'The liberties of the city of Kilkenny', c. 1655, Down Survey (National Archives of Ireland). Original scale 80 Irish perches to an inch (1:20,160), enlarged by approximately one third (to 1:13,240).

Map of Kilkenny 1655

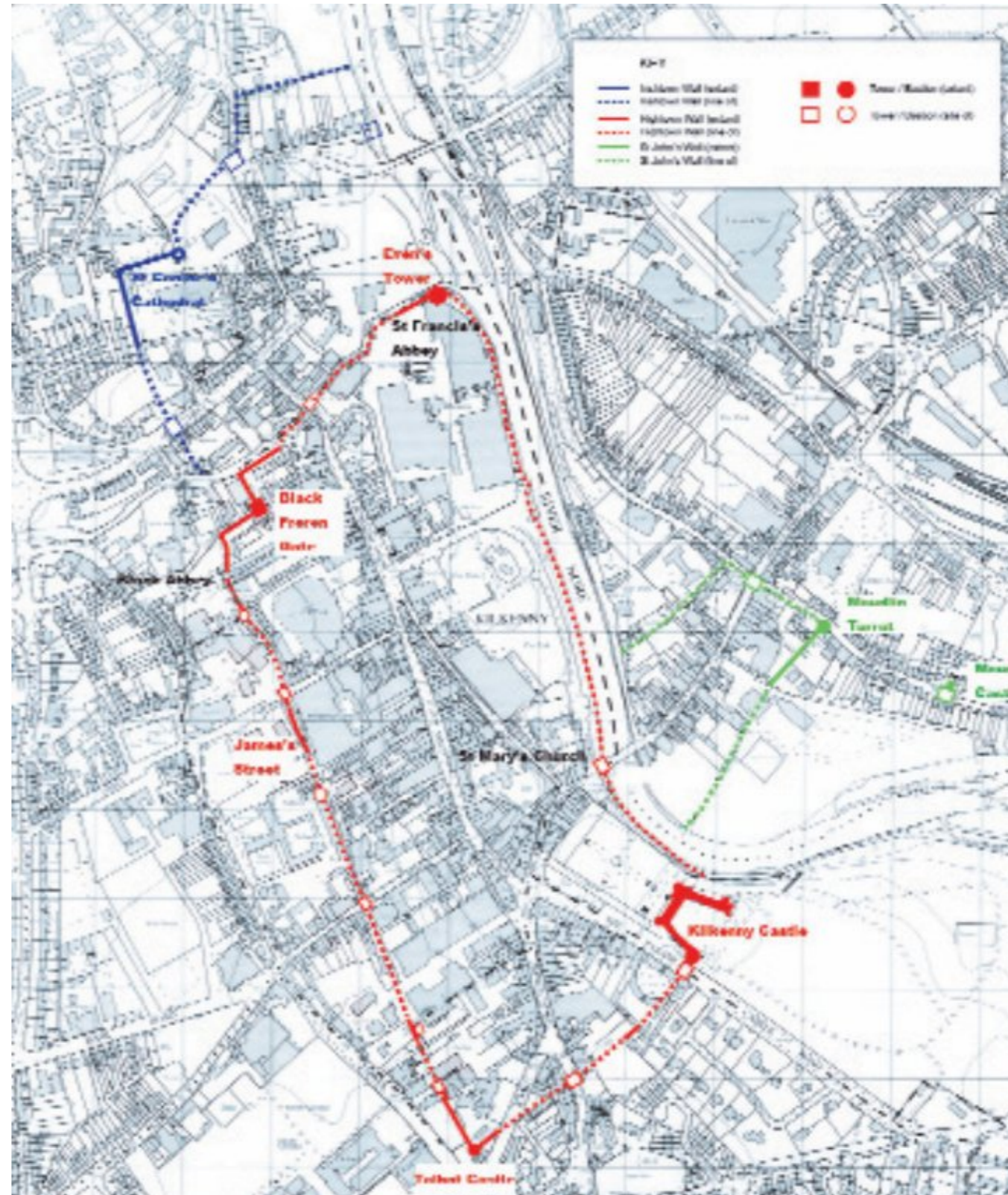
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2.2 The Walls of Kilkenny

Kilkenny had three walled areas: The Hightown, Irishtown, and the suburb of St. John's on the east bank of the Nore.

The Hightown defences had a wall running from the Castle in the south to Talbot's Tower, and from there to the River Breagh on the north, where Evan's Turret is located at the north-east corner of the circuit, enclosing a rectangular area with dimensions of 800m by 350m and a perimeter of approximately 1.45km, enclosing an area of c. 28 hectares.

Irishtown, on the far side of the Breagh, had a wall enclosing the area around St. Canice's Cathedral. St. John's had a much smaller walled area around St. John's Priory.



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The River Bregagh Wall

The course of the wall along River Bregagh, including site of lost Grey Friars Gate.

Historical Background

The walls of Hightown were begun in the mid 13th century. The riverside wall may have been built as a precinct wall for the newly-founded Franciscan (Grey Friars) Friary of St Francis. It seems to have included a postern known as Grey Freren Gate, leading from the friary to a bridge over the Bregagh (Bradley 1976, 215). As the gate would have provided access to Irishtown for the friars, it is unlikely that this was used by the public and probably had no associated defended gate. The gate is mentioned in a lease of 1628 (Hogan 1861, 351).

Rocque's 1758 map shows a straight length of wall from the north-east corner bounding a garden/orchard and Horse Barracks, and then nothing along the remainder of the river bank, although the full extent of the wall is depicted on the OS 1841 manuscript plan as City Wall (Bradley 2000c, Map 2).

Description

A short length of wall immediately adjacent to Evans Tower survives to a height of some 3 metres above the river level, and may contain an arrow loop. It extends westwards from the tower as far as the brewery access bridge across the River Bregagh. Beyond this, the wall has been extensively rebuilt above ground level, reputedly some 25 years ago when the brewery site was extended westwards across the River Bregagh; the lower masonry, however, is likely to contain traces of older wall.

A further length alongside the river consists only of a low revetment wall. Some 75m east of the existing Watergate Road Bridge, a former springing possibly related to the Grey Friars Bridge can still be seen in the south revetment wall. Test-pits prior to riverbed decontamination works were dug against the foundations of the wall, and other test pits were monitored along the river (Excavations Ireland 1999 [1999:455, 456], Excavations Ireland 2000 [2000:535])

Status

Part of a Recorded Monument (Kilkenny City). A length of the wall is recognised in the Kilkenny Architectural Heritage Inventory Study (1997) [Map 9/590] as being of National Importance. The City Wall is included in the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2014 as a Recorded Monument.

Significance

Important surviving length of curtain wall alongside the standing remains of Evans Tower, and line of former wall.

Condition

Masonry is in reasonable condition, with moderate ivy and plant growth. Its base is washed by floodwater. The wall was repointed with lime mortar in 2001.

Issues / Vulnerability

This length of wall is vulnerable to any future works in the lower reaches of the River Bregagh. The remainder of the wall is not easy to access, but has been generally maintained to provide a revetment, though with localised growth of sycamore and ash trees.

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Policies / Recommendations

- Protection and maintenance. [Policy 7]
- Removal and control of vegetation. [Policy 9]
- Protection of viewpoint from adjacent river bank, [Policy 17]
- Protect walls from impact of any future river works, and from any repair or development works within the brewery site. [Policy 8]
- Archaeological record of any alterations or maintenance works. [Policies 12, 15]

Reference: Kilkenny City Walls Conservation Plan, by The Heritage Council.

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2.3 The River and the City

Historically Kilkenny, like all Irish cities and towns, turned its back on the river. The redevelopment of the masterplan site represents the first large scale opportunity to redefine the relationship of the river to the city. The Councils have identified the potential of the river and its banks to be developed as a recreational, amenity and transportation asset for the city, the county and the region as a whole.

It is the policy of the Councils' to promote the natural amenity potential of the River Nore in order to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, ecological and tourism benefits for the city and region generally.



View of Irishtown from St.Canices Tower c. 1967

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3.0 Photographs of Existing Building



1. View from Parliament Street / Watergate (South west)



3. View of raised walkway and Canopy from South west



5. View from St. Francis Abbey (South east)



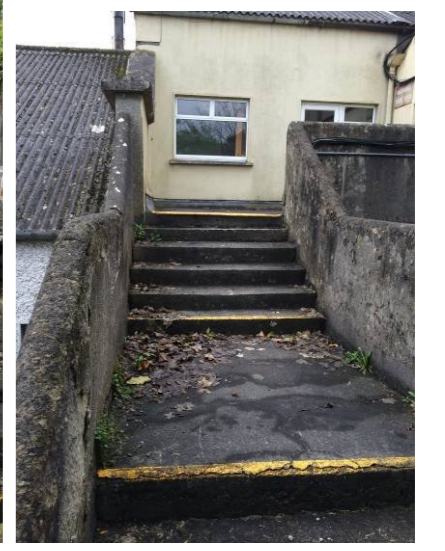
2. View of Service Yard adjoining West façade



4. View from Horse Barrack Lane (South)



6 View from East (City Wall on the right)



7. View of external steps to First Floor

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8. View of from Main Entrance Lobby (looking north)



10. View of Canteen (formerly the ballroom looking north west)



12. View of Kitchen off the Canteen (looking north)



9. View of Ground Floor Central Corridor (looking west)



11. View of Canteen (formerly the ballroom looking south west)



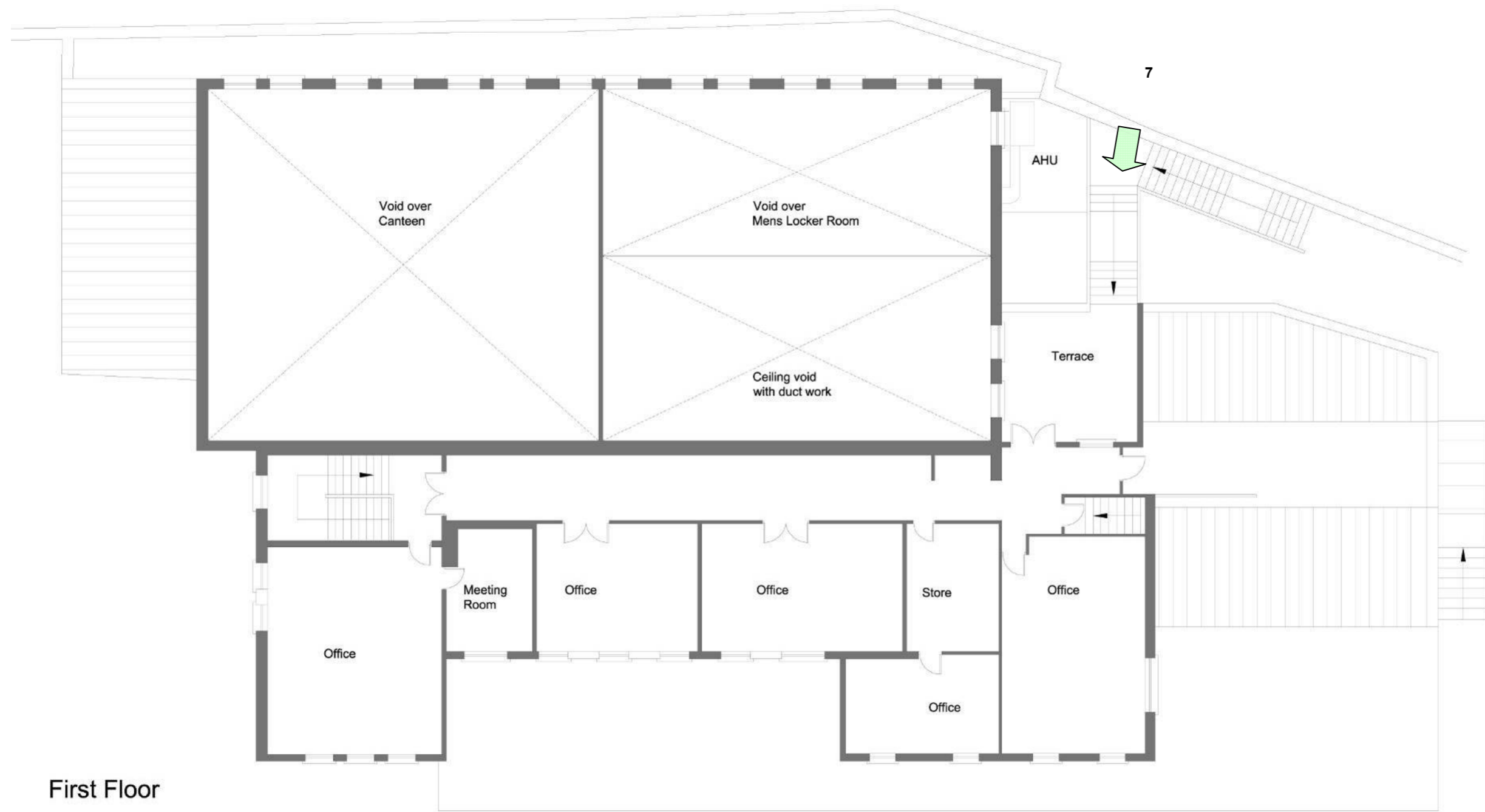
13. View of Locker Room (formerly the ballroom looking east)

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4.0 Drawings of Existing Building 1



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First Floor

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5.0 Site Context

The applicant site is comprised of two areas of land. The first site encompasses an area of approximately 2,015 sq.m and is located at the important entrance to the St.Francis Abbey Brewery.

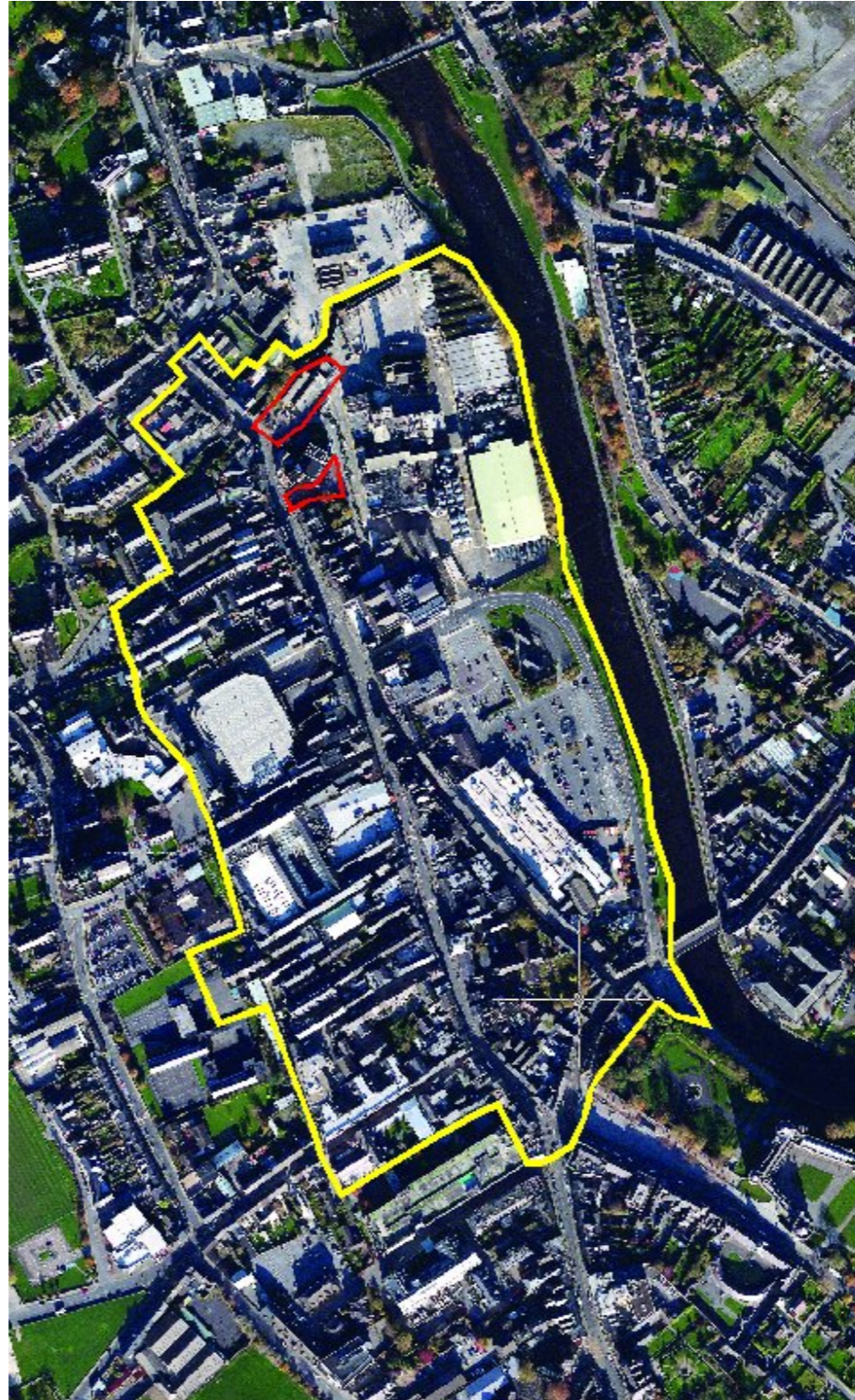
The second site lies to the south of the Watergate Theatre encompassing an area of 691 sq.m. It is a carpark used by the Diageo staff. It is proposed to convert this to a public car park .

While not a protected structure the Mayfair Building is located within the City Centre Architectural Conservation Area, (outlined in yellow in aerial view of the city opposite) an area of archaeological potential, and is immediately adjacent to Kilkenny's City Wall (a Recorded Monument) and adjacent to St.Francis Abbey (a National Monument and Protected Structure).

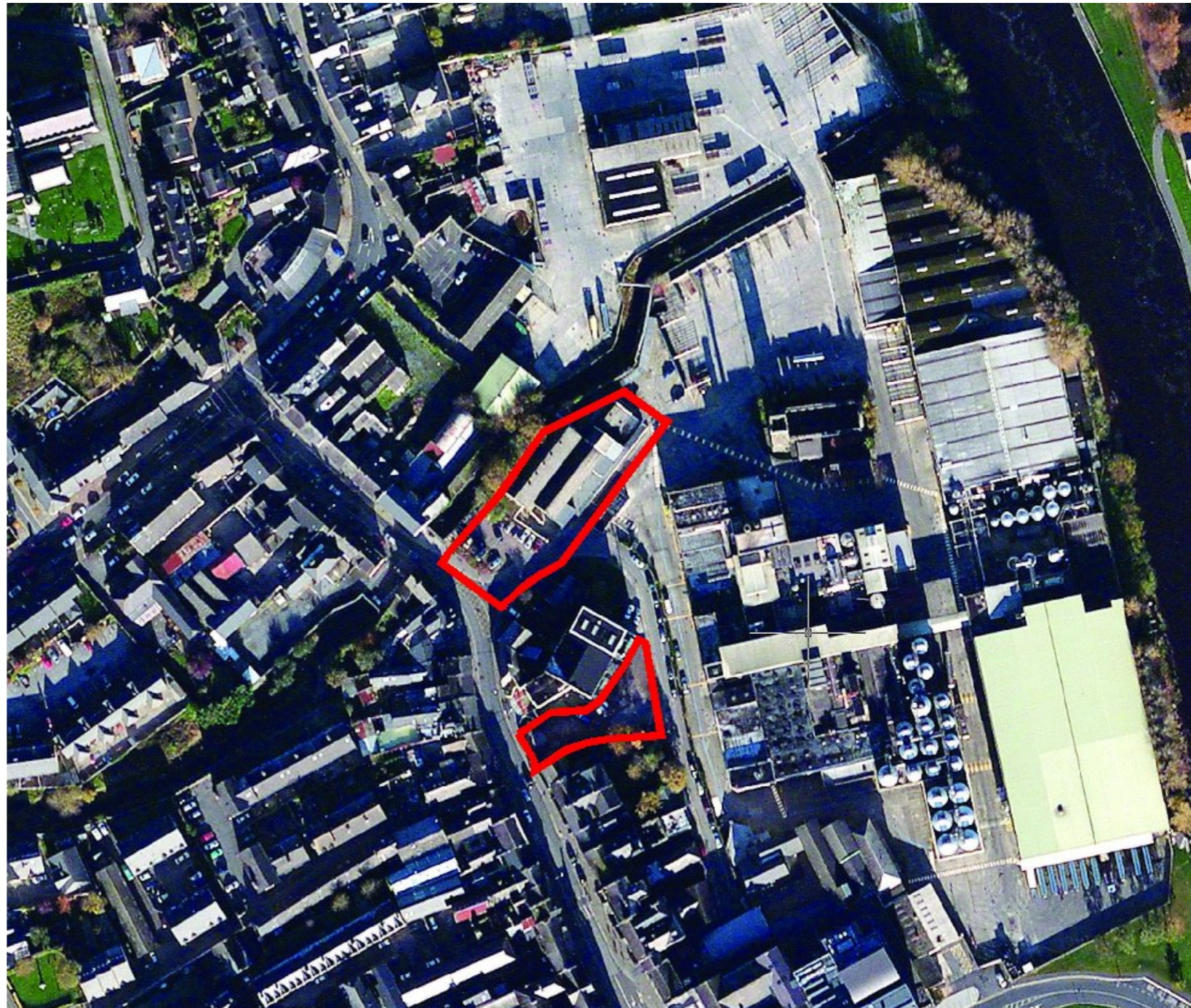
To the north of the existing building lies the City Wall, to the east is the marshalling yard of the brewery. The existing Mayfair Building frames the view of St.Francis Abbey from Parliament Street.

The City Centre ACA is characterised by its evolution during the medieval period as Hightown, containing the residences of the merchant princes, the custom house/Tholsel, the market cross and later the courthouse. Much of the medieval street pattern survives with the main streets running along a north south central spine, having narrow slips unique to Kilkenny running downhill off the main street to the east and having long burgage plots running east-west to the rear of the properties on High Street and Parliament Street.

The area today is characterised by a sizeable collection of landmark medieval and 18th century buildings set in an 18th and 19th century commercial streetscape of two and three storey rendered facades with classically proportioned wall to window ratios and many surviving early shop and pub fronts to ground floor. In the north-east corner of the area is a significant element of Kilkenny's 19th century industrial heritage in the form of the St. Francis Abbey brewing site.



Aerial View of Site (outlined in red) and City Context



Aerial View of Site (outlined in red) and Local Context

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6.0 Design Proposals

The proposal is for the refurbishment and extension of the Mayfair Building which forms part of the St.Francis Abbey Brewery complex. It is currently used as an Office and Canteen facility and it is proposed to maintain these uses.

While not a protected structure the building lies with the City Centre Architectural Conservation Area. It also immediately adjoins the City Wall (a Recorded Monument) and is situated in close proximity to St.Francis Abbey (a National Monument), the River Nore (a Natura 2000 site) and its tributary the River Breagh are also adjacent to the building.

This Architectural Design Statement has been produced to explain the design rationale for the proposed development and to confirm the appropriateness and validity of the design proposal as it has evolved for a contemporary intervention into the historic urban fabric of the Irishtown and Kilkenny City centre environs.

A detailed appraisal of the existing two storey building suggests that it is of little architectural significance internally or externally. What merit the building has lies in its social heritage. The refurbishment and extension of the building will create a building of distinction more appropriate to its location at the entrance to the new Abbey Quarter Area.

The following important determining factors have been analysed in this report:

- Existing building and its immediate and greater context within the Kilkenny City Centre Conservation Area.
- Analysis of the existing structure within the subject site and its architectural qualities.
- Analysis of the urban design parameters for the proposal and the impact on the existing context
- Analysis of the design proposals for the site, with particular and thorough emphasis on the following:
 - Scale and Form
 - Façade design
 - Materiality.

This report will unequivocally demonstrate that the proposals for the subject site are:

- A positive architectural addition to Kilkenny City.
- Will provide appropriate office accommodation for Kilkenny County Council staff and the general public who they serve.
- Appropriate in the treatment of this sensitive and important location
- Complimentary to the existing protected structures adjoining the subject site.
- Of a high architectural quality which will enhance the prominence of the subject site and compliment the adjacent structures.
- Appropriate in terms of materiality and quality of detailing and finish.



Aerial View of Building (1960's)

The proposed development works to the Mayfair Building to facilitate its continuing use as an office and canteen for use by Kilkenny County Council consist of;

- the demolition of later extensions to the original gabled form of the original ballroom comprised of;
 - 64 sq.m single storey extension to the east
 - 36 sq.m. single storey extension to the west
 - Raised walkway to the south east and associated canopy
 - External steps adjoining the city wall (Recorded Monument)
 - 16 sq.m. single storey Boiler Room adjoining the city wall (Recorded Monument)
- Replacement of the existing profiled cement sheeting to the existing pitched roofs with a new standing seam metal roof
- Amendments to south and north facades and the replacement of existing windows with new double glazed aluminium windows
- Construction of new part single and part two storey extension to the west (227 sq.m.)
- Construction of new first floor extension (86 sq.m.) to the east
- Construction of a new first floor extension (67 sq.m.) to the south
- Construction of 3 no. internal "pods" at first floor level (41 sq.m.) overlooking the old ballroom.
- Works associated with the conversion of the existing public carpark to the west of the Mayfair Building to a pedestrian square
- Works associated with the construction of a new public car park to the south of the Watergate Theatre with vehicular access from Horse Barrack Lane.

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Scale and Form

The existing building is a part two storey and part single storey building with a painted render finish. The original building can be identified by the pitched roofs to the two gabled forms. The later extensions to the building are predominantly flat roofed save for the single storey extension to the east which is pitched. The fenestration to the building is varied in design and material and without pattern. The combination of varied forms and varied fenestration types and pattern results in a confused building with little architectural merit.

The double gabled forms could reasonably be described as the predominant form of the existing building. While the proposed design includes extensions to the east, west and south of the building these predominant forms are retained and expressed.

The proposed building retains the overall two storey scale of the existing building. While it is proposed to replace the roof covering to the existing pitched roofs the proposed building design maintains the overall scale of the existing building i.e. the existing ridge height is maintained. The height of the new parapet to the extensions proposed to the east, south, and west match the existing heights of the eaves level to the existing flat roof sections.



View of Existing Building from Parliament Street (West)



View of Proposed Building from Parliament Street (West)



View of Existing Building from St. Francis Abbey (East)



View of Proposed Building from St. Francis Abbey (East)

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Façade Design

The brief developed after consultation with Kilkenny County Council identified the requirement to;

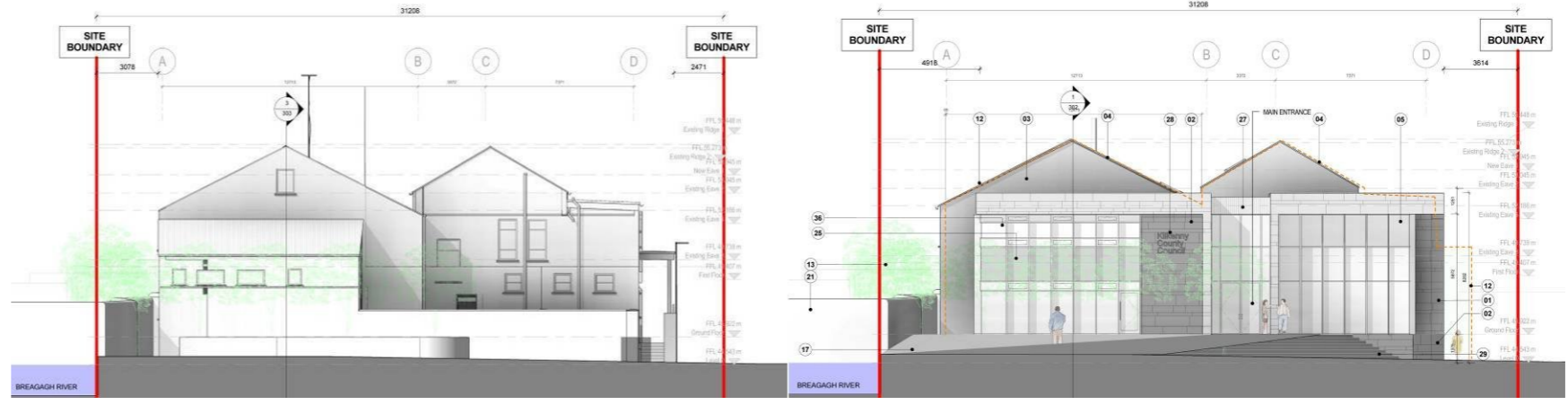
- (a) create facades that would be more reflective of the civic nature of the building.
- (b) address the public square to the west of the building
- (c) reflect the buildings location at the major entrance to the new Abbey Quarter
- (d) improve the thermal efficiency of the external wall build up to comply with the Building Regulations.

To accomplish this the random series of single and two storey extensions to the central double gabled form are replaced by a more ordered regular two storey form which wraps around its east, south and west facades. The varied fenestration designs and random fenestration pattern are replaced by a more ordered rythmical design which is reflective of the proposed civic use of the building. It references the expressed rythmical structural bays of the nearby Brewhouse Building.

The entrance to the existing building is from the raised walkway along its southern façade. This was driven predominatly by the security requirements of the brewery. The decision to convert the small carpark to the west of the building into a public urban square suggested that the entrance to the proposed building should be located on the western façade to reflect this new public space. A more transparent façade is proposed to identify the public entrance and reflect the civic nature of the building.

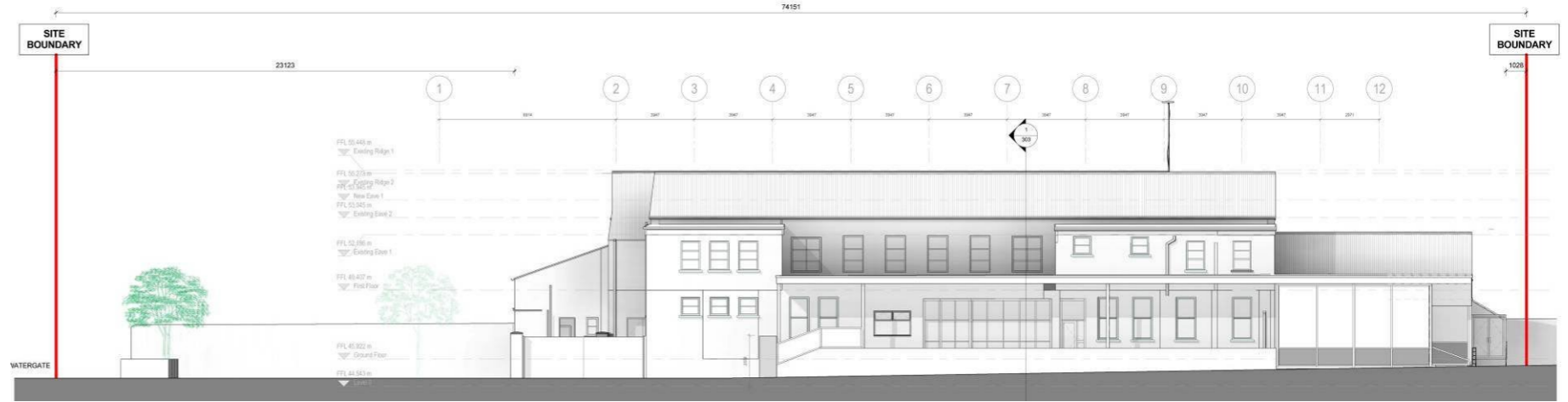
Currently the external wall of the Mayfair Building is uninsulated. This has lead to high running costs for the St.Fanicis Abbey Brewery and more importantly high levels of condensaion on the internal face of the external walls which has lead to a deterioration in the fabric of the building over time.

To address both these issues it is proposed to provide external insulation on the face of the existing facades to achieve the required thermal values. Rather than simply provide a render finish to this insulation to match what is existing it is proposed to overlaid the external walls with natural Kilkenny Limestone and Blue Limestone. We believe that this is a more appropriate material given the civic nature of the building and its location at the gateway to the Abbey Quarter.



Existing West Elevation

Proposed West Elevation (Outline of existing building in orange)



Existing South Elevation



Proposed South Elevation (Outline of existing building in orange)

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Materiality.

The facades of the existing building are finished with a painted render. existing building reflective of its original use as a ballroom.

The pitched roofs are clad with profiled concrete cladding panels which given their age will probably contain asbestos.

Existing windows are a mixture of single and double glazed in timber and aluminium frames. The aluminium frames are not thermally broken and are creating condensation on the internal face of the frames which has contributed to the deterioration of the fabric of the building.

The external walkway is constructed from painted steel posts with glazing inset in aluminium framing with an opaque glass spandrel panel. The fascia and soffit are clad with aluminium sheeting.

It is proposed to replace these domestic / industrial type materials with material which would be more reflective of the proposed civic use of the building and its important location at the gateway to the Abbey Quarter.

Kilkenny limestone to the plinth of the building is proposed with Blue Limestone to the ground and first floor levels of the east, south and west facades. A vertical panel of Kilkenny Limestone with a split face finish is proposed on the west facade.

The existing façade of the building to the north will be externally insulated with a self coloured render finish achieving a minimum u-value of 0.27 w/m²/K.

All of the existing windows will be replaced with new double glazed window in a powder coated aluminium frame achieving a minimum u-value of 2.2 w/m²/K.

The existing profiled concrete cladding to the pitched roofs will be replaced with a standing seam metal roof achieving a minimum u-value of 0.20 w/m²/K.

Existing downpipes visible on the east, south and west facades will be located within the building to ensure the clean lines of the building are maintained.

The new pedestrian urban square to the west of the building and the new footpath along its southern and eastern sides will be constructed from a combination of varying lengths of Kilkenny Limestone with a hammered finish and varying lengths of Granite with a sawn finish.



Paving to new pedestrian square to the west and new footpath to building perimeter



Blue Limestone



Kilkenny Limestone



Kilkenny Limestone

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The City Wall

The preservation and protection of the city wall adjacent to the Mayfair Building was uppermost in our considerations.

The proposed works include the careful demolition of the existing Boiler Room and external stairs to the east of the existing building which immediately abut the City Wall.

Their demolition opens up the possibility of allowing access for the general public and tourists along the city wall from Watergate Bridge to its termination at Evans Turret . The removal of the existing trees located between the Mayfair Building and the City Wall , in accordance with Policy 9, will also facilitate this access.

The proposed extension to the west is commensurate of maintaining and improving visibility of the City Wall. To accomplish this the extension is located some 3 metres south of the wall. The immediately adjoining wall is proposed to be a fully glazed wall to allow a visual connection from the new urban square to extend along the wall through this façade.

It is also proposed to extend the windows on the north elevation of the old Mayfair Building to Ground Floor level to again allow the occupants of the office have a view of the city wall.

It is also proposed to light the wall.



View from Watergate Bridge looking east along the River Bregagh

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Appendix 1 Architectural Drawings

14-208_101_Proposed Site Layout Plan
14-208_102_Proposed Ground Floor Plan
14-208_103_Proposed First Floor Plan
14-208_104_Proposed Roof Plan
14-208_105_Existing Site Layout Plan
14-208_106_Existing Ground Floor Plan
14-208_107_Existing First Floor Plan
14-208_108_Existing Roof Plan

14-208_201_Proposed Elevations Southwest and Southeast
14-208_202_Proposed Elevations Northwest and Northeast
14-208_203_Existing Elevations Southwest and Southeast
14-208_204_Existing Elevations Northwest and Northeast

14-208_301_Proposed Sections AA & BB
14-208_302_Proposed Section CC
14-208_203_Existing Sections AA & CC

14-208_501_3d Views 1
14-208_502_3d Views 2

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