

Administrative Officer
Planning Department
Westmeath County Council
Áras an Chontae
Mullingar
Co. Westmeath

25th July 2025

**PART XI OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) PART 8 OF THE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, 2001 (AS AMENDED)
Athlone Castle Visitor Journey Enhancement**

To whom it may concern

Please find enclosed Part 8 Planning Application for proposed development at Athlone Castle (Protected Structure, RPS No. 70, and National Monument Heritage Site Reg.No. 15000352), Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 A6D7 on behalf of the Regeneration & Capital Projects Team.

Westmeath County Council have been granted funding through the EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023-2026) under the EU Just Transition Fund (EUJTF) 2021 – 2027 to progress the Athlone Castle Interpretation, Facilities & Visitor Journey Enhancement Project.

The project aims to deliver an improved and engaging visitor experience to enhance Athlone Castle's position as a flagship cultural attraction within the Hidden Heartlands. The proposed improvements will be a vital component of Athlone as a destination with the vision to.

“Place the Castle at the heart of Athlone

Place Athlone at the heart of Ireland's story”

The proposed interventions will enhance and enrich the external and internal areas of the castle, and bring to life the stories of the Castle, the Town and its people. The visitor journey will be reconfigured and new type of spaces introduced to improve today's visitor and operation needs for a heritage site. The project aims to bring forward the authenticity of the historic spaces, engage with the collection unique to Athlone and introduce new interactive experiences for all ages – local community as well as visitors to Athlone.

To achieve this, the following improvements are proposed:

- The proposed development will include the following:
- Localised external restoration and adaptation to existing fabric to facilitate ticketing, coffee kiosk new staircases and relocation of existing staircase
- New flooring and joinery / painting works
- Provision of new internal exhibition spaces
- Installation of new entrance airlocks for environmental control of collection
- Internal refurbishment works including upgrades to electrical and mechanical systems
- New external interpretation, lighting, wayfinding and signage works
- Small scale demolition works to widen openings, removal of non-original elements to reveal original features
- Fabric conservation works where required
- Ancillary Works

The proposed site includes the Athlone Castle external areas, historic buildings and modern additions which all are contained on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) (Ref.No. 70) under the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, and furthermore on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) (Reg.No. 15000352) with Archaeological, Architectural, and Historical categories of interest. The site is bounded by Athlone Town bridge, also known as Shannon Road Bridge (a regional Monument and protected structure - Reference Number RPS 004) to the North, The Shannon quays to the East and Market Place to the West. The site is also located within an Architectural Conservation Area (Athlone Town). An Archaeological Impact Assessment and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment Report have been prepared having regard to the proposed development and is available for inspection with this application.

The proposed Part 8 development has undergone Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening under Directive 2014/52/EU (as amended). No likely significant effects were identified during the AA and EIA Screening processes. Therefore, there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of AA or for a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to be produced. In addition, the proposed development is not a type of development that triggers the requirement for an EIA and subsequent preparation of an EIA Report

Any person may, within 4 weeks from the date of the public notice, apply to An Coimisiún Pleanála for a screening determination as to whether the proposed development would be likely to have significant effect on the environment.

The site notice has been placed on the site and the newspaper notice will appear in the Westmeath Independent on Saturday 26th July 2025.

Plans and Particulars of the proposed development are available for inspection at <https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en> and can be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at Athlone Moate Municipal District, Civic Centre, Church

Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 P2T from 9.30am to 4.00pm each day, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays, from 28th July 2025 up to and including 26th August 2025.

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development, will be received up to 4.00pm on Tuesday 9th September 2025 to the planning section of Westmeath County Council.

The documents enclosed as part of the application include:

- *Copy of Newspaper Notice – dated 26th July 2025*
- *Copy of Site Notice – dated 24th July 2025*

Architect – Galmstrup Architects

- *Planning Pack Map (OS Map)*
- *Site Location Map (OS Map)*
- *Drawing Register*
- *Architectural drawings as per attached drawing register*
- *Planning Visuals*

Structural Engineers – Cora Engineering

- *Structural Engineering Report*

Mechanical & Electrical Engineers – Woods PS

- *Proposed Lighting & Security Services Drawings as per attached drawing register*

Environmental Consultant – Minogue & Associates

- *Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment*
- *Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report*

Archaeologist – Aisling Collins Archaeology

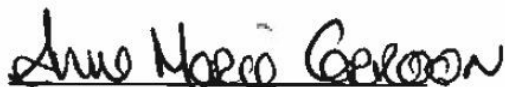
- *Archaeological Impact Assessment*

Conservation Architect – Aughey O’Flaherty Architects

- *Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment*

I trust all is in order, if there are any queries, please contact the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully



On behalf of the Regeneration & Capital Team