Design Statement

October 2023 Rev A

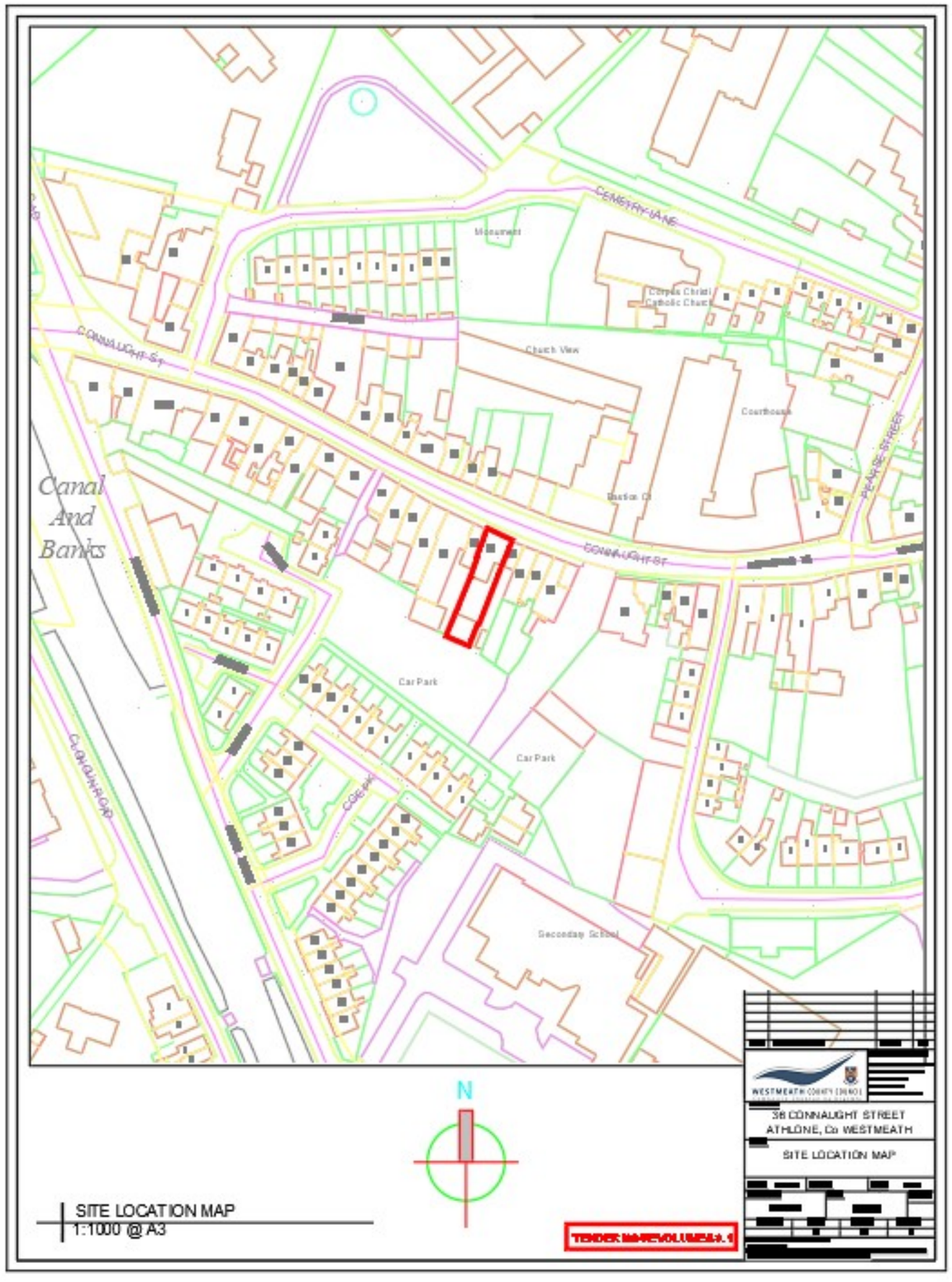
Auburn House, No. 36 Connaught Street

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

Housing for All
A new Housing Plan for Ireland

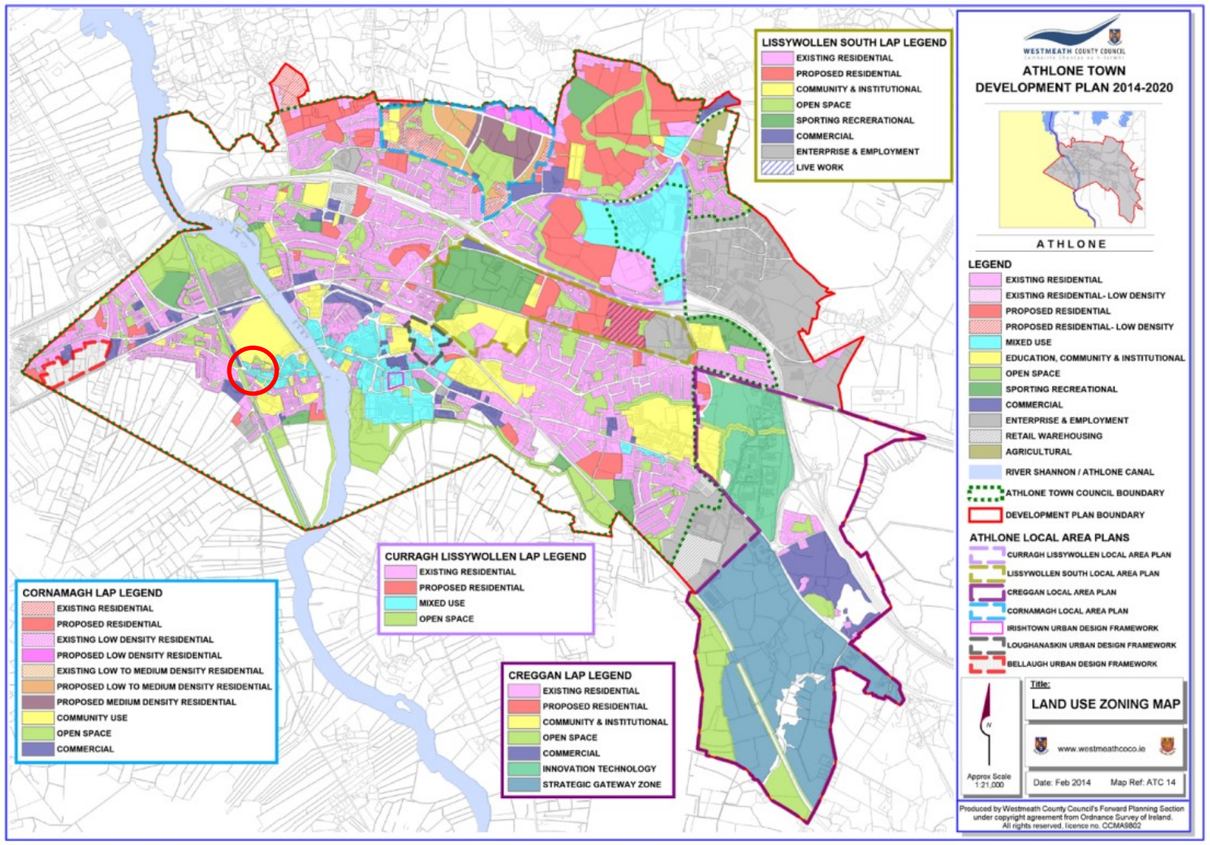
Contents

Site Location Map



Aerial Photo—Site Location

Athlone Town Development Plan 2014—2020 Land use Zoning map



Introduction

This design statement report has been prepared by Westmeath County Council. It relates to the design of Auburn House No.36 Connaught Street, Athlone Co.Westmeath N37 P2K8, Coordinates: 53.421885, -7.947145.
The purpose of this report is to describe the site, to summarise the proposed development and to explain the key aspects of the urban and architectural design.

The existing building is a Protected Structure No: NIAH No. 15000138 (RPS No.75) and in the Athlone Town Architectural Conservation area, and an area of Archeological Importance. The existing building is a 3 storey townhouse over basement with a 1960's extension to the rear, the building has been vacant for some time with some signs of office use before becoming vacant. The existing building was built for residential use as a single unit home with 4 Bedrooms.

NIAH description

"Terraced two-bay three-storey house, built c.1810. Now in use as offices. Pitched natural slate roof with projecting eaves course and with a rendered chimneystack to the east end. Roughcast rendered walls over smooth rendered plinth. Square-headed openings with cut stone sills with two-over-two pane timber sliding sash windows to first and second floor openings and a replacement uPVC window to the ground floor having a cast-iron window guard. Round-headed doorcase to west end of front façade with cut stone block-and-start surround and replacement timber paneled door having a plain fanlight above. Road-fronted."

And it is appraised as follow:

"An attractive and well-proportioned three-storey house which retains most of its early form and fabric. The simple block-and-start doorcase and the cast-iron window guard to the ground floor window are interesting features. This building is the best surviving example from an original terrace of four buildings, the others having been extensively renovated with the loss of original character. This building contributes to the historic nature of Connaught Street and is an important component of the streetscape".

Pre-Planning Consultation

There is no previous planning application or planning history on the application site area.

An initial proposal for the overall site was submitted to Orla McGann of (Planning Department) Westmeath County Council by the Housing Section at Westmeath County Council on the 16th of Aug 2023.

A subsequent Pre planning consultation was held on 20th September 2023, and all comments provided by the planning department are recorded and addressed within this report.

It was acknowledged that the proposal was in accordance with the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020.

National & Regional Policy Context

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework 2018 (NPF)

Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness 2016

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (2019)

Housing for All 2023—housing plan for Ireland to 2030

Local Policy Context

Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 (ATDP)

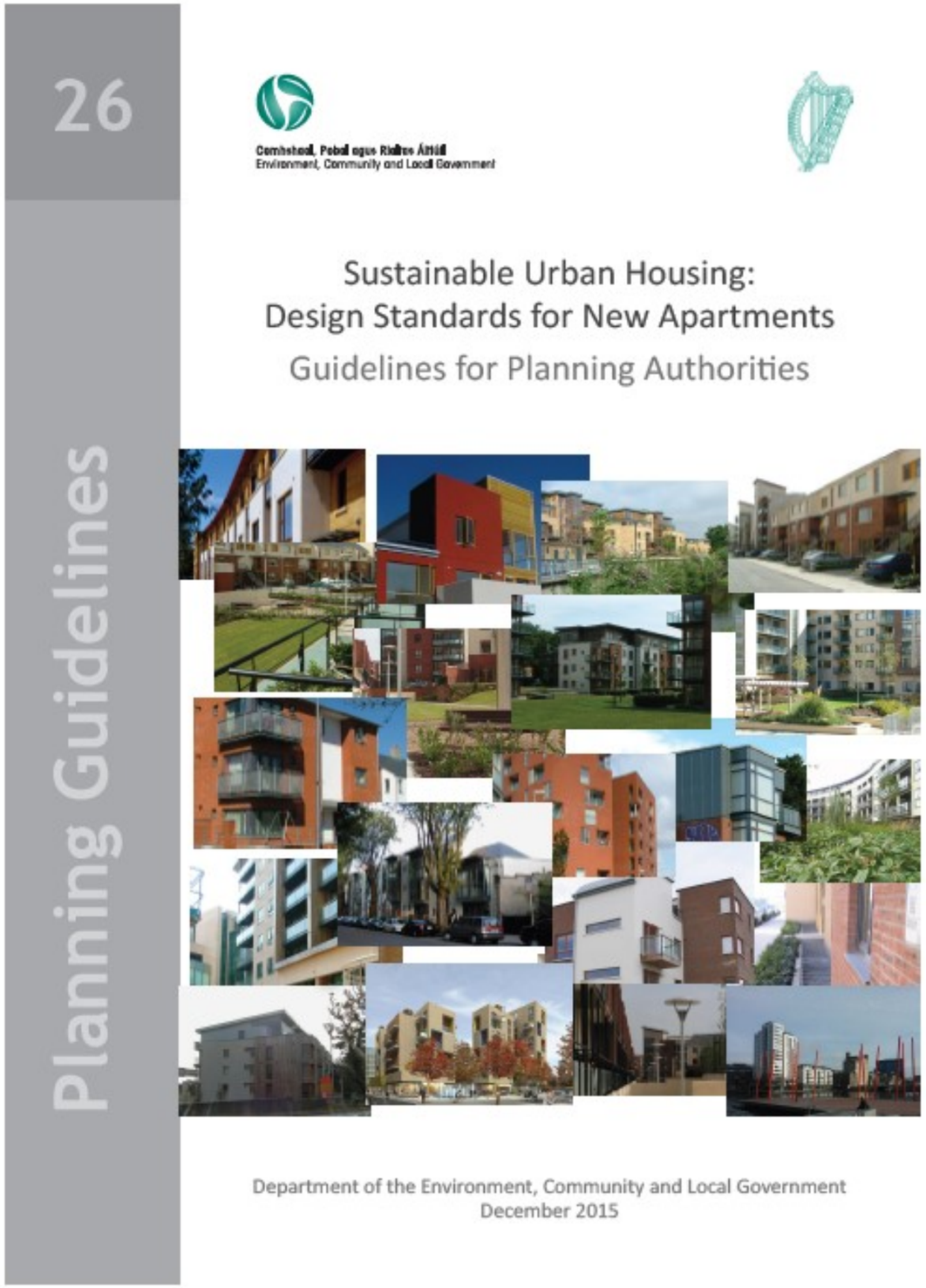
Mixed Use O-LZ3 – '*To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of town centres, through consolidating development, encouraging a mix of uses and maximising the use of land, to ensure the efficient use of infrastructure and services'.*

Outline Brief

The proposed development consists of renovating and extending the existing dwelling. Private open space shall be provided, in substantial accordance with the requirements of the Local Area Plan and DHLGH guidelines.

The development consists of the provision of a 1no. 2bed duplex unit, and 2no. 1bed Apartment within a 4 Storey Town House with demolition of the existing extension and the construction of a new reduced rear extension over the full height of the building.

Under the current Local Area Plan, the proposed site is zoned Mixed Use, which would allow subdivision and extensions. In addition, the site falls into an Architectural Conservation Area and an Area of Archaeological Importance, which would permit development such as this, provided it is suitably sympathetic, and would not negatively impact the existing context or amenities.



"SUSTAINABLE URBAN HOUSING: DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW APARTMENTS" GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES, 2015

This Housing Quality Assessment provides a framework which quantifies the criteria required under the 2015 Sustainable Urban Housing Guidelines (SUHG). The assessment provides these elemental items in table format to demonstrate compliance to the

guidelines. The unit types are provided as a supporting document for visual reference.

Qualitative aspects such as the Residential Conceptual Design approach are covered under the Architectural Design Statement.

The SUHG cover a variety of key topics, an overview of each is provided below to provide a summary to the data provided in the Assessment tables.

The 2015 Guidelines specify planning policy requirements

for:

• Internal space standards for different types of apartments, including studio

apartments;

• Dual aspect ratios;

• Floor to ceiling height;

• Apartments to stair/lift core ratios;

• Storage spaces;

• Amenity spaces including balconies/patios;

• Room dimensions for certain rooms.

Planning And Development (Amendment) Act 2015) - The Act provides for amendments

to section 28, 34 and Part IX of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

In summary, SPPRs supersede the following provisions of the current County Development Plan;

• Section 8.2.3.3 (ii) Dual Aspect

• Section 8.2.3.3 (v) Internal Storage

• Section 8.2.3.3 (vii) Minimum Apartment Floor Areas

• Section 8.2.8.4 (iv) Private Open Space for Apartment Development

All Units have been design and developed to incorporate the minimum standards set out in the SUHG.

Site layout with sun orientation and swot

Historic Photo of Connaught Street in the 1940's

History of Site

The building was built in approximately 1810, and would have replaced an older structure on the same plot. The existing house first appears on the second edition of the 6''Maps, which dates from the 1840's.
The Building was constructed as a town house and was used as a dwelling up until the 1990's. The site was identified as a potential housing development site in 2015.

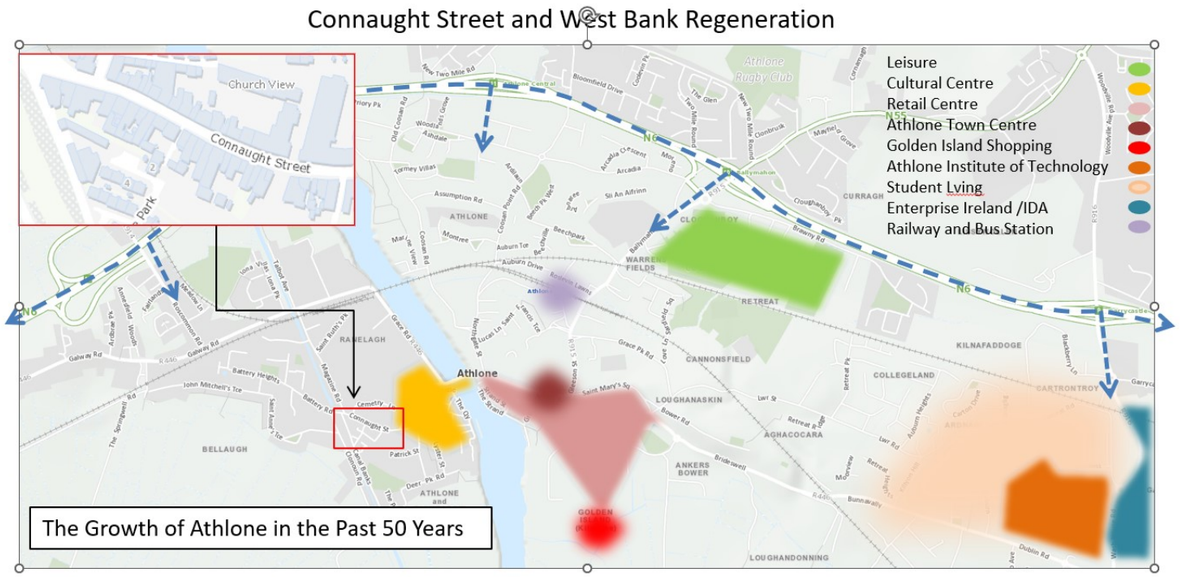
No.36 Connaught Street is mentioned in the online history pages of the Athlone in the 1940's & 50's.
It states:
"No.36 Doctor Martin's house. He was noted for his love of greyhounds and was the owner of the famous Lost Light. Lost light won the Clounanna Cup and was paraded through the town on a float."

Description of site plot

The subject site is located mid terrace of an existing urban street in Athlone, backing on to housing to the north, and located to the West of the town core.
The building on site is currently unoccupied, and the rear shed is derelict and very overgrown. The existing House to the front of the site needs repair and renovations, having been last occupied in 2016.
The Site is located on Connaught Street leading to 'Battery Heights' and 'Magazine Road' and approximately within the 10 –15min walking distance to the town center, therefore it has excellent access to Retail, civic, medical, institutional and transport facilities, It is less than 1 kilometre walk to the bus and rail network which has excellent services to Dublin and Western routes. In conclusion it is ideally located for residential development.
The site measures approximately 35 meters North to South and approximately 6.5 meters East to West.
The existing house proper is a modest early 19C Era house and in a poor state of repair, it is proposed to undertake a sensitive re-build, preserving the protected structure while largely rebuilding the house and adding a rear extension to current compliant TGD standards.
The town house site is bounded to the east and west with party walls which it shares with the neighbouring properties no. 34 and no.38. The natural ground level of the site slopes downwards wards from North to South towards the Athlone Canal. The front door access is at ground level and at the South of the site the building is entered at basement level.

The closest bus stop to the site (Stop ID: 455471) for buses travelling in to town is located approximately 100 metres to the west of the site on 'Battery road' and is served by the A1 Bus Eireann route which offers connections to Bealnamulla in Roscommon.
The site also benefits from nearby transport links. The site is well served by a number of reasonably frequent bus services departing from Athlone bus station approximately 2km to the south west of the site offering the following services: • Route 72 to Limerick Train Station • Route 70 to Green Bridge • Route 440 to the Rail Walk • Route 461 to Roscommon • Route 466 to Longford • Route 73 to Waterford City • Route 70 to Mullingar • Route 65 to Kilnacloy.

Site plan with block identifiers (layouts)



Concept

The concept design is based on retention of existing building structure and the built heritage features of the site whilst providing sufficient housing density to meet the requirements of the Athlone town plan and local area action plan.

The key concepts which have informed the development of the site include the following:

- The renovation of an existing residential building to provide multiple living units that will contribute to the success of the sustainable town center and local businesses and amenities.
- The retention & repair of the protected structure of 36 Connaught Street will improve and enhance the local architectural and historical street fabric.
- The rear extension will replace an unsightly much larger utilitarian extension from the 1960's that detracted and related poorly to the façade of the protected structure, additionally the existing extension removed any references to the original rear elevation of the protected structure. The proposed extension will give back 10m2 internal floor area on each level with an additional 5m2 private amenity space external balcony at First and Second floor levels. The proposal allows for a more discrete architectural expressive extension and gives area back area to the garden to afford a private amenity space for the Ground and basement duplex unit, a bin storage area and a shared amenity space for all units.
- The use of a white acrylic render on the rear elevation and extension along with aluminum / wood windows will to create a delineation of new structure added to the existing protected structure.
- The promotion of energy efficiency by use of good quality external materials and insulation, efficient heating systems, sustainable water use and drainage design.

Description of proposed development

The proposed development is comprised of 3no. Apartment units within an existing house (protected structure) on a stepped, town site, which would have been the top of a hill sloping down to the Canal on the west and the Luan River on the east. This proposal is intended to be a sensitive restoration and should contribute to preserving the amenity and character of Connaught Street. This restoration will require the removal of a 2 storey extension and replacement with an new extension on all floors with a much smaller floor plan. The removal of the existing 1960's extension will allow the rear elevation to be sensitively dressed with a complementary smaller extension that does not compromise the importance of the protected structure.

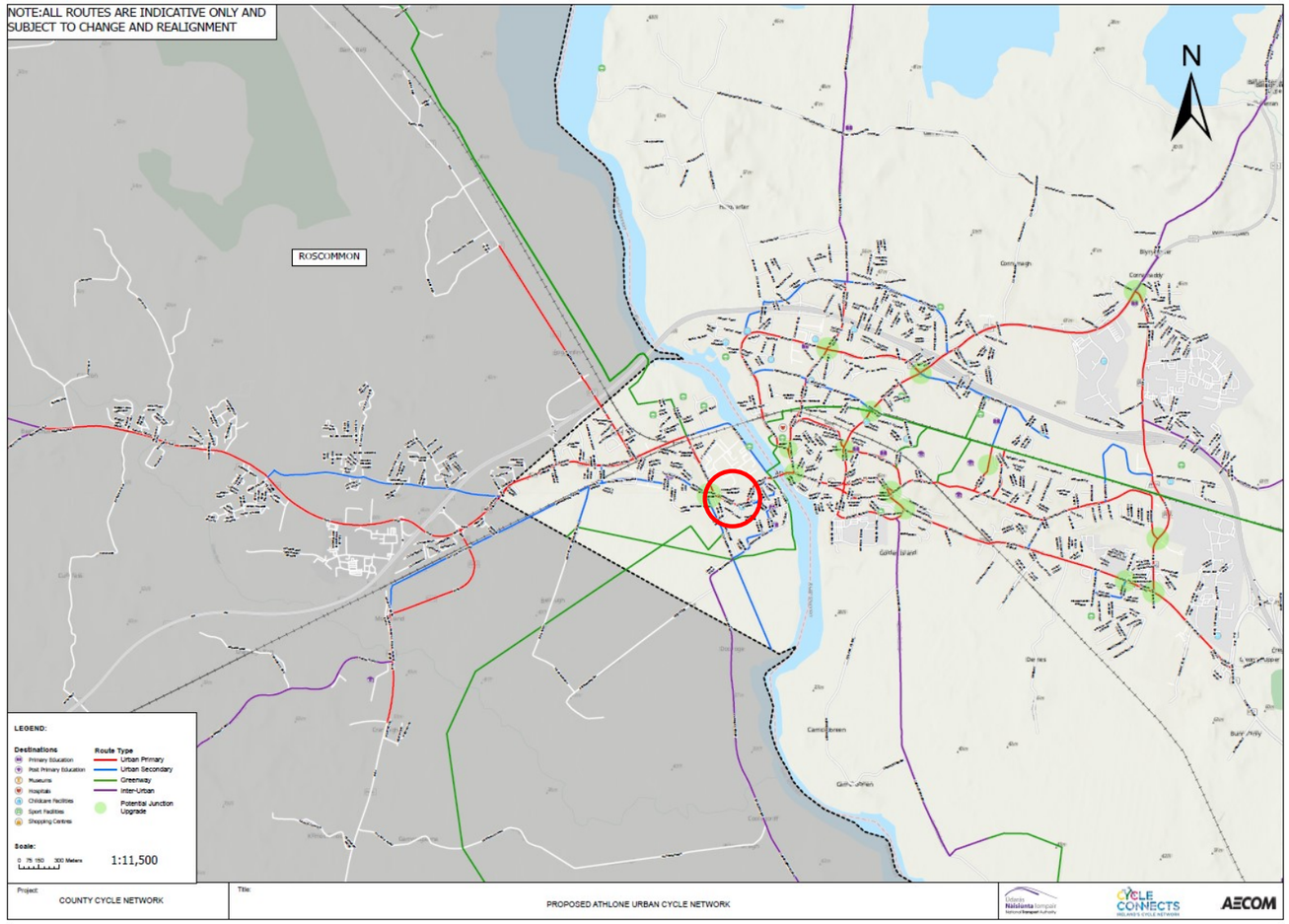
The existing 2 storey extension sits over a 1.5m high void, and has a guarded escape stair from its roof down to the rear garden, the existing extension has a floor area of 29m2 at each floor level. The proposed site access and egress for this development will be via existing rear garden/yard on the southern end of the site which has a medium sized yard which is currently secured with the use of a stone boundary wall and a sliding door directly off the Council car-park (Zoned Residential), and via the existing front door directly off Connaught Street.

The development will consist of the following:

1no. 2 bed (4 person) Duplex Apartments (c.91.6m2), 2no. 1bed Apartment units (c. 45.8 m2 each) with associated private amenity spaces and a shared amenity space.

The proposed development will use of good quality external materials and insulation, efficient heating systems, use of PV panels on roofs, sustainable water use and drainage design.

The front elevation of the house will retain and repair where necessary the rough cast render over smooth rendered plinth with 2 over 2 timber sliding sash windows and round headed door case with timber front door.



Access, Parking & Movement (DMURS)

The Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 specifies that car-parking shall be provided at a rate of one space per dwelling and an additional visitor space for every three dwellings. The development guidelines would therefore require 4 spaces.

However, this proposal does not propose any additional spaces, as it is a town centre location and as there is a large surface car park to the rear of the property.

The strategy for the proposed development delivers a high degree of permeability and legibility for all network users particularly for sustainable forms of travel.

The primary access for the subject site will be via Connaught Street which is serviced by bus routes, the secondary access for the site is via the rear of the property.

The development will incorporate cycle storage within the development, this approach will encourage people to leave their car at home in favour of walking and cycling to near by facilities. The Site is on an Urban Secondary Active Travel Route for Athlone, this route will facilitate access to the Athlone Active travel network of Urban Primary, Urban Secondary and Inter Urban routes, the Athlone Canal - Green way and the Old Rail Trail (NCN Dublin to Galway Greenway).

Materials - Outline Specification

A minimal palette of durable materials is proposed for the external facades.
Materials have been chosen for their suitability to the local environment, ability to provide variety in terms of colour, tone and texture, and for their appropriateness to the building use.
For sustainability, materials have been chosen which are substantially maintenance free in order to ensure that the buildings will age and weather well without the need to carry out extensive maintenance regimes.
For the new extension the materials include brick and acrylic render on mineral wool external insulation with aluminum / wood casement windows and Polyester powder coated vertical Steel slat balconies, which are complemented by powder-coated Entrance door canopies and polyester powder coated aluminum parapet cappings and window cills.

All service pipework and vents are concealed.

All external finishes are long service life materials with minimal maintenance requirements. Adequate hard standing is provided throughout the site for reach & wash equipment to allow for regular cleaning.

Foundations

Mini Pile or Slab Foundation – based on SI report / investigation.

Ground floor build up

Existing floors lifted and excavated to provide new insulated floors

New 150 concrete subfloor

1600 guage DPM / Radon

Floor Insulation – 150mm Unilin XT/PR – UF or similar or (0.022 Thermal Conductivity) to achieve a minimum Uvalue of 0.13

500 Gauge Separating

Underfloor heating (wet System)

60mm Thermal (2.3 Conductivity of screed) Gypsum Liquid screed

Front Elevation wall

Cork lined existing stone walls (or other more suitable recommended systems)

Party walls (side walls)

75mm Gyplner to inside of all party walls shared with accommodation on the other side of the party wall.

Rear Elevation & extension

New Structural Steel framing as primary structure.

LGS metal framed infill walls with external wall insulation & acrylic render as external face of new walls.

50mm Gypliner

on 2no. layers of 12.5mm Plasterboard

on C70 metal stud walls with 100mm Rock wool Batt between the metal studs,

15mm Calcium Silicate board (cemrock xtreme or other equal and approved) fixed back to the C70 Galv metal Stud walls

160mm External wall insultation (StoTherm Mineral or other equal and approved) with roto fix mechanical fixings back to Metal stud locations.

Outer surface with reinforcing coat, glass fibre reinforcing mesh, intermediate priming coat & Decorative render finish.

Upper floors build up

2no. layers of 12.5mm Plasterboard to u/s of existing floor joists.

Existing floor joists to be retained and made good.

Cork separator between the joists and the new floor sheeting.

Floor boards to be removed and replaced with OSB Sheeting with full fill Rockwool or similar and approved between the joists.

Existing Pitched Roof

To remain as is.

200mm Rockwool Blat in the roof space between and over the joists.

Second Floor Ceiling

300mm Drop MF type drop ceiling with 15mm Fire Line Plasterboard

300mm Rockwool Blat over the suspended ceiling

All Chimneys to be closed up and ventilated to prevent moisture buildup.

Fenestration

Existing Front door - to be made good with sympathetic repairs as required and painted.

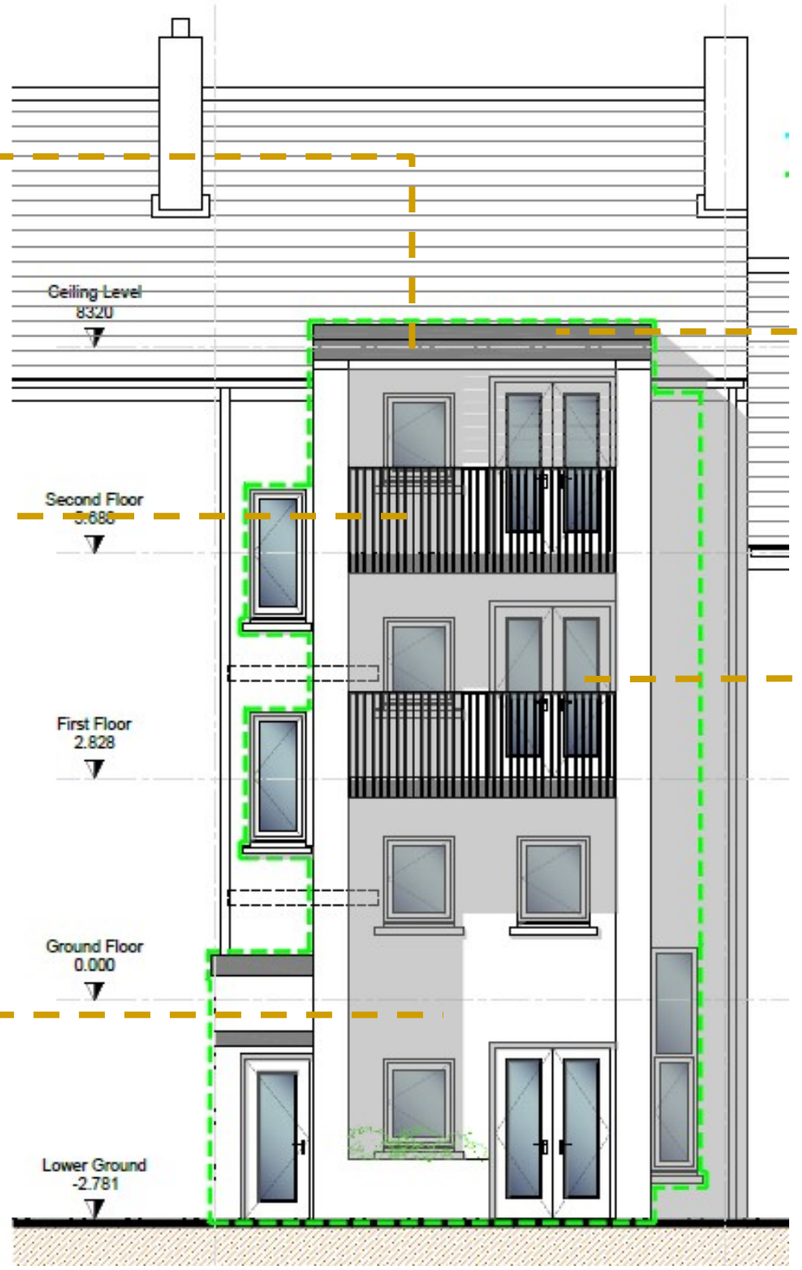
Front Ground Floor window - to be replaced with Wooden sash window made from conservation techniques.

Existing Upper Floors front windows – to be inspected and repaired with conservation techniques.

New Windows and doors to the rear elevation – 24mm DG units in Alu Clad windows and doors.

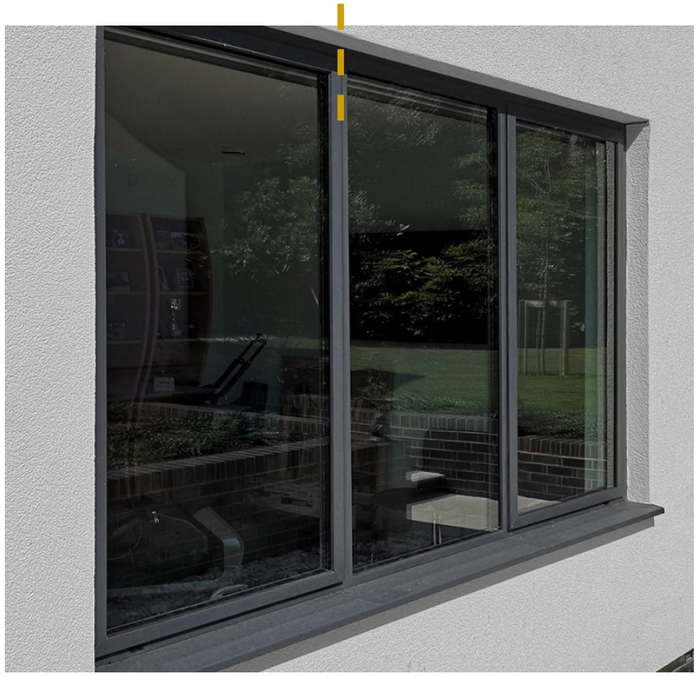
Materials—Architectural Treatment & Materials to the extension

Slatted Steel as balcony balustrades and Brise Soleil to rear extension / elevation.



Aluminium close fascia with Single ply membrane to roof of rear extension Elevation

Acrylic Rendered External Walls



Aluminium Windows & Door s to new extension / Rear

EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION
1:50 @ A3

Listed Building walls to be retained and repaired using traditional methods, openings only to be made once approval from the Heritage department is received.

Organic matter/ plants etc to be removed from roof level, gutters, flat roofs and spigots.

Damaged / broken rainwater goods to be repaired and replaced with existing rainwater goods with cast iron equivalent to match existing.

Façade cleaning of the existing rough cast render facade cleaning using the Nebulous water cleaning method in order to the existing protected structure building .

windows:

All windows to remain as original Timber Sash Windows, windows previously changed to PVC or another modern material must be removed and replaced with a new treated timber sash window made using the methods, proportion and dimensional sizes of the remaining original windows.

Submit name and details of proposed specialist joiner /repair workshop for the 13no. protected structure windows (consisting of 5no. nine over six, 5no. Two over Two and 3no.Four over Four as identified on the drawings) for approval by WCC Architect. Contractors to consider “Ventrolla windows Dublin” or other equal and approved by Westmeath County Council (WCC)

Consider repair in situ before committing to removing windows for repair. If it must be removed, this should be done immediately prior to repairs being carried out

Before removal tag and schedule the existing windows and their existing locations so that they can be put back in their original openings. Carefully remove existing (nine over six) existing sash windows and transport safely to repair workshop.

If several windows must be dismantled in the course of repair, it is good practice to mark and record all the components and where they fit in before beginning the work as there are bound to be tiny variations.

Remove, Clean, and repair all ironmongery, surviving original ironmongery such as cord clamps, sash lifts and sash fasteners should be retained and reused wherever possible.

Clean and remove excess paints to allow the window to ensure the windows function properly, and to inspect the windows thoroughly and spot any developing problems. Windows that have been painted shut can be fixed by carefully cutting through the paint using a craft knife and gently using a broad-based thin scraper blade to lever the sash and case apart. Take care to avoid damage to timber, glass, putty, and surrounding masonry.

Protect the glass and ironmongery when cleaning.

Carefully repair the existing sash windows identified using original techniques and methods to retain the traditional characteristics in terms of performance and design.

When making repairs retain as much of the original timber as possible wherever repair is required.

New replacement wood sections should be Accoya (acetylated treated & environmentally sourced) timber and jointed with EPI adhesive only. Replacement sections should have accurate profiles, so joints fit properly.

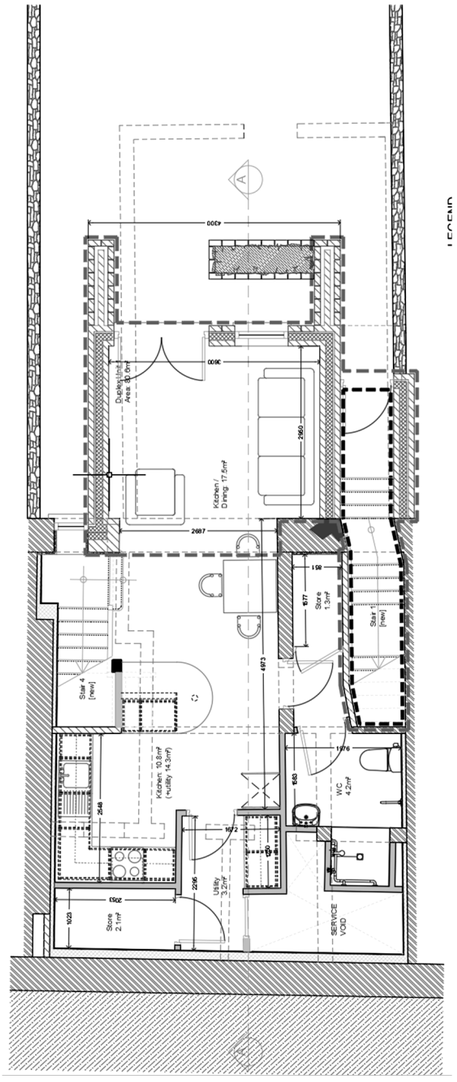
Existing paint can be an effective base for fresh coats, but it is important to ensure compatibility between that paint and any new coats. All timber should be sound and the surface clean and dry before applying paint. If the paintwork has completely failed it should be removed and the surface prepared for new paint. Traditionally, bare timber was conditioned using raw linseed oil. Fill defects in the surface and sand it. Seal any knots by applying shellac, or similar, to seal in their resin. Don’t sand over the shellac or the shellac seal will fail. Submit paint methods statement and paint type for approval by WMCC prior to commencing with the work. Prime all surfaces including end grain. For a uniform colour, apply the undercoat and topcoats thinly and evenly. The paint should completely cover the putty and should slightly overlap onto the glass (1-2mm) to seal the joint. To avoid sealing the window shut, the joints where the sashes and the surrounding case meet must not be painted over.

Re-fixing all loose stop and parting beads and by using a simple system of draught strips between the sash and frame.

If historic ironmongery is beyond repair replace with best quality replacements. Replace all cords and repair and pully wheels. Refit new replacement draught excluders. Re-hang the sashes and check weight balance for adjustments required, leave the windows working easily. Replace broken or missing putty in its entirety and repaint the window. Soften putty in order to reglaze or to facilitate repairs, this work is to be carried out by an experienced contractor to prevent loss of Historic glass. If panes had been removed to allow for a sash repair, the glass must be numbered to ensure panes are put back in their original place, do not use stickers or masking tape. Any damaged glass panes are to be replaced with French Cylinder glass.

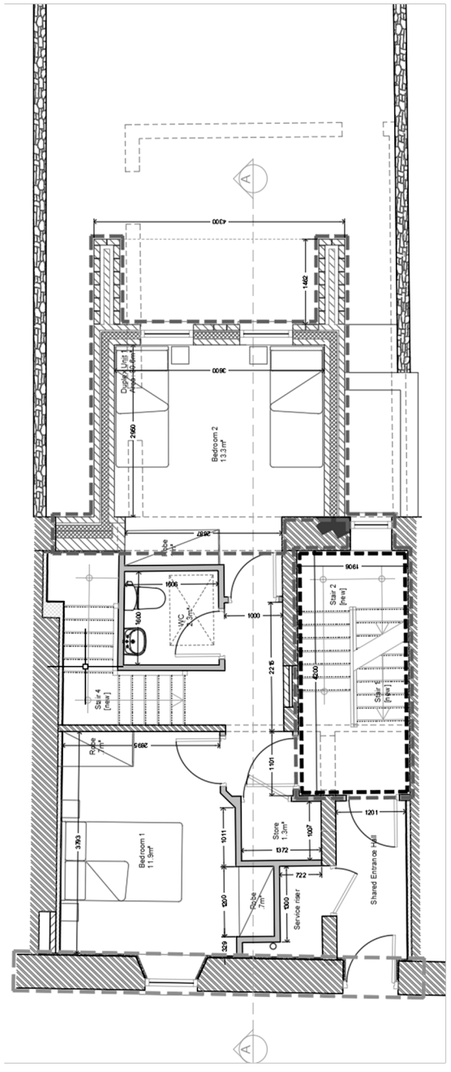
Reinstall the repaired windows the original openings

Typology - Unit layouts



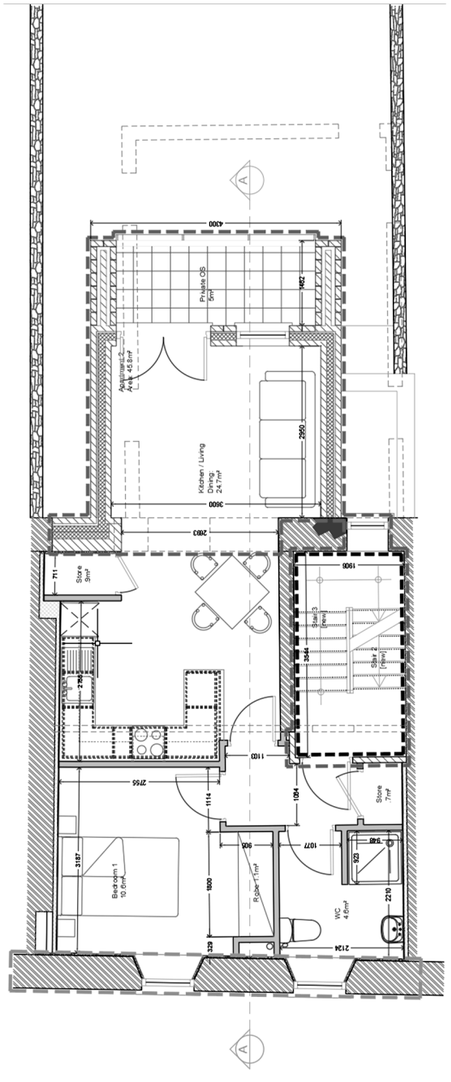
Basement Plan

Kitchen & living accommodation for 2 bed Duplex



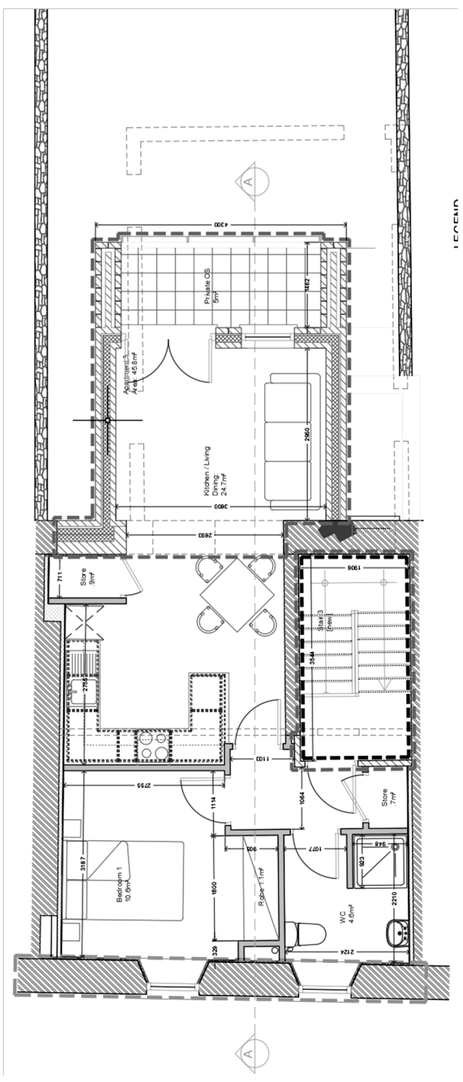
Ground Floor Plan

Bedroom accommodation for 2 bed Duplex



First Floor Plan

1 bed apartment unit



Second Floor Plan

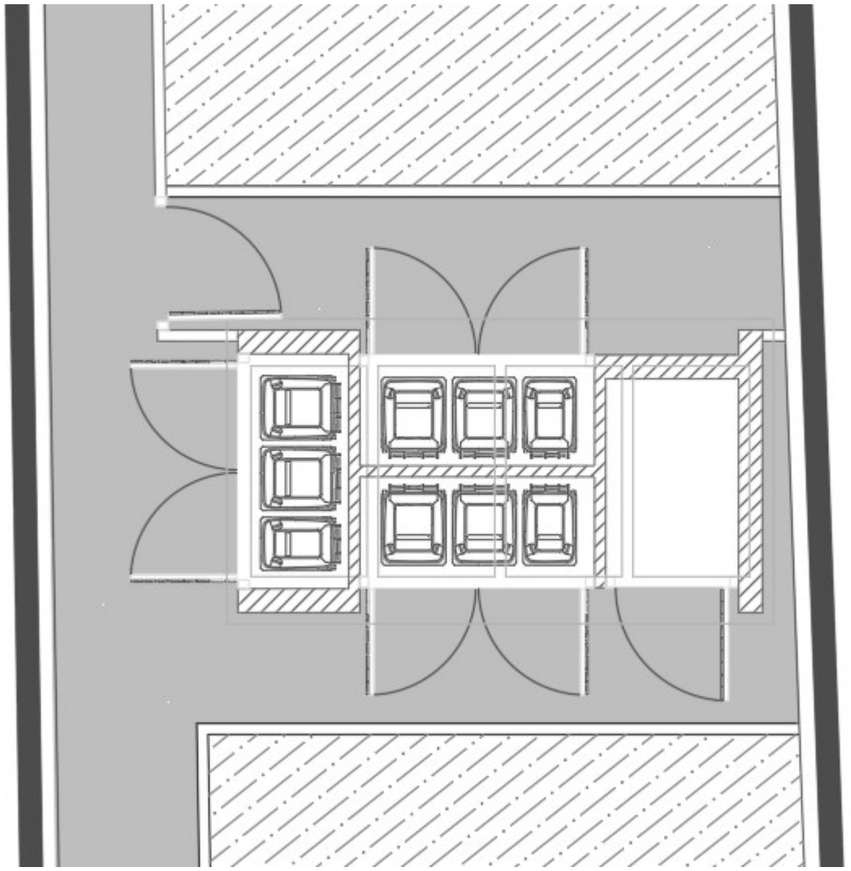
1 bed apartment unit

Proposed Layouts

The proposed layouts are based on keeping the existing stair location to service all upper floors, whilst the Basement and Ground Floor Duplex apartment has its own internal staircase on the opposite party wall.

Whilst it would have been preferred to keep the existing stair case, once surveyed it was found that the existing stair case was non compliant and a hazard especially in the event of an emergency escape from the upper floors, there fore a new compliant stair case is proposed for the existing stair case location.

The apartment designs are very compartmentalized, separated by walls and doors, resulting in fragmented and separate spaces separated by internal walls. For example, the entry space and stair core are separate chambers, which allows the apartment units to remain sealed off. The bedrooms branch off the circulation spaces leading to the living space, kitchen, entries, and bathrooms are separate distinct spaces with their own doors.



Waste Management Proposal - Proposed dedicated Bin storage at rear of No. 36 Connaught Street.

Waste Management Plan

An Operational Waste Management Plan has been prepared by Westmeath County Council

and in included below.

Each unit will have their own dedicated lockable bin storage area within 6m from the rear of the building.

Each Bin store will have sufficient space for 3 no. 240 Litre bins , for 1no. General Waste, 1no. Recyclable waste and 1no. Food / Compostable waste.

The Bins for each individual unit can be registered with licensed operators for removal of waste on agreed schedules.

Energy & Sustainability

The buildings have been designed to maximise energy efficiency and promote

Sustainability by use of good quality external materials and insulation, efficient heating systems, and sustainable water use and drainage design.

The development proposed the use of 2no. Photovoltaic panels per housing unit, therefore there will be a total of 6no. Solar PV panels provided on the rear facing roofs of the development.

The development will employ the use of air source heating systems combined with electrical heating backup, heat recovery and ventilation systems in all types.