



**TO: AN CATHAOIRLEACH
& EACH MEMBER OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL**

RE: ABBEY QUARTER - CONSERVATION PLAN

Date: 13th February 2023

Dear Councillor,

Variation No. 1 to Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 includes an objective “...3J To prepare a Heritage Conservation Plan for St. Francis Abbey, Evans’ Turret and St. Francis’ Well in the context of the existing City Wall conservation plan in conjunction with the Heritage Council, the Office of Public Works, the National Monuments Service, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and other relevant stakeholders.”

Section 9.3.1.5 of the Kilkenny City Development Plan 2021-2027 notes that “...A conservation plan is currently being compiled for St Francis Abbey, Evans turret and sections of Kilkenny City walls which are located on the Abbey Quarter site...” and further notes that “..the Council will facilitate and support the implementation of existing (and any further) conservation plans...”

A draft Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Abbey Quarter has been prepared in collaboration with the National Monuments Service and the Office of Public Works. The draft CMP has been subject to public consultation and consultation with statutory bodies.

Please find attached the Report of the Director of Services outlining the details of the public consultation.

I am satisfied that the draft CMP addresses the future conservation and maintenance of the Heritage Structures listed (*St. Francis Abbey, City walls incorporating Evans Turret and St. Francis’ Well*) noting that the works associated with the implementation of the CMP will be subject to the requirements of various legislation including the National Monument Act 1930 (*as amended*), Planning & Development Act 2000 (*as amended*) and the Habitats Directive.

Its is further noted that the implementation of the CMP will involve all parties involved in the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan, namely Kilkenny County Council, the Office of Public Works, the National Monuments Service (*Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage*) and it is intended that a Steering Group will be established with these parties to oversee the successful implementation of the Conservation Management Plan.

Sean McKeown
A/Chief Executive.

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



Chief Executives Report on the Consultation process
for the Abbey Quarter Conservation Plan



Feb 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared in response to a non statutory public consultation in relation to a Draft Conservation Plan for the Heritage Structures in the Abbey Quarter.

Variation No. 1 to Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 includes an objective “...3J To prepare a Heritage Conservation Plan for St. Francis Abbey, Evans’ Turret and St. Francis’ Well in the context of the existing City Wall conservation plan in conjunction with the Heritage Council, the Office of Public Works, the National Monuments Service, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and other relevant stakeholders.”

Section 9.3.1.5 of the Kilkenny City Development Plan 2021-2027 notes that “...A conservation plan is currently being compiled for St Francis Abbey, Evans turret and sections of Kilkenny City walls which are located on the Abbey Quarter site...” and further notes that “..the Council will facilitate and support the implementation of existing (and any further) conservation plans...”

Following a Tender competition via E-Tenders, a Multi Disciplinary design Team led by Grade 1 Conservation Architects Howley Hayes Cooney was appointed to prepare the required Conservation Plan.

They were supported by the following specialists :

- Conservation Structural Engineers – CORA Consulting Engineers
- Ecologists – Scott Cawley Ltd
- Archaeologist – Archaeological Management Solutions Ltd

A Steering Group was established to oversee the preparation of the Conservation Plan, with the steering Group comprising representatives from the following organisations :

- Kilkenny County Council
- National Monuments Service (*Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*)
- Office of Public Works

1.1 Public Consultation

Notice of the public consultation was advertised by Notice in the Kilkenny People newspaper published on Friday 24th June 2022. It was also advertised on social media and on the consultation portal <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/>

A copy of the public notice is provided in Appendix ‘A’.

Details of the Conservation Plan and the Associated Natura Impact Statement were available for inspection from Monday 27th June 2022 to Monday 25th July 2022 at the following locations:

- Planning Dept., County Hall, John St., Kilkenny.
- <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/>
- <https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/>

Submissions and observations were invited with respect to the Draft Conservation Plan and the associated Natura Impact Statement with a final date for receipt of submissions on Friday 25th July 2022.

The following Statutory Bodies were invited to make submissions on the draft Conservation Management Plan :

- An Comhairle Ealaíon
- Fáilte Ireland
- An Taisce - National Trust for Ireland
- Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Development Applications Unit)
- Heritage Council
- Regional Fisheries Board
- Office of Public Works

The documents on public display were as follows:

- Draft Conservation Plan
- Natura Impact Statement
- Appropriate Assessment Screening

2.0 Brief description of the Conservation Plan

The purpose of the Conservation Management Plan is to establish the history and significance of the site, and provide an overarching vision for the site, together with the various structures that survive within it, and to deliver clear objectives for maintenance and conservation, guidance for any future development of the site.

2.1 Description of the site

St Francis' Abbey is a ruin and a National Monument in State Care, in the ownership of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and managed by the Office of Public Works. Though known as an abbey, it is in fact a friary of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual or simply the Franciscan Order, also known as Franciscans of the First Order or the Grey Friars, founded in Kilkenny following a grant from Richard Marshall, Lord of Kilkenny, in 1231-34.

Evan's Turret, and the existing city wall which adjoins it, and continues along the River Breagh to the Watergate, were once part of the friary precinct and were subsequently subsumed into the city defences. They are in the ownership and care of Kilkenny County Council, as protected structures, and are also protected as national monuments under the National Policy on Town Defences (2008). The City Walls are the subject of a previous Conservation Management

The site of St Francis' Well is now contained in an underground water-filled chamber east of the upstanding remains of St Francis' Abbey, in lands owned by Kilkenny County Council.

2.2 Outline of the Conservation Plan

The format of the conservation plan is summarised as follows

- The history and evolution of the site has been thoroughly researched and presented in the Conservation Plan
- A Statement of Significance, which sets out why this is a place of cultural significance, is assessed under the principles in the Burra Charter (2013).
- A condition survey of the various structures has been prepared, which includes structural and ecological appraisals – this informed the identification of the issues and threats, or immediate concerns for the structures.
- The Issues and Threats to the structures are identified and outlined
- Conservation Strategies are set out – in particular a list of works to be undertaken is presented, with these works identified as being Urgent or required in the Short (3 yrs) , Medium (5 yrs) or Long term (10-15 yrs)
- Development Strategies set out the recommendations for the future development of the areas incorporating these Heritage Structures

2.3 Outcomes from the Conservation Plan

- **Significance**

The abbey is highly significant as one of the largest and best examples of a former Franciscan Abbey in Ireland, and the subject of early antiquarian and conservation interest, together with its late-nineteenth century designation as a national monument.

The principal architectural significance of Evan's Turret and adjoining walls lies in their being part of an important linear monument, part standing, which once enclosed the city. This significance is reflected in the fact that the whole City Wall, together with Evan's Turret, is designated as a national monument, of national importance, under the 'National Policy on Town Defences' (DoEHLG 2008).

- **Threats**

Redundancy and neglect present the greatest single threats to the significance of an important historic structure or place, even a ruined one. The serious challenges now faced by the Kilkenny County Council and the OPW should ensure that regular maintenance and repair works are carried out to these structures to preserve them for future generations.

- **Ecology**

There are two European sites within the vicinity of the study area but the study area does not overlap with any European sites. The nearest European site is the River Nore SPA, adjacent to Evans Turret. The River Barrow and River Nore SAC is also adjacent to the study area, adjacent to Evans Turret.

Consideration of the lighting design for the site, with respect to impact on the biodiversity should be considered in future proposals, along with engagement of an ecologist for any works on site. A preconstruction otter survey is recommended for any works along, or adjacent to, the River Nore. Replacement or alternate bat roosts should also be put in place if any future works are likely to cause disturbance to roosting bats, and a bat derogation licence may be required if works will impact upon any existing bat roosts.

- **Conservation Strategies**

None of the historic structures on the Abbey Quarter site are in use, although as a whole, they are in a fair condition due to various conservation works undertaken over the years. The impact of the brewing industry is seen throughout, as the settings of the structures have been greatly compromised, and interventions into the surviving abbey buildings are still visible from the brewing period.

As the Abbey Quarter site was in private ownership for many years, much of this portion of the city wall, the turret and the abbey were hidden from view and inaccessible. Improving access to the structures should be balanced with ensuring their preservation.

The buried remains of the Abbey are not visible in any way above ground. There is a lack of awareness of the value and extent of the hidden archaeological heritage of the city. The general ground level is much higher than that which would have originally surrounded the abbey and Evan's Turret. This impedes that immediate understanding of the structures.

- **Development Strategies**

There is an opportunity to instigate communication and coordination between Kilkenny County Council, the OPW and the National Monuments Service to establish an acceptable and agreed interface between the abbey and the park.

The park proposals include legible landscaping which will echo the archaeological remains sub-surface, such as the nave and transept. These will be welcome inclusions in the park and will demonstrate clearly the extent of the archaeological remains of the former Abbey.

Ideally the tasting room structure should be removed as it detracts from the views of the abbey and is positioned too close to the structure, while also sitting proud of the east gable window. However wholesale removal may not be feasible, particularly in the short-term, as there is an intention to use this building for the duration of the park and masterplan development works on site. No other

structures or buildings should be built within the environs of the abbey, and for this reason the tasting rooms may need to be retained to serve as a functional park building.

The design of development Block 9 must be carefully considered in the future, and views of the abbey from along the river-bank should be considered within the developing design of this block. Opportunities to glimpse the abbey on approach could be achieved by creating openings through this proposed city block, and exploring the height and scale of this element so that the abbey still retains prominence in the backdrop, along this approach.

The incorporation of a platform within Evan's Turret should be considered. This would allow for occasional access to revive the eighteenth-century purpose of the turret as a prospect tower from which to enjoy views over the River Nore and surrounding landscape.

Removal of one metre or more of earth to the south side of Evan's Turret to reveal more of the historic detail might also be considered. The impact of occasional flooding should be considered within this proposal. The park proposals include for a new pedestrian path along the south edge of the city wall which will allow for visitors to appreciate this historic feature to a much greater degree.

There are various key stakeholders involved with this site, with responsibility for different aspects of these historic structures. Ahead of any further development proposals a steering group or committee should be established, comprising of representatives from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Office of Public Works, Kilkenny County Council and the Heritage Council, and others, to devise a detailed implementation strategy for the conservation management plan site.

3.0 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

Two submissions were received in response to the public consultation / consultation with statutory bodies :

	Obervation	Response
<p>1. Kilkenny Archaeological Society</p>	<p>A conservation plan covering the total site including St Francis Abbey, the Tasting Room, St Francis Well, Evans Turret, City Walls, The Bull Inn wall, the Tea House and Chancellors Mill needs to be undertaken as soon as possible resulting in a management plan to ensure better maintenance.</p> <p>How to deal with what is under ground is a much bigger challenge, but encompasses years of hidden history.</p> <p>Evans Turret is a hidden gem and restoration of interior flooring and roofing would help to stabilise the building providing an asset of significant value to the city.</p>	<p>The Conservation Management Plan has focussed on the Heritage Structures located within the former Abbey Precinct. (Abbey, City Walls, Well) - this is in line with the stated objective in the Kilkenny City & Environs development Plan 2014 - 2020.</p> <p>The conservation of the other structures referenced should be reviewed in the context of development proposals in the area of these structures. It is noted that significant conservation works have been undertaken recently for the conservation of the Tea Houses.</p> <p>The Conservation Plan outlines a methodology for the representation of the below ground archaeology in the design of the proposed park to be developed in the Abbey precinct. This will involve the representation above ground of the underground archaeology by way of changes in paving types and planting etc. The Conservation Plan further outlines the need for interpretation (see Section 8 - defining issues and threats)</p> <p>Initial stabilisation works to Evans turret have been undertaken and the Conservation Plan sets out further proposals that should be considered to provide access to the structure in the future (subject to further assessment)</p>

	<p>Retention and restoration of the tasting room deserves discussion, although it is a recent addition, It does not distract from the archaeological heritage of the site.</p> <p>The Abbey Quarter Conservation plan should compliment the Abbey Quarter Masterplan and in turn The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-27.</p> <p>Every effort should be taken to ensure there is no risk of affecting the conservation objectives and the budget should not work on the 'as resources allow' policy.</p>	<p>The conservation plan proposes the removal or truncating of the Tasting room in the long term noting that it should be retained in the short term for uses associated with the implementation of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan.</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Noted - the conservation plan sets out a phased approach to conservation works, providing an opportunity for conservation works to be budgeted for over a period of time.</p>
<p>2. Inland fisheries Ireland</p>	<p>Submission notes the proximity of the plan area to the River Nore and River Breaghagh, with recent surveys indicating the presence of salmon fry in both channels.</p> <p>Submission notes number of measures to be implemented when works are being undertaken associated with the management plan - these deal with issues such as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage, management and conveyance of materials • Interference with the bed, gradient, profile of watercourses • Timing of instream works • Need for Method Statements for works with the potential to impact on aquatic habitats • Servicing of plant & equipment • Site run off 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted - the detailed requirements of IFI will be taken into consideration when undertaking works associated with the implementation of the Conservation Management Plan.</p> <p>The issues noted have been and will be incorporated into the contract requirements associated with the implementation of the Conservation management plan.</p>

	<p>(full details of the submission are outlined in Appendix. B)</p> <p>The overriding requirement is to comply with the IFI Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to waters (2016)</p> <p>Notes that the Conservation Management Plan should acknowledge the potential amenity value of the Breagh and Nore Rivers. Restoration of river visibility should be considered.</p> <p>If Invasive Species occur a biosecurity protocol should be implemented for their management.</p> <p>Contractor to nominate a responsible person to oversee environmental monitoring and housekeeping.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed - the proposed development of the park centred around St Francis Abbey will provide public access to the areas immediately adjoining the River Nore & Breagh. The provision of a park with associated tree planting in an area currently occupied by an industrial yard is a very significant improvement of the amenity along the river banks.</p> <p>The restoration of river visibility would need to be considered in the context of the area being within a Special Area of Conservation.</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p>
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KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCILS INTENTION WITH REGARD TO THE
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Abbey Quarter - Conservation Management Plan

I recommend that Kilkenny County Council proceed with the approval of the Draft Abbey Quarter Conservation Management Plan, that has been prepared in collaboration with the National Monuments Service and the Office of Public Works and that has been subject to public consultation as outlined in this report.

It is noted that the implementation of the CMP will involve all parties involved in the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan, namely Kilkenny County Council, the Office of Public Works, the National Monuments Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and it is intended that a Steering Group will be established with these parties to oversee the successful implementation of the Conservation Management Plan.

It is further noted that the implementation of the measures outlined in the Conservation Management Plan will involve works that will be subject in due course to the requirements of various legislation including the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Habitats Directive.



Martin Prendiville,

Head of Finance.

Appendix 1

COPY OF PUBLIC NOTICE



ABBHEY QUARTER CONSERVATION PLAN

Objective 3J of the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 outlined an objective to *“Prepare a Heritage Conservation Plan for St. Francis Abbey, Evans’ Turret and St. Francis’ Well in the context of the existing City Wall conservation plan in conjunction with the Heritage Council, the Office of Public Works, the National Monuments Service, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and other relevant stakeholders.”*

Objective C2A of the current Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 outlines an objective *“...To continue to implement the Abbey Quarter Masterplan and Urban Design Code and secure the overall development of the area in accordance with their objectives.”* The Development Plan also notes that a Conservation Plan is currently being prepared for *“...St. Francis’ Abbey, Evan’s Turret, and sections of Kilkenny City walls which are located on the Abbey Quarter site”* and includes an Objective (C4D) *“To facilitate and support the implementation of existing (and any further) conservation plans, as resources allow.”*

Kilkenny County Council has now prepared a Draft Conservation Plan for these Heritage Structures in the Abbey Quarter. The Draft Conservation Plan is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement.

A copy of the Draft Conservation Plan and accompanying documentation may be inspected at the following locations for a 4 week period from **Monday 27th June 2022 to Monday 25th July 2022.**

- online at <http://consult.kilkenny.ie/>
- Planning Dept., Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John St., Kilkenny City from 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays).

Written submissions or observations in relation to the Draft Conservation Plan and Natura Impact Statement received within this period will be taken into consideration in the completion of the Conservation Plan.

Submissions or observations may be made :

- online at <http://consult.kilkenny.ie/> or
- by e-mail to aqconservation@kilkennycoco.ie

Submissions must be received by **5PM on Monday 25th July 2022.** Please note that all submissions will be made available for public viewing on Kilkenny County Council’s consultation website.

Martin Prendiville,
Head of Finance.

Appendix 2

Submissions Received

Abbey Quarter Conservation Plan

The conservation committee of Kilkenny Archaeological Society are delighted to have the opportunity to enter a submission in connection with the Abbey Quarter Conservation Plan.

The St Francis Abbey site has served Kilkenny very well and great foresight was shown by members of Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Borough Council to purchase the site when Diageo ceased brewing in 2013.

A conservation plan covering the total site including St Francis Abbey, the Tasting Room, St Francis Well, Evans Turret, City Walls, The Bull Inn wall, the Tea House and Chancellors Mill needs to be undertaken as soon as possible resulting in a management plan to ensure better maintenance. The above are the structures that are visible. How to deal with what is under ground is a much bigger challenge, but encompasses years of hidden history. Evans Turret is a hidden gem and restoration of interior flooring and roofing would help to stabilise the building providing an asset of significant value to the city. Retention and restoration of the tasting room deserves discussion, although it is a recent addition, it does not distract from the archaeological heritage of the site.

The Abbey Quarter Conservation plan should compliment the Abbey Quarter Masterplan and in turn The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-27.

Every effort should be taken to ensure there is no risk of affecting the conservation objectives and the budget should not work on the 'as resources allow' policy.

Please acknowledge receipt of submission.

Yours sincerely, Kieran Bollard, Conservation Committee,

Kilkenny Archaeological Society ,

Rothe House,

Parliament Street,

Kilkenny .

22/07/2022



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Planning Section,
Kilkenny County Council
County Hall,
John Street,
Kilkenny

3 November 2022

Re: Draft Abbey Quarter Kilkenny City Draft Conservation Management Plan

Via Email to aqconservation@kilkennycoco.ie

To whom it may concern:

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is the statutory authority tasked under section 7(1) of the Inland Fisheries Act 2010 (No. 10 of 2010) with responsibility for the protection, management, and conservation of the inland fisheries resource. With respect to the Abbey Quarter Conservation Management Plan (AQCMP) IFI wishes to make following observations:

The Abbey Quarter is bordered on the east by the Nore_170 and on the north by the Bregagh_030. The Abbey Quarter is also immediately adjacent the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. Electrofishing surveys of the Bregagh River and the Nore main channel carried out by IFI in 2021 show salmon fry on both channels within close proximity of the Abbey Quarter site.

The Nore_170 currently has *Good* Ecological Status. It's current Risk Status is *Under Review*. Among the significant pressures on this water body are Diffuse Urban Run-Off. It is also classified as a Heavily Modified Water Body under the draft Third River Basin Management Plan. The Bregagh (Kilkenny)_030 currently has *Poor* Ecological Status and is *At Risk* of not meeting Good Status within the next RBMP Cycle. Among the significant pressures on this water body are diffuse urban run-off, and hydromorphological pressures including channelisation and embankment.

The storage, management and conveyance of materials on site must not permit any deleterious matter to reach adjacent surface water systems either directly or indirectly. Any works in or adjacent to the aquatic zones the applicant must comply IFI's *Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters (2016)*.

There should be no interference with the bed, gradient, profile or alignment of watercourses without prior notification and the written agreement of Inland Fisheries Ireland. Instream works can only take place during the period 1 July to 30 September and during periods of low flow. This includes the placement of scaffolding on the river bed.

Method statements must be provided to IFI for any works with the potential to impact on aquatic habitats. This includes riparian or instream works or any works e.g. repair and repointing works, with the potential to discharge deleterious matter to surface waters. IFI requests that the method statements are provided at least ten working days before works commence. Approval from IFI should be obtained in writing before works proceed.

IE Cluain Meala, Sraid Angléasa, Cluain Meala, Co. Tiobraid Árann, E91 RD25
IFI Clonmel, Angléasa Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, E91 RD25
+353(0)52 618 0055 - clonmel@fisheriesireland.ie - www.fisheriesireland.ie



Iascach Iníre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Servicing including refuelling of plant and equipment shall only be undertaken in designated impermeable hard standing areas located at least 50m from any watercourse. Where temporary diesel or petrol driven pumps are used within the site, they shall be positioned within portable bunded areas. Material stockpiles should be a minimum of 25m from any wetted channels and battened back to a maximum angle of 45 degrees. Buffer zones around the site should be clearly marked in advance of works commencing to preserve their integrity.

Site run-off should be directed through a suitably sized silt/oil interceptor being discharged to any receiving waters. Incorporation of natural surface water management approaches, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into site layout and design can also attenuate pollution and add amenity and recreational value.

Reference should be made to the Inland Fisheries Ireland document *Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment* for further information. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has also produced a best practice guidance document *Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas* (2021).

The AQCMP should acknowledge the potential amenity value of the Bregagh and Nore Rivers. Due consideration should be given to the co-benefits of measures to protect and enhance surface water quality and habitat. These include increased biodiversity, access to nature, and the contribution to general wellbeing. Among the measures that should be considered are restoration of river visibility along the site perimeter.

Should invasive alien species occur on-site IFI requests that a biosecurity protocol be implemented for their management. The protocol should indicate how the contractor will treat machinery, workwear etc that may potentially become a vector for transporting invasive alien species to or from the site.

During construction the contractor should nominate a responsible person to oversee environmental monitoring and housekeeping, and ensure that guidelines and good practice are being adhered to on site. In the event of any accidental chemical, fuel or machine oil spillage which threatens an aquatic zone IFI must be informed immediately.

Should you require any clarification on the above please do not hesitate to contact me. Future correspondence can be sent by email to cormac.goulding@fisheriesireland.ie or by post to the address below.

Yours sincerely,

Cormac Goulding
Fisheries Environmental Officer
South-Eastern River Basin District

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Appendix 3

Conservation Management Plan

