



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT TUAM TOWN HALL DESIGN AND PLANNING STATEMENT

PART 8 PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESS

Planning and Development Act 2000 (As Amended)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (As Amended)

Galway County Council

Galway County Council - Urban & Rural Regeneration Team

Contents

1. Overview of Proposed Development.....	2
2. Background	3
3. Description of the Project.....	4
4. Planning Context.....	4
5. Design and General Factors.	10
6. Architectural Conservation & Heritage.....	10
7. Archaeology	10
8. Ecology	10
9. Parking Provision.....	11
10. Consultations	11

1. Overview of Proposed Development

Galway County Council is seeking Part 8 approval to redevelop the former Town Hall in Tuam for use as a multi-functional space to include a creative and enterprise hub and co-working space, offices, meeting rooms and supporting spaces.

Internal works to include:

- Limited internal demolition of existing walls
- A new reception area, office space, meeting rooms, open plan creative enterprise / coworking hub, storage.
- General upgrade works to the canteen and sanitary facilities.
- Carefully remove plasterboard and substrate to window heads and areas of external walls showing signs of dampness. Source of dampness must be identified and rectified prior to decorating with proprietary calcium silicate board and lime-based render.
- Fire compartmentation upgrade works to stairwell and first floor

External works to include:

- Specialist cleaning of stonework and roof and clocktower.
- Specialist cleaning and repairs to 4 no. clocks
- Carefully remove all cementitious pointing to front of building and repoint with hydraulic lime- based mortar throughout.
- Repair existing rainwater goods where possible. Any replacement items must be of suitable material and design.
- Undertake any necessary localised repairs to timber windows & doors prior to careful cleaning, preparation and painting.
- Inspect roof and re-fix all loose slates.
- Repair / replace lead flashings as required.
- Proprietary cleaning and repairs to roof mounted ventilation cowl as required.
- Carefully remove all cementitious render to rear of building and replace with natural hydraulic lime-based render.
- Replace concrete tile roof to first floor rear extension with material suitable for low pitch.
- Form new door opening to rear of building at first floor level to align with former window opening.
- Approx. 6.5m² of metal gangway and railing linking new emergency exit to existing external escape stairs with select painted finish.
- Remove existing exit door to rear of building at first floor level and replace with fire rated timber screen with slim line double glazed units and painted finish.
- New signage
- New Uplighting of building
- Utilising existing service connections to public sewer and associated site works.

2. Background

The former Town Hall building in the ownership of Galway County Council is an impressive visually dominant building which faces onto Market Square. The building is located within Tuam's Architectural Conservation Area and the proposal includes works to a Recorded Protected Structure (No. 30,331,029). Tuam town is classified as a monastic town and is a recorded monument (GA029:199).

The building sits in a prominent corner location with the main part of the elevation fronting onto Market Square and High Street, and a first-floor annex to the rear.

Tuam Town Hall was originally built in 1857 on a site donated by the Hancock family and underwent further extension in 1884. The building was destroyed by fire in 1920 during the War of Independence only to be restored again in 1926.

Refurbishment works in the late 90's and early 2000's allowed the building to function as a meeting space for the town council, however this function has subsequently moved to the area office and in recent times the building has been somewhat underutilised.



Figure 1: Extract from Site Location Map

3. Description of the Project

The Townhall has particular social and historical importance for the town of Tuam and its proposed renovation and repurposing would bring it back into community use and preserve it for future generations. Once operational, it would provide space for numerous users in Tuam and the surrounding areas and act as an attraction for visitors to the town.

This project will involve internal renovations and reconfiguration of the main building to make way for the construction of new multi-functional spaces. The ground floor will be served with an attractive modern reception area leading to bright cellular offices and a meeting room which are subdivided with folding partitions to allow for a greater flexibility of the space on offer. Informal break out spaces are provided for on the ground floor in the form of partially enclosed pods.

The large open plan space on the first floor will remain relatively untouched except for necessary repairs / upgrades to the drylining system which will require opening-up works to deal with damp ingress. A smoke lobby will be created adjacent to the internal escape stairs and the external exit to the rear of the building will be relocated to improve the fire protection measures. The canteen and sanitary spaces will undergo internal renovations and fit out.

External works will include those previously listed in the overview.

4. Planning Context



National Planning Framework

These proposals are a primary objective of the National Planning Framework (NPF) national strategic outcome 7, to provide enhanced amenity and heritage. The proposed development seeks to address this by renovating a historic building, enhancing, and improving the visual amenity of the streetscape and bringing the building into community use within the historic town centre.

Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy (RSES)

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy seeks to *“Support the development of Tuam in a sensitive manner which conserves and protects the historic core, recognising the towns cultural and historic built environment as a valuable asset, whilst harnessing the economic, social and cultural value that it presents for current and future generations.”*

Regional Policy Objective 5.14 of the same document promotes *“the conservation of the Region’s National Monuments and built heritage, structures that are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest that are of Regional Significance or above.”*

Galway County Development Plan

A primary objective of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (CDP) is the proper planning and sustainable development of County Galway over the period 2015-2021 and beyond. The development plan sets out the overall vision, with strategies, policies and objectives for the county as a whole. The proposal is in compliance with the CDP strategy to ensure that the physical environment and streetscape is enhanced, that streets are designed and well-lit and therefore

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the planning authority is required to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for towns with a population of more than 5,000 persons. The current Tuam Local Area Plan 2018 – 2024 was adopted on 22nd October 2018 in accordance with section 20 of the act.

Tuam Local Area Plan

Zoning

The site is zoned ‘C1 – Town Centre / Commercial’ in the Tuam Local Area Plan 2018 – 2024 which promotes *‘a range of suitable retail and service facilities throughout the town and protect the vitality and viability of the town centre, while providing a strong base for employment opportunities’*. The proposed uses outlined in this Part 8 application are in accordance with this zoning provision.

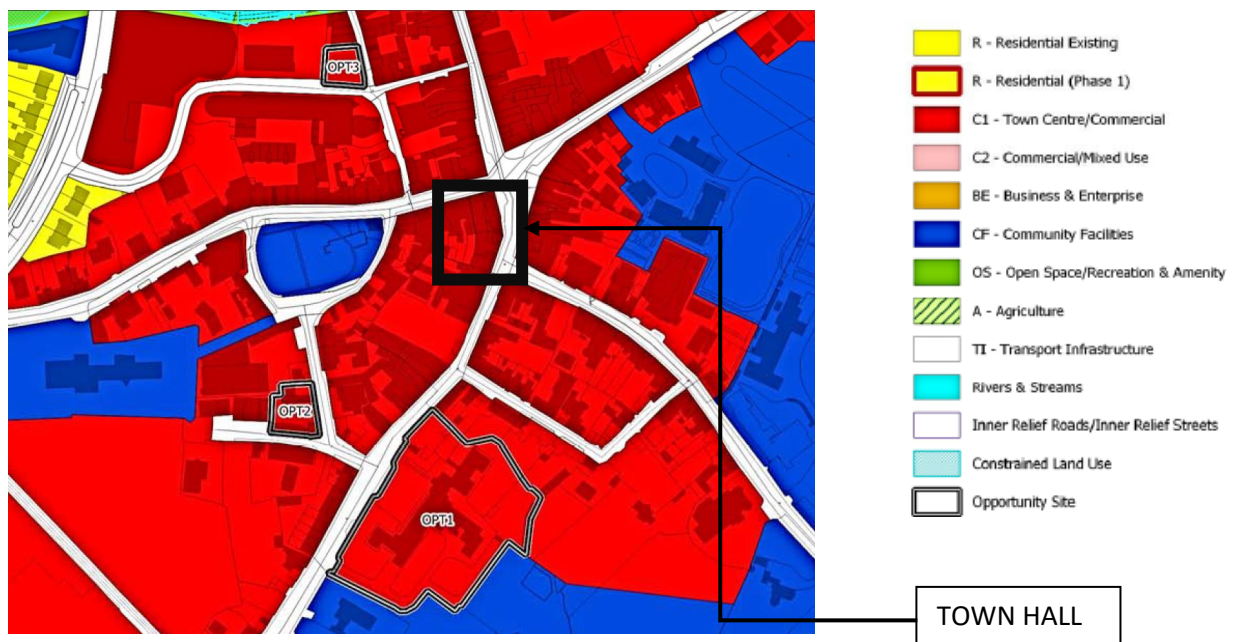


Figure 3: Tuam Local Area Plan 2018-2024, Map 1

The Tuam Local Area Plan 2018-2024 (LAP) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Portumna in the context of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 (CDP) and the Regional Planning Guidelines. It is informed by Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, together with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA).

In order to preserve areas of architectural value, the Tuam Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) has been designated and the Town Hall falls within the ACA.

This proposal is supported by 2 key strategic priorities of the LAP:

- *‘Promoting and facilitating the appropriate growth of the Town, while protecting the built, cultural and natural heritage of Tuam in accordance with applicable legislation and policy. This also includes consideration of particular features of Tuam capitalising on the existing historic fabric of the town. Supporting development in Tuam in a sensitive manner which conserves and protects the historic core, recognising the towns cultural and historic built environment as a valuable asset’.*
- *“Ensuring all new development within the Architectural Conservation Area, reinforces local distinctiveness and creates a sense of place while protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic character of Tuam.”*

This proposal also seeks to comply with the following objectives as set out in the LAP:

Objective DS 1 – Orderly and Sequential Development

Support the orderly and sequential development of the plan area, focussing on consolidation of development, continued vitality and viability of the Town centre and the protection and enhancement of the existing landscape setting, character and unique identity of the town.

Objective DS 3 – Consistency with Core Strategy

Ensure that developments permitted within the plan area are consistent with the zoned land allocations in the Core Strategy and associated provisions in the Galway County Development Plan.

Objective DS 4 – European Sites Network and Habitats Directive Assessment

Protect European sites that form part of the European Sites network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any updated/superseding guidance). A plan or project (e.g., proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:

The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites; or

The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of European Sites.

Objective LU 2 – Commercial/Mixed Use (C2)

Promote the sustainable development of commercial and complementary mixed uses, on suitable lands that can provide focal points for the provision of services to surrounding neighbourhoods/areas and opportunities for commercial enterprises, retail developments and employment creation and which do not undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Objective LU 7– Community Facilities (CF)

Promote the development of community facilities on suitable lands, with a high level of access to the local community, including educational, community, civic, public, institutional, recreational, cultural and other complementary uses, as appropriate.

Policy SI 1 – Social Inclusion and Universal Design & Access

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the principles of social inclusion and universal design & access, to ensure that all individuals have access to goods, services and buildings, in order to assist them to participate in and contribute to all aspects of a vibrant life within Tuam.

Policy CF 1 – Community Facilities and Amenities

It is the policy of the Council to support the provision of an adequate level and equitable distribution of community facilities and amenities in the plan area that:

- Meets the needs of the local community as they arise and as resources permit.
- Are located in appropriate, accessible locations to serve the residential population in the plan area.
- Are clustered or linked together wherever facilities and amenities are complementary and it is practicable to do so, to allow for shared and multi-purpose use of facilities.

Policy ED 1 – Economic Development

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support sustainable economic development and employment creation in Tuam through the identification of appropriately located and adequately serviced lands for business and enterprise, retail, industrial, and commercial developments, the promotion of investment in transportation and other support infrastructure and the creation of a high-quality environment to encourage economic investment. The promotion of economic development and employment creation will be appropriately guided to ensure the protection of residential amenities, built and natural heritage, landscape and streetscape, character of the town and the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Objective HC 1 – Built Heritage

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the protection and conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage in the plan area, including the Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Area, Recorded Monuments and Places and other important features of architectural or archaeological heritage.

Objective HC 2 – Protected Structures

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.

Objective HC 3 – Architectural Conservation Areas

Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of the Portumna Architectural Conservation Area, through respecting the surviving historic plots and street patterns and through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, alterations or extensions to existing structures, and/or modifications to the setting of the structure and the character of the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

Objective HC 4 – Development Relating to Protected Structures and ACA

Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions materially affecting the character of a protected structure, or structure adjoining a protected structure, or structure within or adjacent to the Architectural Conservation Area, is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character or setting of the protected structure, or the Architectural Conservation Area. This will include the following:

- Works materially affecting the character of a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an Architectural Conservation Area will require planning permission.
- Any works/development carried out to a protected structure or the exterior of a

building/structure within an Architectural Conservation Area shall be in accordance with best conservation practice and use sustainable and appropriate materials.

- Works/development within the Architectural Conservation Area shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements which contribute to the character of the area.
- New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.

Objective HC 5 – Energy Efficiency and Traditional Buildings

Ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of protected structures and traditionally built structures/buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and use appropriate materials and do not have detrimental impact on the material, aesthetic, visual character or function of the building.

Objective HC 9 – Archaeological Heritage

- Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage in the Plan Area, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), and the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers.
- Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a National Monument and a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the Recorded Monument or its visual amenity.

Objective HC 11 – Protection of Monuments and Places

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of the monuments and places included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Monuments and Places, as well as any monument that may be designated as a National Monument, together with the integrity of their character and setting, by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended) and the Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers. This will include the protection of Monuments on the list provided by the National Monument Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which has statutory responsibility in this area.

Objective HC 12 – Archaeological Assessment

- Ensure that all planning applications for development within close proximity of Recorded Monuments and Places and any monuments that may be designated as National Monuments, and within Zones of Archaeological Potential are referred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and take account of the archaeological heritage of the area, any advice received from the DAHG and the need for archaeological assessments and, where appropriate, mitigation measures.
- An Archaeological Assessment for such developments within the plan area that include or are proposed to be located at or close to a Recorded Monument, those that are extensive in terms of area (0.5h hectares or more) or length (1 kilometre or more), those that may impact on the underwater environment (riverine) and developments that require an Environmental Impact Statement.

Objective NH 2 – Protected Habitats and Species

Support the protection of protected habitats and species listed in the annexes to the EU Habitats Directive 1992 (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, species protected under the Wildlife Acts and the Flora Protection Order.

This includes the protection of the barn owl, otters, salmon, brook lamprey, bats and their roosts and the maintenance of woodland, hedgerows, tree lines, waterways

5. Design and General Factors.

The design of this scheme considered the architectural integrity of the existing building, its setting in the streetscape and historical setting of the Town Hall within the context of the wider ACA. The proposed works are primarily contained to the interior of the building where the existing spaces will be reconfigured to provide a more flexible and user-friendly offering.

The proposed development and renovation will not result in any loss of significance or material harm to the Town Hall but will conserve its status and enhance its appearance bringing back into community use. The results will promote a greater usage of this distinctive building and will ensure that necessary repairs are undertaken to prevent further deterioration of the historic fabric.

6. Architectural Conservation & Heritage

A Building Conservation Assessment Report and Architectural Heritage Assessment Report has been prepared by Architectural Conservation Professionals (ACP) and accompanies the Part 8 planning pack.

The reports conclude that *'the proposed works will significantly improve the accessibility of the building for all users and ensure the protection of the historic fabric through the undertaking of necessary repair and maintenance works'*.

7. Archaeology

An Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report has been prepared by Aegis Archaeology Ltd and accompanies the Part 8 planning pack.

The reports conclude that *'No previously unrecorded archaeological features are recorded on the subject site, However, due to its location within the historic town of Tuam, the site has the potential to yield archaeological features and/or artefacts subsurface.'*

Suggested mitigation is therefore recommended per best practice.

8. Ecology

Bat and Swift Survey Reports have been prepared by Eire Ecology (Environmental Consultants) and accompanies the Part 8 planning pack.

Given the low impact of the proposed works and the lack of evidence of either bats or swifts, it was the surveyors opinion that no negative impacts are expected from the proposed development.

9. Parking Provision

It is not anticipated that the occupancy of the building will increase substantially from previous uses. Car parking provision will thus be catered for as part of the existing public parking provision.

10. Consultations

Pre-Part 8 Consultations

Pre-Part 8 consultations were undertaken with the following key stakeholders:

- Galway Fire Department
- Galway County Council Conservation Officer
- Galway County Council Heritage Officer
- Elected Members of Tuam Municipal District

Part 8 Consultations

It is intended that details of the proposed scheme will be referred to the Elected Members of Tuam Municipal District to include:

- Councillor Mary Hoade
- Councillor Colm Keaveney
- Councillor Donagh Mark Killilea
- Councillor Karey McHugh Farag
- Councillor Andrew Reddington
- Councillor Peter Roche
- Councillor Joe Sheridan