

Rinville Park Sustainable Development Plan



Welcome to the Rinville Park Public Consultation
Shaping the Future of Rinville Park Together!



What is the Project?

Galway County Council is preparing a Sustainable Development Plan for Rinville Park, supported by funding from the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. This process is about shaping a shared future for Rinville—a park that reflects the needs of its users, protects its natural heritage, and enhances its role in the wider community.

Your voice is central. These boards summarise what we know so far, what you’ve told us, and what we’re exploring. We invite you to share your views and ideas.

This project has been developed in collaboration with CSR, **ACT** and Enviroplan.

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS
LAND PLANNING & DESIGN

ACT



We want

to hear

your voice!



Vision Objectives

Our goal is to develop Rinville Park as a model for sustainable recreation, heritage conservation, and community inclusion, where biodiversity flourishes, local people feel ownership, and visitors experience the best of Galway’s largest park.



Develop the park as an attraction



Enhance park experience



Attract domestic and international tourists



Promote well-being through nature



Engage with children’s senses



Provide community spaces



Connect with children and families



Accessible nature-based education



Increase and preserve biodiversity



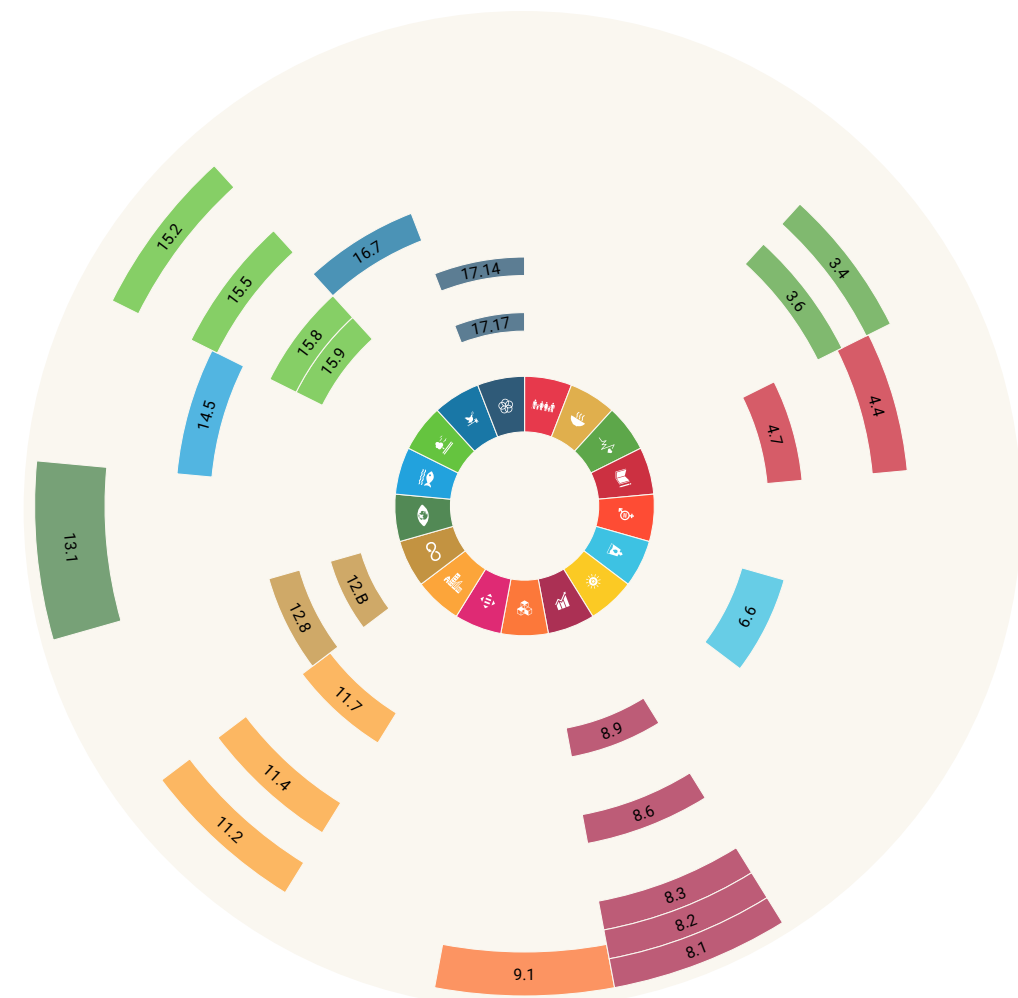
Promote sustainability



Promote environmental stewardship



Building on the park’s heritage



The proposed Sustainable Development Plan for Rinville Park has the potential to contribute to 12 UN SDG Goals through impacting 25 Social, Environmental, Governance and Economic UN Development Targets

Rinville Park

Future Vision

Park Analysis

What Makes Rinville Park Special?



A Rich History

Rich Heritage: Includes Rinville Castle, the Gate Lodge, and the remains of Rinville House, all steeped in the cultural legacy of the area.



An Active Community

The park supports families, events, and outdoor recreation, serving as the green heart of Oranmore.

Many community groups from the area use the park as part of their activities and actively participate in stewardship of the area.



The Ecological Value

The park lies adjacent to the Galway Bay Complex SAC and the Inner Galway Bay SPA, with high ecological sensitivity. The Park itself holds a diversity of flora and fauna that is rich.



The Natural Beauty

Coastal views, woodlands, meadows, and a small lake provide a haven for people and wildlife.

The park is the centre point of these varied landscapes offering a diversity of experience and opportunity.

The Nature of Rinville Park

Flora
Native meadows are supporting pollinators and rare species like the Autumn Lady's-tresses. But there is room for improvement! Invasive species like Japanese Knotweed and Winter Heliotrope are also within in park indicating that a management strategy is needed. The existing lake and stream habitats are nutrient-rich but degraded; a targeted restoration plan is recommended.

Fauna
Nine Irish bat species with high suitability habitat. The Castle, Cottage and Manor buildings are known roosting sites

Important bird species include robin, chough, chiffchaff, and mallard ducks with ducklings spotted at the lake.

Woodland Species



Brambles



Ivy



Dock leaves



Sycamore



Sitka Spruce



Elm



Hawthorn



Ash



Catchweed bedstraw



Common nettle



Grassland Species



Common Daisy



Creeping Buttercup



Catchweed bedstraw



Herb robert



Common nettle



Elm



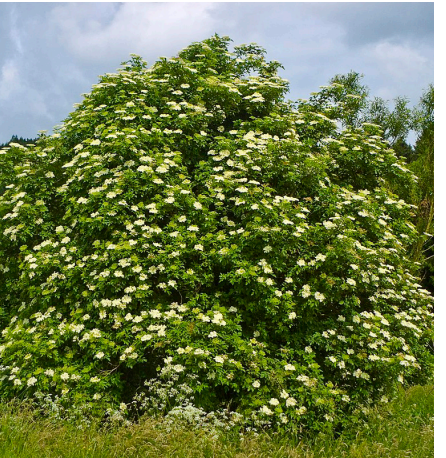
Beech



Oak



Purple Sycamore



Elder



Autumn Lady's Tresses

Birds



European robin



Jackdaw



Red-billed chough



Goldcrest



Magpies



Common chiffchaff



Blue Tit



Great Tit



Woodpigeon



Eurasian wren



Eurasian blackcap



Mallard

Bats



Common Pipistrelle



Leisler's Bat



Soprano Pipistrelle

Other Mammals



Red Squirrel



Hedgehog



Irish Hare



Irish Stoat



Red Fox



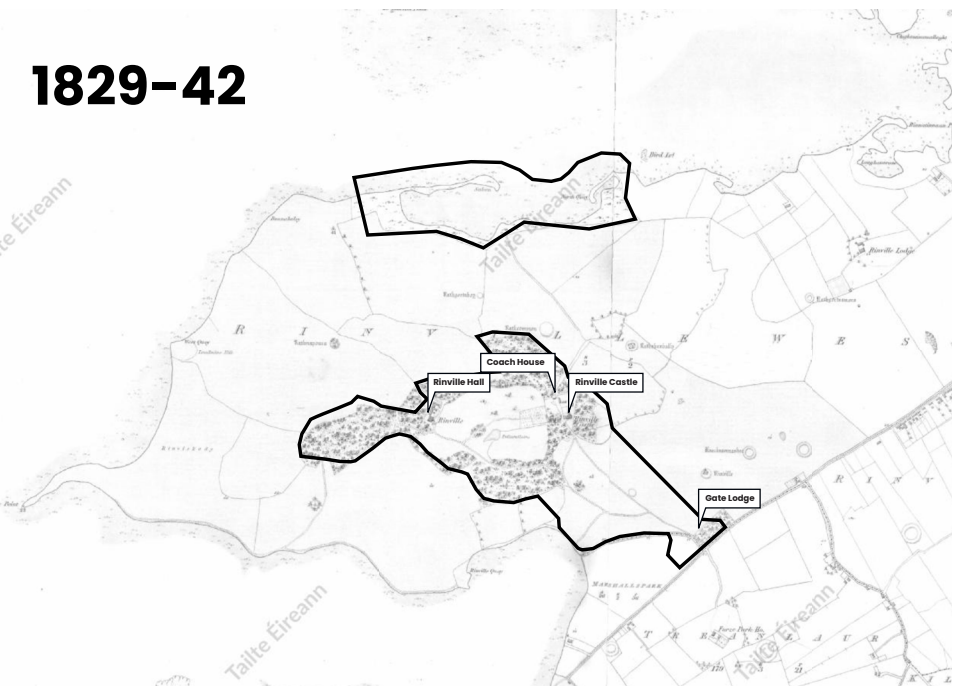
Brown rat

Some Associated Groups & Clubs

A key opportunity to support in the sustainable development of the park lies in the community groups using the park, many of which have submitted ideas of its future. Inclusion of these groups in use and management of the park will positively contribute towards it's stewardship.



Rinville's History through Maps



Rinvile Park

Future Vision

What you’ve told us

Key Themes Emerging from the Community
We’ve gathered ideas from public workshops, written submissions, and partner groups. Here’s what’s coming through clearly:

“Support nature and biodiversity”

You told us:

“Keep nature wild” – support for rewilding, bluebells and wild garlic, and native meadows.

The Autumn Lady’s-tresses orchid (classified as Near Threatened) has been recorded on site, a success of “no-mow” zones

Need for an updated biodiversity plan—including mapping, monitoring, and active invasive species management.

Support for biodiversity corridors to connect woodlands and improve habitat connectivity for bats, red squirrels, and birds

“Celebrate the rich history”

You told us:

Rinvile House should be stabilised, not restored, preserving its ruinous charm.

The Gate Lodge is deteriorating and could be protected through community partnerships.

Heritage is more than architecture: local stories, historic routes, and cemetery trails could all be explored.

“Encourage the park as a community space”

You told us:

Desire for more seating, sheltered areas, and gathering spaces like pavilions and fire pits.

Reuse buildings (e.g. the Gate Lodge or Tower House) as community hubs, interpretive spaces, or artist workshops.

Interest in nature-based education, school trips, and family-friendly signage made from natural materials.

“Recreational and Visitor Amenities”

You told us:

Better toilet and water facilities, especially near Rinvile Point and the pier.

Additional playground space and age-appropriate facilities (e.g. over-12 play or skate features).

Interest in sauna, community garden, and potential eco-café inside adapted heritage structures.

“Improve Access for All”

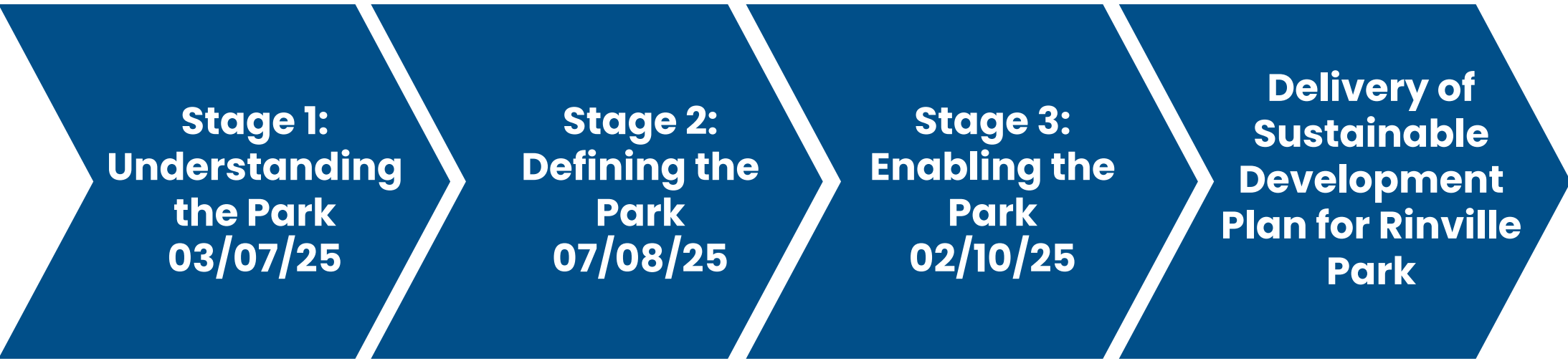
You told us:

Upgrade woodland paths from gravel to accessible surfaces.

Address safety concerns at entrances (especially the Gatehouse entrance and along Maree Road).

Expand accessible routes and link informal paths into looped walking trails.

Vision Development



A Four Stage Project Process



Drone and Measured Building Surveys have been recently completed and our team will incorporate these into the final Rinvile Sustainable Development Plan

Following an in-depth analysis of the park and two rounds of community consultation (‘Understanding the Park’ 3rd July and ‘Defining the Park’ 7th August), our team has developed a strategy for Rinvile Park’s sustainable development. This strategy is grounded in five core principles: supporting nature and biodiversity, celebrating and adaptively reusing the park’s historic structures, strengthening the park as a community space, enhancing recreational and visitor amenities and ensuring improved access for all. The strategy also involved understanding the ongoing development planned in and around Rinvile Park including the new GAA centre and cemetery expansion.

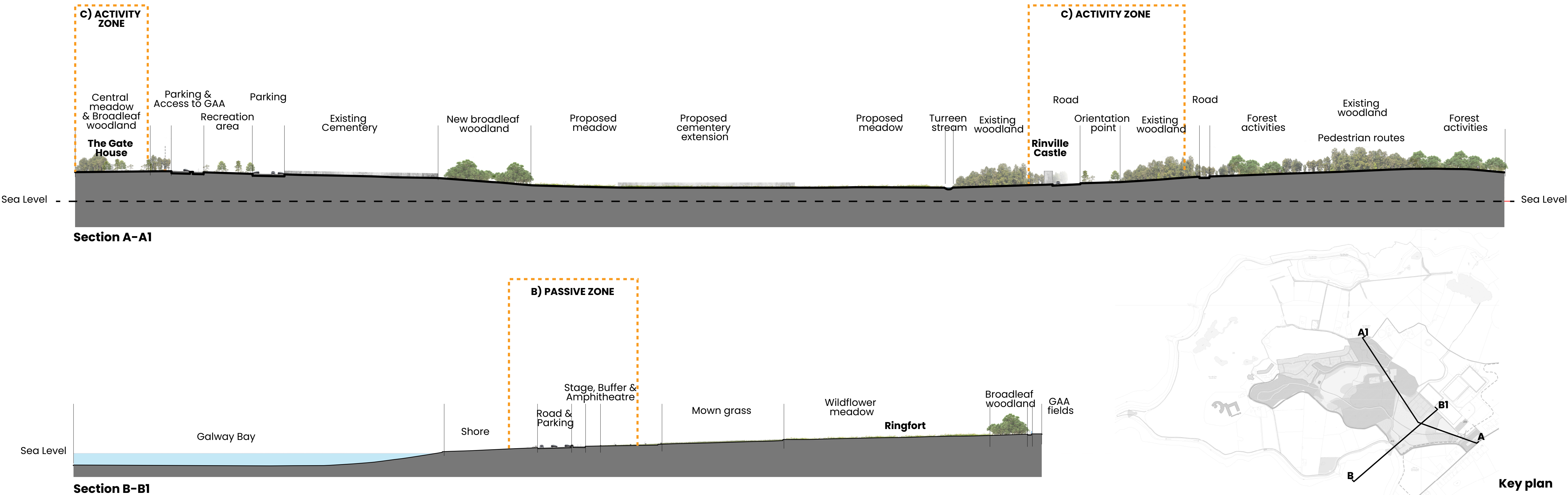
The park and its surrounds have been divided into distinct landscape types with tailored proposals to enhance and expand their qualities. Key nodal points labelled A to E have been identified as character areas with unique activities and opportunities. Existing trails and routes are proposed for accessibility upgrades while new connections and entry points are highlighted to improve movement across the park.

Complementing these landscape improvements, the adaptive reuse of existing historic structures — including the Rinvile Castle Interpretation Centre, Coach House Café, Cottage Bat Roost, Rinvile Hall Reimagined, Scouts Clubhouse Upgrade and the Gate House Artist Residence & Sensory Garden — is imagined to anchor the park’s cultural, ecological and social functions.

Together these combined elements form a holistic and integrated vision that positions Rinvile Park for a vibrant, sustainable and resilient future.



‘Defining the Park’ Public Engagement Session 07/08/25



Rinville Park

Future Vision

Proposals & References

Nodal Zones

Key nodal zones throughout the park act as activity and thematic areas providing a diversity of experience for users, locals and visitors alike. The **Nodal Zones** are:

- A) Arrival Zone
- B) Passive Zone
- C) Activity Zone
- D) Cultural/Heritage Zone
- E) Aquatic Zone

The activities proposed in these areas build on the existing characteristics of the zone and have been informed by feedback from the two initial community meetings.

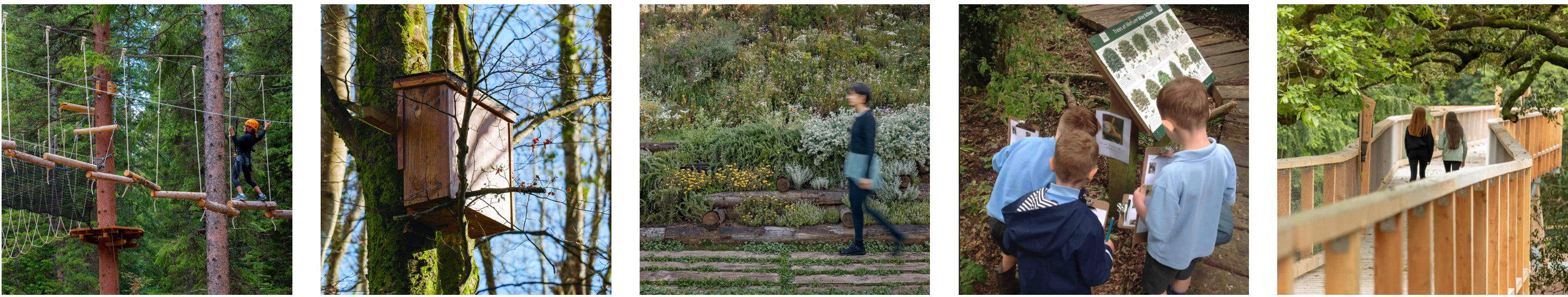
Arrival Zone (Node A)



Passive Zone (Node B)



Activity Zone (Node C)

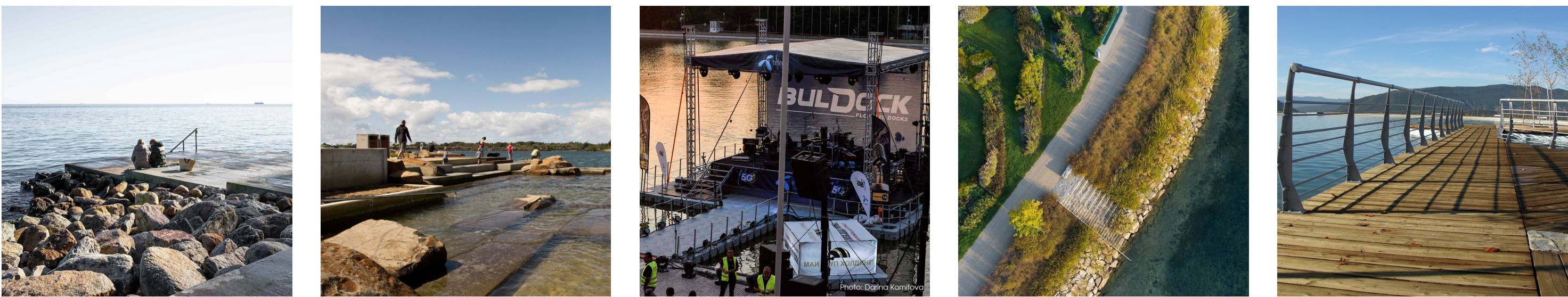


Cultural/Heritage Zone (Node D)



- A) Arrival Zone**, located at eastern entrance gatehouse. A sensory space with strong visual and tactile planting. The area feels natural and calming while also being open and welcoming.
- B) Passive Zone**, located at the water's edge overlooking the bay. A place to gather, have a picnic, relax and enjoy the view over the water. The natural topography offers the opportunity for an amphitheatre to be created overlooking the bay. This is a key marker point on the Wild Atlantic Way that can function as a passive meeting space or a dramatic events space.
- C) Activity Zone**, located around the cluster of building by the Castle. An existing play area could be enhanced with new woodland-based features offering high play value. Surrounding woodland and trees could be used to create woodland based activities.
- D) Cultural/Heritage Zone**, located around the ruins of the old Rinville Hall. The shell of the old building could act as a folly with interpretive signage and a series of interlinked semi-sheltered spaces to meet, interact or play.
- E) Aquatic Zone**, located at the sailing club provision of safe access to the water for swimmers and paddlers and an overall improvement of facilities for water-based activities (e.g. toilets, change rooms, showers, diving board).

Aquatic Zone (Node E)



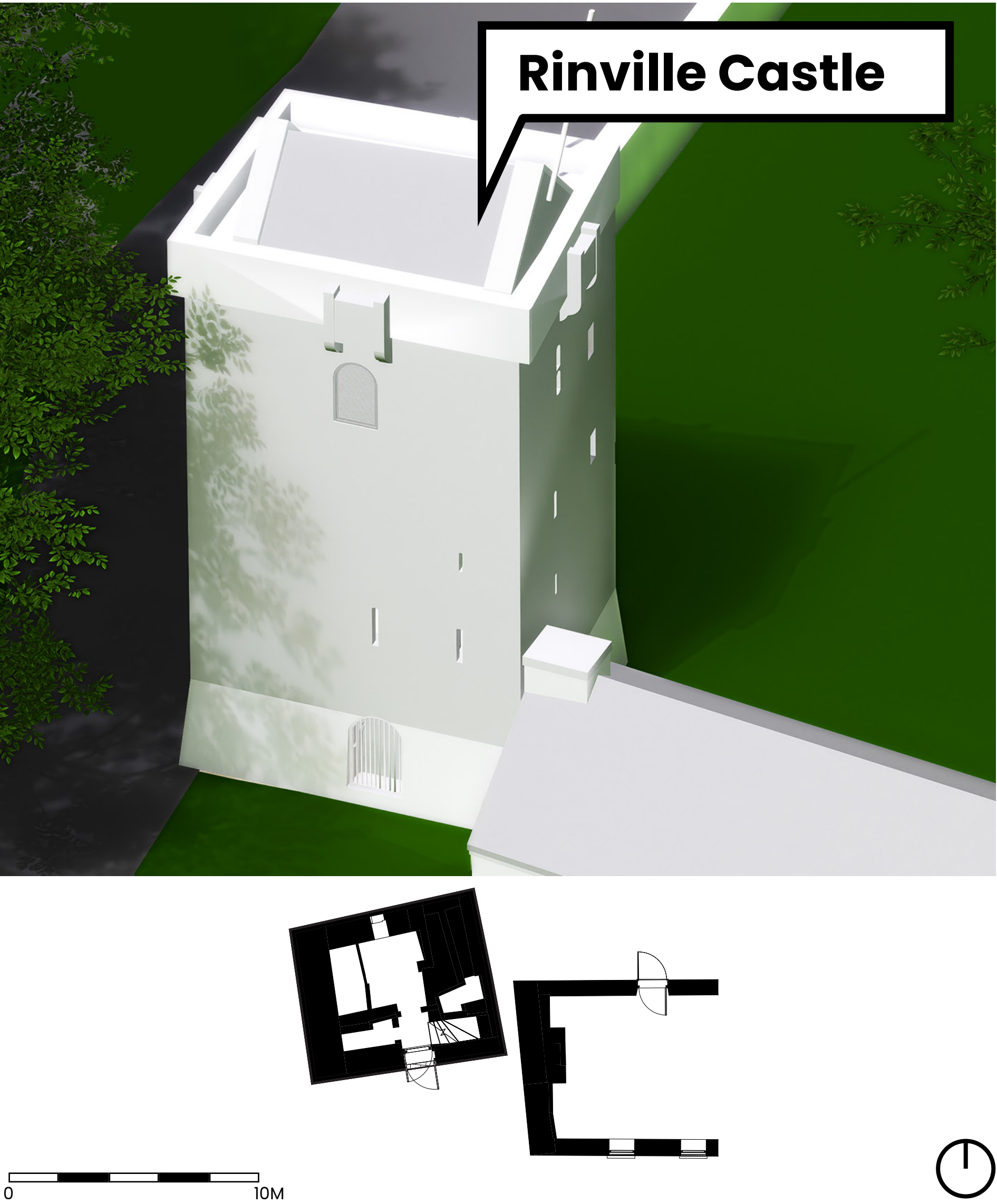
Key Project Proposals



Rinville Park
Future Vision

Historic Structures

Rinville Castle Interpretation Centre



Bringing Heritage to Life



Emerging from the community consultation, the historic Rinville Castle is imagined to be sensitively restored and converted into an Interpretation Centre. This project is envisioned to celebrate the park’s heritage, create opportunities for experiential education, and promote environmental stewardship by connecting visitors of all ages with the rich cultural history of Rinville Park.

Building on the park's heritage

Attract domestic and international tourists

Potential SDG Target Impacts

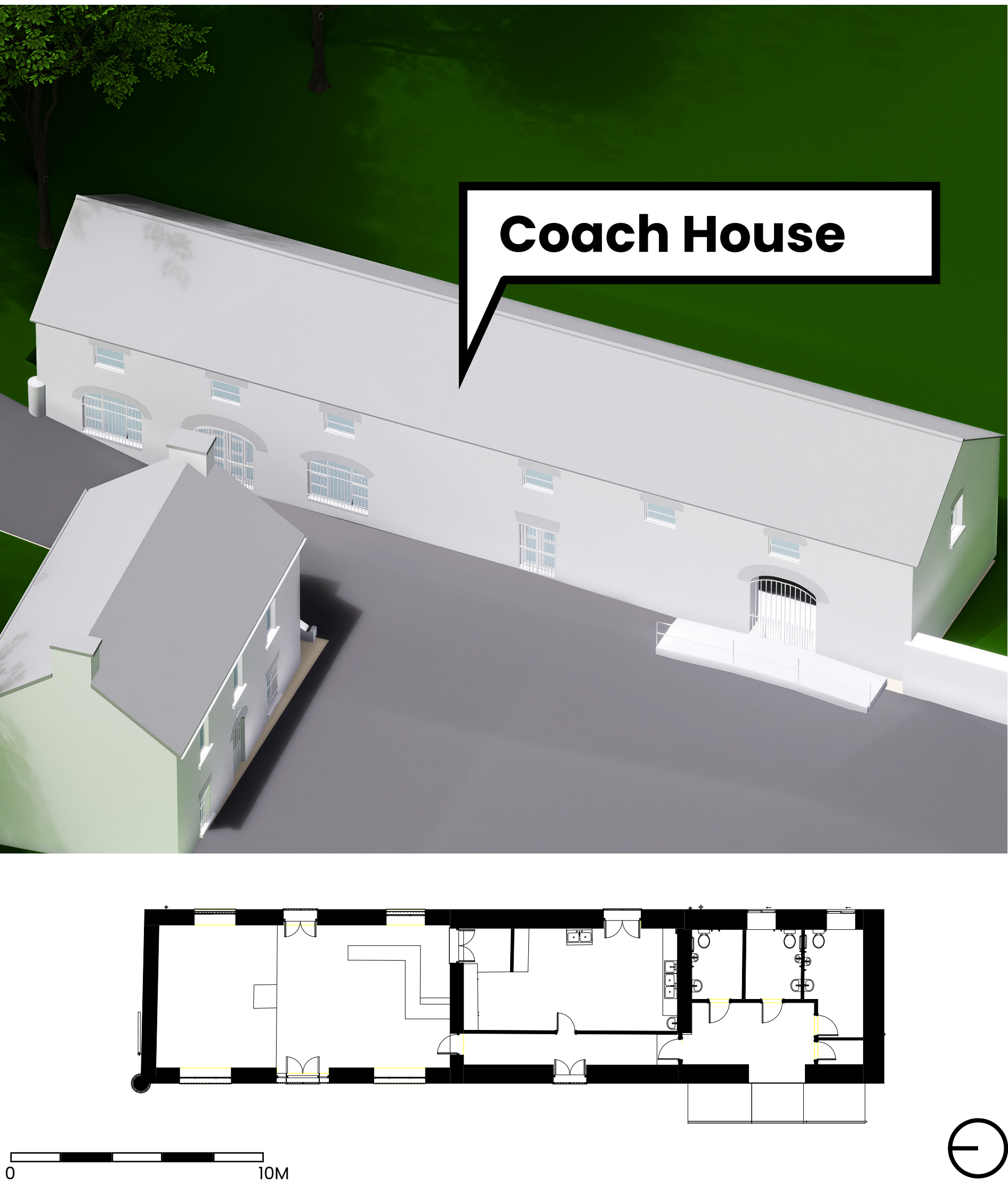
Strengthen efforts to preserve and safeguard cultural heritage sites, promoting their importance for local identity and tourism.

Reference Project



Heritage Interpretation Centre, Thoor Ballylee, Co. Galway

Rinville Park Café (Coach House Conversion)



A Welcoming Hub for All



Consultation highlighted the need for a permanent and welcoming social hub within the park. The existing Coach House is proposed to be transformed into a café with both indoor and outdoor dining, similar to the successful Portumna model. This would replace the current temporary catering truck, providing a long-term facility that enhances accessibility for families, supports community wellbeing and strengthens the overall visitor experience.

Develop the park as an attraction

Connect with children and families

Potential SDG Target Impacts

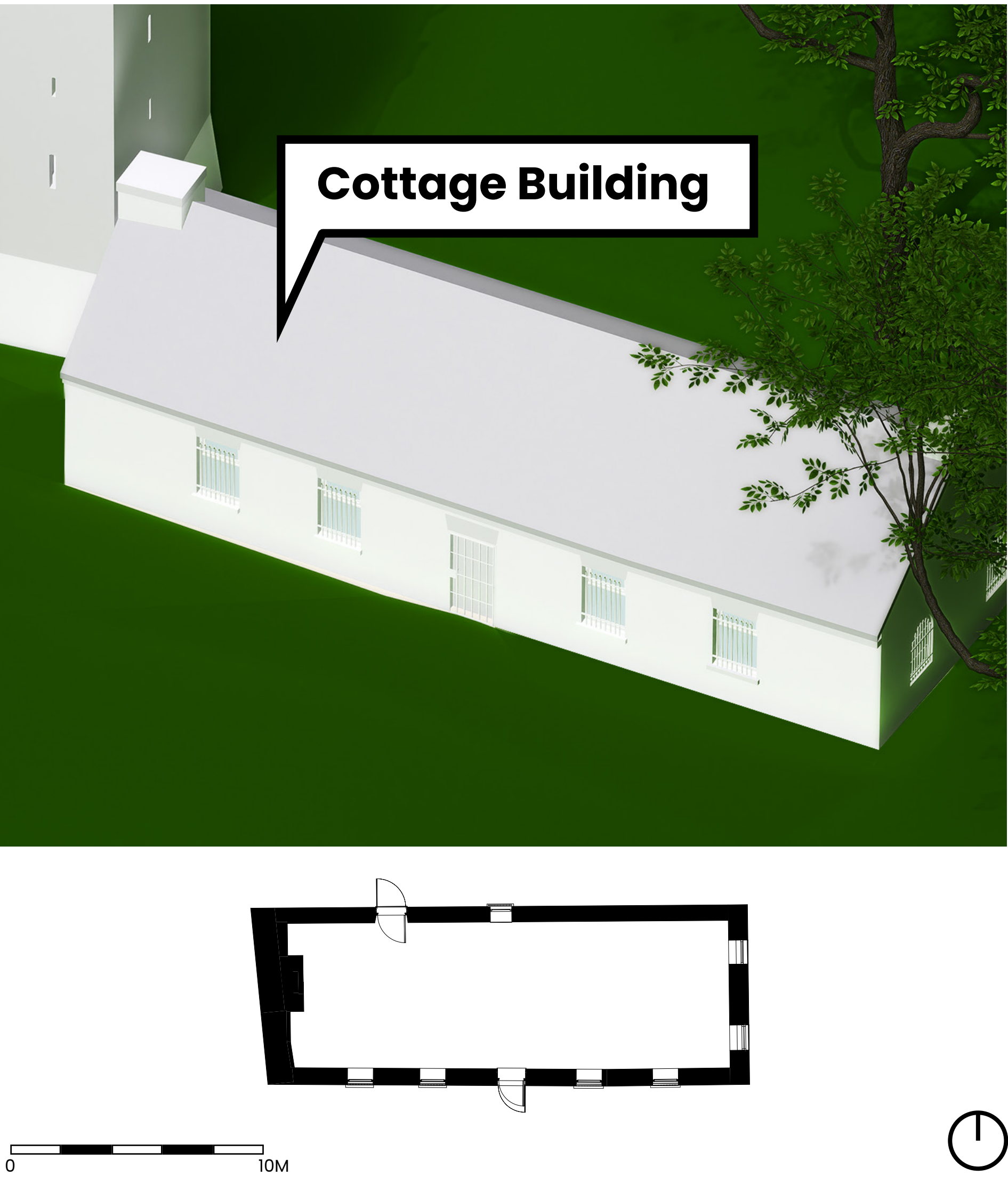
Provide opportunities to small and medium enterprises, as they play a vital role in driving economic growth and creating employment opportunities.

Reference Project



Portumna Castle Tea Rooms, Co. Galway

Cottage Bat Roost



Protecting Nature, Enhancing Biodiversity



The consultation revealed that the existing cottage already supports a thriving bat population. Building on this, the project is imagined to repurpose the cottage into a dedicated bat roost that both protects and expands this important habitat. Inspired by Coole Park, the proposal seeks to enhance the park’s ecological value, promote species conservation and potentially unlock the sensitive renovation of Rinville Castle. It reflects the vision to increase biodiversity and inspire environmental stewardship.

Increase and preserve biodiversity

Promote environmental stewardship

Potential SDG Target Impacts

Integrate biodiversity conservation considerations into land use planning processes to protect and preserve natural habitats and species.

Reference Project

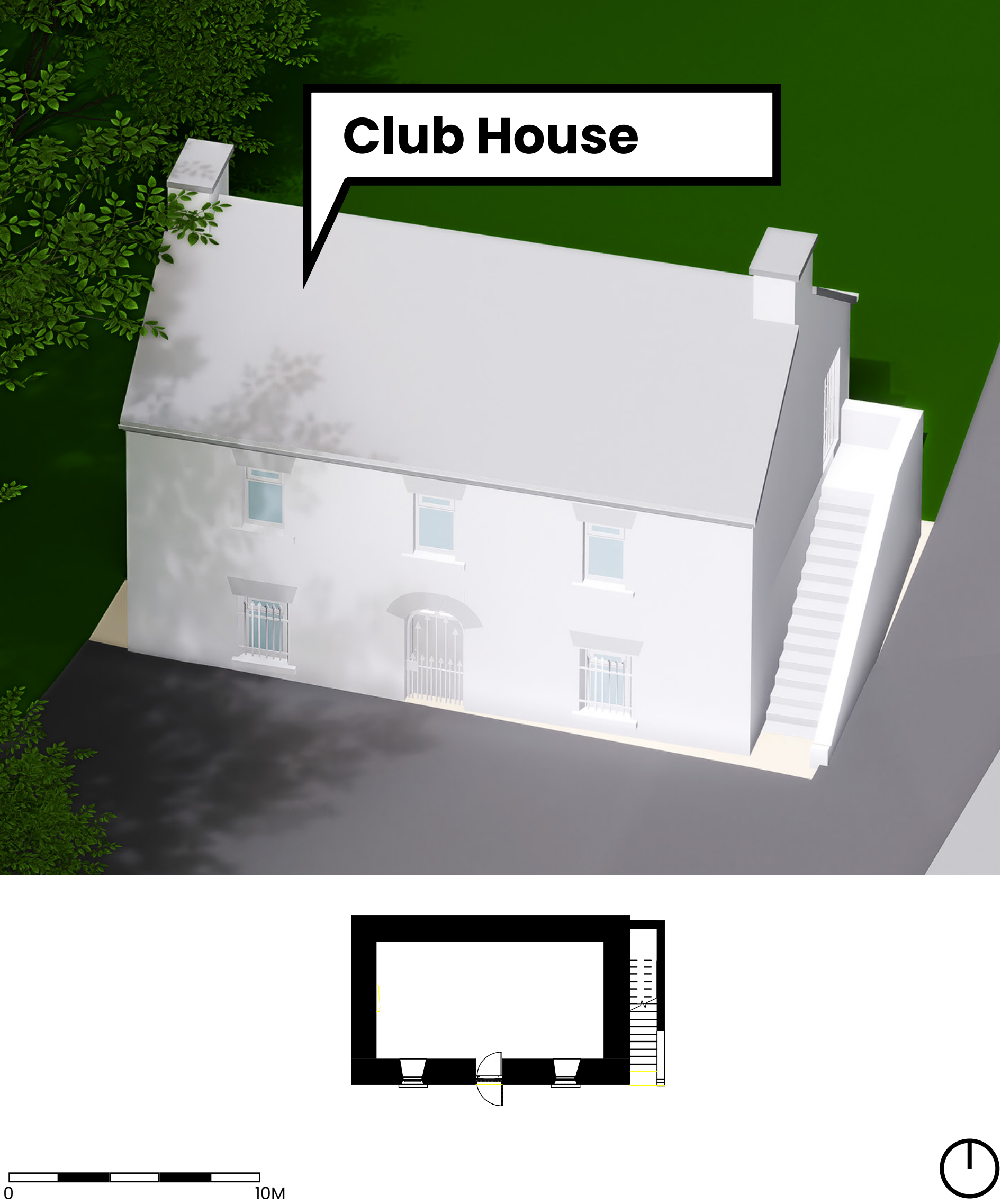


Bat Roost, Coole Park Co. Galway & Mulkear Lesser Horseshoe Bat Conservation Project

Rinville Park
Future Vision

Historic Structures

Scouts Clubhouse Upgrade



Empowering Youth in Nature



Engagement feedback emphasised the importance of supporting existing community groups. The current clubhouse is proposed to be retrofitted to strengthen the role of Oranmore Scouts (which currently utilise the first floor) in promoting youth engagement with nature. The upgraded layout is imagined to provide flexible ground-floor spaces for events and improved upper-floor spaces for administration and storage, aligning with the vision to promote wellbeing, stewardship and inclusive education.



Accessible nature-based education



Provide community spaces



Potential SDG Target Impacts

Facilitate civil society engagement and participation in built environment development projects and initiatives, ensuring their voices are heard and taken into account.

Reference Project



15th Bromley Scout Club House, Bromley, England

Rinville Hall Reimagined



A Landmark for Views and Connection



The consultation process identified the potential of Rinville Hall as a dramatic focal point. The project is envisioned to stabilise the remains of the stately home and reimagine it as a 21st-century folly with walkways and viewing platforms. The design is imagined to engage the senses, provide striking views across the park and bay, and deepen visitors' connection with Rinville's heritage and landscapes.



Building on the park's heritage



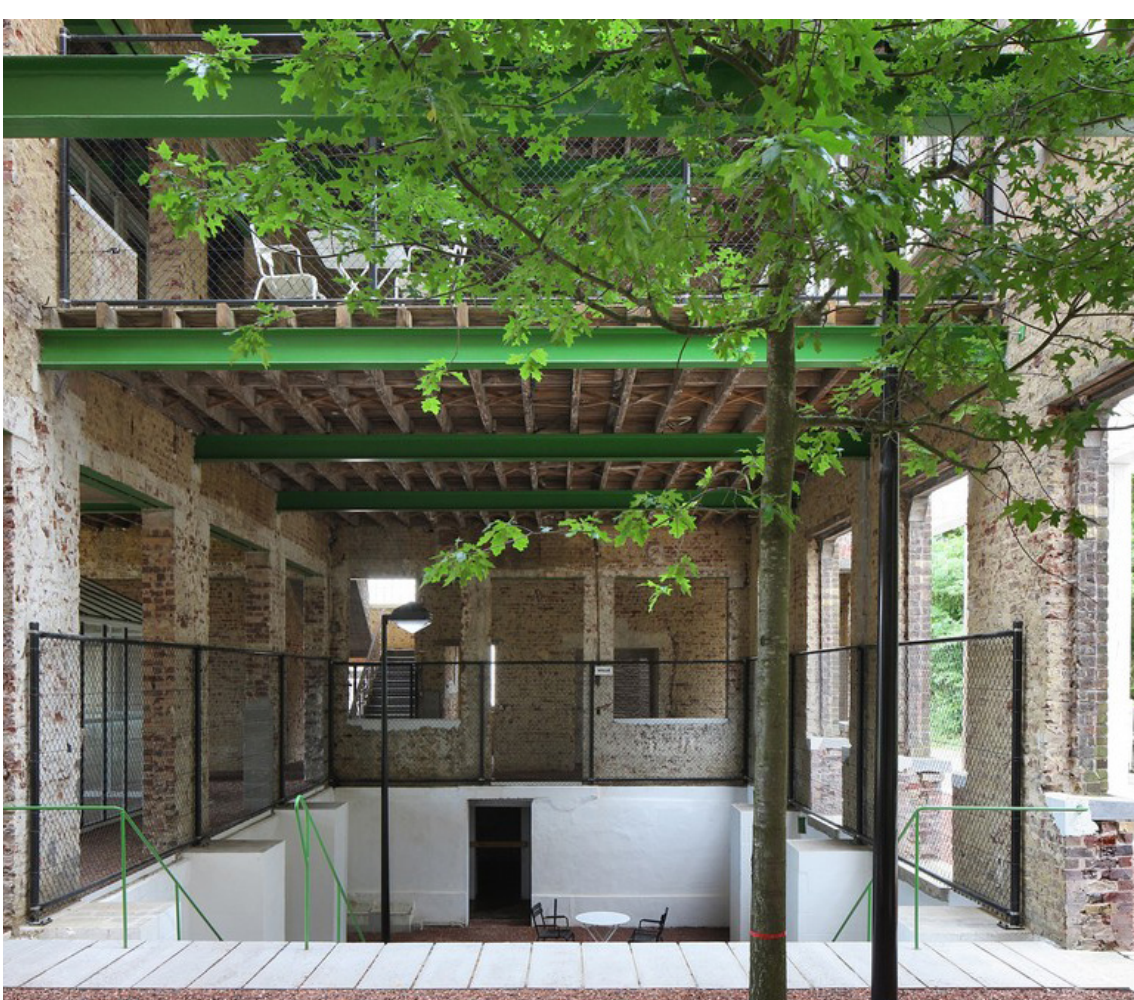
Enhance park experience



Potential SDG Target Impacts

Strengthen efforts to preserve and safeguard cultural heritage sites, promoting their importance for local identity and tourism.

Reference Project



Modern Indoor/Outdoor Folly, PC Caritas, Melle, Belgium

Gate House Artist Residence & Sensory Garden



Creativity and Wellbeing in the Landscape



Reflecting consultation input on culture and creativity, the Gate House is imagined to be restored as an artist-in-residence space, complemented by a sensory garden rich in tactile and visual planting. The project is envisioned to celebrate heritage while creating a highly accessible destination for art, wellbeing and nature-based learning.



Promote well-being through nature



Engage with children's senses



Potential SDG Target Impacts

Encourage the integration of nature in and around buildings which can have positive effects on mental health, stress reduction, and overall well-being.

Reference Project



Writers Retreat, The Gatehouse, Whitby, England



Piet Oudolf Perennial Gardens