

Design Statement
Main Street, Blacklion Co. Cavan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

Craftstudio Architecture have been commissioned by Cavan County Council to design the redevelopment of the existing Mooney's Hall and Fair Green to create a new co-working facility, community centre, car park and hard and soft landscaping on Main Street, Blacklion, Co. Cavan. The site is in close proximity to the village centre. The proposal will regenerate an underutilised site and unoccupied building in the village centre.

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Demolition of the existing unoccupied Mooney's Hall Building
- Construction of new 2-storey Co-Working facility consisting of shared office spaces, meeting rooms and all associated ancillary spaces
- Construction of new single storey Community Centre consisting of hall space, canteen/kitchen, sanitary facilities, and all associated ancillary spaces.

- Construction of new car park and all soft and hard landscaping
- All ancillary site works necessary to facilitate the development.
- This report should be read in conjunction with the architectural drawings (prepared by Craftstudio Architecture), and all other planning documentation (forms, notices etc.).



2.0 Site Overview & Analysis



Aerial Photograph of Blacklion, Cavan with site outlined in red.

2.1 Site Overview

The site is located within the village centre on Main Street.

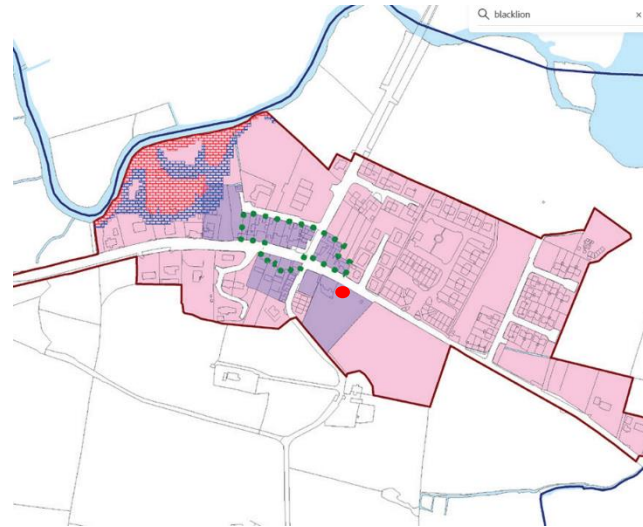
The site is currently zoned as Village Core within the current Cavan County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. It is an objective of this zone within the plan *‘Encourage the renewal, reuse and regeneration of any derelict and underutilised buildings in the village core area. Village Core development uses will be encouraged.*

Support the appropriate development of the Fair green area as a amenity resource for Blacklion’

Extract from Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028

Land Use Zoning Objectives

(Note: the site is denoted with a red dot)



2.2 Site Analysis

The site comprises 0.63 ha of land.

The site is located within the village core on Main Street. It is adjacent to existing residential properties privately owned. Cavan Way runs along the rear of the property.

2.3 Site Opportunities

The site benefits from its' location within the village core of Blacklion, providing great opportunity to support the range of services and facilities that contribute to a sustainable community. With the potential for strong connections to the Geopark sites of interest and popular walking and cycling trails such as the Cavan Way, the site provides opportunity for the town to be developed as a tourist gateway. The site is zoned as Village Core within the current Cavan County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

3.0 Design Statement

3.1 Design Principles

The 2 no. proposed buildings, car park and are located within the footprint of the existing Mooney's Hall building and the portion of Fair Green directly connected to Main Street. The proposed ground floor of the co-working facility consists of proposed dedicated street facing office/studio spaces, providing high visibility for tenants. Communal use spaces such as the kitchen, meeting, and sanitary facilities are all provided with equal access for all units. A proposed multi-function meeting space with direct connection to the south facing courtyard provides an additional opportunity to operate as a training space.

The first floor consists of further independent office/studios, meeting/boardroom space and a hot-desking zone to support local residents in need of a short term work space or as an additional opportunity for remote learning to take place.

The proposed community centre provides a highly visible multi function hall space with strong connections to the surrounding external hard and soft landscaping. The proposed community use space can support local sporting groups, community run events, indoor-outdoor markets etc. with the provision of toilets, changing rooms, storage and a

community use kitchen/canteen. The proposed community centre will act as a landmark for the beginning of the Cavan Way. The building has been set back from the streetscape, to allow space for wayfinding signage, information local tourist attractions but also a meeting point within Blacklion.

Principles dictating the layout and quality of the design are based on delivering a well-integrated facility that is respectful of the town's existing characteristics and activates under utilised spaces for the benefit of the local community and visitors to Blacklion.

3.2 Design Concept

The proposed scheme will be developed in a manner which employs best practice in design with specific regard for the creation of distinctive community use facilities integrated into the existing fabric of the village.

This planning application seeks to create a distinctive scheme to regenerate a derelict building in the village core and inject a sense of purpose and life back in to the Fair Green centred on the local communities needs.



4.0 Connections

The location of the development on Main Street within Blacklion will provide fantastic opportunities for local residents, new/existing businesses and visitors to access the facilities made available within the proposal. The entrance to both buildings address Main Street with appropriate pedestrian paving provided to the proposed site from the centre of the village.

The proposed site is directly within walking distance of Blacklions centre, amenable for visitors of all demographics. There are pedestrian footpaths which connect the site to the town centre.

Within a 15km radius from the proposed site there a significant number of Geopark sites of interest; Moneygashel Cashel, Florencecourt, Whitefathers

Cave. The proposed co-working space will operate as a visitor information point for all geopark sites of interest, enabling Blacklion to become a gateway to all sites.

The site is also bounded by two existing walking trails; Cavan Way & the Blacklion Village Trail. The proposed landscaping and wayfinding signage will strengthen the visibility, knowledge and accessibility of these trails.

The site is in a well-established built up area with a variety of services such as schools, restaurants, shops all within walking distance of the proposed site.

5.0 Inclusivity

The proposal has been developed with due regard to the principles of universal design to achieve a layout enabling easy access by all. All facilities have level access and any changes in level have been designed in accordance to the recommendations of TGD Part M. The design and layout of all public areas is Part M compliant and easily negotiated externally on foot or by bicycle so that the scheme is accessible and open to all. There is a clear definition between amenity spaces, footpaths and roads to provide good separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.



View of proposed community centre & public realm

6.0 Variety

The development of two separate buildings on the one site provides an opportunity for two co-habitable community use facilities to operate independently and codependently as required. The design of each building is unique but share the same materiality and are responsive to the scale and aesthetic of the existing streetscape and landscape of the Fair Green and within Blacklion.

Mixed communities can be created by providing a range of facilities as the proposed development will be suitable for all demographics within the Blacklion community and beyond.

Soft landscaping around the proposed buildings will incorporate a range of planting of herbaceous

plants, shrubs, lawn and wood bark flower beds that reflect the local flora. This aims to promote biodiversity value and visual amenity and variety all year round.

7.0 Efficiency

It is proposed to create the co-working facility over the footprint of the existing dilapidated Mooney's Hall while the car park and community hall has been developed within the existing Fair Green. The extent of building on the Fair Green has been kept to a minimum, ensuring the vast majority of trees and green site is maintained and connected to the proposed facilities.

This constitutes an efficient use of the available land by reusing and repurposing an existing site. The proposal will regenerate a derelict building in the village core (the scheme will bring the land back into use) and address the current community need in the area.

All buildings within the development are designed with efficient use of plot area and in respect of building regulations so that they meet the highest design standards. Raised gardens have been incorporated around the site to provide planting of shade trees, an educational tool of local flora and

strong community engagement that will promote the use of the facilities.

The proposed facilities have adequate provision for recycling facilities in the form of an external bin store. Each building has the capacity to store their bins within their own bin store. This will encourage tenants to sort and store recycling correctly prior to collection and in turn maximise recycling. The store is located on the side and rear elevations so passive surveillance (from the buildings and whilst users go to and from their spaces) will be utilised to ensure the stores are kept in good order.

8.0 Distinctiveness

The scheme makes the most of the street frontage and ecological features to create a distinctive layout that establishes a strong identity for the area and is a positive addition to the locality. The 2 buildings surrounded by the existing landscape and the proposed engaging planters and external seating areas will provide the community with a sense of ownership and pride that will embed a form of emotional attachment to proposed area and the wider built environment of Blacklion.

When completed it is anticipated that the scheme will become a distinct community facility with a prominent sense of place on Main Street .

9.0 Layout

The Layout has been directly informed by planning policy and council development guidelines in relation to creating vibrant community use facilities. Integration into the wider urban context is achieved through a considered design response to the existing adjacent neighbouring dwellings and site specific conditions such as views, topography and all other influencing factors.

The layout of the scheme focuses activity on the proposed access routes by creating active frontages and engaging public realm spaces surrounding the buildings.

10.0 Public Realm

The built environment has been designed to be attractive and safe for community users. High quality materials are chosen to define the interfaces of the new proposal.

Further consideration has been given to the external access to sanitary facilities by tourists and visitors to the area

All publicly accessible areas are overlooked by users (natural surveillance from windows in the rear elevation) who would be able to intervene to prevent crime and maintain public safety, while also have strong visibility from the rest of Main Street.



11.0 Adaptability

All buildings within the scheme are designed with multi-functional, flexible use in mind. The co-working facility has the potential to be utilised as an remote education centre, independent start up business hub, council meeting space or creative studio spaces. The flexibility of interconnected shared use spaces will also allow for the gathering of larger numbers for event or information evenings with the centralised kitchen and communal use areas acting as a hub.

The community centre, with a large multi-functional hall space will be able to cater to larger event nights, small sports groups and maker/produce markets. The strong visibility and connection to the outdoors will enable this facility to spill out or invite in community users to events. With all ground floor facilities being level access, the spaces allow for access by persons with limited mobility.



12.0 Detailed Design

Each building as a whole is 2 stories in height. The use of high quality materials, including locally sourced bricks, metal cladding, aluminium framed glazing and door, and the careful consideration of the external design make a positive contribution to the locality, facilitate easy and regular maintenance and reflect the local character of the area while also embedding a new lease of life to an under-utilised site. Care has been taken over the siting of flues, vents and bin storage.

