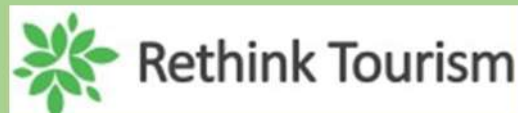




Feasibility Study for Portrunny Amenity & Recreation Centre (“PARC”)



www.portrun.ie



June 2019



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Figure 1 Image from PDA website

Executive Summary

The Portrun Development Association Ltd. (PDA) was established in 2001 to oversee projects in the area. Since 2016, kindled by local interest, fundraising, community support and a vital energy among key individuals, it has become a **powerful engine for transformation in the locality**, raising capital and executing essential upgrading works to the Portrunny area generally, with a specific focus on the marina and community amenity.

During 2016, a series of consultations were held to craft an aspirational future for Portrunny. Issues identified included deficits in community services, meeting/event space, refreshment amenities, sanitary facilities, and a critical lack of enterprise/tourism opportunities. **It was agreed that a collective solution would be welcomed by all.** The PDA set an outline brief for a multi-purpose, stand-alone Portrunny Amenity and Recreation Centre (PARC).

In late 2016, PDA approached Roscommon County Council to secure a site for the proposed centre. RCC have a 4.5-acre site at Portrunny and expressed interest in partnership, subject to feasibility. The local LEADER programme were soon on board to fund a professional study, and a **collaborative design team** were appointed, led by Rethink Tourism, in 2017. The team included georgeboyledesigns, architectural consultant and vision strategy advisor, and FDA consulting engineers, who carried out high-level infrastructural appraisals (see appendix 6).

A dynamic gathering in February 2018 was attended by a highly-engaged audience, during which Rethink Tourism presented their research findings. Georgeboyledesigns presented a synopsis of inspirational features of the area: its lyrical beauty and evocative history, along with a short site appraisal and tentative strategy for development opportunity and formal orientation on the site.

This detailed feasibility study contains the findings of the design team and builds on consultation undertaken with the community. The study was undertaken in two phases, with **phase one consisting of site evaluation & opportunity assessment**. This analysis of the current situation included: site analysis, including site suitability; market analysis including potential user groups; examples of relevant best practice; and SWOT analysis.

This first phase concludes that there is a demonstrable need for a facility such as PARC at this beautiful location on Lough Ree, at a strategic location on the River Shannon and within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The area currently lacks a hub that can provide required facilities and direct visitors to nearby attractions and activities. Its development would capitalise upon existing investment and provide a much needed amenity and recreation centre for the local community, as well as domestic and international visitors.

The **second phase consisted of concept design, recommendation and actions**. This section of the report provides an in-depth consideration of the design rationale, and site considerations. The design response is pragmatic, fulfilling the requirements of the brief, yet in harmony with the exceptional location. **The design is innovative and yet economical.** The proposed design which extends to 270 sq.m estimated to cost around €825,000, which given the site topography and engineering challenges is a minimum that could be considered.

PARC will provide much needed infrastructure for local community and visitors to the area, including café, changing rooms, a meeting area and reception area. There is demand for further spaces, either co-located with the proposed centre or nearby on the same site, which could be used leased to local businesses including wellness activities, art and craft, providing a revenue stream. A number of businesses have expressed interest in such an arrangement.

The provision of a focal point for the community at this popular location would enhance social inclusion and provide a place for the community to meet, reinforcing social cohesion, contributing to the objectives of the county development plan and making Portrunny a better place to live and to visit.

PARC would be ideally situated at the closest Lough Ree access point to Roscommon Town. By providing information on things to see and do nearby **PARC** will encourage increased visitor dwell time and spend in the area – contributing to Roscommon County Council's objectives for tourism development.

As well as serving the needs of the local community of Portrunny, the facility can encourage greater use of Lough Ree and a focal point to encourage visitors to stay for longer and as a launch site for extensive tour opportunity around, across and in engagement with the lake.

Inland Fisheries Ireland and Waterways Ireland have indicated that provision of a hard surfaced area would encourage greater use by water-craft users, including anglers and kayakers, bringing more visitors to the area, and in turn making any associated commercial enterprise more viable.

Fáilte Ireland have indicated their support for the project which, with its focus on outdoor activities, can contribute to the Hidden Heartlands brand proposition.

With Portrunny identified as an amenity area in relevant plans including the Roscommon County Development Plan and the 2017 Lough Ree plan, the proposed development is aligned with strategic decision-making. The proposed **PARC** facility will support infrastructure at Portrunny Bay including marina, proposed slipway and heritage trail, capitalising on existing investment in the area and further developing a clustered recreational facility and attraction.

This project has significant and demonstrable potential for the local community and the wider Ireland's Hidden Heartland's destination. Investment in a facility here will not only provide a transformative amenity and recreational facility for the local community of Portrunny, but also for the wider community in the Roscommon area, and importantly for visitors to the lake and area – encouraging visitors to stay for longer, spend more and have a more enjoyable experience. **This development is, in the view of the project team feasible and desirable and would make Portrunny and Roscommon a better place to live in, work in and to visit.**

1.0 Introduction

Portrun Development Association CLG, a local voluntary not for profit community group, have undertaken a range of local infrastructure and amenity initiatives since their formation in 2001 and particularly since 2016. Most recently this has include the development of a high quality promotional website www.portrun.ie. This study has arisen in response to local community consultation which identified a need for a **multifunctional amenity and recreation facility** that in addition, would offer visitors information, facilities and a reason to stay for longer in the area.

'We want someplace to go', 'a place to meet for a coffee and an ice-cream', 'a welcome & information centre for users of the Shannon', 'a place for tourism & recreation'
Comments from local consultation undertaken by Portrun Development Association, 2016



2.0 Site Appraisal

The purpose of this section is to review the site, to consider the site context at a local and regional level, and to outline the proposed site, site uses and users.

2.1 Portrunny

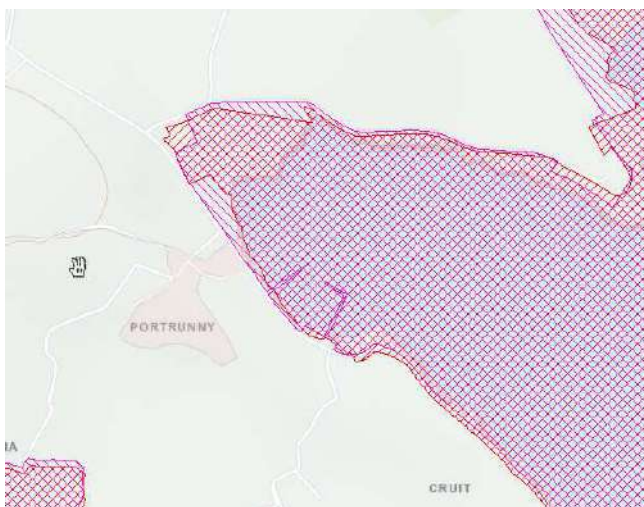
The name Portrunny (*Port Reanna*) is derived from Port Air Cinneach which means lay person in charge of a monastery, indicating its historic links to the area's significant religious heritage. In 540AD St Diarmuid used to travel from Lough Ree via Portrunny Harbour to Roscommon Abbey and the harbour continues to serve as a popular local connection to Lough Ree.

Portrunny is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), Special Protection Area (SPA), and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), as indicated in Figure 1 below. There are controls on development in on or near areas with such designations. Lough Ree is of ecological importance due to the variety of nationally rare plant species, it is also host to important bird habitats with a wide variety of species recorded. There are no designations for the specific site proposed for the PARC, however proximity of the designations for Lough Ree may have implications for development.

The designations highlight the ecological importance of Portrunny. One of the reasons people are attracted to this location is the pristine natural environment and the abundant birdlife. The opportunity to walk along over a kilometre of shoreline walk and to visit the nearby bogs, provide the local community and visitors with an opportunity to engage with nature and to spend time in a scenic part of rural Ireland. **The PARC facility will provide an opportunity to showcase the ecology of the area.**

Figure 1: SAC and SPA Designations in Proximity to Proposed Site

Source: www.webgis.npws.ie/npwsviewer/



2.1.2 Land Ownership

The site proposed for the PARC is currently owned by Roscommon County Council. While the council has not decided on the use of the land, it is thought members might look favourably on a well-considered proposal that would align with strategic objectives and be of benefit for the community¹.

2.1.3 Engineering Services & Infrastructure (refer report by FDA Consulting Engineers)

Water: Portrunny is served by a public piped water supply. The current water supply has the capacity to facilitate further development in the area.

Sewerage: There is currently no sewerage scheme serving the village. Existing dwellings are served by septic tanks. A Part 8 application was completed for a new treatment plan this has

¹ Telephone conversation with Roscommon County Council, 11/12/17

not been scheduled for completion. Any development at the site at Portrunny would be serviced on-site by means of an appropriate Waste Water & Sewage Treatment System. In the interests of environmental and groundwater protection and public health, it is essential that these systems are properly designed, installed and maintained to avoid environmental pollution. All such proposals shall comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Waste Water Treatment Manuals – Treatment systems for small communities, business, leisure centres and hotels* (1999).

2.1.4 Marina and Recreational Users

In the early 1970's Roscommon County Council constructed the first jetty to enable boats and cruisers to moor overnight. In 2006 Waterways Ireland invested in a new marina with floating jetty, including 24 additional berthing spaces, upgrading of the existing breakwater and additional parking. In the early 2000's Roscommon County Council constructed a playground at the marina. As the nearest waterway amenity to Roscommon town, Portrunny is in continuous use by a range of users throughout the year, both from the local community and from further afield, attracting domestic and overseas visitors.

In addition to passive recreation, walkers and picnickers, the harbour at Portrunny is used by a wide variety of recreational users. These include:

- **Visiting cruisers**
- **Roscommon Sports Partnership** (kayaking courses during the summer months and kayaking trips and expeditions for more experienced Kayakers. Courses run during the day for children with adults being catered for with evening classes)
- **Irish Civil Defence** - training
- **Roscommon Sub Aqua/Irish Underwater Council** (weekly training during summer months)
- **Triathlon 2017** - Athlone Triathlon Club in conjunction with Waterways Ireland organise Triathlons in the area, consisting of 5km run, 22km cycle and 750m swim.
- **Boat Club** - The local boat club was established in the 1960s. Classes were run to build boats in some years during the winter. The decline of the Boat Club occurred in the 1980s due to emigration. Portrunny is visited by the Lough Ree Regatta on an annual basis.
- **Fishing Competitions**
- **Shannon View Game and Wildlife Association**
- **Pheasant and Mallard Breeding Hatchery**
- **Brothers of Charity** – bringing children and adults with intellectual disabilities to the playground

2.2 Proposed PARC Initiative

2.2.1 Site Location and Use

This initiative relates to a specific site adjacent to the existing marina area, as indicated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Proposed PARC Site Location



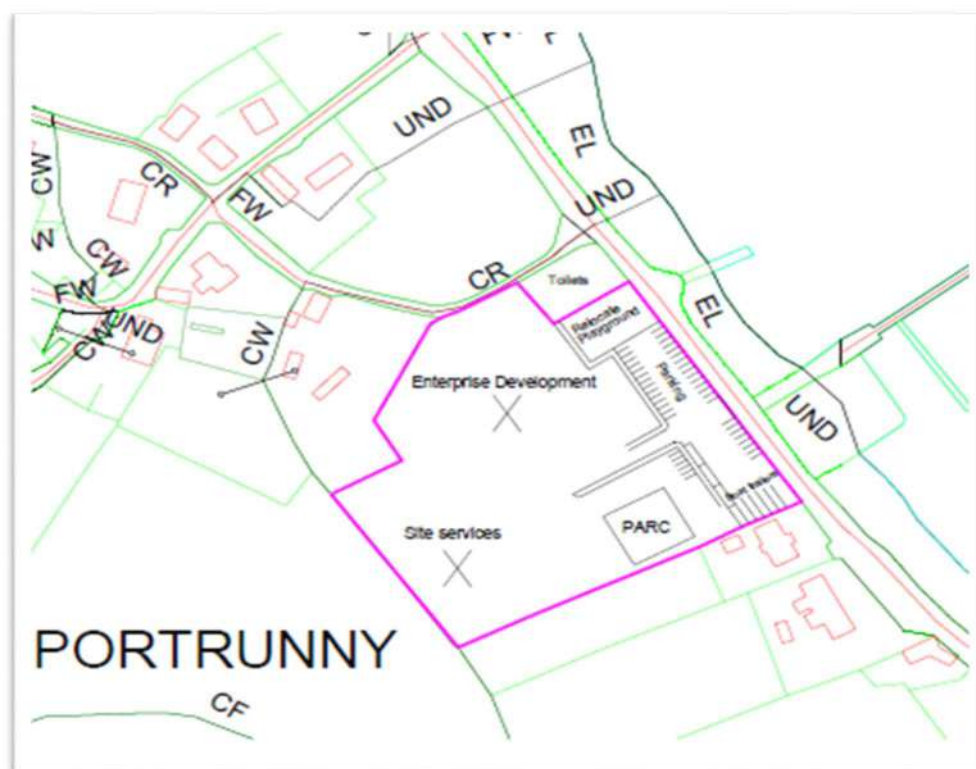
A range of uses are proposed for the **overall site**, as indicated in Figure 6 below, including:

- Amenity & Recreational Centre (PARC),
- Public car park including parking for vehicles with boat trailers and associated public lighting,
- Relocation of public playground and installation of new outdoor exercise equipment,
- Potential sites for enterprise development,
- Site services.



Portrun Development Association have proposed indicative uses for the site, as indicated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Proposed Site Uses²



2.2.2 Proposed Portrunny Amenity & Recreational Centre (PARC)

Proposed uses **within the proposed PARC facility** include:

- A **reception centre / tourist information** including Wi Fi area,
- A **multi-purpose space** to accommodate functions, training, and emergencies services on River Shannon,
- **Facilities to support outdoor activities** such as toilets and showers,
- **Café / restaurant** ("Central PARC"),
- **Meeting lounge**,
- **Storage Area**.

This initiative could provide a **range of facilities that would benefit the local community and visitors to the area**, including:

- Facilities that support outdoor activities that lead to enterprise development e.g. bike hire, kayaking and boat hire,
- Hospitality facilities e.g. café / restaurant,
- Meeting place for community groups and government agencies,
- Training facility for various groups and organisations, including emergency services and search and rescue,
- Venue for hosting water based festivals and competitions.

² Source: Portrun Development Association

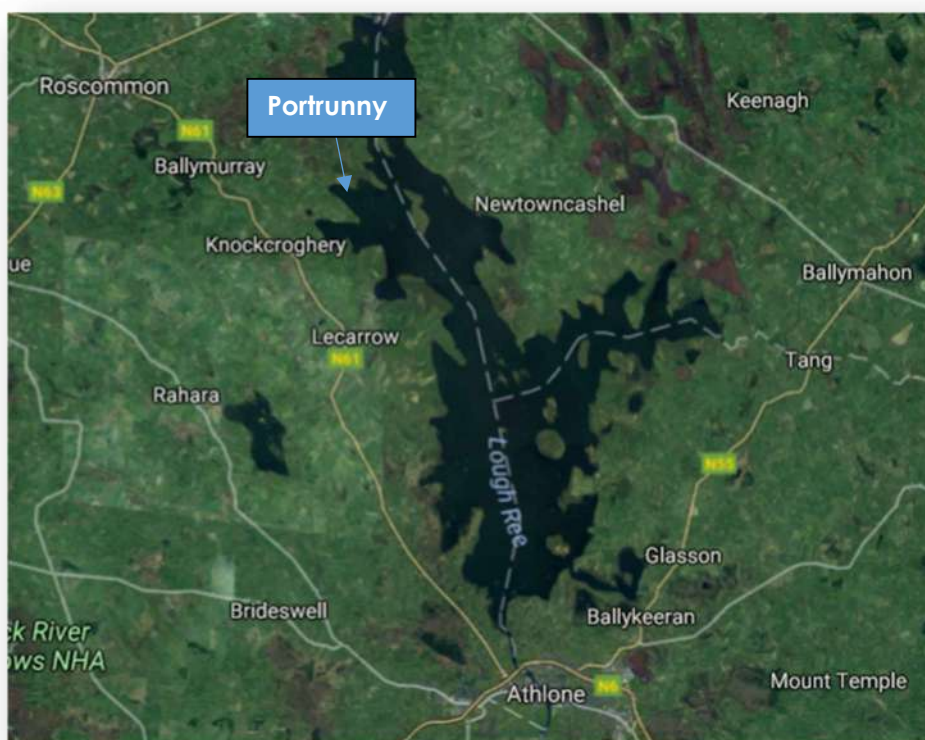
User groups that could benefit from such a facility would include:

- Local community groups,
- Domestic and overseas visitors to the River Shannon,
- Government agencies,
- Emergency services/volunteer groups,
- Sports organisations/clubs including sub-aqua, triathlon, kayaking, boating, sailing, swimming, walking, and cycling,
- Private enterprise e.g. boat hire, cycle hire, guided tours, hospitality etc.

2.3 Local Context

Portrunny is located on the north-west shore of Lough Ree in County Roscommon, 8km south-east of Roscommon town and 25km to the north of Athlone, as shown on Figure 4 below. The settlement, loosely clustered around Portrunny Harbour, had a hinterland population of approximately 529 in 2016³.

Figure 4: Location of Portrunny in context of Roscommon and Athlone



The county town **Roscommon** has a population of almost 6,000 people, with a rich built heritage and a wide range of community amenities. There is a volunteer-run visitor centre where visitors can find out about Roscommon Castle and things to see and do in the area.

Loughnaneane Park is situated in the town centre, behind the old gaol. It contains a children's playground, outdoor exercise equipment, a lakeside walkway, picnic tables, and Roscommon Castle.

³ Census 2016, CSO Ireland

Roscommon is located 30km from the M6 Dublin-Galway motorway and the rail station offers services to all stations on the Dublin- and Westport/Ballina and Galway line. Major national roads lead from Roscommon to Sligo, Longford, Athlone, Castlebar, Galway and Dublin. Bus Éireann runs regular bus services to other major towns from the Mart Road.

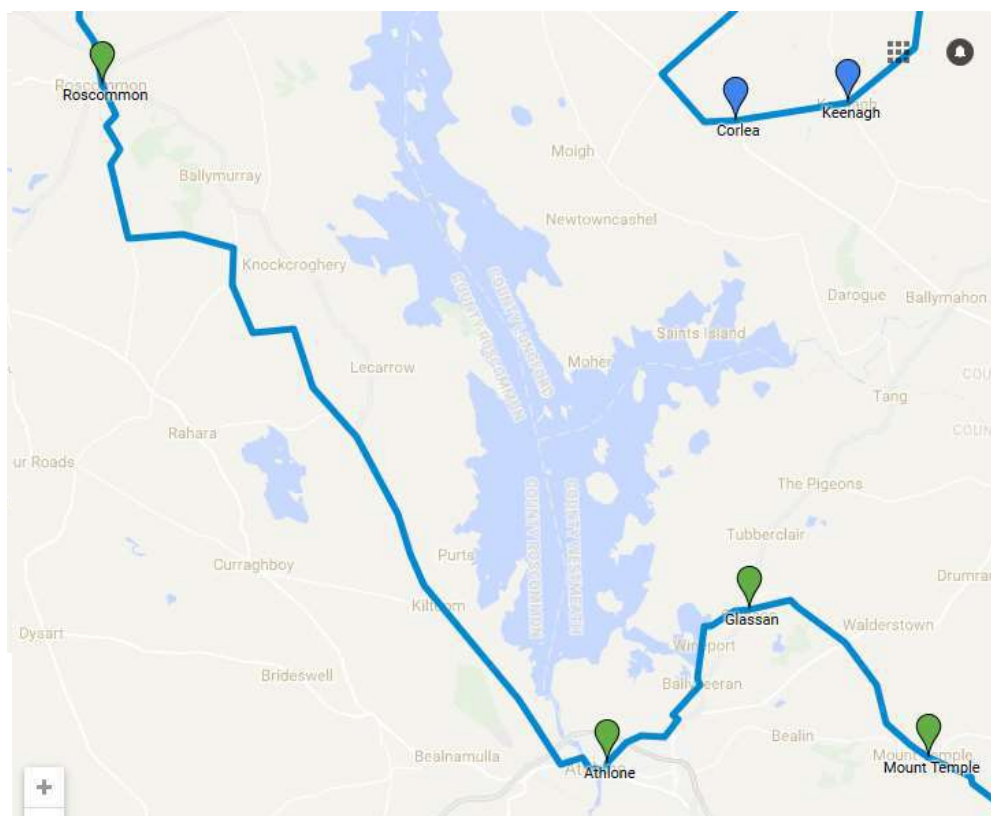
Nearby settlements and attractions include:

- **Knockcroghery:** 'Cnoc na Crocaire': located to the south-west of Portlunny. The village, known for its Clay Pipe Museum and Knockcroghery Fair, has a picnic area by the bank of a stream at the northern end of the village.
- **Kilteevan:** 'Cill Taobháin': is a parish located 6 km east of Roscommon town, and 9 km north of Knockcroghery village. The community association are currently developing a bog walk (see 2.5.3). The village contains a Catholic church, former mass rock, community centre, primary school, public house, karting track and GAA park.
- **Lanesborough-Ballyleague:** *Béal Átha Liag/Lanesboro*: located 15km north-west of Roscommon town, with Lanesborough on the Longford side of River Shannon and Ballyleague on the Roscommon side. The historic town is known for its angling and hosts the Lough Ree Angling hub with several international angling events held there. Lanesborough-Ballyleague is a popular stop-over for pleasure boats on the River Shannon navigation system. Lough Ree is just to the south and stretches almost 30 km to Athlone. Upstream the Shannon runs 40 km to Carrick-on-Shannon and the Shannon-erne Waterway. A sailing regatta takes place in the town and there is a focus on food tourism, with the Taste of the Lakelands Food Festival held in 2016.
- **Mote Park:** Mote Park is a popular walking and amenity area for Roscommon town and surrounding areas. The 650-acre scenic forest provides habitats for a range of flora and fauna including the rare red squirrel. The forest provides opportunities for many forms of outdoor pursuits including hiking, walking and animal/bird-watching. There are two way-marked walking routes including Mote Park Heritage Walkwa, a ~20km walk through open farmland, forest and hillside, and the Croften looped woodland trail. Other facilities include an orienteering course and Mote Park Interactive Heritage Tour with twelve points of heritage Interest brought to life through stunning video footage and interviews with locals, historians and biodiversity experts. Highlights include locals recounting memories of Mote Park House, close up footage of the Lion Gate, the Red Squirrel feeding project, the area's connection to St. Coman, a tour of the Mote Park House Cellar ruins and how the woodland in Mote Park is managed.
- **Lecarrow:** 'An Leithcheathrú': on the shores of Lough Ree has a recently refurbished marina with a Waterways Ireland shower and toilet block. Lough Ree can be accessed by the scenic Lecarrow Canal. A short walk from the marina Coffey's bar and shop and the renowned Yew Tree restaurant – a popular stop off for people cruising the Shannon. Close to Lecarrow is the **Rinn Dinn Peninsula** and the Rinn Duin Castle Estate, one of the most well-preserved deserted Norman towns in Ireland. Its grounds contain nine heritage sites including the castle, gatehouse, windmill, church, and a perimeter wall with three towers, a hospital and a bee pole. There is a looped 4 km sign posted walking trail which will guides visitors through the sites and begins at St John's House, a about a 1.5 mile walk from the marina.

- **The Táin Trail:** The 575km/365 miles Táin Trail walking/cycling route is a loop which runs from Rathcroghan in Co. Roscommon, through County Longford, on to the Cooley Peninsula in Co. Louth and back. It is fully signposted with distinctive Brown Bull finger post signs, as well as striking pictorial maps located in key towns along the route. The modern version of the trail was initially set up in 1985-86 to ring the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth, but was then extended to encompass the complete route followed by the rampaging armies of the legendary Queen Maeve of Connaught, from Rathcroghan in County Roscommon to the Cooley peninsula in Co. Louth.

The Táin Trail is the longest and most historic route in Ireland. It retraces the trail taken by Queen Maeve of Connaught and her armies in the Irish epic The Táin Bo Cuailgne, The Cattle Raid of Cooley – the most famous of Irish sagas and one of the most ancient epics of Northern Europe. The trail takes you not only to the legendary places of the Táin but through some of the most beautiful countryside in Ireland, land steeped in history and hiding a treasure trove of ancient sites and majestic scenery.

Figure 5: Táin Trail



2.4 Regional Context

Lough Ree is the fifth largest lake in Ireland and the second largest on the River Shannon system after Lough Derg, as shown on Figure 6 below. The lake is popular for boating and angling, with the towns of Athlone to the south and Lanesboro to the north, popular activity hubs. Portlunny is centrally located on the Shannon River, in close proximity to large urban areas.



Lough Ree has numerous islands including the 58ha/143 acre **Inchcleraun** (*Inis Cloithrinn*) or Quaker Island where St Diarmuid's Holy Well and Abbey were founded in the 6th Century and where the ruins of seven churches can be found.

Hodson Bay is located 8km north of Athlone and 21km to the south of Portlunny with facilities including the 4* Hodson Bay Hotel and Leisure Centre and the **Baysports** recreation centre. Baysports offers visitors one of Ireland's premier waterparks (adult 15 years + €17, child 6-14 years €12, junior WP 4-6 years €4); kayaking (single kayak/€22 per hour, double kayak/€32 per hour); Stand-up-Paddling (SUPing) €22 each per hour, pedal boats (can seat 4 people) €32 per hour per boat. Admission to the park is every 15 minutes.



Lough Key Forest and Activity Park (www.loughkey.ie) is located 57km to the north of Portlunny. The facility, a joint venture between Roscommon County Council and Coillte includes a visitor centre with Lakeside Café/restaurant, caravan-park with 46 pitches, 50-berth marina,



Moylurg events room, visitor information and shop. The world of adventure

includes Adventure Play Kingdom, Boda Berg, Lough \Key Experience with Tree Canopy, Orienteering and Wheel-O, the 800 acre park and historical estate, and walking and cycling trails.

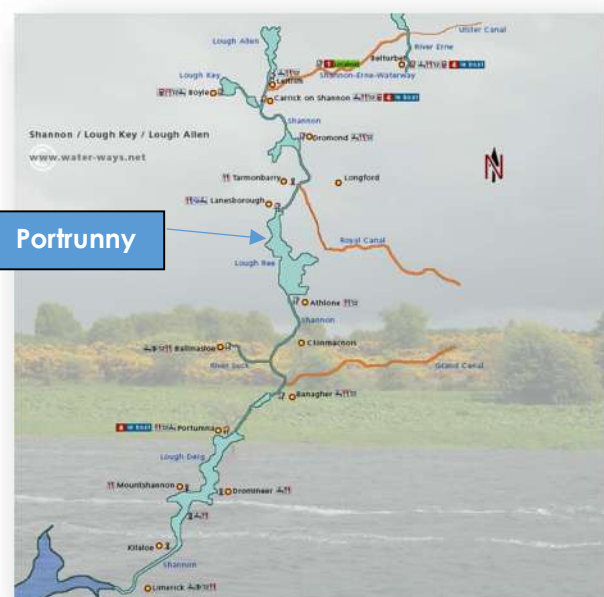


Figure 6: Regional context of Lough Ree

Source: www.european-waterways.eu

2.5 Current Initiatives Underway or Planned

2.5.1 Portrunny Heritage Trail

Portrun Development Association are currently in the process of implementing a Portrunny Heritage Trail to mark significant heritage sites and to provide opportunities to link with neighbouring communities along Lough Ree.

This project aims to help protect the community's identity via documentation of culture and heritage via interpretive signage; and to improve well-being through the encouragement of use of the heritage trail. It is envisaged that the trail will be maintained by the Portrunny Tidy Town Action Group with the assistance of schemes such as the TUS Community Work Placement scheme.



2.5.2 Portrunny Slipway

Development of a slipway at Portrunny is underway, jointly funded by Roscommon County Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland and Waterways Ireland. This will enhance existing facilities and maximise return on investment in the area by Waterways Ireland and Roscommon County Council through **encouraging greater use of and access to Lough Ree by pleasure-craft and anglers**. Figure 7 below shows the plans for the new slipway at Portrunny.

Figure 7: Preliminary Plans for New Portrunny Slipway



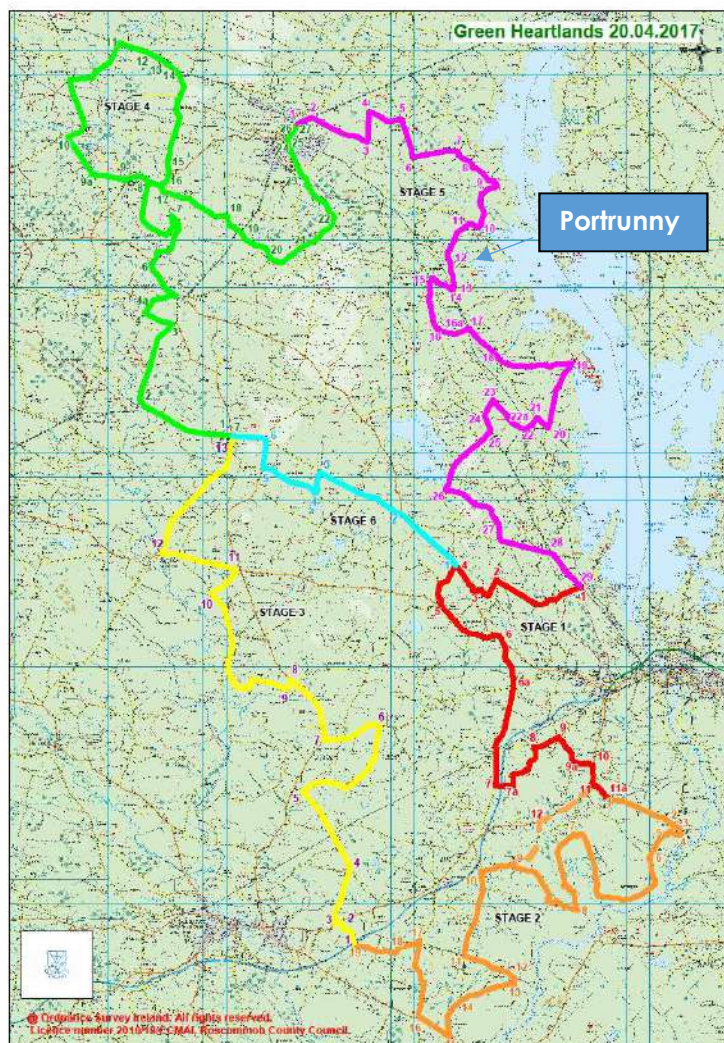
2.5.3 Kiltteevan Bog Trails

A 5km trail around the bog in the neighbouring Kiltteevan community is currently almost finished. This will include interpretation and seating. The community plan to develop further trails. There could be an opportunity, subject to discussion between Portrun Development Association and Kiltteevan Community Association, to develop a link between PARC and the Kiltteevan Bog Trail, with PARC functioning as a starting point with car-parking, bike hire and information available.

2.5.4 Green Heartlands Cycle Route

The new Green Heartlands Cycle Route, as shown in Figure 8, will be coming down by Bracknagh onto Cloonmore heading through Kiltteevan bogs and throughout Roscommon. This will include two family friendly loops.

Figure 8: Indicative Map of Green Heartlands Cycle Route



2.5.5 Lough Ree Island Access

Waterways Ireland have advanced plans to install pontoons (floating docking stations for cruisers) in close proximity to islands in Lough Ree near Portrunny. This may include Inch Clearún Island (Quaker), Hare Island and Inch Bofin.

3.0 Strategic Context

This section considers relevant national, regional and local strategic plans that cover the Roscommon and Mid-Shannon area, and that relate to this study.

3.1 Regional Plans & Policies

3.1.1 Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) were adopted by the West Regional Authority in 2010 following a review of previous guidelines for the period 2004-2016. The guidelines, which cover counties of Roscommon, Mayo and Galway, are a long term strategic planning framework for the region, consistent with the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020. Thriving towns and villages are identified as a strength in the RPG, with facilitation and promotion of **place-making**, and **opportunities for employment** included as opportunities in this area.⁴

Relevant policies, discussed in detail in appendix 2, focus on **support for water-based activities, rural tourism along with support for sustainable tourism on the River Shannon corridor which is complementary to the natural environment, and support for development of cultural facilities.**

3.1.3 Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010)

This study was commissioned by Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland working with North Tipperary, Offaly, Galway, Roscommon, Westmeath and Longford County Councils and Shannon Development. The purpose of this study is to provide a set of recommendations for consideration by tourism authorities, waterway managers, local authorities, funding agencies.

The study identifies the principal tourism needs in the area as being to:

- develop strong products,
- provide more access to water activities for visitors to the area, and develop activity visitor services around a set of activity hubs,
- develop more opportunities for visitors to experience trips on the waterway, including a regular waterbus service, and
- draw attention to the natural heritage of the area and provide sustainable opportunities to appreciate the spectacular wetland bird assemblages and the natural and cultural heritage of Ireland's bogs.

The study's main purpose was to recommend projects that could be developed sustainably in the area to **improve the tourism economy**. The study includes an action plan with a range of programmes designed 'to increase visibility, appeal and ease of use of the area for visitors and to ease self and tour operator packaging of the best aspects of the area'⁵.

Programme 3 in the study's action programme identifies four locations for **activity hubs** with improved access to water based activities. Portlunna is identified as one of the four sites.

⁴ Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region, 2010-2022, page 34

⁵ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 37

Recommended facilities include changing facilities, equipment hire, day boat hire and instruction room, with the opportunity to pre-book activities. Programme 14 outlines Settlement Opportunities. **For Portrunny this is envisaged as 'Provide shore side activity services, space accommodation and seasonal café', with lead partners listed as Waterways Ireland and Roscommon County Council.**

3.1.4 Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, the third national brand proposition was launched in 2018. The brand proposition is:

'Explore the lush green heartlands of Ireland's natural rural beauty where activity and relaxation are centred around rural communities and their lifestyles, that can be discovered across a lattice work of land and water trails showcased by the iconic River Shannon and the Beara Breifne Way'.⁷



The objectives of the Portrun Development Association for the **PARC** facility strongly accord with the concept for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and provision of a visitor facility at this location will help bring the brand to life in County Roscommon.

3.1.5 Lough Ree Study

A study was completed in 2017 to define a roadmap for Lough Ree in terms of key access points and for access to islands. This study considered access to wilderness in the area. This study indicates that **Portrunny is a preferred access point for the islands of Lough Ree, particularly Inis Clearún (Quaker Island).**⁸

3.2 County Plans & Policies

3.2.1 Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020

The county development plan outlines Roscommon County Councils strategy for the county which aims to enhance the quality of life for residents of the county. Relevant several strategic aims, objectives and policies which relate to the study area are outlined in Appendix 2.

Tourism is recognised as playing an increasingly important role in the economy of Roscommon, with Lough Ree and the Shannon system having opportunities to generate economic activity through water based activities. The corresponding vision for tourism in the plan is that the county will capitalise on key natural resources such as Lough Ree and other waterways. The plan indicates the council's support for the development of facilities that, in appropriate locations, support the development of waterways based tourism, with Portrunny identified as one such place. However, the plan indicates that any such development must not adversely affect the integrity of designated areas, with appropriate assessment if deemed necessary.

⁶ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 49

⁷ www.failteireland.ie/IrelandsHiddenHeartlands

⁸ Telephone conversation with Eanna Rowe, Waterways Ireland, 07/12/17

Given that the **PARC** facility will provide recreational facilities of benefit to locals and visitors alike in tandem with the provision of community facilities, the plans policies with regard to community facilities are worth noting.

This includes recognition of the importance of provision of community facilities in building community cohesion, and of provision of recreation facilities as a means to enhance the health and quality of life of local communities, for which the plan indicates the councils support.

3.2.2 Roscommon Local Economic & Community Plan (2016-2021)

The proposed **PARC** development accords with the vision, high level goals and wider actions and outputs outlined within the plan, particularly in relation to the provision of **enhanced tourism, community, sport and recreation facilities** and opportunities in County Roscommon.

3.3 Local Plans & Policies

3.3.1 Portrunny Tourism & Amenity Action Plan (2006)

This objectives of this aspirational plan, produced for Roscommon County Council, and which could be considered typical of the era, relate to enhancing the role of Portrunny within the county. This included a high level of residential, tourist and amenity based development and it is understood there was strong community opposition to these plans due to the scale of the development proposed. **This level of development, in the context of the current study, is not considered appropriate for Portrunny and this study does not propose any residential element.**

3.4 Fáilte Ireland Grant Funding

Fáilte Ireland launched their Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects in June 2016, with €65m investment available to develop new or enhance exiting tourism experiences and attractions. For the first call 115 applications were received from public private and voluntary sectors including community groups.

Following evaluation 24 of these were invited to proceed to a second stage. None of these were in the Lough Ree area – one project was included for County Roscommon, an improvement plan for Strokestown Park & Irish National Famine Museum. It is expected that the next call for applications will be in late 2018-early 2019.

4.0 Market Analysis

This section includes a product:market matching exercise to determine what mix of facilities would be of most appeal to the identified target markets.

4.1 Target Markets

To maximise the visitor opportunity, it will be important to consider who are the likely target markets by country and within these markets which are the type of visitors or market segments most likely to be interested in a visit to Portrunny. By identifying these market segments, and their motivations, the focus then becomes the provision of suitable facilities and infrastructure to attract these visitors and provide them with the optimum experience. **Data on visitors to Ireland, to County Roscommon and core target market segments are included in appendix 3.**

Visitors, both domestic and overseas choose to travel along the unspoilt River Shannon for many reasons including for peace and tranquillity, abundant wildlife and birdwatching opportunities, for coarse and game fishing, to explore built heritage such as Clonmacnoise, and to visit the many pubs, restaurants and café. Above all it is a place to spend quality time together amongst in a highly scenic area. While Portrunny can offer many of these attributes it lacks a hub, a place for visitors to obtain refreshments – an opportunity to linger.

The proposed PARC facility would enhance the visitor experience by providing a place to eat and drink, a place to find out more information on the local area and the wider county area – encouraging return visits and positive word of mouth referrals.

4.2 Product: Market Matching

This project is about provision of facilities for the community and for visitors. To ensure that the optimum range of facilities are provided for visitors, thus making Portrunny an attractive destination it is important that the product provided is matched to the market envisaged.

Table 1 below is a product: market matrix prepared for Portrunny and the associated shore based PARC facility in tandem with those key market segments identified in appendix 3 for the domestic and overseas visitor markets. This matrix identifies those activities which are likely to be of most interest to the widest range of visitors.

While a broad-brush exercise this approach clearly indicates those product areas which of most importance such as **heritage interpretation, visitor services and facilities such as a café and toilets, and hire of equipment.**



Table 1: Portrunny Product/Market Matrix

Market/Market Segments	Local Community	Domestic Ireland		Overseas (focus on Britain, USA, France, Germany and other Mainland Europe)			All markets	
		Connected Families	Footloose Socialisers	Culturally Curious	Great Escapers	Nature Lovers	Adventure & Activity	Special interest e.g. bird-watching
Product/Experience								
Shore based activities								
Heritage Interpretation	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Cafe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Space/Gallery	✓	✓		✓		✓		
Playground	✓	✓						
Toilets/Showers/Changing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Links to Walking Trails	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Canoe/Kayak/Bike Hire	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Visitor Information		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.0 Part One Summary

Site Appraisal

Portrunny is strategically located in the hidden heartlands of Ireland, near the county town of Roscommon and with a range of places to visit and things to see and do in the area. While there are currently many activities and attractions in the area, **it currently lacks a hub** that can direct visitors to these places. The proposed PARC facility will complement, rather than displace, existing and proposed amenities in neighbouring communities, and provide an opportunity for visitors, and people in the local community, to discover more in the local area.

A range of uses are proposed for the overall site include Amenity & Recreational Centre (PARC), public car park, public playground and installation of new outdoor exercise equipment, potential sites for enterprise development, Site services.

Proposed uses within the proposed PARC facility include:

- A reception centre / tourist information including Wi Fi area,
- A multi-purpose space to accommodate functions, training, and emergencies services on River Shannon,
- Facilities to support outdoor activities such as toilets and showers,
- Café / restaurant ("Central PARC"),
- Meeting lounge,
- Storage Area.

This initiative could provide a range of facilities that would **benefit the local community and visitors to the area**, including:

- Facilities that support outdoor activities that lead to enterprise development e.g. bike hire, kayaking and boat hire,
- Hospitality facilities e.g. café / restaurant,
- Meeting place for community groups and government agencies,
- Training facility for various groups and organisations, including emergency services and search and rescue,
- Venue for hosting water based festivals and competitions.

User groups that could benefit from such a facility would include:

- Local community groups,
- Domestic and overseas visitors to the River Shannon,
- Government agencies,
- Emergency services/volunteer groups,
- Sports organisations/clubs including sub-aqua, triathlon, kayaking, boating, sailing, swimming, walking, and cycling,
- Private enterprise e.g. boat hire, cycle hire, guided tours, hospitality etc.

There are a range of relevant local strategic initiatives underway, including the forthcoming development of a Portrunny Heritage Trail and Portrunny Slipway. The heritage trail will help link communities along the shore of Lough Ree and contribute community well-being. The slipway will maximise return on investment by Waterways Ireland and Roscommon County Council in the area to date and encourage greater use of the facilities at Portrunny and attract more people to the area.

With a range of local initiatives currently underway and planned, including the Kiltewan Bog Trails and the Heartlands Cycle Route, **there is joined up thinking taking place between Portrunny and neighbouring communities** which will together add value to the visitor opportunities, and strengthen the case for a community and visitor hub/trail-head in the area.

The site proposed for PARC is strategically located at the heart of the Shannon system, and at the closest access point to Lough Ree from Roscommon town. There is **community support** for a facility that would be of benefit for the local community and visiting lake users alike at this popular and scenic location. **PARC** can offer a coordinated approach to the promotion of local natural and built heritage, activities in the area, and for access to the islands of Lough Ree. Critically it can **act as a visitor hub for this part of Roscommon and Lough Ree**, providing a reason for visitors to dwell in the area, encouraging increased tourism revenue spend and enhanced visitor satisfaction.

Strategic Context

PARC is aligned with regional plans such as the Regional Planning Guidelines which **encourages the development of water-based activities** on inland waterways and rural tourism, as well the enhancement of social infrastructure and community development. **The new Ireland's Hidden Heartland's brand focusses on activities in nature – a good fit for the proposed initiative.**

PARC also supports the objectives of the Mid Shannon & Lough Ree Project Development Study report from 2010 such as the identification of Portrunny as an activity hub on Lough Ree. Recommended facilities at each hub included changing facilities, equipment hire, day boat hire and instruction room, with the opportunity to pre-book activities. This study has been updated by a Lough Ree study which identifies Portrunny as a hub with particular focus for access to the islands of Lough Ree.

The **PARC** concept is supported by the strategic aims, objectives and policies of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, particularly in relation to the separate, but closely linked, aims of fostering greater economic activity based on tourism, and the enhancement of local communities through quality facility development. PARC also accords with the Roscommon Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021.

The **PARC** concept at this location can offer visitors to the area, including those from the local area, a better experience through provision of modern comfortable facilities. However and perhaps more importantly **PARC** can offer the local community a hub – a place that **enhances the community and reinforces a sense of place for Portrunny** by:

- **Providing a place for the local community to gather** for events and festivals – promoting social inclusion,
- **Providing a trail head** for the Portrunny Heritage Trail and future trails – encouraging an interest in conservation and healthy living,
- **Provide a place for local enterprise** – contributing to local economic development and local opportunity.

Market Analysis

Overall the trend for overseas tourism growth in Ireland is strong, with record visitor numbers and strong growth forecast, although with potential for a soft growth or medium term decline in the UK market. While the main overseas visitor market for the West region is Mainland Europe visitors to Roscommon are more likely to come from the UK, with 45% of the overall share – from which it could be suggested that there is a potential negative impact from any Brexit associated downturn, and/or an opportunity to attract more of the Mainland Europe visitors who are coming to the West region.

While domestic tourism has shown strong growth in recent years there has been a significant decline in domestic tourism numbers for County Roscommon in the last year. In terms of

overseas target markets, the most relevant are those from Britain, USA, Germany and France. Within these target markets the market segments of most relevance for the Portrunny & Lough Ree area are likely to be the 'Culturally Curious' and 'Great Escapers', and to a lesser extent the 'Social Energisers'. In terms of the domestic market it is envisaged that the 'Connected Families' segment is of most relevance to Portrunny.

The type of facilities envisaged to be of most interest to overseas and domestic visitors are thought to be heritage interpretation, visitor services and facilities such as a café and toilets, and hire of equipment. **These are the range of facilities that could be provided by PARC, which would increase the appeal of a visit to Portrunny and the wider County Roscommon area.**

While not the subject of this study there is a plan currently considered to place a floating jetty alongside **Inchcleraun Island** to enable visitors to access the island. As indicated above in section 3.1.5, Portrunny will be selected as the preferred location to access Inchcleraun Island from the shore. **This reinforces the case for, and creates an opportunity for the proposed PARC facility to function as an on-shore visitor centre/facility for the island**, although an expansion to include this function would require a separate in-depth feasibility study.

There is a demonstrable need for a facility such as PARC at this beautiful location on Lough Ree, at a strategic location with Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Its development would capitalise upon existing investment and provide a much needed amenity and recreation centre for the local community, as well as domestic and international visitors. This exceptional site deserves an exceptional design response, provided in the next section of this study.

PART TWO: PARC CONCEPT DESIGN, PROCUREMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

Part Two of the PARC Feasibility Study contains a comprehensive architectural site layout and concept plan prepared by [georgeboyledesigns](#). This includes design context (6.1), issues that inform design (6.2), overview of the brief (6.3) analysis of Lough Ree sensitivity (6.4), site features and consideration (6.5), statutory context (6.6) and vision (6.7). Concept and site layout are supported by an engineering study by FDA consulting engineers. This is followed by a series of recommendations and actions in section 7.

6.0 PARC Design

6.1 Design Context: Recreation and Innovation by Lough Ree – Colony, Station, Venue, Base

Waterways Ireland have developed this high-quality marina, play area and visitor facilities over recent years at Portrunny, aside an attractive bay on the western shores of scenic Lough Ree. The marina offers visitors a quiet stopping point along the shores of the Lough, but visitors will find no facilities for eating out, entertainment, visitor information or shops to restock provisions. Since 2016, Portrun Development Association (PDA) undertook several infrastructure and amenity initiatives. This **PARC** project arose in response to extensive community consultation which identified a need for a multifunctional facility that would offer visitors information, facilities and a reason to stay longer in the area.

PDA have engaged with Roscommon County Council and the Department of Rural Development's in relation to the Town & Village Renewal Scheme to develop signage and supports for a heritage trail.

This project has great potential to deliver local and regional benefits in terms of tourism and recreation amenity. Water-based activities are increasingly popular and it is important that adequate, safe and attractive facilities are provided for residents, for domestic and for overseas visitors. **Adequate infrastructure will encourage and foster growth, provide a focus for visitors to Lough Ree, and capitalise on investment by Waterways Ireland. This is likely to increase dwell-time, generating increased revenue with knock-on benefits for communities. There is potential in time for the PARC facility to act as a hub for visitors travelling between Portrunny and Inchcleraun, as envisaged in the Lough Ree study.**

PARC VISION

The PDA has sketched a vision for a dynamic lake community project, promoting a safe, family-oriented and sustainable recreational, enterprise and multi-purpose amenity centre. Our design philosophy layers onto this that the proposal must have a universal, striking and visually meaningful **design appeal** in order to differentiate this site in its remote location among all others. It must be highly responsible and innovative in its **engineering** and **sustainable** features, in order to copper-fasten the safety and environmental perfection of its setting. Finally, it must be – to an unprecedented extent – **evolutionary and adaptable** in footprint, spatial layout,

expansion, capacity and potential for incremental phasing: to allow a breathing, living brief to emerge from a complex funding context, to find its own performing level: to make this place an efficient, economically brilliant and extraordinary 21st century exemplar - not only for the local Portrunny community and County Roscommon, but for the entire region and Ireland.

PARC MISSION

Through innovative planning and community consultation, PDA and the feasibility team have scoped an exceptional opportunity – a “third place”⁹* a destination venue, a place to feel at home and stimulated, for people of all ages and origins: visitors, tourists, adventurers, employers, leaders and local area business groups, sole traders and budding entrepreneurs.



Figure 2 Portrunny Harbour - Photo Paul Doran

Any vision on the site is highly dependent on an ambitious infrastructural and civil engineering plan in tandem with careful market insight and capacity planning. Our design is informed by all inputs to date, but many skills will be required across future stages of the project should it proceed.

It is recommended that detailed site planning and building design are approached as a controlled, further phase for this project, once feasibility has been determined.

⁹ * In community building, the **third place** is the social destination or location - separate from the two usual social environments of home (“first place”) and the workplace (“second place”). Examples of third places include environments such as churches, cafes, clubs, libraries, amenities, bars or parks. In his influential book The Great Good Place, Ray Oldenburg (1991) argues that third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place

6.1.1 PARC LIFE – SIX PRINCIPLES – BRAND, CHARACTER AND VALUE

Over the course of the project consultation, a number of **defining principles** were identified by the design team to aid with framing a design concept approach. These include:

i. CONNECTIVITY HUB - COMMUNITY WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

PARC's tranquil setting, proximity to the beautiful Lough Ree and its islands and recreation-focussed lifestyle are uniquely tied to the location. A welcoming, friendly neighbourhood and sustainable local economy underpin a dynamic, enduring community with strong connections and intelligent engagement with their precious, protected environment.

Creative designs, interactive natural amenities, an astonishing historic tapestry and excellent recent infrastructure celebrate this pride, building valued gathering spaces along the mystical lake connecting all to each other - across global and historic sweeps through space and time. **PARC** will reflect on - and reflect out – an essence of leisure interpreted through legacy, lore, and providence, connecting past to present and here to where we may someday be.

ii. PIVOT POINT - A PLACE THAT RESPONDS TO NEED

Recreation, water activity, visitor information and exhibition; retail, enterprise, work; cultural, heritage and nature trails; environmental engagement, entertainment; community health and social services led by local people – this rich mix of uses can provide profoundly persuasive opportunities at this site, serviced in modest ways to improve living, learning, working and, vitally, play. **PARC** must be a *destination* - a colony, station, venue, and base. It must be readily accessible, but critically must also be adaptable and nimble: capable of pivoting layout, arrangement and face to respond to fluctuating and rapidly changing needs of both resident and visitor populations to whom it will cater as a prominent multi-purpose hub in the region.

iii. THE LIFESTYLE BUSINESS PRIVILEGE - LIVE, LEARN, WORK, PLAY

Ireland's Hidden Heartland's brand proposition launched in 2018, centres on the notion of autonomous, self-led casual curiosity – a mind-set of wonder and exploration.

A diversity of uses and experiences will be possible, presented and promoted here at **PARC**. This has inspired a brief that arranges itself incrementally across a pavilion of non-restrictive but highly serviced quality space. Here, through circulation and movement from inside to outside in all weathers, resident and visitor alike may:

“explore the lush green heartlands of Ireland's natural rural beauty... where activity and relaxation are centred around rural communities and their lifestyles, that can be discovered across a lattice work of land and water trails...”¹⁰

iv. RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP - SENSIBLE AND SENSORY SHARING OF SPACE

At **PARC**, amenities are integrated with lake and wetland to promote and protect Portrunny's physical and environmental health for all species, human and otherwise, and their uniquely special habitats. Designing shared spaces for recreation, learning and working will contribute

¹⁰ Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand identity essential guidelines, Fáilte Ireland

to an outstanding quality of life for residents and visitors alike. To ensure environmental systems flourish, development is guided by stringent principles of sustainability, evolutionary adaptability, smart growth and lean technology. This promotes an ethos of wise resource use and stewardship, assisted by sophisticated dovetailing with sensory design and perception.

v. CURIOSITY CORE – A CENTRE OF DISCOVERY, INVENTION AND LEARNING

PARC will be a place that nurtures optimum conditions for diverse creative expression and inventive innovation, cultivating a buzzing hive for natural entrepreneurship. The unique proposition to combine community, commerce and creativity in a convergence of education, exhibition, information, entertainment, recreation, physical enhancement, enterprise and performance opportunities will build new synergies between traditional and new, reliable and intangible, the unheard of, unthought-of and yet-to-be-imagined.

The inventors and shapers of tomorrow's future now work from most remote places – indeed the more isolated places are where they experience the most provocative and motivating inspirations. **PARC** will encourage active participation in creative entrepreneurial activity.

It will maintain affordability and enhance stability of tenure through strategic investments in infrastructure, through intelligent partnerships, an innovative approach to flexible space/time programming and an effective, socially-motivated governance model.

vi. COLLABORATION CLUSTER – ENHANCED AWARENESS OF VALUE IN ALL THINGS

PARC will foster a collaborative culture that will simmer with the kinetic energy of alchemic interaction, natural cross-fertilisation of ideas and a symbiosis of synergies in product and service design. The value of people, planet and things becomes visible, tangible and ripe for development through the growth of trust and alignment of ideologies and ethos.

Allowing an unstructured, lightly-monitored crucible of casual but intimate encounter spaces in a controlled proximity of creative spaces leads to this inevitable brightening and enlightening elevation of awareness and consequential assimilation of real, intrinsic value.

The whole becomes gradually greater than the sum of parts. Stronger community consolidation and often unexpected, virtuoso, woven and shared initiatives are natural results.

6.1.2 CURRENT SOCIAL TRENDS - INFORMING THE ARCHITECTURE

As set out in previous sections of this study, the **PARC** project is deeply informed by ongoing progress throughout Ireland during a promising time for rural development. The architect's team identified specific trends as fundamental founding stones for the design philosophy applied in the development of a creative concept for this project. These include, *inter alia*:

a. Physical Activity & Wellness

Ongoing health surveys in Ireland (CSO) conclude that fitness levels of children and adults have declined significantly between the 1980s and today. Among teenagers, the percentage at increased risk of health problems more than tripled; for adults under 40, it quadrupled.

Although Irish people agree that physical activity will keep them healthy, less than half are active enough to gain health benefits. Age appears to impact activity levels: young adults are still considered active but only a third of adults aged 65 and older meet sufficient physical activity levels. Household income and education have direct impact: physical activity generally decreases in relation to household income and level of educational attainment.

The real focus is on the concerning trends related to children's physical activity levels. Less than a quarter of 5 to 17 year olds use active modes of transportation. Only 7% of 5 to 11-year-olds and 4% of 12 to 17-year-olds meet Physical Activity Guidelines for Children. Nevertheless, poor physical activity levels nationally do not appear to result from lack of interest or awareness of issues surrounding child and youth physical inactivity.

b. Sport Participation

Studies in Ireland further identify participation trends related to sport activities on the rise. While national levels of sport participation continue to decline, linked in various ways to age, gender, education and income as above, certain activities are spiking. These include adventuring, self-led programmatic sports, group team activities, water sports, outdoor experiences and independent or guided exploration. The most important benefit of sport participation is, of course, relaxation and fun. The reasons most do not participate tend to be attributed overwhelmingly to a lack of time and, less so, of interest.

Where sport participation is generally steady or on the rise tends to centre on established group cluster activity as evidenced through the sustained pervasive strength of the GAA but also among student groups at schools, scouts, special interest clubs and colleges/universities, and among national and visiting recreational adventure seekers and explorers.

Sport participation opportunities form a physical infrastructural backbone to Fáilte Ireland's three priority consumer segments: the "Culturally Curious", the "Social Energisers" and the "Great Escapers".

c. Multi-Use Spaces

Increasingly, recreation and cultural facilities are required to accommodate multiple activities, particularly when serving small communities with diverse interests and experiences. Spaces are required to encompass a host of different components and activities. The benefits of multi-

use spaces include the opportunity to create operational efficiencies, attract a wide spectrum of users, and **procure multiple sources of revenue or income.**

Providing opportunities for all community members to partake in a broad spectrum of differing activities simultaneously at the same location increases convenience and satisfaction for users.

Creating spaces within a facility that are adaptable and re-configurable is a growing trend in new and retro-fitted recreational facilities worldwide. Performing arts venues allow staging, seating, acoustics and wall configurations to be easily changed as required. Visual arts spaces such as studios and galleries are designed to allow a multitude of creation and display purposes. Gym, Aquatic or Sports facilities design-in temporary barriers, walls, bleachers and amenities to be easily adjusted or removed depending on activity type or event.

d. Integrated Indoor and Outdoor Environments

An emerging concept in recreation and culture is to ensure indoor environments interact more seamlessly with outdoor recreational environments.

This is evidenced in indoor/outdoor walking trails, indoor/outdoor child play areas, indoor/outdoor aquatics facilities. Many operational issues need to be considered when planning indoor/outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, maintenance, climate, controlled access, ingress of water/pests etc.) but the concept of planning a facility to compliment the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader community parks, paths and trails, is prudent. **It ensures optimisation of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure.**

Integrating indoor and outdoor environments can be as “simple” as ensuring interiors have great opportunities to view and interact with the outdoors. Many public art installations in cities are already bridging the gap between indoor and outdoor environment.

e. Accessibility

Many current recreation and cultural amenities put significant focus on user experiences and comfort; meeting or surpassing compliance, incorporating designs to accommodate various body types and abilities. Programming accessibility is enhanced via “layering” to provide the broadest appeal to intellectual preferences.

Meeting the various needs of diverse user groups is an important aspect of accessibility. Incorporating mobile technologies, rest spaces, child-friendly spaces, crafts areas, and educational multi-purpose rooms for classes and performances is an emerging trend.

Guidelines set by governments, and increased understanding of needs of different types of visitors drives this trend. It is further empowered by the rising number of people surviving into their older years, with the attendant compromises in physical ability that pioneering people will not allow to constrain their engagement with life and the world around them. Technology is also embraced as a modern tool useful for effectively sharing messages with younger, more technologically savvy audiences.

f. Revenue Generating Spaces and Social Enterprise

Facility operators of community and non-profit facilities are increasingly finding more creative and innovative ways to generate revenues to both sustain current operations and fund future expansion or renovation projects.

By generating sustainable revenues outside of government contributions, many facilities are able to demonstrate increased financial sustainability, independence, and expand service levels. Lease spaces provide one such opportunity. Many new spaces or redeveloped existing areas of a facility can be leased to food and beverage providers and other retail businesses.

Short term rental spaces are another major source of revenue for many facilities. Lobby areas, programs rooms, and event hosting spaces have the potential to be rented to the corporate sector for meetings, team building activities, parties and a host of other functions.

g. Social Amenities

Including social amenities enables multi-purpose community recreation and cultural facilities to maximise the overall experience for users, as well as to attract non-traditional patrons to their facility. Examples include attractive lobby areas, common spaces, restaurants and cafes, spectator viewing areas, meeting facilities, adjacent outdoor parks or green space.

It is increasingly common for new facilities to be equipped with **public wireless Internet**. Another significant benefit of social amenities is the uplift in footfall to the facility during non-peak hours. Public cafes and open lobbies encourage local residents and businesspeople to visit the facility during non-event hours to meet friends, or simply as part of their daily routine. **This ensures that the broader populace perceives the facility as accessible and available to all members of the community.**

h. Sport and Recreation

Sport, recreation, and activity tourism are major contributors to local economies throughout Ireland, especially in the case of communities that have the infrastructure necessary to host significant or niche/ specialised sporting events, attracting teams, competitors or performers that draw spectators from outside the community. "Activity tourists" have been defined as participants and their families who travel more than 80km to attend, participate in, or are somehow involved in a sporting event. Sport tourism related to major regional, national or international events can have long-lasting impacts in communities, leaving enduring legacies including infrastructure, endowments and community brand recognition.

i. Cultural Tourism & Global Segmentation

Cultural tourism is a growing segment of the tourism industry. Its participants are young, well-educated, spend more money on trips, and seek unique personal experiences. Although not a new phenomenon, cultural tourism has recently been subject to extensive scrutiny, leading to the application of a process of "global segmentation" to identify visitor types to Ireland, and their specific, most intimate criteria, values, motivations and desires, right down to booking channels they use. Fáilte Ireland's **three priority consumer segments** are:

Culturally Curious – choose destinations carefully. Independent 'active sightseers'; they visit new places and expand experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture. Unlikely to return for some time after visiting a new place, often travel as couples or individuals – rarely in groups. They are aged around 40+. While small as a percentage of all tourists, they make many more short trips and participate in cultural activity all year round. They seek meaningful experiences and lasting memories that align with their own personal history, more than the site. At **PARC**, they will likely engage with cultural, festival, social activities, heritage trails, ecotourism and island attractions and experimental workspace - more than sporting or water activities.

Social Energisers – generally young couples or young adult groups seeking excitement and fun, socially enriching bursts of colour somewhere different and vibrant. They want laughter, adventure and to develop friendships across new experiences – the more out-of-the-ordinary, the more bizarre or challenging – the better. Having lots of diverse things to do in a small area, such as **PARC**, make its remoteness quickly irrelevant as they can busy themselves intensively without having much planning, travel or time-wasting. Peace and quiet are off the agenda – they want to return revitalised rather than rested. Their age profile is 20 – 30 and they are likely to engage enthusiastically with the lake and its many recreational opportunities.

Great Escapers – generally 30+ couples, often with small children, these are in serious need of rest, recuperation and time out from busy lives and juggled careers and commitments. The attraction of **PARC** is its remote, rural appeal, to escape the humdrum and bustle of urban life. They seek to get physical with nature, to feel earth beneath their feet, stars and skies above. They want to soak up the beauty of the world, a sense of history, their place in the vastness of it all – to feel part of it. They seek reconnection with each other, quality time together - as friends, partners, parents or family. They challenge themselves with strenuous - but not extreme - exploration and activity. They are after renewed balance, taking stock of their lives, learning, remembering what is important, relishing peace and quiet between activities, while still enjoying the “wow” factor. They are likely to engage with **PARC** from the water.

j. Partnerships, Volunteerism and Community Building

Partnerships with recreation, leisure and cultural opportunities are becoming more prevalent. Partnerships can take a number of forms, and include government, non- profit organisations, schools, clubs, special interest groups, local business, corporate and other private sector bodies. While provision of recreation and cultural services has historically relied on regional levels of government, many locations increasingly look to form partnerships that can enhance service levels and efficiently leverage funds. Partnerships can be as simple as facility naming and sponsorship or as complex as lease and contract agreements to operate spaces, entire facilities or deliver programmes.

A critical form of partnerships in recreation, leisure and culture opportunities is between a local authority and its community volunteers. Building a strong volunteer base and overall spirit of volunteerism can help ensure an entity is well positioned to deliver programmes, events and initiatives. Trends impacting volunteerism are important to consider:

- **Much comes from the few.** 1/3 of volunteer hours are contributed by 5% total volunteers.
- **The new volunteer.** Young Irish people and visitors volunteer to gain work related skills, to develop work experience and to practice language skills. Persons with disabilities,

stay-at-home parents, unemployed or retired people may volunteer to more fully participate in community life and feel connected.

- **Volunteer job design** is an excellent defence for changing demographics and fluctuations in funding.
- **Mandatory volunteer programmes** through government programmes and school mandated community work are worthy of considering.
- **Volunteer Contracting** - Volunteer commitment is becoming more of a negotiated and mutually beneficial arrangement rather than one-way sacrifice of time by the volunteer.
- **Risk management** ensures organisations place the right volunteer in the appropriate activity.
- **Borrowing best practices.** adopting corporate and public sector management practices including standards; codes of conduct; accountability and transparency measures around program administration; demand for evaluation; and outcome and impact measurement.
- **Professional volunteer management.** Managers of volunteer resources are working toward establishing an equal footing with other professionals in the voluntary sector.
- **Good governance.** Volunteer boards must respond to the challenge of acting as both supervisors and strategic planners.

k. Sustainability Approach

Largely bedded in the minds of development authorities as an obligation to comply with an ever-expanding and onerous array of building regulations, the impulse to incorporate green technologies, near-zero energy building and design principles into new projects can be richly rewarding and surprisingly straightforward. Minimising impact of building footprints, parking and other hard impermeable surfaces through stormwater management and low impact design such as bioswales, retention and attenuation ponds, stormwater collection and reuse and permeable paving are initial interventions that can be adopted readily.

The site at **PARC** is an elevated, boggy ground site overlooking a water body of profound scenic beauty and the impacts of the project must be exquisitely examined, identified and mitigated. In conjunction with the project design engineers, **the architectural response outlined in this feasibility study starts and is driven almost entirely by the requirement to control and enhance the potential environmental consequences of development through intensive but light-touch engineering responses.** These include:

- **Creation of area of permeable surface** to front of site at south for casual parking, with more permeable parking at elevated site for visitors to PARC,
- **Strictly monitored area** at middle front of site for boat storage/ maintenance,
- **Inspirational and playful new children's realm** at north of site to lakeside frontage,
- **Elevated area for PARC pavilion** to be procured incrementally aligning to 30 – 50 PE proposals for wastewater as outlined in FDA report,

- **Creation of elevated raised bed percolation areas and package treatment plant** to west of site on isolated in contained area, strictly controlled under licence to provide requisite Population Equivalent for full scope of project (to be assembled in stages),
- **Creation of culturally inspired simple volumetric timber framed pavilion**, capable of supporting a myriad of internal uses, with a fixed service core and flexible, loosely-appointed open space to provide a set piece for each of the required uses, none taking more prominence and all possible within one pavilion,
- **Site to be developed on a phased basis** to eventually provide the full complement of activities to contain a visitor lounge and community meeting facility, tourist information office with associated exhibition area and gallery, 25-seater reheat café and restaurant, multipurpose water-sports centre to allow for training, programmatic classes, emergency services, all with public wifi, and generous storage along with island access guide, bicycle and and boat hire point for Lough Ree,
- **Creation of a distinctive and carefully controlled retention pond** with additional water storage capacity to attenuate surface runoff during rainfall events and consisting of a crafted topographical depression by moving and sculpting existing topsoil to form embankments. This design is to ensure pollution and poorer water quality will not disturb or damage the precious local ecology, and will provide both storm water attenuation and water quality treatment by retaining runoff and releasing at a controlled rate,
- **Sensitive Lighting Scheme** informed by Dark Sky Reserve lighting principles.

6.2 Issues Identified

The current amenity comprises upgraded mooring/ marina, the lakeshore, the edge-of road parking, picnic tables, a mooring and a slipway. There are issues however that prevail:

- **There is no meeting place in Portrunny for community meetings/events,**
- **There are no facilities for persons using water amenity to have shower /toilet facilities,**
- **There is no facility to purchase a cup of tea / coffee or refreshments,**
- **There is no tourist desk information point to offer information to water based tourists,**
- **There is no place to accommodate local enterprise, in a time where mobile workspace is on the increase and entrepreneurs are choosing to work from picturesque locations off quality rural networks.**

We believe there are other issues about form, space, order and style; approach, access, movement and outdoor environment; aspect, orientation, elevation and vista; legacy, mythology, heritage, history; folklore, friendliness, local colour and character; coherence, quality of engagement and generosity of capacity. We believe these elements to be challenges – yes, but more importantly they frame a possibility for a truly remarkable response, promoting the site's glorious qualities as a premier destination in the greater national context.

We believe the unique appointment and breath-taking magnificence of this site underwrite its potential to become a singular location with all the additional uses required to act as such, rather than simply a few modest interventions to allow minimal functioning amenity for locals. However, funding and scope will mean that such a lofty vision requires careful planning and – starting somewhere.

These issues can be addressed by meticulously mapping a comprehensive phased strategic plan for the site – to make this a natural focus and central hub for access to the lakes, the Shannon and first-class culture, leisure, recreation and tourism for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.



Figure 3 A key inspiration = the bold but deceptively simple Borden Park Intervention, Edmonton, Canada, GH3 Architects

6.3 Brief for Proposed Development

The brief for the proposed development includes following elements:

- **Reception & tourist information centre** including public WiFi and exhibition area, including historic interpretative element, garden;
- **Multi-purpose space to accommodate events, functions, exhibitions and training;** to be designed to fit capacity as restricted by infrastructural and market considerations;
- **Training and station area for emergency services** on River Shannon, etc.
- **Facilities to support outdoor activities** such as toilets, showers and changing rooms, equipment stores, shop and refreshment zone;
- **Café / restaurant ("Central PARC")** – a hub and meeting spot with a focus on craft food and drinks to attract local makers and suppliers as well as the local community;
- **Meeting/ gathering lounge;**
- **Enterprise centre/co-working HOTSPOT** – for amenity collaboration and inspirational innovation – this zone will rely on provision of broadband/ data services;
- **Storage Areas, ancillary facilities and attendant utilities**

It is envisaged that the PARC site will further include:

- Parking for boat trailers and vehicles;



Figure 4 architects sketch concept for site

- Storage for kayaks/other watercraft close to water's edge;
- Public Car parking for community/visitor facilities with "dark sky" lighting;
- Hard, soft and water feature Landscaping;
- Family zone/ play facilities including relocation of public playground and outdoor equipment;
- Highly efficient and sustainable solutions for energy conservation and reuse;
- Simple, effective, contained under license – packaged waste water treatment plant with storage and buffering tanks to evenly distribute flows from peak periods to low use periods, elevated percolation area, reed water beds, recycling features to achieve an exemplary standard of environmental excellence.

6.4 Lough Ree – Sensitivity to Development – Medium – High

Sensitivity on the Lakes is determined by the patchwork character of the field pattern, the visual enclosure provided by topography and hedgerows, the relationship between the land and water and pockets of native or ancient woodland. Most of eastern Lough Ree and approximately one third of the western side is made up of this landscape – gently undulating hills, with a patchwork of small to medium sized agricultural fields sloping down to the water's edge. Fields are divided by native hedgerows or, in some instances, low stone walls.

There are areas of native woodland, scattered houses, farm buildings and some small scale moorings. The landscape is generally agricultural and does not have the “wilderness” characteristics of other categories, therefore there is capacity for well-designed and appropriately scaled, oriented and positioned development.

Portrunny bay is an important area for wildfowl. Habitats include reed beds, swamp and associated wetlands. The bay is frequented by Greenland Whitefronted geese. Threats to these species – such as noise, fast-moving craft and large numbers of humans – should be avoided or mitigated in any development.

A development of this nature may, in time, cater to larger numbers of visitors than would be initially envisaged. It is intended over time to serve a population equivalent of 250 PE. This level of development on a confined site immediately upslope of housing and directly opposite a sensitive cSAC, SPA and pNHA would be subject to a license and various levels of assessment.

Despite not technically requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment, a Screening assessment and discharge license will be a matter of course. It is recommended by this team therefore that a thorough approach be applied to the statutory applications process. It is recommended that at a basic or high level, assessments that would normally accompany an EIS should be tested or fully carried out, so any question in that regard may be answered. This may seem overly cautious, but it is prudent to be fully assured that the development will not negatively impact on existing environments, habitats or populations. There are also concerns about effects that might arise from “shock loading” - if the scheme is to more heavily used at certain times – for example during summer months, or at a more micro scale, at weekends.

A risk management approach to development will be required due to the sensitive nature of the location and the unique features of the site. It should also be noted that any development impacts on the holy well adjacent to the site - which is part of the heritage of the area - should be assessed and mitigated.

Figure 5 Portrunny Marshes –

Photo by Janey Lainey



6.5 The Site – Features and Considerations

The site is in the ownership of Roscommon County Council and enjoys exceptional elevation, aspect and orientation, located on the western edge of Lough Ree looking across the bay towards the centre of the lake and its islands.

The old village of Portrunny lies immediately North-west of the site, with eight houses and an old graveyard. South is Portrunny amenity area including the recently upgraded mooring/marina. The harbour, jetty breakwater and lakeside work together as a set piece comprising paving, roadside habitats, picnic tables, mooring, slipway, sensitive external lighting and playground. Finishes and features are well maintained and kept to an exemplary standard.

The site itself is a fallow agricultural plot of soft ground rising steadily towards the west. It appears to have been recently used intermittently for grazing livestock. **This raked topography may seem challenging but in fact allows for a tiered or terraced architectural strategy to permit boat storage and parking to be located below proposed buildings.** This device permits the elevated eye level of visitors to indoor use facilities to enjoy **uninterrupted views**, which are maintained across the water, while other more practical yard activities can be located in close proximity to the waters' edge beneath and out of their view. **This is highly desirable from an aesthetic, architectural and practical perspective.**

A toilet block at the north of the site appears to be under the management of Waterways Ireland. The capacity or use patterns of this unit was not established in this study. Boundaries are low stone walls with occasional evergreen clusters and native hedgerows. St. Diarmaida's holy well is located on the narrow lane that abuts the north site boundary. It is envisaged that the whole setting of Portrunny, the Bay, Lakeshore and its islands will be greatly enhanced by the creation of an innovative multi-purpose centre.

It is clear that quality of design in the proposal must be very high to be worthy of this setting.

However, the site also demands a response of muted simplicity. An appropriate language might be an arrangement of low-lying built forms, allowing the benefits of maximum vista across the lake with minimum impact against the hillside when seen from the lake towards land. Buildings should be made from a limited palette of naturally or locally sourced materials.

Iterations considered over the design period reference historic stories and legends from the area: ancient Irish mythology and legends, High Kings, Queen Medb Christian monasteries, Vikings, Quakers and settlers, etc.

This yields a symbolism of aesthetic relevance: celtic or pagan art and crafts – along with research into evolution and textures of riverside dwellings - both natural and man-made.





Figure 2 Folio Map for the proposed site

The most up to date property registration authority map indicates site ownership up to the shorefront with additional ownership of a section of land remote from the main site which is currently used as a picnic/recreation area

Site Details:

Folio Number RN40996F

Area : 2.06 Hectares

Title: Freehold



6.6 Statutory Context

Roscommon County Council is approaching the final term for the prevailing Development Plan 2014 – 2020. There are several mentions of an aspiration to enhance the marina at Portrunny and its amenities within the plan, also in support documentation that reflects the ambitions of other relevant stakeholders, e.g. Waterways Ireland, Inland Fisheries and LEADER programme.

The Mid Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study of 2010 identifies Portrunny as a key designated location for shoreside activities, services, space accommodation and seasonal refreshment facilities. This is reflected in the provisions and objectives of the Roscommon Development Plan 2010 – 2020.

Policy 3.69	Support tourism development of appropriate scale within settlements on the Shannon Corridor and its calling points such as Cortober, Roosky, Termonbarry, Ballyleague/Lanesborough, Hodson Bay, Shannonbridge, Lecarrow, Gailey, Portrun, Drumharlowl, Battlebridge and Cootehall, which focuses on the provision of tourist services (e.g. nature and heritage based activities) for water based tourism.
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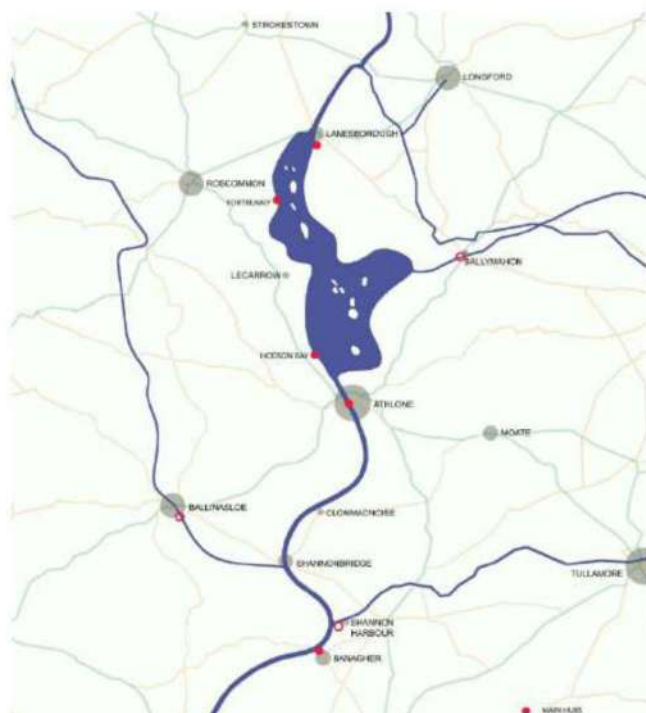
Other ambitious plans for Portrunny are mentioned, although some aspirational concepts may be met by other locations. They include a boat training centre, an aquarium, a sailing club and the establishment of wild and natural walkways between key locations. Much as is already established by the Portrunny Heritage Trail.

Mid Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study

Wilson

6.7 Programme 3 - Activity Hubs

Actions	Lead Agency
<p>1. To select and develop 4 locations as activity hubs where visitors can enjoy reliable daily access to a range of water activities.</p> <p>A model for an activity hub would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watersports/angling equipment hire and instruction base Changing facilities Day boat hire Instruction room A choice of activities Water and activity specific safety advice and information Accommodation close by Eating opportunities close by <p>Arrangements should allow for short notice booking and individual bookings to enable services to the touring market.</p> <p>Potential locations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portunna Athlone Banagher Bellinasloe Ballymahon Shannon Harbour Portrunny Hodson Bay Lanesborough Moate (land based activity) <p>2. Opportunities to build hubs based on existing provision at Portunna, Banagher, Hodson Bay, or to extend club roles.</p> <p>3. To consider the feasibility of offering float trips on the River Shannon.</p>	<p>Faith Ireland, Waterways Ireland and LEADER groups - engagement of private sector.</p> <p>Private sector as main providers of activities.</p> <p>County Tourism Committees</p> <p>Clubs, Councils and Waterways Ireland</p> <p>Faith Ireland, Waterways Ireland</p>



Roscommon County Council has processed a number of applications around Portrunny Bay over the last decade. The map shows the number of applications considered since 2000.

The following lists three of the most relevant applications to the within project:

1. **GRANTED 26/05/2004: REF: 04655** – Provision of 24 floating moorings within existing harbour, including 80m stone breakwater, reinforcement of 100m existing breakwater. Service block incorporating toilets, showers and washing facilities, a boat pumpout facility and car parking on the foreshore with amenity lighting and landscaping.

The above is the excellent work carried out to the marina as previously mentioned in this report.

2. **REFUSED ON APPEAL: 28/04/2005 FOLLOWING GRANT 26/10/2004: REF: 03615** – Aparthotel development with 5 2-bed and a 1-bed accessible apartments, including 28 2-storey, 3- bed semi-detached suites w reception, bar, restaurant, site works, effluent treatment plant.

This application was made on the subject site in 2005, refused on the following grounds:

- Elevated, prominent, rural location in an area of significant scenic amenity, recreational and tourism value – Lough Ree is a candidate SAC, SPA and NHA.
- Proposed development due to siting, layout, scale and design quality fails to take account of the setting and topography of the site – obtrusive, would detract from scenic amenities of sensitive and vulnerable area.
- Significant deficiencies in information on private effluent treatment system intended to have a design capacity of 250 p.e.
- Significant deficiencies of how discharge of effluent is handled by way of percolation, steeply sloping nature of site, location of treatment system and serious risk of water pollution prejudicial to public health.



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION

Figure 6 Previous (refused) application No. 03615 for planning on site - sample elevation to South East

Figure 7 Previous (refused) application No. 03615 for planning on site - site layout plan



3. GRANTED BUT HEAVILY MODIFIED ON FI & APPEAL: 01/02/2011 FOLLOWING GRANTED 31/01/2011: REF: 0981 – Permission granted for 2 single-storey commercial units, 1 2-storey commercial/retail/residential split-use unit, 1 2-storey unit with café, bar, restaurant and ancillary delivery area, 59 surface car parking spaces and entrances/landscaping and utilities. REFUSED permission for 6 no terraced houses.

The above oddly arranged scheme was for a neighbouring site.

It was subject to extensive modification by the planning authority whose split decision granted permission, but seriously reduced the scope of development. ABP further omitted all residential units, three resi-commercial units and 13 car parking spaces.

Development was not to commence until work started on the public wastewater treatment facility to serve Protrun. Details of revision were to be agreed with the planning authority. These conditions seem have rendered the development unviable. The application appears to have expired: the five year period was up in 2016.

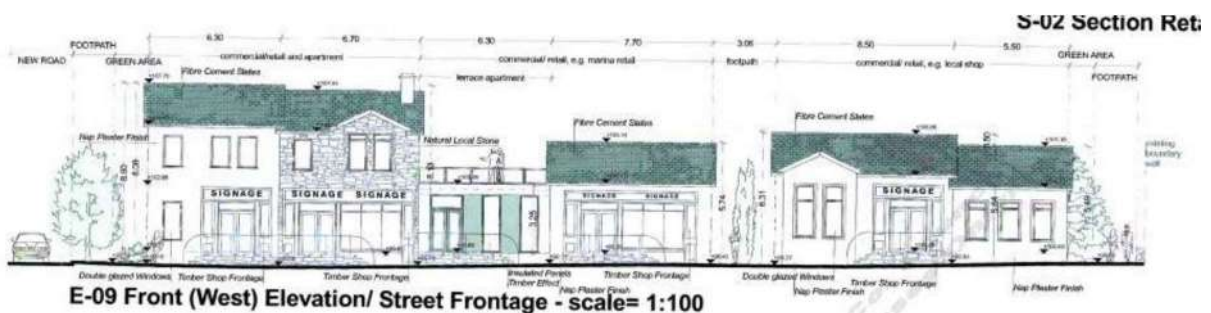


Figure 8 Previous (modified, unbuilt) application No. 0981 for adjacent site - sample elevation



Figure 9 Previous (modified, unbuilt) application No. 0981 for adjacent site

LESSONS FOR PARC

Learnings we gather from the planning file have enlightened the designers and team to a considerable extent.

The following considerations apply therefore to any application for permission on this site and in this locality:

- **It must be consistent with provisions of the Portrunny Tourism and Amenity Action Plan 2006, although not adopted, this is clearly a tool for planners in the absence of other specific guidance.**
- **It must be of the highest possible design quality, sensitive to the setting, topography, unique features of the lakeshore setting, rural frontage and aspirations to expand the attractive nature of the site to reach more people without impact on visual amenity.**
- **Residential use is not only undesirable, it may not be tolerated.**
- **For a smoothly transitioned plan, the first phase should be for a much smaller impact treatment plant in the region of 30 – 50 p.e. with imported raised bed percolation areas, sequential batch reactors and/or activated sludge.**
- **Peak loading should be restricted to approximately 400 – 500 people. See attached civil engineers FDA Consulting report for further information (appendix 1).**

Figure 10 Portrunny - phot by Paul Doran



6.7 A Vision for the Future

6.7.1 Example Design: Project Overview

The design proposed following extensive consultation with the client body, their brief and with the local community centres, resulting in this simple pavilion plan. As well as providing **dedicated facilities for water sports users**, the pavilion will cater to a small group of entrepreneurial locals by providing a **lounge with WIFI spot**. It will have a modest but effective visitor and tourist information point will have **multi-purpose rooms** suitable for meetings, community group gatherings, training, emergency services and other commercial users to rent for programmatic courses on a lease basis. It will have a **25-seater café** with a reheat-only kitchen (providing soups, toasted sandwiches, pastries and pies, for example). It will also have a **shop facility** stocking basic supplies and memorabilia sourced from local craftspeople or based on local features, stories and mythology.

Proposed Facility on the Subject Site

The site is gently sloping. It is proposed to maximise topography benefits by using this incline to assist with engineering and aesthetic opportunities for superlative views for the facility. It will allow the more prosaic activities, e.g. car parking and boat parking - to be below eye-level for visitors to the facility. The site is terraced, or tiered and the ground consequently adjusted and sculpted – it is hoped that this can be achieved using existing topsoil movement to ensure limited disposal costs – to allow a roadside area for cars, kayaks, equipment and boats, while the site rises with gently undulating, fully accessible ramps and pathways to an upper “deck” where the modest, timber framed pavilion is located within a picturesque reed pond - catering for the attenuation requirements of the site. The pavilion is envisaged as a solitary volume overlooking the lake with attendant interstitial outdoor spaces, gardens, boardwalk bridges and features of exceptional sheltered quality and amenity. It echoes Dún Forts and Crannógs of antiquity, commanding elevated view for pleasure – in former times this was more practical, grounded in enhanced security.

Evolving Assignment of Programmatic Uses within Pavilion

The pavilion is created with a solid core housing secure and private zones such as wet facilities, showers, toilets, changing rooms, lockers, kitchens, stores and administrative offices. Around this less penetrable and opaque core are arranged spaces of a highly flexible nature. These can be expanded or contracted via screen divisions or partitions to create an exciting array of multi-functional spaces, waxing and waning to meet demand.

The front part of the circular volume is composed of exceptionally simple timber framed elements between timber posts, glazed to both engage to maximum effect with the site orientation and aspect but also to maximise heat benefits from solar gain. It will combine a small café and hot-desking/ wifi enabled lounge with a **small provisions shop, a reception and visitor information desk** for arranging and guiding tours and providing local information, **a small exhibition, gift shop/ gallery and a large community meeting room.**

To the rear, the construction is more massive masonry to absorb and retain this heat according to principles of sustainable design. This zone focuses on the more sporting and water activities, with **wetsuit racks, stores, changing rooms and sanitary facilities.**

The pavilion is envisaged as something that might grow in scope and size, and the design allows for a **notional vision of phased further development** to support more extensive multi-functional spaces for meetings, team-building, community, conference and seminar facilities, weddings and celebratory events. Expanding development pavilion will likely follow the public wastewater treatment facility for Portrunny. A plan for feasibility of waste water treatment works was carried out by Jennings O'Donovan and Partners in 2005, which proposed a first phase scheme with a capacity of 600 P.E, enabling development in the short-to-medium term.

Development at Roadside

The roadside site is envisaged to be phased according to budget - the initial phase is to provide a rough hardstanding for water-based activity equipment, public parking for recreational users and boats and some lockup storage. It is proposed to integrate a bicycle hire point here. As funds allow, it is intended to enhance this landscape with more sophisticated surfacing and features, creating an elegantly landscaped vehicular zone and adding a vibrant children's realm – a fantastical themed playground, replacing the one currently at the water's edge. It will also incorporate an information station where trails can be embarked upon with or without the assistance of visitor centre guidance.

Developed Design and Scheduling Works

The exact size and design of the facility – along with the scope and timeframe for phasing the stages of development – will be determined subject to costs, planning, energy efficiency, engineering, capacity, sustainability, local participation, funding, partnerships and other considerations.

Preliminary Cost Estimates – €825,000

Based on figures from this feasibility study and allowing for additional costs, it is estimated that the PARC pavilion itself be budgeted at €500,000, with engineering, landscaping, consultancy and contingency costs bringing **total budget to just over €825,000 for the full scope of development.**

Funding Options

A number of potential funding options are being explored but it is anticipated that the majority, if not all, funding would be secured through grant application to local and national funding bodies, with potential of naming rights or other input from bespoke private partners. Initial conversations have been held with some of these bodies and the project management team have been consulting with LEADER for initial support in this process.

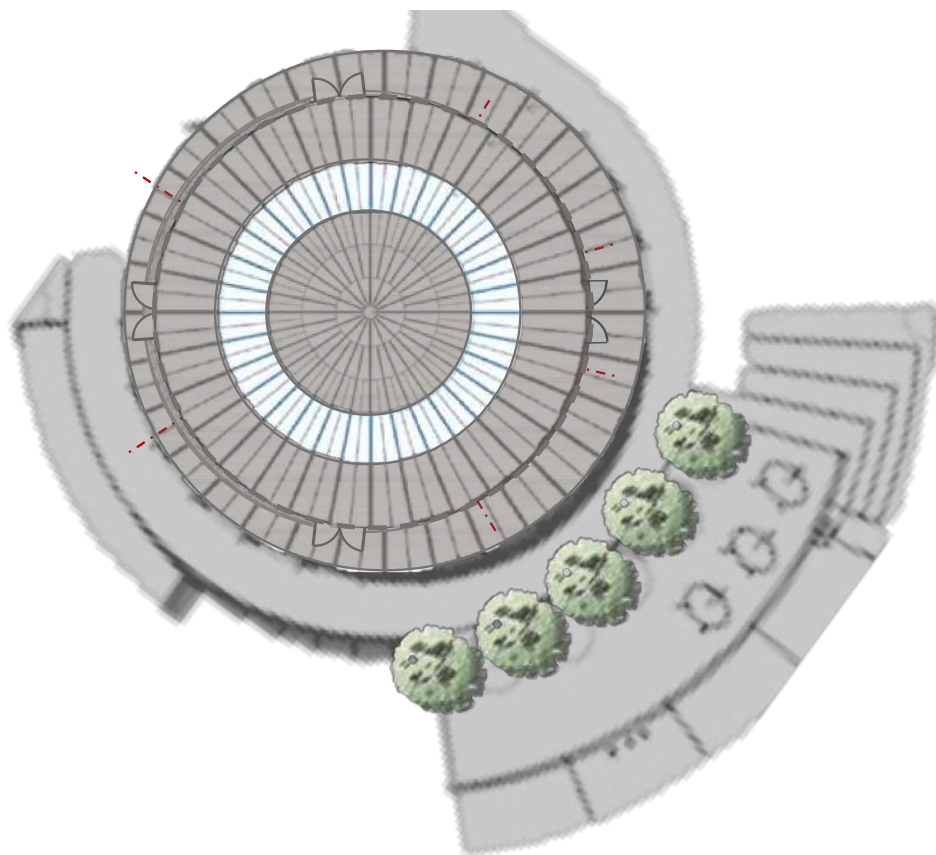
Benefits for Portrunny and the Surrounding Area

PARC will benefit the increasing number of water sport users across Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. It will also bring a number of other benefits to the local area:

- **For schools and community groups** – providing opportunities for school and local groups to participate in small boat sailing, paddle sports and physical activity – this can reduce obesity, improve health and well-being, and assist in team morale and capacity building, in particular training of coaches and volunteers.
- **For the local economy** – by diversifying and improving the tourism infrastructure around Lough Ree and in the County generally. PARC will give the area an enhanced reputation as a venue for cultural enrichment, adventure, tourism and activity holidays, attracting more tourists to Portrunny and the surrounding areas, boosting local business. The proposed WIFI enabled lounge will allow occasional entrepreneurs and small business entities located within the local area to arrange casual work and meeting activity here, with the attendant uplift on demand for local services. The proposed location of the single-point access to the islands of Lough Ree offers further and extensive opportunities in the market.
- **Skills Training** – it is hoped that water activities, boat park, enterprise centre and multi-purpose spaces will allow for development of sundry, as-yet unassigned skills in the area, providing future work potential with local young groups and other organisations

or individuals enjoying various kinds of training – from survival to craft, arts to entrepreneurship, rescue and water training, woodwork, sculpting, boat-building to apiary, ornithological, ecological and environmental academic research and study.

- **Lough Ree is a proven attraction locally, nationally, internationally** for participants in numerous water activities, a stop along the leisurely Shannon route and a place rich in local folklore. Adding to this a centre for gastronomic merit and entertainment would **greatly enhance the positioning of Portrunny within the Hidden Heartlands brand.**
- **PARC** is designed to be a community facility. For it to succeed, it needs as much support from the residents of Portrunny and the surrounding area as possible. **It is hoped that Roscommon County Council will offer its support to the project, thereby helping to build momentum and allowing the project to progress.**



6.7.2 SITE LAYOUT PLAN



THE SITE

FACILITY CONCEPT

The concept plan developed in this feasibility aligns to a number of purposes. Form, space, order and materials of the building are informed by practicalities of use, fitout, flexibility and movement through spaces, enjoying functions ergonomically and comfortably, maximising engagement with the landscape – and, uniquely – allowing the site to evolve across time.



Artists impression of new facility at PARC

Developing a Space-Planning Response

It was necessary to establish a modest but workable size for **PARC** after interrogating the brief and testing its viability through market research and review of site capacity, including extensive civil engineering considerations. We focussed on how it fits on the site in a way that is achievable in the context of an uncertain funding model – to be procured across a flexible timeframe as resourced by the PDA.

In order to understand the relationship of internal activities to the wider site context, the PARC pavilion is **designed to a relatively high level of detail for a feasibility study**, to ensure the pavilion (which is in itself innovative) will carry capacity over the projected timeline.

In addition, factors such as entry points from road for pedestrians, bicycles, cars, vans, trailers with boats and equipment; vehicular movement and location for discreet parking; site orientation, topography, planting, aspect, adjoining uses and structures and environmental context influenced the way the design emerged.

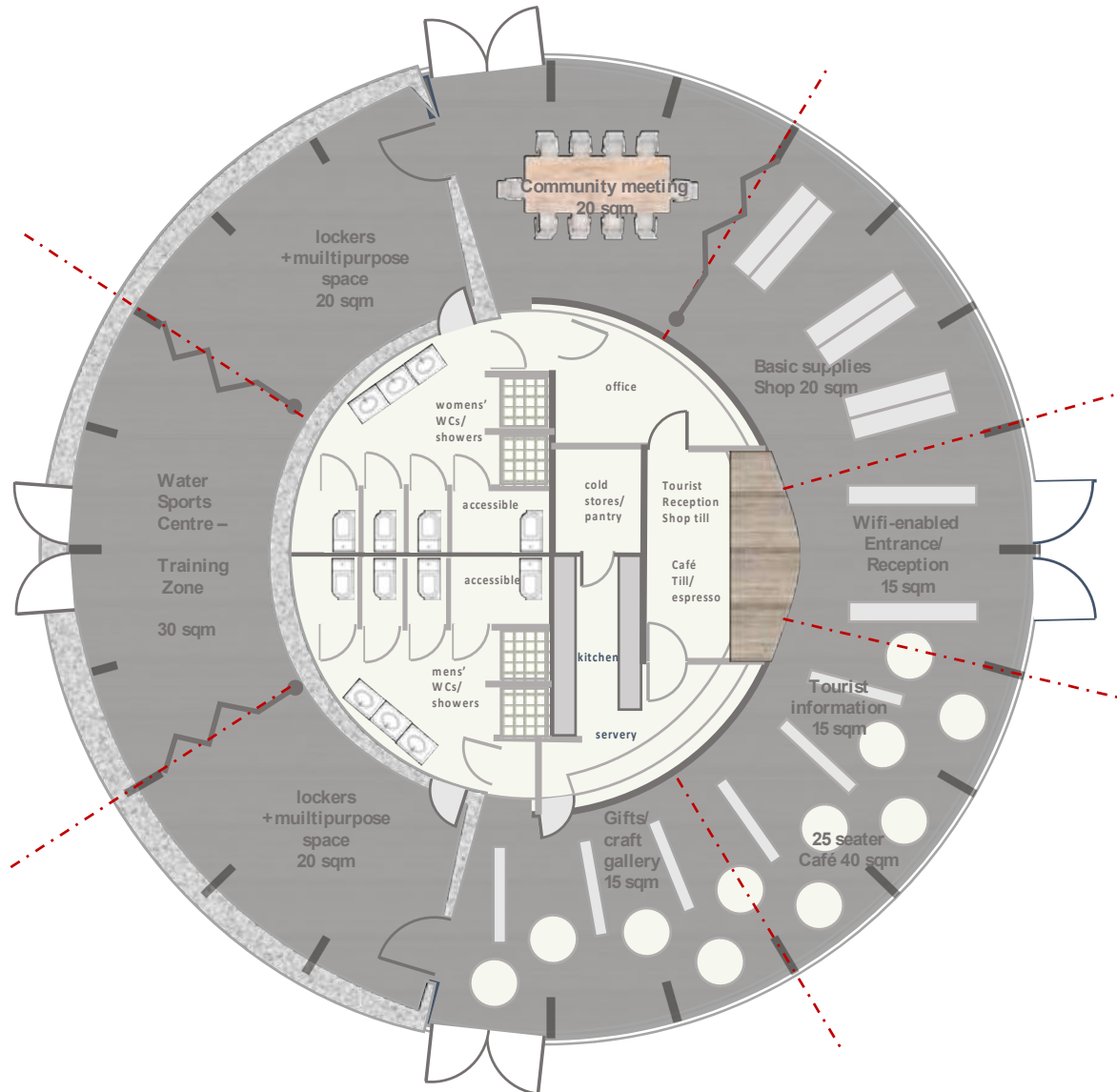
Finally, in order to develop a reasonably accurate cost analysis, the volumetric assembly was comprehensively scoped to a level of detail such that costs could be evaluated.

The proposed **PARC** strives to balance requirements of activity preferences expressed by the various in-depth tourism and local studies, the functional requirements of a **state-of-the-art recreation and training facility**, the powerful opportunity to integrate a **top-class if small-scale tourism information centre** with attendant exhibitions, demonstrations, galleries and tours, the servicing requirements of **kitchens and spaces for café**, the needs of a **lightly serviced lounge for mobile workers** and various multi-functional elements with **operational needs of staff and administration**, all the while creating a place that the Portrunny community will view with a sense of pride and will quickly assimilate as their own.

Bringing these aspects of the project together into a well-orchestrated design begins with function of the plan. The plan concepts are separated into activities that require private, controlled public or stakeholder access - and those that are freely accessible to all: activities likely be used for community functions that may not need a central point of control.

In addition, a second level of organisation isolated and/or combines those activities that will likely be used for special events with modest numbers of visitors. In the longer term, this last operational element might be assigned its own building, as the facility beds in over time.

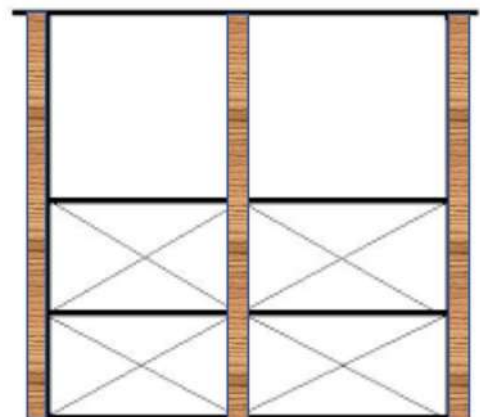




Anatomy of a “Round House” Pavilion

The pavilion recalls iconic geometry of classic traditional Irish homesteads and Crannógs – the circular roundhouse. Given the requirement to navigate a steep site, with curving ramps and paths and loose axial relationships, locating the pavilion on a higher level within an attenuation pond and enhanced with indoor/outdoor cloister and podium is an ideal layout that reflects the needs of the brief.

Inside, the pavilion contains a secure inner core of services, sanitary, kitchen, changing rooms, deliveries, store and administrative or staff spaces, encircled by more public and visitor functions. The latter have unobstructed views of the lake and site through 180°, via an elegant, timber framed simple structure, wrapped in floor-to-ceiling glazing in certain areas (café, shop) and panelled lower areas in others depending on function and privacy requirements within (lounge, meeting areas).



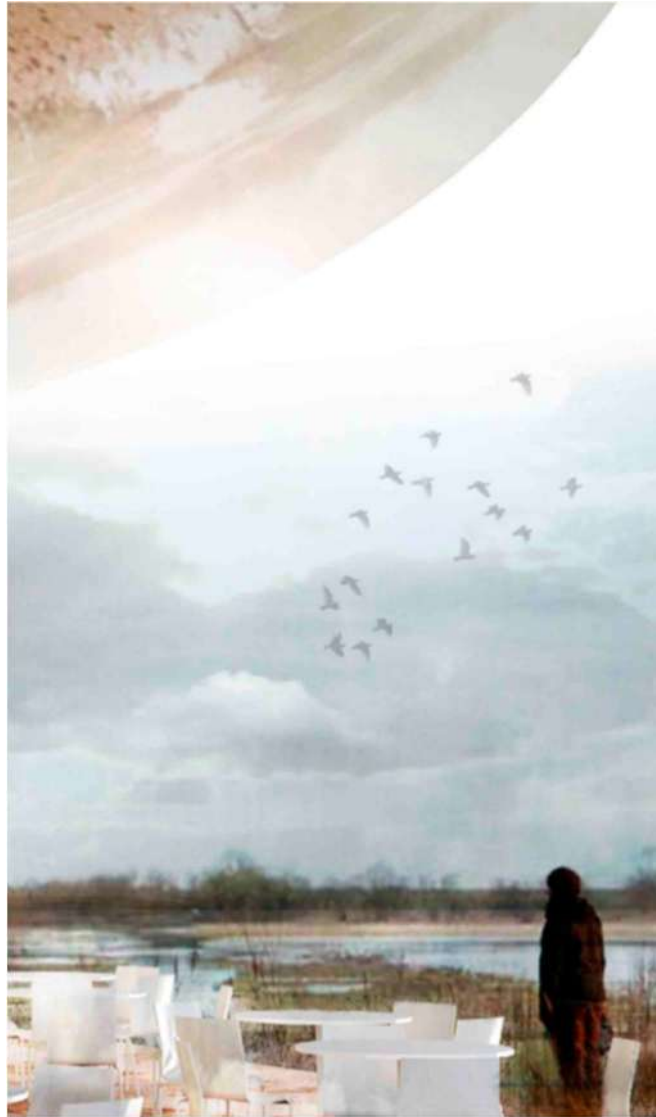
From outside, the pavilion is faced with cedar cladding over its heavy, masonry and insulated west and north-west sides – with highly reflective glazed panels across the full south and south-east overlooking the lake.

Triple glazing is proposed to dilute glare and maximise thermal and solar gain. Performance in the pavilion on sustainable terms is paramount, reducing operation and maintenance costs. The larger surfaces of glass will, in addition, allow boundaries to melt away, bringing the outside in for the visitor within, captivating stunning views out from the pavilion - yet making it effectively dissolve into its surroundings for bystander or viewer, from road or lake.

This sturdy, rhythmic and no-nonsense, deceptively simple timber and glass frame is topped by a slated or similar tiled roof forming a conical peak that reflects the form – if not material – of Irish crannóg structures. The design thus showcases native Irish, durable, natural, permanent and timeless materials.

The design proposes use of rough raw oiled and treated laminated timbers, with rich patina and spatial arrangement recalling iconic structures and materiality of the lake's historic evolution, while promoting the sustainable character of the building.

The buildings remaining palette consists of ever more simple materials that, in character, emphasise the surrounding landscape, and in quality, ensure a robust and enduring building.



Artists impression of new facility at PARC



Transparency, Light & Height

The deliberate openness and use of natural, local materials grounds the building and its uses, **fostering connectivity and collaboration, providing transparency and interactive views** from users of each space into most of other primary activity spaces. From outside, most spaces that benefit from natural light provide a visual interest, and are located at the entry sweep of the curved façade. Areas such as lounge, café, training room, information zone, gallery, meeting rooms and pools are visible from outside, expressing the activities within.

Inside PARC, the relationship of activities is just as important. The bright, open entrance zone welcomes users to the building and clearly signposts the location of activities. The pavilion sits higher than normal towards the centre, with an inner core that permits a possible additional floor within the roof space at a future date. The core is lit by clerestory lighting integrated into conical roofs, with a mezzanine gangway around the core, allowing people and activities to be viewed from above creating an **active and dynamic, engaging environment**.

Overall, the spatial planning of the assembly results in a clear, practical functioning facility that not only supports the programmes anticipated, but also allows for their flexible transformation to something completely different, minimising wasted space and permitting better operation of a complex building with a long projected lifespan.



Architect's art impression of possible design for new facility at PARC

RETENTION / ATTENUATION Pond

As the site has such a prominent position elevated above the lake, risk of water containing pollutants and contamination should be mitigated to the point of practical elimination. In any rural development of this scale, , run-off of from hard standings, roofs, buildings, paths and paving, car parking and yards, play surfaces and courts, decks and terraces – should be collected via soakaways or retention chambers. The location of these should be to the rear of the site and filter beds should be incorporated. These requirements will protect the lake and context, but the entire site can be almost all responded to via introduction of an open, natural retention pond in lieu of artificial, plastic/concrete below-ground tanks or chambers. It is likely to be more effective over time, and unlikely to exceed the alternative in cost.

The sculpted pond is dug out of elevated site soils and is a permanent water body designed with additional capacity, to retain water for a couple of weeks allowing particles settle and biological treatment, attenuating surface run-off from site during rainfall events, preventing system overload and flooding. **Retention ponds are among the most effective storm water management installations for pollutants.** Sedimentation of solids occurs in open water and wetland bench. Nutrients are removed in open water by photosynthesis, sedimentation and bacteria on wetland aquatic plants. Since retention ponds have capability to remove soluble pollutants, they are suitable for sites where nutrient loadings are high. These systems provide flood control, to allow fluctuations in water level above permanent pool of water, releasing captured water at a controlled rate, slowly once the risk of flooding has passed.

The permanent pond will have landscaped banks and planted edges to provide additional capacity during rainfall events. It is made by excavating a depression, and constructing embankments. Existing natural water bodies should not be used due to the risk that pollution events and poorer water quality might disturb/damage the natural ecology of the system. It can, however, with careful design, be used as natural swimming pools.

The pond will contain the following zones:

- a sediment forebay or upstream pre-treatment system
- a permanent pool which will remain wet throughout the year and is main treatment zone
- a temporary storage volume for flood attenuation, created through landscaped banks to the permanent pool
- a shallow zone or aquatic bench which is a shallow area along the edge of the permanent pool to support wetland planting, providing ecology, amenity and safety benefits.

Additional pond design features include emergency spillway for safe overflow when storage capacity is exceeded, maintenance access, a safety bench, and appropriate landscaping.

Well-designed and maintained ponds offer aesthetic, amenity and ecological benefits to the urban landscape, particularly as part of public open spaces. They are designed to support emergent and submerged aquatic vegetation along their shoreline. **They can be effectively incorporated into recreation centres through good landscape design.**

Natural Swimming Pond – a long term fantastical possibility?

Increasingly in public or cultural locations, attenuation systems combine the very practical requirement for retention ponds with emerging and popular recreational use. This can even extend to functional natural swimming pools and ponds. This may not be entirely possible at this location, but water-filtration systems can be incorporated into an area of the water body to allow naturally purified water, which is hypo-allergenic, complies with all strictest H&S requirements and glows with a rich emerald hue and surprisingly clear water. Kings Cross has opened the first community NSP based on a wetland eco-system that tends to itself.

Developed in Austria in the 1980s, the ecological balance of NSPs relies on a 'regeneration area' of shallow beds adjoining the pool but separated from swimming. Taking up between 30%-70% of the area, these are planted hydroponically with oxygenating plants at varying depths — such as reeds, lilies, water mint and other marsh loving species.

Lapped by the water, the right plants and minerals consume harmful bacteria, decontaminate the water and interfere with the growth of algae that can cloud it up and alter the pH. This can all take place in the retention pool adjacent to the natural swimming pool. A standard pool can be converted to a chemical free, biologically managed pool with 'living' water for ~ €20,000.

The provision of a “natural swimming pool” at the site is a step between the lake and the water activity centre, where youngsters can learn the basics of wetsuit-wearing, kayaking, standing on a surf-board, mermaid tails, diving, snorkelling or other activity that may be daunting when starting on the expansive body of a wild lake. It may also be used for training of emergency services, such as water-safety courses, coast-guard certification, life-saving, first aid in the water and other activities.



Core Rooms – Changing Areas, Staff Rooms, Kitchens

Within the pavilion's central privacy core are rooms that serve a basic function within the PARC facility. These are rustic and simple, designed with the user in mind to be comfortable. These areas include **changing areas** – where traditionally users are inherently uncomfortable, so providing extra room, view baffles, and calming colours and lighting to alleviate anxiety. Large seating benches and varying locker sizes allow users access for various purposes from angling to windsurfing, kayaking to sailing. Ample **storage room** is provided with lock-up lockers, without overcrowding. **Large, private showers** are provided in each changing area. Notably "dry" functions – the lounge, events space, community meeting area, shop/gallery and café and tourism offices are separated from the wet areas but will share services that are back-to-back with facilities.

Staff areas within a building can have great impact on ease of operation and if not planned well, can negatively impact operation costs. The **central control desk** has a clear view into primary circulation avenues. **Staff should have resources to perform general tasks without needing to leave their desk.** The functional area, in proximity of the reception desk, includes office, filing areas, meeting/break room, and storage all accommodated in this zone.

The **kitchen** in this building will be very simple and will evolve from kitchenette with vending machines – to a modest kitchen with **café** allowing hot sandwiches, soups, pies and rolls to be re-heated having been prepared off-site and brought daily to stock the café. **It may make economic sense to stock the café via local business offerings, crafting thriving partnerships, encouraging local employment and supporting the local economy.**

FLEXIBLE SPACE - STUDIOS

The pavilion contains areas that can be screened off using flexible partition systems – **areas that can be assigned for various multi-sector uses.** The flooring will be a thick and resilient, heavily underlaid rubber, vinyl or traditional resilient sprung maple wood flooring to cater to a wide array of impacts and sound attenuation. These include a long list of **multiple activities** that can be accommodated simultaneously, including martial arts, water safety training, seminars, yoga, Pilates, fitness classes, press conferences, gymnasium, dance (Zumba, ballroom, ballet, hip-hop) and gymnastics classes, arts and crafts classes, musical tuition, group functions, club meetings, themed parties, kids parties, movie nights, scouts' meets, spinning, steps, weights training, health and wellness classes, etc. These areas have blackout facilities and the walls are lined with **flexible storage** to allow for maximum areas to transfer bulky equipment between classes. These studios have mirrored walls and a separate sound system for aerobics/ dance / ballet classes and other specialised activities.

The most flexible of spaces is the **training area** to the rear that allows set up in a variety of configurations with removable or concertina partitions – including black-out facility.

Activities include: Assemblies Facility, Rentals, Receptions, Banquets, Social Gatherings, Weddings, Dinners, Educational Programmes, Conferences, Birthday Parties, Graduation Parties, Music Recitals, Craft, Expo, Enterprise and Art Shows, Dances, Instructional Programmes Drama, Performing Arts, Informal Gatherings, Meetings, Lectures/Seminars, Travelogues, Computer Classes, Financial Planning, Music Programmes, Club Meetings, Card Parties/Classes, Board Games, Bridge, Bingo, Parties, Cooking Classes, Health/wellness, etc.

Playground & Kids' activities

The playground is designed to be a **large open area with a variety of play equipment for differing age and skill levels including a focus on those with disabilities, currently using the existing play area.** Equipment could include soft climbing and building elements, structured play forts, gross motor skill development, and socialisation, zip lining, water activity, building activities, climbing frames, climbing walls, swings, see-saws; an entire adventure-themed "realm" with a local folklore base to engage their physical activities and imagination.



The playground could also incorporate a **mini-amphitheatre**, to encourage spontaneous and ad-lib performance and artistic endeavours. Indoor activities for children will include a safe environment for childcare for grown-ups engaged in activities – these must have good visibility, resilient fall surfaces, vibrant colours, seating areas for parents, and a fun, lively, themed design.

The children's' areas could allow for scheduled slots to permit kids to move from indoor activity to outdoor zones to maximise their stimulation. Activities could include lego, Minecraft, games, music, art, crafts, storytelling, quilling, dancing, drama, expression and general toy play with cubbies for children's belongings integrated into the storage wall.



Objectives

The goal is for the PARC facility is to be **economically sustainable** and to capture 100% of its operating cost at a minimum. As such the facility components should be ones that support current and future revenue generating programs and membership.

The facility can, in future iterations, be designed to have “free zones” and “pay zones.” Free zones will be areas that any community member can access without being a member or passing a control point, whether human controlled or swipe accessed.

Areas such as; lobby, meeting rooms, public art displays, etc. should be included in a free zone. Areas such as; co-working space, fitness training, meeting rooms, water activities, virtual reality experiences, aquatics, etc. will be included in a daily admission/membership schedule of activities.

The facility will enter an existing market: there are other providers in the zone. Pricing structure will need to be balanced in that context, so as to meet the 100% cost recovery goal.

The facility needs to be **multi-generational** in nature. Indoor recreation facilities typically have a daily life cycle and serve a wide variety of age groups.

The median age in the locality and the extended service area indicates the presence of young families with children; there is also a significant retiree / senior population. As such the facility components should include spaces and programmes that can be used by all groups.

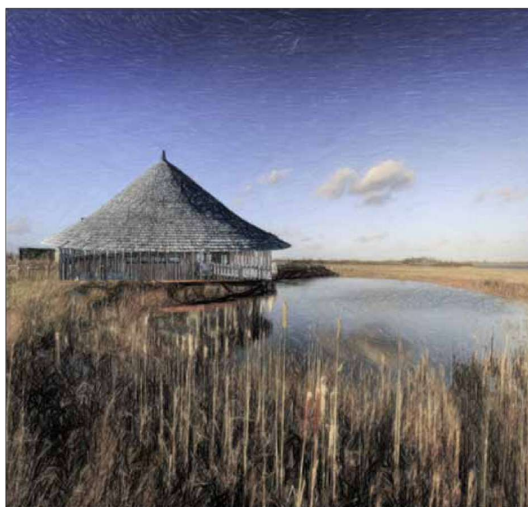
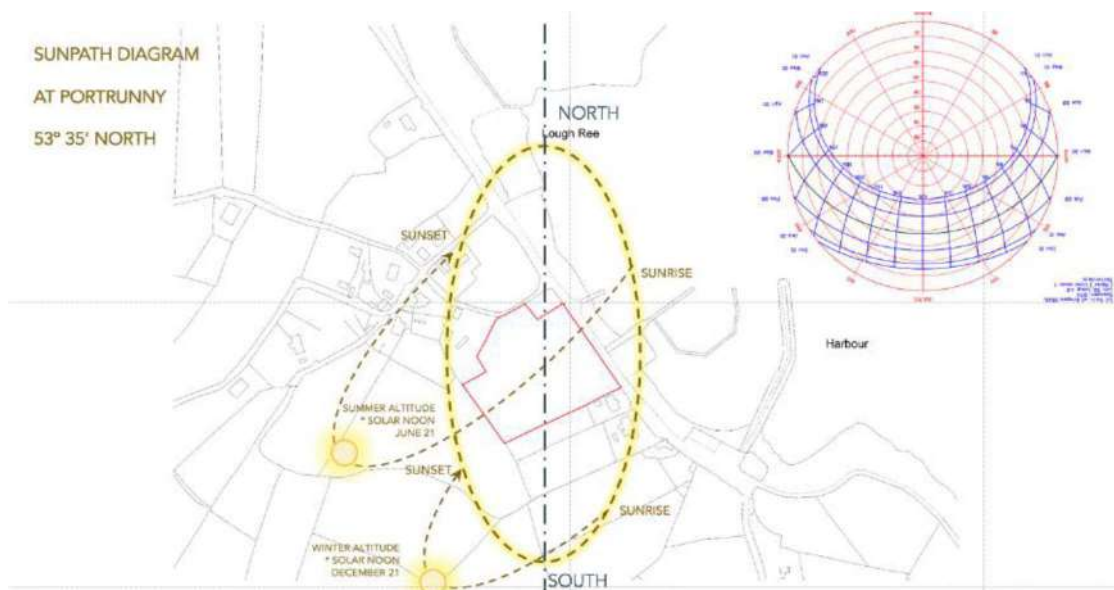
Groups should be considered as capital partners that would bring resources for construction. There may be the opportunity for naming rights of various facility components. There are potential programmatic and rental partners available to the PDA, namely local clubs, groups, emergency services teams, schools, hospitals, enterprise supports, government agencies, fitness, arts, crafts and specialist teachers and the hidden body of sole-traders and entrepreneurs/ small business people.

The facility components will **leverage the opportunity to partner** with individuals and entities around continuing education/health classes for the community and provide an outlet for individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.



Climate & Topography – Sunpath, Aspect & Orientation

The location of the site and its orientation make again for a phenomenal opportunity, as the site is set to witness the rise of the sun over the lake in the morning, and the gradual spread of inky starlight over the lake as the sun sets behind the site to the west. The response to these criteria is to locate the service core of the pavilion to the rear of the site and to use this part of the structure as the more thermally massive heat sink, with blank walls penetrated only by access points for deliveries and services. To the front of the pavilion, the language is very different – opening floor-to-ceiling glazed sections to the view and potential for daylighting and solar gain. As there is little opportunity for direct glare from the sun on these façades, it is prudent to use triple glazing for higher U-values to align with the aspiration for more engagement with nature, and to minimise heat losses through these glazed areas. The orientation of the pavilion is set to optimise solar gain, solar amenity and thermal retention while minimising overheating and glare.

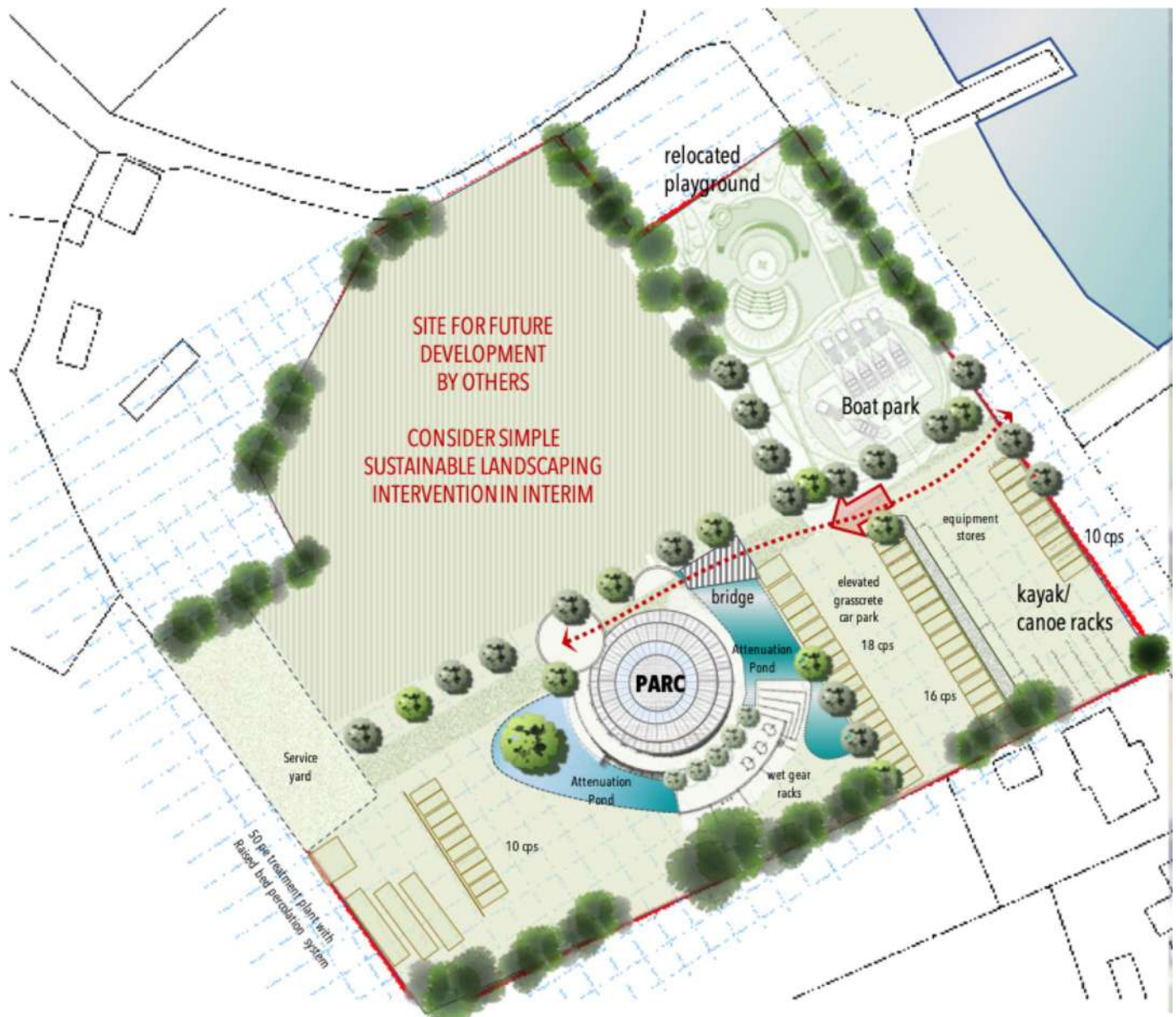


Architect's art impression of possible design for new facility at PARC



Site Plan - a Layered Outlook

The site plan shows the scheme, inspired by these cultural references, to **respond to natural context and topography** - setting out brief elements for ease of access, movement and travel across the whole site for visitors, staff, locals and services. The natural pool acts as reservoir and retention pond allowing access to the central space between the crannóg-like pavilion and adjacent site, which, although marked for future development might become a landscaped area or planted area with some potential for active use or forestry. The western, higher, most sheltered part of the site is set aside for the raised bed percolation system and packaged waste water treatment plant as it has better soil conditions with less rock and ground water problems, reducing works to percolation areas. A site-specific design will be required with percolation results to start reducing the spread. **The elevated site enjoys superb visibility across the lake**, with the moat surrounding the pavilion in a “semi-submerged mound” echoing ancient concepts while dealing with rainwater runoff as technically required. **The tiered and terraced site allows minimal topsoil removal from the site**, hopefully leading to redistribution of soil to sculpt and frame the holistic proposal.



7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Visitor Access and Facilities

PARC will be of value to a wide variety of users including local residents, visiting cruisers, Roscommon Sports Partnership, Irish Civil Defence, Roscommon Sub Aqua/Irish Underwater Council, angling clubs and the Brothers of Charity who will be able to bring children and adults to a state of the art playground.

It is recommended that the building include spaces that provide a commercial opportunity.

These include:

- **A multi-functional space** that can be used for events and classes and in addition meeting room for community groups and government agencies will provide a valuable revenue stream. This can also be used as a training facility for various groups and organisations, including emergency services and search and rescue.
- **Facilities that support outdoor activities** that lead to enterprise development e.g. bike hire, kayaking and boat hire.
- **Changing spaces/storage/parking** of interest to sports organisations/clubs including sub-aqua, triathlon, kayaking, boating, sailing, swimming, walking, and cycling,

It is recommended that PARC include a high quality accessible playground to provide facilities for existing users including the Brothers of Charity.

Interpretation: The **PARC** facility will provide an opportunity to showcase the ecology of the area. It is recommended that PDA engage with key stakeholders to develop high quality interpretation panels for use in the centre. This should also include detail on the Portrunny Heritage Trail, things to see and do in the local area such as Rinn Duin Looped Walkway and information on Inchcleraun.

Action 1: Provide and promote a multipurpose event space and training rooms as a core part of the **PARC** offer.

Action 2: Seek funding for a high quality accessible playground

Action 3: Engage with key stakeholders such as Inland Fisheries Ireland to develop high quality interpretation panels for use in the centre.



7.2 Procurement

As the site is likely to be developed with the assistance of at least one government or public partner, the procurement path for goods, services, designers and contractors will need to be applied. This can add extensive additional costs to the project, and certainly adds time.

It is recommended that the whole design be procured from one design team, and a planning application be lodged for the whole project.

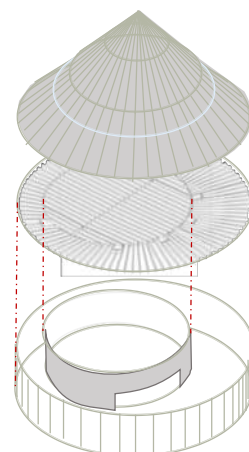
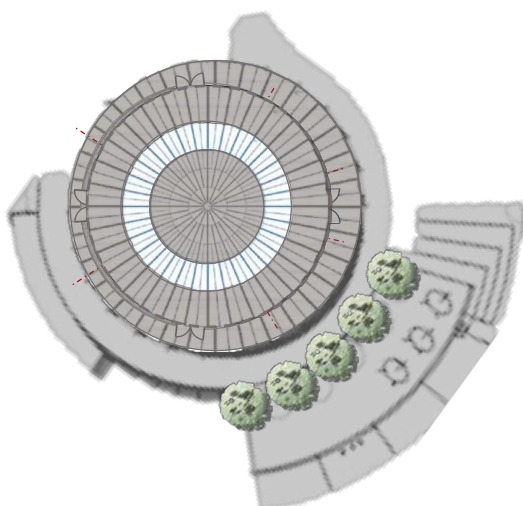
This will allow the orderly development, which can then be procured separately or together, depending on the certainty of funding for the whole facility.

If, for whatever reason, the project must be abandoned over the course of the 5 year period, it would be reasonable should the planning permission lapse to apply for retention for the part erected, which would be a proper course of action.

It may be that the business case substantiates doing the whole project at once. The costs are anticipated as follows:

Site Prep, Survey, statutory & utility charges & Design Consultancy	€100,000
PARC Pavilion	€500,000
Retention Pool & 50 PE Wastewater Treatment Plant	€125,000
Site Engineering, roads, paths, paving, car parking, and landscaping	€50,000
Front Site, Playground, car park/ boat park landscaping	€50,000
TOTAL	€825,000
Of Which = Building costs:	€500,000
Site/ Landscaping/ Engineering Costs:	€225,000
Design / Statutory / Survey:	€100,000

TOTAL	€825,000
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7.3 Funding and Phasing

The site proposed for the PARC is currently owned by Roscommon County Council. While the council has not made a decision on the use of the land, it is thought members might look favourably on a well-considered proposal that would align with strategic objectives and be of benefit for the community. The focus for Portrun Development Association CLG is for the area of land required for PARC. While an indication of possible uses for this site is explored in Appendix 6, development of the remainder of the site is outside both the brief for PARC and capacity of Portrun Development Association CLG and is included to show how the site could be further developed in the future to complement PARC, most likely through partnership between public & private enterprise with support from community.

It is recommended that PDA approach RCC to seek approval of the use of the lands for PARC.

There are a variety of routes for capital funding including grant funding from LEADER or Fáilte Ireland, an application for funding to Roscommon County Council, a bank loan taken out by Portrun Development Association, or a combination of these measures.

It is recommended guidance be sought from LEADER and Roscommon County Council regarding financing.

Some case study examples of similar centres supplemented annual management costs with annual fund-raising events such as summer festivals. Ongoing commercial viability is key issue and obtaining an anchor tenant in commercial space, ideally state-funded would provide a stable source of revenue.

It is recommended that PDA utilise an online booking system that could be operated for booking event spaces.

Action 4: Engage with RCC to obtain consent for use of the lands for PARC

Action 5: Discuss funding options for PARC with key stakeholders (RCC, LEADER, FI)

Action 6: Aim to obtain commercial anchor tenant

Action 7: Organise summer fund raising festivals to supplement annual maintenance and running costs.

Action 8: Seek funding for an online booking system for event spaces



7.5 Management and Staffing

There are a variety of options for the management and operation of PARC. These include:

1. Maintenance and operation by Roscommon County Council
2. Maintenance by Roscommon County Council, operation by local community
3. Maintenance by Roscommon County Council, operation under commercial tender
4. Maintenance by Roscommon County Council, operation by local community on a 3-year contract, with café operated under commercial tender.

It is recommended option 4 be employed which would provide local employment with the major cost centre operated as a concession. This arrangement would give a commercial focus to the visitor centre. Lessons from case studies indicated that a franchise model for cafes was an efficient and effective way to manage a community café.

It is recommended that a bike hire concession be offered to a third party recreational provider.

It is recommended that the layout should be designed so as to facilitate operation by minimal staff in off/shoulder season e.g. café & offices located together.

It is recommended that PARC is staffed by a mix of volunteers and as part of a Pobal scheme.

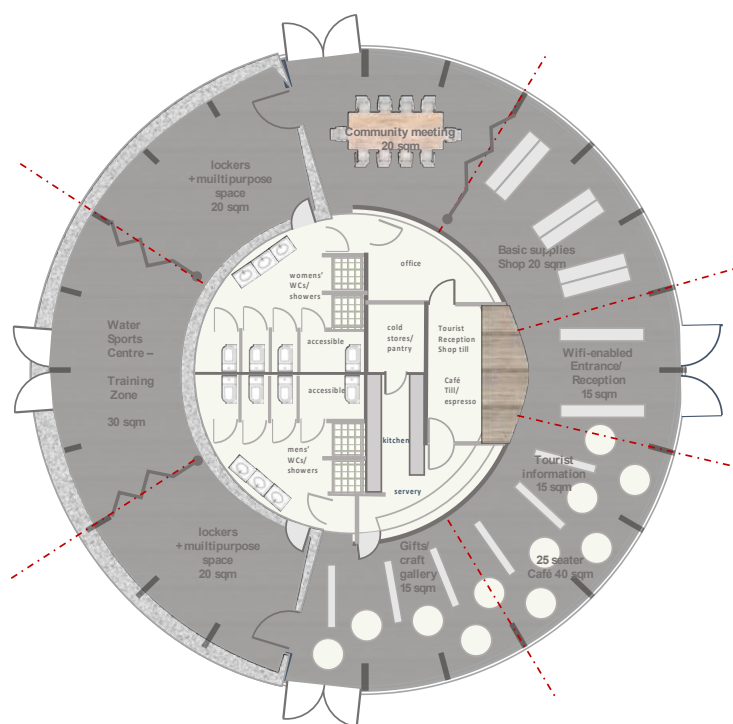
Action 9: Engage with RCC to identify suitable management model

Action 10: Offer franchise to operate café

Action 11: Offer franchise to operate bike hire business

Iconic “Roundhouse” Art Deco Café and Golden Gate Visitor Centre, San Francisco





PARC

PORTRUN AMENITY & RECREATION CENTRE

PHASE 1: NB flexible layout – below for illustration purposes only

ENTRANCE/ RECEPTION – 15 sqm

20 SEATER CAFÉ - 40 sqm

TOURIST INFORMATION ZONE – 15 sqm

GIFT SHOP/ CRAFT GALLERY – 15 sqm

BASIC PROVISIONS SUPPLIES SHOP – 20 sqm

COMMUNITY MEETING/ MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM – 20 sqm

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL CENTRE: TRAINING/ FUNCTIONS - 70sqm

MEN & WOMEN'S SANITARY FACILITIES – 35 sqm

KITCHEN/ SERVERY - 25

OFFICES/ STORES - 15

TOTAL 270 sqm

@€1,850/ sqm = €499,500 excluding site services & fees



8.0 Conclusion

PARC will provide much needed infrastructure for local community and visitors to the area, including café, changing rooms, a meeting area and reception area. There is demand for further spaces, either co-located with the proposed centre or nearby on the same site, which could be used leased to local businesses including wellness activities, art and craft, providing a revenue stream. A number of businesses have expressed interest in such an arrangement.

The provision of a focal point for the community at this popular location would enhance social inclusion and provide a place for the community to meet, reinforcing social cohesion, contributing to the objectives of the county development plan and making Portrunny a better place to live and to visit.

PARC would be ideally situated at the closest Lough Ree access point to Roscommon Town. By providing information on things to see and do nearby **PARC** will encourage increased visitor dwell time and spend in the area – contributing to Roscommon County Council's objectives for tourism development.

As well as serving the needs of the local community of Portrunny, the facility can encourage greater use of Lough Ree and a focal point to encourage visitors to stay for longer and as a launch site for extensive tour opportunity around, across and in engagement with the lake.

Inland Fisheries Ireland and Waterways Ireland have indicated that provision of a hard surfaced area would encourage greater use by water-craft users, including anglers and kayakers, bringing more visitors to the area, and in turn making any associated commercial enterprise more viable.

Fáilte Ireland have indicated their support for the project which, with its focus on outdoor activities, can contribute to the Hidden Heartlands brand proposition.

With Portrunny identified as an amenity area in relevant plans including the Roscommon County Development Plan and the 2017 Lough Ree plan, the proposed development is aligned with strategic decision-making. The proposed **PARC** facility will support infrastructure at Portrunny Bay including marina, proposed slipway and heritage trail, capitalising on existing investment in the area and further developing a clustered recreational facility and attraction.

Appendix 1: List of Consultees

We have undertaken consultations with representatives of a range of relevant organisations including:

- Roscommon County Council – Tourism Officer, Community & Enterprise, Engineering
- Fáilte Ireland
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Waterways Ireland
- Portrunny Therapies
- Lough Ree Boat and Bike Hire
- Vertical Kayakers
- Irish Civil Defence
- Roscommon Sports Partnership
- Stella Maris Community Centre, Kilmore Quay, County Wexford
- Oxford Island Discovery & Nature Centre, Lough Neagh, County Antrim
- Lakeside Centre, Ballyshannon, County Donegal
- Ti Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre, County Armagh

Appendix 2: Relevant Policies and Plans

A2.1 Regional Plans & Policies

A2.1.1 Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022

Relevant **tourism** related policies and objectives set out in the RPG include:

- EDP16: Support and promote innovative development, marketing and support all types of activity holidays and activity events in the West Region including walking routes development, cycling routes development and **water based activities** subject to relevant environmental assessment including Habitats Directive Assessment (where appropriate) of all tourism plans and projects, in order to minimise environmental impact.
- EDP66: Support the sustainable development of rural tourism resources such as **inland waterways**.
- EDP70: **Support rural tourism initiatives** which support sporting events; village enhancement; heritage management and energy conservation.¹¹
- EDO18: Promote sustainably planned tourism (enhancing existing or newly planned resources) with particular emphasis on less developed areas to maintain the region's share of the market, developing new products, services and facilities.
- EDO19: Promote **special interest tourism activities** such as adventure sports, sports events, out---door pursuit tourism holidays, **marine based tourism**, water sports; horse riding, hill walking, angling & fishing and golf, and the establishment of walking and cycling routes within the region and place emphasis on their contribution to healthy and active lifestyles subject to relevant environmental assessment including Habitats Directive Assessment (where appropriate) of all tourism plans and projects, in order to minimise environmental impact.¹²

In relation to **social infrastructure and community development** the RPG's state '*Recreational and leisure activities are major contributors to good health and a high quality of life*' and includes the following policies:

- SCP15: Support a **co-ordinated approach to the development and promotion of sustainable tourism** on the Shannon River Corridor which is complementary to the natural environment and which is informed by relevant environmental assessment. The process must be informed by Habitats Directive Assessment including assessment of potential cumulative impacts on Natura 2000 sites.¹³
- SCP16: Support the **development of cultural facilities** such as theatres, exhibitions spaces and workshops. This will be achieved through proper planning and sustainable development (Section 7.1.1 applies).¹⁴

A2.1.2 Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010)

The study identifies the principal tourism needs in the area as being:

- **To develop strong products** to attract the attention of the higher volume overseas sightseer and culture seeker market to Ireland and to encourage overnight stays by this market in the area. The strongest potential products are considered to be the Christian heritage of the area and the range of castles, historic houses and gardens.
- **To provide more access to water activities for visitors to the area, and develop activity visitor services around a set of activity hubs.**
- **To develop more opportunities for visitors to experience trips on the waterway, including a regular waterbus service.**

¹¹ Ibid page 51

¹² Ibid, page 50-51

¹³ Ibid, page 126

¹⁴ Ibid, page 127

- **To draw attention to the natural heritage of the area** and provide sustainable opportunities to appreciate the spectacular wetland bird assemblages and the natural and cultural heritage of Ireland's bogs.
- To draw attention to and interpret the special landscapes of the area through appropriate landscape designations and programmes (e.g. World Heritage Site status for Clonmacnoise and Special Amenity Area Order or a higher designation for Lough Ree)¹⁵

The study's main purpose was to recommend projects that could be developed sustainably in the area to **improve the tourism economy**.

The study outlines the current situation in Portrunny and opportunities for the settlement:

Current Position: Waterways Ireland has recently completed a marina, playpark and visitor facilities at Portrunny to a high standard. The marina lies in an attractive bay and provides a quiet rural stopping point along the western shores of the lough. People arriving at the marina by boat will find no facilities for eating out, for entertainment or provisioning

Opportunities: Further visitor services including watersports activity or day boat hire could be provided to complement the marina at this point. This could be achieved by a rental units being constructed close to the marina. The development of a wider range of visitor services by the private sector could be encouraged, including café/restaurant provision and low rise, traditional design guest accommodation¹⁶.

The study includes an action plan with a range of programmes designed 'to increase the visibility, appeal and ease of use of the area for visitors and to ease self and tour operator packaging of the best aspects of the area'¹⁷. Programme 3 in the study's action programme, as outlined in Table A2-1 below, identifies four locations for **activity hubs** with improved access to water based activities. Portrunny is identified as one of the four sites. **Recommended facilities** include changing facilities, equipment hire, day boat hire and instruction room, with the opportunity to pre-book activities.

¹⁵ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 1, authors emphasis

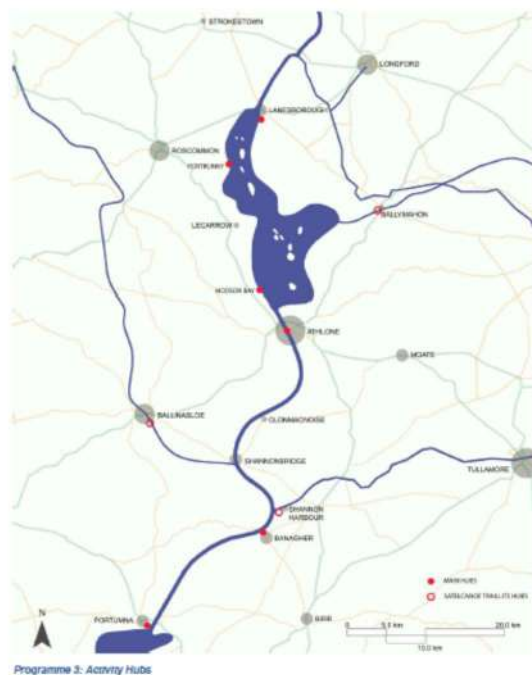
¹⁶ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 19, authors emphasis

¹⁷ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 37

Table A2-1: Programme 3: Activity Hubs¹⁸

Actions	Lead Agency
<p>1. To select and develop 4 locations as activity hubs where visitors can enjoy reliable daily access to a range of water activities.</p> <p>A model for an activity hub would include: Watersports/angling equipment hire and instruction base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Changing facilities ➤ Day boat hire ➤ Instruction room ➤ A choice of activities ➤ Water and activity specific safety advice and information ➤ Accommodation close by ➤ Eating opportunities close by <p>Arrangements should allow for short notice booking and individual bookings to enable services to the touring market. Potential locations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Portumna ➤ Athlone ➤ Banagher ➤ Ballinasloe ➤ Ballymahon ➤ Shannon Harbour ➤ Portrunny ➤ Hodson Bay ➤ Lanesborough ➤ Moate (land based activity) <p>2. Opportunities to build hubs based on existing provision at Portumna, Banagher, Hodson Bay, or to extend club roles.</p> <p>3. To consider the feasibility of offering float trips on the River Shannon.</p>	<p>Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland and LEADER group's engagement of private sector Private sector as main providers of activities.</p> <p>County Tourism Committees</p> <p>Clubs, Councils and Waterways Ireland Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland</p>

Figure A2-1: Activity Hubs¹⁹



¹⁸ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 40

¹⁹ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 40

Programme 14 outlines Settlement Opportunities. For Portrunny this is envisaged as 'Provide shore side activity services, space accommodation and seasonal café²⁰', with lead partners listed as Waterways Ireland and Roscommon County Council.

A2.2 County Plans & Policies

A2.2.1 Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020

The county development plan outlines Roscommon County Councils strategy for the county which aims to enhance the quality of life for residents of the county. Relevant several strategic aims, objectives and policies which relate to the study area are outlined in Appendix 2. Tourism is recognised as playing an increasingly important role in the economy of Roscommon, with Lough Ree and the Shannon system having opportunities to generate economic activity through water based activities.

The corresponding vision for tourism in the plan is that the county will capitalise on key natural resources such as Lough Ree and other waterways. The plan indicates the council's support for the development of facilities that, in appropriate locations, support the development of waterways based tourism, with Portrunny identified as one such place. However the plans indicates that any such development must not adversely affect the integrity of designated areas, with appropriate assessment required if deemed necessary.

Given that the PARC facility will provide recreational facilities of benefit to locals and visitors alike in tandem with the provision of community facilities, the plans policies with regard to community facilities are worth noting. This includes the recognition of the importance of the provision of community facilities in building community cohesion, and of the provision of recreation facilities as a means to enhance the health and quality of life of local communities, for which the plan indicates the councils support.

The County Development plan has several relevant policies which relate to the study area. Several strategic aims of the plan are detailed in the introductory chapter. Of these there are four which are of particular resonance for this project at this location, including:

Strategic Aim 2: *Improve the quality of life for the people of Roscommon and maintain the county as an attractive place to live, work and visit.*

Strategic Aim 6: *Promote the role of rural areas thus maximising their economic potential in areas such as agri –food, forestry, renewable energy and tourism.*

Strategic Aim 7: *Protect, within the context of planning legislation, the county's natural assets such as water resources, scenic areas, archaeological and cultural heritage.*

Strategic Aim 8: *Promote social inclusion, sustainable communities and sustainable travel.²¹*

The plan recognises that the Shannon waterway has the potential to 'generate a wide range of economic activity from both local and international sources through water based activities such as boating and water sports along with the general historic and cultural resource that this natural amenity has to offer'.²²

²⁰ Mid-Shannon and Lough Ree Project Development Study' (2010), page 49

²¹ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 5

²² Ibid, page 31

Chapter 3: Economic Development

The plan identifies the north of the county as having strong tourism potential which is seen as a key opportunity.²³ This includes opportunities for appropriate water based activity on and in the immediate environs of Lough Ree and the Shannon.²⁴

3.5: Tourism

While the plan acknowledges that tourism is relatively under-developed in the county, the strong role that natural resource-based tourism plays is identified, particularly waterways and special interest tourism such as inland cruising, angling and walking.²⁵

Some key tourism issues are identified as a lack of investment; difficult access; and lack of national and international marketing and promotion of tourism in the county. Initiatives to address these issues are considered to include joint cooperation ventures in tourism resource areas. The plan states that *'The Council aims to facilitate tourism wherever possible, without compromising the environment or the natural and built heritage'*.²⁶

One element of the stated **vision for tourism** in the county is to *'Capitalise upon key natural resources such as Lough Key, The Shannon and Suck and associated lakes and waterways'*.²⁷ The plan indicates that the council will support: *'tourism development of appropriate scale within settlements on the Shannon Corridor and its calling points such as Cortober, Roosky, Termonbarry, Ballyleague/lanesborough, Hodson Bay, Shannonbridge, Lecarrow, Gailey, Portrun, Drumharlow, Battlebridge and Cootehall which focuses on the provision of tourist services for water based tourism. There is potential for angling, archaeology and tourism generally to be further developed along the River Shannon corridor'*.²⁸

Relevant tourism policies include:

Policy 3.63 Promote Roscommon as a cultural, heritage and eco-tourism destination in order to diversify the range of tourist facilities in the county. All tourist developments will be screened for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Policy 3.65 Support and facilitate the development of new tourism facilities and services throughout the county.

Policy 3.68 Support tourism type development (e.g. tourist information services, the provision of leisure and activity facilities for tourists) of appropriate scale, including appropriate infrastructure and ancillary services throughout the county and particularly in the key towns of Roscommon Town, Castlerea, Boyle, Ballaghaderreen, Strokestown and Elphin as well as villages with significant tourism amenities such as Tusk and Arigna.

Policy 3.69 Support tourism development of appropriate scale within settlements on the Shannon Corridor and its calling points such as Cortober, Roosky, Termonbarry, Ballyleague/lanesborough, Hodson Bay, Shannonbridge, Lecarrow, Gailey, Portrun, Drumharlow, Battlebridge and Cootehall, which focuses on the provision of tourist services (e.g. nature and heritage based activities) for water based tourism.

Policy 3.77 Ensure that the facilitation of tourism and development related to tourism does not impact negatively on the landscape, environmental quality, built and natural heritage or otherwise result in the deterioration of the quality of the tourism product. The Council will also ensure all tourism related development is of a high standard of design and landscaping, with consideration given to the impact of the proposal on its surroundings in terms of scale and intensity.

Policy 3.81 Work with agencies such as Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, Waterways Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, the

²³ Ibid page 41

²⁴ Ibid page 49

²⁵ Ibid page 70

²⁶ Ibid page 70

²⁷ Ibid page 71

²⁸ Ibid page 72

National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Office of Public Works in the development management and development planning processes.²⁹

Chapter 7: Natural Heritage and Landscape Character Assessment

7.1: Designated sites

It is the strategic aim of the council to:

- *Protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity and natural heritage of County Roscommon*
- *Identify, protect and conserve sites of natural heritage importance, in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities.*

Lough Ree is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), and the plan describes the level of protection which should be afforded to these areas:

SAC: *'Any development in, near or adversely affecting an SAC should avoid any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated or proposed for designation'.*

SPA: *'Any development in, near or adversely affecting an SPA should avoid any significant adverse impact on the integrity of the site'.*

pNHA: *'Any development in, near or adversely affecting a Natural Heritage Area should avoid any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site has been designated'.*³⁰

The plan states that the planning authority must ensure any development proposal which is likely to have a significant effect on a designated area must only be authorised if the planning authority is satisfied that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area. It is further stated that *'Such a proposal must be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the area, if it is clear, on the basis of a preliminary examination, that the project could have a significant effect on the area.'*³¹

7.4: Inland Waterways

There are eight inland waterways in County Roscommon, all connected to the Shannon Navigation. This section of the plan highlights the economic value of these waterways as tourism attractions with the potential to generate revenue, to enhance quality of life for locals and visitors, and to provide access to the waterways and their surroundings.

Policy 7.7 *Have regard to the recommendations set out in the 'Waterways Corridor Study 2004 – A Study of the area surrounding Lanesborough to Shannonbridge', Waterways Corridor Study 2004 - The Shannon River between Roosky and Lanesborough' and the 'Waterways Corridor Study 2005 – A Study of the area surrounding the Upper Shannon navigation down to Roosky, including the Boyle River, Lough Allen, Lough Key and the Carnadoe waters'*

Policy 7.8 *Safeguard and enhance riparian zones along waterways as well as canal towpaths where they occur in the interests of enhancing the public's interface and enjoyment of these natural amenities.*

Objectives for Inland Waterways

Objective 7.30 *Maintain and preserve the aesthetic value of inland waterways and the waterway corridors in the county from the impacts of dispersed and highly visible development.*

Objective 7.31 *Support the growth and development of local communities within the inland waterway corridors whilst maintaining their distinctive character.*

Objective 7.32 *Seek to enhance public access to inland waterways as a condition of any development granted along inland waterways.*

²⁹ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 73

³⁰ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 174

³¹ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 177

Chapter 8: Social, Community and Cultural Development

This chapter of the plan notes recognises that community facilities are 'important for *'important for developing a sense of belonging within communities by providing opportunities for people to meet and greet, and get to know one another.'*³²

8.2: Community Facilities

The plan notes that the council allocates funding for community facilities from the councils Development Contribution Scheme and has worked with various community organisations to provide community sports and recreational facilities.

Policy 8.6 *Ensure the provision of necessary community services and facilities, including those required by young people and teenagers as well as older people and those with special needs, by zoning suitably located lands and ensuring that adequate development levies are raised and used to provide the required facilities.*³³

8.6: Sports, Recreation and Open Space

The plan outlines the importance of recreation facilities for enhancing the health and quality of life of communities, and indicates its support for the provision of such facilities.

Policy 8.30 Ensure the provision of necessary sports and recreational facilities as well as open space, particularly for young people, older adults and those who are disadvantaged or marginalised, by zoning suitably located lands and ensuring that adequate development levies are raised and used to provide the required facilities.

Policy 8.33 Provide for the sports and recreational needs of the County by upgrading and maintaining existing facilities and providing for new facilities at appropriate locations as needed. All facilities should be designed with flexibility in mind so that they are multi-functional and ensure maximum usability by a variety of groups and members of local communities. Facilities should be widely accessible and appropriately located where they can best meet the needs of all sections of the community that they are intended to serve. The Council will work with community groups, sporting organisations and clubs to ensure the widespread availability of facilities.³⁴

Policy 8.35 Support the provision of facilities for young people and teenagers in the County including sports and recreation facilities, youth clubs and supervised places.

Objectives for Sports, Recreation and Open Space include:

Objective 8.3 Work with community groups and local organisations to maximise funding for sporting and recreational facilities throughout County Roscommon.

Objective 8.4 Implement the Council's Development Contribution Scheme as it relates to the improvement of existing recreation and leisure facilities and the funding of new recreation and leisure facilities in tandem with new developments.³⁵

A2.2.2 Roscommon Local Economic & Community Plan (2016-2021)

The proposed PARC development accords with the vision, high level goals and the wider actions and outputs outlined within the plan, particularly in relation to the provision of enhanced tourism, community, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities in County Roscommon.

Vision: The six-year Vision for the county, to be achieved by 2021, is set out as follows:

'To ensure, through collaboration and the provision of strong leadership in partnership with the community, that County Roscommon is an attractive, inclusive, prosperous and vibrant place in which to live, work, invest, do business and to visit.'

Seven high level goals:

- Build and support local communities and a strong sense of place,

³² Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 191

³³ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 204

³⁴ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 205

³⁵ Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, page 206

- Increase economic activity, job creation and employment opportunities,
- Develop a Roscommon brand image and promote a positive identity for the county,
- Protect, enhance and maximise the value of Roscommon's natural, cultural and heritage resources,
- Provide, maintain and enhance strategic infrastructure that supports economic and community development,
- Support priority industry sectors to compete locally, regionally, nationally and internationally,
- Promote social inclusion by reducing poverty and alleviating disadvantage.

A2.3 Local Plans & Policies

A2.3.1 Portrunny Tourism & Amenity Action Plan (2006)

This objectives of this plan, produced for Roscommon County Council, relate to:

- *Enhancing the role and function of Portrunny within the County - given its strategic proximity to Roscommon Town and location on Lough Ree;*
- *Accommodating residential, tourist and amenity-based development while protecting the unique heritage of the Portrunny area;*
- *Providing an enhanced range of amenity and recreational activities focussing on the natural heritage of the area within the management framework for the Lake set out in the cSAC site synopsis.*

To achieve these objectives this aspirational plan, typical of the era, sought:

- *The introduction of a public sewerage scheme and other physical infrastructure to service new developments;*
- *Integration of new development into the village through proper siting and design to ensure the natural and built environment is protected; and*
- *The integration of a new residential population with the existing population'*³⁶

Planning policies and development control criteria are detailed, to be applied to the future development of Portrunny Village. The development plan is based over two phases which are aligned with the implementation of a waste water treatment plant to service the area. In the first phase the plan envisaged new development consisting of 40 permanent residential houses, 60 holiday houses or equivalent in terms of a small hotel/tourist accommodation, amenity use such as restaurant or bar with capacity for 50 users/day & 10 staff, 7 new commercial/retail units.

The focus on tourism and amenity related development was allow for incremental provision of tourist related facilities. Provision of facilities in phase two was thought likely to include a primary school to allow for a population of up to 1,000. The precise mix of development was to be subject to a subsequent development plan.

A map outlining Development Objectives accompanied the plan. This map divides the area into three zones: Shoreside Lands, Village Growth Area, and **Lakeside Activity Area**. The lands identified for the PARC facility are located on the Lakeside Activity Area. The objective, specified, in the plan, for this area is to: *'Create new mixed use development which extends along the westward side of the road fronting the marina. The creation of a strong streetscape provides for focused development and the creation of a sense of place.'*³⁷

Specific policies for this area included:

1. *Permit mixed use development at varying densities while ensuring that structures are sensitively sited so as not to break the localised ridge. Permitted uses to include:*

- *Residential development – of a high density within single or two storey terraces;*
- *Retail services;*

³⁶ Portrun Tourism & Amenity Action Plan (2006), CAAS for Roscommon County Council, page 7

³⁷ Ibid, page 13

- Tourist related development including guesthouses, small hotels, tourist information, etc.;
- Offices and other small-scale commercial enterprises.

2. Implement the design guidelines detailed in Section 4 over, to create an attractive and strong lakeshore edge.

3. Ensure that all development proposals are designed, planned and considered having regard to the impact of that proposal on the habitat of Lough Ree and adjacent lands and that appropriate mitigation measures are incorporated into any such proposals. Moreover, in considering all such applications, Roscommon County Council will have regard to the advice and recommendations of statutory consultees and relevant state agencies.³⁸

The plan details **design guidelines and streetscape considerations** for the three zones. For the Lakeside Activity Area it states: 'These lands are located on the western side of the main access road. Importantly these lands act as a buffer to the designated habitat of Lough Ree and are also themselves partially designated within the Lough Ree pNHA, cSAC and SPA. The designated lands consist of a narrow strip of land with open views to the lake. Critically, these plots are bisected (south-east to north-west) by a 40m contour which creates a localised ridge. It is proposed to create a strong streetscape containing a mixture of uses on this stretch of land leading from opposite the existing marina and playground, north-westwards to the access roads leading to Portrun Village.'³⁹

The role of tourism is emphasised again here stating that 'the Council will particularly encourage the development of appropriate tourist activities – such as those promoting the use of the lake shore as a key amenity – e.g. kayaking / boating clubs, etc. and will support the provision of such services by whatever means possible.'⁴⁰

A2.3.2 Portrunny Local Area Development Plan

Portrun Development Association intend to produce a Portrunny Local Development Plan. This non-statutory plan is intended to inform and guide development in the area from 2018-2020.

³⁸ Ibid, page 13

³⁹ Ibid , page 14

⁴⁰ Ibid, page 16

Appendix 3: Market Research

A3.1 National Profile

A3.1.1 Overseas visitors

There is strong growth in overseas visitors to Ireland, although with a recent decline in the UK market. Revenue to the Irish economy from international visitors reached €6.6bn in 2016, a rise of 9.5% on 2015, on the back of a record year for volume growth with almost 8.74m visitors arriving by air and sea, a growth of 8.8% over 2015. The strongest growth was from visitors from North America (14.2%), followed by Britain (8.5%) and Mainland Europe (7.7%). The **largest source markets** for overseas visitors are Britain (41.5%), Mainland Europe (35.6%) and North America (16.9%). Other long haul accounted for 6.1% of the total.

A3.1.2 Domestic visitors

Domestic tourism also shows an upward trend. In 2016 there were 9.3m domestic trips taken by Irish residents within the Republic with an associated revenue of around €1.8bn. This was an increase of 1.7% on the number of trips taken in 2015 and an increase in expenditure of 2.8% - echoing the trend for growth of revenue in excess of volume shown by overseas visitor figures. The figure of 9.3m includes 4,830 on holiday trips (3,686m who were on a short (1-3 nights), 1,144 on a long (4+ nights) holiday); 3,032m visiting friends and relatives, 425,000 business trips and 994,000 on other trips.

The **most popular activities** engaged in while on holidays for domestic holidaymakers in 2014 was hiking/hillwalking (25%) followed by visiting houses/castles (24%), national parks (23%), visits to a spa (20%), heritage/interpretative centres (20%), gardens (19%), water-based activities (19%), monuments (18%), museums and art galleries (14%), cycling (8%), golf (6%), angling (3%), attending horse racing (3%).

A3.2 Visitors to the West Region

For the purposes of collation of visitor data County Roscommon is located within the Fáilte Ireland's West region which also includes Galway and Mayo. The West region is the 2nd most popular region after Dublin, and the South-west. In 2016 the region attracted 1.675m overseas visitors generating €543m of revenue, and 1.591m domestic visitors generating €329m.

Fáilte Ireland's estimate of overseas visitor numbers and expenditure for the West region by market in 2016 are set out below in Table 2. This indicates over **43% of visitors came from Mainland Europe making it the largest market**; 28.6% of visitors came from North America, and 20.9% from the UK, with around 7% from other areas. Visitors from North America were responsible for a higher level of expenditure than visitors from the Mainland Europe (38.7% vs 35.2%), with 20.3% derived from visitors from the UK.

Table 3-1 shows the estimate of holidaymaker volume and revenue for County Roscommon in 2016. This indicates that while visitors from Mainland Europe are also the largest group of holiday makers they are also responsible for the highest proportion of revenue.

Table 3-1: Overseas Tourists to West region (2016)

	Overseas (000's)	Visitors	Revenue (€m)	Market Share (%)	
				No's	€
Britain	350		110	20.9	20.3
Mainland Europe	733		191	43.7	35.2
North America	479		210	28.6	38.7
Other Areas	114		33	6.8	5.8
	1676		543	100	100

Source: Fáilte Ireland 2017

Table 3-2: Overseas Holidaymakers to West region (2016)

	Overseas (000's)	Visitors	Revenue (€m)	Market Share (%)	
				No's	€
Britain	163		54	13.9	14.9
Mainland Europe	568		147	48.3	40.6
North America	373		137	31.7	37.9
Other Areas	71		24	6.1	6.6
	1176		362	100	100

Source: Fáilte Ireland 2017

A3.3 Visitors to County Roscommon

Roscommon's overseas visitor numbers and associated revenue from 2013-2016 are shown in Table 3-3. The data indicates there has been a very significant growth in both visitor numbers (**up 67%**) and in visitor revenue (**up 65%**) over the 2013-2016 period, with growth slowing in 2016. This generally buoyant trend indicates potential for further growth could be considered very strong. In 2016 there were 137,000 domestic visitors to Roscommon and Longford with revenue of €17.6m, representing a significant decline over the 2015 data of 160,000 and €28.2m.

Table 3-3: Overseas Visitor Numbers and Revenue 2013-2016

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Roscommon Overseas Visitor No's (000's)	35	44	50	52
Roscommon Overseas Visitor Revenue (€m)	13	16	20	20

Source: Fáilte Ireland 2014-2017

Fáilte Ireland's estimate of overseas visitor numbers and expenditure for County Roscommon by market in 2016 are set out below in Table 3-4. This indicates that **the largest market, with around 48% of visitors, came from the UK**, with 26.9% from North America and 19.2% from Mainland Europe. Around 45% all visitor expenditure in County Roscommon was from visitors from the UK with 35% derived from visitors from North America and 15% from Mainland Europe. This indicates that County Roscommon is more exposed to the UK market than the wider West region and could be negatively impacted by any Brexit associated downturn.

Table 3-4: Overseas Visitors to County Roscommon (2016)

	Overseas (000's)	Visitors	Revenue (€m)	Market Share (%)	
				No's	€
Britain	25		9	48.1	45
Mainland Europe	10		3	19.2	15
North America	14		7	26.9	35
Other Areas	3		2	5.8	10
	52		20	100	100

Source: Fáilte Ireland 2016

A3.4 Target Markets

To maximise the visitor opportunity it will be important to consider who are the likely target markets by country and within these markets which are the type of visitors or market segments most likely to be interested in a visit to Portlunty. By identifying these market segments, and their motivations, the focus then becomes the provision of suitable facilities and infrastructure to attract these visitors and provide them with the optimum experience.

A4.4.1 International context

The four **main overseas markets**, which from which 70% of all overseas arrivals are derived are identified by Fáilte Ireland as Britain, USA, Germany and France.

Within these overseas markets, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland have identified **three target market segments** as having the most potential for the development of tourism in Ireland.⁴¹ These segments, i.e. visitors grouped according to values & motivations, are **Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Social Energisers**, described in further detail in Table 3-5 below.⁴²

Table 3-5: Overseas Core Target Market Segments

Culturally Curious <i>Travellers with a passion for new 'wow' experiences who are seeking fun and excitement, immersing themselves in the destination</i>	Great Escapers <i>Independent thinkers with a craving for culture and history. They are out to broaden their minds and expand their experiences by exploring new landscapes, history and culture</i>	Social Energisers <i>Adventurous and committed to spending quality time in a breath-taking place. They are on holiday to take time out, get physical with nature and reconnect with their partner</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to be middle aged (35 – 54) • Likely to travel as a couple or with other adult friends • Want to broaden their minds and expand their experiences through landscape, history and culture • Curious and keen to learn about the places that they travel to • Independent active sightseers • Want to encounter new places and out-of-the-ordinary experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to be younger (25 – 45) • Often couples, some with young children, or travelling with friends and older family members • Need time out from busy lives and careers • Specially interested in rural holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youngest target segment, primarily aged under 35 • Like to holiday in groups or as couples • Look for places that are new, different, and vibrant

Source: Fáilte Ireland

There are overlaps between segments and also variances in motivations, desired experiences they will purchase, and key booking channels they use. There are also variations by segment between the four key markets. The four overseas markets, identified as a priority for the Culturally Curious and Great Escapers segments, also match those visitor markets currently attracted to the West region and County Roscommon (see Table 3-5 above), i.e. Britain, North America (with the priority market being USA) and Mainland Europe (with the priority markets being Germany and France).

Characteristics of Principal Overseas Markets for Ireland

The four main overseas markets, which from which 70% of all overseas arrivals are derived are identified by Fáilte Ireland as Britain, USA, Germany and France. The main characteristics of these four target markets are outlined in Table 3-6 below.

Table 3-6: Characteristics of Principal Overseas Visitor Markets⁴³

	Great Britain	USA	Germany	France
When do they visit Ireland?	Visit all year 31% Jan-Apr 23% May-June 22% July-Aug	62% visit outside of July and August 17% Jan-Apr	73% visit outside of July and August 23% Jan-Apr 31% May-June	64% visit outside of July and August 22% Jan-Apr

⁴¹ GB Path to Growth, 2011, page 5. The other four segments are the 'Top Tenner's', 'Easy Going Socialisers', 'Nature Lovers' and the 'Spoil Us' segment

⁴² Fáilte Ireland, Growing International Sales, Global Segmentation Toolkit

⁴³ Fáilte Ireland, Growing International Sales, Global Segmentation Toolkit

	Great Britain	USA	Germany	France
	9% Sept 15% Oct-Dec	29% May-June 29% July-Aug 11% Sept 13% Oct-Dec	27% Jul-Aug 8% Sept 12% Oct-Dec	26% May-June 36% July-Aug 6% Sept 9% Oct-Dec
Where do they go in Ireland?	Majority spend their time in one destination Short-breaks, less regional touring 53% Dublin 28% Southwest 19% West 11% Midwest	Most will visit more than one region Dublin is on the majority of itineraries followed by Western seaboard and Southwest 80% Dublin 48% Southwest 35% West 32% Midwest	41% like to tour around 24% visit Dublin only 65% Dublin 50% Southwest 33% West	Most will visit more than one region 6% Dublin 50% West 43% Southwest
How long do they stay in Ireland?	Average 5 nights Average annual leave 28 days	Average 6.8 nights (42% stay 6-8 nights) Average annual leave 12 days	Average 8.3 nights Average annual leave 29 days	Average 8.9 nights 13% short breaks (1-3 nights) Average annual leave 7.5 weeks, min. 5 weeks
What accommodation do they use when in Ireland?	33% hotels 13% rented 9% guesthouses/B&Bs 26% friends and relatives	50% hotels 25% B&Bs and guesthouses 7% rented 8% hostels	34% hotels 25% Guesthouses/B&Bs 10% rented	23% guesthouses and B&Bs 20% hotels 13% rented
Where are they from?	21% South East 15% London 11% South West 11% North West 10% West Midlands 8% Scotland 8% Wales	New York, California, Massachusetts, Florida and Illinois	Bavaria Baden-Wurtemberg, Nord Rhein/Westphalia Rheinland-Palatinate and Hessen	33% from Paris 20% from Western France 14% South East 12% South West 11% Mediterranean 6% East 3% North
What age are they?	A greater portion over 35s 48% are over 45 Mostly couples and a quarter in other adult groups Less child or family focussed	Slightly older than European visitors, 25% are over 55 44% are over 45	22% are under 24 24% are 25-34 16% are 35-44 38% are over 45 39% couple 12% family 23% with other adults	Younger than other markets; just 27% are over 45 36% couple 25% family (more than twice the

	Great Britain	USA	Germany	France
		Almost half visit as part of a couple		number of Germans who travel with family) 19% with other adults
How do they get here?	8 out of 10 air 2 out of 10 hire a car 2 out of 10 bring their car	99% air 46% hire a car	75% air 25% by sea 32% hire a car 23% bring their car	80% air 20% sea 18% bring their car 37% hire a car
Have they visited Ireland before?	59% previously visited Visiting friends and relations (VFR) is big from the GB market	75% are on first visit	65% are on first visit 25% are repeat visitors	65% are on first visit
Will they return to Ireland?	76% will return	50% will return	54% will return	50% will return
Is the language important to them?	N/A	N/A	Very important if attending consumer shows in Germany Many like to do their holiday research and planning in their own language, so knowledge of the language is a definite advantage	Being able to speak French is important both for consumer and trade engagement

4.4.2 Domestic Context

As indicated above, in section 3-6, domestic tourism within the island of Ireland is growing. Fáilte Ireland have developed a segmentation model for this market to help drive further growth.

- **Connected Families** - made up of families with young children. Their core motivation is to spend quality time together and grow as a family
- **Footloose Socialisers** - tend to travel as groups of friends, for them holidays are about sharing experiences with people who are of the same mind-set
- **Indulgent Romantics** - made up of couples that are seeking a romantic getaway through which they can reconnect while enjoying wonderful surroundings

Characteristics of Priority Domestic Market Segments

Fáilte Ireland have identified three priority segments for domestic tourism as: Connected Families, Footloose Socialisers, and Indulgent Romantics. Table A3-7 below summarises some of the key characteristics of these three domestic segments.

Table A3-7: Characteristics of Priority Domestic Market Segments⁴⁴

	Connected Families	Footloose Socialisers	Indulgent Romantics
Who are they?	<p>Connected Families make up 23 percent of the domestic market, the single largest segment.</p> <p>They are made up of relatively young families. They are made up of parents in their thirties and early forties and children generally under the age of ten.</p> <p>For Connected Families, family holidays are the best weeks of the year and a special opportunity to spend quality time together, creating memories to last a lifetime.</p> <p>They put their heart into planning and finding out everything a destination has to offer, the best places to stay, the hidden gems and all the activities available that can be shared by adults and children together.</p> <p>For them it is not about having a plan for every day rather knowing that there are lots of 'things to do together' nearby and making sure their accommodation and facilities really suit their needs.</p>	<p>Footloose Socialisers make up 15 percent of the domestic market. On average in their late forties and well educated, they are made up of groups of friends that enjoy getting away and spending quality time together.</p> <p>What matters most to them is being with like-minded people, whether they're old friends or new acquaintances.</p> <p>They really love the opportunity to get a break from their routines and responsibilities.</p> <p>For Footloose Socialisers a weekend with friends is a reminder of their long lost youth and they love to break out, really relax and enjoy themselves.</p> <p>Although value conscious, Footloose Socialisers regularly take short breaks with friends - going to rugby matches, hill walking, attending music and cultural festivals or just playing a few rounds of golf.</p>	<p>Indulgent Romantics make up 14 percent of the domestic market. Although relatively broad in terms of age profile they are more likely than average to be aged between 45 and 64.</p> <p>They are interested in going to different places and enjoy the atmosphere of new cities, particularly if they offer opportunities for shopping, pampering, enjoying great food and the little indulgences in life.</p> <p>They enjoy quick and spontaneous weekend breaks to get away from the stresses and bustle of their daily lives.</p> <p>Savvy trip planners they are always keen to find a good deal for a particularly nice hotel they've had their eye on. Interested and knowledgeable about quality travel, restaurants, food and wine, they tend to be in-the-know about what's hot and what's not.</p>
What they want from a holiday	<p>Connected Families enjoy a holiday that offers a variety of things to see and do in a place that feels special.</p>	<p>Footloose Socialisers are seeking to share experiences with people they can relax and be themselves with –</p>	<p>They are made up of couples whose ultimate goal is to find the perfect romantic hub for their holiday where they can soak</p>

⁴⁴ Fáilte Ireland, Driving Growth Through Segmentation

	<p>Whether it's fun at a petting farm, picnicking, learning to surf, catching crabs on the beach or taking a walk on a local nature trail, as long as they're doing it together, they're happy.</p> <p>For the parents it's all about their children being happy and enjoying themselves.</p> <p>They want to make the most of the opportunity to really 'be' with their children and love to see them do and enjoy the same simple things they did when they were children themselves.</p> <p>They are seeking to create special memories that they can treasure, sharing experiences that they can fondly look back on in the months and years to come.</p>	<p>experiences that bring people together and enrich life. They want to do this in authentic and interesting surroundings.</p> <p>They reject the idea of a package holiday.</p> <p>They believe that it's good to go off the beaten track every now and again, try out different places, meet the locals and really get under the skin of a place.</p> <p>They enjoy good food and drink and tend to be interested in the history and culture of the place they are visiting.</p>	<p>up the luxury, reward themselves, be well looked after and reconnect with one another. Just being together and treating themselves a little really helps them to rebalance.</p> <p>They prefer to spend money on accommodation rather than activities and expect a certain standard of comfort in their accommodation and hospitality</p>
Holiday behaviour	<p>Connected Families tend to plan and book their holidays well in advance (3-6 months) and do most of their booking online. On average family breaks tend to last between four and seven days and they are most likely to stay in hotels or holiday homes.</p> <p>They tend to rely heavily on hotel/accommodations websites, review websites, social media and personal recommendations when deciding on where to holiday and their choice of accommodation.</p>	<p>Footloose Socialisers tend to book their breaks closer to actually taking them, with one in three trips booked less than a month in advance.</p> <p>They do most of their booking online. On average their breaks tend to be for between one to three days and they demonstrate a stronger tendency to stay in holiday homes/rentals than other segments, although they are also likely to stay in hotels.</p>	<p>Indulgent Romantics are more likely than any other segment to book their accommodation well in advance; however they do also act spontaneously and may book at short notice if the right offer comes up.</p> <p>They do most of their booking online. On average their breaks tend to be for between one to three days and they demonstrate very high propensity to stay in hotels.</p> <p>They tend to rely heavily on hotel and</p>

	<p>After their return, they try to hold on to those special holiday memories for as long as possible, by sharing stories and photos with friends and family on social networks.</p>	<p>They tend to rely heavily on review websites and booking agent sites (OTAs) and personal recommendations when deciding on where to holiday and their choice of accommodation.</p> <p>As active users of social media they share stories and pictures from their breaks online.</p>	<p>booking agent sites (OTAs) when deciding on where to holiday and their choice of accommodation (using a relatively narrow range of information sources when compared to other segments).</p> <p>Although they actively research and review destinations and accommodation online they are not active users of social media.</p>
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Appendix 4: Case Studies

This section reviews three places which although different in approach have elements which are relevant for the proposed Portrunny Amenity & Recreation Centre. Case studies include:

- *Lough Boora, County Offaly*
- *Crough Patrick Visitor Centre, County Mayo*
- *Stella Maris Community Centre, Kilmore Quay, County Wexford*
- *Lakeside Centre, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal*
- *Oxford Island Discovery Centre & Nature Reserve, Lough Neagh*
- *Ti Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre, County Armagh*

A4.1 Lough Boora, County Offaly



Bord na Móna harvested peat from Lough Boora from the middle of the 20th Century. The Lough Boora Mesolithic site was discovered in 1977 when what was first thought to be a stone track way was brought to the attention of the National Museum. This was investigated and found to be the storm shoreline of a post-glacial lake, a remnant of an era when the Shannon and its lakes – Lough Ree and Lough Derg covered more of the Midlands than today. Further investigation revealed the charcoal remains of ancient campfires, dated to between 6800 and 6500 BC, which were the temporary campsites of hunters during the Mesolithic era. This is thought to be one of the most important archaeological finds in Ireland as prior to its discovery it was thought the first human settlements were near to the coast and that the midlands remained uninhabited. Discovery of the Lough Boora Mesolithic site pushed the accepted date for colonisation of the midlands back by over 3,000 years.

Bord na Mona no longer harvest peat from the main site and Lough Boora (www.loughboora.com) is now a sanctuary for wildlife and an amenity for the community – a place of quiet, relaxation and refuge. The new visitor centre, a partnership between Bord na Móna and Fáilte Ireland provides visitor information, public toilets, a cafe, picnic area and car park. Facilities include:

Café: Open daily from 9.30am – 6pm in summer months, and open weekends from 11am – 4pm during winter months.

Bike hire: available from 10am to 8pm, Monday through Sunday at a rate of €3/hour or €12.50/day for children, €5/hour or €30/day for adults, €50/day for a family, and €8/hour for a tandem bicycle. Bikes available include tandem, adult and child. Price includes cost of helmets and trailers available at no extra cost.

Cycle and walking routes including:

- Sculpture Park Route: 3.3km, short walking route with 24 works of art
- Mesolithic Route: 9.3km, walking and cycling route, site of national importance for Whooper Swans
- Farmland Route: 6km, walking and cycling route with bird hides
- Finnamore Lakes Route: 11.7km, walking route
- Turraun Route: 15.8km, walking and cycle route

Angling: As areas of Lough Boora came out of commercial peat production, several still water fishing lakes were developed as both local and tourist amenities. The lakes were created by excavating the remaining peat and deepening the proposed lake bottom.

The banks were reinforced and landscaping work carried out to provide shelter. Access roads, parking and picnic facilities were then developed. When the lakes were flooded, aquatic plants were introduced from waterways nearby and the lakes were stocked with a variety of game and coarse fish.



Since development, each lake has undergone rapid naturalisation. The work was carried out by Bord na Móna in conjunction with advice provided by the Central and Shannon Regional Fisheries Boards. The creation of the complex of lakes has led the Shannon Fisheries Board to designate Kilcormac village as a new coarse angling centre. Most of the lakes do not have a closed season but best results can be achieved between the months of April and October. The only lake with a specified open season is Loch Clochan, which is only available between 1 May and 12 October, from 8am to 10pm.

Bird-watching: > 130 bird species have been recorded in the park, including the endangered wild Grey Partridge, many of which can be seen from bird hides located throughout the complex. These include one hide designed and sited to facilitate wheelchair access.

Management and staffing

The café and bike hire operations are both franchised, with income from both combined providing 40% of overall operational costs, the balance is met by Bord na Mona. There is one full time staff member and one seasonal maintenance person, costs for both are met by Bird na Mona. There are also two seasonal guides.

Stages of development

While trails had been developed over a 20 year period there was no point of arrival for visitors. In 2014 a joint project by Bord na Mona and Fáilte Ireland provided the financing to develop the visitor centre. Fáilte Ireland grant funding was 750,000€ with equal match funding from Bord na Mona.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Conversation with Tom Egan, Manager of Lough Boora, 26/01/2018

A4.2 Croagh Patrick Visitor Centre, County Mayo

The Croagh Patrick Visitor Centre or *Teach na Miasa* (www.croagh-patrick.com) is situated in Murrisk on the Pilgrim's path at the base of Croagh Patrick Mountain and opposite the National Famine Monument. The Walsh family, who run the centre, aim to provide for the needs of pilgrims, climbers, archaeologists and nature lovers.

The director of Archaeological Excavations on the summit of Croagh Patrick, Gerry Walsh, and his wife Gabrielle opened the Croagh Patrick Information Centre at the foot of the mountain in March 2000. The Centre stems from the interest shown by the thousands of pilgrims and climbers in the archaeological discoveries on the summit. Gerry realised that people would like more information in an accessible and user-friendly way and he set about making his dream a reality. He also realised that people visiting the mountain were not being supplied with general information on the South Mayo region, an area of unspoilt natural beauty, so he decided to incorporate this into the Centre. Facilities include:



- Family run café/restaurant - seating 50 inside and 40 outside on a terrace
- Craft shop - with local crafts, maps, books, walking sticks, socks & raingear
- Showers
- Lockers
- Visitor information and interpretation on history and archaeology of Croagh Patrick
- Guided tours

A4.3 Stella Maris Community Centre, Kilmore Quay, County Wexford

The Stella Maris Community Centre at Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford (www.stellamariscentre.com) provides a range of community services and activities. This includes a cafe meeting rooms, training rooms, and functions rooms for small and large groups.

'The Centre' Café & Restaurant provides a place for the community to gather and serves the wider community through a meals-on-wheels service. This service operates from Monday to Friday and produces an average of 75 meals a week, distributed throughout the parish by a team of volunteers who take weekly turns. Initially staffed by volunteers the café now operates as part of a Pobal scheme providing employment for four people.

The café is open daily from Tuesday to Sunday with opening hours of Tuesday-Sat 9am to 2pm and Sunday 9am to 12.30pm



Venue Hire – the centre rents rooms to organisations and groups. This includes events and exhibitions.

Clubs and groups – several groups use the facilities, which provides an opportunity for people to meet.

Management and staffing – the centre has operated since 1994. Initial costs were covered by the local community, including bank loans. Funding has also come from LEADER. The centre is supported by annual fund raising events, in particular their summer Seafood Festival. The centre employs four full-time staff as well as varying numbers of part-time. These staff are funded through the Community Services Programme and TUS community Work Placement Scheme.



Lessons for Portrunny – The centre manager recommended starting small. Key issues are considered to be ongoing commercial viability. Obtaining an anchor tenant, ideally state funded, is strongly recommended. If a café is included there a good argument to operate this on a franchise basis – Stella Maris did this initially and then pulled this back in-house to ensure the hours they wanted the café to operate were covered⁴⁶.

A4.4 Lakeside Centre, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

Lakeside Caravan & Camping Park (www.lakesidecaravanandcamping.com) is located on the shore of Assaroe Lake five minutes' walk from Ballyshannon. Open from March to October facilities include a restaurant and dance area with lake views, modern toilet/shower block, disabled toilet, kitchen, TV room, games room, environmentally friendly play park, and full-size astro turf pitch. The restaurant area can be pre-booked for parties, meetings and conferences.



Lakeside Centre is operated by Erne Enterprise Development Co. Ltd, a local community development company representing an active local network. Erne Enterprise is backed by Pobal. Properties controlled by the company include:

- **Lakeside Centre:** Home to a full sized all weather Astro Turf Pitch, environmentally-friendly children's playground, caravan & camping park with on-site restaurant opening during summer months. They also hire out meeting rooms and small offices,
- **Tirhugh Resource Centre:** offices to rent and rooms for hire including an IT Training Suite,
- **Finner Business Park:** A cluster of incubator units for lease,
- **Portnason:** IT centre containing 5 hot desk spaces, 4 units of 1,000sq feet and home to the Emergency Call Centre controlled by BT.



⁴⁶ Telephone conversation with Manager John Dunne, who is happy to discuss any aspect further with Portrun Development Association (053 9129922).

Management & Staffing: The centre employs between ten and fifteen staff depending on the season. Staff costs are principally funded by Pobal. Several organisations contributed to the initial capital cost of the centre development in the early 1990's including the Irish-American Fund, cross border funding and LEADER. Running costs are covered by revenue from the caravan and campground.



The centre was initially set up to provide local employment. The owners of the building they now occupy went into receivership in the mid 1990s so they did not have initial construction costs. Six incubator units built in the late 1990s provide space for SME's on reduced rates with a maximum 3-year lease. These units were funded by IDI and Enterprise Ireland. While the initial operation was solely offices, over the last 20 years they added an all-weather pitch, environmentally friendly playground, caravan and camping facilities and now watersports.

In 2005 a 10,000 sq.ft. IT centre was built, funded by IDI and Peace II, this now houses the 999 emergency call centre. A suggestion for a similar centre is to provide space for exercise classes as these offer an income opportunity, this can be combined with a multi-functional space⁴⁷.

A4.5 Oxford Island Discovery Centre & Nature Reserve, Lough Neagh

Lough Neagh Discovery Centre (www.oxfordisland.com), which opened in 1993, is located within the Oxford Island Reserve on the southern shore of Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland. The multi-functional centre includes Loughside Café seating 100, tourist information centre with gift shop, conference centre and offices for the Conservation Service and Education Team who run extensive, environmental education programmes to schools and community groups across Northern Ireland. Three conference rooms of varying sizes provide extensive views over Lough Neagh and the nature reserve. Events include festivals, birthday parties, star-gazing nights, pop-up exhibitions and art workshops.



Marina: the nearby Kinnego Marina is home to Lough Neagh Sailing Club, established in 1877. There are 190 fully sheltered berths and 10 moorings. Adjacent to the marina is a fully-serviced caravan park. Secured summer and winter storage is provided for 60 boats within the boat park on-site. Fully trained and qualified staff on site offer local knowledge, boat tuition and information on safety on Lough Neagh. Courses include powerboat instruction, sailing courses, personal watercraft, sea survival, VHF/DSC, first aid. Day tours are available of Kinnego Bay, Coney Island or private charter.

⁴⁷ Conversation with Eimear Keon, Erne Enterprise Development Company CLG, 26/01/18

Angling: angling platforms offer the opportunity to fish for Roach, bream, perch and pike. A Coarse Angling Licence is required and the bag limit is two pike per day and pike over 4kg (8.8lb) must be returned to the water.

Kinnego Bush Craft Centre - offers courses and programmes on the practical skills of camp craft, building shelters, making fires, wild food and plant identification for fresh faced beginner through to veterans of the outdoor pursuits. Kinnego Bush Craft offer outdoor group bonding and team building workshops based around nature and basic survival principals along with how and why we should care for our surrounding environment.

Arts Development: The Arts Development Team based at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre develops programmes to meet local needs and often acts as a first point of contact for artists and community groups. **Artspace** is a studio space located at the heart of the Oxford Island Nature Reserve. It is a large open plan space with a range of resources for artists.

Camping and accommodation: the 3-star campground located in a picturesque setting offers:

- **Caravans – open 1 April – 31 October**

- Motor / touring caravan spaces just £18 per night. No awning charge (not all pitches have awnings available). Electricity supply to caravan pitches: hook up £5 per night,
- Disabled facilities – Wheelchair friendly
- Laundry facilities (£3 per token), Toilets and showers.
- BBQs on stand allowed.
- Dogs admitted on lead (excludes ecopod area).
- Children's play area.
- Boat trips arranged.
- Credit cards accepted (minimum £7 spend)
- Café on site (remains open weekends 1st Nov -31 Mar 2016)

- **Ecopods:** Sleep up to 4 adults or 2 adults and 4 children with 2 electric sockets, a kettle, fridge and lighting.

- £40 Per Pod, per night
- Returnable security deposit of £50.

- **Camping**

- 10 Tent spaces
- £12 per night based on 2 -person tent
- £15.80 per night for 4-person tent, £6 per adult thereafter.
- £10 returnable deposit for site keys.



Management and staffing: The centre is owned and managed by Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Council. Staff are funded by the council. The multi-faceted centre attracts over 130,000 visitors per year. The centre was purpose-built in 1993. It was initially going to be fee-paying. This was stopped due to public concern, after this visitor numbers rapidly increased. The centre underwent significant refurbishment in 2006, and generates healthy revenue from leasing conference and event space. It has constant requests from businesses for enterprise and office space due to the location. The manager emphasises the need for storage space in similar buildings⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Conversation with Martin Smith, Manager, Oxford Island, 20/12/17

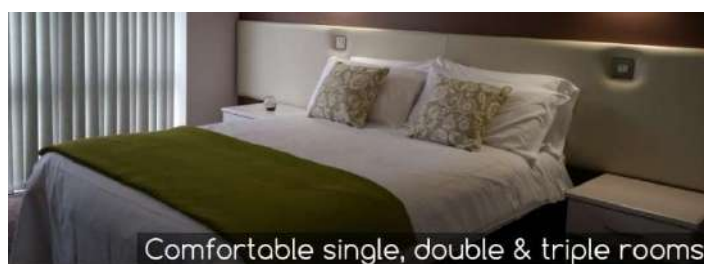
A4.6 Ti Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre, County Armagh

Ti Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre (www.tichulainn.com) is located in the Ring of Gullion, functioning as a multi-function community centre, activity centre, conference and wedding venue.



A range of activities can be provided including paintballing, archery, body zorbing, camp & bush craft, nite line, kayaking & canoeing, with local providers.

Accommodation: There are sixteen high-quality bed & breakfast/self-catering rooms in twin, double and triple configurations. Prices range from £32-50-40 pp sharing with discounts for group bookings.



Conference Venue: Ti Chulainn accommodates conferences, exhibitions, trade shows, training, seminars and team building events with a fully equipped 70 seat audio visual theatre, a large performance area capable of holding in excess of 200 visitors and complimentary off road parking area.

Wedding venue: Ti Chulainn is a registered venue for civil wedding ceremonies from 40 guests to larger events with up to 300 guests. Catering and bar service can be provided. Accommodation is available for the wedding party and guests.



Management and staffing: The centre is owned and managed by the community. The centre employs 3 full-time staff and 4 part-time. The revenue generated by the centre, principally from the accommodation, covers the costs of the centre. The centre was purpose built using a combination of local authority and PEACE II funding.

Appendix 5: SWOT ANALYSIS

This section summarises the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for PARC.

Strengths

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Tourism & Recreation

- Location adjacent to Lough Ree and close to Roscommon town
- Existing infrastructure including marina including jetty and slipways, children's playground, picnic & resting areas, and walkways (e.g. "Croi" trail)
- Scenic character of the lakeshore
- Aligned with regional and county level strategic objectives for tourism

Community & Enterprise

- Large townland/hinterland population
- Established community groups including active Tidy Towns Action Group in place
- Availability of TUS Community Work Placement scheme workers
- Strong community spirit
- Aligned with county development objectives for community inclusion
- Several local small scale therapy and art businesses

Heritage

- Proximity of Quaker Island /Inis Clearun (Monastic Site)
- Local points of interest such as St Dermot's Well and Portrunny Graveyard
- Nearby attractions such as Galey Castle
- Proximity of Lough Ree SAC

Accessibility

- Existing public toilet (owned by Waterways Ireland) is wheelchair accessible

Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Tourism & Recreation

- Limited accessibility
- Limited information/signage
- Lack of commercial /retail mix e.g. café/shop, boat & bike hire
- Limited accessibility to existing public toilets
- Lack of showers, changing rooms for visitors/users
- Limited public seating areas
- Campervans parking in designated picnic area
- Existing infrastructure is need of significant investment/upgrade

Community & Enterprise

- Lack of community centre/meeting point since closure of pub
- Lack of a community centre or enterprise centres for local businesses

Heritage

- Limited accessibility/ information /signage

Accessibility

- Limited access to playground and picnic area
- Lack of designated wheelchair car parking spaces
- Lack of designated footpaths for mobility impaired

Opportunities

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Tourism & Recreation

- Centre could enable hosting of fishing competitions and water based festivals
- Portrunny to be identified as access point for Lough Ree Islands e.g. Inchcleraun
- Potential to link local tourism & recreation infrastructure e.g. Rinn Duin Looped Walkway
- Slipway to be upgraded by RCC before end of 2018
- Meeting place/training facility for community groups, government agencies, emergency services, or search & rescue

Community

- Community enterprise development which could provide hub for local businesses
- Centre will foster social inclusion, providing community with a focal point

Heritage

- Promotion of Portrunny Heritage Trail and provision of information on natural and cultural heritage in the centre

Accessibility

- Provision of accessible playground would provide facilities to benefit existing users

Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Tourism & Recreation

- Other destinations around Lough Ree become more attractive in comparison to Portrunny over time with reduced return on existing investment e.g. marina and toilets
- Potential for littering/pollution from increase in visitor numbers
- Potential further deterioration in infrastructure without investment

Community

- Potential diminution of support from stakeholders without the required investment

Heritage

- Potential for anti-social behaviour e.g. vandalism from increase in visitor numbers

Accessibility

- Exclusion of users without investment

Appendix 6: Engineering Report

Please see separate attachment

Appendix 7: Architects Workbook

Features & Inspiration: Highlights of Roscommon....

County Roscommon, in the Province of Connaught, is home to a wide array of historical and archaeological sites and is known for its lakes and forests. The name derives from “Ros”, an Irish word meaning wooded, gentle terrain – and “Comán”, from Comán Mac Faelchon, a famous Irish Christian saint and the founder, first abbot and bishop of Roscommon. Legend has it that the seat of Queen Medb, the Kings of Connacht, and the High Kings of Ireland were located at Rathcroghan, near Tusk.

Roscommon Castle is a 13th century Norman castle near Roscommon town. After it was won and lost by siege several times over four centuries, it was finally burned down in 1690. It still stands as a ruin today, near to Loughnaneane Park, a wildlife sanctuary.

Oweynagat, the Cave of Cats, also in Rathcroghan, is said to be the home of *The Morrigan* – the Irish Goddess of war and fertility, birth and death. According to mythology, the cave is a portal to the otherworld, and every Samhain, the Morrigan leaves the gates unguarded.

Boyle, a city at the foot of the Curlew Mountains, is known for its history and culture. Boyle abbey was founded in the 12th century and the town is renowned for its summer arts festival. Lough Key Forest Park is one of the most picturesque locations in Ireland, comprised of lakes, woodland, islands, diverse wildlife and many points of historical and archaeological interest.

Strokestown Park House and Famine Museum is an award-winning museum dedicated to the story of the Great Famine, and it contains some of the most extensive records from that time.

Arigna Mining Experience traces 500 years of mining history in the area and offers underground tours exploring Irelands first and last coal mines.

Rindoon is a deserted medieval town situated on the peninsula of St. John's Point, on the Western Shores of Lough Ree. Built in the 13th century with a town wall, castle, medieval hospital, church and mill – it is one of the most important medieval monuments in Ireland.



Roscommon Castle (from Lough Side).

LOUGH REE – Historic Lakeland Settlement

One of the great Shannon Lakes, Lough Ree is 29km in length, from Lanesborough in County Longford to Athlone in County Westmeath. The Greek Cartographer Ptolemy in the 2nd C AD, marked a place “*Rheba*” on his map of Ireland not far from the present Lough Ree.

It is believed the name derives from *Rí Rib* or *Ribh*. Lough Ree translates as “*the Lake of Kings*” and local folklore suggests this was because of seven kings (all named John) who once ruled Rindoon –this has not been historically verified.

A 6th century saint, *St. Ríoch*, was associated with a monastery on Inchbofin. It is possible the Lough was named in his honour. Another claim from the *Metrical Dindsenchas*, suggests the name derives from *Rí*, son of *Muirid* of Meath who drowned in a stream with his horse and cattle, and the lake rose up around him.

Lough Ree is the second largest lake on the Shannon after Lough Derg. Boating, fishing, water skiing, canoeing, rowing and windsurfing are some activities enjoyed on the lake. The Lough is renowned for its “*hot water stretch*” drawing anglers from all over Europe to fish in its waters.

The islands are the stars of the lake. The island of *Inchcleraun* (Inis Cloithreann – Clothra's Island) in the northern part of the lake is close to the subject site. Here the great Queen Medb is said to have met her death while bathing, apparently murdered by a lump of stale cheese from her nephew's vengeful slingshot. The island is known locally as “*Quaker Island*” for its later inhabitants. It is one of the largest and most historically interesting on the lake.

Islands were often plundered and raided. Inchcleraun's monastery was founded by St. Diarmaid around 540AD. It is thought that travel between the mainland and the islands may have been by log boat, or a ‘*cot boat*’. St Diarmaid's holy well is a painstakingly preserved monument very close to the subject site. Apparently, it is a cure for sore eyes.

Rumours abound about a sub-aquatic monster in Lough Ree. The Life of St. Mochuda notes it, helpfully adding that it had devoured a man. Recent reports exist, the most credible being from the 1960s where the monster was sighted by three priests. Global Underwater Search Teams carried out surface water monitoring and hydrophone recordings in 2001. Results were inconclusive, although “*peculiar sounds*” were recorded.

Lough Ree is reputed to hide an underwater city complete with cathedral – a bishop who tried to visit never returned.



PORTRUNNY – Synopsis

Portrunny is in the Electoral Division of Kiltewan, in the Civil Parish of Kilmeane, in the Barony of Athlone, in the County of Roscommon. The Irish name for Portrunny is Port Reanna. It has an area of 4.56 hectares or 11 acres. The name refers to a person entrusted with the care of a monastery and its lands. This suggests a settlement here may have been significant during early Christian and medieval times, when monastic communities were prolific in Ireland.

Portrunny and its environs has a wealth of historical sites, some dating as far back as 540AD. The River Shannon is of course hugely important in Irish history and was used by Vikings to attack inland monasteries, including that on Inchcleraun.

The magic of Portrunny lies not only in its extraordinary heritage, however, but also its rich native flora and fauna and extensive unspoiled shoreline complemented by the exemplary quietly competent and quality works carried out recently by the various stakeholders in the recent interventions by Waterways Ireland to the Portrun Development Authority.

Thanks to the PDA, the local amenities, heritage, folklore, biodiversity and community events have been captured in detail and showcased online and through a series of initiatives including the Portrunny Heritage Trail, which takes in Portrunny Harbour, St. Diarmuid's Holy Well, Portrunny Church and Graveyard, Inchcleraun Island, Shannon View School, Galey Bay and Castle, Cloonsellan Abbey and the diverse and rich biodiversity of the area.

PORTRUNNY BAY

Portrunny Bay, formerly known as "Cruit Bay" and its calm, sheltered waters are contained by Cruit Point, to the South, and Rinanny Point, to the North-east. North of Rinanny Point is the Hind River, which divides Ballymurray and Kiltewan. Inchcleraun (Quaker) Island is located approximately one mile east of Cruit Point. The Water levels in the bay range from 600mm to an average depth of 6m. The bay is very suitable for recreational boats and cruisers and other water sports for all the family. Seasonal changes in water level are managed by locks further along the river. Often, the bay freezes over entirely.

The landscape around the bay has been shaped not only by the waters of the lough, but also by centuries of agriculture, which remains the main industry in the locality. Sheep from local farms are turned out to graze the shoreline. The characteristic landscape is etched through with traditional stone walls rich in limestone, as evidenced by the white appearance of many of the stones. Lime kilns are a feature of the historic industries of the area.

Areas along the shoreline – for example the "Shannon Callows" are designated Special Areas of Conservation. In the 1970s, the first stone jetty was constructed at Portrunny by the local authority to allow boats and cruisers to moor overnight in the harbour.

In 2006, Waterways Ireland invested in the new marina with floating jetty to include 24 berthing spaces as well as upgrading the existing breakwater and providing sanitary facilities for visitors. In 2016, water levels rose to the extent that much of the shoreline, including the children's playground, was flooded. This led to extensive flood elevation works including resurfacing, installation of pavements and lighting by Roscommon County Council.

ARCHITECTURAL INSPIRATION

The “Triskellon” - Celtic Inspiration underwriting site design approach

The “Triskelion” motif IS a triple spiral exhibiting rotational symmetry, based on interlocking Archimedean spirals. The symbol appears in many early cultures, the first in Malta (4400 BC) and is highly visible in ancient Neolithic, Celtic and Christian heritage of Ireland.

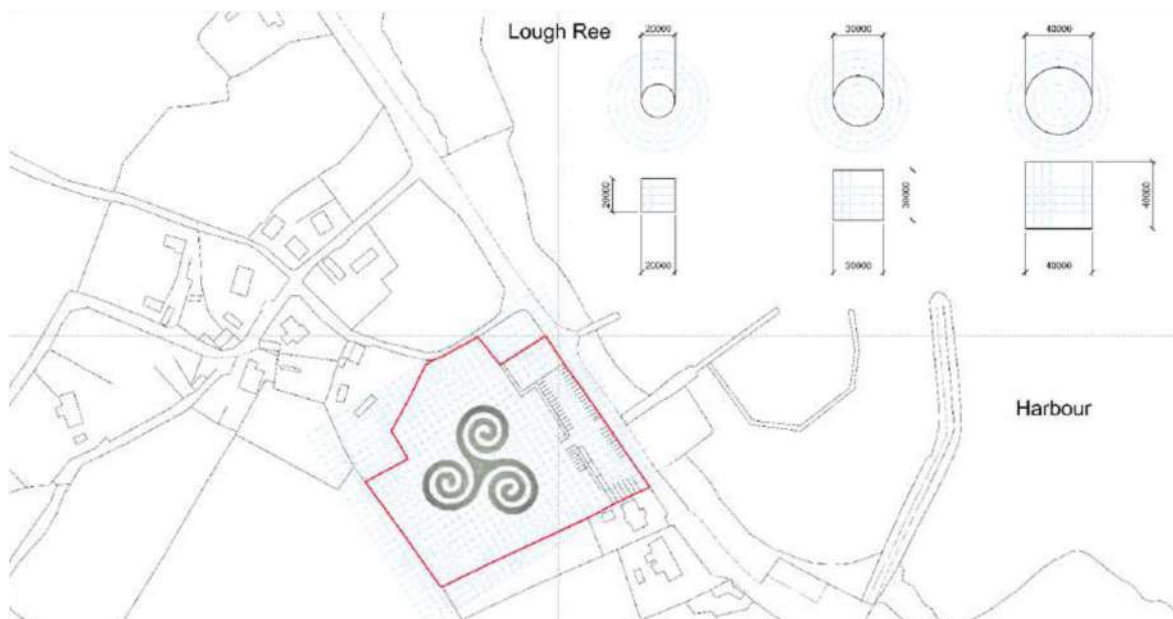
Though popularly considered “Celtic”, it is an ancient Aryan symbol. It is carved into a stone lozenge near the main entrance of prehistoric Newgrange’s megalithic tomb at Brú na Bóinne, built ~ 3200 BC, which long predates Celtic arrival in Ireland.

The sanctity of Brú na Bóinne was invoked to enhance the legitimacy of later pagan kings of Ireland. In legend, kings of Tara were originally buried in the royal cemetery at Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon. When one of the kings married into the Tuatha Dé Danaan, he, his wife and descendants insisted on a new burial place at the Palace of the Boyne.



The Triskellon/ Triskele has long been incorporated into Celtic and later cultures. In the 5th C AD, in Irish Christian culture, the triskele took on new meaning to symbolise the Holy Trinity, also as a symbol of eternity. Its popularity continues today as a decorative symbol of faith for Christians of Celtic descent around the world.

Many Roscommon references underpin our interest in the triple spiral motif as an ephemeral skein that connects all ages. Essentially and conceptually, however, it makes an interesting and compelling organisational tool that assisted in the architectural vision for the site and a response to climactic and topographical conditions.



Building Form, Space & Order – the Crannóg as Impulse for PARC

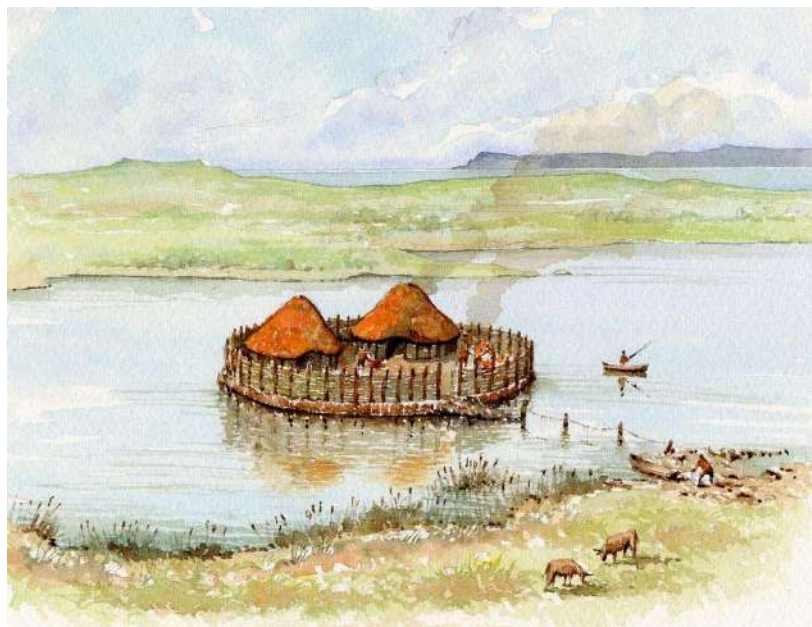
Further inspiration for this proposal draws from the recurring circular form in Irish vernacular architecture across the ages, from protective stone forts, *grianán*, *cashels*, and *souterrains*, to beehives, oratories, temples, tombs and towers of ancient times – but most particularly the romantic artificial lake island village model – the *Crannóg*.

The *crannóg* is an artificial island, roughly circular or oval in shape, constructed on the bed of a lake or a suitable mudbank or islet. It was usual for these semi-submerged mounds to connect by man-made causeway or footbridge to dry land or to make use of boats and canoes for access. These types of lake-dwellings seem to have been an almost uniquely Gaelic feature, from the Late Bronze Age to the pre-industrial era, a span of more than three thousand years, most intensively from 400 CE to 1100 CE in Ireland.

Most *crannóga* were situated on small lakes, usually one per location. More often than not *crannóg*-builders looked to natural inlets or coves along the shore to provide shelter, lower waters aiding construction or providing ready access to the mounds when complete.

In many cases the islands were built in locations of regional or local significance. Most shared landscape with far older monuments such as burial mounds or cairns, promoting notions of continuity with past generations. This is important in largely pastoral, narrowly resourced societies. A fresh-water lake and the fertile pastures around is a valuable resource desired by many. Navigable rivers and water-crossings, served as borders and routes between different *Tuatha* or “kingdoms”, would have been another factor influencing location. By exploiting trade moving along these lines, by boat or foot, some *crannóga* enriched a sense of a local economy and became centres for bartering and exchange. It is such a resonant model in that sense with the aspirations of **PARC**.

The construction of a *crannóg* required considerable community effort. To begin with, upright wooden posts, sharpened at one end, were lowered into the lake and hammered deep into the mud. These vertical piles used interlocking joints to improve their rigidity. This resulted in a circular enclosure of tightly spaced poles in the water, heads visible above the surface. A plan of this shape is rather easy to achieve, which may be the reason why the Medieval Irish



favoured it so much in homes and settlements. A circle can be created by simply placing one end of a predetermined length of rope at a central point, held by a kneeling person or tied to a short stick, and pulling tightly on the opposite end as you move around the fixed centre. This creates a relatively even and equidistant circle. Most *crannóga* were originally fairly uniform in shape some similar technique must have been used by their builders, albeit with far greater difficulty given the environment.

Depending on local resources, the crannóg could range from four or five metres in diameter to over thirty-five. The interior area was filled with alternate layers of rock, peat and broken brushwood, the order of stratification changing from site to site. It's likely that heavy stones and human feet were used to laboriously tamp down the layers, hopefully removing dangerous voids or cavities which could collapse the interior of the structure, as well as driving out pooled water. After months of toiling the artificial mound would rise from the lake, the height determined by the builders. When the platform was judged sufficiently stable, the top would be levelled off and finished with a compacted mixture of soil, sand or pebbles to provide a solid surface and some degree of drainage. This also gave a non-combustible floor to live on. One of the great ironies of the crannóga was their vulnerability to fire.

The role of the crannóg

The purpose of each crannóg varied greatly in time and place. Some functioned as off-shore pens for livestock, probably pigs, goats and geese, the location providing safety from predators, be they human or animal.

Other crannóga functioned as human habitats, for extended families of farmers or overlords. A few larger lake dwellings supported substantial free-standing structures, from timber walls to well-made houses, indicating longer-term use, although it is thought that much of these structures were used seasonally or in times of specific threat, weather events or ritual.

Crannóg houses and structures

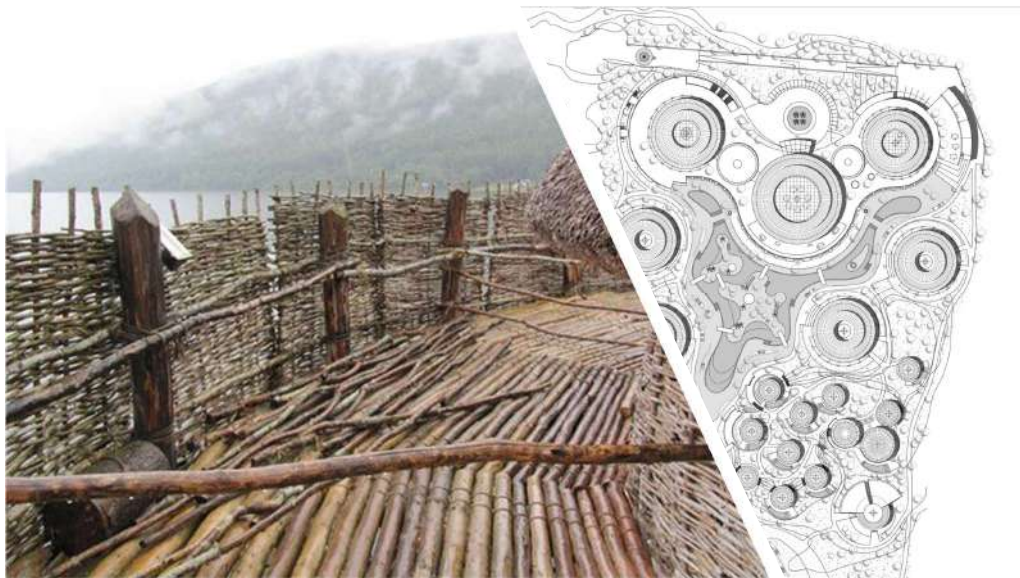
Whatever the purpose, crannóg housing matched architectural styles used in non-maritime settlements. Invariably these were based on the well-known Irish or Celtic roundhouse and its derivatives. They were probably laid out using the rope method, creating a circular floorplan on which a woven wall of rods was crafted. This was built up to form a tall round-bottomed bowl, with the wall and roof almost seamless. This looked something like an upside-down basket sitting on a base of hard-compacted earth, architecturally similar to multi-purpose stone-built *clocháin* or bee hive huts found in Ireland's west, dating from the same period.

The entrance invariably faced east or south-east, to avoid prevailing westerly and south-westerly winds, but also to provide heat and light from the morning sun inside the dark structure for early rising inhabitants. For the Medieval Irish the day began and ended with sunrise and sunset.

A small number of crannóga, especially those predating Christianity, may have been constructed for ritual or ceremonial functions or adapted for those uses. These include royal coronations, communal festivals or treaty negotiations between neighbouring tuatha. It's likely that the popularity and continued use of certain lake dwellings may have been linked to local folk-memories and traditions largely lost to us. By the Medieval period a number of saints – and their immediate followers – were living in seclusion on several natural or artificial islands. Meanwhile a few wealthy monasteries were undoubtedly using the lake dwellings in much the same manner as secular communities: as permanent or temporary abodes, places of refuge or storage, pens for livestock, gathering and meeting points, shelters for hunters and fishermen, or places of worship and ceremony.

The legacy of the crannóg in the Irish landscape

The last hurrah of the crannóga took place from the 15th to 17th centuries as the islands and their offshoots provided native Irish with moated residences, fortresses, treasuries, depots for weapons, prisons and hospitals. The more isolated, the greater the advantage, as the country groaned under the weight of English invaders and colonists. In some cases, artificial islands abandoned centuries beforehand were restored and expanded, the age of musket and cannonball requiring the addition of defensive walls of turf and stone in some places. The last recorded evidence of the crannóga in active use comes from the 18th and 19th centuries, when poor vagrants or armed opponents of British rule hid on their bleak, usually overgrown surfaces. Though some 1,500 artificial islands have been identified by historians and archaeologists, mainly in the midlands, north-west, west and north of Ireland, many more remain to be discovered. Very few are subject to modern investigation by professional researchers. As much as we know about the long history of the crannóg in Ireland, there is much more to learn.



The world is full of out of the case of Croche... an 'A' d'ade... come...

That is Ireland's side to tell

COUNTY ROSCOMMON

County Roscommon, in the province of Connaught, is home to many historical and archaeological sites and is known for its lakes and forests. Here are our top 10 interesting things about Co. Roscommon.

- 1. Origins**
The name of Roscommon comes from 'Ros' and 'Com' meaning meeting, gentle waters and Comas from Comasnaí Párlach, a famous Irish saint and the founder, first abbot and bishop of Roscommon.
- 2. The High Kings of Ireland**
Legend has it that Rathfriland, near Tulsk, was the seat of **Queen Meibh** (Meibh), the Queen of Connaught, and later home to the High Kings of Ireland.
- 3. Roscommon Castle**
Roscommon Castle is a 13th-century tower house near Roscommon town, after being used and later the High Kings of Ireland. It was burned down over four times in 1495. It is a ruin today but still stands. The castle's most interesting feature is its tower, which is a ruin today but still stands.
- 4. Gate to the Otherworld**
Roscommon, 'Gate of Castles', also in Rathfriland, is said to be the home of The Otherworld, the Irish Goddess of War and Victory, Brigid and Brigid. According to Irish mythology the gate is a portal to the Otherworld, and every Sunday, The Otherworld, keeper of the Otherworld, sends the gate open again.
- 5. Boyle**
Boyle is at the heart of the County Roscommon, known for its history and culture. There you will find Boyle Abbey, which was founded in the 13th century, and the Boyle family, who lived in Boyle for over 500 years.
- 6. Lough Forest Park**
Lough Forest Park near Boyle is one of the most picturesque locations in Ireland. It is surrounded by mountains, lakes, forests, a variety of wildlife, and many points of historical and archaeological interest.
- 7. Irish Famine Museum**
Roscommon Park House and Famine Museum is an award-winning museum dedicated to telling the story of the Great Irish Famine, and it contains some of the most extensive records from the time of the Famine.
- 8. Angles Mining Experience**
The Angles Mining Experience in Angles, Co. Roscommon, traces 400 years of mining history in the area and offers underground tours exploring Ireland's first and last mines.
- 9. Roscommon**
Roscommon is a beautiful medieval town situated on the shores of St. John's Park. In the town there is a large lake. Built in the 13th century with stone walls, castle, medieval hospital, church and mill. It is one of the most important complexes of medieval monuments in Ireland.

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Appendix 8: Expanded Vision – Phasing Model

It is envisaged that, **should the initial initiative prove exceptionally successful**, there is scope to expand the concept via clustering in separate pavilions to facilitate phasing models that may be required to react to fluctuating funding opportunities. Each pavilion can capture a mini-model of the whole programmatic brief – that is, with supporting service facilities, each can be a microcosmic version of the whole, with the full suite of buildings added as each use takes a foothold and develops its own circadian rhythms, patterns and sustainable dynamic.

- **Phase 1 – Years 1 - 2** would be the creation of a community recreation centre and tourism facility in a single pavilion, with modest coffee-making zone, a scattering of hot-desks and generous sanitary facilities. This pavilion is destined to be a long-term sporting and recreation centre. It will be serviced by a more modest engineering solution of lower intensity – say 30 – 50 PE. The planning application would therefore have a less onerous requirement and licenses, assessments and analyses can be avoided.
- **Phase 1A Years 2 – 3** - includes the allocation of road-frontage development areas for boat stores and maintenance yard,, kayak and water sports equipment racks, and other features with car parking and site infrastructure including site sculpting for what is destined to be the inventive retention NSP pond;
- **Phase 2 – Years 3 - 4** would be creation of a second pavilion to house café and proposed enterprise co-working space. This phase would include the relocation of the children's play realm, the creation of family and cultural zones within the site and the landscaping out of previously installed car park and open spaces;
- **Phase 3 - Years 4 - 5** sees the addition of the third pavilion, which will become the bespoke space for meetings, events, training and other multi-functional activities. This pavilion will complement the other two on a day-to-day basis but is also self-contained for specific functions or events, with associated car parking, catering and landscaping;
- At this point, the second pavilion can become a pivotal spot for visitor interpretation, exhibition and access to Lough Ree, its islands and Inchcleraun: “Quaker Island”.

