

Development of a Digital Hub

for

Carrigart, Co Donegal

Report to accompany planning application made under Part 8 of
the Planning & Development Regulations 2001
(as amended) by Donegal County Council



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council



**Realising our
Rural Potential**

Action Plan for Rural Development



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

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Introduction

This report should be read in conjunction with Drawing Ref No. 2219/PL-01-Proposed Digital Hub Carrigart prepared by M H Associates Ltd.

Together they describe the proposed development of the “construction of a digital hub building that will incorporate 18 workstations, meeting room, kitchen and W.C’s on the site of the former Health Centre at Main Street, Carrigart”.

Associated ancillary works to include demolition of the existing building, site drainage, connection to the public water supply and other services, landscaping, appropriate boundary treatment, development related signage and connection & discharge to the public sewerage network.

All associated ancillary site works shall be located within the town land of Carrigart in the Letterkenny Municipal District.

The Brief

In accordance with Donegal County Council project brief the development provides for:

- Shared office space for up to 18 people
- Space for meetings and conference call
- Adequate toilet and shower facilities
- Storage area
- Plant & electrical rooms
- Kitchen and canteen facilities

In addition, the building must cater for persons of all abilities including wheelchair users.

The site

The selected site is situated at Main Street, Carrigart and is currently occupied by the old Health Centre which has been disused for a number of years. The Health Centre was built c.1970's and as it was considered unfeasible to renovate or alter and extend same to provide for the new use, it is proposed to demolish it to make way for the new building.

To the northeast of the site is a single storey dwelling; to the southwest is the Sheephaven Credit Union building with access road to the car-park behind.

To the rear of site is the Holy Trinity Church of Ireland and its attendant grounds.

The site is elevated from the road with a difference in level of approximately 1.2 - 1.5m.

Boundaries are clearly defined and services are all available on site including:

- Electrical supply
- Foul and storm water drainage
- Water mains
- Telephone services

There are a number of mature trees along the southwest boundary which will need to be removed to allow for the new construction.

The 3 trees to the front of the site were, as advised, planted and maintained by the local community. As such 2 of the 3 trees will be retained. It is not possible to retain all 3 without obscuring the new building from the street.

Car-parking

There is no parking on site at present however the former Health Centre would have required at least 4 spaces which were provided on site or in nearby car-parks. The same 4 spaces can be counted towards the parking requirements for the new building.

As set out in the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, Part B Appendix 3, new office development will require 1 car-parking space per 30m² and 1 cycle stand space per 100m².

The net office space of the proposed building is 75m² so as above the building would require 2.5 car-parking spaces and 1 bicycle space.

This is less than credited for by the old Health Centre and therefore the new building will lead to no additional parking requirement. That said it is anticipated that there could be 18 users of the building at any one time. In this scenario some users will likely walk to the building, some may cycle and some will travel by car.

We have therefore provided 2 bike-park spaces at the rear of the building. Other parking spaces can be provided for by the existing on-street parking and public car-parks in the immediate vicinity –

See map identifying nearby public parking areas – Fig.1

Planning Consultation

A pre-planning meeting was held with Mr Martin McDermott, of Donegal County Council Planning Section on 03/05/2019 at which the following items were discussed:

- Principle of development – agreed in the context of County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024.
- Building height – to be in keeping with the surrounding 1.5 and 2 storey buildings of Main Street
- Building line – to be consistent with adjoining buildings.
- Building form – to be pitched roof to the front with gable ends in keeping with the surrounding streetscape.
- Materials and design – it was considered that there was some scope to design a contemporary front elevation which would be consistent with the modern function of the building as a digital hub.
In doing so modern material could be incorporated including:
 - Cladding panels
 - Metal skin insulated roof panels
 - Contemporary glazing style and shop-front type design.
 - Render finish to external walls.

Other aspects of planning were considered including the need for appropriate environmental assessment, which was deemed not necessary, however given the context of the historic town and graveyard to the rear it is anticipated that some archaeological monitoring of excavations will be required, as part of any permission which may be granted.

Following the meeting preliminary drawings were submitted and agreed in principle. These were then developed into a full part 8 planning application as presented here.

Conclusion

The development proposed meets the needs set out in the brief and will play an important role in the development of Carrigart as a thriving rural town and community.

It has been designed following consultation with both community representatives and the local authority. It is designed to integrate with the surrounding building environment whilst presenting a modern and contemporary aesthetic both outside and in.

It will contribute to the surrounding streetscape as a new vibrant building replacing an old decaying structure no longer being used.

It will connect with the street by way of opening up the site entrance and encouraging users off street and into the building for work or community participation.

In all it is hoped the elected members will approve the development as proposed.

M H Associates