



Pre Part 8 Planning Report

For

Mount Congreve

Eco- Pod Accommodation & Ancillary Works



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1. INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

The redevelopment works at Mount Congreve Estate and Gardens has been ongoing since mid-2020. A total of €7.2m has now been invested with funding being provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development's Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF), Failte Ireland and 'Matched Funding' from Waterford City & County Council.

The works carried out to date includes the following:

1. Conversion of the eastern wing/old stables of Main House into a new Visitor's Centre incorporating a new Café & Retail Centre.
2. Improved car parking facilities.
3. Improvements to the walkways and pathways throughout the gardens, including surfacing, maps and signage/wayfinding.
4. Creation of an Audio-Visual Tour experience.
5. New Children's playground.
6. Construction of an 'Integrated constructed wetlands'.
7. Construction of a 75 space 'Avenue Car Park'.

It is now proposed to provide additional on-site accommodation within the estate by the installation of 5 Nr Eco-Type Pods within the wooded area approximately 150m to the South West of the existing House (Refer to figure 1.1. below for the locations). These 'Pods' will accommodate up to 14 persons and consist of 2 x family units and 3 x smaller ones for couples. Further details (indicative only) of the style and type of Pods being proposed are included in Appendix C.

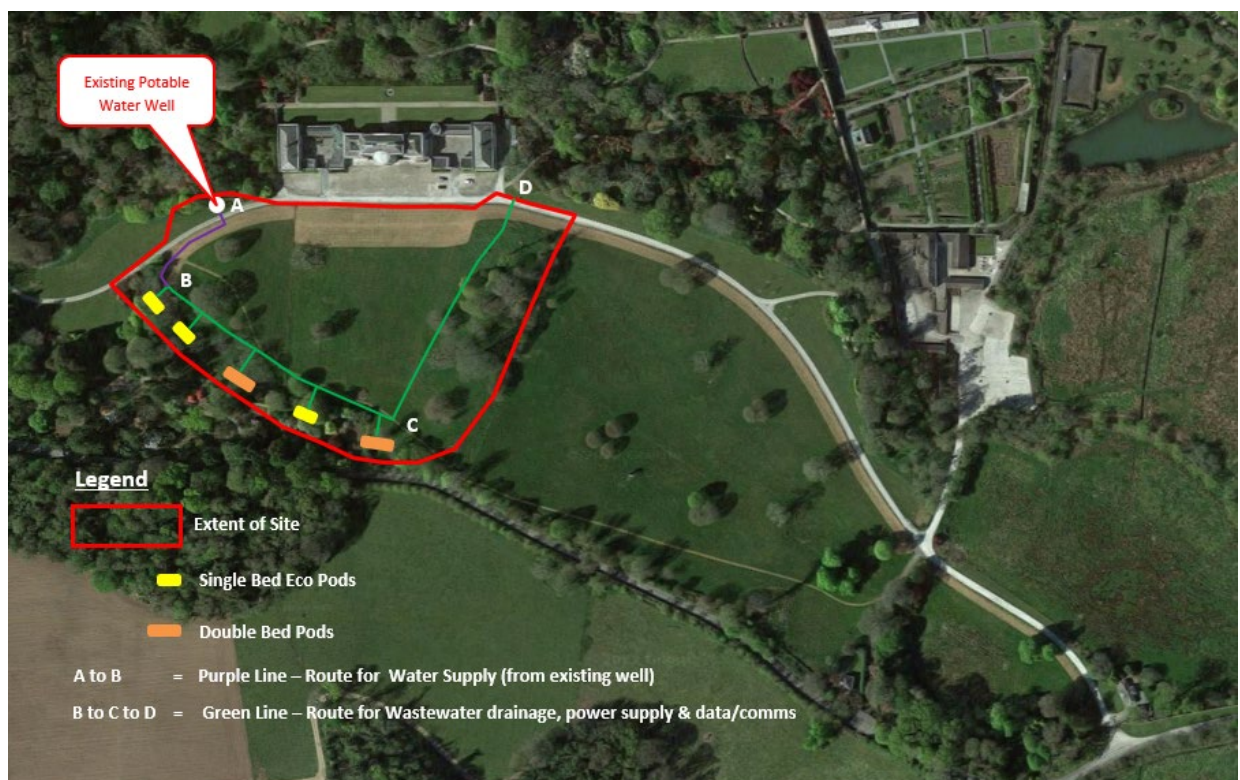


Fig 1.1 – Proposed locations

2. PLANNING & ZONING

The proposed development will be carried out in the townland of Mount Congreve. In the recently adopted Waterford City & Co. Co. 2022 to 2028 Development Plan, the Mount Congreve Estate and Gardens are zoned as 'TM – Tourism' and has been given a Specific Development Object **WCD017** which states that Waterford City & Co. Co. supports '*the sustainable development of the Mount Congreve Estate and Gardens as a major tourist asset for Waterford City and the Southeast region*'.

Below is a list of policy/objective references from the Waterford City & Co. Co. 2022 to 2028 Development Plan that support and/or specifically reference the development of tourism and/or the Mount Congreve Estate itself:

Chapter 3 – Waterford City & MASP

Section 3.5 'Strategic Employment Locations' includes Mount Congreve as part of a 'diverse economic base'.

Chapter 4 – Economy, Tourism, Education and Retail

Development of tourism is included as one of the *Strategic Objectives*, specifically '*to develop, deliver and promote Waterford as a year-round world class tourism destination with authentic, memorable experiences which attracts local, regional, national, and international visitors....*'

Section 4.10 Sustainable Tourism – Mount Congreve is included as one of the major attractions and its continued development and upgrading as an attraction is included as part of ECON 23 i.e., Key Flagship Tourism Projects.

Chapter 11 of the Development Plan – Heritage

Section 11.10 – Historic Demesnes, Gardens & Landscapes – Specific reference is made to Mount Congreve where further commitment is given by WCCC to 'continue to promote this tourism asset for the benefit of all'.

3. PROJECT SCOPE

This Part 8 proposal relates to installation of the 'Eco-Pods' in the locations shown in Figure 1.1. above, it also includes all necessary ancillary works such as site preparation, foul and surface & surface water drainage, potable water supply and electrical supply and data/comms connections. The approximate routes and locations and the site's 'Red Line Boundary' are as shown in Figure 1.1.

All drawings and necessary accompanying documentation are being produced by WCCC internal resources. To date a number of sketches/options for the proposed Pod Locations have been produced and are included in Appendix A.

Following the opening of the new Visitor's Centre in early November 2022, both Mount Congreve Trust and the operators of the new Café have reported that the provision of further on-site accommodation would greatly enhance the 'visitor offering'. In addition, based on the experiences with the existing refurbished gate lodge there is ample demand to make any further on-site accommodation economically viable.

The installation of the 'Eco Pods' will:

- Allow a further 16 persons to reside on site for short/long durations.
- Enhance the overall attractiveness of Mount Congreve.
- Be self-financing and ultimately increase the revenue/income stream to the estate and gardens.

4. PROPOSED WORKS DETAILS

As mentioned above, the proposed works will involve a combination of the following:

1. **Installation of 5 no. Eco Pods** - which will include 3 x single bed and 2 x double bed units, providing accommodation for up to 16, refer to sketches and drawing in Appendices A & B.
2. **Installation of all necessary infrastructure to serve the pods** including water, wastewater, electricity and data/comms.
3. **All other associated ancillary works** – such as landscaping, low level lighting, signage and pedestrian / walkway route improvements.

5. IMPACT ON EXISTING ESTATE & GARDENS

The proposed development will have input from a WCCC Grade 1 Conservation Architect and is being progressed in line with the relevant recommendations contained in all previously issued 'Historic Landscape Assessments/Reports.

Based on the drawings/sketches produced to date, the development is being designed in compliance with the assessments and will be as sympathetic as is practical to the site locations chosen and their surroundings.

An AHIA will also be prepared by a third party/independent Grade 1 or higher Conservation Architect and will be Part of the Part 8 documentation.

Appendix A – Location of Pods & Infrastructure



Location of Pods & Proposed Infrastructure

Appendix B – Indicative view of Pods from House





Appendix C – ‘Eco Pod’ Details

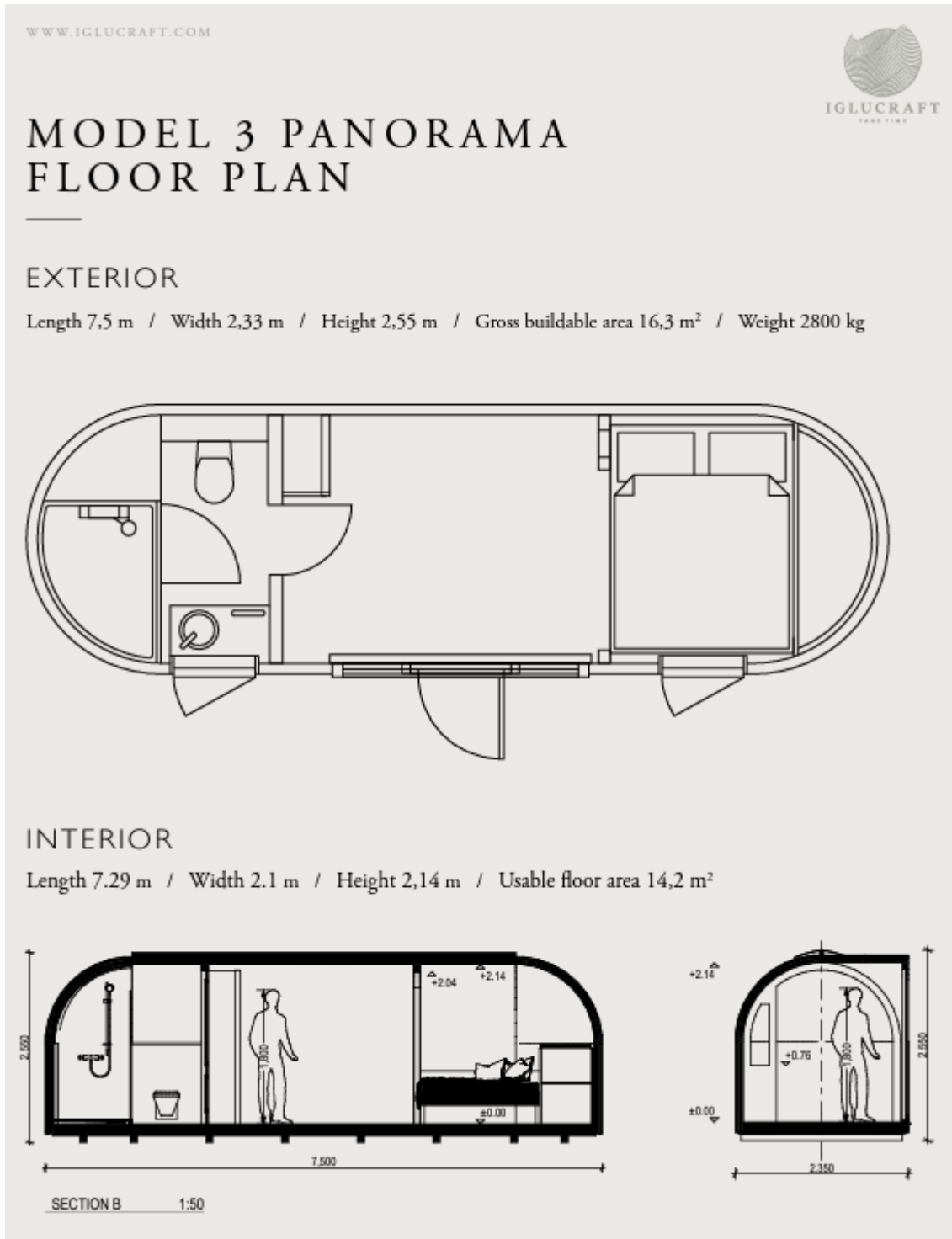
A – 1 Bed Type

MODEL 3 PANORAMA

Small but spacious, this Igluhut makes your short stay memorable as it is thoughtfully designed for purpose. Nestle the cabin in the woods or design your dream resort for rustic luxury. Model 3 Panorama is the perfect size of a weekend getaway or hotel room, accommodating a compact lounge and bedroom area with views straight from the double bed, a full modern bathroom, and large window inviting in the natural beauty of the outdoors.



IGLUCRAFT
TAKE TIME





A – 2 Bed / Family Type

FAMILY MODEL PANORAMA

This two-bedroom retreat accommodates your whole family with ease and comfort. Offering two separated bedroom areas, a compact kitchen, lounge area and full bathroom, the cabin includes all essentials for your time away. Expand the possibilities of your resort with our largest cabin or live your dream of compact living in a traditionally handcrafted tiny house. Invite your family to the outdoors.



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