

**IFDAS** (Independence From Drugs and Alcohol Scotland)

**River Garden Auchincruive**  
**SOCIAL HUB**

**Design and Access Statement**



# River Garden Auchincruive - a special place for all to flourish

## Contents

Page 4	Site Location
Page 5	Preface
Page 6	Introduction
Page 7	Aerial View of RGA
Page 8	The Site
Page 10	Appraisal
Page 12	Evaluation
Page 13	Bothy cafe
Page 14	Design
Page 17	Sustainability
Page 18	Supporters + Funders

---

River Garden Auchincruive is a unique recovery community which accepts people who are motivated to leave addiction behind for good.

# River Garden Auchincruive - a special place for all to flourish



## 1.0 Preface

### 1.0 Preface

This document is submitted in support of the detailed planning application for 3 number new accommodation units at River Garden Auchincruive. This application is part of the vision for the proposed regeneration of River Garden Auchincruive, which formed part of the former West of Scotland Agricultural College at Auchincruive, by Ayr and had fallen into a state of disrepair.

### 1.1 Site Location

The site is within the ownership of IFDAS and extends to approximately 48 acres, and comprises part of the former West of Scotland Agricultural College site which closed in 2007. The site in essence comprises two parts, the first being the grade B listed walled garden and associated buildings, former classrooms, historic glasshouses with the remainder of the site being woodland, arboretum, moorland type scrub and additional ancillary buildings. (The latter currently being used for resident accommodation and recreation space).

The site is located on the B743, 5.5km to the east of Ayr and close by to the villages of Mossblown, Annbank and St Quivox.

### 1.2 IFDAS

The site was acquired in 2017 by the charity IFDAS,

### 1.3 The Project

River Garden Auchincruive (RGA), is a residential based recovery model located at the former Scottish Agricultural College at Auchincruive near Ayr. It is a truly wonderful setting, and IFDAS are creating a quite unique residential recovery environment for residents who are afflicted by addiction to alcohol and / or drugs.

Social Enterprise and entrepreneurship are at the heart of the project with the residents given time and training to regain health and to learn new skills. To be the best that they can be and to reintegrate back into wider society.

### 1.4 Community

River Garden has already becoming a vibrant and accessible community asset, both for those living, working on site and for the many visitors. Through the regeneration of River Garden and the development of social enterprises there is a real connection to the wider community and River Garden will contribute to economy of the local area and the well-being of all who visit and spend time at River Garden.

### 1.5 Accommodation + Associated Social Space

There are currently several accommodation buildings on site as well as a number of separate commercial buildings. The charity's aim is to provide accommodation, based on a 3 year recovery and work based model , for up to 56 residents living and working on site. This proposal is an essential part of that master-plan and growth strategy. The additional accommodation was recently approved, planning ref 23/00258/APP which allows the charity to move significantly towards providing the much needed accommodation .

This application is for the conversion of part of an existing agricultural building, formerly used for poultry production and monitoring when the site was owned and operated by SRUC. The intended use for this building is to provide a social hub for the residents who will be living and working on site. The Social Hub is vital in providing a place for residents to relax, to play, to interact on a social level, to exercise and to aid them in their recovery journey at River Garden.

This building will be utilised by the same 56 residents and staff who are / will already form part of the River Garden Community. This building does not increase staff or resident numbers and is wholly complimentary to the plans already in progress and recently approved.

## 2.0 Introduction

### 2.1 Vision

At River Garden our vision is to create a unique recovery model to benefit those affected by drug and alcohol addiction including families of residents. It is a model of recovery, of social entrepreneurship, of education, of rehabilitation and change that is exciting and full of hope. Through the RGA social enterprise projects, our residents will have the opportunity, through daily work, to measure themselves, challenge their limits and rediscover their potential. Any activity, if carried out with passion combined with training to develop competence, can become a key for reintegration to society. We want people to know that there is hope for a future without addiction and that:

**There is hope for a future without addiction!**

## Recovery is possible!

The charity aims to remove the stigma of addiction and share with the community the garden and landscape, and the wider health and well being benefits that this brings. Its methodology and delivery approach is modelled on some of the most successful self-help charities across the globe including San Patriganano in Italy, Basta in Sweden and Delancey Street, USA.



RGA is based on the same principles of abstinence, trust, firm boundaries, mutual support, social enterprise, respect for life, and responsibility. Participants receive personal developmental support alongside learning new skills and qualifications in a range of social enterprise activities and we also plan to open up links to universities and colleges to expand educational opportunities.

The RGA model, like those mentioned above is a 3 year residency and it is open to and there are no financial barriers to access as there is no charge to residents or their families for access to RGA

As we now look to scale up and grow we require both capital and revenue funding support to realise the potential of the Auchincruive site, as a place where residents can benefit from a sustainable recovery programme and harness their talents and creativity to develop great social enterprises.

River Garden is a wonderful community asset and the proposed developments will be transformational in the lives of our residents and in the regeneration of this wonderful site.

The following social, economic and physical regeneration outcomes will be delivered by the project:

- Social outcomes - changing and saving lives, building, developing and engaging with the community, creating an environment where people flourish, providing spaces for gatherings, meetings, companionship, social connections and other community events.
- Economic outcomes – social enterprises allow the creation of meaningful training and employment opportunities, developing links with local suppliers and generating sustainable income streams to further develop the River Garden site. The model, when measured against the traditional approach to addiction provides value for money to the public purse.
- Physical regeneration – this investment will transform this historic site and bring it back to life ensuring its long term viability and sustainability.

The project is aligned with the priorities of the Scottish Government as noted in 'Place Principle' (investment, innovation, inclusive growth and internationalisation) in reversing the economic, physical and social decline of places where market forces alone won't suffice and:

- A public, private and third sector partnership delivery model, working together with a coordinated action plan.
- It supports principles of Place-making, ensuring an engaged and active community is at the heart of all delivery.
- It is entrepreneurial, inclusive, sustainable, connected, community focused and led – as it promotes a shared understanding of what place is for and what it wants to become and a collaborative approach and agreement to make it happen
- The unique garden location and social enterprises are fully aligned to 6 key areas around healthy, safe places, mental well-being, inclusivity, healthy eating and critically:
- A Scotland where we reduce the use of, and harm from, alcohol and drugs.



# River Garden Auchincruive - a special place for all to flourish

## The Site

### 2.3 The Site History

The first record of a house at Auchincruive is in 1532, with the layout of the estate formalised from 1723.

In 1758 the estate passed to James Murray of Broughton, who sold it in 1764 to the merchant and slave-trader Richard Oswald, who built the present Auchincruive House, now known as Oswald Hall.

In 1925 the estate was sold by the Oswalds to John Hannah, a local farmer, who bequeathed it in 1927 to the Secretary of State for Scotland, for use as the West of Scotland Agricultural College.

Over the next 50 years, the college erected a number of buildings within the grounds for their educational and research requirements.

In 2007, the Scottish Agricultural College, formed in 1990 from the merger of the West of Scotland Agricultural College and other agricultural colleges, decided to move its Ayr campus to a new site at Craighall.

Oswald Hall is now occupied by biotech company Neogen Europe, as its corporate office, together with additional lab facilities across the wider site.

In 2017 IFDAS purchased the 48 acres of areas of land as highlighted on the plan opposite.

Property development company Allanvale subsequently acquired the remaining landholding.

### 2.4 Land Use Context

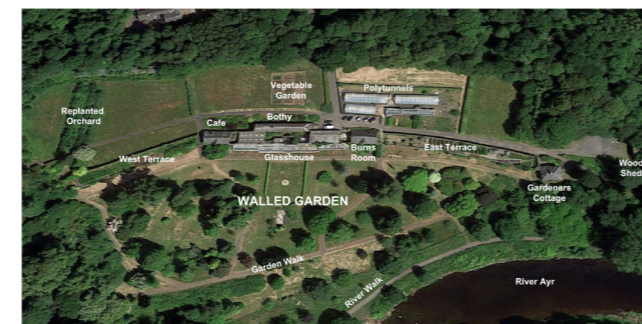
The site was sold with a title condition that it could not be used for private residential accommodation for sale. The use of the site as a residential based recovery and social enterprise community is however appropriate.

The site extends to 48 acres and includes area of woodland, an arboretum and various buildings and ancillary accommodation associated with teaching and research when occupied by West of Scotland Agricultural College.

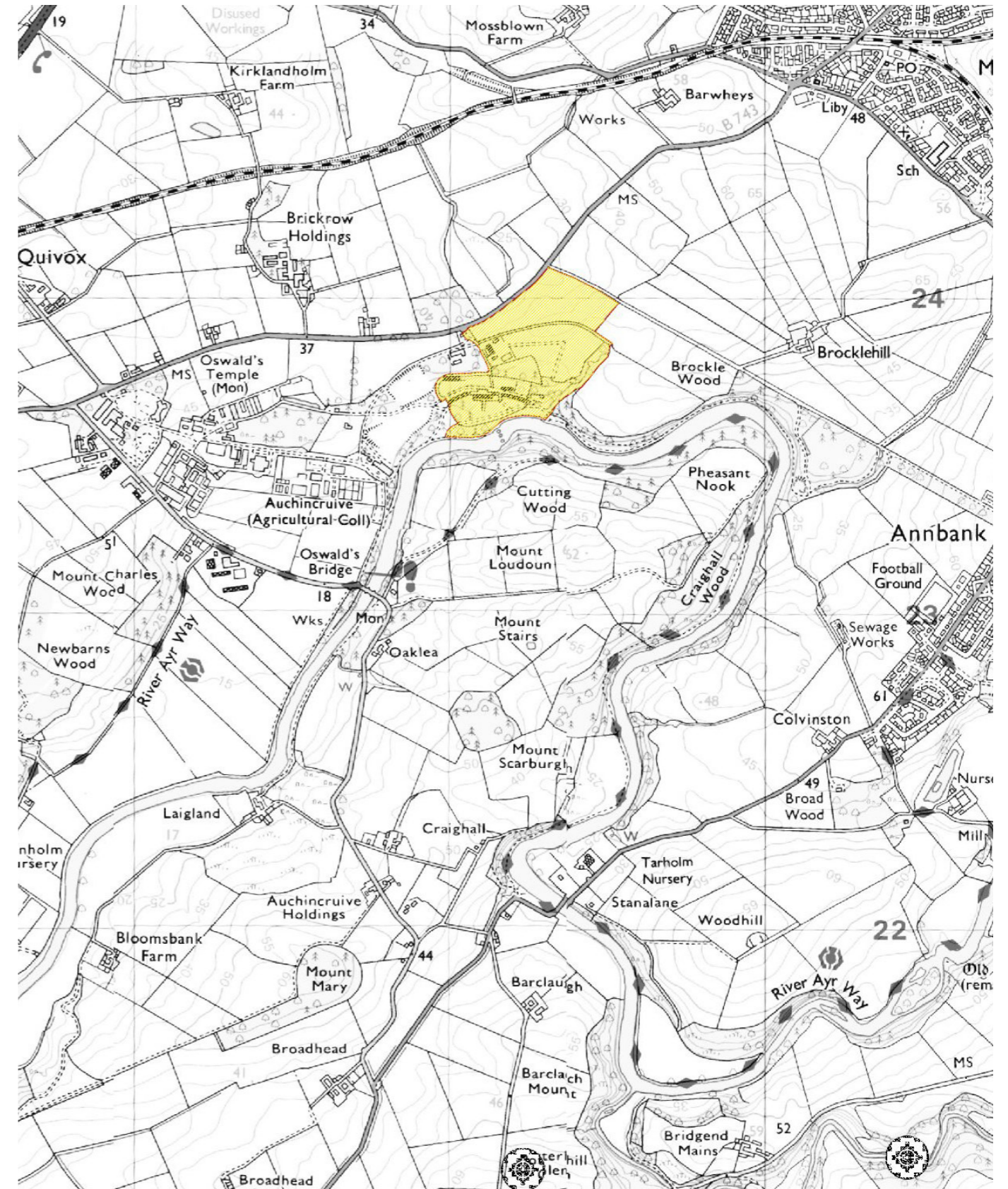
The site and buildings have suffered from many years of neglect and poor maintenance. IFDAS have already begun to regenerate this amazing site, which affords many potential opportunities for recreation, enterprise and community uses all of which underpin our core purpose of recovery for our residents.

### 2.5 Site Boundaries

The site has direct access to the north from the B743 which links into surrounding communities of Annbank, Mossblown and St Quivox and beyond, with the A77 close-by, linking into Ayr and the wider community.



The neighbouring land to the east is agricultural and partly open woodland and to the south the River Ayr. Alongside the River Ayr are well used pathways which are fully linked into River Garden,





We are developing a model of social entrepreneurship, of education, of rehabilitation and change that is exciting and full of hope. Through the RGA social enterprise projects, our residents have the opportunity, through daily work, to measure themselves, challenge their limits and rediscover their potential. Any activity, if carried out with passion combined with training to develop competence, can become a key for reintegration to society.

# River Garden Auchincruive - a special place for all to flourish

## 3.0 Appraisal

### 3.1 Project Principles

River Garden have a bold vision to develop, regenerate and bring back to life the 48 acre site at Auchincruive.

River Gardens vision is absolutely founded in the core purpose to create a unique and truly sustainable recovery community, respecting the heritage of the site and the environment within which it sits.

They will refurbish and re-purpose the buildings on site and where appropriate construct new aesthetically pleasing and sustainable buildings for a range of purposes including accommodation, social enterprise and community uses, and importantly regenerate the walled gardens to be a place of natural beauty, wellness and recreation.

The plan takes a phased approach, aligned with a planned growth in resident numbers, the provision of accommodation and social spaces in conjunction with the development of a range of social enterprises which will underpin much of what IFDAS do at River Garden Auchincruive.

The plan is ambitious, however, IFDAS are clear that with

the appropriate funding and support, they can deliver a sustainable recovery model at River Garden Auchincruive. A model that can be scaled up and scaled out across other communities in Scotland.

### 3.2 Sense of Place

River Garden is a unique place. There is a tangible sense of calm and tranquillity at River Garden. It is a site that enjoys a rather extraordinary location. The topography, aspect, orientation, views, light, micro climate and air quality together with the River Ayr flowing at the foot of the site fuse to create a most compelling 'sense of place'. It is a place that is at one with the recovery journey of our residents.

The proposed site is located on the north of the boundary and has been selected to ensure resident accommodation is private, safe, secure and separated from direct public interaction.

The area is slightly sloping south facing and scrub / vegetation bordered by mature woodland to the south.

### 3.3 The Natural and Built Environment

IFDAS are fortunate to have such a unique site across both the natural and built environment.

Already IFDAS have set high expectations for all that has been achieved at River Garden. Sensitive and respectful regeneration of the existing listed buildings have already taken and the buildings being brought back to life and creating new spaces for living, working and recreation. Once again they are and will contribute to the cultural heritage and economy of the local community.

New buildings will respect the context, and as we look to the future we plan architecturally innovative, bold and sustainable designs across the range of planned new buildings.

### 3.4 The Gardens

The gardens are at the centre of the entire project and IFDAS plan to restore the historic glasshouses and the famous herbaceous borders which were removed in 1990.

As we grow our recovery community, we will also grow our

garden. Whether as a place for work or recreation, to grow fruits and vegetables for our enterprises, an environment of inspiration and education for our residents and visitors, our gardens are a core part of what makes River Garden Auchincruive such a special place.

River Garden is popular with recreational walkers of all generations, those walking their dogs and pony trekking. We are also planning to create a series of woodland walks and trails signposted with information boards and linking into the River Ayr path network.



