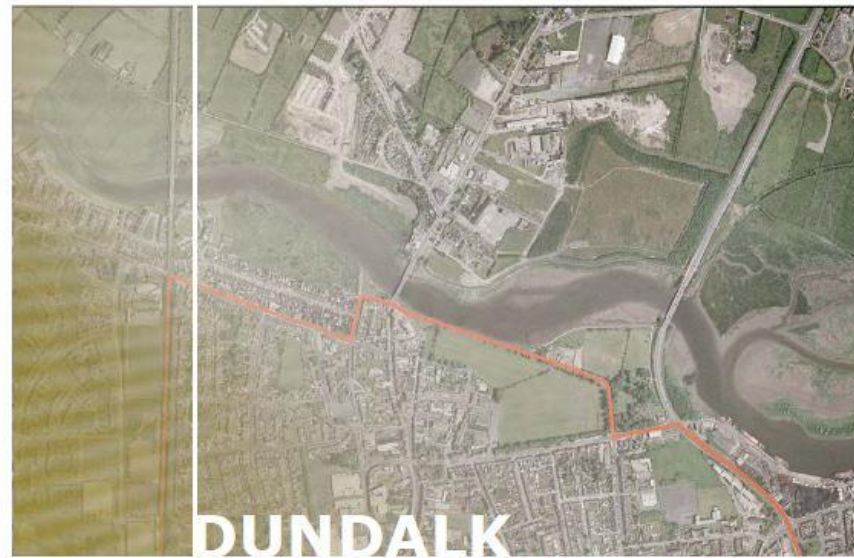


Innovative Urban Regeneration Initiatives in Louth



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Monaghan – Thursday 21st June 2018



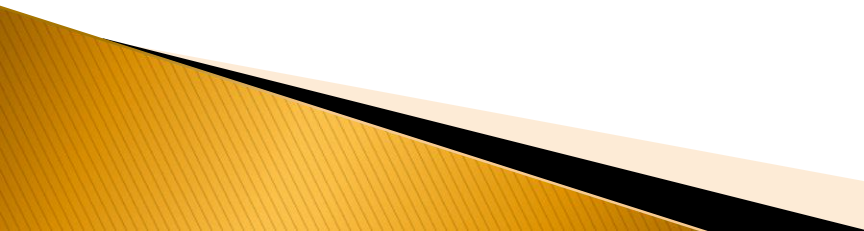
URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN







Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk

- In need of enhancement
 - Cluttered
 - Vehicle dominant
 - Pedestrian experience could be improved
- 

Design objectives:

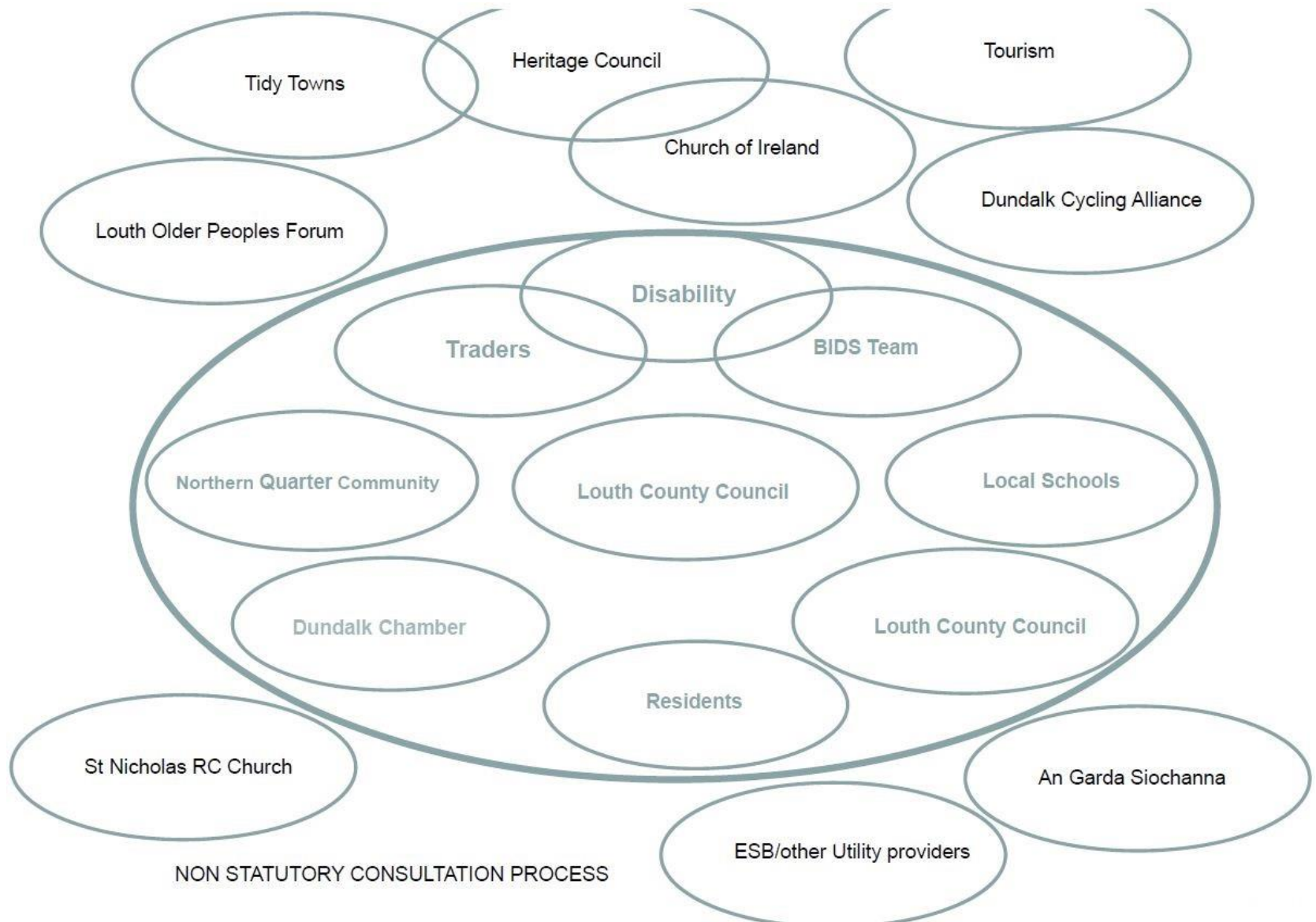
- Establish a new identity for this quarter
- Improve connectivity and legibility
- Enhance the heritage
- Continuity of the quality achieved in Market Square
- Consider the street profile and optimise the balance between vehicle and pedestrian space
- Ensure a platform for a thriving, functioning town centre streetscape



Project objectives:

- Fulfil the funding requirements
- Achieve support from stakeholders, businesses and the public
- Achieve recognisable value, a high impact scheme
- Produce a deliverable scheme, in budget and programme
- Ensure the scheme is maintainable and responds to today's and future needs

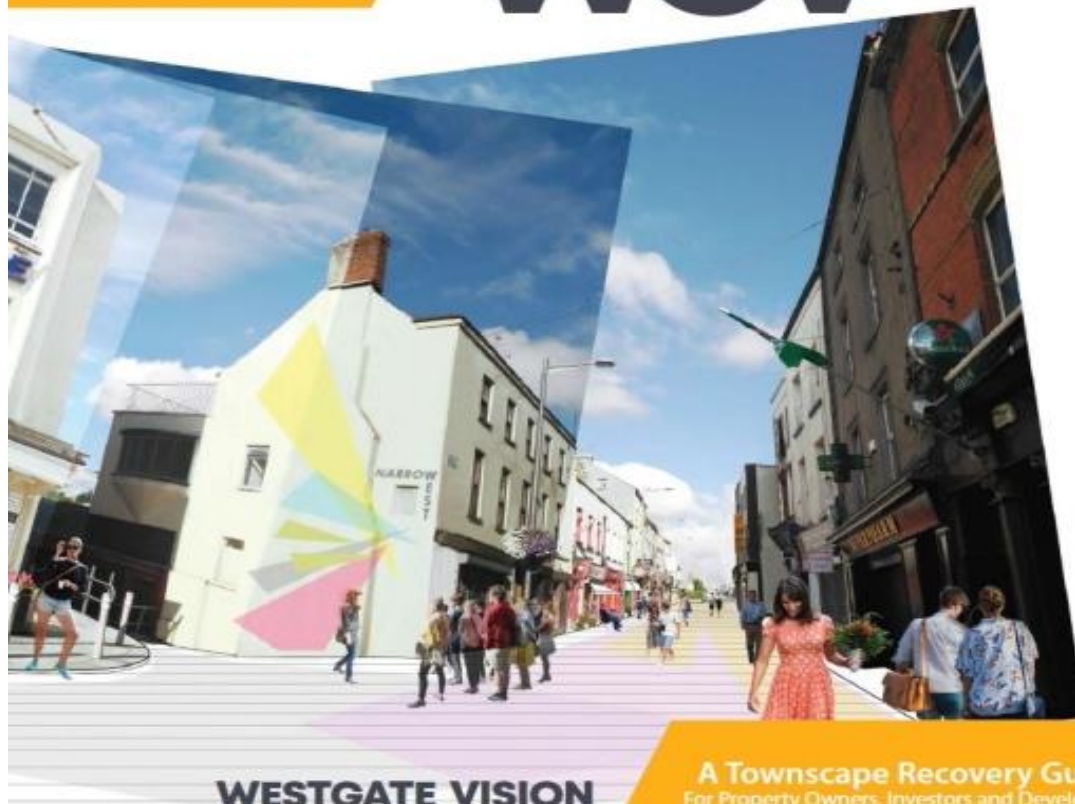






Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

WGV



WESTGATE VISION

A Townscape Recovery Guide
For Property Owners, Investors and Developers

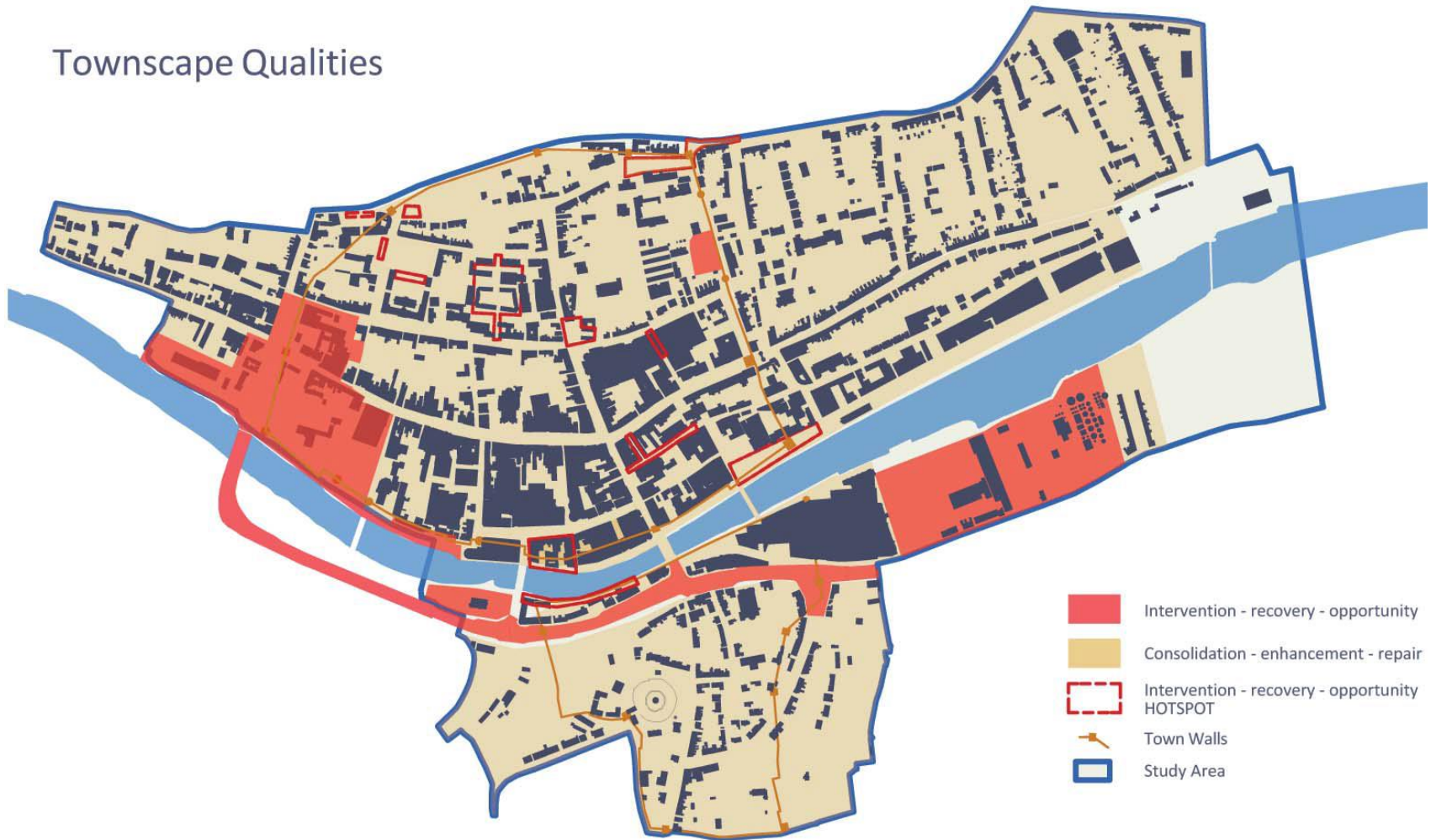
JUNE 2018



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

Map 5.11 Urban Design Framework Plan for the Heritage Quarter, Drogheda

Townscape Qualities



PART 1

THE CHALLENGE

The Drogheda Story

Drogheda is at a crossroads where two major routes of ancient Ireland meet, connecting the north and south of the island with the west. The port of Drogheda connected the Boyne Valley and this part of the island internationally. Drogheda in modern Ireland retains its gateway status providing ease of access to its hinterland, including the Battle of the Boyne heritage site at Oldbridge and the World Heritage site at Brú Na Bóinne and national access via the motorway and rail network.

The Drogheda story from its foundation in the 12th century comprises significant events in Irish history most notably the sacking of Drogheda by Cromwell's forces in 1649 and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The status of the port town in medieval Ireland and its primacy in the life of the Pale, is well documented. Drogheda during this period enjoyed premier status in the Irish urban hierarchy and the broader urban network in these islands as a centre of population and trade.

The Irish Parliament, before the establishment of Dublin as the administrative capital, met in four principal locations on the island: Drogheda, Dublin, Kilkenny and Waterford. The enactment in Drogheda of Poyning's Law in 1494, which made the Irish parliament subservient to the English parliament in Westminster, is an example of Drogheda's status as a national political and administrative centre. The story of Drogheda may have been more gilded if the Irish capital had been settled at the mouth of the River Boyne, cementing the ancient status of the Boyne Valley as the political centre on the island, rather than on the banks of the River Liffey in Dublin.



FIG 1.1 Gabriele Ricciardelli 18th century view of Drogheda

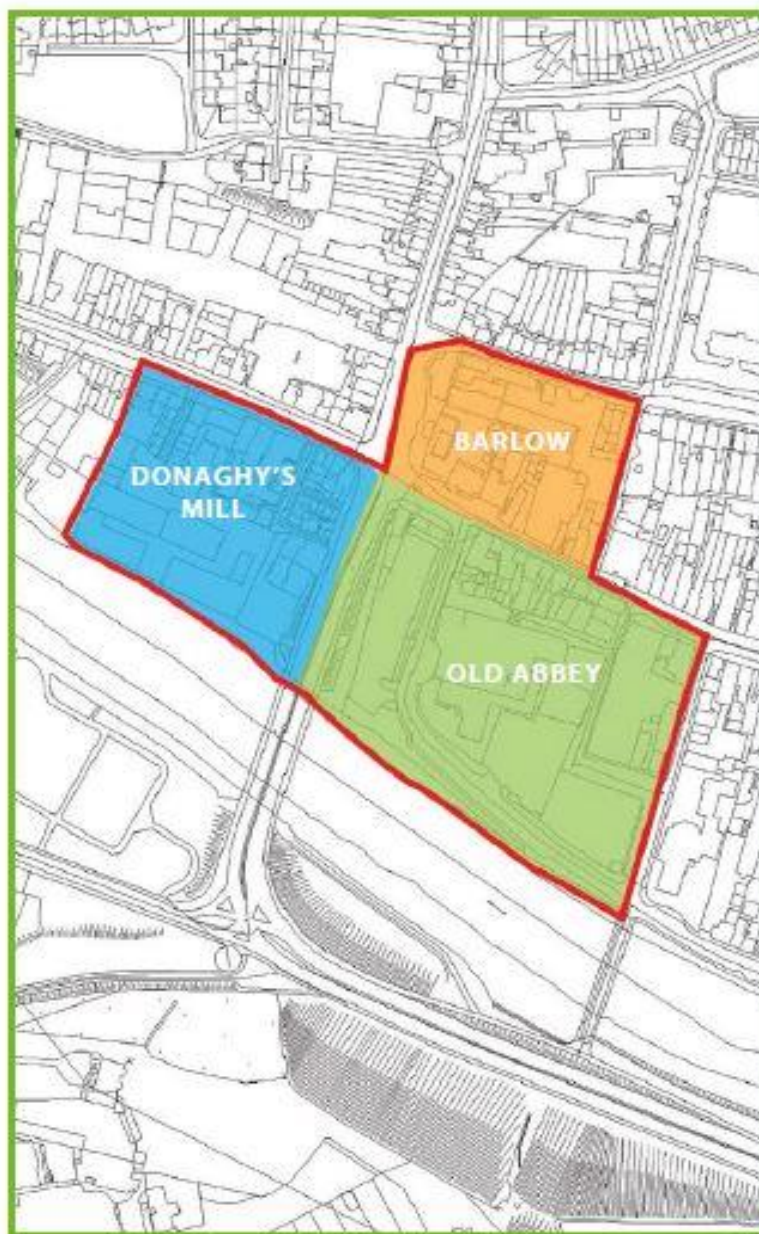
Westgate Vision Area Definition and Description

The WGV Area comprises lands strategically located at the western extremity of the town centre around the medieval West Gate in the town wall. It is a gateway location to the town centre and the wider Boyne Valley. The WGV Area comprises 3 interdependent Study Areas. They are characterised by a high level of underutilised buildings and vacant land. The WGV Area is bounded to the south by the northern bank of the River Boyne which:

- Represents an important natural feature and potential promenade.
- Is bisected at this location by the Bridge of Peace (R132).
- Has an existing under-pass at the Bridge of Peace, albeit is closed at the Donaghy's Mill end.

The 3 Study Areas are

- Barlow
- Old Abbey
- Donaghy's Mill



MAP 2.1 WGV Study Areas

Westgate Vision

Part 1

The Challenge

- Details historical, spatial & urban context
- Identifies interdependent hinterland
- Principal challenge is decay of centre & suburban growth
- Costs of investing/developing in centre compared to developing greenfield sites.

Part 2

The Response

- Identifies spatial extent of WGV Area
- National, local and economic
- Vision & Strategic Guiding Objectives
- Area based urban design strategy to recover townscape, etc



Part 3

The Recovery

- Identify the possibilities to realise the Vision
- Opportunity Sites selected
- Public realm improvements
- Re-use & adaption of existing buildings
- Integrated urban design strategy to recover the streetscape
- The Westgate Vision Area identifies 5 Design Concepts which are:

Part 4

Delivering the Vision

- Breakdown in 3 Stages
- Short Term 3 mths - 3 yrs
- Medium Term 3 - 5 yrs
- Long Term 5 - 10+
- Prepare monitoring report, etc



PART 2

THE RESPONSE

The Vision

The following **six Strategic Guiding Objectives** are identified in response to the challenge in Drogheda:

1

Westgate and the broader town centre as the **vibrant heart** of the **wider hinterland**

2

Westgate as the **gateway** to Drogheda's **historic Town Centre** and the **Boyne Valley heritage sites**

3

Recovery of the townscape in Westgate to **act as a catalyst** for positive regeneration in the broader town centre

4

Delivery of **quality homes** and **employment opportunities**

5

Directional environment for private and public sector **investment decisions** & the co-ordination of built environment **regulation and guidance**

6

Implementation of **Best Practice Conservation**

Westgate is the identifiable principal entry point to the historic town of Drogheda and the premier gateway for visitors to the Boyne Valley. Exploiting the distinctive character and heritage of Westgate, the Drogheda Heritage Quarter Framework Plan 2013 is implemented with creativity, practicality and conviction. Thus is achieved the economic, environmental and social benefits of quality-driven urban regeneration within the Westgate area and within the broader town centre.

WESTGATE VISION

These are aligned with the criteria concerning 'Compact Growth' as outlined in National Strategic Outcome 1 of Project Ireland 2040, which aims to:

- ▶ Enable infill/brownfield development that wouldn't otherwise occur.
- ▶ Improve liveability.
- ▶ Encourage economic development by creating conditions to attract investment.
- ▶ Build on existing assets to create critical mass.
- ▶ Improve accessibility & transition to sustainable modes of transport.
- ▶ Provide affordable houses, improved family services, etc.

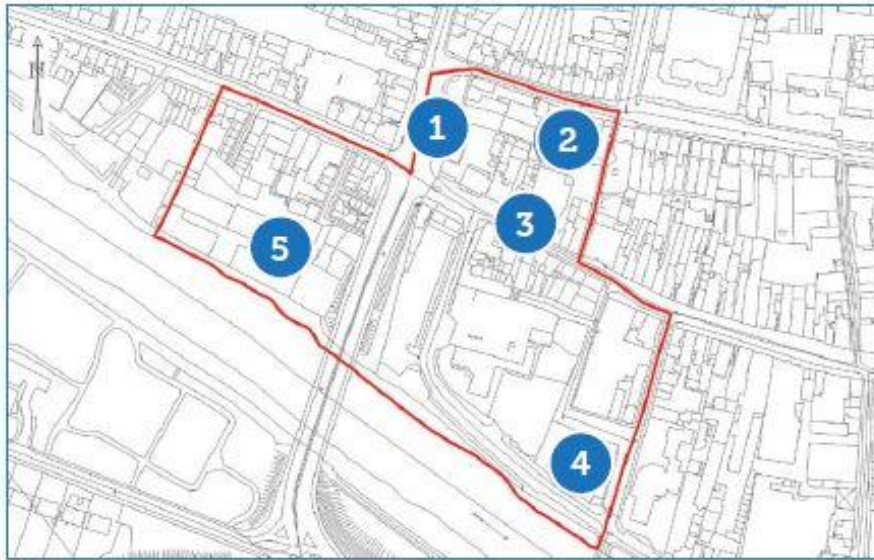


PART 3

THE RECOVERY

- ▶ The Townscape Recovery Guide
- ▶ Identifying the possibilities for urban regeneration to realise the vision
- ▶ Opportunity Sites identified
- ▶ Reuse and Adaption of existing buildings
- ▶ An Integrated Urban Design Strategy to recover the streetscape
- ▶ Westgate Vision supporting regeneration in the broader town centre

Design Concepts



MAP 3.1 Location of the 5 Design Concepts



Arrival space at George's Square Gateway to Drogheda & Boyne Valley

The presentation of the medieval walled town of Drogheda has the potential to become a premier regional visitor attraction in Ireland's Ancient East. Design Concept One is to establish Westgate as the visitor access point to the historic town of Drogheda and as the principal access to the adjacent Boyne Valley heritage sites. It is envisaged that George's Square located at the western threshold of the medieval walled town would play an important role in visitor orientation. The reconfiguration of the George's Square road space and the reimagining of that space as a clearly defined and recognisable entrance to the historic town are essential to achieve this objective.

Drogheda's original medieval street pattern remains largely intact, in instances the walls still stand and one of the best examples of a medieval fortified barbican is St Laurence's Gate. The sense of arrival and occasion that would be afforded by visitor access to the town through St. Laurence's Gate can be replicated in Westgate. Westgate is the logical access point to the historic town for the visitor arriving by road. Historic towns and cities have re-interpreted their old medieval town boundaries to give a new sense of place / arrival. It is strongly argued this objective can be successfully achieved in George's Square.

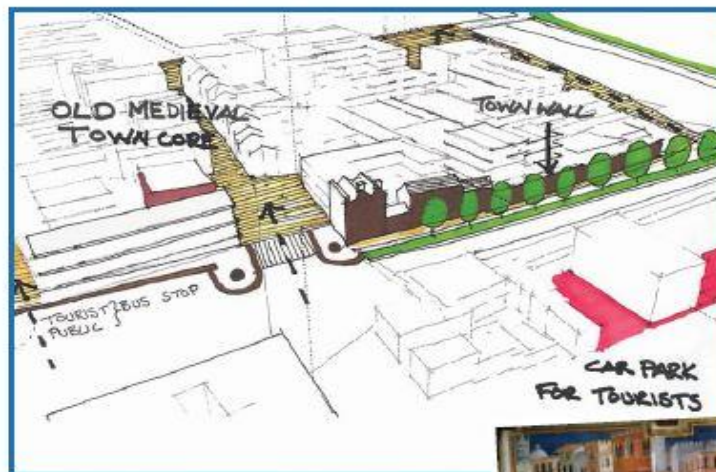


FIG 3.1 Gateway to Drogheda Town Centre

The painting of Siena Town Hall illustrates the physical relationship between the medieval town core and its hinterland, where there is a discernible transition from urban to rural.



FIG 3.2 Siena Town Hall, Italy

Cultural, Entertainment & Recreation Cluster

Drogheda has a very strong cultural, arts and heritage community, which is a positive anchor to develop. The area of Narrow West Street, Patrickswell Lane, Old Abbey Lane and West Street has the highest density of pubs and restaurants. It is also the home of two of the main activity centres - Droichead Arts Centre and the Old Abbey Dance Centre.

Design Concept Two is to enhance and extend Old Abbey Lane in an easterly direction to Dominic Street across Patrickswell Lane. In a potential redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre. In tandem, the virtual extension of the Lane to the west would comprise a visual link to the chimney stack located within the Donaghy's Mill Study Area, which creates a desire line from the Abbey Church to the lands on the other side of the Bridge of Peace.

It is proposed to promote active uses onto the extension of Old Abbey Lane.

To realise the full potential of the WGV Area, pedestrianisation of Narrow West Street is required in order to facilitate the growth of Old Abbey Lane as an entertainment /cultural cluster to counter-balance commercial activity in the east quadrant of Drogheda town centre.

Two potential pocket public spaces are identified for public realm improvements at the eastern extremity of Narrow West Street (See Map 3.3). One at the Scholes Lane / Narrow West Street junction and one at the Patrickswells Lane / Narrow West Street junction.

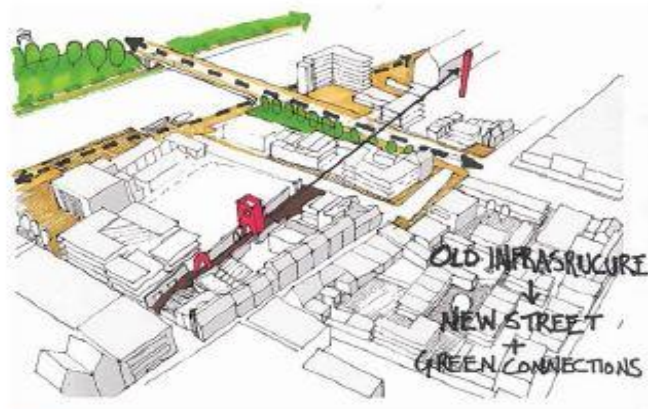


FIG 3.4 Desire Line - Line of Vision to Donaghy's Mill.



PHOTO 3.4 Entertainment

New Homes = New Activation = New Population

Drogheda historically had merchants living over their shops and more recently families lived above their business premises. The medieval town was laid out as a series of oblong burgage plots to accommodate a family and a trade that extended back from a narrow street frontage. The resident shopkeeper has departed in the last 50 years and the tradition has been lost. The loss of a resident community in the town core is evident and is in contrast to areas such as the Cord Road adjacent to the centre where there is a vibrant resident population. Design Concept Three is to attract people back into the urban core, especially in the commercial town centre in vacant space above businesses and to build new homes on vacant land in the town centre.

Drogheda town centre has, in varying degrees, high levels of vacancy above ground floor level and in the availability of vacant and / or derelict lands. The lands in the town centre are not only serviced by essential infrastructure such as, water, sewerage and electricity, but also with a multiplicity of other facilities including shops, schools and community infrastructure. There is an on-going housing crisis, but potential residents need more than housing units. They need a comprehensive range of services and facilities to make homes. Drogheda has the services and facilities to create new homes while new residents will support the sustainability of the existing town infrastructure, thus safeguarding the future of Drogheda town centre.



PHOTO 3.8 New Town Centre Housing Waterford City

Town Scale Public Space

The River Boyne has a significant part to play in the cultural heritage of Ireland. It can be argued that the town of Drogheda like so many other towns has turned its back on the river. Drogheda does not have many public squares or civic focal points. The creation of a large, car free, urban space in the town would be a significant addition to civic amenity and realise the activation of the river promenade.

In 1753 Ricciardelli was commissioned to paint Drogheda. The artist shows a large flat space beside the river which looks like a park or a private garden (See Fig 3.10). Ravells map of 1749 shows something similar located around Wellington Quay,

which were likely civic spaces of their time. The opportunity to provide a public space south of the Abbey Shopping Centre would have historical resonance and is the essence of Design Concept Four. The space would be slightly elevated above the existing ground level to provide undercroft carparking and new buildings would address and enclose the space, providing active ground floor uses to animate this area.

The new public space could be the iconic regeneration project within the WGV Area taking its example from Grand Canal Square which successfully brands the regeneration of the Dublin Docklands.



FIG 3.7 Potential Town Scale Public Space

Tourist/Residential Neighbourhood & Riverside Promenade

Donaghy's Mill Study Area by reason of its dereliction and its peripheral location is isolated at the western edge of the town, segregated from the town core by the physical barrier of the Bridge of Peace. The Donaghy's Mill complex and adjacent vacant lands provide an opportunity to accommodate tourist facilities in proximity to the visitor gateway location of Westgate to include hotel, hostel, visitor car parking, riverside restaurant, bicycle parking, etc.

It is possible to make the Donaghy's Mill complex and adjacent vacant land's accessible by utilising existing potential access points and by creating new access points from the Bridge of Peace and Trinity Street. A possible pedestrian/cycle route from the town

centre could utilise the existing underpass of the Bridge of Peace. A new gateway building is proposed on the identified existing opportunity site in the south-east corner of the Study Area. The underpass of the Bridge of Peace could access a new river promenade between the Mill buildings and the River Boyne.

By utilising the topography of the site it is proposed to provide visitor car parking in an undercroft car park below the level of the Bridge of Peace. A potential hotel building would demarcate the arrival point to Drogheda from all directions. The scale of the building will reflect the landmark location of the existing opportunity site which is identified in the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011 - 2017 (as extended).

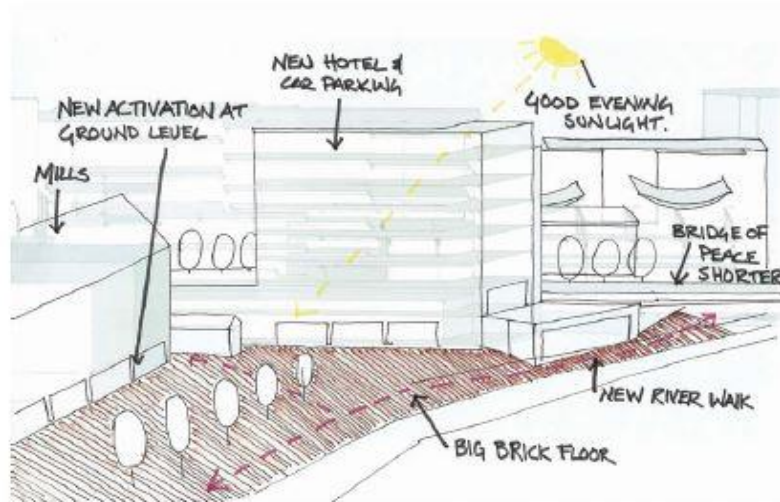
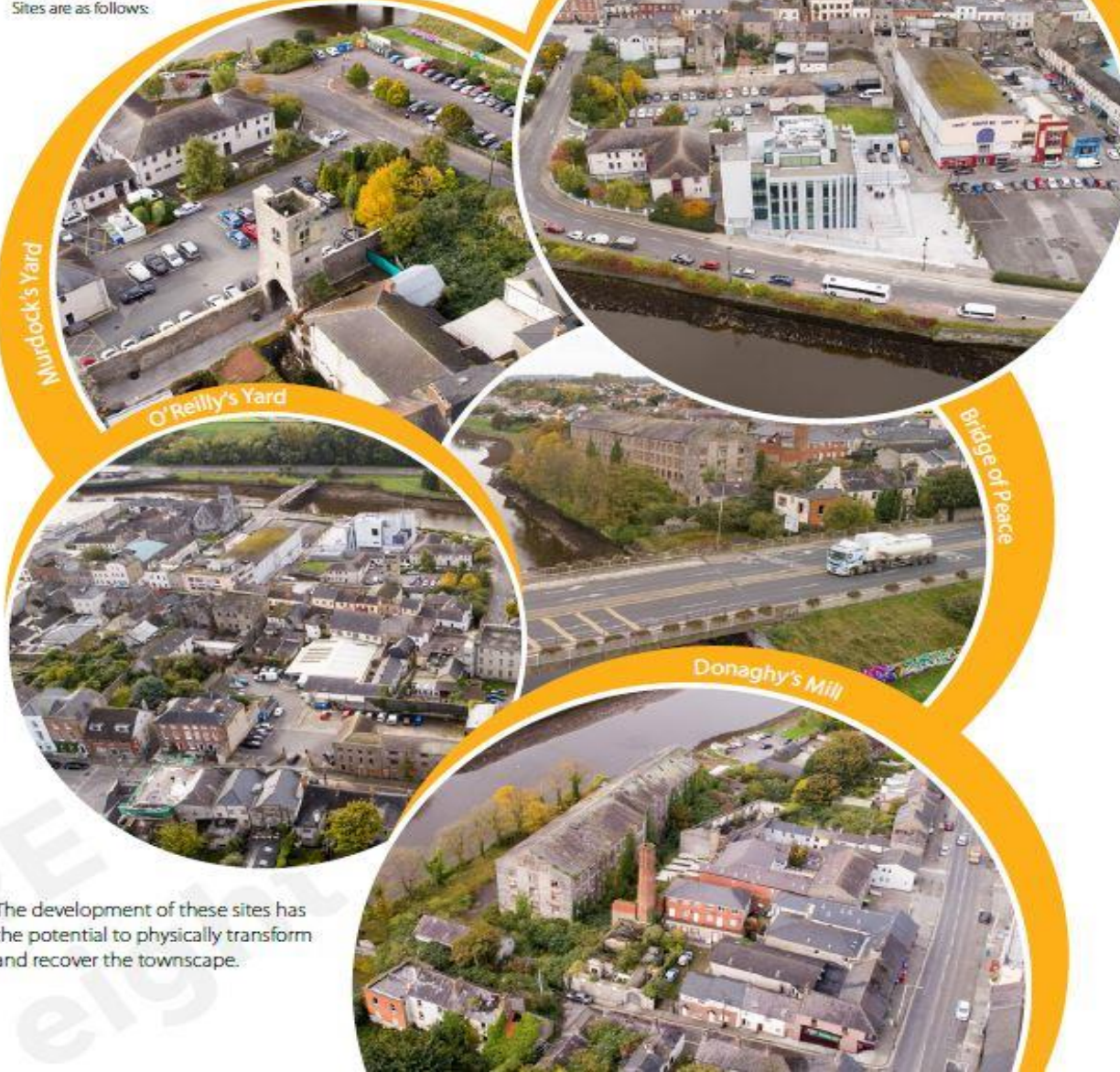


FIG 3.11 Possible design concepts in Donaghy's Mill Study Area

Opportunity Sites

The Townscape Recovery Guide analyses the existing urban fabric and identifies a number of existing and proposed opportunities where feasibility for redevelopment and public realm improvement is examined within the 3 Study Areas of Barlow, Old Abbey and Donaghy's Mill.

The principal identified Opportunity Sites are as follows:



The development of these sites has the potential to physically transform and recover the townscape.



Delivering the Vision

Stage 1

3mths - 3 yrs

Stage 2

3 yrs - 5 yrs

Stage 3

5 yrs - 10 yrs plus

► **Quick Wins** (Please see overleaf)

► Establish a Westgate Vision Team

Embedding a Positive Dynamic

(Guide community/developers in their consideration of future development from feasibility to construction stage)

Consolidation & Growth

(Consolidate previous & potential investment decisions)

Monitoring

It is proposed to prepare a monitoring report at the end of each of the **3-stages of Delivering the Vision**.

The 6 performance indicators of Delivering the Vision

- 1 **Heritage** protect and exploit potential
- 2 **Vacancy** address and eliminate
- 3 **Clustering** create destination to counter balance east-end Drogheda
- 4 **Tourism** develop and embed
- 5 **Urban living** a template for Drogheda town centre living
- 6 **Quality of life** enhance and transform